AN

EXPOSITION
OF THE
Hiſtorical BOOKS
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT,

VIZ.

St. *Matthew*, St. *Luke*,
St. *Mark*, St. *John*,

AND THE

Acts of the Apoſtles.

WHEREIN

Each Chapter is ſumm'd up in its Contents, the Sacred Text inſerted at large in diſtinct Paragraphs; Each Paragraph reduced to its proper Heads, the Senſe given, and largely Illuſtrated.

WITH

Practical Remarks and Obſervations.

VOL. V.

By *MATTHEW HENRY*, Miniſter of the Goſpel.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

PREFACE.

THE one half of our Undertaking upon the *New Teſtament*, is here by the Aſſiſtance of divine Grace finiſhed, and preſented to the Reader, who, 'tis (hoped, the Lord working with it) may hereby be ſomewhat help'd in underſtanding and improving this Sacred Hiſtory of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and making it (as certainly it is) the beſt Expoſition of our Creed, in which theſe inſpired Writers are ſumm'd up; which is intimated by the Evangeliſt, that calls his Goſpel a *Declaration of thoſe Things which are moſt ſurely believed among us*, Luke 1. 1.

And as there is no Part of Scripture which it concerns us more to be well eſtabliſhed in the Belief of, ſo there is none which the generality of Chriſtians are more converſant with, or ſpeak of more frequently: It is therefore our Duty by conſtant Pains in Meditation and Prayer, to come to an intimate Acquaintance with the true Intent and Meaning of theſe Narratives, what our Concern is in them, and what we are to build upon them, and draw from them; that we may not reſt in ſuch a Knowledge of them, as that we had, when in our Childhood, we were taught to read *Engliſh* out of the Tranſlation, and *Greek* out of the Originals of theſe Books; we ought to know them as the Phyſician doth his Diſpenſatory, the Lawyer his Books of Reports, and the Sailor his Card and Compaſs; that is, to know how to make uſe of them in that which we apply ourſelves to as our Buſineſs in this World, which is to ſerve God here, and enjoy him hereafter, and both in Chriſt the Mediator.

The great Deſigns of the Chriſtian Inſtitutes (which theſe Books are the Fountains and Foundations of) were to reduce the Children of Men to the Fear and Love of God, as the commanding active Principles of their Obſervance of him, and Obedience to him; to ſhew them the way of their Reconciliation to him, and Acceptance with him, and to bring them under Obligations to Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator, and by them to engage them to all Inſtances of Devotion towards God, and Juſtice and Charity towards all Men, in Conformity to the Example of Chriſt, in Obedience to his Law, and in purſuance of his great Intentions. What therefore I have endeavoured here has been with this View, to make theſe Writings ſerviceable to the Faith, Holineſs, and Comfort of good Chriſtians.

Now that theſe Writings thus made uſe of to ſerve theſe great and noble Deſigns may have their due Influence upon us, it concerns us to be well eſtabliſh'd in our Belief of their divine Original. And here we have to do with two ſorts of People, ſome that embrace the *Old Teſtament*, but ſet that up in Oppoſition to the *New*; pleading, that if that be right, this is wrong, and theſe are the *Jews*. Others, that tho' they live in a Chriſtian Nation, and by Baptiſm wear the Chriſtian Name, yet under pretence of a freedom of Thought, deſpiſe Chriſtianity, and conſequently reject the *New Teſtament*, and therefore the *Old* of courſe.

I confeſs it ſtrange, that any now who receive the *Old Teſtament*, ſhould reject the *New*, ſince beſides all the particular Proofs of the divine Authority of the *New Teſtament*, there is ſuch an admirable Harmony between it and the *Old*. It agrees with the *Old* in all the main Intentions of it, refers to it, builds upon it, ſhews the Accompliſhment of its Types and Propheſies, and thereby is the Perfection and Crown of it. Nay, if it be not *true*, the *Old Teſtament* muſt be *falſe*, and all the glorious Promiſes which ſhine ſo bright in it, and the Performance of which was limited within certain Periods of Time, muſt be a great Deluſion; which we are ſure they are not, and therefore muſt embrace the *New Teſtament*, to ſupport the Reputation of the *Old*.

That in the *Old Teſtament*, which the *New Teſtament* lays aſide, is the Peculiarity of the *Jewiſh* Nation, and the Obſervances of the Ceremonial Law; both which certainly were of divine Appointment; and yet the *New Teſtament* doth not at all claſh with the *Old*; for,

1. They were always deſign'd to be laid aſide in the Fulneſs of Time. No other is to be expected, but that the Morning-Star ſhould diſappear when the Sun riſeth, and the latter Parts of the *Old Teſtament* often ſpeak of the laying aſide of thoſe Things, and of the calling in of the *Gentiles*.

2. They were very honourably laid aſide, and rather exchanged for that which was more noble and excellent, more divine and heavenly. The *Jewiſh* Church was ſwallowed up in the Chriſtian, the *Moſaick* Ritual in Evangelical Inſtitutions. So that the *New Teſtament* is no more the undoing of the *Old*, than the ſending of a Youth to the Univerſity is the undoing of his Education in the Grammar-School.

3. Providence ſoon determined this Controverſy (which is the only thing that ſeem'd a Controverſy between the *Old Teſtament* and the *New*) by the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, the Deſolations of the Temple, the Diſſolution of the Temple-Service, and the total Diſperſion of all the Remains of the *Jewiſh* Nation, with a judicial Defeat of all their Attempts to incorporate again, now for above ſixteen hundred Years, and this according to the expreſs Predictions of Chriſt a little before his Death. And as Chriſt would not have the Doctrine of his being the *Meſſiah* much inſiſted on, till the great concluſive Proof of it was given by his Reſurrection from the Dead; ſo the Repeal of the Ceremonial Law, as to the *Jews*, was not much inſiſted on, but their keeping up the Obſervation of it was conniv'd at, till the great concluſive Proof of its Repeal was given by the

Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which made the Obſervation of it for ever impracticable. And the manifeſt Tokens of divine Wrath, which the *Jews*, conſidered as a People, even notwithſtanding the Proſperity of particular Perſons among them, continue under to this Day, is a Proof, not only of the Truth of Chriſt's Predictions concerning them, but that they lie under a greater Guilt than that of Idolatry, for which they lay under a Deſolation of 70 Years; and that can be no other but crucifying Chriſt, and rejecting his Goſpel.

Thus evident it is, that in our expounding the *New Teſtament* we are not undoing what we did in expounding the *Old*, ſo far from that, that we may appeal to the Law and the Prophets for the Confirmation of the great Truth which the Goſpels are written to prove, that our Lord Jeſus is the *Meſſiah* promiſed to the Fathers, who ſhould come, and we are to look for no other. For tho' his Appearing did not anſwer the Expectation of the carnal *Jews*, who look'd for a *Meſſiah* in external Pomp and Power, yet it exactly anſwer'd all the Types, Propheſies and Promiſes of the *Old Teſtament*, which all had their Accompliſhment in him; and even his ignominious Sufferings, which are the greateſt Stumbling-block to the *Jews*, were foretold concerning the *Meſſiah*; ſo that if he had not ſubmitted to them we had fail'd in our Proof; ſo far it is from being weaken'd by them. Biſhop *Kidder*'s Demonſtration of the Chriſtian's *Meſſiah* has abundantly made out this Truth, and anſwer'd the Cavils (for ſo they are rather than Arguments) of the *Jews* againſt it, above any in our Language.

But we live in an Age, when Chriſtianity and the *New Teſtament* are more virulently and daringly attack'd by ſome within their own Bowels, than by thoſe upon their Borders; never was *Moſes* and his Writings ſo arraign'd and ridicul'd by any *Jews*, or *Mahomet* and his *Alcoran*, by any *Muſſulmen*, as Chriſt and his Goſpel, by Men that are baptiz'd, and call'd Chriſtians; and this not under Colour of any other divine Revelation, but in Contempt and Defiance of all divine Revelation; and not by way of Complaint, that they meet with that which ſhocks their Faith, and which thro' their own Weakneſs they cannot get over, and therefore deſire to be inſtructed in, and help'd in the underſtanding of, and the reconciling of them to the Truth which they have receiv'd; but by way of reſolute Oppoſition, as if they look'd upon it as their Enemy, and were reſolv'd by all Means poſſible to be the Ruin of it; tho' they cannot ſay what Evil it has done to the World, or to them. If the Pretence of it has tranſported many in the Church of *Rome* into ſuch Corruptions of Worſhip, and Cruelties of Government, as are indeed the Scandal of the human Nature, yet inſtead of being thereby prejudic'd againſt pure Chriſtianity, they ſhould the rather appear more vigorouſly in Defence of it, when they ſee ſo excellent an Inſtitution, as that is in itſelf, ſo baſely abuſed and miſrepreſented.

They pretend to a *Liberty of Thought* in their Oppoſition to Chriſtianity, and would be diſtinguiſh'd by the Name of *Free-thinkers*. I will not here go about to produce the Arguments, which to *all* that are not wilfully ignorant and prejudic'd againſt the Truth, are ſufficient to prove the divine Original and Authority of the Doctrine of Chriſt. The Learned find much Satisfaction in reading the Apologies of the Antients for the Chriſtian Religion, when it was ſtrugling with the Polythiſm and Adultery of the *Gentiles*. *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, *Lactantius* and *Minutius Felix*, wrote admirably in Defence of Chriſtianity, when it was further ſeal'd to by the Blood of the Martyrs.

But its Patrons and Advocates in the preſent Day have another ſort of Enemies to deal with. The Antiquity of the Pagan Theology, its univerſal Prevalency, the Edicts of Princes, and the Traditions and Uſages of the Country, are not now objected to Chriſtianity; but I know not what imaginary freedom of Thought, and an unheard of Privilege of the human Nature is trump'd up, not to be bound by any divine Revelation whatſoever.

Now it is eaſy to make out,

1. That thoſe who would be thought thus to maintain a Liberty of thinking, as one of the Privileges of the human Nature, and in Defence of which they will take up Arms againſt God himſelf, yet themſelves do not *think freely*, nor give others leave to do ſo. In ſome of them a reſolute Indulgence of themſelves in thoſe vicious Courſes, which they know the Goſpel, if they admit it, will make very uneaſy to them, and a ſecret Enmity to a holy, heavenly Mind and Life, forbids them all free Thought; for ſo ſtrong a Prejudice have their Luſts and Paſſions laid them under againſt the Laws of Chriſt, that they find themſelves under a Neceſſity of oppoſing the Truths of Chriſt, upon which theſe Laws are founded. *Perit Judicium quando res tranſit in affectum.* Right or wrong Chriſt's Bonds muſt be broken, and his Cords caſt from them; and therefore how evident ſoever the Premiſes be, the Concluſion muſt be denied, if it tend to faſten theſe Bands and Cords upon them; and where is the Freedom of Thought then? While they promiſe themſelves Liberty, they themſelves are the Servants of Corruption; for of whom a Man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in Bondage.

In others of them a reigning Pride, and Affectation of Singularity, and a Spirit of Contradiction, thoſe Luſts of the Mind, which are as impetuous and imperious as any of the Luſts of the Fleſh and of the World are, forbid a Freedom of thinking, and enſlave the Soul in all its Enquiries after Religion. Thoſe can no more think freely that reſolve they will think by themſelves, than thoſe can that reſolve they will think with their Neighbours.

Nor will they give others liberty to think freely; for it is not by Reaſon and Argument that they go about to convince us, but by Jeſt and Banter, and expoſing Chriſtianity and its ſerious Profeſſors to Contempt; now conſidering how natural it is to moſt Men to be jealous for their Reputation, this is as great an Impoſition as can poſſibly be; and the *Unthinking* are as much kept from free thinking, by the fear of being ridicul'd in the Club of thoſe that ſet up for Oracles in Reaſon, as by the fear of being curs'd, excommunicated, and anathematiz'd by the Council of thoſe that ſet up for Oracles in Religion; and where's the free-thinking then?

2. That thoſe who will indeed allow themſelves a true *Liberty of thinking*, and will think ſeriouſly, cannot but embrace all Chriſt's Sayings, as *faithful*, and well *worthy of all Acceptation*. Let the corrupt Biaſs of the carnal Heart towards the World, and the Fleſh, and Self (the moſt preſumptuous Idol of the three) be taken out, and let the Doctrine of Chriſt be propoſed firſt in its *true Colours*, as Chriſt and his Apoſtles have given it us, and then in its *true Light*, with all its proper Evidence intrinſick and extrinſick, and then let the capable Soul *freely* uſe its rational Powers and Faculties, and by the Operation of the Spirit of Grace, who alone works Faith in all that believe, even the high Thought, when once it becomes a free Thought, freed from the Bondage of Sin and Corruption, will by a pleaſing and happy Power be captivated, and brought into Obedience to Chriſt; and when he thus makes it free, it will be free indeed.

Let any one that will give himſelf leave to think impartially, and be at the pains to think cloſely, read Mr. *Baxter's Reaſons for the Chriſtian Religion*, and he will find both that it goes to the bottom, and lays the Foundation deep and firm, and alſo that it brings forth the top-ſtone in a Believer's Conſent to God in Chriſt, to the Satisfaction of any that are truly concern'd about their Souls and another World. The Proofs of the Truth of the Goſpel have been excellently well methodiz'd and enforc'd likewiſe by Biſhop *Stillingfleet* in his *Origines Sacræ*, *Grotius* in his Book of the Truth of Chriſtian Religion, Dr. *Whitby* in his general Preface to his Commentary on the *New Teſtament*, and of late by Mr. *Ditton*, very argumentatively in his Diſcourſe concerning the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt; and many others have herein done worthily; and I will not believe any Man who rejects the *New Teſtament*, and the Chriſtian Religion, to have *thought freely* upon the Subject, unleſs he has with Humility, and Seriouſneſs, and Prayer to God for Direction, read theſe, or the like Books, which 'tis certain were written both with Liberty and Clearneſs of Thought.

For my own part, if my Thoughts were worth any ones Notice, I do declare I have thought of this great Concern with all the Liberty that a reaſonable Soul can pretend to or deſire; and the Reſult is, that the more I think, and the more freely I think, the more fully I am ſatisfied that the Chriſtian Religion is the true Religion, and what, if I ſubmit my Soul ſincerely to, I may venture my Soul confidently upon.

For when I *think freely*,

1. I cannot but think that the God that made Man a reaſonable Creature by his Power, has a Right to rule him by his Law, and to oblige him to keep his inferior Faculties of Appetite and Paſſion, together with the Capacities of Thought and Speech, in due Subjection to the ſuperior Powers of Reaſon and Conſcience; and when I look into my own Heart, I cannot but think that this was it which my Maker deſign'd in the Order and Frame of my Soul, and that herein he intended to ſupport his own Dominion in me.

2. I cannot but think that my Happineſs is bound up in the Favour of God, and that his Favour will be or not be towards me according as I do or do not comply with the Laws and Ends of my Creation; that I am accountable to this God, and that from him my Judgment proceeds, not only for this World, but for my everlaſting State.

3. I cannot but think that my Nature is very unlike what the Nature of Man was as it came out of the Creator's Hands, that it is degenerated from its primitive Purity and Rectitude; I find in myſelf a natural Averſion to my Duty, and to ſpiritual and divine Exerciſes, and a Propenſion to that which is evil, ſuch an Inclination towards the World and the Fleſh as amounts to a Bent to backſlide from the living God.

4. I cannot but think that I am therefore by Nature thrown out of the Favour of God; for tho' I think he is a gracious and merciful God, yet I think he is alſo a juſt and holy God, and that I am become by Sin both odious to his Holineſs and obnoxious to his Juſtice; I ſhould not think freely, but very partially, if I ſhould think otherwiſe; I think I am guilty before God, have ſinned, and come ſhort of glorifying him, and of being glorified with him.

5. I cannot but think, that without ſome ſpecial Diſcovery of God's Will concerning me, and Good-will to me, I cannot poſſibly recover his Favour, be reconcil'd to him, or be ſo far reſtor'd to my primitive Rectitude, as to be capable of ſerving my Creator, and anſwering the Ends of my Creation, and being fit for another World; for the Bounties of Providence to me in common with the inferior Creatures cannot ſerve either as Aſſurances that God is reconcil'd to me, or Means to reconcile me to God.

6. I cannot but think that the Way of Salvation, both from the Guilt, and from the Power of Sin by Jeſus Chriſt, and his Mediation between God and Man, as it is reveal'd in the *New Teſtament*, is admirably well fitted to all the Exigences of my Caſe, to reſtore me, both to the Favour of God, and to the Government and Enjoyment of myſelf; here I ſee a proper Method for the removing of the Guilt of Sin, that I may not die by the Sentence of the Law, by the all-ſufficient Merit and Righteouſneſs of the Son of God in our Nature; and for the breaking of the Power of Sin, that I may not die by my own Diſeaſe, by the all-ſufficient Influence and Operation of the Spirit of God upon our Nature; every Malady has herein its Remedy, every Grievance is hereby redreſs'd, and in ſuch a way as advances the Honour of all the divine Attributes, and is ſuited and accommodated to the human Nature.

7. I cannot but think, that what I find in myſelf of Natural Religion, doth evidently bear Teſtimony to the Chriſtian Religion; for all that Truth which is diſcover'd to me by the Light of Nature, is confirm'd, and more clearly diſcover'd by the Goſpel; the very ſame thing which the Light of Nature gives me a confuſed Sight of, like the Sight of Men, as Trees walking, the *New Teſtament* gives me a clear and diſtinct Sight of; and all that Good which is preſs'd upon me by the Law of Nature, is more fully diſcover'd to me, and I find myſelf much more ſtrongly bound to by the Goſpel of Chriſt, the Engagements it lays upon me to my Duty, and the Encouragements and Aſſiſtances it gives me in my Duty; and this is further confirming to me, that there, juſt there, where natural Light leaves me at a loſs and unſatisfied, tells me hitherto it can carry me, but no further;

ther; the Goſpel takes me up, helps me out, and gives me all the Satisfaction I can deſire, and that is eſpecially in the great Buſineſs of the ſatisfying of God's Juſtice for the Sin of Man. My own Conſcience asks, Wherewithal ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow myſelf before the moſt high God? Will he be pleaſed with thouſands of Rams? But I am ſtill at a loſs, I cannot frame a Righteouſneſs from any thing I am, or have in myſelf, or any thing I can do for God, or preſent to God, wherein I dare appear before him; but the Goſpel comes and tells me that Jeſus Chriſt has made his Soul an Offering for Sin, and God has declar'd himſelf well pleaſed with all Believers in him, and this makes me eaſy.

8. I cannot but think that the Proofs by which God has atteſted the Truth of the Goſpel, are the moſt proper that could be given in a Caſe of this nature. That the Power and Authority of the Redeemer in the Kingdom of Grace ſhould be exemplified to the World, not by the higheſt Degree of the Pomp and Authority of the Kings of the Earth, as the *Jews* expected, but by the Evidences of his Dominion in the Kingdom of Nature, which is a much greater Dignity and Authority than any of the Kings of the Earth ever pretended to, and is no leſs than divine; and his Miracles being generally wrought upon *Men*, not only upon their Bodies, as moſtly they were when Chriſt was here upon Earth, but, which is more, upon their Minds, as moſtly they were after the pouring out of the Spirit in the Gift of Tongues, and other ſupernatural Endowments, were the moſt proper Confirmations poſſible of the Truth of the Goſpel, which was deſign'd for the making of Men holy and happy.

9. I cannot but think that the Methods taken for the propagating of this Goſpel, and the wonderful Succeſs of thoſe Methods, which are purely ſpiritual and heavenly, and deſtitute of all ſecular Advantages and Supports, plainly ſhew it was of God, for God was with it; and it could never have ſpread as it did, in the Face of ſo much Oppoſition, if it had not been accompanied with a Power from on high; and the Preſervation of Chriſtianity in the World to this Day, notwithſtanding the Difficulties it has ſtruggled with, is to me a ſtanding Miracle for the Proof of it.

Laſtly, I cannot but think that the Goſpel of Chriſt has had ſome Influence upon my Soul, has had ſuch a Command over me, and been ſuch a Comfort to me, as is a Demonſtration to myſelf, tho' it cannot be ſo to another, that it is of God; I have taſted in it that the Lord is gracious, and the moſt ſubtil Diſputant cannot convince one who has taſted Honey, that it is not ſweet.

And now I appeal to him who knows the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, that in all this I *think freely* (if it be poſſible for a Man to know that he doth ſo) and not under the power of any Biaſs. Whether we have reaſon to think that thoſe, who without any Colour of Reaſon, not only *uſurp*, but *monopolize* the Character of Free-thinkers do ſo, let thoſe judge, who eaſily obſerve that they do not ſpeak ſincerely, but induſtriouſly diſſemble their Notions; and one Inſtance I cannot but take notice of, their unfair Dealing with their Readers, that when for the diminiſhing of the Authority of the *New Teſtament*, they urge the various Readings of the Original, and quote an Acknowledgment of Mr. *Gregory* of *Chriſtchurch*, in his Preface to his Works, *That no profane Author whatſoever*, &c. and yet ſuppreſs what immediately follows, as the Senſe of that learned Man upon it, *that this is an invincible Reaſon for the Scriptures part*, &c.

We then receive the Books of the *New Teſtament* as our Oracles, for it is evident that that excellent Notion of Dr. *Henry More*'s is true, that they have a direct Tendency to take us off from the animal Life, and to bring us to the divine Life.

But while we are thus maintaining the divine Original and Authority of the *New Teſtament*, as it has been receiv'd thro' all the Ages of the Church, we find our Cauſe not only attack'd by the Enemies we ſpeak of, but in effect betray'd by one that makes our *New Teſtament* almoſt double to what really it is, adding the *Conſtitutions of the Apoſtles* to it, put together by *Clement*, together with the *Apoſtolical Canons*, and making thoſe to be of equal Authority with the Writings of the Evangeliſts, and preferable to the Epiſtles; by enlarging the Lines of Defence thus, without either Cauſe or Precedent, he gives great Advantage to the Invaders.

Thoſe *Conſtitutions of the Apoſtles* have many Things in them very good, and may be of uſe, as other human Compoſers; but to pretend that they were compoſed, as they profeſs themſelves to be, by the twelve Apoſtles in Conſort at *Jeruſalem*, I *Peter* ſaying this, I *Andrew* ſaying that, &c. is the greateſt Impoſition that can be upon the Credulity of the Simple.

1. It is certain there were a great many ſpurious Writings that in the early Days of the Church went under the Name of the Apoſtles and Apoſtolical Men, ſo that it has always been complain'd of as impoſſible to find out any thing but the Canon of Scripture that would with any Aſſurance be attributed to them. *Baronius* himſelf acknowledgeth it, *Cum Apoſtolorum nomine tam facta quam dicta reperiantur eſſe ſuppoſititia; nec ſe quid de illis à veris ſinceriſque Scriptoribus narratum ſit integrum & incorruptum remanſerit in deſperationem plane quandam animum dejiciunt poſſe unquam aſſequi quod verum certumque ſubſiſtat*. Ad An. Chriſt. 44. Sect. 42. &c. There were *Acts* under the Names of *Andrew* the Apoſtle, *Philip*, *Peter*, *Thomas*; a Goſpel under the Name of *Thaddeus*, another of *Barnabas*, another of *Bartholomew*; a Book concerning the Infancy of our Saviour, another concerning his Nativity, and many the like, which were all rejected as Forgeries.

2. Theſe Conſtitutions and Canons among the reſt were condemned in the primitive Church as apocryphal, and therefore juſtly rejected, becauſe, tho' otherwiſe good, they pretended to be what really they were not, dictated by the twelve Apoſtles themſelves as received from Chriſt. If Jeſus Chriſt gave them in ſuch Inſtructions, and they gave them in ſuch a ſolemn manner to the Church as is pretended, 'tis unaccountable that there is not the leaſt notice taken of any ſuch thing done or deſign'd in the Goſpels, the *Acts*, or any of the Epiſtles.

They that have judged the moſt favourably of thoſe Canons and Conſtitutions, have concluded that they were compiled by ſome officious Hands under the Name of *Clement*, towards the End of the ſecond Century, above 150 Years after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, out of the common Practice of the Churches, that is, that which the Compilers were moſt acquainted with, or had reſpect for; when at the ſame time we have reaſon to think, that the far greater Number of Chriſtian Churches, which by that time were planted, had Conſtitutions of their own, which, if they had had the Happineſs to be tranſmitted to Poſterity, would have recommended themſelves as well as theſe, or better. But as the Legiſlators of old put a Reputation upon their Laws, by pretending to have received them from ſome Deity or other, ſo Church Governors ſtudied to gain Reputation to their Sees, by placing ſome Apoſtolical Man or other at the Head of their Catalogue of Biſhops. (See Biſhop *Stillingfleet*'s *Irenic*. p. 302.) and Reputation to their Canons and Conſtitutions, by fathering them upon the Apoſtles.

But how can it be imagin'd that the Apoſtles ſhould be altogether at *Jeruſalem* to compoſe this Book of Canons with ſo much Solemnity, when we know that their Commiſſion was to go into all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature; and accordingly *Euſebius* tells us that *Thomas* went into *Parthia*, *Andrew* into *Scythia*, *John* into the leſſer *Aſia*; and we have reaſon to think, that after their Diſperſion they never came together again, any more than the Planters of the Nations did, after the moſt High had ſeparated the Sons of *Adam*.

And I think any one that will compare theſe Conſtitutions with the Writings, that we are ſure were given by Inſpiration of God, will eaſily diſcern a vaſt difference in the Stile and Spirit; what is the Chaff to the Wheat?

Edit. *Joan. Cler.* p. 245.

Where are Miniſters in the Stile of the true Apoſtles called Prieſts, High-Prieſts? Where do we find in the Apoſtolical Age, that Age of Suffering, of the placing of the Biſhop in his Throne? Or of Readers, Singers, and Porters in the Church?

I fear the Collector and Compiler of thoſe Conſtitutions under the Name of *Clement*, was conſcious to himſelf of Diſhoneſty in it, in that he would not have them publiſh'd before all, becauſe of the Myſteries contained in them; nor were they known or publiſhed till the middle of the fourth Century, when the Forgery could not be ſo well diſproved. I cannot ſee any Myſteries in them, that they ſhould be concealed, if they had been genuine; but am ſure Chriſt bids his Apoſtles publiſh the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God upon the Houſe-tops. And St. *Paul*, tho' there are Myſteries in his Epiſtles, much more ſublime than any of theſe Conſtitutions, chargeth, that they ſhould be read to all the holy Brethren: Nay, theſe Conſtitutions are ſo wholly in a manner taken up, either with moral Precepts or Rules of Practice in the Church, that if they had been what they pretend, they had been moſt fit to be publiſhed before all. And tho' the Apocalypſe is ſo full of Myſteries, yet a Bleſſing is pronounced upon the Readers and Hearers of that Prophecy. We muſt therefore conclude, that whenever they were written, by declining the Light, they own'd themſelves to be *apocriphal*, i. e. *hidden*, or *concealed*, that durſt not mingle themſelves with what was given by divine Inſpiration, to allude to what is ſaid of the Miniſters, *Acts* 5. 13. of the reſt durſt no Man join himſelf to the Apoſtles, for *the People magnified them*.

So that even by their own Confeſſion they were not delivered to the Churches with the other Writings, when the *New Teſtament* Canon was ſolemnly ſealed up with that dreadful Sentence paſt on thoſe that *add unto theſe Things*.

And as we have thus had Attempts made of late upon the Purity and Sufficiency of our *New Teſtament*, by Additions to it, ſo we have likewiſe had from another Quarter a great Contempt put upon it by the Papal Power. The Occaſion this:

One Father *Queſnel* a *French* Papiſt, but a *Janſeniſt*, near thirty Years ago publiſhed the *New Teſtament* in *French*, in ſeveral ſmall Volumes, with moral Reflections on every Verſe, to render the reading of it more profitable, and Meditation upon it more eaſy; 'twas much taken to in *France* for the ſake of the Piety and Devotion that appeared in it, and it had ſeveral Impreſſions; the Jeſuits were much diſguſted, and ſollicited the Pope for the Condemnation of it, tho' the Author of it was a Papiſt, and many Things in it countenance Popiſh Superſtition.

After much ſtruggling in the Court of *Rome* about it, a Bull was at length obtained at the Requeſt of the *French* King from the then Pope *Clement* XI. bearing Date *September* 8, 1713, by which the ſaid Book, with what Title, or in what Language ſoever it is printed, is prohibited and condemned, both the *New Teſtament* itſelf, becauſe in many things varying from the vulgar *Latin*, and the Annotations, as containing divers Propoſitions (above a hundred are enumerated) ſcandalous and pernicious, injurious to the Church and its Cuſtoms, impious, blaſphemous, ſavouring of Hereſy; and the Propoſitions are ſuch as theſe, that the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the effectual Principle of all manner of Good, is neceſſary for every good Action, for without it nothing is done, nay nothing can be done; that it is a ſovereign Grace, and is an Operation of the Almighty Hand of God; that when God accompanies his Word with the internal Power of his Grace, it operates in the Soul the Obedience which it demands; that Faith is the firſt Grace, and the Fountain of all others; that it is in vain for us to call God our Father, if we do not cry to him with a Spirit of Love; that there is no God nor Religion where there is no Charity; that the Catholick Church comprehends the Angels, and all the Elect, and juſt Men of the Earth, of all Ages; that it has the Word incarnate for its Head, and all the Saints for its Members; that it is profitable, and neceſſary at all Times, in all Places, and for all ſorts of Perſons to know the holy Scriptures; and that the holy Obſcurity of the Word of God is no reaſon for the Laity not reading it; and that the Lord's Day ought to be ſanctified by reading Books of Piety, eſpecially the holy Scriptures; and that to forbid Chriſtians from reading the Scriptures, is to prohibit the Uſe of Light to the Children of Light. Many ſuch Poſitions as theſe, which the Spirit of every good Chriſtian cannot but reliſh as true and good, are condemn'd by the Pope's Bull as impious and blaſphemous; and this Bull, tho' ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by a great Number of the Biſhops in *France*, who were well affected to the Notions of Father their *Queſnel*, yet was received and confirmed by the *French* King's Letters Patents, bearing Date at *Verſailles*, *February* 14, 1714, which forbid all manner of Perſons, upon pain of exemplary Puniſhment, ſo much as to keep any of thoſe Books in their Houſes, and adjudgeth any that ſhould hereafter write in Defence of the Propoſitions condemned by the Pope as Diſturbers of the Peace; it was regiſter'd the Day following, *February* 15, by the Parliament of *Paris*, but with divers Proviſo's and Limitations.

By this it appears that Popery is ſtill the ſame thing that ever it was, an Enemy to the Knowledge of the Scriptures, and to the Honour of divine Grace; and what reaſon we have to bleſs God that we have Liberty to read the Scriptures, and have Helps to underſtand and improve them, which we are concerned diligently to make a good Uſe of, that we may not provoke God to give us up into the Hands of thoſe Powers, who would uſe us in like manner.

I am willing to hope that thoſe to whom the reading of the Expoſitions of the *Old Teſtament* was pleaſant, will find this yet more pleaſant, for this is that Part of Scripture which doth moſt plainly teſtify of Chriſt, and in which that Goſpel Grace which appears to all Men, bringing Salvation, ſhines moſt clear; this is the *New Teſtament* Milk for Babes, the reſt is ſtrong Meat for ſtrong Men; by theſe therefore let us be nouriſhed and ſtrengthened, that we may be preſſing on towards Perfection; and that having laid the Foundation in the Hiſtory of our bleſſed Saviour's Life, Death, and Reſurrection, and the firſt preaching of his Goſpel, we may build upon it, by an Acquaintance with the Myſteries of Godlineſs, which we ſhall be further let into in the Epiſtles.

I deſire I may be read with a candid, and not a critical Eye; I pretend not to gratify the Curious, the top of my Ambition is to aſſiſt thoſe that are truly ſerious in ſearching the Scriptures daily; I am ſure it is deſigned, and hope it is calculated to promote Piety towards God, and Charity towards our Brethren; and that there is not only ſomething in it which may edify, but nothing which may juſtly offend any good Chriſtian.

If any receive ſpiritual Benefit by my poor Endeavours, it will be a Comfort to me, but let God have all the Glory; and that free Grace of his which has employ'd one that is utterly unworthy of ſuch an Honour, and enabled one thus far to go on in it, is utterly inſufficient for ſuch a Service.

Having obtained Help of God, I continue hitherto in it, and humbly depend upon the ſame good Hand of my God to carry me on in that which remains, to gird my Loins with needful Strength, and to make my Way perfect, and for this I humbly deſire the Prayers of my Friends. One Volume more, I hope, will include what is yet to be done, and I will both go about it, and go on with it, as God ſhall enable me, with all convenient Speed, but it is that Part of the Scripture which of all other requires the moſt Care and Pains in expounding it; but I truſt that as the Day ſo ſhall the Strength be.

M. H.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THat which has been offer'd juſt before to the Reader, was the Reverend Author's firſt Draught of a Preface to this Volume; he intended to reviſe it, if God had allow'd him a Return Home from his late Journey; but tho' by the afflicting Stroke of his ſudden Death it wants the Advantage of his laſt Hand, yet ſerious Readers will be well pleaſed to have his firſt Sentiments on thoſe important Heads which come there under his Conſideration, eſpecially ſince it contains his dying Teſtimony to the Chriſtian Religion, the Canon of the *New Teſtament*, and the general Uſefulneſs of the ſacred Scriptures, on occaſion of thoſe Debates which have been lately ſtarted, and have made the moſt conſiderable Noiſe in the World.

The Expoſition itſelf, as far as this Volume goes, was entirely committed to the Preſs before he left the City; the Reader will perceive his Intentions for the reſt of the holy Bible; but the Sovereign Providence of God, *in whoſe Hands our Times are*, has called this faithful and diligent Servant to reſt from his Labours, and finiſh well himſelf, before he could finiſh this, and ſeveral other great and pious Deſigns he had for the Service of God and his Church.

However, it may be acceptable to ſuch as have often entertained themſelves and their Families with what is already extant, to let them know that we are not without Hopes yet of ſeeing Mr. *Henry*'s Expoſition of the Remainder, tho' it cannot be expected to be altogether ſo copious and compleat as that which he prepared himſelf for the Publick. He drew up ſeveral Years ago an Expoſition of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, which he had deſign'd to tranſcribe with little Alteration for the beginning of his next Volume, and was earneſtly ſollicited to print it by itſelf, before he had Thoughts of writing upon the whole Bible; for the reſt, there are Copies of his Expoſitions, both in publick and private, taken from him by judicious Writers, wherein, tho' they may not be of equal Length, yet Mr. *Henry* was uſed to expreſs himſelf with like Propriety, the ſame pious Spirit, and uncommon Skill in the Scriptures. There is Encouragement to hope that the reviſing and preparing of theſe for the Preſs will be undertaken (if God give Life and Health) by an intimate Friend of the excellent Author, whoſe long Acquaintance with his Spirit and Way make him the moſt proper Perſon for that Service, and his endear'd Affection will incline him to take the Pains neceſſary for uſhering them into the World; this Courſe is apprehended much better, than either to leave ſuch a Work unfiniſh'd, when 'tis already advanced ſo far, or to attempt the Continuation of the Deſign with a quite different Set of Thoughts, and another ſort of Stile and Method, that it may be as much Mr. *Henry*'s as poſſible; but a reaſonable Time muſt be allow'd before this can be expected; I pray God long to ſpare the valuable Life of that dear Friend of the Author's, and every way furniſh him for this good Work, and all others he may undertake for the Good of God's Church.

9 OC 65

John Evans.

AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
Goſpel according to St. *MATTHEW.*
WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have now before us, 1. The New Teſtament of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; *ſo this* ſecond *Part of the holy Bible is entitled, The New* Covenant; *ſo it might as well be render'd; the Word ſignifies both: But when it is (as here) ſpoken of, as* Chriſt's Act and Deed, *'tis moſt properly render'd a* Teſtament, *for he is the* Teſtator, *and it becomes of* Force by his Death, *Heb.* 4. 16, 17. *Nor is there, as in Covenants, a previous Treaty between the Parties; but what is granted, tho' an Eſtate upon Condition, is owing to the Will, the Free-will, the Good-will of the* Teſtator; *ſo is all the Grace contained in this Book owing to* Jeſus Chriſt, *as* our Lord *and* Saviour; *and unleſs we conſent to him as* our Lord, *we cannot expect any Benefit by him as* our Saviour. *This is called a* New Teſtament *to diſtinguiſh it from that which was given by* Moſes, *and was now* antiquated, *and to ſignify that it ſhould be always new, and ſhould never wax old, and grow out of date. Theſe Books contain not only a* full Diſcovery *of that* Grace *which has* appeared to all Men, bringing Salvation, *but a* legal Inſtrument, *by which it is conveyed to and ſettled upon all Believers. How carefully do we preſerve, and with what Attention and Pleaſure do we read the laſt Will and Teſtament of a Friend that has by it left us a fair Eſtate, and with it high Expreſſions of his Love to us! How precious then ſhould this* Teſtament *of our* bleſſed Saviour *be to us, which ſecures to us all his* unſearchable Riches! *'Tis his Teſtament; for tho', as is uſual, 'twas written by others (we have nothing upon Record that was of Chriſt's own writing) yet he* dictated *it; and the Night before he died, in the Inſtitution of his Supper, ſign'd, ſeal'd, and publiſh'd it, in the Preſence of twelve Witneſſes: For tho' theſe Books were not written of ſome Years after, for the Benefit of Poſterity,* in perpetuam Rei memoriam, *yet the New Teſtament of our Lord Jeſus was ſettled, confirmed, and declared from the Time of his Death, as a* nuncupative Will, *with with which theſe Records exactly agree. The Things which St.* Luke *wrote were Things which were moſt* ſurely believed, *and therefore well known before he wrote them; but when they were written, the Oral Tradition was ſuperſeded and ſet aſide, and theſe* Writings *were the Repoſitory of that New Teſtament. And this is intimated by the Title which is prefix'd to many* Greek *Copies,* Τὰ καινῆς Διαθήκης Ἅπαντα, The Whole of the New Teſtament, *or* all the Things *of it; in it is declared* the whole Counſel of God *concerning our Salvation,* Acts 20. 27. *As* the Law of the Lord is perfect, *ſo is the Goſpel of Chriſt, and nothing is to be added to it; we have it all, and are to look for no more.*

2. *We have before us the four* Goſpels: Goſpel *ſignifies* good News, *or* glad Tidings; *and this Hiſtory of Chriſt's coming into the World to* ſave Sinners *is without doubt the beſt News that ever came from Heaven to Earth; the Angel gave it this Title,* Luke 2. 10. Εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν, I bring you good Tidings. *I bring the Goſpel to you. And the Prophet foretold it,* Iſa. 52. 7.---61. 1. *where 'tis foretold, that in the Days of the Meſſiah* good Tidings *ſhould be* preached. Goſpel *is an old* Saxon *Word, 'tis* God's Spell, *or* Word; *and* God *is ſo called becauſe he is* good, Deus optimus, *and therefore it may be* a good Spell *or* Word. *And if we take* Spell *in its more proper Signification, for a* Charm (Carmen) *and take that in a good Senſe for what is moving and affecting, which is apt* (lenire dolorem) *to calm the Spirits, or to raiſe them in Admiration or Love, as that which is very* amiable *we call* charming, *'tis applicable to the* Goſpel, *for in it the Charmer* charmeth wiſely, *tho' to* deaf Adders, *Pſal.* 58. 4, 5. *Nor (one would think) can any Charms be ſo powerful as thoſe of the Beauty and Love of our Redeemer. The whole* New Teſtament *is the* Goſpel: *St.* Paul *calls it his Goſpel, becauſe he was one of the Preachers of it. Oh, that we may each of us make it* ours, *by our cordial Acceptance of it, and Subjection to it! But the four Books which contain the Hiſtory of the Redeemer, we commonly call the* four Goſpels, *and the inſpired Penmen of them,* Evangeliſts, *or* Goſpel-writers, *but not very properly, becauſe that Title belongs to a particular Order of Miniſters that were Aſſiſtants to the Apoſtles,* Eph. 4. 11. He gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Evangeliſts. *It was requiſite that the Doctrine of Chriſt ſhould be interwoven with and founded upon the Narrative of his Birth, Life, Miracles, Death and Reſurrection, for then it appears in its cleareſt and ſtrongeſt Light. As in Nature, ſo in Grace, the moſt happy Diſcoveries are thoſe which take Riſe from the certain Repreſentations of Matters of Fact: Natural Hiſtory is the beſt Philoſophy, and ſo is the* ſacred Hiſtory, *both of the Old and New Teſtament, the moſt proper and grateful Vehicle of* ſacred Truth. *Theſe* four Goſpels *were early and conſtantly received by the primitive Church, and read in Chriſtian Aſſemblies, as appears by the Writings of* Juſtin Martyr *and* Irenæus, *who lived little more than an hundred Years after the Aſcenſion of Chriſt; they declare there were neither more nor fewer than four received by the Church: And there was a Harmony of theſe four Evangeliſts compiled by* Tatianus *about that Time, which he*

called Τὸ διὰ τεσσάρων, *the* Goſpel out of the four. *In the third and fourth Centuries there were Goſpels forged by divers Sects and publiſhed, one under the Name of St.* Peter, *another of St.* Thomas, *another of St.* Philip, *&c. but they were never own'd by the Church, nor any Credit given to them, as the learned Dr.* Whitby *ſhews; and he gives this good Reaſon why we ſhould adhere to theſe written* Records, *becauſe, whatever the Pretences of Tradition may be, it is not ſufficient to preſerve Things with any* Certainty, *as appears by* Experience; *for whereas Chriſt ſaid and did many Things memorable which* were not written, John 20. 30.—21. 25. *Tradition has not preſerved any one of them to us, but all is loſt, except what was written; that therefore is it we muſt abide by, and bleſſed be* God *that we have it to* abide by; *'tis the* ſure Word *of Hiſtory.*

3. *We have before us* the Goſpel according to St. Matthew. *The Penman was by Birth a* Jew, *by Calling a Publican, till Chriſt commanded his Attendance, and then he left the Receipt of Cuſtom to follow him, and was one of thoſe that accompanied him* all the Time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out, beginning from the Baptiſm of John, unto the Day that he was taken up, *Acts* 1. 21, 22. *and was therefore a competent Witneſs of what he has here recorded; he is ſaid to have written this Hiſtory about eight Years after Chriſt's Aſcenſion; many of the Ancients ſay he wrote it in the* Hebrew *or* Syriack Language, *but the Tradition is ſufficiently diſproved by Dr.* Whitby; *doubtleſs it was written in* Greek, *as the other Parts of the New Teſtament were, not in that Language which was peculiar to the* Jews, *whoſe Church and State were near a* Period, *but that which was common to the World, and in which the Knowledge of Chriſt would be moſt effectually tranſmitted to the Nations of the Earth; yet 'tis probable there might be an Edition of it in* Hebrew, *publiſhed by St.* Matthew *himſelf, at the ſame time that he wrote it in* Greek, *the former for the* Jews, *the latter for the* Gentiles, *when he left* Judea *to go preach among the* Gentiles; *let us bleſs God that we have it, and have it in a* Language *we underſtand.*

CHAP. I.

This Evangeliſt begins with the Account of Chriſt's Parentage and Birth, his Anceſtors from whom he deſcended, and the Manner of his Entry into the World, to make it appear that he was indeed the Meſſiah *promiſed; for it was foretold that he ſhould be the Son of* David, *and ſhould be* born of a Virgin; *and that he was ſo is here plainly ſhewn. For here is* (1.) *His Pedigree from* Abraham, *in forty-two Generations, three Fourteens,* v. 1.–17. (2.) *An Account of the Circumſtances of his Birth, ſo far as was requiſite to ſhew that he was born of a Virgin,* v. 18.—25. *Thus* methodically *is the Life of our bleſſed Saviour written, as Lives ſhould be written, for the clearer propoſing of the Example of them.*

THE Book of the generation of Jeſus Chriſt, the ſon of David, the ſon of Abraham. 2 Abraham begat Iſaac, and Iſaac begat Jacob, and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren. 3 And Judas begat Pharez and Zara of Thamar, and Pharez begat Eſrom, and Eſrom begat Aram. 4 And Aram begat Aminadab, and Aminadab begat Naaſſon, and Naaſſon begat Salmon. 5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab, and Booz begat Obed of Ruth, and Obed begat Jeſſe. 6 And Jeſſe begat David the King, and David the King begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias. 7 And Solomon begat Roboam, and Roboam begat Abia, and Abia begat Aſa. 8 And Aſa begat Joſaphat, and Joſaphat begat Joram, and Joram begat Ozias. 9 And Ozias begat Joatham, and Joatham begat Achaz, and Achaz begat Ezekias. 10 And Ezekias begat Manaſſes, and Manaſſes begat Amon, and Amon begat Joſias. 11 And Joſias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon. 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel, and Salathiel begat Zorobabel. 13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud, and Abiud begat Eliakim, and Eliakim begat Azor. 14 And Azor begat Sadoc, and Sadoc begat Achim, and Achim begat Eliud. 15 And Eliud begat Eleazar, and Eleazar begat Matthan, and Matthan begat Jacob. 16 And Jacob begat Joſeph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jeſus, who was called Chriſt. 17 So all the generations from Abraham to David, *are* fourteen generations: and from David until the carrying away into Babylon, *are* fourteen generations: and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Chriſt, *are* fourteen generations.

Concerning this Genealogy of our Saviour, obſerve,

1. The Title of it; it is *the Book,* (or, the *Account,* as the *Hebrew* Word *Sepher,* a *Book,* ſometimes ſignifies) *of the Generation of Jeſus Chriſt,* of his Anceſtors according to the Fleſh; or, it is the Narrative of his Birth; 'tis Βιϐλος Γενέσεως, a *Book of Geneſis.* The Old Teſtament begins with the Book of the Generation of the World, and it is its Glory that it doth ſo; but the Glory of the New Teſtament herein excelleth, that it begins with the Book of the Generation of him that made the World. As God, *his Out-goings were of old from everlaſting,* Mic. 5. 2. and none can declare that Generation. But as Man, he was ſent forth in the Fulneſs of Time, born of a Woman, and it is that Generation which is here declared.

2. The principal Intention of it. 'Tis not an *endleſs* or needleſs *Genealogy*; 'tis not a vain-glorious one, as thoſe of great Men commonly are. *Stemmata quid faciunt?* 'Tis like a Pedigree given in Evidence to prove a Title, and make out a Claim; the Deſign is to make it out that our Lord Jeſus is the *Son of David,* and the *Son of Abraham,* and therefore of that *Nation* and *Family,* out of which the Meſſiah was to ariſe. *Abraham* and *David* were in their Day the great Truſtees of the Promiſe relating to the Meſſiah; the Promiſe of the Bleſſing was made to *Abraham and his Seed,* of the Dominion to *David and his Seed.* And thoſe that will have an Intereſt in Chriſt as the Son of *Abraham,* in whom *all the Families of the Earth* are to be *bleſſed,* muſt be faithful loyal Subjects to him as the Son of *David,* by whom *all the Families of the Earth* are to be *ruled.* 'Twas promiſed to *Abraham* that Chriſt ſhould deſcend from him, *Gen.* 12. 3.—22. 18. And to *David* that he ſhould deſcend from him, 2 *Sam.* 7. 12. *Pſal.* 89. 3, &c. — 132. 11. And therefore unleſs it can be proved that Jeſus is a Son of *David,* and a Son of *Abraham,* we cannot admit him to be the *Meſſiah.* Now this is here proved from the authentick Records of the Heralds Offices. The *Jews* were very exact in preſerving their Pedigrees, and there was a Providence in it, for the clearing up of the Deſcent of the Meſſiah from *the Fathers*; and ſince his coming that Nation is ſo diſperſed and confounded, that 'tis a Queſtion whether any Perſon in the World can legally prove himſelf to be a Son of *Abraham*; however 'tis certain there's none can prove himſelf to be either a Son of *Aaron* or a Son of *David,* ſo that the Prieſtly and Kingly Office muſt be either given up as loſt for ever, or be lodged in the Hands of our Lord Jeſus. Chriſt is here firſt called the *Son of David,* becauſe under that Title he was commonly ſpoken of and expected among the *Jews.* Thoſe that own'd him to be *the Chriſt* call'd him the *Son of David,* Matt. 15. 22. 20. 31.—21. 15. This therefore the Evangeliſt undertakes to make out, that he is not only a *Son of David,* but *that* Son of *David,* on whoſe *Shoulders* the *Government* was *to be*; not only a Son of *Abraham,* but *that* Son of *Abraham* that was to be the Father of many Nations.

In calling Chriſt the Son of *David,* and the Son of *Abraham,* he ſhews, that *God is faithful* to his Promiſe, and will make good every Word that he hath ſpoken. And this (1.) tho' the Performance be long *deferr'd.* When God promiſed *Abraham* a Son that ſhould be the great Bleſſing of the World, perhaps he expected it ſhould be his immediate Son, but it proved to be one at the diſtance of forty two Generations, and about two thouſand Years; ſo long before can God *foretel* what ſhall be *done,* and ſo long *after* ſometimes doth God *fulfil* what has been *promiſed. Note,* Delays of promiſed Mercies, tho' they exerciſe our Patience, do not weaken God's Promiſe. (2.) tho' it begin to be deſpair'd of. This Son of *David,* and Son of *Abraham,* that was to be the Glory of his Father's Houſe, was born then, when the Seed of *Abraham* was a deſpiſed People, newly become Tributaries to the *Roman* Yoke, and the Houſe of *David* buried in Obſcurity; for Chriſt was to be a *Root out of a dry Ground. Note,* God's Time for the Performance of his Promiſes is when it labours under the greateſt Improbabilities.

3. The particular Series of it, drawn in a direct line from *Abraham* downwards, according to the Genealogies recorded in the Beginning of the Books of *Chronicles*, as far as thoſe go, and which here we ſee the Uſe of.

Some Particulars we may obſerve in this Genealogy.

1. Among the Anceſtors of Chriſt that had Brethren, generally he deſcended from a younger Brother; ſo *Abraham* himſelf was, and *Jacob*, and *Judah*, and *David*, and *Nathan*, and *Rheſa*, to ſhew, that the Preheminence of Chriſt came not as that of earthly Princes from the Primogeniture of his Anceſtors, but from the *Will of God*, who according to the Method of his Providence, *exalteth them of low Degree*, and puts *more abundant Honour* upon *that part which lacked*.

2. Among the Sons of *Jacob*, beſides *Judah*, from whom *Shiloh* came, here's notice taken of *his Brethren*; *Judas* and *his Brethren*: No mention is made of *Iſhmael* the Son of *Abraham*, or of *Eſau* the Son of *Iſaac*, becauſe they were ſhut out of the Church; whereas all the Children of *Jacob* were taken in, and tho' not Fathers of Chriſt, yet were *Patriarchs* of the Church, *Acts* 7. 8. and therefore are mentioned in this Genealogy for the Encouragement of the *twelve Tribes* that were *ſcatter'd abroad*, intimating to them that they have an Intereſt in Chriſt, and ſtand in Relation to him as well as *Judah*.

3. *Pharez* and *Zara*, the Twin-ſons of *Judah*, are likewiſe both nam'd, tho' *Pharez* only was Chriſt's Anceſtor, for the ſame reaſon that the Brethren of *Judah* are taken notice of; and ſome think, becauſe the Birth of *Pharez* and *Zara* had ſomething of Allegory in it; *Zara* put out his Hand firſt, as the firſt-born, but drawing it in, *Pharez* got the Birthright. The *Jewiſh* Church, like *Zara*, reach'd firſt at the Birthright, but thro' Unbelief withdrawing the Hand, the *Gentile* Church, like *Pharez*, broke forth, and went away with the Birthright; and thus *Blindneſs is in part happen'd unto Iſrael*, till the Fulneſs of the *Gentiles* be come in, and then *Zara* ſhall be born, *all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved*, Rom. 11. 25, 26.

4. There are *four Women*, and but four, named in this Genealogy; two of them were originally Strangers to the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, *Rahab* a *Canaaniteſs*, and a *Harlot* beſides, and *Ruth* the *Moabiteſs*; for *in Jeſus Chriſt there is neither Greek nor Jew*: Thoſe that are *Strangers and Foreigners* are welcome in Chriſt to the *Citizenſhip of the Saints*. The other two were *Adultereſſes*, *Tamar* and *Bathſheba*, which was a further Mark of Humiliation put upon our Lord Jeſus, that not only he deſcended from ſuch, but that his Deſcent from them is particularly remark'd in his Genealogy, and no Veil drawn over it. He took upon him *the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. and takes even great Sinners, upon their Repentance, into the neareſt Relations to himſelf. *Note*, We ought not to upbraid People with the Scandals of their Anceſtors, 'tis what they cannot help, and has been the Lot of the beſt, even our Maſter himſelf. *David*'s begetting *Solomon of her that had been the Wife of Uriah* is taken notice of (ſaith Dr. *Whitby*) to ſhew, that that Crime of *David* being repented of, was ſo far from hindering the Promiſe made to him, that it pleaſed God by this very Woman to fulfil it.

5. Tho' divers Kings are here named, yet none is expreſly called a King but *David*, v. 6. *David the King*, becauſe with him the Covenant of Royalty was made, and to him the Promiſe of the Kingdom of the Meſſiah was given, who is therefore ſaid to inherit the *Throne of his Father David*, Luke 1. 32.

6. In the Pedigree of the Kings of *Judah*, between *Joram* and *Ozias*, v. 8. there are three left out, *viz. Ahaziah*, *Joaſh*, and *Amaziah*; and therefore when it is ſaid, *Joram begat Ozias*, 'tis meant, according to the Uſage of the *Hebrew* Tongue, that *Ozias* was lineally deſcended from him, as 'tis ſaid to *Hezekiah*, that the Sons *which he ſhould beget* ſhould be carried to *Babylon*, whereas they were removed ſeveral Generations from him. It was not thro' Miſtake or Forgetfulneſs that theſe three were omitted, but probably they were omitted in the Genealogical Tables that the Evangeliſt conſulted, which yet were admitted for authentick. Some give this reaſon for it: It being *Matthew*'s Deſign for Memory's ſake to reduce the Number of Chriſt's Anceſtors to 3 fourteens, it was requiſite that in this Period *three* ſhould be *left out*, and none more fit than they who were the immediate Progeny of curſed *Athaliah*, who introduc'd the Idolatry of *Ahab* into the Houſe of *David*, for which this Brand is ſet upon the Family, and the Iniquity thus viſited *to the third and fourth Generation*. Two of theſe three were Apoſtates, and ſuch God commonly ſets a Mark of his Diſpleaſure upon in this World; they all three had their Heads brought to the Grave with Blood.

7. Some obſerve what a Mixture there was of Good and Bad in the Succeſſion of theſe Kings; as for Inſtance, *v.* 7, 8. wicked *Rehoboam* begat wicked *Abia*, wicked *Abia* begat good *Aſa*, good *Aſa* begat good *Jehoſaphat*, good *Jehoſaphat* begat wicked *Joram*. Grace doth not run in a Blood, nor reigning Sin neither. God's Grace is his own, and he gives or with-holds it as he pleaſeth.

8. The Captivity in *Babylon* is mention'd as a remarkable Period in this Line, *v.* 11, 12. All things conſidered, it was a Wonder the *Jews* were not loſt in that Captivity, as other Nations were: But this intimates the reaſon why the Streams of that People were kept to run pure thro' that dead Sea, becauſe from them, *as concerning the Fleſh, Chriſt* was to *come*; deſtroy it not, for a Bleſſing is in it, even that Bleſſing of Bleſſings, Chriſt himſelf, *Iſa.* 65. 8, 9. 'Twas with an eye to him that they were reſtored, and the Deſolations of the Sanctuary were look'd upon with Favour *for the Lord's ſake*, Dan. 9. 17.

9. *Joſias* is here ſaid to beget *Jechonias and his Brethren*, v. 11. where by *Jechonias* is meant *Jehoiakim*, who was the Firſt-born of *Joſias*; but when it is ſaid, *v.* 12. that *Jechonias* begat *Salathiel*, that *Jechonias* was the Son of that *Jehoiakim* who was carried into *Babylon*, and there begat *Salathiel*, as Dr. *Whitby* ſhews. And when *Jechonias* is ſaid to have been *written childleſs*, Jer. 22. 30. 'tis explained thus, *No Man of his Seed ſhall proſper*. *Salathiel* is ſaid here to beget *Zerubbabel*, whereas *Salathiel* begat *Pedaiah*, and he begat *Zerubbabel*, 1 Chron. 3. 19. but, as before, the Grandſon is often called the Son; *Pedaiah* 'tis likely died in his Father's Life-time, and ſo his Son *Zerubbabel* was called the Son of *Salathiel*.

10. The Line is brought down, not to *Mary* the Mother of our Lord, but to *Joſeph*, the *Husband of Mary*, v. 16. for the *Jews* always reckoned their Genealogies by the Males; yet *Mary* was of the ſame Tribe and Family with *Joſeph*, ſo that both by the *Mother*, and by his ſuppoſed Father, he was of the Houſe of *David*; yet his Intereſt in that Dignity is derived by *Joſeph*, to whom really, according to the Fleſh, he had no Relation, to ſhew that the Kingdom of the Meſſias is not founded in a natural Deſcent from *David*.

11. The Center, in whom all theſe Lines meet, is *Jeſus*, *who is called Chriſt*, v. 16. this is he that was ſo importunately deſired, ſo impatiently expected, and whom the Patriarchs had an eye to when they were ſo deſirous of Children, that they might have the Honour of coming into the ſacred Line. Bleſſed be God we are not now in ſuch a dark and cloudy State of Expectation as they were then in, but ſee *clearly* what theſe Prophets and Kings ſaw as thorough a Glaſs *darkly*. And we may have, if it be not our own fault, a greater Honour than that of which they were ſo ambitious; for they that do the Will of God are in a more honourable Relation to Chriſt, than thoſe that were a-kin to him according to the Fleſh, *Matt.* 12. 50. *Jeſus* is called *Chriſt*, that is, the *Anointed*, the ſame with the *Hebrew* Name *Meſſias*. He is called *Meſſiah the Prince*, Dan. 4. 25. and often God's *Anointed*, Pſal. 2. 2. Under this Character he was expected: *Art thou the Chriſt?* the *anointed One*. *David* the King was anointed, 1 *Sam.* 16. 13. ſo was *Aaron* the Prieſt, *Lev.* 8. 12. and *Eliſha* the Prophet, 1 *Kings* 19. 16. and *Iſaiah* the Prophet, *Iſa.* 61. 1. Chriſt being appointed to and qualified for all theſe Offices, he is therefore called the *Anointed*, *anointed with the Oil of Gladneſs above his Fellows*. And from this Name of his, which is as Ointment poured forth, all his Followers are called *Chriſtians*, for they alſo have received the Anointing.

Laſtly, The general Summary of all this Genealogy we have, *v.* 17 where it is ſumm'd up in *three Fourteens*, ſignalized by remarkable Periods. In the firſt Fourteen we have the Family of *David* riſing, and looking forth as the Morning; in the ſecond we have it flouriſhing in its meridian Luſtre; in the third we have it declining, and growing leſs and leſs, dwindled into the Family of a poor Carpenter, and then Chriſt *ſhines forth* out of it, the *Glory of his People Iſrael*.

18 Now the birth of Jeſus Chriſt was on this wiſe: When as his mother Mary was eſpouſed to Joſeph, before they came together, ſhe was found with child of the holy Ghoſt. 19 Then Joſeph her husband being a juſt man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on theſe things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, ſaying, Joſeph, thou Son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her, is of the holy Ghoſt. 21 And ſhe ſhall bring forth a ſon, and thou ſhalt call his name Jeſus: for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins. 22 (Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the Lord by the prophet, ſaying, 23 Behold, a virgin ſhall be with child, and ſhall bring forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us.) 24 Then Joſeph being raiſed from ſleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till ſhe had brought forth her firſt-born ſon; and he called his name Jeſus.

The Myſtery of Chriſt's Incarnation is to be ador'd, not pry'd into; if we *know not the way of the Spirit* in the Formation of common Perſons, nor *how the Bones are form'd in the Womb of* any one *that is with Child* (Eccl. 11. 5.) much leſs do we know how the bleſſed Jeſus was formed in the Womb of the bleſſed Virgin. When *David* admires how he himſelf was *made in ſecret* and *curiouſly wrought*, Pſal. 139. 13, 14, 15, 16. perhaps he ſpeaks in Spirit of Chriſt's Incarnation. Some Circumſtances attending the Birth of Chriſt we find here that are not in *Luke*, tho' 'tis more largely recorded there. Here's

1. *Mary*'s Eſpouſals to *Joſeph*. *Mary* the Mother of our Lord was *eſpouſed to Joſeph*, not compleatly married, but contracted; a Purpoſe of Marriage ſolemnly declared in Words *de futuro*, and a Promiſe of it made, if God permit. We read of a Man that *has betrothed a Wife, and has not taken her*, Deut. 20. 5. Chriſt was born of a Virgin, but a contracted Virgin, (1.) To put Reſpect upon the marry'd State, and to recommend it as *honorable among all*, againſt that

Doctrine of Devils, which *forbiddeth to marry*, and placeth Perfection in the ſingle State. Who more *highly favour'd* than *Mary* was in her Eſpouſals? (2.) To ſave the Credit of the bleſſed Virgin, which otherwiſe would have been expoſed? 'Twas fit her Conception ſhould be protected by a Marriage,and ſo juſtified in the Eye of the World. One of the Ancients ſaith, 'Twas better it ſhould be ask'd, Is not this the *Son of a Carpenter?* than, Is not this the *Son of a Harlot?* (3.) That the bleſſed Virgin might have one to be the Guide of her Youth, the Companion of her Solitudes and Travels, a Partner in her Cares, and a Help-meet for her. Some think *Joſeph* was now a Widower, and that thoſe who are call'd the *Brethren of Chriſt*, Matt. 13. 55. were *Joſeph*'s Children by a former Wife. This is the Conjecture of many of the Ancients. *Joſeph* was a *juſt Man*, ſhe a *virtuous Woman*. Thoſe that are *Believers* ſhould not be *unequally yoked with Unbelievers*; but let thoſe that are religious chuſe to marry with thoſe that are ſo, as they expect the Comfort of the Relation, and God's Bleſſing upon them in it. We may alſo learn from this Example, that it is good to enter into the married State with Deliberation, and not haſtily; to preface the Nuptials with a Contract: 'Tis better take Time to conſider before, than find Time to repent after.

2. Her Pregnancy of the promiſed Seed. *Before they came together* ſhe *was found with Child*, which really was *of the Holy Ghoſt*. The Marriage was deferr'd ſo long after the Contract, that ſhe appear'd to be *with Child* before the Time came for the ſolemnizing of the Marriage, tho' ſhe was contracted before ſhe conceived. Probably 'twas after her Return from her Couſin *Elizabeth*, with whom ſhe continued *three Months*, (*Luke* 1. 56.) that ſhe was perceived by *Joſeph* to be with Child, and did not herſelf deny it. *Note*, Thoſe in whom Chriſt is form'd will ſhew it: It will be *found to be* a Work of God, which he will own. Now we may well imagine what a Perplexity this might juſtly be an Occaſion of to the bleſſed Virgin: She herſelf knew the divine Original of this Conception; but how could ſhe prove it? She would be *dealt with as with a Harlot. Note*, After great and high Advancements, leſt we ſhould be puffed up with them, we muſt expect ſomething or other to humble us; ſome Reproach as *a Thorn in the Fleſh*, nay, as *a Sword in the Bones*. Never was any Daughter of *Eve* ſo dignified as the Virgin *Mary* was, and yet in danger of falling under the Imputation of one of the worſt of Crimes; yet we find not that ſhe tormented herſelf about it, but being conſcious of her own Innocency, kept her Mind calm and eaſy, and committed her Cauſe *to him that judgeth righteouſly*. *Note*, Thoſe who take care to keep a good Conſcience, may chearfully truſt God with the keeping of their good Names, and have reaſon to hope that he will clear up, not only their Integrity, but their Honour as the Sun at Noon-day.

3. *Joſeph's* Perplexity, and his Care what to do in this Caſe. We may well imagine what a great Trouble and Diſappointment it was to him, to find one he had ſuch an Opinion of, and Value for, come under the Suſpicion of ſuch a heinous Crime. *Is this Mary?* He began to think, how may we be deceiv'd in thoſe we think beſt of! How may we be diſappointed in that we expect moſt from! He is loth to believe *ſo ill a thing* of one he believ'd *ſo good a Woman*; and yet the Matter, as it is too bad to be excus'd, ſo 'tis too plain to be denied. What a Struggle doth this occaſion in his Breaſt, between that Jealouſy, which is the Rage of Man, and is cruel as the Grave, on one hand; and that Affection which he has for *Mary*, on the other hand.

Obſerve 1. The *Extremity* which he *ſtudied to avoid*: He was *not willing to make her a publick Example*. He might have done it; for by the Law a *betrothed Virgin*, if ſhe play the Harlot, was to be ſtoned to death, *Deut.* 22. 23, 24. But he *was not willing* to take the Advantage of the Law againſt her; if ſhe be guilty, yet it is not known, nor ſhall it be known for him. How unlike was the Spirit of *Joſeph* here to that of *Judah*, who in ſuch a Caſe haſtily paſſed that ſevere Sentence, *Bring her forth and let her be burnt*, Gen. 38. 24. How good is it to *think on Things*, as *Joſeph* did here. Were there more of Deliberation in our Cenſures and Judgments, there would be more of Mercy and Moderation in them. Bringing her to Puniſhment is here called *making her a publick Example*; which ſhews what is the End to be aimed at in Puniſhments, which is, the giving of Warning to others; 'tis *in terrorem*, that all about may hear and fear. *Smite the Scorner, and the Simple will beware.*

Some that have Rigour in their Temper would blame *Joſeph* for his Clemency, but it is here ſpoken of to his Praiſe; becauſe *he was a juſt Man*, therefore he was not willing to expoſe her. He was a *religious good Man*, and therefore inclined to be merciful as God is, and to *forgive* as one that was *forgiven*. In the Caſe of a betrothed Damſel, if ſhe were lain with in the Field, the Law charitably ſuppoſed that ſhe *cried out*, Deut. 22. 26. and ſhe was not to be puniſhed. And ſome charitable Conſtruction or other *Joſeph* will put upon this Matter, and herein he is a *juſt Man*, tender of the good Name of one that never before had done any thing to blemiſh it. *Note*, It becomes us in many Caſes to be gentle towards thoſe that come under Suſpicion of having offended, to hope the beſt concerning them, and make the beſt of that which at firſt appears bad, in hopes it may prove better. *Summam Jus* is ſometimes *ſumma Injuria*. That Court of Conſcience which moderates the Rigour of the Law, we call a *Court of Equity*: Thoſe that are found faulty, perhaps were *overtaken in the Fault*, and therefore to be *reſtored with the Spirit of Meekneſs*; and *Threatning* when juſt muſt be *moderated*.

2. The *Expedient* he found out for the avoiding of his Extremity. He was *minded to put her away privily*, i. e. to give her a Bill of Divorce into her Hand, before two Witneſſes, and ſo to huſh up the Matter among themſelves. Being a *juſt Man*, i. e. a ſtrict Obſerver of the Law, he would not proceed to marry her, but reſolved to *put her away*, and yet in Tenderneſs for her, he determined to do it with all the Privacy that might be. *Note*, The neceſſary Cenſures of thoſe that have offended ought to be managed without Noiſe. *The Words of the Wiſe are heard in quiet.* Chriſt himſelf *ſhall not ſtrive or cry*. Chriſtian Love and Chriſtian Prudence will *hide a Multitude of Sins*, and great ones, as far as may be done without having Fellowſhip with them.

4. *Joſeph's* Diſcharge from this Perplexity by an Expreſs ſent from Heaven, *v.* 20, 21. *While he thought on theſe things*, and knew not what to determine, *God* graciouſly directed him what to do, and made him eaſy. *Note*, Thoſe that would have Direction from God, muſt *think on things* themſelves, and conſult with themſelves. They are the *thoughtful*, not the *unthinking*, that God will guide. When he was at a loſs, and had carried the Matter as far as he could in his own Thoughts, then God came in with Advice. *Note*, God's Time to come in with Inſtruction to his People, is when they are *non-plus'd*, and at a Plunge in themſelves. God's Comforts moſt delight the Soul *in the Multitude* of its perplexed *Thoughts*.

The Meſſage was ſent to *Joſeph* by an *Angel of the Lord*; probably the ſame Angel that brought to *Mary* the Tidings of the Conception, the Angel *Gabriel*. Now the Commerce with Heaven by Angels, which the Patriarchs had been dignified with, but had been long diſuſed, begins to be revived; for when the *Firſt-begotten* is to be *brought into the World*, the Angels are order'd to attend his Motions. How far God may now in an inviſible way make uſe of the Miniſtration of Angels, for the extricating of his People out of their Straits, we cannot ſay, but this we are ſure of, they are all *miniſtring Spirits* for their Good. This Angel appeared to *Joſeph in a Dream*, when he was aſleep, as God ſometimes ſpake unto the Fathers. When we are moſt quiet and compos'd we are in the beſt Frame to receive the Notices of the divine Will. The Spirit moveth on the calm Waters. This Dream no doubt carried its own Evidence along with it, that it was of God, and not the Product of a vain Fancy.

Now (1.) *Joſeph* is here directed to proceed in his intended Marriage. The Angel calls him, *Joſeph, thou Son of David*; puts him in mind of his Relation to *David*, that he might be prepared to receive this ſurpriſing Intelligence of his Relation to the Meſſiah, who every one knew was to be a Deſcendant from *David*. Sometimes when great Honours devolve upon thoſe that have ſmall Eſtates, they care not for accepting them, but are willing to drop them; 'twas therefore requiſite to put this poor Carpenter in mind of his high Birth. Value thyſelf, *Joſeph*, thou art that *Son of David* thro' whom the Line of the Meſſiah is to be drawn. We may thus ſay to every true Believer, Fear not, thou Son of *Abraham*, thou Child of God; forget not the Dignity of thy Birth, thy new Birth. *Fear not to take Mary for thy Wife*; ſo it may be read. *Joſeph* ſuſpecting ſhe was with Child by Whoredom, was afraid of *taking her*, leſt he ſhould bring upon himſelf either Guilt or Reproach: No, ſaith God, *fear not*; the Matter is not ſo. Perhaps *Mary* had told him that ſhe was with Child by the Holy Ghoſt, and he might have heard what *Elizabeth* ſaid to her, *Luke* 1. 47. when ſhe called her the *Mother of her Lord*; and if this were ſo, he was afraid of Preſumption in marrying one ſo much above him: But whenceſoever his Fears aroſe, they were all ſilenc'd with this Word, *fear not to take unto thee Mary thy Wife*. *Note*, It is a great Mercy to be delivered from ones Fears, and to have our Doubts reſolved, ſo as to proceed in our Affairs with Satisfaction.

(2.) He is here *informed* concerning that *holy Thing* which his eſpouſed Wife was now *with Child* of. That which is conceived in her is of a divine Original. He is ſo far from being in danger of ſharing in any Impunity by marrying her, that he will thereby ſhare in the higheſt Dignity he is capable of. Two things he is told,

1. That ſhe had conceived *by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt*, not by the Power of Nature. The holy Spirit that produced the World, now produced the Saviour of the World, and *prepared him a Body*, as was promiſed him, when he ſaid, *Lo I come*, Heb. 10. 5. Hence he is ſaid to be *made of a Woman*, Gal. 4. 4. and yet to be that ſecond *Adam* that is the *Lord from Heaven*, 1 Cor. 15. 47. He is the *Son of God*, and yet ſo far partakes of the Subſtance of his Mother, as to be called *the Fruit of her Womb*, Luke 1. 42. 'Twas requiſite that his Conception ſhould be otherwiſe than by ordinary *Generation*, that ſo tho' he did participate of the human Nature, yet he might eſcape the Corruption and Pollution of it, and not be *conceived* and *ſhapen* in Iniquity. Hiſtories tell us of ſome who vainly pretended to have conceived by a divine Power, as the Mother of *Alexander*, but never any really did ſo, before the Mother of our Lord. His Name in this, as in other things, is *Wonderful*. We do not read that the Virgin *Mary* did herſelf proclaim the Honour done her, but hid it in her Heart, and therefore God ſent an Angel to atteſt it. Thoſe that ſeek not their own Glory, ſhall have the Honour that comes from God; 'tis reſerved for the Humble.

2. That ſhe ſhould bring forth *the Saviour of the World*, v. 21. *She ſhall bring forth a Son*; what he ſhall be is intimated. 1. In the Name that ſhould be given to her Son, Thou ſhalt call his Name *Jeſus*, a *Saviour*. *Jeſus* is the ſame Name with *Joſhua*, the Termination only made more *pliable* to the *Greek*. *Joſhua* is called *Jeſus*, *Acts* 7. 25. *Heb.* 4. 8. from the Seventy. There were two of that

Name under the Old Teſtament, that were both of them illuſtrious Types of Chriſt; *Joſhua* that was *Iſrae'ls* Captain at their firſt Settlement in *Canaan*, and *Joſhua* that was their High-prieſt at their ſecond Settlement after the Captivity, *Zech.* 6. 11, 12. Chriſt is our *Joſhua*, both the *Captain of our Salvation*, and the *High-preiſt of our Porfeſſion*, and in both our Saviour; a *Joſhua* that comes in the ſtead of *Moſes*, and doth that for us which *the Law could not do, in that it was weak. Joſhua* had been call'd *Hoſhea*, but *Moſes* prefix'd the firſt Syllable of the Name *Jehovah*, and ſo made it *Jehoſhua*, *Num.* 13 16. to intimate that the *Meſſiah*, who was to bear that Name, ſhould be *Jehovah*; he is therefore *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*, neither is their *Salvation in any other*.

2. In the Reaſon of that Name; *for he ſhall ſave his People from their Sins*; not the Nation of the *Jews* only, he came to his *own*, and they *received him not*; but all that were given him by the *Father's Choice*, and all that have given themſelves to him by *their own*. He is a King that *protects* his Subjects, and as the Judges of *Iſrael* of old, *works Salvation* for them. *Note*, thoſe whom Chriſt ſaves he ſaves *from their Sins*; from the Guilt of Sin by the *Merit of his Death*, from the Dominion of Sin by the *Spirit of his Grace*. In ſaving them from Sin he ſaves them from Wrath and the Curſe, and all Miſery here and hereafter. Chriſt came not to ſave his People *in their Sins*, but *from* their Sins, to purchaſe for them, not a Liberty *to ſin*, but a Liberty *from Sins*, to *redeem them from all Iniquity*, Tit. 2. 14. and ſo to redeem them *from among Men*, Rev. 14. 4. to himſelf, who is *ſeparate from Sinners*. So that thoſe who leave their Sins, and give up themſelves to Chriſt as *his People*, are intereſted in the Saviour, and the great Salvation he has *wrought out*, Rom. 11. 26.

5. The fulfilling of the Scripture in all this. This Evangeliſt writing among the *Jews* doth more frequently obſerve this than any other of the Evangeliſts. Here the Old Teſtament Prophecies had their Accompliſhment in our Lord Jeſus; by which it appears this was he that ſhould come, and we are to look for no other, for this was he *to whom all the Prophets bare witneſs*. Now the Scripture that was fulfilled in the Birth of Chriſt, was that Promiſe of a Sign which God gave to King *Ahaz*, Iſa. 7. 14. *Behold a Virgin ſhall conceive*, where the Prophet encouraging the People of God to hope for the promiſed Deliverance from *Sennacherib*'s Invaſion, directs them to look forward to the Meſſiah who was to come of the People of *the Jews*, and the Houſe of *David*; from whence it was eaſy to infer, that tho' that was then an afflicted People, that then a diſtreſſed Houſe, yet neither the one nor the other could be abandon'd to Ruin as long as God had ſuch an Honour, ſuch a Bleſſing in reſerve for them. The Deliverances God wrought for the Old Teſtament Church were Types and Figures of the great Salvation by Chriſt, and if God will do the greater, he will not fail to do the leſſer.

The Prephecy here quoted is juſtly uſher'd in with a *Behold*, which commands both Attention and Admiration; for we have here the Miſtery of Godlineſs which is without Controverſy great, that *God was manifeſted in the Fleſh*,

1. The Sign given is, that the Meſſiah ſhall be *born of a Virgin*. A *Virgin ſhall conceive*, and by her he ſhall be manifeſted *in the Fleſh*. The Word *Almah* ſignifies a *Virgin* in the ſtricteſt Senſe, ſuch as *Mary* profeſſeth her ſelf to be, *Luke* 1. 34. *I know not a Man*, nor had it been any ſuch wonderful Sign as it was intended for, if it had been otherwiſe. It was intimated from the beginning that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be born of a Virgin, when it was ſaid that he ſhould be the *Seed of the Woman*; ſo the Seed of the Woman, as not to be the Seed of any Man. Chriſt was born of a Virgin, not only becauſe his Birth was to be *Supernatural*, and altogether extraordinary, but becauſe it was to be *Spotleſs*, and Pure, without any Stain of Sin. Chriſt would be born not of an *Empreſs* or *Queen*, for he appear'd not in outward Pomp or Splendor, but of a Virgin, to teach us Spiritual Purity, to dye to all the Delights of Senſe, and ſo to *keep our ſelves unſpotted* from the World and the Fleſh, as that we may be preſented *chaſt Virgins to Chriſt*.

2. The Truth prov'd by this Sign is, that he is the Son of God, and the Mediater between God and Man, for *they ſhall call his Name Emmanuel*; that is, he ſhall be *Emmanuel*; as when it is ſaid *he ſhall be call'd*, 'tis meant he ſhall *be the Lord our Righteouſneſs*. *Emmanuel* ſignifies *God with us*; a myſterious Name, but very precious; God *incarnate* among us, and ſo God *Reconcileable* to us, at Peace with us, and taking us into Covenant and Communion with himſelf. The People of the *Jews* had God *with them*, in Types and Shadows, dwelling between the Cherubims, but never ſo as when the *Word was made Fleſh*, that was the bleſſed *Shechinah*. What a happy ſtep is hereby taken towards ſetling of a Peace and Correſpondence between God and Man, that the two Natures are thus brought together in the Perſon of the Mediator; by this he became an unacceptionable Referee, a Days-Man fit to *lay his Hand upon them both*, ſince he partakes of the Nature of both. Behold in this the deepeſt Myſtery, and the richeſt Mercy that ever was. By the Light of *Nature* we ſee God as God *above us*, by the Light of the *Law* we ſee him a God *againſt us*, but by the Light of the *Goſpel* we ſee him *Emmanuel*, God *with us*, in our own Nature, and (which is more) in our Intereſts.. Herein the Redeemer *commended his Love*. With Chriſt's Name *Emmanuel*, we may compare the Name given to the Goſpel-Church, *Ezek.* 48. 35. *Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there*, the Lord of Hoſts is with us.

Nor is it improper to ſay, that the Prophecy which foretold that he ſhould be called *Emmanuel*, was fulfill'd in the Deſign and Intention of it, when he was call'd *Jeſus*; for if he had not been *Emmanuel, God with us*, he could not have been *Jeſus*, a *Saviour*; and herein conſiſts the Salvation he wrought out in the *bringing of God and Man together*; this was it he deſign'd, to bring *God* to be *with us*, which is our great Happineſs, and to bring *us* to be *with God*, which is our great Duty.

6. *Joſeph*'s Obedience to the Divine Precept, *v.* 24. *being raiſed from ſleep* by the Impreſſions which the Dream made upon him, *did as the Angel of the Lord had bidden him*, tho' it was contrary to his former Sentiments and Intentions; he *took unto him his Wife*. He did it ſpeedily, without delay, and chearfully, without diſpute; he was not Diſobedient to the Heavenly Viſion. Extraordinary Direction like this here, we are not now to expect; but God hath ſtill ways of making known his Mind in doubtful Caſes, by Hints of Providence, Debates of Conſcience, and Advice of faithful Friends; each of theſe applying the general Rules of the written Word, we ſhould therefore in all the Steps of our Life, particularly the great Turns of it, ſuch as this of *Joſeph*'s, take Direction from God, and we ſhall find it ſafe and comfortable to do as he bids us.

7. The Accompliſhment of the Divine Promiſe, *v.* 25. *ſhe brought forth her firſt-born Son*. The Circumſtances of it are more largely related, *Luke* 21. *Note*, That which is *conceived of the Holy Ghoſt* never proves *abortive*, but will certainly be *brought forth* in its Seaſon. What is *of the will of the Fleſh*, and *of the will of Man*, often miſcarries, but if Chriſt be *formed* in the Soul, God himſelf has begun the good work, which he will perform; what is *conceiv'd* in Grace will no doubt be *brought forth* in Glory.

It is here further obſerv'd, (1.) That *Joſeph*, tho' he Solemniz'd the Marriage with *Mary* his eſpouſed Wife, yet he kept at a humble diſtance from her while ſhe was with Child of this Holy Thing, he *knew her not till ſhe had brought him forth*. A mighty Rout has been made concerning the perpetual Virginity of the Mother of our Lord; *Jerom* was very angry with *Helvidius* for denying it. 'Tis certain it cannot be proved from Scripture; Dr. *Whitby* inclines to think, that it being ſaid, *Joſeph knew her not till ſhe had brought forth her Firſt-born*, 'tis intimated that afterwards the Reaſon ceaſing, he did the Duty of a Huſband to her according to the Law, *Exod.* 21. 10. (2.) That Chriſt was the *Firſt-born*, and ſo he might be call'd, tho' his Mother had not any other Children after him, according to the Language of Scripture. Nor was it without a Myſtery that Chriſt is call'd her Firſt-born, for he is the *Firſt-born of every Creature*, that is, the Heir of all things, and he is the *Firſt-born among many Brethren*, that in all things he may have the Preheminence. (3.) That *Joſeph called his Name Jeſus*, according to the Direction given him. God having *appointed* him to be the Saviour, which was intimated in his giving him the Name *Jeſus*, we muſt *accept* of him to be our Saviour, and in concurrence with that Appointment we muſt call him *Jeſus* our Saviour.

CHAP. II.

In this Chapter we have the Hiſtory of our Saviour's Infancy, where we find how early he began to ſuffer, and that in him the Word of Righteouſneſs *was* fulfill'd *before he himſelf began to* fulfil all Righteouſneſs. *Here's* (1.) *The Wiſe Mens ſollicitous Enquiry after Chriſt*, v. 1.—8. (2.) *Their devout Attendance on him when they found out were he was*, v. 9.——12 (3.) *Chriſt's flight into* Egypt *to avoid the Cruelty of* Herod, v. 13.–15. (4.) *The barbarous Murder of the Infants of* Bethlehem, v. 16——18. (5.) *Chriſt's Return out of* Egypt *into the Land of* Iſrael *again*, v. 19—23

NOW when Jeſus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wiſe men from the eaſt to Jeruſalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have ſeen his ſtar in the eaſt, and are come to worſhip him. 3 When Herod the king had heard *theſe things*, he was troubled, and all Jeruſalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief prieſts and ſcribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Chriſt ſhould be born. 5 And they ſaid unto him, in Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet; 6 And thou Bethlehem *in* the land of Juda, art not the leaſt among the princes of Juda: for out of thee ſhall come a Governour that ſhall rule my people Iſrael. 7 Then Herod when he had privily called the wiſe men, enquired of them diligently what time the ſtar appeared. 8 And he ſent them to Bethlehem, and ſaid, Go, and ſearch diligently for the young child, and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worſhip him alſo.

It was a *Mark of Humiliation* put upon the Lord Jeſus, that tho' he was the *Deſire of all Nations*, yet his coming into the World was ſo little obſerv'd and taken notice of, his Birth obſcure and unregarded; herein he emptied himſelf, and made himſelf of no Reputation. If the Son of God muſt be brought into the World, one might juſtly expect he ſhould be receiv'd with all the Ceremony poſſible; that Crowns and Scepters ſhould immediately have been laid at his Feet, and the high and Mighty Princes of the World ſhould have been his humble Servants; ſuch a *Meſſiah* as this the *Jews* expected, but we ſee none of all this; he *came into the World*, and the *World knew him not*; nay, he *came to his own*, and *and his own received him not*; for having undertaken to make Satisfaction to his Father for the Wrong done him *in his Honour* by the Sin of Man, he did it by denying himſelf in, and deſpoiling himſelf of the Honour undoubtedly due to an Incarnate Deity, yet as afterwards, ſo in his Birth, there were ſome Rays of Glory darted forth in the midſt of the greateſt Inſtances of his Abaſements. Tho' *there was the hiding of his Power*, yet he had *Beams coming out of his Hand*, Hab. 3. 4. enough to condemn the World, and the *Jews* eſpecially for their Stupidity.

The firſt we find that took notice of Chriſt after his Birth were the Sheperds, *Luke* 2. 15, &c. who ſaw and heard glorious things concerning him, and *made them known abroad*, to the Amazement of all that heard them, *v.* 17, 18. After that *Simeon* and *Anna* ſpake of him by the Spirit to all that were diſpos'd to heed what they ſaid, *Luke* 2. 28. Now one would think theſe Hints ſhould have been taken by the Men of *Judah*, and the *Inhabitants of Jeruſalem*, and that they ſhould with both Arms have embrac'd the long look'd for *Meſſiah*; but for ought appears he continued near two Years after at *Bethlehem*, and no further notice was taken of him till theſe wiſe Men came. *Note*, Nothing will awaken thoſe that are reſolv'd to be regardleſs. O the amazing Stupidity of theſe *Jews*! And no leſs that of many who are called Chriſtians. *Obſerve.*

1. when this Enquiry was made concerning Chriſt, it was *in the Days of* Herod *the King*. This *Herod* was an *Edomite*, made King of *Judea* by *Auguſtus* and *Antonius*, the then chief Rulers of the *Roman* State, a Man made up with Falſhood and Cruelty; yet he was complemented with the Title of *Herod the Great*. Chriſt was born in the 35th Year of his Reign, and notice was taken of this, to ſhew that *the Sceptre* was now *departed from Judah*, and *the Lawgiver from between his feet*; and therefore now was the time for *Shiloh* to come, and *to him ſhall the gathering of the People be*, witneſs theſe wiſe Men, *Gen.* 49, 10.

2. Who and what theſe *wiſe Men* were; they are here call'd Μάγοι, *Magicians*; ſome take it in a good Senſe, the *Magi* among the *Perſians* were their Philoſophers, and their Prieſts; nor would they admit any for their King that had not firſt been enroll'd among the *Magi*; others think they dealt in unlawful Arts, the word is us'd of *Simon* the *Sorcerer*, *Acts* 8. 9, 11. and of *Elymas* the Sorcerer, *Acts* 13. 6 nor doth the Scripture uſe it in any other Senſe; and then it was an early Inſtance and Preſage of Chriſt's Victory over the Devil, when thoſe that had been ſo much his *Devotees*, became the early Adorers, even of the Infant Jeſus; ſo ſoon were Trophies of his Victory over the Powers of Darkneſs erected. Well, whatever ſort of Wiſe Men they were before, now they began to be *Wiſe Men* indeed when they ſet themſelves to enquire after Chriſt.

This we are ſure of (1.) That they were *Gentiles*, and not belonging to the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*. The *Jews* regarded not Chriſt, but theſe *Gentiles* enquired him out. *Note*, Many times thoſe that are neareſt to the *Means*, are furtheſt from the *End*. See *Matt.* 8. 11, 12. The Reſpect paid to Chriſt by theſe *Gentiles* was a happy Preſage and Specimen of what would follow, when thoſe that were *afar off* ſhould be *made nigh by Chriſt*. (2.) That they were *Scholars*, they dealt in Arts, curious Arts; good Scholars ſhould be good Chriſtans, and then they compleat their *Learning*, when they learn *Chriſt*. (3.) That they were *Men of the Eaſt*, who were noted for their *Sooth-ſaying*, *Iſa.* 2. 6. *Arabia* is call'd the Land of the *Eaſt*, *Gen.* 25 .6. And the *Arabians Men of the Eaſt*, Jud. 6. 3. The Preſents they brought were the Products of that Country; the *Arabians* had done Homage to *David* and *Solomon* as Types of Chriſt. *Jethro* and *Job* were of that Country. More than this we have not to ſay of them. The Traditions of the *Romiſh* Church are frivolous, that they were in number *three*, (tho' one of the Ancients ſay they were *fourteen*) that they were Kings, and that they lie buried in *Colen*, thence call'd the three Kings of *Colen*; we covet not to be Wiſe above what is written.

3. What induc'd them to make this Enquiry. They in their Country, which lay *Eaſt*, had ſeen an *extraordinary Star*, ſuch as they had not ſeen before, which they took to be an Indication of an extraordinary Perſon born in the Land of *Judea*, over which Land this Star was ſeen to hover, in the nature of a Comet, or a Meteor rather in the lower Regions of the Air; this differ'd ſo much from any thing that was common, that they concluded it to ſignifie ſomething uncommon. *Note*, Extraordinary Appearances of God in the Creatures ſhould put us upon enquiring after his Mind and Will therein; Chriſt foretold *Signs in the Heavens*. The Birth of Chriſt was notify'd to the *Jewiſh* Shepherds by *an Angel*, to the *Gentile* Philoſophers by a *Star*; to each God ſpoke in their own Language, and in the way they were beſt acquainted with. Some think that very Light which the Shepherds ſaw ſhining round about them the Night after Chriſt was born, was the very ſame which to the wiſe Men who liv'd at ſuch a diſtance appear'd as a Star; which we cannot eaſily admit, becauſe the ſame Star they had ſeen in the *Eaſt*, they ſaw a great while after leading them to the Houſe where Chriſt lay; it was a Candle ſet up on purpoſe to guide them to Chriſt. The Idolaters worſhip'd the Stars as the *Hoſt of Heaven*, eſpecially the *Eaſtern* Nations, whence the Planets have their Names, of their Idol-gods; we read of a particular *Star* they had in Veneration, *Amos* 5. 26. Thus the Stars that had been miſus'd came to be put to the right uſe, to lead Men to Chriſt; the Gods of the Heathen became his Servants. Some think this Star put them in mind of *Balaam's* Prophecy, that a *Star* ſhould come out of *Jacob*, pointing at a *Sceptre* that ſhall *riſe out of Iſrael*, ſee *Numb.* 24. 17. And *Balaam* came from *the Mountains of the Eaſt*, and was one of their *wiſe Men*. Others impute their Enquiry to the general Expectation, that was at that time in thoſe *Eaſtern* Parts of ſome great Prince to appear; *Tacitus* in his Hiſtory, *Lib.* 5. takes notice of it; *Pluribus Perſuaſio inerat, antiquis Sacerdotum literis contineir, eo ipſo tempore fore ut valeſceret oriens, profectique Judæa rerum potirentur. Suetonius* in the Life of *Veſpaſian* ſpeaks of it; ſo that this extraordinary *Phænomenon* was conſtrued as pointing at *that King*; and we may ſuppoſe a divine Impreſſion made upon their Minds, enabling them to interpret this Star as a Signal given by Heaven of the Birth of Chriſt.

4. How they proſecuted this Enquiry, *they came from the* Eaſt to *Jeruſalem* in further Queſt of this Prince; whether ſhould they come to enquite for the King of the *Jews* but to *Jeruſalem*, the Mother City, *whither the Tribes go up, the Tribes of the Lord*. They might have ſaid, If there were ſuch a Prince born, they ſhould hear of him ſhortly in their own Countrey, and it would be time enough then to pay their Homage to him; but ſo impatient are they to be better acquainted with him, that they took a long Journey on purpoſe to enquire after him. *Note*, Thoſe who truly deſire to know Chriſt, and find him, will not ſtick at Pains or Perils in ſeeking after him, *then ſhall we know if we follow on to know the Lord*.

Their Queſtion is, *Where is he that is born King of the* Jews? They do not ask, *whether there were ſuch an one born*, they are ſure of that, and ſpeak of it with Aſſurance, ſo ſtrongly was it ſet home upon their Hearts; *but where is he born? Note*, Thoſe who know *ſomething* of Chriſt, cannot but covet to *know more* of him. They call Chriſt the *King of the Jews*, for ſo the *Meſſiah* was expected to be, and he is Protector and Ruler of all the Spiritual *Iſrael*, he is *born a King*.

To this Queſtion they doubted not but to have a ready Anſwer, and to find all *Jeruſalem* worſhipping at the Feet of this new King; but they come from Door to Door with this Queſtion, and no Man can give them any Information. *Note*, There is more groſs Ignorance in the World, and in the Church too, than we are aware of. Many that we think ſhould direct us to Chriſt, are themſelves ſtrangers to him; they ask, as the Spouſe of the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*, *Saw ye him whom my Soul loveth?* but are never the wiſer. However, like the Spouſe they purſue the Enquiry, *Where is he that is born King of the* Jews? Are they ask'd why they make this Enquiry? 'Tis becauſe they have *ſeen his Star in the Eaſt*. Are they ask'd what Buſineſs they have with him? What have the Men of the *Eaſt* to do with the *King of the Jews?* they have their Anſwer ready, *we are come to Worſhip him*. They conclude he will in proceſs of Time be *their King*, and therefore they will betimes ingratiate themſelves with him, and with thoſe about him. *Note*, Thoſe in whoſe Hearts the Day-ſtar is riſen to give them any thing of the Knowledge of Chriſt, muſt make it their Buſineſs to *Worſhip* him. Have we ſeen Chriſt's Star? ſtudy to give him Honour.

5. How this Enquiry was reſented at *Jeruſalem*. News of it at laſt came to Court, and *when Herod heard it he was troubled*, v. 3. He could not be a ſtranger to the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament* concerning the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom, and the times fix'd for his appearing by *Daniel's* Weeks; but having himſelf reign'd ſo long, and ſo ſucceſsfully, he began to hope that thoſe Promiſes ſhould for ever fail, and that his Kingdom, ſhould be eſtabliſh'd and perpetuated in ſpite of them; what a mighty damp therefore muſt it needs be upon him to here talk of this *King* born, now when the Time fix'd for his appearing was come! *Note*, Carnal wicked Hearts dread nothing ſo much as the fulfilling of the Scripture.

But tho' *Herod* an *Edomite* was troubled, one would have thought *Jeruſalem* ſhould *rejoyce greatly* to hear that *her King comes*; yet it ſeems *all Jeruſalem*, except the few there that *waited for the Conſolation of* Iſrael *were troubled* with *Herod*, and were apprehenſive of I know not what ill Conſequences of the Birth of this new King; that it would involve them in a War, or reſtrain their Luſts; they for their parts deſir'd no King but *Herod*, no, not the Meſſiah himſelf. *Note*, The Slavery of Sin is fooliſhly prefer'd by many before the glorious Liberties of the Children of God, only becauſe they apprehend ſome preſent Difficulties attending that neceſſary Revolution of the Government in the Soul. *Herod* and *Jeruſalem* were thus troubled from a miſtaken Notion that the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* would claſh and interfere with the Secular Powers; whereas the Star that proclaim'd him King, plainly intimated that his Kingdom was *Heavenly*, and not of this lower World. *Note*, The reaſon why the Kings of the Earth, and the People oppoſe the Kingdom of Chriſt, is becauſe they do not know it, but err concerning it.

6. What Aſſiſtance they met with in this Enquiry from the Scribes and the Prieſts, *v.* 4, 5, 6. No body can pretend to tell where the King of the *Jews* is, but *Herod* enquires where it was expected *he ſhould be born*. The Perſons he conſults are the *Chief Prieſts*, who were Teachers by Office, and the *Scribes*, who made it their Buſineſs *to ſtudy the Law*; their *Lips* muſt *keep Knowledge*, but then the People muſt *enquire the Law at their Mouth*, Mal. 2. 7. It was generally known that Chriſt ſhould be born at *Bethlehem*, John 7. 42. But *Herod* would have *Counſel's Opinion* upon it, and therefore applies himſelf to the proper Perſons, and that he might be the better ſatisfied, he hath them altogether, *all the Chief Prieſts* and *all the Scribes*, and demands of them what was the Place, according to the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, *where Chriſt ſhould be born?* Many a good Queſtion is put with an ill Deſign, ſo was this by *Herod*.

The Prieſts and Scribes need not take any long time to give an Anſwer to this Query, nor do they differ in their Opinion, but all agree that the *Meſſiah* muſt be *born* in *Bethlehem*, the City of *David*, here call'd *Bethlehem* of *Judea*, to diſtinguiſh it from another City of the ſame Name, in the land of *Zebulun*. Joſh. 19. 15. *Bethlehem* ſignifies *the Houſe of Bread*, the fitteſt place for him to be born in, who is the true *Manna*, the Bread which came down from Heaven, that was *given for the Life of the World*. The Proof they produce is taken from *Mic.* 5. 2. where 'tis foretold, that tho' *Bethlehem* be *little among the Thouſands of Judah*; ſo it is in *Micah*, no very populous Place, yet it ſhall be found not *the leaſt among the Princes of* Judah, ſo it is here; for *Bethlehem*'s Honour lay not as that of other Cities, in the Multitude of *the People*, but in the Magnificence of the Princes it produc'd. Tho' upon ſome accounts *Bethlehem* was *little*, yet herein it had the Preheminence above all the Cities of *Iſrael*, that *the Lord ſhall count when he writes up the People*, that *this Man*, even the *Man Chriſt Jeſus*, *was born there*, Pſal. 87. 6. *Out of thee ſhall come a Governour*, the King of the *Jews*. *Note*, Chriſt will be a Saviour to thoſe only that are willing to take him for their *Governour*. *Bethlehem* was the City of *David*, and *David* the Glory of *Bethlehem*; there therefore muſt *David*'s Son and Succeſſor be *be born*. There was a famous *Well* at *Bethlehem by the Gate*, which *David* long'd to drink of, 2 *Sam.* 23. 15. In Chriſt we have not only Bread enough, and to ſpare, but may come and take alſo *of the Water of Life freely*. Obſerve here, how *Jews* and *Gentiles* compare Notes about Jeſus Chriſt; the *Gentiles* know the *Time* of it by a *Star*, the *Jews* knew the *Place* of it by the Scriptures, and ſo they are capable of informing one another. *Note*, It would contribute much to the Increaſe of Knowledge, if we did thus mutually communicate what we *know*; Men grow rich by bartering and exchanging, ſo if we have Knowledge to Communicate to others, they will be ready to Communicate to us; thus many ſhall *diſcourſe*, ſhall *run to and fro*, and *Knowledge ſhall be increaſed*.

7. The Bloody Project and Deſign of *Herod* occaſion'd by this Enquiry, *v.* 7, 8. *Herod* was now an old Man, had Reign'd 35 Years; this King was but newly born, and not likely to enterprize any thing conſiderable of many Years, yet *Herod* is *jealous* of him; Crown'd Heads cannot endure to think of Succeſſors, much leſs of Rivals, and therefore nothing leſs than the Blood of this Infant King will ſatisfy him, and he will not give himſelf liberty to think, that if this new-born Child ſhould be indeed the *Meſſiah*, in oppoſing him, or making any Attempts upon him, he would be found *fighting againſt God*, than which nothing more *vain*, nothing more *dangerous*; Paſſion has got the Maſtery of Reaſon and Conſcience.

Now, 1. See how cunningly he *laid the Project*, v. 7, 8. He *privily called the wiſe Men* to talk with them about this matter. He would not openly own his Fears and Jealouſies, 'twould be his Diſgrace to let the wiſe Men know them, and dangerous to let the People know them. Sinners are often tormented with ſecret Fears which they keep to themſelves. *Herod* learns of the Wiſe Men the Time *when the Star appear'd*, that he might take his Meaſures accordingly, and then employs them to enquire further, and bids them bring him an account. All this might look ſuſpicious, if he had not cover'd it with a Shew of Religion; *That I may come and Worſhip him alſo.* *Note*' The greateſt Wickedneſs often conceals it ſelf under a Maſk of Piety; *Abſalom* clokes his rebellious Project with a Vow.

2. See how ſtrangely he was *Befool'd* and *Infatuated* in this, that he truſted it with the *wiſe Men*, and did not chuſe ſome other Managers that would have been true to his Intereſts. 'Twas but ſeven Miles from *Jeruſalem*; how eaſily might he have ſent Spies to dog the Wiſe Men, that ſhould have been as ſoon there to deſtroy the Child, as they to Worſhip him. *Note*, God can hide from the Eyes of the Church's Enemies, thoſe Methods by which they might eaſily deſtroy the Church; when he intends to *lead Princes away ſpoiled*, his way is to *make the Judges Fools*.

9 When they had heard the King, they departed, and lo, the ſtar which they ſaw in the eaſt, went before them, till it came and ſtood over where the young child was. 10 When they ſaw the ſtar, they rejoyced with exceeding great joy. 11 And when they were come into the houſe, they ſaw the young child with Mary his Mother, and fell down and worſhipped him: and when they had opened their treaſures, they preſented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincenſe, and myrrh. 12 And being warned of God in a dream, that they ſhould not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

We have here the wiſe Mens humble Attendance upon this new born *King of the Jews*, and the Honours they paid him. From *Jeruſalem* they went to *Bethlehem*, reſolving to *ſeek till they find*; but 'tis very ſtrange they went *alone*, that not one Perſon of the Court, Church, or City ſhould accompany them, if not in Conſcience, yet in Civility to them, or touch'd with a Curioſity to ſee this young Prince. As the *Queen of the South*, ſo the *wiſe Men of the Eaſt* will riſe up in Judgment againſt the Men of *that* Generation, and of *this* too, and will condemn them, for they came from a far Country to Worſhip Chriſt, while the *Jews* his kinſmen would not ſtir a ſtep, would not go to the next Town to bid him welcome. It might have been a diſcouragement to theſe wiſe Men to find him whom they ſought thus neglected at home: Are we come ſo far to honour the *King of the Jews*, and do the *Jews* themſelves put ſuch a Slight upon him and us? yet they perſiſt in their Reſolution. *Note*, We muſt continue our Attendances upon Chriſt, tho' we be alone in them; whatever others do we muſt ſerve the Lord; if they will not go to Heaven with us, yet we muſt not go to Hell with them.

Now 1. See how they found Chriſt out, by the ſame Star that they had ſeen in their own Country, *v.* 9, 10. And there obſerve, (1.) How graciouſly God directed them; by the firſt Appearance of the Star, they were given to underſtand where they might enquire for this King, and then it diſappear'd, and they were left to take the uſual Methods for ſuch an Enquiry. *Note*, Extraordinary Helps are not to be expected where ordinary Means are to be had. Well, they had traced the Matter as far as they could, they were upon their Journey to *Bethlehem*, but that's a populous Town, where ſhall they find him when they come thither; here they were at a loſs, at their Wit's-end but not at their Faith's-end; they believed God that had brought them thither by his Word, would not leave them there; nor did he, for *behold the Star which they ſaw in the Eaſt went before them*. Note, If we go on as far as we can in the way of our Duty, God will direct and enable us to do that which of our ſelves we cannot do; *up and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee. Vigilantibus non dormientibus ſuccourit Lex.* The Star had left them a great while, yet now returns. They that follow God in the Dark, ſhall find that Light *is ſown*, is *reſerv'd for them*. *Iſrael* was led by a Pillar of Fire to the *promiſed Land*; the Wiſe Men by a Star to the *promiſed Seed*, who is himſelf the *bright and morning Star*, Rev. 22. 16. God would rather *create a new thing*, than leave thoſe at a loſs that diligently and faithfully ſought him. This *Star* was the Token of God's Preſence with them, for he is *Light*, and goes before his People as their Guide. *Note*, if we by Faith eye God in all our Ways, we may ſee our ſelves under his Conduct; he *guides with his Eye*, Pſal. 32. 8. and ſaith to them, *This is the way, walk in it*; and there is a *Day-Star* that *ariſeth in the Hearts* of thoſe that enquire after Chriſt, 2 *Pet.* 1. 19. (2.) Obſerve how joyfully they follow'd God's Direction, *v.* 10. *When they ſaw the Star, they rejoyced with exceeding great Joy.* Now they ſaw they were not deceiv'd, and had not taken this long Journey in vain; *when the Deſire cometh it is a Tree of Life.* Now they were ſure that God was with them, and the Tokens of his Preſence and Favour cannot but fill the Souls of thoſe that know how to value them with Joy unſpeakable. Now they could laugh at the *Jews* in *Jeruſalem*, who probably had laugh'd at them, as coming on a *Fool's Errand*. The Watchmen can give the Spouſe no Tidings of her Beloved, but it *is but a little* that *ſhe paſſeth from them*, and ſhe *finds him*, Cant. 3. 3, 4. We cannot expect too little from Man, nor too much from God. What a Tranſport of Joy theſe wiſe Men were in upon this ſight of the Star none know ſo well as thoſe, who after a long and melancholy Night of Temptation and Deſertion, under the Power of a *Spirit of Bondage*, at length receive the *Spirit of Adoption*, witneſſing with their Spirits, that they are the Children of God; this is Light out of Darkneſs, 'tis Life from the Dead. Now they had reaſon to hope for ſight of the *Lord's Chriſt* preſently; of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, for they ſee the Morning-ſtar. *Note* We ſhould be glad of every thing that will ſhew us the way to Chriſt. This Star was ſent to meet the wiſe Men, and to conduct them into the Preſence-chamber of the King; by this Maſter of the Ceremonies they were introduced to have their Audience. Now God fulfils his Promiſe of *meeting thoſe* that are diſpos'd to *rejoyce and work Righteouſneſs*, Iſa. 64. 5. And they fulfil his Precept; *let the Hearts of thoſe rejoyce that ſeek the Lord*, Pſal. 105. 3. *Note*, God is pleaſed ſometimes to favour young Converts with ſuch Tokens of his Love as are very encouraging to them in reference to the Difficulties they meet with at their *ſetting out* in the Ways of God.

2. See how they made their Addreſs to him when they had found him, *ver.* 11. We may well imagine their Expectations were rais'd to find this Royal Babe, tho' ſlighted by the Nation, yet honourably attended at home, and what a Diſappointment it was to them when they found a Cottage was his Palace, and his own poor Mother all the Retinue he had. Is this the Saviour of the World? Is this the King of the *Jews*, nay, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth? Yes, this is he, who *tho' he was rich*, yet *for our ſakes became* thus *poor*. However theſe *wiſe Men* were ſo *wiſe* as to ſee through this Veil, and in this deſpiſed Babe to diſcern the Glory, *as of the only begotten of the Father*; they did not think themſelves balk'd or baffled in their Enquiry, but as having found the King they ſought, they preſented Themſelves firſt, and then their Gifts to him.

(1.) They preſented Themſelves to him, *they fell down and Worſhipped him*. We do not read that they gave ſuch Honour to *Herod*, tho' he was in the height of his Royal Grandeur, but to *this Babe* they gave this Honour; not only as to a King, then they would have done the ſame to *Herod*, but as to a God. *Note*, All that have *found* Chriſt, *fall down* before him; they *adore* him, and *ſubmit* themſelves to him. *He is thy Lord, Worſhip thou him.* 'Twill be the *Wiſdom* of the *wiſeſt of Men*, and by this it will appear they know Chriſt, and underſtand themſelves and their true Intereſts, if they be the humble faithful Worſhippers of the Lord Jeſus.

(2.) They preſented their Gifts to him. In the Eaſtern Nations, when they *did Homage* to their Kings, they made them a *Preſent*; thus the Subjection of the Kings of *Sheba* to Chriſt is ſpoken of, *Pſal.* 72. 10. They ſhall *bring Preſents*, and offer Gifts. See *Iſa.* 60. 6. *Note*, With our ſelves, we muſt give up all that we have to Jeſus Chriſt, and if we be ſincere in the ſurrender of our ſelves to him, we will not ſtick at parting with what is deareſt to us, and moſt valuable, to him, and for him; nor are our Gifts accepted, unleſs we firſt preſent our ſelves to him living Sacrifices; *God had reſpect to Abel*, and then *to his Offering*. The Gifts they preſented were *Gold, Frankincenſe and Myrrh*, Money, and Monies-worth. Providence ſent this for a ſeaſonable Relief to *Joſeph* and *Mary*, in their preſent poor Condition. Theſe were the Products of their own Country; what God *favours* us with, we muſt *honour* him with. Some think there was a ſignificancy in their Gifts; they offer'd him *Gold* as a *King*, paying him Tribute; to *Cæſar* the things that are *Cæſar's*; *Frankincenſe* as *God*, for they honour'd God with the Smoke of Incenſe, and *Myrrh*, as a Man that ſhould dye, for *Myrrh* was us'd in Imbalming dead Bodies.

3. See how they left him when they had made their Addreſs to him, *v.* 12. *Herod* appointed them to *bring him word* what Diſcoveries they had made, and 'tis probable they would have done ſo, if they had not been countermanded, not ſuſpecting their being thus made his Tools in a wicked Deſign. Thoſe that mean honeſtly and well themſelves, are eaſily made to believe that others do ſo too, and cannot think the World is ſo bad as really it is. But *the Lord knows how to deliver the Godly out of Temptation.* We do not find that the wiſe Men promiſed to come back to *Herod*, and if they had it muſt be with the uſual Proviſo, *if God permit*; and God did not permit them, and ſo prevented the Miſchief *Herod* deſign'd to the Child Jeſus, and the trouble it would have been to the wiſe Men to have been made involuntarily acceſſary to it. They were *warned of God*; *χρηματισθέντες, Oraculo* vel *Reſponſo accepto*: ſome think it intimates, that they *ask'd Counſel* of God, and this was the Anſwer. *Note*, Thoſe that act cautiouſly, and are afraid of Sin and Snares, if they apply themſelves to God for Direction, may expect to be led in the right way. They were warn'd *not to to return to Herod*, or to *Jeruſalem*; theſe were unworthy to have Reports brought them concerning Chriſt, that might have *ſeen with their own Eyes*, and would not. They *departed into their own Country another way*, to bring the Tidings to their Country-men; but 'tis ſtrange we never hear any more of them, and that they or theirs did not afterwards attend him in the Temple, whom they had worſhipped in the Cradle. However, the Direction they had from God in their Return, would be a further Confirmation of their Faith in this Child. as the *Lord from Heaven.*

13 And when they were departed, behold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joſeph in a dream, ſaying, Ariſe, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will ſeek the young child to deſtroy him. 14 When he aroſe, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken of the Lord by the prophet, ſaying, Out of Egypt have I called my ſon.

We have here Chriſt's Flight into *Egypt*, to avoid the Cruelty of *Herod*, and this was the effect of the wiſe Men's Enquiry after him, for before that the obſcurity he lay in was his Protection. It was but little Reſpect (compared with what ſhould have been) that was paid to Chriſt in his Infancy, yet even that inſtead of *honouring* him among his People, did but *expoſe* him.

Now here obſerve,

1. The Command given to *Joſeph* concerning it, *v.* 13. *Joſeph* knew neither the Danger the Child was in, nor how to eſcape it, but God by *an Angel* tells him both *in a Dream*; as before he directed him in like manner what to do, *Chap.* 1. 20. *Joſeph* before his Alliance to Chriſt, had not been wont to converſe with Angels, as now. *Note*, Thoſe that are Spiritually related to Chriſt by Faith, have that Communion and Correſpondence with Heaven, which before they were Strangers to.

(1.) *Joſeph* is here told what their *Danger* was, *Herod* will *ſeek the young Child to deſtroy him. Note* God is acquainted with all the cruel Projects and Purpoſes of the Enemies of his Church. *I know thy Rage againſt me*, ſaith God to *Sennacherib*, *Iſa.* 37. 28. How early was the Bleſſed Jeſus involv'd in Trouble! Uſually even thoſe whoſe ripers Years are attended with Toils and Perils, yet have a peaceable and quiet Infancy, but it was not ſo with the Bleſſed Jeſus; his Life and Sufferings began together. He was born *a Man ſtriven with*, as *Jeremiah* was *Jer.* 15. 10. who was *Sanctified from the Womb*, *Jer.* 1. 5. Both Chriſt the Head, and the Church his Body agree, in ſaying, Many a time have they afflicted me *from my Youth up.* *Pharaoh*'s Cruelty faſtens upon the *Hebrews* Children, and the great red Dragon ſtands ready to *devour the Man-child*, as ſoon as it ſhould be born, *Rev.* 12. 4.

(2.) He is directed what to do to eſcape the Danger; *Take the young Child and flee into* Egypt. Thus early muſt Chriſt give an Example to his own Rule, *Mat.* 10. 23. When *they Perſecute you in one City, flee to another.* He that came to die for us, when his Hour was not yet come, fled for his own Safety. Self-preſervation being a Branch of the *Law of Nature*, is eminently a part of the *Law of God.* Flee, but why into *Egypt?* *Egypt* was infamous for Idolatry, Tyranny, and Enmity to the People of God; it had been a Houſe of Bondage to *Iſrael*, and particularly cruel to the Infants of *Iſrael*; in *Egypt*, as much as in *Ramah*, *Rachel* had been *weeping for her Children*, yet that's appointed to be a Place of Refuge to the Holy Child Jeſus. *Note*, God when he pleaſes can make the worſt of Places ſerve the beſt of Purpoſes; for *the Earth is the Lord's*, he makes what uſe he pleaſes of it; ſometimes the Earth *helps the Woman*, *Rev.* 12. 16. God that made *Moab* a Shelter to his Out-caſts, makes *Egypt* a Refuge for his Son. This may be conſider'd,

(1.) As a Trial of the Faith of *Joſep* and *Mary*; they might be tempted to think, if this Child be the Son of God, as we are told he is, has he no other way to ſecure himſelf from a Man that is a Worm, but by ſuch a mean and inglorious Retreat as this? Cannot he ſummon Legions of Angels to be his Life-guard, or Cherubims with Flaming-ſwords to keep this Tree of Life? Cannot he ſtrike *Herod* dead, or wither the Hand that is ſtretch'd out againſt him, and ſo ſave us the trouble of this Remove? They had been lately told that he ſhould be *the Glory of his People* Iſrael, and is the Land of *Iſrael* ſo ſoon become too hot for him? But we find not that they made any ſuch Objections; their Faith being *tried*, was found firm, and they believe *this is the Son of God*, tho' they ſee no Miracle wrought for his Preſervation, but they are put to the uſe of ordinary Means: *Joſeph* had great Honour put upon him in being the Huſband of the Bleſſed Virgin, but that Honour has Trouble attending it, as all Honours have in this World; *Joſeph* muſt *take the young Child* and carry him into *Egypt*; and now it appear'd how well God had provided for the *young Child and his Mother*, in appointing *Joſeph* into Relation to them; now the Gold which the wiſe Men brought would ſtand them in ſtead to bear their Charges. God foreſees his People's Diſtreſſes, and provides againſt them *before hand.* God intimates the continuance of his Care and Conduct, when he ſaith, *Be thou there until I bring thee word*; ſo that he muſt expect to hear from God again, and not ſtir without freſh Orders. Thus God will keep his People ſtill in a Dependance upon him.

(2.) As an Inſtance of the Humiliation of our Lord Jeſus. As there was no room for him in the Inn at *Bethlehem*, ſo there was no quiet room for him in the Land of *Judea.* Thus was he *baniſh'd* from the Earthly *Canaan*, that we, who for Sin were *baniſh'd* from the Heavenly *Canaan*, might not *be for ever expell'd.* If we and our Infants be at any time *in Straits*, let us remember the Straits Chriſt in his Infancy was brought into, and be reconcil'd to them

(3.) As a Token of God's Diſpleaſure againſt the *Jews*, who took ſo little notice of him; juſtly doth he leave thoſe who had *ſlighted* him: and as an Earneſt of his Favour to the *Gentiles*, to whom the Apoſtles were to bring the Goſpel when the *Jews* rejected it. If *Egypt* entertain Chriſt when he is forc'd out of *Judea*, it will be long e'er it be ſaid, *Bleſſed be Egypt my People*, Iſa. 19. 25.

(2.) *Joſeph*'s Obedience to this Command, *v.* 14. The Journey would be inconvenient and perilous, both to the young Child and to his Mother, they were but poorly provided for it, and were likely to meet with cold Entertainment in *Egypt*, yet *Joſeph was not Diſobedient to the heavenly Viſion*, made no Objection, nor was dilatory in his Obedience. As ſoon as he had receiv'd his Orders, he immediately aroſe and went away *by Night*, the ſame Night, as it ſhould ſeem, that he receiv'd Orders: *Note*, Thoſe that would make *ſure work* of their Obedience muſt make *quick work* of it. Now *Joſeph* went out, as his Father *Abraham* did, with an implicit Dependance upon God, *not knowing whither he went*, Heb. 11. 8. *Joſeph* and *his Wife* having little, had little to take care of in this Remove: An abundance incumbers a neceſſary Flight. If rich People have the advantage of the Poor while they poſſeſs what they have, the Poor have the advantage of the Rich when they are call'd to part with it.

Joſeph took the *young Child and his Mother.* Some obſerve that the *young Child* is put firſt as the principal Perſon, and *Mary* is call'd not the Wife of *Joſeph*, but which was her greater Dignity, the *Mother of the young Child.* This was not the firſt *Joſeph* that was driven from *Canaan* to *Egypt* for a Shelter from the Anger of his Brethren; this *Joſeph* ought to be welcome there for the ſake of that.

If we may credit Tradition at their Entrance into *Egypt*, happening into a Temple, all the Images of their gods were overthrown by an inviſible Power, and fell like *Dagon* before the Ark, according to that Prophecy, *The Lord ſhall come into Egypt, and the Idols of Egypt ſhall be moved at his Preſence*, Iſa. 19. 1. They continued in *Egypt* till the Death of *Herod*, which ſome think was ſeven Years, others think not ſo many Months. There they were at a diſtance from the Temple, and the Service of it, and in the midſt of Idolaters, but God ſent them thither, and will have *Mercy, and not Sacrifice.* Tho' they were far from the Temple of the Lord, they had with them the Lord of the Temple. A forced Abſence from Gods Ordinances, and a forced Preſence with wicked People may be the Lot, is not the Sin, yet cannot but be the Grief of good People.

3. The fulfilling of the Scripture in all this, that Scripture, *Hoſ.* 11. 1. *Out of Egypt have I called my Son.* Of all the Evangeliſts, *Matthew* takes moſt notice of the fulfilling of the Scripture in what concern'd Chriſt, becauſe his Goſpel was firſt Publiſh'd among the *Jews*, with whom that would add much ſtrength and luſtre to it. Now this Word of the Prophet undoubtedly referr'd to the Deliverance of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, in which God own'd them for his Son, his Firſt-born, *Exod.* 4. 22. but it is here apply'd by way of Analogy to Chriſt, the Head of the Church. *Note*, the Scripture has many Accompliſhments, ſo full and copious is it, and ſo *well order'd* in all

things, God is every Day fulfilling the Scripture. Scripture is not of *private Interpretaiton*, we muſt give it its full Latitude. *When Iſrael was a Child, then I loved him*; aud *though* I loved him, I ſuffer'd him to be a great while in *Egypt*, but *becauſe* I loved him, in due time I called him out of *Egypt*. They that read this, muſt in their Thoughts, not only *look back*, but *look forward*; that which has been ſhall be again, *Eccl.* 1. 9. and the Manner of Expreſſion intimates this; for it is ſaid, not *I called him*, but called my *Son* out of *Egypt*. *Note*, 'Tis no new thing for God's Sons to be in *Egypt*, in a ſtrange Land, in a Houſe of Bondage; but they ſhall be fetch'd out: They may be *hid* in *Egypt*, but they ſhall not be *left* there. All the Elect of God, being by Nature Children of Wrath, are born in a ſpiritual *Egypt*, and in Converſion are effectually *called out*. It might be objected againſt Chriſt, that he had been in *Egypt*; Muſt the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe out of that Land of Darkneſs? But this ſhews that to be no ſuch ſtrange thing; *Iſrael* was brought out of *Egypt* to be advanced to the higheſt Honours, and this is but the doing of the ſame thing again.

16 Then Herod when he ſaw that he was mocked of the wiſe men, was exceeding wroth, and ſent forth and ſlew all the Children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coaſts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wiſe-men. 17 Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by Jeremy the Prophet, ſaying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, becauſe they are not.

Here's 1. *Herod*'s Reſentment of the Departure of the Wiſe Men. He waited long for their Return, hopes though they be ſlow, they will be *ſure*, and he ſhall cruſh his Rival at his firſt Appearing; but hears upon Enquiry, that they are gone off another way, which increaſeth his Jealouſy, and makes him ſuſpect they are in the Intereſt of this new King; which made him *exceeding wroth*, and he is the more deſperate and outragious for his being diſappointed. *Note*, Inveterate Corruption ſwells the higher for the Obſtructions it meets with in a ſinful purſuit.

2. His politick Contrivance, notwithſtanding this, to take off him that is born *King of the Jews*. If he could not reach him by a particular Execution, he doubted not but to involve him in a general Stroke, which like the Sword of War, ſhould *devour one as well as another*. This would be ſure Work; and thus thoſe that would deſtroy *their own Iniquity*, muſt be ſure to deſtroy *all their Iniquities*. *Herod* was an *Edomite*; Enmity to *Iſrael* was bred in the Bone with him; *Doeg* was an *Edomite*, who for *David*'s ſake ſlew *all the Prieſts of the Lord*. 'Twas ſtrange that *Herod* could find any ſo inhumane, as to be employ'd in ſuch a bloody and barbarous Piece of Work; but *wicked Hands* never want *wicked Tools* to work with. *Little Children* have been always taken under the ſpecial Protection, not only of human Laws, but of human Nature, yet theſe are ſacrificed to the Rage of this Tyrant, under whom, as under *Nero*, Innocence is the leaſt Security. *Herod* was throughout his Reign a bloody Man: 'Twas not long before, that he deſtroy'd the whole *Sanhedrim*, or *Bench of Judges*. But Blood to the Blood-thirſty, is like Drink to thoſe in a Dropſy; *Quo plus ſunt potæ, plus ſitiuntur Aquæ*. *Herod* was now about Seventy Years old, ſo that an Infant at this time under Two Years old, was not likely ever to give him any Diſturbance. Nor was he a Man over fond of his own Children, or of their Preferment; having formerly ſlain two of his own Sons, *Alexander* and *Ariſtobulus*, and his Son *Antipater* after this, but five Days before he dy'd: So that it was purely to gratify his brutiſh Luſts of Pride and Cruelty, that he did this. All is Fiſh that comes to his Net.

Obſerve what large Meaſures he took, (1.) As to Time; he ſlew all *from two Years old and under*. 'Tis probable the Bleſſed Jeſus was at this Time not *a Year old*: Yet *Herod* took in all the Infants under *two Years old*, that he might be ſure not to miſs of his Prey. He cares not how many Heads fall, whom he allows to be innocent; provided that eſcape not, whom he ſuppoſeth to be guilty. (2.) As to Place; he kills all the Male-Children, not only in *Bethlehem*, but in all the Coaſts thereof, in all the Villages of that City. This was being *overmuch wicked*, Eccl. 7. 17. *Note*, An unbridled Wrath arm'd with an unlawful Power, often tranſports Men to the moſt abſurd and unreaſonable Inſtances of Cruelty. It was no unrighteous thing with God to permit this: Every Life is forfeited to his Juſtice, as ſoon as it commenceth. That Sin which enter'd by one Man's Diſobedience introduc'd Death with it; and we are not to ſuppoſe any thing more than that common guilt, or that theſe Children were Sinners above all that were in *Iſrael*, becauſe they ſuffer'd ſuch things. God's Judgments are a great Deep. The Diſeaſes and Deaths of little Children are Proofs of Original Sin. But we muſt look upon this Murder of the Infants, under another Character: It was their Martyrdom. How early did Perſecution commence againſt Chriſt and his Kingom! *Think ye that he came to ſend Peace on the Earth, no, but a Sword*, ſuch a Sword as this, *Matt.* 10. 34, 35. A Paſſive Teſtimony was hereby given to the Lord Jeſus. As when he was in the Womb, he was witneſſed to by a Child's leaping in the Womb, for Joy at his Approach; ſo now at two Yeasr old, he had *Contemporary* Witneſſes to him of the ſame Age: They ſhed their Blood for him, who afterwards ſhed his for them. Theſe were the *Infantry* of the *Noble Army of Martyrs*. If theſe Infants were thus *baptiz'd with Blood*, though it were *their own*, into the Church Triumphant, it could not be ſaid, but that with what they *got in Heaven*, they were abundantly recompenſed for what they *loſt on Earth*. *Out of the Mouths of theſe Babes and Sucklings God did perfect Praiſe*, otherwiſe *it is not good to the Almighty that he ſhould thus afflict*.

The Tradition of the *Greek* Church (and we have it in the *Æthiopick* Miſſal) is, That the Number of the Children ſlain was Fourteen Thouſand; but that is very abſurd: I believe if the Births of the Male Children in the Weekly Bills were computed, there would not be found ſo many under two Years old in one of the moſt populous Cities in the World, much leſs in *Bethlehem*, a ſmall Town, that was not near a fortieth part of it: But 'tis an Inſtance of the Vanity of Tradition. It is ſtrange that *Joſephus* doth not relate this Story; but he wrote long after St. *Matthew*, and 'twas probable he therefore would not relate it becauſe he would not ſo far countenance the Chriſtian Hiſtory, for he was a zealous *Jew*: But to be ſure, if it had not been true, and well *atteſted*, he would have *conteſted* it. *Macrobius*, a Heathen Writer, tells us, that when *Auguſtus Cæſar* heard, that *Herod*, among the Children he ordered to be ſlain under two Years old, among the reſt ſlew his own Son, he pas'd this Jeſt upon him, That *it was better be* Herod's *Swine than his Son.* The Uſage of the Country forbad him to kill a Swine, but nothing could reſtrain him from killing his Son. Some think he had a young Child at Nurſe in *Bethlehem*; others think, that through Miſtake two Events are confounded, the Murder of the Infants, and the Murder of his Son *Antipater*. But for the Church of Rome to put the *Holy Innocents*, as they call them, into their Calendar, and obſerve a day in Memory of them; while they have ſo often by their barbarous Maſſacres juſtified, and even out-done *Herod*; is but to do as their Predeceſſors did, who built the Tombs of the Prophet, while they themſelves fill'd up the ſame Meaſure.

Some obſerve another Deſign of Providence in the Murder of the Infants: By all the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, it appears that *Bethlehem* was the Place, and this the Time of the *Meſſiah*'s Nativity; now all the Children of *Bethlehem*, born at this Time, being murder'd, and Jeſus only eſcaping, none but he could pretend to be the *Meſſiah*. *Herod* now thought he had baffled all the *Old Teſtament* Prophecies, had defeated the Indications of the Star, and the Devotions of the wiſe Men, by ridding the Country of this new King; having burnt the Hive, he concludes he had killed the Maſter-bee, but God in Heaven laughs at him, and has him in Deriſion. Whatever crafty cruel Devices are in Men's Hearts, the Counſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand.

3. The Fulfilling of the Scripture in this, *v.* 17, 18. *Then was fulfilled* that Prophecy, *Jer.* 31. 15. *a Voice was heard in Ramah.* See and adore the Fulneſs of the Scripture: That Prediction was accompliſhed in *Jeremiah's* Time, when *Nebuzaradon*, after he had deſtroy'd *Jeruſalem*, brought all his Priſoners to *Ramah*, *Jer.* 40. 1. and there diſpos'd of them as he pleaſed, for the Sword, or for Captivity: Then was the *Cry in Ramah* heard to *Bethlehem* (for thoſe two Cities, the one in *Judah*'s Lot, and the other in *Benjamin's*, were not far aſunder.) But now the Prophecy is again fulfilled in the great Sorrow that was for the Death of theſe Infants. The Scripture was fulfill'd.

1. In the *Place* of this Mourning: The Noiſe of it was heard from *Bethlehem* to *Ramah*; for *Herod*'s Cruelty extended it ſelf to *all the Coaſts of Bethlehem*, even into the Lot of *Benjamin*, among the Children of *Rachel*. Some think the Country about *Bethlehem* was called *Rachel*, becauſe there ſhe died and was buried; *Rachel's* Sepulchre was hard by *Bethlehem*, Gen. 35. 16, 19. compare 1 *Sam.* 10. 2. *Rachel* had her Heart much ſet upon Children; the Son ſhe died in Travel of, ſhe called *Benoni*, the Son of her Sorrow: Theſe Mothers were like *Rachel*, liv'd near *Rachel's* Grave, and many of them deſcended from *Rachel*, and therefore their Lamentations are elegantly repreſented by *Rachel's Weeping*.

2. In the *Degree* of this Mourning: 'Twas *Lamentation, and Weeping, and great Mourning*; all little enough to expreſs the Senſe they had of this aggravated Calamity. There was a great Cry in *Egypt*, when the *Firſt-born* were ſlain, and ſo there was here when the *Youngeſt* were ſlain; for whom we naturally have a particular Tenderneſs. Here was a Repreſentation of this World we live in: We hear in it, *Lamentation, and Weeping, and Mourning*, and ſee the *Tears of the Oppreſſed*, ſome upon one Account, and ſome upon another. Our Way lies through a *Vale of Tears*. This Sorrow was ſo great that they *would not be comforted*. They hardned themſelves in it, and took a Pleaſure in their Grief. Bleſſed be God, there is no Occaſion of Grief in this World, no not Sin it ſelf that will juſtify us in refuſing to *be comforted*. They would not be comforted, *becauſe they are not*, i. e. they are not in the Land of the Living, are not as they were in their Mothers Embraces; if indeed they *were not*, there might be ſome Excuſe for Sorrowing, as though we had no hope; but we know *they are* not *loſt*, but *gone before*; if we forget that *they are*, we loſe the beſt Ground of our Comfort, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 13. Some make this great Grief of the *Bethlemites*, to be a juſt Judgment upon them, for their Contempt of Chriſt: They that would not rejoyce for the Birth of the Son of God, are juſtly made to weep for the Death of their own Sons; for they only wondered at the Tidings the Shepherds brought them, but did not *welcome* them.

The Quoting of this Prophecy might ſerve to obviate an Objection, which ſome would make againſt Chriſt upon this ſad Providence; Can the *Meſſiah*, who is to be the Conſolation of *Iſrael*, be introduc'd with all this Lamentation? Yes, for ſo it was foretold, and the Scripture muſt be accompliſhed. And beſides, if we look further into that Prophecy we ſhall find, that the *bitter Weeping* in *Ramah* was but a Prologue to the greateſt Joy, for it follows, *thy Work ſhall be rewarded*, and *there is Hope in thy End*. The worſe things are, the ſooner they will mend: Unto them a Child was born, ſufficient to repair their Loſſes.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joſeph in Egypt, 20 Saying, Ariſe, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Iſrael: for they are dead which ſought the young childs life. 21 And he aroſe, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Iſrael. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithſtanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aſide into the parts of Galilee: 23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophets, He ſhall be called a Nazarene.

We have here Chriſt's Return out of *Egypt* into the Land of *Iſrael* again: *Egypt* may ſerve to ſojourn in, or take ſhelter in for a while but not to abide in; Chriſt was ſent to the *loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael*, and therefore to them he muſt return. *Obſerve*,

1. What it was that made way for his Return, the *Death of Herod*, which happen'd not long after the Murder of the Infants; ſome think not above three Months: ſuch quick Work did Divine Vengeance make. *Note*, *Herods* muſt dye; proud Tyrants that were the Terror of the Mighty, and the Oppreſſors of the Godly in the Land of the Living, their Day muſt come to fall, and down to the Pit they muſt go. *Who art thou then that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a Man that ſhall dye?* Iſa. 51. 12, 13. eſpecially conſidering that at Death, not only their Envy and Hatred are *periſhed*, Eccl. 9. 6. and they ceaſe from troubling, *Job.* 3. 17. but they are *puniſhed*. Of all Sins the Guilt of innocent Blood fills the Meaſure ſooneſt. 'Tis a Dreadful Account which *Joſephus* gives of the Death of this ſame *Herod*, *Antiq. Jud.* lib. 17. cap 8, 9, 10. that he was ſeized with a Diſeaſe, which burn'd him inwardly with an inexpreſſible Torture, that he was inſatiably greedy of Meat, had the Cholick, and Gout, and Dropſy; ſuch an intolerable Stink attended his Diſeaſe, that none could come near him, and ſo paſſionate and impatient, that he was a Torment to himſelf, and a Terror to all that attended him; his innate Cruelty being thus exaſperated made him more barbarous than ever. Having order'd his own Son to be put to Death, he impriſon'd many of the Nobility and Gentry, and order'd, that as ſoon as he was dead they ſhould be kill'd; but that Execution was prevented. See what kind of Men have been the Enemies and Perſecutors of Chriſt and his Followers: Few have oppoſed Chriſtianity, but what have firſt diveſted themſelves of Humanity, as *Nero* and *Domitian*.

2. The Orders given from Heaven concerning their Return, and *Joſeph's* Obedience to thoſe Orders, *v.*19, 20, 21. God had ſent *Joſeph* into *Egypt*, and there he ſtaid till the ſame that brought him thither order'd him thence. *Note*, In all our Removes it is good to ſee our Way plain, and God going before us; we ſhould not move either one Way or other, without Order. Theſe Orders were ſent him by an *Angel*. *Note*, Our Intercourſe with God, if it be kept up on our Part, ſhall be kept up on his, whatever we are. No place can exclude God's gracious Viſits: *Angels* come to *Joſeph* in *Egypt*, to *Ezekiel* in *Babylon*, and to *John* in *Patmos*. Now (1.) The Angel informs him of the Death of *Herod*, and his Accomplices: *They are dead which ſought the young Child's Life*. They are dead, but the young Child lives: Perſecuted Saints ſometimes live to tread upon the Graves of their Perſecutors. Thus did the Church's King weather this Storm, and many a one has the Church in like manner weather'd. *They are dead*, to wit, *Herod* and his Son *Antipater*, who though there were mutual Jealouſies between them, yet probably concurred in ſeeking the Deſtruction of this new King. If *Herod* firſt kill *Antipater*, and then dye himſelf, the Coaſts are clear'd, and the Lord is known by the Judgments which he executeth, when one wicked Inſtrument is the Ruin of another. (2.) He directs him what to do; He muſt go and *return to the Land of Iſrael*; and he did ſo without Delay, not pleading the tolerable good Settlement he had in *Egypt*, or the Inconveniences of the Journey, eſpecially if, as is ſuppoſed, 'twas in the Beginning of Winter that *Herod* died. God's People follow his Conduct wherever he leads them, wherever he lodges them. Did we but look upon the World, as our *Egypt*, the Place of our Bondage and Baniſhment, and Heaven only as our *Canaan*, our Home, our Reſt, we ſhould as readily *ariſe and depart* thither when we are call'd for, as *Joſeph* did out of *Egypt*.

3. The further Direction he had from God, which Way to ſteer, and where to fix in the Land of *Iſrael*, v. 22, 23. God could have given him theſe Inſtructions with the former, but God reveals his Mind to his People by Degrees, to keep them ſtill waiting on him, and expecting to hear further from him. Theſe Orders *Joſeph* received in a Dream, probably as thoſe before, by the Miniſtration of an Angel. God could have ſignified his Will to *Joſeph* by the Child *Jeſus*, but we do not find that in thoſe Removes, he either takes notice or gives notice of any thing that occurred; ſurely it was becauſe in all things it behoved him to be made *like his Brethren*; being a Child, he ſpake as a Child, and did as a Child, and drew a veil over his infinite Knowledge, and Power as a Child he *increaſed in Wiſdom*.

Now the Direction given this holy Royal Family is, (1.) That it might not ſettle in *Judea*, v. 22. *Joſeph* might think, that *Jeſus* being born in *Bethlehem* muſt be brought up there; yet is prudently afraid for the young Child, becauſe he heard that *Archelaus* reigns in *Herod*'s ſtead, not over all the Kingdom as his Father did, but only over *Judea*, the other Provinces being put into other Hands. See what a Succeſſion of Enemies there is to fight againſt Chriſt and his Church. If one drop off another preſently appears, to keep up the old Enmity. But for this Reaſon *Joſeph* muſt not take the young Child into *Judea*. *Note*, God will not thruſt his Children into the Mouth of Danger, but when it is for his own Glory and their Tryal; for *precious in the ſight of the Lord is the Life and Death of his Saints*, precious is their Blood to him.

(2.) That it muſt ſettle in *Galilee*, *v.* 22. There *Philip* now rul'd, who was a mild quiet Man. *Note*, The Providence of God commonly ſo orders it, that his People ſhall not want a quiet Retreat from the Storm and from the Tempeſt; when one Climate becomes hot and ſcorching, another ſhall be kept more cool and temperate. *Galilee* lay far North, *Samaria* lay between it and *Judea*; thither they were ſent, *to Nazareth*, a City upon a Hill, in the Centre of the Lot of *Zebulun*; there the Mother of our Lord lived, when ſhe conceived that *Holy Thing*, and probably *Joſeph* liv'd there too, *Luke* 1. 26, 26. Thither they were ſent, for there they were well known, and were among their Relations; the moſt proper place for them to be in. There they continued, and from thence our Saviour was called *Jeſus of Nazareth*, which was to the *Jews a ſtumbling-block*, for *can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*

In this is ſaid to be fulfilled what was ſpoken *by the Prophets*, *He ſhall be called a Nazarene*; which may be looked upon (1.) As a Name of Honour and Dignity, though primarily it ſignifies no more but a Man of *Nazareth*, yet there is an Alluſion or Myſtery in it, ſpeaking Chriſt to be, (1.) The *Man, the Branch* ſpoken of, *Iſa.* 11. 1. Where the Word is *Netſar*, which ſignifies, either a *Branch*, or the City of *Nazareth*; in being denominated from that City, he is declared to be that Branch. (2.) It ſpeaks him to be the great *Nazarite* of whom the legal *Nazarites* were a Type and Figure, eſpecially *Sampſon*, Jud. 13. 5. and *Joſeph* who is call'd a *Nazarite among his Brethren*, Gen. 49. 26. And to whom that which was preſcrib'd concerning the *Nazarites* has Reference, *Num.* 6. 2. *&c.* not that Chriſt was *ſtrictly a Nazarite*, for he drank Wine, and touch'd dead Bodies; but he was eminently ſo, both as he was ſingularly holy, and as he was by a ſolemn Deſignation and Dedication ſet apart to Honour of God in the Work of our Redemption, as *Sampſon* was to ſave *Iſrael*: And 'tis a Name we have all Reaſon to rejoyce in, and to know him by.

Or 2. As a Name of Reproach and Contempt. To be called a *Nazarene* was to be called a *deſpicable Man*, a Man from whom no Good was to be expected, and to whom no Reſpect was to be paid. The Devil firſt faſten'd this Name upon Chriſt, to render him mean, and to prejudice People againſt him, and it ſtuck a Nick-Name to him and his Followers. Now this was not particularly foretold by any one Prophet, but in general it was *ſpoken by the Prophets*, that he ſhould be *deſpiſed and rejected of Man*, Iſa. 53. 2, 3. a *Worm and no Man*, Pſal. 22. 6, 7. that he ſhould be an *Alien to his Brethren*, Pſal. 69. 9, 10. Let no Name of Reproach for Religion's ſake ſeem hard to us, when our Maſter was himſelf call'd a *Nazarene*

CHAP. III.

At the Story of this Chapter, concerning the Baptiſm of John, *begins the Goſpel*, Mark 1. 1. *what went before is but Preface, or Introduction; this is the* Beginning of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. *And* Peter *obſerves the ſame Date*, Acts 1. 22. beginning from the *Baptiſm of* John, *for then Chriſt began firſt to appear in him, and then to appear to him, and by him to the World. Here's* 1. *The glorious Riſing of the Morning-Star*, John the Baptiſt, *v.* 1. (1.) *The Doctrine he preached*, v. 2. (2.) *The fulfilling of the Scripture in him*, v. 3. (3.) *His Manner of Life*, v. 4. (4.) *The Reſort of Multitudes to him, and their Submiſſion to his Baptiſm*, v. 5, 6. (5.) *His Sermon that he Preached to the Phariſees and Sadduces, wherein he endeavours to bring them to Repentance*, v. 7.–10. *and ſo to bring them to Chriſt*, v. 11, 12. 2. *The more Glorious Shining forth of the Sun of Righteouſneſs immediately after; where we have* (1.) *The Honour done by him to the Baptiſm of* John, v. 13.–15. (2.) *The Honour done to him, by the Deſcent of the Spirit upon him, and a Voice from Heaven*, v. 16, 17.

IN thoſe days came John the Baptiſt, preaching in the wilderneſs of Judea, 2 And ſaying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was ſpoken of by the prophet Eſaias, ſaying, The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight. 4 And the ſame John had his raiment of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loyns; and his meat was locuſts and wild honey. 5 Then went out to him Jeruſalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan. 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confeſſing their ſins.

We have here an Account of the Preaching and Baptiſm of *John*, which was the Dawning of the Goſpel Day. *Obſerve*,

1. The Time when he appear'd: *In thoſe days*, v. 1. or *after thoſe Days*, long after what was recorded in the foregoing Chapter, which left the Child Jeſus in his Infancy. *In thoſe Days*, i. e. in the Time appointed of the Father for the Beginning of the Goſpel, when the *Fulneſs of Time* was come, which was often thus ſpoken of in the *Old Teſtament*, *in thoſe Days*. Now the laſt of *Daniel's* Weeks began, or rather the latter half of the laſt Week, when the *Meſſiah* was to *confirm the Covenant with many*, Dan. 9. 27. Chriſt's Appearances are all in their Seaſons. Glorious Thing were ſpoken both of *John* and *Jeſus*, at, and before their Births, which would have given Occaſion to expect ſome extraordinary Appearances of a Divine Preſence and Power with them when they were very young; but 'tis quite otherwiſe. Except Chriſt's diſputing with the Doctors at Twelve Years old, nothing appears remarkable concerning either of them, till they were about thirty Years old. Nothing is recorded of their Childhood and Youth, but the greateſt part of their Life is *Tempus ἄδηλον*, 'tis wrapt up in Darkneſs and Obſcurity: Theſe Children differ little in outward Appearance from other Children, as the Heir while he is under Age differs nothing from a Servant, though he be *Lord of all*. And this was to ſhew (1.) That even then when God is acting as the God of *Iſrael*, the *Saviour*, yet *verily he is a God that hideth himſelf*, Iſa. 45. 15. *The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not*, Gen. 28. 16. Our Beloved ſtands behind the Wall long before he *looks forth at the Windows*, Cant. 2. 9. (2.) That our Faith muſt principally have an eye to Chriſt in his Office and Underaking, for there is the Diſplay of his Power; but in his Perſon is the *hiding of his Power*. All this while Chriſt was God-Man, yet we are not told, what he ſaid or did, till he appear'd as a Prophet, and then *hear ye him*. (3.) That Young Men, though well qualified, ſhould not be forward to put forth themſelves in publick Service, but be humble and modeſt, and ſelf-diffident, *ſwift to hear*, and *ſlow to ſpeak*.

Matthew ſaith nothing of Conception and Birth of *John* the Baptiſt, which is largely related by St. *Luke*, but finds him at full Age, as if dropt from the Clouds to preach in the Wilderneſs. For above three Hundred Years the Church had been without Prophets; thoſe Lights had been long put out, that he might be the more deſir'd, who was to be the great Prophet. After *Malachi* there was no Prophet, nor any Pretender to Prophecy, till *John* the Baptiſt, to whom therefore the Prophet *Malachi* points more directly, than any of the *Old Teſtament* Prophets had done, *Mal.* 3. 1. *I ſend my Meſſenger.*

2. The Place where he appear'd firſt: *In the Wilderneſs of Judea.* 'Twas not an uninhabited Deſart, but a Part of the Country not ſo thick Peopled, nor ſo much incloſed into Fields and Vineyards, as other Parts were; it was ſuch a Wilderneſs as had 6 Cities and their Villages in it, which are nam'd, *Joſh.* 15. 61. 62. In theſe Cities and Villages *John* preach'd, for thereabouts he had hitherto liv'd being born hard by in *Hebron*. The Scenes of his Action began there, where he had long ſpent his Time in Contemplation, and even when he ſhew'd himſelf to *Iſrael*, he ſhew'd how well he lov'd Retirement, as far as would conſiſt with his Buſineſs. The *Word of the Lord* found *John* here in *a Wilderneſs*. *Note*, No Place is ſo remote as to ſhut us out from the Viſits of Divine Grace; nay, commonly the ſweeteſt Intercourſe the Saints have with Heaven is, when they are withdrawn furtheſt from the Noiſe of this World. It was in this *Wilderneſs* of *Judah*, that *David* penn'd the 63*d Pſalm*, which ſpeaks ſo much of the ſweet Communion he then had with God, *Hoſ.* 2. 14. In a Wilderneſs the Law was given, and as the *Old Teſtament*, ſo the *New Teſtament-Iſrael* was firſt found in a Deſart Land, and there God *led him about* and *inſtructed him*, 1 Deut. 32. 10. *John* Baptiſt was a Prieſt of the Order of *Aaron*, yet we find him preaching in a Wilderneſs, and never officiating in the *Temple*; but Chriſt who was not a Son of *Aaron*, yet is often found in the Temple, and ſitting there as one having Authority; ſo it was foretold, *Mat.* 3. 1. *The Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddenly come to his Temple*, not the *Meſſenger* that was to *prepare his Way*. This intimated that the Prieſthood of Chriſt was to thruſt out that of *Aaron*, and drive it into a Wilderneſs.

The Beginning of the Goſpel in a Wilderneſs, ſpeaks Comfort to the Deſarts of the *Gentile* World. Now muſt the Prophecies be fulfilled, *I will plant in the Wilderneſs the Cedar*, Iſa. 41. 18, 19. The Wilderneſs ſhall be a *fruitful Field*, Iſa. 32. 15. And the *Deſart ſhall rejoyce*, Iſa. 32. 1, 2. which the Septuagint read, *the Deſarts of Jordan*, the very Wilderneſs in which *John* preach'd. In the *Romiſh* Church there are thoſe who call themſelves *Hermites*, and pretend to follow *John*, but when they ſay of Chriſt, *Behold he is in the Deſart, go not forth*, Mat. 24. 26. There was a Seducer that led his Followers *into the Wilderneſs*, Heb. 21. 3.

3. His Preaching. This he made his Buſineſs: He came not fighting, not diſputing, but *preaching*, v. 1. for by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching Chriſt's Kingdom muſt be ſet up.

(1.) The Doctrine he preach'd, was that of Repentance, *v.* 2. *Repent ye*. He preach'd this *in Judea*, among thoſe that were called *Jews*, and made a Profeſſion of Religion; for even they need Repentance. He preached it not in *Jeruſalem*, but in the *Wilderneſs of Judea*, among the plain Country People; for even thoſe that think themſelves moſt out of the Way of Temptation, and furtheſt from the Vanities and Vices of the Town, yet cannot waſh their Hands in Innocency, but muſt do it in Repentance. *John* Baptiſt's Buſineſs was to call Men to *repent* of their Sins; μετανοεῖτε, *bethink your ſelves*, admit a ſecond *Thought* to correct the Errors of the firſt; an *After-Thought*: conſider your Ways, *change your Minds*; you have thought amiſs, *think again, and think aright*. *Note*, True Penitents have *other Thoughs* of God and Chriſt, and Sin and Holineſs, and this World and the other, than they have had, and ſtand otherwiſe affected towards them. The Change of the *Mind* produceth a Change of the *Way*. Thoſe who are truly ſorry for what they have done amiſs, will be careful to do ſo no more. This Repentance is a neceſſary Duty in Obedience to the Command of God, *Acts* 17. 30. and a neceſſary Preparative and Qualification for the Comforts of the Goſpel of Chriſt. If the Heart of Man had continued upright and unſtained, Divine Conſolations might have been receiv'd without this painful Operation proceeding, but being ſinful, it muſt be firſt pain'd before it can be laid at eaſe; muſt *labour* before it can be at reſt, The Sore muſt be ſearch'd, or it cannot be cur'd. *I wound*, and *I heal*.

(2.) The Argument us'd to enforce this Call was, for *the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. The Prophets of the *Old Teſtament* call'd People to *repent*, for the obtaining and ſecuring of temporal National Mercies, and for the preventing and removing of temporal National Judgments: but now though the Duty preſſed is the ſame, the Reaſon is *new*, and purely *Evangelical*. Men are now conſider'd in their perſonal Capacity, and not ſo much as then in a ſocial and political one. Now, Repent, for the *Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, i. e. the Goſpel Diſpenſation of the Covenant of Grace, the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers, by the Death and Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt. 'Tis a *Kingdom* which Chriſt is the Sovereign of, and we muſt be the willing loyal Subjects of. 'Tis a Kingdom of *Heaven*, not of this World, a ſpiritual Kingdom; its Original from Heaven, its Tendency to Heaven. *John* preached this *at hand*, then it was at the Door; to us it is come, by the pouring out of the Spirt, and the full exhibiting of the Riches of Goſpel Grace. Now (1.) This is a *great Inducement* to us *to repent*: Nothing like the Conſideration of divine Grace to break the Heart, both *for Sin*, and *from Sin*. That's Evangelical Repentance that flows from a ſight of Chriſt, from a Senſe of his Love, and the Hopes of Pardon and Forgiveneſs thro' him. Kindneſs is conquering, abuſed Kindneſs humbling and melting. What a Wretch was I to ſin againſt ſuch Grace! againſt the Law and Love of ſuch a Kingdom! (2.) It is a *great Encouragement* to us *to repent*; Repent, for your Sins ſhall be pardon'd upon your Repentance. Return to God in a Way of Duty, and he will through Chriſt return to you in a Way of Mercy. The Proclamation of Pardon diſcovers and fetcheth in the Malefactor that before fled and abſconded. Thus are we drawn to it with the Cords of a Man, and the Bands of Love.

4. The *Prophecy* that was fulfilled in him, *v.* 3. This is he that was ſpoken of in the Beginning of that part of the Prophecy of *Eſaias*, which is moſtly Evangelical, and which points at Goſpel Times, and Goſpel Grace, *Iſa.* 40. 3, 4. *John* is here ſpoken of,

(1.) As the *Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs*. *John* own'd it himſelf, *John* 1. 23. *I am the Voice*, and that's all; God is the Speaker, who maketh known his mind by *John*, as a Man doth by his Voice. The Word of God muſt be received as ſuch, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 13. What elſe is *Paul*, and what is *Apollos*, but the Voice? *John* is called *the Voice*, Φωνὴ βοῶντος, *the Voice of one crying* aloud, which is ſtartling and awakening; Chriſt is called *the Word*, which being diſtinct and articulate, is more inſtructive: *John* as the *Voice* rous'd Men, and then Chriſt as the *Word* taught them; as we find, *Rev.* 14. 2. The Voice of many Waters, and of a great Thunder, make way for the melodious Voice of *Harpers*, and the *New Song*, v. 3. Some obſerve, that as *Sampſon's* Mother muſt drink no *Strong Drink*, yet he was deſign'd to be a *ſtrong Man*, ſo *John* Baptiſt's Father was ſtruck dumb, and yet he was deſign'd to be the *Voice of one crying*. When the Cryer's Voice is begotten of a dumb Father, it ſhews the *Excellency of the Power to be of God, and not of Man.*

(2.) As one whoſe Buſineſs it was to *prepare the Way of the Lord, and to make his Path ſtrait*; ſo it was ſaid of him before he was born, that he ſhould *make ready a People prepared for the Lord*, Luke 1. 17. As Chriſt's Harbinger and Forerunner, and ſuch a one as intimated the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, for he came not in the gaudy Dreſs of a Herald at Arms, but the homely one of a Hermit. Officers are ſent before great Men to clear the Way, ſo *John* prepares the Way of the Lord. (1.) He himſelf did ſo among the Men of that Generation. In the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation at that time all was out of Courſe; there was a great Decay of Piety, the Vitals of Religion were Corrupted and eaten out by the Traditions and Injunctions of the Elders. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, that is, the greateſt Hypocrites in the World, had the Key of Knowledge, and the Key of Government at their Girdle. The People were generally extreme proud of their Privileges, confident of Juſtification by their own Righteouſneſs, unſenſible of Sin, and though now under the moſt *humbling* Providences, being lately made a Province of the *Roman* Empire, yet were *unhumbled*: They were much in the ſame Temper that they were in in *Malachi's* Time, inſolent and haughty, and ready to contradict the Word of God: Now *John* was ſent to level theſe Mountains, to take down their high Opinion of themſelves, and to ſhew them their Sins, that the Doctrine of Chriſt muſt be the more acceptable and effectual. (2.) His Doctrine of Repentance and Humiliations, is ſtill as neceſſary as it was then to prepare the Way of the Lord. *Note*, There is a great deal to be done to make way for Chriſt into a Soul, to *bow the Heart* for the Reception of the Son of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 19. 14. and nothing more needful, in order to this, than the Diſcovery of Sin, and a Conviction of the Inſufficiency of our own Righteouſneſs. That which letteth will lett, until it be taken out of the way; Prejudices muſt be remov'd, high Thoughts brought down, and captivated to the Obedience of Chriſt. Gates of Braſs muſt be broken, and Bars of Iron cut aſunder, e'er the everlaſting Doors be open'd for the King of Glory to come in. The way of Sin and Satan is a *crooked way*; to prepare a Way for Chriſt, the Paths muſt be *made ſtrait*, Heb. 12. 13.

5. The Garb in which he appear'd, the Figure he made, and the manner of Life he liv'd, *v*, 4. They that expected the *Meſſiah* as a temporal Prince, would think his Forerunner muſt come in great Pomp and Splendor, that his Equipage ſhould be very magnificent and gay, but it proves quite contrary, he ſhall be *great in the ſight of the Lord*, but mean in the Eye of the World; and as Chriſt himſelf having *no Form or Comelineſs*, to intimate betimes, that the Glory of Chriſt's Kingdom was to be ſpiritual, and the Subjects of it ſuch as ordinarily were, either *found* by it, or *made* by it poor and deſpis'd, and had their Honours, Pleaſures, and Riches deriv'd from another World.

1. His *Dreſs* was *plain*. This ſame *John* had *his Raiment of Camel's Hair, and a leathern Girdle about his Loins*; he did not go in *long Clothing*, as the *Scribes*, or *ſoft Clothing*, as the Courtiers, but in the Clothing of a Country-huſbandman, for he liv'd in a Country-place, and ſuited his *Habit* to his *Habitation*. *Note*, It is good for us to accommodate ourſelves to the Place and Condition, which God in his Providence has put us in. *John* appear'd in this Dreſs, (1.) to ſhew that, like *Jacob*, he was a *plain Man*, and mortified to this World, and the Delights and Gaities of it. *Behold an* Iſraelite *indeed*. Thoſe that are *lowly in Heart*, ſhould ſhew it by a holy Negligence, and Indifference in their Attire, and not make the putting on of Apparel their Adorning, nor value others by their Attire. (2.) To ſhew that he was a *Prophet*, for Prophets wore *rough Garments*, as mortified men, *Zech.* 13. 4. And eſpecially to ſhew that he was the *Elias* promis'd, for particular notice is taken of *Elias*, that he was a *hairy Man* (which ſome think is meant of the hairy Garments he wore) and that *he was girt with a Girdle of Leather about his Loins*, 2 Kings 1. 18. *John Baptiſt* appears no way inferior to him in Mortification; this therefore is *that* Elias *that was to come*. (3.) To ſhew that he was a Man of Reſolution; his Girdle was not *fine*, ſuch as were then commonly worn, but it was *ſtrong*, 'twas a *leathern Girdle*; and bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he comes, finds with *his Loins girt*, Luke 12. 35. 1 Pet. 1. 13.

2. His *Diet* was *plain*, his *Meat* was *Locuſts* and *wild Honey*; not as if he never eat any thing elſe, but theſe he frequently fed upon, and made many a Meals-meat of when he retired into ſolitary Places, and continued long there for Contemplation; *Locuſts* were a ſort of flying Inſect, very good for Food, and allow'd as clean, *Lev.* 11. 22. it requir'd little Dreſſing, and was light and eaſy of Digeſtion, whence it is reckon'd among the Infirmities of old Age, that the *Graſshopper* or *Locuſt* is then *a Burthen* to the Stomach, *Eccl.* 12. 5. *Wild Honey* was that which *Canaan* flow'd with, 1 *Sam.* 14. 26. Either it was gather'd immediately as it fell in the Dew, or rather as it was found in the hollows of Trees and Rocks, where Bees built that were not as thoſe in Hives, under the Care and Inſpection of Men. This intimates that he eat *ſparingly*, a little ſerv'd his turn; a Man would be long e'er he fill'd his Belly with Locuſts and wild Honey, *John Baptiſt* came *neither Eating nor Drinking*, Mat. 11. 18. Not with that Curioſity, Formality, and Familiarity that other People do. He was ſo intirely taken up with Spiritual Things, that he could ſeldom find time for a ſet Meal. Now (1.) This agreed with the Doctrine he Preached of *Repentance*, and *Fruits meet for Repentance*. Note, Thoſe whoſe buſineſs it is to call others to mourn for Sin, and to mortifie it, ought themſelves to live a ſerious Life, a Life of ſelf-denial, Mortification, and Contempt of the World. *John Baptiſt* thus ſhew'd the deep Senſe he had of the badneſs of the Time and Place he liv'd in, which made the Preaching of Repentance needful; every Day was a *Faſt-day* with him. (2.) This agreed with his Office as *Chriſt's Forerunner*; by this Practice he ſhew'd that he knew what the *Kingdom of Heaven* was, and had experienc'd the Powers of it. *Note*, Thoſe that are acquainted with Divine and Spiritual Pleaſures, cannot but look upon all the Delights and Ornaments of Senſe with a holy Indifferency, they know better things. By giving others this Example, he made way for Chriſt. *Note*, A Conviction of the Vanity of the World, and every thing in it, is the beſt Preparative for the Entertainment of the Kingdom of Heaven in the Heart. *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit*.

6. The People that attended upon him, and flock'd after him, *v.* 5 *Then went out to him Jeruſalem, and all Judea*. Great Multitudes came to him from the City, and from all parts of the Country; ſome of all ſorts, Men and Women, Young and Old, Rich and Poor, Phariſees and Publicans, they *went out to him* as ſoon as they heard of his Preaching the *Kingdom of Heaven*, that they might hear what they heard ſo much of. Now (1.) This was a great *Honour* put upon *John*, that ſo many attended him, and with ſo much Reſpect. *Note*, Many times thoſe have moſt real Honour done them, that leaſt court the Shadow of it. Thoſe that live a mortified Life, that are Humble and Self-denying, and dead to the World, command Reſpect, and Men have a ſecret Value and Reverence for them, more than one would imagine. (2.) This gave *John* a great Opportunity of doing Good, and was an Evidence that God was with him. Now People begin to crowd and *preſs into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Luke 16. 16. and a bleſſed ſight it was to ſee the *Dew of the Youth* dropping *from the Womb* of the Goſpel-*Morning*, *Pſal.* 110. 3. To ſee the Net caſt were there were ſo many Fiſh. (3.) This was an Evidence, that now was a Time of great expectation; it was generally thought that the *Kingdom of God* ſhould preſently *appear*, *Luke* 19. 11. And therefore when *John* ſhew'd himſelf to *Iſrael*, liv'd and preach'd at this rate, ſo very different from the *Scribes and Phariſees*, they were ready to ſay of him, that he was the *Chriſt*, *Luke* 3. 15. And this occaſion'd ſuch a Confluence of People about him. (4.) Thoſe that would have the Benefit of *John's* Miniſtry, muſt *go out* to him to the Wilderneſs, ſharing in his Reproach. *Note*, They who truly deſire the Sincere Milk of the Word, if it be not brought to them, will go ſeek out for it. And they who would learn the Doctrine of Repentance, muſt *go out* from the Hurry of this World, and be ſtill. (5.) It appears by the Iſſue, that of the many that came to *John's* Baptiſm, there were but few that ſtuck to it; witneſs the cold Reception Chriſt had in *Judea*, and about *Jeruſalem*. *Note*. There may be a Multitude of forward Hearers, where there are but a few true Believers, Curioſity, Affectation of Novelty and Variety, may bring many to attend upon good Preaching, and to be affected with it for a while, who yet are never ſubject to the Power of it, *Ezek.* 33. 31, 32.

7. The Rite or Ceremony by which he admitted Diſciples, *v.* 6. Thoſe that receiv'd his Doctrine, and ſubmitted to his Diſcipline, were *Baptized of him in* Jordan, thereby profeſſing their Repentance, and their Belief, that the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was at hand. (1.) They teſtified their Repentance by *confeſſing their Sins*; a general Confeſſion, 'tis probable they made to *John*, that they were *Sinners*, that they were polluted by Sin, and needed cleanſing, but to God they made a Confeſſion of particular Sins, for he is the Party offended. The *Jews* had been taught to *juſtifie* themſelves, but *John* teacheth them to *accuſe* themſelves, and not reſt, as they us'd to do, in the general Confeſſion of Sin, made for all *Iſrael* once a Year upon the Day of Atonement, but to make a particular Acknowledgment, every one, of *the Plague of his own Heart*. *Note*, A penitent Confeſſion of Sin is requir'd, in order to Peace and Pardon; and thoſe only are ready to receive Jeſus Chriſt as their Righteouſneſs, who are brought with Sorrow and Shame to own their Guilt, 1 *John* 1. 8. (2.) The Benefits of the *Kingdom of Heaven* now *at hand*, were thereupon ſeal'd to them by Baptiſm. He waſh'd them with Water in token of this, that from all their Iniquities God would *cleanſe them*. It was uſual with the *Jews* to baptize thoſe whom they admitted Proſelytes to their Religion, eſpecially thoſe who were only *Proſelytes of the Gate*, and were not Circumcis'd as the *Proſelytes of Righteouſneſs* were. Some think it was likewiſe a Cuſtom for Perſons of eminent Religion, that ſet up for Leaders, by Baptiſm to admit Pupils and Diſciples. Chriſt's Queſtion concerning *John's* Baptiſm, was it from *Heaven* or *of Men* imply'd that there were Baptiſms of Men, who pretended not to a Divine Miſſion; with this Uſage *John* complied, but his was from Heaven, and was diſtinguiſh'd from all others, with this Character, 'twas the *Baptiſm of Repentance*, Acts 19. 4. All *Iſrael* were *Baptized into* Moſes, 1 *Cor.* 10. 2. The *Ceremonial Law* conſiſting in *divers Waſhings*, or *Baptiſms*, *Heb.* 9. 10. But *John*'s Baptiſm refers to the *remedial Law*, the Law of Repentance, and Faith. He is ſaid to Baptize them *in Jordan*, that River which was famous for *Iſrael*'s Paſſage through it, and *Naaman*'s Cure, yet 'tis probable, *John* did not Baptize in that River at firſt, but afterwards, when the People that came to his Baptiſm were numerous, he removed to *Jordan*. By Baptiſm he obliged them to live a holy Life, according to the Profeſſion they took upon themſelves. *Note*, Confeſſion of Sin muſt always be accompanied with holy Reſolutions in the Strength of Divine Grace, not to return to it again.

7 But when he ſaw many of the Phariſees and Sad-
duces come to his baptiſm, he ſaid unto them, O ge-
neration of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from
the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits
meet for repentance. 9 And think not to ſay within
yourſelves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I ſay
unto you, that God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up
children unto Abraham. 10 And now alſo the ax is
laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree
which bringeth not forth *fruit*, is hewn down and caſt
into the fire. 11 I indeed baptize you with water un-
to repentance; but he that cometh after me, is migh-
tier then I, whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear:
he ſhall baptize you with the holy Ghoſt, and with fire.
12 Whoſe fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly
purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner:
but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable
fire.

The Doctrine *John* Preach'd, was that of *Repentance*, in conſideration of the *Kingdom of Heaven, at hand*; now here we have the *Uſe* of that *Doctrine*. Application is the Life of Preaching, ſo it was of *John's* Preaching.

Obſerve, 1. To whom he applyed it; to the *Phariſees* and *Sadduces* that *came to his Baptiſm*, v. 7. To others, he thought it enough to ſay, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; but when he ſaw theſe *Phariſees* and *Sadduces* come about him, he found it neceſſary to explain himſelf, and deal more cloſely. Theſe were two of the three noted Sects among the *Jews* at that time; the third was that of the *Eſſenes*, whom we never read of in the Goſpels, for they affected Retirement, and declin'd buſying themſelves in publick Action. The *Phariſees* were Zealots for the Ceremonies, for the Power of the Church, and the Traditions of the Elders; the *Sadduces* run into the other Extreme, and were little better than Deiſts, denying the Exiſtence of Spirits, and a future State, 'Twas ſtrange that they *came to John*'s Baptiſm, but their Curioſity brought them to be Hearers; and ſome of them, 'tis probable, ſubmitted to be baptiz'd, but 'tis certain the generality of them did not; for Chriſt ſaith, *Luke* 7. 29, 30. That *when the Publicans juſtified God, and were Baptized of John, the Phariſees and Lawyers rejected the Council of God againſt themſelves, and being not Baptized of him. Note*, Many come to Ordinances that come not under the Power of them. Now to them *John* here addreſſeth himſelf with all Faithfulneſs, and what he ſaid to them, he ſaid to the Multitude, *Luke* 3. 7. for they were all concern'd in what he ſaid. 2. What the Application was, 'tis plain and home, and directed to their Conſciences; he ſpeaks as one that came not to Preach *before them*, but to Preach *to them*. Tho' this Education was private, he was not baſhful when he appear'd in Publick, nor fear'd the Face of Man, for he was full of the Holy Ghoſt, and of Power.

1. Here's a Word of *Conviction* and *Awakening*. He begins harſhly, calls them not *Rabbi*, gives them not the Titles, much leſs the Applauſes they had been us'd to. (1.) The *Title* he gives them is, O *Generation of Vipers!* Chriſt gave them the ſame Title, *Mat*. 12. 34. 23. 33. They were as *Vipers*, tho' ſpecious, yet venomous and poiſonous, and full of Malice and Enmity to every thing that was good; they were a *Viperous Brood*, the Seed and Off-ſpring of ſuch as had been of the ſame Spirit, 'twas bred in the Bone with them. They gloried in it, that they were the Seed of *Abraham*, but *John* ſhew'd them, that they were the Srepent's Seed; compare *Gen*. 3. 15. of their Father the Devil, *John* 8. 44. They were a *Viperous Gang*, they were all alike; tho' Enemies to one another, yet Confederate in Miſchief. *Note*, A wicked Generation is a *Generation of Vipers*, and they ought to be told ſo; it becomes the Miniſters of Chriſt to be bold in ſhewing Sinners their true Character.

(2.) The *Alarm* he gives them is, *Who has warned you to flee from the Wrath to come?* This intimates that *they* were in danger of the Wrath to come, and that their Caſe was ſo near to deſperate, and their Hearts ſo hardned in Sin, the *Phariſees* by their Shews of Religion, and the *Sadduces* by their Arguments againſt Religion, that it was next to a Miracle to ſee any hopes of them: What brings you hither? Who thought of ſeeing you here? What Fright have you been put into, that you enquire after the Kingdom of Heaven? *Note*, 1. There is a *Wrath to come*, beſides *preſent* Wrath, the Vials of which are *pour'd out* now; there's *future Wrath*, the Stores of which are *treaſur'd up* for hereafter. 2. It is the great Concern of every one of us to *flee* from that *Wrath*. 3. It is wonderful Mercy that we are fairly *warn'd* to *flee* from this Wrath; think, *who has warned us?* God has warn'd us, who delights not in our Ruin; he warns by the written Word, by Miniſters, by Conſcience. 4. Theſe Warnings ſometimes ſtartle thoſe that ſeemed to have been very much hardened in their Security, and good Opinion of themſelves.

2. Here's a Word of *Exhortation* and *Direction*, v. 8. *Bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance. Therefore*, becauſe you are *warn'd to flee from the Wrath to come*, let the Terrors of the Lord perſwade you to a holy Life. Or, *therefore*, becauſe you profeſs Repentance, and attend upon the Doctrine, and Baptiſm of Repentance, evidence that you are true Penitents; Repentance is ſeated in the Heart. There it is as a *Root*; but in vain do we pretend to have it there, if we do not *bring forth the Fruits* of it in a univerſal Reformation, forſaking all Sin, and cleaving to that which is good; theſe are Fruits ἀξίους τῆς μετανοίας, *worthy of Repentance. Note*, Thoſe are not *worthy* the Name of Penitents, nor their Privileges, who ſay they are ſorry for their Sins, and yet prefiſt in them. They that profeſs Repentance, as all that are Baptized do, muſt be, and act as becomes Penitents, and never do any thing unbecoming a Penitent Sinner, It becomes Penitents to be humble, and low in their own Eyes, to be thankful for the leaſt Mercy, patient under the greateſt Affliction, to be watchful againſt all Appearances of Sin, and Approaches towards it, to abound in every Duty, and to be charitable in judging others.

3. Here's a Word of Caution, not to truſt to their external Privileges, ſo as with them to ſhift off theſe Calls to Repentance, *v*. 9. *Think not to ſay within your ſelves, we have Abraham to our Father. Note*, There is a great deal which carnal Hearts are apt to ſay within themſelves, to put by the convincing commanding Power of the Word of God, which Miniſters ſhould labour to meet with, and anticipate; *vain Thoughts* which lodge within thoſe who are call'd to *waſh their Hearts*, *Jer*. 4. 14. Μὴ δόξητε *Pretend not*, *preſume not* to ſay within our ſelves; be not of the Opinion, that this will ſave you, harbour not ſuch a Conceit. *Pleaſe not your ſelves* with ſaying this; ſo ſome read it; rock not your ſelves a-ſleep with this, nor flatter your ſelves into a Fool's Paradiſe. *Note*, God takes notice what we ſay *within our ſelves*, which we dare not *ſpeak out*, and is acquainted with all the falſe Reſts of the Soul, and the Fallacies with which it deludes it ſelf, but will not diſcover them, leſt it ſhould be undeceiv'd. Many *hide* the Lye that runs them in *their Right-hand*, and roll it *under their Tongue*, becauſe they are aſham'd to own it; they keep in the Devil's Intereſt, by keeping the Devil's Councel. Now *John* ſhews them.

1. What their Pretence was; *We have* Abraham *to our Father*; we are not Sinners of the *Gentiles*, it is fit indeed *they* ſhould be call'd to Repent; but we are *Jews*, a holy Nation, a peculiar People, what is this to us? *Note*, The World doth us no good, when we will not take it as ſpoken to us, and belonging to us; think not that becauſe you are the Seed of *Abraham*, therefore (1.) you *need not Repent*, you have nothing to Repent of; your Relation to *Abraham*, and your Intereſt in the Covenant made with him, denominates you ſo Holy, that there's no occaſion for you to change your Mind or Way. (2.) That therefore you ſhall *fare well enough*, tho' you do not *Repent*; think not that this will bring you off in the Judgments, and ſecure you from the Wrath to come; that God will connive at your Impenitency, becauſe you are *Abraham's Seed. Note*, It is vain Preſumption, to think that our having good Relations will ſave us, tho' we be not good our ſelves. What tho' we be deſcended from pious Anceſtors, have been bleſs'd with a Religious Education, have our Lot caſt in Families where the Fear of God is uppermoſt, and have good Friends that Adviſe us, and Pray for us, what will all this avail us, if we do not *Repent*, and live a Life of Repentance? We have *Abraham* to our *Father*, and therefore are entitled to the Privileges of the Covenant made with him, being his Seed, we are *Sons of the Church*, the *Temple of the Lord*, *Jer*. 7. 4. *Note*, Multitudes by reſting in the Honours and Advantages of the viſible Church-memberſhip, take up ſhort of Heaven.

2. How fooliſh and groundleſs this Pretence was; they thought that being the Seed of *Abraham*, they were the only People God had in the World, and therefore if they were cut off, he would be at a loſs for a Church; but *John* ſhews them the Folly of this Conceit, *I ſay unto you* (whatever you ſay within your ſelves) that God is *able of theſe Stones to raiſe up Children unto Abraham.* He was now Baptizing in *Jordan* at *Bethabara*, John 1. 28. *The Houſe of Paſſage*, where the Children of *Iſrael paſſed over*, and there were the twelve Stones, one for each Tribe, which *Joſhua* ſet up for a *Memorial*, *Joſh*. 4. 20. 'Tis not unlikely that he pointed to thoſe Stones, which God could make to be more than in Repreſentation the *twelve Tribes of Iſrael*. Or, perhaps, he refers to *Iſa*. 51. 12. where *Abraham* is call'd the *Rock*, *out of which they were hewn*. That God who rais'd *Iſaac* out of ſuch a Rock, can, if there be occaſion, do as much again, for with him *nothing is impoſſible*. Some think he pointed to thoſe *Heathen-Soldiers* that were preſent, telling the *Jews* that God would raiſe up a Church for himſelf among the *Gentiles*, and entail the Bleſſing of *Abraham* upon them. Thus when our firſt Parents fell, God could have left them to periſh, and out of Stones have rais'd up another *Adam*, and another *Eve:* Or take it thus; Stones themſelves ſhall be own'd as *Abraham*'s Seed, rather than ſuch hard, dry, barren Sinners as you are. *Note*, As it is lowering to the Confidence of the Sinners in *Zion*, ſo it is encouraging to the Fears of the Sons of *Zion*, that whatever comes of the preſent Generation, God will never want a Church in the World; if the *Jews* fall off, the *Gentiles* ſhall be grafted in, *Mat*. 21. 43. *Rom*. 11. 12.

4. Here's a Word of Terror to the Careleſs and Secure *Phariſees* and *Sadduces*, and other the *Jews*, that knew not the Signs of the Times, nor the Day of their Viſitation, *v*. 10. Now look about you, now *the Kingdom of God is at hand*, and be made ſenſible.

1. How ſtrict and ſhort your Tryal is; *now the Axe* is carried before you, now it is *laid to the Root of the Tree*, now you are upon *your good Behaviour* and are to be ſo but a *while*; now you are mark'd for Ruin, and cannot avoid it but by a ſpeedy and ſincere Repentance. Now you muſt expect that God will make quicker work with you by his Judgments than he did formerly, and that they will *begin at the Houſe of God*: where God allows more Means, he allows leſs Time. *Behold, I come quickly*. Now they were put upon their laſt Tryal: Now, or Never.

2. How ſore and ſevere your Doom will be, if you do not improve this. 'Tis now declar'd, with the Axe at the Root, to ſhew that God is in earneſt in the Declaration, that *every Tree* tho' never ſo *high* in Gifts and Honours, tho' never ſo *green* in External Profeſſions and Performances, if it *bring not forth good Fruit*, the Fruits meet for Repentance, it is *hewn down*, diſown'd as a Tree in God's Vineyard, unworthy to have a Room there, and is *caſt into the Fire* of God's Wrath. The fitteſt place for barren Trees; what elſe are they good for? If not fit for Fruit, they are fit for Fuel. Probably, this refers to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*, which was not as other Judgments had been, like the lopping off of the Branches, or cutting down the Body of the Tree, leaving the Root to bud again, but it would be the total, final, and irrecoverable Extirpation of that People, in which all thoſe ſhould periſh that continued Impenitent. Now God will make a full End, *Wrath* was coming on them *to the utmoſt*.

5. A Word of Inſtruction concerning Jeſus Chriſt, in whom all *John*'s Preaching center'd; Chriſt's Miniſters Preach not themſelves, but him. Here's

1. The Dignity and Preheminence of Chriſt above *John*. See how meanly he ſpeaks of himſelf, that he might magnify Chriſt, *v*. 11. *I indeed Baptize you with Water*, that's the utmoſt I can do. *Note*, Sacraments derive not their Efficacy from thoſe that Adminiſter them, they can only apply the Sign, 'tis Chriſt's Prerogative to give the thing ſignified, 1 *Cor*. 3. 6. 2 *Kings* 4. 31. But *he that comes after me is*

mightier than I. Tho' *John* had much Power, for he came in the *Spirit and Power of Elias*, Chriſt had more; tho' *John* was truly Great, great in the ſight of the Lord, not a greater born of Women, yet he thinks himſelf unworthy to be in the meaneſt Place of Attendance upon Chriſt, *whoſe Shoes I am not worthy to bear.* He ſees (1.) How *Mighty* Chriſt is in compariſon with him. *Note*, It is a great Comfort to faithful Miniſters, to think that Jeſus Chriſt is Mightier than they, can do that *for them*, and that *by them*, which they cannot do; his Strength is perfected in their Weakneſs. (2.) How *mean* he is, in compariſion of Chriſt, not worthy to carry his Shoes after him. *Note*, Thoſe whom God puts Honour upon, are thereby made very humble and low in their own Eyes; willing to be abaſed, ſo that Chriſt may be magnified, to be any thing, to be nothing, ſo that Chriſt may be All.

2. The Deſign and Intention of Chriſt's Appearing, which they were now ſpeedily to expect; when it was Propheſied, that *John* ſhould be ſent as Chriſt's Forerunner, *Mal.* 3. 1, 2. It immediately follows, *The Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddenly come*, and ſhall *ſit as a Refiner*, v. 3. And after the coming of *Elijah*, *the Day comes that ſhall burn as an Oven*, Mal. 4: 13. To which the Baptiſm ſeems here to refer; Chriſt will come to make a Diſtinction.

1. By the powerful working of his Grace, *he ſhall Baptize you*, i. e. ſome of you *with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire. Note*, 1. It is Chriſt's Prerogative to Baptize *with the Holy Ghoſt*. This he did in the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit conferr'd upon the Apoſtles; to which Chriſt himſelf applies theſe words of *John*, *Acts* 1. 5. This he doth in the Graces and Comforts of the Spirit, given to them that aſk him, *Luke* 11. 13. *John* 7. 38. 39. See *Acts* 11. 16. 2. Thoſe that are Baptiz'd with the Holy Ghoſt, are Baptiz'd as *with Fire*; the ſeven Spirits of God appear as *ſeven Lamps of Fire*, Rev. 4. 5. Is Fire enlightening? ſo the Spirit is a Spirit of Illumination? Is it warming? And do not their Hearts burn within them? Is it conſuming? And doth not the Spirit of Judgment, as a *Spirit of burning*, conſume the Droſs of their Corruptions? Doth Fire make all it ſeizeth like it ſelf? And doth it move upwards? ſo doth the Spirit make the Soul Holy, like it ſelf, and its Tendency is Heaven-wards. Chriſt ſaith, *I am come to ſend Fire*, Luke 12. 49.

2. By the final Determinations of his Judgment, *v.* 12. *Whoſe Fan is in his Hand.* His Ability to diſtinguiſh, as the Eternal Wiſdom of the Father, who ſees all by a true Light, and his Authority to diſtinguiſh, as the Perſon to whom all Judgment is committed, is the *Fan* that is *in his Hand*, Jer. 15. 7. Now he ſits as a Refiner. *Obſerve* here, (1.) That the viſible Church is Chriſt's Floor; *O my threſhing the Corn of my Floor*, Iſa. 21. 10. The Temple, a Type of the Church, was built upon a Threſhing-floor. (2.) In this Floor there is a mixture of Wheat and Chaff; true Believers are as *Wheat*, ſubſtantial, uſeful, and valuable; Hypocrites are as Chaff, light and empty, uſeleſs and worthleſs, and carried about with every Wind; theſe are now mix'd, good and bad under the ſame external Profeſſion, and in the ſame viſible Communion. (3.) There is a Day coming, when the Floor ſhall be purged, and the Wheat and Chaff ſhall be ſeparated. Something of this kind is often done in this World, when God calls his People out of *Babylon*, Rev. 18. 4. But 'tis the Day of the laſt Judgment, that will be the great winnowing diſtinguiſhing day, which will infallibly determine concerning Doctrines and Works, 1 *Cor.* 3. 13. And concerning Perſons, *Matt.* 25. 32, 33. when Saints and Sinners ſhall be parted for ever. (4.) Heaven is the *Garner*, into which Jeſus Chriſt will ſhortly gather all his Wheat, and not a Grain of it ſhall be loſt. He will gather them as the ripe Fruits were *gathered in*. Death's Scythe is made uſe of to gather them to their People. In Heaven the Saints are brought together, and no longer ſcatter'd; they are ſafe, and no longer expos'd; ſeparated from corrupt Neighbours without, and corrupt Affections within, and there is no Chaff among them. They are not only gather'd into *the Barn*, Mat. 13. 30. but into *the Garner*, where they are throughly purified. (5.) Hell is the *unquenchable Fire*, which will burn up the Chaff, which will certainly be the Portion, and Puniſhment, and everlaſting Deſtruction of Hypocrites and Unbelievers; ſo that here is Life and Death, Good and Evil ſet before us; according as we now are *in the Field*, we ſhall be then *in the Floor*.

13 Then cometh Jeſus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbad him, ſaying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comeſt thou to me? 15 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Suffer *it to be ſo* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteouſneſs. Then he ſuffered him. 16 And Jeſus, when he was baptized, went up ſtraitway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the ſpirit of God deſcending like a dove, and lighting upon him. 17 And lo, a voice from heaven, ſaying, This is my beloved ſon, in whom I am well pleaſed.

Our Lord Jeſus from his Childhood till now, when he was almoſt 30 Years of Age, had lain hid in *Galilee*, buried alive; but now after a long and dark Night, behold the Sun of Righteouſneſs riſes in Glory. The Fulneſs of Time was come that Chriſt ſhould enter upon his *prophetical Office*, and he chuſeth to do it, not at *Jeruſalem*, tho' 'tis probable he went thither at the three yearly Feaſts, as others did, but there where *John* was baptizing; for to him reſorted thoſe that *waited for the Conſolation of Iſrael*, to whom alone he would be welcome. *John* the Baptiſt was ſix Months elder than our Saviour, and it is ſuppoſed he began to preach and baptize about 6 Months before Chriſt appear'd; ſo long he was employ'd in preparing his Way in *the Region round about Jordan*; and more was done towards it in theſe ſix Months than had been done of ſome Ages before. Chriſt's coming from *Galilee* to *Jordan* to be baptized, teacheth us not to ſtick at Pains and Travel that we may have an Opportunity of drawing nigh to God in an Ordinance; we ſhould be willing to go far rather than come ſhort of Communion with God. Thoſe that will find muſt ſeek.

Now in this Story of Chriſt's Baptiſm we may obſerve,

1. How hardly *John* was perſuaded to admit of it, *v.* 14, 15. It was an Inſtance of Chriſt's great Humility that he would offer himſelf to be baptized of *John*; that he who knew no Sin would ſubmit to the Baptiſm of Repentance. *Note*, As ſoon as ever Chriſt began to preach, he preach'd Humility, preach'd it by his Example, preach'd it to all, eſpecially to young Miniſters. Chriſt was deſign'd for the higheſt Honours, yet in his firſt Step he thus abaſeth himſelf. *Note*, Thoſe that would *riſe high* muſt *begin low*; *before Honour is Humility*. It was a great Piece of Reſpect done to *John* for Chriſt thus to come to him, and it was a Return for the Service he did him in giving Notice of his Approach. *Note*, Thoſe that *honour God*, he will *honour*. Now here we have,

(1.) The Objection that *John* made againſt baptizing Jeſus, *v.* 14. *John forbad him*, as *Peter* did, when Chriſt went about to waſh his Feet, *John* 13. 6, 8. *Note*, Chriſt's gracious Condeſcenſions are ſo ſurprizing, as to appear at firſt incredible to the ſtrongeſt Believers; ſo deep and myſterious, that even thoſe who know his Mind well, cannot ſoon find out the Meaning of them, but by reaſon of Darkneſs, ſtart Objections againſt the Will of Chriſt. *John*'s Modeſty thinks this an Honour too great for him to receive; and he expreſſeth himſelf to Chriſt juſt as his Mother had done to Chriſt's Mother, *Luke* 1. 43. *Whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord ſhould come to me? John* had now won a great Name, and was univerſally reſpected, yet ſee how humble he is ſtill. *Note*, God has further Honours in reſerve for thoſe whoſe Spirits continue low when their Reputation riſeth.

1. *John* thinks it *neceſſary* that he ſhould be *baptized by Chriſt*; *I have need to be baptized of thee*, with the Baptiſm of *the Holy Ghoſt, as of Fire*, for that was Chriſt's Baptiſm, *v.* 11. (1.) Tho' *John* was *filled with the Holy Ghoſt* from the Womb, *Luke* 1. 15. yet he acknowledges he had need to be *baptized* with that *Baptiſm*. *Note*, Thoſe that have much of the Spirit of God, yet while they are here in this imperfect State ſee they have need of more, and need to apply themſelves to Chriſt for more. (2.) *John* has need to be *baptized* tho' he was the greateſt that ever was born of Woman, yet being born of Woman he is *polluted*, as others of *Adam*'s Seed are, and owns he has need of cleanſing. *Note*, The pureſt Souls are moſt ſenſible of their own remaining Impurity, and ſeek moſt earneſtly for ſpiritual Waſhing. (3.) He has need to be baptized of *Chriſt*, who can do that for us which none elſe can, and which muſt be done for us or we are undone. *Note*, The beſt and holieſt Men *have need of Chriſt*, and the better they are the more they ſee of that Need. (4.) This was ſaid *before the Multitude*, who had a great Veneration for *John*, and were ready to embrace him for the *Meſſiah*, yet he publickly owns he had need to be baptized of Chriſt. *Note*, 'Tis no Diſparagement to the greateſt of Men to confeſs that they are undone without Chriſt and his Grace. (5.) *John* was Chriſt's Forerunner, and yet owns he had need to be baptized of him. *Note*, Even thoſe that were before Chriſt in Time, yet depended on him, received from him, and had an eye to him. (6.) While *John* was dealing with others about their Souls, obſerve how feelingly he ſpeaks of the Caſe of his own Soul, *I have need to be baptized of thee. Note*, Miniſters who *preach* to others, and baptize others, are concerned to look to it that they preach to themſelves, and be themſelves baptized with the Holy Ghoſt; take heed to *thyſelf* firſt, *ſave thyſelf*, 1 Tim. 4. 16.

2. He therefore thinks it very prepoſterous and abſurd that Chriſt ſhould be baptized by him. *Comeſt thou to me?* Doth the holy Jeſus, that is ſeparated from Sinners, come to be baptized by a Sinner, as a Sinner, and among Sinners? How can this be? Or what Account can we give of it? *Note*, Chriſt's coming to us may well be wonder'd at.

(2.) The over-ruling of this Objection, *v.* 15. *Jeſus ſaid, Suffer it to be ſo now.* Chriſt accepted his Humility, but not his Refuſal; he would have the thing done, and it is fit Chriſt ſhould take his own Method, tho' we do not underſtand it, nor can give a Reaſon for it. See,

1. How Chriſt inſiſts upon it; it muſt be ſo *now*. He doth not deny but that *John* had *need to be baptized* of him, yet he will *now* be baptized of *John*, Ἄφες ἄρτι, *let it be yet ſo, ſuffer it to be ſo now. Note*, Every thing is beautiful in its Seaſon. But why *now?* why *yet?* (1.) Chriſt is *now* in a State of Humiliation, he has emptied himſelf, and made himſelf of no Reputation. He is not only *found in faſhion as a Man*, but is made in the *Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, and therefore *now* let him be *baptized* of *John*; as if he needed to be waſh'd, tho' he be perfectly pure; and thus he was *made Sin for us*, tho' he *knew no Sin*. (2.) *John*'s Baptiſm is *now* in Reputation, that's it by which God is now doing his Work, that's the *preſent* Diſpenſation, and therefore Jeſus will now be baptized with Water, but his baptizing with the Holy Ghoſt is reſerved for hereafter, *many Days hence*, Acts 1. 5. *John*'s Baptiſm has *now* its Day, and therefore Honour muſt *now* be

put upon that, and thoſe that attend upon it muſt be encourag'd. *Note,* Thoſe that are of greateſt Attainments in Gifts and Graces, ſhould yet in their Place bear their Teſtimony to inſtituted Ordinances, by a humble and diligent Attendance on them, that they may give a good Example to others. What we ſee God owns, and while we ſee he doth ſo, we muſt own. *John* was now *increaſing,* and therefore it muſt be thus *yet*; ſhortly he will *decreaſe,* and then it will be otherwiſe. (3.) It muſt be ſo *now,* becauſe *now* is the time for Chriſt's appearing in publick, and this will be a fair Opportunity for it. See *John* 1. 31, 32, 33, 34. Thus he muſt be *made manifeſt to Iſrael,* and be ſignaliz'd by Wonders from Heaven, in that Act of his own, which was moſt condeſcending, and ſelf-abaſing.

2. The reaſon he gives for it; *thus it becomes us to fulfil all Righteouſneſs. Note,* 1. That there was a *Becomingneſs* in every thing that Chriſt did for us; 'twas all *graceful,* Heb. 2. 10.—7. 26. And we muſt ſtudy to do, not only that which *behoves* us, but that which *becomes* us; not only that which is indiſpenſably neceſſary, but that which is *lovely,* and of *good Report.* 2. Our Lord Jeſus look'd upon it as a thing well becoming him to *fulfil all Righteouſneſs,* i. e. (as Dr. *Whitby* explains it) to own every divine Inſtitution, and to ſhew his readineſs to comply with all God's righteous Precepts; *thus it becomes him* to juſtify God, and approve his Wiſdom, in ſending *John* to prepare his Way by the Baptiſm of Repentance. *Thus it becometh us* to countenance and encourage every thing that is good, by Pattern as well as Precept. Chriſt often mentioned *John* and his Baptiſm with Honour, which that he might do the better, he was himſelf baptized. Thus Jeſus began firſt to *do,* and then to *teach,* and his Miniſters muſt take the ſame Method. Thus Chriſt *filled up the Righteouſneſs* of the ceremonial Law, which conſiſted in divers Waſhings; thus he recommended the Goſpel Ordinance of Baptiſm to his Church, put Honour upon it, and ſhewed what Virtue he deſigned to put into it. It *became* Chriſt to *ſubmit* to *John*'s Waſhing with Water, becauſe it was a divine Appointment; but it became him to oppoſe the *Phariſees* waſhing with Water, becauſe it was a human Invention and Impoſition, and he juſtified his Diſciples in refuſing to comply with it.

With the Will of Chriſt, and this Reaſon for it, *John* was entirely ſatisfied, and *then he ſuffered him.* The ſame Modeſty which made him at firſt decline the Honour Chriſt offered him, now made him do the Service Chriſt enjoin'd him. *Note,* No Pretence of Humility muſt keep us off from our Duty.

2. How ſolemnly Heaven was pleaſed to grace the Baptiſm of Chriſt with a ſpecial Diſplay of Glory, *v.* 16, 17. *Jeſus when he was baptized went up ſtraitway out of the Water.* Others that were baptized ſtaid to confeſs their Sins, *v.* 6. But Chriſt having no Sins to *confeſs* went up immediately *out of the Water,* ſo we read it, but not right, for it is ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος, *from the Water,* from the Brink of the River to which he *went down* to be *waſhed* with Water, *i. e.* to have his *Head* or *Face* waſh'd (*John* 13. 9.) for here is no mention of the putting off or putting on of his Clothes, which Circumſtance would not have been omitted if he had been baptized naked. He went up *ſtraitway,* as one that enter'd upon his Work with the utmoſt Chearfulneſs and Reſolution, he would loſe no Time; how was he ſtraitned till 'twas accompliſhed.

Now when he was coming up out of the Water, and all the Company had their Eye upon him,

1. *Lo, the Heavens were opened unto him,* ſo as to diſcover ſomething above and beyond the ſtarry Firmament, at leaſt to *him.* This was (1.) to encourage him to go on in his Undertaking, with the Proſpect of the Glory and Joy that were ſet before him; Heaven is open'd to receive him when he has finiſh'd the Work he was now entring upon. (2.) To encourage us to receive him and ſubmit to him. *Note,* In and thro' Jeſus Chriſt the *Heavens* are *opened* to the Children of Men. Sin ſhut up Heaven, put a Stop to all friendly Intercourſe between God and Man; but now Chriſt has open'd the *Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers.* Divine Light and Love are darted down upon the Children of Men, and we have *Boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt.* We have Receipts of Mercy from God, we make Returns of Duty to God, and all by Jeſus Chriſt, who is the Ladder that has the Foot on Earth and the Top in Heaven, by whom alone it is that we have any comfortable Correſpondence with God, or any hope of getting to Heaven at laſt. The Heavens were open'd when Chriſt was baptized, to teach us, that when we duly attend on God's Ordinances, we may expect Communion with him, and Communications from him.

2. *He ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a Dove,* or *as a Dove,* and coming, or *lighting upon him.* Chriſt ſaw it, *Mark* 1. 10. and *John* ſaw it, *John* 1. 33. and 'tis probable all the Standers-by ſaw it, for this was intended to be his publick Inauguration. *Obſerve,*

(1.) The Spirit of God *deſcended* and *lighted on him.* In the beginning of the old World the *Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters,* Gen. 1. 2. hover'd as a Bird upon the Neſt; ſo here in the beginning of this new World Chriſt *as God* needed not to receive the Holy Ghoſt, but it was foretold that the *Spirit of the Lord* ſhould *reſt upon him,* Iſa. 11. 1.—61. 1. And here he did ſo, for (1.) He was to be a *Prophet,* and Prophets always ſpoke by the Spirit of God, who *came upon them*: Chriſt was to execute the prophetick Office, not by his divine Nature (ſaith Dr. *Whitby*) but by the *Afflatus* of the holy Spirit. (2.) He was to be the Head of the Church, and the Spirit *deſcended upon him,* by him to be derived to all Believers, in his Gifts, Graces, and Comforts. The Ointment *on the Head* ran down to *the Skirts*; Chriſt received Gifts for Men, that he might give Gifts to Men.

(2.) He deſcended on him *like a Dove*; whether it was a real living Dove, or, as was uſual in Viſions, the Repreſentation or Similitude of a Dove, is uncertain. If there muſt be a *bodily Shape* (Luke 3. 22.) it muſt not be that of a Man, for the being ſeen in faſhion as a Man was peculiar to the ſecond Perſon, none therefore more fit than the ſhape of one of the Fowls of Heaven. Heaven being now opened, and of all Fowl none ſo ſignificant as the Dove. (1.) The Spirit of Chriſt is a *Dove-like* Spirit, not like a *ſilly Dove without Heart,* Hoſ. 7. 11. but like an innocent Dove *without Gall.* The Spirit deſcended, not in the ſhape of an Eagle, which is, tho' a royal Bird, yet a Bird of Prey, but in the ſhape of a Dove, than which no Creature more harmleſs and inoffenſive; ſuch was the Spirit of *Chriſt, he ſhall not ſtrive nor cry,* ſuch muſt Chriſtians be, *harmleſs as Doves.* The Dove is remarkable for her Eyes; we find that both the Eyes of Chriſt, *Cant.* 5. 12. and the Eyes of the Church, *Cant.* 1. 15.—4. 1. are compared to *Doves Eyes,* for they have the ſame Spirit. The Dove mourns much, *Iſa.* 38. 14. Chriſt wept oft, and penitent Souls are compared to *Doves of the Vallies.* (2.) The Dove was the only Fowl that was offered in Sacrifice, *Lev.* 1. 14. And Chriſt by the Spirit, *the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without Spot to God.* (3.) The Tidings of the decreaſe of *Noah*'s Flood were brought by a Dove with an Olive Leaf in her Mouth; fitly therefore is the glad Tidings of Peace with God brought by the Spirit *as a Dove,* it ſpeaks God's *Good-will towards Men,* that his Thoughts towards us are *Thoughts of Good, and not of Evil.* By *the Voice of the Turtle heard in our Land,* Cant. 2. 12. the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt underſtand the *Voice of the holy Spirit.* That God is in Chriſt, reconciling the World unto himſelf, is a joyful Meſſage that comes to us upon the Wing, *the Wings of a Dove,* Pſal. 68. 13.

3. To explain and compleat this Solemnity, *there came a Voice from Heaven,* which we have reaſon to think was heard by all that were preſent. The holy Spirit manifeſted himſelf in the Likeneſs of a *Dove,* but God the Father by a *Voice*; for when the Law was given they ſaw no manner of Similitude, only they *heard a Voice,* Deut. 4. 12. and ſo this *Goſpel* came, and Goſpel indeed it is, the beſt News that ever came from Heaven to Earth, for it ſpeaks plainly and fully God's Favour to Chriſt, and us in him.

1. See here how God owns our Lord Jeſus; *this is my beloved Son.* Obſerve (1.) The Relation he ſtood in to him; he is *my Son.* Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God by *eternal Generation,* as he was begotten of the Father before all Worlds, *Col.* 1. 15. *Heb.* 1. 3. and by *ſupernatural Conception*; he was therefore called the *Son of God,* becauſe he was conceived by the *Power of the Holy Ghoſt,* Luke 1. 35. yet this is not all, he is the Son of God by ſpecial Deſignation to the Work and Office of the World's Redeemer. He was ſanctified and ſealed, and ſent upon that Errand, *brought up with* the Father for it, *Prov.* 8. 30. appointed to it. *I will make him my Firſt-born,* Pſal. 89. 26. (2.) The Affection the Father had for him; he is my *beloved Son,* his *dear Son,* the *Son of his Love,* Col. 1. 13. He had lain in his Boſom from all Eternity, *John* 1. 18. had been *always his Delight,* Prov. 8. 30. But particularly as Mediator, and undertaking the Work of Man's Salvation, he was his *beloved Son.* He is *mine Elect, in whom my Soul delighteth,* ſee *Iſa.* 42. 1. Becauſe he conſented to the Covenant of Redemption, and delighted to do that Will of God, *therefore the Father loved him,* John 10. 17.—3. 35. Behold then, behold and wonder, what manner of Love the Father has beſtowed upon us, that he ſhould *deliver up him* that was the Son of his Love to ſuffer and die for thoſe that were the Generation of his Wrath; nay, and *therefore* love him, *becauſe he laid down his Life for the Sheep.* Now know we that he loved us, ſeeing he has not withheld his Son, his only Son, his *Iſaac* whom he loved, but gave him to be a Sacrifice for our Sin.

2. See here how ready he is to own *us in him.* He is *my beloved Son,* not only with whom, but *in whom I am well pleaſed*; he is pleaſed with all that are *in him,* and are united to him by Faith. Hitherto God had been diſpleaſed with the Children of Men, but now his Anger is turned away, and he hath made us *accepted in the Beloved,* Eph. 1. 6. Let all the World take notice that this is the Peacemaker, the Days-man, that has laid his Hand upon us both, and there's *no coming to God* as a Father *but by him* as Mediator, *John* 14. 6. In him our *ſpiritual Sacrifices* are acceptable, for he is the Altar that *ſanctifies every Gift,* 1 Pet. 2. 5. Out of Chriſt God is a conſuming Fire, but in Chriſt a reconciled Father. This is the Sum of the whole Goſpel, 'tis a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that God has declared by a Voice from Heaven, that Jeſus Chrſt is *his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleaſed,* with which we muſt by Faith chearfully concur, and ſay, that he is *our beloved Saviour, in whom we are well pleaſed.*

CHAP. IV.

John Baptiſt *ſaid concerning Chriſt,* he muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe, *and ſo it proved; for after* John *had baptized Chriſt, and born his Teſtimony to him, we hear little more of his Miniſtry, he had done what he came to do, and thence forward there's as much Talk of Jeſus as ever there had been of* John; *as the riſing Sun advanceth the Morning Star diſappears. Concerning Jeſus Chriſt we have in this Chapter* (1.) *The* Temptation *he* underwent, *the triple Aſſault the Tempter made upon him, and the Repulſe he gave to each Aſſault,* v. 1. 11. (2.) *The* teaching Work *he* undertook, *the Places he preach'd in,* v. 12. 16. *and the Subject he preach'd on,* v. 17. (3.) *His calling of Diſciples,* Peter *and* Andrew, James *and* John, *v.* 18, 22.

(4.) *His curing of Diſeaſes*, v. 23, 24. *and the great Reſort of People to him, both to be taught and to be healed.*

THen was Jeſus led up of the Spirit into the wilderneſs, to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had faſted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he ſaid, If thou be the Son of God command that theſe ſtones be made Bread. 4 But he anſwered and ſaid, It is written, Man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God. 5 Then the Devil taketh him up into the holy city, and ſetteth him on a pinnacle of the temple. 6 And ſaith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, caſt thy ſelf down: for it is written, He ſhall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they ſhall bear thee up, leaſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone. 7 Jeſus ſaid unto him, it is written again, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8 Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and ſheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: 9 And ſaith unto him, All theſe things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me. 10 Then ſaith Jeſus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve: 11 Then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and miniſtred unto him.

We have here the Story of a famous Duel fought hand to hand, between *Michael* and the *Dragon*, the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent, nay, the Serpent himſelf, in which the Seed of the Woman *ſuffers being tempted*, and ſo has his Heel bruiſed; but the Serpent is quite baffled in his Temptations, and ſo has his Head broke, and our Lord Jeſus comes off a Conqueror, and ſo ſecures not only Comfort, but Conqueſt at laſt to all his faithful Followers. Concerning Chriſt's Temptation obſerve, 1. The Time when it was: *Then* there's an Emphaſis laid upon that. Immediately after the Heavens were opened to him, and the Spirit deſcended on him, and he was declar'd to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World, the next News we hear of him is, he is tempted, for *then* he is beſt able to grapple with the Temptation. *Note*, (1.) Great Privileges and ſpecial Tokens of divine Favour will not ſecure us from being tempted. Nay (2.) After great Honours put upon us we muſt expect ſomething that is humbling, as *Paul* had a Meſſenger of Satan ſent to buffet him after he had been in the third Heavens. (3.) God uſeth to prepare his People for Temptation before he calls them to it, he *gives ſtrength according to the day*, and before a ſharp Trial gives more than ordinary Comfort. (4.) The Aſſurance of our Sonſhip is the beſt Preparative for Temptation; if the good Spirit witneſſeth to our Adoption, that will furniſh us with an Anſwer to all the Suggeſtions of the evil Spirit, deſigned either to debauch or diſquiet us.

Then when he was newly come from a ſolemn Ordinance, when he was *baptized*, then he was *tempted*. *Note*, After we have been admitted into Communion with God we muſt expect to be ſet upon by *Satan*. The enriched Soul muſt double its Guard; *when thou haſt eaten, and art full, then beware*. *Then*, when he began to ſhew himſelf publickly to *Iſrael*, then he was tempted, ſo as he never had been while he lived in Privacy. *Note*, The Devil has a particular Spite at uſeful Perſons, that not only *are good*, but given to *do Good*, eſpecially at their firſt ſetting out. 'Tis the Advice of the Son of *Sirach*, Ecclus. 2. 1. *My Son, if thou come to ſerve the Lord, prepare thyſelf for Temptation.* Let young Miniſters know what to expect, and arm accordingly.

2. The Place where it was, *in the Wilderneſs*, probably in the great Wilderneſs of *Sinai*, where *Moſes* and *Elijah* faſted forty Days, for no Part of the Wilderneſs of *Judea* was ſo abandoned to *wild Beaſts* as this is ſaid to have been, *Mark* 1. 13. When Chriſt was baptized, he did not go to *Jeruſalem*, there to publiſh the Glories that had been put upon him, but retired into a Wilderneſs. After Communion with God 'tis good to be private a while, leſt we loſe what we have received, in the Crowd and Hurry of worldly Buſineſs. Chriſt withdrew into the Wilderneſs, (1.) To gain Advantage to himſelf; Retirement gives an Opportunity for Meditation and Communion with God, even thoſe that are called to the moſt *active* Life, muſt yet have their *contemplative* Hours, and muſt find Time to be *alone with God*. Thoſe are not fit to ſpeak of the Things of God in publick to others, that have not firſt converſed with thoſe Things in ſecret by themſelves. When Chriſt would appear as *a Teacher come from God*, it ſhall not be ſaid of him, he is newly come *from travelling*, he has been *abroad*, and has ſeen the World, but he is newly come out of *a Deſart*, he has been *alone*, converſing with God and his own Heart. (2.) To *give Advantage to the Tempter*, that he might have a readier Acceſs to him than he could have had in Company. *Note*, Tho' Solitude is a Friend to a good Heart, yet Satan knows how to improve it againſt us: *Wo to him that is alone*. Thoſe that under pretence of Sanctity and Devotion retire into Dens and Deſarts, find they are not out of the reach of their ſpiritual Enemies, and that there they want the Benefit of the Communion of Saints. Chriſt retired, (1.) That Satan might have leave to *do his worſt*. To make his Victory the more illuſtrious, he gave the Enemy Sun and Wind on his ſide, and yet baffled him. He might give the Devil Advantage, for the *Prince of this World had nothing in him*; but he hath in us, and therefore we muſt pray not to be *led into Temptation*, and muſt keep out of Harm's-way. (2.) That he might have Opportunity *to do his beſt* himſelf, that he might be exalted in his *ownſtrength*, for ſo it was written, *I have trod the Wine-preſs alone*, and of the People there was none with me. Chriſt enter'd the Liſts without a Second.

3. The Preparatives for it, which were two.

1. He was *directed to the Combat*. He did not wilfully thruſt himſelf upon it, but he was *led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the Devil*. The Spirit, that deſcended upon him *like a Dove*, made him *meek*, and yet made him *bold*. *Note*, Our Care muſt be not to enter into Temptation, but if God by his Providence order us into Circumſtances of Temptation for our Trial, we muſt not think it ſtrange, but double our Guard, be ſtrong in the Lord, reſiſt *ſtedfaſt in the Faith*, and all ſhall be well. If we preſume upon our own Strength, and tempt the Devil to tempt us, we provoke God to leave us to ourſelves, but whitherſoever God *leads* us, we may hope he will go along with us, and bring us off more than Conquerors.

Chriſt was led to be *tempted of the Devil*, and of him only. Others are tempted when they are *drawn aſide of their own Luſt, and enticed*, Jam. 1. 14. the Devil takes hold of *that* Handle, and ploughs with *that* Heifer, but our Lord Jeſus had no corrupt Nature, and therefore he was led ſecurely, without any Fear or Trembling, as a Champion into the Field, to be *tempted* purely *by the Devil*.

Now Chriſt's Temptation is, (1.) An Inſtance of his own *Condeſcenſion* and Humiliation. Temptations are *fiery Darts*, *Thorns in the Fleſh*, *Buffetings*, *Siftings*, *Wreſtlings*, *Combats*, all which note Hardſhip and Suffering, therefore Chriſt ſubmitted to them, becauſe he would humble himſelf in all things to be made *like unto his Brethren*. Thus he gave his Back *to the Smiters*. (2.) It was an Occaſion of Satan's *Confuſion*. There's no Conqueſt without a Combat, Chriſt was tempted that he might *overcome* the Tempter; *Satan* tempted the firſt *Adam*, and triumph'd over him, but he ſhall not *ever* triumph, the ſecond *Adam* ſhall overcome him, and lead *Captivity captive*. (3.) It is Matter of *Comfort* to all the Saints. In the Temptation of Chriſt it appears that our Enemy is ſubtil, ſpiteful, and very daring in his Temptations, but it appears withal that he is not *invincible*; tho' he is a *ſtrong Man arm'd*, yet the Captain of our Salvation is *ſtronger than he*. It is ſome Comfort to us to think that Chriſt *ſuffered being tempted*, for then Temptations, if they are not yielded to, are not *Sins*; they are Afflictions only, and ſuch as may be the Lot of thoſe with whom God is *well pleaſed*; and we have an High-Prieſt that knows by Experience what it is to be tempted, and therefore is the more tenderly touch'd *with the feeling of our Infirmities* in an Hour of Temptation, *Heb*. 2. 18.—4. 15. But it is much more a Comfort to think that Chriſt *conquered being tempted*, and conquered *for us*, not only that the Enemy we grapple with is a conquered, baffled, diſarmed Enemy, but that we are intereſted in Chriſt's Victory over him, and thro' him are more than Conquerors.

2. He was *dieted for the Combat*, as Wreſtlers uſe to be, who are *temperate in all things*, 1 Cor. 9. 25. but Chriſt beyond any other, for he *faſted* 40 *Days and* 40 *Nights*, in compliance with the Type and Example of *Moſes* the great Lawgiver, and of *Elias*, the great *Reformer* of the *Old Teſtament*. *John Baptiſt* came as *Elias* in thoſe things that were *moral*, but not in ſuch things as were *miraculous*, Joh. 10. 41. that Honour was reſerved for Chriſt. Chriſt needed not to *faſt* for *Mortification*, he had no corrupt Deſires to be ſubdued, yet he faſted (1.) That herein he might *humble himſelf*, and might ſeem as one abandon'd, whom no *Man ſeeketh after*. (2.) That he might give *Satan* both Occaſion and Advantage againſt him, and ſo make his Victory over him the more illuſtrious. (3.) That he might ſanctify and recommend *Faſting* to us, when God in his Providence calls to it, or when we are reduced to Straits, and are *deſtitute of daily Food*, or when it is requiſite for the *keeping up of the Body*, or the quickning of Prayer, and that's a good Preparative for Temptation. If good People are brought low, if they want Friends and Succours, this may comfort them, that their Maſter himſelf was in like manner exercis'd. A Man may want Bread and yet be a favorite of Heaven and under the Conduct of the Spirit. The Reference which the Papiſts make of their Lent-Faſt to this Faſting of Chriſt 40 Days, is a Piece of Foppery and Superſtition, which the Law of our Land witneſſeth againſt, *Stat*. 5^{c}. *Eliz*. *Chap*. 5. *Sect*. 39, 40. When he faſted 40 Days he was never hungry: Converſe with Heaven was inſtead of Meat and Drink to him, but he was afterwards an hungred, to ſhew that he was really and truly Man; and he took upon him our natural Infirmities, that he might atone for us. Man fell by eating, and that way we often ſin, and therefore Chriſt was an hungred.

4. The Temptations themſelves. That which Satan drove at in all his Temptations, was to bring him to *ſin againſt God*, and ſo to render him for ever uncapable to be a Sacrifice for the Sin of others. Now whatever the Colours were, that which he aim'd at was to bring him (1.) To *deſpair* of his Father's *Goodneſs*. (2.) To preſume upon his Father's *Power*. 3. To *alienate* his Father's Honour, by giving it to *Satan*. In the two former, that which he tempted him *to*, ſeemed *innocent*, and therein appear'd the Subtlety of the Tempter: In the

laſt, that which he tempted him *with*, ſeem'd *deſirable.* The two former are *ſly* Temptations, which there was need of great Wiſdom to *diſcern*; the laſt was a *ſtrong* Temptation, which there was need of great Reſolution to *reſiſt*; yet he was baffled in them all.

(1.) He tempted him to *deſpair of his Father's Goodneſs*, and to *diſtruſt* his Father's Care concerning him.

1. See how the Temptation was manag'd, *v.* 3. *The Tempter came to him. Note,* The Devil is the *Tempter*, and therefore he is *Satan*, an Adverſary; for thoſe are our worſt Enemies that entice us to Sin, and are *Satan*'s Agents, are doing his Work, and carrying on his Deſigns; he is call'd emphatically *the Tempter*, becauſe he was ſo to our firſt Parents, and ſtill is ſo, and all other Tempters are ſet on work by him. The Tempter *came* to Chriſt in a *viſible* Appearance, not terrible and affrighting, as afterwards in his Agony in the Garden, no, if ever the Devil transform'd himſelf into an *Angel of Light*, he did it now, and pretends to be a good Genius, a Guardian Angel.

Obſerve the Subtilty of the Tempter in tacking this firſt Temptation to what went before, to make it the ſtronger. 1. Chriſt began to be hungry, and therefore the Motion ſeem'd very proper *to turn Stones into Bread*, for his neceſſary Support. *Note,* It is one of the Wiles of Satan to take advantage of our outward Condition, in that to plant the Battery of his Temptations; he is an Adverſary no leſs *watchful* than *ſpiteful*, and the more *ingenious* he is to take advantage againſt us, the more *induſtrious* we muſt be to give him none; when he began to be *hungry*, and that in a *Wilderneſs*, where there was nothing to be had, then the Devil aſſaulted him. *Note,* Want and Poverty is a great Temptation to Diſcontent and Unbelief, and the uſe of unlawful Means for our Relief, under pretence that *Neceſſity has no Law*, and 'tis excus'd with this, that *Hunger will break thro' Stone-walls*, which yet is no Excuſe, for the Law of God ought to be ſtronger to us than Stone-walls. *Agur* prays againſt Poverty, not becauſe it is an Affliction and Reproach, but becauſe it is a Temptation, *leſt I be poor and ſteal*; thoſe therefore who are reduc'd to Straits have need to double their Guard; 'tis better ſtarve to death than live and grow fat by Sin.

2. Chriſt was lately declared to be the *Son of God*, and here the Devil tempts him to *doubt of that*; *if thou be the Son of God.* Had not the Devil known that the Son of God was to come into the World he would not have ſaid this, and had he not ſuſpected that this was he, he would not have ſaid it *to him*; nor durſt he have ſaid it if Chriſt had not now drawn a Veil over his Glory, and if the Devil had not now put on an *impudent Face.*

1. Thou haſt now an occaſion to *queſtion* whether thou be *the Son of God* or no, for can it be that the Son of God, who is Heir of all things, ſhould be reduced to ſuch Straits? If God were thy Father he would not ſee the ſtarve, for *all the Beaſts of the Foreſt are his*, Pſal. 50. 10, 12. 'Tis true there was a Voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son*, but ſure it was Deluſion, and thou waſt impoſed upon by it; for either God is not thy Father, or he is a very unkind one. *Note,* 1. The great thing Satan aims at in tempting good People is, to overthrow their Relation to God as a Father, and ſo to cut off their Dependance on him, their Duty to him, and their Communion with him; the good Spirit, as the Comforter of the Brethren, witneſſeth that they are the *Children of God*; the evil Spirit, as the Accuſer of the Brethren, doth all he can to ſhake that Teſtimony. 2. That outward Afflictions, Wants and Burthens, are the great Arguments Satan uſeth to make the People of God queſtion their Sonſhip; as if Afflictions could not *conſiſt with*, when really they *proceed from* God's Fatherly Love. Thoſe know how to anſwer this Temptation who can ſay with holy *Job*, tho' he *ſlay me*, tho' he *ſtarve me*, yet will I truſt in him, and love him as a Friend, even when he ſeems to come forth againſt me as an Enemy. 3. The Devil aims to ſhake our Faith in the Word of God, and bring us to queſtion the Truth of that; thus he began with our firſt Parents; *yea, hath God ſaid* ſo and ſo? ſure he has not. So here, Hath God ſaid that thou art his beloved Son? ſure he did not ſay ſo, or if he did, it is not true. *We* then give *place to the Devil* when we queſtion the Truth of any Word that God hath ſaid, for his Buſineſs, as the Father of Lies, is to oppoſe the true *Sayings of God.* 4. The Devil carries on his Deſigns very much by poſſeſſing People with hard Thoughts of God, as if he were unkind or unfaithful, and had forſaken or forgotten thoſe who have ventur'd their All with him. He endeavour'd to beget in our firſt Parents a Notion that God forbid them the Tree of Knowledge, becauſe he grudg'd them the Benefit of it; and ſo here he inſinuates to our Saviour that his Father had caſt him off, and left him to ſhift for himſelf. But ſee how unreaſonable this Suggeſtion was, and how eaſily anſwered: If Chriſt ſeem'd to be a *meer Man* now, becauſe he was hungry, why was he not confeſſed to be more than a Man, even the Son of God, when for forty Days he *faſted*, and was not an *hungry?*

(2.) Thou haſt now an *Opportunity to ſhew* that thou art the *Son of God. If thou art the Son of God*, prove it by this, *Command that theſe Stones* (a Heap of which probably lay now before him) *be made Bread*, v. 3. *John Baptiſt* ſaid but t'other day, that God can out of Stones raiſe up Children to *Abraham*, a divine Power therefore can, no doubt, out of Stones make Bread for thoſe Children; if therefore thou haſt that Power, exert it now in a time of Need for thyſelf; he doth not ſay, *pray to thy Father*, that he would turn them into Bread, but *command* it to be done; thy Father hath forſaken thee, ſet up for thyſelf, and be not beholden to him. The Devil is for nothing that's *humbling*, but every thing that's *aſſuming*, and gains his Point if he can but bring Men off from their Dependance upon God, and poſſeſs them with an Opinion of their Self-ſufficiency.

2. See how this Temptation was reſiſted and overcome.

1. Chriſt refuſed to *comply with it.* He would not command theſe Stones to be made Bread, not becauſe he *could* not, his Power that ſoon after this turn'd Water into Wine, could have turn'd Stones into Bread, but he *would not:* And why would he not? At firſt view the thing appears juſtifiable enough, and the Truth is, the more plauſible a Temptation is, and the greater Appearance there is of Good in it, the more dangerous it is. This Matter would bear a Diſpute, but Chriſt was ſoon aware of the Snake in the Graſs, and would not do any thing (1.) that look'd like queſtioning the Truth of the Voice he heard from Heaven, or putting that upon a new Trial which was already ſettled; (2.) that look'd like diſtruſting his Father's Care of him, or limiting him to one particular way of providing for him; (3.) that look'd like ſetting up for himſelf, and being his own Carver; or (4.) that look'd like gratifying Satan, by doing a thing at his Motion. Some would have ſaid, *to give the Devil his Due*, this was good Counſel; but for thoſe that *wait upon God*, to conſult him, is more than *his Due*; 'tis like enquiring of the God of *Ekron*, when there is a *God in Iſrael.*

2. He was ready to *reply to it*, v. 4. *He anſwered and ſaid, It is written.* This is obſervable, that Chriſt anſwered and baffled all the Temptations of Satan with *It is written.* He is himſelf the eternal Word, and could have produc'd the Mind of God, without having recourſe to the Writings of *Moſes*, but he put Honour upon the Scripture, and to ſet us an Example, he appeal'd to what *was written in the Law*; and he ſaith this to Satan, taking it for granted that he knew well enough what was written. It is poſſible that thoſe who are the Devil's Children may yet know very well what's written in God's Book; *the Devils believe and tremble.* This Method we muſt take when at any time we are tempted to ſin, reſiſt and repel the Temptation with *It is written.* The Word of God is the *Sword of the Spirit*, the only offenſive Weapon in all the Chriſtian Armory, *Eph.* 6. 17. And we may ſay of it, as *David* of *Goliah*'s Sword, *None like that* in our ſpiritual Conflicts.

This Anſwer, as all the reſt, is taken out of the Book of *Deuteronomy*, which ſignifies the *ſecond Law*, and in which there is very little *ceremonial*; the *Levitical* Sacrifices and Purifications could not drive away Satan, tho' of divine Inſtitution, much leſs holy Water and the Sign of the Croſs, which are of human Invention; but moral Precepts and evangelical Promiſes mix'd with Faith, theſe are mighty thro' God for the vanquiſhing of Satan. This is here quoted from *Deut.* 8. 3. where the reaſon given why God fed the *Iſraelites* with Manna is, becauſe he would teach them that *Man ſhall not live by Bread alone*; this Chriſt applies to his own Caſe; *Iſrael* was God's *Son*, whom he *called out of Egypt*, Hoſ. 11. 1. ſo was Chriſt, *Mat.* 2. 15. *Iſrael* was then in a *Wilderneſs*, Chriſt was ſo now, perhaps the ſame Wilderneſs. Now (1.) the Devil would have him *queſtion* his Sonſhip, becauſe he was in *Straits*; no, ſaith he, *Iſrael* was God's Son, and a Son he was very tender of, and whoſe *Manners* he *bore*, *Acts* 13. 18. and yet he brought them into Straits, and it follows there, *Deut.* 4. 5. *as a Man chaſteneth his Son, ſo the Lord thy God chaſteneth thee.* Chriſt being a Son thus learns Obedience. (2.) The Devil would have him to *diſtruſt* his Father's Love and Care; no, ſaith he, that would be to do as *Iſrael* did, who, when they were in Want, ſaid, *Is the Lord among us?* and *can he furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs? Can he give Bread?* (3.) The Devil would have him, as ſoon as he *began to be hungry*, preſently to look out for Supply, whereas God, for wiſe and holy Ends, ſuffered *Iſrael to hunger* before he *fed them*, to *humble them*, and *prove them.* God will have Children, when they want, not only to wait *on him*, but to wait *for him.* (4.) The Devil would have him to ſupply himſelf with *Bread*; no, ſaith Chriſt, what needs that? it is a Point long ſince ſettled, and unconteſtably prov'd, that Man may live without Bread, as *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs liv'd 40 Years upon *Manna.* 'Tis true God in his Providence ordinarily maintains Men by *Bread out of the Earth*, Job 28. 5. but he can, if he pleaſeth, make uſe of other Means to keep Men alive; *any Word proceeding out of the Mouth of God*, i. e. any thing that God ſhall order and appoint for that End, will be as good a Livelihood for Man as Bread, and will maintain him as well. As we may *have Bread*, and yet not be nouriſhed, if God deny his Bleſſing, *Hag.* 1. 6, 9. *Mic.* 6. 14. for tho' Bread is the *Staff of Life*, 'tis God's Bleſſing that is the *Staff of Bread*; ſo we may want Bread, and yet be nouriſhed ſome other way. God ſuſtained *Moſes* and *Elias* without Bread, and Chriſt himſelf juſt now for 40 Days; he ſuſtained *Iſrael* with Bread from Heaven, Angels Food; *Elijah* with Bread ſent miraculouſly by Ravens, and another time by the Widow's Meal, miraculouſly multiplied; therefore Chriſt needs not turn Stones into Bread, but truſt God to keep him alive ſome other way now he is hungry, as he had done 40 Days before he hungred. *Note,* As in our greateſt Abundance we muſt not think to *live without God*, ſo in our greateſt Straits we muſt learn to *live upon God*; and when the *Fig-tree doth not bloſſom*, and the *Field yields no Meat*, when all ordinary Means of Succour and Support are cut off, yet then we muſt *rejoice in the Lord*; then we muſt not think to *command* what we will, tho' contrary to his Command, but muſt humbly *pray* for what he thinks fit to give us, and be thankful for the *Bread of our Allowance*, tho' it be a *ſhort Allowance.* Let us learn of Chriſt here to be at *God's Finding* rather than at our *own*, and not to take any irregular Courſes for our Supply, when our Wants are never ſo preſſing. *Pſal.* 37. 3. *Jehovah Jireth*, ſome way or other *the Lord will provide.* 'Tis better live poorly upon the Fruits of God's Goodneſs, than live plentifully upon the Products of our own Sin, (2.) He tempted him to *preſume* upon his Father's Power and Protection; ſee what a reſtleſs, unwearied Adverſary the Devil is, if he fail in one Aſſault he trys another.

Now in this ſecond Attempt we may obſerve,

1. What *the Temptation* was, and how it was *manag'd*. In general, finding Chriſt ſo confident of his Father's Care of him, in point of *Nouriſhment*, he endeavours to draw him to preſume upon that Care, in point of *Safety*. *Note*, We are in danger of miſſing our Way, both on the *Right-hand*, and on the *Left*, and therefore muſt take heed, leſt when we avoid one Extreme, we be brought by the Artifices of Satan to run into another, leſt by overcoming our Prodigality we fall into Covetouſneſs; nor are any Extremes more dangerous than thoſe of Deſpair and Preſumption, eſpecially in the Affairs of our Souls. Some that have obtained a Perſuaſion that Chriſt is able and willing to ſave them *from their Sins*, are then tempted to *preſume* that he will ſave them *in their Sins*. Thus when People begin to be zealous in Religion, Satan hurries them into Bigotry and intemperate Heats.

Now in this Temptation we may obſerve,

1. How he *made way for it*. He *took* Chriſt, not by Force, and againſt his Will, but mov'd him to go, and went along with him to *Jeruſalem*. Whether Chriſt went upon the Ground, and ſo went up the Stairs to the top of the Temple, or whether he went in the Air, is uncertain; but ſo it was, that he was *ſet upon a Pinacle* or Spire upon the *Fane* (ſo ſome) upon the *Battlements* (ſo others) upon the *Wing*, ſo the Word is, *of the Temple*. Now obſerve (1.) how *ſubmiſſive Chriſt was* in *ſuffering* himſelf to be *hurried* thus, that he might let Satan do his worſt, and yet conquer him. The Patience of Chriſt here, as afterwards in his Sufferings and Death, is more wonderful than the Power of *Satan* or his Inſtruments, for neither he nor they could have any *Power* againſt Chriſt, but *what was given them from above*. How comfortable is it, that Chriſt, who let looſe this Power of Satan againſt himſelf, doth not in like manner let it looſe againſt us, but reſtrains it, for he *knows our Frame*. (2.) How ſubtil the Devil was in the choice of the Place for his Temptations. Intending to ſollicit Chriſt to an *Oſtentation* of his own Power, and a *vain-glorious* Preſumption upon God's Providence, he fixes him on a publick place, in *Jeruſalem*, a populous City, and the *Joy of the whole Earth*, in the *Temple*, one of the Wonders of the World, continually gaz'd upon with Admiration by ſome one or other, there he might make himſelf remarkable, and be taken notice of by every Body, and prove himſelf the *Son of God*, not as he was urg'd in the former Temptation, in the Obſcurities of a Wilderneſs, but before Multitudes, upon the moſt eminent Stage of Action.

Obſerve (1.) That *Jeruſalem* is here called the *holy City*, for ſo it was in Name and Profeſſion, and there was in it a *holy Seed*, that was the *Subſtance thereof*. *Note*, There is no City on Earth ſo holy as to exempt and ſecure us from the Devil and his Temptations. The firſt *Adam* was tempted in the *holy Garden*, the ſecond in the *holy City*; let us not therefore in any Place be off our Watch; nay, the *holy City* is the Place where he doth with the greateſt Advantage and Succeſs tempt Men to Pride and Preſumption; but bleſſed be God, into the *Jeruſalem* above, that *holy City*, no unclean thing ſhall enter, there we ſhall be for ever out of Temptation. (2.) That he *ſet him upon a Pinnacle of the Temple*, which, as *Joſephus* deſcribes it (*Antiq. lib.* 15. *cap.* 14.) was ſo very high, that it would make a Man's Head giddy to look down to the bottom. *Note*, Pinnacles of the Temple are Places of Temptation, I mean (1.) *High Places* are ſo, they are ſlippery Places; Advancement in the World makes a Man a fair Mark for Satan to ſhoot his fiery Darts at. God caſts down that he may raiſe up, the Devil raiſeth up that he may caſt down; therefore thoſe that would take heed of *falling*, muſt take heed of *climbing*. (2.) High Places *in the Church* are in a ſpecial manner dangerous; thoſe that excel in Gifts, are in eminent Stations, and have gained a great Reputation, have need to keep humble, for *Satan* will be ſure to aim at them, to puff them up with Pride, and ſo they *fall into the Condemnation of the Devil*; thoſe that *ſtand high* are concerned to *ſtand faſt*.

2. How he mov'd it. *If thou be the Son of God*, now ſhew thy ſelf to the World, and prove thy ſelf to be ſo, *caſt thy ſelf down*, and then (1.) thou wilt be admir'd as *under the ſpecial Protection of Heaven*, when they ſee thee receive no Hurt by a Fall from ſuch a Precipice, they will ſay as the barbarous People did of *Paul*, that thou art a God. Tradition ſaith that *Simon Magus* by this very thing attempted to prove himſelf a God, but his Pretenſions were diſprov'd, for he fell down, and was miſerably bruiſed. Nay, (2.) Thou wilt be received, as coming *with a ſpecial Commiſſion from Heaven*. All *Jeruſalem* will ſee and acknowledge, not only that thou art more than a Man, but that thou art that *Meſſenger*, that *Angel of the Covenant*, that ſhould *ſuddenly come to the Temple*, Mal. 3. 1. and from thence deſcend into the Streets of the holy City, and thus the Work of convincing the *Jews* will be cut ſhort, and ſoon done.

Obſerve, The Devil ſaid, *Caſt thyſelf down*; the Devil could not caſt him down, tho' a little thing would have done it from the top of a Spire. *Note*, The Power of Satan is a limited Power. *Hitherto he ſhall come, and no further.* Yet if the Devil had *caſt him down*, he had not gain'd his Point, that had been his Suffering only, not his Sin. *Note*, Whatever real Miſchief is done us, it is of *our own doing*; the Devil can but perſuade, he cannot compel; he can but ſay, *Caſt thyſelf down*, he cannot caſt us down; Every Man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own Luſt, and not forced, but enticed; therefore let us not *hurt ourſelves*, and then, bleſſed be God, no one elſe can *hurt us*, Prov. 9. 12.

3. How he back'd this Motion with a Scripture, for it is written *He ſhall give his Angels Charge concerning thee. But is Saul alſo among the Prophets?* Is Satan ſo well vers'd in Scripture as to be able to quote it ſo readily? It ſeems he is. *Note*, It is poſſible a Man may have his Head full of Scripture Notions, and his Mouth full of Scripture Expreſſions, and yet his Heart full of reigning Enmity to God and all Goodneſs. The Knowledge which the Devils have of the Scripture increaſeth both their Miſchievouſneſs and their Torment; never did the Devil ſpeak with more Vexation to himſelf, than when he ſaid to Chriſt, *I know thee who thou art*. The Devil would perſuade Chriſt to *throw himſelf down*, in hopes he will be his own Murderer, and there would be an End of him and his Undertaking, which he look'd upon with a jealous Eye, and to encourage him to do it, tells him there was no Danger, the good Angels would protect him, for ſo was the Promiſe, *Pſal.* 91. 11. *He ſhall give his Angels Charge over thee.* Now in this Quotation,

1. There was *ſomething right*; it is true there is ſuch a Promiſe of the Miniſtration of the Angels for the Protection of the Saints; the Devil knows it by Experience, for he finds his Attempts againſt them fruitleſs, and he frets and rages at it, as he did at the *Hedge* about *Job*, which he ſpeaks of ſo ſenſibly, *Job* 1. 10. He was alſo right in applying it to Chriſt, for to him all the Promiſes of the Protection of the Saints primarily and eminently belong, and to them in and thro' him. That Promiſe that *not a Bone of theirs ſhall be broken*, Pſal. 34. 20. was fulfilled in Chriſt, *John* 19. 36. The Angels guard the Saints for Chriſt's ſake, *Rev.* 5. 6, 11.

2. There was a great deal *wrong in it*, and perhaps the Devil had a particular Spite to this Promiſe, and perverted it, becauſe it often ſtood in his way, and baffled his miſchievous Deſigns againſt the Saints. See here,

1. How he *miſquoted* it, and that was *bad*; the Promiſe is, *they ſhall keep thee*, but how? *in all thy Ways*, not otherwiſe; if we go *out of our Way*, out of the way of our Duty, we forfeit the Promiſe, and put ourſelves out of God's Protection. Now this Word made againſt the Tempter, and therefore he induſtriouſly left it out; if Chriſt had *caſt himſelf down* he had been *out of his Way*, for he had no Call ſo to expoſe himſelf. It is good for us upon all Occaſions to conſult the Scriptures themſelves, and not to take Things upon Truſt, that we may not be impoſed upon by thoſe that maim and mangle the Word of God; we muſt do as the noble *Bereans*, that ſearched the Scriptures daily.

2. How he *miſapplied* it, and that was *worſe*. Scripture is abus'd when it is preſſed to patronize Sin, and when Men thus wreſt it to their own Temptation, they do it to *their own Deſtruction*, 2 Pet 3. 16. This Promiſe is firm, and ſtands good, but the Devil made an ill Uſe of it, when he us'd it as an Encouragement to preſume upon the divine Care. *Note*, It is no new thing for the *Grace of God* to be *turned into Wantonneſs*, and for Men to take Encouragement in Sin from the Diſcoveries of God's Good-will to Sinners; but *ſhall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound?* throw ourſelves down that the Angels may bear us up? God forbid.

2. How Chriſt overcame this Temptation; he reſiſted and overcame it as he did the former, with *It is written*. The Devil's *abuſing* Scripture did not prevent Chriſt from *uſing* it, but he preſently urgeth, *Deut.* 6. 16. *Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God*. The meaning of this is not, therefore thou muſt not tempt me, but therefore *I muſt not tempt* my Father. In the Place whence it is quoted 'tis in the Plural Number, *Ye ſhall not tempt*; here 'tis Singular, *Thou ſhalt not*. *Note*, We are then likely to get good by the Word of God, when we hear and receive general Promiſes, as ſpeaking to us in particular. Satan ſaid, *It is written*; Chriſt ſaith, *It is written*; not that one Scripture contradicts another, God is one, and his Word one, and in one Mind; but that's a Promiſe, this is a Precept, and therefore that's to be explain'd and applied by this; for Scripture is the beſt Interpreter of Scripture; and thoſe that *propheſy*, that expound Scripture, muſt do it according to the Proportion of Faith, *Rom.* 12. 6. in conſiſtence with practical Godlineſs.

If Chriſt ſhould *caſt himſelf down*, it would be the tempting of God, (1.) As it would be *requiring a further Confirmation* of that which was ſo well *confirmed*. Chriſt was abundantly ſatisfied that God was already his Father, and took Care of him, and gave his Angels a Charge concerning him, and therefore to put it upon a new Experiment would be to *tempt* him; as the *Phariſees* tempted Chriſt, when they had ſo many Signs on Earth, they demanded a *Sign from Heaven*; this is limiting the *holy One of Iſrael*. (2.) As it would be *requiring a ſpecial Preſervation* of him in doing that which he had no Call to. If we expect, that becauſe God has promiſed not to forſake us, therefore he ſhould follow us out of the way of our Duty; that becauſe he has promiſed to ſupply our Wants, therefore he ſhould humour us, and pleaſe our Fancies; that becauſe he has promiſed to keep us, we may wilfully thruſt ourſelves into Danger, and may expect the deſired End without uſing the appointed Means; this is Preſumption, this is tempting God; and it is an Aggravation of the Sin, that he is the Lord our God; 'tis an Abuſe of the *Privilege* we have in having him for *our God*; he has thereby encouraged us to *truſt* him, but we are very ungrateful if therefore we tempt him; 'tis contrary to our Duty to him as *our God*; this is to *affront* him whom we ought to *honour*. *Note*, We muſt never promiſe ourſelves any more than God has promiſed us.

(3.) He tempted him to the moſt *black and horrid Idolatry*, with the Proffer of the *Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them*. And here we may obſerve,

1. How the Devil *made this Puſh* at our Saviour, *v.* 8, 9. The worſt Temptation was reſerv'd for the laſt .*Note*, Sometimes the Saints laſt Encounter is with the Sons of *Anak*, and the parting blow is the ſoreſt; therefore whatever Temptation we have been aſſaulted by, ſtill we muſt prepare for worſe; muſt be arm'd for all Attacks with the Armour of Righteouſneſs, on the right-hand, and on the left.

In this Temptarion we may obſerve,

1. What he *ſhew'd him, all the Kingdoms of the World*; in order to this he took him to an *exceeding high Mountain*, in hopes of prevailing, as *Balak* with *Balaam*, he changeth his Ground. The Pinacle of the Temple is not high enough, the Prince of the Power of the Air muſt have him further up into his Territories. Some think this *high Mountain* was on the other ſide *Jordan*, becauſe there we find Chriſt next after the Temptation, *John* 1. 28, 29. Perhaps it was *Mount Piſgah*, from whence *Moſes*, in communion with God, had all the Kingdoms of *Canaan* ſhew'd him. Hither the Bleſſed Jeſus was carried for the advantage of a Proſpect; as if the Devil could ſhew him more of the World than he knew already, who made and govern'd it. From thence he might diſcover ſome of the Kingdoms that lay about *Judea*, tho' not *the Glory of them*; but there was doubtleſs a Juggle, and a Deluſion of Satan's in it; 'tis likely that which he ſhew'd him was but a Landſkip, an airy Repreſentation in a Cloud, ſuch as that great Deceiver could eaſily frame, and put together; ſetting forth in proper and lively Colours, the Glorious and ſplendid Appearances of Princes, and their Robes and Crowns, their Retinue, Equipage, and Life-guards, the Pomps of Thrones and Courts, and ſtately Palaces, the ſumptuous Buildings in Cities, the Gardens and Fields about the Country-ſeats, with the various Inſtances of their Wealth, Pleaſure, and Gaiety; ſo as might be moſt likely to ſtrike the Fancy, and excite the Admiration and Affection: ſuch was this Shew, and his taking him up into a high Mountain, was but to *humour the thing*, and to colour the Deluſion; in which yet the Bleſſed Jeſus did not ſuffer himſelf to be impos'd upon, but ſaw through the Cheat, only permitted Satan to take his own way, that his Victory over him might be the more Illuſtrious. Hence obſerve concerning *Satan's Temptations*, that (1.) they often *come in at the Eye*, that's blinded to the things it ſhould ſee, and dazzled with the Vanities it ſhould be turn'd from, The firſt Sin began in the Eye, *Gen.* 3. 6. We have therefore need to make a Covenant with our Eyes, and to pray that God would *turn them away from beholding Vanity*, (2.) That Temptations commonly take riſe from the World, and the things of it, The *Luſt of the Fleſh*, and of *the Eye*, with the *Pride of Life*, are the Tropicks from which the Devil fetcheth moſt of his Arguments, (3.) That it is a *great Cheat* which the Devil puts upon poor Souls in his Temptations, He deceives, and ſo deſtroys; he impoſes upon Men with Shadows, and falſe Colours; ſhews the World, and the Glory of it, and hides from Mens Eyes that Sin, and Sorrow, and Death which ſtains the Pride of all this Glory; the Cares and Calamities that attend great Poſſeſſions, and the Thorns which Crowns themſelves are lin'd with. (4.) That the *Glory of the World* is the moſt *charming* Temptation to the *Thinking and Unwary*, and that by which Men are moſt impos'd upon, *Laban's* Sons grudge *Jacob all this Glory*; *the Pride of Life* is the moſt dangerous Snare.

2. What *he ſaid to him, v.* 9. *All theſe things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me.* See

1. How *vain the Promiſe* was. *All theſe things will I give thee.* He ſeems to take it for granted, that in the former Temptations he had in part gain'd his point, and prov'd that Chriſt was not the *Son of God*, becauſe he had not given him thoſe Evidences of it which he demanded; ſo that here he looks upon him as a *meer Man*: Come, ſaith he, it ſeems the God, whoſe Son thou thinkeſt thy ſelf to be, deſerts thee, and ſtarves thee, a ſign he is not thy Father, but if thou wilt be rul'd by me, I'll provide better for the than ſo; own me for thy Father, and aſk me Bleſſing, and *all this will I give thee.* Note, Satan makes an eaſy Prey of Men, when he can perſwade, them to think themſelves abandon'd of God. The Fallacy of this Promiſe lies in that, *All this* will I give thee. And what was *all that*, it was but a Map, a Picture, a meer Phantaſm, that had nothing in it real, or ſolid, and this he would *give him*; a goodly Prize, yet ſuch are Satan's Proffers. *Note*, Multitudes loſe the ſight of that which *is*, by ſetting their Eyes on that which *is not*. The Devil's Baits are all a Sham, they are Shows and Shadows, with which he deceives them, or rather they deceive themſelves. The *Nations of the Earth* had been long before promiſed to the *Meſſiah*, if he be *the Son of God* they belong to him; Satan pretends now to be a good Angel, probably one of thoſe that was *ſet over* Kingdoms, and to have receiv'd a commiſſion to deliver poſſeſſion to him according to promiſe. *Note*, We muſt take heed of receiving, even that which God hath promis'd out of the Devils hand; we do ſo when we precipitate the Performance, by catching at it in a ſinful way.

3. How *vile* the *Condition* was: *if thou wilt fall down and Worſhip me. Note*, The Devil is fond to be worſhipped. All the Worſhip which the Heathens perform'd to their gods was directed to the Devil, *Deut.* 32, 17. who is therefore call'd the *god of this World*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. 1 *Cor.* 10. 20. And fain would he draw Chriſt into his Intereſts, and perſuade him now he ſet up for a Teacher, to preach up the *Gentile* Idolatry, and to introduce it again among the *Jews*, and then the Nations of the Earth would ſoon flock in to him. What Temptations could be more hideous, more Black? *Note*, 'Tis poſſible the beſt of Saints may be tempted to the worſt of Sins; eſpecially when they are under the Power of Melancholly, as to Atheiſm, Blaſphemy, Murder, Self-murder, and what not? It is their Affliction; but while there's no conſent to it, nor approbation of it, it is not their Sin; Chriſt was tempted to worſhip Satan.

2. See how Chriſt put by the Thruſt, baffled the Aſſault, and came off a Conqueror. He rejected the Propoſal,

1. With an *Abhorrence* and *Deteſtation, Get thee hence, Satan.* The two former Temptations had ſomething of Colour which would admit of a Conſideration, but this was ſo groſs as not to bear a Parley; it appeats abominable at the firſt ſight, and therefore is immediately rejected. If the beſt Friend we have in the World ſhould ſuggeſt ſuch a thing as this to us, *Go ſerve other Gods*, he muſt not be heard with Patience, *Deut.* 13. 6, 8. Some Temptations have their Wickedneſs written in their Forehead, they are open before-hand, that are not to be diſputed with, but rejected: *Get thee hence, Satan*, away with it, I cannot bear the thought of it. While Satan tempted Chriſt to do himſelf a miſchief, by caſting himſelf down, tho' he yielded not, yet he heard it; but now the Temptation flies in the Face of God, he cannot bear it; *Get thee hence, Satan. Note*, It is a *juſt* Indignation which riſeth at the propoſal of any thing that reflects on the Honour of God, and ſtrikes at his Crown. Nay, whatever is an abominable thing, which we are ſure the Lord hates, we muſt thus abominate it; far be it from us that we ſhould have any thing to do with it. *Note*, It is good to be *peremptory* in reſiſting Temptation, and to *ſtop our Ears to* Satan's Charms.

2. With an *Argument* fetch'd from Scripture. *Note*, In order to the ſtrengthening of our Reſolutions againſt Sin, 'tis good to ſee what a great deal of Reaſon there is for thoſe Reſolutions. The Argument is very pat, and to the purpoſe, taken from *Deut.* 6. 13. and 10. 20. *Thou ſhalt Worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve*, Chriſt doth not diſpute whether he were an Angel of Light, as he pretended, or no; but tho' he were, yet he muſt not be worſhipped, becauſe that's an Honour due to God only. *Note*, 'Tis good to make our Anſwers to Temptation as full and as brief as may be, ſo as not to leave room for objections. Our Saviour has recourſe to the fundamental Law in this Caſe, which is indiſpenſable, and univerſally obliging. *Note*, Religious Worſhip is due to God only, and muſt not be given to any Creature; 'tis a Flower of the Crown which cannot be alienated, a Branch of God's Glory, which he will not give to another, and which he would not give to his own Son, by obliging all Men to *Honour the Son, even as they Honour the Father*, if he had not been God, *equal to him*, and *one with him.* Chriſt quotes this Law concerning Religious Worſhip, and quotes it with Application to himſelf: (1.) To ſhew that in his Eſtate of Humiliation, he was himſelf *made under this Law*; tho' as God he was worſhipped, yet as Man he did Worſhip God, both publickly and privately. He obligeth us to no more than what he was firſt pleas'd to oblige himſelf to. Thus it became him to fulfil all Righteouſneſs. (2.) To ſhew that the Law of Religious Worſhip is of Eternal Obligation; and tho' he abrogated and alter'd many Inſtitutions of Worſhip, yet this fundamental Law of Nature, that God only is to be Worſhipped, he came to ratify and confirm, and enforce upon us.

Laſtly, We have here the end and Iſſue of this Combat, *v.* 11, Tho' the Children of God may be exercis'd with many and great Temptations, yet God will not ſuffer them to be tempted above the Strength which either they have, or he will put into them. 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. 'Tis but *for a Seaſon* that they are in heavineſs through manifold Temptations.

Now the Iſſue was glorious, and much to Chriſt's Honour, for

1. The Devil was baffled, and quitted the Field. *Then the Devil leaveth him*, forc'd to do ſo by the Power that went along with that Word of Command, *Get thee hence, Satan.* He made a ſhameful and inglorious Retreat, and came off with Diſgrace; and the more daring his Attempts had been, the more mortifying was the Foil that was given him. *Magnes tamen excidit Auſis. Then* when he had done his worſt, had Tempted him with *all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them*, and found that he was not influenc'd by that Bait, that he could not prevail with that Temptation, with which he has overthrown ſo many Thouſands of the Children of Men, then he *leaves him*; then he gives him over as more than a Man: Since this did not move him, he deſpairs of moving him, and begins to conclude that he is the *Son of God*, and 'tis in vain to tempt him any further, *Note*, If we reſiſt the Devil, he will flee from us, he will yield, if we keep our Ground; as when *Naomi* ſaw that *Ruth was ſtedfaſtly reſolv'd, ſhe left off ſpeaking to her.* When the Devil *left* our Saviour, he own'd himſelf fairly beaten; his Head was broken by the Attempt he made to *bruiſe Chriſt's Heel.* He left him becauſe he had *nothing in him*, nothing to take hold of; he ſaw it was to no purpoſe, and ſo gave off. *Note*, The Devil, tho' he is an Enemy to all the Saints, he is a conquer'd Enemy. The Captain of our Salvation has defeated and diſarm'd him, we have nothing to do but to *purſue the Victory*,

2. The holy Angels came and attended upon our Victorious Redeemer, *Behold Angels came and Miniſter'd unto him.* They came in a viſible Appearance, as the Devil had done in the Temptation, While the Devil was making his Aſſaults upon our Saviour, the Angels ſtood at a diſtance, and their immediate Attendance and Miniſtration was ſuſpended, that it might appear he vanquiſh'd Satan in his own Strength, and his Victory might be the more Illuſtrious; And that afterwards, when *Michael* makes uſe of *his Angels* in fighting with the *Dragon and his Angels*, it is not becauſe he *needs them*, or could not do his Work without them, but becauſe he is pleas'd to

honour them ſo far as to employ them. One Angel might have ſerv'd to bring him Food, but here are many attending him, to teſtify their Reſpect to him, and their readineſs to receive his Commands, *Behold* this, 'tis worth taking Notice of; (1.) That as there is a world of wicked malicious Spirits that fight againſt Chriſt and his Church, and all particular Believers, ſo there is a world of holy bleſſed Spirits engag'd and employ'd for them. In reference to our *War with Devils* we may take abundance of comfort from our *Communion with Angels.* (2.) That Chriſt's Victories are the Angels Triumphs. The Angels came to congratulate Chriſt's Succeſs, to rejoyce with him, and to give him the Glory due to his Name; for what was ſung with a loud Voice in Heaven, when the great Dragon was caſt out, *Rev.* 12. 9, 10. *Now is come Salvation and Strength.* (3.) That the Angels *Miniſter'd* to the Lord Jeſus, not only Food, but whatever elſe he wanted after this great Fatigue. See how the Inſtances of Chriſt's Condeſcenſion and Humiliation were ballanc'd with Tokens of his *Glory.* As when he was *Crucified im Weakneſs*, yet he *liv'd by the Power of God*; ſo when in Weakneſs he was tempted, was hungry and weary, yet by his divine Power he commanded the Miniſtration of Angels. Thus the Son of Man did eat Angels Food, and like *Elias*, is fed by an Angel in the Wilderneſs, 1 *Kings* 19. 4, 7. *Note*, Tho' God may ſuffer his People to be brought into wants and Straits, yet he will take effectual Care for their Supply, will rather ſend Angels to feed them, than ſee them periſh. *Truſt in the Lord, and verily thou ſhalt be fed*, Pſal. 37. 3.

Chriſt was thus ſuccour'd after the Temptation, (1.) for his encouragement to go on in his Undertaking, that he might ſee the Powers of Heaven ſiding with him, when he ſaw the Powers of Hell ſet againſt him. (2.) For our encouragement to truſt in him; for as he knew by experience what it was to *ſuffer, being tempted*, and how hard that was, ſo he knew what it was to be ſuccour'd, being tempted, and how comfortable that was; and therefore we may expect, not only that he will ſympathize with his tempted People, but that he will come in with ſeaſonable Relief to them; as our great *Melchizedek*, who met *Abraham* when he returned from the Battel, and as the *Angels* here Miniſter'd to him.

Laſtly, Chriſt having been thus ſignaliz'd, and made great in the inviſible World by the Voice of the Father, the Deſcent of the Spirit, his Victory over Devils, and his Dominion over Angels, he was doubtleſs qualified to appear in the viſible World as the Mediator between God and Man; for *conſider how great this Man was.*

12 Now when Jeſus had heard that John was caſt into priſon, he departed into Galilee. 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum which is upon the ſea coaſt, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the Prophet, ſaying, 15 The Land of Zabulon, and the Land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the ſea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: 16 The People which ſat in darkneſs ſaw great light: and to them which ſat in the region and ſhadow of death, light is ſprung up. 17 From that time Jeſus began to preach and to ſay, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

We have here an account of Chriſt's preaching in the Synagogues of *Galilee*, for he came into the World to be a *Preacher*; the great Salvation which he wrought out, he himſelf began to *Publiſh*, *Heb.* 2. 3. to ſhew how much his Heart was upon it, and ours ſhould be.

Several Paſſages in the other Goſpels, eſpecially that of St. *John*, are ſuppos'd in the order of the Story of Chriſt's Life, to intervene between his Temptation and his Preaching in *Galilee*: his firſt Appearance after his Temptation, was when *John Baptiſt* pointed to him, ſaying, *Behold the Lamb of God*, John 1. 29. After that he went up to *Jeruſalem* to the Paſſover, *John* 2. diſcours'd with *Nicodemus*, *John* 3. with the Woman of *Samaria*, *John* 4. and then return'd into *Galilee*, and preach'd there. But *Matthew* having had his Reſidence in *Galilee*, begins his Story of Chriſt's publick Miniſtry, with his Preaching there, which here we have an account of. Obſerve

1. The Time; *when Jeſus had heard that John was caſt into Priſon*, then he *went into Galilee*, v. 12. *Note*, The Cry of the Saints Sufferings comes up into the Ears of the Lord Jeſus. If *John* be caſt into Priſon, Jeſus hears it, takes cognizance of it, and ſteers his Courſe accordingly; he *remembers the Bonds* and Afflictions that abide his People. *Obſerve*, (1.) Chriſt did not go into the Country, *till he heard of John*'s Impriſonment; for he muſt have Time given him to *prepare the Way of the Lord*, before the Lord himſelf *appear*. Providence wiſely order'd it, that *John* ſhould be *eclips'd* before Chriſt *ſhone forth*; otherwiſe the Minds of People would have been diſtracted between the two; one would have ſaid, *I am of John*, and another, *I am of Jeſus. John* muſt be Chriſt's Harbinger, but not his Rival. Moon and Stars are loſt when the Sun riſeth. *John* had done his Work by the Baptiſm of Repentance, and then he is laid aſide. The Witneſſes were ſlain when they had finiſhed their Teſtimony, and not before, *Rev.* 11. 7. (2.) He did go into the Country *as ſoon* as he heard of *John*'s Impriſonment; not only to ſhift for his own Saftey, knowing that the *Phariſees* in *Judea* were as much Enemies to him as *Herod* was to *John*, but to ſupply the want of *John Baptiſt*, and to build upon the good Foundation he had laid. *Note*, God will not leave himſelf without Witneſs, nor his Church without Guides; when he removes one uſeful Inſtrument, he *can* raiſe up another, for he has the reſidue of the Spirit, and he will do it, if he has Work to do. *Moſes my Servant is dead*, *John* is caſt into Priſon; now therefore *Joſhua* ariſe, *Jeſus* ariſe.

2. The Place where he Preach'd; in *Galilee*, a remote part of the Country, that lay fartheſt from *Jeruſalem*, and was there look'd upon with Contempt, as Rude and Booriſh. The Inhabitants of that Country were reckon'd ſtout Men, cut out for Soldiers, but not polite Men, or cut out for Scholars. Thither Chriſt went, there he ſet up the Standard of his Goſpel; and in this, as in other things, he *humbled himſelf.* Obſerve,

(1.) The particular City he choſe for his Reſidence; not *Nazareth*, where he had been bred up, no, *he left Nazareth*, particular notice is taken of that, *v.* 13. And with good Reaſon did he leave *Nazareth*; for the Men of that City *thruſt him out* from among them, *Luke* 4. 29. He made them his *firſt*, and a very *fair Offer* of his Service, but they rejected him and his Doctrine, and were filled with Indignation at him and it, and therefore he left *Nazareth*, and ſhook off the Duſt of his Feet for a Teſtimony againſt them there, that would not have him to Teach them. *Nazareth* was the firſt place that refuſed Chriſt, and was therefore refuſed by him. *Note*, It is juſt with God to take the Goſpel, and the Means of Grace from thoſe that ſlight them, and thruſt them away. Chriſt will not ſtay long where he is not welcome. Unhappy *Nazareth!* If *thou hadſt known* in this thy Day the things that belong to thy Peace, how well had it been for thee! *But now they are hid from thine Eyes.*

But he *came and dwelt at Capernaum*, which was a City of *Galilee*, but many Miles diſtance from *Nazareth*, a great City and of ſo much reſort. It is ſaid here to be *on the Sea-coaſt*, not the *great Sea*, but the Sea of *Tiberias*, an Inland-water, call'd alſo, the *Lake of Genneſaret.* Cloſe by the falling of *Jordan* into this Sea ſtood *Capernaum*, in the Tribe of *Nepthali*, but bordering unto *Zebulon*; hither Chriſt came, and here he dwelt; ſome think his Father *Joſeph* had a Habitation here, others, that he took a Houſe, or Lodgings at leaſt; and ſome think it more than probable, that he dwelt in the Houſe of *Simon Peter*; however, here he fix'd not conſtantly, for he went about doing Good; but this was for ſome time his head Quarters, what little Reſt he had was here; here he had a Place, tho' not a Place of his own to lay his Head on. And at *Capernaum*, it ſhould ſeem he was welcome, and met with better Entertainment than he had at *Nazareth. Note*, If ſome reject Chriſt, yet others will receive him, and bid him welcome. *Capernaum* is glad of *Nazareth*'s Leavings: If Chriſt's own Countrymen be not gather'd, yet he will be Glorious. And thou *Capernaum* haſt now a Day of it; thou art now lifted up to Heaven, be wiſe for thy ſelf, and know the Time of thy Viſitation.

(2.) The Prophecy that was fulfill'd in this, *v.* 14, 15, 16. It is quoted out of *Iſa.* 9. 1, 2. but with ſome variation. The Prophet in that place is foretelling a greater Darkneſs of Affliction to befal the Contemners of *Immanuel*, than befel the Countries there mention'd, either in their firſt Captivity under *Benhadad*, which was but light, 1 *Kings* 15. 20. or their ſecond Captivity under the *Aſſyrian*, which was much heavier. 2 *Kings* 15. 29. The Puniſhment of the *Jewiſh* Nation for rejecting the Goſpel ſhould be ſorer than either; ſee *Iſa.* 8. 21, 22. for thoſe captiv'd Places had ſome reviving in their Bondage, and ſaw a great Light again, *Chap.* 9. 2. This is *Iſaiah*'s Senſe; but the Scripture has many fulfillings, and the Evangeliſt here takes only the latter Clauſe, which ſpeaks of the return of the Light of Liberty, and Proſperity to thoſe Countries that had been in the Darkneſs of Captivity, and applies it to the appearing of the Goſpel among them.

The Places are ſpoken of, *v.* 15. *The Land of Zebulon* is rightly ſaid to be *by the Sea-coaſt*, for *Zebulon* was a *Haven of Ships*, and *rejoiced* in her *going out*, Gen. 49. 13. Deut. 33. 18. Of *Nephthali*, it had been ſaid, that he ſhould *give goodly words*, Gen. 49. 21 and ſhould be *ſatisfied with favour.* Deut 33. 23. for from him began the Goſpel; *goodly words* indeed, and ſuch as bring to a Soul God's ſatisfying Favour. The Country *beyond Jordan* is mention'd likewiſe, for there we ſometimes find Chriſt Preaching; and *Galilee of the Gentiles*, the upper *Galilee* to which the *Gentiles* reſorted for Traffick, and were mingled with the *Jews*; which intimates a Kindneſs in reſerve for the poor *Gentiles.* When Chriſt came to *Capernaum*, the Goſpel came to all thoſe Places round about, ſuch diffuſive Influences did the Sun of Righteouſneſs caſt.

Now concerning the Inhabitants of theſe Places, obſerve (1.) the Poſture they were in before the Goſpel came among them, *v.* 16. They were *in Darkneſs. Note*, Thoſe that are without Chriſt, are in the Dark, nay, they are Darkneſs it ſelf; as the Darkneſs that was upon the *face of the Deep.* Nay, they were *in the Region and Shadow of Death*, which notes not only *great Darkneſs*, as the Grave is a *Land of Darkneſs*, but *great Danger*: A Man that's deſperately ſick, and not likely to recover, is in the *Valley of the Shadow of Death*, tho' not quite dead, ſo the poor People were in the Borders of Damnation, tho' not yet damn'd, dead in Law. And which is worſt of all, they were *ſitting* in this Condition. *Sitting* is a *continuing* Poſture; where we ſit, we mean to ſtay; they were in the Dark, and likely to be ſo, deſpairing to find the way out: And it is a *contented* Poſture; they were in the Dark, and they lov'd Darkneſs, they choſe it rather than Light; they were *willingly ignorant.* Their Condition was ſad; 'tis ſtill the condition of many great and mighty Nations that are to be thought of, and pray'd for with Pity. But their Condition is more ſad who ſit in Darkneſs in the midſt of Goſpel-Light. He that's in the Dark becauſe *'tis Night*, may be ſure the *Sun* will ſhortly *ariſe*; but he that's in the Dark becauſe he is blind, will not ſo ſoon have his Eyes open'd. We have the Light, but what will that avail us, if we be not *Light in the Lord.*

(2.) The Privilege they enjoy'd when Chriſt and his Goſpel came among them, as great a reviving as ever it was to a benighted Traveller. *Note*, When the Goſpel comes, Light comes; when it comes to any Place, when it comes to any Soul, it makes Day there, *John* 3. 19. *Luke* 1. 78, 79. Light is diſcovering, 'tis directing, ſo is the Goſpel.

It is a *great Light*, noting the Clearneſs and Evidence of Goſpel-Revelations; not like the Light of a Candle; but the Light of the Sun, when he goes forth in his Strength. *Great* in compariſon with the Light of the Law, the Shadows of which were now done away. 'Tis a *great Light*, for it diſcovers great things, and of vaſt conſequence; 'twill laſt long, and ſpread far. And it is a *growing Light*, intimated in that Word, 'tis *ſprung up*. It was but *Spring of Day* with them; now the Day dawn'd, which afterwards *ſhone more and more.* The Goſpel-Kingdom, like a Grain of Muſtard-Seed, or the Morning-light, was ſmall in its Beginnings, gradual in its Growth, but great in its Perfection.

Obſerve, The Light *ſprung up to them*; they did not go to ſeek it, but were prevented with the Bleſſings of this Goodneſs. It came upon them e'er they were aware, at the time appointed; by the Diſpoſal of him who *commandeth the Morning, and cauſeth the Day-ſpring to know its Place, that it may take hold of the Ends of the Earth*, Job 38. 12, 13.

The Text he Preach'd upon, *v.* 17. *from that time*, i. e. from the time of his coming into *Galilee*, into the Land of *Zebulun* and *Nephthali*, from that time he *began to Preach.* He had been Preaching before this in *Judea*, and had *made* and *Baptized* many Diſciples, *John* 4. 1. But his Preaching was not ſo publick and conſtant as now it began to be. The Work of the Miniſtry is ſo great and awful, that 'tis fit to be enter'd upon by Steps, and gradual Advances.

The Subject Chriſt dwelt upon now in his Preaching, and it was indeed the Sum and Subſtance of all his Preaching, was the very ſame that *John* had Preach'd upon *Chap.* 3. 2. *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; for the Goſpel is the ſame for Subſtance, under various Diſpenſations; the Commands the ſame, and the Reaſons to inforce them the ſame; an *Angel from Heaven* dare not Preach any other Goſpel, *Gal.* 1. 8. and will Preach *this*; for it is the *Everlaſting Goſpel. Fear God, and* by Repentance *give Honour to him*, Rev. 14. 6, 7. Chriſt put a great Reſpect upon *John*'s Miniſtry, when he Preach'd to the ſame purpoſe that he had Preach'd before him. By this he ſhewed that *John* was his Meſſenger, and Ambaſſador, for when he brought the Errand himſelf, 'twas the ſame that he had ſent by him, Thus did God Confirm the Word of his Meſſengers, *Iſa.* 44. 26. The Son came on the ſame Errand that the Servants came on, *Matt.* 21. 37. to *ſeek Fruit*; Fruits meet for Repentance. Chriſt had lain in the Boſom of the Father, and could have preach'd ſublime Notions of divine and Heavenly Things, that ſhould have alarm'd and amuz'd the learned World, but he pitcheth upon this old plain Text, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* (1.) This he Preach'd *firſt* upon; he began with this: Miniſters muſt not be ambitious of broaching new Opinions, framing new Schemes, or coining new Expreſſions, but muſt content themſelves with plain practical things; with the Word that is *nigh us*, even *in our Mouth*, and *in our Heart*; we need not go up to Heaven, or down to the Deep, for Matter or Language in our Preaching. As *John* prepar'd Chriſt's Way, ſo Chriſt prepar'd his own, and made way for the further Diſcoveries he deſign'd with the Doctrine of Repentance. *If any Man* will do this part of *his Will, he ſhall know* more of *his Doctrine*, John 7. 17. (2.) This he preach'd *often* upon; wherever he went this was his Subject, and neither he nor his Followers ever reckon'd it worn threadbare, as thoſe would have done that have *itching Ears*, and are fond of Novelty and Variety, more than that which is truly *edifying*. *Note*, That which has been Preach'd and heard before, may yet very profitably be Preach'd and heard again; but then it ſhould be Preach'd and heard better, and with new Affections; what *Paul* had ſaid before, he ſaid again *weeping*, Phil. 3. 1, 18. (3.) This he Preach'd as Goſpel; *Repent*, review your Ways, and return to your ſelves. *Note*, The Doctrine of Repentance is right Goſpel-doctrine. It was not only the auſtere Baptiſt that was look'd upon as a melancholly moroſe Man, but the ſweet and gracious Jeſus, whoſe Lips dropt as a Honey-comb that Preach'd Repentance; for it is an unſpeakable Privilege that room is left for Repentance. (4.) The Reaſon is ſtill the ſame. The *Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; for it was not reckon'd to be fully come till the pouring out of the Spirit after Chriſt's Aſcenſion. *John* had Preach'd the Kingdom of Heaven *at hand*, above a Year before this; but now it was ſo much nearer, the Argument was ſo much the ſtronger; now is the *Salvation nearer*, Rom. 13. 11. We ſhould be ſo much the more quicken'd to our Duty, *as we ſee the Day approaching*, Heb. 10. 25.

18 And Jeſus walking by the ſea of Galilee, ſaw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother, caſting a net into the Sea: (for they were fiſhers) 19 And he ſaith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fiſhers of men. 20 And they ſtraightway left *their* nets, and followed him. 21 And going from thence, he ſaw other two brethren, James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother in a ſhip with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them. 22 And they immediately left the ſhip and their father, and followed him.

When Chriſt began to Preach, he began to *gather Diſciples*, that ſhould now be the *Hearers*, and hereafter the *Preachers* of his Doctrine, that ſhould now be Witneſſes *of* his Miracles, and hereafter *concerning* them. Now in theſe Verſes we have an Account of the firſt Diſciples that he call'd into Fellowſhip with himſelf.

And this was an Inſtance (1.) of *effectual Calling* to Chriſt. In all his Preaching he gave a common Call to all the Country, but in this he gave a *ſpecial* and particular Call to thoſe that were given him by the Father. Let us ſee and admire the Power of Chriſt's Grace, own his Word to be the Rod of his Strength, and wait upon him for thoſe powerful Influences which are neceſſary to the Efficacy of the Goſpel-call, thoſe diſtinguiſhing Influences. All the Country was *call'd*; but thoſe were *call'd out*, were *Redeemed from among Men*: Chriſt was ſo manifeſted to them, as he was not manifeſted unto the World. (2.) It was an Inſtance of *Ordination*, and Appointment to the Work of the Miniſtry. When Chriſt as a Teacher ſet up his great School, one of his firſt Works was to appoint Uſhers, or Under-maſters to be employ'd in teaching Work. Now he began to give Gifts unto Men, to put the Treaſure into Earthen-Veſſels. 'Twas an early Inſtance of his Care for his Church.

Now we may obſerve here,

1. Where they were called, by the *Sea of Galilee* where Jeſus was *walking*, *Capernaum* ſtanding near that Sea. Concerning this Sea of *Tiberias*, the *Jews* have a Saying, That of all the ſeven Seas that God made, he made Choice of none but this Sea of *Genneſaret*, which is very applicable to Chriſt's Chocie of it, to honour it, as he ofteh did with his Preſence and Miracles. Here on the Banks of the Sea Chriſt was *walking* for Contemplation, as *Iſaac* in the Field, hither he went to call Diſciples; not to *Herod*'s Court, for few Mighty or Noble are call'd; not to *Jeruſalem*, among the chief Prieſts, and the Elders, but to the Sea of *Galilee*; ſurely Chriſt ſees not as Man ſees. Not but that the ſame Power which effectually called *Peter* and *Andrew*, would have wrought upon *Annas* and *Caiaphas*, for with God nothing is impoſſible, but as in other things, ſo in his Converſe and Attendanc he would humble himſelf, and ſhew that God hath *choſen the Poor of this World*. *Galilee* was a remote Part of the Nation, the Inhabitants were leſs cultivated and refin'd, their very Language was broad and uncouth to the curious, their *Speech betray'd them*: Thoſe that were pick'd up at the Sea of *Galilee* had not the Advantages and Improvements, no, not of the more poliſh'd *Galileans*, yet thither Chriſt went to call his Apoſtles that were to be the prime Miniſters of State in his Kingdom, for he *chuſeth the fooliſh things of the World to confound the Wiſe.*

2. Who they were. Two pair of Brothers we have an account of the Call of in theſe Verſes, *Peter* and *Andrew*, *James* and *John*; the two former, and probably the two latter alſo had had Acquaintance with Chriſt before, *John* 1. 40, 41. but were not till now call'd into a cloſe and conſtant Attendance upon him. *Note*, Chriſt brings poor Souls by degrees into fellowſhip with himſelf. They had been Diſciples of *John*, and ſo were the better diſpos'd to follow Chriſt. *Note*, Thoſe that have ſubmitted to the Diſcipline of Repentanc ſhall be welcome to the Joys of Faith. We may obſerve concerning them,

(1.) That they were *Brothers*. *Note*, It is a bleſſed thing, when thoſe that are *Kinſmen according to the Fleſh* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks *Rom.* 9. 3.) are brought together in to a ſpiritual Alliance to Jeſus Chriſt. 'Tis the Honour and Comfort of a Houſe, when thoſe that are of the ſame Family are of God's Family.

(2.) That they were *Fiſhers*. And being Fiſhers, (1.) they were *poor Men*; if they had had Eſtates, or any conſiderable Stock in Trade, they would not have made it their Trade, however they might have made this their Recreation. *Note*, Chriſt doth not deſpiſe the Poor, and therefore we muſt not; the *Poor* are *Evangeliz'd*, and the Fountain of Honour ſometimes gives more abundant Honour to that part which moſt lack'd. (2.) They were *unlearned* Men, not bred up to Books, or Literature, as *Moſes* was, who was converſant with all the Learning of the *Egyptians*. *Note*, Chriſt ſometimes chuſeth to endow thoſe with the Gifts of Grace that have leaſt to ſhew of the Gifts of Nature. Yet this will not juſtify the bold Intruſion of ignorant and unqualified Men upon the Work of the Miniſtry; extraordinary Gifts of Knowledge and Utterance are not now to be expected, but requiſite Abilities muſt be obtain'd in an ordinary way, and without a competent meaſure of theſe, none are to be admitted to that Service. (3.) They were *Men of Buſineſs*, that thad been bred up to Labour. *Note*, Diligence in an honeſt Calling is pleaſing to Chriſt, and no hindrance to a holy Life. *Moſes* was call'd from keeping Sheep, and *David* from followiug the Ewes, to eminent Employments. Idle People lie open more to the Temptations of Satan, than to the Calls of God. (4.) They were Men that were accuſtom'd to Hardſhips and Hazards; the Fiſhers Trade, more than any other, is Laborious and Perilous: Fiſhermen muſt be often wet and cold, they muſt watch, and wait, and toil, and be often in *Peril by Waters*. *Note*, Thoſe that have learn'd to bear Hardſhips, and to run Hazards, are beſt prepar'd for the Fellowſhip and Diſcipleſhip of Jeſus Chriſt. Good Soldiers of Chriſt muſt *endure Hardneſs*.

3. What they were doing. *Peter* and *Andrew* were then uſing their Nets, they were Fiſhing, and *James* and *John* were *mending their Nets*. Which was and Inſtance of their Induſtry, and their good Huſbandry; they did not go to their Father for Money to buy new Nets, but took pains to mend their old ones. What we have, 'tis commendable,

mendable to make it go as far, and laſt as long as may be. *James* and *John* were with their Father *Zebedee*, ready to aſſiſt him, and make his Buſineſs eaſy to him. *Note*, It is a happy and hopeful Preſage to ſee Children careful of their Parents, and dutiful to them. *Obſerve*, They were *all* employ’d, all very buſy, and none idle. *Note*, When Chriſt comes, ’tis good to be *fonnd doing*. *Am I in Chriſt?* is a very needful Queſtion for us to aſk our ſelves, and next to that, *Am I in my Calling?* (2.) They were *differently* employ’d; two of them were Fiſhing, and two of them mending their Nets. *Note*, Miniſters ſhould be always employ’d, either in Teaching or Studying; they may always find themſelves ſomething to do, if it be not their own Fault. And *mending their Nets* is in its Seaſon, as neceſſary Work as *Fiſhing*.

4. What the Call was, *v.* 19. *Follow me, and I will make you Fiſhers of Men.* They had follow’d Chriſt before as ordinary Diſciples, *Joh.* 1. 37. but *ſo* they might follow Chriſt, and follow their Calling too; therefore they were call’d to a more cloſe and conſtant Attendance, and muſt leave their Calling. *Note*, Even thoſe that have been call’d to follow Chriſt, yet have need to be call’d to follow on, and to follow nearer, eſpecially when they are deſign’d for the Work of the Miniſtry. *Obſerve*,

(1.) What Chriſt intended them for. *I will make you Fiſhers of Men*; this alludes to their former Calling. Let them not be proud of the new Honour deſign’d them, they are ſtill but Fiſhers; let them not be afraid of the new Work cut out for them, for they have been us’d to Fiſhing, and Fiſhers they are ſtill. ’Twas uſual with Chriſt to ſpeak of Spiritual and Heavenly Things under ſuch Alluſions, and in ſuch expreſſions as took riſe from common things that offer’d themſelves to his view. *David* was call’d from feeding Sheep, to *feed God’s Iſrael*, and when he is a King, is a Shepherd. *Note*, 1. Miniſters are *Fiſhers of Men*, not to deſtroy them, but to ſave them, by bringing them into *another Element*. They muſt fiſh not for Wrath, Wealth, Honour and Preferment, to gain them to themſelves, but for Souls, to gain them to Chriſt. They *watch for your Souls*, Heb. 13. 17. and ſeek *not yours, but you*, 2 Cor. 12. 14, 16. (2.) It is Jeſus Chriſt that makes them ſo, *I will make you Fiſhers of Men.* ’Tis he that qualifies Men for this Work, calls them to it, authorizeth them in it, and gives them Succeſs in it, gives them Commiſſion to fiſh for Souls, and Wiſdom to win them. Thoſe Miniſters are likely to have Comfort in their Work that are thus *made* by *Jeſus Chriſt.*

(2.) What they muſt do in order to this. *Follow me.* They muſt ſeparate themſelves to a diligent *Attendance on him*, and ſet themſelves to a humble *Imitation of him*, muſt follow him as their Leader. *Note*, 1. Thoſe whom Chriſt employs in any Service for him, ’tis requiſite they be firſt fitted and qualified for it. 2. Thoſe that would *preach Chriſt*, muſt firſt *learn Chriſt*, and learn *of him.* How can we expect to bring others to the Knowledge of Chriſt, if we do not know him well ourſelves. 3. Thoſe that would get an Acquaintance with Chriſt, muſt be diligent and conſtant in their Attendance on him. The Apoſtles were prepar’d for their Work by *companying with Chriſt all the time that he went in and out among them*, Acts 1. 21. There’s no Learning comparable to that which is got by following Chriſt. *Joſhua* by miniſtring to *Moſes* is fitted to be his Succeſſor. (4.) Thoſe that are to *fiſh for Men*, muſt therein *follow Chriſt* and do it as he did, with Diligence, Faithfulneſs, and Tenderneſs, Chriſt is the great Pattern for Preachers, and they ought to be *workers together with him.*

5. What was the Succeſs of this Call? *Peter* and *Andrew ſtraitway left their Nets*, v. 20. and *James* and *John immediately left the Ship, and their Father*, v. 22. and they *all followed him*, *Note*, Thoſe that would follow Chriſt aright, muſt leave all to follow him. Every Chriſtian muſt leave all in Affection, ſit looſe to all, muſt *hate Father and Mother*, Luke 14. 26. muſt love them leſs than Chriſt; muſt be ready to part with his Intereſt in them, rather than with his Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt; but thoſe that are devoted to the Work of the Miniſtry, are in a ſpecial manner concern’d to diſentangle themſelves from all the Affairs of this Life, that they may give themſelves wholly to that Work which requires the whole Man. Now

1. This Inſtance of the *Power of the Lord Jeſus*, gives us a *good Encouragement* to depend upon the Sufficiency of his Grace. How ſtrong and effectual is his Word! he *ſpeaks* and *it is done.* The ſame Power goes along with this Word of Chriſt, *Follow me*, that went along with that Word, *Lazarus, come forth*; a Power to *make willing*, Pſal. 110. 3.

2. This Inſtance of the *Pliableneſs of the Diſciples*, gives us a *good Example* of Obedience to the Command of Chriſt. *Note*, It is the good Property of all Chriſt’s faithful Servants, to *come when they are call’d*, and to follow their Maſter wherever he leads them. They objected not their preſent Employments, their Engagements to their Families, the Difficulties of the Service they were call’d to, or their own unfitneſs for it, but being call’d, they obey’d, and, like *Abraham*, went out, *not knowing whither they went*, but knowing very well whom they followed. *James* and *John* left *their Father*, ’tis not ſaid what came of him; their Mother *Salome* was a conſtant follower of Chriſt. No doubt their Father *Zebedee* was a Believer, but the Call to follow Chriſt faſtned on the *young ones*; Youth is the learning Age, and the labouring Age. The Prieſts miniſter’d in the prime of their Time.

23 And Jeſus went about all Galilee, teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe among the people. 24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all ſick people that were taken with divers diſeaſes and torments, and thoſe which were poſſeſſed with devils, and thoſe which were lunatick, and thoſe that had the palſie; and he healed them. 25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jeruſalem, and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

See here, 1. What an induſtrious *Preacher* Chriſt was; he *went about all Galilee, teaching in their Synagogues, and Preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom.* Obſerve (1.) what Chriſt Preach’d, the *Goſpel of the Kingdom.* The Kingdom of Heaven, that is, of Grace and Glory, is emphatically *the Kingdom*, the Kingdom that was *now to come*; that Kingdom that ſhall *ſurvive*, as it doth *ſurpaſs* all the Kingdoms of the Earth. The *Goſpel* is the Charter of that Kingdom, containing the King’s Coronation Oath, by which he hath graciouſly oblig’d himſelf to pardon, protect, and ſave the Subjects of that Kingdom; and their Oath of Allegiance, by which they oblige themſelves to obſerve his Statutes, and ſeek his Honour; this is the *Goſpel of the Kingdom*, this Chriſt was himſelf the Preacher of, that our Faith in it might be confirm’d. (2.) Where he Preach’d, *in the Synagogues*; not there only, but there chiefly, becauſe thoſe were the Places of Concourſe, where Wiſdom was to *lift up her Voice*, Prov. 1. 21. Becauſe they were Places of Concourſe for Religious *Worſhip*, and there it was to be hoped People’s Minds would be prepar’d to receive the Goſpel. And there the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament were read, the Expoſition of which would eaſily introduce the *Goſpel of the Kingdom.* (3.) What Pains he took in Preaching; he *went about all Galilee Teaching.* He might have iſſued out a Proclamation, to Summon all to come in to him, but to ſhew his Humility, and the Condeſcentions of his Grace, he goes to them; for he waits to be gracious, and comes to *ſeek and ſave.* *Joſephus* ſaith, there were above two hundred Cities and Towns in *Galilee*, and all or moſt of them Chriſt viſited. He *went about doing Good.* Never was there ſuch an itinerant Preacher, ſuch an indefatigable one as Chriſt was; he went a begging from Town to Town to beſeech poor Sinners to be reconcil’d to God. This is an Example to Miniſters to lay out to do Good, and to be inſtant and conſtant, in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon, to preach the Word.

2. What a powerful Phyſician Chriſt was. He went about, not only *Teaching*, but *Healing*, and both with *his Word*, that he might magnify that above all his Name. He *ſent his Word and heal’d them.* Now, obſerve,

1. What *Diſeaſes* he cur’d, all, without exception. He healed *all manner of Sickneſs, and all manner of Diſeaſe.* They are Diſeaſes that are call’d the *Reproach of Phyſicians*, that are obſtinate to all the Methods they can preſcribe, but even thoſe were *the Glory of this Phyſician*, for he heal’d them all, tho’ never ſo inveterate. His Word was the true *Panpharmacon*, All-Heal.

Three general Words are here us’d to intimate this; he heal’d *every Sickneſs*, **Νόσον**, as Blindneſs, Lameneſs, Fever, Dropſy; *every Diſeaſe*, or Languiſhing, **Μαλακίαν**, as Fluxes, and Conſumptions, and all *Torments*, **Βασάνοις**, Gout, Stone, Convulſions, and ſuch like torturing Diſtempers; wether the Diſeaſe was *Acute*, or *Chronical*; whether it was a *racking*, or a *waſting* Diſeaſe, none was too *bad*, none too *hard*, for Chriſt to heal with a Word’s ſpeaking.

Three particular Diſeaſes are inſtanc’d in it; the *Palſy*, which is the greateſt Weakneſs of the Body, *Lunacy*, which is the greateſt Malady of the Mind, and *Poſſeſſion of the Devil*, which is the greateſt Miſery and Calamity of both; yet Chriſt heal’d all, for he is the Sovereign Phyſician both of Soul and Body, and has command of all Diſeaſes.

2. What Patients he had. Such a Phyſician, that was ſo eaſie of Acceſs, ſo ſure of Succeſs, that cur’d immediately, without either a painful Suſpence and Expectation, or ſuch painful Remedies as are worſe than the Diſeaſe; that cur’d *gratis*, and took no Fees, could not but have abundance of Patients: See here what flocking there was to him from all Parts; great Multitudes of People came, not only from *Galilee*, and the Country about, but even from *Jeruſalem*, and from *Judea*, that lay a great way off, for his *Fame went throughout all Syria*; not only among all the People of the *Jews*, but among the neighbour Nations, which by the Report that now ſpread far and near concerning him, would be prepar’d to receive his Goſpel, when afterwards it ſhould be brought them. This is given as the Reaſon why ſuch *Multitudes* came to him, becauſe *his Fame* ſpread ſo as it did. *Note*, What we hear of Chriſt from others ſhould invite us to him. The Queen of *Sheba* was brought by the Fame of *Solomon* to give him a Viſit. The Voice of Fame is, *Come and See.* Chriſt both *Taught and Heal’d*; thoſe that came for Cures, met with Inſtructions concerning the things that belong’d to their Peace. It’s well if any thing will bring People to Chriſt, and thoſe that come to him, will find more with him than they expected. Theſe *Syrians* like *Naaman* the *Syrian*, coming to be heal’d of their Diſeaſes, many of them became Converts, 2 *Kings* 5. 15, 17. They ſought Health for the Body, and obtain’d the Salvation of the *Soul*; like *Saul*, that ſought the Aſſes, and found the Kingdom. Yet it appear’d by the Iſſue that many of them who rejoyc’d in Chriſt as a Healer, forgot him as a Teacher.

Now concerning the Cures which Chriſt wrought, let us once for all obſerve the Miracle, the Mercy, and the Myſtery of them.

1. The *Miracle* of them; they were wrought in ſuch a manner as plainly ſpoke them the immediate Products of a divine and ſupernatural Power, and they were God's Seal to his Commiſſion. Nature could not do theſe things, it was the God of Nature; the Cures were many, of Diſeaſes incurable by the Art of the Phyſician, of Perſons that were Strangers, of all Ages and Conditions; the Cures were wrought openly, before many Witneſſes, in mixt Companies of Perſons that would have deny'd the Matter of Fact, if they could have had any Colour for it: No Cure ever failed, or was afterwards call'd in queſtion; they were wrought *ſpeedily*, and not (as Cures by natural Cauſes) gradually; they were perfect Cures, and wrought with a Word ſpeaking: All which proves him a *Teacher come from God*, for otherwiſe none could have done the Works that he did, *John* 3. 2. He appeals to theſe as Credentials, *Mat.* 11. 4, 5. *John* 5. 36. It was expected that the Meſſiah ſhould work Miracles, *John* 7. 31. Miracles of this nature, *Iſa.* 35. 5, 6. And we have this Proof beyond diſpute, of his being the Meſſiah; never was any Man that did thus. And therefore his Healing and his Preaching generally went together, for the former confirm'd the latter; thus here he began to *do* and to *teach*, Acts 1. 1.

2. The *Mercy* of them. The Miracles that *Moſes* wrought to prove his Miſſion, were moſt of them Plagues and Judgments, to intimate the Terror of that Diſpenſation, tho' from God; but the Miracles that Chriſt wrought were moſt of them Cures, and all of them (except the Curſing of the barren Figtree) Bleſſings and Favours; for the Goſpel-Diſpenſation is founded and built up in Love, and Grace, and Sweetneſs; and the Management, ſuch as tends not to affright, but allure us to Obedience. Chriſt deſign'd by his Cures to win upon People, and to ingratiate himſelf and his Doctrine into their Minds, and ſo to draw them with the Bands of Love, *Hoſ.* 11. 4. The Miracle of them prov'd his Doctrine a *faithful Saying*, and convinc'd Men's *Judgments*; the Mercy of them prov'd it *worthy of all Acceptation*, and wrought upon their *Affections*. They were not only *great Works*, but *good Works* that he *ſhew'd them from* his Father, *John* 10. 32. And this Goodneſs was intended to lead Men to Repentance, *Rom.* 2. 4. As alſo to ſhew, that Kindneſs, and Beneficence, and doing Good to all to the utmoſt of our Power and Opportunity, is an eſſential Branch of that holy Religion which Chriſt came into the World to Eſtabliſh.

3. The *Myſtery* of them. Chriſt by curing bodily Diſeaſes, intended to ſhew that his great Errand into the World was to cure ſpiritual Maladies. He is the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* that ariſeth with this *Healing under his Wings*. As the *Converter of Sinners*, he is the *Phyſician of Souls*, and has taught us to call him ſo, *Mat.* 9. 12, 13. Sin is the *Sickneſs*, *Diſeaſe* and *Torment* of the Soul; Chriſt came to take away Sin, and ſo to heal theſe. And the particular Stories of the Cures Chriſt wrought, may not only be apply'd ſpiritually by way of Alluſion and Illuſtration, but I believe are very much intended to reveal to us ſpiritual Things, and to ſet before us the Way and Method of Chriſt's dealing with Souls in their Converſion and Sanctification; and thoſe Cures are recorded that were moſt ſignificant and inſtructive this way; and they are therefore ſo to be explain'd, and improv'd to the Honour and Praiſe of that Glorious Redeemer, who *forgiveth all our Iniquities*, and *ſo healeth all our Diſeaſes*.

CHAP. V.

This Chapter, and the two that follow it are a Sermon, a famous Sermon, the Sermon upon the Mount; *'tis the longeſt, and fulleſt continued Diſcourſe of our Saviour's that we have upon Record in all the Goſpels. 'Tis a practical Diſcourſe, there is not much of the* Credenda *of Chriſtianity in it, the things to be* believ'd, *but it is wholly taken up with the* Agenda, *the things to be done: theſe Chriſt began with in his Preaching, for if any Man will* do his Will, *he ſhall* know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God. *The Circumſtances of the Sermon being accounted for,* v. 1, 2. *follows the Sermon it ſelf, the Scope of which is not to fill our Heads with Notions, but to guide and regulate our Practice.* (1.) *He* propoſeth Bleſſedneſs as the End, *and gives us the Character of thoſe who are entitled to Bleſſedneſs, very different from the Sentiments of a vain World, in eight Beatitudes, which may juſtly be called Paradoxes,* v. 3.—12. (2.) *He* preſcribes Duty *as the Way, and gives us ſtanding Rules of that Duty. He directs his Diſciples,* (1.) *to underſtand* what they are, *the Salt of the Earth, and the Lights of the World,* v. 13.—16. (2.) *To underſtand* what they have to do; *they are to be Govern'd by the Moral Law. Here is* (1.) a general Ratification *of the Law, and a Recommendation of it to us as our Rule,* v. 17—20. (2.) *A* particular Rectification *of divers* Miſtakes, *or rather a Reformation of divers wilful groſs* Corruptions, *which the* Scribes *and* Phariſees *had introduc'd in their Expoſition of the Law, and an authentick Explication of divers Branches that moſt needed to be explain'd and vindicated,* v. 20. *Particularly here is an Explication* (1.) *of the* Sixth Commandment, *which forbids Murder,* v. 21.—26. (2.) *Of the* Seventh Commandment, *againſt Adultery,* v. 27.—32. (3.) *Of the* Third Commandment, v. 33.—37. (4.) *Of the Law of Retaliation,* v. 38.—42. (5.) *Of the Law of Brotherly Love,* v. 43.—48. *And the Scope of all this is to ſhew that* the Law is Spiritual.

AND ſeeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was ſet, his diſciples came unto him. 2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, ſaying,

We have here a general account of this Sermon.

1. The Preacher was our *Lord Jeſus*, the Prince of Preachers, the great Prophet of his Church, who came into the World to be the Light of the World. The Prophets, and *John* had *done virtuouſly* in preaching, but *Chriſt excelled them all.* He is the *Eternal Wiſdom*, that lay in the Boſom of the Father before all Worlds, and perfectly knew his Will, *John* 1. 18. And he is the *Eternal Word*, by whom he has in *theſe laſt Days* ſpoken to us. The many miraculous Cures Chriſt wrought in *Galilee*, which we read of in the cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, were intended to make way for this Sermon, and to diſpoſe People to receive Inſtructions from one, in whom there appear'd ſo much of a divine Power and Goodneſs. And probably, this Sermon was the Summary or Rehearſal of what he had preach'd up and down in the Synagogues of *Galilee.* His Text was, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* This is a Sermon upon the former part of that Text, ſhewing, what it is to *Repent*, it is to *Reform*, both in Judgment and Practice; and he here tells us *wherein*, in anſwer to that Queſtion, *Mal.* 3. 7. *Wherein ſhall we return?* He afterwards Preach'd upon the latter part of the Text, when in divers Parables he ſhew'd what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, *Mat.* 13.

2. The Place was a Mountain in *Galilee.* As in other things, ſo in this our Lord Jeſus was but ill accommodated; he had no convenient Place to preach in, no more than to lay his Head on. While the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* had *Moſes*'s Chair to ſit in, with all the Eaſe, Honour, and State that might be, and there corrupted the Law, our Lord Jeſus, the great Teacher of Truth is driven out to the Deſart, and finds no better a Pulpit than a Mountain can afford him. And not one of the *holy Mountains* neither, not one of the Mountains of *Zion*, but a common Mountain, by which Chriſt would intimate, that there is no ſuch diſtinguiſhing *Holineſs of Places* now under the Goſpel, as there was under the Law; but 'tis the Will of God that Men *ſhould Pray*, and Preach *every where*, any where, provided it be decent and convenient. Chriſt Preach'd this Sermon, which *was an Expoſition of the Law, upon a Mountain*, becauſe upon a Mountain the Law was given. And this was alſo a ſolemn Promulgation of the Chriſtian Law; but obſerve the difference, when the Law was given, the Lord *came down* upon the Mountain, now the Lord *went up*; then he ſpoke in Thunder and Lightning, now in a ſtill, ſmall Voice; Then the People were bid to keep their Diſtance, now they are invited to draw near; a bleſſed Change! If God's Grace and Goodneſs be (as certainly it is) *his Glory*, then the Glory of the Goſpel is *the Glory that excelleth*, for *Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 3. 7. *Heb.* 12. 18. 'Twas foretold of *Zebulun* and *Iſſachar*, two of the Tribes of *Galilee*, (Deu. 33. 19) that *they ſhall call the People to the Mountain*; to this Mountain we are call'd, to learn to *Offer the Sacrifices of Righteouſneſs.* Now was this the *Mountain of the Lord*, where he *taught us his Ways*, Iſa. 2. 2, 3. Mic. 4. 1, 2.

3. The Auditors were *his Diſciples*, who *came unto him*, came at his Call, as appears by comparing *Mark* 3. 13. *Luke* 6. 13. To them he directed his Speech, becauſe they follow'd him for Love and Learning, while others attended him only for Cures. He *taught them*, becauſe they were willing to be taught; *the Meek will he teach his Way*: And becauſe they would underſtand what he taught, which to others were Fooliſhneſs, and becauſe they were to teach others; and it was therefore requiſite they ſhould have a clear and diſtinct Knowledge of theſe things themſelves. The Duties preſcrib'd in this Sermon were to be conſcientiouſly perform'd by all thoſe that would enter into *that Kingdom of Heaven* they were ſent to *ſet up*, with hope to have the benefit of it. But tho' this Diſcourſe be directed to the Diſciples, 'twas in the hearing of the Multitude; for it is ſaid, *Chap.* 7. 28. *the People were aſtoniſhed.* Here were no *Bounds ſet about this Mountain* to keep the People off, as were about *Mount Sinai*, Exod. 19. 12. For through Chriſt we have Acceſs to God, not only to ſpeak to him, but to hear from him. Nay, he had an eye to *the Multitude* in preaching this Morning. When the Fame of his Miracles had brought a vaſt Croud together, he took the Opportunity of ſo great a Confluence of People to inſtruct them. *Note*, It is an encouragement to a faithful Miniſter to caſt the Net of the Goſpel where there are a great many Fiſh, in hopes ſome will be caught. The ſight of a Multitude puts Life into a Preacher, which yet muſt ariſe from a Deſire of their Profit, not his own Praiſe.

4. The Solemnity of his Sermon is intimated in that word *when he was ſet.* Chriſt preached many times occaſionally, and by interlocutory Diſcourſes, but this was a ſet Sermon, καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ, when he had *placed himſelf* ſo as to be beſt heard. He *ſat down* as a Judge, or Lawgiver. It intimates with what Sedateneſs and Compoſure of Mind the things of God ſhould be ſpoken and heard of. He *ſat* that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, *Mal.* 3. 3. *He ſhall ſit as a Refiner*, to purge away the Droſs, the corrupt Doctrines of the *Sons of Levi.* He ſat as *in the Throne*, judging right. *Pſal.* 9. 4. for the Word he ſpake ſhall *judge us.* That Phraſe, *He opened his Mouth*, is only a *Hebrew* Periphraſis of ſpeaking, as *John* 3. 1. yet ſome think it notes the Solemnity of this Diſcourſe; the Congregation being large he raiſed his Voice, and ſpoke louder than uſual. He had ſpoken long by his Servants the Prophets, and open'd their Mouths, *Ezek.* 3. 27.—24. 27.—33. 22. But now he *opened his own*, and ſpoke with freedom, as one having Authority. One of the Ancients

has this Remark upon it, Chriſt taught much without *opening his Mouth*, viz. by his holy and exemplary Life; nay, he taught when being led *as a Lamb to the Slaughter*, he *opened not his Mouth*; but now he open'd his Mouth and taught, that the Scripture might be fulfill'd, *Prov.* 8. 1, 2, 6. *Doth not Wiſdom cry?* Cry on *the top of high Places?* and the *opening of Her Lips ſhall be right thigns.* He *taught them* according to the Promiſe, *Iſa.* 54. 13. *All thy Children ſhall be taught of the Lord*, for this purpoſe he had the *Tongue of the Learned*, Iſa. 53. 4. And the *Spirit of the Lord*, Iſa. 61. 1. He taught them what was the Evil they ſhould *abhor*, and what the Good they ſhould *abide* and abound in; for Chriſtianity is not a Matter of Speculation, but is deſign'd to regulate the Temper of our Minds, and the Tenor cf our Converſations; Goſpel-time is a Time of Reformation, *Heb.* 9. 10. and by the Goſpel we muſt be *reform'd*, muſt be made *good* (muſt be made *better.*) The Truth, as it is in Jeſus is the Truth which is *according to Godlineſs*, Tit. 1. 1.

3 Bleſſed *are* the poor in ſpirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Bleſſed *are* they that mourn: for they ſhall be comforted. 5 Bleſſed *are* the meek: for they ſhall inherit the earth. 6 Bleſſed *are* they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs: for they ſhall *be* filled. 7 Bleſſed *are* the merciful: for they ſhall obtain mercy. 8 Bleſſed *are* the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee God. 9 Bleſſed *are* the peace-makers: for they ſhall be called the children of God. 10 Bleſſed *are* they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Bleſſed *are* ye when men ſhall revile you, and perſecute *you*, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake. 12 Rejoyce and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for ſo perſecuted they the Prophets which were before you.

Chriſt begins his Sermon with Bleſſings, for he came into the World to *bleſs us*, Acts 3. 26. as the great *High-Prieſt* of our Profeſſion, as the bleſſed *Melchizedek*, as he in whom all the *Families of the Earth* ſhould be *bleſſed*, Gen. 12. 3. He came not only to purchaſe Bleſſings for us, but to pour out and pronounce Bleſſings on us; and here he doth it as one having Authority, as one that can *command the Bleſſing*, even *Life for evermore*, and that's the Bleſſing here again and again promis'd to the Good; his *ſpeaking* them happy makes them ſo; for thoſe whom he *Bleſſeth*, they are *Bleſſed indeed.* The Old Teſtament ended with *a Curſe*, Mal. 4. 6. The Goſpel begins with a Bleſſing, for hereunto are we call'd that we ſhould *inherit the Bleſſing*. Each of theſe Bleſſings Chriſt here pronounceth hath a double Intendment. (1.) To ſhew who they are that are to be accounted truly happy, and what their Characters are. (2.) What that is wherein true Happineſs doth conſiſt; in the Promiſes made to thoſe of ſuch and ſuch Characters, the Performance of which will make them happy.

Now 1. this is deſign'd to rectifie the ruining Miſtakes of a blind and carnal World. Bleſſedneſs is the thing which Men pretend to purſue, *who will make us to ſee Good?* Pſal. 4. 6. but moſt *miſtake the End*, and form a wrong Notion of Happineſs, and then, no wonder they *miſs the way*; they chuſe their own Deluſions, and court a Shadow. The general Opinion is, Bleſſed and happy are they that are rich, and great, and honourable in the World, that ſpend their Days in Mirth, and their Years in Pleaſure, that eat the Fat, and drink the Sweet, and carry all before them with a high Hand, and have every Sheaf bowing to their Sheaf; *happy the People that is in ſuch a caſe*, and their Deſigns, Aims, and Purpoſes are accordingly; they *bleſs the Covetous*, Pſal. 10. 3. they *will be rich.* Now our Lord Jeſus comes to correct this fundamental Error, to advance a new Hypotheſis. And to give us quite another Notion of Bleſſedneſs, and bleſſed People; which however to thoſe that are prejudic'd, it may appear a Paradox, yet is in it ſelf, and is evident to all that are ſavingly enlightned to be a Rule and Doctrine of Eternal Truth and Certainty, by which we muſt ſhortly be judged. If this therefore be the the beginning of Chriſt's Doctrine, the beginning of a Chriſtian's Practice muſt be to *take his Meaſures* of Happineſs from thoſe Maxims, and direct his Purſuits accordingly.

2. It is deſign'd to remove the Diſcouragements of the *Weak* and *Poor* that *receive the Goſpel*, by aſſuring them that his Goſpel did not make thoſe only happy that were eminent in Gifts, Graces, Comforts, and Uſefulneſs, but even the *leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*, whoſe Heart was upright with God, was happy in the Honours and Privileges of that Kingdom.

3. It is deſign'd to invite Souls to Chriſt, and to make Way for his Law into them; Chriſt's pronouncing theſe Bleſſings, not at the end of his Sermon, to diſmiſs the People, but at the Beginning of it, to prepare them for what he had further to ſay to them, may mind us of Mount *Gerizzim*, and Mount *Ebal*, on which the Bleſſings and Curſings of the Law were read, *Deut.* 27. 12, &c. There the Curſes are expreſſed, and the Bleſſings only implied; here the Bleſſings are expreſſed, and the Curſes implied; in both, Life and Death are ſet before us, but the Law appear'd more as a Miniſtration of Death, to frighten us from Sin; the Goſpel as a Diſpenſation of Life, to allure us to Chriſt, in whom alone all Good is to be had. And they who had ſeen the gracious Cures wrought by his Hand, *Chap.* 4. 23, 24. and now heard the *gracious Words proceeding out of his Mouth*, would ſay, he was all of a piece, made up of Love and Sweetneſs.

4. It is deſigned to ſettle and ſum up the Articles of Agreement between God and Man. The Scope of the divine Revelation is to let us know, what God *expects from us*, and what we may then *expect from him*; and no where is this more fully ſet forth in a few Words than here, nor with a more exact Reference to each other; and this is that *Goſpel* which we are required to *believe*; for what is Faith but a Conformity to theſe Characters, and a Dependance upon theſe Promiſes. The Way to Happineſs is here opened and made a *High-way*, Iſa. 35. 8. and this coming from the Mouth of *Jeſus Chriſt*, 'tis intimated, that *from him* and *by him*, we are to receive both the Seed and the Fruit, both the Grace requir'd, and the Glory promis'd. Nothing paſſeth between God and fallen Man, but thro' his Hand. Some of the wiſer *Heathens* had Notions of Bleſſedneſs, different from the reſt of Mankind, and looking towards this of our Saviour, *Seneca* undertaking to deſcribe a *Bleſſed Man*, makes it out, that 'tis only an honeſt good Man that is to be ſo call'd; *de Vita beata*, c. 4. *Cui nullum Bonum Malumque ſit, niſi bonus malusque Animus.——Quem nec extollant Fortuita, nec frangant.——Cui vera Voluptas erit Voluptatum Contemptio.———Cui unum Bonum Honeſtas, unum Malum Turpitudo.*

Our Saviour here gives us eight Characters of *bleſſed* People, which repreſent to us the principle Graces of a Chriſtian: On each of them a preſent Bleſſing is pronounc'd, *Bleſſed* are they, and to each a future Bleſſedneſs is promis'd, which is variouſly expreſs'd ſo as to ſuit the Nature of the Grace or Duty recommended.

Do we aſk then who are happy; it is anſwer'd,

1. *The poor in Spirit* are happy, *v.* 3. There is a *poor Spiritedneſs*, that is ſo far from making Men bleſſed, that it is a Sin and a Snare. Cowardice and baſe Fear, and a willing Subjection to the Luſts of Men. But this Poverty of Spirit is a gracious Diſpoſition of Soul, by which we are *emptied of ſelf*, in order to our being *filled with Jeſus Chriſt.* To be *poor in Spirit* is (1.) To be *contentedly poor*, willing to be empty of worldly Wealth, if God orders that to be our Lot; to bring our Mind to our Condition, when it is a low Condition. Many are *poor in the World*, but *high in Spirit*, poor and proud, murmuring and complaining, and blaming their Lot, but we muſt accommodate ourſelves to our Poverty, muſt *know how to be abaſed*, Phil. 4. 12. Acknowledging the Wiſdom of God in appointing us to Poverty, we muſt be eaſy in it, patiently bear the Inconveniencies of it, be thankful for what we have, and make the beſt of that which is. 'Tis to ſit looſe to all worldly Wealth, and not ſet our Hearts upon it, but chearfully to bear Loſſes and Diſappointments, which may befal us in the moſt proſperous State. It is not in Pride or Pretence to make ourſelves poor, by throwing away what God hath given us, eſpecially as thoſe in the Church of *Rome*, who vow Poverty, and yet engroſs the Wealth of Nations; but if we be rich in the World, we muſt be poor in *Spirit*, i. e. we muſt condeſcend to the poor, and ſympathize with them, as being touched with the Feeling of their Infirmities: we muſt expect and prepare for Poverty; muſt not inordinately fear to ſhun it, but muſt bid it welcome eſpecially when it comes upon us for keeping a good Conſcience as they, *Heb.* 10. 34. *Job* was *poor in Spirit*, when he *bleſſed God* in *taking away*, as well as *giving*.

2. 'Tis to be humble and low in our own Eyes; to be poor in Spirit, is to think meanly of ourſelves, of what we are and have to do. The *Poor* are often taken in the *Old Teſtament*, for the *humble* and *ſelf-denying*, as oppos'd to thoſe that *are at Eaſe*, and the *Proud.* Tis to be *as little Children* in our Opinion of ourſelves, weak and fooliſh, and inſignificant, *Mat.* 18. 4. — 19. 14. *Laodicea* was *poor in Spirituals*, wretchedly and miſerably poor, and yet *rich in Spirit*, ſo well increaſed with goods, as to have need of nothing, *Rev.* 3. 17. On the other hand, *Paul* was rich in Spirituals, excelling moſt in Gifts and Graces, and yet *poor in Spirit*, the leaſt of the Apoſtles, leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, and nothing in his own Account. 'Tis to look with a holy Contempt upon ourſelves, to value others, and undervalue ourſelves in Compariſon of them. 'Tis to be willing to make ourſelves cheap and mean and little, to do good; to become *all things to all Men.* 'Tis to acknowledge that God is great and we are mean, he is Holy, and we are Sinful, he is All, we are nothing, leſs than nothing, worſe than nothing; and to humble ourſelves before him, and under his mighty Hand.

(3.) 'Tis to come off from all Confidence in our own Righteouſneſs and Strength, that we may depend only upon the Merit of Chriſt for our Juſtification, and the Spirit and Grace of Chriſt for our Sanctification. That broken and Contrite Spirit, with which the Publican cry'd for mercy to a poor Sinner, is this Poverty of Spirit. We muſt call ourſelves *poor*, becauſe always *in want* of God's Grace, always *begging* at God's Door, always *hanging on* in his Houſe

Now 1. This *Poverty in Spirit* is put firſt among the Chriſtian Graces; the Philoſophers did not reckon Humility among their moral Virtues, but Chriſt puts it firſt. *Self-denial* is the firſt Leſſon to be learn'd in his School, and Poverty of Spirit entitled to the firſt Beatitude. The Foundation of all other Graces is laid in Humility; thoſe that would build *high* muſt begin *low*. And it is an excellent Preparative for the entrance of the Goſpel Grace into the Soul; it fits the Soil to receive the Seed. Thoſe that are *weary and heavy laden* are the *poor in Spirit*, and they ſhall find *reſt* with Chriſt.

2. They are *Bleſſed*, now they are ſo in *this* World; God looks graciouſly upon them, they are *his little ones*, and have *their Angels*. To them he gives *more Grace*, they live the moſt comfortable Lives, and are eaſie to themſelves, and all about them, and nothing comes amiſs to them, while high Spirits are always *uneaſie*.

3. *Theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* The Kingdom of *Grace* is compos'd of ſuch; they only are fit to be Members of Chriſt's Church, which is call'd the *Congregation of the Poor*, Pſal. 74. 19. The Kingdom of *Glory* is prepar'd for them. Thoſe that thus humble themſelves, and comply with God when he humbles them, ſhall be thus *exalted*. The great high Spirits go away with the Glory of the *Kingdoms of the Earth*, but the humble, mild, and yielding Souls obtain the Glory of the *Kingdom of Heaven*. We are ready to think, thoſe that are rich, and *do good* with their Riches, no doubt but *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, for they can thus lay up in ſtore a good Security for the time to come. But what ſhall the Poor do that have not wherewithal to do good? Why, the ſame Happineſs is promis'd to thoſe who are *contentedly Poor*, as to thoſe who are *uſefully Rich*. If I am not able to *ſpend chearfully* for his ſake, if I can but *want chearfully* for his ſake, even that ſhall be recompens'd; and do not we ſerve a good Maſter then?

2. *They that mourn* are happy, *v.* 4. *Bleſſed are they that mourn.* This is another ſtrange Bleſſing, and fitly follows the former, the Poor uſe to mourn, the graciouſly Poor mourn graciouſly. We uſe to think, *Bleſſed are the merry*; but Chriſt that was himſelf a great Mourner, ſaith, *Bleſſed are the Mourners.* There is a *ſinful Mourning* that is an Enemy to Bleſſedneſs, the *Sorrow of the World*, deſpairing Melancholy upon a ſpiritual Account, and diſconſolate Grief upon a temporal Account: There is a *natural Mourning* which may prove a Friend to Bleſſedneſs, by the Grace of God working with it, and ſanctifying the Afflictions to us, for which we mourn. But there is a *gracious Mourning* that qualifies for Bleſſedneſs; an *habitual Seriouſneſs*, the Mind mortified to Mirth, and an *actual Sorrow.* (1.) A *penitential Mourning* for *our own Sins*, this is *godly Sorrow*, a Sorrow *according to God*; Sorrow for Sin with an Eye to Chriſt, *Zech.* 12. 10. Thoſe are God's *Mourners* that live a Life of Repentance, that lament the Corruption of their Nature, and their many actual Tranſgreſſions, and God's withdrawings from them, and out of a regard to God's Honour, mourn alſo for the Sins of others, and *ſigh and cry for their Abominations*, Ezek. 9. 4. (2.) A *ſympathizing Mourning* for the Afflictions of others, that *weep with them that weep*, are ſorrowful *for the ſolemn Aſſemblies*, for the *Deſolations of Zion*, Zeph. 3. 18. Pſal. 137. 1. Eſpecially that look with Compaſſion on periſhing Souls, and weep over them, as Chriſt over *Jeruſalem*.

Now theſe gracious Mourners, (1.) they are *bleſſed*; as in vain and ſinful Laughter the Hearr is ſorrowful, ſo in gracious Mourning the Heart hath a ſerious Joy, a ſecret Satisfaction, which a *ſtranger doth not intermeddle with*. They are *bleſſed*, for they are like theLord Jeſus, who was a *Man of Sorrows*, and of whom we never read that he laugh'd, but often that he wept. They are arm'd againſt the many Temptations that attend vain Mirth, and are prepar'd for the Comforts of a ſealed Pardon, and a ſettled Peace. (2.) They ſhall be *comforted*, tho' perhaps they are not preſently comforted, yet plentiful Proviſion is made for their Comfort; Light is ſown for them. And in Heaven, 'tis certain *they ſhall be comforted*, as *Lazarus*, Luke 16. 25. *Note*, The Happineſs of Heaven lies in being perfectly and eternally comforted, and the wiping away of all Tears from their Eyes. 'Tis the *Joy of our Lord*, a *fulneſs of Joy*, and Pleaſures for evermore; which will be doubly ſweet to thoſe that have been prepar'd for them by this Godly Sorrow. Heaven will be Heaven indeed to thoſe that go *mourning* thither; 'twill be a Harveſt of *Joy*, the return of a Seedneſs of *Tears*, Pſal. 126. 5, 6. A Mountain of Joy, to which our way lies thro' a Vale of Tears. See *Iſa.* 66. 10

3. The *Meek* are happy, *v.* 5. *Bleſſed are the Meek.* The *Meek* are thoſe that quietly ſubmit themſelves to God, to his Word, and to his Rod, that follow his Conduct, and comply with his Deſigns, and that are *gentle towards all Men*, Tit. 3. 2. That can bear Povocation without being inflam'd by it, are either *ſilent*, or return a *ſoft Anſwer*; and that can ſhew their Diſpleaſure, when there is occaſion for it, without being tranſported into any Indecencies; that can be cool when others are hot, and in their Patience keep poſſeſſion of their own Souls, when they can ſcarce keep poſſeſſion of any thing elſe. They are *the Meek* that are rarely and hardly provok'd, but quickly and eaſily pacified, and would rather forgive twenty Injuries than revenge one; having the Rule of their own Spirits.

Now theſe *meek ones* are here repreſented as happy, even in this World. (1.) They are *Bleſſed*, for they are like the Bleſſed *Jeſus*, in that wherein particularly they are to *learn of him*, Matt. 11. 29. They are like the Bleſſed God himſelf, who is *Lord of his Anger*, and in whom *Fury is not*; they are *Bleſſed*, for they have the moſt comfortable undiſturb'd Enjoyment of Themſelves, their Friends, their God; they are fit for any Relation, any Condition, any Company, fit to live, and fit to dye. (2.) They ſhall *inherit the Earth*, 'tis quoted from *Pſal.* 37. 11. and it is almoſt the only expreſs temporal Promiſe in all the *New Teſtament.* Not that they ſhall always have much of *the Earth*, much leſs that they ſhall be put off with that only, but this Branch of Godlineſs hath in a ſpecial manner the *Promiſe of the Life that now is.* Meekneſs however ridicul'd and run down, hath a real tendency to our Health, Wealth, Comfort, and Safety, even in this World. The Meek and Quiet are obſerv'd to live the moſt eaſie Lives, compar'd with the Froward and Turbulent. Or, *they ſhall inherit the Land*, ſo it may be read; the Land of *Canaan*, a Type of Heaven. So that all the Bleſſedneſs of Heaven above, and all the Bleſſings of Earth beneath are the meek Man's Portion.

4. They that *hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs* are happy, *v.* 6. Some underſtand this as a further Inſtance of outward Poverty, and a low Condition in this World, which not only expoſeth Men to Injury and Wrong, but makes it vain for them to ſeek to have *Juſtice done them*; they *hunger and thirſt* after it, but ſuch is the Power on the ſide of their Opreſſors, that they cannot have it. They deſire only that which is *juſt and equal*, but it is deny'd them by thoſe that neither fear God, nor regard Man: This is a melancholy Caſe; yet *Bleſſed* are they if they ſuffer theſe Hardſhips for, and with a good Conſcience; let them hope in God, who will ſee Juſtice done, Right take Place, and will deliver the Poor form their Oppreſſors, *Pſal.* 103. 6. Thoſe that contentedly bear Oppreſſion, and quietly refer themſelves to God to plead their Cauſe, ſhall in due time be ſatisfied, abundantly ſatisfied in the Wiſdom and Kindneſs that ſhall appear in his Appearances for them. But 'tis certainly to be underſtod Spiritually, of ſuch a *Deſire* as being terminated on ſuch an Object is Gracious, and the Work of God's Grace in the Soul, and qualifies for the Gifts of the divine Favour. (1.) *Righteouſneſs* is here put for all *Spiritual Bleſſings*; ſee *Pſal.* 24. 5. *Matt.* 6. 33. They are purchas'd for us by theRighteouſneſs ofChriſt, convey'd and ſecur'd by the Imputation of that Righteouſneſs to us, and confirm'd by the Faithfulneſs of God. To have Chriſt made of God to us *Righteouſneſs*, and to be made the *Righteouſneſs of God in him*, to have the whole Man renew'd in Righteouſneſs, ſo as to become a new Man, and to bear the Image ofGod; to have an Intereſt in Chriſt, and the Promiſes, this is *Righteouſneſs.* (2.) Theſe we muſt *hunger* and *thirſt after.* We muſt truly and really deſire them, as one that's hungry and thirſty, deſires Meat and Drink, and will not be ſatisfied with any thing but Meat and Drink, and will be ſatisfied with them, tho' other things be wanting, Our Deſires of Spiritual Bleſſings muſt be earneſt and importunate; Give me theſe, *or elſe I die*, every thing elſe is Droſs and Chaff, unſatisfying; give me theſe, *and I have enough*, tho' I had nothing elſe. *Hunger* and *Thirſt* are Appetites that return frequently, and call for freſh Satisfactions, ſo theſe holy Deſires reſt not in any thing attain'd, but are carried out towards renewed Pardons, and daily freſh Supplies of Grace. The quickned Soul calls for conſtant Meals of Righteouſneſs, Grace to do the Work of every day in its Day, as duly as the living Body calls for Food. They that *hunger* and *thirſt* will labour for Supplies; ſo we muſt not only deſire ſpiritual Bleſſings, but take pains for them in the uſe of the appointed Means. Dr. *Hammond* in his *Practical Catechiſm*, diſtinguiſheth between the *Hunger* and *Thirſt*; *Hunger* is a Deſire of *Food* to ſuſtain, ſuch is ſanctifying Righteouſneſs: Thirſt is the Deſire of *Drink* to refreſh; ſuch is *juſtifying* Righteouſneſs, and the Senſe of our Pardon.

Now thoſe who thus *Hunger and Thirſt* after ſpiritual Bleſſings, they *are Bleſſed* in thoſe Deſires, and *ſhall be filled* with thoſe Bleſſings. (1.) They are *Bleſſed* in thoſe Deſires. Tho' all Deſires of Grace are not Grace, feigned, fainty Deſires are not, yet ſuch a Deſire as this is; 'tis an *Evidence* of ſomething *Good*, and an *Earneſt* of ſomething *better*. 'Tis a Deſire of God's own raiſing, and he will not forſake the Work of his own Hands. Something or other the Soul will be *hungring* and *thirſting* after, therefore they are bleſſed who faſten upon the right Object, which is ſatisfying, and not deceiving, and do not *pant after the Duſt of the Earth*, Amos 2. 7. Iſa. 55. 2. (2.) They *ſhall be filled* with thoſe Bleſſings. God will give them what they deſire to their compleat Satisfaction. 'Tis God only who can *fill a Soul*, whoſe Grace and Favour is adæquate to its juſt Deſires, and he will fill thoſe with *Grace for Grace*, that in a Senſe of their own Emptineſs have recourſe to his Fulneſs. He *filleth the Hungry.* Luke 1. 53. *Satiates* them, *Jer* 31. 25. The Happineſs of Heaven will certainly *fill* the Soul; there *Righteouſneſs* ſhall be compleat, the Favour of God, and his Image, both in their full Perfection.

5. The *Merciful* are happy, *v.* 7. This, like the reſt, is a Paradox; for the Merciful are not taken to be the wiſeſt, nor are likely to be the richeſt, yet Chriſt pronounceth them *Bleſſed*. Thoſe are the *Merciful* who are Piouſly and Charitably inclin'd to Pity, Help, and Succour thoſe that are in Miſery. A Man may be truly *Merciful*, that has not wherewithal to be *Bountiful*, or *Liberal*, and then God accepts the *willing Mind*; we muſt not only bear our own Afflictions patiently, but we muſt by Chriſtian Sympathy partake of the Afflictions of our Brethren, *Pity* muſt be *ſhew'd*, Job 6. 14. and *Bowels of Mercy put on*, Col. 3. 12. and being *put on*, they muſt put forth themſelves in contributing all we can for the Aſſiſtance of thoſe that are any way in Miſery. We muſt have Compaſſion on the Souls of others, and help them; pity the Ignorant, and inſtruct them, the Careleſs, and Warn them; thoſe that are in a State of Sin, and ſnatch them, *as Brands out of the Burning.* We muſt have Compaſſion on thoſe that are Melancholy, and in Sorrow, and Comfort them, *Job* 16. 5. on thoſe that we have Advantage againſt, and not be rigorous and Severe with them; on thoſe that are in Want, and ſupply them; which, if we deny to do, whatever we pretend, we *ſhut up the Bowels of our Compaſſion*, James 2. 15, 16. 1 John 3. 17, 18. *Draw out thy Soul by dealing thy Bread* to the Hungry, *Iſa.* 58. 7, 10. Nay, a *good Man is merciful to his Beaſt*.

Now thoſe that are merciful, (1.) They are *bleſſed*; ſo it was ſaid in the Old Teſtament, *Bleſſed is he that conſiders the Poor*, Pſal. 41. 1. Herein they reſemble God, whoſe Goodneſs is his Glory; in being *Merciful, as he is Merciful*, we are in our meaſure *Perfect, as he is Perfect.* 'Tis an Evidence of Love to God, 'twill be a Satisfaction to ourſelves to be any way inſtrumental for the benefit of others. One of the pureſt and moſt refined Delights in this World, is that of *doing Good*. In this Word, *Bleſſed are the Merciful*, is included that Saying of Chriſt, which otherwiſe we find not in the Goſpels, it is *more bleſſed to give than to receive*, Acts 20. 35. (2.) *They ſhall obtain Mercy*. Mercy *with Men*, when they need it; *he that watereth, ſhall be watered alſo himſelf*. We know not how ſoon we may ſtand in need of Kindneſs, and therefore ſhould be kind; but eſpecially Mercy *with God*, for *with the Merciful, he will ſhew himſelf Merciful*, Pſal. 18. 25. The moſt *Merciful* and Charitable cannot pretend to *Merit*, but muſt fly to Mercy. The Merciful ſhall find with God *ſparing Mercy*, Mat. 6. 14. ſupplying Mercy, *Prov*. 19. 17. ſuſtaining Mercy, *Pſal*. 41. 2. Mercy in that Day, 2 *Tim*. 1. 18. Nay, they ſhall *inherit the Kingdom prepared for them*, Mat. 25. 34, 35. Whereas they ſhall have *Judgment without Mercy*, which can be nothing ſhort of *Hell-fire*, that have *ſhew'd no Mercy*.

6. The *pure in Heart* are happy, *v*. 8. *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God*. This is the moſt comprehenſive of all the Beatitudes; here's Holineſs, and Happineſs fully diſcrib'd and put together.

1. Here's the moſt *comprehenſive Character* of the Bleſſed; they are the *pure in Heart*. *Note*, True Religion conſiſts in Heart-purity. Thoſe that are inwardly *pure*, ſhew themſelves to be under the Power of *pure and undefiled* Religion. True Chriſtianity lies in the Heart, in *the Purity of the Heart*; the *waſhing* of that *from Wickedneſs*, Jer. 4. 14. We muſt lift up to God, not only clean Hands, but a pure Heart, *Pſal*. 24. 4, 5. 1 *Tim*. 1. 5. The Heart muſt be *pure* in oppoſition to *mixture*, an honeſt Heart, that aims well, and pure in oppoſition to *Pollution* and *Defilement*; as Wine *unmix'd*, as Water *unmuddy'd*. The Heart muſt be kept *pure* from *fleſhly Luſts*; all unchaſte Thoughts and Deſires, and from *worldly Luſts*; Covetouſneſs is call'd *filthy Lucre*; from all Filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, all that which comes *out of the Heart* and *Defiles the Man*. The Heart muſt be *purified by Faith*, and entire for God, muſt be preſented, and preſerved a chaſte Virgin to Chriſt. *Create in me ſuch a clean Heart, O God*.

2. Here's the moſt *comprehenſive Comfort* of the Bleſſed, They ſhall ſee God. *Note*, 1. It is the Perfection of the Soul's Happineſs to *ſee God*; *ſeeing him*, as we may by Faith in our preſent State, is a *Heaven upon Earth*; and ſeeing him as we ſhall in the future State, is the *Heaven of Heaven*; to ſee him as he is, Face to Face, and no longer through a Glaſs darkly, to ſee him as ours, and to ſee him and enjoy him; to ſee him, and be like him, and be ſatisfied with that Likeneſs, *Pſal* 17. 15. and to ſee him for ever, and never loſe the ſight of him; this is Heaven's Happineſs. (2.) the Happineſs of ſeeing God is promis'd to thoſe, and thoſe only that are *pure in Heart*. None but the *pure* are capable of *ſeeing God*, nor would it be a Felicity to the Impure; what pleaſure could an unſanctified Soul take in the Viſion of a holy God? as he cannot endure to look upon their Iniquity, ſo they cannot endure to look upon his Purity; nor ſhall any unclean thing enter into the New *Jeruſalem*; but all that are *pure in Heart*, all that are truly ſanctified, have Deſires wrought in them, which nothing but the ſight of God will ſatisfie, and divine Grace will not leave thoſe Deſires unſatisfied.

7, The *Peace-makers* are happy, *v*. 9. The Wiſdom that is from above is firſt *pure*, and then *Peaceable*; the bleſſed ones *pure* towards God, and *Peaceable* towards Men; for with reference to both, Conſcience muſt be kept *void of Offence*. The *Peace-makers* are thoſe that have (1.) a *Peaceable Diſpoſition*; as to *make a Lye*, is to be given and addicted to Lying; ſo to *make Peace*, is to have a ſtrong and hearty Affection to Peace. *I am for Peace*, Pſal. 120. 7. 'Tis to love and deſire, and delight in Peace, to be in it as in our Element, and to ſtudy to be quiet. (2.) A *Peaceable Converſation*; induſtriouſly, as far as we can to preſerve the Peace that it be not broken, and to recover it when it is broken; to hearken to Propoſals of Peace ourſelves, and to be ready to make them to others. Where diſtance is among Brethren and Neighbours, to do all we can to accommodate it, and to be *Repairers of Breaches*. The *making Peace* is ſometimes a *thankleſs Office*, and 'tis the lot of him that parts a Fray to have *Blows on both ſides*, yet it is a good Office, and we muſt be forward to it. Some think this is intended, eſpecially as a Leſſon for Miniſters, who ſhould do all they can to reconcile thoſe that are at Variance, and to promote Chriſtian Love among thoſe under their Charge.

Now thoſe that are ſo, (1.) they are *Bleſſed*; for they have the ſatisfaction of *enjoying themſelves* by keeping the Peace, and of being truly ſerviceable to others by diſpoſing them to Peace. They are working together with Chriſt, who came into the World to *ſlay all Enmities*, and to proclaim *Peace on Earth*. (2.) *They ſhall be called the Children of God*; it will be an evidence to themſelves that they are ſo; God will own them as ſuch, and herein they will reſemble him. He is the God of Peace, the Son of God is the Prince of Peace, the Spirit of Adoption is a Spirit of Peace. Since God has declar'd himſelf *Reconcileable* to us all, he will not own thoſe for his Children that are *implacable* in their Enmity to one another; for if Bleſſed are the Peace-makers, woe to the Peace-breakers. Now by this it appears, that Chriſt never intended to have this Religion propagated by Fire and Sword, or Penal Laws, nor to own Bigotry, or intemperate Zeal, as the Marks of his Diſciples. The Children of this World love to fiſh in troubled Waters, but the Children of God are the Peace-makers, the *Quiet in the Land*.

8. Thoſe that are *Perſecuted for Righteouſneſs ſake* are happy. This is the greateſt Paradox of all, and peculiar to Chriſtianity, and therefore 'tis put laſt, and more largely inſiſted upon than any of the reſt, *v*. 10, 11, 12. This Beatitude, like *Pharaoh*'s Dream, is doubled, becauſe hardly credited, and yet *the thing is certain*; and in the latter part there's a change of the Perſon, *Bleſſed are ye*; ye my Diſciples, and immediate Followers. This is that, which you that excel in Virtue, are more immediately concern'd in, for you muſt count upon Hardſhips and Troubles more than other Men. Obſerve here,

1. The Caſe of ſuffering Saints deſcrib'd, and it is a hard Caſe, and a very pitious one.

(1.) They are *Perſecuted*, hunted, purſued, run down, as noxious Beaſts are, that are ſought for to be deſtroy'd; as if a Chriſtian did, *Caput gerere lupinum*, as an Outlaw is ſaid to do, any one that finds him may ſlay him; they are abandon'd as the *Off-ſcouring of all things*; Fin'd, Impriſon'd, Baniſh'd, ſtrip'd of their Eſtates, excluded from all Places of Profit and Truſt; Scourg'd, Rack'd, Tortur'd, always deliver'd to Death, and accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter. This has been the effect of the Enmity of the Serpent's Seed againſt the holy Seed ever ſince, *Gen*. 3. 15. from *the Blood of Righteous Abel*. 'Twas ſo in *Old Teſtament* Times, as we find, *Heb*. 11. 35, &c. Chriſt has told us it would much more be ſo with the Chriſtian Church, and we are not to think it ſtrange, 1 *John* 3. 13. he has left us an Example.

(2.) They are *Revil'd, and have all manner of Evil ſaid againſt them falſly*, Nick-names, and Names of Reproach are faſten'd upon them, upon particular Perſons, and upon the Generation of the Righteous, in the groſs, to render them odious; ſometimes to make them *deſpicable*. that they may be *trampled upon*, ſometimes to make them *formidable*, that they may be *run upon*; things laid to their charge that they knew not, *Pſal*. 35. 20. *Jer*. 20. 18. *Acts* 17. 6, 7. Thoſe that have not had Power in their Hands to do them any other Miſchief, yet could do *this*; and thoſe that have had Power to *perſecute*, have found it neceſſary to *do this too*, to juſtify themſelves in their barbarous uſage of them; they could not have baited them, if they had not dreſt them in Bears-Skins, nor have given them the worſt of Treatment, if they had not firſt repreſented them as the worſt of Men; they will *revile you, and perſecute you*. Note, *Reviling* the Saints is *perſecuting* them, and will be found ſo ſhortly, when *hard Speeches* muſt be accounted for, *Jude* 15. and *cruel Mockings*, Heb. 11. 36. They will ſay all *manner of Evil of you falſly*, ſometimes before the *Seat of Judgment*, as Witneſſes, ſometimes in the *Seat of the Scornful*, with *hypocritical Mockers at Feaſts*; they are the *Song of the Drunkards*; ſometimes to their Faces, as *Shimei* curſed *David*; ſometimes behind their Backs, as the Enemies of *Jeremiah* did. *Note*, There is no Evil ſo black and horrid, but one time or other it has been ſaid falſly of Chriſt's Diſciples and Followers.

(3.) All this is *for Righteouſneſs ſake*, v. 10. *for my ſake*, v. 11. If for *Righteouſneſs ſake*, then for *Chriſt's ſake*, for he is nearly intereſted in the Work of Righteouſneſs; Enemies to Righteouſneſs are Enemies to Chriſt. This precludes thoſe from this Bleſſedneſs that ſuffer juſtly, and are evil ſpoken of truly for their real Crimes, let ſuch be aſhamed and confounded, 'tis part of their Puniſhment; 'tis not the Suffering, but the Cauſe that makes the Martyr. Thoſe ſuffer *for Righteouſneſs ſake*, that ſuffer becauſe they will not ſin againſt their Conſciences, and that ſuffer for doing that which is good. Whatever Pretence Perſecutors have, 'tis the Power of Godlineſs that they have an Enmity to; 'tis really Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs that is malign'd, hated, and perſecuted; *for thy ſake I have born Reproach*, Pſal. 69. 9. Rom. 8. 36.

2. The Comforts of ſuffering Saints laid down.

1. They *are Bleſſed*, for they now in their Life-time receive *their evil things*, Luke 16. 25. and receive them upon a good account. They are *Bleſſed*, for it is an Honour to them, *Acts* 5. 41. 'tis an opportunity of glorifying Chriſt, and doing Good, and of experiencing ſpecial Comforts, and Viſits of Grace, and Tokens of his Preſence, 2 *Cor*. 1. 5. *Dan*. 3. 24. *Rom*. 8. 29.

2. They ſhall be *recompenſed*, theirs is *the Kingdom of Heaven*. They have at preſent a ſure Title to it, and ſweet foretaſtes of it, and ſhall e'er long be in poſſeſſion of it. Tho' there be nothing in thoſe Sufferings that can in ſtrictneſs merit of God, for the Sins of the beſt deſerve the worſt, yet this is here promis'd as a *Reward*; v. 12. *Great is your Reward in Heaven*; ſo great as far to tranſcend the Service. 'Tis *in Heaven*, future, and out of ſight, but well ſecur'd, out of the reach of Chance, Fraud, and Violence. *Note*, God will provide, that thoſe who *loſe for him*, tho' it be Life itſelf, ſhall not *loſe by him* in the End. Heaven at laſt will be an abundant Recompence for all the Difficulties we meet with in our Way. This is that which has born up the ſuffering Saints in all Ages, this *Joy ſet before them*.

3. So *perſecuted they the Prophets that were before you*, v. 12. They were *before you* in Excellency, above what you are yet arriv'd to, they were *before you* in time, that they might be Examples to you of *ſuffering Affliction*, and of *Patience*, James 5. 10. They were in like manner Perſecuted and Abus'd, and can you expect to go to Heaven in a way by yourſelves? Was not *Iſaiah* mock'd for his *Line upon Line*? *Eliſha* for his *bald Head*? Were not all the Prophets thus treated? therefore *marvel not* at it as a *ſtrange* thing, *murmur not* at it as a *hard* thing; 'tis a Comfort to ſee the way of ſuffering a beaten Road, and an Honour to follow ſuch Leaders. That Grace that was *ſufficient for them* to carry them thro' their Sufferings, ſhall not be *deficient to us*. Thoſe that are your Enemies, are the Seed and Succeſſors of them that of old mocked the Meſſengers of the Lord, 2 *Chr*. 36. 16. *Matt*. 23. 25. *Acts* 7. 52.

4. Therefore *rejoyce, and be exceeding glad*, v. 12. 'Tis not enough to be patient and content under theſe Sufferings, as under common Afflictions, and not to render Railing for Railing, but we muſt *rejoyce*, becauſe the Honour and Dignity, the Pleaſure and Advantage of Suffering for Chriſt, is much more conſiderable than the Pain, or Shame of it. Not that we muſt take a Pride in our Sufferings, that ſpoils all, but we muſt *take a pleaſure* in them, as *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 10. As knowing Chriſt is herein *before-hand* with us, and he will not be *behind-hand* with us, 1 *Pet.* 4. 12, 13.

13 Ye are the ſalt of the Earth: but if the ſalt have loſt his ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on a hill cannot be hid. 15 Neither do Men light a candle, and put it under a buſhel: but on a candleſtick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the Houſe. 16 Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Chriſt had lately call'd his Diſciples, and told them they ſhould be *Fiſhers of Men*; here he tells them further what he deſign'd them to be, The *Salt of the Earth*, and *Lights of the World*, that they might be indeed what 'twas expected they ſhould be.

1. *Ye are the Salt of the Earth.* This would encourage and ſupport them under their Sufferings, that tho' they ſhould be treated with Contempt, yet they ſhall really be Bleſſings to the World, and the more ſo for their ſuffering thus. The Prophets that went before them were the Salt of the Land of *Canaan*, but the Apoſtles were the Salt of *the whole Earth*, for they muſt *go into all the World*, to *Preach the Goſpel.* 'Twas a diſcouragement to them that they were ſo *few*, and ſo *weak*; what could they do in ſo large a province as *the whole Earth*? Nothing, if they were to work by force of Arms, and dint of Sword, but being to work ſilently as *Salt*, one handful of that Salt would diffuſe its Savour far and wide, would go a great way, and work inſenſibly, and irreſiſtably, as Leaven, *Mat* 13. 33. The Doctrine of the Goſpel is as *Salt*, 'tis penetrating, *quick*, and *powerful*, *Heb.* 4. 12. *pricks to the Heart*, *Acts* 2. 37. 'Tis cleanſing, 'tis reliſhing, and preſerves from Rottenneſs and Putrefaction; we read of the *Savour of the Knowledge of Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 2. 14. for all other Learning is inſipid without that. An Everlaſting Covenant is call'd a *Covenant of Salt*, *Numb.* 18. 19. and the Goſpel is an *Everlaſting Goſpel*. *Salt* was requir'd in all the Sacrifices, *Lev.* 2. 13. in *Ezekiel*'s Myſtical Temple, *Ezek.* 43. 24. Now Chriſt's Diſciples having themſelves learn'd the Doctrine of the Goſpel, and being employ'd to teach it to others, were as *Salt*. *Note*, Chriſtians and eſpecially Miniſters, are the Salt of the Earth.

(1.) If they be ſuch as they ſhould be, they are *as good Salt*, white and ſmall, and broken into many Grains, but very uſeful and neceſſary. *Pliny* ſaith, *Sine Sale Vita Humana non poteſt degere.* See in this (1.) what they are to be in themſelves ſeaſon'd with the Goſpel, with the Salt of Grace; Thoughts and Affections, Words and Actions, all ſeaſon'd with Grace, *Col* 4. 6. *Have Salt in your ſelves*, elſe you cannot diffuſe it to others, *Mark* 9. 50. (2.) What they are to be to others; they muſt not only *be good*, but *do good*; muſt inſinuate themſelves into the Minds of People, not to ſerve any ſecular Intereſts of their own, but that they may transform them into the Taſte and Reliſh of the Goſpel. (3.) What great Bleſſings they are to the World. Mankind lying in Ignorance and Wickedneſs, was great heap of unſavoury ſtuff, ready to putrify; but Chriſt ſent forth his Diſciples, by their Lives and Doctrines, to ſeaſon it with Knowledge and Grace, and ſo to render it acceptable to God, to the Angels, and to all that reliſh divine Things. (4.) How they muſt expect to be diſpos'd of, not *laid on a heap*, they muſt not continue always together at *Jeruſalem*, but muſt be ſcatter'd as Salt upon the Meat, here a Grain, and there a Grain, as the *Levites* were diſpers'd in *Iſrael*, that wherever they live they may communicate their Savour. Some have obſerv'd, That whereas 'tis fooliſhly call'd an ill Omen, to have the Salt fall *towards us*, it is really an ill Omen to have this Salt fall *from us*.

(1.) If they be not, they are as *Salt* that has *loſt its Savour*. If you that ſhould ſeaſon others, are yourſelves unſavoury, void of Spiritual Life, Reliſh and Vigor. If a Chriſtian be ſo, eſpecially if a Miniſter be ſo, his Condition is very ſad, for (1.) he is *irrecoverable*; *wherewith ſhall it be ſalted*? Salt is a remedy for *unſavoury Meat*, but there is no remedy for *unſavoury Salt*. Chriſtianity will give a Man a reliſh, but if a Man can take up and continue the Profeſſion of that, and yet remain flat, and fooliſh, and graceleſs, and inſipid; there's no other Doctrine, no other means that can be applied to make him ſavoury. If Chriſtianity do not do it, nothing will. (2.) He is *unprofitable*. *It is thenceforth good for nothing*; what uſe can it be put to, in which it will not do more Hurt than Good? As a Man without Reaſon, ſo is a Chriſtian without Grace. A wicked Man is the worſt of Creatures, a wicked Chriſtian is the worſt of Men, and a wicked Miniſter is the worſt of Chriſtians. (3.) He is doom'd to Ruin and Rejection. He ſhall be *caſt out*, expell'd the Church, and the Communion of the Faithful, to which he is a Blot and a Burthen; and he ſhall be *trodden under foot of Men.* Let God be glorified in the Shame and Rejection of thoſe by whom he has been reproach'd, and who have made themſelves fit for nothing but to be trampled upon.

2. *Ye are the Light of the World*, v. 14. This alſo ſpeaks them uſeful as the former, (*Sole & Sale nihil utilius*,) but more glorious. All Chriſtians are *Light in the Lord*, Eph. 5. 8. and muſt *ſhine as Lights*, Phil. 2. 15. But Miniſters in a ſpecial Manner. Chriſt calls himſelf the *Light of the World*, John 8. 12. and they are *workers together with him*, and have *ſome of his Honour* put upon them. Truly, the Light is ſweet, 'tis welcome; the Light of the firſt Day of the World was ſo, when it ſhone out of Dakneſs, ſo is the Morning-Light of every Day. So was the Goſpel, and thoſe that ſpread it to all ſenſible People. The World *ſate in Darkneſs*, Chriſt rais'd up his Diſciples to ſhine in it, and that they may do ſo, from him they borrow and derive their Light.

This Similitude is here explain'd in two things.

1. As the *Lights of the World*, they are *Illuſtrious* and Conſpicuous, and have many Eyes upon them. A City that is *ſet on a Hill cannot be hid*. The Diſciples of Chriſt, eſpecially thoſe that are forward and zealous in his Service, become remarkable, and are taken notice of as *Beacons*. They are for Signs, *Iſa.* 8. 18. Men *wonder'd at*, Zech. 3. 8. all their Neighbours have an eye upon them. Some admire them, commend them, rejoyce in them, and ſtudy to imitate them; others envy them, hate them, cenſure them, and ſtudy to blaſt them. They are concern'd therefore to *walk circumſpectly*, becauſe of their *Obſervers*; they are a *Spectacle to the World*, and muſt take heed of every thing that *looks ill*, becauſe they are ſo much *look'd at*. The Diſciples of Chriſt were obſcure Men before he call'd them, but the Character he put upon them dignified them, and as Preachers of the Goſpel they made a Figure; and tho' they were reproach'd for it by ſome, they were reſpected for it by others, advanc'd to *Thrones*, and made *Judges*, Luke 22. 30. for Chriſt will honour thoſe that honour him.

2. As the *Lights of the World*, they are intended to illuminate and give Light to others, *v.* 15. and therefore,

1. They ſhall be *ſet up as Lights*. Chriſt having lighted theſe Candles, they ſhall not be *put under a Buſhel*, not confin'd always as they are now to the Cities of *Galilee*, or the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, but they ſhall be ſent *into all the World*. The Churches are the Candleſticks, the golden Candleſticks, in which theſe Lights are placed, that their Light may be *diffuſed*; and the Goſpel is ſo ſtrong a Light, and carries with it ſo much of its own Evidence, that *like a City on a Hill it cannot be hid*, it cannot but appear to be from God, to all thoſe that do not wilfully ſhut their Eyss againſt it. It will *give Light to all that are in the Houſe*, to all that will draw near to it, and come where it is: Thoſe to whom it doth not *give Light*, muſt thank themſelves, they will not be *in the Houſe* with it, will not make a diligent and impartial Enquiry into it, but are prejudic'd againſt it.

2. They muſt *ſhine as Lights*, (1.) by their *good Preaching*. The Knowledge they have they muſt communicate for the good of others, not put it *under a Buſhel*, but ſpread it. The Talent muſt not be buried in a Napkin, but traded with. The Diſciples of Chriſt muſt not muffle themſelves up in Privacy and Obſcurity, under pretence of Contemplation, Modeſty, or Self-preſervation, but *as they have received the Gift*, muſt *Miniſter the ſame*. See *Luke* 12. 3. (2) By their *good Living*. They muſt be *burning and ſhining Lights*, John 5. 35. muſt evidence in their whole Converſation, that they are indeed the Followers of Chriſt, *James* 3. 13. They muſt be to others for Inſtruction, Direction, Quickning, Comfort, *Job* 29. 11.

See here 1. how our Light muſt ſhine, by doing ſuch *good Works* as Men *may ſee*, and may approve of; ſuch Works as are of *good Report* among them that *are without*, and which will therefore give them cauſe to think well of Chriſtianity. We muſt do good Works *that may be ſeen*, to the Edification of others, but not *that they may be ſeen*, to our own Oſtentation; we are bid to pray in ſecret, and what lies between God and our Souls muſt be kept to ourſelves; but that which is of itſelf open and obvious to the ſight of Men, we muſt ſtudy to make *congruous* to our Profeſſion, and Praiſe-worthy, *Phil.* 4. 8. Thoſe about us muſt not only hear our *good Words*, but ſee our *good Works*, that they may be convinc'd Religion is more than a bare Name, and that we do not only make a Profeſſion of it, but abide under the Power of it.

2. For what End our Light muſt thus ſhine. That thoſe who ſee your good Works may be brought, not to *Glorify you*, which was the thing the *Phariſees* aim'd at, and it ſpoil'd the Acceptance of all their Performances, but to Glorify *your Father which is in Heaven*. Note, The Glory of God is the great Thing we muſt aim at in every thing we do in Religion, 1 *Pet.* 4. 11. In this Centre the Lines of all our Actions muſt meet. We muſt not only endeavour to glorify God ourſelves, but we muſt do all we can to bring others to glorify him. The ſight of our *good Works* will do this, by furniſhing them (1.) with *Matter for Praiſe*. Let them ſee *your good Works*, that they may ſee the Power of God's Grace in you, and may thank him for it, and give him the Glory of it, who has given ſuch Power unto Men. (2.) With *Motives to Piety.* Let them ſee *your good Works*, that they may be convinc'd of the Truth and Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion, may be provok'd by a holy Emulation to imitate your good Works, and ſo may *Glorify God*. *Note*, The Holy, Regular, and Exemplary Converſation of the Saints may do much towards the Converſion of Sinners; thoſe that are unacquainted with Religion, may hereby be brought to know what it is; Examples teach; and thoſe that are prejudic'd againſt it, may hereby be brought

in love with it, and thus there is a *winning* Virtue in a *Godly Converſation.*

17 Think not that I am come to deſtroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I ſay unto you, Till heaven and earth paſs, one jot or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of theſe leaſt Commandments, and ſhall teach men ſo, he ſhall be called the leaſt in the kingdom of heaven: but whoſoever ſhall do, and teach *them*, the ſame ſhall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I ſay unto you, That except your Righteouſneſs ſhall exceed *the Righteouſneſs* of the ſcribes and phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Thoſe to whom Chriſt Preach'd, and for whoſe uſe he gave theſe Inſtructions to his Diſciples, were ſuch as in their Religion had an Eye (1.) to the *Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament* as their *Rule*, and therein Chriſt here ſhews them they were *in the right:* (2.) To the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, as their Example, and therein Chriſt here ſhews them they were *in the wrong*; for,

1. The *Rule* Chriſt came to *Eſtabliſh*, exactly agreed with the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, here call'd *the Law and the Prophets*; the *Prophets* were Commentators upon the *Law*, and both together made up that Rule of Faith and Practice which Chriſt found upon Throne in the *Jewiſh* Church, and here he keeps it on the Throne.

(1) He proteſts againſt the thought of cancelling and weakning the *Old Teſtamemt, Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law and the Prophets.* (1.) Let not the *pious Jews* that have an Affection for the *Law and the Prophets, fear* that I come to deſtroy them. Let not them be prejudic'd againſt Chriſt and his Doctrine, from a jealouſie that this Kingdom he came to ſet up would derogate from the Honour of the Scriptures they had embraced as coming from God, and had experienc'd the Power and Purity of; no, let them be ſatisfied Chriſt has no ill deſign upon the Law and the Prophets. (2.) Let not the *profane Jews* that have a Diſaffection to the Law and the Prophets, and are weary of that Yoke, hope that I am come to *deſtroy* them. Let not carnal Libertines imagine that the *Meſſiah* is come to diſcharge them from the Obligation of divine Precepts, and yet to ſecure to them divine Promiſes to make them happy, and yet give them leave to live as they liſt. Chriſt commands nothing new that was forbidden, either the Law of Nature, or the Moral Law, nor forbids any thing which thoſe Laws had enjoin'd; 'tis a great Miſtake to think that he doth, and he here takes care to rectify the Miſtake. *I am not come to deſtroy.* The Saviour of Souls is the *Deſtroyer* of nothing but the *Works of the Devil*, of nothing that comes from God, much leſs of theſe excellent Dictates which we have from *Moſes* and the Prophets. No, he came to *fulfil* them. That is, (1.) to obey the Commands of the Law, for he was *made under the Law, Gal.* 4. 4. He in all reſpects yielded obedience to the Law, Honour'd his Parents, Sanctified the Sabbath, Pray'd, gave Alms, *&c.* and did that which never any one elſe did, Obey'd *perfectly*, and never broke the Law in any thing. (2) To make good the *Promiſes* of the Law, and the *Predictions* of the Prophets, which did all bear witneſs to him. The Covenant of Grace is for Subſtance the ſame now that it was then, and Chriſt the *Mediator* of it. (3.) To anſwer the *Types* of the Law; thus, as (Biſhop *Tillotſon* expreſſeth it) he did not *make void*, but *make good* the Ceremonial Law, and manifeſted himſelf to be the *Subſtance* of all thoſe *Shadows.* (4.) To *fill up* the Defects of it, and ſo to compleat and perfect it. Thus the word πληρῶσαι properly ſignifies; as a Veſſel that had ſome Water in it before, Chriſt did not come to pour that out, but to fill it up to the brim; or as a Picture that is firſt rough drawn, ſome Shadows only of the Piece intended, which are afterwards fill'd up; ſo Chriſt made an improvement of the Law and the Prophets, by his Additions and Explications. (5.) To *carry on* the ſame Deſign; the Chriſtian Inſtitutes are ſo far from thwarting and contradicting that which was the main deſign of the *Jewiſh* Religion, that they promote it to the higheſt degree. The Goſpel is the *Time of Reformation, Heb.* 1. 10. not the Repeal of the Law, but the Amendment of it, and conſequenly its Eſtabliſhment.

(2.) He aſſerts the perpetuity of it; that not only he deſigned not the Abrogation of it, but it never ſhould be abrogated, *v.* 18. *Verily I ſay unto you*, I the *Amen*, the faithful Witneſs ſolemnly declare it, that *till Heaven and Earth paſs*, when Time ſhall be no more, and the unchangeable State of Recompenſes ſhall ſuperſede all Laws, *one Jot or one Tittle*, the leaſt, and moſt minute Circumſtance *ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the Law till all be fulfill'd*; for what is it that God is doing in all the Operations, both of Providence and Grace, but fulfilling the Scripture? Heaven and Earth ſhall come together, and all the Fulneſs thereof be wrapt up in Ruin and Confuſion, rather than any Word of God ſhall fall to the Ground, or be in vain. *The Word of the Lord endures for ever*, both that of the Law, and that of the Goſpel. *Obſerve*, The Care of God concerning his Law, extends itſelf, even to thoſe things that ſeem to be of leaſt account in it; the *Iotas* and the *Tittles*; for whatever belongs to God, and bears his Stamp, be it never ſo little, ſhall be preſerv'd. The Laws of Men are conſcious to themſelves of ſo much Imperfection, that they allow it for a Maxim, *Apices Juris non ſunt Jura*, but God will ſtand by and maintain every Iota and Tittle of his Law.

(3.) He gives it in charge to his Diſciples, carefully to preſerve the Law, and ſhews them the Danger of the Neglect and contempt of it, *v.* 19. *Whoſoever therefore ſhall break one of the leaſt Commandments of the Law of Moſes*, much more any of the greater, as the *Phariſees* did who neglected the weightier Matters of the Law, and ſhall *teach Men ſo*, as they did, who made void the Commandment of God with their Traditions, *Mat.* 15. 3. *He ſhall be called the leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven:* tho' the *Phariſees* be cry'd up for ſuch Teachers as ſhould be, they ſhall not be employ'd as Teachers in Chriſt's Kingdom; but *whoſoever ſhall do and teach them*, as Chriſt's Diſciples, would, and thereby prove themſelves better Friends to the *Old Teſtament*, than the *Phariſees* were, they, tho' deſpiſed by Men, ſhall be *called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. Note*, (1.) Among the Commands of God there are ſome leſs than others; none *abſolutely* little, but *comparatively* ſo. The *Jews* reckon the leaſt of the Commandments of the Law to be that of the *Birds Neſt, Deut.* 22. 6. 7. yet even that had a Significancy and an Intention very great and conſiderable. (2.) It is a dangerous thing in Doctrine or Practice, to diſannul the leaſt of God's Commands, to break them, i. e. to go about either to *contract the Extent*, or *weaken the Obligation* of them; whoever doth ſo will find it is at his Peril. Thus to vacate any of the Ten Commandments, is too bold a ſtroke for the jealous God to paſs by. 'Tis ſomething more than *Tranſgreſſing* the Law, 'tis making *void* the Law, *Pſal.* 119. 126. (3.) That the further ſuch Corruptions as theſe ſpread, the worſe they are. 'Tis impudence enough to break the Command, but 'tis a greater degree of it to *teach Men ſo.* This plainly refers to thoſe who at this time ſat in *Moſes*'s Seat, and by their Comments corrupted and perverted the Text. Opinions that tend to the deſtruction of ſerious Godlineſs, and the Vitals of Religion, by corrupt Gloſſes on the Scripture, are bad when they are *held*, but worſe when they are *propagated*, and taught as the *Word of God.* He that doth ſo, ſhall be called *leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*; in the Kingdom of *Glory*, he ſhall never come thither, but be eternally excluded; or rather in the Kingdom of the Goſpel-Church. He is ſo far from deſerving the Dignity of a Teacher in it, that he ſhall not ſo much as be accounted a Member of it. The *Prophet* that *teacheth* theſe *Lies*, he ſhall be *the Tail* in that *Kingdom, Iſa.* 9. 15. when Truth ſhall appear in its own Evidence, ſuch corrupt Teachers, tho' cry'd up as the *Phariſees*, ſhall be of no account with the Wiſe and Good. Nothing makes Miniſters more Contemptible and Baſe than *corrupting the Law, Mal.* 2. 8, 11. Thoſe that extenuate and encourage Sin, and diſcountenance and put Contempt upon Strictneſs in Religion, and ſerious Devotion, they are the Dregs of the Church. But on the other hand, (1.) thoſe are truly Honourable, and of great Account in the Church of Chriſt, that lay out themſelves by their Life and Doctrine, to promote the Purity and Strictneſs of Practical Religion; that both *do* and *teach* that which is good; for thoſe who do not as they teach, pull down with one hand what they build up with the other; and give themſelves the Lye, and tempt Men to think all Religion is a Sham; but thoſe who ſpeak from Experience, who live up to what they Preach, they are truly Great, they honour Cod, and God will honour them, 1 *Sam.* 2. 10. and hereafter *they* ſhall ſhine as the *Stars in the Kingdom of our Father.*

2. The *Righteouſneſs* Chriſt came to Eſtabliſh by this Rule, muſt exceed that of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, *v.* 20. This was ſtrange Doctrine to thoſe who look'd upon the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* to have arriv'd at the higheſt pitch of Religion. The *Scribes* were the moſt noted Teachers of the Law, and the *Phariſees* the moſt celebrated Profeſſors of it, and they both ſat in *Moſes*'s Chair *Mat.* 23. 2. and had ſuch a Reputation among the People, that they were look'd upon Super-conformable to the Law, and People did not think themſelves oblig'd to be *as good as they*; it was therefore a great ſurprize to them, to hear that they muſt be *better than they*, or they ſhould not go to Heaven; and therefore Chriſt here avers it with Solemnity, *I ſay unto you*, it is ſo. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were Enemies to Chriſt and his Doctrine, and were great Oppreſſors; and yet it muſt be own'd there was ſomething commendable in them: They were much in Faſting and Prayer, and giving of Alms, were punctual in obſerving the Ceremonial Appointments, and made it their Buſineſs to teach others: They had ſuch an Intereſt in the People, that they thought, if but two Men went to Heaven, one would be a *Phariſee*; and yet our Lord Jeſus here tells his Diſciples, that the Religion he came to eſtabliſh, did not only *exclude the Badneſs*, but *excel the Goodneſs* of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees.* We muſt do *more* than they, and *better* than they, or we ſhall come ſhort of Heaven. They were *partial in the Law*, and laid more ſtreſs upon the ritual part of it, but we muſt be *univerſal*, and not think it enough to give the Prieſt his Tythe, but muſt give God our Hearts. They minded only the *outſide*, but we muſt make Conſcience of inſide Godlineſs: They aim'd at the *Praiſe* and *Applauſe of Men*, but we muſt aim at *Acceptance with God*; they were *proud* of what they did in Religion, and truſted to it as *a Righteouſneſs*; but we, when we have done all, muſt *deny ourſelves*, and ſay, we are *unprofitable Servants*, and truſt only to the *Righteouſneſs of Chriſt*; and thus we may go beyond the *Scribes* and *Phariſees.*

21 Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not kill: and whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the Judgment. 22 But I ſay

unto you, that whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the Judgment: and whoſoever ſhall ſay to his brother Raca, ſhall be in danger of the counſel: but whoſoever ſhall ſay, Thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell-fire. 23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembreſt that thy brother have ought againſt thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. 25 Agree with thine adverſary quickly, whilſt thou art in the way with him, leſt at any time the adverſary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be caſt into priſon. 26 Verily I ſay unto thee, Thou ſhalt by no means come out thence, 'till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing.

Chriſt having laid down theſe Principles, that *Moſes* and the *Prophets* were ſtill to be *their Rulers*, but the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were to be no longer *their Rulers*; proceeds to Expound the Law in ſome particular Inſtances, and to vindicate it from the corrupt Gloſſes which thoſe Expoſitors had put upon it. He adds not any thing new, only limits and reſtrains ſome Permiſſions which had been abus'd; and as to the Precepts, ſhews the Breadth, Strictneſs, and ſpiritual Nature of them, adding ſuch explanatory Statutes as made them more clear, and tended much towards the perfecting of our Obedience to them. In theſe Verſes he explains the Law of the Sixth Commandment, according to the true Intent, and full Extent of it.

1. Here's the *Command it ſelf* laid down, *v.* 12. *We have heard it*, and remember it; he ſpeaks *to them that know the Law*, that had *Moſes* read to them in their Synagogues every Sabbath-day; you have heard that it was ſaid *by them*, or rather, as 'tis in the Margin, *to them of old Time*; to your Fore-fathers the *Jews*, *Thou ſhalt not kill*. *Note*, the Laws of God are not novel upſtart Laws, but were deliver'd to *them of old Time*; they are ancient Laws, but of that nature as never to be *Antiquated*, or grow *Obſolete*. The moral Law agrees with the Law of Nature, and the Eternal Rules and Reaſons of Good and Evil, that is, the Rectitude of the Eternal Mind. *Killing* is here forbidden, killing our ſelves, killing any other, directly or indirectly; or being any way acceſſary to it. The Law of God, the *God of Life* is a Hedge of Protection about *our* Lives. 'Twas one of the *Precepts* of *Noah*, Gen. 9. 5, 6.

2. The Expoſition of this Command which the *Jewiſh* Teachers contented themſelves with; their Comment upon it was, *Whoſoever ſhall kill, ſhall be in danger of the Judgment:* This was all they had to ſay upon it, that wilful Murtherers were liable to the Sword of Juſtice, and caſual ones to the Judgment of the City of Refuge. The Courts of Judgment ſate in the Gate of their principal Cities, the Judges ordinarily in Number, *Twenty-three*; theſe Try'd Condemned, and Executed Murtherers; ſo that whoever kill'd was in danger of their Judgment. Now this Gloſs of theirs upon this Commandment was faulty, for it intimated, (1.) That the Law of the Sixth Commandment was *only External*, and forbad no more but the Act of Murther, and laid no reſtraint upon the inward Luſts, from which *Wars and Fightings come.* This was indeed the πρῶτον ψεῦδος, the fundamental Error of the *Jewiſh* Teachers, that the divine Law prohibited only the ſinful Act, not the ſinful Thought; they did *hærere in cortice*, reſted in the Letter of the Law, and never enquired into the ſpiritual Meaning of it; *Paul* while a *Phariſee* did not, till by the Key of the Tenth Commandment, divine Grace let him into the Knowledge of the ſpiritual Nature of all the reſt, *Rom.* 7. 7, 14. (2.) Another Miſtake of theirs was, That this Law was meerly *Political* and *Municipal* given for them, and intended as a Directory for their Courts, and no more; as if they only were *the People*, and the *Wiſdom* of the Law muſt *dye with them.*

3. The Expoſition which Chriſt gave of this Commandment, and we are ſure, that according to his Expoſition of it we muſt be *judg'd* hereafter, and therefore ought to be *rul'd* now. *The Commandment is exceeding broad*, and not to be limited by the Will of the Fleſh, or the Will of Men.

(1.) Chriſt tells them, That *Raſh Anger is Heart-murther*, v. 22. *Whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a Cauſe*, breaks the ſixth Commandment. By our *Brother*, here we are to underſtand any Perſon, tho' never ſo much our Inferior, a Child, a Servant, for we are all *made of one Blood*. Anger is a natural Paſſion, there are Caſes in which it is Lawful and Laudable, but it is then *Sinful* when we are angry *without Cauſe*. The Word is εἰκῆ, which ſignifies both *ſine cauſa, ſine effectu, & ſine modo*; ſo that the Anger is then ſinful, (1.) When it is without any *juſt Provocation given*, either for no Cauſe, or no good Cauſe, or no great and proportionable Cauſe. When we are angry at Children or Servants for that which could not be help'd, which was only a piece of Forgetfulneſs, or Miſtake, that we our ſelves might eaſily have been guilty of, and for which we would not have been angry at our ſelves. When we are angry upon groundleſs Surmizes, or for trivial Affronts, not worth ſpeaking of. (2.) When it is *without any good End* aim'd at, meerly to ſhew our Authority, to gratifie a brutiſh Paſſion, to let People know our Reſentments, and excite our ſelves to revenge, then 'tis *in vain*, 'tis to do hurt; whereas if we are at any time angry, it ſhould be to awaken the Offender to Repentance, and prevent his doing ſo again, to clear ourſelves, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. and to give Warning to others. (3.) When it *exceeds due Bounds*, when we are hardy and headſtrong in our Anger, violent and vehement, outrageous and miſchievous, and ſeek the Hurt of thoſe we are diſpleaſed at; this is a Breach of the ſixth Commandment, for he that is *thus angry would kill* if he could and durſt, he has taken the firſt Step towards it. *Cain*'s killing his Brother began in *Anger*, he is a Murderer in the Account of God, who knows his Heart, whence *Murthers proceed*, Mat. 15. 19.

(2.) He tells them, that giving opprobrious Language to our Brother is *Tongue-murther*, calling him *Raca*, and *thou Fool*; when this is done with Mildneſs, and for a good End, to convince others of their Vanity and Folly, it is not ſinful. Thus *James* ſaith, *O vain Man*; and *Paul*, *thou Fool*; and Chriſt himſelf, *O Fools, and ſlow of Heart*. But when it proceeds from Anger and Malice within, it is the Smoke of that *Fire* which is *kindled from Hell*, and falls under the ſame Character. (1.) *Raca* is a *ſcornful Word*, and comes from *Pride*; *thou empty Fellow*. 'Tis the Language of that which *Solomon* calls *proud Wrath*, Prov. 21. 24. which tramples upon our Brother, diſdains to ſet him even with *the Dogs of our Flock*. *This People which knows not the Law is curſed*, is ſuch Language, *John* 7. 44. (2.) *Thou Fool* is a *ſpiteful* Word, and comes from *Hatred*, looking upon him not only as mean, and not to be honour'd, but as vile, and not to be lov'd. Thou *wicked Man*, thou *Reprobate*; the former ſpeaks a Man *without Wit*, this (in Scripture Language) ſpeaks a Man *without Grace*; the more the Reproach toucheth his ſpiritual Condition, the worſer it is; the former is a haughty *taunting* of our Brother, this is a malicious *cenſuring* and *condemning* him, as abandon'd of God; now this is a Breach of the ſixth Commandment; malicious Slanders and Cenſures are *Poiſon under the Tongue*, that kills ſecretly and ſlowly; *bitter Words* are as *Arrows* that wound ſuddenly, *Pſal.* 64. 3. or as a Sword in the Bones; the good Name of our Neighbour, which is better than Life, is thereby ſtabb'd and murther'd, and it is an Evidence of ſuch an Ill-will to our Neighbour, as would ſtrike at his Life if it were in our Power.

(3.) He tells them, that how light ſoever they made of theſe Sins, they will certainly be reckon'd for; he that is *angry with his Brother* ſhall be in danger of *the Judgment* and Anger of God; he that calls him *Raca* ſhall be *in danger of the Council*, i. e. of being puniſhed by the *Sanhedrim*, for reviling an *Iſraelite*; but whoſoever ſaith, thou Fool, thou profane Perſon, thou Child of Hell, ſhall be *in danger of Hell-fire*, to which he condemns his Brother; ſo the learned Dr. *Whitby*. Some think in Alluſion to the Penalties uſed in the ſeveral Courts of Judgment among the *Jews*, Chriſt ſhews that the Sin of raſh Anger expoſes Men to lower or higher Puniſhments, according to the degrees of its Proceeding. The *Jews* had three capital Puniſhments, each worſe than other; *beheading*, which was inflicted by the *Judgment*; *ſtoning*, by the *Council*, or chief *Sanhedrim*; and *burning* in the Valley of the Son of *Hinnom*, which was uſed only in extraordinary Caſes; it ſignifies therefore that raſh Anger and reproachful Language are *damning Sins*. But ſome are more ſinful than others, and accordingly there is a greater Damnation, and a ſorer Puniſhment reſerv'd for them. Chriſt would thus ſhew which Sin was moſt ſinful, by ſhewing which was it, the Puniſhment whereof was moſt *dreadful*.

4. From all this it is here inferr'd, that we ought carefully to preſerve Chriſtian Love and Peace with all our Brethren, and if at any time a Breach happens, to labour for a Reconciliation, by confeſſing our Fault, humbling ourſelves to our Brother, begging his Pardon, and making Reſtitution, or offering Satisfaction for Wrong done in Word or Deed, according as the Nature of the Thing is, and to do this quickly, for two Reaſons.

1. Becauſe till this be done we are utterly unfit for Communion with God in holy Ordinances, *v.* 23, 24. The Caſe ſuppoſed is, that *thy Brother have ſomewhat againſt thee*, that thou haſt injur'd and offended him, either really, or in his Apprehenſion. If thou art the Party offended there needs not this Delay; if thou have *ought againſt thy Brother*, make a ſhort Work of it, no more is to be done but to *forgive him*, Mat. 11. 25. and forgive the Injury; but if the Quarrel begun on thy ſide, and the Fault was either at firſt or afterwards *thine*, ſo that thy Brother has a Controverſy *with thee*, go and be reconciled to him before thou *offer thy Gift at the Altar*, before thou approach ſolemnly to God in the Goſpel Services of Prayer and Praiſe, hearing the Word, or the Sacraments. *Note*, (1.) When we are addreſſing ourſelves to any religious Exerciſes, it is good for us to take that occaſion of ſerious Reflection and Self-examination; there are many things to be *remember'd when we bring our Gift to the Altar*, and this among the reſt, whether *our Brother hath ought againſt us*; then, if ever we are diſpoſed to be ſerious, and therefore ſhould then call ourſelves to an Account. (2.) Religious Exerciſes are not acceptable to God if they be done when we are *in Wrath*; Envy, Malice, and Uncharitableneſs, are Sins ſo diſpleaſing to God, that nothing pleaſes him which comes from a Heart wherein thoſe are predominant, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. Prayers made in Wrath are written in Gall, *Iſa.* 1. 15.—58. 4. (3.) Love and Charity is ſo much better than all Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifice, that God will have Reconciliation made with an offended Brother before the Gift be offered; he is content to ſtay for the *Gift*, rather than have it offered while we are under Guilt, and engag'd in a Quarrel. (4.) Tho' we are diſfitted for Communion with God by a continual Quarrel with a Brother, yet that can be no Excuſe for the Omiſ-

ſion or Neglect of our Duty. *Leave there thy Gift before the Altar*, leſt otherwiſe, when thou art gone away, thou be tempted not to come again. Many give this as a reaſon why they do not come to Church, or to the Communion, becauſe they are at variance with ſome Neighbour; and whoſe Fault is that? One Sin will never excuſe another, but will rather double the Guilt; want of Charity cannot juſtify the want of Piety; the Difficulty is eaſily got over, thoſe who have wrong'd us we muſt *forgive*, and thoſe whom we have wrong'd we muſt *make Satisfaction to*, or at leaſt make a Tender of it, and deſire a renewing of the Friendſhip, ſo that if Reconciliation be not made it may not be our Fault; and then *come*, come and welcome, come and *offer thy Gift*, and it ſhall be accepted; therefore we muſt not *let the Sun go down upon our Wrath* any Day, becauſe we muſt go to Prayer before we go to ſleep, much leſs let the Sun riſe upon our Wrath *on a Sabbath Day*, becauſe it is a Day of Prayer.

2. Becauſe till this be done we lie expoſed to much Danger, *v.* 25, 26. It is at our Peril if we do not labour an Agreement, and that quickly, upon two Accounts.

1. Upon a temporal Account: If the Offence we have done to our Brother in his Body, Goods, or good Name, be ſuch as will bear *an Action*, in which he may recover conſiderable Damages, it is our Wiſdom, and 'tis Duty to our Family, to prevent that by a humble Submiſſion, and a juſt and peaceable Satisfaction, leſt otherwiſe he recover it by Law, and put us to the Extremity of a Priſon; in ſuch a Caſe 'tis better *compound*, and make the beſt Terms we can, than to *ſtand it out*, for it's in vain to contend with the Law, and there's danger of our being cruſh'd by it; many ruin their Eſtates by an obſtinate perſiſting in the Offences they have given, which would ſoon have been pacified by a little yielding at firſt. *Solomon*'s Advice in Caſe of Suretiſhip is, *Go humble thyſelf*, and ſo ſecure and *deliver thyſelf*, Prov. 6. 1.–5. 'tis good to agree, for the *Law is coſtly*. Tho' we muſt be *merciful* to thoſe we have Advantage againſt, yet we muſt be *juſt* to thoſe that have Advantage againſt us, as far as we are able. *Agree* and compound with thine Adverſary quickly, leſt he be exaſperated by thy Stubbornneſs, and provok'd to inſiſt upon the utmoſt Demand, and will not make thee the Abatement which at firſt he would have made. A Priſon is an uncomfortable Place to thoſe who are brought to it by their own Pride and Prodigality, their own Wilfulneſs and Folly.

2. Upon a ſpiritual Account. Go and be *reconciled to thy Brother*, be juſt to him, be Friends with him, becauſe while the Quarrel continues, as thou art unfit to *bring thy Gift to the Altar*, unfit to come to the Table of the Lord, ſo thou art *unfit to die*; if thou perſiſt in this Sin there's danger leſt thou be ſuddenly ſnatch'd away by the Wrath of God, whoſe Judgment thou canſt not eſcape, or except againſt; and if that Iniquity be laid to thy Charge thou art undone for ever. Hell is a Priſon for all that live and die in Malice and Uncharitableneſs, for all that are *contentious*, Rom. 2. 8. and out of that Priſon there is no Reſcue, no Redemption, no Eſcape to Eternity.

This is very applicable to the great Buſineſs of our Reconciliation to God thro' Chriſt; *Agree with him quickly, while thou art in the way. Note*, (1.) The great God is an Adverſary to all Sinners, Ἀντίδικος, a Law-Adverſary, he has a Controverſy with them, an Action againſt them. (2.) It is our Concern to *agree with him*, to acquaint ourſelves with him, that we may be *at Peace*, John 22. 21. 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. (3.) 'Tis our Wiſdom to do this *quickly, while we are in the way*; while we are alive we *are in the way*, after Death 'twill be too late to do it, therefore *give not Sleep to thine Eyes* till it be done. (4.) Thoſe that continue in a State of Enmity to God are continually expoſed to the Arreſts of his Juſtice, and the moſt dreadful Inſtances of his Wrath. *Chriſt* is the *Judge*, to whom impenitent Sinners will be delivered; for all Judgment is committed to the Son. He that was rejected as a Saviour cannot be eſcaped as a Judge, *Rev.* 6. 16, 17. 'Tis a fearful thing to be thus turned over to the Lord Jeſus, when the Lamb ſhall become a Lion. *Angels* are the *Officers*, to whom Chriſt will deliver them, *Matt.* 13. 41, 42. *Devils* are ſo too, having the *Power of Death*, as Executioners to all Unbelievers, *Heb.* 2. 14. *Hell* is the *Priſon* into which thoſe will be caſt that continued in a State of Enmity to God, 2 *Pet.* 2. 4. (5.) Damned Sinners muſt *lie by it* to Eternity, they ſhall not depart till they have *paid the uttermoſt Farthing*, and that will not be to the utmoſt Ages of Eternity; divine Juſtice will be for ever in the *ſatisfying*, but never *ſatisfied*.

27 Ye have heard that it was ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery. 28 But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever looketh on a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. 29 And if thy right eye offend thee pluck it out, and caſt it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee cut it off, and caſt *it* from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole body ſhould be caſt into hell. 31 It hath been ſaid, Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. 32 But I ſay unto you, That whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, ſaving, for the cauſe of fornication, cauſeth her to commit adultery: and whoſoever ſhall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

We have here an Expoſition of the *Seventh Commandment*, given us by the ſame Hand that made the Law, and therefore was fitteſt to be the Interpreter of it. 'Tis the Law againſt *Uncleanneſs* which fitly follows upon the former, that laid Reſtraint upon *ſinful Paſſions*, this upon *ſinful Appetites*, both which ought always to be under the Government of Reaſon and Conſcience, and if indulg'd, are equally pernicious.

The Command is here laid down, *v.* 17. *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery*; which includes a Prohibition of all other Acts of Uncleanneſs, and the Deſire of them. But the *Phariſees*, in their Expoſitions of this Command, made it to extend no further than the Act of Adultery; ſuggeſting, if the Iniquity was only *regarded in the Heart*, and went no further, God could not *hear it*, would not regard it, (*Pſal.* 66. 18.) and therefore they thought it enough to be able to ſay, they were *no Adulterers*, Luke 18. 11.

2. It is here explain'd in the Strictneſs of it, in three things, which would ſeem new and ſtrange to thoſe who had been always govern'd by the Tradition of the Elders, and took all for Oracle that they taught.

1. We are here taught, That there is ſuch a thing as *Heart Adultery*, adulterous Thoughts and Diſpoſitions, which never proceed to the Act of Adultery and Fornication. And perhaps the *Defilement* which theſe give to the Soul, that's here ſo clearly aſſerted, was not only included in the Seventh Commandment, but was ſignified and intended in many of thoſe Ceremonial Pollutions under the Law, for which they were to *waſh their Cloaths*, and *bath their Fleſh in Water*. V. 28. *Whoſoever looketh on a Woman*, not only another Man's Wife, as ſome would have it, but any Woman, *to luſt after her, has committed Adultery with her in his Heart*. This Command forbids not only the Acts of Fornication or Adultery, but (1.) all *Appetites to them*, all *luſting after* the forbidden Object. This is the Beginning of the Sin, *Luſt conceiving*, Jam. 1. 15. 'tis an ill Step towards the Sin, and where the Luſt is dwelt upon and approved, and the wanton Deſire is roll'd under the Tongue as a ſweet Morſel, it is the Commiſſion of the Sin, as far as the Heart can do it, there wants nothing but a convenient Opportunity for the Sin it ſelf. *Adultera Mens eſt*, Ovid. Luſt is Conſcience *baffled*, or *biaſs'd*; *biaſs'd*, if it ſay nothing againſt the Sin, *baffled*, if it prevail not in what it ſaith. (2.) All *Approaches* towards them, feeding the Eye with the Sight of the forbidden Fruit: Not only looking for that End, *that I may luſt*, but looking till I do luſt, or looking to gratify the Luſt, where further Satisfaction cannot be obtain'd. The Eye is both the Inlet and the Outlet of a great deal of Wickedneſs of this Kind; witneſs *Joſeph*'s Miſtreſs, *Gen.* 39. 7. *Sampſon*, Jud. 16. 1. *David*, 2 Sam. 11. 2. We read of *Eyes full of Adultery*, that *cannot ceaſe from* this *Sin*, 2 Pet. 2. 14. what need have we therefore with holy *Job*, to *make a Covenant with our Eyes*, to make this Bargain with them, that they ſhould have the Pleaſure of beholding the Light of the Sun, and the Works of God, provided they would never faſten or dwell upon any thing that might occaſion impure Imaginations or Deſires, and under this Penalty, that if they did, they muſt ſmart for it in penitential Tears, *Job* 31. 1. What have we the *Covering of the Eyes* for, but to reſtrain corrupt Glances, and keep out their defiling Impreſſions. This forbids alſo the uſing of any other of our Senſes to ſtir up Luſt. If enſnaring Looks are forbidden Fruit, much more unclean Diſcourſes and wanton Dalliances, the Fuel and Bellows of this Helliſh Fire. Theſe Precepts are Hedges about the Law of Heart-purity, *v.* 8. And if *Looking* be *Luſt*, they who dreſs, and deck, and expoſe themſelves with Deſign to be looked at, and luſted after, (like *Jezebel*, that *painted her Face, and tired her Head*, and *looked out at the Window*) are no leſs guilty. Men ſit, but Devils tempt to Sin.

2. That ſuch *Looks* and ſuch *Dalliances* are ſo very dangerous and deſtructive to the Soul, that it is better to loſe the *Eye* and the *Hand*, that thus offend, than give Way to the Sin, and periſh eternally in it. This Leſſon is here taught us, *v.* 29, 30. Corrupt Nature would ſoon object againſt the Prohibition of *Heart-Adultery*, that it is impoſſible to be govern'd by it; 'tis a hard Saying, who can bear it? Fleſh and Blood cannot but look with Pleaſure upon a beautiful Woman, and 'tis impoſſible to forbear luſting after and dallying with ſuch an Object. Such Pretences as theſe will ſcarce be overcome by Reaſon, and therefore muſt be argued againſt with the *Terrors of the Lord*, and ſo they are here argued againſt.

(1.) It is a ſevere Operation that is here preſcribed for the preventing of theſe fleſhly Luſts. *If thy right Eye offend thee*, or *cauſe thee to offend*, by wanton Glances or wanton Gazings upon forbidden Objects; *if thy right Hand offend thee*, or *cauſe thee to offend*, by wanton Dalliances; and if it were indeed impoſſible, as is pretended, to govern the *Eye* and the *Hand*, and they have been ſo accuſtomed to theſe wicked Practices that they will not be withheld from them; yet if there were no other way to reſtrain them (which, bleſſed be God, thro' his Grace there is) it were better for us, and leſs hurtful, to *pluck out the Eye*, and *cut off the Hand*, tho' the *Right Eye* and *Right Hand* the more honourable and uſeful, than indulge them in Sin, to the Ruin of the Soul; and if this muſt be ſubmitted to, at the thought of which Nature ſtartles, much more muſt we reſolve to *keep under the Body, and to bring it into Subjection*, to live a Life of *Mortification* and *Self-denial*, to keep a conſtant *Watch* over our *own* Hearts, and to ſuppreſs the firſt riſing of *Luſt and Corruption* there, to avoid the Occaſions of Sin, to reſiſt the Beginnings of it, and to decline the Company of ſuch who will be a Snare to us, tho' never ſo pleaſing; to keep out of Harm's-way, and abridge ourſelves in the uſe of lawful things, when we find them Temptations to us; and to ſeek unto God for his Grace, and depend upon that Grace daily, and ſo to *walk in the Spirit,* as that we may not *fulfil the Luſt of the Fleſh:* And this will be as effectual as *cutting of a right Hand,* or *pulling out a right Eye,* and perhaps as much againſt the Grain to Fleſh and Blood; 'tis the Deſtruction of the Old Man.

(2.) It is a ſtartling Argument that is made uſe of to enforce this Preſcription, *v.* 29. and it is repeated in the ſame Words, *v.* 30. becauſe we are loth to hear ſuch rough things *Iſa.* 30. 10. *it is profitable for thee that one of thy Members ſhould periſh,* tho' it be an Eye or an Hand, which can be worſt ſpared, *and not that thy whole Body ſhould be caſt into Hell. Note,* 1. It is not unbecoming a Miniſter of the Goſpel to preach of *Hell and Damnation,* nay, he *muſt* do it, for Chriſt himſelf did it, and we are unfaithful to our Truſt if we give not Warning of the *Wrath to come.* 2. There are ſome Sins from which we need to be *ſav'd with Fear,* particularly fleſhly Luſts, which are ſuch *natural brute Beaſts,* as cannot be check'd but by being *frighten'd,* cannot be kept from a forbidden Tree, but by a *Cherubim with a flaming Sword.* 3. When we are tempted to think it hard to deny our ſelves, and to crucify fleſhly Luſts, we ought to conſider how much harder it will be to lie for ever in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimſtone: Thoſe do not *know,* or do not *believe,* what Hell is, that will rather venture their Eternal Ruin in thoſe Flames, than deny themſelves the Gratification of a baſe and brutiſh Luſt. 4. in Hell there will be Torments for the Body; the *whole Body* will be *caſt into Hell,* and there will be Torment in *every part* of it; ſo that if we have any care of our own Bodies, we will poſſeſs them in *Sanctification and Honour,* and not in the Luſts of Uncleanneſs. 5. Even thoſe Duties that are moſt diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood, yet are *profitable* for us, and our Maſter requires nothing from us, but what he knows to be for our Advantage.

3. That Men's divorcing their Wives upon Diſlike, or for any other Cauſe, except Adultery, however tolerated and practis'd among the *Jews,* was a Violation of the ſeventh Commandment, as it open'd a Door to Adultery, *v.* 31. 32. Here obſerve,

1. How the Matter now ſtood in Reference to Divorce. *It has been ſaid* (he doth not ſay, as before, It hath been ſaid *to them of old time,* becauſe this was not a Precept, as thoſe were, tho' the *Phariſees* were willing ſo to underſtand it, *chap.* 19. 7. but only a Permiſſion.) *Whoſoever ſhall put away his Wife, let him give her a Bill of Divorce;* let him not think to do it by Word of Mouth, when he is in a Paſſion, but let him do it deliberately, by a legal Inſtrument in Writing atteſted by Witneſſes; if he will diſſolve the Matrimonial Bond, let him do it ſolemnly. Thus the Law had prevented raſh and haſty Divorces; and perhaps at firſt, when Writing was not ſo common among the *Jews,* that made Divorces rare things; but in Proceſs of time they became very common, and this *Direction* how to do it, when there was juſt Cauſe for it, was conſtrued a *Permiſſion* of it, for *any Cauſe,* Mat. 19. 3.

2. How this Matter was rectified and amended by our Saviour. He reduced the Ordinance of Marriage to its primitive Inſtitution; *they two ſhall be one Fleſh,* not to be eaſily ſeparated, and therefore a Divorce is not to be allow'd, except in *Caſe of Adultery,* which breaks the Marriage Covenant. But he that puts away his Wife upon any other Pretence, *cauſeth her to commit Adultery,* and him alſo, that ſhall marry her when ſhe is thus devorced. *Note,* Thoſe who lead others into Temptation to Sin, or leave them in it, or expoſe them to it, make themſelves guilty of their Sin, and will be accountable for it. This is one way of being *partaker with Adulterers,* Pſal. 50. 18.

33 Again ye have heard that it hath been ſaid by them of old time, Thou ſhalt not forſwear thy ſelf, but ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine oath. 34 But I ſay unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 Nor by the Earth, for it is his footſtool: neither by Jeruſalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 Neither ſhalt thou ſwear by thy head, becauſe thou canſt not make one hair white or black. 37 But let your Communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatſoever *is* more than theſe cometh of evil.

We have here an Expoſition of the third Commandment, which we are the more concern'd righly to underſtand, becauſe 'tis particularly ſaid, that God *will not hold him guiltleſs,* however they may hold themſelves, who break this Commandment, by *taking the Name of the Lord their God in vain.* Now as to this Command,

1. It is agreed on all hands, that this Commandment forbids Perjury, Forſwearing, and the Violation of Oaths, and Vows, *v.* 33. This was ſaid to them of old time, and is the true Intent and Meaning of the third Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not* uſe, or *take up the Name of God* (as we do by an Oath) *in vain,* or *unto Vanity,* or *a Lye.* He hath not *lift up his Soul unto Vanity,* is expounded in the next Words, nor *ſworn deceitfully,* Pſal. 24. 4. *Perjury* is a Sin condemned by the Light of Nature, as a Complication of Impiety towards God, and Injuſtice towards Man, and rendring a Man highly obvious to the divine Wrath, which was always judged to follow ſo infallibly upon that Sin, that the Forms of *Swearing* were commonly turn'd into *Execrations* or *Imprecations;* as that, *God do ſo to me, and more alſo;* and with us, *So help me God,* wiſhing I may never have any help from God, if I ſwear falſly. Thus by the Conſent of Nations have Men *curſed themſelves,* not doubting but that God would *curſe them,* if they ly'd againſt the Truth then when they ſolemnly call'd God to witneſs to it.

It is added from ſome other Scriptures, but *ſhalt perform unto the Lord thine Oaths,* Numb. 30. 2. which may be meant either (1.) of thoſe Promiſes to which God is a *Party,* Vows made to God, theſe muſt be punctally paid, *Eccl.* 5. 4, 5. Or (2.) of thoſe Promiſes made to our Brethren, to which God was a *Witneſs,* he being appealed to concerning our Sincerity; theſe muſt be perform'd *to the Lord,* with an Eye to him, and for his ſake, for to him, by ratifying the Promiſe with an Oath, we have made ourſelves Debtors, and if we break a Promiſe ſo ratified, we have *not lied unto Men* only, *but unto God.*

2. It is here added, that the Commandment doth not only forbid *falſe Swearing,* but all *raſh unneceſſary Swearing. Swear not at all,* v. 34. compare *Jam.* 5. 17. Not that all Swearing is ſinful, ſo far from that, that if rightly done, it is a part of religious Worſhip, and we in it *give unto God the Glory due to his Name,* See *Deut.* 6. 13.–10. 20. *Iſa.* 45. 23. *Jer.* 4. 2. We find *Paul* confirming what he ſaid by ſuch Solemnities. 2 *Cor.* 1. 23. when there was a Neceſſity for it. In Swearing we pawn the Truth of ſomething known, to confirm the Truth of ſomething doubtful or unknown, we appeal to a greater Knowledge, to a higher Court, and imprecate the Vengeance of a righteous Judge, if we ſwear deceitfully.

Now the Mind of Chriſt in this Matter is,

1. That we muſt *not ſwear at all,* but when we are *duly call'd to it,* and Juſtice or Charity to our Brother, or reſpect to the Commonwealth, make it neceſſary for the *End of Strife,* Heb. 6. 16. of which Neceſſity the Civil Magiſtrate is ordinarily to be the Judge. We may *be ſworn,* but we muſt not *ſwear;* we may be *adjur'd,* and ſo obliged to it, but we muſt not thruſt our ſelves upon it for our own worlcly Advantage.

2. That we muſt not ſwear *lightly* and *irreverently,* in common Diſcourſe: 'Tis a very great Sin, a ludicrous Appeal to the glorious Majeſty of Heaven, which being a *ſacred* thing ought always to be very *ſerious.* 'Tis a groſs Profanation of God's holy Name, and of one of the holy things, which *the Children of Iſrael ſanctify to the Lord.* 'Tis a Sin that has no Cloke, no Excuſe for it, and therefore a Sign of a graceleſs Heart, in which Enmity to God reigns, *Thine Enemies take thy Name in vain.*

3. That we muſt in a ſpecial manner *avoid promiſſory Oaths;* of which Chriſt more particularly ſpeaks here, for they are *Oaths* that are to be *perform'd.* The Influence of an *aſſertory* Oath immediately ceaſeth, when we have faithfully diſcover'd the Truth, and the whole Truth, the Peril is over; but a *promiſſory* Oath binds ſo long, and may be ſo many ways broken, by the Surprize, as well as Strength of a Temptation, and therefore it is not to be us'd, but upon great Neceſſity. The frequent requiring and uſing of them is a Reflection upon Chriſtians, who ſhould be of ſuch acknowledg'd Fidelity, as that their *ſober Words* ſhould be as ſacred as their *ſolemn Oaths.*

4. That we muſt not *ſwear by any Creature.* It ſhould ſeem there were ſome, who in Civility (as they thought) to the Name of God, would not make uſe of that in ſwearing, but would ſwear by *Heaven* or *Earth,* &c. This Chriſt forbids here, *v.* 34. and ſhews there is nothing we can Swear by, but it is ſome way or other related to God, who is the Fountain of all Beings and therefore 'tis as dangerous to ſwear *by them,* as it is to ſwear by *God himſelf.* 'Tis the *Verity* of the Creature that is laid at Stake, now that cannot be an Inſtrument of Teſtimony, but as it has regard to God, who is the *Summum Verum.* As for Inſtance,

(1.) Swear not by *the Heaven;* as ſure as there is a Heaven, this is true; for *it is God's Throne,* where he reſides, and in a particular Manner manifeſts his Glory, as a Prince upon his Throne: This being the inſeparable Dignity of the upper World, you cannot ſwear by Heaven, but you ſwear by *God himſelf.*

(2.) *Nor by the Earth; for it is his Footſtool.* He governs the Motions of this lower World; as he rules *in Heaven,* ſo he rules *over the Earth,* and tho' *under his Feet,* yet withal *under his Eyes* and Care, and ſtands in Relation to him as his, *Pſal.* 24. 1. *The Earth is the Lord's;* ſo that in ſwearing by it, you ſwear by its Owner.

(3.) *Neither by Jeruſalem,* a Place which the *Jews* had ſuch a Veneration for, that they could not ſpeak of any thing more ſacred, to *ſwear by.* But beſides the common Reference *Jeruſalem* has to God, as Part of the Earth, it is in ſpecial Relation to him, for it is the *City of the great King,* Pſal. 48. 2. the City of God, *Pſal.* 46. 4. he is therefore intereſted in it, and in every Oath taken by it.

(4.) Neither ſhalt thou *ſwear by thy Head:* Tho' it be near thee, and an eſſential Part of thee, yet it is more God's than thine; for he *made it,* and form'd all the Springs and Powers of it; whereas thou thy ſelf canſt not from any natural intrinſick Influence, change the Colour of one Hair, ſo as to make it *white or black.* So that thou canſt not ſwear by *thy Head,* but thou ſweareſt by him, who is the *Life of thy Head,* and *the Lifter up of it,* Pſal. 3. 3.

5. That therefore in all our Communication we muſt content our ſelves with *yea, yea,* and *nay, nay,* v. 37. In ordinary Diſcourſe, if we affirm a Thing, let us only ſay, *Yea it is ſo;* and if need be, to evidence our Aſſurance of a Thing, we may double it, and ſay,

yea, yea, indeed it is ſo; *verily verily*, was our Saviour's *yea, yea*; ſo if we deny a Thing, let it ſuffice to ſay, *no*; or, if it be requiſite, to repeat the Denial, and ſay, *no, no*. And if our Fidelity be known, that will ſuffice to gain us Credit: And if it be queſtion'd, to back what we ſay with Swearing and Curſing, is but to render it more ſuſpicious; they that can *ſwallow* a prophane Oath, will not *ſtrain at* a Lye. 'Tis Pity, that this which Chriſt puts in the Mouths of all his Diſciples, ſhould be faſten'd as a Name of Reproach, upon a Sect faulty enough other ways, when (as Dr. *Hammond* ſaith) we are not only forbidden any more than *yea* and *nay*, but are in a manner directed to the Uſe of that.

The Reaſon is obſervable, *for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of Evil*, tho' it do not amount to the Iniquity of an Oath. It comes ἐκ τȣ̃ Διαβόλȣ; ſo an ancient Copy has it: It comes from the Devil, the evil one; it comes from the Corruption of Mens Nature. from Paſſion and Vehemence, and a reigning Vanity in the Mind, and a Contempt of ſacred Things. It comes from that Deceitfulneſs which is in Men, *all Men are Liars*; therefore Men uſe their Proteſtations, becauſe they are diſtruſtful one of another, and think they cannot be believed without them. *Note*, Chriſtians ſhould for the Credit of their Religion avoid, not only that which is in it ſelf Evil, but that which *cometh of Evil*, and has the Appearance of it. That may be ſuſpected as an *ill Thing*, which comes from an *ill Cauſe*. An Oath is Phyſick, which ſuppoſeth a Diſeaſe.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, An eye
for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. 39 But I ſay
unto you, that ye reſiſt not evil: but whoſoever ſhall
ſmite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other
alſo. 40 And if any man will ſue thee at the law,
and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke alſo.
41 And whoſoever ſhall compel thee to go a mile,
go with him twain. 42 Give to him that asketh of
thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn
not thou away.

In theſe Verſes the Law of *Retaliation* is expounded, and in a manner repeal'd. Obſerve,

Firſt, What the Old Teſtament Permiſſion was, in Caſe of Injury. And here the Expreſſion is only, *Ye have heard that it has been ſaid*, not as before concerning the Commands of the Decalouge, that it has been ſaid, *by* or *to* them *of old time*. It was not a Command, that every one ſhould of Neceſſity *require* ſuch Satisfaction, but they might lawfully inſiſt upon it, if they pleas'd; *an Eye for an Eye and a Tooth for a Tooth*. This we find, *Exod*. 21. 24. *Lev*. 24. 20. *Deut*. 19. 21. In all which Places 'tis appointed to be done by the Magiſtrate, who *bears not the Sword in vain*, but is the *Miniſter of God, an Avenger to execute Wrath*, Rom 13. 4. 'Twas a Direction, to the Judges of the *Jewiſh* Nation, what Puniſhments to inflict in Caſe of *Maimes*, for Terrour to ſuch as would do miſchief on the one Hand, and for a Reſtraint to ſuch as have Miſchief done them on the other Hand, that they may not inſiſt on a greater Puniſhment than is fitting. 'Tis not a *Life* for an *Eye*, or a *Limb* for a *Tooth*, but obſerve a Proportion. And it is intimated, *Numb*. 35. 31. that the Forfeiture in this Caſe might be redeemed with Money; for when it is provided, that *no Ranſom ſhall be taken for the Life of a Murtherer*, it is ſuppos'd, that for *Maimes* a pecuniary Satisfaction was allowed.

But ſome of the *Jewiſh* Teachers, who were not the moſt compaſſionate Men in the World, inſiſted upon it as neceſſary, that ſuch *Revenges* ſhould be taken, even by private Perſons themſelves, and there was no room left for Remiſſion, or the Acceptance of Satisfaction: Even now when they were under the Government of the *Roman* Magiſtrates, and conſequently the Judicial Law fell to the Ground of Courſe, yet they were ſtill zealous for any thing that look'd harſh and ſevere.

Now ſo far this is in force with us, as a Direction to Magiſtrates, to uſe the Sword of Juſtice, according to the good and wholeſome Laws of the Land; for the Terrour of Evil Doers, and the Vindication of the Oppreſſed. That Judge *neither feared God, nor regarded Man*, who would not *avenge* the poor Widow of *her Adverſary*, Luke 18. 2, 3. And as a Rule to Lawgivers, to provide accordingly, and wiſely to apportion Puniſhments to Crimes, for the Reſtraint of Rapine and Violence, and the Protection of Innocency.

Secondly, What the New Teſtament Precept is. As to the complainant himſelf, his Duty is, to *forgive the Injury* as done to himſelf, and no further to inſiſt upon the Puniſhment of it, than is neceſſary to the *Publick Good*. And this Precept is conſonant to the *Meekneſs* of Chriſt and the *Gentlenſs* of his Yoke.

Two Things Chriſt teacheth us here.

1. We muſt not be *revengeful*, v. 39. *I ſay unto you that ye reſiſt not evil*; the evil Perſon that is injurious to you. The Reſiſting of any ill Attempt upon us, is here as generally and expreſly forbidden, as the *Reſiſting of the higher Powers is*, Rom. 13. 2. And yet this doth not repeal the Law of Self-preſervation, and the Care we are to take of our Families. We may *avoid Evil*, and may *reſiſt* it ſo far as is neceſſary to our own Security; but we muſt not *render Evil for Evil*, muſt not bear a Grudge, or avenge ourſelves; not ſtudy to be *even with* thoſe that have done us a Diſkindneſs; but to go beyond them by forgiving them. *Prov*. 20. 22.—24. 29.—25. 21. 22. *Rom*. 12. 17. The Law of Retaliation muſt be made to conſiſt with the Law of Love: Nor if any have injur'd us, is our *Amends in our own Hands*, but in the *Hands of God*, to whoſe Wrath we muſt give place; and ſometimes in the *Hands of his Vicegerents*, where 'tis neceſſary for the Preſervation of the publick Peace. But it will not juſtify us in hurting our Brother, to ſay, that *he began*, for it is the *ſecond Blow* that *makes the Quarrel*; and when we were injur'd, we had an Opportunity not to juſtify our injuring him, but to ſhew ourſelves the true Diſciples of Chriſt, by forgiving him.

Three Things our Saviour inſtanceth in, to ſhew that Chriſtians muſt patiently yield to thoſe who bear hard upon them, rather than contend; and theſe include others.

1. A *Blow on the Cheek*, which is an Injury to me in *my Body*. Whoſoever ſhall *ſmite thee on thy right Cheek*, which is not only a Hurt, but an Affront and Indignity, 2 *Cor*. 11. 20. If a Man in Anger or Scorn thus abuſe thee, *turn to him the other Cheek*; that is, inſtead of avenging that Injury, prepare for another, and bear it patiently. Give not the rude Man as good as he brings, do not challenge him, or enter an Action againſt him; if it be neceſſary to the Publick Peace, that he be bound to his good Behaviour, leave that to the Magiſtrate; but for thy own Part, it will ordinarily be the wiſeſt Courſe, to paſs it by, and take no further notice of it: There's no Bones broke, no great Harm done, forgive it and forget it, and if proud Fools think the worſe of thee, and laugh at thee for it, all wiſe Men will value and honour thee for it, as a Follower of the bleſſed Jeſus, who tho' he was the *Judge of Iſrael*, did not ſmite thoſe who ſmote him on the Cheek, *Mic*. 5. 2. Tho' this may perhaps with ſome baſe Spirits expoſe us to the like Affront another time, and ſo 'tis in effect to *turn the other Cheek*; yet let not that diſturb us, but let us truſt God and his Providence to protect us in the Way of our Duty. Perhaps the forgiving of one Injury may prevent another, when the avenging of it would but draw another; ſome will be overcome by Submiſſion, who by Reſiſtance would but be the more exaſperated, *Prov*. 25. 22. However our Amends is in Chriſt's Hands, who will recompence us with Eternal Glory, for the Shame we thus patiently endure; and tho' it be not *directly inflicted*, if it be quietly born, for Conſcience ſake, and in Conformity to Chriſt's Example, it ſhall be put upon the Score of Suffering for Chriſt.

2. The *Loſs of a Coat*, which is a Wrong to me in *my Eſtate*, v. 40. *If any Man will ſue thee at the Law, and take away thy Coat*, it's a hard Caſe. *Note*, It is common for legal Proceſſes to be made uſe of for the doing of the greateſt Injuries. Though Judges be juſt and circumſpect, yet 'tis poſſible for ill Men, that make no Conſcience of Oaths and Forgeries, by Courſe of Law to recover the Coat off a Man's back. *Marvel not at the matter*, Eccl. 5. 8. but in ſuch a Caſe, rather than go to Law by way of Revenge, rather than exhibit a croſs Bill, or ſtand out to the utmoſt in Defence of that which is thy undoubted right, *let him* e'en *take thy Cloke alſo*. If the matter be ſmall, which we may part with without any conſiderable Damage to our Families, 'tis good to quit it for Peace ſake. It will not coſt thee ſo much to *buy another Cloke*, but it will coſt thee a great deal more by Courſe of Law to recover that; and therefore unleſs thou canſt get it again by fair means, 'tis better let him take it.

3. The *going of a Mile* by Conſtraint, which is a wrong to me in my Liberty, *v*. 41. *Whoſoever ſhall compel thee to go a Mile*, to run of an Errand for him, or to wait upon him, grudge not at it, but *go with him two Miles*, rather than fall out with him. Say not, I would do it, if I were not *compell'd* to it, but I hate to be forc'd; rather ſay, therefore I will do it; for otherwiſe there will be a Quarrel; and it's better ſerve him, than ſerve thy own Luſt of Pride and Revenge. Some give this Senſe of it: The *Jews* taught, that the *Diſciples of the Wiſe* and *Students of the Law*, were not to be *preſs'd*, as others might by the King's Officers, to travel upon the publick Service; but Chriſt will not have his Diſciples to inſiſt upon this Privilege, but to comply, rather than offend the Government. The Sum of all is, That Chriſtians muſt not be *litigious*; ſmall Injuries muſt be put up, and no notice taken of them: And if the Injury be ſuch, as requires we ſhould ſeek for Reparation, it muſt be for a good End, and without Thought of Revenge. Tho' we muſt not invite Injuries, yet we muſt meet them chearfully in the Way of Duty, and make the beſt of them. If any ſay, Fleſh and Blood cannot paſs by ſuch an Affront, let them remember, that Fleſh and Blood ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

2. We muſt be *Charitable*, and Beneficent, *v*. 42. muſt not only do no hurt to our Neighbours, but labour to do them all the Good we can. (1.) We muſt be ready to *give*. *Give to him that aſketh thee*. If thou haſt an *Ability*, look upon the Requeſt of the Poor as giving thee *Opportunity* for the Duty of Alms-giving. When a real Object of Charity preſents it ſelf, we ſhould give at the firſt word, *give a Portion to ſeven, and alſo to eight*; yet the *Affairs* of our Charity muſt be *guided with Diſcretion*, Pſal. 112. 5. leſt we give that to the Idle and Unworthy, which ſhould be given to thoſe that are neceſſitous, and deſerve well. What God ſaith to us, we ſhould be ready to ſay to our poor Brethren, *Aſk, and it ſhall be given you*. (2.) We muſt be ready to *Lend*. This is ſometimes as great a piece of Charity as *Giving*; as it not only relieveth the preſent Exigence, but obligeth the Borrower to Providence, Induſtry, and Honeſty, and therefore *from him that would borrow of thee* ſomething to live on, or ſomething to trade on, *turn not thou away*. Shun not thoſe that thou knoweſt have ſuch a Requeſt to thee; nor contrive Excuſes to ſhake them off. Be eaſy of Acceſs to him that *would Borrow*. Tho' he be Baſhful, and hath not Confidence to make known his Caſe, and beg the Favour, yet thou knoweſt both his Need, and his Deſire, and

therefore offer him the Kindneſs. *Exorabor antequam rogor*; *Honeſtis precibus occuram.* Seneca de Vit. Beat. It becomes us to be thus forward in Acts of Kindneſs, for before we call, God hears us, and *preſents us with the Bleſſings of his Goodneſs.*

43 Ye have heard that it hath been ſaid, thou ſhalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy: 44 But I ſay unto you, Love your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you: 45 That ye may be the Children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good, and ſendeth rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt. 46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the ſame? 47 And if you ſalute your brethren only, what do you more *than others?* do not even the publicans ſo? 48 Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect

We have here, *(laſtly)* an Expoſition of that great Fundamental Law of the Second Table, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour*, which was the fulfilling of the Law.

1. See here how this Law was *corrupted* by the Comments of the *Jewiſh* Teachers, *v.* 43. God ſaid, Thou ſhalt *love thy Neighbour*; and by *Neighbour*, they underſtood thoſe only of their own Country, Nation, and Religion, and thoſe only that they were pleas'd to look upon as their Friends. Yet this was not the worſt; from this Command, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour*, they were willing to infer what God never deſign'd, *Thou ſhalt hate thine Enemy:* and they look'd upon whom they pleas'd as their Enemies, thus making void that great Command of God by their Traditions; tho' there were expreſs Laws to the Contrary, *Exod* 23. 4, 5. *Deut.* 23. 7. *Thou ſhalt not abhor an Edomite, or an Egyptian*, tho' theſe Nations had been as much Enemies to *Iſrael*, as any whatſoever, 'Twas true, God appointed them to deſtroy the ſeven devoted Nations of *Canaan*, and not to *make Leagues* with them. But there was a particular Reaſon for it, to *make room* for *Iſrael*, and that they might not be *Snares to them*, but it was very ill-natur'd, from hence to infer, that they muſt hate all their Enemies; yet the Moral Philoſophy of the Heathen allow'd this: 'Tis *Cicero*'s Rule, *Nemini nocere niſi prius laceſſitum injuria.* Offic. See how willing corrupt Paſſions are to fetch Countenance from the Word of God, and to *take Occaſion by the Commandment* to juſtify themſelves.

2. See how it is clear'd by the Commandment of the Lord Jeſus, who teacheth us another Leſſon, *But I ſay unto you*, I, who come to be the great Peace-maker, the general Reconciler, who loved you when you were Strangers and Enemies; I ſay, *Love your Enemies*, v. 44, Tho' Men are never ſo bad themſelves, and carry it never ſo baſely towards us, yet that doth not diſcharge us from the great Debt we owe them, of *Love to our Kind*, Love *to our Kin.* We cannot but find ourſelves very prone to *wiſh the Hurt*, or at leaſt very coldly to *deſire the Good* of thoſe that hate us, and have been abuſive to us: But that which is at the Bottom hereof, is a Root of Bitterneſs, which muſt be pluck'd up, and a Remnant of corrupt Nature, which Grace muſt conquer. *Note*, It is the great Duty of Chriſtians to *love their Enemies*; we cannot have Complacency in one that is openly Wicked and Prophane; nor put a Confidence in one that we know to be deceitful, nor are we to love all alike; but we muſt pay Reſpect to the human Nature, and ſo far *honour all Men:* We muſt take notice with pleaſure, of that even in our Enemies which is amiable, and commendable, Ingenuity, good Temper, Learning, moral Virtue, Kindneſs to others, profeſſion of Religion, *&c.* and love that, tho' they are *our Enemies.* We muſt have Compaſſion for them, and a good Will towards them: We are here told,

1. That we muſt *ſpeak well* of them; *Bleſs them that Curſe you.* When we ſpeak to them, we muſt anſwer their Revilings with courteous and friendly Words, and not render *Railing for Railing*; behind their backs we muſt commend that in them which is commendable, and when we have ſaid all the Good we can of tham, not be forward to ſay any more. See 1 *Pet.* 3. 9. They in whoſe Tongues is the *Law of Kindneſs*, can give good Words to thoſe who give ill Words to them.

2. That we muſt *do well to them*; *do Good to them that hate you*, and that will be a better Proof of Love than good Words. Be ready to do them all the real Kindneſs that may be, and glad of an Opportunity to do it, in their Bodies, Eſtates, Names, Families, and eſpecially to do good to their Souls. It was ſaid of Archbiſhop *Cranmer*, That the way to make him one's Friend, was to do him an *ill Turn*, ſo many did he ſerve that had diſobliged him.

3. We muſt *Pray well for them. Pray for them that deſpitefully uſe you, and Perſecute you. Note*, 1. It is no new thing for the moſt excellent Saints to be hated and curs'd, and perſecuted, and deſpitefully us'd by wicked People; Chriſt himſelf was ſo treated. 2. That when at any time we meet with ſuch uſage, we have an opportunity of ſhewing our Conformity, both to the Precept and to the Example of Chriſt, by Praying for them who thus abuſe us. If we cannot otherwiſe teſtify our Love to them, yet this way we may, without Oſtentation, and 'tis ſuch a way as ſurely we durſt not diſſemble in. We muſt pray that God will *forgive them*, that they may never fare the worſe for any thing they have done againſt us, and that he would make them to be at Peace with us, and this is one way of making them ſo. *Plutarch* in his Laconick Apophthegms has this of *Ariſto*; when one commended *Cleomenes*'s Saying, who being aſk'd, *What a good King ſhould do?* Reply'd, Τοὺς μὲν φίλους εὐεργετεῖν τοὺς δὲ ἐχθροὺς κακῶς ποιεῖν, *Good Turns to his Friends, and Evil to his Enemies*: He ſaid, How much better is it τοὺς μὲν φίλους εὐεργετεῖν τοὺς δὲ ἐχθροὺς φίλους ποιεῖν, to *do good to our Friends, and make Friends of our Enemies.* This is *heaping Coals of Fire on their Head.*

Two Reaſons are here given to enforce this Command (which ſounds ſo harſh) of *loving our Enemies.* We muſt do it,

1. That we may be *like God our Father*; that ye may be, *i. e.* may approve yourſelves to be *the Children of your Father which is in Heaven.* Can we write after a better Copy? 'Tis a Copy in which Love to the worſt of Enemies is reconcil'd to and conſiſtent with infinite Purity and Holineſs. God *maketh his Sun to riſe*, and *ſendeth Rain* on *the Juſt and Unjuſt*, v. 45. *Note*, 1. *Sunſhine* and *Rain* are great Bleſſings to the World, and they come from God. 'Tis *his Sun* that *ſhines*, and the Rain is ſent by him. They do not come of Courſe, or by Chance, but from God. 2. Common Mercies muſt be valued as Inſtances and Proofs of the Goodneſs of God, who in them ſhews himſelf a bountiful Benefactor to the World of Mankind, who would be very miſerable without theſe Favours, and are utterly unworthy of the leaſt of them. 3. Theſe Gifts of common Providence are diſpens'd indifferently to *Good* and *Evil*, *Juſt* and *Unjuſt*; ſo that we cannot know *Love* and *Hatred* by what is *before us*, but what is *within us*, not by the ſhining of the Sun on our Heads, but by the riſing of the Sun of Righteouſneſs in our Hearts. 4. The worſt of Men partake of the Comforts of this Life in common with others, tho' they abuſe them, and *fight againſt God* with his own Weapons; which is an amazing Inſtance of God's Patience and Bounty. It was but once that God forbid his Sun to ſhine on the *Egyptians*, when the *Iſraelites* had *Light in their Dwellings*; God could make ſuch a Diſtinction every Day. 5. The Gifts of God's Bounty to wicked Men that are in Rebellion againſt him, teach us to do good *to thoſe that hate us*; eſpecially conſidering, that tho' there is in us a carnal Mind, which is Enmity to God, yet we ſhare in his Bounty. 6. Thoſe only will be accepted as the *Children of God* that ſtudy to reſemble him, particularly in his Goodneſs.

2. That we may herein *do more than others*, v. 46. 47. 1. *Publicans love their Friends*, Nature inclines them to it, Intereſt directs them to it. To do good to them which do good to us is a common piece of Humanity, which even thoſe whom the *Jews* hated and deſpis'd, could give as good Proofs of as the beſt of them. The *Publicans* were Men of no great Fame, yet they were grateful to ſuch as had help'd them to their Places, and Courteous to thoſe they had a Dependance upon; and ſhall we be no better than they? In *doing this* we ſerve ourſelves, and conſult our own Advantage, and what Reward can we expect for that, unleſs a regard to God, and Senſe of Duty carry us further than our natural Inclinations and worldly Intereſt. 2. We muſt therefore love our Enemies that we may *exceed* them. If we muſt go beyond *Scribes and Phariſees*, much more beyond *Publicans. Note*, Chriſtianity is ſomething more than Humanity. It is a ſerious Queſtion, which we ſhould frequently put to ourſelves, *What do we more than others? What excelling thing do we do?* We know more than others, we talk more of the things of God than others; we profeſs, and have promiſed more than others; God has done more for us, and therefore juſtly expects more from us than from others: the glory of God is more concern'd in us than in others But *what do we more than others?* Wherein do we live above the rate of the Children of this World? *Are we not Carnal*, and do we not walk as Men below the Character of Chriſtians? In this eſpecially we muſt do more than others, that while every one will render *Good for Good*, we muſt render *Good for Evil*; and this will ſpeak a nobler Principle, and is conſonant to a higher Rule than the moſt of Men act by. Others *Salute their Brethren*, they hug thoſe of their own Party, and Way, and Opinion, but we muſt not ſo confine our Reſpect, but *love our Enemies*, otherwiſe *what Reward have we?* We cannot expect the Reward of Chriſtians, if we riſe no higher than the Virtue of *Publicans. Note*, Thoſe that promiſe themſelves a Reward above others, muſt ſtudy to *do more than others.*

Laſtly, Our Saviour concludes this Subject with this Exhortation, *v.* 48. *Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.* Which may be underſtood (1.) in general, including all thoſe things wherein we muſt be *followers of God as dear Children. Note*, It is the Duty of Chriſtians to deſire and aim at, and preſs towards a Perfection in Grace and Holineſs, *Phil.* 3. 12, 13, 14. And therein we muſt ſtudy to conform ourſelves to the Example of our heavenly Father, 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. Or, (2.) in this particular before-mention'd, of *doing good to our Enemies*; ſee *Luke* 6. 36. 'Tis God's Perfection to *forgive injuries*, and to *entertain Strangers*, and to do good to the Evil and Unthankful, and it will be *ours to be like him. We* that owe *ſo much*, that owe *our All* to the Divine Bounty, ought to copy it out as well as we can.

CHAP. VI.

Chriſt having in the former Chapter arm'd his Diſciples againſt the Corrupt Doctrines and Opinions of the Scribes *and* Phariſees, *eſpecially in their Expoſitions of the Law (that was call'd* their Leaven, *Mat.* 16. 12.) *comes in this Chapter to warn them againſt their corrupt Practices, againſt the* two Sins, *which tho' in their Doctrine they did not juſtify, yet in their Converſations they were notoriouſly guilty of, and ſo as even to recommend them to their Admirers; thoſe were* Hypocriſy, *and* Worldly-mindedneſs, *Sins, which of all others the Profeſſors of Religion need to guard againſt, as Sins that moſt eaſily beſet thoſe who have eſcaped the groſſer Pollutions that are in the World through Luſt, and are therefore highly dangerous. We are here caution'd* (1.) *againſt* Hypocriſy, *we muſt not be as the Hypocrites are, nor do as the Hypocrites do* (1.) *in* giving of Alms, *v.* 1.–4. (2.) *In* Prayer, *v.* 5.–8. *and here taught what to pray for, and how to Pray,* v. 9.–13. *And to forgive in Prayer,* v. 14, 15. (3.) *In* Faſting, *v.* 16.—18. (2.) *Againſt* Worldly-mindedneſs. (1.) *In our* Choice, *which is the deſtroying Sin of Hypocrites,* v. 19.–24. (2.) *In our* Cares, *which is the diſquieting Sin of many good Chriſtians,* v. 25.–34.

TAke heed that you do not your alms before men, to be ſeen of them: otherwiſe ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou doeſt *thine* alms, do not ſound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in the ſynagogues, and in the ſtreets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I ſay unto you, they have their reward. 3 But when thou doſt alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth: 4 that thine alms may be in ſecret: and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.

As we muſt do better than the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* in avoiding Heart-ſins, Heart-adultery, and Heart-murther, ſo likewiſe in maintaining and keeping up Heart-religion, doing what we do from an inward vital Principle, that we may be approv'd of God, not that we may be applauded of Men; that is, we muſt watch againſt *Hypocriſy,* which was the *Leaven* of the *Phariſees,* as well as their *Doctrine, Luke* 12. 1. *Alms-giving, Prayer,* and *Faſting,* are three great Chriſtian Duties, the three *Foundations of the Law,* ſay the *Arabians,* by them we do Homage and Service to God with our three principal Intereſts; by *Prayer* with our *Souls,* by *Faſting* with our *Bodies,* by *Alms-giving* with our *Eſtates.* Thus we muſt not only *depart from Evil,* but *do Good,* and do it well, and ſo *dwell for evermore.*

Now in theſe Verſes we are caution'd againſt Hypocriſy in giving Alms. *Take heed* of it. Our being bid to *take heed* of it, intimates 'tis a Sin (1.) we are in *great danger of;* 'tis a ſubtle Sin, *Vain-glory* inſinuates itſelf into what we do, e'er we are aware. The Diſciples would be tempted to it by the Power they had to do many *wondrous Works,* and their living with ſome that admir'd them, and others that deſpis'd them, both which Temptations to covet to make a fair ſhew in the Fleſh. (2.) 'Tis a Sin we are in *great danger by.* Take heed of *Hypocriſy,* for if it reigns in you, 'twill ruin you. 'Tis the dead Fly that ſpoils the whole Box of *precious Ointment.*

Two things are here ſuppos'd.

1. The *giving of Alms* is a great Duty, and a Duty which all the Diſciples of Chriſt, according to their Ability, muſt abound in. 'Tis preſcrib'd by the Law of Nature, and of *Moſes,* and great ſtreſs laid upon it by the Prophets. Divers ancient Copies here for τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην, *your Alms,* read τὴν δικαιοσύνην, *your Righteouſneſs,* for *Alms are Righteouſneſs,* Pſal. 112. 9. Prov. 10. 2. The *Jews* call'd the *Poor's Box,* the *Box of Righteouſneſs.* That which is given to the Poor is ſaid to be *their due, Prov.* 3. 27. The Duty is never the leſs neceſſary and excellent for its being abus'd by Hypocrites to ſerve their Pride. If Superſtitious Papiſts have plac'd a Merit in Works of Charity, that will not be an excuſe for covetous Proteſtants that are barren in ſuch good Works. 'Tis true our Alms-deeds do not deſerve Heaven, but 'tis as true, we cannot go to Heaven without them. 'Tis *pure Religion,* Jam. 1. 27. and will be *the Teſt* at the Great Day; Chriſt here takes it for granted, that his Diſciples *give Alms,* nor will he own thoſe that do not.

2. That it is ſuch a Duty as hath a *great Reward* attending it, which is loſt if it be done in *Hypocriſy.* 'Tis ſometimes rewarded in Temporal things, with Plenty, *Prov.* 11. 24, 25.–19. 17. Security from want, *Prov.* 28. 27. *Pſal.* 27. 21, 25. Succour in Diſtreſs *Pſal.* 41. 1. 2. Honour and a good Name, which follows thoſe moſt that leaſt covet it, *Pſal.* 112. 9. However it ſhall be recompens'd in the Reſurrection of the Juſt, *Luke* 14. 4. In Eternal Riches.

Quas dederis, ſolas ſemper habebis, Opes. Martial.

This being ſuppos'd, obſerve now

1. What was the *Practice of the Hypocrites* about this Duty. They *did it* indeed, but not from any Principle of Obedience to God, or Love to Man, but in Pride and Vain-glory, not in Compaſſion to the Poor, but purely for Oſtentation, that they might be cry'd up for good Men, and ſo might gain an Intereſt in the Eſteem of the People, with which they knew how to ſerve their own turn, and to *get* a great deal more than they *gave.* Purſuant to this Intention, they choſe to *give their Alms in the Synagogues, and in the Streets,* where there was the greateſt Concourſe of People to obſerve them, who applauded their Liberality, becauſe they ſhar'd in it, but were ſo ignorant as not to diſcern their abominable Pride. Probably they had Collections for the Poor in the *Synagogues,* and the common Beggars haunted *the Streets* and *High-ways,* and upon theſe publick Occaſions they choſe to give their Alms. Not that it is unlawful to give Alms *when Men ſee us;* we may do it, we muſt do it, but not *that Men may ſee us;* we ſhould rather chuſe thoſe Objects of Charity that are leſs obſerv'd. The Hypocrites, if they give Alms at their own Houſes, *ſounded a Trumpet,* under Pretence of calling the Poor together to be ſerv'd, but really to proclaim their Charity, and to have that taken notice of, and made the Subject of Diſcourſe.

Now the Doom that Chriſt paſſeth upon this, is very obſervable: *Verily, I ſay unto you, they have their Reward.* At firſt view this ſeems a Promiſe, if they have their Reward they have enough, but two words in it make it a Threatning.

(1.) It is a Reward, but it is *their Reward;* not the Reward which God *promiſeth* to them that do Good, but the Reward which they promiſe themſelves, and a *poor Reward* it is; they did it to be *ſeen of Men,* and they are ſeen of Men; they *choſe their own Deluſions,* with which they cheated themſelves, and they ſhall have what they choſe. Carnal Profeſſors indent with God for Preferment, Honour, Wealth, and they ſhall have their *Bellies fill'd* with thoſe things, *Pſal* 17. 14. but let them expect no more, *theſe* are *their Conſolations,* Luke 6. 24. their *good things,* Luke 16. 25. and they ſhall be put off with theſe. *Didſt not thou agree with me for a Penny?* 'Tis the Bargain thou art like to abide by.

(2.) It is a Reward, but it is a *preſent* Reward, they have it; and there's none reſerv'd for them in the future State. They *now* have all that they are likely to have from God; they have their Reward here, and have none to *hope* for hereafter. ἀπέχουσι τὸν μισθόν. It ſignifies a *Receipt in full.* What Rewards the Godly have in this Life 'tis but *in part of Payment,* there's more behind, much more; but Hypocrites have their *All* in this World, ſo ſhall their Doom be; themſelves have decided it. The World is but for Proviſion to the Saints, 'tis their *ſpending Money,* but it is *Pay* to Hypocrites, 'tis their *Portion.*

2. What is the *Precept of our Lord Jeſus about it,* v. 3, 4. He that was himſelf ſuch an Example of Humility, preſs'd it upon his Diſciples as abſolutely neceſſary to the Acceptance of their Performances. *Let not thy left hand know what thy right-hand doth* when thou giveſt Alms. Perhaps it alludes to the placing of the *Corban,* the Poor Man's Box, or the Cheſt, into which they caſt their Free-will Offering, *on the right hand* of the Paſſage into the Temple; ſo that they put their Gift into it with the *right-hand.* Or the giving of Alms with the *right-hand,* intimates readineſs to it, and reſolution in it; do it *dexterouſly,* not awkardly, or with a *ſiniſter* Intention. The *right-hand* may be us'd in helping the Poor, lifting them up, Writing for them, Dreſſing their Sores, and other ways beſides *giving* to them; but whatever Kindneſs thy right-hand doth to the Poor, *let not thy left hand know it,* i. e. conceal it as much as poſſible; induſtriouſly *keep it private.* Do it becauſe it is a *good Work,* not becauſe it will get thee a *good Name. In omnibus Factis, Re, non Teſte moveamur.* Cic. de Fin. 'Tis intimated (1.) That we muſt not let others know what we do, no, not thoſe that ſtand *at our left hand,* that are very near us. Inſtead of acquainting them with it, keep it from them, if poſſible; however appear ſo deſirous to keep it from them, as that in Civility they may ſeem not to take notice of it, and keep it to themſelves, and let it go no further. (2.) That we muſt not obſerve it too much ourſelves, the *left-hand* is part of *ourſelves;* we muſt not within ourſelves take notice too much of the good we do, muſt not applaud and admire ourſelves. Self-conceit, and Self-complacency, and an adoring of our own Shadow, are Branches of Pride, as dangerous as Vain-glory and Oſtentation before Men. We find thoſe had their good Works remember'd to their Honour, who had themſelves forgotten them, *when ſaw we thee a hungry, or a thirſt?*

3. What is the Promiſe of thoſe who are thus ſincere and humble in their Alms-giving. Let *thine Alms be in ſecret,* and then *thy Father which ſees in ſecret* will obſerve them. *Note,* When we take leaſt notice of our good deeds ourſelves, God takes moſt notice of them. As God *hears* the Wrongs done to us, when we do not hear them, *Pſal.* 38. 14, 15. ſo he ſees the good done by us, when we do not ſee it. As 'tis a Terror to Hypocrites, ſo it is a Comfort to ſincere Chriſtians that God *ſees in ſecret.* But this is not all, not only the Obſervation and Praiſe, but the Recompence is of God, *himſelf ſhall reward thee openly. Note,* Thoſe that in their Alms-giving ſtudy to approve themſelves to God, only turn themſelves over to him for their Pay-maſter. The Hypocrite catches at the Shadow, but the upright Man makes ſure the Subſtance. Obſerve how emphatically 'tis expreſs'd; *Himſelf ſhall Reward,* he will himſelf be the Rewarder, *Heb.* 11. 6. Let him alone to make it up *in Kind,* or *Kindneſs;* nay, he will himſelf be *the Reward,* Gen. 15. 1. thine *exceeding great Reward.* He will reward thee as *thy Father,* not as a Maſter, who gives his Servant juſt what he earns, and no more, but as a Father, who gives abundantly more, and without ſtint to *his Son that ſerves him.* Nay, he ſhall reward thee *openly,* if not in the preſent Day,

yet in the Great Day; *then ſhall every Man have Praiſe of God*, open Praiſe; thou ſhalt be confeſs'd *before Men*. If the Work be not *open*, the Reward ſhall, and that's *better*.

5 And when thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to ſtand praying in the ſynagogues, and in the corners of the ſtreets, that they may be ſeen of men, Verily, I ſay unto you, they have their Reward. 6 But thou when thou prayeſt, enter into thy cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly. 7 But when ye pray, uſe not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

In *Prayer* we have more immediately to do with God than in *giving Alms*, and therefore are yet more concern'd to be *ſincere*, which is what we are here directed to. *When thou Prayeſt*, v. 5. it is taken for granted that all the Diſciples of Chriſt *Pray*. As ſoon as ever *Paul* was Converted, *behold he Prayeth*. You may as ſoon find a living Man that doth not breath, as a living Chriſtian that doth not Pray. *For this ſhall every one that is Godly Pray*, If Prayerleſs, then Graceleſs. Now, *when thou Prayeſt*, thou ſhalt not be *as the Hypocrites are*, nor do *as they* do, *v.* 2. *Note*, Thoſe who would not *do* as the Hypocrites *do* in their Way and Actions, muſt not *be* as the Hypocrites *are* in their Frame and Temper. He names no-body, but it appears by *Mat.* 23. 13. that by the Hypocrites here he means eſpecially the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*.

Now there were two great Faults they were guilty of in Prayer, againſt each of which we are here caution'd, Vain-glory, *v.* 5, 6. and vain Repetitions, *v.* 7, 8.

I. We muſt not be *Proud* and *Vain-glorious* in Prayer, nor aim at the Praiſe of Men. And here obſerve,

1. What was the *Way and Practice of the Hypocrites*. In all their Exerciſes of Devotion, 'twas plain the chief thing they aim'd at was to be commended by their Neighbours, and thereby, to make an Intereſt for themſelves, When they ſeem'd to *ſoar upwards* in Prayer, (and if it be right, 'tis the Soul's Aſcent towards God) yet even then their Eyes were downwards upon this as their *Prey*. Obſerve, (1.) What the Places were which they choſe for their Devotion; they Pray'd in the *Synagogues*, which were indeed proper Places for *Publick* Prayer, but not for *Perſonal*. They pretended hereby to *do Honour* to the Place of their Aſſemblies, but intended to do Honour to themſelves. They Pray'd in *the corners of the Streets*, the broad Streets, (ſo the word ſignifies) which were moſt frequented. They withdrew thither, as if they were under a pious Impulſe, which would not admit Delay, but really 'twas to make themſelves to be taken notice of. There were two Streets met, they were not only within ken of both, but every Paſſenger turning cloſe upon them would obſerve them, and hear what they ſaid,

(2.) The Poſture they us'd in Prayer, they Pray *ſtanding*; this is a lawful and Proper Poſture for Prayer, *Mark* 11. 25. *When ye ſtand Praying*, but kneeling being the more humble and reverent Geſture, (*Luke* 22. 41. *Acts* 7. 60. *Eph.* 3. 15.) their *ſtanding* ſeem'd to ſavour of Pride and Confidence in themſelves, *Luke* 18. 11. *The Phariſee ſtood and Pray'd*.

(3.) Their Pride in chuſing thoſe publick Places, which is expreſs'd in two things: (1.) They *love* to Pray there. They did not *love Prayer* for its own ſake, but they lov'd it when it gave them an Opportunity of making themſelves taken notice of. Circumſtances may be ſuch that our good Deeds muſt needs be done openly, ſo as to fall under the Obſervation of others, and be commended by them, but the Sin and Danger is, when we *love it*, and are pleas'd with it, becauſe it feeds the proud Humour. (2.) It is that they may be *ſeen of Men*; not that God might accept them, but that Men might *admire* and *applaud* them; and that they might eaſily get the Eſtates of Widows and Orphans into their hands (who would not truſt ſuch devout praying Men?) and when they had them, might *devour 'em* without being ſuſpected, *Mat.* 23. 14. and effectually carry on their publick Deſigns to enſlave the People.

(4.) The Product of all this, *they have their Reward*; they have all the Recompence they muſt ever expect from God for their Service, and a poor Recompence it is. What will it avail us to have the good Word of our Fellow-ſervants, if our Maſter do not ſay, *Well done*. But if in ſo great a Tranſaction as is between us and God, when we are at Prayer we can take in ſo poor a Conſideration as the Praiſe of Men is, 'tis juſt that that ſhould be *all our Reward*. They did it to be *ſeen of Men*, and they are ſo; and much good may it do them. *Note*, Thoſe that would approve themſelves to God in their Integrity in their Religion, muſt have no regard to the Praiſe of Men; 'tis not to Men that we Pray, nor from them that we expect an Anſwer; they are not to be our Judges, they are Duſt and Aſhes, like ourſelves, and therefore we muſt not have our Eye to them; what paſſeth between God and our own Souls muſt be *out of ſight*. In our Synagogue-worſhip we muſt avoid every thing that tends to make our perſonal Devotion remarkable, as they that caus'd their *Voice to be heard on high*, Iſa. 58. 4. Nor are publick Places proper for private ſolemn Prayer.

2. What is the *Will of Jeſus Chriſt* in oppoſition to this. *Humility* and *Sincerity* are the two great Leſſons that Chriſt teacheth us; *Thou when thou Prayeſt*, do ſo and ſo, *v.* 6. thou in particular, by thyſelf, and for thyſelf. Perſonal Prayer is here ſuppos'd to be the Duty and Practice of all Chriſt's Diſciples: *Obſerve*,

1. The Directions here given about it.

(1.) Inſtead of Praying in *the Synagogues*, and in the *corners of the Streets*, *enter into thy Cloſet*, i. e. into ſome Place of Privacy and Retirement; *Iſaac* went into the Field, *Gen.* 24. 63. Chriſt to a Mountain, *Peter* to the Houſe-top: No place amiſs in point of Ceremony, if it do but anſwer the End. *Note*, Secret Prayer is to be perform'd *ſecretly*, that we may be *unobſerv'd*, and ſo may avoid Oſtentation; *undiſturb'd*, and ſo may avoid Diſtraction; *unheard*, and ſo may uſe the greater Freedom; yet if the Circumſtances be ſuch that we cannot poſſible avoid being taken notice of, we muſt not therefore neglect the Duty, leſt the Omiſſion be a greater Scandal than the Obſervation of it.

(2.) Inſtead of doing it to be *ſeen of Men*, *pray to thy Father which is in ſecret*; *to me, even to me*, Zech. 7. 5. 6. The *Phariſees* Pray'd rather *to Men* than *to God*; whatever was the *Form* of their Prayer, the *Scope* of it was to *beg* the Applauſe of Men, and *court their Favours*. Well do thou Pray to God, and let that be enough for thee. Pray to him as a *Father*, as *thy* Father, ready to hear and anſwer; graciouſly inclin'd to Pity, Help, and Succour thee. Pray to thy Father *which is in ſecret*. *Note*, In ſecret Prayer we muſt have an eye to God, as preſent in all Places; he is *there*, in thy Cloſet, when no one elſe is there; there eſpecially, nigh to thee in what thou *calleſt upon him for*. By *ſecret* Prayer we give God the Glory of his univerſal Preſence, *Acts* 17. 25. and may take to ourſelves the Comfort of it.

2. The Encouragements here given us to it.

1. Thy Father *ſees in ſecret*; his Eye is upon thee to accept thee, when the Eye of no Man is upon thee to applaud thee; *under the Fig-tree I ſaw thee*, ſaid Chriſt to *Nathaniel*, John 1. 48. He ſaw *Paul* at Prayer in ſuch a Street, at ſuch a Houſe, *Acts* 9. 11. There is not a ſecret ſudden breathing after God but he obſerves it,

2. He *will reward thee openly*, they have *their Reward* that do it openly, and thou ſhalt not loſe thine for doing it in ſecret. 'Tis call'd a *Reward*, but it is *of Grace*, not *of Debt*; what merit can there be in Begging? The Reward will be *open*, they ſhall not only have it, but have it honourably; the *open* Reward is that which Hypocrites are *fond of*, but they have not Patience to ſtay for it; 'tis that which the Sincere are *dead to*, and they ſhall have it over and above. Sometimes *ſecret Prayers* are rewarded openly in this World by ſignal Anſwers to them, which manifeſt God's Praying People in the Conſciences of their Adverſaries; however at the Great Day there will be an open Reward, when all Praying People ſhall *appear in Glory* with the great Interceſſor. The *Phariſees* had their Reward *before all the Town*, and it was a meer Flaſh and Shadow, true Chriſtians ſhall have theirs *before all the World*, Angels and Men, and it ſhall be a *Weight of Glory*.

II. We muſt not *uſe vain Repetitions* in Prayer, *v.* 7. 8. Tho' the Life of Prayer lies in *lifting up the Soul*, and *pouring out the Heart*, yet there is ſome Intereſt which Words have in Prayer, eſpecially in *Joynt-Prayer*; for in *that* words are neceſſary, and it ſhould ſeem that our Saviour ſpeaks here eſpecially of that; for before he ſaid, *when thou Prayeſt*, here, when *ye Pray*; and the Lord's-Prayer which follows is a *Joynt-Prayer*, and in that he that is the Mouth of others is moſt tempted to an Oſtentation of Language and Expreſſion, againſt which we are here warn'd; *uſe not vain Repetitions*, either alone, or with others; the *Phariſees* affected this, they *made long Prayers*, Mat. 23. 14. all their care was to make them long. Now obſerve

1. What the *Fault* is that is here *reprov'd* and condemn'd, 'tis making a meer *Lip-labour* of the Duty of Prayer, the Service of the *Tongue*, when it is not the Service of the *Soul*. This is expreſs'd here by two words Βαττολογία, Πολυλογία, (1.) *Vain Repetitions*. Tautology, Battology, idle babbling over the ſame words again and again, to no purpoſe, like *Battus*, *Sub illis montibus erant, erant ſub montibus illis*; like that Imitation of the Wordineſs of a Fool, *Eccl.* 10. 14. *A Man cannot tell what ſhall be, and what ſhall be after him, who can tell?* which is indecent and nauſeous in any Diſcourſe, much more in ſpeaking to God. 'Tis not all *Repetition* in Prayer that is here condemn,d, but *vain Repetitions*. Chriſt himſelf Pray'd, *ſaying the ſame words*, Mat. 26. 44. out of a more than ordinary Fervour and Zeal, *Luke* 22. 44. So *Daniel*, *Chap.* 9. 18, 19. And there is a very elegant Repetition of the ſame words, *Pſal.* 136. it may be of uſe both to expreſs our own Affection, and ſo to excite the Affections of others. But the Superſtitious rehearſing of a Tale of Words, without regard to the Senſe of them, as the Papiſts ſaying by their Beads ſo many *Ave Mary's* and *Pater-Noſters*; or the barren and dry going over of the ſame things again and again, meerly to drill out the Prayer to ſuch a length, and to make a ſhew of Affection, when really there is none, theſe are the *vain Repetitions* here condemn'd. When we would fain ſay much, but cannot ſay much to the Purpoſe; this is diſpleaſing to *God*, and all *wiſe Men*. (2.) *Much ſpeaking*, i. e. an Affectation of Prolixity in Prayer, either out of Pride or Superſtition, or an Opinion that God needs either to be inform'd, or argu'd with by us, or out of meer Folly and Impertinence, becauſe Men love to *hear themſelves talk*. Not that all *long Prayers* are forbidden; Chriſt Pray'd *all Night*, Luke 6. 12. *Solomon*'s was a long Prayer; there

is ſometimes need of long Prayers, when our Errands and our Affections are extraordinary; but meerly to *prolong* the Prayer, as if that would make it more *pleaſing*, or more *prevailing* with God, is that which is here condemn'd; it is not *much Praying* that is condemn'd, no, we are bid to *Pray always*, but much *ſpeaking*; the danger of this Error is when we only *ſay our Prayers*, not when we *pray* them. This Caution is explain'd by that of *Solomon*, Eccl. 5. 2. *Let thy Words be few*, i. e. conſiderate and well weigh'd. *Take with you Words*, Hoſ. 14. 2. *Chuſe out Words*, Job 4. 14. and do not ſay every thing that comes uppermoſt

2. What Reaſons are given againſt this.

1. This is the Way of the Heathen, *as the Heathen do*; and it ill becomes Chriſtians to Worſhip their God as the *Gentiles* Worſhip theirs. The Heathen were taught by the Light of Nature to Worſhip God, but becoming vain in their Imaginations concerning the Object of their Worſhip, no wonder they became ſo concerning the manner of it, and particularly in this Inſtance, thinking God altogether ſuch a one as themſelves, they thought he needed many Words to make him underſtand what was ſaid to him, or to bring him to comply with their Requeſts; as if he were Weak and Ignorant, and hard to be intreated. Thus *Baal*'s Prieſts were hard at it from Morning till almoſt Night, with their *vain Repetitions*. O Baal *hear us*, O Baal *hear us*, and *vain Petitions* they were, but *Elijah* in a grave compoſed Frame, with a very ſhort conciſe Prayer, prevail'd for *Fire* from Heaven firſt, and then *Water*, 1 *Kings* 18. 26, 36. *Lip-Labour* in Prayer, tho' never ſo well *labour'd*, if that be all, is but *loſt Labour*.

2. It needs not be your Way, *for your Father* in Heaven *knows what things you have need of before you aſk him*, and therefore there's no occaſion for ſuch abundance of Words. It doth not follow that therefore you need not Pray, for God requires you by Prayer to own your Need of him, and Dependance on him, and to put his Promiſes in Suit; but therefore you are to open your Caſe, and pour out your Hearts before him, and then leave it with him. Conſider, (1.) The God we pray to is *our Father*, by Creation, by Covenant, and therefore our Addreſſes to him ſhould be eaſy, natural, and unaffected; Children do not uſe to make long Speeches to their Parents, when they want any thing, 'tis enough to ſay, *My Head, my Head*. Let us come to him with the Diſpoſition of Children, with Love, Reverence, and Dependance; and then thoſe need not ſay many Words that are taught by the Spirit of Adoption to ſay that one aright, *Abba, Father*. (2.) He is a Father that knows our Caſe, and knows our Wants better than we do ourſelves. *He knows what things we have need of*, his Eyes run to and fro thro' the Earth to obſerve the Neceſſities of his People, 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. and he often gives *before we call*, Iſa. 65. 24. and *more than we aſk for*, Eph. 3. 20. and if he do not give his People what they aſk, 'tis becauſe he knows they do not need it, nor is it for their Good; and of that he is fitter to judge for us than we for ourſelves. We need not be long, or uſe many Words in repreſenting our Caſe, God knows it better than we can tell him, only he will know it *from us*, *what will ye that I ſhould do unto you*? and when we have told him what it is, we muſt refer our ſelves to him, *Lord, all my Deſire is before thee*, Pſal. 38. 9. So far is God from being wrought upon by the Length or Language of our Prayers, that the moſt Powerful Interceſſions are thoſe which are made with *Groanings that cannot be utter'd*, Rom. 8. 27. We are not to preſcribe, but ſubſcribe to God.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as *it is* in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. 14 For if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you. 15 But if ye forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes.

When Chriſt had condemn'd what was amiſs, he directs to do better; for his are Reproofs of Inſtruction. Becauſe we know not what to Pray for as we ought, he here helps our Infirmities, by putting words into our Mouths, *After this manner therefore Pray ye*, v. 9. So many were the Corruptions that were crept into this Duty of Prayer among the *Jews*, that Chriſt ſaw it needful to give a new Directory for Prayer, to ſhew his Diſciples what muſt ordinarily be the Matter and Method of their Prayer, which he gives in Words that may very well be us'd as a Form; as the Summary or Contents of the ſeveral Particulars of our Prayers. Not that we are ty'd up to the uſe of this Form *only*, or of this *always*, as if this were neceſſary to the conſecrating of our other Prayers; we are here bid to pray *after this manner*, with theſe Words, or to this effect. That in *Luke* differs from this; we do not find it us'd by the Apoſtles, we are not here taught to Pray in the Name of Chriſt, as we are afterwards; we are here taught to Pray, that that Kingdom might come which did come when the Spirit was pour'd out; yet, without doubt it is very good to uſe it as a Form, and it is a Pledge of the Communion of Saints, it having been us'd by the Church in all Ages, at leaſt, (ſaith Dr. *Whitby*) from the third Century. It is our *Lord's Prayer*, 'tis of his Compoſing, of his Appointing; 'tis very compendious, yet very comprehenſive, in Compaſſion to our Praying Infirmities. The Matter is choice and neceſſary, the Method Inſtructive, and the Expreſſions very conciſe. It has much in a little, and it is requiſite that we acquaint ourſelves with the Senſe and Meaning of it, for it is us'd acceptably, no further than 'tis us'd underſtandingly, and without vain Repetition.

The Lord's Prayer, (as indeed every Prayer) is a Letter ſent from Earth to Heaven. Here's the Inſcription of the Letter, the Perſon to whom 'tis directed, *our Father*; the Place where, in *Heaven*; the Contents of it, in ſeveral Errands of Requeſt; the cloſe, *for thine is the Kingdom*; the Seal, *Amen*; and if you will the Date too, *this Day*.

Plainly thus; there are three parts of the Prayer.

1. The Preface, *Our Father which art in Heaven.* Before we come to our Buſineſs, there muſt be a Solemn *Addreſs* to him with whom our Buſineſs lies; *Our Father.* Intimating, that we muſt pray, not only alone, and for ourſelves, but with, and for others; for we are Members one of another, and are call'd into Fellowſhip with each other. We are here taught *to whom to Pray*, to God only, and not to Saints and Angels, for they are ignorant of us, are not to have the Honours we give in Prayer, nor can give the Favours we expect. We are taught how to addreſs ourſelves to God, and what Title to give him, that which ſpeaks him rather Beneficent than Magnificent, for we are to come boldly to the Throne of Grace.

(1.) We muſt addreſs ourſelves to him as *our Father*, and muſt call him ſo. He is a common Father to all Mankind, by Creation, *Mal.* 2. 10. *Acts* 17. 28. He is in a ſpecial manner a Father to the Saints by Adoption and Regeneration, *Eph.* 1. 5. *Gal.* 4. 6. and an unſpeakable Privilege it is. Thus we muſt eye him in Prayer, keep up good Thoughts of him, ſuch as are encouraging, and not affrighting; nothing more pleaſing to God, or pleaſant to ourſelves, than to call God *Father*. Chriſt in Prayer moſtly call'd God *Father*. If he be *our Father*, he will pity us under our Weakneſſes and Infirmities, *Pſal.* 103. 13. will ſpare us, *Mal.* 3. 17. will make the beſt of our Performances, tho' very defective, will deny us nothing that is good for us, *Luke* 11. 11, 13. We have Acceſs with boldneſs to him, as to a Father, and have an *Advocate with the Father*, and the Spirit of Adoption. When we come repenting of our Sins, we muſt eye God as a Father, as the Prodigal did, *Luke* 15. 18. *Jer.* 3. 19. when we come begging for Grace, and Peace, and the Inheritance and Bleſſings of Sons, 'tis an encouragement that we come to God, not as an unreconciled avenging Judge, but as a loving, gracious reconciled Father in Chriſt, *Jer.* 3. 4.

(2.) As our Father *in Heaven*; ſo *in Heaven* as to be every where elſe, for the Heaven cannot contain him, yet ſo in Heaven as there to manifeſt his Glory, for it is his Throne, *Pſal.* 103. 19. and it is to Believers a Throne of Grace, thitherward we muſt direct our Prayers, for Chriſt the Mediator is now in Heaven, *Heb.* 8. 1. Heaven is *out of ſight*, and a World of Spirits, therefore our Converſe with God in Prayer muſt be Spiritual; 'tis *on high*, therefore in Prayer we muſt be rais'd above the World, and lift up our Hearts, *Pſal.* 5. 1. Heaven is a Place of *perfect Purity*, and we muſt therefore lift up *pure Hands*, muſt ſtudy to Sanctify his Name, who is the holy One, and dwells in that holy Place, *Lev.* 10. 3. From *Heaven* God beholds the Children of Men, *Pſal.* 33. 13, 14. And we muſt in Prayer ſee his Eye upon us; thence he has a full and clear view of all our Wants, and Burthens, and Deſires, and all our Infirmities. 'Tis the Firmament of *his Power* likewiſe, as well as of *his Proſpect*, Pſal. 150. 1. He is not only as *a Father*, willing to help us, but as a *Heavenly* Father, *able* to help us, *able* to do great things for us, more than we can aſk or think; he has wherewithal to ſupply our Needs, for every good Gift is from above. He is *a Father*, and therefore we may come to him with *Boldneſs*, but a Father *in Heaven*, and therefore we muſt come *with Reverence*, Eccl. 5. 2. Thus all our Prayers ſhould correſpond with that which is our great Aim as Chriſtians, and that is, to be *with God in Heaven*. God and Heaven, the End of our whole Converſation muſt be particularly ey'd in every Prayer, there's the Centre to which we are all tending. By Prayer we ſend before us thither, where we profeſs to be going.

2. The Petitions, and thoſe are ſix, the three firſt relating more immediately to God and his Honour, the three laſt to our own Concerns, both Temporal and Spiritual; as in the Ten Commandments, the four firſt teach us our Duty towards God, and the ſix laſt our Duty towards our Neighbour. The Method of this Prayer teacheth us to ſeek firſt the *Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs*, and then to hope that *other things ſhall be added*

1. *Hallowed be thy Name.* 'Tis the ſame word that in other places is tranſlated *Sanctified*. But here the old word *Hallow'd* is retain'd, only becauſe People were us'd to it in the Lord's-Prayer. In theſe words (1.) we *give Glory* to God; it may be taken, not as a *Petition*, but as an *Adoration*; as that, *the Lord be Magnified*, or *Glorified*, for God's Holineſs is the Greatneſs and Glory of all his Perfections; we muſt begin our Prayers with Praiſing God, and 'tis very fit he ſhould be firſt ſerv'd, and that we ſhould *give Glory* to God, before we expect to receive Mercy and Grace from him. Let him have the *Praiſe* of his Perfections, and then let us have the *Benefit* of them. (2.) We fix our End, and it is the right End to be aim'd at, and ought to be our chief and ultimate End in all our Petitions, that God may be Glorified; all our other Requeſts, muſt be in Subordination to this, and in purſuance of it. *Father, Glorifie thy ſelf* in giving me my daily Bread, and pardoning my Sins, &c. Since all is of him,

and thro' him, all muſt be to him, and for him. In Prayer our Thoughts and Affections ſhould be carried out moſt to the Glory of God. The *Phariſees* made *their own Name* the chief End of their Prayers, *v.* 5. *to be ſeen of Men*, in oppoſition to which we are directed to make *the Name of God* our chief End; let all our Petitions center in this, and be regulated by it. Do ſo and ſo for me, *for the Glory of thy Name*, and as far as is for the Glory of it. (3.) We deſire and pray that the Name of God, that is, God himſelf in all that whereby he has made himſelf known, may be *ſanctified* and glorified both by us and others, and eſpecially by himſelf. *Father*, let thy Name be glorified as a *Father*, and a Father *in Heaven*; glorify thy Goodneſs and thy Highneſs, thy Majeſty and Mercy. Let *thy Name be ſanctified*, for it is a holy Name; no matter what becomes of our polluted Names, but Lord, *What wilt thou do to thy great Name?* When we pray that God's Name may be glorified, (1.) we make a Virtue of Neceſſity, for God will *ſanctify his own Name* whether we deſire it or no; *I will be exalted among the Heathen*, Pſal. 46. 10. (2.) We ask for that which we are ſure ſhall be granted; for when our Saviour pray'd, *Father, glorify thy Name*, 'twas immediately anſwered, *I have glorified it, and will glorify it yet again.*

2. *Thy Kingdom come.* This Petition has plainly a reference to the Doctrine which Chriſt preach'd at this time, which *John Baptiſt* had preach'd before, and which he afterwards ſent his Apoſtles out to preach, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* The Kingdom of *your Father* which is *in Heaven*, the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, this is *at hand*. pray that it may come. *Note*, We ſhould turn the Word we hear into Prayer, our Heart ſhould eccho to it; doth Chriſt promiſe, *ſurely I come quickly*, our Hearts ſhould anſwer, *Even ſo, come.* Miniſters ſhould pray over the Word; when they preach *the Kingdom of God is at hand*, they ſhould pray, *Father, thy Kingdom come.* What God has promiſed we muſt pray for; for Promiſes are given, not to ſuperſede, but to quicken and encourage Prayer; and when the Accompliſhment of a Promiſe is near, and at the door, when the Kingdom of Heaven is *at hand*, we ſhould then pray for it the more earneſtly, *thy Kingdom come.* As *Daniel* ſet his Face to pray for the Deliverance of *Iſrael*, when he underſtood that the time of it was at hand, *Dan.* 9. 2. See *Luke* 19. 11. It was the *Jews* daily Prayer to God, *Let him make his Kingdom reign, let his Redemption flouriſh, and let his Meſſiah come and deliver his People.* Dr. *Whitby, ex Vitringa.* Let *thy Kingdom come*, i. e. let the Goſpel be preach'd to all, and embraced by all; let all be brought to ſubſcribe to the Record God has given in his Word concerning his Son, and to embrace him as their Saviour and Sovereign. Let the Bounds of the Goſpel-Church be enlarg'd, the Kingdom of the World be made Chriſt's Kingdom, and all Men become Subjects to it, and live as becomes their Character.

3. *Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.* We pray that God's *Kingdom* being *come*, we and others may be brought into Obedience to all the Laws and Ordinances of it. By this let it appear that Chriſt's Kingdom is come, let *God's Will be done*; and by this let it appear that it is come as a *Kingdom of Heaven*, let it introduce a *Heaven upon Earth.* We make Chriſt but a titular Prince, if we call him *King*, and do not do his Will; having pray'd that he may rule us, we pray that we may in every thing be rul'd by him. Obſerve, (1.) The Thing pray'd for, *Thy Will be done*; Lord, *do what thou pleaſeſt* with me and mine, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. I refer myſelf to thee, and am well ſatisfied that all thy Council concerning me ſhould be performed; in this Senſe Chriſt pray'd, *Not my Will, but thine be done*; and enable me to *do what is pleaſing to thee*; give me that Grace that is neceſſary to the right Knowledge of thy Will, and an acceptable Obedience to it. Let thy Will be done conſcientiouſly by me and others, not our own Wills, the Wills of the Fleſh, or the Mind, not the Wills of Men, 1 *Pet.* 4. 2. much leſs Satan's Will, *John* 8. 44. that we may neither diſpleaſe God in any thing we do (*ut nihil noſtrum diſpliceat Deo*) nor be diſpleaſed at any thing God did, *ut nihil Dei diſpliceat nobis.* (2.) The Pattern or Samplar of it, that it *may be done on Earth*, in this place of our Trial and Probation, where our Work muſt be done, or 'twill never be done, *as it is done in Heaven*, that Place of Reſt and Joy, that that may at length be our State. We pray that Earth may be made more like to Heaven by the Obſervance of God's Will, which thro' the Prevalency of Satan's Will is become ſo near a-kin to Hell; and that Saints may be made more like to the *holy Angels* in their Devotion and Obedience. We are *on Earth*, bleſſed be God, not yet *under the Earth*; we pray for the *Living* only, not for the Dead, that are *gone down into Silence.*

4. *Give us this Day our daily Bread.* Becauſe our natural Being is neceſſary to our ſpiritual Well-being in this World, therefore after the things of God's Glory, Kingdom and Will, we pray for the neceſſary Supports and Comforts of this preſent Life, which are the Gift of God, and muſt be ask'd of him, τὸν ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον, *Bread for the Day approaching*, i. e. for all the remainder of our Lives, *Bread for the time to come*, or *Bread for our Being and Subſiſtence*, that which is agreeable to our Condition in the World, *Prov.* 30. 8. *Food convenient for us* and our Families, according to our Rank and Station.

Every Word here hath a Leſſon in it. (1.) We ask for *Bread*, that teacheth us *Sobriety* and *Temperance*; we ask for *Bread*, not *Dainties*, nor *Superfluities*, that which is wholſome, tho' it be not nice. (2.) We ask for *our* Bread, that teacheth us Honeſty and Induſtry; we do not ask for the Bread out of other Peoples Mouths, not the *Bread of Deceit*, Prov. 20. 13. not the Bread of Idleneſs, *Prov.* 31. 27. but the Bread honeſtly got. (3.) We ask for our *daily* Bread, which teacheth us not to *take thought for the Morrow*, Mat. 6. 34. but conſtantly to depend upon divine Providence, as thoſe that live *from Hand to Mouth.* (4.) We beg of God to *give* it us, not ſell it us, or lend us, but *give it*. The greateſt of Men muſt be beholden to the Mercy of God for their *daily Bread.* (5.) We pray, give it *to us*, not to me only, but to others in common with me; this teacheth us Charity, and a compaſſionate Concern for the Poor and Needy; it intimates alſo that we ought to pray with our Families, we and our Houſholds *eat together*, and therefore ought to *pray together.* (6.) We pray that God would give it us *this Day*, which teacheth us to renew the Deſires of our Souls towards God, as the Wants of our Bodies are renewed; as duly as the Day comes we muſt pray to our heavenly Father, and reckon we could as well go a Day without Meat as without Prayer.

5. *And forgive us our Debts as we forgive our Debtors.* This is connected to the former; *and forgive*, intimating, that unleſs our Sins be pardoned we can have no Comfort in Life, and the Supports of it; our daily Bread doth but feed us as Lambs for the Slaughter if our Sins be not pardoned; it intimates likewiſe that we muſt pray for daily Pardon as duly as we pray for daily Bread. *He that is waſhed, needeth to waſh his Feet.* Here we have,

(1) A Petition. *Father in Heaven, forgive us our Debts*, our Debts to thee. *Note*, 1. Our Sins are our Debts. There is a Debt of *Duty*, which, as Creatures, we owe to our Creator; we do not pray to be diſcharg'd from that; but upon the Non-payment of that, there ariſeth a Debt of *Puniſhment*. In Default of *obedience* to the *Will of God*, we become *obnoxious* to the *Wrath of God*; and for not obſerving the Precept of the Law, we ſtand *obliged* to the Penalty. A Debtor is liable to Proceſs; ſo are we: A Malefactor is a Debtor to the Law, ſo are we. 2. Our Heart's Deſire and Prayer to our heavenly Father every Day ſhould be, that he would forgive us our Debts; that the Obligation to Puniſhment may be cancell'd and vacated, that we may not come into Condemnation; that we may be diſcharg'd, and have the Comfort of it. In ſuing out the Pardon of our Sins, the great Plea we have to rely upon, is the Satisfaction that was made to the Juſtice of God for the Sin of Man, by the dying of the Lord Jeſus, our Surety, or rather *Bail to the Action*, that undertook our Diſcharge.

(2.) An Argument to enforce this Petition; *as we forgive our Debtors.* This is not a Plea of Merit, but a Plea of Grace. *Note*, Thoſe that come to God for the Forgiveneſs of their Sins againſt him, muſt make Conſcience of forgiving thoſe who have offended them; elſe they Curſe themſelves when they ſay the Lord's Prayer. Our Duty is to *forgive our Debtors*; as to *Debts of Money*, we muſt not be rigorous and ſevere in exacting them from thoſe that cannot pay them without ruining themſelves and their Families: But this means *Debts of Injury*. Our Debtors are thoſe that *treſpaſs againſt us*, that *ſmite us*, chap. 5. 39, 40. and in Strictneſs of Law, might be proſecuted for it; we muſt forbear, and forgive, and forget the Affronts put upon us, and the Wrongs done us: And this is a Moral Qualification for Pardon and Peace. It encourageth to hope, that *God will forgive us*, for if there be in us this graceful Diſpoſition, 'tis wrought of God, and therefore is a Perfection eminently and tranſcendently in himſelf; it will be an Evidence to us, that he has forgiven us, having wrought in us the Condition of Forgiveneſs.

6. *And lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil.* This Petition is expreſs'd,

1. Negatively; *Lead us not into Temptation.* Having pray'd that the Guilt of Sin may be remov'd, we pray, as is fit, that we may never return again to Folly; that we may not be tempted to it. 'Tis not as if God tempted any to Sin; but Lord do not *let Satan looſe upon us*; chain up that roaring Lion, for he is ſubtle and ſpiteful; Lord do not *leave us to our ſelves*, Pſal. 19. 13. for we are very weak; Lord do not *lay Stumbling-Blocks* and Snares before us, nor put us into ſuch Circumſtances, as may be an Occaſion of falling. Temptations are to be pray'd againſt, both becauſe of the *Diſcomfort* and Trouble of them, and becauſe of the *Danger* we are in of being overcome by them, and the Guilt and Grief that then follows.

2. Poſitively; *But deliver us from evil*, ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ, *from the evil one*, i. e. the Devil, the Tempter; keep us, that either we may not be aſſaulted by him, or we may not be overcome by thoſe Aſſaults. Or from the *evil thing*, that is, Sin, the worſt of Evils; an Evil, an only Evil; that evil Thing which God hates, and which Satan tempts Men to, and deſtroys them by. Lord deliver us from the Evil of the World, the Corruption that is in the World through Luſt, from the Evil of every Condition in the World; from the Evil of Death, from the Sting of Death, which is Sin. Deliver us from our ſelves; from our own evil Hearts: Deliver us from evil *Men*, that they may not be a Snare *to us*, nor we a Prey to them.

3. The Concluſion. *For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the the Glory, for ever, Amen.* Some refer this to *David*'s Doxology, 1 Chron. 24. 11. *Thine O Lord, is the Greatneſs.* It is,

1. A Form of *Plea*, to enforce the foregoing Petitions. It is our Duty to plead with God in Prayer, to fill our Mouth with Arguments, *Job* 23. 4. not to move God, but to affect ourſelves, to *encourage* our Faith, to *excite* our Fervency, and to *evidence* both. Now the beſt Pleas in Prayer, are thoſe that are taken from God himſelf and from that which he hath made known of himſelf. We muſt wreſtle with God in *his own Strength*, both as to the Matter of our Pleas, and the urging of them. The Plea here has ſpecial Reference to the three firſt Petitions; Father in Heaven, *Thy Kingdom come*, for *thine is the Kingdom*; *Thy Will be done*, for *thine is the Power*; *Hallowed be thy Name*, for *thine is the Glory.* And as to our own particular Errands, theſe

are encouraging; *Thine is the Kingdom*, thou haſt the Government of the World, and the Protection of the Saints, thy willing Subjects in it: God gives and ſaves *like a King*. *Thine is the Power*, to maintain and ſupport that Kingdom, and to make good all thine Engagements to thy People. *Thine is the Glory*, as the End of all that, which is given to, and done for the Saints, in Anſwer to their Prayers; for their *Praiſe waiteth* for him. This is matter of Comfort and holy Confidence in Prayer.

2. 'Tis a *Form of Praiſe and Thankſgiving*. The beſt Pleading with God is Praiſing of him; 'tis the Way to obtain further Mercy, as it qualifies us to receive it. In all our Addreſſes to God, 'tis fit that Praiſe ſhould have a conſiderable Share, for *Praiſe becometh the Saints*; they are to be to our God, *for a Name, and for a Praiſe*: 'Tis juſt and equal; we praiſe God, and give him Glory, not becauſe he *needs it*, he is praiſed by a World of Angels, but becauſe he *deſerves it*; and it is our Duty to give him Glory, in Compliance with his Deſign in revealing himſelf to us. Praiſe is the Work and Happineſs of Heaven, and all that would go to Heaven hereafter, muſt begin their Heaven now. Obſerve, how full this Doxology is, *the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory*; 'tis all thine, *Note*, it becomes us to be copious in praſing God. A true Saint never thinks he can ſpeak honourably enough of God: Here there ſhould be a gracious Fluency, and this *for ever*. Aſcribing Glory to God *for ever*, intimates an Acknowledgment, that it is *eternally due*, and an earneſt Deſire to be *eternally doing it*, with Angels and Saints above, *Pſal.* 71. 14.

Laſtly, To all this we are taught to affix our *Amen*; *So be it*. God's *Amen* is a Grant; his *Fiat* is, It ſhall be ſo: Our *Amen is* only a Summary Deſire; our *Fiat* is, Let it be ſo. 'Tis in Token of our Deſire and Aſſurance to be heard, that we ſay, *Amen*. *Amen* refers to every Petition going before; and thus in Compaſſion to our Infirmities, we are taught to knit up the whole in one Word, and ſo to gather up in the general, what we have loſt and let ſlip in the particulars. It is good to *conclude* Religious Duties with ſome *Warmth* and *Vigour*, that we may go from them with a ſweet Savour upon our Spirits. It was of old the Practice of good People, to ſay *Amen* audibly at the End of every Prayer; and it is a commendable practice, provided it be done *underſtandingly*, as the Apoſtle directs, 1 *Cor.* 14. 16. and *uprightly*, with Life and Livelineſs, and inward Impreſſions anſwerable to that outward Expreſſion of Deſire and Confidence.

Moſt of the Petitions in the Lords Prayer, had been commonly us'd by the *Jews*, in their Devotions, or Words to the ſame effect, but that Clauſe in the fifth Petition, *As we forgive our Debtors*, was perfectly new; and therefore our Saviour here ſhews, for what Reaſon he added it; not with any perſonal Reflections upon the Peeviſhneſs, Litigiouſneſs, and Ill-nature of the Men of that Generation, though there was Cauſe enough for it, but only from the Neceſſity and Importance of the thing itſelf. God in forgiving us hath a peculiar Reſpect to our *forgiving thoſe that have Injur'd us*, and therefore, when we pray for Pardon, we muſt mention our making Conſcience of that Duty, not only to *mind* ourſelves of it, but to *bind* ourſelves to it. See that Parable, *Matt.* 18. 23.–35. Selfiſh Nature is loth to comply with this, and therefore 'tis here inculcated, *v.* 14. 15.

1. In a Promiſe. *If ye forgive, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive.* Not as if this were the only Condition requir'd, there muſt be Repentance, and Faith, and new Obedience; but as were other Graces are in Truth, there will be this, ſo this will be a good Evidence of the Sincerity of our other Graces. He that *relents* towards his Brother, thereby ſhews that he *repents* towards his God. Thoſe which in the Prayer are call'd *Debts*, are here call'd *Treſpaſſes*, Debts of Injury; Wrongs done us in our Bodies, Goods, or good Names, *Treſpaſſes*; 'tis an extenuating Term for Offences; παραπτώματα, Stumbles, Slips, Falls. *Note*, It is a good Evidence and a good Help of our forgiving others, to call the Injuries done us by a mollifying, excuſing Name. Call them not Treaſons, but Treſpaſſes, not wilful Injuries, but caſual Inadvertencies; *peradventure it was an Overſight*, Gen. 43. 12. therefore make the beſt of it. We muſt forgive, as we hope to be forgiven; and therefore muſt not only bear no Malice, nor meditate Revenge, but muſt not upbraid our Brother with the Injuries he has done us, nor rejoice in any Hurt that befalls him; but muſt be ready to help him, and do him good, and if he repent, and deſire to be Friends again, we muſt be free and familiar with him, as before.

2. In a Threatning. *But if you forgive not* thoſe that have injur'd you, that's a bad Sign you have not the other requiſite Conditions, but are altogether unqualify'd for Pardon, and therefore *your Father*, whom you call *Father*, and who as a Father, offers you his Grace upon ſeaſonable Terms, will nevertheleſs *not forgive you*. And if other Graces be ſincere, and yet you be defective greatly in forgiving, you cannot expect the Comfort of your Pardon, but to have your Spirits brought down by ſome Affliction or other, to comply with this Duty. *Note*, Thoſe that would find Mercy with God, muſt ſhew Mercy to their Brethren; nor can we expect that he ſhould ſtretch out the Hands of his Favour to us, unleſs we lift up to him *pure Hands, without Wrath*, 1 Tim. 2. 8. If we pray in *Anger* we have reaſon to fear, God will anſwer in *Anger*. It has been ſaid, Prayers made *in Wrath*, are written *in Gall*. What Reaſon is it that God ſhould forgive us the *Talents* we are indebted to him, if we forgive not our Brethren the *Pence* they are indebted to us. Chriſt came into the World, as the great Peace-maker, not only to reconcile us to God, but one to another, and in this we muſt comply with him. 'Tis great Preſumption, and of dangerous Conſequence, for any to make a light Matter of that which Chriſt here lays ſuch a Streſs upon. Men's Paſſions ſhall not fruſtrate God's Word.

16 Moreover when ye faſt, be not as the hypocrites of a ſad Countenance; for they diſfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to faſt. Verily, I ſay unto you, they have their reward. 17 But thou when thou faſteſt, anoint thine head, and waſh thy Face: 18 That thou appear not unto men to faſt, but to thy Father which is in ſecret: and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.

We are here caution'd againſt Hypocriſy in *Faſting*, as before in *Alms-giving* and in *Prayer*.

1. It is here ſuppos'd, that Religious Faſting is a Duty requir'd of the Diſciples of Chriſt, when God in his Providence *calls to it*, and when the Caſe of their own Souls upon any Account *calls for it*; when the Bridegroom is *taken away, then ſhall they faſt*, Matt. 9. 15. Faſting is here put laſt, becauſe it is not ſo much a Duty for its own Sake, as a Means to diſpoſe us for other Duties. Prayer comes in between *Alms-giving* and *Faſting*, as being the Life and Soul of both. Chriſt here ſpeaks eſpecially of *private Faſts*, ſuch as particular Perſons *preſcribe* to themſelves, as *Free-will Offerings*, commonly us'd among the pious *Jews*; ſome faſted one Day, ſome two, every Week, others ſeldomer, as they ſaw Cauſe: On thoſe Days they did not eat till *Sun-ſet*, and then very ſparingly. 'Twas not the *Phariſee*'s *Faſting twice in the Week*, but his Boaſting of it, that Chriſt condemned, *Luke* 18. 12. 'Tis a laudable Practice, and we have reaſon to lament it, that it is ſo generally neglected among Chriſtians. *Anna* was much in Faſting, *Luke* 2. 37. *Cornelius* faſted and prayed, *Acts* 10. 30. The Primitive Chriſtians were much in it, ſee *Acts* 1. 14.–13. 3.–14. 23. Private Faſting is ſuppoſed, 1 *Cor.* 7. 5. 'Tis an Act of Self-denyal, and Mortification of the Fleſh, a holy Revenge upon ourſelves, and Humiliation under the Hand of God; the moſt grown Chriſtians muſt hereby own, they are ſo far from having any thing to be proud of, that they are unworthy of their daily Bread: 'Tis a Means to curb the Fleſh, and the Deſires of it, and to make us more lively in Religious Exerciſes, as Fulneſs of Bread is apt to make us drowſy. *Paul* was *in Faſting often*, and ſo he *kept under his Body*, and *brought it into Subjection*.

2. We are caution'd not to do this *as the Hypocrites* did it, leſt we loſe the Reward of it; and the more Difficulty attends the Duty, the greater Loſs it is to loſe the Reward of it.

Now (1.) the *Hypocrites pretended* Faſting, when there was nothing of that Contrition and Humiliation of Soul in them, which is the Life and Soul of the Duty. Theirs were *Mock-faſts*, the Show and Shadow without the Subſtance: They took on them to be more humbled than really they were, and ſo endeavoured to put a Cheat upon God, than which they could not put a greater affront upon him. The Faſt that God hath choſen is *a Day to afflict the Soul, not to hang down the Head like a Bulruſh*, or for a Man to ſpread *Sackcloth and Aſhes under him*; we are quite miſtaken, if we call this a Faſt, *Iſa.* 58. 5. Bodily Exerciſe, if that be all, profits little, that's not *faſting to God*, even *to him*.

(2.) They *proclaimed* their Faſting, and manag'd it ſo as that all who ſaw them might take notice that it was a *Faſting-day* with them. Even on theſe Days they appear'd *in the Streets*, whereas they ſhould have been *in their Cloſets*; and they affected a Down-look, a melancholy Countenance, a ſlow and ſolemn Pace; and perfectly *diſigur'd* themſelves, that Men might ſee how oft they faſted, and might cry them up for devout mortifi'd Men. *Note*, It is ſad that Men, who have in ſome Meaſure maſter'd their Pleaſure, which is *ſenſual* Wickedneſs, ſhould be ruin'd by their Pride, which is *ſpiritual* Wickedneſs, and no leſs dangerous. Here alſo *they have their Reward*, that Praiſe and Applauſe of Men, which they court and covet ſo much, they have it, and it is *their All*.

3. We are directed how to manage a *private Faſt*, we muſt keep it *private*, v. 17, 18. He doth not tell us how often me muſt faſt, Circumſtances vary, and *Wiſdom* is *profitable* therein to *direct*: The Spirit in the Word has left that to the Spirit in the Heart; but take this for a Rule, whenever you undertake this Duty, ſtudy therein to approve yourſelves to God, and not to recommend yourſelves to the good Opinions of Men. *Humility* muſt evermore attend upon our *Humiliation*. Chriſt doth not direct to abate any thing of the Reality of the Faſt, not take a little Meat, or a little Drink, or a little Cordial, no, let the Body ſuffer, but to lay aſide the Shew and Appearance of it; appear with thy ordinary Countenance, Guiſe, and Habit, and while thou denieſt thyſelf bodily Refreſhments, do it ſo as that it may not be taken notice of, no not by thoſe that are neareſt to thee; look pleaſant, *anoint thine Head, and waſh thy Face*, as thou uſeſt to do on other Days, on purpoſe to conceal thy Devotion, and thou ſhalt be no Loſer in the Praiſe of it at laſt; for though it be not *of Men*, it ſhall be of *God*. *Faſting* is the *Humbling of the Soul*, Pſal. 35. 13. that's the *inſide* of the Duty, let that therefore be thy principal Care, and as to the *outſide* of it, covet not to let it be ſeen. If we be ſincere in our ſolemn Faſts, and humble, and truſt God's Omniſcience for our Witneſs, and his Goodneſs for our Reward, we ſhall find, both that he *did* ſee in ſecret, and *will* reward openly. Religious *Faſts*, if rightly kept, will ſhortly be recompens'd with an

everlaſting Feaſt. Our Acceptance with God in our private Faſts, ſhould make us dead both to Men's Applauſes, we muſt not *do* the Duty *in Hopes* of them, and, to Men's Cenſures too, we muſt not *decline* the Duty for *Fear* of them. *David's Faſting* was turn'd to his Reproach. *Pſal.* 69. 10. and yet *v.* 13. *As for me*, let them ſay what they will of me, *my prayer is unto thee in an acceptable time.*

19 Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal. 20 But lay up for your ſelves treaſures in heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor ſteal. 21 For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo. 22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs: 24 No man can ſerve two maſters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon.

Worldly-Mindedneſs is as common and as fatal a Symptom of Hypocriſy, as any other; for by no Sin can Satan have a ſurer and faſter hold of the Soul, under the Cloke of a viſible and paſſable Profeſſion of Religion, than by this. And therefore Chriſt having warn'd us againſt coveting the *Praiſe of Men*, comes next to warn us againſt coveting the *Wealth of the World*; in this alſo we muſt take heed, leſt we be as the Hypocrites *are*, and do as they *do*. The fundamental Error that they are guilty of this, that they chuſe the World for *their Reward*. We muſt therefore take heed of *Hypocriſy*, and *Worldly-Mindedneſs*, in the Choice we make of our *Treaſure*, our *End* and our *Maſter*.

I. In chuſing the *Treaſure we lay up*. Something or other every Man has which he makes his *Treaſure*, his Portion, which his Heart is upon, to which he carries all he can get, and which he depends upon for hereafter. 'Tis that *Good*, that chief Good which *Solomon* ſpeaks of with ſuch an Emphaſis, *Eccl.* 10. 3. Something the Soul will have, which it looks upon as the beſt Thing, which it has a Complacency and Confidence in above other Things: Now Chriſt deſigns not to deprive us of our Treaſure, but to direct us in the Choice of it. And here we have,

1. A good Caution againſt making the things that are *ſeen*, that are *temporal*, our beſt things, and placing our Happineſs in them. *Lay not up for yourſelves Treaſures upon Earth.* Chriſt's Diſciples had left all to follow him, let them ſtill keep in the ſame good Mind. A *Treaſure* is an Abundance of ſomething that is in itſelf, at leaſt in our Opinion, precious and valuable, and likely to ſtand us in ſtead hereafter. Now we muſt not *lay up our Treaſures on Earth*, that is (1.) we muſt not *count* theſe things the *beſt things*, not the moſt valuable in themſelves, nor the moſt ſerviceable to us. We muſt not call them *Glory, as Laban*'s Sons did, but ſee and own that they have no Glory in Compariſon with the *Glory that excelleth.* (2.) We muſt not *covet* an Abundance of theſe things, nor be ſtill graſping at more and more of them, and adding to them, as Men do to that which is their Treaſure; as never knowing when we have enongh. (3.) We muſt not *confide* in them for hereafter, to be our Security and Supply in *time to come*; muſt not ſay to the Gold, *thou art my Hope.* (4.) We muſt not *content* ourſelves with them, as all we need or deſire; we muſt be content with a little for our Paſſage, but not with all for our Portion. Theſe things muſt not be made *our Conſolation*, Luke 6. 25. Our *good things*, Luke 16. 25. Let us conſider we are laying up, not for our Poſterity in this World, but *for ourſelves* in the other World. We are put to our Choice, and made in a manner *our own Carvers*; that's ours which we lay up *for ourſelves*: It concerns thee to chuſe wiſely, for thou art chuſing *for thyſelf*, and ſhalt have as thou chuſeſt. If we know and conſider *ourſelves*, what we are, what we are made for, how large onr Capacities are, and how long our Continuance, and that our *Souls* are *onr ſelves*, we ſhall ſee it a fooliſh thing to lay up our Treaſure on Earth.

Here's a good Reaſon given, why we ſhould not look upon any thing on Earth as our Treaſure, becuſe it is liable to Loſs and Decay, (1.) From Corruption within. What is treaſur'd up on Earth, *Moth* and *Ruſt do corrupt.* If the Treaſure be laid up in *Fine Clothes*, the *Moth* frets them, and they are gone and ſpoil'd inſenſibly, when we thought them moſt ſecurely laid up. If it be in *Corn*, or other Eatables, as his was who had his Barns full, *Luke* 12. 16, 17. *Ruſt* (ſo we read it) *corrupts that.* Βρῶσις, *Eating*, Eating by *Men*, for *as Goods are increaſed, they are increaſed that eat them*, Eccl. 5. 11. *Eating* by Mice, or other Vermine: *Manna* itſelf bred Worms; or, it grows mouldy, and muſty, is ſtruct, or ſmutted, or blaſted, Fruits ſoon rot: Or, if we underſtand it of *Silver* and *Gold*, that *tarniſheth* and *cankers*; it grows *leſs* with *uſing*, and grows *worſe* with *keeping*, Jam. 5. 2, 3. The *Ruſt* and the *Moth* breed in the Metal *itſelf*, and in the Garment *itſelf*. *Note*, Worldly Riches have in themſelves a Principle of Corruption and Decay. They wither of themſelves, and *make themſelves Wings.* (2.) From Violence without. *Thieves break thro' and Steal.* Every Hand of Violence will be aiming at the Houſe where the Treaſure is laid up; nor can any thing be laid up ſo ſafe, but we may be ſpoil'd of it. *Nunquam ego Fortunæ credidi, etiam ſi videretur Pacem agere, omnia illa quæ in me indulgentiſſime conferebat, Pecuniam, Honores, Gloriam, eo loco poſui, unde poſſet ea, ſine metu meo, repetere,* Senec. *Conſol. ad Helv.* 'Tis folly to make that our Treaſure which we may ſo eaſily be *rob'd of.*

(2.) Good Counſel, to make the Joys and Glories of the other World, thoſe *things not ſeen*, that are *eternal*, our beſt things, and to place our Happineſs in them. *Lay up for yourſelves Treaſures in Heaven. Note*, (1.) There are Treaſures in Heaven, as ſure as there are on this Earth, and thoſe in Heaven are the only true Treaſures; the Riches, and Glories, and Pleaſnres that are at God's Right-Hand, which thoſe that are *ſanctified truly* arrive at, when they come to be *ſanctified perfectly.* (2.) It is our Wiſdom to lay up our Treaſure in thoſe Treaſures, to give all Diligence to make ſure our Title to eternal Life thro' Jeſus Chriſt, and to depend upon that as our Happineſs, and look upon all things here below with a holy Contempt, as not worthy to be compar'd with it. We muſt firmly believe there is ſuch a Happineſs, and reſolve to be content with that, and to be content with nothing ſhort of it. If we thus make thoſe Treaſures ours, they are *laid up*, and we may truſt God to keep them ſafe for us; thither let us then refer all our Deſigns, and let out all our Deſires; thither let us ſend before our beſt Effects, and beſt Affections. Let us not Burthen ourſelves with the Caſh of this World, which will but load us and defile us, and be in danger to ſink us, but lay up in Store *good Securities.* The Promiſes are *Bills of Exchange*, by which all true Believers *return* their Treaſure to Heaven, *payable* in the future State. And thus we muſt make that ſure, that will be made ſure. (3.) It is a great Encouragement to us, to lay up our Treaſure in Heaven, that there it is *ſafe*; it will not decay of itſelf, no *Moth* or *Ruſt* will *corrupt* it, nor can we be by Force or Fraud depriv'd of it; *Thieves do not break through to ſteal.* It is a Happineſs above, and beyond the Changes and Chances of Time; an Inheritance incorruptible.

(3.) A good Reaſon why we ſhould thus chuſe, and an Evidence that we have done ſo, *v.* 21. *Where your Treaſure is*, on Earth, or in Heaven, *there will your Heart be.* We are therefore concern'd to be right and wiſe in the Choice of our Treaſure, becauſe the Temper of our Minds, and conſequently the Tenour of our Lives will be accordingly; either carnal or ſpiritual, earthly or heavenly. The Heart follows the Treaſure, as the Needle follows the Loadſtone, or the Sun-flower the Sun. Where the Treaſure is, there the Value and Eſteem is, there the Love and Affection is, *Col.* 3. 2. That way the Deſires and Purſuits go, thitherwards the Aims and Intents are levell'd, and all is done with that in View. Where the Treaſure is, there our Cares and Fears are, leſt we come ſhort of it; about that we are moſt ſollicitous: There our Hope and Truſt is, *Prov.* 18. 10, 11. There our Joys and Delights will be, *Pſal.* 119. 111. And there our Thoughts will be. There the inward Thought will be, the firſt Thought, the free Thought, the fixed Thought, the frequent, the familiar Thought. The Heart is God's due, *Prov.* 23. 26, and that he may have it, our Treaſure muſt be laid up with him, and then our Souls will be lifted up to him.

This Direction about laying up our Treaſure, may very fitly be applied to the foregoing Caution, of not doing what we do in Religion to be ſeen of Men. Our *Treaſure* is our *Alms*, *Prayers*, and *Faſtings*, and the *Reward* of them; if we have done theſe only to gain the Applauſe of Men, we have laid up this Treaſure on Earth, have lodg'd it in the Hands of Men, and muſt never expect to hear any further from it. Now it is folly to do this, for the Praiſe of Men we covet ſo much, is liable to Corruption; 'twill ſoon be *ruſty*, and *moth-eaten* and *tarniſh'd*. A little Folly, like a dead Fly, will ſpoil it all, *Eccl.* 10. 1. Slander and Calumny are Thieves, that break through and ſteal it away, and ſo we loſe all the *Treaſure* of our Performances; we have *run in vain*, and *labour'd in vain*, becauſe we miſplac'd our Intention in doing of them. Hypocritical Services *lay up* nothing in *Heaven*, Iſa. 58. 3. the Grain of them is gone, when the Soul is call'd for, *Job* 27. 8. But if we have prayed and faſted, and given Alms, in Truth and Uprightneſs with an Eye to God, and to his Acceptance, and have approved ourſelves *to him* therein, we have laid up that *Treaſure* in Heaven; a *Book of Remembrance* is *written* there, *Mal.* 3. 16. and being there recorded, they ſhall be there rewarded, and we ſhall meet them again with Comfort, on t'other ſide Death and the Grave. Hypocrites are *written in the Earth*, Jer. 17. 13. But God's faithful Ones have their Names *written in Heaven*, Luke 10. 20. Acceptance with God is Treaſure in Heaven, which can neither be *corrupted* nor *ſtollen*. His *Well-done* ſhall *ſtand for ever*; and if we have thus *laid up our Treaſure* with him, with him our Hearts will be; And where can they be better?

2. We muſt take heed of Hypocriſy and Worldly-mindedneſs, in chuſing the *End* we look at. Our Concern as to this, is repreſented by two Sorts of Eyes, which Men have; a *ſingle Eye*, and an *evil Eye*, v. 22. 23. The Expeſſions here are ſomewhat dark, becauſe conciſe, we ſhall therefore take them in ſome Variety of Interpretation. *The Light of the Body is the Eye*; that's plain: The Eye is diſcovering, and directing; The Light of the World would avail us little without this *Light of the Body.* 'Tis the *Light of the Eye* that *rejoyceth the Heart*, Prov. 15. 30. But what is that which is compared to the *Eye* in the Body.

(1.) *The Eye*, that is, the *Heart*; ſo ſome; if that be *ſingle*, ἁπλοῦς, *free*, and *bountiful*, ſo the Word is frequently render'd; as *Rom.* 12. 8. 2 *Cor.* 8. 2.—9. 11, 13. *Jam.* 1. 5. And we read of a *bountiful Eye*, Prov. 22. 9. If the Heart be *liberally affected*, and ſtands inclin'd to Goodneſs and Charity, it will direct a Man to Chriſtian Actions; the whole Converſation will be *full of Light*, full of the Evidences and Inſtances of true Chriſtianity, that *pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father*, Jam. 1. 27. full of Light, i. e. of good Works, which are our *Light ſhining before Men*. But if the Heart be *evil*, covetous, and hard, and envious, griping and grudging (ſuch a Temper of Mind is often expreſſed by an *evil Eye*, Mat. 20. 15. Mark 7. 22. Prov. 23. 6, 7.) the Body will pe *full of Darkneſs*, i. e. the whole Converſation will be Heatheniſh and Unchriſtian. *The Inſtruments of the Churl are*, and always will be *evil*, but the *Liberal deviſeth liberal things*, Iſa. 32. 5, 6, 7, 8. *If the Light that is in us*, i. e thoſe Affections which ſhould guide us to that which is good be *darkneſs*, if theſe be corrupt and worldly, if there be not ſo much as *good Nature* in a Man, not ſo much as a kind Diſpoſition, *how great* is the Corruption of the Man, and the Darkneſs in which he ſits! This Senſe ſeems to agree with the Context. We muſt lay up Treaſure in Heaven by Liberality in giving Alms, and that not grudgingly but with Chearfulneſs, *Luke* 12. 33. 2 *Cor.* 9. 7. But theſe Words in the parallel Place do not come in upon any ſuch Occaſion, *Luke* 11. 34 and therefote the Coherence here doth not determine that to be the Senſe of them.

(2.) *The Eye*, that is, the *Underſtanding*; ſo ſome. The Practical Judgment, the Conſience, which is to the other Faculties of the Soul, as the Eye is to the Body, to guide and direct their Motions; Now *if this Eye be ſingle*, i. e. if it make a true and right Judgment and diſcern things that differ, eſpecially in the great Concern of *laying up the Treaſures*, ſo as to chuſe aright in that, it will rightly guide the Affections and Actions, which will all be *full of* the *Light* of Grace and Comfort. But if this be *evil* and *corrupt*, and inſtead of leading the inferiour Powers, is led, and brib'd, and byaſs'd by them, if this be erroneous and miſinform'd, the Heart and Life muſt needs be *full of Darkneſs*, and the whole Converſation corrupt and naught. They that *will not underſtand* are ſaid to *walk on in Darkneſs*, Pſal. 82. 5. 'Tis ſad when the Spirit of a Man, that ſhould be the Candle of the Lord, is an *Ignis Fatuus*; when *the Leaders of the People*, the *Leaders of the* Faculties *cauſe them to err*, for then they *that are led of them are deſtroy'd*, Iſa. 9. 16. An Error in the Practical Judgment is fatal, 'tis that which calls *evil*, *good*, and *good*, *evil*, Iſa, 5. 20. Therefore it concerns us to underſtand things aright, to get our Eyes anointed with Eye-ſalve.

(3.) *The Eye*, that is, the *Arms* and *Intentions*. By the Eye we ſet our End before us, the Mark we ſhoot at, the Place we go to, keep that in view, and direct our Motion accordingly. In every thing we do in Religion there is ſomething or other that we have *in our Eye*; now, if our *Eye* be *ſingle*, that is, if we aim honeſtly, fix right Ends to ourſelves, and move rightly towards them; if we aim purely and only at the Glory of God, ſeek his Honour and Favour, and direct all entirely to him, then the *Eye* is *ſingle*. *Paul*'s was ſo when he ſaid, *to me to live is Chriſt*: and if we be right here, the *whole Body will be full of Light*, all the Actions will be regular and gracious, pleaſing to God, and comfortable to ourſelves. But if this *Eye be evil*, if inſtead of aiming only at the Glory of God, and our Acceptance with him, we look aſquint at the Applauſe of Men, and while we profeſs to honour God, contrive to honour ourſelves, and ſeek our own things under Colour of ſeeking the things of Chriſt: this ſpoils all, the whole Converſation will be perverſe and unſteady, and the Foundations being thus out of courſe, there can be nothing but *Confuſion*, and *every evil work*, in the Superſtructure. Draw the Lines from the Circumference to any other point but the Centre, and they will croſs. If the Light that is in thee be not only *dim*, but *Darkneſs* itſelf, it is a fundamental Error, and deſtructive to all that follows. The End ſpecifies the Action. 'Tis of the laſt Importance in Religion, that we be right in our aims, and make *eternal things*, not *temporal*, our Scope, 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. The Hypocrite is like the Waterman, that looks one Way and rows another; the true Chriſtian is like the Traveller, that has his Journey's End in his Eye. The Hypocrite *ſoars* like the *Kite*, with his Eye upon the Prey below, which he is ready to come down to, when he has a fair Opportunity; the true Chriſtian *ſoars* like the *Lark*, higher and higher, forgetting the things that are beneath.

3. We muſt take heed of Hypocriſy and Worldly-mindedneſs in chuſing the *Maſter we ſerve*, v. 24. *No Man can ſerve two Maſters*. Serving two Maſters is contrary to the *ſingle Eye*; for the Eye will be to the Maſter's Hand, *Pſal.* 123. 1, 2. Our Lord Jeſus doth here obviate the Cheat which thoſe put upon their own Souls, who think to divide between God and the World, to have a Treaſure *on Earth*, and a Treaſure in *Heaven* too; pleaſe God and pleaſe Men too: why not? ſaith the Hypocrite, 'Tis good to have two ſtrings to ones Bow. They hope to make their Religion ſerve their ſecular Intereſt, and ſo 'twill turn to account both ways. The pretending Mother was for dividing the Child: The *Samaritans* will compound between God and Idols: No, ſaith Chriſt, this will not do. It is but a *Suppoſition* that *Gain* is *Godlineſs*, 1 Tim. 6. 5. Here is,

1. A general Maxim laid down; 'tis likely 'twas a Proverb among the *Jews*, *no Man can ſerve two Maſters*, much leſs two Gods; for their Commands will ſometime or other croſs and contradict one another, and their Occaſions interfere: while two Maſters go together, a Servant may follow them both, but when they part, you'll ſee to which he belongs; he cannot love and obſerve and cleave to both as he ſhould: If to the one, not to the other; either this or that muſt be comparatively hated, and deſpis'd. This Truth is plain enough in common Caſes.

2. The Application of it to the Buſineſs in Hand. *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon*. *Mammon* is a *Syriack* Word that ſignifies *Gain*; ſo that whatever it is in this World, that is, or, that we account to be *Gain to us* (as St. *Paul*. ſpeaks, *Phil.* 3. 7.) that's *Mammon*; *whatever is in the World, the Luſt of the Fleſh, the Luſt of the Eye, and the Pride of Life*, it is *Mammon*. To ſome their Belly is their *Mammon*, and they ſerve that, *Phil.* 3. 19. To others their Eaſe, their Sleep, their Sports, and Paſtimes are their Mammon, *Prov.* 6. 9, To others Worldly Riches, *Jam.* 4. 13. To others Honours and Perferments, the Praiſe and Applauſe of Men was the Phariſees *Mammon*; in a Word, *Self*, the Unity in which the World's Trinity centers, ſenſual, ſecular Self is the *Mammon* which cannot be ſerv'd in *Conjunction* with God, for if it be ſerv'd, 'tis in *Competition* with him, and in *Contradiction* to him. He doth not ſay, we *muſt not*, or we *ſhould not*, but we *cannot* ſerve God and *Mammon*, we cannot *love both*, 1 John 2. 15. Jam. 4. 4. or *hold to* both, or hold by both, in Obſervance, Obedience, Attendance, Truſt and Dependance, for they are contrary the one to the other. God ſaith, *My Son, give me thy Heart*. *Mammon* ſaith, no, give it me. God ſaith, *be content with ſuch things as you have*: Mammon ſaith, Graſp at all that ever thou canſt, *Rem, Rem, quocunq; modo Rem*. God ſaith, Defraud not, never tell a Lye, be honeſt and juſt in all thy Dealings; Mammon ſaith, Cheat thy own Father, if thou canſt get by it. God ſaith, be charitable; *Mammon* ſaith, Hold thy own, this Giving undoes us all. God ſaith, *Be careful for nothing*; Mammon ſaith, Be careful for every thing, God ſaith, *Keep holy the Sabbath-Day*; Mammon ſaith, Make uſe of that Day, as well as any other for the World. Thus inconſiſtent are the Commands of God, and *Mammon*, ſo that we cannot ſerve both. Let us not then *halt between God and Baal*, but *chuſe you this Day whom ye will ſerve*, and abide by your Choice,

25 Therefore I ſay unto you, take no thought
for your life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink;
nor yet for your body, what you ſhall put on; is not
the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they ſow not,
neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your
heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? 27 Which of you by taking thought
can add one cubit unto his ſtature? 28 And why take
ye thought for raiment? Conſider the lilies of the field,
how they grow; they toil not, neither do they ſpin.
29 And yet I ſay unto you, that even Solomon in all
his glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe. 30 Wherefore if God ſo clothe the graſs of the field, which to
day is, and to morrow is caſt into the oven, *ſhall be* not
much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? 31 Therefore take no thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat? or
what ſhall we drink? or wherewithal ſhall we be clothed? 32 (For after all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek)
for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of
all theſe things. 33 But ſeek ye firſt he kingdom of
God, and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall
be added unto you. 34 Take therefore no thought for
the morrow: for the morrow ſhall take thought for
the things of it ſelf: ſufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

There is ſcarce any one Sin that our Lord Jeſus doth more largely and earneſtly warn his Diſciples of, nor with more Variety of Arguments arm them againſt, than here the Sin of diſquieting, diſtracting, diſturſtful Cares about the things of this Life, which are a bad Sign that both the Treaſure and the Heart are on the Earth; and therefore he thus largely inſiſts upon it. Here's

1. The Prohibition laid down. 'Tis the Counſel and Command of the Lord Jeſus, That we take no Thought about the Things of this World. *I ſay unto you*. He ſaith it as our *Lawgiver*, and the Sovereign of our Hearts; He ſaith it as our *Comforter*, and the Helper of our Joy. What is it that he ſaith? 'tis this, and he that hath Ears to hear, let him hear it; *Take no Thought for your Life, nor yet for your Bodies*, v. 25. *Take no Thought, ſaying, What ſhall we eat*; v. 31. and again, v. 34. *Take no Thought*, μὴ μεριμνᾶτε, *Be not in Care*. As againſt Hypocriſy, ſo againſt worldly Cares, the Caution is thrice repeated, and yet no vain *Repetition*. Precept muſt be upon Precept, and Line upon Line to the ſame Purpoſe, and all little enough, it is a Sin which doth ſo *eaſily beſet us*. It intimates, how pleaſing it is to Chriſt, and of how much Concern it is to ourſelves that we ſhould live *without Carefulneſs*. It is the repeated Command of the Lord Jeſus to his Diſciples, that they ſhould not *divide*, and *pull in pieces* their own Minds, with Care about the World. There is a *Thought* concerning the things of this Life, which is not only Lawful, but Duty, ſuch as is commended in the virtuous Woman, *Prov.* 27 23. The Word is us'd concerning *Paul's Care* of the Churches, and *Timothy*'s Care for the State of Souls, 2 *Cor.* 11. 28. *Phil.* 2. 20.

But the Care here forbidden is (1.) a *diſquieting, tormenting* Care, which hurries the Mind hither and thither, and hangs it in Suſpenſe, which diſturbs our Joy in God, and is a Damp upon our Hope in him; which breaks the Sleep, and hinders our Enjoyment of ourſelves, of our Friends, and of what God has given us. (2.) A *diſtruſtful* unbelieving Thought. God has promiſed to provide for thoſe that are his all things needful for *Life*, as well as *Godlineſs*, the Life *that now is*, *Food* and a *Covering*, not Dainties, but Neceſſaries. He never ſaid, they ſhall be *feaſted*, but verily they ſhall be *fed*; Now an inordinate Care for time to come, and Fear of wanting thoſe Supplies, ſprings from a Diſbelief of theſe Promiſes, and of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Divine Providence, and that's the Evil of it. For *preſent* Suſtenance we may and muſt uſe lawful means to get it, elſe we tempt God; muſt be diligent in our Callings, and prudent in proportioning our Expences to what we have, and pray for daily Bread; And if all other Means fail we may and muſt aſk Relief of thoſe that are able to give; he was none of the beſt Men that ſaid, *To beg I am aſhamed*, Luke 16. 3. as he was who v. 21. *deſired to be fed with the Crumbs*; but for the *future* we muſt *caſt our Care upon God*, and *take no thought*, becauſe it looks like a Jealouſy of God, who knows how to *give* what we want, when we know not how to *get* it. Let our Souls dwell at eaſe in him. This gracious Careleſſneſs is the ſame with that *Sleep*, which God gives to his *Beloved*, in Oppoſition to the Worldling's Toil, *Pſal.* 127. 2. Obſerve the Cautions here,

1. *Take no Thought for your Life.* Life is our greateſt Concern for this World, *all a Man has will he give for his Life*; yet take no Thought about it. (1.) Not about the Continuance of it; refer it to God, to *lengthen* or *ſhorten it*, as he pleaſes; *My times are in thy Hand*, and they are in a good Hand. (2.) Not about the *Comforts* of this Life; refer it to God, to *embittter* or *ſweeten* it, as he pleaſes. We muſt not be ſollicitous, no not about the neceſſary ſupports of this Life, *Food and Raiment*; theſe God has promis'd, and therefore we may more confidently expect; ſay not, *What ſhall we eat*? 'Tis the Language of one at a Loſs and almoſt deſpairing; whereas though many good People have the Proſpect of little, yet few but have preſent Support.

2. *Take no Thought fot the Morrow*; i. e. for the time to come. Be not ſollicitous for hereafter, how you ſhall live next Year, or when you are old, or what you ſhall leave behind you: As we muſt not *boaſt of to Morrow*; ſo we muſt not *care for to morrow*, or the Events of it.

2. The Reaſons and Arguments to enforce this Prohibition. One would think the Command of Chriſt was enough to reſtrain us from this fooliſh Sin of diſquieting diſtruſtful Care, beſides the Comfort of our own Souls ſo nearly concern'd; but to ſhew how much the Heart of Chriſt is upon it, and what *pleaſure he takes* in thoſe that *hope in his Mercy*, the Command is back'd with the moſt powerful Arguments that can be. If Reaſon may but rule us, ſurely we ſhall eaſe our ſelves of theſe Thorns. To free us from *caring* Thoughts, and to expel them, Chriſt here ſuggeſts to us *comforting* Thoughts, that we may be fill'd with them. 'Twill be worth while to take Pains with our own Hearts, to argue them out of their diſquieting Cares, and to make ourſelves aſhamed of them. They may be weakened by *right Reaſon*, but 'tis by an active Faith only, that they muſt be *overcome*. Conſider then,

1. *Is not the Life more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment*? v. 25. Yes, no doubt it is, ſo he ſaith, who had Reaſon to underſtand the true Value of preſent Things, for he made them, he ſupports them, and ſupports us by them; and the thing ſpeaks itſelf. *Note*, 1. Our Life is a greater Bleſſing than our Livelihood. 'Tis true, Life cannot ſubſiſt without a Livelihood; but the Meat and Raiment which are here poſtpon'd to the Life and Body, is ſuch as is for Ornament and Delight; for about ſuch we are apt to be ſollicitous. *Meat* and *Raiment* are in Order to Life, and the *End* is more noble and excellent than the Means. The Daintieſt Food and fineſt Raiment are from the Earth, but Life from the *Breath of God*. Life is the *Light of Men*, Meat is but the Oyl that feeds that Light; ſo that the difference between Rich and Poor is very inconſiderable, ſince in the greateſt things they ſtand on the ſame level, and differ only in the leſſer. 2. This is an Encouragement to us to truſt God for *Food* and *Raiment*, and ſo to eaſe ourſelves of all perplexing Cares about them. God has given us *Life*, and given us the *Body*; 'twas an Act of Power, 'twas an Act of Favour, 'twas done without our Care: What cannot he do for us, who did that? What will he not? If we take Care about our Souls and Eternity, which are more than the *Body* and its Life, we may leave it to God to provide for us Food and Raiment, which are leſs. God has *maintained* our Lives hitherto, if ſometimes with Pulſe and Water, that has anſwer'd the End; he hath *protected us*, and kept us alive: He that guards us againſt the *Evils* we are expos'd to, will ſupply us with the *good things* we are in need of. If he had been pleaſed to kill us, to ſtarve us, he would not ſo often have *given his Angels a Charge concerning us*, to keep us.

2. *Behold the Fowls of the Air, and conſider the Lillies of the Field.* Here's an Argument taken from God's common Providence towards the Inferior Creatures, and their Dependance according to their Capacities upon that Providence. A fine paſs fallen Man is is come to, that he muſt be ſet to School to the *Fowls of the Air, and they muſt teach him*, Job. 12. 6, 8.

1. Look upon the *Fowls*, and learn to truſt God for *Food*, (v. 26.) and diſquiet not yourſelves with Thoughts, *what you ſhall eat*. (1.) Obſerve the Providence of God concerning them. Look upon them and receive Inſtruction. There are *various* Sorts of Fowls, they are *numerous*, ſome of them *ravenous*, but they are all *fed*, and fed with *Food convenient* for them; 'tis rare that any of them periſh for Want of Food, even in Winter, and there goes no little to feed them all the Year round. The Fowls as they are leaſt ſerviceable to Man, ſo they are leaſt within his Care; Men often feed upon them, but ſeldom feed them; yet they are fed, we know not how, and ſome of them fed fatteſt in the hardeſt Weather: And it is *your heavenly Father that feeds them*; he *knows all the wild Fowls of the Mountains*, better than you know the Tame Ones at your own Barn-door, *Pſal.* 50. 11. Not a Sparrow lights to the Cround to pick up a Grain of Corn, but by the Providence of God, which extends itſelf to the meaneſt Creatures. But that which is eſpecially obſerv'd here is, that they are fed without any Care or Project of their own; *They ſow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into Barns.* The Ant indeed doth, and the Bee, and they are ſet before us as Examples of Prudence and Induſtry; but the Fowls of the Air do not, they make no Proviſion for the future themſelves, and yet every day, as duly as the day comes, Proviſion is made for them; and their *Eyes wait on God*, that great and good Houſe-keeper, that *provides Food for all Fleſh*.

(2.) Improve this for your Encouragement to truſt in God. *Are ye not much better than they*? Yes certainly you are. *Note*, The *Heirs of Heaven* are much better than the *Fowls of Heaven*; nobler and more excellent Beings, and by Faith ſoar higher; of a better Nature and Nurture, *wiſer than the Fowls of Heaven*, Job 35. 11. though the Children of this World, that *know not the Judgment of the Lord*, are not ſo wiſe as *the Stork, and the Crane, and the Swallow*, Jer. 8. 7. you are dearer to God, and nearer, though they fly in the open Firmament of Heaven. He is their Maker and Lord, their Owner and Maſter, but beſides all this, he is your Father, and in his Account *ye are of more Value than many Sparrows*; you are his Children, his Firſt-born; now he that feeds his Birds, ſurely will not ſtarve his Babes. They truſt your Father's Providence, and will not you truſt it? In Dependance upon that, they are careleſs for the morrow, and being ſo, they live the merrieſt Lives of all Creatures, they *ſing among the Branches*, Pſal. 104. 12. and to the beſt of their Power, they praiſe their Creator. If we were by Faith as unconcern'd about the morrow as they are, we ſhould ſing as chearfully as they do; for 'tis worldly Care that marrs our Mirth, and damps our Joy, and ſilenceth our Praiſe as much as any thing.

2. Look upon the *Lillies*, and learn to truſt God for *Raiment*: That's another Part of our Care, *what we ſhall put on*; for Decency, to cover our Nakedneſs; for Defence, to keep us warm; yea, and with many for Dignity and Ornament, to make them look *great* and *fine*; and ſo much concern'd are they for Gaiety and Variety in their Cloathng, that this Care returns almoſt as often as that for their daily bread. Now to eaſe us of this Care, let us *conſider the Lillies of the Field*; not only *look* upon them, every Eye doth that with Pleaſure, but *conſider* them. *Note*, There is a great deal of Good to be learn'd from what we ſee every Day, if we would but conſider it, *Prov.* 6. 6.—24. 32.

(1.) Conſider how *frail* the Lillies are; they are the *Graſs of the Field*. Lillies though diſtinguiſh'd by their Colours, yet ſtill are but *Graſs*. Thus all *Fleſh is Graſs*, though ſome in the Endowments of Body and Mind are as *Lillies*, much admir'd, yet ſtill they are *Graſs*; the Graſs of the Field, in Nature and Conſtitution; they ſtand upon the ſame level with others. Man's Days at beſt are *as Graſs*, as the *Flower of the Graſs*, 1 Pet. 1. 24. This Graſs *to Day is, and to morrow is caſt into the Oven*; in a little while, the Place that *knows us, will know us no more*. The Grave is the Oven into which we ſhall be caſt, and in which we ſhall be conſumed, as Graſs in the Fire, *Pſal.* 49. 14. This intimates a Reaſon, why we ſhould not take Thought for the Morrow, what we ſhall put on, becauſe perhaps by to Morrow we may have occaſion for our Grave-clothes.

(2.) Conſider how *free from Care* the Lillies are: They *toil not* as Men do to earn Clothing, as Servants to earn their Liveries, *neither do they ſpin*, as Women do, to make Clothing: It doth not therefore follow, that we muſt therefore neglect, or do careleſly the proper Buſineſs of this Life, 'tis the Praiſe of the virtuous Woman, that *ſhe lays her Hand to the Spindle, makes fine Linnen, and ſells it*, Prov. 31. 19, 24. Idleneſs *tempts* God, inſtead of truſting him, but he that provides for the inferior Creatures without their Labour, much more will provide for us, by bleſſing our Labour, which he has made our Duty. And if we ſhould by Sickneſs be diſabled to *toil* and *ſpin*, God can furniſh us with what is neceſſary for us.

(3.) Conſider how *fair*, how *fine* the Lillies are. *How they grow.* What they *grow from*. The Root of the Lilly, or Tulip, as other bulbous Roots, is in the Winter loſt and buried under Ground, yet when Spring returns, it appears and ſtarts up in a little time; hence 'tis promis'd to God's *Iſrael*, they ſhall grow as the Lilly, *Hoſ.* 14. 5. Conſider what they *grow to*. Out of that Obſcurity in a few Weeks, they come to be ſo very gay, that even *Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayad like one of theſe*. The Array of *Solomon* was very ſplendid and magnificent; he that had the peculiar Treaſure of Kings and Provinces, and ſo ſtudiouſly affected Pomp and Gallantry, doubtleſs had the richeſt Clothing, and the beſt made up that could be got; eſpecially when he appear'd in his Glory on High Days: And yet let him dreſs himſelf as fine as he could, he comes far ſhort of the Beauty of the Lillies, and a Bed of Tulips outſhines him. Let us therefore be more ambitious of the Wiſdom of *Solomon*, in which he was *outdone by none*, Wiſdom to do our Duty in our Places, rather than the *Glory of Solomon*, in which he was outdone by the Lillies. Knowledge and Grace are the Perfections of Man, not Beauty, much leſs fine Clothes. Now *God* is here ſaid thus to *clothe the Graſs of the Field. Note,* All the Excellencies of the Creature flow from God, the Fountain and Spring of them. 'Twas he that gave the Horſe his Strength, and the Lilly its Beauty; every Creature is *in it ſelf*, as well as *to us*, what he makes it to be.

(4.) Conſider how inſtructive all this is to us, *v.* 30.

1. As to *fine* Clothing, this teaches us not to care for it at all, not to covet it, not to be proud of it, not to make the *putting on of Apparel our Adorning*, for after all our Care in this, the Lillies will far out-do us; we cannot dreſs ſo fine as they do, why then ſhould we go about to vie with them? their Adorning will ſoon periſh, and ſo will ours; they fade, *are to day*, and to *morrow are caſt*, as other Rubbiſh, *into the Oven*; and the Clothes we are proud of are fading, the Gloſs is ſoon gone, the Colour ſheds, the ſhape goes out of Faſhion, or in a while the Garment itſelf is worn out; ſuch is Man in all his Pomp, *Iſa.* 40. 6, 7. eſpecially *rich Men*, Jam. 1. 10. they *fade away in their Ways.*

2. As to *neceſſary* Clothing, this teacheth us to caſt the Care of it upon God; *Jehovah jireh*, truſt him that clothes the Lillies to provide for you what you ſhall *put on*. If he gives ſuch *fine* Clothes to the Graſs, much more will he give *fitting* Clothes to his own Children; Clothes, that ſhall *be warm upon them*, not only when he quieteth the Earth with the *South wind*, but when he diſquiets it with the *North-wind*, Job. 37. 17. He ſhall much more Clothe you; for you are nobler Creatures, of a more excellent Being; if ſo he clothe the *ſhort-liv'd* Graſs, *much more* will he Clothe you that are made for Immortality. Even the Children of *Nineveh* were prefer'd before the Gourd, *Jonah* 4. 10, 11. much more the Sons of *Zion*, that are in Covenant with God. Obſerve the Title he gives them, *v.* 30. *O ye of little Faith.* This may be taken (1.) as an Encouragement to *true* Faith, tho' it be but *weak*, it intitles us to the Divine Care, and the Promiſe of ſuitable Supply. *Great Faith* ſhall be commended, and fetch in great things, but little faith ſhall not be rejected, even that ſhall fetch in Food and Raiment. *Sound* Believers ſhall be provided for, tho' they be not ſtrong Believers. The Babes in the Family are Fed and Cloth'd as well as thoſe that are grown up, and with a ſpecial Care and Tenderneſs; ſay not I am but a Child, but a dry Tree, *Iſa.* 56. 3, 5. for tho' *Poor and Needy*, yet *the Lord thinketh on thee.* Or, (2.) It is rather a Rebuke to *weak Faith*, tho' it be true, *Mat.* 14. 31. And it intimates what's at the bottom of all our inordinate Care and Thoughtfulneſs, 'tis owing to the Weakneſs of our Faith, and the Remainders of Unbelief in us. If we had but more Faith, we ſhould have leſs Care.

3. *Which of you*, the wiſeſt, the ſtrongeſt of you, *by taking thought can add one Cubit to his Stature?* v. 27. to *his Age*; ſo ſome. But the meaſure of a Cubit ſpeaks it to be meant of the *Stature*; and the Age at longeſt is but a Span, *Pſal.* 39. 5. Let us conſider, (1.) We did not arrive to the Stature we are of by our own Care and Thought, but by the Providence of God. An Infant of a *Span long*, is grown up to be a Man of *ſix Foot*, and how was one Cubit after another added to his Stature? not by his own Forecaſt, or Contrivance, he grew, he knew not how, by the Power and Goodneſs of God: Now he that made our Bodies, and made them of ſuch a ſize, ſurely will take care to provide for them. *Note*, God is to be acknowledg'd in the increaſe of our Bodily Strength and Stature, and to be truſted for all needful Supplies, becauſe he has made it to appear that he is *for the Body.* The *growing* Age is the Thoughtleſs, Careleſs Age. yet we *grow*; and ſhall not he who *rear'd* us to this, provide for us now we are *rear'd*? (2.) We cannot alter the Stature we are of, if we would never ſo fain; what a fooliſh and ridiculous thing would it be for a Man of low Stature to perplex himſelf, to break his Sleep, and beat his brains about it, and to be continually taking thought how he might be a Cubit higher; when after all he knows he cannot effect it, and therefore he had better be content, and take it as it is. We are not all of a ſize, yet the difference in Stature between one another is not material, nor of any great account; a little Man is ready to wiſh he were as tall as ſuch a one, but he knows 'tis to no purpoſe, and therefore doth as well as he can with it. Now as we do in reference to our *bodily Stature*, ſo we ſhould do in reference to our *worldly Eſtate.* (1.) We ſhould not covet an Abundance of the Wealth of this World, no more than we would covet the Addition of a Cubit to one's Stature, which is a great deal in a Man's Height; 'tis enough to grow by Inches; ſuch an Addition would but make one unweildy and a Burthen to ones ſelf. (2.) We muſt reconcile our ſelves to our *State*, as we do to our *Stature*, ſet the Conveniencies againſt the Inconveniences, and ſo make a Virtue of Neceſſity; what cannot be *remedy'd*, muſt be *made the beſt of.* We cannot alter the Diſpoſals of Providence, and therefore muſt acquieſce in them, accommodate our ſelves to them, and relieve our ſelves as well as we can againſt Inconveniencies, as *Zacheus* againſt the Inconvenience of his Stature, by climbing into the Tree.

4. *After all theſe things do the Gentiles ſeek*, v, 32. Thoughtfulneſs about the World is a *Heatheniſh* Sin, and unbecoming Chriſtians. The *Gentiles* ſeek *theſe things*, becauſe they know not *better things*; are eager for this World, becauſe they are ſtrangers to a better; they ſeek theſe things *with Care* and *Anxiety*, becauſe they are *without God in the World*, and underſtand not his Providence. They *fear* and *worſhip* their Idols, but know not how to *truſt* them for Deliverance and Supply, and therefore are themſelves full of Care; but it is a ſhame for Chriſtians that build upon nobler Principles, and profeſs a Religion which teacheth them, not only that there is a *Providence*, but that there are Promiſes made to the Good of the Life that now is, which teacheth them a Confidence in God, and a Contempt of the World, and gives ſuch Reaſons for both, it is a ſhame for them to walk as other *Gentiles* walk, and to fill their Heads and Hearts with theſe things.

5. *Your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all theſe things*; theſe neceſſary things, Food and Raiment, knows our Wants better than we do our ſelves; tho' he be in Heaven, and his Children on Earth, he obſerves what the leaſt and pooreſt of them has occaſion for, *Rev.* 2. 2. *I know thy Poverty.* You think if ſuch a good Friend did but know your Wants and Straits, you ſhould ſoon have Relief, your God knows them; and he is *your Father* that loves you and pities you, and is ready to help you; your *heavenly* Father, that has wherewithal to ſupply all your Needs. Therefore away with all diſquieting Thoughts and Cares, go to thy Father, tell him, he *knows thou haſt need of ſuch and ſuch things*; he aſks you, *Children, have you any Meat?* John 21. 5. Tell him whether you have or no. Tho' he knows our Wants, he will know them from us; and when we have open'd them to him, let us chearfully refer our ſelves to his Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs for our Supply. Therefore we ſhould eaſe our ſelves of the Burthen of Care, by caſting it upon God, becauſe it is he *that careth for us*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. and what needs all this ado? If he care, why ſhould we care.?

6. *Seek firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you*, v. 33. Here is a double Argument againſt the Sin of *Thoughtfulneſs*; take no thought for your Life, the Life of the Body, for, (1.) you have *greater* and *better* things to *take thought* about; the Life of your Soul, your Eternal Happineſs, that's the *one thing needful*, Luke 10. 42. about which you ſhould employ your Thoughts, and which is commonly neglected in thoſe Hearts wherein worldly Cares have the Aſcendant. If we were but more careful to pleaſe God, and to work out our own Salvation, we ſhould be leſs ſollicitous to pleaſe ourſelves, and work out an Eſtate in the World. Thoughtfulneſs for our Souls is the moſt effectual Cure of Thoughtfulneſs for the World. (2.) You have a ſurer, an eaſier, a ſafer, and a more compendious way to obtain the Neceſſaries of this Life, than by carking and caring, and fretting about them; and that is by *ſeeking firſt the Kingdom of God*, and making Religion your Buſineſs: ſay not that's the way to ſtarve, no, that's the way to be well provided for, even in this World. Obſerve here,

1. The great Duty requir'd; 'tis the Sum and Subſtance of our whole Duty. *Seek firſt the Kingdom of God*, i. e. mind Religion as your great and Principal Concern; our Duty is to *ſeek*, i. e. to deſire, purſue, and aim at theſe things: 'Tis a Word that has in it much of the Conſtitution of the new Covenant in favour of us; tho' we have not *attained*, but in many things fail and come ſhort, ſincere *ſeeking* is accepted, i. e. a careful Concern, and an earneſt endeavour. Now obſerve, (1.) the *Object* of this ſeeking. *The Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs*; i. e. we muſt mind *Heaven* as our *End*, and *Holineſs* as our *Way*. Seek the Comforts of the Kingdom of Grace and Glory as your Felicity; aim at the *Kingdom of Heaven*, preſs towards it, give diligence to make it ſure, reſolve not to take up ſhort of it; ſeek for this Glory, Honour, and Immortality; prefer Heaven, and Heavenly Bleſſings far before Earth, and Earthly Delights. We make nothing of our Religion, if we do not make Heaven of it. And with the *Happineſs* of this Kingdom ſeek the *Righteouſneſs* of it; *God's Righteouſneſs*, the Righteouſneſs which he requires to be wrought in us, and wrought by us, ſuch as exceeds that of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; we muſt follow *Peace and Holineſs*, Heb. 12. 14. (2.) The *Order* of it. *Seek firſt the Kingdom of God.* Let your Care for your Souls, and another World, take place of all other Cares: And let all the Concerns of this Life be made to truckle to thoſe of the Life to come; we muſt ſeek the Things of Chriſt more than our own Things; and if ever they come in competition, we muſt remember which we are to give the Preference to. Seek theſe things *firſt*; firſt in thy Days, let the Morning of Youth be dedicated to God. Wiſdom, muſt be ſought early; 'tis good beginning *betimes* to be *Religious*. Seek this firſt *every Day*; let waking Thoughts be of God. Let this be our Principle to do that firſt, which is moſt needful, and let him that is the firſt have the firſt.

2. The gracious Promiſe annexed is, that then *all theſe things*, the neceſſary Supports of Life, *ſhall be added unto you*; ſhall be *given over and above*; ſo 'tis in the Margin. You ſhall have what you ſeek, the *Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs*, for never any ſought *in vain*, that ſought *in earneſt*; and beſides that, you ſhall have Food and Raiment by way of Overplus, as he that buys Goods hath Paper and Packthread given him over and above into the Bargain. *Godlineſs has the Promiſe of the Life that now is*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. *Solomon* aſk'd *Wiſdom*, and had that and other things added to him, 2. *Chr.* 1. 11, 12. O what a bleſſed Change would it make in our Hearts and Lives, did we but firmly believe this Truth, that the beſt way to be comfortably provided for in this World, is to be moſt intent upon another World. We then begin at the right end of our Work, when we begin with God. If we give diligence to make ſure to ourſelves the Kingdom of God, and the Righteouſneſs thereof as to all the things of this Life, *Jehovah-jireh*, the Lord will provide as much of them as he ſee good for us, and more we would not wiſh for. Have we truſted him for the *Portion of our Inheritance* at our End, and ſhall we not truſt him for the *Portion of our Cup* in the way to it? God's *Iſrael* were not only brought to *Canaan* at laſt, but had their *Charges*

born through the Wilderneſs. O that we were more thoughtful about the things that are not ſeen that are Eternal, and then the leſs Thoughtful we ſhall be, and the leſs Thoughtful we ſhall need to be about the things that are ſeen that are Temporal. *Alſo regard not your ſtuff*, Gen. 45. 20, 23.

7. *The Morrow ſhall take thought for the things of itſelf*; *ſufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof*, v. 34. We muſt not perplex our ſelves inordinately about future Events, becauſe every Day brings along with it its own *Burthen* of *Cares* and *Grievances*, as if we look about us, and ſuffer not our Fears to betray the Succours which Grace and Reaſon offer, it brings along with it its own *Strength* and *Supply* too. So that we are here told,

1. That *Thoughtfulneſs* for the Morrow is *needleſs*. *Let the Morrow take thought for the things of itſelf*. If Wants and Troubles be renew'd with the Day, there are Aids and Proviſions renew'd likewiſe; *Compaſſions*, that are *new every Morning*, Lam. 3. 22. The Saints have a Friend that is *their Arm every Morning*, and gives out freſh Supply daily, *Iſa*. 33. 2. according *as the Buſineſs of every Day requires*, Ezra 3. 4. And ſo he keeps his People in a conſtant dependance on him. Let us refer it therefore to the Morrow's *Strength* to do the Morrow's *Work*, and bear the Morrow's *Burthen*. To morrow, and the things of it will be provided for without us; what need we thus anxiouſly care for that which is ſo wiſely car'd for already. This doth not forbid a *prudent Foreſight*, and *Preparation* accordingly, but a *perplexing Sollicitude*, and a Prepoſſeſſion of Difficulties and Calamities which may perhaps never come, or if they do, may be eaſily born, and the Evil of them guarded againſt. The meaning is, Let us *mind preſent Duty*, and then *leave Events to God*; do the *Work of the Day in its Day*, and then let *to Morrow bring along with it*.

2. That Thoughtfulneſs for the Morrow, as one of thoſe *fooliſh* and *hurtful Luſts*, which they that *will be Rich* fall into, and one of the *many Sorrows* wherewith they *pierce themſelves through*. *Sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof*. This preſent Day has Trouble enough attending it, we need not *accumulate* Burthens by *anticipating* out Cumber, nor borrow Perplexities from to Morrow's Evils to add to thoſe of this Day. 'Tis uncertain what to Morrow's Evils may be, but whatever they be, 'tis time enough to take thought about them when they come. What a Folly is it to take that Trouble upon our ſelves, *this Day*, by *Care* and *Fear*, which belongs to *another Day*, and will be never the Lighter when it comes. Let us not pull that upon ourſelves altogether *at once*, which Providence hath wiſely order'd to be born by *Parcels*. The Concluſion of this whole Matter then is, That it is the Will and Command of the Lord Jeſus, that his Diſciples ſhould not be *their own Tormentors*, nor make their Paſſage thro' this World, more dark and unpleaſant by their Apprehenſions of Troubles than God has made it by the Troubles themſelves. By our daily Prayers we may fetch in Strength to bear us up under our daily Troubles, and to arm us againſt the Temptations that attend them, and then let none of theſe things move us.

CHAP. VII.

This Chapter continues and concludes Chriſt's Sermons on the Mount; which is purely Practical, *directing us to order our Converſation aright, both towards God, and Man; for the Deſign of the Chriſtian Religion is to make Men Good, every Way Good. We have* (1.) *ſome Rules concerning Cenſure and Reproof*, v. 1.—6. (2.) *Encouragements given us to Pray to God for what we need*, v. 7.—11. (3.) *The Neceſſity of Strictneſs in Converſation urg'd upon us*, v. 13, 14. (4.) *A Caution given us to take heed of falſe Prophets*, v. 13.—20. (5.) *The Concluſion of the whole Sermon, ſhewing the Neceſſity of univerſal Obedience to Chriſt's Commands, without which we cannot expect to be happy*, v. 21.—27. (6.) *The Impreſſion which Chriſt's Doctrine made upon his Hearers*, v. 28, 29.

JUdge not that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged: and with what meaſure you mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again. 3 And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but conſidereſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou ſay to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? 5 Thou hypocrite, firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the mote out of thy brothers eye. 6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither caſt ye your pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you.

Our Saviour is here directing us how to carry it in reference to the Faults of others; and it ſeems intended for a Reproof to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who were very rigid and ſevere, very Magiſterial and Supercillious, in Condemning all about them, as thoſe commonly are that are Proud and Conceited in juſtifying themſelves. We have here,

1. A Caution *againſt Judging*, v. 1, 2. There are thoſe whoſe Office is to *judge*, Magiſtrates, and Miniſters: Chriſt tho' he *made* not himſelf *a Judge*, yet came not to *unmake* them, for by him Princes decree Juſtice; but this is directed to private Perſons, to his Diſciples, who ſhall hereafter *ſit on Thrones Judging*, but not now. Now obſerve,

(1.) The Prohibition. *Judge not*, we muſt Judge ourſelves, and judge of our own Acts, but we muſt not judge *our Brother* not *Magiſterially*, aſſuming ſuch an Authority over others, as we allow not them over us; whereas our Rule is, to be *ſubject to one another*. *Be not many Maſters*, Jam. 3. 1. We muſt not ſit in the Judgment-ſeat to make our Word a Law to every Body. We muſt not *judge* our Brother, thet is, we muſt not *ſpeak Evil* of him, ſo 'tis explain'd *James* 4. 11. We muſt not *deſpiſe him*, or ſet him at *nought*, Rom. 14. 10. Judge not *raſhly*, paſs not ſuch a Judgment upon our Brother as hath no ground, but is only the Product of our own Jealouſy and Ill-nature. We muſt not make the worſt of People, nor infer ſuch invidious things from their Words and Actions, as they will not bear. Judge not *uncharitably*, and *unmercifully*, and with a Spirit of Revenge, and a Deſire to do him a Miſchief. Judge not of a Man's State by a ſingle Act, nor of what he is in himſelf, by what he is to us, becauſe in our own Cauſe we are apt to be Partial. We muſt not judge the Hearts of others, nor their Intentions, for it is God's Prerogative to try the Heart, and we muſt not ſtep into his Throne; nor muſt we judge of their Eternal State, nor call them Hypocrites, Reprobates, and Caſt-aways; that's ſtretching beyond our Line; what have we to do thus to judge another Man's Servant? Counſel him, and help him, but do not judge him.

(2.) The Reaſon to enforce this Prohibition; that ye be not judg'd. This intimates, (1.) that if we *preſume* to *judge* others, we may expect to be ourſerves *judged*. He that uſurps the Bench ſhall be call'd to the Bar. He ſhall be judged *of Men*; commonly none are more *cenſur'd* than thoſe that are moſt *Cenſorious*, every one will have a Stone to throw at them; he that, like *Iſhmael*, has *his Hand*, his Tongue *againſt every Man*, ſhall like him, have *every Man's Hand* and Tongue *againſt him*, Gen. 16. 12. And *no Mercy* ſhall be ſhew'd to the good Names of thoſe that ſhew no Mercy to the good Names of others. Yet that is not the worſt of it, they ſhall be judged *of God*, from him they ſhall *receive the greater Condemnation*, James 3. 1. Both Parties muſt appear before him, *Rom*. 14. 10. who as he will relieve the *humble Sufferer*, ſo he will reſiſt the *haughty Scorner*, and give him enough of *judging*. (2.) That if we be *Modeſt and Charitable* in our own Cenſures of others, and decline *judging* them, and *judge our ſelves* rather, *we ſhall not be judged of the Lord*. As God will forgive thoſe that forgive their Brethren, ſo he will not judge thoſe that *will not judge* their Brethren; *the Merciful ſhall find Mercy*. 'Tis an Evidence of Humility, Charity, and Deference to God, and ſhall be own'd and rewarded by him accordingly. See *Rom*. 14. 10.

The judging of thoſe that judge others, is according to the Law of Retaliation, *with what judgment ye judge, ye ſhall be judged*, v. 2. The Righteous God doth many times in his Judgments obſerve a Rule of Proportion, as in the caſe of *Adonibezek*, Judg. 1. 7. And ſee *Rev*. 13. 10--18. 6. Thus will he be both juſtified and magnified in his Judgments, and all Fleſh will be ſilenc'd before him. *With what meaſure you mete it ſhall be meaſured to you again*; perhaps in this World, ſo that Men may read their Sin in their Puniſhment. Let this deter us from all Severity in dealing with our Broteer, *what then ſhall we do when God riſeth up?* Job 31. 14. What would become of us, if God ſhould be as exact and ſevere in judging us, as we are in judging our Brethren? if he ſhould weigh us in the ſame Ballance we may juſtly expect it, if we be extream to mark what our Brethren do amiſs. In this, as in other things, Men's *violent dealings return upon their own Head*.

2. Some Cautions about Reproving; becauſe we muſt not *judge* others, which is a *great Sin*, it doth not therefore follow that we muſt not *reprove* others, which is a great Duty, and may be a means of *ſaving a Soul from Death*, however 'twill be a means of ſaving our Souls from ſharing in their Guilt. Now obſerve here,

1. It is not every one that is fit *to reprove*; thoſe that are themſelves guilty of the ſame Faults they accuſe others of, or worſe, bring Shame upon themſelves, and are not likely to do good to thoſe they reprove, v. 3, 4, 5. Here's (1.) a *juſt Reproof* to the Cenſorious, that quarrel with their Brother for ſmall Faults, while they allow themſelves in great ones, are quick-ſighted to ſpy a *Mote* in his Eye, but are not ſenſible of *a Beam in their own*; nay, and will be very officious to *pull out the mote out of his Eye*, when they are as unfit to do it, as if they were themſelves ſtark blind. *Note*, (1.) There are Degrees in Sin. Some Sins are comparatively but as *Motes*, while others are as *Beams*, ſome as *Gnats*, others as *Camels*. Not that there is any Sin *little*, for there's no little God to ſin againſt; if it be a Mote (or *Splinter*, for ſo it might better be read) 'tis *in the Eye*, if a *Gnat*, 'tis in the *Throat*, both Painful and Perillous, and we cannot be eaſy or well 'till they are got out. (2.) *Our own Sins* ought to appear greater to us than the ſame Sins *in others*; that which Charity teaches us to call but a *Splinter in our Brother's Eye*, true Repentance and Godly Sorrow will teach us to call a *Beam in our own*; for the Sins of others muſt be extenuated, but our own aggravated. (3.) There are many that have *Beams in their own Eyes*, and yet *do not conſider it*. They are under the Guilt and Dominion of very great Sins, and yet are not aware of it, but juſtify themſelves, as if they needed no Repentance or Reformation; 'tis as ſtrange a Man can be in ſuch a ſinful miſerable Condition, and not be aware of it, as that a Man ſhould have a Beam in his Eye, and not conſider it; but the *God of this World* ſo artfully blinds their Minds, as that yet with great Aſſurance they ſay, *We ſee*. (4.) It is common for thoſe that

are moſt ſinful themſelves, and leaſt ſenſible of it, to be moſt forward and free in Judging and Cenſuring others; the *Phariſees* that were moſt haughty in juſtifying themſelves, were moſt ſcornful in condemning others, They fell foul upon Chriſt's Diſciples for *eating with unwaſhed Hands*, which was ſcarce a *Mote*, while they bolſter'd Men up in a Contempt of their Parents, which was a *Beam*. Pride and Uncharitableneſs are commonly Beams in the Eyes of thoſe that pretend to be critical and nice in their Cenſures of others. Nay, many are guilty of that *in ſecret*, which they have the face to puniſh in others when 'tis diſcover'd. *Cogita tecum, fortaſſe vitium de quo quereris ſi te diligenter excuſſeris, in ſinu invenies; inique publico iraſceris crimini tuo.* Seneca de Benef. But (4.) Men's being ſo ſevere upon the Faults of others, while they are indulgent of their own, is a mark of Hypocriſy. *Thou Hypocrite*, v. 5. Whatever ſuch a one may pretend, 'tis certain he is *no Enemy to Sin* (if he were, he would be an Enemy to his own Sin) and therefore is not worthy of Praiſe; nay, it appears he is an *Enemy to his Brother*, and therefore worthy of Blame. This Spiritual Charity muſt begin at Home; for *how canſt thou ſay?* How canſt thou for ſhame ſay to thy Brother, Let me help to reform thee, when thou takeſt no care to reform thyſelf? Thy own Heart will upbraid thee with the Abſurdity of it; thou wilt do it with an ill Grace, and thou wilt expect every one to tell thee, that *Vice* corrects Sin; *Phyſician, heal thyſelf*; *I præ, ſequar.* See *Rom.* 2. 21. (5.) The Conſideration of what is amiſs in ourſelves, though it ought not to keep us from friendly Reproving, ought to keep us from magiſterial Cenſuring, and to make us very Candid and Charitable in judging others. Therefore *reſtore with the Spirit of Meekneſs, conſidering thyſelf*, Gal. 6. 1. What thou haſt been, what thou art, and what thou wouldſt be, if God ſhould leave thee to thyſelf.

(2.) Here's a good Rule for Reprovers, *v* 5. *Go* in the right Method, *firſt caſt the Beam out of thine own Eye*. Our own Badneſs is ſo far from excuſing us in not reproving, that our being by it render'd unfit to reprove, is an Aggravation of our Badneſs; I muſt not ſay, I have *a Beam in mine own Eye*, and therefore I will not help my Brother with the Mote out of his: A Man's Offence will never be his Defence; but I muſt firſt *reform myſelf*, that I may thereby help to reform my Brother, and may qualify myſelf to reprove him. *Note*, Thoſe that blame others, ought to be Blameleſs and Harmleſs themſelves. Thoſe that are *Reprovers in the Gate*, Reprovers by Office, Magiſtrates and Miniſters, are concern'd to *walk circumſpectly*, and to be very regular in their Converſations. An *Elder* muſt have a *good Report*, 1 Tim. 3. 2, 7. The *Snuffers* of the Sanctuary were to be of *pure Gold*.

2. It is not everyone that is fit to be reproved; *give not that which is holy unto Dogs*, v. 6. This may be conſider'd either (1.) as a Rule to the Diſciples in Preaching the Goſpel; not that they muſt not Preach it to any that were Wicked and Prophane, Chriſt himſelf Preach'd to *Publicans* and *Sinners*, but ſuch as they found obſtinate after the Goſpel was preach'd to them, Blaſphem'd it, and Perſecuted the Preachers of it, let them not ſpend much Time among ſuch, for it would be loſt Labour, but let them *turn to others*, Acts 13. 41. So Dr. *Whitby*. Or, (2.) as a Rule to all in giving Reproof. Our Zeal againſt Sin muſt be guided by Diſcretion, and we muſt not go about to give Inſtructions, Counſels, and Rebukes, much leſs Comforts to hardned Scorners, to whom it will certainly do no good, but who will be *exaſperated*, and *enraged* at you. Throw a *Pearl* to a *Swine*, and he will reſent it as if you threw a Stone at him; *Reproofs* will be called *Reproaches*, as they were, *Luke* 11. 45. *Jer.* 6. 10. therefore give not to *Dogs*, and *Swine*, unclean Creatures, holy things. *Note*, (1.) Good Counſel and Reproof is a holy thing, and a *Pearl*. It is an Ordinance of God, 'tis precious, as an *Earing of Gold, and an Ornament of fine Gold, ſo is a wiſe Reprover*, Prov. 24. 12. and a wiſe Reproof, *like an excellent Oil*, Pſal. 141. 5. 'Tis a Tree of Life, *Prov.* 6. 13. (2.) Among the Generation of the Wicked, there are ſome that are arriv'd to ſuch a pitch of Wickedneſs, that they are to be look'd upon as *Dogs* and *Swine*, that are impudently and notoriouſly vile, that have ſo long *walk'd in the way of Sinners*, that they are ſet down in *the Seat of the Scornful*, and profeſſedly hate and deſpiſe Inſtruction, and ſet it at defiance, ſo that they are irrecoverably and irreclaimably wicked; they return with *the Dog to his Vomit*, and with the *Sow* to her *wallowing in the Mire*. (3.) Reproofs of Inſtruction are ill beſtow'd upon ſuch, and expoſe the Reprover to all the Contempt and Miſchief that may be expected from Dogs and Swine. One can expect no other but that they will *trample* the Reproofs *under their Feet*, in Scorn of them, and Rage againſt them; for they are impatient of Controul and Contradiction, and they will *turn again and rent* the Reprovers; rent their good Names with their Revilings, return them wounding Words for their healing ones; rent *them* with Perſecution; *Herod* rent *John Baptiſt* for his Faithfulneſs. See here what is the Evidence of Men's being *Dogs* and *Swine*. Thoſe are to be reckon'd ſuch who hate Reproofs, and Reprovers, and fly in the Face of thoſe that in Kindneſs to their Souls ſhew them their Sin and Danger. Theſe ſin againſt the Remedy; who ſhall *heal* and *help* thoſe that will not be heal'd and help'd? 'Tis plain *God has determin'd to deſtroy ſuch*, 2 Chron. 25. 16. The Rule here given is applicable to the diſtinguiſhing ſealing Ordinances of the Goſpel; which muſt not be proſtituted to thoſe who are openly wicked and prophane, leſt *holy things* be thereby render'd contemptible, and *unholy Perſons* be thereby harden'd. *It is not meet to take the Children's Bread and caſt it to the Dogs.* Yet we muſt be very cautious who we condemn as Dogs and Swine, and not 'till after Tryal, and upon full Evidence. Many a Patient is loſt by being thought to be ſo, who if Means had been us'd, might have been ſav'd. As we muſt take heed of calling the *Good*, *Bad*, by judging all *Profeſſors* to be *Hypocrites*; ſo we muſt take heed of calling the *Bad*, *Deſperate*, by judging all the Wicked to be *Dogs* and *Swine*. (4.) Our Lord Jeſus is very tender of the Safety of his People, and would not have them needleſly to expoſe themſelves to the Fury of thoſe that will *turn again* and *rent them*. Let not them be *righteous overmuch*, ſo as to *deſtroy themſelves*. Chriſt makes the Law of Self-preſervation one of his own Laws, and *precious is the Blood* of his Subjects to him.

7 Ask, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. 8 For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that ſeeketh findeth: and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his ſon ask bread, will he give him a ſtone? 10 Or if he ask a fiſh, will he give him a ſerpent? 11 If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Our Saviour in the foregoing Chapter had ſpoken of Prayer as a *commanded Duty*, by which God is honour'd, and which, if done aright, ſhall be *rewarded*. Here he ſpeaks of it as the *appointed Means* of obtaining what we need, eſpecially Grace to obey the Precepts he had given, ſome of which are ſo diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood.

Firſt, Here is a *Precept*, in three words, to the ſame purpoſe, *Aſk Seek, Knock*, v. 7. that is, in one word, *Pray*. Pray often, Pray with Sincerity and Seriouſneſs; Pray, and Pray again, make Conſcience of Prayer, and be conſtant in it; make a Buſineſs of Prayer, and be earneſt in it. *Aſk* as a Beggar aſks an Alms; thoſe that would be rich in Grace muſt betake themſelves to the poor Trade of Begging, and they ſhall find it a thriving Trade. *Aſk*, i. e. repreſent your Wants and Burthens to God, and refer yourſelves to him for Support and Supply, according to his Promiſe. *Aſk*, as a Traveller aſks the way; to pray is to *enquire of God*, Ezek. 36. 37. *Seek*, as for a thing of value that we have loſt; or as the Merchant-man that *ſeeks goodly Pearls*. *Seek by Prayers*, Dan. 9. 3. *Knock*, as he that deſires to enter into the Houſe knocks at the Door. We would be admitted to Converſe with God, would be taken into his Love, and Favour, and Kingdom; Sin has ſhut and bar'd the Door againſt us, by Prayer we knock, *Lord, Lord, open to us*. Chriſt knocks at our Door, *Rev.* 3. 20. *Cant.* 5. 2. and allows us to knock at his, which is a Favour we do not allow to common Beggars. *Seeking* and *Knocking* ſpeak ſomething more than *aſking* and *praying*. (1.) We muſt not only aſk, but *ſeek*, i. e. we muſt ſecond our Prayers with our Endeavours, we muſt in the uſe of the appointed Means *ſeek* for that which we *aſk* for, elſe we tempt God. When the Dreſſer of the Vineyard aſk'd for a Year's Reprieve for the barren Fig-tree, he added, *I'll dig about it*, Luke 13. 7, 8. God gives Knowledge and Grace to thoſe that ſearch the Scriptures and wait at Wiſdom's Gates, and Power againſt Sin to thoſe that avoid the Occaſions of it. (2.) We muſt not only aſk, but *knock*; we muſt come to God's Door, muſt aſk *importunately*, not only *Pray*, but *Plead*, and wreſtle with God; we muſt *ſeek diligently*, we muſt *continue* knocking; muſt perſevere in Prayer, and in the uſe of Means; muſt endure to the End in the Duty.

Secondly, Here's a *Promiſe annex'd*; *our Labour* in Prayer, if indeed we do labour in it, *ſhall not be in vain*; where God finds a *Praying Heart*, he will be found a *Prayer hearing God*. He ſhall *give thee an Anſwer of Peace*. The Precept is *threefold*, Aſk, Seek Knock, there's Precept upon Precept; but the Promiſe is *ſix-fold*, Line upon Line, for our Encouragement; becauſe a firm Belief of the Promiſe would make us chearful and conſtant in our Obedience. Now here

1. The Promiſe is *made*, and made ſo as exactly to anſwer the Precept, *v.* 7. God will meet thoſe that attend on him. *Aſk, and it ſhall be given you*; not *lent* you, nor *ſold* you, but given you, and what's more free than Gift? *It* ſhall, *i. e.* whatever you pray for according to the Promiſe, whatever you aſk ſhall be *given you*, if God ſee it fit for you, and what would you more? it is but *aſk* and *have*; *ye have not, becauſe ye aſk not*, or aſk not aright; what is not worth aſking, is not worth having, and then it's worth nothing. *Seek, and ye ſhall find*, and then you do not loſe your Labour; God is himſelf *found* of thoſe that ſeek him, and if we find him, we have enough. *Knock, and it ſhall be open'd*; the Door of Mercy and Grace ſhall no longer be ſhut againſt you as Enemies and Intruders, but open'd to you as Friends and Children. 'Twill be aſk'd, *Who's at the Door?* If you be able to ſay, *A Friend*, and have the Ticket of the Promiſe ready to produce in the Hand of Faith, doubt not of Admiſſion. If the Door be not open'd at the firſt knock, continue inſtant in Prayer; 'tis an Affront to a Friend to knock at his Door, and then go away; tho' the Return tarry, yet *wait*.

2. It is *repeated*, v 8. 'tis to the ſame purpoſe, yet with ſome advantage. (1.) It is made to extend to all that Pray aright; not only *you* my Diſciples ſhall receive what you pray for, but *every one that aſketh receiveth*; whether *Jew or Gentile*, Young or Old, Rich or Poor, High or Low, Maſter or Servant, Learned or Unlearned, they are all alike welcome to the Throne of Grace, if they come in Faith; for *God is no reſpecter of Perſons*. (2.) 'Tis made ſo as to amount to a Grant, in words of the Preſent Tenſe which is more than a Pro-

miſe *de futuro*. Every one that aſketh, not only *ſhall receive*, but *receiveth*; by Faith applying and appropriating the Promiſe we are actually intereſted and inveſted in the Good promiſed; ſo ſure and inviolable are the promiſes of God, that they do in effect give preſent Poſſeſſion; an active Believer enters immediately, and makes the Bleſſings promiſed his own. What we have *in hope* according to the Promiſe, is as *ſure*, and ſhould be as *ſweet* as what we have in hand. *God hath ſpoken in his Holineſs*, and then *Gilead is mine, Manaſſeh is mine*, Pſal. 108. 7, 8. 'tis all *mine own*, if I can but *make it ſo* by *believing it ſo*. Conditional Grants become abſolute upon the performance of the Condition; ſo here, *he that aſketh receiveth*. Chriſt hereby puts his *Fiat* to the Petition, and he having *all Power*, that's enough.

3. It is *illuſtrated* by a Similitude, taken from earthly Parents, and their innate Readineſs to give their Children what they aſk. Chriſt appeals to his Hearers, *What Man is there of you*, tho' never ſo Moroſe and Ill-humour'd, *whom, if his Son ask Bread, will he give him a Stone?* v. 9, 10. Whence he infers, *v.* 11. *If ye then being evil*, yet grant your Children's Requeſts, *much more will your Heavenly Father* give you the good things you aſk. Now this is of uſe,

1. To *direct* our Prayers and Fxpectations. (1.) We muſt come to God, as Children *to a Father in Heaven*, with Reverence and Confidence; how naturally doth the Child in Want or Diſtreſs run to the Father with its Complaints, *My Head, my Head*; thus ſhould the new Nature ſend us to God for Supports and Supplies. (2.) We muſt come to him for *good things*, for thoſe he gives to them that *ask him*; which teach us to *refer ourſelves* to him; we know not what is good for our ſelves *Eccl.* 6. 12. but he knows what is good for us, we muſt therefore leave it with him; *Father, thy will be done*. The Child is here ſuppos'd to aſk *Bread*, that's neceſſary, and a *Fiſh* that's wholſome; but if the Child ſhould fooliſhly aſk for a *Stone*, or a *Serpent*, for unripe Fruit to eat, or a ſharp Knife to play with, the Father, tho' *kind*, is withal ſo *wiſe* as to *deny* him. We oft aſk that of God which would do us hurt if we had it, he knows it, and therefore doth not give it us; Denials in Love are better than Grants in Anger? we had been undone e'er this, if we had had all we deſired; this is admirably well expreſs'd by a Heathen. *Juvenal, Sat.* 10.

Permittis ipſis expendere Numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, Rebuſque ſit utile noſtris,
Nam pro jucundis aptiſſima quæque dabunt Dii.
Carior eſt illis Homo, quam ſibi; Nos Animorum
Impulſu, & cæca magnaque Cupidine ducti.
Conjugium petimus, Partumque Uxoris: at illis
Notum eſt, qui Pueri, qualiſque futura ſit Uxor.

2. To encourage our Prayers and Expectations. We may hope that we ſhall not be deny'd and diſappointed; we ſhall not have a *Stone* for *Bread* to break our Teeth, (tho' we have a hard Cruſt to employ our Teeth) nor a *Serpent for a Fiſh* to ſting us. We have Reaſon indeed to *fear it*, becauſe we *deſerve it*, but God will be better to us than the Deſert of our Sins. The World often gives Stones for Bread, and Serpents for Fiſh, but God never doth. Nay, we ſhall be heard and anſwer'd, for Children are ſo by their *Parents*. (1.) God has *put into the Hearts of Parents a compaſſionate* Inclination to *ſuccour* and *ſupply* their Children according as need is. Even thoſe that have had little Conſcience of Duty, yet have done it, as it were *by Inſtinct*. No Law was ever thought neceſſary to oblige Parents to maintain their Legitimate Children, nor in *Solomon*'s time, their Illegitimate ones. (2.) He has *put himſelf* into the Relation of a *Father* to us, and owns us for his Children; that from the readineſs we find in our ſelves to relieve our Children, we may be encourag'd to apply our ſelves to him for Relief, What Love and Tenderneſs Fathers have, it's from him; not from Nature, but from the God of Nature, and therefore it muſt needs be infinitely more in himſelf. He compares his Concern for his People to that of *a Father* for his Children, *Pſal.* 103. 13. Nay, to that of a Mother, which is uſually more tender, *Iſa.* 66. 13.—49. 14, 15. But here 'tis ſuppos'd, that his Love, and Tenderneſs, and Goodneſs far excells that of any Earthly Parent; and therefore 'tis argu'd with a *much more*, and it is grounded upon this undoubted Truth, that God is a *better Father*, infinitely better than any Earthly Parents are, his Thoughts above theirs. Our Earthly Fathers have taken care of us, we have taken care of our Children, much more will God take care of his: for they *are Evil*, originally ſo; the degenerate Seed of fallen *Adam*, they have loſt much of the good Nature that was incident to Humanity, and among other Corruptions have that of Croſſneſs, and Unkindneſs, and Unlovingneſs in them; yet they *give good things to their Children*, and they *know how to give*, ſuitably and ſeaſonably; *much more* will God, for he *takes up* when they forſake, *Pſal.* 27. 10. And (1.) God is more knowing: Parents are often fooliſhly fond, but God is Wiſe, infinitely ſo; he knows what we need, what we deſire, and what's fit for us. (2.) God is *more kind*. If all the Compaſſions of all the Tender Fathers in the World were crouded into the Bowels of one, yet compar'd with the tender Mercies of our God, they would be but as a Candle to the Sun, or a Drop to the Ocean. God is more rich and more ready to his Children than the Fathers of our Fleſh can be, for he is the Father of our Spirits, an Ever-loving, Ever-living Father; the Bowels of Fathers yern even towards undutiful Children, towards Prodigals, as *David*'s towards *Abſalom*, and will not all this ſerve to ſilence Unbelief?

12 Therefore all things whatſoever ye would that men
ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them: for this is
the law and the prophets. 13 Enter ye in at the
ſtrait gate; for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way
that leadeth to deſtruction, and many there be which
go in thereat: 14 Becauſe ſtrait *is* the gate, and narrow
is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there
be that find it.

Our Lord Jeſus here preſſeth upon us that *Righteouſneſs* towards Men, which is an eſſential Branch of true Religion, and that Religion towards God, which is an eſſential Branch of univerſal Righteouſneſs.

1. We muſt make *Righteouſneſs* our *Rule*, and be rul'd by it, *v.* 12. *Therefore lay this down for your* Principle, to *do as you would be done by*; *therefore*, that you may *conform* to the foregoing Precepts, which are *particular*, that you may not *Judge* and Cenſure others, go by this Rule in general, you would not be *Cenſur'd*, therefore do not *Cenſure*. Or, that you may have the Benefit of the foregoing Promiſes; fitly is the Law of Juſtice tack'd to the law of Prayer, for unleſs we be honeſt in our Converſation, God will not hear our Prayers, *Iſa.* 1. 15, 16, 17.—58. 6, 9. *Zech.* 7. 9, 13. We cannot expect to receive *good things* from God, if we do not do *fair things*, and that which is *honeſt* and *lovely*, and of *good Report* among Men. We muſt not only be *Devout* but *Honeſt*, elſe our Devotion is but Hypocriſy. Now here we have,

(1.) The *Rule of Juſtice* laid down; *Whatſoever you would that Men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them.* Chriſt came to teach us, not only what we are to *know* and Believe, but what we are to *do*; what we are to do, not only towards *God*, but towards *Men*; not only towards our Fellow-Diſciples, thoſe of our Party and Perſuaſion, but toward Men in general, all with whom we have to do. The Golden Rule of Equity, is to do to others, as we would they ſhould do to us. *Alexander Severus*, a Heathen Emperor, was a great admirer of this Rule, had it written upon the Walls of his Cloſet, often quoted it in giving Judgment, honour'd Chriſt, and favour'd Chriſtians for the ſake of it. *Quod tibi, hoc alteri*; take it negatively, *Quod tibi fieri nonv is ne alteri feceris*; or poſitively, it comes all to one; as here, *Quod vis tibi fieri, fac alteri.* We muſt not do to others the Evil they have done to us, nor the Evil which they would do to us if it were in their Power; nor may we do that which we think, if it were done to us, we could bear *ccntentedly*, but what we deſire ſhould be done to us. This is grounded upon that great Commandment, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* As we muſt bear the ſame Affection to our Neighbour that we would have born to our ſelves, ſo we muſt do the ſame good *Offices*. The meaning of this Rule lies in three things: (1.) We muſt do that to our Neighbour which we ourſelves acknowledge to be fit and reaſonable; the Appeal is made to our own Judgment, and the Diſcovery of our Judgment is refer'd to that which is our own Will and Expectation, when it is our own Caſe. (2.) We muſt put other People upon the level with ourſelves, and reckon we are as much obliged to them, as they to us. We are as much bound to the Duty of Juſtice as they, and they as much entitled to the Benefit of it as we. (3.) We muſt in our Dealings with Men, ſuppoſe ourſelves in the ſame particular Caſe and Circumſtances with thoſe we have to do with, and deal accordingly. If I were making ſuch a one's Bargain, labouring under ſuch a ones Infirmity and Affliction, how would I deſire and expect to be treated? and this is a juſt Suppoſition, becauſe we know not how ſoon their Caſe may really be our's; however we may fear, leſt God by his Judgments do to us, as we have done to others, if we have not done as we would be done by.

(2.) A Reaſon given to enforce this Rule. *This is the Law and the Prophets*; 'tis the Summary of that ſecond great Commandment, which is one of thoſe two, *on which hang all the Law and the Prophets*, Mat. 22. 40. We have not this in ſo many Words, either in the Law or the Prophets, but it is the concurring Language of the Whole. All that is there ſaid concerning our Duty towards our Neighbour, (and that is no little) may be reduc'd to this Rule. Chriſt has here adopted it into his Law; ſo that both the Old Teſtament and the New agree in preſcribing this to us, *to do as we would be done by.* By this Rule the Law of Chriſt is commended, but the Lives of Chriſtians are condemn'd by comparing them with it, *Aut hoc non Evangelium, aut hi non Evangelici.*

2. We muſt make Religion our *Buſineſs*, and be intent upon it; we muſt be ſtrict and circumſpect in our Converſation, which is here repreſented to us as *entring in at a ſtrait Gate*, and walking on in a *narrow Way*, v. 13, 14. Obſerve here,

1. The Account that is given of the Bad Way of Sin, and the good Way of Holineſs. There are but two Ways, right and wrong, good and evil; the Way to Heaven, and the Way to Hell; in the one of which we are all of us walking. No middle Place hereafter, no middle Way now. The Diſtinction of the Children of Men into Saints and Sinners, godly and ungodly, will ſwallow up all to Eternity.

Here's (1.) An Account given us of the Way of Sin, and Sinners, both what's the beſt, and what's the worſt of it.

1. That which allures Multitudes into it, and keeps them in it; that the *Gate is wide*, and the *Way broad*, and there are *many* Travallers *in that Way*. (1.) You will have abundance of *Liberty* in that Way. The *Gate is wide*, and ſtands *wide open* to tempt thoſe that go

right on theirWay. You may go in at thisGate with all yourLuſts about you; it gives no Check to yourAppetites, to your Paſſions; you may walk in the *Way of your Heart,and in the Sight of your Eye*; that gives room enough. It's a *broad Way*, for there's nothing to hedge in thoſe that walk in it, but they wander endleſly; a *broad Way*, for there are many Paths in it; there's Choice of ſinful Ways, contrary to each other, but all *Paths* in this broad Way. (2.) You will have abundance of *Company* in that Way. *Many there be that go* in at this Gate, and walk in this Way. If we *follow the Multitude*, it will be *to do Evil*; if we go with the Croud, it will be the wrong Way. 'Tis natural to us to incline to go down the Stream, and do as the moſt do; but it is too great a Complement to be willing to be *damn'd for Company*; and *go to Hell* with them, becauſe they will not *go toHeaven* with us. If many periſh, we ſhould be the more cautious.

2. That which ſhould *affright us* all from it is, that it *leads to Deſtruction*. Death, eternal Death is at the End of it, and the Way of Sin tends to it, everlaſting Deſtruction from the Preſence of the Lord. Whether it be the High-way of open Profaneneſs, or the Back-way of cloſe Hypocriſy, if it be a Way of Sin, it will be our Ruin, if we repent not.

2. Here's an Account given us of the Way of Holineſs.

1. What there is in it, that frightens many from it; let us know the worſt of it,that we mayſit down and count theCoſt of it; Chriſt deals faithfully with us, and tells us,

(1.) That the Gate is ſtrait. Converſion and Regeneration is the *Gate*,by which we enter into thisWay,in which we begin a Life of Faith, and ſerious Godlineſs; out of a State of Sin, into a State of Grace we muſt paſs by the *New Birth*, John 3. 3, 5. This is a *ſtrait Gate*, hard to hit, and hard to get thro'; like a Paſſage between two Rocks, 1 *Sam.* 14. 4. there muſt be a *new Heart*, and a *new Spirit*, and old things muſt paſs away. The Bent of the Soul muſt be chang'd,corruptHabits broken,corruptCuſtoms broken off; what we have been doing all our Days muſt be undone again. We muſt ſwim againſt theStream, much Oppoſition muſt be ſtruggl'd with, and broken thro' from without, and from within. 'Tis eaſier to ſet aMan againſt all theWorld than againſt himſelf,andyet this muſt be in Converſion. It is a ſttaitGate, for we muſt *ſtoop*,or we cannot go in at it, muſt become as little Children; high Thoughts muſt be *brought down*: Nay, we muſt *ſtrip*, muſt deny ourſelves, put off the World, put off the Old Man, muſt be willing to forſake all for our Intereſt inChriſt. The Gate is *ſtrait* to all, but to ſome *ſtraiter* than to others; to theRich,to ſome that have been long prejudic'd againſt Religion. The Gate is *ſtrait*, Bleſſed be God it is not ſhut up or lock'd againſt us; nor kept with a flaming Sword, as it will be ſhortly, *Mat.* 25. 10.

(2.) That the *Way is narrow*. We are not in Heaven as ſoon as we are got thro' the ſtrait Gate, not in *Canaan*, as ſoon as we are got thro' the Red Sea, no, we muſt go thro' a Wilderneſs; muſt travel a *narrow* Way, hedg'd in by the Divine Law, which is *exceeding broad*, and that makes the Way *narrow*. Self muſt be deny'd, the Body kept under, Corruptions mortified, that are as a *right Eye*, and a *right Hand*; daily Temptations muſt be reſiſted; Duties to be done that are againſt the Grain, we muſt endure Hardneſs,muſt wreſtle and be in an Agony, mnſt watch in all things, and walk with Care and Circumſpection; we muſt go thro' much Tribulation, 'tis ὁδὸς τεθλιμμένη, *an afflicted Way*, a Way *hedg'd about* with Thorns, Bleſſed be God it is not hedg'd up. The Bodies we carry about with us, and the Corruptions remaining in us, make the Way of our Duty difficult, but as the Underſtanding and Will grow more and more ſound, 'twill open and enlarge, and grow more and more pleaſant.

3. The Gate being ſo ſtrait, and the Way ſo narrow, it is not ſtrange that there are but *few that find it*, and chuſe it, many paſs it by thro' Carleſſneſs,they will not be at the Pains to find it; they are well as they are, and ſee no need to *change their Way*: Others look upon it, but ſhun it; they like not to be ſo limited, and reſtrained. Thoſe that are going to Heaven are *few*, compar'd to thoſe that are going to Hell; a Remnant, a little Flock, like the Grape-gleanings of the Vintage; as the Eight that were ſaved in the Ark, 1 *Kings* 20. 27. *In Vitia alter alterum trudimus: Quomodo ad Salutem revocari poteſt,quum nullus retrabit, & Populus impellit?* Senec. Epiſt. 29. This diſcourages many, they are loth to be ſingular, to be ſolitary; but inſtead of ſtumbling at this,ſay rather, if ſo few are going to Heaven, there will be one the more for me.

2. Let us ſee what there is in this Way, which, notwithſtanding this, ſhould invite us all to it; it *leads to Life*, to *preſent Comfort*, in the Favour of God,whichis the Life of the Soul,to *eternal Bliſs*; the Hope of which at the End of our Way, ſhould reconcile us to all the Difficulties and Inconveniencies of the Way. *Life* and *Godlineſs* are put together, 2 *Pet.* 1. 3. The Gate is ſtrait, and the Way *narrow*, and up hill, but one Hour in Heaven will make amends for all.

2. The Great Concern and Duty of every one of us in Conſideration of all this; *Enter ye in at the ſtrait Gate*. The Matter is fairly ſtated; Life and Death, Good and Evil are ſet before us, both the Ways,and both the Ends; now let the Matter be taken entire,and conſider'd impartially,and then chuſe you this Day,which you will walk in; nay, the Matter determines itſelf, and will not admit of a Debate. No Man in his Wits would chuſe to go to the Gallows, becauſe it's a ſmooth pleaſantWay to to it, nor refuſe the Offer of a Palace and a Throne,becauſe it's a rough dirty Way to it; yet ſuch Abſurdities as theſe are Men guilty of in the Concerns of their Souls. Delay not therefore, deliberate not any longer, but *enter ye in at the ſtrait Gate*; knock at it by ſincere and conſtant Prayers and Endeavours, and it *ſhall be opened*, nay, a *wide Door ſhall be opened, and an effectual one*. 'Tis true we can neither *go in*, nor *go on* without theAſſiſtance of Divine Grace,but 'tis as true,thatGrace is freely offer'd, and ſhall not be wanting to thoſe that ſeek it, and ſubmit to it. Converſion is hard Work, but it is needful; and bleſſed be God it is not impoſſible if we *ſtrive*, Luke 13. 24.

15 Beware of falſe Prophets which come to you in ſheeps clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye ſhall know them by their fruits: do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thiſtles? 17 Even ſo every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good ftuit, is hewn down and caſt into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye ſhall know them.

We have here a Caution againſt *falſe Prophets*, to take heed that we be not deceiv'd and impos'd upon by them. *Prophets* are properly ſuch as foretel things to come; there were ſome in the old Teſtament who pretended to that withoutWarrant,and the Event diſproved their Pretenſions, as *Zedekiah*, 1 Kings 22. 11. and another *Zedekiah* Jer. 29. 21. But Prophets did alſo teach the People their Duty, ſo that falſe Prophets here are *falſe Teachers*; Chriſt being a Prophet and a Teacher come from God,and deſigning to ſend abroad *Teachers* under him,givesWarning to all to take heed ofCounterfeits, who inſtead of healing Souls with wholeſome Doctrine as theypretend, would poiſon them.

Thoſe are *falſe Teachers*, and *falſe Prophets*, (1.) Who produce *falſe Commiſſions*, who pretend to have immediate Warrant and Direction from God to ſet up for Prophets, and to be *divinely inſpir'd* when they are not ſo. Tho' their Doctrine may be *true*, we are to *beware* of them as *falſe Prophets*. Falſe Apoſtles are thoſe who *ſay they are Apoſtles, and are not*, Rev. 2. 2. ſuch are *falſe Prophets*. Take heed of thoſe that pretend to *Revelation*, and admit them not without ſufficient Proof, leſt that one Abſurdity being admitted, a thouſand follow. (2.) Who preach *falſe Doctrine* in thoſe things that are eſſential to Religion; who teach that which is contrary to theTruth *as it is inJeſus*,to theTruth which is *according toGodlineſs*. The former ſeems to be the properNotions of*Pſeudo-propheta*,a falſe or pretendingProphet; but commonly the latter falls in with it,for who would hang out falſe Colours,but with Deſigns underPretence of them,the more ſuceſsfully to attack the Truth. Well,*beware* of them; ſuſpect them, try them, and when you have diſcovered their Falſhood, avoid them, have nothing to do with them, ſtand upon your Guard againſt this Temptation, which commonly attends the Days of Reformation, and the Breathings out of Divine Light, in more than ordinary Strength and Splendor. When God's Work is reviv'd, Satan and his Agents are moſt buſy. Here's

Firſt a good *Reaſon* for this Caution; Beware of them, for they are *Wolves in Sheeps Clothing*, v. 15.

1. We have need to be very cautious, becauſe their Pretences are very *fair* and *plauſible*, and ſuch as will deceive us,if we be not *upon our Guard*. They come in *Sheeps Clothing*, in the Habit of Prophets, which was plain,and courſe,and unwrought; they wear a *roughGarment to deceive*, Zech. 13. 4. *Elijah's* Mantle the *Septuagint* calls ἡ μηλωτῆς, a *Sheep's-Skin* Mantle. We muſt take heed of being impos'd upon byMensDreſs and Garb,as bythat of the *Scribes* which *deſire to walk in long Robes*, Luke 20. 46. Or it may be taken figuratively; they pretend to be Sheep,and outwardly appear ſo innocent, harmleſs, meek, uſeful, and all that's good, as none more; they *feign themſelves to be juſtMen*, and for the ſake of their *Clothing* are admitted among the *Sheep*,which gives them anOpportunity of doing them a Miſchief, e'er they are aware. They and their Errors are gilded with the ſpecious Pretences of Sanctityand Devotion; Satan turns himſelf into an *Angel of Light*, 2 Cor. 11. 13, 14. The Enemy has *Horns like aLamb*,Rev. 13. 11. *Faces of Men*,Rev. 9. 7, 8. Seducers in Language and Carriage are *ſoft as Wooll*, Rom. 16. 18. Iſa. 30. 10.

2. Becauſe under theſe Pretenſions their Deſigns are very malicious and miſchievous. *Inwardly they are ravening Wolves*. Every Hypocrite is a *Goat in Sheeps Clothing*, but a falſe Prophet is a *Wolf in Sheeps Clothing*, not only not a Sheep, but the worſt Enemy the Sheep has,that comes not but to tear and devour,to *ſcatter theSheep*, John 10. 12. to drive them from God, and one from another, into crookedPaths. Thoſe that would cheat us of anyTruth,and poſſeſs us with Error, whatever they pretend,'tisMiſchief to ourSouls that they intend. *Paul* calls them *grievous Wolves*, Acts 20. 29. They *raven* for themſelves, *ſerve their own Belly*, Rom. 16. 18. make a *Prey* of you, make a *Gain* of you. Now ſince it it is ſo eaſy a Thing and withal ſo dangerous to be cheated, *Beware of falſe Prophets*.

Secondly, Here's a good *Rule* to go by in this Caution. We muſt prove all things, 1 *Theſſ*. 5. 21. *Try the Spirits*, 1 John 4. 1. and here we have a Touchſtone to try by. *Ye ſhall know them by their Fruits*, v. 16. 20. Obſerve,

1. The Illuſtration of this Compariſon,of theFruits being theDiſcovery of the Tree. You cannot always diſtinguiſh them by their

Bark and Leaves, or by the Spreading of their Boughs, but *by their Fruits ye ſhall know them.* The Fruit is according to the Tree. Men may in their *Profeſſions* put a force upon their Nature, and contradict their inward Principles, but the Stream and Bent of their practices will agree with 'em. Chriſt inſiſts upon this, the *Agreeableneſs* between the Fruit and the Tree; which is ſuch, as that (1.) if you know what *the Tree is*, you may know *what Fruit to expect.* Never look to *gather Grapes from Thorns, or Figs from Thiſtles*; 'tis not in their Nature to produce ſuch Fruits. An Apple may be *ſtuck*, or a Bunch of Grapes *hang* upon a Thorn, ſo may a good Truth, a good Word or Action be found in an ill Man, but you may be ſure it never grew there. *Note*, 1. Corrupt, vicious, unſanctified Hearts, are like *Thorns and Thiſtles*, which came in with Sin, are worthleſs, vexing, and for the Fire at laſt. 2. *Good Works* are good Fruit, like *Grapes* and *Figs*, pleaſing to God and profitable to Men. 3. This good Fruit is never to be expected from Bad Men, no more than a *clean thing* out of an *unclean*. They want an influencing acceptable Principle; out of an *evil Treaſure* will be brought forth *evil Things.* 2. On the other hand, if you know what *the Fruit is*, you may by that perceive *what the Tree is. A good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit*, nay, it cannot but bring forth good Fruit; and *a corrupt Tree cannot bring forth good Fruit*; nay, it cannot but bring forth evil Fruit; but then that muſt be reckon'd the Fruit of the Tree, which it brings forth *naturally*, and which is its genuine Product, and which it brings forth plentifully and conſtantly, and is its *uſual* Product. Men are known not by particular Acts, but by the Courſe and Tenour of their Converſations, and by the more *frequent* Acts, eſpecially thoſe that appear to be *free*, and moſt their own, and leaſt under the influence of external Motives, and Inducements.

2. The Application of this to the falſe Prophets.

1. By Way of Terrour and Threatning, *v.* 19. *Every Tree that brings not forth good Fruit is hewn down.* This very ſaying *John Baptiſt* had us'd, *ch.* 3. 10. Chriſt could have ſpoken the ſame Senſe in other Words, could have alter'd it, or given it a new Turn, but he thought it no Diminution to him, to ſay the ſame that *John* had ſaid before him; let not Miniſters be ambitious of coining new Expreſſions, nor Peoples Ears itch for Novelties: To write and ſpeak the ſame Things muſt not be *grievous*, for it is *ſafe.* Here's (1.) The *Deſcription of barren Trees.* They are Trees that do not *bring forth good Fruit.* Though there be Fruit, if it be not *good Fruit*, tho' that be done, which for the Matter of it is *good*, if it be not done *well*, in a right Manner, and for a right End, the Tree is accounted barren. (2.) The *Doom* of barren Trees. *They are*, that is, certainly they ſhall be, *hewn down, and caſt into the Fire.* God will deal with them, as Men uſe to deal with dry Trees that cumber the Ground. He will *mark them* by ſome ſignal Tokens of his Diſpleaſure; he will bark them, by ſtripping them of their Parts and Gifts, will *cut them down* by Death, and *caſt them into the Fire* of Hell, a Fire blown with the Bellows of God's Wrath, and fed with the wood of barren Trees. Compare this with *Ezek.* 31. 12, 13. *Dan.* 4. 14. *John* 15. 6.

2. By Way of Tryal. *By their Fruits ye ſhall know them.*

1. By the *Fruits of their Perſons*; their Words and Actions, and the Courſe of their Converſation. If you would know whether they be right or no, obſerve how they live; their *Works* will teſtify for them or againſt them. The *Scribes and Phariſees* ſat in *Moſes*'s Chair, and taught the Law, but they were proud and covetous, and falſe, and oppreſſive, and therefore Chriſt warn'd his Diſciples to *beware of them*, and of their Leaven, *Mark* 12. 38. If Men pretend to be Prophets, and are immoral, that diſproves their Pretenſions; thoſe are no true Friends to the Croſs of Chriſt, whatever they profeſs, whoſe *God is their Belly*, and *who mind earthly things*, Phil. 3. 18, 19. Thoſe are not taught, or ſent of the Holy God, whoſe Lives evidence that they are led by the *unclean Spirit.* God puts the Treaſure into earthen Veſſels, but not into ſuch ſtinking Veſſels. They may *declare God's Statutes*, but what have they to do to declare them?

2. By the Fruits of *their Doctrine*; Their Fruits as Prophets; Not that this is the *only Way*; but it is *one Way* of trying Doctrines, whether they be of God or no; What do they tend to? What Affections and Practices will they lead thoſe into that embrace them? If the Doctrine be of God, it will tend to promote ſerious Piety, Humility, Charity, Holineſs and Love, with other Chriſtian Graces; but if, on the Contrary, the Doctrines theſe Prophets preach have a manifeſt Tendency to make People proud, worldly and contentious, to make them looſe and careleſs in their Converſations, unjuſt or uncharitable, factious, or Diſturbers of the Publick Peace; if it indulge carnal Liberty, and take People off from governing themſelves and their Families, by the ſtrict Rules of the narrow Way, we may conclude, that *this Perſwaſion cometh not of him that calleth us*, Gal. 5. 8. *This Wiſdom is not from above*, Jam. 3. 15 *Faith* and a *good Conſcience* are held together, 1 *Tim.* 1. 19.—3. 9. *Note, Doctrines of doubtful Diſputation* muſt be tryed by Graces and Duties of confeſſed Certainty. Thoſe Opinions come not *from* God that lead *to Sin.* But if we cannot know them by *their Fruits*, we muſt have Recourſe to the great Touchſtone, *to the Law, and to the Teſtimony.* Do they ſpeak according to that Rule?

21 Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven. 22 Many will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not Propheſied in thy name? and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity. 24 Therefore whoſoever heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wiſe man, which built his houſe upon a rock: 25 And the rain deſcended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe, and it fell not, fo rit was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doeth them not, ſhall be likened unto a fooliſh man which built his houſe upon the ſand: 27 And the rain deſcended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that houſe, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. 28 And it came to paſs when Jeſus had ended theſe ſayings, the people were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine. 29 For he taught them as one having authority; and not as the ſcribes.

We have here the Concluſion of this long and excellent Sermon, the Scope of which is to ſhew the indiſpenſable Neceſſity of Obedience to the Commands of Chriſt; this is deſign'd to clench the Nail, that it might fix in a *ſure place.* He ſpeaks this to his Diſciples, that ſate at his Feet, wherever he preach'd, and followed him wherever he went: Had he ſought his own Praiſe among Men, he would have ſaid that was enough; but the Religion he came to eſtabliſh, is *in Power*, not *in Word* only, 1 *Cor.* 4. 20. and therefore ſomething more is Neceſſary.

Firſt, He ſhews by a *plain Remonſtrance*, that an *outward Profeſſion* of Religion, though making itſelf never ſo remarkable, will not bring us to Heaven, unleſs there be an *agreeable Converſation*, v. 21, 22, 23. All Judgment is committed to our Lord Jeſus, the Keys are put into his Hand, he has Power to preſcribe new Terms of Life and Death, and of judging Men according to them: Now this is a ſolemn Declaration purſuant to that Power. Obſerve here,

1. Chriſt's Law laid down, v. 21. *Not every one that ſaith Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, i. e. into the Kingdom of Grace and Glory. 'Tis an anſwer to that Queſtion, *Pſal.* 15. 1. *Who ſhall ſojourn in thy Tabernacle?* i. e. the Church Militant, and who ſhall *dwell in thy holy Hill?* i. e. the Church Triumphant. Chriſt here tells us in two things,

(1.) That it will not ſuffice to ſay, *Lord, Lord*; in Word and Tongue to own Chriſt for our Maſter, and to make Addreſſes to him and Profeſſions of him accordingly; in Prayer to God, in Diſcourſe with Men, we muſt call Chriſt *Lord, Lord*, we *ſay well*, for *ſo he is*, John 13. 13. But can we imagine that this is enough to bring us to Heaven, that ſuch a Piece of Formality as this ſhould be ſo recompens'd? or that he who knows and requires the Heart, ſhould be ſo put off with Shews for Subſtance? Complements among Men are Pieces of Civility that are return'd with Complements, but they are never paid as real Services; and can they then be of any Account with Chriſt? There may be a ſeeming Importunity in Prayer, *Lord, Lord*, But if inward Impreſſions be not anſwerable to outward Expreſſions, we are but as a *ſounding Braſs*, and a *tinkling Cymbal.* This is not to take us off from ſaying, *Lord, Lord*, from Praying and being earneſt in Prayer, from Profeſſing Chirſt's Name, and being bold in Profeſſing it; but from reſting in theſe, in the Form of Godlineſs without the Power.

(2.) That it is neceſſary to our Happineſs that we *do the Will* of *Chriſt*, which is indeed the *Will of his Father in Heaven.* The Will of God as *Chriſt's Father*, is his Will in the Goſpel; for there he is made known, as the Father of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and in him our Father: Now that is his Will, thit we believe in Chriſt, that we repent of Sin, that we live a holy Life, that we love one another: This is his Will, even our Sanctification. If we comply not with the Will of God, we mock Chriſt in calling him *Lord*, as they did who put on him a gorgeous Robe, and ſaid, *Hail, King of the Jews.* Saying and Doing are two Things often parted in the Converſation of Men: He that ſaid, *I go, Sir*, ſtirr'd never a ſtep, *Mat.* 21. 30. But theſe two Things God *has joyn'd* in his Command, and let no Man that *puts them aſunder* think to enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven.*

2. The Hypocrites Plea againſt the ſtrictneſs of this Law, offering other things in Lieu of Obedience, *v.* 22. The Plea is ſuppoſed to be *in that Day*; that great Day, when every Man ſhall appear in his own Colours, when the *Secrets of all Herats* ſhall be manifeſt, and among the reſt the ſecret Pretences with which ſinners now ſupport their vain Hopes. Chriſt knows the Strength of their Cauſe, and it is but Weakneſs. What they now harbour in their Boſoms they will then produce in Arreſt of Judgment, to ſtay the Doom, but it will be in vain. They put in their Plea with great Importunity, *Lord, Lord*, and with great Confidence, appealing to Chriſt concerning it: *Lord*, doſt not thou know? (1.) That we *have propheſied in thy Name*; yes, it may be ſo; *Balaam* and *Caiphas* were over-rul'd to *propheſy*, and *Saul* was againſt his Will *among the Prophets*; yet they did not

ſave them. Theſe propheſy'd *in his Name*, but he did not ſend them; they only made uſe of his Name to ſerve a Turn. *Note*, A Man may be a Preacher, may have Gifts for the Miniſtry, and an external Call to it, and perhaps ſome Succeſs in it, and yet be a wicked Man; may help others to Heaven, and yet come ſhort himſelf. (2.) That *in thy Name we have caſt out Devils.* That may be too; *Judas* caſt out Devils, and yet a *Son of Perdition. Origen* ſaith, that in his Time ſo *prevalent* was the *Name of Chriſt* to *caſt out Devils*, that *ſometimes it availed when nam'd by wicked Chriſtians.* A Man might caſt Devils out of others, and yet have a Devil, nay, and be a Devil himſelf. (3.) That *in thy Name we have done many wonderful works.* There may be a Faith of Miracles, where there is no juſtifying Faith, none of that Faith which works by Love and Obedience. Gifts of Tongues and Healing would recommend Men to the World. But it is only real Holineſs and Sanctification that is accepted of God. Grace and Love is a more excellent Way, than *removing Mountains*, or ſpeaking *with the Tongue of Men and Angels*, 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2. Grace will bring a Man to Heaven without working Miracles, but working Miracles will never bring a Man to Heaven without Grace. Obſerve, That which their Heart was upon in doing theſe Works, and which they confided in, was the *Wonderfulneſs* of them: *Simon Magus* wonder'd at the *Miracles*, Acts 8. 13. and therefore would give any Money for Power to do the like. Obſerve, they had not many good Works to plead; they could not pretend to have done many *gracious Works* of Piety and Charity, *one* ſuch would have paſt better in their Account than *many wonderful Works*, which prevailed not at all while they perſiſted in Diſobedience. Miracles are now ceaſed, and with them this Plea; but do not carnal Hearts ſtill bolſter up themſelves in their groundleſs Hopes with the like vain Supports? They think they ſhall go to Heaven, becauſe they have been of *good Repute* among Profeſſors of Religion, have kept Faſts, and given Alms, and have been prefer'd in the Church, as if this would attone for their reigning Pride, Worldlineſs, and Senſuality, and Want of Love to God and Man. *Bethel is their Confidence*, Jer. 48. 13. They are *haughty becauſe of the holy Mountain*, Zeph. 3. 11. and boaſt that they are *the Temple of the Lord*, Jer. 7. 4. Let us take heed of reſting in external Privileges and Performances, leſt we deceive ourſelves, and periſh eternally, as Multitudes do, with a *Lye in our Right Hand*.

3. The Rejection of this Plea, as frivolous. The ſame that is the Law-maker, *v.* 21. is here the Judge according to that Law, *v.* 23. and he will over-rule the Plea, will over-rule it publickly, he will *profeſs to them*, with all poſſible Solemnity, as Sentence is paſs'd by the Judge, *I never knew you*, and therefore *depart from me ye that work Iniquity.* Obſerve, 1. Why, and upon what Ground, he rejects them and their Plea; becauſe they were *Workers of Iniquity*. *Note*, It is poſſible for Men to have a great Name for Piety, and yet to be workers of Iniquity, and thoſe that are ſo will receive the greater Damnation. Secret Haunts of Sin, kept up under the Cloke of a viſible Profeſſion, will be the ruin of Hypocrites. Living in known Sin nullifies Men's Pretenſions, be they never ſo ſpecious. 2. How 'tis expreſs'd. *I never knew you*, i. e. I never own'd you as my Servants, no, not when you *propheſied in my Name*; when you were in the Height of your Profeſſion, and were moſt cry'd up. This intimates that if he had ever known them, *as the Lord knows them that are his*, had ever own'd them and lov'd them as his, he would have known them, and own'd them, and lov'd them to the End. But he *never did know them*, for he always knew them to be Hypocrites, and rotten at Heart, as he did *Judas*; therefore, *Depart from me.* Hath Chriſt need of ſuch Gueſts? When he came in the Fleſh he call'd Sinners to him, *Mat.* 9. 13. But when he ſhall come again in Glory, he will drive Sinners from him. They that would not come to him to be ſav'd, muſt depart from him to be damn'd. To depart from Chriſt is the very Hell of Hell; 'tis the Foundation of all the Miſery of the Damn'd, to be cut off from all Hope of Benefit of Chriſt and his Mediation. Thoſe that go no further in Chriſt's Service than a bare Profeſſion, he doth not accept, nor will he own in the great Day. See from what a Height of Hope Men may fall into the Depth of Miſery, how they may go to Hell by the Gates of Heaven. This ſhould be an awakening Word to all Chriſtians. If a Preacher, one that caſt out Devils, and wrought Miracles, be diſowned of Chriſt, for working Iniquity, what will become of us if we be found ſuch? And if we be ſuch, we ſhall certainly be found ſuch. At God's Bar a Profeſſion of Religion will not bear out any Man in the Practice and Indulgence of Sin. Therefore *let every one that names the Name of Chriſt depart from all Iniquity.*

Secondly, He ſhews by a *Parable*, that *Hearing* theſe ſayings of Chriſt will not make us happy, if we do not make Conſcience of *doing them*; but if we hear them and do them, we are *bleſſed in our Deed*, v. 24.–27.

1. The Hearers of Chriſt's Word are here divided into two ſorts; ſome that hear, and do what they hear, others that hear, and do not do. Chriſt preach'd now to a mixt *Multitude*, and he thus *ſeparates them one from the other*, as he will at the great Day, when *all Nations ſhall be gather'd before him.* Chriſt is ſtill ſpeaking from Heaven by his Word and Spirit, ſpeaks by Miniſters, by Providences, and of thoſe that hear him there are two Sorts.

(1.) Some that *hear his Sayings and do them*; Bleſſed be God, that there are any ſuch, though comparatively few. To hear Chriſt is not barely to *give him the Hearing*, but to obey him. *Note*, It highly concerns us all to do what we hear of the Sayings of Chriſt. 'Tis a Mercy that we hear his Sayings. *Bleſſed are thoſe Ears*, Mat. 13. 16, 17. But if we *practiſe* not what we hear, we receive that Grace in vain. To do Chriſt's Sayings is conſciouſly to abſtain from the Sins that he forbids, and perform the Duties that he requires. Our Thoughts and Affections, our Words and Actions, the Temper of our Minds, and the Tenour of our Lives, muſt be conformable to the Goſpel of Chriſt, that's the *doing he requires.* All the *Sayings* of Chriſt, not only the *Laws* he hath enacted, but the *Truths* he hath revealed, muſt be done by us: They are a Light not only to *our Eyes*, but to our *Feet*; and are deſign'd not only to inform our Judgments, but to reform our Hearts and Lives: Nor do we indeed believe them, if we do not live up to them. Obſerve, It is not enough to hear Chriſt's Sayings and *underſtand* them, hear them and *remember* them, hear them and talk of them, repeat them, diſpute for them, but we muſt hear and *do them.* *This do*, and thou ſhalt live. Thoſe only that *hear and do are bleſſed*, Luke 11. 28. John 13. 17. and are *a-kin to Chriſt*, Mat. 12. 50.

(2.) There are others who hear Chriſt's Sayings, and *do them not*. Their Religion reſts in bare Hearing, and goes no further, like Children that have the Rickets, their Heads ſwell with empty Notions, and indigeſted Opinions, but their Joynts are weak, and they heavy and liſtleſs; they neither can ſtir, nor care to ſtir in any good Duty. They *hear God's Words* as if they deſire to *know his Ways*, like a *People that did Righteouſneſs*, but they will not *do them*, Ezek. 33. 30, 31. Iſa. 58. 2. Thus they deceive themſelves as *Micah*, who thought himſelf happy becauſe he had a *Levite* to be his *Prieſt*, though he had not the Lord to be his *God*. The Seed *is ſown*, but it never *comes up*; they ſee their Spots in the Glaſs of the Word, but Waſh them not off, *Jam.* 1. 22, 24. Thus they put a Cheat upon their own Souls; for it is certain if our Hearing be not the means of our Obedience, 'twill be the Aggravation of our Diſobedience. Thoſe who only hear Chriſt's Sayings and do them not, ſit down in the *Mid-way* to Heaven, and that will never bring them to their Journeys End; They are a-kin to Chriſt, only by the *Half-blood*, and our Law allows not ſuch to inherit.

2. Theſe two Sorts of Hearers are here repreſented in their true Characters, and the State of their Caſe, under the Compariſon of two Builders; One was *wiſe*, and built upon the Rock, and his Building ſtood in a Storm; the other *fooliſh*, and built upon the Sand, and his Building fell.

Now 1. The general Scope of this Parable teacheth us, that the only Way to make *ſure Work* for our Souls and Eternity, is to *hear* and *do* the Sayings of our Lord Jeſus; *theſe Sayings of his* in this Sermon upon the Mount, which is wholly practical; ſome of them ſeem hard Sayings to Fleſh and Blood, but they muſt be done; and thus we lay up a ſtore, *a good Foundation for the time to come*, 1 Tim. 6. 19. *A good Bond*, ſo ſome read it, a Bond of *God's making*, which ſecures Salvation upon Goſpel Terms, that's a good Bond, not one of our own deviſing, which brings Salvation to our own Fancies. Thoſe make ſure *the good Part*, who, like *Mary*, when they hear the Word of Chriſt, *ſit at his Feet*, in Subjection to it; *Speak, Lord, for thy Servant hears.*

2. The particular Parts of it teach us divers good Leſſons.

1. That we have every one of us *a Houſe to Build*, and that Houſe is our Hopes for Heaven. It ought to be our chief and conſtant Care to make our Calling and Election ſure, and ſo we make our Salvation ſure; to ſecure a Title to Heaven's Happineſs, and then to get the comfortable Evidence of it; to make it ſure, and ſure to ourſelves, that *when we fail, we ſhall be received into Everlaſting Habitations.* Many never mind this; 'tis the furtheſt thing in their Thoughts; they are building for *this* World, as if they were to be here always, but take no Care to build for *another* World. All that take upon them a Profeſſion of Religion profeſs to enquire, what they ſhould do to be ſav'd? How they may get to Heaven at laſt, and may have a well-grounded Hope of it in the mean time.

2. That there is a Rock provided for us to build this Houſe upon, and that Rock is Chriſt. He is *laid for a Foundation*, and other Foundation can no Man lay, *Iſa.* 28. 16. 2 *Cor.* 3. 11. He is *our Hope*, 1 Tim. 1, 1. Chriſt in us is ſo; we muſt ground our Hopes for Heaven upon the Fulneſs of Chriſt's Merit for the Pardon of Sin, the Power of his Spirit for the Sanctification of our Nature, and the Prevalency of his Interceſſion for the drawing out of all that good which he hath purchas'd for us. There is that in him, as he is *made known* and *made over* to us in the Goſpel, which is ſufficient to redreſs all our Grievances, and to anſwer all the Neceſſities of our Caſe, ſo that he is a *Saviour to the uttermoſt.* The Church is built upon this Rock, and ſo is every Believer. He is ſtrong and immoveable as a Rock; we may venture our All upon him, and ſhall not be made aſhamed of our Hope.

3. There is a Remnant, who by hearing and doing the Sayings of Chriſt, build their Hopes upon this Rock, and it is their Wiſdom. Chriſt is our only way to the Father, but the Obedience of Faith is our only Way to Chriſt; for to them that *obey him*, and to them only, he becomes the *Author of eternal Salvation.* Thoſe *build upon Chriſt*, who having ſincerely conſented to him as their Prince and Saviour, make it their conſtant Care to conform to all the Rules of his Holy Religion, and therein depend entirely upon him for Aſſiſtance from God, and Acceptance with him; and count every thing but Loſs and Dung, that they may win Chriſt, and be *found in him.* Building upon a Rock requires Care and Pains; thoſe that would make their Calling and Election ſure muſt *give Diligence.* Thoſe are wiſe Builders, that begin to build, ſo as they may be *able to finiſh*, Luke 14. 30. and therefore lay a firm Foundation.

4. There are many who profeſs they hope to go to Heaven, but deſpiſe this Rock, and build their Hopes upon the Sand, which is done without much Pains, but it is their Folly. Every thing beſides Chriſt is Sand. Some build their Hopes upon their worldly Proſperity, as if that were a ſure Token of God's Favour, *Hoſ.* 12. 8. Others upon their External Profeſſion of Religion, the Priviledges they enjoy, and the Performances they go through in that Profeſſion, and the Reputation they have got by it. They are called Chriſtians, were Baptiz'd, go to Church, hear Chriſt's Word, ſay their Prayers, and do no body any harm, and if they Periſh, God help a great many. This is the *Light of their own Fire* which they *walk in*; this is that which with a great deal of Aſſurance they venture upon; but its all Sand, too weak to bear ſuch a Fabrick as our Hopes for Heaven.

5. There is a Storm coming that will try what our hopes are bottom'd on, *try every Man's Work*, 1 Cor. 3. 13. will *diſcover the Foundation*, Hab. 3. 13. *Rain*, and *Floods*, and *Wind*, will *beat upon the Houſe*; the Tryal is ſometimes in this World, when *Tribulation and Perſecution ariſe becauſe of the Word*, then it will be ſeen who only heard the Word, and who heard and practis'd it; then when we have occaſion to uſe our Hopes, it will be try'd whether they were right and well grounded or no. However, when Death and Judgment come, then the Storm comes, and it will undoubtedly come, how calm ſoever things may be with us now. Then every thing elſe will fail us but theſe Hopes, and then, if ever, they will be turn'd into everlaſting Fruition.

6. Thoſe Hopes that are built upon Chriſt the Rock will ſtand, and will ſtand the Builder in ſtead when the Storm comes. They will be his Preſervation, both from Deſertion, and from prevailing Diſquiet. His Profeſſion will not wither, his Comforts will not fail, they will be his Strength and Song, as *an Anchor of the Soul, ſure and ſtedfaſt*. When he comes to the laſt Encounter, thoſe Hopes will take off the Terror of Death, and the Grave, will carry him chearfully through that dark valley, will be approved by the Judge, will ſtaud the Teſt of the Great Day, and will be crown'd with Endleſs Glory, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. 2 *Tim.* 4. 7, 8. Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he comes, finds ſo doing, ſo hoping.

7. Thoſe Hopes which fooliſh Builders ground upon any thing but Chriſt, will certainly fail them in a ſtormy Day, will yield them no true Comfort and Satisfaction in Trouble, in the Hour of Death, and in the Day of Judgment; will be no Fence againſt Temptations to Apoſtacy in a Time of Perſecution; when God takes away the Soul, *where is the Hope of the Hypocrite?* Job. 27. 8. 'Tis as the *Spider's Web*, and as the *giving up of the Ghoſt*. He ſhall *lean upon his Houſe, but it ſhall not ſtand*, Job. 8. 15. It fell in the *Storm*, when the Builder had moſt need of it, and expected it ſhould be a Shelter to him. It fell when it was too late to build another; *when a wicked Man dies, his Expectation periſhes*, then when he thought it ſhould have been turn'd into Fruition. It fell, and *great was the Fall of it*. 'Twas a great Diſappointment to the Builder, the Shame and Loſs was great; the higher Men's Hopes have been rais'd, the lower they fall. It is the ſoreſt Ruin of all that attends formal Profeſſors; witneſs *Capernaum*'s Doom.

Laſtly, In the two laſt Verſes we are told what Impreſſions Chriſt's Diſcourſe made upon the Auditory. 'Twas an excellent Sermon, and 'tis probable he ſaid more than is here recorded, and doubtleſs the Delivery of it from the Mouth of him, into whoſe Lips Grace was pour'd, did mightily ſet it off. Now (1.) they were *aſtoniſh'd at his Doctrine*; 'tis to be fear'd few of them were brought by it to follow him, but for the preſent they were fill'd with Wonder. *Note*, It is poſſible for People to admire good Preaching, and yet to remain in Ignorance and Unbelief; to be *aſtoniſh'd*, and yet not *Sanctified*. (2.) The Reaſon was becauſe he taught them, *as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes*. The *Scribes* pretended to as much Authority as any Teachers whatſoever, and were ſupported by all the external Advantages that could be, but their Preaching was mean, and flat, and jejune; they ſpake as thoſe that were not themſelves *Maſters* of what they Preach'd; the Word did not come from them with any Life or Force, they deliver'd it as a School-boy ſaith his Leſſon, but Chriſt deliver'd his Diſcourſe as a Judge gives his Charge. He did indeed, *dominari in concionibus*; his Leſſons were Laws, his Word a Word of Command. Chriſt upon the Mountain ſhew'd more true Authority than the *Scribes* in *Moſes's Seat*. Thus when Chriſt teacheth by his Spirit in the Soul, he teacheth *with Authority*. He ſaith, Let there be Light, and there is Light.

CHAP. VIII.

The Evangeliſt had given this general Idea of the Converſation of our Lord Jeſus, after his entrance upon his publick Work, that he went about Preaching the Goſpel, and healing all manner of Sickneſs, Chap. 4. 23. *And the Doctrine he preach'd was both confirm'd and recommended by the Cures he wrought: having therefore in the foregoing Chapters given us a* Specimen *of his Preaching, he comes now to give ſome Inſtances of the Miracles he wrought, which prove him a* Teacher come from God, *and the great* Healer *of a diſeaſed World. In this Chapter we have* (1.) *Chriſt's* Cleanſing *of a Leper,* v. 1.—4. (2.) *His* Curing *a Palſy and Fever,* v. 5.—18. (3.) *His* Communing *with two that had a mind to follow him,* v. 19.—22. (4.) *His* Controuling *of the Tempeſts,* v. 37—27. (5.) *His* caſting *out of Devils,* v. 27.—34.

WHen he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. 2 And behold, there came a leper, and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean. 3 And Jeſus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, ſaying, I will, be thou clean. And immediately his leproſy was cleanſed. 4 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, See thou tell no man, but go thy way, ſhew thy ſelf to the Prieſt, and offer the gift that Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them.

The firſt Verſe refers to the cloſe of his foregoing Sermon; the People that heard him were *aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine*, and the Effects of that was, that *when he came down from the Mountain great Multitudes followed him*; tho' he was ſo ſtrict a Law-giver, and ſo faithful a Reprover, they diligently attended him, and were loth to diſperſe and go from him. *Note*, Thoſe to whom Chriſt has manifeſted himſelf, cannot but deſire to be better acquainted with him. They who know *much* of Chriſt ſhould covet to know *more*; and then ſhall we know, if we thus follow on to know the Lord. It's good to ſee People ſo well affected to Chriſt, as never to think they can hear enough of him; ſo well affected to the *beſt things*, as thus to flock after good Preaching, and to *follow the Lamb* whitherſoever he goes. Now was *Jacob*'s Prophecy concerning the *Meſſiah* fulfill'd, that *unto him ſhall the gathering of the People be*; yet thoſe who gather'd to him did not cleave to him. They who follow'd him cloſely and conſtantly were but few, compar'd with the Multitudes that were but *followers at large*.

In theſe Verſes we have an Account of Chriſt's *cleanſing a Leper*. It ſhould ſeem by comparing *Mark* 1. 40. and *Luke* 5. 12. that this Paſſage, tho' plac'd by St. *Matthew* after the Sermon on the Mount, becauſe he would give an Account of his Doctrine firſt, and then of his Miracles, yet happen'd ſome time before; but that is not at all material. This is fitly recorded with the firſt of Chriſt's Miracles; (1.) becauſe the Leproſy was look'd upon among the *Jews* as a particular Mark of God's Diſpleaſure: Hence we find *Miriam*, *Gehazi*, and *Uzziah* ſmitten with Leproſy for ſome one particular Sin, and therefore Chriſt, to ſhew that he came to turn away the Wrath of God, by taking away Sin, began with the Cure of a Leper. (2.) Becauſe this Diſeaſe, as it was ſuppos'd to come immediately from the Hand of God, ſo alſo to be removed immediately by his Hand, and therefore 'twas not attempted to be cur'd by Phyſicians, but was put under the Inſpection of the Prieſts, the Lord's Miniſters, who waited to ſee what God would do. And its being in a Garment, or in the Walls of a Houſe, was altogether Supernatural; and it ſhould ſeem to be a Diſeaſe of a quite different Nature, from what we call now the Leproſy. The King of *Iſrael* ſaid, *Am I a God*, that I am ſent to *recover a Man of his Leproſy*? 2 Kings 5. 7. Chriſt prov'd himſelf *God*, by recovering many from the Leproſy, and authorizing his Diſciples in his Name to do ſo too, *Chap.* 10. 8. and 'tis put among the Proofs of his being the Meſſiah, *Chap.* 11. 5. he alſo ſhew'd himſelf to be the *Saviour of his People from their Sins*; for tho' every Diſeaſe is both the Fruit of Sin, and a Figure of it, as the Diſorder of the Soul, yet the Leproſy was in a ſpecial manner ſo; for it contracted ſuch a Pollution, and oblig'd to ſuch a ſeparation from holy Things, as no other Diſeaſe did; and therefore in the Laws concerning it, *Lev.* 13. and 14. 'tis treated not as a *Sickneſs*, but as an *Uncleanneſs*; the Prieſt was to pronounce the Party *Clean or Unclean*, according as the Indications were; but the Honour of *making the Lepers clean* was reſerv'd for Chriſt, who was to do it as the *High-Prieſt of our Profeſſion*; he comes to do that which *the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the Fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. The Law diſcover'd Sin; for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin; and pronounc'd Sinners unclean, it *ſhut them up*, (Gal. 3. 23.) as the Prieſt did the Leper, but could go no further; it could not *make the comers thereunto perfect*. But Chriſt takes away Sin, cleanſeth us from it, and ſo *perfecteth for ever them that are Sanctified*. Now here we have,

1. The Lepers Addreſs to Chriſt. If this happen'd, as 'tis here placed, after the Sermon on the Mount, we may ſuppoſe that the Leper, tho' ſhut out by his Diſeaſe from the Cities of *Iſrael*, yet got within hearing of Chriſt's Sermon, and was encouraged by it to make his Application to him; for he that taught, *as one having Authority*, could Heal ſo; and therefore he *came and Worſhipped him*, as one cloth'd with a divine Power. His Addreſs is, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean*. The Cleanſing of him may be conſider'd

(1.) As a *Temporal* Mercy, a Mercy to the Body, delivering it from a Diſeaſe, which tho' it did not *threaten* Life, *embitter'd it*. And ſo it directs us, not only to apply ourſelves to Chriſt, who has Power over bodily Diſeaſes for the Cure of them, but in what manner to apply ourſelves to him; with an Aſſurance of his Power, he is as able to cure Diſeaſes now as he was when on Earth, but with a Submiſſion to his Will; *Lord, if thou wi't, thon canſt.* As to Temporal Mercies we cannot be ſo ſure of God's Will to beſtow them, as we may of his Power, for his Power in them is *unlimited*, but his Promiſe of them is limited as far as it is for his Glory, and our Good; but when we cannot be ſure of his Will, yet we may be ſure of his *Wiſdom and Mercy*, to which we may chearfully refer ourſelves; *Thy*

Will be done: And this makes the *Expectation eaſy,* and the *Event,* when it comes, *comfortable.*

(2.) As a *Typical* Mercy. Sin is the *Leproſy* of the Soul, it ſhuts us out from Communion with God; to which that we may be reſtor'd, 'tis neceſſary we be cleans'd from this Leproſy, and ought to be our great Concern. Now, obſerve, It is our Comfort when we apply our ſelves to Chriſt as the great Phyſician, that if he will, he can make us clean, and we ſhould with humble believing boldneſs go to him and tell him ſo. That is, (1.) we muſt *reſt ourſelves upon his Power,* be confident of this, that Chriſt *can make us clean.* No Guilt ſo great, but there is a Sufficiency in his Righteouſneſs to atone for it; no Corruption ſo ſtrong, but there is a Sufficiency in his Grace to ſubdue it. God would not appoint a Phyſician to his Hoſpital that is not *par Negotio,* every way qualified for the Undertaking. (2.) We muſt *recommend our ſelves to his Pity,* we cannot demand it as a Debt, but we humbly requeſt it as a Favour; *Lord, if thou wilt.* I throw myſelf at thy Feet, and if I periſh, I will periſh there,

2. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Addreſs, which was very kind, *v.* 3.

(1.) He *put forth his Hand and touch'd him.* The Leproſy was a noiſome loathſome Diſeaſe, yet Chriſt touch'd him; for he did not diſdain to Converſe with Publicans and Sinners to do them good. There was a Ceremonial Pollution contracted by the Touch of a Leper, but Chriſt would ſhew, that when he Convers'd with Sinners he was in no danger of being infected by them, for the Prince of this World had nothing in him. If we touch Pitch we are defiled; but Chriſt was *ſeparate from Sinners,* even when he liv'd among them.

(2.) He ſaid, *I will, be thou clean.* He did not ſay, *as Eliſha* to *Naaman, Go, waſh in Jordan;* did not put him upon a tedious, troubleſome, chargeable Courſe of Phyſick, but ſpake the Word, and heal'd him. (1.) Here's a Word of *Kindneſs; I will.* I am as willing to help thee, as thou art to be help'd. *Note,* Thoſe who by Faith apply themſelves to Chriſt for Mercy and Grace, may be ſure that he is willing, freely willing to give them the Mercy and Grace they come to him for. Chriſt is a Phyſician that doth not need to be *ſought for,* he is always in the way; doth not need to be *urg'd,* while we are yet ſpeaking he hears; doth not need to be *Feed,* he heals freely, *not for Price or Reward.* He has given all poſſible Demonſtration, that he is as willing as he is able to ſave Sinners. (2.) A Word of *Power, Be thou clean.* Both a Power of Authority, and a Power of Energy are exerted in this Word. Chriſt heals by a Word of Command *to us; Be thou clean,* i. e. be willing to be clean, and uſe the Means; cleanſe thyſelf from all Filthineſs, but there goes along with this Word of Command *concerning us,* a Word that doth the Work; *I will that thou be clean.* Such a word as this is neceſſary to the Cure, and effectual for it; and the Almighty Grace which ſpeaks it ſhall not be wanting to thoſe that truly deſire it.

3. The happy Change hereby wrought. *Immediately his Leproſy was cleanſed.* Nature works gradually, but the God of Nature works *immediately;* he *ſpeaks, it is done;* and yet works effectually; he *commands, and it ſtands faſt.* One of the firſt Miracles *Moſes* wrought, was curing *himſelf* of a *Leproſy,* Exod. 4. 7. for the Prieſts under the Law offer'd Sacrifice firſt for their *own Sin;* but one of Chriſt's firſt Miracles was curing *another* of a Leproſy, for he had no Sin of *his own* to atone for.

4. The After-directions Chriſt gave him. 'Tis fit that thoſe who are cur'd by Chriſt ſhould ever after be rul'd by him.

1. *See thou tell no Man,* i. e. tell no Man till thou haſt ſhew'd thy ſelf to the Prieſt, and he has pronounc'd thee *clean;* and ſo thou haſt a legal Proof, both that thou waſt before a Leper, and art now throughly cleans'd. Chriſt would have his Miracles to appear in their full Light and Evidence, and not to be publiſh'd till they could appear ſo. *Note,* Thoſe that *Preach* the Truths of Chriſt ſhould be able to *prove them,* to defend what they Preach, and *convince Gainſayers. Tell no Man till thou haſt ſhewed thyſelf to the Prieſt,* leſt if he hear who cur'd thee, he ſhould out of ſpite deny to give thee a Certificate of the Cure, and ſo continue thee under Confinement. Such were the Prieſts in Chriſt's Time, that thoſe who had any thing to do with them had need to be wiſe as Serpents.

2. *Go, ſhew thyſelf to the Prieſt,* according to the Law, *Lev.* 14. 2. Chriſt took care to have the Law obſerv'd, leſt he ſhould give Offence; and to ſhew that he will have Order kept up, and good Diſcipline and Reſpect paid to thoſe that are in Office. It may be of uſe to thoſe who are cleans'd of their ſpiritual Leproſy to have recourſe to Church Miniſters, and open their Caſe to them, that they may aſſiſt them in their Enquiries into their ſpiritual State, and adviſe and comfort them, and pray for them.

3. *Offer the Gift that* Moſes *commanded,* in Token of Thankfulneſs to God, and Recompence to the Prieſt for his Pains; and this *for a Teſtimony unto them;* either (1.) which *Moſes commanded for a Teſtimony:* The Ceremonial Laws were Teſtimonies of God's Authority over them, Care of them, and of that Grace which ſhould after be reveal'd. Or, (2.) do thou *offer it* for a Teſtimony, and let the Prieſt know who cleans'd thee, and how, and it ſhall be a Teſtimony that there is one among them who doth that which the High-Prieſt cannot do. Let it remain upon Record as a Witneſs of my Power, and a Teſtimony for me to them, if they will uſe it, and improve it, but *againſt them,* if they will not; for ſo Chriſt's Word and Works are *Teſtimonies.*

5 And when Jeſus was entred into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beſeeching him, 6 And ſaying, Lord, my ſervant lieth at home ſick of the palſy, grievouſly tormented. 7 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion anſwered and ſaid, Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt come under my roof: but ſpeak the word only, and my ſervant ſhall be healed. 9 For I am a man under authority, having ſoldiers under me: and I ſay to this *man,* Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come, and he cometh: and to my Servant, Do this, and he doeth it. 10 When Jeſus heard *it,* he marvelled, and ſaid to them that followed, Verily I ſay unto you, I have not found ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael. 11 And I ſay unto you, That many ſhall come from the eaſt and weſt, and ſhall ſit down with Abraham and Iſaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the children of the kingdom ſhall be caſt out into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. 13 And Jeſus ſaid unto the centurion, Go thy way, and as thou haſt believed, ſo be it done unto thee. And his ſervant was healed in the ſelf ſame hour.

We have here an Account of Chriſt's curing the Centurion's Servant of a Palſy. This was done at *Capernaum,* where Chriſt now dwelt, *Chap.* 4. 13. Chriſt went about doing Good, and came home to do Good too; every Place he came to was the better for him. The Perſons Chriſt had now to do with were,

1. A *Centurion,* he was the *Supplicant;* a *Gentile,* a *Roman,* a Captain, an Officer of the Army; probably Commander in chief of that part of the *Roman* Army which was quarter'd at *Capernaum,* and kept Garriſon there. (1.) Tho' he was a Soldier, and a little Piety commonly goes a great way with Men of that Profeſſion, yet he was a Godly Man, he was eminently ſo. *Note,* God hath his Remnant among all Sorts of People. No Man's Calling or Place in the World will be an Excuſe for his Unbelief and Impiety; none ſhall ſay in the Great Day, I had been *Religious* if I had not been a Soldier: for ſuch there are among the Ranſomed of the Lord; and ſometimes where Grace conquers the Unlikely, it is more than a Conqueror; this Soldier that was *good,* was *very good.* (2.) Tho' he was a *Roman* Soldier, and his very Dwelling among the *Jews* was a Badge of their Subjection to the *Roman* Yoke, yet Chriſt who was *King of the Jews* favour'd him; and therein has taught us to do good to our Enemies, and not needleſly to intereſt ourſelves in National Enmities (3.) Tho' he was a *Gentile,* yet Chriſt countenanc'd him. 'Tis true he went not to any of the *Gentile* Towns, ('twas the Land of *Canaan* that was *Immanuel*'s Land, *Iſa.* 8. 8.) yet he received Addreſſes from *Gentiles;* now good old *Simeon*'s Word began to be fulfill'd, that he ſhould be a *Light to lighten the Gentiles,* as well as *the Glory of his People Iſrael. Matthew* in annexing this Cure to that of the Leper, who was a *Jew,* intimates this; the *Leprous Jews* Chriſt *touch'd* and *cur'd,* for he preach'd Perſonally to them; but the *Paralytick Gentiles* he cur'd *at a diſtance;* for to them he did not go *in Perſon,* but *ſent his Word and heal'd them;* yet in them he was more Magnified.

2. The Centurion's *Servant,* he was the *Patient.* In this alſo it appears that there is *no Reſpect of Perſons with God,* for in Chriſt Jeſus, as there is neither *Circumciſion, nor Uncircumciſion,* ſo there is *neither Bond nor Free.* He is as ready to heal the *pooreſt* Servant, as the *richeſt* Maſter; for himſelf *took upon him the Form of a Servant,* to ſhew his Regard to the Meaneſt.

Now in the Story of the Cure of this Servant, we may obſerve an *Intercourſe* or *Interchanging of Graces,* very remarkable between *Chriſt* and the *Centurion.* See here,

Firſt, The *Grace* of the *Centurion* working *towards Chriſt.* Can any good thing come out of a *Roman* Soldier? Any thing *tolerable,* much leſs any thing *laudable? Come and ſee,* and you will find abundance of Good coming out of this Centurion, that was Eminent and Exemplary. *Obſerve,*

1. His *Affectionate Addreſs* to Jeſus Chriſt, which ſpeaks

(1.) A *Pious Regard* to our *Great Maſter,* as one able and willing to ſuccour and relieve poor Petitioners. He came to him, *beſeeching him,* not as *Naaman* the *Syrian,* (a Centurion too) came to *Eliſha,* demanding a Cure, taking State, and ſtanding upon Points of Honour, but with Cap in Hand, as a humble Suiter. By this it appears that he ſaw more in Chriſt than what appear'd at firſt view; ſaw that which commanded Reſpect, tho' to thoſe that look'd no further, his *Viſage* was *marred* more than any Man's. The Officers of the Army being Comptrollers of the Town, no doubt, made a great Figure, yet he lays by the Thoughts of his Poſt of Honour, when he addreſſeth himſelf to Chriſt, and comes *beſeeching him. Note,* The greateſt of Men muſt turn Beggars when they have to do with Chriſt. He owns Chriſt's Soveraignity in calling him *Lord,* and referring the Caſe to him, and to his Will, and Wiſdom, by a modeſt *Remonſtrance,* without any formal and expreſs Petition. He knew he had to do with a wiſe and gracious Phyſician, to whom the *opening of the Malady* was equivalent to the moſt earneſt Requeſt. A humble Confeſſion of our Spiritual Wants and Diſeaſes ſhall not fail of an

Anſwer of Peace, Pour out thy Complaint, and Mercy ſhall be pour'd out.

(2.) A *Charitable Regard* to his *poor Servant.* We read of many that came to Chriſt for their Children, but this is the only Inſtance of one that came to him for a Servant, *Lord, my Servant lies at home Sick. Note,* It is the Duty of Maſters to concern themſelves for their Servants when they are in Affliction. The *Palſie* diſabled the Servant for his Work, and made him as troubleſome and tedious as any Diſtemper could, yet he did not turn him away when he was Sick, as that *Amalakite* did his Servant, 1 *Sam.* 30. 13. did not ſend him to his Friends, or let him lye by neglected, but ſought out the beſt Relief he could for him; the Servants could not have done more for the Maſter, than the Maſter did here for the Servant. The Centurion's Servants were very dutiful to him, *v.* 9. and here we ſee what made them ſo, he was very kind to them, and that made them the more chearfully obedient to him. As we muſt not *deſpiſe the Cauſe of our Servants when they contend with us,* Job 31. 13, 14, 15. So we muſt not deſpiſe their Caſe when God contends with them, for we are made of the ſame Mould, by the ſame Hand, and ſtand upon the ſame Level with them before God, and muſt not ſet them with the *Dogs of our Flock.* The Centurion ſeeks not to Witches and Wizzards for his Servant, but to Chriſt. The Palſie is a Diſeaſe, in which the Phyſicians Skill commonly fails; it was therefore a great Evidence of his Faith in the Power of Chriſt to come to him for a Cure, which was above the Power of natural Helps to effect. Obſerve how pathetically he repreſents his Servant's Caſe as very ſad; he is *ſick of the Palſy,* a Diſeaſe which commonly makes the Patient ſenceleſs of Pain, but this here was *greivouſly tormented* ; being yonng, Nature was *ſtrong* to ſtruggle with the ſtroke which made it painful. 'Twas not *Paralyſis Simplex,* but *Scorbutica.* We ſhould thus concern ourſelves for the Souls of our Children and Servants that are Spiritually Sick of the Palſy, the Dead-Palſy, the Dumb-Palſy, ſenceleſs of Spiritual Evils, unactive in that which is ſpiritually good, and bring them to Chriſt by Faith and Prayer, bring them to the Means of Healing and Health.

2. See here his great *Humility* and *Self-abaſement.* After Chriſt had intimated his Readineſs to come and heal his Servant, *v.* 7. he expreſs'd himſelf with the more humbleneſs of Mind. *Note,* Humble Souls are made more humble by Chriſt's gracious Condeſcenſions to them. Obſerve what was the Language of his Humility; *Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhould'ſt come under my roof,* v. 8. which ſpeaks *mean* thoughts of himſelf, and high thoughts of our Lord Jeſus. He doth not ſay, my Servant is not worthy that thou ſhould'ſt come into his Chamber, becauſe its in the Garret; but *I am not worthy that thou ſhould'ſt come into my Houſe.* The Centurion was a great Man, yet own'd his Unworthineſs before God. *Note,* Humility very well becomes Perſons of Quality. Chriſt now made but a mean Figure in the World, yet the Centurion looking upon him as a Prophet, yea, more than a Prophet, paid him this Reſpect. *Note,* We ſhould have a Value and Veneration for what we ſee of God, even in thoſe who in outward Condition are everyway our inferiors. The Centurion came to Chriſt with a Petition, and therefore expreſſeth himſelf thus humbly. *Note,* In all our Approaches to Chriſt, and to God through Chriſt, it becomes us to abaſe ourſelves, and to lye low in the Senſe of our own Unworthineſs, as *mean Creatures,* and as *vile Sinners,* to do any thing for God, receive any Good from him, or to have any thing to do with him.

3. See here his *great Faith.* And the more Humility the more Faith; the more diffident we are of ourſelves, the ſtronger will be our Confidence in Jeſus Chriſt. He had an Aſſurance of Faith, not only that Chriſt could cure his Servant, but

1. That he could cure him at a diſtance: There needed not any Phyſical Contact, as in natural Operations, no Application to the part affected, no, not to the Blood or the Weapon, as is pretended in the *ſympathetick Powder* ; but the Cure he believes may be wrought without bringing the Phyſician and Patient together. We read afterwards of thoſe who *brought the Man ſick of the Palſy to Chriſt,* thro' much difficulty, and ſet him before him, and Chriſt commended *their* Faith for a *working* Faith; this Centurion did *not* bring his *Man ſick of the Palſy,* and Chriſt commended his Faith for a *truſting* Faith; true Faith is accepted of Chriſt, tho' variouſly appearing; Chriſt puts the beſt Conſtruction upon the *different* Methods of Religion that People take, and thereby has taught us to do ſo too. This Centurion believed, and it is undoubtedly true, that the Power of Chriſt knows no limits, and therefore *near,* or *far off* are alike to him. Diſtance of Place cannot obſtruct either the knowing or working of him that *fills all Places. Am I a God at hand, ſaith the Lord, and not a God afar off,* Jer. 23. 23.

2. That he could cure him *with a Word,* not ſend him a Medicine, much leſs a Charm, but *ſpeak the Word only,* and I do not queſtion but *my Servant ſhall be healed.* Herein he owns him to have a *Divine Power,* an Authority to *command* all the Creatures, and Powers of Nature, which enables him to *do whatever he pleaſeth* in the Kingdom of Nature, as at firſt he rais'd that Kingdom by an Almighty Word when he ſaid, *Let there be Light.* With Men, *ſaying* and *doing* are *two things*; but not ſo with Chriſt, who is therefore the *Arm of the Lord,* becauſe he is the *Eternal Word.* His ſaying, *Be ye warmed, and filled,* (Jam. 2. 16.) and healed, *warms, and fills, and heals.*

The Centurion's Faith in the Power of Chriſt he here illuſtrates by the Dominion he had as a *Centurion* over his Soldiers, as a Maſter over his Servants; he ſaith to one, *Go, and he goes,* &c. They were all at his Beck and Command, ſo far, that he could by them execute things at a diſtance; his Word was a Law to them; *Dictum Factum* well Diſciplin'd Soldiers know that the Commands of their Officers are not to be *diſputed* bnt *obey'd*; thus could Chriſt ſpeak, and it is done; ſuch a Power had he over all bodily Diſeaſes. The Centurion had this Command over his Soldiers, tho' he was himſelf a *Man under Authority*; not a Commander in Chief, but a Subaltern Office; much more had Chriſt this Power, who is the Supream and Sovereign Lord of all. The Centurion's Servants were very obſequious, would go and come at every the leaſt intimation of their Maſter's Mind: Now, (1.) ſuch Servants we all ſhould be to God; we muſt *go* and *come* at his Bidding, according to the Directions of his Word, and the Diſpoſals of his Providence, run where he ſends us, return when he remands us, and do what he appoints. *What ſaith my Lord unto his Servant?* when his Will croſſeth our own, then his muſt take place, and our own be ſet aſide. (2.) Such Servants Bodily Diſeaſes are to Chriſt, they ſeize us when he ſends them, they leave us when he calls them back; they have that effect upon us, upon our Bodies, upon our Souls that he orders. 'Tis Matter of Comfort to all that belong to Chriſt, for whoſe Good his Power is exerted and engag'd, that every Diſeaſe hath his Commiſſion, executes his Command, is under his Controul, and is made to ſerve the Intentions of his Grace. Thoſe need not fear Sickneſs, nor what it can do, who ſee it in the Hand of ſo good a Friend.

Secondly, Here's the Grace of Chriſt appearing towards this Centurion; for to the Gracious he will ſhew himſelf Gracious.

1. He complies *with his Addreſs* at the firſt Word. He did but tell him his Servant's Caſe, and was going on to beg a Cure, when Chriſt prevented him with this good Word, and comfortable Word, *I will come and heal him,* v. 7. Not, I will come and *ſee him,* that had ſpoken him a *kind Saviour*; but I will come and *heal him,* that ſpeaks him a *mighty Saviour,* Almighty; 'twas a *great word,* but no more than he could *make good*; for he has *healing under his Wings*; his *coming is healing.* Thoſe who wrought Miracles by a *derived* Power, did not ſpeak thus poſitively as Chriſt did, who wrought them by his own Power, as one that had Authority. When a Miniſter is ſent for to a ſick Friend, he can but ſay, *I will come, and Pray for him*; but Chriſt ſaith, *I will come, and heal him*; 'tis well that Chriſt can do more for us then our Miniſters can. The Centurion deſired he would *heal* his Servant; he ſaith, *I will come and heal him*; thus expreſſing more Favour than he did either *aſk or think of. Note,* Chriſt often out-does the Expectations of poor Supplicants. See an Inſtance of Chriſt's Hamility, that he would make a viſit to a poor Soldier. He would not *go down to ſee* a Nobleman's ſick Child, who inſiſted upon his coming down, *John* 4. 47, 48, 49. but proffers to go down to ſee a ſick *Servant*; thus doth he *regard the low eſtate* of his People, and give more abundant Honour to that part which lacked. Chriſt's Humility in being *willing to come,* gave an Example to him, and occaſion'd his Humility, in owning himſelf unworthy to have him come, *Note,* Chriſt's gracious Condeſcentions to us, ſhould make us the more Humble and Self-abaſing before him.

2. He *commends his Faith,* and takes occaſion from it to ſpeak a kind word of the poor *Gentiles,* v. 10, 11, 12. See what great things a ſtrong, but Self-denying Faith can obtain from Jeſus Chriſt, even of general and publick Concern

1. As to the Centurion himſelf; he not only *approv'd* him, and *accepted* him (that Honour have all true Believers) but he *admir'd* him, and *applauded* him: That Honour great Believers have, as *Job,* There's *none like him in the Earth.*

(1.) Chriſt *admir'd him,* not for his Greatneſs, but for his Graces, *When Jeſus heard it, he marvelled*: not as if it were to him *new* and *ſurprizing,* he knew the Centurion's Faith, for he *wrought* it; but it was great and excellent, rare and uncommon, and Chriſt ſpoke of it as *wonderful,* to teach us what to admire; not worldly Pomp and Bravery, but the Beauty of Holineſs, and the Ornaments which are *in the ſight of God of great Price. Note,* The Wonders of Grace ſhould effect us more than the Wonders of Nature and Providence, and Spiritual Attainments more than any Atchievements in this World. Of thoſe that are *rich in Faith,* not of thoſe that are *rich in Gold and Silver,* we ſhould ſay that they have *gotten all this Glory,* Gen. 31. 1. But whatever there is *admirable* in the Faith of any, it muſt redound to the Glory of Chriſt, who ſhall ſhortly be himſelf *admir'd in all them that believe,* as having done in, and for them *Marvellous things.*

(2.) He *adplauded* them in what he ſaid to *them that follow'd.* All Believers ſhall *in the other World,* but ſome Believers are in this *World* confeſs'd and acknowledg'd by Chriſt *before Men,* in his eminent Appearances for them, and with them. *Verily I have not found ſo great Faith no, not in Iſrael.* Now this ſpeaks (1.) *Honour to the Centurion,* who, tho' not a Son of *Abraham*'s Loins, was an Heir of *Abraham*'s Faith, and Chriſt *found* it ſo. *Note,* The thing that Chriſt ſeeks is *Faith* and wherever it is he *finds* it, though but as a *grain of Muſtard-Seed.* He had not found *ſo great Faith,* all things conſider'd and in proportion to the means; as the poor Widow is ſaid to *caſt in more than they all,* Luke 21. 3. Tho' the Centurion was a *Gentile,* yet he was thus *Commended. Note,* We muſt be ſo far from *grudging,* that we muſt be forward to *give* thoſe their due Praiſe that are not within our Denomination or Pale. (2.) It ſpeaks *Shame to Iſrael,* to whom pertained *the Adoption, the Glory, the Covenants,* and all the Aſſiſtances and Encouragements of Faith, *Note,* When the Son of Man *comes* he *finds* little Faith, and therefore he finds ſo little Fruit. *Note,* The Attainments of ſome that have had but little Helps for their Souls, will aggravate the Sin and Ruin of many that have had great plenty of the Means of Grace, and have not made a good Improvement of them. Chriſt ſaid this to *thoſe that followed him*, if by any means he might provoke them to a holy Emulation, (as *Paul* ſpeaks *Rom.* 11. 14.) They were *Abraham*'s Seed, in jealouſy for that Honour, let them not ſuffer themſelves to be out-ſtrip'd, eſpecially in that Grace which *Abraham* was famous for, *by a Gentile*.

2. As to others; Chriſt takes occaſion from hence to make a compariſon between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and tells them two things, which could not but be very ſurprizing to them, who had been taught, that *Salvation was of the* Jews.

1. That *a great many of the Gentiles ſhould be ſaved*, v. 11. The Faith of the Centurion was but a *Specimen* of the Converſion of the *Gentiles*, and a Preface to their Adoption into the Church. This was a String our Lord Jeſus oft harp'd upon, he ſpeaks it with aſſurance; *I ſay unto you*, I that know all Men; and he could not ſay anything more pleaſing to himſelf, or more diſpleaſing to the *Jews*; an Intimation of this kind enrag'd the *Nazarenes* againſt him, *Luke* 4. 27. Chriſt gives us here an *Idea* (1.) of the *Perſons* that ſhall be *ſaved*; many *from the Eaſt and the Weſt*. He had ſaid, *Chap.* 7. 14. *Few there be that find the Way to Life*, and yet here *many ſhall come*. Few at one Time, and in one Place, yet when they come altogether, they will be a great many. We now ſee but here and there one brought to Grace; but we ſhall ſhortly ſee the Captain of our Salvation *bringing many Sons to Glory*, Heb. 2. 10. He will come with *ten Thouſand of his Saints*, Jude 14. ſuch a Company as *no Man can number*, Rev. 7. 9. *Nations of them that are ſaved*, *Rev.* 21. 24. They ſhall come from the *Eaſt*, and from the *Weſt*, Places far diſtant from each other, yet they ſhall all meet at the right Hand of Chriſt, the Centre of their Unity. *Note*, God has his Remnant in all Places; *from the riſing of the Sun, to the going down of the ſame*, Mal. 1. 11. The Elect will be gathered from the four Winds, *Mat.* 24. 31. They are ſown in the Earth, ſome ſcatter'd in every corner of the Field. The *Gentile* World lay *from Eaſt to Weſt*, and they are eſpecially meant here; tho' they were *ſtrangers to the Covenant of Promiſe* now, and had been long, yet who knows what *hidden ones* God had among them then? as in *Elijah's* time in *Iſrael*, 1 Kings 19. 14. and ſoon after they flock'd into the Church in great Multitudes, *Iſa.* 60. 3, 4. *Note*, When we come to Heaven, as we ſhall miſs a great many thence that we thought had been going thither, ſo we ſhall meet a great many there that we did not expect to have met there. (2.) Chriſt gives us an *Idea* of the *Salvation itſelf*. They ſhall *come*, ſhall *come together*, ſhall come together *to Chriſt*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 1. (1.) They ſhall *be admitted into the Kingdom of Grace* on Earth, into the Covenant of Grace, made with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*; they ſhall be bleſſed with faithful *Abraham*, whoſe Bleſſing comes upon the *Gentiles*, Gal. 3. 14. This makes *Zaccheus* a *Son of Abraham*, Luke 19. 9. (2.) They ſhall be admitted into the *Kingdom of Glory in Heaven*. They ſhall come chearfully, flying *as Doves to their Windows*; they ſhall *ſit down* to reſt from their Labours, as having done their Day's Work; ſitting notes *continuance*, while we *ſtand* we are going, where we ſit we mean to ſtay; Heaven is a *remaining* Reſt, 'tis a *continuing City*; they ſhall ſit down, as upon a Throne, *Rev.* 3. 21. as *at a Table*, that's the Metaphor here; they ſhall ſit down to be *feaſted*; which notes both *Fulneſs of Communication*, and *Freedom* and *Familiarity* of Communion, *Luke* 22. 30. They ſhall ſit down with *Abraham*. Thoſe that in this World were never ſo far diſtant from each other in Time, Place, or outward Condition, ſhall all meet together in Heaven; Ancients and Moderns, *Jew and Gentile*, Rich and Poor. The Rich Man in Hell *ſees Abraham*, but *Lazarus* ſits down with him, leaning on his Breaſt. *Note*, holy Society is a part of Heaven's Felicity; and thoſe on whom the Ends of the World are come, and are moſt obſcure, ſhall ſhare in Glory with the renowned Patriarchs.

2. That a *great many of the* Jews *ſhould periſh*, v. 12. *Obſerve*,

1. A *ſtrange Sentence* paſt. The *Children of the Kingdom ſhall be caſt out*, i. e. The *Jews* that perſiſt in Unbelief, tho' they were by Birth *Children of the Kingdom*, yet ſhall be cut off from being Members of the viſible Church; the *Kingdom of God*, which they boaſted that they were the *Children of*, ſhall be taken from them, and they ſhall become *not a People*, nor *obtaining Mercy*, Rom. 11. 20.--9. 31. In the great Day it will not avail Men to have been *Children of the Kingdom*, either as *Jews* or as Chriſtians; for Men will then be judg'd not by what they were call'd, but by what they were. *If Children* indeed, then heirs, but many are Children *in profeſſion* in the Family, but not of it, that will come ſhort of the Inheritance. Being born of profeſſing Parents, denominates us Children of the Kingdom; but if we reſt in that, and have nothing elſe to ſhew for Heaven but that, we ſhall be *caſt out*.

2. A *ſtrange Puniſhment* for the workers of Iniquity deſcrib'd. They ſhall be caſt into *outer Darkneſs*, the Darkneſs of thoſe that are *without*, i. e. of the *Gentiles*, that were out of the Church, into that the *Jews* were caſt, and worſe, they were *blinded* and *hardned*, and fill'd with Terrors, as the Apoſtle ſhews, *Rom.* 11. 8, 9, 10. A People ſo unchurch'd, and given up to ſpiritual Judgments, are in *utter Darkneſs* already. But it looks further to the ſtate of damned Sinners in Hell, which the other is a diſmal Preface to. They ſhall be *caſt out from God*, and all true Comfort, and caſt into *Darkneſs*: in Hell there's Fire, but no Light; 'tis utter Darkneſs, Darkneſs in extremity, the higheſt degree of Darkneſs, without any remainder, or mixture, or hope of Light; not the leaſt gleam or glimpſe of it. 'Tis Darkneſs that reſults from their being ſhut out of Heaven, the Land of Light. They that are *without* are in the *Regions of Darkneſs*, yet that is not the worſt of it, *there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*. (1.) In Hell there will be great *Grief*, Floods of Tears ſhed to no purpoſe, Anguiſh of Spirit preying eternally upon the Vitals in the Senſe of the Wrath of God, is the Torment of the Damned. (2.) *Great Indignation*. Damned Sinners will *gnaſh their Teeth* for Spite and Vexation, *full of the Fury of the Lord*, ſeeing with Envy the Happineſs of others, and reflecting with Horror upon the former poſſibility of their own being happy, which is now paſt.

3. He *cures his Servant*. He doth not only *commend* his Application to him, but *grants* him that which he apply'd himſelf to him for, which was a real Anſwer, *v.* 13. *Obſerve*,

(1.) What Chriſt ſaid to him. He ſaid that which made the Cure as great a Favour to him as it was to his Servant, and much greater, *as thou haſt believed, ſo be it done to thee*. The Servant got a Cure of his Diſeaſe, but the Maſter got the Confirmation and Approbation of his Faith. *Note*, Chriſt often gives encouraging Anſwers to his Praying People, when they are interceeding for others. 'Tis kindneſs to us to be heard for others; God return'd the Captivity of *Job* then when he *Pray'd for his Friends*, Job 42. 10. 'Twas a great Honour which Chriſt put upon this Centurion, when he gave him a Blank as it were; be it *done as thou believeſt*; what could ye have more? yet what was ſaid to him is ſaid to us all, *Believe and ye ſhall receive*, only believe. See here the Power of Chriſt, and the *Power of Faith*. As Chriſt can do what he will, ſo an Active Believer may have what he will from Chriſt. The Oil of Grace multiplies, and ſtays not till the Veſſels of Faith fail.

(2.) What was the effect of this ſaying. The Prayer of Faith was a prevailing Prayer, it ever was ſo, and ever will be ſo. It appears by the *ſuddenneſs* of the Cure that it was miraculous, and by its *coincidence* with Chriſt's ſaying that the Miracle was his; *he ſpake, and it was done*; and this was a Proof of his Omnipotence, that he has a long Arm. It is the Obſervation of a Learned Phyſician, that the Diſeaſes Chriſt cur'd, were moſtly ſuch as were the moſt difficult to be cur'd by any natural Means, and particularly the Palſie, *Omnis Paraliſis præſertim vetuſta, aut incurabilis eſt, aut difficilis curatu, etiam Pueris: Atque ſoleo ego dicere, Morbos omnes qui Chriſto curandi fuerant propoſiti difficillimos ſua Natura curatu eſſe. Mercurialis de Morbis Puerorum*, lib. 2. c. 5.

14 And when Jeſus was come into Peters houſe, he ſaw his wives mother laid, and ſick of a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and ſhe aroſe and miniſtred unto them. 16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were poſſeſſed with devils: and he caſt out the ſpirits with *his* word, and healed all that were ſick: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, Himſelf took our infirmities, and bear *our* ſickneſſes.

Thoſe that pretend to be critical in the Harmony of the Evangeliſts, place this Paſſage, and all that follows to the End of *Chap.* 9. before the Sermon on the Mount, according to the Order which *Mark* and *Luke* obſerve in placing it. Dr. *Lightfoot* placing only this Paſſage before the Sermon on the Mount, and *v.* 18, *&c.* after. Here we have,

Firſt, A *particular Account* of the Cure of *Peter*'s Wife's Mother, that was ill of a Fever. In which obſerve,

1. The *Caſe*, which was nothing extraordinary; Fevers are the moſt common Diſtempers, but the Patient being a near Relation of *Peter*'s, it is recorded as an Inſtance of Chriſt's peculiar Care of, and Kindneſs to the Families of his Diſciples. Here we find (1.) that *Peter* had a *Wife*, and yet was call'd to be an Apoſtle of Chriſt, and Chriſt countenanc'd the Marry'd State he was in, by being thus kind to his Wife's Relations. The Church of *Rome* therefore, which forbids Miniſters to marry, go contrary to that Apoſtle, from whom they pretend to derive an Infallibility. (2.) That *Peter* had a Houſe tho' Chriſt had not, *v.* 20. Thus was the Diſciple better provided for than his Lord. (3.) That he had a Houſe at *Capernaum*, tho' he was originally of *Bethſaida*; 'tis probable he remov'd to *Capernaum* when Chriſt removed thither, and made that his Principle Reſidence. *Note*, It's worth while to change our Quarters, that we may be near to Chriſt, and Opportunities of Converſe with him. When the Ark removes, *Iſrael* muſt remove and go after it. (4.) That he had his *Wife's Mother* with him in his Family, which is an Example to Yoke-fellows to be kind to one another's Relations, as their own. Probably, this good Woman was old, and yet was reſpected and taken care of, as old People ought to be, with all poſſible Tenderneſs. (5.) That ſhe lay *ill of a Fever*. Neither the Strength of Youth nor the Weakneſs and Coldneſs of Age will be a Fence againſt Diſeaſes of this kind. The *Palſie* was a *Chronical* Diſeaſe, the *Fever* an *Acute* Diſeaſe, but both brought to Chriſt.

2. The *Cure*, v. 15. (1.) How it was *effected*; he *touched her Hand*; not to *know* the Diſeaſe as the Phyſicians do, by the Pulſe, but to *heal it*. This was an Intimation of his Kindneſs and Tenderneſs, he is himſelf *touched* with the feeling of our Infirmities; it likewiſe ſhews the way of Spiritual Healing, by the exerting of the Power of Chriſt with his Word, and the Application of Chriſt to our ſelves. The Scripture ſpeaks the Word, the Spirit gives the

Touch; touches the Heart, touches the Hand. (2.) How it was *evidenced.* This ſhew'd that the *Fever left her,* ſhe *aroſe and Miniſter'd to them.* By this it appears (1.) That the Mercy was *perfected.* Thoſe that recover from Fevers by the Power of Nature, are commonly weak and feeble, and unfit for Buſineſs a great while after; to ſhew therefore that this Cure was above the Power of Nature, ſhe was immediately ſo well as to go about the Buſineſs of the Houſe. (2.) That the Mercy was *ſanctified,* and the Mercies that are ſo, are indeed *perfected.* Tho' ſhe was thus dignified by a peculiar Favour, yet ſhe doth not take State, but is as ready to wait at Table, if occaſion be, as any Servant. Thoſe muſt be *humble* whom Chriſt has *honour'd*; being thus deliver'd, ſhe ſtudies what ſhe ſhall render. 'Tis very fit that thoſe whom Chriſt hath heal'd ſhould Miniſter unto him as his humble Servants all their Days.

Secondly, Here's a general Account of the many Cures that Chriſt wrought. This Cure of *Peter*'s Mother in Law brought him abundance of Patients; he heal'd ſuch a one, why not me? Such a ones Friend, why not mine? Now here we are told,

1. What he did, *v.* 16. (1.) He caſt out Devils, *caſt out the* Evil *Spirits with his Word.* There may be much of Satan's Agency by the Divine Permiſſion, in thoſe Diſeaſes, of which natural Cauſes may be aſſign'd, as in *Job*'s Boils, eſpecially in the Diſeaſes of the Mind; but about the Time of Chriſt's being in the World, there ſeems to have been a more than ordinary letting looſe of the Devil to poſſeſs and vex the Bodies of People; he came, *having great wrath,* for he knew that his Time was ſhort; and God wiſely order'd it ſo, that Chriſt might have the fairer and more frequent Opportunities of ſhewing his Power over Satan, and the Purpoſe and Deſign of his coming into the World, which was to diſarm and diſpoſſeſs Satan, to break his Power, and to deſtroy his Works; and his Succeſs was as glorious, as his Deſign was Gracious. (2.) He *healed all that were ſick*; all, without Exception, tho' the Patient was never ſo mean, and the Caſe never ſo bad.

2. How the Scripture was herein fulfill'd, *v.* 17. The Accompliſhment of the Old Teſtament Propheſies was the great thing Chriſt had in his Eye, and the great Proof of his being the Meſſiah; among other things it was written of him, *Iſa.* 53. 4. *Surely he hath born our Griefs and carry'd our Sorrows.* 'Tis refer'd to 1 *Pet.* 2. 24. and there 'tis conſtrued, *he hath born our Sins:* Here 'tis refer'd to, and is conſtrued, *he hath born our Sickneſſes,* our *Sins* make our *Sickneſſes* our *Griefs*; Chriſt bore away Sin by the *Merit of his Death,* and bore away Sickneſs by the *Miracles of his Life*; nay, tho' thoſe Miracles are ceas'd, we may ſay, That he bore our *Sickneſſes,* then when he bore our Sins in his own Body upon the Tree; for Sin is both the Cauſe, and the Sting of Sickneſs. Many are the Diſeaſes and Calamities which we are liable to in the Body, and there is more in this one Line of the Goſpels to ſupport and comfort us under them, than in all the Writings of the Philoſophers, that Jeſus Chriſt *bore our Sickneſſes,* and *carry'd our Sorrows*; he bore them *before us,* tho' he was never Sick, yet he was hungry, and thirſty, and weary, and troubled in Spirit, ſorrowful and very heavy; he bore them for us in his Paſſion, and bears them *with us* in his Compaſſion, being *touched with the feeling of our Infirmities*; and thus he *bears them off from us,* and makes them ſit light, if it be not our own fault. Obſerve how emphatically 'tis expreſs'd here, *Himſelf took our Infirmities, and bare our Sickneſſes*; he was both able and willing to interpoſe in that Matter, and concern'd to deal with our *Infirmities* and *Sickneſſes,* as our Phyſician; that part of the Calamity of the human Nature was his particular Care, which he evidenc'd by his great Readineſs to *cure Diſeaſes*; and he is not leſs powerful, or leſs tender now, for we are ſure never any were the worſe for going to Heaven.

18 Now when Jeſus ſaw great multitudes about him,
he gave commandment to depart unto the other ſide.
19 And a certain ſcribe came, and ſaid unto him,
Maſter, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.
20 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, The foxes have holes,
and the birds of the air *have* neſts; but the Son of
man hath not where to lay *his* head. 21 And another
of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, ſuffer me firſt to
go and bury my father. 22 But Jeſus ſaid unto him,
Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead.

Here's 1. Chriſt's removing to *the other ſide* of the Sea of *Tiberias,* and his ordering his Diſciples, whoſe Boats attended him to get their Tranſport Veſſels ready in order to it, *v.* 18. The Influences of this Sun of Righteouſneſs were not to be confin'd to one place, but diffus'd all the Country over; he muſt go about to *do Good*; the Neceſſities of Souls call'd to him, *Come over and help us,* Acts 16. 9. He removed when he *ſaw great Multitudes about him.* Tho' by this it appear'd, they were deſirous to have him there, he knew there were others as deſirous to have him with them, and they muſt have *their ſhare* of him. His being acceptable and uſeful in one place, was no objection againſt, but a Reaſon for his going to another. Thus he would *try* the Multitudes that were *about him*; whether their Zeal would carry them to follow him, and attend on him when his *Preaching* was remov'd to ſome diſtance. Many would be glad of ſuch Helps' if they could have them at next door, that will not be at the pains to follow them to *the other ſide*; and thus Chriſt ſhook off thoſe that were leſs Zealous, and the Perfect were *made manifeſt.*

2. Chriſt's Communication with two, who upon his remove to the other ſide were loth to ſtay behind, and had a Mind to follow him; not as others that were his followers at large, but to come into cloſe *Diſcipleſhip*; which the moſt were *ſhy of*; for it carry'd ſuch a Face of Srictneſs as they could not digeſt, or be well reconcil'd to; but here's an account of two that ſeem'd *fond* to come into Communion, and yet were not *right*; which is here given as a Specimen of the Hindrances by which many are kept from cloſing with Chriſt, and cleaving to him; and a warning to us to ſet out in following Chriſt, ſo as that we may not come ſhort; to lay ſuch a Foundation as that our Building may ſtand.

We have here Chriſt's managing of two different Tempers; one *quick* and *eager,* the other *dull* and *heavy*; and his Inſtructions are adapted to each of them, and deſign'd for our uſe.

1. Here's one that was *too haſty in promiſing,* and he was a *certain Scribe,* v. 19. A Scholar, a Learned Man, one of thoſe that ſtudy'd and expounded the Law; generally we find them in the Goſpels to be Men of no good Character, uſually coupled with the *Phariſees,* as Enemies to Chriſt and his Doctrine; *where is the Scribe?* 1 *Cor.* 1. 20. He is very ſeldom following Chriſt, yet here was one that bid pretty fair for Diſcipleſhip; a *Saul among the Prophets.*

Now obſerve (1.) how he *expreſs'd his forwardneſs*; *Maſter I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.* I know not how any Man could have ſaid better. His Profeſſion of a Self-dedication to Chriſt is (1.) very *ready,* and ſeems to be *ex mero Motu*; he is not call'd to it by Chriſt, or urg'd by any of the Diſciples, but of his own accord proffers himſelf to be a cloſe follower of Chriſt, is not a *preſs'd* Man, but a Voluntier. (2.) Very *reſolute*; he ſeems to be at a point in this Matter, not I have a *mind* to follow thee, but I'm determin'd, *I will* do it. (3.) It was *unlimited,* and without reſerve; I'll *follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt*; not only to the other ſide of the Country, but if it were to the utmoſt Region of the World. Now we would think our ſelves ſure of ſuch a Man as this, and yet it appears by Chriſt's Anſwer, that his Reſolution was raſh, his Ends low and carnal; either he did not conſider at all, or not that which was to be conſider'd. He ſaw the Miracles Chriſt wrought, and hoped he would ſet up a Temporal Kingdom, and he would put in betimes for a ſhare in it. *Note,* There are many Reſolutions for Religion produc'd by ſome ſudden Pangs of Conviction, and taken up without due Conſideration, that prove abortive, and when they ſhould knit, fall and come to nothing. Soon ripe, ſoon rotten.

(2.) How Chriſt try'd *his Forwardneſs,* whether it were ſincere or no, *v.* 20. He let him know that this *Son of Man,* whom he is ſo eager to follow, *has not where to lay his Head,* v. 20. Now this Account of Chriſt's great Poverty,

1. Is *ſtrange in it ſelf*; that the Son of God when he came into the World, ſhould put himſelf into ſuch a very low Condition, as to want the convenience of a certain reſting place, which the meaneſt of the Creatures have. If he would take our Nature upon him, one would think he ſhould have taken it in its beſt Eſtate and Circumſtances; no, he takes it in its worſt. See here (1.) how well provided for the inferior Creatures are. *The Foxes have holes*; tho' they are not only not *uſeful,* but *hurtful* to Man, yet God provides *Holes* for them, in which they are Earth'd. Man Endeavours to deſtroy them, but thus they are ſhelter'd; their Holes are their Caſtles. The *Birds of the Air,* tho' they take no care for themſelves, yet are taken care of, and have *Neſts,* Pſal. 104. 17. Neſts in the Field, ſome of them Neſts in the Houſe, in God's Courts, *Pſal.* 84. 3. (2.) How poorly the Lord Jeſus was provided for. It may encourage us to truſt God for Neceſſaries that the Beaſts and Birds have ſuch good Proviſion, and may comfort us if we want Neceſſaries, that our Maſter did ſo before us. *Note,* Our Lord Jeſus, when he was here in the World, ſubmitted to the Diſgraces and Diſtreſſes of extreme Poverty; *for our ſakes he became poor,* very poor. He had not a Settlement, had not a place of Repoſe, not a Houſe of his own to put his Head in, not a Pillow of his own to lay his Head on. He and his Diſciples liv'd upon the Charity of well diſpoſed People, that *Miniſter'd to him of their Subſtance,* Luke 8. 2. Chriſt ſubmitted to this, not only that he might in all reſpects *humble himſelf,* and fulfil the Scriptnres, which ſpoke of him as *Poor* and *Needy,* but that he might ſhew us the Vanity of worldly Wealth, and teach us to look upon it with a holy Contempt, that he might purchaſe better things for us, and ſo *make us rich,* 2 Cor. 8. 9.

2. It *comes in ſtrangely here.* When a *Scribe* offer'd to follow Chriſt, one would think he ſhould have encourag'd him, *Come, and I'll take care of thee*; one *Scribe* might be capable of doing him more Credit and Service than *twelve Fiſhermen*; but Chriſt ſaw his Heart, and anſwer'd to the Thoughts of that, and therein teaches us all how to come to Chriſt. (1.) The *Scribe*'s Reſolve ſeems to have been *ſudden,* and Chriſt would have us when we take upon us a Profeſſion of Religion, to *ſit down and count the coſt,* Luke 14. 28. to do it intelligently, and with Conſideration, and chuſe the Way of Godlineſs, not becauſe they know *no other,* but becauſe we know *no better.* 'Tis no advantage to Religion to take Men by ſurpriſe, e'er they are aware. They that take up a Profeſſion *in a Pang,* will throw it off again *in a Fret*; let him therefore *take Time,* and he will have *done the ſooner*; he that will follow Chriſt, let him know the worſt of it, and expect to lye hard, and fare hard. (2.) His Reſolve ſeems to have been from a worldly covetous Principle. He ſaw what abundance of Cures Chriſt wrought, and concluded he had large Fees, and would get an Eſtate quickly, and therefore he would follow him in hopes of growing Rich with him; but Chriſt rectifies his Miſtake, and tells him, he was ſo far from *growing Rich,* that he had not a place to *lay*

his Head on; and if he follow him, he cannot expect to fare better than he far'd. *Note*, Chriſt will accept none for his Followers that aim at worldly Advantages in following him, or deſign to make any thing but *Heaven* of their Religion. We have Reaſon to think that this Scribe hereupon *went away ſorrowful*, being balk'd in a Bargain he thought would turn to account; he is not following Chriſt unleſs he can *get by him*.

2. Here's another that was too *ſlow in performing*. Delay in Execution is as bad on the one hand, as Precipitancy in Reſolution is on the other hand; when we have taken time to conſider, and then have determin'd, let it never be ſaid, we left that to be done *to morrow*, which we could do *to day*. This Candidate for the Miniſtry, this *Propoſant* was *one of Chriſt's Diſciples* already, *v.* 21. a follower of him, at large; *Clemens Alexandrinus*, tells us from an ancient Tradition, that this was *Philip*; he ſeems to be better qualified and diſpos'd than the former, becauſe not ſo confident and preſumptuous; a bold, eager, over-forward Temper is not the moſt *promiſing* in Religion; ſometimes the laſt are firſt, and the firſt laſt. Now obſerve here,

1. The Excuſe that this Diſciple made to ſhift off an immediate Attendance on Chriſt, *v.* 21. *Lord, ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my Father.* Before I come to be a cloſe and conſtant follower of thee, let me be allow'd to perform this laſt Office of Reſpect to my Father, and in the mean time, let it ſuffice to be a Hearer of thee now and then, when I can ſpare time. His Father (ſome think) was now ſick, or dying, or dead; others think he was only Aged, and not likely in a courſe of Nature to continue long; and he deſired leave to attend upon him in his Sickneſs, at his Death, and to his Grave, and then he will be at Chriſt's Service. This ſeem'd a reaſonable Requeſt, and yet it was not right. He had not the Zeal he ſhould have had for the Work, and therefore pleaded this becauſe it ſeem'd a plauſible Plea. *Note*, An unwilling Mind never wants an Excuſe. The meaning of *non vacat*, is *non placet*. He that ſaith he has *no time*, the truth is, he has no mind. We will ſuppoſe it to come from a true filial Affection and Reſpect to his Father, but ſtill the Preference ſhould have been given to Chriſt. *Note*, Many are hinder'd *from*, and *in* the way of ſerious Godlineſs, by an over Concern for their Families and Relations; theſe lawful things undoe us all, and our Duty to God is neglected and poſtpon'd, under colour of diſcharging our debts to the World; here therefore we have need to double our guard.

2. Chriſt's *diſallowing* of this Excuſe, *v.* 22. *Jeſus ſaid to him, follow me*; and, no doubt, Power went along with this Word to him, as to others, and he did *follow Chriſt*, and clave to him, as *Ruth* to *Naomi*, when the *Scribe* in the Verſes before, like *Orpah*, took leave of him; that ſaid, *I will follow thee*, to This Chriſt ſaid, *Follow me*; comparing them together, 'tis intimated, that we are brought to Chriſt by the Force of *his Call* to us, not of *our Promiſes* to him; 'tis *not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſhews Mercy*, and calleth whom he will, *Rom.* 9. 16. And further, *Note*, Tho' choſen Veſſels may make Excuſes, and ſhift off their Compliance with divine Calls a great while, yet Chriſt will at length anſwer their Excuſes, conquer their Unwillingneſs, and bring them to his Foot; when Chriſt calls, he will overcome and make the Call effectual, 1 *Sam.* 3, 10. His Excuſe is laid aſide as inſufficient; *Let the Dead bury their Dead*, 'Tis a Proverbial Expreſſion, Let *one* dead Man bury *another*, I. e. rather let them lye unbury'd than that the Service of Chriſt ſhould be neglected. *Let the Dead* Spiritually *bury the Dead* Corporally; let Worldly Offices be left to Worldly People; do not thou encumber thyſelf with them. Burying the Dead is *good Work*, eſpecially a dead Father, but it is not thy *Work* at this time; it may be done as well by others that are not call'd, and qualified as thou art to be employ'd for Chriſt; thou haſt ſomething elſe to do, and muſt not defer that. *Note*, Piety to God muſt be prefer'd before Piety to Parents, tho' that is a great and needful part of our Religion. The *Nazarites* under the Law were not to mourn for their own Parents, becauſe they were *holy to the Lord*, Num. 6. 6, 7, 8. nor was the High-Prieſt to *defile himſelf for the Dead*, no, not for *his own Father*, Lev. 21. 11, 12. And Chriſt requires of thoſe who would follow him, that they *hate Father and Mother*, Luke 14. 26. *i. e.* love them leſs than God; we muſt comparatively neglect and diſeſteem our neareſt Relations when they come in competition with Chriſt, and either our *doing* for him, or our *ſuffering* for him.

23 And when he was entred into a ſhip his diſciples followed him. 24 And behold, there aroſe a great tempeſt in the ſea, inſomuch that the ſhip was covered with the waves: but he was aſleep. 25 And his diſciples came unto him, and awoke him, ſaying Lord, ſave us: we periſh. 26 And he ſaith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he aroſe and rebuked the winds and the ſea, and there was a great calm. 27 But, the men marvelled, ſaying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the ſea obey him!

Chriſt had given ſailing Orders to his Diſciples, *v.* 18. that they ſhould depart *to the other ſide of the Sea of Tiberias* into the Country of *Gadara*, in the Tribe of *Gad*, which lay *Eaſt* of *Jordan*; thither he would go to reſcue a poor Creature that was poſſeſs'd with a Legion of Devils, tho' he foreſaw how he ſhould be affronted there. Now (1.) he choſe to go by *Water*. It had not been much about if he had gone by Land, but he choſe to croſs the Lake, that he might have occaſion to manifeſt himſelf the God *of the Sea*, as well as of *the dry Land*, and that all Power is his both *in Heaven and in Earth*. And it is a Comfort to thoſe who *go down to the Sea in Ships*, and are oft in Perils there, that they have a Saviour to truſt to, and pray to, who knows what it is to be at *Sea*, and to be *in Storms* there. But obſerve, when he went to Sea he had no Yatch, or Pleaſure-boat to attend him, but made uſe of his Diſciples *Fiſhing-boats*; ſo poorly was he accommodated in all Reſpects. (2.) *His Diſciples followed him*, the Twelve kept cloſe to him, when others ſtaid behind upon the *Terra firma*, where there was ſure footing. *Note*, They, and they only will be found the true diſciples of Chriſt that are willing to go to Sea with him; to follow him into Dangers and Difficulties. Many would be content to go the Land-way to Heaven, that will rather ſtand ſtill, or go back, than venture upon a dangerous Sea; but thoſe that would reſt with Chriſt hereafter, muſt follow him now wherever he leads them into a Ship, or into a Priſon, as well as into a Palace. Now obſerve here

Firſt, The Peril and Perplexity of the Diſciples in this Voyage; and in this appear'd the Truth of what Chriſt had juſt now ſaid, that thoſe who follow him muſt count upon Difficulties, *v.* 20.

1. There *aroſe a very great Storm*, v. 24. Chriſt could have prevented this Storm, and have order'd them a pleaſant Paſſage, but that would not have been ſo much for his Glory, and the Confirmation of their Faith as their Deliverance was. This Storm was *for their ſakes*, as *John* 11. 4. One would have expected, that having Chriſt with them, they ſhould have had a very favourable Gale, but 'tis quite otherwiſe; for Chriſt would ſhew, that thoſe that are paſſing with him over the Ocean of this World, to the other ſide, muſt expect Storms by the way. The Church is *toſſed with Tempeſts*, Iſa. 54. 11. 'Tis only the upper Region that enjoys a perpetual Calm, this lower one is ever and anon diſturb'd, and diſturbing.

2. Jeſus Chriſt was *aſleep in this Storm*. We never read of Chrſt's Sleeping but at this time; he was in Watchings often, continued all Night in Prayer to God; this was a Sleep not of Security, like *Jonah's* in a Storm, but of Holy Serenity, and Dependance upon his Father. He *ſlept* to ſhew that he was really and truly Man, and ſubject to the ſinleſs Infirmities of our Nature; his Work made him weary and ſleepy, and he had no Guilt, no Fear within to diſturb his Repoſe: Thoſe that can lay their Heads upon the Pillow of a clear Conſcience, may ſleep quietly and ſweetly in a Storm, *Pſal.* 4. 8. as *Peter*, Acts 12. 6. He ſlept at this time to try the Faith of his Diſciples, whether they could truſt him when he ſeem'd to ſlight them. He ſlept, not ſo much with a deſire to be *refreſh'd*, as with a deſign to be *awaked*.

3. The poor Diſciples, tho' us'd to the Sea, were in a great Fright, and in their Fear *came to their Maſter*, v. 25. whither elſe ſhould they go? 'twas well they had him ſo near them, they *awoke him* with their Prayers; *Lord, ſave us, we periſh*. *Note*, Thoſe who would learn to Pray, muſt go to Sea. Imminent and ſenſible Dangers will drive People to him, who alone can help in time of need. Their Prayer has Life in it, *Lord, ſave us, we periſh*. (1.) Their Petition is, *Lord, ſave us*, They believed he could ſave them, they beg'd he would; Chriſt's Errand into the World was *to ſave*, but thoſe only *ſhall be ſaved that call on the Name of the Lord*, Acts 2. 21. Thoſe who by Faith are intereſted in the Eternal Salvation wrought out by Chriſt, may with an humble Confidence apply themſelves to him for Temporal Deliverances. Obſerve, they *call him Lord*, and then Pray, *Save us*. *Note*, Chriſt will ſave none but thoſe that are willing to take him for their *Lord*, for he is a Prince and a Saviour. (2.) Their Plea is, *we periſh*; which was (1.) the *Language* of their *Fear*; they look'd upon their Caſe as deſperate, and gave up all for gone, had receiv'd a Sentence of Death within themſelves, and this they plead; we periſh, if thou doſt not ſave us; look upon us therefore with Pity. (2.) 'Twas the *Language* of their *Fervency*; they Pray as Men in earneſt that beg for their Lives; it becomes us thus to *ſtrive* and *wreſtle* in Prayer, Therefore Chriſt ſlept that he might draw out this Inportunity.

Secondly, The Power and Grace of Jeſus Chriſt put forth for their Succour; then the Lord Jeſus awaked, *as one refreſh'd*, Pſal. 78. 65. Chriſt may ſleep when his Church is in a Storm, but he will not *outſleep* himſelf; the *Time, the ſet Time* to favour his diſtreſſed Church *will come*, Pſal. 102. 13.

1. He Rebuked the Diſciples, *v.* 26. *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little Faith?* He doth not chide them for diſturbing him with their Prayers, but for diſturbing themſelves with their Fears. Chriſt *reprov'd* them firſt, and then deliver'd them; this is his Method to prepare us for a Mercy, and then give it us. Obſerve (1.) his Diſlike of their Fears; *Why are ye fearful? ye* my Diſciples; let the Sinners in *Zion* be afraid, let Heathen Mariners tremble in a Storm, but you ſhall not be ſo. Enquire into the Reaſons of your Fear, and weigh them. (2.) His Diſcovery of the Cauſe and Spring of their Fears; *O ye of little Faith*. Many that have true Faith are weak in it, and it doth but *little*. *Note*, 1. Chriſt's Diſciples are apt to be diſquieted with Fears in a ſtormy Day, to torment themſelves with Jealouſies that things are bad with them, and diſmal Concluſions that they will be worſe. 2. The Prevalency of our inordinate Fears in a ſtormy Day, is owing to the Weakneſs of our Faith, which would be as an Anchor to the Soul, and would ply the Oar of Prayer. By Faith we might ſee thro' the Storm to the quiet Shore, and encourage our ſelves with hope that we ſhall weather our point. 3. The Fearfulneſs of Chriſt's Diſciples in a Storm, and their Unbelief the Cauſe of it, is very diſpleaſing to the Lord Jeſus, for it reflects a Diſhonour upon him, and creates Diſturbance to themſelves.

2. He rebukes the Wind, the former he did as the God of Grace, and the Sovereign of the Heart, that can do what he pleaſeth in us; This he did as the God of Nature, the Sovereign of the World, that can do what he pleaſeth for us. 'Tis the ſame Power that *ſtills the Noiſe of the Sea*, and the Tumult of Fear, *Pſal.* 65. 7. See (1.) How eaſily this was done; with a Word's ſpeaking. *Moſes* commanded the Waters with a *Rod*, *Joſhua* with the Ark of the Covenant, *Eliſha* with the Prophet's Mantle, but Chriſt with a Word. See his abſolute Dominion over all the Creatures, which ſpeaks both his Honour, and the Happineſs of thoſe that have him on their Side. (2.) How *effectually* it was done, there *was a great Calm*, all of a ſudden. Ordinarily after the Storm there is ſuch a Fret of the Waters, that 'tis a good while e'er they can ſettle, but if Chriſt ſpeak the Word, not only the Storm ceaſeth, but all the Effects of it, all the Remains of it. Great Storms of Doubt and Fear in the Soul under the Power of the Spirit of Bondage, ſometimes end in a wonderful Calm, created and ſpoken by the Spirit of Adoption.

3. This ſet them all on wondring, *v.* 27. *The Men marvelled.* They had been long acquainted with the Sea, and never ſaw a Storm ſo *immediately* turn'd into a perfect Calm in all their Lives. It had all the Marks and Signatures of a Miracle upon it; it is the Lord's Doing, and is marvellous in their Eyes. Obſerve, (1.) Their Admiration of Chriſt. *What manner of Man is this!* *Note*, Chriſt is a Nonſuch; every thing in him is admirable: None ſo wiſe, ſo mighty, ſo amiable as he. (2.) The Reaſon of it. *Even the Wind and the Sea obey him.* Upon this Account Chriſt is to be admir'd, that he has a commanding Power even over Winds and Seas. Others pretended to cure Diſeaſes, but he only undertook to command the Winds. We *know not the Way of the Wind*, Joh. 3. 8. much leſs can we controul it; but he that bringeth forth the Wind out of his Treaſury (*Pſal.* 135. 7.) when it is out gathers it into his Fiſts, *Prov.* 30. 4, He that can do this can do any thing, can do enough to encourage our Confidence and Comfort in him in the moſt ſtormy Day, within or without, *Iſa.* 26. 4. The Lord *ſits upon the Floods*, and is *mightier than the Noiſe of many Waters.* Chriſt by commanding the Seas ſhew'd himſelf to be the ſame that made the World, when *at his Rebuke the Waters fled*, Pſal. 104. 7, 8. as now at his Rebuke they *fell*.

28 And when he was come to the other ſide, into the country of the Gergeſens, there met him two poſſeſſed with devils, coming out of the Tombs, exceeding fierce, ſo that no man might paſs by that way 29 And behold they cried out, ſaying, What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? 30 And there was a good way off from them a herd of many ſwine, feeding 31 So the devils beſought him, ſaying, If thou caſt us out, ſuffer us to go away into the herd of ſwine. 32 And he ſaid unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of ſwine: and behold, the whole herd of ſwine ran violently down a ſteep place into the Sea, and periſhed in the Waters. 33 And they that kept them, fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the poſſeſſed of the devils. 34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jeſus; and when they ſaw him, they beſought him that he would depart out of their coaſts.

We have here the Story of Chriſt's caſting the Devils out of two Men that were poſſeſs'd. The Scope of this Chapter is to ſhew the Divine Power of Chriſt by the Inſtances of his Dominion over *Bodily Diſeaſes*, which to us are irreſiſtible; over *Winds and Waves*, which to us are yet more uncontroulable; and laſtly, over Devils which to us are moſt formidable of all. Chriſt has not only all Power in Heaven and Earth, and all deep places, but has the Keys of Hell too. Principalities and Powers were made ſubject to him, even while he was in his Eſtate of Humiliation, as an earneſt of what ſhould be at his Entrance into his Glory, *Eph.* 1. 21. He ſpoil'd them, *Col.* 2. 15. 'Twas obſerved in general, *v.* 16. that Chriſt *caſt out the Spirits with his Word.* Here we have a particular Inſtance of it, which had ſome Circumſtances more remarkable than the reſt. This Miracle was wrought in the Country of the *Gergeſens*, ſome think they were the Remains of the old *Girgaſhites*, Deut. 7. 1. Though Chriſt was ſent chiefly to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, yet ſome Sallies he made out among the Borderers, as here to gain this Victory over *Satan*, which was a Specimen of the Conqueſt of his Legions in the *Gentile* World.

Now, beſides the general Inſtance which this gives us of Chriſt's Power over *Satan*, and his deſign againſt him to diſarm and diſpoſſeſs him, we have here eſpecially diſcover'd to us, the Way and Manner of evil Spirits in their Enmity to Man. Obſerve, concerning this Legion of Devils, what work they made where *they were*, and where *they went*.

Firſt, what work they made *where they were*, which appears in the miſerable Condition of thoſe two that were poſſeſſed by them, and ſome think thoſe two were Man and Wife, becauſe the other Evangeliſts ſpeak but of one.

1. They dwelt *among the Tombs*; thence they came when they met Chriſt. The Devil having *the Power of Death*, not as Judge, but as Executioner, he delighted to converſe among the Trophies of his Victory, the dead bodies of Men; but there, where he thought himſelf in his greateſt Triumph and Elevation, as afterwards in *Golgotha*, the *Place of a Skull*, did Chriſt conquer and ſubdue him. Converſing among the Graves increaſed the Melancholy and Frenzy of the poor poſſeſſed Creatures, and ſo ſtrengthened the Hold he had of them by their bodily Diſtemper; and did alſo make them more formidable to other People, who generally ſtartled at any thing that ſtirs *among the Tombs*,

2. They were *exceeding fierce*, not only ungovernable themſelves, but miſchievous to others, frightning many, having hurt ſome, ſo that *no man* durſt *paſs that Way*. *Note*, The Devil bears Malice to Mankind, and ſhews it by making Men ſpiteful and malicious one to another. Mutual Enmities, where there ſhould be mutual Endearments and Aſſiſtances, are Effects and Evidences of Satan's Enmity to the whole Race. He makes one man a Wolf, a Bear, a Devil to another. *Homo Homini Lupus.* Where Satan rules in a Man ſpiritually, by thoſe Luſts that war in the Members, Pride, Envy, Malice, Revenge, they make him as unfit for Human Society, as unworthy of it, and as much an Enemy to the Comfort of it, as theſe poor poſſeſſed Creatures were.

3. They *bid Defiance to Jeſus Chriſt*, and diſclaim'd all intereſt in him, *v.* 29. It is an Inſtance of the Power of God over the Devils, that notwithſtanding the Miſchief they ſtudied to do by, and to theſe poor Creatures, yet they could not keep them from *meeting* Jeſus Chriſt, who order'd the Matter ſo as to meet them. 'Twas his overpowering Hand that drag'd theſe unclean Spirits into his Preſence, which they dreaded more than any thing elſe. His Chains could hold them, when the Chains Men made for them could not. But being brought before him, they proteſted againſt his Juriſdiction, and broke out into a Rage, *What have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God?* Here's

(1.) One Word that the Devil ſaid like *a Saint*; he addreſſed himſelf to Chriſt as *Jeſus* the *Son of God*; a good Word, and at this time when it was a Truth but in the proving, it was a *great Word* too, what Fleſh and Blood did not reveal to *Peter*, Mat. 16. 16. Even the Devils knew, and believe, and confeſs Chriſt to be the *Son of God*, and yet they are Devils ſtill, which makes their Enmity to Chriſt ſo much the more wicked, and indeed a perfect Torment to themſelves, for how can it be otherwiſe, to oppoſe one they know to be the Son of God? *Note*, It is not Knowledge but Love that diſtinguiſheth Saints from Devils. He is the Firſt-born of Hell that knows Chriſt, and yet hates him, and will not be ſubject to him and his Law. We may remember that not long ſince the Devil made a Doubt, whether Chriſt was the *Son of God*, or no, and would have perſwaded him to queſtion it, *chap.* 4. 3. but now he readily owns it. *Note*, Tho' God's Children may be much diſquieted in an Hour of Temptation by Satan's queſtioning their Relation to God, as a Father, yet the Spirit of Adoption ſhall at length clear it up to them ſo much to their Satisfaction, as to ſet it even above the Devils Contradiction.

(2.) Two Words that he ſaid *like a Devil*, like himſelf.

1. A Word of *Defiance.* *What have we to do with thee?* Now (1.) It is true that the Devils have nothing to do with Chriſt as a *Saviour*, for he took not on him the Nature of the Angels that fell, nor did he lay hold on them, *Heb.* 2. 16. They are in no Relation to him, they neither have, nor hope for any Benefit by him. Oh! the Depth of this Myſtery of Divine Love, that fallen Man hath ſo much *to do with Chriſt*, when fallen Angels have nothing to do with him. Surely here was torment enough before the Time, to be forc'd to own the Excellency that is in Chriſt, and yet that he has no Intereſt in him. *Note*, It is poſſible for Men to call Jeſus the Son of God, and yet have nothing to do with him.

(2.) It is as true, that the Devils *deſire not* to have any thing to do with Chriſt as a *Ruler*; they hate him, they are fill'd with Enmity againſt him, they ſtand in Oppoſition to him, and are in open Rebellion againſt his Crown and Dignity. See whoſe Language they ſpeak that will have nothing to do with the Goſpel of Chriſt, with his Laws and Ordinances, that throw off his Yoke, that *break his Bands in ſunder*, and will *not have him to reign over them*; that ſay *to the Almighty* Jeſus, *Depart from us.* They are of their Father *the Devil*, they *do his Luſts*, and ſpeak his Language.

(3.) But it is not true, that the Devils have *nothing to do* with Chriſt as *a Judge*, for they have, and they know it. Theſe Devils could not ſay, *What haſt thou to do with us?* could not deny but that the Son of God is the Judge of Devils; to his Judgment they are bound over in Chains of Darkneſs, which they would fain ſhake off, and ſhake off the Thought of.

2. A Word of *Dread* and *Deprecation.* *Art thou come hither to torment us?* i. e. to caſt us out from theſe Men, and to reſtrain us from doing the Hurt we would do. *Note*, To be turn'd *out* and *ty'd up* from doing Miſchief, is a Torment to the Devil, all whoſe Comfort and Satisfaction is Man's Miſery and Deſtruction. Should not we then count it our Heaven to be well doing, and reckon that our Torment, whether within or without, that hinders us from Well-doing? Now muſt we be tormented by thee *before the Time?* *Note*, 1. There is a *Time* in which Devils will be more *tormented* than they are, and they know it. The Great Aſſize at the laſt Day

is the Time prefix'd for their compleat Torture in that *Tophet* which is ordained of old, *for the King*, for the *Prince of the Devils*, and his *Angels*, Iſa. 30. 33. Mat. 25. 41. for the *Judgment of that Day* they are reſerv'd, 2 *Pet*. 2. 4. Thoſe malignant Spirits thar are now by the divine Permiſſion Priſoners at large, walking to and fro thro' the Earth, *Job* 1. 7. yet are in a Chain; hitherto ſhall their Power reach, and no further; they will then be made cloſe Priſoners, that have now ſome eaſe, will then be in Torment without Eaſe. This they here take for granted, and aſk not never to be tormented; Deſpair of Relief is the Miſery of their Caſe; but not *before the Time*, for tho' they know not when the Day of Judgment ſhould be, they knew it ſhould not be yet. 2. The Devils have a certain fearful looking for of that Judgment and fiery Indignation upon every Approach of Chriſt, and every Check that is given to their Power and Rage. The very Sight of Chriſt, and his Word of Command to come out of the Man, made them thus apprehenſive of their Torment. Thus the Devils *believe and tremble*, Jam. 2. 19. 'Tis their own Enmity to God and Man that puts them upon the Rack, and torments them before the Time. The moſt deſperate Sinners whoſe Damnation is ſeal'd, yet cannot quite harden their Hearts againſt the Surprize of *Fearfulneſs* when they ſee the Day approaching.

Secondly, Let us now ſee what work they made *where they went*, when they were turn'd out of the Men poſſeſſed; and that was in a *Herd of Swine*, which was a *good way off*, v. 30. Theſe *Gergeſenes*, tho' living on the other ſide *Jordan*, were *Jews*: What had they to do with *Swine*, which by the Law were unclean, and not to be eaten or touch'd? Probably lying in the out Skirts of the Land there were many *Gentiles* among them to whom this *Herd of Swine* belonged; Or they kept them to be ſold or barter'd to the *Romans*, with whom they had now great Dealings, and who were Admirers of *Swines Fleſh*.

Now obſerve 1. How the *Devils ſeiz'd the Swine*. Though they were a *good way off*, and one would think out of Danger, yet the Devils had an Eye upon them to do them a Miſchief. For they go up and down, *ſeeking to devour*, ſeeking an Opportunity, and they ſeek not long but they find. Nor here

1. They *aſk'd Leave* to enter into the Swine. v. 31. They *beſought him* with all Earneſtneſs, *If thou caſt us out, ſuffer us to go away into the Herd of Swine*. Hereby (1.) They diſcover their own Inclination to do Miſchief, and what a pleaſure it is to them, Thoſe therefore are their Children, and reſemble them, whoſe *Sleep departeth from them, except they cauſe ſome to fall*, Prov. 4. 16. Let us go into the *Herd of Swine*; any whither rather than into the Place of Torment, any whither to do Miſchief. If they might not be ſuffer'd to hurt Men in their Bodies, they would hurt them in their Goods, and in that too they intend hurt to their Souls, by making Chriſt a Burthen to them. Such malicious Reaches hath that old ſubtle Serpent. (2.) They own Chriſt's Power over them, that without his Sufference and Permiſſion they could not ſo much as hurt a Swine. This is comfortable to all the Lord's People, that tho' the Devil's Power is very great, yet it is limited, and not equal to his Malice, (what would become of us, if it were?) eſpecially that it is under the controul of our Lord Jeſus, our moſt faithful, powerful Friend and Saviour; that Satan and his Inſtruments can go no further then he is pleas'd to lengthen their Tedder; *Here ſhall their proud Waves be ſtaid*.

(2.) They had *leave*. Chriſt ſaid unto them, *Go*, v. 32. as God did to Satan, when he deſired leave to afflict *Job*. *Note*, God doth often for wiſe and holy Ends permit the Efforts of Satan's Rage, and ſuffer him to do the Miſchief he would, and even by it ſerve his own Pupoſes: The Devils are not only Chriſt's Captives, but his Vaſſals. His Dominion over them appears in the Harm they do, as well as in the Hindrance of them from doing more. Thus even their Wrath is made to praiſe Chriſt, and *the Remainder of* it he doth and will *reſtrain*. Chriſt permitted this, (1.) for the *Conviction* of the *Sadducees*, that were then among the *Jews*, who deny'd the Exiſtence of Spirits, and would not own there were ſuch Beings, becauſe they could nor *ſee them*: Now Chriſt would by this bring it as near as might be to an ocular Demonſtration of the Being, Multitude, Power, and Malice of Evil Spirits, that if they were not hereby convinc'd, they might be left inexcuſable in their Infidelity. We ſee not the Wind, but it would be abſurd to deny it, when we ſee Trees and Houſes blown down by it. (2.) For the Puniſhment of the *Gadarenes*, who perhaps though *Jews*, took a Liberty to eat *Swines Fleſh*, contrary to the Law; however their keeping Swine border'd upon evil. And Chriſt would alſo ſhew what a Helliſh Crew they were deliver'd from, and if he had permitted it, would ſoon have chok'd *them* as they did their *Swine*. The Devils in Obedience to Chriſt's Command came out of the Men, and having Permiſſion *when they were come out* immediately *they went into the Herd of Swine*. See what an Induſtrious Enemy Satan is, and how expeditious; he will loſe no Time in doing Miſchief.

2. Obſerve, *whither they hurry'd them*, when they had ſeiz'd them. They were not bid to *ſave their Lives*, and therefore they were made to *run violently down a ſteep place into the Sea*, where they all periſhed to the Number of about *two thouſand*, Mark 5. 13. *Note*, The Poſſeſſion which the Devil gets is for Deſtruction. Thus the Devil hurries People to *Sin*, hurries them to that which they have reſolved againſt, and which they know will be Shame and Grief to them, with what a Force doth the Evil Spirit *work in the Children of Diſobedience*, when by ſo many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts they are brought to act in direct Contradiction, not only to Religion, but to right Reaſon and their Intereſt in this World. Thus likewiſe he hurries them to Ruin, for he is *Apollyon* and *Abaddon*, the great *Deſtroyer*. By his Luſts which Men do they are *drown'd in Deſtruction and Perdition*. This is *Satan's* Will to *ſwallow up*, and to *devour*; miſerable then is the Condition of thoſe that are led *captive by him at his Will*. They are hurried into a worſe Lake than this, a Lake that *burns with Fire and Brimſtone*.

3. Obſerve, *What effect this had upon the Owners*. The Report of it was ſoon brought them by the Swine-herds, who ſeem'd to be more concern'd for the loſs of the Swine than any thing elſe, for they went not to tell *what was befallen to the poſſeſſed of the Devils*, till the Swine were loſt, *v*. 33. Chriſt went not *into the City*, but the News of his Being there did, by which he was willing to feel how their Pulſe beat, and what Influence it had upon them, and then act accordingly.

Now 1. Their Curioſity brought them out to ſee Jeſus. The *whole City came out to meet him*, that they might be able to ſay, they had ſeen a Man who did ſuch Wonderful Works. Thus many go out in Profeſſion to meet Chriſt, for Company, that have no real Affection for him, nor deſire to know him.

2. Their Covetouſneſs made them *willing to be rid of him*. Inſtead of inviting him into their City, or bringing their Sick to him to be heal'd, they deſire him *to depart out of their Coaſts*, as if they had taken the Devils Words out of their Mouths, *what have we to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God*? And now the Devils had what they aimed at in drowning the Swine; they did it and then made the People believe Chriſt had done it, and ſo prejudic'd them againſt him. He ſeduc'd our firſt Parents by poſſeſſing them with hard Thoughts of God, and kept the *Gadarenes* from Chriſt by ſuggeſting that he came into their Country to deſtroy their Cattle, and that he would do more Hurt than Good; for though he had cur'd two Men, yet he had drown'd two Thouſand Swine. Thus the Devil ſows Tares in God's Field, doth Miſchief in the Chriſtian Church, and then lays the Blame upon Chriſtianity, and incenſeth Men againſt that. They beſought him that he would depart, leſt like *Moſes* in *Egypt*, he ſhould proceed to ſome other Plague. *Note*, There are a great many who prefer their Swine before their Saviour, and ſo come ſhort of Chriſt and Salvation by him. They deſire Chriſt to depart out of their Hearts, and will not ſuffer his Word to have a Place in them, becauſe he and his Word will be the Deſtruction of their brutiſh Luſts, thoſe *Swine*, which they give up themſelves to the *feeding* of. And juſtly will Chriſt forſake thoſe that thus are weary of him, and ſay to them hereafter. *Depart ye Curſed*, who now ſay to the Almighty, *Depart from us*.

CHAP. IX.

We have in this Chapter remarkable Inſtances of the Power and Pity of the Lord Jeſus, ſufficient to convince us, that he is both able to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by him, and as willing as he is able. His Power and Pity appear here in the good Offices he did, (1.) *To the Bodies of People, in curing the Palſy,* v. 2.--8. *Raiſing to Life the Ruler's Daughter, and healing the bloody Iſſue,* v. 18.--26. *Giving Sight to two blind Men,* v. 27.--31. *Caſting the Devil out of one poſſeſſed* v. 32.--34. *and healing all manner of Sickneſs,* v. 35. (2.) *To the Souls of People, in forgiving Sins,* v. 2. *Calling* Matthew, *and converſing freely with Publicans and Sinners,* v. 9-13. *Conſidering the Frame of his Diſciples, with reverence to the Duty of Faſting,* v. 14.--17. *Preaching the Goſpel, and in Compaſſion to the Multitude providing Preachers for them,* v. 35.--38. *Thus did he prove himſelf to be, as undoubtedly he is, the ſkilful faithful Phyſician both of Soul and Body, that hath ſufficient Remedies for all the Maladies of both; for which we muſt therefore apply our ſelves to him, and glorify him both with our Bodies, and with our Spirits, which are his, in Return to him for his Kindneſs to both.*

AND he entred into a ſhip, and paſſed over,
and came into his own city. 2 And behold,
they brought to him a man ſick of the Palſy, lying
on a bed: and Jeſus ſeeing their faith, ſaid unto the
ſick of the palſy, Son, be of good chear thy ſins be
forgiven thee. 3 And behold, certain of the ſcribes
ſaid within themſelves, This man blaſphemeth. 4
And Jeſus knowing their thoughts, ſaid, Wherefore
think ye evil in your hearts? 5 For whether is eaſier
to ſay, Thy ſins be forgiven thee: or to ſay, Ariſe
and walk? 6 But that ye may know that the Son
of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins (then ſaith
he to the ſick of the palſy) Ariſe, take up thy bed, and
go unto thine houſe. 7 And he aroſe, and departed
to his houſe. 8 But when the multitude ſaw it, they
marvelled, and glorified God, which hath given ſuch
power unto Men.

The firſt Words of this Chapter oblige us to look back to the Cloſe of that foregoing, where we find the *Gadarenes* ſo reſenting the Loſs of their Swine, that they were ſick of Chriſt's Company, and beſought him to *depart out of their Coaſts*: Now here it follows, He *enter'd into a Ship, and paſſed over.* They bid him be gone, and he took them at their Word, and we never read that he came into their Coaſts again. Now here obſerve, (1.) His *Juſtice* that he *left them. Note,* Chriſt will not tarry long there where he is not welcome. In righteous Judgment he forſakes thoſe Places and Perſons that are weary of him, but abides with thoſe that covet and court his Stay. *If the Unbeliever will depart* from Chriſt *let him depart,* it is at his peril, 1 *Cor.* 7. 15. (2.) His *Patience,* that he did not leave ſome deſtroying Judgment behind him to puniſh them, as they deſerv'd for their Contempt and Contumacy. How eaſily, how juſtly might he have ſent them after their Swine, who were already ſo much under the Devil's Power. The Provocation indeed was very great, but he put it up, and paſs'd it by, and without any angry Reſentments or Upbraidings he *enter'd into a Ship, and paſſed over.* This was the Day of his Patience; he came not to *deſtroy Mens Lives,* but to ſave them; not to kill, but cure. Spiritual Judgments agree more with the Conſtitution of Goſpel Times; yet ſome obſerve, that in thoſe bloody Wars which the *Romans* made upon the *Jews,* which began not many Years after this, they firſt beſieged the Town of *Gadara,* where theſe *Gadarens* dwelt. *Note,* Thoſe that drive Chriſt from them, draw all Miſeries upon them. Wo unto us, if God depart from us.

He came *into his own City,* that was *Capernaum,* the principal Place of his Reſidence at preſent, *Mark* 2. 1. and therefore call'd *his own City.* He had himſelf teſtified, that a Prophet is leaſt honour'd in *his own Country* and *City,* yet thither he came; for he *ſought not his own Honour,* but being in a State of Humiliation, he was content to be deſpiſed of the People. At *Capernaum* all the Paſſages of Story recorded in this Chapter happened, and are therefore put together here, though in the Harmony of the Evangeliſts other Events interven'd. When the *Gadarens* deſired Chriſt to depart, they of *Capernaum* received him. If Chriſt be affronted by ſome, there are others in whom he will be glorious; if one will not, another will.

Now the firſt Paſſage of Story, after Chriſt's Return to *Capernaum,* is in theſe Verſes, concerning the Cure of the Man ſick of the Palſie. In which we may obſerve,

1. The *Faith of his Friends* in bringing him to Chriſt. His Diſtemper was ſuch that he could not come to Chriſt himſelf, but as he was *carry'd. Note,* Even the Halt and the Lame may be brought to Chriſt, and they ſhall not be rejected of him, if we do as well as we can, he will accept of us. Chriſt had an Eye to their *Faith.* Little Children cannot go to Chriſt themſelves, but he will have an Eye to the Faith of thoſe that bring them, and it ſhall not be in vain, Jeſus ſaw *their* Faith, *his own* as well as *theirs* that brought him; which Jeſus ſaw the Habit of, tho his Diſtemper perhaps impair'd his Intellectuals, and obſtructed the Actings of it. Now their Faith was (1.) A *ſtrong* Faith; they firmly believed, that Jeſus Chriſt both could and would heal him, elſe they would not have brought the Sick Man to him ſo publickly, and thro' ſo much Difficulty. (2.) A *humble* Faith; though the ſick Man was unable to ſtir a Step, they would not ask Chriſt to make him a Viſit, but bring him to attend on Chriſt. 'Tis fitter we ſhould wait on Chriſt than he on us. (3.) An *active* Faith; In the Belief of Chriſt's Power and Goodneſs, they brought the ſick Man to him *lying on a Bed,* which could not be done without a deal of Pains. *Note,* A ſtrong Faith ſticks at nothing in preſſing after Chriſt.

2. The *Favour of Chriſt* in what he ſaid to him. *Son, be of good Chear, thy Sins be forgiven thee.* This was a ſovereign Cordial to a ſick Man, and which was enough to *make all his Bed in his Sickneſs;* and to make it eaſy to him. We read not of any thing ſaid to Chriſt; probably, the poor ſick Man could not ſpeak for himſelf, and they that brought him choſe rather to ſpeak by Actions than Words; they ſet him before Chriſt, that was enough. *Note,* It is not in vain to preſent ourſelves and our Friends to Chriſt, as the Objects of his Pity. Miſery cries as well as Sin, and Mercy is no leſs quick of Hearing than Juſtice. Here is in what Chriſt ſaid, (1.) A kind Compellation, *Son. Note,* Exhortations and Conſolations to the Afflicted ſpeak to them as to Sons, for Afflictions are fatherly Diſcipline, *Heb.* 12. 5. (2.) A gracious Encouragement. *Be of good Chear. have a good Heart on it;* cheer up thy Spirits. Probably the poor Man, when let down among them all in his Bed, was daſh'd out of Countenance, was afraid of a Rebuke, for being brought in ſo rudely: But Chriſt doth not ſtand upon Ceremony, bids him *be of good Cheer;* all would be well, he ſhould not be laid before Chriſt in vain. Chriſt bids him *be of good Chear,* and then *cures* him. He would have thoſe to whom he deals his Gifts to be *chearful* in ſeeking to him, and in truſting in him; to be of good Courage. (3.) A good Reaſon for that Encouragement. *Thy Sins be forgiven thee.* Now this may be conſider'd, (1.) As an Introduction to the Cure of his bodily Diſtemper, Thy Sins are *pardon'd,* and therefore thou ſhalt be heal'd. *Note,* As Sin is the Cauſe of Sickneſs, ſo the Remiſſion of Sin is the Comfort of Recovery from Sickneſs; not but that Sin may be pardon'd, and yet the Sickneſs not remov'd; not but that the Sickneſs may be remov'd, and yet the Sin not pardon'd: But if we have the Comfort of our Reconciliation to God, with the Comfort of our Recovery from Sickneſs; this makes it a Mercy indeed to us, as to *Hezekiah,* Iſaiah 38. 17. Or, (2.) As a Reaſon of the Command to *be of good Chear,* whether he were cur'd of his Diſeaſe or no. Tho' I ſhould not heal thee, wilt thou ſay, thou has not ſought in vain, if I aſſure thee, that *thy Sins are pardon'd;* and look upon that as a ſufficient Ground of Comfort, though thou ſhouldſt continue *ſick of the Palſie. Note,* Thoſe who through Grace have ſome Evidence of the Forgiveneſs of their Sins, have Reaſon to be of good chear, whatever outward Trouble or Afflictions they are under; ſee *Iſa.* 33. 24.

3. The Cavil of the Scribes at that which Chriſt ſaid, *v.* 3. They *ſaid within themſelves* in their Hearts, *among themſelves,* in their ſecret Wiſperings, *This Man blaſphemeth.* See how the greateſt Inſtance of Heaven's Power and Grace is branded with the blackeſt Note of Hells Enmity; Chriſt's Pardoning Sin is termed Blaſphemy, nor had it been leſs, if he had not had Commiſſion from God for it. Thoſe therefore are guilty of Blaſphemy that have no ſuch Commiſſion, and yet pretend to pardon Sin.

4. The Conviction which Chriſt gave them of the Unreaſonableneſs of this Cavil, before he proceeded.

(1.) He *charged them with it.* Though they did but ſay it within themſelves, he *knew their Thoughts. Note,* Our Lord Jeſus has the perfect Knowledge of all that we ſay within ourſelves. Thoughts are ſecret and ſudden, yet naked and open before Chriſt the eternal Word, *Heb.* 4. 12, 13. and he *underſtands them afar off,* Pſalm 139. 2. He could ſay to them which no meer Man could, *Wherefore think ye Evil in your Hearts. Note,* There is a great deal of evil in ſinful Thoughts, which is very offenſive to the Lord Jeſus. He being the Sovereign of the Heart, ſinful Thoughts invade his Right, and diſturb his Poſſeſſion, therefore he takes Notice of them, and is much diſpleaſed with them. In them lies the *Root of Bitterneſs,* Gen. 6. 5. The Sins that begin and end in the Heart, and go no further, are as dangerous as any other.

(2.) He *argued them out of it,* v. 5, 6. Where obſerve,

1. How he *aſſerts* his Authority in the *Kingdom of Grace.* He undertakes to make out, that the *Son of Man* the Mediator has *Power on Earth* to *forgive Sins;* for therefore the Father has *committed all Judgment to the Son,* and has given him this Authority, *becauſe he is the Son of Man,* John 5. 22, 27. If he have *Power to give eternal Life,* as he certainly has, *John* 17. 2. he muſt have Power to forgive Sin, for Guilt is a Bar that muſt be removed, or we can never get to Heaven. What an Encouragement is this to poor Sinners to repent, that the Power of pardoning Sins is put into the Hands of the *Son of Man,* who is Bone of our Bone! And if he had this *Power on Earth,* much more now he is exalted to the Father's Right-Hand to give *Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins,* and ſo to be both a *Prince and a Saviour,* Acts 5. 31.

2. How he *proves* it by his Power in the Kingdom of *Nature,* his Power to cure Diſeaſes. Is it not as eaſy to ſay, *Thy Sins be forgiven thee,* as to ſay, *Ariſe and walk?* He that can cure the Diſeaſe, whether *declaratively* as a Prophet, or *authoritatively* as God, can in like manner forgive the Sin. Now (1.) This is a general Argument to prove that Chriſt had a Divine Miſſion. His Miracles, eſpecially his miraculous Cures, confirm what he ſaid of himſelf, that he was the Son of God; The Power that appear'd in his Cures prov'd him *ſent of God,* and the Pity that appear'd in them prov'd him ſent of God *to heal and ſave.* The God of Truth would not ſet his Seal to a Lye. (2.) It had a particular Cogency in this Caſe. The Palſy was but a Symptom of the Diſeaſe of Sin; now he made it to appear that he could effectually cure the Original Diſeaſe, by the immediate Removal of that Symptom; ſo cloſe a Connexion was there between the Sin and the Sickneſs. He that had Power to *remove* the Puniſhment, no doubt had Power to *remit* the Sin. The Scribes ſtood much upon a Legal Righteouſneſs, and placed their Confidence in that, and made no great Matter of the *Forgiveneſs of Sin,* the Doctrine of which Chriſt hereby deſign'd to put Honour upon, and to ſhew that his great Errand into the World, was to *ſave his People from their Sins.*

5. The immediate Cure of the Sick Man. Chriſt turn'd from diſputing with them, and ſpake Healing to him. The moſt neceſſary Arguing muſt not divert us from doing the Good that our *Hand finds to do.* He ſaith to *the Sick of the Palſy, Ariſe, take up thy Bed, and go to thine Houſe;* and a healing, quickning, ſtrengthning Power went along with this Word, *v.* 7. *He aroſe and departed to his Houſe.* Now (1.) Chriſt bid him *take up his Bed,* to ſhew that he was *perfectly cur'd* and that not only he had no more Occaſion to be *carried* upon his Bed, but that he had Strength to carry it. (2.) He ſent him *to his Houſe,* to be a Bleſſing to his Family, where he had been ſo long a Burthen; and did not take him along with him for a *Shew,* which thoſe would do in ſuch a Caſe, who ſeek the Honour that cometh from Men.

6. The Impreſſion which this made upon the *Multitude, v.* 8. They *marvelled,* and *glorified God. Note,* All our Wonder ſhould help to enlarge our Hearts in *glorifying God.* who alone doth marvellous Things. They glorified God for what he had done for this poor Man. *Note,* Others Mercies ſhould be our Praiſes, and we ſhould give him Thanks for them, for we are Members one of another. Tho' few of this Multitude were ſo convinc'd as to be brought to believe in Chriſt, and to follow him, yet they admir'd him, not as God, or the Son of God, but as a *Man* to whom God *had given ſuch Power. Note,* God muſt be glorified in all the Power that is *given to Men* to do good. For all power is originally his, its in him as the fountain, in men as the ciſterns.

9 And as Jeſus paſſed forth from thence, he ſaw a Man, named Matthew, ſitting at the receit of cuſtom: and he ſaith unto him, Follow me. And he aroſe and followed him. 10 And it came to paſs, as Jeſus ſate at meat in the houſe, behold, many publicans and ſinners came and ſate down with him and his diſciples. 11 And when the Phariſees ſaw *it,* they

ſaid unto his diſciples, Why eateth your Maſter with publicans and ſinners? 12 But when Jeſus heard *that*, he ſaid unto them, They that be whole need not a phyſician, but they that are ſick. 13 But go ye, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

In theſe Verſes we have an account of the Grace and Favour of Chriſt to poor Publicans, particularly to *Matthew*. What he did to the Bodies of People was to make way for a kind deſign he had upon their Souls. Now obſerve here,

1. The call of *Matthew*, the Pen-man of this Goſpel. *Mark* and *Luke* call him *Levi*; 'twas ordinary for the ſame Perſon to have two Names; perhaps *Matthew* was the Name he was moſt known by as a Publican, and therefore in his Humility he call'd himſelf by that Name, rather than by the more honourable Name of *Levi*. Some think Chriſt gave him the Name of *Matthew*, when he call'd him to be an Apoſtle, as *Simon*, he Sirnamed *Peter*. *Matthew* ſignifies *the Gift of God*; Miniſters are God's Gifts to the Church, their Miniſtry, and their Ability for it are God's Gifts to them. Now obſerve

1. The *Poſture* that Chriſt's Call found *Matthew* in. He was *ſitting in the Receit of Cuſtom*, for he was a Publican, *Luke* 5. 27. He was a Cuſtom-houſe Officer at the Port of *Capernaum*, or an Exciſe-Man, or Collector of the Land-Tax. Now (1.) He was *in his Calling*, as the reſt of them whom Chriſt call'd, *Chap.* 4. 18. *Note*, As Satan chuſeth to come with his Temptations to thoſe that are idle, ſo Chriſt chuſeth to come with his Calls to thoſe that are employ'd. But (2.) it was a Calling of *ill Fame* among ſerious People; becauſe it was attended with ſo much Corruption and Temptation, and there were ſo few in that Buſineſs that were honeſt Men. *Matthew* doth himſelf own that he was before his Converſion, as doth St. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. That the Grace of Chriſt in calling him might be the more magnified, and to ſhew that God hath his Remnant among all ſorts of People. None can juſtifie themſelves in their Unbelief by their Calling in the World; for there is no *ſinful* Calling but ſome have been ſaved *out of it*, and no *lawful Calling* but ſome have been ſaved *in it*.

2. The *preventing Power* of this Call. We find not that *Matthew* look'd after Chriſt, or had any Inclination to follow him, tho' ſome of his Kindred were already Diſciples of Chriſt, but Chriſt prevented him with the Bleſſings of his Goodneſs. He is found of thoſe that ſeek him not. Chriſt *ſpoke firſt*; we have not choſen him, but he hath choſen us. He ſaid, *Follow me*; and the ſame divine Almighty Power went along with this Word to convert *Matthew*, which went along with that Word, *v.* 6. *Ariſe, and walk* to cure the Man ſick of the Palſie. *Note*, A ſaving Change is wrought in the Soul by Chriſt as the Author, and his Word as the Means. His Goſpel is the *Power of God unto Salvation*, Rom. 1. 16. The Call was *effectual*, for he came at the Call; *he aroſe and* follow'd him immediately: neither *deny'd* nor *defer'd* his Obedience. The Power of divine Grace ſoon anſwers and overcomes all Objections. Neither his *Commiſſion* for his Place, nor his *Gains* by it could detain him when Chriſt call'd him. *He conferred not with Fleſh and Blood*, Gal. 1. 15, 16. He quitted his Poſt, and his Hopes of Preferment in that way; and tho' we find the Diſciples that were Fiſhers occaſionally, fiſhing again afterward, we never find *Matthew* at the Receit of Cuſtom again.

2. Chriſt's *Converſe* with Publicans and Sinners upon this Occaſion; Chriſt call'd *Matthew* to introduce himſelf into an Acquaintance with People of that Profeſſion. *Jeſus ſate at Meat in the Houſe*, v. 10. The other Evangeliſts tells us, That *Matthew* made a *great Feaſt*, (which the poor Fiſhermen, when they were call'd, were not able to do.) But when he comes to ſpeak of this himſelf, he neither tells us that it was his own Houſe, nor that it was a Feaſt, but only that he *ſate at Meat in the Houſe*; preſerving the remembrance of Chriſt's Favour to the Publicans, rather than of the Reſpect he had paid to Chriſt. *Note*, It well becomes us to ſpeak ſparingly of our own good Deeds.

Now obſerve (1.) when *Matthew* invited Chriſt, he invited his Diſciples to *come along with him*. *Note*, Thoſe that wlecome Chriſt muſt welcome all that are his for his ſake, and let them have a Room in their Hearts. (2.) He invited many Publicans and Sinners to *meet him*. This was the chief thing *Matthew* aim'd at in this Treat, that he might have an opportunity of bringing his old Comrades acquainted with Chriſt. He knew by experience what their Temptations were, and pity'd them; knew by experience what the Grace of Chriſt could do, and would not deſpair concerning them. *Note*, Thoſe who are effectually brought to Chriſt themſelves, cannot but be deſirous that others alſo might be brought to him, and ambitious of contributing ſomething towards it. True Grace will not contentedly eat its morſels alone, but will invite others. When by the Converſion of *Matthew* the Gang was broke, preſently his Houſe ſwarms with Publicans, and it ſhall go hard but ſome of them ſhall *follow him*, as he *followed Chriſt*. Thus did *Andrew* and *Philip*, Joh. 1. 41, 45.—4 29. See *Judg.* 14. 9.

3. The *Diſpleaſure* of the *Phariſees* at this, *v.* 11. They cavil'd at it; *Why eateth your Maſter with Publicans and Sinners?* Here obſerve, (1.) That Chriſt was quarrel'd with. It was not the leaſt of his Sufferings that he *endur'd the Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf*. None was more quarrel'd with by Men than he that came to take up the great Quarrel between God and Man. Thus he deny'd himſelf the Honour due to an incarnate Deity, which was to be juſtified in what he ſpake, and to have all he ſaid readily ſubſcrib'd to; for tho' he never ſpoke or did any thing amiſs, every thing he ſaid and did was found fault with. Thus he taught us to expect and prepare for Reproach, and bear it patiently. (2.) Thoſe that quarrel'd with him were the *Phariſees*; a proud Generation of Men, conceited of themſelves, and cenſorious of others; of the ſame Temper with thoſe in the Prophets Time, that ſaid, *ſtand by thy ſelf, come not near me, I am holier than thou*; very ſtrict in avoiding Sinners, but not in avoiding Sin; none greater Zealots than they for the Form of Godlineſs, nor greater Enemies to the Power of it. They were for keeping up the Traditions of the Elders to a nicety, and ſo propagating the ſame Spirit that they were themſelves govern'd by. (3) They brought their Cavil, not to Chriſt himſelf, they had not the Courage to face him with it, but to his *Diſciples*. The Diſciples were in the ſame Company, but the Quarrel is with the Maſter; for they would not have done it, if he had not; and they thought it worſe in him, that was a Prophet, than in them; his Dignity they thought ſhould ſet him at a greater diſtance from ſuch Company than others. Being offended at the Maſter, they quarrel with the Diſciples. *Note*, It concerns Chriſtians to be able to vindicate and juſtify Chriſt, and his Doctrines and Laws, and to be *ready always to give an Anſwer to thoſe that aſk them a Reaſon of the Hope that is in them*, 1 Pet. 3. 15. While he is an Advocate for us in Heaven, let us be Advocates for him on Earth, and make his Reproach our own. (4.) The Quarrel was his *eating with Publicans and Sinners*; to be intimate with wicked People is againſt the Law of God, *Pſal.* 119. 115.— 1. 1. and perhaps by accuſing Chriſt of this to his Diſciples, they hoped to tempt them from him, to put them out of conceit with him, and ſo to bring them over to themſelves to be their Diſciples, who kept better Company; for they *compaſs'd Sea and Land to make Proſelytes*. To be intimate with *Publicans*, was againſt the *Tradition of the Elders*, and therefore they look'd upon it as a heinous thing. They were angry with Chriſt for this. (1.) becauſe they *wiſh'd Ill to him*, and ſought occaſion to miſ-repreſent him. *Note*, It is an eaſy and very common thing to put the worſt Conſtructions on the beſt Words and Actions. (2.) Becauſe they *wiſh'd no Good* to Publicans and Sinners, but envy'd Chriſt's Favour to them, and were grieved to ſee them brought to Repentance. *Note*, It may juſtly be ſuſpected that thoſe have not the Grace of God themſelves, who grudge others a ſhare in that Grace, who are not pleas'd with it.

4. The *Defence* that Chriſt made for himſelf and his Diſciples, in juſtification of their Converſe with Publicans and Sinners. The Diſciples it ſhould ſeem being yet weak, were to ſeek for an Anſwer to the *Phariſees* Cavil, and therefore bring it to Chriſt, and he heard it, *v.* 12. or perhaps *over-heard* them *whiſpering* it to his Diſciples; let him alone to vindicate himſelf, and to Plead his own Cauſe; to anſwer for himſelf, and for us too. Two things he urges in his Defence.

(1.) The *Neceſſity* and *Exigence* of the Publican's *Caſe*, which call'd aloud for his Help, and therefore juſtify'd him in converſing with them for their Help. It was the extream Neceſſity of poor loſt Sinners that brought Chriſt from the pure Regions above to theſe impure ones, and the ſame was it that brought him into this Company which was thought impure. Now 1. he proves the Neceſſity of the Publican's Caſe. *They that be whole need not a Phyſician, but they that are ſick.* The Publicans are ſick, and they need one to help and heal them, which the *Phariſees* think they do not. *Note*, Sin is the *Sickneſs* of the Soul; Sinners are ſpiritually Sick. Original Corruptions are the Diſeaſes of the Soul; actual Tranſgreſſions are its Wounds, or the Eruptions of the Diſeaſe. 'Tis deforming, weakning, diſquieting, waſting, killing, but, bleſſed be God, not incurable. (2.) Jeſus Chriſt is the great Phyſician of Souls. His curing of bodily Diſeaſes ſignified this, that he aroſe *with healing under his Wings*. He is a skilful, faithful, compaſſionate Phyſician, and it is his Office and Buſineſs to heal the Sick. Wiſe and good Men ſhould be as Phyſicians to all about them, Chriſt was ſo. *Hunc affectum verſus omnes habet Sapiens, quem verſus ægros ſuos Medicus.* Senec. de. Conſt. (3.) Sin-ſick Souls have need of this Phyſician, for their Diſeaſe is dangerous, Nature will not help it ſelf, no Man can help us; ſuch need have we of Chriſt, that we are undone, eternally undone without him. Senſible Sinners ſee their Need, and apply themſelves to him accordingly. (4.) There are multitudes who conceit themſelves to be ſound and whole, think they have no *need of Chriſt*, but that they can ſhift for themſelves well enough without him, as *Laodicea*, Rev. 3. 17. Thus the *Phariſees* deſir'd not the knowledge of Chriſt's Word and Ways, not becauſe they had no need of him, but becauſe they *thought they* had none. See *John* 9. 40, 41.

2. He proves that their Neceſſity did ſufficiently juſtifie his Conduct in converſing familiarly with them, and he ought not to be blam'd for it; for that *Neceſſity* made it *an Act of Charity*, which ought always to be prefer'd before the Formalites of a Religious Profeſſion; in which Beneficence and Munificence are far better than Magnificence, as much as Subſtance is then Shews or Shadows. Thoſe Duties which are of moral and natural Obligation, are to take place, even of thoſe divine Laws which are poſitive and ritual, much more of thoſe Impoſitions of Men, and Traditions of the Elders, which make God's Law ſtricter than he has made it. This he proves *v.* 13. by a Paſſage quoted out of *Hoſ.* 6. 6. *I will have Mercy and not Sacrifice.* That moroſe Separation from the Society of Publicans, which the *Phariſees* enjoyn'd, was leſs *then Sacrifice*; but Chriſt's con-

verſing with them was more than an Act of common Mercy, and therefore to be prefer'd before it. If to *do well* our ſelves is better than Sacrifice, as *Samuel* ſhews, 1 *Sam.* 15. 22, 23. much more to *do good* to others. Chriſt's converſing with Sinners is here call'd *Mercy*; to promote the Converſion of Souls is the greateſt Act of Mercy imaginable, 'tis *ſaving a Soul from Death*, Jam. 5. 20. Obſerve how Chriſt quotes this, *Go ye, and learn what that meaneth. Note*, It is not enough to be acquainted with theLetter of the Scripture, but we muſt learn to underſtand the meaning of it. And thoſe have beſt learn'd the meaning of the Scripture, that have learn'd how to applyit as aReproof to their ownFaults, and a Rule to their own Practice. This Scripture which Chriſt quoted, ſerv'd not only to vindicate him, but (1.) to ſhew wherein *true* Religion doth *conſiſt*, not in external Obſervances, not *in Meats and Drinks*, and Shews of Sanctity, not in little particular Opinions, and doubtful Diſputations, but in doing all the Good we can to the Bodies and Souls of others, in Righteouſneſs and Peace, in *viſiting the Fatherleſs and Widows*. (2.) To condemn the Phariſaical Hypocriſy of thoſe who place Religion in Rituals more than in Morals, *Mat.* 23. 23. They eſpouſe thoſeForms ofGodlineſs which maybe made conſiſtent with, and perhaps ſubſervient to their pride, covetouſneſs, ambition and malice, while theyhate thatpower of itwhich is mortifying totheſe luſts.

(2.) He urgeth the *Nature* and *End* of his own *Commiſſion*. He muſt keep to his Orders, and proſecute that for which he was appointed to be the great Teacher; now, ſaith he, *I am not come to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*, and therefore muſt Converſe with Publicans. Obſerve (1.) what his Errand was, 'Twas to *call to Repentance*. This was his firſt Text, *Matth.* 4. 17. and it was the Tendency of all his Sermons. *Note*, The Goſpel-call is a Call to Repentance, a Call to us to change our Mind, and to change our Way. (2.) With whom his Errand lay, not with the*Righteous*, but with *Sinners*. That is, (1.) if the Children of Men had not been *Sinners*, there had been no occaſion for Chriſt's coming among them. He is the Saviour, not of Man, as Man, but of Man as *fallen*. Had the firſt *Adam* continued in his original *Righteouſneſs*, we had not needed a ſecond*Adam*. (2.) Therefore his *greateſt Buſineſs* lies with the *greateſt Sinners*; the more dangerous the Sick Man's Caſe is, the more occaſion there is for the Phyſician's help. Chriſt came into the World to *ſave Sinners*, but eſpecially *the Chief*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. To call not thoſe ſo much, who tho' *Sinners*, are comparatively *Righteous*, but the worſt of Sinners. (3.) The more ſenſible any Sinners are of their Sinfulneſs, the more welcome will Chriſt and his Goſpel be to them; and every one chuſeth to go where *their Company* is deſir'd, not to thoſe who would rather have *their room*. Chriſt came not with anyExpectation of ſpeeding among *the Righteous*, i.e. thoſe who conceit themſelves ſo, and therefore will ſooner be ſick of their Saviour, than ſick of their Sins; but among the convinced humble Sinners, to them Chriſt will come, for with them he will *be welcome*.

14 Then came to him the diſciples of John, ſaying, Why do we and the Phariſees faſt oft, but thy diſciples faſt not? 15 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom ſhall be taken from them, and then ſhall they faſt. 16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth into an old garment: for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worſe. 17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: elſe the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles periſh. but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preſerved.

The Quarrels thatwere pick'd withChriſt and his Diſciples, gave occaſion to ſome of the moſt profitable of his Diſcourſes; thus are the Intereſts of Truth often ſerv'd, even by the Oppoſition it meets with from Gain-ſayers, and thus the Wiſdom of Chriſt brings Good out of Evil. This is the third Inſtance of it in this Chapter; his Diſcourſe of his Power to forgive Sin, and his readineſs to receive Sinners, were occaſion'd by the Cavils of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; ſo here from a Reflection upon the Conduct of his Family aroſe a Diſcourſe concerning his Tenderneſs of it. *Obſerve*

1. TheObjection which theDiſciples of *John* made againſtChriſt's Diſciples for not *faſting* ſo oft as they did; which they are charg'd with as another Inſtance of the looſeneſs of their Profeſſion, beſides that of eating withPublicans and Sinners; and 'tis therefore ſuggeſted to them that they ſhould change theirProfeſſion for another more ſtrict. It appears by the other Evangeliſts, *Mark* 2. 18. and *Luke* 5. 33. that the Diſciples of the Phariſees joyn'd with them, and we have Reaſon to ſuſpect, ſet them on, making uſe of *John*'s Diſciples as their Spokeſmen, becauſe they being more in favour with Chriſt, and nearer ally'd to his Diſciples, could do it more plauſibly. *Note*, It is no new thing for bad Men to ſet good Men together by the Ears; if the People of God differ in their Sentiments, deſigning Men will take that occaſion to ſow Diſcord, and incenſe them one againſt another, and alienate them one from another, and ſo to make an eaſy Prey of them. If the Diſciples of *John*, and of *Jeſus* claſh, we have reaſon to ſuſpect the *Phariſees* have been at work under-hand, blowing the Coals. Now the Complaint is, *Why do we and the Phariſees faſt oft, but thy Diſciples faſt not?* 'Tis pity the Duties of Religion, which ought to be the Confirmations of holy Love, ſhould be made the Occaſions of Strife and Contention; but they often are ſo, as here; where we may obſerve,

1. How they *boaſted* of their own Faſting. *We and the Phariſees faſt oft.* Faſting has in all Ages of the Church been conſecrated upon ſpecial Occaſions to the Service of Religion; the *Phariſees* were much in it, many of them kept two Faſt days in a Week, and yet the generality of them were Hypocrites and ill Men. *Note*, Falſe and formal Profeſſors often excel others in outward Acts of Devotion, even of Mortification. The Diſciples of *John* too *faſted oft*, partly in compliance with their Maſter's Practice, for he came *neither eating nor drinking*, Mat. 11. 18. And People are apt to imitate their Leaders, tho' not always from the ſame inward Principle; partly in compliance with their Maſter's Doctrine of Repentance. *Note*, The *ſeverer* part of Religion is often moſt *minded* by thoſe that are yet under the Diſcipline of the Spirit, as a *Spirit of Bondage*; whereas tho' theſe are good in their place, we muſt paſs thro' them to that Life of Delight in God, and Dependance on him, which theſe are in order to. Now they come to Chriſt to tell him that they *faſted oft*, at leaſt they thought it *often. Note, Moſt Men will proclaim every one his own Goodneſs*, Prov. 20. 6. There is a Proneneſs in Profeſſors to brag of their ownPerformances in Religion, eſpeciallyif there be anything extraordinaryin them; nay, and not onlyto boaſt of them beforeMen but to plead them before God, and confide in them as a righteouſneſs.

2. How they blam'd Chriſt's Diſciples for not faſting ſo oft as they did. *Thy Diſciples faſt not.* They could not but know that Chriſt had inſtructed his Diſciples to keep their Faſts private, and to manage themſelves ſo as that they might not *appear unto Men to faſt*; and therefore'twas veryuncharitable in them to conclude theydid *not faſt*, becauſe they did not proclaim their Faſts. *Note*, We muſt not judge of People's Religion by that which falls under the Eye and Obſervation of the World. But ſuppoſe it was ſo, that Chriſt's Diſciples did not *faſt* ſo oft, or ſo long as they did; why, truly they would therefore have it thought that theyhad moreReligion in them than Chriſt's Diſciples had. *Note*, It is common for vain Profeſſors to make *themſelves* a Standard in Religion, by which to try and meaſure Perſons and Things, as if all who differ'd from them were ſo far in the wrong; as if all that did leſs than they, did too little; and all that did more than they, did too much; which is a plain Evidence of their want of Hnmility and Charity.

3. How they brought this Complaint to Chriſt. *Note*, If Chriſt's Diſciples, either byOmiſſion orCommiſſion giveOffence, Chriſt himſelf will be ſure to hear of it, and be reflected upon for it. *O Jeſus, Are theſe thy Chriſtians?* Therefore as we tender the Honour of Chriſt, we are concern'd to carry ourſelves well. Obſerve, The Quarrel with Chriſt was brought to the Diſciples, *v.* 11. The Quarrel with the Diſciples was brought to Chriſt, *v.* 14. This is the way of ſowing Diſcord, and killing Love, to ſet People againſt Miniſters, Miniſters againſt People, and one Freind againſt another.

2. The Apology which Chriſt made for his Diſciples in this Matter. Chriſt might have upbraided *John*'s Diſciples with the former part of their Queſtion, *Why do we faſt oft?* Nay, you know beſt why you do it, but the truth is, many abound in external Inſtances of Devotion, that ſcarce do themſelves know why, and wherefore. But he only vindicates the Practice of his Diſciples, when they had nothing to ſay for themſelves, he had ſomething ready to ſay for them. *Note*, As it is Wiſdom's Honour to be juſtified of all her Children, ſo it is her Children's Happineſs to be all juſtified of Wiſdom. What we do according to the Precept and Pattern of Chriſt, he will be ſure to bear us out in, and we may with confidence leave it to him to clear up our Integrity,

But thou ſhalt anſwer, Lord, for me. Herbert.

Two things Chriſt pleads in defence of their *not faſting*.

1. That it was not a Seaſon proper for that Duty, *v.* 15. *Can the Children of the Bride-chamber mourn as long as the Bridegroom is with them?* Obſerve, Chriſt's Anſwer is ſo fram'd, as that it might ſufficiently juſtify the Practice of his own Diſciples, and yet not condemn the Inſtitution of *John*, or the Practice of his Diſciples. When the *Phariſees* fomented this Diſpute, they hoped Chriſt would caſt Blame, either on his own Diſciples, or on *John*'s, but he did neither. *Note*, When at any time we are unjuſtly cenſur'd, our care muſt be only to clear our ſelves, not to recriminate, or throw Dirt upon others; and ſuch a variety there may be of Circumſtances, as may juſtify us in our Practice, without condemning thoſe that practiſe otherwiſe.

Now his Argument is taken from the common uſage of Joy and Rejoycing during the continuance of Marriage-Solemnities; when all Inſtances of Melancholy and Sorrow are look'd upon as improper, and abſurd, as it was at *Sampſon*'s Wedding, *Judg.* 14. 27. Now (1.) The Dſciples of Chriſt were the *Children of the Bride-Chamber*, invited to the Wedding-feaſt, and welcome there, *the Diſciples of the Phariſees* were not ſo, but *Children of the Bond-woman*, Gal. 4. 25, 31. continuing under a Diſpenſation of Darkneſs and Terror. *Note*, The faithful Followers of Chriſt that have the Spirit of Adoption, have a continual Feaſt, while they that have the Spirit of Bondage and Fear cannot rejoyce for Joy, as other People, *Hoſ.* 9. 1. (2.) The Diſciples of Chriſt had *the Bridegroom with them*, which the Diſciples of *John* had not; their Maſter was now caſt into Priſon, and lay there in continual danger of his Life, and therfore 'twas ſeaſonable for them to *faſt oft*. Such a day would come upon the Diſciples of Chriſt, when the Bridegroom ſhould be taken from them, when they ſhould be depriv'd of his Bodily Preſence, and *then ſhall they faſt.* The Thoughts of parting griev'd them when he was going, *John.* 16.6. Tribulation and Affliction befel them when he was gone, and gave them occaſion of *Mourning and Praying*, that is, of Religious Faſting. *Note*, (1.) Jeſus Chriſt is the Bridegroom of his Church, and his Diſciples are the *Children of the Bride-chamber*. Chriſt ſpeaks of himſelf to *John*'s Diſciples under this Similitude, becauſe it was the ſame that *John* had us'd, when he call'd himſelf a Friend of the Bridegroom, *John* 3. 29. And if they would by this Hint call to mind what their Maſter then ſaid, they would anſwer themſelves. (2.) The Condition of thoſe that are the Children of the Bride-chamber is liable to many Changes and Alterations in this World, they ſing of Mercy and Judgment. (3.) It is merry or melancholy with the Children of the Bride-chamber, according as they have, more or leſs of the Bridegroom's Preſence. When he is with them, the Candle of God ſhines upon their Head, and all is well; but when he is withdrawn, tho' but for a ſmall moment, *they are troubled*, and walk heavily; the Preſence and Nearneſs of the Sun makes Day and Summer, his Abſence and Diſtance Night and Winter. Chriſt is all in all to the Churches Joy. (4.) Every Duty is to be done in its proper ſeaſon; See *Eccl.* 7. 14. *James* 5. 13. There is a Time to Mourn, and a Time to Laugh, to each of which we ſhould accommodate our ſelves, and bring forth Fruit in due Seaſon. In Faſts, regard is to be had to the Methods of God's Grace in us, when he *mourns to us*, we muſt *lament*; and alſo in the Diſpenſations of his Providence concerning us; there are Times when *the Lord God calls to Weeping and Mourning*; regard is likewiſe to be had to any ſpecial Work before us, *Mat.* 17. 21. *Acts* 13. 2.

2. They had not a *ſtrength* ſufficient for that Duty. This is ſet forth in two Similitudes, one of putting new Cloth into an old Garment, which doth but pull the old to pieces, *v.* 16. the other of putting new Wine into old Bottles, which doth but burſt the Bottles, *v.* 17. Chriſt's Diſciples were not able to bear theſe ſevere Exerciſes, ſo well as thoſe of *John*, and of the *Phariſees*; which the Learned Dr. *Whitby* gives this Reaſon for: There were among the *Jews* not only Sects of the *Phariſees* and *Eſſenes*, who led an auſtere Life, but alſo *Schools of the Prophets*, who frequently liv'd in Mountains and Deſarts, and were many of them *Nazarites*; they had alſo private Academies, to train Men up in a ſtrict Diſcipline, and poſſibly from theſe many of *John*'s Diſciples might come, and many of the *Phariſees*; whereas Chriſt's Diſciples being taken immediately from their Callings, had not been us'd to ſuch Religious Auſterities, and were unfit for them, and would by them be rather diſfitted for their other Work. *Note*, (1.) Some Duties of Religion are harder and more difficult than others, like *new Cloth*, and *new Wine*; which require moſt intenſeneſs of Mind, and are moſt diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood; ſuch is Religious Faſting, and the Duties that attend it. (2.) The beſt of Chriſt's Diſciples paſs through a State of Infancy; all the Trees in Chriſt's Garden are not of a growth, nor all his Scholars in the ſame Form. There are *Babes in Chriſt*, and *grown Men*. 3. In the injoyning of Religious Exerciſes, the Weakneſs and Infirmity of young Chriſtians ought to be conſider'd. As the Food provided for them muſt be ſuch as is proper for their Age; (ſee 1 *Cor.* 3. 2. *Heb.* 5. 12.) So muſt the Work be that is cut out for them. Chriſt would not ſpeak to his Diſcples that which they could not then bear, *John* 16. 12. Young beginners in Religion muſt not preſently be put upon the hardeſt Duties at firſt, leſt they be diſcouraged. Such as was God's Care of his *Iſrael*, when he brought them out of *Egypt*, not to lead them by the way of the *Philiſtines*, Exod. 13. 17, 18. And ſuch as was *Jacob*'s care of his Children and Cattle, not to over-drive them, *Gen.* 33. 13. Such is Chriſt's care of the little ones of his Family, and the Lambs of his Flock, he gently leads them. For want of this care many times *the Bottles break*, and the *Wine is ſpill'd*, the Profeſſion of many miſcarries, and comes to nothing, through Indiſcretion at firſt. *Note*, There may be *over-doing*, even in *well-doing*, a being *Righteous over-much*; and ſuch an over-doing as may prove an *undoing*, through the Subtilty of Satan.

18 While he ſpake theſe things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler and worſhipped him, ſaying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and ſhe ſhall live. 19 And Jeſus aroſe and followed him, and *ſo did* his diſciples. 20 (And behold, a woman which was diſeaſed with an iſſue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment. 21 For ſhe ſaid within herſelf, If I may but touch his garment, I ſhall be whole. 22 But Jeſus turned him about, and when he ſaw her, he ſaid, Daughter be of good comfort: thy faith hath made the whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour) 23 And when Jeſus came into the rulers houſe, and ſaw the minſtrels and the people making a noiſe, 24 He ſaid unto them, Give place, for the maid is not dead, but ſleepeth. And they laughed him to ſcorn. 25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid aroſe. 26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

We have here two Paſſages of Story put together, that of the raiſing of *Jarius*'s Daughter to Life, and that of the curing the Woman that had the *bloody Iſſue*, by the way as he was going to *Jarius*'s Houſe, which comes in in a Parentheſis in the midſt of the other; for Chriſt's Miracles were thick ſown, and interwoven; the Work of him that ſent him was his daily Work. He was call'd to do theſe good Works from *ſpeaking thoſe things* foregoing, in anſwer to the Cavils of the Phariſees. *v.* 18. *While he ſpake theſe things.* And we may ſuppoſe it a pleaſing Interruption given to that unpleaſant Work of Diſputation, which, tho' ſometimes needful, a good Man will gladly leave to go about a Work of Devotion or Charity. Here's

Firſt, The Ruler's *Addreſs to Chriſt*, v. 18. A *certain Ruler*, a Ruler *of the Synagogue* came and *Worſhipped him*: *Have any of the Rulers believed on him?* Yes, here was one, a Church-ruler, whoſe Faith condemn'd the Unbelief of the reſt of the Rulers. This Ruler had a little Daughter of Twelve Years old *newly dead*, and this Breach made upon his Family-comforts, was the occaſion of his coming to Chriſt. *Note*, In Trouble we ſhould *viſit* God; the Death of our Relations ſhould drive us to Chriſt, who is our Life; tis well if any thing will do it. When Affliction is in our Families, we muſt not *ſit down aſtoniſhed*, but as *Job*, fall *down and Worſhip*. Now obſerve,

1. His *Humility* in this Addreſs to Chriſt. He *came* with his Errand to Chriſt himſelf, and did not ſend a Servant. *Note*, It's no diſparagement to the greateſt Rulers perſonally to attend on the Lord Jeſus. He *Worſhipped him*, bow'd the Knee to him, and gave him all imaginable Reſpect. *Note*, Thoſe that would receive Mercy from Chriſt, muſt give honour to Chriſt.

2. His Faith in this Addreſs. *My Daughter is even now Dead*, and tho' any other Phyſician would now come too late, nothing more abſurd than *Poſt mortem Medicina*; yet Chriſt comes not too late, he is a Phyſician *after Death*, for he is *the Reſurrection and the Life*; O come then, *and lay thy Hand upon her, and ſhe ſhall live.* This was quite above the Power of Nature, (*a Privatione ad Habitum non datur Regreſſus*) yet within the Power of Chriſt, who has *Life in himſelf, and quickneth whom he will.* Now Chriſt works in an ordinary way, by Nature, and not againſt it, and therefore we cannot in Faith bring him ſuch a Requeſt as this; while there's Life there's Hope, and room for Prayer; but when our Friends are dead the Caſe is determin'd; *we ſhall go to them, but they ſhall not return to us*: But while Chriſt was here upon Earth working Miracles, ſuch a Confidence as this was not only allowable but very commendable.

Secondly, The *Readineſs of Chriſt* to comply with his Addreſs, *v.* 19. *Jeſus* immediately *aroſe*, left his Company, *and followed him*; he was not only willing to grant him what he deſired, in raiſing his Daughter to Life, but to gratify him ſo far as to come to his Houſe to do it. Surely *he never ſaid to the Seed of* Jacob, *ſeek ye me in vain.* He deny'd to go along with the Nobleman, who ſaid, *Sir, Come down e'er my Child dye.* John 4. 48, 49, 50. yet went along with the Ruler of the Synagogue, who ſaid, Sir, come down, and *my Child ſhall live.* The Variety of Methods which Chriſt took in working his Miracles, is perhaps to be attributed to the different Frame and Temper of Mind, which thoſe were in that applied themſelves to him, which he who *ſearcheth the Heart* plainly knew, and accommodated himſelf to. He knows what is in Man, and what courſe to take with him. And obſerve, when *Jeſus* followed him, *ſo did his Diſciples*, whom he had choſen for his conſtant Companions; 'twas not for State, or that he might come with Obſervation that he took his Attendance with him, but that they might be the Witneſſes of his Miracles, who were hereafter to be the Preachers of his Doctrine.

Thirdly, The *Healing of the poor Woman's bloody Iſſue*; I call her a *poor* Woman, not only becauſe her Caſe was piteous, but becauſe, tho' ſhe had had ſomething in the World, ſhe had *ſpent it all upon Phyſicians*, for the Cure of her Diſtemper, and was never the better; which was a double Aggravation of the Miſery of her Condition, that ſhe had been full, but was now empty; and that ſhe had impoveriſh'd herſelf for the recovery of her Health, and yet had not her Health neither. This Woman was diſeaſed with a conſtant *Iſſue of Blood twelve Years*, v. 20. A Diſeaſe which was not only weakening and waſting, and under which the Body muſt needs languiſh; but alſo it render'd her *Ceremonially Unclean*, and ſhut her out from the Courts of the Lord's Houſe, but did not cut her off from approaching to Chriſt. She applied herſelf to Chriſt, and received Mercy from him *by the way*, as he followed the *Ruler*, whoſe *Daughter was dead*, to whom it would be a great Encouragement, and would help to keep up his Faith in the Power of Chriſt; ſo graciouſly doth Chriſt conſider the Frame, and conſult the Caſe of weak Believers. Obſerve

1. The Woman's *great Faith in Chriſt*, and in his Power. Her Diſeaſe was of ſuch a nature, that her modeſty would not ſuffer her to ſeek openly to Chriſt for a Cure, as others did, but by a peculiar Impulſe of the Spirit of Faith ſhe believ'd him to have ſuch an overflowing Fulneſs of healing Vertue, that the very *touch of his Garment* would be her *Cure*. This perhaps had ſomething of *Fancy* mix'd with *Faith*; for ſhe had no Precedent for this way of Application to Chriſt, unleſs as ſome think, ſhe had an eye to the raiſing of the dead Man by the touch of *Eliſha's Bones*, 2 Kings 13. 21. But what *Weakneſs of Underſtanding* there was in it, Chriſt was pleas'd

to overlook and accept the ſincerity and *ſtrength of her Faith*; for he eateth the *Honey-Comb with the Honey*, Cant. 5. 11. She believed ſhe ſhould be heal'd, if ſhe did but *touch* the very *hem of his Garment*, the outmoſt part of it. *Note*, There is Virtue in every thing that belongs to Chriſt. The holy Oyl with which the High-Prieſt was anointed, ran down *to the Skirts of his Garments*, Pſal. 133. 2. Such a Fulneſs of Grace is there in Chriſt, that from it *we may all receive*, John 1. 16.

2. Chriſt's *great Favour* to this Woman. He did not ſuſpend (as he might have done) his healing Influences, but ſuffered this *baſhful* Patient to *ſteal a Cure*, unknown to any one elſe, though ſhe could not think to do it *unknown to him*. And now ſhe was well content to be gone, for ſhe had what ſhe came for, but Chriſt was not willing to let her go ſo; he will not only have his Power magnified in her Cure, but his Grace magnified in her Comfort and Commendation. The Triumphs of her Faith muſt be to her Praiſe and Honour. He *turned about* to ſee for her, *v.* 22. and ſoon diſcovered her. *Note*, It is great Encouragement to humble Chriſtians, that thoſe who hide themſelves from Men, are known to Chriſt, who ſees in ſecret their Applications to Heaven that are moſt private. Now here,

(1.) He *puts Gladneſs in her Heart*, by that Word, *Daughter be of good Comfort*. She feared being chidden for coming clandeſtinely; but is encouraged. (1.) He calls her *Daughter*, for he ſpoke to her with the Tenderneſs of a Father, as he did to the *Man ſick of the Palſy*, v. 2. whom he call'd *Son*. *Note*, Chriſt has Comforts ready for the *Daughters of Zion*, that are of a Sorrowful Spirit, as *Hannah* was, 1 *Sam.* 1. 15. Believing Women are Chriſt's *Daughters*, and he will own then as ſuch. (2.) He bids her *be of good Comfort*. She has Reaſon to be ſo, if Chriſt owns her for a Daughter. *Note*, The Saints *Conſolation* is founded in their *Adoption*. His bidding her *be comforted* brought comfort with it, as his ſaying, *be ye whole*, brought Health with it. *Note*, 'Tis the will of Chriſt that his People ſhould be comforted, and it is his Prerogative to command Comfort to troubled Spirits. *He creates the Fruit of his Lips, Peace*, Iſa. 57. 18.

(2.) He *puts Honour upon her Faith*. That Grace of all other gives moſt Honour to Chriſt, and therefore he puts moſt Honour upon it; *Thy Faith has made thee whole*. Thus by Faith ſhe obtain'd a good Report. And as of all Graces Chriſt puts the greateſt Honour upon Faith, ſo of all Believers he puts the greateſt Honour upon thoſe that are moſt humble; as here on this Woman, who had more Faith than ſhe thought ſhe had. She has Reaſon to be *of good Comfort*, not only becauſe ſhe was *made whole*, but becauſe *her Faith had made her whole*; that is, (1.) She was *ſpiritually heal'd*: That Cure was wrought in her which is the proper Fruit and effect of Faith, the Pardon of Sin and the Work of Grace. *Note*, We may then be abundantly comforted in our Temporal Mercies, when they are accompanied with thoſe ſpiritual Bleſſings that reſemble them; our Food and Raiment comfortable, when by Faith we are fed with the Bread of Life, and cloth'd with the Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt: Our Reſt and Sleep comfortable, when by Faith we repoſe in God, and dwell at eaſe in him, Our Health and Proſperity comfortable, when by Faith our Souls *proſper*, and are *in Health*. See *Iſa.* 38. 16, 17. 2. Her bodily Cure was the Fruit of Faith, of *her Faith*, and that made it a happy comfortable Cure indeed. Thoſe out of whom the Devils were caſt, were help'd by Chriſt's Sovereign Power, ſome by the Faith of others, as *v.* 2. but 'tis *thy Faith that has made thee whole*. *Note*, Temporal Mercies are then Comforts indeed to us, when they are *receiv'd by Faith*. If when we are in purſuit of Mercy, we pray'd for it in Faith, with an Eye to the Promiſe, and in Dependance upon that, if we deſired it for the ſake of God's Glory, and with a Reſignation to God's Will, and have our Hearts enlarged by it in Faith, Love, and Obedience, we may then ſay, It was *received by Faith*.

Fourthly, The *Poſture* in which he found the Ruler's Houſe, *v.* 23. *He ſaw the People, and the Minſtrels*, or Muſicians *making a Noiſe*. The Houſe was in a Hurry; ſuch Work doth Death make, when it comes into a Family. And perhaps the neceſſary Cares that ariſe at ſuch a Time, when our Dead is to be decently buried out of our Sight, give ſome uſeful Diverſion to that Grief which is apt to prevail and play the Tyrant. The People in the Neighbourhood came together to condole the Loſs, to comfort the Parents, to prepare for, and attend on the Funeral, which the *Jews* were not wont to defer long. The Muſicians were among them, according to the Cuſtom of the *Gentiles*, with their doleful melancholy Tunes, to increaſe the Grief and ſtir up the Lamentation of thoſe that attended on this Occaſion; as (they ſay) is uſual among the *Iriſh*, with their *Abone, Abone*. Thus they indulge a Paſſion that is apt enough of it ſelf, to grow intemperate, and affected to *ſorrow as thoſe that have no Hope*. See how Religion provides Cordials, where Irreligion adminiſters Corroſives: Heatheniſm aggravates that Grief, which Chriſtianity ſtudies to aſſwage. Or, perhaps theſe Muſicians endeavour'd on the other hand to divert the Grief, and exhilirate the Family; but as *Vinegar upon Nitre, ſo is he that ſings Songs to a heavy Heart*. Obſerve, The Parents, who were immediately touch'd with the Affliction, were ſilent, while the People and Minſtrels, whoſe Lamentations were forced, made ſuch a Noiſe. *Note*, The loudeſt Grief is not always the greateſt; Rivers are moſt noiſy, where they run ſhallow. *Ille dolet vere, qui ſine Teſte dolet*. But notice is taken of this, to ſhew that the Girl was really dead, in the undoubted Apprehenſion of all about her.

Fifthly, The *Rebuke* that Chriſt gave to this Hurry and Noiſe, *v.* 24. He ſaid, *Give place*. *Note*, Sometimes when the Sorrow of the World prevails, it's much ado for Chriſt and his Comforts to crowd in. Thoſe that harden themſelves in Sorrow, and, like *Rachel*, refuſe to be comforted, ſhould think they hear Chriſt ſaying to their diſquieting Thoughts, *Give place*. Make room for him who is the *Conſolation of Iſrael*, and brings with him *ſtrong Conſolations*, ſtrong enough to overcome the Confuſion and Tyranny of theſe worldly Griefs, if he may but be admitted into the Soul. He gives a good reaſon, why they ſhould not thus diſquiet themſelves, and one another, *The Maid is not dead, but ſleepeth*. (1.) This was eminently true of this Maid, that was immediately to be rais'd to Life. She was *really dead*, but not ſo to Chriſt, who knew within himſelf *what he would do*, and could do, and who had determin'd to make her Death but as a *Sleep*. There is little more difference between Sleep and Death, but in *Continuance*, whatever other difference there is, 'tis but a Dream: This Death muſt be but of ſhort Continuance, and therefore is but a *Sleep*, like one Night's Reſt. He that quickens the Dead, may well call the Things which be not, as though they were, *Rom*, 4. 17. (2.) It is in a Senſe true of all that *die*, chiefly they that dye in the Lord. *Note*, 1. Death is a *Sleep*. All Nations and Languages, for the ſoftning of that which is ſo dreadful, and with all ſo unavoidable, and the reconciling themſelves to it, have agreed to call it ſo. 'Tis ſaid even of the wicked Kings, that they *ſlept with their Fathers*; and of thoſe that ſhall riſe to everlaſting Contempt, that they *ſleep in the Duſt*, Dan. 12. 2. 'Tis not the Sleep of the Soul, its Activity ceaſeth not, but the Sleep of the Body, which lies down in the Grave, ſtill and ſilent, regardleſs and diſregarded, wrapt up in Darkneſs and Obſcurity. Sleep is a *ſhort Death*, and Death a *long Sleep*. But the Death of the Righteous is in a ſpecial Manner to be look'd upon as a Sleep, *Iſa.* 57. 2. They ſleep in Jeſus, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 14. Not only reſt from the Toils and Labours of the Day, but reſt *in Hope of* a joyful Waking again in the Morning of the Reſurrection, when they ſhall wake refreſhed, wake to a new Life, wake to be richly dreſs'd and crown'd, and wake to *ſleep no more*.

2. The Conſideration of this ſhould moderate our Grief at the Death of our dear Relations, ſay not, they are *loſt*; no, they are but *gone before*; ſay not, they are *Slain*; no, they are but *fallen aſleep*; and the Apoſtle ſpeaks of it as an abſurd thing to imagine that *they that are fallen aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed*, 1 Cor. 15. 18. *Give place* therefore to thoſe Comforts which the Covenant of Grace miniſters, fetch'd from the future State and the Glory to be reveal'd.

Now could it be thought that ſuch a comfortable Word as this from the Mouth of our Lord Jeſus ſhould be ridicul'd as it was? *They laugh'd him to ſcorn*. Theſe People liv'd in *Capernaum*, knew Chriſt's Character, that he never ſpake a raſh or fooliſh Word; they knew how many mighty Works he had done; ſo that if they did not underſtand *what he meant* by this, they might at leaſt have been *ſilent*, in Expectation of the Iſſue. *Note*, The Words and Works of Chriſt, which cannot be underſtood, yet are not therefore to be deſpis'd. We muſt adore the Myſtery of divine Sayings, even when they ſeem to contradict what we think ourſelves moſt confident of. Yet even this tended to the Confirmation of the Miracle; for it ſeems ſhe was ſo apparently dead, that it was thought a very ridiculous thing to ſay otherwiſe.

Sixthly, The Raiſing of the Damſel to Life, by the Power of Chriſt, *v.* 25. The *People were put forth*. *Note*, Scorners that laugh at what they ſee and hear that is above their Capacity, are not proper Witneſſes of the wonderful Works of Chriſt, the Glory of which lies not in Pomp but in Power. The Widows Son at *Nain* and *Lazarus* were rais'd from the Dead openly, but this Damſel privately, for *Capernaum* that had ſlighted the leſſer Miracles of *reſtoring Health*, was unworthy to ſee the greater of *reſtoring Life*. Theſe Pearls were not to be caſt before thoſe that would *trample them under their Feet*.

Chriſt went in *and took her by the Hand*, as it were to awake her, and to help her up, proſecuting his own Metaphor of her *being aſleep*. The High-Prieſt that typified Chriſt, was not to come near the dead, *Lev.* 21. 10, 11. but Chriſt touched *the dead*. The Levitical Prieſthood leaves the dead in their Uncleanneſs, and therefore keeps at a Diſtance from them, becauſe it cannot remedy them; but Chriſt having Power to raiſe the Dead, is above the Infection, and therefore is not ſhy of touching them, He *took her by the Hand*, and *the Maid aroſe*. So eaſily, ſo effectually was the Miracle wrought; not by *Prayer*, as *Elijah* did it, 1 *Kings* 17. 21. and *Eliſha*, 2 *Kings* 4. 33. but by a touch. They did it *as Servants*, he as a Son, as a God, *to whom belong the Iſſues from Death*. *Note*, Jeſus Chriſt is the *Lord of Souls*, he commands them *forth*, and commands them *back*, when and as he pleaſeth, Dead Souls are not rais'd to ſpiritual Life, unleſs Chriſt *take them by the Hand*. 'Tis done in the *Day of his Power*. He helps us up or we lye ſtill.

Seventhly, The general Notice that was taken of this Miracle; tho' it was wrought privately, yet *v.* 26. *the Fame thereof went abroad into all that Land*: It was the common Subject of Diſcourſe. *Note*, Chriſt's Works are more talk'd of than conſider'd and improv'd. And doubtleſs, they that heard only the Report of Chriſt's Miracles, were accountable for that as well as they that were Eye-Witneſſes of them. Tho' we at this Diſtance have not ſeen Chriſt's Miracles, yet have an Authentick Hiſtory of them, we are bound upon the Credit of that to receive his Doctrine; and *bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed*, John 20. 29.

27 And when Jeſus departed thence, two blind men follow'd him, crying and ſaying, Thou ſon of

David, have mercy on us. 28 And when he was
come into the houſe, the blind Men came to him;
and Jeſus ſaith unto them, Believe ye that I am able
to do this? They ſaid unto him, Yea, Lord. 29 Then
touched he their eyes, ſaying, According to your
faith, be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were open-
ed, and Jeſus ſtraitly charged them, ſaying, See that
no man know *it.* 31 But they, when they were
departed, ſpread abroad his fame in all that country.
32 As they went out, behold they brought to him a
dumb man poſſeſſed with a devil. 33 And when the
devil was caſt out, the dumb ſpake: and the multitudes
marvelled, ſaying, It was never ſo ſeen in Iſrael.
34 But the Phariſees ſaid, He caſteth out the devils
through the prince of the devils.

In theſe Verſes we have an Account of two Miracles wrought together by our Saviour.

Firſt, The *Giving of Sight to two blind Men*, v. 27,--31. Chriſt is the Fountain of Light as well as Life, and as by raiſing the Dead he ſhew'd himſelf to be the ſame that at firſt *breath'd into Man the Breath of Life*, ſo by giving Sight to the Blind, he ſhew'd himſelf to be the ſame that at firſt *commanded the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs.* Obſerve,

1. The importunate Addreſs of the blind Men to Chriſt. He was returning from the Ruler's Houſe, to his own Lodgings, and theſe Blind Men *follow him*, as Beggars uſe to do, with their inceſſant Cries, *v.* 27. He that cur'd Diſeaſes, ſo eaſily, ſo effectually, and with all ſo cheap, ſhould have Patients enough. As for other things, ſo he is famed for an Oculiſt.

Obſerve (1.) The Title which theſe Blind Men gave to Chriſt; *Thou Son of David, have Mercy upon us.* The promiſe made to *David* that of his Loins the *Meſſiah* ſhould come, was well known, and the *Meſſiah* was therefore commonly call'd *the Son of David*: At this time there was a general Expectation of his appearing; theſe Blind Men know and own, and proclaim it in the Streets of *Capernaum*, that he is come, and *this is he*; which aggravates the Folly and Sin of the Chief Prieſts and *Phariſees*, that deny'd and oppos'd him. They could not ſee him and his Miracles, but *Faith comes by hearing.* *Note*, Thoſe who by the Providence of God are depriv'd of Bodily Eye-ſight, may yet by the Grace of God have the Eyes of their Underſtanding ſo enlightned, as to diſcern thoſe great things of God, which *are hid from the wiſe and prudent.*

(2.) Their Petition. *Have Mercy on us.* It was foretold that the *Son of David* ſhould be *merciful*, Pſal. 72. 12, 13. and in him ſhines the *tender Mercy of our God*, Luke 1. 78. *Note*, Whatever our Neceſſities and Burthens are, we need no more for Supply and Support, than a ſhare in the *Mercy of our Lord Jeſus.* Whether he heal us or no, if he *have Mercy on us*, we have enough, as to the particular Inſtances and Methods of Mercy, we may ſafely and wiſely refer our ſelves to the Wiſdom of Chriſt. They did not each of them ſay for himſelf, *Have Mercy on me*, but both for one another, *Have Mercy on us.* *Note*, It becomes thoſe that are under the ſame Affliction to concur in the ſame Prayers for Relief. Fellow-ſufferers ſhould be Joynt-Petitioners. In Chriſt there is enough for all.

(3.) Their Importunity in this Requeſt, they *followed him crying.* It ſeems he did not take notice of them at firſt, for he would try their Faith, which he knew to be ſtrong, would quicken their Prayers, and make his Cures the more valu'd, when they did not always come at the firſt Word. And would teach us to *continue inſtant in Prayer, always to pray, and not to faint*; and though the Anſwer do not come preſently, yet to wait for it, and to follow Providence, even in thoſe Steps and Out-goings of it, which ſeem to neglect or contradict our Prayers. Chriſt would not heal them publickly *in the Streets*, for this was a Cure he would have kept private, *v.* 30. But when he *came into the Houſe*, they follow'd him thither, and *came to him.* *Note*, Chriſt's Doors are always open to believing and importunate Petitioners, it ſeem'd rude in them, to thruſt into the Houſe after him, when he deſired to retire: But (ſuch is the Tenderneſs of our Lord Jeſus) they were not more bold than welcome.

2. The Confeſſion of Faith, which Chriſt drew from them upon this Occaſion. When they came to him for *Mercy*, he aſk'd them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* *Note*, Faith is the great Condition of Chriſt's Favours. Thoſe who would receive the Mercy of Chriſt, muſt firmly believe the Power of Chriſt; what we would have him do for us, we muſt be fully aſſur'd that he is *able to do it.* They follow'd Chriſt, and follow'd him crying, but the great Queſtion is, *Do ye believe?* Nature may work Fervency, but its only Grace that can work Faith. Spiritual Bleſſings are fetch'd in only by *Faith.* They had intimated their Faith in the Office of Chriſt, as *Son of David*, and in his *Mercy*, but Chriſt demands likewiſe a Profeſſion of Faith *in his Power. Believe ye that I am able?* *Note*, Chriſt will have the Glory of his Power aſcrb'd to him, by all thoſe that hope to have the Benefit of it. Believe ye that I am able for *this*, to beſtow this Favour; to give Sight to the Blind, as well as to cure the Palſy, and raiſe the Dead? *Note*, It is good to be particular in the Exerciſe of Faith; to apply the general Aſſurances of God's Power and Good-Will, and the general Promiſes to our particular Exigences. *All ſhall work for Good*, and if *all* then *this.* Believe ye that I am able not only to prevail with God for it, as a *Prophet*, but that I am able to *do it* by my own Power? This will amount to their Belief of his being not only *the Son of David*, but the *Son of God*; for it is God's Prerogative to *open the Eyes of the Blind*, Pſal. 146. 8. He makes the *ſeeing Eye*, Exod. 4. 11. *Job* was *Eyes to the Blind*, Job 24. 15. was to them *inſtead of Eyes*, but he could not give Eyes to the Blind, Still it is put to us, Believe we that Chriſt is able to *do for us*; by the Power of his Merit and Interceſſion in Heaven, of his Spirit and Grace in the Heart, and of his Providence and Dominion in the World? To believe the Power of Chriſt, is not only to aſſure our ſelves *of it*, but to *commit* our ſelves *to it*, and encourage our ſelves *in it.*

To this Queſtion they give an immediate Anſwer, without Heſitation, they ſaid, *Yea, Lord.* Tho' he had kept them in a Suſpence a while, and had not help'd them at firſt, they honeſtly imputed that to his *Wiſdom*, not to his *Weakneſs*, and were ſtill confident of his Ability. *Note*, The Treaſures of Mercy that are *laid up* in the Power of Chriſt are *laid out and wrought for thoſe that truſt iu him*, Pſal. 31. 14.

3. The Cure that Chriſt wrought on them. He *touched their Eyes*, v. 29. This he did to *encourage* their Faith, which by his Delay he had *try'd*, and to ſhew that he gives Sight to blind Souls by the Operations of his Grace going along with the Word, *anointing the Eyes with Eye-ſalve.* And he put the Cure upon their Faith, *according to your Faith be it unto you.* When they beg'd for a Cure, he enquir'd into their Faith, *v.* 28. *Believe ye that I am able?* He did not enquire into their Wealth, Whether they were able to pay him for a Cure? not into their Reputation, Should he get Credit by curing them? but into their Faith; and now they had profeſſed their Faith, he referred the Matter to that. I know you do believe, and the Power you believe in ſhall be exerted for you, *According to your Faith be it unto you.* This ſpeaks (1.) His knowledge of the Sincerity of their Faith, and his Acceptance and Approbation of it. *Note*, It is a great Comfort to true Believers that Jeſus Chriſt knows their Faith, and is well pleaſed with it. Though it be weak, though others do not diſcern it, tho' they themſelves are ready to queſtion it, 'tis known to him. (2.) His inſiſting upon their Faith as neceſſary. If you *believe*, take what you come for, *Note*, Thoſe that apply themſelves to Jeſus Chriſt ſhall be dealt with according to *their Faith*, not according to their Fancies, or according to their Profeſſion, but *according to their Faith*; that is, Unbelievers cannot expect to find any Favour with God, but true Believers may be ſure to find all that Favour which is offer'd in the Goſpel; and our Comforts ebb or flow, according as our Faith is ſtronger or weaker. We are not ſtraitned in Chriſt, let us be not then ſtraitned in ourſelves.

4. The Charge he gave them to keep it private, *v.* 30. *See that no Man know it.* He gave them this Charge (1.) To ſet us an Example of Humility, and that *Lowlineſs of Mind*, which he would have us to *learn of him.* *Note*, In the Good we do we muſt not ſeek our own Praiſe, but only the Glory of God. It muſt be more our Care and Endeavour to be uſeful, than to be known and obſerv'd to be ſo, *Prov.* 20. 6,--25. 27. Thus Chriſt ſeconded the Rule he had given, *Let not thy Left-hand know what thy Right-hand doth.* (2.) Some think Chriſt in keeping it private ſhew'd his Diſpleaſure againſt the People of *Capernaum*, who had ſeen ſo many Miracles, and yet believed not. *Note*, The Silencing of thoſe who ſhould proclaim the Works of Chriſt, is a great Judgment to any Place or People: And it is juſt with Chriſt to deny the Means of Conviction to thoſe that are obſtinate in their Infidelity, and to ſhroud the Light from thoſe that ſhut their Eyes againſt it. (3.) He did it in Deſcretion, for his own Preſervation, becauſe the more he was proclaim'd, the more jealous would the Rulers of the *Jews* be of his growing Intereſt in the People. (4.) Dr. *Whitby* gives another Reaſon, which is very conſiderable, why Chriſt ſometimes concealed his Miracles, and afterwards forbid the publiſhing of his Transfiguration; becauſe he would not indulge that pernicious Conceit which obtain'd among the *Jews*, that their *Meſſiah* ſhould be a Temporal Prince, and ſo give Occaſion to the People to attempt the ſetting up of his Kingdom by Tumults and Seditions, as they offered to do, *John* 6. 15. But when after his Reſurrection, (which was the full Proof of his Miſſion) his Spiritual Kingdom was ſet up, then that danger was over, and they muſt be publiſhed to all Nations. And he obſerves, that the Miracles which Chriſt wrought among the *Gentiles* and the *Gadarens*, were order'd to be publiſhed; becauſe with them there was not that Danger.

But Honour is like the Shadow, which as it flees from thoſe that follow it, ſo it follows thoſe that flee from it, *v.* 21. They *ſpread abroad his Fame.* This was more an Act of Zeal than of Prudence and Obſervance; and though it may be *excus'd* as honeſtly meant for the Honour of Chriſt, yet it cannot be *juſtified*, being done againſt a particular Charge. Whenever we profeſs to direct our *Intention* to the Glory of God, we muſt ſee to it that the *Action* be according to the Will of God.

Secondly. The Healing of a *Dumb Man* that was *poſſeſſed with a Devil.* And here obſerve,

1. His *Caſe*, which was very *ſad*; He was under the Power of the Devil in this particular Inſtance, that he was *diſabled to ſpeak*, v. 32. See the *calamitous* State of this World, and how various the Afflictions of the Afflicted are; we have no ſooner diſmiſs'd two *Blind Men*, but we meet with a *Dumb Man.* How thankful ſhould we be to God for our Sight and Speech. See the *Malice* of Satan againſt Mankind, and how many Ways he ſhews it. This Man's Dumbneſs was the

Effect of his being *poſſeſſed with a Devil*; but it was better he ſhould be made unable to ſay any thing, than be forc'd to ſay as thoſe *Dæmoniacks* did, *chap.* 8. 29. *What have we to do with thee?* of the two, better a *Dumb* Devil, than a *Blaſpheming* one. When the Devil gets Poſſeſſion of a Soul, 'tis made ſilent as to any thing that is good; *Dumb* in Prayers and Praiſes, which the Devil is a Sworn Enemy to. This poor Creature they *brought* to Chriſt, who entertained not only thoſe that came of themſelves in their own Faith, but thoſe that were brought to him by their Friends, and the Faith of others. Tho' the Juſt ſhall live eternally by *his Faith*, yet Temporal Mercies may be beſtow'd on us with an eye to their Faith that are Interceſſors on our Behalf. They brought him in juſt as the blind Men *went out*. See how unwearied Chriſt was in doing good, how cloſely one good Work follow'd another. Treaſures of mercy, wondrous mercy are hid in him, which may be continually ſpent upon, but can never be exhauſted.

2. His *Cure*, which was very *ſudden*, v. 33. *When the Devil was caſt out, the Dumb ſpake. Note*, Chriſt's Cures ſtrike at the Root, and remove the Effect by taking away the Cauſe, *opens the Lips*, by breaking Satan's Power in the Soul. In Sanctification he *heals the Waters*, by caſting Salt into the *Spring*. When Chriſt by his Grace caſts the Devil out of a Soul, preſently the *Dumb ſpake*. When *Paul* was converted, *behold he prays*. Then the *Dumb ſpake*.

3. The Conſequences of this Cure,

1. The *Multitudes marvelled*; and well they might; though few believed, many wondered. The Admiration of the Common People is ſooner rais'd than any other Affection. 'Twas foretold that the New-Song, the New-Teſtament-Song ſhould be ſung for *marvellous Works*, Pſal. 98. 1. They ſaid, *it was never ſo ſeen in Iſrael*, and therefore never ſo ſeen *any where*; for no People experienc'd ſuch Wonders of Mercy as *Iſrael* did. There had been thoſe in *Iſrael* that were famous for working Miracles, but Chriſt excell'd them all. The Miracles *Moſes* wrought had Reference to *Iſrael* as a People, but Chriſt's were brought home to particular Perſons.

2. The *Phariſees blaſphemed*, v. 34. When they could not gainſay the convincing Evidence of theſe Miracles, they fathered them upon the Devil, as if they had been wrought by Compact, and Colluſion; *he caſteth out Devils* (ſay they) *by the Prince of the Devils*. A Suggeſtion horrid beyond Expreſſion, we ſhall hear more of it afterwards, and Chriſt's Anſwer to it, *chap.* 12. 14. Only obſerve here, how *Evil Men and Seducers wax worſe and worſe*, 2 Tim. 3. 13. and it is both their Sin and their Puniſhment. Their Quarrels with Chriſt for taking upon him to *forgive Sin*, v. 3. for *converſing with Publicans and Sinners*. v. 11. for *not faſting*, v. 14. though ſpiteful enough, yet had ſome Colour of Piety, Purity and Devotion in them. But this (which they are left to, to puniſh them for thoſe) breaths nothing elſe but Malice and Falſhood, and helliſh Enmity to the higheſt degree, 'tis Diaboliſm all over, and was therefore juſtly pronounc'd unpardonable. Becauſe the People *marvelled* they muſt ſay ſomething to diminiſh the Miracle, and this was all they could ſay.

35 And Jeſus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their ſynagogues, and preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing every ſickneſs, and every diſeaſe among the people. 36 But when he ſaw the multitudes, he was moved with compaſſion on them; becauſe they fainted, and were ſcatter'd abroad, as ſheep having no ſhepherd. 37 Then ſaith he unto his diſciples, The harveſt truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. 38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt, that he will ſend forth labourers into his harveſt.

Here's 1. A Concluſion of the foregoing Account of Chriſt's Preaching and Miracles, *v.* 35. *He went about all the Cities teaching and healing*. This is the ſame we had before, *chap.* 4. 23. *There* it uſhers in the more particular Record of Chriſt's Preaching, *chap.* 5, 6, and 7. and of his Cures, *chap.* 8, and 9. And here it is elegantly repeated in the cloſe of the Inſtances, as the *Quod erat demonſtrandum*; as if the Evangeliſt ſhould ſay, Now I hope I have made it out, by an Induction of Particulars, that Chriſt *preach'd* and *heal'd*; for you have had the Heads of his Sermons, and ſome few Inſtances of his Cures, which were wrought to confirm his Doctrine: And theſe were written that you might believe. Some think this was a ſecond Perambulation of *Galilee* like the former; he *viſited again* thoſe whom he had before *preach'd to*. Tho' the *Phariſees* cavil'd at him, and oppos'd him, he went on with his Work; he preached the *Goſpel of the Kingdom*. He told them of a Kingdom of Grace and Glory, now to be ſet up under the Government of a Mediator; this was *Goſpel* indeed, good News, glad Tidings of great Joy.

Obſerve, how Chriſt in his Preaching had Reſpect,

1. To the *private Towns*. He viſited not only the great and wealthy Cities, but the poor obſcure *Villages*, there he *preach'd*, there he *heal'd*. The Souls of thoſe that are meaneſt in the World are as precious to Chriſt, and ſhould be to us, as the Souls of thoſe that make the *greateſt Figure*. Rich and Poor meet together in him, Citizens and Boors. His righteous Acts towards the *Inhabitants of his Villages* muſt be *rehears'd*, Jud. 5. 11.

2. To the *publick Worſhip*. He taught in their *Synagogues*. (1.) That he might bear a Teſtimony to ſolemn Aſſemblies, even then when there were Corruptions in them. We muſt not *forſake the Aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the Manner of ſome is*. (2.) That he might have an Opportunity of Preaching there where People were gathered together, with an Expectation to hear. Thus even after the Goſple Church was founded, and Chriſtian Meetings erected, the Apoſtles often preached in the Synagogues of the *Jews*. 'Tis the Wiſdom of the Prudent, to *make the beſt of that which is*.

2. A Preface or Introduction to the Account in the following Chapter, of his ſending forth his Apoſtles. He took notice of the *Multiude*, v. 36. not only the Crowds that *follow'd him*, but the vaſt Numbers of People with which (as he pas'd along) he obſerv'd the Country to be *repleniſh'd*; what Neſts of Souls the Towns and Cities were, and how thick of Inhabitants; what abundance of People there were in every Synagogue, and what Places of Concourſe the *Openings* of the Gates were. So very populous was that Nation now grown, and it was the Effect of God's Bleſſing on *Abraham*. Seeing this,

1. He *pity'd* them, and was concern'd for them, *v.* 36. He was *moved with Compaſſion on them*, not upon a Temporal Account as he pity'd the Blind, and Lame, and Sick; but upon a ſpiritual Account; he was concern'd to ſee them ignorant and careleſs, and ready to periſh for Lack of Viſion. *Note*, Jeſus Chriſt is a very compaſſionate Friend to precious Souls. Here his *Bowels* do in a ſpecial Mannern yern. 'Twas Pity to Souls that brought him from Heaven to Earth, and there to the Croſs. Miſery is the Object of Mercy, and the Miſeries of ſinful ſelf-deſtroying Souls are the greateſt Miſeries. Chriſt pities thoſe moſt, that pity themſelves leaſt; ſo ſhould we. The moſt Chriſtian Compaſſion is Compaſſion to Souls, 'tis moſt Chriſt-like.

See what mov'd this Pity. (1.) They *fainted*. They were deſtitute, vexed, wearied. They *ſtrayed*; ſo ſome; were looſed one from another. The *Staff of Bands was broken*' Zech. 11. 14. They wanted help for their Souls, and had none at hand that was good for any thing. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* fill'd them with vain Notions, burthened them with the Traditions of the Elders, deluded them into many Miſtakes; while they were not inſtructed in their Duty, nor acquainted with the Extent and ſpiritual Nature of the Divine Law. Therefore they *fainted*; for what ſpiritual Health, and Life, and Vigour can there be in thoſe Souls, that are fed with Huſks and Aſhes inſtead of the Bread of Life. Precious Souls faint when Duty is to be done, Temptations to be reſiſted, Afflictions to be born, being not nouriſhed up with the Word of Truth. (2.) They were *ſcatter'd abroad as Sheep having no Shepherd*. That Expreſſion is borrow'd from 1 *Kings* 22. 17. and it ſets forth the ſad Condition of thoſe that are deſtitute of Faithful Guides to go before them in the things of God: No Creature more apt to go aſtray than a Sheep, and when gone Aſtray more helpleſs, ſhiftleſs, and expos'd, nor more unapt to find the Way home again; ſinful Souls are as *loſt Sheep*, they need the care of Shepherds to bring them back. The Teachers the *Jews* then had pretended to be *Shepherds*, yet Chriſt ſaith they had no *Shepherds*, for they were *worſe than none*. Idol-Shepherds, that led them away inſtead of reducing them, and *fleec'd* the Flock inſtead of *feeding* it. Such Shepherds as were deſcrib'd, *Jer.* 23. 1, &c. *Ezek.* 34. 2. &c. *Note*, The Caſe of thoſe People is very piteous, that either have no Miniſters at all, or thoſe that are as bad as none; that ſeek their own things, not the things of Chriſt and Souls.

2. He puts his Diſciples on to pray for them. His pity put him upon deviſing Means for the Good of theſe People. It appears *Luke* 6. 12, 13. that upon this Occaſion, before he ſent out his Apoſtles, he did himſelf ſpend a great deal of Time in Prayer. *Note*, Thoſe we pity, we ſhould *pray for*. Having ſpoken to God for them, he turns to the Diſciples, and tells them,

1. How the *Caſe ſtood*, v. 37. *The Harveſt is truly plenteous*, but *the Labourers are few*. People deſir'd good Preaching, but there were few good Preachers. There was a great deal of Work to be done, and a great deal of good likely to be done, but there wanted hands to do it. (1.) It was an Encouragement, that the *Harveſt* was ſo *plenteous*. It was not ſtrange that there were Multitudes that needed Inſtruction, but it was what doth not often happen, that they who needed it, deſir'd it, and were forward to receive it. They that were ill taught, were deſirous to be better taught, Peoples Expectations were rais'd, and there was ſuch a Moving of Affections as promis'd well. *Note*, Its a bleſſed thing to ſee People in Love with good Preaching. The Vallies are then *cover'd over with Corn*, and there's Hopes it may be well gather'd in. That's a Gale of Opportunity that calls for a double Care and Diligence in the Improvement of; a Harveſt Day that ſhould be a buſy Day. (2.) It was Pity when it was ſo, that the Labourers ſhould be ſo few; that the Corn ſhould ſhed and ſpoil, and rot upon the Ground for want of Reapers. Loyterers many, but Labourers very few. *Note*, Its ill with the Church, when *good Work* ſtands ſtill, or goes ſlowly on for want of *good Workmen*; when it is ſo, the Labourers that are, have need to be very buſy.

2. What was *their Duty in this Caſe*, v. 38. *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harveſt. Note*, The melancholy Aſpect of the Times, and the deplorable State of precious Souls, ſhould much excite and quicken Prayer. When things look diſcouraging, we ſhould pray more, and then we would complain and fear leſs. And we ſhould adapt our Prayers to the preſent Exigences of the Church; ſuch an Underſtanding we ought to have of the Times, as to know not only what *Iſrael* ought to do, but what *Iſrael* ought to pray for. *Note*, (1.) God is the *Lord of the Harveſt*; my Father is the Huſbandman, *John* 15. 1. 'Tis the *Vineyard of the Lord of Hoſts*, Iſa. 5. 7. 'Tis for him, and to him, and to his Service and Honour, that the Harveſt is gather'd in.

Ye are *God's Husbandry*, 1 Cor. 3. 9. *his Threſhing, and the Corn of his Floor*, Iſa. 21. 10. He orders every thing concerning the Harveſt as he pleaſeth, when and where the Labourers ſhall work, and how long; and it is very comfortable to thoſe who wiſh well to the Harveſt-work, that God himſelf preſides in it, who will be ſure to order all for the beſt. (2.) Miniſters are and ſhould be Labourers in God's Harveſt; the Miniſtry is *a Work*, and muſt be attended too accordingly; his *Harveſt-Work*, which is needful Work, Work that requires every thing to be done in its Seaſon, and Diligence to do it *throughly*; but it is *pleaſant* Work, they Reap in Joy, and the Joy of the Preachers of the Goſpel is liken'd to the *Joy of Harveſt*, Iſa. 9. 2. 3. And *he that Reapeth receiveth Wages*; the *Hire of the Labourers* that *reap down* God's *Field* ſhall not be kept back as theirs was, *Jam.* 5. 4. (3.) It is God's Work to ſend forth Labourers, Chriſt makes Miniſters, *Eph.* 4. 11. The Office is of his appointing, the Qualifications of his working, the Call of his giving. Thoſe will not be own'd, nor paid as Labourers that run without their Errand, unqualify'd, uncall'd. *How ſhall they Preach except, they be ſent?* (1.) All that love Chriſt and Souls, ſhould ſhew it by their earneſt Prayers to God, eſpecially when the *Harveſt* is *plenteous*, that he would *ſend forth* more ſkilful, faithful, wiſe, and induſtrious *Labourers into his Harveſt*. That he will raiſe up ſuch as he will own in the Converſion of Sinners, and the Edification of Saints, would Spirit them for the Work, call them to it, and ſucceed them in it; that he would give them *Wiſdom to win Souls*, that *he would thruſt forth Labourers*. So ſome intimating unwillingneſs in them to *go forth*, becauſe of their own Weakneſs and the People's Badneſs, and Oppoſition from Men that endeavour to *thruſt them out* of the Harveſt, but pray that all Contradiction from within, and from without may be conquer'd and got over. Chriſt puts his Friends upon praying this, juſt before he ſends Apoſtles forth to Labour in the Harveſt. *Note*, It is a good ſign God is about to beſtow ſome ſpecial Mercy upon a People, when he ſtirs up thoſe that have an Intereſt at the Throne of Grace to pray for it, *Pſal.* 10. 17. Further Obſerve, that Chriſt ſaid this to his Diſciples who were to be employ'd as Labourers. They muſt pray. (1.) That God would *ſend them forth*. Here *am I, ſend me*, Iſa. 6. 8. *Note*, Commiſſions given in anſwer to Prayer are moſt likely to be ſucceſsful; *Paul is a choſen Veſſel*, for, *behold he prays*, Acts 9. 11, 15. (2.) That he would ſend *others* forth. *Note*, Not the People only, but thoſe who are themſelves Miniſters, ſhould pray for the Increaſe of Miniſters. Tho' Self-intereſt make thoſe that ſeek their own things deſirous to be *placed alone*, the fewer Miniſters, the more Preferments, yet thoſe that *ſeek the things of Chriſt* deſire more Workmen, that more Work may be done, tho' they be eclips'd by it.

CHAP. X.

This Chapter is an Ordination Sermon, *which our Lord Jeſus Preach'd when he advanc'd his twelve Diſciples to the Degree and Dignity of Apoſtles: In the cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, he had ſtir'd them and others up to Pray that God would* ſend forth Labourers, *and here we have an immediate Anſwer to that Prayer; while they are yet ſpeaking he hears and doth. What we pray for according to Chriſt's Direction ſhall be given in. Now here we have (1.) the general Commiſſion that was given them,* v. 1. *(2.) The Names of the Perſons to whom this Commiſſion was given,* v. 2.–4. *(3.) The Inſtructions that were given them, which are very full and particular, (1.) concerning the* Services *they were to* do, *their Preaching, their working Miracles, to whom they muſt apply themſelves, how they muſt behave themſelves, and in what Method they muſt proceed,* v. 5.–15. *(2.) Concerning the* Sufferings *they were to* undergo. *They are told what they ſhould ſuffer, and from whom; Counſels are given them what courſe to take when they were Perſecuted, and Encouragements to bear up chearfully under their Sufferings,* v. 16.--42. *And theſe things. tho' primarily intended for direction to the Apoſtles then, are of uſe to all Chriſt's Miniſters, with whom by this Word Chriſt is, and will be always to the end of the Word.*

AND when he had called unto him his twelve diſciples he gave them power *againſt* unclean ſpirits to caſt them out, and to heal all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe. 2 Now the names of the twelve Apoſtles are theſe: the firſt Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, James *the ſon of* Zebedee, and John his brother. 3 Philip, and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew the publican, James *the ſon of* Alpheus, and Lebbeus, whoſe ſirname was Thaddeus. 4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iſcariot, who alſo betrayed him.

Here we are told,

(1.) Who they were that Chriſt Ordained to be his *Apoſtles*, or *Embaſſadors*; they were his *Diſciples*, v. 1. He had call'd them to be Diſciples ſome time before, his immediate Followers, and conſtant Attendants, and he then told them they ſhould be made Fiſhers of Men, which Promiſe he now *perform'd*. *Note*, Chriſt commonly confers Honours and Graces *by degrees*; the Light of both, like that of the Morning, *ſhines more and more*. All this while Chriſt had had theſe twelve (1.) in a State of *Probation*. Tho' he knows what is in Man, knew from the firſt what was in them, *John* 6. 70. yet he took this Method to give an Example to his Church. *Note*, The Miniſtry being a great Truſt, 'tis fit that Men ſhould be try'd for a time before they be truſted with it. Let them *firſt be prov'd*, 1 Tim. 3. 10. Therefore Hands muſt not be laid ſuddenly on any Man, but let him firſt be obſerv'd as a Candidate and Probationer, a *Propoſant*, (that's the Term the *French* Churches uſe) becauſe ſome Mens Sins go before, others follow, 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. (2.) In a State of *Preparation*. All this while he had been fitting them for this great Work. *Note*, Thoſe whom Chriſt intends for, and calls to any Work, he firſt prepares and qualifies them in ſome meaſure for it. He prepar'd them (1.) by *taking them to be with him*. *Note*, The beſt Preparative for the Work of the Miniſtry, is an Acquaintance and Communion with Jeſus Chriſt. Thoſe that would *ſerve Chriſt*, muſt firſt be *with him*, John 12. 26. *Paul* had Chriſt revealed, not only *to him* but *in him*, before he went to preach him among the *Gentiles*, Gal. 1. 16. By the lively Acts of Faith, and the frequent Exerciſe of Prayer and Meditation, that Fellowſhip with Chriſt muſt be maintain'd and kept up, which is a requiſite Qualification for the Work of the Miniſtry. (2.) By *teaching them*; they were with him as *Scholars* or *Pupils*, and he taught them privately, beſides the Benefit they had by his publick Preaching; he open'd the Scriptures to them, and open'd their Underſtandings to underſtand the Scripture; to them it was given to *know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*, and to them they were *made plain*. *Note*, Thoſe that deſign to be Teachers, muſt firſt be Learners, they muſt *receive* that they may *give*; they muſt be *able to teach others*, 2 Tim. 2. 2. *Goſpel-Truths* muſt firſt be committed to them before they be *Commiſſion'd* to be *Goſpel-Miniſters*. To give Men Authority to teach others that have not an *Ability*, is but a Mokery to God and the Church; 'tis *ſending a Meſſage by the Hand of a Fool*, Prov. 26. 6. Chriſt *taught his Diſciples* before he ſent them forth, *Chap.* 5. 2. and afterwards, when he enlarg'd their Commiſſion, he gave them more ample Inſtructions, *Acts* 1. 3.

(2.) What the Commiſſion was that he gave them.

1. He *call'd them to him*, v. 1. He had call'd them to come *after him* before, now he calls them to come *to him*, admits them into a greater Familiarity, and will not have them keep at ſuch a diſtance as they had hitherto obſerv'd. Thoſe that humble themſelves ſhall thus be exalted. The Prieſts under the Law were ſaid to *draw near* and *approach* unto God, nearer than the People; the ſame may be ſaid of *Goſpel-Miniſters*; they are call'd to draw near to Chriſt, which as it is an Honour, ſo it ſhould ſtrike an Awe upon them, remembring that Chriſt will be Sanctified in thoſe that *come nigh unto him*. It is obſervable, when the Diſciples were to be *inſtructed*, they *came unto* him of their own accord, *Mat.* 5. 1. But now they were to be *Ordain'd*, he *call'd them*. *Note*, It well becomes the Diſciples of Chriſt to be more forward to *learn* than to *teach*. In the Senſe of our own Ignorance we muſt *ſeek* Opportunities to be *taught*; and in the ſame Senſe we muſt wait for a *Call*, a clear Call, e'er we take upon us to *teach others*; for *no Man ought to take this Honour to himſelf*.

2. He *gave them Power*, ἐξουσίαν, *Authority* in his Name to command Men into Obedience, and for the Confirmation of that Authority, to command Devils too into a Subjection. *Note*, All rightful Authority is deriv'd from Jeſus Chriſt. All Power is given to him without Limitation, and the ſubordinate Powers that be are ordain'd of him. *Some of his Honour he puts on his* Miniſters, as *Moſes* put ſome of his on *Joſhua*. *Note*, It is an undeniable Proof of the Fulneſs of Power Chriſt us'd as Mediator, that he could impart his Power to thoſe he imploy'd, and enable them to work the ſame Miracles that he wrought in his Name. He gave them *Power over unclean Spirits*, and over *all manner of Sickneſs*. *Note*, The Deſign of the Goſpel was to *conquer the Devil*, and to *cure the World*, Theſe Preachers were ſent out deſtitute of all external Advantages to recommend them; they had no Wealth, or Learning, or Titles of Honour, and made a very mean Figure; it was therefore requiſite they ſhould have ſome extraordinary Power to advance them above the *Scribes*.

1. He gave them Power *againſt unclean Spirits to caſt them out*. *Note*, The Power that is committed to the Miniſters of Chriſt, is directly level'd againſt the Devil and his Kingdom. The Devil as an *unclean Spirit*, is working both in *doctrinal Errors*, Rev. 16. 13. and in practical Debauchery, 2 *Pet.* 2. 10. and in both theſe Miniſters have a Charge againſt him. This here is meant of a Power to *caſt him* out of the Bodies of People; but that was to ſignify the Deſtruction of his *Spiritual Kingdom*, and all the Works of the Devil; for which purpoſe the *Son of God was manifeſted*.

2. He gave them Power to *heal all manner of Sickneſs*. He authoriz'd them to *work Miracles* for the Confirmation of their Doctrine, to prove that it was of God; and they were to work *uſeful* Miracles for the Illuſtration of it, to prove, that it is not only *faithful*, but *well worthy of all Acceptation*; that the deſign of the Goſpel is to *Heal*, and *Save*. *Moſes*'s Miracles were many of them for Deſtruction; thoſe *Mahomet* pretended to were for Oſtentation, but the Miracles Chriſt wrought, and appointed his Apoſtles to work, were all for Edification, and ſpeak him, not only the great Teacher and Ruler, but the great Redeemer of the World. Obſerve, what an Emphaſis is laid upon the extent of their Power to *all manner of Sickneſs*, and *all manner of Diſeaſe*, without exception, even of thoſe that are reckon'd *Incurable*, and the Reproach of *Phyſicians*. *Note*, In the Grace of the Goſpel there is a Salve for every Sore, a Remedy for every Malady, There is no ſpiritual Diſeaſe ſo malignant, ſo inveterate, but there is a ſuffi-

a ſufficiency of Power in Chriſt for the Cure of it. Let none therefore ſay, there is no Hope, or that the Breach is wide as the Sea, that cannot be heal'd

(3.) The Number and Names of thoſe that were Commiſſion'd; they are made *Apoſtles*, that is, *Meſſengers*. An *Angel*, and an *Apoſtle*, both ſignifie the ſame thing, one *ſent on an Errand*; an *Embaſſador*. All faithful Miniſters are ſent of Chriſt, but thoſe that were firſt, and immediately ſent by him, are eminently call'd *Apoſtles*, the prime Miniſters of State in his Kingdom. Yet this was but the Infancy of their Office; it was when Chriſt *aſcended on high* that he *gave ſome Apoſtles*, Eph. 4. 11. Chriſt himſelf is call'd an *Apoſtle*, Heb. 3. 1. for he was *ſent by the Father*, and ſo ſent them, *John* 20. 21. The Prophets were call'd God's *Meſſengers*.

1. Their Number was *Twelve*, referring to the Number of the Tribes of *Iſrael*, and the Sons of *Jacob* that were the Patriarchs of thoſe Tribes. The Goſpel-Church muſt be the *Iſrael of God*, the *Jews* muſt be firſt invited into it; the Apoſtles muſt be *ſpiritual Fathers* to beget a Seed to Chriſt. *Iſrael* after the Fleſh is to be rejected for thir Infidelity, theſe twelve therefore are appointed to be the Fathers of another *Iſrael*. Theſe *Twelve* by their Doctrine were to judge the twelve Tribes of *Iſrael*, Luke 22. 30. Theſe were the twelve Stars that made up the Churches Crown, *Rev.* 12. 1. the twelve Foundations of the new *Jeruſalem*, Rev. 21. 12, 14. typified by the twelve precious Stones in *Aaron*'s Breaſt-plate, the twelve Loaves on the Table of Shew-bread, the twelve Wells of Water at *Elim*. This was that that famous Jury, (and to make it a grand Jury, *Paul* was added to it) that was Empannel'd to enquire between the King of Kings, and the Body of Mankind, and in this Chapter they have their Charge given them by him to whom *all Judgment was committed*.

2. Their Names are here left upon Record, and it is their Honour; yet in this they had more reaſon to rejoyce that their *Names* were *written in Heaven*, Luke 10. 20. when the high and mighty Names of the great ones of the Earth are *bury'd in the Duſt*.

1. There are ſome of theſe twelve Apoſtles that we know no more of from the Scripture but only their Names; as *Bartholomew* and *Simon* the *Cananite*, and yet they were faithful Servants to Chriſt and his Church. *Note*, All the good Miniſters of Chriſt are not alike *famous*, or their Actions alike celebrated.

2. They are nam'd *by couples*; for at firſt they were ſent forth *two and two*, becauſe *two are better than one*; they would be ſerviceable to each other, and the more ſerviceable joyntly to Chriſt and Souls; what one forgot, the other would remember, and *out of the Mouth of two Witneſſes every word would be eſtabliſh'd*. Three couple of them were Brethren; *Peter* and *Andrew*, *James* and *John*, and the other *James* and *Lebbeus*. *Note*, Friendſhip and Fellowſhip ought to be kept up among Relations, and to be made ſerviceable to Religion. 'Tis an excellent thing when Brethren by Nature are Brethren by Grace, and thoſe two Bonds ſtrengthen each other.

3. *Peter is nam'd firſt*, becauſe he was firſt *call'd*; or becauſe he was the moſt forward Man among them, and upon all occaſions made himſelf the Mouth of the reſt, and he was to be the Apoſtle of the Circumciſion, but that gave him no Power over the reſt of the Apoſtles, nor is there the leaſt mark of any Supremacy that was given to him, or ever claim'd by him in this ſacred Colledge.

4. *Matthew* the Penman of this Goſpel is here joyn'd with *Thomas*, v. 3. But in two things varying from the Accounts of *Mark* and *Luke*, (Mark 3. 18. Luke 6. 16.) There *Matthew* is put firſt, in that order 'twas likely he was Ordain'd, before *Thomas*; but here in his own Catalogue *Thomas* is put firſt. *Note*, It well becomes the Diſciples of Chriſt in honour to *prefer one another*. There he is only call'd *Matthew*, here *Matthew* the *Publican*, the Toll-gatherer, or Collector of the Cuſtoms, who was call'd from that infamous Employment to be an Apoſtle. *Note*, It is good for thoſe who are advanc'd to Honour with Chriſt to look *unto the Rock whence they were hewn*; oft to remember what they were before Chriſt called, that thereby they may be kept humble, and divine Grace may be the more glorified. *Matthew* the Apoſtle *was Matthew* the Publican.

5. *Simon* is call'd the *Cananite*, or rather the *Canite*, from *Cana* of *Galilee*, where probably he was born; or *Simon* the *Zealot*, which ſome make to be the ſignification of Κανανίτης.

6. *Judas Iſcariot* is always named laſt, and with that black Brand upon his Name, *who alſo betray'd him*; which intimates, that from the firſt Chriſt knew what a Wretch he was, that he had a Devil, and would prove a *Traitor*; yet Chriſt took him among the Apoſtles, that it might not be a Surprize and Diſcouragement to his Church, if at any time the vileſt Scandals would break out in the beſt Societies, Such *Spots* there have been in our Feaſts of Charity; Tares among the Wheat, Wolves among the Sheep; but there is a Day of Diſcovery and Separation coming, when Hypocrites ſhall be unmask'd and diſcarded. Neither the Apoſtleſhip, nor the reſt of the Apoſtles were ever the worſe for *Judas*'s being one of the Twelve, while his Wickedneſs was conceal'd, and did not break out.

5 Theſe twelve Jeſus ſent forth and commanded them, ſaying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not. 6 But go rather to the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. 7 And as you go, preach, ſaying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 8 Heal the ſick, cleanſe the lepers, raiſe the dead: caſt out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. 9 Provide neither gold, nor ſilver, nor braſs, in your purſes: 10 Nor ſcrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither ſhoes, nor yet ſtaves: (for the workman is worthy of his meat.) 11 And into whatſoever city or town ye ſhall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, and there abide till ye go thence. 12 And when ye come into an houſe ſalute it. 13 And if the houſe be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your words: when ye depart out of that houſe, or city, ſhake off the duſt of your feet. 15 Verily I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, then for that city.

We have here the Inſtructions that Chriſt gave to his Diſciples, when he gave them their Commiſſion. Whether this Charge was given them in a continued Diſcourſe, or the ſeveral Articles of it hinted to them at ſeveral times, is not material; in this he *commanded them*. *Jacob*'s Bleſſing his Sons, is call'd his *commanding* them, and with theſe Commands Chriſt commanded a Bleſſing. *Obſerve*,

Firſt, The *People* to whom he *ſent* them. Theſe Embaſſadors are directed what Places to go to.

1. Not to the *Gentiles*, or the *Samaritans*. They muſt not *go into the way of the Gentiles*, not into any Road out of the Land of *Iſrael*, whatever Temptations they might have. The *Gentiles* muſt not have the Goſpel brought them till the *Jews* have firſt refus'd it. As to the *Samaritans*, who were the Poſterity of that mungrel People that the King of *Aſſyria* planted about *Samaria*, their Country lay between *Judea* and *Galilee*, ſo that they could not avoid *going into the way* of the *Samaritans*, but they muſt *not enter into any of their Cities*. Chriſt had declin'd manifeſting himſelf to the *Gentiles*, or *Samaritans*, and therefore the Apoſtles muſt not preach to them. If the Goſpel be hid from any Place, Chriſt thereby hides himſelf from that Place. This Reſtraint was upon them only in their firſt Miſſion, afterwards they were appointed to go *into all the World*, and teach *all Nations*.

2. But *to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael*. To them Chriſt appropriated his own Miniſtry, *Matt.* 15. 24. for he was a *Miniſter of the Circumciſion*, Rom. 15. 8. And therefore to them the Apoſtles, who were but his Attendants and Agents, muſt be confin'd. The firſt Offer of Salvation muſt be made to *the Jews*, Acts 3. 26. *Note*, Chriſt had a particular, and very tender Concern for the *Houſe of Iſrael*; they were *beloved for the Father's ſake*, Rom. 11. 28. He look'd with Compaſſion upon them as *loſt Sheep*, whom he as a Shepherd was to gather out of the By-paths of Sin and Error, into which they were gone aſtray, and in which, if not reduc'd, they would wander endleſly. See *Jer.* 50. 6. The *Gentiles* alſo had been as loſt Sheep, 1 *Pet.* 23. 25. Chriſt gives this Deſcription of thoſe to whom they were ſent to quicken them to Diligence in their Work; they were ſent to the Houſe of *Iſrael*, (of which Number they themſelves lately were) whom they could not but *pity*, and be deſirous to help.

Secondly, The *Preaching-work* which he *appointed* them. He did not ſend them forth without an Errand, no, *As ye go, Preach*, v. 7. They were to be itinerant Preachers; wherever they come they muſt proclaim the beginning of the Goſpel, *ſaying*, *The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*. Not that they muſt ſay nothing elſe, but this muſt be their Text, on this Subject they muſt enlarge; let People know that the *Kingdom* of the *Meſſiah*, who is the Lord *from Heaven* is now to be ſet up according to the Scriptures; from whence it follows, that Men muſt *repent* of their Sins, and forſake them, that they might be admitted to the Privileges of that Kingdom. It is ſaid, *Mark* 6. 12. they went out and Preach'd that Men ſhould *repent*; which was the proper Uſe and Application of this Doctrine, concerning the Approach of the *Kingdom of Heaven*. They muſt therefore expect to hear more of this long look'd for *Meſſiah* ſhortly, and muſt be ready to receive his Doctrine, to believe in him, and to ſubmit to his Yoke. The Preaching of this was like the *Morning-light*, to give notice of the approach of the *Riſing-ſun*. How unlike was this to the Preaching of *Jonah*, which proclam'd Ruin at hand, *Jon.* 3. 4. This proclaims Salvation at hand, *nigh them that fear God*; *Mercy and Truth meet together*, Pſal. 85. 9, 10. that's *the Kingdom of Heaven at hand*. Not ſo much the Perſonal Preſence of the King, that muſt not be doted upon, but a *Spiritual Kingdom* which is to be ſet up when his Bodily Preſence is remov'd in the Hearts of Men.

Now this was the ſame that *John Baptiſt* and Chriſt had Preach'd before. *Note*, People need to have good Truths preſs'd again and again upon them, and if they be preach'd and heard with new Affections, they are as if they were freſh to us. Chriſt in the Goſpel is *the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever*. Heb. 13. 8. Afterwards indeed when the Spirit was pour'd out, and the Chriſtian Church was form'd, this *Kingdom of Heaven came*, which was now ſpoken of as *at hand*; but the *Kingdom of Heaven* muſt ſtill be the Subjects of our Preaching: Now it is *come*, we muſt tell People 'tis come *to them*, and muſt lay before them the Precepts and Privileges of it; and there is a Kingdom of Glory yet to come, which we muſt ſpeak of as *at hand*, and quicken People to Diligence from the Conſideration of that.

Thirdly, The Power he gave them to work Miracles for the Confirmation of their Doctrine, *v.* 8. when he ſent them to preach the ſame Doctrine that he had preach'd, he impower'd them to confirm it by the ſame Divine Seals, which could never be ſet to a Lye. This needs not now the Kingdom of God *is come*; to call for Miracles now, is to lay again the Foundation when the Building is rear'd. The Point being ſettled, and the Doctrine of Chriſt ſufficiently atteſted by the Miracles which Chriſt and his Apoſtles wrought, 'tis tempting God to ask for more Signs. They are directed here

1. To uſe their Power in *doing Good*; not go and remove Mountains, or fetch Fire from Heaven, but *heal the Sick, cleanſe the Lepers.* They are ſent abroad as publick Bleſſings, to intimate to the World, That Love and Goodneſs was the Spirit and Genius of that Goſpel which they came to preach, and that Kingdom which they were employ'd to *ſet up*. By this it would appear that they were the Servants of that God, who is good, and doth good, and whoſe Mercy is *over all his Works*; and that the Intention of the Doctrine they preach'd was to heal ſick Souls, and to *raiſe* thoſe that were *dead in Sin*; and therefore perhaps that of *raiſing the Dead* is mention'd; for tho' we read not of *their* raiſing any to Life before the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, yet they were inſtrumental to raiſe many to *Spiritual Life*.

2. In *doing Good freely*; *freely ye have received, freely give.* Thoſe that had Power to heal all Diſeaſes, had an Opportunity to enrich themſelves; who would not purchaſe ſuch eaſie certain Cures at any rate? Therefore they are caution'd not to make a Gain of the Power they had to work Miracles: They muſt cure *gratis*, further to exemplifie the Nature and Complexion of the Goſpel-Kingdom, which is made up, not only of Grace, but of *Free Grace. Gratia gratis data*, Rom. 3. 24. *freely by his Grace.* Buy Medicines *without Money, and without Price*, Iſa. 55. 1. And the reaſon is, becauſe *freely you have received.* Their Power to heal the Sick coſt them nothing, and therefore they muſt not make any ſecular Advantage to themſelves of it. *Simon Magus* would not have *given Money* for the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, if he had not hoped to *get Money* by them; *Acts* 8. 18. *Note*, The Conſideration of Chriſt's Freeneſs in doing Good *to us*, ſhould make us free in doing Good *to others*.

Fourthly, The *Proviſion* that muſt be made *for them* in this Expedition; 'tis a thing to be conſider'd, in ſending an Embaſſador, who muſt bear the Charge of the Embaſſy. As to that.

1. They muſt make no Proviſion for it themſelves, *v.* 9, 10. *Provide neither Gold nor Silver.* As on the one hand they ſhall not raiſe Eſtates by their Work, ſo on the other hand, they ſhall not ſpend what little they have of their own upon it. This was confin'd to the preſent Miſſion, and Chriſt would teach them (1.) to act *under the Conduct of human Prudence.* They were now to make but a ſhort Sally out, and were ſoon to return to their Maſter, and to their Head-Quarters again, and therefore why ſhould they Burthen themſelves with that which they ſhould have no occaſion for. (2.) To act in *dependance upon Divine Providence.* They muſt be taught to live without *taking thought for Life*, Matt. 6. 25, &c. *Note*, Thoſe who go upon Chriſt's Errand, have of all People moſt reaſon to truſt him for *Food convenient.* Doubtleſs he will not be *wanting* to thoſe that are *working* for him. Thoſe whom he employs, as they are taken under *ſpecial Protection*, ſo they are entitled to *ſpecial Proviſions.* Chriſt's hired Servants ſhall have *Bread enough, and to ſpare.* While we abide faithful to God and our Duty, and are *in care* to do our work well, we may caſt all our other Care upon God; *Jehovah jireh*, Let *the Lord provide* for us and ours, as he thinks fit.

2. They might expect that thoſe they were ſent to would *provide for them* what was neceſſary, *v.* 10. The *Workman is worthy of his Meat.* They muſt not expect to be fed by Miracles, as *Eljiah* was; but they might depend upon God to incline the Hearts of thoſe they went among to be kind to them, and provide for them. Tho' they who *ſerve at the Altar*, may not expect to grow rich by the Altar, yet they may expect to live, and to live comfortably upon it, 1 *Cor.* 9. 13, 14. 'Tis fit they ſhould have their Maintenance from their Work. Miniſters are, and muſt be *Workmen*, Labourers, and thoſe that are ſo are *worthy of their Meat*, ſo as not to be forc'd to any other *Labour* for the earning of it. Chriſt would have his Diſciples, as not to diſtruſt their God, ſo not to diſtruſt their Country-men, ſo far as to doubt of a comfortable Subſiſtance among them. If you Preach to them, and endeavour to do Good among them, ſurely they will give you Meat and Drink enough for your Neceſſities; and if they do, never deſire *Dainties*, God will pay you your Wages hereafter, and it will be *running on* in the mean time.

Fifthly, The Proceedings they were to make in dealing with any place, *v.* 11.-15. They went abroad, they knew not whither, uninvited, unexpected, knowing none, and known of none; the Land of their Nativity was to them a ſtrange Land; what Rule muſt they go by? What Courſe muſt they take? Chriſt would not ſend them out without full Inſtructions, and here they are.

1. They are here directed how to carry themſelves towards thoſe that were *Strangers to them.* How to do,

(1.) In *ſtrange Towns and Cities*; when you come to a Town, *enquire who* in it *is worthy.* (1.) It is ſuppos'd there were ſome ſuch in every Place as were better diſpos'd than others to receive the Goſpel, and the Preachers of it; tho' it was a Time of general Corruption and Apoſtacy. *Note*, In the worſt of Times and Places, we may charitably hope there are ſome that diſtinguiſh themſelves, and are better than their Neighbours; ſome that ſwim againſt the Stream, and are as *Wheat* among the *Chaff.* There were Saints in *Nero*'s Houſhold. Enquire who is *worthy*, i. e. who there are that have ſome Fear of God before their Eyes, and have made a good Improvement of the Light and Knowledge they have; the beſt are far from *meriting* the Favour of a Goſpel-offer; but ſome would be more likely than others to give the Apoſtles and their Meſſage a favourable Entertainment, and would not trample theſe Pearls under their Feet. *Note*, Previous Diſpoſitions to that which is good, are both Directions and Encouragements to Miniſters in dealing with People; There is moſt hopes of the Word being profitable to thoſe who are already ſo well inclin'd, as that 'tis *acceptable* to them; and there's here and there one ſuch. (2.) They muſt *enquire* out ſuch; not enquire for the beſt Inns; Publick-houſes were no proper Places for them that neither took Money with them, *v.* 9. nor expected to receive any, *v.* 8. But they muſt hearken out for Accommodations in private Houſes, with thoſe that would entertain them well, and expect no other Recompence for it but a *Prophet's Reward*, an Apoſtle's Reward, their Praying and Preaching. *Note*, Thoſe that entertain the Goſpel muſt neither grudge the Expence of it, nor promiſe themſelves to get by it in this World. They muſt enquire not, who is Rich? but who is worthy? not who is the beſt Gentleman, but who is the beſt Man? *Note*, Chriſt's Diſciples, where-ever they come, ſhould ask for the good People of the Place, and be acquainted with them; when we took God for our God, we took his People for our People, and *Like* will *rejoyce in its Like.* *Paul* in all his Travels found out *the Brethren*, if there were any, *Acts* 28. 14. It is implied, that if they did enquire who was worthy, they might diſcover them. Thoſe that were better than their Neighbours would be taken notice of, and any one could tell them, there lives an honeſt, ſober, good Man; for this is a Character, which like the Ointment of the Right-hand, bewrays it ſelf, and fills the Houſe with its Odours. Every body knew where the *Seer's Houſe was*, 1 Sam. 9. 18. (3.) In the Houſe of thoſe they found worthy, they muſt continue; which intimates, that they were to make ſo ſhort a Stay at each Town, that they needed not change their Lodging, but whatever Houſe Providence brought them to at firſt, there they muſt contiuue till they left that Town. Thoſe are juſtly ſuſpected, as having no good Deſign, that are often changing their Quarters. *Note*, It becomes the Diſciples of Chriſt to make the beſt of that which is, to abide by it, and not be for ſhifting upon every Diſlike, or Inconvenience.

(2.) In *ſtrange Houſes.* When they had found the Houſe of one they thought *worthy*, they muſt at their entrance *ſalute it.* In thoſe common Civilities be before-hand with People, in Token of your Humility. Think it not a diſparagement to invite yourſelves into a Houſe, nor ſtand upon the *Punctilio* of being invited. *Salute* the Family, (1.) to draw on further Diſcourſe, and ſo to introduce your Meſſage. From Matters of common Converſation, we may inſenſibly paſs into that Communication which is good to the uſe of Edifying. (2.) To try whether you are welcome or no; you'll take notice whether the Salutation be received ſhily and coldly, or with a ready Return. He that will not receive your Salutation kindly, will not receive your Meſſage kindly; for he that is unſkilful and unfaithful in a little, will be in much, *Luke* 16. 10. (3.) To inſinuate yourſelves into their good Opinion. *Salute the Family*, that they may ſee, tho' you are ſerious, you are not moroſe. *Note*, Religion teacheth us to be Courteous and Civil, and Obliging to all with whom we have to do. Tho' the Apoſtles went out back'd with the Authority of the Son of God himſelf, yet their Inſtructions were when they came into a Houſe, not to *command* it, but to *ſalute* it; for *Love's ſake rather to beſeech*, is the Evangelical way, *Philemon* 8. 9. Souls are firſt drawn to Chriſt with the *Cords of a Man*, and kept to him by the *Bands of Love*, Hoſ. 11. 4. When *Peter* made the firſt Offer of the Goſpel to *Cornelius* a *Gentile*, *Peter* was firſt *ſaluted*; ſee *Acts* 10. 25. for the *Gentiles courted that* which the *Jews* were *courted to.*

When they had *ſaluted* the Family after a *Godly ſort*, they muſt by the Return judge concerning the Family, and proceed accordingly. *Note*, The Eye of God is upon us to obſerve what Entertainment we give to good People and good Miniſters; *If the Houſe be worthy, let your Peace come* and reſt *upon it*; *if not, let it return to you*, v. 13. It ſeems then after they had enquired for the *moſt Worthy*, v. 11. 'twas poſſible they might light upon thoſe that were unworthy. *Note*, Tho' it is Wiſdom to *hearken to*, yet it is Folly to *rely upon* common Report and Opinion; we ought to uſe a Judgment of Diſcretion, and to ſee with our own Eyes. *The Wiſdom of the Prudent is* himſelf to *underſtand his* own *way.* Now this Rule is intended,

(1.) For *Satisfaction* to the Apoſtles. The common Salutation was, *Peace be unto you*; this, as they us'd, was turn'd into Goſpel; 'twas the *Peace of God*, the Peace of the Kingdom of Heaven that they *wiſh'd*: Now leſt they ſhould make a ſcruple of pronouncing this Bleſſing upon all *promiſcuouſly*, becauſe many were utterly unworthy of it, this is to clear them of that Scruple; Chriſt tells them that this *Goſpel-Prayer*, (for ſo it was now become) ſhould be put up for all, as the *Goſpel-proffer* was made to all *indefinitely*, and let God alone, who knows the Heart, and every Man's true Character, to *determine* the Iſſue of it. If the Houſe be worthy, it will reap the Benefit of your Bleſſing, if not, there's no harm done, you will not loſe the Benefit of it; *it ſhall return to you* as *David*'s Prayers for his ungrateful Enemies did, *Pſal.* 35. 13. *Note*, It becomes us to judge charitably *of all*, pray heartily *for all*, and carry our ſelves courteouſly *to all*, for that's our part, and then leave it with God what effect it ſhall have upon them, for that's his part.

(2.) For *Direction* to them. If upon your Salutation it appear that they are indeed worthy, let them have more of your Company, and ſo *let your Peace come upon them*, Preach the Goſpel to them, Peace by Jeſus Chriſt; but if otherwiſe, if they carry it rudely to you, and ſhut their Doors againſt you, *let your Peace*, as much as in you lies, *return to you.* Retract what you have ſaid, and turn your Backs upon them; by ſlighting *this*, they have made themſelves unworthy of the reſt of your Favours, and cut themſelves ſhort of them. *Note*, Great Bleſſings are often loſt by a Neglect, ſeemingly ſmall and inconſiderable, when Men are in their Probation, and upon their Behaviour. Thus *Eſau* loſt his Birthright, *Gen.* 25. 34. and *Saul* his Kingdom, 1 *Sam.* 13. 13, 14.

2. They are here directed how to carry it towards thoſe that were refuſers of them. The Caſe is put, *v.* 14. of thoſe that *would not receive them, nor hear their words.* The Apoſtles might think now they had ſuch a Doctrine to preach, and ſuch a Power to work Miracles for the confirmation of it; no doubt but they ſhould be univerſally entertain'd, and bid welcome: They are therefore told before that there would be thoſe that would ſlight them, and put Contempt on them and their Meſſage. *Note*, The beſt and moſt powerful Preachers of theGoſpel muſt expect to meet with ſome that will not ſomuch as give them the Hearing, nor ſhew them any Token of Reſpect. Many turn *a deaf Ear*, even to the *joyful ſound*, and will not *hearken to the Voice of the Charmers, charm they never ſo wiſely.* Obſerve, They will not *receive you*, and they will not *hear your Words.* *Note*, Contempt of the Goſpel, and Contempt of Goſpel-Miniſters commonly go together, and they will either of them be conſtrued a Contempt of Chriſt, and will be reckon'd for accordingly.

Now in this Caſe, we have here

1. The Directions given to the Apoſtles what to do. They muſt *depart out of that Houſe, or City.* *Note*, The Goſpel will not tarry long with thoſe that put it away from them. At their departure, they muſt *ſhake off the Duſt of their Feet.* (1.) In *Deteſtation* of their Wickedneſs, it was ſo abominable, that it did even pollute theGround they went upon, which muſt therefore be *ſhaken off* as a filthy thing. The Apoſtles muſt have no Fellowſhip or Communion with them; muſt not ſo much as carry away the Duſt of their City with them. *The Work of them that turn aſide* ſhall *not cleave to me*, Pſal. 101. 3. The Prophet was not to *eat or drink* in *Bethel*, 1 Kings 13. 9. (2.) As a *Denunciation* of Wrath againſt them. 'Twas to ſignifie that they were Baſe, and Vile as Duſt, and God would *ſhake them off.* The Duſt of the Apoſtles Feet which they left behind them would witneſs againſt them, and be brought in in Evidence that the Goſpel had been Preach'd to them, *Mark* 6. 11. Compare *James* 5. 3. See this practis'd, *Acts* 13. 51. *Acts* 18. 6. *Note*, Thoſe who *deſpiſe* God and his Goſpel ſhall be *lightly eſteemed.*

2. The *Doom paſt* upon ſuch *wilful Recuſants*, v. 15. It ſhall be *more tolerable in the Day of Judgment for the Land of* Sodom, as wicked a Place as it was. *Note*, (1.) There is a Day of Judgment coming, when all thoſe that refus'd the Goſpel will certainly be call'd to account for it; however they now make a Jeſt of it. Thoſe that would not hear the Doctrine that would ſave them, ſhall be made to hear the Sentence that will ruin them. Their Judgment is reſpited till *that Day.* (2.) There are different degrees of Puniſhment in that Day. All the Pains of Hell will be *intolerable*, but ſome will be more ſo than others. Some Sinners ſink deeper into Hell than others, and are beaten with more Strips. (3.) The Condemnation of thoſe that reject the Goſpel, will in that be ſeverer and heavier than that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah.* *Sodom* is ſaid to ſuffer the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, *Jude* 7. But that *Vengeance* will come with an Aggravation upon thoſe that deſpiſe the great Salvation. *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were exceeding wicked, *Gen.* 13. 13. and that which fill'd up the Meaſure of their Iniquity was, that they *received not* the Angels that were ſent to them, but abuſed them, *Gen.* 19. 4, 5. and *hearken'd not to their Words*, v. 14. And yet it will be more tolerable for them, than for thoſe who receive not Chriſt's Miniſters, and hearkn'd not to their Words. God's Wrath againſt them will be more flaming, and their own Reflections upon themſelves more cutting. *Son remember*, will ſound moſt dreadfully in the Ears of ſuch as had a fair Offer made them of *Eternal Life*, and choſe Death rather. The Iniquity of *Iſrael*, when God ſent them his Servants the Prophets, is repreſented as upon that account more heinous than the Iniquity of *Sodom*, Ezek. 16. 48, 49. much more now he ſent them his Son, the great Prophet.

16 Behold I ſend you forth, as ſheep in the midſt of wolves: be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves. 17 But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will ſcourge you in their Synagogues. 18 And ye ſhall be brought before governours and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles. 19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye ſhall ſpeak, for it ſhall be given you in that ſame hour what ye ſhall ſpeak. 20 For it is not ye that ſpeak, but the ſpirit of your Father which ſpeaketh in you. 21 And the brother ſhall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children ſhall riſe up againſt *their* parents, and cauſe them to be put to death 22 And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my names ſake: but he that endureth to the end, ſhall be ſaved. 23 But when they perſecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I ſay unto you, ye ſhall not have gone over the cities of Iſrael till the Son of man be come. 24 The diſciple is not above *his* maſter, nor the ſervant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the diſciple that he be as his maſter, and the ſervant as his lord: if they have called the maſter of the houſe Beelzebub, how much more *ſhall they call* them of his houſhold? 26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered that ſhall not be revealed; and hid, that ſhall not be known. 27 What I tell you in darkneſs, *that* ſpeak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the houſe tops. 28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul: but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both ſoul and body in hell. 29 Are not two ſparrows ſold for a farthing? and one of them ſhall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbred. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many ſparrows. 32 Whoſoever therefore ſhall confeſs me before men, him will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whoſoever ſhall deny me before men, him will I alſo deny before my Father which is in heaven. 34 Think not that I am come to ſend peace on earth: I came not to ſend peace, but a ſword. 35 For I am come to ſet a man at variance againſt his father, and the daughter againſt her mother, and the daughter in law againſt her mother in law. 36 And a mans foes *ſhall be* they of his own houſhold. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth ſon or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his croſs, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life ſhall loſe it: and he that loſeth his life for my ſake ſhall find it. 40 He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me. 41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet ſhall receive a prophets reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, ſhall receive a righteous mans reward. 42 And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a diſciple, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward.

All theſe Verſes relate to the Sufferings of Chriſt's Miniſters in their Work, which they are here taught to expect and prepare for, and are directed how to bear them, and how to go on with their Work in the midſt of them. And this part of the Sermon looks further than to their preſent Miſſion; for we find not that they met with any great Hardſhips or Perſecutions while Chriſt was with them, nor were they well able to bear them; but they are here forewarn'd of the Troubles they ſhould meet with; when after Chriſt's Reſurrection their Commiſſion ſhould be *enlarg'd*, and the Kingdom of Heaven, which was now *at hand* ſhould be actually *ſet up*; they dream'd of nothing *then* but outward Pomp and Power, but Chriſt tells them they muſt expect greater Sufferings than they were yet call'd to; that they ſhould then be made Priſoners, when they expected to be made Princes. 'Tis good to be told what Troubles we may hereafter meet with, that we may provide accordingly, and may not boaſt, as if we had put off the Harneſs, when we are yet but girding it on.

We have here intermix'd (1.) Predictions of Trouble. And (2.) Preſcriptions of Counſel and Comfort with reference to it.

Firſt, We have here *Predictions* of Trouble, which the Diſciples ſhould meet with in their Works; Chriſt *foreſaw* their Sufferings, as well as his own, and yet will have them go on as he *went on* himſelf; and he *foretold* them, not only that the Troubles might not be a Surprize to them, and ſo a Shock to their Faith, but that being the Accompliſhment of a Prediction, they might be a Confirmation to their Faith.

He tells them *what* they ſhould ſuffer, and *from whom.*

1. *What they ſhould ſuffer*, hard things to be ſure; for, *Behold I will ſend you forth as Sheep in the midſt of Wolves.* v. 16. And what may a Flock of poor helpleſs unguarded Sheep expect in the midſt of a Herd of ravenous Wolves, but to be worry'd and torn. *Note*, 1. Wicked Men are like *Wolves*, in whoſe Nature it is to Devour and

Deſtroy. 2. God's People, and eſpecially his Miniſters, are like *Sheep* among them, of a contrary Nature and Diſpoſition, expoſed to them, and commonly hardned by them, and an eaſie Prey to them. It look'd unkind in Chriſt, to expoſe thoſe to ſo much Danger, who had left all to follow him; but he knew the Glory reſerv'd for *his Sheep*, when in the great Day they ſhall be ſet on his Right-hand, would be a Recompence ſufficient for Sufferings, as well as Services. They are as *Sheep among Wolves*, that's frightful; but Chriſt *ſends them forth*, that's comfortable; for he that *ſends them forth* will protect them, and *bear them out*. But that they might know the worſt, he tells them particularly what they muſt expect.

1. They muſt expect *to be hated*, v. 22. *Ye ſhall be hated* for my Name's ſake, That's the Root of all the reſt, and a bitter Root it is. *Note*, Thoſe whom Chriſt loves the World hates; as whom the Court Bleſſeth, the Country Curſeth. If the World *hated Chriſt without Cauſe*, Joh. 15. 25. no marvel if it hated thoſe that bore his Image, and ſerv'd his Intereſts. We hate what is *nauſeous*, and they are counted as the Off-ſcouring of all things, 1 *Cor*. 4. 13. We hate what is *noxious*, and they are counted the *Troubles of the Land*, 1 Kings 18. 17. and the Tormentors of their Neighbours, *Rev*. 11. 10. 'Tis grievous to be *hated*, and to be the Object of ſo much Ill-will, but it is *for thy Name's ſake*; which as it ſpeaks the true Reaſon of the Hatred, whatever is pretended, ſo it ſpeaks Comfort to them who are thus hated, 'tis for a good Cauſe, and they have a good Friend that ſhares with them in it, and takes it to himſelf.

2. They muſt expect to be *apprehended and arraign'd as Malefactors*. Their reſtleſs Malice is reſiſtleſs Malice, and they will not only attempt, but will prevail to *deliver you up to the Councils*, v. 17. 18. to the Bench of Aldermen, or Juſtices, that take care of the publick Peace. *Note*, A deal of Michief is often done to good Men under colour of Law and Juſtice. In the *Place of Judgment there is Wickedneſs*, perſecuting Wickedneſs, *Eccl*. 3. 16. They muſt look for Trouble, not only from inferior Magiſtrates in the *Councels*, but from *Governours, and Kings*, the ſupreme Magiſtrates: to be brought before them under ſuch black Repreſentations as were commonly made of Chriſt's Diſciples, was dreadful and dangerous, for the Wrath of a King is as *the Roaring of a Lion*. We find this oft fulfill'd in the Acts of the Apoſtles.

3. They muſt expect to be *put to Death*, v. 21. They ſhall *deliver them to Death*, to Death *in State*, with Pomp and Solemnity, when it ſhews it ſelf moſt as the *King of Terrors*. The Malice of the Enemies rageth ſo high as to *inflict* this; 'tis the Blood of the Saints that they thirſt after: the Faith and Patience of the Saints ſtand ſo firm as to expect this; *neither count I my Life dear to my ſelf*: The Wiſdom of Chriſt permits it, knowing how to make the Blood of the Martyrs the *Seal of the Truth*, and the *Seed of the Church*. By this *noble Armies*, not loving their Lives to the Death, Satan has been vanquiſh'd, and the Kingdom of Chriſt and its Intereſts greatly advanc'd, *Rev*. 11. 11. They were *put to Death* as Criminals, ſo the Enemies meant it, but really as *Sacrifices*, Phil. 2. 17. 2 Tim. 4. 6. as Burnt-offerings, Sacrifices of *Acknowledgment* to the Honour of God, and his Truths and Cauſe.

4. They muſt expect in the midſt of theſe Sufferings to be *branded with* the moſt *odius* and *ignominious Names and Characters* that could be. Perſecutors would be aſhamed in this World, if they did not firſt dreſs up thoſe in Bears-ſkins whom they thus Bait, and repreſent them in ſuch *Colours* as may ſerve to juſtify ſuch *Cruelties*. The blackeſt of all the ill Characters they give them is here inſtanc'd in; they call them *Beelzebub*, the Name of the *Prince of the Devils*, v. 25. They repreſent them as Ring-leaders of the Intereſt of the Kingdom of Darkneſs, and ſince every one thinks he hates the *Devil*, thus they endeavour to make them *odious* to all Mankind. See, and be amaz'd to ſee how this World is *impos'd upon*. (1.) Satan's *ſworn Enemies* are repreſented as his *Friends*. The Apoſtles, who pull'd down the Devils Kingdom, were call'd *Devils*. Thus Men laid to their charge, not only *things which they knew not*, but things which they abhor'd, and were directly contrary to, and the reverſe of. (2.) Satan's *ſworn Servants* would be thought to be his *Enemies*; and they never more effectually do his Work than when they pretend to be fighting againſt him. Many times thoſe that themſelves are neareſt akin to the Devil, are moſt apt to father others upon him; and thoſe that paint him on others Clothes, have him reigning in their own Hearts. 'Tis well there's a Day coming when, (as it follows here, *v*. 26.) that which is *hid will be brought to light*.

5. Theſe Sufferings are here repreſented by a *Sword*, and *Diviſion*, v. 34, 35. *Think not that I am come to ſend Peace*, i. e. *Temporal* Peace, and outward Proſperity. They thought Chriſt came to give all his Followers Wealth and Power in the World; no, ſaith Chriſt, I did not come ſo much as to *give them Peace*. *Peace in Heaven* they may be ſure of, but not Peace on *Earth*. Chriſt came to give us Peace with God, Peace in our Conſciences, Peace with our Brethren, but *in the World ye ſhall have Tribulation*. *Note*, Thoſe miſtake in the Deſign of the Goſpel, who think their Profeſſion of it will ſecure them from, for it will certainly expoſe them to Trouble in this World. If all the World would receive Chriſt, there would then follow a *univerſal Peace*; but while there are, and will be ſo many that reject him, and thoſe not only the Children of this World, but the Seed of the Serpent, the Children of God that are call'd out of the World, muſt expect to feel the Fruits of their Enmity.

1. Look not for Peace, but a *Sword*. Chriſt came to give the *Sword of the Word*, with which his Diſciples fight againſt the World, and *conquering* Work this Sword hath made, *Rev*. 6. 2.—19. 21. And the *Sword of Perſecution*, with which the World fights againſt the Diſciples, being *cut to the Heart* with the Sword of the Word, *Acts* 7. 54. and *tormented* by the Teſtimony of Chriſt's Witneſſes, *Rev*. 11. 10. and cruel Work this Sword made. Chriſt ſent that Goſpel which gives occaſion for the drawing of this Sword, and ſo may be ſaid to ſend this Sword; he orders his Church into a ſuffering State, for the Tryal and Praiſe of his People's Graces, and the filling up of the Meaſure of their Enemies Sins.

2. Look not for Peace, *but Diviſion*, v. 35. *I am come to ſet Men at Variance*. This Effect of the Preaching of the Goſpel, is not the fault of the Goſpel, but of thoſe that do not receive it. When ſome *believe the things that are ſpoken*, and others *believe them not*, the Faith of thoſe that believe, condemns thoſe that believe not, and therefore they have an Enmity to them that believe. *Note*, The moſt violent and implacable Feuds have ever been thoſe that have ariſen from Difference in Religion. No Enmity like that of the Perſecutors, no Reſolution like that of the Perſecuted. Thus Chriſt tells his Diſciples *what they ſhould ſuffer*, and theſe were hard Sayings; if they could bear theſe, they could bear any thing. *Note*, Chriſt has dealt fairly and faithfully with us, in telling us the worſt we can meet with in his Service; and he would have us deal ſo with ourſelves, in ſitting down and counting the Coſt.

2. They are here told *from whom*, and *by whom* they ſhould ſuffer theſe hard things. Surely *Hell it ſelf* muſt be *let looſe*, and *Devils*, thoſe deſperate and deſpairing Spirits, that have *no part or lot* in the great Salvation, muſt become incarnate e'er ſuch ſpiteful Enemies could be found to a Doctrine, the Subſtance of which was *Good-will towards Men*, and the *reconciling of the World to God*; no, would you think it? All this Miſchief ariſeth to the Preachers of the Goſpel, from thoſe whom they came to preach Salvation to. Thus *the Blood-thirſty hate the Upright, but the Juſt ſeek his Soul*, Prov. 29. 10. And therefore Heaven is ſo much oppos'd on Earth, becauſe Earth is ſo much under the Power of Hell, *Eph*. 2. 2.

Theſe hard things Chriſt's Diſciples muſt ſuffer.

1. From *Men*, v. 17. *Beware of Men*, you will have need to ſtand upon your Guard, even againſt thoſe that are of the ſame Nature with you, ſuch is the Pravity and Degeneracy of that Nature, *Homo Homini Lupus*; Crafty and Politick as *Men*, but Cruel and Barbarous as Beaſts, and wholly diveſted of the thing call'd *Humanity*. *Note*, Perſecuting Rage and Enmity turns Men into Brutes, into Devils. *Paul* at *Epheſus* fought with Beaſts in the Shape of Men, 1 *Cor*. 15. 32. 'Tis a ſad paſs that the World is come to, when the beſt Friends it has have need to *beware of Men*. It aggravates the Troubles of Chriſt's ſuffering Servants, that they ariſe from thoſe that are *Bone of their Bone*, made of the *ſame Blood*. Perſecutors are in this reſpect worſe than Beaſts, that they prey upon thoſe of their own kind; *Savis inter ſe convenit Urſis*. 'Tis very grievous to have *Men riſe up againſt us*, Pſal. 124. from whom we might expect Protection and Sympathy. *Men*, and no more, meer Men; Men, and not Saints; *natural Men*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. *Men of this World*, Pſal. 17. 14. Saints are more than *Men*, and are redeemed from among Men, and therefore are *hated by them*, Rev. 14. 14. The nature of Man, if it be not Sanctified, is the worſt Nature in the World, next to that of Devils. They are *Men*, and therefore ſubordinate, depending, dying Creatures; they are *Men*, but they are *but Men*, Pſal. 9. *ult*. and *who art thou, that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a Man that ſhall dye?* Iſa. 51 12. *Beware of the Men*. So Dr. *Hammond*, Thoſe you wot of the Men of the *Jewiſh Sanhedrim*, which diſallow'd Chriſt, 1 *Pet*. 2. 4.

2. From *profeſſing Men*, Men that have a Form of Godlineſs, and made a Shew of Religion. *They will ſcourge you in their Synagogues*, their Places of Meeting for the Worſhip of God, and for the Exerciſe of their Church-diſcipline; ſo that they look'd upon the Scourging of Chriſt's Diſciples to be a Branch of their Religion. *Paul* was five times *Scourg'd in the Synagogues*, 2 Cor. 11. 24. The *Jews*, under Colour of Zeal for *Moſes*, were the moſt bitter Perſecutors of Chriſt and Chriſtianity, and plac'd thoſe Outrages to the Score of their Religion. *Note*, Chriſt's Diſciples have ſuffer'd much from conſcientious Perſecutors that ſcourge them *in their Synagogues*, caſt them out, and kill them, and think they *do God good Service*, John 16. 2. and ſay, *Let the Lord be glorified*, Iſa. 66. 5. Zech. 11. 4, 5. But the *Synagogue* will be ſo far from *Conſecrating* the Perſecution, that the Perſecution doubtleſs *Prophanes* anb *Deſecrates* the Synagogue.

3. From *great Men*, and Men in Authority. The *Jews* did not only *Scourge* them, which was the utmoſt of their remaining Power extended to, but when they could go no further themſelves, they deliver'd them up to the *Roman* Powers, as they did Chriſt, *John* 18. 30. Ye ſhall be *brought before Governours and Kings*, v. 11. who having more Power, are in a Capacity of doing the more Miſchief. *Governours and Kings* receive their Power from Chriſt, *Prov*. 8. 15. and ſhould be his Servants, and his Churches Protectors, and Nurſing-Fathers, but they often uſe their Power againſt him, and are Rebels to Chriſt, and Oppreſſors of his Church. *The Kings of the Earth* ſet themſelves againſt his Kingdom, *Pſal*. 2. 1, 2. *Acts* 4. 25, 26. *Note*, It has often been the lot of good Men to have great Men for their Enemies.

4. From *all Men*, v. 22. *Ye ſhall be hated of all Men*, i. e. of all wicked Men; and theſe are the generality of Men, for *the whole World lies in Wickedneſs*. So few are there that love, and own, and countenance Chriſt's Righteous Cauſe, that we may ſay, the Friends of it are *hated of all Men*. They are all gone aſtray, and therefore *eat up my People*, Pſal. 14. 3. As far as the Apoſtacy from God goes, ſo far the Enmity againſt the Saints goes; ſometimes it appears more general than at other times, but there is ſomething of this Poiſon

lurking in the Hearts of all the *Children of Diſobedience.* The World *hates you,* for it *wanders after the Beaſt,* Rev. 13. 3. Every Man a Liar, and therefore a hater of Truth.

5. From *thoſe of their own Kindred. The Brother ſhall deliver up the Brother to Death,* v. 21. *A Man ſhall be* upon this account *at Variance with his own Father*; nay, and thoſe of the weaker and tenderer Sex too become *Perſecutors,* and *Perſecuted*; *the Perſecuting Daughter will be againſt the* Believing *Mother,* where natural Affection, and filial Duty, one would think ſhould prevent, or ſoon extinguiſh the Quarrel; and then, no marvel, if the *Daughter-in-law* be *againſt the Mother-in-law*; where too often the Coldneſs of Love ſeeks Occaſion of Contention, *v.* 35. In general, *v.* 36. *A Mans Foes ſhall be they of his ownHouſhould.* They that ſhould be his Friends, will be incens'd againſt him for embracing Chriſtianity, and eſpecially for adhering to it, when it comes to be perſecuted, and will joyn with his Perſecutors againſt him. *Note,* The ſtrongeſt Bonds of relative Love and Duty, have oft been broken thro' by an Enmity to Chriſt and his Doctrine. Such has been the Power of Prejudice againſt the true Religion, and Zeal for a falſe one, that all othe Regards, the moſt Natural and Sacred, the moſt engaging and endearing, have been Sacrificed to theſe *Molochs.* Thoſe that rage againſt the Lord and his Anointed ones, break even theſe Bonds in ſunder, and caſt away, even theſe Cords from them, *Pſal.* 2. 2, 3. Chriſt's Spouſe ſuffers hard things from the Anger of *her own Mother's Children,* Cant. 1. 6. Sufferings from ſuch are more grievous, nothing cuts more than this; *It was thou, a Man, mine equal,* Pſal. 55. 12, 13. And the Enmity of ſuch is commonly moſt implacable; *a Brother offended is harder to be won than a ſtrong City,* Prov. 18. 19. The Martyrologies, both antient and modern, are full of Inſtances of this. Upon the whole Matter, it appears, that *all that will live Godly in Chriſt Jeſus muſt ſuffer Perſecution*; and through many Tribulations, we muſt expect to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Secondly, With theſe Predictions of Trouble we have here Preſcriptions of Counſels, and Comforts for a Time of Tryal. He ſends them out expos'd to Danger indeed, and expecting it, but withal well arm'd with Inſtructions and Encouragements, ſufficient to bear them up, and bear them out in all theſe Tryals. Let us gather up what he ſaith,

Firſt, By way of Counſel and Direction in ſeveral things.

1. *Be wiſe as Serpents,* v. 16. You *may be ſo* (ſo ſome take it, only as a Permiſſion) you may be as wary as you pleaſe, provided you be *harmleſs as Doves.* But it is rather to be taken as a Precept, recommending to us that Wiſdom of the Prudent, which is to underſtand his Way, as uſeful at all times, but eſpecially in ſuffering Times. *Therefore,* becauſe you are expos'd as Sheep among Wolves; *be ye wiſe as Serpents,* not wiſe as *Foxes,* whoſe Cunning is to *deceive* others, but as *Serpents,* whoſe Policy is only to *defend* themſelves, and to ſhift for their own Safety. The Diſciples of Chriſt are hated and perſecuted as Serpents, and their Ruin ſought, and therefore need the Serpent's Wiſdom. *Note,* It is the Will of Chriſt, that his People and Miniſters being ſo much expos'd to Troubles in this World as they are, ſhould not needleſly *expoſe themſelves,* but uſe all fair and lawful Means for their own Preſervation. Chriſt gave us an Example of this Wiſdom, *Matt.* 21. 24, 25.—22. 17, 18, 19. *John* 8. 6, 7. Beſides the many Eſcapes he made out of the Hands of his Enemies, till his Hour was come. See an Inſtance of St. *Paul*'s Wiſdom, *Acts* 23. 8, 9. In the Cauſe of Chriſt, we muſt ſit looſe to Life, and all its Comforts, but muſt not be prodigal of them. 'Tis the Wiſdom of the Serpent to ſecure his Head, that that may not be broken, to ſtop his Ear to the Voice of the Charmer, *Pſal.* 58. 4, 5. and to take ſhelter in the Clifts of the Rock, and herein we may be wiſe *as Serpents.* We muſt be wiſe, not to pull Trouble upon our own Heads, wiſe to keep Silence in an Evil Time, and not to give Offence if we can help it.

2. *Be ye harmleſs as Doves.* Be Mild, and Meek, and Diſpaſſionate; not only do no body any hurt, but bear no body any Ill-will; be *without Gall,* as Doves are. This muſt always go along with the former, they are ſent forth *among Wolves,* therefore muſt be *wiſe as Serpents,* but they are ſent forth *as Sheep,* therefore muſt be *harmleſs as Doves.* We muſt be wiſe, not to *wrong ourſelves,* but rather ſo than *wrong any one elſe*; muſt uſe the Harmleſneſs of the Dove, to bear twenty Injuries, rather then the Subtilty of the Serpent, to offer, or to return one. *Note,* It muſt be the continual Care of all Chriſt's Diſciples to be innocent and offenſive in Word and Deed, eſpecially in conſideration of the Enemies they are in the midſt of. We have need of a *Dove-like* Spirit when we are beſet with Birds of Prey, that we may neither provoke them, nor be provoked by them; *David* coveted the *Wings of a Dove,* on which to fly away and be at reſt, rather than the Wings of a Hawk. The Spirit deſcended on Chriſt *as a Dove,* and all Believers partake of the Spirit of Chriſt, a *Dove-like* Spirit, made for Love, not for War.

3. *Beware of Men,* v. 17. be always upon your guard, and avoid dangerous Company; take heed what you ſay and do, and preſume not too far upon any Mans Fidelity. Be jealous of the moſt plauſible Pretenſions, *truſt not in a Friend,* no, not in the Wife of thy Boſom, *Mic.* 7. 5. *Note,* It becomes thoſe that are *Gracious* to be *cautious,* for we are taught to *ceaſe from Man.* Such a wretched World do we live in, that we know not whom to truſt. Ever ſince our Maſter was betray'd with a Kiſs by one of his own Diſciples, we have need to *beware of Men,* of *falſe Brethren.*

4. *Take no thought how, or what ye ſhall ſpeak,* v. 19. When ye are brought before Magiſtrates, carry yourſelves decently, but afflict not yourſelves with Care how you ſhall come off. A prudent Thought there muſt be, but not an anxious, perplexing, diſquieting Thought; let this Care be caſt upon God as well as that, *what you ſhall eat, and what you ſhall drink.* Do not ſtudy to make fine Speeches, *ad captandam Benevolentiam*; affect not quaint Expreſſions, Flouriſhes of Wit, and labour'd Periods, which only ſerve to gild a bad Cauſe, the Gold of a good one needs it not. It argues a diffidence of your Cauſe to be ſollicitous in this matter, as if it were not ſufficient to *ſpeak for itſelf.* You know upon what Grounds you go, and then *Verbaque praviſam rem non invita ſequentur.* Never any ſpoke better before Governours and Kings, than thoſe three Champions, who took no thought before what they ſhould ſpeak, *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to anſwer thee in this Matter,* Dan. 3. 16. See *Pſal.* 119. 46. *Note,* The Diſciples of Chriſt muſt be more thoughtful how to *do well,* than how to *ſpeak well*; how to *keep* their Integrity, than how to *vindicate it. Non magna loquimur, ſed vivimus,* is the beſt Apology.

5. *When they Perſecute you in this City, flee to another,* v. 23. Thus reject them that reject you and your Doctrine, and try whether others will not receive you and it. Thus ſhift for your own Safety. *Note,* In caſe of imminent Peril, the Diſciples of Chriſt may, and muſt ſecure themſelves by Flight, when God in his Providence opens to them a Door of Eſcape. He that flies may Fight again. 'Tis no inglorious thing for Chriſt's Soldiers to *quit their Ground,* provided they do not *quit their Colours.* They may go out of the Way of *Danger,* tho' they muſt not go out of the Way of *Duty,* Obſerve Chriſt's Care of his Diſciples, in providing places of Retreat and Shelter for them, ordering it ſo that Perſecution rageth not in all Places at the ſame time, but when one City is made too hot for them, another is reſerv'd for a cooler Shade, and a *little Sanctuary,* a Favour to be us'd, and not to be ſlighted; yet always with this Proviſo, that no ſinful unlawful Means be us'd to make the Eſcape, for then it is not a Door of God's opening. We have many Examples to this Rule, in the Hiſtory both of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, in the Application of all which to particular Caſes Wiſdom and Integrity are profitable to direct.

6. *Fear them not,* v. 26. becauſe *they can but kill the Body,* v. 28. *Note,* It is the Duty and Intereſt of Chriſt's Diſciples not to fear the greateſt of their Adverſaries. Thoſe that truly fear God, need not fear Man, and thoſe that are afraid of the leaſt Sin, need not be afraid of the greateſt Trouble. *The Fear of Man bringeth a Snare,* a perplexing Snare that diſturbs our Peace, an entangling Snare, by which we are drawn into Sin, and therefore it muſt be carefully watch'd, and ſtriven, and pray'd againſt. Be the Times never ſo difficult, Enemies never ſo outragious, and Events never ſo threatning, yet need we not fear, *yet will not we fear, tho' the Earth be remov'd,* while we have ſo good a God, ſo good a Cauſe, and ſo good a Hope thro' Grace,

Yes, this is ſoon ſaid, but when it comes to the Tryal, Racks and Tortures, Dungeons and Gallies, Axes and Gibbets, Fire and Faggot are terrible things, enough to make the ſtouteſt Heart to tremble and to ſtart back, eſpecially when 'tis plain, they may be avoided by a few declining Steps; and therefore to fortify us againſt this Temptation, we have here

(1.) A *good Reaſon* againſt this Fear, taken from the *limited* Power of the Enemies; they *kill the Body,* that's the utmoſt their Rage can extend to, *hitherto they can go,* if God permit them, but no further, *they are not able to kill the Soul,* nor to do it any hurt, and the Soul is the Man. By this it appears that the Soul doth not, (as ſome dream) fall aſleep at Death, nor is depriv'd of Thought and Perception; for then the killing of the Body would be the killing of the Soul too. The Soul is kill'd when it is ſeparated from God and his Love, which is its Life, and is made a Veſſel of his Wrath; now this is out of the reach of their Power, *Tribulation, Diſtreſs, and Perſecution* may ſeparate us from all the World, but cannot part between us and God, cannot make us either not to love him, or not to be beloved by him. *Rom.* 8. 35, 37. If therefore we were more concern'd about our Souls as our Jewels, we ſhould be leſs afraid of Men, whoſe Power cannot rob us of them. They can but *kill the Body,* which would quickly dye of itſelf, not the Soul, which will enjoy its ſelf, and its God in ſpite of them. They can but cruſh the Cabinet; a Heathen ſet the Tyrant at defiance with this, *Tunde Capſam Anaxarchi, Anaxarchum non lædis,* The Pearl of Price is untouch'd. *Seneca* undertakes to make it out, that you cannot hurt a wiſe and good Man, becauſe Death itſelf is no real Evil to him. *Si maximum illud ultra quod nihil habent iratæ leges, aut ſæviſſimi Domini minantur, in quo Imperium ſuum Fortuna conſumit æquo placidoque Animo accipimus, & ſcimus mortem malum non eſſe ob hoc ne injuriam quidem.* Seneca de Conſtantia.

(2.) A *good Remedy* againſt it, and that is to *Fear God. Fear him who is able to deſtroy both Soul and Body in Hell. Note,* (1.) Hell is the Deſtruction both of Soul and Body, not of the Being of either; but the Well-being of both. 'Tis the Ruin of the whole Man. If the Soul be loſt, the Body is loſt too. They ſinn'd together, the Body was the Soul's Tempter to Sin, and it's Tool in Sin, and they muſt eternally ſuffer together. (2.) This Deſtruction comes from the *Power of God.* He is *able* to deſtroy; 'tis a Deſtruction from his *glorious Power,* 2 Theſ. 1. 9. He will in it *make his Power known,* not only his *Authority* to ſentence, but his *Ability* to *execute* the Sentence, *Rom.* 9. 22. (3.) God is therefore to *be fear'd,* even by the beſt Saints in this World. *Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we perſwade Men* to *ſtand in awe* of him. If *according to his Fear, ſo is his Wrath,* then according to his *Wrath*, ſo ſhall his *Fear* be, eſpecially becauſe *none knows the Power of his Anger*, Pſal. 90. 11. When *Adam* in Innocency was aw'd by a Threatning, let none of Chriſt's Diſciples think they need not the Reſtraint of a holy Fear. *Happy is the Man that fears always.* The God *of Abraham*, who was then dead, is call'd the *Fear of Iſaac*, who was yet alive, *Gen.* 31. 42, 43. (4.) The Fear of God, and of his Power reigning in the Soul, will be a Sovereign Antidote againſt the Fear of Man. 'Tis better fall under the Frowns of all the World, than under God's Frowns, and therefore as it is moſt *right* in it ſelf, ſo it is moſt ſafe for us to *obey God rather than Men*, Acts 4. 19. They that are *afraid of a Man that ſhall die, forget the Lord their Maker*, Iſa. 51. 12, 13. Neh. 4. 14.

7. *What I tell you in Darkneſs, that ſpeak ye in Light*, v. 27. i. e. Whatever Hazards you run, go on with your Work, publiſhing and proclaiming the everlaſting Goſpel to all the World; that's your Buſineſs, mind that. The Deſign of the Enemies is not meerly to *deſtroy* you, but to *ſuppreſs* that, and therefore whatever comes of it, publiſh that. *What I tell you, that ſpeak ye. Note*, That which the Apoſtles have deliver'd to us, is the ſame that they *receiv'd from Jeſus Chriſt*, Heb. 2. 3. They ſpake what he told them, that, all that, and nothing but that. Thoſe Embaſſadors receiv'd their Inſtructions in private, in *Darkneſs*, in *the Ear*, in Corners, in Parables. Many things Chriſt ſpake *openly*, and nothing in ſecret varying from what he preached in publick, *John* 18. 20. But the particular Inſtructions he gave his Diſciples after his Reſurrection, concerning the *things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*, were whiſper'd in the Ear, *Acts* 1, 3. for then he *never ſhew'd himſelf openly*. But they muſt deliver their Embaſſy publickly; in the *Light*, and upon the *Houſe-tops*; for the Doctrine of the Goſpel is what all are concern'd in, *Prov.* 1. 20, 21.—8. 2, 3. Therefore *he that hath Ears to hear let him hear*. The firſt Indication of the taking in of the *Gentiles* into the Church was upon a *Houſe-top*, Acts 10. 9. *Note*, There is no part of Chriſt's Goſpel that needs upon any Account to be conceal'd; the whole *Counſel of God* muſt be *reveal'd*, Acts 20. 27. In never ſo mixt a Multitude let it be plainly and fully deliver'd.

Secondly, By Way of *Comfort* and *Encouragement*. Here is very much ſaid to that purpoſe, and all little enough, conſidering the many Hardſhips they were to grapple with, throughout the Courſe of their Miniſtry, and their preſent Weakneſs, which was ſuch as that without ſome powerful ſupport they could ſcarce bear even the Proſpect of ſuch Uſage; Chriſt therefore ſhews them, why they ſhould be of good Chear.

1. Here is one Word peculiar to their preſent Miſſion, and their Expedition upon it, *v.* 23. *Ye ſhall not have gone over the Cities of Iſrael, till the Son of Man be come.* They were to preach that the Kingdom of the *Son of Man*, i. e. the *Meſſiah*, was at hand; they were to pray, *Thy Kingdom come:* Now they ſhould not have gone over all the Cities of *Iſrael*, thus *praying* and thus *preaching*, before that Kingdom they ſpoke of, ſhould come in the Exaltation of Chriſt, and the Pouring out of the Spirit. It was Comfort (1.) That what they ſaid ſhould be made good; they ſaid, the Son of Man is coming, and *behold he comes*. Chriſt will *confirm the Word of his Meſſengers*, Iſa. 44. 26. (2.) That it ſhould be made good *quickly*. *Note*, It is matter of Comfort to Chriſt's Lobourers, that their working time will be ſhort and ſoon over; the Hireling has *his Day*; the Work and Warfare will in a little time be accompliſhed. (3.) That then they ſhould be advanc'd to a higher Station. When the *Son of Man comes*, they ſhall be *endued with greater Power* from on high; now they were ſent forth as Agents and Envoys, but in a little time their Commiſſion ſhould be enlarged, and they ſhould be ſent forth as Plenipotentiaries into all the World.

2. Here are many Words that relate to their Work in general, and the Troubles they were to meet with in it. And they are good Words, and comfortable Words.

1. That *their Sufferings* were *for a Teſtimony againſt them and the Gentiles*, v. 18. When the *Jewiſh* Conſiſtories remove you before the *Roman* Governours, that they may have you put to Death, your being hurried thus from one Judgment Seat to another, will help to make your Teſtimony the more publick, and will give you an Opportunity of bringing the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, as well as to the *Jews:* Nay, you will teſtify *to* them and *againſt* them by the very Troubles you undergo. *Note*, God's People, and eſpecially God's Miniſters, are his Witneſſes, *Iſa.* 43. 10. not only in their Doing-work, but in their Suffering-work. Hence they are call'd *Martyrs*, Witneſſes *for* Chriſt, that his Truths are of undoubted Certainty and Value; and being Witneſſes *for him*, they are Witneſſes *againſt* thoſe that oppoſe him and his Goſpel. The Sufferings of the Martyrs, as they witneſs to the Truth of the Goſpel they profeſs, ſo they are Teſtimonies of the Enmity of their Perſecutors, and both Ways they are a Teſtimony againſt them; and will be produc'd in Evidence in the great Day, when the Saints ſhall *judge the World*, and the Reaſon of the Sentence will be, *in as much as ye did it unto theſe, ye did it unto me*. Now if their Sufferings be a *Teſtimony*, how chearfully ſhould they be born, for the Teſtimony is not *finiſh'd* till thoſe come, *Rev.* 11. 7. If they be Chriſt's Witneſſes, they ſhall be ſure to have *their Charges born*.

2. That upon all occaſions they ſhould have God's ſpecial Preſence with them, and the immediate aſſiſtance of his holy Spirit, particularly when they ſhould be called out to bear their Teſtimony *before Governours and Kings, it ſhall be given you in that ſame Hour what ye ſhall ſpeak*. Chriſt's Diſciples were choſen *from among the fooliſh of the World*, unlearned and ignorant Men, and therefore might juſtly diſtruſt their own Abilities, eſpecially when they were called before great Men. When *Moſes* was ſent to *Pharaoh*, he complain'd, *I am not eloquent*, Exod. 4. 10. When *Jeremiah* was ſet over the Kingdoms, he objected, *I am but a Child*, Jer. 16. 10. Now in Anſwer to this Suggeſtion, 1. They are here promis'd that *it ſhould be given them*, not ſome time before, but *in that ſame Hour what they ſhall ſpeak*. They ſhall ſpeak *extempore*, and yet ſhall ſpeak as much to the Purpoſe, as if it had been never ſo well ſtudy'd. *Note*, When God calls us out to ſpeak for him, we may depend upon him to teach us what to ſay; even then when we labour under the greateſt Diſadvantages, and Diſcouragements. (2.) They are here aſſur'd that the bleſſed Spirit ſhould draw up their Plea for them. *It is not ye that ſpeak, but the Spirit of your Father which ſpeaketh in you*, v. 20. They were not left to themſelves upon ſuch an Occaſion, but God *undertook for them*, his Spirit of Wiſdom ſpoke *in them*, as ſometimes his Providence wonderfully ſpoke for them, and by both together they were manifeſted in the Conſciences, even of their Perſecutors. God gave them an Ability, not only to ſpeak to the Purpoſe, but what they did ſay, to ſay it with holy Zeal. The ſame Spirit that aſſiſted them *in the Pulpit*, aſſiſted them *at the Bar*. Thoſe cannot but come off well, that have ſuch an Advocate; and to whom God ſaith, as he did to *Moſes*, Exod. 4. 12. *Go, and I will be with thy Mouth*, and with *thy Heart*.

3. That *he that endures to the End ſhall be ſaved*, v. 22. Here it ſounds very comfortable, (1.) That there will be an *End* of theſe Troubles; they may laſt long, but will not laſt always. Chriſt comforted himſelf with this, and ſo may his Followers. *The things concerning me have an End*, Luke 22. 37. *Dabit Deus his quoque Finem. Note*, A believing Proſpect of the Period of our Troubles will be of great uſe to ſupport us under them. The weary will be *at reſt*, when the *Wicked ceaſe from troubling*, Job 3. 17. God will give an expected End, *Jer.* 29. 11. The Troubles may ſeem tedious like the *Days of a hireling*, but bleſſed be God they are not everlaſting. (2.) That while they continue, they may be *endur'd*; as they are not *eternal*, ſo they are not *intolerable*. They may be *born*, and *born to the End*; and therefore the *Sufferings* may be *born*, becauſe the *Sufferers* ſhall be *born up* under them in everlaſting Arms. The *Strength* ſhall be *according to the Day*, 1 Cor. 10. 13. (3.) Salvation will be the eternal Recompenſe of all thoſe that *endure to the End*. The Weather ſtormy, and the Way foul, but the Pleaſure of *Home* will make amends for all. A believing Regard to the Crown of Glory has been in all Ages the Cordial and Support of Suffering Saints, 2 *Cor.* 4. 16, 17, 18. *Heb.* 10. 34. This is not only an *Encouragement* to us to *endure*, but an *Engagement* to endure to *the End*. Thoſe that endure but a while, and *in time of Temptation fall away*, have run in vain, and loſe all that they have attained; but thoſe that perſevere are ſure of the Prize; and thoſe only. Be *faithful unto Death*; and then thou ſhalt have the *Crown of Life*.

4. That whatever hard uſage the Diſciples of Chriſt meet with, it is no more than what their Maſter met with before, *v.* 24. 25. *The Diſciple is not above his Maſter.* We find this given them as a Reaſon why they ſhould not ſtick at the meaneſt Duties, no, not waſhing one another's Feet, *John* 13. 16. Here 'tis given as a Reaſon why they ſhould not ſtumble at the hardeſt Sufferings. They are minded of this Saying, *John* 15. 20. 'Tis a proverbial Expreſſion, *The Servant is not better than his Maſter*, and therefore let him not expect to *fare better*. *Note*, (1.) Jeſus Chriſt is our *Maſter*; our teaching Maſter, and we are his Diſciples to learn of him; our Ruling Maſter, and we are his Servants to obey him. He *is Maſter of the Houſe*, οἰκοδεσπότης, has a Deſpotick Power in the Church, which is his Family. (2.) Jeſus Chriſt our Lord and Maſter met with very hard Uſage from the World. They call'd him *Beelzebub*, the *God of Flies*, the Name of the Chief of the Devils, with whom they ſaid he was *in League*. 'Tis hard to ſay, which is here more to be admir'd, the *Wickedneſs of Men*, that thus abus'd Chriſt, or the Patience of Chriſt, who ſuffer'd himſelf to be thus abus'd; that he who was the God of Glory, ſhould be ſtigmatiz'd as the God of Flies; the King of *Iſrael*, as the God of *Ekron*, the Prince of Light and Life, as the Prince of the Powers of Death and Darkneſs. That Satan's greateſt Enemy and Deſtroyer ſhould be run down as his Confederate, and yet endure ſuch *Contradiction of Sinners*. (3.) The Conſideration of the ill Treatment Chriſt met with in the World, ſhould engage us to expect and prepare for the like; and to bear it patiently. Let us not think it *ſtrange*, if thoſe that hated him hate his Followers for his Sake, nor *think it hard*, if thoſe that are ſhortly to be made like him in Glory, be now made like him in Sufferings. Chriſt began in the bitter Cup, let us be willing to pledge him: His bearing the Croſs made it eaſy for us.

5. That *there is nothing cover'd that ſhall not be revealed*, v. 26. We underſtand this, (1.) Of the revealing of the Goſpel to all the World. Do you *publiſh it*, v. 27. for it *ſhall be publiſhed*. The Truths which are now as Myſteries hid from the Children of Men, ſhall all be made known to all Nations in their own Language, *Acts* 2. 11. The *Ends of the Earth* muſt *ſee this Salvation*. *Note*, It is a great Encouragement to thoſe who are *doing* Chriſt's Work, that it is a Work which ſhall certainly be done: it is a *Plough* which God will *ſpeed*. Or (2.) Of the Clearing up of the Innocency of Chriſt's Suffering Servants that are call'd *Beelzebub*; their true Character is now invidiouſly blackned with falſe Colours, but however their Innocency and Excellency is now *cover'd*, it ſhall be *reveal'd*. Sometimes 'tis in a great Meaſure done in this World, when the Righteouſneſs of the Saints is made by ſubſequent Events to *ſhine forth as the Light:* How-

ever 'twill be done at the great Day, when their Glory ſhall be manifeſted to all the World, Angels and Men, to whom they are now *made Spectacles*, 1 Cor. 4. 9. All their *Reproach* ſhall be *roll'd away*, and their Graces and Services, that are now *cover'd*, ſhall be *reveal'd*, 1 Cor. 4. 5. *Note*, It is Matter of Comfort to the People of God, under all the Calumnies and Cenſures of Men, that their will be a Reſurrection of Names as well as of Bodies at the laſt Day, when the Righteous ſhall ſhine forth as the Sun. Let Chriſt's Miniſters faithfully reveal his Truths, and then leave it to him in due time to reveal their Integrity.

6. That the Providence of God is in a ſpecial Manner converſant about the Saints in their Sufferings, *v.* 29, 30, 31. 'Tis good to have Recourſe to our firſt Principles, and particularly to the Doctrine of God's univerſal Providence, extending itſelf to all the Creatures, and all their Actions, even the ſmalleſt and moſt minute. The Light of Nature teacheth us this, and it is comfortable to *all Men*, but eſpecially to all good Men; who can in Faith call this God *their Father*, and for whom he hath a tender Concern. See here,

1. The general Extent of Providence to all the Creatures, even the leaſt, and leaſt conſiderable to the *Sparrows*, v. 29. Theſe little Animals are of ſo ſmall Account, that one of them is not valued, there muſt go two to be worth a *Farthing*, nay, (you ſhall have five for a Half-penny, *Luke* 12. 6.) and yet they are not ſhut out of the Divine Care; *One of them ſhall not fall to the Ground without your Father*. That is (1.) They do not *light on the Ground* for Food, to pick up a Grain of Corn, but *your* heavenly *Father* by his Providence laid it ready for them. In the Parallel Place, *Luke* 12. 6. 'tis thus expreſs'd, *Not one of them is forgotten before God*, forgotten to be provided for; he *feedeth them*, Mat. 6. 26. now he that feeds the Sparrows will not ſtarve the Saints. (2.) They do not *fall to the Ground* by Death, either a natural or a violent Death. Though they are ſo ſmall a Part of the Creation yet even their Death comes within the Notice of the Divine Providence, much more doth the Death of his Diſciples. Obſerve, the Birds that *ſoar above* when they dye *fall to the Ground*; Death brings the higheſt to the Earth. Some think Chriſt here alludes to the two *Sparrows* that were us'd in cleanſing the Leper, *Lev.* 14. 4, 5, 6. the two *Birds* in the Margin were call'd *Sparrows*; of theſe one was kill'd, and ſo *fell to the Ground*, the other was let go. Now it ſeem'd a caſual thing which of the two was kill'd, the Perſons imploy'd took which they pleas'd, but God's Providence deſign'd and determin'd which. Now this God who has ſuch an eye to the *Sparrows* becauſe they are his *Creatures*, much more will have an Eye to you who are his Children. If a Sparrow dye not without your Father, ſure a Man doth not, a Chriſtian, a Miniſter, my Friend, my Child. A Bird falls not *into the Fowlers Net*, or *by the Fowler's Shot*, and ſo comes not to be Sold in the Market, but according to the Direction of Providence; your Enemies, like ſubtle Fowlers, lay Snares for you, and *privily ſhoot at you*, but they cannot *take you*, they cannot *hit you*, unleſs God give them leave. Therefore *be not afraid of Death*, for your Enemies have no Power againſt you, but what is *given them from above*. God can break their Bows and Snares, *Pſal.* 37. 14, 15.----64. 4, 7. and make your *Souls* to *eſcape as a Bird*, Pſal. 124. 7. *Fear ye not therefore*, v. 31. *Note*, There is enough in the Doctrine of God's Providence to ſilence all the Fears of God's People. *Ye are of more value than many Sparrows*. All Men are ſo, for the other Creatures were made for Man, and put under his Feet, *Pſal.* 8. 4, 5, 8. much more the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, who are the excellent ones of the Earth, however contemn'd, as if not worth one Sparrow.

2. The particular Cognizance which Providence takes of the Diſciples of Chriſt, eſpecially in their Sufferings, *v.* 30. *But the very Hairs of your Head are all number'd*. This is a Proverbial Expreſſion, noting the account which God *takes* and *keeps* of all the Concernments of his People, even thoſe that are moſt minute, and leaſt regarded. This is not to be made a Matter of curious Enquiry, but of Encouragement to live in a continual Dependance upon God's Providential Care, which extends it ſelf to all Occurrences, yet without Diſparagement to the infinite Glory, or diſturbance to the infinite Reſt of the eternal Mind. If God *numbers their Hairs*, much more doth he number their Heads, and take care of their Lives, their Comforts, their Souls. It intimates, that God takes more care of them than they do of themſelves. Thoſe that are ſollicitous to number their Money, and Goods, and Cattle, yet were never careful to number their Hairs, which fall and are loſt, and they never miſs them; but God numbers the Hairs of his People, and *not a Hair of their Head ſhall periſh*, Luke 21. 18. not the leaſt hurt ſhall be done them; but upon a valuable conſideration: So precious to God are his Saints, and their Lives and Deaths.

7. That he will ſhortly, in the Day of Triumph own thoſe that now own him in the Day of Tryal, when thoſe that deny him ſhall be for ever diſown'd and rejected by him, *v.* 32, 33. *Note*, 1. It is our Duty, and if we do it, will hereafter be our unſpeakable Honour and Happineſs to confeſs Chriſt before Men. (1.) It is our Duty not only to believe in Chriſt, but to *profeſs* that Faith, in ſuffering for him when we are call'd to it, as well as in Serving him. We muſt never be aſham'd of our Relation to Chriſt, our Attendance on him, and our Expectations from him. Hereby the Sincerity of our Faith is evidenc'd, his Name Glorified, and others edified. (2.) However this may expoſe us to Reproach and Trouble now, we ſhall abundantly be made amends for that in the Reſurrection of the Juſt, when it ſhall be our unſpeakable Honour and Happineſs; what would we more? *Him will I confeſs*; tho' a poor worthleſs Worm of the Earth, Chriſt will ſay, *This is one of mine*; one of my Friends and Favourites, that loved me, and was beloved of me. The Purchaſe of my Blood, the workmanſhip of my Spirit. *I will confeſs him before my Father*, when it will do him the moſt ſervice; I will ſpeak a good Word for him when he appears before *my Father* to receive his Doom; I will *preſent him*, will *repreſent him* to my Father. Them that *honour* Chriſt, he will thus *honour*. They *honour* him before Men, that's a poor thing, he will *honour* them before his Father, that's a great thing. 2. It is a dangerous thing for any to deny and diſown Chriſt before Men; for thoſe that do ſo will be diſown'd by him in the great Day, when they have moſt need of him. He will not own them for his Servants, that would not own him for their Maſter. *I tell you, I know you not*, Mat. 7. 23. In the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity, when for a Man to confeſs Chriſt, was to venture all that was dear to him in this World, 'twas more a Tryal of Sincerity that it was afterwards, when it had ſecular Advantages attending it.

8. That the Foundation of their Diſcipleſhip was laid in ſuch a Temper and Diſpoſition as would make Sufferings very light and eaſy to them, and it was upon the Condition of a Preparedneſs for Suffering that Chriſt took them to be his Followers, *v.* 37, 38, 39. He told them that at firſt they were not *worthy of him*, if they were not willing to *part with all for him*. Men ſtick not at thoſe Difficulties which neceſſarily attend their Profeſſion: and which they counted upon when they undertook that Profeſſion: and they will either chearfully ſubmit to thoſe Fatigues and Troubles, or diſclaim the Priviledges and Advantages of their Profeſſion: Now in the Chriſtian Profeſſion thoſe are reckon'd unworthy the Dignity and Felicity of it, that put not ſuch a Value upon their Intereſt in Chriſt, as to prefer that before any other Intereſts. They cannot expect the Gains of a Bargain, that will not come up to the Terms of it. Now thus the Terms are ſettl'd; if Religion be worth any thing, 'tis worth *every thing*; and therefore all that believe the *Truth of it*, will ſoon come up to the *Price of it*; and thoſe who make it their Buſineſs and Bliſs, will make every thing elſe to truckle to it. Thoſe that like not Chriſt on theſe Terms, may leave him at their Peril. *Note*, It is very encouraging to think, that whatever we leave, or loſe, or ſuffer for Chriſt, we do not make a *hard Bargain* for ourſelves. Whatever we part with for this Pearl of Price, we may comfort ourſelves with this, that its well worth what we give for it. The Terms are, That we muſt prefer Chriſt.

1. Before our neareſt and deareſt Relations; *Father or Mother, Son or Daughter*. Between theſe Relations, becauſe there's little room left for Envy, there's commonly more room for Love, and therefore theſe are inſtanc'd in as Relations, which we are moſt likely to affect. Children muſt love their Parents, and Parents muſt love their Children, but if they love them better than Chriſt, they are unworthy of him. As we muſt not be deter'd from Chriſt by the Hatred of our Relations which he ſpoke of, *v.* 21, 35, 36. ſo we muſt not be drawn from him by their Love. Chriſtians muſt be as *Levi*, that *ſaid to his Father, I have not ſeen him*, Deut. 39. 9.

2. Before our Eaſe and Safety. We muſt *take up our Croſs and follow him*, elſe we are not worthy of him. Here obſerve, (1.) Thoſe that would follow Chriſt muſt expect their Croſs, and *take it up*. (2.) In taking up the Croſs we muſt follow Chriſt's Example, and bear it as he did. (3.) It is a great encouragement to us when we meet with Croſſes, that in bearing of them we *follow Chriſt*, who hath ſhew'd us the Way, and if we follow him faithfully, will lead us thro' Sufferings *like him* to Glory *with him*.

3. Before Life it ſelf, *v.* 39. *He that findeth his Life ſhall loſe it*, that thinks he has *found* it when he hath *ſav'd* it, and *kept it* by denying Chriſt, he ſhall *loſe it* in an Eternal Death; but he that *loſeth his Life for Chriſt's ſake*, that will part with it rather than deny Chriſt, he ſhall find it to his unſpeakable advantage in an Eternal Life. Thoſe are beſt prepar'd for the Life to come that ſit moſt looſe to this preſent Life.

9. That Chriſt himſelf would ſo heartily eſpouſe their Cauſe, as to ſhew himſelf a Friend to all their Friends, and to repay all the Kindneſſes that ſhould at any time be beſtow'd upon them, *v.* 40, 41, 42. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me*.

1. It is here implied, That tho' the generality would reject them, yet they ſhould meet with ſome that would receive and entertain them, would bid the Meſſage welcome into their Hearts, and the Meſſengers into their Houſes for the ſake of it. Why was the Goſpel-market made? But that if ſome will not, others will. In the worſt of Times there is a Remnant according to the Election of Grace. Chriſt's Miniſters ſhall not *labour in vain*.

2. Jeſus Chriſt takes what is done to his faithful Miniſters, whether in Kindneſs, or in Unkindneſs, as done to himſelf, and reckons himſelf *treated* as they are *treated*. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me*. Both Honours and Contempts put upon an Embaſſador, do reflect Honour or Contempt upon the Prince that ſends him, and Miniſters are *Embaſſadors for Chriſt*. See how Chriſt may ſtill be entertain'd by thoſe that would teſtify their Reſpects to him; his People and Miniſters we have always with us, and he is *with them always, even to the end of the World*. Nay, the Honour riſeth higher, *He that receiveth me receiveth him that ſent me*, not only Chriſt takes it as done to himſelf, but thro' Chriſt God doth ſo too. By entertaining Chriſt's Miniſters, they entertain not *Angels unawares*, but Chriſt, nay, and God himſelf, and *unawares* too, as appears, *Mat.* 25. 37. *When ſaw we thee an hungred?*

3. That tho' the Kindneſs done to Chriſt's Diſciples be never ſo ſmall, yet if there be occaſion for it, and ability to do no more, it ſhall be accepted, tho' it be *but a Cup of Cold Water given to one of theſe little ones*, v. 42. They are *little ones*, poor and weak, and often ſtand in need of Refreſhment, and glad of the leaſt. The Extremity may be ſuch, that a *Cup of cold Water* may be a great Favour. *Note*, Kindneſſes ſhew'd to Chriſt's Diſciples are valued in Chriſt's Books, not according to the Coſt of the Gift, but according to the Love and Affection of the Giver. On that ſcore the Widow's Mite not only paſt current, but was ſtampt high, *Luke* 21. 3, 4. Thus they that are truly rich in Graces, may be rich in good Works, tho' poor in the World.

4. That Kindneſs to Chriſt's Diſciples which he will accept, muſt be done with an Eye to Chriſt, and for his ſake. A *Prophet* muſt be received *in the Name of a Prophet*; and a *righteous Man*, in the Name of a *righteous Man*, and one of thoſe *little ones in the Name of a Diſciple*; not becauſe they are Learned, or Witty, or becauſe they are our Relations or Neighbours; but becauſe they are *Righteous*, and ſo bear Chriſt's Image; they are *Prophets* and *Diſciples*, and ſo are ſent on Chriſt's Errand. 'Tis a believing Regard to Chriſt that puts an acceptable Value upon the Kindneſſes done to his Miniſters. When we entertain them for their Maſter's ſake whoſe they are, and whom they ſerve. Chriſt doth not intereſt himſelf in the Matter, unleſs we firſt intereſt himſelf in it. *Ut tibi de beam aliquid pro eo quod praſtas, debes non tantum mihi praſtare, ſed tanquam mihi.* Seneca.

5. That Kindneſſes ſhewn to Chriſt's People and Miniſters, ſhall not only be accepted, but richly and ſuitably rewarded. There is a great deal to be gotten by doing good Offices to Chriſt's Diſciples, if it be done *to the Lord*, he will repay them again with Intereſt; for he is *not unrighteous to forget any Labour of Love*, Heb. 6. 10. (1.) They ſhall *receive a reward*, and in no wiſe *loſe it*. He doth not ſay, they *deſerve* a Reward, we cannot merit any thing as Wages from the Hand of God; but they ſhall *receive a Reward* from the free Gift of God. And they ſhall *in no wiſe loſe it*, as good Services often do among Men; becauſe thoſe that ſhould reward them are either falſe or forgetful. The Reward may be defer'd, the full Reward will be defer'd till the Reſurrection of the Juſt; but it ſhall in no wiſe be *loſt*, nor ſhall they be any *loſers* by the delay. (2.) This is a *Prophet's Reward*, and a *righteous Man's*. That is, either (1.) The Reward that God gives to Prophets and Righteous Men; the Bleſſings confer'd upon them ſhall diſtill upon their Friends. Or, (2.) the Reward he gives *by* Prophets and Righteous Men. In anſwer to *their* Prayers, *Gen.* 20. 7. *He is a Prophet, and he ſhall Pray for thee*, that's a Prophet's Reward. And by *their* Miniſtry, when he gives the Inſtructions and Comforts of the Word, to thoſe that are kind to the Preachers of the Word, then he ſends a *Prophet's Reward*. Prophets Rewards are Spiritual Bleſſings in Heavenly Things, and if we know how to value them, we ſhall reckon them good Payment

CHAP. XI.

In this Chapter we have (1.) the conſtant and unwearied Diligence of our Lord Jeſus in his great Work of Preaching the Goſpel, v. 1. (2.) His Diſcourſe with the Diſciples of John, *concerning his being the* Meſſiah, *v.* 2.—6. (3.) *The honourable Teſtimony that Chriſt bore to* John Baptiſt, *v.* 7.—15. (4.) *The ſad Account he gives of that Generation in general, and eſpecially of ſome particular Places; with reference to the Succeſs, both of* John's *Miniſtry, and of his own,* v. 16.—24. (5.) *His Thankſgiving to his Father for the Wiſe and Gracious Methods he had taking in revealing the great Myſteries of the Goſpel,* v. 25, 26. (6.) *His Gracious Call and Invitation to poor Sinners to come to him, and to be rul'd and taught, and ſav'd by him,* v. 27.—30. *No where have we more of the Terror of Goſpel-Woes for warning to us, or of the ſweetneſs of Goſpel-Grace for encouragement to us than in this Chapter, which ſets before us Life and Death, the Bleſſing and the Curſe.*

AND it came to paſs, when Jeſus had made an end of commanding his twelve Diſciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. 2 Now when John had heard in the priſon the works of Chriſt, he ſent two of his diſciples, 3 And ſaid unto him, Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another? 4 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Go, and ſhew John again thoſe things which ye do hear and ſee. 5 The blind receive their ſight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up, and the poor have the goſpel preached to them. 6 And bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me.

The firſt Verſe of this Chapter ſome joyn to the foregoing Chapter, and make it (not unfitly) the cloſe of that.

1. The Ordination Sermon which Chriſt Preach'd to his Diſciples in the foregoing Chapter, is here call'd his *commanding them*. *Note*, Chriſt's Commiſſions imply Commands. Their Preaching of the Goſpel was not only *permitted* them, but it was *enjoyn'd* them. 'Twas not a thing they were left at their liberty about, but *Neceſſity was laid upon them*, 1 Cor. 9. 16. The *Promiſes* he made them are included in theſe Commands, for the Covenant of Grace is a *word which he hath commanded*, Pſal. 105. 8. He *made an end of commanding*, ἐτέλεσεν διατάσσων. *Note*, The Inſtructions Chriſt gives are *full* Inſtructions. He *goes thro'* with his Work.

2. When Chriſt had ſaid what he had to ſay to his Diſciples, he *departed thence*. It ſhould ſeem they were very loth to *ſcatter* and go abroad from their Maſter, till he *departed*, and ſeparated himſelf from them; as the Nurſe withdraws her Hand, that the Child may learn to *go it ſelf*. Chriſt would now teach them how to *live*, and how to *work* without his Bodily Preſence. 'Twas *expedient for them*, that Chriſt ſhould thus *go away* for a while, that they might be prepar'd for his long Departure, and that by the help of the Spirit their own Hands might be *ſufficient for them*, Deut. 33. 5. and they might not be always Children. We have little account of what they did now purſuant to their Commiſſion. They went abroad, no doubt, probably into *Judea* (for in *Galilee* the Goſpel had been moſtly Preach'd hitherto) publiſhing the Doctrine of Chriſt, and working Miracles in his Name; but ſtill in a more immediate Dependance upon him, and not being long from him; and thus they were train'd up by degrees for their great Work.

3. Chriſt departed *to teach and Preach*; there where he ſent his Diſciples before him to *work Miracles*, Chap. 10. 1, 8. and ſo to raiſe Peoples Expectations, and make way for his Entertainment. Thus was the *Way of the Lord prepar'd*; *John* prepar'd it by bringing People to *Repentance*, but he *did no Miracle*. The Diſciples go further, they *work Miracles* for the Confirmation. *Note*, Repentantce and Faith prepare People for the Bleſſings of the Kingdom of Heaven, which Chriſt gives. Obſerve, When Chriſt impower'd them to *work Miracles*, he imploy'd himſelf in *Teaching* and *Preaching*, as if that were the more honourable of the two. That was but in order to this. Healing the Sick was the *ſaving of Bodies*, but Preaching the Goſpel was to the *ſaving of Souls*. Chriſt had directed his Diſciples to Preach, *Chap.* 10. 7. yet he did not leave off Preaching himſelf. He ſet them to work, not for his own Eaſe, but for the Eaſe of the Country, and was not the leſs buſy for employing them. How unlike are they to Chriſt who yoke others, only that they may themſelves be idle. *Note*, The Increaſe and Multitude of Labourers in the Lord's Work, ſhould be made not an Excuſe for our Negligence, but an encouragement to our Diligence. The more buſy others are, the more buſy we ſhould be, and all little enough, ſo much Work is there to be done. Obſerve, He went to Preach in their *Cities*, which were populous Places; he caſt the Net of the Goſpel where there were moſt Fiſh to be inclos'd. Wiſdom cries in the *City*, Prov. 1. 21. *at the entry of the City*, Prov. 8. 3. In *the Cities of the Jews*, even theirs who made light of him, yet had the firſt offer.

What he Preach'd we are not told, but 'tis likely 'twas to the ſame purpoſe with his Sermon on the Mount. But here is next recorded a Meſſage which *John Baptiſt* ſent to Chriſt, and his return to it, *v.* 2.—6. We heard before that Jeſus heard of *John*'s Sufferings, *Chap.* 4. 12. Now we are told that *John* in Priſon hears of Chriſt's doings. *He heard in the Priſon the Works of Chriſt*; and, no doubt, he was glad to hear of them, for he was a true Friend of the Bridegroom, *John* 3. 29. *Note*, When one uſeful Inſtrument is laid aſide, God knows how to raiſe up many others in the ſtead of it. The Work went on tho' *John* was *in Priſon*, and it added no Affliction, but a great deal of Conſolation to his Bonds. Nothing more comfortable to God's People in Diſtreſs than to *hear of the Works of Chriſt*; eſpecially to experience them in their own Souls. This turns a Priſon into a Palace. Some way or other Chriſt will convey the Notices of his Love to thoſe that are in Trouble for Conſcience ſake. *John* could not ſee the Works of Chriſt, but he heard of them with Pleaſure. And bleſſed are they which *have not ſeen*, but only heard, and yet *have believed*.

Now *John Baptiſt* hearing of Chriſt's Works, ſent two of his Diſciples to him; and what paſs'd between them and him, we have here an account of. Here's,

1. The Queſtion they had to propoſe to him: *Art thou he that ſhould come, or do we look for another?* This was a ſerious and important Queſtion, *Art thou the Meſſiah promiſed, or not? Art thou the Chriſt? tell us*: (1.) It is taken for granted that the Meſſiah ſhould come. It was one of the Names by which he was known to the *Old Teſtament* Saints, He *that cometh*, or *ſhall come*, Pſal. 118. 26. He is now come, but there is another coming of his we ſtill expect. (2.) They intimate, that if this be not *he*, they would *look for another*. *Note*, We muſt not be weary of looking for him that is to come, nor ever ſay, we will no more *expect* him till we come to *enjoy* him. Tho' he tarry, wait for him, for he that ſhall come will come, tho' not in our time. (3.) They intimate likewiſe, That if they be convinc'd this is He, they will not be Scepticks, they will be ſatisfied, and will look *for no other*. (4.) They therefore aſk, *Art thou he? John* had ſaid for his part, *I am not the Chriſt*, John 1. 20. Now (1.) ſome think *John* ſent this Queſtion for his own Satisfaction: 'Tis true he had born a noble Teſtimony to Chriſt, he declar'd him to be the *Son of God*, John 1. 34. the Lamb of God, *v.* 29. and he that *ſhould baptize with the Holy Ghoſt*, v. 33. and *ſent of God*, John 3. 34. which were great things. But (1.) he deſir'd to be further and more fully aſſur'd that he was the *Meſſiah* that had been ſo long promis'd and expected. *Note*, In Matters relating to Chriſt and our Salvation by him 'tis good to be ſure. Chriſt appear'd not in that

external Pomp and Power that 'twas expected he ſhould appear in: his own Diſciples ſtumbled at this, and perhaps *John* did ſo; Chriſt ſaw ſomething of this at the bottom of this Enquiry, when he ſaid, *Bleſſed is he who ſhall not be offended in me.* *Note*, Its hard, even for good Men to bear up againſt vulgar Errors. (2.) *John*'s Doubt might ariſe from his own preſent Circumſtances. He was a Priſoner, and might be tempted to think, If Jeſus be indeed the *Meſſiah*, whence is it that I his Friend and Fore-runner am brought into this Trouble, and am left to be ſo long in it, and he never looks after me, viſits me not, nor ſends to me, enquires not after me, doth nothing either to ſweeten my Impriſonment, or haſten my Enlargement. Doubtleſs there was a good Reaſon why our Lord Jeſus did not go to *John* in Priſon, leſt there ſhould ſeem to have been a Compact between them; but *John* conſtru'd it a Neglect, and it was perhaps a Shock to his Faith in Chriſt. *Note*, 1. Where there is true Faith, yet there may be a mixture of Unbelief. The beſt are not always alike ſtrong. 2. Troubles for Chriſt, eſpecially when they continue long unreliev'd, are ſuch Tryals of Faith as ſometimes prove too hard to be born up againſt. 3. The remaining Unbelief of good Men may ſometimes in an Hour of Temptation ſtrike at the Root, and call in queſtion the moſt fundamental Truths which were thought to be well ſettled. *Will the Lord caſt off for ever?* But we will hope that *John*'s Faith did not fail in this Matter, only he deſir'd to have it ſtrengthen'd and confirm'd. *Note*, The beſt Saints have need of the beſt Helps they can get for the ſtrengthening of their Faith, and the arming of themſelves againſt Temptations to Infidelity. *Abraham* believed, and yet deſir'd a Sign, *Gen.* 15. 6, 8. ſo did *Gideon*, Judg. 6. 36, 37. But (2.) Others think *John* ſent his Diſciples to Chriſt with this Queſtion, not ſo much for his own Satisfaction as for *theirs*. Obſerve, Tho' he was a Priſoner they ſtuck to him, attended on him, and were ready to receive Inſtructions from him; they lov'd him, and would not leave him. Now, 1. they were *weak* in Knowledge, and wavering in their Faith, and needed Inſtruction and Confirmation; and in this matter they were ſomewhat prejudic'd, being jealous for *their* Maſter, they were jealous of *our* Maſter; were loth to acknowledge Jeſus to be the *Meſſiah*, becauſe he eclips'd *John*, and are loth to believe their own Maſter when they think he ſpeaks againſt himſelf and them. Good Men are apt to have their Judgments byaſs'd by their Intereſt. Now *John* would have their Miſtakes rectified, and them as well ſatisfied as he himſelf was. *Note*, The Strong ought to conſider the Infirmities of the Weak, and do what they can to help them; and ſuch as we cannot help ourſelves, we ſhould ſend to thoſe that can. *When thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy Brethren.* 2. *John* was all along induſtrious to *turn over his* Diſciples to Chriſt, as from the *Grammar-School* to the *Academy*. Perhaps he foreſaw his Death approaching, and therefore would bring his Diſciples to be better acquainted with Chriſt, under whoſe Guardianſhip he muſt leave them. *Note*, Miniſters Buſineſs is to *direct* every body *to Chriſt*. And thoſe who would *know the Certainty* of the Doctrine of Chriſt, muſt apply themſelves to him, who is come to give an Underſtanding. Thoſe that would grow in Grace, muſt be inquiſitive.

2. Here's Chriſt's Anſwer to this Queſtion, *v.* 4, 5, 6. It was not ſo direct and expreſs, as when he ſaid, *I that ſpeak unto thee am he*; but it was a *real* Anſwer, an Anſwer in Fact. Chriſt will have us to *ſpell out* the convincing Evidences of Goſpel-Truths, and to take pains in *digging* for Knowledge.

1. He *points them* to what they *heard* and *ſaw*, which they muſt *tell John*, that he might from thence take occaſion the more fully to inſtruct and convince them out of their own Mouths. Go and tell him *what you hear and ſee*. *Note*, Our Senſes may, and ought to be appeal'd to in thoſe things that are their proper Objects. Therefore the Popiſh Doctrine of the real Preſence agrees not with the Truth *as it is in Jeſus*; for Chriſt refers us to the things we *hear and ſee*. Go and *tell John*.

(1.) *What you ſee* of the *Power of Chriſt's Miracles*; you ſee how by the Word of Jeſus *the Blind receive their Sight*, the *Lame walk* &c. Chriſt's Miracles were done *openly*, and in the view of all; for they feared not the ſtrongeſt and moſt impartial Scrutiny. *Veritas non quærit Angulos.* They are to be conſider'd (1.) as the *Acts of a Divine Power*. None but the God of Nature could thus over-rule and outdo the Power of Nature. 'Tis particularly ſpoken of as God's Prerogative to *open the Eyes of the Blind*, Pſal. 146. 8. Miracles are therefore the Broad-Seal of Heaven, and the Doctrine they are affix'd to muſt be of God, for his Power will never contradict his Truth; nor can it be imagin'd he ſhould ſet his Seal to a Lye; however *lying Wonders* may be vouch'd for proof of *falſe Doctrines*, *true Miracles* evince a divine Commiſſion; ſuch Chriſt's were, and leave no room to doubt that he was ſent of God, and his Doctrine was his that *ſent him*. (2.) As the Accompliſhment of a divine Prediction. It was foretold, *Iſa.* 35. 5, 6. that our God ſhould come, and that then *the Eyes of the Blind ſhall be open'd*. Now if the Works of Chriſt agree with the Words of the Prophet, as 'tis plain they do, then, no doubt but this is our God whom we have *waited for*, who ſhall *come with a Recompence*; this is he that is ſo much *wanted*.

(2.) Tell him *what you hear* of the *Preaching of his Goſpel*, which goes along with his Miracles. Faith, tho' *confirm'd* by ſeeing, *comes* by hearing. Tell him (1.) That *the Poor preach the Goſpel*; ſo ſome read it. It proves Chriſt's divine Miſſion, that thoſe whom he employ'd in founding his Kingdom were *poor Men*, deſtitute of all ſecular Advantages, and therefore could never have carried their Point, if they had not been carried on by a divine Power. (2.) That *the Poor have the Goſpel preach'd to them*. Chriſt's Auditory is made up of ſuch as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* deſpis'd, and look'd upon with Contempt; and the *Rabbi's* would not inſtruct, becauſe they were not able to pay them. The *Old Teſtament* Prophets were ſent moſtly to Kings and Princes, but Chriſt preach'd to the *Congregations of the Poor*. It was foretold that the *Poor of the Flock* ſhould *wait upon him*, Zech. 11. 11. *Note*, Chriſt's gracious Condeſcenſions and Compaſſions to *the Poor*, are an evidence that it was he that ſhould bring to the World the *tender Mercies* of our God. 'Twas foretold that the *Son of David* ſhould be the *poor Man's King*, Pſal. 72. 2, 4, 12, 13. Or, we may underſtand it, not ſo much of the *Poor of the World*, as the *Poor in Spirit*, and ſo that Scripture is fulfill'd, *Iſa.* 61. 1. *He hath anointed me to preach glad Tidings to the Meek.* *Note*, 'Tis a Proof of Chriſt's divine Miſſion that his Doctrine is Goſpel indeed; good News to thoſe that are truly *humbled*, in Sorrow for their Sin, and truly *humble* in the denial of Self; to them it is accommodated, for whom God always declar'd he had Mercy in Store. (3.) That the *Poor receive the Goſpel*, and are wrought upon by it; they are *Evangeliz'd*, they receive and entertain the Goſpel, are leaven'd by it, and deliver'd into it as into a Mold. *Note*, The wonderful Efficacy of the Goſpel is a proof of its divine Original. The *Poor* are *wrought upon* by it. The Prophets complain'd of *the Poor*, that they *know not the way of the Lord*, Jer. 5. 4. They could do no good upon them; but the Goſpel of Chriſt made its way into their ſtupid Souls.

2. He pronounceth a *Bleſſing* on thoſe that *were not offended in him*, *v.* 6. So clear are theſe Evidences of Chriſt's Miſſion, that thoſe who are not wilfully prejudic'd againſt him, and *ſcandaliz'd* in him; (ſo the word is) cannot but receive his Doctrine, and ſo be *bleſſed in him*. *Note*, (1.) There are many things *in Chriſt* which thoſe that are ignorant and unthinking are apt to be offended at, ſome Circumſtances, for the ſake of which they reject the Subſtance of his Goſpel. The meanneſs of his Appearance, his Education at *Nazareth*, the Poverty of his Life, the Deſpicableneſs of his Followers, the Slights which the great Men put upon him, the ſtrictneſs of his Doctrine, and the Contradiction it gives to Fleſh and Blood; the Sufferings that attend the Profeſſion of his Name, and are likely to do ſo; theſe are things that keep many from him, who otherwiſe cannot but ſee much of God in him. Thus he is ſet *for the Fall of many*, even in *Iſrael*, Luke 2. 34. a *Rock of Offence*, 1 Pet. 2. 8. (2.) They are happy who get over theſe Offences, *Bleſſed are they*. The Expreſſion intimates, that 'tis a *difficult* thing to conquer theſe Prejudices, and a *dangerous* thing not to conquer them; but thoſe, who notwithſtanding this Oppoſition do believe in Chriſt, their Faith will be found ſo much the more to *Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory*.

7 And as they departed, Jeſus began to ſay unto the multitudes, concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderneſs to ſee? A reed ſhaken with the wind? 8 But what went ye out for to ſee? A man clothed in ſoft raiment? behold, they that wear ſoft clothing, are in kings houſes. 9 But what went ye out for to ſee? A prophet? yea, I ſay unto you, and more than a prophet. 10 For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before they face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee. 11 Verily I ſay unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not riſen a greater than John the Baptiſt: notwithſtanding, he that is leaſt in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he. 12 And from the days of John the Baptiſt, until now, the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law propheſied until John. 14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias which was for to come. 15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

We have here the high Encomium which our Lord Jeſus gave of *John Baptiſt*; not only to revive his Honour, but to revive his Work. Some of Chriſt's Diſciples might perhaps take occaſion from the Queſtion *John* ſent to reflect upon him, as weak and wavering, and inconſiſtent with himſelf, to prevent which, Chriſt gives him this Character. *Note*, It is our Duty to conſult the Reputation of our Brethren, and not only to remove, but to obviate and prevent Jealouſies, and ill Thoughts of them; and we muſt take all Occaſions, eſpecially thoſe which diſcover any thing of Infirmity, to ſpeak well of thoſe that are Praiſe-worthy, and to give them that *Fruit of their Hands*. *John* Baptiſt, when he was upon the Stage, and Chriſt in Privacy and Retirement, bore Teſtimony to Chriſt; and now Chriſt appear'd publickly, and *John* was under a Cloud, he bore Teſtimony to *John*. *Note*, Thoſe who have a confirmed Intereſt themſelves, ſhould improve it for the helping of the Credit and Reputation of others, whoſe Character claims it, but either their Temper, or preſent Circumſtances put them out of the way of it. This is giving Honour to whom Honour is due. *John* had abaſed himſelf to Honour Chriſt, *John* 3. 29, 30. *Matt.* 3. 11. had made himſelf Nothing, that Chriſt might be all, and now Chriſt dignifies him with this Character. *Note*, Thoſe that humble themſelves ſhall be exalted, and thoſe that honour Chriſt, he will honour; that confeſs him before Men, he will confeſs, and ſometimes *before Men* too, even in this World. *John* had now *finiſhed his Teſtimony*, and now Chriſt commends him. *Note*, Chriſt reſerves Honour for His Servants when they *have done their Work*, John 12. 26.

Now concerning this Commendation of *John*, obſerve,

1. That Chriſt ſpoke thus honourably of *John*, not in the hearing of *John*'s Diſciples, but *as they departed*, juſt after they were gone, *Luke* 7. 24. He would not ſo much as ſeem to flatter *John*, nor have theſe Praiſes of him reported to him. *Note*, Tho' we muſt be forward to give to all their due Praiſe for their Encouragement, yet we muſt avoid every thing that looks like Flattery, or may be in danger of puffing them up. Thoſe that in other things are mortified to the World, yet cannot well bear their own Praiſe. Pride is a corrupt Humour, which we muſt not feed either in others, or in ourſelves.

2. That what Chriſt ſaid concerning *John*, was intended, not only for his Praiſe, but for the People's Profit, to revive the Remembrance of *John's* Miniſtry which had been much flock'd after; but was now, (as other ſuch things us'd to be) ſtrangely forgotten; they did for a ſeaſon, and but *for a ſeaſon, rejoyce in his Light*, John 5. 35. Now conſider, *What went ye out into the Wilderneſs to ſee?* Put this Queſtion to your ſelves. (1.) *John* preach'd *in the Wilderneſs*, and thither People flock'd in crowds to him, tho' in a *remote* place, and an *inconvenient* one. If Teachers be remov'd into corners, 'tis better go after them than be without them. Now if his Preaching is worth taking ſo much pains to hear it, ſure 'twas worth taking ſome care to recollect it. The more Difficulties we have broke thro' to hear the Word, the more we are concern'd to profit by it. (2.) They went out to him *to ſee* him; rather to feed the Eye with the unuſual Appearance of his Perſon, than to feed their Souls with his wholſome Inſtructions, rather for Curioſity than for Conſcience. *Note*, Many that attend on the Word come rather to ſee and be ſeen, than to learn and be taught, to have ſomething to talk of, than to be made wiſe to Salvation. (3.) Chriſt puts it to them, *What went ye out to ſee? Note*, Thoſe that attend on the Word will be call'd to an account, what their Intentions, and what their Improvements were. We think when the Sermon is done the Care's over; no, then the greateſt of the Care begins. It will ſhortly be aſk'd, What Buſineſs had you at ſuch a time, at ſuch an Ordinance? *What brought you thither?* Was it Cuſtom, or Company, or was it a deſire to honour God, and get Good? *What have you brought thence?* What Knowledge, and Grace and Comfort? *What went ye to ſee? Note*, When we go to read and hear the Word, we ſhould ſee that we aim right in what we do.

3. Let us ſee what the Commendation of *John was*. They know not what Anſwer to make to Chriſt's Queſtion; Well, ſaith Chriſt, I'll tell you what a *Man John Baptiſt* was.

1. He was a firm reſolute Man, and not *a Reed ſhaken with the Wind*; you have been ſo in your Thoughts of him, but he was not ſo. He was not wavering in his Principles, or uneven in his Converſation; but was remarkable for his Steddineſs, and conſtant conſiſtency with himſelf. Thoſe that are *weak* as *Reeds*, will be *ſhaken* as Reeds; but *John* was *ſtrong in Spirit*, Eph. 4. 14. When the Wind of popular Applauſe on the one hand blew freſh and fair, when the Storm of *Herod*'s Rage on the other hand grew fierce and bluſtering; *John* was ſtill the ſame, the ſame in all Weathers. The Teſtimony he had born to Chriſt, 'twas not the Teſtimony of a *Reed*, of a Man that was of one Mind to Day, and of another to Morrow, 'twas not a Weather-cock Teſtimony; no, his Conſtancy in it is intimated, *John* 1. 20. he *confeſſed, and denied not, but confeſſed*, and he ſtood to it afterwards, *John* 3. 28. And therefore this Queſtion ſent by his Diſciples was not to be conſtrued as ſpeaking any Suſpicion he now had of the Truth of what he had formerly ſaid. Therefore the People flock'd to him becauſe he was not as a Reed. *Note*, There's nothing loſt at long run by an unſhaken Reſolution to go on with our Work, neither courting the Smiles, nor fearing the Frowns of Men.

2. He was a *Self-denying* Man, and *mortified* to this World. Was he a Man *clothed in ſoft Raiment?* If ſo, you would not have gone *into the Wilderneſs* to ſee him, but to the Court. You went to ſee one that had *his Raiment of Camels Hair*, and a *leathern Girdle about his Loins*; his Mein and Habit ſhew'd that he was dead to all the Pomps of the World, and the Pleaſures of Senſe, his Clothing agreed with the *Wilderneſs* he liv'd in, and the *Doctrine* he Preach'd there, that of Repentance. Now you cannot think that he who was ſuch a Stranger to the Pleaſures of a Court, ſhould be brought to change his Mind by the Terrors of a Priſon, and now to queſtion whether Jeſus be the Meſſiah or no; *Note*, Thoſe who have liv'd a Life of Mortification, are leaſt likely to be driven off from their Religion by Perſecution. He was not a Man clothed in *ſoft Raiment*; ſuch *there are*, but they are *in Kings Houſes. Note*, It becomes People in all their Appearances to comport with their Character, and the Place they are in, and to conform to that. Thoſe that are Preachers muſt not affect to look like Courtiers; nor thoſe whoſe lot is caſt in common Dwellings, be ambitious of the ſoft Clothing which they wear that are in Kings Houſes. Prudence teacheth us to be *of a Piece. John* appear'd rough and unpleaſant, yet they *flock'd after him. Note*, The Remembrance of our former Zeal in attending on the Word of God, ſhould quicken us to, and in our preſent Work; let it not be ſaid that we have done and ſuffered ſo many things *in vain*, have *run in vain*, and *labour'd in vain*.

3. His greateſt Commendation of all was his Office and Miniſtry, which was more his Honour than any perſonal Endowments or Qualifications could be, and therefore this is moſtly enlarged upon in a full Encomium.

1. He was *a Prophet*, yea, and *more than a Prophet*, v. 9. ſo he ſaid of him who was the great Prophet, to whom all the Prophets bare witneſs. *John* ſaid of himſelf, He was not *that Prophet*, that great Prophet, the Meſſiah himſelf, and now Chriſt, (a very competent Judge) ſaith of him, that he was *more than a Prophet*. He own'd himſelf inferior to Chriſt, and Chriſt own'd him ſuperior to all other Prophets. Obſerve, The Forerunner of Chriſt was not a *King*, but a *Prophet*, leſt it ſhould ſeem that the Kingdom of the Meſſiah had been laid in Earthly Power; but his immediate Forerunner was as ſuch, a *tranſcendent* Prophet, more than an *Old Teſtament Prophet*: They all *did virtuouſly*, but *John* excelled them all; they *ſaw Chriſt's Day* at a diſtance, and their Viſion was yet for a great while to come; but *John* ſaw the Day dawn, he ſaw the Sun riſe, and told the People of the *Meſſiah*, as one that ſtood among them. They ſpake of Chriſt, but he pointed to him; they ſaid, *A Virgin ſhall conceive*, he ſaid, *Behold the Lamb of God*.

2. He was the ſame that was Propheſied to be Chriſt's Forerunner, *v.* 10. *This is he of whom it is written.* He was propheſied of by the other Prophets, and therefore was greater than they. *Malachi* propheſied concerning *John, Behold, I ſend my Meſſenger before thy Face.* Herein ſome of Chriſt's Honour was put upon him, that the *Old Teſtament* Prophets ſpake and wrote of him; and this Honour have all the Saints, that their *Names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life*. 'Twas great Preferment to *John* above all the Prophets, that he was Chriſt's Harbinger. He was a *Meſſenger*, ſent on a great Errand; a Meſſenger, *one among a thouſand*, deriving his Honour from him, whoſe Meſſenger he was; he is *my Meſſenger*, ſent *of God*, and ſent before the *Son of God*. His Buſineſs was to *prepare Chriſt's Way*, to diſpoſe People to receive the Saviour, by diſcovering to them their Sin and Miſery, and their need of a Saviour. This he had ſaid of himſelf, *John* 1. 23. and now Chriſt ſaid it of him, intending thereby, not only to put an Honour upon *John*'s Miniſtry; but to revive People's Regard to it, as making way for the *Meſſiah*. *Note*, Much of the Beauty of God's Diſpenſations lies in their mutual Connexion and Coherence, and the reference they have one to another. That which advanc'd *John* above the *Old Teſtament* Prophets was, that he went immediately before Chriſt. *Note*, The nearer any are to Chriſt, the more truly honourable they are.

3. There was *not a greater born of Women than John Baptiſt*, v. 11. Chriſt knew how to value Perſons according to the degrees of their Worth, and he prefers *John* before all that went before him, before all that were *born of Women* by ordinary Generation. Of all that God has rais'd up, and call'd to any Service in his Church, *John* is the moſt eminent, even beyond *Moſes* himſelf; for he began to preach the Goſpel-doctrine of Remiſſion of Sins to thoſe that are truly penitent; and he had more ſignal Revelations from Heaven than any of them had; for he *ſaw Heaven open'd*, and the *Holy Ghoſt deſcend*. He alſo had great Succeſs in his Miniſtry, almoſt the whole Nation flock'd to him: None roſe on ſo great a Deſign, or came on ſo noble an Errand as *John* did, nor had ſuch reaſon to be welcome. Many had been born of Women that made a greater Figure in the World, but Chriſt prefers *John* before them. *Note*, Greatneſs is not to be meaſured by Shews and Appearances, and outward Splendor, but thoſe are the greateſt Men that are the greateſt Saints, and the greateſt Bleſſings; that are as *John* was, *great in the ſight of the Lord*, Luke 1. 14.

Yet this high Encomium of *John* had a ſurprizing Limitation, *notwithſtanding he that is leaſt in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he*. (1) In the Kingdom *of Glory*. *John* was a *great* and *good* Man, but he was yet in a State of Infirmity and Imperfection, and therefore came ſhort of glorified Saints, and the *Spirits of juſt Men made perfect*. *Note*, (1.) There are Degrees of Glory in Heaven, ſome that are *leſs* than others there; tho' every Veſſel is alike full, 'tis not alike *large* and capacious. (2.) The leaſt Saint in Heaven is *greater*, and knows more, and loves more, and doth more in praiſing God, and receives more from him than the greateſt in this World. The Saints on Earth are *excellent ones*, Pſal. 16. 3. but thoſe in Heaven are much more excellent; the beſt in this World are *lower than the Angels*, Pſal. 8. 5. the leaſt there are *equal with the Angels*, which ſhould make us long for that bleſſed State, where the *weak ſhall be as David*, Zech. 12. 8. (2.) By the *Kingdom of Heaven* here, is rather to be underſtood the *Kingdom of Grace*, the Goſpel Diſpenſation in the Perfection of its Power and Purity, and ὁ μικρότερος, he that is *leſs* in that is *greater than John*. Some underſtand it of *Chriſt* himſelf, who was younger than *John*; and in the Opinion of ſome leſs than *John*, who always ſpoke diminiſhingly of himſelf; *I am a Worm, and no Man*, yet greater than *John*; ſo it agrees with what *John* Baptiſt ſaid, *Johr* 1. 15. *He that cometh after me is prefer'd before me*. But 'tis rather to be underſtood of the Apoſtles and Miniſters of the *New Teſtament*, the Evangelical Prophets; and the Compariſon between them and *John*, is not with reſpect to their Perſonal Sanctity, but to their Office; *John* preach'd Chriſt coming, but they preach'd Chriſt not only come, but *Crucified*, and *Glorifi'd. John* came to the dawning of the Goſpel-day, and therein excell'd the foregoing Prophets, but he was taken off before the Noon of that Day, before the rendring of the Vail before Chriſt's Death and Reſurrection, and the pouring out of the Spirit; ſo that the leaſt of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, having greater Diſcoveries made to them, and being employ'd in a greater Embaſſy, is *greater than John*. *John* did no Miracles, the Apoſtles wrought many. The ground of this Performance is laid in the Preference of the *New Teſtament* Diſpenſation, above that of the *Old Teſtament*. Miniſters of the *New Teſtament* therefore *excel*, becauſe their Miniſtration doth ſo, 2 *Cor.* 3. 6, &c. *John* was a *Maximum quod ſic*, he went to the utmoſt that the Diſpenſation he was under would allow; but *minimum maximi eſt majus maximo minimi*, a Dwarf upon a Mountain ſees further than a Giant in the Valley. *Note*, All the true Greatneſs of Men is derived from, and denominated by the gracious Manifeſtation of Chriſt to them. The beſt Men are no better than he is pleas'd to make them, and reflect Light upon them. What reaſon have we to be thankful that our Lot is caſt in the Days of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, under ſuch Advantages of Light and Love; and the greater the Advantages, the greater will the Account be, if we *receive the Grace of God in vain*.

4. The great Commendation of *John* Baptiſt was that God own'd his Miniſtry, and made it wonderfully ſucceſsful for the breaking of the Ice, and the preparing of People for the *Kingdom of Heaven*. *From the Days of* the firſt appearing of *John Baptiſt*, *until now*, (which was not much above two Years) a great deal of Good was done; ſo quick was the Motion when it came near to Chriſt the Center: *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth Violence*, *βιάζεται*, *vim patitur*, like the Violence of an Army taking a City by Storm, or of a Crowd thruſting into a Houſe, ſo the *Violent take it by Force*. The meaning of this we have in the parallel place, *Luke* 16. 16. Since that time *the Kingdom of God is Preached, and every Man preſſeth into it*. Multitudes are wrought upon by the Miniſtry of *John*, and become his Diſciples. And it is (1.) an *improbable* Multitude. Thoſe ſtrove for a Place in this Kingdom, that one would think had no Right or Title to it, and ſo ſeem'd to be Intruders, and to make a *tortious* Entry, as our Law calls it, a wrongful and forcible one. When the *Children of the Kingdom* are excluded out of it, and many come into it *from the Eaſt and the Weſt*, then it *ſuffers Violence*. Compare this with *Matt.* 21. 31, 32. The *Publicans* and *Harlots* believed *John* whom the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* rejected, and ſo went into the Kingdom of God before them, *took it over their Heads* while they trifled. *Note*, It is no Breach of good Manners to go to Heaven before our Betters. And it is a great Commendation of the Goſpel from the Days of its Infancy, that it has brought many to Holineſs that were very unlikely.

(2.) An *importunate* Multitude. This *Violence* notes a Strength, and Vigour, and Earneſtneſs of Deſire and Endeavour in thoſe that follow'd *John*'s Miniſtry, elſe they would not have come ſo far to attend upon it. It ſhews us alſo what Fervency and Zeal is requir'd of all thoſe that deſign to make Heaven of their Religion. *Note*, Thoſe that would enter into the Kingdom of Heaven muſt *ſtrive to enter*. That Kingdom *ſuffers* a holy *Violence*. Self muſt be deny'd the Bent and Biaſs, the Frame and Temper of the Mind muſt be alter'd, there's hard Services to be done, and hard Sufferings to be undergone, a Force to be put upon the corrupt Nature; we muſt run, and wreſtle, and Fight, and be *in an Agony*, and all little enough to win ſuch a Prize, and to get over ſuch Oppoſition from without, and from within. *The Violent take it by Force*. Thoſe that will have an Intereſt in the great Salvation, are carry'd out towards it with a ſtrong Deſire, will have it *upon any Terms*, and not think them hard, nor quit their hold without a Bleſſing, *Gen.* 32. 26. Thoſe that will make their Calling and Election ſure muſt *give Diligence*. The Kingdom of Heaven was never intended to indulge the Eaſe of Triflers, but to be the Reſt of them that Labour. 'Tis a bleſſed Sight, O that we could ſee more of it, not with an *angry Contention*, thruſting others out of the Kingdom of Heaven, but with a *holy Contention*, thruſting themſelves into it.

5. The Miniſtry of *John* was the *beginning of the Goſpel*, as 'tis reckon'd, *Mark* 1. 1. *Acts* 1. 22. This is ſhew'd here in two things:

1. In *John* the *Old Teſtament* Diſpenſation began to *die*, v. 13. So long that Miniſtration continu'd in full Force and Virtue, but then it began to decline. Tho' the *Obligation* of the *Law* of *Moſes* was not remov'd 'till Chriſt's Death, yet the Diſcoveries of the *Old Teſtament* began to be ſuperſeded by the more clear manifeſtation of the *Kingdom of Heaven* as *at hand*. Becauſe the *Light of the Goſpel*, (as that of Nature) was to precede and make way for *its Law*; therefore the *Prophecies* of the *Old Teſtament* came to an end (*Finis perficiens*, not *interficiens*) before the *Precepts* of it; ſo that when Chriſt ſaith, *All the Prophets and the Law Propheſied until John*, He ſhews us (1.) how the Light of the *Old Teſtament* was *ſet up*; 'twas ſet up in *the Law and the Prophets*, who ſpoke, tho' darkly of Chriſt and his Kingdom. Obſerve, The *Law* is ſaid to *Propheſie* as well as the *Prophets*, concerning him that was to come. Chriſt *began at Moſes*, Luke 24. 27. Chriſt was foretold by the *dumb Signs* of the *Moſaick* Work, as well as by the more articulate Voices of the Prophets, and was exhibited, not only in the verbal Predictions, but in the perſonal and real Types. Bleſſed be God that we have both the *New Teſtament* Doctrine to explain the *Old Teſtament* Prophecies, and the *Old Teſtament* Prophecies to confirm and illuſtrate the *New Teſtament* Doctrine. *Heb.* 1. 1. like the two Cherubims, they look at each other. The Law was given by *Moſes* long ago, and there had been no Prophets of three hundred Years before *John*, and yet they are both ſaid to *Propheſie until John*, becauſe the Law was ſtill obſerv'd, and *Moſes* and the Prophets ſtill read. *Note*, The Scripture is teaching to this day, tho' the Pen-men of it are gone. *Moſes* and the Prophets are *dead*, the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts dead, *Zech.* 1. 5. but the *Word of the Lord endures for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 25. The *Scripture* is *ſpeaking expreſly*, tho' the Writers are ſilent in the Duſt. (2.) How this Light was *laid aſide*; when he ſaith, they *Propheſied until John*; he intimates, that their Glory was eclips'd by the Glory which *excelled*; their Predictions ſuperſeded by *John*'s Teſtimony, *Behold the Lamb of God*. Even before the Sun riſeth the Morning-light makes Candles to ſhine dim. Their Prophecies of a Chriſt *to come* became out of date, when *John* ſaid *He is come*.

2. In him the *New Teſtament* Day began to dawn; for v. 14. *This is Elias, that was for to come*. *John* was as the Loop that coupled the two Teſtaments; as *Noah* was *Fibula utriuſque Mundi*, ſo was he *utriuſque Teſtamenti*. The concluding Propheſie of the *Old Teſtament* was, *Behold, I will ſend you Elijah*, Mal. 4. 5, 6. Thoſe Words Propheſied until *John*, and then being turned into a Hiſtory they ceaſed to Propheſie. (1.) Chriſt ſpeaks of it as a great Truth, that *John Baptiſt* is the *Elias* of the *New Teſtament*, not *Elias in propria Perſona*, he deny'd that, *John* 1. 21. Such an *Elias* the carnal *Jews* expected, but one that ſhould come in the Spirit and Power of *Elias*, Luke 1. 17. like him in Temper and Converſation, that ſhould preſs Repentance with Terrors, and eſpecially as it is in the Prophecy, that ſhould *turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children*. (2.) He ſpeaks of it as a Truth, which would not be eaſily apprehended by thoſe whoſe Expectations faſtned upon the temporal Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, and Introductions to it agreeable. Chriſt ſuſpects the welcome of it, *if ye will receive it*. Not but that is was true, whether they would receive it or no, but he upbraids them with their Prejudices, that they were backward to receive the greateſt Truths that were croſs to their Sentiments, tho' never ſo favourable to their Intereſts. Or, if *you will receive him*, or, if you will receive the Miniſtry of *John* as that of the promiſed *Elias*, he will be *Elias* to you, to *turn you*, and *prepare you* for the Lord. *Note*, Goſpel-Truths are as they are received, a Saviour of Life or Death. Chriſt is a Saviour, and *John* an *Elias* to thoſe who will receive the Truth concerning them.

Laſtly. Our Lord Jeſus cloſeth this Diſcourſe *with* a ſolemn Demand of Attention, *v.* 15. *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear*. Which intimates, that thoſe things were dark and hard to be underſtood, and therefore needed Attention, but of great Concern and Conſequence, and therefore well deſerv'd it. Let all People take notice of this, If *John* be the *Elias* Propheſied of, then certainly there is a great Revolution on foot, the Meſſiah's Kingdom is at the door, and the Word will ſhortly be ſurpriz'd into a happy change. Theſe are things which require your ſerious Conſideration, and therefore you are all concern'd to hearken to what I ſay. *Note*, The things of God are of great and common concern; every one that has *Ears to hear* any thing, is concern'd to hear this. It intimates, That God requires no more from us but the right uſe and improvement of the Faculties he has already given us. He requires thoſe to hear that have Ears, thoſe to uſe their Reaſon that have Reaſon. Therefore People are ignorant, not becauſe they want Powers, but becauſe they want Wills; therefore they do not hear, becauſe like the deaf Adder they *ſtop their Ears*.

16 But whereunto ſhall I liken this generation? It is like unto children ſitting in the markets and calling unto their fellows, 17 And ſaying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they ſay, He hath a devil. 19 The ſon of man came eating and drinking, and they ſay, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners: but wiſdom is juſtified of her children. 20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein moſt of his mighty works were done, becauſe they repented not. 21 Wo unto thee Corazin, wo unto thee Bethſaida: for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in ſackloth and aſhes. 22 But I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of Judgment, then for you. 23 And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, ſhall be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained uutil this day. 24 Bnt I ſay unto you, that it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment then for thee.

Chriſt was going on in the Praiſe of *John* Baptiſt and his Miniſtry, but here ſtops on a ſudden, and turns that to the Reproach of thoſe who enjoy'd both that and the Miniſtry of Chriſt, and his Apoſtles too in vain. As to that Generation, we may obſerve who he *compares them to*, v. 16.—19. And as to the particular places he inſtanceth in, we may obſerve who he *compares them with*, v. 20.—24.

Firſt, As to that *Generation*, the Body of the *Jewiſh* People at that time. There were many indeed that preſs'd into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the generality continued in Unbelief and Obſtinacy. *John* was a great and good Man, but the *Generation* into which his Lot was caſt, was as barren and unprofitable as could be, and unworthy of him. *Note*, The badneſs of the Places where good Miniſters live, ſerves for a Foil to their Beauty. 'Twas *Noah*'s Praiſe that he was *Righteous in his Generation*. Having commended *John*, he condemns thoſe that had him among them, and did not profit by his Miniſtry. *Note*, The more Praiſe-worthy the Miniſter is, the more blame-worthy the People are if they ſlight him, and ſo it will be found in the Day of Account.

This our Lord Jeſns here ſets forth in a Parable, yet ſpeaks as if he were at a loſs to find out a Similitude proper to repreſent this. *Whereunto ſhall I liken this Generation? Note*, There is not to be a greater Abſurdity than that which theyare guilty of that have good Preaching among them, and are never the better for it. 'Tis hard to ſay, *what they are like*. The Similitude is taken from ſome common Cuſtom among the *Jewiſh* Children at their Play, who, as is uſual with Children, intimated the Faſhions of grown People at their Marriages and Funerals, *rejoycing* and *lamenting*; but being all a Jeſt, it made no Impreſſion; no more did the Miniſtry either of *John Baptiſt*, or of Chriſt upon that Generation. He eſpecially reflects on the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who had a proud Conceit of themſelves; therefore to humble them, he compares them to Children, and their Carriage to Childrens Play.

The Parable will be beſt explain'd byopening it and the Reddition of it together in theſe five Obſervations.

Note, 1. The God of Heaven uſeth variety of proper Means and Methods for the Converſion and Salvation of poor Souls; he would *have all Men to be ſaved*, and therefore leaves no ſtone unturn'd in order to it. The great thing he aims at is the *melting* of our *Wills* into a Compliance with the will of God, and in order to this the affecting of us with the Diſcoveries he has made of himſelf. Having various Affections to be wrought upon, he uſeth various ways of working upon them, which, tho' differing one from another, all tend to the ſame thing, and God is in them all driving on the ſame Deſign. In the Parable this is call'd his *Piping* to us, and his *Mourning* to us; he hath *piped* to us in the precious Promiſes of the Goſpel, proper to work upon Hope, and mourning to us in the dreadful Threatnings of the Law, proper to work upon Fear, that he might frighten us out of our Sins, and allure us to himſelf. He hath *piped to us* in gracious and merciful Providences, *mourned to us* in calamitous afflicting Providences, and hath ſet the one over againſt the other. He hath taught his Miniſters to *change their Voices*, Pſal. 4. 20. Sometimes to ſpeak in Thunder from *Mount Sinai*, ſometimes in a ſtill ſmall Voice from *Mount Sion*.

In the Reddition of the Parable is ſet forth the different Temper of *John*'s Miniſtry, and of Chriſt, who were the two great Lights of that Generation.

(1.) On the one hand *John* came *mourning to them*, neither *eating nor drinking*; not converſing familiarly with People, nor ordinarily eating in Company, but alone, in his Cell, in the Wilderneſs, where his Meat was *Locuſt and wild Honey*. Now this, one would think, ſhould work upon them; for ſuch an auſtere mortified Life as this was very agreeable to the Doctrine he preach'd, and that Miniſter is moſt likely to *do good* whoſe Converſation is according to his Doctrine, and yet the Preaching even of ſuch a Miniſter is not always effectual.

(2.) On the other hand, the Son of Man came *eating and drinking*, and ſo he *piped unto them*. Chriſt converſed familiarly with all ſorts of People, not affecting any peculiar ſtrictneſs or auſterity, he was affable and eaſy of Acceſs, not ſhy of any Company, was oft as Feaſts, both with *Phariſees* and *Publicans*, to try if this would win upon thoſe that were not wrought upon by *John*'s Reſervedneſs. Thoſe that were not *aw'd* by *John*'s Frowns, would be allur'd by Chriſt's Smiles, from whom St. *Paul* learn'd to become *all things to all Men*, 1 Cor. 9. 22. Now our Lord Jeſus by this Freedom he took, did not at all condemn *John*, no more than *John* did condemn him, tho' their Carriage were ſo very different. *Note*, Tho' we are never ſo clear in the Goodneſs of our own Practice, yet we muſt not judge of others by it. There may be a great *diverſity of Operations*, where it is *the ſame God that worketh all in all*, 1 Cor. 12. 6. and this various Manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man *to profit withal*, v. 7. Obſerve, eſpecially that God's Miniſters are variouſly gifted. The Ability and Genius of ſome lies one way, of others another way. Some are *Boanarges*'s Sons of Thunder; others *Barnabas*'s Sons of Conſolation, yet *all theſe worketh that one and the ſelf ſame Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 11. and therefore we ought not to condemn neither, but to praiſe both, and praiſe God for both, who thus tries various ways of dealing with Perſons of various Tempers, that Sinners may be either made pliable, or left inexcuſable, ſo that whatever the Iſſue is, God will be glorified.

Note, 2. The various Methods which God takes for the Converſion of Sinners, are with many fruitleſs and ineffectual. *Ye have not danced, ye have not lamented*, i. e. you have not been ſuitably affected either with the one or with the other; particular Means have, as in Medicine, their particular *Intentions*, which muſt be *anſwer'd*, particular *Impreſſions*, which muſt be *ſubmitted to*, in order to the Succeſs of the great and general Deſign; now if People will be neither *bound* by Laws, or *invited* by Promiſes, nor *frighted* by Threatnings; will neither be *awaken'd* by the greateſt things, nor *allur'd* by the ſweeteſt things, nor *ſtartled* by the moſt terrible things, nor be *made ſenſible* by the plaineſt things; if they will hearken to the Voice neither of Scripture, nor Reaſon, nor Experience, nor Providence, nor Conſcience, nor Intereſt, what more can be done? *The Bellows are burnt, the Lead is conſumed, the Founder melteth* in vain, reprobate Silver ſhall Men call them, *Jer*. 6. 29. Miniſters Labour is beſtow'd in vain, *Iſa*. 49. 4. and which is a much greater Loſs, the Grace of God *receiv'd in vain*, 2 Cor. 6. 1. *Note*, It is ſome Comfort to faithful Miniſters, when they ſee little Succeſs of their Labours, that 'tis no new thing for the beſt Preachers and the beſt Preaching in the World to come ſhort of the deſired End. *Who has believed our Report?* If from the *Blood of the Slain, from the Fat of the Mighty, the Bow* of thoſe great Commanders, Chriſt and *John return'd* ſo often empty, (2 *Sam*. 1. 22.) no marvel if ours do ſo, and we Propheſy to ſo little purpoſe upon *dry Bones*.

Note, 3. That commonly thoſe People that do not profit by the Means of Grace are perverſe, and reflect upon the Miniſters, by whom they enjoy thoſe Means; and becauſe they do not *get good* themſelves, they *do* all the *hurt* they can to others, by raiſing and propagating Prejudices againſt the Word, and the faithful Preachers of it. Thoſe that will not comply with God, and walk after him, *confront* him, and walk contrary to him. So this *Generation* did, becauſe they were reſolv'd not to believe Chriſt and *John*, and to own them as they ought to have done for the *beſt of Men*, they ſet themſelves to abuſe them, and to repreſent them as the worſt. (1.) As for *John Baptiſt*, they ſay, *He has a Devil*. They imputed his Strictneſs and Reſervedneſs to Melancholy, and ſome kind or degree of a Poſſeſſion of Satan. Why ſhould we heed him? he is a poor hypocondriacal Man, full of Fancies, and under the Power of a craz'd Imagination. (2.) As for *Jeſus Chriſt*, they imputed his free and obliging Converſation to the more vicious Habit of Luxury and Fleſh-pleaſing; *Behold a gluttonous Man, and a Wine-bibber*. No Reflection could be more foul and invidious; 'tis the Charge againſt the Rebellious Son, *Deut*. 21. 20. *He is a Glutton, and a Drunkard*. Yet none could be more falſe and unjuſt; for Chriſt *pleaſed not himſelf*, Rom. 15. 3. nor did ever any Man live ſuch a life of Self-denial, Mortification, and Contempt of the World as Chriſt liv'd. He that was *undefiled, and ſeparate from Sinners*, is here repreſented as in league with them, and polluted by them. *Note*, The moſt unſpotted Innocency, and the moſt unparallel'd Excellency will not always be a Fence againſt the Reproach of Tongues. Nay, a Man's beſt Gifts, and beſt Actions, which are both well intended, and well calculated for Edification, may be made the Matter of his Reproach. The beſt of our Actions may become the worſt of our Accuſations, as *David*'s Faſting, *Pſal*. 69. 10. It was true in ſome ſenſe that Chriſt was a *Friend to Publicans and Sinners*, the beſt Friend they ever had, for he came into the World to *ſave Sinners*, great Sinners, even *the chief*; ſo he ſaid very feelingly, who had been himſelf, not a Publican and Sinner, but a Phariſee and Sinner; but this is, and will be to Eternity Chriſt's Praiſe, and they forfeited the Benefit of it who thus turn'd it to his Reproach.

Note, 4. That the Cauſe of this great Uufruitfulneſs, and Perverſeneſs of People under the means of Grace, is becauſe they are *like Children ſitting in the Markets*. They are *fooliſh* as Children, *froward* as Children; *mindleſs* and *playful* as Children. Would they but *ſhew themſelves Men* in Underſtanding, there would be ſome hopes of them. The Market-place they ſit in, is to ſome a place of *Idleneſs*, Mat. 20. 3. To others a Place of worldly Buſineſs, *James* 4. 13. to all a place of Noiſe of Diverſion; ſo that if you aſk the reaſon why People get ſo lttle good by the Means of Grace, you will find, 'tis becauſe they are *Slothful* and *Trifling*, and do not love to take Pains; or, becauſe their Heads, and Hands, and Hearts are full of the World, the Cares of which choke the Word, and choke their Souls at laſt, *Ezek*. 33. 31. *Amos* 8. 5. And they ſtudy to *divert* their own Thoughts from every thing that is Serious. Thus *in the Markets* they are, and there they *ſit*; in theſe things their Hearts reſt, and by them they reſolve to *abide*.

Note, 5. Tho' the Means of Grace be thus ſlighted and abus'd by many, by the moſt, yet there is a Remnant that through Grace do improve them, and anſwer the Deſigns of them to the Glory of God, and the Good of their own Souls. *But Wiſdom is juſtified of her Children*. Chriſt is Wiſdom, in him are hid *Treaſures of Wiſdom*; the Saints are the Children God has given him, *Heb*. 2. 13. The Goſpel is Wiſdom, 'tis the *Wiſdom from above*. True Believers are begotten again by it, and born from above too. They are wiſe Children, wiſe for themſelves and their true Intereſts; not like the *foooliſh Children* that ſat in the Markets. Theſe *Children of Wiſdom juſtify Wiſdom*, they comply with the Deſigns of Chriſt's Grace, anſwer the Intentions of it, and are ſuitably affected with, and impreſs'd by the various Methods it takes, and ſo evidence the Wiſdom of Chriſt in taking theſe Methods. This is explain'd, *Luke* 7. 29. The *Publicans juſtified God, being baptiz'd with the Baptiſm of* John, and afterwards embracing the Goſpel of Chriſt. *Note*, The Succeſs of the Means of Grace juſtifies the Wiſdom of God in the choice of theſe Means, againſt thoſe who charge him with Folly therein. The Cure of every Patient that obſerves the Phyſician's Orders, juſtifies the Wiſdom of the Phyſician, and therefore *Paul* is not *aſhamed of the Goſpel of Chriſt*, becauſe whatever it is to others, to *them that believe* it is the *Power of God unto Salvation*, Rom. 1. 16. When the Croſs of Chriſt, which to others is *Fooliſhneſs* and a *Stumbling-block* is to them *that are called the Wiſdom of God*, and the *Power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. So that they make the Knowledge of that the top of their Ambition, 1 *Cor*. 2. 2. and the Efficacy of that the Crown of their

Glorying, *Gal.* 6. 14. Here is Wiſdom *juſtified of her Children.* Wiſdom's Children are Wiſdom's Witneſſes in the World, *Iſa.* 43. 10. and ſhall be produc'd as Witneſſes in that Day, when Wiſdom that is now *juſtified* by the Saints ſhall be *Glorified in the Saints*, and *admir'd in all them that believe*, 2 Theſ. 1. 10. If the Unbelief of ſome reproach Chriſt, by giving him the Lye, the Faith of others ſhall honour him by ſetting to its Seal that he is true, and that *he alſo is wiſe* 1 *Cor.* 1. 25. Whether we do it or no, it will be done; not only God's Equity, but his Wiſdom will be juſtified when he ſpeaks, when he judges.

Well, this is the Account Chriſt gives of *that Generation*, and that Generation is *not paſſed away*, but remains in a Succeſſion of the like; for as it was then, it has been ſince, and is ſtill, ſome believe the things which are ſpoken, and ſome believe not, *Acts* 28. 24.

Secondly, As to the particular Places in which Chriſt was moſt converſant. What he ſaid in general of that Generation, he apply'd in particular to thoſe Places to affect them. *Then began he to upbraid them*, v. 20. He began to preach to them long before, *Chap.* 4. 17. but he did not begin to *upbraid* them till now. *Note*, Rough and unpleaſing Methods muſt not be taken till gentler Means have firſt been us'd. Chriſt is not apt to *upbraid*, he *gives liberally, and upbraideth not*, till Sinners by their Obſtinacy extort it from him. Wiſdom firſt invites, but when her Invitations are ſlighted then ſhe upbraids, *Prov.* 1. 20, 24. Thoſe do not go in Chriſt's Method, who *begin* with Upbraidings. Now obſerve,

1. The *Sin charg'd upon them*; not any againſt the Moral Law, then an appeal would have lain to the Goſpel, which would have *reliev'd*; but a Sin againſt the Goſpel, the Remedial Law, and that is *Impenitency*. This it was he upbraided them with, or *reproach'd* them for, as the moſt ſhameful and ungrateful that could be, that they *repented not*. *Note*, Wilful Impenitency is the great damning Sin of Multitudes that enjoy the Goſpel, and which, (more than any other) Sinners will be upbraided with to Eternity. The great Doctrine that both *John Baptiſt*, and Chriſt, and the Apoſtles Preach'd was *Repentance*; the great thing deſign'd both in the *Piping* and in the *Mourning*, was to prevail with People to change their Minds and Ways, to leave their Sins, and turn to God, and this they would not be brought to. He doth not ſay, becauſe *they believed not*, for ſome kind of Faith many of them had, that Chriſt was a Teacher come from God; but becauſe they *repented not*, their Faith did not prevail to the *transforming* of their Hearts, and the reforming of their Lives. Chriſt *reproved* them for their other Sins, that he might lead them to Repentance; but when they *repented not*, he *upbraided them* with that as their *Refuſal to be heal'd*. He upbraided them with it, that they might upbraid themſelves, and might at length ſee the Folly of it, as that which alone makes the *ſad* Caſe a *deſperate* one, and the Wound incurable.

2. The Aggravation of the Sin. They were *the Cities, in which moſt of his mighty Works were done*; for thereabouts his principal Reſidence had been for ſome time. *Note*, Some Places enjoy the Means of Grace in greater Plenty, Power, and Purity than other Places. God is a free Agent, and Acts ſo in all his Diſpoſals, both as the God of Nature, and as the God of Grace, common and diſtinguiſhing Grace. By Chriſt's mighty Works they ſhould have been prevail'd with not only to receive his Doctrine, but to obey his Law; the curing of Bodily Diſeaſes ſhould have been the healing of their Souls, but it had not that effect. *Note*, The ſtronger Inducements we have to Repent, the more heinous is the Impenitency, and the ſeverer will the Reckoning be; for Chriſt keeps account of the *mighty Works done among us*, and of the gracious Works done for us too, by which alſo we ſhould be *led to repentance*, Rom. 2. 4.

1. *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida* are here inſtanc'd in *v.* 21, 22. they have each of them their Woe. *Wo unto thee* Chorazin, *woe unto thee* Bethſaida. Chriſt came into the World to bleſs us, but if that Bleſſing be ſlighted, he has Woes in reſerve, and his *Woes* are of all other the moſt terrible. Theſe two Cities were ſituate upon the *Sea of Galilee*, the former on the Eaſt ſide, and the latter on the Weſt, rich and populous Places; *Bethſaida* was lately advanc'd to a City by *Philip* the *Tetrarch*, out of it Chriſt took at leaſt three of his Apoſtles. Thus highly were theſe Places favour'd, yet becauſe they knew not the Day of their Viſitation they fell under theſe *Woes* which ſtuck ſo cloſe to them, that ſoon after this they decay'd, and dwindled into mean obſcure Villages: So fatally doth Sin ruin Cities, and ſo certainly doth the Word of Chriſt take place.

Now *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida* are here compar'd with *Tyre* and *Sidon*, two maritine Cities we read much of in the *Old Teſtament* that had been brought to ruin but began to flouriſh again; theſe Cities border'd upon *Galilee*, but were in a very ill Name among the *Jews* for Idolatry, and other Wickedneſs. Chriſt ſometimes went *into the Coaſts of Tyre and Sidon*, Mat. 15. 21. but never thither; the *Jews* would have taken it very heinouſly if he had; therefore Chriſt to convince and humble them, here ſhews,

1. That *Tyre* and *Sidon* would not have been *ſo bad* as *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*. If they had had the ſame Word Preach'd, and the ſame Miracles wrought among them, *they would have repented*, and that *long ago*, as *Nineveh* did, in *Sackcloth and Aſhes*. Chriſt who knows the Hearts of all, knew that if he had gone and liv'd among them, and Preach'd among them, he ſhould have done more good there than where he was; yet he continued where he was for ſome time, to encourage his Miniſters to do ſo, tho' they ſee not the Succeſs they deſire. *Note*, Among the Children of Diſobedience, ſome are more eaſily wrought upon than others: And it is a great Aggravation of the Impenitency of thoſe that plentifully enjoy the Means of Grace; not only that there are many who ſit under the ſame Means that are work'd upon, but there are many more that *would have been* work'd upon if they had enjoy'd the ſame Means. See *Ezek.* 3. 6, 7. Our Repentance is ſlow and delay'd, but theirs would have been ſpeedy, they would have repented *long ago*. Ours has been ſlighty and ſuperficial, theirs would have been *deep* and ſerious, in *Sackcloth and Aſhes*. Yet we muſt obſerve with an awful Adoration of the Divine Sovereignity, that the *Tyrians* and *Sidonians* will juſtly periſh in their Sin, tho' if they had had the Means of Grace they would have repented; for God is a *Debtor to no Man*.

2. That therefore *Tyre* and *Sidon* ſhall not be ſo *miſerable* as *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, but it ſhall be *more tolerable* for them in the *Day of Judgment*, v. 22. *Note*, (1.) At the *Day of Judgment* the everlaſting State of the Children of Men will by an unerring and unalterable Doom be determin'd; Happineſs or Miſery, and the ſeveral Degrees of each. Therefore 'tis call'd the *Eternal Judgment*, Heb. 6. 2. becauſe deciſive of the Eternal State. (2.) In that Judgment all the Means of Grace that were enjoy'd in the State of Probation will certainly come into the Account, and it will be enquir'd, not only how bad we were, but how much better we might have been, had it not been our own fault, *Iſa.* 5. 3, 4. (3.) Tho' the Damnation of all that periſh will be intolerable, yet the Damnation of thoſe that had the fulleſt and cleareſt Diſcoveries made them of the Power and Grace of Chriſt, and yet repented not, will be of all other the moſt intolerable. The Goſpel-light and Sound open the Faculties, and enlarge the Capacities of all that *ſee* and *hear* it, either to receive the Riches of *Divine Grace*, or (if that Grace be ſlighted) to take in the more plentiful Effuſions of *Divine Wrath*. If ſelf-reproach be the Torture of Hell, it muſt needs be Hell indeed to thoſe that had ſuch a fair Opportunity of getting to Heaven. *Son remember* that.

2. *Capernaum* is here condemn'd with an Emphaſis, *v.* 23. *And thou Capernaum*, hold up thy Hand, and hear thy Doom. *Capernaum* above all the Cities of *Iſrael* was dignified with Chriſt's moſt uſual Reſidence, 'twas like *Shiloh* of old, the Place which he choſe to *put his Name there*, and it far'd with it as with *Shiloh*, Jer. 7. 12, 14. Chriſt's Miracles here were *daily Bread*, and therefore as the *Manna* of old were deſpis'd and call'd *light Bread*. Many a ſweet and comfortable Lecture of Grace Chriſt had read them to little purpoſe, and therefore here he reads them a dreadful Lecture of Wrath. Thoſe who will not *hear the former*, ſhall be made to *feel the latter*.

We have here *Capernaum*'s Doom.

1. *Put abſolutely*. Thou which art *exalted to Heaven ſhall be brought down to Hell*. *Note*, 1. Thoſe that enjoy the Goſpel in Power and Purity are thereby *exalted to Heaven*. They had therein a great *Honour* for the Preſent, and a great Advantage for Eternity. They are lifted up *towards Heaven*, but if notwithſtanding they ſtill *cleave to the Earth*, they may thank themſelves that they are not lifted up *into Heaven*. 2. Goſpel Advantages and Advancements abus'd, will ſink Sinners ſo much the lower into Hell. Our external Priviledges will be ſo far from ſaving us, that if our Hearts and Lives be not agreeable to them, they will but inflame the Reckoning. The higher the Precipice is, the more fatal is the fall from it. Let us not therefore be high-minded, but fear; nor Slothful, but diligent. See *Job* 20. 6, 7.---24. 29.

2. We have it here *put in Compariſon* with the Doom of *Sodom*. A place more remarkable, both for Sin and Ruin than perhaps any other; and yet Chriſt here tells us,

1. That *Capernaum*'s Means would have ſaved *Sodom*. If theſe Miracles had been done among the *Sodomites*, as bad as they were, they would have repented, and their City *would have remained unto this Day*, a Moment of ſparing Mercy, as now it is of deſtroying Juſtice, *Jude* 7. *Note*, Upon true Repentance thro' Chriſt, even the greateſt Sin ſhall be pardon'd, and the greateſt Ruin prevented, that of *Sodom* not excepted. Angels were ſent to *Sodom*, and yet it *remained not*; but if Chriſt had been ſent thither *it would have remained*: How well is it for us then that the World to come *is put in Subjection* to Chriſt, and *not to Angels*, Heb. 2. 5. *Lot* would not have ſeem'd as one that mocked, if he had wrought Miracles.

2. That *Sodom*'s Ruin will therefore be leſs at the great Day than *Capernaum*'s. *Sodom* will have many Sins to anſwer for, but not the Sin of neglecting Chriſt, as *Capernaum* will. If the Goſpel prove a *Savour of Death*, a killing Savour, 'tis doubly ſo, 'tis *of Death unto Death*, ſo great a Death, 2 *Cor.* 2. 16. Chriſt had ſaid the ſame of all other Places that receive not his Miniſters, nor bid his Goſpel welcome, *Mat.* 10. 15. *It ſhall be more tolerable for the land of* Sodom, *than for that City*. We that have now the written Word in our Hands, the Goſpel Preach'd, and Goſpel-ordinances Adminiſter'd to us, and live under the Diſpenſation of the Spirit, have Advantages not inferior to thoſe of *Chorazin*, and *Bethſaida*, and *Capernaum*, and the Account in the great Day will be accordingly. It has therefore been juſtly ſaid, that the Profeſſors of this Age, whether they go to Heaven or Hell, will be the greateſt Debtors in either of thoſe Places; if to Heaven, the greateſt Debtors to divine Mercy for thoſe rich Means that brought them thither; if to Hell, the greateſt Debtors to divine Juſtice for thoſe rich Means that would have kept them thence.

25 At that time Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, becauſe thou

haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and
haſt revealed them unto babes. 26 Even ſo Father
for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight. 27 All things are
deliver'd unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth
the Son but the Father: neither knoweth any man the
Father, ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son
will reveal *him*. 38 Come unto me all ye that labour
and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.
29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for
I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye ſhall find
reſt unto you ſouls. 30 For my yoke is eaſy and
my burden is light.

In theſe Verſes we have Chriſt *looking up* to Heaven with Thankſgiving to his Father for the Sovereignty and Security of the *Covenant of Redemption*; and looking *around him* upon this Earth with an Offer to all the Children of Men, to whom theſe Preſents ſhall come, of the Privileges and Benefits of the Covenant of Grace.

Firſt, Chriſt here returns Thanks to God for his Favour to thoſe *Babes*, who had the Myſteries of the Goſpel reveal'd to them, *v.* 25. 26. *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid.* 'Tis call'd an Anſwer, tho' no other Words are before recorded, but *his own*, becauſe it is ſo comfortable a Reply to the Melancholy Conſiderations preceeding, and is aptly ſet in the Ballance againſt them. The Sin and Ruin of thoſe woful Cities, no doubt was a Grief to the Lord Jeſus, he could not but weep over them, as he did over *Jeruſalem*, Luke 19. 41. with this Thought therefore he refreſheth himſelf, and to make it the more refreſhing, he puts it into a Thankſgiving, That for all this there is a Remnant, tho' but Babes, to whom the things of the Goſpel are revealed. *Though* Iſrael *be not gather'd*, yet ſhall he be *glorious*. *Note*, We may take great Encouragement in looking upwards to God, when round about us we ſee nothing but what is diſcouraging. 'Tis ſad to ſee how regardleſs the moſt Men are of *their own Happineſs*, but'tis comfortable to think that the wiſe and faithful God will however, effectually ſecure the Intereſts of *his own Glory*. *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, I thank thee*. *Note*, Thankſgiving is a proper Anſwer to dark and diſquieting Thoughts, and may be an effectual Means to ſilence them. Songs of Praiſe are ſovereign Cordials to drooping Souls, and will help to cure Melancholy. When we have no other Anſwer ready to the Suggeſtions of Grief and Fear, we may have Recourſe to this, *I thank thee O Father*; let us bleſs God that it is not worſe with us than it is.

Now in this Thankſgiving of Chriſt's we may obſerve,

1. The Title he gives to God; *O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth*. *Note*, 1. In all our Approaches to God by Praiſe, as well as by Prayer, it is good for us to eye him as a Father, and to faſten on that Relation, not only when we aſk for the Mercies we want, but when we give Thanks for the Mercies we have receiv'd. Mercies are then doubly ſweet, and powerful to enlarge the Heart in Praiſe, when they are receiv'd as tokens of a Father's Love, and Gifts of a Father's Hand. *Giving Thanks to the Father*, Col. 1. 12. It becomes Children to be *grateful*, and to ſay, *Thank you Father*, as readily as *Pray Father*. 2. When we come to God as a Father, we muſt withal remember, that he is *Lord of Heaven and Earth*; which obligeth us to come to him with Reverence as to the Sovereign Lord of all, and yet with Confidence, as one able to do for us whatever we need or can deſire; to defend us from all evil, and to ſupply us with all good. Chriſt in *Melchizedeck* had long ſince *bleſſed God*, as the *Poſſeſſor*, or *Lord of Heaven and Earth*; and in all our Thankſgivings for Mercies in the Stream, we muſt give him the Glory of the All-ſufficiency that is in the Fountain.

2. The thing he gives Thanks for. Becauſe *thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and Prudent*, and yet *revealed them to Babes*. Theſe things, he doth not ſay what things, but means the great Things of the Goſpel, the *things that belong to our Peace*, Luke 19. 42. He ſpeaks thus emphatically of them, *theſe things*, becauſe they were things that *fill'd him*, and ſhould *fill us*. All other things are as nothing to things.

Note, 1. The great things of the everlaſting Goſpel have been, and are hid from many that were *wiſe and prudent*, that were eminent for Learning and worldly Policy. Some of the greateſt Scholars, and the greateſt Stateſmen have been the greateſt Strangers to Goſpel Myſteries: *The World by Wiſdom knew not God*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. Nay, there is an Oppoſition given to the Goſpel by a *Science falſly ſo call'd*, 1 Tim. 6. 20. Thoſe that are moſt expert in things ſenſible and ſecular, are commonly leaſt experienc'd in ſpiritual things. Men may dive deep into the Myſteries of Nature and the Myſteries of State, and yet be ignorant of, and Miſtake about the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, for Want of an Experience of the Power of them.

2. While the *wiſe and Prudent* Men of the World are in the dark about Goſpel Myſteries, even *the Babes* in Chriſt have the ſanctifying ſaving knowledge of them, *thou haſt revealed them unto Babes*, ſuch the Diſciples of Chriſt were, Men of mean Birth and Education, no Scholars, no Artiſts, no Politicians, unlearned and ignorant Men, *Acts* 4. 13. Thus are the *Secrets of Wiſdom, which is double to that which is*, John 11. 6. made known to *Babes and Sucklings*, that out of their Mouths Strength might be ordain'd, *Pſal.* 8. 2. and God's *Praiſe* thereby *perfected*. The Learned Men of the World were not made choice of to be Preachers of the Goſpel, but the *fooliſh things of the World*, 1 Cor. 2. 6, 8, 10.

3. This Difference between the *Prudent* and the *Babes* is of God's own making (1.) 'Tis he that has *hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent*; he gave them parts and Learning, and much of human Underſtanding above others, and they were proud of that, and reſted in it, and look'd no further, and therefore God juſtly denies them the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation, and then tho' they hear the Sound of the Goſpel Tidings, they are to them as a *ſtrange thing*. God is not the Author of their Ignorance and Error, but he leaves them to themſelves, and their Sin becomes their Puniſhment, and the Lord is righteous in it. See *John* 12. 39, 40. *Rom.* 11. 7, 8. *Acts* 28. 26, 27. Had they *honour'd* God with the *Wiſdom* and *Prudence* they had, he would have given them the Knowledge of theſe better things. but becauſe they ſerv'd their Luſts with them, he has *hid their Hearts from* this *Underſtanding*. (2.) 'Tis he that has *reveal'd them unto Babes*. Things *revealed* belong *to our Children*, Deut. 24. 29. and to them he *gives an Underſtanding* to receive theſe things, and the Impreſſions of them. Thus he *reſiſts the Proud*, and *gives Grace to the humble*, Jam. 4. 6.

4. This Diſpenſation muſt be reſolv'd into the divine Sovereignty. Chriſt himſelf refer'd it to that, *Even ſo Father, becauſe it ſeemed good in thy ſight*. Chriſt here ſubſcribes to the Will of his Father in this Matter. *Even ſo*. Let God take what way he pleaſeth to glorify himſelf, and make uſe of what Inſtruments he pleaſeth, for the carrying on of his own Work: His Grace is his own, and he may give or withhold it as he pleaſes. We can give no Reaſon why *Peter*, a Fiſherman, ſhould be made an Apoſtle, and not *Nicodemus* a *Phariſee*, and a Ruler of the *Jews*, tho' he alſo believ'd in Chriſt; but ſo it *ſeem'd good in God's Sight*. Chriſt ſaid this in the Hearing of his Diſciples, to ſhew them that is was not for any Merit of their own, that they were thus dignified and diſtinguiſh'd, but purely from God's good Pleaſure. *He made them to differ*.

5. This way of diſpenſing divine Grace is to be acknowledg'd by us as it was by our Lord Jeſus, with all Thankfulneſs. We muſt thank God, (1.) That *theſe things are revealed*; the Myſtery hid from Ages and Generations is manifeſted; that they are *revealed* not to a few, but to be publiſhed to all the World. (2.) That they are revealed to *Babes*, that the meek and humble are *beautify'd* with this *Salvation*; and this Houour put upon thoſe whom the World pours Contempt upon. (3.) It magnifies the Mercy to them, that theſe things are *hid from the wiſe and prudent*. Diſtinguiſhing Favours are moſt obliging. As *Job* ador'd the Name of the Lord, in *taking away* as well as in *giving*, ſo may we in *hiding theſe things from the wiſe and prudent*, as well as in *revealing them unto Babes*, not as it is their Miſery, but as it is a Method by which ſelf is abas'd, proud Thoughts brought down, all Fleſh ſilenc'd, and divine Power and Wiſdom is made to ſhine the more bright. See 1 *Cor.* 1. 27, 31.

Secondly, Chriſt here makes a gracious Offer of the Benefits of the Goſpel to all; and theſe are the *things* which are reveal'd to *Babes*, v. 27, *&c*. Obſerve here,

1. The ſolemn Preface which uſhers in this Call or Invitation, both to command our Attention to it, and to encourage our Compliance with it. That we might have ſtrong Conſolation in flying for Refuge to this Hope ſet before us, Chriſt perfix'd his Authority, produceth his Credentials; we ſhall ſee he is impower'd to make this Offer.

Two things he here lays before us, *v.* 27.

(1.) His Commiſſion from the Father. *All things are deliver'd unto me of my Father*. Chriſt as God is equal in Power and Glory with the Father, but as Mediator, he receives his Power and Glory from the Father; hath *all Judgment committed to him*. He is authoriz'd to ſettle a new Covenant between God and Man, and to offer Peace and Happineſs to the Apoſtate World upon ſuch Terms as he ſhould think fit. He was ſanctified and ſealed to be the ſole Plenipotentiary, to concert and eſtabliſh this great Affair: In Order to this, he has *all Power both in Heaven and in Earth*, Mat. 28. 18. Power over all Fleſh. *John* 17. 2. Authority to execute Judgment, *John* 5. 22, 27. This encourageth us to come to Chriſt, that he is *commiſſioned* to receive us, and to give us what we come for, and has *all things deliver'd to him* for that Purpoſe, by him who is *Lord of all*. All Powers, all Treaſures are in his Hand. Obſerve, the Father has deliver'd his *All* into the Hands of the Lord Jeſus, let us but deliver *our All* into his Hand, and the Work is done; God has made him the *great Referee*, the bleſſed *Days-man* to *lay his Hand upon us both*. That which we have to do, is, to agree to the Reference, to ſubmit to the Arbitration of the Lord Jeſus for the taking up of this unhappy Controverſy, and enter into Bonds to ſtand to his Award.

(2.) His Intimacy with the Father. *No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father ſave the Son*, This gives us a further Satisfaction, and an abundant one. Embaſſadors uſe to have not only their *Commiſſions*, which they produce, but their *Inſtructions*, which they reſerve to themſelves, to be made uſe of as there is Occaſion in their Negotiations: Our Lord Jeſus had both, not only Authority, but Ability for his undertaking. In tranſacting the great Buſineſs of our Redemption, the Father and the Son are the Parties principally concern'd, *the Counſel of Peace is between them*, Zech. 6. 13. It muſt therefore be a great Encouragement to us to be aſſur'd, that they *underſtood one another* very well in this Affair; that the Father knew the Son, and the Son knew the Father, and both perfectly, (a *mutual Conciouſneſs*, we may call it, between the Father and the Son) ſo that there could be no miſtake in the ſettling of this Matter; as often there is among Men, to the Overthrow of Contracts, and the breaking of the Meaſures taken, through their *Miſunderſtanding* one of another. The Son had *lain in the Boſom of the Father* from Eternity, he was *a ſecretioribus*, of the Cabinet Council, *John* 1. 18. He was *by him as one brought up with him*, Prov. 8. 30. So that *none knows the Father ſave the Son*, he adds. *and he to whom the Son will reveal him*. *Note*, 1. The Happineſs of Men lies in an Acquaintance with God; ’tis *Life eternal*, ’tis the Perfection of rational Beings. 2. Thoſe that would have an Acquaintance with God muſt apply themſelves to Jeſus Chriſt; for the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God ſhines in the Face of Chriſt, 2 *Cor* 4. 6. We are obliged to Chriſt for all the Revelation we have of God the Father’s Will and Love, ever ſince *Adam* ſinn’d. There’s no Comfortable Intercourſe between a holy God, and ſinful Man, but in, and by a Mediator, *John* 14. 6.

2. Here’s the Offer itſelf that is made to us, and an Invitation to accept of it. After ſo ſolemn a Preface we may well expect ſomething very *great*; and it is ſo, a faithful Saying, and well worthy of all Acceptation; *Words whereby we may be ſav’d*. We are here invited to Chriſt as our Prieſt, Prince, and Prophet to be ſaved, and in order to that to be rul’d and taught by him.

1. We muſt come to Jeſus Chriſt as our *Reſt*, and *repoſe ourſelves in him*, v. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour*. Obſerve, 1. The Character of the Perſons invited; *all that labour and are heavy laden*. This is a Word in Seaſon *to him that is weary*, Iſa. 53. 4. Thoſe that complain of the Burden of the Ceremonial Law, which was an intolerable Yoke, and was made much more ſo by the Tradition of the Elders, *Luke* 11. 46. let them come to Chriſt, and they ſhall be made eaſy; he came to free his Church from this Yoke, to cancel the Impoſition of thoſe carnal Ordinances, and to introduce a purer and more ſpiritual way of Worſhip. But ’tis rather to be underſtood of the Burden of Sin, both the Guilt and the Power of it. *Note*, All thoſe, and thoſe only are invited to reſt in Chriſt, that are ſenſible of Sin as a Burden and Groan under it; that are not only convinc’d of the Evil of Sin; of their own Sin, but are contrite in Soul for it; that are really ſick of their Sins, weary of the ſervice of the World and the Fleſh: That ſee their State ſad and dangerous by reaſon of Sin, and are in Pain and Fear about it, as *Ephraim*, Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20. the Prodigal, *Luke* 15. 17. the Publican, *Luke* 18. 13. *Peter*’s Hearers, *Acts* 2. 37. *Paul*, Acts 9. 4, 6, 9. the Jaylors, *Acts* 16. 29, 30. This is a neceſſary Preparative for Pardon and Peace. The Comforter muſt firſt *convince*, John 16. 8. I have *torn*, and then will *heal*.

2. The Invitation it ſelf. *Come unto me*. That glorious Diſplay of Chriſt’s Greatneſs which we had, *v.* 27. as Lord of all, might frighten us from him, but ſee here how he holds out the golden Sceptre, that we may touch the top of it, and may live. *Note*, It is the Duty and Intereſt of *weary* and *heavy laden Sinners to come to Jeſus Chriſt*. Renouncing all thoſe things which ſtand in Oppoſition to him, or in Competition with him, we muſt accept of him as our Phyſician and Advocate, and give up ourſelves to his Conduct and Government, freely willing to be ſav’d by him, in his own Way, and upon his own Terms. Come and *caſt that Burden* upon him; under which thou art *heavy laden*. This is the Goſpel Call, *The Spirit ſaith come, and the Bride ſaith come; Let him that is athirſt come. Whoever will let him come*.

3. The Bleſſing promis’d to thoſe that do come; *I will give you reſt*. Chriſt is our *Noah*, whoſe Name ſignifies *Reſt*, for *this ſame ſhall give us Reſt*, Gen. 5. 29.–8. 9. Truly *Reſt is good*, Gen. 49. 15. eſpecially to thoſe that *Labour*, and are *heavy laden*, Eccl. 5. 12. *Note*, Jeſus Chriſt will give aſſured Reſt to thoſe weary Souls that by a lively Faith come to him for it; Reſt from the Terror of Sin, in a well grounded Peace of Conſcience; Reſt from the Power of Sin, in a regular Order of the Soul, and its due Government of its ſelf; a Reſt in God and a Complacency of Soul in his Love, *Pſal.* 11. 6, 7. This is that *Reſt* which *remains for the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9. begun in Grace, and perfected in Glory.

2. We muſt come to Jeſus Chriſt as our *Ruler*, and *ſubmit ourſelves to him*, v. 29. *Take my Yoke upon you*. This muſt go along with the former, for Chriſt is exalted to be both *a Prince and Saviour*, a *Prieſt upon his Throne*. The Reſt he promiſeth is a Releaſe from the Drudgery of Sin, not from the Service of God; but an Obligation to the Duty we owe to him. *Note*, Chriſt hath a *Yoke for our Necks*, as well as a *Crown for our Heads*, and this Yoke he expects we ſhould take upon us, and draw in. To call thoſe that are *weary* and *heavy laden to take a Yoke* upon them, looks like adding *Affliction* to the *afflicted*; but the Pertinency of it lies in the Word *my*: You are under a Yoke which makes you *weary*, ſhake that off, and try mine, which will make you *eaſy*. Servants are ſaid to be *under the Yoke*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 1. and Subjects, 1 *Kings* 12. 10. To take Chriſt’s Yoke upon us, is to put ourſelves into the Relation of Servants and Subjects to him, and then to carry ourſelves accordingly in a conſcientious Obedience to all his Commands, and a chearful Submiſſion to all his Diſpoſals. ’Tis to *obey the Goſpel of Chriſt*, *to yield ourſelves to the Lord*. ’Tis *Chriſt’s Yoke*, the Yoke he has appointed, a Yoke he has himſelf drawn in *before us*, for he *learned Obedience*, and which he doth by his Spirit draw in *with us*, for he *helpeth our Infirmities*, *Rom*, 8. 26. A Yoke ſpeaks ſome Hardſhip, but if the Beaſt muſt draw, the Yoke helps him; Chriſt’s Commands are all in our Favours. We muſt take this Yoke upon us to *draw in it*. We are yoked to *work*, and therefore muſt be diligent; we are yok’d to *ſubmit*, and therefore muſt be *humble* and *patient*. We are yoked *together* with our Fellow-Servants, and therefore muſt keep up the Comunion of Saints. And the Words of the wiſe are as *Goads*, to thoſe that are thus yoked.

Now this is the hardeſt Part of our Leſſon, and therefore ’tis qualified; *v.* 30. *My Yoke is eaſy and my Burden light*, you need not be afraid of it.

(1.) The *Yoke* of Chriſt’s Commands is an *eaſy Yoke*; it is χρηστὸς, not only eaſy, but *gracious*; ſo the Word ſignifies; ’tis ſweet and pleaſant: There’s nothing in it to *gall* the yielding Neck, nothing to *hurt us*, but on the contrary much to refreſh us. ’Tis a Yoke that’s lin’d with Love. Such is the Nature of all Chriſt’s Commands, ſo reaſonable in themſelves, ſo profitable to us, ſumm’d up in one Word, and that a ſweet Word, *Love*. So powerful are the Aſſiſtances he gives us, ſo ſuitable the Encouragements, and ſo ſtrong the Conſolations that are to be found in the Way of Duty, that we may truly ſay, ’tis a Yoke of Pleaſantneſs. ’Tis *eaſy* to the New Nature, very eaſy *to him that underſtandeth*, Prov. 14. 6. It may be a little hard at firſt, but it’s eaſy afterwards; the Love of God, and the Hope of Heaven will make it eaſy.

(2.) The *Burden* of Chriſt’s Croſs is a *light Burden*, very light, Afflictions *from* Chriſt which befal us as *Men*, Afflictions *for* Chriſt which befal us as *Chriſtians*; the latter are eſpecially meant. This Burden in it ſelf, it is not joyous but grievous; yet as it is Chriſt’s it is light. *Paul* knew as much of it as any Man, and he calls it a light Affliction, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. God’s Preſence, *Iſa.* 43. 2. Chriſt’s Sympathy, *Iſa.* 63. 9. *Dan.* 3. 25. And eſpecially the Spirit’s Aids and Comforts, 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. make Sufferings for Chriſt light and eaſy. As Afflictions abound and are prolong’d, Conſolation abound and are prolong’d too. Let this therefore reconcile us to the Difficulties, and help us over the Diſcouragements we may meet with, both in doing-Work and Suffering-Work; though we may loſe for Chriſt, we ſhall not loſe by him.

3. We muſt come to Jeſus Chriſt as our Teacher, and ſet our ſelves to *learn of him*, v. 29. Chriſt hath erected a great School, and has invited us to be his Scholars: We muſt enter our ſelves, aſſociate with his Scholars, and daily attend the Inſtructions he gives by his Word and Spirit. We muſt *converſe* much with what he *ſaid*, and have it ready to us to uſe upon all Occaſions; we muſt confirm what he *did* and *follow his Steps*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. Some make the following Words, *for I am meek and lowly in Heart*, to be the particular Leſſon we are required to learn from the Example of Chriſt. We muſt learn of him to be *meek* and *lowly*; and muſt mortify our Pride and Paſſion, which render us ſo unlike to him. We muſt ſo *learn of Chriſt*, as to *learn Chriſt*, Eph. 4. 20. for he is both Teacher and Leſſon, Guide and Way, all in all.

Two Reaſons are given why we muſt *learn of* Chriſt.

1. *I am meek and lowly in Heart*, and therefore fit to teach you. (1.) He is *meek*, and can have *Compaſſion on the Ignorant*, whom others would be in a *Paſſion with*. Many able Teachers are hot and haſty, which is a great Diſcouragement to thoſe that are dull and ſlow; but Chriſt knows how to bear with ſuch, and to open their Underſtandings. His Carriage towards his twelve Diſciples was a Specimen of this; he was mild and gentle with them, and made the beſt of them; though they were heedleſs and forgetful, he was not extream to mark their Follies. (2.) He *is lowly in Heart*. He condeſcends to teach poor Scholars, to teach Petties, he choſe Diſciples not from the Court or Schools, but from the Sea-ſide. He teacheth the firſt Principles ſuch things as are Milk for Babes; he ſtoops to the meaneſt Capacities; he taught *Ephraim* to go, *Hoſ.* 11. 3. Who teacheth like him? ’Tis an Encouragement to us to put our ſelves to School to ſuch a Teacher. This Humility and Meekneſs, as it qualifies him to be a Teacher, ſo it will be the beſt Qualification of thoſe that are to be taught by him; for the Meek will he guide in Judgment, *Pſal.* 25. 9.

2. *You ſhall find reſt to your Souls*. This Promiſe is borrowed from *Jer.* 6. 16. for Chriſt delighted to expreſs himſelf in the Language of the Prophets, to ſhew the Harmony between the two Teſtaments. *Note*, (1.) Reſt for the *Soul* is the moſt deſirable Reſt; to have the Soul to *dwell at eaſe*. (2.) The only Way, and a ſure Way to find *Reſt for our Souls*, is to ſit at Chriſt’s Feet, and hear his Word. The Way of Duty is the Way of Reſt. The *Underſtanding* finds *Reſt* in the *Knowledge* of God and Jeſus Chriſt, and is there abundantly ſatisfied, finding that Wiſdom in the Goſpel, which has been ſought for in vain throughout the whole Creation, *Job* 28. 12. The Truths Chriſt teacheth are ſuch as we may venture our Souls upon. The *Affections* find Reſt in the *Love* of God and Jeſus Chriſt, and meet with that in them which gives them abundant Satiſfaction; *Quietneſs* and *Aſſurance* for ever. And thoſe Satiſfactions will be perfected and perpetuated in Heaven, where we ſhall ſee and enjoy God immediately, ſhall ſee him as he is, and enjoy him as he is ours. This Reſt is to be had with Chriſt, for all thoſe that learn of him.

Well, This is the Sum and Subſtance of the Goſpel Call and Offer: We are here told in a few Words, What the Lord Jeſus requires of us, and it agrees with what God ſaid of him once and again, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed: Hear ye him*.

CHAP. XII.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *Chriſt's clearing of the Law of the Fourth Commandment concerning the Sabbath-day, and vindicating it from ſome ſuperſtitious Notions advanc'd by the* Jewiſh *Teachers*; *ſhewing that works of Neceſſity and Mercy are to be done on that Day*, v. 1.—13. (2.) *The Prudence, Humility, and Self-denial of our Lord Jeſus in working his Miracles*, v. 14.–22. (3.) *Chriſt's Anſwer to the blaſphemous Cavils and Calumnies of the* Scribes *and* Phariſees, *who imputed his caſting out Devils to a Compact with the Devil*, v. 22.—-38. (4.) *Chriſt's Reply to a tempting Demand of the* Scribes and Phariſees, *challenging him to ſhew them a Sign from Heaven*, v. 38.–-45. (5.) *Chriſt's Judgment about his Kindred and Relations*, v. 46. ad fin.

AT that time Jeſus went on the ſabbath-day through the corn, and his diſciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. 2 But when the Phariſees ſaw *it*, they ſaid unto him, Behold, thy diſciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the ſabbath-day. 3 But he ſaid unto them, Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungred, and they that were with him, 4 How he entred into the houſe of God, and did eat the ſhew bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the Prieſts? 5 Or have we not read in the law, how that on the ſabbath-days the Prieſts in the temple prophane the ſabbath, and are blameleſs? 6 But I ſay unto you, That in this place is one greater then the temple. 7 But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not ſacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltleſs. 8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the ſabbath-day. 9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their ſynagogue. 10 And behold there was a man which had *his* hand withered: and they asked him, ſaying, Is it lawful to heal on the ſabbath-days? that they might accuſe him. 11 And he ſaid unto them, What man ſhall there be among you that ſhall have one ſheep, and if it ſall into a pit on the ſabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out? 12 How much then is a man better than a ſheep? wherefore it is lawful to do well on the ſabbath-days. 13 Then ſaith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand: and he ſtretched *it* forth; and *it* was reſtored whole, like as the other.

The *Jewiſh* Teachers had corrupted many of the Commandments, by interpreting them more *looſly* than they were intended, a Miſtake which Chriſt diſcover'd and rectifi'd, *Chap.* 5. in his Sermon on the Mount; but concerning the Fourth Commandment they had err'd in the other Extream, and interpreted it too *ſtrictly*. *Note*, It is common for Men of corrupt Minds by their Zeal in Rituals, and the External Services in Religion, to think to atone for the *Looſeneſs* of their Morals. But they are curſed who *add too*, as well as they who *take from the Words of this Book*, Rev. 22. 16, 19. Prov. 30. 6.

Now that which our Lord Jeſus here lays down is, that the Works of Neceſſity and Mercy are lawful on the Sabbath-day, which the *Jews* in many Inſtances were taught to make a Scruple of. Chriſt's Induſtrious explaining the Fourth Commandment, intimates its perpetual Obligation to the Religious Obſervation of *one Day in Seven*, as a *holy Sabbath*. He would not *expound* a Law that was immediately to *expire*, but doubtleſs intended thereby to ſettle a Point which would be of uſe to his Church in all Ages; and ſo it is, to teach us that our Chriſtian Sabbath, though under the Direction of the Fourth Commandment, is not under the Injunctions of the *Jewiſh* Elders.

It is uſual to ſettle the meaninng of a Law by Judgment given upon Caſes that happen in Fact, and in like manner is the meaning of this Law ſettled: Here are two Paſſages of Story put together for this purpoſe, happening at ſome diſtance of Time from each other, and of a different Nature, but both anſwering this Intention.

Firſt, Chriſt by juſtifying his Diſciples plucking the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-day, ſhews that *Works of Neceſſity* are *Lawful* on that Day. Now here obſerve,

1. What it was that the Diſciples *did*. They were following their Maſter one Sabbath day thro' a Corn-field, 'tis likely going to *the Synagogue*, v. 9. for it becomes not Chriſt's Diſciples to take *idle Walks* on that Day, and *they were hungry*: Let it be no diſparagement to our Maſter's Houſe-keeping. But we will ſuppoſe they were ſo intent upon the Sabbath-work, that they forgot to eat Bread, had ſpent ſo much time in their Morning-worſhip, that they had no time for their Morning-meal, but came out faſting, becauſe they would not *come late* to the Synagogue. Providence order'd it that *they went through the Corn*, and there they were ſupply'd. *Note*, God has many ways of bringing ſuitable Proviſion to his People when they need it, and will take particular Care of them when they are going to the Synagogue, as of old for them that went up to *Jeruſalem* to Worſhip, (*Pſal.* 84. 6, 7.) for whoſe uſe the Rain fill'd the Pools, while we are in the way of Duty, *Jehovah-jireh*, Let God alone to provide for us. Being in the Corn-fields, they began to *pluck the Ears of Corn*, the Law of God allow'd this, *Deut.* 23. 25. to teach People to be Neighbourly, and not to inſiſt upon Property in a ſmall matter, whereby another may be benefited. This was but ſlender Proviſion for Chriſt and his Diſciples, but it was the beſt they had, and they were content with it. The famous Mr. *Ball* of *Whitmore* us'd to ſay he had two Diſhes of Meat to his Sabbath-dinner, a Diſh of *hot* Milk, and a Diſh of *Cold*, and he had *enough and enough*.

2. What was the Offence that the *Phvriſees* took at this; 'twas but a dry Breakfaſt, yet the *Phariſees* would not let them eat that *in Quietneſs*. They did not quarrel with them for taking another Man's Corn, they were no great Zealots for Juſtice, but for doing it *on the Sabbath-day*, for plucking and rubbing the Ears of Corn on that Day was expreſly forbidden by the Tradition of the Elders, for this Reaſon, becauſe it was a kind of *Reaping*. *Note*, It is no new thing for the moſt harmleſs and innocent Actions of Chriſt's Diſciples to be evil ſpoken of, and reflected upon as unlawful, eſpecially by thoſe who are zealous for their own Inventions and Impoſitions. The *Phariſees* complain'd of them to their Maſter for doing that which it was *not lawful to do*. *Note*, Thoſe are no Friends to Chriſt and his Diſciples who make that to be unlawful which God has not made to be ſo.

3. What was Chriſt's Anſwer to this Cavil of the *Phariſees*. The Diſciples could ſay little for themſelves, eſpecially becauſe thoſe that quarrel with them ſeem'd to have the ſtrictneſs of Sabbath-ſanctification on their ſide, and it is ſafeſt to err on that hand; but Chriſt came to free his Followers, not only from the *Corruptions* of the *Phariſees*, but from their *unſcriptural Impoſitions*, and therefore has ſomething to ſay for them, and juſtifies what they did, though it was a Tranſgreſſion of the Canon.

1. He juſtifies them by *Precedents*, which were allow'd to be good by the *Phariſees* themſelves.

(1.) He urgeth an ancient Inſtance of *David*, who in a caſe of neceſſity did that which otherwiſe he ought not to have done, *v.* 3, 4. *Have ye not read* the Story, 1 *Sam.* 21. 6. of *David*'s eating the Shew-Bread, which by the Law was appropriated to the Prieſt, *Lev.* 24. 5.–9. *it is moſt holy to* Aaron *and his Sons*; and *Exod.* 29. 33. *a ſtranger ſhall not eat of it*; yet the Prieſt gave it to *David* and his Men; for tho' the Exception of a Caſe of Neceſſity was not expreſs'd, yet it was implied in that and all other ritual Inſtitutions. That which bore out *David* in eating the Shew-bread was not his *Dignity*; *Uzziah* that invaded the Prieſt's Office in the Pride of his Heart, tho' a King, was ſtruck with a Leproſy for it, 2 *Chron.* 26. 16, *&c.* but it was his *Hunger*. The greateſt ſhall not have their Luſts indulg'd, but the meaneſt ſhall have their Wants conſider'd. Hunger is a *natural* Deſire which cannot be mortified, but muſt be *gratified*, and cannot be put off with any thing but *Meat*; therefore we ſay, *'Twill break through Stone-walls*: Now *the Lord is for the Body*, and allow'd his own Appointment to be diſpens'd with in a Caſe of Diſtreſs, much more might the Tradition of the Elders be diſpens'd with. *Note*, That may be done in a caſe of Neceſſity, which may not be done at another Time; there are *Laws* which *Neceſſity has not*, but it is a Law to itſelf. *Men do not deſpiſe*, but pity *a Thief that ſteals to ſatisfy his Soul when he is hungry*, Prov. 6. 30.

(2.) He urgeth a daily Inſtance of the Prieſts, which they likewiſe *read in the Law*, and according to which was the conſtant uſage, *v.* 15. *The Prieſts in the Temple* did a great deal of Servile Work on the Sabbath-day; Killing, Flaying, Burning the Sacrificed Beaſts, which in a common Caſe, would have been *profaning the Sabbath*; and yet it was never reckon'd any Tranſgreſſion of the fourth Commandment, becauſe the Temple-ſervice requir'd and juſtified it. This intimates that thoſe Labours are lawful on the Sabbath-day, which are neceſſary, not only to *the Support of Life*, but to the *Service of the Day*; as tolling a Bell to call the Congregation together, travelling to Church, and the like. Sabbath-reſt is to promote, not to hinder Sabbath-worſhip.

2. He juſtifies them by Arguments, three cogent ones.

1. *In this place is one greater than the Temple*, v. 6. If the Temple-ſervice would juſtify what the Prieſts did in their Miniſtration, the Service of Chriſt would much more juſtify the Diſciples in what they did in their Attendance upon him. The *Jews* had an extreme Veneration for the Temple, it *Sanctified the Gold*; *Stephen* was accus'd for *Blaſpheming that holy Place*, Acts 6. 13. But Chriſt in a Corn-field was *greater than the Temple*, for in him dwelt not the *Preſence of God* Symbolically, but *all the fulneſs of the Godhead Bodily*. *Note*, If whatever we do we do it *in the Name of Chriſt*, and *as unto him*, it ſhall be graciouſly accepted of God, however it may be cenſur'd and cavil'd at by Men.

2. *God will have Mercy and not Sacrifice*, v. 7. Ceremonial Duties muſt give way to moral, and the natural royal Law of Love and Self-Preſervation muſt take place of ritual Obſervances. This is quoted from *Hoſ.* 6. 6. 'Twas us'd before, *Mat.* 9. 9. in vindication of

Mercy to the Souls of Men, here of Mercy to their Bodies. The Reſt of the Sabbath was ordain'd for Man's Good, in favour of the Body, *Deut.* 5. 14. Now no Law muſt be conſtrued ſo as to contradict its own End. *If you had known what this means*, had known what it is to be of a merciful Diſpoſition, you would have been ſorry that they were forc'd to do this to ſatisfy their Hunger, and would *not have condemned the Guiltleſs*. *Note*, (1.) Ignorance is the Cauſe of our raſh and uncharitable Cenſures of our Brethren. (2.) 'Tis not enough for us to know the Scriptures, but we muſt labour to *know the meaning* of them. *Let him that readeth underſtand*. (3.) Ignorance of the meaning of the Scripture is eſpecially ſhameful in thoſe who take upon them to teach others.

3. *The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day*, v. 8. That Law, as all the reſt, is put into the Hand of Chriſt, to be alter'd, enforc'd, or diſpenc'd with as he ſees good. 'Twas by the *Son* that God *made the World*, and by him he inſtituted the Sabbath in Innocency; by him he gave the Ten Commandments at *Mount Sinai*, and as Mediator he is intruſted with the Inſtitution of Ordinances, and to make what Changes he thought fit, and particularly as being *Lord of the Sabbath*, he was authoriz'd to make ſuch an alteration of that Day as that it ſhould become the *Lord's Day*, the Lord Chriſt's Day. And if Chriſt be the *Lord of the Sabbath*, 'tis fit the Day, and all the Work of it ſhould be dedicated to him. By Virtue of this Power, Chriſt here enacts, that Works of Neceſſity, if they be really ſuch, and not pretended, and a *Self-created* Neceſſity, are lawful on the Sabbath-day: And this Explication of the Law plainly ſhews it was to be perpetual. *Exceptio firmat Regulam.*

Chriſt having thus ſilenc'd the *Phariſees*, and got clear of them; 'tis ſaid, *v.* 9. he *departed*, and *went into their Synagogue*, the Synagogue of theſe *Phariſees*, in which they preſided, and which he was going towards when they pick'd this Quarrel with him. *Note*, (1.) We muſt take heed leſt anything that occurs in our way to holy Ordinances, diſfit us for, or divert us from our due Attendance on them. Let us proceed in the way of our Duty, notwithſtanding the Artifices of Satan, who endeavours by the *perverſe Diſputings of Men of corrupt Minds*, and many other ways to ruffle and diſcompoſe us. (2.) We muſt not for the ſake of private Feuds, and perſonal Piques draw back from publick Worſhip. Tho' the *Phariſees* had thus maliciouſly cavil'd at Chriſt, yet he *went into their Synagogue.* Satan gains his point, if by ſowing Diſcord among Brethren, he prevail to drive them, or any of them from the Synagogue, and the Communion of the Faithful.

Secondly, Chriſt by *healing the Man that had the wither'd hand* on the Sabbath-day, ſhews that *Works of Mercy* are lawful and proper to be done on that Day. The Work of *Neceſſity* was done by the Diſciples, and juſtifi'd by him; the Work of Mercy was done by himſelf, for Works of *Mercy* were his Works of *Neceſſity*; 'twas his *Meat and Drink to do good*. *I muſt Preach*, ſaith he, *Luke* 4. 43. This Cure is here recorded for the ſake of the Time when it was wrought, on the *Sabbath*.

Here's 1. The Affliction that this poor Man was in; his Hand was *wither'd*, ſo that he was utterly diſabled to get his Living by *working with his Hands*. St. *Jerom* ſaith, that the Goſpel of *Matthew* in *Hebrew*, us'd by the *Nazarens* and *Ebionites*, adds this Circumſtance to this Story of the Man with the wither'd Hand, that he was *Cæmentarius*, a Bricklayer, and applied himſelf to Chriſt thus; Lord, I am a Bricklayer, and have got my Living by my Labour, (*manibus victum quaritans*) I beſeech thee, O Jeſus, reſtore me the uſe of my Hand, that I may not be oblig'd to beg my Bread; *ne turpiter mendicem cibos*. Hieron. in loc. This poor Man was in the *Synagogue*. *Note*, Thoſe that can do but little, or have but little to do for the World, muſt do ſo much the more for their Souls. As the Rich, the Aged, and the Infirm.

2. A ſpiteful Queſtion which the *Phariſees* put to Chriſt upon the ſight of this Man. *They aſked him, ſaying, Is it lawful to heal?* We read not here of any Addreſs this poor Man made to Chriſt for a Cure, but they obſerv'd Chriſt began to take notice of him, and knew it was uſual for him to be *found of thoſe that ſought him not*, and therefore with their Badneſs they prevented his Goodneſs, and ſtarted this Caſe as a Stumbling-block in the way of doing good; *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?* Whether it was lawful for *Phyſicians* to *heal* on that Day or no, which was the thing diſputed in their Books, one would think it paſt diſpute that it is lawful for *Prophets to heal*, for him to heal who diſcover'd a divine Power and Goodneſs in all he did of this kind, and manifeſted himſelf to be *ſent of God*. Did ever any aſk whether it is lawful for God to heal, to ſend his Word and heal? 'Tis true, Chriſt was now *made under the Law*, by a voluntary Submiſſion to it, but he was never made under the Precepts of the Elders. *Is it lawful to heal?* To enquire into the the lawfulneſs and Unlawfulneſs of Actions is very good, and we cannot apply ourſelve ſto any with ſuch Enquiries, more fitly than to Chriſt; but they aſk'd here, not that they might be inſtructed by him, but *that they might accuſe him*. If he ſhould ſay it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day, they would accuſe him of a Contradiction to the fourth Commandment; to ſo great a degree of Superſtition had the *Phariſees* brought the Sabbath-reſt, that unleſs in Peril of Life they allow'd not any medicinal Operations on the Sabbath-day; if he ſhould ſay it was not lawful, they would accuſe him of Partiality, having lately juſtified his Diſciples plucking the Ears of Corn on that Day.

3. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Queſtion, by way of Appeal to themſelves, and their own Opinion and Practice, *v.* 11, 12. In Caſe a *Sheep*, (tho' but one, of which the Loſs would not be very great) ſhould fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, *would they not lift it out?* No doubt they *might* do it, the fourth Commandment allows it, they *muſt* do it, for a *merciful Man regardeth the Life of his Beaſt*, and for their Parts they *would* do it rather than loſe a Sheep; Doth Chriſt take care for Sheep? Yes, he doth, he preſerves and provides for both Man and Beaſt. But here he ſaith it for our ſakes, 1 *Cor.* 9. 9, 10. And hence argues, *How much then is a Man better than a Sheep?* Sheep are not only harmleſs, but uſeful Creatures, and are priz'd and tended accordingly, yet a Man is here prefer'd far before them. *Note*, Man in reſpect of his Being, is a great deal better and more valuable than the beſt of the Brute Creatures; Man is a reaſonable Creature, capable of knowing, loving, and glorifying God, and therefore is better than a Sheep. The Sacrifice of a Sheep could therefore not atone for the Sin of a Soul. They do not conſider this, who are more ſollicitous for the Education, Preſervation, and Supply of their Horſes and Dogs than of God's Poor, or perhaps their own Houſhold.

Hence Chriſt infers a Truth which even at firſt ſight appears very reaſonable and good natur'd; That *it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days*; they had aſk'd, *Is it lawful to heal?* Chriſt proves it is lawful to *do well*, and let any one judge whether healing, as Chriſt heal'd was not *doing well*, *Note*, There are many ways of *doing well* upon Sabbath-days, than by the Duties of God's immediate Worſhip; attending the Sick, Relieving the Poor, helping thoſe that are fallen into ſudden Diſtreſs, and call for ſpeedy Relief; this is *doing good*: And this muſt be done from a Principle of Love and Charity, with Humility and Self-denial, and a heavenly Frame of Spirit, and this is *doing well*, and it *ſhall be accepted*, Gen. 4. 7.

4. Chriſt's curing of the Man, notwithſtanding the Offence which he foreſaw the *Phariſees* would take at it, *v.* 13. Tho' they could not Anſwer Chriſt's Arguments, they were reſolv'd to perſiſt in their Prejudice and Enmity; but Chriſt went on with his Work however. *Note*, Duty is not to be left undone, nor Opportunities of doing good neglected, or let ſlip for fear of giving *Offence*. Now the manner of the Cure is obſervable, he *ſaid to the Man, ſtretch forth thy Hand*, exert thyſelf as well as thou canſt, and he did ſo, and *it was reſtored whole*. This, as other the Cures Chriſt wrought, had a ſpiritual ſignificancy. (1.) By Nature our Hands are wither'd, we are utterly unable of ourſelves to do any thing that is good. (2.) 'Tis Chriſt only by the Power of his Grace that cures us; he heals the wither'd Hand by putting Life into the dead Soul, works in us both to will and to do. (3.) In order to our Cure, he commands us to *ſtretch forth our Hands*, to improve our natural Powers, and do as well as we can; ſtretch them out in Prayer to God, ſtretch them out to lay hold on Chriſt by Faith, ſtretch them out in holy Endeavours. Now this Man could not *ſtretch forth his wither'd Hand* of himſelf, no more than the impotent Man could ariſe and *carry his Bed*, or *Lazarus come forth out of his Grave*, yet Chriſt bid him do it; God's Commands to us to do the Duty, which of our ſelves we are not able to do, are no more abſurd or unjuſt than this Command to the Man with the *wither'd Hand to ſtretch it forth*; for with the Command there is a Promiſe of Grace which is given by the Word. *Turn ye at my Reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit*, Prov. 1. 23. And thoſe that periſh are as *inexcuſable* as this Man would have been, if he had not attempted to ſtretch forth his Hand, and ſo had not been *heal'd*. But thoſe that are ſav'd have no more to boaſt of than this Man had of contributing to his own Cure, by *ſtretching forth his Hand*, but are as much indebted to the Power and Grace of Chriſt as he was.

14 Then the Phariſees went out, and held a councel againſt him, how they might deſtroy him. 15 But when Jeſus knew it, he withdrew himſelf from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all. 16 And he charged them that they ſhould not make him known: 17 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpokeu by Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, 18 Behold, my ſervant whom I have choſen, my beloved in whom my Soul is well pleaſed: I will put my ſpirit upon him, and he ſhall ſhew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He ſhall not ſtrive, nor cry, neither ſhall any man hear his voice in the ſtreets. 20 A bruiſed reed ſhall he not break, and ſmoking flax ſhall he not quench, till he ſend forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his Name ſhall the Gentiles truſt.

As in the midſt of Chriſt's greateſt *Humiliations* there were Proofs of his *Dignity*, ſo in the midſt of his greateſt *Honours* he gave Proofs of his *Humility*; and when the *mighty Works* he did, gave him an opportunity of *making a Figure*, yet he made it appear that he *emptied himſelf*, and had *made himſelf of no Reputation*. Here we have

1. The curſed Malice of the *Phariſees* againſt Chriſt, *v.* 14. being enrag'd at the convincing Evidence of his Miracles, they *went out and held a Counſel againſt him, how they might deſtroy him*. That which vex'd them was, not only that by his Miracles his Honour eclips'd theirs, but that the Doctrine he Preach'd was directly oppoſite to

their Pride and Hypocriſy, and worldly Intereſt; but they pretended to be diſpleas'd at his breaking the Sabbath-day, which was by the Law a capital Crime, *Exod.* 35. 2. *Note*, 'Tis no new thing to ſee the vileſt Practices cloak'd with the moſt ſpecious Pretences. Obſerve their *Policy*; they took *Counſel* about it, conſider'd with themſelves which way to do it effectually; they *took Counſel together* in a cloſe Cabal about it, that they might both *animate* and *aſſiſt* one another. Obſerve their *Cruelty*; they took Counſel, not to Impriſon or Baniſh him, but to *deſtroy* him, to be the *death* of him, who came *that we might have Life*. What an Indignity was hereby put upon our Lord Jeſus, to run him down as an Out-law, (*qui caput gerit lupinum*) and the Plague of his Country, who was the greateſt Bleſſing of it, *the Glory of his People Iſrael*.

2. Chriſt's *abſconding* upon this Occaſion, and the Privacy he choſe, to decline not his Work, but his Danger, becauſe *his Hour was not yet come*, v. 15. *he withdrew himſelf from thence*. He could have ſecur'd himſelf by Miracle, but choſe to do it in the ordinary way of Flight and Retirement; becauſe in this, as in other things, he would ſubmit to the ſinleſs Infirmities of our Nature. Herein he humbled himſelf, that he was driven to the common Shift of thoſe that are moſt helpleſs; thus alſo he would give an Example to his own Rule, *when they Perſecute you in one City, flee to another*. Chriſt had ſaid, and done enough to convince thoſe *Phariſees*, if Reaſon or Miracle would have done it; but inſtead of yielding to the Conviction, they were harden'd and enraged, and therefore he left them as incurable, *Jer.* 51. 9.

Chriſt did not retire *for his own eaſe*, nor ſeek an Excuſe to leave off his Work, no, his Retirements were fill'd up with Buſineſs, and he was even then *doing good*, when he was forc'd to *flee for the ſame*. Thus he gave an Example to his Miniſters to do what they can, when they cannot do what they would, and to continue teaching, even when they are remov'd into Corners. When the *Phariſees*, the great Dons and Doctors of the Nation drove Chriſt from them, and forc'd him to *withdraw himſelf*, yet the common People crowded after him, *great Multitudes follow'd him*, and found him out. This ſome would turn to his Reproach, and call him the Ring-leader of the Mob; but it was really his Honour, that all that were *unbiaſs'd* and *unprejudic'd*, and not blinded by the Pomp of the World, were ſo hearty, ſo zealous for him, that they would follow him whitherſoever he went, and whatever Hazards they run with him; as it was alſo the Honour of his Grace that the Poor were *Evangeliz'd*, that when they *received him*, he received them, and *healed them all*. Chriſt came into the World to be a Phyſician General, as the Sun to the lower World, with *Healing under his Wings*. Tho' the *Phariſees* perſecuted Chriſt for *doing good*, yet he went on in it, and did not let the People fare the worſe for the Wickedneſs of their Rulers. *Note*, Tho' ſome are unkind to us, we muſt not therefore be unkind to others.

Yet Chriſt ſtudy'd to reconcile Uſefulneſs and Privacy, he *healed them all*; and yet, *v.* 16. *charg'd them that they ſhould not make him known*; which may be look'd upon (1.) As an Act of *Prudence*; 'twas not ſo much the Miracles themſelves, as the publick Diſcourſe concerning them that enrag'd the *Phariſees*, *v.* 23, 24. Therefore Chriſt, tho' he would not omit doing Good, yet would do it with as little Noiſe as poſſible, to avoid Offence to them, and Peril to himſelf. *Note*, Wiſe and good Men, tho' they covet to do good, yet are far from coveting to have it *talk'd of* when it is done; becauſe 'tis God's Acceptance, not Mens Applauſe that they aim at. And in ſuffering Times, tho' we muſt boldly go on in the way of Duty, yet we muſt contrive the Circumſtances of it, ſo as not to exaſperate more than needs thoſe that ſeek occaſion againſt us. *Be ye wiſe as Serpents*, Mat. 10. 16. (2.) It may be look'd upon as an Act of Righteous Judgment upon the *Phariſees*, who were unworthy to *hear of* any more of his Miracles, having made ſo light of thoſe they had ſeen. By ſhutting their Eyes againſt the Light, they had forfeited the Benefit of it. (3.) As an Act of Humility and Self-denial. Tho' Chriſt's Intention in his Miracles was to prove himſelf the Meſſiah, and ſo bring Men to believe on him, in order to which 'twas requiſite they ſhould be *known*, yet ſometimes he charged People to conceal them, to ſet us an Example of Humility, and to teach us not to *proclaim our own Goodneſs* or uſefulneſs, or to deſire to have it proclaim'd; Chriſt would have his Diſciples to be the Reverſe of thoſe who did all their Works *to be ſeen of Men*.

3. The fulfilling of the Scriptures in all this, *v.* 17. Chriſt retir'd into Privacy and Obſcurity, that tho' he was *eclips'd*, the Word of God might be fulfill'd, and ſo *Illuſtrated* and *Glorified*, which was the thing his Heart was upon. The Scripture here ſaid to be fulfill'd is *Iſa.* 42. 1, 2, 3, 4. which is quoted at large, *v.* 18, 19, 20. 21. The ſcope of it is to ſhew how *mild* and *quiet*, and yet how *ſucceſsful* our Lord Jeſus ſhould be in his Undertaking; Inſtances of both which we have in the foregoing Paſſages. Obſerve here,

Firſt, The *Pleaſedneſs* of the Father in Chriſt, *v.* 28. *Behold my Servant whom I have choſen, my beloved, in whom my Soul is well pleaſed.* Hence we may learn,

1. That our Saviour was *God's Servant* in the great Work of our Redemption. He therein ſubmitted himſelf to the Father's Will, *Heb.* 10. 7. and ſet himſelf to ſerve the Deſigns of his Grace, and the Intereſts of his Glory, in repairing the Breaches that had been made by Man's Apoſtacy. As a *Servant*, he had a great Work appointed him, and a great Truſt repoſed in him. This was a part of his Humiliation, that tho' he *thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*, yet in the Work of our Salvation he took upon him the Form of a Servant, received a Law, and came into Bonds. *Tho' he were a Son, yet learned he this Obedience*, Heb. 5. 8. The Motto of this Prince is *Ich dien, I ſerve.*

2. That Jeſus Chriſt was *choſen of God*, as the only fit and proper Perſon for the Management of the great Work of our Redemption. He is *my Servant whom I have choſen*, as *par Negotio*. None but he was able to do the Redeemer's Work, or fit to wear the Redeemer's Crown. He was one *choſen out of the People*, Pſal. 89. 19. choſen by infinite Wiſdom to that Poſt of Service and Honour, which neither Man nor Angel was qualified for; none but Chriſt, that he might in all things have the Preheminence. Chriſt did not thruſt himſelf upon this Work, but was duly choſen into it; Chriſt was ſo God's choſen as to be the Head of Election, and of all other the Elect, for we are *choſen in him*, Eph. 1. 4.

3. That Jeſus Chriſt is *God's Beloved*, his *beloved Son*; as *God* he lay from Eternity in his Boſom, *John* 1. 18. He was *daily his delight*, Prov. 8. 30. Between the Father and the Son there was before all Time an eternal and unconceivable Intercourſe, and Interchanging of Love, and thus *the Lord poſſeſſed him in the beginning of his way*, Prov. 8. 22. *As Mediator* the Father *lov'd him*; then when it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, and he ſubmitted to it, *therefore did the Father love him*, John. 10. 17.

4. That Jeſus Chriſt is one in whom the Father is *well pleas'd*, in whom *his Soul is pleas'd*, which notes the higheſt Complacency imaginable. God declar'd by a Voice from Heaven, that he is his beloved Son in whom he is well pleas'd, well pleas'd *in him*, becauſe he was the ready and chearful Undertaker of that Work of Wonder which God's Heart was ſo much upon, and he is well pleaſed *with us in him*; for he hath *made us accepted in the Beloved*, Eph 1. 6. All the Intereſts which fallen Man hath, or can have in God, is grounded upon, and owing to God's *Well-pleaſedneſs* in Jeſus Chriſt; for there's *no coming to the Father but by him*, John 14. 6.

Secondly, The Promiſe of the Father to him in two things.

1. That he ſhould be every way well *qualified* for his Undertaking; *I will put my Spirit upon him*, as a Spirit of *Wiſdom and Counſel*, Iſa. 11. 2, 3. Thoſe whom God calls to any Service, he will be ſure to fit and qualifie them for it, and by that it will appear that he called them to it, as *Moſes*, Exod. 4. 12. Chriſt as God was *equal in Power and Glory* with the Father, as Mediator he *received* from the Father Power and Glory, and *received* that he might *give*; and all that the Father *gave him* to qualifie him for his Undertaking was ſum'd up in this, he *put his Spirit upon him*; this was that *Oil of Gladneſs* with which he was *anointed above his Fellows*, Heb. 1. 9. He received the Spirit, not *by meaſure*, but *without meaſure*, John 3. 34. *Note*, Whoever they be that God hath *choſen*, and in whom he is *well pleaſed*, he will be ſure to *put his Spirit upon them*. Wherever he confers his *Love*, he confers ſomewhat of his *Likeneſs*.

2. That he ſhould be abundantly *ſucceſsful* in his Undertaking. Thoſe whom God *ſends* he will certainly *own*. 'Twas long ſince ſecur'd by Promiſe to our Lord Jeſus, that the *good Pleaſure of the Lord* ſhould *proſper in his Hand*, Iſa. 53. 10. And here we have an account of that proſpering *good Pleaſure*.

1. He ſhall *ſhew Judgment to the Gentiles*. Chriſt in his own Perſon preach'd to thoſe that border'd upon the Heathen Nations, ſee *Mark* 3. 6, 7. and by his Apoſtles ſhew'd his *Goſpel*, call'd here his *Judgment* to the *Gentile* World. The Way and Method of Salvation, the *Judgment* which is *committed to the Son*, is not only wrought out by him as our great *High-Prieſt*, but ſhew'd and publiſh'd by him as our great *Prophet*. The Goſpel, as it is a Rule of Practice and Converſation, which has a direct Tendency to the reforming and bettering Men's Hearts and Lives, ſhall be ſhew'd to the *Gentiles*. God's *Judgments* had been the *Jews* peculiar, *Pſal.* 147. 19. But it was oft foretold by the *Old Teſtament* Prophets, that they ſhould be *ſhew'd to the Gentiles*, which therefore ought not to have been ſuch a *ſurprize* as it was to the unbelieving *Jews*, much leſs a *Vexation*.

2. *In his Name ſhall the Gentiles truſt*, v. 21. He ſhall ſo *ſhew Judgment* to them, that they ſhall heed and obſerve what he ſhews them, and be influenc'd by it to depend upon him, to devote themſelves to him, and conform to that Judgment. *Note*, The great deſign of the Goſpel is to bring People to truſt in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt; his Name *Jeſus a Saviour*, that precious Name whereby he is call'd; and which is as Ointment poured forth, *the Lord our Righteouſneſs*. The Evangeliſt here follows the Septuagint, (or perhaps the latter Editions of the Septuagint follow the Evangeliſt, the *Hebrew* (Iſa. 42. 4) is, *The Iſles ſhall wait for his Law*. The Iſles of the *Gentiles* are ſpoken of, *Gen.* 11. 5. Peopled by the Sons of *Japhet*, of whom 'twas ſaid, *Gen.* 9. 27. *God ſhall perſwade* Japhet *to dwell in the Tents of* Shem; which was now to be fulfill'd when *the Iſles*, (ſaith the Prophet) *the Gentiles*, (ſaith the Evangeliſt) ſhall *wait for his Law*, and *truſt in his Name*: Compare theſe together, and obſerve, that they, and they only, can with confidence *truſt in Chriſt's Name*, that *wait for his Law* with a Reſolution to be rul'd by it. Obſerve alſo, that the *Law we wait for* is the Law of Faith, the Law of *truſting in his Name*. This is now his great Commandment, that we *believe in Chriſt*, 1 John 3. 23.

Thirdly, The *Prediction* concerning him, and his mild and quiet Management of his Undertaking, *v.* 19, 20. 'Tis chiefly for the ſake of this that 'tis here quoted, upon occaſion of Chriſt's affected Privacy and Concealment.

1. That he ſhould carry on his Undertaking without Noiſe or Oſtentation. *He ſhall not ſtrive, or make an Out-cry.* Chriſt and his Kingdom come not *with Obſervation,* Luke 17. 20, 21. When the firſt begotten was brought into the World, 'twas not with State and Ceremony, he made no Publick Entry, had no Harbingers to proclaim him King. He *was in the World*, and the World *knew him not*. Thoſe were miſtaken that fed themſelves with hopes of a pompous Saviour. *His Voice was not heard in the Streets*; Lo, here is Chriſt, or, Lo, he is there: He ſpoke in a ſtill ſmall Voice, which was *alluring to all*, but *terryfying* to none; he did not affect to make a noiſe, but came down *ſilently*, like the *Dew*. What he ſpoke and did was with the greateſt Humility and Self-denial poſſible. His Kingdom was *Spiritual*, and therefore not to be advanc'd by Force or Violence, or by talking big. No, *the Kingdom* of God is not *in Word*, but in *Power*.

2. That he ſhould carry on his Undertaking without Severity and Rigour, *v.* 20. *A bruiſed Reed ſhall he not break.* Some underſtand this of his Patience in *bearing with the Wicked*; he could as eaſily have broke theſe *Phariſees*, as a bruiſed Reed, and have quench'd them as ſoon as ſmoaking Flax, but he will not do it *till the Judgment-day*, when all his Enemies ſhall be made his Footſtool. Others rather underſtand it of his Power and Grace in *bearing up the Weak*. In general, the deſign of his Goſpel is to ſtabliſh ſuch a Method of Salvation as encourageth *Sincerity*, tho' there be much *Infirmity*; doth not inſiſt upon a ſinleſs Obedience, but accepts an upright *willing Mind*. As to particular Perſons that follow Chriſt in Weakneſs and in Fear, and in much Trembling. Obſerve, (1.) How their Caſe is here deſcrib'd, they are like *a bruiſed Reed*, and *ſmoaking Flax*. Young beginners in Religion are *weak*, as a *bruiſed Reed*, and their Weakneſs offenſive, like *ſmoaking Flax*; ſome little Life they have, but it is like that of a *bruiſed Reed*, ſome little Heat, but like that of *ſmoaking Flax*. Chriſt's Diſciples were as yet but weak, and many are ſo that have a Place in his Family. The Grace and Goodneſs in them is as a *bruiſed Reed*, the Corruption and Badneſs in them is as *ſmoaking Flax*, as the Wick of a Candle when 'tis put out, and is yet ſmoaking. (2.) What is the Compaſſion of our Lord Jeſus towards them. He will not diſcourage them, much leſs reject them, or caſt them off: The *Reed* that is *bruiſed* ſhall not be *broken*, and trodden down, but ſhall be ſupported, and made as a ſtrong Cedar, or flouriſhing Palm-Tree. The Candle newly lighted, tho' it only ſmokes, and doth not flame, ſhall not be blown out, but blown up. The Day of *ſmall things* is the Day of precious things, and therefore he will not deſpiſe it, but make it the *Day of great things*, Zech. 4. 10. *Note*, Our Lord Jeſus deals very tenderly with thoſe that have true Grace, tho' they be weak in it, *Iſa.* 40. 11. *Heb.* 5. 2. He remembers, not only that we are *Duſt*, but that we are Fleſh. (3.) The good Iſſue and Succeſs of this, intimated in that, *till he ſend forth Judgment unto Victory*. That Judgment which he ſhew'd to the *Gentiles* ſhall be victorious, he will go on conquering, and to conquer, *Rev.* 6. 2. Both the Preaching of the Goſpel in the World, and the Power of the Goſpel in the Heart ſhall prevail. Grace ſhall get the upper hand of Corruption, and ſhall at length be perfected in Glory; Chriſt's *Judgment* will be brought forth to *Victory*, for when he Judgeth he will overcome. He ſhall *bring forth Judgment unto Truth*. So it is, *Iſa.* 42. 3. *Truth* and *Victory* are much the ſame, for *great is the Truth, and will prevail.*

22 Then was brought unto him one poſſeſſed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, inſomuch that the blind and dumb both ſpake and ſaw. 23 And all the people were amazed, and ſaid, Is not this the ſon of David? 24 But when the Phariſees heard *it*, they ſaid, This *fellow* doth not caſt out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. 25 And Jeſus knew their thoughts, and ſaid unto them, Every kingdom divided againſt it ſelf, is brought to deſolation: and every city or houſe divided againſt it ſelf, ſhall not ſtand. 26 And if Satan caſt out Satan, he is divided againſt himſelf: how ſhall then his kingdom ſtand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your children caſt *them* out? therefore they ſhall be your judges. 28 But if I caſt out devils by the ſpirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. 29 Or elſe how can one enter into a ſtrong mans houſe, and ſpoil his goods, except he firſt bind the ſtrong man? and then he will ſpoil his houſe. 30 He that is not with me, is againſt me: and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad. 31 Wherefore I ſay unto you, All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men: but the blaſphemy *againſt* the *holy* Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him: but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come. 33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or elſe make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by *his* fruit. 34 O generation of vipers, how can ye being evil, ſpeak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh. 35 A good man out of the good treaſure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and and an evil man out of the evil treaſure, bringeth forth evil things. 36 But I ſay unto you, That every idle word that men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of Judgment. 37 For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Chriſt's glorious Conqueſt of Satan in the gracious Cure of one that by the divine Permiſſion was under his Power, and in his Poſſeſſion, *v.* 22. Here obſerve,

1. The Man's *Caſe* was very *ſad*, he was *poſſeſſed with a Devil*: There were more Caſes of this kind occurred in Chriſt's time than uſual, that Chriſt's *Power* might be more *magnified*, and his *Purpoſe* the more manifeſted in oppoſing and diſpoſſeſſing Satan; and it might the more evidently appear that he came to *deſtroy the Works of the Devil*. This poor Man that was poſſeſs'd was *Blind* and *Dumb*; a miſerable caſe, he could neither *ſee* to help himſelf, nor *ſpeak* to others to help him. A Soul under Satan's Power, and led Captive by him, is *blind* in the things of God, and *dumb* at the Throne of Grace; ſees nothing, and ſaith nothing to the Purpoſe. Satan *blinds* the Eye of Faith, and *ſeals up* the Lips of Prayer.

2. His Cure was very *ſtrange*, and the more ſo, becauſe *ſudden*, he *healed him*. *Note*, The conquering and diſpoſſeſſing of Satan, is the healing of Souls. And the Cauſe being removed immediately, the Effect ceaſed; the *Blind and Dumb* both *ſpake* and *ſaw*. *Note*, Chriſt's Mercy is directly oppoſite to Satan's Malice; his Favours to the Devil's Miſchiefs. When Satan's Power is broke in the Soul, the Eyes are open'd to ſee God's Glory, and the Lips open'd to ſpeak his Praiſe.

Secondly, The Conviction which this gave to the People, to *all the People*, they were *amazed*. Chriſt had wrought divers Miracles of this kind before; but his Works are not the leſs Wonderful, nor the leſs to be wonder'd at for their being *oft repeated*. They infer'd from it, *Is not this the Son of David?* The Meſſiah promis'd that was to ſpring from the Loins of *David*? Is not this he that ſhould come? we may take this (1.) as an *enquiring* Queſtion; they ask'd, *Is not this the Son of David?* but did not ſtay for an Anſwer; the Impreſſions were *cogent*, but they were *tranſient*. 'Twas a good Queſtion they ſtarted, but it ſhould ſeem it was ſoon *loſt*, and was not proſecuted. Such Convictions as theſe ſhould be brought *to a Head*, and then they are likely to be brought *to the Heart*. Or, (2.) as an *affirming* Queſtion; *Is not this the Son of* David? Yes, certainly it is, it can be no other: Such Miracles as theſe plainly evince that the Kingdom of the Meſſiah is now in the ſetting up. And they were *the People*, the vulgar ſort of the Spectators that drew this Inference from Chriſt's Miracles. Atheiſts will ſay, That was becauſe they were leſs *prying* than the *Phariſees*; no, the Matter of Fact was obvious, and requir'd not much ſearch; but it was becauſe they were leſs *prejudic'd*, and biaſs'd by worldly Intereſt. So plain and eaſie was the Way made to this great Truth of Chriſt's being the *Meſſiah*, and Saviour of the World, that the common People could not miſs it; the *Way-faring Men, tho' Fools*, could not *err therein*. See *Iſa.* 35. 8. 'Twas found of them that ſought it. And it is an Inſtance of the Condeſcenſions of the divine Grace, that the things that were *hid from the Wiſe and Prudent* were *revealed unto Babes*. The World by Wiſdom knew not God, and by the *fooliſh things* the Wiſe were confounded.

Thirdly. The blaſphemous Cavil of the *Phariſees*, v. 24. The *Phariſees* were a ſort of Men that pretended to more Knowledge in, and Zeal for the divine Law than other People, yet they were the moſt inveterate Enemies to Chriſt and his Doctrine. They were proud of the Reputation they had among the People, that fed their Pride, ſupported their Power, and fill'd their Purſes; and when they *heard* the People ſay, *Is not this the Son of* David? they were extremely *nettled*, more at that than at the Miracle it ſelf; this made them jealous of our Lord Jeſus, and apprehenſive that his Intereſt in the People's Eſteem increas'd, theirs muſt of courſe be eclips'd and diminiſh'd; therefore they envy'd him, as *Saul* did his Father *David*, becauſe of what the Woman ſang of him, 1 *Sam.* 18. 7, 8. *Note*, Thoſe that bind up their Happineſs in the Praiſe and Applauſe of Men, expoſe themſelves to a perpetual uneaſineſs upon every favourable word that they hear ſaid of any other. The Shadow of Honour follow'd Chriſt that fled from it, and fled from the *Phariſees* that were eager in the purſuit of it. They ſaid, *This fellow doth not caſt out Devils, but by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils*, and therefore is not the Son of *David*. Obſerve,

1. How *ſcornfully* they ſpeak of Chriſt, *This Fellow*; as if that precious Name of his, which is *as Ointment po*[illegible]*d forth*, were not worthy to be taken into their Lips. 'Tis an Inſtance of their Pride and Superciliouſneſs, and their diabolical Envy, that the more People magnified Chriſt, the more induſtrious they were to *Vilifie* him. 'Tis an ill thing to ſpeak of good Men with *Diſdain* becauſe they are Poor.

2. How *blaſphemouſly* they ſpeak of his Miracles; they could not deny the Matter of Fact, 'twas as plain as the Sun, that Devils were caſt out by the Word of Chriſt; nor could they deny but that it was an extraordinary thing, and ſupernatural: and being thus forc'd to grant the Premiſes, they had no other way to avoid the Concluſion, that this is the *Son of David*, but by ſuggeſting that Chriſt *caſt out Devils by Beelzebub*. That there was a Compact between Chriſt and the Devil, purſuant to the Devil the Devil was not *caſt out*, but did voluntarily retire, and give back by Conſent, and with Deſign. Or, as if by an Agreement with the ruling Devil he had Power to caſt out the inferior Devils. No Surmiſe could be more palpably *falſe* and *vile*, than this; that he who is Truth it ſelf, ſhould be in Combination with the Father of Lies to *cheat the World*. This was the laſt Refuge, or Subterfuge rather of an obſtinate Infidelity, that was reſolv'd to ſtand it out againſt the cleareſt Conviction. Obſerve, Among the Devils there is a *Prince*, the Ring-leader of the Apoſtacy from God, and Rebellion againſt him. But this Prince is *Beelzebub*, the *God of a Fly*, or, a *Dunghil-god*. How art thou fallen, O *Lucifer!* from an Angel of Light to be a *Lord of Flies*. Yet this is the *Prince of the Devils* too, the chief of the Gang of infernal Spirits.

Fourthly, Chriſt's Reply to this baſe Inſinuation, *v.* 25.--30. *Jeſus knew their Thoughts. Note*, Jeſus Chriſt knows what we are thinking at any time, *knows what is in Man*; he underſtandeth our Thoughts afar off. It ſhould ſeem the *Phariſees* could not for ſhame ſpeak it out, but kept it in their Minds: They could not expect to ſatisfy the People with it, they therefore reſerv'd it for the ſilencing the Convictions of their own Conſciences. *Note*, Many are kept off from their Duty by that which they are aſham'd to own, but which they cannot hide from Jeſus Chriſt. Yet 'tis probable the *Phariſees* had whiſper'd what they *thought* among themſelves, to help to harden *one another*; but Chriſt's Reply is ſaid to be to their *Thoughts*, becauſe he knew with what Mind, and from what Principle they ſaid it; they did not ſay it *in their haſte*, but it was the product of a rooted Malignity.

Chriſt's Reply to this Imputation is copious and cogent; that every Mouth may be ſtop'd with Senſe and Reaſon, before it be ſtop'd with Fire and Brimſtone: Here are three Arguments by which he demonſtrates the unreaſonableneſs of this Suggeſtion.

1. It would be very ſtrange, and highly improbable, that Satan ſhould be caſt out by ſuch a Compact, becauſe then *Satan's Kingdom* would be *divided againſt it ſelf*; which conſidering his Subtilty, is not a thing to be imagin'd, *v.* 25, 26.

(1.) Here's a known Rule laid down, That in all Societies a common Ruin is the Conſequence of mutual Quarrels; *every Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf is brought to Deſolation*, and every Family too. *Quæ enim Domus tam ſtabilis eſt, quæ tam firma Civitas, quæ non Odiis atque Diſſidiis funditus everti poſſit?* Cic. Læl. 7. Diviſions commonly end in Deſolations; if we claſh we break, if we divide one from another, we become an eaſy Prey to a common Enemy; much more if we *bite* and *devour* one another, *ſhall we be conſumed one of another*, Gal. 5. 15. Churches and Nations have known this by ſad Experience.

(2.) The Application of it to the Caſe in hand, *v.* 26. *If Satan caſt out Satan.* If the Prince of the Devils ſhould be at variance with the inferior Devils, the whole Kingdom and Intereſt would ſoon be broken. Nay, if Satan ſhould come into a Compact with Chriſt, it muſt be to his own Ruin; for the manifeſt Deſign and Tendency of Chriſt's Preaching and Miracles, was to overthrow the Kingdom of Satan, as a Kingdom of Darkneſs, Wickedneſs, and Enmity to God, and to ſet up upon the Ruins of it a Kingdom of Light, Holineſs, and Love. The Works of the Devil as a Rebel againſt God, and a Tyrant over the Souls of Men, were *deſtroy'd* by Chriſt, and therefore it was the muſt abſurd thing imaginable, to think that *Beelzebub* ſhould at all countenance ſuch a Deſign, or come into it. If he ſhould fall in with Chriſt, *how ſhall then his Kingdom ſtand?* He would himſelf contribute to the Overthrow of it. *Note*, The Devil has a Kingdom, a common Intereſt in Oppoſition to God and Chriſt, which to the utmoſt of his Power he will *make to ſtand*, and he will never come into Chriſt's Intereſts; he muſt be conquer'd and broken by Chriſt, and therefore cannot ſubmit and bend to him. What Concord or Communion can there be between Light and Darkneſs, Chriſt and *Belial*, Chriſt and *Beelzebub*. Chriſt will deſtroy the Devil's Kingdom, but he needs not do it by any ſuch little Arts and Projects as this of a ſecret Compact with *Beelzebub*; no, this Victory muſt be obtain'd by nobler Methods. Let the Prince of the Devils muſter up all his Forces, let him make uſe of all his Powers and Politicks, and keep his Intereſts in the cloſeſt Confederacy, yet Chriſt will be too hard for his united Force, and *his Kingdom ſhall not ſtand*.

2. It was not at all ſtrange or improbable, that Devils ſhould be caſt out by the *Spirit of God*; for,

(1.) *How* otherwiſe *do your Children caſt them out?* There were thoſe among the *Jews*, who by Invocation of the Name of the moſt high God, or the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, did ſometimes caſt out Devils. *Joſephus* ſpeaks of ſome in his Time that did it; we read of *Jewiſh Exorciſts*, Acts 19. 9. and of ſome that in Chriſt's Name caſt out Devils, tho' they did not follow him, *Mark* 9. 38. or were not faithful to him, *Mat.* 7. 22. Theſe the *Phariſees* condemned not, but imputed what they did to the Spirit of God, and valu'd themſelves and their Nation by it. It was therefore meerly from Spite and Envy to Chriſt, that they would own that others caſt out Devils by the Spirit of God, but ſuggeſt that he did it by Compact with *Beelzebub*. *Note*, It is the way of malicious People, eſpecially the malicious Perſecutors of Chriſt and Chriſtianity, to condemn the ſame thing in thoſe they hate, which they approve of and applaud in thoſe they have a kindneſs for. The Judgments of Envy are made, not by Things, but Perſons; not by Reaſon, but Prejudice. But thoſe were very unfit to ſit in *Moſes*'s Seat who *knew Faces*, and knew nothing elſe in Judgment; therefore *they ſhall be our Judges*, i. e. This Contradicting of your ſelves will riſe up in Judgment againſt you at the great Day, and will condemn you. *Note*, In the laſt Judgment, not only every Sin, but every Aggravation of it, will be brought into the Account, and ſome of our Notions that were right and good will be brought in evidence againſt us to convict us of Partiality.

(2.) This caſting out of Devils was a certain Token and Indication of the Approach and Appearance of the Kingdom of God, *v.* 28. But if it be indeed that I caſt out Devils by the *Spirit of God*, as certainly I do, then you muſt conclude, that tho' you are unwilling to receive it, yet the Kingdom of the Meſſiah is now about to be ſet up among you. Other Miracles that Chriſt wrought, prov'd him ſent of God, but this prov'd him ſent of God to deſtroy the Devil's Kingdom and his Works. Now that great Promiſe was evidently fulfilled, that the *Seed of the Woman ſhould break the Serpent's Head*, Gen. 3. 15. Therefore that glorious Diſpenſation of the *Kingdom of God*, which has been long expected, is now commenc'd, ſlight it at your Peril. *Note*, (1.) The Deſtruction of the Devil's Power is wrought by the Spirit of God. That Spirit who works to the Obedience of Faith, overthrows the Intereſt of that Spirit who works in the Children of Unbelief and Diſobedience. (2.) The caſting out of Devils is a certain Introduction to the Kingdom of God. If the Devil's Intereſt in a Soul be not only check'd by Cuſtom, or external Reſtraints, but ſunk and broken by the Spirit of God as a Sanctifier, no doubt but *the Kingdom of God is come* to that Soul, the Kingdom of Grace, a bleſſed Earneſt of the Kingdom of Glory.

3. The comparing of Chriſt's Miracles, particularly this of caſting out Devils with his Doctrine, and the Deſign and Tendency of his holy Religion did evince that he was ſo far from being in league with Satan, that he was at open Enmity and Hoſtility againſt him, *v.* 29. *How can one enter into a ſtrong Man's Houſe, and plunder his Goods*, and carry them away, except he firſt *bind the ſtrong Man*, and then he may do what he pleaſeth with his Goods. The World that ſate in Darkneſs and lay in Wickedneſs, was in Satan's Poſſeſſion, and under his Power, as a Houſe in the Poſſeſſion, and under the Power of a ſtrong Man; ſo is every unregenerate Soul, there Satan *reſides*, there he *rules*. Now (1.) the Deſign of Chriſt's Goſpel was to *ſpoil* the Devil's Houſe, which was a *ſtrong Man* he *kept* in the World, to turn People from Darkneſs to Light, from Sin to Holineſs, from this World to a better, from the *Power of Satan unto God*, Acts 26. 18. to alter the Property of Souls. (2.) Purſuant to this Deſign, he *bound the ſtrong Man*, when he caſt out unclean Spirits by his Word. Thus he wreſted the Sword out of the Devil's Hand, that he might wreſt the Scepter out of it. The Doctrine of Chriſt teacheth us how to conſtrue his Miracles; and when he ſhewed how eaſily and effectually he could caſt the Devil out of Peoples Bodies, he encouraged all Believers to hope, that whatever Power Satan might uſurp and exerciſe in the Souls of Men, Chriſt by his Grace would break it, he will *ſpoil him*; for it appears he can *bind him*. When Nations were turned from the Service of Idols to ſerve the living World, when ſome of the *worſt of Sinners* were ſanctified and juſtified, and became the *beſt of Saints*, then Chriſt *ſpoiled the Devil's Houſe*, and will ſpoil it more and more.

Laſtly, It is here intimated, that this *holy War* which Chriſt was carrying on with Vigour againſt the Devil, and his Kingdom, was ſuch as would not *admit of a Neutrality*, v. 30. *He that is not with me is againſt me.* In the little Differences that may ariſe between the Diſciples of Chriſt among themſelves, we are taught to leſſen the Matters in Variance, and to ſeek Peace, by accounting thoſe that *are not againſt us*, to be *with us*, Luke 9. 50. But in the great Quarrel between Chriſt and the Devil, no Peace is to be ſought, nor any ſuch favourable Conſtruction to be made of an Indifferency in the Matter; he that is not hearty *for Chriſt*, will be reckon'd with, as really *againſt him*. He that is cold in the Cauſe, is look'd upon as an Enemy. When the Diſpute is between God and *Baal*, there is no halting between two, 1 *Kings* 18. 21. There's no *Trimming* between Chriſt and *Belial*; for the Kingdom of Chriſt, as it is eternally *oppoſite to*, ſo it will be eternally *victorious over* the Devil's Kingdom. And therefore in this Cauſe there's no *ſitting ſtill* with *Gilead* beyond *Jordan*, or *Aſher* on the Sea-ſhore, *Judg.* 5. 16, 17. We muſt be entirely, faithfully, and immoveably on Chriſt's Side; 'tis the right Side, and will at laſt be the *riſing* Side. See *Exod.* 32. 26.

The latter Clauſe is to the ſame Purpoſe. *He that gathereth not with me ſcattereth. Note*, (1.) Chriſt's Errand into the World was to *gather*; to gather in his Harveſt, to gather in thoſe that the Father had given him, *John* 11. 52. *Eph.* 1. 10. (2.) Chriſt expects and requires from thoſe that are *with him*, that they *gather* with him; that they not only gather to him themſelves, but do all they can in their Places, to gather others to him, and ſo to ſtrengthen his Intereſt. (3.) Thoſe who will not appear and act, as Furtherers of Chriſt's Kingom, will be look'd upon and dealt with, as Hinderers of it. If we gather not with Chriſt, we ſcatter; 'tis not enough not to *do hurt*, but we muſt *do good*. Thus is the Breach widen'd between *Chriſt* and *Satan*, to ſhew there was no ſuch Compact between them as the *Phariſees* whiſper'd.

Fifthly, Here's a Diſcourſe of Chriſt's upon this Occaſion, concerning *Tongue-ſins. Wherefore I ſay unto you.* He ſeems to turn from the *Phariſees* to the People, from diſputing to inſtructing, and from the Sin of the *Phariſees*, he warns the People concerning three Sorts of *Tongue-Sins*; for others Harms are Admonitions to us.

1*ſt*, *Blaſphemous Words againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, the worſt Kind of *Tongue-Sins*, and unpardonable, *v.* 31, 32. (1.) Here's a gracious Aſſurance of the Pardon of all Sin upon Goſpel Terms. This Chriſt *ſaith unto us*, and it is a comfortable Saying, That the Greatneſs of Sin ſhall be no Bar to our Acceptance with God, if we truly repent, and believe the Goſpel, *All manner of Sin and Blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto Men.* Though the Sin has been *as Scarlet and Crimſon*, *Iſa.* 1. 18. though never ſo heinous in its Nature, never ſo much aggravated by its Circumſtances, and never ſo oft repeated, tho' it *reach up to the Heavens*, yet with the Lord there's Mercy that *reacheth beyond the Heavens.* Even *Blaſphemy*, a Sin immediatly touching God's Name and Honour; *Paul* obtain'd Mercy, who had been a *Blaſphemer*, 1 Tim. 1. 13. Well may we ſay, *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning Iniquity?* Mic. 7. 18. Even *Words ſpoken againſt the Son of Man* ſhall be forgiven; as theirs was who revil'd him at his Death, many of whom repented, and found Mercy. Chriſt herein hath ſet an Example to all other the *Sons of Men*, to be ready to forgive *Words ſpoken againſt them. I as a deaf Man heard not.* Obſerve, They ſhall be forgiven *unto Men*, not to Devils; this is Love to the whole World of Mankind, above the World of fallen Angels, that all Sin is pardonable *to them.*

(2.) Here's an Exception of the *Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, which is here declar'd to be the only unpardonable Sin, See here.

1. What this Sin is. 'Tis *ſpeaking againſt the Holy Ghoſt.* See what Malignity there is in *Tongue Sins*; when the only unpardonable Sin is ſo. But Jeſus *knew their Thoughts*, v. 25. 'Tis not all ſpeaking againſt the Perſon, or Eſſence of the Holy Ghoſt, or ſome of his more private Operations, or meerly the reſiſting of his internal Working in the Sinner himſelf, that is here meant; for who then ſhould be ſav'd? It is adjudg'd in our Law, that an Act of *Indemnity* ſhould always be conſtru'd in favour of that Grace and Clemency, which is the Intendment of the Act; and therefore the Exceptions in the Act are not to be extended further than needs muſt. The Goſpel is an Act of Indemnity; none are excepted by Name, nor any by Deſcription, but thoſe only that blaſpheme the Holy Ghoſt; which therefore muſt be conſtrued in the *narroweſt Senſe.* All preſuming Sinners are effectually cut off by the Conditions of the indemnity, Faith and Repentance: And therefore the other Exceptions muſt not be ſtretched far; and this *Blaſphemy* is excepted, not for any Defect of Mercy in God, or Merit in Chriſt, but becauſe it inevitably leaves the Sinner in Infidelity and Impenitency. We have Reaſon to think that none are guilty of this Sin, who believe that Chriſt is the Son of God, and ſincerely deſire to have part in his Merit and Mercy. And thoſe who fear they have committed this Sin, 'tis a good Sign they have not. The learned Dr. *Whitby* very well obſerves, that Chriſt ſpeaks not of what was now ſaid or done, but of what ſhould be, *Mark* 3. 38. *Luke* 12. 10. *Whoſoever ſhall Blaſpheme.* As for thoſe who Blaſphemed Chriſt, when he was here upon Earth and called him a Wine-bibber, a Deceiver, a Blaſphemer, and the like, they had ſome Colour of Excuſe, becauſe of the Meanneſs of his Appearance, and the Prejudices of the Nation againſt him; and the Proof of his divine Miſſion was not perfected till after his Aſcenſion: And therefore upon their Repentance they ſhould be pardon'd, and 'tis hoped they may be convinc'd by the pouring out of the Spirit, as many of them were, who had been his Betrayers and Murderers. But if when the Holy Ghoſt is given, in his *inward Gifts* of Revelation, Speaking with Tongues, and the like, ſuch as were the Diſtributions of the Spirit among the Apoſtles, if they continue to *blaſpheme the Spirit* likewiſe, as an *Evil Spirit*, there's no Hopes of them, that they will ever be brought to believe in Chriſt. For (1.) Thoſe Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt in the Apoſtles, were the laſt Proof that God deſign'd to make uſe of for the confirming of the Goſpel and were ſtill kept in Reſerve, when other Methods proceeded. (2.) This was the moſt powerful Evidence, and more apt to convince than Miracles themſelves. (3.) Thoſe therefore that blaſpheme this Diſpenſation of the Spirit, cannot poſſibly be brought to believe in Chriſt. Thoſe who ſhall impute them to a Colluſion with Satan, as the *Phariſees* did the Miracles, what can convince them? This is is ſuch a Strong-hold of Infidelity, as a Man can never be beaten out of, and is therefore unpardonable, becauſe hereby Repentance is hid from the Sinner's Eyes.

2. What the Sentence is that is paſs'd upon it, *It ſhall not be forgiven, neither in this World, nor in the World to come.* As in the then preſent State of the *Jewiſh* Church, there was no Sacrifice of Expiation for the Soul that *ſin'd preſumptuouſly*, ſo neither under the Diſpenſation of Goſpel Grace, which is often in Scripture call'd the *World to come*, ſhall there be any pardon to ſuch, as *tread under Foot the Blood of the Covenant*, and do *Deſpite to the Spirit of Grace.* There is no cure for a Sin ſo directly againſt the Remedy. It was a Rule in our old Law. No *Sanctuary* for *Sacriledge.* Or, it ſhall be forgiven neither now, in the Sinner's own Conſcience, nor in the great Day, when the Pardon ſhall be publiſh'd. Or, This is a Sin that expoſeth the Sinner, both to temporal and eternal Puniſhment, both to preſent Wrath, and the Wrath to come.

2*d*, Chriſt ſpeaks here concerning *other wicked Words*, the Products of Corruption reigning in the Heart, and breaking out thence, *v.* 33, 34, 35. 'Twas ſaid, *v.* 25. that *Jeſus knew their Thoughts*, and here he ſpoke with an Eye to them, ſhewing that it was not ſtrange they ſhould *ſpeak ſo ill*, when their Hearts were ſo full of *Enmity* and *Malice*; which yet they oft endeavour'd to cloke and cover, by *feigning themſelves juſt Men.* Our Lord Jeſus therefore points to the Spring, and heals them; let the Heart be ſanctified, and it will appear in our Words,

1. The Heart is the *Root*, the Language is the *Fruit*, *v.* 33. If the Nature of the Tree be good, it will bring forth Fruit accordingly. Where Grace is the reigning Principle in the Heart, the Language will be the Language of *Canaan*; and on the contrary, whatever Luſt reigns in the Heart it will break out; rotten Lungs make a ſtinking Breath: Men's Language diſcovers what Country they are of, ſo likewiſe what manner of Spirit they are of, *Either make the Tree good*, and then the *Fruit will be good*, get pure Hearts, and then you will have pure Lips and pure Lives, or elſe the *Tree will be corrupt*, and the *Fruit accordingly.* You may make a Crab-ſtock to become a good Tree, by graffing into it an Imp from a good Tree, and then the Fruit will be good: But if the Tree be ſtill the ſame, plant it where you will, and water it with what you will, the Fruit will be ſtill corrupt. *Note*, Unleſs the Heart be transform'd, the Life will never be throughly reform'd. The *Phariſees* were ſhy of *Speaking out* their wicked Thoughts of Jeſus Chriſt; But Chriſt here intimates how vain it was for them to ſeek to *hide* that Root of Bitterneſs in them that bore this Gall and Wormwood, when they never ſought to *mortify it.* *Note*, It ſhould be more our care to be *good really*, than to *ſeem* good *outwardly.*

2. The Heart is the *Fountain*, the Words are the *Streams*, v. 34. *Out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaks*, as the Streams are the Overflowings of the Spring. A wicked Heart is ſaid to *ſend forth Wickedneſs as a Fountain caſteth forth her Waters*, Jer. 6. 7. A *troubled Fountain*, and a *corrupt Spring*, ſuch as *Solomon* ſpeaks of, *Prov.* 25. 26. muſt needs ſend forth muddy and unpleaſant Streams. Evil Words are the natural genuine Product of an evil Heart. Nothing but the *Salt* of Grace caſt into the *Spring* will heal the Waters, *ſeaſon the Speech*, and purify the *corrupt Communication.* This they wanted; they were evil, and *how can ye being evil ſpeak good things?* They were a *Generation of Vipers*; *John* Baptiſt had call'd them ſo, *chap.* 3. 7. and they were ſtill the ſame; for *can the Ethiopian change his Skin?* the People look'd upon the *Phariſees* as a Generation of Saints, but Chriſt calls them a *Generation of Vipers*, the Seed of the Serpent, that had an Enmity to Chriſt and his Goſpel. Now what could be expected from a Generation of Vipers, but that which is poyſonous and malignant. Can the Viper be otherwiſe than venomous? *Note*, Ill things may be expected from ill People, as ſaid the Proverb of the Ancients, *Wickedneſs proceedeth from the Wicked*, 1. Sam. 24. 13. The *Vile Perſon will ſpeak Villany*, Iſa. 32. 6. Thoſe that are themſelves *evil*, have neither *Skill* nor *Will* to *ſpeak good things*, as they ſhould be ſpoken of. Chriſt would have his Diſciples know what ſort of Men they were to live among, that they might know what to look for. They are as *Ezekiel* among *Scorpions*, Ezek. 2. 6. and muſt not think it ſtrange if they be *ſtung* and *bitten.*

3. The Heart is the *Treaſury*, The Words are the things brought out of that Treaſury, *v.* 35. and from hence Mens Characters may be drawn, and they may be judg'd of.

1. It is the Character of a *good Man*, that he has a *good Treaſure* in his Heart, and from thence *brings forth good things*, as there is Occaſion. Graces, Comforts, Experiences, good Knowledge, good Affections, good Reſolutions, theſe are a *good Treaſure* in the Heart; the Word of God *hidden* there, the Law of God *written* there, Divine Truths dwelling and Ruling there, are a *Treaſure* there, valuable and ſuitable, kept ſafe, and kept ſecret, as the Stores of the good Houſholder, but ready for uſe upon all Occaſions. A good Man thus furniſhed will *bring forth*, as *Joſeph* out of his Stores, will be ſpeaking and doing that which is good, for God's Glory and the Edification of others. See *Prov.* 10. 11, 13, 14, 20, 21, 31, 32. This is *bringing forth good things.* Some pretend to good Expenſes, that have not a good Treaſure, ſuch will ſoon be Bankrupts; ſome pretend to have a good Treaſure within, but give no Proof of it; they hope they have it in them, and thank God, whatever their Words and Actions are, they have good *Hearts.* But *Faith without Works is dead.* And ſome have a good Treaſure of Wiſdom and Knowledge, but they are not communicative, they do not *bring forth out of it.* They have a Talent, but know not how to trade with it. The compleat Chriſtian in this bears the Image of God, that he both *is good*, and *doth good.*

2. It is the Character of an *evil man*, that he has an *evil Treaſure in his Heart, and out of it bringeth forth evil things.* Luſts and Corruptions dwelling and reigning in the Heart are *an evil Treaſure*, out of which the Sinner brings forth ill Words and Actions, to the Diſhonour of God and the Hurt of others. See *Gen.* 6. 5. 12. *Mat.* 15. 18, 19, 20. *Jam.* 1. 15. But *Treaſures of Wickedneſs*, Prov. 10. 2. will be *Treaſures of Wrath.*

3*d*, Chriſt ſpeaks here concerning *Idle Words*, and ſhews what evil there is in them, *v.* 36. 37. much more is there in ſuch wicked Words as the *Phariſees* ſpoke. It concerns us to think much of the Day of Judgment, that that may be a check upon our Tongues. And let us conſider,

1. How particular the Account will be [illegible] *Tongue-Sins* in that Day. Even *for every idle Word*, or Diſcourſe th[illegible] *Men ſpeak, they ſhall give Account.* This intimates (1.) That God takes notice of every Word we ſay, even that which we ourſelves do not take notice of. See *Pſal.* 139. 4. *Not a Word in my Tongue but thou knoweſt it*; though

ſpoken without Regard or Deſign God takes Cognizance of it. (2.) That vain, idle, impertinent Talk is diſpleaſing to God, which tends not to any good Purpoſe, is not good to any *Uſe for edifying*; 'tis the Product of a vain and trifling Heart. Theſe idle Words are the ſame with that *fooliſh Talking and Jeſting* which is forbidden, *Eph.* 5. 4. This is that *Sin* which is ſeldom wanting in the *Multitude of Words*, *unprofitable Talk*, Job 15. 3. (3.) We muſt ſhortly account for theſe idle Words, they will be produced an Evidence againſt us to prove us *unprofitable Servants*, that have not improv'd the Faculties of Reaſon and Speech, which are part of the Talents we are entruſted with. If we repent not of our idle Words, and our Account for them be not balanc'd by the Blood of Chriſt, we are undone.

2. How ſtrict the Judgment will be upon that Account, *v.* 37. *By thy Words thou ſhalt be juſtified*, or condemn'd; a common Rule in Men's Judgments, and here apply'd to God's. *Note*, The conſtant Tenour of our Diſcourſe, according as it is gracious or not gracious, will be an Evidence for us or againſt us at the great Day. Thoſe that *ſeem'd to be religious*, but *bridled not their Tongues*, will then be found to have put a Cheat upon themſelves with a vain Religion, *Jam.* 1. 26. Some think Chriſt here refers to that of *Eliphaz*, Job 15. 6. *Thine own Mouth condemneth thee, and not I*; or rather to that of *Solomon*, Prov. 18. 21. *Death and Life are in the Power of the Tongue.*

38 Then certain of the Scribes and of the Phariſees anſwered, ſaying, Maſter, we would ſee a ſign from thee. 39 But he anſwered and ſaid to them, An evil and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given to it, but the ſign of the Prophet Jonas. 40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whales belly: ſo ſhall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh ſhall riſe in judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: becauſe they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas *is* here. 42 The queen of the South ſhall riſe up in the judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: for ſhe came from the uttermoſt parts of the earth to hear the wiſdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon *is* here. 43 When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a man he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt, and findeth none. 44 Then he ſaith, I will return into my houſe from whence I came out: and when he is come, he findeth it empty, ſwept, and garniſhed. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himſelf ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in and dwell there: and the laſt ſtate of that man *is* worſe than the firſt. Even ſo ſhall it be alſo unto this wicked generation.

'Tis probable, theſe *Phariſees* that Chriſt is here in Diſcourſe with, were not the ſame that cavil'd at him, *v.* 24. and would not *credit* the Signs he gave, but another Set of them, that ſaw there was no reaſon to diſcredit them; but would not *content* themſelves with the Signs he gave, nor admit the Evidence of them, unleſs he would give them ſuch further Proof as they ſhould demand.

Here's 1. Their Addreſs to him, *v.* 38. They complement him with the Title of *Maſter*, pretending Reſpect for him, when they intended to abuſe him; all are not indeed Chriſt's Servants, who call him *Maſter*. Their Requeſt is, *We would ſee a Sign from thee.* It was highly reaſonable they ſhould *ſee a Sign*, that he ſhould by Miracles prove his divine Miſſion. See *Exod.* 4. 8, 9. He came to take down a Model of Religion that was ſet up by Miracles, and therefore 'twas requiſite he ſhoule produce the ſame *Credentials*. But it was *highly unreaſonable* to demand a *Sign now*, when he had given ſo many ſigns already, that did abundantly prove him ſent of God. *Note*, 'Tis natural to proud Men to *preſcribe* to *God*, and then make that an Excuſe for not *ſubſcribing to* him; But a Man's Offence will never be his Defence.

2. His Anſwer to this Addreſs, this inſolent Demand.

Firſt, He condemns the Demand, as the Language of *an evil and adulterous Generation*, v. 39. He faſtens the Charge not only on the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, but the whole Nation of the *Jews*, they were all like their Leaders, a Seed and Succeſſion of Evil Doers. They were an *evil Generation* indeed, that not only hardned themſelves againſt the Conviction of Chriſt's Miracles, but ſet themſelves to abuſe him, and put Contempt on his Miracles. They were an *adulterous Generation.* (1.) As an *adulterous Brood*, ſo miſerably degenerated from the Faith and Obedience of their Anceſtors, that *Abraham* and *Iſrael* acknowledge them not, See *Iſa.* 57. 3. Or (2.) As an *adulterous Wife*; they departed from that God, to whom by Covenant they had been eſpouſed. They were not guilty of the Whoredom of Idolatry, as they had bee[illegible]fore the Captivity, but they were guilty of Infidelity and all Iniquity, and that's Whoredom too. They did not look after Gods of their own making, but they look'd for Signs of their own deviſing; and that was *Adultery.*

Secondly, He denies to give them any other Sign more than he has already given them, but that of the Prophet *Jonas*. *Note*, Tho' Chriſt is always ready to hear and anſwer holy Deſires and Prayers, yet he will not gratify corrupt Luſts and Humours. Thoſe that *ask amiſs*, ask and *have not*. Signs were granted to thoſe who deſired them for the Confirmation of their Faith, as to *Abraham* and *Gideon*; but were denied to thoſe that demanded them for the Excuſe of their Unbelief.

Juſtly might Chriſt have ſaid they ſhall never ſee another Miracle, but ſee his wonderful Goodneſs. (1.) They ſhall have the ſame Signs ſtill repeated, for their further *Benefit* and more abundant Conviction. (2.) They ſhall have one Sign of a different kind from all theſe, and that's the *Reſurrection of Chriſt* from the Dead by his own Power, call'd here *the Sign of the Prophet Jonas*; this was yet reſerv'd for their Conviction, and was intended to be the great Proof of Chriſt's being the Meſſiah, for by that he was *declared to be the Son of God with Power*, Rom. 1. 4. That was ſuch a Sign as *ſurpaſs'd* all the reſt, compleated and crown'd them. *If they will not believe* the former Signs, they will believe this, *Exod.* 4. 9. and if this will not convince them, nothing will. And yet the Unbelief of the *Jews* found out an Evaſion to ſhift off that too, by ſaying, *his Diſciples came and ſtole him away*; for none are ſo incurable blind, as thoſe that are reſolved they will not ſee.

Now this Sign of the Prophet *Jonas* he further explains here, *v.* 40. *As Jonas was three Days and three Nights in the Whales Belly*, and then came out again ſafe and well, thus Chriſt ſhall be *ſo long* in the Grave, and then ſhall *riſe again.* (1.) The Grave was to Chriſt as the Belly of the Fiſh was to *Jonah*, thither he was thrown, as a Ranſom for Lives ready to be loſt in a Storm; there he lay as *in the Belly of Hell*, Jon. 2. 2. and ſeem'd to be *caſt out of God's Sight.* (2.) He continued in the Grave juſt as long as *Jonah* continu'd in the *Fiſh's Belly, three Days and three Nights*; not *three* whole *Days and Nights*, 'tis probable *Jonah* did not lie ſo long in the Whales Belly, but part of three natural Days (νυχθήμερους the *Greeks* call'd them) he was buried in the Afternoon of the ſixth Day of the Week, and roſe again in the Morning of the firſt Day. 'Tis a manner of Speech very uſual, ſee 1 *Kings* 20. 29. *Eſth.* 4. 16.—5. 1. *Luke* 2. 21. ſo long *Jonah* was a Priſoner for his own Sin, ſo long Chriſt was a Priſoner for ours. (3.) As *Jonah* in the Whales Belly comforted himſelf with an Aſſurance that yet he ſhould look again towards God's holy Temple, *Jonah* 2. 4. ſo Chriſt when he lay in the Grave is expreſly ſaid to *reſt in Hope*, as one aſſur'd he ſhould not *ſee Corruption*, Acts 2. 26, 27. (4.) As *Jonah* on the *third Day* was diſcharged from his Priſon, and came to the Land of the Living again from the *Congregation of the Dead* (for *dead things* are ſaid to be *formed from under the Water*, Job 26. 5.) ſo Chriſt on the third Day ſhould return to Life, and riſe out of his Grave, to ſend abroad his Goſpel to the *Gentiles.*

Thirdly, Chriſt takes this Occaſion to repreſent the ſad Character and Condition of that Generation in which he liv'd, a Generation that *would not* be *reformed*, and therefore *could not* but be *ruin'd.* And he gives them their Character, as it would ſtand in the *Day of Judgment*, under the full Diſcoveries, and final Sentences of that Day. Perſons and Things now appear under falſe Colours; Characters and Conditions are here *changeable:* If therefore we ſhould make a right Eſtimate, we muſt take our Meaſures from the laſt Judgment. Things are really what they are eternally.

Now Chriſt repreſents the People of the *Jews*,

1. As a Generation that would be condemn'd by the Men of *Nineveh*, whoſe repenting at the Preaching of *Jonah*, would *riſe up in Judgment* againſt them, *v.* 41. Chriſt's Reſurrection will be the *Sign of the Prophet Jonas* to them, but it will not have ſo happy an Effect upon them, as that of *Jonas* had upon the *Ninevites*, for they were by it brought to ſuch a Repentance, as prevented their Ruin; but the *Jews* will be harden'd in an Unbelief, that ſhall haſten their Ruin. And in the Day of Judgment the Repentance of the *Ninevites* will be mention'd as an Aggravation of the Sin, and conſequently the Condemnation of thoſe to whom Chriſt preach'd then, and of thoſe to whom Chriſt is preached now; for this reaſon, becauſe Chriſt is greater than *Jonah.* (1.) *Jonah* was but a Man, ſubject to *like Paſſions*, to like ſinful Paſſions as we are; but Chriſt is the Son of God. (2.) *Jonah* was a Stranger in *Nineveh*, he came among Strangers that were prejudic'd againſt his Country; but Chriſt *came to his own*, when he preach'd to the *Jews*, and much more when he is preach'd among profeſſing Chriſtians, that are call'd by his Name. (3.) *Jonah* preach'd but one ſhort Sermon, and that with no great Solemnity, but as he paſs'd along the Streets; Chriſt renews his Calls, ſat and taught, taught in the Synagogues. (4.) *Jonah* preach'd nothing but Wrath and Ruin within *forty Days*, gave no Inſtructions, Directions or Encouragements to repent; but Chriſt, beſides the Warning given us of our Danger, hath ſhew'd wherein we muſt repent, and aſſured us of Acceptance upon our Repentance, becauſe the *Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* (5.) *Jonah* wrought no Miracle to confirm his Doctrine, ſhew'd no Good-will to the *Ninevites*; but Chriſt wrought abundance of Miracles, and all Miracles of Mercy. And yet the *Ninevites* repented at the preaching of *Jonas*, but the *Jews* were not wrought upon by Chriſt's Preaching. *Note*, The Goodneſs of ſome who have leſs Helps and Advantages for their Souls, will aggravate the Badneſs of thoſe that have much greater. Thoſe that by the *Twilight* diſcover the Things that belong to their Peace, will ſhame thoſe that grope at Noon-day.

2. As a Generation that would be condemned by the *Queen of the South*, the Queen of *Sheba*, v. 42. The *Ninevites* would ſhame them for not *repenting*, the Queen of *Sheba* for not believing in Chriſt. She came from a *far Country to hear the Wiſdom of* Solomon, yet People will not be perſwaded to come *hear the Wiſdom* of Chriſt, tho' he is in every thing greater than *Solomon.* (2.) The Queen of *Sheba* had no Invitation to come to *Solomon*, nor any Promiſe of being welcome, but we are invited to Chriſt, to ſit at his Feet, and hear his Word. (2.) *Solomon* was but a wiſe Man, but Chriſt is Wiſdom it ſelf, in whom are hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom. (3.) The Queen of *Sheba* had many Difficulties to break through, ſhe was a Woman unfit for Travel, the Journey long and perilous, ſhe was a Queen, and what would become of her own Country in her Abſence? We have no ſuch Cares to hinder us. (4.) She could not be ſure that it would be worth her while to go ſo far on this Errand: Fame uſes to flatter Men, and perhaps ſhe might have in her own Country, or Court, wiſe Men ſufficient to inſtruct her, yet having heard of *Solomon*'s Fame ſhe would ſee him; but we come not to Chriſt upon ſuch Uncertainties. (5.) She came *from the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth*, but we have Chriſt among us, and his *Word nigh us. Behold, he ſtands at the Door, and knocks.* (6.) It ſhould ſeem the Wiſdom the Queen of *Sheba* came for, was only Philoſophy and Politicks, but the Wiſdom that is to be had with Chriſt, is Wiſdom to Salvation. (7.) She could only *hear* Solomon's *Wiſdom*, he could not give her Wiſdom; but Chriſt will *give Wiſdom* to thoſe that come to him, nay, he will himſelf be *made of God* to them *Wiſdom.* So that upon all theſe Accounts, if we do not *hear the Wiſdom of Chriſt*, the Forwardneſs of the Queen of *Sheba* to come to hear the Wiſdom of *Solomon*, will riſe up in Judgment againſt us, and condemn us; for Jeſus Chriſt is greater than *Solomon.*

3. As a Generation that were reſolv'd to continue in the Poſſeſſion, and under the Power of *Satan*, notwithſtanding all the Methods that were uſed to diſpoſſeſs him and reſcue them. They are compared to one out of whom the Devil is gone out, but returns with double Force, *v.* 43, 44, 45. The Devil is here call'd the *unclean Spirit*, for he has loſt all his Purity, and delights in, and promotes all manner of Impurity among Men. Now,

1. The Parable repreſents his Poſſeſſing Mens Bodies: Chriſt having lately caſt out a Devil, and they having ſaid, He had a Devil, gave Occaſion to ſhew how much they were under the Power of Satan. This is a further Proof, that Chriſt did not caſt out Devils by Compact with the Devil, for then he would ſoon have return'd again, but Chriſt's Ejectment of him was final, and ſuch as bar'd a Re-entry. We finding him charging the evil Spirit to *go out and enter no more*, Mar. 9. 17. Probably the Devil was wont ſometimes thus to ſport with thoſe he had Poſſeſſion of, he would *go out*, and then return again with more Fury; hence the *Lucid Intervals* of thoſe in that Condition were commonly follow'd with the more violent Fits. When the Devil is *gone out*, he is uneaſy, for *he ſleeps not except he have done Miſchief*, Prov. 4. 16. He *walks in dry Places*, like one that is very Melancholy, he *ſeeks Reſt*, but *finds none*, 'till he returns again. When Chriſt caſt the Legion out of the Man, they beg'd Leave to *enter into the Swine*, where they went not long in *dry Places*, but into the Lake preſently.

2. The Application of the Parable makes it to repreſent the Caſe of the Body of the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation. *So ſhall it be with this wicked Generation*, that now *reſiſt*, and will finally *reject* the Goſpel of Chriſt. The Devil, who by the Labours of Chriſt and his Diſciples, had been *caſt out of many of the Jews*, ſought for Reſt among the *Heathen*, from whoſe Perſons and Temples the Chriſtians would every where expel him; ſo Dr. *Whitby*: Or, finding no where elſe in the *Heathen* World ſuch *pleaſant deſirable Habitations* to his Satisfaction as here in the Hearts of the *Jews*, ſo Dr. *Hammand*: He ſhall therefore enter again in them, for Chriſt had not found Admiſſion among them, and they by their *prodigious Wickedneſs and obſtinate Unbelief*, were ſtill more ready than ever to receive him. And then he ſhall take a durable Poſſeſſion here, and the State of this People is likely to be more deſperately damnably, (ſo Dr. *Hammond*) than it was before Chriſt came among them, or would have been, if Satan had never been *caſt out.*

The Body of that Nation is here repreſented (1.) As an *Apoſtate People.* After the Captivity in *Babylon* they began to reform, left their Idols, appear'd with ſome Face of Religion, but they ſoon corrupted them ſelves again. Tho' they never relapſed into Idolatry, they fell into all manner of Impiety and Prophaneſs, went worſe and worſe, and added to all the reſt of their Wickedneſs, a wilful Contempt of, and Oppoſition to Chriſt and his Goſpel. (2.) As *People markt for Ruin.* A new Commiſſion was paſſing the Seals againſt that *Hypocritical Nation*, the *People of God's Wrath*, like that, *Iſa.* 10. 6. And their Deſtruction by the *Romans* was likely to be greater than any other, as their Sins had been more flagrant. Then it was that *wrath came upon them to the uttermoſt*, 1 Theſ. 2. 15, 16. Let this be a Warning to all Nations and Churches to take heed of leaving their firſt Love, of letting fall a good Work of Reformation begun among them, and returning to that Wickedneſs which they ſeemed to have forſaken, for *the laſt State of ſuch will be worſe than the firſt.*

46. While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren ſtood without, deſiring to ſpeak with him. 47 Then one ſaid unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſpeak with thee 48 But he anſwered and ſaid unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my Brethren? 49 And he ſtretched forth his hand towards his Diſciples, and ſaid, Behold my mother, and my brethren. 50 For whoſoever ſhall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the ſame is my brother, and ſiſter, and mother.

Many excellent uſeful Sayings came from the Mouth of our Lord Jeſus upon particular Occaſions; even his Digreſſions were inſtructive, as well as his ſet Diſcourſes: As here

Obſerve, 1. How Chriſt was interrupted in his Preaching by *his Mother and his Brethren*, that *ſtood without deſiring to ſpeak with him*, *v.* 46, 47. which deſire of theirs was handed to him through the Crowd. 'Tis needleſs to enquire which of his Brethren they were that came along with his Mother; perhaps they were thoſe that *did not believe in him*, John 7. 5. Or, what their Buſineſs was; perhaps twas only deſign'd to oblige him to break off, for Fear he ſhould over-ſpend himſelf, or to caution him to take heed of giving Offence by his Diſcourſe to the *Phariſees*, and running himſelf into a *Premunire*, as if they could teach him Wiſdom.

(1.) He was yet *talking to the People. Note*, Chriſt's *Preaching* was *Talking*, it was plain, eaſy and familiar, and ſuited to their Capacity and Caſe. What Chriſt had deliver'd, had been cavil'd at, and yet he *went on. Note*, The Oppoſition we meet with in our Work, muſt not drive us from it. He left off talking with the *Phariſees*, for he ſaw he could do no good with them, but continued to *talk* to the common *People*, who having not ſuch a Conceit of their Knowledge, as the *Phariſees* had, were willing to learn.

(2.) His *Mother and Brethren* ſtood *without* deſiring to ſpeak with him, when they ſhould have been ſtanding within deſiring to *hear him*. They had the Advantage of his daily Converſe in private, and therefore were leſs mindful to attend upon his publick Preaching. *Note*, Many times thoſe that are neareſt akin to the Means of Knowledge and Grace, are moſt negligent. Familiarity and Eaſineſs of Acceſs breeds ſome Degree of Contempt. We are apt to neglect that *this Day*, which we think we may have *any Day*, forgetting that 'tis only the preſent Time we can be ſure of; to morrow is none of ours. There is too much Truth in that common Proverb, The nearer the Church, the further from God; 'tis pity it ſhould be ſo.

(3.) They not only would not hear him themſelves, but they interrupted others that *heard him gladly*. The Devil was a ſworn Enemy to our Saviour's Preaching. He had ſought to *baffle* his Diſcourſe by the *unreaſonable* Cavils of the Scribes and Phariſees, and when he could not gain his Point that way, he endeavour'd to *break it off*, by the *unſeaſonable* Viſits of Relations. *Note*, We often meet with Hindrances and Obſtructions in our Work, by our Friends, that are about us, and are taken off by *Civil Reſpects*, from our *Spritual Concerns*. Thoſe that really wiſh well to us and to our Work, may ſometimes by their Indiſcretion, prove our Back-Friends, and Impediments to us in our Duty; as *Peter* was *offenſive* to Chriſt, with his *Maſter ſpare thy ſelf*, when he thought himſelf very *officious*. The Mother of our Lord *deſir'd to ſpeak* with him; it ſeems ſhe had not then learn'd to *command her Son*, as the Iniquity and Idolatry of the Church of *Rome* hath ſince pretended to teach her. Nor was ſhe ſo free from Fault and Folly as they would make her. 'Twas Chriſt's Prerogative and not his Mother's, to do every thing wiſely and well, and in its Seaſon. Chriſt once ſaid to his Mother, *How is it that ye ſought me? Wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my Fathers Buſineſs?* and it was then ſaid, ſhe *laid up that Saying in her Heart*, Luke 2. 49. But if ſhe had remembred it now, ſhe would not have given him this Diverſion, when he was about his *Father's Buſineſs. Note*, There is many a good Truth, that we thought was well laid up, when we heard it, which yet is out of the Way, when we have Occaſion to uſe it.

2. How he reſented this Interruption, *v.* 48, 49, 50.

1. He would not hearken to it, was ſo intent upon his Work, that no natural or civil Reſpects ſhould take him off from it. *Who is my Mother, and who are my Brethren?* Not that natural Affection is to be put off, or that under Pretence of Religion we may be diſreſpectful to Parents, or unkind to other Relations; but *every thing is beautiful in its Seaſon*, and the leſſer Duty muſt ſtand by while the greater is done. When our Regard to our Relations comes in competition with the Service of God, and the improving an Opportunity to *do good*, in ſuch a caſe we muſt *ſay to our Father I have not ſeen him*, as *Levi* did, *Deut.* 33. 9. The neareſt Relations muſt be comparatively *hated*, that is, we muſt love them leſs than Chriſt, *Luke* 14. 26. and our Duty to God muſt have the Preference. This Chriſt has here given us an Example of, the *Zeal of God's Houſe* did ſo far *eat him up*, that it made him not only forget himſelf, but forget his deareſt Relations. And we muſt not *take it ill* of our Friends, nor put it upon the Score of their Wickedneſſeſs, if they prefer the *pleaſing of God* before the pleaſing of us; but muſt readily forgive thoſe Neglects, which may eaſily be imputed to a pious Zeal for God's Glory, and others Good. Nay, we muſt deny ourſelves and our own Satisfaction, rather than do that which may any way divert our Friends from, or diſtract them in their Duty to God.

2. He took that occaſion to prefer his Diſciples, who were his *Spiritual Kindred*; before his *natural Relations* as ſuch, which was a good Reaſon why he would not leave Preaching to ſpeak with his Brethren. He would rather be *profiting his Diſciples*, than *pleaſing his Relations*. Obſerve,

1. The Deſcription of Chriſt's Diſciples. They are ſuch as *do the Will of his Father*; not only hear it, and know it, and talk of it, but *do it*; for *doing the Will of God* is the beſt Preparative for Diſcipleſhip, *John* 7. 17. and the beſt *Proof* of it, *Mat*. 7. 21. that denominates us his Diſciples indeed. Chriſt doth not ſay, whoſoever ſhall do *my Will*, for he came not to ſeek, or do *his own Will*, diſtinct from his Father's; his Will and his Father's are the ſame, but he refers us to his Father's Will, becauſe now in his preſent State and Work he refer'd himſelf to it, *John* 6. 38.

2. The Dignity of Chriſt's Diſciples. *The ſame is my Brother, and Siſter, and Mother*. His Diſciples that had left all to follow him, and embrac'd his Doctrine, were dearer to him than any that were akin to him according to the Fleſh. They had prefer'd Chriſt before their Relations, they *left their Father*, Mat. 4. 22.—10. 37. and now to make them amends, and to ſhew that there was no Love loſt, he prefer'd them before his Relations; did not they hereby receive in point of Honour a *hundred fold*, Mat. 19. 29. 'Twas very endearing and very encouraging, for Chriſt to ſay, *Behold my Mother*, and my Brethren; yet it was not *their* Privilege alone, *this Honour have all the Saints: Note*, All obedient Believers are near akin to Jeſus Chriſt. They wear his Name, bear his Image, have his Nature, are of his Family. He loves them, owns them, converſes freely with them, as his Relations. He bids them welcome to his Table, takes care of them, provides for them, ſees that they want nothing that's fit for them; when he dy'd he left them rich Legacies, now he is in Heaven he keeps up a Correſpondence with them, and will have them all with him at laſt, and will in nothing fail to *do the Kinſman's part*, Ruth 3. 13. nor will he ever be aſham'd of his poor Relations, but will confeſs them before Men, before the Angels, and before his Father.

CHAP. XIII.

In this Chapter we have 1. *the Favour which Chriſt did to his Countrymen in Preaching the Kingdom of Heaven to them*, v. 1, 2. *He Preach'd to them in Parables, and here gives the Reaſon why he choſe that way of Inſtructing*, v. 10.—17. *And the Evangeliſt gives another Reaſon*, v. 34, 35. *Here are eight Parables recorded in this Chapter, which are deſign'd to repreſent the* Kingdom of Heaven, *the Method of planting of the Goſpel Kingdom in the World, and of its Growth and Succeſs. The great Truths and Laws of that Kingdom are in other Scriptures laid down* plainly, *and without Parables; but ſome Circumſtances of its Beginning and Progreſs are here laid open in Parables.* (1.) *Here's one Parable to ſhew what are the great Hindrances of People profiting by the Word of the Goſpel, and in how many it comes ſhort of its End through their own Folly; and that's the Parable of the four ſorts of Grounds deliver'd*, v. 3,—9. *and expounded*, v. 18.—23. (2.) *Here are two Parables intended to ſhew, That there would be a mixture of Good and Bad in the Goſpel Church, which would continue till the great Separation between them in the Judgment Day. The Parable of the Tares put forth*, v. 24.—30. *and expounded at the Requeſt of the Diſciples*, v. 36.—43. *And that of the Net caſt into the Sea*, v. 47.—50. (3.) *Here are two Parables intended to ſhew, that the Goſpel Church ſhould be very ſmall at firſt, but in proceſs of time it ſhould become a conſiderable Body. That of the Grain of Muſtard Seed*, v. 31, 32. *and that of the Leaven*, v. 33. (4.) *Here are two Parables intended to ſhew, that thoſe who expect Salvation by the Goſpel, muſt be willing to venture all, and quit all in the proſpect of it, and they ſhall be no loſers by the Bargain. That of the Treaſure hid in the Field*, v. 43. *And that of the Pearl of great Price*, v. 45, 46. (5.) *Here's one Parables intended for Direction to the Diſciples, to make uſe of the Inſtructions he had given them for the Benefit of others. And that's the Parable of the good Houſholder*, v. 51, 52. 2. *The Contempt which his Country men put upon him for the ſake of the Meanneſs of his Parentage*, v. 53.—58.

THE ſame day went Jeſus out of the houſe, and ſate by the ſea-ſide. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, *ſo* that he went into a ſhip, and ſate, and the whole multitude ſtood on the ſhore. 3 And he ſpake many things unto them in parables, ſaying, Behold, a ſower went forth to ſow. 4 And when he ſowed, ſome *ſeeds* fell by the way-ſide, and the fowls came, and devoured them up. 5 Some fell upon ſtony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they ſprung up, becauſe they had no deepneſs of earth. 6 And when the Sun was up, they were ſcorched, and becauſe they had not root, they withered away. 7 And ſome fell among thorns: and the thorns ſprung up, and choaked them. 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, ſome an hundred fold, ſome ſixty fold, ſome thirty fold. 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10 And his diſciples came, and ſaid unto him, Why ſpeakeſt thou unto them in parables? 11 He anſwered, and ſaid unto them, Becauſe it is given unto you to know the myſteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given, and he ſhall have more abundance: but whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken away, even that he hath. 13 Therefore ſpeak I to them in parables: becauſe they ſeeing, ſee not: and hearing, they hear not, neither do they underſtand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Eſaias, which ſaith, By hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand: and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and ſhall not perceive. 15 For this peoples heart is waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have cloſed, leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and ſhould underſtand with *their* heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them. 16 But bleſſed *are* your eyes, for they ſee: and your ears, for they hear. 17 For verily I ſay unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have deſired to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen *them*: and to hear thoſe things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*. 18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the ſower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and underſtandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was ſown in his heart: this is he which received ſeed by the way-ſide. 20 But he that receiveth the ſeed into ſtony places the ſame is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: 21 Yet hath he not root in himſelf, but dureth for a while for when tribulation or perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He alſo that received ſeed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word: and the care of this world, and the deceitfulneſs of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 But he that receiveth ſeed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and underſtandeth *it*, which alſo beareth fruit, and bringeth forth ſome an hundred-fold, ſome ſixty, ſome thirty.

We have here Chriſt's Peeaching, and may obſerve;

1. *When* Chriſt Preach'd this Sermon, 'twas *the ſame Day* that he Preach'd the Sermon in the foregoing Chapter, ſo unwearied was he in doing Good, and working the Works of him that ſent him. *Note*, Chriſt was for Preaching *both Ends of the Day*, and has by his Example recommended that Practice to his Church; we muſt *in the Morning ſow our Seed, and in the Evening not withhold our Hand*. See *Eccl*. 11. 6. An Afternoon Sermon well heard, will be ſo far from *driving out* the Morning Sermon, that it will rather clench it, and faſten the *Nail in a ſure place*. Tho' Chriſt had been in the Morning oppos'd and cavil'd by his Enemies, is diſturb'd and interrupted by his Friends, yet he went on with his Work, and in the latter part of the Day we do not find that he met with ſuch Diſcouragements. Thoſe who with Courage and Zeal break thro' Difficulties in God's Service, will perhaps find them not ſo apt to recur as they fear. *Reſiſt them*, and they will *flee*.

2. *To whom* he Preach'd, there were *great Multitudes gather'd together to him*, and they were the Auditors; we do not find that any of the *Scribes* or *Phariſees* were preſent. They were willing to hear him when he preach'd in the Synagogue, *Chap*. 12. 9, 14. But they thought it below them to go hear a Sermon by the Sea-ſide, tho' Chriſt himſelf was the Preacher; and truly he had better have *their Room* than *their Company*; for now they were abſent he went on quietly, and without contradiction. *Note*, Sometimes there is moſt of the Power of Religion there were there is leſs of the Pomp of it. *The Poor receive the Goſpel*. When Jeſus went to the *Sea-ſide*, *Multitudes* were preſently *gather'd together to him*. Where the King is, there is the Court; where Chriſt is, there is the Church, tho' it be the Sea-ſide. *Note*. Thoſe that would get good by the Word, muſt be willing to follow it in all its Removes; when the Ark ſhifts, ſhift after it. The *Phariſees* have been labouring by baſe Calumnies and Suggeſtions to drive the People off from following Chriſt, but they ſtill flock'd after him as much as ever. *Note*, Chriſt will be glorified in ſpite of all Oppoſition; he will be follow'd.

3. *Where* he Preach'd this Sermon.

(1.) His Meeting place was the *Sea-ſide.* He went *out of the Houſe* (becauſe there was no room for the Auditory) into the open Air. 'Twas pity but ſuch a Preacher ſhould have had the moſt ſpacious, ſumptuous, and convenient Place to preach in that could be deviſ'd, like one of the *Roman* Theatres; but he was now in his Eſtate of Humiliation, and in this,as in other things, deny'd himſelf the Honours due to him; that as he had not a Houſe of his own to live in, ſo he had not a Chappel of his own to Preach in. By this he teacheth us in the external Circumſtances of Worſhip, not to covet that which is ſtately, but to make the beſt of the Conveniences which God in his Providence allots to us. When Chriſt was born he was crouded into the Stable and now to the Sea-ſide, upon the Strand, where all Perſons might come to him with Freedom. He that was Truth it ſelf ſought no Corners, no *Adyta*, as the Pagan Myſteries did. *Wiſdom cries without*, Prov. 1. 20. John 18. 20.

(2.) His Pulpit was *a Ship*; not like *Ezra*'s Pulpit,that was *made for the Purpoſe*, Neh. 8. 4. but converted to this uſe for want of a better. No Place amiſs for ſuch a Preacher, whoſe Preſence dignified and conſecrated any Place: Let not thoſe who Preach Chriſt be aſham'd, tho' they have mean and inconvenient Places to Preach in. Some obſerve that the *People ſtand* upon dry Ground, and firm Ground while the Freacher was upon the Water in more hazard. Miniſters are moſt expos'd to Trouble. Here was a true *Roſtrum*, a Ship-Pulpit.

4. What, and how he Preach'd. (1.) He *ſpak many things unto them*, many more, 'tis likely, than are here recorded, but all excellent and neceſſary things, things that belong to our Peace, things pertaining to the *Kingdom of Heaven*; they were not Trifles, but things of everlaſting Conſequence that Chriſt ſpoke of. It concerns us to *give a more earneſt heed*, when Chriſt had ſo many things to ſay to us, that we *miſs not* any of them. (2.) What he ſpake was in *Parables*; a *Parable* ſometimes ſignifies any wiſe weighty Saying that is *Inſtructive*; but here in the Goſpels it generally ſignifies a continued Similitude, or Compariſon, by which ſpiritual and heavenly Things were deſcrib'd in Language borrow'd from the things of this Life. It was a way of Teaching us'd very much, not only by the *Jewiſh Rabbins*, but by the *Arabians*, and other the wiſe Men of the *Eaſt*; and it was found very profitable, and the more ſo for its being pleaſant. Our Saviour us'd it much, and in it condeſcended to the Capacities of People, and liſp'd to them in their own Language. God had long *uſed Similitudes by his Servants the Prophets*, Hoſ. 12. 10. and to little purpoſe now he uſeth Similitudes by his Son; *ſurely they will Reverence him who ſpeaks from Heaven*, and of heavenly things, and yet clothes them with Expreſſions borrow'd from *things Earthly*. See *John* 3. 12. So deſcending in a Cloud.

Now, *Firſt*, We have here the general Reaſon why Chriſt taught in *Parables*, The Diſciples were a little ſurpriz'd at it, for hitherto in his Preaching he had not much us'd it, and therefore they aſk, *Why ſpeakeſt thou to them in Parables?* Becauſe they were truly deſirous that the People might hear with Underſtanding. They do not ſay, Why ſpeakeſt thou *to us?* They knew how to get the Parables explain'd, but *to them*. *Note*, We ought to be concern'd for the Edification of others, as well as for our own, by the Word preach'd, and if ourſelves *ſtrong*, yet to *bear to the Infirmities of the Weak.*

To this Queſtion Chriſt anſwers largely, *v.* 11.–17. where he tells them, that therefore he preach'd by Parables, becauſe thereby the things of God were made more plain and eaſie to them that were willing to be taught, and at the ſame time more difficult and obſcure to thoſe that were *willingly ignorant*; and thus the Goſpel would be a *Savour of Life to* ſome, and of *Death* to others. A Parable like the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, turns a dark ſide toward *Egyptians*, which confounds them, but a light ſide toward *Iſraelites*, which comforts them, and ſo anſwers a double Intention. The ſame Light *directs* the Eyes of ſome, but *dazzles* the Eyes of others. Now

1. This Reaſon is laid down, *v.* 11. *Becauſe it is given to you to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.* That is, (1.) The Diſciples had Knowledge, but the People had not. You know already ſomething of theſe Myſteries, and need not in this familiar way to be Inſtructed; but the People are ignorant,are yet but Babes, and muſt be taught as ſuch, by plain Similitudes, being yet uncapable of receiving Inſtruction in any other way; for tho' they have Eyes, they know not how to uſe them. So ſome, or (2.) The Diſciples were well inclin'd to the Knowledge of Goſpel-myſteries, and would ſearch into the Parables, and by them would be led into a more intimate Acquaintance with thoſe Myſteries; but the *carnal Hearers* that reſted in bare Hearing, and would not be at the pains to look further, nor to aſk the meaning of the Prarbles, would be never the wiſer, and ſo would juſtly ſuffer for their Remiſsneſs. A *Parable* is a Shell that keeps good Fruit *for* the Diligent, but keeps it *from* the Slothful. *Note*, (1.) There are *Myſteries* in the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and without controverſie, *great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs*: Chriſt's Incarnation, Satisfaction, Interceſſion, our Juſtification, and Sanctification by Union with Chriſt, and indeed the whole Work of Redemption from firſt to laſt are *Myſteries* could never have been diſcovered but by divine Revelation, 1 *Cor.* 15. 51. were at this time diſcover'd but in part to the Diſciples, and will never be fully diſcover'd till the Vail ſhall be rent; but the Myſterиouſneſs of Goſpel-Truth ſhall not diſcourage us from, but quicken us in our Enquiries after it, and Searches into it. (2.) It is graciouſly given to the Diſciples of Chriſt to be acquainted with theſe Myſteries. Knowledge is the firſt Gift of God, and it is a *diſtinguiſhing* Gift, *Prov.* 2. 6. 'Twas given to the Apoſtles, becauſe they were Chriſt's conſtant Followers and Attendants. *Note*, The nearer we draw to Chriſt, and the more we converſe with him, the better acquainted we ſhall be with Goſpel-myſteries. 'Tis given to all true Believers, who have an *experimental* Knowledge of the Goſpel-myſteries, and that's without doubt the beſt Knowledge: A Principle of Grace in the Heart is that which makes Men of *quick underſtanding* in the Fear of the Lord, and in the Faith of Chriſt, and ſo in the meaning of Parables; and for want of that *Nicodemus* a Maſter in *Iſrael* talk'd of the new Birth, as a blind Man of Colours. (3.) That there are thoſe to whom this Knowledge *is not given*, and a Man can *receive nothing unleſs it be given him from above*, John 3. 27. And be it remember'd that God is Debtor to no Man. His Grace is his own, he gives or with-holds it at pleaſure, *Rom.* 11. 35. The Difference muſt be reſolv'd into God's Sovereignty, as before, *Mat* 11. 25, 26.

2. This Reaſon is further illuſtrated by the Rule God obſerves in diſpenſing his Gifts; he beſtows them on thoſe that improve them, but takes them away from thoſe that bury them. 'Tis a Rule among Men, they will rather entruſt their Money with thoſe that have increaſed their Eſtates by their Induſtry, than with thoſe who have diminiſhed them by their Slothfulneſs.

(1.) Here's a Promiſe to him that *hath*, that hath true Grace,purſuant to the Election of Grace, that hath, and uſeth what he hath, he ſhall have *more abundance*: God's Favours are Earneſts of further Favours,where he lays the Foundation he will build upon it. Chriſt's Diſciples us'd the Knowledge they now had, and they had *more abundance* at the pouring out of the Spirit, *Acts* 2. They that have the Truth of Grace ſhall have the increaſe of Grace, even to an *abundance* in Glory, *Prov.* 4. 18. *Joſeph*, he will *add*, Gen. 30. 24.

(2.) Here's a Threatning to him that *hath not*, that has no deſire of Grace, that makes no right uſe of the Gifts and Graces he has, has no root, no ſolid Principle; that hath, but uſeth not what he has, from him ſhall be *taken away* that which he has, or *ſeems to have*. His Leaves ſhall wither, his Gifts decay, the Means of Grace he has, and makes no uſe of, ſhall be taken from him, God will *call in* his Talents out of their hands that are likely to become Bankrupts quickly.

3. This Reaſon is particularly explain'd, with reference to the two ſorts of People Chriſt had to do with.

1. Some were willingly ignorant, and ſuch were amuz'd by the Parables, *v.* 13. *becauſe they ſeeing, ſee not.* They had ſhut their Eyes againſt the clear Light of Chriſt's plainer Preaching, therefore were now left in *the Dark*. *Seeing* Chriſt's Perſon, *they ſee not* his Glory, ſee no difference between him and another Man; *ſeeing* his Miracles, and *hearing* his Preaching, they *ſee not*, they *hear not* with any Concern, or Application, they *underſtand* neither. *Note*, (1.) There are many that ſee the Goſpel-light,and hear the Goſpel ſound, but it never reacheth their Hearts, nor has it any place in them. (2.) 'Tis juſt with God to take away the Light from thoſe that ſhut their Eyes againſt it; that ſuch as will be ignorant may be ſo. And God's dealing thus with them magnifies his Diſtinguiſhing Grace to his Diſciples.

Now in this the Scripture would be fulfill'd, *v.* 14, 15. 'Tis quoted from *Iſa.* 6. 9, 10. The Evangelical Prophet that ſpoke moſt plainly of Goſpel Grace, foretold the Contempt of it, and the Conſequences of that Contempt. 'Tis refer'd to no leſs than ſix times in the *New Teſtament*, which intimates, that in Goſpel-times *ſpiritual Judgments* would be moſt common, which make leaſt noiſe, but are moſt dreadful. That which was ſpoken of the Sinners in *Iſaiah*'s time, was fulfil'd in thoſe in Chriſt's time, and it is ſtill in the fulfilling every day; for while the wicked Heart of Man keeps up the ſame Sin, the righteous Hand of God inflicts the ſame Puniſhment. Here's,

1. A Deſcription of Sinners *wilful Blindneſs* and Hardneſs, which is their Sin. *This Peoples heart is waxed groſs*, 'tis *fatned*, ſo the word is; which notes both *Senſuality* and *Senſeleſneſs* Pſal. 119. 70. *Secure* under the Word and Rod of God, and *ſcornful* as *Jeſhurun*, that *waxed fat and wicked*, Deut. 32. 15. And when the Heart is thus heavy,no wonder that the *Ears* are *dull of hearing*; the Whiſpers of the Spirit they hear not at all, the loud Calls of the Word, tho' the Word be *nigh them*, they regard not, nor are at all affected with. *They ſtop their Ears*, Pſal. 58. 4, 5. And becauſe they are reſolv'd to be *ignorant*, they ſhut up both the *learning* Senſes, for *their Eyes* alſo *they have cloſed*; reſolv'd they would not ſee. Light came into the World when the Sun of Righteouſneſs aroſe, but they ſhut their Windows, becauſe they *loved Darkneſs rather than Light*, John 3. 19. 2 Pet. 3. 5.

2. A Deſcription of that *judicial Blindneſs* which is the juſt Puniſhment of this. *By hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand*, i. e. what means of Grace you have ſhall be to no purpoſe to you; tho' in Mercy to others they are continued, yet in Judgment to you the Bleſſing upon them is deny'd. The ſaddeſt condition a Man can be in on this ſide Hell, is to ſit under the moſt lively Ordinances with a dead, ſtupid, untouch'd Heart. To hear God's Word, and ſee his Providences, and yet not to underſtand and perceive his Will, either in the one, or in the other,is the greateſt Sin, and the greateſt Judgment that can be. Obſerve, It is God's Work to *give an underſtanding Heart*, and he often in a way of righteous Judgment denies it to thoſe to whom he hath given the *hearing Ear*, and the *ſeeing Eye* in vain. Thus doth God chuſe Sinners Deluſions, *Iſa.* 66. 4. and binds them over to the greateſt Ruin, by giving them up to their

own Hearts Luſts, *Pſal.* 81. 11, 12. *Let them alone,* Hoſ. 4. 17. *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive,* Gen. 6. 3.

3. The woful Effect and Conſequence of this, *leſt at any time they ſhould ſee.* They *will not* ſee becauſe they *will not* turn; and God ſaith, they *ſhall not* ſee, becauſe they *ſhall not* turn, *leſt they ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them.*

Note, (1.) That Seeing, Hearing, and Underſtanding, are neceſſary to Converſion; for God in working-Grace deals with Men as Men, as rational Agents; he draws with Cords of a Man, changeth the Heart by opening the Eyes, and turns *from the Power of Satan unto God,* by turning firſt *from Darkneſs to Light,* Acts 26. 18. (2.) All thoſe that are truly *converted* to God, ſhall certainly be *healed* by him. If they be converted, I *ſhall heal them,* I ſhall ſave them; ſo that if Sinners periſh, 'tis not long of God, but of themſelves; they fooliſhly expected to be healed, without being converted. (3.) It is juſt with God to deny his Grace to thoſe that have long and oft refuſed the Propoſals of it, and reſiſted the Power of it. *Pharaoh* for a good while hardened his own Heart, *Exod.* 8. 15, 32. and afterwards God hardened it, *Chap.* 9. 12.—10. 20. Let us therefore fear, leſt by *ſinning againſt* the divine Grace we *ſin it away.*

2. Others were effectually called to be the Diſciples of Chriſt, and were truly deſirous to be taught of him, and they were inſtructed, and made to improve greatly in Knowledge by theſe Parables, eſpecially when they were expounded; and by them the things of God were made more plain and eaſy, more intelligible and familiar, and more apt to be remember'd, *v.* 16, 17. *Your Eyes ſee, your Ears hear.* They ſaw the Glory of God in Chriſt's Perſon, they heard the Mind of God in Chriſt's Doctrine; they ſaw much, and were deſirous to ſee more, and thereby were prepared to receive further Inſtruction; they had Opportunity for it, by being conſtant Attendants on Chriſt, and they ſhould have it from Day to Day, and Grace with it. Now this Chriſt ſpeaks of,

1. As a *Bleſſing*; *Bleſſed are your Eyes, for they ſee,* and *your Ears, for they hear,* i. e. it is your *Happineſs,* and it is a Happineſs, for which you are indebted to the peculiar Favour and Bleſſing of God; 'tis a promis'd Bleſſing, that in the Days of the Meſſiah *the Eyes of them that ſee ſhall not be dim,* Iſa. 32. 3. The Eyes of the meaneſt Believer that knows experimentally the Grace of Chriſt, are more bleſſed than thoſe of the greateſt Scholars, the greateſt Maſters in experimental Philoſophy, that are Strangers to God, who, like the *other Gods* they ſerve, *have Eyes and ſee not. Bleſſed are your Eyes. Note,* True Bleſſedneſs is entail'd upon the right Underſtanding and due Improvement of the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God. The *hearing Ear* and the *ſeeing Eye* are God's Work, in thoſe that are ſanctified, they are the Work of his Grace, *Prov.* 20. 12. and they are a bleſſed Work, which ſhall be *fulfilled with Power,* when thoſe that now ſee thro' a Glaſs darkly, ſhall *ſee Face to Face.* 'Twas to illuſtrate this Bleſſedneſs that Chriſt ſaid ſo much of the Miſery of thoſe that are left in Ignorance, *they have Eyes and ſee not,* but *bleſſed are your Eyes. Note,* The Knowledge of Chriſt is a diſtinguiſhing Favour to thoſe that have it, and upon that Account the more obliging; ſee *John* 14. 22. The Apoſtles were to teach others, and therefore were themſelves bleſt with the cleareſt Diſcoveries of divine Truth. *The Watchmen ſhall ſee Eye to Eye,* Iſa. 52. 8.

2. As a *tranſcendent* Bleſſing, deſired *by,* but not granted *to* many Prophets and righteous Men, *v.* 17. The Old-Teſtament Saints that had ſome Glimpſes, ſome Glimmerings of Goſpel-light, coveted earneſtly further Diſcoveries. They had the Types, Shadows, and Prophecies of theſe things, but long'd to ſee the Subſtance, that glorious *End of theſe things* which they could not ſtedfaſtly *look unto,* that glorious *Inſide of thoſe things* which they could not *look into.* They deſir'd to ſee the great Salvation, the Conſolation of *Iſrael* but did not ſee it, becauſe the Fulneſs of Time was not yet come. *Note,* (1.) Thoſe that know *ſomething* of Chriſt, cannot but covet to know *more.* (2.) The Diſcoveries of divine Grace are made, even to *Prophets and righteous Men,* but according to the Diſpenſation they are under. Tho' they were the Favourites of Heaven, with whom God's Secret was, yet they have not ſeen the things which they deſired to ſee, becauſe God had determined not to bring them to light yet, and his Favours ſhall not anticipate his Counſels; there was then, as there is ſtill, a *Glory to be revealed,* ſomething in reſerve, that *they without us ſhould not be made perfect,* Heb. 11. 49. (3.) For the exciting of our Thankfulneſs and the quickning of our Diligence, 'tis good for us to conſider what Means we enjoy, and what Diſcoveries are made to us now under the Goſpel, over what they had and enjoy'd that liv'd under the *Old Teſtament* Diſpenſation, eſpecially in the Revelation of the Atonement for Sin; ſee what are the Advantages of the *New Teſtament* above the Old, 2 *Cor.* 3. 7, &c. *Heb.* 12. 18. And ſee that our Improvements be proportionable to our Advantages.

Secondly, We have here in theſe Verſes one of the Parables which our Saviour put forth, 'tis that of the *Sower, and the Seed*; both the Parable itſelf, and the Reddition of it. Chriſt's Parables are borrow'd from common ordinary things, not from any philoſophical Notions or Speculations, or the unuſual Phænomena of Nature, tho' applicable enough to the Matter in hand, but from the moſt obvious things that are of every Day's Obſervation, and come within reach of the meaneſt Capacity; many of them are fetch'd from the *Huſbandman's Calling,* as this of the *Sower,* and that of the *Tares.* Chriſt choſe to do thus, (1.) that *ſpiritual Things* might hereby be made *more plain,* and by familiar Similitudes might be made the more eaſy to ſlide into our Underſtandings. (2.) That *common Actions* might hereby be *ſpiritualiz'd,* and we might take occaſion from thoſe things which fall ſo often under our View, to meditate with delight on the Things of God; and thus when our Hands are buſieſt about the World, we may not only, notwithſtanding that, but even with the help of that be led to have our *Hearts in Heaven*; thus the Word of God ſhall talk with us, talk familiarly with us, *Prov.* 6. 22.

The Parable of the *Sower* is plain enough, *v.* 3, 9. The Expoſition of it we have from Chriſt himſelf, who knew beſt what was his own Meaning. The Diſciples when they aſk'd, *Why ſpeakeſt thou to them in Parables?* v. 10. intimated a Deſire to have the Parable explain'd for the ſake of the People; nor was it any Diſparagement to their own Knowledge to deſire it for themſelves. Our Lord Jeſus kindly took the Hint, and *gave the Senſe,* and *cauſed them to underſtand* the Parable, directing his Diſcourſe to the Diſciples, but in the hearing of the Multitude, for he did not diſmiſs them till *v.* 36. *Hear ye therefore the Parable of the Sower,* v. 18. you have heard it, but let's go over it again. *Note,* 'Tis of good uſe, and would contribute much to our underſtanding of the Word, and profiting by it, to hear over again what we have heard, *Phil.* 3. 18. you have heard it, but hear the Interpretation of it. *Note,* Then only we hear the Word aright, and to good purpoſe when we underſtand what we hear; 'tis no hearing at all, if it be not with Underſtanding, *Neh.* 8. 2. 'Tis God's Grace indeed that gives the Underſtanding, but 'tis our Duty to give our Minds to underſtand.

Let us therefore compare the Parable and the Expoſition.

1. The *Seed* ſown is the *Word of God,* here call'd *the Word of the Kingdom,* v. 19. i. e. the Kingdom *of Heaven,* that's the Kingdom; the Kingdoms of the World compar'd with that, are not to be call'd *Kingdoms.* The Goſpel *comes from* that Kingdom, and *Conducts to* that Kingdom, the Word of the Goſpel is the *Word of the Kingdom,* 'tis the Word of the King, and where that is, *there is Power*; it is a Law, by which we muſt be rul'd and govern'd. This Word is the *Seed ſown,* which ſeems a dead dry thing, but all the Product is *virtually* in it. 'Tis *incorruptible Seed,* 1 Pet. 1. 23. 'Tis the Goſpel that *brings forth Fruit* in Souls, *Col.* 1. 5, 6.

2. The *Sower* that ſcatters this Seed is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, either by himſelf, or by his Miniſters, ſee *v.* 37. People are God's Huſbandry, his Tillage, ſo the Word is; and Miniſters are *Labourers, together with God,* 1 Cor. 3. 9. Preaching to a Multitude, is Sowing the Corn, we know not where it muſt light; only ſee that it be *good,* that it be *clean,* and be ſure to give it Seed enough. The ſowing of the Word is the ſowing of a People for God's Field, the *Corn of his Floor,* Iſa. 21. 10.

3. The *Ground* in which this Seed is Sown, is the Hearts of the Children of Men, which are differently qualify'd and diſpos'd, and accordingly the Succeſs of the Word is different. *Note,* Man's Heart is like Soil capable of Improvement, of bearing good Fruit, 'tis pity it ſhould lye Fallow, or be like the Field of the Slothful, *Prov.* 24. 30. The Soul is the proper place for the Word of God to dwell, and work, and rule in; its Operation is upon Conſcience, 'tis to light that *Candle of the Lord.* Now according as we are, ſo the Word is to us. *Recipitur ad modum recipientis.* As 'tis with the Earth, ſome ſort of Ground, take never ſo much Pains with it, and throw never ſo good Seed into it, yet it brings forth no Fruit to any purpoſe, while the good Soil brings forth plentifully: So it is with the Hearts of Men, whoſe different Characters are here repreſented by four ſorts of Ground, of which *three are bad,* and but *one good. Note,* The Number of fruitleſs Hearers is very great, even of thoſe that heard Chriſt himſelf Preach. *Who has believed our Report?* Tis a melancholy Proſpect which this Parable gives us of the Congregations of thoſe that hear the Goſpel preach'd, that ſcarce *one in four* brings forth Fruit to Perfection. Many are called with the common Call, but in few is the eternal Choice evidenc'd by the Efficacy of that Call, *Matt.* 20. 16.

Now obſerve the Characters of theſe four ſorts of Ground.

1. The *High way Ground,* v. 4.--19. They had Path-ways through their Corn-fields, *Matt.* 12. 1. and the Seed that fell on them never enter'd, and ſo the Birds pick'd it up. The Place where Chriſt's Hearers now ſtood, repreſented the Characters of moſt of them, the Sand on the Sea-ſhore, which was to the Seed like the High-way Ground.

Obſerve, 1. What kind of Hearers are compar'd to the High-way Ground; ſuch as *hear the Word, and underſtand it not,* and it is their own fault that they do not. They take no heed to it, take no hold of it; they do not come with any deſign to get Good, as the High-way was never intended to be ſown. They *come before God as his People come,* and *ſit before him as his People ſit*; but 'tis meerly for Faſhion ſake, to ſee and to be ſeen, they mind not what is ſaid, it comes in at one Ear, and goes out at the other, and makes no Impreſſion.

2. How they come to be unprofitable Hearers. The *wicked one,* that is the Devil, *cometh and catcheth away that which was ſown.* Such mindleſs, careleſs, trifling Hearers are an eaſie Prey to Satan, who, as he is the great murtherer of Souls, ſo he is the great Thief of Sermons, and will be ſure to rob us of the Word, if we take not care to keep it; as the Birds pick up the Seed that falls on the Ground, that is neither *Plough'd* before, nor *Harrow'd* after. If we *break not up the Fallow Ground* by preparing our Hearts for the Word, and humbling them to it, and engaging our own Attention; And if we cover not the Seed afterwards by Meditation and Prayer, if we

give not a *more earneſt heed to the things which ye have heard*, we are as the High-way Ground. *Note*, The Devil is a ſworn Enemy to our profiting by the Word of God, and none do more befriend his Deſign than heedleſs Hearers, who are thinking of ſomething elſe, when they ſhould be thinking of the things that belong to their Peace.

2. The *ſtony Ground. Some fell upon ſtony Places*, v. 6, 7. which repreſents the Caſe of Hearers that go further than the former, who receive ſome good impreſſions of the Word, but they are not laſting, v. 20, 21. *Note*, It is poſſible we may be a great deal better than ſome others, and yet not be ſo good as we ſhould be; may *go beyond* our Neighbours, and yet *come ſhort* of Heaven. Now obſerve concerning theſe Hearers that are repreſented by the *ſtony Ground*.

1. How far they went. (1.) They *hear the Word*; they turn neither their Backs upon it, nor a deaf Ear to it. *Note*, Hearing the Word, tho' never ſo frequently, never ſo gravely, if we reſt in that, will never bring us to Heaven. (2.) They are *quick in hearing*, ſwift to hear, *he anon receiveth it*, εὐθὺς, he is *ready* to receive it, *forthwith it ſprung up*, v. 5. it ſooner appear'd above Ground than that which was ſown in the good Soil. *Note*, Hypocrites often get the ſtart of true Chriſtians in the Shews of Profeſſion, and are often too hot to hold. He *receiveth it ſtraitway*, without trying it; ſwallows it without chewing, and then there can never be a good Digeſtion. Thoſe are moſt likely to hold faſt that which is good that *prove all things*, 1 *Theſ*. 5. 21. (3.) They receive it *with joy*. *Note*, There are many that are very glad to hear a good Sermon, that yet do not profit by it; may be pleas'd with the Word, and yet not chang'd and rul'd by it; The Heart may *melt* under the Word, and yet not be *melted down* by the Word, much leſs *into it*, as into a Mold. Many *taſte the good Word of God*, Heb. 6. 5. and ſay they find ſweetneſs in it, but ſome beloved Luſt is *roll'd under the Tongue*, which it would not agree with, and ſo they ſpit it out again. (4.) They *endure for a while*, like a violent Motion which continues as long as the Impreſſion of the Force remains, but ceaſeth when that hath ſpent it ſelf. *Note*, Many endure *for a while*, that do not endure *to the end*, and ſo come ſhort of the Happineſs which is promis'd to them only that perſevere, *Mat*. 10. 22. they did *run well*, but ſomething *hinder'd them*, Gal. 5. 7.

2. How they fell away, ſo that no Fruit was brought *to perfection*, no more than the Corn that having no depth of Earth, from which to draw Moiſture, is ſcorch'd and wither'd by the Heat of the Sun. And the Reaſon is,

1. They have *no Root in themſelves*, no *ſettled* fixed Principles in their Judgments. No firm Reſolution in their Wills, nor any *rooted* Habits in their Affections; nothing firm that will be either the Sap or the Strength of their Profeſſion. *Note*, (1.) 'Tis poſſible there may be the *green Blade* of a Profeſſion, where yet there is not the Root of Grace; Hardneſs prevails in the Heart, and what there is of Soil and Softneſs is only in the Surface, *inwardly* they are no more affected than a Stone; they have *no Root*, i. e, They are not by Faith united to Chriſt who is our Root, they derive not from him, they depend not on him. (2.) Where there is not a Principle, tho' there be a Profeſſion, we cannot expect Perſeverance. Thoſe that have *no Root* will endure but *a while*. A Ship without Ballaſt, tho' ſhe may at firſt out-ſail the laden Veſſel, yet will certainly fail in Streſs of Weather, and will never make her Port.

2. Times of Tryal come, and then they come to nothing. *When Tribulation and Perſecution ariſe becauſe of the Word, he is offended*; 'tis a Stumbling-block in his way which he cannot get over, and ſo he flies off, and this is all that his Profeſſion comes to. *Note*, 1. After a fair Gale of Opportunity uſually follows a Storm of Perſecution, to try who hath received the Word in Sincerity, and who have not. When *the Word* of Chriſt's *Kingdom* comes to be the Word of Chriſt's *Patience*, Rev. 3. 10. then is the Tryal who keeps it, and who doth not, *Rev*. 1. 3. It's Wiſdom to prepare for ſuch a Day. (2.) When trying Times come, thoſe that have no Root are ſoon offended; they firſt *quarrel* with their Profeſſion, and then *quit it*; firſt find fault with it, and then throw it off. Hence we read of the *Offence of the Croſs*, Gal. 5. 11. Obſerve, the Perſecution is repreſented in the Parable by the *ſcorching Sun*, v. 6. The ſame Sun which warms and cheriſhes that which was *well rooted*, withers and burns up that which *wanted Root*. As the Word of Chriſt, ſo the Croſs of Chriſt is to ſome a Savour of Life unto Life, to others a Savour of Death unto Death. The ſame Tribulation which drives ſome to Apoſtacy and Ruin, works for others a *far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*. Tryals which ſhake ſome, confirms others, *Phil*. 1. 12. Obſerve, how ſoon they fall away, *by and by*, as ſoon rotten as they were ripe; a Profeſſion taken up without Conſideration is commonly let fall without it. Light come, light go.

3. The *Thorny Ground. Some fell among Thorns*, which are a good Guard to the Corn when they are in the Hedge, but a bad Inmate when they are in the Field, and the *Thorns ſprung up*; which intimates, that they did not appear, or but little, when the Corn was ſown, but afterwards they prov'd *choaking* to it, v. 7. This went further than the former, for it *had Root*; and it repreſents the Condition of thoſe that do not quite caſt off their Profeſſion, and yet come ſhort of any ſaving Benefit by it; the Good they gain by the Word being inſenſibly overcome, and over-born by the things of this World. Proſperity deſtroys the Word in the Heart as much as perſecution doth, and more *dangerouſly*, becauſe more *ſilently*. The Stones ſpoil'd the *Root*, the Thorns ſpoil the Fruit.

Now what are theſe choking Thorns?

1. The *Cares of this World*. Care for another World would quicken the ſpringing of this Seed, but Care for this World choaks it. Worldly Cares are fitly compar'd to Thorns, for they came in with Sin, and are a Fruit of the Curſe; they are good in their place to ſtop a Gap, but a Man muſt be *well arm'd* that deals to much in them, 2 *Sam*. 23. 6, 7. they are entangling, vexing, ſcratching, and *their end is to be burn'd*, Heb. 6. 8. Theſe Thorns choke the good Seed. *Note*, Worldly Cares are great Hindrances to our profiting by the Word of God, and our Proficiency in Religion. They eat up that Vigour of Soul which ſhould be ſpent in divine Things, divert us from Duty, diſtract us in Duty, and do us moſt miſchief of all afterwards; quenching the Sparks of good Affections, and burſting the Cords of good Reſolutions. Thoſe that are *careful* and *cumber'd about many things*, commonly *neglect the one thing needful*.

2. The *Deceitfulneſs of Riches*. Thoſe that by their Care and Induſtry have rais'd Eſtates, and ſo the Danger that ariſeth from *Care* ſeems to be over, and they continue *Hearers of the Word*, yet are ſtill in a Snare, *Jer*. 5. 4, 5. 'Tis hard for them to enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven*; they are apt to promiſe themſelves that in Riches that is not in them, to rely upon them, and to take an inordinate Complacency in them, and this choaks the Word as much as Care did. Obſerve, It is not ſo much *Riches* as the *Deceitfulneſs of Riches* that doth the Miſchief: Now they cannot be ſaid to be deceitful *to us*, unleſs we put our Confidence *in them*, and raiſe our Expectations *from them*, and then it is that they *choke* the good Seed.

4. The *good Ground*, v. 18. *Other fell into good Ground*, and it is pity but that good Seed ſhould always meet with good Soil, and then there's no Loſs; ſuch are good *Hearers of the Word*, v. 23. *Note*, Tho' there are many that receive the Grace of God, and the Word of his Grace in vain, yet God hath a Remnant, by whom it is received to good purpoſe; for God's Word ſhall not *return empty*, Iſa. 55. 10, 11.

Now that which differenc'd this good Ground from the reſt, was in one word *Fruitfulneſs*. By this true Chriſtians are diſtinguiſh'd from Hypocrites, that they *bring forth the Fruits of Righteouſneſs*, ſo ſhall ye be my Diſciples, *John* 15. 8. He doth not ſay that this good Ground has no ſtones in it, or no Thorns, but there were none that prevailed to hinder its Fruitfulneſs. Saints in this World are not *perfectly free* from the Remains of Sin, but *happily freed from* the Reign of it.

The Hearers repreſented by the good Ground are,

1. *Intelligent Hearers*. They hear the Word, and *underſtand it*. They underſtand, not only the Senſe and meaning of the Words, but their own Concern in them, they underſtand it, as a Man of Buſineſs underſtands his Buſineſs. God in his Word deals with Men as Men, in a rational way, and gains Poſſeſſion of the Will and Affections, by opening the Underſtanding; whereas Satan, who is a Thief and a Robber, comes not in by that Door, but *climbeth up another way*.

2. *Fruitful Hearers*, which is an Evidence of their *good Underſtanding, which alſo beareth Fruit*. Fruit is to every Seed its own Body, a ſubſtantial Product, in the Heart and Life agreeable to the Seed of the Word received. We then bear Fruit when we practiſe according to the Word; when the Temper of our Minds, and the Tenor of our Lives are conformable to the Goſpel we have received, and we do as we are taught.

3. Not all *alike fruitful*; *ſome a hundred fold, ſome ſixty, ſome thirty*. *Note*, Among fruitful Chriſtians ſome are more fruitful than others. Where there is true Grace, yet there are degrees of it; ſome are of greater Attainments in Knowledge and Holineſs than others; all Chriſt's Scholars are not in the ſame Form. We ſhould aim at the higheſt degree, to bring forth an hundred fold, as *Iſaac*'s Ground did, *Gen*. 26. 12. *abounding in the Work of the Lord*, John 15. 8. But if the Ground be good, and the Fruit right, the Heart Honeſt, and the Life of a piece with it, thoſe that bring forth but *thirty fold* ſhall be graciouſly accepted of God, and it will be Fruit abounding to their Account, for we are under Grace, and not under the Law.

Laſtly, He cloſeth the Parable with a ſolemn Call to Attention, v. 9. *Who hath Ears to hear, let him hear*. *Note*, The Senſe of Hearing cannot be better employ'd than in hearing the Word of God. Some are for hearing *ſweet Melody*, their Ears are only the *Daughters of Muſick*, Eccl. 12. 4. There's no Melody like that of the *Word of God*, others are for *hearing new things*, Acts 7. 21. no News like that.

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, ſaying,
The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man
which ſowed good ſeed in his field: 25 But while
men ſlept, his enemy came and ſowed tares among
the wheat, and went his way. 26 But when the
blade was ſprung up, and brought forth fruit: then
appeared the tares alſo. 27 So the ſervants of the
houſholder came and ſaid unto him, Sir, didſt not
thou ſow good ſeed in thy field? from whence then
hath it tares? 28 He ſaid unto them, An enemy
hath done this. The ſervants ſaid unto him, Wilt
thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But
he ſaid, Nay, leſt while ye gather up the tares, ye

root up alſo the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harveſt: and in the time of harveſt I will ſay to the reapers, Gather ye together firſt the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn. 31 Another parable put he forth unto them, ſaying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of muſtard-ſeed which a man took and ſowed in his field. 32 Which indeed is the leaſt of all ſeeds: but when it is grown, it is the greateſt among herbs, and becometh a tree: ſo that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. 33 Another parable ſpake he unto them, the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three meaſures of meal, till the whole was leavened. 34 All theſe things ſpake Jeſus unto the multitude in parables, and without a parable ſpake he not unto them: 35 That it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying, I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things which have been kept ſecret from the foundation of the world. 36 Then Jeſus ſent the multitude away, and went into the houſe: and his Diſciples came unto him, ſaying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, he that ſoweth the good ſeed, is the Son of Man: 38 The field is the World: the good ſeed are the children of the kingdom: but the tares are the children of the wicked one: 39 The enemy that ſowed them is the devil: the harveſt is the end of the world: and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the Tares are gathered and burnt in the fire; ſo ſhall it be in the end of this World. 41 The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity: 42 And ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire; there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. 43 Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

In theſe Verſes we have,

1. Another Reaſon given why Chriſt preach'd by Parables, *v.* 34, 35. *All theſe things he ſpoke in Parables*, becauſe the Time was not yet come for the more clear and plain Diſcoveries of the Myſteries of the Kingdom. Chriſt to keep the People attending and expecting, preach'd in *Parables*, and *without a Parable ſpake he not unto them*, *viz.* at this Time, and in this Sermon. *Note*, Chriſt tries all ways and Methods to do good to the Souls of Men, and to make Impreſſions upon them; if Men will not be inſtructed and influenc'd by plain Preaching, he will try them with Parables. And the Reaſon here given is, *that the Scripture might be fulfill'd*. The Paſſage here quoted for it, is part of the Preface to that hiſtorical Pſalm, *Pſal.* 78. 2. *I will open my Mouth in a Parable.* What the Pſalmiſt *David*, or *Aſaph* ſaith here of his Narrative, is accommodated to Chriſt's Sermons, and that great Precedent would ſerve to vindicate this way of Preaching from the Offence which ſome took at it. Here's (1.) the *Matter* of Chriſt's Preaching; he preach'd *things which had been kept ſecret from the Foundation of the World*. The Myſtery of the Goſpel had been *hid in God*, i. e. in his Counſels and Decrees *from the beginning of the World*, Eph. 3. 9. Compare *Rom.* 16. 25. 1 *Cor.* 2. 7. *Col.* 1. 26. If we delight in the Records of *ancient things*, and in the Revelation of *ſecret things*, how welcome ſhould the Goſpel be to us which hath in it ſuch *Antiquity*, and ſuch *Myſtery*. It was *from the Foundation of the World*, wrapt up in Types and Shadows, which are now *done away*, and thoſe ſecret things are now become ſuch things reveal'd as *belong to us, and to our Children*, Deut. 29. 29. (2.) The *manner* of Chriſt's Preaching; he Preach'd by *Parables*, wiſe Sayings, but figurative, and which help to engage Attention, and a diligent Search. *Solomon's* Sententious Dictates, which are full of Similitudes, are call'd *Proverbs*, or *Parables*, 'tis the ſame word; but in this, as in other things, *Behold a greater than Solomon is here*, in whom are hid *Treaſures of Wiſdom*.

2. The Parable of the Tares, and the Expoſition of it; they muſt be taken together, for the Expoſition explains the Parable, and the Parable illuſtrates the Expoſition.

Obſerve, 1. The Diſciples Requeſt to their Maſter to have this Parable expounded to them, *v.* 36. *Jeſus ſent the Multitude away*, and 'tis to be fear'd many of them went away no wiſer than they came, they had *heard a ſound of Words*, and that was all. 'Tis ſad to think how many go away from Sermons with the *Word of Grace* in their Ears, but not the *Work of Grace* in their Hearts. Chriſt *went into the Houſe*, not ſo much for his own Repoſe, as for particular Converſe with his Diſciples, whoſe Inſtruction he chiefly intended in all his Preaching. He was ready to do good in all Places; the Diſciples laid hold on the Opportunity, and *they came to him*. *Note*, Thoſe that would be wiſe for every thing elſe, muſt be wiſe to diſcern and improve their Opportunities, eſpecially of Converſe with Chriſt, of Converſe with him *alone*, in ſecret Meditation and Prayer. It is very good when we return from the ſolemn Aſſembly, to talk over what we have heard there, and by familiar Diſcourſe to help one another to underſtand and remember it, and to be affected with it; for we loſe the Benefit of many a Sermon by vain and unprofitable Diſcourſe after it. See *Luke* 24. 32. *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. It is eſpecially good, if it may be to aſk of the Miniſters of the Word the meaning of the Word, for their *Lips* ſhould *keep Knowledge*. Mal. 2. 7. private Conference would contribute much to our profiting by publick Preaching. *Nathan's Thou art the Man*, was it that touch'd *David* to the Heart.

The Diſciples Requeſt to their Maſter, was, *Declare unto us the Parable of the Tares.* This implied an Acknowledgment of their Ignorance; which they were not aſhamed to make. 'Tis probable they did apprehend the general Scope of the Parable, but they deſired to underſtand it more particularly, and to be aſſur'd that they took it right. *Note*, Thoſe are rightly diſpos'd for Chriſt's teaching, that are ſenſible of their Ignorance, and ſincerely deſirous to be taught. He will *teach the Humble*, Pſal. 25. 8, 9. but *will for this be enquir'd of*. If any Man lack Inſtruction, let him aſk it of God. Chriſt had expounded the foregoing Parable *unaſk'd*, but for the Expoſition of this they aſk him. *Note*, The Mercies we have received muſt be improv'd, both for Direction what to pray for, and for our Encouragement in Prayer. The *firſt* Light and the *firſt* Grace are given in a *preventing* Way, further Degrees of both which muſt be daily pray'd for.

2. The Expoſition Chriſt gave of the Parable, in Anſwer to their Requeſt; ſo ready is Chriſt to anſwer ſuch Deſires of his Diſciples. Now the Drift of the Parable is, to repreſent to us the preſent and future State of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, the Goſpel Church, Chriſt's Care of it, the Devils Enmity againſt it, the Mixture that there is in it of good and bad in the World, and the Separation between them in the other World. *Note*, The viſible Church is the *Kingdom of Heaven*; tho' there be many Hypocrites in it, Chriſt *rules in it* as a King, and there is a Remnant in it, that are the Subjects and Heirs of Heaven, from whom as the better part it is denominated. The Church is the *Kingdom of Heaven* upon Earth.

Let us go over the Particulars of the Reddition of the Parable.

Firſt, He that *ſows the Good Seed is the Son of Man.* Jeſus Chriſt is the Lord of the Field, the Lord of the Harveſt, the Sower of good Seed: When he aſcended on high, he gave Gifts to the World, not only good Miniſters, but other good Men. *Note*, Whatever good Seed there is in the World, it all comes from the Hand of Chriſt, and is of his ſowing. Truths preach'd, Graces planted, Souls ſanctified are good Seed, and all owing to Chriſt. Miniſters are Inſtruments in Chriſt's Hand to ſow good Seed, are employ'd by him and under him, and the Succeſs of their Labours depends purely upon his Bleſſing; ſo that it may well be ſaid, 'tis Chriſt and no other, that *ſows the good Seed*; he is the *Son of Man*, one of us, that his Terror might not make us afraid: the *Son of Man*, i. e. the Mediator and that has Authority.

Secondly, The *Field* is the *World*; the World of Mankind, a large Field, capable of bringing forth good Fruit, the more it is to be lamented, that it brings forth ſo much bad Fruit. The *World* here is the viſible Church, ſcattered all the World over, not confin'd to one Nation. Obſerve, In the Parable 'tis call'd *his Field*; the World is Chriſt's Field, for *all things are deliver'd unto him of the Father*. Whatever Power and Intereſt the Devil has in the World, 'tis uſurped and unjuſt; when Chriſt comes to take Poſſeſſion, he comes whoſe Right it is; 'tis *his Field*; and becauſe 'tis *his*, he took Care to ſow it with good Seed.

Thirdly, The *good Seed* are the *Children of the Kingdom*, i. e. true Saints. They are (1.) The *Children of the Kingdom*, not in Profeſſion only, as the *Jews were*, Mat. 8. 12. but in Sincerity, *Jews inwardly*, *Iſraelites indeed*, incorporated in Faith and Obedience to Jeſus Chriſt, the great King of the Church. (2.) They are the *good Seed*, precious as Seed, (*Pſal.* 126. 6.) The Seed is the Subſtance of the Field, ſo the Holy Seed, *Iſa.* 6. 13. The Seed is *ſcatter'd*, ſo are the Saints, diſpers'd, here one, and there another, tho' in ſome Places thicker ſown than in others. The Seed is that from which Fruit is expected, what Fruit of Honour and Service God has from this World, he has it from the Saints; whom he hath *ſow'd unto himſelf in the Earth*, Hoſ. 2. 23.

Fourthly, The *Tares* are the *Children of the wicked One.* Here's the Character of Sinners, Hypocrites, and all prophane and wicked People. (1.) They are the Children of the Devil, as a *wicked One*. Though they do not own his Name, yet they bear his Image, do his Luſts, and from him they have their Education; he rules over them, he works in them, *Eph.* 2. 2. *Joh.* 8. 44. (2.) They are *Tares* in the Field of this World. They do no good, they do good; unprofitable in themſelves, and hurtful to the good Seed, both by Temptation and Perſecution. They are *Weeds* in the Garden, have the ſame Rain and Sunſhine, and Soil with the good Plants, but are good for nothing. The Tares *are among the Wheat*. *Note*, God hath ſo order'd it, that Good and Bad ſhould be mix'd together in this World, that the Good may be exercis'd, the bad left inexcuſable, and a Difference made between Earth and Heaven.

Fifthly, The *Enemy that ſow'd* the Tares, is *the Devil*, a ſworn Enemy to Chriſt and all that's good, to the Glory of the good God, and the Comfort and Happineſs of all good Men. He is an Enemy to the Field of the World, which he endeavours to make his own, by ſowing his Tares in it. Ever ſince he became a *wicked Spirit* himſelf, he has been induſtrious to promote Wickedneſs, and has made it his Buſineſs, and therein to counter-work Chriſt.

Now concerning the ſowing of the Tares, obſerve in the Parable,

1. That they were ſown *while Men ſlept*. Magiſtrates ſlept, that by their Power, Miniſters ſlept, that by their Preaching ſhould have prevented this Miſchief. *Note*, Satan watcheth all Opportunities, and lays hold on all Advantages to propagate Vice and Profaneneſs. The Prejudice he doth to particular Perſons is, when Reaſon and Conſcience *ſleep*, when they are off their Guard; we have therefore need to be *ſober* and *vigilant*; 'twas *in the Night*, for that's the *ſleeping-time*. *Note*, Satan rules in the Darkneſs of this World, that gives him an Opportunity to ſow Tares, *Pſal*. 104. 20. It was while *Men* ſlept, and there's no Remedy, but *Men* muſt have ſome ſleeping-time. *Note*, It is as impoſſible for us to prevent Hypocrites being in the Church, as it is for the Husbandman when he is aſleep to hinder an Enemy from ſpoiling his Field.

2. The Enemy, when he had ſown the Tares, *went his way*, v. 25. that it might not be known who did it. *Note*, When Satan is doing the greateſt Miſchief he ſtudies moſt to conceal himſelf, for his Deſign is in danger of being ſpoil'd if he be ſeen in it; and therefore when he comes to ſow Tares he *transforms himſelf into an Angel of Light*, 2 Cor. 11. 13, 14. he *went his way*, as if he had done no harm; *ſuch is the way of the adulterous Woman*, Prov. 30. 20. Obſerve, Such is the Proneneſs of fallen Man to ſin, that if the Enemy *ſow the Tares*, he may e'en *go his way*, they will ſpring up of themſelves and do hurt; whereas when good Seed is ſown, it muſt be tended, watered and fenced, or 'twill come to nothing.

3. The Tares *appeared* not, till *the Blade ſprung up, and brought forth Fruit*, v. 26. There is a great deal of ſecret Wickedneſs in the Hearts of Men, which is long hid under the Cloke of a plauſible Profeſſion, but breaks out at laſt. As the *good Seed*, ſo the *Tares* lie a great while under the Clods, and at firſt ſpringing up 'tis hard to diſtinguiſh them; but when a trying time comes, when *Fruit* is to be *brought forth*, when Good is to be done that has Difficulty and Hazard attending it, then *you'll return and diſcern* between the Sincere and the Hypocrite, then you may ſay, this is *Wheat*, and that is *Tares*.

4. The Servants when they were aware of it, complain'd to their Maſter, *v*. 27. *Sir, didſt not thou ſow good Seed in thy Field?* No doubt he did; whatever is amiſs in the Church, we are ſure it is not long of Chriſt. Conſidering the Seed which Chriſt ſows, we may well ask with Wonder, whence ſhould theſe Tares come? *Note*, The Riſe of Errors, the Breaking out of Scandals, and the Growth of Profaneneſs, are Matter of great Grief to all the Servants of Chriſt, eſpecially to his faithful Miniſters, who are directed to complain of it to him, whoſe the Field is. 'Tis ſad to ſee ſuch Tares, ſuch Weeds in the Garden of the Lord, to ſee the good Soil waſted, the good Seed choked, and ſuch a Reflection caſt on the Name and Honour of Chriſt, as if his Field were no better than the Field of the Slothful, *all grown over with Thorns*.

5. The Maſter was ſoon aware whence it was, *v*. 28. *An Enemy has done this*. He doth not lay the Blame upon the Servants, they could not help it, had done what was in their Power to prevent it. *Note*, The Miniſters of Chriſt, that are faithful and diligent, ſhall not be judged of Chriſt, and therefore ſhould not be reproached by Men, for the Mixture of bad with good, Hypocrites with the Sincere, in the Field of the Church. It muſt needs be that ſuch Offences will come, and they ſhall not be laid to our Charge, if we do our Duty, tho' it have not the deſired Succeſs. Tho' they *ſleep*, if they do not *love Sleep*, tho' Tares be ſown, if they do not *ſow them*, nor *water* them, nor allow of them, the Blame ſhall not lie at their Door.

6. The Servants were very forward to have theſe Tares *rooted up*. *Wilt thou that we go* and do it preſently. *Note*, The over-haſty and inconſiderate Zeal of Chriſt's Servants before they have conſulted with their Maſter, is ſometimes ready with the Hazard of the Church, to root out all that they preſume to be Tares. *Lord, wilt thou that we call for Fire from Heaven?*

7. The Maſter very wiſely prevented this, *v*. 29. *Nay, leſt while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up alſo the Wheat with them*. *Note*, It is not poſſible for any Man infallibly to diſtinguiſh between Tares and Wheat, but he may be miſtaken; and therefore ſuch is the Wiſdom and Grace of Chriſt, that he will rather permit the Tares, than any way indanger the Wheat. 'Tis certain ſcandalous Offenders are to be cenſur'd, and we are to withdraw from them; thoſe that are openly the Children of the wicked One, are not to be admitted to ſpecial Ordinances; yet 'tis poſſible there may be a Diſcipline, either ſo *miſtaken* in its Rules, or ſo *over nice* in the Application of them, as may prove *vexatious* to many that are truly godly and conſcientious. Great Caution and Moderation muſt be uſed in inflicting and continuing Church-Cenſures, leſt the Wheat be *trodden down*, if not *plucked up*. The Wiſdom from above, as it is *pure*, ſo it is *peaceable*, and thoſe that *oppoſe themſelves* muſt not be cut off, but *inſtructed*, and with *Meekneſs*, 2 Tim. 2. 25. The Tares, if continued under the Means of Grace, may become good Corn, therefore have Patience with them.

Sixthly, The *Harveſt* is the *End of the World*, v. 39. This World will have an *End*; tho' it continue long, it will not continue always; Time will ſhortly be ſwallow'd up in Eternity. At the End of the World there will be a great *Harveſt-day*, a Day of Judgment; at Harveſt all is ripe, and ready to be cut down, both good and bad are ripe at the great Day, *Rev*. 6. 11. 'Tis the *Harveſt of the Earth*, Rev. 14. 15. At *Harveſt* the Reapers cut down all before them, not a Field, not a Corner left behind; ſo at the great Day all muſt be *judged*, Rev. 20. 12, 13. God hath *ſet a Harveſt*, Hoſ. 6. 11. and it ſhall not fail, *Gen*. 8. 22. At Harveſt every Man reaps as he ſow'd, every Man's Ground, and Seed, and Skill, and Induſtry, will be manifeſted; ſee *Gal*. 6. 7, 8. Then they who ſow'd precious Seed will come *again with Rejoycing*, Pſal. 126. 5, 6. with the Joy of Harveſt, *Iſa*. 9. 3. when the Sluggard, who would not plough by reaſon of Cold, ſhall beg and have nothing, *Prov*. 20. 4. ſhall cry, *Lord, Lord*, but *in vain*; when the Harveſt of thoſe that ſow'd to the Fleſh ſhall be a *Day of Grief and deſperate Sorrow*, Iſa. 17. 11.

Seventhly, The *Reapers* are the *Angels*, they ſhall be employ'd in the great Day in executing Chriſt's righteous Sentences, both of Approbation and Condemnation, as Miniſters of his Juſtice, *Mat*. 25. 31. The Angels are ſkilful, ſtrong and ſwift, obedient Servants to Chriſt, holy Enemies to the Wicked, and faithful Friends to all the Saints, and therefore fit to be thus employ'd. *He that reapeth receiveth Wages*, and the Angels will not be unpaid for their Attendance; for *he that ſoweth and he that reapeth ſhall rejoice together*, John 4. 36. That's *Joy in Heaven in the Preſence of the Angels of God*.

Eighthly, Hell Torments are the *Fire* into which the *Tares* ſhall then be *caſt*, and in which they ſhall be *burn'd*; at the great Day a Diſtinction will be made, and with it a vaſt Difference; 'twill be a *notable Day* indeed.

1. The *Tares* will then be *gathered out*. The *Reapers* (whoſe primary Work it is to *gather* in the Corn) ſhall be charg'd firſt to *gather out the Tares*. *Note*, Tho' Good and Bad are together in this World undiſtinguiſh'd, yet at the great Day they ſhall be *parted*. No Tares ſhall then be among the Wheat. No Sinners among the Saints. Then you ſhall plainly diſcern *between the Righteous and the Wicked*, which here ſometimes 'tis hard to do, *Mal*. 3. *ult*.—4. 1. Chriſt will not bear always, *Pſal*. 50. 1, *&c*. They ſhall *gather out of his Kingdom* all wicked *things that offend, and all* wicked Perſons that *do Iniquity*; when he begins he will make a full End. All thoſe corrupt Doctrines, Worſhips and Practices which *have offended*, have been *Scandals* to the Church, and *Stumbling-blocks* to Mens Conſciences, ſhall be condemned by the righteous Judge in that Day, and conſum'd by the Brightneſs of his coming; all the *Wood, Hay and Stubble*, 1 Cor. 3. 12. and then wo to them that *do Iniquity*, that make a Trade of it, and perſiſt in it; not only thoſe in the laſt Age of Chriſt's Kingdom upon Earth, but thoſe in every Age. Perhaps here is an Alluſion to *Zeph*. 1. 3. *I will conſume the Stumbling-blocks with the Wicked*.

2. They will then be *bound in Bundles*, v. 30. Sinners of the ſame ſort will be bundled together in the great Day. A Bundle of Atheiſts, a Bundle of Epicures, a Bundle of Perſecutors, and a great Bundle of Hypocrites. Thoſe that have been Aſſociates in Sin, will be ſo in Shame and Sorrow, and it will be an Aggravation of their Miſery, as the Society of glorified Saints will add to their Bliſs. Let us pray as *David*, *Lord, gather not my Soul with Sinners*, Pſal. 26. 9. but let it be bound in the *Bundle of Life, with the Lord our God*, 1 Sam. 25. 29.

3. They will be *caſt into a Furnace of Fire*; ſuch will be the End of wicked miſchievous People that are in the Church, as *Tares in the Field*; they are fit for nothing but Fire, to it they ſhall go, it is the fitteſt Place for them. *Note*, Hell is a Furnace of Fire, kindled by the Wrath of God, and kept burning by the Bundles of Tares caſt into it, who will be ever in the conſuming, but never conſumed. But he ſlides out of the Metaphor into a Deſcription of thoſe Torments that are deſign'd to be ſet forth by it, *there ſhall be Weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*. Comfortleſs Sorrow and an incurable Indignation at God, themſelves, and one another, will be the endleſs Torture of damned Souls. Let us therefore *knowing theſe Terrors of the Lord* be *perſuaded* not to *do Iniquity*.

Ninthly, Heaven is the Barn into which all God's Wheat ſhall be gathered in that Harveſt-day. *But gather the Wheat into my Barn*. So 'tis in the Parable, *v*. 30. *Note*, (1.) In the Field of this World, good People are *the Wheat*, the moſt precious Grain, and the valuable Part of the Field. (2.) This Wheat ſhall ſhortly be *gather'd*, gather'd from among the Tares and Weeds, all gather'd together in a *general Aſſembly*, all the Old Teſtament Saints, all the New Teſtament Saints, not one miſſing: *Gather my Saints together to me*, Pſal. 50. 5. (3.) All God's Wheat ſhall be lodg'd together in God's Barn. Particular Souls are hous'd at Death as a Shock of Corn, *Job* 5. 26. But the general *Ingathering* will be at the End of Time. God's Wheat will then be *put together*, and no longer ſcattered, there will be *Sheaves of Corn* as well as *Bundles of Tares*. They will then be ſecured, and no longer expoſed to Wind and Weather, Sin and Sorrow, no longer afar off, and at a diſtance in the Field, but near in the Barn; nay, Heaven is a *Garner*, Matt. 3. 12. in which the Wheat will not only be ſeparated from the Tares of ill Companions, but ſifted from the Chaff of their own Corruptions.

In the Reddition of the Parable this is glorioſly repreſented, *v*. 43. *Then ſhall the Righteous ſhine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*. (1.) It is their preſent Honour that God is *their Father*. *Now are we the Sons of God*, 1 John 3. 2. Our Father *in Heaven* is King *there*. Chriſt when he went to Heaven went to *his Father*, and *our Father*, John 20. 17. 'Tis our *Father's Houſe*, nay, 'tis our Father's

Palace, his Throne, *Rev.* 3. 21. (2.) The Honour in reſerve for them is, that they ſhall *ſhine forth as the Sun in that Kingdom.* Here they are obſcure, and hidden, *Col.* 3. 3. their Beauty is eclips'd by their Poverty, and the Meanneſs of their outward Condition; their own Weakneſs and Infirmities, and the Reproach and Diſgrace caſt upon them, *cloud them.* But then they ſhall *ſhine forth as the Sun* from behind a dark Cloud, at Death they ſhall ſhine forth to themſelves, at the great Day they will ſhine forth publickly, before all the World, their Bodies will be made like Chriſt's glorious Body, they ſhall ſhine by Reflection, with a Light borrow'd from the Fountain of Light. Their Sanctification will be perfected, and their Juſtification publiſhed; God will own them for his Children, and will produce the Record of all their Services and Sufferings for his Name. They ſhall ſhine as the *Sun*, the moſt glorious of all viſible Beings. The Glory of the Saints is in the Old Teſtament compar'd to that of the *Firmament* and the *Stars*, but here to that of the Sun; for Life and Immortality are brought to a much clearer Light, by the Goſpel than under the Law. Thoſe that ſhine as *Lights* in this World, that God may be *glorified*, ſhall ſhine as the Sun in the other World, that they may be *glorified*. Our Saviour concludes as before with a Demand of Attention, *Who hath Ears to hear, let him hear.* Theſe are things which 'tis our Happineſs *to hear of*, and our Duty to *hearken to.*

3. Here's the Parable of the *Grain of Muſtard Seed*, v. 31, 32. The Scope of this Parable is to ſhew, that the Beginings of the Goſpel would be *ſmall*, but its latter End would *greatly increaſe.* In this way the Goſpel Church, the Kingdom of God *among us* would be ſet up *in the World*; in this way the Work of Grace in the Heart, the Kingdom of God within us, would be carried on in particular Perſons.

Now concerning the Work of the Goſpel, obſerve,

(1.) That it's commonly very weak and ſmall at firſt. *Like a Grain of Muſtard Seed, which is* one *of* the *leaſt of all Seeds*, the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, which was now in the ſetting up made but a ſmall Figure; Chriſt and the Apoſtles, compar'd with the Grandees of the World, appear'd like a *Grain of Muſtard Seed*, the *weak things of the World.* In particular Places the firſt breaking out of the Goſpel Light is but as the Dawning of the Day, and in particular Souls, 'tis at firſt the Day of *ſmall things*, like a *bruiſed Reed.* Young Converts are like *Lambs* that muſt be *carried in Arms*, Iſa. 40. 11. There's a little Faith, but there's much *lacking in it*, 1 Theſ. 3. 10. and the *groanings* ſuch as *cannot be uttered*, they are ſo ſmall. A Principle of ſpiritual Life, and ſome Motion, but ſcarce diſcernable.

(2.) That yet it is *growing* and *coming on.* Chriſt's Kingdom ſtrangely *got ground*, great Acceſſions were made to it; Nations were born at once in ſpite of all the Oppoſition it met with from Hell and Earth. In the Soul where Grace is *true*, it will *grow*, really, though perhaps inſenſibly. A Grain of *Muſtard Seed* is *ſmall*, but however it is *Seed*, and has in it a Diſpoſition to grow. Grace will be getting ground, ſhining *more and more*, Prov. 4. 18. Gracious Habits confirm'd, Actings quicken'd, and Knowledge more clear, Faith more confirm'd, Love more inflam'd. Here's the Seed growing.

(3.) That it will at laſt come to a *great Degree* of Strength and Uſefulneſs, *when it is grown* to ſome Maturity, it becomes a *Tree*, much larger in thoſe Countries than in *ours.* The Church, like the *Vine brought out of* Egypt, has taken root, and filled the Earth, *Pſal.* 80. 9, 10, 11. The Church is like a *great Tree*, in which the *Fowls of the Air* do *lodge*; God's People have Recourſe to it for Food and Reſt, Shade and Shelter. In particular Perſons the Principle of Grace, if true, will perſevere, and be perfected at laſt. Growing Grace will be ſtrong Grace, and will bring *much to paſs.* Grown Chriſtians muſt covet to be uſeful to others, as the Muſtard Seed when grown is to the *Birds*, that thoſe that dwell near or under their *Shadow*, may be the better for them, *Hoſ.* 14. 7.

4. Here's the Parable of the *Leaven*, v. 33. The Scope of this is much the ſame with that of the foregoing Parable; to ſhew, that the Goſpel ſhould prevail and be ſucceſsful by Degrees, but ſilently and inſenſibly. The Preaching of the Goſpel is like Leaven, and works like Leaven in the Hearts of thoſe that do receive it.

1. A *Woman* took this Leaven; it was her Work. Miniſters are employ'd in *leavening* Places, in leavening Souls with the Goſpel. The Woman is the *weaker Veſſel*, and we have *this Treaſure* in ſuch Veſſels.

2. The Leaven was *hid* in *three Meaſures of Meal.* The Heart is as *the Meal*, ſoft and pliable. 'Tis the tender Heart that is likely to profit by the Word. Leaven among Corn unground doth not work, nor doth the Goſpel in Souls unhumbled, and unbroken for Sin. The Law *grinds* the Heart, and then the Goſpel leavens it. 'Tis *three Meaſures of Meal*, i. e. a great Quantity, for *a little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump.* The Meal muſt be *kneaded*, before it receive the Leaven, our Hearts, as they muſt be *broken*, ſo they muſt be *moiſten'd* and Pains taken with them to prepare them for the Word, that they may receive the Impreſſions of it. This Leaven muſt be *hid in the Heart*, Pſal. 119. 11. not ſo much for *Secrecy* (for it will ſhew it ſelf) as for *Safety.* Our *inward Thought* muſt be upon it, we muſt lay it up, as *Mary* laid up the *Sayings* of Chriſt, *Luke* 2. 51. When the Woman hides the Leaven in the Meal 'tis with an Intention that it ſhould communicate its Taſte and Reliſh to it; ſo we muſt treaſure up the Word in our Souls, that we may be ſanctified by it, *John* 17. 17.

3. The Leaven thus *hid* in the Dough *works* there, it *ferments*; the Word is *quick* and *powerful*, Heb. 4. 12. The Leaven works *ſpeedily*, ſo doth the Word, and yet gradually. What a ſudden Change did *Elijah*'s Mantle make upon *Eliſha*, 1 Kings 19. 20. It works *ſilently*, and inſenſibly, *Mark* 4. 26. yet *ſtrongly* and irreſiſtably; it doth its Work *without Noiſe*, for ſo is the *way of the Spirit*, but doth it *without fail.* Hide but the Leaven in the Dough, and all the World cannot hinder it from communicating its Taſte and Reliſh to it, and yet none ſees how it is done, but by Degrees the *whole is leaven'd*

1. Thus it was in *the World.* The Apoſtles by their Preaching hid a handful of Leaven in the great Maſs of Mankind, and it had a ſtrange Effect; it put the World *into a Ferment*, and in a Senſe *turned it upſide down*, Acts 17. 6. and by Degrees made a wonderful Change in the Taſte and Reliſh of it. The *Savour* of the Goſpel was *manifeſted in every Place*, 2 Cor. 2. 14. *Rom.* 15. 19. It was thus effectual not by outward Force, and therefore not by any ſuch Force *reſiſtable* and *conquerable*, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hoſts, who *works, and none can hinder.*

2. Thus it is in *the Heart.* When the Goſpel comes into the Soul, (1.) It works a *Change*, not in the Subſtance, the Dough is the ſame, but in the Quality; it makes us to ſavour otherwiſe than we have done, and other things to ſavour with us otherwiſe than they us'd to do, *Rom.* 8. 5. (2.) It works an *univerſal* Change, it diffuſes it ſelf into all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul, and alters the Property even of the Members of the Body, *Rom.* 6. 13 (3.) This Change is ſuch as makes the Soul to partake of the Nature of the Word, as the Dought doth of the Leaven. We are *delivered into it*, as into a Mold, *Rom.* 6. 7. chang'd into the ſame Image, 2 *Cor.* 2. 18. like the Impreſſion of the Seal upon the Wax. The Goſpel ſavours of God and Chriſt and free Grace, and another World, and theſe things now reliſh with the Soul. 'Tis a Word of Faith and Repentance, Holineſs and Love, and theſe are wrought in the Soul by it. This Savour is communicated *inſenſibly*, for our Life is *hid*, but *inſeparably*, for Grace is a good part that ſhall never be taken away from thoſe that have it. When the Dough is leavened then to *the Oven with it*; Tryals and Afflictions commonly attend this Change; but thus Saints are fitted to be *Bread* for our Maſter's Table.

44 Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto treaſure hid in a field: the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for Joy thereof goeth and ſelleth all that he hath and buyeth that field. 45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, ſeeking goodly pearls: 46. Who when he had found one of great price, he went and ſold all that he had, and bought it. 47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was caſt into the ſea, and gathered of every kind. 48 Which when it was full, they drew to ſhore, and ſat down, and gathered the good into veſſels, but caſt the bad away. 49 So ſhall it be at the end of the world: the angels ſhall come forth, and ſever the wicked from among the juſt; 50 And ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire, there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth. 51 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Have ye underſtood all theſe things? They ſay unto him, Yea, Lord. 52 Then ſaid he unto them, Therefore every ſcribe which is inſtructed into the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an houſholder, which bringeth forth out of his treaſures things new and old.

We have four ſhort Parables in theſe Verſes.

Firſt, That of the *Treaſure hid in the Field.* Hitherto he had compar'd the Kingdom of Heaven to ſmall things, becauſe its Beginning was ſmall; but leſt any ſhould thence take occaſion to think meanly of it, in this Parable and the next, he repreſents it as of great Value in it ſelf, and of great Advantage to thoſe that embrace it, and are willing to come up to its Terms. It is here likened to a *Treaſure hid in the Field*, which if we will we may make our *own.*

1. Jeſus Chriſt is the *true Treaſure.* In him there is an Abundance of all that which is rich and uſeful, and will be a Portion for us; *all Fulneſs*, Col. 1. 19. John 1. 16. Treaſures of *Wiſdom and Knowledge*, (Col. 2. 3.) of Righteouſneſs, Grace, and Peace; theſe are laid up for us in Chriſt, aad if we have an Intereſt in him 'tis all our own.

2. The Goſpel is the *Field* in which this Treaſure is hid. 'Tis hid in the *Word* of the Goſpel, both the Old Teſtament and the New Teſtament Goſpel. In Goſpel Ordinances he is hid as the Milk in the Breaſt, the Marrow in the Bone, the Manna in the Dew. As the Water in the Well, *Iſa.* 12. 3. As the Honey in the Honey-comb. 'Tis hid not in a *Garden inclos'd*, or a *Spring ſhut up*, but in a *Field*, an open Field; whoever will, let him come and *ſearch the Scriptures*, let him dig in this Field, *Prov.* 2. 4. and whatever Royal Mines we find, they are all *our own*, if we take the right Courſe.

3. It is a great thing to *diſcover the Treaſure* hid in this Field, and the unſpeakable Value of it. The Reaſon why ſo many ſlight the Goſpel, and will not be at the Expence, and run the Hazzard of entertaining it, is, becauſe they look only upon the *Surface* of the Field, and judge by that, and ſo ſee no Excellency in the *Chriſtian Inſtitutes*, above thoſe of the Philoſophers, nay, the richeſt Mines are oft in Grounds that appear moſt barren; and therefore will not ſo much as bid at the

Field; much leſs come up to the Price. What's thy Beloved more than another Beloved? What's the Bible more than other good Books? the Goſpel of Chriſt more than *Plato*'s Philoſophy, or *Confutius*'s Morals? But thoſe that have *ſearched the Scriptures*, ſo as in them to find *Chriſt and eternal Life*, (John 5. 39.) have diſcover'd ſuch a *Treaſure* in *this* Field, as makes it infinitely more valuable.

4. Thoſe that diſcern this *Treaſure* in the Field, and value it aright, will never be eaſy till they have made it their *own* upon *any Terms*. He that has found this *Treaſure hides it*, which notes a holy Jealouſy, leſt we come ſhort, *Heb.* 4. 1. *looking diligently*, Heb. 12. 15. leſt Satan come between us and it. He *rejoyceth* in it, tho' as yet the Bargain be not *made*, he is glad there is ſuch a Bargain to be had; and that he is in a *fair Way* to have an Intereſt in Chriſt, that the Matter is in *Treaty*: Their Hearts may rejoyce who are yet but ſeeking the Lord, *Pſal.* 105. 3. He reſolves to *buy this Field*; thoſe that embrace Goſpel Offers upon Goſpel Terms buy this Field, they make it their own for the ſake of the unſeen Treaſure in it. Tis *Chriſt* in the Goſpel that we are to have an Eye to; we need not go up to Heaven, but Chriſt *in the Word is nigh us*. And ſo intent he is upon it, that he *ſells all to buy that Field*; thoſe that would have ſaving Benefit by Chriſt, muſt be willing to part with all, that they may make it ſure to themſelves, muſt *count every thing but Loſs*, that they may *win Chriſt*, and be found in him.

Secondly, That of the Pearl of Price, *v.* 45, 46. which is to the ſame Purpoſe with the former of the Treaſure. The *Dream* is thus *doubled*, for *the thing is certain*.

Note, 1. All the Children of Men are buſy *ſeeking goodly Pearls*. One would be Rich, another would be Honourable, another would be Learned, but the moſt are impos'd upon, and take up with Counterfeits for Pearls.

2. Jeſus Chriſt is a *Pearl of great Price*, a Jewel of ineſtimable Value, which will make thoſe that have it Rich, truly Rich, Rich towards God: In having him we have enough to make us happy, here and for ever.

3. A true Chriſtian is a ſpiritual Merchant, that ſeeks and finds this *Pearl of Price*, that doth not take up with any thing ſhort of an Intereſt in Chriſt, and as one that's reſolv'd to be ſpiritually rich, *trades high*. He went and *bought that Pearl*, did not bid at *it*, but *purchaſe it*. What will it avail us to know Chriſt, if we do not know him as ours, made to us Wiſdom? 1 *Cor.* 1. 30.

4. Thoſe that would have a ſaving Intereſt in Chriſt, muſt be willing to part with all for him, leave all to *follow* him. Whatever ſtands in Oppoſition to Chriſt, or in Competition with him for our Love and Service, we muſt chearfully quit it, though never ſo dear to us. A Man may buy Gold too dear, but not this *Pearl of Price*.

Thirdly, That of the *Net caſt into the Sea*, v. 47, 48, 49.

1. Here's the Parable it ſelf. Where *Note*, (1.) The World is a *vaſt Sea*, and the Children of Men are things creeping innumerable, both ſmall and great in that Sea, *Pſal.* 104. 25. Men in their natural State are *like the Fiſhes of the Sea*, that have no Ruler over them, *Heb.* 1. 14. (2.) The Preaching of the Goſpel is the *caſting of a Net* into this Sea, to catch ſomething out of it for his Glory, who hath the Sovereignty of this Sea. Miniſters are *Fiſhers of Men*, employ'd in *caſting and drawing* this Net, and then they ſpeed, when at Chriſt's Word they let down the Net, otherwiſe they *toil and catch nothing*. (3.) This Net *gathers of every kind*, as large Drag-nets uſe to do. In the viſible Church there's a deal of Traſh and Rubbiſh, Dirt and Weeds, and Vermin, as well as Fiſh. (4.) There is a Time coming when this Net will be *full*, and *drawn to ſhore*; a ſet time when the Goſpel ſhall have fulfilled that for which it was ſent, and we are ſure it ſhall not *return void*, Iſa. 55. 10, 11. The Net is now in the filling, ſometimes it fills faſter than at other times, but ſtill it fills, and will be drawn to ſhore, *when the Myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed*. (5.) When the Net is *full and drawn to ſhore*, there ſhall be a Separation between the good and bad that were gathered in. Hypocrites and true Chriſtians ſhall then be parted; the good ſhall be *gathered into Veſſels* as valuable, and therefore to be carefully kept, but the bad ſhall be *caſt away*, as vile and unprofitable; and miſerable is the Condition of thoſe who are *Caſt-aways* in that Day. While the Net is *in the Sea*, 'tis not known what is in it; the Fiſhermen themſelves cannot diſtinguiſh; but they carefully draw it, and all that's in it to ſhore, for the ſake of the good that's in it. Such is God's Care for the viſible Church, and ſuch ſhould Miniſters Concern be for thoſe under their Charge, tho' they *are mixed*.

2. Here's the Reddition of the latter part of the Parable, the former is *preſent*, and plain enough: We ſee gathered into the viſible Church, *ſome of every kind*: But the latter Part refers to that which is yet *to come*, and is therefore more particularly explain'd, *v.* 49, 50. *So ſhall it be at the End of the World*; then, and not till then, will the dividing, diſcovering Day be. We muſt not look for the *Net* full of all good Fiſh, the *Veſſels* will be ſo, but in the Net they are mix'd. See here. (1.) The diſtinguiſhing of the wicked from the righteous. The *Angels* of Heaven ſhall come forth to do that which the Angels of the Churches never could do, they ſhall *ſever the wicked from among the juſt*, and we need not aſk how they will diſtinguiſh them when they have both their Commiſſion and their Inſtructions from him that knows all Men, and particularly knows them that are *his*, and them that are *not*, and we may be ſure there ſhall be no Miſtake or Blunder either way. (2.) The Doom of the wicked, when they are thus ſever'd. They ſhall be *caſt into the Furnace*. *Note*, Everlaſting Miſery and Sorrow will certainly be the Portion of thoſe that live among *ſanctified ones*, but themſelves die *unſanctified*. This is the ſame with what we had before, *v.* 42. *Note*, Chriſt himſelf preach'd often of Hell Torments, as the everlaſting Puniſhment of Hypocrites, and 'tis good for us to be often minded of this awakening quickening Truth.

Fourthly, Here is tha Parable of the *good Houſholder*, which is intended to rivet all the reſt.

1. The Occaſion of it was the good Proficiency which the Diſciples had made in Learning, and their Profiting by this Sermon in particular. (1.) He aſk'd them, *Have ye underſtood all theſe things?* intimating, that if they had not, he was ready to explain what they did not underſtand. *Note*, It is the Will of Chriſt, that all thoſe who read and hear the Word ſhould underſtand it; for otherwiſe, how ſhould they get good by it? It is therefore good for us when we have read or heard the Word, to examine ourſelves, or to be examin'd, whether we have underſtood it or no. It's no Diſparagement to the Diſciples of Chriſt to be catechiz'd. Chriſt invites us to ſeek to him for Inſtruction, and Miniſters ſhould proffer their Service to thoſe who have any good Queſtion to aſk concerning what they have heard. (2.) They anſwered him, *Yea, Lord*. And we have Reaſon to believe they ſaid true, becauſe when they did not underſtand, they aſk'd for an Explication, *v.* 36. And the Expoſition of that Parable was a Key to the reſt. *Note*, The right underſtanding of one good Sermon, will very much help us to underſtand another; for good Truths mutually explain and illuſtrate one another; and *Knowledge is eaſy to him that underſtandeth*.

2. The Scope of the Parable it ſelf, was to give his Approbation and Commendation of their Proficiency. *Note*, Chriſt is ready to encourage willing Learners in his School, tho' they are but weak, and to ſay, *well done, well ſaid*.

1. He commends them as *Scribes inſtructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven*. They were now *learning* that they might *teach*, and the Teachers among the *Jews* were the *Scribes*. *Ezra* that *prepar'd his Heart to teach in* Iſrael, is call'd *a ready Scribe*, Ezra 7. 6, 10. Now a ſkilful faithful Miniſter of the Goſpel is a *Scribe* too, but for diſtinction he is call'd a Scribe *inſtructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven*, well vers'd in the things of the Goſpel, and well able to teach thoſe things. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe that are to inſtruct others, have need to be well inſtructed themſelves. If the Prieſt's Lips muſt keep Knowledge, his Head muſt firſt have Knowledge. (2.) The Inſtruction of a Goſpel Miniſter muſt be in the *Kingdom of Heaven*, that's it about which his Buſineſs lies. A Man may be a great Philoſopher and Politician, and yet if not inſtructed to the Kingdom of Heaven, he will make but a bad Miniſter.

2. He compares them to a *good Houſholder*, that *brings forth out of his Treaſure things new and old*; Fruits of laſt Years Growth, and this Years Gathering, Abundance, and Variety, for the Entertainment of his Friends. See *Can.* 7. 13. See here, (1.) What ſhould be a Miniſter's Furniture, *a Treaſure of things new and old*. Thoſe that have ſo many and various Occaſions, need to ſtock themſelves well in their gathering Days, with Truths *new and old*, out of the Old Teſtament, and out of the New; with ancient and Modern Improvements, *that the Man of God* may be *thoroughly well furniſh'd*, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. *Old Experiences* and *new Obſervations*, each have their Uſe; but we muſt not content our ſelves with old Diſcoveries, but muſt be adding new. *Live and Learn*. (2.) What uſe he ſhould make of this Furniture. He ſhould *bring forth*, laying up is in Order to laying out, for the Benefit of others. *Sic vos non vobis*. Many are *full*, but they have *no Vent*, Job 22. 19. have a Talent, but they bury it; ſuch are *unprofitable Servants*: Chriſt himſelf receiv'd, that he might give, ſo muſt we, and we ſhall have more. In bringing forth things, *new and old* do beſt together; old Truths, but new Methods and Expreſſions, eſpecially new Affections.

53 And it came to paſs that when Jeſus had finiſhed theſe parables, he departed thence. 54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their ſynagogue, inſomuch that they were aſtoniſhed, and ſaid; Whence hath this man this wiſdom, and theſe mighty works? 55 Is not this the carpenter's ſon? is not his Mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joſes, and Simon, and Judas? 56 And his Siſters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all theſe things? 57 And they were offended in him. But Jeſus ſaid unto them, A prophet is not without honour, ſave in his own country, and in his own houſe. 58 And he did not many mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief.

We have here Chriſt in his own Country. He went about *doing good*, yet left not any Place till he had finiſhed his Teſtimony there, at that time. His own Country-men had rejected him once, yet he came to them again. *Note*, Chriſt doth not take Refuſers at their firſt Word, but *repeats* his Offers to thoſe that have oft *repuls'd* them. In this, as in other things, Chriſt was like *his Brethren*, that he had a natural Affection to his own Country. *Patriam quiſque amat, non quia pulchram, ſed quia ſuam.* Seneca. His Treatment this time was much the ſame as before, *ſcornful* and *ſpiteful*.

Obſerve, 1. How they expreſs'd thier Contempt of him. When *he taught them in their Synagogue they were aſtoniſhed*; not that they were taken with his Preaching, or admir'd his Doctrine in it ſelf, but only that it ſhould be *his*; looking upon him as unlikely to be ſuch an Undertaker. Two things they upbraided him with:

1. His want of Academical Education. They own'd that he had *Wiſdom*, and did *mighty Works*; but the Queſtion was, whence he had them, for they knew he was not brought up at the Feet of their Rabbins: He had never been at the Univerſity, nor took his Degree, or was called of Men *Rabbi, Rabbi*. *Note*, Mean and prejudic'd Spirits are apt to judge of Men by their Education, and to enquire more into their Riſe, than into their Reaſons. *Whence has this Man theſe mighty Works?* Did he come honeſtly by them? Has he not been ſtudying the Black Art? Thus they turn'd that againſt him which was really for him; for if they had not been wilfully blind, they muſt have concluded him to be divinely Aſſiſted and Commiſſion'd, who without the help of Education gave ſuch Proofs of an extraordinary Wiſdom and Power.

2. The Meanneſs and Poverty of his Relations, *v.* 55, 56.

1. They upbraid him with *his Father*. *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* Yes, 'tis true he was reputed ſo, and what harm in that? No Diſparagement to him to be the Son of an honeſt Tradeſman, They remember not, (tho' they might have known it) that this Carpenter was *of the Houſe of David*, Luke 1. 27. a *Son of David*, Mat. 1. 20 therefore tho' a *Carpenter*, yet a Perſon of Honour. Thoſe that are willing to pick Quarrels will overlook that which is worthy and deſerving, and faſten upon that only which ſeems mean. Some ſordid Spirits regard no Branch, no not a Branch from the Stem of *Jeſſe*, (Iſa. 11. 1.) if it be not a Top-Branch.

2. They upbraid him with *his Mother*, and what Quarrel have they with her? Why, truly, *his Mother is called Mary*, and that was a very common Name, and they all knew her, and knew her to be an ordinary Perſon; ſhe *was called Mary*, not *Queen Mary*, or *Lady Mary*, or ſo much as *Miſtreſs Mary*, but *plain Mary*, and this is turn'd to his Reproach; as if Men had nothing to be valued by but foreign Extraction, noble Birth, or ſplendid Titles; poor things to meaſure Worth by.

3. They upbraid him with *his Brethren*, whoſe Names they knew, and had them ready enough to ſerve this Turn; *James*, and *Joſes*, and *Simon*, and *Judas*, good Men, but poor Men, and therefore deſpis'd, and Chriſt for their ſakes. Theſe Brethren, 'tis probable were *Joſeph's* Children by a former Wife; or whatever their Relation was to him, they ſeem to have been *brought up with him* in the ſame Family. And therefore of the calling of three of theſe who were of the Twelve, to that Honour, (*James*, *Simon* and *Jude*, the ſame with *Thaddeus*) we read not particularly, becauſe they needed not ſuch an expreſs Call into Acquaintance with Chriſt, who had been the Companions of his Youth.

4. *His Siſters* too are *all with us*; they ſhould therefore have lov'd him, and reſpected him the more, becauſe he was one of themſelves, but therefore they deſpis'd him. They were *offended in him*. They ſtumbled at theſe Stumbling-ſtones, for he was ſet for a *Sign that ſhould be ſpoken againſt*, Luke 2. 34. Iſa. 8. 14.

2. See how he reſented this Contempt, *v.* 57. 58.

1. It did not *trouble his Heart*. It appears he was not much concern'd at it, he *deſpis'd the Shame*, Heb. 12. 2. Inſtead of aggravating the Affront, or expreſſing an Offence at it, or returning ſuch an Anſwer to their Fooliſh Suggeſtions as they deſerv'd, he mildly imputes it to the common Humour of the Children of Men, to undervalue Excellencies that are cheap, and common, and home-bred. 'Tis uſually ſo. *A Prophet is not without Honour, ſave in his own Country*. *Note*, (1.) Prophets ſhould have Honour paid them, and commonly have; *Men of God* are great Men, and Men of Honour, and challenge Reſpect. 'Tis ſtrange indeed if *Prophets* have not *Honour*. (2.) Notwithſtanding this, they are commonly leaſt regarded and reverenc'd in their own Country, nay, and ſometimes are moſt envy'd. Familiarity breeds Contempt.

2. It did for the preſent (to ſpeak with Reverence) in effect *tye his Hands*. He *did not many mighty Works there becauſe of their Unbelief*. *Note*, Unbelief is the great Obſtruction to Chriſt's Favours. *All things are in general poſſible to God*, Mat. 19. 26. but then 'tis *to him that believes*, as to the Particulars, *Mark* 9. 23. The Goſpel is the *Power of God unto Salvatiom*, but then it is to *every one that believes*, Rom. 1. 26. So that if *mighty Works* be not wrought in us, it is not for want of Power or Grace in Chriſt, but for want of Faith in us. *By Grace ye are ſaved*, and that's a mighty Work, but it is *thro' Faith*, Eph. 2. 8.

CHAP. XIV.

John Baptiſt *had ſaid concerning Chriſt*, He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe, *John* 3. 30. *The Morning-ſtar is here diſappearing, and the Sun of Righteouſneſs riſing to his Meridian Luſtre. Here's* (1.) *the* Martyrdom *of* John, *his Impriſonment for his Faithfulneſs* to Herod, *v.* 1.—5. *And the Beheading of him to pleaſe* Herodias, *v.* 6.—12. (2.) *The* Miracles *of* Chriſt. (1.) *His feeding five thouſand Men that came to him to be taught, with five Loaves and two Fiſhes*, v. 13.—24. (2.) *Chriſt's walking on the Water to his Diſciples in a Storm*, v. 22.—33. (3.) *His healing the Sick with the touch of the hem of his Garment*, v. 34.—36. *Thus he went forth, thus he went on, conquering, and to conquer, or rather, curing, and to cure.*

AT that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jeſus, 2 And ſaid unto his ſervants This is John the Baptiſt, he is riſen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do ſhew forth themſelves in him. 3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in priſon for Herodias ſake his brother Philips wife. 4 For John ſaid unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. 5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, becauſe they counted him as a prophet 6 But when Herods birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleaſed Herod. 7 Whereupon he promiſed with an oath to give her whatſoever ſhe would ask. 8 And ſhe, being before inſtructed of her mother, ſaid, Give me here John Baptiſts head in a charger. 9 And the king was ſorry: neverthleſs for the oaths ſake, and them which ſat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. 10 And he ſent and beheaded John in the priſon. 11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given the damſel: and ſhe brought *it* to her mother. 12 And his diſciples came, and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jeſus.

We have here the Story of *John*'s Matyrdom. *Obſerve*,

1. The occaſion of relating this Story here, *v.* 1, 2. Here's

(1.) The Account brought to *Herod* of the Miracles which Chriſt wrought. *Herod* the *Tetrarch*, or chief Governour of *Galilee*, *heard of the Fame of Jeſus*. *At that time* when his Country-men ſlighted him, upon the account of his Meanneſs and Obſcurity, he began to be *famous* at Court. *Note*, God will honour thoſe that are deſpis'd for his ſake. And the Goſpel, like the Sea, gets in one place what it loſes in another. Chriſt had been now Preaching and working Miracles above two Years, yet it ſhould ſeem *Herod* had not heard of him till now, and now only *heard the Fame* of him. *Note*, It is the Unhappineſs of the great ones of the World, that they are moſt out of the way of hearing the beſt things, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. *which none of the Princes of this World knew*, 1 Cor. 1. 26. Chriſt's Diſciples were now ſent abroad to Preach, and to work Miracles in his Name, and this ſpread the *Fame of him* more than ever; which was an Indication of the ſpreading of the Goſpel by their Means after his Aſcenſion.

(2.) The Conſtruction he puts upon this, *v.* 2. *He ſaid to his Servants* that told him of the Fame of Jeſus, As ſure as we are here *This is* John *the* Baptiſt, *he is riſen from the Dead*: Either the Leaven of *Herod* was not *Sadduciſm*, (for the *Sadduces* ſay, There is no Reſurrection, *Acts* 23. 8.) or elſe *Herod*'s guilty Conſcience, (as is uſual with Atheiſts) did at this time get the Maſtery of his Opinion, and now he concludes, whether there be a general Reſurrection or no; for certain *John Baptiſt is riſen*, and therefore *mighty Works do ſhew forth themſelves in him*. *John* while he lived did *no Miracle*, John 10. 41. but *Herod* concludes, that being *riſen from the Dead*, he is cloth'd with a greater Power than he had while he was living. And he very well calls the *Miracles* he ſuppo'd him to work, not *his mighty Works*, but *mighty Works ſhewing forth themſelves in him*. Obſerve here concerning *Herod*,

1. How he was diſappointed in what he intended by beheading *John*. He thought if he could get that troubleſome Fellow out of the way, he might go on in his Sin, undiſturb'd and uncontroul'd; yet no ſooner is that effected, but he hears of Jeſus and his Diſciples Preaching the ſame pure Doctrine that *John* preach'd, and which is more, even the Diſciples confirming it by Miracles in their Maſter's Name. *Note*, Miniſters may be ſilenc'd, and Impriſon'd, and Baniſh'd, and ſlain, but the Word of God cannot be run down, The Prophets *live not for ever, but the Word takes hold*, Zech. 1. 5, 6. See 2 *Tim.* 2. 9. Sometimes God raiſeth np many faithful Miniſters out of the Aſhes of one. This *Hope* there is of God's *Trees, tho' they be cut down. allu*, Job. 14. 7, 8, 9.

2. How he was fill'd with cauſeleſs Fears, meerly from the Guilt of his own Conſcience. Thus *Blood cries*, not only *from the Earth*, on which it was ſhed, but from the Heart of him that ſhedit, and makes him *Magor-miſſabel*, a *Terror round about*, a Terror to himſelf. A guilty Conſcience ſuggeſts every thing that is frightful, and like a Whirlpool, gathers all to its ſelf that comes near it. Thus the *wicked flee when none purſue*, Prov. 28. 1. are in *great fears, where no fear is*, Pſal. 14. 5. *Herod* by a little enquiry might have found out that this Jeſus was in being long before *John Baptiſt*'s Death, and therefore could not be *Johannes Redivivus*, and ſo have undeceived himſelf; but God juſtly left him to this Infatuation.

3. How, notwithſtanding this, he was harden'd in his Wickedneſs; for tho' he was convinc'd that *John* was a Prophet, and one owned of God, yet he doth not expreſs the leaſt Remorſe or Sorrow for his Sin

in putting him to death. The Devils believe and *tremble*, but they never believe and *repent*. *Note*, There may be the Terror of ſtrong Convictions, where there is not the Truth of a ſaving Converſion.

2. The Story it ſelf of the Impriſonment, and Martyrdon of *John*. And theſe extraordinary Sufferings of him, who was the firſt Preacher of the Goſpel, plainly ſhew, that Bonds and Afflictions will abide the Profeſſors of it. As the firſt Old Teſtament Saint, ſo the firſt New Teſtament Miniſter dy'd a Martyr. And if Chriſt's *Forerunner* was thus treated, let not his *Followers* expect to be careſs'd by the World. *Obſerve* here,

Firſt, *John*'s Faithfulneſs in reproving *Herod*, v. 3, 4. *Herod* was one of *John*'s Hearers, *Mark* 6. 20. and therefore *John* might be the more bold with him. *Note*, Miniſters, who are Reprovers by Office, are eſpecially oblig'd to reprove thoſe that are under their Charge, and *not to ſuffer Sin upon them*; they have the faireſt Opportunity, of dealing with them, and with them may expect the moſt favourable Acceptance.

The particular Sin he reprov'd him for was Marrying his Brother *Phillip*'s Wife not his Widow, that had not been ſo *Crimimal*, but his Wife; *Phillip* was now living, and *Herod* inveigled his Wife from him, and kept her for his own: Here was a Complication of Wickedneſs, Adultery, Inceſt, beſides the Wrong done to *Phillip*, who had had a Child by this Woman; and it was an Aggravation of the Wrong, that he was *his Brother*, his half Brother by Father, but not by Mother. See *Pſal*. 50. 20. For this Sin *John* reprov'd him; not by tacit and oblique Terms, but in plain Terms, *It is not lawful for thee to have her*. He chargeth it upon him as a Sin, not it is not honourable, or it is not ſafe, but it is not *lawful*, the *ſinfulneſs* of Sin, as it is the *Tranſgreſſion of the Law*, is the worſt thing in it. This was *Herods own Iniquity*, his beloved Sin, and therefore this *John Baptiſt* tells him of particularly. *Note*, (1.) That which by the Law of God is unlawful to other People, is by the ſame Law unlawful to Princes, and the greateſt of Men. They that *rule over Men*, muſt not forget that they are themſelves but Men, and ſubject to God. *It is not lawful for thee*, no more than for the meaneſt Subject thou haſt to debauch another Mans Wife. There's no Prerogatives, no, not for the greateſt, and moſt arbitrary Kings to break the Laws of God. (2.) If Princes and great Men break the Law of God, it is very fit they ſhould be told of it by proper Perſons, and in a proper manner. As they are not above the Commands of God's Word, ſo they are not above the Reproofs of his Miniſters. *It is not fit* indeed *to ſay to a King*, *Thou art Belial*, (Job. 34. 18. no more than to call a Brother *Raca*, or *Thou Fool*: It is not fit while they keep within the Sphere of their own Authority to arraign them. But it is fit that by thoſe, whoſe Office it is they ſhould be told what is *unlawful*, and told with Application, *Thou art the Man*; for it follows there, *v*. 19. that God (whoſe Agents and Ambaſſadors faithful Miniſters are) accepteth not the Perſons of Princes, nor regardeth the Rich more than the Poor.

Secondly, The *Impriſonment* of *John* for his *Faithfulneſs* v. 3. *Herod laid hold on* John, when he was going on to Preach and Baptize, put an end to his Work, *bound him, and put him in Priſon*; partly to gratifie his own Revenge, and partly to pleaſe *Herodias*, who of the two ſeem'd to be moſt incens'd againſt him; 'twas *for her ſake* that he did it. *Note*, (1.) Faithful Reproofs, if they do not *profit* uſually *provoke*; if they do not do good, they are reſented as Affronts, and they that will not bow to the Reproof, will fly in the Face of the Reprover, and hate him, as *Ahab* hated *Micajah*, 1 Kings 22. 8. See *Prov*. 9. 8.–15. 10, 12. *Veritas odium parit*. (2.) It's no new thing for God's Miniſters to ſuffer ill for doing well. Troubles abide thoſe moſt that are moſt diligent and faithful in doing thir Duty, *Acts* 20. 20, 23. 'Twas ſo with the Old Teſtament Prophets, ſee 2 *Chron*. 16. 10.--24. 20, 21. Perhaps ſome of *John*'s Friends would blame him as *indiſcreet* in reproving *Herod*, and tell him he had better been ſilent than provoke *Herod*, whoſe Character he knew very well, thus to deprive him of his Liberty; but *away with that Diſcretion* that would hinder Men from doing their Duty, as Magiſtrates, Miniſters, or Chriſtian Friends; I believe *John*'s own Heart did not reproach him for it, but this Teſtimony of his Conſcience for him made his Bonds eaſie, that he ſuffer'd for well-doing, and not as a *Buſie-body in others Mens Matters*, 1 Pet. 4. 15.

Thirdly, The Reſtraint that *Herod* lay under from further venting of his Rage againſt *John*, v. 5.

(1.) He would have put him to Death. Perhaps that was not intended at firſt when he Impriſon'd him, but his Revenge by degrees boil'd up to that height. *Note*, The way of Sin, eſpecially the Sin of Perſecution is down hill; and when once a Reſpect to Chriſt's Miniſters is caſt off, and broken through in one Inſtance, that is at length done, which the Man would ſooner have thought himſelf a Dog than to have been guilty of, 2 *Kings* 8. 13.

(2.) That which hinder'd him was his *Fear of the Multitude, because they counted* John *as a Prophet*. It was not becauſe he *feared God*, (if the Fear of God had been before his Eyes he would not have Impriſon'd him) nor becauſe he feared *John*, tho' formerly he had a Reverence for him, his Luſts had overcome that, but becauſe he *feared the People*, i. e. He was afraid for himſelf, his own Safety, and the Safety of his Government; his Abuſe of which he knew had already render'd him odious to the People; whoſe Reſentments being ſo far heated already, would be apt upon ſuch a Provocation, as the putting of a Prophet to death, to break out *into a Flame*. *Note*, 1. Tyrants have their *Fears*. Thoſe that are, and affect to be the *Terror of the Mighty*, are many times geateſt Terrors of all to themſelves; and when they are moſt ambitious to be feared by the People, are moſt afraid of them. 2. Wicked Men are reſtrained from the moſt wicked Practices, meerly for their ſecular Intereſt, and not any regard to God. A Concern for their Eaſe, Credit, Wealth, and Safety, being their reigning Principle, as it keeps them from many Duties, ſo it keeps them from many Sins which otherwiſe they would not be reſtrained from; and this is one Means by which Sinners are kept from being *overmuch Wicked*, Eccl. 7. 17. The Danger of Sin that appears to Senſe, or to Fancy only, influenceth Men more than that which appears to Faith. *Herod* feared that the putting of *John* to Death might raiſe a Mutiny among the People, which it did not; but he never fear'd it might raiſe a Mutiny in his own Conſcience, which it did, *v*. 2. Men fear being *hang'd* for that which they do not fear being *damn'd* for.

Fourthly, The Contrivance of bringing *John* to his Death. Long he lay in Priſon, and againſt the Liberty of the Subject, (which, bleſſed be God, is ſecur'd to us of this Nation by Law) might neither be Try'd nor Bail'd: 'Tis computed that he lay a Year and half a cloſe Priſoner, which was about as much Time as he had ſpent in his publick Miniſtry, from his firſt entrance into it. Now here we have an account of his Releaſe, not by any other Diſcharge than Death, the Period of all a good Man's Troubles, that brings the *Priſoners* to *reſt together*, ſo that they hear not the Voice of the Oppreſſor, *Job* 3. 18.

Herodias laid the Plot, her implacable Revenge thirſted after *John*'s Blood, and would be ſatisfied with nothing leſs; croſs the *carnal Appetites*, and they turn into the moſt *barbarous Paſſions*; 'twas a Woman, a Whore, and the Mother of Harlots, that was drunk with the Blood of the Saints, *Rev*. 17. 5, 6. *Herodias* contriv'd how to bring about the Murther of *John* ſo artificially as to ſave *Herod*'s Credit, and ſo to pacify the People. A ſorry Excuſe is better than none. But I am apt to think that if the Truth were known, *Herod* was himſelf *in the Plot*; and for all his Pretences of Surprize and Sorrow, was privy to the Contrivance, and knew before what would be ask'd. And his pretending his Oath, and reſpect to his Gueſts was all but Sham and Grimace. But if he were *trepan'd* into it e'er he was aware, yet becauſe it was the thing he would have, and might have prevented, he is juſtly found guilty of the whole Contrivance. Tho *Jezebel* bring *Naboth* to his End, yet if *Ahab* take poſſeſſion, *he hath kill'd*. So tho' *Herodias* contrive the *Beheading* of *John*, yet if *Herod conſent* to it, and take pleaſure in it, he is not only an Acceſſary, but a principal Murtherer. Well, the Scence being laid behind the Curtain, let us ſee how it was Acted upon the Stage, and in what Method. Here we have,

1. The Humouring of *Herod* by the Damſel's Dancing upon his Birth-day. It ſeems *Herod*'s Birth-day was kept with ſome Solemnity; in honour of the Day, there muſt needs be, as uſual, a *Ball at Court*, and to grace the Solemnity, the Daughter of *Herodias Danced before them*; which being the Queen's Daughter, was more than what ſhe ordinarily condeſcended to. *Note*, Times of carnal Mirth and Jollity are convenient Times for carrying on ill Deſigns againſt God's People. When the *King* was *made Sick with Bottles of Wine*, he *ſtretched out his Hand with Scorners*, Hoſ. 7. 5. for it is part of the *Sport of a Fool to do Miſchief*, Prov. 10. 23. The *Philiſtines* when *their Hearts were merry*, call'd for *Sampſon* to abuſe him. Phe *Pariſian* Maſſacre was at a Wedding. This young Lady's Dancing *pleaſed Herod*. We are not told who Danc'd with her, but none pleas'd *Herod* like her Dancing. *Note*, A vain and graceleſs Heart is apt to be hugely in love with the Luſts of the Fleſh, and of the Eye, and when it is ſo, 'tis entring into further Temptation; for by that *Satan* gets and keeps poſſeſſion. See *Prov*. 23. 31, 33. *Herod* was now upon the merry Pin, and nothing was more agreeable to him than that which fed his Vanity.

2. The raſh and fooliſh Promiſe which *Herod* made to this wanton Girl, to *give her whatſoever ſhe would* ask, and this Promiſe confirm'd *with an Oath*, v. 7. 'Twas a very extravagant Obligation which *Herod* here enter'd into, and no way becoming a prudent Man that is afraid of being *ſnar'd in the Words of his Mouth*, Prov. 6. 2. much leſs a good Man that *fears an Octh*, Eccl. 9. 2. To put this Blank into her Hand, and enable her to draw upon him at pleaſure, was too great a Recompence for ſuch a ſorry piece of Merit; and I am apt to think *Herod* would not have been guilty of ſuch an Abſurdity, if he had not been inſtructed of *Herodias*, as well as the Damſel. *Note*, Promiſſory Oaths are enſnaring things, and when made raſhly, are the Products of inward Corruptions, and the Occaſions of many Temptations. Therefore ſwear not ſo at all, leſt thou have occaſion to ſay, *It was an Error*, Eccl. 5. 6.

3. The bloody Demand the young Lady made, of *John Baptiſt*'s Head, *v*. 8. She *was before inſtructed of her Mother*. *Note*, The Caſe of thoſe Children is very ſad; whoſe Parents are *their Counſellors to do wickedly*, as *Ahaziah*'s, 2 Chron. 22. 3. who inſtruct them, and encourage them in Sin, and ſet them ill Examples; for the corrupt Nature will ſooner be quicken'd by bad Inſtructions, than reſtrain'd and mortified by good ones. Children ought not to *obey their Parents againſt the Lord*, but if they command them to Sin, muſt ſay, as *Levi* did to *Father and Mother*, they *have not ſeen them*.

Herod having given her her Commiſſion, and *Herodias* her Inſtructions; ſhe requires *John Baptiſt*'s Head in a Charger. Perhaps *Herodias* fear'd, leſt *Herod* ſhould grow weary of her (as Luſt uſeth to nauſeate, and be cloy'd) and then would make *John Baptiſt*'s Reproof a pretence to diſmiſs her, to prevent which, ſhe contrives to harden

Herod in it, by engaging him in the Murther of *John. John* muſt be *beheaded* then, that's *the Death* by which he muſt glorifie God; and becauſe it was *his* who dy'd firſt after the beginning of the Goſpel, tho' the Martyr's dy'd various kinds of Deaths, and not ſo eaſie and honourable as this, yet this is put for all the reſt, *Rev.* 20. 4. where we read of *the Souls of thoſe that were Beheaded for the Witneſs of Jeſus.* Yet this is not enough, the thing muſt be humour'd too, and not only a *Revenge*, but a *Fancy* muſt be *gratify'd*; it muſt be *given her here in a Charger*, ſerv'd up in Blood, as a Diſh of Meat at the Feaſt, or Sawce to all the other Diſhes; 'tis reſerv'd for the third Courſe. to come up with the Rarities. He muſt have no Tryal, no publick Hearing, no Forms of Law or Juſtice muſt add Solemnity to his Death; but he is Try'd, Condemn'd, and Executed in a Breath. 'Twas well for him he was ſo mortified to the World, that Death could be no ſurprize to him, tho' never ſo ſudden. It muſt be *given her*, and ſhe will reckon it a Recompence for her Dancing, and deſire no more.

4. *Herod*'s *Grant* of this *Demand*, v. 9. The *King was ſorry*, or at leaſt took on him to be ſo, but *for the Oaths ſake* he *commanded it to be given her*. Here's

(1.) A pretended Concern for *John, The King was ſorry. Note*, Many a Man ſins with Regret, that never has any true Regret for his Sin, is ſorry to ſin, yet is utterly a ſtranger to *godly Sorrow*; ſins with Reluctancy, and yet goes on to Sin. Dr. *Hammond* ſuggeſts, that one Reaſon of *Herod*'s Sorrow, was becauſe it was his *Birth-day Feſtival*, and it would be an ill *Omen* to ſhed Blood on that Day, which as other Days of Joy us'd to be grac'd with Acts of Clemency, *Natalem colimus, tacete lites.*

(2.) Here's a pretended Conſcience of his Oath, with a ſpecious Shew of Honour and Honeſty, he muſt needs do ſomething *for the Oaths ſake. Note*, It is a great miſtake, to think that a wicked Oath will juſtifie a wicked Action. It was implied ſo neceſſarily, that it needed not be expreſs'd, that he would do any thing for her that was *lawful* and *honeſt*; and when ſhe demanded what was otherwiſe, he ought to have declar'd, and he might have done it honourably, that the Oath was null and void, and the Obligation of it ceaſed. No Man can oblige himſelf *to Sin*, becauſe God hath already ſo ſtrongly oblig'd every Man *againſt Sin.*

(3.) Here's a real Baſeneſs in Compliance with wicked Companions. *Herod* yielding, not ſo much for the ſake of the Oath, but becauſe it was publick, and in Complement *to them that ſate at Meat with him*; he granted the Demand, that he might not ſeem before them to have broke his Engagement. *Note*, A Point of Honour goes much further with many than a Point of Conſcience. Thoſe that *ſate at Meat* with him, probably, were as well pleas'd with the Damſel's Dancing as he, and therefore would have her by all means to be gratified in a Frolick, and perhaps was as willing as ſhe to ſee *John Baptiſt*'s Head off. However, none of them had the Honeſty to interpoſe, as they ought to have done for the preventing of it, as *Jehoiakim*'s Princes did, *Jer.* 36. 25. If ſome of the common People had been here, they would have reſcued this *Jonathan*, as 1 Sam. 14. 45.

(4.) Here's a real Malice to *John* at the bottom of this Conceſſion, or elſe he might have found out Evaſions enough to have gotten clear of his Promiſe. *Note*, Tho' a wicked Mind never wants an Excuſe, yet the truth of the Matter is, that every Man is tempted, when he is *drawn aſide of his own Luſts and enticed*, James 1. 14. Perhaps *Herod* preſently reflected upon the Extravagance of his Promiſe, on which ſhe might ground a Demand of ſome vaſt Sum of Money, which he lov'd a great deal better than *John Baptiſt*, was glad to *get clear of it* ſo eaſily, and therefore immediately Iſſues out a Warrant for the Beheading of *John Baptiſt*, it ſhould ſeem not in Writing, but only by Word of Mouth; ſo little account is made of that precious Life, *he commanded it to be given her.*

5. The Execution of *John*, purſuant to this Grant, *v.* 10. *He ſent and Beheaded John in the Priſon.* 'Tis probable the Priſon was, very near at the Gate of the Palace, and thither an Officer was ſent to *cut off the Head* of this great Man. He muſt be *beheaded* for expedition to gratifie *Herodias*, who was in a *longing* Condition till it was done. 'Twas done *in the Night*, for it was at *Supper-time*, after Supper it's likely. 'Twas done *in the Priſon*, not at the uſual Place of Execution, for fear of an Uproar. A great deal of innocent Blood, of Martyrs Blood has thus been huddled up in Corners, which when God comes to make Inquiſition for Blood the Earth ſhall diſcloſe, and ſhall no more cover, *Iſa.* 26. 21. *Pſal.* 9. 12.

Thus was that *Voice* ſilenced, that burning and ſhining Light extinguiſhed; thus did that Prophet, that *Elias* of the New Teſtament, fall a Sacrifice to the Reſentments of an Imperious Whoriſh Woman. Thus did he who was great in the ſight of the Lord, dye *as a Fool dieth, his Hands were bound, and his Feet put into Fetters, and as a Man falleth before wicked Men*, ſo he fell a true Martyr to all Intents and Purpoſes, dying, tho' not for the Profeſſion of his Faith yet for the Performance of his Duty. However, tho' his Work was *ſoon* done, it *was done* and *his Teſtimony finiſhed*, for till then none of God's *Witneſſes* are *ſlain*. And God brought this good out of it, that hereby his Diſciples, who, while he lived, tho' in Priſon, kept cloſe to him, now after his Death heartily clos'd with Jeſus Chriſt

Fifthly, The Diſpoſal of the poor Remains of this bleſſed Saint and Martyr. The Head and Body being ſeparated,

1. The Damſel brough *the Head* in *Triumph* to her Mother, as a Trophy of the Victories of her Malice and Revenge, *v.* 11. *Jerom, ad Ruffin.* relates, that when *Herodias* had *John Baptiſt*'s Head brought her, ſhe gave herſelf the barbarous Diverſion of pricking the Tongue with a Needle, as *Fulvia* did *Tully*'s. *Note*, Bloody Minds are pleas'd with bloody Sights, which thoſe of tender Spirits ſhrink and tremble at. Sometimes the inſatiable Rage of Bloody Perſecutor has fallen upon the dead Bodies of the Saints, and made Sport with them, *Pſal.* 79. 2. When the Witneſſes are ſlain, they that *dwell on the Earth rejoyce over them, and make merry*, Rev. 11. 10. Pſal. 14. 4, 5.

2. The Diſciples *bury'd the Body*, and brought the News *in Tears* to our Lord Jeſus. The Diſciples of *John* had faſted oft, while their Maſter was *in Priſon*, their *Bridegroom* was *taken away from them*, and they pray'd earneſtly for his Deliverance as the Church did for *Peter*'s, Acts 12. 5. They had free acceſs to him in Priſon, which was a comfort to them, but they wiſh'd to ſee him at Liberty, that he might preach to others; but now on a ſudden all their Hopes are daſh'd. Diſciples weep and lament, when *the World rejoyceth.* Let us ſee what they did.

(1.) They *bury'd the Body. Note*, There is a Reſpect owing to the Servants of Chriſt, not only while they live, but in their Bodies and Memories when they are dead. Concerning the two firſt New Teſtament Martyrs, it is particularly taken notice of that they were decently bury'd, *John Baptiſt* by his Diſciples, and *Stephen* by devout Men, *Acts* 8. 2. yet there was no enſhrining of their Bones, or other Relicks, a piece of Superſtition which ſprung up long after when the Enemy had ſow'd Tares. That *over-doing* in reſpect to the Bodies of the Saints is *undoing*; tho' they are not to be vilified, yet they are not to be deified.

(2.) They *went and told Jeſus*; not ſo much that he might ſhift for his own Safety, no doubt he heard it from others, the Countrey rang of it, as that they might receive Comfort from him, and be taken in among his Diſciples. *Note*, 1. When any thing ails us at any time, it is our Duty and Privilege to make Chriſt acquainted with it. 'Twill be a relief to our burthened Spirits to unboſom ourſelves to a Friend we may be free with. Such a Relation dead, or unkind, ſuch a Comfort loſt or embitter'd, Go and *tell Jeſus*, who knows already, but will know from us the Trouble of *our Souls in Adverſity*. 2. We muſt take heed leſt our Religion, and the Profeſſion of it dye with our Miniſters; when *John* was dead they did not return every Man to his own, but reſolv'd to abide by it ſtill. When the Shepherds are ſmitten, the Sheep need not be ſcatter'd while they have the great Shepherd of the Sheep to go to, who is ſtill the ſame, *Heb.* 13. 7, 8. The removal of Miniſters ſhould bring us nearer to Chriſt, into a more immediate Communion with him. 3. Comforts, otherwiſe highly valuable, are ſometimes therefore taken from us, becauſe they come between us and Chriſt, and are apt to carry away that Love and Eſteem which is due to him only: *John* had long ſince directed his Diſciples to Chriſt, and turn'd them over to him, but they could not leave their old Maſter while he liv'd, therefore he is remov'd that they may *go to Jeſus*, whom they had ſometimes emulated and *envy'd for* John'*s ſake.* 'Tis better be drawn to Chriſt by Want and Loſs, than not to come to him at all. If our Miniſters be taken from our Head, this is our Comfort, we have a Maſter in Heaven, who himſelf is *our Head.*

Joſephus mentions this Story of the Death of *John Baptiſt*, Antiq. l. 18. c. 7. and adds, that a fatal Deſtruction of *Herod*'s Army, in his War with *Aretas*, the King of *Petrea*, (whoſe Daughter was *Herod*'s Wife, whom he put away to make room for *Herodias*) was generally look'd upon by the *Jews* to be a juſt Judgment upon him for putting *John Baptiſt* to Death. *Herod* having at the Inſtigation of *Herodias*, diſoblig'd the Emperor, he was depriv'd of his Government, and they were both baniſh'd to *Lions* in *France*; which, ſaith *Joſephus*, was his juſt Puniſhment for hearkening to her Sollicitations. And, laſtly, it is Storied of this *Daughter of Herodias*, that going over the Ice in Winter, the Ice broke, and ſhe ſlipt in up to her Neck, which was cut thro' by the ſharpneſs of the Ice. God requiring her Head, (ſaith Dr. *Whitby*) for that of the *Baptiſt*; which if true, was a remarkable Providence.

13 When Jeſus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ſhip into a deſart place, apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities. 14. And Jeſus went forth, and ſaw a great multitude, and was mov'd with compaſſion toward them, and he healed their ſick. 15 And when it was evening, his diſciples came to him, ſaying, This is a deſart place, and the time is now paſt; ſend the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themſelves victuals. 16 But Jeſus ſaid unto them, They need not depart, give ye them to eat. 17 And they ſay unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fiſhes. 18 He ſaid, Bring them hither to me. 19 And he commanded the multitude to ſit down on the graſs, and took the five loaves, and the two fiſhes, and looked up to heaven, he bleſſed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* diſciples, and the diſciples to the multitude. 20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and

they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full. 21 And they that had eaten were above five thouſand men, beſide women and children.

This Paſſage of Story concerning Chriſt's feeding five thouſand Men with five Loaves and two Fiſhes, is recorded by all the four Evangeliſts, which very few, if any of Chriſt's Miracles are; this intimates, there's ſomething in it worthy of ſpecial remark. *Obſerve*,

Firſt, The great Reſort of People to Chriſt, when he was retir'd into a deſart Place, *v.* 13. He withdrew into Privacy *when he heard*, not of *John*'s Death, but of the Thoughts *Herod* had concerning him, that he was *John Baptiſt riſen from the Dead*, and therefore ſo fear'd *Herod* as to be hated, he departed further off, to get out of *Herod*'s Juriſdiction. *Note*, In times of Peril, when God opens a Door of Eſcape, it is lawful to *flee* for our own Preſervation, unleſs we have ſome ſpecial Call to expoſe our ſelves. Chriſt's Hour was not yet come, and therefore he would not thruſt himſelf upon Suffering. He could have ſecur'd himſelf by *divine Power*, but becauſe his Life was intended for an Example, he did it by *human* Prudence, he *departed by Ship*. But a *City on a Hill cannot be hid*; when the People *heard it, they followed him on foot* from all parts. Such an Intereſt Chriſt had in the Affections of the Multitude, that his *withdrawing from them*, did but draw them after him with ſo much the more eagerneſs. Here as often the Scripture was fulfill'd, that *unto him ſhall the gatheing of the People be.* It ſhould ſeem there was more crowding to Chriſt after *John*'s Martyrdom than before. Sometimes the Sufferings of the Saints are made to further the Goſpel, *Phil.* 1. 12. and the Blood of the Martyrs is the *Seed of the Church.* Now *John*'s Teſtimony was *finiſhed*, it was recollected, and more improv'd than ever. *Note*, (1.) When Chriſt and his Word withdraw from us, it is beſt for us (whatever Fleſh and Blood may object to the contrary) to follow it, preferring Opportunities for our Souls before any ſecular Advantages whatſoever. When the *Ark removes, ye ſhall remove and go after it*, Joſh. 3. 3. (2.) Thoſe that truly deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, will not ſtick at the Difficulties they may meet with in their attendance on it. The Preſence of Chriſt and his Goſpel make a deſart Place, not only tolerable, but deſirable, it makes the Wilderneſs an *Eden*, Iſa. 51. 3.—41. 19, 20.

Secondly, The tender Compaſſion of our Lord Jeſus towards thoſe that thus follow'd him, *v.* 14. (1.) He *went forth* and appear'd *publickly* among them. Tho' he retir'd for his own Security, and his own Repoſe, yet he *went forth* from his Retirement when he ſaw People deſirous to hear him, as one willing both to *toil* himſelf, and to expoſe himſelf for the good of Souls, for *even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf.* (2.) When he *ſaw the Multitude, he had Compaſſion* on them. *Note*, The ſight of a great Multitude may juſtly *move Compaſſion.* To ſee a *great Multitude*, and to think how many precious immortal Souls here are, the greateſt part of which we have Reaſon to fear are neglected, and ready to periſh, would grieve one to the heart. None like Chriſt for Pity to Souls, his Compaſſions fail not. (3.) He did not only pity them, but he help'd them. Many of them were Sick, and he in Compaſſion to them *healed them*; for he came into the World to be the great Healer. After a while they were all *hungry*, and he in Compaſſion to them fed them. *Note*, In all the Favours Chriſt ſhew to us, he *is moved with Compaſſion*, Iſa. 63. 9.

Thirdly, The Motion which the Diſciples made for the diſmiſſing of the Congregation, and Chriſt's ſetting aſide the Motion. (1.) The Evening drawing on, the Diſciples mov'd it to Chriſt to *ſend the Multitude away.* They thought there was a good Days Work done, and it was time to diſperſe. *Note*, Chriſt's Diſciples are often more careful to ſhew their *Diſcretion* than to ſhew their *Zeal*, and their abundant Conſideration, rather than their abundant Affection in the things of God. (2.) Chriſt would not diſmiſs them hungry as they were, nor detain them longer without Meat, nor put them upon the Trouble and Charge of buying Meat for themſelves, but orders his Diſciples to provide for them. Chriſt all along expreſs'd more Tenderneſs towards the People than his Diſciples did; for what are the Compaſſions of the moſt merciful Men compar'd with the tender Mercies of God in Chriſt. See how loth Chriſt is to part with thoſe that are reſolv'd to cleave to him. *They need not depart.* *Note*, Thoſe that have Chriſt have enough, and need not depart to ſeek a Happineſs and Livelyhood in the Creature. They that have made ſure the one thing needful, need not be *cumber'd about much Serving.* Nor will Chriſt put his willing Followers upon a needleſs Expence, but will make their Attendance cheap to them.

But if they be *hungry* they have *need to depart*, for that's a *Neceſſity* which *has no Law*; therefore *give you them to eat.* *Note*, The Lord is for the Body, 'tis the Work of his Hands, 'tis part of his Purchaſe; he was himſelf clothed with a Body, that he might encourage us to depend upon him for the Supply of our bodily Wants. But he takes a particular care of the Body, when it is employ'd to ſerve the Soul in his more immediate Service. If we *firſt ſeek the Kingdom of God*, and make that our chief Care, we may depend upon God to add other things to us, as far as he ſees fit, and may caſt all our Care of them upon him. Theſe follow'd Chriſt but for a puſh, in a preſent pang of Zeal, yet Chriſt took this Care of them, much more will he provide for thoſe that *follow him fully.*

Fourthly, The ſlender Proviſion that was made for this great Multitude. And here we muſt compare the number of invited Gueſts with the Bill of Fare.

1. The Number of the Gueſts was *five Thouſand Men, beſides Women and Children*, and 'tis probable the Women and Children might be as many as the Men, if not more. This was a vaſt Auditory that Chriſt Preach'd to, and we have reaſon to think an attentive Auditory; and yet it ſhould ſeem far the greateſt part, notwithſtanding all this ſeeming Zeal and Forwardneſs, came to nothing; *went off*, and follow'd him no more; for many are call'd, but few choſen. We would rather perceive the Acceptableneſs of the Word by the Converſations, than by the Crowds of its Hearers, tho' that alſo is a *good ſight*, and a *good ſign.*

2. The Bill of Fare was very diſproportionable to the number of the Gueſts, but *five Loaves*, and *two Fiſhes.* This Proviſion the Diſciples carried about with them for the uſe of the Family, now they were retir'd *into the Deſart.* Chriſt could have fed *them* by Miracle, but to ſet us an Example of providing for thoſe of our own Houſholds, he will have their own Camp Victual'd in an ordinary way. Here's neither *Plenty*, nor *Variety*, nor *Dainty.* A Diſh of Fiſh was no Rarity to them that were Fiſhermen, but it was Food convenient for the Twelve; two Fiſhes for their Supper, and Bread to ſerve them, perhaps for a Day or two. Here was no Wine, or ſtrong Drink, fair Water from the *Rivers in the Deſart*, was the beſt they had to drink with their Meat; and yet out of this Chriſt will have the Multitude fed. *Note*, Thoſe that have but a little, yet when the Neceſſity is urgent, muſt relieve others out of that little, and that's the way to make it more. *Can God furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs?* Yes, he can, when he pleaſeth, a plentiful Table.

Fifthly, The liberal Diſtribution of this Proviſion among the Multitude, *v.* 18, 19. *Bring them hither to me.* *Note*, The Way to have our Creature-comforts, Comforts indeed to us, is to bring them to Chriſt; for every thing is ſanctifi'd by *his* Word, and by Prayer *to him.* That's likely to proſper, and do well with us, which we put into the Hands of our Lord Jeſus, that he may diſpoſe of it as he pleaſeth, and that we may take it back from his Hand, and then it will be doubly ſweet to us. What we give in Charity, we ſhould *bring to Chriſt* firſt, that he may graciouſly accept it *from* us, and graciouſly bleſs it to thoſe to whom it is given; this is doing it *as unto the Lord.*

Now at this miraculous Meal, we may obſerve,

1. The Seating of the Gueſts, *v.* 19. He *commanded them to ſit down*; which intimates, that while he was Preaching to them they were *ſtanding*, which is a Poſture of Reverence and Readineſs for Motion. But what ſhall we do for Chairs for them all? Let them ſit down *on the Graſs.* When *Ahaſuerus* would *ſhew the Riches of his glorious Kingdom, and the Honour of his excellent Majeſty in a Royal Feaſt* for the great Men of all his Provinces, the *Beds*, or Couches they ſate on *were of Gold and Silver, upon a Pavement of red and blue, and white and black Marble*, Eſth. 1. 4. Our Lord Jeſus did now ſhew in a divine Feaſt the *Riches* of a more *glorious Kingdom* than that, and the *Honour of a more excellent Majeſty*, even a Dominion over Nature it ſelf; but here is not ſo much as a Cloth ſpread, no Plates, or Napkins laid, no Knives, or Forks, not ſo much as a Bench to ſit down on; but as if Chriſt intended indeed to reduce the World to the Plainneſs and Simplicity, and ſo to the Innocency and Happineſs of *Adam* in Paradice, he commanded them to *ſit down on the Graſs.* By doing every thing thus without any Pomp or Splendor, he plainly ſhew'd that *his Kingdom was not of this World*, nor cometh with Obſervation.

2. The craving of a Bleſſing. He did not appoint one of his Diſciples to be his Chaplain, but he himſelf *looked up to Heaven, and Bleſſed, and gave Thanks*; he praiſed God for the Proviſion they had and pray'd to God to bleſs it to them. His *craving* a Bleſſing, was *commanding* a Bleſſing; for as he *Preach'd* ſo he *Pray'd*, like one *having Authority*; and in this Prayer and Thankſgiving, we may ſuppoſe he had ſpecial reference to the multiplying of this Food; but herein he has taught us that good Duty of craving a Bleſſing, and giving Thanks at our Meals. God's good Creatures muſt be *received with Thankſgiving*, 1 Tim. 4. 4. *Samuel* bleſſed the Feaſt, 1 *Sam.* 9. 31. *Acts* 2. 46, 47.—27. 34, 35. This is Eating and Drinking to the Glory of God, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. *giving God Thanks*, Rom. 14. 6. before God, as *Moſes* and his *Father in-Law*, Exod. 18. 15. When Chriſt *bleſſed*, he *looked up to Heaven*, to teach us in Prayer to eye God as a *Father in Heaven*, and when we receive our Creature Comforts, to look thitherward, as taking them from God's Hand, and depending on him for a Bleſſing.

3. The Carving of the Meat. The Maſter of the Feaſt was himſelf Head-carver, for *he brake and gave the Loaves to the Diſciples, and the Diſciples to the Multitude.* Chriſt intended hereby to put Honour upon his Diſciples, that they might be reſpected, as workers together with him. As alſo to ſignify in what way the ſpiritual Food of the Word ſhould be diſpens'd to the World; *from* Chriſt, as the original Author *by* his Miniſters. What Chriſt deſign'd for *the Churches*, he ſignified to *his Servant John*, Rev. 1. 1. 4. They *deliver'd* all that, and that only which they *received from the Lord*, 1 Cor. 11. 23. Miniſters can never fill the Peoples Hearts, unleſs Chriſt firſt *fill their Hands.* And what he has given to the Diſciples, they muſt give to the Multitude; for they are *Stewards, to give to every one their Portion of Meat*, Mat. 24. 45. And bleſſed be God, be the Multitude never ſo great, there's enough for *all*, enough for *each.*

4. The Increaſe of the Meat. This is taken notice of only in the Effect, not in the Cauſe, or Manner of it. Here is no mention of any Word that Chriſt ſpoke, by which the Food was multiplied; the Purpoſes and Intentions of his Mind, and Will ſhall take effect, tho'

they be not *ſpoken out.* But this is obſervable, that the Meat was multiplied, not in the heap at firſt, but in the diſtribution of it. As the Widow's Oil increaſed *in the pouring out*, ſo here the Bread *in the breaking.* Thus Grace grows by being acted, and while other things periſh in the uſing, ſpiritual Gifts increaſe in the uſing. God Miniſters *Seed to the Sower*, and multiplies not the Seed hoarded up, but the Seed ſown, 1 *Cor.* 9. 10. Thus *there is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth*, that ſcattereth, and *ſo* increaſeth.

Sixthly, The plentiful Satisfaction of all the Gueſts with this Proviſion. Tho' the Diſproportion was ſo great, yet there was *enough* and *to ſpare.*

1. There was *enough. They did all eat, and were fill'd. Note*, Thoſe that Chriſt *feeds* he *fills*; ſo runs the Promiſe, *Pſal.* 37. 19. *They ſhall be ſatiſfied.* As there was enough for *all, they did all eat*, ſo there was enough for *each, they were filled*; tho' there was but a little, there was enough, and that's *as good as a Feaſt. Note*, The Bleſſing of God can make a little go a great way; as if God blaſts what we have, we *eat, and have not enough*, Hag. 1. 9.

2. There was *to ſpare.* They took up of the Fragments *that remained twelve Baſkets full*, one Baſket for each Apoſtle; thus what they gave they had again, and a great deal more with it; and they were ſo far from being nice, that they could make this broken Meat ſerve another time, and be thankful. This was to *manifeſt* and magnify the Miracle, and to ſhew that the Proviſion Chriſt makes for thoſe that are his, is not bare and ſcanty, but rich and plenteous, *Bread enough, and to ſpare*, Luke 15. 17. an *overflowing* fulneſs. *Eliſha*'s multiplying the Loaves was ſomewhat like this, but far ſhort of it, and then it was ſaid, They ſhall *eat*, and *leave*, 2 Kings 4. 43.

It is the ſame divine Power, tho' exerted in an ordinary way, which multiplieth the *Seed ſown* in the Ground every Year, and makes the Earth yield her Increaſe; ſo that what was *brought out* by handfuls, is *brought home* in Sheaves. *This is the Lord's doing*; 'tis by Chriſt that all natural things *conſiſt*, and *by the Word of his Power* that they are upheld.

22 And ſtraightway Jeſus conſtrained his diſciples
to get into a ſhip, and to go before him unto the
other ſide, while he ſent the multitudes away. 23
And when he had ſent the multitudes away, he
went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when
the evening was come, he was there alone. 24
But the ſhip was now in the midſt of the ſea,
toſſed with waves: for the wind was contrary. 25
And in the fourth watch of the night, Jeſus went
unto them walking on the ſea. 26 And when the
diſciples ſaw him walking on the ſea, they were
troubled, ſaying, It is a ſpirit: and they cried out
for fear. 27 But ſtraightway Jeſus ſpake unto them,
ſaying, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.
28 And Peter anſwered him and ſaid, Lord, if it
be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29
And he ſaid, Come. And when Peter was come down
out of the ſhip, he walked on the water, to go to
Jeſus. 30 But when he ſaw the wind boiſtrous,
he was afraid: and beginning to ſink, he cried, ſaying, Lord, ſave me. 31 And immediately Jeſus
ſtretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and ſaid unto him, O thou of litte faith, wherefore didſt thou
doubt? 32 And when they were come into the ſhip,
the wind ceaſed. 33 Then they that were in the ſhip,
came and worſhipped him, ſaying, Of a truth thou art
the Son of God.

We have here the Story of another Miracle which Chriſt wrought for the Relief of his Friends and Followers, *his walking upon the Water to his Diſciples.* In the foregoing Miracle he acted as the Lord of Nature, *improving* its Power for the ſupply of thoſe that were in want: In this he acted as the Lord of Nature, correcting and controulling its Powers for the ſuccour of thoſe that were in Danger and Diſtreſs. *Obſerve*,

First, Chriſt's diſmiſſing of his Diſciples, and the Multitude, after he had fed them miraculouſly. He *conſtrained his Diſciples to get into a Ship, and to go before him unto the other ſide*, v. 22. St. *John* gives a particular Reaſon for the haſty breaking up of this Aſſembly, becauſe the People were ſo affected with the Miracle of the Loaves, that they were about to *take him by force*, and *make him a King*, Joh. 6. 15. to avoid which, he immediately ſcatter'd the People, ſent away the Diſciples, leſt they ſhould joyn with them, and he himſelf withdrew, *John* 6. 15.

When they had ſitten down to eat and drink, they did not *riſe up to play*, but each went to his Buſineſs.

(1.) Chriſt *ſent the People away.* It intimates ſomewhat of Solemnity in the diſmiſſing of them; he ſent them away with a Bleſſing, with ſome parting Words of Caution, Counſel and Comfort, which might abide with them.

(2.) He conſtrain'd the Diſciples to go into a Ship firſt, for till they were gone the People would not ſtir. The Diſciples were loth to go, and would not have gone, if he had not conſtrain'd them. They were loth to go to Sea without him. *If thy Preſence go not with us, carry us not up hence*, Exod. 35. 15. They were loth to leave him alone, without any Attendance, or any Ship to wait for him. But they did it in pure Obedience.

Secondly, Chriſt's Retirement hereupon, *v.* 23. *He went up into a Mountain apart to Pray.* Obſerve here,

1. That he was *alone*; he went apart into a ſolitary Place, and was there all alone. Tho' he had ſo much work to do with others, yet he choſe ſometimes to be *alone*, to ſet us an Example: Thoſe are not Chriſt's Followers that do not care for being *alone*, that cannot enjoy themſelves in Solitude, when they have none elſe to converſe with, none elſe to enjoy but God and their own Hearts.

2. That he was alone *at Prayer*, that was his Buſineſs in this Solitude to *Pray.* Tho' Chriſt as God was *Lord of all*, and was pray'd to, yet Chriſt as Man had the Form of a Servant, of a Beggar, and *pray'd.* Chriſt has herein ſet before us an Example of *ſecret Prayer*, and the performance of it *ſecretly*, according to the Rule he gave, *Mat.* 6. 6. Perhaps in this Mountain there was ſome private Oratory, or convenience provided for ſuch an Occaſion; 'twas uſual among the *Jews* to have ſuch. *Obſerve*, When the Diſciples went to Sea, their Maſter went to Prayer; when *Peter* was to be *ſifted as Wheat*, Chriſt *pray'd for him.*

3. That he was long alone, there he was when the Evening was come; and for ought appears, there he was till towards Morning, the fouth Watch of the Night. The Night came on, and it was a ſtormy, tempeſtuous Night, yet he continued inſtant in Prayer. *Note*, It is good, at leaſt ſometimes, upon ſpecial Occaſions, and when we find our Hearts enlarg'd, to continue long in ſecret Prayer, and to take full Scope in pouring out our Hearts before the Lord. We muſt not *reſtrain Prayer*, Job 15. 4.

Thirdly, The Condition that the poor Diſciples were in at this time. *Their Ship was now in the midſt of the Sea, toſſed with Waves*, v. 24. We may obſerve here,

1. That they were got *into the midſt of the Sea*, when the Storm roſe. We may have fair Weather at the Beginning of our Voyage, and yet meet with Storms before we arrive at the Port we are bound for. Therefore let not him that *girdeth on the Harneſs boaſt, as he that putteth it off*; but after a long Calm, expect ſome Storm or other.

2. The Diſciples were now where Chriſt ſent them, and yet met with this Storm. Had they been flying from their Maſter, and Work, as *Jonah* was, when he was arreſted by the Storm, it had been a dreadful one indeed, but they had a ſpecial Command from their Maſter to go to Sea at this Time, and were going about their Work. *Note*, It is no new thing for Chriſt's Diſciples to meet with Storms in the way of their Duty, and to be ſent to Sea then when their Maſter foreſees a Storm, but let them not take it unkindly, what he doth, they *know not now*, but they ſhall *know hereafter*, that Chriſt deſigns hereby to manifeſt himſelf with the more wonderful Grace to them, and for them.

3. It was a great Diſcouragement to them now that they had not Chriſt with them, as they had formerly when they were in a Storm; tho' he was then *aſleep* indeed, yet he was ſoon waked, *Chap.* 8. 24. But now he was not with them at all. Thus Chriſt uſeth his Diſciples, firſt to leſſer Difficulties, and then to greater, and ſo trains them up by degrees to live by Faith, and not by Senſe.

4. Tho' the *Wind was contrary*, and they were *toſſed with Waves*, yet being order'd by their Maſter *to the other ſide*, they did not tack about, and come back again, but *made the beſt of their way* forward. *Note*, Tho' Troubles and Difficulties may diſturb us in our Duty, they muſt not drive us from it. But thro' the midſt of them we muſt preſs forwards.

Fourthly, Chriſt's Approach to them in this Condition, *v.* 25. And in this we have an Inſtance.

1. Of his Goodneſs, that he *went unto them*, as one that took cognizance of their Caſe, and was under a concern about them, as a Father about his Children. *Note*, The Extremity of the Church and People of God, is Chriſt's Opportunity to viſit them, and appear for them. But he came not till the fourth Watch, towards three a Clock in the Morning, for then the fourth Watch began. It was in the *Morning-watch* that the Lord appear'd for *Iſrael* in the *Red Sea*, Exod. 14. 24. So was this, *He that keepeth Iſrael neither ſlumbers nor ſleeps*, but when there is occaſion *walks in Darkneſs* for their Succour, helps, and that *right early.*

2. Of his Power; that he went unto them *walking on the Sea*, This is a great Inſtance of Chriſt's ſovereign Dominion over all the Creatures; they are all under his Feet, and at his Command, forget their Natures, and change their Qualities that we call'd eſſential. We need not enquire how this was done, whether by condenſing the Surface of the Water, when God pleaſeth the *Depths are congealed in the Heart of the Sea*, Exod. 15. 8. or by ſuſpending the Gravitation of his Body, which was transfigur'd as he pleaſed; 'tis ſuffcient that it proves his divine Power, for it is God's Prerogative to *tread upon the Waves of the Sea*, Job 9. 8. as it is to *ride upon the Wings of the Wind.* He that made the Waters of the Sea *a Wall* for the *redeemed of the Lord*, Iſa. 51. 10. here makes them a *Wall* for the *Redeemer* himſelf, who as Lord of all appears with *one Foot on the Sea*, and the other on dry Land, *Rev.* 10. 2. The ſame Power that made *Iron to*

ſwim, 2 Kings 6. 6. did this. *What ailed thee, O thou Sea?* Pſal. 114. 5. It was *at the Preſence of the Lord. Thy Way, O God, is in the Sea*, Pſal. 77. 19. *Note*, Chriſt can take what way he pleaſeth to ſave his People.

Fifthly, Here's an Account of what paſſed between Chriſt and his diſtreſſed Friends upon his Approach.

1. Between *him* and *all the Diſciples*. We are here told,

(1.) How their *Fears were raiſ'd*, v. 26. *When they ſaw him walking on the Sea they were troubled, ſaying, it is a Spirit*, φάντασμα ἐςι, *it is an Apparition*, ſo it might much better be render'd. It ſeems the Exiſtence and Appearance of Spirits was generally believ'd by all, except the *Sadduces*, whoſe Doctrine Chriſt had warn'd his Diſciples againſt; yet doubtleſs many ſuppoſed Apparitions have been meerly the Creatures of Mens own Fear and Fancy. Theſe Diſciples ſaid, *It is a Spirit*, when they ſhould have ſaid, *It is the Lord*, it can be no other. *Note*, (1.) Even the Appearances and Approaches of Deliverance are ſometimes the Occaſions of Trouble and Perplexity to God's People, who are ſometimes *moſt frighten'd* when they are *leaſt hurt*; nay, when they are *moſt favour'd*, as the Virgin *Mary*, Luke 1. 29. *Exod.* 3. 6, 7. The Comforts of the Spirit of Adoption are introduc'd by the Terrors of the Spirit of Bondage, *Rom.* 8. 15. (2.) The Appearance of a *Spirit*, or the Fancy of it, cannot but be frightful, and ſtrike a Terror upon us, becauſe of the diſtance of the World of Spirits from us, the juſt Quarrel good Spirits have with us, and the inveterate Enmity evil Spirits have againſt us; ſee *Job* 4. 14, 15. The more Acquaintance we have with God, the Father of Spirits, and the more careful we are to keep ourſelves in his Love, the better able we ſhall be to deal with thoſe Fears. (3.) The perplexing diſquieting Fears of good People ariſe from their Miſtakes and Miſapprehenſions concerning Chriſt, his Perſon, Offices and Undertaking, the more clearly and fully we know his Name, with the more Aſſurance we ſhall truſt in him, *Pſal.* 9. 10. (4.) A little thing frightens us in a *Storm*; when *without are Fightings*, no marvel that *within are Fears*. Perhaps the Diſciples fancied this was ſome evil Spirit that raiſ'd the Storm. *Note*, Moſt of our Danger from outward Troubles ariſeth from the occaſion they give for inward Troubles.

(2.) How theſe Fears were ſilenc'd, *v.* 27. He *ſtraitway* relieved them, by ſhewing them their Miſtake. When they were wreſtling with the Waves, he *delayed* his Succour for ſome time, but *haſtened* his Succour againſt their Fright, as much the more *dangerous*; he *ſtraitway* laid that Storm with this Word, *Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.*

1. He rectified their Miſtake, by making himſelf known to them, as *Joſeph* to his Brethren. *It is I.* He doth not name himſelf as he did to *Paul*, *I am Jeſus*, for *Paul* as yet knew him not; but to theſe Diſciples 'twas enough to ſay, *it is I*; they *knew his Voice*, as his Sheep, *John* 10. 45. as *Mary Magdalen*, Joh. 20. 16. they need not aſk, *Who art thou Lord? art thou for us, or for our Adverſaries?* but could ſay with the Spouſe, *it is the Voice of my Beloved*, Cant. 2. 8.—5. 2. True Believers know it by a good Token. It was enough to make them eaſy to underſtand who it was they ſaw. *Note*, A right Knowledge opens the Door to true Comfort, eſpecially the Knowledge of Chriſt.

2. He encourag'd them againſt their Fright. *It is I*, and therefore (1.) *Be of good cheer.* Θαρσεῖτε, *Be courageous*; pluck up your Spirits, and be courageous. If Chriſt's Diſciples be not chearful in a Storm 'tis their own fault, he would have them ſo. (2.) *Be not afraid.* (1.) *Be not afraid of me*, now you know *'tis I*, ſurely you will not fear, for you know I mean you no Hurt. *Note*, Chriſt will not be a Terror to thoſe to whom he manifeſts himſelf; when they come to underſtand him aright the Terror will be over. (2.) Be not afraid of the *Tempeſt*, of the Winds and Waves, tho' noiſy and very threatning, fear them not while I am ſo near you, I am he that concern myſelf for you, and will not ſtand by and ſee you periſh. *Note*, Nothing need be a Terror to thoſe that have Chriſt near them, and know he is theirs, no, not Death itſelf.

2. Between him and *Peter*, v. 28.—31. where obſerve,

1. *Peter's Courage*, and Chriſt's *countenancing* that.

(1.) It was very bold in *Peter* that he would venture to come to Chriſt upon the Water, *v.* 28. *Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee.* Courage was *Peter*'s Maſter Grace, and that made him ſo forward above the reſt to *expreſs* his Love to Chriſt, tho' others perhaps loved him as well.

1. It is an Inſtance of *Peter*'s Affection to Chriſt that he deſired to come to him. When he *ſees* Chriſt, whom doubtleſs during the Storm he had many a time wiſh'd for, he is impatient to be *with him*. He doth not ſay, *Bid me walk upon the Waters*, as deſiring it for the Miracles ſake, but *bid me come to thee*, as deſiring it for Chriſt's ſake. Let me come to thee, no matter how. *Note*, True Love will break thro' Fire and Water, if duly call'd to it to come to Chriſt. Chriſt was coming to them to ſuccour and deliver them, *Lord*, ſaith *Peter*, *bid me come to thee*. *Note*, When Chriſt is coming towards us in a way of Mercy, we muſt go forth to meet him in a way of Duty, and herein we muſt be willing and bold to venture with him, and venture for him. Thoſe that would have Benefit by Chriſt as a Saviour, muſt thus by Faith come to him. Chriſt had been now for ſome time abſent, and hereby it appears why he abſented himſelf, 'twas to endear himſelf ſo much the more to his Diſciples at his Return, to make it highly ſeaſonable, and doubly acceptable. *Note*, When for a ſmall Moment Chriſt has forſaken his People, his Returns are welcome, and moſt affectionately embrac'd; when gracious Souls after long ſeeking find their Beloved at laſt, they *hold him, and will not let him go*, Cant. 3. 4.

2. It is an Inſtance of *Peter*'s Caution and due Obſervance of the Will of Chriſt, that he would not come without a Warrant. Not, *If it be thou, I will come*, but, *If it be thou, bid me come*. *Note*, The boldeſt Spirits muſt wait for a Call to hazardous Enterprizes, and we muſt not raſhly and preſumptuouſly thruſt ourſelves upon them. Our Will to Services and Sufferings is interpreted not *Willingneſs*, but *Wilfulneſs*, if it hath not a regard to the Will of Chriſt, and be not regulated by his Call and Command. Such extraordinary Warrants as this to *Peter* we are not now to expect, but muſt have recourſe to the general Rules of the Word, which how to apply to particular Caſes, with the help of providential Hints, *Wiſdom is profitable to direct*.

3. It is an Inſtance of *Peter*'s Faith and Reſolution that he ventur'd upon the Water when Chriſt bid him. To quit the Safety of the Ship, and throw himſelf into the Jaws of Death, to deſpiſe thoſe threatning Waves he ſo lately dreaded, argued a very ſtrong Dependance upon the Power and Word of Chriſt; what Difficulty or Danger could ſtand before ſuch a Faith and ſuch a Zeal.

(2.) It was very kind and condeſcending in Chriſt that he was pleaſed to own him in it, *v.* 29. He might have condemned the Propoſal as fooliſh and raſh, nay, as proud and aſſuming. Shall *Peter* pretend to do as his Maſter doth? but Chriſt knew that it came from a ſincere and zealous Affection to him, and graciouſly accepted of it. *Note*, Chriſt is well pleaſed with the Expreſſions of his Peoples Love, tho' mix'd with manifold Infirmities, and makes the beſt of them.

1. He bid him *come*. When the *Phariſees ask'd a Sign*, they had not only a *Repulſe*, but a *Reproof* for it, becauſe they did it with a deſign to *tempt* Chriſt; when *Peter* ask'd a Sign he had it, becauſe he did it with a Reſolution to truſt Chriſt. The Goſpel Call is *Come*, come to Chriſt, venture all in his Hand, and commit the keeping of your Souls to him; venture thro' a ſtormy Sea, a troubleſome World, to Jeſus Chriſt.

2. He bore him out when he did come. *He walked upon the Water.* The Communion of true Believers with Chriſt is repreſented by their being quickned with him, and raiſed up with him, and made to ſit with him, *Eph.* 2. 5, 6. and their being *crucified with him*, Gal. 2. 20. Now methinks it is repreſented in this Story by their *walking with him on the Water*, thro' the Strength of Chriſt we are born up above the World, are enabled to trample upon it, kept from ſinking into it, from being overwhelm'd by it, obtain a Victory over it, 1 *John* 5. 4. by Faith in Chriſt's Victory, *John* 16. *ult.* and with him are *crucified to it*, Gal. 6. 14. See bleſſed *Paul* walking upon the Water with *Jeſus*, and more than a Conqueror thro' him, and treading upon all the threatning Waves, as not able to *ſeparate him from the Love of Chriſt*, Rom. 8. 35, *&c.* Thus the Sea of the World is become like a *Sea of Glaſs*, congealed ſo as to bear, and they that have gotten the Victory ſtand upon it and ſing, *Rev.* 15. 2, 3.

He walked upon the Water, not for Diverſion or Oſtentation, but to *go to Jeſus*, and in that he was thus wonderfully *born up*. *Note*, When *our Souls are following hard after God*, then it is that his *Right-hand upholds us*; 'twas *David*'s Experience, *Pſal.* 63. 8. *Special Supports* are promiſed, and are to be expected only in *ſpiritual Purſuits*. When God bears his *Iſrael* upon *Eagles Wings*, 'tis to *bring them to himſelf*, Exod. 19. 4. Nor can we ever come to Jeſus, unleſs we be upheld by his Power; 'tis in *his own Strength* that we wreſtle with him, that we reach after him, that we preſs *forward toward the Mark*, being *kept by the Power of God*, which Power we muſt depend upon, as *Peter* when he walked upon the Water; and there is no danger of ſinking while *underneath are the everlaſting Arms*.

2. Here's *Peter*'s Cowardice, and Chriſt's reproving him, and ſuccouring him. Chriſt bid him *come*, not only that he might walk upon the Water, and ſo know Chriſt's Power, but that he might ſink, and ſo know his own Weakneſs; for as he would encourage his Faith, ſo he would check his Confidence, and make him aſhamed of it. Obſerve then,

1. *Peter*'s great *Fear*, v. 30. *He was afraid.* The ſtrongeſt Faith and the greateſt Courage has a Mixture of Fear; thoſe that can ſay, *Lord I believe*, muſt ſay, *Lord help my Unbelief*. Nothing but *perfect Love* will quite *caſt out Fear*. Good Men often fail in thoſe Graces they are moſt eminent for, and which they have then in Exerciſe, to ſhew that they have not yet attained. *Peter* was very ſtout at firſt, but afterwards his Heart failed him. The lengthening out of a Trial diſcovers the Weakneſs of Faith.

Here's 1. The Cauſe of this Fear. *He ſaw the Wind boiſterous.* While *Peter* kept his Eye fix'd upon Chriſt, and upon his Word and Power, he walked upon the Water well enough, but when he took notice withal of the Danger he was in, and obſerv'd how the Floods lift up their Waves, then he *feared*. *Note*, Looking at Difficulties with an Eye of Senſe, more than at Precepts and Promiſes with an Eye of Faith, is at the bottom of all our inordinate Fears, both as to publick and perſonal Concerns. *Abraham* was ſtrong in Faith, becauſe he *conſidered not his own Body*, Rom. 4. 19. He minded not the diſcouraging Improbabilities which the Promiſe lay under, but kept his Eye on God's Power, and ſo *againſt Hope believed in Hope*, v. 18. *Peter* when he ſaw the Wind boiſterous ſhould have remembred what he had ſeen, *Chap.* 8. 27. when the Winds and the Sea obey'd Chriſt; but therefore we *fear continually every Day*, becauſe we *forget the Lord our Maker*, Iſa. 51. 12, 13.

2. The Effect of this Fear, *he began to ſink*. While Faith kept up he kept above Water, but when Faith ſtagger'd he began to *ſink*.

Note, The ſinking of our Spirits is owing to the Weakneſs of our Faith; we are upheld (but it is as we are ſav'd) *thro' Faith*, 1 Pet. 1. 5. and therefore when our Souls are caſt down and *diſquieted*, the ſovereign Remedy is to *hope in God*, Pſal. 43. 5. It is likely *Peter*, being bred a Fiſherman, could ſwim very well, it ſhould ſeem ſo by *John* 21. 7. and perhaps he truſted in part to that when he caſt himſelf into the Sea; if he could not walk he could ſwim; but Chriſt let him begin to *ſink*, to ſhew him that it was Chriſt's Right-hand and his holy Arm, not any Skill of his own that was his Security. It was Chriſt's great Mercy to him, that upon the failing of his Faith he did not leave him to ſink outright, to ſink to the bottom as a Stone (*Exod.* 15. 5.) but gave him time to cry, *Lord ſave me.* Such is the Care of Chriſt concerning true Believers tho' weak, they do but *begin to ſink*; a Man is never *ſunk*, never *undone*, till he is in Hell. *Peter* walk'd as he believ'd; to him as to others the Rule held good, *According to your Faith be it unto you.*

3. The Remedy he had recourſe to in this Diſtreſs; the old tried approved Remedy, and that was Prayer; he cry'd, *Lord ſave me.* Obſerve (1.) the manner of his praying, 'tis *fervent* and *importunate*, *he cried.* *Note*, When Faith is *weak*, Prayer ſhould be *ſtrong*. Our Lord Jeſus has taught us in the Day of our Fear to *offer up ſtrong Cries*, Heb. 5. 7. Senſe of Danger *will* make us *cry*; Senſe of Duty and Dependance on God *ſhould* make us cry *to him*. (2.) The Matter of his Prayer was *pertinent*, and to the purpoſe; he cried, *Lord ſave me.* Chriſt is the great Saviour, he came *to ſave*; thoſe that would be ſav'd muſt not only *come* to him, but *cry* to him for Salvation; but we are never brought to this till we find ourſelves *ſinking*; Senſe of Need will drive us to him.

2. Chriſt's great *Favour* to *Peter* in this Fright. Tho' there was a Mixture of *Preſumption* with *Peter*'s Faith in his firſt Adventure, and of *Unbelief* with his Faith in his *after fainting*, yet Chriſt did not *caſt him off*. For,

1. *He ſaved him. He anſwered him with the ſaving Strength of his Right-hand*, Pſal. 20. 6. for immediately he *ſtretched forth his Hand and caught him. Note*, Chriſt's Time to *ſave* is when we *ſink*, Pſal. 18. 4–7. He helps *at a dead Lift*. Chriſt's Hand is ſtill *ſtretched out to all Believers* to keep them from *ſinking*. Thoſe whom he hath once apprehended as his *own*, and hath ſnatched as Brands *out of the burning*, he will catch out *of the Water* too; tho' he may ſeem to have left his Hold, he doth but ſeem to do ſo, for they ſhall *never periſh, neither ſhall any Man pluck them out of his Hand*, John 10. 28. Never fear, he will *hold his own*. Our Deliverance from our own Fears, which elſe would overwhelm us, is owing to the Hand of his Power and Grace, *Pſal.* 34. 4.

2. *He rebuked him*, for as many as he loves and ſaves he reproves and chides: *O thou of little Faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt? Note*, (1.) Faith may be *true* and yet *weak*, at firſt like a Grain of Muſtard-Seed. *Peter* had Faith enough to bring him upon the Water, yet becauſe not enough to carry him thro, Chriſt tells him he had but a *little*. (2.) Our diſcouraging Doubts and Fears are all owing to the Weakneſs of our Faith; therefore we *doubt*, becauſe we are but of *little Faith*; 'tis the Buſineſs of Faith to reſolve Doubts, the Doubts of Senſe in a *ſtormy* Day, ſo as even then to keep the Head above Water; could we but *believe* more we ſhould *doubt* leſs. (3.) The Weakneſs of our Faith and the Prevalency of our Doubts is very diſpleaſing to our Lord Jeſus; 'tis true he doth not caſt off *weak Believers*, but it is as true that he is not pleaſed with *weak Faith*, no, not in thoſe that are neareſt to him. *Wherefore didſt thou doubt?* what reaſon was there for it? *Note*, Our Doubts and Fears would ſoon vaniſh before a ſtrict Enquiry into the *Cauſe* of them; for all things conſider'd, there's no good reaſon why Chriſt's Diſciples ſhould be of a *doubtful Mind*, no, not in a *ſtormy Day*, becauſe he is ready to them a *very preſent Help*.

Sixthly, The *ceaſing of the Storm*, v. 32. When Chriſt was come into the *Ship* they were preſently at the *Shore*. Chriſt walk'd upon *the Water* till he came to the Ship, and then took into that, when he could as eaſily have walked to the Shore; but when *ordinary Means* are to be had, Miracles are not to be expected; tho Chriſt needs not Inſtruments for the doing of his Work, he is pleaſed to uſe them. Obſerve, when Chriſt came into the Ship, *Peter* came in with him. Companions with Chriſt in his *Patience*, ſhall be Companions in his *Kingdom*, Rev. 1. 9. Thoſe that *walk* with him ſhall *reign* with him, that are expos'd, and ſuffer with him, ſhall triumph with him.

When they were come into the *Ship*, immediately the Storm ceaſed, for it had done its Work, its trying Work. He that has *gathered the Wind into his Fiſts, and bound the Waters in a Garment*, is the ſame that *aſcended and deſcended*, and his Word, his Will, even *ſtormy Winds fulfil*, Pſal. 148. 8. When Chriſt comes into a Soul he makes Winds and Storms to ceaſe there, and commands the Peace. Welcome Chriſt, and the *Noiſe of her Waves will ſoon be quell'd.* The way to be *ſtill* is to know that he is God, that he is the *Lord with us*.

Seventhly, The Adoration paid to Chriſt hereupon, *v.* 33. *They that were in the Ship came and worſhipped him*, and ſaid, *Of a Truth thou art the Son of God.* Two good Uſes they made of this Diſtreſs and this Deliverance.

1. It was a Confirmation of their Faith in Chriſt, and abundantly convinc'd them that the Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him; for none but the World's *Creator* could *multiply the Loaves*, none but its *Governor* could *tread upon the Waters of the Sea*, they therefore yield to the Evidence, and make Confeſſion of their Faith, *Thou truly art the Son of God.* They knew before that he was the Son of God, but now they know it *better*. Faith after a Conflict with Unbelief is ſometimes the more active, and gets to greater degrees of Strength by being exercis'd. Now they know it *of a Truth. Note*, It is good for us to know more and more of *the Certainty of thoſe things* wherein we have been inſtructed, *Luke* 1. 4. Faith then grows when it arrives to a full Aſſurance, when it ſees clearly, and ſaith, *Of a Truth.*

2. They took occaſion from it to *give him the Glory due unto his Name.* They not only own'd that great Truth, but were ſuitably affected with it, they *worſhipped Chriſt*. *Note*, When Chriſt manifeſts his Glory for us, we ought to return it to him, *Pſal.* 50. 15. *I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorify me.* Their Worſhip and Adoration of Chriſt was thus expreſs'd, *Of a Truth thou art the Son of God. Note*, The Matter of our *Creed* may and muſt be made the Matter of our *Praiſe*. Faith is the proper Principle of Worſhip, and Worſhip the genuine Product of Faith. He that *comes to God* muſt *believe*, and he that *believes* in God will *come*, Heb. 11. 6.

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Genneſaret. 35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they ſent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diſeaſed. 36 And beſought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

We have here an account of Miracles by wholeſale which Chriſt wrought on the other ſide the Water, in the Land of *Genneſaret*. Wherever Chriſt went he was doing good. *Genneſaret* was a Tract of Land that lay between *Bethſaida* and *Capernaum*, and either gave the Name to, or took the Name from this Sea, which is called *Luke* 5. 1. *the Lake of Genneſaret*, it ſignifies the *Valley of Branches*, Obſerve here,

Firſt, The Forwardneſs and Faith of the *Men of that Place*. Theſe were more noble than the *Gergeſens* their Neighbours, who were Borderers upon the ſame Lake. Thoſe beſought Chriſt to *depart* from them, they had no occaſion for him; theſe beſought him to *help* them, they had need of him. Chriſt reckons it the greateſt Honour we can do him to make uſe of him. Now here we are told,

1. How the Men of that Place were *brought to Chriſt*; they had *Knowledge of him*. 'Tis likely his miraculous Paſſage over the Sea, which they that were in the Ship would induſtriouſly ſpread the Report of, might help to make way for his Entertainment in thoſe Parts, and perhaps 'twas one thing Chriſt intended in it, for he has great Reaches in what he doth. This they had Knowledge of, and of other the Miracles Chriſt had wrought, and therefore they flock'd to him. *Note*, They that know Chriſt's Name will make their Application to him. If Chriſt were better known he would not be neglected as he is; he's *truſted* as far as he's *known*.

They had *Knowledge of him*, i. e. of his being among them, and that he would be but a while among them. *Note*, The diſcerning of the Day of our Opportunities is a good Step towards the Improvement of it. This was the Condemnation of the World, that Chriſt *was in the World, and the World knew him not*, John 1. 42. *Jeruſalem* knew not, *Luke* 19. 10. But there were ſome that when he was among them had *Knowledge of him*. It is better to know that there is a Prophet among us, than that there has been one, *Ezek.* 2. 5.

2. How they *brought others to Chriſt*, by giving notice to their Neighbours of Chriſt's being come into thoſe Parts. *They ſent out into all that Country. Note*, Thoſe that have got the Knowledge of Chriſt themſelves, ſhould do all they can to bring others acquainted with him too. We muſt not *eat theſe ſpiritual Morſels alone*; there is in Chriſt enough for us all, ſo that there is nothing got by monopolizing. When we have Opportunities of getting Good to our Souls, we ſhould bring as many as we can to ſhare with us. More than we think of would cloſe with Opportunities, if they were but call'd upon and invited to them. They ſent into *their own* Country, becauſe it was their own, and they deſired the Welfare of it. *Note*, We can no better teſtify our Love to our Country, than by promoting and propagating the Knowledge of Chriſt in it. Neighbourhood is an Advantage of doing Good, which muſt be improved. Thoſe that are *near to us* we ſhould contrive to do ſomething for, at leaſt by our Example to bring them near to Chriſt.

3. What their Buſineſs was with Chriſt; not only, perhaps not chiefly, if at all to be taught, but to have their *Sick healed*. They *brought unto him all that were diſeaſed*. If Love to Chriſt and his Doctrine will not bring them to him, yet *Self-love* would. Did we but rightly ſeek *our own things*, the things of our own Peace and Welfare, we ſhould ſeek the things of Chriſt. We ſhould do him Honour, and pleaſe him, by deriving Grace and Righteouſneſs from him. *Note*, Chriſt is the proper Perſon to bring the Diſeaſed to; whither ſhould they go but to the Phyſician, to the Son of Righteouſneſs, that hath *healing under his Wings*.

4. How they made their Application to him. *They beſought him that they may only touch the Hem of his Garment*, v. 36. They applied themſelves to him, (1.) with great *Importunity*, *they beſought him.* Well may we *beſeech* to be heal'd, when God by his Miniſters *beſeecheth* us that we will be heal'd. *Note*, The greateſt Favours and Bleſſings are to be obtain'd from Chriſt by *Intreaty*. Aſk and it ſhall be given. (2.) With great Humility; they came to him as thoſe that were ſenſible of their Diſtance, humbly *beſeeching* him to help them. And their deſiring to *touch the Hem of his Garment*, intimates,

they thought themſelves unworthy that he ſhould take any particular Notice of them, that he ſhould ſo much as *ſpeak* to their Caſe, much leſs *touch* them for their Cure; but they will look upon it as a great Favour, if he will give them leave to *touch the Hem of his Garment.* The Eaſtern Nations ſhew reſpect to their Princes by kiſſing their Sleeve or Skirt. (3.) With great *Aſſurance* of the All-ſufficiency of his Power, not doubting but they ſhould be heal'd even by *touching the hem of his Garment*, that they ſhould receive abundant Communication from him by the ſmalleſt Token or Symbol of Communion with him. They did not expect the Formality of ſtriking his Hand over the Place or Perſons diſeaſed as *Naaman* did, 2 *Kings* 5. 11. but were ſure there was in him ſuch an overflowing fulneſs of healing Virtue, that they could not fail of a Cure, that were but admitted near him. It was in this Country and Neighbourhood that the Woman with the bloody Iſſue was cured by *touching the Hem of his Garment*, and was commended for her Faith, *Mat.* 9. 20, 21, 22. And thence probably they took Occaſion to aſk this. *Note*, The Experiences of others in their Attendance on Chriſt may be of uſe both to *direct*, and to encourage us in our Attendance on him. 'Tis good uſing thoſe Means and Methods, which others before us have ſped well in the Uſe of.

Secondly, The Fruit and Succeſs of this their Application to Chriſt. It was not in vain that theſe Sons of *Jacob* ſought him, for as *many as touched were made perfectly whole. Note*, (1.) Chriſt's Cures are perfect Cures, Thoſe that he heals, he heals *perfectly*. He doth not do his Work by Halves. Though ſpiritual Healing be not perfected at firſt, yet doubtleſs he *that has begun the good Work, will perform it*, Phil. 1. 6. (2.) There is abundance of healing Virtue in Chriſt for all that apply themſelves to him, be they never ſo many. That precious Ointmeut which was pour'd on his Head, ran down to the *Skirts of his Garments*, Pſal. 133. 2. The leaſt of Chriſt's Inſtitutions, like the *Hem of his Garment*, is replenished with the overflowing Fulneſs of his Grace, and he is able to *ſave to the uttermoſt.* (3.) The Healing Virtue that is in Chriſt, is put forth for the Benefit of thoſe that by a true and lively Faith *touch him.* Chriſt is in Heaven, but his *Word is nigh us*, and he himſelf in that Word. When we mix Faith with the Word, apply it to ourſelves, depend upon it, and ſubmit to the Influences and Commands of it; then we touch the Hem of Chriſt's Garment. 'Tis but thus *touching*; and we are *made whole.* On ſuch eaſy Terms are ſpiritual Cures offer'd by him, that may truly be ſaid to heal *freely*; ſo that if our Souls dye of their Wounds it is not long of our Phyſician, 'tis not for Want of *Skill* or *Will* in him; but it is purely long of our ſelves. He *could* have healed us, he *would* have healed us, but we *would not be healed*; ſo that our Blood will lye upon our own Heads.

CHAP. XV.

In this Chapter we have our Lord Jeſus, as the great Prophet teaching, *as the great Phyſician* healing, *and as the great Shepherd of the Sheep* feeding, *as the Father of Spirits inſtructing* them; *as the Conqueror of Satan diſpoſſeſſing* him, *and as concern'd for the Bodies of his People, providing for* them. *Here,* (1.) *Chriſt's Diſcourſe with the Scribes and Phariſees about Humane Traditions and Injunctions,* v. 1.—9. (2.) *His Diſcourſe with the Multitude and with his Diſciples, concerning the things that defile a Man,* v. 10.—20. (3.) *His caſting the Devil out of the Woman of* Canaan's *Daughter,* v. 21. 28. (4.) *His Healing of all that were brought to him,* v. 29—31. (5.) *His Feeding four Thouſand Men, with ſeven Loaves and a few little Fiſhes,* v. 32.—39.

THen came to Jeſus Scribes and Phariſees, which were of Jeruſalem, ſaying, 2 Why do thy Diſciples tranſgreſs the tradition of the elders? for they waſh not their hands when they eat bread. 3 But he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Why do you alſo tranſgreſs the commandment of God by your Tradition? 4 For God commanded, ſaying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curſeth father or mother, let him die the death. 5 But ye ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſay to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is* a gift by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me, 6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he ſhall be free.* Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Eſaias propheſy of you, ſaying, 8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips: but their heart is far from me. 9 But in vain they do worſhip me, teaching *for Doctrines* the commandments of men.

Evil Manners, we ſay, beget good Laws: The intemperate Heat of the *Jewiſh* Teachers for the Support of their Hierarchy, occaſion'd many excellent Diſcourſes of our Saviour's, for the Settling of the Truth, as here.

Firſt, Here's the Cavil of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* at Chriſt's Diſciples, for *eating with unwaſhen Hands.* The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were the Topping Men of the *Jewiſh* Church, Men, whoſe Gain was Godlineſs, great Enemies to the Goſpel of Chriſt, but colouring their Oppoſition with a Pretence of Zeal for the Law of *Moſes*; when really nothing was intended but the Support of their own Tyranny over the Conſciences of Men. They were Men of Learning, and Men of Buſineſs. Theſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees* here introduc'd were of *Jeruſalem*, the Holy City, the Head City, whither the *Tribes went up*, and where were ſet the *Thrones of Judgment*; they ſhould therefore have been better than others, but they were worſe. *Note*, External *Privileges*, if they be not duly improv'd, commonly ſwell Men up the more with Pride and Malignity. *Jeruſalem* ſhould have been a *pure Spring*, was now become a *poiſon'd Sink. How is the faithful City become a Harlot!*

Now if theſe great Men be the Accuſers, pray, what is the Accuſation? What Articles do they exhibit againſt the Diſciples of Chriſt? Why, truly the thing laid to their Charge is *Nonconformity to the Canons of their Church*, v. 2. *Why do thy Diſciples tranſgreſs the Tradition of the Elders?* This Charge they make good in a particular Inſtance, *They waſh not their Hands when they eat Bread.* A very high Miſdemeanor! 'Twas a Sign Chriſt's Diſciples carried themſelves inoffenſively, when this was the worſt thing they could charge them with.

Obſerve, 1. What was the *Tradition of the Elders*, That People ſhould often *waſh their Hands*, and always at Meat. This they plac'd a great deal of Religion in, ſuppoſing that the Meat they touch'd with *unwaſhen Hands* would be *defiled* to them. The *Phariſees* practiſed this themſelves, and with a great deal of Strictneſs impos'd it upon others, not under civil Penalties, but as Matter of Conſcience, and making it a Sin againſt God if they did not do it. Rabbi *Joſes* determin'd, That to eat with unwaſhen Hands was as great a Sin as Adultery. And Rabbi *Akiba* being kept a cloſe Priſoner, having Water ſent him both to waſh his Hands with and to drink with his Meat, the greateſt Part being accidentally ſhed, he waſh'd his Hands with the Remainder, though he left himſelf none to drink, ſaying, He would rather die than trangreſs the Tradition of the Elders. Nay, they would not eat Meat with one that did not waſh before Meat. This mighty Zeal in ſo ſmall a Matter would appear very ſtrange, if we did not ſtill ſee it incident to Church Oppreſſors, not only to be fond of *practiſing* their own *Inventions*, but to be furious in *preſſing* their own *Impoſitions.*

2. What was the Tranſgreſſion of this Tradition or Injunction by the Diſciples; it ſeems they did not *waſh their Hands when they eat Bread*, which was the more offenſive to the *Phariſees*, becauſe they were Men that in other things were ſtrict and conſcientious. The Cuſtom was *innocent* enough, and had a *Decency* in its Civil Uſe; We read of the Water for purifying at the Marriage where Chriſt was preſent, *John* 2. 6. though Chriſt turned it into Wine, and ſo put an end of that Uſe of it. But when it came to be practis'd and *impos'd* as a Religious Rite and Ceremony, and ſuch a Streſs laid upon it; the Diſciples tho' weak in Knowledge, yet were ſo well taught, as not to comply with it or obſerve it; no, not when the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* had their Eye upon them. They had already learned St. *Paul*'s Leſſon, *All things are lawful for me*, no doubt 'tis lawful to waſh before Meat; *but I will not be brought under the Power of any*, eſpecially not of thoſe who *ſaid to their Souls, Bow down that we may go over*, 1 Cor. 6. 12.

3. What was the Complaint of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* againſt them: They quarrel with Chriſt about it, ſuppoſing that he allow'd them in it, as he did no doubt by his own Example. *Why do thy Diſciples tranſgreſs* the Canons of the Church, and why doſt thou ſuffer them to do it? 'Twas well the Complaint was made to Chriſt; for the Diſciples themſelves, though they knew their Duty in this Caſe, yet perhaps were not ſo well able to give a Reaſon for what they did, as were to be wiſh'd.

Secondly, Here is Chriſt's Anſwer to this Cavil, and his Juſtification of the Diſciples in that which was charg'd upon them as a Tranſgreſſion. *Note*, While we ſtand faſt in the Liberty wherewith Chriſt has made us free, he will be ſure *to bear us out in it.*

Two Ways Chriſt replies upon them,

1. By Way of *Recrimination*, v.—6. They were ſpying *Motes* in the Eyes of his Diſciples, but Chriſt ſhews them a *Beam* in their own. But that which he charges upon them, is not barely a Recrimination, for it will be no Vindication of ourſelves, to condemn our Reprovers; but it is ſuch a Cenſure of their Tradition (and the Authority of that was it they built their Charge upon) as makes not only a *Non-compliance* lawful, but an *Oppoſition* a Duty. That human Authority muſt never be ſubmitted to, which ſets up in Competition with divine Authority.

The Charge in general is, *You tranſgreſs the Commandment of God, by your Tradition.* They call'd it the Tradition of the Elders, laying Streſs upon the Antiquity of the Uſage, and the Authority of them that impos'd it, as the Church of *Rome* doth upon Fathers and Councils; but Chriſt calls it their Tradition. *Note*, Illegal Impoſitions will be laid to the Charge of thoſe that ſupport and maintain them, and keep them up, as well as of thoſe who firſt *invented* and *enjoyn'd* them, *Mic.* 6. 16. *You tranſgreſs the Commandment of God. Note*, Thoſe that are moſt zealous of their own Impoſitions are commonly moſt careleſs of God's Commands; which is a good reaſon why Chriſt's Diſciples ſhould ſtand upon their Guard againſt ſuch Impoſitions, leſt tho' at firſt they ſeem only to infringe the Liberty of Chriſtians, they come at length to confront the Authority of Chriſt. Tho' the *Phariſees* in *this* Command of *waſhing before Meat*, did not intrench upon any Command of God; yet becauſe in other Inſtances they did, he juſtifies his Diſciples Diſobedience to *this*.

(2.) The Proof of this Charge is in a particular Inſtance, that of their Tranſgreſſing the fifth Commandment.

1. Let us ſee what the Command of God is, *v.* 4. what the *Precept*, and what the *Sanction* of the Law is.

The *Precept* is, *Honour thy Father and thy Mother*; this is enjoyn'd by the common *Father of Mankind*, and by paying Reſpect to them, whom Providence has made the Inſtruments of our Being, we give Honour to him who is the Author of it, who has thereby, as to us put ſome of his Image upon them. The whole of Childrens Duty to their Parents is included in this of *honouring* them, which is the Spring and Foundation of all the reſt: *If I be a Father, where is my Honour*? Our Saviour here ſuppoſes it to mean the Duty of Childrens maintaining their Parents, and miniſtring to their Wants, if there be occaſion, and being every way ſerviceable to their Comfort. *Honour Widows*, i. e. maintain them, 1 *Tim* 5. 3.

The Sanction of this Law is the fifth Commandment, is a Promiſe, *that thy Days may be long*; but our Saviour waves that, leſt any ſhould thence infer it to be only a thing commendable and profitable, and inſiſts upon the Penalty annex'd to the Breach of this Commandment in another Scripture, which ſpeaks the Duty highly and indiſpenſably neceſſary; *he that curſeth Father, or Mother, let him dye the Death*: This Law we have, *Exod*. 21. 17. The Sin of *Curſing* Parents, is here oppos'd to the Duty of *honouring* them. Thoſe that ſpeak Ill of their Parents, or wiſh Ill to them, that mock at them, or give them taunting and opprobrious Language, break this Law. If to call a Brother *Raca* be ſo penal, what is it to call a Father ſo? By our Saviour's Application of this Law, it appears, that denying Service or Relief to Parents, is included in *Curſing* of them. Tho' the Language be reſpectful enough, and nothing abuſive in it, yet what will that avail if the Deeds be not agreeable? 'tis but like him that ſaid, *I go Sir, and went not*, Mat. 21. 30.

2. Let us ſee what was the Contradiction which the Tradition of the Elders gave to this Command. 'Twas not direct, and downright, but *implicit*; their Caſuiſts gave them ſuch Rules as furniſhed them with an eaſy Evaſion from the Obligation of this Command, *v.* 5, 6. You hear what God ſaith, *but ye ſay* ſo and ſo. *Note*, That which Men ſay, even great Men, and learned Men, and Men in Authority, muſt be examin'd by that which *God ſaith*, and if it be found either contrary or inconſiſtent, it may, and muſt be rejected, *Acts* 4. 19. *Obſerve*,

1. What their Tradition was; that a man could not in any caſe beſtow his Worldly Eſtate better than to *give it to the Prieſts*, and devote it to the Service of the Temple: And that when any thing was ſo devoted, it was not only unlawful to alienate it, but all other Obligations, tho' never ſo juſt and ſacred, were thereby ſuperſeeded, and a Man was thereby diſcharg'd from them. And this proceeded partly from their *Ceremoniouſneſs*, and the ſuperſtitious Regard they had to the Temple, and partly from their *Covetouſneſs*, and Love of Money; for what was given to the Temple they were gainers by. The former was in Pretence, the latter was in Truth, at the bottom of this Tradition.

2. How they allow'd the Application of this to the Caſe of Children. When their Parents Neceſſities call for their Aſſiſtance, they pleaded, That all they could ſpare from themſelves and their Children, they had devoted to the *Treaſury of the Temple. It is a Gift* by *whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me*, and therefore their Parents muſt expect nothing from them; ſuggeſting withal that the ſpiritual Advantage of what was ſo devoted would redound to the Parents, who muſt *live upon* that *Air*. This they taught was a good and valid Plea, and many undutiful, unnatural Children made uſe of it, and they juſtified them in it, and ſaid, *He ſhall be free*; ſo we ſupply the Senſe: Some go further, and ſupply it thus, *He doth well, his Days ſhall be long in the Land*, and he ſhall be look'd upon as having duly obſerv'd the fifth Commandment. The Pretence of Religion would make his Refuſal to provide for his Parents not only *paſſable*, but *plauſible*. But the Abſurdity, and Impiety of this Tradition was very evident; for revealed Religion, was intended to improve, not to overthrow natural Religion, one of the fundamental Laws, of which is this of *honouring our Parents*, and had they known what that meant, *I will have Juſtice*, and *Mercy*, and *not Sacrifice*, they had not thus made the moſt arbitrary Rituals deſtructive of the moſt neceſſary Morals. This was *making the Commandment of God of none effect*. *Note*, Whatever leads to, or countenanceth *Diſobedience*, doth in effect make void the *Command*; and they that take upon them to diſpenſe with God's Laws, do in Chriſt's Account repeal and diſanul it. To break the Law is *bad*, but to *teach Men ſo*, as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* did, is much worſe, *Mat.* 5. 19. To what Purpoſe is the Command given, if it be not obey'd? The *Rule* is, as to us, of none effect, if we be not *rul'd* by it. *It's time for the Lord to work*, high time for the great Reformer, the great Refiner to appear; for they have *made void the Law*, Pſal. 119. 126. Not only *Sinn'd againſt* the Commandment, but as far as in them lay, *ſinn'd away* the Commandment. But thanks be to God, in ſpite of them, and all their Traditions, the Command ſtands in full Force, Power, and Virtue.

2. The other part of Chriſt's Anſwer is by way of *Reprehenſion*, and that which he here chargeth them with is *Hypocriſy*, ye *Hypocrites*, *v.* 7. *Note*, It is the Prerogative of him who ſearcheth the Heart, and knows what is in Man, to pronounce who are *Hypocrites*. The Eye of Man can perceive open Profaneneſs, but it is only the Eye of Chriſt that can diſcern Hypocriſy, *Luke* 16. 15. And as it is a Sin which his Eye diſcovers, ſo it is a Sin, which of all other his Soul hates.

Now Chriſt fetches his reproof from *Iſa.* 29. 13. *Well did* Eſaias *Propheſy of you*. *Iſaiah* ſpoke it of the Men of that Generation, to whom he propheſied, yet Chriſt applies it to theſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees*. *Note*, The Reproofs of Sin and Sinners, which we find in Scripture, were deſign'd to teach the like Perſons and Practices to the end of the World; for they are not of private Interpretation, 2 *Pet.* 1. 20. The Sinners of the latter Days are propheſied of, 1 *Tim.* 4. 1. 2 *Tim.* 3. 1. 2 *Pet.* 3. 3. Threatnings directed againſt others belong to us, if we be guilty of the ſame Sins. *Iſaiah* propheſied not of them only, but of all other Hypocrites, againſt whom that Word of his is ſtill level'd, and ſtands in force. The Propheſies of Scripture are every Day in the fulfilling.

This Prophecy doth exactly decypher an hypocritical Nation, *Iſa.* 9. 17.—10. 6. Here is

1. The *Deſcription* of *Hypocrites*, in two things.

1. In their own Performances of Religious Worſhip, *v.* 8. When they *draw nigh to God with their Mouth, and honour him with their Lips, their Heart is far from him*. Obſerve,

(1.) How far an Hypocrite goes; he draws nigh to God, *and honours him*. He is in Profeſſion a *Worſhipper* of God. The *Phariſee went up to the Temple to Pray*; he doth not ſtand at that diſtance which thoſe are at that *live without God in the World*, but has a Name among the People near unto him. They *honour him*, i. e. they take on them to honour God, they joyn with thoſe that do ſo. Some Honour God has even from the Services of Hypocrites, as they help to keep up the Face and Form of Godlineſs in the World, whence God fetches Honour to himſelf, tho' they *intend* it not to him. When God's Enemies ſubmit themſelves but *feignedly*, when they *lye unto him*; ſo the Word is, *Pſal.* 66. 3. it redounds to his Honour, and he *gets himſelf a Name*.

(2.) Where he reſts and takes up; this is done but *with his Mouth*, and with *his Lips*. 'Tis Piety but from the Teeth outward; he *ſhews much Love*, and that's all, there is in his Heart no true Love; they *make their Voice to be heard*, Iſa. 58. 4. mention the *Name of the Lord*, Iſa. 48. 1. Hypocrites are thoſe that only make a Lip-labour of Religion and Religious Worſhip. In Word and Tongue the worſt Hypocrites may do as well as the beſt Saints, and ſpeak as fair with *Jacob*'s Voice.

(3.) What that is wherein he comes ſhort, it is in the main matter, *their Heart is far from me*, habitually alienated and eſtrang'd, *Eph.* 4. 18. actually wandring, and dwelling upon ſomething elſe; no ſerious Thoughts of God, no pious Affections towards him, no Concern about the Soul and Eternity, no Thoughts agreeable to the Service. God is *near in their Mouth*, but far from their *Reins*, Jer. 12. 2. *Ezek.* 33. 31. The Heart, with the *Fool's Eyes, in the ends of the Earth*. 'Tis a *ſilly Dove* that is *without Heart*, and ſo 'tis a *ſilly Duty*, Hoſ. 7. 11. An Hypocrite ſaith one thing, but thinks another. The great thing that God looks at and requires is the *Heart*, Prov. 21. 26. if that be far from him, 'tis not a reaſonable Service, and therefore not an acceptable one, it is the *Sacrifice of Fools*, Eccl. 5. 1.

2. In their *Preſcriptions* to others; this is an Inſtance of their Hypocriſy, that they *Teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*. The *Jews* then, as the Papiſts ſince, paid the ſame reſpect to oral Tradition that they did to the Word of God, receiving it, *pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia*, Conc. Trident. Seſ. 4. Decr. 1. When Men's Inventions are tack'd to God's Inſtitutions, and impos'd accordingly, this is *Hypocriſy*, a meer *human* Religion. The Commandments of Men are properly converſant about the *things of Men*, but God will have his own Work done by his own Rules, and expects not that which he did not himſelf appoint. That only comes to him that comes from him.

2. The Doom of Hypocrites, 'tis put in a little compaſs, *in vain do they Worſhip me*. Their Worſhip doth not attain the End for which it was appointed, 'twill neither *pleaſe God*, nor *profit* themſelves. If it be not *in Spirit*, 'tis not *in Truth*, and ſo 'tis all nothing. That Man who only ſeems to be Religious, but is not ſo, his Religion *is vain*, Jam. 1. 26. and if our Religion be *a vain Oblation*, a vain Religion, *How great is that Vanity!* How ſad is it to live an Age of Prayers, and Sermons, and Sabbaths, and Sacraments *in vain*, to *beat the Air in* all theſe, 'tis ſo, if the Heart be not *with God* in them, Lip-labour is loſt-labour, *Iſa.* 1. 11. Hypocrites ſow the Wind, and reap the Whirlwind; *truſt in Vanity*, and *Vanity will be their Recompence*.

Thus Chriſt juſtifies his Diſciples in their Diſobedience to the Traditions of the Elders, and this the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* got by their Cavilling; we read not of any Reply they made, if they were not ſatisfied, yet they were ſilenc'd, and could not reſiſt the Power wherewith Chriſt ſpoke.

10 And he called the multitude, and ſaid unto them, Hear and underſtand. 11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. 12 Then came his diſciples and ſaid unto him, Knoweſt thou that the Phariſees were offended after they heard this ſaying? 13 But he anſwered and ſaid,

Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted ſhall be rooted up. 14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both ſhall fall into the ditch. 15 Then anſwered Peter and ſaid unto him, Declare unto us this parable. 16 And Jeſus ſaid, Are ye alſo yet without underſtanding? 17 Do not ye yet underſtand, that whatſoever entereth in at the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is caſt out into the draught? 18 But thoſe things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile the man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe witneſs, blaſphemies. 20 Theſe are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwaſhen hands, defileth not a man.

Chriſt having prov'd that the Diſciples in *eating with unwaſhen Hands*, were not to be blam'd, as tranſgreſſing the Traditions and Injunctions of the Elders, comes here to ſhew, that they were not to be blam'd as having done any thing that was in it ſelf evil. In the former part of his Diſcourſe he overturn'd the Authority of the Law, and in this the Reaſon of it. *Obſerve,*

Firſt, The *ſolemn Introduction* to this Diſcourſe, *v.* 10. He *called the Multitude.* They were *withdrawn* while Chriſt diſcours'd with the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, probably thoſe proud Men order'd them to *withdraw*, as not willing to talk with Chriſt in their hearing; Chriſt muſt favour them at their pleaſure with a Diſcourſe *in private.* But Chriſt had a regard to the *Multitude*, he ſoon diſpatch'd the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, and then turn'd them off, and invited the Mob, the *Multitude* to be his Hearers; Thus the *Poor* are *Evangeliz'd*, and the fooliſh things of the World, and things that are deſpis'd hath Chriſt choſen. The humble Jeſus embraceth thoſe whom the proud *Phariſees* look'd upon wtih diſdain, and to them he deſign'd it for a Mortification. He turns *from* them as wilful and unteachable, and turns *to* the Multitude, who tho' weak, were humble, and willing to be taught. To them he ſaid, *Hear, and underſtamd. Note*, What we hear from the Mouth of Chriſt, we muſt give all diligence to *underſtand.* Not only *Scholars*, but even the *Multitude*, the ordinary People muſt apply their Minds to *underſtand* the Words of Chriſt. He therefore calls upon them to *underſtand*, becauſe the Leſſon he was now about to teach them was contrary to the *Notions* they had ſuck'd in with their Milk from their Teachers, and overturn'd many of the Cuſtoms and Uſages which they were wedded to, and laid ſtreſs upon. *Note*, There's need of a great Intention of Mind, and clearneſs of *Underſtanding*, to free Men from thoſe corrupt Principles and Practices which they have been bred up in, and long accuſtom'd to; for in that caſe the Underſtanding is commonly brib'd and byaſs'd by Prejudice.

Secondly, The Truth it ſelf laid down, *v.* 11. in two Propoſitions, which are oppoſite to the vulgar Errors of that time, and were therefore ſurpriſing.

1. *Not that which goes into the Mouth defiles the Man.* It is not the *Kind*, or *Quality* of our Food, nor the Dirtineſs of our Hands that affects the Soul with any *moral* Pollution or Defilement. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink*, Rom. 14. 17. That *defiles the Man*, by which Guilt is contracted before God, and the Man is render'd offenſive to him, and diſfitted for Communion with him; now what we eat, if we do not eat unſeaſonably and immoderately, doth not this; for *to the pure all things are pure*, Tit. 1. 15. The *Phariſees* carried the Ceremonial Pollutions by eating ſuch and ſuch Meats, much further than the Law intended, and burthen'd it with Additions of their own; which our Saviour witneſſeth againſt, intending hereby to pave the Way to a Repeal of the Ceremonial Law in that matter. He was now beginning to teach his Followers to *call nothing common or unclean*, and if *Peter*, when he was bid to *kill and eat*, had remembred this Word, he would not have ſaid, *Not ſo, Lord*, Acts 10. 13, 14, 15, 28.

2. But *that which comes out of the Mouth, this defiles a Man.* We are polluted, not by the *Meat we eat with unwaſhen Hands*, but by the words we ſpeak from an *unſanctified Heart*, ſo it is that *the Mouth cauſeth the Fleſh to Sin*, Eccl. 5. 6. Chriſt in a former Diſcourſe had laid a great Streſs upon our words, *Matt.* 12. 36, 37. and that was intended for Reproof and Warning to thoſe that cavil'd at *him*: This here is intended for Reproof and Warning to thoſe that cavil'd at the Diſciples, and cenſur'd them. 'Tis not the Diſciples that defile themſelves with what they *eat*, but the *Phariſees* that defile themſelves with what they ſpeak ſpitefully and cenſoriouſly of them. *Note*, Thoſe who charge Guilt upon others for tranſgreſſing the Commandments of Men, many times bring greater guilt upon themſelves by tranſgreſſing the Law of God againſt raſh Judging. Thoſe moſt *defile themſelves*, who are moſt forward to cenſure the Defilements of others.

Thirdly, The Offence that was taken at this Truth, and the Account brought to Chriſt of that Offence, *v.* 12. *The Diſciples ſaid unto him, knoweſt thou that the Phariſees were offended*, and didſt thou not foreſee that they would be ſo *at this Saying?* and would think the worſe of thee, and of thy Doctrine for it, and be the more enrag'd at thee.

1. It was not ſtrange that the *Phariſees* ſhould be offended at this plain Truth, for they were Men made up of *Error* and *Enmity*, *Miſtake* and *Malice.* Sore Eyes cannot bear clear Light, and nothing is more provoking to proud Impoſers than the undeceiving of thoſe whom they have firſt *blind-folded*, and then *enſlav'd.* It ſhould ſeem that the *Phariſees*, who were the ſtrict obſervers of the Traditions, were more offended than the *Scribes*, who were the Teachers of them; and perhaps they were as much gall'd with the latter part of Chriſt's Doctrine, which taught a ſtrictneſs in the *Government of our Tongue*, as with the former part, which taught an Indifferency about *waſhing our Hands.* Great Contenders for the Formalities of Religion, being commonly as great Contemners of the Subſtantials of it.

2. The Diſciples thought it ſtrange their Maſter ſhould ſay that which he knew would give ſo much offence, he did not uſe to do ſo; ſure, think they, if he had conſider'd how provoking it would be, he would not have ſaid it. But he knew what he ſaid, and to whom he ſaid it, and what would be the effect of it, and would teach us, That tho' in indifferent things we muſt be tender of giving Offence, yet we muſt not for fear of that balk any Truth of Duty. Truth muſt be *own'd*, and Duty muſt be *done*, and if any be offended, 'tis their own fault; 'tis not Scandal *given*, but *taken.*

Perhaps the Diſciples were themſelves ſtumbled at the Word Chriſt ſaid, which they thought *bold*, and ſcarce reconcileable with the difference that was put by the Law of God between *clean* and *unclean* Meats, and therefore objected this to Chriſt, that they might themſelves be better inform'd. They ſeem likewiſe to have a concern upon them for the *Phariſees*, tho' they had quarrel'd with them, which teacheth us to forgive, and ſeek the Good, eſpecially the ſpiritual Good of our Enemies, Perſecutors, and Slanderers. They would not have the *Phariſees*, go away diſpleas'd at any thing Chriſt had ſaid; and therefore tho' they do not deſire him to *retract* it, yet they hope he will explain, correct, and mollify it. Weak Hearers are ſometimes more ſollicitous than they ſhould be, not to have wicked Hearers offended. But if we pleaſe Men with the Concealment of Truth, and the indulging of their Errors and Corruptions, we are not the *Servants of Chriſt.*

Fourthly, The Doom paſt upon the *Phariſees*, and their corrupt Traditions; which comes in as a Reaſon why Chriſt car'd not, tho' he offended them, and therefore why the Diſciples ſhould not care, becauſe they were a Generation of Men that hated to be reform'd, and were mark'd out for Deſtruction. Two things Chriſt here foretels concerning them.

1. The *rooting out* of them and their Traditions, *v.* 13. *Every Plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted ſhall be rooted up*, Not only the corrupt Opinions, and ſuperſtitious Practiſes of the *Phariſees*, but their Sect, and Way, and Conſtitution were Plants, not of God's planting: The Rules of their Profeſſion were no Inſtitutions of his, but ow'd their Original to Pride and Formality. The People of the *Jews* were planted a *noble Vine*, but now they are become the degenerate Plant of a ſtrange Vine, God diſown'd them, as not of his planting. *Note*, 1. In the viſible Church, 'tis no ſtrange thing to find *Plants* that *our heavenly Father has not planted.* 'Tis imply'd, that whatever is good in the Church is of God's planting, *Iſa.* 41. 19. But let the Huſbandman be never ſo careful, his Ground will caſt forth Weeds of it ſelf, more or leſs, and there is an Enemy buſie *ſowing Tares.* What is corrupt, tho' of God's permitting, is not of his planting, he ſowes nothing but *good Seed in his Field.* Let us not therefore be deceiv'd, as if all muſt needs be right that we find *in the Church*, and all thoſe Perſons and things our Father's Plants that we find in our Father's Garden; *believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits*: See *Jer.* 19. 5.—23. 31, 32. (2.) Thoſe that are of the Spirit of the *Phariſees*, proud, formal, and impoſing, what Figure ſoever they make, and of what Denomination ſoever they be, God will not own them as of his planting; *by their Fruits you ſhall know them.* (3.) Thoſe Plants that are not of God's planting, ſhall not be of his protecting, but ſhall undoubtedly be *rooted up.* What is *not of God* ſhall *not ſtand*, Acts 5. 38. What things are unſcriptural will wither and dye of themſelves, or be juſtly exploded by the Churches; however, in the great Day theſe Tares that offend will be bundled for the Fire. What's gone with the *Phariſees* and their Traditions? they are long ſince abandon'd, but the Goſpel of Truth is great, and will remain. It cannot be *rooted up.*

2. The *Ruin* of them and their Followers, that had their Perſons and Principles in *admiration*, v. 14. Where

1. Chriſt bids his Diſciples *let them alone.* Have no Converſe with them, or Concern for them; neither court their Favour, nor dread their Diſpleaſure; care not tho' they be offended, they will take their Courſe, and let them take the Iſue of it: They are wedded to their own Fancies, will have every theing their own way, and *let them alone.* Seek not to pleaſe a Generation of Men that *pleaſe not God*, (1 Theſ. 2. 15.) and will be pleas'd with nothing leſs than an abſolute Dominion over your Conſciences. They are *joyned to Idols*, as *Ephraim*, Hoſ. 4. 17. the Idols of their own Fancy, *let them alone*, let them be *filthy ſtill*, Rev. 22. 11. The Caſe of theſe Sinners is ſad indeed, whom Chriſt orders his Miniſters to *let alone.*

2. He gives them two Reaſons for it. *Let them alon*, for

1. They are *proud* and *ignorant*, two bad Qualities that often meet, and render a Man incurable in his Folly, *Prov.* 26. 12. *They be blind leaders of the blind.* They are groſly *ignorant* in the things of God, and ſtrangers to the ſpiritual Nature of the divine Law, and yet ſo *proud*, that they think they ſee better and further than any, and therefore undertake to be *leaders* of others, to ſhew others the way to Hea-

ven, when they themſelves knew not one ſtep of the way, and accordingly they *preſcribe* to all, and *preſcribe* thoſe who will not follow them. Tho' they were blind, if they had own'd it, and come to Chriſt for Eye-ſalve they might have ſeen, but they took the Intimation of ſuch a thing very heinouſly. *John* 9. 40. *Are we blind alſo?* and were *confident that they themſelves were guides of the blind*, Rom. 1. 19, 20. were appointed to be ſo, and fit to be ſo; that every thing they ſaid was an Oracle, and a Law: Therefore *let them alone*, their Caſe is deſperate, do not meddle with them, you may ſoon provoke them, but never convince them. How miſerable was the Caſe of the *Jewiſh* Church now when *their Leaders were blind*; were ſo *Self-conceitedly fooliſh* as to be peremptory in their Conduct, while the People were *ſo ſottiſhly fooliſh*, as to follow them with an implicit Faith and Obedience, and *willingly walk after the Commandment*, Hoſ. 5. 11. Now the Prophecy was fulfill'd, *Iſa*. 29. 10, 14. And 'tis eaſie to imagine *what will be in the end hereof*, when the *Prophets prophecy falſly*, and the *Prieſts bear Rule by their means*, and the *People love to have it ſo*, Jer. 5. *ult*.

2. They are *poſting* to Deſtruction, and will ſhorly be *plunged* in it. *Both ſhall fall into the Ditch.* This muſt needs be the end of it, if both be ſo *blind*, and yet both ſo *bold*, venturing forwards, and yet not aware of Danger. Both will be involv'd in the general Deſolation coming upon the *Jews*, and both drown'd in Eternal Deſtruction and Perdition. The blind Leaders and the blind Followers will *periſh together*. We find *Rev*. 22. 15. that Hell is the Portion of thoſe that *make a Lye*, and of thoſe that *love it*, when it is made. *The Deceived*, and *the Deceiver* are obnoxious to the Judgment of God, *Job* 12. 16. *Note*, 1. Thoſe that by *cunning Craftineſs* draw others to Sin and Error, yet ſhall not with all their Craft and Cunning eſcape Ruin themſelves. If *both fall together into the Ditch*, the the blind *Leaders* will fall undermoſt, and have the worſt of it. See *Jer*. 14. 15, 16. *The Prophets ſhall be conſumed firſt*, and then *the People to whom they prophecy*, Jer. 20. 6.—28. 15, 16. (2.) The Sin and Ruin of the Deceivers will be no ſecurity to thoſe that are deceived by them. Tho' the Leaders of this People *cauſe them to err*, yet they that are *led of them are deſtroy'd*, Iſa. 9. 16. becauſe they ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light, which would have rectify'd their Miſtake. *Seneca* complaing of moſt People's being led by common Opinion and Practice, *unuſquiſque mavult credere quam judicare*, things are taken upon truſt, and never examin'd, concludes *inde eſta tanta coacervatio aliorum ſuper alios ruentium*. De. Vit. Beat. The falling of *both together* will aggravate the Fall of *both*; for they that have thus mutually increaſed each other's Sin, will mutually exaſperate each other's Ruin.

Fifthly, Inſtruction given to the Diſciples concerning the Truth Chriſt had laid down, *v*. 10. Tho' Chriſt rejects the willfully ignorant that care not to be taught, he can have compaſſion on the ignorant that are *willing to learn* Heb. 5. 2. If the *Phariſees* that made *void the Law* be offended, *let* them be offended; but this *great Peace have they that love the Law*, that *nothing ſhall offend them*, but ſome way or other the Offence ſhall be taken off. *Pſal*. 119. 165.

Here's 1. Their deſire to be better inſtructed in this matter, *v*. 15. and in this Requeſt, as in many other, *Peter* was their ſpeaker, the reſt, 'tis probable, putting him on to ſpeak, or intimating their Concurrence. *Declare unto us this Parable.* What Chriſt ſaid was plain, but becauſe it agreed not with the Notions they had imbib'd, tho' they would not *contradict* it, yet they call it a *Parable*, and cannot *underſtand* it. *Note*, (1.) Weak Underſtandings are apt to turn plain Truths into Parables, and to ſeek for a Knot in a Bulruſh: The Diſciples often did ſo, as *John* 16. 17. Even the *Graſs-hopper* is a *burthen* to a weak Stomach, and Babes in underſtanding cannot bear and digeſt ſtrong Meat. (2.) Where a *weak Head* doubts concerning any Word of Chriſt, an *upright Heart*, and a *willing Mind* will *ſeek for Inſtruction*. The *Phariſees* were offended, but kept it to themſelves, hating to be *reform'd*, they hated to be *inform'd*; but the Diſciples, tho' *offended*, ſought for Satisfaction, imputing the Offence not to the Doctrine deliver'd, but to the Shallowneſs of their own Capacity.

2. The Reproof Chriſt gave them for their Weakneſs and Ignorance, *v*. 16. *Are ye alſo without underſtanding?* As many as Chriſt loves and teaches he thus rebukes. *Note*, They are very ignorant indeed, who underſtand not that *moral* Pollutions are abundantly worſe, and more dangerous than ceremonial ones. And two things aggravate their Dulneſs and Darkneſs.

(1.) That they were the Diſciples of Chriſt. Are *ye* alſo without Underſtanding? you whom I have admitted into ſo great a degree of Familiarity with me, are you ſo unſkilful in the Word of Righteouſneſs? *Note*, The Ignorance and Miſtakes of thoſe that profeſs Religion, and enjoy the Privileges of Church-memberſhip, is juſtly a Grief to the Lord Jeſus. No wonder the *Phariſees* underſtand not this Doctrine, who know nothing of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, but you that have heard of it, and embrac'd it your ſelves, and preach it to others, *are you alſo* ſuch Strangers to the Spirit and Genius of it?

(2.) That they had been a great while Chriſt's Scholars, are you *yet* ſo? after you have been ſo long under my teaching. Had they been but *of yeſterday* in Chriſt's School it had been another matter, but to have been for ſo many Months Chriſt's conſtant Hearers, and yet to be without Underſtanding, was a great Reproach to them. *Note*, Chriſt expects from us ſome proportion of Knowledge, and Grace, and Wiſdom, according to the Time and Means we have had. See *John* 14. 9. *Heb*. 5. 12. 2 *Tim*. 3. 7, 8.

3. The Explication Chriſt gave them of this Doctrine of Pollutions. Tho' he chid them for their Dulneſs, he did not caſt them off, but pity'd them, and taught them, as *Luke* 24. 25, 26, 27. He here ſhews us,

1. What *little danger* we are in of *Pollution* from that which *entereth in at the Mouth*, v. 17. An inordinate Appetite, Intemperance, and Exceſs in Eating comes out of the Heart, and is *defiling*; but Meat in it ſelf is not ſo, as the *Phariſees* ſuppos'd. What there is of Dregs and Defilement in our Meat, Nature, (or rather the God of Nature) has provided a way to clear us of it, *it goes in at the Belly*, and is *caſt out into the Draught*, and nothing remains to us but *pure Nouriſhment*. So *fearfully* and *wonderfully* are we made, and preſerv'd, and our *Souls held in Life*. The *expulſive* Faculty is as neceſſary in the Body as any other, for the Diſcharge of that which is ſuperfluous, noxious, or excrementitious, ſo happily is Nature enabled to *help it ſelf*, and ſhift for its own Good: By this means nothing defiles; if we eat with *unwaſhen Hands*, and ſo any Dirt ſtick to our Meat, Nature will ſeparate it, and caſt it out, and it will be no Defilement to us. So that tho' it may be a piece of cleanlineſs, 'tis no Point of Conſcience to *waſh before Meat*, and we go upon a great Miſtake if we place Religion in it. It is not the Practice it ſelf, but the Opinion it is built upon that Chriſt condemns, as if Meat commended us to God, 1 *Cor*. 8. 8. Whereas Chriſtianity ſtands not in ſuch Obſervances.

2. What great Danger we are in of Pollution from that which *proceeds out of the Mouth*, (v. 18.) *i. e.* out of the abundance of the Heart. Compare *Matt*. 12 34. There's no Defilement in the Products of God's Bounty, the Defilement ariſeth from the Products of our Corruption. Now here we have

1. The corrupt Fountain of that which proceeds out of the Mouth, it comes *from the Heart*; that's the Spring and Source of all Sin, *Jer*. 8. 7. 'Tis the Heart that is ſo *deſperately wicked*, Jer. 17. 9. for there is no Sin in Word or Deed, but it was firſt in the Heart. There is the Root of Bitterneſs which *bears Gall and Wormwood*. 'Tis the *inward part* of a Sinner that is *very Wickedneſs*, Pſal 5. 9. All evil Speaking comes forth from the Heart, and are defiling; from the corrupt Heart comes the *corrupt Communication*.

2. Some of the corrupt Streams which flow from this Fountain inſtanc'd in; tho' they do not all *come out of the Mouth*, yet they all come out of the Man, and are the Fruits of that Wickedneſs which is *in the Heart*, and is wrought there, *Pſal*. 58. 2.

1. *Evil Thoughts*, Sins againſt *all* the Commandments, therefore *David* puts vain Thoughts in oppoſition to the whole Law, *Pſal*. 119 113. Theſe are the *Firſt born* of the corrupt Nature, the beginning of its Strength, and do moſt reſemble it. Theſe as the Son and Heir *abide in the Houſe*, and *lodge within us*. There is a great deal of Sin that *begins* and *ends in the Heart*, and goes no further. Carnal Fancies and Imaginations are *evil Thoughts*, Wickedneſs in the Contrivance, Διαλογισμοὶ πονηροὶ, are wicked Plots, Purpoſes, and Devices of Miſchief to others, *Mic*. 2. 1.

2. *Murthers*, Sins againſt the ſixth Commandment. Theſe come from a *Malice* in the Heart againſt our Brother's Life, or a *Contempt* of it. Hence he that hates his Brother, is ſaid to be a *Murtherer*; he is ſo at God's Bar, 1. *John* 3. 15. *War is in the Heart*, Pſal. 55. 21. James 4. 1.

3. *Adulteries and Fornications*, Sins againſt the ſeventh Commandment, thoſe come from the wanton, unclean, carnal Heart, and the Luſts that reign there, is conceiv'd there, and *brings forth* theſe ſins, *James* 1. 15. There is Adultery in the Heart firſt, and then in the Act, *Matt*. 5. 28.

4. *Thefts*, Sins againſt the eighth Commandment, Cheats, Wrongs, Rapins, and all injurous Contracts; the Fountain of theſe is in the Heart, that's it that is *exercis'd in theſe Covetous Practiſes*, 2 Pet. 2. 14. that is ſet upon Riches, *Pſal*. 62. 10. *Achan coveted*, and then *took*, Joſh. 7. 20.

5. *Falſe Witneſs*, againſt the Ninth Commandment; this comes from a Complication of Falſhood and Covetouſneſs, or Falſhood and Malice in the Heart. If Truth, Holineſs, and Love, which God requires in the inward part, reign'd as they ought, there would be no falſe Witneſs-bearing, *Pſal*, 64. 6. *Jer*. 9 8.

6. *Blaſphemies*, ſpeaking Evil of God againſt the Third Commandment ſpeaking Evil of our Neighbour, againſt the Ninth Commandment; theſe come from a Contempt and Diſeſtteem of both in the Heart, thence the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt proceeds, *Matt*. 12. 33, 34. Thoſe are the *Overflowings of the Gall* within.

Now *theſe are the things which defile a Man*, v. 20. *Note*, Sin is defiling to the Soul, renders it unlovely and abominable in the Eyes of the pure and holy God, unfit for Communion with him, and for the enjoyment of him in the New *Jeruſalem*, into which nothing ſhall enter that defileth or worketh Iniquity. The Mind and Conſcience defiled by Sin, and that makes every thing elſe ſo, *Tit*. 1. 15. This Defilement by Sin was ſignified by the Ceremonial Pollutions which the *Jewiſh* Doctors *added to*, but *underſtand not*, ſee *Heb*. 9. 13, 14. 1 *John* 1. 7.

Theſe therefore are the things we muſt carefully avoid, and all approaches towards them, and not lay ſtreſs upon the *waſhing of the Hands*. Chriſt doth not yet repeal the Law of the *diſtinction of Meats*, that was not done till *Act* 10. but the Tradition of the Elders, which was tack'd to that Law; and therefore he concludes *to eat with unwaſhen Hands*, (which was the matter now in variance) *this defileth* not *a Man*. If he waſh he is not the better before God, if he waſh not he is not the worſe.

21 Then Jeſus went thence, and departed into the coaſts of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the ſame coaſts, and cried unto him, ſaying, have Mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievouſly vexed with a devil. 23 But he anſwered her not a word. And his diſciples came and beſought him, ſaying, Send her away, for ſhe crieth after us. 24 But he anſwered and ſaid, I am not ſent, but unto the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. 25 Then came ſhe and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, help me. 26 But he anſwered and ſaid, It is not meet to take the childrens bread and to caſt it to dogs. 27 And ſhe ſaid, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their maſters table. 28 Then Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, O woman great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

We have here that famous Story of *Chriſt's caſting the Devil* out of the *Woman* of *Canaan's Daughter*, it has ſomething in it ſingular, and very ſurprizing, and which looks favourable upon the poor *Gentiles*, and is an Earneſt of that Mercy which Chriſt had in ſtore for them. Here's a Gleam of that Light which was to *lighten the Gentiles*, Luke 2. 32. Chriſt came to *his own and his own received him not*, but many of them quarrel'd with him, and where *offended in him*, and obſerve what follows, *v.* 21.

1. Jeſus *went thence*. *Note*, Juſtly is the Light taken from thoſe that either *play by it*, or *rebel againſt it*. When Chriſt and his Diſciples could not be quiet among them, he left them, and ſo left an Example to his own Rule, *Mat.* 10. 14. *Shake off the Duſt of your Feet.* Tho' Chriſt endure long, he will not always endure the Contradiction of Sinners againſt him. He had ſaid, *v.* 14. *Let them alone*, and he did ſo *Note*, Wilful Prejudices againſt the Goſpel, and Cavils at it, often provoke Chriſt to withdraw, and to *remove the Candleſtick out of his Place*, Acts 13. 45, 51.

2. When he *went thence he departed into the Coaſts of Tyre and Sidon*, not to thoſe Cities, they were excluded from any ſhare in Chriſt's *mighty Works*, Mat. 11. 21, 22 But into that part of the Land of *Iſrael* which lay that way. Thither he went, as *Elias* to *Sarepta, a City of Sidon*, Luke 4. 25. Thither he went to look after this poor Woman, whom he had Mercy in reſerve for. While he went *about doing Good*, he *was never out of his Way*. The dark corners of the Country which lay moſt remote ſhall have their ſhare of his benign Influences; and as now *the ends of the Lands*, ſo afterwards *the ends of the Earth ſhall ſee his Salvation*, Iſa. 49. 6. Here 'twas that this Miracle was wrought, in the Story of which, we may obſerve,

Firſt, The *Addreſs* of the Woman of *Canaan* to Chriſt, *v.* 22. She was a *Gentile*, a ſtranger to the *Common-wealth of Iſrael*; probably, one of the Poſterity of thoſe accurſed Nations, that were *devoted* by that Word, *curſed be Canaan*. *Note*, The Doom of Political Bodies doth not always reach every individual Member of them, God will have his Remnant out of all Nations; *choſen Veſſels* in all Coaſts, even the moſt unlikely. *She came out of the ſame Coaſts.* If Chriſt had not now made a Viſit to theſe Coaſts, tho' the Mercy was worth travelling far for, 'tis probable ſhe had never come to him. *Note*, 'Tis often an Excitement to a dormant Faith and Zeal, to have Opportunities of Acquaintance with Chriſt brought to our Doors, to have *the Word nigh us*.

Her *Addreſs* was very importunate, *ſhe cried* to Chriſt as one in earneſt; *cried*, as being at ſome diſtance from him, not daring to approach too near, being a *Canaanite*, leſt ſhe ſhould give Offence. In her Addreſs

1. She *relates* her Miſery; *My Daughter is grievouſly vexed with a Devil*, κακῶς δαιμονίζεται, ſhe is ill *bewitch'd*, or *poſſeſs'd*; there were degrees of that Miſery, and this was of the worſt ſort. 'Twas a common Caſe at that time, and very calamitous. *Note*, The *Vexations* of Children are the Trouble of Parents, and nothing ſhould be more ſo than their being under the Power of Satan. Tender Parents very ſenſibly feel the Miſeries of thoſe that are *pieces of themſelves*; tho' *vexed with the Devil*, yet ſhe is *my Daughter* ſtill. The greateſt Afflictions of our Relations do not diſſolve our Obligations to them, and therefore ought not to alienate our Affections *from* them. It was the Diſtreſs and Trouble of her Family that now brought her to Chriſt; ſhe came to him, not for *Teaching*, but for *Healing*, yet becauſe ſhe came in Faith he did not reject her. Tho. 'tis Need that *drives us to Chriſt*, yet we ſhould not therefore be *driven from him*. 'Twas the Affliction of her Daughter that gave her this Occaſion of applying to Chriſt. 'Tis good to make others Afflictions our own in Senſe and Sympathy, that we may make them our own in Improvement and Advantage.

2. She *requeſts* for Mercy. *Have Mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David.* In calling him *Lord, the Son of David*, ſhe owns him to be the *Meſſiah*, that's the great thing which Faith ſhould faſten upon, and fetch comfort from. From the Lord we may expect Acts of Power, he can *command* Deliverances; from the *Son of David* we may expect all that Mercy and Grace which was foretold concerning him. Tho' a *Gentile*, ſhe owns the Promiſe made to the Fathers of the *Jews*, and the Honour of the Houſe *of David*. The *Gentiles* muſt receive Chriſtianity, not only as an *Improvement of Natural Religion*; but as the *Perfection of the* Jewiſh *Religion*, with an Eye to the Old Teſtament.

Her Petition is, *Have Mercy on me.* She doth not *limit* Chriſt to this or that particular Inſtance of Mercy, but *Mercy, Mercy* is the thing ſhe begs. She pleads not *Merit*, but depends upon Mercy. *Have Mercy upon me.* Mercies to the Children are Mercies to the Parents, Favours to ours are Favours to us, and are ſo to be accounted. *Note*, It's the Duty of Parents to *Pray* for their Children, and to be *earneſt* in Prayer for them, eſpecially for their Souls. I have a Son, a Daughter grievouſly vexed with a proud Devil, an unclean Devil, a malicious Devil, led captive by him at his Will, Lord, help them. This is a Caſe more deplorable than that of a bodily Poſſeſſion. Bring them to Chriſt by Faith and Prayer, who alone is able to heal them. Parents ſhould look upon it as a great Mercy to themſelves to have Satan's Power broken in the Souls of their Children.

Secondly, The Diſcouragements ſhe met with in this Addreſs. In all the Story of Chriſt's Miniſtry, we do not meet with the like. He was wont to countenance and encourage all that came to him, and either to *anſwer before they call'd*, or to *hear while they were yet ſpeaking*; but here was one otherwiſe treated. And what ſhould be the reaſon of it? (1.) Some think Chriſt ſhew'd himſelf backward to gratify this poor Woman, becauſe he would not give offence to the *Jews*, by being as free and forward in his Favours to the *Gentiles* as to them. He had bid his Diſciples not *go into the way of the Gentiles*, Chap. 10. 5. and therefore would not himſelf ſeem ſo inclinable to them as to others, but rather more ſhy. Or rather, (2.) Chriſt treated her thus to *try her*, he knows what is in the Heart, knew the ſtrength of her Faith, and how well able ſhe was by his Grace to break through ſuch Diſcouragements, and therefore met her with them; that the *Tryal of her Faith might be found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 6, 7. This was like God's tempting *Abraham*, Gen. 22. 1. like the Angels wreſtling with *Jacob*, only to put him upon wreſtling, *Gen* 32. 24. Many of the Methods of Chriſt's Providence, and eſpecially of his Grace in dealing with his People, which are dark and perplexing, may be explain'd with the Key of this Story, which is for that end left upon Record, to teach us that there may be Love in Chriſt's Heart while there are Frowns in his Face, and to encourage us therefore, *tho' he ſlay us*, yet to *truſt in him*. Obſerve the particular Diſcouragements given her.

(1.) When ſhe *cried after him*, he *anſwered her not a word*, v. 23. His Ear was wont to be always open and quiet to the Cries of poor Supplicants, and his Lips which dropt as the Honey-comb, always ready to give an *anſwer of Peace*; but to this poor Woman he turn'd a deaf Ear, and ſhe could get neither an *Alms*, nor an *Anſwer*. It was a wonder ſhe did not fly off in a Fret, and ſay, is this he that is ſo fam'd for Clemency and Tenderneſs? Have ſo many been heard and anſwer'd by him as they talk, and muſt I be the firſt rejected Suitor? Why ſo *ſtiff* to me, if it be true that he hath *ſtoop'd* to ſo many? But Chriſt knew what he did, and therefore did not anſwer, that ſhe might be the more earneſt in Prayer. He heard her, and was *pleas'd* with her, and ſtrengthen'd her with ſtrength in her Soul to proſecute her Requeſt, (*Pſal.* 138. 3. *Job* 23. 6.) tho' he did not immediately give her the Anſwer ſhe expected. By ſeeming to *draw away* the deſired Mercy from her, he *drew her* on to be ſo much the more importunate for it. *Note*, Every *accepted* Prayer is not preſently an *anſwered* Prayer. Sometimes God ſeems not to regard his Peoples Prayers, like a Man aſleep, or aſtoniſhed, *Pſal.* 44. 3. *Jer.* 14. 9. *Pſal.* 22. 1, 2. nay, to be *angry* at them, *Pſal.* 80. 4. *Lam.* 3. 8, 44. But it is to *prove*, and ſo to *improve* their Faith, and to make his after-appearances for them the more *glorious* to himſelf, and the more *welcome* to them, for the Viſion at the end *ſhall ſpeak* and *ſhall not lye*, Hab. 2. 3. See *Job* 35. 14.

(2.) When the Diſciples ſpoke a good word for her, he gave a reaſon why he refus'd her, which was yet more diſcouraging.

(1.) 'Twas ſome little Relief that the Diſciples *interpos'd* on her behalf. They ſaid, *ſend her away, for ſhe crieth after us.* It is deſireable to have an Intereſt in the Prayers of good People, and we ſhould be *deſirous* of it. Yet the Diſciples, tho' wiſhing ſhe might have what ſhe came for, yet therein to conſult rather their own *Eaſe*, than the poor Woman's *Satisfaction*; ſend her away with a Cure, for ſhe *cries*, and is in good earneſt; ſhe *cries after us*, and is *troubleſome* to us, and *ſhames* us. Continued Importunity may be uneaſy to *Men*, even to *good Men*, but Chriſt loves to be *cry'd after*.

(2.) Chriſt's Anſwer to the Diſciples quite daſh'd her Expectations; *I am not ſent but to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael.* You know I am not, ſhe is none of them, and would you have me go beyond my Commiſſion? Importunity ſeldom conquers the *ſettled* Reaſon of a wiſe Man, and thoſe Refuſals are moſt *ſilencing* which are ſo *back'd*. He doth not only not anſwer her, but he *argues* againſt her, and ſtops her Mouth with a Reaſon. 'Tis true ſhe is a *loſt Sheep*, and hath as much need of his Care as any, but ſhe is not of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, (*to whom he was firſt ſent*, Acts 3. ult.) and therefore not immediately *intereſted* in it, and *entitled* to it. Chriſt was a *Miniſter of the Circumciſion*, Rom. 15. 8. And tho' he was intended for a *Light to the Gentiles*, yet the *fulneſs of time* for that was not now come, the Vail was not yet rent, nor the Partition-wall taken down; Chriſt's Perſonal Miniſty was to be *the Glory of his People Iſrael*. And if I am ſent *to them*, what have I to do with thoſe that are none of them? *Note*, It is a great Tryal, when we have occaſion given us to queſtion, whether we be of thoſe to whom Chriſt was ſent. But bleſſed be

God, no room is left for that Doubt; the Diſtinction between *Jew* and *Gentile* is taken away. We are ſure he gave his Life a Ranſom for many, and if for *many* why not for *me*?

3. When ſhe continued her Importunity, he inſiſted upon the Unfitneſs of the thing, and gave her not only a *Repulſe*, but a ſeeming *Reproach* too, *v.* 26. *it is not meet to take the Childrens Bread, and to caſt it unto Dogs.* This ſeems to cut her off from all *Hope*, and might have driven her to *Deſpair*, if ſhe had not had a very *ſtrong* Faith indeed Goſpel Grace, and miraculous Cures (the Appurtenances of it) were *Childrens Bread*; they belong'd to them to whom *pertained the Adoption*, Rom. 9. 4. and lay not upon the ſame level with that *Rain from Heaven*, and thoſe *fruitful Seaſons*, which God gave to the Nations whom he ſuffer'd to *walk in their own Ways*, Acts 14. 16, 17. No, theſe were peculiar Favours appropriated to the peculiar People, the Garden incloſ'd. Chriſt *Preach'd* to the *Samaritans*, John 4. 41. but we read not of any Cures he wrought among them: That *Salvation was of the* Jews; *it is not meet therefore to alienate them.* The *Gentiles* were look'd upon by the *Jews* with great Contempt, were called and counted *Dogs*, and in Compariſon with the Houſe of *Iſrael*, who were ſo dignifi'd and privileg'd, Chriſt here ſeems to *allow* it; and therefore thinks it not meet that the *Gentiles* ſhould ſhare in the Favours beſtow'd on the *Jews*. But ſee how the Tables are turn'd; after the bringing the *Gentiles* into the Church, the *Jewiſh* Zealots for the Law, are call'd *Dogs*, Phil. 3. 2.

Now this Chriſt urgeth againſt this Woman of *Canaan*. How could ſhe expect to eat of the Children's Bread, who was not of the Family? *Note*, 1. Thoſe whom Chriſt intends moſt ſignally to *honour*, he firſt humbles and lays low, in a Senſe of their own Meanneſs and Unworthineſs. We muſt firſt ſee our ſelves to be as *Dogs*, *leſs than the leaſt of all God's Mercies*, before we are fit to be dignified and privilledged with them. (2.) Chriſt delights to exerciſe great Faith with great Trials, and ſometimes reſerves the ſharpeſt for the laſt, that *being tried we may come forth like Gold*. This general Rule is applicable to other Caſes for *Direction*, though here us'd only for *Trial*. Special Ordinances and Church Privileges are Children's Bread, and muſt not be proſtituted to the groſly ignorant and profane. Common Charity muſt be extended to all, but ſpiritual Dignities are appropriated to the Houſhold of Faith, and therefore promiſcuous Admiſſion to them, without Diſtinction, waſtes the Children's Bread, and is the *giving of that which is holy to the Dogs*, Mat. 7. 6. *Procul hinc, procul inde profani.*

Thirdly, Here's the Strength of her Faith and Reſolution, in breaking thro' all theſe Diſcouragements. Many a one thus tried, would either have ſunk down into *Silence*, or broke out into a *Paſſion*. Here's cold Comfort, might ſhe have ſaid, for a poor diſtreſſed Creature; As good for me have ſtaid at Home, as come hither to be *taunted* and abus'd at this rate; not only to have a piteous Caſe ſlighted, but to be call'd *a Dog*. A proud unhumbled Heart would not have born it. The *Reputation of the Houſe of* Iſrael was not now ſo *great* in the World, but that this Slight put upon the *Gentiles* was capable of being *retorted*, had the poor Woman been ſo minded. It might have occaſion'd a Reflection upon Chriſt, and might have been a Blemiſh upon his Reputation, as well as a Shock to the good Opinion ſhe had entertain'd of him; for we are apt to judge of Perſons, as we our ſelves find them, and think that they are, what they are to us. *Is this the Son of David?* might ſhe have ſaid; is this he that has ſuch a Reputation for Kindneſs, and Tenderneſs, and Compaſſion? I'm ſure, I have no Reaſon to give him that Character, for I was never treated ſo roughly in my Life; he might have done as much for me, as for others: Or if not, he need not to have *ſet me with the Dogs of his Flock.* I am not a Dog, I am a Woman, and an honeſt Woman, and a Woman in Miſery; and I am ſure, *it is not meet to call me Dog*. No, here is not a Word of this. *Note*, A humble believing Soul that truly *loves* Chriſt, *takes* every thing in *good part*, that *he ſaith* and doth, and puts the beſt Conſtruction upon it.

She breaks thro' all theſe Diſcouragements.

1. With a holy *Earneſtneſs of Deſire* in proſecuting her Petition. This appear'd upon the former Repulſe, *v.* 25. *Then came ſhe and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord help me.* (1.) She continued to pray. What Chriſt ſaid ſilenc'd the Diſciples, you hear no more of them, they *took* the Anſwer, but the Woman *did not*. *Note*, The more *ſenſible* we feel the Burthen, the more *reſolutely* we ſhould pray for the Removal of it. And it is the Will of God, that we ſhould *continue inſtant in Prayer*, ſhould always pray, and not faint. (2.) She *improved* in Prayer. Inſtead of *blaming* Chriſt, or *charging him* with Unkindneſs, ſhe ſeems rather to ſuſpect *her ſelf*, and lay the Fault upon her ſelf. She fears, leſt in her firſt Addreſs ſhe had not been *humble* and *reverent* enough, and therefore now ſhe *came and worſhipped him*, and paid him more reſpect than ſhe had done; or, that ſhe had not been *earneſt* enough, and therefore now ſhe *cries*, *Lord help me*. *Note*, When the *Anſwers* of Prayers are *defer'd*, God is thereby teaching us to pray *more* and pray *better*. 'Tis then time to enquire wherein we have come ſhort in our former Prayers, that what has been amiſs may be amended for the future. Diſappointments in the Succeſs of Prayer muſt be Excitements to the Duty of Prayer. Chriſt in his Agony *pray'd more earneſtly*.

(3.) She waves the Queſtion, whether ſhe was of thoſe to whom Chriſt was ſent, or no; ſhe will not argue that with him, though perhaps ſhe might have *claimed* ſome Kindred to the *Houſe of Iſrael*; but whether an *Iſraelite*, or no, I come to the Son of *David* for Mercy, and I will not let him go, except he *bleſs me*. Many weak Chriſtians perplex themſelves with Queſtions and Doubts about their Election, whether they are of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, or no, ſuch had better *mind* their Errand to God, and continue inſtant in Prayer for Mercy and Grace, throw themſelves by Faith at the Feet of Chriſt, and ſay, *If I periſh, I will periſh here*; and then that Matter will by degrees *clear it ſelf*. If we cannot *reaſon down our Unbelief*, let us *pray it down*. A fervent Affectionate *Lord help me*, will help us over many of the Diſcouragements which are ſometimes ready to *bear us down*, and overwelm us.

(4.) Her Prayer is very ſhort, but comprehenſive, and fervent; *Lord help me*. Take this (1.) as lamenting her Caſe. If the Meſſiah be ſent only to the Houſe of *Iſrael*, the *Lord help me*, what will become of me, and mine. *Note*, It is not in vain for broken Hearts to *bemoan themſelves*; God *looks upon them* then, *Jer.* 31. 18. Or (2.) As begging Grace to aſſiſt her in this Hour of Temptation. She found it hard to keep up her Faith, when it was *thus frowned upon*, and therefore prays, *Lord help me*, Lord, ſtrengthen my Faith now; Lord, *let thy right Hand uphold me*, while my Soul is *following hard after thee*, Pſal. 63. 8. Or, (3.) As enforcing her original Requeſt. *Lord, help me*, i. e. Lord, give me what I come for. She believed that Chriſt could and would help her, though ſhe was not of the *Houſe of Iſrael*; elſe ſhe would have dropt her Petition. Still ſhe keeps up good Thoughts of Chriſt, and will not quit her Hold. *Lord, help me*, is a good Prayer, if well put up, and it's Pity it ſhould be turned into a By-word, and that we ſhould *take God's Name in vain* in it.

2. With a holy *Skilfulneſs of Faith*, ſuggeſting a very ſurprizing Plea. Chriſt had placed the *Jews* with the Children, as Olive-plants round about God's Table, and had put the *Gentiles* with the *Dogs*, under the Table; and ſhe doth not deny the Aptneſs of the Similitude. *Note*, There is nothing got by *contradicting* any Word of Chriſt, though it bear never ſo hard upon us. But this poor Woman, ſince ſhe cannot object againſt it, reſolves to make the beſt of it, *v.* 27. *Truth Lord, yet the Dogs eat of the Crumbs.* Now here,

1. Her *Acknowledgment* was very *humble*, *Truth Lord*. *Note*, You cannot ſpeak ſo *meanly and ſlightly* of a humble Believer, but he is ready to ſpeak as *meanly* and *ſlightly of himſelf*. Some that ſeem to *diſpraiſe* and *diſparage* themſelves, will yet take it as an Affront, if others do ſo too; but one that is humbled aright, will ſubſcribe to the moſt *abaſing* Challenges, and not call them *abuſing* ones. *Truth Lord*, I cannot deny it; I am *a Dog*, and have no Right to the *Childrens Bread*. *David*, Thou haſt *done fooliſhly, very fooliſhly*; *Truth Lord*. *Aſaph*, Thou *haſt been as a Beaſt before God*. *Agur*, Thou *art more brutiſh than any Man*; *Truth Lord*. *Paul*, Thou *haſt been the* chief *of Sinners, art leſs than the leaſt of Saints, not meet to be call'd an Apoſtle*; *Truth Lord*.

2. Her *improvement* of this into a *Plea* was very *Ingenious*. *Yet the Dogs eat of the Crumbs.* 'Twas by a ſingular *Acumen*, and ſpiritual Quickneſs and Sagacity, that ſhe diſcern'd Matter of *Argument* in that which look'd like a Slight. *Note*, A lively active Faith will make that to be *for us*, which ſeems to be *againſt us*; will fetch *Meat* out of the *Eater*, and *Sweetneſs* out of the *ſtrong*. Unbelief is apt to miſtake Recruits for Enemies, and to draw *diſmal* Concluſions even from comfortable Promiſes, (*Jud.* 13. 22, 23.) but Faith can find Encouragement even in that which is *diſcouraging*, and get nearer to God by taking hold on that Hand, which is ſtretch'd out to puſh it away. So good a thing is it to be of *quick Underſtanding in the Fear of the Lord*, Iſa. 11. 3.

Her Plea is, *Yet the Dogs eat of the Crumbs.* 'Tis true, the full and regular Proviſion is intended for the Children only, but the ſmall caſual neglected Crumbs are allow'd to the *Dogs*, and are not grudg'd them; that is, to the *Dogs under the Table* that attend there expecting them. We poor *Gentiles* cannot expect the ſtated *Miniſtry* and *Miracles* of the Son of *David*, that belongs to the *Jews*; but they begin now to be weary of their Meat, and to play with it, they find Fault with it, and crumble it away: Surely then ſome of the broken Meat may fall to a poor *Gentile*. I beg a Cure by the by, which is but as a Crumb, though of the ſame precious Bread, yet but a ſmall inconſiderable *Piece*, compar'd with the Loaves which they have. *Note*, When we are ready to ſurfeit on the Childrens Bread, we ſhould remember how many there are that would be glad of the Crumbs. Our broken Meat in ſpiritual Privileges would be a Feaſt to many a Soul, as *Acts* 13. 42. Obſerve here,

1. Her Humility and Neceſſity made her glad of *Crumbs*. Thoſe who are conſcious to themſelves that they deſerve nothing, will be thankful for any thing. And then we are prepar'd for the greateſt of God's Mercies, when we ſee ourſelves *leſs than the leaſt of them*. The *leaſt* of Chriſt is precious to a Believer, and the very Crumbs of the Bread of Life.

2. Her Faith encourageth her to expect theſe Crumbs. Why ſhould it not be at Chriſt's Table, as at a great Man's, where the Dogs are fed as ſure as the Children. Obſerve, ſhe calls it *their Maſter's Table*: If ſhe were a Dog, ſhe was *his* Dog, and it cannot be ill with us, if we ſtand but in the meaneſt Relation to Chriſt. Though unworthy to be called Children, yet *make me as one of the hired Servants*; nay, rather let me be ſet with the Dogs, than turn'd out of the Houſe, for in my Father's Houſe there is not only *Bread enough*, but to *ſpare*, Luke 15. 17, 19. It's good lying in God's Houſe, tho' we lye at the Threſhold there.

Fourthly, The happy Iſſue and Succeſs of all this. She came off with Credit and Comfort from this Struggle, and tho' a *Canaanite*, approv'd herſelf a true Daughter of *Iſrael*, who *like a Prince had Power with God, and prevail'd*. Hitherto Chriſt hid his Face from her, but now *gathers her with everlaſting Kindneſs* v. 27. *Then Jeſus ſaid, O Woman, great is thy Faith.* This was like *Joſeph*'s making himſelf known to his Brethren, *I am Joſeph*, ſo here in effect, *I am Jeſus.* Now he begins to ſpeak like himſelf, and put on his own Countenance. He will not contend for ever.

1. He *commended* her Faith. *O Woman, great is thy Faith.* Obſerve (1.) 'Tis her *Faith* that he commends. There were ſeveral other Graces that ſhone bright in her Conduct of this Affair, Wiſdom, Humility, Meekneſs, Patience, Perſeverance in Prayer, but theſe were the Product of her Faith, and therefore Chriſt faſtens upon that as moſt commendable. Becauſe of all Graces Faith honours Chriſt moſt, therefore of all Graces Chriſt honours Faith moſt.

(1.) 'Tis the Greatneſs of her Faith. *Note*, 1. Though the Faith of all the Saints be alike precious, yet it is not in all alike ſtrong. All Believers are not of the ſame Size and Stature. 2. The greatneſs of Faith conſiſts much in a reſolute Adherence to Jeſus Chriſt, as an all-ſufficient Saviour, even in the Face of Diſcouragements; to *love* him and *truſt* him, as a Friend, even then when he ſeems to come forth againſt us as an Enemy. This is great Faith. 3. Tho' weak Faith, if true, ſhall not be rejected, yet great Faith ſhall be commended; and ſhall appear greatly well-pleaſing to Chriſt; for in them that thus believe, he is moſt *admir'd.* Thus Chriſt commended the Faith of the Centurion, and he was a *Gentile* too: He had a ſtrong Faith in the Power of Chriſt; this Woman in the Good-will of Chriſt. Both were acceptable.

2. He *cur'd* her Daughter. *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* I can deny thee nothing, take what thou cameſt for. *Note*, Great Believers may have what they will for the asking. When our Will conforms to the Will of Chriſt's Precept, his will concur with the Will of our Deſire. Thoſe that will deny Chriſt nothing, ſhall find he will deny them nothing at laſt, tho' for a time he ſeem to hide his Face from them. Thou wouldſt have thy Sins pardon'd, thy Corruptions mortified, thy Nature ſanctified, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.* And what canſt thou deſire more? When we come as this poor Woman did, to pray againſt *Satan*, and his Kingdom, we concur with the Interceſſion of Chriſt, and it ſhall be accordingly. Tho' Satan may *ſift Peter*, and *buffet Paul*, yet thro' Chriſt's Prayer and the Sufficiency of his Grace, we ſhall be more than Conquerors, *Luke* 22. 31, 32. 2 *Cor.* 12. 7, 9. *Rom.* 16. 20.

The Event was anſwerable to the Word of Chriſt. *Her Daughter was made whole from that very Hour*: from thence forward was never *vexed with the Devil* any more. The Mother's Faith prevail'd for the Daughter's Cure. Though the Patient was at Diſtance, that was no Hindrance to the Efficacy of Chriſt's Word. *He ſpake and it was done.*

29 And Jeſus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the ſea of Galilee, and went up into a mountain, and ſat down there. 30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them thoſe that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and caſt them down at Jeſus feet, and he healed them. 31 Inſomuch that the multitude wondered, when they ſaw the dumb to ſpeak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to ſee: and they glorified the God of Iſrael. 32 Then Jeſus called his diſciples unto him, and ſaid, I have compaſſion on the multitude, becauſe they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not ſend them away faſting, leſt they faint in the way. 33 And his diſciples ſay unto him, Whence ſhould we have ſo much bread in the wilderneſs, as to fill ſo great a multitued? 34 And Jeſus ſaith unto them, How many Loves have ye? and they ſaid, Seven, and a few little fiſhes. 35 And he commanded the multitude to ſit down on the ground. 36 And he took the ſeven loaves and the fiſhes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his diſciples, and the diſciples to the multitude. 37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left, ſeven baſkets full. 38 And they that did eat, were four thouſand men, beſide women and children. 39 And he ſent away the multitude, and took ſhip, and came into the coaſts of Magdala.

Here's 1. A general Account of Chriſt's Cures; his curing by Wholeſale. The Tokens of Chriſt's Power and Goodneſs are neither *ſcarce*, nor *ſcanty*; for there is in him an overflowing Fulneſs. Now obſerve,

1. The Place were theſe Cures were wrought. 'Twas *near the Sea of Galilee*, a Part of the Country Chriſt was pretty much converſant with. We read not of any thing he did in the Coaſts of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, but the caſting of the Devil out of the Woman of *Canaan*'s Daughter, as if he took that Journey on Purpoſe, with that in Proſpect. Let not Miniſters grudge their Pains to do good tho' but to few. He that knows the Worth of Souls, would go a great way to help to ſave one from Death, and Satan's Power.

But Jeſus *departed thence*, having let fall that Crumb under the Table, he here returns to make a full Feaſt for the Children. We may do that occaſionally for one, which we may not make a conſtant Practice of. Chriſt ſteps into the Coaſts of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, but he *ſits down* by the Sea of *Galilee*, v. 29. ſits down, not on a ſtately Throne or Tribunal of Judgment, but *on a Mountain.* So mean and homely were his moſt ſolemn Appearances in the Days of his Fleſh. He ſate down *on a Mountain*, that all might ſee him, and have free Acceſs to him; for he is an *open* Saviour. He *ſate down* there, as one tir'd with his Journey, and willing to have a little Reſt; or rather, as one waiting to be gracious. He ſate expecting Patients, as *Abraham* at his Tent-door, ready to entertain Strangers. He ſettled himſelf to this good Work.

2. The Multitudes and Maladies that were healed by him, v. 30. *Great Multitudes came to him*, that the Scripture might be fulfill'd, *unto him ſhall the gathering of the People be*, Gen. 49. 10. If Chriſt's Miniſters could cure bodily Diſeaſes as Chriſt did, there would be more flocking to them than there is. But bodily Pain and Sickneſs is a thing we are ſoon ſenſible of, but few are concern'd about their Souls, and their ſpiritual Diſeaſes.

Now (1.) Such was the *Goodneſs* of Chriſt, that he *admitted* all Sorts of People. The Poor as well as the Rich are welcome to Chriſt, and with him there's room enough for all Comers. He never complain'd of Crouds or Throngs of Seekers, or look'd with Contempt upon the *Vulgar*, the *Herd*, as they are called; for the Souls of Peaſants are as precious with him as the Souls of Princes.

(2.) Such was the *Power* of Chriſt, that he *healed* all ſorts of Diſeaſes. Thoſe that came to him brought their ſick Relations and Friends along with them, and *caſt them down at Jeſus Feet*, v. 30. We read not of any thing they ſaid to him, but they laid them down before him, as Objects of Pity, to be *look'd upon* by him. Their Calamities ſpoke more for them than the Tongue of the moſt eloquent Orator could. *David ſhew'd before God his Trouble*, that was enough, he then left it with him, *Pſal.* 142. 2. Whatever our Caſe is, the only way to find Eaſe and Relief, is to *lay it at Chriſt's Feet, to ſpread* it before him, and refer it to his *Cognizance*, and then *ſubmit* it to him, and refer it to his *Diſpoſe.* Thoſe that would have ſpiritual Healing from Chriſt, muſt *lay themſelves at his Feet*, to be *ruled* and *ordered* as he pleaſeth.

Here were *Lame, Blind, Dumb, Maimed, and many others* brought to Chriſt; ſee what Work *Sin has made*, it has turned the World into an Hoſpital; what various Diſeaſes are human Bodies ſubject to; ſee what work the Saviour makes, he conquers thoſe Hoſts of Enemies to Mankind. Here were ſuch Diſeaſes as a Flame of Fancy could contribute neither to the Cauſe of nor to the Cure of, as lying not in the *Humours*, but in the *Members* of the Body, and yet theſe were ſubject to the Commands of Chriſt; *he ſent his Word and healed them. Note*, All Diſeaſes are at the Command of Chriſt, to go and come as he bids them. This is an Inſtance of Chriſt's *Power*, which may comfort us in all our *Weakneſſes*, and of his *Pity*, which may comfort us in all our *Miſeries.*

3. The Influence that this had upon the People, *v.* 31.

1. They *wonder'd*; and well they might. Chriſt's Works ſhould be our Wonder. 'Tis the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous, *Pſal.* 118. 23. The ſpiritual Cures that Chriſt works are wonderful. When *blind* Souls are made to *ſee* by Faith, the *Dumb* to ſpeak in Prayer, the *Lame* to walk in holy Obedience, 'tis to be *wonder'd at.* Sing unto the Lord a new Song, for thus he has *done marvellous things.*

2. They *glorified the God of Iſrael*, whom the *Phariſees*, when they ſaw theſe things, blaſphemed. *Miracles*, which are the Matter of our *Wonder*, muſt be the Matter of our *Praiſe*; and *Mercies*, which are the Matter of our *Rejoycing*, muſt be the Matter of our *Thankſgiving.* Thoſe that were *healed* glorified God; if he *heal our Diſeaſes*, all that is *within us* muſt *bleſs his holy Name*; and if we have been graciouſly *preſerved* from Blindneſs, and Lameneſs, and Dumbneſs, we have as much reaſon to bleſs God as if we had been cur'd of them, Nay, and the Standers-by glorified God. *Note*, God muſt be acknowledg'd with Praiſe and Thankfulneſs in others Mercies as in our own. They glorified him as the *God of Iſrael*, his Church's God, a God in Covenant with his People, who hath ſent the *Meſſiah* promiſed, and this he; ſee *Luke* 1. 68. *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael.* This was done by the Power of the God of *Iſrael*, and no other could do it.

2. Here's a particular Account of his feeding four thouſand Men with *ſeven Loaves* and a *few little Fiſhes*, as he had lately fed *five thouſand with five Loaves.* The Gueſts indeed were now not quite ſo many as then, and the Proviſion a little more, which does not intimate that Chriſt's Arm was ſhortned, but that he wrought his Miracles as the *Occaſion* requir'd, and not for Oſtentation, and therefore he ſuited them to the Occaſion. Both then and now he took as many as were to be *fed*, and made uſe of all that was at hand to feed them with. When once the utmoſt Powers of Nature are exceeded, we muſt ſay, *This is the Finger of God*, and it is neither here nor there how far they are *out-done*; ſo that this is no leſs a Miracle than the former.

Here's 1. Chriſt's Pity, *v.* 32. *I have Compaſſion on the Multitude.* He tells his Diſciples this, both to *try* and *excite* their Compaſſion. When he was about to work this Miracle he call'd them to him, and made them acquainted with his Purpoſe, and diſcourſed them about it, not becauſe he needed their Advice, but becauſe he would give an Inſtance of his condeſcending Love to them. He *call'd them not Servants,*

vants, for *the Servant knows not what his Lord doth*, but treated them as his *Right-truſty and well-beloved Couſins and Counſellors. Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?* Gen. 18. 17. In what he ſaid to them obſerve,

1. The *Caſe of the Multitude.* They *continue with me now three Days, and have nothing to eat* This is an Inſtance of their Zeal, and the Strength of their Affection to Chriſt and his Word, that they not only left their Callings to attend upon him on Week-days, but underwent a deal of Hardſhip to continue with him, they wanted their natural Reſt, and for ought appear'd lay like Soldiers in the Field, they wanted neceſſary Food, and had ſcarce enough to keep Life and Soul together. In thoſe hotter Countries they could better bear long faſting than we can in theſe colder Climates, but however it could not but be grievous to the Body, and might endanger their Health, yet the Zeal of God's Houſe thus *eat them up*, and they eſteem'd the Words of Chriſt more than their *neceſſary Food*. We think three Hours too much to attend upon publick Ordinances, but theſe People ſtaid together *three Days*, and yet ſnuffed not at it, nor ſaid, *Behold, what a Wearineſs is it!* Obſerve with what Tenderneſs Chriſt ſpoke of it, *I have Compaſſion on them.* It had become them *to have Compaſſion on him*, who took ſo much Pains with them for three Days together, and was ſo indefatigable in teaching and healing; ſo much Virtue had gone out of him, and yet for ought appears he was faſting too, but he prevented them with his Compaſſion. *Note*, Our Lord Jeſus keeps an Account how long his Followers continue their Attendance on him, and takes notice of the Difficulty they ſuſtain in it, *Rev.* 2. 2. *I know thy Works, and thy Labour, and thy Patience*, and it ſhall in no wiſe loſe its Reward.

Now the Exigence the People were reduc'd to ſerves to magnify (1.) The *Mercy* of their *Supply*; he fed them when they wery *hungry*, and then Food was doubly welcome; he treated them as he did *Iſrael* of old, *he ſuffer'd them to hunger*, and then *fed them*, Deut. 8. 3. for that's ſweet to the hungry Soul, which *the full Soul loaths.* (2.) The *Miracle* of their Supply. Having been ſo long *faſting*, their Appetites were the more craving; if two hungry Meals make the third a Glutton, what would three hungry Days do? and yet *they did all eat, and were filled. Note*, There is Mercy and Grace enough with Chriſt to give the moſt earneſt and enlarg'd Deſire an abundant Satisfaction. *Open thy Mouth wide and I will fill it.* He *repleniſheth even the hungry Soul.*

2. The *Care* of our Maſter concerning them. *I will not ſend them away faſting, leſt they ſhould faint by the Way*, which would be a Diſcredit to Chriſt and his Family, and a Diſcouragement both to them and to others. *Note*, It is the Unhappineſs of our preſent State, that when our Souls are in ſome meaſure elevated and enlarg'd, yet our Bodies cannot keep pace with them in good Duties The *Weakneſs* of the Fleſh is a great Grievance to the *Willingneſs* of the Spirit; 'twill not be ſo in Heaven, where the Body ſhall be made *ſpiritual*, where they reſt not Day or Night from praiſing God, and yet *faint not*, where they *hunger no more, nor thirſt any more*, Rev. 7. 16.

2. Chriſt's Power. His Pity of their Wants ſets his Power on work for their Supply. Now obſerve,

1. How his Power was *dſtiruſted* by his Diſciples, *v.* 33. *Whence ſhould we have ſo much Bread in the Wilderneſs?* A proper Queſtion one would think, like that of *Moſes*, Numb. 11. 22. *Shall the Flocks and the Herds be ſlain to ſuffice them?* But it was here an improper Queſtion, conſidering not only the general Aſſurance the Diſciples had of the Power of Chriſt, but the particular Experience they lately had of a ſeaſonable and ſufficient Proviſion by Miracle in a like Caſe. They had been not only the *Witneſſes*, but the *Miniſters* of the former Miracle, the multiplied Bread went thro' their Hands; ſo that it was an Inſtance of great Weakneſs for them to ask, *Whence ſhall we have Bread?* Could they be to ſeek while they had their Maſter with them? *Note*, Forgetting former Experiences leaves us under preſent Doubts.

Chriſt knew how ſlender the Proviſion was, but he would know it from them, *v.* 34. *How many Loaves have ye?* Before he would work he would have it ſeen how little he had to work on, that his Power might ſhine the brighter. What they had they had *for themſelves*, and it was little enough for their own Family, but Chriſt would have them beſtow it all upon the Multitude, and truſt Providence for more. *Note*, It becomes Chriſt's Diſciples to be generous, their Maſter was ſo; what we have we ſhould be free of, as there is Occaſion; given to Hoſpitality. Not like *Nabal*, 1 Sam. 25. 11. but like *Eliſha*, 2 Kings 4. 42. Niggardlineſs to-day, out of Thoughtfulneſs for to-morrow, is a Complication of corrupt Affections that ought to be mortified. If we be prudently kind and charitable with what we have, we may piouſly hope that God will ſend more. *Jehovah jireh, the Lord will provide.* The Diſciples aſk'd, *Whence ſhould we have Bread?* Chriſt aſk'd, *How many Loaves have ye? Note*, When we cannot have what we *would* we muſt make the beſt of what we *have*, and do good with it as far as it will go. We muſt not think ſo much of our *Wants* as of our *Havings.* Chriſt herein went according to the Rule he gave to *Martha*, not to be *troubled about many things*, nor *cumber'd about much Serving.* Nature is content with *little*, Grace with *leſs*, but Luſt with *nothing*.

2. How his Power was *diſcover'd* to the Multitude in the plentiful Proviſion he made for them, the Manner of which is much the ſame as before, *Chap.* 14. 18, *&c.* Obſerve here,

1. The *Proviſion* that was at hand, *ſeven Loaves, and a few little Fiſhes.* The *Fiſh* not proportionable to the Bread, for Bread is the Staff of Life. 'Tis likely the Fiſh was ſuch as they had themſelves taken, for they were Fiſhers, and were now near the Sea, *Note*, It is comfortable *eating the Labour of our Hands*, Pſal. 128. 2. and enjoying that which is any way the Product of our own Induſtry, *Prov.* 12. 27. And what we have got by God's Bleſſing on our Labour we ſhould be free of, for therefore we muſt labour *that we may have to give*, Eph. 4. 28.

2. The putting of the People in a Poſture to receive it, *v.* 35. *He commanded the Multitude to ſit down on the Ground* They ſaw but very little Proviſion, yet they muſt ſit down, in Faith that they ſhould have a Meals Meat out of it. They who would have ſpiritual Food from Chriſt, muſt *ſit down* at his Feet to hear his Word, and expect it to come in an unſeen way.

3. The diſtributing of the Proviſion among them. He firſt *gave Thanks*, ἐυχαεισήσας. The Word us'd in the former Miracle was ἐυλόγησε, he *bleſſed.* It comes all to one; *Giving Thanks to God* is a proper Way of craving a *Bleſſing* from God. And when we come to ask and receive further Mercy, we ought to give *Thanks* for the Mercies we have receiv'd. He then *brake the Loaves* (for it was in the breaking that the Bread multiplied) and *gave to his Diſciples, and they to the Multitude.* Though the Diſciples had diſtruſted Chriſt's Power, yet he made uſe of them now as before; he is not provok'd, as he might be, by the Weakneſſes, and Infirmities of his Miniſters, to lay them aſide; but ſtill he gives to them, and they to his People of the *Word of Life.*

4. The Plenty there was among them, *v.* 37. *They did all eat, and were fill'd. Note*, Thoſe whom Chriſt *feeds* he *fills.* While we labour for the World, we labour for that which ſatisfieth not, *Iſa.* 55. 2. but thoſe that duly wait on Chriſt, ſhall be *abundantly ſatisfied with the Goodneſs of his Houſe*, Pſal. 65. 4. Chriſt thus fed People once and again to intimate, that though he was call'd *Jeſus of Nazareth*, yet he was of *Bethlehem, the Houſe of Bread*; or rather, that he was himſelf the *Bread of Life.*

To ſhew that they had all enough, there was a graet deal left; *Seven Baſkets full of broken Meat*; and not ſo much as there was before, becauſe they did not gather after ſo many Eaters, but enough to ſhew, that with Chriſt there is *Bread enough and to ſpare*; Supplies of Grace for more than ſeek it, and for thoſe that ſeek more.

5. The Account taken of the Gueſts, not that they might pay their Ordinary; here was no Reckoning to be diſcharged, they were fed *gratis*, but that they might be Witneſſes to the Power and Goodneſs of Chriſt; and that this might be ſome Reſemblance of that univerſal Providence that gives *Food to all Fleſh*, Pſal. 136. 25 Here were Four Thouſand Men fed, but what were they to that great Family, which is provided for by the divine Care every Day? God is a great Houſe-keeper, on whom *the Eyes of all the Creatures* wait, and he *giveth them their Food in due Seaſon*, Pſal. 104 27 — 145. 15.

Laſtly, The Diſmiſſion of the Multitude, and Chriſt's Departure to another Place, *v.* 39. He *ſent away* the People. Though he had fed them twice, they muſt not expect Miracles to be their daily Bread. Let them now go home to their Callings, and to *their own Tables.* And he himſelf departed by Ship to another Place; for being the *Light of the World*, he muſt be ſtill in *Motion*, and go *about to do good.*

CHAP. XVI.

None of Chriſt's Miracles are recorded in this Chapter, but Four of his Diſcourſes. Here's (1.) A Conference with the Phariſees, *who challenged him to ſhew them a Sign from Heaven*, v. 1.—4. *(2.) Another with his Diſciples about the Leaven of the* Phariſees, *v.* 5.—12. *(3.) Another with them concerning himſelf, as the* Chriſt, *and concerning his Church built upon him.* v. 13.—20. *(4.) Another concerning his Sufferings for them, and theirs for him*, v. 21—28. *And all theſe are written for our Learning.*

THE Phariſees alſo with the Sadducees, came, and tempting, deſir'd him that he would ſhew them a ſign from Heaven. 2 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, When it is evening, ye ſay, *It will be* fair weather: for the skie is red. 3 And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather to day: for the skie is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the skie, but can ye not *diſcern* the ſigns of the times? 4 A wicked and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given unto it, but the ſign of the Prophet Jonas. And he left them and departed

We have here Chriſt's Diſcourſe with the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees*, Men at Variance among themſelves, as appears, *Acts* 23. 7, 8. and yet unanimous in their Oppoſition to Chriſt; becauſe his Doctrine did equally overthrow the Errors and Hereſies of the *Sadducees*, who denied the Exiſtence of Spirits, and a future State; and the Pride, Tyranny, and Hypocriſy of the *Phariſees*, who were the great Impoſers of the Traditions of the Elders. Chriſt and Chriſtianity meet with Oppoſition on all hands. Obſerve,

Firſt, Their *Demand*, and the *Deſign* of it.

The *Demand* was of a *Sign from Heaven*, this they *deſired* him to ſhew them; pretending they were very willing to be ſatisfied and convinc'd, when really they were far from being ſo, but ſought Excuſes for an obſtinate Infidelity. That which they pretended to deſire was,

(1.) Some *other Sign* than what they had yet had. They had great plenty of Signs, every Miracle Chriſt wrought was a Sign; for *no Man cou'd do what he did unleſs God were with him:* But this will not ſerve, they muſt have a Sign of their own chuſing; they deſpis'd thoſe Signs which reliev'd the Neceſſity of the Sick and Sorrowful, and inſiſted upon ſome Sign which would gratify the Curioſity of the Proud. 'Twas fit the Proofs of divine Revelation ſhould be choſen by the Wiſdom of God, not by the Follies and Fancies of Men. The Evidence that is given, is ſufficient to ſatisfy an unprejudiced Underſtanding, but was not intended to pleaſe a vain Humour. And it is an Inſtance of the deceitfulneſs of the Heart, to think that we ſhould be wrought upon by the Means and Advantages which we have not, while we ſlight thoſe we have. *If we hear not* Moſes *and the Prophets*, neither would we be wrought upon, *tho' one roſe from the Dead.*

(2.) It muſt be a Sign *from Heaven.* They would have ſuch Miracles to prove his Commiſſion as were wrought at the giving of the Law upon *Mount Sinai, Thunder and Lightning, and the Voice of Words* were the *Sign from Heaven* they requir'd. Whereas the ſenſible Signs, and terrible ones were not agreeable to the ſpiritual and comfortable Diſpenſation of the Goſpel. Now the Word comes more *nigh us*, Rom. 10. 8. and therefore the Miracles do ſo, and do not oblige us to keep ſuch a diſtance as theſe did, *Heb.* 12. 18.

2. The Deſign was to *tempt him*, not to be taught by him, but to enſnare him. If he ſhould ſhew them a Sign *from Heauen*, they would attribute it to a Confederacy with the *Prince of the Power of the Air*: If he ſhould not, as they ſuppos'd he would not, they would have that to ſay for themſelves, *why they did not believe on him.* They now *tempted Chriſt* as *Iſrael* did, 1 Cor. 11. 9. And obſerve their Perverſeneſs; then when they have had *Signs from Heaven*, they tempted Chriſt, ſaying, *Can he furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs?* Now he had *furniſh'd a Table in the Wilderneſs*, they tempted him, ſaying, *Can he give us a Sign from Heaven?*

Secondly, Chriſt's Reply to this Demand; leſt they ſhould be *wiſe in their own Conceit*, he *anſwer'd theſe Fools according to their Folly*, Prov. 26. 5. In his Anſwer,

1. He condemns their Inadvertency of the Signs they had, *v.* 2, 3. They were ſeeking for the *Signs* of the Kingdom of God, when it was already *among them.* The Lord was *in this place*, and they *knew it not.* Thus their unbelieving Anceſtors, when Miracles were their daily Bread, yet aſked, *Is the Lord among us, or is he not?*

To expoſe this, he obſerves to them,

(1.) Their Skilfulneſs and Sagacity in other things, particularly in natural Prognoſtications of the Weather, you know that a *red Sky* over Night is a Preſage of fair Weather, and a *red Sky* in the Morning of *foul Weather.* There are common Rules drawn from Obſervation and Experience, by which it is eaſy to foretel very probably what Weather it will be. When ſecond Cauſes have begun to work, we may eaſily gueſs at their Iſſue, ſo uniform is Nature in its Motions, and ſo inconſiſtent with it ſelf, We *know not the ballancings of the Clouds*, Job 37. 16. but we may ſpell ſomething from the Faces of them. This gives no countenance at all to the wild and ridiculous Predictions of the *Aſtrologers, the Star-gazer, and the Monthly Prognoſticators*, (Iſa. 47. 13.) concerning the Weather, long before, with which weak and fooliſh People are impos'd upon; we are ſure in general that *Seed-time, and Harveſt, Cold, and Heat, Summer, and Winter, ſhall not ceaſe.* But as to the Particulars, till by the Weather-Glaſſes, or otherwiſe we perceive the immediate Signs and Harbingers of the Change of Weather: It is not for us to know, no, not that concerning the Time and Seaſons. Let it ſuffice, that it ſhould be what Weather *pleaſeth God*, and that which *pleaſeth God* ſhould not *diſpleaſe us.*

(2.) Their *Sottiſhneſs* and *Stupidity* in the Concerns of their Souls; *Can ye not diſcern the Signs of the Times?*

1. Do you not ſee that the *Meſſiah* is come? The Sceptre was departed from *Judah, Daniel*'s Weeks were upon expiring, and yet they regarded not. The Miracles Chriſt wrought, and the gathering of the People to him, were plain indications, that the *Kingdom of Heaven was at hand*, that this was the *Day of their Viſitation. Note*, (1.) There are Signs of the Times, by which wiſe and upright Men are able to make moral Prognoſtications, and ſo far to underſtand the Motions and Method of Providence, as from thence to take their Meaſures, and to *know what* Iſrael *ought to do*, as the Men of *Iſſachar*, as the Phyſician from ſome certain Symptoms finds a *Criſis form'd.* (2.) There are many who are ſkilful enough in other things, and yet cannot, or will not diſcern the Day of their Opportunities, are not aware of the Wind when its fair for them, and ſo let ſlip the Gale, See *Jer.* 8. 7. *Iſa.* 1. 3. (3.) It's great Hypocriſy when we ſlight the Signs of God's Ordaining, to ſeek for Signs of our own preſcribing.

2. Do not you *foreſee your own Ruin coming* for rejecting him? You will not entertain the Goſpel of Peace, and can you not evidently diſcern that hereby you pull an inevitable deſtruction upon your own Heads. *Note*, It is the undoing of Multitudes, that they are not aware of what will be in the end of their refuſing Chriſt.

2 He denies to give them any other Sign, *v.* 4. as he had done before in the ſame words. *Chap*, 12. 39. Thoſe that perſiſt in the ſame Iniquities, muſt expect to meet with the ſame Reproofs. Here as there, (1.) he calls them an *adulterous Generation*; becauſe while they profeſſed themſelves of the true Church, and Spouſe of God, they treacherouſly departed from him, and broke their Covenants with him. The *Phariſees were a Generation pure in their own Eyes*, having the way of the *adulterous Woman*, that thinks ſhe has no Wickedneſs, *Prov.* 30. 20. (2.) He refuſeth to gratify their Deſire, Chriſt will not be preſcrib'd to, we *aſk, and have* not, becauſe we *aſk amiſs.* 3. He refers them to the Sign of the Prophet *Jonas*, which ſhould yet be given them; his *Reſurrection* from the Dead, and his *Preaching* by his Apoſtles to the *Gentiles*, theſe were reſerv'd for the laſt and higheſt Evidences of his divine Miſſion. *Note*, Tho' the Fancies of proud Men ſhall not be humour'd, yet the Faith of the Humble ſhall be ſupported, and the Unbelief of them that periſh, left inexcuſable, and *every Mouth ſhall be ſtop'd.*

This Diſcourſe broke of abruptly, *he left them, and departed*; Chriſt will not tarry long with them that tempt him, but juſtly withdraws from thoſe that are diſpos'd to *quarrel with him. He left them* as irreclaimable; *Let them alone. He left them* to themſelves, left them in the Hands of their own Counſels, ſo *he gave them up to their own Hearts Luſts.*

5 And when his diſciples were come to the other ſide, they had forgotten to take bread. 6 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and of the Sadduces, 7 And they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, *It is* becauſe we have taken no bread. 8 *Which* when Jeſus perceived, he ſaid unto them, O ye of little faith, why reaſon ye among your ſelves, becauſe ye have brought no bread? 9 Do ye not yet underſtand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thouſand, and how many baskets ye took up? 10 Neither the ſeven loaves of the four thouſand, and how many baskets ye took up? 11 How is it that ye do not underſtand, that I ſpake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye ſhould beware of the leaven of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees? 12 Then underſtood they how that he bad *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Phariſees, and of the Sadducees.

We have here Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples concerning Bread, in which, as in many other, he ſpeaks to them of ſpiritual things under a Similitude, and they miſunderſtand him of carnal things. The occaſion of it was their forgetting to *Victual their Ship*, and to take along with them Proviſions for their Family on the other ſide the Water; uſually they carry'd Bread along with them, becauſe ſometimes they were in deſart Places, and when they were not, yet they would not be *burthenſome.* But now they *forgot*, we will hope 'twas becauſe their Minds and Memories were fill'd with better things. *Note*, Chriſt's Diſciples are often ſuch as have no great Forecaſt for the World.

Firſt, Here's the Caution Chriſt gave them to *beware of the Leaven of the Phariſees.* He had now been diſcourſing with the *Phariſees* and *Sadduces*, and ſaw them to be Men of ſuch a Spirit, that 'twas neceſſary to caution his Diſciples to have nothing to do with them, Diſciples are in moſt danger from Hypocrites, againſt thoſe that are openly vicious they ſtand upon their Guard, but againſt *Phariſees* that are great Pretenders to Devotion, and *Sadduces* that pretend to a free and impartial ſearch after Truth, they commonly lye unguarded. And therefore the Caution is doubled, *Take heed, and beware.*

The corrupt Principles and Practiſes of the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees* are compar'd to *Leaven*; they were ſowing and ſwelling, and ſpreading like Leaven; they *fermented* wherever they came.

Secondly, Their Miſtake concerning this Caution, *v.* 7. They thought Chriſt hereby upbraided them with their Improvidence and Forgetfulneſs, that they were ſo buſy attending to his Diſcourſe with the *Phariſees*, that therefore they forgot their private Concerns. Or, becauſe having no Bread of their own with them, they muſt be beholden to their Friends for Supply, he would not have them to aſk it of the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees*, nor to receive of *their* Alms, becauſe he would not ſo far Countenance them; or for fear, leſt under pretence of feeding them they ſhould do them a miſchief. Or, they took it for a Caution, not to be *familiar* with the *Phariſees* and *Sadducees*, not to *eat with them*, Prov. 23. 6. whereas the Danger was not in their Bread, Chriſt himſelf did eat with them, *Luke* 7. 36. 14, 1.—11. 37. but in their *Principles.*

Thirdly, The Reproof Chriſt gave them for this.

1. He reproves their Diſtruſt of his Ability and Readineſs to ſupply them in this Strait, *v.* 8. *O ye of little Faith*, why are ye in ſuch Perplexity becauſe ye have *taken no Bread?* that you can mind nothing elſe, that you think your Maſter is as full of it as you, and apply every thing he ſaith to that. He doth not chide them for their *little Forecaſt*, as they expected he would. *Note*, Parents and Maſters muſt not be angry at the forgetfulneſs of their Children and Servants, more than is neceſſary, to make them take more heed another time, we are all apt to be forgetful of our Duty. This ſhould ſerve to excuſe a Fault, *peradventure it was an overſight*, See how eaſily Chriſt forgave his Diſciples Careleſneſs, tho' it was in ſuch a mate-

rial Point, as *taking Bread*, and do likewiſe. But that which he chides them for is their *little Faith.*

(1.) He would have them to depend upon him for Supply, tho' it were in a Wilderneſs, and not to diſquiet themſelves with anxious Thoughts about it. *Note*, Tho' Chriſt's Diſciples be brought into Wants and Staits thro' their own Careleſneſs and Incogitancy, yet he encourageth them to truſt in him for Relief. We muſt not therefore uſe this as an excuſe for our Charity to thoſe that are really poor, that they ſhould have minded their own Affairs better, and then they would not have been in need. It may be ſo, but they muſt not therefore be left to ſtarve when they are in need.

(2.) He is diſpleas'd at their Solicitude in this Matter. The Weakneſs and Shiftleſneſs of good People in their worldly Affairs, is that for which Men are apt to condemn them, but it is not ſuch an Offence to Chriſt as their inordinate Care and Anxiety about thoſe things. We muſt endeavour to keep the mean between the Extreams of Careleſneſs and Carefulneſs, but of the two the *exceſs* of Thoughtfulneſs about the World worſt becomes Chriſt's Diſciples. *O ye of little Faith*, why are ye diſquieted *for want of Bread?* *Note*, To diſturſt Chriſt, and diſturb our ſelves when we are in Straits and Difficulties, is an evidence of the Weakneſs of our Faith, which if it were in exerciſe as it ſhould be, would eaſe us of the burthen of Care, by caſting it on the Lord, who careth for us.

(3.) The Aggravation of their Diſtruſt was, the experience they had ſo lately had of the Power and Goodneſs of Chriſt in providing for them, *v.* 9, 10. Tho' they had *no Bread* with them, they had him with them that could provide Bread for them. If they had not the Ciſtern, they had the Fountain. *Do not ye underſtand, neither remember?* *Note*, Chriſt's Diſciples are often to be blamed for the Shallowneſs of their Underſtandings, and the ſlipperineſs of their Memories. Have you forgot thoſe repeated Inſtances of merciful and miraculous ſupplies; five Thouſand fed with five Loaves, and four Thouſand with ſeven Loaves, and yet they had enough, and to ſpare. Remember *how many Baſkets ye took up*, which were intended for Memorials, by which to keep the Mercy in remembrace, as the Pot of *Manna* which was preſerv'd in the Ark, *Exod.* 16. 32. The *Fragments* of thoſe Meals would be a *Feaſt* now; and he that could furniſh them with ſuch an overplus then, could furniſh them with with what was neceſſary now. That Meat for their Bodies was intended to be Meat for their Faith, (*Pſal.* 74. 14.) which therefore they ſhould have liv'd upon now they had forgotten to *take Bread.* *Note*, We are therefore perplex'd with preſent Care and Diſtruſts, becauſe we do not duly remember our former Experiences of divine Power and Goodneſs.

2. He reproves their Miſunderſtanding of the Caution he gave them, *v.* 11. *How is it that ye do not underſtand?* *Note*, Chriſt's Diſciples may well be aſham'd of the Slowneſs and Dulneſs of their Apprehenſions in divine Things; eſpecially when they have long enjoy'd the Means of Grace. *I ſpake it not unto you concerning Bread.* He took it ill (1.) that they ſhould think him as thoughtful about Bread as they were; whereas his *Meat and Drink* was to *do his Father's Will.* (2.) That they ſhould be ſo little acquainted with his way of Preaching, as to take that *literally* which he ſpoke by way of Parable, and ſhould thus make themſelves like the Multitude, who when Chriſt ſpoke to them in Parables, ſeeing, *ſaw not*, and hearing, *heard not*, Mat. 13. 13.

Fourthly, The *rectifying* this Miſtake by this Reproof, *v.* 12. *Then underſtood they* what he meant. *Note*, Chirſt therefore ſhews us our Folly and Weakneſs, that we may ſtir up our ſelves to take things right. He did not tell them expreſly what he meant, but *repeated* what he had ſaid, that they ſhould *beware of the Leaven*, and ſo oblig'd them, by comparing this with his other Diſcourſes, to *bolt out* the Senſe of it in their own Thoughts. Thus Chriſt teacheth by the *Spirit of Wiſdom* in the Heart, opening the Underſtanding to the Spirit of Revelation in the Word. And thoſe Truths are moſt precious which we have thus *dig'd for*, and have found out, after ſome Miſtakes. Tho' Chriſt did not tell them plainly, yet now they were aware, that by the Leaven of the *Phariſees* and *Sadduces*, he meant their *Doctrine* and *Way*, which was Corrupt, and Vicious, but as they manag'd it, was very apt to inſinuate it ſelf into the Minds of Men, like Leaven, and to *eat like a Canker.* They were *leading Men*, and were had in Reputation, which made the Danger of Infection by their Errors the greater. In our Age we may reckon Atheiſm and Deiſm to be the Leaven of the *Sadduces*, and Popery to be the Leaven of the *Phariſees*, againſt both which it concerns all Chriſtians to ſtand upon their Guard.

13 When Jeſus came into the coaſts of Ceſarea Philippi, he asked his diſciples, ſaying, Whom do men ſay, that I, the Son of man, am? 14 And they ſaid, Some *ſay that thou art* John the Baptiſt, ſome Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. 15 He ſaith unto them, but whom ſay ye that I am? 16 And Simon Peter anſwered and ſaid, Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God. 17 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed art thou Simon Bar-jona: for fleſh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. 18 And I ſay alſo unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt it. 19 And I will give nnto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhalt bind on earth ſhall be bound in heaven: and whatſoever thou ſhalt looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed in heaven. 20 Then charged he his diſciples that they ſhould tell no man that he was Jeſus the Chriſt.

We have here a private Conference which Chriſt had with his Diſciples *concerning himſelf.* 'Twas in the Coaſts of *Caſarea Philippi*, the utmoſt borders of the Land of *Canaan*, Northward; there in that remote corner, perhaps there was leſs flocking after him than in other Places, which gave him leiſure for this private Converſation with his Diſciples. *Note*, When Miniſters are abridg'd in their publick Work, they ſhould endeavour to do the more in their own Families

Chriſt is here Catechizing his Diſciples.

Firſt, He enquires what the Opinion of others were concerning him. *Whom do Men ſay, that I the Son of Man am?*

1. He calls himſelf the *Son of Man*; which may be taken, either (1.) as a Title common to him with others. He was called, and juſtly, *the Son of God*, for ſo he was, *Luke* 1. 35. but he called himſelf the *Son of Man*; for he is really and truly *Man, made of a Woman.* In Courts of Honour, 'tis a Rule to diſtinguiſh Men by their higheſt Titles; but Chriſt having now *emptied himſelf*, tho' he was the Son of God, yet will he be known by the Style and Title of the *Son of Man. Ezekiel* was often call'd ſo to keep him humble, Chriſt call'd himſelf ſo, to ſhew that he was humble. Or, (2.) As a Title peculiar to him as Mediator. He is made known in *Daniel*'s Viſiou as the *Son of Man*, Dan. 7. 13. I am the *Meſſiah*, that *Son of Man* that was promis'd. But,

2. He enquires what People's Sentiments were concerning him. *Whom do Men ſay that I am? The Son of Man.* So I think it might better be read; Do they own me for the Meſſiah? He aſks not; Whom do the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* ſay that I am? They were prejudic'd againſt him, and ſaid that he was a *Deceiver*, and in League with *Satan*; but whom do Men ſay that I am? The common People whom the *Phariſees* deſpis'd, to them Chriſt had a regard. Chriſt aſk'd this Queſtion, not as one that knew not; for if he knows what Men *think*, much more what they *ſay*; nor as one deſirous to hear his own Praiſes, but to make the Diſciples ſollicitous concerning the Succeſs of their Preaching, by ſhewing that he himſelf was ſo. The common People convers'd more familiarly with the Diſciples than they did with their Maſter, and therefore from them he might better know *what they ſaid.* Chriſt had not plainly ſaid who he was, but left People to refer it from his Works, *Joh.* 10. 24, 25. Now he would know what Inferences the People drew from *them*, and from the Miracles which his Apoſtles wrought in his Name.

3. To this Queſtion the Diſciples gave him an Anſwer, *v.* 14. *Some ſay, thou art John Baptiſt*, &c. There were ſome that ſaid, He was the *Son of David*, Mat. 12. 43. and the *great Prophet*, John 6. 10. But the Diſciples do not mention that, but only thoſe that were *wide*, which they had gathered up from their Country-men. *Obſerve*,

1. They are *different* Opinions, ſome ſay *one thing*, and others *another.* Truth is *one*, but thoſe that vary from *that*, commonly vary one from another. Thus Chriſt came *eventually* to ſend Diviſion, *Luke* 12. 51. Being ſo noted a Perſon, every one would be ready to paſs his Verdict upon him, and *many Men, many Minds*; thoſe that were not willing to own him to be *the Chriſt*, wander'd in endleſs Mazes, and follow'd the Chaſe of every uncertain Gueſs, and wild Hypotheſis.

2. They are *honourable* Opinions, and ſpeak the Reſpect they had for him, according to the beſt of their Judgment. Theſe were not the Sentiments of his Enemies, but the ſober Thoughts of thoſe that follow'd him with Love and Wonder. *Note*, 'Tis poſſible Men may have *good* Thoughts of Chriſt, and yet not right ones, a *high* Opinion of him, and yet not *high enough.*

3. They all ſuppoſe him to be one riſen from the Dead, which perhaps aroſe from a confuſed Notion they had of the Reſurrection of the Meſſiah before his publick Preaching, as of *Jonas.* Or their Notions aroſe from an over-value for Antiquity; as if it were not poſſible for an excellent Man to be produc'd in their own Age, but it muſt be one of the Ancients return'd to Life again.

4. They are all *falſe* Opinions, and built upon Miſtakes, and wilful Miſtakes. Chriſt's Doctrine and Miracles ſpoke him an extraordinary Perſon; but becauſe of the Meanneſs of his Appearance, ſo different from what they expected, they would not own him to be the *Meſſiah*, but will grant him to be any thing rather than that.

1. Some ſay, *Thou art John Baptiſt*, *Herod* ſaid ſo, *Chap.* 14. 2. and thoſe about him would be apt to ſay as he ſaid. And this Notion might be ſtrengthened by an Opinion they had, that thoſe who dy'd as *Martyrs* ſhould *riſe again* before others; which ſome think the ſecond of the ſeven Sons refers to in his Anſwer to *Antiochus*, 2 Mac. 7. 9. *The King of the World ſhall raiſe us up who have dy'd for his Laws unto Everlaſting Life.*

2. Some *Elias*; taking occaſion, no doubt, from the Prophecy of *Malachi*, Chap. 4, 5. *Behold I will ſend you Elijah*. And the rather, becauſe *Elijah*, (as Chriſt) Did many Miracles, and was himſelf in his Tranſlation the greateſt Miracle of all.

3. Others *Jeremias*; they faſten upon him, either becauſe he was the weeping Prophet, and Chriſt was oft in Tears; or, becauſe God had *ſet him over the Kingdoms and Nations*, *Jer.* 1. 10. which they thought agreed with their Notion of the Meſſiah.

4. Or, *one of the Prophets*. This ſhews what an honourable account they made of the Prophets, and yet they were the Children of them that *Perſecuted* and *Slew them Mat.* 23, 29. Rather than they would allow Jeſus of *Nazareth* one of their own Country, to be ſuch an extraordinary Perſon as his Works ſpoke him to be, they would ſay, It was not he, but *one of the old Prophets*.

Secondly, He enquires what *their* Thoughts were concerning him; *But whom ſay ye that I am?* v. 15. You tell me what other People ſay of me, can you ſay better? (1.) the Diſciples had themſelves been *better taught* than others, had by their Intimacy with Chriſt greater advantages of getting Knowledge than others had. *Note*, It is juſtly expected that thoſe who enjoy greater Plenty of the Means of Knowledge and Grace than others, ſhould have a more clear and diſtinct knowledge of the things of God than others. Thoſe that have more acquaintance with Chriſt than others, ſhould have truer Sentiments concerning him, and be able to give a better account of him than others. (2.) The Diſciples were train'd up to teach others, and therefore 'twas highly requiſite they ſhould underſtand the Truth themſelves. *Ye* that are to *Preach* the Goſpel of the Kingdom, what are your notions of him that ſends you? *Note*, Miniſters muſt be examin'd before they be ſent forth, eſpecially what their Sentiments are of Chriſt, and whom they ſay that *he is*, for how can they be own'd as Miniſters of Chriſt, that are either *ignorant* or *erroneous* concerning Chriſt? This is a Queſtion we ſhould every one of us be frequently putting to our ſelves, whom do we ſay, *what kind of one* do we ſay that the Lord Jeſus is? Is he precious to us? Is he in our Eyes the chief of ten thouſand? Is he the beloved of our Souls? 'Tis well or ill with us, according as our Thoughts are right or wrong concerning Jeſus Chriſt.

Well, this was the Queſtion, now let us obſerve,

1. *Peter*'s Anſwer to this Queſtion, *v.* 16. To the former Queſtion concerning the Opinion others had of Chriſt, ſeveral of the Diſciples anſwer'd, according as they heard People talk; but to this *Peter* anſwers in the Name of all the reſt, they all conſenting to it, and concurring in it. *Peter*'s Temper led him to be *forward* in ſpeaking upon all ſuch Occaſions, and ſometimes he ſpoke *well*, ſometimes *amiſs*; in all Companies there are found ſome warm bold Men, to whom a Precedency of Speech falls of courſe; *Peter* was ſuch a one, yet we find other of the Apoſtles ſometimes ſpeaking as the Mouth of the reſt; as *John*, Mark ix. 38. *Thomas* and *Philip*, and *Jude*, John xiv. 5, 8, 22. So that this is far from being a Proof of ſuch a Primacy and Superiority of *Peter* above the reſt of the Apoſtles, as the Church of *Rome* aſcribes to him; they will needs advance him to be a Judge, when the utmoſt they can make of him is, that he was but Foreman of the Jury, to ſpeak for the reſt, and that only *pro hac vice*, not the perpetual Dictator or Speaker of the Houſe, only Chair-man upon this Occaſion.

Peter's Anſwer is *ſhort*, but it is full, and true, and to the Purpoſe, *Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God*. Here's a *Confeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith*, addreſs'd to Chriſt, and ſo made an *Act of Devotion*. Here's a Confeſſion of the *True* God, as the *living* God, in oppoſition to dumb and dead Idols, and of *Jeſus Chriſt whom he hath ſent*, whom to know is *Life Eternal*. This is the Concluſion of the whole Matter.

(1.) The People call'd him *a Prophet*, *that* Prophet, *John* 6. 14. but the Diſciples own him to be *the Chriſt*, the anointed one; the great Prophet, Prieſt, and King of the Church; the true *Meſſiah* promis'd to the Fathers, and depended on by them as *he that ſhould come*. 'Twas a great thing to believe this concerning one whoſe outward Appearance was ſo contrary to the general Idea the *Jews* had of the *Meſſiah*.

(2.) He called himſelf the *Son of Man*, but they own'd him to be *the Son of the living God*. The People's Notion of him was, that he was the Ghoſt of a dead Man, *Elias*, or *Jeremias*, but they know and believe him to be *the Son of the living God*, who has Life in himſelf, and has given to his Son to have Life in himſelf, and to be the *Life of the World*. If he be *the Son of the living God*, he is of the ſame Nature with him; and tho' his Divine Nature was now vail'd with the Cloud of Fleſh, yet there were thoſe who look'd through it and *ſaw his Glory*, *the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth*. Now can we with an Aſſurance of Faith ſubſcribe to this Confeſſion? Let us then with a Fervency of Affection and Adoration go to Chriſt and tell him ſo, Lord Jeſus, *Thou art the Chriſt the Son of the living God*.

3. Chriſt's *Approbation* of this Anſwer, *v.* 17, 18, 19. In which *Peter* is reply'd to both as a Believer, and as an Apoſtle.

1. As a *Believer*, *v.* 17. Chriſt *ſhews himſelf* well pleas'd with *Peter*'s Confeſſion, that it was ſo clear and expreſs, without *ifs* or *ands*, as we ſay. *Note*, The Proficiency of Chriſt's Diſciples in Knowledge and Grace is very acceptable to him; and Chriſt *ſhews him* whence he receiv'd the Knowledge of this Truth. At the firſt Diſcovery of this Truth in the dawning of the Goſpel-day, it was a mighty thing to *believe* it, *All Men had not this Knowledge*, had not this Faith. But

(1.) *Peter* had the *Happineſs* of it. *Bleſſed art thou, Simon Barjona.* He minds him of his Riſe and Original, the meanneſs of his Parentage, the obſcurity of his Extraction, he was *Bar-jonas*, (*the Son of a Dove*, ſo ſome.) Let him remember the *Rock*, *out of which he was hewn*, that he might ſee he was not born to this Dignity, but prefer'd to it by the Divine Favour; 'twas free Grace that *made him to differ*. Thoſe that have receiv'd the Spirit, muſt remember *who is their Father*, 1 Sam. 10, 12. And having minded him of this, he makes him ſenſible of his great Happineſs as a Believer; *bleſſed art thou*. *Note*, True Believers are truly bleſſed, and thoſe are bleſſed indeed whom Chriſt pronounceth bleſſed; his ſaying they are ſo makes them ſo. *Peter*, Thou art a happy Man, who thus *knoweſt the joyful ſound*, Pſal. 89. 15. *Bleſſed are your Eyes*, *Mat.* 13. 16. All Happineſs attends the right Knowledge of Chriſt.

(2.) God muſt have the glory of it, for *Fleſh and Blood has* not revealed it to thee. Thou had'ſt this neither by the *Invention* of thy own Wit and Reaſon, nor by the *Inſtruction* and *Information* of others; this Light ſprung neither from Nature nor Education, but from *my Father* which is in Heaven. *Note*, (1.) The Chriſtian Religion is a *revealed Religion*, has its riſe in Heaven; 'tis a Religion from above, given by Inſpiration of GOD, not the Learning of Philoſophers, or the Politicks of Stateſmen. (2.) Saving Faith is the *Gift of God*, and wherever it is, is wrought by him, as the *Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* for *his* ſake, and upon the Score of his Mediation, *Phil.* 1. 29. Therefore thou art *bleſſed*, becauſe *my Father has revealed it to thee*. *Note*, The revealing of Chriſt *to us*, and *in us*, is a diſtinguiſhing Token of God's Good-will, and a firm Foundation of true Happineſs, and bleſſed are they that are thus highly favour'd.

Perhaps Chriſt diſcern'd ſomething of Pride and Vain-glory in *Peter*'s Confeſſion, a ſubtil Sin, and which is apt to mingle it ſelf even with our good Duties. 'Tis hard for good Men to compare themſelves with others, and not to have too great a Conceit of themſelves; to prevent which, we ſhould conſider that our Preference above others is no *Atchivement* of our own, but the free Gift of God's Grace to us, and not to others, ſo that we have nothing to boaſt of, *Pſal.* 115. 1. 1 *Cor.* 4. 7.

2. Chriſt replies to him as *an Apoſtle*, or Miniſter, *v.* 18, 19. *Peter*, in the Name of the *Church* had confeſs'd Chriſt, and to him therefore the Promiſe intended for the Church is directed. *Note*, There's nothing loſt by being forward to confeſs Chriſt; for thoſe who thus *honour him*, he will *honour*.

Upon occaſion of this great Confeſſion made of Chriſt, which is the Churches *Homage* and *Allegiance*, he ſign'd and publiſh'd this Royal, this *Divine Charter*, by which that Body Politick is *incorporated*. Such is the Communion between Chriſt and the Church, the Bridegroom and the Spouſe. God had a Church in the World from the Beginning, and it was built upon the Rock of the *promiſed Seed*, Gen. 3. 15. But now that promiſed Seed was come, 'twas requiſite the Church ſhould have a new Charter, as Chriſtian, and ſtanding in relation to a Chriſt already come. Now here we have that Charter, and a thouſand pities it is that this Word, which is the great ſupport of the Kingdom of Chriſt, ſhould be wreſted, and preſt into the Service of Anti-chriſt. But the Devil has employ'd his Subtilty to pervert it, as he did that Promiſe, *Pſal.* 91, 11. which he perverted to his own Purpoſe, *Mat.* 4. 6. and perhaps both that Scripture and this he thus perverted, becauſe they *ſtood in his Way*, and therefore he *ow'd them a Spite*.

Now the purport of this Charter is,

1. To eſtabliſh the Being of the Church. *I ſay alſo unto thee*. 'Tis Chriſt that makes the Grant, he that is the Church's Head and Ruler, to whom all Judgment is committed, and from whom all Power is deriv'd. He that makes it purſuant to the Authority received from the Father, and his Undertaking for the Salvation of the Elect, The Grant is put into *Peter*'s hand, I ſay it *to thee*. The Old Teſtament Promiſes relating to the Church, were given immediately to particular Perſons, eminent for Faith and Holineſs as to *Abraham* and *David*, which yet gave no Supremacy to them, much leſs to any of their Succeſſors, ſo the New Teſtament Charter is here *deliver'd* to *Peter* as an Agent, but *to the uſe and behoof* of the Church in all Ages, according to the Purpoſes therein ſpecified and contain'd. Now it is here promis'd.

1. That Chriſt would *build his Church upon a Rock*. This Body Politick is incorporated by the Style and Title of *Chriſt's Church*. 'Tis a number of the Children of Men call'd out of the World, and ſet apart from it, and dedicated to Chriſt. 'Tis not *thy Church* but *mine*; *Peter* remember'd this, when he caution'd Miniſters, not to *Lord it over God's Heritage*. The Church is Chriſt peculiar appropriated to him. The *World* is *God's*, and they that dwell therein, but the Church is a choſen Remnant that ſtands in Relation to God through Chriſt as Mediator. It *bears his Image and Superſcription*.

(1.) The Builder and Maker of the Church is Chriſt himſelf, *I will build it*. The Church is a *Temple*, which Chriſt is the builder of, *Zech.* 6. 11, 13. Herein *Solomon* was a Type of Chriſt and *Cyrus*, *Iſa.* 44. 28. The Materials and Workmanſhip are his. By the working of his Spirit with the Preaching of his Word, he *adds Souls to his Church*, and ſo builds it up with *living Stones*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. *Ye are God's Building*, and Building is a *progreſſive* Work, the Church in this World is but *in fieri*, like a Houſe in the Building. 'Tis comfort to all thoſe who wiſh well to the Church, that Chriſt who has a Divine Wiſdom and Power undertakes to build it.

(2.) The Foundation on which it is built is *this Rock*. Let the Architect do his part never ſo well, if the Foundation be rotten the Building will not ſtand; let us therefore ſee what the Foundation is, and it muſt be meant of Chriſt, for other Foundation can no Man lay. See *Iſa.* 28. 16.

(1.) The Church is built upon *a Rock*, a firm, ſtrong, and laſting Foundation, which Time will not waſte, nor will it *ſink* under the Weight of the Building. Chriſt would not build his Houſe *upon the Sand*, for he knew that Storms would ariſe. A Rock is *high*, Pſal. 6. 2. Chriſt's Church doth not ſtand upon a level with this World. A *Rock* is *large*, and extends far, ſo doth the Church's Foundation, and the more *large*, the more *firm*; thoſe are not the Church's Friends that narrow its Foundation.

(2.) 'Tis built upon *this Rock*. Thou art *Peter*, which ſignifies a *Stone* or *Rock*; Chriſt gave him that Name when he firſt call'd him *John* 1. 42. and there he confirms it; *Peter*, thou doſt anſwer thy Name, thou art a ſolid, ſubſtantial Diſciple, fix'd and ſtay'd, and one that there is ſome hold of; *Peter* is thy *Name*, and *Strength*, and *Stability* are with thee, Thou art not ſhaken with the Waves of Men's *fluctuating* Opinions concerning me, but *eſtabliſh'd in the preſent Truth*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12. And from the mention of this ſignificant Name occaſion is taken for this Metaphor of *building upon a Rock*.

1. Some by *this Rock* underſtand *Peter* himſelf as an Apoſtle, the *Chief*, tho' not the *Prince* of the Twelve; *Senior* among them, but not *Superior* over them. The Church is built upon the *Foundation of the Apoſtles*, Eph. 2. 20. The firſt Stones in that building were laid in, and by their Miniſtry, hence their Names are ſaid to be written in the Foundation of the *new Jeruſalem*, *Rev.* 21. 14. Now *Peter* being that Apoſtle, by whoſe hand the firſt Stones of the Church were laid both in *Jewiſh* Converts, *Acts* 2. and in the *Gentile* Converts, *Acts* 10. he might in ſome ſenſe be ſaid to be the Rock on which it was built. *Cephas* was one that ſeemed to be *a Pillar*, Gal. 2. 9. But it ſounds very harſh, to call a Man that only lays the firſt Stone of a Building, which is a *tranſient* Act, the *Foundation* on which it is built, which is an *abiding* thing. Yet if it were ſo, this would not ſerve to ſupport the Pretentions of the Biſhop of *Rome*; for *Peter* had no ſuch Headſhip as he clams, much leſs could he derive it to his Succeſſors, leaſt of all to the Biſhops of *Rome*, who whether they are ſo *in place* or no, is a Queſtion, but that they are not ſo in the Truth of Chriſtianity, is paſt all queſtion.

2. Others by this Rock underſtand *Chriſt*. *Thou art Peter*, thou haſt the name of a *Stone*, but *upon this Rock*, pointing to himſelf, *I will build my Church*; perhaps he laid his hand on his Breaſt, as when he ſaid, *Deſtroy this Temple*, *John* 2. 19. When he *ſpake of the Temple of his Body*. Then he *took occaſion* from the Temple where he was ſo to ſpeak of himſelf, and *gave occaſion* to ſome to underſtand him of *that*; ſo here he *took occaſion* from *Peter* to ſpeak of himſelf as the Rock, and *gave occaſion* to ſome to miſunderſtand him of *Peter*. But this muſt be explain'd by thoſe many Scriptures which ſpeak of Chriſt as the only Foundation of the Church, ſee 1 *Cor.* 3. 11. 1 *Pet.* 2. 6. Chriſt is both its *Founder*, and its *Foundation*; he draws Souls, and he draws them to *himſelf*, to him they are *united*, and on him they *reſt*, and have a conſtant Dependance.

3. Others by *this Rock*, underſtand this *Confeſſion* which *Peter* made of Chriſt, and this comes all to one with underſtanding it of Chriſt himſelf. 'Twas a good *confeſſion* which *Peter witneſſed*, *Thou art Chriſt the Son of the living God*, the reſt concur'd with him in it. Now ſaith Chriſt, this is that great Truth upon which *I will build my Church*. (1.) Take away *this Truth it ſelf*, and the *univerſal* Church falls to the Ground. If Chriſt be not the *Son of God*, Chriſtianity is a Cheat, and the Church is a meer *Chimera*, *our Preaching is vain*, *your Faith is vain*, and *you are yet in your Sins*, 1 Cor. 15. 14, 17. If Jeſus be not the Chriſt, thoſe that own him are not of the Church, but *Deceivers* and *Deceived*. (2.) Take away the *Faith* and *Confeſſion* of this Truth from any *particular Church*, and it ceaſeth to be a part of Chriſt's Church, and relapſeth to State and Character of *Infidelity*. This is *Articulus ſtantis & cadentis Eccleſiæ*, the main Hinge on which the Door of Salvation turns, thoſe who *let go* this do not *hold the Foundation*, and tho' they may call themſelves Chriſtians, they give themſelves the Lye; for the Church is a Sacred Society, incorporated upon the Certainty and Aſſurance of this great Truth, and great it is and has prevail'd.

2. Chriſt here promiſeth to *preſerve* and *ſecure* his *Church* when it is *built*. The *Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it*; neither againſt *this Truth*, nor againſt the Church which is *built upon it*.

1. This implies that the Church has Enemies that fight againſt it and endeavour its Ruin and Overthrow, here repreſented by the *Gates of Hell*, i. e. the *City of Hell*, which is directly oppoſite to this Heavenly City, this *City of the Living God*, the Devil's Intereſt among the *Children of Men*. The *Gates of Hell* are the *Powers* and *Policies* of the Devil's Kingdom; the Dragon's *Heads* and *Horns*, by which he *makes War with the Lamb*. All that comes out of *Hell-gates*, as being hatch'd and contriv'd there. Theſe *fight againſt the Church*, by oppoſing Goſpel-truths, corrupting Goſpel-ordinances, Perſecuting good Miniſters, and good Chriſtians; drawing or driving, perſwading by Craft, or forcing by Cruelty to that which is inconſiſtent with the Purity of Religion. This is the Deſign of the *Gates of Hell*, to root out the Name of Chriſtianity, *Pſal*, 83. 4. to *devour* the *Man-child*, *Rev.* 12. 9. to raſe this City to the Ground.

2. This aſſures us that the Enemies of the Church ſhall not *gain their Point*. While the World ſtands Chriſt will have a Church in it, in which his Truths and Ordinances ſhall be own'd and kept up, in ſpite of all the Oppoſition of the Powers of Darkneſs, they *ſhall not prevail againſt it*, *Pſal.* 129. 1, 2. This gives no Security to any particular Church, or Church-governours that they ſhall never err, never Apoſtatize, or be deſtroy'd, but that ſome where or other the Chriſtian Religion ſhall have a Being; tho' not always in the ſame degree of Purity and Splendor, yet ſo as that the Entail of it ſhall never be quite cut off. The Woman *lives* tho' *in a Wilderneſs*, Rev. 14. 12. *caſt down*, but not *deſtroy'd*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 9. *as dying*, *and behold we live*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 9. Corruptions grieving, Perſecutions grievous, but neither *fatal*. The Church may be foil'd in particular Encounters, but in the main Battle it ſhall come off more than a Conquerer. Particular Believers are *kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5.

2. The other part of this Character, is to ſettle the *Order* and *Government* of the Church, *v.* 19. When a City or Society is *Incorporated*, Officers are appointed, and empower'd to act for the common Good. A City without Government is a *Chaos*. Now this Conſtituting of the Government of the Church, is here expreſs'd by the *delivering of the Keys*, and with them a Power to *bind* and *looſe*. This is not to be underſtood of any particular Power that *Peter* was inveſted with, as if he were ſole *Door-keeper* of the *Kingdom of Heaven*; and had that Key of *David* which belongs only to the Son of *David*; no, this inveſts all the Apoſtles and their Succeſſors with a Miniſterial Power to guide and govern the Church of Chriſt, as it exiſts in particular Congregations or Churches, according to the Rulers of the Goſpel. *Claves Regni Cœlorum in B. Petro Apoſtolo cuncti ſuſcepimus Sacerdotes.* So *Ambroſe*, *de Dignit. Sacred.* Only the Keys were firſt put into *Peter*'s hand, becauſe he was the firſt that *open'd the Door of Faith to the Gentiles*, Acts 10. 28. As the King in giving a Charter to a Corporation, impowers the Magiſtrates to hold Courts in his Name, to try Matters of Fact, and determine therein according to Law, confirming what was ſo done regularly, as if done in any of the Superior Courts, ſo Chriſt having incorporated his Church, hath appointed the Office of the Miniſtry for the keeping up of Order and Government, and to ſee that his Laws be duly obſerv'd. *I will give thee the Keys*. He doth not ſay, He *has given* them, or *doth now*, but he *will* do it after his Reſurrection, when he *aſcended on high* he *gave thoſe Gifts*, *Eph.* 4. 8. Then his Power was actually given, not to *Peter* only, but to all the reſt, *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. *John* 20. 21. He doth not ſay, the Keys *ſhall be given*, but *I will give them*, for Miniſters derive their Authority from Chriſt, and all their Power is to be us'd *in his Name*, 1 Cor. 5. 4.

Now 1. The Power here delegated is a *Spiritual Power*, 'tis a Power pertaining to *the Kingdom of Heaven*, i. e. to the Church, that part of it which is militant here on Earth, to the *Goſpel-Diſpenſation*, that's it about which the Apoſtolical and Miniſterial Power is wholly converſant. 'Tis not any civil ſecular Power that is hereby convey'd, Chriſt's *Kingdom is not of this World*. Their Inſtructions afterwards were in *things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*, *Acts* 1. 3.

2. It is the Power *of the Keys* that is given; alluding to the cuſtom of inveſting Men with Authority in ſuch a Place, by delivering to them the Keys of the Place. Or as the Maſter of the Houſe gives the Keys to the Steward, the Keys of the Stores, where the Proviſions are kept, that he may give to every one in the Houſe their Portion of Meat *in due Seaſon*, *Luke* 12. 42. and deny it, as there is occaſion, according to the Rules of the Family. Miniſters are *Stewards*, 1 Cor. 4. 1. Tit. 1. 7. *Eliakim* that had the Key of the Houſe of *David* was *over the Houſhold*, Iſa. 22. 22.

3. It is a Power to *bind* and *looſe*, i. e. (following the Metaphor of the Keys) to *ſhut* and *open*. *Joſeph* that was Lord of *Pharaoh's* Houſe, and Steward of the Stores, had Power to *bind his Princes*, and to *teach* his *Senators* Wiſdom, *Pſal.* 105. 21, 22. When the Stores and Treaſures of the Houſe are ſhut up from any, they are *bound*, *interdico tibi aqua & igne*; when they are open'd to them again they are *looſed from that Bond*, are diſcharged from the Cenſure, and reſtor'd to their Liberty.

4. It is a Power which Chriſt has promis'd to own the due Adminiſtration of, to ratifie his Sentences of his Steward with his own Approbation; it ſhall be *bound in Heaven*, *and looſ'd in Heaven*. Not that Chriſt hath hereby oblig'd himſelf to confirm all Church Cenſures, right or wrong, but ſuch as are duly paſt according to the Word, *Clave non Errante*, they are Seal'd in *Heaven*, i. e. the Word of the Goſpel in the Mouth of faithful Miniſters is to be look'd upon, not as the Word of Man, but as the *Word of God*, and to be receiv'd accordingly, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 13. *John* 13. 20.

Now the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are

(1.) The Key of *Doctrine*, call'd the Key of Knowledge, your buſineſs ſhall be to explain to the World the Will of God, both as to Truth and Duty, and for this you ſhall have your Commiſſions Credentials, and full Inſtructions to *bind* and *looſe*, in the common Speech of the *Jews*, at that time ſignifi'd to *prohibit* and *permit*; to teach, or declare a thing to be *unlawful*, was to *bind*, to be *lawful*, was to *looſe*. Now the Apoſtles had an extraordinary Power of this kind; ſome things *forbidden* by the Law of *Moſes* were now to be *allow'd*, as the eating of ſuch and ſuch Meats, ſome things *allowed* there were now to be *forbidden*, as Divorce, and the Apoſtles were impower'd to *declare* this to the World, and Men might take it *upon their Words*. When *Peter* was firſt taught himſelf, and then taught others to *call* *nothing common or unclean*, this Power was exercis'd. There is alſo an ordinary Power hereby conveyed to all Miniſters to preach the Goſpel as *appointed Officers*, to tell People in God's Name and according to the Scriptures, what is *good*, and *what the Lord requires of them*, and they who declare *the whole Council* of God uſe thoſe Keys well, *Acts*. 20. 27.

Some make the *giving of the Keys* to allude to the Cuſtom of the *Jews* in creating a *Doctor of the Law*, which was to put into his Hand the Keys of the Cheſt where the Book of the Law was kept, noting his being authoriz'd to take and read it. And the *binding* and *looſing* to allude to the Faction about their Books which were in Rolls, they ſhut them by *binding them up* with a String, which they *unty'd* when they open'd them; Chriſt gives his Apoſtles Power to *ſhut* or *open* the Book of the Goſpel to People, as the Caſe requir'd. See the Exerciſe of this Power, *Acts* 13. 46.—18. 6. When Miniſters preach Pardon and Peace to the penitent, Wrath and the Curſe to the impenitent, in Chriſt's Name, they act then purſuant to this Authority of *binding* and *looſing*.

(2.) The Key of *Diſcipline*, which is but the Application of the former to particular Perſons, upon a right Eſtimate of their Characters and Actions. 'Tis not a *Legiſlative* Power that is hereby confer'd, but *judicial*. The Judge doth not *make* the Law, but only *declare* what is Law, and upon an impartial Enquiry into the Merits of the Cauſe *give Sentence* accordingly; ſuch is the *Power of the Keys*, (wherever it is lodg'd) with Reference to Church-memberſhip, and the Priviledges thereof. (1.) Chriſt's Miniſters have a power to *admit* into the Church; Go, *diſciple* all Nations *baptizing* them; thoſe who profeſs Faith in Chriſt and Obedience to him, admit them and their Seed Members of the Church by Baptiſm. Miniſters are to *let in* to the Wedding-Feaſt thoſe that are bidden, and to keep out ſuch as are apparently unfit for ſo holy a Communion. (2.) They have a Power to expel and caſt out ſuch as have forfeited their Church-Memberſhip. That's *binding*, refuſing to Unbelievers the Application of Goſpel-Promiſes, and the Seals of them, and declaring to ſuch as appear to be *in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and bond of Iniquity*, that they have *no Part or Lot in the Matter*, as *Peter* did to *Simon Magus*, though he had been baptiz'd; and this is a *binding over* to the Judgment of God. (3.) They have a Power to *reſtore*, and to *receive* in again upon their Repentance, ſuch as had been *thrown out*, to *looſe* thoſe whom they had *bound*; declaring to them, that if their Repentance be ſincere, the Promiſe of Pardon belong to them. The Apoſtles had a miraculous Gift of *diſcerning Spirits*, yet even they went by the Rule of outward Appearances, as *Acts* 8. 21. 1 *Cor.* 5. 1. 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. 1 *Tim.* 1. 20. which Miniſters may ſtill make a Judgment upon, if they be ſkilful and faithful.

Laſtly, Here's the Charge which Chriſt gave his Diſciples to keep this private for the preſent, *v.* 20. They *muſt tell no Man that he was Jeſus the Chriſt*. What they had profeſs'd to him, they muſt not yet publiſh to the World for ſeveral Reaſons, (1.) Becauſe this was the time of Preparation for his Kingdom. The great thing now preach'd was, that *the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand*, and therefore thoſe things were now to be inſiſted on, which were proper to *make way* for Chriſt, as the Doctrine of Repentance, not this great Truth in and with which the *Kingdom of Heaven* was to be actually *ſet up*. *Every thing is beautiful in its Seaſon*, and 'tis good Advice *Prepare thy Work and afterwards build*, Prov. 24. 27. (2.) Chriſt would have his *Meſſiah-ſhip* prov'd by his Works, and would rather *they* ſhould teſtify of him, than that his *Diſciples* ſhould, becauſe *their* Teſtimony was but as *his own*, which he inſiſted not on; ſee *John* 5. 31, 34. He was ſo ſecure of the Demonſtration of his Miracles that he wav'd other Witneſſes, *John* 10. 25, 38. (3.) If they had known that he was *Jeſus* and *Chriſt* they *would not have crucified the Lord of Glory*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. (4.) Chriſt would not have the Apoſtles preach this, till they had the moſt convincing Evidence ready to alledge in Confirmation of it. Great Truths may ſuffer Damage by being *aſſerted* before they can be ſufficiently prov'd. Now the great Proof of Jeſus being the *Chriſt*, was his Reſurrection; by that he was *declar'd to be the Son of God with Power*, and therefore the Divine Wiſdom would not have this Truth preach'd, till that could be alledg'd for Proof of it. (5.) 'Twas requiſite that the Preachers of ſo great a Truth ſhould be furniſhed with greater Meaſures of the Spirit than the Apoſtles as yet had; therefore the open aſſerting it was adjourn'd, till the Spirit ſhould be pour'd out upon them. But when *Chriſt* was glorify'd, and the Spirit pour'd out, we find *Peter* proclaiming upon the Houſe-tops what was here ſpoken *in a Corner*; Acts 2. 36. *That God hath made this ſame Jeſus both Lord and Chriſt*; for as there is a time to *keep Silence*, ſo there is a *time to ſpeak*.

21 From that time forth began Jeſus to ſhew unto his Diſciples, how that he muſt go unto Jeruſalem, and ſuffer many things of the elders and chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be killed, and be raiſed again the third day. 22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, ſaying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this ſhall not be unto thee. 23 But he turned and ſaid unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me: for thou favoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of men.

We have here Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples concerning *his own Sufferings*. In which *obſerve*,

Friſt, Chriſt's foretelling his Sufferings. Now he *began* to do it, and *from this time* frequently ſpoke of them. Some Hints he had already given of Sufferings, as when he ſaid, *Deſtroy this Temple*, when he ſpoke of the *Son of Man being lifted up*, and of *eating his Fleſh*, and *drinking his Blood*; but now he began to *ſhew* it to ſpeak plainly and expreſly of it. Hithereto he had not touch'd upon this, becauſe the Diſciples were weak, and could not well bear the Notice of a thing ſo very *ſtrange* and ſo very *melancholy*. But now they were more ripe in Knowledge and ſtrong in Faith, he *began* to tell them this. *Note*, Chriſt reveals his Mind to his People gradually, and lets in Light as they can bear it, and are fit to receive it.

From that time, when they had made that full Confeſſion of Chriſt, that he was the *Son of God*, then he *began* to ſhew them this; when he found them knowing in one Truth, he taught them another, for to *him that has ſhall be given*. Let them firſt be eſtabliſh'd in the Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and then go on to Perfection, *Heb.* 6. 1. If they had not been well grounded in the Belief of Chriſt's being the *Son of God*, it would have been a great ſhaking to their Faith. All Truths are not be ſpoken to all Perſons at all times; but ſuch as are proper and ſuitable to the *preſent State*. Now obſerve,

1. *What* he foretold concerning his Sufferings; the Particulars and Circumſtances of them, and all ſurprizing.

1. The *Place* where he ſhould ſuffer. He muſt go to *Jeruſalem*, the Head City, the Holy City, and ſuffer *there*. Though he liv'd moſt of his time in *Galilee*, he muſt dye at *Jeruſalem*, there all the *Sacrifices* were offer'd there, therefore he muſt dye, who is the great *Sacrifice*, Luke 13. 34.

2. The *Perſons* by whom he ſhould ſuffer; the *Elders* and *Chief Prieſts*, and *Scribes*; theſe made up the great *Sanhedrin*, which ſat at *Jeruſalem*, and was had in Veneration by the People. Thoſe that ſhould have been moſt forward in owning and admiring Chriſt, were the moſt bitter in perſecuting him. 'Twas ſtrange that Men of Knowledge in the Scripture, who profeſs'd to expect the Meſſiah's coming, and pretended to have ſomething ſacred in their Character, ſhould uſe him thus barbarouſly when he did come. 'Twas the *Roman* Power that condemn'd and crucified Chriſt, but he lays it at the Door of the *Chief Prieſts* and *Scribes*, who were the *firſt Movers*.

3. *What* he ſhould ſuffer. He muſt *ſuffer many things*, and *be kill'd* His Enemies *inſatiable* Malice, and his own *invincible* Patience appears in the *Variety* and *Multiplicity* of his Sufferings; he ſuffer'd *many things*; and in the *Extremity* of them; nothing leſs than his *Death* would ſatisfy them, he muſt be *kill'd*. The Suffering of *many things*, if not unto Death, is more *tolerable*, for while there's Life there's Hope; And Death without ſuch Prefaces would be leſs *terrible*; but he muſt firſt *ſuffer many things*, and then be *kill'd*.

4. What ſhould be the happy Iſſue of all his Sufferings, he ſhall be *raiſed again the third Day*. As the Prophets, ſo Chriſt himſelf when he teſtified before-hand his Sufferings, *teſtified* withal the *Glory that ſhould follow*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 11. His Riſing again the third Day prov'd him to be the *Son of God*, notwithſtanding his Sufferings, and therefore he mentions that to keep up their Faith. When he ſpoke of the *Croſs* and the *Shame*, he ſpoke in the Breath of the Joy ſet before him, in the proſpect of which he *endur'd the Croſs*, and *deſpiſed the Shame*. Thus we muſt look upon Chriſt's Sufferings for us, ſee his Suffering the way to his Glory; and thus we muſt look upon *our* Suffering for *Chriſt*, look through it to the Recompence of Reward; *if we ſuffer with him, we ſhall reign with him*.

2. Why he foretold his Sufferings. (1.) To ſhew that they were the Product of an eternal Councel and Conſent; were agreed upon between the Father and the Son from Eternity. Thus it *behoved Chriſt to ſuffer*. The Matter was ſettled in the *determinate Counſel and Foreknowledge*, in Purſuance of his own voluntary Suſception and Undertaking for our Salvation; his Sufferings were no Surprize to him, did not come upon him as a *Snare*, but he had a diſtinct and certain Fore-ſight of them, which greatly magnifies his Love, *John* 18. 4. (2.) To rectify the Miſtakes of his Diſciples concerning the external Pomp and Power of his Kingdom, which they had inbib'd Notion of. Believing him to be the *Meſſiah*, they counted upon nothing but *Dignity* and *Authority* in the World; but here Chriſt reads them another Leſſon, tells them of the *Croſs* and *Sufferings*; Nay, and that the *Chief Prieſts* and the *Elders*, whom 'tis likely they expect to be the *Supports* of the *Meſſiah's* Kingdom, ſhould be the great *Enemies* and *Perſecutors* of it; this would give them quite another *Idea* of that Kingdom, which they themſelves had preach'd the *Approach* of; and 'twas repuiſite this Miſtake ſhould be rectify'd. Thoſe that follow Chriſt muſt be dealt plainly with, and warn'd not to expect great things in this World. (3.) 'Twas to prepare them for the Share at leaſt of Sorrow and Fear, which they muſt have in his Sufferings, When he ſuffer'd *many things*, the Diſciples could not but ſuffer *ſome*; and if their Maſter be *kill'd*, they will be *ill frighned*; Let them know it before, that they may provide accordingly, and being *forewarn'd* may be *fore-arm'd*.

Secondly, The *Offence* which *Peter* took at this; He ſaid, *Be it far from thee, Lord*, and 'tis likely ſpoke the Senſe of the Reſt of the Diſciples, as before, for he was *Chief-ſpeaker*. *He took him, and began to rebuke him*. Perhaps *Peter* was a little elevated with the great things Chriſt had now ſaid to him, which made him more bold with Chriſt than did become him; ſo hard is it to keep the Spirit low and humble in the midſt of great *Advancements*.

1. It did not become *Peter* to *contradict* his Maſter, or take upon him to *advice* him. He might have *wiſh'd* that if it were poſſible, this *Cup might paſs away*, without ſaying ſo peremptorily, *this ſhall not be*, when Chriſt had ſaid, *it muſt be. Shall any teach God Knowledge? He that reproveth God let him anſwer it. Note*, when God's Diſpenſations are either *intricate* or *croſs* to us, it becomes us ſilently to *acquieſe in*, and not to *preſcribe to* the Divine Will. God knows what he has to do without our teaching. Unleſs we know the *Mind of the Lord*, it is not for us to be his *Counſellors*, Rom. 11. 34.

2. It ſavour'd much of *fleſhly Wiſdom*, for him to appear ſo warmly againſt *Suffering*, and to ſtartle thus at the *Offence of the Croſs* 'Tis the corrupt part of us that is thus ſollicitous to *ſleep in a whole Skin*. We are apt to look upon Sufferings as they relate to this preſent Life, to which they are uneaſy. but there are other Rules to meaſure them by, which if duly obſerv'd, will enable us to make *nothing* of them, *Rom.* 8. 18. See how paſſionately *Peter* ſpeaks, *Be it far from thee Lord.* God forbid, that thou ſhouldſt ſuffer and be kill'd, we cannot bear the *Thoughts of it. Maſter ſpare thy ſelf*, So it might be read; ἵλεώς σοι Κύριε, *Be merciful to thy ſelf*, and then no one elſe can be cruel to thee. *Pity thy ſelf*, and then *this ſhall not be to thee*. He would have Chriſt to dread Suffering as much as he did; But we miſtake if we meaſure Chriſt's Love and Patience by our own. He intimates likewiſe the Improbility of the thing, humanly ſpeaking; *This ſhall not be unto thee*, 'Tis impoſſible that one who hath ſo great an Intereſt in the People as thou haſt, ſhould be cruſhed by *the Elders*, who *fear the People*. This can never be, we that have follow'd thee will fight for thee if Occaſion be, and there are thouſands that will ſtand by us.

Thirdly, Chriſt's Diſpleaſure againſt *Peter* for this Suggeſtion of his, *v.* 23. We do not read of any thing ſaid or done by any of his Diſciples, at any time, that he reſented ſo very ill as this here, tho' they oft offended.

Obſerve 1. How he *expreſs'd* his Diſpleaſure. He *turn'd* upon *Peter*, and (we may ſuppoſe) with a Frown ſaid, *Get thee behind me Satan*. He did not ſo much as take time to deliberate upon it, but gave an immediate Reply to the Temptation, which was ſuch as made it to appear how *heniouſly* he took it. Juſt now he had ſaid, *Bleſſed art thou Simon*, and had even laid him in his Boſom, but here, *Get thee behind me, Satan*, and there was Cauſe for both. *Note*, A good Man may by a Surprize of Temptation ſoon grow very unlike himſelf. He anſwer'd him as he did Satan himſelf, *Mat.* 4. 10. *Note*, (1.) It is the Subtlety of *Satan* to ſend Temptations to us by the unſuſpected Hands of our beſt and deareſt Friends. Thus he aſſaulted *Adam* by *Eve*, *Job* by his Wife, and here Chriſt by his beloved *Peter*. It concerns us therefore not to be ignorant of his Devices, but to *ſtand againſt* his Wiles and Depths, by *ſtanding* always *upon our Guard* againſt Sin, whoever moves us to it. Even the Kindneſſes of our Friends are often abus'd by *Satan*, and made uſe of as Temptatiuns to us. (2.) Thoſe who have their ſpiritual Senſes exercis'd will be aware of the Voice of *Satan*, even in a Friend, a Diſciple, a Miniſter that diſſwades them from their Duty. We muſt not regard who ſpeaks ſo much as what is ſpoken; we ſhould learn to know the Devil's Voice, when he ſpeaks in a *Saint*, as well as when he ſpeaks in a *Serpent*. Whoever takes us off from that which is good, and would have us afraid of doing too much for God, ſpake *Satan*'s Language, (3.) We muſt be free and faithful in reproving the deareſt Friend we have, that ſaith or doth amiſs, through it may be under Colour of Kindneſs to us. We muſt not *complement* but *rebuke* miſtaken Courteſies *Faithful are the Wounds of a Friend*; ſuch *Smitings* muſt be accounted *Kindneſſes*, Pſal. 141. 5. (4.) Whatever appears to be a Temptation to Sin muſt be reſiſted with Abhorrence, and not *parley'd* with.

2. What was the Ground of this Diſpleaſure; Why did Chriſt thus reſent a Motion that ſeem'd not only harmleſs but kind. Two Reaſons are given,

1. *Thou art an Offence to me.* Σκάνδαλόν μου εἶ *Thou art my Hindrance*, ſo it may be read; *Thou ſtandeſt in my way*. Chriſt was haſting on in the Work of our Salvation, and his Heart was ſo much upon it, that he took it ill to be hinder'd, or tempted to ſtart back from the hardeſt and moſt diſcouraging Part of his Undertaking. So ſtrongly was he engag'd for our Redemption, that they who but indirectly endeavour'd to *divert* him from it, touch'd him in a very tender and ſenſible Part. *Peter* was not ſo ſharply reprov'd for *diſowning* and *denying* his Maſter in his Sufferings, as he was for *diſſwading* him from them, tho' that was the Defect, this the Exceſs of Kindneſs. It argues a very great Firmneſs and Reſolution of Mind in any Buſineſs, when it is an Offence to be *diſſwaded*, and a Man will not endure to hear any thing to the contrary like that of *Ruth*, *Intreat me not to leave thee*. Our Lord Jeſus preſer'd our Salvation before his own Eaſe and Safety, for *even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf*, Rom. 15. 3. He came into the World not to *ſpare himſelf*, as *Peter* adviſ'd, but to *ſpend himſelf*.

See why he call'd *Peter*, *Satan*, when he ſuggeſted this to him, becauſe whatever ſtood in the Way of our Salvation, he look'd upon as coming from the Devil, who is a ſworn Enemy to it. The ſame *Satan* that afterwards enter'd into *Judas* maliciouſly to *deſtroy* him in his Undertaking, here prompted *Peter* plauſibly to *divert* him from it. Thus he changes himſelf into an *Angel of Light*.

Thou art an Offence to me. Note, 1. Thoſe that engage in any *great* and *good* Work, muſt expect to meet with Hindrance and Oppoſition, from Friends and Foes, from *within* and from *without*. 2. Thoſe that obſtruct our Progreſs in any Duty muſt be look'd upon as an *Offence to us*. Then we do the Will of God, as Chriſt did, whoſe *Meat and Drink* it was to do it, when it is a Trouble to us to be ſollicited from our Duty. Thoſe that hinder us from doing or ſuffering for God, when we are call'd to it, whatever they are in other things, in that they are *Satans*, Adverſaries to us.

2. *Thou ſavioureſt not the things that be of God*, but *thoſe that be of Men. Note*, (1.) The *things that be of God*, that is, the Concerns of his Will and Glory do often claſh and interfere with the *things that be of Men*, that is, with our own Wealth, Pleaſure, and Reputation. While we mind Chriſtian Duty as our Way and Work, and the Divine Favour as our End and Portion, we *ſavour the things of God*; but if theſe be *minded* the Fleſh muſt be *deny'd*, Hazzards muſt be run, and Hardſhips born, and here's the Trial which of the two we *ſavour*, (2.) Thoſe that inordinately fear, and induſtriouſly decline Suffering for Chriſt, when they are call'd to it, *ſavour* more of the *things of Man*, than of the *things of God*, they reliſh thoſe things more themſelves, and make it appear to others that they do ſo.

24 Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me, 25 for whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it: and whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, ſhall find it. 26 For what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own Soul? or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his Soul? 27 For the Son of man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels: and then he ſhall reward every man according to his works. 28 Verily, I ſay unto you, There be ſome ſtanding here, which ſhall not taſte of death, till they ſee the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Chriſt having ſhew'd his Diſciples that *he* muſt ſuffer, and that he was ready and willing to ſuffer, here ſhews them, that *they* muſt ſuffer too, and muſt be ready and willing to it. 'Tis a weighty Diſcourſe that we have in theſe Verſes.

Firſt, Here's the Law of Diſciple-ſhip laid down, and the Terms fix'd upon which we may have the Honour and Benefit of it, *v.* 24. He ſaid this to his Diſciples, not only that they might inſtruct others concerning it but that by this Rule they might examine their own Sincerity.

Obſerve, (1.) What it is to be a *Diſciple of Chriſt*. It is to *come after him*. When Chriſt call'd Diſciples, this was the Word of Command, *Follow me*. A true Diſciple of Chriſt is one that *doth* follow him in *Duty*, and ſhall follow him to *Glory*. He is one that *comes after* Chriſt, not one that *preſcribes* to him, as *Peter* now undertook to do, forgetting his Place. A diſciple of Chriſt *comes after* him, as the Sheep after the Shepherd, the Servant after his Maſter, the Soldiers after their Captain; He is one that aims at the ſame end that Chriſt aim'd at, the Glory of God, and the Glory of Heaven; and one that walks in the ſame Way, that he walk'd in, is led by *his Spirit*, treads in his Steps, ſubmits to his Conduct, and *follows the Lamb whitherſoever he goes*, Rev. 14. 4.

(2.) What are the great things requir'd of thoſe that will be Chriſt's Diſciples. If any Man *will come* εἴ τις θέλει, *If any Man be willing* to come. It notes a *delibrate* Choice, and Chearfulneſs and Reſolution in that Choice. Many are Diſciples more by *Chance*, or the Will of others, than by an Act of their *own* Will; but Chriſt will have his People *Voluntiers*, Pſal. 110. 3. 'Tis as if Chriſt had ſaid, if any of the People, that *are not* my Diſciples, be *ſtedfaſtly minded* to *come to me*; and if you that *are* be in like manner minded to *ſtick to me*, 'tis upon *theſe* Terms, theſe and *no other*; you muſt follow me in *Sufferings*, as well as in other things, and therefore when you ſit down to count the Coſt, reckon upon it.

Now what are theſe Terms?

1. *Let him deny himſelf. Peter* had adviſ'd Chriſt to ſpare himſelf, and would be ready in the like Caſe to take the Advice, but Chriſt tells them all, they muſt be ſo far from *ſparing themſelves*, that they muſt *deny themſelves*. Herein they muſt *come after* Chriſt, for his Birth, and Life, and Death, were all a continued Act of Self-denial, a *ſelf emptying*, Phil. 2. 7, 8. If Self-denial be a hard Leſſon, and againſt the Grain to Fleſh and Blood, it is no more than what our Maſter learn'd and practis'd *before us*, and *for us*, both for *Redemption*, and for our *Inſtruction*, and the *Servant is not above his Lord*, *Note*, All the Diſciples and Followers of Jeſus Chriſt muſt *deny themſelves*. It is the fundamental Law of Admiſſion into Chriſt's School, and the firſt and great Leſſon to be learn'd in his School, to deny ourſelves; 'tis both the *ſtrait Gate*, and the *narrow Way*; 'tis neceſſary in order to our learning all the other good Leſſons that are there taught. We muſt deny our ſelves *abſolutely*, we muſt not admire our own Shadow, nor gratify our own Humour, we muſt not lean to our own Underſtanding, nor ſeek our own things, nor be our own End. We muſt deny our ſelves *comparatively*, we muſt deny our ſelves for Chriſt, and his Will and Glory, and the Service of his Intereſt in the World; we muſt deny our ſelves for our Brethren, and for their good; and we muſt deny our ſelves for our ſelves, deny the Appetites of the Body, for the Benefit of the Soul.

2. *Let him take up his Croſs*. The *Croſs* is here put for all *Sufferings*, as Men or Chriſtians; providential Afflictions, Perſecutions for Righteouſneſs ſake, every Trouble that befals us either for doing well, or not for doing ill. The Troubles of Chriſtians are fitly call'd *Croſſes*, in Alluſion to the Death *of the Croſs*, which Chriſt was *obedient*

to, it ſhould reconcile us to Troubles, and take off the Terror of them, that they are what we bear *in common* with Chriſt, and ſuch as he hath born before us. *Note*, 1. Every Diſciple of Chriſt hath *his Croſs*, and muſt count upon it; as each hath his ſpecial *Duty* to be done, ſo each hath his ſpecial Trouble to be born and every one feels moſt from *his own* Burden. Croſſes are the common Lot of God's Children, but of this common Lot each hath his *particular* Share. That's *our* Croſs which infinite Wiſdom hath appointed for us, and a ſovereign Providence has laid on us, as *fitteſt for us*. 'Tis good for us to call the Croſs we are under *our own*, and entertain it accordingly. We are apt to think we could bear ſuch a one's Croſs better than our own, but that's *beſt which is*, and we ought to *make the beſt* of it. (2.) Every Diſciple of Chriſt muſt *take up* that which the wiſe God hath made *his Croſs*. It is an Alluſion to the *Roman* Cuſtom of compelling thoſe that were condemn'd to be crucified to carry their Croſs; when *Simon* carry'd Chriſt's Croſs after him this Phraſe was illuſtrated. (1.) It is ſuppos'd that the Croſs lies in our Way, and is *prepar'd* for us. We muſt not *make Croſſes* to our ſelves, but muſt accommodate our ſelves to thoſe which God has made for us. Our Rule is, not to go a Step out of the Way of Duty, either to *meet* a Croſs, or to *miſs* one. We muſt not by our Raſhneſs and Indiſcretion pull Croſſes down upon our own Heads, but muſt *take them up* when they are laid in our Way. We muſt ſo manage an Affliction, as that it may not be a Sumbling-block or Hindrance to us in any Service we have to do for God. We muſt take it up *out of our Way*, by getting over the *Offence of the Croſs*. *None of theſe things move me*; and we muſt then go on with it *in our Way*, tho' it lie heavy. (2.) That which we have to do is not only to *bear the Croſs*; that a Stock, or a Stone, or a Stick may do; not only to be ſilent under it, but we muſt *take up* the Croſs, muſt improve it to ſome good Advantage. Not ſay, *This is an Evil*, and *I muſt bear it*, becauſe I cannot help it; but, this is an Evil, and I *will bear it*, becauſe it ſhall work for my good. When we *rejoice* in our Afflictions, and glory in them, then we take up the Croſs. This fitly follows upon *denying our ſelves*; for he that will not *deny himſelf* the Pleaſures of Sin, and the Advantages of this World for Chriſt, when it comes to the puſh will never have the Heart to *take up his Croſs*. "He that cannot take up "a Reſolution to *live a Saint*, has a Demonſtration within himſelf, "that he is never like to *dye a Martyr*. So Arch-biſhop *Tillotſon*.

3. Let him *follow me* in this particular of *taking up the Croſs*. Suffering Saints muſt *look unto Jeſus*, and take from him both Direction and Encouragement in Suffering. Do we *bear the Croſs*? we therein follow Chriſt, who bears it *before us*, bears it *for us*, and ſo bears it *off us*. He bore the heavy End of the Croſs, the End that had the Curſe upon it, that was a heavy End, and ſo made the other *light* and *eaſy* for us. Or we may take it in general, we muſt follow Chriſt in all Inſtances of Holineſs and Obedience. *Note*, The Diſciples of Chriſt muſt ſtudy to imitate their Maſter, and conform themſelves in every thing to his Example, and *continue* in *well-doing*, whatever Croſſes lie in their Way. To *do well* and to *ſuffer ill* is to follow Chriſt. If any Man will *come after me*, *let him follow me*; that ſeems to be *idem per idem*, what's the Difference? ſurely 'tis this, If any Man will come after me in *Profeſſion*, and ſo have the Name and Credit of a Diſciple, let him *follow me in Truth*, and ſo do the Work and Duty of a Diſciple. Or thus, If any Man will *ſet out after me* in good Beginnings, let him continue to *follow me* with all Perſeverance. That's *following the Lord fully*, as *Caleb* did. Thoſe that come after Chriſt muſt *fulfil* after him.

Secondly, Here are Arguments to perſwade us to ſubmit to *theſe Laws*, and come up to *theſe Terms*. Self-denial and patient Suffering are hard Leſſons, which will never be learned if we conſult with Fleſh and Blood, let us therefore conſult with our Lord Jeſus, and ſee what Advice he gives us. And here he gives us,

1. Some Conſiderations proper to *engage us* to theſe Duties of Self-denial, and ſuffering for Chriſt. Conſider,

1. The *Weight of* that *Eternity* which depends upon our *preſent Choice*, v. 25. *Whoſoever will ſave his Life* by denying Chriſt, *ſhall loſe it*, and whoſoever is content to *loſe his Life*, for owning Chriſt, *ſhall find it*. Here's Life and Death, Good and Evil, the Bleſſing and the Curſe ſet before us. Obſerve,

(1.) The *Miſery* that attends the moſt plauſible *Apoſtacy*. *Whoſoever* will ſave his Life in this World, if it be by Sin, he ſhall loſe it in another; he that forſakes Chriſt to preſerve a *temporal Life*, and avoid a *temporal Death*, will certainly come ſhort of eternal Life, and will be *hurt of the Second Death*, and eternally *held* by it. There cannot be a fairer Pretence for Apoſtacy and Iniquity, than *ſaving the Life* by it, ſo cogent is the Law of Self-preſervation, and yet even that is Folly, for it will prove in the End, *Self-Deſtruction*. The Life *ſav'd* is but *for a Moment*, the Death ſhun'd is but a *Sleep*; but the Life loſt is *everlaſting*, and the Death run upon is the *Depth* and *Complement* of all Miſery, and an *endleſs* Separation from all Good. Now let any rational Man conſider of it, take Advice, and ſpeak his Mind, whether there's any thing got at long run by Apoſtacy, tho' a Man ſave his Eſtate, Preferment, or Life by it.

(2.) The *Advantage* that attends the moſt *perilous* and *expenſive Conſtancy*. *Whoſoever will loſe his Life* for Chriſt's ſake *in this World*, ſhall find it in a better, infinitely to his Advantage. *Note*, 1. There's many a Life loſt for *Chriſt's ſake*, in *doing* Work, by labouring fervently for his Name, in *ſuffering* Work, by chuſing rather to dye than to deny him, or his Truths and Ways. Chriſt's holy Religion is handed down to us ſealed with the Blood of Thouſands, that have not *known their own Souls*, but have *deſpiſed their Lives* (as *Job* ſpeaks in another Caſe) though very valuable ones, when they have ſtood in Competition with their Duty, and the *Teſtimony of Jeſus*, Rev. 20. 4. (2.) Though many have been *Loſers for Chriſt*, even of Life it ſelf, yet never any one was, or will be a *Loſer by him* in the End. The Loſs of other Comforts for Chriſt may poſſibly be made up in this World, *Mark* 10.30. The loſs of Life cannot, but it ſhall be made up in the other World, in an *eternal Life*. The believing Proſpect of which hath been the great Support of ſuffering Saints in all Ages. And Aſſurance of the Life they ſhould find in lieu of the Life they hazzarded, hath enabled them to triumph over Death in all its Terrors, to go *ſmiling* to a Scaffold, and to ſtand ſinging at a Stake, and to call the utmoſt Inſtances of their Enemies Rage but a *light Affliction*.

2. The *Worth of the Soul*, which lies at Stake and the *Worthleſneſs* of the World in Compariſon of it, v. 26. *What is a Man profitted if he gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul*, τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ; the ſame Word which is tranſlated, *his Life*, v. 25. for the *Soul* is *the Life*, Gen. 2. 7. This alludes to that common Principle, That whatever a Man gets, if he loſe his Life, 'twill *do him no good*, he cannot *enjoy his gains*. But it looks higher, and ſpeaks of the Soul as immortal, and a Loſs of it beyond Death, which cannot be compenſated by the Gain of the whole World. *Note*, (1.) Every Man has a Soul of *his own*. The Soul is the ſpiritual and immortal Part of Man, which thinketh and reaſoneth, has a Power of Reflection and Proſpect, which acts the Body now, and will ſhortly act in a Separation from the Body. Our Souls are *our own*, not in Reſpect of Dominion and Propriety, for we are not our own, *All Souls are mine*, ſaith God; but in Reſpect of Nearneſs and Concern, our Souls are our own, for they are our *ſelves*. (2.) It is poſſible the Soul may be loſt and there is danger of it. The Soul is *loſt*, when it is eternally ſeperated from all the good to all the evil that a Soul is capable of; when it dies, as a Soul can die, when it is *ſeparated* from the Favour of God, and *ſunk* under his Wrath and Curſe. A Man is never *undone*, till he is *in Hell*. (3.) If the Soul be loſt it is of the Sinners own loſing. The Man *loſeth his own Soul*, for he doth that which is certainly *deſtroying* to it, and neglects that which alone would be *ſaving*. *Hoſ.* 13. 9. The Sinner dies becauſe he will die, his Blood is on his own Head. (4.) *One Soul* is more worth than *all the World*, our own Souls that we have, of greater Value to us than all the Wealth, Honour, and Pleaſures of this preſent time, if we had it. Here's the *whole World* ſet in the Scale againſt *one Soul*, and *Tekel* written upon it; 'tis weigh'd in the Balance, and found too light to *weigh it down*. This is Chriſt's Judgment upon the Matter, and he is a competent Judge; he had reaſon to know the Price of Souls, for he redeem'd them, nor would he under rate the World, for he *made* it. (5.) The *wenning of the World* is oftentimes the *loſing of the Soul*. Many a one has ruin'd his eternal Intereſts, by his prepoſterous and inordinate Care to ſecure and advance his temporal ones. 'Tis the Love of the World and the eagar Perſuit of it, that *drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition*. (6.) The Loſs of the Soul is ſo great a Loſs, that the Gain of the whole World will not countervail it, or make it up. He that *loſes his Soul*, though it be *to gain the World*, makes a very bad bargain for himſelf, and will ſit down at laſt an unſpeakable Loſer. When he comes *to balance the Account*, and to compare *Profit* and *Loſs*, he will find, that inſtead of the Advantage he promis'd himſelf, he is ruin'd to all Intents and Purpoſes, is irreparable broken.

What ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul? Note, If once the Soul be loſt, it is loſt for ever, There is no ἀντάλλαγμα, no Counter price than can be *paid*, or will be *accepted*. 'Tis a Loſs that can never be *repair'd*, never be *retriev'd*. If after that great Price which Chriſt laid down to *redeem* our Souls, and to reſtore us to the Poſſeſſion of them, they be ſo neglected for the World, as that they come to be *loſt*, that new Mortgage will never be *taken off*; there remains no more *Sacrifices* for Sin, nor *Price* for Souls, but the *Equity* of Redemption is eternally precluded. Therefore it is good to be *wiſe in time*, and do well for our ſelves.

2. Here are ſome Conſiderations proper to encourage us in Self-denial, and Suffering for Chriſt.

1. The *Aſſurance* we have of Chriſt's Glory at his ſecond coming to judge the World, *v.* 27. If we look to the End of all theſe things, the *Period* of the World, and the Poſture of Souls then, we ſhall from thence from a very different Idea of the preſent State of things. If we ſee things as they *will* appear *then*, we ſhall ſee them as they *ſhould* appear *now*.

The great Encouragement to Stedfaſtneſs in Religion is taken from the ſecond Coming of Chriſt, conſidering it.

(1.) As his *Honour*. *The Son of Man ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, with his Angels*. To look upon Chriſt in his State of Humiliation, ſo abaſed, ſo abuſed, *a Reproach of Men, and deſpiſed of the People*, would diſcourage his Followers from taking any Pains, or running any Hazzards for him, but with an Eye of Faith to ſee the Captain of our Salvation coming in his Glory, in all the Pomp and Power of the upper World, will animate us, and make us think nothing too much to do, or too hard to ſuffer for him. *The Son of Man ſhall come*. He here gives himſelf the Title of his humble State, he is the *Son of Man*, to ſhew that he is not aſhamed to own it. His firſt coming was in the *Meanneſs of his Children*, who being Partakers of Fleſh, he took Part of the ſame; but his ſecond coming will be in the *Glory of his Father*. In his firſt coming he his attended with *poor Diſciples*, in his ſecond coming he will be attended with glorious Angels, and if we ſuffer with him, we ſhall be *glorified with him*, 2 Tim. 2. 12.

(2.) As *our Concern*. Then *he ſhall reward every Man according to his Works*. *Obſerve*, (1.) Jeſus Chriſt will come *as a Judge*, to diſpenſe Rewards and Puniſhments, infinitely exceeding the greateſt that any Earthly Potentate has the diſpenſing of. The Terror of Men's Tribunal, (*Mat.* 10. 18.) will be taken off by a believing Proſpect of the Glory of Chriſt's Tribunal. (2.) Men will then be rewarded, not according to their *Gains* in this World, but *according to their Works*, according to what they *were*, and *did*. In that Day the Treachery of Backſliders will be puniſhed with eternal Deſtruction, and the conſtancy of faithful Souls recompens'd with a Crown of Life. (3.) The beſt Preparative for that Day, is to *deny our ſelves*, and *take up our Croſs* and follow Chriſt; for ſo we ſhall make the *Judge* our *Friend*, and theſe things will then paſs well in the Account. (4.) The rewarding of Men *according to their Works* is defer'd till *that Day*. Here Good and Evil ſeem to be diſpens'd promiſcuouſly; we ſee not Apoſtacy puniſh'd with immediate *Strokes*, nor Fidelity encourag'd with immediate *Smiles* from Heaven; but in that Day all will be *ſet to rights*. Therefore *judge nothing before the time*, 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8.

2. The *near approach* of his Kingdom *in this World*, v. 28. 'Twas ſo near that there were ſome attending him that ſhould live to ſee it. As *Simeon* was aſſur'd that he ſhould not *ſee Death* till he had *ſeen the Lord's Chriſt* come in the Fleſh; ſo ſome here are aſſur'd that they ſhall not *taſte Death*. (Death is a ſenſible thing, its *Terrors* are *ſeen*, its *Bitterneſs* is *taſted*) till they had ſeen the Lord's Chriſt *coming in his Kingdom*. At the *end of Time* he ſhall come *in his Father's Glory*, but now in the *fulneſs of Time* he was to come in *his own Kingdom*, his *Mediatorial* Kingdom; Some little *Specimen* was given of his *Glory* a few Days after this in his *Transfiguration, Chap.* 17. 1. then he *try'd* his Robes. But this points at Chriſt's coming, by the pouring out of his Spirit, the planting of the Goſpel-Church, the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the taking away of the Place and Nation of the *Jews*, who were the moſt bitter Enemies to Chriſtianity. Here was the *Son of Man coming in his Kingdom*. Many then preſent liv'd to ſee it, particularly *John*, who liv'd till after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and ſaw Chriſtianity planted in the World. Let this encourage the then followers of Chriſt to ſuffer for him. (1.) That their Undertaking ſhall be *ſucceeded*; the Apoſtles were employ'd in ſetting up Chriſt's Kingdom, let them know for their comfort, that whatever Oppoſition they meet with, yet they ſhould carry their Point, ſhould *ſee of the Travel of their Soul*. *Note*, It is a great Encouragement to ſuffering Saints to be aſſur'd, not only of the Safety, but of the Advancement of Chriſt's Kingdom among Men; not only *notwithſtanding* their Sufferings, but *by* their Sufferings. A believing Proſpect of the Succeſs of the Kingdom of Grace, as well as of our ſhare in the Kingdom of Glory, may carry us cheafully through our Suffering. (2.) That their *Cauſe* ſhall be *pleaded*; their Deaths ſhall be reveng'd, and their Perſecutors reckon'd with. (3.) That this ſhall be done ſhortly, in the preſent Age. *Note*, The nearer the Church's Deliverances are, the more chearful ſhould we be in our Sufferings for Chriſt. *Behold, the Judge ſtandeth before the Door*. It is ſpoken as a Favour to thoſe that ſhould ſurvive the preſent cloudy Time, that they ſhould ſee better Days. *Note*, 'Tis deſirable to ſhare with the Church in her Joys, *Dan.* 12. 12. Obſerve, Chriſt ſaith, *Some* ſhall live to ſee thoſe glorious Days, not *all*; ſome ſhall enter into the promiſed Land, but others ſhall fall in the Wilderneſs. He doth not tell them *who* ſhould live to ſee this Kingdom, leſt if they had known, they ſhould have put off the Thoughts of Dying, but *ſome* of them ſhall; behold *the Lord is at hand*, The *Judge ſtandeth before the Door*; *be patient therefore Brethren*.

CHAP. XVII.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *Chriſt in his* Pomp *and* Glory transfigured, v. 1.—13. (2.) *Chriſt in his* Power *and* Grace *caſting the Devil out of a Child*, v. 14—21. *And* (3.) *Chriſt in his* Poverty *and great Humiliation*, (1.) *foretelling, his own Sufferings* v. 22, 23. (2.) *Paying Tribute*, v. 24.—27. *So that here's Chriſt, the brightneſs of his Father's Glory by himſelf, purging our Sins, paying our Debts, and deſtroying for us him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil. Thus were the ſeveral* Indications *of Chriſt's gracious* Intentions *admirably* interwoven.

AND after ſix days, Jeſus taketh Peter, James and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them, and his face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And behold, there appeared unto them Moſes and Elias talking with him. 4 Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, it is good for us to be here; if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias. 5 While he yet ſpake, behold, a bright cloud overſhadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which ſaid, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear ye him. 6 And when the diſciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were ſore afraid. 7 And Jeſus came and touched them, and ſaid, Ariſe, and be not afraid. 8 And when they had lift up their eyes, they ſaw no man, ſave Jeſus only. 9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jeſus charged them, ſaying, Tell the viſion to no man, until the Son of man be riſen again from the dead. 10 And his diſciples asked him, ſaying, Why then ſay the ſcribes, that Elias muſt firſt come? 11 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Elias truly ſhall firſt come, and reſtore all things: 12 But I ſay unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatſoever they liſted: likewiſe ſhall alſo the Son of man ſuffer of them. 13 Then the diſciples underſtood that he ſpake unto them of John the Baptiſt.

We have here the Story of *Chriſt's Transfiguration*; he had ſaid that the *Son of Man ſhould* ſhortly *come in his Kingdom*, to which Promiſe all the three Evangeliſts induſtriouſly connect this Story; as if Chriſt's Transfiguration were intended for a *Specimen* and an *Earneſt* of the Kingdom of Chriſt, and of that *Light* and *Love* of his, which therein appears to his Select and Sanctified ones. *Peter* ſpeaks of this as the *Power and coming of our Lord Jeſus*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 16. becauſe it was an *Emanation* of his Power, and a previous notice of his *coming*, which it was fit ſhould be introduc'd by ſuch proper Prefaces.

When Chriſt was here in his Humiliation, tho' his State for the main was a State of Abaſement and Affliction, yet there were ſome Glimpſes of his Glory intermix'd, that he himſelf might be *the more encourag'd* in his Sufferings, and others *the leſs offended*. His Birth, his Baptiſm, his Temptation, and his Death were the moſt remarkable Inſtances of his Humiliation; and theſe were each of them attended with ſome ſignal Points of Glory, and the Smiles of Heaven, But the Series of his publick Miniſtry being a *continued* Humiliation, here juſt in the midſt of that comes in this diſcovery of his Glory. As now he is in Heaven he has his Condeſcenſions, ſo when he was on Earth he had his Advancements.

Now concerning Chriſt's Transfiguration. *Obſerve*,

Firſt, The Circumſtances of it, which are here noted, *v.* 1.

1. The *Time*, *ſix Days* after he had had that ſolemn Conference with his Diſciples, *Chap.* 16. 21. St *Luke* ſaith, it *was about eight Days after*, ſix whole Days intervening, and this the eight Day, that Day Seven-night. Nothing is recorded to be ſaid or done by our Lord Jeſus, for *ſix* Days before his Transfiguration; thus before ſome great Appearances *there was Silence in Heaven for the ſpace of half an hour*, *Rev.* 8. 1. Then when Chriſt ſeems to be doing nothing for his Church, expect e'er long ſomething more than ordinary.

2. The *Place*, it was on the top of a *high Mountain apart*. Chriſt choſe a Mountain (1.) as a *ſecret* place, he *went apart*; for tho' a *City upon a Hill* can hardly be *hid*, two or three Perſon upon a Hill can hardly be *found*; therefore their private Oratories were commonly on Mountains. Chriſt choſe a retired Place to be Transfigured in, becauſe his appearing publickly in his Glory was not agreeable to his preſent State, and thus he would ſhew his *Humility*, and teach us, that Privacy doth much befriend our Communion with God. Thoſe that would maintain an Intercourſe with Heaven muſt frequently withdraw from the Converſe and Buſineſs of this World, and they will find themſelves never leſs alone, than when alone, for *the Father is with them*, (2.) Tho' a *ſublime* place, *elevated* above things below. *Note*, Thoſe that would have a transforming Fellowſhip with God, muſt not only *retire*, but *aſcend*; *lift up* their Hearts, and *ſeek things above*. The Call is *come up hither*, Rev. 6. 1.

3. The *witneſſes* of it. He took with him *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*. (1.) He took *three*, a competent number, to teſtifie what they ſhould *ſee*; for out of the Mouth of two or *three* Witneſſes ſhall every Word be eſtabliſh'd. Chriſt makes his Appearances *certain* enough, but too *common, not to all the People, but to Witneſſes*, Acts 10. 41. that they might be bleſſed, who have not ſeen, and yet have believ'd. (2.) He took *theſe* three becauſe they were the chief of his Diſciples, the *firſt three* of the Worthies of the Son of *David*, probably they excell'd in Gifts and Graces; they were Chriſt's Favourites, ſingled out to be the Witneſſes of his Retirements. They were preſent when he rais'd the Damſel to Life, *Mark* 5. 37. They were afterwards to be the Witneſſes of his Agony, and *this* was to prepare them for that. *Note*, A ſight of Chriſt's Glory while we are here in *this World*, is a good Preparative for our Sufferings with him, as theſe are Preparatives for the ſight of his Glory in the *other World*. *Paul* that had abundance of Trouble, had abundance of Revelations.

Secondly, The manner of it, *v.* 2. *He was transfigured before them*. The Subſtance of his Body remain'd the ſame, but the Accidents and Appearances of it were greatly alter'd; he was not turn'd into a Spirit, but his Body which had appear'd in Weakneſs and Diſhonour, now appear'd in *Power and Glory*. *He was transfigured*, μετεμορφώθη he was *Metamorphos'd*. The profane Poets amus'd and abus'd the World with idle extravagant Stories of *Metamorphoſes*, eſpecially the *Metamorphoſes* of their gods, and ſuch as were diſparaging and diminiſhing to them, which were equally falſe and ridiculous; to theſe ſome think *Peter* has an eye, when being about to mention this

Transfiguration of Chriſt, he ſaith, *We have not followed cunningly deviſed Fables, when we made it known unto you*, 2 Pet. 1. 16. Chriſt was both *God* and *Man*, but in the Days of his Fleſh he took on him the *form of a Servant*, μορφὴν δȣ́λȣ, *Phil.* 2. 7. He drew a Vail over the Glory of his Godhead; but now in his Transfiguration he *put by* that Vail, appear'd ἐν μορφῇ Θεȣ̃ in the *Form of God*, *Phil.* 2. 6. gave his Diſciples a glimpſe of his Glory, which could not but *change his Form.*

The great Truth which we declare is, that *God is Light*, 1 John 1. 5. *dwells in light*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. covers himſelf with Light, *Pſal.* 104. 2. And therefore when Chriſt would appear in the *Form of God*, he appear'd *in Light*, the moſt glorious of all viſible Beings, the Firſt-born of the Creation, and moſt nearly reſembling the Eternal Parent. Chriſt is *the Light*, while he was in the World he *ſhined in Darkneſs*, and therefore the World knew him not, *John* 1. 5, 10. But at this time that Light *ſhined out of the Darkneſs.*

Now his Transfiguration appear'd in two things.

1. *His Face did ſhine as the Sun.* The Face is the principle part of the Body, by which we are *known*; therefore ſuch a Brightneſs was put on Chriſt's Face, that *Face* which afterwards he *hid not from ſhame and Spitting.* It ſhone *as the Sun* when it goes forth in his Strength, ſo clear, ſo bright, for he is the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, the Light of the World. The Face of *Moſes* ſhone but as the *Moon* with a borrowed reflected light, but Chriſt ſhone *as the Sun*, with an innate inherent Light, which was the more ſenſibly glorious, becauſe it ſuddenly broke out as it were from behind a black Cloud.

2. His *Raiment was white as the Light.* All his Body was alter'd as his Face was; ſo that Beams of Light darting from every part through his Clothes made them *white*, and *glittering.* The ſhining of the Face of *Moſes* was ſo weak, that it could eaſily be conceal'd by a thin Vail, but ſuch was the Glory of Chriſt's *Body*, that his Clothes were enlighten'd by it.

Thirdly, The *Companions* of it; he will come at laſt with *ten thouſands of his Saints*, and as a Specimen of that, *there now appear'd unto them, Moſes* and *Elias talking with him*, *v.* 3. Obſerve (1.) There were glorified Saints attending him, that when there were *three to bear Record on Earth, Peter, James* and *John*, there might be ſome to bear Record from Heaven too. Thus here was a lively reſemblance of *Chriſt's Kingdom*, which is made up of Saints in Heaven, and Saints on Earth, and to which belong the *Spirits of juſt Men made perfect.* We ſee here that they which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt are not periſhed, but do exiſt in a *ſeperate State*, and ſhall be forth-coming when there is occaſion. (2.) Theſe two were *Moſes* and *Elias*, Men very eminent in their Day. They had both faſted forty Days, and forty Nights, as Chriſt did, and wrought other Miracles, and were both remarkable at their going out of the World, as well as in their living in the World. *Elias* was carried to Heaven in a fiery Chariot, and died not. The Body of *Moſes* was never found, poſſibly it was *preſerv'd* from Corruption, and reſerv'd for this Appearance. The *Jews* had great Reſpect for the Memory of *Moſes* and *Elias*, and therefore they came to witneſs of him, they came to carry tidings concerning him to the upper World. In them the Law and the Prophets did honour to Chriſt and bore Teſtimony to him. *Moſes* and *Elias* appear'd to the Diſciples, they *ſaw* them, and heard them talk, and either by their Diſcourſe, or by information from Chriſt they knew them to be *Moſes* and *Elias*; glorified Saints ſhall *know one another* in Heaven. They *talked with* Chriſt. *Note*, Chriſt has Communion with the Bleſſed, and will be no ſtranger to any of the Members of that glorified Corporation. Chriſt was now to be *Seal'd* in his Prophetical Office, and therefore theſe two great Prophets were fitteſt to attend him, as transferring all their Honour and Intereſt to him, for *in theſe laſt Days God ſpeaks to us by his Son*; Heb. 1. 1.

Fourthly, The great Pleaſure and Satisfaction that the Diſciples took in the ſight of Chriſt's Glory. *Peter*, as uſual, ſpoke for the reſt. *Lord it is good for us to be here. Peter* here expreſſeth.

1. The *Delight* they had in this Converſe, *Lord*, it is *good to be here.* Tho' upon a *high Mountain*, which we may ſuppoſe rough and unpleaſant, black, and cold, yet *it's good to be here.* He ſpeaks the Senſe of his Fellow-Diſciples; 'tis not only good *for me*, but good *for us.* He did not covet to monopolize this Favour, but gladly takes them in. He ſaith this to *Chriſt.* Pious and devout Affections love to pour out themſelves before the Lord Jeſus. The Soul that loves Chriſt, and loves to be with him, loves to go and tell him ſo: *Lord it is good for us to be here*; this intimates a thankful Acknowledgment of his Kindneſs in admitting them to this Favour. *Note*, Communion with Chriſt is the Delight of Chriſtians. All the Diſciples of the Lord Jeſus reckon it is good for them to be with him in the holy Mount. It is good to be here where Chriſt is, and brings us along with him by his Appointment; it is good to be *here*, retir'd, and alone with Chriſt; to be here where we may *behold the Beauty* of the Lord Jeſus, *Pſal.* 27. 4. 'Tis pleaſant to hear Chriſt compare Notes with *Moſes* and the Prophets, to ſee how all the Inſtitutions of the Law, and all the Predictions of the Prophets pointed at Chriſt, and were filled in him.

2. The *deſire* they had of the continuance of it. *Let us make here, three Tabernacles.* There was in this, as in many other of *Peter*'s Sayings, a mixture of Weakneſs, and of Good-will, more Zeal than Diſcretion.

1. Here was a Zeal for this Converſe with Heavenly Things, a laudable Complacency in the ſight they had of Chriſt's Glory. *Note*, Thoſe that by Faith *behold the Beauty of the Lord* in his Houſe, cannot but deſire to *dwell there all the Days of their Life.* It's good having a *Nail in God's holy Place*, *Ezra* 9. 8. A conſtant Abode, to be in holy Ordinances, as a *Man at home*, not as a *Way-faring Man. Peter* thought this *Mountain* was a fine ſpot of Ground to *Build upon*, and he was for making Tabernacles there, as *Moſes* in the Wilderneſs made a Tabernacle for the *Schechinah*, or *Divine Glory*

It argued great Reſpect for his Maſter and the Heavenly Gueſts. with ſome commendable Forgetfulneſs of himſelf and his Fellow Diſciples, that he would have Tabernacles for *Chriſt*, and *Moſes and Elias*, but none for himſelf. He would be content to lie in the open Air, on the cold Ground in ſuch good Company; if his Maſter have but *where to lay his head*, no matter whether he himſelf has or no.

2. Yet in this Zeal he betray'd a great deal of Weakneſs and Ignorance; What need had *Moſes* and *Elias* of Tabernacles? they belong'd to that bleſſed World, *where they hunger no more, nor doth the Sun light upon them.* Chriſt had lately foretold his Sufferings, and bid his Diſciples expect the like; *Peter* forgets *that*, or to prevent it, will needs be building Tabernacles in the *Mount of Glory, out of the way* of Trouble. Still he harps upon, *Maſter ſpare thy ſelf*, tho' he had been ſo lately check'd for it. *Note*, There is a Proneneſs in good Men to expect the Crown without the Croſs. *Peter* was for laying hold of this as the Prize, tho' he had not yet *fought* his *Fight*, nor finiſhed his Courſe; as theſe other Diſciples, *Mat.* 20. 21. We are out in our Aim, if we look for a Heaven here upon Earth. It is not for Strangers and Pilgrims, (ſuch we are in our beſt Circumſtances in this World) to talk of Building, or expect a *continuing City.*

Yet it is ſome excuſe to the Incongruity of *Peter*'s Propoſal, not only that he *knew not what he ſaid Luke* 9. 33. but alſo that he ſubmitted the Propoſal to the Wiſdom of Chriſt; *If thou wilt, let us make Tabernacles. Note*, Whatever Tabernacles we propoſe to make to our ſelves in this World, we muſt always remember to ask Chriſt leave.

Now to this which *Peter* ſaid there was no Reply made; the diſappearing of the Glory would ſoon anſwer it. They that promiſe themſelves great things on this Earth, will ſoon be undeceived by their own Experience.

Fifthly, The glorious Teſtimony which God the Father gave to our Lord Jeſus, in which he *received from him Honour and Glory*, (2 Pet. 1. 17.) when *there came this Voice from the excellent Glory.* This was like *proclaming* the *Titles of Honour*, or the *Royal Style* of a Prince, when at his Coronation he appears in his *Robes of State*; and be it known, to the comfort of Mankind the Royal Style of Chriſt is taken from him his Mediation. Thus in Viſion he appear'd with a Rainbow, the Seal of the Covenant about his Throne, *Rev.* 4. 3. for 'tis *his Glory* to be our *Redeemer.*

Now concerning this Teſtimony from Heaven to Chriſt, *Obſerve*,

1. *How it came*, and in what manner it was *introduc'd.*

1. There was *a Cloud.* We find often in the Old Teſtament, that a Cloud was the viſible Token of God's Preſence; he came down upon *Mount Sinai* in a Cloud, *Exod.* 19. 9. and ſo to *Moſes*, Exod. 34. 5. *Numb.* 11. 25. He took Poſſeſſion of the Tabernacle in a Cloud, and afterwards of the Temple, where Chriſt was in his Glory the *Temple* was, and there God ſhew'd himſelf preſent. We know not the *ballancings of the Clouds*, but we know that much of the Intercourſe and Communication between Heaven and Earth is maintain'd by them. By the Clouds *Vapours aſcend*, and *Rains deſcend*; therefore God is ſaid to make the *Clouds his Chariots*, ſo he did here when he deſcended upon this Mount.

2. It was a *bright Cloud*, under the Law it was commonly a *thick* and *dark* Cloud that God made the Token of his Preſence; he came down upon *Mount Sinai* in a thick Cloud, *Exod.* 19. 16. and ſaid he would *dwell in the thick Darkneſs*; ſee 1 *Kings* 8. 1. But we are not now come to that Mount that was cover'd with *Blackneſs and Darkneſs*, *Heb.* 12. 18. but to the Mount that is crown'd with a *bright Cloud.* Both the Old Teſtament, and the New Teſtament Diſpenſation had Tokens of God's Preſence, but *that* was a Diſpenſation of Darkneſs, and Terror, and Bondage, *this* of Light, Love, and Liberty.

3. It *overſhadow'd* them. This Cloud was intended to break the force of that great Light, which otherwiſe would have overcome the Diſciples, and have been *intolerable* 'twas like the Veil which *Moſes* put upon his Face when it ſhone. God in manifeſting himſelf to his People, *conſiders their Frame.* This Cloud was to their Eyes, as Parables to their Underſtandings, to convey *ſpiritual* things by things *ſenſible*, as they were *able to bear them.*

4. There came a *Voice out of the Cloud.* and it was the Voice of God, who now, as of old, *ſpake in the cloudy Pilar*, *Pſal.* 49. 7. Here was no Thunder, or Lightning, or Voice of a Trumpet, as there was when the Law was given by *Moſes*, but only a Voice, ſtill ſmall Voice, and that not uſher'd in with a ſtrong Wind, or an Eearthquake, or Fire, as when God ſpake to *Elias*, 1 Kings 10. 11, 13. *Moſes* then, and *Elias* were witneſſes, that in theſe laſt Days God hath ſpoken to us by his Son in another way, than he ſpoke formerly to them. This Voice came from the *excellent Glory*, 2 Pet. 1. 17. the Glory which *excelleth*, in compariſon of which the former had *no Glory*; tho' the excellent Glory was clouded, ye thence came a Voice, for Faith *comes by Hearing.*

2. What this Teſtimony from Heaven was. *This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.* Here we have.

1. The great *Goſpel-Myſtery* reveal'd; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* This was the very ſame that was ſpoken from Heaven at his Baptiſm, *Chap.* 3. 17. And it was the beſt News that ever came from Heaven to Earth ſince Man Sin'd. 'Tis to the ſame purpoſe with that great Doctrine, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. *That God was in Chriſt, reconciling the World to himſelf. Moſes and Elias* were great Men, and Favourites of Heaven, yet they were but *Servants*, and Servants that God was not always well pleaſed in; for *Moſes ſpake unadviſedly*, and *Elias* was a Man *ſubject to Paſſions*; but Chriſt is *a Son*, and in him God was always *well pleaſed. Moſes* and *Elias* where ſometimes Inſtruments of Reconciliation between God and *Iſrael*, *Moſes* was a great *Interceſſor*, and *Elias* a great Reformer, but in Chriſt God is reconciling the World, his *Interceſſion* is more prevalent than that of *Moſes*, and his *Reformation* more effectual than that of *Elias*.

This Repetition of the ſame Voice that came from Heaven at his Baptiſm, was no *vain Repetition*; but, like the doubling of *Pharaoh*'s Dream, was to ſhew the *thing was eſtabliſh'd.* What God hath thus ſpoken *once*, yea, *twice*, no doubt, he will ſtand to, and he expects we ſhould take notice of it. It was ſpoken at his Baptiſm, becauſe then he was entring upon his *Temptation*, and his *publick Miniſtry*; and now it was repeated becauſe he was entring upon his *Sufferings*, which are to be dated from hence, for now, and not before he began to *foretel* them, and immediately after his Transfiguration it is ſaid, *Luke* 9. 51. that *the time was come that he ſhould be received up*; this therefore was then repeated to arm *him* againſt the Terror, and his *Diſciples* againſt the *Offence of the Croſs*. When Sufferings begin to abound, Conſolations are given in moſt abundantly, 2 *Cor.* 1 3.

2. The great *Goſpel Duty* requir'd, and it is the condition of our Benefit by Chriſt, *hear ye him*. God is well pleas'd with none in Chriſt but thoſe that *hear him*. 'Tis not enough to give him the hearing, (what will that avail us?) but we muſt hear him, and believe him as the great Prophet and Teacher, hear him, and be rul'd by him, as the great Prince and Lawgiver; hear him, and heed him. Whoever will know the Mind of God, muſt hearken to Jeſus Chriſt; for by him God has in theſe laſt Days *ſpoken to us*. This Voice from Heaven has made all the Sayings of Chriſt as *authentick* as if they had been thus ſpoken *out of a Cloud.* God doth here as it were *turn us over* to Chriſt for all the Revelations of his Mind; and it refers to that Prediction concerning the Prophet God would raiſe up like unto *Moſes*, Deut. 18. 18. *him ſhall ye hear.*

Chriſt now appear'd *in Glory*, and the more we ſee of Chriſt's Glory, the more cauſe we ſhall ſee to hearken to him; but the Diſciples were gazing on that Glory of his which they *ſaw*, they are therefore bid not to *look at him*, but *to hear him*. Their *ſight* of his Glory was ſoon intercepted by the *Cloud*, but their buſineſs was to hear him. We walk *by Faith*, which *comes by Hearing*, not *by Sight*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7.

Moſes and *Elias* were now with him, the *Law and the Prophets*, hitherto it was ſaid, *hear them*, *Luke* 16. 29. The Diſciples were ready to equal them with Chriſt, when they muſt have Tabernacles for them as well as for him. They had been talking with Chriſt, and probably, the Diſciples were very deſirous to know what they ſaid, and to hear ſomething more from them; no ſaith God, *hear him*, and that's enough; him, and not *Moſes* and *Elias*, who were preſent, and whoſe *Silence gave conſent* to this Voice; they had nothing to ſay to the contrary, whatever Intereſt they had in the World as Prophets, they were willing to ſee it all transfer'd to Chriſt, that in *all things he might have the Preheminence*. Be not troubled that *Moſes* and *Elias* make ſo ſhort a ſtay with you, hear Chriſt, and you will not want them.

Sixthly, The Fright which the Diſciples were put into by this Voice, and the Encouragement Chriſt gave them.

1. *The Diſciples fell on their Faces* and *were ſore afraid.* The greatneſs of the Light, and the Surprize of it might have a natural Influence upon them to diſpirit them. But that was not all, ever ſince Man ſin'd and heard God's Voice in the Garden, extraordinary Appearances of God have ever been terrible to Man; who knowing he has no reaſon to expect any Good, has been afraid to hear any thing immediately from God. *Note*, Even then when *fair Weather* comes *out of the ſecret place*, yet *with God* is *terrible Majeſty*, *John* 37. 22. See what dreadful work *the Voice of the Lord makes*, *Pſal.* 29. 4. 'Tis well for us that God ſpeaks to us by Men *like our ſelves*, whoſe *Terror ſhall not make us afraid.*

2. Chriſt graciouſly rais'd them up with abundance of tenderneſs. *Note*, The Glories and Advancements of our Lord Jeſus, do not at all leſſen his regard to, and concern for his People that are compaſs'd about with Infirmity. 'Tis comfortable to think, that now he is in his *exalted State*, he has a Compaſſion for, and condeſcends to the meaneſt true Believer. *Obſerve* here (1.) What he did, *he came and touched them.* His Approaches baniſh'd their Fears; and when they apprehended that they were *apprehended of Chriſt*, there needed no more to make them eaſie. Chriſt *laid his right hand* upon *John* in a like caſe, and upon *Daniel*, *Rev.* 1. 17. *Dan.* 8. 18.—10. 18. Chriſt's Touches were often healing, and here they were ſtrengthning and comforting. (2.) What he ſaid; *Ariſe and be not afraid. Note*, Tho' a fear of Reverence in our converſe with Heaven is pleaſing to Chriſt, yet a fear of Amazement is not ſo, but muſt be ſtriven againſt. Chriſt ſaid, *Ariſe. Note*, It is Chriſt by his Word, and the Power of his Grace going along with it that raiſeth up good Men from their Dejections, and ſilenceth their Fears, and none but he can do it. *Ariſe, be not afraid. Note*, Cauſeleſs Fears would ſoon vaniſh, if we would not yield to them, and lye down under them, but get up, and do what we can againſt them. Conſidering what they had *ſeen* and *heard*, they had more reaſon to *rejoyce* than to *fear*, and yet it ſeems they needed this Caution. *Note*, Through the Infirmity of the Fleſh, we oft frighten our ſelves with that wherewith we ſhould encourage our ſelves. *Obſerve*, after they had an expreſs Command from Heaven to *hear Chriſt*, the firſt Word they had from him was, *Be not afraid*, hear that. *Note*, Chriſt's Errand into the World was to give comfort to good People, that being deliver'd out of the Hands of their Enemies, they might ſerve God *without fear*, *Luke* 1. 74. 75.

Seventhly, The diſappearing of the Viſion, *v*, 8. *They* lift up themſelves, and then *lift up their Eyes*, and *ſaw no Man, ſave Jeſus only. Moſes* and *Elias* were gone, the Rays of Chriſt's Glory were laid aſide or vail'd again. They hoped this had been the Day of Chriſt's entrance into his Kingdom, and publick Appearance in that external Splendor which they dream'd of, but ſee how they are diſappointed. *Note*. It is not Wiſdom to raiſe our expectations high in this World, for the moſt valuable of our Glories and Joys here are vaniſhing, even thoſe of near Communion With God are ſo; not a *continual Feaſt*, but a *running Banquet*. If ſometimes we are favour'd with ſpecial Manifeſtations of Divine Grace, Glimpſes, and Pledges of future Glory, yet they are withdrawn preſently; two Heavens are too much for thoſe to expect that never deſerve one. Now they *ſaw no Man ſave Jeſus only. Note*, Chriſt will tarry with us when *Moſes* and *Elias* are gone. The Prophets *do not live for ever*, Zech. 1. 5. and we ſee the Period of our Miniſters Converſation, but Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame, *yeſterday, to day, and for ever*, Heb. 13. 7, 8.

Eighthly, The *Diſcourſe* between Chriſt and his Diſciples *as they came down from the Mountain*, v. 9--13.

Obſerve (1.) They *came down from the Mountain. Note*, Even the holy Mountains where we have Communion with God, and Complacency in that Communion, and of which we are ſaying, *it is good to be here*, yet we muſt *come down from*, even there we have no continuing City; bleſſed be God there is a Mountain of Glory and Joy before, whence we ſhall never come down. But obſerve, when the Diſciples came down, Jeſus came with them. *Note*, When we return to the World again after an Ordinance, it muſt be our care to *take Chriſt with us*, and then it may be our comfort that *he is with us*.

(2.) As they *came down they talk'd of Chriſt. Note*, When we are returning from holy Ordinances, 'tis good to entertain our ſelves, and one another with Diſcourſe, ſuitable to the Work we have been about. That *Communication* which is *good to the uſe of edifying*, is then in a ſpecial manner ſeaſonable, as on the contrary, that which is corrupt is worſe *then* than at another Time.

Here's. The *Charge* that Chriſt gave the Diſciples to *keep* the Viſion *very private* for the preſent, *v.* 9. *Tell it to no Man till the Son of Man is riſen.* If they had proclaim'd it, the Credibility of it would have been ſhock'd by his Sufferings, which were now haſtening on. But let the Publication of it be *adjourn'd* till after his Reſurrection, and then that, and his ſubſequent Glory will be a great confirmation of it. *Note*, Chriſt obſerv'd a Method in the Manifeſtation of himſelf, would have his Works put together, mutually to explain and illuſtrate each other, that they might appear in their full ſtrength, and convincing Evidence. Every thing is beautiful in its ſeaſon. Chriſt's *Reſurrection* was properly the beginning of the Goſpel-ſtate and Kingdom, to which all before was but Preparatory, and by way of Preface; and therefore tho' this was tranſacted before, yet it muſt not be produc'd *as Evidence* till then, (and then it appears to have been much inſiſted on by 2 *Pet.* 1. 16, 17, 18.) when the Religion it was deſign'd for the Confirmation of was brought to its full Conſiſtence and Maturity. Chriſt's Time is the beſt and fitteſt for the manifeſting of himſelf, and muſt be attended by us.

2. An Objection which the Diſciples made againſt ſomething Chriſt had ſaid, *v.* 10. *Why then ſay the Scribes that Elias was firſt come?* If *Elias* make ſo ſhort a ſtay, and is gone ſo ſuddenly and we muſt ſay nothing of him; why have we been *taught out of the Law* to expect his publick Appearance in the World immediately before the ſetting up of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom? Muſt the coming of *Elias* be a Secret which every body looks for? Or, thus; If the Reſurrection of the *Meſſiah*, and with it the beginningng of his Kingdom be at hand, what comes of that glorious Preface and Introduction to it, which we expect in the coming of *Elias*. The *Scribes*, who were the publick Expoſitors of the Law, ſaid this according to the Scripture, *Mal.* 4. 5. *Behold I ſend you* Elijah *the Prophet.* The Diſciples ſpoke the common Language of the *Jews*, who made that the Saying of the *Scribes* which was the Saying of the *Scripture*; whereas what Miniſters ſpake to us according to the Word of God, we ſhould ſay, *God ſpeaks* it to us not the Miniſters; for we muſt not receive it *as the Word of Men*, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 13. *Obſerve*, When the Diſciples could not reconcile what Chriſt ſaid with what they had heard out of the Old Teſtament, they deſired him to explain it to them. *Note*, When we are puzzled with Scripture-difficulties, we muſt apply ourſelves to Chriſt by Prayer for his Spirit to open our Underſtandings, and lead us into all Truth.

3. The ſolving of this Objection. *Aſk, and it ſhall be given*, aſk Inſtruction, and it ſhall be given.

1. Chriſt allows the Prediction, *v.* 11. *Elias truly ſhall firſt come and reſtore all things*, ſo far you are in the right; Chriſt did not come to alter or invalidate any thing foretold in the Old Teſtament. *Note*, Corrupt and miſtaken Gloſſes may be ſufficiently rejected and

exploded without diminiſhing or derogating from the Authority or Dignity of the Sacred Text. New Teſtament Prophecies are *true and good*, and to be received and improved, tho' ſome hot fooliſh Men may have miſinterpreted them, and drawn wrong Inferences from them. He ſhall come and *reſtore all things*, not reſtore them to their former State; *John Baptiſt* went not about to do that, but he ſhall *accompliſh all things*, ſo it may be read; to wit, all things that were *written of him*, all the Predictions of the coming of *Elias*. *John Baptiſt* came to reſtore things Spiritually, to revive the Decays of Religion, to *turn the Hearts of the Fathers to their Children*, which means the ſame with this here, he ſhall *reſtore all things*. *John* Preach'd *Repentance*, and that *reſtores all things*.

2. He aſſerts the Accompliſhment. The *Scribes* ſay true, that *Elias ſhall come*, *but I ſay unto you* what the *Scribes* could not ſay, that *Elias is come*. v. 12. *Note*, God's Promiſes are often fulfill'd; and Men perceive it not, but enquire, Where is the Promiſe? when it is already perform'd. *Elias is come, and they knew him not*, they know him not to be the *Elias* promis'd, the forerunner of the *Meſſiah*. The *Scribes* buſi'd themſelves in criticizing upon the Scripture, but underſtood not by the Signs of the Times the *fulfilling of the Scripture*. *Note*, It's eaſier to *explain* the Word of God, than to *apply* it, and make a right uſe of it. But it is no wonder that the Morning-Star was not obſerv'd, when he who is the Sun it ſelf was in the World, and *the World knew him not*.

Becauſe they *knew him not*, they have *done to him whatſoever they liſted*; *if they had known*, they would not have Crucified Chriſt, or Beheaded *John*, 1 Cor. 2. 8. They ridicul'd *John*, perſecuted him and at laſt put him to Death, which was *Herod*'s doing, but is here charged upon the whole Generation of unbelieving *Jews*, and particularly the *Scribes*, who, tho' they could not proſecute *John* themſelves, yet were pleas'd with what *Herod* did. He adds, *Likewiſe alſo ſhall the Son of Man ſuffer of them*. Marvel not that *Elias* ſhould be abus'd, and killed by thoſe who pretended with a great deal of Reverence to expect him, when the *Meſſiah* himſelf will be in like manner treated. *Note*, The Sufferings of Chriſt took off the Strangeneſs of all other Sufferings, *John* 15. 18. when they had imbrued their Hands in the Blood of *John Baptiſt*, they were ready to do the like at Chriſt. *Note*, As Men deal with Chriſt's Servants, ſo they would deal with himſelf; And they that are drunk with the Blood of the Martyrs, ſtill cry, *Give, give*, Acts 12. 1, 2, 3.

4. The Diſciples Satisfaction in Chriſt's Reply to their Objection, *v.* 13. they *underſtood that he ſpake unto them of* John *the* Baptiſt. He did not name *John*, but gives them ſuch a Deſcription of him as would put them in mind of what he had ſaid to them formerly concerning him; *This is Elias*. This is a profitable way of teaching, it engageth the Learner's own Thoughts, and makes them, if not their own *Teachers*, yet their own *Remembrances*, and thus Knowledge becomes *eaſie to him that underſtandeth*. When we diligently uſe the Means of Knowledge, how ſtrangely are Miſts ſcatter'd, and Miſtakes rectify'd?

14 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man, kneeling down to him, and ſaying, 15 Lord, have mercy on my ſon, for he is lunatick, and ſore vexed: for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. 16 And I brought him to thy diſciples, and they could not cure him. 17 Then Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, O faithleſs and perverſe generation, how long ſhall I be with you? how long ſhall I ſuffer you? bring him hither to me. 18 And Jeſus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. 19 Then came the diſciples to Jeſus apart, and ſaid, Why could not we caſt him out? 20 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Becauſe of your unbelief: for verily I ſay unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it ſhall remove; and nothing ſhall be unpoſſible unto you. 21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out, but by prayer and faſting.

We have here the miraculous Cure of a Child that was Lunatick, and vexed with a Devil. *Obſerve*,

Firſt, A melancholy *Repreſentation* of the caſe of this Child made to Chriſt by the afflicted Father. This was immediately upon his coming down from the Mountain where he was transfigur'd. *Note*, Chriſt's Glories do not make him unmindful of us, and of our Wants and Miſeries. Chriſt when he came down from the Mount, where he had Converſation with *Moſes* and *Elias*, did not take State upon him, but was as eaſie of acceſs, as ready to poor Beggars, and as familiar with the Multitude as ever he us'd to be. This poor man's Addreſs was very *importunate*, he came *kneeling* to *Chriſt*. *Note*, Senſe of Miſery will bring People to their Knees. Thoſe who ſee their Need of Chriſt will be earneſt, will be in good earneſt in their Applications to him, and he delights to be thus wreſtled with.

Two things the Father of the Child complains of.

1. The *Diſtreſs* of his Child, *v.* 15. *Lord, have mercy on my Son*. The Affliction of the *Children* cannot but affect the tender *Parents*, for they are Pieces of themſelves. And the caſe of afflicted Children ſhould be preſented to God by faithful and fervent Prayer. This Child's Diſtemper probably diſabled him to pray for himſelf. *Note*, Parents are doubly concern'd to pray for their Children, not only that are *weak* and *cannot*, but much more that are *wicked*, and *will not* pray for themſelves. Now, (1.) The *Nature* of this Child's Diſeaſe was very ſad, he is *lunatick, and ſore vexed*. *A Lunatick* is properly one whoſe Diſtemper lies in the Brain, and returns with the Change of the Moon. The Devil by the divine Permiſſion, either caus'd this Diſtemper, or at leaſt concur'd with it to highten and aggravate it. The Child had the *Falling-Sickneſs*, and the Hand of *Satan* was in it, by it he tormented then, and made it much more grievous than ordinarily it is. And thoſe whom *Satan* got poſſeſſion of, he afflicted by thoſe diſeaſes of the Body which do moſt affect the Mind; for 'tis the Soul that he aims to do miſchief to. The Father in his Complaint, ſaith, *he is lunatick*, taking notice of the Effect; but Chriſt in the Cure rebuked the Devil, and ſo ſtruck at the *Cauſe*. Thus he doth in Spiritual Cures. (2.) The Effects of the Diſeaſe were very deplorable, he oft *falls into the Fire, and into the Water*: If the *Force* of the *Diſeaſe* made him to *fall*, the *Malice* of the Devil made him fall into the *Fire*, or *Water*; ſo miſchievous is he where he gains Poſſion and Power in any ſoul. *He ſeeks to devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8.

2. The Diſappointment of his Expectation from the Diſciples, *v*, 16. *I brought him to thy Diſciples, and they could not cure him*. Chriſt gave his Diſciples Power to caſt out Devils, *Mat.* 10. 1, 8. and therein they were ſucceſsful, *Luke.* 10. 17. yet at this time they fail'd in the Operation, tho' they were nine of them together, and before a great Multitude. Chriſt permitted this (1.) to keep them *humble*, and to ſhew them their Dependance upon him, that without him they could *do nothing*. (2.) To glorifie himſelf and his own Power. 'Tis for the Honour of Chriſt to come in with Help at a dead lift, when other *Helpers* cannot help. *Eliſha's* Staff in *Gehazi's* Hand will not raiſe the Child, he muſt come himſelf. *Note*, There are ſome ſpecial Favours which Chriſt reſerves to himſelf the beſtowing of, and ſometimes he keeps the *Ciſtern* empty, that he may bring us to himſelf the *Fountain*. But the Failures of inſtruments ſhall not hinder the Operations of his Grace, which will work, if not *by them, yet without them*.

Secondly, The rebukes that Chriſt gave to the *People* firſt, and then to the Devil.

1. He *chid* thoſe about him, *v.* 17. *O faithleſs and perverſe Generation*. This is not ſpoken to the Diſciples, but to the People, and perhaps eſpecially to the *Scribes*, who are mention'd in *Mark* 9. 14. and who, as it ſhould ſeem, inſulted over the Diſciples, becauſe they had now met with a Caſe that was too hard for them. Chriſt himſelf *could not do many mighty Works* among a People, in whom Unbelief reign'd. It was here owing to the *Faithleſneſs* of this Generation that they could not obtain thoſe Bleſſings from God, that otherwiſe they might have had, as it was owing to the Weakneſs of the Diſciples Faith that they could not do thoſe Works for God, which otherwiſe they might have done. They were *Faithleſs* and *Perverſe*. *Note*. Thoſe that are *Faithleſs* will be *Perverſe*, and *Perverſeneſs* is Sin in its worſt Colours. Faith is Compliance with God; Unbelief is Oppoſition and Controdiction to God. *Iſrael* of old was *perverſe*, becauſe *Faithleſs*, Pſal. 95. 9. *froward*, for in them is *no Faith*, Deut. 32. 20.

Two things he upbraids them with. (1.) His *Preſence* with them *ſo long, how long ſhall I be with you?* Will you always need my bodily Preſence, and never come to ſuch Maturity as to be fit to be left, the People to the Conduct of the Diſciples, and the Diſciples to the Conduct of the Spirit, and of their Commiſſion? Muſt the Child be always carried, and will it never learn to *go alone?* (2.) His *Patience* with them *ſo long? How long ſhall I ſuffer you? Note*, (1.) The Faithleſneſs and Perverſneſs of thoſe who enjoy the Means of Grace, is a great Grief to the Lord Jeſus. Thus did he *ſuffer the Manners* of *Iſrael* of old, *Acts* 13. 18. (2.) The longer Chriſt has born with a perverſe and Faithleſs People, the more he is diſpleas'd with their Perverſneſs and Unbelief; and *he is God, and not Man*, elſe he would not ſuffer ſo long, nor bear ſo much as he doth.

2. He *cur'd* the Child, and ſet him to rights again. he call'd, *Bring him hither to me*. Tho' the People were *Perverſe*, and Chriſt was *provoked*, yet care was taken of the Child. *Note*, Tho' Chriſt may be *angry*, he is never *unkind*, nor doth he in the greateſt of his Diſpleaſure ſhut up the Bowels of his Compaſſion from the Miſerable. *Bring him to me*, *Note*, When all other Helps and Succours fail, we are welcome to Chriſt, and may be confident in him, and in his Power and Goodneſs.

See here an Emblem of Chriſt's Undertaking as our Redeemer.

1. He breaks the Power of *Satan*, v. 18. *Jeſus rebuked the Devil*, as one having Authority, that could back with force his Word of Command, *Note*, Chriſt's Victories over *Satan* are obtain'd by the Power of his Word, the Sword that comes out of his Mouth, *Rev.* 19. 21. Satan cannot ſtand before the Rebukes of Chriſt, tho' his Poſſeſſion has been never ſo long. 'Tis comfortable to thoſe who are wreſtling with Principalities and Powers, that Chriſt hath *ſpoiled them*, Col. 2. 15. The Lion of the Tribe of *Judah* will be too hard for the *roaring Lion* that ſeeks to *devour*.

2. He redreſſeth the Grievances of the Children of Men. *The Child was cur'd from that very hour*. 'Twas an immediate Cure, and a perfect one. This is an encouragement to Parents to bring their Children to Chriſt, whoſe Souls are under Satan's Power; he is able to

heal them, and as willing as he is able. Not only *bring them to Chriſt* by Prayer, but bring them to the *Word of Chriſt*, the ordinary means by which *Satan*'s ſtrong Holds are demoliſh'd in the Soul. Chriſt's Rebukes brought home to the Heart will ruin *Satan*'s Power there.

Thirdly, Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples hereupon.

1. They ask the Reaſon why they could not caſt out the Devil at this time, *v.* 19. *They came to Jeſus apart. Note*, Miniſters that are to deal for Chriſt in publick, have need to keep up a private Communion with him, that they may in ſecret, where no Eyes ſee, bewail their Weakneſs and Straitneſs, their Follies and Infirmities in their publick Performances, and enquire into the Cauſe of them. We ſhould make uſe of that Liberty of Acceſs we have *to Jeſus apart*, where we may be free and particular with him. Such Queſtions as the Diſciples put to Chriſt, we ſhould put to our ſelves in communing with our own Hearts upon our Beds. What was the reaſon we were ſo dull and careleſs at ſuch a time, we came ſo much ſhort in ſuch a Duty, that finding out what was *amiſs*, it may be *amended?*

2. Chriſt gives them two Reaſons why they fail'd.

1. It was *becauſe of their Unbelief*, v. 20. When he ſpoke to the Father of the Child, and to the People, he charg'd it upon *their* Unbelief, when he ſpoke to his Diſciples he charg'd it upon *theirs*; for the truth was, there were *Faults on both ſides*, but we are more concern'd to hear of *our own* Faults than of *other people's*, and to impute Amiſſes to our ſelves than to others. When the Preaching of the Word ſeems not to be ſo ſucceſsful, as ſometimes it has been, the People are apt to lay all the fault upon the Miniſters, and the miniſters upon the People; whereas it is more becoming for each to own their own Faultineſs, and to ſay, *'Tis long of me.* Miniſters in reproving, muſt learn thus to give to each their Portion of the Word, and to take People off from judging others, by teaching all to *judge themſelves.* 'Tis becauſe of your *Unbelief.* Tho' they had Faith, yet that Faith was weak and ineffectual. *Note*, (1.) As far as Faith falls ſhort of its due Strength, Vigour, and Activity, it may truly be ſaid, there is *Unbelief*; many are chargeable with Unbelief, that yet are not to be called Unbelievers. (2.) 'Tis *becauſe of our Unbelief* that we bring ſo little to paſs in Religion, and ſo oft miſcarry and come ſhort in that which is good.

Our Lord Jeſus takes this occaſion to ſhew them the *Power of Faith*, that they might not be defective in that another time, as they were now. *if ye have Faith as a grain of Muſtard-ſeed*, ye ſhall do Wonders, *v.* 20. Some make the Compariſon to refer to the *Quality* of the *Muſtard-ſeed*, which is, when bruis'd, *ſharp* and *penetrating* if you have an active growing Faith, not dead, flat, or inſipid, you will not be baffled and balk'd thus, But it rather refers to the *Quantity*, if you had but a *grain* of true Faith, tho' ſo little that it were like that which is the *leaſt of all ſeeds*, you would do Wonders: *Faith* in general is a firm *Aſſent to*, a *Compliance with*, and a Confidence in all Divine Revelation? the *Faiah* here repuir'd is that which had for his Object that particular Revelation, by which Chriſt gave his Diſciples power to work Miracles in his Name for the Confirmation of the Doctrine they Preach'd; 'twas a Faith in *this* Revelation that they were defective in, either doubting the Validity of their Commiſſion, or fearing it was expir'd with their firſt Miſſion, and was not to continue when they were return'd to their Maſters; or that it was ſome way or other forfeited or withdrawn, perhaps their Maſter's Abſence with the three chief of his Diſciples, with a Charge to the reſt not to follow them, might occaſion ſome Doubts concerning their Power, or rather the Power of the Lord with them to do this; however there was not at preſent ſuch a ſtrong actual Dependance upon, and Confidence in the Promiſe of Chriſt's Preſence with them as there ſhould have been. It is good for us to be *diffident* of our ſelves, and of our own Strenght, but it is diſpleaſing to Chriſt when we diſtruſt any Power derived *from him*, or granted *by him.*

If ye have never ſo little of his Faith in Sincerity, if you truly rely upon the Powers committed to you, *ye ſhall ſay to this Mountain remove.* This is a Proverbial Expreſſion, noting that which follows, and no more, *nothing ſhall be unpoſſible to you.* They had a full Commiſſion, among other things, to *caſt out Devils* without Exception; but this Devil being more than ordinary Malicious and Inveterate, they diſtruſted the Power they had received, and ſo fail'd To convince them of this, Chriſt ſhews them what they might have done, *Note*, An active Faith can *remove Mountains*, not of it ſelf, but in the Virtue of a Divine Power engag'd by a Divine Promiſe, both which Faith faſtens upon.

2. Becauſe there was ſomething in the kind of the Malady which render'd the Cure more than ordinary difficult, *v.* 21. *This kind goes not out by Prayer and faſting.* This Poſſeſſion which works by a Falling-Sickneſs, or this kind of Devils that are thus furious, is not caſt out ordinarily, but by great acts of Devotion and therein you were defective. *Note*, (1.) Tho' the adverſaries we wreſtle with be all *Principalities and Powers*, yet ſome are ſtronger than others, and their Powers more hardly broken. (2.) The extraordinary Power of Satan muſt not diſcourage our Faith, but quicken us to a greater Intenſeneſs in the acting of it, and more earneſtneſs in praying to God for the increaſe of it, and ſo ſome underſtand it here, *this kind* of Faith (which *removeth Mountains) doth not proceed*, i. e. is not obtained from God, nor is it carry'd up to its full Growth, nor drawn out into Act and Exerciſe but by earneſt Prayer. (3.) Faſting and Prayer are proper means for the bringing down of Satans Power againſt us, and the fetching in of Divine Power to our aſſiſtance. *Faſting* is of uſe to put an edge upon Prayer, it is an Evidence and Inſtance of Humiliation which is neceſſary in Prayer, and is a means of mortifying ſome corrupt Habits, and ſo diſpoſing the Body to ſerve the Soul in Prayer. When the Devil's Intereſt in the Soul is confirm'd by the Temper and Conſtitution of the Body, Faſting muſt be joyn'd with Prayer to *keep under the Body.*

22 And while they abode in Galilee, Jeſus ſaid unto them, The Son of man ſhall be betrayed into the hands of men: 23 And they ſhall kill him, and the third day he ſhall be raiſed again: and they were exceeding ſorry.

Chriſt here *foretels* his own *Sufferings*, he began to do it before, *Chap* 16. 21. and finding that it was to his Diſciples *a hard ſaying*, he ſaw it neceſſary to repeat it; there are ſome things which *God ſpeaketh once, yea, twice*, and yet Man *perceiveth it not.* Obſerve here,

1. What he foretold concerning himſelf, that he ſhould be *betray'd* and *kill'd* He perfectly knew before all things that ſhould come to him, and yet undertook the Work of our Redemption, which greatly *commendeth his Love*; nay, his clear Foreſight of them was a kind of *ante-paſſion*, had not his Love to Man made all eaſie to him.

(1.) He tells them that he ſhould be *betray'd into the hands of men*. He ſhall *be deliver'd up*, ſo it might be read, and underſtood of his Father's delivering him up by his *determined Counſel and Foreknowledge*, Acts 4. 23. Rom. 8. 32. But as we render it, it refers to *Judah's* betraying him into the Hands of the Prieſts, and their betraying him into the Hands of the *Romans.* He was betray'd *into the Hands of Men, Men* to whom he was allay'd by Nature, and from whom therefore he might expect *Pity* and *Tenderneſs*; *Men* whom he had undertaken to *ſave*, and from whom therefore he might expect *Honour* and *Gratitude*, yet theſe are his perſecutors and Murtherers.

(2.) That they ſhould *kill him*; nothing leſs than that would *ſatisfie their Rage* 'twas his Blood, his precious Blood they thirſted after, *This is the Heir, come let us kill him*; and nothing leſs would ſatisfie God's Juſtice, and anſwer his Undertaking; if he be a Sacrifice of Atonement, he muſt be *kill'd*, without Blood no Remiſſion.

(3.) That he ſhall be *raiſed again the third day*, Still when he ſpoke of his Death, he gave a hint of his Reſurrection, the *Joy ſet before him*, in the proſpect of which he *endured the Croſs, and deſpiſed the Shame*, This was an encouragement, not only to him, but to his Diſciples; for if he riſe the third Day, his Abſence from them will not be *long*, and his Return to them will be *glorious.*

2. How the Diſciples reſented this, *they were exceeding ſorry.* Herein appear'd their Love to their Maſter's Perſon, but withal their Ignorance and Miſtake concerning his Undertaking. *Peter* indeed durſt not ſay any thing againſt it, as he had done before, *Chap.* 16. 22. having then been ſoundly chidden for it, but he and the reſt of them greatly lamented it, as it would be their own Loſs, their Maſter's Grief, and the Sin and Ruin of them that did it.

24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute-*money*, came to Peter, and ſaid, Doth not your Maſter pay tribute? 25 He ſaith, Yes. And when he was come into the houſe, Jeſus prevented him, ſaying, what thinkeſt thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take cuſtom or tribute? of their own children, or of ſtrangers? 26 Peter ſaid unto him, Of ſtrangers. Jeſus ſaith unto him, Then are the children free. 27 Notwithſtanding, leſt we ſhould offend them, go thou to thee ſea, and caſt an hook, and take up the fiſh that firſt cometh up; and when thou haſt opened his mouth, thou ſhalt find a peice of money, that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

We have here an Account of Chriſt's paying Tribute.

Firſt, Obſerve, How it was *demanded*, v. 24. Chriſt was now at *Capernaum*, his *Head-quarters*, where he moſtly reſided; he did not keep from thence to decline being call'd upon for his Dues, but the rather came thither to be ready to pay them.

(1.) The *Tribute demanded* was not any *civil Payment* to the *Roman* Powers, that was ſtrictly exacted by the *Publicans*, but the *Church Duties*, the *half ſhekel*, about fifteen Pence, which was required from every Perſon for the Service of the Temple, and the defraying the Expences of the Worſhip there,; 'tis call'd a ranſom for the Soul, *Exod.* 30. 12. *&c.* This was not ſo ſtrictly exacted now, as ſometimes it had been, eſepecially not in *Galilee.*

(2.) The Demand was very modeſt, the Collectors ſtood in ſuch Awe of Chriſt's becauſe of his mighty Works, that they durſt not ſpeak to him about it, but applied themſelves to *Peter*, whoſe houſe was in *Capernaum*, and probably in his Houſe Chriſt lodg'd, and therefore he was fitteſt to be ſpoken to as the *Houſe-keeper*, and they preſum'd he knew his Maſter's Mind. Their Queſtion is, *Doth not your Maſter pay Tribute?* Some think they ſought an occaſion againſt him, deſigning, if he refus'd to preſent him as diſaffected to the

Temple-Servite, and his Followers as lawleſs People, that would pay neither *Toll, Tribute, nor Cuſtom*, Ezra 4. 13. It ſhould rather ſeem they ask'd this with Reſpect, intimating, that if he had any Privilege to exempt him from this Payment, they would not inſiſt upon it.

Peter preſently paſt his Word for his Maſter; *yes, ſure*, my Maſter pays Tribute, 'tis his Principle and Practice, you need not fear moving it to him. (1.) He was *made under the Law*, Gal. 4. 4. therefore under this Law, he was paid for at Forty Days old *Luke* 2. 22. and now he paid for himſelf; as one that in his Eſtate of Humiliation had taken upon him the *from of a Servant*, Phil. 2. 7, 8. (2.) He was *made Sin for us*, and was ſent forth in *the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. Now this Tax paid to the Temple is call'd an *Atonement for the Soul*, Exod. 30. 15. Chriſt that in every thing he might appear in the likeneſs of Sinners, paid it tho' he had no Sin to atone for. (3.) *Thus it became him to fulfil all Righteouſneſs*, Mat. 4. 15. He did this to ſet us an Example (1.) of *rendering to all their Due, Tribute to whom Tribute is due*, Rom. 13. 7. The *Kingdom of Chriſt not* being *of this World*, the Favourites and Officers of it are ſo far from having a Power granted them as ſuch to tax other People's Purſes, that theirs are made liable to the *Powers that be*. (2.) Of contributing to the Support of the publick Worſhip of God in the Places where we are. If we reap ſpiritual things, 'tis fit we ſhould return carnal things. The Temple was now made a *Den of Thieves*, and the Temple Worſhip a Pretence for the Oppoſition which the chief Prieſts gave to Chriſt and his Doctrine, and yet Chriſt paid this Tribute. *Note, Church Duties* legally impos'd are to be paid, notwithſtanding *Church-Corruptions*. We muſt take heed of *uſing our Liberty* as a *Cloak of Covetouſneſs*, or *Maliciouſneſs*, 1 Pet. 2. 16. If Chriſt pay Tribute, who can pretend an Exemption?

Secondly, How it was *diſputed*, v. 25. not with the Collectors themſelves, leſt they ſhould be irritated, but with *Peter* that he might be ſatisfied in the Reaſon why Chriſt paid Tribute, and might not miſtake about it. He brought the Collectors *into the Houſe*, but Chriſt *prevented him*, to give him a Proof of his *Omniſcience*, and that no *Thought can be witholden from him*; the Diſciples of Chriſt are never attack'd but he knows it.

Now (1.) He appeals to the way of the *Kings of the Earth* which is to take Tribute of *Strangers*, of the Subjects of their Kingdom, or Foreigners that deal with them, but not *their own Children* that are of their Families; there is ſuch a Community of Goods between Parents and Children, and a Joynt intereſt in what they have, that it would be abſurd for the Parents to levy Taxes upon the Children, or demand any thing from them, 'tis like one hand taxing the other.

(2.) He applies this to himſelf, *then are the Children free*. Chriſt is the Son of God, and Heir of all things, the Temple is *his Temple*, Mal. 3. 1. his *Father's Houſe*, John 2. 16. in it he is *faithful as a Son in his own Houſe*, Heb 3. 6. and therefore not oblig'd to pay this Tax for the Service of the Temple. Thus Chriſt *aſſerts* his Right, leſt his paying this Tribute ſhould be miſimprov'd to the weakning of his Title, as the *Son of God*, and the *King of* Iſrael, and ſhould have look'd like a diſowning of it himſelf. Theſe Immunities of *the Children* are to be extended no further than our Lord Jeſus himſelf; God's Children by Grace and Adoption are freed from the Slavery of Sin and Satan, but not from their Subjection to civil Magiſtrates in civil things; here the Law of Chriſt is expreſs, *Let every Soul* (ſanctified Souls not accepted) *be ſubject to the higher Powers*; *Render to* Cæſar *the things that are* Cæſars.

Thirdly, How it was paid notwithſtanding, *v.* 27.

1. For what Reaſon Chriſt wav'd his Privilege, and paid this Tribute, tho' he was entitled to an Exemption, *leſt we ſhould offend them*. Few knew as *Peter* did, that he was the *Son of God*, and it would have been a Diminution to the Honour of that great Truth, which was yet a Secret, to advance it now to ſerve ſuch a Purpoſe as this: Therefore Chriſt drops that Argument, and conſiders, that if he ſhould refuſe this Payment, it would increaſe People's Prejudice againſt him and his Doctrine, and alienate their Affections from him, and therefore reſolves to pay it. *Note*, Chriſtian Prudence and Humility teach us in many cauſes to *recede from our Right*, rather than *give Offence* by *inſiſting* upon it. We muſt never decline our *Duty* for fear of giving Offence; Chriſt's Preaching and Miracles *offended them*, yet he went on with them, *Mat.* 15. 12, 13. Better offend Men than God; but we muſt deny our ſelves in that which is our ſecular Intereſt ſometimes, rather than *give Offence*, as *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 8. 13. *Rom.* 14. 13.

2. What courſe he took for the Payment of this Tax; he furniſh'd himſelf with Money for it *out of the Mouth of a Fiſh*, v. 27. Wherein appears,

1. The *Poverty* of Chriſt; he had not fifteen Pence at command to pay his Tax with, tho' he cur'd ſo many that were Diſeaſed; it ſeems he did all *gratis, for our ſakes he became poor*. 2 Cor. 8. 9. In his ordinary expences he *liv'd upon Alms*, Luke 8. 3. and in extraordinary ones he *liv'd upon Miracles*. He did not order *Judas* to pay this out of the *Bag* which he carried, that was for *Subſiſtence*, and he would not order that for his particular uſe which was intended for the Benefit of the Community.

2. The *Power* of Chriſt in fetching Money out of a Fiſh's Mouth for this purpoſe. Whether his *Omnipotence* put it there, or his *Omniſcience* knew that it was there, it comes all to one, 'twas an Evidence of his Divinity, and that he is *Lord of Hoſts*. Thoſe Creatures that are moſt remote from Man are at the Command of Chriſt, even the *Fiſhes of the Sea* are under his Feet, *Pſal.* 8. 5. And to evidence his Dominion in this lower World, and to accommodate himſelf to his preſent State of Humiliation, he choſe to take it out of a Fiſh's Mouth, when he could have taken it out of an Angel's Hand. Now obſerve,

1. *Peter* muſt *catch the Fiſh* by Angling. Even in *Miracles* he would uſe *Means* to encourage Induſtry and Endeavour, *Peter* has ſomething to do, and it is in the way of his old Calling too, to teach us Diligence in the Employment we are called *to*, and called *in*. Do we expect Chriſt ſhould give to us, let us be ready to work for him?

2. The Fiſh came up with *Money in the Mouth of it*, which repreſents to us the Reward *of* Obedience *in* Obedience. What Work we do at Chriſt's Command brings its own Pay along with it, *Pſal.* 19. 11. In keeping God's Commands, as well as after keeping them, *there is a great Reward*. *Peter* was made a *Fiſher of Men*, and thoſe that he caught thus came up; where the Heart is open'd to entertain Chriſt's Word, the Hand is open to encourage his Miniſters.

3. The *piece of Money* was juſt enough to pay the Tax for *Chriſt* and *Peter*. Thou ſhalt find a *Stater*, the value of a *Jewiſh Shekel*, which would pay the Poll-tax for *two*, for it was *half a Shekel*, Exod. 30. 13. Chriſt could as eaſily have commanded a *Bag of Money*, as a *Piece of Money*, but he would teach us not to covet *Superfluities*, but having enough for our preſent Occaſions, therewith to be *content*, and not to diſtruſt God, tho' we live but from Hand to Mouth. Chriſt made the Fiſh his *Caſh-keeper*, and why may not we make God's Providence our *Store-houſe* and Treaſury? And if we have a Competency for to Day, let to Morrow *take thought for the things of it ſelf*. Chriſt paid for *himſelf* and *Peter*; becauſe, 'tis probable here he only was aſſeſs'd, and of him it was at this time demanded; perhaps the reſt had paid already, or were to pay elſewhere. The Papiſts make a great Myſtery of Chriſt's praying for *Peter*, as if this made him the Head and Repreſentative of the whole Church; whereas the Payment of Tribute for him was rather a ſign of Subjection than of Superiority. His pretended Succeſſors *pay* no Tribut, but *exact* it. *Peter fiſh'd* for this Money, and therefore part of it went for his uſe. Thoſe that are workers together with Chriſt in *winning* Souls, ſhall be ſharers with him in his Glory, and ſhall ſhine with him, *Give it for thee and me*. What Chriſt paid *for himſelf* was look'd upon as a Debt, what he paid for *Peter* was a *Courteſie* to him. *Note*, It is a deſirable thing, if God ſo pleaſe, to have wherewithal of this World's Goods, not only to be *juſt*, but to be *kind*; not only to be charitable to the Poor, but obliging to our Friends. What is a great Eſtate good for, but that it enables a Man to do ſo much the more good,

Laſtly, Obſerve, That here is recorded the Orders Chriſt gave to *Peter* what to do, the Warrant he had; the Effect is not particularly mention'd, but taken for granted, and juſtly; for with Chriſt, ſaying and doing are the ſame thing.

CHAP. XVIII.

The Goſpels are in ſhort a Record of what Jeſus began both to do *and to* teach. *In the foregoing Chapter we had an account of his* Doings, *in this of his* Teachings; *probably not all at the ſame time in a continued Diſcourſe, but at ſeveral times, upon divers Occaſions here put together as near akin. We have here* (1.) *Instructions concerning* Humility, v. 1.—6. (2.) *Concerning* Offences *in general*, v. 7. *particularly Offences given.* (1.) *By us to our ſelves*, v. 8. 9. (2.) *By us to others*, v. 10.—14. (3.) *By others to us, which are of two ſorts.* 1. Scandalous Sins *that are to be reproved*, v. 15—20. 2. *Perſonal Wrongs that are to be forgiven*, v. 21.—35. *See how practical Chriſt's Preaching was, he could have reveal'd Myſteries, but he preſs'd plain Duties, eſpecially thoſe that are moſt diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood.*

AT the ſame time came the diſciples unto Jeſus, ſaying, Who is the greateſt in the Kingdom of heaven? 2 And Jeſus called a little child unto him, and ſet him in the midſt of them, 3 And ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little child, the ſame is greateſt in the kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoſo ſhall receive one ſuch little child in my name, receiveth me. 6 But whoſo ſhall offend one of theſe little ones believe in me, it were better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the ſea.

As there never was a greater *Pattern* of *Humility*, ſo there never was a greater *Preacher* of it than Chriſt; he took all Occaſions to *command* it, to *commend* it to his Diſciples and Followers.

Firſt, The occaſion of this Diſcourſe here concerning *Humility* was an unbecoming Conteſt among the Diſciples for Precedency: they *came to him, ſaying among* themſelves, (for they were aſham'd to ask him, *Mark* 9. 34.) *Who is the greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven?*

They mean not who by *Character*, then the Queſtion had been good, that they might know what Graces and Duties to excel in, but who by *Name*. They had heard much and preach'd much of the Kingdom of *Heaven*, the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, his Church in this World, but as yet they were ſo far from having any clear Notion of it, that they dreamt of *a temporal Kingdom*, and the external Pomp and Power of it. Chriſt had lately foretold his Suffering, and the *Glory* that ſhou'd *follow*, that he ſhould *riſe again*, from whence they expected his Kingdom would commence, and now they thought it was time to *put in* for their Places in it; 'tis good in ſuch Caſes to ſpeak early. Upon other Diſcourſes of Chriſt to that Purpoſe, Debates of this Kind aroſe, *Mat.* 20. 19, 20. *Luke* 22. 22. 24. He ſpoke *many* Words of his Sufferings, but only *one* of his Glory, yet they faſten upon *that*, and over-look the *other*; and inſtead of asking how they might have Strength and Grace to ſuffer with him, they ask him who ſhall be higheſt in reigning with him? *Note*, many love to hear and ſpeak of Privileges and Glory, that are willing to paſs by the thoughts of Work and Trouble. They look ſo much at the *Crown*, that they forget the *Yoke*, and the *Croſs*. So the Diſciples here did when they ask'd *Who is the greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven?*

1. They ſuppoſe that all that have a Place in that Kingdom are *great*, for it is a *Kingdom of Prieſts*. *Note*, Thoſe are truly *great* that are truly *good*, and they will appear ſo at laſt, when Chriſt ſhall own them as his, though never ſo mean and poor in the World.

2. They ſuppoſe that there are *Degrees* in this Greatneſs. All the Saints are honourable, but not all alike ſo; one Star differs from another Star in Glory. All *David*'s Officers were not Worthies, nor all his Worthies of the firſt three.

3. They ſuppoſe it muſt be ſome of them that muſt be prime Miniſters of State. To whom ſhould King Jeſus *delight to do honour*, but to them who had *left all for him*, and were now his Companions in Pataience and Tribulation.

4. They ſtrive who it ſhould be, each having ſome Pretence or other to it. *Peter* was always the chief Speaker, and already had the Keys given him, and he expects to be Lord Chancellour, or Lord Chamberlain of the Houſhold, and ſo to be the greateſt. *Judas* had the *Bag*, and therefore he expects to be *Lord Treaſurer*, which though now he come laſt, he hopes will then denominate him the greateſt. *Simon* and *Jude* are nearly related to Chriſt, and they hope to take place of all the great Officers of State, as *Princes of the Blood*. *John* is the *Beloved Diſciple*, the Favourite of the Prince, and therefore hopes to be greateſt. *Andrew* was firſt call'd, and why ſhould not he be firſt prefer'd? *Note*, We are very apt to amuſe and humour our ſelves with fooliſh Fancies of things that will never be.

Secondly, The Diſcourſe it ſelf, which is a juſt rebuke to the Queſtion, *Who ſhould be greateſt?* And we have abundant Reaſon to think, that if Chriſt ever intended that *Peter*, and his Succeſſors at *Rome*, ſhould be Heads of the Church, and his chief Vicars on Earth, having ſo far on Occaſion given him, he would now have let his Diſciples know it; but ſo far is he from this, that his Anſwer diſallows and condemns the thing it ſelf. Chriſt will not lodge ſuch an Authority or Supremacy any where in his Church; whoever pretend to it are Uſurpers; inſtead of ſetting any of the Diſciples in this Dignity, he warns them all not to put in for it.

Chriſt here teacheth them to be humble.

1. By a Sign, *v.* 2. *He call'd a little Child to him*, and ſet *him in the midſt of them*. Chriſt often taught by Signs or ſenſible Repreſentations, Compariſons to the Eye, as the Prophets of old. *Note*, Humility is a Leſſon ſo hardly learn'd, that we have need by all ways and means to be taught it. When we look upon *a little Child*, we ſhould be put in Mind of the Uſe Chriſt made of this Child: Senſible things muſt be improv'd to ſpiritual Purpoſes. He ſet him *in the midſt of them*, not that they might play with him, but learn by him. Grown Men and great Men ſhould not diſdain the Company of little Children, or think it below them to take notice of them. They may either ſpeak to them, and give Inſtruction to them, or *look upon them*, and receive *Inſtruction* from them. Chriſt himſelf when a Child, was in *the midſt of the Doctors*, Luke 2. 46.

2. By a Sermon upon his Sign, in which he ſhews them and us,

1. The Neceſſity of Humility, *v.* 3. His Preface is ſolemn, and commands both Attention and Aſſent, *Verily I ſay unto you*, I, the *Amen*, the faithful Witneſs, ſay it, *Except ye be converted and become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Here obſerve,

1. What it is that he requires and inſiſts upon.

(1.) You *muſt be converted*; you muſt be of *another Mind*, and in *another Frame*, and *Temper*, muſt have other Thoughts both of you ſelves, and of the Kingdom of Heaven, before you be fit for a Place in it. This Pride, Ambition, and Affectation of Honour and Dominion, which appears in you, muſt be repented of, mortified, and reform'd, and you muſt come to your ſelves. *Note*, Beſides the *firſt Converſion* of a Soul from a State of Nature to a State of Grace, there are *After-Converſions* from particular Paths of Backſliding, which are equally neceſſary to Salvation. Every Step out of the Way by Sin, muſt be a Step into it again by Repentance. When *Peter* repented of his denying his Maſter he was *converted*. (2.) You muſt become *as little Children*. *Note*, Converting Grace makes us like little Children, not *fooliſh* as Children, 2 *Cor.* 14. 20. nor fickle, *Eph.* 4. 14. nor playful, *Mat.* 11. 16. But as Children we muſt deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. as Children we muſt be *careful for nothing*, but leave it to our heavenly Father to care for us, *Mat.* 6. 31. We muſt as Children be harmleſs and inoffenſive, and void of Malice 1 *Cor.* 14. 20. governable and under Command, *Gal.* 4. 2. And (which is here chiefly intended) we muſt be humble as little Children, who do not take State upon them, nor ſtand upon the Punctilio's of Honour; the Child of a Gentleman will play with the Child of a Beggar, *Rom.* 12. 16. The Child in Rags, if it have the Breaſt, is well enough pleas'd, and envies not the Gaiety of the Child in Silk; little Children have no great Aims at great Places, nor Projects to raiſe themſelves in the World; they exerciſe not themſelves in things *too high for them*, and we ſhould in like manner *behave* and *quiet our ſelves*, Pſal. 131. 3, 2. As Children are *little* in Body, and *low* in Statute, ſo we muſt be *little* and *low* in Spirit, and in our Thoughts of our ſelves. This is a Temper which leads to other good Diſpoſitions; the Age of Childhood is the learning Age.

2. What Streſs he lay upon this. Without this *you ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. *Note*, Diſciples of Chriſt have need to be kept in awe by Threatnings, that they may fear *leſt they ſeem to come ſhort*, Heb. 4. 1. The Diſciples when they put that Queſtion, *v.* 1. thought themſelves ſure of *the Kingdom of Heaven*, but Chriſt awakens them to be *jealous of themſelves*, they were ambitious of being *greateſt in the Kingdom* of Heaven, Chriſt tells them, that except they came to better Temper they ſhould never come thither. *Note*, Many that ſet up for *great ones* in the Church, prove not only little, but nothing, and are found to have no Part or Lot in the Matter. Our Lord deſigns here to ſhew the great Danger of Pride and Ambition; whatever Profeſſion Men make, if they allow themſelves in this Sin, they will be rejected both from God's Tabernacle, and from his holy Hill. Pride threw the Angels that ſin'd out of Heaven, and will keep us out, if we be not *converted* from it. They that are lifted up with Pride, *fall into the Condemnation of the Devil*; to prevent this we muſt become as *little Children*, and in order to that muſt be *born again*, muſt put on a *new Man*, muſt be like the *holy Child Jeſus*; So he is call'd even after his *Aſcenſion*, Acts 4. 27.

2. He ſhews the Honour and Advancement that attends Humility *v.* 4. which is a *direct*, but ſurprizing Anſwer to their Queſtion; he that *humbles himſelf as a little Child*, though he may fear that hereby he will render himſelf contemptible, as low Spirits do, that thereby throw themſelves out of the way of Preferment, yet *the ſame is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.* *Note*, The humbleſt Chriſtians are the beſt Chriſtians, and moſt like to Chriſt, and higheſt in his Favour, are beſt diſpoſed for the Communications of Divine Grace, and fitteſt to ſerve God in this World, and enjoy him in another. They are *great*, for God overlooks Heaven and Earth to look on ſuch, and certainly thoſe are to be moſt reſpected, and honour'd in the Church that are moſt humble and ſelf-denying; for tho' they leaſt *ſeek it*, they beſt *deſerve it*.

3. The ſpecial Care Chriſt takes for thoſe that are humble, he eſpouſeth their Cauſe, protects them, intereſts himſelf in their Concerns, and will ſee that they are not *wrong'd*, but they ſhall be *righted*.

Thoſe that thus humble themſelves will be afraid,

1. That *no Body will receive them*; and as to that Fear, *v.* 5, *Whoſo ſhall receive one ſuch little Child in my Name, receiveth me.* Whatever Kindneſſes are done to ſuch, Chriſt takes as done to himſelf; whoſo entertains a meek and humble Chriſtian, keeps him in Countenance, will not let him loſe by his Modeſty, takes him into his Love and Friendſhip, and Society, and Care, and ſtudies to do him a Kindneſs, and doth this in *Chriſt's Name*, for his ſake, becauſe he bears the Image of Chriſt, ſerves Chriſt, and becauſe Chriſt has receiv'd him; this ſhall be accepted, and recompens'd as an acceptable price of Reſpect to Chriſt: Obſerve, Tho' it be but *one ſuch little Child* that is received in Chriſt's Name, it ſhall be accepted. *Note*, The tender Regard Chriſt has to his Church extends it ſelf to every particular Member, even the meaneſt, not only the whole Family, but to every Child of the Family; the *leſs* they are in themſelves to whom we ſhew Kindneſs, the more there is of Good-will in it to Chriſt; the leſs 'tis for their ſakes, the more 'tis for his, and he takes it accordingly. If Chriſt were perſonally among us we think we ſhould never do enough to welcome him, *the poor*, the poor in *Spirit*, we have always with us, and they are his Receivers; ſee *Mat.* 25. 35.—40.

2. They will be afraid that *every Body will abuſe them.* The baſeſt Men delight to trample upon the humble, *vexat Cenſura Columbas*; this Objection he obviates, *v.* 6. where he warns all People as they will anſwer it at their utmoſt Peril, not to offer any Injury to one of Chriſt's little ones. This Word makes a Wall of Fire about them; he that *toucheth them, toucheth the Apple of God's Eye.*

Obſerve, 1. The Crime ſuppos'd, *offending one of theſe little ones*, that *believe in Chriſt*. Their *believing* in Chriſt, though they be little ones unites them to him, ſo that as they partake of the Benefit of his Sufferings, ſo he partakes in the Wrong of theirs, and intereſts him in their Cauſe. Even the *little ones* that believe have the ſame Privilege with the *great ones*, for they have all obtain'd like *precious Faith.* There are thoſe that *offend theſe little ones*, by drawing them to Sin, 1 *Cor.* 8. 10, 11. grieving and vexing their righteous Souls; diſcouraging them, taking occaſion from their Mildneſs to *make a Prey* of them in their Perſons, Families, Goods or Good Name. Thus the beſt Men have oft met with the worſt Treatment in this World.

2. The Puniſhment of this Crime; intimated in that Word, *better for him that he were drown'd in the Depth of the Sea.* The Sin is ſo heinous and the Ruin proportionably ſo great, that he had better undergo the ſoreſt Puniſhments inflicted on the worſt of Malefactors, which can only kill the Body. *Note*, (1.) Hell is worſe than the

Depth *of the Sea*, for it is a bottomleſs Pit, and it is a *burning* Lake. The Depth of the Sea is only Killing, but Hell is tormenting. We meet with one that had Comfort in the Depth of the Sea, 'twas *Jonah, chap.* 2. 2, 4, 9. but never any had the leaſt Grain or Glimpſe of Comfort in Hell, nor will have to Eternity. (2.) The irreſiſtible, irrevocable Doom of the great Judge will ſink ſooner and ſurer, and bind faſter than a *Milſtone hang'd about the Neck*: It fixeth a great Gulf that can never be broke through, *Luke* 16. 26. Offending Chriſt's little ones, though by Omiſſion, is aſſign'd as the Reaſon of that dreadful Sentence, *Go ye curſed*, which will at laſt be the Doom of proud Perſecutors.

7 Wo unto the world becauſe of offences: for it muſt needs be that offences come: but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh. 8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and caſt *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be caſt into everlaſting fire, 9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt *it* from the: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be caſt into Hell-fire. 10 Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones: for I ſay unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven, 11 For the Son of man is come to ſave that which was loſt. 12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred ſheep, and one of them be gone aſtray, doth not he leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and ſeeketh that which is gon aſtray. 13 And if ſo be that he find it, verily I ſay unto you, he rejoyceth more over that *ſheep*, then of the ninety and nine which went not aſtray, 14 Even ſo it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of theſe little ones ſhould periſh.

Our Saviour here ſpeaks of *Offences* or *Scandals*;

1. In general, *v.* 7. He takes Occaſion from the Mention of the offending the *little ones* to ſpeak more generally of Offences. That's an Offence, (1.) Which occaſions *Guilt*, which by Enticement or Affrightment tends to draw Men from that which is good, to that which is evil. (2.) Which occaſions *Grief*, which makes the Heart of the Righteous ſad. Now concerning Offences, Chriſt here tells them.

(1.) That they were *certain* things. *It muſt needs be that Offences come.* When we are ſure there is Danger, we ſhould be the better arm'd. Not that Chriſt's Word neceſſitates any Man to offend, but it is a *Prediction* upon a View of the Cauſes; conſidering the Subtlety and Malice of Satan, the Weakneſs and Pravity of Men's Hearts, and the Fooliſhneſs that is found there, 'tis morally impoſſible but that there ſhould be Offences? and God has determin'd to permit them for wiſe and holy Ends, that both they which are perfect, and they which are not, may be made manifeſt; ſee 1 *Cor.* 11. 19. *Dan.* 11. 35. Being *told before* that there will be Seducers. Tempters, Perſecutors, and many ill Examples, let us ſtand upon our Guard, *Mat.* 24. 24. *Acts* 20. 29, 30.

2. That they would be *woful things*, and the Conſequences of them fatal. Here's a double Wo annex'd to *Offences*.

1. A Wo to the *careleſs* and *unguarded* to whom the Offence is given. *Wo to the World becauſe of Offences.* The Obſtructions and Oppoſitions given to Faith and Holineſs in all Places are the Bane and Plague of Mankind, and the Ruin of Thouſand. This preſent World is an *evil World.* 'tis ſo full of Offences of *Sins*, and *Snares*, and *Sorrows*; a dangerous Road we travel, full of Stumbling-blocks, Precipices, and falſe Guides. Wo to *the World.* As for thoſe whom God hath choſen and called out of the World, and deliver'd from it they are preſerv'd by the Power of God, from the Prejudice of theſe Offences, are help'd over all theſe Stones of Stumbling: They that love God's Law have *great Peace*, and nothing *ſhall offend them*, Pſal. 119. 165.

2. A Wo to the *wicked* that wilfully give the Offence. But *Wo to that Man by whom the Offence comes.* Though it muſt needs be that the *Offence will come*, yet that will be no Excuſe for the Offenders. *Note*, Though God makes the Sins of Sinners to ſerve his Purpoſes, yet that will not ſecure them from his Wrath. And the Guilt will be laid at the Door of thoſe that *give the Offence*, though they alſo fall under a Wo that take it. *Note*, They who any way hinder the Salvation of others, will find their own Condemnation the more intolerable, like *Jeroboam* that *ſinn'd*, and made *Iſrael* to *ſin*, This Wo is the Moral of that judicial Law, *Exod.* 21. 33, 34.—22. 6. that he who openeth the Pit, and kindled the Fire, was accountable for all the Damage that enſued. The Antichriſtian Generation by whom came the great *Offence*, will fall under this Wo, for their Deluſions of Sinners, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 11, 12. And their Perſecutions of Saints, *Rev.* 17. 1, 2, 6. For the righteous God will reckon with thoſe that ruin the *eternal Intereſts* of *precious Souls*, and the *temporal Intereſts* of *precious Saints*; for precious in the Sight of the Lord is the *Blood of Souls*, and the *Blood of Saints*; and Men will be reckon'd with not only for their *Doings*, but for the *Fruit of their Doings*, the Miſchief done by them.

2. In particular, Chriſt ſpeaks here of Offences given.

Firſt, By us to our ſelves, which is expreſs'd by our *Hand* or *Foot*, *offending* us; in ſuch a Caſe it muſt be cut off. *v.* 8. 9. This Chriſt had ſaid before, *Mat.* 5. 29, 30. where it eſpecially refers to the Seventh Commandment Sins, here it is taken more generally. *Note*, Thoſe *hard Sayings* of Chriſt which are diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood, need to be repeated to us again and again, and all little enough. Now obſerve,

1. What it is that is here *enjoyn'd.* We muſt part with an Eye, or a Hand, or a Foot, *i. e.* that, whatever it is, which is dear to us, when it proves unavoidably an Occaſion of Sin to us. *Note*, (1.) many prevailing Temptations to Sin, ariſe from within our ſelves; our own *Eyes* and *Hands offend us*; if there were never a Devil to tempt us we ſhould be *drawn away of our own Luſt.* Nay, thoſe things which in themſelves are *good*, and may be us'd as Inſtruments of good, yet through the Corruptions of our Hearts proves Snares to us, incline us to Sin, and hinder us in Duty. (2.) In ſuch a Caſe, we *muſt* as far as lawfully we *may*, part with that which we cannot keep without being entangled in Sin by it. (1.) It is certain the inward Luſt muſt be mortified, though it be dear to us as an Eye or a Hand. The *Fleſh* with its *Affections and Luſts muſt* be *mortified*, Gal. 5. 24. the *Body of Sin* muſt be deſtroy'd, corrupt Inclinations and Appetites muſt be check'd and croſs'd; the beloved Luſt that has been roll'd under the Tongue as a *ſweet Morſal*, muſt be abandon'd with Abhorrence, (2.) The outward Occaſions of Sin muſt be avoided, though we thereby put as great a Violence upon our ſelves, as it would be to cut off a Hand, or pluck out an Eye, When *Abraham* quitted his native Country, for Fear of being enſnared in the Idolatry of it, and when *Moſes* quitted *Pharoh*'s Court, for Fear of being entangled in the ſinful Pleaſures of it, there was a Right hand *cut off.* We muſt think nothing too dear to part with for the keeping of a good Conſcience.

2. Upon what Inducement this is requir'd. *It is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two Hands to be caſt into Hell.* The argument is taken from the future State, from *Heaven* and *Hell.* thence are fetch'd moſt cogent Diſſwaſion from Sin. the Argument is the ſame with that of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 13. (1.) *If we live after the Fleſh we muſt dye*, having *two Eyes*, no Breaches made upon the Body of Sin, inbred Corruption like *Adonijah* never diſpleaſed, we ſhall be *caſt into Hell fire*, (2.) *If we through the Spirit mortifie the Deeds of the Body, we ſhall live*, that's meant by our *entring into Life maimed*, i. e. the Body of Sin maim'd, and it is but maimed at the beſt, while we are in this World. If the Right-hand of the old Man be cut off, and its Right Eye be plucked out, its chief Policies blaſted, and Powers broken, it is well, but there is ſtill an Eye and a Hand remaining, with which it will ſtruggle. *They that are Chriſt's* have *nail'd* the Fleſh *to the Croſs*, but it is not yet dead. Its Life is prolong'd, but its *Dominion taken away*, Dan. 7. 12. and the deadly Wound given it that ſhall not be heal'd.

Secondly, Concerning Offences given *by us* to others, eſpecially Chriſt's *little ones*, which we are here charg'd to *take heed of*, purſuant to what he had ſaid, *v.* 6. Obſerve,

1. The *Caution* it ſelf, *Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones.* This is ſpoken of the Diſciples. As Chriſt will be diſpleas'd with the Enemies of his Church, if they wrong any of the Members of it, even the leaſt, ſo he will be diſpleas'd with the *great ones of the* Church, if they diſpiſe the *little ones* of it. You that are ſtriving *who ſhall be greateſt*, take heed leſt in this Conteſt you *deſpiſe the little ones.* We may underſtand it literally of *little Children*, of them Chriſt was ſpeaking, *v.* 2, 4. The infant-ſeed of the faithful belong to the Family of Chriſt, and are not to be diſpiſed. Or figuratively, True, but weak Believers are theſe *little ones*, that in their outward Condition, or the Frame of their Spirits are like *little Children* the lambs of Chriſt's Flock.

(1.) We muſt not *deſpiſe them*, not think meanly of them as *Lamps deſpiſ'd*, Job 12. 5. We muſt not make a Jeſt of their infirmities, not look upon them with Contempt, nor carry it ſcornfully or diſdainfully towards them, as if we car'd not what became of them; we muſt not ſay, tho' they be offended, and griv'd, and ſtumbled, what's that to us, nor make a ſlight Matter of doing that which will *entangle* and *perplex* them. This *Diſpiſing* of the *little ones* is what we are largely caution'd againſt, *Rom.* 14. 3, 10, 15, 20, 21. we muſt not impoſe upon the Conſciences of others, nor bring them into Subjection to our Humours, as they do, who ſay to Men's Souls, *bow down that we may go over.* There is a Reſpect owing to every Man's Conſcience that appears to be conſcientious.

(2.) We muſt *take heed* that we do not *deſpiſe* them; we muſt be *afraid* of the Sin, and be very cautious what we ſay and do, leſt we ſhould through Inadvertancy give Offence to Chriſt's *little ones*, leſt we put Contempt upon them, and are not aware of it. There were thoſe that *hated them*, and *caſt them out*, and yet ſaid, *Let the Lord be glorified.* And we muſt be afraid of the Puniſhment; take heed of deſpiſing them for it is at your Peril if you do.

2. The Reaſons to enforce the Caution. we muſt not look upon *theſe little ones as contemptible*, becauſe really they are *conſiderable*; let not Earth *deſpiſe* thoſe whom Heaven *reſpects*, nor let them be look'd upon by us with Diſdain, whom God has put Honour upon, and looks upon with Reſpect as his Favourites. To prove that the *little ones* which believe in Chriſt are worthy to be reſpected. Conſider,

1. The Miniſtration of the good Angels about them. *In Heaven their Angels always behold the Face of my Father.* This Chriſt *ſaith to us*, and we may take it upon his Word, who came from Heaven to let us know what is done there by the World of Angels. Two things he lets us know concerning them,

(1.) That they are the *little ones Angels*. God's Angels are *theirs*, for all his is *ours*, if we be *Chriſt's*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. They are *theirs*, for they have a Charge concerning them to miniſter for their good, *Heb.* 1. 14. to pitch their Tents about them, and bear them up in their Arms. Some have imagin'd that every particular Saint has a *Guardian Angel*, but what need we ſuppoſe that, when we are ſure every particular Saint, when there is Occaſion, has a *Guard of Angels*. This is particularly applied here to the *little ones*, becauſe they are moſt deſpis'd and moſt expos'd, they have but little that they can call *their own*, but they can look by Faith on the Heavenly Hoſts, and call them *theirs*. While the great ones of the World have honourable Men for their Retinue and Guards, the *little ones* of the Church are attended with *glorious Angels*; which ſpeaks not only their Dignity, but the Danger thoſe run themſelves upon, that deſpiſe and abuſe them. It's ill being Enemies to thoſe who are ſo guarded; and it's good having *God for our God*, for then we have his *Angels for our Angels*.

(2.) That they *always behold the Face of the Father in Heaven*, This ſpeaks (1.) The Angels continual Felicity and Honour. The Happineſs of Heaven conſiſts in the *Viſion* of God, ſeeing him Face to Face, as he is, beholding his Beauty; this the Angels *have* without Interruption, when they are miniſtering to us on Earth, yet even then by the Contemplation they behold the Face of God, for they are *full of Eyes within*. *Gabriel* when ſpeaking to *Zacharias*, yet ſtands in *the Preſence of God*, Rev. 4. 8. *Luke* 1. 19. The Expreſſion intimates, as ſome think, the ſpecial Dignity and Honour of the *little ones* Angels; the prime Miniſters of State are ſaid to ſee *the King's Face*, Eſth. 1. 14. as if the *ſtrongeſt* Angels had the Charge of the *weakeſt* Saints. (2.) It ſpeaks their continual *Readineſs* to miniſter to the Saints. They *behold the Face of God*, expecting to receive Orders from him what to do for the good of the Saints. *As the Eyes of the Servant are to the Hand of his Maſter*, ready to go or come upon the leaſt Beck, ſo the Eyes of the Angels are upon the Face of God, waiting for the Intimations of his Will, which thoſe winged Meſſengers *fly ſwiftly* to fulfil; they *go and return like a flaſh of Lightning*, Ezek. 1. 14. If we would behold the Face of God in Glory hereafter, as the Angels do, *Luke* 20. 36. we muſt *behold the Face of God* now, in readineſs to our Duty, as they do, *Acts* 9. 6.

2. The gracious Deſign of Chriſt concerning them, ver. 11. *For the Son of Man is come to ſave that which was loſt.* This is a reaſon (1.) Why the *little ones* Angels have ſuch a Charge concerning them, and to attend upon them; 'tis in purſuance of Chriſt's Deſign to *ſave them*, *Note*, The *Miniſtration of Angels* is ſounded in the *Mediation of Chriſt*; through him Angels are reconcil'd to us, and when they celebrat'd *Gods Good-will towards Men*, to it they annex'd *their own* (2.) Why they are not to be deſpis'd, becauſe Chriſt came to ſave them to ſave them *that are loſt*, i. e. the *little ones* that are *loſt* in their own Eyes, *Iſa.* 56. 3. that are at *a loſs* within themſelves. Or, rather the Children of Men. *Note*, (1.) Our Souls by Nature are *loſt Souls*, as a Traveller is loſt that is out of his way, as a convicted Priſoner is loſt; God loſt the Service of fallen Man, loſt the Honour he ſhould have had from him. (2.) Chriſt's Errand into the World was to *ſave that which was loſt*, to reduce us to our Allegiance, reſtore us to our Work, re-inſtate us in our Privileges, and ſo to put us into the right Way that leads to our great End; to ſave thoſe that are ſpiritually loſt, from being eternally ſo. (3.) This is a good Reaſon, why the leaſt and weakeſt Believers ſhould not be *deſpis'd* or *offended*. If Chriſt put ſuch a Value upon them, let not us undervalue them. If he deny'd himſelf ſo much for their Salvation, ſure we ſhould deny our ſelves for their Edification and Conſolation. See this Argument urged, *Rom.* 14. 15. 1 *Cor.* 8. 11, 12. Nay, if Chriſt came into the World to ſave Souls, and his Heart is ſo much upon it at Work, he will reckon ſeverely with thoſe that obſtruct and hinder it, by obſtructing the Progreſs of thoſe that are ſetting their Faces Heaven-wards, and ſo thwart his great Deſign.

3. The tender Regard which our heavenly Father has to theſe *little ones*, and his Concern for their Welfare. This is illuſtrated by a Compariſon, *ver.* 12. 13, 14. Obſerve the Gradation of the Argument; the Angels of God are their *Servants*, the Son of God is their *Saviour*, and to compleat their Honour, God himſelf is their *Friend*. *None ſhall pluck them out of my Father's Hand*, John 10. 24.

Here's 1. The Compariſon, *v.* 12, 13. The Owner that has loſt *one Sheep* out of a *hundred*, doth not ſlight it, but diligently enquires after it, is hugely pleas'd when he has found it, and has in that a ſenſible and affecting Joy, more than in the ninety and nine that wandered not. The Fear he was in of loſing that one, and the Surprize of finding it adds to the Joy. Now this is applicable (1.) To the State of fallen Man in general, he is ſtray'd like a *loſt Sheep*; the Angels that ſtood, were as the ninety and nine that never went *aſtray*; wandering Man is *ſought* upon the *Mountains*, which Chriſt in a great Fatigue travers'd in purſuit of him, and he is *found*; which is Matter of Joy: *Greater Joy* there is in Heaven for *returning Sinners* than for *remaining Angels*. (2.) To particular Believers that are *offended*, and put out of their way by the Stumbling-blocks that are laid in their way, or the Wiles of thoſe that ſeduce them out of the way. Now though but *one of a hundred* ſhould hereby be driven off, as Sheep eaſily are, yet that one ſhould be look'd after with a great deal of *Care*, the Return of it welcom'd with a great deal of *Pleaſure*, and therefore the wrong done to it, no doubt, will be reckon'd for with a great deal of *Diſpleaſure*. If there be *Joy in Heaven* for the *finding* of one of theſe *little ones*, there is Wrath in Heaven for the *offending* of them. *Note*, God is graciouſly concern'd, not only for his Flock in general, but for every Lamb or Sheep that belongs to it. Though they are *many*, yet out of thoſe *many* he can eaſily *miſs one*, for he is a great Shepherd; but not ſo eaſily *loſe it*, for he is a good Shepherd, and takes a more particular Cognizance of his Flock than ever any did; for he *calls his own Sheep by Name*, John 10. 3. See a full Expoſition of this Parable, *Ezek.* 34. 2, 10, 16, 19.

2. The Reddition of this Compariſon, *v.* 14. *It is not the Will of your Father, that one of theſe little ones ſhould periſh*; more is implied than is expreſs'd: It is not his Will that *any ſhould periſh*, but (1.) It is his Will that theſe *little ones* ſhould be ſav'd; 'tis the Will of his Deſign and Delight, he has deſign'd it, and his Heart is upon it, and he will effect it; 'tis the Will of his Precept that all ſhould do what they can to further it, and nothing to hinder it. (2.) This Care extends it ſelf to every particular Member of the Flock, even the *meaneſt*. We think if but one or two be offended and enſnar'd, 'tis no great Matter, we need not mind it: but God's Thoughts of Love and tenderneſs are above ours. (3.) 'Tis intimated, that thoſe who do any thing, by which any of theſe *little ones* are brought into Danger of periſhing, contradict the *Will* of God, and highly provoke him; and though they cannot prevail in it, yet they will be reckon'd with for it, by him, who *in his Saints*, as in other things, is jealous of his Honour, and will not bear to have it trampled on. See *Iſa.* 3. 15. *What mean ye that ye beat my People?* Pſal. 76. 8, 9.

Obſerve that, *v.* 19. Chriſt call'd God, *my Father which is in Heaven*; *v.* 14. he calls him, *your Father which is in Heaven*, intimating that he is not aſhamed to call his poor Diſciples Brethren, for have not *he* and *they* one Father? John 20. 17. *I aſcend to my Father and your Father*; therefore *ours* becauſe his. This intimates likewiſe the Ground of the Safety of his *little ones*, that God is their Father, and is therefore inclin'd to ſuccour them. A *Father* takes Care of all his Children, but is particularly tender of the *little ones* (Gen. 14. 20.) He is their Father *in Heaven*, a Place of *Proſpect*, and therefore he ſees all the Indignites offer'd them; and a Place of Power, therefore he is able to *avenge* them. This comforts offended little ones, that their *Witneſs* is in *Heaven*, Job 16. 19. their Judge is there, *Pſal.* 68. 45.

15 Moreover, if thy brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee,
go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if
he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gained thy Brother. 16
But if he will not hear *thee*, take with thee one or two
more, that in the mouth of two or three witneſſes every
word may be eſtabliſhed. 17 And if he ſhall neglect to
hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to
hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen
Man, and a publican. 18 Verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever
ye ſhall bind in earth, ſhall be bound in heaven:
and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on earth, ſhall be looſed
in heaven. 19 Again I ſay unto you, that if two of you
ſhall agree on earth as touching any thing that they ſhall
ask, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in
heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together
in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.

Chriſt having caution'd his Diſciples not to give Offence, comes next to direct them what they muſt do in Caſe of *Offences given them*; which may be underſtood either of *perſonal Injuries*, and then theſe Directions are intended for the preſerving the Peace of the Church; or of *publick Scandals*, and then they are intended for the preſerving of the Purity and Beauty of the Church. Let us conſider it both Ways.

Firſt, Let us apply it to the *Quarrels* that happen among Chriſtians upon any Account. If thy Brother *treſpaſs againſt thee*, by *grieving* thy Soul, 1 *Cor.* 8. 12. by affronting thee, or putting Contempt or Abuſe upon thee, if he blemiſh thy good Name by falſe Reports or Tale-bearing, if he encroach on thy Rights, or be any way injurious to thee in thy Eſtate; if he be guilty of any of thoſe Treſpaſſes that are inſtanc'd in, *Lev.* 6. 2, 3. If he tranſgreſs the Laws of Juſtice, Charity, or Relative Duties; theſe are Treſpaſſes *againſt us*, and often happen among Chriſt's Diſciples, and ſometimes for want of Prudence are of very ill Conſequence. Now obſerve what is the Rule preſcrib'd in this Caſe.

1. *Go and tell him his Fault between him and thee alone.* Let this be compar'd with and explain'd by *Lev.* 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart*, i. e. if thou haſt conceiv'd a Diſpleaſure at thy Brother for any Injury he hath done thee, do not ſuffer thy Reſentments to ripen into a ſecret Malice, like a Wound that's moſt dangerous, when it *bleeds inwardly*, but give Vent to them in a mild and grave Admonition, let them ſo ſpend themſelves, and they will expire the ſooner; do not go and rail againſt him behind his Back, but *thou ſhall in any ways reprove him*. If he has indeed done thee a conſide-

rable Wrong, endeavour to make him ſenſible of it, but let the Rebuke be *private*, between the and him *alone*; if thou would'ſt convince him, do not *expoſe* him, for that will but exaſperate him, and make the *Reproof* look like a *Revenge*. This agrees with *Prov.* 25. 8, 9. *Go not forth haſtily to ſtrive, but debate thy Cauſe with thy Neighbour himſelf*, argue it calmly and amicably, and *if he ſhall hear thee*, well and good, *thou haſt gain'd thy Brother*, there's an end of the Controverſie, and it's a happy End; let no more be ſaid of it, but let the *falling out* of Friends be the *renewing* of Friendſhip.

2. *If he will not hear thee*, if he will not own himſelf in a fault, nor come to an Agreement, yet do not deſpair, but try what he will ſay to it if thou take *one or two more*, not only to be Witneſſes of what paſſeth, but to reaſon the Caſe further with him; he will be the more likely to hearken to them becauſe they are *diſintereſted*; and if Reaſon will rule him, the Word of Reaſon, in the Mouth of *two or three Witneſſes* will be better ſpoken to him, (*plus vident oculi quam oculus*) and more regarded *by him*, and perhaps 'twill influence him to acknowledge his Error, and to ſay, *I repent*.

3. *If he ſhall neglect to hear them*, and will not refer the Matter to their Arbitration, then tell it *to the Church*, to the Miniſters, Elders, or other Officers, or the moſt conſiderable Perſons in the Congregation you belong to, make them the Referees to accommodate the Matter, and do not preſently appeal to the Magiſtrate, or fetch a Writ for him; this is fully explain'd by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 6. where he reproves thoſe that went to Law *before the unjuſt*, and not before the Saints, *v.* 1. and would have the Saints to judge thoſe *ſmall Matters*, *v.* 2. that pertain to this Life. *v.* 3. If you aſk who is *the Church*, that muſt be *told*, the Apoſtle directs there, *v.* 5. *Is there not a wiſe Man among you?* Thoſe of the Church that are preſum'd moſt capable of determining ſuch Matters; and he ſpeaks ironically, when he ſaith, *v.* 4. *Set them to judge who are leaſt eſteemed in the Church*; thoſe, if there be no better, thoſe, rather than ſuffer an irreconcileable Breach between two Church-Members. This Rule was then in a ſpecial manner requiſite, when the civil Government was in the hands of ſuch as were not only *Aliens*, but *Enemies*.

4. If he will not *hear the Church*, will not ſtand to their Award, but perſiſts in the Wrong he has done thee, and proceeds to do thee further Wrong, *let him be to thee as an Heathen Man, and a Publican*, take the Benefit of the Law againſt him, but let that always be the laſt Remedy; appeal not to the Courts of Juſtice till thou haſt firſt try'd all other Means to comprimiſe the Matter in variance. Or thou may'ſt, if thou wilt break off thy Friendſhip and Familiarity with him; tho' thou muſt by no means ſtudy *Revenge*, yet thou may'ſt chuſe whether thou wilt have any *Dealings with him*, at leaſt in ſuch a way as may give him an opportunity of doing the like again. Thou would'ſt have heal'd him, would'ſt have preſerv'd his Friendſhip, but he would not, and ſo has forfeited it: If a Man cheat, and abuſe me once, 'tis *his fault*, if twice, 'tis *my own*.

Secondly, Let us apply it to *ſcandalous Sins*, which are an offence to the *little ones*, of ill Example to thoſe that are weak and pliable, and of great grief to thoſe that are weak and timerous. Chriſt having taught us to indulge the weakneſs of our Brethren, here cautions us not to indulge their Wickedneſs under pretence of that. Chriſt deſigning to erect a Church for himſelf in the World, here took care for the Preſervation (1.) of its *Purity*, that it might have an expulſive Faculty, a Power to cleanſe and clear it ſelf, like a Fountain of *living* Waters, which is neceſſary as long as the Net of the Goſpel brings up both good Fiſh and bad. (2.) Of its *Peace* and *Order*, that every Member may know his Place and Duty, and the Purity of it may be preſerv'd in a regular way, and not tumultuouſly. Now let us ſee,

1. What is the Caſe ſuppos'd *If thy Brother treſpaſs againſt thee.* (1.) The Offender is a *Brother*, one that is in Chriſtian Communion, that is Baptized, that hears the Word, and Prays with thee, with whom thou joyneſt in the Worſhip of God, Statedly, or Occaſionally. *Note*, Church Diſcipline is for Church-Members. *Them that are without, God judgeth*, 1 Cor. 5. 12, 13. When any Treſpaſs is done againſt us, 'tis good to remember that the Treſpaſſer is *a Brother*, which furniſheth us with qualifying Conſideration. (2.) The Offence is a *Treſpaſs againſt thee*; if thy Brother *Sin againſt thee*, ſo the Word is; if he do any thing which is *offenſive* to thee as a Chriſtian. *Note*, A groſs Sin againſt God is a Treſpaſs againſt his People that have a true Concern for his Honour. Chriſt and Believers have twiſted Intereſts; what is done againſt them, Chriſt takes as done againſt himſelf, and what is done againſt him, they cannot but take as done againſt themſelves. The *Reproacher of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me*, Pſal. 69. 9.

2. What is to be done in this Caſe. We have here;

1. The Rules preſcrib'd, *v.* 15, 16, 17. Proceed in this Method.

(1.) *Go and tell him his Fault between thee and him alone.* Do not ſtay till he comes to thee, but *go to him*, as the Phyſician viſits the Patient, and the Shepherd goes after the loſt Sheep. *Note*, We ſhould think no Pains too much to take for the recovering of a Sinner to Repentance. *Tell him his Fault*, mind him of what he has done, and of the Evil of it, *ſhew him his Abominations*. *Note*, People are loth to ſee their Faults, and have need to be told of them. Tho' the *Fact* is plain, and the *Fault* too, yet they muſt be put together with Application. Great Sins often amuze Conſcience, and for the preſent ſtupifie and *ſilence* it, and there's need of help to awaken it. *David*'s own Heart ſmote him when he had cut off *Saul*'s Skirt, and when he had number'd the People, but (which is very ſtrange) we do not find that it ſmote him in the Matter of *Uriah*, till *Nathan* told him, *Thou art the Man.*

Tell him his Fault, ἔλεγξον αὐτὸν, *argue the Caſe* with him; ſo the word ſignifies, and do it *with Reaſon* and Argument, not with Paſſion. Where the *Fault* is plain and great, the *Perſon* proper for us to deal with, and we have an opportunity for it, and there is no apparent danger of doing *more hurt* than *good*; we muſt with Meekneſs and Faithfulneſs tell People of what is amiſs in them. Chriſtian Reproof is an Ordinance of Chriſt for the bringing of Sinners to Repentance, and muſt be manag'd as an Ordinance. Let the Reproof be private, *between thee and him alone*; that it may appear you ſeek not his *Reproach* but his *Repentance*. *Note*, it is a good Rule, which ſhould ordinarily be obſerv'd among Chriſtians, not to ſpeak of our Brethren's Faults to others, till we have firſt ſpoken of them to themſelves; this would make *leſs Reproaching*, and *more Reproving*, that is, leſs Sin committed, and more Duty done. It will be likely to work upon an Offender, when he ſees his Reprover concern'd, not only for his *Salvation*, in telling him his Fault, but for his *Reputation* in telling him of it *privately*.

If he ſhall hear thee, that is, heed thee, if he be wrought upon by the Reproof, it is well, *thou haſt gain'd thy Brother*, thou haſt help'd to ſave him from Sin and Ruin, and it will be thy Credit, and Comfort, *James* 5. 19, 20. *Note*, The *Converting* of a Soul is the *winning* of that Soul, *Prov.* 11. 30. And we ſhould covet it, and labour after it as *Gain* to us; and if the loſs of a Soul be a great Loſs, the gain of a Soul is ſure *no ſmall Gain*.

2. If that doth not prevail, then *take with thee one or two more*, v. 16. *Note*, We muſt not be weary of well-doing, tho' we ſee not preſently the good Succeſs of it. If he will not *hear thee*, yet do not give him up as in a deſperate Caſe; ſay not, it will be to no purpoſe to deal with him any further, but go on in the uſe of other Means, even thoſe that *harden their Necks* muſt be *often reprov'd*, and thoſe that *oppoſe themſelves* inſtructed *in Meekneſs*. In Work of this kind we muſt *travel in Birth again*, Gal. 4. 19. and it is after *many Pains* and *Throws* that the Child is born.

Take with thee *one or two more* (1.) to *aſſiſt thee*; they may ſpeak ſome pertinent convincing Word which thou didſt not think of, and may manage the Matter with more prudence than thou didſt. *Note*, Chriſtians ſhould ſee their Need of Help in doing good, and *pray in the Aid* one of another, as in other things, ſo in giving Reproofs, that the Duty may be *done*, and may be *done well*. (2.) To *affect him*; he will be the more likely to be humbled for his Fault, when he ſees it witneſſed againſt by *two* or *three*, Deut. 19. 15. *Note*, Thoſe ſhould think it high time to repent and reform that ſee their Miſcarriages become a general Offence and Scandal. Tho' in ſuch a World as this, 'tis rare to find one good whom *all Men ſpeak well of*, yet 'tis more rare to find one good whom *all Men ſpeak ill of*. (3.) To be witneſſes of his Carriage, in caſe the Matter ſhould afterwards be brought *before the Church*. None ſhould come under the Cenſure of the Church as Obſtinate and Contumacious, till it be very well prov'd that they are ſo.

3. *If he neglect to hear them*, and will not be humbled then, *tell it the Church*, v. 17. There are ſome ſtubborn Spirits, to whom the likelieſt Means of Conviction prove ineffectual, yet ſuch muſt not be given over as incurable, but let the Matter be made more publick, and further help call'd in. *Note*, 1. Private Admonitions muſt always go before publick Cenſures; if gentler Methods will do the Work, thoſe that are more rough and ſevere muſt not be us'd, *Tit.* 3. 10. Thoſe that will be *reaſon'd* out of their Sins, need not be *ſhamed* out of them. Let God's Work be done effectually, but with as *little noiſe* as may be, his Kingdom comes with Power, but not *with Obſervation*. But (2.) where private Admonition doth not prevail, here *publick Cenſure* muſt *take place*. The Church muſt receive the *Complaints* of the *Offended*, and rebuke the *Sins* of the *Offenders*, and judge between them, after an impartial Enquiry made into the Merits of the Cauſe.

Tell it to the Church. 'Tis a thouſand pities that this Appointment of Chriſt which was deſign'd to end Differences, and remove Offences, ſhould it ſelf be ſo much a Matter of Debate, and occaſion Differences and Offences through the Corruption of Men's Hearts. What *Church* muſt be *told?* is the great Queſtion; the civil Magiſtrate, ſay ſome, the *Jewiſh Sanhedrin*, then in being, ſay others; but by what follows, *v.* 18. 'tis plain he means a Chriſtian Church, which tho' not yet form'd, was now in the *Embryo*. *Tell the Church*, i. e. that particular Church, in the Communion of which the Offender liveth; make the Matter known to thoſe of that Congregation, who are by conſent appointed to receive Informations of that kind. Tell it to the Guides and Governours of the Church, the Miniſters, the Elders, or Deacons, or, (if ſuch the Conſtitution of the Society be) tell it to the Repreſentatives, or Heads of the Congregation, or to all the Members of it; let them examine the Matter, and if they find the Complaint; frivolous and groundleſs, let them rebuke the Complainant; if they find it juſt, let them rebuke the Offender, and call him to Repentance, and this will be likely to put an *Edge*, and an *Efficacy* upon the Reproof, becauſe given (1.) with greater *Solemnity*, and (2.) with greater *Authority*. 'Tis an awful thing to receive a Reproof from a Church, from a Miniſter, a Reprover *by Office*, and therefore the more regarded by ſuch as pay any deference to an Inſtitution of Chriſt and his Embaſſadors.

4. If he neglect to *hear the Church*, if he ſlight the Admonition, and will neither be aſham'd of his Faults, nor amend them, *let him be unto thee as a heathen Man, and a Publican*; let him be caſt out of

the Communion of the Church, ſecluded from ſpecial Ordinances, degraded from the Dignity of a Church-member, let him be put under Diſgrace, and let the Members of the Society be warn'd to withdraw from him, that he may be aſham'd of his Sin, and they may not be infected by it, or chargeable with it. Thoſe who put Contempt on the Orders and Rules of a Society, and bring Reproach upon it, forfeit the Honours and Privileges of it, and are juſtly laid aſide till they repent and ſubmit, and reconcile themſelves to it again. Chriſt has appointed this Method for the vindicating of the Church's Honour, the preſerving of its Purity, and the Conviction and Reformation of thoſe that are ſcandalous. But obſerve, he doth not ſay, Let him be to thee as a Devil, or damned Spirit, as one whoſe caſe is deſperate, but as a *Heathen* and a *Publican*, as one in a capacity of being reſtor'd, and receiv'd in again. Count him not *as an Enemy*, but admoniſh him *as a Brother*. The Directions given to the Church of *Corinth* concerning the inceſtuous Perſon, agrees with the Rules here; he muſt be *taken away from among them*, 1 Cor. 5 2. muſt be *deliver'd to Satan*; for if he be caſt out of Chriſt's Kingdom, he is look'd upon as belonging to *Satan*'s Kingdom, they muſt not keep company with him, *v.* 11. 13. But when by this he is humbled, and reclaim'd, he muſt be welcom'd into Communion again, and all ſhall be well.

2. Here's a Warrant ſign'd for the Ratification of all the Churches Proceedings according to theſe Rules, *v.* 18. What was ſaid before to *Peter*, is here ſaid to all the Diſciples, and in them to all the faithful Office-bearers in the Church to the World's end; while Miniſters preach the Word of Chriſt faithfully, and in their Government of the Church ſtrictly adhere to his Laws, *clave non errante*, they may be aſſur'd he will own them, and ſtand by them, and will rectify what they ſay and do, ſo that it ſhall be taken as ſaid, and done by himſelf. He will own them,

1. In their Sentence of *Suſpenſion*; *Whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven.* If the Cenſures of the Church duly follow the Inſtitution of Chriſt, his Judgments will follow the Cenſures of the Church, his Spiritual Judgments which are the reſt of all other, ſuch as the rejected *Jews* fell under, *Rom.* 11. 8. a *Spirit of Slumber*; for Chriſt will not ſuffer his own Ordinances to be trampled upon, but will ſay, *Amen* to the righteous Sentences which the Church paſſeth on obſtinate Offenders. How light ſoever proud Scorners may make of the Cenſures of the Church, let them know that they are confirm'd in the Court of Heaven, and 'tis in vain for them to appeal to that Court, for Judgment is there already given againſt them. They that are ſhut out from the *Congregation of the Righteous* now, ſhall not *ſtand in it* in the great Day, *Pſal.* 1. 5. Chriſt will not own thoſe as his, nor receive them to himſelf whom the Church has duly deliver'd to *Satan*; but if through Error or Envy the Cenſure of the Church be unjuſt, Chriſt will graciouſly find thoſe who are ſo caſt out, *John* 9. 34, 35.

2. In their Sentence of *Abſolution*. *Whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven.* *Note*, (1.) No Church-cenſures bind ſo faſt, but that upon the Sinners Repentance and Reformation they may, and muſt be looſed again. Sufficient is the Puniſhment which has attain'd its End, and the Offender muſt then be forgiven and comforted, 2 *Cor.* 2. 6. There's no unpaſſable Gulph fix'd but that between Hell and Heaven. (2.) Thoſe that upon their Repentance are received by the Church into Communion again, may take the comfort of their Abſolution in Heaven, if their Hearts be upright with God. As Suſpenſion is for the Terror of the Obſtinate, ſo Abſolution is for the Encouragement of the Penitent. St. *Paul* ſpeaks *in the Perſon of Chriſt*, when he ſaith, *To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive alſo*, 2 Cor. 2. 10.

Now 'tis a great Honour which Chriſt here puts upon the Church, that he will condeſcend, not only to take cognizance of their Sentences, but to confirm them; and in the following Verſes we have two things laid down as the *Ground* of this.

1. God's readineſs to anſwer the Church's Prayers, *v.* 19. *If two of you ſhall agree* harmoniouſly, *touching any thing that they ſhall ask, it ſhall be done for them.* Apply this,

(1.) In general, to all the Requeſts of the faithful praying Seed of *Jacob*, they ſhall not *ſeek God's Face in vain.* Many Promiſes we have in Scripture of a gracious Anſwer to the Prayers of Faith, but this here gives a particular Encouragement to *Joynt-Prayer*; the Requeſts which *two of you* agree in, much more which *many* agree in. No Law of Heaven limits the number of Petitioners. *Note*, Chriſt has been pleas'd to put an Honour upon, and to allow a ſpecial Efficacy in the Joynt Prayers of the Faithful, and the *common Supplications* they make to God. If they joyn in the ſame Prayer, if they meet by appointment to come together to the Throne of Grace on ſome ſpecial Errand, or tho' at a diſtance agree in ſome particular Matter of Prayer, they ſhall *ſpeed well.* Beſides the general regard God has to the Prayers of the Saints, he is particularly pleas'd with their Union and Communion in thoſe Prayers. See 2 *Chron.* 5. 13. *Acts* 4. 24.

(2.) In particular, to theſe Requeſts that are put up to God about *Binding* and *Looſing*; to which this Promiſe ſeems more eſpecially to refer. *Obſerve*, (1.) That the Power of Church-Diſcipline is not here lodg'd in the hand of a ſingle Perſon, but *two* at leaſt are ſuppos'd to be concern'd in it. When the inceſtuous *Corinthian* was to be caſt out, the Church was *gather'd together*, 1 Cor. 5. 4. and it was a Puniſhment *inflicted of many*, 2 Cor. 2. 6. In an Affair of ſuch Importance, *two are better than one, and in multitude of Counſellors there is ſafety.* (2.) It is good to ſee thoſe that have the management of Church-Diſcipline *agreeing in it.* Heats and Animoſities among them, whoſe Work it is to remove Offences, will be the greateſt Offence of all. (3.) Prayer muſt evermore go along with Church-Diſcipline. Paſs no Sentence, which you cannot in Faith ask of God to confirm. The *Binding* and *Looſing* ſpoken of, *Chap.* 16. 17. was done by *Preaching*, this by *Praying.* Thus the whole Power of Goſpel-Miniſters is reſolv'd into the Word and Prayer, to which they muſt wholly *give themſelves.* He doth not ſay, If you ſhall agree to *Sentence* and *Decree* a thing, it ſhall be done; as if Miniſters were Judges and Lords, but if you *agree to* ask it of God, from him you ſhall obtain it. Prayer muſt go along with all our Endeavours for the Converſion of Sinners; ſee *James* 5. 16. (4.) The unanimous Petitions of the Church of God for the Ratification of their juſt Cenſures ſhall be heard in Heaven, and obtain an Anſwer. *It ſhall be done*, it ſhall be *bound* and *looſed* in Heaven; God will ſet his *Fiat* to the Appeals and Applications you make to him. If Chriſt, (who here ſpeaks as one having Authority) ſay *it ſhall be done*, we may be aſſur'd it is done, tho' we ſee not the effect in that way that we look for it. God doth eſpecially own and accept us when we are praying for thoſe that have offended him and us. The Lord *turn'd the Captivity of* Job, not when he pray'd for himſelf, but when he pray'd *for his Friends*, who had treſpaſſed *againſt him.*

2. The Preſence of Chriſt in the Aſſemblies of Chriſtians, *v.* 20. Every Believer hath the Preſence of Chriſt with him, but where *two or three are gather'd in his Name*, not only for Diſcipline, but for Religious Worſhip, or any Act of Chriſtian Communion. Meetings of Chriſtians for holy Purpoſes are hereby *appointed, directed* and *encourag'd.*

1. They are hereby *appointed*; the Church of Chriſt in the World exiſts moſt viſibly in Religious Aſſemblies, which it is the Will of Chriſt ſhould be ſet up, and kept up for the Honour of God, the Edification of Men, and the preſerving of a Face of Religion upon the World. When God intends ſpecial Anſwers to Prayer, he calls for a *ſolemn Aſſembly*, Joel 2. 15, 16. If there be no liberty and opportunity for large and numerous Aſſemblies, yet then 'tis the Will of God that *two or three* ſhould gather together to ſhew their Good-will to the great Congregation. *Note*, When we cannot do what we would in Religion, we muſt do as we can, and God will accept us.

2. They are hereby *directed* to gather together in Chriſt's Name. In the Exerciſe of Church-Diſcipline they muſt come together *in the Name of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 5. 4. That Name gives what they do an Authority on Earth, and an Acceptableneſs in Heaven. In meeting for Worſhip we muſt have an Eye to Chriſt; muſt come together by virtue of his Warrant and Appointment, in token of our Relation to him, profeſſing Faith in him, and in Communion with all that in every place call upon him. When we come together to worſhip God in a dependance upon the Spirit and Grace of Chriſt as Mediator for Aſſiſtance, and upon his Merit and Righteouſneſs as Mediator for Acceptance, having an actual Regard to him as our way to the Father, and our Advocate with the Father, then we are met together in his Name.

3. They are hereby *encouraged* with an aſſurance of the Preſence of Chriſt, *there am I in the midſt of them.* By his common Preſence, he is in all Places as God, but this is a Promiſe of his ſpecial Preſence; where his *Saints* are, his *Sanctuary* is, and there he will *dwell*, 'tis his Reſt, *Pſal.* 132. 14. 'tis his *Walk*, Rev. 2. 1. he is *in the midſt of them*, to quicken and ſtrengthen them, to refreſh and comfort them, as the Sun in the midſt of the Univerſe. He is *in the midſt of them*, i. e. in their Hearts, 'tis a ſpiritual Preſence, the Preſence of Chriſt's Spirit with their Spirit that is here intended, *There am I*, not only I *will be* there, but I *am there*, as if he came *firſt*, is ready before them, they ſhall find him there; he repeated this Promiſe at parting, *Mat.* 28. 20. *Lo, I am with you always.* *Note*, The Preſence of Chriſt in the Aſſemblies of Chriſtians is promis'd, and may in Faith be pray'd for, and depended on; *there am I.* This is equivalent to the *Schechinah*, or ſpecial Preſence of God in the Tabernacle and Temple of old, *Exod.* 40. 24. 2 *Chron.* 5. 14.

Tho' but two or three are met together, Chriſt is *among them*; this is an encouragement to the *meeting of a few*, when it is either (1.) of *Choice.* Beſides the ſecret Worſhip perform'd by particular Perſons, and the publick Services of the whole Congregation, there may be occaſion ſometimes for two or three to come together, either for mutual aſſiſtance in Conference, or Joynt Aſſiſtance in Prayer, not in contempt of publick Worſhip, but in concurrence with it, there Chriſt will be preſent. Or, (2.) by *Conſtraint*; when there are not more than *two or three* to come together, or if there be, they dare not *for fear of the Jews*, yet Chriſt will be *in the midſt of them*; for it is not the Multitude, but the Faith and ſincere Devotion of the Worſhippers that invites the Preſence of Chriſt; and tho' there be but *two* or *three*, the ſmalleſt number that can be, yet if Chriſt make one among them, who is the principal one, their Meeting is as honourable and comfortable, as if they were *two* or *three thouſand.*

21 Then came Peter to him, and ſaid, Lord, how
oft ſhall my brother ſin againſt me, and I forgive
him? till ſeven times? 22 Jeſus ſaith unto him, I
ſay not unto thee, Until ſeven times: but until ſe-
venty times ſeven. 23 Therefore is the kingdom
of heaven likened unto a certain king which would
take an account of his ſervants. 24 And when he
had

had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which ought him ten thouſand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be ſold, and his wiſe and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The ſervant therefore fell down and worſhipped him, ſaying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that ſervant was moved with compaſſion, and looſed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the ſame ſervant went out, and found one of his fellow-ſervants which ought him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, ſaying, Pay me that thou oweſt. 20 And his fellow-ſervant fell down at his feet, and beſought him, ſaying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and caſt him into priſon, till he ſhould pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow-ſervants ſaw what was done, they were very ſorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, ſaid unto him, O thou wicked ſervant, I forgave thee all that debt, becauſe thou deſiredſt me: 33 Shouldſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him, 35 So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly father do alſo unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their treſpaſſes.

This part of the Diſcourſe concerning Offences, is certainly to be underſtood of perſonal Wrongs, which it is in our Power to forgive. Now obſerve,

1. *Peter*'s Queſtion concerning this Matter, *v.* 21. *Lord, how oft ſhall my Brother treſpaſs againſt me, and I forgive him?* Will it ſuffice to do it *ſeven times*.

1. He takes it for granted, that he muſt *forgive*; Chriſt had before taught his Diſciples this Leſſon, *Mat*. 6. 14, 15. and *Peter* has not forgot it. He knows he muſt not only not bear a Grudge againſt his Brother, or meditate Revenge, but he muſt be as good a Friend as ever, and forget the Injury.

2. He thinks it a great matter to forgive till *ſeven times*, he means not *ſeven times a Day*, as Chriſt ſaid, *Luke* 17. 4. but ſeven times in his Life; ſuppoſing, that if a Man had any way abus'd him ſeven times, tho' he were never ſo deſirous to be reconcil'd, he might then abandon his Society, and have no more to do with him. Perhaps *Peter* had an eye to, *Prov*. 24. 16. *A juſt Man falleth ſeven times*; or to the mention of *three Tranſgreſſions*, and *four*, which God would no more paſs by, *Amos* 2 1. *Note*, There is a Proneſs in our corrupt Nature to *ſtint our ſelves* in that which is good, and to be afraid of doing too much in Religion, particularly of forgiving too much, tho' we have ſo much *forgiven us*.

2. Chriſt's direct Anſwer to *Peter*'s Queſtion. *I ſay not unto thee till ſeven times*, never intended to ſet up any ſuch bounds, but until *ſeventy times ſeven*, a certain number for an indefinite one, but a great one. *Note*, It doth not look well for us to *keep count* of the Offences done againſt us by our Brethren: There is ſomething of ill Nature in *ſcoring up* the Injuries we forgive, as if we would allow our ſelves to be reveng'd when the *Meaſure is full*. God keeps an account, *Deut*. 32. 34. becauſe he is the Judge, and Vengeance is his; but *we* muſt not, leſt we be found ſtepping into his Throne. It is neceſſary to the Preſervation of Peace both *within* and *without*, to paſs by Injuries, without reckoning *how often*; to *forgive* and *forget*. God multiplies his Pardons, and ſo ſhould we, *Pſal*. 78. 38. 40. It intimates that we ſhould make it our conſtant practice to forgive Injuries, and ſhould accuſtom our ſelves to it till it becomes *habitual*.

3. A further Diſcourſe of our Saviour's, by way of Parable, to ſhew the Neceſſity of forgiving the Injuries that are done to us. Parables are of uſe, not only for the explaining of Chriſtian Doctrines, but for the preſſing of Chriſtian Duties; for they make and leave an Impreſſion. The Parable is a Comment upon the fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*. Thoſe, and thoſe only may expect to be forgiven of God, who forgive their Brethren. The Parable repreſents the *Kingdom of Heaven*, i. e. the Church and the Adminiſtration of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation in it. The Church is God's *Family*, 'tis his Court, there he dwells, there he rules, God is our Maſter, his Servants we are, at leaſt in *Profeſſion* and *Obligation*. In general, the Parable intimates how much Provocation God has from his Family on Earth, and how *untoward* his Servants are.

There are three Things in the Parable.

Firſt, The Maſter's *wonderful Clemency* to his Servant who was indebted to him, he forgave him *ten thouſand Talents* out of pure Compaſſion to him, *v.* 23—27. Where obſerve,

1. Every Sin we commit is *a Debt to God*; not like a Debt to an equal, contracted by Buying, or Borrowing, but to a Superior, like a Debt to a Prince when a *Recognizance* is *forfeited*, or a Penalty incur'd by a Breach of the Law, or Breach of the Peace; like this Debt of a Servant to his Maſter, by witholding his Service, waſting his Lord's Goods, breaking his Indentures, and incurring the Penalty. We are all Debtors, we owe Satisfaction, and are liable to the Proceſs of the Law.

2. There is an account kept of theſe Debts, and we muſt ſhortly be reckon'd with for them. This King would *take account of his Servants*. God now reckons with us by our own *Conſciences*; Conſcience is an Auditor for God in the Soul, to *call us to account*, and to account with us. One of the firſt Queſtions that an awaken'd Chriſtian asks, is, *How much oweſt thou unto my Lord?* And unleſs it be brib'd it will tell the truth, and not write *fifty* for a *hundred*. There is another Day of reckoning coming, when theſe Accounts will be call'd over, and either paſs'd or diſallow'd, and nothing but the Blood of Chriſt will ballance the Account.

3. The Debt of Sin is a very great Debt, and ſome are more in debt, by reaſon of Sin than others. When he *began to reckon*, one of the firſt Fore-faulters appear'd to owe *ten thouſand Talents*. There's no evading the Enquiries of Divine Juſtice, *your Sin* will be ſure to *find you out*. The Debt was *ten Thouſand* Talents, a vaſt Sum, amounting by Computation to one Million, eight hundred, ſeventy five thouſand Pounds Sterling, a King's Ranſom, or a Kingdoms Subſidy, more likely than a Servant's Debt; ſee what our Sins are; (1.) For the *Heinouſneſs* of their *Nature* they are *Talents*, the greateſt Denomination that ever was us'd in the account of Money or Weight. Every Sin is the *Load* of a Talent, a *Talent of Lead, this is Wickedneſs*, Zech. 5. 7, 8. The Truſts committed to us as Stewards of the Grace of God, are each of them *a Talent*, *Mat* 25. 15. a Talent *of Gold*, and for every one of them bury'd, much more for every one of them waſted we are a Talent in debt, and this raiſes the Account. (2.) For the *vaſtneſs* of their *Number*, they are *ten Thouſand*, a Myriad, more than the *Hairs on our Head*, Pſal. 40. 12. who can underſtand the number of his Errors, or tell *how oft he offends*, Pſal. 19. 12.

4. The Debt of Sin is ſo great, that we are not able to pay it, he *had not to pay*: Sinners are *Inſolvent* Debtors, the Scripture which concludeth all under Sin is a *Statute of Bankrupt* againſt us all. Silver and Gold would not pay our Debt, *Pſal*. 49. 6, 7. Sacrifice and Offering would not do it, our good Works are but God's Work in us, and cannot make Satisfaction; we are *without Strength*, and cannot help our ſelves.

5. if God would deal with us in ſtrict Juſtice, we ſhould be condemn'd as Inſolvent Debtors, and God might exact the Debt by glorifying himſelf in our utter Ruin. Juſtice demands Satisfaction, *currat Lex*, Let the Sentence of the Law be executed. The Servant had contracted this Debt by his waſtefulneſs and wilfulneſs, and therefore might juſtly be left to lie by it. His Lord *commanded him to be ſold* as a Bondſlave into the Gallies, ſold to grind in the Priſon-houſe, his Wife and Children to be ſold, and all that he had and *Payment to be made*. See here what every Sin deſerves, this is the *Wages of Sin* (1.) to be *ſold*. Thoſe that *ſell themſelves* to work Wickedneſs, muſt be *ſold* to make Satisfaction. Captives to Sin are Captives to Wrath. He that is *ſold* for a Bondſlave is depriv'd of all his Comforts, and has nothing left him but his Life, that he may be ſenſible of his Miſeries; which is the Caſe of damned Sinners. (2.) Thus he would have *Payment* to be made, i. e. ſomething done towards it; tho' 'tis impoſſible that the Sale of one ſo *worthleſs* ſhould amount to the Payment of ſo great a Debt. By the Damnation of Sinners Divine Juſtice will be to Eternity in the *ſatisfying*, but never *ſatisfied*.

6. Convinced Sinners cannot but *humble themſelves* before God, and *pray* for Mercy. The Servant under this Charge, and this Doom, *fell down* at the Feet of his Royal Maſter, and *worſhipped him*; or as ſome Copies reads it, he *beſought himſelf*; his Addreſs was very ſubmiſſive, and very importunate, *have patience with me and I will pay thee all*, v. 26. The Servant knew before that he was ſo much in Debt, and yet was under no Concern about it, till he was *call'd to an account*. Sinners are commonly careleſs about the Pardon of their Sins, till they come under the Arreſts of ſome awakening *Word*, ſome ſtartling *Providence*, or an approaching Death, and then *wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord?* Mich. 6. 6. How eaſily, how quickly can God bring the proudeſt Sinner to his Feet, *Ahab* to his *Sacloth*, *Manaſſeh* to his *Prayers*, *Pharaoh* to his *Confeſſions*, *Judas* to his *Reſtitution*, *Simon Magus* to his *Supplication*, *Belſhazzar* and *Felix* to their *Tremblings*; the ſtouteſt Heart will truckle when God ſets the Sins in order before it. This Servant doth not deny the Debt, nor ſeek occaſions, or go about to abſcond.

But (1.) He *begs Day*; *have patience with me*. Patience and Forbearance is a great Favour, but it's Folly to think that that alone will ſave us; Reprieves are not Pardons. Many are born that are not thereby *brought to Repentance*, Rom. 2. 4. and then their being born with doth them no kindneſs.

(2.) He *promiſeth Payment*. Have Patience a while, and *I will pay thee all*. *Note*, It is the Folly of many that are under Convictions of Sin, to imagine that they can make God Satisfaction for the Wrong they have done him; as thoſe, that like a compounding Bankrupt would diſcharge the Debt, by giving their *firſt born for their Tranſgreſſion*, Mic. 6. 7. that *go about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs*, Rom. 10. 3. He that had *nothing to pay*, v. 25. yet fancied he could *pay all:* See how cloſe Pride ſticks, even to awaken'd Sinners; they are *convinced*, but not *humbled*.

7. The God of infinite Mercy is very ready out of pure *Compaſſion* to forgive the Sins of thoſe that *humble* themſelves before him, *v.* 27. *The Lord of that Servant*, when he might juſtly have *ruin'd* him, mercifully *releas'd* him, and ſince he could not be ſatisfied by the *Payment* of the Debt, he would be glorified by the *Pardon* of it. The Servant's Prayer was, *Have patience with me:* the Maſter's Grant is a *Diſcharge in full*. *Note*, 1. The *Pardon of Sin* is owing to the *Mercy of God*, to his tender Mercy, *Luke* 1. 77, 78. He was *moved with Compaſſion*. God's Reaſons of Mercy are fetch'd from within himſelf. He has Mercy becauſe he will have Mercy. God look'd with *Pity* on Mankind in general, becauſe miſerable, and ſent his Son to be a Surety for them; he looks with Pity on particular Penitents, becauſe ſenſible of their Miſery, their Hearts *broken* and *contrite*, and accepts *them* in the beloved. 2. There is Forgiveneſs with God for the greateſt Sins, if they be repented of. Tho' the Debt was vaſtly great he *forgave it all*, v. 32. Tho' our Sins be very numerous, and very heinous, yet upon Goſpel-Terms they may be pardon'd. 3. The forgiving of the Debt is the looſing of the Debtor. *He looſed him*. The Obligation is cancell'd, the Judgment vacated, we never walk at liberty till our Sins are *forgiven*. But obſerve, tho' he diſcharg'd him from the *Penalty* as a Debtor, he did not diſcharge him from his *Duty* as a Servant. The Pardon of Sin doth not ſlacken, but ſtrengthen our Obligations to Obedience. And we muſt reckon it a Favour that God is pleas'd to continue ſuch waſteful Servants as we have been in ſuch a gainful Service as his is, and ſhould therefore *deliver us* that we might *ſerve him*, Luke 1. 74. *I am thy Servant*, for thou haſt *looſed my Bonds*.

Secondly, The Servants *unreaſonable Severity* towards his Fellow-Servant, notwithſtanding his Lord's Clemency towards him, *v.* 28, 29, 30. This repreſents the Sin of thoſe, who, tho' they are not *unjuſt* in demanding that which is *not their own*, yet are *rigorous* and *unmerciful* in demanding that which *is their own*; to the utmoſt of Right, which ſometimes proves a real Wrong. *Summum jus ſumma injuria*. To exact Satisfaction for *Debts of Injury*, which tend neither to reparation, nor to the publick Good, but purely for Revenge; tho' the Law may allow it *in terrorem*, and for the Hardneſs of Men's Hearts, yet ſavours not of a Chriſtian Spirit. To ſue for *Money-Debts* when the Debtor cannot poſſibly pay them, and ſo to let him rot in Priſon, argues a greater love of Money, and a leſs love of our Neighbour than we ought to have, *Neh.* 5. 7.

See here, 1. How *ſmall* the Debt was, how very ſmall, compar'd with the ten thouſand Talents which his Lord forgave him. He ow'd him a *hundred Pence*, about three Pounds and half a Crown of our Money. *Note*, Offences done to Men are nothing to thoſe which are committed againſt God. Diſhonours done to a Man like our ſelves are but as Pence, Motes, Gnats, but Diſhonours done to God are as Talents, Beams, Camels. Not that therefore we may *make* light of wronging our Neighbour, for that's alſo a Sin againſt God; but therefore we ſhould make light of our Neighbours wronging us, and not aggravate it, or ſtudy Revenge. *David* was unconcern'd at the Indignities done to him, *I as a deaf Man heard not*, but laid much to Heart the Sins committed againſt God, for them *Rivers of Tears run down his Eyes*.

2. How *ſevere* the *Demand* was; he *laid Hands on him, and took him by the Throat*. Proud and angry Men think if the *Matter* of their Demand be *juſt*, that will bear them out, tho' the *manner* of it be never ſo *cruel* and *unmerciful*, but it will not hold. What needed all this Violence? The Debt might have been demanded without taking the Debtor by the Throat, without ſending for a Writ, or ſetting the Bayliff upon him. How *Lordly* is this Man's Carriage, and yet how *baſe* and *ſervile* is his Spirit. If he had been himſelf going to Priſon for his Debt to his Lord, his Occaſions would have been ſo *preſſing*, that he might have had ſome pretence for going to this extremity in requiring his own; but many times *Pride* and *Malice* prevail more to make Men ſevere than the moſt urgent Neceſſity would do.

3. How *ſubmiſſive* the *Debtor was*. His *fellow Servant*, tho' his *Equal*, yet knowing how much he lay at his Mercy, *fell down at his Feet*, and humbled himſelf to him for this trifling Debt, as much as he did to his Lord for that *great Debt*, for *the Borrower is Servant to the Lender*, Prov. 22. 7. *Note*, Thoſe that cannot pay their Debts, yet ought to be very reſpectful to their Creditors, and not only give them good words, but do them all the good Offices they poſſibly can. They muſt not be angry at thoſe who claim their own, nor ſpeak ill of them for it, no, not tho' they do it in a rigorous manner but in that caſe leave it to God to plead their Cauſe. The poor Man's Requeſt is, *Have patience with me*; he honeſtly confeſſeth the Debt, and puts not his Creditor to the charge of proving it, only begs time. *Note*, Forbearance, 'tho it be no Acquittance, is ſometimes a piece of needful and laudable Charity. As we muſt not be *hard*, ſo we muſt not be *haſty* in our Demands, but think how *long* God bears with us.

4. How *implacable* and *furious* the Creditor was, *v.* 30. He *would not have patience* with him, would not hearken to his fair Promiſe, but without Mercy *caſt him into Priſon*. How inſolently did he trample upon one as good as himſelf that ſubmitted to him? How cruelly did he uſe one that had done him no harm, and tho' it would be no advantage to himſelf? In this, as in a Glaſs, unmerciful Creditors may ſee their own Faces, who take pleaſure in nothing more than to ſwallow up and to deſtroy, 2 *Sam.* 20. 19. and glory in having their *poor Debtor's Bones*.

5. How much concern'd the reſt of the Servants were, *they* were *very ſorry*, v. 31. ſorry for the Creditor's Cruelty, and for the Debtor's Calamity. *Note*, The Sins and Sufferings of our Fellow-ſervants ſhould be matter of Grief and Trouble to us. 'Tis ſad that any of our Brethren ſhould either *make themſelves Beaſts of Prey* by Cruelty and Barbarity, or be *made Beaſts of Slavery* by the inhuman Uſage of thoſe that have Power over them. To ſee a Fellow-ſervant either raging like a Bear, or trampled on like a Worm, cannot but occaſion great Regret to all that have any Jealouſie for the Honour, either of their Nature, or of their Religion. See with what Eye *Solomon* look'd both upon the *Tears of the Oppreſſed*, and the *Power of the Oppreſſors*, Eccl. 4. 4. 1.

6. How the notice of it was brought to the Maſter, *they come and told their Lord*. They durſt not reprove their Fellow-ſervant for it, he was ſo unreaſonable and outragious. *Let a Bear rob'd of her Whelps meet a Man, rather than ſuch a Fool in his Folly*; but they went to their Lord, and beſought him to appear for the Oppreſſed againſt the Oppreſſor. *Note*, That which gives us occaſion for Sorrow ſhould give us occaſion for Prayer. Let our Complaints, both of the Wickedneſs of the Wicked, and of the Afflictions of the Afflicted be brought to God, and left with him.

Thirdly, The Maſter's juſt Reſentment of the Cruelty his Servant was guilty of. If the Servant took it ſo heinouſly much more would the Maſter, whoſe Compaſſions are infinitely above ours. Now obſerve here,

1. How he *reprov'd* his Servant's Cruelty, *v.* 32, 33. *O thou wicked Servant*. *Note*, Unmercifulneſs is Wickedneſs, 'tis great Wickedneſs. (1.) He upbraids him with the Mercy he had found with his Maſter. *I forgave thee all that Debt*. Thoſe that will uſe God's Favours ſhall never be upbraided with them, but they that abuſe them may expect it, *Mat.* 11. 20. Conſider, it was *all that Debt*, that *great Debt*. *Note*, The greatneſs of Sin magnifies the Riches of pardoning Mercy. We ſhould think *how much has been forgiven us*, Luke 7. 47. (2.) He thence ſhews him the Obligation he was under to be merciful to his Fellow-ſervant. Should'ſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy *Fellow-ſervant, even as I had pity on thee?* *Note*, It's juſtly expected, that ſuch as have *receiv'd Mercy*, ſhould *ſhew Mercy*. *Dat ille veniam facile cui venia eſt opus*. Senec. Agam. He ſhews him, (1.) That he ſhould have been more compaſſionate to the Diſtreſs of his Fellow-ſervant, becauſe he had himſelf experienced the ſame Diſtreſs. What we have had the feeling of our ſelves, we can the better have the *Fellow-feeling* of with *our Brethren*. The *Iſraelites* know *the Heart of a Stranger* for they *were Strangers*; and this Servant ſhould have better known the Heart of an arreſted Debtor, than to have been thus hard upon ſuch a one. (2.) That he ſhould have been more conformable to the Example of his Maſter's Tenderneſs, having himſelf experienc'd it ſo much to his Advantage. *Note*, The comfortable Senſe of pardoning Mercy tends much to the diſpoſing of our Hearts to forgive our Brethren. It was in the cloſe of the *Day of Atonement* that the Jubilee Trumpet ſounded a *Releaſe of Debts*, Lev. 25. 9. For we muſt have compaſſion on our Brethren as God has on us.

2. How he *revok'd* his Pardon, and cancell'd the Acquittance, ſo that the Judgment againſt him reviv'd, *v.* 34. *He deliver'd him to the Tempters, till he ſhould pay all that was due unto him*. Tho' the *Wickedneſs* was very great, his Lord laid upon him no other Puniſhment but the Payment of his own Debt, *Note*, Thoſe that will not come up to the Terms of the Goſpel, need be no more miſerable than to be left open to the Law, and to let that have its courſe againſt them. See how the Puniſhment anſwers the Sin; he that would not *forgive* ſhall not be *forgiven*. He *deliver'd him to the Tormentors*; the utmoſt he could do to his *Fellow-ſervant*, was but to caſt him *into Priſon*, but he was himſelf *deliver'd to* the Tormentors. *Note*, The Power of God's Wrath to ruin us, goes far beyond the utmoſt extent of any Creatures Strength and Wrath. The Reproaches and Terrors of his own Conſcience would be his *Tormentors*, for that's a *Worm* that *dies not*; Devils, the Executioners of God's Wrath that are Sinners Temptors, now will be their Tormentors, for ever. He was ſent to *Bridewell till he ſhould pall all*. *Note*, Our *Debts* to God are never *Compounded*, either *all* is *forgiven*, or all is *exacted:* Glorified Saints in Heaven are *pardon'd all* through Chriſt's compleat Satisfaction; damned Sinners in Hell are *paying all* that is, are *puniſh'd for all*. The Offence done to God by Sin is in point of Honour, which cannot be compounded for without ſuch a *Diminution* as the Caſe will by no means admit, and therfore ſome way or other, by the Sinner, or by his Surety it muſt be ſatisfied.

Laſtly, Here is the Reddition of the whole Parable, *v.* 35. *So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do unto you*. The Title Chriſt here gives to God was made uſe of, *v.* 19. in a comfortable *Promiſe, it ſhall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven*; here 'tis made uſe of in a terrible *Threatning*. If God's Government be *Fatherly*, it follows thence that it is not *Righteous*, but it doth not therefore follow that it is not *Rigorous*, or that under his Government we muſt not be kept in awe by the fear of Divine Wrath. When we pray to God as *our Father in Heaven*, we are taught to aſk for the Forgiveneſs of Sins *as we forgive* our Debtors. *Obſerve* here,

1. The *Duty of Forgiving*, we muſt *from our Hearts forgive*. Note, We do not forgive our offending Brother aright, nor acceptably if we do not *forgive from the Heart*; for that's it that God looks at. No

Malice muſt be harbour'd *there*, or Ill-will to any Perſon, one or another; no projects of Revenge muſt be hatch'd there, or deſires of it, as there are in many who outwardly appear peaceable and reconcil'd. Yet this is not enough, we muſt *from the Heart* deſire and endeavour the Welfare, even of thoſe that have *offended us*.

2. The *danger of not forgiving, ſo ſhall your Heavenly Father do.* (1.) This is not intended to teach us that God *reverſeth* his Pardons to any, but that he *denies* them to thoſe that are *unqualified* for them, according to the Tenor of the Goſpel, tho' having *ſeemd* to *be humbled* like *Ahab*, they thought themſelves, and others thought them in a *Pardon'd State*, and they made bold with the Comfort of it. Intimations enough we have in Scripture of the *Forfeiture* of Pardons for *Caution* to the Preſumptuous, and yet ſecurity enough of the *continuance* of them for *Comfort* to thoſe that are ſincere, but timorous, that the one may *fear*, and the other may *hope*. Thoſe that do not forgive their Brother's Treſpaſſes, did never *truly* repent of their own, nor ever *truly* believe the Goſpel; and therefore that which is taken away is only that *they ſeemed to have*, Luke 8. 13. (2.) This is intended to teach us, that *they ſhall have Judgement without Mercy that have ſhewd no Mercy*, Jam. 2. 13. It is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to Pardon and Peace, that we not only *do juſtly*, but *love Mercy*. It is an eſſential Part of that Religion which is *pure and undefiled before God and the Father* of that Wiſdom from above which is *gentle and eaſie to be intreated*. Look how they will anſwer, it another day, who, tho' they bear the Chriſtian Name, Perſiſt in the moſt rigorous and unmerciful Treatment of their Brethern, as if the ſtricteſt Laws of Chriſt might be diſpens'd with for the gratifying of their unbridled Paſſions, and ſo they curſe themſelves every time they ſay the Lord's Prayer.

CHAP. XIX.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *Chriſt changing his Quarters, leaving* Galilee, *and coming into the Coaſts of* Judea, v. 1. 2. (2.) *His Diſpute with the* Phariſees *about Divorce, and his Diſcourſe with his Diſciples upon occaſion of it*, v. 3.—12. (3.) *The kind Entertainment he gave to ſome* little Children *which were* brought *to him*, v. 13.—15. (4.) *An account of what paſs'd between Chriſt and a hopeful young Gentleman that apply'd himſelf to him*, v. 16.—22. (5.) *His Diſcourſe with his Diſciples upon that occaſion, concerning the Difficulty of the Salvation of thoſe that have much in the World, and the certain Recompence of thoſe that leave all for Chriſt*, v. 23.—30.

AND it came to paſs, that when Jeſus had finiſhed theſe ſayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coaſts of Judea, beyond Jordon: 2 And great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there.

We have here an account of Chriſt's *Remove*. *Obſerve*,

1. He left *Galilee*. There he had been *brought up*, and had ſpent the greateſt part of his Life in that remote deſpicable part of the Country; 'twas only upon occaſion of the Feaſts that he came up to *Jeruſalem*, and *Manifeſted himſelf*, there; and we may ſuppoſe, that having no conſtant Reſidence there, when he did come his Preaching and Miracles were the more obſervable and acceptable. But it was an Inſtance of his Humiliation, and in this, as in other things he appear'd *mean*, that he would go under the Character of a *Galilean*, a *North-Country* Man, the leaſt polite and refin'd part of the Nation. Moſt of Chriſt's Sermons hitherto had been *Preach'd*, and Moſt of his Miracles wrought in *Galilee*; but now having *finiſhed theſe ſayings*, he departed *from* Galilee, and it was his *final* Farewel; for (unleſs his paſſing through the midſt of *Samaria* and *Galilee*, Luke 17. 11. was after this, which yet was but a Viſit *in tranſitu*) he never came to *Galilee* again till after his Reſurrection; which makes this Tranſition very remarkable; Chriſt did not take his leave of *Galilee* till he had *done his Work* there, and then he *departed thence*. *Note*, As Chriſt's faithful Miniſters are not taken out of the World, ſo they are not remov'd from any place till they have *finiſhed their Teſtimony* in that place, *Rev.* 11. 7. This is very comfortable to thoſe that follow not their own Humours, but God's Providence in their Removes, that their Sayings ſhall be *finiſhed* before they depart. And who would deſire to continue any where, longer than he has Work to do for God there?

2. He *came into the Coaſts of* Judea, *beyond* Jordan, that they might have their *Day of Viſitation* as well as *Galilee*, for they alſo belong'd to the loſt Sheep of the houſe of *Iſrael*. But ſtill Chriſt kept to thoſe Parts of *Canaan* that lay towards other Nations, *Galilee* is call'd *Galilee* of the *Gentiles*, and the *Syrians* dwelt beyond *Jordan*: Thus Chriſt intimated, that while he kept within the Confines of the *Jewiſh* Nation he had his eye upon the *Gentiles*, and his Goſpel was aiming and coming towards them.

3. *Great Multitudes followed him*; where *Shilo* is, there will the *gathering of the People be*. The Redeemed of the Lord are ſuch as *follow the Lamp whitherſoever he goes*, Rev. 14. 4. When Chriſt departs, it's beſt for us to *follow him*. It was a piece of reſpect to Chriſt, and yet it was a continual Trouble to be thus *crowded* after wherever he went; but he ſought not his own Eaſe, nor conſidering how mean and contemptible this Mob was, (as ſome would call them) his own Honour much, in the eye of the World, he went about *doing Good*; for ſo it follows, he *healed them there*. This ſhews what they follow'd him for, to have their Sick heal'd, and they found him as able and ready to help here as he had been in *Galilee*; for wherever this Son of Righteouſneſs aroſe, it was with *healing under his Wings*. He *healed them there*, becauſe he would not have them follow him to *Jeruſalem*, leſt it ſhould give Offence. He ſhall not *ſtrive, nor cry*.

3 The Phariſees alſo came unto him, tempting him, and ſaying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cauſe? 4 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning, made them male and female? 5 And he ſaid, For this cauſe ſhall a man leave father and mother, and ſhall cleave to his wife; and they twain ſhall be one fleſh. 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one fleſh, What therefore God hath joyned together, let not man put aſunder. 7 They ſay unto him, Why did Moſes then command to give a writing of divorcement and to put her away? 8 He ſaith unto them, Moſes, becauſe of the hardneſs of your hearts, ſuffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not ſo. 9 And I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and ſhall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoſo marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery. 10 His diſciples ſay unto him, If the caſe of a man be ſo with *his* wife, it is not good to marry. 11 But he ſaid unto them, All men cannot receive this ſaying, ſave *they* to whom it is given. 12 For there are ſome eunuchs, which were ſo born from *their* mothers womb: and there are ſome eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themſelves eunuchs for the kingdom of heavens ſake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

We have here the Law of Chriſt in the Caſe of Divorce, occaſion'd as ſome other Declarations of his Will by a Diſpute with the *Phariſees*, ſo patiently did he endure the *Contradiction of Sinners*, that he turn'd it into Inſtructions to his own Diſciples. *Obſerve*, here.

Firſt, The Caſe propos'd by the *Phariſees*, v. 13. *Is it lawful for a Man to put away his Wife?* This they ask'd, *tempting him*, not deſiring to be taught by him. Some time ago he had in *Galilee* declar'd his Mind in this Matter againſt that, which was the common Practice, *Mat.* 5. 31, 32. And if he would in like manner declare himſelf now againſt Divorce, they would make uſe of it for the prejudicing and incenſing of the People of this Country againſt him, who would look with a jealous eye upon one that attempted to cut them ſhort in a Liberty they were fond of. They hoped he would loſe himſelf in the Affections of the People, as much by this as by any of his Precepts. Or, the Temptation might be deſign'd thus; if he ſhould ſay that Divorces were *not lawful*, they would reflect upon him as an Enemy to the Law of *Moſes* which allowed them; if he ſhould ſay they were, they would repreſent his Doctrine as not having that Prefection in it which was expected in the Doctrine of the *Meſſiah*, ſince tho' Divorces were tolerated, they were look'd upon by the ſtricter ſort of People as not of good Report. Some think, tho' the Law of *Moſes* did permit Divorce, yet in aſſigning the juſt Cauſes for it, there was a Controverſie between the *Phariſees* among themſelves, and they deſir'd to know what Chriſt ſaid to it. *Matrimonial Caſes* have been numerous, and ſometimes intricate and perplex'd, made ſo, not by the Law of God, but by the Luſts and Follies of Men; and many times in theſe caſes People reſolve before they as'k, what they will do.

Their Queſtion is, Whether a Man may *put away his Wife for every Cauſe*; that it might be done for *ſome Cauſe*, even for that of *Fornication* was granted: But may it be done as now it commonly was done by the looſer ſort of People for *every Cauſe*, for *any Cauſe* that a Man ſhall think fit to aſſign, tho' never ſo frivolous, upon every Diſlike or Diſpleaſure; the Toleration in this caſe permitted it, *in caſe ſhe found no favour in his eyes, becauſe he hath found ſome uncleanneſs in her*, Deut. 24. 1. This they interpreted ſo largely as to make any *diſguſt*, tho' cauſeleſs the ground of a Divorce.

Secondly, Chriſt's anſwer to this Queſtion, tho' it was propos'd to *tempt him*, yet being a Caſe of Conſcience, and a weighty one, he gave a full Anſwer to it, not a direct one, but an effectual one; laying down ſuch Principles as undeniably prove that ſuch arbitrary Divorces as were then in uſe, which made the Matrimonial Bond ſo very precarious, were by no means lawful. Chriſt himſelf would not give the Rule without a reaſon, nor lay down his Judgement without Scripture Proof to ſupport it. Now his Argument is this; if Husband and Wife are by the Will and Appointment of God joyned together in the ſtricteſt and cloſeſt Union, then they are not to be *lightly*, and upon every occaſion ſeparated; if the Knot be *Sacred* it cannot be eaſily *unty'd.* Now to prove that there is ſuch a Union between Man and Wife, he urgeth three things:

1. The *Creation* of *Adam* and *Eve*; concerning which he appeals to their own knowledge of the Scriptures; *Have ye not read?* It is ſome advantage in arguing to deal with thoſe that own and have read the Scriptues; *you have read,* (but have not conſider'd) that *he which made them at the beginning, made them Male and Female,* Gen. 1. 27. 5.—2. *Note,* It will be of great uſe to us often to think of our *Creation,* how, and by whom, what, and for what we were created. He made them *Male* and *Female,* one Female for one Male, ſo that *Adam* could not Divorce his Wife, and take another; for there was no other to take. It likewiſe intimated as inſeparable Union between them; *Eve* was a Rib out of *Adam's* ſide ſo that he could not put her away but he muſt put away a peice of himſelf, and contradict the manifeſt Indications of her Creation. Chriſt hints briefly at this, but in appealing to what they had *read,* he refers them to the original Record, where 'tis obſervable, that tho' the *reſt* of the *living* Creatures were made *Male and Female,* yet it is not ſaid ſo concerning any of them, but only concerning *Mankind*; becauſe between Man and Woman the Conjunction is rational, and intended for nobler Purpoſes than meerly the pleaſing of Senſe, and the *preſerving* of a *Seed,* and it is therefore more cloſe and firm than that between Male and Female among the Brutes, who were not capable of being ſuch *helps met for one another* as *Adam* and *Eve* were. Hence the manner of Experſſion is ſome what ſingular, Gen. 1. 27. *in the Image of God Created he him, Male and Female, Created he them*; *him* and *them* are us'd promiſcuouſly, being *one* by Creation before they were *two,* when they became *one* again by Marriage-Covenant, that Oneneſs could not but be cloſer and undiſſolvable.

2. The *fundamental Law* of *Marriage,* which is, that a Man ſhall *leave Father and Mother,* and *ſhall cleave to his Wife,* v. 5. The Relation between Husband and Wife is nearer than that between Parents and Children; now if the final Relation may not eaſily be violated, much leſs may the Marriage-Union be broken. May a Child *deſert* his Parents, or may a Parent abandon his Children *for any Cauſe?* for every Cauſe? No, by no means; much leſs may a Husband put away his Wife, betwixt whom, tho' not by Nature, yet by Divine Appointment the Relation is nearer, and the Bond of Union ſtronger than between Parents and Children, for that is in a great meaſure *ſuperſeded* by Marriage; when a Man muſt *leave* his Parents to *cleave* to his Wife. See here the Power of a *Divine Inſtitution,* that the Reſult of it is a *Union* ſtronger than that which reſults from the higheſt Obligations of Nature.

3. The Nature of the *Marriage-Contract*; it is a Union of Perſons, *they twain ſhall be one Fleſh,* ſo that *v.* 6. *they are no more twain, but one Fleſh.* A Man's Children are *peices of himſelf,* but his Wife is *himſelf.* As the conjugal Union is cloſer than that between Parents and Children, ſo it is in a manner equivalent to that between one Member and another in the natural Body. As this is a Reaſon why Husbands ſhould *love their Wives,* ſo it is a reaſon why they ſhould not *put away their Wives,* for no man ever yet hated his own Fleſh, or *cut it off,* but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it, and doth all he can to preſerve it. *They two* ſhall be one, therefore there muſt be but *one Wife,* for God made but one *Eve* for one *Adam,* Mal. 2. 15.

From hence he infer, *What God hath joyned together, let not Man put aſunder, Note,* (1.) Husband and Wife are of God's joyning together, *συνέζευξεν,* he hath *yok'd them together,* ſo the Word is, and it is very ſignificant; God himſelf Inſtituted the Relation between Husband and Wife in the State of Innocency. *Marriage* and the *Sabbath* are the moſt ancient of Divine Ordinance. Tho' Marriage be not peculiar to the Church, but common to the World, yet being ſtamp'd with a Divine Inſtitution, and here ratified by our Lord Jeſus, it ought to be manag'd after a godly ſort and *ſanctified by the Word of God and Prayer.* A conſciencious Regard to God in this Ordiance would have a good Influence upon the Duty, and conſequently upon the Comfort of the Relation. (2.) Husband and Wife being joyn'd together by the Ordinance of God, are not to be put aſunder by any Ordinance of Man. Let not *Man* put them aſunder, not the Husband himſelf, or any one for him; not the Magiſtrate, God never gave him Authority to do it. The God of *Iſrael* hath ſaid, that *he hateth putting away,* Mal. 2. 16. 'Tis a general Rule, that Man muſt not go about to *put aſunder* what God hath *joynd together.*

Thirdly, An Objection ſtarted by the *Phariſees* againſt this, and it has colour enough, *v.* 7. *Why did Moſes command to give a Writing of Divorcement,* in caſe a Man did *put away his Wife.* he urg'd Scripture-reaſon againſt Divorce they alledge Scripture Authority for it. *Note,* The ſeeming Contradictions that are in the Word of God are great Stumbling-blocks to Men of corrupt Minds. It is true, *Moſes* was faithful to him that appointed him, and commanded nothing but what he *recieved from the Lord*; but as to the thing it ſelf, what they call a *Command* was only an *Allowance,* (Deut. 24. 1.) and deſign'd rather to reſtrain the Exhorbitances of it, than to give countenance to the thing itſelf. And the *Jewiſh* Doctors themſelves obſerve ſuch Limitations in that Law, as that it could not be done without great Deliberation. A particular Reaſon muſt be aſſign'd, the Bill of Divorce muſt be *written,* and as a judicial Act, muſt have all the Solemnities of a Deed executed and inroll'd. It muſt be given into the Hands of the Wife her ſelf; and (which would oblige Men, if they had any Conſideration in them to conſider) they were expreſly forbidden ever to come together again.

Fourthly, Chriſt's Anſwer to this Objection, in which

1. He *rectifies their Miſtake* concerning the Law of *Moſes*; they call'd it a *Command,* Chriſt calls it but a *Permiſſion,* a Toleration; carnal Hearts will take an Ell, if but an Inch be given them. The Law of *Moſes* in this caſe was a *political* Law, which God gave as the Governour of *that People,* and it was for Reaſons of State that Divorces were tolerated. The ſtrictneſs of the Marriage-Union being the Reſult, not of a *natural,* but a *poſitive* Law, the Wiſdom of God diſpens'd with Divorces in ſome caſes, without any Impeachment to his Holineſs.

But Chriſt tells them there was a Reaſon for this Toleration, not at all for their Credit, it was *becauſe of the hardneſs of your Hearts* that you were permitted to put away your Wives. *Moſes* complain'd of the People of *Iſrael* in his time that *their Hearts were hardned,* Deut. 9. 6.—31. 27. Hardened againſt God, this here is meant of their being *hardened* againſt their Relations; they were generally violent and outragious, which was ſoever they took, both in their Appetites and in their Paſſions; and therefore if they had not been allow'd to put away their Wives when they had conceiv'd a Diſlike of them, they would have us'd them cruelly, would have beaten and abus'd them, and perhaps have *murther'd* them. *Note,* There is not a greater piece of *Hardheartedneſs* in the World, than for a Man to be harſh and ſevere with his own Wife. The *Jews,* it ſeems, were infamous for this, and therefore were allow'd to *put them away*; better Divorce them than *do worſe,* than that the Altar of the Lord ſhould be *cover'd with Tears,* Mal. 2. 13. A little Compliance to *humour* a Mad-man, or a Man in a Fenzy may prevent a greater Miſchief. Poſitive Laws may be diſpens'd with for the Preſervation of the Law of Nature, for God will have *Mercy,* and not *Sacrifies*; but then thoſe are *hardhearted* Wretches that have made it neceſſary. And none can wiſh to have the liberty of Divorce, but they muſt own the hardneſs of their Hearts. *Obſerve,* he ſaith, 'tis for the hardneſs of *your* Hearts, not only theirs who liv'd then, but all their Seed. *Note,* God not only *ſees,* but *foreſees* the Hardneſs of Men's Hearts; he ſuited both the Ordinances and Providences of the *Old Teſtament* to the Temper of that People, both *in Terror,* Further, obſerve, The Law of *Moſes conſider'd* the hardneſs of Men's Hearts, but the Goſpel of Chriſt *cures* it, and his Grace *takes away the Heart of Stone, and gives a Heart of Fleſh.* By the Law was the Knowledge of Sin, but by the Goſpel was the Conqueſt of it.

2. He *reduceth them to the Original Inſtitution,* but *from the beginning it was not ſo. Note,* Corruptions that are crept into any Ordinance of God muſt be purged out by having recourſe to the Primitive Inſtitution. If the Copy be *vicious,* it muſt be examin'd and corrected by the Original, Thus when St. *Paul* would redreſs the Grievances in the Church of *Corinth* about the Lord's Supper, he appeal'd to the Appointment, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. So and ſo I *receiv'd it from the Lord.* Truth was *from the beginning,* we muſt therefore enquire for the *good old way,* Jer. 6. 16. and muſt reform, not by *later Patterns,* but by *antient Rules.*

3. He *ſettles the Point* by an expreſs Law; *I ſay unto you, v.* 9. and it agrees with what he ſaid before, *Chap.* 5. 32. There 'twas ſaid *in Preaching,* here *in diſpute,* but the ſame, for Chriſt is conſtant to himſelf. Now in both theſe places.

1. He *allows Divorce* in caſe of *Adultery.* The Reaſon of the Law againſt Divorce being this, *they two ſhall be one Fleſh*; if the Wiſe play the Harlot, and make her ſelf one Fleſh with an Adulterer, the Reaſon of the Law ceaſeth, and ſo doth the Law. By the Law of *Moſes* Adultery was puniſh'd with Death, *Deut.* 22. 22. Now our Saviour mitigates the Rigor of that, and appoints *Divorce* to be the Penalty. Dr. *Whitby* underſtands this not of *Adultery,* but (becauſe our Saviour uſeth the word *πορνεία, Fornication*) of Uncleanneſs committed *before Marriage,* but diſcover'd afterwards, becauſe if it were committed after it was a capital Crime, and there needed no Divorce.

2. He *diſallows it* in all other Caſes, *whoſoever puts away his Wiſe,* except for Fornication, *and Marries another, commits Adultery.* This is a direct Anſwer to their Query, that it is not *lawful.* In this, as in other things, Goſpel-times are *Times of Reformation,* Heb. 9. 10. The Law of Chriſt tends to re-inſtate Man in his primitive Integrity; the Law of Love, conjugal Love, is no new Commandment, but was *from the beginning.* If we conſider what Miſchiefs to Families and States, what Confuſions and Diſorders would follow upon arbitrary Divorces, we ſhall ſee how much this Law of Chriſt is for our own Benefit, and what a Friend Chriſtianity is to our ſecular, Intereſts.

The Law of *Moſes* allowing Divorce for the *hardneſs of Mens Hearts* and the Law of Chriſt forbidding it, intimates, that Chriſtians being under a Diſpenſation of Love and Liberty, *Tenderneſs of Heart* may juſtly be expected among them, that they will not be hard-hearted, like *Jews,* for God *has call'd us to Peace.* There will be no occaſion for Divorces if we *for bear one another,* and *forgive one another in Love,* as thoſe that are, and hope to be forgiven, and have found God not forward to *put us away,* Iſa. 50. 1. No need of Divorces if *Husbands love their Wives,* and *Wives be obedient to their Husbands,* and they *live together as heirs of the Grace* of Life, and theſe are the Laws of Chriſt, ſuch as we find not in all the Law of *Moſes.*

Fifthly, Here's a Suggeſtion of the Diſciples againſt this Law of Chriſt, *v.* 10, *If the Caſe of a Man be ſo with his Wife, it is better not to marry.* It ſeems the Diſciples themſelves were loth to give up the Liberty of Divorce, thinking it a good Expedient for preſerving Comfort in the Married State; and therefore, like ſullen Children, if they may not have what they would have, they will throw away what they have. If they may not be allow'd to put away their Wives when they pleaſe, they will have no Wives at all; tho' *from the beginning*, when no Divorce was allow'd, God ſaid, *It is not good for Man to be alone*, and *bleſſed them*, pronounc'd them bleſſed who were thus ſtrictly *joyn'd together*, yet unleſs they may have a liberty of Divorce, they think 'tis good for a Man not to Marry. *Note*, (1.) Corrupt Nature is impatient of Reſtraint, and would fain break Chriſt's Bonds in ſunder, and have a liberty for its own Luſts. (2.) It is a fooliſh peviſh thing for Men to abandon the Comforts of this Life, becauſe of the Croſſes that are commonly woven in with them. As if we muſt needs *go out of the World* becauſe we have not *every thing to our mind* in the World, or muſt enter into no uſeful Calling or Condition becauſe it is made our Duty to *abide in it*; no, what ever our Condition is we muſt bring our Minds to it, be thankful for its Comforts, ſubmiſſive to its Croſſes, and as God has done, *ſet the one over againſt the other*, and make the beſt of that which is, *Eccl.* 7. 14. If the Yoak of Marriage may not be thrown off at pleaſure, it doth not follow that therefore we muſt not come under it, but therefore when we do come under it, we muſt reſolve to *comport with it* by Love, and Meekneſs, and Patience, which will make Divorce the moſt unneceſſary undeſirable thing that can be.

Sixthly, Chriſt's Anſwer to this Suggeſtion, *v.* 11, 12. In which

1. He *allows it* good for ſome *not to Marry. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it*, Chriſt allow'd what the Diſciples ſaid, *It is good not to Marry*, not as an Objection againſt the Prohibition of Divorce, as they intended it, but as giving them a Rule, (perhaps no leſs unpleaſing to them) that they who have the Gift of Continency, and are not under any neceſſity of Marrying, do beſt if they continue ſingle, 1 *Cor*. 7. 1. for they that are unmarried have *opportunity*, if they have but *a heart* to *care* more *for the things of the Lord, how they may pleaſe the Lord*, 1 Cor. 7. 32, 34. being leſs incumber'd with the Cares of this Life, and having a greater vacancy of Thoughts and Time to mind better things. The Increaſe of Grace is better than the increaſe of the Family, and *fellowſhip with the Father*, and *with his Son Jeſus Chriſt*, is to be prefer'd before any other Fellowſhip.

2. He *diſallows* it, as utterly miſchievous to *forbid Marriage*, becauſe *all Men cannot receive this Saying*, indeed few can, and therefore the Croſſes of the Married State muſt be born, rather than that Men ſhould run themſelves into Temptation to avoid them; better Marry than burn.

Chriſt here ſpeaks of a two-fold *unaptneſs* to Marriage.

1. That which is a *Calamity*, by the Providence of God, ſuch are they under that are *born* Eunuchs, or *made ſo* by Men, that being uncapable of anſwering one great End of Marriage, ought not to Marry. But to that *Calamity* let them oppoſe the *Opportunity* that there is in the ſingle State of ſerving God better to ballance it.

2. That which is a *Virtue*, by the Grace of God; ſuch is their who have *made themſelves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heavens ſake*. This is not meant of an unaptneſs for Marriage *in Body*, (which ſome, through miſtake of this Scripture have fooliſhly and wickedly brought upon themſelves) but *in Mind*. Thoſe have *thus* made themſelves *Eunuchs*, who have attain'd a holy Indifferency to all the Delights of the Marry'd State, have a fix'd Reſolution in the ſtrength of God's Grace, wholly to obtain from them, and by faſting and other Inſtances of Mortification have ſubdued all Deſires toward them. Theſe are they that can *receive this Saying*; and yet theſe are not to bind themſelves by a Vow that they will never Marry, only that in the Mind they are now in, they purpoſe not to Marry.

Now (1.) This affection to the ſingle State muſt be *given of God*; for *none can receive it, ſave they to whom it is given. Note*, Continence is a ſpecial Gift of God to ſome, and not to others; and when a Man in a ſingle State finds by experience that he has this Gift, he may determine with himſelf, and (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Cor*. 7. 37.) ſtand ſtedfaſt in his Heart having no neceſſity, but *having Power over his own Will, that he will keep himſelf ſo*. But Men in this caſe muſt take heed leſt they *boaſt of a falſe Gift*, Prov. 25. 14.

(2.) The ſingle State muſt be choſen *for the Kingdom of Heaven's ſake*. Thoſe who reſolve never to Marry only that they may ſave Charges, or may gratifie a moroſe ſelfiſh Humour, or have a greater liberty to ſerve other Luſts and Pleaſures, in them it is ſo far from being a Virtue that it is an *ill natur'd* Vice; but when it is *for Religion's ſake*, not as in it ſelf a meritorious Act (which the Papiſts make it) but only as a means to keep our Minds more intire for, and more intent upon the Services of Religion, and having no Families to provide for, we may do the more in Works of Charity, then it is approved and accepted of God. *Note*, That Condition is *beſt for us*, and to be choſen and ſtuck to accordingly, which is *beſt for our Souls*, and tends moſt to the preparing of us for, and the preſerving of us to the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he ſhould put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the diſciples rebuked them. 14 But Jeſus ſaid, Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven. 15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

We have here the Welcome which Chriſt gave to ſome little Children that were brought to him. *Obſerve*,

Firſt, The *Faith of thoſe that brought them*. How many they were that were brought, we are not told, but they were ſo *little* as to be taken up in Arms, a Year old it may be, or two at moſt. The account here given of it is, That there were brought unto him *little Children, that he ſhould put his hand on them and pray*, v. 13. Probably they were their Parents, Guardians, or Nurſes that brought them; and herein (1.) they teſtified their reſpect to Chriſt, and the value they had for his Favour and Bleſſing. *Note*, Thoſe who glorifie Chriſt by coming to him themſelves, ſhould further glorifie him by bringing all they have, or have Influence upon to him likewiſe. Thus give him the Honour of his unſearchable Riches of Grace his overflowing, never failing Fulneſs. We cannot better honour Chriſt than by making uſe of him. (2.) They did a kindneſs to their Children, not doubting but they would fare the better in this World and the other for the *Bleſſing* and *Prayers* of the Lord Jeſus, whom they look'd upon at leaſt as an extraordinary Perſon, as a *Prophet*, if not as a Prieſt and King, and the Bleſſings of ſuch were valu'd and deſir'd. Others brought their Children to Chriſt to be *healed* when they were ſick; but theſe Children were under no preſent Malady, only they deſired a *Bleſſing* for them. *Note*, It is a good thing when we come to Chriſt our ſelves, and bring our Children to him before we are driven to him, (as we ſay) by *Wo-need*; not only to *viſit him* when we are *in trouble*, but to addreſs our ſelves to him in a Senſe of our general Dependance on him, and of the Benefit we expect by him, this is pleaſing to him.

They deſired that he would *put his Hands on them and Pray*. Impoſition of Hands was a Ceremony us'd, eſpecially in paternal Bleſſing, *Jacob* us'd it when he *Bleſſed* and adopted the Sons of *Joſeph*, *Gen*. 48. 14. It intimates ſomething of Love and Familiarity, mix'd with Power and Authority, and ſpeaks an Efficacy in the Bleſſing. Whom Chriſt *prays for* in Heaven, he *puts his Hand upon* by his Spirit. *Note*, (1.) Little Children *may be* brought to Chriſt as needing, and being capable of receiving Bleſſings from him, and having an Intereſt in his Interceſſion. (2.) Therefore they *ſhould be* brought to him. We cannot do better for our Children than to commit them to the Lord Jeſus, to be *wrought upon* and *pray'd* for by him. We can but beg a Bleſſing for them, 'tis Chriſt only that can *command* the Bleſſing.

Secondly, the Fault of the Diſciples in *rebuking them*. They *diſcountenanc'd* the Addreſs as vain and frivolous, and reproved them that made it as impertinent and troubleſome; either they thought it *below* their Maſter to take notice of little Children, except any thing in particular ail'd them. Or, they thought he had Toil enough with his other Work, and would not have him diverted from it; or, they thought if ſuch an Addreſs as this were encouraged, all the Country would bring their Children to him, and they ſhould never ſee an end of it. *Note*, It is well for us that Chriſt has more Love and Tenderneſs in him then the beſt of his Diſciples have. And let us learn of him not to diſcountenance any *willing well meaning* Souls in their enquiries after Chriſt, tho' they are but *weak*. If he do not break the bruiſed Reed, we ſhould not. Thoſe that ſeek unto Chriſt, muſt not think it ſtrange if they meet with Oppoſition and Rebuke, even from good Men who think they *know the Mind of Chriſt* better than they do.

Thirdly, The Favour of our Lord Jeſus. See how he carry'd it here.

1. He *rebuked the Diſciples*, v. 14. *Suffer little Children, and forbid them not*; and he rectifies the Miſtake they went upon, *of ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven. Note*, (1.) The Children of believing Parents belonged to the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and are Members of the viſible Church. *Of ſuch*, not only of ſuch in Diſpoſition and Affection, that might have ſerv'd for a Reaſon why Doves or Lambs ſhould be brought to him, but of ſuch *in age is the Kingdom of Heaven*; to them pertain the Privileges of viſible Church-memberſhip, as among the *Jews* of old. The Promiſe is *to you, and to your Children. I will be a God to thee and thy Seed*. (2.) That for this Reaſon they are welcome to Chriſt, who is ready to entertain thoſe that when they cannot come themſelves are *brought to him*. And this (1.) in reſpect to the *little Children* themſelves, whom he has upon all occaſions expreſs'd a Concern for, and who having participated of the malignant Influences of the firſt *Adam*'s Sin, muſt needs ſhare in the Riches of the Second *Adam*'s Grace, elſe that would come of the Apoſtles Parallel, 1 *Cor*. 15. 22. *Rom*. 5. 14, 15, *&c*. Thoſe that are given to Chriſt as part of his Purchaſe, he will *in no wiſe caſt out*. (2.) With an Eye to the *Faith* of the *Parents* that brought them, and preſented them as *living Sacrifices*; Parents are Truſtees of their Children's Wills, are impower'd by Nature to tranſact for their Benefit, and therefore Chriſt accepts their Dedication of them as their Act and Deed, and will own theſe dedicated things in the Day he *makes up his Jewels*. (3.) Therefore he takes it ill at thoſe who *forbid them*, and exclude thoſe whom he has receiv'd, who caſt them out from the Inheritance of the Lord, and ſay, *ye have no part in the Lord*; ſee *Joſh*. 22. 27. and who forbid Water that they ſhould be Baptiz'd, who if that Promiſe be fulfill'd, *Iſa*. 44. 3. *have receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt as well as we*, for ought we know.

2. He *received the little Children*, and did as he was deſir'd, he *laid his Hands on them*, that is he *bleſs'd them*. The ſtrongeſt Believer lives not ſo much by apprehending Chriſt, as by being apprehended of him, *Phil*. 3. 12. not ſo much by *knowing* God, as by being *known of him*, *Gal*. 4. 9. and this the leaſt Child is capable of, if

they cannot ſtretch out their Hands to Chriſt, yet he can lay his Hands on them, and ſo make them his own, and own them for his own.

Methinks it hath ſomething obſervable in it, that when he had done this he *departed thence*, v. 5. As if he reckon'd he had done enough *there* when he had thus aſſerted the Rights of the Lambs of his Flock, and made this Proviſion for a Succeſſion of Subjects in his Kingdom.

16 And behold, one came and ſaid unto him, Good Maſter, what good thing ſhall I do, that I may have eternal life? 17 And he ſaid unto him, why calleſt thou me good, *there is* none good, but one, *that is* God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. 18 He ſaith unto him, which? Jeſus ſaid, Thou ſhalt do no murder, Thou ſhalt not commit adultery, Thou ſhalt not ſteal, thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs. 19 Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf. 20 The young man ſaith unto him, All theſe things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? 21 Jeſus ſaid unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* ſell that thou haſt, and give to the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come *and* follow me. 22 But when the young man heard that ſaying, he went away ſorrowful: for he had great poſſeſſions.

Here's an Account of what paſs'd between Chriſt and a hopeful young Gentleman that addreſs'd himſelf to him upon a ſerious Errand; he is ſaid to be a *young Man*, v. 22. and I call him a Gentleman, not only becauſe he had *great Poſſeſſions*, but becauſe he was a *Ruler*, *Luke* 18. 18. a Magiſtrate, a Juſtice of the Peace in his Country; 'tis probable he was of pregnant Parts beyond his Years, elſe his Youth would have debar'd him from the Magiſtracy.

Now concerning this young *Gentleman*, we are told how fair he bid for Heaven, and yet *came ſhort*.

1. How *fair he bid for Heaven*, and how kindly and tenderly Chriſt treated him in favour to *good Beginnings*. Here's

(1.) The Gentleman's ſerious Addreſs to Jeſus Chriſt, *v.* 16. *Good Maſter, what good thing ſhall I do that I may have eternal Life?* Not a better Queſtion could be ask'd, nor more gravely.

1. He gives Chriſt an honourable Title, *Good Maſter*. Διδάσκαλε ἀγαθέ. It ſignifies not a *Ruling*, but a *Teaching* Maſter. His calling him *Maſter*, ſpeaks his Submiſſiveneſs, and Willingneſs to be taught; and *good* Maſter his Affection and peculiar Reſpect to the Teacher, like that of *Nicodemus*, thou art a *Teacher come from God*. We read not of any that addreſs'd themſelves to Chriſt more reſpectfully than that *Maſter in Iſrael*, and this *Ruler*. It is a good thing when Men's Quality and Dignity increaſes their Civility and Courteſie. 'Twas Gentleman-like to give this Title of Reſpect to Chriſt, notwithſtanding the preſent Meanneſs of his Appearence. It was not uſual among the *Jews* to accoſt their Teachers with the Title of *Good*, and therefore this ſpeaks the ſingular uncommon Reſpect he had for Chriſt. *Note*, Jeſus Chriſt is a *good Maſter*, the beſt of Teachers; none teacheth like him, he is famous for his *Goodneſs*, for *he can have Compaſſion on the ignorant*; he is *meek and lowly in Heart*.

2. He comes to him upon an Errand of importance, none could be more ſo, and he came not to *tempt him*, but ſincerely deſiring to be *taught by him*. His Queſtion is, *What good thing ſhall I do that I may have eternal Life?* By this it appears (1.) that he had a firm Belief of *eternal Life*; he was no *Sadducee*. He was convinc'd that there is a Happineſs prepar'd for thoſe in the other World, that are prepar'd for it in this World. (2.) That he was concern'd to make it ſure to himſelf that he ſhould *live Eternally*, and was deſirous of *that Life* more than of any of the Delights of *this Life*. It was a rare thing for one of his Age and Quality to appear ſo much in care about another World. The Rich are apt to think it *below them* to make ſuch an Enquiry as this, and young People think it *time enough yet*; but here was a *young Man*, and a *rich Man* ſollicitous about his Soul and Eternity. (3.) That he was ſenſible *ſomething* muſt be *done*, ſome *good thing* for the attainment of this Happineſs. 'Tis by *patient continuance in well-doing*, that we *ſeek for Immortality*, Rom. 2. 7. We muſt be *doing* and doing that which is good. The Blood of Chriſt is the only Purchaſe of eternal Life, he *merited* it for us, but Obedience to Chriſt is the appointed way to it, Heb. 5. 9. (4.) That he was or at leaſt thought himſelf *willing to do* what was to be done for the obtaining of his *Eternal Life*. Thoſe that know what it is to have eternal Life and what it is to come ſhort of it, will be glad to accept of it upon any Terms. Such a holy *Violence* doth the *Kingdom of Heaven ſuffer*. *Note*, While there be many that ſay, *Who will ſhew us any Good*, one great enquiry ſhould be what we ſhall do that we may have eternal Life, what we ſhall do to be for ever happy, happy in another World; for this World has not that in it that will make us happy.

(2.) The Encouragement that Jeſus Chriſt gave to this Addreſs. He doth not uſe to ſend any away without an Anſwer, that come to him no ſuch an Errand, for nothing pleaſeth him more, *v.* 17. In his Anſwer,

1. He tenderly *aſſiſts his Faith*; for doubtleſs, he did not mean it for a Reproof, when he ſaid, *Why calleſt thou me Good?* But would ſeem to find that Faith in what he ſaid, when he call'd him *good Maſter*, which the Gentleman perhaps was not conſcious to himſelf of; he intended no more but to own and honour him as a *good Man*, but Chriſt would lead him to own and honour him as a good God, for *there is none good but one, that is God. Note*, As Chriſt is graciouſly ready to *make the beſt* that he can be of what is ſaid, or done amiſs; ſo he is ready to *make the moſt* that can be of what is *well ſaid*, and *well done*. His Conſtructions are often better than our Intentions; as in that, *I was hungry, and you gave me Meat*. Tho' you little thought it was to me. Chriſt will have this young Man either know him to be *God*, or not call him *Good*, to teach us to transfer to God all the Praiſe that is at any time given to us; Do any call us *Good?* tell them all Goodneſs is from God, and therefore *not to us*, but to him *give Glory*. All Crowns muſt lye before the Throne. *Note*, God only is good, and there is none eſſenſially, originally, and unchangeably *Good* but *God only*. His goodneſs is of, and from himſelf, and all the Goodneſs in the Creature is from him, he is the Fountain of Goodneſs, and whatever the Streams are, *all the Springs are in him*, James 1. 17. He is the great Pattern and Sampler of Goodneſs, by him all Goodneſs is to be meaſur'd; that is good which is *like him*, and agreeable to *his Mind*. We in our Language call him *God*, becauſe he is *Good*. In *this* as in other things, our Lord Jeſus was the *Brightneſs of his Glory*, (and his Goodneſs is his Glory) and the *expreſs Image of his Perſon*, and therefore fitly call'd *Good Maſter*.

2. He plainly *directs his Practice*, in anſwer to his Queſtion. He ſtarted that *Thought* of his being *Good*, and therefore *God*; but did not ſtay upon it, leſt he ſhould ſeem to divert from, and ſo to drop the main Queſtion, as many do in needleſs Diſputes, and *Strifes of Words*. Now Chriſt's Anſwer is in ſhort this, *if thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments*.

(1.) The *End propos'd is entring into Life*. The young Man in his Queſtion ſpoke of *eternal Life*, Chriſt in his Anſwer ſpeaks of *Life*; to teach us, that *eternal Life* is the only *true Life*. The words concerning that are the words of *this Life*, *Acts* 5. 20. The preſent Life ſcarce deſerves the name of *Life*, for in the midſt of Life we are in Death. Or, *into Life*, i. e. that ſpiritual Life which is the Beginning and Earneſt of *eternal Life*. He deſired to know how he might *have* eternal Life, Chriſt tells him how he might *enter into it*; we *have* it by the Merit of Chriſt, a Myſtery which was not as yet fully reveal'd, and therefore Chriſt waves that; but the way of *entering* into it is by Obedience, and Chriſt directs us in that. By the former we *make our Title*, by this, as by our *Evidence* we *prove* it; 'tis *by adding to Faith Virtue*, that an *entrance*, (the word here us'd) is *Miniſter'd to us into the everlaſting Kingdom*, 2 *Pet*. 1. 5. 11. Chriſt who is our *Life* is the way to the Father, and to the Viſion and Fruition of him, he is the *only way*, but Duty and the *Obedience of Faith* is the way to Chriſt. There is an *entrance into Life* hereafter, at Death, at the great Day, a compleat Entrance, and thoſe only ſhall then *enter into Life* that do their Duty; 'tis the diligent faithful Servant that ſhall then *enter into the Joy of his Lord*, and that Joy will be his eternal Life. There is an *entrance into Life* now, *we which have believed do enter into Reſt*, *Heb*. 4. 3. We have Peace and Comfort, and Joy in the believing Proſpect of the Glory to be reveal'd, and to this alſo ſincere Obedience is indiſpenſibly neceſſary.

(2.) The *way preſcrib'd* is *keeping the Commandments*. *Note* Keeping the Commandments of God, according as they are reveal'd and made known to us, is the only way to Life and Salvation, and Sincerity herein is accepted through Chriſt as our Goſpel perfection, proviſion being made of Pardon upon Repentance, wherein we come ſhort. Through Chriſt we are deliver'd from the *condemning* Power of the Law, but the commanding Power of it is lodg'd in the Hand of the Mediator, and under that in that hand we ſtill are, *under the Law of Chriſt*, 1 *Cor*. 9. 12. under it is a *Rule*, tho' not as a *Covenant*. *Keeping the Commandments*, includes *Faith in Jeſus Chriſt*, for that is the great Commandment, 1 *John* 3. 23. and it was one of the Laws of *Moſes*, that when the great Prophet ſhould be raiſed up they ſhould *hear him*. Obſerve, in order to our happineſs here and for ever, it is not enough for us to *know* the Commandments of God, but we muſt *keep them*, keep *in them* as our way, keep *to them* as our Rule, keep them as our Treaſure, and with care, as the *Apple of our Eye*.

3. At his further Inſtance and Requeſt he mentions ſome particular Commandments which he muſt keep, *v*. 18. 19. *The young Man ſaith unto him, which? Note*, Thoſe that would *do* the Commandments of God muſt *ſeek them* diligently, and enquire after them, what they are. *Ezra* ſet himſelf to *ſeek the Law*, and to *do it*, Ezr. 7. 10. There were many Commandments in the Law of *Moſes*, good Maſter, let me know which thoſe are, the keeping of which is neceſſary to Salvation.

In anſwer to this, Chriſt inſtanceth in ſeveral, eſpecially the Commandments of the ſecond Table. (1.) That which concerns our own, and our Neighbour's Life, *Thou ſhalt do no Murder*. (2.) Our own and our Neighbours Chaſtity which ſhould be as dear to us as Life it ſelf. *Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery*. (3.) Our own and our Neighbours Wealth and outward Eſtate, as hedg'd about by the Law of Property. *Thou ſhalt not Steal*. (4.) That which concerns Truth, and our own and our Neighbours good Name, *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs*, neither *for thy ſelf*, nor *againſt thy Neighbour*; for ſo it is here left at large. (5.) That which concerns the Duties of particular Relations, *Honour thy Father and Mother*. (6.) That comprehenſive Law of *Love*, which is the Spring and Summary of all theſe Duties, whence they all *flow*, on which they are all *founded*, and in which they are all *fulfill'd*. *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf*, Gal. 5. 14. Rom. 13. 9. that royal Law, *Jam.* 2. 8. Some think this comes in here, not as the Sum of the ſecond Table, but as the particular Import of the Tenth Commandment; *Thou ſhalt not covet*, which in *Mark* is, *Defraud not*; intimating, that it is not lawful for me to deſign Advantage or Gain to my ſelf by the Diminution or Loſs of another; for that is to *covet*, and to love *my ſelf* better than *my Neighbour*, whom I ought to love as my ſelf, and to treat, as I would my ſelf be treated.

Our Saviour here inſtanceth in *ſecond Table Duties* only; not as if the firſt were of leſs account, but (1.) becauſe they that now *ſate in* Moſes's *Seat*, either wholly neglected, or greatly corrupted theſe Precepts in their Preaching. While they preſs'd the Tithing of *Mint*, *Anniſe*, and *Cummin*, *Judgment*, and *Mercy*, and *Faith*, the Summary of ſecond Table Duties were overlook'd, *Mat.* 23. 23. Their Preaching run out all in *Rituals*, and nothing in *Morals*, and therefore Chriſt preſs'd that *moſt* which they *leaſt* inſiſted on. As one Truth, ſo one Duty muſt not juſtle out another, but each muſt know its place, and be kept in it; but Equity requires that that be help'd up which is moſt in danger of being thruſt out. That's the *preſent Truth* we are call'd to bear our Teſtimony to, not only which is *oppos'd*, but which is *neglected*. (2.) Becauſe he would teach him and us all, that *moral Honeſty* is a neceſſary Branch of true Chriſtianity, and to be minded accordingly. Tho' a meer moral Man comes ſhort of being a compleat Chriſtian, yet an immoral Man is certainly no true Chriſtian; for the Grace of God teacheth us to live *Soberly* and *Righteouſly*, as well as *Godly*. Nay, tho' firſt Table Duties have in them more of the *Eſſence* of Religion, yet ſecond Table Duties have in them more of the *Evidence* of it. Our Light *burns* in Love to God, but it *ſhines* in Love to our Neighbour.

2. See here how he *came ſhort*, tho' he bid thus fair, and wherein he *fail'd*, he fail'd by two things.

1. By *Pride*, and a *vain conceit* of his own Merit and Strength; this is the ruin of thouſands, who keep themſelves miſerable by fancying themſelves happy. When Chriſt told him what Commandments he muſt keep, he anſwer'd very ſcornfully, *All theſe things have I kept from my Youth up*, v. 20.

Now, (1.) According as he underſtood the Law, as prohibiting only the outward Acts of Sin, I am apt to think he *ſaid true*, and Chriſt knew it, for he did not contradict him; nay, 'tis ſaid in *Mark* he *loved him*, ſo far was very good, and pleaſing to Chriſt. St. *Paul* reckons it a Privilege not contemtible in it ſelf, tho' 'twas Droſs in compariſon with Chriſt, that he was as *touching the Righteouſneſs that is in the Law blameleſs*, Phil. 3. 6. His Obſervance of theſe Commands was univerſal, *all theſe have I keep*, 'twas early and conſtant, *from my Youth up*. *Note*, A Man may be free from groſs Sin, and yet come ſhort of Grace and Glory. His Hands may be clean from external Pollutions, and yet he may periſh eternally in his Heart-Wickedneſs. What ſhall we think then of thoſe who do not attain to this? whoſe Fraud and Injuſtce, Drunkenneſs and Uncleanneſs witneſs againſt them, that all theſe they have broken from their Youth up, tho' they have named the Name of Chriſt; well, it is ſad to *come ſhort of thoſe* that *come ſhort of Heaven*.

It was commendable alſo that he deſir'd to know further what his Duty was; *What lack I yet?* He was convinc'd he wanted ſomething to *fill up his Works* before God, and was therefore deſirous to *know it*, becauſe, if he was not miſtaken in himſelf, he was *willing to do it*, Having not yet attained, he thus ſeemed to *preſs forward*. And he applied himſelf to Chriſt, whoſe Doctrine was ſuppos'd to improve and perfect the *Moſaick* Inſtitution. He deſir'd to know what were the peculiar Precepts of his Religion, that he might have all that was in them to poliſh and accompliſh him. Who could bid fairer?

But (2.) even in this that he ſaid he diſcover'd his Ignorance and Folly. (1.) Taking the Law in its ſpiritual Senſe, as Chriſt expounded it, no doubt, *in many things* he had offended againſt all theſe Commands. Had he been acquainted with the extent and ſpiritual meaning of the Law, inſtead of ſaying, *All theſe have I kept, What lack I yet?* He would have ſaid with Shame and Sorrow, *All theſe have I broken*, what ſhall I do to get my Sins pardon'd? (2.) Take it how you will, what he ſaid ſavour'd of Pride and Vain-glory, and had in it too much of that *Boaſting* which is *excluded by the Law of* Faith, *Rom.* 3. 27. and which doth exclude from Juſtification, *Luk.* 18. 11, 14. He valued himſelf too much, as the *Phariſees* did, upon the Plauſibleneſs of his Profeſſion before Men, and was proud of that, which ſpoil'd the Acceptableneſs of it. That word, *What lack I yet?* perhaps was not ſo much a deſire of further *Inſtruction*, as a Demand of the Praiſe of his preſent fancy'd *Perfection*, and a *Challenge* to Chriſt himſelf to ſhew him any one Inſtance wherein he was *deficient*.

2. He came ſhort by an *inordinate Love of the World*, and his Enjoyments in it. This was the fatal Rock on which he ſplit. *Obſerve*.

1. How he was *try'd* in this matter, *v.* 21. *Jeſus ſaid unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and ſell that thou haſt*. Chriſt waved the Matter of his boaſted Obedience to the Law, and let that drop, becauſe this would be a more effectual way of diſcovering him, than a Diſpute of the extent of the Law. Come, ſaith Chriſt, *If thou wilt be perfect*, if thou wilt approve thy ſelf ſincere in thine Obedience; for Sincerity is our Goſpel-perfection? If thou wilt come up to that which Chriſt has added to the Law of *Moſes*; if thou wilt be *perfect*, i. e. if thou wilt *enter into Life*, and ſo be *perfectly* happy; for that which Chriſt here preſcribes is not a thing of *Supererogation*, or a *Perfection* we may be *ſaved without*, but in the main ſcope and intendment of it, it is our neceſſary and indiſpenſible Duty. What Chriſt ſaid to him, he thus far ſaid to us all, that if we will approve our ſelves Chriſtians indeed, and would be found at laſt the Heirs of eternal Life, we muſt do *theſe two things*.

1. We muſt practically prefer the heavenly Treaſures before all the Wealth and Riches in this World. That *Glory* muſt have the Preheminence in our Judgment and Eſteem before *this Glory*. No thanks to us to prefer Heaven before Hell, the worſt Man in the World would be glad of that *Jeruſalem* for a Refuge when he can ſtay no longer here, and to have it *in reſerve*; but to make it our *choice*, and to perfer it before this Earth, that's to be a Chriſtian indeed.

Now as an Evidence of this.

(1.) We muſt *diſpoſe of what we have* in this World for the Honour of God, and in his Service. *Sell that thou haſt, and give to the Poor*, If the occaſions of Charity be very preſſing, ſell thy Poſſeſſions that thou may'ſt have to give to them that need; as the firſt Chriſtians did, with an eye to this Precept, *Acts* 4. 34. Sell what thou can'ſt ſpair for pious Uſes, all thy Superfluities; if thou can'ſt not otherwiſe do good with it, ſell it. Sit *looſe* to it, be willing to part with it for the Honour of God, and the Relief of the Poor. A gracious Contempt of the World, and Compaſſion of the poor and afflicted ones in it, is in all a *neceſſary Condition* of Salvation, and in thoſe that have wherewithal, giving of Alms is as *neceſſary* and *Evidence* of that contempt of the World, and Compaſſion to our Brethren; by this the Trial will be at the great Day, *Mat.* 25. 35. Tho' many that call themſelves Chriſtians do not act as if they liev'd it. 'Tis certain, when we embrace Chriſt we muſt let go the World, for we cannot ſerve God and Mammon. Chriſt knew that Covetouſneſs was the Sin that did moſt eaſily beſet this young Man, that tho' what he had he had got *honeſtly*, yet he could not *chearfully* part with it, and by this he diſcover'd his Inſincerity. This Command was like the Call to *Abraham, Get thee out of thy Country*, to a *Land that I will ſhew thee*. As God tries Believers by their ſtrongeſt Graces, ſo Hypocrites by their ſtrongeſt Corruptions. (2.) We muſt *depend upon what we hope for* in t'oher World as an abundant Recompence for all we have left, or loſt, or laid out for God in this World. *Thou ſhalt have Treaſure in Heaven*. We muſt in the way of chargeable Duty truſt God for a Happineſs out of ſight, which will make us rich amends for all our Expences in God's Service. The Precept ſounded hard and harſh, *ſell that thou haſt, and give it way*; and the Objection againſt it would ſoon ariſe, That *Charity begins at home*; therefore Chriſt immediately annexeth this Aſſurance of a *Treaſure in Heaven*. *Note*, Chriſt's Promiſes makes his Precepts eaſie, and his Yoke not only tolerable, but pleaſant, and ſweet, and very comfortable; yet this Promiſe was as much a Trial of this young Man's Faith, as the Precept was of his Charity, and Contempt of the World.

2. We muſt devout ourſelves entirely to the Conduct and Government of our Lord Jeſus; *come and fellow me*. It ſeems here to be meant of a cloſe and conſtant Attendance upon his Perſon, ſuch as the ſelling of what he had in the World was neceſſary to, as it was to the other Diſciples to quit their Callings; but of us it is requir'd that we *follow Chriſt*, that we duly attend upon his Ordinances, ſtrictly conform to his Pattern, and chearfully ſubmit to his Diſpoſals, and by upright and univerſal Obedience to obſerve his Statutes, and keep his Laws, and all this from a Principal of Love to him, and Dependance on him, and with a holy Contempt of every thing elſe in compariſon of him, and much more in competition with him. This is to *follow Chriſt fully*. To *ſell all and give to the Poor* will not ſerve, unleſs we *come* and *follow Chriſt* If I give all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not *Love*, it *profits me nothing*. Well, on *theſe* Terms, and no lower is Salvation to be had, and they are very eaſie and reaſonable Terms, and will appear ſo to thoſe who are brought to be glad of it upon *any Terms*.

2. See how he was *diſcover'd*, v. 22. This touch'd him in a tender part, *v.* 22. *When he heard that Saying, he went away ſorrowful, for he had great Poſſeſſions*.

1. He was a *rich Man*, and lov'd his Riches, and therefore *went away*. He did not like eternal Life upon theſe Terms. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe that have much in the World are in the greateſt Temptation to love it, and to ſet their Hearts upon it. Such is the bewitching nature of wordly Wealth, that thoſe who want it leaſt deſire it moſt; *when Riches increaſe*, then is the danger of *ſetting the Heart upon them*, Pſal. 62. 10. If he had had but *two Mites* in all the World, and had been commanded to give them to the Poor, or but one *handful of Meal in the Barrel*, and a *little Oil in the Cruſe*, and had been bidden to *make a Cake of that* for a poor Prophet, the Trial, one would think had been much greater, and yet thoſe Trials have been overcome, *Luke* 21. 4. and 1 *Kings* 17. 14. Which ſhews that the *Love of the World* draws ſtronger than the moſt *preſſing Neceſſities*. (2.) The reigning Love of this World keeps many from Chriſt that ſeem to have had ſome good Deſires towards him. A great Eſtate as to thoſe who are got above it 'tis a great furtherance; ſo to thoſe who are entangled in the Love of it, 'tis a great hindrance in the way to Heaven.

Yet ſomething of Honeſty there was in it, that when he did not like the Terms he *went away*, and would not pretend to that which he could not find in his heart to come up to the ſtrictneſs of; better ſo than do as *Demas* did, who *having known the way of Righteouſneſs*, afterwards turn'd aſide out of *Love to this preſent World*, to the greater

Scandal of Profeſſion; ſince he could not be a complete Chriſtian, he would not be an Hypocrite.

2. Yet he was a *thinking* Man, and well-inclin'd, and therefore *went away ſorrowful*: He had a good mind to Chriſt, and was loth to part with him. *Note*, Many a one is ruin'd by the Sin he commits *with Reluctancy*; leaves Chriſt ſorrowfully, and yet is never truly ſorry for leaving him, for if he were he would return to him. Thus this Man's Wealth was *Vexation of Spirit to him*, then when it was his *Temptation*; What then would the Sorrow be afterwards when his Poſſeſſions would be gone, and all Hopes of eternal Life gone too?

23 Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, Verily I ſay unto you, that a rich man ſhall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I ſay unto you, It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, then for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25 When his diſciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, ſaying, Who then can be ſaved? 26 But Jeſus beheld them, and ſaid unto them, With men this is unpoſſible, but with God all things are poſſible. 27 Then anſwered Peter, and ſaid unto him, Behold, we have forſaken all, and followed thee; what ſhall we have therefore? 28 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man ſhall ſit in the throne of his glory, ye alſo ſhall ſit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael. 29 And every one that hath forſaken houſes, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my names ſake, ſhall receive an hundred-fold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life. 30 But many *that are* firſt ſhall be laſt: and the laſt *ſhall be* firſt.

We have here Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples, upon occaſion of the rich Man's *breaking with Chriſt*.

Firſt, Chriſt took occaſion from thence to ſhew *the Difficulty of the Salvation of rich People*, v. 23.—26.

1. That it is a very *hard thing* for a *rich Man* to get to Heaven, ſuch a *rich Man* as this here. *Note*, From the Harms and Falls of others, 'tis good for us to infer, that which will be of *Caution* to us.

Now (1.) This is *vehemently aſſerted by our Saviour*, v. 23. 24. He ſaid this to his Diſciples, who were poor, and had but little in the World, to reconcile them to their Condition with this, That the leſs they had of wordly Wealth, the leſs hindrance they had in the way to Heaven. *Note*, It ſhould be a Satisfaction to them who are in a low Condition, that they are not expos'd to the Temptations of a high and proſperous Condition: If they live *more hardly* in this World than the Rich, yet if withal they get *more eaſily* to a better World, they have no reaſon to complain. This Saying is *ratified*, v. 23. *Verily, I ſay unto you.* He that has Reaſon to know what the way to Heaven is, for he has laid it open; he tells us this is one of the greateſt Difficulties in that way. It is *repeated*, v. 24. *Again I ſay unto you*: Thus he ſpeaketh *once*, yea *twice*, that which Man is loth to *perceive*, and more loth to *believe*.

1. He ſaith, That it is a *hard thing* for a *rich Man* to be a *good Chriſtian*, and to be ſaved; to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, either here or hereafter. The way to Heaven is to all a *narrow Way*, and the Gate that leads into it a *ſtrait Gate*, but it is particularly ſo to *rich People*. More Duties are expected from them than from others, which they can hardly *do*; and more Sins do eaſily beſet them which they can *hardly* avoid. Rich People have *great Temptations* to reſiſt, and ſuch as are very inſinuating; 'Tis hard not to be charm'd with a ſmiling World; very hard when our Bellies are fill'd with theſe *hid Treaſures* not to take up with them for a *Portion*. Rich People have a *great Accompt* to make up for their Eſtates, their Intereſt, their Time, and their Opportunities of doing and getting Good above others. It muſt be a great Meaſure of Divine Grace that will enable a Man to break through theſe Difficulties.

2. He ſaith, That the Converſion and Salvation of a rich Man is ſo extremely difficult, that *it is eaſier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle*, v. 24. This is a proverbial Expreſſion, noting a Difficulty altogether unconquerable by the Art and Power of Man; nothing leſs than the Almighty Grace of God will enable a *rich Man* to get over this Difficulty. The Difficulty of the Salvation of Apoſtates, *Heb.* 6. 4. and of old Sinners, *Jer.* 13. 23. is thus repreſented as an Impoſſibility. The Salvation of any is ſo very difficult, even the *Righteous ſcarcely are ſaved*, that where there is a peculiar Difficulty, 'tis fitly ſet forth thus: 'Tis very rare for a Man to be rich, and not to *ſet his Heart* upon his Riches; and it is utterly *impoſſible* for a Man that ſets his Heart upon his Riches to get to Heaven; for if any Man *love the World*, the *Love of the Father* is not in him, 1 *Joh.* 2. 15. *Jam.* 4. 4. (1.) The way to Heaven is very fitly compared to a *Needles Eye*, which 'tis hard to hit, and hard to get though. (2.) A rich Man is fitly compar'd to a *Camel*, a Beaſt of Burthen, for he has *Riches*, as a Camel has his Load, he carries it, but it is *anothers*, he has it from others, ſpends it for others, and muſt ſhortly leave it to others; 'tis a *Burthen*, for Men *load themſelves with thick Clay*, Hab. 2. 6. A Camel is a large Creature, but unwieldly.

(2.) This Truth is very much admir'd, and ſcarce credited by the Diſciples, *v.* 25. *They were exceedingly amazed, ſaying, who then can be ſaved?* Many ſurprizing Truths Chriſt told them, which they were aſtoniſhed at, and knew not what to make of, and this was one, and their *Weakneſs* was the Cauſe of their *Wonder*. 'Twas not in Contradiction to Chriſt, but for awakening to themſelves that they ſaid, *Who then can be ſaved? Note*, Conſidering the many Difficulties that are in the way of Salvation, it is really ſtrange that any are ſaved. When we think *how good God is*, it may ſeem a wonder that ſo *few* are his; but when we think *how bad Man* is, 'tis more a wonder that ſo many are, and Chriſt will be eternally admir'd in them. *Who then can be ſaved?* Since ſo many are rich, and have great Poſſeſſions, and ſo many more would be rich, and are well affected to great Poſſeſſions, who can be ſaved? If Riches are a hindrance to rich People, are not Pride and Luxury incident to thoſe that are not rich, and as dangerous to them, and who then can get to Heaven? This is a good Reaſon why rich People ſhould ſtrive againſt the Stream.

2. That tho' it be hard, yet it is not impoſſible but that rich People may be ſaved, *v.* 26. *Jeſus beheld them*, turn'd and look'd wiſtly upon his Diſciples, to ſhame them out of their fond Conceit of the Advantages rich People had in Spiritual Things: *He beheld them* as Men that had got over this Difficulty, and were in a fair way for Heaven, and the more ſo becauſe poor in this World; and *he ſaid unto them, With Men this is unpoſſible, but with God all things are poſſible.* This ſpeaks a great Truth in general, that God is able to do that which quite exceeds all created Power; that nothing is too hard for God, *Gen.* 18. 14. *Num.* 11. 23. when Men are at a loſs, God is not, for his Power is infinite, and irreſiſtable; but this Truth is here applied. (1.) To the *Salvation of any*. Who can be ſaved, ſay the Diſciples? None, ſaith Chriſt, by any created Power. *With Men this is Impoſſible*: The Wiſdom of Man would ſoon be non-plus'd in contriving, and the Power of Man baffled in effecting the Salvation of a Soul. No Creature can work the Change that is neceſſary to the Salvation of a Soul, either in it ſelf or in any one elſe: *With Men it is impoſſible*, that ſo ſtrong a Stream ſhould be turned, ſo hard a Heart ſoftned, ſo ſtubborn a Will bow'd. 'Tis a *Creation*, 'tis a *Reſurrection*, and *with Men this is impoſſible*; it can never be done by Philoſophy, Medicine, or Politicks, but *with God all things are poſſible*. *Note*, The Beginning, Progreſs, and Perfection of the Work of Salvation depends intirely upon the Almighty Power of God, to which *all things are poſſible*. Faith is wrought by that Power, *Eph.* 1. 19. and is kept by it, 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. *Job*'s Experience of God's convincing humbling Grace made him acknowledge more than any thing elſe, *I know that thou canſt do every thing*, Job 42. 2. (2.) To the Salvation of rich People eſpecially; it is *impoſſible with Men* that ſuch ſhould be ſav'd, but with God even *this is poſſible*, not that rich People ſhould be ſaved in their worldlineſs, but that they ſhould be ſaved *from* it. *Note*, The Sanctification and Salvation of ſuch as are ſurrounded with the Temptations of this World is not to be *deſpair'd* of; it is poſſible it may be brought about by the All-ſufficiency of the Divine Grace, and when ſuch are brought to Heaven, they will be there everlaſting Monuments of the Power of God. I am willing to think, that in this Word of Chriſt there is an Intimation of Mercy Chriſt had yet in ſtore for this young Gentleman, that was now gone away ſorrowful; *it was not impoſſible to God* yet to recover him, and bring him to a *better Mind*.

Secondly, *Peter* took occaſion from hence to enquire what they ſhould get by it, who had *come up* to theſe Terms, upon which this young Man *broke* with Chriſt, and had *left all* to *follow* him, *v.* 27, &c. where we have the Diſciples Expectations from Chriſt, and his Promiſes to them.

1. We have their *Expectations from Chriſt*; *Peter* in the Name of the reſt ſignifies that they depend upon him for ſomething conſiderable in lieu of what they had left for him. *Behold we have forſaken all, and have follow'd thee, what ſhall we have therefore?* Chriſt had promiſed the young Man, that if he would *ſell all*, and *come* and *follow him*, he ſhould have *Treaſure in Heaven*; now *Peter* deſires to know.

(1.) Whether they had ſufficiently *come up* to *thoſe Terms*, they had not *ſold all*, for they had many of them Wives and Families to provide for, but they had *forſaken all*; they had not *given it to the Poor*, but they had renounc'd it as far as it might be any way a hinderance to them in ſerving Chriſt. *Note*, when we hear what are the Characters of thoſe that ſhall be ſav'd, it concerns us to enquire whether, we through Grace, anſwer thoſe Characters. Now *Peter* hopes, that as to the main Scope and Intendment of the Condition, they had come up to it, for God had wrought in them a holy Contempt of the World, and the *things that are ſeen* in compariſon with Chriſt, and the *things that are not ſeen*; and how this muſt be evidenced, no certain Rule can be given, but according *as we are called*,

Lord, ſaith *Peter*, *we have forſaken all*, Alas; it was but a poor *All* that they had forſaken; one of them had indeed quitted a Place in the Cuſtom-houſe, but *Peter* and the moſt of them had only left a few Boats and Nets, and the Appurtenances of a poor Fiſhing-Trade; And yet ſee how *big Peter* there ſpeaks of it, as if it had been ſome mighty thing: *Behold, we have forſaken all*. *Note*, We are too apt to make the moſt of our Services and Sufferings, our Expences and Loſſes for Chriſt, and to think we have made him much our Debtor.

However Chriſt doth not upbraid them with this; tho' it was but little they had forſaken, yet it was *their All*, like the Widow's two Mites, and was as *dear* to them as if it had been more, and therefore Chriſt *took it kindly* that they left it to follow him; for he accepts *according to what a Man hath.*

(2.) Whether therefore they might expect *that Treaſure*; the young Man ſhall have it if he will *ſell All.* Lord, ſaith *Peter*, ſhall we have it who have *left All?* All People are for what they can get, and Chriſt's Followers are allow'd to conſult their own true Intereſt, and to ask, *What ſhall we have?* Chriſt look'd at the *Joy ſet before him*, and *Moſes* at the *Recompence of Reward.* For this End 'tis *ſet before us*, that by a *patient Continuance in well doing* we might *ſeek for it.* Chriſt encourageth us to ask what we ſhall gain by leaving All to follow him, that we may ſee he doth not call us to *our Prejudice*, but unſpeakably to our Advantage. As it is the Language of an obediential Faith, to ask, *What ſhall we do?* with an Eye to the Precepts; ſo it is of a hoping truſting Faith, to ask, *What ſhall we have?* with an Eye to the Promiſes. But obſerve, the Diſciples had long ſince left All to engage themſelves in the Service of Chriſt, and yet never till now ask'd, *What ſhall we have?* tho' there was no viſible proſpect of Advantage by it; they were ſo well aſſured of his Goodneſs, that they knew they ſhould not loſe by him at laſt, and therefore referr'd themſelves to him, in what way he would make up their Loſſes to them; minded their Work, and asked not what ſhould be their Wages. *Note*, It honours Chriſt to truſt him and ſerve him, and not to *indent with him.* Now this young Man was *gone* from Chriſt to *his Poſſeſſions*, 'twas time for them to think which they ſhould *take to*, what they ſhould *truſt to*; when we ſee what others keep by their Hypocriſy and Apoſtacy, 'tis proper for us to conſider what we hope through Grace to gain, not *for*, but *by* our Sincerity and Conſtancy, and then we ſhall ſee more Reaſon to *pity* them than to *envy* them.

2. We have here Chriſt's *Promiſes to them*, and to all others that tread in the Steps of their Faith and Obedience: What there was either of Vain-glory, or of Vain-hopes in that which *Peter* ſaid, Chriſt overlooks, and is not extreme to mark it, but takes this occaſion to give the *Bond* of a *Promiſe*;

1. To his *immediate Followers, v.* 28. They had ſignaliz'd their Reſpects to him, as the *firſt* that followed him, and to them he promiſeth not only *Treaſure*, but *Honour* in Heaven; and here they have a Grant or Patent for it from him, who is the *Fountain* of *Honour* in that Kingdom; *Ye which have followed me in the Regeneration ſhall ſit upon twelve Thrones.* Obſerve,

1. The *Preamble* to the *Patent*, or the *Conſideration* of the *Grant*, which, as uſual, is a Recital of their Services; you *have follow'd me* in the Regeneration, and therefore this will I do for you. The Time of Chriſt's appearing in this World was a time of *Regeneration*, of *Reformation*, *Heb.* 9. 10. when old Things began to *paſs away*, and all Things to look new. The Diſciples had follow'd Chriſt when the Church was yet in the *Embryo*, when the Goſpel-Temple was but in the framing, when they had more of the Work and Service of Apoſtles than of the Dignity and Power that belong'd to their Office. Now they follow'd Chriſt with a conſtant Fatigue, when few did, and therefore on them he will put particular Marks of Honour. *Note*, Chriſt hath ſpecial Favour for thoſe that begin early with him, that truſt him further than they can ſee him, as they did who *follow'd him in the Regeneration.* Obſerve, *Peter* ſpoke of their *forſaking all* to follow him, Chriſt only ſpeaks of their *following him*, which was the main Matter.

2. The *Date* of their *Honour*, which fixeth the time when it ſhould commence, not immediately from the Day of the Date of theſe Preſents; no, they muſt continue a while in Obſcurity, as they were: But *when the Son of Man ſhall ſit in the Throne of his Glory*; and to this ſome refer that, *in the Regeneration*; You which now have *follow'd me*, ſhall *in the Regeneration* be thus dignified. Chriſt's ſecond Coming will be a *Regeneration*, when there ſhall be *new Heavens*, and a *new Earth*, and the *reſtitution of all things.* All that partake of the Regeneration in Grace, (*John* 3. 3.) ſhall partake of the *Regeneration* in Glory; for as Grace is the *firſt Reſurrection*, *Rev.* 20. 6. ſo Glory is the ſecond *Regeneration.*

Now their Honour being adjourn'd till the *Son of Man's ſitting in the Throne of his Glory*, intimates (1.) That they muſt *ſtay* for their Advancement till then. *Note*, As long as their Maſter's Glory is delay'd, 'tis fit that ours ſhould be ſo too, and that we ſhould *wait* for it with an earneſt Expectation as of a *Hope not ſeen*, *Rom.* 8. 19. We muſt live and work and ſuffer in Faith, and Hope, and Patience, which therefore muſt be try'd by theſe Delays. (2.) That they muſt *ſhare* with Chriſt in his Advancement; their Honour muſt be a Communion with him in his Honour. They having ſuffered with a *ſuffering* Jeſus, muſt reign with a *reigning* Jeſus, for Both here and hereafter Chriſt will be *all in all*; we muſt be *where he is*, *John* 12. 26. muſt *appear with him*, *Col.* 3. 4. And this will be an abundant Recompence, not only for our Loſs, but for the *Delay*, and when our Lord comes, we ſhall receive, not only *our own*, but our own *with Uſury.* The longeſt Voyages make the richeſt Returns.

3. The *The Honour it ſelf* hereby granted, *Ye ſhall alſo ſit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Iſrael.* It is hard to determine the particular Senſe of this Promiſe; and whether it was not to have many Accompliſhments, which I ſee no harm in admitting; (1.) When Chriſt is aſcended to the Right Hand of the Father, and ſits on the Throne of his Glory, there the Apoſtles ſhall *receive Power* by the Holy Ghoſt, (*Acts* 1. 8.) ſhall be ſo much advanced *above themſelves*, as they are now, that they ſhall think themſelves *upon Thrones* in promoting the Goſpel, they ſhall deliver it with Authority, as a Judge from the Bench: They ſhall then have their Commiſſion enlarg'd, and ſhall publiſh the Laws of Chriſt, by which the *Church*, God's Spiritual *Iſrael*, (*Gal.* 6. 16.) ſhall be *govern'd*, and *Iſrael* according to the Fleſh that continues in Infidelity, with all others that do likewiſe, ſhall be condemn'd. This Honour and Power given them, may be explain'd by *Jer.* 1. 10. *See I have ſet thee over the Nations*, and *Ezek.* 20. 4. *Wilt thou judge them?* And *Dan.* 7. 18. *The Saints ſhall take the Kingdom*; and *Rev.* 12. 11. where the Doctrine of Chriſt is called a *Crown of twelve Stars.* (2.) When Chriſt appears for the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, *Matt.* 24. 30. then the Apoſtles ſhall be ſent to *judge* the Jewiſh Nation, becauſe in that Deſtruction their Predictions, according to the Word of Chriſt, would be accompliſh'd. (3.) Some think it has reference to the Converſion of the *Jews*, which is yet to come, at the latter end of the World, after the Fall of Anti-Chriſt; ſo Dr. *Whitby*, and that "it reſpects the Apoſtles Government of the twelve "Tribes of *Iſrael*, not by a Reſurrection of their Perſons, but by a "Reviveſcence of that Spirit which reſided in them, and of that Purity and Knowledge which they deliver'd to the World, and chiefly "by Admiſſion of their Goſpel to be the Standard of their Faith, and "the direction of their Lives." (4.) It is certainly to have its full accompliſhment at the ſecond coming of Jeſus Chriſt, when *the Saints* in general ſhall judge the World, and the twelve Apoſtles eſpecially as Aſſeſſors with Chriſt, in the Judgment of the great Day, when all the World ſhall receive their final Doom, and they ſhall ratifie and applaud the Sentence. But the *Tribes of Iſrael* are nam'd, partly becauſe the Number of the Apoſtles was deſignedly the ſame with the Number of the Tribes; partly becauſe the Apoſtles were of the Jewiſh Nation, befriended them moſt, but were moſt ſpitefully perſecuted by them; and it intimates, that the Saints will get their Acquaintance and Kindred according to the Fleſh, and will in the great Day judge thoſe they had a Kindneſs for, will judge their Perſecutors, who in this World judged them.

But the general Intendment of this Promiſe, is to ſhew the Glory and Dignity reſerv'd for the Saints in Heaven, which will be an abundant Recompence for the Diſgrace they ſuffer'd here in Chriſt's Cauſe. There are higher Degrees of Glory for thoſe that have done and ſuffer'd moſt. The Apoſtles in this World were hurry'd and toſs'd, there they ſhall *ſit down* at reſt and eaſe: Here Bonds, and Afflictions, and Deaths did abide them, but there they ſhall *ſit on Thrones* of Glory. Here they were dragg'd to the Bar, there they ſhall be advanced to the Bench; here the *twelve Tribes of Iſrael* trampled upon them, there they ſhall tremble before them; and will not this be Recompence enough to make up all their Loſſes and Expences for Chriſt? See *Luke* 22. 29.

4. The *Ratification* of this Grant, 'tis firm, 'tis inviolably immutably ſure; for Chriſt hath ſaid, *Verily I ſay unto you*, I the *Amen*, the faithful Witneſs, who am empower'd to make this Grant; I have ſaid it, and it cannot be diſannull'd.

2. Here is a Promiſe to all others that ſhould in like manner leave all to follow Chriſt. It was not peculiar to the Apoſtles to be thus prefer'd, but this Honour have all his Saints; Chriſt will take care they ſhall none of them loſe by him, *v.* 29. *Every one that has forſaken any thing for Chriſt ſhall receive.*

1. *Loſſes for Chriſt* are here *ſuppoſ'd*; Chriſt had told them that his Diſciples muſt *deny themſelves* in all that's done to them in this World; now here he inſtanceth in Particulars, for it's good to count upon the worſt; if they have not forſaken all, as the Apoſtles did, yet they have forſaken a great deal, *Houſes* ſuppoſe, and have turn'd themſelves out to wander in Deſarts, or dear Relations, that would not go with them to *follow Chriſt.* Theſe are particularly mention'd, as hardeſt for a tender gracious Spirit to part with, *Brethren, or Siſters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children*; and *Lands* are added in the Cloſe, the Profits of which were the Support of the Family.

Now (1.) The Loſs of theſe Things is ſuppoſed to be *for Chriſt's Name ſake*, elſe he doth not oblige himſelf to make it up. Many forſake *Brethren*, and *Wife* and *Children*, in Humour and Paſſion, as the *Bird that wanders from her Neſt*; that's a ſinful Deſertion: But if we forſake them *for Chriſt's ſake*, becauſe we cannot keep them, and keep a good Conſcience, we muſt either quit them, or quit our Intereſt in Chriſt, not quit our *Concern* for them, or our *Duty* to them, but our *Comfort* in them, and will do it rather than deny Chriſt; and this with an Eye to him, and to his Will and Glory; this is that which ſhall be thus recompenc'd: 'Tis not the *Suffering* but the *Cauſe* that makes both the Martyr and the Confeſſor.

(2.) It is ſuppoſed to be a *great Loſs*, and yet Chriſt undertakes to make it up, for he is able to do it, be it never ſo great. See the Barbarity of the *Perſecutors*, that they ſtript innocent People of all they had, for no other Crime, but becauſe they adher'd to Chriſt. See the Patience of the *Perſecuted*, and the Strength of their Love to Chriſt, which was ſuch as all theſe *Waters could not quench.*

2. A *Recompence of theſe Loſſes* is here *ſecured*: Thouſands have dealt with Chriſt and have truſted him far, but never any one loſt by him, never any one but was an unſpeakable Gainer by him, when the Account came to be ballanc'd. Chriſt here gives his Word for it, that he will not only *indemnify* his ſuffering Servants, and ſave them harmleſs, but will abundantly reward them. Let them make a Schedule of their Loſſes for Chriſt, and they ſhall be ſure to receive,

1. A *hundred fold in this Life*, ſometimes *in Kind*, in the things themſelves they have parted with; God will raiſe up for his ſuffering Servants *more Friends*, that will be ſo to them for Chriſt's ſake, than they have left that were ſo for their own Sakes. The Apoſtles whereever they came met with thoſe that were kind to them, and entertain'd them, and open'd their Hearts and Doors to them. However, they ſhall receive a hundred Fold *in Kindneſs* in thoſe things that are abundantly better and more valuable. Their Graces ſhall increaſe, their Comforts abound, they ſhall have Tokens of God's Love, more free Communion with him, more full Communications from him, clearer Foreſights, and ſweeter Foretaſtes of the Glory to be revealed, and then they may truly ſay they have received a hundred times more Comfort in God and Chriſt, than they could have had in *Wiſe* or *Children*.

2. *Eternal Life* at laſt; The former is Reward enough, if there were no more, *Cent. per. Cent.* is great Profit, what then is a hundred to one? But this comes in over and above, as it were into the Bargain. The *Life* here promis'd, includes in it all the Comforts of Life in the higheſt Degree, and all Eternal. Now if we could but mix Faith with this Promiſe, and truſt Chriſt for the Performance of it, ſurely we ſhould think nothing too much to do, nothing too hard to ſuffer, nothing too dear to part with for him.

Our Saviour in the laſt Verſe obviates a Miſtake of ſome, as if Preheminence in Glory went by Providence in time, rather than the Meaſure and Degree of Grace; no, *Many that are firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt*, v. 30. God will croſs Hands, will reveal that to Babes which he *hid from the Wiſe and Prudent*, will reject unbelieving *Jews*, and receive believing *Gentiles*. The Heavenly Inheritance is not given as Earthly Inheritances commonly are, by ſeniority of Age, and Priority of Birth, but according to God's Pleaſure. This is the Text of another Sermon, which we ſhall meet with in the next Chapter.

CHAP. XX.

We have four things in this Chapter, (1.) *The Parable of the* Labourers in the Vineyard, v. 1.—16. (2.) *A Prediction of Chriſt's approaching Sufferings*, v. 17.—19. (3.) *The Petition of two of the Diſciples, by their Mother, reprov'd*, v. 20.—28. (4.) *The Petition of the two blind Men granted, and their Eyes open'd*, v. 29.—34.

FOR the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an houſholder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his Vineyard. 2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a peny a day, he ſent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third hour, and ſaw others ſtanding idle in the market place, 4 And ſaid unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard, and whatſoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way. 5 Again he went out about the ſixth and ninth hour, and did likewiſe. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others ſtanding idle, and ſaith unto them, Why ſtand ye here all the day idle? 7 They ſay unto him, becauſe no man hath hired us. He ſaith unto them, Go ye alſo into the vineyard, and whatſoever is right, *that* ſhall ye receive. 8 So when even was come, the Lord of the vineyard ſaith unto his Steward, Call the Labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the laſt unto the firſt. 9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a peny. 10 But when the firſt came, they ſuppoſed that they ſhould have received more, and they likewiſe received every man a peny. 11 And when they had received it, they murmured againſt the good-man of the houſe, 12 Saying, Theſe laſt have wrought but one hour, and thou haſt made them equal unto us, which have born the burden and heat of the day. 13 But he anſwered one of them, and ſaid, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didſt not thou agree with me for a peny? 14 Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto the laſt, even as unto thee. 15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Is thine eye evil becauſe I am good? 16 So the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt: for many be called, but few choſen.

This Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard is intended,

1. To repreſent to us *the Kingdom of Heaven*, v. 1. that is, the way and method of the Goſpel Diſpenſation. The Laws of that Kingdom are not wrapt up in Parables, but plainly ſet down, as in the Sermon upon the Mount; but the Myſteries of that Kingdom are delivered in Parables, in Sacraments, as here, and *Mat.* 13. The Duties of Chriſtianity are more neceſſary to be *known* than the Notions of it; and yet the Notions of it more neceſſary to be *illuſtrated* than the Duties of it; which is that that Parables are deſign'd for.

2. In particular to repreſent to us, that concerning the Kingdom of Heaven, which he had ſaid in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, that *many that are firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt*; to which this Parable is connected: that Truth having in it a ſeeming Contradiction, needed farther Explication.

Nothing was more a *Myſtery* in the Goſpel Diſpenſation than the rejection of the *Jews*, and the calling in of the *Gentiles*; ſo the Apoſtle ſpeaks of it, *Eph.* 3. 3.—6. *That the Gentiles ſhould be fellow-heirs*: Nor was any thing more provoking to the *Jews*, than the Intimations of it. Now this ſeems to be the *principal Scope* of this Parable, to ſhew that the *Jews* ſhould be firſt call'd into the Vineyard, and many of them ſhould come at the Call; but at length the Goſpel ſhould be preach'd to the *Gentiles*, and they would receive it, and be admitted to equal Privileges and Advantages with the *Jews*, ſhould be fellow Citizens with the Saints, with the *Jews*, even thoſe of them that believed, would be very much diſguſted at, but without Reaſon.

But the Parable may be *apply'd* more generally, and ſhews us (1.) That *God is a Debtor to no Man*: A great Truth, which the Contents in our Bible give as the Scope of this Parable. (2.) That many who begin *laſt*, and promiſe *little* in Religion, ſometimes, by the Bleſſing of God, arrive to greater Attainments in Knowledge, Grace and Uſefulneſs, than others whoſe Entrance was more early, and who promiſs'd fairer; Tho' *Cuſhi* gets the ſtart of *Ahimaaz*, yet *Ahimaaz* chuſing the *Way of the Plain*, out-runs *Cuſhi*: *John* is ſwifter of foot, and comes firſt to the Sepulchre, but *Peter* has more Courage, and goes firſt *into it*: Thus many that are laſt ſhall be firſt. Some make it a Caution to the Diſciples, who had boaſted of their timely and zealous embracing of Chriſt; they had *left all to follow him*: But let them look to it that they keep up that Zeal, let them preſs forwards and perſevere, elſe their good Beginnings will avail them little; they that ſeem'd to be *firſt* would be *laſt*. Sometimes thoſe that are converted later in their Lives, out-ſtrip thoſe that are converted earlier; *Paul* was as one *born out of due time*, yet *came not behind the chief of the Apoſtles*, and out-did thoſe that were in *Chriſt before him*. Something of Affinity there is between this Parable and that of the Prodigal Son, where he that return'd from his wandring, was as dear to his Father, as he was that never went aſtray; firſt and laſt alike. (3.) That the Recompence of Reward will be given to the Saints, not according to the time of their Converſion, but according to the Preparations for it by Grace in this World; not according to the Seniority, (as *Gen.* 43. 33.) but *according to the meaſure of the Stature of the fulneſs of Chriſt*. Chriſt had promis'd the Apoſtles, who follow'd him *in the Regeneration*, at the beginning of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, great Glory, *Chap.* 19. 28. but tells them, thoſe that are in like manner faithful to him, even in the latter end of the World, ſhall have the ſame Reward, ſhall ſit with Chriſt *on his Throne* as well as the Apoſtles, *Rev.* 2. 26.—3. 21. Sufferers for Chriſt in the latter Days ſhall have the ſame Reward with the Martyrs and Confeſſors of the Primitive Times, tho' they are more celebrated; and *faithful Miniſters* now, the ſame with the *firſt Fathers*.

We have two things in the Parable; the Agreement with the Labourers, and the *Account* with them.

Firſt, Here's the Agreement made with the Labourers, *v.* 1.—7. And here it will be ask'd as uſual,

1. Who hires them? *A man that is an Houſholder*. God is the great Houſholder, *whoſe we are*, and *whom we ſerve*; As a Houſholder, he has Work that he will have to be *done*, and Servants that he will have to be *doing*; he hath a great Family in Heaven and Earth, which is named from Jeſus Chriſt, *Eph.* 3. 16. which he is Owner and Ruler of: God hires Labourers, not becauſe he needs them, or their Services, for *if we be righteous, what do we unto him?* but as ſome charitable generous Houſholders keep poor Men to work, in Kindneſs to them, to ſave them from Idleneſs and Poverty, and pay them for working for themſelves.

2. Whence they are hir'd? Out of *the Market-place*, where till they are hir'd into God's Service, they *ſtand idle*, *v.* 3. *all the Day idle*, v. 6. *Note*, (1.) The Soul of Man ſtands ready to be hir'd into ſome Service or other; 'twas (as all the Creatures were) *created to work*, and is either a *Servant to Iniquity*, or a *Servant to Righteouſneſs*, Rom. 6. 19. The Devil by his Temptations is hiring Labourers into his Field to *feed Swine*; God by his Goſpel is hiring Labourers into his Vineyard to dreſs it, and keep it, Paradiſe Work: We are put to our Choice, *for hir'd we muſt be*. Joſh. 24. 15. *Chooſe ye this Day whom ye will ſerve.* (2.) 'Till we are hir'd into the Service of God, we are *ſtanding all the Day idle*; a ſinful State, tho' a State of Drudgery to Satan, may really be call'd a State of *Idleneſs*; Sinners are *doing nothing*, nothing to the Purpoſe, nothing of the great Work they were ſent into the World about; nothing that will paſs well in the Account. (3.) The Goſpel-Call is given to thoſe that ſtand *idle in the Market-place*. The Market-place is a place of *Concourſe*, and there *Wiſdom cries*, Prov. 1. 20, 21. 'tis a place of *Sport*, there the Children are *playing*, Chap. 11. 16. and the Goſpel calls us from Vanity to Seriouſneſs. 'Tis a Place of Buſineſs, of Noiſe and Hurry, and from that we are call'd to *retire*. Come, come from this Market-place.

3. What are they hir'd to do? To *labour in his Vineyard*. *Note*, (1.) The Church is God's Vineyard; 'tis of his planting, watering, and fencing, and the Fruits of it muſt be to his Honour and Praiſe. (2.) We are all call'd upon to be *Labourers* in this Vineyard. The Work of Religion is *Vineyard*-Work, Pruning, Dreſſing, Digging,

Watering, Fencing, Weeding; we have each of us *our own Vineyard* to keep, our own Soul, and it is God's, and to be kept and dreſs'd for him. In this Work we muſt not be ſlothful, not *Loiterers*, but Labourers, working, and *working out our own Salvation*: Work for God will not admit of *trifling*. A man may go idle to Hell, but he that will go to Heaven muſt be buſy.

4. What ſhall be their Wages? He promiſeth (1.) A *Penny*, *v.* 2. The Roman Penny was in our Money of the value of ſeven pence halfpenny, a Days Wages for a Days Work, and the Wages ſufficient for the Days Maintenance. This doth not prove that the Reward of our Obedience to God is *of Work*, or *of Debt*; no, it is *of Grace*, free Grace, *Rom.* 4. 4. or that there is any Proportion between our Services and Heaven's Glories; no, when we have done all, we are *unprofitable Servants*, but 'tis to ſignifie that there is a Reward *ſet before us*, and a ſufficient One. (2.) Whatſoever is *right*, v. 4. 7. *Note*, God will be ſure not to be behind-hand with any for the Service they do him. Never any loſt by working for God. The Crown ſet before us is a *Crown of Righteouſneſs*, which the *righteous Judge ſhall give.*

5. For what Term are they hir'd? For *a Day*: 'Tis but a *Day's Work* that is here done. The Time of Life is the Day, in which we muſt *work the Works of him that ſent us* into the World, 'Tis a *ſhort Time*, the Reward is for Eternity, the Work is but for *a Day*; Man is ſaid to *accompliſh as a Hireling his Day*, Job 14. 16. This ſhould *quicken* us to Expedition and Diligence in our Work, that we have but a little Time to Work in, and the Night is haſtening on when *no Man can work*; and if our great Work be undone when our Day is done, we are undone for ever. It ſhould alſo *encourage* us in reference to the Hardſhips and Difficulties of our Work, that 'tis but *for a Day*; the approaching *Shadow*: which the *Servant earneſtly deſireth*, will bring with it both Reſt and the *Reward of our Work*, Job 7. 2. Hold out Faith and Patience yet a little while.

6. Notice is taken of the ſeveral Hours of the Day, at which the *Labourers* were hir'd. The Apoſtles were ſent forth at the *firſt* and *third* Hour of the Goſpel-Day, they had a firſt and a ſecond Miſſion while Chriſt was on Earth, and their Buſineſs was to *call in* the *Jews*; After Chriſt's Aſcenſion, about the *ſixth* and *ninth* Hour they went out again on the ſame Errand, *preaching the Goſpel to the Jews only*, to them in *Judea* firſt, and afterwards to them of the *Diſperſion*; but at length, as it were about the 11*th* Hour, they called the *Gentiles* to the ſame Work and Priviledge with the *Jews*, and told them that in Chriſt Jeſus there ſhould be no difference made between *Jew* and *Greek*.

But this may be, and commonly is applied to the ſeveral Ages of Life, in which Souls are converted to Chriſt. The common Call is promiſcuous, to come *work in the Vineyard*, but the effectual Call is *particular*, and 'tis then *effectual* when we *come at the Call*.

(1.) Some are effectually call'd and begin to work in the Vineyard, when they are *very young*, are *ſent in early in the Morning*, whoſe tender Years are ſeaſon'd with Grace, and the Remembrance of their Creator. *John Baptiſt* was *ſanctified from the Womb*, and therefore great, *Luke* 1. 15. *Timothy* from *a Child*, 2*Tim.* 3. 15. *Obadiah* feared the *Lord from his youth*. Thoſe that have ſuch a Journey to go had need ſet out betimes, the ſooner the better.

(2.) Others are ſavingly wrought upon in *middle Age*, to work in the Vineyard, at the third, ſixth, or ninth Hour. The Power of Divine Grace is magnified in the Converſion of ſome, when they are in the midſt of their Pleaſures, and worldly Purſuits, as *Paul*. God has Work for all Ages; no time amiſs to turn to God. None can ſay it's all in good time, for whatever Hour of the Day it is with us, the time *paſt of our Life may ſuffice* that we have ſerved Sin; *Go ye alſo into the Vineyard*. God turns away none that are willing to be hired, for *yet there is room*.

(3.) Others are hired into the Vineyard *in old Age*, at the *eleventh hour*, when the Day of Life is far ſpent, and there is but *one hour* of the twelve remaining. None are hired at the *twelfth hour*, when Life is done, Opportunity is done; but while there's Life, there's Hope. (1.) There is hopes *for* old Sinners, for if in Sincerity they turn to God, they ſhall doubtleſs be accepted. True Repentance is never too late; And (2.) There is hopes *of* old Sinners, that they may be brought to true Repentance; nothing is too hard for Almighty Grace to do, that can change the *Ethiopian*'s Skin, and the Leopard's Spots; can ſet thoſe to work who have contracted a habit of Idleneſs. *Nicodemus* may be born again when he is *old*, and the *old Man may* be *put off* which is *corrupt*.

Yet let none upon this Preſumption *put off* their Repentance till they are old. Theſe were ſent into the Vineyard, 'tis true, at *the eleventh hour*, but *no Body had hir'd them*, or *offer'd* to hire them before. The *Gentiles* came in at the *eleventh hour*, but it was becauſe the Goſpel had not been before preached to them. Thoſe that have had Goſpel-Offers made them at the third or ſixth Hour, and have reſiſted and refuſed them, will not have that to ſay for themſelves at the eleventh Hour that theſe had, *No Man has hired us*, nor can they be ſure that any Man *will* hire them at the ninth or eleventh Hour; and therefore not to diſcourage any, but to awaken all, be it remember'd, That now is the *accepted time*; if we will hear his Voice it muſt be *to Day*.

Secondly, Here's the *Account* with the Labourers. Obſerve 1. When the Account was taken; *when the Evening was come*, then as uſual the Day-Labourers were called and pay'd. *Note*, Evening-time is the Reckoning-time; the particular Account muſt be given up in the *evening of our Life*; for *after Death the Judgment*. Faithful Labourers ſhall receive their Reward when they *die*; 'tis defer'd till then that they may wait with Patience for it; but no longer, for God will obſerve his own Rule, the *Hire of the Labourers ſhall not abide with thee all Night until the Morning*, ſee *Deut.* 24. 15. When *Paul* that faithful Labourer departs, he is *with Chriſt* preſently. The Payment ſhall not be wholly defer'd till the Morning of the Reſurrection; but then in the *evening of the World* will be the general Account, when *every one ſhall receive according to the things done in the Body*. When Time ends, and with it the World of Work and Opportunity, then the State of Retribution commenceth. Then *call the Labourers and give them their Hire*; Miniſters call them into the Vineyard, to do their Work, Death calls them out of the Vineyard to receive their Penny; and thoſe to whom the Call into the Vineyard is effectual, the Call out of it will be joyful. *Obſerve*, They did not come for their Pay till they were called; we muſt with Patience wait God's Time for our Reſt and Recompence, go by our Maſter's Clock. The laſt Trumpet at the great Day ſhall *call the Labourers*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 16. Then *ſhalt thou call*, ſaith the good and faithful Servant, *and I will anſwer*. In calling the Labourers they muſt begin *from the laſt*, and ſo *to the firſt*: Let not thoſe that come in at the eleventh Hour be put behind the reſt, but leſt they ſhould be diſcouraged, call them firſt. At the great Day, tho' the Dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt, yet *they which are alive and remain*, on whom the *Ends of the World* (the eleventh Hour of its Day) comes, ſhall be *caught up together with them in the Clouds*; no Preference ſhall be given to Seniority, but every Man ſhall ſtand in his own Lot *at the end of the Days*.

2. What the Account was; and in that obſerve,

1. The *general Pay*, v. 9, 10. they *received every Man a Penny*. *Note*, All that by patient Continuance in well-doing, *Seek for Glory, Honour, and Immortality*, ſhall undoubtedly *obtain eternal Life*, Rom. 2. 7. not as Wages for the value of their Work, but as the *Gift of God*. Tho' there be Degrees of Glory in Heaven, yet it will be to all a compleat Happineſs: They that come *from the Eaſt and Weſt*, and ſo come in *late*, that are pick'd up out of the High-Ways and the Hedges, yet ſhall ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* at the ſame Feaſt, *Mat.* 8. 11. In Heaven every Veſſel will be *full*, brimful, tho' every Veſſel is not alike large and capacious. In the Diſtributions of future Joys, as it was in the gathering of the Manna; he that ſhall gather much will have nothing over, and he that ſhall gather little will have no lack, *Exod.* 16. 18. Thoſe whom Chriſt fed miraculouſly, tho' of different Sizes, Men, Women and Children, yet *did all eat and were filled*.

The giving of a *whole Days Wages* to thoſe that had not done the tenth part of a Days Work, is deſign'd to ſhew that God diſtributes his Rewards by Grace and Sovereignty, and not *of Debt*. The beſt of the Labourers, and thoſe that begin ſooneſt, yet having ſo many empty Spaces in their Time, and their *Works* not bing *filled up before God*, may truly be ſaid to labour in the Vineyard ſcarce *one Hour of* their *twelve*; but becauſe we are *under Grace*, and not *under the Law*, even ſuch defective Services done in Sincerity, ſhall not only be accepted, but by free Grace richly rewarded. Compare *Luke* 17. 7, 8. with *Luke* 12. 37.

2. The *particular pleading* with thoſe that were offended with this Diſtribution in *Gavel-Kind*. The Circumſtances of this ſerve to adorn the Parable, but the general Scope is plain, that *the laſt ſhall be firſt*. We have here,

1. The Offence taken, *v.* 11, 12. *They murmured at the good Man of the Houſe*; not that there is, or can be any Diſcontent or Murmuring *in* Heaven, for that's both *Guilt* and Grief, and in Heaven there is neither; but there may be, and often is Diſcontent and Murmuring *concerning* Heaven, and heavenly Things, while they are in proſpect and promiſe in this World. This ſignifies the Jealouſie which the *Jews* were provoked to by the admiſſion of the *Gentiles* into the *Kingdom of Heaven*. As the elder Brother in the Parable of the Prodigal repin'd at the Reception of his younger Brother, and complained of his Father's Generoſity to him; ſo theſe Labourers quarrel'd with their Maſter and found fault, not becauſe they had not *enough*, ſo much as becauſe others were made *equal with them*. They boaſt, as the Prodigal's elder Brother did, of their good Services, *We have born the burthen and heat of the Day*; that was the moſt they could make of it: Sinners are ſaid to *labour in the very Fire*, Heb. 2. 13. whereas God's Servants at the worſt do but *labour in the Sun*, not in the heat of the Iron Furnace, but only in the *heat of the Day*: Now theſe laſt have *work'd* but *one Hour*, and that too in the *cool of the Day*, and yet thou haſt *made them equal with us*. The *Gentiles* that are newly called in have as much of the Priviledges of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, as the *Jews* have that have ſo long been labouring in the Vineyard of the Old Teſtament-Church, under the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law, in expectation of that Kingdom. *Note*, there is a great proneneſs in us to think that we have too little, and others too much of the Tokens of God's Favour; and that we do too much, and others too little in the Work of God. Very apt we all are to under-value others Deſerts, and to over-value our own. Perhaps Chriſt here gives an Intimation to *Peter* not to boaſt too much, as he ſeemed to do, of his having *left all to follow Chriſt*, as if becauſe he and the reſt of them had *born the burthen and heat of the Day* thus, they muſt have a *Heaven by themſelves*. 'Tis hard for thoſe that do or ſuffer more than ordinary for God, not to be elevated too much with the Thought of it, and to expect to merit by it. Bleſſed *Paul* guarded againſt this, when, tho' the chief of the Apoſtles, he own'd himſelf to be *nothing*, to be *leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*.

2. The *Offence* removed. Three things the Maſter of the Houſe urgeth in anſwer to this *ill-natur'd* Surmize.

1. That the Complainant had no reaſon at all to ſay, he had any Wrong done unto him, *v.* 13, 14. Here he aſſerts his own Juſtice, *Friend, I do thee no wrong.* He calls him *Friend*, for in reaſoning with others, we ſhould uſe *ſoft* Words, and *hard* Arguments; if our Inferiors are peeviſh and provoking, yet we ſhould not thereby be put into a Paſſion, but ſpeak calmly to them. (1.) It is unconteſtably true that God can *do no wrong*. This is the Prerogative of the King of Kings. *Is there Unrighteouſneſs with God?* The Apoſtle ſtartles at the thought of it, *God forbid*, *Rom.* 3. 5, 6. His Word ſhould ſilence all our Murmurings, that whatever God doth to us, or withholds from us, he doth us no wrong. (2.) If God gives that Grace to others which he denies to us, 'tis Kindneſs to them, but no Injuſtice to us, and Bounty to another; while 'tis no Injuſtice to us, we ought not to find fault with. Becauſe it is *free Grace* that is given to thoſe that have it, *Boaſting is for ever excluded*; and becauſe it is *Free Grace* that is with-held from thoſe that have it not, *murmuring* is for ever excluded. Thus ſhall *every Mouth* be *ſtop'd*, and all Fleſh be *ſilent before God.*

To convince the Murmurer that he did no wrong, he refers him to the Bargain, *Did'ſt not thou agree with me for a Penny?* and if thou had'ſt what thou did'ſt agree for, thou haſt no reaſon to *cry out of Wrong*; thou ſhalt have what we *agreed for*. Tho' God is a Debtor to none, yet he is graciouſly pleaſed to make himſelf a Debtor by his own Promiſe, for the Benefit of which, through Chriſt, Believers *agree with him*, and he will ſtand to his part of the Agreement. *Note*, It is good for us often to conſider what it was that we *agreed with God for*. (1.) Carnal Worldlings agree with God for *their Penny* in this World, they chuſe their *Portion in this Life*, *Pſal.* 17. 14. In theſe things they are willing to have *their Reward*, Mat. 6. 2, 5. *their Conſolation*, *Luke* 6. 24. their *good things*, *Luke* 16. 25. And with theſe they ſhall be put off, ſhall be cut off from Spiritual and Eternal Bleſſings. And herein God *doth them no wrong*; they have what they choſe, the Penny they agreed for, ſo ſhall their Doom be, themſelves have decided it; 'tis concluſive againſt them. (2.) Obedient Believers agree with God for their Penny in the other World, and they muſt remember that they have ſo agreed. Did'ſt not thou agree to *take God's Word* for it? thou did'ſt, and wilt thou go and agree with the World. Did'ſt not thou agree to *take up* with Heaven as thy Portion, thy All, and to *take up* with nothing ſhort of it? and wilt thou ſeek for a Happineſs in the Creature, or think from thence to make up the Deficiencies of thy Happineſs in God?

He therefore, 1. tyes him to his Bargain, *v.* 14. *Take that thine is, and go thy way.* If we underſtand it of that which is ours by Debt, or abſolute Propriety, it would be a dreadful Word; we are all undone if we be put off with that only which we can call *our own*. The higheſt Creature muſt *go away* into nothing, if he muſt go away with that only which is *his own*. But if we underſtand it of that which is ours *by Gift*, the free Gift of God, it teacheth us to be *content with ſuch things as we have*. Inſtead of repining that we have no more, let us take what we have, and be thankful. If God be better in any reſpect to others than to us, yet we have no reaſon to complain while he is ſo much *better* to us than we *deſerve*; in giving us our Penny; tho' we are unprofitable Servants. 2. He tells him, that thoſe he envy'd ſhould fare as well as he did, *I will give unto this laſt, even as unto thee*, I am reſolv'd I will. *Note*, The unchangeableneſs of God's Purpoſes in diſpenſing his Gifts ſhould ſilence our Murmurings. If he will do it, 'tis not for us to gainſay; for *he is in one mind, and who can turn him? neither giveth he an account of any of his Matters*; nor is it fit he ſhould.

2. He had no reaſon to quarrel with the Maſter, for what he gave was abſolutely his own, *v.* 15. As before he aſſerted his *Juſtice*, ſo here his *Sovereignty*; *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? Note*, (1.) God is the owner of all Good, his propriety in it is Abſolute, Sovereign, and Unlimited. (2.) He may therefore give or with-hold his Bleſſings as he pleaſeth. What we have is not *our own*, and therefore 'tis not lawful for us to do what we will with it, but what God has is *his own*. And this will juſtifie him (1.) in all the *Diſpoſals* of his Providence, when God takes from us that which was dear to us, and which we could ill ſpare, we muſt ſilence our Diſcontents with this, *May he not do what he will with his own? Abſtulit, ſed & dedit*. It is not for ſuch depending Creatures as we are to quarrel with our Sovereign. (2.) In all the *Diſpenſations* of his Grace, God gives or with-holds the means of Grace, and the Spirit of Grace, as he pleaſeth. Not but that there is a *Counſel* in every *Will of God*, and what ſeems to us to be done *Arbitrarily*, will appear at length to have been done *wiſely*, and for holy Ends: But this is enough to ſilence all Murmurers and Objectors that God is ſovereign Lord of all, and may *do what he will with his own*. We are in his Hand as *Clay in the hand of the Potter*, and it is not for us to preſcribe to him, or ſtrive with him.

3. He had no reaſon to envy his Fellow-ſervant, or to grudge at him; not to be angry that he came into the Vineyard no ſooner, for he was not ſooner called; not to be angry that the Maſter had given him Wages for the whole Day, when he had idled away the greateſt part of it; for *is thine Eye Evil, becauſe I am Good?* See here,

(1.) The nature of *Envy*, it is an *evil Eye*. The Eye is oftentimes both the In-let, and Out-let of this Sin. *Saul ſaw* that *David* proſper'd, and he *eyed* him, 1 *Sam.* 18. 9, 15. 'Tis an *evil Eye*, being diſpleaſed at the Good of others, and deſiring their Hurt; What can have more *Evil* in it? 'Tis Grief to our ſelves, Anger to God, and Ill-will to our Neighbour, and it is a Sin that has neither Pleaſure, Profit, nor Honour in it; 'tis an *Evil*, an *only Evil*.

(2.) The Aggravation of it, 'tis *becauſe I am good*. Envy is *unlikeneſs* to God, who is good, and doth good, and delights in doing good; nay, it is an *Oppoſition* and *Contradiction* to God, 'tis a Diſlike of his Proceedings, and a Diſpleaſure at what he doth, and is pleas'd with. It is a direct Violation of both the two great Commandments at once; both that of *Love to God*, in whoſe Will we ſhould acquieſce, and *Love to our Neighbour*, in whoſe Welfare we ſhould rejoyce. Thus Man's badneſs takes occaſion from God's Goodneſs to be more *exceeding ſinful*.

Laſtly. Here is the Reddition of the Parable, *v.* 16. in that Obſervation which occaſion'd it, *Chap.* 19. 30. ſo *the firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt.* There were many that followed Chriſt now *in the Regeneration*, when the Goſpel-Kingdom was firſt ſet up, and theſe *Jewiſh* Converts ſeem'd to have got the ſtart of others; but Chriſt, to obviate and ſilence their Boaſting here, tells them,

1. That they might poſſibly be *out-ſtrip'd* by their Succeſſors in Profeſſion, and tho' they were before others in Profeſſion, might be found inferior to them in Knowledge, Grace and Holineſs. The *Gentile* Church, which was as yet *unborn*, the *Gentile* World, which as yet ſtood *idle in the Market place*, would produce greater numbers of eminent uſeful Chriſtians than were found among the *Jews*. *More* and more excellent ſhall be *the Children of the Deſolate, than thoſe of the marry'd Wife*, *Iſa.* 54. 1. Who knows but that the Church in its old Age may be more fat and flouriſhing than ever, *to ſhew that the Lord is upright*. Tho' Primitive Chriſtianity had more of the Purity and Power of that holy Religion than is to be found in the degenerate Age wherein we live, yet what Labourers may be ſent into the Vineyard in the eleventh Hour of the Church's Day, in the *Philadelphian Period*, and what plentiful Effuſions of the Spirit may then be, above what has been yet, who can tell?

2. That they had reaſon to fear, leſt they themſelves ſhould be found Hypocrites at laſt; for *many are called, but few are choſen*. This is apply'd to the *Jews*, *Chap.* 22. 14. It was ſo then, it is too true ſtill; many are called with a common Call that are not choſen with a ſaving Choice. All that are choſen from Eternity are effectually called *in the fulneſs of time*, *Rom.* 8. 30. So that in making our effectual Calling ſure, we make ſure our Election, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. But it is not ſo as to the outward Call. Many are *called*, and yet *refuſe*, Prov. 1. 24. Nay, *as they are called* to God, ſo they *go from him*, Hoſ. 11. 2, 7. By which it appears they were not *choſen*, for *the Election* will *obtain*, Rom. 11. 7. *Note*, There are but few *choſen* Chriſtians, in compariſon with the many that are only *called* Chriſtians; it therefore highly concerns us to build our Hope for Heaven upon the *Rock* of an eternal Choice, and not upon the *Sand* of an external Call; and we ſhould fear leſt we be found but *ſeeming* Chriſtians, and ſo ſhould *really* come ſhort; nay, leſt we be found *blemiſh'd* Chriſtians, and ſo ſhould *ſeem to come ſhort*, Heb. 4. 1.

17 And Jeſus going up to Jeruſalem, took the twelve diſciples apart in the way, and ſaid unto them, 18 Behold we go up to Jeruſalem, and the Son of man ſhall be betrayed unto the chief prieſts, and unto the ſcribes, and they ſhall condemn him to death, 19 And ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to ſcourge, and to crucifie *him*: and the third day he ſhall riſe again.

This is the *third* time that Chriſt gave his Diſciples notice of his approaching Sufferings; he was now *going up to Jeruſalem* to celebrate the Paſſover, and to offer up himſelf the great Paſſover; both muſt be done at *Jeruſalem*, there the *Paſſover* muſt be *kept*, Deut. 12. 5. And there a Prophet muſt *periſh*, becauſe there the great Sanhedrin ſate, who were Judges in that caſe, *Luke* 13. 33.

Obſerve, 1. The Privacy of this Prediction, *he took the twelve Diſciples apart in the way*. This was one of thoſe things which was told to them in darkneſs, but which they were afterwards to *ſpeak in the Light*, Mat. 10. 27. *His Secret was with them* as his Friends, and this particularly. 'Twas a hard *Saying*, and if any could bear it they could. They would be more immediately expoſed to Peril with him, and therefore 'twas requiſite they ſhould know of it, that being *fore-warn'd*, they might be *fore-arm'd*. It was not fit to be ſpoken publickly as yet, (1.) becauſe many that were *cool* towards him, would hereby have been driven to turn their backs upon him; the ſcandal of the Croſs would have frightned them from following him any longer. (2.) Becauſe many that were *hot* for him would hereby be driven to take up Arms in his Defence, and it might have occaſioned an Uprear *among the People*, *Mat.* 26. 5. which would have been laid to his charge, if he had told them of it publickly before. And beſides that, ſuch Methods are utterly diſagreeable to the Genius of his Kingdom, which is not of this World, he never countenanced any thing which had a tendency to prevent his Sufferings. This Diſcourſe was not *in the Synagogue*, or in the *Houſe*, but *in the Way* as they travelled along, which teaches us in our Walks or Travels with our Friends, to keep up ſuch Diſcourſe as is good, and *to the uſe of edifying*, ſee *Deut.* 16. 7.

2. The Prediction it ſelf, *v.* 18, 19. *Obſerve*,

1. It is but a Repetition of what we had once and again ſaid before, *Chap.* 16. 21.—17. 22, 23. This intimates, that he not only ſaw clearly what Troubles lay before him, but that his Heart was upon his Suffering-work, it fill'd him, not *with Fear*, then he would have ſtudy'd to avoid it, and could have done it, but with Deſire and Expectation. He ſpoke thus frequently of his Sufferings, becauſe through them he was to *enter into his Glory*. *Note*, It is good for us to be often thinking and ſpeaking of our Death, and of the Sufferings which 'tis likely we may meet with betwixt this and the Grave. And thus by making them more *familiar*, they would become leſs *formidable*. This is one way of *dying daily*, and of taking up our Croſs *daily*, to be daily ſpeaking of the *Croſs*, and of *Dying*, which would come neither the *ſooner*, nor the *ſurer*, but much the *better* for our Thoughts and Diſcourſes of them.

2. He is more particular here in foretelling his Sufferings, than any time before. He had ſaid, *Chap.* 16. 21. That he ſhould *ſuffer many things, and be killed*, and *Chap.* 17. 22. that he ſhould be *betrayed into the hands of Men*, and *they ſhould kill him*. But here he adds, that he ſhall be condemn'd, and *deliver'd* to the *Gentiles*, that they ſhall *Mock* him, and *Scourge* him, and *Crucifie* him. Theſe are frightful things, and the certain foreſight of them was enough to damp an ordinary Reſolution, yet (as was foretold concerning him, *Iſa.* 42. 4.) he *did not fail, nor was diſcourag'd*, but the more clearly he foreſaw his Sufferings, the more chearfully he went forth to meet them. He foretels *by whom* he ſhould ſuffer, by *the Chief Prieſts and the Scribes*, ſo he had ſaid before, but here he adds, *they ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles*, that he might be the better underſtood; for the *Chief Prieſts and Scribes* had no power to put him to Death, nor was Crucifying a manner of Death in uſe among the *Jews*. Chriſt ſuffer'd *from* the Malice both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, becauſe he was to ſuffer *for* the Salvation both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. Both had a hand in his Death, becauſe he was to reconcile both by his Croſs. *Eph.* 2. 16.

3. Here, as before, he annexeth the mention of his *Reſurrection* and his *Glory*, to that of his Death and Sufferings. *The third Day he ſhall riſe again.* He ſtill brings this in (1.) to encourage himſelf in his Sufferings, and to carry him chearfully through them. He *endured the Croſs, for the Joy ſet before him*; he foreſaw he ſhould *riſe again*, and riſe quickly, *the third Day*. He ſhall be *ſtraightway* glorified, *John* 13. 32. The Reward is not only *ſure*, but very *near*. (2.) To encourage his Diſciples, and comfort them, who would be overwhelm'd, and greatly terrified by his Sufferings. (3.) To direct us under all the Sufferings of this preſent time, to keep up a believing Proſpect of the Glory to be reveal'd; to look at the things that are not ſeen, that are Eternal, which will enable us to call the preſent Afflictions *Light*, and but *for a moment*.

20 Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her ſons, worſhipping *him*, and deſiring a certain thing of him. 21 And he ſaid unto her, What wilt thou? She ſaith unto him, Grant that theſe my two ſons may ſit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left in thy kingdom. 22 But Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I ſhall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with? They ſay unto him, We are able. 23 And he ſaith unto them, Ye ſhall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with: but to ſit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it *ſhall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father. 24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation againſt the two brethren. 25 But Jeſus called them unto him, and ſaid, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exerciſe dominion over them, and they that are great, exerciſe Authority upon them. 26 But it ſhall not be ſo among you: but whoſoever will be great among you, let him be your miniſter. 27 And whoſoever will be chief among you, let him be your ſervant. 28 Even as the Son of man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many.

Here's *Firſt*, The Requeſt of the two diſciples to Chriſt, and the rectifying of the Miſtake upon which that was grounded, *v.* 20.---23. The Sons of *Zebedee* were *James* and *John*, two of the *firſt three* of Chriſt's Diſciples, *Peter* and they were his Favourites; *John* was the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved, yet none were ſo often reproved as they, whom Chriſt loves beſt, he reproves moſt, *Rev.* 3. 19.

1. Here's the ambitious *Addreſs* they made to Chriſt, that they might ſit the one on his right-hand, and the other on his left in his Kingdom, *v.* 20, 21. 'Twas a great degree of Faith, that they were confident of his Kingdom, tho' now he appear'd in Meanneſs; but a great degree of Ignorance, that they ſtill expected a *temporal* Kingdom with Worldly Pomp and Power, when Chriſt had ſo often told them of *Sufferings* and *Self-denial*. This Kingdom they expected to be Grandees in. They ask not for *Employment* in this Kingdom, but for *Honour* only, and no place would ſerve them in this *imaginary* Kingdom but the *higheſt*, next to Chriſt, and above every body elſe. 'Tis likely the laſt Word in Chriſt's foregoing Diſcourſe gave occaſion to this Requeſt, that *the third day he ſhould riſe again*. They concluded that his Reſurrection would be his entrance upon his kingdom, and therefore were reſolved to put in betimes for the beſt Place; nor would they loſe it for want of ſpeaking early. What Chriſt ſaid to *comfort them*, they thus abus'd, and were *puff'd up with*. Some cannot bear Comforts, but they turn them to a wrong Purpoſe; as Sweet-meats in a foul Stomach breed Choler. Now obſerve,

(1.) There was *Policy* in the *Management* of this Addreſs, that they put their Mother on to preſent it, that it might be look'd upon as her Requeſt, and not theirs. Tho' proud People think well of themſelves, they would not be thought to do ſo, and therefore affect nothing more than a *Shew of Humility*, *Col.* 2. 18. and others muſt be put on to court that Honour for them which they are aſham'd to court for themſelves. The Mother of *James* and *John* was *Salome*, as appears by comparing *Mat.* 27. 46. with *Mark* 15. 40. Some think ſhe was Daughter of *Cleophas*, or *Alpheus*, and *Siſter*, or *Couſin German* to *Mary* the Mother of our Lord. She was one of thoſe Women that attended Chriſt, and Miniſter'd to him; and they thought ſhe had ſuch an Intereſt in him, that he could deny her nothing, and therefore they make her their Advocate. Thus when *Adonijah* had an *unreaſonable* Requeſt to make to *Solomon*, he put *Bathſheba* on to ſpeak for him. 'Twas their Mother's Weakneſs thus to become the Tool of their Ambition, which ſhe ſhould have given a Check to. Thoſe that are wiſe and good would not be ſeen in an ill-favour'd thing. In gracious Requeſts we ſhould learn this Wiſdom, to deſire the Prayers of thoſe that have an Intereſt at the Throne of Grace; ſhould beg of our praying Friends to Pray for us, and reckon it a real Kindneſs.

It was likewiſe Policy to ask firſt for a general Grant, that he would *do a certain thing* for them, not in *Faith*, but in *Preſumption* upon that general Promiſe, *Ask, and it ſhall be given you*; in which is implied this Qualification of our Requeſt, that it be according to the revealed Will of God, otherwiſe we *ask, and have not*, if we ask to *conſume it upon our Luſts*, James 4. 3.

(2.) There was *Pride* at the bottom of it, a proud conceit of their own Merit, a proud Contempt of their Brethren, and a proud deſire of Honour and Preferment; Pride is a Sin that doth moſt eaſily beſet us, and which it is hard to get clear of. 'Tis a *holy Ambition* to ſtrive to *excel* others in Grace and Holineſs, but it is a ſinful Ambition to covet to *exceed* others in Pomp and Grandeur; *ſeekeſt thou great things thy ſelf*, when thou haſt juſt now heard of thy Maſter's being *Mock'd*, and *Scourg'd*, and *Crucified*, for ſhame ſeek them not, *Jer.* 45. 45.

2. Chriſt's *Anſwer* to this Addreſs, *v.* 22, 23. directed not to the Mother, but to the Sons that *ſet her on*. Tho' others be *our Mouth* in Prayer, the Anſwer will be given to us according as we ſtand affected. Chriſt's Anſwer is very mild, they were overtaken in the Fault of Ambition, but Chriſt *reſtored them with the Spirit of Meekneſs*. Obſerve,

(1.) How he reprov'd the Ignorance and Error of their Petition. *Ye know not what ye ask.* (1.) They were much *in the dark* concerning the *Kingdom* they had their eye upon; they dream'd of a Temporal Kingdom, whereas Chriſt's Kingdom *is not of this World*. They knew not what it was to ſit on *his right hand*, and *on his left*; they talk'd of it as blind Men do of others. Our Apprehenſions of that Glory which is yet *to be revealed*, are like the Apprehenſions which a Child has of the Preferments of grown Men: If at length through Grace we arrive at Perfection, we ſhall then *put away* ſuch *Childiſh* Fancies, when we come to ſee face to face, we ſhall know *what we enjoy*; but now, alas, we know not what we ask; we can but ask for the Good as it lies in the *Promiſe*, *Tit.* 1. 2. what it will be in the *performance*, *Eye has not ſeen*, nor *Ear heard*. (2.) They were much in the dark concerning the *way* to that Kingdom. They *know not what they ask*, that as for the *End*, but overlooks the *Means*, and ſo *put aſunder* what God has *joyned together*. The Diſciples thought when they had left what little *All* they had for Chriſt, and had gone about the Country a while Preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom, all their Service and Sufferings was over, and 'twas now time to ask, *What ſhall we have?* As if nothing were now to be look'd for but Crowns and Garlands; whereas there were far greater Hardſhips and Difficulties before them than they had yet met with; they imagin'd their *Warfare* was *accompliſh'd* when it was ſcarce *begun*, and they had yet but *run with the Footmen*. They dream of being in *Canaan* preſently, and conſider not what they ſhall do in the Swellings of *Jordan*. *Note*, 1. We are all apt when we are but *girding on the Harneſs*, to *boaſt* as tho' we had *put it off*. 2. We know not what we ask when we ask for the Glory of wearing the Crown, and ask not for Grace to bear the Croſs in our way to it.

(2.) How he repreſs'd the Vanity and Ambition of their Requeſt. They were pleaſing themſelves with the Fancy of ſitting *on his right-hand*, and *on his left* in great State; now to check this, he leads them to the Thoughts of their Sufferings, and leaves them in the dark about their Glory.

1. He *leads them to the Thoughts of their Suffering*, which they were not ſo mindful of as they ought to have been. They look'd ſo earneſtly upon the Crown, the Prize, that they were ready to plunge

headlong, and unprepar'd, into the foul way that led to it; and therefore he thinks it neceſſary to put them in mind of the Hardſhips that were before them, that they might be no *Surprize* or *Terror* to them.

Obſerve, 1. How fairly he puts the Matter to them concerning theſe Difficulties, *v.* 22. You would ſtand Candidates for the firſt Poſt of Honour in the Kingdom, but *are you able to drink of the Cup that I ſhall drink of?* You talk of what great things you muſt have when you have done your Work, but are you able to hold out to the end of it? Put the Matter ſeriouſly to your ſelves. Theſe ſame two Diſciples once knew not what manner of Spirit they were of when they were diſturb'd with Anger, *Luke* 9. 55. and now were not awar what was amiſs in their Spirits when they were lifted up with Ambition, Chriſt ſees that Pride in us which we diſcern not in our ſelves.

Note, 1. That to ſuffer for Chriſt is to *drink of a Cup*, and to be *Baptized with a Baptiſm*. In this Deſcription of Sufferings, (1.) it is true that *Affliction doth abound*. 'Tis ſuppos'd to be a *bitter Cup*, that is drunk of, Wormwood and Gall, thoſe Waters of a full Cup that are wrung out to God's People, *Pſal.* 73. 10. A Cup of *Trembling* indeed, but not of *Fire and Brimſtone*, the Portion of the Cup of wicked Men, *Pſal.* 11. 6. 'Tis ſuppos'd to be a *Baptiſm*, a *Waſhing* with the *Waters* of Affliction; ſome are *dip'd* in them, the Waters compaſs them about even *to the Soul*, *John* 2. 5. Others have but a *ſprinkling* of them; both are *Baptiſms*, ſome are overwhelm'd in them, as in a Deluge, others ill wet, as in a ſharp Shower. But (2.) even in this *Conſolation doth more abound*. 'Tis *but* a Cup, not an Ocean; 'tis but a Draught, bitter perhaps, but we ſhall ſee the bottom of it, 'tis a Cup in the Hand of *a Father*, *John* 18. 11. and it is full of mixture, *Pſal.* 75. 8. 'Tis but a *Baptiſm*, if *dip'd*, that's the worſt of it, not *drown'd*, *perplex'd*, but *not in deſpair*. Baptiſm is an Ordinance by which we joyn our ſelves to the Lord in Covenants and Communion, and ſo is Suffering for Chriſt, *Ezek.* 20. 37. *Iſa.* 48. 10. Baptiſm is an outward and viſible Sign of an inward and ſpiritual Grace, and ſo is ſuffering for Chriſt, for *unto us it is given*, *Phil.* 1. 29.

2. It is to drink of the ſame Cup that Chriſt drunk of, and to be Baptiz'd with the ſame Baptiſm that he was baptiz'd with. Chriſt is before-hand with us in Sufferings, and in that, as in other things, left us an Example. (1.) It ſpeaks the *Condeſcenſion* of a *Suffering Chriſt*, that he would drink of ſuch a Cup, *John* 18. 11. nay, and ſuch a Brook, *Pſal.* 110. 7. and drink ſo deep, and yet ſo chearfully, that he would be Baptiz'd with ſuch a *Baptiſm*, and was ſo forward to it, *Luke* 12. 50. 'Twas much he would be *Baptiz'd with Water* as a *common Sinner*, much more with Blood as an uncommon Malefactor. But in all this he was made *in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, and was made Sin for us. (2.) It ſpeaks the *Conſolation of ſuffering Chriſtians*, that they do but pledge Chriſt in the bitter Cup, are *partakers of his Sufferings*, and *fill up that which is behind* of them; we muſt therefore *arm our ſelves with the ſame Mind*, and *go to him without the Camp*.

3. It is good for us to be often putting it to ourſelves, whether we be able to *drink of this Cup*, and to be *Baptized with this Baptiſm*. We muſt expect Suffering, and look upon it as a hard thing to *ſuffer well*, and as becomes us. *Are we able* to ſuffer chearfully, and in the worſt of Times ſtill to *hold faſt our Integrity?* What can we afford to part with for Chriſt? How far will we give him Credit? Could I find in my Heart to drink of a *bitter Cup*, and to be Baptized with a *bloody Baptiſm*, rather than let go my hold for Chriſt? The Truth is, Religion, if it be worth any thing, is worth every thing; but it's worth little, if it be not worth ſuffering for. Now let us ſit down and *count the coſt* of *dying* for Chriſt, rather than *denying* him, and ask, Can we take him upon theſe Terms?

2. See how boldly they engage for themſelves, they ſaid, *we are able*, in hopes of ſitting on his right-hand, and on his left; but at the ſame time fondly hoped that they ſhould never be try'd. As before, they knew not what they *ask'd*, ſo now they knew not what they *anſwer'd*. *We are able*, they would have done well to put in, *Lord, by thy Strength*, and in thy Grace *we are able*, otherwiſe we are not. But the ſame that was *Peter's* Temptation, to be confident of his own Sufficiency, and preſume upon his own Strength, was here the Temptation of *James* and *John*, and 'tis a Sin we are all prone to. They knew not what Chriſt's *Cup* was, nor what his *Baptiſm*, and therefore they were thus *bold* in promiſing for themſelves. But thoſe are commonly moſt confident that are leaſt acquainted with the Croſs.

3. See how plainly and poſitively their Sufferings are here foretold, *v.* 23. *Ye ſhall drink of my Cup*. Sufferings foreſeen will be the eaſier born, eſpecially if look'd upon under a right Notion, as drinking of his Cup, and being *Baptiz'd* with his Baptiſm. Chriſt begun in Suffering for us, and expects we ſhould pledge him in ſuffering for him. Chriſt will have us *know the worſt*, that we may *make the beſt* of our way to Heaven. *Ye ſhall drink*, i. e. ye ſhall *ſuffer*. *James* drunk the bloody Cup firſt of all the Apoſtles, *Acts* 12. 2. *John*, tho' at laſt he dy'd in his Bed, if we may credit the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians, yet often drunk of this bitter Cup, as when he was baniſh'd into the Iſle *Patmos*, *Rev.* 1. 9. And when, (as they ſay) at *Epheſus* he was put into a Caldron of boiling Oyl, but was miraculouſly preſerv'd. He was as the reſt of the Apoſtles in Deaths oft. He took the Cup, offer'd himſelf to the Baptiſm, and it was accepted.

2. He *leaves them in the dark* about the *degrees of their Glory*. To carry them chearfully through their Sufferings, it was enough to be aſſur'd that they ſhould have *a Place in his Kingdom*: The loweſt Seat in Heaven is an abundant Recompence for the greateſt Sufferings on Earth. But as to the Preferments there, 'twas not fit there ſhould be any intimation given for whom they were intended; for the Infirmity of the preſent State could not bear ſuch a diſcovery with any evenneſs. To *ſit on my right-hand, and on my left*, is not *mine to give*, and therefore 'tis not for you to ask it, or to know it, *but it ſhall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father*. *Note*, 1. 'Tis very probable there are degrees of Glory in Heaven; for our Saviour ſeems to allow that there are ſome that ſhall *ſit on his right-hand, and on his left*, in the higheſt Places. 2. As the future Glory it ſelf, ſo the degrees of it are purpoſed and prepar'd in the eternal Counſel of God; as the *common Salvation*, ſo the more peculiar Honours are appointed, the whole Affair is long ſince ſettled, and there is a certain *Meaſure of the Stature*, both in Grace and Glory, *Eph.* 4. 13. 3. Chriſt in diſpenſing the Fruits of his own Purchaſe goes exactly by the Meaſures of his Father's Purpoſe. *'Tis not mine to give, ſave to thoſe* (ſo it may be read) *for whom it is prepared*. Chriſt has the ſole power of giving *Eternal Life*, but then it is to *as many as were given him*, John 17. 2. it is *not mine to give*, i. e. to promiſe now, that matter is already ſettled and concerted, and the Father and Son underſtand one another perfectly well in this matter. It is *not mine to give* to thoſe that ſeek it, and are ambitious of it, but to thoſe that by great Humility and Self-denial are *prepared for it*.

Secondly, Here is the Reproof and Inſtruction which Chriſt gave to *the other ten* Diſciples for their Diſpleaſure at the Requeſt of *James* and *John*. He had ſomething to do with them all, they were ſo weak in Knowledge and Grace, yet he *bore their Manners*.

1. The Fret that the ten Diſciples were in, *v.* 24. *They were moved with Indignation againſt the two Brethren*; not becauſe they were deſirous to be prefer'd, which was their Sin, and for which Chriſt was diſpleaſed with them, but becauſe they were deſirous to be prefer'd *before them*, which was a Reflection upon them; many ſeem to have *Indignation* at Sin, but it is not becauſe it is *Sin*, but becauſe it *toucheth them*. They will *inform* againſt a Man that *ſwears*, but it's only if he ſwear *at them*, and affront them, not becauſe he diſhonours God. Theſe Diſciples were angry at their Brethrens Ambition, *tho'* they themſelves, nay, *becauſe* they themſelves were as ambitious. *Note*, It is common for thoſe People to be angry at thoſe Sins in others, which they allow of, and indulge in themſelves. Thoſe that are proud and covetous themſelves, yet do not care to ſee others ſo. Nothing makes more Miſchief among Brethren, nor is the cauſe of more *Indignation* and Contention, than Ambition and Deſire of Greatneſs. We never find Chriſt's Diſciples quarrelling, but ſomething of this was at the bottom of it.

2. The check that Chriſt gave them, which was very gentle, rather by way of Inſtruction what they ſhould be, than by way of Reprehenſion for what they were. He had reprov'd this very Sin before, *Chap.* 18. 3. and told them they muſt be humble *as little Children*, yet they relaps'd into it, and yet he reproved them for it thus mildly.

He *called them unto him*, which intimates great Tenderneſs and Familiarity. He did not in anger bid them get out of his Preſence, but call'd them in love to come into his Preſence; for therefore he is fit to teach, and we are invited to learn of him, becauſe he is *meek and lowly in Heart*. What he had to ſay concern'd both the *two Diſciples*, and the ten, and therefore he will have them *all together*. And he tells them, that whereas they were asking, which of them ſhould have Dominion in a temporal Kingdom, there was really no ſuch Dominion reſerv'd for any of them. For,

1. They muſt not be *like the Princes of the Gentiles*. Chriſt's Diſciples muſt not be like *Gentiles*, no, not like *Princes of the* Gentiles. *Principality* doth no more become Miniſters, than Gentiliſm doth Chriſtians.

Obſerve, 1. What is the way of the Princes of the *Gentiles*, v. 25. to *exerciſe Dominion* and *Authority* over their *Subjects*, and (if they can but win the upper-hand with a ſtrong hand) over *one another* too. And that which bears them up in it, is, that they are *great*, and great Men think they may *do any thing*. *Dominion* and Authority is the thing which the Princes of the *Gentiles* purſue, and pride themſelves in; they would *bear ſway*, would carry all before them, have every body truckle to them, and every Sheaf bow to theirs. They would have it cry'd before them, *Bow the Knee*, like *Nebuchadnezzar*, who *ſlew* and *kept alive* at pleaſure.

2. What is the Will of Chriſt concerning his Apoſtles and Miniſters in this matter.

1. *It ſhall not be ſo among you*. The Conſtitution of the Spiritual Kingdom is quite different from this. You are to teach the Subjects of this Kingdom, to inſtruct and beſeech them, to counſel and comfort them, to take pains with them, and ſuffer with them, not to exerciſe *Dominion* or *Authority* over them; you are not to *Lord it over God's Heritage*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. but to *labour* in it. This forbids, not only Tyrranny, and Abuſe of Power, but the claim or uſe of any ſuch ſecular Authority as the Ptinces of the *Gentiles* lawfully exerciſe. So hard is it for vain Men, even good Men, to have ſuch Authority, and not to be puff'd up with it, and do more hurt than good with it, that our Lord Jeſus ſaw fit wholly to *baniſh it* out of his Church. *Paul* himſelf diſowns Dominion over the Faith of any, 2 *Cor.* 1. 1. The Pomp and Grandeur of the Princes of the *Gentiles* ill becomes Chriſt's Diſciples. Now if there were no ſuch Power and Honour intended to be in the Church, it was nonſenſe for them to be ſtriving who ſhould have it. They *knew not what they ask'd*.

2. How then ſhall it be among the Diſciples of Chriſt? Something of *Greatneſs* among them Chriſt himſelf had intimated, and here he explains it: *He that will be great among you*, that *will be chief*, that would *really* be ſo, and would be found to be ſo at laſt, *let him be your Miniſter, your Servant*, v. 26, 27. Here obſerve, (1.) That it is the *Duty* of Chriſt's Diſciples to *ſerve one another* for mutual Edification. This includes both *Humility* and *Uſefulneſs*. The Followers of Chriſt muſt be ready to ſtoop to the meaneſt Offices of Love for the Good of one another, muſt *ſubmit one to another*, 1 *Pet.* 5. 5. *Eph.* 5. 21. and *edifie one another, Rom.* 14. 19. *Pleaſe one another* for Good, *Rom.* 15. 2. The great Apoſtle made himſelf every one's Servant. See 1 *Cor.* 9. 19. (2.) It is the *Dignity* of Chriſt's Diſciples faithfully to diſcharge this Duty. The way to be *Great* and *Chief*, is to be *humble and ſerviceable*. Thoſe are to be beſt *accounted of*, and moſt *reſpected* in the Church, and will be ſo by all that underſtand things aright, not that are dignified with high and mighty Names, like the Names of the great ones of the Earth, that appear in Pomp, and aſſume to themſelves a Power proportionable; but thoſe that are moſt humble and ſelf-denying, and lay out themſelves moſt to do good, tho' to the diminiſhing of themſelves. Theſe honour God moſt, and thoſe he will honour. As he muſt become a Fool that would be wiſe, ſo he muſt become a Servant that would be chief. St. *Paul* was a great Example of this, he *labour'd more abundantly than they all*, made himſelf (as ſome would call it) a drudge to his Work, and is not he chief? Do we not by conſent call him the *great Apoſtle?* tho' he call'd himſelf *leſs than the leaſt*. And perhaps our Lord Jeſus had an eye to him, when he ſaid, there were *laſt* that ſhould be *firſt*; for *Paul* was one *born out of due time*, 1 Cor. 15. 8. Not only the youngeſt Child of the Family of the Apoſtles, but a *poſthumous* one, yet he became *greateſt*. And perhaps he it was for whom the *firſt Poſt* of Honour in Chriſt's Kingdom was reſerv'd, and *prepared of his Father*, not for *James* who ſought it; and therefore juſt before *Paul* began to be famous as an Apoſtle, Providence ordered it ſo that *James* was cut off, *Acts* 12. 1. that in the Colledge of the Twelve, *Paul* might be ſubſtituted in his room.

2. They muſt be *like the Maſter himſelf*, and 'tis very fit they ſhould; that while *they were in the World*, they ſhould be as *he was* when he was in the World; for to both, the preſent State is a ſtate of Humiliation, the Crown and Glory was reſerv'd for both in the future State. Let them conſider that the *Son of Man came not to be Miniſter'd to, but to Miniſter, and to give his Life a Ranſom for many, v.* 28. Our Lord Jeſus here ſets himſelf before his Diſciples as a Pattern of thoſe two things before recommended, *Humility* and *Uſefulneſs*.

1. Never was there ſuch an Example of *Humility* and Condeſcenſion as there was in the *Life of Chriſt*, who came not to be *Miniſter'd unto, but to Miniſter*. When the Son of God came into the World, his Embaſſador to the Children of Men, one would think he ſhould have been *Miniſter'd to*, ſhould have appear'd in an Equipage agreeable to his Perſon and Character, but he did not ſo; he made no figure, had no pompous Train of State-Servants to attend him, nor was he clad in Robes of Honour, for he took upon him the *Form of a Servant*. He was indeed *Miniſter'd to* as a *poor Man*, which was a part of his Humiliation, there were thoſe that *Miniſter'd to him of their Subſtance*, Luke 8. 2, 3. But he was never Miniſter'd to as a *Great Man*; never took State upon him, was not waited on at Table; he once waſh'd his Diſciples Feet, but we never read that they waſh'd his Feet. He come to *Miniſter* Help to all that were in Diſtreſs; he made himſelf a Servant to the Sick and Diſeaſed; was as ready to their Requeſts as ever any Servant was to the Beck of his Maſter, and took as much pains to ſerve them; he attended continually to this very thing, and deny'd himſelf both Food and Reſt to attend to it.

2. Never was there ſuch an Example of *Beneficence* and *Uſefulneſs* as there was in the *Death of Chriſt*, who gave his Life a *Ranſom for many*. He liv'd as a *Servant*, and went about *doing Good*; but he dy'd as a *Sacrifice*, and in that did the greateſt Good of all. He came into the World on purpoſe *to give his Life a Ranſom*, it was firſt in his Intention. The aſpiring Princes of the *Gentiles* make the Lives of many a Ranſom for their own Honour, and perhaps a Sacrifice to their own Humour. Chriſt doth not do ſo, his Subjects Blood is *precious* to him, and he is not *prodigal* of it, *Pſal.* 72. 14. But on the contrary he gives his Honour and Life too a Ranſom for his Subjects. *Note*, (1.) Jeſus Chriſt laid down his Life for a *Ranſom*. Our Lives were forfeited into the Hands of divine Juſtice by Sin; Chriſt by parting with his Life made Attonement for Sin, and ſo reſcued ours; he was made *Sin*, and a *Curſe* for us, and dy'd, not only *for our Good*, but *in our ſtead*, Acts 20. 28. 1 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. (2.) 'Twas a Ranſom *for many*, ſufficient for all, effectual for many; and if for *many*, then, ſaith the poor doubting Soul, *why not for me?* for *many*, that by him *many* may be made Righteous. Theſe *many* were *his Seed*, for which his Soul *travelled*, Iſa. 53. 10, 11. *For many*, ſo they will be when they come all together, tho' now they appear but a *little Flock*.

Now this is a good Reaſon why we ſhould not ſtrive for Precedency, becauſe the Croſs is our Banner, and our Maſter's *Death* is our *Life*. 'Tis a good Reaſon why we ſhould ſtudy to *do Good*, and in conſideration of the Love of Chriſt in dying for us, not ſtick at *laying down our Lives for the Brethren*, 1 John 3. 16. Miniſters ſhould be more forward than others to ſerve and ſuffer for the Good of Souls, as bleſſed *Paul* was, *Acts* 20. 24. *Phil.* 2. 17. And the nearer we are all concern'd in, and the more we are advantag'd by the Humility and Humiliation of Chriſt, the more ready and careful we ſhould be to imitate it.

29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him. 30 And behold two blind men ſitting by the way-ſide, when they heard that Jeſus paſſed by, cried out, ſaying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou ſon of David. 31 And the multitude rebuked them, becauſe they ſhould hold their peace: but they cried the more, ſaying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou ſon of David. 32 And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and called them, and ſaid, What will ye that I ſhall do unto you? 33 They ſay unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. 34 So Jeſus had compaſſion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received ſight, and they followed him.

We have here an account of the Cure of two poor blind Beggars; in which we may obſerve,

1. Their Addreſs to Chriſt, *v.* 29, 30. And in this,

1. The Circumſtances of it are obſervable: 'Twas as Chriſt and his Diſciples *departed from Jericho*; that devoted Place which was rebuilt under a Curſe, Chriſt took his leave of with this Bleſſing, for he received Gifts, even *for the Rebellious*: 'Twas in the preſence of a *great Multitude* that *follow'd him*. Chriſt had a *numerous*, tho' not a *pompous* Attendance, and did good to them, tho' he did not *take State* to himſelf. This Multitude that followed Chriſt was a *mixt* Multitude: Some follow'd him for *Loaves*, and ſome for *Love*; ſome for Curioſity, and ſome in expectation of his temporal Reign, which the Diſciples themſelves dream'd of, and very few with deſire to be taught their Duty; yet for the ſake of thoſe few, he confirm'd his Doctrine by Miracles wrought in the preſence of great Multitudes; who, if they were not convinc'd by them, would be the more inexcuſable. Two blind Men concur'd in their Requeſt; for Joynt-prayer is pleaſing to Chriſt, *Mat.* 18. 19. Theſe *Joynt-Sufferers* were Joynt-ſutors, being *Companions* in the ſame *Tribulation*, they were Partners in the ſame Supplication. *Note*, 'Tis good for thoſe that are labouring under the ſame Calamity, or Infirmity of Body or Mind, to joyn together in the ſame Prayer to God for Relief, that they may quicken one another's Fervency, and encourage one another's Faith. There is Mercy enough in Chriſt for all the Petitioners. Theſe blind Men were *ſitting by the way ſide*, as blind Beggars us'd to do. *Note*, Thoſe that would receive Mercy from Chriſt, muſt place themſelves there where his out-goings are; where he uſeth to manifeſt himſelf to thoſe that ſeek him. 'Tis good thus to *Way-lay* Chriſt, to be *in his Road*.

They *heard that Jeſus paſſed by*. Tho' they were *blind*, they were not *deaf*. *Seeing* and *Hearing* are the learning Senſes. 'Tis a great Calamity to want either; but the defect of one may be, and often is made up in the *Acuteneſs* of the other; and therefore it has been obſerv'd by ſome, as an Inſtance of the Goodneſs of Providence, that none were ever known to be born both *Blind* and *Deaf*; but that one way or other they might be in a capacity of receiving Knowledge. Theſe blind Men had heard of Chriſt by the *hearing of the Ear*, but they deſir'd that their *Eyes* might *ſee him*. When they *heard that Jeſus paſſed by*, they ask'd no further Queſtions who were with him, or whether he was in haſte, but immediately *cried out*. *Note*, It is good to improve the preſent Opportunity, to make the beſt of the Price now in the hand, becauſe if once let ſlip, it may never return; theſe blind Men did ſo, and did wiſely; for we do not find that Chriſt ever came to *Jericho* again. *Now is the accepted time.*

2. The Addreſs it ſelf is more obſervable. *Have Mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of* David, repeated again, *v.* 31. Four things are recommended to us for an example in this Addreſs; for tho' the Eye of the Body was *dark*, the Eye of the Mind was enlightned, concerning Truth, Duty, and Intereſt.

1. Here's an Example of *Importunity* in Prayer. They *cry'd* out as Men *in earneſt*; Men *in want* uſe to be ſo. Cold deſires do but *beg Denials*. Thoſe that would prevail in Prayer, muſt *ſtir up themſelves* to take hold on God in the Duty. When they were diſcountenanc'd in it, they *cried the more*. The Stream of Fervency, if it be ſtop'd, will riſe and ſwell the higher. This is *wreſtling* with God in Prayer, and makes us the fitter to receive Mercy; for the more it is *ſtriven for*, the more 'twill be *priz'd*, and thankfully *acknowledg'd*.

2. Of *Humility* in Prayer: In that word, have mercy on us, not ſpecifying the Favour, or preſcribing what, much leſs pleading Merit, but caſting themſelves upon, and referring themſelves chearfully to the Mediator's Mercy, in what way he pleaſeth, only *have Mercy*. They ask not for Silver and Gold, tho' they were *poor*, but *Mercy*, mercy. This is that which our hearts muſt be upon when we come to the Throne of Grace, that we may *find Mercy*, Heb. 4. *ult*. *Pſal.* 130. 7.

3. Of *Faith* in Prayer: In the Title they gave to Chriſt, which was in the nature of a Plea, *O Lord, thou Son of David*. They confeſs that *Jeſus Chriſt is Lord*, and therefore had Authority to *command Deliverance* for them. Surely it was *by the Holy Ghoſt* that they called Chriſt *Lord*, 1 Cor. 12. 3. Thus they take their Encouragement in Prayer from his *Power*, as in calling him the *Son of David*, they take encouragement from his Goodneſs, as *Meſſiah*, of whom ſo many *kind* and *tender* things had been foretold, particularly his Compaſſion to the *Poor* and *Needy*, Pſal. 72. 12, 13. It is of excellent uſe in

Prayer to eye Chriſt in the Grace and Glory of his Meſſiah-ſhip; remember that he is the *Son of David*, whoſe Office it is to help, and ſave, and plead it with him.

4. Of *Perſeverance* in Prayer, notwithſtanding Diſcouragement. The *Multitude rebuked them*, as noiſy, and clamorous, and impertinent, and bid them *hold their Peace*, and not diſturb the Maſter, who perhaps at firſt himſelf ſeemed not to regard them. In following Chriſt with our Prayers, we muſt expect to meet with Hindrances, and manifold Diſcouragements from within, and from without, ſomething or other that bids us *hold our Peace*. Such Rebukes are permitted, that Faith and Fervency, Patience and Perſeverance may be try'd: Theſe poor blind Men were rebuked by the *Multitude* that *follow'd Chriſt*. *Note*, The ſincere and ſerious Beggars at Chriſt's Door commonly meet with the worſt Rebukes from thoſe that follow him but in Pretence and Hypocriſy: But they would not be *beaten off ſo*: when they were in purſuit of ſuch a Mercy, it was no time to Complement, or to be meal-mouth'd; no, they *cried the more*. *Note*, Men ought always to pray, and not to faint, to pray *with all Perſeverance*, Luke 18. 1. to continue in Prayer with Reſolution, and not to yield to Oppoſition.

2. The Anſwer of Chriſt to this Addreſs of theirs: The Multitude rebuked them, but Chriſt encouraged them. 'Twere ill for us if the Maſter were not more kind and tender than the Multitude; but he loves to countenance thoſe with ſpecial Favour that are under Frowns, and Rebukes and Contempts from Men. He will not ſuffer his humble Supplicants to be run down and daſh'd out of Countenance.

1. He *ſtood ſtill, and called them*, v. 32. He was now going up to *Jeruſalem*, and was ſtraiten'd till his Work there was accompliſhed, and yet he ſtood ſtill to cure theſe blind Men. *Note*, when we are never ſo much *in haſte* about any Buſineſs, yet we ſhould be willing to ſtand ſtill to do Good. He *called them*, not becauſe he could not cure them at a Diſtance, but becauſe he would do it in the moſt obliging and inſtructing way, and would countenance weak but willing Patience, and Petitioners. Chriſt doth not only enjoin us to pray, but invites us; holds out the Golden Sceptre to us, and bids us come touch the top of it.

2. He enquired farther into their Caſe; *What will ye that I ſhall do unto you?* Which ſpeaks (1.) a very fair Offer. Here I am, let me know what you would have, and you ſhall have it; and what would we more? he is able to do for us, and as willing as he is able. *Ask, and it ſhall be given you.* (2) A Condition annexed to this Offer, which is a very eaſy and reaſonable one, that they ſhould tell him what they would have him do for them: One would think this a ſtrange Queſtion, any one might tell what they would have, Chriſt knew well enough, but he would know it from them, whether they begg'd only for an Alms, as from a common Perſon, or for a Cure, as from the *Meſſiah*. *Note*, It is the Will of God that we ſhould in every thing make our Requeſts known to him, by Prayer and Supplication; not to inform or move him, but to qualifie our ſelves for the Mercy. The Water-Man in the Boat, that with his Hook takes hold of the Shore, doth not thereby pull the Shore to the Boat, but the Boat to the Shore. So in Prayer we do not draw the Mercy to our ſelves, but our ſelves to the Mercy.

They ſoon made known their Requeſt to him, ſuch a one as they never made to any one elſe, *Lord, that our Eyes may be opened*. The Wants and Burthens of the Body we are ſoon ſenſible of, and can readily relate, *ubi dolor, ibi digitus*; O that we were but as apprehenſive of our Spiritual Maladies, and could as feelingly complain of them, eſpecially our Spiritual Blindneſs; Lord, that the Eyes of our Mind may be opened. Many are ſpiritually blind, and yet ſay *they ſee*, Joh. 9. 41. Were we but ſenſible of our Darkneſs, we ſhould ſoon apply our ſelves to him, who alone has the Eye-Salve, with this Requeſt, *Lord, that our Eyes may be opened.*

3. He cured them, when he encouraged them to ſeek him, he did not ſay, *ſeek in vain*: What he did was an Inſtance,

1. Of his Pity; He had *Compaſſion on them*: Miſery is the Object of Mercy. They that are *poor* and *blind*, are *wretched* and *miſerable*, Rev. 3. 17. and the Objects of Compaſſion. 'Twas the tender Mercy of our God that gave Light and Sight to them that ſat in Darkneſs, *Luk*. 1. 78, 79. We cannot help thoſe that are under ſuch Calamities as Chriſt did, but we may, and muſt pity them as Chriſt did, and *draw out our Soul* to them.

2. Of his Power: He that *formed the Eye*, can he not heal it? Yes, he can, he did, he did it eaſily, he touched their Eyes, he did it effectually, immediately their *Eyes received Sight*. Thus he not only proved that he was ſent of God, but ſhew'd on what Errand he was ſent, to give Sight to thoſe that are ſpiritually Blind, to turn them from Darkneſs to Light.

Laſtly, Theſe blind Men, when they had received Sight, *followed him*. *Note*, None followed Chriſt *blindfold*: He firſt by his Grace opens Mens Eyes, and ſo draws their Hearts after him. They *followed* Chriſt as his Diſciples, to learn of him, and as his Witneſſes, Eye-Witneſſes to bear their Teſtimony to him, and to his Power and Goodneſs. The beſt Evidence of Spiritual Illumination, is a conſtant inſeparable Adherence to Jeſus Chriſt, as our Lord and Leader.

CHAP. XXI.

The Death and Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, are the two main Hinges upon which the Door of Salvation turns; He came into the World on purpoſe to give his Life a Ranſom, ſo he had lately ſaid, chap. 20. 28. *And therefore the Hiſtory of his Sufferings, even unto Death, and his riſing again, is more particulary recorded by all the Evangeliſts than any other part of his Story; and to that this Evangeliſt now haſtens apace. For at this Chapter begins that which they call the Paſſion-Week: He had ſaid to his Diſciples more than once*, Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, *and there the* Son of Man *muſt be betray'd; a great deal of good Work he did by the way, and now at length he is* come *up to* Jeruſalem, *and here we have* (1.) *The publick Entry which he made into* Jeruſalem, *upon the firſt Day of the Paſſion-Week*, v. 1—11. (2.) *The Authority he exerciſed there; in cleanſing the Temple, and driving out of it the Buyers and Sellers*, v. 12—16. (3.) *The Emblem he gave of the State he gave of the Jewiſh Church, in curſing the barren Fig-Tree, and his Diſcourſe with his Diſciples thereupon*, v. 17.—22. (4.) *His juſtifying his own Authority, by appealing to the Baptiſm of* John, v. 23.—27. (5.) *His ſhaming the Infidelity and Obſtinacy of the chief Prieſts and Elders, with the Repentance of the Publicans, illuſtrated by the Parable of the two Sons*, v. 29.—32. (6.) *His reading the Doom of the Jewiſh Crurch for its unfruitfulneſs, in the Parable of the Vineyard, let out to unthankful Husbandmen*, v. 33.—46.

AND when they drew nigh unto Jeruſalem, and were come to Bethpage, unto the mount of Olives, then ſent Jeſus two diſciples, 2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over againſt you, and ſtraightway ye ſhall find an aſs tied, and a colt with her: looſe *them*, and bring *them* unto me. 3 And if any man ſay ought unto you, ye ſhall ſay, The Lord hath need of them; and ſtraightway he will ſend them. 4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, ſaying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and ſitting upon an aſs, and a colt the fole of an aſs. 6 And the diſciples went, and did as Jeſus commanded them, 7 And brought the aſs, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and then ſet *him* thereon. 8 And a very great multitude ſpread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and ſtrawed *them* in the way. 9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, ſaying, Hoſanna to the ſon of David: Bleſſed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hoſanna in the higheſt. 10 And when he was come into Jeruſalem, all the city was moved, ſaying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude ſaid, This is Jeſus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

All the four Evangeliſts take notice of this Paſſage of Chriſt's *riding in triumph into Jeruſalem*, five Days before his Death; the Paſſover was on the fourteenth Day of the Month, and this was the *tenth*; on which Day the Law appointed that the Paſchal Lamb ſhould be *taken up*, Exod. 12. 3. and ſet apart for that Service; on that Day therefore Chriſt our Paſſover, who was to be ſacrificed for us, was publickly ſhewed. So that this was the Prologue to his Paſſion: He had lodg'd at *Bethany*, a Village not far from *Jeruſalem* for ſome time; at a Supper there, the Night before *Mary* had *anointed his Feet*, Joh. 12. 2. But as is uſual with Ambaſſadors, he deferr'd his publick Entry till ſome time after his Arrival. Our Lord Jeſus travelled much, and his Cuſtom was to travel *on foot* from *Galilee* to *Jeruſalem*; ſome ſcores of Miles, which was both *mean* and *toilſome*; many a dirty weary Step he had when he went about *doing Good*; how ill doth it become Chriſtians to be inordinately ſollicitous about their own *Eaſe* and *State*, when their Maſter had ſo little of either; yet once in his Life he *rode in triumph*, and it was now when he went into *Jeruſalem* to ſuffer and dye, as if that were the Pleaſure and Preferment he courted; and then he thought himſelf begin to *look great*.

Now here we have,

Firſt, The *Proviſion* that was *made* for this *Solemnity*; and it was very poor and ordinary, and ſuch as beſpoke his Kingdom, *not of this World*: Here were no Heralds at Arms provided, no Trumpets ſounded before him, no Chariots of State, no Liveries; ſuch things as theſe, were not agreeable to his preſent State of Humiliation; but will be far out-done at his ſecond coming; to which his *magnificent* Appearance is reſerved, when the laſt Trumpet ſhall ſound, the glorious Angels ſhall be his Heralds and Attendants, and the Clouds his Chariots. But in this publick appearance,

1. The Preparation was *ſudden* and *off-hand*; for his Glory in the other World, and ours with him, Preparation was made before the Foundation of the World, for that was the Glory his Heart was upon; his Glory in this World he was dead to, and therefore tho' he

had it in proſpect, did not *forecaſt* for it, but took what came next. They were come to *Bethpage*, which was the Suburbs of *Jeruſalem*, and was accounted (ſay the *Jewiſh* Doctors) in all things, as *Jeruſalem*, a long ſcattering Street, that lay towards the Mount of *Olives*; when he enter'd upon that, he *ſent two of his Diſciples*, ſome think *Peter* and *John*, to fetch him an *Aſs*, for he had none laid ready for him.

2. It was very *mean*: He ſent only for an *Aſs* and her Colt, *v.* 2. Aſſes were much uſed in that Country for *Travel*, Horſes were kept only by great Men, and for War; Chriſt could have ſummon'd a Cherub to carry him, *Pſal.* 18. 10. But tho' by his Name *Jah*, which ſpeaks him *God*, he *rides upon the Heavens*, yet now by his Name *Jeſus*, *Immanuel*, *God with us*, in his State of Humiliation he *rides upon an Aſs*; yet ſome think he had herein an Eye to the Cuſtom in *Iſrael*, for the *Judges* to *ride upon white Aſſes*, Jud. 5. 10. and their Sons on *Aſs-colts*, Jud. 12. 14. And Chriſt would thus enter, not as a Conqueror, but as the *Judge of Iſrael*, who *for Judgment* came into this World.

3. It was not his own, but *borrow'd*; tho' he had not a Houſe of his own, yet one would think, like ſome Way-faring Men that live upon their Friends, he might have an Aſs of his own to carry him about; but for our Sakes he became in all reſpects *poor*, 2 Cor. 8. 9. 'Tis commonly ſaid, they that *live on borrowing*, live on *ſorrowing*; in this therefore, as in other Things, Chriſt was a *Man of ſorrows*, that he had nothing of this World's Goods but what was given him or lent him.

The Diſciples who were ſent to borrow this Aſs, are directed to ſay, The *Lord has need of him?* Thoſe that are in need muſt not be aſham'd to own their Need, nor ſay as the *unjuſt Steward*, to *beg I am aſhamed*, *Luke* 16. 3. As on the other Hand none ought to impoſe upon the Kindneſs of their Friends, by going to beg or borrow when they have not need. In the borrowing of this Aſs,

1. We have an Inſtance of Chriſt's *Knowledge*; tho' the thing was altogether *contingent*, yet Chriſt could tell his Diſciples where they ſhould find an Aſs ty'd, and a Colt with her: his Omniſcience extends it ſelf to the meaneſt of his Creatures; *Aſſes* and their Colts, and their being *bound* or *looſed*: *Doth God take care for Oxen!* 1 Cor. 9. 9. no doubt he doth, and would not ſee *Balaam*'s Aſs abuſed. He knows all the Creatures, ſo as to know, and to make them ſerve his own Purpoſes.

2. We have an Inſtance of his *Power* over the Spirits of Men; the Hearts of the meaneſt Subjects, as well as of Kings, are in the *Hand of the Lord.* Chriſt aſſerts his *Right* to uſe the Aſs, in bidding them *bring it to him*; the fulneſs of the Earth is the Lord Chriſt; but he foreſees ſome hindrance which the Diſciples might meet with in this Service; they muſt not take them *clan & ſecretò*, but in the ſight of the owner, much leſs *vi & armis*, but with the conſent of the Owner, which he undertakes they ſhall have; *If any Man ſay ought to you, ye ſhall ſay, The Lord has need of them. Note*, What Chriſt ſets us to do, he will bear us out in the doing of, and furniſh us with Anſwers to the Objections we may be aſſaulted with, and make them prevalent, as here, *ſtraightway he will ſend them.* Chriſt in commanding the Aſs into his Service, ſhew'd that he is *Lord of Hoſts*, and in inclining the Owner to ſend him without further Security, ſhewed that he is the *God of the ſpirits of all Fleſh*, and can *bow* Men's Hearts.

3. We have an Example of Juſtice and Honeſty, in not uſing the Aſs, tho' for ſo ſmall a piece of Service as riding the length of a Street or two without the Owner's Conſent: And as ſome read the latter Clauſe, it gives us a further Rule of Juſtice, *you ſhall ſay the Lord has need of them, and he* (that is, *the Lord*) *will preſently ſend them back*, and take care that they be ſafely delivered to the Owner, as ſoon as he has done with them. *Note*, What we borrow we muſt reſtore in due time, and in good Order; for *the wicked borrows and pays not again.* Care muſt be taken of borrow'd Goods, that they be not damag'd. *Alas, Maſter, for it was borrow'd.*

Secondly, The *Prediction* that was fulfilled in this, *v.* 4, 5. Our Lord Jeſus in all he did and ſuffered, had very much his Eye upon this, That the *Scriptures* might be *fulfill'd.* As the Prophets look'd forward to him, to him they all *bare Witneſs*, ſo he look'd back upon them, that all things which were written of the *Meſſiah* might be punctually accompliſh'd in him. This particularly which was written of him, *Zech.* 9. 9. where it uſhers in a large Prediction of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, *Tell the Daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh*, muſt be accompliſhed. Now obſerve here,

1. How the coming of Chriſt is foretold; *Tell ye the Daughter of Sion*, the Church, the Holy Mountain, *Behold thy King cometh unto thee. Note*, (1.) Jeſus Chriſt is the *Churches King*, one of *our Brethren*, like unto us, according to the Law of the Kingdom, *Deut.* 17. 15. He is *appointed* King over the Church, *Pſal.* 2. 6. He is *accepted* King by the Church, the Daughter of *Sion* ſwears Allegiance to him, *Hoſ.* 1. 11. (2.) Chriſt, the King of his Church, came *to his Church*, even in this lower World; he comes *to thee*, to rule thee, to rule in thee, to rule for thee, he is *Head over all things to the Church*: He *came to Sion*, Rom. 11. 26. that out of *Sion* the *Law* might *go forth*; for the Church and its Intereſts were all in all with the Redeemer. (3.) Notice was given to the Church before hand of the coming of her King; *Tell the Daughter of Sion. Note*, Chriſt will have his coming *look'd for*, and *waited for*, and his Subjects big with Expectation of it; *Tell the Daughters of Sion*, that they may *go forth and behold King Solomon*, Cant. 3. 11. Notices of Chriſt's coming are uſually uſher'd in with a *Behold!* a Note commanding both Attention and Admiration; *Behold thy King cometh*; Behold and wonder at him, behold and welcome him. Here's a Royal Progreſs truly admirable, *Pilate*, like *Caiphas*, ſaid he knew not what, in that great Word, *Joh.* 19. 14. *Behold your King.*

2. How his coming is deſcribed; when a King comes, ſomething great and magnificent is expected, eſpecially when he comes to take poſſeſſion of his Kingdom; the King, the Lord of Hoſts, was ſeen upon a *Throne high and lifted up*, Iſa. 6. 1. But here's nothing of that here, *Behold, he comes to thee, meek, and ſitting upon an Aſs*; when Chriſt would appear in his Glory, 'tis in his *Meekneſs*, not in his *Majeſty*.

1. His *Temper* is very *mild*; He comes not in Wrath, to take Vengeance, but in Mercy to *work Salvation*; he is *meek* to ſuffer the greateſt Injuries and Indignities for *Sion*'s Cauſe; *meek* to bear with the Follies and Unkindneſſes of *Sion*'s own Children: He is eaſy of acceſs, eaſy to be intreated. He is not only *meek* as a Teacher, but *meek* as a Ruler; he rules by Love. His Government is mild and gentle, and his Laws not written in the Blood of his Subjects, but in his own: His Yoke eaſy.

2. As an Evidence of this, his Appearance is very *mean*, *ſitting upon an Aſs*, a Creature made not for State, but Service, not for Battles, but for Burthens; ſlow in its motions, but ſure and ſafe, and conſtant. The foretelling of this ſo long before, and the care taken that it ſhould be exactly fulfilled, intimates it to have a peculiar ſignificancy, for the encouragement of poor Souls to apply themſelves to Chriſt: *Sion*'s King comes riding, not on a *prancing* Horſe, which the timorous Petitioner dares not come near, or a *running* Horſe, which the ſlow-footed Petitioner cannot keep pace with, but on a *quiet Aſs*, that the pooreſt of his Subjects may not be diſcouraged in their Acceſs to him. Mention is made in the Prophecy of a *Colt*, *the Fole of an Aſs*; and therefore Chriſt ſent for the *Colt* with the *Aſs*, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Thirdly, The *Proceſſion* it ſelf, which was anſwerable to the *Preparation*, both being deſtitute of wordly Pomp, and yet both accompany'd with a Spiritual Power.

Obſerve 1. His *Equipage*. The *Diſciples did as Jeſus commanded them*, v. 6. they went to fetch the Aſs and the Colt, not doubting but to find them, and to find the Owner willing to lend them. *Note*, Chriſt's Commands muſt not be diſputed, but obey'd, and thoſe that ſincerely obey them ſhall not be balk'd or baffled in it; they *brought the Aſs and the Colt*. The meanneſs and contemptibleneſs of the Beaſt Chriſt rode on, might have been made up with the richneſs of the Trappings, but thoſe were like all the reſt, ſuch as come next hand; They had not ſo much as a Saddle for the Aſs, but the Diſciples threw ſome of *their Clothes* upon it, and that muſt ſerve for want of better Accommodations. *Note*, We ought not to be nice or curious, or to affect Exactneſs in outward Conveniencies; a holy Indifferency and Neglect well becomes us in *theſe things*; 'Twill evidence that our Heart is not upon them, and that we have learn'd the Apoſtle's Rule, *Rom.* 12. 16. *Marg. To be content with mean things*: Any thing will ſerve Travellers; and there is a Beauty in ſome ſort of Careleſneſs; a noble Negligence. Yet the Diſciples furniſh him with the beſt they had, and did not object the ſpoiling of their Clothes, when *the Lord had need of them. Note*, We muſt not think the Clothes on our Backs too dear to part with for the Service of Chriſt; for the clothing of his poor deſtitute and afflicted Members, *I was naked and you clothed me*, Matt. 25. 36. Chriſt ſtript himſelf for us.

2. His *Retinue*; and there was nothing in this ſtately or magnificent: *Sion*'s King comes to *Sion*, and the Daughter of *Sion* was told of his coming long before, and yet he is not attended by the Gentlemen of the Country, nor met by the Magiſtrates of the City in their Formalities; as one might have expected; he ſhould have had the Keys of the City preſented to him, and ſhould have been conducted with all poſſible conveniency to the *Thrones of Judgment*, the *Thrones of the Houſe of David*; but here's nothing of all this, yet he has his Attendants, *a very great Multitude*, they were only the common People, the Mob, (the Rabble, we ſhould have been apt to call them) that grac'd the Solemnity of Chriſt's Triumph, and none but they: The *Chief Prieſts* and the *Elders* afterwards herded themſelves with the *multitude* that abuſed him upon the Croſs; but we find none of them here joining with the Multitude that did him Honour. *Ye ſee here your calling Brethren*, not many *mighty* or noble attend on Chriſt, but the *fooliſh things of this World and baſe things, which are deſpiſed*, 1 Cor. 1. 26, 28. *Note*, Chriſt is honour'd by the *Multitude*, more than by the *Magnificence* of his Followers, for he values Men by their Souls, not by their Preferments, Names, or Titles of Honour.

Now concerning this great Multitude, we are here told,

1. What they did; according to the beſt of their Capacity they ſtudy'd to do Honour to Chriſt. (1.) They *ſpread their Garments in the way*, that he might ride upon them. When *Jeſus* was proclaim'd King, the Captains *put their Garments under him*, in Token of their Subjection to him. *Note*, thoſe that take Chriſt for their King, muſt lay their All under his Feet: The *Clothes* in token of the *Heart*; for when Chriſt comes, tho' not when any elſe comes, it muſt be *ſaid to the Soul, Bow down, that he may go over.* Some think theſe Garments were ſpread, not upon the Ground, but on the *Hedges* or *Walls*, to adorn the Roads, as to beautify a Cavalcade, the Balconies are hung with Tapeſtry. This was but a poor piece of State; yet Chriſt accepted their good Will, and we are hereby taught to contrive how to make Chriſt welcome; Chriſt and his Grace, Chriſt and his Goſpel, into our Hearts and Houſes; how ſhall we expreſs our Reſpects to

Chriſt? What Honour and what Dignity ſhall be done to him? (2.) *Others cut down Branches from the Trees, and ſtrewed them in the Way*, as they us'd to do at the Feaſt of Tabernacles, in token of Liberty, Victory and Joy; for the Myſtery of that Feaſt is particularly ſpoken of as belonging to Goſpel-Times, *Zech*. 14. 16.

2. What they ſaid; They that *went before*, and they that *follow'd*, were in the ſame Tune; both thoſe that gave notice of his coming, and thoſe that attended him with their Applauſes; *they cried, ſaying, Hoſanna to the Son of David*, v. 9. when they carried Branches about at the Feaſt of Tabernacles, they were wont to cry *Hoſanna*, and from thence to call their Bundles of Branches their *Hoſanna's*; *Hoſanna* ſignifies, *ſave now, we beſeech thee*; referring to *Pſal*. 118. 25, 26. where the *Meſſiah* is propheſied of, as the *Head-ſtone of the Corner*, tho' *the Builders refus'd him*; and all his loyal Subjects are brought in triumphing in him, and attending him with hearty good Wiſhes, to the Proſperity of all his Enterprizes; *Hoſanna to the Son of David*, is this we do in Honour of the Son of *David*.

The *Hoſanna*'s with which Chriſt was attended ſpeak two Things.

1. Their *welcoming* his Kingdom. *Hoſanna* ſpeaks the ſame with, *Bleſſed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord*. 'Twas foretold concerning this Son of *David*, That *all Nations ſhall call him Bleſſed*, Pſal. 72. 17. Theſe here began, and all true Believers in all Ages concur in it, and *call him Bleſſed*; 'tis the genuine Language of Faith. *Note*, (1.) Jeſus Chriſt comes *in the Name of the Lord*; he *is ſanctified*, and ſent into the World as Mediator, *Him hath God the Father ſealed*. 2. The coming of Chriſt in the Name of the Lord is worthy of all Acceptation, and we all ought to ſay, Bleſſed is he that cometh; praiſe him, and be pleaſed in him; let his coming in the Name of the Lord be mentioned with ſtrong Affections to our Comfort, and joyful Acclamations to his Glory. Well may we ſay, *Bleſſed is he*, for it is in him that *we are bleſſed*: Well may we follow him with our Bleſſings that meets us with his.

2. Their *wiſhing well* to his Kingdom, intimated in their *Hoſanna*, earneſtly deſiring that Proſperity and Succeſs may attend it, and that it might be a *victorious* Kingdom; *ſend now Proſperity* to that Kingdom. If they underſtood it of a temporal Kingdom, and had their Hearts carry'd out thus towards *that*, it was their Miſtake, which a little time would rectify, however, their good Will was accepted. *Note*, It is our Duty earneſtly to deſire and pray for the Proſperity and Succeſs of Chriſt's Kingdom in the World. Thus *Prayer muſt be made for him continually*, Pſal. 72. 15. that all Happineſs may attend his Intereſt in the World, and that tho' he ride on *an Aſs*, yet in his Majeſty he may *ride proſperouſly*, becauſe of that *Meekneſs*, Pſ. 45. 4. This we mean when we pray, *Thy Kingdom come*: They add, *Hoſanna in the Higheſt*: Let Proſperity in the higheſt Degree attend him, let him have a Name above every Name, a Throne above every Throne; or let us praiſe him in the beſt manner, with exalted Affections; or let our Prayers for his Church aſcend to Heaven, to the higheſt Heavens, and fetch in Peace and Salvation from thence. See *Pſal*. 20.6. *The Lord ſaveth his Anointed*, and will hear from his *high*, his *holy* Heaven.

3. We have here his *Entertainment* in *Jeruſalem*, v. 10. *When he was come into Jeruſalem, all the City was moved*, every one took Notice of him, ſome were moved with Wonder at the Novelty of the Thing, others with Laughter at the Meanneſs of it; ſome perhaps were mov'd with Joy, who waited for the Conſolation of *Iſrael*; others of the Phariſees Kidney were mov'd with Envy and Indignation; ſo various are the Motions in the Minds of Men upon the Approach of Chriſt's Kingdom.

Upon this Commotion we are further told,

1. What the Citizens ſaid; *Who is this?* (1.) They were, it ſeems, *ignorant* concerning Chriſt, tho' he was the *Glory of his Temple Iſrael*, yet *Iſrael* knew him not; tho' he had *diſtinguiſh'd* himſelf by the many Miracles he wrought among them, yet the Daughters of *Jeruſalem* knew him not from *another Beloved*, Cant. 5. 9. The Holy One unknown in the Holy City; In Places where the cleareſt Light ſhines, and the greateſt Profeſſion of Religion is made, there is more Ignorance than we are aware of. (2.) Yet they were *inquiſitive* concerning him; *who is this* that is thus cry'd up, and comes with ſo much Obſervation? *Who is this King of Glory*, that demands Admiſſion into our Hearts? *Pſal*. 24. 8. *Iſa*. 63. 1.

2. How the *Multitude* anſwer'd them; *This is Jeſus*, v. 11. The Multitude were better acquainted with Chrſt than the great Ones; *Vox Populi* is ſometimes *Vox Dei*. Now in the Account they give of him; (1.) They were right in calling him *the Prophet*, that *great Prophet*; hitherto he had been known as a *Prophet*, teaching and working Miracles, now they attend him as a *King*; Chriſt's Prieſtly Office was, of all the three, laſt diſcover'd. (2.) Yet they miſs'd it in ſaying he was of *Nazareth*, and it help'd to confirm ſome in their Prejudices againſt him. *Note*, Some that are willing to honour Chriſt, and bear their Teſtimony to him, yet labour under Miſtakes concerning him, which would be rectified if they would take Pains to inform themſelves.

12 And Jeſus went into the temple of God, and caſt
out all them that ſold and bought in the temple, and
overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the
ſeats of them that ſold doves, 13 And ſaid unto them,
It is written, My houſe ſhall be called the houſe of
prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves. 14 And
the blind and the lame came to him in the temple,
and he healed them, 15 And when the chief prieſts
and ſcribes ſaw the wonderful things that he did, and
the children crying in the temple, and ſaying, Hoſanna
to the ſon of David, they were ſore diſpleaſed, 16
And ſaid unto him, Heareſt thou what theſe ſay? And
Jeſus ſaith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out
of the mouth of babes and ſucklings thou haſt perfected
praiſe? 17 And he left them, and went out of the city
into Bethany, and he lodged there.

When Chriſt came into *Jeruſalem*, he did not go up to the Court, or the Palace, tho' he came in as a King, but into the Temple; for his Kingdom is Spiritual, and not of this World, 'tis in holy Things that he rules, in the Temple of God that he exerciſeth Authority. Now what did he do there?

Firſt, Thence he *drove the Buyers and Sellers*. Abuſes muſt firſt be purged out, and the Plants not of God's planting be plucked up, before that which is right can be eſtabliſhed; The great Redeemer appears as a great Reformer, that turns away Ungodlineſs, *Rom*. 11. 26. Here we are told,

1. What he *did*, *v*. 12. he *caſt out all them that ſold and bought*; he had done this once before, *John* 2. 14, 15. but there was occaſion to do it again. *Note*, Buyers and Sellers driven out of the Temple, will return and neſtle there again, if there be not a continual care and overſight to prevent it, and if the Blow be not follow'd and oft repeated.

1. The Abuſe was *buying* and *ſelling*, and *changing Money* in the Temple. *Note*, Lawful Things ill-tim'd and ill-placed may become ſinful Things: That which was decent enough in another Place, and not only lawful, but laudable on another Day, yet defiles the Sanctuary, and profanes the Sabbath. This *buying* and *ſelling*, and *changing Money*, tho' ſecular Employments, yet had the pretence of being *in ordine ad ſpritualia*; they *ſold Beaſts* for Sacrifice, for the Convenience of thoſe that could eaſier bring their Money with them than their Beaſt; and they *changed Money* for thoſe that wanted the *half Shekel*, which was their yearly Poll, or Redemption-Money, or upon the Bills of Return; ſo that this might paſs for the *outward Buſineſs of the Houſe of God*, and yet Chriſt will not allow of it. *Note*, Great Corruptions and Abuſes come into the Church by the Practices of thoſe *whoſe Gain is Godlineſs*, that is, that make worldly Gain the End of their Godlineſs, and counterfeit Godlineſs their way to worldly Gain, 1 *Tim*. 6. 5. ſuch, and from ſuch turn away.

2. The purging out of this Abuſe; Chriſt *caſt them out that ſold*: He did it before with a *Scourge of ſmall Cords*, John 2. 13. Now he did it with a Look, with a Frown, with a Word of Command. Some reckon this none of the leaſt of Chriſt's Miracles, that he ſhould himſelf thus clear the Temple, and not be oppoſed in it by them, who *by this Craft got their living*, and were back'd in it by the Prieſts and Elders. 'Tis an Inſtance of his Power over the Spirits of Men, and the Hold he has of them by their own Conſciences. This was the only Act of Regal Authority and Co-ercive Power that Chriſt did in the Days of his Fleſh, he began with it, *John* 2. and here ended with it. Tradition ſaith, That *his Face ſhone*, and Beams of Light darted from his bleſſed Eyes, which aſtoniſhed theſe Market-people, and compelled them to yield to his Command; if ſo, the Scripture was fulfill'd, *Prov*. 20. 8. *The King that ſitteth on the Throne of Judgment ſcattereth away all evil with his Eyes*. *He overthrew the Tables of the Money-changers*; he did not take the Money to himſelf, but ſcattered it, *threw* to the Ground, the fitteſt Place for it. The *Jews* in *Eſther*'s Time *on the Spoil laid not their Hand*, Eſt. 9. 10.

2. What he *ſaid*, to *juſtify* himſelf, and to *convict* them, *v*. 13. *It is written*. *Note*, In the Reformation of the Church the Eye muſt be upon the Scripture, and that muſt be adher'd to as the Rule, the Pattern in the Mount; and we muſt go no farther than we can juſtify our ſelves with, *It is written*. Reformation is then right, when corrupted Ordinances are reduced to their primitive Inſtitution.

1. He ſhews from a *Scripture-Prophecy* what the Temple ſhould be, and was deſign'd to be, *My Houſe ſhall be called the Houſe of Prayer*, which is quoted from *Iſa*. 56.7. *Note*, All the Ceremonial Inſtitutions were intended to be ſubſervient to Moral Duties: The Houſe of Sacrifices was to be a *Houſe of Prayer*, for that was the Subſtance and Soul of all thoſe Services; The Temple was in a ſpecial manner ſanctified to be a *Houſe of Prayer*, for it was not only the Place of that Worſhip, but the *medium* of it, ſo that the Prayers made in, or towards that Houſe, had a particular promiſe of Acceptance, 2 *Chron*. 6. 21. as it was a Type of Chriſt; therefore *Daniel* look'd that way in Prayer; and ſo no Houſe or Place is now or can be a *Houſe of Prayer*, for Chriſt is our Temple; yet in ſome Senſe the appointed Places of our religious Aſſemblies may be ſo called, as Places *where Prayer is wont to be made*, Acts 16. 13.

2. He ſhews from a *Scripture Reproof*, how they had abus'd the Temple, and perverted the Intention of it, *Ye have made it a Den of Thieves*; This is quoted from *Jer*. 7. 11. *Is this Houſe become a Den of Robbers in your Eyes?* When diſſembled Piety is made the Cloke and Cover of Iniquity, it may be ſaid, That the *Houſe of Prayer* is become a *Den of Thieves*, in which they lurk and ſhelter themſelves. *Markets are* too often *Dens of Thieves*, ſo many are the corrupt and cheating Practices in buying and ſelling; but Markets in the Temple are certainly ſo, for they *rob God* of his Honour, the worſt of Thieves, *Mal*. 3.8. The Prieſts liv'd, and liv'd plentifully upon the Altar, but not content with that, they found other Ways and Means to ſqueeze

Money out of the People; and therefore Chriſt here calls them *Thieves*, for they exacted that which did not belong to them.

Secondly, There, in the Temple, he *healed the Blind and the Lame*, v. 14. when he had driven the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, he invited the *Blind* and *Lame* into it; for he *he filleth the Hungry with good Things, but the rich he ſends empty away*. Chriſt in the Temple, by his Word there preached, and in anſwer to the Prayers there made, heals thoſe that are ſpiritually *Blind* and *Lame*. It's good coming to the Temple when Chriſt is there, who, as he ſhews himſelf *jealous* for the Honour of his Temple, in expelling thoſe that profane it, ſo he ſhews himſelf *gracious* to thoſe who humbly ſeek him. The *Blind* and the *Lame* were debarr'd *David*'s Palace, 2 *Sam.* 5. 8. but were admitted into God's Houſe; for the State and Honour of his Temple lies not in thoſe Things, wherein the Magnificence of Princes Palaces is ſuppoſed to conſiſt; from them *Blind* and *Lame* muſt keep their Diſtance, but from God's Temple only the Wicked and Profane. The Temple was profan'd and abuſed when 'twas made a *Market-place*, but it was graced and honoured when it was made an *Hoſpital*; to be *doing Good* in God's Houſe is more honourable, and better becomes it, than to be *getting Money* there. Chriſt's healing was a real Anſwer to that Queſtion, *Who is this?* His Works teſtify'd of him more than the *Hoſanna's*; and his healing *in the* Temple was the fulfilling of the Promiſe, That *the Glory of the latter Houſe ſhould be greater than the Glory of the former*.

There alſo he ſilenced the Offence which the Chief Prieſts and Scribes took at the Acclamations with which he was attended, *v.* 15, 16. They that ſhould have been moſt forward to give him Honour, were his worſt Enemies.

1. They were *inwardly vexed* at the *wonderful Things* that *he did*; They could not deny them to be true Miracles, and therefore were *cut to the Heart* with *Indignation* at them, as *Acts* 4. 16.—5. 33. The Works that Chriſt did, recommended themſelves to every Man's Conſcience, if they had any Senſe, they could not but own the *Miracle* of them, and if any good Nature, could not but be in love with the *Mercy* of them, yet becauſe they were reſolved to oppoſe him for theſe, they envy'd him, and bore him a Grudge.

2. They *openly quarrel'd* at the Children's *Hoſanna's*; they thought hereby an Honour was given him which did not belong to him, and that it look'd like Oſtentation. Proud Men cannot bear that Honour ſhould be done to any but to themſelves, and are uneaſy at nothing more than at the juſt Praiſes of deſerving Men. Thus *Saul* envy'd *David* the Women's Songs; and *who can ſtand before Envy?* When Chriſt is moſt honoured, his Enemies are moſt diſpleaſed.

Juſt now we had Chriſt preferring the Blind and the Lame before the Buyers and Sellers; now here we have him, *v.* 16. taking part with the Children againſt Prieſts and Scribes.

Obſerve, 1. The Children were *in the Temple*, perhaps *playing* there; and no wonder when the Rulers made it a Market-place, that the Children made it a Place of Paſtime, but we are willing to hope many of them were *worſhipping* there. *Note*, 'Tis good to bring Children betimes to the Houſe of Prayer, for *of ſuch is the Kingdom of Heaven*. Let Children be taught to keep up the form of Godlineſs, it will help to lead them to the Power of it: Chriſt has a tenderneſs for the Lambs of his Flock.

2. They were there crying *Hoſanna to the Son of* David. This they learned from thoſe that were grown up, little Children ſay and do as they hear others ſay, and ſee others do; ſo eaſily do they imitate: And therefore great Care muſt be taken to ſet them good Examples, and no ill ones: *Maxima debetur puero reverentia*. Children will learn of thoſe that are with them, either to Curſe and Swear, or to Pray and Praiſe. The *Jews* did betimes teach their Children to carry Branches at the Feaſt of Tabernacles, and to cry *Hoſanna*, but God taught them here to apply it to Chriſt. *Note*, *Hoſanna* to the Son of *David* well becomes the Mouths of *little Children*, who ſhould learn young the Language of *Canaan*.

3. Our Lord Jeſus not only allowed it, but was very well pleaſed with it, and quoted a Scripture which was fulfilled in it, (*Pſ.* 8. 2.) or at leaſt may be accommodated to it; *Out of the Mouth of Babes and Sucklings thou haſt perfected Praiſe*, which ſome think refers to the Children's joining in the Acclamations of the People, and the Women's Songs with which *David* was honoured, when he *returned from the ſlaughter* of the *Philiſtines*, and therefore is very fitly applied here to the *Hoſanna's*, with which the Son of *David* was cryed up, now he was entring upon his conflict with *Satan*, that *Goliah*. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is ſo far from being aſhamed of the Services of little Children, that he takes particular Notice of them, (and Children love to be taken notice of) and is well pleaſed with them. If God may be honoured by *Babes* and *Sucklings*, who are made to *hope at the beſt*, much more by Children that are grown up to Maturity, and ſome Capacity. (2.) Praiſe is *perfected* out of the Mouth of ſuch; it has a peculiar Tendency to the Honour and Glory of God for *little Children* to join in his Praiſes: The Praiſe would be accounted defective and imperfect if they had not their ſhare in it; which is an Encouragement for Children to be good betimes, and to Parents to teach them to be ſo; the Labour neither of the one nor of the other ſhall be in vain: In the Pſalm it is, *Thou haſt ordained Strength*. *Note*, God *perfecteth Praiſe*, by *ordaining Strength* out of the Mouths of *Babes* and *Sucklings*, when great things are brought about by weak and unlikely Inſtruments, God is thereby much honour'd, for his Strength is *perfected in Weakneſs*, and the Infirmities of the *Babes* and *Sucklings*, ſerve for a Foil to the Divine Power. That which follows in the Pſalm, *that thou mighteſt ſtill the Enemy, and the Avenger*, was very applicable to the Prieſts and Scribes, but Chriſt did not apply it to them, but left it to them to apply it.

Laſtly, Chriſt having thus ſilenced them, forſook them, *v.* 17. he *left them*, in Prudence, leſt they ſhould now have ſeized him before his Hour was come; in Juſtice, becauſe they had forfeited the Favour of his Preſence: By repining at Chriſt's Praiſes, we drive him from us. He left them as *incorrigble*, and he *went out of the City to* Bethany, which was a more quiet retired Place, not ſo much that he might ſleep undiſturb'd, as that he might pray undiſturb'd. *Bethany* was but two little Miles from *Jeruſalem*, thither he now went *on Foot*, to ſhew that when he *rode*, 'twas only to fulfil the Scripture: He was not lifted up with the *Hoſanna's* of the People, but as having forgot them, ſoon returned to his mean and toilſome way of Travelling.

18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungred. 19 And when he ſaw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but Leaves only, and ſaid unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And preſently the fig-tree withered away. 20 And when the diſciples ſaw it, they marvelled, ſaying, How ſoon is the fig-tree withered away? 21 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, If ye have faith and doubt not, ye ſhall not only do this *which is done* to the fig-tree, but alſo if ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea; it ſhall be done. 22 And all things whatſoever ye ſhall aſk in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive.

Obſerve 1. Chriſt *returned* in the Morning to *Jeruſalem*, v. 18. ſome think he went out of the City over-night, becauſe none of his Friends there durſt entertain him, for fear of the great Men, yet having Work to do there he returned. *Note*, We muſt never be driven off from our Duty, either by the Malice of our Foes, or the Unkindneſs of our Friends. Tho' he knew that in this City *Bonds and Affliction* did *abide him*, yet *none of theſe things moved him*: *Paul* followed him when he went *bound in the Spirit to Jeruſalem*, Acts 20. 22.

2. As he went he *hungered*. He was a *Man*, and ſubmitted to the Infirmities of our Nature; He was an *active Man*, and was ſo intent upon his Work, that he neglected his Food, and came out faſting; for the *Zeal of God's Houſe* did even *eat him up*, and his Meat and Drink was to do his Father's Will: He was a *poor Man*, and had no preſent Supply; He was a Man that *pleaſed not himſelf*, for he would willingly have taken up with green raw Figs for his Breakfaſt, when it was fit he ſhould have had *ſomething warm*.

Chriſt therefore *hungred*, that he might have occaſion to work this Miracle, in *curſing* and ſo *withering*, the barren Fig-tree, and therein might give us an Inſtance of his Juſtice, and his Power, and both inſtructive.

1. See his *Juſtice*, v. 19. He went to it, expecting Fruit, becauſe it had Leaves, but finding none, he ſentenc'd it to a perpetual Barrenneſs. This Miracle had its Significancy, as well as other his Miracles; All Chriſt's Miracles hitherto were wrought for the Good of Men, and proved the Power of his Grace and Bleſſing, (the ſending of the Devils into the Herd of Swine, was but a Permiſſion;) all he did was for the Benefit and Comfort of his Friends, none for the Terror or Puniſhment of his Enemies; but now at laſt to ſhew that *all Judgment is committed to him*, and that he is able, not only to ſave, but to deſtroy, he would give a Specimen of the Power of his Wrath and Curſe, yet this not on any Man, Woman or Child, becauſe the *great Day of his Wrath* is not yet come, but on an inanimate Tree: But that is ſet for an Example; *Come learn a Parable of the Fig-tree*, Mat. 24. 32. The Scope of it is the ſame with the parable of the Fig-tree, *Luke* 13. 6.

1. This curſing of the barren Fig-tree repreſents the State of *Hypocrites in general*; and ſo it teacheth us, (1.) That the Fruit of Fig-trees may juſtly be expected from thoſe that have the Leaves. Chriſt looks for the Power of Religion from thoſe that make profeſſion of it, the ſavour of it from thoſe that have the ſhew of it. Grapes from the Vineyard that is *planted in a fruitful Hill*, he *hungers* after it, his Soul *deſires the firſt ripe Fruits*.

(2.) Chriſt's juſt Expectations from flouriſhing Profeſſors are often fruſtrated and diſappointed: He comes to many ſeeking *Fruit*, and finds *Leaves* only, and he diſcovers it. Many have a Name to live, and are not alive indeed; *dote* on the form of Godlineſs, and yet deny the Power of it.

(3.) The Sin of Barrenneſs is juſtly puniſh'd with the Curſe and Plague of Barrenneſs; *Let no Fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever*. As one of the chiefeſt Bleſſings, and which was the firſt, is, *Be fruitful*; ſo one of the ſaddeſt Curſes is, Be *no more* fruitful. Thus the Sin of Hypocrites is made their Puniſhment; they *would* not do good, and therefore they ſhall do none: He that is *fruitleſs*, let him be *fruitleſs ſtill*, and loſe his Honour and Comfort.

(4.) A falſe and hypocritical Profeſſion commonly withers in this World, and 'tis the Effect of Chriſt's Curſe; the Fig-tree that had *no Fruit* ſoon loſt its *Leaves*. Hypocrites may look plauſible for a time, but having no Principle, no Root *in themſelves*, their Profeſſion will ſoon come to nothing; the Gifts wither, common Graces decay, the

Credit of the Profeſſion declines and ſinks, and the Falſeneſs and *Folly* of the Pretender is *manifeſted to all Men.*

2. It repreſents the State of the Nation, and People of the *Jews* in particular: They were a *Fig-tree* planted in Chriſt's way, as a Church. Now obſerve,

1. The *Diſappointment* they gave to our Lord Jeſus; He came among them, expecting to find ſome *Fruit*, ſomething that would be pleaſing to him; he hungred after it, not that he *deſir'd a Gift*, he needed it not, but *Fruit that might abound* to a good *Account*, but his Expectations were fruſtrated, he *found nothing but Leaves*, they call'd *Abraham* their Father, but did not do the Works of *Abraham*; they profeſs'd themſelves Expectants of the promiſed *Meſſiah*, but when he came they did not receive and entertain him.

2. The *Doom* he paſt upon them, That never any Fruit ſhould grow upon them, or be gathered from them, as a Church, or as a People, from henceforward for ever. Never any Good came from them, (except the particular Perſons among them that believed) after they rejected Chriſt, they went worſe and worſe; Blindeſs and Hardneſs happen'd to them, and grew upon them, till they were unchurch'd, unpeopled, and undone, and their Place and Nation rooted up; their Beauty was defac'd, their Privileges and Ornaments, their Temple, and Prieſthood, and Sacrifices, and Feſtivals, and all the Glories of their Church and State fell like Leaves in Autumn; *How ſoon* did their *Fig-tree wither away*, after they ſaid, *His Blood be on us and on our Children*, and the Lord was righteous in it!

2. See the *Power* of Chriſt; the former is wrap'd up in the Figure, but this more fully diſcourſed of, Chriſt intending hereby to direct his Diſciples in the uſe of their Powers.

1. The Diſciples admired the Effect of Chriſt's Curſe, *v.* 20. *they marvelled*, no Power could do it but his, who ſpake and it was done. They admired at the ſuddenneſs of the thing, *How ſoon is the Fig-tree withered away?* There was no viſible cauſe of the Fig-trees withering, but it was a ſecret Blaſt, a Worm at the Root; 'twas not only the Leaves of it that withered, but the Body of the Tree; it withered away in an Inſtant, and became like a dry Stick. Goſpel-Curſes are upon this Account the moſt dreadful, that they work inſenſibly, and ſilently, by a Fire not blown, but effectually.

2. Chriſt empower'd them by Faith to do the like, *v.* 21, 22. as he ſaid, *Joh.* 14. 12. *Greater Works than theſe ſhall ye do.*

Obſerve 1. The Deſcription of this Wonder-working Faith; *If ye have Faith and doubt not*. *Note*, Doubting of the Power and Promiſe of God, is the great Thing that ſpoils the Efficacy and Succeſs of Faith: If ye have Faith and *diſpute not*, ſo ſome read not, diſpute not with your ſelves, diſpute not with the Promiſe of God; if you *ſtagger not at the Promiſe*, (Rom. 4. 20.) for as far as we do ſo our Faith is deficient; as certain as the Promiſe is, ſo confident our Faith ſhould be

2. The Power and Prevalency of it expreſs'd figuratively; *If ye ſhall ſay to this Mountain*, meaning the Mount of Olives, *Be thou removed, it ſhall be done.* There might be a particular Reaſon for his ſaying ſo of *this Mountain*, for there was a Prophecy, that the *Mount of Olives, which is before Jeruſalem*, ſhould cleave in the midſt, and then remove, *Zech.* 14. 4. and whatever was the Intent of that Word, the ſame muſt be the Expectation of Faith, how impoſſible ſoever it might appear to Senſe. But this is a proverbial Expreſſion, intimating, that we are to believe that nothing is impoſſible with God, and therefore what he has promiſed ſhall certainly be performed, tho' to us it ſeem impoſſible. It was among the *Jews* a uſual Commendation of their learned *Rabbins*, that they were *Removers of Mountains*, *i. e.* could ſolve the greateſt Difficulties; now this may be done by Faith acted on the Word of God, which will bring great and ſtrange Things to paſs.

3. The way and means of exerciſing this Faith, and of doing that which is to be done by it; *All things whatſoever ye ſhall ask in Prayer believing, ye ſhall receive.* Faith is the Soul, Prayer is the Body, both together make a compleat Man for any Service: Faith, if it be right, will excite Prayer, and Prayer is not right, if it do not ſpring from Faith. This is the condition of our *receiving*, we muſt *ask in Prayer believing*. The Requeſts of Prayer ſhall not be deny'd; the Expectations of Faith ſhall not be fruſtrated. We have many Promiſes to this Purpoſe from the Mouth of our Lord Jeſus, and all to encourage Faith, the principal Grace, and Prayer the principal Duty of a Chriſtian: 'Tis but ask and have, believe and receive, and what would we more? Obſerve how comprehenſive the Promiſe is of *all things whatſoever ye ſhall ask*; this is like *all* and *every* the Premiſes in a Conveyance: *All things* is General *whatſoever* brings it to Particulars, tho' Generals included Particulars, yet ſuch is the Folly of our Unbelief, that tho' we think we aſſent to Promiſes in the general, yet we fly off when it comes to Particulars, and therefore that we might have ſtrong Conſolation, 'tis thus copiouſly expreſs'd, *All things whatſoever*.

23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief prieſts and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and ſaid, By what authority doſt thou theſe things? and who gave thee this authority? 24 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I alſo will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewiſe will tell you by what authority I do theſe things. 25 The baptiſm of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven; he will ſay unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? 26 But if we ſhall ſay, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. 27 And they anſwered Jeſus, and ſaid, We cannot tell. And he ſaid unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things.

Our Lord Jeſus (like St. *Paul* after him) preached his Goſpel *with much Contention*; his firſt appearance was in a Diſpute with the Doctors in the Temple, when he was twelve Years old, and here juſt before he dy'd we have him engaged. In this Senſe he was like *Jeremiah*, a *Man of Contention*, not ſtriving, but *ſtriven with*; the great Contenders with him were the *Chief Prieſts* and the *Elders*; the Judges of two diſtinct Courts; the *Chief Prieſts* preſided in the Eccleſiaſtical Court, in *all Matters of the Lord*, as they are called; the *Elders of the People* were Judges of the Civil Courts in temporal Matters; ſee an Idea of both, 2 *Chron.* 19. 5, 8, 11. Theſe joined to attack Chriſt, thinking they ſhould find or make him obnoxious, either to the one, or to the other: See how wofully degenerate that Generation was, when the Governours both in Church and State, that ſhould have been the great Promoters of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, were the great oppoſers of it: Here we have them diſturbing him when he was preaching, *v.* 23. They would neither receive his Inſtructions themſelves, or let others receive them. *Obſerve*,

1. As ſoon as he came into *Jeruſalem* he went *to the Temple*, tho' he had been affronted there the Day before, was there in the midſt of Enemies, and in the Mouth of Danger, yet thither he went, for there he had a fairer opportunity of doing good to Souls than any where elſe in *Jeruſalem*; tho' he came Hungry to the City, and was diſappointed of a Breakfaſt at the barren Fig-tree, yet for ought appears, he went ſtraight to the Temple, as one that *eſteemed the Words of God's Mouth*, the preaching of them, *more than his neceſſary Food.*

2. In the Temple he was *teaching*; he had called it a *Houſe of Prayer*, V. 13. and here we have him preaching there. *Note*, In the ſolemn Aſſemblies of Chriſtians, Praying and Preaching muſt go together, and neither muſt encroach upon, or juſtle out the other: To make up a Communion with God, we muſt not only ſpeak to him in Prayer, but hear what he has to ſay to us by his Word; Miniſters muſt *give themſelves* both *to the Word and to Prayer*, Acts 6. 4. Now Chriſt taught in the Temple that Scripture was fulfilled, *Iſa.* 2. 3. *Let us go up to the Houſe of the Lord, and he will teach us his ways*; The Prieſts of old often taught there the good Knowledge of the Lord, but they never had ſuch a Teacher as this.

When Chriſt was teaching the People, the Prieſts and Elders came upon him, and challenged him to produce his Orders; the Hand of *Satan* was in this to hinder him in his Work. *Note*, It cannot but be a Trouble to a faithful Miniſter, to be taken off, or diverted from plain and practical Preaching, by an unavoidable neceſſity of engaging in Controverſies, yet Good was brought out of this Evil, for hereby occaſion was given to Chriſt to diſpel the Objections that were advanced againſt him, to the greater Satisfaction of his Followers; and while his Adverſaries thought by their Power to have ſilenc'd him, he by his Wiſdom ſilenc'd them.

Now in this Diſpute with them we may obſerve,

Firſt, How he was aſſaulted by their inſolent Demand; *By what Authority doſt thou theſe things? and who gave thee this Authority?* Had they duly conſider'd his Miracles, and the Power by which he wrought them, they needed not to have asked this Queſtion; but they muſt have ſomething to ſay for the Shelter of an obſtinate Infidelity: Thou rideſt in Triumph into *Jeruſalem*, receiveſt the *Hoſanna's* of the People, controuleſt in the Temple, driveſt out ſuch as had Licenſe to be there from the Rulers of the Temple, and paid them Rent; thou art here preaching a new Doctrine, whence hadſt thou a Commiſſion to do all this? Was it from *Cæſar?* or from the High-Prieſt? or from God? Produce thy Warrant, thy Credentials; Doſt not thou take too much upon thee? *Note*, It is good for all that take upon them to act with Authority, to put this Queſtion to themſelves, *Who gave them that Authority?* For unleſs a Man be clear in his own Conſcience concerning that, he cannot act with any Comfort, or hope of Succeſs: They who run before their Warrant, run without their Bleſſing, *Jer.* 23. 21, 22.

Chriſt had often ſaid it, and prov'd it beyond Contradiction, and *Nicodemus* a Maſtear in *Iſrael* had own'd it, that he was a *Teacher ſent from God*, Joh. 3. 2. yet at this time of Day, when that Point had been ſo fully cleared and ſettled, they come to him with this Queſtion; (1.) In the Oſtentation of their own Power, as *Chief Prieſts* and *Elders*, which they thought authorized them to call him to an account in this manner: How haughtily do they ask, *Who gave this Authority?* intimating that he could have no Authority, becauſe he had none from them, 1 *Kings* 22. 24. *Jer.* 20. 1. *Note*, It is common for the greateſt Abuſers of their Power to be the moſt rigorous Aſſertors of it, and to take a Pride and Pleaſure in any thing that looks like the Exerciſe of it. (2.) It was to *enſnare* and *entangle* him; ſhould he deny to anſwer this Queſtion, they would enter Judgment againſt him upon *nihil dicit*, would condemn him as ſtanding Mute, and would inſinuate to the People, that his Silence was a tacit confeſſing of himſelf a *Uſurper*; ſhould he plead an authority from God, they would as formerly demand a ſign from Heaven, or make his Defence his Offence, and accuſe him of Blaſphemy for it.

Secondly, How he anſwered this Demand with another, which would help them to anſwer it themſelves, *v.* 24, 25. *I alſo will ask you one thing*: He declined giving them a direct Anſwer, leſt they ſhould take advantage againſt him, but anſwers them with a Queſtion; Thoſe that are as ſheep in the midſt of Wolves have need to be *wiſe as Serpents*: The *Heart of the Wiſe ſtudieth to anſwer.* We muſt *give a Reaſon of the Hope that is in us,* not only with *Meekneſs*, but *with Fear*, 1 Pet. 3. 15. with prudent Caution, leſt Truth be damag'd, or our ſelves endangered.

Now this Queſtion is concerning *John*'s Baptiſm, here put for his whole Miniſtry, Preaching as well as Baptizing; Was this *from Heaven*, or *of Men*? One of the two it muſt be, either what he did was of his own Head, or he was ſent of God to do it; *Gamaliel*'s Argument turn'd upon this Hinge, *Acts* 5. 38, 39. either this Counſel is *of Men*, or *of God*: Tho' that which is manifeſtly *bad* cannot be *of God*, yet that which is ſeemingly *good* may be of Men, nay, of Satan, when he transforms himſelf into an *Angel of Light*. This Queſtion was not at all ſhuffling, to evade theirs. But,

1. If they anſwer this Queſtion, it would anſwer theirs; if they ſhould ſay againſt their Conſciences that *John*'s Baptiſm was *of Men*, yet it would be eaſy to anſwer, *John did no Miracle*, (John 10. 41.) Chriſt did many; but if they ſhould ſay, as they could not but own, that *John*'s Baptiſm was from Heaven, (which was ſuppoſed in the Queſtions ſent him, *John* 1. 21. Art thou *Elias*, or that Prophet?) then their Demand was anſwered, for he bare Teſtimony to Chriſt. *Note*, Truths appear in the cleareſt Light when they are taken in their due Order; the reſolving of the previous Queſtion will be a Key to the main Queſtion.

2. If they refuſe to anſwer it, that will be a good Reaſon why he ſhould not offer Proofs of his Authority to Men that were obſtinately prejudiced againſt the ſtrongeſt Conviction; 'twas but to caſt Pearls before Swine. Thus he *taketh the Wiſe in their own Craftineſs*, 1. Cor. 3. 19. and thoſe that would not be convinced of the plaineſt Truths ſhall be convicted of the vileſt Malice againſt *John* firſt, then againſt Chriſt, and in both againſt God.

Thirdly, How they were hereby *baffled* and *run aground*; they knew the Truth, but would not own it, and ſo were taken in the Snare they laid for our Lord Jeſus. *Obſerve*,

1. How they *reaſoned with themſelves*, not concerning the Merits of the Cauſe, what Proofs there were of the Divine Original of *John*'s Baptiſm; no, their Care was how to make their Part good againſt Chriſt: Two things they *conſider'd* and *conſulted* in this *reaſoning with themſelves*, their Credit, and their Safety, the ſame things which they principally aim at, that *ſeek their own things.*

(1.) They conſider their own *Credit*, which they would endanger if they ſhould own *John*'s Baptiſm to be *of God*, for then, Chriſt would ask them before all the People, *Why did ye not believe him?* And to acknowledge that a Doctrine is *from God*, and yet not to receive and entertain it, is the greateſt Abſurdity and Iniquity that a Man can be charged with: Many that will not be kept by the Fear of *Sin* from *neglecting* and *oppoſing* that which they know to be *true* and *good*, yet are kept by the fear of *Shame* from owning that to be *true* and *good*, which they *neglect* and *oppoſe*. Thus they *reject the Counſel of God againſt themſelves*, in not ſubmitting to *John*'s Baptiſm, and were left without Excuſe.

(2.) They conſider their own *Safety*, that they would expoſe themſelves to the Reſentments of the People, if they ſhould ſay, that *John*'s Baptiſm was of Men; *we fear the People, for all hold John as a Prophet*. It ſeems then (1.) That the People had righter Sentiments of *John* than the Chief Prieſts and the Elders had, or at leaſt were more free and faithful in declaring their Sentiments. *This People*, of whom they ſaid in their Pride, that they *knew not the Law*, and were *curſed*, John 7. 49. it ſeems knew the Goſpel and were bleſſed. (2.) that the *Chief Prieſts* and *Elders* ſtood in awe of the Common People, which is an Evidence that Things were in diſorder among them, and that mutual Jealouſies were at a great height; That the Government was become obnoxious to the Hatred and Scorn of the People, and the Scripture was fulfilled, *I have made you contemptible and baſe*, Mal. 2. 8, 9. If they had kept their Integrity, and done their Duty they had kept up their Authority, and needed not to *fear the People*: We find ſometimes that the People feared them, and it ſerved them for a Reaſon why they did not confeſs Chriſt, *John* 9. 22.—12. 44. *Note*, Thoſe cannot but *fear the People*, who ſtudy'd only how to make the People *fear them.* (3.) That it is uſually the Temper, even of common People, to be zealous for the Honour of that which they account ſacred and divine. If they *account John as a Prophet*, they will not endure it ſhould be ſaid his *Baptiſm was of Men*; hence the hotteſt Conteſts have been about *holy Things.* (4.) That the Chief Prieſts and Elders were kept from an open denial of the Truth, even againſt the Conviction of their own Minds, not by the fear of God, but purely by the *Fear of the People*; as the *Fear of Man* may *bring* good People into *a Snare*, Prov. 29. 25. ſo ſometimes it may keep bad People from being *overmuch wicked, leſt they ſhould dye before their time*, Eccleſ. 7. 17. Many *ill People* would be a deal *worſe* than they are if they *durſt*.

2. How they *reply'd to our Saviour*, and ſo dropt the Queſtion: They fairly confeſs'd *we cannot tell*; that is, we will not, οὐκ οἴδαμεν, *we never knew*; the more ſhame for them, while they pretended to be Leaders of the People, and by their Office were oblig'd to take Cognizance of ſuch things; when they would not confeſs their Knowledge, they were conſtrain'd to confeſs their Ignorance. And obſerve by the way, when they ſaid *We cannot tell*, They told a Lye, for they knew that *John*'s Baptiſm was of God. *Note*, there are many who are more afraid of the *Shame* of Lying than of the Sin; and therefore ſcruple not to ſpeak that which they know to be falſe concerning their own Thoughts and Apprehenſions, their Affections and Intenſions, or their remembring or forgetting of Things, becauſe in thoſe Things they know no Body can *diſprove* them.

Thus Chriſt avoided the Snare they laid for him, and juſtified himſelf in refuſing to gratifie them, *neither tell I you by what Authority I do theſe things*: If they be ſo wicked and baſe, as either not to believe, or not to confeſs that the Baptiſm of *John* was *from Heaven*, (tho' it oblig'd to *Repentance*, that great *Duty*, and ſealed the *Kingdom of God* at hand, that great *Promiſe*) were not fit to be diſcourſed with concerning Chriſt's Authority; for Men of ſuch a Diſpoſition could not be convinced of the Truth, nay, they could not but be provoked by it, and therefore *he that is* thus *ignorant, let him be ignorant* ſtill. *Note*, Thoſe that impriſon the Truths they know in unrighteouſneſs, either by not *profeſſing* them, or by not practiſing according to them, are juſtly deny'd the further Truths they enquire after, *Rom.* 1. 18, 19. Take away the Talent from him that buried it; thoſe that will not ſee, ſhall not ſee.

28 But what think you? A certain man had two ſons, and he came to the firſt, and ſaid, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. 29 He anſwered and ſaid, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 30 And he came to the ſecond, and ſaid likewiſe. And he anſwered and ſaid, I *go*, ſir; and went not. 31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They ſay unto him, The firſt. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came unto you in the way of righteouſneſs, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him. And ye when ye had ſeen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

As Chriſt inſtructed his Diſciples by Parables, which made the Inſtructions the more eaſy, ſo ſometimes he convinced his Adverſaries by Parables, which bring Reproofs more cloſe, and make Men, or ever they are aware, to reprove themſelves. Thus *Nathan* convinced *David* by a Parable, 2 *Sam.* 12. 1. and the Woman of *Tekoa* ſurprized him in like manner, 2 *Sam.* 14. 2. Reproving Parables are Appeals to the Offenders themſelves, and judge them out of their own Mouths. This Chriſt deſigns here, as appears by the firſt Words, *v.* 28. *But what think you?*

In theſe Verſes we have the Parable of the two Sons ſent to *work in the Vineyard*, the Scope of which is to ſhew, that they who knew not *John*'s Baptiſm to be of Men, were aſhamed even by the Publicans and Harlots, who knew it, and own'd it. Here's,

Firſt, The Parable it ſelf, which repreſents two ſorts of Perſons; ſome that *prove* better than they *promiſe*, repreſented by the firſt of thoſe Sons; others that *promiſe* better than they *prove*, repreſented by the ſecond.

1. They had both one and the ſame Father, which ſignifie that God is a common Father to all Mankind. There are Favours which all alike receive from him, and Obligations which all alike lie under to him; *Have we not all one Father?* Yes, and yet there is a vaſt difference between Mens Characters.

2. They had both the ſame Command given them: *Son, go work to Day in my Vineyard.* Parents ſhould not breed up their Children in idleneſs; nothing more *pleaſing*, and yet nothing more *pernicious* to Youth than that, *Lam.* 3. 27. God ſets his Children to *work*, tho' they are all *Heirs*: This Command is given to every one of us. *Note*, 1. The Work of Religion which we are call'd to engage in, is Vineyard-work, creditable, profitable and pleaſant. By the Sin of *Adam* we were turn'd out to work upon the Common, and to eat the Herb of the Field; but by the Grace of our Lord Jeſus we are call'd to work again in the Vineyard. 2. The Goſpel-Call to work in the Vineyard requires *preſent* Obedience; *Son, go work to Day*, while it is call'd *to Day*, becauſe the Night comes when *no Man can work*; we were not ſent into the World to be idle, nor had we Daylight given us to play by, and therefore if ever we mean to do any thing for God and our Souls, why not now? Why not to Day? 3. The Exhortation to go *work to Day in the Vineyard*, ſpeaketh unto us, *as unto Children*, Heb. 12. 5. *Son, go work*; 'tis the Command of a Father, which carries with it both Authority and Affection, a Father that pities his Children, and conſiders their Frame, and will not over-task them, *Pſal.* 103. 13, 14. a Father that is very tender of *his Son that ſerves him*, Mal. 3. 17. if we work in our Father's Vineyard we work for our ſelves.

3. Their Carriage is very different.

1. One of the Sons *did* better than he *ſaid*, *prov'd* better than he *promiſed*: His *Anſwer* was *ill*, but his *Actions well.*

(1.) Here's the untoward Anſwer that he gave to his Father; he ſaid flat and plain, *I will not*: See to what a degree of Impudence the corrupt Nature of Man riſeth, to ſay, *I will not*, to the Command of a Father; ſuch a Command of ſuch a Father, they are *impudent Children*, and *ſtiff-hearted*: Thoſe that will not *bend*, ſurely they cannot *bluſh*; if they had any degree of Modeſty left them, they could not ſay, *We will not*, Jer. 2. 25. Excuſes are bad, but downright Denials are worſe; yet ſuch peremptory Refuſals do the Calls of the Goſpel often meet with. (1.) Some love their Eaſe, and *will not work*; they would live in the World, as *Leviathans* in the Waters, to play therein, *Pſal.* 104. 26. they do not love *working*. (2.) Their Hearts are ſo much upon *their own Fields*, that they are not for working *in God's Vineyard*. They love the Buſineſs of the World better than the Buſineſs of their Religion. Thus ſome by the delights of Senſe, and others by the Employments of the World, are kept from doing that great Work which they were ſent into the World about, and ſo *ſtand all the Day idle*.

(2.) Here's the happy Change of his Mind, and of his Way upon ſecond Thoughts. *Afterwards he repented, and went. Note*, There are many that in their beginning are wicked and wilful, and very unpromiſing, who afterwards repent and mend, and come to ſomething. Some that God hath choſen, are ſuffered for a great while to run to a great exceſs of Riot; *ſuch were ſome of you*, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Theſe are ſet forth for *Patterns of long Suffering*, 1 Tim. 1. 16 *afterwards he repented*. Repentance is Μετάνοια, an *After-wit*; and Μεταμέλεια, an *After-care*; better late than never. *Obſerve*, When he *repented* he *went*, that was the *Fruit meet for Repentance*: The only Evidence of our Repentance for our former Reſiſtance, is immediately to comply, and ſet to work, and then what's paſt ſhall be pardon'd, and all ſhall be well. See what a kind Father God is; he reſents not the affront of our Refuſals, as juſtly he might. He that told his Father to his face, he would not do as he bid him, deſerv'd to be kick'd out of doors, and diſinherited; but our God *waits to be Gracious*, and notwithſtanding our former Follies, if we repent and mend, will favourably accept of us; bleſſed be God, we are under a Covenant that leaves room for ſuch a Repentance.

2. The other Son *ſaid* better than he *did*, *promis'd* better than he *prov'd*; his *Anſwer* was well, but his *Actions* ill. To him the Father *ſaid likewiſe*, v. 30. The Goſpel-call, tho' very different in the effect, is the ſame to all, and is carry'd on with an even Tenor. We all have the ſame Commands, Engagements, Encouragements, tho' to ſome they are a ſavour of Life unto Life, to others of Death unto Death. *Obſerve*,

1. How *fairly* this other Son *promiſed*. He ſaid, *I go, Sir*. He gives his Father a Title of Reſpect, *Sir. Note*, It becomes Children to ſpeak reſpectfully to their Parents. 'Tis one Branch of that Honour which the Fifth Commandment requires. He profeſſes a ready Obedience. *I go*; not, I will go by and by, but ready, Sir, you may depend upon it, I go juſt now. This Anſwer we ſhould give from the Heart heartily to all the Calls and Commands of the Word of God. See *Jer.* 3. 22. *Pſal.* 27. 8.

2. How he *fail'd* in the *Performance*, he *went not*. *Note*, There are many that give good Words, and make fair Promiſes in Religion, and thoſe from ſome good Motions for the preſent, and reſt there, and go no further, and ſo come to nothing. *Saying* and *Doing* are two things, and many there are that *ſay*, and *do not*; 'tis particularly charged upon the *Phariſees*, Mat. 23. 3. Many with their Mouth ſhew much Love, but their Heart goes another way. They had a good mind to be religious, but they met with ſomething to be done that was too *hard*, or ſomething to be parted with that was too *dear*, and ſo the Purpoſes are to no purpoſe. Buds and Bloſſoms are not Fruit.

Secondly, A general Appeal upon the Parable; *Whether of them did the Will of his Father?* v. 31. They both had their Faults, one was *rude*, and the other was *falſe*; ſuch variety of Exerciſes Parents ſometimes have in the different Humours of their Children, that they have need of a great deal of Wiſdom and Grace to know what is the beſt way of managing them. But the Queſtion is, Which was the better of the two, and the leſs faulty? And it was ſoon reſolv'd; *the firſt*, becauſe his Actions were better than his Words, and his latter End than his Beginning. This they had learn'd from the Common Senſe of Mankind, who will much rather deal with one that will be better than his Word, than with one that will be falſe to his Word: And in the intention of it, they had learn'd from the account God gives of the Rule of his Judgment, *Ezek.* 18. 21, 22. That if *the Sinner turn from his Wickedneſs*, he ſhall be pardon'd. And *if the righteous Man turn from his righteouſneſs*, he ſhall be rejected. The Tenor of the whole Scripture gives us to underſtand, that thoſe are accepted as doing their Father's Will, who, wherein they have miſs'd it, are ſorry for it, and do better.

Thirdly, A particular Application of it to the matter in hand, *v.* 31, 32. The Primary ſcope of the Parable is, to ſhew how the *Publicans* and *Harlots*, who never talk'd of the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom, yet *entertain'd* the Doctrine, and *ſubmitted* to the Diſcipline of *John Baptiſt* his Fore-runner, when the *Prieſts* and *Elders*, who were big with Expectations of the Meſſiah, and ſeem'd very ready to go into his Meaſures, ſlighted *John Baptiſt*, and run counter to the deſigns of his Miſſion. But it was a further reach, the *Gentiles* were *ſometimes diſobedient*, had been long ſo, Children of Diſobedience, like the elder Son, *Tit.* 3. 3, 4. Yet when the Goſpel was Preached to them, they became obedient to the Faith; whereas the *Jews* who ſaid, *I go, Sir*, promis'd fair, *Exod.* 24. 7. *Joſh.* 24. 24. yet went not; they did but *flatter God* with their Mouth, *Pſal.* 78. 36.

In Chriſt's Application of this Parable, obſerve,

1. How he *proves* that *John's* Baptiſm was *from Heaven*, and not *of Men*. If you *cannot tell*, (ſaith Chriſt) you might tell.

(1.) By the *Scope* of his Miniſtry. *John came unto you in the way of Righteouſneſs*. Would you know whether *John* had his Commiſſion from Heaven, remember the Rule of Tryal, *by their Fruits ye ſhall know them*; the Fruits of their Doctrines, the Fruits of their Doings. Obſerve but their Way, and you may trace out both their Riſe and their Tendency. Now it was evident that *John* came *in the Way of Righteouſneſs*. In his Miniſtry he taught People to repent, and to work the works of Righteouſneſs: In his Converſation, he was a great Example of Strictneſs, and Seriousneſs, and Contempt of the World, denying himſelf, and doing good to every body elſe; Chriſt therefore ſubmitted to the Baptiſm of *John*, becauſe it *became him to fulfil all Righteouſneſs*: Now if *John* thus *came in the way of Righteouſneſs*, could they be ignorant that his *Baptiſm* was *from Heaven*, or make any doubt of it?

(2.) By the *Succeſs* of his Miniſtry. *The Publicans and the Harlots believed him*; he did abundance of good among the worſt ſort of People. St. *Paul* proves his Apoſtleſhip by the *Seals* of his *Miniſtry*, 1 *Cor.* 9. 2. If God had not ſent *John Baptiſt*, he would not have crown'd his Labours with ſuch wonderful Succeſs, nor have made him ſo Inſtrumental as he was for the Converſion of Souls. If *Publicans* and *Harlots* believe his Reports, ſurely the Arm of the Lord is with him. The Peoples profiting is the Miniſter's beſt Teſtimonial.

2. How he *reproves* them for their Contempt of *John's* Baptiſm, which yet, for fear of the People, they were not willing to own. And to ſhame them for it, he ſets before them the Faith, Repentance, and Obedience of the *Publicans* and *Harlots*, which aggravated their Unbelief and Impenitence; as he ſhews, *Mat.* 11. 21. that the leſs likely *would* have repented, ſo here that the *leſs likely* did repent.

1. The *Publicans* and *Harlots* were like the *firſt Son* in the Parable, from whom little of Religion was expected. They promis'd little good, and thoſe that knew them promis'd themſelves little good from them: Their Diſpoſition was generally rude, and their Converſation profligate and debauch'd, and yet many of them were wrought upon by the Miniſtry of *John*, who came in the Spirit and Power of *Elias*. See *Luke* 7. 29. And theſe fitly repreſented the *Gentile World*; for (as Dr. *Whitby* obſerves) the *Jews* generally rank'd the *Publicans* with the *Heathen*; nay, and the Heathen were repreſented by the *Jews* as *Harlots*, and *born of Harlots*, John 8. 41.

2. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, the *Chief Prieſts* and *Elders*, and indeed the *Jewiſh* Nation in general, were like the other Son that gave good words, they made a ſpecious Profeſſion of Religion, and yet when the *Kingdom* of the *Meſſiah* was brought among them by the Baptiſm of *John*, they ſlighted it, they turned their back upon it, nay, they *lift up the Heel* againſt it. An Hypocrite is more hardly convinc'd and converted than a groſs Sinner; the *Form of Godlineſs*, if that be reſted in, becomes one of *Satan's* ſtrong Holds, by which he oppoſeth the *Power of Godlineſs*. 'Twas an Aggravation of their Unbelief, (1.) That *John* was ſuch an excellent Perſon, that he came, and came *to them* in the *way of Righteouſneſs*. The better the means are, the greater will the account be if not improv'd. (2.) That when they ſaw the *Publicans* and *Harlots* go before them into the *Kingdom* of *Heaven*, they did not *afterwards repent and believe*; were not thereby provok'd to an holy Emulation, *Rom.* 11. 14. Shall Publicans and Harlots go away with Grace and Glory, and ſhall not we put in for a ſhare? Shall our Inferiors be more holy and more happy than we? They had not the Wit and Grace that *Eſau* had, who was mov'd to take other Meaſures than he had done, by the Example of his younger Brother, *Gen.* 28. 6. Theſe proud Prieſts, that ſet up for *Leaders*, ſcorn'd to *follow*, tho' it were into the Kingdom of Heaven, eſpecially to follow Publicans; *through the Pride of their Countenance* they would not ſeek after God, after Chriſt, *Pſal.* 10. 4.

33 Hear another parable: There was a certain houſholder which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-preſs in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. 34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he ſent his ſervants to the husbandmen, that he might receive the fruits of it. 35 And the husbandmen took his ſervants, and beat one, and killed another, and ſtoned another. 36 Again, he ſent other ſervants, mo than the firſt: and they did unto them likewiſe. 37 But laſt of all he ſent unto them his ſon, ſaying, They will reverence my ſon. 38 But when the husbandmen ſaw the ſon, they ſaid among themſelves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us ſeize on his inheritance. 39 And they caught *him*, and caſt him out of the vineyard, and ſlew *him*. 40 When the Lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto thoſe husbandmen? 41 They ſay unto him, He will miſerably deſtroy thoſe wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbanmen, which ſhall render him the fruits in their ſeaſons. 42 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The ſtone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner: this is the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43 Therefore I ſay unto you, The Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And whoſoever ſhall fall on this ſtone ſhall be broken: but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder. 45 And when the chief Prieſts and Phariſees had heard his parables, they perceived that he ſpake of them: 46 But when they ſought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, becauſe they took him for a prophet.

This Parable plainly ſets forth the Sin and Ruin of the *Jewiſh* Nation; they and the Leaders are the Husbandmen here, and what is ſpoken for Conviction to them, is ſpoken for Caution to all that enjoy the Priviledges of the viſible Church, not to be high-minded, but fear.

Firſt, We have here the Priviledges of the *Jewiſh* Church repreſented, by the letting out of a Vineyard to the Husbandmen; they were as Tenants holding by, from, and under God the great Houſholder. *Obſerve*,

1. How God *eſtabliſh'd a Church* for himſelf in the World. The Kingdom of God upon Earth is here compar'd to a *Vineyard*, furniſh'd with all things requiſite to an advantageous management and improvement of it. (1.) He *planted* this *Vineyard*. The Church is the *planting of the Lord*, Iſa. 61. 3. The forming of a Church is a *Work by it ſelf*, like the planting of a Vineyard, which requires a great deal of Coſt and Care. 'Tis the *Vineyard which his right-hand has planted*, Pſal. 80. 15. planted with the *chiefeſt Vine*, Iſa. 5. 2. a *noble Vine*, Jer. 2. 21. The Earth of it ſelf produceth Thorns and Briars, but Vines muſt be *planted*. The Being of a Church is owing to God's diſtinguiſhing Favour, and his manifeſting himſelf to ſome, and not to others. (2.) He *hedg'd it round about*. *Note*, God's Church in the World is taken under his ſpecial Protection. 'Tis a *Hedge round about*, like that about *Job* on every ſide, *Job* 1. 10. a Wall of Fire, *Zech.* 2. 5. Wherever God has a Church, it is, and will always be his peculiar Care. The Covenant of Circumciſion and the Ceremonial Law were a Hedge, or *Wall of Partition* about the *Jewiſh* Church, which is taken down by Chriſt; who yet has appointed a Goſpel-order and Diſcipline to be the Hedge of his Church. He will not have his Vineyard to lie *in common*, that thoſe that are without may *thruſt in* at pleaſure; nor to lie *at large*, that thoſe that are within may *laſh out* at pleaſure, but care is taken to ſet bounds about this holy Mountain. (3.) He *dig'd a Wine-preſs*, and *built a Tower*. The Altar of *Burnt-offerings* was the *Wine-preſs*, to which all the Offerings were brought. God inſtituted Ordinances in his Church, for the due over-ſight of it, and for the promoting of its Fruitfulneſs. What could have been done more to make it every way convenient?

2. How he intruſted theſe viſible Church-priviledges with the Nation and People of the *Jews*, eſpecially their chief Prieſts and Elders; he *let it out* to them as *Husbandmen*, not becauſe he had need of them, as Landlords have of their Tenants; but becauſe he would try them, and be honour'd by them. When in *Judah* God was *known*, and his Name was great; when they were taken to be to God *for a People, and for a Name, and for a Praiſe*, Jer. 13. 11. when he *revealed his Word unto* Jacob, *Pſal.* 147. 19. when the *Covenant of Life and Peace* was made *with* Levi, *Mal.* 2. 4, 5. then this Vineyard was let out. See an Abſtract of the Leaſe, *Cant.* 8. 11, 12. The Lord of the Vineyard was to have *a thouſand Pieces of Silver*, (compare *Iſa.* 7. 13.) the *main Profit* was to *be his*; but the Keepers were to have *two hundred*, a competent and comfortable Encouragement. And then he *went into a far Country*. When God had in a viſible Appearance ſettled the *Jewiſh* Church at *Mount Sinai*, he did in a manner *withdraw*; they had no more ſuch *open Viſion*, but were left to the *written Word*. Or, they imagin'd that he was gone into a *far Country*, as *Iſrael* when they made the Calf, fancy'd that *Moſes* was gone. They put far from them the *evil Day*.

Secondly, God's *expectation* of Rent from theſe *Husbandmen*, v. 34. And good Reaſon; for *who plants a Vineyard, and eats not of the Fruit thereof?* *Note*, From thoſe that enjoy Church-priviledges, both Miniſters and People, God looks for Fruit accordingly. (1.) His Expectations were not *haſty*; he did not demand a Fore-rent, tho' he had been at ſuch Expence upon it; but ſtaid *till the time of the Fruit drew near*, as it did: now *John* Preach'd, the *Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*; God waits to be gracious that he may *give us time*. (2.) They were not *high*, he did not require them to come at their Peril, upon Penalty of forfeiting their Leaſe if they run behind-hand, but he ſent his *Servants to them*, to mind them of their Duty, and of the *Rent-day*, and to help them in gathering in the Fruit, and making return of it. Theſe *Servants* were the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament*, who were *ſent*, and ſometimes directly to the People of the *Jews*, to reprove, and inſtruct them. (3.) They were not *hard*, 'twas only to *receive the Fruits*. He did not demand more than they could make of it, but ſome Fruit of that which he himſelf planted, and obſervance of the Laws and Statutes he gave them. What could have been done more *reaſonable*? But his Expectations were fruſtrated, he *found none*. *Iſrael* was an *empty Vine*, nay, 'twas become the degenerate Plant of a *ſtrange Vine*, and brought forth *wild Grapes*.

Thirdly, The Husbandmens Baſeneſs in abuſing the Meſſengers that were ſent to them.

1. When he ſent them his *Servants*, they *abuſed* them, tho' they repreſented the Maſter himſelf, and ſpoke in his Name. *Note*, The Calls and Reproofs of the Word, if they do not *engage*, will but *exaſperate*. See here what hath all along been the Lot of God's faithful Meſſengers, more or leſs, (1.) to *ſuffer*, *ſo perſecuted they the Prophets*, they were hated with a *cruel* Hatred; they not only deſpis'd and reproach'd them, but treated them as the worſt of Malefactors, they *beat* them, and *kill'd* them, and *ſton'd* them. They *beat Jeremiah*, kill'd *Iſaiah*, ſton'd *Zecharia* the Son of *Jehojadah* in the Temple. If they that *live godly in Chriſt Jeſus* themſelves ſhall *ſuffer Perſecution*, much more they that preſs others to it. This was God's old Quarrel with the *Jews*, miſuſing his Prophets, 2 *Chron.* 36. 16. (2.) It has been their lot to ſuffer from *their Maſter's* own *Tenants*. They were *the Husbandmen* that treated them thus, the chief Prieſts and Elders that *ſate in* Moſes*'s Chair*, that profeſs'd Religion, and Relation to God; theſe were the moſt bitter Enemies of the Lord's Prophets, that caſt them out and killed them, and ſaid, *Let the Lord be glorified*, Iſa. 66. 5. See *Jer.* 20. 1, 2.—26. 11.

Now ſee, 1. How God perſever'd in his Goodneſs to them. He ſent *other Servants more than the firſt*, tho' the firſt ſped not, but were abus'd. He ſent them *John Baptiſt*, and him they had beheaded, and yet he ſent them his Diſciples to prepare his way. O the Riches of the Patience and Forbearance of God, in keeping up in his Church a deſpiſed, perſecuted Miniſtry!

2. How they perſiſted in their Wickedneſs. They *did unto them likewiſe*. One Sin makes way for another of the ſame kind. They that are drunk with the Blood of the Saints, add Drunkenneſs to Thirſt, and ſtill cry, Give, give.

3. At length he ſent them *his Son*; we have ſeen God's Goodneſs in *ſending*, and their Badneſs in abuſing the Servants, but in the latter Inſtance both theſe exceed themſelves.

1. Never did *Grace* appear more *Gracious* than in *ſending the Son*. This was done *laſt of all*. *Note*, All the Prophets were Harbingers and Fore-runners to Chriſt. He was ſent *laſt*; for if nothing elſe would work upon them, ſure this would; it was therefore reſerv'd for the *Ratio ultima*, the laſt Expedient. *Surely they will reverence my Son*, and therefore I'll ſend him. *Note*, It might reaſonably be expected, that the Son of God, when he came to his own ſhould be reverenc'd. And Reverence to Chriſt would be a powerful and effectual Principle of Fruitfulneſs and Obedience to the Glory of God; if they will but reverence the Son, the Point is gain'd. *Surely they will reverence my Son*, for he comes with more Authority than the Servants could; Judgment is committed to him, that *all Men ſhould honour him*. There is greater danger in refuſing him, than in deſpiſing *Moſes*'s Law.

2. Never did *Sin* appear more *ſinful* than in the abuſing of him, which was now to be done in two or three Days. *Obſerve*,

1. How it was *plotted*, v. 38. *When they ſaw the Son*, when he came whom the People own'd and followed as the Meſſiah, who would either have the Rent paid, or diſtrain for it; this touch'd their Copy-hold, and they were reſolv'd to make one bold puſh for it, and to preſerve their Wealth and Grandeur by taking him out of the way, who was the only hindrance of it, and Rival with them. *This is the Heir, come, let us kill him*. *Pilot* and *Herod* the Princes of this World *knew not*; for *if they had known, they would not have Crucified the Lord of Glory*, 1 Cor. 2. 8. But the *chief Prieſts and Elders* knew that *this was the Heir*, at leaſt ſome of them; and therefore *come, let us kill him*, many are killed for what they have. The chief thing they envy'd him, and for which they hated and fear'd him, was his Intereſt in the People, and their *Hoſanna's*, which if he were taken off, they hop'd to ingroſs ſecurely to themſelves. They pretended he muſt die to ſave the People from the *Romans*, John 11. 50. but really he muſt die to ſave their Hypocriſie and Tyranny from that Reformation which the expected Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* would certainly bring along with it. He drives the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, and therefore *let us kill him*; and then, as if the Promiſes muſt of courſe go to the Occupant, *let us ſeize on his Inheritance*. They thought, if they could but get rid of this *Jeſus*, they ſhould carry all before them in the Church without controul, might impoſe what Traditions, and force the People to what Submiſſions they pleas'd. Thus they *take Counſel againſt the Lord and his Anointed*; but he that *ſits in Heaven*, laughs to ſee them *out-ſhot in their own Bow*; for while they thought to kill him, and ſo to ſeize on his Inheritance, he went by his Croſs to his Crown, and they were broke in pieces with a Rod of Iron, and their Inheritance ſeiz'd, *Pſal.* 2. 2, 3, 6, 9.

2. How this Plot was executed, *v.* 39. While they were ſo ſet upon *killing him*, in purſuance of their Deſign to ſecure their own Pomp and Power, and while he was ſo ſet upon *dying*, in purſuance of his Deſign to ſubdue Satan, and ſave his choſen, no wonder if they ſoon *caught him*, and *ſlew him* when his hour was come. Tho' the *Roman* Power condemn'd him, yet ſtill 'tis charged upon the chief Prieſts and Elders; for they were not only the Perſecutors, but the principal Agents, and had the *greater Sin*. *Ye have taken*, Acts 2. 23. nay, looking upon him to be as *unworthy* to live, as they were *unwilling* he ſhould, they *caſt him out of the Vineyard*, out of the holy Church, which they ſuppoſed themſelves to have the Key of, and out of the holy City, for he was *Crucified without the Gate*, Heb. 13. 12. as if he had been the Shame and Reproach, who was the greateſt Glory of his People *Iſrael*. Thus they who Perſecuted the Servants, Perſecuted the Son; as Men treat God's Miniſters, they would treat Chriſt himſelf if he were with them.

Fourthly, Here is their Doom read out of their own Mouths, *v.* 40, 41. He puts it to them, *When the Lord of the Vineyard comes, what will he do unto theſe Husbandmen?* He puts it to themſelves, for their ſtronger Conviction, that *knowing the Judgment of God* againſt them which do ſuch things, they might be the more inexcuſable. *Note*, God's Proceedings are ſo unexceptionable, that there needs but an Appeal to Sinners themſelves concerning the Equity of them; God will be *juſtified when he ſpeaks.* They could readily anſwer, *He will miſerably deſtroy thoſe wicked Men. Note*, Many can eaſily prognoſticate the diſmal Conſequences of other People's Sins, that ſee not what will be the end of their own.

1. Our Saviour in his Queſtion ſuppoſeth, that *the Lord of the Vineyard will come* and reckon with them. God is the *Lord of the Vineyard*, the Property is his, and he will make them know it, who now *Lord it over his Heritage*, as if it were all their own. The Lord of the Vineyard *will come.* Perſecutors ſay in their Hearts, he *delays his coming*, he *doth not ſee*, he *will not require*, but they ſhall find, tho' he bear long with them, he will not bear always. 'Tis comfort to abuſed Saints and Miniſters, that *the Lord is at hand*, the *Judge ſtands before the Door.* When he comes, *what will he do* to *carnal Profeſſors?* What will he do to *cruel Perſecutors?* They muſt be called to account, they have their Day now, but he *ſees that his Day is coming.*

2. They in their Anſwer ſuppoſe that it will be a terrible Reckoning, the Crime appearing ſo very black, you may be ſure.

1. That he will *miſerably deſtroy thoſe wicked Men*, 'tis Deſtruction that is their Doom. *κακοὺς κακῶς ἀπολέσει, malos malè perdit.* Let Men never expect to *do ill*, and *fare well.* This *was fulfilled* upon the *Jews*, in that miſerable Deſtruction which was brought upon them by the *Romans*, and was compleated about forty Years after this; an unparallel'd Ruin, attended with all the moſt diſmal aggravating Circumſtances. It *will be fulfilled* upon all that tread in the Steps of their Wickedneſs; *Hell is everlaſting Deſtruction*, and it will be the moſt *miſerable Deſtruction* to them of all others, that have enjoy'd the greateſt Share of Church-Priviledges and have not improv'd them. The hotteſt Place in Hell will be the Portion of Hypocrites and Perſecutors.

2. That he will *let out his Vineyard to other Husbandmen.* Note, God will have a Church in the World, notwithſtanding the Unworthineſs and Oppoſition of many that abuſe the Priviledges of it. The Unbelief and Forwardneſs of Man ſhall not make the Word of God of none effect. If one will not, another will. The *Jews* Leavings were the *Gentiles* Feaſt. Perſecutors may deſtroy the Miniſters, but cannot deſtroy the Church. The *Jews* imagin'd, that no doubt but *they were the People*, and Wiſdom and Holineſs muſt *die with them*; and if they were cut off, what would God do for a Church in the World? But when God makes uſe of any to bear up his Name; 'tis not becauſe he needs them, nor is he at all beholden to them. If we were made a Deſolation and an Aſtoniſhment, God could build a flouriſhing Church upon our Ruins; for he is never at a loſs what to do for *his Great Name*, whatever becomes of us, and of our Place and Nation.

Fifthly, The further Illuſtration and Application of this by Chriſt himſelf, telling them in effect, they had rightly judged.

1. He illuſtrates it, by referring to a Scripture fulfill'd in this, *v.* 42. *Did ye never read in the Scripture?* Yes, no noubt, they had often read and ſung it, but had not conſider'd it. We loſe the Benefit of what we read for want of Meditation. The Scripture he quotes is, *Pſal.* 118. 22, 23. the ſame Context, out of which the Children fetch'd their Hoſanna's. The ſame word yields matter of Praiſe and Comfort to Chriſt's Friends and Followers, which ſpeaks Conviction and Terror to his Enemies. Such a two-edged Sword is the Word of God. That Scripture, the *Stone which the Builders refuſed, is become the head Stone of the corner*, illuſtrates the preceeding Parable, eſpecially that part of it which refers to Chriſt.

1 The Builders rejecting the Stone, is the ſame with the Husbandmen's abuſing the Son that was ſent to them. The chief Prieſts and the Elders were *the Builders*, had the Overſight of the *Jewiſh* Church, which was *God's Building*: And they would not allow Chriſt a Place in their Building, would not admit his Doctrine or Laws into their Conſtitution; they threw him aſide as a deſpiſed broken Veſſel, a *Stone* that would ſerve only for a *Stepping-Stone*, to be trampled upon.

2. The advancing of this Stone to be the Head of the Corner, is the ſame with *letting out the Vineyard to other Husbandmen.* He who was rejected by the *Jews*, was embrac'd by the *Gentiles*; and to that Church, where there is no difference of Circumciſion or Uncircumciſion, *Chriſt is all, and in all.* His Authority over the Goſpel-Church, and Influence upon it, his ruling it as the Head, and uniting it as the Corner-ſtone, is the great Inſtance of his Exaltation. Thus in ſpite of the Malice of the Prieſts and Elders he *divided a Portion with the Great*, and received *his Kingdom*, tho' they would not have him to reign over them.

3. The Hand of God was in all this; *this is the Lord's doing.* Even the rejecting of him by the *Jewiſh* Builders was by the determinate Counſel and Fore-knowledge of God, he permitted and over-ruled it; much more was his Advancement to the Head of the Corner; his Right-hand and his holy Arm brought it about, 'twas God himſelf that *highly exalted him*, and gave him the Name above every Name, and *it is marvellous in our* Eyes. The Wickedneſs of the *Jews* that rejected him is marvellous; that Men ſhould be ſo prejudic'd againſt their own Intereſt; ſee *Iſa.* 29. 9, 10, 14. The Honour done him by the *Gentile* World, notwithſtanding the Abuſes done him by his own People, is marvellous. That he whom Men deſpis'd and abhor'd ſhould be adorn'd by Kings, *Iſa.* 49. 7. but it is *the Lord's doing.*

2. He applies it to them, and Application is the Life of Preaching.

1. He applies the *Sentence* which they had *paſt*, *v.* 41. and turns it upon themſelves; not the former part of it concerning the miſerable Deſtruction of the Husbandmen, he could not bear to ſpeak of that, but the latter part of *letting out the Vineyard to others*, he makes Application of; becauſe tho' it lock'd back upon the *Jews*, it ſpoke Good to the *Gentiles.* Know then,

(1.) That the *Jews* ſhall be *unchurch'd*; *the Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you.* This turning out of the Husbandmen, ſpeaks the ſame Doom with that of diſmantling the Vineyard, and laying it common, *Iſa.* 5. 5. To the *Jews* had long pertain'd *the Adoption, and the Glory*, Rom. 9. 4. to them were committed the *Oracles of God*, Rom. 3. 2. and the ſacred Truſt of revealed Religion, and bearing up God's Name in the World, *Pſal.* 76. 1, 2. But now it ſhall be ſo no longer. They were not only unfruitful in the uſe of their Priviledges, but under pretence of them oppoſed the Goſpel of Chriſt, and ſo forfeited them, and it was not long e'er the Forfeiture was taken. *Note*, It is a righteous thing with God to remove Church-Priviledges from thoſe that not only Sin *againſt* them, but Sin *with* them, *Rev.* 2. 4, 5. The Kingdom of God was taken from the *Jews*, not only by the Temporal Judgments that befel them, but by the Spiritual Judgment they lay under, their Blindneſs of Mind, hardneſs of Heart, and Indignation at the Goſpel, *Rom.* 11. 8, 9, 10. 1 *Theſ.* 2. 15.

(2.) That the *Gentiles* ſhall be taken in. God needs not ask us leave, whether he ſhall have a Church in the World; tho' his Vine be pluck'd up in one place, he will find another to plant in it. He will give it ἔθνει to *the Gentile World*, that will *bring forth the Fruit of it.* They who had been *not a People*, and had *not obtained Mercy*, became Favourites of Heaven. This is the Myſtery which bleſſed *Paul* was ſo much affected with, *Rom.* 11. 30, 33. and which the *Jews* were ſo much affronted by, *Acts* 22. 21, 22. At the firſt planting of *Iſrael* in *Canaan*, the *Fall of the Gentiles* was the *Riches of* Iſrael, *Pſal.* 135. 10, 11. So at their Extirpation the Fall of *Iſrael* was the Riches of the *Gentiles*, Rom. 11. 12. It ſhall go to a *Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof. Note*, Chriſt knows before-hand who will bring forth Goſpel-fruits in the uſe of Goſpel-means; becauſe our Fruitfulneſs is all the Work of his own Hands, and *known unto God are all his Works.* They ſhall bring forth the Fruits better than the *Jews* had done; God has had more Glory from the *New Teſtament* Church, than from that of the *Old Teſtament*, for when he changeth, it ſhall not be *to his Loſs.*

2. He applies the *Scripture* which he had quoted, *v.* 42. to their Terror, *v.* 44. This *Stone* which the *Builders refuſed* is ſet for the Fall of many in *Iſrael*; and we have here the Doom of two ſorts of People, for whoſe Fall it proves that Chriſt is ſet.

1. Some through *Ignorance* ſtumble at Chriſt in his Eſtate of Humiliation; when this Stone lies on the Earth, where the Builders threw it, they through their Blindneſs and Careleſneſs fall on it, and *they ſhall be broken*: The Offence they take at Chriſt will not hurt him, no more than he that ſtumbles hurts the Stone he ſtumbles at, but it will hurt themſelves; they will fall, and be broken, and ſnar'd, *Iſa.* 8. 14. 1 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. The Unbelief of Sinners will be their Ruin.

2. Others through *Malice* oppoſe Chriſt, and bid defiance to him in his Eſtate of Exaltation; when this Stone is advanced *to the Head of the Corner*, and on them *it ſhall fall*, for they pull it on their own Heads, as the *Jews* did by that Challenge, *his Blood be upon us, and upon our Children*, and *it will grind them to Powder.* The former ſeems to ſpeak the Sin and Ruin of all Unbelievers; this is the greater Sin, and ſorer Ruin of Perſecutors that *kick againſt the Pricks*, and perſiſt in it. Chriſt's Kingdom will be a *burthenſome Stone* to all thoſe that attempt to overthrow it, or heave it out of its place; ſee *Zech.* 12. 3. This Stone, cut out of the Mountain without Hands, will *break in pieces* all oppoſing Power, *Dan.* 2. 34, 35. Some make this an alluſion to the manner of *Stoning to Death* among the *Jews.* The Malefactors were firſt thrown down violently from a high Scaffold upon a great Stone, which would much *bruiſe* them; but then they threw another great Stone upon them, which would cruſh them to pieces; one way or other Chriſt will utterly deſtroy all thoſe that fight againſt him. If they be ſo ſtout-hearted that they are not deſtroy'd by falling on this Stone, yet it ſhall fall on them, and do their buſineſs. He will *ſtrike through Kings*, he will *fill the Places with dead Bodies*, Pſal. 110. 5, 6. None ever hardned his Heart againſt God and proſper'd.

Laſtly, The Entertainment which this Diſcourſe of Chriſt met with among the chief Prieſts and Elders that heard his Parables.

1. They *perceived that he ſpake of them*, (v. 45.) and that in what they ſaid, *v.* 41. they had but read their own Doom. *Note*, A guilty Conſcience needs no Accuſer, and ſometimes will ſave a Miniſter the labour of ſaying, *Thou art the Man. Mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur.* So quick and powerful is the Word of God, and ſuch a diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, that 'tis eaſie for bad Men, (if Conſcience be not quite ſear'd,) to perceive that it *ſpeaks of them.*

2. They *ſought to lay hands on him. Note*, When thoſe who hear the Reproofs of the Word, perceive that it ſpeaks of them, if it do not do them a great deal of good, it will certainly do them a great deal of hurt. If they be not *prick'd to the Heart* with Conviction and

Contrition as they were, *Acts* 2. 37. they will be cut to the Heart with Rage and Indignation, as they were, *Acts* 5. 33.

3. They durſt not do it for fear of *the Multitude*, who took him *for a Prophet*, tho' not for the *Meſſiah*; this ſerv'd to keep the *Phariſees* in awe. The Fear of the People reſtrain'd them from ſpeaking ill of *John*, v. 26. and here from doing ill to Chriſt. *Note*, God has many ways of reſtraining the Remainders of Wrath, as he has of making that which breaks out to redound to his Praiſe, *Pſal.* 76. 10.

CHAP. XXII.

This Chapter is a Continuation of Chriſt's Diſcourſes in the Temple, two or three Days before he dy'd. His Diſcourſes then are largely recorded, as being of ſpecial Weight and Conſequence. In this Chapter we have (1.) *Instruction given by the Parable of the Marriage Supper, concerning the Rejection of the* Jews, *and the Calling of the* Gentiles, v. 1.—10. *And by the Doom of the Gueſt that had not the* Wedding Garment, *the Danger of Hypocriſie in the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity*, v. 11.—14. (2) *Diſputes with the* Phariſees, Sadducees *and* Scribes, *who oppos'd Chriſt.* (1.) *Concerning paying Tribute to* Cæſar, *v.* 15.—22. (2.) *Concerning the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the future State*, v. 23.—33. (3.) *Concerning the great Commandment of the Law*, v. 34.—40. (4.) *Concerning the Relation of the Meſſiah to* David, *v.* 41.—46.

AND Jeſus anſwered and ſpake unto them again by parables, and ſaid, 2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his ſon; 3 And ſent forth his ſervants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again, he ſent forth other ſervants, ſaying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage. 5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandiſe: 6 And the remnant took his ſervants, and entreated *them* ſpitefully, and ſlew *them*. 7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he ſent forth his armies, and deſtroyed thoſe murderers, and burnt up their city. 8 Then ſaith he to his ſervants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden, were not worthy. 9 Go ye therefore into the high-ways, and as many as ye ſhall find, bid to the marriage. 10 So thoſe ſervants went out into the *high*-ways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furniſhed with gueſts. 11 And when the king came in to ſee the gueſts, he ſaw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment. 12 And he ſaith unto him, Friend, How cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was ſpeechleſs. 13 Then ſaid the king to the ſervants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and caſt *him* into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few *are* choſen.

We have here the parable of the Gueſts invited to the Wedding-Feaſt. In this it is ſaid, *v.* 1. *Jeſus anſwered*, not to what his Opposers *ſaid*, for they were put to Silence, but to what they *thought*, when they were wiſhing for an opportunity to *lay hands* on him, *Chap.* 21. 46. *Note*, Chriſt knows how to anſwer Men's Thoughts, for he is a diſcerner of them. Or, he *anſwer'd*, i. e. he continu'd his Diſcourſe to the ſame purpoſe; for this parable repreſents the Goſpel-offer, and the Entertainment it meets with, as the former, but under another Similitude. The Parable of the *Vineyard* repreſents the Sin of the Rulers that perſecuted the Prophets; this ſhews alſo the Sin of the People, who generally neglected the Meſſage, while their great Ones were perſecuting the Meſſengers.

Firſt, Goſpel-preparations are here repreſented by a Feaſt which a King made *at the Marriage of his Son.* Such is the Kingdom of Heaven, ſuch the Proviſion made for precious Souls, in, and by the new Covenant. The *King* is God, a great King, King of Kings. Now,

1. Here is a *Marriage made* for his Son. Chriſt is the Bridegroom, the Church is the Bride. The *Goſpel-day* is the *Day of his Eſpouſals*, *Cant.* 3. *ult.* Behold by Faith the Church of the Firſt-born, that are written in Heaven, and were given to Chriſt by him whoſe they were, and in them you ſee *the Bride, the Lamb's Wife*, Rev. 21. 9. The Goſpel-covenant is a Marriage-covenant betwixt Chriſt and Believers, and 'tis a Marriage of God's making. This Branch of the Similitude is only mention'd, and not proſecuted here.

2. Here is a *Dinner* prepar'd for this Marriage, *v.* 4. All the Priviledges of Church-memberſhip, and all the Bleſſings of the new Covenant, Pardon of Sin, the Favour of God, Peace of Conſcience, the Promiſes of the Goſpel, and all the Riches contain'd in them; Acceſs to the Throne of Grace, the Comforts of the Spirit, and a well grounded Hope of Eternal Life. Theſe are the Preparations for this Feaſt, a Heaven upon Earth now, and a Heaven in Heaven ſhortly. God has prepar'd it in his Counſel, in his Covenant. 'Tis a *Dinner*, noting preſent Priviledges in the midſt of our Day, beſides the Supper at Night in Glory.

1. It is *a Feaſt.* Goſpel-preparations were Propheſied of as a Feaſt, *Iſa.* 25. 6. a *Feaſt of fat things*, and were typify'd by the many Feſtivals of the Ceremonial Law, 1 *Cor.* 5. 8. *Let us keep the Feaſt.* A Feaſt is a *good Day*, Eſth. 8. 17. So is the Goſpel, 'tis a continual Feaſt. *Oxen* and *Fatlings* are *kill'd* for this Feaſt, no Niceties, but ſubſtantial Food, enough, and enough of the beſt. The Day of a Feaſt is a *Day of Slaughter*, or Sacrifice, *Jam.* 5. 5. Goſpel-Preparations are all founded in the Death of Chriſt, his Sacrifice of himſelf. A Feaſt was made for *Love*, 'tis a Reconciliation Feaſt, a Token of God's Good-will towards Men. 'Twas made *for Laughter*, *Eccl.* 10. 19. 'tis a *rejoycing* Feaſt. 'Twas made *for Fulneſs*; the deſign of the Goſpel was to fill every hungry Soul with good things. 'Twas made *for Fellowſhip*, to maintain an Intercourſe between Heaven and Earth. We are ſent for to the Banquet of Wine, that we may tell what is our Petition, and what is our Requeſt.

2. It is a *Wedding Feaſt*; Wedding Feaſts uſe to be moſt rich, and free, and moſt joyful. The firſt Miracle Chriſt wrought was, to make plentiful Proviſion for a Wedding Feaſt, *John* 2. 7. and ſurely then he will not be wanting in Proviſion for *his own* Wedding Feaſt. When the *Marriage of the Lamb is come*, and the *Bride has made herſelf ready*, a victorious, triumphant Feaſt, *Rev.* 19. 7, 17, 18.

3. It is a *Royal* Wedding Feaſt, 'tis the *Feaſt of a King*, 1 Sam. 25. 36. At the Marriage, not of a Servant, but of a Son, and then, if ever he will, like *Ahaſuerus*, ſhew *the Riches of his glorious Kingdom*, Eſth. 1. 4. The Proviſion made for Believers in the Covenant of Grace, is not ſuch as becomes ſuch worthleſs Worms as we are to receive, but ſuch as becomes the King of Glory to give. He gives like himſelf, for he gives himſelf to be to them *El-ſhaddai*, a God that is enough, a Feaſt indeed for a Soul.

Secondly, Goſpel Calls and Offers are repreſented by an *Invitation* to this Feaſt. Thoſe that make a Feaſt will have Gueſts to Grace the Feaſt with. God's Gueſts are the Children of Men, Lord, what is man that he ſhould be thus dignified? The Gueſts that were firſt invited were the *Jews*; wherever the Goſpel is Preach'd, this Invitation is given. Miniſters are the Servants that are ſent to *invite*, Prov. 9. 4, 5.

Now, 1. The Gueſts are *call'd, bidding to the Wedding.* All that are within, hearing of the joyful Sound of the Goſpel, to them is the Word of this Invitation ſent. The Servants that bid have not their Names ſet down in a Paper, that needs not, ſince none are excluded but thoſe that exclude themſelves. Thoſe that are bidden to the Dinner, are *bidden to the Wedding*; for all that partake of Goſpel-priviledges, are to give a due and reſpectful Attendance on the Lord Jeſus, as the faithful Friends, and humble Servants of the Bridegroom. They are *bidden to the Wedding*, that they may *go forth to meet the Bridegroom*; for it is the Father's Will that all Men ſhould *Honour the Son.*

2. The Gueſts are *call'd upon*; for in the Goſpel there are not only gracious Propoſals made, but gracious Perſwaſives. We *perſwade* Men, we *beſeech them in Chriſt's ſtead*, 2 Cor. 5. 11, 20. See how much Chriſt's Heart is ſet upon the Happineſs of poor Souls: He not only *provides* for them, in conſideration of their Want, but ſends to them in conſideration of their Weakneſs and Forgetfulneſs. When the invited Gueſts were ſlack in coming, the King ſent forth other Servants, *v.* 4. When the Prophets of the Old Teſtament prevailed not, nor *John Baptiſt*, nor Chriſt himſelf, who told them Dinner was almoſt ready *The Kingdom of God was at hand*; the Apoſtles and Miniſters of the Goſpel were ſent after Chriſt's Reſurrection, to tell them, It was come. It was quite ready, and to perſwade them to accept the Offer. One would think it had been enough to give Men an Intimation that they had *leave to come*, and ſhould be welcome; that during the Solemnity of the Wedding, the King *kept open Houſe*; but becauſe the natural Man *diſcerns not*, and therefore deſires not the things of the Spirit of God, we are preſs'd to accept the Call by the moſt powerful Inducements, drawn with the Cords of a Man, and all the *Bonds of Love.* If the *Repetition* of the Call will move us, *Behold, the Spirit ſaith, Come, and the Bride ſaith, Come, let him that hears, ſay come, let him that is athirſt come*, Rev. 22. 17. If the *Reaſon* of the Call will work upon us, *Behold, the Dinner is prepar'd, the Oxen and Fatlings are kill'd, and all things are ready*; the Father is ready to accept of us, the Son to intercede for us, the Spirit to Sanctifie us; Pardon is ready, Peace ready, Comforts ready, the Promiſes ready, as Wells of living Water for ſupply, Ordinances ready as golden Pipes for conveyance, Angels ready to attend us, Creatures ready to be in league with us, Providences ready to work for our Good, and Heaven at laſt ready to receive us; 'tis a *Kingdom prepar'd, ready to be reveal'd in the laſt time.* Is all this ready, and ſhall we be unready? Is all this Preparation made for us, and is there any room to doubt of our Welcome, if we come in a right manner? Come therefore, O come to the Marriage, we beſeech you *receive not all this Grace of God in vain*, 2 Cor. 6. 1.

Thirdly, The *ill Entertainment* which the Goſpel of Chriſt often meets with among the Children of Men, repreſented by the *cold* Treatment that this Meſſage met with, and the *hot* Treatment that the Meſſengers met with, and in both the King himſelf and the Royal Bridegroom are affronted. This reflects primarily upon the *Jews*, who rejected the Counſel of God againſt themſelves. But it looks further to the Contempt that would by many in all Ages be put upon, and the Oppoſition that would be given to the Goſpel of Chriſt.

1. The *Meſſage* was baſely *ſlighted*, v. 3. *they would not come. Note*, The reaſon why Sinners come not to Chriſt, and Salvation by him, is not becauſe they *cannot*, but becauſe they *will not*, John 5. 40. *Ye will not come unto me.* This will aggravate the Miſery of Sinners, that they might have had Happineſs for the coming for, but it was their own Act and Deed to refuſe it. *I would, and ye would not.* But this was not all, *v.* 5. they *made light of it.* They thought it not worth coming for, thought the Meſſengers made more ado than needs; let them magnifie the Preparations never ſo much, they could dine as well at home. *Note*, Making light of Chriſt, and of the great Salvation wrought out by him, is the damning Sin of the World. *ἀμελήσαντες. They were careleſs. Note*, Multitudes periſh eternally through meer Careleſneſs; that have not any direct Averſion to, but a prevailing Indifferency in the Matters of their Souls, and an unconcernedneſs about them.

And the reaſon why they made light of the Marriage-feaſt, was becauſe they had other things that they minded more, and had more mind to. *They went their ways, one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandize. Note*, The Buſineſs and Profit of worldly Employments, proves to many a great hindrance in cloſing with Chriſt. None turn their Back on the Feaſt, but with ſome plauſible Excuſe or other, *Luke* 14. 18. The *Country People* have their *Farms* to look after, about which there's always ſomething or other to do; the *Town's People* muſt tend their Shops, and be conſtant upon the *Exchange*; they muſt *Buy, and Sell, and get Gain*: And it is true, that both Farmers and Merchants muſt be diligent in their Buſineſs, but not ſo as to keep them from making Religion their main Buſineſs. *Licitis perimus omnes.* Theſe lawful things undo us, when they are unlawfully manag'd, when we are ſo careful and troubled about many things, as to neglect the *one thing needful.* Obſerve, Both the City and the Country has its Temptations, the *Merchandize* in the one, and the *Farms* in the other; ſo that whatever we have of the World in our hands, our Care muſt be to keep it out of our Hearts, leſt it come between us and Chriſt.

2. The *Meſſengers* were baſely *abus'd. The Remnant*, or the reſt of them, that is, thoſe who did not go to the *Farms*, or *Merchandize*, were neither Huſbandmen nor Tradeſmen, but *Eccleſiaſticks*, the *Scribes*, and *Phariſees*, and chief Prieſts; theſe were the Perſecutors, theſe *took the Servants and intreated them ſpitefully, and ſlew them.* This in the Parable is *unaccountable*, never any could be ſo rude and barbarous as this to Servants that came to invite them to a Feaſt; but in the Reddition of the Parable 'twas *Matter of Fact.* They whoſe *Feet* ſhould have been *beautiful*, becauſe they brought the glad Tidings of the *ſolemn Feaſts*, (Nahum 1. 15.) were treated as the *Off-ſcouring of all things*, 1 Cor. 4. 13. The Prophets, and *John Baptiſt* had been thus abus'd already, and the Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt muſt count upon the ſame. The *Jews* were either directly, or indirectly Agents in moſt of the Perſecutions of the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel; witneſs the Hiſtory of *the Acts*, i. e. the Sufferings *of the Apoſtles.*

Fourthly, The utter Ruin that was coming upon the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation, is here repreſented by the Revenge which the King in Wrath took on theſe inſolent Recuſants, *v.* 7. *He was wrath*; the *Jews* that had been the People of God's Love and Bleſſing, by rejecting the Goſpel, became the Generation of his Wrath and Curſe; *Wrath came upon them to the uttermoſt*, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 16. Now obſerve here,

1. What was the crying Sin that brought the Ruin, it was their being *Murtherers.* He doth not ſay, he deſtroy'd thoſe Deſpiſers of his Call, but thoſe *Murtherers* of his Servants; as if God were more jealous for the Lives of his Miniſters, than for the Honour of his Goſpel; he that *toucheth them, toucheth the Apple of his Eye. Note*, Perſecution of Chriſt's faithful Miniſters fills the Meaſure of Guilt more than any thing. Filling *Jeruſalem* with *innocent Blood*, was that Sin of *Manaſſeh*, which *the Lord would not pardon*, 2 Kings 24. 4.

2. What was the Ruine it ſelf that was coming, *He ſent forth his Armies.* The *Roman* Armies were *his Armies*, of his raiſing, of his ſending againſt the People of his Wrath, and he *gave them a charge to tread them under foot*, Iſa. 10. 6. God is *the Lord of* Men's *Hoſts*, and makes what uſe he pleaſeth of them, to ſerve his own Purpoſes, tho' they *mean not ſo*, neither doth *their Heart think ſo*, Mic. 4. 11, 12. His Armies *deſtroy'd thoſe Murtherers*, and *burnt up their City.* This ſpeaks very plainly the Deſtruction of the *Jews*, and the burning of *Jeruſalem* by the *Romans*, forty Years after this. No Age ever ſaw a greater Deſolation than that, nor more of the direful Effects of Fire and Sword. Tho' *Jeruſalem* had been a *holy City*, the *City* that *God had choſen*, to put his Name there; *Beautiful for Situation, the Joy of the whole Earth.* Yet that City being now *become a Harlot*, Righteouſneſs being no longer *lodg'd* in it, but *Murtherers*, the worſt of Murtherers, (as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 1. 21.) Judgment came upon it, and Ruin without Remedy: And it is ſet forth for an Example to all that ſhould oppoſe Chriſt and his Goſpel. It was the Lord's doing, to *avenge the Quarrel of his Covenant.*

Fifthly, the repleniſhing of the Church again by the bringing in of the *Gentiles*, is here repreſented by the furniſhing of the Feaſt with Gueſts out of the High-ways, *v.* 8, 9, 10.

Here's 1. The *Complaint* of the Maſter of the Feaſt concerning thoſe that were firſt bidden, *v.* 8. *The Wedding is ready*, the Covenant of Grace ready to be ſeal'd, a Church ready to be founded, but *they which were bidden*, i.e. the *Jews*, to whom pertained the Covenant and the Promiſes, by which they were of old invited to the Feaſt of fat things; they *were not worthy*, i. e. they were utterly unworthy, and by their Contempt of Chriſt had forfeited all the Priviledges they were invited to. *Note*, It is not long of God that Sinners periſh, but of themſelves. Thus when *Iſrael* of old was within ſight of *Canaan*, the Land of Promiſe was ready, the Milk and Honey ready, but their Unbelief, and Murmuring, and Contempt of that pleaſant Land ſhut themſelves out, and their Carcaſſes were left to periſh in the Wilderneſs; and *theſe things happen'd to them* for Enſamples. See 1 *Cor.* 10. 11. *Heb.* 3. 16.—4. 1.

2. The *Commiſſion* he gave to the Servants to invite other Gueſt; the Inhabitants of the City, (*v.* 7.) had refus'd, *Go to the High-ways* then; into the *Way of the Gentiles*, which at firſt they were to decline, *Mat.* 10. 5. Thus by the *Fall* of the *Jews* Salvation is come to the *Gentiles*, Rom. 11. 11, 12. *Eph.* 3. 8. *Note*, Chriſt will have a Kingdom in the World, tho' many *reject* the Grace, and *reſiſt* the Power of that Kingdom. Tho' *Iſrael be not gathered*, he will *be glorious.* The Offer of Chriſt and Salvation to the *Gentiles* was (1.) *unlook'd for*, and *unexpected*; ſuch a Surprize as it would be to Wayfaring-men upon the Road, to be met with an Invitation to a Wedding-feaſt. The *Jews* had notice of the Goſpel long before, and expected the Meſſiah and his Kingdom, but to the *Gentiles* it was all *new*; and what they had never heard of before, *Acts* 17. 19, 20. nor thought did belong to them. See *Iſa.* 65. 1, 2. (2.) It was *univerſal and diſtinguiſhing.* Go and *bid as many as you find.* The *High-ways* are publick places, and there Wiſdom cries, *Prov.* 1. 20. Ask them that *go by the way*, i. e. Ask any body, *John* 21. 29. High and Low, Rich and Poor, Bond and Free, Young and Old, *Jew* and *Gentile*; tell them all they ſhall be welcome to Goſpel-priviledges, upon Goſpel-terms. Whoever will, let him come without Exception.

3. The *Succeſs* of this ſecond Invitation; if ſome will not come, others will, *v.* 10. *They gathered together all, as many as they found.* The Servants obey'd their Orders; *Jonah* was ſent *into the High-ways*, but was ſo tender of the Honour of his Country, that he avoided the Errand; but Chriſt's Apoſtles, tho' *Jews*, preferr'd the Service of Chriſt before their Reſpects to their Nation; and St. *Paul*, tho' ſorrowing for the *Jews*, yet magnifies his Office as the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles.* They *gather'd together all.* The deſign of the Goſpel is, (1.) To *gather Souls together*, not the Nation of the *Jews* only, but *all the Children of God*, who were *ſcatter'd abroad*, John 11. 52. The *other Sheep* that were not of that fold, *John* 10. 16. They were gather'd into one Body, one Family, one Corporation. (2.) To gather them together to the *Wedding-Feaſt*, to pay their Reſpects to Chriſt, and to partake of the Priviledges of the New Covenant. Where the Dole is, there will the Poor be gather'd together.

Now the Gueſts that were gather'd were (1.) a *Multitude*, all, as many as they found, ſo many, that the *Gueſt-Chamber* was fill'd. The *ſealed ones* of the *Jews* were *numbred*, but thoſe of other Nations were *without number*; a very *great Multitude*, Rev. 7. 9. See *Iſa.* 60. 4, 8. (2.) A *mixt* Multitude, both *bad* and *good.* Some that before their Converſion were ſober and well inclin'd, as the devout *Greeks*, Acts 17. 4. and *Cornelius*, others that had run to an Exceſs of Riot, as the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. 6. 11. *Such were ſome of you.* Or, ſome that after their Converſion prov'd *bad*, that turn'd not to the Lord with all their Heart, but feignedly; others that were upright, and ſincere, and prov'd well. Miniſters in caſting the Net of the Goſpel, incloſe both good Fiſh and bad, but *the Lord knows them that are his.*

Sixthly, The Caſe of Hypocrites that are in the Church, but not of it, that have a name to live, but are not alive indeed, is repreſented by the *Gueſt* that *had not on the Wedding-Garment*; one of the *bad* that were gather'd in. Thoſe come ſhort of Salvation by Chriſt, not only who refuſe to take upon them the Profeſſion of Religion, but who are not ſound at Heart in that Profeſſion. Concerning this Hypocrite, obſerve,

1. His Diſcovery, how he was found out, *v.* 11.

(1.) The *King came in to ſee the Gueſts*, to bid thoſe welcome that came prepar'd, and to turn thoſe out that came otherwiſe. *Note*, The God of Heaven takes particular notice of thoſe who profeſs Religion, and have a Place and a Name in the viſible Church. Our Lord Jeſus walks among the golden Candleſticks, and therefore *knows their Works*, See *Rev.* 2. 1, 2. *Cant.* 7. 12. Let this be a warning to us againſt Hypocriſie, that diſguiſes will ſhortly be ſtript off, and every Man will appear in his own Colours, and an Encouragement to us in our Sincerity, that God is a witneſs to it.

Obſerve, This Hypocrite was never diſcover'd to be without a Wedding-Garment, till the King himſelf came in to ſee the Gueſts. *Note*, It is God's Prerogative to know who are ſound at Heart in their Profeſſion, and who are not. We may be deceiv'd in Men, either one way or other, but he cannot. The Day of *Judgment* will be the great diſcovering Day, when all the Gueſts will be preſented to the King, then he will *ſeparate between the precious and the vile*, Mat. 25. 32. the *Secrets of all Hearts* will then be *made manifeſt*, and we ſhall infallibly diſcern between the Righteous and the Wicked, which now is not eaſy to do: It concerns all the Gueſts to prepare for that Scrutiny, and to conſider how they will paſs the piercing Eye of the Heart-ſearching God.

(2.) As ſoon as he came in, he preſently eſpy'd the Hypocrite; he *ſaw there a Man which had not on a Wedding-garment*, though but one, he ſoon had his Eye upon him: There's no hope of being hid in a Crowd from the Arreſts of Divine Juſtice, he *had not on a Wedding-Garment*; he was not dreſs'd as became a Nuptial Solemnity, he had not his *beſt Clothes* on. *Note*, Many come to the Wedding-Feaſt without a Wedding-Garment. If the Goſpel be the *Wedding-Feaſt*, then the *Wedding-Garment* is a Frame of Heart, and a Courſe of Life agreeable to the Goſpel, and our Profeſſion of it, *worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are called*, Eph. 4. 1. as *becomes the Goſpel of Chriſt*, Phil. 1. 27. The *Righteouſneſs of Saints*, their real Holineſs, and Sanctification, and Chriſt made Righteouſneſs to them, is the *clean Linnen*, Rev. 19. 6. This Man was not naked, or in Rags, ſome Raiment he had, but not a *Wedding-Garment*: Thoſe, and thoſe only that *put on the Lord Jeſus*, that have Chriſtian Temper of Mind, and are adorn'd with Chriſtian Graces, that live by Faith in Chriſt, and to whom he is *all in all*, have the *Wedding-Garment*.

2. His Trial, *v.* 12. And there we may obſerve,

(1.) How he was arraign'd, *v.* 12. *Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a Wedding-Garment?* A ſtartling Queſtion to one that was priding himſelf in the place he ſecurely poſſeſs'd at the Feaſt. *Friend*; that was a cutting Word, a ſeeming Friend, a pretended Friend, a Friend in Profeſſion, under manifold Ties and Obligations to be a Friend. *Note*, There are many in the Church that are falſe Friends to Jeſus Chriſt, that ſay they love him, but their Hearts are not with him. *How cameſt thou in hither?* He doth not chide the Servants for letting him in. The Wedding-Garment is an inward Thing, Miniſters muſt go according to that which falls within their Cognizance; but he checks his Preſumption in crowding in, when he knew his Heart was not upright; how durſt thou claim a Share in Goſpel-Benefits, when thou had'ſt no regard to Goſpel-Rules? *What haſt thou to do to declare my Statutes?* Pſal. 50. 16, 17. Such are Spots in the Feaſt, diſhonour the Bridegroom, affront the Company, and diſgrace themſelves, and therefore *how cameſt thou in hither? Note*, The Day is coming when Hypocrites will be called to an Account for all their preſumptuous Intruſion to Goſpel-Ordinances, and Uſurpation of Goſpel-Priviledges, *who has required this at your Hand?* Iſa. 1. 12. Deſpiſed Sabbaths, and abuſed Sacraments muſt be reckon'd for, and Judgment taken out upon an Action of Waſte againſt all thoſe who *received the Grace of God in vain*. How cameſt thou to the Lord's Table at ſuch a time unhumbled, and unſanctified? What brought thee to ſit before God's Prophets, as his People do, when thy Heart went after thy Covetouſneſs? How cameſt thou in? Not *by the Door*, but ſome other way, as a *Thief and a Robber*: 'Twas a *tortious* Entry, a Poſſeſſion without colour or Title. *Note*, It is good for thoſe that have a Place in the Church, often to put it to themſelves, *How came I in hither?* Have I a Wedding-Garment? If we would thus judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged.

(2.) How he was convicted; he was *ſpeechleſs*, ἐφιμώθη, he was *muzzled*, ſo the Word is uſed, 1 *Cor.* 9. 9. The Man *ſtood mute* upon his Arraignment, being convicted, and condemn'd by his own Conſcience. *Note*, They who live within the Church, and die without Chriſt, will not have one Word to ſay for themſelves in the Judgment of the great Day, they will be *without Excuſe*; ſhould they plead, *We have eaten and drunken in thy preſence*, as they do, *Luke* 13. 26. that's to plead *guilty*; for the Crime they are charged with, is thruſting themſelves into the Preſence of Chriſt, and to his Table, before they were called. They that never heard a Word of this Wedding-Feaſt, will have more to ſay for themſelves, their Sin will be more excuſable, and their Condemnation more tolerable than theirs who came to the Feaſt without the Wedding-Garment, and ſo Sin againſt the cleareſt Light and deareſt Love.

3. His Sentence, *v.* 13. *Bind him hand and foot*, &c.

1. He is order'd to be pinion'd, as condemn'd Malefactors are to be manacled, and ſhackled. Thoſe that will not *work* and *walk* as they ſhould, may expect to be bound *Hand* and *Foot*. There is a *binding* in this World by the Servants, the Miniſters, whoſe ſuſpending of Perſons that walk *diſorderly*, to the Scandal of Religion, is called *binding* of them, *Matt.* 18. 18. bind them *up* from partaking of Special Ordinances and the peculiar Priviledges of their Church-Memberſhip; bind them *over* to the righteous Judgment of God. In the Day of Judgment Hypocrites will be *bound*; the Angels ſhall bind up theſe Tares in Bundles for the Fire, *Mat.* 13. 41. Damned Sinners are *bound Hand and Foot* by an irreverſible Sentence; this ſignifies the ſame with the fixing of the great Gulf. They can neither *reſiſt* nor *outrun* their Puniſhment.

2. He is order'd to be carry'd off from the Wedding Feaſt; *take him away*. When the Wickedneſs of Hypocrites appears, they are to be *taken away* from the Communion of the Faithful, to be *cut off* as wither'd Branches. This ſpeaks the Puniſhment *of Loſs* in the other World, they ſhall be *taken away* from the King, from the Kingdom, from the Wedding Feaſt; *Depart from me ye Curſed*. It will aggravate their Miſery, that like the *unbelieving* Lord, (2 *Kings* 7. 2. they ſhall *ſee* all this Plenty with *their Eyes*, but ſhall not *taſte of it*) *Note*, Thoſe that walk unworthy of their Chriſtianity, forfeit all the Happineſs they preſumptuouſly laid claim to, and complemented themſelves with a groundleſs Expectation of.

3. He is order'd into a doleful Dungeon; *caſt him into utter Darkneſs*. Our Saviour here inſenſibly ſlides out of this Parable into the Reddition of it, the Damnation of Hypocrites in the other World; Hell is *utter Darkneſs*, 'tis Darkneſs *out of* Heaven, the Land of Light; or, 'tis extreme Darkneſs, Darkneſs to the laſt degree, without the leaſt Ray or Spark of Light, or hope of it, like that of *Egypt*, Darkneſs which might *be felt*; the Blackneſs of Darkneſs, as Darkneſs it ſelf, *Job* 10. 22. *Note*, Hypocrites go by the Light of the Goſpel it ſelf, down to utter Darkneſs: And Hell will be Hell indeed to ſuch a Condemnation more intollerable; *There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*. This our Saviour often uſeth as part of the Deſcription of Hell-Torments, which are hereby repreſented, not ſo much by the Miſery it ſelf, as by the Reſentment Sinners will have of it; there ſhall be *weeping*, an Expreſſion of great Sorrow and Anguiſh, not a guſh of Tears, which gives preſent Eaſe, but conſtant Weeping, which is conſtant Torment; and the *gnaſhing of Teeth*, is an Expreſſion of the greateſt Rage and Indignation: They will be like a wild Bull in a Net, full of the Fury of the Lord, *Iſa.* 51. 20.—8. 21, 22. Let us therefore *hear* and *fear*.

Laſtly, The Parable is concluded with that remarkable Saying which we had before, *Matt.* 20. 16. *Many are called, but few are choſen*, v. 14. Of the many that are called to the Wedding-Feaſt, if you ſet aſide all thoſe as *unchoſen*, that *make light of it*; and avowedly prefer other Things before it; if then you ſet aſide all that make a Profeſſion of Religion, but the Temper of their Spirits, and the Tenour of their Converſation is a conſtant Contradiction to it, ſet aſide all the Profane, and all the Hypocrites, and you will find they are *few*, very few that are *choſen*; many called to the Wedding Feaſt, but few choſen to the Wedding-Garment, *i. e.* to *Salvation* by *Sanctification of the Spirit*. This is the *ſtrait Gait*, and *narrow Way*, which *few find*.

15 Then went the Phariſees, and took counſel how
they might intangle him in *his* talk. 16 And they
ſent out unto him their diſciples, with the Herodians,
ſaying, Maſter, we know that thou art true, and teach-
eſt the way of God in truth, neither careſt thou for
any man: for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men.
17 Tell us therefore, What thinkeſt thou? Is it law-
ful to give tribute unto Ceſar, or not? 18 But Jeſus
perceived their wickedneſs, and ſaid, Why tempt ye
me, ye hypocrites? 19 Shew me the tribute-money.
And they brought unto him a penny. 20 And he
ſaith unto them, Whoſe *is* this image and ſuperſcription?
21 They ſay unto him, Ceſars. Then ſaith he unto
them, Render therefore unto Ceſar the things which are
Ceſars: and unto God, the things that are Gods. 22 When
they had heard *theſe Words*, they marvelled, and left
him, and went their way.

It was not the leaſt grievous of the Sufferings of Chriſt, that he *endur'd the Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf*, and had Snares laid for him by thoſe that ſought how to take him off, with ſome Pretence. In theſe Verſes we have him attack'd by the *Phariſees* and *Herodians*, with a Queſtion about *paying Tribute* to *Cæſar*. Obſerve,

Firſt, What their *Deſign* was, which they propoſed to themſelves, they *took Counſel* to *intangle him in his Talk*. Hitherto his Rencounters had been moſtly with the *Chief Prieſts* and the *Elders*, Men in *Authority*, who truſted more to their Power, than to their Policy, and examin'd him concerning his Commiſſion, *Chap.* 21. 23. But now he is ſet upon from another Quarter, the *Phariſees* will try whether they can deal with him by their Learning in the Law, and in Caſuiſtical Divinity, and they have a *Tentamen novum* for him. *Note*, It is vain for the beſt and wiſeſt of Men, to think that by their Ingenuity, or Integrity, or Induſtry, or by their Innocency and Integrity it ſelf, they can eſcape the Hatred and Ill-will of bad Men, or ſcreen themſelves from the *Strife of Tongues*. See how unwearied the Enemies of Chriſt and his Kingdom are in their Oppoſition.

(1.) They *took Counſel*: 'Twas foretold concerning him, that the Rulers would *take Counſel* againſt him, *Pſal.* 2. 2. and ſo *perſecuted they the Prophets*: *Come, and let us deviſe Devices againſt Jeremiah*. See *Jer.* 18. 18.—20. 10. *Note*, The more there is of Contrivance and Conſultation about Sin, the worſe it is. There is a particular *Woe* to them that *deviſe Iniquity*. *Mic.* 2. 1. The more there is of the wicked Wit in the contrivance of a Sin, the more there is of the wicked Will in the Commiſſion of it.

(2.) That which they aim'd at, was to *entangle him in his Talk*: They ſaw him free and bold in ſpeaking his Mind, and hoped by that, if they could bring him to ſome nice and tender Point, to get an Advantage againſt him. It has been the old Practice of Satan's *Agents* and *Emiſſaries*, to make a Man an *Offender for a Word*, a Word *miſplaced*, or miſtook, or miſ-underſtood; a Word, tho' innocently deſign'd, yet perverted by ſtrain'd *Innuendo's*; thus they lay a Snare for him that *reproveth in the Gate*, Iſa. 29. 21. and repreſent the greateſt *Teachers*, as the greateſt *Troublers* of Iſrael. Thus the *Wicked plotteth againſt the Juſt*, Pſal. 37. 12, 13.

There were two ways by which the Enemies of Chriſt might be *reveng'd* on him, and be *rid* of him, either by *Law* or by *Force*. By *Law* they could not do it, unleſs they could make him obnoxious to the Civil Government; for *it was not lawful for them to put any Man to*

Death, John 18. 31. and the Roman Powers were not apt to concern themſelves about *Queſtions of Words, and Names*, and *their Law*, Acts 18. 14. By *Force* they could not do it, unleſs they could make him obnoxious to the *People*, who were always the Hands, whoever were the Heads in ſuch Violences, which they call'd the *Beating of the Rebels*; now the People took Chriſt for a Prophet, and therefore they could not get him *Mob'd*. Now (as the old Serpent was from the beginning *more ſubtile than any Beaſt of the Field*) the Deſign was to bring him into ſuch a Dilemma, that he muſt make himſelf liable to the Diſpleaſure, either of the *Jewiſh* Multitude, or of the *Roman* Magiſtrates, let him take which Side of the Queſtion he will, he ſhall run himſelf into a *Premunire*, and ſo they gain their Point, and make his own Tongue to *fall upon him*.

Secondly, The Queſtion which they put to him, purſuant to this Deſign, *v.* 16, 17. Having *deviſed this Iniquity* in Secret, in a cloſe Cabal, behind the Curtain, when they went abroad, without loſs of Time, they *practis'd* it. Obſerve,

1. The Perſons they employ'd: They did not go themſelves, leſt the Deſign ſhould be ſuſpected, and Chriſt ſhould ſtand the more upon his Guard, but they *ſent their Diſciples*, who would look leſs like *Tempters*, and more like *Learners*: *Note*, Wicked Men will never want wicked Inſtruments to be employ'd in carrying on their Wicked Counſels: Phariſees have their Diſciples at their Beck, that will go on any Errand for them, and ſay as they ſay; and they have this in their Eye when they are ſo induſtrious to make *Proſelytes*.

With them they *ſent the Herodians*, a Party among the *Jews*, who were for a cheerful and intire Subjection to the *Roman* Emperor, and to *Herod* his Deputy, and made it their Buſineſs to reconcile People to that Government, and preſs'd all to pay their Tribute; ſome think they were the Collectors of the Land Tax, as the Publicans were of the Cuſtoms, and they went with the *Phariſees* to Chriſt, with this Blind upon their Plot; that while the *Herodians* demanded the Tax, and the *Phariſees* deny'd it, they were both willing to refer it to Chriſt, as a proper Judge to deſide the Quarrel. *Herod* being oblig'd by the Charter of the Sovereignty, to take care of the Roman Tribute, theſe *Herodians*, by aſſiſting him in that, help'd to endear him to his great Friends at *Rome*. The *Phariſees* on the other Hand were zealous for the Liberty of the *Jews*, and did what they could to make them impatient of the *Roman* Yoke. Now if he ſhould *countenance* the paying of Tribute, the *Phariſees* would incenſe the *People* againſt him, if he ſhould diſcountenance or *diſallow* it, the *Herodians* would incenſe the Government againſt him. *Note*, 'Tis common for thoſe that oppoſe one another, to continue in an oppoſition to Chriſt and his Kingdom: *Sampſon*'s Foxes look'd ſeveral ways, but met in one Firebrand; ſee *Pſal.* 83. 3, 5, 7, 8. If they are unanimous in *oppoſing*, ſhould not we be ſo in maintaining the Intereſts of the Goſpel?

2. The Preface with which they were plauſibly to introduce the Queſtion, and it is a mighty Complement upon our Saviour, *v.* 16. *Maſter, we know that thou art true, and teacheſt the way of God in Truth.* *Note*, It is a common thing for the moſt *ſpiteful Projects* to be cover'd with the moſt *ſpecious Pretences*. Had they come to Chriſt with the moſt ſerious Enquiry, and the moſt ſincere Intention, they could not have expreſs'd themſelves better; Here's *Hatred cover'd with Deceit*, and a *wicked Heart* with *burning Lips*, Prov. 26. 23. as *Judas* that kiſs'd and betray'd; *Joab* that kiſs'd and kill'd.

Now, 1. What they ſaid of Chriſt was *right*; and whether they knew it or no, bleſſed be God *we know it*.

(1.) That Jeſus Chriſt was a *faithful Teacher*; thou art *true*, and *teacheſt the way of God in Truth*: For himſelf he is *True, the Amen*, the faithful Witneſs; he is the *Truth* it ſelf. As for his Doctrine, the matter of his Teaching was the *Way of God*, the Way that God requires us to walk in; the Way of Duty that leads to Happineſs; that's the *Way of God*: The manner of it was *in Truth*, he ſhew'd People the right Way; the Way in which they ſhould go. He was a skilful Teacher, and they knew the Way of God, and a *faithful* Teacher, that would be ſure to let us know it; ſee *Prov.* 8. 6, 7, 8, 9. This is the Character of a good *Teacher*, to preach the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth, and not to balk, pervert, or ſtretch any Truth, for Favour or Affection, Hatred or Ill-will, either out of a Deſire to pleaſe, or a Fear to offend any Man.

(2.) That he was a *bold Reprover*: in preaching he *cared not for any*, to value no Man's Frowns or Smiles, he did not court, he did not dread either the *Great* or the *Many*, for he *regarded not the Perſon of Man*: In his Evangeſical Judgment he did not *know Faces*; that *Lion of the Tribe of Judah turned not away for any*, Prov. 30. 30. turned not a Step from the Truth, nor from his Work, for *fear* of the moſt *formidable*. He *reprov'd with Equity*, Iſa. 11. 4. and never *with Partiality*.

2. Tho' what they ſaid was true, for the Matter of it, yet there was nothing but Flattery and Treachery in the Intention of it. They call'd him *Maſter*, when they were contriving to treat him as the worſt of Malefactors; they pretended *Reſpect* for him, when they intended *Miſchief* againſt him, and they affronted his Wiſdom as Man, much more his Omniſcience as God, which he had ſo oft given pregnant Proofs of, when they imagin'd that they could impoſe upon him with theſe Pretences, and that he could not ſee through them. It is the groſſeſt Atheiſm, that is, the greateſt Folly in the World, to think to put a Cheat upon Chriſt, who ſearcheth the Heart, *Rev.* 2. 23. Thoſe that mock God do but *deceive themſelves*, Gal. 6. 7.

3. The Propoſal of the Caſe: *What thinkeſt thou?* q. d. Many Men are of many Minds in this Matter; 'tis a Caſe which relates to Practice, and occurs daily; let us have thy Thoughts freely in the Matter, *Is it lawful to give Tribute to Cæſar, or not?* Which implies a further Queſtion; Have they right to demand it. The Nation of the *Jews* was lately about a hundred Years before this, conquer'd by the Roman Sword, and ſo, as other Nations, made ſubject to the Roman Yoke, and became a Province of the Empire: accordingly *Toll*, *Tribute* and *Cuſtom* was demanded from them, and ſometimes *Poll-Money*. By this it appeared that the *Scepter* was *departed* from *Judah*, Gen. 40. 10. and therefore if they had underſtood *the Signs of the Times*, they muſt have concluded that *Shiloh* was come, and either this was he, or they muſt find out another more likely to be ſo.

Now the Queſtion was, Whether it was lawful to pay theſe Taxes voluntarily, or whether they ſhould not inſiſt upon the ancient Liberty of their Nation, and rather ſuffer themſelves to be diſtrain'd upon? The Ground of the Doubt was, that they were *Abraham*'s Seed, and ſhould not by conſent be *in Bondage to any Man*, Joh. 8. 33. God had given them a Law, that they ſhould not *ſet a Stranger over them*; and whether that did not imply that they were not to yield any willing Subjection to any Prince, State or Potentate, that was not of their own Nation and Religion? This was an old Miſtake ariſing from that *Pride* and *haughty Spirit*, which brings Deſtruction and a Fall. *Jeremiah* in his Time, tho' he ſpake in God's Name, could not poſſibly beat them off it, nor perſuade them to *ſubmit to the King of Babylon*; and their Obſtinacy in that Matter was then their Ruin, *Jer.* 27. 12, 13. And now again they ſtumbled at the ſame Stone, and it was the very Thing which in a few Years after brought a final Deſtruction upon them by the Romans. They quite miſtook the Senſe both of the Precept and of the Priviledge, and under Colour of God's Word, contented with his Providence, when they ſhould have kiſſed the Rod, and accepted the Puniſhments of their Iniquity.

However, by this Queſtion they hoped to *entangle Chriſt*, and which way ſoever he reſolved it, to expoſe him to the Fury, either of the jealous *Jews*, or of the jealous *Romans*, and were ready to triumph, as *Pharaoh* did of *Iſrael*, that the *Wilderneſs had ſhut him in*; and his Doctrine would be concluded either injurious to the *Rights of the Church*, or *hurtful to Kings and Provinces*.

Thirdly, The breaking of this Snare by the Wiſdom of the Lord Jeſus.

1. He diſcovered it, *v.* 18. he *perceived their Wickedneſs*, for *ſurely in vain is the Net ſpread in the ſight of any Bird*, Prov. 1. 17. A Temptation *perceiv'd*, is half conquered, for our greateſt Danger lies from Snakes under the green Graſs; and he ſaid, *Why tempt ye me ye Hypocrites?* *Note*, Whatever Vizzard the Hypocrite puts on, our Lord Jeſus ſees through it; he perceives all the Wickedneſs that is in the Hearts of Pretenders, and can eaſily convict them of it, and ſet it in order before them. He cannot be impos'd upon, as we often are, by flatteries and fair Pretences: He that ſearcheth the Heart can call Hypocrites by their own Name, as *Abijah* did the *Wife of Jeroboam*, 1 Kings 14. 6. *Why feigneſt thou thy ſelf to be another? Why tempt ye me ye Hypocrites?* *Note*, Hypocrites tempt Jeſus Chriſt; they try his Knowledge, whether he can diſcover them through their Diſguiſes; they try his Holineſs and Truth, whether he will allow of them in his Church; but if they that of old *tempted Chriſt*, when he was but darkly reveal'd, were *deſtroyed of Serpents*; of how much ſorer Puniſhment ſhall they be thought worthy, who tempt him now in the midſt of Goſpel-Light and Love? Thoſe that preſume to tempt Chriſt, will certainly find him too hard for them, and that he is of more *piercing Eyes* than not to ſee, and more *pure Eyes* than not to hate the *diſguiſed* Wickedneſs of Hypocrites, that *dig deep to* hide their *Counſel from him*.

2. He evaded it; his convicting them of Hypocriſy might have ſerved for an Anſwer; ſuch captious, malicious Queſtions deſerve a Reproof, not a Reply; but our Lord Jeſus gave a full Anſwer to their Queſtion, and introduced it by an Argument ſufficient to ſupport it, ſo as to lay down a Rule for his Church in this Matter, and yet to avoid giving Offence, and to break the Snare.

1. He forced them e'er they were aware to confeſs *Cæſar*'s Authority over them, *v.* 19, 20. in dealing with thoſe that are exceptious, 'tis good to give our Reaſons, and if poſſible, Reaſons of confeſſed Cogency, before we give our Reſolutions. Thus the Evidence of Truth may ſilence Gain-ſayers by ſurprize, while they only ſtood upon their Guard againſt the Truth it ſelf, not againſt the Reaſon of it; *Shew me the Tribute-Money*. He had none of his own to convince them by, it ſhould ſeem he had not ſo much as one piece of Money about him, for, for our Sakes he emptied himſelf, and became poor; he deſpiſed the Wealth of this World, and thereby taught us not to over-value it: Silver and Gold he had none, why then ſhould we covet to *load our ſelves with* that *thick Clay*? The *Romans* demanded their Tribute in their own Money, which was current among the *Jews* at that time: That therefore is call'd the *Tribute-money*; he doth not name what Piece, but the *Tribute-Money*, to ſhew that he did not mind things of that Nature, nor concern himſelf about them; his Heart was upon better Things, the Kingdom of God, and the Riches, and Righteouſneſs thereof, and ours ſhould be ſo too. They preſently *brought him a Penny*, a *Roman* Penny in Silver, in value about ſeven Pence half-penny of our Money, the moſt common Piece then in uſe: it was ſtamp'd with the Emperor's *Image* and *Superſcription*, which was the Warrant of the publick Faith, for the value of the Pieces ſo ſtamp'd; a Method agreed on by moſt Nations, for the more eaſy Circulation of Money with Satisfaction. The coining of Money has always been look'd upon as a Branch of the Prerogative, a Flower of the Crown, a Royalty belonging to the Sovereign Powers, and the admitting of that as the *good* and *lawful* Money of a Countrey,

is an implicit Sumbiſſion to thoſe Powers, and an owning of them in Money Matters. How happy is our Conſtitution, and how happy we, who live in a Nation where, tho' the *Image* and *Superſcription* be the Sovereigns, the Property is the Subjects, under the Protection of the Laws, and that what we have we can call *our own.*

Chriſt asked them, *Whoſe Image is this?* And they own it to be *Cæſar*'s, and thereby convicted thoſe of Falſhood, who ſaid, *We were never in Bondage to any*, and confirm'd, what afterward they ſaid, *We have no King but* Cæſar. It is a Rule in the *Jewiſh Talmud*, that he is the *King of the Countrey*, whoſe *Coin* is *current* in the Countrey: And ſome think the Superſcription upon this Coin was a Memorandum of the Conqueſt of *Judea* by the Romans, *Anno poſt Captam Judæam*, and they admitted that too.

2. From thence he inferr'd the lawfulneſs of paying Tribute to *Cæſar*, *v.* 21. *Render therefore to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar*'s; not *give* it him, as they expreſs'd it, *v.* 17. but render it, return or reſtore it; if *Cæſar* fill the Purſes, let *Cæſar* Command them: It is too late now to diſpute paying Tribute to *Cæſar*, for you are become a Province of the Empire, and when once a Relation is admitted, the Duty of it muſt be performed; *Render to all their due*, and particularly *Tribute to whom Tribute is due.* Now by this Anſwer;

1. No *Offence* was *given*: It was much to the Honour of Chriſt and his Doctrine, that he did not interpoſe as a *Judge*, or a *Divider* in Matters of this Nature, but left them as he found them, for his Kingdom is not *of this World*; and in this he hath given an Example to his Miniſters, who deal in ſacred Things, not to meddle with Diſputes about things Secular, not to wade far into Controverſies relating to them, but leave that to thoſe whoſe proper Buſineſs it is. Miniſters that would mind their Buſineſs, and pleaſe their Maſter, muſt not *entangle themſelves in the Affairs of this Life*: They forfeit the Conduct of God's Spirit, and the Convoy of his Providence, when they thus go out of their way. Chriſt diſcuſſeth not the Emperor's Title, but ſubjoins a peaceable Subjection to the *Powers that be*: The Government therefore had no reaſon to take Offence at his Determination, but to thank him, for it would ſtrengthen *Cæſar*'s Intereſt with the People that held him *for a Prophet*; and yet ſuch was the Impudence of his Proſecutors, that tho' he had expreſly charg'd them to *render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſars*, they laid the direct contrary in his Indictment, that he *forbad to give Tribute to Cæſar*, Luke 23. 2. As to the People, the Phariſees could not accuſe him to them, becauſe they themſelves had before they were aware yielded the Premiſes, and then it was too late to evade the Concluſion. *Note*, Tho' Truth ſeeks not a fraudulent Concealment, yet it ſometimes needs a prudent Management, to prevent the Offence, which may be taken at it.

2. His *Adverſaries* were *reproved*; (1.) Some of them would have had him made it unlawful to give Tribute to *Cæſar*, that they might have a Pretence to ſave their Money. Thus many excuſe themſelves from that which they *muſt do*, by arguing, whether they *may do it* or no. (2.) They all with-held from God his Dues, and are reprov'd for that; while they were vainly contending about their Civil Liberties, they had loſt the Life and Power of Religion, and needed to be put in mind of their Duty to God, with that to *Cæſar.*

3. His Diſciples were inſtructed, and ſtanding Rules left to the Church.

1. That the Chriſtian Religion is no Enemy to Civil Government, but a Friend to it: Chriſt's Kingdom doth not claſh or interfere with the Kingdoms of the Earth, in any thing that pertains to their Juriſdiction. By Chriſt Kings reign.

2. It is the Duty of Subjects to render to Magiſtrates, that which according to the Laws of their Countrey is *their due.* The *higher Powers* being *intruſted* with the *publick Welfare*, the Protection of the Subject, and the Conſervation of the Peace, is intitled, in conſideration thereof, to a juſt proportion of the *publick Wealth*, and the Revenue of the Nation, for *this cauſe pay we Tribute*, becauſe they *attend continually to this very thing*, Rom. 13. 6. and it is doubtleſs a greater Sin to cheat the Government, than to cheat a private Perſon, tho' 'tis the Conſtitution that determines what is *Cæſar*'s, yet when that is determined, Chriſt bids us render it to him; my Coat is my Coat by the Law of Man, but he is a Thief by the Law of God that takes it from me.

3. When we render to *Cæſar* the things that are *Cæſar*'s, we muſt remember withal to render to God the things that are God's. If our Purſes be *Cæſar's*, our Conſciences are God's; he hath ſaid, *My Son, give me thy Heart*; he muſt have the innermoſt and uppermoſt place there, we muſt render to God that which is his due out of our Time, and out of our Eſtates; from them he muſt have his Share, as well as *Cæſar* his, and if *Cæſar*'s Commands intefere with God's, we muſt *obey God rather than Men.*

Laſtly, Obſerve, how they were daſh'd by this Anſwer; they *marvelled, and left him, and went their way*, v. 22. They admired his Sagacity, in diſcovering and evading a Snare, which they thought ſo craftily laid. Chriſt is, and will be the Wonder, not only of his beloved Friends, but of his baffled Enemies. One would think they ſhould have marvelled and followed him, marvelled and ſubmitted to him; no, they *marvelled* and *left him. Note*, There are many, in whoſe Eyes Chriſt is *marvellous*, and yet not *precious*: They *admire* his Wiſdom, but will not be guided by it, his Power, but will not ſubmit to it. They *went their way*, as Perſons aſhamed, and made an inglorious Retreat. The Stratagem being defeated, they quitted the Field. *Note*, There is nothing got by contending with Chriſt.

23 The ſame day came to him the Sadducees, which ſay that there is no Reſurrection, and asked him, 24 Saying, Maſter, Moſes ſaid, If a man die, having no children, his brother ſhall marry his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 25 Now there were with us ſeven brethren, and the firſt, when he had married a Wife, deceaſed, and having no iſſue, left his Wife unto his brother. 26 Likewiſe the ſecond alſo, and the third, unto the ſeventh, 27 And laſt of all the Woman died alſo. 28 Therefore in the reſurrection, whoſe Wife ſhall ſhe be of the ſeven? for they all had her. 29 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of God. 30 For in the reſurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven. 31 But as touching the reſurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was ſpoken unto you by God, ſaying, 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

We have here Chriſt's Diſpute with the Sadducees concerning the *Reſurrection*; and it was *the ſame Day* that he was attacked by the *Phariſees* about *paying Tribute. Satan* was now more buſy than ever to ruffle and diſturb him; 'Twas an *hour of Temptation*; Rev. 3. 10. The Truth as it is in Jeſus, will ſtill meet with Contradiction in ſome Branch or other of it. Obſerve here,

1. The oppoſition which the *Sadducees* made to a very great Truth of Religion, they ſay, *There is no Reſurrection*, as there are ſome Fools who ſay, *There is no God.* Theſe Hereticks were called *Sadducees* from one *Sadoc*, a Diſciple of *Antigonus Sochæus*, who flouriſhed about 284 Years before our Saviour's Birth: They lie under an ill Character among the Writers of their own Nation, as Men of baſe and debauched Converſations, which their Principles led them to. They were the feweſt in Number of all the Sects among the *Jaws*, but generally Perſons of ſome Rank. As the *Phariſees* and *Eſſenes* ſeem'd to follow *Plato* and *Pythagoras*, ſo the *Sadducees* were much of the Genius of the *Epicureans*; they deny'd the *Reſurrection*, they ſaid, There is *no future State*, no Life after this; that when the Body dies, the Soul is annihilated, and dies with it; that there is no State of Rewards or Puniſhments in the other World; no Judgment to come in Heaven or Hell. They maintain'd, that except *God*, there is *no Spirit*, Acts, 23. 8. nothing but *Matter* and *Motion*: They would not own the divine Inſpiration of the Prophet, nor any Revelation from Heaven, but what God himſelf ſpoke upon *Mount Sinai*. Now the Doctrine of Chriſt carry'd that great Truth of the Reſurrection and a future State much farther than it had yet been revealed, and therefore the *Sadducees* in a particular manner ſet themſelves againſt it. The *Phariſees* and *Sadducees* were *contrary* to each other, and yet *Confederates* againſt Chriſt: Chriſt's Goſpel hath always ſuffer'd between ſuperſtitious ceremonious Hypocrites, and Bigots on the one Hand, and profane Deiſts and Infidels on the other. The former *abuſing*, the latter *deſpiſing* the Form of Godlineſs, but both *denying* the Power of it.

2. The Objection they made againſt the Truth, which was taken from a ſuppoſed Caſe of a Woman that had ſeven Husbands ſucceſſively; now they take it for granted, if there be a *Reſurrection*, it muſt be a return to ſuch a State as this we are now in, and to the ſame Circumſtances, like the imaginary Platonick Year; and if ſo, 'tis an invincible Abſurdity, for this Woman in the future State to have *ſeven Husbands*, or elſe an inſuperable Difficulty, which of them ſhould have her, he whom ſhe had firſt, or he whom ſhe had laſt, or he whom ſhe lov'd beſt, or he whom ſhe liv'd longeſt with.

1. They ſuggeſt the Law of *Moſes* in this Matter, *v.* 24. that the next of Kin ſhould marry the Widow of him that dy'd Childleſs, *Deut.* 25. 5. we have it practiſed, *Ruth* 4. 5. 'Twas a political Law, founded in the particular Conſtitution of the *Jewiſh* Common-Wealth, to preſerve the diſtinction of Families, and Inheritances, of both which there were ſpecial Care taken in that Government.

2. They put a Caſe upon this Statute, which, whether it were a *Caſe in fact*, or only a *Moot-Caſe*, is not at all material; if it had not really occur'd, yet poſſibly it might; 'Twas of ſeven Brothers that marry'd the ſame Woman, *v.* 25, 26, 27. Now this Caſe ſuppoſeth,

(1.) The Deſolation that Death ſometimes makes in Families, when it comes with Commiſſion, how it often ſweeps away a whole Fraternity, in a little time. Seldom (as the Caſe is put) according to Seniority, the Land of Darkneſs is without any Order, but *Heaps upon Heaps*; it *diminiſheth* Families that had multiplied greatly, *Pſal.* 107. 28, 29. when there were ſeven Brothers grown up to Man's Eſtate, there was a Family very likely to be built up, and yet this numerous Family leaves neither *Son nor Nephew, nor any remaining in their Dwellings*, Job 18. 14. well may we ſay then, *Except the Lord build the Houſe, they labour in vain that build it.* Let none be ſure of the Advancement and Perpetuity of their Names and Families, unleſs they could *make a Covenant* of Peace *with Death*, and be at an *Agreement with the Grave.*

(2.) The Obedience of theſe ſeven Brothers to the Law, tho' they had a Power of Refuſal, under the Penalty of a Reproach, *Deut.* 25. 7. *Note,* Diſcouraging Providences ſhould not keep us from doing our Duty, becauſe we muſt be govern'd by the Rule, not by the Event. The ſeventh that ventur'd laſt to marry the Widow, many a one would ſay, was a *bold Man,* I would ſay, if he did it purely in Obedience to God, he was a *good Man* ; and one that made Conſcience of his Duty.

But *laſt of all the Woman died alſo. Note,* Survivorſhip is but a Reprieve ; they that live long and bury their Relations and Neighbours one after another, do not thereby acquire an immortality ; no, their Day will come to Fall. Death's bitter Cup goes round, and ſooner or later we muſt all pledge in it. Allu. *Jer.* 25. 26.

3. They propoſe a Doubt upon this Caſe, *v.* 28. *In the Reſurrection, whoſe Wife ſhall ſhe be of the ſeven?* You cannot tell whoſe, and therefore we muſt conclude there is no Reſurrection. The Phariſees who profeſſed to believe a Reſurrection had very groſs and carnal Notions concerning it, and concerning the future State, expecting to find there, as the *Turks* in their Paradiſe, the Delights and Pleaſures of the animal Life, which, perhaps, drove the *Sadducees* to deny the thing it ſelf; for nothing gives greater Advantage to Atheiſm and Infidelity, than the Carnality of thoſe that make Religion, either in its Profeſſion or in its Proſpects, a Servant to their ſenſual Appetites, or ſecular Intereſts ; while thoſe that are erroneous deny the Truth, thoſe that are ſuperſtitious betray it to them. Now they in this Objection went upon the *Phariſees* Hypotheſis. *Note,* It is not ſtrange that Carnal Minds have very falſe Notions of Spiritual and Eternal Things. The Natural Man receiveth not theſe things, for they are fooliſhneſs to him, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. Let Truth be ſet in a clear Light, and then it appears in its full Strength.

3. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Objection herein, by reproving their Ignorance, and rectifying their Miſtake, he ſhews the Objection to be fallacious and unconcluding.

1. He reproves their Ignorance, *v.* 28. *Ye do err. Note,* Thoſe do greatly err in the Judgment of Chriſt, who deny the Reſurrection and a future State. Here Chriſt reproves with the Meekneſs of Wiſdom, and is not ſo ſharp upon them (whatever was the Reaſon) as ſometimes he was upon the Chief Prieſts and Elders, *Ye are not knowing. Note,* Ignorance is the Cauſe of Error ; thoſe that are in the Dark miſs their Way : The Patrons of Error do therefore reſiſt the Light, and do what they can to take away the Key of Knowledge ; *Ye err* in this Matter, *not knowing. Note,* Ignorance is the Cauſe of Error about the Reſurrection and a future State. *What it is* in its particular Inſtances, the wiſeſt and beſt know not ; it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, 'tis a Glory that is to be revealed, when we ſpeak of the State of ſeparate Souls, the Reſurrection of the Body, and of Eternal Happineſs and Miſery, we are ſoon at a loſs ; we cannot order our Speech, by reaſon of Darkneſs, but *that it is,* is a Thing about which we are not left in the Dark, bleſſed be God we are not ; and thoſe who deny it are guilty of a willing and affected Ignorance. It ſeems there were ſome *Sadducees,* ſome ſuch Monſters among profeſſing Chriſtians, *ſome among you that ſay there is no Reſurrection of the Dead,* 1 Cor. 15. 12. and ſome that did in effect deny it, by turning it into an Allegory, ſaying, The *Reſurrection* is *paſt already.* Now obſerve,

(1.) They know not the *Power of God,* which ſpeaks it *poſſible* that there *may* be a Reſurrection, and a future State. *Note.* The Ignorance, Disbelief, or weak Belief of God's Power, is at the Bottom of many Errors, particularly theirs who deny the Reſurrection : When we are told of the Soul's Exiſtence and Agency in a State of a ſeparation from the Body, and eſpecially that a dead Body which has lain many Ages in the Grave, and is turn'd into common and undiſtinguiſh'd Duſt, that this ſhall be raiſed the ſame Body that it was, and live, and move, and act again, we are are ready to ſay, *How can theſe things be?* Nature allows it for a Maxim, *à privatione ad habitum nondatur regreſſus* ; *If a Man dye ſhall he live again?* And vain Men, becauſe they cannot comprehend the Way of it, queſtion the Truth of it ; whereas, if we firmly believe in *God the Father Almighty,* that nothing is impoſſible with God, all theſe Difficulties vaniſh. This therefore we muſt faſten upon in the firſt place, that God is Omnipotent, and can do what he will, and then no room is left for doubting, but that he will do what he has promiſed ; and if ſo, *why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the Dead?* Acts 26. 8. His Power far exceeds the Power of Nature.

(2.) They know not *the Scriptures,* which ſpeak it *certain,* that there *ſhall be* a Reſurrection and a future State. The Power of God, determin'd and engag'd by his Promiſe, is the Foundation for Faith to build upon. Now the Scripture ſpeaks plainly that the Soul is Immortal, and there is another Life after this ; 'tis the Scope both of the Law and of the Prophets, *That there ſhall be a Reſurrection* of the Dead, both of the Juſt, and of the Unjuſt, *Acts* 24. 14, 15. *Job* knew it, *Job* 12. 26. *Ezekiel* foreſaw it, *Ezek.* 37. and *Daniel* plainly foretold it, *Dan.* 12. 2. Chriſt roſe again *according to the Scriptures,* 1 Cor. 15. 3. and ſo ſhall we : Thoſe therefore who deny it, either have not convers'd with the Scriptures, or do not believe them, or do not take the true Senſe and Meaning of them. *Note,* Ignorance of the Scripture is the Riſe of abundance of Miſchief.

2. He rectifies their Miſtake, and *v.* 30. corrects thoſe groſs Ideas, which they had of the Reſurrection and a future State, and fixeth theſe Doctrines upon a true and laſting Baſis. Concerning that State, obſerve,

1. It is not like the State we are now in upon Earth ; *They neither marry, nor are given in marriage.* In our preſent State, Marriage is neceſſary, 'twas inſtituted in Innocency ; whatever Intermiſſion or Neglect there has been of other Inſtitutions, this was never laid aſide, nor will be to the end of Time. In the old World they were *marrying, and given in marriage* ; the *Jews* in *Babylon,* when cut off from other Ordinances, yet were bid to *take them Wives,* Jer. 29. 6. All civiliz'd Nations have had a Senſe of the Obligation of the Marriage-Covenant ; and 'tis requiſite for the gratifying of the Deſires, and recruiting the Deficiencies of the human Nature : But in the Reſurrection there is no occaſion for Marriage ; whether in glorified Bodies there will be any diſtinction of Sexes, ſome too curiouſly diſpute ; the Antients are divided in their Opinions about it ; but whether there will be a Diſtinction or no, 'tis certain there will be no Conjunction ; where God will be *all in all,* there needs no other *meet-help* ; the Body will be *Spiritual,* and there will be in it no carnal Deſires to be gratify'd : When the myſtical Body is compleated, there will be no further occaſion to *ſeek a godly Seed,* which was one end of the Inſtitution of Marriage, *Mal.* 2. 15. In Heaven there will be no decay of the Individuals, and therefore no eating and drinking, no decay of the Species, and therefore no marrying, where there ſhall be no more Deaths, *Rev.* 21. 4. there needs be no more Births. The marry'd State is a Compoſition of Joys and Cares, thoſe that enter upon it are taught to look upon it as ſubject to Changes, *Richer* and *Poorer, Sickneſs* and *Health,* and therefore 'tis fit for this mix'd, changing World ; but as in Hell, where there is no Joy, the Voice of the Bridegroom, and the Voice of the Bride, ſhall be heard no more at all ; ſo in Heaven, where there is all Joy, and no Care, or Pain, or Trouble, there will be no Marrying : The Joys of that State are pure and ſpiritual, and ariſe from the Marriage of all of them to the Lamb, not of any of them to one another.

2. It is like the State Angels are now in in Heaven ; *They are as the Angels of God in Heaven,* they *are* ſo, *i. e.* undoubtedly they ſhall be ſo : They *are* ſo already in Chriſt their Head, who has made them ſit with him in Heavenly Places, *Eph.* 2. 6. The Spirits of juſt Men already made perfect, are of the ſame Corporation with the innumerable Company of Angels, *Heb.* 12. 22, 23. Man in his Creation was a *little lower than the Angels,* Pſal. 8. 5. but in his compleat Redemption and Renovation will be as the Angels, pure and Spiritual as the Angels, knowing and loving as thoſe bleſſed Seraphims, ever praiſing God like them, and with them. The Bodies of the Saints ſhall be raiſed Incorruptible and Glorious, like the uncompounded Vehicles of thoſe pure and holy Spirits, 1 *Cor.* 15. 42, *&c.* Swift and ſtrong, like them. We ſhould therefore deſire and endeavour to do the Will of God now, as the Angels do it in Heaven, becauſe we hope ſhortly to be *like the Angels,* who always behold our Father's Face. He ſaith nothing of the State of the Wicked in the Reſurrection, but by Conſequence, they ſhall be like the Devils, whoſe Luſts they have done.

4. Chriſt's Argument to confirm this great Truth of the Reſurrection, and a future State ; the Matters being of great Concern, he did not think it enough (as in ſome other Diſputes) to diſcover the Fallacy and Sophiſtry of the Objections, but back'd the Truth with a ſolid Argument, for Chriſt *brings forth Judgment to truth,* as well as *Victory* ; and enables his Followers, to give a Reaſon of the Hope that is in them. Now obſerve,

1. From whence he fetch'd his Argument, from the Scripture ; that's the great Magazine or Armory, whence we may be furniſh'd with ſpiritual Weapons, offenſive and defenſive : *It is written,* is *Goliah*'s Sword : *Have ye not read that which was ſpoken to you by God? Note,* (1.) What the Scripture ſpeaks, God ſpeaks. (2.) What was ſpoken to *Moſes,* was ſpoken *to us,* 'twas ſpoken and written for our Learning. (3.) It concerns us to *read,* and hear what God hath ſpoken, becauſe 'tis ſpoken *to us* : 'Twas ſpoken *to you Jews* in the firſt place, for to them were committed the Oracles of God. The Argument is fetch'd from the Books of *Moſes,* becauſe the *Sadducees* received them only, as ſome think, or however them chiefly, for Canonical Scriptures, Chriſt therefore fetch'd his Proof from the moſt indiſputable Fountain. The latter Prophets have more expreſs Proofs of a future State than the Law of *Moſes* has ; for tho' the Law of *Moſes* doth ſuppoſe the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State, as Principles of Religion, in ſome degree naturally, yet no new expreſs Revelation of it is made by the Law of *Moſes,* becauſe ſo much of that Law was peculiar to that People, and was therefore guarded, as municipal Laws us'd to be with temporal Promiſes and Threatnings, and the more expreſs Revelation of a future State was reſerv'd for the latter Days ; but our Saviour finds a very ſolid Argument for the Reſurrection, even in the Writings of *Moſes.* Much Scripture-Treaſure lies under Ground that muſt be digg'd for.

2. What his Argument was, *v.* 32. *I am the God of* Abraham : This was not an expreſs Proof, *totidem verbis,* and yet 'twas really a concluſive Argument. Conſequences from Scripture, if rightly deduced, muſt be receiv'd as Scripture ; for it was written for thoſe that have the uſe of Reaſon.

1. Now the Drift of the Argument is, to prove,

1. That there is a *future State,* another Life after this, in which the Righteous ſhall be truly and conſequently Happy : This is prov'd from what God ſaid, *I am the God of* Abraham.

(1.) For God to be any one's God, ſuppoſeth ſome very extraordinary Priviledge and Happineſs ; unleſs we know fully what God is, we could not comprehend the Riches of that Word, *I will be to thee a God,* i. e. a Benefactor *like my ſelf.* The God *of Iſrael* is a God *to Iſrael,* 1 Chron. 17. 29. A *Spiritual* Benefactor, for he is the *Father of Spirits,* and bleſſeth with Spiritual Bleſſings ; 'Tis to be an *All-*

ſufficient Benefactor, a God that is enough, a compleat Good, and an *Eternal* Benefactor; for he is himſelf an Everlaſting God, and will be to thoſe that are in Covenant with him an everlaſting Good. This great Word God had often ſaid to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and it was intended as a Recompence for their ſingular Faith and Obedience, in quitting their Country at God's Call. The *Jews* had a mighty Veneration for thoſe three Patriarchs, and would extend the Promiſe God made them to the uttermoſt.

(2.) It is manifeſt that theſe good Men had no ſuch extraordinary Happineſs befel them *in this Life*, as might look any thing like the Accompliſhment of ſo great a Word as that. They were ſtrangers in the Land of Promiſe, wandering, pinch'd with Famine, had not a foot of Ground of their own but a Burying-place (which directed them to look for ſomething beyond this Life.) In preſent Enjoyments they came far ſhort of their Neighbours, that were ſtrangers to this Covenant. What was there in this World to difference them and the Heirs of their Faith from other People any whit proportionable to the Dignity and Diſtinction of this Covenant? If no Happineſs had been reſerv'd for theſe great and good Men on the other ſide Death, that melancholy Word of poor *Jacob*'s when he was old, *Gen.* 47. 9. *Few and evil have the days of the Years of my Life been*, would have been an eternal Reproach to the Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Faithfulneſs of that God, who had ſo often call'd himſelf *the God of Jacob*.

(3.) Therefore there muſt certainly be a future State, in which as God will *ever live*, to be eternally *rewarding*; ſo *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* will ever live to be eternally rewarded. That of the Apoſtle, *Heb.* 11. 16. is a Key to this Argument, where when he had been ſpeaking of the Faith and Obedience of the Patriarchs in the Land of their Pilgrimage, he adds, *therefore God is not aſhamed to be called their God*; becauſe he *has provided for them a City*, a heavenly City; implying, that if he had not provided ſo well for them in the other World, conſidering how they ſped in this, he would have been aſham'd to have call'd himſelf their God; but now he is not, having done that for them which anſwers it in its *true intent*, and *full extent*.

2. That the Soul is Immortal, and the Body ſhall riſe again to be united; if the former Point be gain'd, theſe will follow, but are likewiſe prov'd by conſidering the Time when God ſpake this; 'twas to *Moſes* at the Buſh, long after *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* were dead and buried, and yet God ſaith, not I was, or have been, but *I am* the God of *Abraham*. Now God is *not the God of the Dead, but of the Living*. He is a living God, and communicates vital Influences to thoſe to whom he is *a God*. If when *Abraham* dy'd there had been an end of him, there had been an end likewiſe of God's Relation to him as *his God*; but at that time when God ſpoke to *Moſes* he was the God of *Abraham*, and therefore *Abraham* muſt be then alive; which proves the Immortality of the Soul in a State of Bliſs; and that by conſequence infers the Reſurrection of the Body; for there is ſuch an *Inclination* in the humane Soul to its body, as would make a *final* and *eternal* Separation *inconſiſtent* with the Bliſs of thoſe that have God for *their God*. The *Sadducees* Notion was, That the *Union* between Body and Soul is ſo *cloſe*, that when the *Body* dies, the *Soul* dies with it. Now upon the ſame Hypotheſis, if the Soul *lives*, as it certainly doth, the Body muſt ſome time or other live with it. And beſides the Lord is *for the Body*, 'tis an eſſential part of the Man, there is a *Covenant with the* Duſt, which will be remember'd, otherwiſe the Man would not be happy. The Charge which the dying Patriarchs gave *concerning their Bones*, and that *in Faith*, was an Evidence that they had ſome Expectation of the Reſurrection of their Bodies. But this Doctrine was reſerv'd for a more full Revelation after the Reſurrection of Chriſt, who was the *firſt Fruits of them that ſlept*.

Laſtly, We have the Iſſue of this Diſpute. The *Sadducees* were *put to ſilence*, v. 34. and ſo put to Shame. They thought by their Subtilty to put Chriſt to Shame, when they were preparing Shame for themſelves. But the Multitudes *were aſtoniſh'd at his Doctrine*, v. 33. (1.) Becauſe it was *new* to them. See to what a ſad paſs the Expoſition of Scripture was come among them, when People were aſtoniſh'd at it as a Miracle, to hear the fundamental Promiſe apply'd to this great Truth; they had ſorry *Scribes*, or this had been no News to them. (2.) Becauſe it had ſomething in it very good and great. Truth oft ſhines the brighter, and is the more admir'd for its being oppos'd. *Obſerve*, Many Gainſayers are *ſilenc'd*, and many Hearers *aſtoniſh'd*, when neither are ſavingly converted; yet even in the Silence and Aſtoniſhment of unſanctified Souls, God *magnifies his Law*, magnifies his Goſpel, and *makes* both *honourable*.

34 But when the Phariſees had heard that he had put the Sadduces to ſilence, they were gathered together. 35 Then one of them, *which was* a lawyer, asked *him* a queſtion, tempting him, and ſaying, 36 Maſter, which *is* the great commandment in the law? 37 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the firſt and great commandment. 39 And the ſecond *is* like unto it, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf. 40 On theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Here's a Diſcourſe which Chriſt had with a *Phariſee Lawyer*, about the great Commandment of the Law. *Obſerve*,

1. The *Combination* of the *Phariſees* againſt Chriſt, *v.* 34. They heard that he had *put the Sadducees to Silence*, had ſtop'd their Mouths, tho' their Underſtandings were not open'd; and they were *gather'd together*, not to return him the Thanks of their Party, as they ought to have done, for his effectual aſſerting and confirming the Truth againſt the *Sadducees*, the common Enemies of their Religion; but to *tempt him*, in hopes to get the Reputation of puzzling him who had puzzled the *Sadducees*: They were more vex'd that Chriſt was *honour'd*, than pleas'd that the *Sadducees* were ſilenc'd; being more concern'd for their own Tyranny and Traditions, which Chriſt oppos'd, than for the doctrine of the Reſurrection, and a future State, which the *Sadducees* oppos'd. *Note*, It is an Inſtance of *Phariſaical* Envy and Malice, to be diſpleas'd at the maintaining of a confeſſed Truth, when 'tis done by thoſe we do not like; to ſacrifice a publick Good to private Piques and Prejudices. Bleſſed *Paul* was otherwiſe minded, *Phil.* 1. 18.

2. The Lawyer's Queſtion which he put to Chriſt. The *Lawyers* were Students in, and Teachers of the Law of *Moſes*, as the *Scribes* were; but ſome think in this they differ'd, that they dealt more in *practical* Queſtions than the *Scribes*; they ſtudy'd and profeſs'd Caſuiſtical Divinity. This Lawyer *ask'd him a Queſtion, tempting him*; not with any Deſign to enſnare him, as appears by St. *Mark*'s Relation of this Story, where we find that this was he to whom Chriſt ſaid, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God, *Mark* 12. 34. But only to ſee what he would ſay, and to draw on Diſcourſe with him, to ſatisfie his own, and his Friends Curioſity.

(1.) The Queſtion was, *Maſter, which is the great Commandment of the Law?* A needleſs Queſtion, when all the things of God's Law are great things, *Hoſ.* 8. 12. and the Wiſdom from above is *without Partiality*, Partiality in the Law, *Mal.* 2. 9. and hath reſpect to them all. Yet it is true, there are ſome Commands that are the Principles of the Oracles of God, more extenſive and incluſive than others. Our Saviour ſpeaks of the *weightier Matters of the Law*, Mat. 23. 23.

(2.) The Deſign was to *try* him, or *tempt* him; to try, not ſo much his Knowledge as his Judgment. It was a Queſtion diſputed among the Criticks in the Law: Some would have the Law of *Circumciſion* to be the great Commandment, others the Law of the *Sabbath*, others the Law of *Sacrifices*, according as they ſeverally ſtood affected, and ſpent their Zeal; now they would try what Chriſt ſaid to this Queſtion, hoping to incenſe the People againſt him, if he ſhould not anſwer according to the vulgar Opinion; and if he ſhould magnifie one Commandment, they would reflect on him as villifying the reſt. The Queſtion was harmleſs enough, and it appears by comparing *Luke* 10. 27, 28. that it was an adjudg'd Point among the Lawyers, that the *Love of God* and our *Neighbour* is the *great Commandment*, and the Sum of all the reſt, and Chriſt had there approv'd it; ſo that the putting of it to him here, ſeems rather a ſcornful Deſign to Catechiſe him as a Child, than a ſpiteful Deſign to diſpute him as an Adverſary.

3. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Queſtion, and it's well for us that ſuch a Queſtion was ask'd him, that we might have this Anſwer. 'Tis no diſparagement to great Men to anſwer *plain* Queſtions. Now Chriſt recommends to us thoſe as the great Commandments, not which are ſo excluſive of others, but which are therefore ſo, becauſe incluſive of others. *Obſerve*,

1. Which theſe great Commandments are, *v.* 37, 38, 39. not the *Judicial* Laws. Thoſe could not be the *greateſt* now, the People of the *Jews*, to whom they pertained, were ſo little; not the *Ceremonial* Laws, thoſe could not be the greateſt, now they were waxen old, and were ready to vaniſh away; nor any particular moral Precept; but the Love of God and our Neighbour, which are the Spring and Foundation of all the reſt, which (theſe being ſuppos'd) will follow of courſe.

(1.) All the Law is fulfill'd in *one word*, and that is *Love*. See *Rom.* 13. 10. All Obedience begins in the Affections, and nothing in Religion is done right, that is not done there firſt. Love is the leading Affection which gives Law, and gives Ground to the reſt, and therefore that as the main Fort is to be firſt ſecur'd, and Garriſon'd for God. Man is a Creature cut out for Love; thus therefore is the Law *written in the Heart*, that it is a *Law of Love*. Love is a ſhort and ſweet word, and if that be the *fulfilling of the Law*, ſurely the Yoke of the Command is very eaſie. Love is the Reſt and Satisfaction of the Soul, if we walk in this good old Way, we ſhall *find Reſt*.

(2.) The *Love of God* is the firſt and great Commandment of all, and the Summary of all the Commands of the firſt Table. The proper act of Love being *Complacency*, God is the proper Object of it. Now God being Good Infinitely, Originally, and Eternally, he is to be loved in the firſt place, and nothing lov'd *beſide him*, but what is lov'd *for him*. *Love* is the firſt and great thing that God *demands* from us, and therefore the firſt and great thing that we ſhould *devote* to him.

Now here we are directed,

1. To love God as *ours*. Thou ſhalt love the Lord *thy God* as *thine*. The firſt Commandment is, Thou ſhalt have *no other God*; which implies, that we muſt have him for our God, and that will engage our Love to him. Thoſe that made the Sun and Moon their gods, *loved them*, Jer. 8. 2. Jud. 18. 24. To love God *as ours*, is to love him becauſe he is *ours*, our Creator, Owner, and Ruler, and to carry our

ſelves to him as ours, with Obedience to him, and Dependance on him. We muſt love God, as reconcil'd to us, and made *ours* by Covenant, that's the Foundation of this, *thy God*.

2. To love him *with all our Heart, and Soul, and Mind.* Some make theſe to ſignify one and the ſame thing, love him with all thy Powers; others diſtinguiſh them, the Heart, Soul and Mind are the Will, Affections, and Underſtandings; or the Vital, Senſitive, and Intellectual Faculties. Our Love of God muſt be a *ſincere* Love, and not in Word and Tongue only, as theirs is, who ſay they love him, but their Hearts are not with him. It muſt be a *ſtrong* Love, we muſt love him in the moſt intenſe Degree; as we muſt praiſe him, ſo we muſt love him with *all that is within us*, Pſal. 103. 1. It muſt be a *Singular* and *Superlative* Love, we muſt love him more than any thing elſe; this way the ſtream of our Affections muſt entirely run. The heart muſt be *united* to love God, in oppoſition to a *divided* Heart. All our Love is too little to beſtow upon him, and therefore all the Powers of the Soul muſt be engaged for him, and carried out towards him. This is the *firſt and great Commandment*, for Obedience to this is the Spring of Obedience to all the reſt; which is then only acceptable when it flows from Love.

(3.) To love our Neighbours as our ſelves, is the ſecond great Commandment, *v.* 39. *It is like unto that firſt*; it is incluſive of all the Precepts of the ſecond Table, as that is of the firſt. 'Tis *like it*, for it is founded upon it, and flows from it; and a right Love to our Brother whom we have ſeen, is both an Inſtance, and an Evidence of our *Love to God, whom we have not ſeen*, 1 John 4. 20.

1. It is implied that we do, and ſhould *love our ſelves.* There is a Self-love which is *corrupt*, and the *Root* of the *greateſt Sins*, and it muſt be put off and mortified: But there is a Self-love which is *natural*, and the Rule of the greateſt Duty, and it muſt be preſerv'd and ſanctified. We muſt *love our ſelves*, i. e. we muſt have a due regard to the Dignity of our own Natures, and a due concern for the Welfare of our own Souls and Bodies.

2. It is preſcrib'd, that we *love our Neighbour as our ſelves.* We muſt honour and eſteem all Men, and muſt wrong and injure none; muſt have a *Good will* to all, and good Wiſhes for all, and as we have opportunity, muſt do Good to all. We muſt love our Neighbour *as our ſelves*, as truly and ſincerely as we love our ſelves, and in the ſame Inſtances, nay, in many Caſes we muſt deny our ſelves for the Good of our Neighbour, and muſt make our ſelves Servants to the true Welfare of others, and be willing to ſpend, and be ſpent for them, to *lay down our Lives for the Brethren.*

2. *Obſerve* what the Weight and Greatneſs of theſe Commandments is, *v.* 40. *On theſe two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets*, i. e. This is the Sum and Subſtance of all thoſe Precepts relating to practical Religion, which were written in Men's Hearts by Nature, reviv'd by *Moſes*, and back'd and enforc'd by the Preaching and Writing of the Prophets. All hang upon the Law of Love, take away this, and all falls to the ground, and comes to nothing. Rituals and Ceremonials muſt give way to theſe, as muſt all ſpiritual Gifts, for Love is the *more excellent way*. This is the *Spirit of the Law* which animates it, the *Cement of the Law* which joyns it, 'tis the Root and Spring of all other Duties, the Compendium of the whole Bible, not only of the Law and the Prophets, but the Goſpel too, only ſuppoſing this Love to be the Fruit of Faith, and that we Love God in Chriſt, and our Neighbour for his ſake. All *hangs on theſe two Commandments*, as the effect doth both on its efficient, and on its final Cauſe, for the *fulfilling of the Law is Love*, Rom. 13. 10. and the *end of the Law is Love*, 1 Tim. 1. 5. The Law of Love is the Nail, is the *Nail in the ſure Place, faſtened by the Maſters of Aſſemblies*, Eccl. 12. 11. on which is *hung all the Glory of the Law and the Prophets*, Iſa. 22. 24. a Nail that ſhall never be drawn; for on this Nail all the Glory of the New *Jeruſalem* ſhall eternally hang. *Love never faileth.* Into theſe two great Commandments therefore let our Hearts be deliver'd as into a Mold, in the Defence and Evidence of theſe let us ſpend our Zeal, and not in Notions, Names and Strifes of Words, as if thoſe were the mighty things on which the Law and the Prophets hung, and to them the Love of God and our Neighbour muſt be ſacrific'd; but to the commanding Power of theſe, let every thing elſe be made to truckle.

41 While the Phariſees were gathered together, Jeſus asked them, 42 Saying, What think ye of Chriſt? whoſe Son is he? They ſay unto him, *The ſon* of David. 43 He ſaith unto them, How then doth David in ſpirit call him, Lord, ſaying, 44 The LORD ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footſtool? 45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his ſon? 46 And no man was able to anſwer him a word, neither durſt any man (from that day forth) ask him any mo queſtions.

Many Queſtions the *Phariſees* had ask'd Chriſt, by which, tho' they thought to *expoſe* him, they did but *expoſe* themſelves; but now let him ask them a Queſtion, and he will do it when they are *gather'd together*, v. 41. He did not take ſome one of them apart from the reſt, (*ne Hercules contra duos*) but to ſhame them the more, he took them *all together*, when they were in Confederacy, and Conſult againſt him, and yet puzzled them. *Note*, God delights to baffle his Enemies, when they moſt ſtrengthen themſelves, gives them all the Advantages they can wiſh for, and yet conquers them. *Aſſociate your ſelves, and you ſhall be broken in pieces*, Iſa. 3. 9, 10. Now here,

1. Chriſt propoſeth a Queſtion to them, which they could eaſily anſwer, 'twas a Queſtion in their own Catechiſm; *What think ye of Chriſt? Whoſe Son is he?* Whoſe Son do you expect the *Meſſiah* to be, who was promis'd to the Fathers? This they could eaſily anſwer, *The Son of* David. 'Twas the common Periphraſis of the *Meſſiah*, they call'd him *the Son of* David. So the *Scribes*, who expounded the Scripture, had taught them from *Pſal.* 89. 35, 36. *I will not lye unto* David, *his Seed ſhall endure for ever*, Iſa. 9. 7. *upon the Throne of David.* And *Iſa.* 11. 1. *A Rod out of the Stem of Jeſſe.* The Covenant of Royalty made with *David*, was a Figure of the Covenant of Redemption made with Chriſt; who, as *David*, was made King *with an Oath*, and was firſt humbled, and then advanced. If Chriſt was the Son of *David*, he was really and truly *Man*; *Iſrael* ſaid, *We have ten parts in* David, and *Judah* ſaid, *He is our Bone and our Fleſh*; What part have we then in the Son of *David*, who took our Nature upon him?

What think ye of Chriſt? They had put Queſtions to him, one after another out of *the Law*; but he comes and puts a Queſtion to them upon the *Promiſe*: Many are ſo full of the Law, that they forget Chriſt, as if their Duties would ſave them without his Merit and Grace. It concerns each of us ſeriouſly to ask our ſelves, *What think we of Chriſt?* Some think not of him at all, he is not in all, not in any of their Thoughts; ſome think meanly, and ſome think hardly of him, but *to them that believe he is precious*; and *how precious* then are the Thoughts of him? While the Daughters of *Jeruſalem* think no more of Chriſt than of another Beloved, the Spouſe thinks of him as the Chief of ten Thouſands.

2. He ſtarts a Difficulty upon their Anſwer, which they could not ſo eaſily ſolve, *v.* 43, 44, 45. Many can ſo readily *affirm* the Truth, that they think they have Knowledge enough to be *proud of*, who, when they are call'd to *confirm* the Truth, and to vindicate and defend it, ſhew they have Ignorance enough to be *aſham'd of.* The Objection Chriſt rais'd was, If Chriſt be *David's Son*, how then doth *David in Spirit call him Lord?* He did not hereby deſign to *enſnare* them, as they did him, but to *inſtruct* them in a Truth, they were loth to believe that the expected *Meſſiah* is God.

(1.) It is eaſie to ſee that *David* calls Chriſt Lord, and this *in Spirit*, being Divinely Inſpired, and acted therein by a *Spirit of Prophecy*; for it was the *Spirit of the Lord that ſpake by him*, 2 Sam. 23. 1, 2. *David* was one of thoſe *holy Men* that ſpake *as he was moved by the Holy Ghoſt*, eſpecially in *calling Chriſt Lord*; for it was then, as it is ſtill, (1 *Cor.* 12. 3.) that *no Man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord*, but *by the Holy Ghoſt.* Now to prove that *David* in Spirit call'd Chriſt Lord, he quotes *Pſal.* 110. 1. Which *Pſalm* the *Scribes* themſelves underſtood of Chriſt; of him 'tis certain the Prophet there ſpeaks, of him, and of no other Man: And it is a Prophetical Summary of the Doctrine of Chriſt, it deſcribes him executing the Offices of a Prophet, Prieſt, and King, both in his Eſtate of Humiliation, and Exaltation.

Chriſt quotes the whole Verſe, which ſhews the Redeemer in his Exaltation. 1. *Sitting at the right hand of God.* His *ſitting* notes both *Reſt* and *Rule*; his ſitting *at God's Right hand*, notes Superlative Honour, and Sovereign Power. See in what great words this is expreſs'd, *Heb.* 8. 1. *He is ſet on the Right-hand of the Throne of the Majeſty.* See *Phil.* 2. 9. *Eph.* 1. 21. He did not take this Honour to himſelf, but was *Entitled* to it by Covenant with his Father, and *Inveſted* in it by Commiſſion from him, and here's that Commiſſion. 2. *Subduing his Enemies.* There he ſhall ſit till they be all made either his Friends, or *his footſtool.* The carnal Mind, wherever it is, is Enmity to Chriſt, and that is ſubdued in the *Converſion* of the *willing People* that are *called to his Foot*, as the Expreſſion is, *Iſa.* 41. 2. And in the Confuſion of his impenitent Adverſaries, that ſhall be brought *under his Foot*, as the Kings of *Canaan* were under the Feet of *Joſhua.*

But that which this Verſe is quoted for is, that *David* calls the Meſſiah *his Lord, the Lord Jehovah*, ſaid unto *my Lord*: This intimates to us, that in expounding Scripture, we muſt take notice of, and improve, not only that which is the main Scope and Senſe of a Verſe, but of the Words and Phraſes, by which the Spirit chuſeth to expreſs that Senſe, which have many times a very uſeful and inſtructive Significancy. Here's a good Note from that Word, *My Lord.*

(2.) It is not ſo eaſie for thoſe who believe not the God-head of the *Meſſiah* to clear this from an Abſurdity; if Chriſt be *David*'s *Son.* 'Tis incongruous for the Father to ſpeak of his Son, the Predeceſſor of his Succeſſor, as *his Lord. If* David *call him Lord*, that is laid down, *v.* 45. as the *magnis notum*, the more evident Truth; for whatever is ſaid of Chriſt's Humanity, and Humiliation, muſt be conſtrued and underſtood in conſiſtency with the Truth of his Divine Nature and Dominion. We muſt hold this faſt, that he is *David*'s Lord, and by that explain his being *David*'s Son. The ſeeming Differences of Scripture, as here, may not only be accommodated, but contribute to the Beauty and Harmony of the whole. *Amica Scripturarum lites, utinam & noſtræ.*

3. We have here the Succeſs of this gentle Tryal which Chriſt made of the *Phariſees* Knowledge; in two things:

1. It *puzzled* them, *v.* 46. *No man was able to anſwer him a word*; either 'twas their Ignorance that they did not know, or their Impiety, that they would not own the *Meſſiah* to be God, which Truth was

the only Key to unlock this Difficulty. What thoſe *Rabbies* could not then anſwer, bleſſed be God, the plaineſt Chriſtian that is led into the Underſtanding of the Goſpel of Chriſt can now account for; that *Chriſt as God*, was *David's Lord*, and Chriſt *as Man*, was *David*'s Son. This he did not now himſelf explain, but reſerv'd it till the Proof of it was compleated by his Reſurrection; but we have it fully explain'd by him in his Glory, *Rev.* 22. 16. *I am the Root, and Off-ſpring of David*, Chriſt as God, was *David's Root*, Chriſt as Man, was *David*'s *Off-ſpring*. If we hold not faſt this Truth, that Jeſus Chriſt is over all, God bleſſed for ever, we run our ſelves into inextricable Difficulties. And well might *David*, his remote Anceſtor, call him *Lord*, when *Mary*, his immediate Mother, after ſhe had conceiv'd him, call'd him *Lord*, and *God her Saviour*, Luke 1. 46, 47.

2. It *ſilenc'd* them, and all others that ſought occaſion againſt him; *neither durſt any Man from that Day forth ask him any more* ſuch captious, tempting, enſnaring *Queſtions*. *Note*, God will glorifie himſelf in the Silencing of many, whom he will not glorifie himſelf in the Salvation of. Many are convinced that are not converted by the Word. Had theſe been converted, they would have ask'd him more Queſtions, eſpecially that great Queſtion, *What muſt we do to be ſaved?* But ſince they could not gain their Point, they would have no more to do with him. But thus all that ſtrive with their Maſter ſhall be convinc'd, as theſe *Phariſees* and Lawyers here were, of the Inequality of the Match.

CHAP. XXIII.

In the foregoing Chapter we had our Saviour's Diſcourſes with the Scribes *and* Phariſees, *here we have his Diſcourſe concerning them, or rather againſt them.* (1.) *He allows their Office*, v. 2, 3. (2.) *He warns his Diſciples not to imitate their Hypocriſie and Pride*, v. 4.—12. (3.) *He exhibits a Charge againſt them for divers high Crimes and Miſdemeanors, Corrupting the Law, Oppoſing the Goſpel, and treacherous Dealing both with God and Man; and to each Article he prefixes a Woe*, v. 13.—33. (4.) *He paſſeth Sentence upon* Jeruſalem, *and foretels the Ruin of the City and Temple, eſpecially for the Sin of Perſecution*, v. 34—39.

THen ſpake Jeſus to the multitude, and to his diſciples, 2 Saying, The Scribes and the Phariſees ſit in Moſes ſeat. 3 All therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, *that* obſerve and do; but do not ye after their works: for they ſay, and do not. 4 For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be born, and lay *them* on mens ſhoulders, but they themſelves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do, for to be ſeen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6 And love the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts, and the chief ſeats in ſynagogues, 7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. 8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your maſter, *even* Chriſt, and all ye are brethren. 9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your father which is in heaven. 10 Neither be ye called maſters: for one is your maſter, *even* Chriſt. 11 But he that is greateſt among you, ſhall be your ſervant. 12 And whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall be exalted.

We find not Chriſt in all his Preaching ſo ſevere upon any ſort of People as upon theſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; for the Truth is, nothing is more directly oppoſite to the Spirit of the Goſpel, than the Temper and Practice of that Generation of Men, who were made up of Pride, Worldlineſs, and Tyranny, under a Cloke and Pretence of Religion. Yet theſe were the Idols, and Darlings of the People, who thought, if but two Men went to Heaven, one would be a *Phariſee*. Now Chriſt directs his Diſcourſe here *to the Multitude, and to his Diſciples*, v. 1. to rectifie their Miſtakes concerning theſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, by painting them out in their true Colours, and ſo to take off the Prejudice which ſome of the Multitude had conceiv'd againſt Chriſt and his Doctrine; becauſe it was oppos'd by thoſe topping Men of their Church, that call'd themſelves the People's Guides. *Note*, It is good to know the true Characters of Men, that we may not be impos'd upon by great and mighty Names, Titles, and Pretenſions to Power. People muſt be told of the *Wolves*, Acts 20. 29, 30. the Dogs, *Phil.* 3. 2. the *deceitful Workers*, 2 Cor. 11. 13. that they may know where to ſtand upon their Guard. And not only the mixt Multitude, but even the Diſciples need theſe Cautions; for good Men are apt to have their Eyes dazzled with worldly Pomp.

Now in this Diſcourſe,

1. Chriſt allows their Office as Expoſitors of the Law. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, (that is, the whole *Sanhedrin*, who ſate at the Helm of Church-Government, who were all call'd *Scribes*, and were ſome of them *Phariſees*,) they ſit in *Moſes Seat*, v. 2. as publick Teachers and Interpreters of the Law; and the Law of *Moſes* being the *municipal* Law of their State, they were as Judges, or a Bench of Juſtices; *Teaching* and *Judging* ſeem to be *equivalent*, comparing 2 *Chron.* 17. 7, 9. with 2 *Chron.* 19. 5, 6, 8. They were not the *itinerate* Judges that *rode the Circuit*, but the ſtanding Bench that determin'd on Appeals, ſpecial Verdicts, or Writs of Error by the Law. They ſate in *Moſes*'s Seat; not as he was Mediator between God and *Iſrael*, but only as he was *Chief Juſtice*, Exod. 18. 26. Or we may apply it, not to the *Sanhedrin*, but to the other *Phariſees* and *Scribes* that expounded the Law, and taught the People how to apply it to particular Caſes. The *Pulpit of Wood*, ſuch as was made for *Ezra*, that *ready Scribe in the Law of God*, (Neh. 8. 4.) is here call'd *Moſes*'s Seat, becauſe *Moſes had thoſe in every City*, (ſo the Expreſſion is, *Acts* 15. 21.) which in thoſe Pulpits *Preached him*. This was their Office, and it was juſt and honourable. It was requiſite there ſhould be ſome, at whoſe Mouth the People might *enquire the Law*, Mal. 2. 7. *Note*, (1.) There's many a good Place fill'd with *bad Men*. 'Tis no new thing for the *vileſt Men* to be *exalted* even to *Moſes*'s Seat, *Pſal.* 12. 8. And when it is ſo, the Men are not ſo much honour'd by the Seat, as the Seat is diſhonour'd by the Men. Now they that ſate in *Moſes*'s Seat being ſo wretchedly degenerated as they were, it was time for the great Prophet to ariſe, like unto *Moſes*, to erect another Seat. (2.) Good and uſeful Offices and Powers are not therefore to be preſently condemn'd and aboliſh'd, becauſe they fall ſometimes into the Hands of ill Men that abuſe them. We muſt not therefore pull down *Moſes*'s Seat, becauſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees* have got Poſſeſſion of it, rather than ſo, *let both grow together until the Harveſt*, Mat. 13. 30.

Hence he infers, *v.* 3. *Whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do.* As far as they *ſit in* Moſes's *Seat*, i. e. Read, and Preach the Law that was given by *Moſes*, (which as yet continued *in full Force, Power, and Vertue*) and judge according to that Law; ſo far you muſt hearken to them, as Remembrancers to you of the *written Word*. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* made it their Buſineſs to ſtudy the Scripture, and were well acquainted with the Language, Hiſtory, and Cuſtoms of it, and its Style and Phraſeology: Now Chriſt would have the People to make uſe of the Helps they gave them for the underſtanding of the Scripture, and do accordingly. As long as their Comments did *illuſtrate* the Text, and not *pervert* it, did *make plain*, and not *make void* the Commandment of God, ſo far they muſt be obſerv'd and obey'd, but with Caution, and a Judgment of Diſcretion. *Note*, We muſt not think the worſe of *good Truths*, for their being Preach'd by *bad Miniſters*, nor of *good Laws*, for their being executed by *bad Magiſtrates*. Tho' 'tis moſt deſirable to have our Food brought by Angels, yet if God ſend it us by Ravens, if it be good and wholſome, we muſt take it, and thank God for it. Our Lord Jeſus premiſeth this, to prevent the Cavil which ſome would be apt to make at his following Diſcourſe; as if by condemning the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, he deſign'd to bring the Law of *Moſes* into Contempt, and to draw People off from it; whereas he came not to *deſtroy*, but to *fulfil*. *Note*, 'Tis Wiſdom to obviate the Exceptions which may be taken at juſt Reproofs, eſpecially when there is occaſion to diſtinguiſh between Officers and their Offices, *that the Miniſtry be not blam'd* when the Miniſters are.

2. He condemns the Men. He had order'd the Multitude to *do as they taught*; but here he annexeth a Caution, not to *do as they did*, to beware of their Leaven. *Do not ye after their Works.* Their Traditions were *their Works*, were their *Idols*, the Works of their Fancy. Or, do not according to their Example. Doctrines and Practices are both *Spirits* that muſt be *tried*, and where there is occaſion, muſt be carefully ſeparated and diſtinguiſh'd. And as we muſt not ſwallow *corrupt* Doctrines for the ſake of any *laudable* Practices of thoſe that *teach* them, ſo we muſt not imitate any *ill* Examples for the ſake of the *plauſible* Doctrines of thoſe that *give* them. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* boaſted as much of the goodneſs of their *Works*, as of the Orthodoxy of their Teaching, and hoped to be juſtified *by them*; 'twas the Plea they put in, *Luke* 18. 11, 12. And yet theſe things which they valued themſelves ſo much upon were an Abomination in the ſight of God.

Our Saviour here, and in the following Verſes, inſtances in divers Particulars of *their Works*, wherein we muſt not imitate them. In general they are charg'd with Hypocriſie, *Diſſimulation*, or *double-Dealing* in Religion; a Crime which cannot be enquir'd of at Men's Bar, becauſe we can only judge *according to outward Appearance*; but God, who ſearcheth the Heart, can convict of Hypocriſie, and nothing is more diſpleaſing to him, for he *deſireth Truth*.

Four Things are in theſe Verſes charg'd upon them.

Firſt, Their *Saying* and *Doing* were *two Things*.

Their Practice was no way agreeable, either with their Preaching, or with their Profeſſion; for the *ſay and do not*. They teach out of the Law that which is good, but their Converſation gives them the Lie, and they ſeem to have found another way to Heaven for themſelves, than what they ſhew to others. See this illuſtrated and charg'd home upon them, *Rom.* 2. 17,—24. Thoſe are of all Sinners moſt inexcuſable, that allow themſelves in the ſame Sins they condemn in others, or in worſe. This doth eſpecially touch *wicked Miniſters*, who will be ſure to have their Portion appointed them with Hypocrites, *Mat.* 24. 51. for what greater Hypocriſie can there be, than to preſs that upon others, to be believ'd and done, which they themſelves live in unbelief of, and diſobedience to, who pull down in their Practice what they build up in their Preaching; who when they are in the Pulpit, Preach ſo well, that it's pity they ſhould ever come out; but when they are out of the Pulpit, live ſo ill, that 'tis pity they ſhould ever come in; like Bells that call others to Church, but hang out themſelves, or mercurial Poſts that point the way to others, but ſtand ſtill themſelves; ſuch will be *judged out of their own Mouths*.

It is applicable to all others that *ſay, and do not*; that make a plauſible Profeſſion of Religion, but do not live up to that Profeſſion; that make fair Promiſes, but do not perform their Promiſes; are full of good Diſcourſe, and can lay down the Law to all about them, but are as empty of good Works, great Talkers, but little Doers; the Voice is *Jacob*'s Voice, but the *Hands* are the Hands of *Eſau*. *Vox & preterea nihil.* They ſpeak fair, *I go, Sir*, but there's no truſting them, for there are *ſeven Abominations in their Heart*.

Secondly, They were *very ſevere* in *impoſing* upon others thoſe things, which they were not *themſelves* willing to *ſubmit* to the Burthen of, *v.* 4. They bind *heavy Burthens, and grievous to be born*; not only inſiſting upon the minute Circumſtances of the Law, which is call'd a *Yoke*, Acts 15. 10. and preſſing the Obſervation of them with more Strictneſs and Severity than God himſelf did; (whereas the Maxim of the Lawyers is, *Apices Juris, non ſunt Jura*) but by adding to his Words, and impoſing their own Inventions and Traditions under the higheſt Penalties. They lov'd to ſhew their Authority, and to exerciſe their domineering Faculty, Lording it over God's Heritage, and ſaying to Men's Souls, *Bow down, that we may go over.* Witneſs their many Additions to the Law of the Fourth Commandment, by which they made the Sabbath a Burthen on Men's Shoulders, which was deſign'd to be the Joy of their Hearts. Thus with Force and Cruelty did thoſe Shepherds *rule the Flock*, as of old, *Ezek.* 34. 4.

But ſee their Hypocriſie, *they themſelves will not move them with one of their Fingers.* (1.) They would not *exerciſe themſelves* in thoſe things which they *impos'd* upon *others*; they preſs'd upon the People a Strictneſs in Religion, which they themſelves would not be bound by; but *ſecretly tranſgreſs'd* their own Traditions, which they *publickly inforc'd*. They indulged their Pride in giving Law to others, but conſulted their Eaſe in their own Practice. Thus it has been ſaid to the Reproach of the Popiſh Prieſts, that they faſt with Wine and Sweetmeats, while they force the People to faſt with Bread and Water, and decline the Penances they enjoyn the Laity. (2.) They would not *eaſe* the People in theſe things, not put a Finger to lighten their Burthen, when they ſaw it pinch'd them. They could find out looſe Conſtructions to put upon God's Law, and could *diſpence* with that, but would not *bate an ace* of their own Impoſitions, nor diſpenſe with a Failure in the leaſt Punctilio of them. They allow'd no *Chancery* to relieve the Extremity of their *common Law*. How contrary to this was the Practice of Chriſt's Apoſtles, who would allow to others that uſe of Chriſtian Liberty, which for the Peace and Edification of the Church they would deny themſelves in. They would lay no other Burthen but neceſſary things, and thoſe eaſie, *Acts* 15. 28. How carefully doth *Paul ſpare* thoſe to whom he writes, 1 *Cor.* 7. 28.—9. 12.

Thirdly, They were all for *Shew*, and nothing for *Subſtance* in Religion, *v.* 5. *All their Works they do to be ſeen of Men.* We muſt do ſuch good Works, that they who ſee them may *glorifie God*; but we muſt not proclaim our good Works, with deſign that others may ſee them, and *glorifie us*; which our Saviour here chargeth upon the *Phariſees* in general, as he had done before in the particular Inſtances of *Prayer*, and *giving of Alms*. All their End was to be *praiſed of Men*, and therefore all their Endeavour was to be *ſeen of Men*, to *make a fair ſhew* in the Fleſh. In thoſe Duties of Religion, which fall under the Eye of Men, none ſo conſtant and abundant as they; but in what lies between God and their Souls, in the Retirements of their Cloſets, and the Receſſes of their Hearts, they deſire to be excus'd. *The Form of Godlineſs* will get them a *Name to live*, which is all they aim at, and therefore trouble not themſelves with the Power of it, which is eſſential to a Life indeed. He that *doth all to be ſeen*, doth *nothing to the purpoſe*.

He inſtanceth two things, which they did to be *ſeen of Men*.

1. They *make broad their Phylacteries*. Thoſe were little Scrolls of Paper, or Parchment, wherein were written, with great Niceneſs, theſe four Paragraphs of the Law, *Exod.* 13. 2, to *v.* 11. *Exod.* 13. 11,—16. *Deut.* 6. 4,—9. *Deut.* 11. 13,—21. Theſe were ſown up in Leather, and worn upon their Foreheads, and left Arms; 'twas a Tradition of the Elders, which had reference to *Exod.* 13. 9. and *Prov.* 7. 3. where the Expreſſions ſeem to be Figurative, intimating no more, but that we ſhould bear the things of God in our Minds as carefully, as if we had them bound *between our Eyes*. Now the *Phariſees made broad theſe Phylacteries*, that they might be thought more holy, and ſtrict, and zealous for the Law than others. 'Tis a gracious Ambition to covet to be really more holy than others; but it is a proud Ambition to covet to appear ſo. 'Tis good to excel in real Piety, but not to exceed in outward Shews, for over-doing is juſtly ſuſpected of Deſign, *Prov.* 27. 14. 'Tis the Guiſe of Hypocriſie to make more ado than needs in external Services, more than is needful, either to *prove*, or to improve the good Affections and Diſpoſitions of the Soul.

2. They *enlarged the Borders of their Garments*. God appointed the *Jews* to make *Borders*, or *Fringes* upon their Garments, *Num.* 15. 38. to diſtinguiſh them from other Nations, and to be a Memorandum to them of their being a *peculiar* People; but the *Phariſees* were not content to have theſe Borders like other Peoples, which might ſerve God's Deſign in appointing them: But they muſt be larger than ordinary, to anſwer their Deſign of making themſelves to be taken notice of, as if they were more Religious than others. But thoſe who thus inlarge their *Phylacteries*, and the *Borders of their Garments*, while their Hearts are ſtraitned, and deſtitute of the Love of God and their Neighbour; tho' they may now *deceive others*, will in the end *deceive themſelves*.

Fourthly, They much affected *Preheminence* and *Superiority*, and *prided* themſelves extremely in it. *Pride* was the darling, reigning Sin of the *Phariſees*, the Sin that did moſt eaſily beſet them, and which our Lord Jeſus takes all Occaſions to witneſs againſt.

1. He deſcribes their Pride, *v.* 6, 7. They courted and coveted,

(1.) *Places* of *Honour* and *Reſpect*. In all publick Appearances, as at Feaſts, and in the Synagogues, they expected, and had to their Hearts Delight, the *uppermoſt Rooms*, and the *chief Seats*. They took place of all others, and Precedency was adjudg'd to them as Perſons of the greateſt Note, and Merit; and 'tis eaſie to imagine what a Complacency they took in it; they *loved to have the Preheminence*, 3 *John* 9. It is not *poſſeſſing* the uppermoſt Rooms, nor ſitting in the chief Seats that is condemn'd, (ſome body muſt ſit uppermoſt) but *loving* them, for Men to *value* ſuch a little piece of Ceremony as ſitting higheſt, going firſt, taking the Wall, or the better Hand, and to *value themſelves by it*, and ſeek it, and reſent it, if they have it not; what is that but making an Idol of our ſelves, and then falling down and Worſhipping it? the worſt kind of Idolatry. 'Tis bad any where, but eſpecially *in the Synagogues*. There to ſeek Honour to our ſelves, where we come to give Glory to God, and to humble our ſelves before him, is indeed to mock God inſtead of ſerving him. *David* would willingly *lie at the Threſhold* in God's Houſe; ſo far was he from coveting the chief Seat there, *Pſal.* 84. 10. It ſavours much of Pride and Hypocriſie, when People do not care for going to Church, unleſs they could *look fine*, and make a Figure there.

(2.) *Titles* of *Honour* and *Reſpect*. They *lov'd Greetings in the Markets*, lov'd to have People put off their Hats to them, and ſhew them Reſpect when they met them in the Streets; O how it pleas'd them, and fed a vain Humour, *digito monſtrari & dicier, hic eſt*, to have way made for them in the Crowd of Market-people, ſtand off, here's a *Phariſee* coming, and to be complemented with the high and pompous Title of *Rabbi, Rabbi*; this was Meat, and Drink, and Dainties to them, and they took as great a Satisfaction in it as *Nebuchadnezzar* did in his Palace, when he ſaid, *Is not this great* Babylon *that I have built?* The *Greetings* would not have done them half ſo much good, if they had not been *in the Markets*, where every body might ſee how much they were reſpected, and how high they ſtood in the Opinion of the People. It was but a little before Chriſt's Time that the *Jewiſh* Teachers, the Maſters of *Iſrael*, had aſſum'd the Titles of *Rabbi, Rab*, and *Rabban*, which ſignifies *Great*, or *Much*, and was conſtrued as *Doctor*, or *my Lord*: And they laid ſuch a ſtreſs upon it, that they gave it for a Maxim, That he who ſaluteth his Teacher, and doth not call him *Rabbi*, provokes the Divine Majeſty to *depart from Iſrael*; ſo much Religion did they place in that which was but a piece of good Manners. For him that is *taught in the Word*, to give Reſpect to him that teacheth, is *commendable enough* in him that gives it; but for him that teacheth to love it, and demand it, and affect it, to be puffed up with it, and to be diſpleas'd if it be omitted, is ſinful and abominable, and inſtead of *teaching*, he has need himſelf to *learn* the firſt Leſſon in the School of Chriſt, which is *Humility*.

2. He cautions his Diſciples againſt being herein like them. Herein they muſt not do after their Works. But *be not ye called ſo*, for ye ſhall not be of ſuch a Spirit, *v.* 8, *&c.*

Here's 1. A Prohibition of Pride. They are here forbidden,

(1.) To challenge Titles of Honour and Dominion to themſelves, *v.* 8, 10. 'tis repeated twice, *Be not called Rabbi, neither be ye called Maſter*, or Guide, not that it is unlawful to give civil Reſpect to thoſe that are over us in the Lord; nay, it is an Inſtance of that Honour and Eſteem of them, which is our Duty. But (1.) Chriſt's Miniſters muſt not *affect* the Name of *Rabbi*, or *Maſter*, by way of Diſtinction from other People; 'tis not agreeable to the Simplicity of the Goſpel, for them to covet or accept the Honour which they have that are in *Kings Palaces*. (2) They muſt not *aſſume* the Authority and Dominion that is implied in thoſe Names; they muſt not be magiſterial, nor domineer over their Brethren, or over *God's Heritage*, as if they had *Dominion over the Faith* of Chriſtians: What they received of the Lord, all muſt receive from them, but in other things they muſt not make their Opinions and Wills a Rule and Standard to all other People; to be *admitted* with an *implicit* Faith, and *ſubmitted* to with an implicit Obedience. The Reaſons for this Prohibition are,

1. *One is your Maſter, even Chriſt*, *v.* 8. And again, *v.* 10. *Note*, 1. Chriſt is *our Maſter*, our Teacher, our Guide. Mr. *George Herbert*, when he named the Name of Chriſt, uſually added, *My Maſter*. (2.) Chriſt only is *our Maſter*; Miniſters are but Uſhers in the School, Chriſt only is the *Maſter*, that *great Prophet*, whom we muſt hear, and be rul'd and over-rul'd by, whoſe Word muſt be an Oracle and a Law to us; *verily I ſay unto you*, muſt be enough to us: And if he only be our Maſter, then for his Miniſters to ſet up for Dictators, and to pretend to a Supremacy, and an Infallibility, is a daring Uſurpation of that Honour of Chriſt, which he will not give to another.

2. *All ye are Brethren*. Miniſters are not only Brethren to one another, but to the People, and therefore it ill becomes them to be *Maſters*, when there are none for them to maſter it over but *their Brethren*; yea, and we are all younger Brethren, otherwiſe the eldeſt

might claim an *excellency of Dignity and Power,* Gen. 49. 3. But to preclude that Chriſt himſelf is *the firſt born among many Brethren,* Rom. 8. 29. *Ye are Brethren,* as ye are all Diſciples of the ſame Maſter: School-Fellows are *Brethren,* and as ſuch ſhould help one another in getting their Leſſon, but it will by no means be allow'd that one of the Scholars ſtep into the Maſter's Seat, and give Law to the School. If we are *all Brethren,* we muſt not be *many Maſters,* Jam. 3. 1.

(2.) They are forbidden to aſcribe ſuch Titles to others, *v.* 9. *Call no man your Father upon Earth:* Conſtitute no Man the *Father* of your Religion, that is, the Founder, Author, Director, and Governour of it. The *Fathers of our Fleſh* muſt be call'd *Fathers,* and as ſuch we muſt give them Reverence, but God only muſt be owned as the *Father of our Spirits,* Heb. 12. 9. Our Religion muſt not be *derived from,* or made to *depend* upon *any Man.* We are born again to the Spiritual and Divine Life, not of *corruptible Seed, but by the Word of God;* not *of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.* Now the Will of Man not being the *Riſe* of our Religion, muſt not be the *Rule* of it: We muſt not *jurare in verba Magiſtri;* not ſwear to the Dictates of any Creature, not the wiſeſt or beſt, nor pin our Faith on any Man's Sleeve, becauſe we know not whither he will carry it. St. *Paul* calls himſelf a *Father* to thoſe whoſe Converſion he had been an Inſtrument of, 1 *Cor.* 4. 10. *Philem.* 10. but he pretends to no Dominion over them, and uſeth that Title to note not Authority but Affections; therefore he calls them not his *obliged,* but his *beloved* Sons, 1 *Cor.* 4. 14.

The Reaſon given is, *One is your Father which is in Heaven:* God is our Father, and is all in all in our Religion. He is the Fountain of it, and its Founder; the Life of it, and its Lord; from whom alone, as the Original, our Spiritual Life is deriv'd, and on whom it doth depend. He is the *Father* of all *Lights,* Jam. 1. 17. that *one Father, from whom are all things, and we in him,* Eph. 4. 6. Chriſt having taught us to ſay, *Our Father which art in Heaven;* let us *call no Man Father upon Earth; no Man,* becauſe Man is a Worm, and the Son of Man is a Worm, hewn out of the ſame Rock with us, eſpecially not *upon Earth,* for Man upon Earth is a *ſinful* Worm; there is *not a juſt Man upon Earth* that doth Good and *ſins not,* and therefore not fit to be called *Father.*

2. Here's a Precept of Humility and mutual Subjection, *v.* 11. *He that is greateſt among you ſhall be your Servant,* not only *call* himſelf ſo; we know of one that ſtyles himſelf *Servus Servorum Dei,* but acts as Rabbi, and Father, and Maſter, and *Dominus Deus noſter,* and what not; but he ſhall *be ſo:* Take it as a Promiſe, he ſhall be accounted greateſt, and ſtand higheſt in the Favour of God, that is moſt ſubmiſſive and ſerviceable; or as a Precept, he that is advanc'd to any Place of Dignity, Truſt and Honour in the Church, *let him be your Servant* (ſome Copies read ἔςω for ἔςαι.) Let him not think that his Patent of Honour is a Writ of Eaſe; no, he that is greateſt is not a Lord but a *Miniſter.* St. *Paul,* who knew his Priviledge as well as Duty, tho' *free from all, yet made himſelf Servant of all,* 1 Cor. 9. 19. And our Maſter frequently preſs'd it upon his Diſciples to be humble and ſelf-denying, mild and condeſcending, and to abound in all Offices of Chriſtian Love, tho' mean, and to the meaneſt, and of this hath ſet us an Example.

3. Here's a good Reaſon for all this, *v.* 12. Conſider,

1. The Puniſhment intended for the Proud: *Whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf ſhall be abaſed.* If God give them Repentance, they will be abaſed in their own Eyes, and will abhor themſelves for it; if they repent not ſooner or later, they will be abaſed before the World. *Nebuchadnezzar* in the height of his Pride, was turn'd to be a Fellow-Commoner with the Beaſts; *Herod* to be a Feaſt for the Worms, and *Babylon,* that ſate as a Queen, to be the Scorn of Nations. God made the proud and aſpiring Prieſts contemptible and baſe, *Mal.* 2. 9. and the *lying* Prophet to be the Tail, *Iſa.* 9. 15. But if proud Men have not Marks of Humiliation ſet upon them in this World, there is a Day coming when they ſhall *riſe to everlaſting Shame and Contempt,* Dan. 12. 2. ſo *plentifully* will he *reward the proud Doer,* Pſal. 31. 23.

2. The Preferment intended for the Humble; he that ſhall *humble himſelf* ſhall be *exalted:* Humility is that *Ornament* which is *in the ſight* of God *of great Price.* In this World the Humble have their Honour of being accepted with the Holy God, and reſpected by all wiſe and good Men, of being qualified for, and oft call'd out to moſt honourable Services; for Honour is like the Shadow, which flees from thoſe that purſue it, and graſp at it, but follows thoſe that flee from it. However in the other World, they that have humbled themſelves in Contrition for their Sin, in compliance with their God, and in condeſcention to their Brethren, ſhall be exalted to inherit the Throne of Glory; ſhall be not only own'd, but crown'd before Angels and Men.

13 But wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye ſhut up the kingdom of heaven againſt men; for ye neither go in your ſelves, neither ſuffer ye them that are entring to go in. 14 Wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye devour widows houſes, and for a pretence make long prayer; therefore ye ſhall receive the greater damnation. 15 Wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye compaſs ſea and land to make one proſelyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell then your ſelves. 16 Wo unto you, ye blind guides, which ſay, Whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the temple, it is nothing: but whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the gold of the temple, he is a debter. 17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that ſanctifieth the gold? 18 And whoſoever ſhall ſwear by the altar, it is nothing: but whoſoever ſweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that ſanctifieth the gift? 20 Whoſo therefore ſhall ſwear by the altar, ſweareth by it, and by all things thereon. 21 And whoſo ſhall ſwear by the temple, ſweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. 22 And he that ſhall ſwear by heaven, ſweareth by the throne of God, and by him that ſitteth thereon. 23 Wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint, and aniſe, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 24 Ye blind guides, which ſtrain at a gnat, and ſwallow a camel. 25 Wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye make clean the outſide of the cup, and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and exceſs. 26 Thou blind Phariſee, cleanſe firſt that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outſide of them may be clean alſo. 27 Wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited ſepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanneſs. 28 Even ſo ye alſo outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocriſie and iniquity. 29 Wo unto you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites; becauſe ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garniſh the ſepulchres of the righteous: 30 And ſay, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. 31 Wherefore ye be witneſſes unto your ſelves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. 32 Fill ye up then the meaſure of your fathers. 33 Ye ſerpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye eſcape the damnation of hell?

In theſe Verſes we have eight *Woes* levell'd directly againſt the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, like ſo many claps of Thunder, or Flaſhes of Lightning from Mount *Sinai: Three* Woes are made to look very dreadful, *Rev.* 8. 13—9. 10. But here are *eight* Woes in oppoſition to the *eight Beatitudes,* Mat. 5. 3. The Goſpel has its *Woes* as well as the Law, and Goſpel-Curſes are of all other the heavieſt. Theſe *Woes* are the more remarkable, not only becauſe of the Authority, but becauſe of the meekneſs and gentleneſs of him that denounced them. He came to *bleſs,* and lov'd to *bleſs,* but if *his Wrath be kindled,* to be ſure there's cauſe for it; and *who ſhall intreat for him* that the great Interceſſor pleads againſt? A Woe from Chriſt is a *remedileſs* Woe.

This is here the Burthen of the Song, and it is a heavy Burthen; *Woe unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites. Note,* (1.) The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were *Hypocrites;* that's it, in which all the reſt of their ill Characters are ſum'd up: 'Twas the *Leaven* which gave the reliſh to all they ſaid and did. An *Hypocrite* is a *Stage-player* in Religion; that's the primary Signification of the Word, he perſonates or acts the part of one that he neither *is* nor *may be,* or perhaps that he neither *is* nor *would be.* (2.) That Hypocrites are in a *woful* State and Condition. *Woe to Hypocrites,* ſo he ſaid, whoſe ſaying their Caſe is miſerable makes it ſo; while they live their Religion is vain, when they dye their Ruin is great.

Now each of theſe *Woes* againſt the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* has a Reaſon annex'd to it, containing a ſeveral Crime charg'd upon them, proving their Hypocriſy, and juſtifying the Judgment of Chriſt upon them; for his *Woes,* his *Curſes* are never *cauſeleſs*

Firſt, They were ſworn Enemies to the Goſpel of Chriſt, and conſequently to the Salvation of the Souls of Men, *v.* 13. They *ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt Men, i. e.* they did all they could to keep People from believing in Chriſt, and ſo entring into his Kingdom. Chriſt came to *open the Kingdom of Heaven,* that is, to lay open for us a new and living way into it, to bring Men to be Subjects of that Kingdom. Now the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* who ſate in *Moſes*'s Seat, and pretended to the *Key of Knowledge,* ought to have contributed their Aſſiſtance herein, by opening thoſe Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, which pointed at the Meſſiah and his Kingdom, in their true proper Senſe; they that undertook to expound *Moſes* and the *Prophets,* ſhould have ſhew'd the People how they *teſtified of Chriſt;* that *Daniel's*

Weeks were expiring, the Scepter was departed from *Judah*, and therefore now was the time for the *Meſſiah*'s appearing. Thus they might have facilitated that great Work, and have help'd thouſands to Heaven, but inſtead of this they *ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven*; they made it their Buſineſs to *preſs* the *Ceremonial Law*, which was now in the *vaniſhing*, and to *ſuppreſs* the *Prophecies*, which were now in the *accompliſhing*, and to beget and nouriſh up in the Minds of the People Prejudices againſt Chriſt and his Doctrine.

1. They would not *go in themſelves*; *Have any of the Rulers, or of the Phariſees believed on him?* Joh. 7 48. No, they were too proud to ſtoop to his Meanneſs, too formal to be reconciled to his Plainneſs; they did not like a Religion which inſiſted ſo much on Humility, Self-denial, Contempt of the World, and Spiritual Worſhip. *Repentance* was the Door of admiſſion into his Kingdom; and nothing could be more diſagreeable to the *Phariſees*, that *juſtified* themſelves, and admired themſelves, than to *repent*, that is, to accuſe, and abaſe and abhor themſelves: Therefore they *went not in themſelves*; but that was not all.

2. They *would not ſuffer them that were entring to go in.* 'Tis bad to keep away from Chriſt our ſelves, but it is worſe to keep others from him; yet that's commonly the way of Hypocrites, they do not love that any ſhould go beyond them in Religion, or be better than they. Their *not going in themſelves* was a hindrance to many; for having ſo great an Intereſt in the People, Multitudes rejected the Goſpel, only becauſe their Leaders did; but beſides that they oppos'd both Chriſt's entertaining of Sinners, *Luke* 7. 39. and Sinners entertaining of Chriſt; They perverted his Doctrine, confronted his Miracles, quarrell'd with his Diſciples, and repreſented him and his Inſtitutes and Oeconomy to the People in the moſt diſingenuous, diſadvantageous manner imaginable; they thundered out their Excommunications againſt thoſe that confeſs'd him, and us'd all their Wit and Power to ſerve their Malice againſt him: And thus they *ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven*; ſo that they who would enter into it muſt *ſuffer Violence.* Matt. 11. 12 and *preſs into it*, (Luke 16. 16.) through a Croud of *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, and all the Obſtructions and Difficulties they could contrive to lay in their way. How well is it for us that our Salvation is not intruſted in the Hands of any Man, or Company of Men in the World; if it were, we were undone: They that ſhut out of the Church, would ſhut out of Heaven, if they could, but the Malice of Men cannot make the Promiſe of God to his Choſen of none Effect, Bleſſed be God it cannot.

Secondly, They made Religion and the form of Godlineſs a Cloke and Stalking-horſe to their covetous Practices and Deſires, *v.* 14. Obſerve here,

1. What their wicked Practices were; they *devour'd Widows Houſes*, either by *quartering* themſelves and their Attendants upon them, for Entertainment, which muſt be *of the beſt*, for Men of their Figure, or by inſinuating themſelves into their Affections, and ſo getting to be the Truſtees of their Eſtates, which they could make an eaſy Prey of, for who could preſume to call ſuch as they were to an Account? The thing they aim'd at was to enrich themſelves, and this being their chief and higheſt End, all Conſideration of Juſtice and Equity were laid aſide, and even *Widow's Houſes* were ſacrificed to this. Widows are of its weaker Sex, in the weakeſt State, eaſily impos'd upon, and therefore they faſten'd on them to make a Prey of: They devour'd, thoſe, whom by the Law of God they were particularly obliged to protect, patronize, and relieve. There's a Woe in the Old Teſtament to thoſe that *made Widows their Prey*, Iſa. 10. 1, 2. and Chriſt here ſeconded it with his Woe. God is the Judge of the Widows, they are his peculiar Care, he *eſtabliſheth their Border*, Prov. 15. 25. and *eſpouſeth their Cauſe*, Exod. 22. 22, 23. yet theſe were they whoſe Houſes the *Phariſees* devour'd by wholeſale; ſo greedy were they to get their *Bellies filled with the Treaſures of Wickedneſs*: Their *devouring* notes not only *Covetouſneſs*, but *Cruelty* in their Oppreſſion, deſcrib'd *Mic.* 3. 3. *They eat the Fleſh, and flay the Skin*: and doubtleſs they did all this under Colour of Law, for they did it ſo artifully, that it paſſed uncenſur'd, and did not at all leſſen the People's Veneration for them.

2. What was the Cloke with which they cover'd this wicked Practice? *For a Pretence they made long Prayers*, very long indeed, if it be true, which ſome of the *Jewiſh* Writers tell us, that they ſpent three Hours at a time in the Formalities of Meditation and Prayer, and did it thrice every Day, which is more than an upright Soul, that makes Conſcience of being inward with God in the Duty, dares pretend ordinarily to do; but to the *Phariſees* it was eaſy enough, who never *made a Buſineſs* of the Duty, and always *made a Trade* of the outſide of it: By this Craft they got their Wealth, and maintain'd their Grandeur. It is not probable that theſe long Prayers were *Extemporary*, for then (as Mr. *Baxter* obſerves) the Phariſees had much more of the Gift of Prayer than Chriſt's Diſciples had, but rather that they were ſtated Forms of Words in uſe among them, which they ſaid over *by Tale*, as the Papiſts drop their Beads. Chriſt doth not here condemn long Prayers, as in themſelves hypocritical; nay, if there were not a great appearance of Good in them, they would not have been us'd *for a Pretence*, and the Cloke muſt be very *thick*, which was us'd to cover ſuch *wicked* Practices. Chriſt himſelf *continued all Night* in Prayer to God, and we are commanded to *pray without ceaſing* too ſoon; where there are many Sins to be confeſs'd, and many Wants to pray for the ſupply of, and many Mercies to give Thanks for, there is occaſion for *long Prayers*; but the *Phariſees long Prayers* were made up of *vain Repetitions*, and which was the End of them, they were *for a Pretence*. By them they got the Reputation of pious devout Men, that lov'd Prayer, and were the Favourites of Heaven; and by this Means People were made to believe it was not poſſible ſuch Men as they ſhould cheat them, and therefore happy the Widow that could get a *Phariſee* for her Truſtee and Guardian to her Children. Thus while they ſeem'd to ſoar Heavenwards upon the Wings of Prayer, their Eye, like the Kites, was all the while upon their Prey on Earth, ſome Widow's Houſe or other that lay convenient for them. Thus Circumciſion was the Cloke of the *Shechemites* Covetouſneſs, *Gen.* 34. 22, 23. and the payment of a Vow in *Hebron*, the Cover of *Abſalom*'s Rebellion, 2 *Sam.* 15. 7. and a *Faſt* in *Jezreel* muſt patronize *Naboth*'s Murther, and the Extirpation of *Baal*, is the Foot-ſtool of *Jehu*'s Ambition. Popiſh Prieſts under pretence of *long Prayers* for the Dead, Maſſes, and Dirgees, and I know not what Stuff, enrich themſelves, by devouring the Houſes of the Widows and Fatherleſs. *Note*, It is no new thing for the ſhew and form of Godlineſs to be made a Cloke to the greateſt Enormities. But *diſſembled* Piety, however it paſſeth now, will be reckon'd for as *double* Iniquity *in the Day when God ſhall judge the Secrets of Men.*

3. The Doom paſt upon them for this; *Therefore ye ſhall receive the greater Damnation. Note*, 1. There are degrees of Damnation: there are ſome whoſe Sin being more inexcuſable, their Ruin will be more intollerable. 2. The Pretences of Religion, which Hypocrites uſe to diſguiſe or excuſe their Sin now, will aggravate their Condemnation ſhortly. Such is the *deceitfulneſs of Sin*, that that very thing, by which Sinners hope to expiate and attone for their Sins, will come againſt them, and make their Sins more exceeding ſinful: But 'tis ſad for the Criminal, when his Defence proves his Offence, and his Plea, we have propheſied in thy Name, and in thy Name *made long Prayers*, heightens the Charge againſt him.

Thirdly, While they were ſuch Enemies to the Converſion of Souls to Chriſtianity, they were very *induſtrious* in the Perverſion of them to their Faction. They ſhut up the Kingdom of Heaven againſt thoſe that would turn to Chriſt, but at the ſame time *compaſſed Sea and Land* to make Proſelytes to themſelves, *v.* 15. Obſerve here,

1. Their *commendable Induſtry* in making Proſelytes to the *Jewiſh* Religion, not only *Proſelytes of the Gate*, who oblig'd themſelves to no more but the Obſervance of the ſeven Precepts of the Sons of *Noah*, but *Proſelytes of Righteouſneſs*, who addicted themſelves wholly to all the Rites of the *Jewiſh* Religion, for that was the Game they flew at; for *this*, for *one* ſuch, tho' but *one*, they *compaſs Sea and Land*, had many a cunning Reach, and laid many a Plot, rid, and run, and ſent, and wrote, and labour'd unweariedly; and what did they aim at? Not the Glory of God and the Good of Souls, but that they might have the Credit of making them Proſelytes, and the Advantage of making a Prey of them, when they were made. *Note*, 1. The making of Proſelytes, if it be to the Truth, and ſerious Godlineſs, and be done with a good Deſign, is a good Work, well worthy of the utmoſt Care and Pains. Such is the value of Souls, that nothing muſt be thought too much to do to *ſave a Soul from Death.* The Induſtry of the *Phariſees* herein may ſhew the Negligence of many, who would be thought to act from better Principles, but will be at no Pains or Coſt to propagate the Goſpel. 2. To make a Proſelyte, *Sea and Land* muſt be *compaſſed*; all Ways and Means muſt be try'd, firſt one way, and then another muſt be try'd, all little enough, but all well paid, if the point be gain'd. 3. Carnal Hearts ſeldom ſtick at Pains to carry on their Carnal Purpoſes: When a Proſelyte is to be made to ſerve a Turn for themſelves, they will *compaſs Sea and Land* to make him, rather than be balk'd.

2. Their curſed Impiety in abuſing their Proſelytes when they were made, *ye make him* the Diſciple of a *Phariſee* preſently, and he ſucks in all their Notions, and ſo ye *make him twofold more the Child of Hell than yourſelves. Note*, (1.) *Hypocrites*, while they fancy themſelves Heirs of Heaven, are in the Judgment of Chriſt the *Children of Hell*. The Riſe of their Hypocriſy is from Hell, for the Devil is the Father of Lies, and the Tendency of their Hypocriſy is towards Hell; that's the Country they belong to, the Inheritance they are Heirs to; they are call'd *Children of Hell*, becauſe of their rooted Enmity to the *Kingdom of Heaven*, which was the Principle and Genius of Phariſaiſm. (2.) Tho' all that maliciouſly oppoſe the Goſpel are *Children of Hell*, yet ſome are *twofold* more ſo than others, more furious and bigotted and malignant. (3.) *Perverted* Proſelytes are commonly the greateſt Bigots: The Scholars outdid their Maſters; (1.) In *Fondneſs of Ceremony*; the *Phariſees* themſelves ſaw the Folly of their own Impoſitions, and in their Hearts ſmil'd at the obſequiouſneſs of thoſe that conform'd to them, but their Proſelytes were eager for them. *Note*, Weak Heads commonly admire thoſe Shews and Ceremonies which wiſe Men (however for publick Ends they countenance them) cannot but think meanly of. (2.) In *Fury* againſt Chriſtianity; the Proſelytes readily *imbibed* the Principles which their crafty Leaders were not wanting to poſſeſs them with, and ſo became extream hot againſt the Truth. The moſt bitter Enemies the Apoſtles met with in all Places were the *Helleniſt Jews*, that were moſtly Proſelytes, *Acts* 13. 45—14. 2, 19.—17. 5—18. *Paul* a Diſciple of the *Phariſees* was *exceedingly mad* againſt the Chriſtians, *Acts* 26. 11. when his Maſter *Gamaliel* ſeems to have been more moderate.

Fourthly, Their ſeeking of their own worldly Gain and Honour, more than God's Glory, put them upon coining *falſe and unwarrantable Diſtinctions*, with which they led the People into dangerous Miſtakes, particularly in the matter of Oaths; which as an evidence of a univerſal Senſe of Religion, have been by all Nations accounted *ſacred*, v. 16. *Ye blind Guides. Note*, (1.) It is ſad to think how many are under the guidance of ſuch as are themſelves *blind*; who undertake to ſhew others that way which they are themſelves willingly ignorant of. *His Watchmen are blind*, Iſa. 56. 10. and too often *the People love to have it ſo*, and *ſay to the Seers, ſee not*. But the Caſe is bad when the *Leaders* of the People *cauſe them to err*, Iſa 9. 16. (2.) Tho' the condition of thoſe whoſe Guides are blind is very ſad, yet that of the *blind Guides* themſelves is yet more *woful*. Chriſt denounceth a *Woe to the blind Guides*, that have the Blood of ſo many Souls to anſwer for.

Now to prove their Blindneſs, he inſtanceth in the matter of *Swearing*, and ſhews what corrupt Caſuiſts they were.

1. He lays down the *Doctrine* they *taught*.

(1.) They allow'd Swearing by Creatures, provided they were *conſecrated* to the Service of God, and ſtood in any ſpecial Relation to him. They allow'd Swearing by the *Temple*, and the *Altar*, tho' they were the Work of Men's Hands, intended to be the Servants of God's Honour, not ſharers in it. An Oath is an Appeal to God, to his Omniſcience and Juſtice, and to make this Appeal to any Creature, is to put that Creature into the Place of God. See *Deut.* 6. 13.

(2.) They diſtinguiſhed between an Oath by the Temple, and an Oath by the *Gold of the Temple*, an Oath *by the Altar*, and by the *Gift upon the Altar*, making the latter binding, but not the former. Here was a double Wickedneſs: (1.) That there were ſome Oaths which they diſpens'd with, and made light of, and reckon'd a Man was not bound by, to aſſert the Truth, or perform a Promiſe. They ought not to have ſworn by the Temple or the Altar, but when they had ſo ſworn, they were *taken in the Words of their Mouth*; that Doctrine cannot be of the God of Truth, which gives Countenance to the Breach of Faith in any Caſe whatſoever. Oaths are Edge-Tools, and are not to be jeſted with. (2.) That they preferr'd the *Gold* before the *Temple*, and the *Gift* before the *Altar*, to encourage People to bring Gifts to the Altar, and Gold to the Treaſurers of the Temple, which they hoped to be Gainers by. They who had *made Gold their Hope*, and whoſe *Eyes* were *blinded* by *Gifts in ſecret*, were great Friends to the *Corban*; and Gain being their Godlineſs, by a thouſand Artifices they made Religion truckle to their worldly Intereſts. Corrupt Church-Guides make things to be Sin, or no Sin, as it ſerves their Purpoſes, and lay a much greater ſtreſs on that which concerns their own Gain, than that which is for God's Glory, and the Good of Souls.

2. He ſhews the Folly and Abſurdity of this Diſtinction, *v.* 17, 19. *Ye Fools and Blind:* 'Twas in the way of a neceſſary Reproof, not an angry Reproach, that Chriſt call'd them *Fools*. Let it ſuffice us from the Word of Wiſdom, to ſhew the Folly of ſinful Opinions and Practices, but for the faſtening of the Character upon particular Perſons, leave that to Chriſt, who knows what is in Man, and hath forbidden us to ſay, *Thou Fool*.

To convict them of Folly, he appeals to themſelves, *Whether is greater, the Gold*, (the golden Veſſels and Ornaments, or the Gold in the Treaſury) or *the Temple that ſanctifies the Gold? The Gift*, or *the Altar that ſanctifies the Gift?* Any one will own, *Propter quod aliquid eſt tale, id eſt magis tale*; They that ſwear by the *Gold of the Temple* had an Eye to it as *Holy*; but what was it that made it Holy, but the Holineſs of the Temple, to the Service to which it was appropriated? And therefore the Temple cannot be leſs Holy than the Gold, but muſt be more ſo; for *the leſs is bleſſed*, and ſanctified *of the better*, Heb. 7. 7. The *Temple* and *Altar* were dedicated to God *fixedly*, the Gold and Gift but *ſecondarily*. Chriſt is our *Altar*, Heb. 13. 10. our Temple, *Joh.* 2. 21. for 'tis he that *ſanctifies all our Gifts*, and puts an acceptableneſs in them, 1 *Pet.* 2. 5. Thoſe that put their own Works into the Place of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs, in Juſtification, are guilty of the *Phariſees* Abſurdity, that preferr'd the *Gift* before the *Altar*. Every true Chriſtian is a *living Temple*, and by Vertue thereof common things are ſanctified to him, *unto the Pure all things are Pure*, Tit. 1. 15. and the *unbelieving Husband is ſanctified by the believing Wife*, 1. Cor. 7. 14.

3. He rectifies the Miſtake, *v* 20, 21, 22. by reducing all thoſe Oaths they had invented to the true Intent of an Oath, which is, *By the Name of the Lord*; ſo that tho' an Oath by the *Temple*, or the *Altar*, or *Heaven*, be formally bad, yet they are binding; *Quod fieri non debuit factum valet*. A Man ſhall never take advantage of his own Fault.

(1.) He that ſwears *by the Altar*, let him not think to ſhake off the Obligation of it, by ſaying, the Altar is but Wood, and Stone, and Braſs, for his Oath ſhall be conſtrued moſt ſtrongly againſt himſelf, becauſe he was culpable, and ſo as that the Obligation of it may be preſerv'd, *ut res potius valeat quàm pereat*. And therefore an Oath *by the Altar* ſhall be interpreted by it, and *by all things thereon*; for the Appurtenances paſs with the Principal: And the *things thereon* being offer'd up to God, to ſwear by it and them, was in effect to *call God* himſelf *to witneſs*; for it was the *Altar of God*, and he that went *to that*, went *to God*, Pſal. 43 4.—26. 6.

(2.) He that ſwears *by the Temple*, if he underſtand what he doth, cannot but apprehend that the Ground of ſuch a Reſpect to it is, not becauſe it is a *fine Houſe*, but becauſe it is the *Houſe of God*, dedicated to his Service, the Place which he hath choſen to put his Name there; and therefore he ſwears *by it*, and *by him that dwelleth therein*; there he was pleaſed in a peculiar manner to manifeſt himſelf, and give Tokens of his Preſence; ſo that whoſo ſwear by it, ſwear by him, who had ſaid, *This is my Reſt, here will I dwell*. Good Chriſtians are God's Temples, and the Spirit of God dwells in them, 1 *Cor.* 3. 16.—6. 19. and God takes what's done to them as done to himſelf; he that *grieves* a gracious Soul, grieves it, and *the Spirit that dwells in it*, Eph. 4. 30.

(3.) If a Man *ſwear by Heaven*, he ſins, *Matt.* 5. 34. yet he ſhall not therefore be diſcharg'd from the Obligation of his Oath; no, God will make him know that the Heaven he ſwears by is *his Throne*, Iſa. 66. 1. and he that ſwears by the Throne, appeals to him that ſits upon it; who as he repreſents the Affront done to him, in the form of the Oath, ſo he will certainly revenge the greater Affront done to him by the Violation of it. Chriſt will not countenance the Evaſion of a ſolemn Oath, tho' never ſo plauſible.

Fifthly, They were very *ſtrict* and *preciſe* in the *ſmaller Matters* of the Law, but as *careleſs* and *looſe* in the *weightier* Matters, *v.* 23, 24. They were *partial in the Law*, Mal. 2. 9. would pick and chooſe their Duty, according as they were intereſted, or ſtood affected. Sincere Obedience is *univerſal*, and he that from a right Principle obeys any of God's Precepts, will *have reſpect to them all*, Pſal. 119. 6. But Hypocrites, who act in Religion for themſelves, and not for God, will do no more in Religion than they can ſerve a turn by for themſelves. The Partiality of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* appears here in two Inſtances.

1. They obſerved *ſmaller Duties*, but omitted *greater*; they were very exact in *paying Tythes*, till it came to *Mint*, *Anniſe*, and *Cummin*, their exactneſs in tything of which, would not coſt them much, but would be cry'd up, and they ſhould buy Reputation pretty cheap. The *Phariſee* boaſted of this; I give Tythes of all that I poſſeſs, *Luk.* 18. 12. But 'tis likely they had Ends of their own to ſerve, and would find their own Account in it; for the *Prieſts* and *Levites*, to whom the Tythes were paid, were in their Intereſts, and knew how to return their Kindneſs. *Paying Tythes* was their Duty, and what the Law requir'd, Chriſt tells them, they ought not to *leave it undone*. *Note*, All ought in their Places to contribute to the Support and Maintenance of a ſtanding Miniſtry: With-holding Tythes is call'd *robbing God*, Mal. 3. 8, 9, 10. They that are *taught in the Word*, and do not *communicate to them that teach them*, that love a cheap Goſpel, come ſhort of the *Phariſees*.

But that which Chriſt here condemns them for is, that they *omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgmeut, Mercy and Faith*; and their niceneſs in paying Tythes was, if not to attone God, yet at leaſt to excuſe, and palliate to Men the omiſſion of thoſe. All the Things of God's Law are weighty, but thoſe are moſt weighty which are moſt expreſſive of inward Holineſs in the Heart, the Inſtances of Self-denial, Contempt of the World, and Reſignation to God, in which lies the Life of Religion. *Judgment* and *Mercy* towards Men, and *Faith* towards God, are the weighty Matters of the Law, the *good things* which the *Lord our God requires*, Mic. 6. 8. to do *juſtly*, and *love Mercy*, and humble our ſelves by *Faith*, to walk *with God*. This is the *Obedience* which is *better than Sacrifice or Tythe*; Judgment is preferr'd before Sacrifice, *Iſa.* 1. 11. To be juſt to the Prieſts in their Tythes, and ye to cheat and defraud every body elſe, is but to mock God, and deceive our ſelves. *Mercy* alſo is preferr'd before Sacrifice, *Hoſ.* 6. 6. To feed thoſe who *made themſelves fat with the Offerings of the Lord*, and at the ſame time *to ſhut up the Bowels of Compaſſion* from a Brother or a Siſter, that is naked and deſtitute of daily Food, to pay *Tythe-Mint* to the Prieſt, and to deny a Crumb to *Lazarus*, is to lie open to that Judgment without Mercy, which is awarded to thoſe who pretended to *Judgment*, and *ſhew'd no Mercy*; nor will *Judgment* and *Mercy* ſerve without *Faith* in Divine Revelation; for God will be honour'd in his *Truths* as well as in his *Laws*.

2. They avoided *leſſer* Sins, but committed *greater*, v. 24. *Ye blind Guides*; ſo he had call'd them before, *v.* 16. for their corrupt teaching, here he calls them ſo for their corrupt living, for their Example was *leading* as well as their Doctrine; and in this alſo they were blind and partial: They *ſtrain'd at a Gnat, and ſwallow'd a Camel*. In their Doctrine they *ſtrain'd at* Gnats, warn'd People againſt every the leaſt Violation of the Tradition of the Elders. In their Practice they *ſtrain'd at* Gnats, heav'd at them, with a ſeeming Dread, as if they had a great abhorrence of Sin, and were afraid of it in the leaſt Inſtance; but they made no difficulty of thoſe Sins, which, in compariſon with them, were as a *Camel* to a *Gnat*; when they *devour'd Widows Houſes*, they did indeed *ſwallow a Camel*; when they gave *Judas* the Price of innocent Blood, and yet ſcrupled to put the return'd Money into the Treaſury, *Matt.* 27. 6. when they would not go into the Judgment-Hall, for fear of being defiled, and yet would ſtand at the Door, and cry out againſt the Holy Jeſus, *Joh.* 18. 28. when they quarrel'd with the Diſciples for eating with unwaſhen Hands, and yet for the filling of the Corban, taught People to break the fifth Commandment, they ſtrain'd at Gnats, or leſs things, and yet *ſwallow'd Camels*. It is not the ſcrupling of a little Sin that Chriſt here reproves, if it be a Sin, tho' but a Gnat, it muſt be ſtrain'd at, but the doing of that, and then ſwallowing a Camel; in the leſſer Matters of the Law to be Superſtitious, and to be profane in the greater, is the Hypocriſy here condemn'd.

Sixthly, They were all for the *outſide*, and not at all for the *inſide* of Religion: They were more *deſirous* and *ſollicitous* to *appear* pious to Men, than to *approve* themſelves ſo towards God. This is illuſtrated by two Similitudes.

1. They are compared to a Veſſel that's clean waſh'd on the outſide, but all Dirt within, *v.* 25, 26. The *Phariſees* plac'd Religion in that which at beſt was but a Point of Decency, the *waſhing of Cups*, Mark 7. 4. They were in care to eat their Meat in clean Cups and Platters, but made no Conſcience of getting their Meat by *Extortion* and uſing it to *Exceſs*. Now what a fooliſh thing would it be for a Man to waſh only the *outſide* of a Cup, which is to be *look'd* at, and to leave the inſide dirty, which is to be *uſ'd*; ſo they will

only avoid ſcandalous Sins that would ſpoil their Reputation with Men, but allow themſelves in Heart-wickedneſs, which renders them odious to the pure and holy God. In reference to this, *Obſerve*,

(1) The Practice of the *Phariſees*, they *made clean the out-ſide.* In thoſe things which fell under the Obſervation of their Neighbours, they ſeem'd very exact, and carry'd on their wicked Intrigues with ſo much Artifice, that their Wickedneſs was not ſuſpected; People generally took them for very good Men: But *within*, in the Receſſes of their Hearts, and the cloſe Retirements of their Lives, they were *full of Extortion, and Exceſs*; of *Violence*, and *Incontinence*, ſo Dr. *Hammond*, that is, of Injuſtice and Intemperance. While they would ſeem to be *Godly*, they were neither *Sober*, nor *Righteous.* Their *inward Part* was *very Wickedneſs*, Pſal. 5. 9. and that we are really, that we are *inwardly.*

(2.) The Rule Chriſt gives in oppoſition to this Practice, *v.* 26. It is addreſs'd to the *blind Phariſees.* They thought themſelves the *Seers of the Lord*, John 9. 40. But Chriſt calls them *blind. Note*, Thoſe are blind in Chriſt's Account, who (how quick ſighted ſoever they are in other things) are ſtrangers, and no Enemies to the Wickedneſs of their own Hearts, that ſee not, and hate not the ſecret Sin that lodgeth there. Self-Ignorance is the moſt ſhameful and hurtful Ignorance, *Rev.* 3. 17. The Rule is, *Cleanſe firſt that which is within. Note*, The principal Care of every one of us ſhould be, to waſh our Hearts from Wickedneſs, *Jer.* 4. 14. The main Buſineſs of a Chriſtian lies *within*, to get cleanſed from the *Filthineſs of the Spirit.* Corrupt Affections and Inclinations, the ſecret Luſts that lurk in the Soul, unſeen, and unobſerv'd; thoſe muſt firſt be mortify'd and ſubdu'd. Thoſe Sins muſt be conſcientiouſly abſtain'd from, which the Eye of God only is a Witneſs to, who ſearcheth the Heart.

Obſerve, The Method preſcrib'd, cleanſe *firſt* that which is within; not that *only*, but that *firſt*; becauſe, if due Care be taken concerning that, *the outſide will be clean alſo.* External Motives and Inducements may keep the outſide clean, while the inſide is *filthy*; but if renewing, ſanctifying Grace make clean the inſide, that will have an influence upon the outſide: for the commanding Principle is within. If the Heart be well kept, all is well, for *out of it are the Iſſues of Life.* The Eruptions will vaniſh of courſe. If the Heart and Spirit be made new, there will be a newneſs of Life; here therefore we muſt begin with our ſelves: *firſt* cleanſe that which is within; we then make ſure work when this is our firſt work.

2. They are compar'd to *whited Sepulchres*, v. 27, 28.

1. They were *fair* without, like *Sepulchres*, which appear beautiful outward: Some make it to refer to the Cuſtom of the *Jews* to *whiten* Graves, only for the *notifying* of them, eſpecially if they were in unuſal Places, that People might avoid them, becauſe of the Ceremonial Pollution contracted by the touch of a Grave, *Numb.* 19. 16. And it was part of the Charge of the Overſeers of the High-ways, to repair that Whitening when 'twas decay'd. Sepulchres were thus made remarkable, 2 *Kings* 23. 16, 17. The Formality of Hypocrites, by which they ſtudy to recommend themſelves to the World, doth but make all wiſe and good Men the more careful to avoid them, for fear of being defil'd by them. *Beware of the Scribes*, Luke 20. 46. It rather alludes to the Cuſtom of whitening the Sepulchres of eminent Perſons for the *beautifying* of them: 'Tis ſaid here, *v.* 29. that they *garniſhed the Sepulchres of the Righteous*; as 'tis uſual with us to erect Monuments upon the Graves of great Perſons, and to ſtrew Flowers on the Graves of dear Friends: Now the Righteouſneſs of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, was like the Ornaments of a Grave, or the dreſſing up of a dead Body, only for Shew. The top of their Ambition was to *appear Righteous before Men*, and to be applauded, and had in admiration by them. But,

2. They were *foul* within, like Sepulchres, *full of dead Men's Bones, and all Uncleanneſs*: So vile are our Bodies when the Soul has deſerted them. Thus were they *full of Hypocriſie and Iniquity.* Hypocriſie is the worſt Iniquity of all other. *Note*, It is poſſible for thoſe that have their Hearts full of Sin, yet to have their Lives free from Blame, and to appear very good. But what will it avail us to have the good Word of our Fellow-ſervants, if our Maſter do not ſay, *Well done?* When all other *Graves* are *open'd*, theſe whited Sepulchres will be look'd into, and the dead Men's Bones, and all the Uncleanneſs ſhall be *brought out*, and be *ſpread before all the Hoſt of Heaven*, Jer. 8. 1, 2. For 'tis the Day when God ſhall judge, not the Shews, but the *Secrets of Men.* And it will then be ſmall comfort to them, who ſhall have their Portion with Hypocrites, to remember how creditably and plauſibly they went to Hell, applauded by all their Neighbours.

Seventhly, They pretended a deal of *Kindneſs* for the *Memory* of the *Prophets* that were dead and gone, while they *Hated*, and *Perſecuted* thoſe that were preſent *with them.* This is put laſt, becauſe it was the blackeſt part of their Character. God is jealous for his Honour in his Laws and Ordinances, and reſents it, if they be profan'd and abus'd; but he has oft expreſs'd a no leſs jealouſie for his Honour in his Prophets and Miniſters, and reſents it worſe, if they be Wrong'd and Perſecuted: And therefore when our Lord Jeſus comes to this Head, he ſpeaks more fully than upon any of the other, *v.* 29.---37. for he that toucheth his Miniſters, *toucheth his Anointed*, and toucheth the *Apple of his Eye.* Obſerve here,

1. The Reſpect which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* pretended for the Prophets that were gone, *v.* 29, 30. This was the Varniſh, and that in which they outwardly appear'd Righteous.

(1.) They honour'd the Relicks of the Prophets, they *built* their *Tombs*, and *garniſhed* their *Sepulchres*: It ſeems the Places of their Burial were known, *David*'s Sepulchre was *with them*, Acts 2. 29. There was a Title upon the Sepulchre of the *Man of God*, 2 Kings 23. 17. and *Joſiah* thought it Reſpect enough not to *move his Bones*, *v.* 18. But they would do more, Re-build, and Beautifie them. Now conſider this, (1.) as an Inſtance of *Honour* done to *deceaſed Prophets*, who, while they liv'd, were counted as the Off-ſcouring of all things, and had all manner of Evil ſpoken againſt them falſly. *Note*, God can extort, even from bad Men, an acknowledgment of the Honour of Piety and Holineſs. Them that honour God, he will honour, and ſometimes with thoſe from whom Contempt is expected, 2 *Sam.* 6. 27. The *Memory of the Juſt is bleſſed*, when the Names of thoſe that hated and perſecuted them ſhall be cover'd with Shame. The Honour of Conſtancy and Reſolution in the way of Duty, will be a laſting Honour, and thoſe that are manifeſt to God, will be manifeſt in the Conſciences of thoſe about them. (2.) As an Inſtance of the Hypocriſie of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who paid their reſpect to them. *Note*, Carnal People can eaſily honour the Memories of faithful Miniſters that are dead and gone, becauſe they do not reprove them, nor diſturb them in their Sins. Dead Prophets are *ſeers, that ſee not*, and thoſe they can bear well enough; they do not *torment them*, as the living Witneſſes do, that bear their Teſtimony, *vivâ voce*, Rev. 11. 10. They can pay a Reſpect to the Writings of the dead Prophets, which tell them what they *ſhould be*; but not the Reproofs of the living Prophets, which tell them what *they are. Sit Divus, modo non ſit vivus.* The extravagant Reſpects which the Church of *Rome* pays to the Memory of Saints departed, eſpecially the Martyrs, dedicating Days and Places to their Names, enſhrining their Relicks, praying to them, and Offering to their Images, while they make themſelves drunk with the Blood of the Saints of their own Day, is a manifeſt Proof, that they not only *ſucceed*, but *exceed* the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* in a counterfeit hypocritical Religion, which builds the Prophets Tombs, but hates the Prophets Doctrine.

(2.) They proteſted againſt the Murther of them, *v.* 30. *If we had been in the Days of our Fathers, we would not have been partakers with them.* They would never have conſented to the Silencing of *Amos*, and the Impriſonment of *Micajah*, to the putting of *Hanani* in the Stocks, and *Jeremiah* in the Dungeon, to the Stoning of *Zechariah*, and the mocking of all the Meſſengers of the Lord, and the Abuſes put upon his Prophets; no, not they, they would ſooner have loſt their right Hands, than have done any ſuch thing. *What! Is thy Servant a Dog?* And yet they were at this time plotting to Murther Chriſt, to whom *all the Prophets bare witneſs*: They think, if they had liv'd in the Days of the Prophets, they would have heard them gladly, and obey'd, and yet rebell'd againſt the Light that Chriſt brought into the World. But it is certain a *Herod*, and an *Herodias* to *John Baptiſt*, would have been an *Ahab*, and a *Jezebel* to *Elijah. Note*, The Deceitfulneſs of Sinners Hearts appears very much in this, that while they go down the Stream of the Sins of their own Day, they fancy they ſhould have ſwam againſt the Stream of the Sins of the former Days: That if they had other People's Opportunities, they would have improv'd them more faithfully; had been in other People's Temptations, they would have reſiſted them more vigorouſly; when yet they improve not the Opportunities they have, nor reſiſt the Temptations they are in. We are ſometimes thinking, if we had liv'd when Chriſt was upon Earth, how conſtantly we would have follow'd him; we would not have deſpis'd and rejected him, as they then did; and yet Chriſt in his Spirit, in his Word, in his Miniſters, is ſtill no better treated.

3. Their Enmity and Oppoſition to Chriſt and his Goſpel, notwithſtanding, and the Ruin they were bringing upon themſelves, and upon that Generation thereby, *v.* 31, 32, 33. *Obſerve* here,

1. The Indictment prov'd, *Ye be Witneſſes againſt your ſelves.* Note, There is no hopes for Sinners eſcaping the Judgment of Chriſt, for want of Proof againſt them, when it is eaſie to find them Witneſſes againſt themſelves, and their very Pleas will not only be over-rul'd, but turn'd to their Conviction, and *their own Tongues* ſhall be made to *fall upon them*, Pſal. 64. 8.

(1.) By their own Confeſſion it was the great *Wickedneſs* of their Fore-fathers to kill the Prophets; ſo that they knew the *Fault* of it, and yet were themſelves guilty of the ſame *Fact. Note*, They who condemn Sin in others, and yet allow the ſame, or worſe in themſelves, are of all others moſt inexcuſable, *Rom.* 1. 32.—2. 1. They knew they ought not to have been *Partakers* with Perſecutors, and yet were the *Followers* of them. Such *Self-contradictions* now will amount to *Self-condemnations* in the great Day. Chriſt puts another Conſtruction upon their *building* of the *Tombs of the Prophets*, than what they intended; as if by *beautifying* their Graves, they *juſtify'd* their Murtherers, *Luk.* 11. 48. for they perſiſted in the Sin.

(2.) By their own Confeſſion theſe notorious Perſecutors were their Anceſtors, *ye are the Children of them.* They meant no more, but that they were their Children by Blood and Nature, but Chriſt turns it upon them, that they were ſo by Spirit and Diſpoſition. *You are of thoſe Fathers, and their Luſts you will do.* They are, as you ſay, *your Fathers*, and you do *patrizare*; 'tis the Sin that runs in the Blood among you. *As your Fathers did, ſo do ye*, Acts 7. 51. They came of a *Perſecuting Breed*, were a *Seed of evil Doers*, Iſa. 1. 4. *riſen up in theirs Fathers ſtead*, Numb. 32. 14. Malice, and Envy, and Cruelty were bred in the Bone with them, and they had formerly eſpous'd it for a Principle, to *do as their Fathers did*, Jer. 44. 17. And it is obſervable here, *v.* 30. How careful they are to mention the Relation; they were *our Fathers* that kill'd the Prophets, and they were Men in Honour and Power, whoſe Sons and Succeſſors we are. If they had deteſted the Wickedneſs of their Anceſtors, as they ought to have done, they would not have been ſo fond to call them *their Fathers*; for it's no Credit to be akin to Perſecutors, tho' they have never ſo much Dignity and Dominion.

2. The Sentence paſt upon them. Chriſt here proceeds,

(1.) To give them *up* to the Sin as irreclaimable, *v.* 32. *Fill ye up then the Meaſure of your Fathers.* If *Ephraim* be joyned to Idols, and hate to be reform'd, *let him alone.* He *that is filthy*, let him be filthy ſtill. Chriſt knew they were now contriving his Death, and in a few Days would accompliſh it; well, ſaith he, Go on with your Plot, take your courſe, walk in the way of your Heart, and in the ſight of your Eyes, and ſee what will come of it, *What thou do'ſt do quickly.* You will but fill up the Meaſure of Guilt, which will then overflow in a Deluge of Wrath. *Note,* 1. There is a meaſure of Sin to be filled up, before the utter Ruin comes upon Perſons and Families, Churches and Nations. God will bear long, but the time will come when he can *no longer forbear*, Jer. 44. 22. We read of the *Meaſure* of the *Amorites* that was to be *fill'd*, Gen. 15. 16. and the *Harveſt* of the Earth being *ripe for the Sickle*, Rev. 14. 15, 19. and of Sinners *making an end to deal treacherouſly*, arriving to a *full Stature* in Treachery, *Iſa.* 33. 1. (2.) Children *fill up* the Meaſure of their Fathers Sins when they are gone, if they perſiſt in the ſame, or the like. That National Guilt which brings National Ruin, is made up of the Sin of Many in ſeveral Ages, and in the Succeſſions of Societies there is a Score going on; for God juſtly viſits the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children that tread in the Steps of it. (3.) Perſecuting Chriſt, and his People, and Miniſters, is a Sin that fills the Meaſure of a Nations Guilt ſooner than any other. This was it that brought *Wrath without Remedy* upon the Fathers, 2 *Chron.* 36. 16. and Wrath *to the utmoſt* upon the *Children* too, 1. *Theſ.* 2. 16. This was that *fourth* Tranſgreſſion, which when added to the other *three*, the Lord *would not turn away the Puniſhment*, Amos 1. 3, 6, 9, 11, 13. (4.) It is juſt with God to give thoſe up to their own Hearts Luſts, that obſtinately perſiſt in the Gratification of them. Thoſe that will run headlong to Ruin, let their Reins be laid in their Neck; and 'tis the ſaddeſt condition a Man can be in on this ſide Hell.

(2.) He proceeds to give them up to the Ruin as irrecoverable, to a Perſonal Ruin in the other World, *v.* 33. *Ye Serpents,* ye *Generation of Vipers, how can ye eſcape the Damnation of Hell?* Theſe are ſtrange words to come from the Mouth of Chriſt, into whoſe Lips Grace was pour'd: But he can, and will ſpeak Terror, and in theſe words he explains and ſums up the *eight Woes* he had denounc'd againſt the *Scribes* and *Phariſees.*

Here's (1.) Their Deſcription; *Ye Serpents.* Doth Chriſt call Names? Yes, but this doth not warrant us to do ſo. He infallibly knew what was in Man, and knew them to be as ſubtile as Serpents, cleaving to the Earth, feeding on Duſt, they had a ſpecious outſide, but were within malignant, had Poiſon under their Tongues, the Seed of the old Serpent. They were a *Generation of Vipers*; they, and thoſe that went before them, they, and thoſe that joyned with them, were a *Generation* of envenom'd, enraged, ſpiteful Adverſaries to Chriſt and his Goſpel. They lov'd to be called of Men, *Rabbi, Rabbi*, but Chriſt calls them *Serpents*, and *Vipers*; for he gives Men their true Characters, and delights to put Contempt upon the Proud.

2. Their Doom. He repreſents their Condition as very ſad, and in a manner deſperate; *how can ye eſcape the Damnation of Hell?* Chriſt himſelf Preach'd *Hell* and *Damnation*, for which his Miniſters have often been reproach'd by thoſe that care not to hear of it. *Note,* (1.) The *Damnation of Hell* will be the fearful End of all impenitent Sinners. This Doom coming from Chriſt, was more terrible than coming from all the Prophets and Miniſters that ever were, for he is *the Judge*, into whoſe Hands the Keys of Hell and Death are put, and his ſaying they were Damn'd made them ſo. (2.) There is a way of eſcaping this Damnation, this is imply'd here; ſome are *deliver'd from the Wrath to come.* (3.) Of all Sinners, thoſe who are of the Spirit of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, are leaſt likely to eſcape, this Damnation; for *Repentance* and *Faith* are neceſſary to that eſcape, and how will they be brought to theſe, who are ſo *conceited* of themſelves and ſo *prejudic'd* againſt Chriſt and his Goſpel as they were? How could they be *heal'd* and ſaved, that would not bear to have their Wound ſearch'd, nor the Balm of *Gilead* apply'd to it? *Publicans* and *Harlots*, who were ſenſible of their Diſeaſe, and apply'd themſelves to the Phyſician, were more likely to *eſcape the Damnation of Hell* than thoſe; who tho' they were in the high Road to it, were confident they were in the way to Heaven.

34 Wherefore behold, I ſend unto you prophets, and wiſe men, and ſcribes; and *ſome* of them ye ſhall kill and crucifie, and ſome of them ſhall ye ſcourge in your ſynagogues, and perſecute *them* from city to city: 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood ſhed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, ſon of Barachias, whom ye ſlew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I ſay unto you, all theſe things ſhall come upon this generation. 37 O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not! 38 Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate. 39 For I ſay unto you, Ye ſhall not ſee me henceforth, till ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

We have left the *blind Leaders* fallen into the Ditch under Chriſt's Sentence, into the *Damnation of Hell*; let us ſee what will become of the *blind Followers* of the body of the *Jewiſh* Church, and particularly *Jeruſalem.*

Firſt, Jeſus Chriſt deſigns yet to try them with the Means of Grace, *I ſend unto you Prophets, and wiſe Men, and Scribes.* The Connexion is ſtrange, *you are a Generation of Vipers*, not likely to *eſcape the Damnation of Hell*; one would think it ſhould follow, therefore you ſhall never have a Prophet ſent to you any more; no, *therefore I will ſend you Prophets*, to ſee if you will yet at length be wrought upon, or elſe to leave you inexcuſable, and to juſtifie God in your Ruin. 'Tis therefore uſher'd in with a Note of Admiration, Behold! *Obſerve,*

1. 'Tis *Chriſt* that ſends them. *I ſend.* By this he avows himſelf to be God, having Power to *Gift* and *Commiſſion* Prophets. 'Tis an Act of *Kingly* Office; he ſends them as *Embaſſadors*, to treat with us about the Concerns of our Souls. After his Reſurrection he made this Word good, when he ſaid, *So ſend I you*, John 20. 21. Tho' now he appear'd mean, yet he was intruſted with this great Authority.

2. He ſends them *to the Jews* firſt, I ſend them *to you.* They *began at Jeruſalem*, and wherever they went they obſerv'd this Rule, to make the firſt tender of Goſpel-Grace *to the Jews*, Acts 13. 46.

3. Thoſe he ſends are called *Prophets, wiſe Men*, and *Scribes*, Old Teſtament Names for New Teſtament Officers; to ſhew that the Miniſters ſent to them now, ſhould not be inferior to the *Prophets* of the Old Teſtament, to *Solomon* the Wiſe, or *Ezra* the *Scribe.* The extraordinary Miniſters, which in the firſt Ages were Divinely *Inſpir'd*, were as the *Prophets*, Commiſſion'd immediately from Heaven; the ordinary ſettled Miniſters that were then, and continue in the Church ſtill, and will do to the end of Time, are as the *wiſe Men*, and *Scribes*, to guide and inſtruct the People in the Things of God. Or, we may take the *Apoſtles* and *Evangeliſts* for the *Prophets* and *wiſe Men*, and the *Paſtors* and *Teachers* for the *Scribes, inſtructed to the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. 13. 52. for the Office of a *Scribe* was *honourabe*, till the Men *diſhonour'd* it.

Secondly, He foreſees, and foretels the ill Uſage that his Meſſengers would meet with among them. *Some of them ye ſhall Kill and Crucifie*, and yet I'll ſend them. Chriſt knows before hand how ill his Servants will be treated, and yet ſends them, and appoints them their Meaſure of Sufferings; yet he loves them nevertheleſs for his thus expoſing them, for he deſigns to glorifie himſelf *by* their Sufferings, and them *after* them; and will balance them, tho' not prevent them. *Obſerve,*

1. The *Cruelty* of theſe Perſecutors; *ye ſhall Kill, and Crucifie them.* 'Tis no leſs than the Blood, the Life-blood that they thirſt after; their *Luſt* is not *ſatisfied* with any thing ſhort of their Deſtruction, *Exod.* 15. 9. They kill'd the two *James's*, Crucified *Simon* the Son of *Cleophas*, and Scourged *Peter* and *John*; thus did the Members partake of the Sufferings of the Head, he was *Kill'd* and *Crucified*, and ſo were they. Chriſtians muſt expect to reſiſt unto Blood.

2. Their unwearied Induſtry. *Ye ſhall Perſecute them from City to City.* As the Apoſtles went from City to City to Preach the Goſpel, the *Jews* dodg'd them, and haunted them, and ſtir'd up Perſecution againſt them, *Acts* 14. 19.—17. 13. They that *did not believe in Judea*, were more bitter Enemies to the Goſpel than any other *Unbelievers*, Rom. 15. 31.

3. The Pretence of Religion in this; they Scourged them in their *Synagogues*, their Places of Worſhip, where they kept their Eccleſiaſtical Courts; ſo that they did it as a piece of Service to the Church; caſt them out, and ſaid, *Let the Lord be Glorified*, Iſa. 66. 5. *John* 16. 2.

Thirdly, He *imputes* the Sin of their Fathers to them, becauſe they imitated it. *That upon you may come all the righteous Blood ſhed upon the Earth*, v. 35, 36. Tho' God bear long with a Perſecuting Generation, he will not bear always; and Patience abus'd turns into the greateſt Wrath. The longer Sinners have been heaping up *Treaſures of Wickedneſs*, the deeper and fuller will the *Treaſures of Wrath* be, and the breaking of them up will be like breaking up the *Fountains of the great Deep.*

Obſerve, 1. The *Extent* of this Imputation; it takes in *all the righteous Blood ſhed upon the Earth*, i. e. the Blood ſhed for Righteouſneſs ſake, which has all been laid up in God's Treaſury, and not a drop of it loſt, for it is *precious*, Pſal. 72. 14. He dates the Account *from the Blood of righteous* Abel; thence this *Æra Martyrum* doth commence; he is call'd *Righteous Abel*; for he obtain'd Witneſs from Heaven that he was Righteous, God *teſtifying of his Gifts.* How early did Martyrdom come into the World, the firſt that dy'd, dy'd for his Religion, and being dead, he yet ſpeaketh. His Blood not only cry'd againſt *Cain*, but continues to cry againſt all that *walk in the way of Cain*, and Hate, and Perſecute their Brother, becauſe *their Works are Righteous.* He extends it to the Blood of *Zacharias*, the Son of *Barachias*, v. 36. not *Zacharias* the Prophet, tho' he was the Son of *Barachias*, Zech. 1. 1. as ſome would have it; nor *Zecharias* the Father of *John Baptiſt*, as others ſay; but as is moſt probable, *Zecharias* the Son of *Jehojadah*, who was *ſlain in the Court* *of the Lord's Houſe*, 2 Chron. 24. 20, 21. His Father is call'd *Barachias*, which ſignifies much the ſame with *Jehojadah*, and it was uſual among the *Jews* for the ſame Perſon to have two Names; *whom ye ſlew*, ye of this *Nation*, tho' not of this Generation. This is inſtanc'd in, becauſe the requiring of that is particularly ſpoken of, 2 *Chron.* 24. 22. as that of *Abel*'s is: The *Jews* imagin'd that the Captivity had ſufficiently atton'd for that Guilt, but Chriſt lets them know it was not yet fully accounted for, but remain'd upon the Score. And ſome think this is mention'd with a Prophetical *Hint*, for there was one *Zecharias*, the Son of *Baruch*, whom *Joſephus* ſpeaks of, *De Bel. Judaic. Lib.* 5. *c.* 1. That was a juſt and good Man, who was kill'd in the Temple a little before it was deſtroy'd by the *Romans.* Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* thinks Chriſt doth both allude to the Hiſtory of the former *Zecharias* in Chronicles, and foretel the Death of this latter in *Joſephus*: Tho' the latter was not yet ſlain, yet before this Deſtruction comes, it would be true that they had ſlain him; ſo that all ſhall be put together from firſt to laſt.

2. The effect of it. *All theſe things ſhall come*, all the Guilt of this Blood, all the Puniſhment of it, it ſhall *all come upon this Generation.* The Miſery and Ruin that is coming upon them ſhall be ſo very great, that tho' conſidering the Evil of their own Sins, it was *leſs* than even thoſe *deſerv'd*; yet comparing it with other Judgments, it would ſeem to be a general Reckoning for all the Wickedneſs of their Anceſtors, eſpecially their Perſecutions; to all which God declar'd this Ruin to have ſpecial reference and relation. The Deſtruction ſhall be ſo dreadful, as if God had once for all Arraign'd them for all the righteous Blood ſhed in the World. It ſhall come upon *this Generation*; which intimates, that it ſhall come quickly; ſome here ſhall live to ſee it. *Note*, The ſorer and nearer the Puniſhment of Sin is, the louder is the Call to Repentance and Reformation.

Fourthly, He laments the Wickedneſs of *Jeruſalem*, and juſtly upbraids them with the many kind Offers he had made them, *v.* 37. See with what Concern he ſpeaks of that City. O *Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem.* The Repetition is emphatical, and ſpeaks abundance of Commiſeration; A Day or two before Chriſt had *wept* over *Jeruſalem*, now he ſigh'd and groan'd over it. *Jeruſalem*, the *Viſion of Peace*; ſo it ſignifies, muſt now be the Seat of War and Confuſion: *Jeruſalem*, that had been the Joy of the whole Earth, muſt now be a Hiſſing, and an Aſtoniſhment, and a By-word. *Jeruſalem*, that has been a City compact together, ſhall now be ſhatter'd and ruin'd by its own inteſtine Broils. *Jeruſalem*, the Place that God has choſen to put his Name there, ſhall now be abandon'd to the Spoil, and the Robbers, *Lam.* 1. 1.—4. 1. But wherefore will the Lord do all this to *Jeruſalem*? Why? *Jeruſalem hath grievouſly ſinn'd.* Lam. 1. 8.

1. She perſecuted God's Meſſengers. *Thou that killeſt the Prophets, and Stoneſt them that are ſent unto thee.* This Sin is eſpecially charg'd upon *Jeruſalem*, becauſe there the Sanhedrin, or great Council ſate, who took Cognizance of Church Matters, and therefore a Prophet could not periſh but in *Jeruſalem*, Luke 13. 33. 'Tis true, they had not now a Power to put any Man to Death, but they kill'd the Prophets in popular Tumults, Mobb'd them, as *Stephen*, and put the *Roman* Powers on to kill them. At *Jeruſalem*, where the Goſpel was firſt *Preach'd*, it was firſt *Perſecuted*, Acts 8. 1. and that Place was the *head Quarters* of the Perſecutors; thence Warrants were iſſued out to other Cities, and thither the Saints were brought bound, *Acts* 9. 2. Thou *Stoneſt* them. That was a capital Puniſhment, in uſe only among the *Jews*; by the Law *falſe Prophets* and *Seducers* were to be *Stoned*, Deut. 13. 10. Under colour of which Law they put the true Prophets to death. *Note*, It has oft been the Artifice of Satan, to turn that Artillery againſt the Church, which was originally planted in the defence of it. Brand the true Prophets as Seducers, and the true Profeſſors of Religion, as Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, and then it will be eaſie to perſecute them. There was abundance of other Wickedneſs in *Jeruſalem*, but this was the Sin that made the loudeſt Cry, and which God had an eye to, more than any other, in bringing that Ruin upon them. As 2 *Kings* 24. 4. 2 *Chron.* 36. 16. Obſerve. Chriſt ſpeaks in the *preſent* Tenſe; thou *Killeſt*, and *Stoneſt*; for all they had done, and all they would do, was preſent to Chriſt's Notice.

2. She refuſed, and rejected Chriſt and Goſpel-Offers. The former was a Sin *without Remedy*, this *againſt the Remedy.* Here's 1. The wonderful Grace and Favour of Jeſus Chriſt towards them; *How often would I have gathered thy Children together, as an Hen gathers her Chickens under her Wings?* Thus kind and condeſcending are the Offers of Goſpel-Grace, even to *Jeruſalem*'s Children, as bad as ſhe is, the Inhabitants, the little ones not excepted. (1.) The *Favour* propos'd, was the *gathering* of them. Chriſt's Deſign is to *gather* poor Souls, gather them *in* from their Wanderings, gather them *home* to himſelf, as the Center of Unity; for to him muſt the *gathering of the People* be. He would have taken the whole Body of the *Jewiſh* Nation into the Church, and ſo gather'd them all, (as the *Jews* us'd to ſpeak of Proſelites) under the Wings of the Divine Majeſty. 'Tis here illuſtrated by a humble Similitude, *as a Hen* clock's *her Chickens together.* Chriſt would have gather'd them, (1.) With ſuch a Tenderneſs of Affection as the Hen doth, that has by inſtinct a ſtrange Concern for her young ones. Chriſt's gathering Souls comes from his Love, *Jer.* 31. 3. (2.) For the ſame End; the Hen *gather'd her Chickens under her Wings*, for Protection and Safety, and for Warmth and Comfort. Poor Souls have in Chriſt both Refuge and Refreſhment. The Chickens naturally run to the Hen for Shelter, when they are threaten'd by the Birds of Prey. Perhaps Chriſt refers to that Promiſe, *Pſal.* 91. 4. *He ſhall cover thee with his Feathers.* There is *Healing* under Chriſt's Wings, *Mal.* 4. 2. that's more than the *Hen* has for her Chickens.

(2.) The *Forwardneſs* of Chriſt to confer this Favour. His Offers are (1.) very *free.* I *would* have done it. Jeſus Chriſt is truly willing to receive and ſave poor Souls that come to him. He deſires not their Ruin; he delights in their Repentance. (2.) Very frequent, *how often?* Chriſt often came up to *Jeruſalem*, Preach'd, and wrought Miracles there, and the meaning of all this was, he *would have gather'd* them. He keeps account *how oft* his Calls have been repeated. As often as we have heard the Sound of the Goſpel, as oft as we have felt the Strivings of the Spirit; ſo oft Chriſt *would have gather'd us.*

2. Their wilful Refuſal of this Grace and Favour. *Ye would not.* How emphatically is their Obſtinacy oppos'd to Chriſt's Mercy? *I would, and ye would not.* He was willing to ſave them, but they were not willing to be ſaved by him. *Note*, It is wholly owing to the wicked Wills of Sinners, that they are not gather'd under the Wings of the Lord Jeſus. They did not like the Terms upon which Chriſt propos'd to gather them, and lov'd their Sins, and yet truſted to their Righteouſneſs; they would not ſubmit, either to the Grace of Chriſt, or to his Government, and ſo the Bargain broke off.

Fifthly, He reads *Jeruſalem*'s Doom, *v.* 38, 39. *Therefore behold your Houſe is left unto you deſolate*: Both the City and the Temple, God's Houſe, and their own, all ſhall be laid waſte. But 'tis eſpecially meant of the Temple, which they boaſted of, and truſted to: That holy Mountain, becauſe of which they were ſo *haughty.* Note, They that will not be gather'd by the Love and Grace of Chriſt, ſhall be conſum'd and ſcatter'd by his Wrath. I would, and you would not, *Iſrael would none of me, ſo I gave them up*, Pſal. 81. 11, 12.

1. Their Houſe ſhall be *deſerted.* It is *left unto you.* Chriſt was now departing from the *Temple*, and never came into it again, but by this word abandon'd it to Ruin. They doted on it, would have it *to themſelves*; Chriſt muſt have no room or intereſt there: Well, ſaith Chriſt, *It is left to you*, take it, and make your beſt of it, I'll never have any thing more to do with it. They had made it a Houſe of Merchandize, and a Den of Thieves, and ſo it is left to them: Not long after this the Voice was heard in the Temple, *Let us depart hence.* When Chriſt went, *Jehabod*, the *Glory departed.* Their *City* alſo was left *to them*, deſtitute of God's Preſence and Grace. He was no longer a Wall of Fire about them, nor the Glory in the midſt of them.

2. It ſhall be *deſolate.* 'Tis *left unto you deſolate.* It is left ἔρημος, a *Wilderneſs.* (1.) It was immediately, when Chriſt left it in the Eyes of all that underſtood themſelves, a very diſmal, *melancholy* place; Chriſt's Departure makes the beſt furniſhed, beſt repleniſhed place a *Wilderneſs*; tho' it be the Temple, the chief place of Converſe; for what Comfort can there be where Chriſt is not? Tho' there may be a crowd of other Contentments; yet if Chriſt's ſpecial ſpiritual Preſence be withdrawn, that Soul, that Place is become a Wilderneſs, a Land of Darkneſs, a Darkneſs it ſelf: And this comes of Men's rejecting Chriſt, and driving him away from them. (2.) It was not long after *deſtroy'd*, and *ruin'd*, and not one Stone left upon another. The Lot of *Jeruſalem*'s Enemies, will now become *Jeruſalem*'s Lot to be made *of a City, a Heap*; *of a defenced City, a Ruin*, Iſa. 25. 2. A *lofty* City *laid low, even to the Ground*, Iſa. 26. 5. The Temple, that holy and beautiful Houſe became deſolate. When God *goes out*, all Enemies *break in.*

Laſtly, Here's the final Farewell that Chriſt took of them and their Temple: *Ye ſhall not ſee me henceforth, till ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed is he that cometh.* This ſpeaks,

1. His *Departure* from them. The time was at hand when he ſhould *leave the World to go to his Father*, and be ſeen no more: After his Reſurrection he was ſeen only by a few choſen Witneſſes, and they ſaw him not long, but he ſoon remov'd to the inviſible World, and there will be till the Time of the *Reſtitution of all things*; when his welcome at his firſt coming will be repeated with loud Acclamations: *Bleſſed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.* Chriſt will not be ſeen again till he *comes in the Clouds, and every Eye ſhall ſee him*, Rev. 1. 7. and then, even they, who when time was, rejected, and *pierced* him, will be glad to come in among his *Adorers.* Then *every Knee ſhall bow* to him, even thoſe that had bow'd to *Baal*; and even the Workers of Iniquity will then cry, *Lord, Lord*, and will own, when his Wrath is kindled, that *Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him.* Would we have our Lot in that Day, with thoſe that ſay, *Bleſſed is he that cometh*, let us be with them now, with them that truly *worſhip*, and truly *welcome* Jeſus Chriſt.

2. Their continued Blindneſs and Obſtinacy. *Ye ſhall not ſee me*, i. e. not ſee me to be the *Meſſiah*, (for otherwiſe they did ſee him upon the Croſs) not ſee the Light of the Truth concerning me, nor the things that belong to your Peace, till ye ſhall ſay, *Bleſſed is he that cometh.* They will never be convinced till Chriſt's ſecond coming convinceth them, when it will be too late to make an Intereſt in him, and nothing will remain but *a fearful looking for of Judgment.* Note, (1.) Wilful Blindneſs is oft puniſh'd with judicial Blindneſs. If they will not ſee, they ſhall not ſee; with this word he concludes his publick Preaching. After his Reſurrection, which was the Sign of the Prophet *Jonas*, they ſhould have no other Sign given them, till they ſhould ſee the Sign of the Son of Man, *Mat.* 24. 30. (2.) When the Lord comes with ten thouſand of his Saints, he will *convince all*, and will force Acknowledgments from the proudeſt of his Enemies, of his being the Meſſiah, and even they ſhall be *found Liars to him.* They

that would not now come at his *Call*, ſhall then be forc'd to depart with his *Curſe*. The Chief Prieſts and *Scribes* were diſpleas'd with the Children for crying *Hoſanna* to Chriſt; but the Day is coming, when proud Perſecutors would gladly be found in the Condition of the meaneſt and pooreſt they now trample upon. They who now reproach and ridicule the *Hoſanna's* of the Saints, will be of another Mind ſhortly; it were therefore better to be of that Mind now. Some make this to refer to the Converſion of the *Jews* to the Faith of Chriſt; then they ſhall ſee him, and own him, and ſay, *Bleſſed is he that cometh*: But it ſeems rather to look further; for the compleat Manifeſtation of Chriſt, and Conviction of Sinners, is reſerv'd to be the Glory of the Laſt Day.

CHAP. XXIV.

Chriſt's Preaching was moſtly Practical; but in this Chapter we have a Prophetical Diſcourſe, a Prediction of Things to come; but ſuch as had a practical Tendency, and was intended, not to gratify the Curioſity of his Diſciples, but to guide their Conſciences and Converſations; and it is therefore concluded with a Practical Application. The Church has always had particular *Prophecies, beſides* general *Promiſes, both for Direction, and for Encouragement to Believers: But it is obſervable, Chriſt preach'd this Prophetical Sermon in the Cloſe of his Miniſtry; as the* Apocalypſe *is the laſt Book of the* New Teſtament, *and the Prophetical Books of the* Old Teſtament *are plac'd laſt, to intimate to us, that we muſt be well grounded in plain Truths and Duties, and thoſe muſt firſt be well digeſted, before we dive into thoſe Things that are dark and difficult. Many run themſelves into Confuſion, by beginning their Bible* at the wrong End. *Now in this Chapter we have,* (1.) *The Occaſion of this Diſcourſe,* v. 1, 2, 3. (2.) *The Diſcourſe it ſelf: In which,* (1.) *The Prophecy of divers Events, eſpecially referring to the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *and the utter Ruin of the* Jewiſh *Church and Nation, which was now* haſtening on, *and was* compleated *about Forty Years after; the Prefaces to that Deſtruction, the Concomitants, and Conſequences of it: Yet looking further to Chriſt's Coming at the End of Time, and the Conſummation of all Things, of which that was a Type and Figure,* v. 4,—31. (2.) *The Practical Application of this Prophecy, for the awakening and quickning of his Diſciples, to prepare for theſe great and awful Things,* v. 32,—51.

AND Jeſus went out, and departed from the temple; and his diſciples came to *him*, for to ſhew him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, See ye not all theſe things? verily I ſay unto you, There ſhall not be left here one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down. 3 And as he ſat upon the mount of Olives, the diſciples came unto him privately, ſaying, Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? and what *ſhall be* the ſign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

Here's, (1.) Chriſt's quitting the Temple, and his publick Work there. He had ſaid in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, *Your Houſe is left unto you deſolate*; and here he made his Words good, *He went out and departed from the Temple.* The Manner of Expreſſion is obſervable: He not only went *out of* the Temple, but departed *from it*, took his final Farewel of it: He departed from it, never to return to it any more; and then immediately follows a Prediction of its Ruin. *Note,* That Houſe is *left deſolate* indeed, which Chriſt *leaves. Wo unto them when I depart,* Hoſ. 9. 12. Jer. 6. 8. 'Twas now Time to groan out their *Ichabod, The Glory is departed*; *their Defence is departed.* Three Days after this, the Veil of the Temple was rent; when Chriſt left it, all became *common* and *unclean.* But Chriſt departed not, till they drove him away; did not reject them, till they firſt rejected him.

2. His private Diſcourſe with his Diſciples: He left *the Temple*, but he did not leave *the Twelve*, who were the Seed of the Goſpel-Church, which the *Caſting off* of the *Jews* was the *Enriching* of. When he left the Temple, his Diſciples left it too, and *came to him. Note,* 'Tis good being where Chriſt is, and leaving that which he leaves. They came to him to be *inſtructed* in private, when his publick Preaching was over; for *the Secret of the Lord is with them that Fear him:* He had ſpoken of the Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* Church to the Multitude, *in Parables*; which here, as uſual, he explains to his Diſciples. *Obſerve,*

1. His Diſciples came to him, to *ſhew him the Buildings of the Temple.* 'Twas a ſtately and beautiful Structure, one of the Wonders of the World: No Coſt was ſpar'd, no Art left untry'd, to make it ſumptuous. Tho' it came ſhort of *Solomon*'s Temple, and *its Beginning was ſmall*, yet *its latter End did greatly increaſe.* It was richly furniſh'd with *Gifts* and *Offerings*, to which there were continual Additions made. They ſhew'd Chriſt theſe Things, and deſir'd him to take notice of them, either,

(1.) As being greatly pleas'd with them themſelves, and expecting he ſhould be ſo too. They had liv'd moſtly in *Galilee*, at a Diſtance from the *Temple*, had ſeldom ſeen it, and therefore were the more ſtruck with Admiration at it, and thought he ſhould admire as much as they did all *this Glory*, Gen. 31. 1. and would have him divert himſelf *after* his Preaching, and *from* his Sorrow which they ſaw him perhaps almoſt *overwhelmed with*, with looking about him. *Note,* Even good Men are apt to be too much enamour'd with outward Pomp and Gaiety, and to over-value it, even in the Things of God; whereas we ſhould be, as Chriſt was, dead to it, and look upon it with Contempt. The Temple was indeed glorious; but, (1.) Its Glory was *ſully'd* and *ſtain'd* with the *Sin* of the *Prieſts* and *People.* That wicked Doctrine of the *Phariſees*, which preferr'd the *Gold* before the *Temple* that *ſanctified* it, was enough to deface the Beauty of all the Ornaments of the Temple. (2.) Its Glory was eclips'd, and out-done by the Preſence of Chriſt in it, who was *the Glory of this latter Houſe*, Hag. 2. 9. So that the Buildings had no Glory, in Compariſon with that Glory which excelled.

Or, (2.) As *pitying* that this Houſe ſhould be *left deſolate*: They *ſhew'd him the Buildings*, as if they would move him to *reverſe* the Sentence: Lord, Let not this holy and *beautiful Houſe, where our Fathers praiſed thee*, be made a Deſolation. They forgot how many Providences concerning *Solomon*'s Temple had been manifeſt, how little God car'd for that *outward Glory* which they had ſo much admir'd, when the People were wicked, 2 *Chron.* 7. 21. *This Houſe which is High*, Sin will *bring low.* Chriſt had lately look'd upon the *precious Souls*, and *wept for them*, Luk. 19. 41. The Diſciples look upon the *pompous Buildings*, and are ready to *weep for them.* In this, as in other Things, his Thoughts are not *like ours.* 'Twas Weakneſs, and Meanneſs of Spirit in the Diſciples, to be ſo fond of fine Buildings; 'twas a childiſh Thing. *Animo magno nihil magnum.* Seneca.

2. Chriſt hereupon foretels the utter Ruin and Deſtruction that was coming upon this Place, *v.* 2. *Note,* A believing Foreſight of the defacing of all worldly Glory, will help to take us off from admiring it, and over-valuing it. The moſt beautiful Body will be ſhortly Worms Meat, and the moſt beautiful Building a ruinous Heap. And ſhall we then *ſet our Eyes upon that which* ſo ſoon *is not*; and look upon that with *ſo much Admiration*, which e'er long we ſhall certainly look upon with ſo much Contempt? *See ye not all theſe Things?* They would have Chriſt look upon *them*, and be as much *in Love with them* as they were: He would have them *look upon them*, and be as *dead to them* as he was. There is ſuch a *Sight of theſe Things*, as will do us good; ſo to *ſee them*, as to ſee thro' them, and ſee to the End of them.

Chriſt, inſtead of reverſing the Decree, ratifies it; *Verily, I ſay unto you, there ſhall not be left one Stone upon another.*

He ſpeaks of it as a *certain Ruin*: *I ſay unto you.* I that know what I ſay, and know how to make good what I ſay; take my word for it, it ſhall be ſo: *I, the Amen, the true Witneſs*, ſay it to you. All Judgment being committed to the Son, the Threatnings as well as the Promiſes are all *Yea and Amen* in him, *Heb.* 6. 17, 18.

(2.) He ſpeaks of it as *an utter Ruin.* The Temple ſhall not only be ſtript, and plunder'd, and defac'd, but utterly demoliſh'd and laid waſte; *not one Stone ſhall be left upon another.* Notice is taken, in the building of the Second Temple, of the *laying of one Stone upon another*, Hag. 2. 15. and here, in the Ruin, of not *leaving one Stone upon another.* The Story tells us, that this was fulfill'd in the latter: For tho' *Titus*, when he took the City, did all he could to preſerve the Temple, yet he could not reſtrain the enraged Soldiers from deſtroying it utterly; and it was done to that degree, that *Turnus Rufus* plow'd up the Ground on which it had ſtood: And that Scripture was fulfill'd, *Mic.* 3. 12. *Sion ſhall for your Sake be plow'd as a Field.* And afterwards, in *Julian* the Apoſtate's Time, when the *Jews* were encourag'd by him to rebuild their Temple, in Oppoſition to the Chriſtian Religion, what remain'd of the Ruins was quite pull'd down, to level the Ground for a new Foundation; but the Attempt was defeated by the miraculous Eruption of Fire out of the Ground, which deſtroy'd the Foundation they laid, and frighten'd away the Builders. Now this Prediction of the final and irreparable Ruin of the Temple, includes a Prediction of the Period of the *Levitical* Prieſthood, and the Ceremonial Law.

3. The Diſciples, not diſputing either the Truth or the Equity of this Sentence, nor doubting of the Accompliſhment of it, enquire more particularly of the Time when it ſhould come to paſs, and the Signs of its Approach, *v.* 3. *Obſerve,*

1. *Where* they made this Enquiry; *privately, as he ſat upon the Mount of Olives*: Probably, he was returning to *Bethany*, and there ſat down by the way to *reſt him.* The Mount of *Olives* directly *faced* the Temple, and from thence he might have a full Proſpect of it at ſome Diſtance: There he ſat as Judge upon the Bench, the Temple and City before him, as at the Bar, and thus he paſs'd Sentence on them. We read, *Ezek.* 11. 23. of the *removing of the Glory of the Lord* from the *Temple* to the *Mountain*; ſo Chriſt, the great *Shechinah*, here removes to this Mountain.

2. What the Enquiry it ſelf was: *When ſhall theſe Things be? And what ſhall be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the End of the World?* Here are Three Queſtions which they put:

1. Some think theſe Queſtions do all point at one and the ſame Thing; the Deſtruction of the Temple, and the Period of the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation, which Chriſt had himſelf ſpoken of at his *coming*, Chap. 16. 28. and which would be *the Conſummation of the Age*; for ſo it may be read, the finiſhing of that Diſpenſation. Or, they thought the Deſtruction of the Temple muſt needs be the End of the World. If that Houſe be *laid waſte*, the World cannot *ſtand*: For the *Rabbins* us'd to ſay, that the *Houſe of the Sanctuary* was one of the *Seven Things*, for the Sake of which the World was

made; and they think, if ſo, the World will not ſurvive the Temple.

2. Others think their Queſtion, *When ſhall theſe things be?* refers to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the other Two to the End of the World: Or, *Chriſt's Coming* may refer to his ſetting up his Goſpel-Kingdom, and the *End of the World*, to the Day of Judgment. I rather incline to think, that their Queſtion look'd no further than the Event Chriſt now foretold: But it appears by other Paſſages, they had very *confuſed* Thoughts of future Events; ſo that perhaps, it is not poſſible to put any certain Conſtruction upon this Queſtion of theirs.

But Chriſt, in his Anſwer, tho' he doth not expreſly rectify the Miſtake of his Diſciples, that muſt be done by the pouring out of the Spirit, yet looks further than their Queſtion, and inſtructs his Church, not only concerning the great Events of that Age, the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, but concerning his Second Coming at the End of Time, which here he inſenſibly ſlides into a Diſcourſe of; and of that, 'tis plain, he ſpeaks in the next Chapter, which is a Continuation of this Sermon.

4 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am Chriſt: and ſhall deceive many. 6 And ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumours of wars: ſee that ye be not troubled: for all *theſe things* muſt come to paſs, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom: and there ſhall be famines, and peſtilences, and earthquakes in divers places. 8 All theſe *are* the beginning of ſorrows. 9 Then ſhall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and ſhall kill you: and ye ſhall be hated of all nations for my names ſake. 10 And then ſhall many be offended, and ſhall betray one another, and ſhall hate one another. 11 And many falſe prophets ſhall riſe, and ſhall deceive many. 12 And becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold. 13 But he that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved. 14 And this goſpel of the kingdom ſhall be preached in all the world, for a witneſs unto all nations, and then ſhall the end come. 15 When ye therefore ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation, ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtand in the holy place, (whoſo readeth, let him underſtand) 16 Then let them which be in Judea, flee into the mountains. 17 Let him which is on the houſe-top, not come down to take any thing out of his houſe: 18 Neither let him which is in the field, return back to take his clothes. 19 And wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days. 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the ſabbath-day: 21 For then ſhall be great tribulation, ſuch as was not ſince the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever ſhall be. 22 And except thoſe days ſhould be ſhortned, there ſhould no fleſh be ſaved: but for the elects ſake thoſe days ſhall be ſhortned. 23 Then if any man ſhall ſay unto you, Lo, here *is* Chriſt, or there: believe *it* not. 24 For there ſhall ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets, and ſhall ſhew great ſigns and wonders, inſomuch that (if *it were* poſſible) they ſhould deceive the very elect. 25 Behold, I have told you before. 26 Wherefore if they ſhall ſay unto you, Behold, he is in the deſert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the ſecret chambers; believe *it* not. 27 For as the lightning cometh out of the eaſt, and ſhineth even unto the weſt: ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be. 28 For whereſoever the carcaſe is, there will the eagles be gathered together. 29 Immediately after the tribulation of thoſe days, ſhall the ſun be darkened, and the moon ſhall not give her light, and the ſtars ſhall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens ſhall be ſhaken. 30 And then ſhall appear the ſign of the Son of man in heaven: and then ſhall all the tribes of the earth mourn; and they ſhall ſee the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. 31 And he ſhall ſend his angels with a great ſound of a trumpet, and they ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Diſciples had aſk'd concerning *the Times when theſe Things ſhould be?* And Chriſt gives them no Anſwer to that, after what Number of Days and Years his Prediction ſhould be accompliſh'd; for *it is not for us to know the Times*, Acts 1. 7. But they had aſk'd, *What ſhall be the Sign?* And that Queſtion he anſwers fully; for we are concern'd to *underſtand the Signs of the Times*, Mat. 16. 3. Now the Prophecy primarily reſpects the Events near at Hand, the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, the Period of the *Jewiſh* Church and State, the Calling of the *Gentiles*, and the Setting up of *Chriſt's Kingdom* in the World. But as the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, which have an *immediate* Reference to the Affairs of the *Jews*, and the Revolutions of their State, yet, under the Figure of them, do certainly *look further* to the Goſpel-Church, and the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, and are ſo expounded in the *New Teſtament*; and ſuch Expreſſions are found in thoſe Predictions as are *peculiar* thereto, and not applicable otherwiſe; ſo *this* Prophecy, under the Type of *Jeruſalem*'s Deſtruction, looks *as far forward* as the General Judgment: And, as is uſual in Prophecies, ſome Paſſages are moſt applicable to the Type, and others to the Antitype; and towards the Cloſe, as uſual, it points more particularly to the latter. And it is obſervable, that what Chriſt here ſaith to his Diſciples, tends more to *engage their Caution*, than to *ſatisfy their Curioſity*; more to prepare them for the Events that ſhould happen, than to give them a diſtinct *Idea* of the Events themſelves. This is that good *Underſtanding of the Times* we ſhould all covet, from thence to infer what *Iſrael ought to do*. And ſo this Prophecy is of *ſtanding*, *laſting* Uſe to the Church, and will be ſo to the End of Time; for the *Thing that has been, is that which ſhall be*, Eccl. 1. 5, 6, 7, 9. And the Series, Connexion, and Preſages of Events, are much the ſame ſtill that they were then; ſo that upon the Prophecy of this Chapter pointing at that Event, Moral Prognoſtications may be made; and ſuch Conſtructions of the Signs of the Times, as the wiſe Man's Heart will know how to improve.

Firſt, Chriſt here foretels the *going forth of Deceivers*. He begins with a Caution, *Take heed that no Man deceive you.* They expected to be told *when* theſe Things ſhould be, to be let into that Secret; but this Caution is a Check to their Curioſity, *What is that to you?* Mind you your Duty; follow me, and be not ſeduced from following me. Thoſe that are moſt inquiſitive concerning the ſecret Things which belong not to them, are eaſieſt impos'd upon by Seducers, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 3. The Diſciples, when they heard that the *Jews*, their moſt inveterate Enemies, ſhould be deſtroy'd might, be in Danger of falling into Security; Nay, ſaith Chriſt, you are more expos'd other ways. *Seducers* are more dangerous Enemies to the Church than Perſecutors.

Three times in this Diſcourſe he mentions the falſe Prophets appearing; which was (1.) A Preſage of *Jeruſalem*'s Ruin. Juſtly were they that *killed* the true Prophets left to be enſnar'd by falſe Prophets, and that crucified the true *Meſſiah*, left to be deceiv'd and broken by falſe Chriſts, and pretended *Meſſiahs*. The appearing of theſe, was the Occaſion of dividing that People into Parties and Factions, which made their Ruin the more eaſy and ſpeedy: And the Sin of the many that were led aſide by them, help'd to fill the Meaſure. (2.) It was a Trial to the Diſciples of Chriſt, and therefore agreeable to their State of Probation, that they which are perfect may be *made manifeſt*.

Now concerning theſe Deceivers, obſerve here,

1. The *Pretences* they ſhould *come under*: Satan acts moſt miſchievouſly, when he appears as an *Angel of Light*. The *Colour* of the *greateſt Good*, is oft the *Cover* of the *greateſt Evil*.

(1.) There ſhould appear *falſe Prophets*, v. 11, 24. The Deceivers would pretend to Divine Inſpiration, an immediate Miſſion, and a Spirit of Prophecy, when it was all a Lye. Such there had been formerly, *Jer.* 23. 16. *Ezek.* 13. 6. as was foretold, *Deut.* 13. 3. Some think the Seducers here pointed to, were ſuch as had been *ſettled Teachers* in the Church, and had gain'd a Reputation as ſuch, but afterwards betray'd the Truth they had taught, and revolted to Error; and from ſuch the Danger is the greater, becauſe leaſt ſuſpected. One *falſe* Traytor in the Gariſon, may do more Miſchief than a Thouſand avow'd Enemies without.

(2.) There ſhould appear *falſe Chriſts*, coming in *Chriſt's Name*, v. 5. aſſuming to themſelves the Name peculiar to him, and ſaying, *I am Chriſt*, *Pſeudo-Chriſts*, v. 24. There was at that Time a general Expectation of the Appearing of the *Meſſiah*; they ſpoke of him, as *he that ſhould come*; but when he did come, the Body of the Nation *rejected* him, which thoſe who were ambitious of making themſelves a Name, took advantage of, and ſet up for Chriſts. *Joſephus* ſpeaks of ſeveral ſuch Impoſtors between this and the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; one *Theudas*, that was defeated by *Cuſpius Fadus*, another by *Felix*, another by *Feſtus*. *Doſetheus* ſaid he was *the Chriſt foretold by* Moſes; *Origen adv. Celſ.* See *Acts* 5. 36, 37. 21. 28. *Simon Magus* pretended to be the *great Power of God*, Acts 8. 10. In After-Ages there have been ſuch Pretenders; one about 100 Years after Chriſt, that call'd himſelf *Bar-Cochobas*, the *Son of a Star*, but prov'd *Bar-Coſba*, the *Son of a Lye*. And about 50 Years ago, *Sabbati-Levi* ſet up for a *Meſſiah* in the *Turkiſh* Empire, and was hugely careſs'd by the *Jews*, but in a ſhort Time his Folly was made manifeſt. See Sir *Paul Rycaut*'s *Hiſtory*,

ſtory. The Popiſh Religion doth in Effect ſet up a *falſe Chriſt:* The Pope comes in *Chriſt's Name,* as his Vicar, but invades and uſurps all his Offices, and ſo is a Rival with him, and, as ſuch, an *Enemy* to him, a Deceiver and an *Antichriſt.*

(3.) Theſe falſe Chriſts and falſe Prophets would have their Agents and Emiſſaries buſy in all Places to draw People in to them, *v.* 23. *Then* when publick Troubles are great and threatning, and People will be catching at any Thing that looks like Deliverance, *then* Satan will take the Advantage of impoſing on them; then they will ſay, *Lo, here is a Chriſt,* or *there is one;* but do not *mind them.* The true Chriſt *did not ſtrive or cry,* nor was it ſaid of him, *Lo here,* or *Lo there,* Luke 17. 21. Therefore if any Man ſay ſo concerning him, look upon it as a *Temptation.* The Hermits, that place Religion in a Monaſtical Life, ſay, *He is in a Deſart;* the Prieſts, who make the Conſecrated Wafare to be *Chriſt,* ſay, he is, ἐν τοῖς ταμείοις, in the *Cupboards,* in the *ſecret Chambers;* Lo, he is in this Shrine, in *that* image. Thus ſome appropriate Chriſt's Spiritual Preſence to one Party or Perſuaſion, as if they had the Monopoly of Chriſt and Chriſtianity; and the Kingdom of Chriſt muſt *ſtand* and *fall,* muſt *live* and *dye* with them. Lo, he is in this Church, in that Council: Whereas Chriſt is *all in all;* not *here* or *there,* but meets his People with a Bleſſing in every Place where *he records his Name.*

2. The *Proofs* they ſhould *offer,* for the making good of theſe Pretences; *They ſhall ſhew great Signs and Wonders,* v. 24. Not *true Miracles;* thoſe are a Divine Seal, and with thoſe the Doctrine of Chriſt ſtands confirm'd; and therefore if any offer to draw us from that by Signs and Wonders, we muſt have recourſe to that Rule given of old, *Deut.* 13. 1, 2, 3. *If the Sign or Wonder come to paſs,* yet follow not him that would draw you to ſerve other Gods, or believe in other *Chriſts;* for *the Lord your God proveth you.* But theſe were *lying Wonders,* wrought by Satan, (God permitting him) who is the *Prince of the Power of the Air,* 2 Theſſ. 2. 9. It is not ſaid they ſhall *work Miracles,* but they ſhall *ſhew great Signs:* They are but a Shew; either they impoſe upon Men's Credulity, by falſe Narratives, or deceive their Senſes by Tricks of Legerdemain, or Arts of Divination, as the Magicians of *Egypt* by their Enchantments.

3. The *Succeſs* they ſhould have in theſe *Attempts:*

(1.) They ſhall *deceive many,* v. 5. and again, *v.* 11. *Note,* The Devil and his Inſtruments may prevail far in deceiving poor Souls. Few find the *ſtrait Gate,* but many are drawn into the *broad Way:* Many will be impos'd upon by their Signs and Wonders, and many drawn in by the Hopes of Deliverance from their Oppreſſions. *Note,* Neither Miracles nor Multitudes are certain Signs of a true Church; for *all the World wonders after Beaſt,* Rev. 13. 3.

(2.) They ſhall *deceive, if it were poſſible, the very Elect,* v. 24. This ſpeaks, (1.) The *Strength of the Deluſion;* 'tis ſuch as many ſhall be carry'd away by; (ſo ſtrong ſhall the Stream be) even thoſe that were thought to ſtand faſt. Men's Knowledge, Gifts, Learning, eminent Station, and long Profeſſion, will not ſecure them, but notwithſtanding theſe, *many will be deceived:* Nothing but the Almighty Grace of God, purſuant to his Eternal Purpoſe, will be a Protection. (2.) The *Safety of the Elect,* in the midſt of this Danger, which is taken for granted in that Parentheſis, *if it were poſſible;* plainly implying, that it is not poſſible, for they are *kept by the Power of God,* that the *Purpoſe of God, according to the Election, may ſtand.* 'Tis poſſible for thoſe that have been enlighten'd to *fall away,* Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. but not for thoſe that were *Elect.* If God's *Choſen ones* ſhould be *deceiv'd,* God's Choice would be *defeated;* which is not to be imagin'd; for *whom he did predeſtinate, he call'd, juſtified, and glorified,* Rom. 8. 30. They were given to Chriſt, and of all that were given to him, he will *loſe none,* Joh. 10. 28. *Grotius* will have this to be meant of the great Difficulty of drawing the Primitive Chriſtians from their Religion, and quotes it as us'd proverbially by *Galen,* when he would expreſs a Thing very difficult, and morally impoſſible; he ſaith, *You may ſooner draw away a Chriſtian from Chriſt.*

4. The repeated Cautions which our Saviour gives to his Diſciples, to ſtand upon their Guard againſt them: Therefore he gave them *Warning,* that they might *watch,* v. 25. *Behold, I have told you before.* He that is *told before* where he will be aſſaulted, may ſave himſelf, as the King of *Iſrael* did, 2 *Kings* 6. 9, 10. *Note,* Chriſt's Warnings are deſign'd to engage our Watchfulneſs: And tho' the Elect ſhall be preſerved from Deluſion, yet they ſhall be preſerv'd by the Uſe of appointed Means, and a due Regard to the Cautions of the Word: We are *kept thro' Faith;* Faith in Chriſt's Word, which he has *told us before.*

(1.) We muſt not *believe* thoſe that ſay; *Lo, here is Chriſt,* or, *Lo, he is there,* v. 23. We believe that the true Chriſt is at the right Hand of God, and that his Spiritual Preſence is where Two or Three are gather'd together *in his Name.* Believe not thoſe therefore who would draw you off from a Chriſt in Heaven, by telling you he is any where on Earth, or draw you off from the Catholick Church *on Earth,* by telling you *he is here,* or *he is there; believe it not.* *Note,* There is not a greater Enemy to true *Faith,* than vain *Credulity:* *The Simple believeth every Word,* and runs after every Cry; Μέμνησο ἀπιστεῖν.

(2.) We muſt not *go forth* after thoſe that ſay, *He is in the Deſart,* or *he is in the ſecret Chambers,* v. 26. We muſt not hearken to every Empirick and Pretender, nor follow every one that puts up the Finger to point us to a new Chriſt, and a new Goſpel: *Go not forth,* for if you do, you are in danger of being taken by them; therefore keep out of Harm's way. Be not *carry'd about with every Wind:* Many a Man's vain Curioſity to *go forth,* hath led him into a fatal Apoſtacy: Your Strength at ſuch a Time is to ſit ſtill, to have *the Heart eſtabliſhed with Grace.*

Secondly, He foretels *Wars and great Commotions among the Nations,* *v.* 6, 7. When Chriſt was born, there was an Univerſal Peace in the Empire, the Temple of *Janus* was ſhut; but *think not that Chriſt came to ſend* or continue ſuch a Peace, *Luk.* 12. 5. No; his City and his Wall are to be built even *in troubleſome Times,* and even *Wars* ſhall forward his *Work.* From the Time that the *Jews* rejected Chriſt, and he left their Houſe deſolate, the *Sword* did *never depart from their Houſe:* The Sword of the Lord was never *quiet,* becauſe he had given it a Charge againſt *an hypocritical Nation,* and the *People of his Wrath,* and by it brought Ruin upon them.

Here's, 1. A *Prediction of the Event of the Day:* You will now ſhortly *hear of Wars and Rumours of Wars.* When *Wars* are, they will be *heard,* for *every Battel of the Warrior is with confuſed Noiſe,* *Iſa.* 9. 5. See how terrible it is, *Jer.* 4. 19. *Thou haſt heard, O my Soul, the Alarm of Wars.* Even the Quiet in the Land, and the leaſt inquiſitive after new Things, cannot but hear *the Rumours of War.* See what comes of refuſing the Goſpel: Thoſe that will not hear the *Meſſengers of Peace,* ſhall be made to hear the *Meſſengers of War.* God has a Sword ready to revenge the Quarrel of his Covenant, his new Covenant. *Nation ſhall riſe up againſt Nation;* i. e. one Part or Province of the *Jewiſh* Nation againſt another, one City againſt another, 2 *Chron.* 15. 5, 6. And in the ſame Province and City, one Party or Faction ſhall riſe up againſt another, ſo that they ſhall be devour'd by, and daſh'd in Pieces againſt one another, *Iſa.* 9. 19, 21.

2. A Preſcription of the Duty of the Day: *See that ye be not troubled.* Is that poſſible? To hear ſuch ſad News, and not be troubled? Yet where the *Heart is fixed, truſting in God,* 'tis kept in *Peace,* and is not afraid; no, not of the *evil Tidings of Wars,* and *Rumours of War;* no, not the noiſe of *Arm, Arm.* *Be not troubled;* Μὴ θροεῖσθε, be not put into Confuſion or Commotion, not put into *Throws,* as a Woman with Child by a Fright. *See* that ye be not, ὁρᾶτε. *Note,* There is need of conſtant *Care* and *Watchfulneſs,* to keep Trouble from the Heart, when there are *Wars* abroad; and it is againſt the Mind of Chriſt, that his People ſhould have troubled Hearts even in troublous Times.

We muſt not be *troubled,* for two Reaſons:

1. Becauſe we are bid to *expect this.* The *Jews* muſt be puniſh'd, Ruin muſt be brought upon them; by this the Juſtice of God, and the Honour of the Redeemer muſt be aſſerted, and therefore *all theſe things muſt come to paſs:* The *Word is gone out of* God's Mouth, and it ſhall be accompliſh'd in its Seaſon. *Note,* The Conſideration of the Unchangeableneſs of the Divine Counſels, which govern all Events, would compoſe and quiet our Spirits, whatever happens. God is but performing the Thing that is appointed for us; and our inordinate Trouble is an interpretative Quarrel with that Appointment. Let us therefore *acquieſce,* becauſe *theſe Things muſt come to paſs,* not only *neceſſitate Decreti,* as the Product of the Divine Counſel, but *neceſſitate Medij,* as a Means in order to a further End. The old Houſe muſt be *taken down,* (tho' it cannot be done without Noiſe, and Duſt and Danger) e'er the new Fabrick can be erected: The Things that are ſhaken (and ill ſhaken they were) muſt be removed, that the Things which cannot be ſhaken may remain, *Heb.* 12. 27.

2. Becauſe we are ſtill to *expect worſe; The End is not yet.* The End *of Time* is not, and while Time laſts we muſt expect Trouble, and that the End of one Affliction will be but the Beginning of another: Or, *the End* of theſe *Troubles is not yet:* there muſt be more Judgments than one made uſe of, to bring down the *Jewiſh* Power. More Viols of Wrath muſt yet be poured out, there is but *one Woe paſt,* more *Woes* are yet to come, more Arrows are yet to be ſpent upon them out of God's Quiver: Therefore *be not troubled;* do not give way to Fear and Trouble, ſink not under the preſent Burthen, but rather gather in all the Strength and Spirit you have, to encounter what is yet before you. Be not troubled to hear of Wars and Rumours of Wars; for then what will become of you when the *Famines* and *Peſtilences* come? If it be to us a *Vexation* but to *underſtand the Report,* Iſa. 28. 19. what will it be to *feel the Stroke,* when it *toucheth the Bone and the Fleſh?* If *running with the Footmen weary us, how ſhall we contend with Horſes?* And if we be frighted at a little Brook in our way, *what ſhall we do in the Swellings of Jordan?* Jer. 12. 5.

Thirdly, He foretels *other Judgments* more immediately *ſent of God;* *Famines, Peſtilences* and *Earthquakes.* *Famine* is often the Effect of *War,* and *Peſtilence* of *Famine.* Theſe were the three Judgments which *David* was to chooſe one out of; and he was in a Strait, for he knew not which was the worſt. But what dreadful Deſolations will they make, when they all pour in together upon a People? Beſides War, and that's enough, there ſhall be,

1. *Famine,* ſignified by the *black Horſe* under the *Third Seal,* Rev. 6. 5, 6. We read of a Famine in *Judæa,* not long after Chriſt's Time, which was very *impoveriſhing,* Acts 11. 28, 29. But the foreſt Famine was in *Jeruſalem,* during the Siege. See *Lam.* 4. 9, 10.

2. *Peſtilence,* ſignified by the *pale Horſe,* and *Death* upon him, and the *Grave* at his *Heels,* under the *Fourth Seal,* Rev. 6. 7, 8. This deſtroys without Diſtinction, and in a little time lays *Heaps upon Heaps.*

3. *Earthquakes in divers Places,* or *from Place to Place,* purſuing thoſe that flee from them, as they did *from the Earthquake* in the Days of *Uzziah, Zech.* 14. 5. Great Deſolations have ſometimes been made by *Earthquakes,* of late and formerly; they have been the Death of many, and the Terror of more. In the *Apocalyptick* Viſions, it is obſervable, that *Earthquakes* bode Good, and no Evil to the Church, *Rev.* 6. 12. Compare *v.* 15.—11, 12, 13, 19.—16. 17, 18, 19. When

God *ſhakes terribly the Earth*, Iſa. 2. 21. 'tis to ſhake the wicked out of it, *Job* 38. 13. and to introduce the *Deſire of all Nations*, Hag. 2. 6, 7. But here they are ſpoken of as dreadful Judgments, and yet but *the beginning of Sorrows*, ὠδίνων, *of travailing Pains*, which grow even the longer, the more *quiet* and *violent*. *Note*, When God judgeth, he will overcome; when he begins *in Wrath*, he will *make a full End*, 1 Sam. 3. 12. When we look forward to the Eternity of Miſery, that is before the obſtinate Refuſers of Chriſt and his Goſpel, we may truly ſay concerning the greateſt Temporal Judgments, they are but *the Beginning of Sorrows*. As bad as Things are with them, there's *worſe behind*.

Fourthly, He fortels the Perſecution of his own People and Miniſters, and a general Apoſtacy, and Decay in Religion thereupon, *v.* 9, 10, 12, 13. Obſerve,

1. The *Croſs it ſelf* foretold, *v.* 9. *Note*, Of all future Events, we are as much *concern'd*, tho' commonly as little deſirous to know of our own Sufferings, as of any Thing elſe. *Then* when *Famines* and *Peſtilences* prevail, *then* they ſhall impute them to the Chriſtians, and make that a Pretence for perſecuting them; *Chriſtianos ad Leones*. Chriſt had told his Diſciples, when he firſt ſent them out, what hard things they ſhould ſuffer; but they had hitherto experienc'd little of it, and therefore he minds them of it again, that the leſs they had *ſuffer'd*, the more was behind to be *fill'd up*, *Col.* 1. 24.

(1.) They ſhall be *afflicted* with Bonds and Impriſonments, *cruel Mockings and Scourgings*, as bleſſed *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 11. 23, 24, 25. Not kill'd outright, but *kill'd all the Day long*, *in Deaths oft*; kill'd ſo as to feel themſelves dye, made a Spectacle to the World, 1 *Cor.* 4. 9, 11.

(2.) They ſhall be *kill'd*: So cruel are the Church's Enemies, that nothing leſs will ſatisfy them than the Blood of the Saints, which they thirſt after, ſuck, and ſhed like Water.

(3.) They ſhall *be hated of all Nations for Chriſt's Name's Sake*, as he had told them before, *Chap.* 10. 22. The World was generally leaven'd with an Enmity and Malignity to Chriſtians. The *Jews*, tho' ſpiteful to the Heathen, yet were never perſecuted by them, ſo as the Chriſtians were: They were hated by the *Jews*, that were diſperſed among *the Nations*, were the common Butt of the World's Malice. What ſhall we think of this World, when the beſt Men had the worſt Uſage in it? 'Tis the *Cauſe* that *makes the Martyr*, and comforts him; 'twas for *Chriſt's Sake* that they were thus *hated*. Their *Profeſſing* and *Preaching* his Name, incens'd the Nations ſo much againſt them; the Devil finding a fatal Shock thereby given to his Kingdom, and that his Time was likely to be *ſhort*, came down, having *great Wrath*.

2. The *Offence of the Croſs*, v. 10, 12. Satan thus carries on his Intereſt by Force of Arms, tho' Chriſt at the length will bring Glory to himſelf out of the Sufferings of his People and Miniſters. Three *ill Effects of Perſecution* are here foretold:

(1.) The *Apoſtacy of ſome*: When the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity begins to coſt Men dear, *then ſhall many be offended*; ſhall firſt *fall out with*, and then *fall off from* their Profeſſion: They will begin to pick Quarrels with their Religion, ſit looſe to it, grow weary of it, and at length revolt from it. *Note*, (1.) 'Tis no *new* Thing, (tho' 'tis a *ſtrange* Thing) for thoſe that have known the *Way of Righteouſneſs*, to *turn aſide* out of it. *Paul* often complains of *Deſerters*, who *began well*, but ſomething *hinder'd them*; they were *with us*, but go out *from us*, becauſe never truly *of us*, Joh. 2. 19. We are told of it before. (2.) *Suffering* Times are *ſhaking* Times, and thoſe fall in the Storm, that ſtood in fair Weather; like the *ſtony Ground*, Mat. 13. 21. Many will follow Chriſt in the Sun-ſhine, that will ſhift for themſelves, and leave him to do ſo too in the *cloudy, dark Day*. They like their Religion, while they can have it cheap, and ſleep with it in a whole Skin; but if their Profeſſion coſt them any Thing, quit it preſently.

(2.) The *Malignity of others*: When Perſecution is *in Faſhion*, Envy, Enmity and Malice are ſtrangely diffus'd into the Minds of Men by Contagion; and Charity, Tenderneſs and Moderation, are look'd upon as Singularities, which make a Man *like a ſpeckled Bird*: Then they ſhall *betray one another*; *i.e.* Thoſe that have treacherouſly deſerted their Religion, ſhall *hate* and *betray* thoſe who adhere to it, for whom they have pretended Friendſhip. Apoſtates have commonly been the moſt bitter and violent Perſecutors. *Note*, *Perſecuting* Times are diſcovering Times: Wolves in Sheep's Cloathing will then throw off their Diſguiſe, and appear Wolves: They ſhall *betray one another, and hate one another*. The Times muſt needs be *perilous*, when *Treachery* and *Hatred*, Two of the worſt Things that can be, (becauſe directly contrary to Two of the beſt, *Truth* and *Love*) ſhall have the *Aſcendant*. This ſeems to refer to the barbarous Treatment, which the ſeveral contending Factions among the *Jews* gave to one another; and juſtly were they, who eat up God's People *as they eat Bread*, left thus to *bite* and *devour one another*, till they were *conſumed one of another*: Or it may refer to the Miſchiefs done to Chriſt's Diſciples, by thoſe that were neareſt to them, as *Mat.* 10. 21. the *Brother ſhall deliever up the Brother to Death*.

(3.) The general *declining* and *cooling* of moſt, *v.* 12. In ſeducing Times, when falſe Prophets ariſe, in perſecuting Times, when the Saints are hated, expect theſe Two Things:

1. The *Abounding of Iniquity*. Tho' the World always lies in Wickedneſs, yet there are ſome Times, in which it may be ſaid, that *Iniquity doth* in a ſpecial manner *abound*: As, when it is more *extenſive* than ordinary, as in the old World, when *all Fleſh had corrupted their Way*; and when it is more *exceſſive* than ordinary, when *Violence is riſen up to a Rod of Wickedneſs*, Ezek. 7. 11. ſo that Hell ſeems to be broke looſe in Blaſphemies againſt God, and Enmities to the Saints.

2. The *Abating of Love*: This is the Conſequence of the former; *Becauſe Iniquity ſhall abound, the Love of many ſhall wax cold*. Underſtand it in *general*, of true, ſerious Godlineſs, which is all ſumm'd up in *Love*. 'Tis too common for Profeſſors of Religion to grow *cool* in their Profeſſion, when the Wicked are *hot* in their Wickedneſs; as the Church of *Epheſus*, in bad Times, *left her firſt Love*, Rev. 2. 2, 4. Or more particularly, of *brotherly Love*: When Iniquity abounds, *ſeducing* Iniquity, *perſecuting* Iniquity, this Grace commonly waxes cold; Chriſtians begin to be *ſhy* and *ſuſpicious* one of another; Affections are alienated, Diſtances created, Parties made, and ſo Love comes to nothing. The Devil is the Accuſer of the Brethren, not only to their Enemies, which makes perſecuting *Iniquity abound*, but *one to another*; which makes *the Love of many to wax cold*.

This gives a melancholy Proſpect of the Times, that there ſhall be ſuch a great Decay of Love. But, (1.) It is of the Love of *many*, not of *all*. In the worſt of Times, God has his Remnant that hold faſt their Integrity, and retain their Zeal; as in *Elijah*'s Days, when he thought himſelf left alone. (2.) This Love is grown *cold*, but not *dead*; it abates, but is not quite *caſt off*. There is Life in the Root, which will ſhew it ſelf when the *Winter is paſt*. The new Nature may *wax cold*, but ſhall not *wax old*, for then 'twould *decay and vaniſh away*.

3. Comfort adminiſter'd in reference to this Offence of the Croſs, for the Support of the Lord's People under it, *v.* 13. *He that endures to the End, ſhall be ſaved*. (1.) It is comfortable to thoſe who wiſh well to the Cauſe of Chriſt in general, that tho' many are offended, yet ſome ſhall *endure to the End*. When we ſee ſo many drawing back, we are ready to fear, that the Integrity of Chriſt will ſink for want of Supporters, and his Name be left and forgotten for want of ſome to make Profeſſion of it; but *even at this Time there is a Remnant, according to the Election of Grace*, Rom. 11. 5. 'Tis ſpoken of the ſame Time that this Prophecy has Reference to; a Remnant, who are not of them that draw back unto Perdition, but believe and perſevere to *the Saving of the Soul*: They *endure to the End*, to the End of their Lives, to the End of their preſent State of Probation, or to the End of theſe ſuffering, trying Times, to the laſt Encounter, tho' they ſhould be called to *reſiſt unto Blood*. (2.) It is comfortable to thoſe who do thus *endure to the End*, and ſuffer for their Conſtancy, that they *ſhall be ſaved*. Perſeverance *wins* the Crown thro' free Grace, and ſhall *wear* it. They ſhall be *ſaved*: Perhaps they may be deliver'd out of their Troubles, and comfortably ſurvive them in this World; but it is the Eternal Salvation that is here intended. They that endure to the End of their Days, ſhall then receive the *End of their Faith and Hope, even the Salvation of their Souls*, 1 Pet. 1. 9. Rom. 2. 7. Rev. 2. 20. The *Crown of Glory* will make amends for all; and a believing Regard to that, will enable us to chuſe rather to *dye at a Stake* with the *Perſecuted*, that to *live in a Palace* with the *Perſecutors*.

Fifthly, He foretels *the Preaching of the Goſpel in all the World*, v. 14. *This Goſpel ſhall be preach'd, and then ſhall the End come*. Obſerve here, (1.) 'Tis call'd *the Goſpel of the Kingdom*, becauſe it reveals the Kingdom of *Grace*, which leads to the Kingdom of *Glory*; ſets up *Chriſt's Kingdom* in this World, and ſecures *ours* in t'other World. (2.) This Goſpel, ſooner or later, is to be preach'd *in all the World*, to every Creature, and *all Nations* diſcipled by it; for in it, Chriſt is to be *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*; for this End, the Gift of Tongues was *the Firſt-Fruits of the Spirit*. (3.) The Goſpel is preach'd for a *Witneſs to all Nations*; *i. e.* a faithful Declaration of the Mind and Will of God, concerning the *Duty* which God requires from Man, and the *Recompence* which Man may expect from God. It is a *Record*, *Joh.* 5. 11. 'Tis a Witneſs *for* thoſe who believe, that they ſhall be *ſaved*; and *againſt* thoſe who perſiſt in Unbelief, that they ſhall be *damned*. See *Mark* 16. 16. But how doth this come in here?

1. It is intimated, that the *Goſpel* ſhould be, if not *heard*, yet at leaſt *heard of* throughout the then *known World*, before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; that the Old-Teſtament Church ſhould not be quite diſſolv'd, till the New Teſtament was pretty well ſettled, and got conſiderable Footing, and began to make ſome Figure. Better's the Face of a corrupt, degenerate Church, than none at all. Within Forty Years after Chriſt's Death, the *Sound of the* Goſpel was *gone forth to the Ends of the Earth*, Rom. 10. 18. St. *Paul* fully *preach'd the Goſpel from Jeruſalem, and round about unto Illyricum*; and the other Apoſtles were not idle. The Perſecuting of the Saints at *Jeruſalem*, help'd to diſperſe them, ſo that they *went every where preaching the Word*, Acts 1. 4. And when the Tidings of the Redeemer was ſent over all Parts of the World, then ſhall come *the End* of the *Jewiſh* State. Thus that which they thought to *prevent*, by putting Chriſt to Death, they thereby procur'd; all Men *believed on him*, and the *Romans came and took away their Place and Nation*, Joh. 11. 48. *Paul* ſpeaks of the Goſpel being *come to all the World*, and *preach'd to every Creature*, Col. 1. 6, 23.

2. It is likewiſe intimated, that even in *Times of Temptation, Trouble* and *Perſecution*, the Goſpel of the Kingdom ſhall be *preach'd* and *propagated*, and ſhall force its Way thro' the greateſt Oppoſition: Tho' the Enemies of the Church grow very *hot*, and many of her Friends very *cool*, yet *the Goſpel ſhall be preached*. And even then when many fall by the Sword, and by Flame, and many do wickedly, and are corrupted by Flatteries, yet then the People that do know their God, ſhall be ſtrengthen'd to do the greateſt Exploits of all, in inſtructing many. See *Dan.* 11. 32, 33. And ſee an Inſtance, *Phil.* 1. 12,—14.

3. That which ſeems chiefly intended here, is, That *the end of the World* ſhall be *then*, and *not till then*, when the Goſpel has done its Work in the World. The Goſpel ſhall be preached, and that Work carried on when you are dead: So that all Nations, firſt or laſt, ſhall have either the *enjoyment* or the *refuſal* of the Goſpel; and *then cometh the End*, when the Kingdom *ſhall be delivered up to God, even the Father*: When the Myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed, the myſtical Body compleated, and the Nations either *converted* and *ſav'd*, or *convicted* and *ſilenc'd* by the Goſpel, and *then ſhall the End come*, which he had ſaid before, *v.* 6, 7. *not yet*, not till thoſe intermediate Counſels be fulfilled. The World ſhall ſtand as long as any of God's choſen Ones remain uncall'd, but when they are all gather'd in, it will be *ſet on Fire* preſently.

Sixthly, He foretels more particularly the Ruin that was coming upon the People of the *Jews*, their City, Temple and Nation, *v.* 15, *&c.* Here he comes more cloſely to anſwer their Queſtion concerning the Deſolation of the Temple, and what he ſaid here would be of uſe to his Diſciples, both for their Conduct, and for their Comfort, in reference to that great Event; and here he deſcribes the ſeveral Steps of their Calamity, ſuch as is uſual in War.

1. The *Romans* ſetting up the *Abomination of Deſolation in the Holy Place*, v. 15. Now (1.) ſome underſtand by this an Image or Statue, ſet up in the Temple by ſome of the *Roman* Governors, which was very offenſive to the *Jews*, provoked them to rebel, and ſo brought the Deſolation upon them. The Image of *Jupiter Olympius*, which *Antiochus* caus'd to be ſet up upon the Altar of God, is call'd Βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως, the *Abomination of Deſolation*, the very Word here us'd by the Hiſtorian, 1 *Maccab.* 1. 54. Since the Captivity in *Babylon*, nothing was or could be more diſtaſteful to the *Jews* than an *Image* in *the Holy Place*, as appear'd by the mighty Oppoſition they made when *Caligula* offer'd to ſet up his Effigies there, which had been of fatal Conſequence if it had not been prevented, and the Matter accommodated by the Conduct of *Petronius*; but *Herod* did ſet up an Eagle over the Temple-Gate, and ſome ſay, the Effigies of *Titus* was ſet up in the Temple. (2.) Others chuſe to expound it by the parallel Place, *Luke* 21. 20. when ye ſhall *ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with Armies. Jeruſalem* was the Holy City, *Canaan* the Holy Land; the *Mount Moriah*, which lay about *Jeruſalem*, for its nearneſs to the Temple, was, they thought, in a particular manner *Holy Ground*; on the Country lying round about *Jeruſalem* the *Roman* Army was *encamp'd*, that was the Abomination that *made deſolate*. The Land of an Enemy is ſaid to be the *Land which thou abhorreſt*, Iſa. 7. 16. ſo an Enemies Army to a *weak* but *wilful* People, may be called the *Abomination*. Now this is ſaid to be *ſpoken of by Daniel the Prophet*, who ſpoke more plainly of the Meſſiah and his Kingdom, than any of the Old Teſtament Prophets did; he ſpeaks of an *Abomination making deſolate*, which ſhould be ſet up by *Antiochus*, Dan. 11. 31.— 12. 11. but this that our Saviour refers to, we have in the Meſſage that the Angel brought him, *Dan.* 9. 27. of what ſhould come at the end of ſeventy Weeks, long after the former, *for the overſpreading of Abominations*, or as the Margin reads it, *with the abominable Armies* (which comes home to this here) *he ſhall make it deſolate.* Armies of Idolaters may well be called *abominable* Armies; and ſome think the Tumults, Inſurrections, and abominable Factions and Seditions in the City and Temple, may at leaſt be taken in as part of the *Abomination making deſolate.* Chriſt refers them to that Prophecy of *Daniel*, that they might ſee how the Ruin of their City and Temple was ſpoken of in the Old Teſtament, which would both confirm his Prediction, and take off the *Odium* of it. They might likewiſe from thence gather the Time of it, ſoon after the *cutting off* of *Meſſiah* the Prince; the Sin that procur'd it, their rejecting him, and the Certainty of it, 'tis a *Deſolation* determin'd. As Chriſt by his Precepts confirm'd *the Law*, ſo by his Predictions he confirm'd the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, and 'twill be of good uſe to *compare* both *together*.

Reference being here had to a Prophecy, which is commonly dark and obſcure, Chriſt inſerts this *Memorandum*, *Whoſo readeth, let him underſtand*; whoſo readeth the Prophecy of *Daniel*, let him underſtand that it is to have its accompliſhment now ſhortly in the Deſolations of *Jeruſalem*. *Note*, Thoſe that read the Scriptures ſhould labour to underſtand the Scriptures, elſe their reading is to little Purpoſe, we cannot *uſe* that which we do not *underſtand.* See *Joh.* 5. 39. *Acts* 8. 30. The Angel that deliver'd this Prophecy to *Daniel*, ſtirr'd him up to *know* and *underſtand*, *Dan.* 9. 25. And we muſt not deſpair of underſtanding even dark Prophecies; the great New Teſtament Prophecy is call'd a *Revelation*, not a *Secret*. Now *Things revealed belong* to us, and therefore muſt be humbly and diligently ſearch'd into: Or, *let him underſtand*, not only the *Scriptures*, which ſpeak of thoſe Things, but by the Scriptures let him *underſtand the Times*, 1 Chron. 12. 32. *Let him obſerve*, and *take notice*, ſo ſome read it; let him be aſſured, that notwithſtanding the vain Hopes with which the deluded People feed themſelves, the *abominable Armies* will *make deſolate.*

2. The *means of Preſervation* which thinking Men ſhould *betake themſelves to*, v. 16, 20. *Then let them which be in Judea flee.* Then conclude there's no other way to help your ſelves but by flying for the ſame. We may take this,

1. As a *Prediction* of the *Ruin* it ſelf, that it ſhould be *irreſiſtable*; that it would be impoſſible for the ſtouteſt Hearts to make Head againſt it, or contend with it, but they muſt have recourſe to the laſt Shift of getting out of the Way. It ſpeaks that which *Jeremiah* ſo much inſiſted upon, but in vain, when *Jeruſalem* was beſieg'd by the *Chaldeans*, that it would be to no purpoſe to reſiſt, but it was their Wiſdom to yield and capitulate: ſo Chriſt here, to ſhew how fruitleſs it would be to ſtand it out, bids every one *make the beſt of his way.*

(2.) We may take it as a *Direction* to the Followers of Chriſt what to do; not to *ſay a Confederacy* with thoſe who *fought* and *warr'd* againſt the *Romans* for the Preſervation of their City and Nation, only that they might *conſume* the Wealth of both *upon their Luſts*, (for to this very Affair, the Struggles of the *Jews* againſt the *Roman* Power, ſome Years before their final Overthrow, the Apoſtle refers, *Jam.* 4. 1, 2, 3.) But let them acquieſce in the Decree that was gone forth, and with all ſpeed quit the City and Country, as they would quit a falling Houſe, or a ſinking Ship, as *Lot* quitted *Sodom*, and *Iſrael* the Tents of *Dathan* and *Abiram.* He ſhews them,

1. *Whither* they muſt flee, *from Judea* to the *Mountains*, not the *Mountains round about Jeruſalem*, but thoſe in the remote Corners of the Land, which would be ſome Shelter to them, not ſo much by their *Strength*, as by their *Secrecy*. *Iſrael* is ſaid to be *ſcattered upon the Mountains*, 2 Chron. 18. 16. and ſee *Heb.* 11. 28. It would be ſafer among the *Lions Dens*, and the *Mountains of the Leopards*, than among the *ſeditious Jews*, or the *enraged Romans*. *Note*, In Times of imminent Peril and Danger, 'tis not only lawful, but Duty, to ſeek our own Preſervation by all good and honeſt Means, and if God opens a Door of Eſcape, we ought to make our Eſcape, otherwiſe we do not *truſt* God, but *tempt* him. There may be a Time when even *thoſe that are in Judea*, where God is known, and his Name is great, muſt *flee to the Mountains*; and while we only go out of the way of *Danger*, not out of the way of *Duty*, we may truſt God to provide a *Dwelling for his Out-caſts*, Iſa. 16. 4, 5. In Times of publick Calamity, when 'tis manifeſt we cannot be *ſerviceable* at home, and may be *ſafe* abroad, Providence calls us to make our eſcape: He that *flees* may *fight again.*

2. *What haſte* they muſt *make*, v. 17, 18. The Life will be in danger, in imminent Danger, the Scourge will *ſlay ſuddenly*; and therefore he *that is on the Houſe-top* when Alarm comes, let him not *come down into the Houſe* to look after his Effects there, but go the next way down to make his Eſcape; and ſo he that ſhall be *in the Field* will find it his wiſeſt Courſe to take to his Heels immediately, and not return to fetch his Cloaths, or the Wealth of his Houſe; for two Reaſons. (1.) Becauſe the time which would be taken up in packing up his Things, would delay his Flight. *Note*, When Death is at the Door, Delays are dangerous; 'twas the Charge to *Lot*, *Look not behind thee.* Thoſe that are convinc'd of the Miſery of a ſinful State, and the Ruin that attends them in that State, and conſequently of the neceſſity of their *fleeing to Chriſt*, muſt take heed, leſt after all theſe Convictions they periſh eternally by *Delays*. (2.) Becauſe the carrying of his Cloaths, and other his *Moveables* and *Valuables* with him, would but *burthen* him, and clog his flight. The *Syrians* in their Flight caſt *away their Garments*, 2 Kings 7. 15. At ſuch a time we muſt be thankful, if our *Lives be given us for a Prey*, tho' we can *ſave* nothing, *Jer.* 45. 4, 5. for *the Life is more than Meat*, Mat. 6. 25. Thoſe who carry'd off leaſt were ſafeſt in their Flight, *Cantabit vacuus coram Latrone viator.* 'Twas to his own Diſciples that Chriſt recommended this forgetfulneſs of their Houſe and Cloaths, who had an Habitation in Heaven, Treaſure there, and durable Cloathing, which the Enemy could not plunder them of; *Omnia mea mecum porto*, ſaid *Bias* the Philoſopher in his Flight empty-handed. He that has Grace in his Heart carries his All along with him, when ſtript of all.

Now thoſe to whom Chriſt ſaid this immediately, did not live to ſee this diſmal Day, none of all the Twelve, but *John* only; they needed not be hid in the Mountains, Chriſt hid them in Heaven, but they left the Direction to their Succeſſors in Profeſſion who purſu'd it, and it was of uſe to them; for when the Chriſtians in *Jeruſalem* and *Judea* ſaw the Ruin coming on, they all retir'd to a Town call'd *Pella*, on the other ſide *Jordan*, where they were ſafe; ſo that of the many Thouſands that periſhed in the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, there was not ſo much as one Chriſtian. See *Euſeb. Ecleſ. Hiſt. l.* 3. *c.* 5. Thus the *prudent Man foreſees the Evil, and hides himſelf*, Prov. 22. 3. Heb. 11. 7. This Warning was not *kept private.* St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel was publiſh'd long before that Deſtruction, ſo that others might have taken the Advantage of it; but their periſhing thro' their unbelief of this, was a Figure of their eternal periſhing through their unbelief of the Warnings Chriſt gave concerning the *Wrath to come.*

3. Whom it would *go hard with* at that time, v. 19. *Woe to them that are with Child, and to them that give ſuck.* To this ſame Event that Saying of Chriſt at his Death refers, *Luke* 23. 29. they ſhall ſay, *Bleſſed are the Wombs that never bare, and the Paps that never gave ſuck.* Happy are they that have no Children to ſee the Murther of, but moſt unhappy they whoſe Wombs are then bearing, their Paps then giving Suck: They of all other will be in the moſt melancholy Circumſtances. (1.) To them the *Famine* would be *moſt grievous*, when they ſhould ſee the *Tongue of the ſucking Child cleaving to the Root of his Mouth for thirſt*, and themſelves by the Calamity made more *cruel* than the *Sea-monſters*, Lam. 4. 3, 4. (2.) To them the Sword would be moſt terrible, when 'tis in the Hand of worſe than brutal Rage. 'Tis a direful Midwifery, when the *Women with Child* come to be *ript up* by the enraged Conqueror, 2 *Kings* 15. 16. *Hoſ.* 13. 16. *Amos* 1. 13. or the Children *brought forth to the Murtherers*, Hoſ. 9. 13. (3.) To them alſo the *Flight* would be moſt afflictive; the Woman with Child cannot make haſte, or go far; the *ſucking Child* cannot be left behind, or if it ſhould, *can a Woman forget it*, that ſhe

ſhould not have Compaſſion on it? And if it be carry'd along, it retards the Mother's Flight, and ſo expoſeth her Life, and is in danger of *Mephiboſheth*'s Fate, who was lamed by a Fall he got in his Nurſe's Flight, 2 *Sam.* 4. 4.

4. What they ſhould *pray againſt* at that time, *that your Flight be not in the Winter, or on the Sabbath Day*, v. 20. Obſerve in general, it becomes Chriſt's Diſciples in Times of publick Trouble and Calamity to be *much in Prayer*; that's a Salve for every Sore, never out of Seaſon, but in a ſpecial manner ſeaſonable when we are *diſtreſſed on every ſide.* There's no Remedy, but you muſt flee, the Decree is *gone forth*, ſo that God will not be intreated to take away his Wrath, no, not if *Noah, Daniel* and *Job ſtood before him: Let it ſuffice thee, ſpeak no more of that Matter*, but labour to *make the beſt of that which is*, and when you cannot in Faith pray that you may not be forc'd to flee, yet pray that the Circumſtances of it may be *graciouſly* ordered; that tho' the Cup may not paſs from you, yet the extremity of the Judgment may be prevented. *Note*, God has the diſpoſing of the Circumſtances of Events, which ſometimes make a great Alteration one way or other; and therefore in thoſe our Eyes muſt be ever towards him. Chriſt's bidding them pray for this Favour, intimates his Purpoſe of granting it to them; and in a general Calamity we muſt not overlook a circumſtantial Kindneſs, but ſee, and own wherein it might have been worſe. Chriſt bids his Diſciples now and ſtill to pray for themſelves and their Friends, that whenever they were forc'd to flee, it might be in the moſt convenient time. *Note*, When Trouble is in proſpect, at a great diſtance, 'tis good to lay in a Stock of Prayers before-hand: They muſt pray (1.) That their Flight, if it were the Will of God, might not be *in the Winter*, when the Days are ſhort, the Weather cold, the Ways dirty, and therefore travelling very uncomfortable, eſpecially for *whole Families. Paul* haſtens *Timothy* to come to him before Winter, 2 *Tim.* 4. 21. *Note*, Tho' the Eaſe of the Body is not to be mainly conſulted, it ought to be duly conſider'd; tho' we muſt take *what* God ſends, and *when* he ſends it, yet we may pray againſt bodily Inconveniencies, and are encourag'd to do ſo, in that *the Lord is for the Body.* (2.) That it might not be on *the Sabbath Day*; not on the *Jewiſh* Sabbath, becauſe travelling then would give Offence to them, who were angry with the Diſciples for plucking the Ears of Corn on that Day; not on the Chriſtian Sabbath, becauſe being forc'd to travel on that Day, would be a Grief to themſelves. This intimates Chriſt's Deſign, that a Weekly Sabbath ſhould be obſerv'd in his Church, after the preaching of the Goſpel to all the World. We read not of any of the Ordinances of the *Jewiſh* Church, which were purely Ceremonial, that Chriſt ever expreſſed any Care about, becauſe they were all to vaniſh; but for the Sabbath he oft ſhew'd a Concern. It intimates likewiſe that the Sabbath is ordinarily to be obſerv'd as a Day of Reſt from *Travel*, and *worldly Labour*; but that, according to his own Explication of the fourth Commandment, Works of Neceſſity were lawful on the Sabbath-Day, as this of *fleeing* from an Enemy, to *ſave our Lives*; had it not been lawful, he would have ſaid, whatever becomes of you, do not flee on the Sabbath-Day, but abide by it, tho' you dye by it, for we muſt not commit the leaſt Sin to eſcape the greateſt Trouble; but it intimates likewiſe, that it is very uneaſy, and uncomfortable to a good Man, to be taken off by any Work of Neceſſity, from the ſolemn Service and Worſhip of God on the Sabbath-Day. We ſhould pray that we may have quiet undiſturb'd Sabbaths, and may have no other Work but Sabbath Work to do on Sabbath-Days; that we may attend upon the Lord without Diſtraction. 'Twas deſirable, that if they muſt *flee*, they might have the Benefit and Comfort of one Sabbath more, to help to *bear their Charges.* To flee in the Winter is uncomfortable to the Body, but to flee on the Sabbath-Day, is ſo to the Soul, and the more ſo when it *remembers former Sabbaths*, as *Pſal.* 42. 4.

3. The greatneſs of the Troubles which ſhould immediately enſue, *v.* 21. *Then ſhall be great Tribulation*; then when the Meaſure of Iniquity is full; then when the Servants of God are ſeal'd, and ſecur'd, then comes the Troubles; nothing can be done againſt *Sodom* till *Lot* is enter'd into *Zoar*, and then look for *Fire and Brimſtone* preſently. There ſhall be *great Tribulations*; Great indeed, when within the City Plague and Famine rag'd, and (worſe than either,) Faction and Diviſion, ſo that every Man's Sword was againſt his Fellow; then, and there it was that the Hands of the pitiful Women fed their own Children: Without the City was the *Roman* Army ready to ſwallow them up with a particular Rage againſt them, not only as *Jews*, but as *Rebellious Jews. War* was the only one of the three ſore Judgments that *David* excepted againſt; but that was it by which the *Jews* were ruin'd, and Famine and Peſtilence in Extremity beſides. *Joſephus*'s Hiſtory of the *Wars of the Jews* has in it more *Tragical* Paſſages, than perhaps any Hiſtory whatſoever.

1. It was a Deſolation *unparallel'd*; ſuch *as was not ſince the beginning of the World, nor ever ſhall be*; many a City and Kingdom has been made deſolate, but never any with a Deſolation like this. Let not daring Sinners think that God has done his worſt, he can heat the Furnace ſeven times, and yet ſeven times hotter, and will, when he ſees greater, and ſtill greater Abominations. The *Romans* when they deſtroy'd *Jeruſalem*, were degenerated from the Honour and Virtue of their Anceſtors, which had made even their Victories eaſy to be vanquiſh'd. And the Wilfulneſs and Obſtinacy of the *Jews* themſelves contributed much to the *increaſe of the Tribulation.* No wonder the Ruin of *Jeruſalem* was an unparallel'd Ruin, when the Sin of *Jeruſalem* was an unparallel'd Sin, even their *Crucifying Chriſt.* The nearer any People are to God in Profeſſion and Privileges, the greater and heavier will his Judgments be upon them, if they abuſe thoſe Privileges, and be falſe to that Profeſſion, *Amos* 3. 2.

2. It was a Deſolation, which if it ſhould continue long, would be *intolerable*, ſo that *no Fleſh ſhould be ſaved*, v. 22. So triumphantly would Death ride, in ſo many diſmal Shapes, and with ſuch Attendants, that there would be no eſcaping, but firſt or laſt all would be cut off: He that eſcaped one Sword, would fall by another, *Iſa.* 24. 17, 18. The Computation which *Joſephus* makes of thoſe that were ſlain in ſeveral Places amount to above two Millions: *No fleſh ſhall be ſaved*; he doth not ſay, *no Soul* ſhall be ſav'd, for the *Deſtruction of the Fleſh* may be for the ſaving of the *Spirit in the Day of the Lord Jeſus*; but temporal Lives will be ſacrificed ſo profuſely, that one would think, if it laſt a while, 'twould make a full End.

But here's one Word of Comfort in the midſt of all this Terror, that *for the Elect's Sake theſe Days ſhall be ſhortned*, not ſhorter than what God had determined, for *that determined ſhall be poured upon the Deſolate*, Dan. 9. 27. but ſhorter than what he *might have decreed*, if he had dealt with them according to their Sins; *ſhorter* than what the Enemy *deſign'd*, who would have cut all off, if God, who made uſe of them to ſerve his own Purpoſe, had not ſet Bounds to their Wrath. *Shorter* than one that judged by human Probabilities would have imagin'd. *Note* (1.) In Times of common Calamity, God manifeſts his Favour to the elect Remnant; his Jewels whom he will then *make up*; his peculiar Treaſure, which he will ſecure when the Lumber is abandoned to the Spoiler. (2.) The ſhortening of Calamities is a Kindneſs God often grants for the Elect's Sake. Inſtead of complaining that our Afflictions laſt ſo long, if we conſider our Defects, we ſhall ſee Reaſon to be thankful that they do not laſt *always*; when 'tis bad with us, it becomes us to ſay, Bleſſed be God *it is no worſe*; Bleſſed be God *it is not Hell*, endleſs and remedileſs Miſery: 'Twas a lamenting Church that ſaid, *It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not conſum'd*; and it is for the Sake of *the Elect*, leſt *their Spirit ſhould fail* before them, if he ſhould *contend for ever*, and leſt they ſhould be tempted to *put forth*, if not their Heart, yet *their Hand to Iniquity.*

And now comes in the repeated Caution, which was open'd before, to take heed of being enſnar'd by *falſe Chriſts*, and *falſe Prophets*, v. 23, *&c.* who would promiſe them Deliverance, as the lying Prophets in *Jeremiah*'s time, *Jer.* 14. 13.—23. 16, 17.—27. 19.—28. 2. but would *delude* them. Times of great Trouble us'd to be Times of great Temptation, and therefore we have need to double our Guard then. If they ſhall ſay, *Here is a Chriſt, or there is one*, that ſhall deliver us from the *Romans*, do not heed them, 'tis all but Talk; ſuch a Deliverance is not to be expected, and therefore not ſuch a Deliverer.

Seventhly, He foretels the ſudden ſpreading of the Goſpel in the World, about the time of theſe great Events, *v.* 27, 28. *as the Lightning comes out of the Eaſt, ſo ſhall the coming of the Son of Man be.* It comes in here as an Antidote againſt the Poyſon of thoſe Seducers, that ſaid, *Lo, here is Chriſt*, or, *Lo, he is there*; compare *Luke* 17. 23, 24. Hearken not to them, for the coming of *the Son of Man* will be *as the Lightning.*

1. It ſeems primarily to be meant of his *coming*, to ſet up his ſpiritual Kingdom in the World; where the Goſpel came in its Light and Power, there *the Son of Man came*, and in a way quite contrary to the faſhion of the Seducers and falſe Chriſts, who came creeping *in the Deſart*, or the *ſecret Chambers*, 2 Tim. 3. 6. no, Chriſt comes not with ſuch a *Spirit of Fear*, but of *Power, and of Love, and of a ſound Mind.* The Goſpel would be remarkable for two things (1.) Its *ſwift ſpreading*; it ſhall fly *as the Lightning*, ſo ſhall the Goſpel be *preached* and *propagated.* The Goſpel is *Light*, Joh. 3. 19. and it is not in this as the *Lightning*, that it is a ſudden *Flaſh*, and *away*; for it is Sun-Light, and Day-Light; but it is as *Lightning* in theſe Reſpects;

1. It is Light *from Heaven*, as the *Lightning*: 'Tis God, and not Man, that ſends the Lightnings, and ſummons them that they may go and ſay, *Here we are*, Job 38. 35. 'tis God that directs it, *Job* 37. 3. To Man 'tis one of *Nature's Miracles*, above his Power to effect, and one of *Nature's Myſteries*, above his Skill to account for, but it is *from above: His Lightnings lightned the World*, Pſal. 97. 4.

2. 'Tis *viſible* and *conſpicuous* as the Lightning. The Seducers carry'd on their Depths of Satan in the *Deſart*, and the *ſecret Chambers*, ſhunning the Light. Hereticks were call'd *Lucifugæ.* But Truth *ſeeks no Corners*, however it may ſometimes be *forc'd* into them, as the *Woman in the Wilderneſs*, tho' *cloathed with the Sun*, Rev. 12. 1, 6. Chriſt preach'd his Goſpel *openly*, Joh. 18. 20. and his Apoſtles on *the Houſe top*, Mat. 10. 27. not *in a Corner*, Acts 26. 26. See *Pſal.* 98. 2.

3. 'Twas *ſudden* and *ſurprizing* to the World, as the *Lightning*; the *Jews* indeed had Predictions of it, but to the *Gentiles* it was altogether *unlook'd for*, and *came upon them* with an unaccountable Energy, *or ever they were aware*: 'Twas Light *out of Darkneſs*, Mat. 4. 16. 2 Cor. 4. 6. We read of the diſcomfiting of Armies by *Lightning*, 2 Sam. 22. 15. Pſal. 144. 6. The Powers of Darkneſs were diſpers'd and vanquiſh'd by the *Goſpel-Lightning.*

4. It *ſpread far* and wide, and that *quickly*, and *irreſiſtibly*, like the *Lightning*, which comes (ſuppoſe) *out of the Eaſt*, (Chriſt is ſaid to aſcend *from the Eaſt*, Rev. 7. 2. Iſa. 41. 2.) and *lightneth to the Weſt.* The propagating of Chriſtianity to ſo many diſtant Countries of divers Languages, by ſuch unlikely Inſtruments, deſtitute of all ſecular Advantages, and in the face of ſo much Oppoſition, and this in ſo

ſhort a time was one of the greateſt Miracles that was ever wrought for the Confirmation of it; here was Chriſt upon his *White Horſe*, noting *Speed* as well as *Strength*, and going on *conquering* and to *conquer*, Rev. 6. 2. Goſpel-Light roſe with the Sun, and went with the ſame, ſo that the Beams of it reach'd to the Ends of the Earth, *Rom.* 10. 18. compare with *Pſal.* 19. 3, 4. Tho' it was fought againſt, it would never be coop'd up in a *Deſart*, or in a *ſecret Place*, as the Seducers were, but by this, according to *Gamaliel*'s Rule, prov'd it ſelf to be *of God*, that it *could not be overthrown*, Acts 5. 38, 39. Chriſt ſpeaks of ſhining *into the Weſt*, becauſe it ſpread moſt effectually into thoſe Countries, which lay *Weſt* from *Jeruſalem*, as Mr. *Herbert* obſerves in the *Church-Militant*. How ſoon did the Goſpel-Lightning reach this Iſland of *Great-Britain*; *Tertullian*, who wrote in the ſecond Century, takes Notice of it, *Britannorum inacceſſa Romanis Loca Chriſto tamen ſubdita*. This was the Lord's doing.

(2.) Another Thing remarkable concerning the Goſpel, was its *ſtrange Succeſs* in thoſe Places, to which it was ſpread; it gather'd in Multitudes, not by external Compulſion, but as it were by ſuch a natural Inſtinct and Inclination, as brings the Birds of Prey to their Prey, for *where the Carcaſs* is, *there will the Eagles be gathered together*, v. 28. where Chriſt is preach'd, Souls will be gathered in to him: The *lifting up of Chriſt from the Earth, i. e.* the preaching of Chriſt crucified, which one would think ſhould drive all Men from him, will *draw all Men to him*, Joh. 12. 32. according to *Jacob*'s Prophecy, that to him ſhall the *gathering of the People be*, Gen. 49. 10. See *Iſa.* 60. 8. The Eagles will be where the Carcaſs is, for it's Food for them, 'tis a Feaſt for them, *where the Slain are, there is ſhe*, Job 39. 30. And Eagles are ſaid to have a ſtrange Sagacity and Quickneſs of Scent to find out the Prey, and they fly ſwiftly to it, *John.* 9. 26. So thoſe whoſe Spirits God ſhall ſtir up, will be effectually *drawn* to Jeſus Chriſt to feed upon him; whither ſhould the Eagle go but to the Prey? Whither ſhould the Soul go but to Jeſus Chriſt, who *has the Words of Eternal Life*? The Eagles will diſtinguiſh what is proper for them from that which is not; ſo thoſe who have ſpiritual Senſes exerciſed, will know the Voice of the good Shepherd from that of *a Thief and a Robber*. Saints will be where the *true Chriſt* is, not the *falſe Chriſts*. This is applicable to the Deſires that are wrought in every gracious Soul after Chriſt, and Communion with him. Where he is in his Ordinances, there will his Servants chuſe to be. A living Principle of Grace is a kind of natural Inſtinct in all the Saints, drawing them to Chriſt, to *live upon him*.

2. Some underſtand theſe Verſes of the *coming of the Son of Man* to *deſtroy Jeruſalem*, Mal. 3. 1, 2, 5. So much was there of an extraordinary diſplay of Divine Power and Juſtice in that Event, that 'tis call'd the *coming of Chriſt*.

Now here are two things intimated concerning it.

(1.) That *to the moſt* it would be as *unexpected*, as a Flaſh of *Lightning*, which indeed gives Warning of the Clap of Thunder which follows, but is it ſelf *ſurprizing*? The Seducers ſay, *Lo here is Chriſt* to deliver us, or there is one, a Creature of their own Fancies, but e'er they are aware, the Wrath of the Lamb, the *true Chriſt*, will arreſt them, and they ſhall not eſcape.

(2.) That yet it might be as juſtly expected, as that the Eagles ſhould fly to the Carcaſſes; tho' they put far from them the Evil Day, yet the Deſolation will come as certainly as the Birds of Prey to a dead Carcaſs that lies expos'd in the open Field. (1.) The *Jews* were ſo *corrupt* and *degenerate*, ſo vile and vitious, that they were become a *Carcaſs*, obnoxious to the righteous *Judgment of God*; they were alſo ſo *factious* and ſeditious, and every way provoking to the *Romans*, that they had made themſelves obnoxious to their Reſentments, and an inviting Prey to them. (2.) The *Romans* were as an *Eagle*, and the Enſign of their Armies was an *Eagle*. The Army of the *Chaldeans* is ſaid to fly as the *Eagle* that *haſteth to eat*, Hab. 1. 8. The Ruine of the New Teſtament *Babylon* is repreſented by a Call to the Birds of Prey, to come feaſt upon the Slain, *Rev.* 19. 17, 18. Notorious Malefactors have their Eyes eaten out by the *young Eagles*, *Prov.* 30. 17. The *Jews* were hung up in Chains, *Jer.* 7. 3.—16. 4. (3.) The *Jews* can no more preſerve themſelves from the *Romans* than the Carcaſs can ſecure it ſelf from the *Eagles*. (4.) The Deſtruction ſhall find out the *Jews* wherever they are, as the Eagle ſcents the Prey. *Note*, When a People do by their Sin make themſelves Carcaſſes, putrid and loathſome, no other can be expected but that God ſhould ſend Eagles among them to devour and deſtroy them.

3. It is very applicable to the Day of Judgment, *the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* in that Day, and *our gathering together unto him*, 2 Theſ. 2. 1. Now ſee here,

1. How he ſhall come; *as the Lightning*. The Time was now at hand, when he ſhould *depart out of the World to go to the Father*. Therefore thoſe that enquire after Chriſt muſt not go into the *Deſart*, or the *ſecret Place*, nor liſten to every one that will put up the Finger to invite them to a ſight of Chriſt, but let them *look upwards*, for *the Heavens muſt contain him*, and thence *we look for the Saviour*, Phil. 3. 20. he ſhall *come in the Clouds*, as the Lightning doth, and *every Eye ſhall ſee him*, as they ſay 'tis natural for all living Creatures to turn their Faces towards the Lightning, *Rev.* 1. 7. Chriſt will appear to all the World, from one end of Heaven to the other; nor ſhall *any Thing be hid from the Light and Heat* of that Day.

2. How the Saints ſhall be *gathered to him*, as the Eagles are to the Carcaſs, by natural Inſtinct, and with the greateſt Swiftneſs and Alacrity imaginable: Saints when they ſhall be fetch'd to Glory will be carry'd as on Eagles Wings, *Exod.* 19. 4. as on Angels Wings. They ſhall *mount up with Wings like Eagles*, and like them *renew their youth*.

Eighthly, He foretels his *ſecond coming* at the *End of Time*, v. 29, 30, 31. *The Sun ſhall be darkned*, &c.

1. Some think this is to be underſtood only of the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the *Jewiſh* Nation; the *darkening* of the *Sun, Moon* and *Stars* notes the Eclipſe of the Glory of that State, its Convulſions, and the general Confuſion that attended that Deſolation. Great Slaughter and Devaſtation is in the Old Teſtament thus ſet forth, as *Iſa.* 13. 10.—34. 4. *Ezek.* 32. 7. *Joel.* 2. 31. or, by the Sun, Moon, and Stars, may be meant the Temple, *Jeruſalem*, and the Cities of *Judah*, which ſhould all come to Ruin: And the *Sign of the Son of Man*, v. 30. means a ſignal Appearance of the Power and Juſtice of the Lord Jeſus *in it*, avenging his own Blood on them that imprecated the Guilt of it upon them and their Children; and the gathering of the Elect, *v.* 31. ſignifies the delivering of a Remnant from this Sin and Ruin.

2. It ſeems rather to refer to Chriſt's ſecond coming. The Deſtruction of the particular Enemies of the Church was typical of the compleat Conqueſt of them all, and therefore what will be done *really* at the Great Day may be apply'd metaphorically to thoſe Deſtructions; but ſtill we muſt attend to the principal Scope of them; and while we are all agreed to expect *Chriſt's ſecond coming*, what need we put ſuch ſtrained Conſtructions, as ſome do, upon theſe Verſes, which ſpake of it ſo clearly, and ſo agreeably to other Scriptures, eſpecially when Chriſt is here anſwering an Enquiry concerning his coming at the *end of the World*, which Chriſt was never ſhy of ſpeaking of to his Diſciples?

The only Objection againſt this, is, that 'tis ſaid to be *immediately after the Tribulation of thoſe Days*. But as to that, (1.) It is uſual in the prophetical Style to ſpeak of *Things great* and *certain*, as near and juſt at hand, only to expreſs the *Greatneſs* and *Certainty* of them. *Enoch* ſpoke of Chriſt's ſecond coming as within *Ken*, *Behold the Lord cometh*, Jude 14. (2.) A *thouſand years* are in God's ſight but *as one Day*, 2 Pet. 3. 8. 'Tis there urg'd, with reference to this very Thing, and ſo it might be ſaid to be *immediately after*. The *Tribulation of thoſe Days* includes not only the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, but all the other Tribulations which the Church muſt paſt through, not only its ſhare in the Calamities of the Nations, but the Tribulations peculiar to it ſelf. While the Nations are torn with Wars, and the Church with Schiſms, Deluſions and Perſecutions, we cannot ſay that the *Tribulation of thoſe Days* is over; the whole State of the Church *on* Earth is *Militant*, we muſt count upon that; but when the Church's Tribulation is over, her Warfare accompliſhed, and what is behind of the Sufferings of Chriſt fill'd up, then *look for the End*.

Now concerning Chriſt's ſecond coming, 'tis here foretold;

1. That there ſhall be then a great and amazing *change* of the Creatures, and particularly the *Heavenly Bodies*, v. 29. *The Sun ſhall be darkened*, and *the Moon not give her Light*; the Moon ſhines with a borrow'd Light, and therefore if the *Sun* from whom ſhe *borrows* her Light is turn'd into Darkneſs, ſhe muſt fail of Courſe, and become Bankrupt. The *Stars ſhall fall, i. e.* they ſhall loſe their light, and diſappear, and be as if they were *fallen*, and the *Powers of Heaven ſhall be ſhaken*. This intimates,

(1.) That there ſhall be a *great Change*; in order to the making of all things new; then ſhall be the *reſtitution of all Things*, when the *Heavens* ſhall not be caſt away as a Rag, but *chang'd as a Veſture*, to be worn in a better faſhion, *Pſal.* 102. 26. They ſhall *paſs away with a great Noiſe*, that there may be *new Heavens*, 2 Pet. 3. 10, 13.

(2.) It ſhall be a *viſible* Change, and ſuch as all the World muſt take notice of, for ſo the darkening of the *Sun* and *Moon* cannot but be; and it will be an *amazing* Change, for the Heavenly Bodies are not ſo liable to *alteration* as the Creatures of this lower World are. *The Days of Heaven*, and the continuance of the *Sun* and *Moon*, are us'd to expreſs that which is laſting and unchangeable; as *Pſal.* 89. 29, 36, 37. yet they ſhall thus be ſhaken.

(3.) It ſhall be a *univerſal* Change; if the Sun be turn'd into Darkneſs, and the *Powers of Heaven* ſhaken, the Earth cannot but be turn'd into a Dungeon, and its Foundation made to tremble: *Howl Fir trees, if the Cedars be ſhaken*; when the Stars of Heaven drop, no marvel if the *everlaſting Mountains melt*, and the *perpetual Hills bow*. Nature ſhall ſuſtain a general Shock and Convulſion, which yet ſhall be no hindrance to the Joy and rejoycing of Heaven and Earth, *before the Lord, when he cometh to judge the World*, Pſal. 96. 11, 13. They ſhall as it were *glory in the Tribulation*.

(4.) The darkning of the Sun, Moon and Stars, which were made to rule *over the Day, and over the Night*, (which is the firſt Dominion we find of any Creature, *Gen.* 1. 16, 18.) ſignifies the *putting down of all Rule, Authority and Power*, (even that which ſeems of the greateſt Antiquity and Uſefulneſs) *that the Kingdom may be delivered up to God, even the Father*, and he may be *all in all*, 2 Cor. 15. 24, 28. The Sun was darkned at the Death of Chriſt, for then was in one Senſe one *Judgment of this World*, John 12. 31. an Indication what would be at the general Judgment.

(5.) The glorious Appearance of our Lord Jeſus, who will then ſhew himſelf as the *Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon*, will darken the Sun and Moon, as a Candle is darkned in the Beams of the Noon-Day Sun; they will have no Glory, *becauſe of the Glory that excelleth*, 2 Cor. 3. 10. Then *the Sun ſhall be aſhamed*, and *the Moon confounded*, when God ſhall appear, *Iſa.* 24. 23.

(6.) The Sun and Moon ſhall then be *darkened*, becauſe there will be no more occaſion for them: To Sinners that chuſe their Portoin in this Life, all Comfort will be eternally deny'd, as they ſhall not have a *Drop of Water*, ſo not a *Ray of Light*. Now God *cauſeth his Sun to riſe* on the Earth, but then *interdico tibi Sole & Lunâ*, Darkneſs muſt be their Portion; And to the Saints that had their *Treaſure above*, ſuch Light of Joy and Comfort will be given, as ſhall ſuperſede that of the Sun and Moon, and render it uſeleſs. What need we Veſſels of Light when we come to the Fountain and *Father of Lights*? See *Iſa*. 60. 19. *Rev*. 22. 5.

2. That then ſhall appear *the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven*, *v*. 30. *i. e*. The Son of Man himſelf, as it follows here, they ſhall *ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds.* At his firſt coming he was ſet for a Sign that ſhould be ſpoken againſt, *Luke* 2. 34. but at his ſecond coming, a Sign that ſhould be admired. *Ezekiel* was a *Son of Man*, ſet for a Sign, *Ezek*. 12. 6. Some make this a Prediction of the Harbingers and Fore-runners of his coming, giving notice of his approach; a *Light ſhining before him*, and the *Fire devouring*, Pſal. 50. 3. 1 Kings 19. 11, 12. The Beams *coming out* of his Hand, where had long been the *hiding of his Power*, *Hab*. 3. 4. 'Tis a groundleſs Conceit of ſome of the Ancients, that this *Sign of the Son of Man* will be the *Sign of the Croſs*, diſplay'd as *a Banner*. It will certainly be ſuch a clear convincing Sign, as will daſh Infidelity quite out of Countenance, and fill their Faces with Shame, who ſaid, *Where is the Promiſe of his coming*?

3. That then *all the Tribes of the Earth ſhall mourn*, v. 30. See *Rev*. 1. 7. *All the Kindred of the Earth* ſhall then *wail becauſe of him*; ſome of all the *Tribes and Kindreds of the Earth* ſhall *mourn*, for the greater part will tremble at his approach, while the choſen Remnant, one of a Family, and two of a Tribe, ſhall *lift up their Heads with Joy*, knowing that *their Redemption draws nigh*, and their Redeemer. *Note*, Sooner or later all Sinners will be Mourners; Penitent Sinners look to Chriſt, and mourn after *a godly Sort*, and they who ſow in *thoſe Tears*, ſhall ſhortly *reap in Joy*; impenitent Sinners ſhall look unto him whom they have pierced, and tho' they laugh now, ſhall mourn and weep, after *a deviliſh ſort*, in endleſs Horror and Deſpair.

4. That then *they ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory*. *Note*, (1.) The Judgment of the Great Day will be committed to the *Son of Man*, both in *purſuance*, and in *recompence* of his great Undertaking for us as *Mediator*, *Joh*. 5. 22, 27. (2.) The *Son of Man* will at that Day *come in the Clouds of Heaven*. Much of the ſenſible Intercourſe between Heaven and Earth is by *the Clouds*, they are betwixt them as it were the *Medium participationis*, *drawn* by Heaven from the Earth, *diſtill'd* by Heaven upon the Earth; Chriſt went to Heaven *in a Cloud*, and will *in like manner come again*, Acts 1. 9, 11. Behold he *comes in the Clouds*, Rev. 1. 7. A Cloud will be the Judge's Chariot, *Pſal*. 104. 3. his Robe, *Rev*. 10. 1. his Pavilion, *Pſal*. 18. 11. his Throne, *Rev*. 14. 14. when the World was deſtroyed by Water, the Judgment came in the *Clouds of Heaven*, for the Windows of Heaven were opened; ſo when it ſhall be deſtroy'd *by Fire*. Chriſt went before *Iſrael* in a Cloud, which had a bright ſide, and a dark ſide; ſo will the Cloud have in which Chriſt will come at the *great Day*, 'twill bring both Comfort and Terror. (3.) He will come with Power and great Glory; his firſt coming was in *weakneſs* and *great meanneſs*, 2 Cor. 13. 4. but his ſecond coming will be with Power and Glory, agreeable both to the Dignity of his Perſon, and to the Purpoſes of his coming. (4.) He will be *ſeen* with *bodily Eyes* in his coming: Therefore the *Son of Man* will be the *Judge* that he may be *ſeen*, that Sinners thereby may be the more *confounded*, who ſhall ſee him as *Balaam* did, but *not nigh*, *Numb*. 24. 17. ſee him, but not *as theirs*. It added to the Torment of that *damned Sinner*, that he ſaw *Abraham* afar off: Is this he whom we have ſlighted and rejected, and rebell'd againſt? Whom we have crucified to our ſelves afreſh? Who might have been our Saviour, but is our Judge, and will be our Enemy for ever. The Deſire of all Nations will then be their Dread.

5. *That he ſhall ſend his Angels with a great ſound of a Trumpet*, v. 31. *Note*, 1. The Angels ſhall be Attendants upon Chriſt at his ſecond coming; they are call'd *his* Angels, which proves him to be God, and Lord of the Angels, they ſhall be obliged to wait upon him. 2. Theſe Attendants ſhall be employed by him as Officers of the Court, in the *Judgment* of that Day: They are now *miniſtring Spirits* ſent forth by him, *Heb*. 1. 14. and will be ſo then. 3. Their Miniſtration will be uſher'd in with a great ſound of a Trumpet, to awaken and alarm a ſleeping World. This Trumpet is ſpoken of, 1 *Cor*. 15. 52. and 1 *Theſ*. 4. 16. At the giving of the Law on *Mount Sinai*, the ſound of the Trumpet was remarkably *terrible*, Exod. 19. 13, 16. but much more will it be ſo in the great Day. By the Law, Trumpets were to be ſounded for the *calling of Aſſemblies*, Numb. 10. 2. in *praiſing God*, Pſal. 81. 3. in offering Sacrifices, *Numb*. 10. 10. and in proclaiming the Year of *Jubilee*, Lev. 25. 9. very fitly therefore ſhall there be the ſound of a Trumpet at the laſt Day, when the *general Aſſembly* ſhall be called, when the Praiſes of God ſhall be glorioully celebrated, when Sinners ſhall fall as Sacrifices to Divine Juſtice, and when the Saints ſhall enter upon their Eternal *Jubilee*.

6. That they ſhall *gather together his Elect, from the four Winds*. *Note*, At the ſecond coming of Jeſus Chriſt there will be a general meeting of all the Saints. (1.) The *Elect* only will be *gathered*, the *choſen* Remnant, who are but *few* in compariſon with the many that are only *call'd*. This is the Foundation of the Saint's Eternal Happineſs, that they are *God's Elect*: The Gifts of Love to Eternity follow the Thoughts of Love from Eternity, and *the Lord knows them that are his*. (2.) The Angels ſhall be employ'd to bring them together, as Chriſt's Servants, and as the Saint's Friends; we have the Commiſſion given them, *Pſal*. 50. 5. *Gather my Saints together unto me*; nay, 'twill be ſaid to them, *Habetis Fratres*, for the Elect will then be *equal to the Angels*, Luke 20. 36. (3.) They ſhall be *gathered from one end of Heaven to the other*; the Elect of God are ſcatter'd abroad, *Joh*. 11. 52. there are ſome in all Places, in all Nations, *Rev*. 7. 9. but when that great gathering Day comes, there ſhall not one of them be miſſing. Diſtance of Place ſhall keep none out of Heaven, if diſtance of Affection do not, *Undique ad Cælos tantundem eſt via*. See *Matt*. 8. 11. *Iſa*. 43. 6.—49. 12.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: When his
branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye
know that ſummer *is* nigh: 33 So likewiſe ye, when
ye ſhall ſee all theſe things, know that it is near,
even at the doors. 34 Verily I ſay unto you, This
generation ſhall not paſs, till all theſe things be fulfilled.
35 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, but my words
ſhall not paſs away. 36 But of that day and hour
knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but
my Father only. 37 But as the days of Noe *were*,
ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man be. 38
For as in the days that were before the flood, they
were eating and drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage,
until the day that Noe entred into the Ark,
39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them
all away; ſo ſhall alſo the coming of the Son of man
be. 40 Then ſhall two be in the field, the one
ſhall be taken, and the other left. 41 Two *women*
ſhall be grinding at the mill, the one ſhall be taken,
and the other left. 42 Watch therefore, for ye
know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But
know this, that if the good-man of the Houſe had
known in what watch the thief would come, he would
have watched, and would not have ſuffered his houſe
to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye alſo ready: for
in ſuch an hour as you think not, the Son of man
cometh. 45 Who then is a faithful and wiſe ſervant,
whom his Lord hath made ruler over his houſhold, to
give them meat in due ſeaſon? 46 Bleſſed *is* that ſervant,
whom his Lord when he cometh, ſhall find ſo
doing. 47 Verily I ſay unto you, that he ſhall make
him ruler over all his goods. 48 But and if that evil
ſervant ſhall ſay in his heart, My Lord delayeth his
coming, 49 And ſhall begin to ſmite *his* fellow-ſervants,
and to eat and drink with the drunken: 50 The Lord
of that ſervant ſhall come in a day when he looketh
not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of;
51 And ſhall cut him aſunder, and apppoint *him* his
portion with the hypocrites: there ſhall be weeping
and gnaſhing of teeth.

We have here the practical Application of the foregoing Prediction in general, we muſt *expect* and *prepare* for the Events here foretold.

Firſt, We muſt *expect them*. *Now learn a Parable of the Fig-tree*, v. 32, 33. Now learn what uſe to make of the Things you have heard; ſo obſerve and underſtand the Signs of the Times, and compare them with the Predictions of the Word, as from thence to foreſee what is at the Door, that you may provide accordingly. The Parable of the Fig-tree is no more but this, that its budding and bloſſoming is a Preſage of Summer coming; for as the Stork in the Heaven, ſo the Trees of the Field *know their appointed Time*. The Beginning of the working of Second Cauſes, aſſures us of the Progreſs and Perfection of it. Thus when God begins to fulfil Prophecies, he will *make an End*. There is a certain Series in the Works of Providence, as there is in the Works of Nature. The *Signs of the Times* are compar'd with the Prognoſticks of the *Face of the Sky*, Matt. 16. 3. ſo here with thoſe of the *Face of the Earth*, when that is *renew'd*, we foreſee that *Summer* is coming, not immediately, but at ſome diſtance. After the *Branch grows tender*, we expect the *March Winds*, and the *April Showers*, before the Summer comes, however we are ſure it is coming; *ſo likewiſe ye*, when the Goſpel Day is *broke*, count upon it that, through this variety of Events that I have told you of, the perfect Day will come: The *Things revealed muſt ſhortly come to paſs*, Rev. 1. 1. they muſt come *in their own Order*, in the order appointed for them, *Know that it is near*; he doth not here ſay *what*, but it is that which your Hearts are upon, and which you are inquiſitive after, and long for; the *Kingdom of God* is near, ſo it is expreſſed in the parallel Place, *Luke* 21. 31, *Note*, When the Trees of Righteouſneſs begin to bud and bloſſom, when God's People promiſe Faithfulneſs, 'tis a happy Preſage of good Times. In them God begins his Work, firſt *prepares their Heart*, and then he will go on with it; for *as for God, his Work is perfect*, and he will *revive it in the midſt of their Years.*

Now touching the Events foretold here, which we are to *expect*;

1. Chriſt doth here aſſure us of the *Certainty of them*, v. 35. *Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away:* They continue this Day indeed according to God's Ordinance, but they ſhall not continue for ever, *Pſal.* 102. 25, 26. See 2 *Pet.* 3. 10. *But my Words ſhall not paſs away. Note,* The Word of Chriſt is more ſure and laſting than Heaven and Earth. *Hath he ſpoken? And ſhall he not do it?* We may build with more Aſſurance upon the Word of Chriſt, than we can upon the Pillars of Heaven, or the ſtrong Foundations of the Earth; for when they ſhall be made to tremble and totter, and ſhall be no more, the Word of Chriſt ſhall remain, and be in full Force, Power and Virtue. See 1 *Pet.* 1. 24, 25. 'Tis *eaſier for Heaven and Earth to paſs*, than the Word of Chriſt; ſo 'tis expreſs'd, *Luk.* 16. 17. Compare *Iſa.* 54. 10. The Accompliſhment of theſe Prophecies might ſeem to be *delay'd*, and intervening Events might ſeem to *diſagree* with them; but do not think that therefore the *Word of Chriſt is fallen to the Ground*, for that ſhall never *paſs away*. Tho' it be not fulfill'd, either in the *Time*, or in the *Way* that we have preſcrib'd, yet in *God*'s *Time*, which is the *beſt Time*, and in *God*'s *Way*, which is the *beſt Way*, it ſhall certainly be fulfill'd. Every Word of Chriſt is very *pure*, and therefore very *ſure*.

2. He here inſtructs us as to the Time of them, *v.* 34, 36. And as to this, 'tis well obſerv'd by the Learned *Grotius*, that there is a manifeſt Diſtinction made between the ταῦτα, *v.* 34. and the ἐκείνη, *v.* 36. *Theſe Things*, and *that Day and Hour*; which will help to clear this Prophecy.

1. As to *theſe Things*, the Wars, Seductions, and Perſecutions here foretold, and eſpecially the Ruin of the *Jewiſh* Nation. *This Generation ſhall not paſs away, till all theſe things be fulfill'd*, v. 34. There are thoſe now alive that ſhall ſee *Jeruſalem deſtroy'd*, and the *Jewiſh* Church brought to *an End*. And becauſe it might ſeem ſtrange, he backs it with a ſolemn Aſſeveration, *Verily, I ſay unto you:* You may take my Word for it, theſe Things are at the Door. Chriſt oft ſpeaks of the Nearneſs of that Deſolation, the more to affect People, and quicken them to prepare for it. *Note,* There may be greater Tryals and Troubles yet before us, in our own Day, than we are aware of. They that are old, know not what Sons of *Anak* may be reſerv'd for their laſt Encounters.

2. But as to *that Day and Hour*, which will put a Period to Time, that *knows no Man*, v. 36. Therefore take heed of confounding theſe Two, as they did, who, from the Words of Chriſt, and the Apoſtles Letters, inferr'd, that the *Day of Chriſt was at hand*, 2 Theſſ. 1. 2. No, it was not; *This Generation*, and many another, *ſhall paſs*, before *that Day and Hour comes. Note,* (1.) There is a certain Day and Hour fix'd for the Judgment to come; 'tis call'd *the Day of the Lord*, becauſe ſo unalterably fix'd. None of God's Judgments are adjourn'd *ſine Die.* (2.) That Day and Hour is a *great Secret: Temporis exitum caliginosâ nocte premit Deus*; Hor. *No Man knows it*; not the *Wiſeſt*, by their Sagacity; not the *Beſt*, by any Divine Diſcovery. We *all know* there *ſhall be* ſuch a Day, but *none knows* when it ſhall be: *No, not the Angels*; Tho' their *Capacities* for *Knowledge* are great, and their *Opportunities* of knowing this advantageous: They dwell at the *Fountain-Head* of Light; and tho' they are to be employ'd in the Solemnity of that Day, yet they are not told *when* it ſhall be: None knows, but *my Father only*. This is one of thoſe *ſecret Things* which *belong to the Lord our God*. The Uncertainty of the Time of *Chriſt*'s Coming, is to thoſe who are watchful, *a Savour of Life unto Life*, and makes them more *watchful*; but to thoſe who are careleſs, it is a *Savour of Death unto Death*, and makes them more *careleſs*.

Secondly, To this End we muſt *expect* theſe Events, that we may *prepare for* them: And here we have a Caution againſt *Security* and *Senſuality*, which will make it a diſmal Day indeed to us, *v.* 37,—41. In which Verſes, we have ſuch an Idea given us of the Judgment Day, as may ſerve to ſtartle and awaken us, that we may not ſleep, as do others.

It will be a *ſurprizing* Day, and a *ſeparating* Day.

1. It will be a *ſurprizing* Day, as the *Deluge* was to the *old World*, *v.* 37, 38, 39. That which he here intends to deſcribe, is the Poſture of the World *at the Coming of the Son of Man:* Beſides his firſt Coming to *Save*, he has other Comings to *Judge*. He ſaith, *John* 10. 39. For Judgment *I am come*, and for Judgment *he will come*; for *all Judgment is committed* to him, both that of the *Word*, and that of the *Sword*.

Now this here is applicable,

(1.) To *Temporal Judgments*, particularly that which was now haſtening upon the Nation and People of the *Jews:* Tho' they had fair Warning given them of it, and there were many Prodigies that were Preſages of it, yet it found them ſecure, crying, *Peace and Safety*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 3. The Siege was laid to *Jeruſalem* by *Titus Veſpaſian*, when they were met at the *Paſſover*, in the Midſt of their Mirth. Like the Men of *Laiſh*, they dwelt *careleſs* when the Ruin arreſted them, *Judg.* 18. 7, 27. The Deſtruction of *Babylon*, both that in the Old Teſtament, and that in the New, comes, when ſhe ſaith, *I ſhall be a Lady for ever*, Iſa. 47. 7, 8, 9. Rev. 18. 7. Therefore the Plagues come *in a Moment, in one Day. Note,* Men's Unbelief ſhall not make God's Threatnings of none Effect.

(2.) To the *Eternal Judgment*; ſo the Judgment of the *great Day* is call'd, *Heb.* 6. 2. Tho' Notice has been given of it from *Enoch*, yet when it comes, it will be *unlook'd for* by the moſt of Men: The *latter Days*, which are neareſt to that Day, will produce *Scoffers*, that ſay, *Where is the Promiſe of his Coming?* 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4. Luke 18. 8. Thus it *will be* when the World, that *now is*, ſhall be deſtroy'd by Fire; for thus it *was* when the old World, *being overflow'd by Water, periſh'd*, 2 Pet. 3. 6, 7. Now Chriſt here ſhews, what was the *Temper* and *Poſture* of the *old World*, when the *Deluge* came.

1. They were *Senſual* and *Worldly*; they were *Eating and Drinking, Marrying, and giving in Marriage.* It is not ſaid, they were Killing, and Stealing, and Whoring, and Swearing; theſe were indeed the horrid Crimes of ſome of the worſt of them, the *Earth was full of Violence*; but they were all of them, except *Noah*, over Head and Ears in the World, and *regardleſs* of the Word of God, and this ruin'd them. *Note,* Univerſal Neglect of Religion is a more dangerous Symptom to any People, than particular Inſtances here and there of daring Irreligion. *Eating* and *Drinking* is neceſſary to the Preſervation of Man's Life; *Marrying* and *giving in Marriage* is ſo to the Preſervation of Mankind: But *licitis premus omnes*, theſe *lawful Things undo us*, unlawfully managed. (1.) They were *unreaſonable* in it; inordinate and entire in the Purſuit of the Delights of Senſe, and the Gains of the World; they were wholly taken up with theſe Things, ἦσαν τρώγοντες, they *were eating*; they were in theſe Things as in their Element, as if they had their Being for no other End but to *eat and drink*, Iſa. 56. 12. (2.) They were *unſeaſonable* in it; they were entire and intent upon the World and the Fleſh, when Deſtruction was at the Door, which they had had ſuch fair Warning of. They were *Eating and Drinking*, when they ſhould have been *Repenting and Praying*; when God, by the Miniſtry of *Noah*, call'd *to Weeping and Mourning, then Joy and Gladneſs*. This was to them, as 'twas to *Iſrael* afterwards, the *unpardonable* Sin, *Iſa.* 22. 12, 14. Eſpecially becauſe it was in Defiance of thoſe Warnings by which they ſhould have been awaken'd; *Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we dye:* If it muſt be a ſhort Life, let it be a merry one. The Apoſtle *James* ſpeaks of this as the general Practice of the wealthy *Jews* before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; when they ſhould have been *weeping for the Miſeries that were coming upon them*, they were *living in Pleaſure, and nouriſhing their Hearts as in a Day of Slaughter*, James 5. 1, 5.

2. They were *Secure* and *Careleſs:* They *knew not, until the Flood came*, v. 39. *Knew not?* Surely they could not but know. Did not God, by *Noah*, give them fair Warning of it? Did he not call them to *Repentance*, while his *Long-ſuffering waited?* 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20. But they *knew not, i. e.* they believed not; they *might have known*, but *would not know. Note,* What we know of the Things that *belong to our Everlaſting Peace*, if we do not mix Faith with it, and improve it, 'tis all one as if we did not *know it at all*. Their *not knowing* is join'd with their *Eating*, and *Drinking*, and *Marrying:* For, (1.) Therefore they were *ſenſual*, becauſe they were *ſecure. Note,* The Reaſon why People are ſo eager in the Purſuit, and ſo entangled in the Pleaſures of this World, is, becauſe they do not know and believe, and conſider the Eternity which they are upon the Brink of. Did we *know aright*, that all theſe Things muſt ſhortly be *diſſolv'd*, and we muſt certainly ſurvive them, we would not ſet our Eyes and Hearts ſo much upon them as we do. (2.) Therefore they were *ſecure*, becauſe they were *ſenſual:* Therefore they knew not that the *Flood* was coming, becauſe they were *Eating and Drinking*; were ſo taken up with Things ſeen and preſent, that they had neither *Time* nor *Heart* to mind the Things *not ſeen as yet*, which they were warn'd of. *Note,* As Security bolſters Men up in their brutal Senſuality, ſo Senſuality rocks them aſleep in their carnal Security; *They knew not until the Flood came.* (1.) The Flood did come, tho' they would not foreſee it. *Note,* Thoſe that will not know by Faith, ſhall be made to know by feeling the Wrath of God reveal'd from Heaven againſt their Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs. The *Evil Day* is never the *further off*, for Men's *putting it far off* from them. (2.) They did not know it till it was too late to prevent it, as they might have done if they had known it *in Time*, which made it ſo much the more grievous. Judgments are moſt *terrible* and *amazing* to the Secure, and thoſe that have *made a Jeſt* of them.

The Application of this concerning the old World, we have in theſe Words, *So ſhall the Coming of the Son of Man be.* That is, (1.) In ſuch a *Poſture* ſhall he find People, *Eating and Drinking*, and never expecting him. *Note,* Security and Senſuality are likely to be the Epidemical Diſeaſes of the latter Days: All *Slumber and Sleep*, and at Midnight *the Bridegroom comes.* All *off their Watch*, and *at their Eaſe*. (2.) With ſuch a *Power*, and for ſuch a *Purpoſe* will he *come upon them:* As the Flood *took away* the Sinners of the old World, *irreſiſtibly* and *irrecoverably*; ſo ſhall ſecure Sinners, that mock'd at *Chriſt* and his Coming, be taken away by the *Wrath of the Lamb*, when the great Day of his Wrath comes, which will be like the coming of the Deluge, a Deſtruction which there's no fleeing from.

2. It will be a *ſeparating* Day, *v.* 40, 41. *Then ſhall Two be in the Field.* Two ways this may be apply'd:

1. We may apply it to the *Succeſs of the Goſpel*, eſpecially at the firſt Preaching of it, it *divided* the World: Some *believed the Things which were ſpoken*, and were *taken* to Chriſt; others *believed not*, and were *left* to periſh in their Unbelief. Thoſe of the ſame Age, Place, Capacity, Employment, and Condition in the World, *grinding at the ſame Mill*, thoſe of the ſame Family, nay, thoſe that were join'd in the ſame Bond of Marriage, yet one *effectually* call'd, the other paſſed by, and left in the *Gall of Bitterneſs*. This is that *Diviſion*, that *ſeparating Fire* which Chriſt came to *ſend*, Luke 12. 49, 51. This renders free Grace the more *obliging*, that it is *diſtinguiſhing*; to us,

and not to the World, *John* 14. 22. Nay, to us, and not to thoſe in the ſame *Field*, the ſame *Mill*, the ſame *Houſe*.

When Ruin came upon *Jeruſalem*, a *Diſtinction* was made by *Divine Providence*, according to that which had been before made by *Divine Grace*; for all the Chriſtians among them were ſav'd from periſhing in that Calamity, by the ſpecial Care of Heaven. If Two were at work in the Field together, and *one of them* was a *Chriſtian*, he was *taken* into a Place of Shelter, and had his Life given him for a Prey, while the other was left to the Sword of the Enemy. Nay, if but *Two Women* were grinding at the *Mill*, if one of them *belong'd to Chriſt*, (tho' but a Woman, a poor Woman, a Servant) yet ſhe was *taken* to a Place of Safety, and the other *abandon'd*. Thus the *Meek of the Earth* are *hid in the Day of the Lord's Anger*, *Zeph*. 2. 3. either in Heaven, or under Heaven. *Note*, Diſtinguiſhing Preſervations, in Times of general Deſtruction, are ſpecial Tokens of God's Favour, and ought ſo to be acknowledg'd. If we are ſafe, when Thouſands fall on our Right-hand, and on our Left; are not *conſum'd*, when others are *conſum'd* round about us, ſo that we are as *Brands pluck'd out of the Fire*; we have Reaſon to ſay, *It is of the Lord's* Mercies, and it is a great Mercy.

2. We may apply it to the *Second Coming* of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and the *Separation* which will be made in that Day. He had ſaid before, *v.* 31. that the *Elect* will be *gather'd together*: Here he tells us, in order to that, they will be diſtinguiſh'd from thoſe that were neareſt to them in this World; the choice and choſen ones *taken* to Glory, the other *left* to periſh eternally. Thoſe that ſleep in the Duſt of the Earth, Two in the ſame Grave, their Aſhes mix'd, yet ſhall ariſe, one to be *taken* to Everlaſting Life, the other left to *Shame* and *Everlaſting Contempt*, Dan. 12. 2. Here 'tis apply'd to them who ſhall be *found alive*. Chriſt will come unlook'd for, will find People buſy at their uſual Occupations, *in the Field*, at the *Mill*; and then, according as they are veſſels of Mercy, prepar'd for Glory, or Veſſels of Wrath, prepar'd for Ruin, accordingly it will be with them, *the one taken to meet the Lord* and his Angels *in the Air*, to be *for ever with him* and them; *the other left* to the Devil and his Angels, who, when Chriſt has gather'd out his own, will ſweep up the Reſidue. This will aggravate the Condemnation of Sinners, that others ſhall be taken from the midſt of them to Glory, and they *left behind*. And it ſpeaks Abundance of *Comfort* to the Lord's People. (1.) Are they mean and deſpiſed in the World, as the Man-ſervant in the Field, or the Maid at the Mill? *Exod.* 11. 5. yet they ſhall not be forgotten, or over-look'd in that Day. The *Poor in the World*, if *rich in Faith*, are *Heirs of the Kingdom*. (2.) Are they diſpers'd in diſtant and unlikely Places, where one would not expect to find the Heirs of Glory, *in the Field, at the Mill*? Yet the Angels will *find them* there hid, as *Saul* among the Stuff, when they are to be enthron'd, and *fetch them* thence: And well may they be ſaid to be *chang'd*, for a very great Change it will be, to go to Heaven from *Plowing* and *Grinding*. (3.) Are they weak and unable of themſelves to move Heaven-ward? They ſhall be *taken*, or *laid hold on*, as *Lot* was taken out of *Sodom*, by a gracious Violence, *Gen.* 19. 16. Thoſe whom *Chriſt* has once apprehended and laid hold on, he will never loſe his Hold of. (4.) Are they intermix'd with others, link'd with them in the ſame Habitations, Societies, Employments? Let not that diſcourage any *true Chriſtian*: God knows how to ſeparate between the *Precious* and the *Vile*, the *Gold* and *Droſs* in the ſame Lump, the *Wheat* and *Chaff* in the ſame Floor.

Thirdly, Here is a general Exhortation to us to *watch*, and *be ready* againſt that Day comes, enforc'd by divers weighty Conſiderations, *v.* 42, &c. *Obſerve*,

Firſt, The *Duty requir'd*: *Watch*, and be *ready*, v. 42, 44.

1. *Watch therefore*, v. 42. *Note*, It is the great Duty and Intereſt of all the Diſciples of Chriſt to *watch*, to be awake, and keep awake, that they may mind their Buſineſs. As a ſinful *State* and *Way* is compar'd to *ſleep*, ſenſeleſs and unactive, 1 *Theſ*. 5. 4. ſo a gracious State and Way is compar'd to *Watching* and *Waking*. We muſt watch for our *Lord's Coming*, to us in particular at our Death, after which is *the Judgment*; that's the *great Day with us*, the End of *our Time*; and his *Coming* at the End of *all Time* to judge the World, the *great Day* with all Mankind. To *watch* for this, is not only to *believe* that our Lord *will come*, but to *deſire* that he *would come*; to be often thinking of his Coming, and always looking for it, as ſure, and near, and the Time of it uncertain. To *watch* for *Chriſt*'s Coming, is to *maintain* that gracious Temper and Diſpoſition of Mind, which we would be willing our Lord when he comes ſhould *find us in*. To *watch*, is to beware of the firſt Notices of his Approach, that we may immediately attend his *Motions*, and *addreſs* our ſelves to the Duty of meeting him. *Watching* is ſuppos'd to be in the Night, which is *Sleeping-time*: While we are in this World, 'tis Night with us, and we muſt take pains to *keep our ſelves awake*.

2. *Be ye alſo ready*. We wake in vain, if we do not *get ready*. 'Tis not enough to *look for ſuch Things*, but we muſt therefore *give diligence*, 2 *Pet*. 3. 11, 14. We have then our Lord to *attend upon*, and we muſt have our Lamps *ready trimm'd*; a *Cauſe* to be *try'd*, and we muſt have our Plea ready *drawn* and *ſign'd* by our Advocate; a *Reckoning* to *make up*, and we muſt have our Accounts ready *ſtated* and *ballanc'd*: There's an *Inheritance* which we hope then to *enter upon*, and we muſt have *our ſelves ready*, made meet to partake of it, *Col*. 1. 12.

Secondly, The Reaſons to induce us to this *Watchfulneſs*, and *diligent Preparation* for that Duty; which are Two:

1. Becauſe the Time of our Lord's *Coming* is very uncertain. This is the Reaſon immediately annex'd to the double *Exhortation*, v. 42, 44. and it is illuſtrated by a Compariſon, *v.* 43. Let us conſider then,

1. That *we know not what Hour he will come*, v. 42. We know not the Day of our Death, *Gen*. 27. 2. We may know that we have but a *little Time to live*; 2 *Tim*. 4. 6. *The Time of my Departure is at hand*; but we cannot know that we have a *long Time* to live, for our Souls are *continually in our Hands*; nor can we know how little a Time we have to live, for it may prove leſs than we expect. Much leſs do we know the Time fix'd for the General Judgment. Concerning both we are kept at an Uncertainty, that we might expect that *every Day*, which may come *any Day*; may never boaſt of a Year's Continuance, *James* 4. 13. no, nor of To-morrow's Return, as if it were ours, *Prov*. 27. 1. *Luke* 12. 20.

2. That he may come at *ſuch an Hour as we think not*, v. 44. Tho' there be ſuch Uncertainty in the Time, there is none in the Thing it ſelf: Tho' we know not *when* he will come, we are ſure he *will come*. His parting Word was, *Surely I come quickly*: His ſaying, I come *ſurely*, obligeth us to *expect* him; his ſaying, I come *quickly*, obligeth us to be *always* expecting him; for it keeps us in a State of *Expectancy*. *In ſuch an Hour as you think not*; *i. e.* ſuch an Hour as they which are unready and unprepar'd *think not*, v. 50. Nay, ſuch an Hour as the moſt lively Expectants, perhaps, thought leaſt likely. The Bridegroom came when the *Wiſe* were ſlumbering. It is agreeable to our preſent State, that we ſhould be under the Influence of a conſtant and *general Expectation*, rather than that of *particular Preſages* and *Prognoſtications*, which we are ſometimes tempted vainly to deſire and wiſh for.

3. The Children of this World are thus *wiſe in their Generation*, that when they know of a Danger approaching, they will keep awake, and ſtand on their Guard againſt it. This he ſhews in a particular Inſtance, *v.* 43. *If the Maſter of a Houſe* had notice that a Thief would come ſuch a Night, and ſuch a Watch of the Night, (for they divided the Night into Four Watches, allowing Three Hours to each) and would make an Attempt upon his Houſe, tho' it were the Midnight Watch, when he was moſt *ſleepy*, yet he would be up, and liſten to every Noiſe in every Corner, and be ready to give him a warm Reception. Now, tho' we know not *juſt when* our Lord will come, yet knowing that he *will come*, and come quickly, and without any other Warning than what he hath given in his Word, it concerns us to *watch always*. *Note*, (1.) We have every one of us a *Houſe to keep*, that lies expos'd, in which all we are worth is laid up; and that Houſe is *our own Souls*, which we muſt *keep with all Diligence*. (2.) The Day of the Lord comes by *Surprize*, as a *Thief in the Night*. Chriſt chuſeth to come when he is leaſt expected, that the Triumphs of his Enemies may be turn'd into the greater Shame, and the Fears of his Friends into the greater Joy. (3.) If Chriſt, when he comes, finds us aſleep and unready, our *Houſe* will be *broken up*, and we ſhall loſe all we are worth; not as by *a Thief*, unjuſtly, but as by a *juſt* and *legal Proceſs*: Death and Judgment will ſeize upon all we have, to our irreparable Damage, and *utter Undoing*. Therefore be ready, *be ye alſo ready*; as ready at all Times as the good Man of the Houſe would be at the Hour when he *expected the Thief*; muſt put on the *Armour of God*, that we may not only *ſtand in that evil Day*, but, as more than Conquerors, may *divide the Spoil*.

2. Becauſe the Iſſue of the Lord's *Coming* will be very *happy* and *comfortable* to thoſe that ſhall be found ready, but very diſmal and dreadful to thoſe that are not, *v.* 45, *&c.* This is repreſented by the different State of *good* and *bad* Servants, when their Lord comes to reckon with them. 'Tis likely to be well or ill with us to Eternity, according as we are found ready, or unready at that Day; for Chriſt comes to *render to every Man according to his Works*. Now this Parable, with which the Chapter cloſeth, is applicable to all *Chriſtians*, who are in Profeſſion and Obligation God's Servants; but it ſeems eſpecially intended as a Warning to Miniſters, for the Servant ſpoken of is a *Steward*. Now obſerve what Chriſt here ſaith,

Firſt, Concerning the *good Servant*; He ſhews here what he is, a *Ruler of the Houſhold*; what, being ſo, he *ſhould be Faithful* and *Wiſe*; and what, if he be ſo, he ſhall be eternally *Bleſſed*. Here's good Inſtructions and Encouragements to the Miniſters of *Chriſt*.

(1.) Here's his *Place* and *Office*: He is one whom *his Lord has made Ruler over his Houſhold*, to *give them Meat in due Seaſon*. *Note*, (1.) The *Church of Chriſt* is his *Houſhold*, or *Family*, ſtanding in Relation to him, as the *Father* and *Maſter* of it. 'Tis the *Houſhold of God*, a Family named from *Chriſt*, *Eph*. 3. 15. (2.) Goſpel Miniſters are appointed *Rulers in this Houſhold*: Not as Princes, (*Chriſt* has enter'd a *Caveat* againſt that) but as Stewards, or other ſubordinate Officers; not as *Lords*, but as *Guides*; not to preſcribe new Ways, but to *ſhew* and *lead in* the Ways that Chriſt has appointed; that's the Signification of the ἡγούμενοι, which we tranſlate, *having Rule over you*, Heb. 13. 17. And as *Overſeers*, not to cut out new Work, but to direct in, and quicken to the Work which Chriſt has order'd; that's the Signification of ἐπίσκοποι, *Biſhops*. They are Rulers *by Chriſt*; what Power they have is derived from him, and none may take it from them, or abridge it to them. He is one whom *the Lord has made Ruler*: Chriſt has the *making* of Miniſters. They are Rulers *under Chriſt*, and act in Subordination to him; and Rulers *for Chriſt*, for the Advancement of his Kingdom. (3.) The Work of Goſpel-Miniſters, is to *give to Chriſt*'s Houſhold *their Meat in due Seaſon*, as Stewards, and therefore they have the *Keys* deliver'd to them. (1.) Their Work is to *give*; not take to themſelves, *Ezek*. 34. 8. but give *to the Family* what the Maſter has bought, to *diſpenſe* what Chriſt has *purchas'd*. And to Miniſters it is ſaid, That it is *more bleſſed to give, than to receive*, Acts 20. 35. (2.) 'Tis to give *Meat*, not to give

Law, that's Chriſt's Work; but to deliver thoſe Doctrines to the Church, which, if duly digeſted, will be Nouriſhment to Souls. They muſt not give the *Poyſon* of falſe Doctrines, not the *Stones* of hard and unprofitable Doctrines, but the *Meat* that is *ſound* and *wholeſome.* (3.) It muſt be given in *due Seaſon*, ἐν καιρῷ, while there is *Time* for it; when Eternity comes, it will be too late: We muſt *work while it is Day.* Or, *in Time, i. e.* whenever any Opportunity offers it ſelf; or, in the *ſtated* Time, Time after Time; *according as the Duty of every Day requires.*

2. His *right Diſcharge* of this Office: The *good Servant*, if thus preferr'd, will be a *good Steward.* For,

1. He is *faithful.* Stewards muſt be ſo, 1 *Cor.* 4. 2. He that is *truſted*, muſt be *truſty:* And the greater the Truſt is, the more is expected from them. 'Tis a great good Thing that is committed to *Miniſters*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 2. and they muſt be faithful, as *Moſes* was, *Heb.* 3. 2. Chriſt counts thoſe Miniſters, and thoſe only, that are *faithful*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 12. A faithful Miniſter of *Jeſus Chriſt*, is one that ſincerely deſigns his Maſter's Honour, not his own; delivers *the whole Counſel of God*, not his own Fancies and Conceits; follows Chriſt's Inſtitutions, and adheres to them; regards the *meaneſt*, reproves the *greateſt*, and doth not *reſpect Perſons.*

2. He is *wiſe* to underſtand his Duty, and the proper Seaſon of it: And the guiding of the Flock, there's need not only of the *Integrity of the Heart, but the Skilfulneſs of the Hands.* Honeſty may ſuffice for a *good Servant*, but *Wiſdom* is neceſſary to a *good Steward*; for it is *profitable to direct.*

3. He is *doing, ſo doing* as his Office requires. The Miniſtry is a *good Work*, and they whoſe Office it is, have always *ſomething to do:* They muſt not indulge themſelves in Eaſe, nor leave the Work undone, or careleſly turn it off to others, but be *doing*, and doing *to the Purpoſe. So doing*, giving Meat to the Houſhold; minding their own Buſineſs, and not meddling with that which is *foreign: So doing*, as the Maſter has appointed, as the Office imports, and as the Caſe of the Family doth *require:* Not *talking*, but *doing.* 'Twas the Motto Mr. *Perkins* us'd, *Miniſter verbi es*, (not only *Age*, but) *Hoc age.*

4. He is *found doing* when his Maſter comes: Which intimates, (1.) *Conſtancy at his Work.* At what Hour ſoever his Maſter comes, he is found *buſy*, at the *Work of the Day.* Miniſters ſhould not leave *empty Spaces* in their Time, leſt their Lord ſhould come in one of thoſe *empty Spaces.* As with a good God, the End of one Mercy is the Beginning of another; ſo with a good Man, a good Miniſter, the End of one Duty is the *Beginning of another.* When *Salvin* was perſuaded to remit his Miniſterial Labours, he anſwer'd with ſome Reſentment, *What, would you have my Maſter find me idle?* (2.) *Perſeverance in his Work*, till his Lord doth come: *Hold faſt till then*, Rev. 2. 25. *Continue in theſe Things*, 1 Tim. 4. 16.—6. 14. Endure to the End.

3. The *Recompence of Reward* intended him for this, in Three Things:

1. He ſhall be *taken notice of.* This is intimated in theſe Words, *Who then is* that *faithful and wiſe Servant?* Which ſuppoſe that there are but few who anſwer this Character: Such an *Interpreter* is *One of a Thouſand*, ſuch a *faithful and wiſe Steward.* Thoſe who thus diſtinguiſh themſelves now by Humility, Diligence and Sincerity, in their Work, *Chriſt* will, in the Great Day, both *dignify* and *diſtinguiſh* by the Glory confer'd on them.

2. He ſhall be *bleſſed*; *Bleſſed is that Servant*; and *Chriſt's* pronouncing him *bleſſed*, makes him ſo. All the Dead that *dye in the Lord* are *bleſſed, Rev.* 14. 13. But there is a peculiar Bleſſedneſs ſecur'd to them that approve themſelves *faithful Stewards*, and are *found doing.* Next to the Honour of thoſe who dye in the *Field of Battel*, ſuffering for *Chriſt* as the Martyrs, is the Honour of thoſe that dye in the *Field of Service*, Plowing, and Sowing, and Reaping for Chriſt.

3. He ſhall be *preferr'd*, v. 47. *He ſhall make him Ruler over all his Goods.* Alluding to the Way of great Men, who, if the Stewards of their Houſe carry themſelves well in that Place, commonly prefer them to be the Managers of their Eſtates; thus *Joſeph* was preferr'd in the Houſe of *Potiphar, Gen.* 39. 4, 6. But the greateſt Honour which the kindeſt Maſter ever did to his moſt *try'd* Servants in *this World*, is nothing to that Weight of Glory which the Lord *Jeſus* will confer upon his faithful, watchful Servants in the World to come. What is here ſaid by a Similitude, is the ſame that is ſaid more plainly, *John* 12. 26. *Him will my Father honour.* And God's Servants, when thus *preferr'd*, ſhall be perfect in Wiſdom and Holineſs to bear that Weight of Glory; ſo that there's no Danger from *theſe Servants when they reign.*

Secondly, Concerning the *Evil Servant.* Here we have,

1. His *Deſcription given*, v. 48, 49. Where we have the Wretch drawn in his own Colours. The vileſt of *Creatures* is a wicked *Man*, the vileſt of *Men* is a wicked *Chriſtian*, and the vileſt of them a wicked *Miniſter. Corruptio optimi eſt peſſima:* Wickedneſs in the Prophets of *Jeruſalem* is *a horrible Thing* indeed, *Jer.* 23. 14. Here is,

(1.) The *Cauſe* of his Wickedneſs, and that is a practical Disbelief of Chriſt's Second coming. He hath *ſaid in his Heart, My Lord delays his Coming*; and therefore he begins to think he will *never come*, but has quite forſaken his Church. Obſerve, (1.) *Chriſt* knows what they ſay in their Hearts, who with their Lips cry, *Lord, Lord*, as this Servant here. (2.) The Delay of Chriſt's Coming, tho' it's a gracious Inſtance of his Patience, yet is greatly abuſed by wicked People, whoſe Hearts are thereby harden'd in their wicked Ways. When *Chriſt's* Coming is look'd upon as *doubtful*, or a Thing at a mighty *Diſtance*, the Hearts of Men are *fully ſet to do evil*, Eccl. 8. 11. See *Ezek.* 12. 27. They that walk by Senſe, are ready to ſay of the unſeen *Jeſus*, as the People did of *Moſes* when he tarry'd in the Mount upon their Errand; We *wot not what's become of them*; and therefore *up, make us gods*; the World a god, the Belly a god, any Thing but he that ſhould be.

(2.) The *Particulars* of his Wickedneſs, and they are *Sins* of the *firſt Magnitude*; He is a Slave to his Paſſions and his Appetites.

1. *Perſecution* is here charg'd upon him: He begins to *ſmite his Fellow-ſervants. Note*, (1.) Even the Stewards of the Houſe are to look upon all the Servants of the Houſe as their *Fellow-ſervants*, and therefore are forbidden to *lord it over them.* If the Angel call himſelf *Fellow-ſervant* to *John*, Rev. 19. 10. no marvel if *John* have learn'd to call himſelf Brother to the Chriſtians of the *Churches* of *Aſia, Rev.* 1. 9. (2.) It is no new Thing to ſee *evil Servants* ſmiting their Fellow-ſervants; both private Chriſtians, and faithful Miniſters. He *ſmites them*, either becauſe they reprove him, or becauſe they will not bow and do him Reverence; will not ſay as he ſaith, and do as he doth againſt their Conſciences. *Smites them with the Tongue*, as they ſmote the Prophet, *Jer.* 18. 18. And if he get Power into his Hand, or can preſs thoſe into his Service that have, as the Ten Horns upon the Head of the Beaſt, it goes farther. *Paſhur* the Prieſt ſmote *Jeremiah*, and put him in the Stocks, *Jer.* 20. 1. The *Revolters* have many times been, of all others, moſt *profound to make Slaughter*, Hoſ. 5. 2. The Steward, when he *ſmites his Fellow-ſervants*, doth it under Colour of his Maſter's Authority and in his Name; he ſaith, *Let the Lord be glorified, Iſa.* 66. 5. But he ſhall know that he could not put a greater Affront upon his Maſter.

2. *Profaneneſs* and *Immorality*; He begins to *eat and drink with the drunken.* (1.) He *aſſociates* with the *worſt* of *Sinners*, hath Fellowſhip with them, is intimate with them: He walks in their Counſel, ſtands in their way, ſits in their Seat, and ſings their Songs. The *Drunken* are the merry, jovial Company, and thoſe he is for; and thus he *hardens* them in their Wickedneſs. (2.) He doth *like them, eats, and drinks, and is drunken*; ſo it in is *Luke.* And this is an Inlet to all manner of Sin. Drunkenneſs is a leading Wickedneſs, they who are Slaves to that, are never *Maſters of themſelves* in any Thing elſe. The *Perſecutors* of God's People have commonly been the moſt vicious and immoral Men. *Perſecuting Conſciences*, whatever the Pretenſions be, are commonly the moſt profligate and debauch'd Conſciences. What will not they be drunk with, that will be *drunk with the Blood of the Saints?* Well, this is the Deſcription of a wicked Miniſter, who yet may have the common Gifts of Learning and Utterance above others, and (as hath been ſaid of ſome) may preach ſo well in the Pulpit, that 'tis pity he ſhould ever come out; and yet live ſo ill out of the Pulpit, that 'tis pity he ſhould ever come in.

2. His *Doom read*, v. 50, 51. The Coat and Character of wicked Miniſters, will not only not ſecure them from Condemnation, but will greatly aggravate it. They can plead no Exemption from Chriſt's Juriſdiction, whatever they pretend to in the Church of *Rome* from that of the Civil Magiſtrate; no *Benefit of Clergy* at Chriſt's Bar. *Obſerve*,

1. The *Surprizingneſs* of his Doom, *v.* 50. *The Lord of that Servant will come. Note*, (1.) Our putting off the Thoughts of Chriſt's Coming, will not put off his Coming. Whatever Fancy he deludes himſelf with, *his Lord will come.* The *Unbelief of Man ſhall not make* that great Promiſe, or Threatning, (call it which you will) *of none Effect.* (2.) The Coming of Chriſt will be a moſt dreadful Surprize to ſecure and careleſs Sinners, eſpecially to wicked Miniſters: *He ſhall come in a Day when he looketh not for him. Note*, Thoſe that have *ſlighted* the Warnings of the Word, and *ſilenc'd* thoſe of their own Conſciences concerning the Judgment to come, cannot expect *any other Warnings:* Thoſe will be adjudg'd ſufficient legal Notice *given*, whether *taken* or no; and no Unfairneſs can be charg'd on *Chriſt*, if he come ſuddenly, without giving other Notice. *Behold*, he has *told us before.*

2. The *Severity* of his Doom, *v.* 51. 'Tis not more *ſevere* than righteous; but it is a Doom that carries in it utter Ruin, wrapt up in Two dreadful Words, *Death and Damnation.*

1. *Death.* His Lord ſhall *cut him aſunder*, διχοτομήσει αὐτὸν, he *ſhall cut him off* from the Land of the Living, from the Congregation of the Righteous; ſhall *ſeparate him unto Evil*, which is the Definition of a *Curſe, Deut.* 29. 21. Shall *cut him down*, as a Tree that cumbers the Ground. Perhaps it alludes to the Sentence often us'd in the Law, *That Soul ſhall be cut off from his People*; noting an utter Extirpation. Death *cuts off* a good Man, as a choice Imp is cut off, to be grafted in a better Stock; but it cuts off a wicked Man, as a wither'd Branch is cut off for the Fire. Cut him off from this World, which he ſet his Heart ſo much upon, and was as it were *one with.* Or, as we read it, ſhall *cut him aſunder*, i. e. part Body and Soul: ſend the Body to the Grave, to be a Prey for Worms, and the Soul to Hell, to be a Prey for Devils; and there's the Sinner *cut aſunder.* The *Soul* and *Body* of a godly Man at Death part fairly, the one chearfully lifted up to God, the other left to the Duſt; but the *Soul* and *Body* of a wicked Man at Death are *cut aſunder*, torn aſunder, for to them Death is the *King of Terrors, Job* 18. 14. The wicked Servant *divided himſelf* between God and the World, *Chriſt* and *Belial*, his Profeſſion and his Luſts; juſtly therefore will he thus be *divided.*

2. *Damnation.* He ſhall *appoint him his Portion with the Hypocrites*; and a miſerable Portion it will be, for *there ſhall be weeping. Note*, (1.) There is a Place and State of Everlaſting Miſery in the other World, where there is nothing but *Weeping and Gnaſhing of Teeth*; which ſpeaks the Soul's *Tribulation* and *Anguiſh* under God's *Indignation* and *Wrath.* (2.) The Divine Sentence will *appoint* this Place and State, as the Portion of thoſe, who by their own Sin were fitted

for it. Even he of whom he ſaid, that he was *his Lord*, ſhall thus appoint him his Portion. He that is now *the Saviour*, will then be *the Judge*; and the everlaſting State of the Children of Men will be as he appoints. They that chuſe the World for their Portion in this Life, will have Hell for their Portion in the other Life. *This is the Portion of a wicked Man from God*, Job 20. 29. (3.) Hell is the proper Place of Hypocrites: This wicked Servant has his Portion with *the Hypocrites*. They are, as it were, the Free-holders; other Sinners are but as Inmates with them, and have but a *Portion* of their Miſery. When Chriſt would expreſs the moſt ſevere Puniſhment in the other World, he calls it the *Portion of Hypocrites*. If there be any Place in Hell hotter than other, as 'tis like there is, it will be the Allotment of thoſe that have the Form, but *hate* the Power of Godlineſs. (4.) Wicked Miniſters will have their Portion in the other World with *the worſt of Sinners*, even with the Hypocrites; and juſtly, for they are the worſt of Hypocrites. The *Blood of Chriſt*, which they have by their Profaneneſs trampled *under their Feet*, and the *Blood of Souls*, which they have by their Unfaithfulneſs brought *upon their Heads*, will bear hard upon them in that *Place of Torment*. *Son, remember*, will be as *cutting* a Word to a Miniſter, if he periſh, as to any other Sinner whatſoever: Let them, therefore, who preach to others, fear, leſt they themſelves ſhould be *Caſt-aways*.

CHAP. XXV.

This Chapter continues, and concludes our Saviour's Diſcourſe, which began in the foregoing Chapter, concerning his Second Coming, *and the End of the World. This was his Farewel-Sermon of Caution, as that,* John 14, 15, *and* 16, *was of Comfort to his Diſciples; and they had need of both in a World of ſo much Temptation and Trouble as this is. The Application of that Diſcourſe was,* Watch therefore, *and,* Be ye therefore ready. *Now in Proſecution of theſe ſerious awakening Cautions, in this Chapter we have Three Parables, the Scope of which is the ſame, to quicken us all with the utmoſt Care and Diligence, to get ready for Chriſt's* Second Coming, *which, in all his Farewels to his Church, mention was made of; as, that before he died,* Joh. 14. 2. *at his Aſcenſion,* Acts 1. 11. *and at the ſhutting up of the Canon of the Scripture,* Rev. 22. 20. *Now it concerns us to* prepare *for Chriſt's Coming:* (1.) *That we may then be ready to* attend upon him; *and this is ſhew'd in the Parable of the* Ten Virgins, *v.* 1,--13. (2.) *That we may then be ready to give up our Accounts to him; and this is ſhew'd in the Parable of the* Three Servants, *v.* 14,--30. (3.) *That we may then be ready to receive from him our final Sentence, and that it may be to Eternal Life; and this is ſhew'd in a more plain Deſcription of the Proceſs of the Laſt Judgment,* v. 31,--46. *Theſe are Things of awful Conſideration, becauſe of everlaſting* Concern *to every one of us.*

THen ſhall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wiſe, and five *were* fooliſh. 3 They that were fooliſh took their lamps, and took no oyl with them: 4 But the wiſe took oyl in their veſſels with their lamps. 5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all ſlumbered and ſlept. 6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7 Then all thoſe virgins aroſe, and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the fooliſh ſaid unto the wiſe, Give us of your oyl, for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wiſe anſwered, ſaying, *Not ſo*; leſt there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that ſell, and buy for your ſelves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready, went in with him to the marriage, and the door was ſhut. 11 Afterward came alſo the other virgins, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12 But he anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, I know you not. 13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh.

Here, 1. That in general which is to be illuſtrated, is the *Kingdom of Heaven*, the State of Things under the Goſpel, the External Kingdom of Chriſt, and the Adminiſtration and Succeſs of it. Some of Chriſt's Parables had ſhew'd us what it *is* like now, in the preſent Reception of it; as *Mat.* 13. This tells us what it *ſhall be* like, when the Myſtery of God ſhall be finiſh'd, and that Kingdom deliver'd up to the Father. The Adminiſtration of Chriſt's Government towards the Ready and the Unready in the Great Day, may be illuſtrated by this Similitude. Or, The *Kingdom* is put for the Subjects of the Kingdom: The Profeſſors of Chriſtianity ſhall then be liken'd to theſe Ten Virgins, and ſhall be thus diſtinguiſh'd.

2. That by which it is illuſtrated is a *Marriage Solemnity*: 'Twas a Cuſtom ſometimes us'd among the *Jews* on that Occaſion, that the Bridegroom came, attended with his Friends, late in the Night, to the Houſe of the Bride, where ſhe expected him, attended with her Bride-Maids; who, upon Notice given of the Bridegroom's Approach, were to go out with lamps in their Hands, to light him into the Houſe with Ceremony and Formality, in order to the Celebrating of the Nuptials with great Mirth. And ſome think, on theſe Occaſions they had uſually *Ten Virgins*: For the *Jews* never held a Synagogue, Circumcis'd, kept the Paſſover, or contracted Marriage, but Ten Perſons at leaſt were preſent. *Boaz*, when he marry'd *Ruth*, had *Ten Witneſſes*, Ruth 4. 2. Now in this Parable,

Firſt, The *Bridegroom* is our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; he is ſo repreſented in the 45th *Pſalm*, *Solomon's Song*, and often in the *New Teſtament*. It ſpeaks his ſingular and ſuperlative Love to us, and his faithful and inviolable Covenant with his Spouſe the Church. Believers are now betrothed to Chriſt, *Hoſ*. 2. 19. but the Solemnizing of the Marriage is reſerv'd for the Great Day, when the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, will have made her ſelf compleatly ready, *Rev*. 19. 7, 9.

Secondly, The *Virgins* are the *Profeſſors of Religion*, Members of the Church, but here repreſented as *her Companions*, Pſal. 45. 14. as elſewhere, *her Children*, Iſa. 54. 1. *her Ornaments*, Iſa. 49. 18. They that follow the Lamb, are ſaid to be Virgins, *Rev*. 14. 4. noting their Beauty and Purity; They are to be preſented as *Chaſte Virgins* to Chriſt, 2 *Cor*. 11. 2. The Bridegroom is a King, ſo theſe Virgins are *Maids of Honour*; Virgins *without Number*, Cant. 6. 8. yet here ſaid to be *Ten*.

Thirdly, The *Office* of theſe Virgins is to *meet the Bridegroom*, which is as much their Happineſs as their Duty: They come to *wait upon* the Bridegroom when he appears, and in the mean time to *wait for him*. See here the Nature of Chriſtianity. As Chriſtians, we profeſs our ſelves to be, (1.) *Attendants upon Chriſt*, to *do him Honour*, as the Glorious Bridegroom, to be to him *for a Name, and a Praiſe*; eſpecially then, when he *ſhall come to be glorified in his Saints*. We muſt follow him as Honorary Servants do their Maſters, *John* 12. 26. *Hold up* the Name, and *hold forth* the Praiſe of the Exalted Jeſus: This is our Buſineſs. (2.) *Expectants of Chriſt*, and of *his Second Coming*. As Chriſtians, we profeſs not only to *believe* and *look for*, but to *love* and *long for*, the Appearing of Chriſt, and to act in our whole Converſation with a Regard to it. The Second Coming of *Chriſt* is the Centre in which all the Lines of our Religion meet, and to which the whole of the Divine Life hath a conſtant Reference and Tendency.

Fourthly, Their chief Concern is to have *Lights in their Hands* when they attend the Bridegroom; thus to do him Honour, and do him Service. *Note*, Chriſtians are Children of Light. The Goſpel is *Light*; and they who receive it, muſt not only be enlighten'd by it themſelves, but muſt *ſhine as Lights*, muſt *hold it forth*, Phil. 2. 15, 16. This in general.

Now concerning theſe Ten Virgins, we may obſerve,

Firſt, Their different Character, with the Proof and Evidence of it.

1. Their Character was, that *Five were wiſe, and Five fooliſh*, v. 2. And *Wiſdom excelleth Folly, as far as Light excelleth Darkneſs*; ſo ſaith *Solomon*, a competent Judge, *Eccl*. 2. 13. *Note*, Thoſe of the ſame Profeſſion and Denomination among Men, may yet be of Characters very different in the *Sight of God*. *Sincere Chriſtians* are the *wiſe* Virgins, and Hypocrites the *fooliſh* ones; as, in another Parable, they are repreſented by *wiſe and fooliſh Builders*. *Note*, Thoſe are wiſe, or fooliſh indeed, that are ſo in the Affairs of their Souls. True Religion is true Wiſdom; Sin is Folly, but eſpecially the Sin of Hypocriſy; for thoſe are the *greateſt Fools*, that are *wiſe in their own Conceit*; and thoſe the worſt of Sinners, that *feign themſelves juſt Men*. Some obſerve, from the equal Number of the wiſe and fooliſh, what a *Charitable Decorum* ('tis Archbiſhop *Tillotſon*'s Expreſſion) Chriſt obſerves, as if he would hope that the Number of true Believers were near equal to that of Hypocrites; or at leaſt teach us to *hope the beſt* concerning thoſe that profeſs Religion, and to think of them with a Bias to the charitable Side. Tho' in judging of *our ſelves*, we ought to remember that *the Gate is ſtrait, and few find it*; yet in judging of others, we ought to remember that the Captain of our Salvation brings *many Sons to Glory*.

2. The Evidence of this Character was in the very Thing which they were to *attend to*; by that they are judg'd of.

1. It was the *Folly* of the *fooliſh* Virgins, that they *took their Lamps*, and took *no Oyl with them*, v. 3. They had juſt Oyl enough to make their Lamps burn for the preſent, to make a Shew with, as if they intended to meet the Bridegroom; but no Cruſe, or Bottle of Oyl with them, for a Recruit if the Bridegroom tarried. Thus Hypocrites.

(1.) They have *no Principle within*. They have a *Lamp* of Profeſſion in their Hands, but have not in their Hearts that Stock of ſound *Knowledge*, rooted *Diſpoſitions*, and ſettled *Reſolutions*, which are neceſſary to carry them thro' the Services and Tryals of the preſent State. They act under the Influence of External Inducements, but are void of Spiritual Life: Like a Tradeſman that ſets up without a Stock, or the Seed on the ſtony Ground that *wanted Root*.

(2.) They have no *Proſpect of*, nor make *Proviſion for*, what is to come: They took Lamps for a *preſent Shew*, but not Oyl for *After-Uſe*. This Incogitancy is the Ruin of many Profeſſors; all their Care is to *recommend* themſelves to their Neighbours, whom they now *converſe with,* not to approve themſelves to *Chriſt,* whom they muſt hereafter appear before; as if any Thing will *ſerve,* provided it will but ſerve *for the preſent.* Tell them of *Things not ſeen as yet,* and you are like *Lot* to his *Sons-in-Law,* as one that mock'd. They do not provide *for hereafter,* as the Ant doth, nor lay up for *the Time to come,* 2 Cor. 4. 18.

2 It was the *Wiſdom* of the *wiſe Virgins,* that they *took Oyl in their Veſſels with their Lamps,* v. 4. They had a good Principle within, which would maintain and keep up their Profeſſion. (1.) Their Heart is *the Veſſel,* which it is our Wiſdom to get *furniſh'd;* for out of a *good Treaſure* there good Things muſt be brought; but if that *Root* be Rottenneſs, the *Bloſſom* will be *Duſt.* (2.) Grace is the *Oyl* which we muſt have in this *Veſſel:* In the Tabernacle there was conſtant Proviſion made of *Oyl for the Light,* Exod. 35. 14. Our Light muſt *ſhine before Men,* in *good Works;* but this cannot be, or not long, unleſs there be a fix'd, active *Principle* in the Heart, of *Faith* in *Chriſt,* and *Love* to *God* and our *Brethren;* from which we muſt act in every Thing we do in Religion, with an Eye to what is before us. They that took Oyl in their Veſſels, did it upon Suppoſition, that perhaps the *Bridegroom* might tarry. *Note,* In looking forwards, 'tis good to prepare for the worſt, to lay in for a Siege. But remember, that this Oyl which keeps the Lamps burning, is deriv'd to the Candleſtick from *Jeſus Chriſt,* the great and good Olive, by the *golden Pipes* of the Ordinances, as 'tis repreſented in that Viſion, *Zech.* 4. 2, 3, 12. which is explain'd, *John* 1. 16. *Of his Fulneſs have all we receiv'd, and Grace for Grace.*

Secondly, Their *common Fault,* during the Bridegroom's Delay, *They all ſlumber'd and ſlept,* v. 25. Obſerve here,

1. The *Bridegroom tarried; i.e.* he did not come out ſo ſoon as they expected. What we look for as certain, we are apt to think is very near: Many, in the Apoſtles Times, imagin'd that the *Day of the Lord was at Hand;* but it is not ſo. *Chriſt,* as to us, *ſeems* to tarry, and yet really *doth not, Hab.* 2. 3. There is good Reaſon for the Bridegroom's tarrying; there are many intermediate Counſels and Purpoſes to be accompliſh'd, the Elect muſt all be call'd in, God's Patience muſt be manifeſted, and the Saints Patience try'd; the *Harveſt of the Earth* muſt be ripen'd, and ſo muſt the Harveſt of Heaven too. But tho' *Chriſt* tarry paſt *our Time,* he will not tarry paſt the *due Time.*

2. While he tarried, thoſe that waited for him grew careleſs, and forgot what they were attending, *they all ſlumber'd and ſlept;* as if they had given over looking for him; for *when the Son of Man comes,* he will *not find Faith,* Luk. 18. 8. Thoſe that inferr'd the *Suddenneſs* of it from its *Certainty,* when that anſwer'd not their Expectation, were apt from the *Delay* to infer its *Uncertainty.* The wiſe Virgins *ſlumber'd,* and the fooliſh *ſlept;* ſo ſome diſtinguiſh it: However, they were both faulty. The wiſe Virgins kept their *Lamps burning,* but did not keep *themſelves awake. Note,* Too many good Chriſtians, when they have been long in Profeſſion, grow remiſs in their Preparations for *Chriſt*'s Second Coming: They intermit their Care, abate their Zeal; their Graces are not lively, nor their Works found perfect before God; and tho' *all Love* be not *loſt,* yet the *firſt Love* is *left.* If 'twas hard to the Diſciples to watch with Chriſt *one Hour,* much more to watch with him an Age. *I ſleep,* (ſaith the Spouſe) but *my Heart wakes.* Obſerve, Firſt, They *ſlumber'd,* and then they *ſlept. Note,* One Degree of Careleſneſs and Remiſneſs makes way for another. Thoſe that allow themſelves in *Slumbering,* will ſcarce keep themſelves from *Sleeping;* therefore dread the Beginning of Spiritual Decays; *Venienti occurrite Morbo.* The Ancients generally underſtood the Virgins *Slumbering* and *Sleeping* of their *Dying;* they all *dy'd,* wiſe and fooliſh, (*Pſal.* 49. 10.) before *Judgment-Day.* So *Ferus; Antequam veniat Sponſus, omnibus obdormiſcendum eſt,* h. e. *moriendum;* and ſo *Calvin.* But I think 'tis rather to be taken as we have open'd it.

Thirdly, The ſurprizing Summons given them to attend the Bridegroom, *v.* 6. *At Midnight there was a Cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh. Note,* (1.) Tho' Chriſt tarry long, he will come at laſt; tho' he ſeem *ſlow,* he is *ſure.* In his firſt coming he was *thought long* by thoſe that *waited for the Conſolation of Iſrael,* yet in the *Fulneſs of Time he came;* ſo his Second Coming, tho' *long deferr'd,* is *not forgotten:* His Enemies ſhall find to their Coſt, that *Forbearance is no Acquittance;* and his Friends ſhall find to their Comfort, that *the Viſion is for an appointed Time, and at the End it ſhall ſpeak, and not lye.* The *Year of the Redeemed* is fix'd, and it *will come.* (2.) Chriſt's *Coming* will be at *our Midnight,* when we leaſt look for him, and are moſt diſpos'd to take our Reſt. His coming for the Relief and Comfort of his People, often is when the Good intended ſeems to be at the greateſt diſtance: And his coming to reckon with his Enemies, is when they put the *evil Day* furtheſt from them. 'Twas at *Midnight* that the Firſt-born of *Egypt* were deſtroy'd, and *Iſrael* deliver'd, *Exod.* 12. 22. Death often comes when 'tis leaſt expected; the Soul requir'd *this Night, Luke* 12. 20. Chriſt will come when he pleaſeth, to ſhew his Sovereignty; and will not let us know when, to teach us our Duty. (3.) When Chriſt comes, we muſt *go forth to meet him.* As Chriſtians, we are bound to attend all the Motions of the *Lord Jeſus,* and meet him in all his Out-goings. When he comes to us *at Death,* we muſt *go forth* out of the Body, out of the World, to *meet him* with Affections and Workings of Soul, ſuitable to the Diſcoveries we then expect him to make of himſelf. *Go ye forth to meet him,* is a Call to thoſe who are *habitually* prepar'd, to be *actually* ready. (4.) The *Notice* given of Chriſt's Approach, and the *Call* to *meet him,* will be *awakening:* There was a *Cry made.* His firſt Coming was not with any Obſervation at all, nor did they ſay, *Lo, here is Chriſt, or, Lo, he is there:* He *was in the World, and the World knew him not:* But his Second Coming will be with the Obſervation of all the World; *Every Eye ſhall ſee him.* There will be a Cry from Heaven, for he ſhall *deſcend with a Shout, Ariſe ye Dead, and come to Judgment;* and a Cry from the Earth too, a Cry to *Rocks and Mountains,* Rev. 6. 16.

Fourthly, The *Addreſs* they all made to anſwer this Summons, *v.* 7. They *all aroſe, and trimmed their Lamps;* ſnuff'd them, and ſupply'd them with Oyl, and went about with all Expedition to put themſelves in a Poſture to *receive* the Bridegroom. Now, (1.) This in the *wiſe Virgins,* ſpeaks an *actual Preparation* for the Bridegroom's *Coming. Note,* Thoſe that are beſt prepar'd for Death, yet upon the immediate Arreſts of it, have Work to do to get themſelves *actually* ready, that they may be *found in Peace,* 2 Pet. 3. 14. *found doing,* Mat. 24. 46. and not *found naked,* 2 Cor. 5. 3. 'Twill be a Day of Search and Enquiry, and it concerns us to think how we ſhall then be *found.* When we ſee the *Day approaching,* we muſt addreſs our ſelves to our dying Work with all Serioufneſs, renewing our Repentance for Sin, our Conſent to the Covenant, our Farewels to the World; and our Souls muſt be carry'd out towards God in ſuitable Breathings. (2.) In the *fooliſh Virgins,* it notes a *vain Confidence and Conceit* of the Goodneſs of their State, and their Readineſs for another World. *Note,* Even counterfeit Graces will ſerve a Man to make a *ſhew of* when he comes to dye, as well as they have done all his Life long. The Hypocrites Hopes blaze when they are juſt expiring, like a Lightning before Death.

Fifthly, The Diſtreſs which the *fooliſh Virgins* were in for want of *Oyl,* v. 8, 9. This ſpeaks, (1.) The Apprehenſions which ſome Hypocrites have of the Miſery of their State, even on this ſide Death, when God opens their Eyes to ſee their Folly, and themſelves periſhing with a *Lye in their Right-hand.* Or however, (2.) The real Miſery of their State on the other ſide Death, and in the Judgment; how far their *fair,* but *falſe* Profeſſion of Religion, will be from availing them any Thing in the Great Day. See what comes of it!

1. Their *Lamps are gone out.* The *Lamps* of Hypocrites often *go out* in this Life; when they who have begun in the Spirit, end in the Fleſh, and the Hypocriſy breaks out in an open Apoſtacy, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20. The *Profeſſion withers,* and the *Credit* of it is loſt; the *Hopes fail,* and the *Comfort* of them is gone: How oft is *the Candle of the Wicked* thus *put out?* Job 21. 17. Yet many an Hypocrite keeps up both the Credit and the Comfort of his Profeſſion, ſuch as it is, to the laſt; but what is it when *God takes away his Soul?* Job 27. 8. If *his Candle* be not put out *before him,* 'tis put out *with him,* Job 18. 5, 6. He ſhall *lye down in Sorrow,* Iſa. 50. 11. The Gains of an hypocritical Profeſſion will not follow a Man to Judgment, *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. The Lamps are gone out, when the Hypocrites Hope proves like the Spider's Web, *John* 8. 11, *&c.* and like the *giving up of the Ghoſt,* Job 11. 20. Like *Abſalom*'s Mule, that left him *in the Oak.*

2. They *wanted Oyl* to *ſupply* them when they were *going out. Note,* Thoſe that take up ſhort of *true Grace,* will certainly find the want of it one Time or other. An External Profeſſion well humour'd, may carry a Man *far,* but it will not carry him *through;* may light him along this World, but the Damps of the Valley of the *Shadow of Death* will *put it* out.

3. They would gladly be beholden to the *wiſe Virgins* for a Supply out of their Veſſels: *Give us of your Oyl. Note,* The Day is coming, when carnal Hypocrites would gladly be found in the Condition of true Chriſtians. Thoſe who now hate the Strictneſs of Religion, will at Death and Judgment wiſh for the ſolid Comforts of it. Thoſe who care not to *live the Life,* yet would *dye the Death of the Righteous.* The Day is coming, when thoſe who now look with Contempt upon humble, contrite Saints, would gladly get an Intereſt in them, and would value thoſe as their beſt Friends and Benefactors, whom now they *ſet with the Dogs of their Flock. Give us of your Oyl;* that is, ſpeak a good Word for us; ſo ſome. But there's no Occaſion for Vouchers in the Great Day; the Judge knows what's every Man's true Character. But is it not well that they are brought to ſay, *Give us of your Oyl?* It is ſo: But, (1.) This Requeſt was *extorted* by ſenſible *Neceſſity. Note,* Thoſe will ſee their Need of Grace hereafter, when it ſhould *ſave* them, that will not ſee their Need of Grace now, when it ſhould *ſanctify* and *rule them.* (2.) It comes *too late.* God would have *given* them Oyl, had they ask'd in Time; but there's no buying when the Market's over, no bidding when the Inch of Candle is dropp'd.

4. They were deny'd a Share in their Companions Oyl. 'Tis a ſad Preſage of a Repulſe with God, when they were thus repuls'd by good People. *The Wiſe anſwer'd, Not ſo:* That peremptory Denial is not in the Original, but ſupply'd by the Tranſlators. Theſe *wiſe Virgins* would rather give a Reaſon without a poſitive Refuſal, than (as many do) give a poſitive Refuſal without a Reaſon. They were well inclin'd to help their Neighbours in *Diſtreſs;* but we muſt not, we cannot, we dare not do it, *leſt there be not enough for us and you.* Charity begins at Home; but, go and *buy for your ſelves. Note,* (1.) Thoſe that *would be ſaved,* muſt have *Grace of their own.* Tho' we have Benefit by the Communion of Saints, and the Faith and Prayers of others may now redound to our Advantage, yet *our own Sanctification* is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to *our own Salvation.* The Juſt ſhall live by *his* Faith. Every Man ſhall *give Account of himſelf,* and

therefore let every Man *prove his own Work*; for he cannot get another to *Muſter* for him in that Day. (2.) Thoſe that have *moſt Grace* have *none to ſpare*; all we have is little enough for our ſelves to appear before God in. The beſt have need to *borrow* from Chriſt, but they have none to *lend* to any of their Neighbours. The Church of *Rome*, that dreams of Works of Supererogation, and the Imputation of the Righteouſneſs of Saints, forgets that it was the Wiſdom of the wiſe Virgins to underſtand that they had but Oyl enough for themſelves, and none for others. But obſerve, theſe wiſe Virgins did not upbraid the Fooliſh with their Neglect, nor boaſt of their own Forecaſt, nor torment them with Suggeſtions tending to Deſpair, but give them the beſt Advice the Caſe will bear. *Go ye rather to them that Sell. Note,* Thoſe that deal fooliſhly in the Affairs of their Souls are to be pitied, and not inſulted over; for who made thee to differ? When Miniſters attend ſuch as have been mindleſs of God and their Souls all their Days, but are under Death-bed Convictions, and becauſe *true Repentance is never too late*, direct them to repent, and turn to God, and cloſe with Chriſt; yet becauſe *late Repentance is ſeldom true*, they do but as theſe wiſe Virgins did by the Fooliſh, even *make the beſt of bad*. They can but tell them what is to be done, if it be not too late; but whether the Door may not be ſhut before it is done, is an unſpeakable hazard. 'Tis good Advice now, if it be taken in time, *Go to them that ſell, and buy for your ſelves. Note,* Thoſe that would have Grace, muſt have recourſe to, and attend upon the means of Grace. See *Iſa.* 55. 1.

Sixthly, The *coming of the Bridegroom*, and the *Iſſue of all* this different Character of the wiſe and fooliſh Virgins. See what came of it.

1. *While they went out to buy, the Bridegroom came.* Note, Thoſe that put off their great Work to the laſt, 'tis a thouſand to one they have not time to do it then. Getting Grace is a *Work of Time*, and cannot be done in a hurry. While the poor awakened Soul addreſſeth it ſelf upon a Sick-bed to Repentance and Prayer, in a mighty Confuſion, it ſcarce knows which end to *begin at*, or what to do firſt, and preſently Death comes, Judgment comes, and the Work is undone, and the poor Sinner undone for ever. This comes of having Oyl to *buy*, when we ſhould *burn* it, and Grace to get, when we ſhould *uſe it*.

The Bridegroom came. Note, Our Lord Jeſus will come to his People at the great Day, as a *Bridegroom* will come in Pomp, and rich Attire, attended with his Friends; now the Bridegroom is taken away from us, *we Faſt*, Mat. 9. 15. But then will be an *Everlaſting Feaſt*. Then the Bridegroom will *fetch home* his Bride, to be *where he is*, John 17. 24. and will *rejoice over his Bride*, Iſa. 62. 5.

2. *They that were ready went in with him to the Marriage.* Note, (1.) To be eternally Glorified, is to go in with Chriſt to the Marriage, to be in his immediate Preſence, and in the moſt intimate Fellowſhip and Communion with him in a State of Eternal Reſt, Joy, and Plenty. (2.) Thoſe, and thoſe only ſhall go to Heaven hereafter, that are made ready for Heaven here, that are *wrought to the ſelf ſame thing*, 2 Cor. 5. 5. (3.) The Suddenneſs of Death, and of Chriſt's coming to us then, will be no Obſtruction to our Happineſs, if we have been habitually *prepared*.

3. The *Door was ſhut*, as is uſual, when all the Company is come that are to be admitted. The Door was ſhut, (1.) to *ſecure* thoſe that were within; that being now made *Pillars in the Houſe of our God*, they may *go no more out*, Rev. 3. 12. *Adam* was put into Paradiſe, but the Door was left open, and ſo he went out again; but when glorified Saints are put into the Heavenly Paradiſe, they are *ſhut in*. (2.) To *Seclude* thoſe that were out. The State of Sants and Sinners will then be unalterably fix'd, and thoſe that are ſhut out then, will be ſhut out for ever. Now the Gate is *ſtrait*, yet it is open, but then it will be ſhut and bolted, and a *great Gulf fixed*. This was like the ſhutting of the Door of the Ark when *Noah* was in, as he was thereby preſerv'd, ſo all the reſt were finally abandoned.

4. The fooliſh Virgins came when it was *too late*, v. 11. *afterwards came alſo the other Virgins. Note,* 1. There are many that will ſeek Admiſſion into Heaven when it is too late; as prophane *Eſau*, who *afterwards would have inherited the Bleſſing*. God and Religion will be glorified by thoſe late Sollicitations, tho' Sinners will not be ſaved by them; 'tis for the Honour of, *Lord, Lord*, that is, of fervent and importunate Prayer, that thoſe who ſlight it now will flee to it ſhortly, and 'twill not be called *Whining* and *Canting* then. 2. The vain Confidence of Hypocrites will carry them very far in their Expectations of Happineſs. They go to Heaven-gate, and demand Entrance, and yet are *ſhut out*; lifted up to Heaven in a fond Conceit of the Goodneſs of their State, and yet *thruſt down to Hell*.

5. They were *rejected*, as *Eſau* was, *v.* 12. *I know you not. Note,* We are all concern'd to *ſeek the Lord while he may be found*; for there is a Time coming, when he *will not be found*. Time was when, *Lord, Lord, open to us*, would have ſped well by Virtue of that Promiſe, *Knock, and it ſhall be open'd unto you*; but now it comes *too late*. The Sentence is ſolemnly bound on, with, *Verily, I ſay unto you*, which amounts to no leſs than *Swearing in his Wrath, that they ſhould never enter into his Reſt*. It ſpeaks him *reſolv'd*, and them *ſilenc'd* by it.

Laſtly, Here's a Practical Inference drawn from this Parable, *v.* 13. *Watch therefore.* We had it before, *Chap.* 24. 42. and here 'tis repeated as the moſt needful Caution. *Note,* 1. Our great Duty is to *Watch*, to attend to the Buſineſs of our Souls with the utmoſt Diligence and Circumſpection. Be awake, and be wakeful. 2. 'Tis a good Reaſon for our watching, that the Time of our Lord's coming is very uncertain; *we know neither the Day, nor the Hour*. Therefore every Day, and every Hour we muſt be ready, and not off our Watch any Day in the Year, or any Hour in the Day; be thou *in the Fear of the Lord* every Day, and *all the Day long*.

14 For *the kingdom of heaven* is as a man travelling into a far Countrey, who called his own ſervants, and delivered unto them his goods: 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to every man according to his ſeveral ability, and ſtraitway took his journey. 16 Then he that had received the five talents, went and traded with the ſame, and made *them* other five talents. 17 And likewiſe he that *had received* two, he alſo gained other two. 18 But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lords money. 19 After a long time, the Lord of thoſe Servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. 20 And ſo he that had received five talents, came and brought other five talents, ſaying, Lord, thou deliveredſt unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beſides them five talents more. 21 His lord ſaid unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He alſo that had received two talents, came and ſaid, Lord, thou deliveredſt unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beſides them. 23 His lord ſaid unto him, Well done, good and faithful ſervant; thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 24 Then he which had received the one talent, came and ſaid, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou haſt not ſown, and gathering where thou haſt not ſtrawed: 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou haſt *that is* thine. 26 His lord anſwered and ſaid unto him, Thou wicked and ſlothful ſervant, thou kneweſt that I reap where I ſowed not, and gather where I have not ſtrawed: 27 Thou oughteſt therefore to have put my money to the Exchangers, and then at my coming I ſhould have received mine own with uſury. 28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance: but from him that hath not, ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath. 30 And caſt ye the unprofitable ſervant into outer darkneſs: there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth.

We have here the Parable of the *Talents* committed to *three Servants*, and this ſpeaks us in a State of Work and Buſineſs, as the former in a State of Expectancy. That ſhew'd the neceſſity of habitual Preparation, this of actual Diligence in our preſent Work and Service. In that we were ſtirr'd up to do well for our own Souls; in this to lay out our ſelves for the Glory of God, and the Good of others.

In this Parable, (1.) The *Maſter is Chriſt*, who is the abſolute Owner and Proprietor of all Perſons and Things, and in a ſpecial manner of his Church, into his Hands all Things are delivered. (2.) The *Servants* are Chriſtians, *his own* Servants, ſo they are call'd, born in *his* Houſe, bought with *his* Money, devoted to *his* Praiſe, and employed in *his* Work. 'Tis likely *Miniſters* are eſpecially intended here, who are more immediately attending on him, and ſent by him. St. *Paul* often calls himſelf a *Servant of Jeſus Chriſt*. See 2 *Tim.* 2. 24.

We have three Things in general in this Parable.

Firſt, The *Truſt committed* to theſe Servants: Their Maſter *delivered to them his Goods*; having appointed them to Work, (for Chriſt keeps no Servants to be idle) he left them ſomething to work upon. *Note*, 1. Chriſt's Servants have and receive their *All* from him; for they are of themſelves *worth nothing*, nor any Thing they can call their own but *Sin*. (2.) Our receiving from Chriſt is in order to our working for him. Our Privileges are intended to find us with Buſineſs: The *manifeſtation of the Spirit* is given to every Man to *profit withal*. (3.) Whatever we receive to be made uſe of for Chriſt, ſtill the *Property* is *veſted in him*; we are but Tenants upon his Land, *Stewards* of his *manifold Grace*, 1 Pet. 4. 10. Now obſerve here,

1. On *what occaſion* this Truſt was *committed* to theſe Servants; The Maſter was *travelling into a far Countrey*: This is explain'd, *Eph*. 4. 8. *when he aſcended on high, he gave Gifts unto Men*. *Note*, (1.) When Chriſt went to Heaven, he was as a man *travelling into a far Countrey*, i. e. He went with a Purpoſe to be away a great while. (2.) When he went, he took care to furniſh his Church with all Things neceſſary for it, during his perſonal Abſence. For, and in conſideration of his Departure, he committed to his Church Truths, Laws, Promiſes, and Powers; theſe were the παρακαταθήκη, the great *Depoſitum*, as it is called, 1 *Tim*. 6. 20. 2 *Tim*. 1. 14. The *good thing that is committed* to us; and he ſent his Spirit to enable his Servants to teach and profeſs thoſe *Truths*, to preſs and obſerve thoſe *Laws*, to improve and apply thoſe *Promiſes*, and to exerciſe and employ thoſe *Powers*, ordinary or extraordinary. Thus Chriſt at his Aſcenſion left *his Goods* to his Church.

2. In *what proportion* this Truſt was committed. (1.) He gave *Talents*; A Talent of Silver is computed to be in our Money 353*l*. 11*s*. 10*d*. *ob*. ſo the Learned Biſhop *Cumberland*. *Note*, Chriſt's Gifts are rich and valuable, the Purchaſes of his Blood ineſtimable, and none of them *mean*. (2.) He gave to ſome *more*, to others *leſs*; to one *five* Talents, to another *two*, to another *one*; to every one *according to his ſeveral Ability*. When Divine *Providence* has made a difference in Men's *Ability*, as to Mind, Body, Eſtate, Relation, Intereſt, Divine Grace diſpenſeth Spiritual Gifts accordingly, but ſtill the *Ability* it ſelf is from him. Obſerve, (1.) Every one had *ſome*, *one* Talent at leaſt, and that's not a deſpicable Stock for a poor Servant to begin with. A *Soul of our own* is the *one* Talent we are every one of us intruſted with, and it will find us with Work. *Hoc nempe ob Homine exigitur, ut proſit Hominibus; ſi fieri poteſt multis, ſi minus paucis, ſi minus proximis, ſi minus ſibi, nam cum ſe utilem ceteris efficit, commune ait negotium. Et ſi quis bene de ſe meretur, hoc ipſo aliis prodeſt quod aliis profuturum parat. Seneca de otio Sapient*. (2.) All had not alike, for they had not all like Abilities and Opportunities; God is a free Agent, *dividing every Man ſeverally as he will*: ſome are cut out for Service in one kind, others in another, as the Members of the *Natural Body*: When the Houſholder had thus ſettled his Affairs, he *ſtraitway took his Journey*. Our Lord Jeſus when he had *given Commandments* to his Apoſtles, as one in haſte to be gone, he *went to Heaven*.

Secondly, The different management and improvement of this Truſt, which we have an account of, *v*. 16, 17, 18.

1. Two of the Servants did well.

(1.) They were *diligent* and *faithful*; they *went* and *traded*, they put the Money they were intruſted with to the uſe for which it was intended, laid it out in Goods, and made Returns of it; as ſoon as ever their Maſter was gone, they immediately applied themſelves to their Buſineſs: Thoſe that have ſo much Work to do, as every Chriſtian has, have need to ſet about it quickly, and loſe no time. They *went and traded*. *Note*, A true Chriſtian is a ſpiritual Tradeſman: Trades are called *Myſteries*, and without Controverſy *great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs*; 'Tis a *Manufacture Trade*; there is ſomething to be done by us upon our own Hearts, and for the good of others. 'Tis a *Merchant Trade*, Things of leſs Value to us are parted with for Things of greater Value; *Wiſdom's Merchandiſe*, Prov. 3. 5. Mat. 13. 45. A Tradeſman is one that having made his Trade *his Choice*, and taken Pains to *learn it*, made it his *Buſineſs* to *follow* it, lays out all he hath for the advancement of it, makes all other Affairs truckle to it, and lives upon the Gain of it. Thus doth a true Chriſtian in the Work of Religion; we have no Stocks of our own to trade with, but trade as Factors with our Maſter's Stock. The *Endowments* of the Mind, Reaſon, Wit, Learning, muſt be us'd in ſubſerviency to Religion; the *Enjoyments* of the World, Eſtate, Credit, Intereſt, Power, Preferment, muſt be improv'd for the Honour of Chriſt. The *Ordinances* of the Goſpel, and our *Opportunities* of attending them, Bibles, Miniſters, Sabbaths, Sacraments, muſt be improv'd for the End for which they were inſtituted, and Communion with God kept up by them; and the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit muſt be exerciſed: And this is Trading with our Talents.

(2.) They were *ſucceſsful*; they doubled their Stock, and in a little Time made *Cent. per Cent*. of it: He that had *Five Talents*, ſoon made them *other Five*. Trading with our Talents is not always ſucceſsful with others, but however, it ſhall be ſo to our ſelves, *Iſa*. 49. 4. *Note*, the Hand of the Diligent makes rich in Graces and Comforts, and Treaſures of good Works. There's a great deal to be got by Induſtry in Religion.

Obſerve, The Returns were in *Proportion* to the Receivings. (1.) From thoſe to whom God hath given *Five* Talents, he expects the Improvement of Five, and to *reap plentifully* where he *ſows plentifully*. The greater Gifts any have, the more Pains they ought to take, as thoſe muſt that have a large Stock to manage. (2.) From thoſe to whom he has given but *Two* Talents, he expects only the Improvement of *Two*; which may encourage thoſe who are plac'd in a lower and narrower Sphere of *Uſefulneſs*, if they lay out themſelves to do good according to the beſt of their Capacity and Opportunity, they ſhall be accepted, tho' they do not ſo much good as others.

2. The Third did ill, *v*. 18. *He that had received one Talent, went and hid his Lord's Money*. Tho' the Parable repreſents but *One in Three* unfaithful, yet in a Hiſtory that anſwers this *Parable*, we find the Diſproportion quite the other way; when *Ten Lepers* were *cleanſed*, *Nine* of the *Ten* hid the Talent, and only *One returned to give Thanks*, Luke 17. 17, 18. The *unfaithful* Servant was he that had but *One* Talent; doubtleſs there are many that have Five Talents, and bury them all; great Abilities, great Advantages, and yet do no good with them; But Chriſt would hint to us, (1.) That if he that had but One Talent, be reckon'd with thus for burying that one, much more will they be accounted Offenders, that have more, that have many, and bury them. If he that was but of ſmall Capacity, was caſt into utter Darkneſs, becauſe he did not improve what he had as he might have done; *of how much ſorer Puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy*, that tramples under foot the *greateſt Advantages*? (2.) That many Times thoſe who have leaſt to do for God, do leaſt of what they have to do. Some make it an Excuſe for their Lazineſs, that they have not the Opportunities of ſerving God that others have; and becauſe they *have not wherewithal* to do what they ſay *they would*, they *will not do* what we are ſure *they can*, and ſo ſit down and *do nothing*: It is really an Aggravation of their Sloth, that when they have but One Talent to take care about, they neglect that one.

He digg'd in the Earth, and hid the Talent, for fear it ſhould be ſtolen: He did not miſ-ſpend or miſ-employ it, did not embezzle it, or ſquander it away; but he *hid it*. *Money* is like *Muck*, (ſo my Lord *Bacon* us'd to ſay) good for nothing in the Heap, but it muſt be ſpread; yet 'tis an Evil we have often ſeen under the Sun, *Treaſure heaped together*, Jam. 5. 3. Eccl. 6. 1, 2. which doth good to no body. And ſo it is in Spiritual Gifts; many have them, and make no uſe of them, for the End for which they were given them. Thoſe that have Eſtates, and do not lay out in Works of Piety and Charity, that have Power and Intereſt, and do not with it promote Religion in the Places where they live; Miniſters that have Capacities and Opportunities of doing good, but do not *ſtir up the Gift that is in* them; are thoſe ſlothful Servants, that ſeek their own Things more than Chriſt's.

He hid his Lord's Money: Had it been *his own*, he might have done as he pleas'd; but whatever Abilities and Advantages we have, they are *not our own*; we are but Stewards of them, and muſt *give Account* to our Lord, whoſe Goods they are. 'Twas an Aggravation of his Slothfulneſs, that his Fellow-Servants were buſy, and ſucceſsful in Trading, and their Zeal ſhould have provok'd his. Are others active; and ſhall we be idle?

Thirdly, The Account of this Improvement, *v*. 19. (1.) The Account is deferr'd; 'tis not till *after a long Time* that they are reckon'd with: Not that the Maſter neglects his Affairs, or that God is *ſlack concerning his Promiſe*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. No, he is *ready to judge*, 1 Pet. 4. 5. but every Thing muſt be done in its Time and Order. (2.) Yet the Day of Account comes at laſt, *The Lord of thoſe Servants reckoneth with them*. *Note*, The Stewards of the manifold Grace of God muſt ſhortly *give Account of their Stewardſhip*: We muſt all be reckon'd with, what Good we have got to our own Souls, and what Good we have done to others, by the Advantages we have enjoy'd. See *Rom*. 14. 10, 11. Now here is,

(1.) The good Account of the faithful Servants: And there obſerve, 1. The Servants *giving up the Account*, v. 20, 22. *Lord, thou deliveredſt to me five Talents*, and to me *Two*; *Behold, I have gained Five Talents*, *Two* Talents *more*.

(1.) Chriſt's faithful Servants acknowledge with Thankfulneſs his *Vouchſafements* to them; *Lord, thou deliveredſt to me* ſuch and ſuch Things. *Note*, 1. It is good to keep a particular Account of our *Receivings* from God, to *remember what we have received*, that we may know what is expected from us, and may *render according to the Benefit*. 2. We muſt never look upon our *Improvements* but with a general mention of God's Favour to us, and the Honour he has put upon us, in intruſting us with *his Goods*, and that Grace which is the Spring and Fountain of all the Good that is in us, or is done by us. For the Truth is, the more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him for making uſe of us, and enabling us for his Service.

(2.) They produce, as an Evidence of their Faithfulneſs, what they have gained. *Note*, God's good Stewards have *ſomething to ſhew* for their Diligence: *Shew me thy Faith by thy Works*. He that is a good Man, *let him ſhew it*, Jam. 3. 13. If we be careful in our Spiritual Trade, it will ſoon be ſeen by us, and *our Works will follow us*, Rev. 14. 13. Not that the Saints will in the Great Day make mention of their own good Deeds; no, Chriſt will do that for them, *v*. 35. But it intimates, that they who faithfully improve their Talents, ſhall have *Boldneſs in the Day of Chriſt*, 1 Joh. 2. 28.—4. 17. And it is obſervable, that he that had but *Two* Talents, gave up his Account as chearfully as he that had *Five*: For our Comfort in the Day of Account will be according to our *Faithfulneſs*, not according to our *Uſefulneſs*; our *Sincerity*, not our Succeſs; according to the Uprightneſs of our Hearts, not according to the Degree of our Opportunities.

2. The Maſter's Acceptance and Approbation of their Account, *v*. 21, 23.

(1.) He *commended* them; *Well done good and faithful Servant*; *Note*, The Diligence and Integrity of thoſe who approve themſelves the good and faithful Servants of Jeſus Chriſt, will certainly be *found to Praiſe and Honour and Glory at his appearing*, 1 Pet. 1. 7. Thoſe that own and honour God now, he will own and honour them ſhortly. (1.) Their *Perſons* will be accepted; thou *good and faithful Servant*. He that *knows* the Integrity of his Servants now, will witneſs to it, in the Great Day, and they that are *found* faithful ſhall be *call'd* ſo. Perhaps they were cenſur'd by Men, as righteous overmuch, but Chriſt will give them their juſt Characters, of *Good* and *Faithful*. (2.) Their *Performances* will be accepted, *Well done*: Chriſt will call thoſe, and thoſe only, *good Servants* that have *done well*; for it is by patient continuance in *well-doing*, that we ſeek for this Glory and Honour; and if we *ſeek* we ſhall *find*; if we do that which is good, and do it *well*, we ſhall have *praiſe of the ſame*. Some Maſters are ſo *moroſe*, that they will not *commend* their Servants, tho' they do their Work *never ſo well*, 'tis thought enough not to *chide*, but Chriſt will commend his Servants that *do well*; whether their Praiſe be *of Men* or no, it is *of him*; and if we have the *good Word* of our Maſter, the Matter is not great what our Fellow-Servants ſay of us; if he ſaith *Well done*, we are happy, and it ſhould then be a ſmall thing to us to be judg'd of Men's Judgment; as on the contrary, not he that commendeth himſelf, or whom his Neighbours commend, is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

(2.) He *rewardeth* them: The faithful Servants of Chriſt ſhall not be put off with bare Commendations, no, all their Work and Labour of Love ſhall be *rewarded*.

Now this reward is here expreſſed two ways.

1. In one Expreſſion agreeable to the Parable, *Thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will make thee Ruler over many things*. 'Tis uſual in the Courts of Princes, and Families of Great Men, to advance thoſe to higher Offices, that have been faithful in lower. *Note*, Chriſt is a Maſter that will prefer his Servants, who acquit themſelves well. Chriſt has Honour in Store for thoſe that honour him; a Crown, 2 *Tim*. 4. 8. a Throne, *Rev*. 3. 21. a Kingdom, *Mat*. 25. 34. Here they are Beggars, in Heaven they ſhall be Rulers. The Upright ſhall have Dominion: Chriſt's Servants are all Princes.

Obſerve the Diſproportion between the *Work* and the *Reward*: They are but *few Things* in which the Saints are ſerviceable to the Glory of God, but many Things wherein they ſhall be glorified with God. What Charge we receive from God, what Work we do for God in this World is but little, very little, compar'd with the *Joy ſet before us*. Put together all our Services, all our Sufferings, all our Improvements, all the Good we do to others, all we get to our ſelves, and they are but a *few Things*, next nothing; not worthy to be compar'd, not fit to be nam'd the ſame Day with the Glory to be reveal'd.

2. In another Expreſſion which ſlips out of the Parable into the Thing ſignified by it; *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord*. *Note*, (1.) The State of the Bleſſed is a *State of Joy*; not only becauſe all *Tears* ſhall then be *wiped away*, but all the Springs of Comfort ſhall be open'd to them, and the Fountains of Joy broken up; where there's the Viſion and Fruition of God, a Perfection of Holineſs, and the Society of the Bleſſed, there cannot but be *Fulneſs of Joy*. (2.) This Joy is the *Joy of our Lord*; the Joy which he himſelf has purchaſed, and provided for them: The Joy of the *Redeemer*, bought with the *Sorrow* of the *Redeemer*. 'Tis the Joy which he himſelf is in the Poſſeſſion of, and which he had his Eye upon when he endur'd the *Croſs*, and deſpis'd the *Shame*, *Heb*. 12. 2. 'Tis the Joy which he himſelf is the Fountain and Centre of; 'tis the Joy of our Lord, for it is *Joy in the Lord*, who is our *exceeding Joy*. *Abraham* was not willing that the *Steward of his Houſe*, tho' *faithful*, ſhould be his *Heir*, *Gen*. 15. 23. But Chriſt admits his faithful Stewards into his own *Joy*, to be *Joint-Heirs with him*. (3.) Glorified Saints ſhall enter into this Joy, *i. e.* ſhall have a full and compleat Poſſeſſion of it; as the Heir, when he comes to Age, enters upon his Eſtate, as they that were ready went in to the Marriage-Feaſt. Here the Joy of our Lord *enters into* the Saints, in the Earneſt of the Spirit; ſhortly they ſhall *enter into* it, ſhall be in it to Eternity, as in their Element.

(2.) The bad Account of the *ſlothful* Servant. Obſerve,

1. His Apology for himſelf, *v*. 24, 25. Tho' he had received but *One* Talent, for that *One* he is call'd to Account. The Smalneſs of our Receiving will not excuſe us from Reckoning. None ſhall be call'd to an Account for more than they have received; but for what we have, we muſt all account.

Obſerve, 1. What he *confides in*: He comes to the Account with a deal of Aſſurance, relying on the Plea he had to put in, that he was able to ſay, *Lo, there thou haſt that is thine*: If I have not made it more, as the others have done, yet this I can ſay, I have not made it leſs. And this he thinks may ſerve to bring him off, if not with *Praiſe*, yet with *Safety*.

Note, Many a one goes very ſecurely to Judgment, preſuming upon the *Validity* of a Plea that will be over-rul'd as vain and frivilous. Slothful Profeſſors, that are afraid of doing too much for God, yet hope to come off as well as thoſe that take ſo much Pains in Religion. Thus *The Sluggard is wiſer in his own Conceit than ſeven Men that can render a Reaſon*, Prov. 26. 16. This Servant thought his Account would paſs well enough, becauſe he could ſay, *There thou haſt that is thine*: Lord, I was no Spend-thrift of my Eſtate, no Prodigal of my Time, no Profaner of my Sabbaths, no Oppoſer of good Miniſters, and good Preaching: Lord, I never ridicul'd my Bible, nor ſet my Wits on Work to banter Religion, nor abus'd my Power to perſecute any good Man: I never drown'd my Parts, nor waſted God's good Creatures in Drunkenneſs and Gluttony nor ever to my Knowledge did Injury to any body. Many that are called Chriſtians, build great Hopes for Heaven, upon their being able to make ſuch an Account; and yet all this amounts to no more, but, *there thou haſt that is thine*; as if no more were requir'd, or could be expected.

2. What he *confeſſeth*: He owns the burying of his Talent; *I hid thy Talent in the Earth*. He ſpeaks as if that were no great Fault; nay, as if he deſerv'd Praiſe for his Prudence, in putting it in a ſafe Place, and running no Hazards with it. *Note*, 'Tis common for People to make a very light matter of that which will be their Condemnation in the great Day. Or, if he was conſcious to himſelf that it was his Fault, it intimates how eaſily ſlothful Servants will be convicted in the Judgment; there will need no great ſearch for Proof, for *their own Tongues ſhall fall upon them*.

3. What he makes his Excuſe; *I knew that thou waſt a hard Man*, and *I was afraid*. Good Thoughts of God would beget Love, and that Love would make us diligent and faithful, but hard Thoughts of God beget Fear, and that Fear makes us ſlothful and unfaithful. His Excuſe ſpeaks,

1. *The Sentiments of an Enemy*; *I knew thee that thou* art an *hard Man*. This was like that wicked Saying of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, The *Way of the Lord is not equal*, Ezek. 18. 25. Thus his Defence is his Offence; *the fooliſhneſs of Man perverteth his way*, and then, as if that would mend the Matter, *his Heart fretteth againſt the Lord*. This is covering the Tranſgreſſion, as *Adam*, who implicitly laid the Fault on God himſelf, *the Woman which thou gaveſt me*. *Note*, Carnal Hearts are apt to conceive falſe and wicked Opinions concerning God, and with them to harden themſelves in their evil Ways. Obſerve how confidently he ſpeaks, *I knew thee to be ſo*: How could he know him to be ſo? *What Iniquity have we or our Fathers found in him*? Jer. 2. 5. wherein has he *wearied* us with his Work, or deceiv'd us in his Wages? *Mic*. 6. 3. Hath he *been a Wilderneſs to us, or a Land of Darkneſs*? Thus long God has govern'd the World, and may ask with more reaſon than *Samuel* himſelf could, *whom have I defrauded*? Or, *whom have I oppreſſed*? Doth not all the World know the contrary, that he is ſo far from being a *hard Maſter*, that the *Earth is full of his Goodneſs*? So far from *reaping where he ſowed not*, that he ſows a great deal where he reaps nothing, for he *cauſeth the Sun to ſhine, and his Rain to fall* upon the Evil and Unthankful, and *fills their Hearts with Food and Gladneſs*, who ſay to the Almighty, *Depart from us*. This Suggeſtion ſpeaks the common Reproach wicked People caſt upon God, as if all the Blame of their Sin and Ruin lay at his Door, for denying them his Grace; whereas it is certain, never any that faithfully improv'd the *common Grace they had*, periſhed for want of ſpecial Grace; nor can any ſhew what could in reaſon have been done more for an unfruitful Vineyard than God has done in it. God doth not demand Brick and deny Straw; no, whatever is required in the Covenant, is promiſed in the Covenant; ſo that if we periſh 'tis long of our ſelves.

2. The *Spirit of a Slave*; *I was afraid*. This *ill Affection* towards God aroſe from his *falſe Notions* of him; and nothing is more unworthy of God, nor more hinders our Duty to him, than *ſlaviſh Fear*: This has *Bondage* and *Torment*, and is directly oppoſite to that *entire Love* which the great Commandment requires. *Note*, Hard Thoughts of God drive us from, and cramp us in his Service: Thoſe who think it impoſſible to pleaſe him, and in vain to ſerve him, will do nothing to purpoſe in Religion.

2. His Lord's Anſwer to this Apology; His Plea will ſtand him in no ſtead, 'tis over-rul'd, nay, it is made to turn againſt him, and he is ſtruck ſpeechleſs with it, for here is his Conviction, and his Condemnation.

1. His *Conviction*, v. 26, 27. Two Things he is convicted of.

1. *Slothfulneſs*; Thou *wicked and ſlothful Servant*. *Note*, Slothful Servants are wicked Servants, and will be reckon'd with as ſuch by their Maſter; for he that is *ſlothful in his Work*, and neglects the Good that God has commanded, is *Brother to him that is a great Waſter*, by doing the Evil that God has forbidden, *Prov*. 11. 9. He that is careleſs in *God's Work* is near a-kin to him that is buſy in the *Devil's Work*; *Satis eſt mali nihil feciſſe boni*. Omiſſions are Sins, and muſt come into Judgment; *Slothfulneſs* makes way for *Wickedneſs*, all becomes *filthly*, for there's *none that doth good*, Pſal. 14. 3. When the Houſe is *empty*, the *unclean Spirit* takes *poſſeſſion*. Thoſe that are idle in the Affairs of their Souls, are *not only idle*, but ſomething worſe, 1 *Tim*. 5. 13. When Men ſleep, the Enemy ſows Tares.

2. *Self-contradiction*, v. 26, 27. *Thou kneweſt that I reap where I ſowed not*: *Thou oughteſt therefore to have put my Money to the Exchangers*. *Note*, The hard Thoughts which Sinners have of God, tho' Falſe and Unjuſt, will be ſo far from juſtifying their Wickedneſs and Slothfulneſs, that they will rather aggravate, and add to their Guilt. Three ways this may be taken; (1.) Suppoſe I had been ſo hard a Maſter, ſhould'ſt not thou *therefore* have been the more diligent and careful to pleaſe me, if not *for Love*, yet *for Fear*, and for that Reaſon *thou oughteſt* to have minded thy Work: If our God be a *conſuming Fire*, in conſideration of that let us ſtudy how to ſerve him. (2.) Or thus; If thou didſt think me to be *a hard Maſter*, and therefore *durſt not* trade with the Money thy ſelf, for fear of loſing by it, and being made to ſtand to the loſs, yet thou mighteſt have put in into the Hands of the *Exchangers*, or *Goldſmiths*, might have brought it into the Bank, and then at my coming, if I could not have had the *greater* Improvement, by *Trade* and *Merchandiſe* (as of the other Talents) yet I might have had the *leſſer* Improvement of bare

Intereſt, and ſhould have received *my own with Uſury*, which it ſeems was a common Practice at that Time, and not diſallow'd by our Saviour. *Note*, If we *could not*, or *durſt not* do what *we would*, yet that Excuſe will not ſerve, when it will be made to appear, that we *did not do* what we *could* and *durſt*. If we could not find in our Hearts to venture upon more difficult and hazardous Services, yet will that juſtify us in baulking thoſe that were more ſafe and eaſy? Something is better than nothing; if we fail of ſhewing our Courage in bold Enterprizes, yet we muſt not fail to teſtify our Good-will in honeſt Endeavours, and our Maſter will not *deſpiſe the Day of ſmall Things*. Or thus, (3.) Suppoſe I did reap *where I ſowed not*, yet that's nothing to thee, for I had *ſowed upon thee*, and the Talent was *my Money* which thou waſt entruſted with, not only to *keep*, but to *improve*. *Note*, In the Day of Account wicked and ſlothful Servants will be left quite without Excuſe; frivolous Pleas will be overrul'd, and every Mouth will be ſtopp'd; and thoſe who now ſtand ſo much upon their own Juſtification, will not have one Word to ſay for themſelves.

2. His Condemnation; The ſlothful Servant is ſentenc'd:

1. To be *deprived of his Talent*, *v.* 28, 29. *Take therefore the Talent from him*. The Talents were firſt diſpos'd of by the Maſter, as an abſolute *Owner*; but this was now diſpos'd of by him, as a *Judge*; he takes it from the unfaithful Servant to puniſh him, and gives it to him that was eminently faithful to reward him. And the Meaning of this Part of the Parable we have in the Reaſon of the Sentence, *v.* 29. *To every one that hath ſhall be given*. This may be apply'd (1.) To the *Bleſſings of this Life*, worldly Wealth and Poſſeſſions. Theſe we are entruſted with to be us'd for the Glory of God, and the Good of thoſe about us: Now *he that hath* theſe Things, and uſeth them for theſe Ends, he *ſhall have Abundance*, perhaps abundance of the Things themſelves; however, abundance of Comfort in them, and of better Things; but *from him that hath not*, i. e. that hath theſe Things, as if he had them not, had not Power to eat of them, or to do Good with them (*Avaro deeſt, tam quod habet, quam quod non habet*) *they ſhall be taken away*. *Solomon* explains this, *Prov.* 11. 24. *There is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to Poverty*. Giving to the Poor is trading with what we have, and the Returns will be rich, 'twill multiply the Meal in the Barrel, and the Oil in the Cruſe; but thoſe that are ſordid, and niggardly, and uncharitable, will find that thoſe Riches which are ſo got *periſh by evil Travel*, Eccl. 5. 13, 14. Sometimes Providence ſtrangely transfers Eſtates from thoſe that do no Good with them, to thoſe that do; they are *gathered for him* that will *pity the Poor*, Prov. 28. 8. See *Prov.* 13. 22. *Job* 27. 16, 17. *Eccl.* 2. 26. (2.) We may apply it to the *Means of Grace*: They who are diligent in improving the Opportunities they have, God will enlarge them, will *ſet before them an open Door*, Rev. 3. 8. But they who know not the Day of their Viſitation, ſhall have the Things that belong to their Peace *hid from their Eyes*. For Proof of this, *go ſee what God did to Shiloh*, Jer. 7. 12. (3.) We may apply it to the *common Gifts of the Spirit*. He that hath theſe, and doth Good with them, ſhall have *Abundance*; theſe Gifts improve by Exerciſe, and *brighten* by being *us'd*: The more we do, the more we may do in Religion; but thoſe who *ſtir not up the Gift* that is in them, who do not exert themſelves according to their Capacity, their Gifts ruſt and decay, and go out like a *neglected* Fire. *From him that has not* a living Principle of Grace in his Soul, *ſhall be taken away* the *common Gifts* which he hath, as the Lamps of the fooliſh Virgins *went out* for want of *Oil*, v. 8. Thus the Arm of the *Idol-Shepherd*, which he had ſluggiſhly folded up in his Boſom, comes to be *dried up*; and his *Right Eye*, which he had careleſly or wilfully ſhut, becomes *utterly darkned*, as it is threaten'd, *Zech.* 11. 17.

2. He is ſentenc'd to be *caſt into utter Darkneſs*, v. 30. Here, 1. His Character is, that of an *unprofitable Servant*. *Note*, Slothful Servants will be reckon'd with as *unprofitable Servants*, who do nothing to the Purpoſe of their coming into the World, nothing to anſwer the End of their Birth or Baptiſm, who are no way ſerviceable to the Glory of God, the Good of others, or the Salvation of their own Souls. A *Slothful Servant* is a wither'd Member in the Body, a barren Tree in the Vineyard, an idle Drone in the Hive, is good for nothing. In one Senſe we are all *unprofitable Servants*, Luke 17. 10. we cannot *profit God*, John 22. 2. But to others, and to our ſelves, it is required that we be *profitable*; if we be not, Chriſt will not own us as his Servants; it is not enough not to do Hurt, but we muſt *do Good*, muſt bring forth Fruit; and tho' thereby God is not *profited*, yet he is *glorified*, John 15. 8.

2. His Doom is to be *caſt into utter Darkneſs*. Here, as in what was ſaid to the faithful Servants, our Saviour ſlides inſenſibly out of the Parable into the Thing intended by it, and it ſerves as a Key to the whole; for *utter Darkneſs, where there is weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*, is in Chriſt's Diſcourſes the common Periphraſis of the Miſeries of the Damned in Hell. Their State is, (1.) Very *Diſmal*; it is the *outer Darkneſs*. Darkneſs is uncomfortable and frightful; 'twas one of the Plagues of *Egypt*: In Hell there are *Chains of Darkneſs*, 2 Pet. 2. 4. In the Dark *no Man can Work*, a fit Puniſhment for a *ſlothful* Servant. It is *utter Darkneſs*, *out* from the Light of Heaven, *out* from the Joy of their Lord, into which the faithful Servants were admitted; *out* from the Feaſt. Compare *Mat.* 18. 12.—22. 13. (2.) Very *Doleful*; there is *Weeping*, which ſpeaks great Sorrow; and *gnaſhing of Teeth*, which ſpeaks great Vexation and Indignation. This will be the Portion of the ſlothful Servant.

31 When the Son of man ſhall come in his glory,
and all the holy angels with him, then ſhall he ſit upon
the throne of his glory. 32 And before him ſhall be
gathered all nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one
from another, as a ſhepherd divideth his ſheep from
the goats: 33 And he ſhall ſet the ſheep on his right
hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then ſhall the
King ſay unto them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed
of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for
you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was
an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirſty,
and ye gave me drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took
me in: 36 Naked, and ye cloathed me: I was ſick,
and ye viſited me: I was in priſon, and ye came unto
me. 37 Then ſhall the righteous anſwer him, ſaying,
Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred, and fed
thee? or thirſty, and gave *thee* drink? 38 When ſaw
we thee a ſtranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and
cloathed *thee?* 39 Or when ſaw we thee ſick, or in
priſon, and came unto thee? 40 And the king ſhall
anſwer, and ſay unto them, Verily I ſay unto you,
In as much as ye have done *it* unto one of the leaſt
of theſe my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.
41 Then ſhall he ſay alſo unto them on the left hand,
Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared
for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was an
hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirſty,
and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a ſtranger, and
ye took me not in: naked, and ye cloathed me not:
ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. 44 Then
ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying, Lord, when ſaw
we thee an hungred, or athirſt, or a ſtranger, or
naked, or ſick, or in priſon, and did not miniſter unto
thee? 45 Then ſhall he anſwer them, ſaying,
Verily I ſay unto you, In as much as ye did it not
to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me.
46 And theſe ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment:
but the righteous into life eternal.

We have here a Deſcription of the Proceſs of the *laſt Judgment* in the Great Day: Some Paſſages there are in it that are Parabolical, as the ſeparating between the Sheep and the Goats, and the Dialogue between the Judge and the Perſon judg'd; but there is no Thread of Similitude carry'd thro' the Diſcourſe, and therefore 'tis rather to be call'd a Draught or Delineation of the final Judgment, than a *Parable*; it is as it were the *Reddition* of the former *Parables*. And here we have,

Firſt, The placing of the *Judge* upon the *Judgment-Seat*, v. 30. *When the Son of Man ſhall come*. Obſerve here,

1. That there is a *Judgment to come*, in which every Man ſhall be determin'd to a State of everlaſting Happineſs or Miſery in the World of *Recompence* and *Retribution*, according to what he did in this World of Trial and Probation, which is to be judg'd of by the Rule of *the everlaſting Goſpel*.

2. The Adminiſtration of the Judgment of the Great Day is committed to the *Son of Man*, for by him God will *judge the World*, Acts 17. 31. and to him *all Judgment is committed*, and therefore the Judgment of *that Day*, which is the Centre of all. Here, as elſewhere, when the laſt Judgment is ſpoken of, Chriſt is call'd the *Son of Man*, becauſe he is to judge the Sons of Men; and being himſelf of the ſame Nature, he is the more unexceptionable; and becauſe his wonderful Condeſcenſion to take upon him our Nature, and to become the Son of Man, will be recompens'd by his Exaltation in that Day, and an Honour put upon the Human Nature.

3. Chriſt's appearing to judge the World will be ſplendid and glorious. *Agrippa* and *Bernice* came to the Judgment-Seat with *great Pomp*, Acts 25. 3. but that was (as the original Word is) *great Fancy*; Chriſt will come to the Judgment-Seat in *real Glory*: The Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhall then ſhine in his Meridian Luſtre, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth ſhall *ſhew the Riches of his glorious Kingdom*, and the *Honours of his Excellent Majeſty*; and all the World ſhall *ſee* what the Saints only do now believe, that he is the *Brightneſs of his Father's Glory*; he ſhall come not only in the *Glory of his Father*, but in *his own Glory*, as Mediator: His *firſt coming* was under a black Cloud of Obſcurity, his ſecond will be in a bright Cloud of Glory. The Aſſurance Chriſt gave his Diſciples of his future Glory, might help to take off the Offence of the Croſs, and his approaching Diſgrace and Suffering.

4. When Chriſt comes in his Glory to judge the World, he will *bring all his Holy Angels with him*. This glorious Perſon will have a glorious Retinue, his holy Myriads, who will be not only his Attendants, but Miniſters of his Juſtice; they ſhall come with him both for *State* and *Service*. They muſt come to call the Court, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 16. to gather the Elect, *Matt.* 24. 31. to bundle the

Tares, *Matt.* 13. 40. to be Witneſſes of the Saints Glory, *Luke* 12. 8. of Sinners Miſery, *Rev.* 19. 10.

5. He will then *ſit upon the Throne of his Glory*; He is now ſet down with the Father upon his Throne, and it is a *Throne of Grace*, to which we may *come boldly*; 'tis a Throne *of Government*, the Throne of his Father *David*; he is a Prieſt *upon that Throne*, but then he will ſit upon the *Throne of Glory*, the Throne of Judgment. See *Dan.* 7. 9, 10. *Solomon*'s Throne, tho' there was not its like in any Kingdom, was but a Dunghil to it. Chriſt, in the Days of his Fleſh, was arraign'd as a Priſoner at the Bar; but at his Second Coming he will ſit as a Judge upon the Bench.

Secondly, The *appearing* of all the *Children of Men* before him, *v.* 32. *Before him ſhall be gather'd all Nations.* *Note*, The Judgment of the Great Day will be a general Judgment. All muſt be ſummon'd before Chriſt's Tribunal; all of *every Age* of the World, from the Beginning to the End of Time; all of *every Place* on Earth, even from the remoteſt Corners of the World, moſt obſcure, and diſtant from each other; *all Nations*, all thoſe Nations of Men that are *made of one Blood*, to *dwell on all the Face of the Earth*.

Thirdly, The Diſtinction that will then be made between the Precious and the Vile; *he ſhall ſeparate them one from another*, as the Tares and Wheat are ſeparated at the Harveſt, the good Fiſh and bad at the Shore, the Corn and Chaff in the Floor. Wicked and Godly here dwell together in the ſame Kingdoms, Cities, Churches, Families, and are not certainly diſtinguiſhable one from another; ſuch are the Infirmities of Saints, ſuch the Hypocriſies of Sinners, and one Event to both; but in that Day they will be ſeparated, and parted for ever, *Then ſhall ye return and diſcern between the Righteous and the Wicked*, Mal. 3. 18. They cannot ſeparate themſelves one from another in this World, 1 *Cor.* 5. 10. nor can any one elſe ſeparate them, *Matt.* 13. 29. But *the Lord knows them that are his, and he can ſeparate them.* This Separation will be ſo exact, that the moſt inconſiderable Saints ſhall not be loſt in the Crowd of Sinners, nor the moſt plauſible Sinner hid in the Crowd of Saints, *Pſal.* 1. 5. but every one ſhall *go to his own Place*.

This is compar'd to a Shepherd's *dividing between the Sheep and the Goats*; 'tis taken from *Ezek.* 34. 17. *Behold I judge between Cattle and Cattle.* *Note*, 1. Jeſus Chriſt is the Great Shepherd, he now feeds his Flock like a Shepherd, and will ſhortly diſtinguiſh between thoſe that are his, and thoſe that are not, as *Laban* divided his Sheep from *Jacob*'s, and ſet *three Days Journey* between them, *Gen.* 30. 35, 36. 2. The Godly are like Sheep, Innocent, Mild, Patient, Uſeful: The Wicked are like *Goats*, a baſer Kind of Animal, unſavoury and unruly. Theſe Sheep and Goats are here feeding all Day in the ſame Paſture, but will be coted at Night in different Folds.

Being thus divided, he will ſet the *Sheep on his Right Hand*, and the *Goats on his Left*, v. 33. Chriſt puts Honour upon the Godly, as we ſhew Reſpect to thoſe we ſet on our Right Hand, but the Wicked ſhall riſe to *everlaſting Shame*, Dan. 12. 2. 'Tis not ſaid, He ſhall put the Rich on his Right Hand, and the Poor on his Left; the Learned and Noble on his Right Hand, and the Unlearned and Deſpiſed on his Left; but the Godly *on his Right Hand*, and the Wicked *on his Left*; all other Diviſions and Subdiviſions will then be aboliſhed; but the great Diſtinction of Men into Saints and Sinners, Sanctified and Unſanctified, will remain for ever, and Men's Eternal State will be determined by it. The Wicked took up with *Left-Hand* Bleſſings, *Riches and Honour*, and ſo ſhall their Doom be.

Fourthly, The Proceſs of the Judgment concerning each of theſe; 1. Concerning the Godly, *on the Right Hand.* Their Cauſe muſt be firſt diſpatch'd, that they may be Aſſeſſors with Chriſt in the Judgment of the Wicked, whoſe Miſery will be aggravated by their ſeeing *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* admitted into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, Luke 13. 28. Obſerve here,

(1.) The *Glory* conferr'd upon them; the Sentence by which they ſhall be not only acquitted, but preferr'd and rewarded, *v.* 34. *The King ſhall ſay unto them.* He that was *the Shepherd*, which ſpeaks the Care and Tenderneſs wherewith he will make this Diſquiſition, is here *the King*, which ſpeaks the Authority wherewith he will then pronounce the Sentence; where the Word of this King is, there is Power. Here are two Things in this Sentence;

1. The *acknowledging* of the Saints to be the *Bleſſed of the Lord*; *Come ye Bleſſed of my Father.* (1.) He pronounceth them *Bleſſed*, and his ſaying they are *Bleſſed*, makes them ſo; the Law curſeth them for their many Diſcontinuances, but Chriſt having redeemed them from the Curſe of the Law, and purchaſed a Bleſſing *for them*, commands a Bleſſing *on them.* (2.) *Bleſſed of his Father*, reproached and curſed by the World, but bleſſed of God: As the Spirit glorifies the Son, *Joh.* 16. 14. ſo the Son glorifies the Father, by referring the Salvation of the Saints to him as the *firſt Cauſe*; all our Bleſſings in Heavenly Things flow to us from God, as the *Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Eph. 1. 3. (3.) He calls them *to come*; this come is in effect *welcome*, ten thouſand *welcomes* to the *Bleſſed of my Father*; Come *to me*, come to be for ever *with me*; you that follow'd me, *bearing the Croſs*, now come along with me *wearing the Crown.* The *Bleſſed of my Father* are the *Beloved of my Soul*, that have been too long at a Diſtance from me; come now, come into *my Boſom*, come into *my Arms*, come into my deareſt Embraces. O with what Joy will this fill the Hearts of the Saints in that Day! We now come boldly to the *Throne of Grace*, but we ſhall then come boldly to the *Throne of Glory*; and this Word holds *out the Golden Sceptre*, with an Aſſurance that our Requeſt ſhall be granted to more than *the Half of the Kingdom*: Now the Spirit ſaith, *Come* in the Word, and the Bride ſaith, Come in Prayer, and the Reſult hereof is a ſweet Communion, but the Perfection of Bliſs will be when *the King ſhall ſay*, *Come*.

2. The *Admiſſion* of the Saints into the Bleſſedneſs and Kingdom of the Father; *Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.*

(1.) The *Happineſs* they ſhall be poſſeſs'd of is very *rich*; we are told what it is by him who had reaſon to know it, having purchaſed it for them, and poſſeſs'd it himſelf.

1. It is a *Kingdom*, which is reckon'd the moſt valuable Poſſeſſion on Earth, and includes the greateſt Wealth and Honour. Thoſe that inherit Kingdoms wear all the Glories of the Crown, enjoy all the Pleaſures of the Court, and command all the peculiar *Treaſures of the Provinces*; yet this is but a faint Reſemblance of the Felicities of the Saints in Heaven. They that here are Beggars, Priſoners, accounted as the Off-ſcouring of all Things, ſhall then *inherit a Kingdom*, Pſal. 113. 7. Rev. 2. 26, 27.

2. It is a Kingdom prepared: The Happineſs muſt needs be great, for it is the Product of the Divine Counſels. *Note*, There is great *Preparation made* for the Entertainment of the Saints in the Kingdom of Glory. The Father deſign'd it for them in his Thoughts of Love, and provided it for them in the Greatneſs of his Wiſdom and Power. The Son purchaſed it for them, and is enter'd as the *Fore-runner to prepare a Place*, John 14. 2. And the bleſſed Spirit, in preparing them for the Kingdom, in effect is preparing it for them.

3. It is prepar'd *for them.* This ſpeaks (1.) The Suitableneſs of this Happineſs, it is in all Points adapted to the Nature of a Soul, and to the new Nature of a *ſanctified* Soul. (2.) Their Property and Intereſt in it. 'Tis *prepar'd* on purpoſe *for them*, not only for *ſuch as you*, but for you, you by Name, you perſonally and particularly, who were choſen to Salvation *through Sanctification.*

4. It is prepar'd *from the Foundation of the World.* This Happineſs was deſign'd for the Saints, and they for it, before Time began, from all Eternity, *Eph.* 1. 4. The End which is *laſt* in Execution, is *firſt* in Intention; infinite Wiſdom had an Eye to the Eternal Glorification of the Saints from the firſt founding of the Creation; *All Things are for your Sakes*, 2 Cor. 4. 15. or, it notes the Preparation of the Place of this Happineſs, which is to be the Seat and Habitation of the Bleſſed in the very Beginning of the Work of Creation, *Gen.* 1. 1. There in the Heaven of Heavens, the Morning Stars were *ſinging together*, when the *Foundations of the Earth were faſtned*, Job 38. 4, 6, 7.

(2.) The *Tenure* by which they ſhall *hold* and *poſſeſs* it is very good, they ſhall *come* and *inherit it*; what we come to by Inheritance, is not got by any Procurement of our own, but purely as the Lawyers expreſs it, *by the Act of God.* 'Tis God that *makes Heirs*, Heirs of Heaven. We come to an Inheritance by virtue of our *Sonſhip*, our *Adoption*; if Children, *then Heirs*: A Title by Inheritance is the ſweeteſt and ſureſt Title, it alludes to Poſſeſſions in the Land of *Canaan*, which paſs'd by Inheritance, and would not be alienated longer than to the Year of *Jubilee*: Thus is the Heavenly Inheritance indefeaſible, and unalienable. Saints in this World are as *Heirs under Age*, tutor'd and govern'd till the Time appointed of the Father, *Gal.* 4. 1. and then they ſhall be put in *full Poſſeſſion* of that which now thro' Grace they have a Title to, Come and *inherit it*.

(2.) The *Ground* of this, *v.* 35, 36. *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat.* We cannot hence infer that any good Works of ours merit the Happineſs of Heaven, by any intrinſick Worth or Excellency in them, our Goodneſs extendeth not unto God; but it is plain that Jeſus Chriſt will *judge* the World by the ſame Rule by which he *governs* it, and therefore will reward thoſe that have been *obedient* to that Law, and mention will be made of their Obedience, not as their *Title*, but as their *Evidence* of an Intereſt in Chriſt, and his Purchaſe. This Happineſs will be adjudg'd to obedient Believers, not upon a *Quantum meruit*, which ſuppoſeth a Proportion between the *Work* and the *Reward*, but upon the *Promiſe* of God *purchaſed* by Jeſus Chriſt, and the Benefit of it ſecur'd under certain Proviſo's and Limitations; and 'tis the Purchaſe and Promiſe that gives the Title, the Obedience is only the Qualification of the Perſon deſign'd. *An Eſtate* made by Deed or Will *upon Condition*, when the Condition is perform'd according to the true Intent of the Donor or Teſtator, becomes *Abſolute*; and then tho' the Title be built purely upon the Deed or Will, yet the *performing of the Condition* muſt be *given in Evidence*; and ſo it comes in here, for Chriſt is the *Author of Eternal Salvation to thoſe only that obey him*, and who *patiently continue in well doing*.

Now the good Works here mention'd are ſuch as we commonly call Works of *Charity to the Poor*; not but that many will be found on the Right Hand who never were in a Capacity to feed the Hungry, or cloath the Naked, but were themſelves fed and cloathed by the Charity of others; but one Inſtance of ſincere Obedience is put for all the reſt, and it teaches us this in general, That Faith working by Love is all in all in Chriſtianity; *Shew me thy Faith by thy Works*: and nothing will abound to a good Account hereafter but the Fruits of Righteouſneſs in a good Converſation now. The good Works here deſcrib'd do imply three things, which muſt be found in all that are ſav'd.

1. *Self-Denial*, and *Contempt of the World*, reckoning the Things of the World no further *good Things*, than as we are enabled to do Good with them; and thoſe who have not wherewithal to do Good, muſt ſhew the ſame Diſpoſition by being *contentedly*, and *chearfully* poor. Thoſe are fit for Heaven that are mortified to the Earth.

2. *Love to our Brethren*, which is the Second great Commandment, the fulfilling of the Law, and an excellent Preparative for the World of everlaſting Love. We muſt give Proof of this Love by our Readineſs to *do Good*, and to communicate; *good Wiſhes* are but Mockeries without *good Works*, Jam. 2. 15, 16. 1 John 3. 17. Thoſe that

have not to give, muſt ſhew the ſame Diſpoſition ſome other way.

3. A *believing Regard to Jeſus Chriſt.* That which is here rewarded, is their Relieving the Poor for Chriſt's Sake, out of Love to him, and with an Eye to him. This puts an Excellency upon the *good Work,* when in it *we ſerve the Lord Chriſt*; which thoſe may do that *work for their own Living,* as well as thoſe that help to *keep others alive.* See *Eph.* 6. 5, 6, 7. Thoſe *good Works* ſhall then be accepted, which are done *in the Name of the Lord Jeſus,* Col. 3. 17.

I was hungry; *i. e.* my Diſciples and Followers *were ſo,* either by the Perſecutions of Enemies for Well-doing, or by the common Diſpenſations of Providence; for in theſe Things there is one Event to the Righteous and Wicked; *and you gave them Meat. Note,* 1. Providence doth ſo variouſly order and diſpoſe of the Circumſtances of his People in this World, as that while ſome are in a Condition to *give Relief,* others *need it.* 'Tis no new Thing for thoſe that are feaſted with the Dainties of Heaven, to be *hungry* and *thirſty,* and to want *daily Food*; for thoſe that are at Home in God, to be *Strangers in a ſtrange* Land; for thoſe that have put on Chriſt, to want Cloaths to keep them warm; for thoſe that have healthful Souls, to have ſickly Bodies; and for thoſe to be *in Priſon,* that Chriſt has *made free.* 2. Works of Charity and Beneficence, according as our Ability is, are neceſſary to Salvation, and there will be more Streſs laid upon them in the Judgment of the Great Day, than is commonly imagin'd: Theſe muſt be the Proofs of our Love, and of our profeſs'd Subjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 9. 13. But they that ſhew no Mercy, ſhall have *Judgment without Mercy.*

Now this Reaſon is modeſtly *excepted againſt* by the Righteous, but is *explain'd* by the Judge himſelf.

1. It is *queſtion'd* by the *Righteous,* v. 37, 38, 39, not as if they were loth to inherit the Kingdom, or were aſham'd of their good Deeds, or had not the Teſtimony of their own *Conſciences* concerning them: But, (1.) The Expreſſions are Parabolical, deſign'd to introduce and impreſs theſe great Truths, That Chriſt has a mighty Regard to Works of Charity, and is eſpecially pleas'd with Kindneſſes done to his People for his Sake. Or, (2.) They ſpeak the humble Admiration which glorified Saints will be fill'd with, to find ſuch poor and worthleſs Services as theirs are, ſo highly celebrated, and richly rewarded. *Lord, when ſaw we thee a hungred, and fed thee? Note,* Gracious Souls are apt to think *meanly* of their own good Deeds; eſpecially as *unworthy to be compar'd with the Glory that ſhall be reveal'd.* Far from this is the Temper of thoſe, who ſaid, *Wherefore have we faſted, and thou ſeeſt not?* Iſa. 58. 3. Saints in Heaven will wonder what brought them thither, and that God ſhould *ſo regard* them and their Services. It even put *Nathaniel to the Bluſh,* to hear Chriſt's *Encomium* of him; *Whence knoweſt thou me?* John 1. 47, 48. See *Epheſ.* 3. 20. *When ſaw we thee a hungred?* We have ſeen the Poor in Diſtreſs many a Time, but *when ſaw we thee? Note,* Chriſt is more among us than we *think he is: Surely the Lord is in this Place,* by his Word, his Ordinances, his Miniſters, his Spirit, yea, and *his Poor,* and *we know it not: When thou waſt under the Fig-tree, I ſaw thee,* John 1. 48.

2. It is *explain'd* by the Judge himſelf, *v.* 40. *Inaſmuch as you have done it to theſe my Brethren,* to the *leaſt,* to *one* of the leaſt of them, *ye have done it unto me.* The good Works of the Saints, when they are produc'd in the great Day, (1.) ſhall *all* be remember'd, and not *the leaſt,* not *one of the leaſt* over-look'd; no, not a *Cup of cold Water.* (2.) They ſhall be interpreted moſt to their Advantage, and the beſt Conſtruction that can be put upon them. As Chriſt *makes the beſt* of their Infirmities, ſo he *makes the moſt* of their Services.

We ſee what Recompence Chriſt has for thoſe that *fed the Hungry,* and *cloath the Naked*; but what will become of the Godly Poor that had not wherewithal to do ſo? Muſt they be ſhut out? No; (1.) Chriſt will own them, even the leaſt of them, as *his Brethren*; he will not be aſham'd, nor think it any Diſparagement to him to *call them Brethren,* Heb. 2. 11. In the Height of his Glory, he will not diſown his poor Relations: *Lazarus* is there laid in his Boſom, as a Friend, as a Brother. Thus he will *confeſs* them, *Mat.* 10. 31. (2.) He will take the Kindneſſes done to them, as done to himſelf; *Ye have done it to me*: Which ſhews a Reſpect to the Poor that were reliev'd, as well as to the Rich that did relieve them. *Note,* Chriſt eſpouſeth his People's Cauſe, and intereſts himſelf in their Intereſts, and reckons himſelf receiv'd, and lov'd, and own'd in them. If *Chriſt* himſelf were among us in Poverty, how readily would we relieve him? In Priſon, how frequently would we viſit him? We are ready to envy the Honour they had, who *miniſter'd to him of their Subſtance,* Luke 8. 3. Where-ever poor Saints and poor Miniſters are, there Chriſt is ready to receive our Kindneſſes in them, and they ſhall be put to his Account.

2. Here's the Proceſs concerning *the Wicked,* thoſe on the *Left-hand*: And in that we have,

1. The Sentence paſs'd upon them, *v.* 41. 'Twas a Diſgrace to be ſet on the Left-hand; but that's not the worſt of it, he ſhall ſay to them, *Depart from me, ye Curſed.* Every Word has Terror in it; like that of the Trumpet at *Mount Sinai,* waxing *louder and louder*; every Accent more and more *doleful,* and *excluſive* of Comfort.

(1.) To be ſo *near* to Chriſt, was ſome Satisfaction, tho' under his Frowns; but that will not be allow'd, *Depart from me.* In this World they were often call'd to come to Chriſt, to come for Life and Reſt, but they turn'd a deaf Ear to his Calls; juſtly therefore are they bid to depart from Chriſt, that would not come to him. *Depart from me* the Fountain of all Good, from me *the Saviour,* and therefore from all Hope of *Salvation*: I'll never have any thing more to ſay to you, or do with you. Here they ſaid to the Almighty, *Depart from us*; then he will *chuſe their Deluſions,* and ſay to them, *Depart from me. Note,* It is the Hell of Hell to depart from Chriſt.

(2.) If they muſt *depart,* and depart *from Chriſt,* might not they be diſmiſs'd with a Bleſſing; with one kind and compaſſionate Word at leaſt? No; *Depart, ye Curſed.* They that would not come to *Chriſt* to inherit a Bleſſing, muſt depart from him under the Burthen of a *Curſe,* that Curſe of the Law on every one that breaks it, *Gal.* 3. 10. *As they loved Curſing,* ſo ſhall it *come unto them.* But obſerve, The Righteous are call'd *the Bleſſed of my Father*; for their Bleſſedneſs is owing purely to the Grace of God, and his Bleſſing; but the Wicked are call'd only, *ye Curſed,* for their Damnation is of themſelves. Hath God ſold them? No, they have *ſold themſelves,* have laid themſelves under the *Curſe, Iſa.* 50. 1.

(3.) If they muſt *depart,* and depart *with a Curſe,* may they not go into ſome Place of Eaſe and Reſt? Will it not be Miſery enough for them to bewail their Loſs? No, there is a Puniſhment of *Senſe,* as well as *Loſs*; they muſt depart *into Fire, i. e.* into a *Torment* as grievous as that of Fire is to the Body, and much more. This *Fire* is the Wrath of the Eternal God, faſtening upon the guilty Souls and Conſciences of Sinners, that have made themſelves Fuel for it. Our God is *a conſuming Fire,* and Sinners fall immediately *into his Hands,* Heb. 10. 31. Rom. 2. 8, 9.

(4.) If *into Fire,* may it not be ſome light or gentle *Fire?* No, it is *prepared Fire*; 'tis a Torment *ordained of old,* Iſa. 30. 33. The Damnation of Sinners is oft ſpoken of as an Act of the Divine Power; He is *able to caſt into Hell.* In the *Veſſels of Wrath* he makes *his Power known*; it is a Deſtruction from the *Preſence of the Lord,* and from *the Glory of his Power.* In it ſhall be ſeen what a provok'd God can do, to make a provoking Creature miſerable.

(5.) If into *Fire, prepared Fire,* O let it be but of ſhort Continuance; let them but paſs thro' Fire. No, the *Fire of God's Wrath* will be an *Everlaſting Fire*; a Fire that, faſtening and preying upon *immortal* Souls, can never go out for want of Fuel; and being kindled and kept burning by the Wrath of an immortal God, can never go out for want of being blown and ſtirr'd up; and the *Streams of Mercy* and *Grace* being for ever excluded, there is nothing to extinguiſh it. If a Drop of Water be deny'd to cool the Tongue, Buckets of Water will never be granted to quench this Flame.

(6.) If they muſt be doom'd to ſuch a State of endleſs Miſery, yet may they not have ſome *good Company* there? No, none but *the Devil and his Angels,* their *ſworn* Enemies, that help'd to bring them to this Miſery, and will triumph over them in it. They ſerv'd the Devil while they liv'd, and therefore are juſtly ſentenc'd to be *where he is,* as thoſe that ſerv'd Chriſt, are taken to be with him where he is. 'Tis terrible to lye in a Houſe haunted with Devils; what will it be then to be Companions with them for ever? Obſerve here, (1.) Chriſt intimates, that there is one that is the *Prince of the Devils,* the Ring-leader of the Rebellion; and the reſt are as *his Angels,* his *Meſſengers,* by whoſe Agency he ſupports his Kingdom. Chriſt and his Angels will in that Day triumph over the Dragon and his, *Rev.* 12. 7. (2.) The Fire is ſaid to be *prepar'd,* not primarily for the Wicked, as the Kingdom is prepar'd *for the Righteous*; but 'twas originally intended for the *Devil and his Angels.* If Sinners make themſelves *Aſſociates* with Satan, by indulging their *Luſts,* they may thank themſelves if they become Sharers in that Miſery which was prepar'd for him and his *Aſſociates. Calvin* notes upon this, That therefore the Torment of the *Damned* is ſaid to be *prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels,* to cut off all Hope of eſcaping it. The Devil and his Angels are already made Priſoners in that Pit; and can Worms of the Earth think to eſcape?

2. The Reaſon of this Sentence aſſign'd. God's Judgments are all juſt, and he will be juſtified in them: He is *Judge himſelf,* and therefore the *Heavens ſhall declare his Righteouſneſs.*

Now, 1. All that is charg'd upon them, on which the Sentence is grounded, is *Omiſſion*: As before, the Servant was condemn'd not for *waſting* his Talent, but for *burying it*; ſo here, he doth not ſay, I was *hungry* and *thirſty,* for you took my Meat and Drink from me; I was a *Stranger,* for you baniſh'd me; *Naked,* for you ſtript me; *in Priſon,* for you laid me there: But when I was in theſe Diſtreſſes, you were ſo ſelfiſh, ſo taken up with your own Eaſe and Pleaſure, made ſo much of your Labour, and were ſo loth to part with your Money, that you did not miniſter as you might have done to my Relief and Succour. You were like thoſe *Epicures* that were at Eaſe in *Zion,* and were not *grieved for the Affliction of Joſeph,* Amos 6. 4, 5, 6. *Note,* Omiſſions are the Ruin of Thouſands.

2. It is the Omiſſion of Works of *Charity to the Poor.* They are not ſentenc'd for omitting their *Sacrifices* and *Burnt-Offerings*; they abounded in theſe, *Pſal.* 50. 8. but for omitting the weightier Matters of the Law, *Judgment, Mercy* and *Faith.* The *Ammonites* and *Moabites* were excluded the *Sanctuary,* becauſe they *met not Iſrael* with *Bread and Water,* Deut. 23. 3, 4. *Note,* Uncharitableneſs to the Poor is a *damning Sin.* If we will not be brought to *Works of Charity* by the Hope of Reward, let us be influenc'd by Fear of Puniſhment; for they ſhall *have Judgment without Mercy, that have ſhewed no Mercy.* Obſerve, He doth not ſay, *I was ſick,* and ye did not cure me; *in Priſon,* and you did not releaſe me; perhaps that was more than they could do; but you *viſited me not,* which you might have done. *Note,* Sinners will be condemn'd at the *great Day,* for the Omiſſion of that Good which it was in the Power of their Hand to

do. But if the Doom of the Uncharitable be ſo dreadful, how much more intolerable will the Doom of the Cruel be, the Doom of Perſecutors? Now this Reaſon of the Sentence is,

1. *Objected againſt* by the Priſoners, *v.* 44. *Lord, when ſaw we thee an hungred and thirſt?* Condemned Sinners, tho' they have no Plea that will bear them out, yet will in vain offer at Excuſes. Now (1.) the manner of their Pleading ſpeakss their *preſent Precipitation.* They cut it ſhort, as Men in haſte; *when ſaw we thee hungry, or thirſty, or naked?* They care not to repeat the Charge, as conſcious to themſelves of their own Guilt, and unable to bear the Terrors of the Judgment. Nor will they have Time allow'd them to inſiſt upon ſuch frivolous Pleas; for it's all, (as we uſe to ſay) but *trifling with the Court.* (2.) The Matter of their Plea ſpeaks their *former Inconſideration* of that which they might have known, but would not till now, that it was too late. They that had ſlighted and Perſecuted poor Chriſtians, would not own that they had Slighted and Perſecuted Chriſt: No, they never intended any Affront to him, nor expected that ſo great a Matter would have been made of it. They imagin'd it was only a Company of poor, weak, ſilly, and contemptible People, who made more ado than they needed about Religion, that they put thoſe Slights upon; but they who do ſo, will be made to know, either in the Day of their Converſion, as *Paul*, or of their Condemnation, as theſe here, That *it was Jeſus whom they Perſecuted.* And, if they ſay, *Behold, we knew it not, doth not he that pondereth the Heart conſider it?* Prov. 24. 11, 12.

2. *Juſtified* by the Judge, who will convince all the Ungodly of the hard Speeches *ſpoken againſt him* in thoſe that are his, *Jude* 15. He goes by this Rule, *v.* 45. *Inaſmuch as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me. Note,* What is done againſt the faithful Diſciples, and Followers of Chriſt, even the leaſt of them, he takes as done againſt himſelf. He is reproached, and Perſecuted in them, for they are Reproached and Perſecuted for his ſake, and *in all their Afflictions he is Afflicted.* He that touches them, touches him in a Part no leſs tender than the Apple of his Eye.

Laſtly, Here is the Execution of both theſe Sentences, *v.* 46. Execution is the Life of the Law, and Chriſt will take care that it be done according to the Sentence.

1. The Wicked ſhall *go away into Everlaſting Puniſhment.* Sentence will then be executed ſpeedily, and no Reprieve granted, nor any Time allow'd to move in Arreſt of Judgment. The Execution of the Wicked is firſt mentioned; for firſt the Tares are gather'd and burn'd. *Note,* (1.) The Puniſhment of the Wicked in the future State, will be an *Everlaſting* Puniſhment, for the State is an *unalterable* State. It can neither be thought that Sinners ſhould change their own Natures; nor that God ſhould give his Grace to change them, when in this World the Day of Grace was miſ-ſpent, the Spirit of Grace reſiſted, and the Means of Grace abus'd and baffled. (2.) The Wicked ſhall be made to *go away* into that Puniſhment; not that they will go voluntarily, no, they are *driven from Light into Darkneſs*; but it ſpeaks an irreſiſtible *Conviction of Guilt*, and a final *Deſpair of Mercy.*

2. The *Righteous* ſhall go away *into Life Eternal,* i. e. they ſhall inherit the Kingdom, *v.* 34. *Note,* 1. Heaven is *Life,* it is all Happineſs. The Life of the Soul reſults from its Union with God by the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, as that of the Body from its Union with the Soul, by the *Animal* Spirit. The Heavenly Life conſiſts in the Viſion and Fruition of God, in a perfect Conformity to him, and an immediate uninterrupted Communion with him. 2. It is Eternal Life. There's no Death to put a Period to the Life it ſelf, nor old Age to put a Period to the Comfort of it, or any Sorrow to embitter it. Thus Life and Death, Good and Evil, the Bleſſing and the Curſe are ſet before us, that we may chuſe our Way, and *ſo ſhall our End be.* Even the Heathen had ſome Notion of theſe different States of Good and Bad in the other World. *Cicero* in his *Tuſculan Queſtions*, lib. 1. brings in *Socrates* thus ſpeaking, *Duæ ſunt viæ, duplicesque curſus è corpore exeuntium; nam qui ſe vitiis humanis contaminarunt, & libidinibus ſe tradiderunt, iis devium quoddam iter eſt, ſecluſum à Conſilio Deorum: Qui autem ſe integros caſtoſque ſervarunt, quibuſque fuerit minima cum corporibus Contagio, ſuntque in corporibus humanis vitam imitati deorum, iis ad illos a quibus ſunt profecti facile patet reditus.*

CHAP. XXVI.

The Story of the Death and Sufferings of Chriſt, is more particularly and fully Recorded by all the four Evangeliſts, than any other part of his Story; for what ſhould we determine, and deſire to know but Chriſt, and him Crucified. *And this Chapter begins that famous Story. The Year of the Redeemed was now come, the ſeventy Weeks determin'd were now accompliſhed, when* Tranſgreſſion *muſt be* finiſh'd, Reconciliation made, *and an* Everlaſting Righteouſneſs brought in, *by the cutting off of the Meſſiah the Prince,* Dan. 9, 24, 26. *That* awful *Scene is here introduc'd, to be read with Reverence and holy Fear. In this Chapter we have,* (1.) *The Preliminaries, or Prefaces to Chriſt's Sufferings.* 1. *The previous notice given by him of it to his Diſciples,* v. 1, 2. 2. *The Ruler's Conſpiracy againſt him,* v. 3,—5. 3. *The Anointing of his Head at a Supper in* Bethany, *v.* 6,—13. 4. Judas's *Bargain with the Prieſts to betray him, v.* 14,—16. 5. *Chriſt's eating the Paſſover with his Diſciples,* v. 17,—25. 6. *His Inſtituting the Lord's Supper, and his Diſcourſe with his Diſciples after it,* v. 26,—35. (2.) *His entrance upon them, and ſome of the Particulars of them.* (1.) *His Agony in the Garden, v.* 36,—46. (2.) *The ſeizing of him by the Officers with* Judas's *Help,* v. 47,—56. (3.) *His Arraignment before the chief Prieſt, and his Condemnation in his Court,* v. 57,—68. (4.) Peter's *denying him,* v. 69,—75.

AND it came to paſs, when Jeſus had finiſhed all theſe ſayings, he ſaid unto his diſciples, 2 Ye know that after two days is *the feaſt of* the paſſover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified. 3 Then aſſembled together the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high prieſt, who was called Caiaphas, 4 And conſulted that they might take Jeſus by ſubtilty, and kill *him.* 5 But they ſaid, Not on the *feaſt-day,* leſt there be an uprore among the people.

Here's 1. The Notice Chriſt gave his Diſciples of the near Approach of his Sufferings, *v.* 1, 2. While his Enemies were preparing Trouble for him, he was preparing himſelf and his Followers for it. He had often told them of his Sufferings at a diſtance, now he ſpeaks of them as at the Door, *after two Days. Note,* After many *former* Notices of Trouble, we ſtill have need of *freſh* ones. Obſerve,

1. The *Time* when he gave this Alarm, when he had *finiſhed all theſe Sayings.* (1.) Not till he had finiſhed *all* he had to ſay. *Note,* Chriſt's Witneſſes die not till they have finiſhed their Teſtimony. When Chriſt had gone through his Undertaking as a Prophet, he enter'd upon the Execution of his Office as a Prieſt. (2.) After he had finiſhed *theſe Sayings,* which go immediately before; he had bid his Diſciples expect ſad Times, Bonds and Afflictions, and then tells them *the Son of Man is betrayed*; to intimate, that they ſhould fare no worſe than he ſhould, and that *his* Sufferings ſhould take the Sting out of *theirs. Note,* Thoughts of a *Suffering Chriſt* are great Supports to a ſuffering Chriſtian, ſuffering *with him,* and *for him.*

2. The *Thing* it ſelf he gave them notice of, *The Son of Man is betray'd.* The Thing was not only ſo *ſure,* but ſo *near,* that it was *as good as done. Note,* 'Tis good to make Sufferings that are yet to come as *preſent* to us. He *is betray'd*; for *Judas* was then contriving and deſigning to betray him.

2. The Plot of the Chief Prieſts, and Scribes, and Elders of the People againſt the Life of our Lord Jeſus, *v.* 3, 4, 5. Many Conſults had been held againſt the Life of Chriſt, but this Plot was laid deeper than any yet; for the Grandees were all engag'd in it. The *Chief Prieſts,* who preſided in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs; the *Elders,* that were Judges in Civil Matters; and the *Scribes,* that, as Doctors of the Law, were Directors to both. Theſe compos'd the *Sanhedrim,* or great Council that govern'd the Nation, and theſe were confederate againſt Chriſt. *Obſerve,* 1. The *Place* where they met, *in the Palace of the High Prieſt,* who was the Center of their Unity in this wicked Project. 2. The *Plot* it ſelf, to *take Jeſus by Subtilty, and kill him*; nothing leſs than his Blood, his Life-blood, would ſerve their turn. So Cruel and Bloody have been the Deſigns of Chriſt's and his Churches Enemies. 3. The Policy of the Plotters. *Not on the Feaſt-day*; Why not? Was it in regard to the Holineſs of the Time, or becauſe they would not be diſturb'd in the Religious Services of the Day; no, but *leſt there ſhould be an Uproar among the People.* They knew Chriſt had a great Intereſt in the common People, of whom there was a great Concourſe on the Feaſt-Day, and they would be in danger of taking up Arms againſt their Rulers, if they ſhould offer to lay violent Hands on Chriſt, whom all held for *a Prophet.* They were not aw'd by the Fear of God, but by the Fear of the People; all their Concern was for their own Safety, not God's Honour: they would have it done *at the Feaſt*; for it was a Tradition of the *Jews,* that Malefactors ſhould be put to Death at one of the *three Feaſts,* eſpecially Rebels and Impoſtors, that *all* Iſrael *might ſee and fear,* but *not on the Feaſt-day.*

6 Now when Jeſus was in Bethany, in the houſe of Simon the leper, 7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaſter box of very precious ointment, and poured *it* on his head, as he ſat at *meat.* 8 But when his diſciples ſaw it, they had indignation, ſaying, To what purpoſe is this waſte? 9 For this ointment might have been ſold for much, and given to the poor. 10 When Jeſus underſtood *it,* he ſaid unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for ſhe hath wrought a good work upon me. 11 For ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always. 12 For in that ſhe hath poured this ointment on my body, ſhe did *it* for my burial. 13 Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever this goſpel ſhall be preached in the whole world, *there* ſhall alſo this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

In this Paſſage of Story, we have,

Firſt, The *ſingular Kindneſs* of a *good Woman* to our Lord Jeſus, in anointing his Head, *v.* 6, 7. 'Twas in *Bethany*, a Village hard by *Jeruſalem*, and in *the Houſe of Simon the Leper*. Probably, he was one who had been miraculouſly cleanſed from his Leproſy by our Lord Jeſus, and he would expreſs his Gratitude to Chriſt, by entertaining him; nor did Chriſt diſdain to converſe with him, to come into him, and ſup with him. Tho' he was cleanſed, yet he was call'd *Simon the Leper*. Thoſe who are guilty of ſcandalous Sins, tho' the Sin be pardon'd, yet the Reproach will ſtick by them, and will hardly be wiped away. The Woman that did this is ſuppos'd to have been *Mary*, the Siſter of *Martha* and *Lazarus*: And Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks 'twas the ſame that was call'd *Mary Magdalen*. She had a *Box of Ointment*, very *precious*, which ſhe *pour'd upon the Head* of Chriſt as he *ſat at Meat*. This, among us, would be an odd ſort of Compliment: But it was then accounted the higheſt Piece of Reſpect; for the Smell was very grateful, and the Ointment it ſelf refreſhing to the Head. *David* had his Head *anointed*, *Pſal.* 23. 5. *Luke* 7. 46. Now this may be look'd upon,

1. As an *Act of Faith* in our Lord Jeſus, the *Chriſt*, the *Meſſiah*, *i. e.* the Anointed: To ſignify that ſhe believed in him as *God's Anointed*, whom he had *ſet King*, ſhe anointed him, and made him *her King*. They ſhall *appoint themſelves one Head*, Hoſ. 1. 11. This is *kiſſing the Son*.

2. As an *Act of Love and Reſpect* to him. Some think this was ſhe that *loved much* at firſt, and *waſhed Chriſt's Feet with her Tears*, Luke 7. 47. and ſhe had not *left her firſt Love*, but was now as affectionate in the Devotions of a grown Chriſtian, as ſhe was in thoſe of a young Beginner. *Note*, Where there is true Love in the Heart to Jeſus Chriſt, nothing will be thought *too good*, no, nor *good enough*, to beſtow upon him.

Secondly, The *Offence* which the *Diſciples* took at this: They *had Indignation*, v. 8, 9. were vex'd to ſee this Ointment thus ſpent, which they thought might have been better beſtow'd.

1. See how they expreſs'd their Offence at it: They ſaid, *To what Purpoſe is this Waſte?* Now this ſpeaks,

1. *Want of Tenderneſs* towards this *good Woman*, in interpreting her Over-kindneſs (ſuppoſe it was ſo) to be *Waſtfulneſs*. Charity teacheth us to put the beſt Conſtruction upon every Thing that it will bear, eſpecially upon the Words and Actions of thoſe that are *zealouſly affected* in a good Thing; tho' we may think them not altogether ſo diſcreet in it as they might be. 'Tis true, there may be *over-doing* in *well-doing*; but thence we muſt learn to be *cautious* our ſelves, leſt we run into Extreams; but not to be *Cenſorious* of others; becauſe that which we may impute to the want of Prudence, God may accept as an Inſtance of abundant Love. We muſt not ſay, Thoſe do *too much* in Religion, that do *more* than we do, but rather aim to do as much as they.

2. *Want of Reſpect to their Maſter*: The beſt we can make of it, is, that they knew their Maſter was perfectly dead to all the Delights of Senſe: He that was ſo much *grieved for the Affliction of Joſeph*, cared not for being *anointed with he chief Ointments*, Amos 6. 6. And therefore they thought ſuch Pleaſures ill beſtow'd upon one, who took ſo little Pleaſure in them. But ſuppoſing that, it did not become them to call it *waſte*, when they perceiv'd that he admitted and accepted it as a Token of his Friend's Love. *Note*, We muſt take heed of thinking any Thing waſte, which is beſtow'd upon the Lord Jeſus, either by others, or by our ſelves. We muſt not think that Time waſte that is ſpent in the Service of Chriſt, or that Money waſte which is laid out in any Work of Piety; for tho' it ſeem to be *caſt upon* the Waters, to be thrown down the River, yet we ſhall *find it again* to Advantage *after many Days*, Eccl. 11. 1.

2. See how they *excus'd* their Offence at it, and what Pretence they made for it: *This Ointment might have been ſold for much, and given to the Poor*. *Note*, It is no new Thing for bad Affections to ſhelter themſelves under ſpecious Covers; for People to ſhift off Works of Piety, under Colour of Works of Charity.

Thirdly, The Reproof Chriſt gave to his Diſciples for the Offence at this good Woman, *v.* 10, 11. *Why trouble ye the Woman?* *Note*, It is a great Trouble to good People, to have their good Works cenſur'd and miſconſtrued; and it is a Thing that Jeſus Chriſt takes very ill. He here took part with a good, honeſt, zealous, well-meaning Woman, againſt all his Diſciples, tho' they ſeem'd to have ſo much Reaſon on their ſide: So heartily doth he eſpouſe the *Cauſe* of the *offended Little ones*, Mat. 18. 10.

Obſerve his Reaſon, *You have the Poor always with you*. *Note*, 1. There are ſome Opportunities of doing, and getting Good, which are *conſtant*, and which we muſt give conſtant Attendance to the Improvement of: Bibles we have always with us, Sabbaths always with us, and ſo the *Poor we have always with us*. *Note*, Thoſe who have a Heart to do good, never need to complain for want of Opportunity. The Poor never ceaſed, even out of the Land of *Iſrael*, *Deut.* 15. 11. Some or other we cannot but ſee in this World, that call for our charitable Aſſiſtance, who are as God's Receivers; ſome poor Members of Chriſt, to whom he will have Kindneſs ſhewn, as to himſelf.

2. There are other Opportunities of doing and getting Good, which come but *ſeldom*, which are ſhort and uncertain, and require a more peculiar Diligence in the Improvement of them, and which ought to be preferr'd before the other: *Me ye have not always*; therefore uſe me while ye have me. *Note*, 1. Chriſt's conſtant, bodily Preſence, was not to be expected here in this World; 'twas expedient he ſhould *go away*: His real Preſence in the Euchariſt is a fond and groundleſs Conceit, and contradicts what he here ſaid, *Me ye have not always*. 2. Sometimes ſpecial Works of Piety and Devotion ſhould take place of common Works of Charity. The Poor muſt not rob Chriſt: We muſt do good to all, but eſpecially to the *Houſhold of Faith*.

Fourthly, Chriſt's Approbation and Commendation of the Kindneſs of this good Woman: The more his Servants and their Services are cavill'd at by Men, the more he manifeſts his Acceptance of them. He calls it a *good Work*, v. 10. and ſaith more in Praiſe of it, than could have been imagin'd. Particularly,

1. That the *Meaning* of it was *myſtical*, v. 12. *She did it for my Burial*. (1.) Some think ſhe *intended it* ſo, and that the Women better underſtood Chriſt's frequent Predictions of his Death and Sufferings, than the Apoſtles did; for which they were recompens'd with the Honour of being the firſt Witneſſes of his Reſurrection. (2.) However, Chriſt *interpreted it ſo*; and he is always willing to make the beſt, to make the moſt of his People's well-meant Words and Actions. This was as it were the *Embalming of his Body*; becauſe the doing of that after his Death would be prevented by his Reſurrection, it was therefore done before; for it was fit it ſhould be done *ſome Time*, to ſhew that he was ſtill the *Meſſiah*, even when he ſeem'd to be triumph'd over by Death. The Diſciples thought the Ointment *waſted*, which was *pour'd upon his Head*. But, ſaith he, If ſo much Ointment were poured upon a dead Body, according to the Cuſtom of your Country, you would not *grudge* it, or think it *worſe*. Now this is in Effect ſo; the Body ſhe anoints is as good as dead, and her Kindneſs is very ſeaſonable for that Purpoſe; therefore rather than call it *waſte*, put it upon that Score.

2. That the *Memorial* of it ſhould be *honourable*, v. 13. *This ſhall be held for a Memorial*. This Act of Faith and Love was ſo remarkable, that the Preachers of Chriſt crucified, and the inſpired Writers of the Hiſtory of his Paſſion, could not chuſe but take notice of this Paſſage, proclaim the Notice of it, and perpetuate the Memorial of it: And being once enroll'd in theſe Records, 'twas *graven as with an Iron Pen, and laid in the Rock for ever*, and could not poſſibly be forgotten. None of all the Trumpets of Fame found ſo loud, and ſo long, as the Everlaſting Goſpel. *Note*, 1. The Story of the Death of Chriſt, tho' a Tragical one, is *Goſpel*, glad Tidings, becauſe he dy'd *for us*. 2. This Goſpel was to be preach'd in *the whole World*; not in *Judea* only, but in *every Nation*, to every *Creature*. Let the Diſciples take notice of this for their Encouragement, that *their Sound* ſhould go to *the Ends of the Earth*. 3. Tho' the Honour of Chriſt is principally deſign'd in the *Goſpel*, yet the Honour of his Saints and Servants is not altogether *overlook'd*. The Memorial of this Woman was to be preſerv'd, not by dedicating a Church to her, or keeping an Annual Feaſt in Honour of her, or preſerving a Piece of her broken Box for a ſacred Relick; but by mentioning her Faith and Piety in the Preaching of the Goſpel for Example to others, *Heb.* 6. 12. And hereby Honour redounds to Chriſt himſelf, who in this World, as well as in that to come, will be *glorified in his Saints*, and *admir'd in all them that believe*.

14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iſcariot, went unto the chief prieſts, 15 And ſaid *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of ſilver. 16 And from that time he ſought opportunity to betray him.

Immediately after an Inſtance of the greateſt *Kindneſs* done to Chriſt, follows an Inſtance of the greateſt *Unkindneſs*: Such Mixture is there of Good and Bad among the Followers of Chriſt; he hath ſome faithful Friends, and ſome falſe and feigned ones. What could be more baſe, than this Agreement which *Judas* here made with the Chief Prieſts to *betray* Chriſt to them?

1. The Traitor was *Judas Iſcariot*; he is ſaid to be *one of the Twelve*, as an Aggravation of his Villany. When the *Number of the Diſciples was Multiplied*, Acts 6. 1. no marvel if there were ſome among them that were a Shame and Trouble to them; but when there were but *Twelve*, and one of them was *a Devil*, ſurely we muſt never expect any Society perfectly pure on this ſide Heaven. The *Twelve* were Chriſt's *choſen Friends*, that had the Privilege of his ſpecial Favour; they were his *conſtant Followers*, that had the Benefit of his moſt intimate Converſe, that upon all Accounts had Reaſon to love him, and be true to him; and yet one of them *betray'd* him. *Note*, No Bonds of Duty or Gratitude will hold thoſe that have a Devil, *Mark* 5. 3, 4.

2. Here's the Proffer which he made to the Chief Prieſts; *He went to them, and ſaid, What will ye give?* v. 15. They did not ſend for him, nor make the Propoſal to him; they could not have thought that one of Chriſt's own Diſciples ſhould be falſe to him. *Note*, There are thoſe even among Chriſt's Followers, that are worſe than any one can imagine them to be, and want nothing but Opportunity to ſhew it.

Obſerve, 1. What *Judas* promis'd, *I will deliver him unto you*; *i. e.* I'll let you know where he is, and undertake to bring you to him, at ſuch a convenient Time and Place, that you may ſeize him without Noiſe, or Danger of an Uproar. In their Conſpiracy againſt Chriſt, this was it they were at a Loſs about, *v.* 4, 5. They durſt not meddle with him in Publick, and knew not where to find him in Private. Here the Matter ſtuck, and the Difficulty was inſuperable till *Judas*

came

come, and offer'd them his Service. *Note*, Thoſe that give up themſelves to be led by the Devil, find him readier than they imagine to help them at a dead Lift, as *Judas* did the Chief Prieſts. Tho' the Rulers, by their Power and Intereſt, when they have him in their Hands could *kill him*, yet none but a Diſciple could *betray him*. *Note*, The greater Profeſſion Men make of Religion, and the more they are employ'd in the Study and Service of it, the greater Opportunity they have of doing Miſchief, if their Hearts be not right with God: If *Judas* had not been an Apoſtle, he could not have been a Traytor; if Men had not known the *Way of Righteouſneſs*, they could not have *abus'd* it.

I will deliver him unto you: He did not offer himſelf, nor did they tamper with him to be a Witneſs againſt *Chriſt*, tho' they wanted Evidence, *v.* 59. And if there had been any Thing to be alledg'd againſt him, which had but the Colour of Proof that he was an Impoſtor, *Judas* was the likelieſt Perſon to have atteſted it: But this is an Evidence of the Innocency of our *Lord Jeſus*, that his own Diſciple, who knew ſo well his Doctrine and Manner of his Life, and was falſe to him, yet could not charge him with any Thing criminal, tho' it would have ſerv'd to juſtify his *Treachery*.

2. What he ask'd in Conſideration of this Undertaking: *What will ye give me?* This was the only Thing that made *Judas* betray his Maſter, he hop'd to *get Money* by it. His Maſter had not given him any Provocation; tho' he knew from the firſt that he *had a Devil*, yet, for ought appears, he ſhew'd the ſame Kindneſs to him that he did to the reſt, and put no Mark of Diſgrace upon him, that might diſoblige him. He had plac'd him in a Poſt that pleas'd him, had made him Purſe-bearer; and tho' he had embezzled the common Stock, for he is call'd a *Thief*, *John* 12. 6. yet we do not find he was in any Danger to be call'd to Account for it. Nor doth it appear he had any Suſpicion that the *Goſpel* was a Cheat: No, it was not the Hatred of his Maſter, nor any Quarrel with him, but purely the Love of the Money; that, and nothing elſe, made *Judas* a Traytor.

What will ye give me? Why, what did he want? Neither Bread to eat, nor Raiment to put on; neither *Neceſſaries* nor *Conveniencies*. Was not he welcome where-ever his Maſter was? Did he not fare as he far'd? Had he not been but juſt now nobly entertain'd at a Supper in *Bethany*, in the Houſe of *Simon* the *Leper*; and a little before at another, where no leſs a Perſon than *Martha* her ſelf waited at Table? And yet this covetous Wretch could not be content, but comes baſely cringing to the Prieſts, with, *What will ye give me?* *Note*, It is not the *Lack of Money*, but the *Love of Money*, that is the *Root of all Evil*, and particularly of Apoſtacy from Chriſt; witneſs *Demas*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 10. Satan tempted our Saviour with this Bait, *All this will I give thee*, Mat. 4. 9. But *Judas* offer'd himſelf to be tempted with it; he asks, *What will ye give me?* As if his Maſter were a Commodity that ſtuck on his Hands.

3. Here's the Bargain which the Chief Prieſts made with him; They *covenanted with him for Thirty Pieces of Silver*; Thirty Shekels, which in our Money is about 3*l.* 8*s.* ſo ſome; 3*l.* 15*s.* ſo others. It ſhould ſeem, *Judas* referr'd himſelf to them, and was willing to take what they were willing to give: He catches at the firſt Offer, leſt the next ſhould be worſe. *Judas* had not been wont to *trade high*, and therefore a little Money went a great way with him. By the Law, *Exod.* 21. 32. Thirty Pieces of Silver was the Price of a Slave, a *goodly Price*, at which Chriſt was valued, *Zech.* 11. 13. No wonder *Sion*'s Sons, tho' comparable to fine Gold, are eſteem'd as *Earthen Pitchers*, when *Sion*'s King himſelf was thus undervalued. They *covenanted with him*; ἔστησαν, *appenderunt*, they *paid it down*, ſo ſome; gave him his Wages in Hand, to ſecure him, and to encourage him.

4. Here's the Induſtry of *Judas*, in Purſance of his Bargain, *v.* 16. He *ſought Opportunity to betray him*; his Head was ſtill working to find out how he might do it effectually. *Note*, 1. It is a very wicked Thing to ſeek Opportunity to ſin, and to *deviſe Miſchief*; for it argues the *Heart* fully *ſet in them to do Evil*, and a *Malice prepenſe*. 2. Thoſe that are *in*, think they muſt on, tho' the Matter be never ſo bad. After he had made that wicked Bargain, he had Time to repent, and to revoke it; but now, by his Covenant, the Devil has one Hank more upon him than he had, and tells him he muſt be true to his Word, tho' never ſo falſe to his Maſter; as *Herod* muſt behead *John* for *his Oath's ſake*.

17 Now the firſt *day* of the *feaſt* of unleavened bread,
the diſciples came to Jeſus, ſaying unto him, Where
wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the paſſover?
18 And he ſaid, Go into the city to ſuch a man, and
ſay unto him, The maſter ſaith, My time is at hand,
I will keep the paſſover at thy houſe with my diſciples.
19 And the diſciples did as Jeſus had appointed them,
and they made ready the paſſover. 20 Now when the
even was come, he ſat down with the twelve. 21 And
as they did eat, he ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, that
one of you ſhall betray me. 22 And they were exceeding
ſorrowful, and began every one of them to ſay unto
him, Lord, is it I? 23 And he anſwered and ſaid, He
that dippeth his hand with me in the diſh, the ſame
ſhall betray me. 24 The Son of man goeth as it written
of him: but wo unto that man by whom the Son of
man is betrayed: it had been good for that man, if he
had not been born. 25 Then Judas, which betrayed
him, anſwered, and ſaid, Maſter, is it I? He ſaid unto
him, Thou haſt ſaid.

We have here an Account of Chriſt's keeping the *Paſſover*; being *made under the Law*, he ſubmitted to all the Ordinances of it, and to this among the reſt: 'Twas kept in Remembrance of *Iſrael*'s Deliverance out of *Egypt*, the Birth-day of that People. It was a Tradition of the *Jews*, that in the Days of the *Meſſiah*, they ſhould be redeemed on the very Day of their coming out of *Egypt*; and it was exactly fulfill'd, for Chriſt dy'd the Day after the *Paſſover*, in which Day they began their March.

1. The Time when Chriſt eat the *Paſſover*, was the uſual Time *appointed* by God, and *obſerved* by the *Jews*, v. 17. *The firſt Day of the Feaſt of unleavened Bread*; which that Year happen'd on the Fifth Day of the *Week*, which is our *Thurſday*. Some have advanc'd a Suggeſtion, that our *Lord Jeſus* celebrated the *Paſſover* at this Time of Day ſooner than other People did; but the Learned Dr. *Whitby* has largely diſprov'd it.

2. The Place where, was particularly appointed by himſelf to the Diſciples, upon their Enquiry; *v.* 17. They asked, *Wherewith wilt thou that we prepare the Paſſover?* Perhaps *Judas* was one of thoſe that ask'd this Queſtion, where he would eat the *Paſſover*, that he might know the better how to lay his Train; but the reſt of the Diſciples ask'd it as uſual, that they might do their Duty.

1. They took it for granted, that their Maſter would eat the *Paſſover*, tho' he was at this Time perſecuted by the Chief Prieſts, and his Life ſought; they knew he would not be put by his Duty, either by Frightnings without, or Fears within. Thoſe do not follow Chriſt's Example, who make it an Excuſe for their not attending on the *Lord's-Supper*, our *Goſpel-Paſſover*, that they have many Troubles and many Enemies, are full of Care and Fear; and if ſo, they have the more need of that *Ordinance*, to help to ſilence their Fears, and comfort them under their Troubles; to help them in forgiving their Enemies, and caſting all their Cares upon God.

2. They knew very well there muſt be Preparation made for it, and it was their Buſineſs as his Servants to make Preparation: *Where wilt thou that we prepare? Note*, Before ſolemn Ordinances, there muſt be ſolemn Preparation.

3. They knew he had no Houſe of his own wherein to eat the *Paſſover*; in this, as in other Things, *for our Sakes he became poor*. Among all *Sion*'s *Palaces*, there was none for *Sion*'s *King*; but his *Kingdom* was *not of this World*. See *John* 1. 11.

4. They would not pitch upon a Place without Direction from him, and from him they had Direction; he ſent them to *ſuch a Man*, v. 18. who probably was a Friend and Follower of his; and to his Houſe he invited himſelf and his Diſciples.

(1.) Tell him, *My Time is at hand*: He means the Time of his Death, elſwhere call'd *his Hour*, John 8. 20.—13. 1. The Time, the Hour fix'd in the Counſel of God, and which his Heart was upon, and which he had ſo oft ſpoken of. He knew when 'twas at hand, and was buſy accordingly: We *know not our Time*, Eccl. 9. 12. and therefore muſt never be off our Watch; *Our Time is always ready*, John 7. 6. and therefore we muſt be *always ready*. Obſerve, Becauſe his *Time was at hand*, he would *keep the Paſſover*. *Note*, The Conſideration of the near Approach of Death ſhould quicken us to a diligent Improvement of all Opportunities for our Souls. Is our Time at hand, and an Eternity juſt before us? Let us then *keep the Feaſt with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity*. Obſerve, When our *Lord Jeſus* invited himſelf to this good Man's Houſe, he ſent him this Intelligence, that *his Time was at hand*. *Note*, Chriſt's Secret is with them that entertain him in their Hearts. Compare *John* 14. 21. with *Rev.* 3. 20.

(2.) Tell him, *I will keep the Paſſover at thy Houſe*: This was an Inſtance of his Authority, as *the Maſter*, which 'tis likely this Man acknowledg'd: He did not *beg*, but *command* the Uſe of his Houſe for this Purpoſe. Thus, when Chriſt by his Spirit comes into the Heart, he *demands* Admiſſion, as one whoſe *own the* Heart is, and cannot be *denied*; and *gains* Admiſſion, as one who has *all Power* in the Heart, and cannot be *reſiſted*: If he ſaith, I will keep a Feaſt in ſuch a Soul, he will do it; for he works, and none can hinder. His People ſhall *be willing*, for he *makes them ſo*. *I will keep the Paſſover with my Diſciples*. *Note*, Where-ever *Chriſt* is welcome, he expects that his *Diſciples* ſhould be welcome too: When we take God for our God, we take his People for our People.

3. The *Preparation* was *made* by the Diſciples, *v.* 19. *They did as Jeſus had appointed*. *Note*, Thoſe who would have Chriſt's Preſence with them in the *Goſpel-Paſſover*, muſt ſtrictly obſerve his Inſtructions, and do as he directs. They *made ready the Paſſover*; they got the Lamb kill'd in the Court of the *Temple*, got it roaſted, the bitter Herbs provided, Bread and Wine, the Cloth laid, and every Thing ſet in Readineſs for ſuch a ſacred, ſolemn Feaſt.

4. They eat the *Paſſover* according to the Law, *v.* 20. *He ſat down* in the uſual Table-Geſture; not lying on one ſide, for it was not *eaſy* to *eat*, nor *poſſible* to *drink* in that Poſture; but ſitting *upright*, tho' perhaps ſitting *low*. 'Tis the ſame Word that is us'd for his Poſture at other Meals, *Mat.* 9. 10. *Luke* 7. 37. *Mat.* 26. 7. 'Twas only the firſt *Paſſover* in *Egypt*, as moſt think, that was eaten with

their Loins girded, Shoes on their Feet, and Staff in their Hand, tho' all that might be in a ſitting Poſture. His *ſitting down,* notes the Compoſedneſs of his Mind, when he addreſs'd himſelf to this Solemnity: He *ſat down with the Twelve, Judas* not excepted. By the Law they were to take *a Lamb for a Houſhold,* Exod. 12. 3, 4. which were to be not leſs than ten, or more than twenty; Chriſt's Diſciples were his Houſhold. *Note,* They whom God has charged with Families, muſt have their Houſes with them in *ſerving the Lord.*

5. We have here Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples at the Paſſover Supper: The uſual Subject of Diſcourſe at that Ordinance, was the Deliverance of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt, Exod.* 12. 26, 27. but the great Paſſover is now ready to be offered, and the Diſcourſe of that ſwallows up all Talk of the other, *Jer.* 16. 14, 15. Here is,

1. The general Notice Chriſt gives his Diſciples of the Treachery that ſhould be among them, *v.* 21. *One of you ſhall betray me:* Obſerve (1.) Chriſt *knew it;* we know not what Troubles will befal us, nor whence they will ariſe, but Chriſt knew all his, which as it proves his Omniſcience, ſo magnifies his Love, that he knew all Things that ſhould befal him, and yet did not *draw back:* He foreſaw the Treachery and Baſeneſs of a Diſciple of his own, and yet went on; took care of thoſe that were given him, tho' he knew there was a *Judas* among them; would pay the Price of our Redemption, tho' he foreſaw ſome would *deny the Lord that bought them;* and ſhed his Blood, tho' he knew it would be *trodden under foot,* as an *unholy Thing.* (2) When there was occaſion he let thoſe about him know it. He had often told them that the Son of Man ſhould be betray'd, now he tells them that one of them ſhould do it, that when they ſaw it they might not only be the leſs ſurpriz'd, but have their Faith in him confirm'd, *Joh.* 13. 19.—14. 29.

2. The Diſciples Reſentment of this, *v.* 22. How did they take it?

(1.) They were *exceeding ſorrowful.* (1.) It troubled them *much* to hear that their Maſter ſhould be *betray'd:* When *Peter* was firſt told of it, he ſaid, *Be it far from thee;* and therefore it muſt needs be a great Trouble to him, and the reſt of them, to hear that it was very near to him. (2.) It troubled them *more* to hear that *one of them* ſhould do it. It would be a Reproach to the Fraternity, for an Apoſtle to prove a Traitor, and this griev'd them; gracious Souls grieve for the Sins of others, eſpecially of thoſe that have made a more than ordinary Profeſſion of Religion, 2 *Cor.* 11. 29. (3.) It troubled them *moſt of all,* that they were left at uncertainty which *of them* it was, and each of them was afraid for himſelf, leſt, as *Hazael* ſpeaks, 2 *Kings* 8. 13. he was the *Dog* that ſhould do *this great Thing.* Thoſe that know the Strength and Subtilty of the Tempter, and their own Weakneſs and Folly, cannot but be in pain for themſelves, when they hear that the *Love of many will wax cold.*

(2.) They *began every one of them to ſay; Lord, Is it I?*

(1.) They were not apt to *ſuſpect Judas,* tho' he was a *Thief,* yet it ſeems he had carry'd it ſo plauſibly, that thoſe who were intimate with him, were not jealous of him: None of them ſo much as look'd upon him, much leſs ſaid, *Lord, Is it Judas? Note,* It is poſſible for an Hypocrite to go through the World, not only *undiſcovered,* but *unſuſpected,* like bad Money ſo ingeniouſly counterfeited, that no Body queſtions it.

(2.) They were apt to *ſuſpect themſelves, Lord, Is it I?* Tho' they were not conſcious to themſelves of any Inclination that way, no ſuch Thought had ever enter'd into their Mind, yet they fear'd the worſt, and ask'd him, who knows us better than we know our ſelves, *Lord, Is it I? Note,* It well becomes the Diſciples of Chriſt always to be jealous over themſelves with a godly Jealouſy, eſpecially in trying Times. We know not how ſtrongly we may be tempted, nor how far God may leave us to our ſelves, and therefore have Reaſon not to be *high-minded, but fear.* It is obſervable, that our Lord Jeſus, juſt before he inſtituted the Lord's Supper, put his Diſciples upon this Tryal, and Suſpicion of themſelves, to teach us to examine and judge our ſelves, and *ſo to eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

3. Further Information given them concerning this Matter, *v.* 23, 24. where Chriſt tells them, (1.) That the Traitor was a familiar Friend; *He that dippeth his Hand with me in the Diſh, i. e.* one of you that are now with me at the Table. He mentions this to make the Treachery appear the more exceeding ſinful. *Note,* External Communion with Chriſt in holy Ordinances is a great Aggravation of our Falſeneſs to him. 'Tis baſe Ingratitude to dip with Chriſt in the Diſh, and yet betray him. (2.) That this was according to the Scripture, which would take off the Offence at it. Was Chriſt betray'd by a Diſciple, ſo it was written, *Pſal.* 41. 9. *He that did eat Bread with me, has lift up the Heel againſt me.* The more we ſee of the fulfilling of the Scripture in our Troubles, the better we may bear them. (3.) That it would prove a very dear Bargain to the Traitor; *Woe to that Man by whom the Son of Man is betray'd.* This he ſaid, not only to awaken the Conſcience of *Judas,* and bring him to repent, and revoke his Bargain, but for warning to all others to take heed of ſinning like *Judas;* tho' God can ſerve his own Purpoſes by the Sins of Men, that doth not make the Sinners Condition the leſs *woful. It had been good for that Man if he had not been born. Note,* The Ruin that attends thoſe who betray Chriſt is ſo great, that it were more eligible by far *not to be* at all, than to be *thus miſerable.*

4. The Conviction of *Judas, v.* 25. (1.) He ask'd, *Is it I?* to avoid coming under the Suſpicion of Guilt by his Silence: He knew very well *it was he,* and yet made thus ſtrange of it. *Note,* Many whoſe Conſciences condemn them, yet are very induſtrious to juſtify themſelves before Men, and put a good Face on it, with, *Lord, Is it I?* He could not but know that Chriſt knew, and yet truſted ſo much to his Courteſy, becauſe he had hitherto conceal'd it, that he had the Impudence to challenge him to tell: Or perhaps, he was ſo much under the Power of Infidelity, that he imagin'd Chriſt did not know it, as thoſe who ſaid, *The Lord ſhall not ſee,* Pſal. 94. 7. And he asked, *Can he judge through the dark Clouds?* (2) Chriſt ſoon anſwer'd his Queſtion, *Thou haſt ſaid,* i. e. it is as thou haſt ſaid; this is not all out ſo plain as *Nathan*'s, Thou art the Man; but it was enough to convict him, and if his Heart had not been wretchedly hardned, to have broke the Neck of his Plot, when he ſaw it diſcover'd to his Maſter, and diſcover'd by him. *Note,* They who are contriving to betray Chriſt, will ſometime or other betray themſelves, and *their own Tongues* will *fall upon them.*

26 And as they were eating, Jeſus took bread, and bleſſed *it,* and brake *it,* and gave *it* to the diſciples, and ſaid, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, ſaying, Drink ye all of it: 28 For this is my blood of the new teſtament, which is ſhed for many for the remiſſion of ſins. 29 But I ſay unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Fathers kingdom. 30 And when they had ſung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

We have here the Inſtitution of the great Goſpel-Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which was received of the Lord. Obſerve,

1. The Time when it was inſtituted, *as they were eating.* At the latter end of the Paſſover, before the Table was drawn, becauſe as a Feaſt upon a Sacrifice it was to come in the room of that Ordinance. Chriſt is to us the *Paſſover Sacrifice,* by which *Atonement* is made, 1 *Cor.* 5. 8. *Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us;* this Ordinance is to us the *Paſſover-Supper,* by which *Application* is made, and a Commemoration celebrated of a much greater Deliverance than that of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt.* All the legal *Sacrifices of Propitiation* being ſumm'd up in the Death of Chriſt, and ſo *aboliſh'd.*

2. The Inſtitution it ſelf. A *Sacrament* muſt be *inſtituted;* 'tis no part of Moral Worſhip, nor is it dictated by natural Light, but has both its Being and Significancy from the Inſtitution, from a *Divine* Inſtitution; 'tis his Prerogative who eſtabliſh'd the Covenant to appoint the Seals of it. Hence the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23, *&c.* in that Diſcourſe of his concerning this Ordinance, all along calls Jeſus Chriſt *the Lord,* becauſe as *Lord,* as Lord of the Covenant, Lord of the Church, he appointed this Ordinance. In which,

Firſt, The Body of Chriſt is ſignified and repreſented by Bread; he had ſaid formerly, *John* 6. 35. *I am the Bread of Life,* upon which Metaphor this Sacrament is built; as the Life of the Body is ſupported by *Bread,* which is therefore put for all bodily Nouriſhment, *Matt.* 4. 4.—6. 11. ſo the Life of the Soul is ſupported and maintained by Chriſt's Mediation.

1. He *took Bread,* τὸν ἄρτον, *the Loaf,* ſome Loaf that lay ready at hand, fit for the Purpoſe; 'tis likely 'twas unleavened Bread; but that Circumſtance not being taken notice of, we are not to bind our ſelves to that, as ſome of the *Greek* Churches do. His *taking* the Bread was a ſolemn Action, and 'tis like was done in ſuch a manner as to be obſerv'd by them that ſat with him, that they might expect ſomething more than ordinary to be done with it. Thus was the Lord Jeſus *ſet apart* in the Counſels of Divine Love for the working out of our Redemption.

2. He *bleſſed* it, ſet it apart for this Uſe by Prayer and Thankſgiving. We do not find any ſet Form of Words us'd by him upon this Occaſion, but what he ſaid, no doubt, was accommodated to the Buſineſs in hand, that New Teſtament, which by this Ordinance was to be ſealed and ratified. This was like God's *bleſſing the ſeventh Day,* Gen. 2. 3. by which it was ſeparated to God's Honour, and made to all that duly obſerve it, a bleſſed Day: Chriſt could command the Bleſſing, and we in his Name are embolden'd to beg the Bleſſing.

3. He *brake it;* which notes (1.) The breaking of Chriſt's Body *for us,* that it might be fitted for our uſe; he was *bruiſed* for our Iniquities, as *Bread-Corn* is bruiſed, Iſa. 28. 28. tho' a *Bone of him was not broken,* for all his breaking did not weaken him, yet his Fleſh was *broken with breach upon breach,* and his Wounds multiplied, *John* 16. 14.——9. 17. and that pain'd him. God complains that he is *broken* with the *whoriſh Heart* of Sinners, *Ezek.* 6. 9. his Law broken, our Covenants with him broken; now Juſtice requires *Breach for Breach,* Lev. 24. 20. and Chriſt was broken to ſatisfy that Demand. (2.) The breaking of Chriſt's Body *to us,* as the Father of the Family *breaks the Bread* to the Children: The breaking of Chriſt to us, is to facilitate the Application; every Thing is made ready to us, by the Grants of God's Word, and the Operations of his Grace.

4. He *gave it* to his Diſciples, as the Maſter of the Family, and the Maſter of this Feaſt; it is not ſaid, he gave it to the *Apoſtles,* tho' they were ſo, and had been often call'd ſo before this, but to the *Diſciples,* becauſe all the *Diſciples* of Chriſt have a right to this Ordinance, and thoſe ſhall have the Benefit of it, who are his Diſciples

indeed, yet he gave it to them, as he did the multiplied Loaves by them to be *handed* to all other his Followers.

5. He ſaid, *Take, eat, this is my Body.* He here tells them,

1. What they ſhould *do with it, take, eat*; accept of Chriſt as he is offer'd to you, receive the Atonement, approve of it, conſent to it, come up to the Terms on which the Benefit of it is propos'd to you; ſubmit to his Grace and to his Government: Believing on Chriſt is expreſs'd by Receiving him, *John* 1. 12. and feeding upon him, *John* 6. 57, 58. Meat look'd upon, or the Diſh never ſo well garniſh'd, will not nouriſh us, it muſt be fed upon, ſo muſt the Doctrine of Chriſt.

2. What they ſhould *have with it*; *This is my Body*, not οὗτος, this *Bread*, but τοῦτο, this *eating* and *drinking*, *i. e.* Believing carries all the Efficacy of Chriſt's Death to our Souls; *This is my Body*, *i. e.* Spiritually and Sacramentally; this ſignifies and repreſents my Body, that is Sacramental Language, like that, *Exod.* 12. 11. *It is the Lord's Paſſover.* Upon a carnal and much miſtaken Senſe of theſe Words, the Church of *Rome* builds the monſtrous Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation*, which makes the Bread to be changed into the Subſtance of Chriſt's Body, only the Accidents of Bread remaining, which affronts Chriſt, deſtroys the Nature of a Sacrament, and gives the Lye to our Senſes: We partake of the Sun, not by having the Bulk and Body of the Sun put into our Hands, but the Beams of it darted down upon us; ſo we *partake of Chriſt*, by partaking of his Grace, and the bleſſed Fruits of the breaking of his Body.

Secondly, The Blood of Chriſt is ſignified and repreſented by the Wine; to make it a compleat Feaſt, here is not only Bread to ſtrengthen, but Wine to *make glad* the Heart, *v.* 27, 28. *He took the Cup*, the *Grace-Cup*, which was ſet ready to be drank, after Thanks return'd, according to the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, at the Paſſover; this Chriſt took and made the Sacramental Cup, and ſo alter'd the Property. 'Twas intended for a *Cup of Bleſſing*, ſo the *Jews* call'd it, and therefore St. *Paul* ſtudiouſly diſtinguiſh'd between the Cup of Bleſſing *which we bleſs*, and that which *they bleſs*. He *gave Thanks*, to teach us, not only in every Ordinance, but in every part of the Ordinance, to have our Eyes up to God.

This Cup he gave to the Diſciples.

1. With a Command, *Drink ye all of it*: Thus he welcomes his Gueſts to his Table, obligeth them all to drink of *his Cup*. Why ſhould he ſo expreſly command them *all* to drink, and to ſee that none let it paſs them, and preſs that more expreſly in this than in the other part of the Ordinance; ſurely it was becauſe he foreſaw how in after Ages this Ordinance would be diſmember'd by the Prohibition of the Cup to the Laity, with an expreſs *non obſtante* to the Command.

2. With an Explication; For *this is my Blood of the New Teſtament*; Therefore drink it with Appetite, Delight, becauſe it is ſo rich a Cordial. Hitherto the Blood of Chriſt had been repreſented by the *Blood of Beaſts*, real Blood, but after it was actually ſhed, it was repreſented by the *Blood of Grapes*, metaphorical Blood; ſo Wine is call'd in an Old Teſtament Prophecy of Chriſt, *Gen.* 49. 10, 11.

Now obſerve what Chriſt ſaith of his Blood repreſented in the Sacrament.

1. 'Tis *my Blood of the New Teſtament*: the Old Teſtament was confirm'd by the *Blood of Bulls and Goats*, Heb. 9. 16, 17. Exod. 24. 8. But the New Teſtament with the Blood of Chriſt, which is here diſtinguiſh'd from that, 'tis *my Blood of the New Teſtament*. The Covenant God is pleaſed to make with us, and all the Benefits and Privileges of it are owing to the Merits of *Chriſt's Death*.

2. It is *ſhed*; It was not ſhed till next Day, but it was now upon the Point of being ſhed, it is as good as done. Before you come to repeat this Ordinance your ſelves, it will be *ſhed*; he was now *ready to be offer'd*, and his Blood to be poured out, as the Blood of the Sacrifices which made Atonement.

3. It is *ſhed for many*; Chriſt came to confirm a Covenant *with many*, Dan. 9. 27. and the *Intent* of his Death agreed. The Blood of the old Teſtament was ſhed for a *few*, it confirm'd a Covenant, which, ſaith *Moſes*, the Lord has *made with you*, Exod. 24. 8. The Atonement was made only *for the Children of Iſrael*, Lev. 16. 34. but Jeſus Chriſt is a Propitiation *for the Sins of the whole World*, 1 Joh. 2. 2.

4. It is ſhed *for the Remiſſion of Sins*, i. e. to purchaſe Remiſſion of Sins for us. The Redemption we have through his Blood is *the Remiſſion of Sins*, Eph. 1. 7. The New Covenant which *is* procur'd and ratified by the Blood of Chriſt, is a Charter of *Pardon*, an Act of *Indemnity*, in order to a Reconciliation between God and Man, for Sin was the only Thing that made the Quarrel, and without *ſhedding of Blood is no Remiſſion*, Heb. 9. 22. The Pardon of Sin is that great Bleſſing which is in the Lord's Supper conferr'd upon all true Believers, it is the Foundation of all other Bleſſings, and the Spring of everlaſting Comfort, *Mat.* 9. 2, 3. with a Farewel to the Fruit of the Vine, *v.* 29. Chriſt and his Diſciples had now feaſted together with a deal of Comforts in both an Old Teſtament and a New Teſtament Feſtival, (*Fibula utriuſque Teſtamenti.*) How amiable were theſe Tabernacles? How good to be here? Never ſuch a Heaven upon Earth, as was at this Table, but was not intended for a Perpetuity; he now told them, *Joh.* 16. 17. that *yet a little while and they ſhould not ſee him, and again, a litle while and they ſhould ſee him*, which explains this here.

1. He takes leave of ſuch Communion; *I will not drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine*, that is, *Now I am* no more in the World, *John* 17. 11. I have had enough of it, and am glad to think of leaving it, glad to think this is the laſt Meal. *Farewel this Fruit of the Vine*, this Paſſover-Cup, this Sacramental Wine; dying Saints take their leave of Sacraments, and other the Ordinances of Communion, which they enjoy in this World with Comfort, for the Joy and Glory they *enter into* ſuperſedes them all; when the Sun riſeth, farewel the Candles.

2. He aſſures them of a happy Meeting again at laſt: 'Tis a long, but not an everlaſting Farewel, *until that Day when I drink it new with you.* (1.) Some underſtand it of the Interviews he had with them after his Reſurrection, which was the firſt Step of his Exaltation *into the Kingdom of his Father*; and tho' during thoſe Forty Days he did not converſe with them ſo conſtantly as he had done, yet he did *eat and drink with them*, *Acts* 10. 41. which as it confirm'd their Faith, ſo doubtleſs it greatly *comforted their Hearts*, for they were over-joy'd at it, *Luke* 24. 41. (2.) Others underſtand it of the Joys and Glories of the future State, which the Saints ſhall partake of in everlaſting Communion with the Lord Jeſus, repreſented here by the Pleaſures of a *Banquet of Wine.* That will be the Kingdom of his Father, for unto him ſhall the Kingdom be then deliver'd up, the *Wine of Conſolation*, (16. 7.) will there be always new, never flat or ſowre, as Wine with long keeping; never nauſeous or unpleaſant, as Wine to thoſe that have drank much; but ever *freſh*. Chriſt will himſelf partake of thoſe Pleaſures, 'twas the *Joy ſet before him*, which he had in his Eye, and all his faithful Friends and Followers ſhall partake with him.

Laſtly, Here's the Cloſe of the Solemnity with a Hymn, *v.* 30. They ſung a *Hymn*, or a *Pſalm*; whether the Pſalms which the *Jews* uſually ſung at the cloſe of the Paſſover-Supper, which they call'd the *great Hallel*, *viz.* Pſal. 113. and the five that follow it; or whether ſome *new Hymn* more cloſely adapted to the Occaſion, is uncertain. I rather think the former; had it been new, *John* would not have omitted to record it. *Note*, 1. Singing of Pſalms is a Goſpel-Ordinance. Chriſt's removing the Hymn from the cloſe of the Paſſover to the cloſe of the Lord's Supper, plainy ſpeaks, that he intended that Ordinance ſhould continue in his Church; that as it had not its Birth with the Ceremonial Law, ſo it ſhould not dye with it. 2. 'Tis very proper after the Lord's Supper, as an Expreſſion of our Joy in God through Jeſus Chriſt, and a thankful Acknowledgment of that great Love, wherewith God has loved us in him. 3. It is not unſeaſonable, no, not in Times of Sorrow and Suffering; the Diſciples were in Sorrow, and Chriſt entering upon his Sufferings, and yet they could ſing a Hymn together. Our Spiritual Joy ſhould not be interrupted by outward Afflictions.

When this was done, they *went out into the Mount of Olives*; he would not ſtay in the Houſe to be apprehended, leſt he ſhould bring the Maſter of the Houſe into trouble; nor would he ſtay in the City, leſt it ſhould occaſion an Uproar; but he retir'd into the adjacent Country, *the Mount of Olives*, the ſame *Mount* that *David*, in his Diſtreſs, went *up the Aſcent of* weeping, 2 *Sam.* 15. 30. They had the benefit of Moon-light for this Walk, for the Paſſover was always at the Full Moon. *Note*, After we have received the Lord's Supper, it is good for us to retire for Prayer and Meditation, and to be *alone with God.*

31 Then ſaith Jeſus unto them, All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night: for it is written, I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the ſheep of the flock ſhall be ſcattered abroad. 32 But after I am riſen again, I will go before you into Galilee. 33 Peter anſwered and ſaid unto him, Though all men ſhall be offended becauſe of thee, yet will I never be offended. 34 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 35 Peter ſaid unto him, Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewiſe alſo ſaid all the diſciples.

We have here Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples upon the Way, as they were going to the *Mount of Olives.* Obſerve,

Firſt, A *Prediction* of the Tryal which both he and his Diſciples were now to go through. He here foretels,

1. A diſmal ſcattering Storm juſt ariſing, *v.* 31.

(1.) That they ſhould *all* be *offended becauſe of Chriſt that* very *Night*, *i. e.* They would all be ſo ill frightened with his Sufferings, that they would not have the Courage to ſtick to him in them, but would all baſely deſert him; *Becauſe of me this Night*, ἐν ἐμοὶ ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ, *Becauſe of me, even becauſe of this Night*, ſo it might be read, *i. e.* Becauſe of what happens to me this Night, *Note.* (1.) Offences will come among the Diſciples of Chriſt in an Hour of Trial and Temptation; it cannot be but they ſhould, for they are weak. Satan is buſy, God permits Offences, even they whoſe Hearts are upright, may ſometimes be overtaken with an Offence. (2.) There are ſome Temptations and Offences, the Effects of which are general and univerſal among Chriſt's Diſciples; *All you ſhall be offended.* Chriſt had lately diſcovered to them the Treachery of *Judas*, but let not the reſt be ſecure, tho' there will be but *one Traytor*, they will be all *Deſerters*: This he ſaith to *alarm* them all, that they might all *watch*. (3.) We have need to prepare for *ſudden* Tryals, which may come to Extremity in a very little time. Christ and his Diſciples had eaten their Supper well together in Peace and Quietneſs, yet that very Night prov'd ſuch a Night of Offence. How ſoon may a Storm ariſe? We know not what a Day, or a Night may bring forth, nor what great Event may be in the teeming Womb of a little Time, *Prov.* 27. 1. (4.) The Croſs of Chriſt is the great Stumbling block to many that paſs for *his Diſciples*; both the Croſs he bore for us, 1 *Cor.* 1. 23. and that which we are call'd out to bear for him, *Mat.* 13. 21.

(2.) That herein the *Scripture* would be fulfill'd, *I will ſmite the Shepherd.* 'Tis quoted from *Zech.* 13. 7. (1.) Here's the Smiting of the Shepherd in the Sufferings of Chriſt. God *awakens* the *Sword* of his Wrath againſt the Son of his Love, and he is *ſmitten.* (2.) The *ſcattering of the Sheep* thereupon in the Flight of the Diſciples. When Chriſt fell into the Hands of his Enemies, his Diſciples run, one, one way, and another, another; 'twas each one's Care to ſhift for himſelf, and happy he that could get furtheſt from the Croſs.

2. He gives them the Proſpect of a comfortable gathering together again after this Storm, *v.* 32. *After I am riſen again I will go before you.* Tho' you'll forſake me, I will not forſake you; tho' you fall, I'll take care you ſhall not fall finally, we ſhall have a Meeting again in *Galilee*, I'll *go before you*, as the Shepherd before the Sheep. Some make the laſt Words of that Prophecy, *Zech.* 13. 7. a Promiſe equivalent to this here; *And I will bring my Hand again to the little Ones.* There's no bringing them back but by *bringing his Hand* to them. *Note*, The Captain of our Salvation knows how to rally his Troops, when through their Cowardice they have been put into Diſorder.

Secondly, The *Preſumption* of *Peter*, that he ſhould keep his Integrity whatever happen'd, *v.* 33. *Tho' all Men be offended, yet will I never be offended. Peter* had a great Stock of Confidence, and was upon all Occaſions forward to ſpeak, eſpecially to ſpeak *for himſelf*, and ſometimes it did him a Kindneſs, but at other times it betray'd him, as it did here. Where obſerve,

1. How he *bound himſelf* with a Promiſe, that he would never be *offended in Chriſt*; not only not this Night, but at no time: And if this Promiſe had been made in an humble Dependance upon the Grace of Chriſt, it had been an excellent good Word. Before the Lord's Supper, Chriſt's Diſcourſe led his Diſciples to *examine* themſelves with, *Lord, Is it I?* For that's our preparatory Duty; after the Ordinance, his Diſcourſe leads them to an *engaging* of themſelves to cloſe walking; for that's the ſubſequent Duty.

2. How he *fancied himſelf* better arm'd againſt Temptation than any one elſe, and this was his *Weakneſs* and *Folly*; *tho' all Men ſhall be offended, yet not I.* This was worſe than *Hazael's*, *What? Is thy Servant a Dog?* For he ſuppos'd the thing ſo ill, that *no Man* would do it. But *Peter* ſuppoſeth it poſſible that ſome, nay, that *all Men* might be offended, and yet he eſcape better than any. *Note*, It argues a great Degree of Self-conceit, and Self-confidence, to think our ſelves, either ſafe from the Temptations, or free from the Corruptions that are *common to Men.* We ſhould rather ſay, If it be poſſible others may be offended, there is danger that I may be ſo. But 'tis common for thoſe that think too well of themſelves, eaſily to admit Suſpicions of others. See *Gal.* 6. 1.

Thirdly, The particular Warning Chriſt gave *Peter* of what he would do, *v.* 34. He imagin'd, That in the Hour of Temptation he ſhould come off better than any of them, and Chriſt tells him he ſhould come off worſe. The Warning is introduc'd with a ſolemn Aſſeveration, *Verily, I ſay unto thee*, Take my Word for it, who know thee better than thou knoweſt thy ſelf. He tells him,

1. That he ſhould *deny him. Peter* promis'd he would not be ſo much as *offended* in him, not *deſert* him; but Chriſt tells him he will go further, he will *diſown* him. He ſaid, Tho' all Men, yet not I, and he did it ſooner than any.

2. How quickly he ſhould do it, *this Night* before to morrow, nay, *before Cock-crowing.* Satan's Temptations are compar'd to *Darts*, Eph. 6. 16. which wound e'er we are aware, *ſuddenly doth he ſhoot.* As we know not how near we may be to Trouble, ſo we know not how near we may be to Sin, if God leaves us to our ſelves, we are always in danger.

3. How often he ſhould do it, *thrice.* He thought he ſhould never *once* do ſuch a thing, but Chriſt tells him, he would do it again, and again; for when once our Feet *begin to ſlip*, it's hard to recover our Standing again. The Beginnings of Sin are as the *letting forth of Water.*

Fourthly, Peter's repeated Aſſurances of his Fidelity, *v.* 35. *Though I ſhould dye with thee.* He ſuppos'd the Temptation ſtrong, when he ſaid, *Though all Men do it, yet will not I*: But here he ſuppoſeth it ſtronger when he puts it to the Peril of Life, *though I ſhould dye with thee.* He *knew* what he *ſhould do*, rather dye with Chriſt than deny him, 'twas the Condition of Diſcipleſhip, *Luke* 14. 26. And he *thought* what he *would do*, never be falſe to his Maſter, whatever it coſt him, yet it prov'd he was. It's eaſie to talk *boldly* and *careleſly* of Death at a Diſtance; I'll *rather* dye than do ſuch a thing. But it's not ſo ſoon *done* as *ſaid* when it comes to the ſetting to, and Death ſhews its ſelf in its own Colours.

What *Peter* ſaid, the reſt ſubſcrib'd to; *likewiſe alſo ſaid all the Diſciples. Note*, 1. There is a Proneneſs in good Men to be over-confident of their own Strength and Stability. We are ready to think our ſelves able to grapple with the ſtrongeſt Temptations, to go through the hardeſt and moſt hazardous Services, and to bear the greateſt Afflictions for Chriſt; but 'tis becauſe we do not know our ſelves: 2. Thoſe often fall ſooneſt and fouleſt that are moſt confident of themſelves. Thoſe are leaſt ſafe that are moſt ſecure. Satan is moſt active to ſeduce ſuch, they are moſt off their Guard, and God leaves them to themſelves to humble them. See 1 *Cor.* 10. 12.

36 Then cometh Jeſus with them unto a place called Gethſemane, and ſaith unto the diſciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. 37 And he took with him Peter, and the two ſons of Zebedee, and began to be ſorrowful, and very heavy. 38 Then ſaith he unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me: nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou *wilt.* 40 And he cometh unto the Diſciples, and findeth them aſleep, and ſaith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the ſpirit indeed *is* willing, but the fleſh *is* weak. 42 He went away again the ſecond time, and prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if this cup may not paſs away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43 And he came and found them aſleep again: for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, ſaying the ſame words. 45 Then cometh he to his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your reſt; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of ſinners. 46 Riſe, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

Hitherto were the Preparatives for Chriſt's Sufferings, now we enter upon the bloody Scene. In theſe Verſes we have the Story of his *Agony in the Garden.* This was the beginning of Sorrows to our Lord Jeſus. Now the *Sword of the Lord* began to awake againſt *the Man that was his Fellow*, and *how ſhould it be quiet when the Lord had given it a Charge?* The Clouds had been gathering a good while, and look'd black; he had ſaid ſome Days before, *Now is my Soul troubled*, John 12. 27. But now the Storm began in good earneſt. He *put himſelf into* this Agony, before his Enemies gave him any trouble, to ſhew that he was a Free-will Offering, that his Life was not forc'd from him, but he *laid it down himſelf*, John 10. 18. *Obſerve*,

1. The *Place where* he underwent this mighty Agony; it was *in a Place called* Gethſemane. The Name ſignifies, *Torculi Olei*, an *Olive-Mill*, a *Preſs for Olives*, like a *Wine-preſs*, where they *trod the Olives*, *Mic.* 6. 15. And this was the proper Place for ſuch a thing, at the foot of the *Mount of Olives.* There our Lord Jeſus began his Paſſion, there it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, and cruſh him, that freſh Oyl might flow to all Believers from him; that we might partake of the Root and Fatneſs of that *good Olive.* There he trod the Wine-preſs of his Father's Wrath, and trod it alone.

2. The *Company* he had with him, when he was in this Agony.

(1.) He took all the *Eleven* Diſciples with him to the Garden, except *Judas*, who was at this time otherwiſe employ'd. Tho' it was late in the Night, near Bed-time, yet they ſtuck to him, and took this Walk by Moon-light with him, as *Eliſha*, who, when he was told that his Maſter ſhould ſhortly be taken from his Head, profeſs'd he *would not leave him*, tho' he *led him about*; ſo theſe follow the Lamb whereſoever he goes.

(2.) He took only *Peter*, and *James*, and *John* with him into that Corner of the Garden, where he ſuffer'd *his Agony*, He left the reſt at ſome diſtance, perhaps at the Garden-door, with this Charge, *Sit ye here, while I go pray yonder*; like that of *Abraham* to his *young Men*, Gen. 22. 5. *Abide ye here, and I will go yonder and Worſhip.* (1.) Chriſt went to Pray alone, tho' he had lately Pray'd with his Diſciples, *John* 17. 1. *Note*, Our Prayers with our Families muſt not excuſe us from our ſecret Devotions. (2.) He order'd them to *ſit here. Note*, We muſt take heed of giving any Diſturbance, or Interruption to thoſe who retire for ſecret Communion with God. He took *theſe three* with him, becauſe they had been the Witneſſes of his Glory in his Transfiguration, *Mat.* 17. 1, 2. and that would prepare them to be the Witneſſes of his Agony. *Note*, Thoſe are beſt prepar'd to ſuffer with Chriſt, that have by Faith *beheld his Glory*, and have convers'd with the glorified Saints upon the holy Mount. *If we ſuffer with Chriſt, we ſhall reign with*; *him* and if we hope to *reign with him*, why ſhould we not expect to *ſuffer with him?*

3. The *Agony* it ſelf that *he was in. He began to be ſorrowful, and very heavy.* 'Tis call'd an *Agony*, Luke 22. 44. a *Conflict.* 'Twas not any bodily Pain or Torment that he was in, nothing occurr'd to hurt him; but whatever it was, 'twas *from within*; he troubled himſelf, *John* 11. 33. The words here us'd are very emphatical, he began λυπεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν, to be *ſorrowful* and *in a Conſternation.* The latter word ſignifies ſuch a Sorrow as makes a Man neither *fit* for

Company, nor *deſirous* of it. He had, like a Weight of Lead upon his Spirits. Phyſicians uſe a Word near a-kin to it, to ſignifie the Diſorder a Man is in, in a Fit of an Ague, or beginning of a Fever. Now was fulfill'd, *Pſal.* 22. 14. *I am pour'd out like Water, my Heart is like Wax, it is melted*; and all thoſe Paſſages in the *Pſalms*, where *David* complains of the Sorrow of his Soul, *Pſal.* 18. 4, 6.—42. 7.—55. 4, 5.—69. 1, 2, 3.—88. 3.—116. 3. And *Jonah's* Complaint, *Chap.* 2. 4, 5.

But what was the Cauſe of all this? what was it that put him into this Agony? *Why art thou caſt down*, Bleſſed Jeſus? And *why diſquieted?* Certainly 'twas nothing of Deſpair, or Diſtruſt of his Father, much leſs any Conflict or Struggle with him. As the Father lov'd him, becauſe he laid down his Life for the Sheep, ſo he was entirely ſubject to his Father's Will in it. But,

1. He engag'd in an Encounter with the Powers of Darkneſs; ſo he intimates, *Luke* 22. 52. *This is your Hour, and the Power of Darkneſs*; and he ſpoke of it juſt before, *John* 14. 30, 31. *The Prince of this World comes.* I ſee him rallying his Forces, and preparing for a general Aſſault; but *he has nothing in me*, no Garriſons in his Intereſt, none that ſecretly hold Correſpondence with him; and therefore his Attempts, tho' fierce, will be fruitleſs; but *as the Father gave me Commandment, ſo I do*; however it be, I muſt have a Struggle with him, the Field muſt be fairly fought, and therefore, *ariſe, let us go hence*, let us haſten to the Field of Battle, and meet the Enemy. Now [illegible] the cloſe Engagement in ſingle Combat between *Michael* and the Dragon, hand to hand; *now is the Judgment of this World*, the great Cauſe is now to be determin'd, the deciſive Battle fought, in which the *Prince of this World* will certainly be beaten, and *caſt out*, John 12. 31. Chriſt when he works Salvation, is deſcrib'd like a Champion taking the Field, *Iſa.* 59. 16, 17, 18. Now the Serpent makes his fierceſt Onſet on the Seed of the Woman, and directs his Sting, the Sting of Death, to his very Heart; *animamque in vulnere ponit.*

2. He was now *bearing* the *Iniquities*, which the Father laid upon him, and by this Sorrow and Amazement he *accommodated himſelf* to his Undertaking. The Sufferings he was entring upon were for *our Sins*, they were all made to meet upon him, and he knew it. And therefore, as we are *oblig'd* to be *ſorry* for our *particular Sins*, ſo was he *griev'd* for the *Sins of us all.* So Biſhop *Pearſon*, p. 191. Now, *in the Valley of Jehoſaphat*, where Chriſt now was, God *gather'd all Nations*, and *pleaded with them in his* Son, *Joel* 3. 2, 12. He knew the Malignity of the Sins that were laid upon him, how provoking to God, how ruining to Man, and theſe being all ſet in order before him, and charg'd upon him, he was *ſorrowful* and *very heavy.* Now it was that *Iniquities took hold on him*; ſo that he was *not able to look up*, as was foretold concerning him, *Pſal.* 40. 7, 12.

3. He had a full and clear Proſpect of all the Sufferings that were before him: He foreſaw the Treachery of *Judas*, the Unkindneſs of *Peter*, the Malice of the *Jews*, and their baſe Ingratitude. He knew that he ſhould now in a few Hours be ſcourged, ſpit upon, crown'd with Thorns, nail'd to the Croſs, Death in its moſt dreadful Appearances; Death in Pomp attended with all its Terrors, look'd him in the Face, and this made him ſorrowful, eſpecially becauſe it was the Wages of our Sin, which he had undertaken to ſatisfie for. It is true, the Martyrs that have ſuffer'd for Chriſt, have entertain'd the greateſt Torments, and the moſt terrible Death, without any ſuch Sorrow and Conſternation, have call'd theirs Priſons their delectable Orchards, and a Bed of Flames, a Bed of Roſes: But then (1.) Chriſt was now denied the Supports and Comforts which they had, *i. e.* he denied them *to himſelf*, and *his Soul refuſed to be comforted*, not in *Paſſion*, but in *Juſtice* to his Undertaking. Their Chearfulneſs under the Croſs was owing to the Divine Favour, which for the preſent was ſuſpended from the Lord Jeſus. (2.) His Sufferings were of another Nature from theirs. St. *Paul*, when he is to be offered upon the Sacrifice and Service of the Saints Faith, can *joy and rejoyce with them all*; but to be offer'd a Sacrifice to make Atonement for Sin, is quite a different Caſe. On the Saints Croſs there is a Bleſſing pronounc'd, which enables them to rejoice under it, *Mat.* 5. 10, 12. But to Chriſt's Croſs there was a Curſe annex'd, which made him *ſorrowful*, and *very heavy* under it. And *his Sorrow* under the Croſs was the Foundation of their Joy under it.

4. His Complaint of this Agony. Finding himſelf under the Arreſts of his Paſſion, he goes to his Diſciples, *v.* 38. And,

1. He acquaints them with his Condition, *My Soul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto Death.* It gives ſome little Eaſe to a troubled Spirit, to have a Friend ready to unboſom it ſelf to, and give vent to its Sorrows. Chriſt here tells them (1.) what was the *Seat* of his Sorrow. It was *his Soul* that was now in an *Agony.* This proves that Chriſt had a true *human* Soul; for he ſuffered not only in his Body, but *in his Soul.* We had ſinn'd both againſt our own Bodies, and againſt our Souls, both us'd in Sin, and both wrong'd by it, and therefore Chriſt ſuffered *in Soul* as well as *in Body.* (2.) What was the *Degree* of his Sorrow. He was *exceeding ſorrowful*, περίλυπος, *compaſſed about* with Sorrow on all hands. 'Twas Sorrow in the higheſt Degree, *even unto Death*; it was a killing Sorrow, ſuch Sorrow as no mortal Man could bear and live. He was ready to dye for Grief, they were Sorrows of Death. (3.) The Duration of it, it will continue, even *unto Death.* My Soul will be ſorrowful as long as it is in this Body; I ſee no other Out-let but Death. He now *began* to be ſorrowful, and never ceas'd to be ſo till he ſaid, *It is finiſhed*; that Grief is now *finiſhed* which *began* in the Garden: 'Twas propheſy'd of Chriſt, that he ſhould be a *Man of Sorrows*, Iſa. 53. 3. he was ſo all along, we never read that he laughed; but all his Sorrows hitherto were nothing to this.

2. He beſpeaks their Company and Attendance; *Tarry ye here, and watch with me.* Sure he was deſtitute indeed of Help, when he intreated theirs, whom he knew would be but miſerable Comforters; but he would hereby teach us the Benefit of the Communion of Saints. 'Tis good to *have*, and therefore good to ſeek the Aſſiſtance of our Brethren, when at any time we are in an Agony; for *two is better than one.* What he ſaid to them, he ſaith to all, *watch*, Mark 13. *ult.* not only watch *for him*, in expectation of his *future coming*, but watch *with him*, in application to our *preſent Work.*

5. What paſſed between him and his Father when he was in this Agony. Being in an Agony he pray'd. Prayer is never out of Seaſon, but eſpecially ſeaſonable in an Agony.

1. Obſerve the *Place* where he pray'd. *He went a little further*, withdrew from them, that the Scripture might be fulfill'd, *I have trod the Wine-preſs alone*; he *retir'd* for Prayer; a troubled Soul finds moſt eaſy when it is alone with God, who underſtands the broken Language of Sighs and Groans. *Calvin*'s devout Remarks upon this is worth tranſcribing, *Utile eſt ſeorſim Orare, tunc enim magis familiariter ſeſe denudat fidelis animus, & ſimplicius ſua vota, gemitus, curas, pavores, ſpes, & gaudia in Dei ſinum exonerat.* Chriſt has hereby taught us, that ſecret Prayer muſt be made ſecretly. Yet ſome think, that even the Diſciples whom he left at the Garden-door overheard him; for 'tis ſaid *Heb.* 5. 7. they were *ſtrong Cries.*

2. His *Poſture* in Prayer. He *fell on his Face*; his lying proſtrate notes, (1.) the Agony he was in, and the Extremity of his Sorrow. *Job* in great Grief *fell on the Ground*, and great Anguiſh is expreſs'd by *rolling in the Duſt*, Mich. 1. 10. (2.) His Humility in Prayer. This Poſture was an Expreſſion of his εὐλάβεια, his *reverential Fear*, ſpoken of *Heb.* 5. 7. with which he offer'd up *theſe Prayers:* And it was *in the Days of his Fleſh*, in his Eſtate of Humiliation, to which he hereby accommodated himſelf.

3. The *Prayer* it ſelf; wherein we may obſerve three Things.

1. The Title he gives to God; O *my Father.* As thick as the Cloud was, he could ſee God as a Father through it. *Note*, In all our Addreſſes to God, we ſhould eye him as a Father, as our Father, and 'tis in a ſpecial manner comfortable to do ſo when we are in an Agony. 'Tis a pleaſing String to harp upon at ſuch a Time, *my Father*; whither ſhould the Child go when any thing grieves him but to *his Father.*

2. The Favour he begs; *If it be poſſible let this Cup paſs from me.* He calls his Sufferings *a Cup*, not a River, not a Sea, but a Cup, which we ſhall ſoon ſee the bottom of. When we are under Troubles, we ſhould make the beſt, the leaſt of them, and not aggravate them. *A Cup*, becauſe allotted him, as at Feaſts a Cup was ſet to every Meſs. He begs this Cup might *paſs from him*, i. e. that he might avoid the Sufferings now at hand; or at leaſt that they might be ſhorten'd. This ſpeaks no more but that he was really and truly Man, and as a Man, he could not but be averſe to Pain and Sufferings: This is the firſt and ſimple Act of Man's Will, to ſtart back from that which is ſenſibly grievous to us, and to deſire the Prevention and Removal of it. The Law of Self-preſervation is impreſs'd upon the innocent Nature of Man, and rules there 'till *over-rul'd* by ſome other Law; therefore Chriſt admitted, and expreſs'd a Reluctancy to Sufferings, to ſhew that he was *taken from among Men*, Heb. 5. 1. was touch'd with the feelings of our Infirmities, *Heb.* 4. 15. and *tempted as we are, yet without Sin. Note*, A *Prayer of Faith againſt an Affliction*, may very well conſiſt with the *Patience of Hope under an Affliction.* When *David* had ſaid, *I was dumb, I open'd not my Mouth, becauſe thou didſt it*; yet his very next Words, *Remove thy Stroke away from me*, Pſal. 39. 9, 10. But obſerve the Proviſo, *If it be poſſible.* If God may be glorify'd, Man ſav'd, and the Ends of his Undertaking anſwered without his drinking of this bitter Cup, he deſires to be excus'd, otherwiſe not. What we cannot do with the ſecuring our great End, we muſt reckon to be in effect *impoſſible*, Chriſt did ſo. *Id poſſimus, quod jure poſſimus.* We *can* do nothing, not only we *may* do nothing againſt the Truth.

3. His intire Submiſſion to, and Acquaintance in the Will of God however. *Nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Not that the human Will of Chriſt was *adverſe*, or *averſe* to the Divine Will, only in its firſt Act *divers* from it; to which in the ſecond Act of the Will, which compares and chuſes, he freely ſubmits himſelf. *Note*, (1.) Our Lord Jeſus, tho' he had a quick Senſe of the extreme Bitterneſs of the Sufferings he was to undergo, yet was freely willing to ſubmit to them for our Redemption and Salvation, and *offer'd himſelf*, and *gave himſelf* for us. (2.) The Reaſon of Chriſt's Submiſſion to his Sufferings, was his *Father's* Will, *as thou wilt*; as *thou wilt*, v. 39. He grounds his own Willingneſs upon the Father's Will, and reſolves the Matter wholly into that; therefore he did what he did, and did it with Delight, becauſe it was the *Will of God*, Pſal. 40. 7. This he had often referr'd to as that which put him upon, and carry'd him thro' his whole Undertaking; *this is the Father's Will*, John 6. 39, 40. This he ſought, *John* 5. 30. 'twas his Meat and Drink to do it, *John* 4. 39. (3.) In Conformity to this Example of Chriſt, we muſt drink of the bitter Cup which God puts into our Hands, be it never ſo bitter; tho' Nature ſtruggle, Grace muſt ſubmit. We then are Spirited as Chriſt was, when our Wills are in every thing melted into the Will of God, tho' never ſo diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood; *the Will of the Lord be done*, Acts 21. 14.

4. 'The Repetition of the Prayer. He went away again the *ſecond time* and prayed, *v.* 42. and again, the *third Time*, *v.* 44. and all to the ſame purpoſe; only, as it is related here, he did not in the *ſecond* and *third* Prayer expreſly ask that the Cup might paſs from him, as he had done in the firſt. *Note*, Tho' we may pray to God to prevent and remove an Affliction; yet our chief Errand, and that which we ſhould moſt inſiſt upon, muſt be, that he will give us Grace to *bear it well*. It ſhould be more our care to get our Troubles ſanctified, and our Hearts ſatisfied under them, than to get them taken away. *He pray'd, ſaying, Thy Will be done. Note*, Prayer is the offering up, not only of our *Deſires*, but of our *Reſignations* to God. It amounts to an acceptable Prayer, when at any time we are in Diſtreſs, to *refer our ſelves to God*, and to commit our Way and Work to him. *Thy Will be done.* The *third time* he *ſaid the ſame Words*, τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, the *ſame word*, i. e. the ſame *Matter* or *Argument*; he ſpoke to the ſame purpoſe; we have reaſon to think this was not all he ſaid, for it ſhould ſeem by *v.* 40. that he continued *an hour* in his Agony and Prayer; but whatever more he ſaid, it was *to this effect*, reſenting his approaching Sufferings, and yet reſigning himſelf to God's Will in them. In the Expreſſions of which, we may be ſure he was not ſtraiten'd.

But what Anſwer had he to this Prayer? for certain 'twas not made *in vain*; he that heard him always, did not deny him now: 'Tis true the Cup *did not paſs* from him, for he *withdrew* that Petition, and did not inſiſt upon it, (if he had, for ought I know, the Cup had paſs'd away) but he had an Anſwer to his Prayer, for (1.) he was *ſtrengthned with Strength in his Soul*, in the Day when he cried, *Pſal.* 138. 3. and that was a real Anſwer, *Luke* 22. 43. (2.) He was deliver'd from that which he fear'd, which was, leſt by Impatience and Diſtruſt he ſhould offend his Father, and ſo diſable himſelf to go on with his Undertaking, *Heb.* 5. 7. In anſwer to his Prayer, God provided that he ſhould not fail, or be *diſcouraged*.

6. What paſs'd between him and his *Three Diſciples* at this time; and there we may obſerve,

1. The *Fault* they were guilty of; that when he was in his Agony, Sorrowful and Heavy, Sweating, and Wreſtling, and Praying, they were ſo little concern'd that they could not keep awake; he comes and *finds them aſleep*, v. 40. The ſtrangeneſs of the thing ſhould have rouz'd their Spirits to turn aſide now and ſee this great Sight, the Buſh burning, and yet not conſum'd; much more ſhould their Love to their Maſter, and their Care concerning him, have oblig'd them to a more cloſe and vigilant Attendance on him; yet they were ſo dull that they could not keep their Eyes open. What had become of us, if Chriſt had been now as ſleepy as his Diſciples were? 'Tis well for us that our Salvation is in the hand of one who *neither ſlumbers nor ſleeps*. Chriſt beſpoke them to watch with him, as if he expected ſome Succour from them, and yet they ſlept; ſurely 'twas the unkindeſt thing that could be. When *David* wept at this Mount of *Olives*, all his Followers wept with him, 2 *Sam.* 15. 30. But when the Son of *David* was here in Tears, his Followers were aſleep. His Enemies that *watch'd for him* were wakeful enough, *Mark* 14. 12. but his Diſciples that ſhould have watch'd *with him* were aſleep. Lord, what is Man? what are the beſt of Men when God leaves them to themſelves? *Note*, Careleſneſs, and carnal Security, eſpecially when Chriſt is in his Agony, is a great Fault in any, but eſpecially in thoſe who profeſs to be neareſt in Relation to him. The Church of Chriſt, which is his Body, is often in an *Agony*, Fightings without, and Fears within, and ſhall we be aſleep then? like *Gallio*, that *cared for none of thoſe things*; or thoſe, *Amos*, 6. 6. that lay at eaſe, and were not *grieved for the affliction* of *Joſeph*.

2. Chriſt's *Favour* to them notwithſtanding. Perſons in Sorrow are too apt to be croſs and peeviſh with thoſe about them, and to take it very heinouſly if they but ſeem to neglect them; but Chriſt in his *Agony* is as *meek* as ever, and carries it as patiently towards his *Followers*, as towards his *Father*, and is not apt to take things ill.

When Chriſt's Diſciples put this Slight upon him,

1. He *came to them*, as if he expected to receive ſome Comfort from them; and if they had put him in mind of what they had heard from him concerning his Reſurrection and Glory, perhaps it might have been ſome help to him; but inſtead of that, they added Grief to his Sorrow, and yet he *came to them*; more careful for them than they were for themſelves; when he was moſt engag'd, yet he came to *look after them*, for thoſe that were given him were upon his Heart living and dying.

2. He gave them a *gentle Reproof*, for as many as he loves he rebukes; he directed it to *Peter*, who us'd to *ſpeak* for them; let him now *hear* for them. The Reproof was very melting, *What, Could ye not watch with me one hour?* He ſpeaks as one amaz'd to ſee them ſo ſtupid; every word is aggravating, if it were proſecuted. Conſider, (1.) *who they were*, could not *ye* watch? ye my Diſciples and Followers; no wonder if others neglect me, if *the Earth ſit ſtill* and *be at reſt*, Zech. 1. 11. But from you I expected better things. (2.) Who *he was?* watch *with me*: If one of your ſelves were ill, and in an Agony, it would be very *unkind* not to *watch with him*; but 'tis *undutiful* not to watch with *your Maſter*, who has long watch'd over you for good, has led you, and fed you, and taught you, born you, and born with you; Do you thus requite him? He *awoke* out of *his Sleep* to help them when they were in diſtreſs, *Matt.* 8. 26. and could not they keep awake, at leaſt to ſhew their Goodwill to him? eſpecially conſidering that he was now ſuffering *for them*, in an Agony *for them*; *Jam tua res agitur*. (3.) How ſmall a thing it was that he expected from them, only to *watch with him*: If he had bid them do ſome great thing, had bid them be in an *Agony* with him, or *dye with him*, they thought they could have done it, and yet they could not do it when he only deſir'd them to *watch with him*, 2 Kings 5. 13. (4.) How ſhort a time it was that he expected it, but *one Hour*; they were not ſet upon the Guard whole Nights, as the Prophet was, *Iſa.* 21. 8. only *one hour*. Sometimes he *continued all Night in Prayer to God*, but did not then expect his Diſciples ſhould watch with him; only now, when he had but one Hour to ſpend in Prayer.

3. He gave them good Counſel; *Watch and Pray, that ye enter not into Temptation*, v. 41. (1.) There was an Hour of Temptation drawing on, and very near; The Troubles of Chriſt were Temptations to his Followers to disbelieve and diſtruſt him, to deny, and deſert him, and renounce all Relation to him. (2.) There was danger of their *entring into the Temptation*, as into a Snare, or Trap, of their entring into a Parley with it, or a good Opinion of it, of their being influenced by it, and inclining to comply with it, which is the firſt ſtep towards being overcome by it. (3.) He therefore exhorts them to Watch and Pray. Watch *with me*, and Pray *with me*; while they were ſleeping they loſt the benefit of joyning in Chriſt's Prayer. Watch *your ſelves*, and Pray *your ſelves*. Watch and Pray againſt this preſent Temptation to Drowſineſs and Security; *Pray* that you may *watch*. Beg of God by his Grace to keep you awake now there is occaſion. When we are drowſie in the Worſhip of God, we ſhould Pray, as a good Chriſtian once did, The Lord *deliver me from this ſleepy Devil!* Lord, *quicken thou me in thy Way*. Or, Watch and Pray againſt the further Temptation you will be aſſaulted with; *Watch and Pray*, leſt this Sin prove the Inlet of many more. *Note*, When we find our ſelves entering into Temptation, we have need to *Watch and Pray*.

4. He kindly excus'd for them. *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Fleſh is weak.* We do not read of one word they had to ſay for themſelves, ſenſe of their own Weakneſs ſtop'd their Mouth; but then he had a tender word to ſay on their behalf, for 'tis his Office to be an Advocate; in this he ſets us an Example of that Love, which *covers a multitude of Sins*. He conſider'd their Frame, and did not chide them, for he remember'd that *they were but Fleſh*, and the Fleſh is *weak*, tho' the Spirit be *willing*, Pſal. 78. 38. *Note*, (1) Chriſt's Diſciples, as long as they are here in this World, have *Bodies* as well as *Souls*, and a Principle of remaining Corruption, as well as of reigning Grace, like *Jacob* and *Eſau* in the ſame Womb, *Canaanites* and *Iſraelites* in the ſame Land, *Gal.* 5. 17, 24. (2.) It is the Unhappineſs and Burthen of Chriſt's Diſciples, that their Bodies cannot keep pace with their Souls in Works of Piety and Devotion; but are many a time a Cloud, and Clog to them. That when the *Spirit* is free, and diſpos'd to that which is good, the Fleſh is averſe and indiſpos'd. This St. *Paul* laments, *Rom.* 7. 22. *With my Mind I ſerve the Law of God, but with my Fleſh the Law of Sin.* Our Impotency in the Service of God, is the great Iniquity and Infidelity of our Nature, and it ariſeth from theſe ſad Remainders of Corruption, which are the conſtant Grief and Burthen of God's People. (3.) Yet it is our comfort that our Maſter graciouſly conſiders this, and accepts the Willingneſs of the Spirit, and pities and pardons the Weakneſs and Infirmity of the Fleſh; for we are *under Grace*, and *not under the Law*.

(5.) Tho' they continu'd dull and ſleepy, he did not any further *rebuke them for it*; for tho' we *daily offend*, yet he will not *always chide*. (1.) When he came to them the *ſecond time*, we do not find that he ſaid any thing to them, *v.* 43. he *findeth them aſleep again*. One would have thought he had ſaid enough to them to keep them awake, but it's hard to recover from a Spirit of Slumber. Carnal Security, when once it prevails, is not eaſily ſhaken off. *Their Eyes were heavy*, which intimates that they ſtrove againſt it as much as they could, but were overcome by it, like the Spouſe; *I ſleep, but my Heart awakes*, *Cant.* 5. 2. and therefore their Maſter look'd upon them with Compaſſion. (2.) When he came the *third time* he left them to be alarm'd with the approaching *Danger*, *v.* 45, 46. *Sleep on now, and take your reſt.* This is ſpoken ironically now ſleep if you can, ſleep if you dare; I would not diſturb you, if *Judas* and his Band of Men would not. See here how Chriſt deals with thoſe that ſuffer themſelves to be overcome by Security, and will not be awaken'd out of it. (1.) Sometimes he gives them up to the Power of it; *Sleep on now.* He that will ſleep, let him ſleep ſtill. The Curſe of Spiritual Slumber is the juſt Puniſhment of the Sin of it, *Rom.* 11. 8. *Hoſ.* 4. 17. (2.) Many times he ſends ſome ſtartling Judgment to awaken thoſe that would not be wrought upon by the Word; and thoſe who will not be alarm'd by Reaſons and Arguments, had better be alarm'd by *Swords* and *Spears*, than left to periſh in their Security. Let thoſe that would not *believe* be made to *feel*.

As to the Diſciples here, (1.) Their Maſter gave them notice of the near Approach of his Enemies, who, 'tis, likely were now within ſight or hearing, for they came with *Candles* and *Torches*, and 'tis likely made a *great noiſe*. The *Son of Man is betray'd into the Hands of Sinners*. And again, *He is at hand that doth betray me. Note*, Chriſt's Sufferings were no ſurprize to him, he knew what and when he was to ſuffer. By this time the Extremity of his Agony was pretty well over, or at leaſt diverted; while with an undaunted Courage he addreſſeth himſelf to the next Encounter, as a Champion to the Combat. (2.) He call'd them to *riſe* and *be going*. Not riſe, and let us *flee* from the Danger, but riſe, and let us go *meet* it; before he had pray'd, he fear'd his Sufferings, but now has got over his Fears, *Eph.* 4. 16. But (3.) he intimates to them their Folly in ſleeping away the Time which they ſhould have ſpent in Preparation, and now it found them unready, and was a Terror to them.

47 And while he yet ſpake, lo, Judas one of the twelve came, and with him a great multitude with ſwords and ſtaves from the chief prieſts and elders of the people. 48 Now he that betrayed him, gave them a ſign, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he, hold him faſt. 49 And forthwith he came to Jeſus, and ſaid, Hail maſter; and kiſſed him. 50 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they and laid hands on Jeſus, and took him. 51 And behold, one of them which were with Jeſus, ſtretched out his hand, and drew his ſword, and ſtruck a ſervant of the high prieſts, and ſmote off his ear. 52 Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Put up again thy ſword into his place: for all they that take the ſword, ſhall periſh with the ſword. 53 Thinkeſt thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he ſhall preſently give me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then ſhall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be? 55 In that ſame hour ſaid Jeſus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as againſt a thief with ſwords and ſtaves for to take me? I ſat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. 56 But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the diſciples forſook him, and fled.

We are here told how the bleſſed Jeſus was *ſeized*, and *taken into Cuſtody*; this follow'd immediately upon his Agony, *while he yet ſpake*; for from the beginning to the cloſe of his Paſſion, he had not the leaſt Intermiſſion, or Breathing-time, but *Deep call'd unto Deep*. His Trouble hitherto was rais'd within himſelf; but now the Scene is chang'd, now the *Philiſtines* are upon thee, thou bleſſed *Sampſon*; the *Breath of our Noſtrils, the Anointed of the Lord is taken in their Pits*, *Lam.* 4. 20.

Now concerning the apprehending of the Lord Jeſus: Obſerve,

1. Who the Perſons were that were *employ'd* in it. (1.) Here was *Judas, one of the Twelve*, in the Head of this Black-guard. He was *Guide to him that took Jeſus*, Acts 1. 16. without his help they could not have found him in this Retirement. *Behold*, and wonder; the firſt that appear'd with his Enemies is one of his own Diſciples, that an hour or two ago was *eating Bread* with him. (2.) Here was with him a *great Multitude*, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *Lord, how are they increaſed that trouble me?* Pſal. 3. 1. This *Multitude* was made up partly of a Detachment out of the Guards, that were poſted in the Tower of *Antonia* by the *Roman* Governour; theſe were *Gentiles*, Sinners as Chriſt calls them, *v.* 45. partly of the Servants and Officers of the High-prieſt, and they were *Jews*; they that were at variance with each other, agreed againſt Chriſt.

2. How they were *arm'd* for this Enterprize.

1. What *Weapons* they were *arm'd with*; they came with *Swords and Staves*. The Roman Soldiers, no doubt, had Swords; the Servants of the Prieſts, thoſe of them that had not Swords, brought *Staves*, or *Clubs*. *Furor arma miniſtrat.* They were not regular Troops, but a tumultuous Rabble. But wherefore is this ado? If they had been ten times as many, they could not have taken him, had he not yielded himſelf; and his hour being come for him to give up himſelf, all this Force was needleſs. When a Butcher goes into the Field to take out a *Lamb for the Slaughter*, doth he uſe to raiſe the Militia, and come arm'd? No, he needs not, yet is there all this Force us'd to ſeize the *Lamb of God*.

2. What *Warrant* they were *arm'd with*; they *came from the Chief Prieſts*, and *Elders of the People*; this armed Multitude was ſent by them upon this Errand. He was taken up by a Warrant from the great *Sanhedrin*, as a Perſon obnoxious to them. *Pilate* the Roman Governour gave them no Warrant to ſearch for him, he had no jealouſie of him; but they were Men who pretended to Religion, and preſided in the Affars of the Church, that were active in this Proſecution, and were the moſt ſpiteful Enemies Chriſt had. 'Twas a Sign he was ſupported by a Divine Power, for by all Earthly Powers he was not only deſerted, but oppos'd; *Pilate* upbraided him with it, *Thine own Nation, and the Chief Prieſts deliver'd thee to me*, John 18. 34.

3. The manner how it was done, and what paſs'd at that time.

1. How *Judas* betray'd him; he did his Buſineſs effectually, and his Reſolution in this Wickedneſs may ſhame us who fail in that which is Good. Obſerve,

1. The *Inſtructions* he gave to the Soldiers, *v.* 48. he *gave them a Sign*; as Commander of the Party in this Action he gives the Word, or Signal. He *gave them a Sign*, leſt by miſtake they ſhould ſeize one of the Diſciples inſtead of him, who had ſo lately ſaid in *Judas*'s hearing, they would be willing to *dye for him*. What abundance of Caution was here not to *miſs him, that ſame is he*, and when they had him in their hands, not to *loſe* him, *hold him faſt*; for he had ſometimes eſcaped from thoſe who thought to ſecure him; as *Luke* 4. 30. Tho' the *Jews* who frequented the Temple could not but know him, yet the Roman Soldiers perhaps had never ſeen him, and the Sign was to direct them; and *Judas* by his Kiſs, intended not only to diſtinguiſh him, but to *detain* him while they came behind him, and laid hands on him.

2. The *diſſembling Compliment* he gave his Maſter. *He came* cloſe up *to Jeſus*; ſure now, if ever, his wicked Heart will relent; ſure when he comes to look him in the Face, he will either be aw'd by the Majeſty, or charm'd by the Beauty of it. Dare he come into his very Sight and Preſence to betray him? *Peter* deny'd Chriſt, but when *the Lord turn'd and look'd upon him*, he relented preſently; but *Judas* comes up to his Maſter's Face and betrays him. *Me mihi (perfide) prodis? me mihi prodis?* He ſaid, *Hail Maſter, and kiſſed him.* It ſhould ſeem our Lord Jeſus had been wont to admit his Diſciples to ſuch a degree of Familiarity with him, as to give them his Cheek to kiſs, after they had been any while abſent, which *Judas* villainouſly us'd to facilitate his Treaſon. A Kiſs is a Token of Allegiance and Friendſhip, *Pſal.* 2. 12. But *Judas*, when he broke all the Laws of Love and Duty, profan'd this ſacred Sign to ſerve his Purpoſe. *Note*, There are many that betray Chriſt with *a Kiſs*, and *Hail Maſter*; who, under Pretence of doing him honour, betray and undermine the intereſts of his Kingdom. *Mel in Ore, Fel in Corde.* καταφιλεῖν οὐκ ἔστι φιλεῖν, *Philo. Jud.* *Joab*'s *Kiſs* and *Judas*'s were much alike.

3. The *Entertainment* his Maſter gave him, *v.* 50.

1. He calls him *Friend.* If he had call'd him Villain and Traytor, Raca, and thou Fool and Child of the Devil, he had not *miſcall'd* him; but he would teach us under the greateſt Provocation to forbear Bitterneſs and evil Speaking, and to ſhew *all Meekneſs. Friend*, for a Friend he *had been*, and *ſhould* have been, and *ſeem'd* to be: Thus he upbraids him, as *Abraham*, when he call'd the rich Man in Hell *Son.* He calls him *Friend*, becauſe he further'd his Sufferings, and ſo *befriended* him, whereas he call'd *Peter Satan*, for attempting to hinder them.

2. He asks him, *Wherefore art thou come?* Is it Peace, *Judas?* explain thy ſelf; if thou come as an Enemy, what means this Kiſs? If as a Friend, What mean theſe Swords and Staves? Wherefore art thou come? What harm have I done thee? Wherein have I wearied thee? ἐφ' ᾧ πάρει. *Wherefore art thou preſent?* Why hadſt thou not ſo much Shame left thee as to keep out of ſight, which thou mighteſt have done, and yet have given the Officers notice where I was? This was an Inſtance of great Impudence for him to be ſo forward and bare-fac'd in this ill thing. But it is uſual for Apoſtates from Religion to be the moſt bitter Enemies to it; witneſs *Julian.* Thus *Judas* did his part.

2. How the Officers and Soldiers ſecur'd him. *Then came they and laid hands on Jeſus, and took him*; they made him their Priſoner. *How! were they not afraid to ſtretch forth their Hands againſt the Lord's Anointed?* We may well imagine what rude and cruel Hands they were which this barbarous Multitude laid on Chriſt; and now 'tis probable they handled him the more roughly for their being ſo often diſappointed, when they ſought to *lay hands* on him. They could not have taken him, if he had not ſurrender'd himſelf, and been delivered *by the determined Counſels and Foreknowledge of God*, Acts 2. 23. He who ſaid concerning his Anointed Servants, *Touch them not*, and *do them no harm*, Pſal. 105. 14, 15. ſpared not his *Anointed* Son, but *delivered him up for us all*; and again, *gave his Strength into Captivity, his Glory into the Enemies hands*, Pſal. 78. 61. See what was the Complaint of *Job*, Chap. 16. 11. *God hath delivered me to the Ungodly*, and apply that, and other Paſſages in that Book to *Job*, as a Type of Chriſt.

Our Lord Jeſus was *made a Priſoner*, becauſe he would in all things be treated as a Malefactor, puniſhed for our Crime, and as a Surety under Arreſt for our Debt. The *Yoke of our Tranſgreſſions* was bound by the Father's Hand upon the Neck of the Lord Jeſus, *Lam.* 1. 14. He became a Priſoner, that he might ſet us at liberty; for he ſaid, If ye ſeek me, *let theſe go their way*, John 18. 8. And thoſe are free indeed whom he makes ſo.

3. How *Peter fought* for Chriſt, and was *check'd* for his pains. 'Tis here only ſaid to be *one of them that was with Jeſus in the Garden*, but, *John* 18. 10. we are told, it was *Peter* who ſignaliz'd himſelf upon this Occaſion.

1. *Peter*'s *Raſhneſs*, *v.* 51. He *drew his Sword.* They had but two Swords among them all, *Luke* 22. 38. and one of them, it ſeems, fell to *Peter*'s ſhare; and now he thought 'twas time to draw it, and he laid about him as if he would have done ſome great Matters, but all the Execution he did was the *cutting* off an Ear from a Servant of the High-prieſts, deſigning, 'tis likely, to cleave him down the head, becauſe he ſaw him more forward than the reſt in laying hands on Chriſt, he miſs'd his Blow. But if he would be ſtriking, in my mind, he ſhould rather have aim'd at *Judas*, and have mark'd him for a Rogue. *Peter* had talk'd much, and more what he would do for his Maſter, he would *lay down his Life for him*; yea, that he would, and now he will be as good as his word, and venture his Life to reſcue his Maſter; and thus far was commendable, that he had a great Zeal for Chriſt, and his Honour and Safety; but it was not *according to Knowledge*, nor guided by Diſcretion; for (1.) he did it *without Warrant*; ſome of the Diſciples ask'd indeed, *Shall we ſmite with the Sword*, Luke 22. 49. But *Peter* ſtruck before they had an Anſwer. We muſt ſee, not only our *Cauſe good*, but our *Call clear*, before

we *draw the Sword*, and be able to ſhew by what Authority we do it, and who gave us that Authority. (2.) He indiſcreetly expos'd himſelf and his fellow Diſciples to the Rage of the Multitude; for what could they with two Swords do againſt a Band of Men?

2. The *Rebuke* which our Lord Jeſus gave him, *v.* 52. *Put up again thy Sword into his place:* He doth not command the Officers and Soldiers to put up the Swords that were drawn againſt him, he left them to the Judgment of God, who judges them that are without, but commands *Peter* to put up his Sword, doth not chide him for what he had done, becauſe done out of good Will, but *ſtops the progreſs of his Arms*, and provides that it ſhould not be drawn into a Precedent. Chriſt's Errand into the World was to make Peace. *Note*, The *Weapons of our Warfare are not Carnal*, but *Spiritual*, and Chriſt's Miniſters, tho' they are his Soldiers, yet do not *war after the Fleſh*, 2 Cor. 10. 3, 4. Not that the Law of Chriſt overthrows either the Law of Nature, or the Laws of Nations, as far as thoſe warrant Subjects to ſtand up in defence of their Civil Rights and Liberties, and their Religion, when 'tis incorporated with them; but it provides for the Preſervation of publick Peace and Order, by forbidding private Perſons, *quà tales*, to reſiſt the Powers that be; nay, we have a general Precept, that we *reſiſt not Evil*, Mat. 5. 39. nor will Chriſt have his Miniſters propagate his Religion by Force and Arms, *Religio cogi non poteſt, & defendenda non occidendo ſed moriendo. Lactant. Inſt.* As Chriſt forbad his Diſciples the Sword of Juſtice, *Mat.* 20. 25, 26. ſo here the Sword of War. Chriſt bid *Peter* put up his Sword, and never bid him draw it again; yet that which *Peter* is here blam'd for, is his doing it *unſeaſonable*; the Hour was come for Chriſt to ſuffer and dye, he knew, *Peter* knew it, the *Sword of the Lord was drawn againſt him*, *Zech.* 13. 7. and for *Peter* to draw his Sword for him, was like *Maſter, ſpare thy ſelf.*

Three Reaſons Chriſt gives to *Peter* for this Rebuke.

(1.) His *drawing the Sword* would be *dangerous* to himſelf, to his Fellow-Diſciples: They that *take the Sword ſhall periſh with the Sword*; they that uſe Violence, fall by Violence, and Men haſten and increaſe their own Troubles, by bluſtring bloody Methods of Self-defence: They that *take the Sword*, before it's given them, that uſe it without Warrant or Call, expoſe themſelves to the Sword of War, or publick Juſtice. Had it not been for the ſpecial Care and Providence of the Lord Jeſus, *Peter* and the reſt of them had, for ought I know, been cut in pieces preſently. *Grotius* gives another and a probable Senſe of this Blow, making thoſe that *take the Sword* to be not *Peter*, but the Officers and Soldiers that came *with Swords* to *take Chriſt*, they ſhall *periſh with the Sword*: *Peter*, thou need'ſt not draw thy Sword to puniſh them, God will certainly, ſhortly and ſeverely, reckon with them. They took the *Roman* Sword to ſeize Chriſt with, and by the *Roman* Sword, not long after, they and their Place and Nation were *deſtroy'd*. Therefore we muſt not *avenge our ſelves*, becauſe *God will repay*, Rom. 12. 19. and therefore ſuffer with Faith and Patience, becauſe Perſecutors will be paid in their own Coin. See *Rev.* 13. 10.

(2.) It was *needleſs* for him to *draw his Sword* in Defence of his Maſter, who, if he pleas'd, could ſummon into his Service all the Hoſts of Heaven, *v.* 53. *Thinkeſt thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he ſhall ſend* from Heaven effectual Succours. *Peter*, If I would put by theſe Sufferings, I could eaſily do it without thy Hand or thy Sword. *Note*, God has no need of us, of our Services, much leſs of our Sins, to bring about his Purpoſes; and it argues our Diſtruſt and Disbelief of the Power of Chriſt, when we go out of the way of our Duty to ſerve his Intereſts. God can do his Work without us: If we look into the Heavens, and ſee how he is attended there, we may eaſily infer, That, *tho' we be Righteous*, he is not *beholden* to us, *Job* 35. 5, 7. Tho' Chriſt was *crucified thro' Weakneſs*, 'twas a voluntary Weakneſs; he ſubmitted to Death, not becauſe he could not, but becauſe he would not contend with it. This takes off the Offence of the Croſs, and proves Chriſt crucified *the Power of God*, even *now* in the depth of his Sufferings he could call in the Aid of Legions of Angels. *Now*, ἄρτι, *yet*, tho' the Buſineſs is ſo far gone, I could yet with a Word ſpeaking turn the Scale. Chriſt here lets us know,

(1.) What a *great Intereſt* he had in his Father; *I can pray to my Father*, and he will *ſend me help from the Sanctuary*: I can, παρακαλέσαι, *demand* of my Father theſe Succours; Chriſt pray'd *as one having Authority*. *Note*, It is a great Comfort to God's People, when they are ſurrounded with Enemies on all Hands, that they have a Way open Heaven-wards; if they can *do nothing elſe*, they can pray to him that can *do every thing*: And they who are much in Prayer at other Times, have moſt Comfort in Prayer when *troubleſome Times* come. *Obſerve*, Chriſt ſaith, not only that God *could* ſend him ſuch a Number of Angels, but that, if he *inſiſted* upon it, he *would* do it; Tho' he had *undertaken* the Work of our Redemption, yet if he had *deſir'd* to be *releas'd*, it ſhould ſeem by this the Father would not have *held him to it*: He might *yet* have *gone out free* from the Service, but he lov'd it, and would not; ſo that 'twas only with the *Cords* of his own Love that he was *bound to the Altar*.

(2.) What a great *Intereſt* he had in the Heavenly Hoſts; *He ſhall preſently give me more than twelve Legions of Angels*, amounting to above ſeventy two thouſand. Obſerve here, (1.) There is an *innumerable Company* of Angels, *Heb.* 12. 22. A Detachment of more than twelve Legions might be ſpared for our Service, and yet no miſs of them from about the Throne. See *Dan.* 7. 10. They are marſhal'd in exact Order, like the well-diſciplin'd *Legions*; not a confuſed Multitude, but regular Troops, all know their Poſt, and obſerve the Word of Command. (2.) This innumerable Company of Angels are all at the diſpoſe of our Heavenly Father, and do his Pleaſure, *Pſal.* 103. 20, 21. (3.) Theſe Angelick Hoſts were ready to come in to the Aſſiſtance of our Lord Jeſus in his Sufferings, if he had needed or deſir'd it. See *Heb.* 1. 6, 14. They would have been to him as they were to *Eliſha, Chariots of Fire, and Horſes of Fire*, not only to ſecure him, but to conſume thoſe that ſet upon him. (4.) Our heavenly Father is to be ey'd and acknowledg'd in all the Services of the Heavenly Hoſts; *He ſhall give them me:* Therefore Angels are not to be pray'd to, but the Lord of the Angels, *Pſal.* 91. 11. (5.) It is Matter of Comfort to all that wiſh well to the Kingdom of Chriſt; that there is a World of Angels always at the Service of the Lord Jeſus, that can do Wonders. He that has the Armies of Heaven at his Beck, can do what he pleaſes among the *Inhabitants of the Earth*; he ſhall *preſently* give them me. See how *ready* his Father was to *hear his Prayer*, and how *ready* the Angels were to obſerve Orders; they are willing Servants, winged Meſſengers, they *fly ſwiftly*. This is very encouraging to thoſe that have the Honour of Chriſt, and the Welfare of his Church *much at Heart*: Think they that they have more Care and Concern for Chriſt and his Church, than God and the Holy Angels have?

(3.) It was no time to make any Defence at all, or to offer to put by the Stroke, for, *how then ſhall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be?* v. 54. It was written that Chriſt ſhould be *led as a Lamb to the Slaughter*, Iſa. 53. 7. Should he ſummon the Angels to his Aſſiſtance, he would not be *led to the Slaughter* at all; ſhould he permit his Diſciples to fight, he would not be led *as a Lamb*, quietly, and without Reſiſtance; therefore he and his Diſciples muſt yield to the Accompliſhment of the Predictions. *Note*, In all difficult Caſes the Word of God muſt be *concluſive* againſt our own Counſels, and nothing muſt be done, nothing attempted againſt the *fulfilling of the Scripture*. If the eaſing of our Pains, the breaking of our Bonds, the ſaving of our Lives, will not conſiſt with the fulfilling of the Scripture, we ought to ſay, Let God's Word and Will take place, let his Law be magnified and made honourable, whatever becomes of us. Thus Chriſt check'd *Peter*, when he ſet up for his *Champion*, and Captain of his *Life-Guard*.

(4.) We are next told how Chriſt argued the Caſe with them that came to *take him*, v. 55. tho' he did not reſiſt them, yet he did *reaſon* with them. *Note*, It will conſiſt with Chriſtian Silence under our Sufferings, calmly to expoſtulate with our Enemies and Perſecutors, as *David* with *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 24. 14.—26. 18. *Are ye come out*, (1.) with Rage and Enmity, *as againſt a Thief*, as if I were an Enemy to the publick Safety, and deſervedly ſuffer'd this. *Thieves* draw upon themſelves the common *Odium*, every one will lend a hand to *ſtop a Thief*: And thus they fell upon Chriſt as the *Off-ſcouring of all Things*. If he had been the Plague of his Country, he could not have been proſecuted with more Heat and Violence. (2.) With all this Power and Force, *as againſt* the worſt of Thieves, that *dare the Law*, bid Defiance to publick Juſtice, and *add Rebellion to their Sin*; you are come out as *againſt a Thief*, with Swords and Staves, as if there were danger of Reſiſtance; whereas you have *killed the juſt one, and he doth not reſiſt you*, Jam. 5. 6. If he had not been willing to ſuffer, 'twas Folly to *come with Swords and Staves, for they could not conquer him*; had he been minded to reſiſt, he would have eſteemed their Iron as Straw, and their Swords and Staves would have been as *Briers* before a *conſuming Fire*; but being willing to ſuffer, 'twas Folly to come thus arm'd, for he *would not contend with them*.

He further expoſtulates with them, by minding them how he had behaved himſelf hitherto towards them, and they towards him. (1.) Of his *publick Appearance*; *I ſat daily with you in the Temple, teaching*. And (2.) of their publick Connivance, *Ye laid no hold on me*; How comes then this Change? They were very unreaſonable in treating him as they did; (1.) He had given them no Occaſion to look upon him as *a Thief*, for he had *taught in the Temple:* And ſuch was the matter and ſuch the manner of his teaching, that he was manifeſted in the Conſciences of all that heard him, no not to be an ill *Man*. Such gracious Words as came from *his Mouth*, were *not the Words* of a Thief, or of *one that had a Devil*. (2.) Nor had he given them occaſion to look upon him as one that abſconded or fled from Juſtice, that they ſhould come *in the Night* to ſeize him; if they had any thing to ſay to him, they might find him every Day in the Temple, ready to anſwer all Challenges, all Charges, and there they might do as they pleas'd with him; for the chief Prieſts had the Cuſtody of the Temple, and the Command of the Guards about it; but to come upon him thus clandeſtinely in the Place of his Retirement, was *baſe* and *cowardly*. Thus the greateſt *Hero* may be villainouſly aſſaſſinated in a Corner, by one that in open Field would tremble to look him in the Face.

But all this was done (ſo it follows, *v.* 56.) *that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled.* 'Tis hard to ſay, whether theſe are the Words of the ſacred Hiſtorian as a Comment upon this Story, and a Direction to the Chriſtian Reader to compare it with the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, which pointed at it: or, whether they are the Words of Chriſt himſelf, as a Reaſon why, tho' he could not but *reſent* this baſe Treatment, yet he ſubmitted to it, that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled, to which he had juſt now referr'd himſelf, *v.* 54. *Note*, The Scriptures are in the fulfilling every Day, and all thoſe Scriptures which ſpake of the *Meſſiah*, had their full Accompliſhment in our Lord Jeſus.

5. How he was in the midſt of this Diſtreſs ſhamefully deſerted by his Diſciples; *They all forſook him and fled.*

1. This was *their Sin*, and it was a great Sin for them who had left all to follow him, now to leave him for they know not what: There was *Unkindneſs* in it, conſidering the Relation they ſtand in to him, the Favours they had received from him, and the melancholy Circumſtances he was now in. There was *Unfaithfulneſs* in it, for they had ſolemnly promis'd to ſtick to him, and never to forſake him. He had *indented* for their *ſafe* Conduct, *John* 18. 18. yet they could not rely upon that, but ſhifted for themſelves by an inglorious Flight. What Folly was this, *for fear of Death* to flee from him whom they themſelves knew, and had acknowledg'd to be the *Fountain of Life*? John 6. 67, 68. *Lord, what is Man*?

2. It was a part of Chriſt's Suffering, it added Affliction to his Bonds, to be thus deſerted, as it did to *Job*, *chap.* 19. 13. *He hath put my Brethren far from me*, and to *David*, Pſal. 38. 11. *Lovers and Friends ſtand aloof from my Sore:* They ſhould have ſtaid with him to miniſter to him, to countenance him, and if need were, to be Witneſſes for him at his Tryal, but they treacherouſly deſerted him, as at St. *Paul*'s firſt Anſwer, *no Man ſtood with him*: But there was a Myſtery in this; 1. Chriſt as a *Sacrifice* for *Sins* ſtood thus *abandon'd*. The Deer that by the Keeper's Arrow is mark'd out to be hunted and run down, is immediately deſerted by the whole Herd. In this he was *made a Curſe for us*, being left as one *ſeparated to Evil*. 2. Chriſt as the *Saviour* of *Souls* ſtood thus *alone*; as he needed not, ſo he had not the Aſſiſtance of any other in working out our Salvation, *he bore all*, and *did all* himſelf: He *trod the Wine-preſs alone*, and when to Admiration there was *none to uphold*, then *his own Arm wrought Salvation*, Iſa. 63. 3, 5. *So the Lord alone did lead his Iſrael*, and they *ſtand ſtill* and only *ſee this great Salvation*, Deut. 32. 12.

57 And they that had laid hold on Jeſus, led *him* away to Caiaphas, the high prieſt, where the ſcribes and the elders were aſſembled. 58 But Peter followed him afar off, unto the high prieſts palace, and went in, and ſat with the ſervants to ſee the end. 59 Now the chief prieſts and elders, and all the council, ſought falſe witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to death, 60 But found none: yea, though many falſe witneſſes came, yet found they none. At the laſt came two falſe witneſſes, 61 And ſaid, This *fellow* ſaid, I am able to deſtroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days. 62 And the high prieſt aroſe, and ſaid unto him, Anſwereſt thou nothing? what is *it which* theſe witneſs againſt thee? 63 But Jeſus held his peace. And the high prieſt anſwered and ſaid unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us, whether thou be the Chriſt the Son of God. 64 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Thou haſt ſaid: nevertheleſs I ſay unto you, Hereafter ſhall ye ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 65 Then the high prieſt rent his clothes, ſaying, He hath ſpoken blaſphemy; what further need have we of witneſſes? behold, now ye have heard his blaſphemy. 66 What think ye? They anſwered and ſaid, He is guilty of death. 67 Then did they ſpit in his face, and buffeted him, and others ſmote *him* with the palms of their hands, 68 Saying, Propheſie unto us, thou Chriſt, who is he that ſmote thee?

We have here the Arraignment of our Lord Jeſus in the Eccleſiaſtical Court, before the *great Sanhedrin*. Obſerve,

Firſt, The *ſitting of the Court*; the *Scribes* and the *Elders were aſſembled*; tho' it was in the dead time of the Night, when other People were faſt aſleep in their Beds; yet to gratifie their Malice againſt Chriſt, they deny'd themſelves that natural Reſt, and ſate up all Night to be ready to fall upon the Prey which *Judas* and his Men, they hoped, would *ſeize*.

See 1. Who they were that were aſſembled, the *Scribes*, the principal *Teachers*, and the *Elders*, the principal *Rulers* of the *Jewiſh* Church: Theſe were the moſt bitter Enemies to Chriſt our great *Teacher* and *Ruler*, on whom therefore they had a jealous Eye, as one that eclipſed them; perhaps ſome of theſe *Scribes* and *Elders* were not ſo malicious at Chriſt, as ſome others of them were, yet in Concurrence with the reſt they made themſelves guilty. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, *Pſal.* 22. 16. *The Aſſembly of the Wicked have incloſed me. Jeremiah* complains of an *Aſſembly of treacherous Men*; and *David*, of his Enemies *gathering themſelves together againſt him*, Pſal. 35. 15.

2. Where they were aſſembled, *in the Palace of Caiaphas the High-Prieſt*; there they were aſſembled two Days before to lay the Plot, *v.* 3. and there they now conven'd again to proſecute it. The *High Prieſt* was *Ab-beth-din*, *the Father of the Houſe of Judgment*, but is now the Patron of Wickedneſs, his Houſe ſhould have been the Sanctuary of oppreſſed Innocency, but is become the Throne of Iniquity, and no Wonder, when even God's Houſe of Prayer was made a *Den of Thieves*.

Secondly, The *ſetting of the Priſoner to the Bar*; they that had *laid hold on Jeſus, led him away*, hurry'd him, no doubt, with Violence, led him as a Trophy of their Victory, led him as a Victim to the Altar; he was brought into *Jeruſalem* through that which was call'd the *Sheep Gate*, for that was the Way into Town from the *Mount of Olives*, and 'twas ſo call'd, becauſe the Sheep appointed for Sacrifice were brought that way to the Temple; very fitly therefore is Chriſt led that way, who is the Lamb of God that takes away the Sin of the World. Chriſt was led firſt *to the High-Prieſt*, for by the Law all *Sacrifices* were to be firſt *preſented to the Prieſt*, and *deliver'd into his Hand*, Lev. 17. 5.

Thirdly, The *Cowardice* and *Faint-heartedneſs* of *Peter*, v. 58. *But Peter follow'd afar off*: This comes in here with an Eye to the following Story of his denying him. He forſook him as the reſt did when he was ſeiz'd, and what is here ſaid of his following him, is eaſily reconcileable with his *forſaking him*; ſuch following was no better than forſaking him; for,

1. He *follow'd* him, but it was *afar off*: Some Sparks of Love and Concern for his Maſter there were in his Breaſt, and therefore he *follow'd* him, but Fear and Concern for his own Safety prevail'd, and therefore he follow'd *afar off*. *Note*, It looks ill, and bodes worſe, when thoſe that are willing to be Chriſt's Diſciples, yet are not willing to be known to be ſo. Here began *Peter*'s denying him, for to *follow him afar off*, is by little and little to go back from him. There is danger in *drawing back*, nay, *in looking back*.

2. He *follow'd* him, but he *went in and ſat with the Servants*: He ſhould have gone up to the Court, and attended on his Maſter, and appear'd for him, but he went in where there was a good Fire, and *ſat with the Servants*, not to ſilence their Reproaches, but to ſcreen himſelf. 'Twas Preſumption in *Peter* thus to *thruſt himſelf* into Temptation; he that doth ſo, *throws himſelf* out of God's Protection. Chriſt had told *Peter* he *could not follow him now*, and had particularly warn'd him of his Danger *this Night*, and yet he would *venture* into the midſt of this Wicked Crew; it help'd *David* to *walk in his Integrity*, that he *hated the Congregation of evil Doers*, and *would not ſit with the Wicked*.

3. He *follow'd* him, but it was only to *ſee the end*, led more by his *Curioſity* than by his *Conſcience*; he attended as an idle Spectator, rather than a Diſciple, a Perſon concern'd: He ſhould have gone in to do Chriſt ſome Service, or to get ſome Wiſdom and Grace to himſelf, by obſerving Chriſt's Behaviour under his Sufferings, but he went in only to *look about him*; 'tis not unlikely that *Peter* went in, expecting that Chriſt would have made his Eſcape miraculouſly out of the Hands of his Perſecutors; that having ſo lately *ſtruck* them *down* who came to *ſeize* him, he would now have *ſtruck* them *dead* who ſate to *judge him*, and this he had a mind to ſee; if ſo, 'twas Folly for him to think of *ſeeing any other* End than what Chriſt had foretold, that he ſhould be *put to Death*. *Note*, It is more our Concern to prepare for the End, whatever it may be, than curiouſly to enquire what the End will be. The Event is God's, but the Duty is ours.

Fourthly, The Trial of our Lord Jeſus in this Court.

1. They *examin'd Witneſſes* againſt him; tho' they were reſolv'd, right or wrong to condemn him, yet to put the better Colour upon it, they would produce Evidence againſt him. The Crimes properly conuſable in their Court were *Falſe Doctrine* and *Blaſphemy*; theſe they endeavour'd to prove upon him. And obſerve here,

(1.) Their Search for Proof; They *ſought falſe Witneſs againſt him*; they had ſeiz'd him, bound him, abus'd him, and after all are to ſeek for ſomething to lay to his Charge, and can ſhew no Cauſe for his Commitment: They *try'd* if any of them could alledge ſeemingly from their own Knowledge any thing againſt him; and ſuggeſted one Calumny, and then another, which, if true, might touch his Life. Thus *Evil Men dig up Miſchief*, Prov. 16. 27. Here they trod in the Steps of their Predeceſſors, who *deviſed Devices again Jeremiah*, Jer. 18. 18.—20. 10. They made Proclamation, that if any one could give Information againſt the Priſoner at the Bar, they were ready to receive it; and preſently many bare falſe Witneſs againſt him, *v.* 60. for *if a Ruler hearken to Lies, all his Servants are wicked*, and will carry falſe Stories to him, *Prov.* 29. 12. This is an Evil often ſeen under the Sun, *Eccleſ.* 10. 5. If *Naboth* muſt be taken off, there are Sons of *Belial* to ſwear againſt him.

2. Their *Succeſs* in this Search; in ſeveral Attempts they were *baffled*, they ſought falſe Teſtimonies among themſelves, others came in to help them, and yet they found none; they could make nothing of it, could not tack the Evidence together, or give it any colour of Truth or conſiſtency with it ſelf, no not they themſelves being Judges. The Matters alledg'd were ſuch palpable Lies, as carry'd their own Confutation along with them. This redounded much to the Honour of Chriſt now, when they were loading him with Diſgrace.

But at laſt they met with *two Witneſſes*, who it ſeems agreed in their Evidence, and therefore were hearken'd to, in hopes that now the Point was gain'd: The Words they ſwore againſt him were, that he ſhould ſay, *I am able to deſtroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three Days*, v. 61. Now by this they deſign'd to accuſe him, (1.) As an *Enemy* of the *Temple*, and one that ſought for the Deſtruction of it, which they could not bear to hear of; for they valued themſelves by the *Temple of the Lord*, Jer. 7. 4. and when they abandon'd other Idols, made a perfect *Idol* of that. *Stephen* was accus'd for *ſpeaking* *againſt this holy Place*, Acts 6. 13, 14. (2.) As one that dealt in Witchcraft, or ſome ſuch unlawful Arts, by the help of which he could rear ſuch a Building in *three Days*. They had oft ſuggeſted that he was in League with *Beelzebub*; now as to this (1.) the Words were *miſ-recited*, he ſaid, *Deſtroy ye this Temple*, John 2. 19. plainly intimating, that he ſpoke of a Temple which his Enemies would ſeek to deſtroy; they come and ſwear that he ſaid, *I am able to deſtroy* this Temple, as if the Deſign againſt it were his: He ſaid, *In three Days* I will *raiſe it up*, ἐγερῶ ἀυτὸν, a Word properly us'd of a living Temple, I will raiſe it to Life. They come and ſwear that he ſaid *I am able*, οικοδομήσαι, *to build it*, which is properly us'd of a *Houſe-Temple*. (2.) The Words were *miſunderſtood*; he *ſpake of the Temple of his Body*, John 2. 21. And perhaps when he ſaid *this Temple*, pointed to, or laid his Hand upon his own Body; but they ſwear that he ſaid the *Temple of God*, meaning this Holy Place. *Note*, There have been, and ſtill are ſuch as *wreſt the Sayings of Chriſt* to their own Deſtruction, 2 *Pet*. 3. 16. (3.) Make the worſt they could of it, it was no capital Crime, even by their own Law; if it had, no queſtion but he had been proſecuted for it when he ſpoke the Words, in a publick Diſcourſe ſome Years ago; nay, the Words were capable of a laudable Conſtruction, and ſuch as ſpoke a Kindneſs for the Temple; if it were deſtroy'd, he would exert himſelf to the utmoſt to rebuild it. But any thing that look'd *Criminal*, would ſerve to give Colour to their *malicious Proſecution*. Now the Scriptures were fulfilled, which ſaid, *Falſe Witneſſes are riſen up againſt me*, Pſal. 27. 13. and ſee *Pſal*. 35. 11. *Tho' I have redeemed them, they have ſpoken Lyes againſt me*, Hoſ. 7. 13. We ſtand *juſtly* accus'd, the Law *accuſeth us*, Deut. 27. 26. Joh. 5. 45. Satan and our own Conſciences accuſe us, 1 *John* 3. 20. The Creatures cry againſt us: Now to diſcharge us from all theſe juſt Accuſations, our Lord Jeſus ſubmitted to this, to be unjuſtly and falſly accus'd, that in the virtue of his Sufferings, we may be enabled to triumph over all Challenges, *who ſhall lay any thing to the Charge of God's Elect?* Rom. 8. 33, 34. He was *accus'd*, that we might not be condemn'd; and if at any time we ſuffer thus, have all manner of Evil, not only ſaid, *but ſwore againſt us falſly*; let us remember that we cannot expect to fare better than our Maſter.

(3.) Chriſt's Silence under all theſe *Accuſations*, to the Amazement of the Court, *v*. 62. The *High Prieſt*, the Judge of the Court, aroſe in ſome Heat, and ſaid, *Anſwereſt thou nothing?* Come, you the Priſoner at the Bar, you hear what is ſworn againſt you, what have you now to ſay for your ſelf? What Defence can you make? Or what Pleas have you to offer in anſwer to this Charge? *But Jeſus held his Peace*, v. 63. not as one ſullen, or as one *ſelf-condemn'd*, or as one aſtoniſhed, and in Confuſion; not becauſe he wanted ſomething to ſay, or knew not how to ſay it, but that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *Iſa*. 53. 7. *as the Sheep is dumb* before the Shearer, and before the Butcher, ſo *he open'd not his Mouth*; and that he might be the Son of *David*, who when his Enemies ſpake miſchievous things againſt him, was *as a deaf man that heard not*, Pſal. 38. 12, 13, 14. He was ſilent, becauſe *his Hour was come*; he would not deny the Charge, becauſe he was willing to ſubmit to the Sentence, otherwiſe he could as eaſily have put them to Silence and Shame now, as he had done many a time before. If God had enter'd into Judgment with us, we had been *ſpeechleſs*, Matt. 22. 12. not able to *anſwer for one of a thouſand*, Job 9. 3. Therefore when Chriſt was *made Sin* for us, he was *ſilent*, and left it to his Blood to ſpeak, *Heb*. 12. 24. He ſtood mute at this Bar, that we might have ſomething to ſay at God's Bar.

Well, this way will not do, *aliâ aggrediendum eſt viâ*.

2. They examin'd our Lord Jeſus himſelf, upon an Oath, like that *ex officio*, and ſince they could not *accuſe* him, they'll try, contrary to the Law of Equity, to make him *accuſe himſelf*.

1. Here's the *Interrogatory* put to him by the *High Prieſt*. Obſerve (1.) The Queſtion it ſelf, *Whether thou be the Chriſt the Son of God? i. e.* Whether thou pretend to be ſo, for they will by no means admit it into Conſideration, whether he really be ſo or no; tho' the Meſſiah was to be the Conſolation of *Iſrael*, and glorious things were ſpoken concerning him in the *Old Teſtament*, yet ſo ſtrangely beſotted were they with a Jealouſy of any thing that threaten'd their exorbitant Power and Grandeur, that they would never enter into the Examination of the Matter, whether Jeſus were the Meſſiah or no, never once put the Caſe, ſuppoſe he ſhould be ſo, only would have him confeſs that he call'd himſelf ſo, that they might on that indict him as a Deceiver. What will not Pride and Malice carry Men to?

(2.) The Solemnity of the Propoſal of it: *I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us*: Not that he had any Regard to the living God, but took his Name in vain, only thus he hop'd to gain his Point with our Lord Jeſus; If thou haſt any value for the bleſſed Name of God, and reverence for his Majeſty, tell us this; If he ſhould refuſe to anſwer when he was thus adjur'd, they would charge him with Contempt of the bleſſed Name of God. Thus the Perſecutors of good Men often take advantage againſt them by their Conſciences, as *Daniel*'s Enemies did againſt him in the Matters of his God.

2. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Interrogatory, *v*. 64. in which,

1. He owns himſelf to be *the Chriſt the Son of God. Thou haſt ſaid*, i. e. it is as thou haſt ſaid, for in *Mark* it is, *I am*. Hitherto he ſeldom profeſs'd himſelf expreſly to be the Chriſt, the Son of God; the Tenor of his Doctrine ſpoke it, and his Miracles prov'd it, but now he would not omit to make a Confeſſion of it (1.) Becauſe that would have look'd like a diſowning of that Truth, which he came into the World to bear witneſs to. (2.) It would have look'd like declining *his Sufferings*, when he knew the Acknowledgment of this would give his Enemies all the Advantage they deſir'd againſt him. He thus *confeſſed himſelf*, for Example and Encouragement to his Followers, when they are call'd to it, to *confeſs him before Men*, whatever Hazards they run by it. And according to this Pattern the Martyrs readily confeſs'd themſelves Chriſtians, tho' they knew they muſt dye for it, as the Martyrs at *Thebais*, *Euſeb. Hiſt. l*. 8. *c*. 9. That Chriſt anſwer'd out of a Regard to the *Adjuration* which *Caiaphas* had profanely us'd by the *living God*, I cannot think, any more than that he had any Regard to the like Adjuration in the Devil's Mouth, *Mark* 5. 7.

2. He refers himſelf for the Proof of this to his *ſecond coming*, and indeed to his whole Eſtate of Exaltation; 'Tis probable they look'd upon him with a ſcornful diſdainful Smile, when he ſaid, *I am*; a likely Fellow, thought they, to be the *Meſſiah*, who is expected to come in ſo much Pomp and Power; and in that this *nevertheleſs* refers. Tho' now you ſee me in this low and abject State, and think it a ridiculous thing for me to call my ſelf the *Meſſiah*, *nevertheleſs* the Day is coming when I ſhall appear otherwiſe. *Hereafter* ἀπ' ἄρτι, *a modo*, *ſhortly*; for his Exaltation began in a few Days, now ſhortly his Kingdom began to be ſet up; and hereafter ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man *ſitting on the right Hand of Power*, to *judge the World*, of which his coming ſhortly to judge and deſtroy the *Jewiſh* Nation, would be a Type and Earneſt. *Note*, The Terrors of the Judgment-Day will be a ſenſible Conviction to the moſt obſtinate Infidelity, not in order to Converſion, that will be then too late, but in order to an Eternal Confuſion. Obſerve (1.) Whom they ſhould ſee, *the Son of Man*. Having own'd himſelf the *Son of God*, even now in his Eſtate of Humiliation, he ſpeaks of himſelf as the *Son of Man*, even in his Eſtate of Exaltation; for he had theſe two diſtinct Natures in one Perſon. The Incarnation of Chriſt has made *Son of God*, and *Son of Man*, for he is *Immanuel*, God with us. (2.) In what Poſture they ſhould *ſee him*. (1.) *Sitting on the right Hand of Power*, according to the Prophecy of the Meſſiah, *Pſal*. 110. 1. *Sit thou at my right Hand*; which denotes both the Dignity and the Dominion he is exalted too: Tho' now he ſtood at the Bar, they ſhould ſhortly ſee him ſit on the Throne. (2.) *Coming in the Clouds of Heaven*; this refers to another Prophecy concerning the *Son of Man*, Dan. 7. 13, 14. which is apply'd to Chriſt, *Luke* 1. 33. when he came to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*; ſo terrible was the Judgment, and ſo *ſenſibly* the Indications of the *Wrath of the Lamb* in it, that it might be call'd a viſible Appearance of Chriſt, but doubtleſs it has reference to the general Judgment; to this Day he *appeals*, and ſummons them to an Appearance then, and there to anſwer for what they were now doing: He had ſpoken of this Day to his Diſciples a while ago, for their Comfort, and had bid them *lift up their Heads* for Joy in the Proſpect of it, *Luke* 21. 27, 28. Now he ſpeaks of it to his Enemies for their Terror; for nothing more comfortable to the Righteous, nor more terrible to the Wicked, than Chriſt's judging the World at the laſt Day.

Fifthly, His *Conviction* upon this *Trial*; *The High Prieſt rent his Clothes*, according to the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, when they heard or ſaw any thing done or ſaid, which they look'd upon to be a Reproach to God; as *Iſa*. 36. *ult*. — 37. 1. *Acts* 14. 14. *Caiaphas* would be thought extremely tender of the Glory of God, *Come ſee his Zeal for the Lord of Hoſts*; but while he pretended an Abhorrence of Blaſphemy, he was himſelf the greateſt Blaſphemer; he now forgot the Law, which forbad the *High Prieſt* in any Caſe to rent his Clothes, unleſs we will ſuppoſe this an excepted Caſe.

Obſerve 1. The *Crime* he was found guilty of, *Blaſphemy*: He hath *ſpoken Blaſphemy*, i. e. he hath ſpoken reproachfully of the living God; that's the Notion we have of Blaſphemy; becauſe we by Sin had *reproached the Lord*, therefore Chriſt when he was *made Sin for us*, was condemned as a Blaſphemer, for the Truth he told them.

2. The *Evidence* upon which they *found him guilty*, *we have heard the Blaſphemy*, *what need* we trouble our ſelves to examine *Witneſſes* any further? He own'd the Fact, that he did profeſs himſelf the *Son of God*, and then they made Blaſphemy of it, and convicted him upon his Confeſſion. The high Prieſt triumphs in the Succeſs of the Snare he had laid; now I think I have done his Buſineſs for him, *Aha, ſo would we have it*. Thus was he *judg'd out of his own Mouth at their Bar*, becauſe we were liable to be ſo judg'd at God's Bar. No need of Witneſſes againſt us, our own Conſciences are againſt us inſtead of a thouſand Witneſſes.

Sixthly, His *Sentence* paſs'd upon *this Conviction*, v. 66.

Here's 1. *Caiaphas*'s Appeal to the Bench; *What think ye?* See his baſe Hypocriſy and Partiality; when he had already prejudg'd the Cauſe, and pronounc'd him a Blaſphemer, then, as if he were willing to be adviſ'd, he asks the Judgment of his Brethren; but hide Malice never ſo cunningly under the Robe of Juſtice, ſome way or other it will break out: If he would have dealt fairly, he ſhould have collected the Votes of the Bench *Seriatim*, and begun with the *Junior*, and have deliver'd his own Opinion laſt; but he knew by the Authority of his Place, he could ſway the reſt, and therefore declares his Judgment, and preſumes they are all of his Mind; he takes the Crime as to Chriſt, *pro confeſſo*, and the Judgment as to the Court, *pro conceſſo*.

2. Their Concurrence with him; they ſaid, *He is guilty of Death*; perhaps they did not all concur, 'tis certain, *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, if he was preſent, diſſented, *Luke* 23. 51. ſo did *Nicodemus*, and 'tis likely others with them, however, the Majority carry'd it that way;

but perhaps this being an extraordinary Council, or Cabal, rather none had notice to be preſent, but ſuch as they knew would concur, and ſo it might be Voted *nemine contradicente.* The Judgment was, *He is guilty of Death*, by the Law he deſerves to dye. Tho' they had not Power now to put any Man to Death, yet by ſuch a Judgment as this they made a Man an *Out-law* among his People, (*qui caput gerit lupinum*, ſo our old Law deſcribes an *Out-law*) and ſo expoſe him to the Fury, either of a popular Tumult, as *Stephen* was, or to be clamour'd againſt before the Governour, as Chriſt was. Thus was the Lord of Life condemn'd to dye, that through him there may be *no Condemnation to us.*

Seventhly, The Abuſes and Indignities done to him after Sentence paſs'd, *v.* 67, 68. *Then*, when he was found guilty, they *ſpit in his Face.* Becauſe they had not Power to put him to Death, and could not be ſure they ſhould prevail with the Governour to be their Executioner, they would do him all the Miſchief they could, now they had him in their Hands. Condemned Priſoners are taken under the ſpecial Protection of the Law, which they are to make Satisfaction to, and by all civiliz'd Nations have been treated with Tenderneſs; *ſufficient is this Puniſhment.* But when they had paſs'd Sentence upon our Lord Jeſus, he was treated as if Hell had broke looſe upon him, as if he were not only *worthy of Death*, but that were too good for him, and he were unworthy of the Compaſſion ſhew'd to the worſt Malefactors. Thus he was *made a Curſe for us.* But who were they that were thus barbarous? It ſhould ſeem the very ſame that had *paſs'd Sentence* upon him. *They ſaid, he is guilty of Death*, and *then did they ſpit in his Face.* The Prieſts began, and then, no wonder, if the Servants, who would do any thing to make Sport to themſelves, and curry Favour with their wicked Maſters, carry'd on the Humour. See how they abus'd him.

1. They *ſpit in his Face*, thus the Scripture was fulfill'd, *Iſa.* 50. 6. *He hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting.* *Job* complain'd of this Indignity done to him, and herein was a Type of Chriſt, *Job* 3. 10. they *ſpare not to ſpit in my* Face; 'tis an Expreſſion of the greateſt Contempt and Indignation poſſible; looking upon him as more deſpicable than the very Ground they ſpit upon. When *Miriam* was under the Leproſie, it was look'd upon as a Diſgrace to her, like that of *her Father, ſpitting in her Face*, Num. 12. 14. He that refus'd to raiſe up Seed to his Brother, was to undergo this Diſhonour, *Deut.* 25. 9. Yet Chriſt, when he was repairing the Decays of the great Family of Mankind, ſubmitted to it. That Face which was *fairer than the Children of Men*, which was *white* and *ruddy*, and which Angels Reverence, was thus filthily abus'd by the baſeſt and vileſt of the Children of Men. Thus was Confuſion pour'd upon his Face, that ours might not be fill'd with everlaſting Shame and Contempt. They who now profane his bleſſed Name, abuſe his Word, and hate his Image on his Sanctified Ones; what do they better than *ſpit in his Face?* And would do that if it were in their reach.

2. They *Buffeted him, and Smote him with the Palms of their Hands*: this added Pain to the Shame, for both came in with Sin. Now the Scripture was fulfill'd, *Iſa.* 50. 6. *I gave my Cheek to them that plucked off my Hair*; and *Lam.* 3. 30. *He giveth his Cheek to him that ſmiteth him, he is filled with Reproach*, and yet *keepeth Silence*, v. 28. and *Mic.* 5. 1. *They ſhall ſmite the Judge of* Iſrael *with a Rod upon the Cheek*; and here the Margin reads it, they *Smote him with Rods*; for ſo ἐῤῥάπισαν ſignifies, and this he ſubmitted to.

3. They *challeng'd* him to tell who ſtruck him, having firſt Blindfolded him; *Prophecy unto us, thou Chriſt, who is he that Smote thee?* (1.) They *made Sport* with him, as the *Philiſtines* did with *Sampſon*; 'tis grievous to thoſe that are in Miſery, for People to *make merry about them*, but much more to *make Merry with them* and their Miſery. Here was an Inſtance of the greateſt Pravity and Degeneracy of the human Nature that could be, to ſhew that there was need of a Religion that ſhould recover Men to Humanity. (2.) They made Sport with his Prophetical Office. They had heard him call'd a Prophet, and that he was fam'd for wonderful Diſcoveries; this they upbraid him with, and pretend to make tryal of; as if the Divine Omniſcience muſt lacquey it to a piece of Childrens Play. They put a like Affront upon Chriſt, who profanely jeſt with the Scripture, and make themſelves merry with holy Things; like *Belſhazzar*'s Revels in the Temple-bowls.

69 Now Peter ſat without in the Palace: and a damſel came unto him, ſaying, Thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Galilee. 70 But he denied before them all, ſaying, I know not what thou ſayeſt. 71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* ſaw him, and ſaid unto them that were there, This *fellow* was alſo with Jeſus of Nazareth. 72 And again he denied with an Oath, I do not know the man. 73 And after a while came unto him they that ſtood by, and ſaid to Peter, Surely thou alſo art *one* of them, for thy ſpeech bewrayeth thee. 74 Then began he to curſe and to ſwear, *ſaying*, I know not the man. And immediately the Cock crew. 75 And Peter remembred the Words of Jeſus, which ſaid unto him, Before the Cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

We have here the Story of *Peter*'s denying his Maſter, and it comes in as a part of Chriſt's Sufferings. Our Lord Jeſus was now in the High-prieſt's Hall, not to be *Tryed*, but *Baited* rather, and then it would have been ſome Comfort to him to ſee his Friends near him: But we do not find any Friend he had about the Court, ſave *Peter* only, and better he had been at a Diſtance. Obſerve how he fell, and how he got up again by Repentance.

Firſt, His *Sin*, which is here impartially related, to the Honour of the Pen-men of Scripture, who dealt *faithfully*. Obſerve,

1. The immediate Occaſion of *Peter*'s Sin. He *ſat without in the Palace*, among the Servants of the High-prieſt. *Note*, Bad Company is to many an Occaſion of Sin; and thoſe who needleſly thruſt themſelves into it, go upon the Devil's Ground, venture into his Crowds, and may expect either to be Tempted and Enſnared, as *Peter* was, or to be Ridicul'd and Abus'd as his Maſter was, and ſcarce can come out of ſuch Company without Guilt, or Grief, or both. He that would keep God's Commandments, and his own Covenants, muſt ſay to Evil-doers, *Depart from me*, Pſal. 119. 115. *Peter* ſpoke of his own Experience, when he warn'd his new Converts to *ſave themſelves from that untoward Generation*; for he had like to have ruin'd himſelf by but going once among them.

2. The Temptation to it. He was *challeng'd* as a *Retainer* to *Jeſus* of *Galilee*; firſt one Maid, and then another, and then the reſt of the Servants charg'd it upon him, *Thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Galilee, v.* 69. And again, *This Fellow was with Jeſus of Nazareth*, v. 71. And again, *v.* 37. *Thou alſo art one of them, for thy Speech bewrayeth thee*, to be a *Galilean*; whoſe Dialect and Pronunciation differ'd from that of the other *Jews.* Happy he whoſe *Speech bewrays him* to be a Diſciple of Chriſt, by the Holineſs and Serious neſs of whoſe Diſcourſe it appears that he has been *with Jeſus.* Obſerve how *ſcornfully* they ſpeak of Chriſt, *Jeſus of Galilee*, and of *Nazareth*, upbraiding him with the Country he was of; and how *diſtainfully* they ſpeak of *Peter, This Fellow*; as if they thought it a Reproach to them to have ſuch a Man in their Company; and he was well enough ſerv'd for coming among them; yet they had nothing to accuſe him of, but that he was with Jeſus, which they thought was enough to render him both a *ſcandalous* and a *ſuſpected* Perſon.

3. The Sin it ſelf. When he was *charg'd* as one of Chriſt's Diſciples, he *deny'd* it, was aſham'd, and afraid to own himſelf ſo, and would have all about him to believe that he had no *Knowledge* of him, nor any Kindneſs or Concern for him.

1. Upon the firſt mention of it he ſaid, *I know not what thou ſayeſt.* This was a *ſhuffling* Anſwer he took on him, he did not underſtand the Charge, that he knew not who ſhe meant by *Jeſus of Galilee*, or what ſhe meant by being *with him*; ſo making ſtrange of that which his Heart was now as full of as it could. (1.) It is a Fault thus to miſrepreſent our own Apprehenſions, Thoughts and Affections to ſerve a Turn; to take on us, we do not underſtand, or did not think of, or remember that which yet we do apprehend, and did think of, and remember; this is a Species of Lying, which we are more prone to than any other, becauſe in this a Man is not eaſily *diſprov'd*; for *who knows the Spirit of a Man, ſave he himſelf?* But God knows it, and we muſt be reſtrain'd from this Wickedneſs by a Fear of him, *Prov.* 24. 12. (2.) It is yet a greater Fault to be ſhy of Chriſt, to diſſemble our Knowledge of him, and to ſhift off a Confeſſion of him, when we are call'd to it, 'tis in Effect to *deny him.*

2. Upon the next Attack, he ſaid flat and plain, *I know not the Man*, and back'd it with an Oath, *v.* 72. This was in Effect to ſay, I will not own him, I am no Chriſtian, for Chriſtianity is the Knowledge of Chriſt Why, *Peter?* Canſt thou look upon yonder Priſoner at the Bar, and ſay, thou doſt not know him? Didſt thou not quit all to follow him? And haſt thou not been the Man of his Counſel? Haſt thou not known him better than any one elſe? Didſt thou not confeſs him to be the Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed? Haſt thou forgot all the kind and tender Looks thou hadſt had from him, and all the intimate Fellowſhip thou haſt had with him? Canſt thou look him in the Face, and ſay, Thou *doſt not know him*?

3. Upon the third Aſſault he began to *Curſe and Swear, ſaying, I know not the Man*, v. 74. 'This was worſt of all, for the Way of Sin is down-hill. He Curs'd and Swore (1.) to back what he ſaid and to gain Credit to it, that they might not any more call it in queſtion; he did not only *ſay it*, but *ſwear it*, and yet what he ſaid was falſe. *Note*, We have reaſon to ſuſpect the Truth of that which is back'd with raſh Oaths and Imprecations. None but the Devil's Sayings need the Devil's Proofs. He that will not be reſtrain'd by the Third Commandment from mocking his God, will not be kept by the Ninth from deceiving his Brother. (2.) He deſign'd it to be an Evidence for him, that he was none of Chriſt's Diſciples, for this was none of their Language. Curſing and Swearing is enough to prove a Man no Diſciple of Chriſt; for 'tis the Language of his Enemies thus to *take his Name in vain.*

This is written for warning to us, that we Sin not after the Similitude of *Peter*'s Tranſgreſſion; that we never, either directly or indirectly deny Chriſt, the Lord that bought us, by rejecting his Offers, reſiſting his Spirit, diſſembling our Knowledge of him, and being aſham'd of him and his Words, or afraid of ſuffering for him, and with his ſuffering People.

4. The Aggravations of this Sin, which it may be of uſe to take Notice of, that we may obſerve the like *Tranſgreſſions* in *our own Sins.* Conſider (1.) *who he was*, an Apoſtle, one of the firſt three, that had been upon all Occaſions the moſt forward to ſpeak to the Honour of Chriſt. The greater Profeſſion we make of Religion, the greater is our Sin, if in any thing we walk unworthily. (2.) What *fair warning* his Maſter had given him of his Danger; which, if he had regarded as he ought to have done, he would not have run himſelf into the Temptation. (3.) How ſolemnly he had promis'd to adhere to Chriſt in this Night of Trial; he had ſaid again and again, I'll never deny thee, no, I'll die with thee firſt, yet he *broke theſe Bonds in ſunder*, and his Word was, Yea and Nay. (4.) How ſoon he fell into this Sin after the Lord's-Supper. There to receive ſuch an ineſtimable Pledge of Redeeming Love, and yet the ſame Night, before Morning, to diſown his Redeemer, was indeed *turning aſide quickly.* (5.) How *weak*, comparatively, the *Temptation* was; 'twas not the Judge, or any of the Officers of the Court that charg'd him with being a Diſciple of *Jeſus*, but a ſilly Maid or two, that probably deſign'd him no Hurt, nor would have done him any, if he had own'd it. This was but *running with the Footmen*, Jer. 12. 5. (6.) How often he *repeated* it; even after the Cock had crow'd once, he continued in the Temptation, and a ſecond, and third time relaps'd into the Sin. Is this *Peter? How art thou fallen?*

Thus was his Sin aggravated; but on the other hand there's this to *extenuate* it, that what he ſaid, he ſaid *in his haſte*, Pſal. 116. 11. He fell into the Sin by ſurprize, not as *Judas*, with deſign; his Heart was againſt it; he ſpoke very ill, but it was unadviſedly, and before he was aware.

Secondly, *Peter*'s Repentance for this Sin, *v.* 75. The former is written for our Admonition, that we may not ſin; but if at any time we be overtaken, this is written for our Imitation, that we may make Haſte to repent. Now obſerve,

1. What it was that brought *Peter* to Repentance.

(1.) The *Cock crew*, *v.* 74. a common Contingency; but Chriſt having mention'd the *Crowing of the Cock* in the warning he gave him, that made it a means of bringing him to himſelf. The *Word of Chriſt* can put a Significancy upon whatever Sign he ſhall pleaſe to chuſe, and by Virtue of that Word he can make it very beneficial to the Souls of his People. The Crowing of a Cock is to *Peter* inſtead of a *John Baptiſt*, the Voice of one calling to Repentance. Conſcience ſhould be to us as the Crowing of the Cock, to put us in mind of what we had forgotten. When *David*'s *Heart ſmote him*, the *Cock crew.* Where there is a living Principle of Grace in the Soul, tho' for the preſent overpower'd by Temptation, a little Hint will ſerve only for a Memorandum, when God ſets in with it to recover it from a By-path. Here was the Crowing of a Cock made a happy Occaſion of the Converſion of a Soul. Chriſt comes ſometimes in Mercy, *at Cock crowing.*

(2.) He *remembred the Words of the Lord*; this was that brought him to himſelf, and melted him into Tears of godly Sorrow; a Senſe of his Ingratitude to Chriſt, and the ſlight Regard he had had to the gracious Warning Chriſt had given him. *Note*, A ſerious Reflection upon the Words of the Lord Jeſus, will be a powerful Inducement to Repentance, and will help to break the Heart for Sin. Nothing grieves a Penitent more, than that he has ſinn'd againſt the Grace of the Lord Jeſus, and the Tokens of his Love.

2. How his Repentance was expreſs'd; *He went out and wept bitterly.* 1. His Sorrow was *ſecret*, he *went out*, out of the High-Prieſt's Hall, vext at himſelf that ever he came into it; now he found what a Snare he was in, and got out of it as faſt as he could. He went out into the Porch before, *v.* 71. and if he had gone quite off then, his ſecond and third Denial had been prevented; but then he came in again, now he went out, and came in no more. He *went out* to ſome Place of Solitude and Retirement, where he might bemoan himſelf, *like the Doves of the Valleys*, Ezek. 6. 9. Jer. 9. 1, 2. He *went out* that he might not be diſturb'd in his Devotions on this ſad Occaſion. We may then be moſt free in our Communion with God, when we are moſt free from the Converſe and Buſineſs of this World. In mourning for Sin, we find the *Families apart*, and *their Wives apart*, Zech. 12. 11, 12.

3. His Sorrow was *ſerious.* He *wept bitterly.* Sorrow for Sin muſt not be ſlightly, but great and deep, like that for an only Son. Thoſe that have ſinn'd ſweetly, muſt weep bitterly, for ſooner or later Sin will be Bitterneſs. This deep Sorrow is requiſite, not to ſatisfie Divine Juſtice, a Sea of Tears would not do that; but to evidence that there is a real *change of Mind*, which is the Eſſence of Repentance, to make the Pardon the more welcome, and Sin for the future the more loathſome. *Peter* that wept ſo bitterly for denying Chriſt, never deny'd him again, but *confeſs'd* him often, and openly, and in the Mouth of Danger; ſo far from ever ſaying, *I know not the Man*; that he made all the Houſe of *Iſrael know aſſuredly*, that this ſame Jeſus was *Lord and Chriſt.* True Repentance for any Sin, will be beſt evidenced by our abounding in the contrary Grace and Duty; that's a ſign of our weeping, not only *bitterly*, but *ſincerely.* Some of the Ancients ſay, That as long as *Peter lived*, he never heard a Cock crow but it ſet him a weeping. Thoſe that have truly ſorrow'd for Sin, will ſorrow upon every Remembrance of it; yet not ſo as to hinder, but rather to increaſe their Joy in God, and in his Mercy and Grace.

CHAP. XXVII.

It is a very affecting Story which is recorded in this Chapter, concerning the Sufferings and Death of our Lord Jeſus. Conſidering the thing it ſelf, there cannot be a more Tragical Story *told us, common Humanity would melt the Heart to find an innocent and excellent Perſon thus miſus'd. But conſidering the Deſign and Fruit of Chriſt's Sufferings, 'tis Goſpel, 'tis* good News *that Jeſus Chriſt was thus* deliver'd for our Offences; *and there is nothing we have more reaſon to* glory in *than the Croſs of Chriſt. In this Chapter, obſerve, (1.) how he was* Proſecuted. *(1.) The delivering of him to* Pilate, v. 1, 2. *(2.) The Deſpair of* Judas, v. 3,—10. *(3.) The Arraignment and Trial of Chriſt before* Pilate, v. 11—14. *(4.) The Clamours of the People againſt him,* v. 15—25. *(5.) Sentence paſs'd, and the Warrant ſign'd for his* Execution, v. 26. *(2.) How he was* Executed. *(1.) He was barbarouſly us'd,* v. 27—30. *(2.) Led to the Place of Execution,* v. 31—33. *(3.) There he had all poſſible Indignities done him, and Reproaches caſt upon him,* v. 34—44. *(4.) Heaven frown'd upon him,* v. 45—49. *(5.) Many remarkable things attended his Death,* v. 50—56. *(6.) He was buried, and a Watch ſet on his Grave,* v. 57—66.

WHEN the morning was come, all the chief prieſts and elders of the people took counſel againſt Jeſus to put him to death. 2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governour. 3 Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he ſaw that he was condemned, repented himſelf, and brought again the thirty pieces of ſilver to the chief prieſts and elders, 4 Saying, I have ſinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they ſaid, What *is that* to us? ſee thou *to that.* 5 And he caſt down the pieces of ſilver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himſelf. 6 And the chief prieſts took the ſilver pieces, and ſaid, It is not lawful for to put them into the treaſury, becauſe it is the price of blood. 7 And they took counſel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury ſtrangers in. 8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood unto this day. 9 (Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by Jeremy the prophet, ſaying, And they took the thirty pieces of ſilver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Iſrael did value: 10 And gave them for the potters field, as the Lord appointed me).

We left Chriſt in the Hands of the Chief Prieſts and Elders, condemn'd to die, but they could only ſhew their Teeth; about two Years before this, the *Romans* had taken from the *Jews* the Power of capital Puniſhment, they could put no Man to Death, and therefore early in the Morning another Counſel is held, to conſider what's to be done. And here we are told what was done in that Morning Counſel, after they had been for two or three Hours conſulting with their Pillows.

1. Chriſt is *deliver'd up to* Pilate, that he might execute the Sentence they had paſt upon him. *Judea* having been almoſt 100 Years before this conquer'd by *Pompey*, had ever ſince been tributary to *Rome*, and was lately made part of the Province of *Syria*, and ſubject to the Government of the Preſident of *Syria*; under whom there were ſeveral *Procurators*, who chiefly attended the Buſineſs of the *Revenues*; but ſometimes, as *Pilate* particularly, had the whole Power of the Preſident lodg'd in them. This was a plain Evidence that the *Sceptre was departed from* Judah, and therefore now the *Shiloh* muſt come, according to *Jacob*'s Prophecy, *Gen.* 49. 10. *Pilate* is characteriz'd by the *Roman* Writers of that Time, to be a Man of a rough and haughty Spirit, wilful and implacable, and extremely Covetous and Oppreſſive; the *Jews* had a great Enmity to his Perſon, and were weary of his Government, and yet they made uſe of him as the Tool of their Malice againſt Chriſt.

(1.) They *bound* Jeſus. He was bound when he was firſt ſeiz'd; but either they took off theſe Bonds when he was before the Council, or now they added to them. Having found him guilty, they ty'd his Hands behind him, as they uſually do with convicted Criminals. He was already bound with the Bonds of Love to Man, and of his own Undertaking, elſe he had ſoon broke theſe Bonds, as *Sampſon* did his. We were fetter'd with the *Bond of Iniquity*, held in the Cords of our Sins, *Prov.* 5. 22. but God had bound the *Yoke of our Tranſgreſſions* upon the Neck of the Lord Jeſus, *Lam.* 1. 14. that we might be looſ'd by his Bonds, as we are *heal'd by his Stripes.*

(2.) They *led him away* in a ſort of Triumph, led him as a *Lamb to the Slaughter*; ſo was he *taken from Priſon, and from Judgment*, Iſa. 53. 7, 8. 'Twas near a Mile from *Caiaphas*'s Houſe to *Pilate*'s. All that way they led him through the Streets of *Jeruſalem*, when in the Morning they began to fill, to make him a *Spectacle to the World*.

(3.) They *deliver'd him to Pontius Pilate*, according to that which Chriſt had often ſaid, that he ſhould be *deliver'd to the Gentiles*. Both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were obnoxious to the Judgment of God, and *concluded under Sin*, and Chriſt was to be the Saviour both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and therefore Chriſt was brought into the Judgment both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and both had a hand in his Death. See how theſe corrupt Church Rulers abus'd the civil Magiſtrate, making uſe of him to *execute their unrighteous Decrees*, and *inflict the Grievance which they had preſcrib'd*, Iſa. 10. 1. Thus have the Kings of the Earth been wretchedly impos'd upon by the *Papal* Powers, and condemn'd to the Drudgery of extirpating with the Sword of War, as well as that of Juſtice, thoſe whom they have mark'd for Hereticks, right or wrong, to the great Prejudice of their own Intereſts.

2. The Money which they had paid to *Judas* for betraying Chriſt, is by him deliver'd back to them, and *Judas* in deſpair hangs himſelf. The Chief Prieſts and Elders ſupported themſelves with this, in proſecuting Chriſt, that his own Diſciples betray'd him to them; but now in the midſt of the Proſecution that String fail'd them, and even he is made to them a Witneſs of Chriſt's Innocency, and a Monument of God's Juſtice, which ſerv'd (1.) for Glory to Chriſt in the midſt of his Sufferings, and a Specimen of his Victory over *Satan*, who had enter'd into *Judas*. (2.) For Warning to his Perſecutors, and to leave them the more inexcuſable. If their Heart had not been fully ſet in them to do this Evil, what *Judas* ſaid and did, one would think, ſhould have ſtopp'd the Proſecution.

1. See here how *Judas* repented, not like *Peter*, who repented, believ'd, and was pardon'd; no, he repented, deſpair'd, and was ruin'd Now obſerve here,

(1.) What *induced him to repent*. 'Twas when he *ſaw that he was condemned*. It's very likely *Judas* expected, that either Chriſt would have made his Eſcape out of their Hands, or would ſo have pleaded his own Cauſe at their Bar, as to have come off, and then Chriſt would have had the Honour, the *Jews* the Shame, and he the Money, and no Harm done: This he had no reaſon to expect, becauſe he had ſo often heard his Maſter ſay, he muſt be *crucified*; yea, 'tis probable he did expect it, and when the Event did not anſwer his vain Fancy, then he fell into this Horror; when he ſaw the Stream ſtrong againſt Chriſt, and him yielding to it. *Note*, Thoſe who meaſure Actions by the Conſequences of them, rather than by the Divine Law, will find themſelves miſtaken in *their Meaſures*. The Way of Sin is down-hill, and if we cannot eaſily ſtop our ſelves, much leſs can we ſtop others whom we have ſet a going in a ſinful way. He *repented himſelf*, i. e. he was fill'd with Grief, Anguiſh, and Indignation at himſelf, in reflection upon what he had done. When he was tempted to betray his Maſter, the thirty pieces of Silver look'd very fine and glittering, like the *Wine when it is red, and gives its colour in the Cup*. But when the thing was done, and the Money paid, the Silver was become Droſs, it *bit like a Serpent, and ſtung like an Adder*. Now his Conſcience flew in his Face; "What "have I done? What a Fool? What a Wretch am I, to ſell my "Maſter, and all my Comfort and Happineſs in him, for ſuch a "Trifle? All theſe Abuſes and Indignities done him are chargeable "upon me; 'tis long of me that he is bound and condemn'd, ſpit "upon and buffetted; I little thought 'twould have come to this, "when I made that wicked Bargain; ſo fooliſh was I, and igno"rant, and ſo like a Beaſt." Now he curſeth the Bag he carry'd, the Money he coveted, the Prieſts he dealt with, and the Day that he was born. The Remembrance of his Maſter's Goodneſs to him, which he had ſo baſely requited; the Bowels of Mercy he had ſpurn'd at, and the fair Warnings he had ſlighted, ſteel'd his Convictions, and made them the more piercing. Now he found his Maſter's Words true; *'Twere better for that Man he had never been born. Note*, Sin will ſoon change its taſte. Tho' it be roll'd *under the Tongue* as a *ſweet Morſel*, in the Bowels 'twill be turn'd into the *Gall of Aſps*, Job 20. 12, 13, 14. like *John*'s Book, *Rev.* 10. 9.

(2.) What were the Indications of his Repentance.

1. He *made Reſtitution*. He *brought again the thirty pieces of Silver to the Chief Prieſts*, when they were all together publickly. Now the Money *burn'd* in his Conſcience, and he was *ſick* of it, as ever he had been *fond* of it. *Note*, That which is ill gotten, will never do good to thoſe that get it, *Jer.* 13. 10. *Job* 20. 15. If he had repented, and brought the Money back before he had betray'd Chriſt, he might have done it with Comfort, then he had *agreed, while yet in the way*; but now 'twas too late, now he cannot do it without Horror, wiſhing ten thouſand times he had never meddled with it. See *Jam.* 5. 3. He *brought it again. Note*, What is unjuſtly gotten muſt not be kept; for that's a continuance in the Sin by which it was got, and ſuch an avowing of it as is not conſiſtent with Repentance. He brought it to thoſe from whom he had it, to let them know that he repented his Bargain. *Note*, Thoſe who have ſerv'd, and harden'd others in their Sin, when God gives them Repentance, ſhould let them know it, whoſe Sins they have been partakers in, that it may be a Means to bring them to Repentance.

2. He made Confeſſion, *v.* 4. *I have ſinned in that I have betray'd innocent Blood*. (1.) To the *Honour of Chriſt* he pronounceth his Blood *Innocent*. If he had been guilty of any ill Practices, *Judas* as his *Diſciple* would certainly have known it, and as his *Betrayer*, would certainly have diſcover'd it; but he freely, and without being urg'd to it, pronounces him innocent to the Face of thoſe who had now pronounc'd him *guilty*. (2.) To *his own Shame* he confeſſeth, that he had *ſinned* in *betraying this Blood*. He doth not lay the Blame on any one elſe, doth not ſay, you have ſinn'd in hiring me to do it, but takes it all to himſelf, I have ſinned in doing it. Thus far *Judas* went towards his Repentance, yet it was not to Salvation. He confeſſed, but not to God, did not go to him, and ſay, *I have ſinned, Father, againſt Heaven*. He confeſs'd the betraying of *innocent Blood*, but did not confeſs that wicked *Love of Money*, which was the Root of this Evil. Yet there are thoſe who betray Chriſt, and yet juſtifie themſelves in it, and ſo come ſhort of *Judas*.

2. See here how the Chief Prieſts and Elders entertain'd *Judas*'s Penitential Confeſſion; they ſaid, *What is that to us? ſee thou to that*. He made them his Confeſſors, and that was the Abſolution they gave him; more like the Prieſts of Devils, than like the Prieſts of the Holy Living God.

1. See here how *careleſly* they ſpeak of the betraying of Chriſt. *Judas* had told them, that the Blood of Chriſt was *innocent Blood*, and they ſay, *What is that to us*? Was it nothing to them, that they had thirſted after this Blood, and hir'd *Judas* to betray it, and had now condemn'd it to be ſhed unjuſtly? Is this *nothing* to them? Doth it give no Check to the Violence of the Proſecution, no warning to take heed what they do to this juſt Man? Thus do Fools make a Mock at Sin, as if no Harm were done, no Hazard run by the Commiſſion of the greateſt Wickedneſs. Thus light do many make of Chriſt crucified, *what is it to them* that he ſuffer'd ſuch things?

2. See here how *careleſly* they ſpeak of the Sin of *Judas*, he ſaid, *I have ſinned*, and they ſaid, What's that to us? What are we concern'd in thy Sin, that thou telleſt us of it? *Note*, It is Folly for us to think, that the Sins of others are *nothing to us*, eſpecially thoſe Sins that we are any way acceſſary, or partakers in. Is it nothing to us that God is diſhonour'd, Souls wounded, Satan gratified, and his Intereſts ſerv'd? And that we have aided and abetted it? If the Elders of *Jezreel*, to pleaſe *Jezebel*, murther *Naboth*, is that nothing to *Ahab*? Yes, *he has kill'd*, for he has *taken poſſeſſion*, 1 Kings 21. 19. The Guilt of Sin is not ſo eaſily transferr'd, as ſome People think it is. If there were Guilt in the Matter, they tell *Judas* he muſt *look to it*, he muſt *bear it*. (1.) Becauſe he had betray'd him to them. His was indeed the *greater Sin*, John 19. 11. But it did not therefore follow that theirs was *no Sin*. It is a common Inſtance of the Deceitfulneſs of our Hearts, to *extenuate* our own Sin by the Aggravation of other People's Sins. But the Judgment of God is according to Truth, not according to Compariſon. (2.) Becauſe he knew and believ'd him to be *innocent*. If he be innocent, *ſee thou to it*, that's more than we know, we have adjudg'd him *guilty*, and therefore may juſtly proſecute him as ſuch. Wicked *Practices* are buoy'd up by wicked *Principles*, and particularly by this, That *Sin* is Sin only to thoſe that *think it to be ſo*; that 'tis no Harm to perſecute a good Man, if we take him to be an *ill Man*; but thoſe who thus think to mock God, will but deceive and deſtroy themſelves.

3. See how *careleſly* they ſpeak of the Conviction, Terror, and Remorſe that *Judas* was under. They were glad to make uſe of him in the Sin, and were then very fond of him; none more welcome to them than *Judas*, when he ſaid, *What will ye give me, and I will betray him to you?* They did not ſay, *What is that to us?* But now his Sin had put him into a Fright, now they ſlighted him, had nothing to ſay to him, but turn'd him over to his own Terrors; what did he come to trouble them with his melancholy Fancies, they had ſomething elſe to do than to heed him; but why ſo ſhy? (1.) Perhaps they were in ſome Fear leſt the Sparks of his Conviction brought too near, ſhould *kindle a Fire* in their own Conſciences, and leſt his Moans liſten'd to ſhould *give an Alarm* to their own Conſciences. *Note*, Obſtinate Sinners ſtand upon their Guard againſt Convictions; and thoſe that are reſolvedly impenitent, look with diſdain upon the Penitent. (2.) However, they were in no concern to ſuccour *Judas*; when they had brought him into the Snare, they not only *left him*, but *laugh'd at him*. *Note*, Sinners under Convictions will find their old Companions in Sin but *miſerable Comforters*. It is uſual for thoſe that *love the Treaſon* to *hate the Traitor*.

3. Here's the utter Deſpair that *Judas* was hereby driven into. If the Chief Prieſts had promis'd him to ſtay the Proſecution, it would have been ſome Comfort to him; but ſeeing no Hopes of that, he grew deſperate, *v.* 5.

1. He *caſt down the Pieces of Silver in the Temple*. The Chief Prieſts would not *take the Money*, for fear of taking thereby the whole Guilt to themſelves, which they were willing *Judas* ſhould bear the load of; *Judas* would not *keep it*, 'twas *too hot* for *him* to hold, he therefore threw it down *in the Temple*, that whether they would or no, it might fall into the Hands of the Chief Prieſts. See what a Drug Money was, when the Guilt of Sin was tack'd to it, or was thought to be ſo.

2. He *went and hang'd himſelf*. (1.) He *retir'd* ἀνεχώρησε, he withdrew into ſome ſolitary Place, like the poſſeſſed Man that was drawn by the Devil into the Wilderneſs, *Luke* 8. 29. *Woe to him that is* in Deſpair, and is *alone*. If *Judas* had gone to Chriſt, or to ſome of the Diſciples, perhaps he might have had Relief, as bad as the Caſe was; but miſſing of it with the Chief Prieſts, he abandon'd himſelf to

Deſpair. And the ſame Devil, that with the help of the Prieſts drew him to the Sin, with their help drove him to Deſpair. (2.) He became his own Executioner; he *hang'd himſelf*, he was *ſuffocated* with Grief: So Dr. *Hammond*; but Dr. *Whitby* is clear that our Tranſlation is right. *Judas* had a *Sight, and Senſe of Sin*, but no apprehenſion of the Mercy of God in Chriſt, and ſo he *pin'd away in his Iniquity*. His Sin, we may ſuppoſe, was not in its own nature unpardonable, there were ſome of thoſe ſav'd that had been Chriſt's Betrayers and Murtherers; but he concluded as *Cain*, that his Iniquity was greater than could be forgiven, and would rather throw himſelf on the Devil's Mercy than God's. And ſome have ſaid, That *Judas* ſin'd more in deſpairing of the Mercy of God than in betraying his Maſter's Blood. Now the Terrors of the Almighty ſet themſelves in Array againſt him. All the Curſes written in God's Book now *come into his Bowels like Water, and like Oyl into his Bones*, as was foretold concerning him, *Pſal.* 109. 18, 19. and drove him to this deſperate Shift, for the eſcaping of a *Hell within him*, to leap into *that before him*, which was but the *Perfection* and *Perpetuity* of this Horror and Deſpair. He throws himſelf into the Fire, to avoid the Flame, but miſerable is the Caſe when a Man muſt *to Hell for eaſe*.

Now in this Story, (1.) we have an Inſtance of the wretched End of thoſe into whom *Satan* enters, and particularly thoſe that are given up to the *Love of Money*. This is the Deſtruction in which many are drown'd by it, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9, 10. Remember what came of the Swine into which, and of the Traitor, into whom the *Devil enter'd*, and *give not place to the Devil*. (2.) We have an Inſtance of the Wrath of God reveal'd from Heaven againſt the Ungodlineſs, and Unrighteouſneſs of Men, *Rom.* 1. 18. As in the Story of *Peter*, we behold *the Goodneſs of God*, and the Triumphs of Chriſt's Gaace in the Converſion of ſome Sinners; ſo in the Story of *Judas*, we behold the *Severity of God*, and the Triumphs of Chriſt's Power and Juſtice in the Confuſion of other Sinners. When *Judas*, into whom Satan enter'd, was thus *hung up*; Chriſt made an open ſhew of the Principalities and Powers he undertook the *ſpoiling of*, Col. 2. 15. (3.) We have an Inſtance of the direful Effects of Deſpair, it often ends in *Self-murther*. *Sorrow*, even that for Sin, if not *according to God, worketh Death*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. the worſt kind of Death; for a *wounded Spirit, who can bear?* Let us think as bad as we can of Sin, provided we do not think it *unpardonable*, and deſpair of Help in our ſelves, but not of help in God. He that thinks to eaſe his Conſcience by *deſtroying his Life*, doth in effect dare God Almighty to *do his worſt*: And Self-murther, tho' preſcrib'd by ſome of the Heathen Moraliſts, is certainly a Remedy worſe than the Diſeaſe, how bad ſoever the Diſeaſe may be. Let us watch againſt the Beginnings of Melancholy, and pray, Lord, *Lead us not into Temptation*.

4. The *Diſpoſal* of the *Money* which *Judas brought back*, v. 6.—10. 'Twas laid out in the Purchaſe of a Field, call'd the *Potter's Field*; becauſe ſome Potter either had own'd it, or occupied it, or liv'd near it, or becauſe broken Potters Veſſels were thrown into it. And this Field was to be a *Burying place for Strangers, i. e.* Proſelites to the *Jewiſh* Religion, who were of other Nations, and coming to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip, happen to *dye there*. (1.) It looks like an Inſtance of their *Humanity*, that they took care for the *Burying of Strangers*; and it intimates, that they themſelves allow'd, as St. *Paul* ſaith, *Acts* 24. 15. *That there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Dead, both of the Juſt, and of the Unjuſt*; for we therefore take care of the dead Body, not only becauſe it *has been* the Habitation of a rational Soul, but becauſe it muſt be ſo again. But (2.) It was no Inſtance of their *Humility* that they bury *Strangers* in a Place by themſelves, as if they were not worthy to be laid in their *Burying-place*; Strangers muſt *keep their Diſtance*, alive and dead, and that Principle muſt go down to the Grave, *ſtand by thy ſelf, come not near me, I am holier than thou*, Iſa. 65. 5. The *Sons of Heth* were better affected toward *Abraham*, tho' a Stranger among them, when they offer'd him the choiceſt of their own Sepulchres, *Gen.* 22. 6. But their *Sons of the Strangers* that have *joyn'd themſelves to the Lord*, tho' bury'd by themſelves, ſhall riſe with all that are *dead in Chriſt*.

This *buying of the Potter's Field* was not done that Day that Chriſt dy'd, they were then too buſie to mind any thing elſe but hunting him down, yet it was done not long after; for *Peter* ſpeaks of it ſoon after Chriſt's Aſcenſion; yet 'tis here recorded,

1. To ſhew the Hypocriſie of the Chief Prieſts and Elders: They were maliciouſly perſecuting the Bleſſed Jeſus, and now,

(1.) They *ſcruple* to put that *Money* into the Treaſury, or *Corban* of the Temple, with which they had hir'd the Traytor. Tho' perhaps they had *taken it out* of the Treaſury, pretending it was for the publick Good, and tho' they were great Sticklers for the *Corban*, and labour'd to draw all the Wealth of the Nation into it, yet they would not put that Money into it which was the *Price of Blood*. The *Hire of a Traytor* they thought parallel to the *Hire of a Whore*, and the Price of a Malefactor, (ſuch a one they made Chriſt to be) equivalent to the *Price of a Dog*, neither of which was to be *brought into the Houſe of the Lord*, Deut. 23. 18. They would thus ſave their Credit with the People, by poſſeſſing them with an Opinion of their great Reverence for the Temple. Thus they that *ſwallowed a Camel, ſtrain'd at a Gnat*.

(2.) They think to *attone* for what they had done by this publick good Act, of providing a *Burying-place for Strangers*, tho' not at their own Charge. Thus in Times of Ignorance People were made to believe, that Building *Churches*, and Endowing *Monaſteries*, would make amends for Immoralities.

2. To ſignifie the *Favour* intended by the Blood of Chriſt, to *Strangers, and Sinners of the Gentiles*. Through the Price of his Blood a *Reſting-place* is provided for *them after Death*. Thus many of the Antients apply this Paſſage. The Grave is the *Potter's Field*, where the Bodies are thrown, as *deſpiſed*, broken Veſſels: but Chriſt by his Blood *purchaſed it*, for thoſe who by confeſſing themſelves *Strangers* on Earth, ſeek the better Country, *he has alter'd the Property* of it, (as a Purchaſer doth) ſo that now Death is ours, the Grave is ours, a Bed of Reſt for us. The *Germans* in their Language call *Burying-places God's Fields*; for in them God ſows his People as a *Corn of Wheat*, John 12. 24. See *Hoſ.* 2. 23. *Iſa.* 26. 19.

3. To perpetuate the Infamy of thoſe that bought and ſold the Blood of Chriſt. This Field was commonly call'd *Aceldama*, the *Field of Blood*; not by the Chief Prieſts, they hoped in this *Burying-place* to bury the Remembrance of their own Crime; but by the People, who took notice of *Judas*'s Acknowledgement that he had betray'd the innocent Blood, tho' the Chief Prieſts made nothing of it. They faſten'd this Name upon the Field, *In perpetuam rei memoriam*. *Note*, Divine Providence has many ways of entailing Diſgrace upon the wicked Practices, even of great Men, who, tho' they ſeek to cover their Shame, are *put to a perpetual Reproach*.

4. That we may ſee how the Scripture was fulfill'd, *v.* 9, 10.

Then was fulfilled that which was ſpoken by Jeremy *the Prophet*: The words quoted are found in the *Prophecy* of *Zechary*, Chap. 11. 12. how they are here ſaid to be ſpoken by *Jeremy*, is a difficult Queſtion; but the Credit of Chriſt's Doctrine doth not depend upon it; for that proves it ſelf perfectly Divine, tho' there ſhould appear ſomething human, as to ſmall Circumſtances in the Pen-men of it. The *Syriack* Verſion, which is antient, reads only, *it was ſpoken by the Prophet*, not naming any, whence ſome thought *Jeremy* was added by ſome Scribe; ſome think the whole Volume of the Prophets, being in one Book, and the Prophecy of *Jeremiah* put firſt, it might not be improper, *currente Calamo*, to quote any Paſſage out of that Volume under his Name. The *Jews* us'd to ſay, *The ſpirit of* Jeremiah *was in* Zechariah, and ſo they were as one Prophet: Some ſuggeſt that it was *ſpoken* by *Jeremiah*, but written by *Zechariah*: Or, that *Jeremiah* wrote the *9th*, *10th*, and *11th* Chapters of *Zechariah*. Now this Paſſage in the Prophet is a Repreſentation of the great *Contempt of God* that was found among the *Jews*, and the *poor Returns* they made to him for rich Receivings from him. But here that is *really acted*, which was there but *figuratively expreſs'd*. The *Sum of Money* is the ſame, Thirty pieces of *Silver*, this they *weigh'd for his Price*, at this rate they valued him, *a goodly Price*, and this *caſt to the Potter in the Houſe of the Lord*; which was here literally accompliſh'd. *Note*, We ſhould better underſtand the Events of Providence, if we were better acquainted, even with the Language and Expreſſions of the Scripture; for even thoſe alſo are ſometimes written upon the Diſpenſations of Providence ſo plain that *he that runs may read them*. What *David* ſpoke *figuratively*, Pſal. 42. 7. *Jonah* made a *literal* Application of. *All thy Waves and thy Billows are gone over me*, Jon. 2. 3.

The giving of the *Price of him that was valued*, not for *him*, but for the *Potter's Field*, ſpeaks (1.) the *high value* that ought to be *put* upon *Chriſt*. The Price was given, not *for him*, no, when 'twas given *for him*, it was ſoon brought *back again* with Diſdain, as infinitely below his Worth; he cannot be *valued with the Gold of Ophir*, nor this *unſpeakable Gift bought with Money*. (2.) The *low value* that was *put* upon him. *They of the Children of* Iſrael did ſtrangely undervalue *him*, when his Price did but reach to buy a *Potter's Field*, a pitiful ſorry ſpot of Ground, not worth looking upon. It added to the Reproach of his being *Bought* and *Sold*, that it was at ſo low a rate. *Caſt it to the Potter*, ſo it is in *Zechary*, a contemptible, petty Chapman, not *the Merchant* that deals in things of Value. And, obſerve, they of the *Children of Iſrael* thus *undervalued him*. They that were *his own* People, that ſhould have known better, what Eſtimate to put upon him: They to whom he was *firſt ſent*, whoſe *Glory* he was, and whom he had valued ſo highly, and bought ſo dear. He gave *Kings Ranſoms* for them, and the *richeſt Countries*, ſo *precious* were they *in his ſight*, Iſa. 43. 3, 4. *Egypt*, and *Ethiopia*, and *Seba*; but they gave a *Slave's Ranſom* for him, (ſee *Exod.* 21. 32.) and valued him but at the rate of *a Potter's Field*; ſo was that Blood trodden under foot, which *bought the Kingdom of Heaven* for us. But all this was *as the Lord appointed*; ſo the Prophetick Viſion was which typified this Event, and ſo the Event it ſelf, as other the Inſtances of Chriſt's Sufferings was by the *determinate Counſel and Fore-knowledge of God*.

11 And Jeſus ſtood before the governour; and the
governour asked him, ſaying, Art thou the King of
the Jews? And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſayeſt.
12 And when he was accuſed of the chief prieſts
and elders, he anſwered nothing. 13 Then ſaith
Pilate unto him, Heareſt thou not how many things
they witneſs againſt thee? 14 And he anſwered
him to never a word, inſomuch that the governour
marvelled greatly. 15 Now at *that* feaſt the governour
was wont to releaſe unto the people a priſoner,
whom they would. 16 And they had then a

notable priſoner, called Barabbas. 17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate ſaid unto them, Whom will ye that I releaſe unto you? Barabbas, or Jeſus which is called Chriſt? 18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him. 19 When he was ſet down on the judgment ſeat, his wife ſent unto him, ſaying, Have thou nothing to do with that juſt man: for I have ſuffered many things this day in a dream, becauſe of him. 20 But the chief prieſts and elders perſwaded the multitude that they ſhould ask Barabbas, and deſtroy Jeſus. 21 The Governour anſwered and ſaid unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I releaſe unto you? They ſaid, Barabbas. 22 Pilate ſaith unto them, What ſhall I do then with Jeſus, which is called Chriſt? They all ſay unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the govenour ſaid, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, ſaying, Let him be crucified. 24 When Pilate ſaw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and waſhed his hands before the multitude, ſaying, I am innocent of the blood of this juſt perſon: ſee ye *to it.* 25 Then anſwered all the people, and ſaid, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

We have here an Account of what paſs'd in *Pilate*'s Judgment-hall, when the Bleſſed *Jeſus* was brought thither betimes in the Morning: Tho' twas no Court-day, *Pilate* immediately took his Caſe before him. We have here,

Firſt, The Tryal Chriſt had before *Pilate*.

1. His Arraignment. *Jeſus ſtood before the Governour*, as the Priſoner before the Judge. We could not ſtand before God, becauſe of our Sins, nor lift up our Face in his Preſence, if Chriſt had not been thus made *Sin* for us. He was *Arraign'd* that we might be *diſcharg'd.* Some think this ſpeaks his Courage and Boldneſs, he ſtood *undaunted*, unmov'd by all their Rage. He thus ſtood in this Judgment, that we might ſtand in God's Judgment. He ſtood for a *Spectacle*, as *Naboth*, when he was Arraign'd, was *ſet on high among the People.*

2. His Indictment. *Art thou the King of the* Jews? The *Jews* were now not only under the Government, but under the very jealous Inſpection of the *Roman* Powers; which they were themſelves to the higheſt degree diſaffected to, and yet now pretend a Concern for to ſerve this Turn; accuſing *Jeſus* as an *Enemy* to *Cæſar*, Luke 23. 2. which they could produce no other Proof of, but that he himſelf had newly own'd he was *the Chriſt.* Now they thought, that whoever was the Chriſt muſt be the *King of the Jews*, and muſt deliver them from the *Roman* Power, and reſtore to them a temporal Dominion, and enable them to trample upon all their Neighbours. And according to this *Chimæra* of their own they accus'd our Lord Jeſus, as making himſelf *King of the Jews*, in Oppoſition to the *Roman* Yoke; whereas tho' he ſaid he was the Chriſt, he meant not ſuch a Chriſt as this. *Note*, Many oppoſe Chriſt's holy Religion upon a Miſtake of the Nature of it; they *dreſs* it up in *falſe Colours*, and then *fight* againſt it. They aſſuring the Governour, that if he made himſelf *Chriſt*, he made himſelf *King of the Jews*, the Governour takes it for granted, that he goes about to *ſubvert the Nation*, and *ſubvert the Government. Art thou a King?* 'Twas plain he was not ſo *de facto*, but doſt thou lay any Claim to the Government, or pretend a Right to *Rule the Jews? Note*, It has often been the hard Fate of Chriſt's holy Religion unjuſtly to fall under the Suſpicions of the Civil Powers, as if it were hurtful to Kings and Provinces, whereas it tends mightily to the Benefit of both.

3. His Plea. *Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſayeſt*, i. e. It is as *thou ſayeſt*, tho' not as *thou meaneſt*; I am a King, but not ſuch a King as thou doſt ſuſpect me to be. Thus before *Pilate* he witneſſed a good Confeſſion, and was not *aſham'd* to own himſelf a *King*, tho' it look'd ridiculous, nor *afraid*, though at this Time it was *dangerous.*

4. The Evidence, *v.* 12. He was *accus'd of the Chief Prieſts.* Pilate found *no fault in him*; whatever was ſaid, Nothing was prov'd, and therefore what was wanting in Matter, they made up in Noiſe and Violence, and *follow'd* him with *repeated Accuſations*, the ſame they had given in before; but by the Repetition they thought to force a Belief from the Governour. They had learn'd not only *calumniari*, but *fortiter calumniari.* The beſt Men have often been accus'd of the worſt Crimes.

5. The Priſoner's Silence as to the Proſecutor's Accuſations. He *anſwer'd nothing*, (1.) becauſe it *did not need*, Nothing was alledg'd but what carried its own Confutation along with it. (2.) He was now taken up with the great Concern that lay between him and his Father, to whom he was offering up himſelf a Sacrifice, to anſwer the Demands of his Juſtice, which he was ſo intent upon, that he minded not what they ſaid againſt him. (3.) His hour was come, and he ſubmitted to his Father's Will, *not as I will, but as thou wilt*; he knew what his Father's Will was, and therefore ſilently *committeth himſelf to him that judgeth Righteouſly.* We muſt not thus by our Silence throw away our Lives, becauſe we are not Lords of our Lives, as Chriſt was of his; nor can we know as he did, when *our Hour is come.* But hence we muſt learn, not to render *Railing for Railing*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 23.

Now (1.) *Pilate* preſs'd him to make ſome Reply, *v.* 13. *Heareſt thou not how many things they witneſs againſt thee?* what theſe things were may be gathered from *Luke* 23. 3, 5. and *John* 19. 7. *Pilate* having no Malice at all againſt him, was deſirous he ſhould *clear himſelf*, urgeth him to it, and believes he could do it. *Heareſt thou not?* Yes, he did hear, and ſtill he hears all that is witneſſed unjuſtly againſt his Truths and Ways; but he *keeps Silence*, becauſe 'tis the Day of his Patience, and doth not anſwer, as he will *ſhortly*, Pſal. 50. 3. (2.) He wonders at his *Silince*; which was not interpreted ſo much a Contempt of the Court, as a Contempt of himſelf. And therefore *Pilate* is not ſaid to be angry at it, but to have *marvelled greatly* at it, as a thing very unuſual. He believ'd him to be innocent, and had heard perhaps that never Man ſpake like him, and therefore thought it ſtrange that he had not one word to *ſay for himſelf.* Now,

Secondly, The Outrage and Violence of the People, in preſſing the Governour to Crucifie Chriſt. The *Chief Prieſts* had a great Intereſt in the People, they call'd them *Rabbi, Rabbi*, made Idols of them, and Oracles of all they ſaid, and they made uſe of this to incenſe them againſt him, and by the Power of the Mob gain'd the Point, which they could not otherwiſe carry. Now here are two Inſtances of their Outrage.

1. Their preferring *Barabbas* before him, and chuſing to have him releaſed rather than Jeſus.

(1.) It ſeems it was grown into a Cuſtom with the *Roman* Governours, for the humouring of the *Jews*, to grace the *Feaſt of the Paſſover* with the *Releaſe of a Priſoner*, v. 15. This they thought did Honour to the Feaſt, and was agreeable to the Commemoration of their Deliverance, but it was an Invention of their own, and no Divine Inſtitution; tho' ſome think it was antient, and kept up by the *Jewiſh* Princes, before they became a Province of the Empire. However, it was an ill Cuſtom, an Obſtruction to Juſtice, and an Encouragement to Wickedneſs. But our Goſpel-Paſſover is Celebrated with the *Releaſe of Priſoners*, by him who hath *Power on Earth to forgive Sins.*

(2.) The Priſoner put in competition with our Lord Jeſus, was *Barabbas*, a *notable* Priſoner he is here call'd, *v.* 16. Either becauſe by Birth and Breeding he was of ſome Note and Quality, or becauſe he had ſignaliz'd himſelf by ſomething remarkable in his Crimes; whether he was ſo *notable* as to recommend himſelf the more to the Favours of the People, and ſo the more likely to be *begg'd*; or whether ſo *notable* as to make himſelf more liable to their Rage, is uncertain. Some think the latter, and therefore *Pilate* mention'd him, as taking it for granted, they would have deſir'd any one's Releaſe rather than his. *Treaſon*, *Murther*, and *Felony*, are the three moſt enormous Crimes that are uſually puniſh'd by the Sword of Juſtice, and *Barabbas* was guilty of them all three, *Luke* 23. 17. *John* 18. 40. A *notable Priſoner* indeed, whoſe Crimes were ſo complicated.

(3.) The Propoſal was made by *Pilate* the Governour, *v.* 17. *Whom will ye that I releaſe unto you?* 'Tis probable, the Judge had the Nomination of two, one of which the People were to *chuſe*: *Pilate* propos'd to them to have Jeſus *releaſed*; he was convinced of his Innocency, and that the Proſecution was Malicious, yet had not the Courage to acquit him, as he ought to have done by his own Power; but would have him releas'd by the People's Election, and ſo he hoped to ſatisfie both his own *Conſcience*, and the *People* too; whereas finding no fault in him, he ought not to have *put him upon the Country*, or brought him *into Peril of his Life.* But ſuch little Tricks and Artifices as theſe to trim the Matter, and to keep in with Conſcience, and the World too, are the common Practice of thoſe that ſeek more to pleaſe Men than God. *What ſhall I* do, ſaith *Pilate*, with *Jeſus, which is called Chriſt?* He puts the People in mind of this, that this *Jeſus*, whoſe Releaſe he propos'd, was look'd upon by ſome among them as the *Meſſiah*, and had given pregnant Proofs of his being ſo; do not reject one whom your Nation has profeſs'd ſuch an Expectation of.

The Reaſon why *Pilate labour'd* thus to get Jeſus *diſcharg'd*, was becauſe he knew that *for Envy the Chief Prieſts had deliver'd him up*, *v.* 18. That it was not his *Guilt*, but his Goodneſs, that they were provoked at; and for this Reaſon he *hoped* to bring him off by the People's Act, and that they would be for his Releaſe; when *David* was *envied* by *Saul*, he was the *Darling of the People*, and any one that heard the *Hoſanna's* with which Chriſt was but a few Days ago brought into *Jeruſalem*, would have thought that he had been ſo, and that *Pilate* might ſafely have referr'd this Matter to the Commonalty, eſpecially when ſo notorious a Rogue was ſet up as a Rival with him for their Favours. But it prov'd otherwiſe.

(4.) While *Pilate* was thus labouring the Matter, he was confirm'd in his Unwillingneſs, to condemn Jeſus, by a Meſſage ſent him from his Wife, *v.* 19. by way of Caution, *have thou nothing to do with that juſt Man*, together with the Reaſon, *for I have ſuffered many things this Day in a Dream becauſe of him.* Probably this Meſſage was deliver'd to *Pilate* publickly, in the hearing of all that were preſent, for it was intended to be a Warning, not to him only, but to the Proſecutors. Obſerve,

1. The ſpecial Providence of God in ſending this Dream to *Pilate*'s Wife; it is not likely that ſhe had heard any thing before concerning Chriſt, at leaſt, not ſo as to occaſion her dreaming of him, but it was immediately from God: Perhaps ſhe was one of the *devout and honourable Women*, and had ſome Senſe of Religion; yet God revealed himſelf by Dreams to ſome that had not, as to *Nebuchadnezzar*. She *ſuffered many things* in this Dream; whether ſhe dream'd of the cruel Uſage of an innocent Perſon, or of the Judgments that would fall upon thoſe that had any Hand in his Death, or both, it ſeems it was a frightful Dream, and her Thoughts *troubled her*, as *Dan.* 2. 1.—4. 5. *Note*, The Father of Spirits has many ways of acceſs to the Spirits of Men, and can *ſeal their Inſtruction in a Dream, or Viſion of the Night*, Job 33. 15. yet to thoſe who have the written Word, God more ordinarily ſpeaks by Conſcience on a waking Bed, than by Dreams, when *deep Sleep falls upon Men*.

2. The Tenderneſs and Care of *Pilate's* Wife in ſending this Caution thereupon to her Husband, *Have nothing to do with that juſt Man*. (1.) This was an honourable Teſtimony to our Lord Jeſus, witneſſing for him that he was a *juſt Man* even then when he was perſecuted as the worſt of Malefactors; when his Friends were afraid to appear in Defence of him, God made even thoſe that were Strangers and Enemies to ſpeak in his Favour: when *Peter* deny'd him, *Judas* confeſs'd him: when the Chief Prieſts pronounc'd him guilty of Death, *Pilate* declar'd he *found no Fault* in him: when the Women that lov'd him ſtood afar of, *Pilate's* Wife, that knew little of him, ſhew'd a Concern for him. *Note*, God will not leave himſelf without Witneſſes to the Truth and Equity of his Cauſe, even then when it ſeems to be moſt ſpitefully run down by its Enemies, and moſt ſhamefully deſerted by its Friends. (2.) It was a fair Warning to *Pilate*, *Have nothing to do with him*. *Note*, God has many ways of giving Checks to Sinners in their ſinful Purſuits, and it is a great Mercy to have ſuch Checks from Providence, from faithful Friends, and from our own Conſciences, and our great Duty to hearken to them. O *do not this abominable thing which the Lord hates*, is what we may hear ſaid to us, when we are entring into Temptation, if we will but regard it. *Pilate*'s Lady ſent him this Warning, out of the Love ſhe had to him, ſhe fear'd not a Rebuke from him for meddling with that which belong'd not to her, but let him take it how he would, ſhe would give him the Caution. *Note*, It is an Inſtance of true Love to our Friends and Relations to do what we can to keep them from Sin; and the nearer any are to us, and the greater Affection we have for them, the more ſollicitous we ſhould be not to ſuffer Sin to come, or lie upon them, *Lev.* 19. 17. The beſt Friendſhip is Friendſhip to the Soul; We are not told how *Pilate* turn'd this off, 'tis like with a Jeſt; but by his proceeding againſt this juſt Man, it appears he did not regard it. Thus faithful Admonitions are made light of when they are given as Warnings againſt Sin, but will not be ſo eaſily made light of, when they ſhall be reflected upon as Aggravations of Sin.

5. The Chief Prieſts and the Elders were buſy all this while to influence the People in favour of *Barabbas*, v. 20. They *perſwaded the Multitude*, both by themſelves, and their Emiſſaries, whom they ſent abroad among them, *that they ſhould ask Barabbas, and deſtroy Jeſus*; ſuggeſting that this Jeſus was a Deceiver, in League with Satan, an Enemy to their Church and Temple, that if he were let alone, the *Romans* would come and take away their Place and Nation; that *Barabbas*, tho' an ill Man, yet having not the Intereſt that Jeſus had, could not do ſo much Miſchief. Thus they manag'd the Mob, who otherwiſe were well affected to Jeſus; and if they had not been ſo much at the Beck of their Prieſts, would never have done ſuch a prepoſterous Thing, as to prefer *Barabbas* before Jeſus. Here, (1.) we cannot but look upon theſe wicked Prieſts with Indignation; by the Law in *Matter of Controverſy between Blood and Blood*, the People were to be guided by the Prieſts, and to do as they inform'd them, *Deut.* 17. 18. This great Power put into their Hands, they wretchedly abus'd, and the Leaders of the People caus'd them to err. (2.) We cannot but look upon the deluded People with Pity; *I have Compaſſion on the Multitude* to ſee them hurry'd thus violently to ſo great Wickedneſs, to ſee them thus Prieſt-ridden, and falling into the Ditch with their *blind Leaders*.

(6.) Being thus over-rul'd by the Prieſts, at length they made their Choice, *v.* 21. *Whether of the Twain* (ſaith *Pilate*) *will ye that I releaſe unto you*? hoping he had gain'd his Point to have *Jeſus* releas'd. But to his great Surprize they ſaid *Barabbas*, as if his *Crimes* were *leſs*, and therefore he leſs *deſerv'd to dye*, or if his *Merits* were *greater*, and therefore he better *deſerv'd to live*: The Cry for *Barabbas* was ſo univerſal, One and All, that there was no Colour to demand a Poll between the Candidates. *Be aſtoniſh'd O Heavens, at this, and thou Earth be horribly afraid*; Were ever Men that pretended to Reaſon or Religion guilty of ſuch prodigious Madneſs, ſuch horrid Wickedneſs? This was it that *Peter* charg'd ſo home upon them, *Acts* 3. 14. *Ye deſir'd a Murtherer to be granted you*; yet Multitudes, who chooſe the World rather than God, for their Ruler and Portion, thus *chuſe their own Deluſions*.

2. Their *preſſing earneſtly* to have Jeſus crucified, *v.* 22, 23. *Pilate* being amaz'd at their Choice of *Barabbas*, was willing to hope it was rather from a Fondneſs for him, than from an Enmity to Jeſus, and therefore puts it to them, *What ſhall I do then with Jeſus*? Shall I releaſe him likewiſe, for the greater Honour of your Feaſt? Or will you leave it to me? No; *they all ſaid, let him be crucified*. That Death they deſir'd he might dye, becauſe it was look'd upon as the moſt ſcandalous and ignominious, and they hop'd thereby to make his Followers aſham'd to own him, and their Relation to him. 'Twas abſurd for them to preſcribe to the Judge what Sentence he ſhould paſs, but their Malice and Rage made them forget all Rules of Order and Decency, and turn'd a Court of Juſtice into a *riotous, routous*, and *ſeditious Aſſembly*. Now was Truth fallen in the Street, and Equity could not enter, where one *look'd for Judgment, behold Oppreſſion*, the worſt kind of Oppreſſion, for Righteouſneſs behold a Cry, the worſt Cry that ever was, *Crucify, Crucify* the Lord of Glory; tho' they that cry'd thus, perhaps were not the ſame Perſons that the other Day had cry'd *Hoſanna*, yet ſee what a Change was made upon the face of the Populacy in a little time: when he *rode in triumph* into *Jeruſalem*, ſo *general* were the *Acclamations of Praiſe*, that one would have thought he had *no Enemies*; but now when he was *led in triumph* to *Pilate*'s Judgment-Seat, ſo *general* were the *Out-cries* of Enmity, that one would think he had *no Friends*. Such Revolutions are there in this changeable World, through which our Way to Heaven lies, as our Maſter's did, *by Honour and Diſhonour, by evil Report and good Report* counter-chang'd, 2 *Cor.* 6. 8. that we may not be lifted up by Honour, as if when we were applauded and careſs'd, we had *made our Neſt amongſt the Stars*, and ſhould *dye in that Neſt*; nor yet be dejected or diſcourag'd by Diſhonour, as if when we were deſpiſed and trampled upon, we were trodden to the loweſt Hell, from which there is *no Redemption*. *Vides tu iſtos qui te laudant; Omnes aut ſunt Hoſtes, aut (quod in æquo eſt) eſſe poſſunt.* Seneca de V. B.

Now as to this Demand we are further told,

1. How *Pilate* objected againſt it; *Why, what Evil has he done*? A proper Queſtion to ask before we cenſure any in common Diſcourſe, much more for a Judge to ask before he paſs a Sentence of Death. *Note*, 'Tis much for the Honour of the Lord Jeſus, that tho' he ſuffer'd as an evil Doer, yet neither his Judge nor his Proſecutors could find that he had done any Evil. Had he done any Evil *againſt God*? No, he *always did thoſe things that pleaſed him*: Had he done any Evil againſt the *Civil Government*? No, as he did himſelf, ſo he taught others, to *render to* Cæſar *the things that were* Cæſars: Had he done any Evil againſt the *publick Peace*? No, he did not *ſtrive or cry*, nor did his Kingdom *come with Obſervation*: Had he done any Evil to particular Perſons? *Whoſe Ox had he taken, or whom had he defrauded*? No, ſo far from that, that he *went about doing good*. This repeated Aſſertion of his unſpotted Innocency, plainly intimates that he dy'd to ſatisfy for the Sins of others; for if it had not been for our Tranſgreſſions that he was thus wounded, and for our Offences that he was deliver'd up, and that upon his own voluntary Undertaking to atone for them, I ſee not how theſe extraordinary Sufferings of a Perſon that had never thought, ſaid, or done any thing amiſs, could be reconciled with the Juſtice and Equity of that Providence that governs the World, and at leaſt *permitted* this to be done in it.

2. How they *inſiſted* upon it; *They cry'd out the more, let him be crucified*. They do not go about to ſhew any Evil he had done, but right or wrong he muſt be *crucified*; quitting all Pretenſions to the Proof of the Premiſes, they reſolve to hold the Concluſion; and what was wanting in Evidence to make up in Clamour, this unjuſt Judge was wearied by Importunity into an unjuſt Sentence, as he in the Parable into a juſt one, *Luke* 18. 4. and the Cauſe carry'd purely by Noiſe.

Thirdly, Here's the *devolving* of the *Guilt* of Chriſt's Blood upon the *People* and *Prieſts*.

1. *Pilate* endeavours to transfer it from himſelf, *v.* 24.

1. He ſees it *to no Purpoſe to contend*: What he ſaid, (1.) would do no good, *he could prevail nothing*; he could not convince them what an unjuſt, unreaſonable thing it was for him to condemn a Man whom he believ'd Innocent, and whom they could not prove Guilty. See how ſtrong the Stream of Luſt and Rage ſometimes is, neither Authority nor Reaſon will prevail to give Check to it. Nay, (2.) It was more likely to *do hurt*, he ſaw that rather a *Tumult was made*; this rude and brutiſh People fell to high Words, and began to threaten *Pilate* what they would do if he did not gratify them; and how great a Matter might this Fire kindle, eſpecially when the Prieſts, thoſe great Incendiaries, blew the Coals. Now this turbulent tumultuous Temper of the *Jews*, by which *Pilate* was aw'd to condemn Chriſt againſt his Conſcience, contributed more than any thing to the Ruin of the Nation not long after; for their frequent Inſurrections provok'd the *Romans* to deſtroy them, tho' they had reduc'd them, and their inveterate Quarrels among themſelves made them an eaſy Prey to the common Enemy; Thus their Sin was their Ruin.

Obſerve how eaſily we may be miſtaken in the Inclination of the common People; the Prieſts were apprehenſive that their Endeavours to *ſeize* Chriſt would have cauſed an Uproar, eſpecially *on the Feaſt Day*, but it prov'd that *Pilate*'s Endeavour to *ſave* him caus'd an Uproar, and that on the Feaſt Day; ſo uncertain are the Sentiments of the Croud.

2. This puts him into a *great Strait*, betwixt the Peace of his own Mind, and the Peace of the City; he is loth to condemn an innocent Man, and yet loth to *diſoblige* the People, and raiſe a Devil that would not be ſoon laid; had he ſteadily and reſolutely adher'd to the ſacred Laws of Juſtice, as a Judge ought to do, he had not

been in any Perplexity, the Matter was plain and paſt Diſpute, that a Man in whom was found *no Fault*, ought not to be crucify'd, upon any Pretence whatſoever; nor muſt an unjuſt thing be done to gratify any Man, or Company of Men in the World; the Cauſe is ſoon decided, let Juſtice be done, tho' Heaven and Earth come together, *Fiat Juſtitia ruat Cælum*; if *Wickedneſs proceed from the Wicked*, tho' they be Prieſts, yet *my Hand ſhall not be upon him.*

3. *Pilate* thinks to trim the Matter, and to pacify both the People and his own Conſcience too, by *doing it*, and yet *diſowning* it, *acting* the thing, and yet *acquitting* himſelf from it at the ſame time. Such Abſurdities and *Self-contradictions* do they run upon, whoſe Convictions are *ſtrong*, but their Corruptions *ſtronger*; *Happy is he* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *Rom.* 14. 22. *that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he allows*, or, which is all one, that *allows* not himſelf in that thing which he *condemns.*

Now *Pilate* endeavours to clear himſelf from the Guilt;

1. By a *Sign*: He *took Water and waſhed his Hands before the Multitude*, not as if he thought thereby to cleanſe himſelf from any Guilt contracted before God, but to acquit himſelf before the People, from ſo much as contracting any Guilt in this Matter; *q. d.* If it be done, bear Witneſs it's none of my doing; he *borrow'd* the Ceremony from that Law, which appointed it to be us'd for the clearing of the Country from the Guilt of an undiſcover'd Murther, *Deut.* 21. 6, 7. and he us'd it the more to affect the People with the Conviction he was under of the Priſoner's Innocency, and probably ſuch was the Noiſe of the Rabble, that if he had not us'd ſome ſuch ſurprizing Sign in the View of them all, he could not have been heard.

2 By a *Saying*; in which, (1.) He *clears* himſelf, *I am innocent of the Blood of this juſt Perſon*: What Nonſenſe was this to condemn him, and yet proteſt he is innocent of his Blood; but for Men to proteſt againſt a thing, and yet to practiſe it, is only to proclaim that they ſin againſt their Conſciences; and tho' *Pilate* profeſs'd his Innocency, God chargeth him with Guilt, *Acts* 4. 27. Some think to juſtify themſelves, by pleading that their *Hands* were not in the Sin; but *David* kills by the Sword of the Children of *Ammon*, and *Ahab* by the Elders of *Jezreel*; *Pilate* here thinks to juſtify himſelf, by pleading that his *Heart* was not in the Action; but that's an Averment which will never be admitted; *Proteſtatio non valet contra Factum.* (2.) He caſt it upon the Prieſts and People, *See ye to it*; if it muſt be done, I cannot help it, do you anſwer it before God and the World. *Note*, Sin is a Brat that no Body is willing to own; and many deceive themſelves with this, that they ſhall bear no Blame if they can but find any to lay the Blame upon; but it is not ſo eaſy a thing to transfer the Guilt of Sin as many think it is. The Condition of him that is infected with the Plague is not the leſs dangerous, either for his catching the Infection from others, or his communicating the Infection to others; we may be *tempted* to Sin, but cannot be *forc'd.* The Prieſts threw it upon *Judas*, *See thou to it*; and now *Pilate* throws it upon them, *See ye to it*; *for with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you.*

2. The Prieſts and People *conſented* to take the Guilt *upon themſelves*; they all ſaid, *His Blood be on us, and on our Children*; We are ſo well aſſur'd that there is neither Sin nor Danger in putting him to Death, that we are willing to run the hazard of it; as if the Guilt would do no harm to them or theirs: They ſaw that it was the Dread of Guilt that made *Pilate* heſitate, and that he was getting over this Difficulty, by a Fancy of transferring it; to prevent the return of his Heſitation, and to confirm him in that Fancy, they in the Heat of their Rage agreed to it, rather than loſe the Prey they had in their Hands, and cry'd, *His Blood be upon us.* Now,

1. By this they *deſign'd* to *indemnify Pilate*, that is, to make him think himſelf indemnify'd, by becoming bound to Divine Juſtice to ſave him harmleſs. But thoſe that are themſelves Bankrupts and Beggars will never be admitted Security for others, nor taken as a Bail for them. None could bear the Sin of others, but he that had none of his own to anſwer for; 'tis a bold Undertaking, and too big for any Creature to become bound for a Sinner to Almighty God.

2. But they did really *imprecate* Wrath and Vengeance upon themſelves and their Poſterity; What a deſperate Word was this, and how little did they think what was the direful Import of it; nor to what an Abyſs of Miſery it would bring them and theirs? Chriſt had lately told them, that upon them would come *all the righteous Blood ſhed upon the Earth*, from that of righteous *Abel*; but as if that were too little, they here imprecate upon themſelves the Guilt of that Blood, which was more precious than all the reſt, and the Guilt of which would lie heavier. O the daring Preſumption of wilful Sinners, that *run upon God, upon his Neck*, and defy his Juſtice, *John* 15. 25, 26. Obſerve,

1. How *cruel* they were in their *Imprecation*; they not only imprecated the Puniſhment of this Sin upon themſelves, but upon *their Children* too, even thoſe that were yet unborn, without ſo much as limiting the Entail of the Curſe, as God himſelf had been pleas'd to limit it to the *third and fourth Generation.* 'Twas Madneſs to pull it upon themſelves, but the height of Barbarity, to entail it on their Poſterity. Sure, they were like the Oſtrich, *harden'd againſt their young ones*, as tho' they were not *theirs*: What a dreadful Conveyance was this of Guilt and Wrath to them and their Heirs for ever, and this deliver'd by *Joint-conſent, nemine contradicente*, as their own *Act and Deed*, which certainly amounted to a Forfeiture and Defeaſance of that ancient Charter, *I will be a God to thee, and to thy Seed*; their entailing the Curſe of the *Meſſiah*'s Blood upon their Nation cut off the Entail of the Bleſſings of that Blood from *their* Families, that, according to another Promiſe made to *Abraham*, in him *all the Families of the Earth* might be bleſſed. See what Enemies wicked Men are to their own Children and Families; thoſe that damn their own Souls, care not how many they take to Hell with them.

2. How righteous God was in his Retribution according to this Imprecation; they ſaid, *His Blood be on us, and on our Children*, and God ſaid *Amen* to it, ſo ſhall thy Doom be; as they *loved Curſing*, ſo it came upon them. The wretched Remains of that abandon'd People feel it to this Day; from the time they imprecated this Blood upon them, they were follow'd with one Judgment after another, till they were quite laid waſte, and made an Aſtoniſhment, a Hiſſing, and a By-Word; yet on ſome of them, and ſome of theirs, this Blood came not to *condemn* them, but to *ſave* them; Divine Mercy, upon their repenting and believing, cut off this Entail, and then *the Promiſe* was again *to them, and to their Children*: God is better to us and ours than we are.

26 Then releaſed he Barabbas unto them: and when he had ſcourged Jeſus, he delivered him to be crucified. 27 Then the ſoldiers of the governour took Jeſus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of *ſoldiers.* 28 And they ſtripped him, and put on him a ſcarlet robe. 29 And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, ſaying, Hail King of the Jews. 30 And they ſpit upon him, and took the reed, and ſmote him on the head. 31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the Robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucifie him. 32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his croſs.

In theſe Verſes we have the *Preparatives* for, and *Preface* to the Crucifixion of our Lord Jeſus. Here is,

Firſt, The Sentence paſt, and the Warrant ſign'd for his Execution, and this *immediately*, the ſame Hour.

1. *Barabbas* was *releas'd*, that notorious Criminal; if he had not been put in Competition with Chriſt for the Favour of the People, 'tis likely he had dy'd for his Crimes, but that prov'd the Means of his Eſcape, to intimate that Chriſt was condemn'd for this Purpoſe, that Sinners, even the chief of Sinners, might be *releas'd*; he was *deliver'd up*, that we might be deliver'd; whereas the *common Inſtance* of Divine Providence is, That *the Wicked is a Ranſom for the Righteous, and the Tranſgreſſor for the Upright*, Prov. 21. 18.—11. 18. In this *unparallel'd Inſtance* of Divine Grace the *Upright* is a *Ranſom for the Tranſgreſſor*, the Juſt for the Unjuſt.

2. Jeſus was *ſcourged*; this was an ignominious cruel Puniſhment, eſpecially as it was inflicted by the *Romans*, who were not under the Moderation of the *Jewiſh* Law, which forbad Scourgings above forty Stripes, and moſt unreaſonably inflicted on one that was ſentenc'd to dye; the *Rods* were not to introduce the Axes, but ſuperſede them. Thus the Scripture was fulfill'd, *The Plowers plowed on my Back*, Pſal. 129. 3. and *Iſa.* 50. 6. *I gave my Back to the Smiters*; and *Iſa.* 53. 5. by his Stripes we are healed; he was *chaſtiſed with Whips*, that we might not be for ever *chaſtiſed with Scorpions.*

3. He was then *delivered to be crucified*; tho' his Chaſtiſement was in order to our Peace, yet there's no Peace made but by the *Blood of his Croſs*, Col. 1. 20. therefore the Scourging is not enough, he muſt be *crucified*, a kind of Death us'd only among the *Romans*; the manner of it ſuch, as that it ſeems to be the Reſult of Wit and Cruelty in Combination, each putting forth it ſelf to the utmoſt, to make Death in the higheſt Degree terrible and miſerable. A Croſs was ſet up in the Ground, to which the Hands and Feet were nail'd, on which Nails the Weight of the Body hung, till it dy'd of the Pain. This was the Death to which Chriſt was condemn'd, that he might anſwer the Type of the brazen Serpent lifted up upon a Pole: 'Twas a bloody Death, painful, ſhameful, curſed Death; 'twas ſo miſerable a Death, that merciful Princes appointed thoſe who were condemn'd to it by the Law to be ſtrangled firſt, and then nail'd to the Croſs; ſo *Julius Cæſar* did by ſome Pirates, *Sueton. lib.* 1. *Conſtantine* the firſt Chriſtian Emperor, by an Edict aboliſhed the Uſe of that Puniſhment among the *Romans*, *Sozomen, Hiſt. l.* 1. *c.* 8. *Ne ſalutare Signum ſubſerviret ad perniciem.*

Secondly, The barbarous Treatment which the Soldiers gave him, while things were getting ready for his Execution. When he was condemn'd, he ought to have had ſome time allow'd him to prepare for Death; there was a Law made by the *Roman* Senate in *Tiberius*'s Time, perhaps upon Complaint of this and the like Precipitation, that the Execution of Criminals ſhould be deferr'd at the leaſt *ten Days* after Sentence. *Sueton. in Tiber. cap.* 25. but there were ſcarce allow'd ſo many Minutes to our Lord Jeſus; nor had he any breathing time during thoſe Minutes; it was a *Criſis*, and there were no *lucid Intervals* allow'd him, *Deep call'd unto Deep*, and the Storm continu'd without any Intermiſſion.

When he was *deliver'd* to be *crucified*, that was enough; they that *kill the Body*, yield there is no more that they *can do*, but Chriſt's Enemies will *do more*, and if it be poſſible wrap up a thouſand Deaths in one. Tho' *Pilate* pronounc'd him innocent, yet his Soldiers, his Guards ſet themſelves to abuſe him, being ſway'd more by the Fury of the People *againſt him*, than by their Maſter's Teſtimony *for him*; the *Jewiſh* Rabble infected the *Roman* Soldiery; or perhaps it was not ſo much in *Spite* to him, as to make *Sport* for themſelves, that they thus abus'd him. They underſtood that he *pretended to a Crown*, and to *taunt* him with that, gave them ſome Diverſion, and an Opportunity to make themſelves and one another merry. *Note*, It is an Argument of a baſe ſervile ſordid Spirit, to inſult over thoſe that are in Miſery, and to make the Calamities of any, matter of Sport and Merriment.

Obſerve 1. *Where* this was done, in the *Common-Hall*. The *Governour's Houſe*, which ſhould have been a Shelter to the wrong'd and abus'd, is made the Theatre of this Barbarity. I wonder the Governour, who was ſo deſirous to acquit himſelf from the Blood of this juſt Perſon, would ſuffer this to be done in *his* Houſe. Perhaps he did not order it to be done, but he *connived* at it; and thoſe in Authority will be accountable not only for the Wickedneſs which they *do*, or *appoint*; but for that which they do not reſtrain, when 'tis in the Power of their Hands. Maſters of Families ſhould not ſuffer their Houſes to be Places of Abuſe to any, nor their Servants to make Sport with the Sins, or Miſeries, or Religion of others.

2. *Who* were concern'd in it: They gather'd the *whole Band*: The Soldiers that were to attend the Execution, would have the whole Regiment (at leaſt five hundred, ſome think twelve or thirteen hundred) to ſhare in the Diverſion. If Chriſt was thus made a *Spectacle*, let none of his Followers think it ſtrange to be ſo us'd, 1 *Cor.* 4. 9. *Heb.* 10. 33.

3. What particular Indignities were done him.

1. They *ſtripp'd him*, v. 28. The Shame of Nakedneſs came in with Sin, *Gen.* 3. 7. and therefore Chriſt, when he came to ſatisfy for Sin, and take it away, was *made naked*, and ſubmitted to *that Shame*, that he might prepare for us *white Raiment to cover us*, Rev. 3. 18.

2. They *put on him a ſcarlet Robe*, ſome old red Cloak, ſuch as the *Roman* Soldiers wore, in imitation of the *ſcarlet Robes*, which Kings and Emperors wore; thus upbraiding him with his being called *a King*. This Sham of Majeſty they put upon him in his Dreſs, when nothing but Meanneſs and Miſery appeared in his Countenance, only to expoſe him to the Spectators as the more *ridiculous*; yet there was ſomething of *Myſtery* in it: This was he that was *red in his Apparel*, Iſa. 63. 1, 2. that *waſhed his Garments in Wine*, Gen. 49. 10. therefore he was dreſs'd in a *ſcarlet Robe*. Our Sins were as *ſcarlet and crimſon*, Chriſt's being clad in a *ſcarlet Robe*, ſignified his bearing our Sins, to his Shame, in his own Body upon the Tree; that we might waſh our Robes, and make them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

3. They *platted a Crown of Thorns, and put it upon his Head*, v. 29. This was to carry on the Humour of making him a *Mock King*; yet had they intended it only for a *Reproach*, they might have *platted a Crown of Straw*, or *Ruſhes*, but they deſign'd it to be painful to him, and to be *literally*, what Crowns are ſaid to be figuratively, lin'd with Thorns; he that invented this Abuſe, 'tis likely valued himſelf upon the Wit of it, but there was a Myſtery in it. (1.) Thorns came in with Sin, and were part of the Curſe that was the Product of Sin, *Gen.* 3. 18. Therefore Chriſt being made a *Curſe for us*, and dying to remove the Curſe from us, felt the Pain and Smart of thoſe Thorns, nay, and *binds them as a Crown* to him, *Job* 31. 36. for his Sufferings for us were *his Glory*. (2.) Now he anſwered the Type of *Abraham*'s Ram that was *caught in the Thicket*, and ſo offer'd up inſtead of *Iſaac*, Gen. 22. 13. (3.) Thorns ſignify Afflictions, 2 *Chron.* 33. 11. Theſe Chriſt put into a Crown, ſo much did he alter the Property of them to them that are his, and give them cauſe to *glory in Tribulation*, and made it to work for them a weight of Glory. (4.) Chriſt was crown'd with Thorns, to ſhew that *his Kingdom was not of this World*, nor the Glory of it worldly Glory, but is attended here with Bonds and Afflictions, while the Glory of it is *to be revealed*. (5.) It was the Cuſtom of ſome Heathen Nations to bring their Sacrifices to the Altars crown'd with Garlands; theſe Thorns were the Garlands with which this great Sacrifice was crown'd. (6.) Theſe Thorns 'tis likely fetch'd Blood from his bleſſed Head, which trickled down his Face, *like the precious Ointment*, (typifying the Blood of Chriſt with which he conſecrated himſelf) *upon the Head*, which ran down upon the Beard, even *Aaron*'s Beard, *Pſal.* 133. 2. Thus when he came to eſpouſe to himſelf his Love, his Dove, his undefiled Church, his *Head* was *filled with Dew*, and his *Locks with the Drops of the Night*, Cant. 5. 2.

4. They *put a Reed in his right Hand*; this was intended for a *Mock-Sceptre*, another of the Inſignia of the Majeſty they jeer'd him with, as if this were a Sceptre good enough for ſuch a King as was like *a Reed ſhaken with the Wind*, Matt. 11. 7. like Sceptre, like Kingdom, both weak and wavering, and withering and worthleſs, but they were quite miſtaken, for his Throne is *for ever and ever*, and the *Sceptre of his Kingdom is a right Sceptre*, Pſal. 45. 6.

5. *They bow'd the Knee before him, and mocked him, ſaying, Hail King of the Jews.* Having made him a Sham King, they thus make a Jeſt of doing Homage to him, thus ridiculing his Pretenſions to Sovereignty, as *Joſeph*'s Brethren, *Gen.* 37. 8. *Shalt thou indeed reign over us?* But as they were afterwards compell'd to do Obeiſance to him, and enrich his Dreams, ſo theſe here bow'd the Knee in Scorn to him, who was ſoon after this exalted to the right Hand of God, that *in his Name every Knee might bow*, or break before him; it is ill jeſting with that which ſooner or later will come in earneſt.

6. They *ſpit upon him*; thus he had been abus'd in the High Prieſt's Hall, *chap.* 26. 27. In doing Homage the Subject kiſs'd the Sovereign in Token of his Allegiance; thus *Samuel* kiſſed *Saul*, and we are bid to *kiſs the Son*, but they in this Mock-Homage, inſtead of kiſſing him, ſpit in his Face; that bleſſed Face which out-ſhines the Sun, and before which the Angels cover theirs, was thus polluted. 'Tis ſtrange that the Sons of Men ſhould ever do ſuch a piece of *Villany*, and that the Son of God ſhould ever ſuffer ſuch a piece of *Ignominy*.

7. They *took the Reed, and ſmote him on the Head*. That which they had made the *Mock-Enſign* of his Royalty, they now make the real Inſtrument of *their* Cruelty, and *his Pain*: They ſmote him, 'tis probable, upon the *Crown of Thorns*, and ſo ſtruck them into his Head, that they might wound it the deeper, which made the more Sport for them, to whom his Pain was the greateſt Pleaſure. Thus was he *deſpis'd and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows*, and *acquainted with Grief*. All this Miſery and Shame he underwent, that he might purchaſe for us everlaſting Life, and Joy, and Glory.

Thirdly, The conveying of him to the Place of Execution; after they had mock'd and abus'd him, as long as they thought fit, they then *took the Robe off from him*; to ſignify their diveſting him of all that Kingly Authority they had inveſted him with, by putting it on him; and they put his own Raiment on him, becauſe that was to fall to the Soldiers Share that were employ'd in the Execution. They took off the Robe, but no mention is made of their taking off the *Crown of Thorns*, whence it is commonly ſuppos'd, (tho' there's no Certainty of it) that he was crucified with that on his Head; for as he is a Prieſt upon his Throne, ſo he was a King upon his Croſs. Chriſt was led to be crucified in *his own Raiment*, becauſe he himſelf was to *bear our Sins in his own Body upon the Tree*. And here,

1. They *lead him away* to be *crucified*; he was led *as a Lamb to the Slaughter*, as a Sacrifice to the Altar; we may well imagine how they hurry'd him on, and dragg'd him along with all the Speed poſſible, leſt any thing ſhould intervene to prevent the glutting of their cruel Rage with his precious Blood. 'Tis likely they now loaded him with Taunts and Reproaches, and treated him as the Off-ſcouring of all things. They led him away *out of the City*; for Chriſt, that he might ſanctify the People with his own Blood, *ſuffer'd without the Gate*, Heb. 13. 12. as if he that was the Glory of them that *waited for Redemption* in *Jeruſalem*, were not worthy to live among them. To this he himſelf had an Eye, when in the Parable he ſpeaks of his being *caſt out of the Vineyard*, Matt. 22. 39.

2. They compell'd *Simon* of *Cyrene to bear his Croſs*, v. 30. It ſeems at firſt he *carry'd the Croſs* himſelf, as *Iſaac* carry'd the Wood for the Burnt-Offering, which was to burn him. And this was intended, as other Things, both for Pain and Shame to him. But after a while they *took the Croſs* off from him, either, (1.) in Compaſſion to him, becauſe they ſaw it was too great a Load for him. We can hardly think they had any Conſideration of that, yet it teaches us, that God *conſiders the Frame* of his People, and will not *ſuffer them to be tempted above what they are able*; he gives them ſome breathing-time, but they muſt expect that the Croſs will return, and the lucid Intervals only give them Space to prepare for the next fit. But (2.) Perhaps 'twas becauſe he could not with the Croſs on his Back go forward ſo faſt as they would have him. Or (3.) they were afraid, leſt he ſhould faint away under the Load of his Croſs, and dye, and ſo prevent what their Malice further intended to do againſt him: Thus even the *tender Mercies of the Wicked*, which ſeem to be ſo, *are* really *cruel*; taking the Croſs off from him, they *compell'd* one *Simon* of *Cyrene*, preſſing him to the Service by the Authority of the Governour, or the Prieſts. 'Twas a Reproach, and none would do it but by Compulſion. Some think this *Simon* was a Diſciple of Chriſt, at leaſt a Well-wiſher to him, and they knew it, and therefore put this upon him. *Note*, All that will approve themſelves Diſciples indeed, muſt follow Chriſt, *bearing his Croſs*, Matt. 16. 14. *bearing his Reproach*, Heb. 3. 13. we muſt know the *Fellowſhip of his Sufferings for us*, and patiently ſubmit to all the Sufferings for him we are call'd out to; for thoſe only ſhall *reign with him*, that *ſuffer with him*, ſhall ſit with him in his Kingdom, that drink of *his Cup*, and are baptized with *his Baptiſm*.

33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to ſay, a place of a ſcull. 34 They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall: and when he had taſted *thereof*, he would not drink. 35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, caſting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my veſture did they caſt lots. 36 And ſitting down, they watched him there: 37 And ſet up over his head, his accuſation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him: one on the right hand, and another on the left. 39 And they that paſſed by, reviled him, wagging their heads, 40 And ſaying, Thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and buildeſt *it* in three days, ſave thy ſelf: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the croſs. 41 Likewiſe

alſo the chief prieſts mocking him, with the ſcribes and elders, ſaid, 42 He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave: if he be the king of Iſrael, let him now come down from the croſs, and we will believe him. 43 He truſted in God; let him deliver him now if he will have him: for he ſaid, I am the Son of God. 44 The Thieves alſo which were crucified with him, caſt the ſame in his teeth. 45 Now from the ſixth hour there was darkneſs over all the land unto the ninth hour. 46 And about the ninth hour, Jeſus cried with a loud voice, ſaying, Eli, Eli, lama ſabachthani? that is to ſay, My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? 47 Some of them that ſtood there, when they heard that, ſaid, This man calleth for Elias. 48 And ſtraightway one of them ran, and took a ſpunge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink. 49 The reſt ſaid, Let be, let us ſee whether Elias will come to ſave him.

We have here the Crucifixion of our Lord Jeſus:

Firſt, The Place where our Lord Jeſus was put to Death.

1. They came to a Place called *Golgotha*, near adjoyning to *Jeruſalem*, probably the common Place of Execution. If he had had a Houſe of his own in *Jeruſalem*, probably for his greater Diſgrace they would have Crucified him before his own Door. But now in the ſame Place where Criminals were ſacrificed to the Juſtice of the Government, was our Lord Jeſus ſacrificed to the Juſtice of God. Some think 'tis call'd the Place of a Scull, becauſe it was the common Charnel Houſe, where the Bones and Sculls of dead Men were laid together out of the way, leſt People ſhould touch them, and be defil'd thereby. Here lay the Trophies of Death's Victory over Multitudes of the Children of Men; and when by dying Chriſt would deſtroy Death, he added this Circumſtance of Honour to his Victory, that he triumph'd over Death upon his own Dunghil.

2. There they *Crucified* him, *v.* 35. nail'd his Hands and Feet to the Croſs, and then rear'd it up, and him hanging on it; for ſo the manner of the *Romans* was to *Crucifie.* Let our Hearts be touch'd with the feeling of that exquiſite Pain which our bleſſed Saviour now endur'd, and let us look upon him who was thus pierced, and mourn. Was ever Sorrow like unto his Sorrow? And when we behold what manner of Death he died, let us in that behold with *what manner of Love* he *loved us.*

Secondly, The barbarous and abuſive Treatment they gave him, in which their Wit and Malice vy'd, which ſhould excel. As if Death, ſo great a Death, were not bad enough, they contriv'd to add to the Bitterneſs and Terror of it.

1. By the Drink they provided for him before he was nail'd to the Croſs, *v.* 34. 'Twas uſual to have a Cup of ſpiced Wine for thoſe to drink of that were to be put to Death, according to *Solomon's* Direction, *Prov.* 31. 6, 7. *Give ſtrong Drink to him that is ready to periſh*; but with that Cup which Chriſt was to drink of, they mingled *Wormwood and Gall*, to make it ſower and bitter. This ſignified (1.) the *Sin of Man*, which is a *Root of Bitterneſs, bearing Gall and Wormwood*, Deut. 29. 18. The Sinner perhaps rolls it under his Tongue as a ſweet Morſel, but to God 'tis *Grapes of Gall*, Deut. 32. 32. 'Twas ſo to the Lord Jeſus when he bore our Sins, and ſooner or later 'twill be ſo to the Sinner himſelf, *Bitterneſs at the latter end*, more *bitter than Death*, Eccl. 7. 26. (2.) It ſignified the *Wrath of God*, that Cup which his Father *put into his Hand*, a bitter Cup indeed, like the *bitter Water which cauſed the Curſe*, Num. 5. 18. This Drink they offer'd him, as was literally foretold *Pſal.* 69. 21. And (1) he *taſted thereof*, and ſo had the *worſt* of it, took the bitter taſte into his Mouth; he let no bitter Cup go by him untaſted, when he was making Atonement for all our ſinful taſting of forbidden Fruit, now he was *taſting* Death in its full Bitterneſs. (2.) He *would not drink it*, becauſe he would not have the *beſt of it*; would have nothing like an Opiate to leſſen his Senſe of Pain, for he would dye ſo as to *feel himſelf dye*, becauſe he had ſo much *work to do*, as our High-Prieſt in his ſuffering Work.

2. By the dividing of his Garments, *v.* 35. when they nail'd him to the Croſs, they *ſtript* him of his Garments, at leaſt his *upper Garment*; for by Sin we were made naked to our Shame, and thus he purchas'd for us white Raiment to cover us. If we be at any time ſtript of our Comforts for Chriſt, let us bare it patiently; he was ſtript for us: Enemies may ſtrip us of our Clothes, but cannot ſtrip us of our *beſt Comforts*; cannot take from us the *Garments of Praiſe.* The Clothes of thoſe that are executed are the Executioner's Fee; four Soldiers were employ'd in Crucifying Chriſt, and they muſt each of them have a Share. His upper Garment, if it were divided, would be of no uſe to any of them, and therefore they agreed to *caſt Lots* for it. (1.) Some think the Garment was ſo fine and rich, that it was worth contending for; but that agreed not with the Poverty Chriſt appear'd in. (2.) Perhaps they had heard of thoſe that had been cur'd by touching the Hem of his Garment, and they thought it valuable for ſome Magick Virtue in it. Or, (3.) they hoped to get Money of his Friends for ſuch a ſacred Relick. Or, (4.) becauſe in Deriſion they would ſeem to put a Value upon it as Royal Clothing. Or (5.) it was for Diverſion, to paſs away the Time while they waited for his Death, they would play a Game at Dice for the Clothes; but whatever they deſign'd, the Word of God was herein accompliſh'd. In that famous *Pſalm*, the firſt words of which Chriſt made uſe of upon the Croſs, it was ſaid, They *parted my Garments among them, and caſt Lots upon my Veſture*, Pſal. 22. 18. Which was never true of *David*, but looks *primarily* at Chriſt, of whom *David* in Spirit ſpake. Then is the Offence of this part of the Croſs ceas'd; for it appears to have been by the *determinate Counſel and Foreknowledge of God.* Chriſt ſtript himſelf of his Glories to divide them among us.

They now *ſate down and watched him*, v. 36. The Chief Prieſts were careful, no doubt, in ſetting this Guard, leſt the People, whom they ſtill ſtood in Awe of, ſhould riſe and reſcue him. But Providence ſo order'd it, that thoſe who were appointed to *watch* him, thereby became unexceptionable Witneſſes for him; having the Opportunity to ſee and hear that which extorted from them that noble Confeſſion, *v.* 54. *Truly this was the Son of God.*

3. By the *Title* ſet up over his Head, *v.* 37. It was uſual for the vindicating of publick Juſtice, and putting the greater Shame upon Malefactors that were executed, not only by a Cryer to proclaim before them, but by a Writing alſo over their Heads, to notifie what was the Crime for which they ſuffer'd; ſo they ſet up over Chriſt's Head, his Accuſation written, to give publick Notice of the Charge againſt him, *This is Jeſus the King of the* Jews. This they deſign'd for his Reproach, but God ſo over-rul'd it, that even his Accuſation redounded to his Honour. For (1.) Here was no Crime alledg'd againſt him. It is not ſaid that he was a pretended Saviour, or a uſurping King, tho' they would have it thought ſo, *John* 19. 21. But this is *Jeſus a Saviour*, to be ſure that was no Crime, and this is the King of the *Jews*, nor was that a Crime; they expected that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be ſo; ſo that his Enemies themſelves being Judges, he *did no Evil.* Nay, (2.) here was a very glorious Truth aſſerted concerning him, That he is *Jeſus the King of the* Jews, that King whom the *Jews* expected, and ought to have ſubmitted to; ſo that his Accuſation amounts to this, That he was the true *Meſſiah* and Saviour of the World; as *Balaam*, when he was ſent for to curſe *Iſrael*, bleſſed them altogether, and that three times, *Num.* 24. 10. So *Pilate*, inſtead of accuſing Chriſt as a Criminal, proclaim'd him a *King*, and that *three times*, in three Inſcriptions. Thus God makes Men to ſerve *his* Purpoſes quite beyond *their own.*

4. By his Companions with him in ſuffering, *v.* 38. There were *two Thieves crucified with him* at the ſame Time; in the ſame Place, under the ſame Guard. Two Highway-men, or Robbers upon the Road, as the word properly ſignifies. 'Tis probable this was appointed to be *Execution-day*, and therefore they hurry'd the Proſecution of Chriſt in the Morning, that they might have him ready to be executed with the other Criminals. Some think *Pilate* order'd it thus, that this piece of neceſſary Juſtice in Executing theſe Thieves, might atone for his Injuſtice in condemning Chriſt: others, that the *Jews* contriv'd it to add to the Ignominy of the Sufferings of our Lord Jeſus; however it was, the Scripture was fulfill'd in it, *Iſa.* 53. 11. *He was was numbered with Tranſgreſſors.*

1. It was a Reproach to him that he was *Crucified with them.* Tho' while he liv'd he was *ſeparate from Sinners*, yet *in their Death they were not divided*; but he was made to partake of the vileſt Malefactors in their Plagues, as if he had been a Partaker with them in their Sins; for he was made Sin for us, and took upon him the *Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh.* He was at his Death number'd among the Tranſgreſſors, and had his Lot with the Wicked, that we at our Death might be *numbered among the Saints*, and have our *Lot among the Choſen.*

2. It was an additional Reproach that he was Crucified *in the midſt between them*, as if he had been the worſt of the three, the principal Malefactor; for among *three* the *middle* is the Place for the chief. Every Circumſtance was contriv'd to his Diſhonour, as if the great Saviour were of all other the *greateſt Sinner.* It was alſo intended to ruffle and diſcompoſe him in his laſt Moments with the Shrieks, and Groans, and Blaſphemies of theſe Malefactors, who, 'tis likely, made a hideous Outcry when they were nail'd to the Croſs; but thus would Chriſt affect himſelf with the Miſeries of Sinners, when he was ſuffering for their Salvation. Some of Chriſt's Apoſtles were afterwards Crucified, as *Peter* and *Andrew*, but none of them were Crucified *with him*, leſt it ſhould have look'd as if they had been Joynt-Undertakers with him in ſatisfying for Man's Sin, and Joynt-purchaſers of Life and Glory; therefore he was Crucified between two Malefactors, who could not be ſuppos'd to contribute any thing to the Merit of his Death; for he himſelf bore our Sins *in his own Body.*

5. By the Blaſphemies and Revilings, with which they loaded him when he was hanging upon the Croſs; tho' we read not that they caſt any Reflections on the Thieves that were Crucified with him. One would have thought when they had nail'd him to the Croſs, they had done their worſt, and Malice it ſelf had been exhauſted: Indeed if a Criminal be put in the Pillory, or Carted, becauſe 'tis a Puniſhment leſs than Death, 'tis uſually attended with ſuch Expreſſions of Abuſe; but a dying Man, tho' an *ill Man*, ſhould be treated with Compaſſion. 'Tis an inſatiable Revenge indeed which will not be ſatiſfied with Death, *ſo great a Death.* But to compleat the Humiliation

on of the Lord Jeſus, and to ſhew that when he was dying, he was *bearing Iniquity*, he was then *loaded with Reproach*, and for ought appears, not one of his Friends, who t'other Day cry'd *Hoſanna* to him, durſt be ſeen to ſhew him any Reſpect.

1. The common *People that paſſed by reviled him.* His extreme Miſery, and exemplary Patience under it, did not mollifie them, or make them to relent; but they who by their Outcries brought him to this, now think to juſtifie themſelves in it by their Reproaches, as if they *did well* to *condemn* him. They *revil'd* him; ἐβλασφήμουν, they *Blaſphem'd* him, and *Blaſphemy* it was in the ſtricteſt Senſe, ſpeaking Evil of him who *thought it not Robbery to be equal with God.* Obſerve here,

1. The Perſons that Reviled him. *They that paſſed by*, the Travellers that went along the Road, and it was a great *Road*, leading from *Jeruſalem* to *Gibeon*; they were poſſeſs'd with Prejudices againſt him by the Reports and Clamours of the High-Prieſt's Creatures. It's a hard thing, and requires more Application and Reſolution than is ordinarily met with, to keep up a good Opinion of Perſons and Things that are *every where* run down, and ſpoken againſt. Every one is apt to ſay as the moſt ſay, and to throw a Stone at that which is put into an ill Name. *Turba Remi ſequitur fortunam ſemper & odit Damnatos.* Juv.

2. The Geſture they us'd in Contempt of him. *Wagging their Heads*, which ſignifies their Triumph in his Fall, and their inſulting over him, *Iſa.* 37. 22. *Jer.* 18. 16. *Lam.* 2. 15. The Language of it was Aha, ſo would we have it, *Pſal.* 35. 25. Thus they inſulted over him that was the Saviour of their Country, as the *Philiſtines* did over *Sampſon* the Deſtroyer of their Country. This very Geſture was propheſied of, *Pſal.* 22. 8. *They ſhake the Head at me.* And *Pſal.* 109. 25.

3. The Taunts and Jeers they utter'd. Theſe are here recorded.

(1.) They upbraided him with his *Deſtroying the Temple.* Tho' the Judges themſelves were ſenſible, that what he had ſaid of that was miſrepreſented, as appears, *Mark* 14. 19. yet they induſtriouſly ſpread it among the People, to bring an *Odium* upon him, that he had a Deſign to deſtroy the Temple; than which nothing would more incenſe the People againſt him. And this was not the only time that the Enemies of Chriſt had labour'd to *make others believe* that ill of Religion and the People of God, which they themſelves have known to be *falſe*, and the Charge *unjuſt*. *Thou that deſtroyeſt the Temple*, that vaſt and ſtrong Fabrick; try thy Strength now in plucking up that *Croſs*, and drawing thoſe *Nails*, and ſo *ſave thy ſelf*; if thou haſt the Power thou haſt boaſted of, this is a proper Time to exert it, and give Proof of it; for 'tis ſuppos'd every Man will do his utmoſt to *ſave himſelf*. This made the Croſs of Chriſt ſuch a *Stumbling-block* to the *Jews*, that they look'd upon it to be inconſiſtent with the *Power* of the *Meſſiah*; he was *Crucified in Weakneſs*, 2 Cor. 13. 4. ſo it ſeem'd to them, but indeed Chriſt Crucified is the *Power of God.*

(2.) They upbraid him with his ſaying that he was *the Son of God*; if thou be ſo, ſay they, *Come down from the Croſs.* Now they take the Devil's Words out of his Mouth, with which he tempted him in the Wilderneſs, *Mat.* 3. 3, 6. and renew the ſame Aſſault, *If thou be the Son of God.* They think now, or never, he muſt prove himſelf to be the *Son of God*; forgetting that he had prov'd it by the Miracles he wrought, particularly his raiſing the Dead; nor willing to wait for the compleat Proof of it by his own Reſurrection, to which he had ſo often referr'd himſelf and them; which, if they had obſerv'd it, would have anticipated the Offence of the Croſs. This comes of judging things by the preſent Aſpect of them, without a due Remembrance of what is *paſt*, and a patient Expectation of *what may further be produced.*

2. The *Chief Prieſts and Scribes*, the Church-Rulers, and the *Elders*, the State-Rulers, they mock'd him, *v.* 41. They did not think it enough to invite the Rabble to do it, but gave Chriſt the Diſhonour, and themſelves the Diverſion of Reproaching him in their own proper Perſons. They ſhould have been in the Temple at their Devotion; for it was the firſt Day of the Feaſt of Unleavened Bread, when there was to be a *Holy Convocation*, Lev. 23. 7. but they were here at the Place of Execution, ſpitting their Venom at the Lord Jeſus. How much below the Grandeur and Gravity of their Character was this? Could any thing tend more to make them *Contemptible and Baſe before the People?* One would have thought, tho' they neither fear'd God, nor regarded Man, yet common Prudence ſhould have taught them, who had ſo great a hand in Chriſt's Death, to keep as much as might be behind the Curtain, and to play leaſt in ſight; but nothing is ſo mean as that Malice may ſtick at it. Did they diſparage themſelves thus to do deſpite to Chriſt, and ſhall we be afraid of diſparaging our ſelves by joyning with the Multitude to *do him Honour*, and not rather ſay, *If this be to be Vile, I will be yet more Vile?*

Two things the Prieſts and Elders upbraided him with.

(1.) That he could not *ſave himſelf*, v. 42. He had been before abus'd in his Prophetical and Kingly Office, and now in his *Prieſtly* Office as a Saviour. (1.) They take it for granted, he *could not* ſave himſelf, and therefore had not the Power he pretended to, when really he *would not* ſave himſelf, becauſe he would die to *ſave us*. They ſhould have argued, he *ſaved others*, therefore he *could* ſave himſelf, and if he do not, 'tis for ſome good Reaſon. But (2.) they would inſinuate, that becauſe he did not now ſave himſelf, therefore all his Pretence to ſave others was but Sham and Deluſion, and was never really done; tho' the Truth of his Miracles was demonſtrated beyond Contradiction. (3.) They upbraid him with being *the King of Iſrael.* They dream'd of the external Pomp and Power of the *Meſſiah*, and therefore thought *the Croſs* altogether diſagreeable to the King of *Iſrael*, and inconſiſtent with that Character. Many People could like the *King of Iſrael* well enough, if he would but *come down from the Croſs*, if they could have his Kingdom without the Tribulation, through which they muſt *enter into* it. But the Matter is ſettled, If no Croſs, then no Chriſt, no Crown: Thoſe that would reign with him, muſt be willing to ſuffer with him, for Chriſt and his Croſs are *nail'd together* in this World. (4.) They challeng'd him to *come down from the Croſs.* And what had become of us then, and the Work of our Redemption and Salvation? If he had been provok'd by theſe Scoffs to *come down from the Croſs*, and ſo to have left his Undertaking *unfiniſh'd*, we had been for ever *undone.* But his unchangeable Love and Reſolution ſet him above, and fortified him againſt this Temptation, ſo that he did not *fail*, nor was *diſcouraged.* (5.) They promis'd, That if he would *come down from the Croſs, they would believe him.* Let him give them that Proof of his being the *Meſſiah*, and they would own him to be ſo. When they had formerly demanded a Sign, he told them the Sign he would give them, ſhould be not his *coming down from the Croſs*, but, which was a greater Inſtance of his Power, his *coming up from the Grave*, which they had not Patience to wait two or three Days for. If he had *come down from the Croſs*, they might with as much Reaſon have ſaid, that the Soldiers had juggled in nailing him to it, as they ſaid, when he was raiſed from the Dead, That the *Diſciples came by Night* and *ſtole him away.* But to promiſe our ſelves, that we would believe, if we had ſuch and ſuch Means and Motives of Faith, as we our ſelves would preſcribe, when we do not improve what God has appointed, is not only a groſs Inſtance of the Deceitfulneſs of our Hearts, but the ſorry *Refuge*, or *Subterfuge* rather, of an obſtinate deſtroying Infidelity.

(2.) That God *his Father* would *not ſave him*, v. 43. *He truſted in God*, i. e. he pretended to do ſo; for he ſaid, *I am the Son of God.* Thoſe who call God Father, and themſelves his Children, thereby profeſs to put a Confidence in him, *Pſal.* 9. 10. Now they ſuggeſt, that he did but deceive himſelf and others, when he made himſelf ſo much the *Darling of Heaven*; for if he had been the Son of God, (as *Job*'s Friends argued concerning him) he would not have been *abandon'd to* all this Miſery, much leſs *abandon'd in* it. This was a *Sword in his Bones*, as *David* complains of the like, *Pſal.* 42. 10. and it was a *two-edged* Sword; for it was intended (1.) to *vilifie* him, and to make the Standers by think him a Deceiver, and an Impoſtor; as if his ſaying that he was the *Son of God* were now effectually *diſprov'd.* (2.) To *terrifie* him, and drive him to diſtruſt and deſpair of his Father's Power and Love; which ſome think was the thing *he fear'd, Religiouſly fear'd*, pray'd againſt, and was *deliver'd from*, Heb. 5. 7. *David* complain'd more of the Endeavours of his Perſecutors to *ſhake his Faith*, and drive him from his Hope in God, than of their Attempts to *ſhake his Throne*, and drive him from his Kingdom; their ſaying, there is *no Help for him in God*, Pſal. 3. 2. and *God has forſaken him*, Pſal. 71. 11. In this, as in other things, he was a Type of Chriſt. Nay, theſe very words *David*, in that famous Prophecy of Chriſt, mentions as ſpoken by *his Enemies*, Pſal. 22. 8. He *truſted on the Lord that he would deliver him.* Sure theſe Prieſts and Scribes had forgot their Pſalter, or they would not have us'd theſe ſame Words, ſo exactly to anſwer the Type and Prophecy. But the *Scriptures muſt be fulfilled.*

3. To compleat the Reproach, the *Thieves alſo that were Crucified with him*, were not only not revil'd as he was, as if they had been Saints, compar'd with him; but tho' Fellow-ſufferers with him, joyn'd in with his Proſecutors, and *caſt the ſame in his Teeth*; that is, one of them did, who ſaid, *If thou be the Chriſt, ſave thy ſelf and us*, Luke 23. 39. One would think of all People, this Thief had *leaſt Cauſe*, and ſhould have had *leaſt Mind* to banter Chriſt. Partners in ſuffering, tho' for different Cauſes, uſually commiſerate one another; and few, whatever they have done before, will breath their laſt in Revilings: But it ſeems the greateſt Mortifications of the Body, and the moſt humbling Rebukes of Providence, will not of themſelves mortifie the Corruptions of the Soul, nor ſuppreſs the Wickedneſs of the Wicked, without the Grace of God.

Well, Thus our Lord Jeſus having undertaken to ſatisfie the Juſtice of God for the Wrong done him in his Honour by Sin, he did it by ſuffering *in his Honour*; not only by diveſting himſelf of that which was due to him as the Son of God; but by ſubmitting to the utmoſt Indignity that could be done to the worſt of Men; becauſe he was made Sin for us, he was thus made a Curſe for us, to make Reproach eaſie to us, if at any time we ſuffer it, and have all manner of Evil ſaid againſt us falſly for Righteouſneſs ſake.

Thirdly, We have here the Frowns of Heaven which our Lord Jeſus was under, in the midſt of all theſe Injuries and Indignities from Men. Concerning which obſerve,

1. How this was ſignified by an extraordinary and miraculous Eclipſe of the Sun, which continued for *three Hours*, v. 45. There was Darkneſs ἐπὶ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν, *over all the Earth*; ſo moſt Interpreters underſtand it, tho' our Tranſlation confines it to *that Land*: Some of the Ancients appeal'd to the Annals of the Nations concerning this extraordinary Eclipſe at the Death of Chriſt, as a thing well known, and which gave Notice to thoſe Parts of the World of ſome-

thing great then in doing; as the Sun's going back in *Hezekiah*'s time did. 'Tis reported that *Dionyſius* at *Heliopolis* in *Egypt*, took notice of this Darkneſs, and ſaid, *Aut Deus Naturæ patitur, aut mundi machina diſſolvitur.* An extraordinary Light gave Intelligence of the Birth of Chriſt, *Mat.* 2. 2. and therefore 'twas proper an extraordinary *Darkneſs* ſhould notifie his Death, for he is the *Light of the World.* The Indignities done to our Lord Jeſus, made the *Heavens aſtoniſh'd*, and *horribly afraid*, and even put into Diſorder and Confuſion; ſuch Wickedneſs as this, the Sun never ſaw before, and therefore withdrew, and would not ſee this. This ſurprizing amazing Darkneſs was deſign'd to ſtop the Mouths of thoſe Blaſphemers, who were reviling Chriſt as he hung on the Croſs; and it ſhould ſeem for the preſent to have ſtruck ſuch a Terror upon them, that tho' their Hearts were not chang'd, yet they were ſilent, and ſtood doubting what this ſhould mean, till after *three Hours* the Darkneſs *ſcatter'd*, and then, as appears by *v.* 47. like *Pharaoh* when the Plague was over, they harden'd their Hearts. But that which was principally intended in this Darkneſs, was (1.) Chriſt's preſent *Conflict* with the *Powers of Darkneſs:* Now the Prince of this World, and his Forces, the *Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World*, were to be caſt out, to be ſpoil'd, and vanquiſh'd, and to make his Victory the more illuſtrious, he fighteth them on their own ground; gives them all the Advantages they could have againſt him by this Darkneſs, lets them take the *Wind* and *Sun*, and yet baffles them, and ſo becomes more than a Conqueror. (2.) His preſent want of Heavenly Comforts. This Darkneſs ſignified that dark Cloud which the human Soul of our Lord Jeſus was now under. God makes his Sun to ſhine upon the Juſt, and upon the Unjuſt, but even the Light of the Sun was with-held from our Saviour when he was *made Sin for us. A pleaſant thing it is for the Eyes to behold the Sun*; but becauſe now his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful, and the Cup of Divine Diſpleaſure was fill'd to him without mixture, even the Light of the Sun was ſuſpended. When Earth denied him a Drop of cold Water, Heaven deny'd him a Beam of Light; being to deliver us from *utter Darkneſs*, he did himſelf in the depth of his Sufferings walk in Darkneſs, and had no Light, *Iſa.* 50. 10. During the *three Hours* that this Darkneſs continued, we do not find that he ſaid *one word*, but paſs'd this Time in a ſilent Retirement into his own Soul, which was now in an Agony, Wreſtling with the Powers of Darkneſs, and taking in the Impreſſions of his Father's Diſpleaſure, not againſt himſelf, but the Sin of Man, which he was now *making his Soul an Offering for.* Never were there *three ſuch Hours* ſince the Day that God Created Man upon the Earth, never ſuch a dark and awful Scene; the *Criſis* of that great Affair of Man's Redemption and Salvation.

2. How he complain'd of it, *v.* 46. *About the ninth hour*, when it began to clear up, after a long and ſilent conflict, *Jeſus cried, Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani?* The words are related in the *Syriack* Tongue, in which they were ſpoken, becauſe worthy of double Remark, and for the ſake of the perverſe Conſtruction which his Enemies put upon them, in putting *Elias* for *Eli.* Now obſerve here,

1. Whence he borrow'd this Complaint, from *Pſal.* 22. 1. 'Tis likely he did not (as ſome have thought) repeat the whole Pſalm; yet hereby he intimated, that the whole was to be apply'd to him, and that *David* in Spirit there ſpake of his Humiliation and Exaltation. This, and that other Word, *Into thy Hands I commit my Spirit*, he fetch'd from *David*'s *Pſalms*, (tho' he could have expreſs'd himſelf in his own Words) to teach us of what uſe the Word of God is to teach us to direct us in Prayer, and to recommend to us the uſe of Scripture Expreſſions in Prayer, which will *help our Infirmities.*

2. How he utter'd it, *with a loud Voice*; which ſpeaks the Extremity of his Pain and Anguiſh, the Strength of Nature remaining in him, and the great Earneſtneſs of his Spirit in this Expoſtulation. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, *Joel* 3. 15, 16. *The Sun and the Moon ſhall be darkned. The Lord ſhall alſo roar out of Zion, and utter his Voice from Jeruſalem. David* often ſpeaks of his *crying aloud in* Prayer, *Pſal.* 55. 17.

1. What the Complaint was; *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* A ſtrange Complaint to come from the Mouth of our Lord Jeſus, who we are ſure was *God's Elect, in whom his Soul delighted*, Iſa. 42. 1. and one in whom he was always *well pleas'd.* The Father now lov'd him, nay, he knew that *therefore he lov'd him, becauſe he laid down his Life for the Sheep*; what, and yet forſaken of him, and in the midſt of his Sufferings too? Sure never Sorrow was like unto that Sorrow, which extorted ſuch a Complaint as this from one who being perfectly free from Sin, could never be a Terror to himſelf; but the Heart knows its own Bitterneſs: No wonder that ſuch a Complaint as this made the Earth to quake, and rent the Rocks; for it is enough to make both the *Ears of every one that hears it to tingle*, and ought to be ſpoken of with great Reverence.

Note (1.) That our Lord Jeſus was in his Sufferings for a Time *forſaken by his Father.* So he ſaith himſelf, who we are ſure was under no Miſtake concerning his own Caſe. Not that the Union between the divine and human Nature was in the leaſt weaken'd or ſhock'd; no, he was *now by the Eternal Spirit Offering himſelf.* Nor, as if there were any Abatement of his Father's Love to him, or his to his Father; we are ſure there was upon his Mind no Horror of God, or Deſpair of his Favour, nor any thing of the Torments of Hell; but his Father *forſook* him, that is, (1.) he deliver'd him up into the Hands of his Enemies, and did not appear to deliver him out of their Hands. He let looſe the Powers of Darkneſs againſt him, and ſuffer'd them to do their worſt, worſe than againſt *Job.* Now was that Scripture fulfill'd, *Job* 16. 9. *God has turn'd me over into the Hands of the Wicked*, and no Angel is ſent from Heaven to deliver him, no Friend on Earth rais'd up to appear for him. (2.) He withdrew from him the preſent comfortable Senſe of his Complacency in him. When *his Soul* was firſt *troubled*, he had a *Voice from Heaven* to comfort him, *John* 12. 27, 28. When he was in his Agony in the Garden, there appear'd an Angel from Heaven ſtrengthning him, but now he had neither the one nor the other. God hid his Face from him, and for a while withdrew his Rod and Staff in the darkſome Valley. God *forſook* him, not as he forſook *Saul*, leaving him to an endleſs Deſpair; but as ſometimes he forſook *David*, leaving him to a preſent Deſpondency. (3.) He let out upon his Soul an afflicting Senſe of his Wrath againſt Man for Sin, Chriſt was made *Sin* for us, a *Curſe* for us; and therefore tho' God lov'd him as a Son, he frown'd upon him as a Surety: Theſe Impreſſions he was pleas'd to *admit*, and to *wave* that *Reſiſtance* of them which he *could have made*; becauſe he would accommodate himſelf to this part of his Undertaking, as he had done to all the reſt, when it was in his Power to have avoided it.

(2.) That Chriſt's being *forſaken* of his Father, was the moſt grievous of his Sufferings, and that which he complain'd moſt of. Here he laid the moſt doleful Accents; he did not ſay, Why am I ſcourg'd? And why ſpit upon? And why nail'd to the Croſs? nor did he ſay to his Diſciples when they turn'd their Back upon him, *Why have ye forſaken me?* But when his Fatehr ſtood at a Diſtance, he cried out thus; for this was it that *put Wormwood and Gall* into the Affliction and Miſery. This brought the *Waters into the Soul*, Pſal. 69. 1, 2, 3.

(3.) That our Lord Jeſus, even when he was thus forſaken of his Father, yet he kept hold of him as his God notwithſtanding; *My God, my God*; tho' forſaking me, yet *mine.* Chriſt was God's *Servant* in carrying on the Work of Redemption, to him he was to make Satisfaction, and by him to be carry'd through and crown'd, and upon that account he calls him *his God*; for he was now *doing his Will.* See *Iſa.* 49. 4, 9. This ſupported him, and bore him up, that even in the depth of his Sufferings God was his God, and this he reſolves to keep faſt hold of.

3. See how his Enemies impiouſly banter'd and ridicul'd this Complaint, *v.* 47. *They ſaid, This Man calleth for Elias.* Some think this was the ignorant Miſtake of the *Roman* Soldiers, who had heard talk of *Elias*, and of the *Jews* Expectation of the coming of *Elias*, but knew not the Signification of *Eli, Eli*, and ſo made this blundering Comment upon theſe words of Chriſt, perhaps not hearing the latter part of what he ſaid, for the Noiſe of the People. *Note*, Many of the Reproaches caſt upon the Word of God, and the People of God, take riſe from groſs Miſtakes. Divine Truths are oft corrupted by Ignorance, or the Language and Style of the Scripture. Thoſe that hear by the halves, pervert what they hear. But others think it was the wilful Miſtake of ſome of the *Jews*, who knew very well what he ſaid, but were minded to abuſe him, and make themſelves and their Companions merry, and to miſrepreſent him as one that being forſaken of God, was driven to truſt in Creatures; perhaps hinting alſo, that he who had pretended to be himſelf the Meſſiah, would now be glad to be beholden to *Elias*, who was expected to be only the Harbinger and Forerunner of the Meſſiah. *Note*, It is no new thing for the moſt pious Devotions of the beſt Men to be ridicul'd and abus'd by profane Scoffers; nor are we to think it ſtrange, if what is well ſaid in Praying and Preaching be miſconſtrued, and turn'd to our Reproach; Chriſt's Words were ſo, tho' he ſpake as never Man ſpake.

Fourthly, The cold Comfort which his Enemies miniſter'd to him in this Agony, which was like all the reſt.

1. Some *gave him Vinegar to drink*, v. 48. inſtead of ſome Cordial-water to revive and refreſh him under this heavy Burthen, they *tantaliz'd* him with that which did not only add to the Reproach they were loading him with, but did too ſenſibly repreſent that Cup of Trembling which his Father had *put into his hand. One of them run* to fetch it, ſeeming to be officious to him, but really glad of an Opportunity to abuſe and affront him, and afraid, leſt any one ſhould take it out of his hands.

2. Others with the ſame Purpoſe of diſturbing and abuſing him, refer him to *Elias*, v. 49. *Let be, let us ſee whether Elias will come to ſave him.* Come, let him alone, his Caſe is deſperate, neither Heaven nor Earth can help him; let us do nothing either to haſten his Death, or to retard it; he has appealed to *Elias*, and *to Elias let him go.*

50 Jeſus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghoſt. 51 And behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, 52 And the graves were opened, and many bodies of ſaints which ſlept, aroſe, 53 And came out of the graves after his reſurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. 54 Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him,

watching Jeſus, ſaw the Earthquake, and thoſe things that were done, they feared greatly, ſaying, Truly this was the Son of God. 55 And many women were there (beholding a far off) which followed Jeſus from Galilee, miniſtring unto him. 56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the Mother of James and Joſes, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

We have here at length an account of the Death of Chriſt, and ſeveral remarkable Paſſages that attended it.

Firſt, The *manner* how he breath'd his laſt, *v.* 5. between the third and the ſixth Hour; that is, between nine and twelve a Clock, as we reckon, he was nail'd to the Croſs, and ſoon after the ninth Hour, that is, between three and four a Clock in the Afternoon he *died*. That was the Time of the Offering of the Evening Sacrifice, and the Time when the Paſchal Lamb was killed, and Chriſt our Paſſover is ſacrificed for us, and offer'd himſelf in the Evening of the World a Sacrifice to God, of a ſweet ſmelling Savour. 'Twas at that time of the Day that the Angel *Gabriel* deliver'd to *Daniel* that glorious Prediction of the *Meſſiah*, Dan. 9. 21, 24. And ſome think, that from that very time when the Angel ſpoke it, to this time when Chriſt dy'd, was juſt ſeventy Weeks, that is, four hundred and ninety Years, to a Day, to an Hour; as the Departure of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt* was at the end of the four hundred and thirty Years, even *the ſelf-ſame Day*, Exod. 12. 41.

Two things are here noted concerning the manner of Chriſt's Dying.

1. That he *cried with a loud Voice*, as before, *v.* 46. Now,

(1.) This was a Sign, that after all his Pains and Fatigues, yet his Life was *whole* in him, and Nature *ſtrong*. The Voice of dying Men is one of the firſt things that fails; with a panting Breath, and a faltring Tongue, a few broken words are hardly ſpoken, and more hardly heard: But Chriſt juſt before he expir'd, ſpoke like a Man *in his full Strength*, to ſhew that his Life was not forc'd from him, but was freely *deliver'd* by him into his Father's hands, as *his own Act and Deed*. He that had ſtrength to cry thus when he died, could have got looſe from the Arreſt he was under, and have bid Defiance to the Powers of Death, but to ſhew that *by the Eternal Spirit he offer'd himſelf*, being the Prieſt as well as the Sacrifice, he *cried with a loud Voice*.

(2.) It was ſignificant. This *loud Voice* ſhews that he attack'd our Spiritual Enemies with an undaunted Courage, and ſuch a Bravery of Reſolution as ſpeaks him hearty in the Cauſe, and daring in the Encounter. He was now *ſpoiling Principalities and Powers*, and in this loud Voice he did as it were *ſhout for Maſtery*, as one *mighty to ſave*, Iſa. 63. 1. and compare with this *Iſa.* 42. 13, 14. He now bow'd himſelf with all his might, as *Sampſon* did, when he ſaid, *Let me dye with the Philiſtines*, Jud. 16. 30. *Animamque in vulnere ponit*. His crying with a loud Voice when he dy'd, ſignified that his Death ſhould be publiſh'd and proclaim'd to all the World; all Mankind being concern'd in it, and oblig'd to take notice of. Chriſt's loud Cry was like a Trumpet blown over the Sacrifices.

2. That when he yielded up the Ghoſt. This is the uſual *Periphraſis* of Dying; to ſhew that the Son of God upon the Croſs did truly and properly dye by the Violence of the Pain he was put to. His *Soul* was ſeparated from his *Body*, and ſo his Body was left really and truly dead. 'Twas certain he *did dye*, for it was requiſite he ſhould dye; *thus it was written*, both in the *cloſe Rolls* of the *Divine Counſels*, and in the *Letters Patent* of the *Divine Predictions*, and therefore thus *it behoved him to ſuffer*. Death being the Penalty for the Breach of the firſt Covenant, *thou ſhalt ſurely dye*; the Mediator of the new Covenant muſt make Atonement *by means of Death*, otherwiſe no Remiſſion, *Heb.* 9. 15. He had undertaken to make his Soul an *Offering for Sin*, and he did it when he *yielded up the Ghoſt*, and voluntarily reſign'd it.

Secondly, The *Miracles* that attended his Death. So many Miracles being wrought *by him* in his Life, we might well expect ſome to be wrought concerning him at his Death, for his Name was call'd *Wonderful*. Had he been fetch'd away as *Elijah* in a *fiery Chariot*, that had it ſelf been Miracle enough; but being ſent for away by an ignominious Croſs, 'twas requiſite that his Humiliation ſhould be attended with ſome ſignal Emanations of the Divine Glory.

1. *Behold the Vail of the Temple was rent in twain*. This Relation is uſher'd in with *Behold*, turn aſide and ſee this great ſight, and be aſtoniſhed at it. Juſt as our Lord Jeſus expir'd, at the time of the Offering of the Evening Sacrifice, and upon a ſolemn Day, when the Prieſts were Officiating in the Temple, and might themſelves be Eye-witneſſes of it, *the Vail of the Temple was rent* by an inviſible Power; that Vail which parted between the *holy Place*, and the *moſt Holy*. They had condemn'd him for ſaying, *I will deſtroy this Temple*, underſtanding it literally, now by this Specimen of his Power he let them know, that if he had pleas'd, he could have made his Words good. In this, as in other of Chriſt's Miracles, there was a Myſtery.

1. It was in Correſpondence with the Temple of Chriſt's Body, which was now in the *diſſolving*. That was the true Temple, in which dwelt *the Fulneſs of the Godhead*; when Chriſt *cried with a loud Voice, and gave up the Ghoſt*, and ſo diſſolv'd that Temple; the literal Temple did as it were eccho to that Cry, and anſwer the Stroke by *rending its Vail*. *Note*, Death is the rending of the Vail of Fleſh which interpoſeth between us and the Holy of Holies; the Death of Chriſt was ſo, the Death of true Chriſtians is ſo.

2. It ſignified the revealing and unfolding of the Myſteries of the Old Teſtament. The Vail of the Temple was for Concealment, as was that on the Face of *Moſes*, therefore 'twas call'd the *Vail of the Covering*; for 'twas highly penal for any Perſon to ſee the Furniture of the moſt holy Place, except the High Prieſt, and he but once a Year, with great Ceremony, and through a Cloud of Smoke: all which ſignified the Darkneſs of that Diſpenſation, 2 *Cor.* 3. 13. But now at the Death of Chriſt all was laid open, the Myſteries unvail'd, ſo that now he that runs may read the meaning of them. Now we ſee that the Mercy-ſeat ſignified *Chriſt* the great *Propitiation*, the Pot of *Manna* ſignified Chriſt the Bread of Life. Thus *we all with open face, behold as in a* Glaſs, which helps the ſight, as the Vail hinder'd it, *the Glory of the Lord*, *Our Eyes ſee the Salvation*.

3. It ſignified the uniting of *Jew* and *Gentile* by the removing of the Partition-wall between them, which was the Ceremonial Law, by which the *Jews* were diſtinguiſh'd from all other People, as a *Garden encloſed*; were brought near to God, whilſt others were made to *keep their Diſtance*; Chriſt in his Death repeal'd the Ceremonial Law, cancell'd that *Hand-writing of Ordinances*, took it out of the way, nail'd it to his Croſs, and ſo *broke down the middle Wall of Partition*; and by aboliſhing thoſe Inſtitutions, *aboliſhed the Enmity*, and *made in himſelf of twain one new Man*, (as two Rooms are made one, and that large and lightſome, by taking down the Partition) ſo *making Peace*, Eph. 2. 14, 15, 16. Chriſt dy'd to rend all dividing *Vails*, and to make all his one, *John* 17. 21.

4. It ſignified the Conſecrating, and laying open of *a new and living Way* to God. The Vail kept People off from drawing near to the moſt holy Place, where the *Shechinah* was. But the rending of it ſignified, that Chriſt by his Death open'd a Way to God (1.) *for himſelf*. This was the great *Day of Atonement*, when our Lord Jeſus, as the great *High-Prieſt*, not *by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own Blood, enter'd once for all into the Holy Place*; in token of which the Vail was rent, *Heb.* 9. 7, *&c.* Having offer'd his Sacrifice in the outer Court, the Blood of it was now to be ſprinkled upon the Mercy-ſeat within the Vail; wherefore *lift up your Heads, O ye Gates*, and *be ye lift up, ye everlaſting Doors*; *for the King of Glory*, the Prieſt of Glory, *ſhall come in*. Now was he cauſed to draw near, and made to approach, *Jer.* 30. 21. Tho' he did not Perſonally aſcend into the holy Place, not made with Hands, till above forty Days after, yet he immediately acquir'd a Right to enter, and had a virtual Admiſſion (2.) *for us in him*. So the Apoſtle applies it, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20. We have *boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt by that new and living Way which he has conſecrated for us through the Vail*. He dy'd to *bring us to God*, and in order thereunto to rend that Vail of Guilt and Wrath which interpos'd between us and him, to take away the *Cherubim*, and *flaming Sword*, and to open the Way to *the Tree of Life*. We have free Acceſs through Chriſt to the Throne of Grace, or Mercy-ſeat now, and to the Throne of Glory hereafter, *Heb.* 4. *ult.*—6. *ult.* The rending of the Vail ſignified, (as that antient Hymn excellently expreſſeth it) that *when Chriſt had overcome the ſharpneſs of Death, he open'd the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers*. Nothing can obſtruct, or diſcourage our Acceſs to Heaven, for the Vail is rent; *a Door is open'd in Heaven*, Rev. 4. 1.

2. The *Earth did quake*; not only *Mount Calvary*, where Chriſt was Crucified, but the *whole Land*, and the adjacent Countries. This Earthquake ſignified two things.

(1.) The *horrible* Wickedneſs of *Chriſt's Crucifiers*. The Earth, by trembling under ſuch a Load, bore its Teſtimony to the Innocency of him that was perſecuted, and againſt the Impiety of thoſe that perſecuted him. Never did the whole Creation before groan under ſuch a Burthen as the Son of God Crucified, and the guilty Wretches that crucified him. The Earth *quaked*, as if it *feared to open its Mouth* to *receive* the Blood of Chriſt, ſo much more precious than that of *Abel*, which it had *received*, and was *curſed* for it, *Gen.* 4. 11, 12. And as if it *fain would open its Mouth* to ſwallow up thoſe Rebels that put him to Death, as it had ſwallow'd up *Dathan* and *Abiram* for a much leſs Crime, when the Prophet would expreſs God's great Diſpleaſure againſt the Wickedneſs of the Wicked, he asks, *Shall not the Land tremble for this?* Amos 8. 8.

(2.) The *glorious* Atchievements of *Chriſt's Croſs*. This *Earthquake* ſignified the mighty Shock; nay, the fatal Blow now given to the Devil's Kingdom. So vigorous was the Aſſault Chriſt now made upon the infernal Powers; that (as of old, *when he went out of* Seir, *when he march'd through the Field of* Edom) the *Earth trembled*, Judges 5. 4. *Pſal.* 68. 7, 8. God ſhakes all Nations, when the Deſire of all Nations is to come, and there is a *yet once more*, which perhaps refers to this ſhaking, *Hag.* 2. 7, 21.

3. The *Rocks rent*; the hardeſt and firmeſt part of the Earth was made to feel this mighty Shock. Chriſt had ſaid, that if the Children ſhould ceaſe to cry *Hoſanna*, *the Stones would immediately cry out*, and now in Effect they did ſo, proclaiming the Glory of the Suffering Jeſus, and themſelves more ſenſible of the Wrong done him, than the hard-hearted *Jews* were, who yet will ſhortly be glad to find a

Hole in the Rocks, and a Cleft in the ragged Rocks, to hide them from the Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne. See *Rev.* 6. 16. *Iſa.* 2. 21. But when God's *Fury is pour'd out like Fire, the Rocks are thrown down by him,* Nah. 1. 6. Jeſus Chriſt is the *Rock,* and the rending of *theſe* Rocks ſignified the rending of *that Rock:* (1.) That in the Clefts of it we may be *hid,* as *Moſes* in the Cleft of the Rock at *Horeb,* that there we may *behold the Glory of the Lord,* as he did, *Exod.* 33. 22. Chriſt's Dove is ſaid to be *hid in the Clefts of the Rock, Cant.* 2. 14. that is, as ſome make the Alluſion, ſhelter'd in the Wounds of our Lord Jeſus, the Rock rent. (2.) That from the Clefts of it, Rivers of living Water may flow, and follow us in this Wilderneſs, as from the Rock which *Moſes ſmote,* Exod. 17. 6. and which God clave, *Pſal.* 78. 15. and that Rock was Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 10. 4. When we celebrate the Memorial of Chriſt's Death, our hard and rocky Hearts muſt be *rent,* the Heart and not the Garments. That Heart is harder than a Rock that will not *yield,* that will not *melt,* where Jeſus Chriſt is *evidently ſet forth Crucified.*

4. The *Graves were opened.* This Matter is not related ſo fully as our Curioſity would wiſh; for the Scripture was not intended to gratifie that; it ſhould ſeem the ſame Earthquake that rent the Rocks, *open'd the Graves,* and many Bodies of *Saints which ſlept aroſe;* Death to the Saints is but the *Sleep* of the Body, and the *Grave* the Bed it *ſleeps in;* they awoke by the Power of the Lord Jeſus; and *v.* 53. came *out of the Graves after his Reſurrection, and went into* Jeruſalem, *the Holy City, and appeared unto many.* Now here,

1. We may raiſe many Enquiries concerning it, which we cannot reſolve. As (1.) *Who* theſe *Saints* were that *did ariſe.* Some think the *antient Patriarchs,* that were in ſuch care to be buried in the Land of *Canaan,* perhaps in the believing Foreſight of the Advantage of this early Reſurrection. Chriſt had lately prov'd the Doctrine of the Reſurrection from the Inſtance of the Patriarchs, *Mat.* 22. 32. and here was a ſpeedy Confirmation of his Arguments. Others think, theſe that roſe were *modern Saints,* ſuch as had ſeen Chriſt in the Fleſh, but dy'd before him; as his Father *Joſeph, Zecharias, Simeon, John Baptiſt,* and others, that had been known to the *Diſciples* while they liv'd, and therefore were the fitter to be Witneſſes to them in an *Apparition* after. What if we ſhould ſuppoſe that they were the *Martyrs,* who in the *Old Teſtament* Times had ſeal'd the Truths of God with their Blood, that were thus *dignified* and *diſtinguiſh'd?* Chriſt particularly points at them, as his Fore-runners, *Mat.* 23. 35. And we find, *Rev.* 20. 4, 5. that thoſe who were *Beheaded for the Teſtimony of Jeſus,* roſe *before the reſt of the Dead.* Sufferers with Chriſt ſhall *firſt* reign with him. (2.) 'Tis uncertain whether, (as ſome think) they roſe to Life now at the Death of Chriſt, and diſpos'd of themſelves elſewhere, but did not *go into the City* 'till after his Reſurrection; or, whether, (as others think) tho' *their Sepulchres,* (which the *Phariſees* had *built* and *garniſh'd,* Mat. 23. 29. and ſo made remarkable) were ſhatter'd now by the Earthquake, (ſo little did God matter that hypocritical Reſpect) yet they did not *revive* and *riſe* 'till after his Reſurrection; only for brevity ſake 'tis mention'd here upon the mention of the *opening of the Graves,* which ſeems more probable. (3.) Some think they roſe only to bear witneſs of Chriſt's Reſurrection to thoſe to whom they appear'd, and having finiſhed their Teſtimony, retir'd to their Graves again: But it is more agreeable, both to Chriſt's Honour, and theirs, to *ſuppoſe,* tho' we cannot *prove,* that they roſe as Chriſt did, to *dye no more,* and therefore aſcended with him to Glory. Sure they who did partake of this firſt Reſurrection, on them a *ſecond* Death had no Power. (4) To whom they appear'd, (not *to all the People,* 'tis certain, but *too many*) whether Enemies or Friends, in what manner they appear'd, how often, what they ſaid and did, and how they diſappear'd, are ſecret things which belong not to us; we muſt not covet to *be wiſe above what is written.* The relating of this matter ſo briefly, is a plain intimation to us, that we muſt not look that way for the Confirmation of our Faith, we have a more ſure Word of Prophecy. See *Luke* 16. *ult.*

2. Yet we may learn many good Leſſons from it. (1.) That even thoſe who liv'd and dy'd before the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt had ſaving Benefit thereby, as well as thoſe that have liv'd ſince; for he *was* the ſame *yeſterday* that he is *to day,* and will be *for ever,* Heb. 13. 8. (2.) That Jeſus Chriſt by dying conquer'd, diſarm'd, and diſabled Death. Theſe Saints that roſe were the preſent Trophies of the Victory of Chriſt's Croſs over the Powers of *Death,* which he thus *made a ſhew of openly.* Having by Death deſtroy'd him that had the Power of Death, he thus *led Captivity Captive,* and gloried in theſe *re-taken Prizes,* in them fulfilling that Scripture, *I will ranſom them from the Power of the Grave.* (3.) That in the Virtue of Chriſt's Reſurrection, the Bodies of all the Saints ſhall in the fulneſs of Time *riſe again.* This was an Earneſt of the General Reſurrection at the laſt Day, when *all that are in the Graves ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of God.* And perhaps *Jeruſalem* is therefore call'd here the *Holy City,* becauſe the Saints at the General Reſurrection, ſhall enter into the *New Jeruſalem;* which will be indeed what the other was, in Name, and Type only, the *Holy City, Rev.* 21. 2. (4.) That all the Saints do by the Influence of Chriſt's Death, and in conformity to it, riſe from the *Death of Sin* to the *Life of Righteouſneſs.* They are *raiſed up with him* to a Divine and Spiritual Life; they go *into the Holy City,* become *Citizens* of it, have their Converſation in it, and *appear to many* as Perſons not of this World.

Thirdly, The Conviction of his Enemies that were employ'd in the Execution, *v.* 54. which ſome make no leſs than another Miracle, all things conſider'd. Obſerve,

1. The Perſons convinced; *the Centurion, and they that were with him watching Jeſus;* a Captain and his Company, that were ſet on the Guard on this Occaſion. (1.) They were *Soldiers,* whoſe Profeſſion is commonly hardening, and whoſe Breaſts are commonly not ſo ſuſceptible as ſome others of the Impreſſions, either of Fear or Pity. But there's no Spirit too big, too bold for the Power of Chriſt to break and humble. (2.) They were *Romans, Gentiles,* who knew not the Scriptures that were now fulfilled, yet they only were convinced. A ſad Preſage of the *Blindneſs* that ſhould *happen to* Iſrael, when the Goſpel ſhould be ſent to the *Gentiles* to open their Eyes. Here were the *Gentiles ſoftened,* and the *Jews hardened.* (3.) They were the Perſecutors of Chriſt, and thoſe that but juſt before had revil'd him, as appears, *Luke* 23. 36. How ſoon can God, by the Power he has over Men's Conſciences, alter their Language, and fetch Confeſſions of his Truths to his own Glory, out of the Mouths of thoſe that have *breath'd* nothing but *Threatnings,* and *Slaughters,* and *Blaſphemies.*

2. The Means of their Conviction; they perceiv'd *the Earthquake,* which frighten'd them, and ſaw the other *things that were done.* Theſe were deſign'd to aſſert the Honour of Chriſt in his Sufferings, and had their End on theſe Soldiers, whatever they had on others. *Note,* The dreadful Appearances of God in his Providence, ſometimes work ſtrangely for the Conviction and awakening of Sinners.

3. The Expreſſions of this Conviction, in two things:

1. The *Terror* that was *ſtruck* upon them, they *fear'd greatly;* feared leſt they ſhould have been buried in the Darkneſs, or ſwallow'd up in the Earthquake. *Note,* God can eaſily frighten the moſt daring of his Adverſaries, and make them know themſelves to be but Men. Guilt puts Men into Fear. He that when Iniquity abounds, doth not *fear always* with a Fear of *Caution,* when Judgments are abroad, cannot but *fear greatly* with a Fear of *Amazement;* whereas there are thoſe who will not fear, *though the Earth be removed,* Pſal. 46. 1, 2.

2. The *Teſtimony* that was *extorted* from them. They ſaid, *Truly this was the Son of God;* a noble Confeſſion, *Peter* was bleſſed for it, *Mat.* 16. 16, 17. 'Twas the great Matter now in diſpute, the Point upon which he and his Enemies had *joyn'd Iſſue,* Mat. 26. 63, 64. His Diſciples believ'd it, but at this time durſt not confeſs it; our Saviour himſelf was tempted to queſtion it, when he ſaid, *Why haſt thou forſaken me?* The *Jews,* now he was dying upon the Croſs, look'd upon it as plainly determined againſt him, that he was not the Son of God, becauſe he did not come down from the Croſs. And yet now this Centurion, and the Soldiers make this voluntary Confeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith, *Truly this was the Son of God.* The beſt of his Diſciples could not have ſaid more at any time, and at this time they had not Faith and Courage enough to ſay thus much. *Note,* God can maintain and aſſert the Honour of a Truth then, when it ſeems to be cruſh'd, and run down; for *great is the Truth, and will prevail.*

Fourthly, The Attendance of his Friends that were Witneſſes of his Death, *v.* 55, 56. Obſerve,

1. Who they were, *many Women which followed him from* Galilee. Not his Apoſtles (only elſewhere we find *John* by the Croſs, *John* 19. 26.) Their Hearts fail'd them, they durſt not appear, for fear of coming under the ſame Condemnation. But here were a Company of Women, ſome would have call'd them *ſilly* Women, that *boldly* ſtuck to Chriſt when the reſt of his Diſciples had baſely deſerted him. *Note,* Even thoſe of the weaker Sex are often by the Grace of God made ſtrong in Faith, that Chriſt's Strength may be made perfect in Weakneſs. There have been Women Martyrs, famous for Courage and Reſolution in Chriſt's Cauſe. Now of theſe Women, it is ſaid, (1.) That they had *follow'd Jeſus from* Galilee, out of the great Love they had to him, and a deſire to hear him Preach; otherwiſe the Males only were oblig'd to come up to Worſhip at the Feaſt. Now having follow'd him ſuch a long Journey, as from *Galilee* to *Jeruſalem,* Eighty, or an Hundred Miles, they reſolv'd not to forſake him now. *Note,* Our former Services and Sufferings for Chriſt ſhould be an Argument with us faithfully to perſevere to the end in our Attendance on him. Have we follow'd him ſo far, and ſo long, done ſo much, and laid out ſo much for him, and ſhall we forſake him now? *Gal.* 3. 3, 4. (2.) That they *Miniſter'd to him* of their Subſtance for his neceſſary Subſiſtence. How gladly would they have Miniſter'd to him now, if they might have been admitted; but being forbidden that, they reſolv'd to *follow him. Note,* When we are reſtrain'd from doing what we would, we muſt do what we can in the Service of Chriſt. Now he is in *Heaven,* tho' he is out of the reach of our *Miniſtration,* yet he is not out of the reach of our *believing Views.* (3.) Some of them are particularly nam'd; for God will *honour* thoſe that *honour* Chriſt. They were ſuch as we have ſeveral times met with *before,* and it was their Praiſe that we meet with them *to the laſt.*

2. What they did, they were *beholding afar off.*

1. They ſtood *afar off.* Whether their own Fear, or their Enemies Fury kept them at a diſtance, is not certain; however it was an Aggravation of the Sufferings of Chriſt, that his *Lovers and Friends ſtood aloof from his Sore,* Pſal. 38. 11. Job 19. 13. Perhaps they might have come nearer if they would; but good People when they

are in Sufferings muſt not think it ſtrange, if ſome of their beſt Friends be ſhy of them. When *Paul*'s Danger was imminent, *no Man ſtood by him*, 2 Tim. 4. 16. If we be thus look'd ſtrangely upon, remember our Maſter was ſo before us.

2. They were there *beholding*; in which they ſhew'd a Concern and Kindneſs for Chriſt, when they were debarr'd from doing any other Office of Love to him, they look'd a Look of Love towards him. (1.) It was a *ſorrowful* Look, they look'd unto him who was now pierc'd and *mourn'd*, and no doubt were *in bitterneſs* for him. We may well imagine how it cut them to the Heart to ſee him in this Torment; and what Floods of Tears it fetch'd from their Eyes: Let us with an Eye of Faith behold Chriſt and him crucified, and be affected with that great Love wherewith he loved us. But (2.) It was no more but a Look; they beheld him, but they could not *help him*. *Note*, When Chriſt was in his Sufferings, the beſt of his Friends were but Spectators, and Lookers on, even the *Angelic Guards ſtood trembling by*, ſaith Mr. *Norris*, for he *trod the Wine-preſs alone*, and of the People there was none with him; ſo *his own Arm wrought Salvation.*

57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joſeph, who alſo himſelf was Jeſus diſciple: 58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jeſus: then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. 59 And when Joſeph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great ſtone to the door of the ſepulchre, and departed. 61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, ſitting over againſt the ſepulchre. 62 Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief prieſts and Phariſees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver ſaid, while he was yet alive, After three days I will riſe again. 64 Command therefore that the ſepulchre be made ſure until the third day, leſt his diſciples come by night, and ſteal him away, and ſay unto the people, He is riſen from the dead: ſo the laſt error ſhall be worſe than the firſt. 65 Pilate ſaid unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, make it as ſure as you can. 66 So they went and made the ſepulchre ſure, ſealing the ſtone, and ſetting a watch.

We have here an Account of Chriſt's *Burial*, and the Manner and Circumſtances of it, concerning which, obſerve (1.) The *Kindneſs* and *Good Will* of his Friends that *laid him in the Grave.* (2.) The *Malice* and *Ill Will* of his Enemies, that were very ſollicitous to keep him there.

Firſt, His Friends gave him a *decent Burial*. Obſerve,

1. In general that Jeſus Chriſt was *buried*; when his precious Soul was gone to Paradiſe, his bleſſed Body was depoſited in the Chambers of the Grave, that he might anſwer the Type of *Jonas*, and fulfil the Prophecy of *Iſaias*, he *made his Grave with the Wicked.* Thus in all things he muſt be made *like unto his Brethren*, Sin only excepted, and like us, unto Duſt *he muſt return*: He was buried, to make his Death the more certain, and his Reſurrection the more illuſtrious. *Pilate* would not deliver his Body to be buried till he was well aſſur'd he was really dead; while the Witneſſes lay *unburied*, there was ſome Hopes concerning them, *Rev.* 11. 8. But Chriſt the great Witneſs is as one *free among the Dead*, *like the Slain that lie in the Grave.* He was *buried*, that he might take off the Terror of the Grave, and make it eaſy to us, might warm and perfume that cold noiſome Bed for us, and that we might be *buried with him.*

2. The particular Circumſtances of his Burial here related.

1. The Time *when* he was buried; *when the Even was come*, the ſame Evening that he dy'd, before Sun-ſet, as is uſual in burying Malefactors. It was not deferr'd till the next Day, becauſe it was the *Sabbath*; for burying the Dead is not proper Work either for a Day of Reſt, or for a Day of Rejoycing, as the Sabbath is.

2. The Perſon that took Care of the Funeral was *Joſeph of Arimathea.* The Apoſtles were all fled, and none of them appear'd to ſhew this reſpect to their Maſter, which the Diſciples of *John* ſhew'd to him after he was beheaded, they *took up his Body and buried it*, Mat. 14. 12. The Women that follow'd him durſt not move in it, then did God ſtir up this good Man to do it; for what Work God has to do, he will find out Inſtruments to do it. *Joſeph* was a fit Man; for (1.) He had wherewithal to do it, being a *rich Man*; moſt of Chriſt's Diſciples were poor Men, ſuch were moſt fit to go about the Countrey to preach the Goſpel, but here was one that was a *rich Man*, ready to be employ'd in a piece of Service which requir'd *a Man of Eſtate.* *Note*, Worldly Wealth, tho' it is to many an Obſtruction in Religion's way, yet in ſome Services to be done for Chriſt, it is an Advantage and an Opportunity, and it's well for thoſe who have it, if withal they have a Heart to uſe it for God's Glory. (2.) He was well-affected to our Lord Jeſus, for he was himſelf *his Diſciple*, believed in him, tho' he did not openly profeſs it. *Note*, Chriſt has more ſecret Diſciples than we are aware of; Seven thouſand in *Iſrael*, Rom. 11. 4.

3. The Grant of the dead Body procur'd from *Pilate*, v. 53. *Joſeph went to Pilate*, the proper Perſon to be apply'd to on this Occaſion, who had the Diſpoſal of the Body; for in things wherein the Power of the Magiſtrate is concern'd, due regard muſt be had to that Power, and nothing done to break in upon it. What we do that is good, muſt be done peaceably, and not tumultuouſly. *Pilate* was willing to give the Body to one that would interr it decently, that he might do ſomething towards atoning for the Guilt his Conſcience charg'd him with, in condemning an innocent Perſon. In *Joſeph*'s Petition, and *Pilate*'s ready Grant of it, *Honour* was done to Chriſt, and a Teſtimony born to his *Integrity.*

The dreſſing of the Body in its Grave-clothes, *v.* 59. Tho' he was an honourable Counſellor, yet he himſelf *took the Body*, as it ſhould ſeem, into his own Arms, from the infamous and accurſed Tree, (*Acts* 13. 29.) for where there is true Love to Chriſt, no Service will be thought too mean to ſtoop to for him: Having taken it, he wrapt it in a *clean Linnen Cloth*, for burying in Linnen was then the common Uſage, which *Joſeph* comply'd with. *Note*, Care is to be taken of the dead Bodies of good Men, for there is a Glory intended for them at the Reſurrection, which we muſt hereby teſtify our Belief of, and wind up the dead Body as deſign'd for a better Place. This common Act of Humanity, if done after a *godly ſort*, may be made an acceptable piece of *Chriſtianity.*

5. The depoſiting of it in the Sepulchre, *v.* 60. Here was nothing of that Pomp and Solemnity, with which the Grandees of the World are *brought to the Grave, and laid in the Tomb*, Job 21. 32. A private Funeral did beſt befit him, whoſe Kingdom came not with Obſervation.

(1.) He was laid in a *borrow'd* Tomb, in *Joſeph*'s Burying-Place; as he had not a Houſe of his own wherein to *lay his Head* while he liv'd, ſo he had not a Grave of his own wherein to *lay his Body* when he was dead, which was an Inſtance of his Poverty, yet in this there might be ſomewhat of a Myſtery: The Grave is the peculiar Heritage of a *Sinner*, Job 24. 19. There is nothing we can truly call our own but our Sins, and our Graves; he returneth to *his Earth*, Pſal. 146. 4. When we go to the Grave, we go to our own Place, but our Lord Jeſus, that had no Sin of his own, had no Grave of his own, dying under imputed Sin, 'twas fit he ſhould be bury'd in a *borrow'd* Grave; the *Jews* deſign'd that he ſhould have *made his Grave with the Wicked*, ſhould have been bury'd with the Thieves with whom he was crucified, but God over-rul'd it, ſo as that he ſhould make it *with the Rich in his Death*, Iſa. 53. 9.

(2.) He was laid in a *new Tomb*, which *Joſeph*, 'tis likely, deſign'd *for himſelf*, but it would be *never the worſe* for his lying in it, who was to riſe ſo quickly, but a *great deal the better* for his lying in it, who has alter'd the Property of the Grave, and made it *anew* indeed, by turning it into a *Bed of Reſt*, nay, into a *Bed of Spices* for all the Saints.

(3.) In a Tomb that was *hewn out of a Rock*; the Ground about *Jeruſalem* was generally Rocky: *Shebna* had his Sepulchre hewn out thereabouts *in a Rock*, Iſa. 22. 16. Providence order'd it, that Chriſt's Sepulchre ſhould be in a ſolid intire Rock, that no room might be left to ſuſpect his Diſciples to have had acceſs to it by ſome under-ground Paſſage, or to have broke through the Back-Wall of it to ſteal the Body; for there is no acceſs to it but by the Door which was watched.

(4.) A *great Stone* was *rolled to the Door of the Sepulchre*; this alſo was according to the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, in burying their Dead, as appears by the Deſcription of the Grave of *Lazarus*, John 11. 38. ſignifying that thoſe who are dead are *ſeparated*, and *cut off from all the living*; if the Grave were his Priſon, now was the Priſon-Door lock'd and bolted. The rolling of the Stone to the Grave's Mouth, was with them as filling up the Grave is with us, it compleated the Funeral. Having thus in Silence and Sorrow depoſited the precious Body of our Lord Jeſus in the Grave, the Houſe *appointed for all the living*, they *departed* without any further Ceremony. 'Tis the moſt melancholy Circumſtance in the Funerals of our Chriſtian Friends, when we have laid their Bodies in the dark and ſilent Grave, to go home and leave them behind; but alas, it is not we that *go home* and *leave them behind*, no, 'tis they that are gone to the better home, and have left us behind.

6. The Company that attended the Funeral, and that was very *ſmall* and *mean*; Here were none of the Relations in Mourning to follow the Corps, no Formalities to grace the Solemnity, but ſome good Women that were true Mourners, *Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary*, v. 6. Theſe, as they had attended him to the *Croſs*, ſo they follow'd him to *the Grave*, as if they compos'd themſelves to Sorrow, they *ſate over againſt the Sepulchre*, not ſo much to fill their Eyes with the Sight of what was done, as to empty them in Rivers of Tears. *Note*, True Love to Chriſt will carry us through to the utmoſt in following him. Death it ſelf cannot quench that Divine Fire, *Cant.* 8. 6, 7.

Secondly, His Enemies did what they could to prevent his Reſurrection; what they did herein was *the next Day that follow'd the Day of the Preparation*, v. 62. That was the ſeventh Day of the Week, the *Jewiſh Sabbath*, yet not expreſly call'd ſo, but deſcrib'd by this Periphraſis; becauſe it was now ſhortly to give way to the Chriſtian Sabbath, which began the Day after. Now, (1.) All that Day Chriſt lay dead in the Grave; having for ſix days labour'd and done all his Work, on the ſeventh day he *reſted*, and was *refreſhed*. (2.) On that day the *Chief Prieſts* and *Phariſees*, when they ſhould have been at their Devotions, asking Pardon for the Sins of the Week paſt, were dealing with *Pilate* about ſecuring the Sepulchre, and ſo *adding Rebellion to their Sin*: They that had ſo often quarrell'd with Chriſt for Works of the greateſt Mercy on that Day, were themſelves buſied in a Work of the greateſt Malice. Obſerve here,

1. Their Addreſs to *Pilate*; they were vexed that the Body was given to one that would bury it decently, but ſince it muſt be ſo, they deſire a Guard may be ſet on the Sepulchre.

(1.) Their Petition ſets forth, that *that Deceiver* (ſo they call him, who is Truth it ſelf) *had ſaid, After three Days I will riſe again*: He had ſaid ſo, and his Diſciples *remember'd* thoſe very Words, for the confirmation of their Faith, but his Perſecutors remember them for the Provocation of their Rage and Malice. Thus the ſame Word of Chriſt to the one was a ſavour of Life unto Life, to the other of Death unto Death. See how they compliment *Pilate* with the Title of *Sir*, while they reproach Chriſt with the Title of *Deceiver*: Thus the moſt malicious Slanderers of *good Men* are commonly the moſt ſordid Flatterers of *great Men*.

(2.) It further ſets forth their Jealouſy, *leſt his Diſciples come by Night and ſteal him away, and ſay, He is riſen.*

1. That which *really* they were afraid of was his *Reſurrection*: That which is moſt Chriſt's Honour and his People's Joy, is moſt the Terror of his Enemies. That which exaſperated *Joſeph*'s Brethren againſt him was the Preſages of his Riſe, and of his having Dominion over them, *Gen.* 37. 8. and all they aim'd at in what they did againſt him was to prevent that. Come, ſay they, let us *ſlay him*, and ſee *what will become of his Dreams*; ſo the Chief Prieſts and Phariſees here labour'd to defeat the Predictions of Chriſt's Reſurrection, ſaying as *David*'s Enemies of him, *Pſal.* 41. 8. *Now that he lieth he ſhall riſe up no more*, if he ſhould, that would break all their Meaſures. *Note*, Chriſt's Enemies, even when they have gain'd their Point, yet are ſtill in fear of loſing it again. Perhaps the Prieſts were ſurpriz'd at the Reſpects ſhew'd to Chriſt's dead Body by *Joſeph* and *Nicodemus*, two honourable Counſellors, and look'd upon it as an ill Preſage; nor can they forget his raiſing *Lazarus* from *the Dead*, which ſo confounded them.

2. That which they took on them to be afraid of, was, leſt *his Diſciples ſhould come by Night and ſteal him away*, which was a very improbable thing; for (1.) They had not the Courage to own him while he liv'd, when they might have done him and themſelves real Service, and 'twas not likely that his Death ſhould have put Courage into ſuch Cowards. (2.) What could they promiſe themſelves by ſtealing away his Body, and making People believe he was riſen; when if he ſhould not riſe, and ſo prove himſelf a Deceiver, his Diſciples that had left all for him in this World in dependance upon a Recompence in t'other World, would of all others ſuffer moſt by the Impoſture, and would have had Reaſon to throw the firſt Stone at his Name? What good would it do them to carry on a Cheat upon themſelves, to ſteal away his Body, and ſay, *He is riſen*, when if he were not riſen their Faith was vain, and they were *of all Men the moſt miſerable*? The Chief Prieſts apprehend, that if the Doctrine of Chriſt's Reſurrection be once preach'd and believ'd, the *laſt Error will be worſe than the firſt*; a proverbial Expreſſion ſpeaking no more of this, That we ſhall be routed, all undone; they think it was *their Error* that they had ſo long connived at his Preaching and Miracles, which *Error* they thought they had *rectified*, by putting him to Death; but if People ſhould be perſwaded of his Reſurrection, that would *ſpoil all* again, his Intereſt would revive with him, and theirs muſt needs ſink who had ſo barbarouſly murther'd him. *Note*, Thoſe that oppoſe Chriſt and his Kingdom, will ſee, not only their Attempts baffled, but themſelves miſerably *plung'd* and *embarraſs'd*, their Errors each worſe than other, and the laſt worſt of all, *Pſal.* 2. 4, 5.

(3.) In conſideration hereof they humbly move to have a Guard ſet upon the Sepulchre till the third Day; *command that the Sepulchre be made ſure. Pilate* muſt ſtill be their Drudge, his Civil and Military Power muſt both be engag'd to ſerve their Malice; one would think Death's Priſoners needed no other Guard, and that the Grave were *Security* enough to it ſelf; but what will not thoſe fear that are conſcious to themſelves, both of *Guilt* and *Impotency*, in oppoſing the Lord and his Anointed?

2. *Pilate*'s Anſwer to this Addreſs, *v.* 65. *Ye have a Watch, make it ſure, as ſure as you can*; He was ready to gratify Chriſt's Friends, in allowing them the Body, and his Enemies in ſetting a Guard upon it, being deſirous to pleaſe all Sides, whiles perhaps he laugh'd in his Sleeve at both, for making ſuch a do, *pro* and *con*, about the dead Body of a Man, looking upon the Hopes of one Side, and the Fears of t'other, to be alike ridiculous. *You have a Watch*; he means the conſtant Guard that was kept in the Tower of *Antonia*, out of which he allows them to *detach* as many as they pleas'd for that purpoſe, but as if aſham'd to be himſelf ſeen in ſuch a thing, he leaves the Management of it wholly to them. Methinks that Word, *Make it as ſure as you can*, looks like a Banter, either (1.) Of their *Fears*; beſure to ſet a ſtrong Guard upon the dead Man; or rather (2.) Of their *Hopes*; do your worſt, try your Wit and Strength to the utmoſt, but if he be of God, he will riſe in ſpite of you, and all your Guards. I am apt to think that by this time *Pilate* had had ſome Talk with the Centurion, his own Officer, of whom he would be apt to enquire how that *juſt Man* dy'd, whom he had condemn'd with ſuch Reluctancy; and he would give him an Account of thoſe things, which made him conclude that *truly he was the Son of God*, and *Pilate* would give more Credit to him than to a Thouſand of thoſe ſpiteful Prieſts that call'd him a *Deceiver*; and if ſo, no Marvel that he tacitly derides their Project, in thinking to ſecure the Sepulchre upon him, that had ſo lately rent the Rocks, and made the Earth to quake. *Tertullian* ſpeaking of *Pilate*, ſaith, *Ipſe jam pro ſuâ Conſcientiâ Chriſtianus*; and it was poſſible he might be under ſuch Convictions at this time, upon the Centurion's Report, and yet never be throughly perſwaded, no more than *Agrippa* or *Felix* was, to be a Chriſtian.

3. The wonderful Care they took hereupon to ſecure the Sepulchre, *v.* 66. *They ſealed the Stone*, probably with the Great Seal of their *Sanhedrin*, whereby they interpos'd their Authority, for who durſt break the publick Seal? But not truſting too much to that, withal they *ſet a Watch*, to keep *his Diſciples* from coming to *ſteal him away*, and if poſſible, to hinder him from coming out of the Grave. So they intended, but God brought this Good out of it, that they who were ſet to *oppoſe* his Reſurrection, thereby had an Opportunity to obſerve it, and did ſo, and told the Chief Prieſts what they obſerv'd, who were thereby render'd the more inexcuſable. Here was all the Power of Earth and Hell combined to keep Chriſt a Priſoner, but all in vain; when his hour was come, Death, and thoſe Sons and Heirs of Death, could then no longer hold him, no longer have Dominion over him. To guard the Sepulchre againſt the poor weak Diſciples, was Folly, becauſe *needleſs*; but to think to guard it againſt the Power of God, was Folly, becauſe *fruitleſs*, and to no purpoſe, and yet they thought they had *dealt wiſely*.

CHAP. XXVIII.

In the foregoing Chapters we ſaw the Captain of our Salvation engag'd with the Powers of Darkneſs, attack'd by them, and vigorouſly attacking them; Victory ſeem'd to hover between the Combatants, nay, at length it inclin'd to the Enemies ſide, and our Champion fell before them; behold God has deliver'd his Strength into Captivity, *and his* Glory into the Enemies Hand. *Chriſt in the Grave is like the Ark in* Dagon's *Temple; the Powers of Darkneſs ſeem'd to ride Maſters, but* Then the Lord awaked as one out of Sleep, and like a mighty Man that ſhouteth by Reaſon of Wine, *Pſal.* 78. 61, 65. *The Prince of our Peace is in this Chapter rallying again, coming out of the Grave a Conqueror, yea, more than a Conqueror, leading Captivity Captive; tho' the Ark be a Priſoner,* Dagon *falls before it, and it proves that* none is able to ſtand before the Holy Lord God. *Now the Reſurrection of Chriſt being one of the main Foundations of our Religion, it is requiſite that we ſhould have infallible Proofs of it; four of which Proofs we have in this Chapter, which are but a few of many, for* Luke *and* John *give a larger Account of the Proofs of Chriſt's Reſurrection than* Matthew *and* Mark *do. Here is* (1.) *The Teſtimony of the Angel to Chriſt's Reſurrection,* v. 1.—8. (2.) *His Appearance himſelf to the Women,* v. 9, 10. (3.) *The Confeſſion of the Adverſaries that were upon the Guard,* v. 11.—15. (4.) *Chriſt's Appearance to the Diſciples in* Galilee, *and the Commiſſion he gave them,* v. 16.—20.

IN the end of the ſabbath, as it began to dawn
towards the firſt *day* of the week, came Mary
Magdalene, and the other Mary, to ſee the ſepulchre.
2 And behold there was a great earthquake; for the
angel of the Lord deſcended from heaven, and came
and rolled back the ſtone from the door, and ſat upon
it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his
raiment white as ſnow. 4 And for fear of him the
keepers did ſhake, and became as dead men. 5 And
the angel anſwered and ſaid unto the women, Fear
not ye: For I know that ye ſeek Jeſus, which was
crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is riſen, as he ſaid:
come, ſee the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go
quickly, and tell his Diſciples that he is riſen from
the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee,
there ſhall ye ſee him, lo, I have told you. 8 And
they departed quickly from the ſepulchre, with fear
and great joy, and did run to bring his diſciples word.
9 And as they went to tell his diſciples, behold,
Jeſus met them, ſaying, All hail. And they came
and held him by the feet, and worſhipped him.
10 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell
my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there
ſhall they ſee me.

For the Proof of Chriſt's Reſurrection, we have here the Teſtimony of the *Angel*, and of *Chriſt* himſelf concerning his Reſurrection. Now we may think it would have done better, if the Matter had been ſo order'd, that a competent Number of Witneſſes ſhould have been preſent,and have ſeen the Stone roll'd away by the Angel, and the dead Body reviving, as People ſaw *Lazarus* come out of his Grave, and then the Matter had been paſt diſpute; but let not us preſcribe to infinite Wiſdom, which order'd that the Witneſſes of his Reſurrection ſhould ſee him *riſen*, but not ſee him *riſe*. His Incarnation was a Myſtery, ſo was this *ſecond Incarnation*, (if we may ſo call it) this *new making* of the Body of Chriſt for his exalted State, it was therefore *made in Secret*; *Bleſſed are they that have not ſeen, and yet have believed.* Chriſt gave ſuch Proofs of his Reſurrection as were *corroborated* by the Scriptures, and by the *Word* which he had *ſpoken*, *Luke* 24. 6, 7, 44. *Mark* 16. 7. for here we muſt *walk by Faith, not by Sight.* We have here,

Firſt, The *coming* of the *good Women* to the *Sepulchre.*

Obſerve, 1. *When* they came, *In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the firſt Day of the Week*, v. 1. This fixeth the Time of Chriſt's Reſurrection.

1. He roſe the *third day* after his Death, that was the Time which he had often prefixed, and he kept within it: He was bury'd in the Evening of the ſixth Day of the Week, and roſe in the Morning of the firſt Day of the following Week, ſo that he lay in the Grave about thirty ſix or thirty eight Hours. He lay ſo long to ſhew that he was really and truly dead, and no longer, that he might not *ſee Corruption*. He roſe the *third Day*,to anſwer the Type of the Prophet *Jonas*, *Mat.* 12. 40. and to accompliſh that Prediction, *Hoſ.* 6. 2. *The third Day he will raiſe us up, and we ſhall live in his ſight.*

2. He roſe *after the Jewiſh Sabbath*, and it was the Paſſover-Sabbath, all that Day he lay in the Grave, to ſignify the aboliſhing of the *Jewiſh* Feaſts, and other the Parts of the Ceremonial Law, and that his People muſt be dead to ſuch Obſervances, and take no more notice of them than he did when he *lay in the Grave.* Chriſt on *the ſixth Day finiſhed* his Work, he ſaid, *It is finiſhed*, on the *ſeventh Day he reſted*, and then on the firſt Day of the next Week did as it were begin a new World, and enter upon new Work, Let no Man therefore judge us now in reſpect of *the new Moons*, or of the *Jewiſh Sabbaths*, which were indeed a Shadow of good Things to come, but the *Subſtance* is *of Chriſt.* We may further obſerve, that the Time of the Saints lying in the Grave, is a Sabbath to them (ſuch as the *Jewiſh Sabbath* was, which conſiſted chiefly in bodily reſt) for there they *reſt from their Labours*, Job 3. 17. and it is owing to Chriſt.

3. He roſe upon the *firſt Day of the Week*; on the firſt Day of the firſt Week God *commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs*; on this Day therefore did he, who was to be the Light of the World, ſhine out of the Darkneſs of the Grave; and the ſeventh Day Sabbath being buried with Chriſt, it roſe again in the firſt Day Sabbath, call'd the *Lord's Day*, Rev. 1. 10. and no other Day of the Week is from henceforward mentioned in all the *New Teſtament* but this, and this often, as the Day which Chriſtians religiouſly obſerv'd in ſolemn Aſſemblies, to the Honour of Chriſt, *John* 20. 19, 26. *Acts* 20. 7. 1 *Cor.* 16. 2. If the Deliverance of *Iſrael* out of the Land of the North ſuperſeded the Remembrance of that out of *Egypt*, Jer. 23. 7, 8. much more doth our Redemption by Chriſt eclipſe the Glory of God's former Works. The Sabbath was inſtituted in remembrance of the *perfecting* of the Work of Creation, *Gen.* 2. 1. Man by his Revolt made a Breach upon that *perfect* Work, which was never perfectly repair'd till Chriſt roſe from the Dead, and the *Heavens and the Earth were* again *finiſhed*, and the diſorder'd *Hoſts of them* modell'd anew, and the Day on which this was done was juſtly *bleſſed and ſanctified*, and the ſeventh Day from that. He who on that Day roſe from the Dead, is the ſame, by whom, and for whom all things were at firſt created, and now anew created.

4. He roſe *as it began to dawn* towards that Day; as ſoon as it could be ſaid that the *third Day* was come, the Time prefix'd for his Reſurrection, he roſe; after his withdrawing from his People, he returns *with all convenient ſpeed*, and *cuts the Work* as *ſhort in Righteouſneſs* as may be. He had ſaid to his *Diſciples*, that tho' within a little while they *ſhould not ſee him*, yet again *a little while*, and they *ſhould ſee him*, and accordingly he made it as little a while as poſſible, *Iſa.* 54. 7, 8. Chriſt roſe *when the Day began to dawn*, becauſe then the Day-ſpring from on high did again viſit us, *Luke* 1. 78. His Paſſion begun in the Night, when he hung on the Croſs, the Sun was darkned, he was laid in the Grave in the Duſk of the Evening, but he roſe from the Grave when the Sun was near riſing, for he is the *bright and morning Star*, Rev. 22. 16. the *true Light*. Thoſe who addreſs themſelves early in the Morning to the religious Services of the Chriſtian Sabbath, that they may take the Day before them, therein follow this Example of Chriſt, and that of *David, early will I ſeek thee.*

2. Who they were that came to the Sepulchre, *Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary*, the ſame that attended the Funeral, and *ſate over againſt the Sepulchre*, as before they *ſate over againſt the Croſs*; ſtill they ſtudied to expreſs their Love to Chriſt, ſtill they were enquiring after him. Then ſhall we *know*, if we thus *follow on to know*. No mention is made of the *Virgin Mary* being with them, 'tis likely the *beloved Diſciple*, who had taken her to his own home, hinder'd her from *going to the Grave to weep there*. Their Attendance on Chriſt, not only *to* the Grave, but *in* the Grave, repreſents his like care for thoſe that are his, when they have *made their Bed in the Darkneſs*. As Chriſt in the Grave was beloved of the *Saints*, ſo the Saints in the Grave are beloved of Chriſt, for Death and the Grave cannot ſlacken that Bond of Love which is between them.

3. What they *came to do*; the other Evangeliſts ſay they came to anoint the Body; *Matthew* ſaith they came to *ſee the Sepulchre*, whether it was as they left it; hearing perhaps, but not being ſure that the Chief Prieſts had ſet a Guard upon it. They went, to ſhew their Good-will in another Viſit, to the dear Remains of their beloved Maſter, and perhaps not without ſome thoughts of his Reſurrection, for they could not have quite forgot all he had ſaid of it. *Note*, Viſits to the Grave are of great Uſe to Chriſtians, and will help to make it familiar to them,and to take off the Terror of it, eſpecially Viſits to the Grave of our Lord Jeſus, where we may ſee Sin buried out of ſight, the Pattern of our Sanctification,and the great Proof of redeeming Love ſhining illuſtriouſly even in that *Land of Darkneſs.*

Secondly, The appearance of the angel of the Lord to them, *v.* 2, 3, 4. We have here an Account of the manner of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, as far as 'twas fit we ſhould know.

1. There was a *great Earthquake*; when he dy'd, the Earth that *receiv'd him*, ſhook for fear; now he roſe, the Earth that *reſign'd him*, leap'd for Joy in his Exaltation. This Earthquake did as it were *looſe* the Bond of Death, and *ſhake off* the Fetters of the Grave, and introduc'd the *Deſire of all Nations*, Hag. 2. 6, 7. 'Twas the *Signal* of Chriſt's Victory, notice was hereby given of it, that when the *Heavens rejoyc'd*, the *Earth* alſo might be *glad*. 'Twas a *Specimen* of the *Shake* that will be given to the Earth at the general Reſurrection, when Mountains and Iſlands ſhall be remov'd, that the Earth may no longer *cover her Slain*. There was a *noiſe and a ſhaking* in the Valley, when the *Bones were to come together, Bone to his Bone*, Ezech. 37. 7. The Kingdom of Chriſt, which was now to be ſet up, made the Earth to quake, and *terribly ſhook it*: Thoſe that are ſanctified, and thereby rais'd to a Spiritual Life, while 'tis in the doing, find an Earthquake in their own Boſom, as *Paul* who *trembled* and was *aſtoniſhed.*

2. The *Angel of the Lord deſcended from Heaven*: The Angels frequently attended our Lord Jeſus, at his Birth, in his Temptation, in his Agony, but upon the Croſs we find no Angel attending him; when his Father *forſook him*, the Angels withdrew from him, but now he is reſuming the Glory he had before the Foundation of the World, now behold the *Angels of God worſhip him.*

3. He came and roll'd back the Stone from the Door, and ſat upon it: Our Lord Jeſus could have *rolled back the Stone* himſelf, by his own Power,but he choſe to have it done by an Angel, to ſignify that having undertaken to make ſatisfaction for our ſin, as ſuch was imputed to him, and being under Arreſt purſuant to that Imputation, he did not *break Priſon*, but had a fair and *legal Diſcharge*, obtain'd from *Heaven*; he did not break Priſon, but an Officer was ſent on purpoſe to *roll away the Stone*, and ſo to open the Priſon-door, which would never have been done if he had not made a *full Satisfaction.* But being deliver'd for our Offences, to compleat the Deliverance, he was *raiſed again for our Juſtification*; he dy'd to pay our Debt, and roſe again to take out our Acquittance. The *Stone* of our Sins was *roll'd* to the Door of the Grave of our Lord Jeſus, (and we find the rolling of a great Stone to ſignify the *contracting of guilt*, 1 Sam. 14. 33.) But to demonſtrate that Divine Juſtice was ſatisfied, an Angel was commiſſioned to roll back the Stone, not that the Angel *rais'd him from the Dead*, no more than thoſe that *took away the Stone* from *Lazarus*'s Grave rais'd him, but thus he intimated the Conſent of Heaven to his Releaſe, and the Joy of Heaven in it. The Enemies of Chriſt had ſeal'd the Stone, reſolving, like *Babylon*, not to *open the Houſe of his Priſoners, ſhall the Prey be taken from the Mighty?* For this was *their hour*, but all the Powers of Death and Darkneſs are under the controul of the God of Light and Life. An Angel from Heaven has Power to *break the Seal*, tho' it were the *great Seal of Iſrael*, and is able to *roll away the Stone*, tho' never ſo great: Thus the *Captives of the Mighty are taken away.* The Angel's *ſitting* upon the *Stone* when he had *rolled it away*, is very obſervable, and ſpeaks a ſecure Triumph over all the Obſtructions of Chriſt's Reſurrection. There he ſate defying all the Powers of Hell to roll the Stone to the Grave again. Chriſt erects his Seat of Reſt, and Seat of Judgment upon the Oppoſition of his Enemies; *the Lord ſitteth upon the Floods*: The Angel ſate as a Guard to the Grave, having frightned away the Enemies *black Guard*; he ſate expecting the Women, and ready to give them an account of his Reſurrection.

4. That *his Countenance was like Lightning, and his Raiment white as Snow*, v. 3. This was a viſible Repreſentation by that which we call *ſplendid* and *illuſtrious*, of the *Glories* of the inviſible World, which know no *difference of Colours.* His look upon the Keepers was like *Flaſhes of Lightning, he caſt forth Lightning and ſcatter'd them*, Pſal. 144. 6. The *whiteneſs* of his Raiment was an Emblem, not only of Purity but of Joy and Triumph. When Chriſt dy'd, the Court of Heaven *went into deep Mourning*, ſignified by the *darkning of the Sun*; but when he roſe, they again put on the *Garments of Praiſe*; the Glory of this Angel repreſented the Glory of Chriſt, to which he was now riſen, for it is the ſame Deſcription that was given of him in his Transfiguration, *Mat.* 17. 2. but when he convers'd with his Diſciples after his Reſurrection, he drew a Vail over it, and it ſpoke the Glory of the Saints in their Reſurrection, when they ſhall be *as the Angels of God in Heaven.*

5. That *for fear of him the Keepers did ſhake, and became as dead Men*, v. 4. They were *Soldiers*, that thought themſelves harden'd againſt Fear, yet the very ſight of an Angel ſtruck them with Terror. Thus *when* the Son of *God aroſe to Judgment, the ſtout-hearted*

were ſpoiled, Pſal. 76. 5, 9. *Note*, The Reſurrection of Chriſt, as it is the Joy of his Friends, ſo it is the Terror and Confuſion of his Enemies. *They did ſhake*; the Word ἐσείσθησαν, is the ſame with that which was uſed for the Earthquake, *v.* 2. σεισμὸς, when the *Earth* ſhook, theſe *Children of the Earth*, that had their Portion in it, *ſhook too*; whereas thoſe that have their Happineſs in things above, *tho' the Earth be removed, yet are without fear.* The Keepers become *as dead Men*, when he whom they kept guard upon became alive, and they whom they kept guard againſt reviv'd with him. It ſtruck a Terror upon them, to ſee themſelves baffled in that which was their Buſineſs here. They were poſted here to *keep a dead Man in his Grave*, as eaſy a piece of Service ſure as ever was aſſign'd them, and yet it proves too hard for them. They were told that they muſt expect to be aſſaulted by a Company of feeble faint-hearted Diſciples, who for fear of them would ſoon *ſhake*, and become as *dead Men*, but are amaz'd when they find themſelves attack'd by a *mighty Angel*, whom they dare not look in the Face. Thus doth God *fruſtrate* his Enemies, by *frightning them*, Pſal. 9. *ult.*

Thirdly, The Meſſage which this Angel deliver'd to the Women, *v.* 5, 6, 7.

1. He *encourageth them againſt their Fears*, v. 5. To come near to Graves, and Tombs, eſpecially in Silence and Solitude, has ſomething in it *frightful*, much more was it ſo to thoſe Women to find an Angel at the Sepulchre, but he ſoon makes them eaſy with the Word, *Fear not ye*: The Keepers ſhook, and became as dead Men, but *fear not ye.* Let the Sinners in *Zion* be afraid, for there is Cauſe for it, but *fear not Abraham*, nor any of the faithful Seed of *Abraham.* Why ſhould the Daughters of *Sarah*, that *do well*, be afraid *with any Amazement*? 1 Pet. 3. 6. *Fear not ye.* Let not the News I have to tell you be any ſurprize to you, for you were told before your Maſter would riſe, let it be no Terror to you, for his Reſurrection will be your Conſolation; Fear not any Hurt, that I'll tell you, nor any evil Tydings I have to tell you. *Fear not ye, for I know that ye ſeek Jeſus*: I know you are Friends to the Cauſe, I do not come to frighten you, but to encourage you. *Note*, Thoſe that *ſeek Jeſus* have no reaſon to be *afraid*, for if they ſeek him diligently, they ſhall *find him*, and ſhall find him their *bountiful Rewarder.* All our believing Enquiries after the Lord Jeſus are obſerv'd, and taken notice of in Heaven; *I know that ye ſeek Jeſus*, and ſhall certainly be anſwer'd as theſe were, *with good Words, and comfortable Words*: *Ye ſeek Jeſus that was crucified.* He mentions his being crucified, the more to commend their Love to him; ye ſeek him ſtill, tho' *he was crucified*; you retain your Kindneſs for him notwithſtanding. *Note*, True Believers love and ſeek Chriſt, not only *tho'* he was crucified, but *becauſe* he was ſo.

2. He *aſſures them of the Reſurrection of Chriſt*, and there was enough in that to ſilence their Fears, *v.* 6. He *is not here, for he is riſen.* To be told, *He is not here*, would have been no welcome News to thoſe who ſought him, if it had not been added, *He is riſen.* *Note*, It is Matter of Comfort to thoſe who ſeek Chriſt, and miſs of finding him where they expected, that *He is riſen*: If we find him not in ſenſible Comfort, yet *he is riſen.* We muſt not hearken to thoſe who ſay, *Lo, here is Chriſt*, or, *Lo, he is there*, for he is not *here*, he is not *there*, he is *riſen.* In all our Enquiries after Chriſt, we muſt remember that he is *riſen*; and we muſt ſeek him as one *riſen*, (1.) Not with any *groſs carnal* Thoughts of him: There were thoſe that *knew Chriſt after the Fleſh*, but now henceforth know we him ſo no more, 2 *Cor* 5. 16. 'Tis true he had a Body, but 'tis now a *glorified Body*: They that make Pictures and Images of Chriſt, forget that *he is not here, he is riſen*; our Communion with him muſt be Spiritual, by Faith in his Word, *Rom.* 10. 6, 7, 8. (2.) We muſt ſeek him with great *Reverence* and *Humility*, and an awful Regard to his Glory, for *he is riſen*; God has *highly exalted him*, and *given him a Name above every Name*, and therefore every Knee and every Soul muſt *bow before him.* (3.) We muſt ſeek him with a *Heavenly Mind*, when we are ready to make this World our Home, and to ſay, *It is good to be here*, let us remember our Lord Jeſus *is not here, he is riſen*, and therefore let not our *Hearts* be *here*, but let them *riſe too*, and *ſeek the things that are above*, Col. 3. 1, 2, 3. Phil. 3. 20.

Two things the Angel refers theſe Women to for the Confirmation of their Faith, touching Chriſt's Reſurrection.

(1.) To his *Word* now *fulfilled*, which they might remember; *He is riſen, as he ſaid.* This he voucheth as the proper Object of Faith; he ſaid *he would riſe*, and you know he is the *Truth* it ſelf, and therefore have reaſon to expect he *ſhould riſe*; Why ſhould you be backward to *believe* that which he told you would be? Let us never *think ſtrange* at that which the Word of Chriſt has raiſed our Expectations of, whether the *Sufferings of this preſent time*, or the *Glory* that is *to be revealed.* If we remember what Chriſt has ſaid *to us*, we ſhall be the leſs ſurpriz'd at what he doth *with us.* This Angel, when he ſaid, *He is not here, he is riſen*, makes it to appear, that he preaches no other Goſpel than what they had already receiv'd, for he refers himſelf to the Word of Chriſt, as ſufficient to bear him out; *He is riſen, as he ſaid.*

(2.) To his *Grave* now *empty*, which they might *look into*, *Come ſee the Place where the Lord lay.* Compare what you have *heard* with what you *ſee*, and putting both together you will *believe.* You ſee *he is not here*, and remembring what he ſaid, you may be ſatisfied, *he is riſen*, come *ſee the Place*, and you'll ſee he is not there, you'll ſee he could not be ſtollen thence, and therefore muſt conclude *he is riſen.* *Note*, It may be of uſe to affect us, and may have a good Influence upon us, to come, and with an Eye of Faith *ſee the Place where the Lord lay.* See the Marks he has there left of his Love, in condeſcending ſo low for us; ſee how *eaſy* he has made that *Bed*, and how *lightſome* for us, by lying in it himſelf: when we look into the Grave, where we expect we muſt lie, to take off the Terror of it, let us look into the Grave where the Lord lay; the Place where *our Lord* lay, ſo the *Syriack.* The Angels own him for *their* Lord, as well as *we*; for the *whole Family* both in Heaven and Earth is *nam'd from him.*

3. He *directs them* to go *carry the Tidings* of it to his Diſciples, *v.* 7. Go *quickly and tell his Diſciples*; 'Tis probable they were for entertaining themſelves with the ſight of the Sepulchre, and diſcourſe with the Angels: 'Twas good to be here, but they have other Work appointed them; *this is a Day of good Tydings*, and tho' they have the *primer ſeiſin* of the Comfort, the firſt taſte of it, yet they muſt not have the *Monopoly* of it, muſt not hold their Peace, no more than thoſe Lepers, 2 *King* 7. 9. They muſt go *tell the Diſciples.* *Note*, Publick uſefulneſs to others muſt be preferr'd before the Pleaſure of ſecret communion with God our ſelves; for *it is more bleſſed to give than to receive.* Obſerve,

1. The *Diſciples* of Chriſt muſt firſt be *told the News*, not go tell the *Chief Prieſts* and the *Phariſees*, that they may be *confounded*; but tell the Diſciples that they may be *comforted.* God anticipates the *Joy* of his Friends more than the *Shame* of his Enemies, tho' the Perfection of both is reſerv'd for hereafter. *Tell his Diſciples*, it may be they will believe your Report, however tell them. (1.) That they may encourage themſelves under their preſent Sorrows and Diſperſions. 'Twas a diſmal time with them, between Grief and Fear, what a Cordial would this be to them now, to hear *their Maſter is riſen.* (2.) That they may enquire further into it themſelves. This Alarm was ſent them to awaken them from that ſtrange Stupidity which had ſeiz'd them, and to raiſe their Expectations: This was to ſet them on ſeeking him, and to prepare them for his Appearance to them. General Hints excite to cloſer Searches. They now ſhall hear of him, but ſhall very ſhortly ſee him. Chriſt diſcovers himſelf *gradually.*

2. The *Women* are ſent to tell it them, and ſo are made as it were the *Apoſtles of the Apoſtles.* This was an Honour put upon them, and a Recompence for their conſtant affectionate Adherence to him, at the Croſs, and in the Grave, and a Rebuke to the Diſciples who forſook him. Still God chooſeth the weak Things of the World to confound the Mighty, and puts the Treaſure, not only into earthen Veſſels, but here into the *weaker Veſſels*; as *the Woman, being deceiv'd* by the Suggeſtions of an evil Angel, *was firſt in the Tranſgreſſion*, 1 Tim. 2. 14. So theſe Women being duly inform'd by the Inſtructions of a good Angel, were firſt in the Belief of the Redemption from Tranſgreſſion by Chriſt's Reſurrection, that that Reproach of their Sex might be roll'd away, by putting this in the Balance againſt it, which is their perpetual Praiſe.

3. They were bid to *go quickly* upon this Errand; Why, what haſt was there? Would not the News keep cold, and be welcome to them at any time? Yes, but they were now overwhelm'd with Grief, and Chriſt would have this Cordial haſten'd to them; when *Daniel* was humbling himſelf before God for Sin, the Angel *Gabriel* was cauſed to fly *ſwiftly* with a Meſſage of Comfort, *Dan.* 9. 21. We muſt always be ready and forward; (1.) To obey the Commands of God, *Pſal.* 119. 60. (2.) To do good to our Brethren, and to carry Comfort to them, as thoſe that tell from their Afflictions; *Say not, go and come again, and to morrow I will give*; but now quickly.

4. They were directed to appoint the Diſciples to *meet him in Galilee.* There were other appearances of Chriſt to them before that in *Galilee*, which were ſudden and ſurprizing, but he would have one to be ſolemn and publick, and gave them notice of it before. Now this general Rendezvouz was appointed in *Galilee*, Eighty or a Hundred Miles from *Jeruſalem*; (1.) *In Kindneſs* to thoſe of his Diſciples that remained in *Galilee*, and *did not*, perhaps they *could not*, come up to *Jeruſalem*, and therefore into that Country he would go to manifeſt himſelf to his Friends there: *I know thy Works, and where thou dwelleſt*; Chriſt knows where his Diſciples dwell, and will viſit there. *Note*, The Exaltation of Chriſt doth not make him forget the meaner and poorer ſort of his Diſciples, but even to them that are at a Diſtance from the Plenty of the Means of Grace he will graciouſly *manifeſt himſelf.* (2.) In conſideration of the weakneſs of his Diſciples that were now at *Jeruſalem*, who as yet were *afraid of the Jews*, and durſt not appear publickly, and therefore this Meeting was adjourn'd to *Galilee.* Chriſt knows our Fears, and conſiders our Frame, and made his Appointment where there was leaſt danger of Diſturbance.

Laſtly, The Angel ſolemnly affirms upon his Word, the Truth of what he had related to them, *Lo, I have told you*, you may be aſſur'd of it, and depend upon it; I have told you, who dare not tell a Lye. *The Word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt*, Heb. 2. 2. God had been wont formerly to make known his Mind to his People by the Miniſtration of Angels, as at the giving of the Law, but intending in Goſpel-times to lay aſide that way of Communion, (for *unto the Angels hath he not put in Subjection the World to come*, nor appointed them to be the Preachers of the Goſpel) this Angel was *now ſent* to certifie the Reſurrection of Chriſt to the Diſciples, and ſo leave it in their hands to be publiſh'd to the World, 2 *Cor.* 4. 7. In ſaying, *Lo, I have told you*, he doth as it were diſcharge himſelf from the Blame of their Unbelief, if they ſhould not receive this Record, and throw it upon them; *I have done my Errand*, I have faithfully deliver'd my

Meſſage, now look you to it, believe it at your Peril, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, *I have told you. Note,* Thoſe Meſſengers from God that diſcharge their Truſt faithfully, may take the Comfort of that, whatever the Succeſs be, *Acts* 20. 26, 27.

Fourthly, The Womens *Departure* from the *Sepulchre,* to bring notice to the Diſciples, *v.* 8. And obſerve,

1. What Frame and Temper of Spirit they were in; they *departed with Fear and great Joy;* a ſtrange Mixture, Fear and Joy at the ſame time in the ſame Soul. To hear that Chriſt was riſen, was Matter of Joy; but to be led into his Grave, and to ſee, and talk with an Angel about it, could not but cauſe Fear. 'Twas good News, but they were *afraid* it was too *good* to be true. But obſerve, 'tis ſaid of their Joy, it was *great* Joy, it is not ſaid ſo of their Fear. *Note,* (1.) Holy Fear has Joy attending it. They that ſerve the Lord with *Reverence,* ſerve him with *Gladneſs.* (2.) Spiritual Joy is mix'd with Trembling, *Pſal.* 2. 11. 'Tis only perfect Love and Joy that will caſt out all Fear.

2. What haſte they made, *they did run.* The Fear and Joy together quicken'd their Pace, and added Wings to their Motion; the Angel bid them *go quickly,* and they *ran.* Thoſe that are ſent on God's Errand, muſt not loiter, or loſe Time; where the *Heart* is *enlarged* with the glad Tidings of the Goſpel, the Feet will *run the Way of God's Commandments.*

3. What Errand they went upon. They did run to *bring his Diſciples word.* Not doubting but it would be joyful News to them, they run to comfort them with the ſame Comforts wherewith they themſelves were comforted of God. *Note,* The Diſciples of Chriſt ſhould be forward to communicate to each other their Experiences of ſweet Communion with Heaven; ſhould tell others what God has *done for their Souls,* and ſpoken to them. Joy in Chriſt Jeſus, like the Ointment of the Right-hand, will betray it ſelf, and fill all Places within the Lines of its Communication with its Odours. When *Sampſon* found Honey, he brought it to his Parents.

Fifthly, Chriſt's appearing to the Women, to confirm the Teſtimony of the Angel, *v.* 9, 10. Theſe zealous good Women, not only heard the firſt Tidings of him, but had the firſt Sight of him after his Reſurrection. The Angel directed thoſe that would ſee him to go to *Galilee,* but before that time came, even *here alſo* they *looked after him* that lives and ſees them. *Note,* Jeſus Chriſt is often better than his Word, but never worſe; often anticipates, but never fruſtrates the believing Expectations of his People.

Here's 1. Chriſt's ſurprizing appearance to the Women. *As they went to tell his Diſciples, behold Jeſus met them. Note,* God's gracious Viſits uſually meet us in the way of Duty, and to thoſe who uſe what they have for others Benefit, more ſhall be given. This Interview with Chriſt was *unexpected, or ever they were aware,* Cant. 6. 12. *Note,* Chriſt is nearer to his People than they imagine. They needed not *deſcend into the Deep* to fetch Chriſt thence; he *was not there, he was riſen;* nor *go up to Heaven,* for he *was not yet aſcended,* but Chriſt was *nigh them,* and ſtill Chriſt in *the Word is nigh us.*

2. The Salutation wherewith he accoſted them; All *Hail,* χάιρετε. We uſe the old *Engliſh Form of Salutation,* wiſhing *all Health* to thoſe we meet; for ſo, *All hail* ſignifies, and is expreſſive of the *Greek* Form of Salutation here us'd, anſwering to that of the *Hebrew, Peace be unto you.* And it ſpeaks (1.) the *Good-will* of Chriſt to us, and our Happineſs, even ſince he enter'd upon his State of Exaltation. Tho' he be advanc'd, he wiſheth us as well as ever, and is as much concern'd for our Comfort. (2.) The Freedom and holy Familiarity which he us'd in his Fellowſhip with his Diſciples; for he called them *Friends.* But the *Greek* word ſignifies, *Rejoyce ye.* They were affected both with *Fear* and *Joy;* what he ſaid to them tended to encourage their Joy, *v.* 9. *Rejoyce ye;* and to ſilence their Fear, *v.* 10. *Be not afraid. Note,* 'Tis the Will of Chriſt that his People ſhould be a chearful joyful People, and his Reſurrection furniſheth them with abundant Matter for Joy.

3. The affectionate Reſpect they paid him. *They came and held him by the Feet, and worſhipped him.* Thus they expreſs'd (1.) the *Reverence* and *Honour* they had for him, they threw themſelves at his Feet, put themſelves into a Poſture of Adoration, and *worſhipped* him with Humility and godly Fear, as the Son of God, and now exalted. (2.) The *Love* and *Affection* they had to him; they *held him, and would not let him go,* Cant. 3. 4. How *beautiful* were the *feet of the Lord Jeſus* to them, *Iſa.* 52. 7. (3.) The *Tranſport of Joy* they were in, now they had this further Aſſurance of his Reſurrection; they welcom'd it with both Arms. Thus we muſt embrace Jeſus Chriſt offer'd us in the Goſpel, with *Reverence* caſt our ſelves at his Feet, by Faith *take hold* of him, and with Love and Joy lay him near our Hearts.

4. The encouraging Words Chriſt ſaid to them, *v.* 10. We do not find they ſaid any thing to him, their affectionate Embraces and Adorations ſpoke plainly enough; and what he ſaid to them was no more than what the Angel had ſaid, *v.* 5, 7. for he will *confirm the Word of his Meſſengers,* Iſa. 44. 26. and his way of *comforting* his People is by his Spirit, to ſpeak over again to their Hearts, the ſame that they had heard before from *his Angels* the Miniſters. Now obſerve here,

1. How he rebukes their Fear. *Be not afraid.* They muſt not fear being impos'd upon by theſe repeated Notices of his Reſurrection, nor fear any hurt by the Appearance of one from the Dead; for the News, tho' ſtrange, was both *true* and *good. Note,* Chriſt roſe from the Dead to ſilence his People's Fears, and there is enough in that to ſilence them.

2. How he repeats their Meſſage, *Go tell my Brethren,* that they muſt prepare for a Journey into *Galilee,* and there *they ſhall ſee me.* If there be any Communion between our Souls and Chriſt, 'tis he that *appoints the Meeting,* and we will obſerve the Appointment. *Jeruſalem* had forfeited the Honour of Chriſt's Preſence, 'twas a *tumultuous* City, therefore he adjourns the Meeting to *Galilee. Come my Beloved, let us go forth,* Cant. 7. 11. But that which is eſpecially obſervable here is, that he calls the Diſciples *his Brethren.* Go tell *my Brethren,* not only thoſe of them that were akin to him, but all the reſt, for they are all his Brethren, *Mat.* 12. 50. but he never call'd them ſo till after his Reſurrection, here, and *John* 20. 17. Being by the Reſurrection himſelf declar'd to be the *Son of God with Power,* all the Children of God were thereby declar'd to be *his Brethren.* Being the *firſt begotten from the Dead,* he is become the *Firſt-born among many Brethren,* even of all that are planted together in the likeneſs of his Reſurrection. Chriſt did not now converſe ſo conſtantly and familiarly with his Diſciples as he had done before his Death; but leſt they ſhould think him grown ſtrange to them, he gives them this endearing Title, *Go to my Brethren,* that the Scripture might be fulfill'd, which ſpeaking of his Entrance upon his exalted State, ſaith, *I will declare thy Name unto my Brethren.* They had ſhamefully *deſerted* him in his Sufferings, but to ſhew that he could forgive and forget, and to teach us to do ſo, he not only continues his Purpoſe to *meet* them, but calls them *Brethren.* Being all *his* Brethren, they were Brethren one to another, and muſt love as Brethren. His owning them for his Brethren put a great Honour upon them, but withal gave them an Example of Humility in the midſt of that Honour.

11 Now when they were going, behold, ſome of the watch came into the city, and ſhewed unto the chief prieſts all the things that were done. 12 And when they were aſſembled with the elders, and had taken counſel, they gave large money unto the ſoldiers, 13 Saying, Say ye, His diſciples came by night, and ſtole him away while we ſlept. 14 And if this come to the governour's ears, we will perſwade him, and ſecure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this ſaying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

For the further Proof of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, we have here the Confeſſion of the Adverſaries that were upon the Guard; and there are two Things which ſtrengthen this Teſtimony; that they were *Eye-witneſſes,* and did themſelves ſee the Glory of the Reſurrection, which none elſe did; and that they were *Enemies,* ſet there to oppoſe and obſtruct his Reſurrection. Now obſerve here,

1. How this Teſtimony was *given in* to the Chief Prieſts, *v.* 11. *when* the Women *were going* to bring that News to the Diſciples, which *would fill their Hearts with Joy;* the Soldiers went to bring the ſame News to the Chief Prieſts, which would *fill their Faces with Shame. Some of the Watch,* probably thoſe of them that commanded in chief, they *came into the City,* and brought to thoſe who employ'd them, the Report of their Diſappointment. *They ſhew'd to the Chief Prieſts all the Things that were done;* told them of the Earthquake, the Deſcent of the Angel, the rolling of the Stone away, and the coming of the Body of Jeſus alive out of the Grave. Thus the *ſign* of the Prophet *Jonas* was brought to the Chief Prieſts, with the moſt clear and unconteſtable Evidence that could be; and ſo the utmoſt Means of Conviction were afforded them; we may well imagine what a Mortification it was to them, and that, like the Enemies of the *Jews,* they were *much caſt down in their own Eyes,* Neh. 6. 16. It might juſtly have been expected, that they ſhould now have believ'd in Chriſt, and repented their putting him to Death; but they were obſtinate in their Infidelity, and therefore ſeal'd up under it.

2. How it was baffled and ſtifled by them. They call'd an Aſſembly, and conſider'd what was to be done. For their own parts they were reſolv'd not to believe that Jeſus was riſen, but their Care was to keep others from believing, and themſelves from being quite ſhamed from their Disbelief of it. They had put him to Death, and there was no way of ſtanding to what they had done, but by confronting the Evidence of his Reſurrection. Thus they who have ſold themſelves to work Wickedneſs, find that one Sin draws on another, and they have plung'd themſelves into a wretched Neceſſity of *adding Iniquity to Iniquity,* which is part of the Curſe of Chriſt's Perſecutors, *Pſal.* 69. 27.

The Reſult of their Debate was, That thoſe Soldiers muſt by all Means be brib'd off, and hir'd not to tell Tales.

1. They *put Money into their Hands;* and what Wickedneſs is it which Men will not be brought to by the love of Money. They *gave large Money,* 'tis likely, a great deal more than they gave to *Judas,* unto *the Soldiers.* Theſe Chief Prieſts lov'd their Money as well as moſt People did, and were as loth to part with it; and yet to carry on a malicious Deſign againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt, they were very prodigal of it; they gave the Soldiers, 'tis likely, as much as they ask'd, and they knew how to improve their Advantages. Here was *large Money* given for the advancing of that, which they knew to be a Lye, yet many grudge a little Money for the Advancement of that

which they know to be the Truth; tho' they have a Promiſe of being re-imburs'd in the Reſurrection of the Juſt. Let us never ſtarve a good Cauſe, when we ſee a bad one ſo liberally ſupported.

2. They *put a Lye into their Mouths*, v. 13. *Say ye, his Diſciples came by Night, and ſtole him away while we ſlept*; a ſorry Shift is better than none, but this is a ſorry one indeed. (1.) The Sham was *ridiculous*, and carry'd along with it its own Confutation; if *they ſlept*, how could they know any thing of the matter, or ſay, who came: If *any one* of them were awake to *obſerve it*, no doubt, he would awake them all to *oppoſe it*; for that was the only thing they had in charge. 'Twas altogether improbable, that a Company of poor, weak, cowardly, diſpirited Men ſhould expoſe themſelves for ſo inconſiderable an Atchievement as the Reſcue of the dead Body. Why were not the Houſes where they lodg'd diligently ſearch'd, and other Means us'd to diſcover the dead Body; but this was ſo thin a Lye as one might eaſily ſee through. But had it been never ſo plauſible, (2.) it was a very wicked thing for theſe Prieſts and Elders to hire theſe Soldiers to tell a deliberate Lye, (if it had been in a Matter of never ſo ſmall Importance) againſt their Conſciences: Thoſe know not what they do, that draw others to commit one wilful Sin; for that may debauch Conſcience, and be an inlet to many. But (3.) Conſidering this as intended to overthrow the great Doctrine of Chriſt's Reſurrection, this was a Sin againſt the laſt Remedy, and was in Effect a Blaſphemy *againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, imputing that to the Roguery of the Diſciples, which was done by *the Power of the Holy Ghoſt*.

But leſt the Soldiers ſhould object the Penalty they incurr'd by the *Roman* Law, for *ſleeping upon the Guard*, which was very ſevere, *Acts* 12. 19. They promis'd to interpoſe with the Governour, *we will perſwade him, and ſecure you.* We will uſe our own Intereſt in him to get him not to take Notice of it, and they had lately found how eaſily they could manage him. If really theſe Soldiers had ſlept, and ſo ſuffer'd the Diſciples to ſteal him away, as they would have the World believe; 'tis certain the Prieſts and Elders would have been the forwardeſt to ſollicit the Governour to puniſh them for their Treachery; ſo that *their* Care for the Soldiers Safety, plainly gives the Lye to the Story. They undertook to *ſecure* the Sword of *Pilate*'s Juſtice, but could not ſecure them from the Sword of God's Juſtice, which hangs over the Head of thoſe that love and make a Lye. They promiſe more than they can perform, who undertake to ſave a Man harmleſs in the Commiſſion of a wilful Sin.

Well: Thus was the Plot laid; now, what Succeſs had it?

1. Thoſe that were *willing to deceive* took the Money, and did as they were taught. They car'd as little for Chriſt and his Religion, as the Chief Prieſts and Elders did; and Men that have no Religion at all, can be very well pleas'd to ſee Chriſtianity run down, and lend a hand to it, if need be, to ſerve a Turn. They *took the Money*, that was it they aim'd at, and nothing elſe. *Note*, Money is a Bait for the blackeſt Temptation; mercenary Tongues will ſell the Truth for it.

The great Argument to prove Chriſt to be the Son of God, is his Reſurrection, and none could have more convincing Proofs of the Truth of that than theſe Soldiers had; they ſaw the Angel deſcend from Heaven; ſaw the Stone roll'd away; ſaw the Body of Chriſt come out of the Grave, unleſs the Conſternation they felt hinder'd them; and yet were ſo far from being convinced by it themſelves, that they were hir'd to bely him, and to hinder others from believing in him. *Note*, The moſt ſenſible Evidences will not convince Men without the concurring Operation of the Holy Spirit.

2. Thoſe that were willing to be deceived, not only credited, but propagated the Story. *This Saying is commonly reported among the* Jews *until this Day.* The Sham took well enough, and anſwer'd the End. The *Jews*, who perſiſted in their Infidelity, when they were preſs'd with the Argument of Chriſt's Reſurrection, had this ſtill ready to reply, *His Diſciples came and ſtole him away.* To this Purpoſe was the ſolemn Narrative, which (as *Juſtin Martyr* relates in his Dialogue with *Trypho* the *Jew*) the great *Sanhedrin* ſent to all the *Jews* of the Diſperſion, concerning this Affair, exciting them to a vigorous Reſiſtance of Chriſtianity, that *when they had Crucified, and Buried him, the Diſciples came by Night and ſtole him out of the Sepulchre*, deſigning thereby not only to overthrow the Truth of Chriſt's Reſurrection, but to render his Diſciples odious to the World, as the greateſt Villains in Nature. When once a Lye is rais'd, none knows how far it will ſpread, nor how long it will laſt, nor what Miſchief it will do. Some give another Senſe of this Paſſage, *this ſaying is commonly reported*, i. e. notwithſtanding the Artifice of the Chief Prieſts thus to impoſe upon the People, yet the Colluſion that was between them and the Soldiers, and the Money that was given to ſupport the Cheat, was commonly *reported* and whiſper'd among the *Jews*; for one way or other, *Truth will out.*

16 Then the eleven diſciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jeſus had appointed them. 17 And when they ſaw him, they worſhipped him: but ſome doubted. 18 And Jeſus came, and ſpake unto them, ſaying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt: 20 Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

This Evangeliſt paſſeth over ſeveral other Appearances of Chriſt, recorded by *Luke* and *John*, and haſtens to this, which was of all other the moſt ſolemn, as being promis'd and appointed, again and again, before his Death, and after his Reſurrection.

Obſerve (1.) How the Diſciples attended this Appearance according to the Appointment, *v.* 16. *They went into Galilee*, a long Journey to go for one Sight of Chriſt, but it was worth while: They had ſeen him ſeveral Times at *Jeruſalem*, and yet they went into *Galilee* to ſee him there.

(1.) Becauſe he appointed them to do ſo. Tho' it ſeem'd a needleſs thing to go into *Galilee*, to ſee him whom they might ſee at *Jeruſalem*, eſpecially when they muſt ſo ſoon come back again to *Jeruſalem*, before his Aſcenſion, yet they had learn'd to obey Chriſt's Commands, and not object againſt them. *Note*, Thoſe who would maintain Communion with Chriſt, muſt attend him there where he has appointed. Thoſe that have met him in one Ordinance, muſt attend him in another, that have ſeen him at *Jeruſalem*, muſt go to *Galilee*.

(2.) Becauſe that was to be a publick and general Meeting. They had ſeen him themſelves, and convers'd with him in private, but that ſhould not excuſe their Attendance in a ſolemn Aſſembly, where many were to be gather'd together to ſee him. *Note*, Our Communion with God in ſecret muſt not ſuperſede our Attendance on publick Worſhip, as we have Opportunity; for *God loves the Gates of Zion*, and ſo muſt we. The Place was a *Mountain* in *Galilee*, probably the ſame Mountain on which he was transfigured. There they met for Privacy, and perhaps to ſignifie the exalted State, into which he was enter'd, and his Advances towards the upper World.

(3.) How they were affected with the Appearance of Chriſt to them, *v.* 17. Now was the Time that he was *ſeen of above five hundred Brethren at once*, 1 Cor. 15. 6. Some think they ſaw him at firſt at ſome diſtance, above in the Air, ὤφθη ἐπάνω, *He was ſeen above of five hundred brethren*, ſo they read it; which gave occaſion to ſome to doubt till he *came nearer*, v. 18. and then they were ſatisfied. We are told,

1. That they *worſhipped him*; many of them did ſo, nay it ſhould ſeem they all did that, they gave Divine Honour to him, which was ſignified by ſome outward Expreſſions of Adoration. *Note*, All that ſee the Lord Jeſus with an Eye of Faith are oblig'd to *worſhip him*.

But *ſome doubted*, ſome of thoſe that were then preſent. *Note*, Even among thoſe that *worſhip*, there are ſome that *doubt*. The Faith of thoſe that are ſincere, may yet be very weak and wavering They *doubted*, ἐδίστασαν, they *hung in ſuſpence*, as the Scales of the Ballance, when 'tis hard to ſay which preponderates. Theſe Doubts were afterwards removed, and their Faith grew up to a full Aſſurance, and it tended much to the Honour of Chriſt, that the Diſciples *doubted* before they *believed*; ſo that they cannot be ſaid to be credulous, and willing to be impos'd upon, for they firſt *queſtion'd*, and *prov'd all things*, and then *held faſt* that which was *true*, and they found to be ſo.

(3.) What Jeſus Chriſt ſaid to them, *v.* 18, 19, 20. *Jeſus came and ſpake unto them.* Tho' there were thoſe that doubted, yet he did not therefore reject them; for he will not *break the bruiſed Reed.* He did not ſtand at a diſtance, but *came near*, and gave them ſuch convincing Proofs of his Reſurrection, as turn'd the wavering Scale, and made their Faith to triumph over their Doubts. *He came and ſpake* familiarly *to them*, as one Friend ſpeaks to another, that they might be fully ſatisfied in the Commiſſion he was about to give them. He that *drew near* to God to ſpeak for us to him, *draws near* to us to ſpeak from him to us. Chriſt now deliver'd to his Apoſtles the great Charter of his Kingdom in the World, was ſending them out as his Embaſſadours, and here gives them their Credentials.

In opening this great Charter, we may obſerve two things:

Firſt, The Commiſſion which our Lord Jeſus received himſelf from the Father; being about to *authorize* his Apoſtles, if any ask, by what Authority he doth it, and who gave him that Authority? here he tells us, *All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth*; a very great Word, and which none but he could ſay. Hereby he aſſerts his univerſal Dominion as Mediator, which is the great Foundation of the Chriſtian Religion. He has *all Power.* Obſerve 1. *Whence* he hath this Power. He did not aſſume it, or uſurp it, but it was *given* him, he was legally entitled to it, and inveſted in it by a Grant from him who is the Fountain of all Being, and conſequently of all Power. God *ſet him King*, Pſal. 2. 6. inaugurated, and inthron'd him, *Luke* 1. 32. As God, equal with the Father, all Power was originally and eſſentially *his*; but as Mediator, as God-Man, *all Power* was *given him*; partly in *Recompence* of his Work, becauſe he humbled himſelf, therefore God thus *exalted him*, and partly in *purſuance* of his Deſign; he had this *Power* given him *over all Fleſh*, that he might *give Eternal Life to as many as were given him*, John 17. 2. for the more effectual carrying on, and compleating our Salvation. This Power he was now more ſignally inveſted in upon his Reſurrection, *Acts* 13. 33. He had Power before, *Power to forgive Sins*, Mat. 9. 6. but now *all Power* is given him. He is now going to *receive for himſelf a Kingdom*, Luke 19. 12. to ſit down *at the right-hand*, Pſal. 110. 1. Having purchas'd it, nothing remains but to take Poſſeſſion, 'tis *his own* for ever.

2. *Where* he has this Power, in *Heaven and Earth*, comprehending the Univerſe. Chriſt is the ſole univerſal Monarch, he is *Lord of all*, Acts 10. 36. He hath all *Power in Heaven*; he has Power of Dominion over the Angels, they are all his humble Servants, *Eph.* 1. 20, 21. He has Power of Interceſſion with his Father, in the Virtue of his Satisfaction and Atonement; he intercedes, not as a Suppliant, but as a Demandant, *Father, I will.* He hath *all Power on Earth* too; having prevail'd with God by the Sacrifice of Atonement, he prevails with Men, and deals with them as one having Authority by the Miniſtry of Reconciliation. He is indeed in all Cauſes, and over all Perſons Supreme Moderator and Governour. *By him Kings Reign.* All Souls are his, and to him *every* Heart and *Knee muſt bow*, and *every Tongue confeſs* him to be *Lord*. This our Lord Jeſus tells them, not only to ſatisfie them of the Authority he had to Commiſſion them, and to bring them out in the Execution of their Commiſſion, but to take off the Offence of the Croſs; they had no reaſon to be aſham'd of *Chriſt Crucified*, when they ſaw him *thus Glorified*.

Secondly, The Commiſſion he gives to thoſe whom he ſent forth. *Go ye therefore.* This Commiſſion is given (1.) to the *Apoſtles* primarily, the chief Miniſters of State in Chriſt's Kingdom, the Architects that laid the Foundation of the Church. Now thoſe that had follow'd Chriſt in the Regeneration were *ſet on Thrones*, Luke 22. 30. *Go ye.* 'Tis not only a word of Command, like that, *Son, go work*, but a word of Encouragement, *Go*, and *fear not*, *Have not I ſent you?* Go and make a Buſineſs of this Work. They muſt not *take State*, and iſſue out Summons to the Nations to attend upon them; but they muſt go, and bring the Goſpel to their Doors. *Go ye.* They had doted on Chriſt's *Bodlily Preſence*, and hung upon *that*, and built all their Joys and Hopes upon *that*; but now Chriſt diſchargeth them from further Attendance on his Perſon, and ſends them abroad about other Work. *As an Eagle ſtirs up her Neſt, flutters over her Young*, to excite them to fly, *Deut.* 32. 11. So Chriſt ſtirs up his Diſciples to diſperſe themſelves into all the World. (2.) 'Tis given to their Succeſſors, the Miniſters of the Goſpel, whoſe Buſineſs it is to tranſmit the Goſpel from Age to Age, to the end of the World in time, as it was theirs to tranſmit it from Nation to Nation, to the end of the World in place, and no leſs neceſſary. The *Old Teſtament* Promiſe of a Goſpel-Miniſtry is made to a Succeſſion, *Iſa.* 59. 21. and this here muſt be underſtood, otherwiſe how could Chriſt be with them always to the *Conſummation of the World.* Chriſt at his Aſcenſion gave, not only Apoſtles and Prophets, but *Paſtors and Teachers*, Eph. 4. 11. Now obſerve,

1. How far his Commiſſion is extended, to *all Nations.* Go, and Diſciple *all Nations*; not that they muſt go all together into every place, but by conſent diſperſe themſelves in ſuch manner as might beſt *diffuſe* the Light of the Goſpel. Now this plainly ſignifies it to be the Will of Chriſt, (1.) That the Covenant of Peculiarity made with the *Jews* ſhould now be cancell'd and diſannull'd. This Word broke down the middle Wall of Partition, which had ſo long excluded the *Gentiles* from a viſible Church-ſtate; and whereas the Apoſtles, who firſt ſent out, were forbidden to go into the Way of the *Gentiles*; now they were ſent to *all Nations.* (2.) That Salvation by Chriſt ſhould be offer'd to all, and none excluded that did not by their own Unbelief and Impenitence exclude themſelves. The Salvation they were to Preach is a *common Salvation*, whoever will, let him come and take the benefit of the *Act* of *Indemnity*; for there is no Difference of *Jew* or *Greek* in Chriſt Jeſus. (3.) That Chriſtianity ſhould be twiſted in with National Conſtitutions, that the Kingdoms of the World ſhould become Chriſt's Kingdoms, and their Kings the Churches Nurſing Fathers.

2. What is the principal Intention of this Commiſſion to *Diſciple* all Nations. Μαθητεύσατε. Admit them Diſciples, do your utmoſt to make the Nations Chriſtian Nations; not go to the Nations, and denounce the Judgments of God againſt them, as *Jonah* againſt *Nineveh*, and the *Old Teſtament* Prophets; tho' they had reaſon enough to expect it for their Wickedneſs, but go, and *Diſciple them.* Chriſt the Mediator is ſetting up a Kingdom in the World, bring the Nations to be his Subjects; ſetting up a School, bring the Nations to be his Scholars; raiſing an Army for the carrying on of the War againſt the Powers of Darkneſs, liſt the Nations of the Earth under his Banner. The Work which the Apoſtles had to do, was to ſet up the Chriſtian Religion in all Places, and it was honourable Work; the Atchievements of the mighty Heroes of the World was nothing to it. They conquer'd the Nations for themſelves, and made them miſerable, the Apoſtles conquer'd them for Chriſt, and made them happy.

3. Their Inſtructions for executing this Commiſſion.

1. They muſt *admit Diſciples* by the *Sacred Right of Baptiſm*; Go into all Nations, Preach the Goſpel to them, work Miracles among them, and perſuade them to come in themſelves, and bring their Children with them into the Church of Chriſt, and then admit them and theirs into the Church, by waſhing them with Water; either dipping them in the Water, or by pouring or ſprinkling Water upon them, which ſeems the more proper, becauſe the thing is moſt frequently expreſs'd ſo, as *Iſa.* 44. 3. *I will pour my Spirit on thy Seed.* And *Tit.* 3. 5, 6. *Which he ſhed on us abundantly.* And *Ezek.* 36. 25. *I will ſprinkle clean Water upon you.* And *Iſa.* 52. 15. *So ſhall he ſprinkle many Nations*, which ſeems a Prophecy of this Commiſſion to *Baptize the Nations.*

2. This Baptiſm muſt be Adminiſter'd, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* That is, (1.) *by Authority* from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; the Baptiſm of Jeſus is *from Heaven*, and not *of Man*; for his Miniſters act by Authority from the three Perſons in the Godhead, who all concur as to our *Creation*, ſo to our *Redemption*; they have their Commiſſion under the Great Seal of Heaven, which puts an Honour upon the Ordinance, tho' to a carnal Eye, like him that inſtituted it, it has *no Form of Comelineſs.* (2.) *Calling upon the Name* of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt. Every thing is Sanctified by Prayer, and particularly the Waters of Baptiſm. The Prayer of Faith obtains the Preſence of God with the Ordinance, which is its Luſtre and Beauty, its Life and Efficacy. But (3.) it is *into the Name* (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα) of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*; this was intended as the *Summary* of the firſt Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, and of the new Covenant, and according to it the antient Creeds were drawn up. By our being baptiz'd, we ſolemnly profeſs (1.) our *Aſſent* to the Scripture Revelation concerning *God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* We confeſs our Belief that there is a God, that there is but *one God*; that in the Godhead there is a *Father* that *begets*, a *Son* that is *begotten*, and a holy *Spirit* of both. We are Baptized, not into the *Names*, but into the *Name* of Father, Son, and Spirit, which plainly ſpeaks that *theſe three are One*, and *their Name One.* The diſtinct mentioning of the *Three Perſons* in the Trinity, both in the *Chriſtian Baptiſm* here, and in the *Chriſtian Bleſſing*, 2 *Cor.* 13. ult. as it is a full Proof of the Doctrine of the Trinity, ſo it has done much towards the preſerving of it pure and entire through all Ages of the Church; for nothing is more great and awful in *Chriſtian Aſſemblies* than theſe two. (2.) Our *Conſent* to a Covenant Relation to God *the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.* Baptiſm is a *Sacrament*, that is, it is *an Oath*, (*Super Sacramentum dicere*, is to ſay upon Oath.) It is an Oath of *Abjuration*, by which we renounce the World and the Fleſh, as Rivals with God for the Throne in our Hearts: And an Oath of *Allegiance*, by which we reſign, and give up *our ſelves* to God, to be *his*, our own ſelves, our whole ſelves, *Body, Soul, and Spirit*, to be govern'd by his Will, and made happy in his Favour; *we become his Men*, ſo the Form of Homage in our Law runs. Therefore *Baptiſm* is applied to *the Perſon*, as *Livery* and *Seiſin* is given of the Premiſes, becauſe it is the Perſon that is *dedicated* to God. (1.) 'Tis into the Name of *the Father*, believing him to be the *Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* (for that is principally intended here) by *Eternal Generation*, and *our Father* as our Creator, Preſerver, and Benefactor, to whom therefore we reſign our ſelves, as our abſolute *Owner* and *Proprietor*, to act for us, and diſpoſe of us; as our Supreme *Rector* and *Governour*, to rule us as free Agents by his Law, and as our *chief Good*, and *higheſt* End. (2.) 'Tis into the Name of *the Son*, the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the *Son of God*, and *correlate* to the Father. Baptiſm was in a particular manner Adminiſter'd *in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, Acts 8. 16.---19. 5. In Baptiſm we *aſſent* as *Peter* did, *Thou art Chriſt, the Son of the Living God*, Mat. 16. 16. And conſent, as *Thomas* did, *My Lord, and my God*, John 20. 28. We take Chriſt to be our Prophet, Prieſt, and King, and give up our ſelves to be taught, and ſav'd, and rul'd by him. (3.) 'Tis into the Name of *the Holy Ghoſt.* Believing the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, and his Agency in carrying on our Redemption, we give up our ſelves to his Conduct and Operation as our Sanctifier, Teacher, Guide, and Comforter.

3. Thoſe that are thus baptiz'd, and enroll'd among the Diſciples of Chriſt muſt be taught, *v.* 20. *Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you.* This ſpeaks two Things;

1. The Duty of *Diſciples*, of all *Baptized Chriſtians*; they muſt obſerve all things whatſoever Chriſt has commanded, and in order to that, muſt ſubmit to the Teaching of thoſe whom he ſends. Our Admiſſion into the viſible Church is in order to ſomething further; when Chriſt hath *Diſcipled* us, he hath not *done with us*; he *liſts* Soldiers, that he may *train them* up for his Service.

All that are *Baptiz'd*, are thereby oblig'd (1.) to make the Command of Chriſt their Rule; there is a *Law of Faith*, and we are ſaid to be *under the Law to Chriſt*; we are by Baptiſm *bound*, and muſt *obey.* (2.) To *obſerve* what Chriſt has commanded. Due *Obedience* to the Commands of Chriſt requires a diligent Obſervation; we are in danger of miſſing, if we take not *good heed.* And in all our Obedience, we muſt have an Eye to the Command, and do what we do as unto the Lord. (3.) To obſerve *all things* that he hath commanded, without Exception; all the *Moral* Duties, and all the *inſtituted* Ordinances. Our Obedience to the Laws of Chriſt is not *ſincere*, if it be not univerſal; we muſt *ſtand compleat in his whole Will.* (4.) To confine themſelves to the Commands of Chriſt, and as not to *diminiſh* from them, ſo not to *add* to them. (5.) To learn their Duty according to the Law of Chriſt, for thoſe whom he has appointed to be Teachers in his School; for therefore we were enter'd into his School.

2. The Duty of the Apoſtles of Chriſt, and his Miniſters, and that is, to *teach* the Commands of Chriſt, to expound them to his Diſciples, to preſs upon them the Neceſſity of Obedience, and to aſſiſt them in applying the general Commands of Chriſt to particular Caſes. They muſt teach them, not their own Inventions, but the Inſtitutions of Chriſt; to them they muſt religiouſly adhere, and in the knowledge of *them* Chriſtians muſt be *trained up.* A *ſtanding* Miniſtry is hereby *ſettled* in the Church, for the *edifying* of the Body of Chriſt, *till we all come to the perfect Man*, Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13. The Heirs of Heaven, till they come to Age, muſt be *under Tutors and Governours.*

Thirdly, Here's the Aſſurance he gives them of his Spiritual Preſence with them in the Execution of this Commiſſion. *And lo, I am* *with you always even unto the end of the World.* This exceeding great and precious Promiſe is uſher'd in with a *behold*, to ſtrengthen their Faith, and engage their Obſervation of it. Take notice of this, 'tis what you may aſſure your ſelves of, and venture upon. Obſerve here,

1. The Favour promis'd them, *I am with you.* Not, *I will be* with you, but *I am.* ἐγώ εἰμι. As God ſent *Moſes*, ſo Chriſt ſent his Apoſtles, by this Name, *I am*; for he is God, to whom paſt, preſent, and to come, are the ſame. See *Rev.* 1. 8. He was now about to leave them, his bodily Preſence was now to be removed from them, and this griev'd them; but he aſſures them of his *Spiritual* Preſence, which was more expedient for them than his bodily Preſence could be. *I am with you*, i. e. my Spirit is with you, the Comforter ſhall *abide with you*, John 16. 7. I am *with you*, and not *againſt you*; with you to take your part, to be on your ſide, and to *hold* with you, as *Michael* our Prince is ſaid to do, *Dan.* 10. 21. I am *with you*, and not *abſent from you*, not at a Diſtance; I am a very *preſent help*, *Pſal.* 46. 1. Chriſt was now ſending them to ſet up his Kingdom in the World, which was a great Undertaking; And then doth he ſeaſonably promiſe them his Preſence with them, (1.) to *carry them* on through the Difficulties they were likely to meet with. I am with you to *bear you up*, to plead your Cauſe; with you in all your Services, in all your Sufferings, to bring you through them with Comfort and Honour. *When you go through the Fire, or Water, I will be with you.* In the Pulpit, in the Priſon, *lo, I am with you.* (2.) To *ſucceed* this great Undertaking; Lo, *I am with you*, to make your Miniſtry *effectual* for the Diſcipling of the Nations, for the *pulling down* of the Strong-holds of Satan, and the ſetting up of ſtronger for the Lord Jeſus. 'Twas an unlikely thing that they ſhould unhinge National Conſtitutions in Religion, and turn the Stream of ſo long a Uſage, that they ſhould *eſtabliſh* a Doctrine ſo directly contrary to the Genius of the Age, and perſuade People to become the Diſciples of a *Crucified* Jeſus; but *lo, I am with you*, and therefore you ſhall *gain your Point.*

2. The continuance of the Favour, *always, even unto the end of the world.*

1. They ſhall have his *conſtant* Preſence *always*, πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας *all Days*, every Day; I'll be with you on Sabbath-days, on Week-days, fair Days and foul Days, Winter-days and Summer-days. There is no Day, no Hour of the Day, in which our Lord Jeſus is not preſent with his Churches, and with his Miniſters, if there were, that Day, that Hour, they were undone. Since his Reſurrection he had appear'd to them *now and then*, once a Week it may be, and ſcarce that. But he aſſures them they ſhall have his Spiritual Preſence continued to them without Intermiſſion. Wherever we are, the Word of Chriſt is nigh us, even *in our Mouth*, and the Spirit of Chriſt nigh us, even *in our Hearts.* The *God of Iſrael* the *Saviour*, is ſometimes *a God that hideth himſelf*, Iſa. 45. 15. but never a God that abſenteth himſelf; ſometimes *in the dark*, but never *at a diſtance.*

2. They ſhall have his *perpetual* Preſence, even to *the end of World.* There is a World before us that will never have an end, but this is haſtening towards its Period, and even till then the Chriſtian Religion ſhall in one part of the World or other be *kept up*, and the Preſence of Chriſt continued with his Miniſters; I am with you *to the end of the World*, not with your Perſons, they died quickly, but with *you and your Writings*: There is a Divine Power going along with the Scriptures of the *New Teſtament*, not only preſerving them in being, but producing ſtrange Effects by them, which will continue to the end of Time, (2.) with you and *your Succeſſors*; with you, and all the Miniſters of the Goſpel in the ſeveral Ages of the Church; with all to whom this Commiſſion extends, with all that being duly called and ſent, thus *Baptize*, and thus *Teach.* When the *end of the World* is come, and the Kingdom deliver'd up to God, even the Father; there will then be no further need of Miniſters, and their Miniſtration, but till then they ſhall continue, and the great Intentions of the Inſtitution ſhall be anſwer'd. This is an encouraging word to all the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, that what was ſaid to the Apoſtles, was ſaid to them all, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee.*

Two ſolemn Farewels we find our Lord Jeſus giving to his Church, and his parting word at both of them is very encouraging; one was here when he *clos'd up* his perſonal Converſe with them, and then his parting word was, *Lo, I am with you always*; I leave you, and yet ſtill I am with you; the other was when he *clos'd up* the Canon of the Scripture by the Pen of his beloved Diſciple, and then his parting word was, *Surely, I come quickly.* I leave you for a while, but I'll be with you again ſhortly, *Rev.* 22. 20. By this it appears he did not part in Anger, but in Love, and that it is his Will we ſhould keep up both our Communion with him, and our Expectation of him.

There is one Word more remaining, which muſt not be overlook'd, and that's *Amen*; which is not a Cypher, intended only for a concluding word, like *Finis* at the end of a Book, but it has its Significancy. (1.) It ſpeaks Chriſt's Confirmation of this Promiſe, *Lo, I am with you.* 'Tis *his* Amen, in whom all the Promiſes are *Yea, and Amen. Verily* I am and will be with you; I, the Amen, the faithful Witneſs, do aſſure you of it. Or, (2.) it ſpeaks the Churches Concurrence with it in their Deſire, and Prayer, and Expectation. It is the Evangeliſt's Amen, ſo be it, bleſſed Lord. Our *Amen* to Chriſt's Promiſes turns them into Prayers. Hath Chriſt promiſed to be preſent with his Miniſters, preſent in his Word, preſent in the Aſſemblies of his People, tho' but two or three are gathered together in his Name, and this *always even to the end of the World?* Let us heartily ſay, *Amen* to it; believe that it *ſhall be ſo*, and pray that it *may be ſo*: Lord, *Remember this Word unto thy Servants, upon which thou haſt cauſed us to hope.*

AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
Goſpel according to St. *MARK.*
WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have heard the Evidence given in by the firſt Witneſs to the Doctrine and Miracles of our Lord Jeſus; and now here is another Witneſs produc'd, who calls for our Attention. The ſecond Living Creature *ſaith*, Come and See, *Rev.* 6. 3. *Now let us enquire a little,* (1.) *Concerning* this Witneſs. *His Name is* Mark. Marcus *was a* Roman *Name, and a very common one, and yet we have no Reaſon to think, but that he was by Birth a* Jew; *but as* Saul *when he went among the Nations took the* Roman *Name of* Paul, *ſo he of* Mark, *his* Jewiſh *Name perhaps being* Mardocai, *ſo* Grotius. *We read of* John, *whoſe Sirname was* Mark, *Siſter's Son to* Barnabas, *whom* Paul *was diſpleas'd with,* Acts 15. 37, 38. *But afterwards had a great Kindneſs for, and not only order'd the Churches to receive him,* Col. 4. 10. *but ſent for him to be his Aſſiſtant, with this Encomium,* He is profitable to me for the Miniſtry, 2 Tim. 4. 11. *And he reckons him among his Fellow-Labourers,* Philem. 24. *We read of* Marcus *whom* Peter *calls his Son, having been an Inſtrument of his Converſion,* 1 Pet. 5. 13. *Whether that was the ſame with the other; and if not, which of them was the Penman of this Goſpel, is altogether uncertain. 'Tis a Tradition very current among the Ancients, that St.* Mark *wrote this Goſpel under the Direction of St.* Peter, *and that it was confirm'd by his Authority; ſo* Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccleſ. Marcus Diſcipulus & Interpres *Petri*, juxta quod *Petrum* referentem audierat, legatus *Roma* à Fratribus, breve ſcripſit Evangelium; *and* Tertullian *ſaith,* Adv. Marcion. lib. 4. cap. 5. Marcus quod edidit, Petri affirmetur, cujus Interpres Marcus. *But as* Dr. Whitby *very well ſuggeſts, What need we have Recourſe to the Authority of* Peter *for the Support of this Goſpel, or to ſay with St.* Jerom, *that* Peter *approv'd it, and recommended it by his Authority to the Church to be read, when, tho' 'tis true* Mark *was no Apoſtle, yet we have all the Reaſon in the World to think, that both He and* Luke *were of the Number of the Seventy Diſciples, who* companied with the Apoſtles all along, *Acts* 1. 21. *Who had a Commiſſion like that of the Apoſtles,* Luke 10. 19. *compar'd with* Mark 16. 18. *And who, 'tis highly probable, received the Holy Ghoſt when they did,* Acts 1. 15. 2. 1. *So that it is no Diminution at all to the Validity or Value of this Goſpel, that* Mark *was not one of the Twelve, as* Matthew *and* John *were. St.* Jerom *ſaith, that after the writing of this Goſpel he went into* Egypt, *and was the firſt that preached the Goſpel at* Alexandria, *where he founded a Church, to which he was a Great Example of Holy Living.* Conſtituit Eccleſiam tantâ Doctrinâ & vitæ continentiâ, ut omnes Sectatores Chriſti ad Exemplum ſui cogeret.

(2.) *Concerning* this Teſtimony. Mark'*s Goſpel* (1.) *is but* ſhort, *much ſhorter than* Matthew'*s, not giving ſo full an Account of Chriſt*'s Sermons *as that did, but inſiſting chiefly on his* Miracles. (2.) *It is very much a Repetition of what we had in* Matthew, *many remarkable Circumſtances being added to the Stories there related, but not many new Matters. When many Witneſſes are call'd to prove the ſame Fact, upon which Judgment is to be given, it is not thought* tedious, *but highly* neceſſary, *that they ſhould each of them relate it in their own Words, again and again, that by the Agreement of the Teſtimony the Thing may be eſtabliſhed; and therefore we muſt not think this Book of Scripture needleſs; for it is written not only to confirm our Belief that* Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, *but to put us in mind of Things which we have read in the foregoing Goſpel, that we may* give the more earneſt heed to them, *leſt at any Time we let them ſlip; and even* pure Minds *have need to be* thus ſtirr'd up by way of remembrance. *'Twas fit that ſuch great Things as theſe ſhould be ſpoken and written, once, yea, twice, becauſe Man is ſo* unapt *to* perceive *them, and ſo* apt *to* forget *them. There is no ground for the Tradition, that this Goſpel was written firſt in* Latin, *tho' it was written at* Rome; *it was written in* Greek, *as was St.* Paul'*s Epiſtle to the* Romans, *the* Greek *being the more univerſal Language.*

CHAP. I.

Mark'*s Narrative takes not riſe ſo early as thoſe of* Matthew *and* Luke *do, from the Birth of our Saviour, but from* John'*s* Baptiſm, *from which he preſently paſſeth to Chriſt's publick Miniſtry. Accordingly in this Chapter, we have,* (1.) *The Office of* John Baptiſt, *illuſtrated by the Prophecy of him,* v. 1.---3. *and the Hiſtory of him,* v. 4.---8. (2.) *Chriſt's Baptiſm, and his being own'd from Heaven,* v. 9.---11. (3.) *His Temptation,* v. 12, 13. (4.) *His Preaching,* v. 14, 15, 21, 22, 38, 39. (5.) *His calling Diſciples,* v. 16.---20. (6.) *His Praying,* v. 35. (7.) *His working Miracles.* (1.) *His rebuking an unclean Spirit,* v. 23.---28. (2.) *His curing* Peter's *Mother-in-Law, that was ill of a Fever,* v. 29.---31. (3.) *His healing all that came to him,* v. 32, 34, 35. (4.) *His cleanſing a Leper,* v. 40.---45.

THE beginning of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, 2 As it is written in the Prophets, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee. 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight. 4 John did baptize in the wilderneſs, and preach the Baptiſm of repentance, for the remiſſion of ſins. 5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jeruſalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confeſſing their ſins. 6 And John was cloathed with camels hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins: and he did eat locuſts and wild honey; 7 And preached, ſaying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to ſtoop down and unlooſe. 8 I indeed have baptized you with water: but he ſhall baptize you with the holy Ghoſt.

We may obſerve here,

Firſt, What the *New Teſtament* is; The *Divine* Teſtament, to which we *adhere* above all that is *human*. The *New* Teſtament, to which we *advance* above that which was *Old*. It is *the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God*, v. 1. (1.) It is *Goſpel*; it is God's Word, and is *faithful* and *true*, ſee *Rev.* 19. 9. 21. 5. 22. 6. it is a *good Word*, and well *worthy of all Acceptation*, it brings us glad Tidings. (2.) It is the *Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*, the *anointed Saviour*, the *Meſſiah* promis'd and expected. The foregoing Goſpel began with the *Generation of Jeſus Chriſt*, that was but Preliminary, this comes immediately to the Buſineſs, *the Goſpel of Chriſt*. 'Tis call'd *his*, not only becauſe he is the *Author* of it, and it comes *from him*, but becauſe he is the *Subject* of it, and it treats wholly *concerning him*. (3.) This Jeſus is the *Son of God*. That Truth is the Foundation on which the Goſpel is built, and which it is written to demonſtrate, for if Jeſus be not *the Son of God*, our *Faith is vain*.

Secondly, What the *reference* of the New Teſtament is to the Old, and its *Coherence* with it. The Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt *begins*, and ſo we ſhall find it *goes on*, juſt *as it is written in the Prophets*, v. 2. for it *ſaith no other Thing, than thoſe which the Prophets and Moſes ſaid ſhould come*, Acts 26. 22. which was moſt proper and powerful for the Conviction of the *Jews*, that believ'd the *Old* Teſtament Prophets to be ſent of God, and ought to *evidence*, that they did ſo by *welcoming* the Accompliſhment of their Prophecies in *its Seaſon*; but is of uſe to us all, for the Confirmation of our Faith both in the *Old* Teſtament and in the *New*; for the exact Harmony that there is between both, ſhews that they both have the ſame *Divine Original*.

Quotations are here borrow'd from two Prophecies. That of *Iſaiah*, which was the *longeſt*, and That of *Malachi*, which was the *lateſt*, (and there were above Three Hundred Years between them) that both ſpoke to the ſame Purpoſe concerning the *Beginning of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*, in the Miniſtry of *John*.

1. *Malachi*, in whom we had the Old Teſtament *Farewel*, ſpoke very plainly, *Chap.* 3. 1. concerning *John Baptiſt*, who was to give the New Teſtament *Welcome*, *Behold, I ſend my Meſſenger before thy Face*, v. 2. Chriſt himſelf had taken Notice of this, and applied it to *John*, Mat. 11. 10. who was God's *Meſſenger* ſent to *prepare Chriſt's way*.

2. *Iſaiah*, the moſt-Evangelical of all the Prophets, *begins* the Evangelical Part of his Prophecy with this, which points to the *beginning of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt*, Iſa. 40. 3. *The Voice of him that crieth in the Wilderneſs*, v. 3. *Matthew* had taken notice of this, and applied it to *John*, *Chap.* 3. 3. But from theſe Two put together here, we may obſerve, (1.) That *Chriſt* in his Goſpel *comes among us*, bringing with him a Treaſure of Grace, and a Sceptre of Government. (2.) Such is the Corruption of the World, that it is ſomething to do to *make room* for him, and to remove that which gives not only *Obſtruction*, but *Oppoſition* to his Progreſs. (3.) When God ſent his Son into the World he *took Care*, and when he ſends him into the Heart, he *takes Care*, effectual Care, to *prepare his way before him*; for the Deſigns of his Grace ſhall not be *fruſtrated*; nor may any expect the Comforts of that Grace, but ſuch as by Conviction of Sin, and Humiliation for it, are *prepar'd* for thoſe Comforts, and diſpos'd to receive them. (4.) When the *Paths* that were *crooked* are *made ſtraight*, the Miſtakes of the Judgment rectified, and the *crooked Ways* of the Affections, then way is made for Chriſt's Comforts. (5.) 'Tis in a *Wilderneſs*, for ſuch this World is, that *Chriſt's Way* is prepar'd, and theirs that follow him, like that which *Iſrael* paſſed through to *Canaan*. (6.) The Meſſengers of Conviction and Terror, that come to prepare Chriſt's way, are *God's Meſſengers*, whom he ſends and will own, and muſt be *receiv'd* as ſuch. (7.) They that are ſent to *prepare the Way of the Lord*, in ſuch a vaſt howling Wilderneſs as this is, have need to *cry aloud*, and not ſpare, and to *lift up their Voice like a Trumpet*.

Thirdly, What the *Beginning* of the New Teſtament was. The Goſpel began in *John Baptiſt*; for *the Law and the Prophets were until* John the only Divine Revelation, but the *Kingdom of God began to be preach'd*, Luke 16. 16. *Peter* begins *from the Baptiſm of John*, Acts 1. 22. The Goſpel did not begin *ſo ſoon* as the *Birth* of Chriſt, for he took Time to *increaſe in Wiſdom and Stature*, nor ſo late as his entring upon his Publick Miniſtry, but half a Year before, when *John* began to preach the ſame Doctrine that Chriſt afterwards preach'd. His Baptiſm was the dawning of the *Goſpel-Day*; for,

1. In *John*'s way of *living* there was the Beginning of a *Goſpel Spirit*, for it ſpoke great Self-Denial, Mortification of the Fleſh, a Holy Contempt of the World, and Nonconformity to it, which may truly be call'd the *Beginning of the Goſpel of Chriſt* in any Soul, *v.* 6. He was *clothed with Camels Hair*, not with ſoft Raiment, was girt, not with a golden but a *Leathern Girdle*; and in contempt of Dainties and delicate Things, his Meat was *Locuſts and wild Honey*. *Note*, The more we ſit looſe to the Body, and live above the World, the better we are prepar'd for Jeſus Chriſt.

2. In *John*'s *Preaching* and *Baptizing* there was the *beginning* of the *Goſpel Doctrine and Ordinances*, and the firſt Fruits of them. (1.) He preach'd the *Remiſſion of Sins*, which is the great Goſpel Privilege, ſhew'd People their *need* of it, that they were *undone* without it, and that it might be obtain'd. (2.) He preach'd *Repentance* in order to it; he told People that there muſt be a Renovation of their Hearts, and a Reformation of their Lives, that they muſt forſake their Sins and turn to God, and upon thoſe Terms, and no other, their Sins ſhould be forgiven. *Repentance for the Remiſſion of Sins*, was what the Apoſtles were commiſſion'd to *preach to all Nations*, Luke 24. 47. (3.) He preach'd *Chriſt*, and directed his Hearers to *expect him* ſpeedily to appear, and to *expect great Things* from him. The Preaching of Chriſt is pure Goſpel, and that was *John Baptiſt's* Preaching, *v.* 7, 8. Like a true Goſpel Miniſter he preacheth, (1.) The great *Preheminence* Chriſt is *advanced* to; ſo high, ſo great is Chriſt, that *John*, tho' one of the greateſt that was born of Women, yet thinks himſelf unworthy to be employ'd in the meaneſt Office about him, even to *ſtoop down* and *untie his Shoes*. Thus induſtrious is he to give Honour to him, and brings others to do ſo too. (2.) The great *Power* Chriſt is *inveſted in*. He *comes after me* in Time, but he is *mightier than I*, mightier than the mighty Ones of the Earth, for he is able to *baptize with the Holy Ghoſt*; He can *give* the Spirit of God, and by him *govern* the Spirits of Men. (3.) The great *Promiſe* Chriſt makes in his Goſpel to thoſe who have *repented*, and have had their Sins forgiven them; they ſhall be *baptized with the Holy Ghoſt*, ſhall be *purified* by his Graces, and *refreſh'd* by his Comforts. And, laſtly, All thoſe who received his Doctrine, and ſubmitted to his Inſtitution, he *baptized with Water*, as the manner of the *Jews* was to admit Proſelytes, in Token of their *cleanſing themſelves* by Repentance and Reformation, which was the Duty requir'd; and of God's *cleanſing them* both by Remiſſion and by Sanctification, which were the Bleſſings promis'd. Now this was afterwards to be advanc'd into a Goſpel Ordinance, which *John*'s uſing it was a Preface to.

3. In the Succeſs of *John*'s Preaching, and the Diſciples he admitted by Baptiſm, there was the *Beginning of a Goſpel Church*. He baptiz'd *in the Wilderneſs*, and declin'd going into the Cities, but *there went out unto him all the Land of* Judea, *and they of* Jeruſalem, Inhabitants both of City and Country, Families of them, and *were all baptiz'd of him*: They enter'd themſelves his Diſciples, and bound themſelves to his Diſcipline; and in Token of that they *confeſs'd their Sins*; he admitted them his Diſciples, and in Token of that *baptiz'd* them. Here were the *Stamina* of the Goſpel Church, the *Dew of its Youth* from *the Womb of the Morning*, Pſal. 110. 3. Many of theſe afterwards became Followers of Chriſt, and Preachers of his Goſpel, and this Grain of Muſtard-ſeed became a *Tree*.

9 And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that Jeſus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10 And ſtraightway coming up out of the water, he ſaw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a Dove deſcending upon him. 11 And there came a voice from heaven, *ſaying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed. 12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderneſs. 13 And he was there in the wilderneſs forty days tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beaſts, and the Angels miniſtred unto him.

We have here a brief Account of Chriſt's Baptiſm, and Temptation, which were largely related, *Mat.* 3. and 4.

Firſt, His *Baptiſm*, which was his firſt publick Appearance, after he had long liv'd obſcurely *in Nazareth*. O how much *hidden worth* is there, which in this World is either loſt in the Duſt of Contempt, and *cannot* be known, or wrapt up in the Veil of Humility, and *will not* be known. But ſooner or later it *ſhall be* known, as Chriſt's was.

1. See how *humbly* he *own'd* God, by coming to be *baptized of John*, and thus *it became him to fulfil all Righteouſneſs*. Thus he *took upon him the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, that tho' he was perfectly pure and unſpotted, yet he was *waſhed*, as if he had been *polluted*; and thus *for our ſakes he ſanctified himſelf, that we alſo might be ſanctified*, and be baptized with him, *John* 17. 19.

2. See how *honourably* God own'd him, when he ſubmitted to *John's Baptiſm*. Thoſe who *juſtifie God*, as they are ſaid to do who were *baptized with the Baptiſm* of *John*, he will *glorifie* them, *Luke* 7. 29, 30.

1. He *ſaw the Heavens open'd*; thus he was own'd to be the Lord from Heaven, and had a Glimpſe of the Glory and Joy that

was *ſet before him*, and *ſecur'd* to him as the Recompence of his Undertaking. *Matthew* ſaith, the *Heavens were open'd to him*. *Mark* ſaith, he *ſaw them open'd*; many have the Heavens open'd to receive them, but they do not ſee it; Chriſt had not only a clear Foreſight of his Sufferings, but of his Glory too.

2. He *ſaw the Spirit like a Dove deſcending upon him*. *Note*, Then we may ſee Heaven open'd to us, when we perceive the Spirit *deſcending* and working upon us. God's good Work in us is the ſureſt Evidence of his good Will towards us, and his Preparations for us. *Juſtin Martyr* ſaith, that *when Chriſt was baptiz'd, a Fire was kindled in* Jordan: And it is an ancient Tradition, that *a great Light ſhone round the Place*, for the Spirit brings both *Light* and *Heat*.

3. He heard a Voice which was intended for his Encouragement to proceed in his Undertaking, and therefore 'tis here expreſs'd, as directed *to him*, *Thou art my Beloved Son*. God lets him know, (1.) That he *lov'd him* never the *leſs* for that *low* and *mean* Eſtate to which he had now *humbled himſelf*; tho' thus emptied and made of no Reputation, yet my *beloved Son* ſtill. (2.) That he *lov'd him* much the *more* for that *glorious* and *kind* Undertaking, in which he had now *engag'd himſelf*. God is *well pleaſed* in him, as Referee of all Matters in Controverſie between him and Man; and ſo well pleas'd in him, as to be well pleas'd *with us* in him.

Secondly, His *Temptation*. The *good Spirit* that deſcended upon him, *led him into the Wilderneſs*, v. 12. *Paul* mentions it as a Proof, That he had his Doctrine from God, and not from Man, that as ſoon as he was call'd, he *went not to* Jeruſalem, but *went into* Arabia, *Gal.* 1. 17. Retirement from the World is an Opportunity of more free Converſe with God, and therefore muſt ſometimes be choſen for a while, even by thoſe that are call'd to the greateſt Buſineſs. *Mark* obſerves this Circumſtance of his being *in the Wilderneſs*, that he was *with the wild Beaſts*. It was an Inſtance of his Father's Care of him, that he was preſerv'd from being torn in Pieces by the wild Beaſts, which encouraged him the more, that his Father would provide for him when he was hungry. Special Protections are Earneſts of ſeaſonable Supplies. It was likewiſe an Intimation to him of the Inhumanity of the Men of that Generation, whom he was to live among, no better than *wild Beaſts* in the *Wilderneſs*, nay abundantly worſe. In that Wilderneſs,

1. The *Evil Spirits* were *buſie with him*; He was *tempted of Satan*; not by any inward Injections: the Prince of this World had *nothing in him* to faſten upon, but by outward Sollicitations. Solitude often gives Advantage to the Tempter, therefore *two is better than one*. Chriſt himſelf was tempted, not only to teach us, that *it is no Sin to be tempted*, but to direct us whither to go for Succour when we are tempted, even to him that *ſuffer'd* being *tempted*; that he might experimentally ſympathize with us when we are *tempted*.

2. The *Good Spirits* were *buſie about him*; the *Angels miniſter'd to him*, ſupply'd him with what he needed, and dutifully attended him. *Note*, The Miniſtration of the good Angels about us, is Matter of great Comfort in Reference to the malicious Deſigns of the evil Angels againſt us; but much more doth it befriend us to have the Indwelling of the Spirit in our Hearts, which they that have, are ſo *born of God*, that as far as they are ſo *the Evil One toucheth them not*, much leſs ſhall he *Triumph* over them.

14 Now after that John was put in Priſon, Jeſus came into Galilee, preaching the Goſpel of the kingdom of God; 15 And ſaying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe the Goſpel. 16 Now as he walked by the ſea of Galilee, he ſaw Simon, and Andrew his brother, caſting a net into the Sea (for they were fiſhers) 17 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fiſhers of men. 18 And ſtraightway they forſook their nets, and followed him. 19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he ſaw James *the ſon* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who alſo were in the ſhip mending their nets. 20 And ſtraightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ſhip, with the hired ſervants, and went after him. 21 And they went into Capernaum, and ſtraightway on the ſabbath day he entered into the Synagogue, and taught. 22 And they were aſtoniſhed at his Doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the ſcribes.

Here's 1. A general Account of Chriſt's Preaching in *Galilee*. *John* gives an Account of his Preaching in *Judea* before this, *Chap.* 2 and 3. which the other Evangeliſts had omitted, who chiefly relate what occurr'd in *Galilee*, becauſe that was leaſt known at *Jeruſalem*. Obſerve,

1. When Jeſus began to preach in *Galilee*. *After that John was put in priſon*. When he had *finiſhed* his Teſtimony, then *Jeſus began* his. *Note*, The ſilencing of Chriſt's Miniſters ſhall not be the ſuppreſſing of Chriſt's Goſpel; if ſome be laid aſide, others ſhall be raiſed up, perhaps mightier than they, to carry on the ſame Work.

2. What he preach'd; *The Goſpel of the Kingdom of God*; Chriſt came to ſet up the Kingdom of God among Men, that they might be brought into *Subjection to it*, and might obtain *Salvation in it*; and he ſet it up by the preaching of his Goſpel, and a Power going along with it.

Obſerve (1.) The great *Truths* Chriſt preach'd. *The Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand.* This refers to the *Old Teſtament*, in which the Kingdom of the Meſſiah was promis'd, and the Time fix'd for the introducing of it; they were not ſo well vers'd in thoſe Prophecies, nor did they ſo well obſerve the Signs of the Times, as to underſtand it themſelves, and therefore Chriſt gives them Notice of it. The Time prefix'd is now *at hand*; glorious Diſcoveries of Divine Light, Life and Love, are now to be made, a New Diſpenſation, far more ſpiritual and heavenly than that which you have hitherto been under, is now to commence. *Note*, God keeps Time; when *the Time is fulfill'd*, the *Kingdom of God is at hand*, for the Viſion is *for an appointed Time*, which will be punctually obſerv'd, tho' it tarry paſt our Time.

(2.) The great *Duties* inferr'd from thence; Chriſt gave them to *underſtand the Times*, that they might know *what Iſrael ought to do*; they fondly expected the Meſſiah to appear in external Pomp and Power, not only to free the *Jewiſh* Nation from the *Roman* Yoke, but to make it have Dominion over all its Neighbours, and therefore thought when that *Kingdom of God* was *at hand*, they muſt prepare for War, and for Victory and Preferment, and great Things in the World; but Chriſt tells them, in the Proſpect of that Kingdom approaching, they muſt *repent, and believe the Goſpel*. They had broken the *Moral Law*, and could not be ſav'd by a *Covenant of Innocency*, for both *Jew* and *Gentile* are concluded *under Guilt*: They muſt therefore take the Benefit of a *Covenant of Grace*, muſt ſubmit to a *Remedial Law*, and this is it, *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. They had not made uſe of the preſcribed Preſervatives, and therefore muſt have Recourſe to the preſcribed Reſtoratives. By Repentance we muſt lament and forſake our Sins, and by Faith we muſt receive the Forgiveneſs of them. By Repentance we muſt give Glory to our Creator, whom we have offended; by Faith we muſt give Glory to our Redeemer, who came to *ſave us from our Sins*. Both theſe muſt go together; we muſt not think either that reforming our Lives will ſave us, without truſting in the Righteouſneſs and Grace of Chriſt; nor that truſting in Chriſt will ſave us, without the Reformation of our Hearts and Lives. Chriſt hath join'd theſe Two together, and let no Man think to put them aſunder. They will mutually aſſiſt and befriend each other. Repentance will quicken Faith, and Faith will make Repentance Evangelical; and the Sincerity of both together muſt be evidenced by a diligent conſcientious Obedience to all God's Commandments. Thus the Preaching of the Goſpel began, and thus it continues; ſtill the Call is, Repent and Believe, and live a *Life of Repentance*, and a *Life of Faith*.

2. Chriſt appearing as a Teacher, here is next his *calling of Diſciples*, v. 16—20. Obſerve (1.) Chriſt will have Followers. If he ſet up a School he will have Scholars; if he ſet up his Standard he will have Soldiers; if he preach, he will have Hearers. He has taken an effectual Courſe to ſecure this, for *all that the Father has given him ſhall* without fail *come to him*. (2.) The Inſtruments Chriſt choſe to employ in ſetting up his Kingdom were the *weak* and *fooliſh things of the World*: not call'd from the Great *Sanhedrin*, or the Schools of the *Rabbins*, but pick'd up from among the Tarpaulins *by the Sea-ſide, that the Excellency of the Power* might appear to be wholly *of God*, and not at all *of them*. (3.) Tho' Chriſt needs not the Help of Man, yet he is pleas'd to make uſe of it in ſetting up his Kingdom, that he might deal with us, not in a formidable but a familiar Way, and that in his Kingdom the *Nobles and Governours may be of our ſelves*, Jer. 30. 21. (4.) Chriſt puts Honour upon thoſe, who, tho' mean in the World, are *diligent in their Buſineſs*, and *loving to one another*; ſo thoſe were whom Chriſt call'd. He found them *employ'd*, and employ'd *together*. *Induſtry* and Unity are *good* and *pleaſant*, and there the Lord Jeſus commands the Bleſſing, even this Bleſſing, *Follow me*. (5.) The Buſineſs of Miniſters is to *fiſh for Souls*, and *win them to Chriſt*. The Children of Men in their natural Condition are loſt, and wander endleſly in the great Ocean of this World, and are carry'd down the Stream of its Courſe and Way, they are unprofitable. Like *Leviathan* in the Waters, they *play therein*; and often, like the Fiſhes of the Sea, they devour one another. Miniſters in preaching the Goſpel, *caſt the Net* into the Waters, *Mat.* 13. 47. Some are incloſ'd and brought to Shore, but far the greater Number eſcape. *Fiſhermen* take great Pains, and expoſe themſelves to great Perils, ſo do *Miniſters*; and they have need of Wiſdom. If many a Draught brings home nothing, yet they muſt go on. (6.) Thoſe whom Chriſt calls, muſt *leave all* to follow him; and by his Grace he inclines them to do ſo. *Not that we muſt needs go out of the World* preſently, but we muſt ſit looſe to the World, and forſake every Thing that is inconſiſtent with our Duty to Chriſt, and which cannot be kept without Prejudice to our Souls. *Mark* takes notice of *James* and *John*, that they left not only *their Father*;

ther, which we had in *Matthew*, but *the hired Servants*, whom perhaps they lov'd as their own Brethren, being their *Fellow-Labourers*, and pleaſant Comrades; not only Relations but Companions, muſt be left for Chriſt, and old Acquaintance. Perhaps it is an Intimation of their Care for their Father, they did not leave him without Aſſiſtance, they left the *hir'd Servants* with him. *Grotius* thinks 'tis mention'd as an Evidence that their Calling was gainful to them, for it was worth while to keep Servants in pay to help them in it, and their *Hands* would be much *miſs'd*, and yet they *left it*.

3. Here's a particular Account of his Preaching in *Capernaum*, one of the *Cities* of *Galilee*; for tho' *John Baptiſt* choſe to preach *in a Wilderneſs*, and did *well*, and did *good*, yet it doth not therefore follow that *Jeſus* muſt do ſo too; the Inclinations and Opportunities of Miniſters may very much differ, and yet both be in the *way of their Duty*, and both uſeful. Obſerve, (1.) When Chriſt *came into Capernaum*, he *ſtraightway* applied himſelf to his Work there, and took the *firſt* Opportunity of Preaching the Goſpel. Thoſe will think themſelves concern'd not to *loſe Time*, who conſider what a deal of Work they have to do, and what a little Time to do it in. (2.) Chrtſt religiouſly obſerv'd the *Sabbath Day*, tho' not by tying himſelf up to the Tradition of the Elders in all the Niceties of the *Sabbath Reſt*, yet (which was far better) by applying himſelf to, and abounding in the *Sabbath-work*, in order to which the Sabbath-Reſt was inſtituted. (3.) *Sabbaths* are to be ſanctified in *Religious Aſſemblies*, if we have Opportunity; it is a *Holy Day*, and muſt be honour'd with a *Holy Convocation*; this was the *good old Way*, Acts 13. 27. 15. 21. On the *Sabbath-Day*, τοῖς σαββασιν, *on the Sabbath-Days*; every Sabbath-Day, as duly as it returned, he *went into the Synagogue*. (4.) In *Religious Aſſemblies* on *Sabbath-Days* the Goſpel is to be preached, and thoſe to be *taught*, who are willing to learn the *Truth as it is in Jeſus*. (5.) Chriſt was a Non-ſuch Preacher; he did not preach *as the Scribes*, who expounded the Law of *Moſes* by rote, as a School-boy ſaith his Leſſon, but were neither *acquainted* with it (*Paul* himſelf when a *Phariſee* was ignorant of the Law) nor *affected* with it; it came not *from the Heart*, and therefore came not with *Authority*. But Chriſt taught *as one that had Authority*, as one that knew the Mind of God, and was commiſſion'd to declare it. (6) There is much in the Doctrine of Chriſt that is *aſtoniſhing*; the more we hear it, the more Cauſe we ſhall ſee to *admire it*.

23 And there was in their Synagogue a man with an unclean ſpirit, and he cried out, 24 Saying, Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus of Nazareth? Art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee who thou art, the holy One of God? 25 And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26 And when the unclean ſpirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, inſomuch that they queſtioned among themſelves, ſaying, What thing is this? What new doctrine *is* this? For with Authority commandeth he even the unclean ſpirits, and they do obey him. 28 And immediately his fame ſpread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

As ſoon as Chriſt began to preach, he began to work Miracles for the Confirmation of his Doctrine; and they were ſuch as intimated the Deſign and Tendency of his Doctrine, which was to conquer Satan, and cure ſick Souls.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Chriſt's *caſting the Devil* out of a Man that was poſſeſs'd, in the *Synagogue* at *Capernaum*. This Paſſage was not related in *Matthew*, but is afterwards in *Luke*, *v.* 23. *There was in the Synagogue a Man with an unclean Spirit*, ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ. *In an unclean Spirit*; for the Spirit had the Man in his Poſſeſſion, and led him Captive at his Will. So the whole World is ſaid to lie ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, *in the wicked One*. And ſome have thought it more proper to ſay the *Body* is *in the Soul*, becauſe it is govern'd by it, than the Soul *in the Body*. He was *in the unclean* Spirit, as a Man is ſaid to be *in a Fever*, or in a Frenzy, quite overcome by it. Obſerve, The Devil is here call'd *an unclean Spirit*, becauſe he has loſt all the Purity of his Nature, becauſe he acts in direct Oppoſition to the *Holy* Spirit of God, and becauſe with his Suggeſtions he pollutes the Spirits of Men. This Man *was in the Synagogue*, he did not come either to be taught or to be healed, but as ſome think to confront Chriſt and oppoſe him, and hinder People from believing on him. Now here we have,

1. The Rage which the unclean Spirit expreſs'd at Chriſt. *He cried out*, as one in an Agony, at the Preſence of Chriſt, and afraid of being diſlodg'd; thus the *Devils believe and tremble*, have a Horror of Chriſt, but no Hope in him, nor Reverence for him. We are told what he ſaid, *v.* 24. where he doth not go about to *capitulate* with him, or *make Terms*, ſo far was he from being in League or Compact with him; but ſpeaks as one that knew his Doom. (1) He calls him *Jeſus of Nazareth*, and for ought appears, he was the firſt that call'd him ſo, and he did it with Deſign to poſſeſs the Minds of the People with *low Thoughts* of him, becauſe no good Thing was expected out of *Nazareth*, and with *Prejudice* againſt him as a Deceiver, becauſe every Body knew the *Meſſiah* muſt be of *Bethlehem*. (2) Yet a Confeſſion is extorted from him, that he is *the Holy One of God*, as was from the Damſel that had the Spirit of Divination concerning the Apoſtles, that they were the *Servants of the moſt High God*, Acts 16. 16, 17. Thoſe who have only a *Notion* of Chriſt, that he is the *Holy One of God*, and have no Faith in him, or Love to him, go no further than the Devil doth. (3.) He in Effect acknowledgeth that Chriſt was too hard for him, and that he could not ſtand before the Power of Chriſt; *let us alone*, for if thou take us to Task we are undone, thou canſt *deſtroy us*. This is the Miſery of thoſe wicked Spirits, that they perſiſt in their Rebellion, and yet know it will end in their Deſtruction. (4.) He deſires to have *nothing to do* with Jeſus Chriſt, for he *deſpairs* of being *ſaved* by him, and *dreads* being *deſtroy'd* by him. *What have we to do with thee?* If thou wilt let us alone, we will let thee alone. See whoſe Language they ſpeak that *ſay to the Almighty depart from us*. This being an *unclean Spirit*, therefore hated and dreaded Chriſt, becauſe he knew him to be a *Holy One*; for the *carnal Mind is Enmity againſt God*, eſpecially againſt *his Holineſs*.

2. The Victory which Jeſus Chriſt obtain'd over the unclean Spirit; *for this Purpoſe was the Son of God manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil*, and ſo he makes it to appear; nor will he be turned back from proſecuting this War, either by his Flatteries or by his Menaces. 'Tis in vain for *Satan* to beg and pray, *Let us alone*, his Power muſt be broken, and the poor Man muſt be relieved, and therefore (1.) Jeſus *commands*: As he taught, ſo he heal'd *with Authority*. Jeſus *rebuked him*, He chid him, and threaten'd him, impos'd Silence upon him. *Hold thy Peace*; φιμώθητι, *Be muzzled*; Chriſt has a Muzzle for that unclean Spirit when he *fawns*, as well as when he *barks*; ſuch Acknowledgments of him as this was, Chriſt *diſdains*, ſo far is he from *accepting* them. Thoſe that confeſs Chriſt to be the *Holy One of God*, that under the Cloak of that Profeſſion, they may carry on malicious, miſchievous Deſigns, their Confeſſion is doubly an Abomination to the Lord Jeſus, as it ſues in his Name for a Licenſe to Sin, and ſhall therefore be put to Silence and Shame. But this is not all, he muſt not only *hold his Peace*, but he muſt *come out of the Man*; this was it he dreaded, his being reſtrain'd from doing farther Miſchief. But, (2.) The unclean Spirit *yields*, for there's no Remedy, *v.* 26. He *tore him*, put him into a *ſtrong Convulſion*; that one could have thought he had been pull'd in Pieces; when he would not *touch* Chriſt, in Fury at him he grievouſly diſturb'd this poor Creature. Thus when Chriſt by his Grace delivers poor Souls out of the Hands of Satan, it is not without a grievous Toſs and Tumult in the Soul; for that ſpiteful Enemy will *diſquiet* thoſe whom he cannot *deſtroy*. He *cried with a loud Voice*, to frighten the Spectators, and make himſelf ſeem terrible, as if he would have it thought, that tho' he was conquer'd, he was but juſt conquer'd, and that he hoped to rally again, and recover his Ground.

Secondly, The Impreſſions which this Miracle made upon the Minds of the People, *v* 27, 28.

1. It aſtoniſh'd them that ſaw it. *They were all amaz'd*. 'Twas evident beyond Contradiction that the Man was poſſeſs'd, witneſs the tearing of him, and the *loud Voice* with which the *Spirit cried*, 'twas evident he was *forced out* by the Authority of Chriſt; this was ſurprizing to them, and put them upon conſidering with themſelves, and enquiring of one another, *What is this new Doctrine?* for it muſt certainly be of God which is thus confirm'd. He hath certainly an Authority to command us, who hath Ability to *command even the unclean Spirits*, and they cannot reſiſt him, but are forc'd *to obey him*. The *Jewiſh* Exorciſts pretended by Charm or Invocation to drive away evil Spirits, but this was quite another Thing; *with Authority he commands them*. Surely it is our Intereſt to make him our Friend, who has the Controul of infernal Spirits.

2. It rais'd his Reputation among all that heard it. *Immediately his Fame ſpread abroad into the whole adjacent Region of Galilee*, which was a Third Part of the Land of *Canaan*. The Story was preſently got into every one's Mouth, and People wrote it to their Friends all the Country over, together with the Remark made upon it. *What new Doctrine is this?* So that it was univerſally concluded, that he was a *Teacher come from God*, and under that Character he ſhone more bright, than if he had appear'd in all the external Pomp and Power, which the *Jews* expected their *Meſſiah* to *appear* in; and thus he *prepar'd his own Way*; now *John*, who was his Harbinger, was clapt up; and the Fame of this Miracle ſpread the further, becauſe as yet the *Phariſees*, who *envy'd* his Fame, and labour'd to *eclipſe* it, had not advanc'd their blaſphemous Suggeſtion, that he *caſt out Devils* by Compact with the *Prince of the Devils*.

29 And forthwith when they were come out of the Synagogue, they entred into the houſe of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 But Simon's wives mother lay ſick of a fever: and anon they tell him of her. 31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lift her up, and immediately the fever left her, and ſhe miniſtred unto them. 32 And

at even, when the Sun did ſet, they brought unto him all that were diſeaſed, and them that were poſſeſſed with devils. 33 And all the city was gathered together at the door. 34 And he healed many that were ſick of divers diſeaſes, and caſt out many devils, and ſuffered not the devils to ſpeak, becauſe they knew him. 35 And in the morning, riſing up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a ſolitary place, and there prayed. 36 And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him. 37 And when they had found him, they ſaid unto him, All men ſeek for thee. 38 And he ſaid unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there alſo: For therefore came I forth. 39 And he preached in their Synagogues throughout all Galilee, and caſt out devils.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, A particular Account of one Miracle that Chriſt wrought in the Cure of *Peter*'s Wife's Mother, that was ill of a Fever. This Paſſage we had before in *Matthew*. Obſerve,

1. When Chriſt had done that which *ſpread his Fame* throughout all Parts, he did not then ſit ſtill, as ſome think they may *lie in Bed* when their *Name's up*. No, he continued to *do good*, for that was it he aim'd at, and not his own Honour. Nay, thoſe who are in Reputation had need be buſie and careful to keep it up.

2. When he *came out of the Synagogue*, where he had taught and heal'd with a Divine Authority, yet he convers'd familiarly with the poor Fiſhermen that attended him, and did not think it below him. Let the ſame Mind, the ſame lowly Mind be in us, that was in him.

3. He went into *Peter*'s Houſe, probably invited thither to ſuch Entertainment as a poor Fiſherman could give him, and he accepted of it. The Apoſtles left all for Chriſt, ſo far as that what they had ſhould not hinder them from him, yet not ſo, but that they might uſe it for him.

4. He cur'd his Mother-in-law that was ſick; wherever Chriſt comes, he comes to do Good, and will be ſure to pay richly for his Entertainment. Obſerve, how compleat the Cure was, when *the Fever left her*, it did not as uſually leave her *weak*, but the ſame Hand that *heal'd* her *ſtrengthen'd her*, ſo that ſhe was able to *miniſter* to them: The Cure is in order to that, to fit for Action, that we may miniſter to Chriſt, and to thoſe that are *his*, for his ſake.

Secondly, A general Account of many Cures he wrought. Diſeaſes heal'd, Devils expell'd; 'twas at the *Even of the Sabbath*, when the *Sun did ſet*, or *was ſet*; perhaps many ſcrupled bringing their ſick to him, till the Sabbath was over, but their Weakneſs therein was no Prejudice to them in applying to Chriſt. Tho' he prov'd it *lawful to heal on the Sabbath-Days*, yet if any ſtumbled at it, they were welcome at another time. Now obſerve,

1. How *numerous* the Patients were; *All the City was gather'd at the Door*, as Beggars at a Dole. That *one Cure* in the Synagogue occaſion'd this crowding after him. Others ſpeeding well with Chriſt, ſhould quicken us in our Enquiries after him. Now the *Sun of Righteouſneſs riſeth with healing under his Wings*; to him ſhall the *gathering of the People be*. Obſerve, how Chriſt was flock'd after in a *private Houſe*, as well as in the *Synagogue*; where-ever he is, there let his Servants, his Patients be. And in the *Evening of the Sabbath*, when the Publick Worſhip is over, we muſt continue our Attendance upon Jeſus Chriſt; He heal'd, as *Paul* preach'd, publickly, and from Houſe to Houſe.

2. How *powerful* the Phyſician was; He *heal'd all* that were brought to him, tho' never ſo many. Nor was it ſome one particular Diſeaſe, that Chriſt ſet up for the Cure of, but he heal'd thoſe that were *ſick of divers* Diſeaſes, for his Word was a *Panpharmacon*, a Salve for every Sore. And that Miracle particularly which he wrought in the Synagogue, he *repeated in the Houſe* at Night, for he *caſt out many Devils*, and *ſuffer'd not the Devils to ſpeak*, for he made them *know who he was*, and that ſilenc'd them. Or, he *ſuffer'd them not to ſay that they knew him*, ſo it may be read; He would not permit any more of them to ſay as they did, *v.* 24. *I know thee, who thou art*.

Thirdly, His *Retirement* to his *private Devotion*, v. 35. *He pray'd*, pray'd alone; to ſet us an Example of ſecret Prayer. Tho' as God he was *pray'd to*, as Man he *pray'd*. Tho' he was glorifying God, and doing Good in his publick Work, yet he found Time to be alone with his Father; and thus *it became him to fulfil all Righteouſneſs*. Now obſerve,

1. The Time *when* Chriſt pray'd. (1.) It was *in the Morning*, the Morning after the *Sabbath-Day*. *Note*, When a Sabbath-Day is over and paſt, we muſt not think that we may intermit our Devotion till the next Sabbath: No, tho' we go not *to the Synagogue*, we muſt go to the *Throne of Grace*, every Day in the Week; and the Morning after the Sabbath particularly, that we may preſerve the good Impreſſions of the Day. This *Morning* was the Morning of the *firſt Day of the Week*, which afterwards he ſanctified, and made remarkable by another ſort of *riſing early*. (2.) It was early, *a great while before Day*. When others were aſleep in their Beds he was *praying*, as a genuine Son of *David*, who ſeeks God *early*, and *directs his Prayer in the Morning*; nay, and *at Midnight will riſe to give Thanks*. It has been ſaid that the Morning is a Friend to the *Muſes* (*Aurora Muſis amica*) and 'tis no leſs ſo to the *Graces*. When our Spirits are moſt freſh and lively, then we ſhould take Time for *devout* Exerciſes. He that is the *firſt* and *beſt*, ought to have the *firſt* and *beſt*.

2. The Place *where* he pray'd: He *departed into a ſolitary Place*, either out of Town, or ſome remote Garden or Out-building. Tho' he was in no Danger of Diſtraction, or of Temptation to Vain-glory, yet he retir'd, to ſet us an Example to his own Rule, *When thou prayeſt enter into thy Cloſet*. Secret Prayer muſt be made ſecretly. Thoſe that have the moſt Buſineſs in Publick, and of the beſt Kind, yet muſt ſometimes be *alone with God*; muſt retire into *ſolitude*, there to converſe with God, and keep up Communion with him.

Fourthly, His *Return* to his *publick* Work. The Diſciples thought they were *up early*, but found their Maſter was up *before them*, and they enquir'd which way he went, *follow'd him* to his *ſolitary Place*, and there *found him* at Prayer, *v.* 36, 37. and told him, he was much wanted, there were a great many Patients waiting for him: *All Men ſeek for thee*. They were proud that their Maſter was become ſo popular already, and would have him appear *in Publick*, yet more in that Place, becauſe it was *their own City*; and we are apt to be partial to the Places we know, and are intereſted in. No, ſaith Chriſt, *Capernaum* muſt not have the Monopoly of the *Meſſiah*'s Preaching and Miracles. *Let us go into the next Towns*, the *Villages* that lie about here, *that I may preach there alſo*, and work Miracles there, *for therefore came I forth*, not to be conſtantly reſident in one Place, but to *go about doing Good*. Even the *Inhabitants of the Villages in Iſrael*, ſhall *rehearſe the righteous Acts of the Lord*, Judg. 5. 11. Obſerve, Chriſt had ſtill an Eye to the End *wherefore he came forth*, and cloſely purſu'd that; nor will he be drawn by Importunity, or the Perſuaſions of his Friends, to decline from that; for *v.* 39. He *preached in their Synagogues throughout all Galilee*, and to illuſtrate and confirm his Doctrine, *he caſt out Devils*. *Note*, Chriſt's Doctrine is Satan's Deſtruction.

40 And there came a leper to him, beſeeching him, and kneeling down to him, and ſaying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean. 41 And Jeſus moved with compaſſion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and ſaith unto him, I will, be thou clean. 42 And aſſoon as he had ſpoken, immediately the leproſie departed from him, and he was cleanſed. 43 And he ſtraightly charged him, and forthwith ſent him away; 44 And ſaith unto him, See thou ſay nothing to any man: But go thy way, ſhew thy ſelf to the prieſt, and offer for thy cleanſing thoſe things which Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them. 45 But he went out, and began to publiſh *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter; inſomuch that Jeſus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in deſert places: And they came to him from every quarter.

We have here the Story of Chriſt's *cleanſing* of a *Leper*, which we had before *Mat.* 8. 2. And it teaches us,

1. *How to apply our ſelves to Chriſt*; come as this Leper did, (1.) With great *Humility*; this Leper came *beſeeching him, and kneeling down to him*; v. 40. Whether giving Divine Honour to him as God, or rather a leſs Degree of Reſpect as a *Great Prophet*, it teaches us, That thoſe who would receive Grace and Mercy from Chriſt, muſt aſcribe Honour and Glory to Chriſt, and approach to him with Humility and Reverence. (2.) With a firm Belief of *his Power*; thou *canſt make me clean*. Tho' Chriſt's outward Appearance was but *mean*, yet he had this Faith in his Power, which implies his Belief that he was *ſent of God*. He believes it with Application, not only in general, thou canſt do every Thing, as *John* 11. 22. but *thou canſt make me clean*. *Note*, What we believe of the Power of Chriſt, we muſt bring home to our particular Caſe; thou canſt do *this for me*. (3.) With Submiſſion to the Will of Chriſt; *Lord, if thou wilt*. Not as if he had any doubt of Chriſt's Readineſs in general to help the Diſtreſſed, but with the Modeſty that became a poor Petitioner, he refers his own particular Caſe to him.

2. *What to expect from Chriſt*; that according to our Faith it ſhall be to us. His Addreſs is not in the Form of Prayer, yet Chriſt anſwer'd it as a Requeſt. *Note*, Affectionate Profeſſions of Faith in Chriſt, and Reſignations to him, are the moſt prevailing Petitions for Mercy from him, and ſhall ſpeed accordingly. (1.) Chriſt was *moved with Compaſſion*. This is added here in *Mark*, to ſhew that Chriſt's Power is employ'd by his Pity for the Relief of poor Souls. That his Reaſons are fetch'd from within himſelf, and we have nothing in us to recommend us to his Favour, but our *Miſery* makes us the Objects of his *Mercy*. And what he doth for us, he doth with all poſſible Tenderneſs. (2.) He *put forth his Hand*,

and touched him. He *exerted* his Power, and direĉted it to *this* Creature. In healing Souls Chriſt *toucheth them,* 1 Sam. 20. 26. When the Queen toucheth for the Evil, ſhe ſaith, *I touch, God heals,* but Chriſt *toucheth and heals too.* (3.) He ſaid, *I will, be thou clean.* Chriſt's Power was put forth in and by *a Word,* to ſignifie in what Way Chriſt would ordinarily work ſpiritual Cures, *He ſends his Word and heals,* Pſal. 107. 20. John 17. 17. 15. 3. The poor Leper put an *if* upon the Will of Chriſt, *if thou wilt?* but that *Doubt* is ſoon put *out of doubt, I will.* Chriſt moſt readily *wills* Favours to thoſe that moſt readily *refer themſelves* to his Will. He was confident of Chriſt's *Power,* thou *canſt make me clean,* and Chriſt will ſhew how much his Power is drawn out into Aĉt by the Faith of his People, and therefore ſpeaks the Word as one having Authority, *Be thou clean.* And Power accompanied this Word, and the Cure was perfeĉt in an Inſtant, *immediately his Leproſy* vaniſhed, and there remain'd no more Sign of it, *v.* 42.

3. *What to do when we have receiv'd Mercy from Chriſt;* We muſt with his Favours receive his Commands. When Chriſt had cur'd him, *he ſtriĉtly charged him;* The Word here is very ſignificant, ἐμβριμησάμενος, *graviter interminatus.* I am apt to think this refers not to the Direĉtions he gave him to conceal it, *v.* 44. for thoſe are mentioned by themſelves; but that this was ſuch a Charge as he gave to the impotent Man whom he cur'd, *John* 5. 14. *Go, ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come to thee;* for the *Leproſy* was ordinarily the Puniſhment of ſome particular Sinners in *Miriam*'s, *Gehazi*'s, and *Uzziah*'s Caſe; now when Chriſt heal'd him, he *warn'd* him, he *threaten'd* him with the fatal Conſequence of it, if he ſhould *return to ſin* again. He alſo appointed him (1.) To *ſhew himſelf to the Prieſt,* that the Prieſt by his own Judgment of this Leper, might be a Witneſs for Chriſt, that he was the *Meſſiah,* Mat. 11. 5. (2.) Till he had done that, not to *ſay any thing* of it *to any Man:* This is an Inſtance of the *Humility* of Chriſt, and his Self-denial, that he did not ſeek his own Honour, *did not ſtrive or cry,* Iſa. 42. 2. And it is an Example to us not to *ſeek our own Glory,* Prov. 25. 27. He muſt not *proclaim* it, becauſe that would much increaſe the *Crowd* that follow'd Chriſt, which he thought was too great already; nor as if he were unwilling to *do good to all,* to as many as came; but he would do it with as *little Noiſe* as might be, would have no Offence given to the Government, no Diſturbance of the publick Peace, nor any thing done that look'd like Oſtentation, or an Affeĉtation of popular Applauſe. What to think of the Leper's *publiſhing* it, and *blazing it abroad,* I know not; the Concealment of the good Charaĉters, and good Works of good Men, better become them than their Friends; nor are we always bound by the modeſt Commands of humble Men. The Leper ought to have obſerv'd his Orders, yet no doubt it was with a good Deſign that he *proclaim'd* the Cure, and it had no other ill Effeĉt, but that it increas'd the Multitudes that follow'd Chriſt, to that Degree, that he *could no more openly enter into the City;* not upon the Account of Perſecution, there was no Danger of that yet; but becauſe the Crowd was ſo great, that the Streets would not hold them, which oblig'd him to go into *deſart Places,* to a *Mountain,* Chap. 3. 13. to the *Sea ſide,* Chap. 4. 1. This ſhews how *expedient* it was for us, that Chriſt ſhould *go away,* and *ſend the Comforter,* for his Bodily Preſence could be but in one Place at a Time; and thoſe that *came to him from every Quarter* could not get *near him;* but by his ſpiritual Preſence, he is with his People wherever they are, and comes to them *to every Quarter.*

CHAP. II.

In this Chapter we have (1.) Chriſt's healing a Man that was ſick of a Palſy, v. 1—12. (2.) His calling Matthew *from the Receipt of Cuſtom, and his eating, upon that Occaſion, with Publicans and Sinners, and juſtifying himſelf in ſo doing,* v. 13—17. *(3.) His juſtifying his Diſciples in not faſting ſo much as thoſe of the Phariſees did,* v. 18—22. *(4.) His juſtifying them in plucking the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath Day,* v. 23—28. *All which Paſſages we had before,* Matt. 9 *and* 12.

AND again he entred into Capernaum after *ſome* days, and it was noiſed that he was in the houſe. 2 And ſtraightway many were gathered together, inſomuch that there was no room to receive *them,* not ſo much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. 3 And they come unto him, bringing one ſick of the palſy, which was born of four. 4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the preſs, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the ſick of the palſy lay. 5 When Jeſus ſaw their faith, he ſaid unto the ſick of the palſy, Son, thy ſins be forgiven thee. 6 But there were certain of the ſcribes ſitting there, and reaſoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this man thus ſpeak blaſphemies? Who can forgive ſins, but God only? 8 And immediately when Jeſus perceived in his ſpirit, that they ſo reaſoned within themſelves, he ſaid unto them, Why reaſon ye theſe things in your hearts? 9 Whether is it eaſier to ſay to the ſick of the palſy, Thy ſins be forgiven thee: or to ſay, Ariſe, and take up thy bed, and walk? 10 But that ye may know that the ſon of man hath power on earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaith to the ſick of the palſy,) 11 I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine houſe. 12 And immediately he aroſe, took up the bed, and went forth before them all, inſomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, ſaying, We never ſaw it on this faſhion.

Chriſt having been for ſome Time preaching about in the Country, here returns to *Capernaum* his Head-Quarters, and makes his Appearance there, in hopes by this Time, the Talk and Crowd would be ſomewhat abated. Now obſerve,

1. The great Reſort there was to him. Tho' he was *in the Houſe,* either *Peter*'s Houſe, or ſome Lodgings of his own which he had taken, yet People came to him as ſoon as it was *noiſed* that he was in Town; they did not ſtay till he appear'd in the Synagogue, which they might be ſure he would do on the *Sabbath-Day,* but *ſtraightway many were gathered together to him.* Where the King is, there is the Court; where *Shiloh* is, there *ſhall the gathering of the People be.* In improving Opportunities for our Souls, we muſt take Care not to *loſe Time.* One invited another, come let us go ſee Jeſus, ſo that his Houſe could not contain his Viſitants. *There was no room to receive them,* they were ſo numerous, *no, not ſo much as about the Door.* A bleſſed Sight to ſee People thus flying like a Cloud to Chriſt's Houſe, tho' it was but a poor one, and *as the Doves to the Windows.*

2. The good Entertainment Chriſt gave them, the beſt his Houſe would afford, and better than any other could, he *preached the Word unto them,* V. 2. Many of them, perhaps, came only for Cures, and many, perhaps, only for Curioſity, to get a Sight of him; but when he had them together he *preached to them:* Tho' the Synagogue Door was open to him at proper Times, he thought it not at all amiſs to preach in a Houſe, on a Week Day; tho' ſome might reckon it both an improper Place and an improper Time. *Bleſſed are ye that ſow beſide all Waters,* Iſa. 32. 20.

3. The preſenting of a poor Cripple to him to be help'd by him. The Patient was one *ſick of the Palſy,* it ſhould ſeem not as that, *Mat.* 8. 6. *grievouſly tormented,* but perfeĉtly diſabled, ſo that he was *born of four,* was carried upon *a Bed,* as if he had been upon *a Bier* by four Perſons: It was his Miſery that he needed to be ſo carried, and ſpeaks the calamitous State of human Life; it was their Charity who did ſo carry him, and ſpeaks the Compaſſion that 'tis juſtly expeĉted ſhould be in the Children of Men towards their Fellow-Creatures in Diſtreſs, becauſe we know not how ſoon the Diſtreſs may be *our own.* Theſe kind Relations or Neighbours thought, if they could but carry this poor Man once to Chriſt, they ſhould not need to carry him any more; and therefore made hard ſhift to get him to him; and when they could not otherwiſe get to him, they *uncover'd the Roof where he was,* V. 4. I ſee no Neceſſity to conclude, that Chriſt was preaching in an *upper Room,* tho' in ſuch the *Jews* that had ſtately Houſes had their Oratories; for then to what Purpoſe ſhould the Crowd ſtand *before the Door,* as Wiſdom's Clients us'd to do, *Prov.* 8. 34. But I rather conjeĉture, that the Houſe he was in was ſo little and mean, (agreeable to his preſent State) that it had no *upper Room,* but the *Ground-floor* was open to the Roof: And theſe Petitioners for the poor Paralytick, reſolving not to be baulk'd when they could not get through the Crowd at the Door, get their Friend by ſome Means or other to the Roof of the Houſe, took off ſome of the Tiles, and ſo let him down upon his Bed, with Cords into the Houſe where Chriſt was preaching. This ſpoke both their *Faith,* and their *Fervency* in this Addreſs to Chriſt. Hereby it appear'd, they were in Earneſt, and would not go away, nor *let Chriſt go without a Bleſſing,* Gen. 32. 26.

4. The kind word Chriſt ſaid to this poor Patient. *He ſaw their Faith;* perhaps not ſo much his, for his Diſtemper hinder'd him from the Exerciſe of Faith, but *theirs* that brought him. In curing the Centurion's Servant, Chriſt took Notice of it, as an Inſtance of *his Faith,* that he did not bring him to Chriſt, but believ'd he could cure him at a Diſtance; here he commended *their Faith,* becauſe they did bring their Friend through ſo much Difficulty. *Note,* True Faith and ſtrong Faith may work variouſly, conquering ſometimes the Objeĉtions of Reaſon, ſometimes thoſe of Senſe but it ſhall be accepted and approved by Jeſus Chriſt however. Chriſt ſaid, *Son, thy Sins be forgiven thee.* The *Compellation* is very *tender, Son,* intimating a fatherly *Care* of him, and *Concern* for him; Chriſt owns true Believers as his Sons: *A Son,* and yet ſick of the Palſie. Herein God *deals with you as with Sons.* The *Cordial* is very rich; *thy Sins be forgiven thee. Note* (1.) Sin is the procuring Cauſe of all our Pains and Sickneſſes. This Word of Chriſt was to take his Thoughts off from the Diſeaſe, which was the Effeĉt, and to lead them to the Sin, the Cauſe, that he might

be more concern'd about that, to get that pardon'd. (2.) God doth then graciouſly take away the ſting and malignity of Sickneſs, when he forgives Sin; recovery from Sickneſs is then a Mercy indeed, when way is made for it by the Pardon of Sin. See *Iſa.* 38. 17. *Pſalm* 103. 3. The way to remove the Effect, is to take away the Cauſe. Pardon of Sin ſtrikes at the root of all Diſeaſes, and either cures them or alters their Property.

5. The Cavil of the *Scribes* at that which Chriſt ſaid, and a Demonſtration of the Unreaſonableneſs of their Cavil. They were Expoſitors of the Law, and their Doctrine was *true*, that it is Blaſphemy for any Creature to undertake the Pardon of Sin; 'tis God's Prerogative, *Iſa.* 43. 25. But, as is uſual with ſuch Teachers, their Application was *falſe*, and was the Effect of their Ignorance and Enmity to Chriſt. 'Tis *true, none can forgive Sins but God only*; but it is falſe, that therefore Chriſt cannot, who had abundantly prov'd himſelf to have a Divine Power. But, Chriſt *perceived in his Spirit, that they ſo reaſon'd within themſelves*; this proves him to be God, and therefore confirm'd what was to be prov'd, that he had Authority to *forgive Sins*; for he *ſearched* the Heart, and knew *what was in Man*, Rev. 2. 23. God's Royalties are inſeparable, and he that could *know Thoughts*, could *forgive Sins*. And this magnifies the Grace of Chriſt in *pardoning Sin*, that he knew Men's Thoughts, and therefore knows more than any other can know, both of the ſinfulneſs of their Sins, and the particulars of them, and yet is ready to pardon. Now he proves his Power to *forgive Sin*, by demonſtrating his Power to cure the *Man ſick of the Palſie*, v. 9, 10, 11. He would not have pretended to do *the one*, if he could not have done *the other*. *That ye may know that the Son of Man*, the *Meſſiah, has Power on Earth to forgive Sin*, that I have that Power, *Thou that art* Sick of the Palſie, *ariſe, take up thy Bed*. Now, (1.) This was a *ſuitable* Argument in it ſelf. He could not have cur'd the Diſeaſe, which was the Effect, if he could not have taken away the Sin, which was the Cauſe. And beſides, his curing Diſeaſes was a Figure of his pardoning Sin, for Sin is the Diſeaſe of the Soul; when 'tis pardon'd 'tis heal'd. He that could by a Word accompliſh the ſign, could doubtleſs perform the Thing ſignified. (2.) It was ſuited to them. Theſe carnal *Scribes* would be more affected with ſuch a ſenſible Effect of a Pardon, as the Cure of the Diſeaſe, and be ſooner convinc'd by it, than by any other more ſpiritual Conſequences; therefore it was proper enough to appeal, whether it is eaſier to ſay, *Thy Sins be forgiven thee, or to ſay, Ariſe and walk.* The removing of the Puniſhment as ſuch, was the remitting of the Sin; he that could go ſo far in the Cure, no doubt could perfect it. See *Iſa.* 33. *ult.*

6. The Cure of the ſick Man, and the Impreſſion it made upon the People, *v.* 12. He not only *aroſe* out of his Bed, perfectly well, but to ſhew that he had perfect Strength reſtor'd to him, he *took up his Bed*, becauſe it lay in the way, *and went forth before them all*; and *they were all amazed*, as well they might, *and glorified God*, as indeed they ought; Saying, *We never ſaw it on this Faſhion*, never were ſuch Wonders as theſe done before in our Time. *Note*, Chriſt's Works were without Precedent. When we ſee what he doth in healing Souls, we muſt own we *never ſaw the like.*

13 And he went forth again by the ſea-ſide, and all the multitude reſorted unto him, and he taught them. 14 And as he paſſed by, he ſaw Levi *the ſon* of Alpheus, ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom, and ſaid unto him, Follow me. And he aroſe and followed him. 15 And it came to paſs, that as Jeſus ſate at meat in his houſe, many Publicans and Sinners ſate alſo together with Jeſus and his diſciples: for there were many, and they followed him. 16 And when the Scribes and Phariſees ſaw him eat with Publicans and Sinners, they ſaid unto his diſciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with Publicans and Sinners? 17 When Jeſus heard *it*, he ſaith unto them, They that are whole, have no need of the Phyſician, but they that are ſick: I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance.

Here's, 1. Chriſt's preaching *by the Sea-ſide*, v. 3. Whither he went *for Room*, becauſe he found upon ſecond Trial, no Houſe or Street large enough to contain his Auditory; but upon the Strand there might come as many as would. It ſhould ſeem by this, that our Lord Jeſus had a ſtrong Voice, and could, and did ſpeak loud; *for Wiſdom crieth without*, in the *Place of Concourſe*. Where-ever he goes, tho' it be to the Sea-ſide, *Multitudes reſort to him.* Where-ever the Doctrine of Chriſt is faithfully preach'd, tho' it be driven into Corners, or into Deſarts, we muſt follow it.

2. His calling *Levi*, the ſame with *Matthew*, who had a Place in the Cuſtom-houſe at *Capernaum*, from which he was denominated a *Publican*; his Place fix'd him by the Water-ſide, and thither Chriſt went to meet with him, and to give him an Effectual Call. This *Levi* is here ſaid to be the Son of *Alpheus*, or *Cleophas*, Husband to that *Mary*, who was Siſter or near Kinſwoman to the Virgin *Mary*: and if ſo, he was own Brother to *James the Leſs*, and *Jude*, and *Simon the Canaanite*, ſo that there were four Brothers of them Apoſtles. 'Tis probable, that *Matthew* was but a looſe extravagant young Man, or elſe being a *Jew*, he would never have been a *Publican*. However, Chriſt call'd him to *follow him*. *Paul*, tho' a *Phariſee*, had been one of the chief of Sinners, and yet was call'd to be an Apoſtle. With God, through Chriſt, there is Mercy to pardon the greateſt Sins, and Grace to ſanctifie the greateſt Sinners. *Matthew*, that had been a *Publican*, became an Evangeliſt, the *firſt* that put Pen to Paper, and the *fulleſt* in writing the Life of Chriſt. Great Sin and Scandal before Converſion, is no Bar to great Gifts, Graces and Advancements after; nay, God may be the more glorified, *Gal.* 1. 6. Chriſt prevented him with this Call; in bodily Cures ordinarily he was *ſought unto*, but in theſe ſpiritual Cures, he was *found of them that ſought him not*. For this is the great Evil and Peril of the Diſeaſe of Sin, that thoſe that are under it, deſire not to be *made whole.*

3. His familiar Converſe with *Publicans and Sinners*, v. 15. We are here told, (1.) That Chriſt *ſate at Meat in Levi's Houſe*, who invited *him and his Diſciples* to the Farewel Feaſt he made to his Friends, when he left all to attend on Chriſt: Such a Feaſt he made, as *Eliſha* did, 1 *Kings* 19. 21. to ſhew not only with what Chearfulneſs in himſelf, but with what Thankfulneſs to God, he quitted all in Compliance with Chriſt's Call. Fitly did he make the *Day of his Eſpouſals* to Chriſt a Feſtival Day. This was alſo to teſtifie his Reſpects to Chriſt, and the grateful Senſe he had of his Kindneſs in ſnatching him from the Receipt of Cuſtom, as a Brand out of the Burning. (2.) That *many Publicans and Sinners* ſate with Chriſt in *Levi*'s Houſe; for *there were many* belonging to that Cuſtom-Houſe, *and they followed him.* They follow'd *Levi*, ſo ſome underſtand it, ſuppoſing that like *Zaccheus* he was *chief among the Publicans*, and was *rich*; and for that Reaſon, the inferior ſort of them attended him, for what they could get. I rather take it, that they *followed Jeſus*, becauſe of the Report they had heard of him. They did not *for Conſcience ſake* leave all to follow him, but *for Curioſity ſake* they came to *Levi*'s Feaſt to *ſee* him; whatever brought them there, they were ſitting with *Jeſus* and *his Diſciples.* The *Publicans* are here and elſewhere rank'd with *Sinners*, the worſt of *Sinners*: (1.) Becauſe commonly they *were ſuch*; ſo general were the Corruptions in the Execution of that Office, oppreſſing, exacting, and taking Bribes or Fees to Extortion, and *accuſing falſly*, Luke 3. 13.—19. A faithful fair-dealing *Publican* was ſo rare, even at *Rome*, that one *Sabinus*, who kept a clean Reputation in that Office, was after his Death honour'd with this Inſcription, *καλῶς τελωνήσαντι. Here lies an Honeſt* Publican. (2.) Becauſe the *Jews* had a particular Antipathy to them, and their Office, as an Affront to the Liberty of their Nation, and a Badge of their Slavery, and therefore put them into an ill Name, and thought it ſcandalous to be ſeen in their Company. Such as theſe our bleſſed Lord was pleas'd to converſe with, when he appeared *in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh.*

4. The *Offence*, which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* took at this, *v.* 16. They would not come to hear him preach, which they might have been convinc'd and edify'd by, but they would come themſelves to *ſee him ſit* with *Publicans* and *Sinners*, which they would be provok'd by. They endeavour'd to put the *Diſciples* out of Conceit with their Maſter, as a Man not of that Sanctity and ſevere Morals that became his Character; and therefore put the Queſtion to them, *How is it, that he eateth and drinketh with* Publicans *and* Sinners? *Note*, It is no new Thing, for that which is both well *done*, and well *deſign'd*, to be miſrepreſented, and turn'd to the Reproach of the wiſeſt and beſt of Men.

5. Chriſt's Juſtification of himſelf in it, *v.* 17. He ſtood to what he did, and would not withdraw, tho' the *Phariſees* were offended; as *Peter* afterwards did, *Gal.* 2. 12. *Note*, Thoſe are too tender of their own *good Name*, who to preſerve it with ſome nice People will decline a *good Work*. Chriſt would not do ſo. They thought the *Publicans* were to be *hated*: No, ſaith Chriſt, they are to be *pity'd*, they are *ſick*, and *need a Phyſician*; they are *Sinners*, and need a Saviour. They thought Chriſt's Character ſhould ſeparate him from them; no, ſaith Chriſt, my Commiſſion directs me to them; *I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance.* If the World had been *Righteous*, there had been no occaſion for my coming either to *preach* Repentance, or to *purchaſe* Remiſſion. 'Tis to a *ſinful World* that I am ſent, and therefore my Buſineſs lies moſt with thoſe that are the greateſt Sinners in it. Or thus; *I am not come to call the Righteous*, the proud *Phariſees* that think themſelves Righteous, that ask, *wherein ſhall we return*, Mal. 3. 7. of what ſhall we repent? But poor *Publicans*, that own themſelves to be *Sinners*, and are glad to be invited, and encourag'd to repent. It's good Dealing with thoſe that there is hopes of; now there's *more Hope of a Fool*, than of one that is *wiſe in his own Conceit*, Prov. 26. 12.

18 And the diſciples of John and of the Phariſees uſed to faſt; and they come, and ſay unto him, Why do the diſciples of John and of the Phariſees faſt, but thy diſciples faſt not? 19 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Can the children of the Bride-chamber faſt, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they can-

not faſt. 20 But the days will come, when the bride-
groom ſhall be taken away from them, and then
ſhall they faſt in thoſe days. 21 No man alſo
ſeweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment:
elſe the new piece that filled it up, taketh away
from the old, and the rent is made worſe. 22 And
no man putteth new wine into old bottles, elſe the
new wine doth burſt the bottles, and the wine is
ſpilled, and the bottles will be marred: But new
wine muſt be put into new bottles. 23 And it
came to paſs, that he went through the corn-fields
on the Sabbath-day, and his diſciples began as they
went, to pluck the ears of corn. 24 And the Pha-
riſees ſaid unto him, Behold, why do they on the
Sabbath-day that which is not lawful? 25 And
he ſaid unto them, Have ye never read what Da-
vid did when he had need, and was an hungred, he,
and they that were with him? 26 How he went
into the houſe of God in the days of Abiathar the
high Prieſt, and did eat the Shew-bread, which is
not lawful to eat but for the prieſts, and gave alſo to
them which were with him? 27 And he ſaid unto
them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man
for the Sabbath: 28 Therefore the Son of man is
Lord alſo of the Sabbath.

Chriſt had been put to *juſtifie* himſelf in converſing with *Publicans and Sinners:* Here he is put to juſtifie his Diſciples; and in what they do according to his Will, he will juſtifie them and bear them out.

Firſt, He juſtifies them in their *not faſting*, which was turn'd to their Reproach by the *Phariſees*; why do the *Phariſees* and the Diſciples of *John* faſt? They *uſe to faſt*, the *Phariſees* faſted *twice in the Week*, Luke 18. 12. and probably the Diſciples of *John* did ſo too; and it ſhould ſeem this very Day, when Chriſt and his Diſciples were feaſting in *Levi*'s Houſe, was their *Faſt-Day*, for the Word is νηστεύουσι, they *do faſt*, or *are faſting*, which aggravated the Offence. Thus apt are ſtrict Profeſſors to make their own Practice a Standard, and to cenſure and condemn all that do not fully come up to it. They inviduouſly ſuggeſt, that if Chriſt went among Sinners to do *them good*, as he had pleaded, yet the Diſciples went to indulge their Appetites, for they never knew what it was to faſt or to deny themſelves. *Note*, Ill Will always ſuſpects the worſt.

Two Things Chriſt pleads in excuſe of his Diſciples *not faſting*.

1. That theſe were *early Days* with them, and Faſting was not ſo *ſeaſonable* now as it would be hereafter, *v.* 19, 20. There is a Time for all Things. Thoſe that enter into the married State muſt expect Care, and *trouble in the Fleſh*, and yet during the Nuptial Solemnity they are merry, and think it becomes them to be ſo; it was very abſurd for *Sampſon*'s Bride to *weep before* him *during the Days that the Feaſt laſted*, Judg. 14. 17. Chriſt and his Diſciples were but newly married, the *Bridegroom* was *yet with them*, the Nuptials were yet in the celebrating; *Matthew*'s particularly; when the Bridegroom ſhould be remov'd from them to the far Country about his Buſineſs, then would be a proper Time to ſit as a Widow, in ſolitude and faſting.

2. That theſe were *early Days* with them, and they were not ſo able for the ſevere Exerciſe of Religion, as hereafter they would be. The *Phariſees* had long accuſtom'd themſelves to ſuch Auſterities; and *John Baptiſt* himſelf, neither eating nor drinking. His Diſciples from the firſt inur'd themſelves to Hardſhip, and came the eaſier to bear ſtrict and frequent Faſting, but it was not ſo with Chriſt's Diſciples; their Maſter came *eating and drinking*, and had not bred them up to the difficult Services of Religion as yet, for it was all in good Time. To put them upon ſuch frequent Faſting at firſt would be a Diſcouragement to them, and perhaps drive them off from following Chriſt; would be of as ill Conſequence as *putting new Wine into old Casks*, or ſowing *new cloth* to that which is worn thin and thread-bare, *v.* 21, 22. *Note*, God graciouſly *conſiders the Frame* of young Chriſtians, that are *weak* and *tender*, and ſo muſt we; nor muſt we expect more, but the *Work of the Day in its Day*, and that Day according to the Strength, becauſe it is not in our Hands to give Strength according to the Day. Many contract an Antipathy to ſome kind of Food, otherwiſe good, by being ſurfeited with it when they are young; ſo many entertain Prejudices againſt the Exerciſes of Devotion by being burthen'd with them; and *made to ſerve with an Offering*, at their ſetting out. Weak Chriſtians muſt take heed of *over-tasking* themſelves, and of making the Yoke of Chriſt otherwiſe than as it is, eaſie, and ſweet, and pleaſant.

Secondly, He juſtifies them in *plucking the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath-Day*, which I'll warrant you a Diſciple of the *Phariſees* would not dare to have done; for it was contrary to an expreſs Tradition of their Elders. In this Inſtance, as in that before, they reflect upon the Diſcipline of Chriſt's School, as if it were not ſo ſtrict as that of theirs: So common is it for thoſe that deny the *Power of Godlineſs*, to be zealous for the *Form*, and cenſorious of thoſe who affect not *their* Form.

Obſerve, (1.) What a poor Breakfaſt Chriſt's Diſciples had on a Sabbath-Day Morning, when they were going to Church, *v.* 23. they *pluck'd the Ears of Corn*, and that was the beſt they had. They were ſo intent upon ſpiritual Dainties, that they forgot even their *neceſſary Food*; and the word of Chriſt was to them inſtead of that; and their Zeal for it even *eat them up*. The *Jews* made it a piece of Religion to eat dainty Food on Sabbath-Days, but the Diſciples were content with any Thing.

2. How even this was *grudg'd them* by the *Phariſees*, upon Suppoſition that it was not lawful to *pluck the Ears of Corn* on the Sabbath-Day, that that was as much a ſervile Work as *Reaping*, v. 24. *Why do they on the Sabbath-Day that which is not lawful? Note*, If Chriſt's Diſciples do that which is unlawful, Chriſt will be reflected upon, and upbraided with it, as he was here, and Diſhonour will redound to his Name. 'Tis obſervable, that when the *Phariſees* thought Chriſt did amiſs, they told the Diſciples, *v.* 16. and now when they thought the Diſciples did amiſs, they ſpoke to Chriſt; as Make-bates, that did what they could to ſow Diſcord between Chriſt and his Diſciples, and make a Breach in the Family.

3. How Chriſt defended them in what they did.

1. By Example. They had a good Precedent for it in *David's* eating the *Shew-Bread*, when he was hungry, and there was no other Bread to be had, *v.* 25, 26. *Have ye never read? Note*, Many of our Miſtakes would be rectified, and our unjuſt Cenſures of others corrected, if we would but recollect what *we have read* in the Scripture; Appeals to that are moſt convincing. You have read that *David*, the Man after God's own Heart, *when he was hungry*, made no Difficulty of eating the *Shew-Bread*, which by the Law none might eat of, but the *Prieſts* and their Families. *Note*, Ritual Obſervances muſt give way to Moral Obligations; and that may be done in a Caſe of Neceſſity, which otherwiſe may not be done. This 'tis ſaid *David* did in the Days of *Abiathar the High-Prieſt*; or, *juſt before* the Days of *Abiathar*, who immediately ſucceeded *Abimelech* his Father in the *Pontificate*; and 'tis probable, was at that Time his Father's Deputy, or Aſſiſtant in the Office; and he it was that eſcap'd the Maſſacre, and brought the Ephod to *David*.

2. By Argument. To reconcile them to the Diſciples *plucking the Ears of Corn*. Let them conſider,

1. Who the Sabbath was *made for*, v. 27. *It was made for Man, and not Man for the Sabbath.* This we had not in *Matthew*. The Sabbath is a Sacred and Divine Inſtitution, but we muſt receive and embrace it as a Privilege and a Benefit, not as a Task and a Drudgery. (1.) God never deſign'd it to be an *Impoſition* upon us, and therefore we muſt not make it ſo to our ſelves; *Man was not made for the Sabbath*, for he was made a Day before the Sabbath was inſtituted. Man was made *for God*, and for his Honour and Service, and he muſt rather die than deny him; but he was not *made for the Sabbath*, ſo as to be ty'd up by the Law of it, from that which is neceſſary to the Support of his Life. (2) God did deſign it to be an *Advantage* to us, and ſo we muſt make it, and improve it. He made it *for Man*. 1. He had *ſome* regard to our *Bodies* in the Inſtitution, that they might reſt, and not be tir'd out with the conſtant Buſineſs of this World, *Deut.* 5. 14. *That thy Man-ſervant, and thy Maid-ſervant may reſt.* Now he that intended the *Sabbath-Reſt* for the *Repoſe* of our Bodies, certainly never intended it ſhould reſtrain us in a Caſe of Neceſſity from fetching in the neceſſary *Supports* of the Body; it muſt be conſtru'd, ſo as not to contradict it ſelf, for *Edification*, and not for *Deſtruction*. 2. He had *much more* regard to our *Souls*; the *Sabbath* was made a Day of Reſt, only in order to its being a Day of Holy Work, a Day of Communion with God, a Day of Praiſe and Thankſgiving; and the reſt from worldly Buſineſs is therefore neceſſary, that we may cloſely apply our ſelves to this Work, and ſpend the whole Time in it, in Publick, Private, and Secret; but then Time is allow'd us for that which is neceſſary to the fitting of our Bodies for the Service of our Souls in God's Service; and the enabling of them to *keep Pace* with them in their Work. See here, (1.) What a *good Maſter* we ſerve, all whoſe Inſtitutions are for our own Benefit, and if we be ſo wiſe as to obſerve them, we are *wiſe for our ſelves*; 'tis not he, but we that are Gainers by our Service. (2.) What we ſhould aim at in our *Sabbath Work*, even the Good of our own Souls. If the Sabbath was made for Man, we ſhould then aſk our ſelves at Night, what am I the better for this Sabbath-Day? (3.) What care we ought to take, not to make thoſe Exerciſes of Religion, Burthens to our ſelves or others, which God ordain'd to be Bleſſings; not only not by unreaſonable Strictneſs added to the Command, but not by indulging thoſe Corruptions which are adverſe to the Command, for thereby we make thoſe devout Exerciſes a Penance to our ſelves, which otherwiſe would be a Pleaſure.

2. Who the Sabbath was *made by*, v. 28. *The Son of Man is Lord alſo of the Sabbath*; and therefore he will not ſee the kind Intentions of the Inſtitution of it fruſtrated by your Impoſitions. *Note*, The Sabbath-Days are *Days of the Son of Man*: He is the Lord of the Day, and to his Honour it muſt be obſerv'd; By him God made the Worlds, and ſo it was by him that the Sabbath was firſt inſtituted; by him God gave the Law at *Mount Sinai*, and ſo the *Fourth* Commandment was *his Law*; and that little Alteration,

ration that was ſhortly to be made by the ſhifting of it, one Day forward to the firſt Day of the Week, was to be in remembrance of *his* Reſurrection, and therefore the *Chriſtian Sabbath* was to be call'd *the Lord's Day*, Rev. 1. 10. the Lord Chriſt's Day; and the *Son of Man*, Chriſt as Mediator, is always to be look'd upon as Lord of the Sabbath. This Argument he largely inſiſts upon in his own Juſtification, when he was charg'd with having broken the Sabbath, *John* 5. 16.

CHAP. III.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) Chriſt's healing the Man that had a wither'd Hand on the Sabbath-Day, and the Combination of his Enemies againſt him for it, v. 1.---6. *(2.) The univerſal Reſort of People to him from all Parts to be heal'd, and the Relief they all found with him,* v. 7.--- 12. *(3.) His ordaining his Twelve Apoſtles to be Attendants on him, and the Preachers of his Goſpel,* v. 13.--- 21. *(4.) His Anſwer to the blaſphemous Cavil of the* Scribes, *who imputed his Power to caſt out Devils, to a Confederacy with the Prince of the Devils,* v. 22.---30. *(5.) His owning his Diſciples for his neareſt and deareſt Relations,* v. 31.--- 35.

AND he entred again into the Synagogue, and there was a man there which had a withered hand: 2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath-day, that they might accuſe him. 3 And he ſaith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. 4 And he ſaith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-days, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to kill? but they held their peace. 5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardneſs of their hearts, he ſaith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he ſtretched *it* out: and his hand was reſtored whole as the other. 6 And the Phariſees went forth, and ſtraightway took counſel with the Herodians againſt him, how they might deſtroy him. 7 But Jeſus withdrew himſelf with his diſciples to the ſea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, 8 And from Jeruſalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. 9 And he ſpake to his diſciples, that a ſmall ſhip ſhould wait on him, becauſe of the multitude, leſt they ſhould throng him. 10 For he had healed many, inſomuch that they preſſed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. 11 And unclean ſpirits, when they ſaw him, fell down before him, and cried, ſaying, Thou art the Son of God. 12 And he ſtraightly charged them, that they ſhould not make him known.

Here, as before, we have our Lord Jeſus buſie at work *in the Synagogue* firſt, and then by *the Sea-ſide*, to teach us that his Preſence ſhould not be confin'd either to the one or to the other; but where-ever any are gather'd together in his Name, whether *in the Synagogue*, or any where elſe, there is he in the midſt of them. *In every Place where he records his Name*, he will meet his People and *bleſs them*; 'tis his Will that Men *pray every where.* Now here we have ſome Account of what he did.

Firſt, When he *enter'd again into the Synagogue*, he improv'd the Opportunity he had there of doing Good, and having no doubt preached a Sermon there, he wrought a Miracle for the Confirmation of it, or at leaſt for the Confirmation of this Truth, *that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath-Day.* We had the Story, *Mat.* 12. 9.

1. The Patient's Caſe was piteous; he had a *wither'd Hand*, by which he was diſabled to work for his Living, and thoſe that are ſo are the moſt proper Objects of Charity; let thoſe be help'd that cannot help themſelves.

2. The Spectators were very unkind both to the Patient and to the Phyſician, who, inſtead of interceding for a poor Neighbour, did what they could to hinder his Cure. For they intimated, that if Chriſt cur'd him now on the Sabbath-Day, they would accuſe him as a *Sabbath-breaker*; it had been very unreaſonable, if they ſhould have oppos'd a Phyſician or Surgeon in helping any poor Body in Miſery by ordinary Methods; but much more abſurd was it to oppoſe him, that cur'd without any labour, but by a Word ſpeaking.

3. Chriſt dealt very fairly with the Spectators, and dealt with them *firſt*, if poſſible to *prevent* the Offence. (1.) He labour'd to convince their Judgment. He bid the Man *ſtand forth*, v. 3. that by the ſight of him they might be mov'd with Compaſſion towards him, and might not for ſhame account his Cure a Crime. And then he appeals to their own Conſciences; tho' the Thing *ſpeaks it ſelf*, yet *he* is pleaſed to *ſpeak* it, *Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-Days*, as I deſign to do, *or to do Evil*, as you deſign to do? Whether is better, to *ſave Life*, or to *kill*? What fairer Queſtion could he put? And yet becauſe they ſaw it would turn againſt them, *they held their Peace. Note*, Thoſe are obſtinate indeed in their Infidelity, who, when they can ſay nothing *againſt* a Truth, will ſay nothing *to it*; and when they cannot *reſiſt*, yet will not *yield.*

(2.) When they rebell'd againſt the Light, he *lamented their Stubbornneſs*, v. 5. *He looked round about on them with Anger, being griev'd for the hardneſs of their Hearts.* The *Sin* he had an Eye to was the *hardneſs of their Hearts*, their unſenſibleneſs of the Evidence of his Miracles, and their inflexible Reſolution to perſiſt in Unbelief. We hear what is ſaid amiſs, and ſee what is done amiſs, but Chriſt looks at the *Root of Bitterneſs* in the Heart; the Blindneſs and Hardneſs of *that.* Obſerve, (1.) How he was *provok'd* by the Sin. He look'd *round upon them*, for they were ſo many, and had ſo plac'd themſelves, that they ſurrounded him. And he look'd *with Anger*; 'tis likely his Anger appear'd in his Countenance; his Anger was like God's, without the leaſt *Perturbation* to himſelf, but not without great *Provocation* from us. *Note*, The Sin of Sinners is very diſpleaſing to Jeſus Chriſt; and the way to be angry, and not to Sin, is to be angry, as Chriſt was, at nothing but Sin. Let hard-hearted Sinners tremble to think of the Anger with which he will *look round* upon them ſhortly, when the *Great Day of his Wrath comes.* (2.) How he *pitied* the Sinners; He was *griev'd for the hardneſs of their Hearts*; as God was griev'd Forty Years for the hardneſs of the Hearts of their Fathers in the Wilderneſs: *Note*, It is a great Grief to our Lord Jeſus to ſee Sinners bent upon their own Ruin, and obſtinately ſet againſt the Methods of their Conviction and Recovery, for he would not that any ſhould periſh. This is a good Reaſon, why the Hardneſs of our own Hearts, and of the Hearts of others, ſhould be a grief to us.

4. Chriſt dealt very kindly with the Patient. He bid him *ſtretch forth his Hand*, and it was immediately *reſtor'd.* Now (1.) Chriſt has hereby taught us to go on with Reſolution in the way of our Duty, how violent ſoever the Oppoſition is, that we meet with in it. We muſt deny our ſelves ſometimes in our Eaſe, Pleaſure and Convenience, rather than give Offence even to thoſe who cauſeleſly take it; but we muſt not deny our ſelves the Satisfaction of ſerving God and doing Good, tho' Offence may be unjuſtly taken at it. None could be more tender of giving Offence than Chriſt; yet rather than ſend this poor Man away uncur'd, he would venture offending all the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* that encompaſſed him about. (2.) He hath hereby given us a *Specimen* of the Cures wrought by his Grace upon *poor Souls*; our Hands are ſpiritually *wither'd*; the Powers of our Souls weaken'd by Sin, and diſabled for that which is good. The great Healing Day is the *Sabbath*, and the Healing Place the *Synagogue*; the Healing Power is that of Chriſt. The Goſpel Command is like this here; and the Command as rational and juſt as this; tho' our Hands are wither'd, and we cannot of our ſelves *ſtretch them forth*, we muſt attempt it, muſt as well as we can *lift them up* to God in Prayer, *lay hold* on Chriſt, and eternal Life, and employ them in good Works; and if we do our Endeavour, Power goes along with the Word of Chriſt, he effects the Cure. Tho' our Hands be *wither'd*, yet if we will not offer to *ſtretch them out*, 'tis our own Fault that we are not heal'd; but if we do, and are heal'd, Chriſt, and his Power and Grace, muſt have all his Glory.

5. The Enemies of Chriſt dealt very barbarouſly with him. Such a Work of *Mercy* ſhould have engag'd their Love *to him*, and ſuch a Work of *Wonder* their Faith *in him.* But inſtead of that, the *Phariſees*, that pretended to be Oracles in the Church, and the *Herodians*, that pretended to be the Supporters of the State, tho' of oppoſite Intereſts one to another, yet *took council together againſt him how they might deſtroy him. Note*, They that ſuffer for doing good, do but ſuffer as their Maſter did.

Secondly, When he withdrew *to the Sea*, he did good there. Whilſt his Enemies ſought *to deſtroy him*, he quitted the Place, to teach us in troubleſome Times to ſhift for our own Safety; but, ſee here,

1. How he was follow'd into his Retirement. When ſome had ſuch an Enmity to him, that they drove him out of their Country, others had ſuch a Value for him, that they followed him where ever he went; and the Enmity of their Leaders to Chriſt did not cool their Reſpects to him. *Great Multitudes* followed him from all Parts of the Nation; as far North, as *from Galilee*: as far South, as from *Judea and Jeruſalem*; nay, and from *Idumea*; as far Eaſt, as from beyond *Jordan*; and Weſt, as from about *Tyre* and *Sydon.*— *v.* 7, 8. Obſerve, (1.) What induced them to follow him; 'twas the Report they had of the *Great Things he did* for all that applied themſelves to him: ſome wiſhed *to ſee* one that had done ſuch *great things*, and others hop'd he would do *great things for them. Note*, The Conſideration of the *Great Things* Chriſt has done, ſhould engage us to *come to him.* (2.) What they followed him for, *v.* 10. They *preſſed upon him for to touch him, as many as had Plagues.* Diſeaſes are here call'd *Plagues*, μάστιγας, *Corrections, Chaſtiſements.* So they are deſign'd to be, to make us *ſmart* for our Sins, that thereby we may be made *ſorry* for them, and may be warned not to return to them. Thoſe that were under theſe *ſcourgings* came to *Jeſus*; this is the Errand on which Sickneſs is ſent, to quicken us to enquire after Chriſt, and apply our ſelves to him as our Phyſician. They *preſs'd upon him*, each ſtriving which ſhould get *neareſt him*, and

which ſhould be *firſt ſerv'd*. They *fell down before him*. So Dr. *Hammond*, as Petitioners for his Favour; they deſir'd Leave but to *touch him*, having Faith to be heal'd not only by *his* touching *them*, but by *their* touching him; which no doubt they had many Inſtances of. (3.) What Proviſion he made to be ready to attend them, *v.* 9. he *ſpake to his Diſciples*, who were Fiſhermen, and had Fiſher-boats at command, that a *ſmall Ship ſhould conſtantly wait on him*, to carry him from place to place on the ſame Coaſt, that when he had diſpatched the neceſſary Buſineſs he had to do in one place, he might eaſily remove to another, where his Preſence was requiſite, without preſſing thro' the Crowds of People that follow'd him for Curioſity. Wiſe Men, as much as they can, decline a Crowd.

2. What abundance of Good he did in his Retirement; he did not withdraw to be idle, nor did he ſend back thoſe who rudely crowded after him when he withdrew, but took it kindly, and gave them what they came for; for he never ſaid to any that ſought him diligently, *ſeek ye me in vain*. (1.) Diſeaſes were effectually cur'd. He *healed many*; divers ſorts of Patients, ill of divers ſorts of Diſeaſes, tho' numerous, tho' various, he *healed them*. (2.) *Devils* were effectually *conquer'd*. Thoſe whom unclean Spirits had got Poſſeſſion of, *when they ſaw him*, trembled at his Preſence, and they alſo *fell down before him*, not to ſupplicate his Favour, but to deprecate his Wrath, and by their own Terrors were compell'd to own, *that he was the Son of God*, *v.* 11. 'Tis ſad that this great Truth ſhould be denied by any of the Children of Men, who may have the Benefit of it, when a Confeſſion of it has ſo often been extorted from Devils, who are excluded from having Benefit by it.—(3.) Chriſt ſought not Applauſe to himſelf in doing thoſe great things, for *he ſtrictly charged* thoſe for whom he did them, *that they ſhould not make him known*, *v.* 12. That they ſhould not be *induſtrious* to ſpread the Notice of his Cures, as it were by Advertiſements in the News-Papers, but let them leave *his own Works to praiſe him*, and let the Report of them *diffuſe it ſelf*, and make its own way. Let not thoſe that were cur'd be forward to divulge it, leſt it ſhould feed their Pride, who were ſo *highly favour'd*, but let the *Standards-by* carry away the Intelligence of it. When we do that which is *praiſe-worthy*, and yet covet not to be *praiſed of Men* for it, then *the ſame Mind is in us*, which was *in Chriſt Jeſus*.

13 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him. 14 And he ordained twelve, that they ſhould be with him, and that he might ſend them forth to preach: 15 And to have Power to heal ſickneſſes, and to caſt out devils. 16 And Simon he ſirnamed Peter, 17 And James *the Son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (and he ſirnamed them Boanerges, which is, the ſons of thunder.) 18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James *the Son* of Alpheus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19 And Judas Iſcariot, which alſo betrayed him: and they went into an houſe. 20 And the multitude cometh together again, ſo that they could not ſo much as eat bread. 21 And when his friends heard of *it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they ſaid, He is beſide himſelf.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, The Choice Chriſt made of the *twelve Apoſtles* to be his conſtant Followers and Attendants, and to be ſent abroad as there was occaſion to preach the Goſpel. Obſerve,

1. The Introduction to this *Call*, or *Promotion* of Diſciples. He *goes up into a mountain*, and his Errand thither was *to pray*. Miniſters muſt be ſet apart with ſolemn Prayer, for the pouring out of the Spirit upon them; tho' Chriſt had Authority to confer the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, yet to ſet us an Example, he prayed for them.

2. The Rule he went by in his Choice, and that was his own good Pleaſure; *he called unto him whom he would*. Not ſuch as we would have thought *fitteſt to be called, looking upon the Countenance and the Height of the Stature*: But ſuch as he *thought fit* to call, and determin'd to *make fit* for the Service to which he call'd them: *Even ſo*, bleſſed Jeſus, *becauſe it ſeemed good in thine Eyes*. Chriſt calls *whom he will*, for he is a Free Agent, and his Grace is his own.

3. The Efficacy of the Call. He *call'd them*, to ſeparate themſelves from the Crowd, and ſtand by him, and they *came unto him*; Chriſt calls thoſe who were *given him*, Joh. 17. 6. and *all that the Father gave him ſhall come to him*, Joh. 6. 37. Thoſe whom it was his *Will* to call, he made *willing to come*; his *People ſhall be willing in the Day of his Power*. Perhaps they came to him readily enough, becauſe they were in Expectation of *reigning with him* in temporal Pomp and Power, but when afterwards they were *undeceived* in that Matter, yet they had ſuch a Proſpect given them of better things, that they would not ſay they were *deceiv'd* in their Maſter, nor repented their leaving all to be with him.

4. The End and Intention of this Call; he *ordain'd them* (probably by the Impoſition of Hands, which was a Ceremony us'd among the *Jews*) *that they ſhould be with him* conſtantly, to be Witneſſes of *his Doctrine*, *manner of Life*, *and Patience*, that they might *fully know it*, and be able to give an Account of it; and eſpecially that they might atteſt the Truth of his Miracles; they muſt be *with him*, to receive Inſtructions *from him*, that they might be qualified to give Inſtructions *to others*. 'Twould *require time* to fit them for that which he deſign'd them for; for they muſt be *ſent forth to preach*; not to preach till they were *ſent*, and not to be *ſent*, till by a long and intimate Acquaintance with Chriſt, they were fitted. *Note*, Chriſt's Miniſters muſt be much *with him*.

5. The Power he gave them to work Miracles; and hereby he put a very great Honour upon them, beyond that of the great Men of the Earth. He ordain'd them to *heal Sickneſſes, and to caſt out Devils*. They ſhew'd that the Power which Chriſt had to work theſe Miracles, was an *Original* Power; that he had it not *as a Servant*, but *as Son in his own Houſe*, in that he could confer it upon others, and inveſt them with it: They have a Rule in the Law, *Deputatus non poteſt Deputare*, He that is only *deputed* himſelf, cannot *depute* another; but our Lord Jeſus had *Life in himſelf*, and the Spirit without Meaſure, for he could give this Power even to the *weak* and *fooliſh things* of the World.

6. Their Number and Names; he *ordain'd twelve*, according to the Number of the twelve Tribes of *Iſrael*. They are here nam'd, not juſt in the ſame Order as they were in *Matthew*, nor by Couples, as they were there; but as there, ſo here *Peter* is put firſt, and *Judas* laſt. Here *Matthew* is put before *Thomas*; 'tis likely, being called in that Order, but in that Catalogue which *Matthew* himſelf drew up, he puts himſelf after *Thomas*; ſo far was he from inſiſting upon the Precedency of his Conſecration. But that which *Mark* only takes notice of in this Liſt of the Apoſtles, is, that Chriſt called *James* and *John Boanerges*, which is, *The Sons of Thunder*; perhaps they were remarkable for a loud commanding Voice, they were thundering Preachers; or rather, it notes the Zeal and Fervency of their Spirits, which would make them active for God above their Brethren. Theſe two (ſaith Dr. *Hammond*) were to be ſpecial eminent Miniſters of the Goſpel, which is called *a Voice ſhaking the Earth*, Heb. 12. 26. yet *John*, one of thoſe *Sons of Thunder*, was full of Love and Tenderneſs, as appears by his Epiſtles, and was the beloved Diſciple.

7. Their Retirement with their Maſter, and cloſe Adherence to him, *they went into an Houſe*. Now this Jury was impannell'd, they *ſtood together* to *hearken to their Evidence*. They went together into the Houſe to ſettle the Orders of their Infant College, and now 'tis likely the Bag was given to *Judas*, which pleas'd him, and made him eaſy.

Secondly, The continual Crowds that attended Chriſt's Motions; *v.* 20. The *multitude cometh together again* unſent for, and unſeaſonably, preſſing upon him, ſome with one Errand, and ſome with another; ſo that he and his Diſciples could not get time *ſo much as to eat Bread*, much leſs for a ſet and full Meal. Yet he did not ſhut his Doors againſt the Petitioners, but bid them welcome, and gave to each of them *an Anſwer of Peace*. *Note*, They whoſe Hearts are enlarged in the Work of God, can eaſily bear with great Inconveniencies to themſelves in the Proſecution of it, and will rather loſe a Meal's Meat at any time, than let ſlip an Opportunity of doing good. 'Tis happy when zealous *Hearers* and zealous *Preachers* thus *meet*, and encourage one another. Now the *Kingdom of God was preach'd*, and Men preſs'd into it, *Luke* 16. 16. This was a Gale of Opportunity worth improving, and the Diſciples might well afford to adjourn their Meals to lay hold on it. 'Tis good ſtriking while the Iron is hot.

Thirdly, The Care of his Relations concerning him, *v.* 21. *When his Friends* in *Capernaum* heard how he was followed, and what Pains he took, they *went out to lay hold on him*, and fetch him home, for they ſaid, *He is beſides himſelf*. (1.) Some underſtand it of an abſurd, prepoſterous Care, which had more in it of Reproach to him, than of Reſpect; and ſo we muſt take it as we read it, *He is beſide himſelf*; either they ſuſpected it themſelves, or it was ſuggeſted to them, and they gave Credit to the Suggeſtion, that he was *gone diſtracted*, and therefore his Friends ought to bind him, and put him in a dark Room, to bring him to his right Mind again. His Kindred many of them had mean Thoughts of him, *Joh.* 6. 4. 7. 5. and were willing to hearken to this ill Conſtruction which ſome put upon his great Zeal, and to conclude him craz'd in his Intellectuals, and under that Pretence, to take him off from his Work. The Prophets were call'd mad Fellows, 2 *Kings* 9. 11. (2.) Others underſtand it of a *well-meaning* Care, and then they read ἐξέστη, *He fainteth*; he has no time to *eat bread*, and therefore his Strength will fail him; he will be ſtifled with the Crowd of People, and will have his Spirits quite exhauſted with conſtant ſpeaking, and the Virtue that *goes out of him* in his Miracles; and therefore let us uſe a friendly Violence with him, and get him a little *breathing-time*. In his Preaching-work, as well as his Suffering-work, he was attack'd with, *Maſter, ſpare thy ſelf*. *Note*, They who go on with Vigour and Zeal in the Work of God, muſt expect to meet with Hindrances, both from the groundleſs Diſaffection of their Enemies, and the miſtaken Affections of their Friends, and they have need to ſtand upon their Guard againſt both.

22 And the Scribes which came down from Jeruſalem, ſaid, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils caſteth he out devils. 23 And he called them unto him, and ſaid unto them in parables,

bles, How can Satan caſt out Satan? 24 And if a
kingdom be divided againſt it ſelf, that kingdom
cannot ſtand. 25 And if a houſe be divided againſt
it ſelf, that houſe cannot ſtand. 26 And if Satan
riſe up againſt himſelf, and be divided, he cannot
ſtand, but hath an end. 27 No man can enter into
a ſtrong man's houſe, and ſpoil his goods, except he
will firſt bind the ſtrong man, and then he will ſpoil
his houſe. 28 Verily I ſay unto you, All ſins ſhall be
forgiven unto the ſons of men, and blaſphemies where-
with ſoever they ſhall blaſpheme: 29 But he that ſhall
blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt, hath never forgive-
neſs, but is in danger of eternal damnation. 30 Be-
cauſe they ſaid, He hath an unclean ſpirit.

Here's 1. The *impudent impious Brand* which the Scribes faſten'd upon Chriſt's caſting out Devils, that they might evade and invalidate the Conviction of it, and have a poor Excuſe for not yielding to it. Theſe *Scribes came down from* Jeruſalem, *v.* 22. It ſhould ſeem they came this long Journey on purpoſe to hinder the Progreſs of the Doctrine of Chriſt: Such Pains did they take to do Miſchief; and coming from *Jeruſalem*, where were the moſt polite and learned Scribes, and where they had Opportunity of *conſulting* together *againſt the Lord and his Anointed*, they were in the greater Capacity to do Miſchief: The Reputation of *Scribes from* Jeruſalem, would have an Influence not only upon the *Country People*, but upon the *Country Scribes*; They had never thought of this baſe Suggeſtion concerning Chriſt's Miracles, till the *Scribes from* Jeruſalem put it in their Heads. They could not deny but that he caſt out Devils, which plainly ſpoke him ſent of God; but they inſinuated *he had Beelzebub* on his Side, was in League with him, and by *the Prince of the Devils caſt out Devils*. There is a Trick in the Caſe, Satan is not *caſt out*, he only *goes out* by conſent. There was nothing in the Manner of Chriſt's *caſting out Devils*, that gave any Cauſe to ſuſpect this; he did it *as one having Authority*; but ſo they will have it who reſolve not to believe him.

2. The *rational Anſwer* which Chriſt gave to this Objection, demonſtrating the Abſurdity of it.

(1.) Satan is ſo *ſubtile*, that he will never voluntarily quit his Poſſeſſion. *If Satan caſt out Satan, his Kingdom is divided againſt it ſelf*, and it *cannot ſtand*, v. 23, 24, 25. He *called them to him*, as one deſirous they ſhould be convinc'd, he treats them with all the Freedom, Friendlineſs and Familiarity that could be; he vouchſafes to reaſon the Caſe with them, *that every Mouth may be ſtopp'd.* 'Twas plain that the Doctrine of Chriſt *made War* upon the Devil's Kingdom, and had a direct Tendency to break his Power, and cruſh his Intereſt in the Souls of Men; and 'twas as plain that the caſting him out of the Bodies of People confirm'd that Doctrine, and gave it the ſetting on; and therefore it cannot be imagin'd that he ſhould come into ſuch a Deſign: every one knows Satan is no *Fool*, nor will act ſo directly againſt his own Intereſt.

(2.) *Chriſt* is ſo *wiſe*, that being engag'd in a War with him, he will attack his Forces wherever he meets them, whether in the Bodies or Souls of People, *v.* 27. 'Tis plain Chriſt's Deſign is to *enter into* the *ſtrong Man's Houſe*, to take Poſſeſſion of the Intereſt he has in the World, and to *ſpoil his Goods*, and convert them to his own Service, and therefore 'tis natural to ſuppoſe that he will thus *bind the ſtrong Man*; will forbid him to *ſpeak* when he would, and to *ſtay* where he would, and thus ſhew that he has gain'd a Victory over him.

3. The *awful Warning* Chriſt gave them to take heed how they ſpoke ſuch *dangerous* Words as theſe; however they might make light of them, as only Conjectures and the Language of *Free-Thinking*, if they perſiſted in it, 'twould be of fatal Conſequence to them; it would be found a Sin againſt the laſt Remedy, and conſequently *unpardonable*; for what could be imagin'd poſſible to bring them to Repentance for their Sin in blaſpheming Chriſt, that wou'd ſet aſide ſuch a *ſtrong* Conviction with ſuch a *weak* Evaſion? It is true the Goſpel *promiſeth*, becauſe Chriſt hath *purchaſed* Forgiveneſs for the greateſt Sins and Sinners, *v.* 28. thoſe who reviled Chriſt on the Croſs, which was a *blaſpheming of the Son of Man*, aggravated to the higheſt Degree, yet many of them found Mercy, and Chriſt himſelf pray'd, *Father, forgive them*; but this was *blaſpheming the Holy Ghoſt*, for it was by the Holy Spirit that he *caſt out* Devils, and they ſaid it was *by the unclean Spirit*, v. 30. And by this Method they would out-face the Conviction of all the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, and defeat them all, after which there remain'd no more Proof, and therefore they ſhould *never have Forgiveneſs*, but were *liable to eternal Damnation*. They were in imminent Danger of that everlaſting Puniſhment, from which there was *no Redemption*, and in which there was no *Intermiſſion*, no *Remiſſion*.

31 There came then his brethren and his mother,
and ſtanding without, ſent unto him, calling him.
32 And the multitude ſate about him, and they ſaid
unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without ſeek for thee. 33 And he anſwered them, ſaying,
Who is my mother, or my brethren? 34 And he look-
ed round about on them which ſate about him, and
ſaid, Behold, my mother and my brethren. 35 For
whoſoever ſhall do the will of God, the ſame is my bro-
ther, and my ſiſter, and mother.

Here's 1. The *Diſreſpect* which Chriſt's *Kindred according to the Fleſh* ſhew'd to him, when he was preaching, (and they knew very well that he was then in his Element) they not only *ſtood without*, having no Deſire to come in and hear him, but they ſent in a Meſſage to *call him out to them*, v. 31, 32. as if he muſt leave his Work to hearken to their *Impertinencies*; 'tis likely they had *no Buſineſs with him*, only ſent for him on purpoſe to oblige him to *break off*, leſt he ſhould *kill himſelf*. He knew how far his Strength would go, and preferr'd the Salvation of Souls before his own Life, and ſoon after made it to appear with a Witneſs; it was therefore an *idle Thing* for them, under Pretence of his ſparing himſelf, to interrupt him; and it was worſe, if really they had Buſineſs with him, when they knew he preferr'd his Buſineſs as a Saviour, ſo much before any other Buſineſs.

2. The *Reſpect* which Chriſt ſhew'd to his ſpiritual Kindred upon this Occaſion. Now as at other Times, he put a *comparative Neglect* upon his Mother, which ſeem'd purpoſely deſign'd to obviate and prevent the extravagant Reſpect which Men in after Times would be apt to pay her. *Our* Reſpects ought to be guided and govern'd by *Chriſt*'s; now the Virgin *Mary*, or Chriſt's Mother, is not equall'd with, but poſtpon'd to ordinary Believers, on whom Chriſt here puts a *ſuperlative* Honour. He look'd upon thoſe who *ſat about* him, and pronounced thoſe of them that not only heard, but did the Will of God, to be to him as *his Brother and Siſter and Mother*; as much eſteem'd, lov'd and car'd for as his neareſt Relations, *v.* 33, 34, 35. This is a good Reaſon why we ſhould *honour thoſe that fear the Lord*, and chuſe them for our People; why we ſhould be not hearers of the Word only, but doers of the Work, that we may ſhare with the Saints in this Honour. Surely it is good to be akin to thoſe who are thus nearly ally'd to Chriſt, and to have Fellowſhip with thoſe that have Fellowſhip with Chriſt; and woe to thoſe who hate and perſecute Chriſt's Kindred, that are *his Bone and his Fleſh*, every one *reſembling the Children of a King*, ſee *Jude* 8, 18, 19. for he will with Jealouſie plead their Cauſe, and avenge their Blood.

CHAP. IV.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *The Parable of the Seed, and the four Sorts of Ground*, v. 1—9, *with the Expoſition of it*, v. 10—20. *and the Application of it*, v. 21—25. (2.) *The Parable of the Seed growing gradually, but inſenſibly*, v. 26—29. (3.) *The Parable of the Grain of Muſtard-Seed, and a general Account of Chriſt's Parables*, v. 30—34. (4.) *The Miracle of Chriſt's ſudden ſtilling a Storm at Sea*, v. 35—41.

1 AND he began again to teach by the ſea ſide:
and there was gathered unto him a great
multitude, ſo that he entred into a ſhip, and ſate in
the ſea, and the whole multitude was by the ſea on the
land. 2 And he taught them many things by parables,
and ſaid unto them in his doctrine, 3 Hearken, Be-
hold, there went out a Sower to ſow: 4 And it came
to paſs as he ſowed, ſome fell by the way ſide, and the
fowls of the air came and devoured it up. 5 And ſome
fell on ſtony ground, where it had not much earth, and
immediately it ſprang up, becauſe it had no depth of
earth. 6 But when the Sun was up, it was ſcorched,
and becauſe it had no root, it withered away. 7 And
ſome fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and
choaked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8 And other fell on
good ground, and did yield fruit that ſprang up and
increaſed, and brought forth ſome thirty, and ſome
ſixty, and ſome an hundred. 9 And he ſaid unto
them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 10 And
when he was alone, they that were about him, with
the twelve, asked of him the parable. 11 And he ſaid
unto them, Unto you it is given to know the myſtery of
the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without,
all *theſe* things are done in parables: 12 That ſeeing
they may ſee, and not perceive, and hearing they may
hear, and not underſtand; leſt at any time they ſhould
be converted, and *their* ſins ſhould be forgiven them.
13 And he ſaid unto them, Know ye not this parable?
And how then will you know all parables? 14 The
Sower ſoweth the Word. 15 And theſe are they by
the

the way ſide, where the word is ſown: but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was ſown in their hearts. 16 And theſe are they likewiſe which are ſown on ſtony ground, who when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladneſs: 17 And have no root in themſelves, and ſo endure but for a time: afterward when affliction or perſecution ariſeth for the words ſake, immediately they are offended: 18 And theſe are they which are ſown among thorns: ſuch as hear the word, 19 And the cares of this World, and the deceitfulneſs of riches, and the luſts of other things entring in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20 And theſe are they which are ſown on good ground, ſuch as hear the word, and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, ſome thirty fold, ſome ſixty, and ſome an hundred.

The foregoing Chapter began with Chriſt's *entring again into the Synagogue*, v. 1. This Chapter begins with Chriſt's *teaching again by the Sea-ſide.* Thus he chang'd his Method, that, if poſſible, all might be reach'd and wrought upon. To gratifie the nice and more genteel Sort of People that had Seats, *chief Seats in the Synagogue*, and did not care for hearing a Sermon any where elſe, He did not preach always by the *Sea-ſide*, but having Liberty went oft *into the Synagogue*, and taught there; yet to gratifie the Poor, the Mob that could not get room in the *Synagogue*, he did not always preach there, but *began again to teach by the Sea-ſide*, where they could come *within hearing*. Thus are we *Debtors both to the wiſe and to the unwiſe*, Rom. 1. 14.

Here ſeems to be a new convenience found out, which had not been us'd before, tho' he had before preach'd by the *Sea-ſide*, Chap. 2.—13. and that was his ſtanding *in a Ship*, while his Hearers *ſtood upon the Land*; and that inland Sea of *Tiberius* having no Tide, there was no ebbing and flowing of the Waters to diſturb them. Methinks Chriſt's carrying his Doctrine into a Ship, and preaching it thence, was a Preſage of his ſending of the Goſpel to the *Iſles of the Gentiles*, and the ſhipping off of the Kingdom of God, (that rich Cargo) from the *Jewiſh* Nation, to be ſent to a People that would bring forth more of the Fruits of it. Now obſerve here,

1. The *Way of teaching* that Chriſt us'd with the *Multitude*, v. 2. He *taught them many Things*, but it was *by Parables*, or Similitudes, which would *tempt them to hear*, for People love to be ſpoken to in their own Language, and careleſs Hearers will catch at a plain Compariſon, borrow'd from common Things, and will retain and repeat that, when they have *loſt*, and perhaps never *took* the Truth which it was deſign'd to explain and illuſtrate: But unleſs they would take Pains to ſearch into it, it would but amuſe them, *ſeeing they would ſee and not perceive*, v. 12. and ſo while it gratify'd their Curioſity, it was the Puniſhment of their Stupidity; they wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light, and therefore juſtly did Chriſt put it into the dark Lanthorn of a Parable, which had a *bright Side* towards thoſe who apply'd it to themſelves, and were willing to be guided by it; but to thoſe who were only *willing for a Seaſon to play with it*, it only gave a Flaſh of Light now and then, but ſent them away *in the dark*. It is juſt with God to ſay of thoſe that *will not ſee*, that they *ſhall not ſee*, and to hide from their Eyes, who only look about them with a great deal of careleſneſs, and never look before them with any concern upon the Things that belong to their Peace.

2. The Way of *expounding* that he us'd with his *Diſciples. When he was alone* by himſelf, not only the *twelve*, but others that were *about him with the twelve*, took the Opportunity to *aſk him* the Meaning of the Parables, *v.* 10. They found it good to be *about Chriſt*; the nearer him the better; good to be *with the twelve*, to be converſant with thoſe that are intimate with him: And he told them what a diſtinguiſhing Favour it was to them, that they were made acquainted with the *Myſtery of the Kingdom of God*, v. 11. *The Secret of the Lord was with them.* That *inſtructed* them which others were only *amuſed* with, and they were made to increaſe in Knowledge by every Parable, and underſtood more of the Way and Method in which Chriſt deſign'd to ſet up his Kingdom in the World, while others were diſmiſs'd never the wiſer. *Note*, Thoſe who know the *Myſtery* of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, muſt acknowledge that it is *given to them*; they receive both the Light and the Sight from Jeſus Chriſt, who, after his Reſurrection, both *open'd the Scriptures*, and *open'd the Underſtanding*, Luke 24. 27—45.

In particular, we have here,

1. The Parable of the Sower, as we had it, *Mat.* 13. 3, &c. He begins *v.* 3. with *Hearken*, and concludes, *v.* 9. with, *He that hath Ears to hear let him hear. Note*, The Words of Chriſt demand Attention, and thoſe who ſpeak from him may command it, and ſhould ſtir it up; even that which as yet we do not *throughly* underſtand, or not *rightly*, yet we muſt carefully attend to it, believing it to be both intelligible and weighty, that at length we may underſtand it; we ſhall find more in Chriſt's Sayings than at firſt there ſeem'd to be.

2. The Expoſition of it to the Diſciples. Here is a Queſtion Chriſt put to them before he expounded it, which he had not in *Matthew*, v. 13. *Know ye not this parable?* Know ye not the Meaning of it? *How then will ye know all Parables?* (1.) If ye know not this, which is ſo plain, how will you underſtand other Parables that will be more dark and obſcure? If you are gravell'd and run aground with this, which ſpeaks ſo plainly, the different Succeſs of the Word preached upon thoſe that hear it, which you your ſelves may ſee eaſily, how will you underſtand the Parables which hereafter will ſpeak of the Rejection of the *Jews*, and the Calling of the *Gentiles*, which is a Thing you have yet no Idea of? *Note*, This ſhould quicken us both to Prayer and Pains, that we may get Knowledge; that there are a great many Things we are concern'd to know, and if we underſtand not the plain Truth of the Goſpel, how ſhall we maſter thoſe that are more difficult? *Vita brevis, Ars longa. If we have run with the Footmen, and they have wearied us*, and run us down, then *how ſhall we contend with Horſes?* Jer. 12. 5. (2.) If you know not this which is intended for your Direction in hearing the Word, that ye may profit by it; how ſhall ye profit by what you are further to hear? This Parable is to teach you to be attentive to the Word, and affected with it, that you may *underſtand* it. If you receive not this, you'll not know how to uſe the Key by which you muſt be let into all the reſt. If we underſtand not the Rules we are to obſerve in Order to our profiting by the Word, how ſhall we profit by any other Rules? Obſerve, Before Chriſt expounds the Parable, (1.) He ſhews them how ſad their Caſe was who were not let into the Meaning of the Doctrine of Chriſt. *To you it is given, but not to them. Note*, It will help us to put a Value upon the Privileges we enjoy as Diſciples of Chriſt, to conſider the deplorable State of thoſe who want ſuch Privileges; eſpecially that they are out of the ordinary Way of Converſion, *leſt they ſhould be converted, and their Sins ſhould be forgiven them*, v. 12. Thoſe only who are *converted* have *their Sins forgiven them*: And it is the Miſery of *unconverted* Souls, that they lie under *unpardon'd* Guilt. (2.) He ſhews them what a Shame it was that they needed ſuch particular Explanations of the Word they heard, and did not apprehend it at firſt. Thoſe that would improve in Knowledge muſt be made ſenſible of their Ignorance.

Having thus prepar'd them for it, he gives them the Reddition of the Parable of the Sower, as we had it before in *Matthew.* Let us only obſerve here,

1. That in the great Field of the Church, the Word of God is diſpenced to all promiſcuouſly. *The Sower ſoweth the Word*, v. 14. ſows it at a venture, *beſide all Waters*, upon all ſorts of Ground, *Iſa.* 32. 20. not knowing where it will alight, or what Fruit it will bring forth. He *ſcatters* it in Order to the *increaſe* of it. Chriſt was a while *ſowing* himſelf, when he went about teaching and preaching; now he ſends his Miniſters, and ſows by their Hand: Miniſters are Sowers; they have need of the Skill and Diſcretion of the Husbandman, *Iſa* 28. 24,—26. They muſt not obſerve Winds and Clouds, *Eccleſ.* 11. 4, 6. and muſt look up to God, who *gives Seed to the Sower*, 2 Cor. 9. 10.

2. That of the many that hear the Word of the Goſpel, and read it, and are converſant with it, there are, comparatively, but few that receive it ſo as to bring forth the Fruits of it; here's but one in four that comes to good. 'Tis ſad to think, how much of the precious Seed of the Word of God is loſt, and *ſown in vain*; but there is a Day coming when *loſt Sermons* muſt be accounted for: Many that have heard Chriſt himſelf *preach in the Streets*, yet will hereafter be bidden to depart from him: thoſe therefore who place all their Religion in Hearing, as if that alone would ſave them, do but deceive themſelves, and build their Hope upon the Sand, *Jam.* 1. 22.

3. Many are much affected with the Word for the preſent, that yet receive no abiding Benefit by it. The Motions of Soul they have, anſwerable to what they hear, are but a meer Flaſh, like the crackling of Thorns under a Pot. We read of Hypocrites that *delight to know God's Ways*, Iſa. 58. 2. of *Herod*, that he heard *John* gladly, *Mark* 6. 20. and of others, that they *rejoyced in his Light*, John 5. 35. and of thoſe to whom *Ezekiel* was a *lovely Song*, Ezek. 32. 32. and thoſe repreſented here by the ſtony Ground, received the Word *with Gladneſs*, and yet came to nothing.

4. The Reaſon why the Word doth not leave commanding, abiding Impreſſions upon the Minds of People is, becauſe their Hearts are not duly diſpos'd and prepar'd to receive it: the Fault is in themſelves, not in the Word; ſome are careleſs forgetful Hearers, and theſe get *no good at all* by the Word; it comes in at one Ear, and goes out at t'other; others have their Convictions over-power'd by their Corruptions, and they loſe the good Impreſſions the Word has made upon them, ſo that they get no *abiding* Good by it.

5. The Devil is very buſy about looſe, careleſs Hearers; as the Fowls of the Air go about Seed that lies above Ground; when the Heart, like the *High-way*, is unplow'd, unhumbled, when it *lies common*, to be trodden on by every Paſſenger, as theirs that are great Company-Keepers, then the *Devil* is *like the Fowls*, he comes ſwiftly and carries away the Word e'er we are aware: When therefore theſe Fowls come down upon the Sacrifices, we ſhould take Care, as *Abram* did, to *drive them away*, Gen. 15. 11. that tho' we cannot keep them from hovering over our Heads, we may not let them neſtle in our Hearts.

6. Many that are not openly *ſcandaliz'd*, ſo as to throw off their Profeſſion, as they on the ſtony Ground did, yet have the Efficacy of it ſecretly *choaked* and *ſtifled*, ſo that it comes to nothing; they continue in a barren hypocritical Profeſſion, which brings nothing to paſs, and ſo go down as certainly, tho' more plauſibly, to Hell.

7. Impreſſion

7. Impreſſions that are not *deep*, will not be *durable*, but will wear off in ſuffering, trying Times; like Footſteps on the Sand of the Sea, which are gone the next high Tide of Perſecution; when *that* Iniquity doth abound, the Love of many to the Ways of God waxeth cold; many that keep their Profeſſion in fair Days, loſe it in a Storm; and do as thoſe that go to Sea only for Pleaſure, come back again when the Wind riſes. 'Tis the Ruin of Hypocrites that they *have no Root*; they do not act from a living fixed Principle; they do not mind *Heart-work*, and without that, Religion is nothing; for he is the Chriſtian that is *one inwardly*.

8. Many are hindred from profiting by the Word of God, by their Abundance of the World: Many a good Leſſon of Humility, Charity, Self-denial, and heavenly Mindedneſs is choak'd and loſt by that prevailing Complacency in the World, which they are apt to have on whom it ſmiles. Thus many Profeſſors, that otherwiſe might have come to ſomething, prove like *Pharaoh's lean Kine* and *thin Ears*.

9. Thoſe that are not encumber'd with the Cares of the World, and the deceitfulneſs of Riches, yet may loſe the Benefit of their Profeſſion by the *Luſts of other Things*; this is added here in *Mark*, *By the Deſires which are about other Things*; ſo Dr. *Hammond*: An inordinate Appetite towards thoſe Things that are pleaſing to Senſe, or to the Fancy. Thoſe that have but little of the World, may yet be ruin'd by an Indulgence of the Body.

10. Fruit is the Thing that God expects and requires from thoſe that enjoy the Goſpel: Fruit according to the *Seed*; a Temper of Mind and a Courſe of Life agreeable to the Goſpel; Chriſtian Graces daily exercis'd, Chriſtian Duties duly perform'd. This is *Fruit*, and it will abound to our Account.

Laſtly, No good Fruit is to be expected but from good Seed. If the Seed be ſown on *good Ground*; if the Heart be humble and holy and heavenly, there will be *good Fruit*, and it will *abound*; ſometime even to an *Hundred fold*, ſuch a Crop as *Iſaac* reap'd, *Gen.* 26. 12.

21 And he ſaid unto them, Is a Candle brought to be put under a buſhel, or under a bed, and not to be ſet on a candleſtick? 22 For there is nothing hid, which ſhall not be manifeſted: neither was any thing kept ſecret, but that it ſhould come abroad. 23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 24 And he ſaid unto them, Take heed what you hear: With what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you: And unto you that hear, ſhall more be given. 25 For he that hath, to him ſhall be given: and he that hath not, from him ſhall be taken even that which he hath. 26 And he ſaid, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man ſhould caſt ſeed into the ground, 27 And ſhould ſleep, and riſe night and day, and the ſeed ſhould ſpring and grow up, he knoweth not how. 28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of her ſelf, firſt the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. 29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the ſickle, becauſe the harveſt is come. 30 And he ſaid, Whereunto ſhall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what compariſon ſhall we compare it? 31 *It is* like a grain of muſtard ſeed, which, when it is ſown in the earth, is leſs than all the ſeeds that be in the earth. 32 But when it is ſown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and ſhooteth out great branches, ſo that the fowls of the air may lodge under the ſhadow of it. 33 And with many ſuch parables ſpake he the word unto them as they were able to hear *it*. 34 But without a parable ſpake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his diſciples.

The Leſſons which our Saviour deſigns to teach us here, by Parables and figurative Expreſſions, are theſe:

Firſt, That thoſe that *are good*, ought to conſider the Obligations they are under to *do good*; that is, as in the Parable before, to *bring forth Fruit*—God expects a grateful Return of his Gifts to us, and a uſeful Improvement of his Gifts in us; for *v.* 21. *Is a Candle brought* to be *put under a Buſhel, or under a Bed?* No, but that it may be *ſet on a Candleſtick*. The Apoſtles were ordain'd to receive the Goſpel, not for themſelves only, but for the good of others, to communicate it to them. All Chriſtians, as they have *received the Gifts*, muſt *miniſter the ſame*. *Note*, (1.) Gifts and Graces make a Man *as a Candle*; the *Candle of the Lord*, Prov. 20. 27 lighted by the Father of Lights; the moſt eminent are but Candles, poor Lights, compar'd with the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*. A Candle gives Light but a *little Way*, and but a *little while*, and is eaſily blown out, and continually burning down and waſting. (2) Many that are *lighted* as Candles, put themſelves *under a Bed*, or *under a Buſhel*: They do not *manifeſt* Grace themſelves, nor *miniſter* Grace to others: They have Eſtates, and do no good with them; have their Limbs and Senſes, Wit and Learning, perhaps, but no body is the better for them: They have ſpiritual Gifts, but do not uſe them; like a Taper in an Urn, they burn to themſelves. (3.) Thoſe who are lighted as Candles ſhould ſet themſelves *on a Candleſtick*; that is, ſhould improve all Opportunities of doing good, as thoſe that were made for the Glory of God, and the Service of the Communities they are Members of; we are not born for our ſelves.

And the Reaſon given for this, is, becauſe *there is nothing hid which ſhall not be manifeſted*, which *ſhould not* be made manifeſt, ſo it might better be read, *v* 22. There is no Treaſure of Gifts and Graces lodg'd in any but with deſign to be communicated; nor was the Goſpel made a *Secret* to the Apoſtles to be concealed, but that it ſhould *come abroad* and be divulg'd to all the World. Tho' Chriſt expounded the Parables to his Diſciples privately, yet it was with Deſign to make them the more publickly uſeful; they were *taught* that they might teach; and it is a general Rule, That *the Miniſtration of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal*, not himſelf only, but others alſo.

Secondly, It concerns thoſe that hear the Word of the Goſpel to *mark* what they hear, and to *make a good uſe of it*, becauſe their *Weal* or *Woe* depends upon it; what he had ſaid before he ſaith again, *If any Man hath Ears to hear, let him hear*, v. 23. Let him give the Goſpel of Chriſt a fair hearing; but that is not enough, 'tis added, v. 24. *Take heed what you hear*, and give a due Regard to that which you do hear — *Conſider what you hear*, ſo Dr. *Hammond* reads it. *Note*, What we hear doth us no good unleſs we conſider it; thoſe eſpecially that are to teach others, muſt themſelves be very obſervant of the Things of God; muſt take Notice of the Meſſage they are to deliver, that they may be exact. We muſt likewiſe *take heed what we hear*, by *proving* all Things, that we may *hold faſt that which is good*: We muſt be *cautious*, and ſtand upon our Guard, leſt we be impos'd upon. To enforce this Caution, conſider,

1. As we deal with God, God will deal with us. So Dr. *Hammond* explains theſe Words, *With what Meaſure you mete, it ſhall be meaſur'd to you*. If you be faithful Servants to him, he will be a faithful Maſter to you: *With the upright he will ſhew himſelf upright*.

2. As we improve the Talents we are intruſted with, we ſhall increaſe them; if we make uſe of the Knowledge we have for the Glory of God and the Benefit of others, it ſhall ſenſibly grow as Stock in Trade doth by being turn'd. *Unto you that hear, ſhall more be given; to you that have, it ſhall be given*, v. 25. If the Diſciples *deliver* that to the Church which they have *received of the Lord*, they ſhall be *led* more into the *Secret of the Lord*—Gifts and Graces multiply by being exercis'd; and God has promis'd to bleſs the *Hand of the diligent*.

3. If we do not *uſe*, we *loſe* what we have—*from him that has not*, that doth no good with what he has, and ſo has it in vain, is as if he had it not, *ſhall be taken even that he has*. Burying a Talent is the betraying of a Truſt, and amounts to a Forfeiture; and Gifts and Graces *ruſt* for want of *wearing*.

Thirdly, The good Seed of the Goſpel ſown in the World, and ſown in the Heart, doth by Degrees produce wonderful Effects, but without Noiſe, *v.* 26. &c. *So is the Kingdom of God*; ſo is the Goſpel, when it is ſown, and receiv'd a Seed in good Ground.

(1.) It will *come up*; tho' it ſeem loſt and bury'd under the Clods, it will find or make its way through them. The Seed *caſt into the Ground will ſpring*. Let but the Word of Chriſt have the place it ought to have in a Soul, and it will ſhew it ſelf, as the *Wiſdom from above* doth in a *good Converſation*. After a Field is ſown with Corn, how ſoon is the Surface of it alter'd, how gay and pleaſant doth it look when 'tis cover'd with Green?

(2.) The Husbandman cannot deſcribe how it comes up; 'tis one of the Myſteries of Nature; it *ſprings and grows up he knows not how*; v. 27. He ſees it has grown, but he cannot tell in what manner it grew, or what was the Cauſe and Method of its growth. Thus we know not how the Spirit by the Word makes a change in the Heart, no more than we can account for the blowing of the Wind, which we hear the ſound of, but cannot tell whence it comes, or whither it goes. Without Controverſie, great is the Myſtery of Godlineſs, how *God manifeſted in the Fleſh* came to be *believed on in the World*, 1 Tim. 3. 16.

(3.) The Husbandman, when he hath ſown the Seed, doth nothing towards the ſpringing of it up. *He ſleeps and riſes Night and Day*; goes to ſleep *at Night*, gets up *in the Morning*, and perhaps never ſo much as thinks of the Corn he hath ſown, or ever looks upon it, but follows his Pleaſures or other Buſineſs, and yet the *Earth brings forth fruit of it ſelf*, according to the ordinary Courſe of Nature, and by the concurring Power of the God of Nature. Thus the *Word of Grace*, when it is received in Faith, is in the Heart a *Work of Grace*, and the Preachers contribute nothing to it. The Spirit of God is carrying it on when *they ſleep*, and can do no Buſineſs, *Job* 3. 15, 16. or when *they riſe* to go about other Buſineſs. The Prophets do not *live for ever*, but the Word which they preached is doing its work, when they are in their Graves; *Zech* 1. 5, 6. The Dew by which the Seed is brought up *tarryeth not for Man, nor waiteth for the Sons of Men*, Mich. 5. 7.

(4.) It grows gradually, *firſt the blade, then the Ear, after that the full Corn in the Ear*, v. 28. when it is ſprung up it will go forward, Nature will have its courſe, and ſo will Grace; Chriſt's Intereſt both in the World, and in the Heart, is and will be a *growing*

Intereſt; and tho' *the beginning be ſmall, the latter end will greatly increaſe.* Tho' thou ſoweſt not that Body that ſhall be but *bare Grain*, yet God *will give to every Seed its own Body*; tho' at firſt it is but a tender Blade, which the Froſt may nip, or the Foot may cruſh, yet it will increaſe to *the Ear*, to the *full Corn in the Ear. Natura nil facit per ſaltum.* God carries on his Work inſenſibly and without noiſe, but inſuperably and without fail.

5. It comes to Perfection at laſt, *v.* 29. *When the Fruit is brought forth*, i. e. when it is *ripe*, and ready to be *delivered* into the Owner's Hand; then he *puts in the Sickle.* This intimates, (1.) That Chriſt *now accepts the Services* which are done to him by an honeſt Heart from a good Principle; from the Fruit of the Goſpel taking Place and working in the Soul: Chriſt *gathers in* a Harveſt of Honour to himſelf. See *John* 4. 35. (2.) That he will reward them in Eternal Life. When thoſe that receive the Goſpel aright, have finiſhed their Courſe, the Harveſt comes when they ſhall be gather'd, as *Wheat into God's Barn*, Mat. 13. 30. as a ſhock of Corn *in his Seaſon.*

Fourthly, The Work of Grace is ſmall in its beginning, but comes to be great and conſiderable at laſt, *v.* 30, 31, 32. *Whereunto ſhall I liken the Kingdom of God*, as now to be ſet up by the *Meſſiah*? How ſhall I make you to underſtand the deſigned Method of it? Chriſt ſpeaks as one conſidering, and conſulting with himſelf, how to illuſtrate it with an apt Similitude. *With what Compariſon ſhall we compare it*? Shall we fetch it from the Motions of the Sun, or the Revolutions of the Moon! No, the Compariſon is borrowed from this Earth, it is *like a Grain of Muſtard Seed*; he had compar'd it before to *Seed ſown*, here to *that Seed*, intending thereby to ſhew,

1. That the Beginnings of the *Goſpel Kingdom* would be very ſmall, like that which is *one of the leaſt of all Seeds.* When a Chriſtian Church was *ſown in the Earth* for God, it was all contain'd in one Room, and the *Number of the Names* was but 120, *Acts* 1. 15. as the Children of *Iſrael* when they went down into *Egypt* were but Seventy Souls. The Work of Grace in the Soul, is at firſt but the *Day of ſmall Things*; a *Cloud* no *bigger than a Man's Hand.* Never were there ſuch great Things undertaken by ſuch an inconſiderable handful, as that of the Diſcipling of the Nations by the Miniſtry of the Apoſtles; nor a Work that was to end in ſuch great Glory, as the Work of Grace, rais'd from ſuch weak and unlikely Beginnings. *Who hath begotten me theſe*?

2. That the Perfection of it will be very great. *When it grows up, it becomes greater than all Herbs.* The Goſpel Kingdom in the World ſhall increaſe, and ſpread to the remoteſt Nations of the Earth, and ſhall continue to the lateſt Ages of Time. The *Church* hath *ſhot out great Branches*, ſtrong ones, ſpreading far, and fruitful. The *Work of Grace* in the Soul hath mighty Products, now while it is in its growth: But what will it be when 'tis perfected in Heaven? The Difference between a *Grain of Muſtard Seed*, and a *great Tree*, is nothing to that between a *young Convert* on Earth, and a *glorified Saint* in Heaven. See *John* 12. 24.

After theſe Parables thus inſtanc'd in, the Hiſtorian concludes with this general Account of Chriſt's preaching, that *with many ſuch Parables he ſpake the Word unto them*, v. 33. probably deſigning to refer us to the larger Account of the Parables of this kind, which we had before, *Mat.* 13. He ſpake in Parables, *as they were able to bear them*; he fetch'd his Compariſons from thoſe Things that were familiar to them, and level to their Capacity, and deliver'd them in plain Expreſſions, in Condeſcenſion to their Capacity; tho' he did not let them into the *Myſtery* of the Parables, yet his manner of Expreſſion was eaſie, and ſuch as they might hereafter recollect to their Edification. But for the preſent *without a Parable ſpake he not unto them*, v. 34. The Glory of the Lord was cover'd with a Cloud, and God ſpeaks to us in the Language of the *Sons of Men*, that tho' not *at firſt*, yet *by Degrees*, we may underſtand his meaning; the Diſciples themſelves underſtood thoſe Sayings of Chriſt afterwards, which at firſt they did not rightly take the Senſe of. But theſe Parables he *expounded to them, when they were alone.* We cannot but wiſh we had had that Expoſition, as we had of the Parable of the Sower; but it was not ſo needful, becauſe when the Church ſhould be enlarg'd, that would *expound* theſe Parables to us without any more ado.

35 And the ſame day when the even was come, he ſaith unto them, Let us paſs over unto the other ſide. 36 And when they had ſent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ſhip, and there were alſo with him other little ſhips. 37 And there aroſe a great ſtorm of wind, and the waves beat into the ſhip, ſo that it was now full. 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ſhip, aſleep on a pillow: And they awake him, and ſay unto him, Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh? 39 And he aroſe, and rebuked the wind, and ſaid unto the Sea, Peace, be ſtill: And the wind ceaſed, and there was a great calm. 40 And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye ſo fearful? How is it that you have no faith? 41 And they feared exceedingly, and ſaid one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the Wind and the Sea obey him?

This Miracle which Chriſt wrought for the Relief of his Diſciples in ſtilling the Storm, we had before *Mat* 8. 23, &c. but 'tis here more fully related. Obſerve,

1. It *was the ſame Day* that he had preach'd out of a Ship, *when the even was come*, v. 35. When he had been *labouring in the Word and Doctrine* all Day, inſtead of *repoſing* himſelf, he *expoſeth* himſelf, to teach us not to think of a conſtant remaining Reſt, till we come to Heaven. The end of a Toil may perhaps be but the beginning of a Toſs. But obſerve, the Ship that Chriſt made his Pulpit, is taken under his ſpecial Protection, and tho' in danger, cannot ſink. What is us'd for Chriſt, he will take particular care of.

2. He himſelf propos'd putting to Sea at Night, becauſe he would loſe no Time. *Let us paſs over to the other ſide*, for we ſhall find in the next Chapter he has Work to do there. Chriſt went about doing Good, and no Difficulties in his way ſhould hinder him; thus induſtrious we ſhould be in ſerving him, and our Generation according to his Will.

3. They did not put to Sea till *they had ſent away the Multitude*, i. e. had given to each of them that which they came for, and anſwer'd all their Requeſts; for he ſent none home complaining, that they had attended him *in vain.* Or, they ſent them away *with a ſolemn Bleſſing*, for Chriſt came into the World not only to pronounce, but to *command*, and to *give* the Bleſſing.

4. They took him *even as he was*, i. e. in the ſame Dreſs that he was in when he preach'd, without any Cloak to throw over him, which he ought to have had to keep him *warm*, when he went to Sea at Night, eſpecially after Preaching. We muſt not from hence infer, that we may be careleſs of our Health, but we may learn hence not to be over-nice and ſollicitous about the Body.

5. The Storm was ſo great that the Ship was *full of Water*, v. 37. not by ſpringing a Leak, but perhaps partly with the Shower, for the Word here us'd ſignifies a *Tempeſt of Wind with Rain*, however, the Ship being little, the Waves beat into it, ſo that *it was full. Note*, It is no new Thing for that Ship to be greatly hurry'd and endanger'd, in which Chriſt and his Diſciples, Chriſt and his Name and Goſpel are embark'd.

6. There were *with him other little Ships*, who no doubt ſhar'd in the Diſtreſs and Danger. Probably thoſe *little Ships* carry'd thoſe, who were deſirous to go along with Chriſt, for the Benefit of his Preaching and Miracles on the other ſide. The *Multitude went away* when he put to Sea, but ſome there was that would venture upon the Water with him. Thoſe follow the Lamb aright, that follow him *where-ever he goes.* And thoſe that hope for a Happineſs in Chriſt, muſt be willing to take their Lot with him, and run the ſame Riſques that he runs. One may boldly and chearfully put to Sea in Chriſt's Company, yea, tho' we foreſee a Storm.

7. Chriſt was aſleep in this Storm, and here we are told, that it was *in the hinder part of the Ship*, the Pilot's place, he lay at the Helm, to intimate that, as Mr. *George Herbert* expreſſeth it,

When Winds and Waves aſſault my Keel,
He doth preſerve it, he doth ſteer,
Even when the Boat ſeems moſt to reel,
Storms are the Triumph of his Art;
Tho' he may cloſe his Eyes, yet not his Heart.

He had a *Pillow* there, ſuch a one as a Fiſherman's-ſhip would furniſh him with. And he *ſlept*, to try the Faith of his Diſciples, and to ſtir up Prayer: And upon the Trial their Faith appear'd *weak*, and their Prayers *ſtrong. Note*, Sometimes when the Church is in a Storm, Chriſt ſeems as if he were aſleep, unconcerned in the troubles of his People, and regardleſs of their Prayers, and doth not preſently appear for their Relief. *Verily he is a God that hideth himſelf*, Iſa. 45. 15. But as when he tarries, he doth not tarry, *Hab.* 2. 3. So when he ſleeps, he doth not ſleep; the Keeper of *Iſrael* doth not ſo much as ſlumber, *Pſalm* 121. 3, 4. he ſlept, but his Heart was awake, as the Spouſe, *Cant.* 5. 2.

8. His Diſciples encourag'd themſelves with their having his Preſence, and thought it the beſt way to improve that, and appeal to that, and ply the Oar of Prayer, rather than their other Oars. Their Confidence lay in this, that they had their Maſter with them; and the Ship that has Chriſt in it, tho' it may be *toſt*, it cannot *ſink*: the Buſh that has God in it, tho' it may *burn*, ſhall not *conſume. Cæſar* encourag'd the Maſter of the Ship that had him on Board with this, *Cæſarem vehis & Fortunam Cæſaris.* They *awoke Chriſt.* Had not the Neceſſity of the Caſe call'd for it, they would not have *ſtirred up* or *awoke* their Maſter *till he had pleas'd*, Cant. 2. 7. But they knew he would *forgive them this wrong.* When Chriſt ſeems as if he ſlept in a Storm, he is awaked by the Prayers of his People; when we know not what to do, our Eye muſt be to him, 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. at our Wit's end, but not at our Faith's end, while we have ſuch a Saviour to go to. Their Addreſs to Chriſt is here expreſs'd very emphatically, *Maſter, careſt thou not that we periſh?* I confeſs this ſounds ſomewhat harſh, rather like chiding him for ſleeping, than begging him to awake; I know no excuſe for it, but the great Familiarity which he was pleas'd to admit them into, and the Freedom he allow'd them; and the preſent Diſtreſs they were in, which put them into ſuch a Fright, that they knew not what they ſaid. They do Chriſt a deal of wrong, who ſuſpect him to be *careleſs* of his People in Diſtreſs. The Matter is not ſo! He is not willing that any ſhould periſh, much leſs any of his little ones, *Mat.* 18. 14.

9. The Word of Command with which Chriſt rebuked the Storm we have here, and had not in *Matthew*, v. 39. He ſays, *Peace, be ſtill*, σιώπα, πεφίμωσο, *be ſilent, be dumb.* Let not the Wind any longer roar, nor the Sea rage. Thus he *ſtills the Noiſe of the Sea, the Noiſe of her Waves*; a particular Emphaſis is laid upon the Noiſineſs of them, *Pſalm* 65. 7. and *Pſalm* 93. 3, 4. The Noiſe is threatning and terrifying, let us hear no more of it. This is, (1.) A Word of Command to us, when our wicked Hearts are *like the troubled Sea, which cannot reſt*, Iſa. 57. 20. When our Paſſions are up, and are unruly, think we hear the Law of Chriſt, ſaying, *be ſilent, be dumb.* Think not confuſedly, ſpeak not unadviſedly; but *be ſtill.* (2.) A Word of Comfort to us, that be the Storm of Trouble never ſo loud, never ſo ſtrong, Jeſus Chriſt can lay it with a Word's ſpeaking. When without are fightings, and within are fears, and the Spirits are in a tumult, Chriſt can *create the Fruit of the Lips Peace.* If he ſay, *Peace, be ſtill*, there is a *great Calm* preſently. 'Tis ſpoken of as God's Prerogative to command the Seas, *Iſa.* 57. 15. *Jer.* 31. 35. By this therefore Chriſt proves himſelf to be God. He that made the Seas can make them *quiet.*

10. The Reproof Chriſt gave them for their Fears, is here carry'd further than in *Matthew*; there it is, *Why are ye fearful?* Here, *Why are ye ſo fearful?* Tho' there may be cauſe for ſome fear, yet not for fear to ſuch a Degree as this. There it is, *O ye of little Faith*; here it is, *How is it that ye have no Faith?* Not that the Diſciples were without Faith. No: They believed that *Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God*, but at this Time their Fears prevailed ſo, that they ſeem'd to *have no Faith* at all. 'Twas out of the Way, when they had occaſion for it, and ſo it was, as if they had not had it. *How is it, that in this Matter ye have no Faith?* That you think I would not come in with ſeaſonable, and effectual Relief. Thoſe may ſuſpect their Faith, who can entertain ſuch a Thought as that Chriſt *careth not*, tho' his *People periſh*, and Chriſt juſtly takes it ill.

Laſtly, The Impreſſion this Miracle made upon the Diſciples is here differently expreſs'd. In *Matthew* 'tis ſaid, *the Man marvelled*; here 'tis ſaid, *They feared greatly.* They *feared a great fear*; ſo the Original reads it. Now their Fear was rectified by their Faith. When they feared the Winds and the Seas, it was for want of the Reverence they ought to have for Chriſt: But now they ſaw a Demonſtration of his Power over them, they feared *them* leſs and *him* more. They *feared* leſt they had offended Chriſt by their unbelieving Fears, and therefore ſtudy'd now to give him Honour. They had *feared* the Power and Wrath of their Creator in the Storm, and that Fear had Torment, and Amazement in it; but now they feared the Power and Grace of the Redeemer in the Calm, they *feared the Lord and his Goodneſs*, and it had Pleaſure and Satisfaction in it, and by it they gave Glory to Chriſt, as *Jonah*'s Mariners, who when the *Sea ceaſed from raging, feared the Lord exceedingly, and offer'd a Sacrifice unto the Lord*, Jon. 1. 16. This Sacrifice they offer'd to the Honour of Chriſt, they ſaid, *What manner of Man is this?* Surely more than a Man, *for even the Winds and the Seas obey him.*

CHAP. V.

In this Chapter, we have, (1.) *Chriſt's caſting the Legion of Devils out of the Man poſſeſs'd, and ſuffering them to enter into the Swine*, v. 1—20. (2.) *Chriſt's healing the Woman with the Bloody Iſſue in the way, as he was going to raiſe* Jairus*'s Daughter to Life*, v. 21—43. *Theſe three Miracles we had the Story of before*, Mat. 8. 28, *&c. and* Mat. 9. 18, *&c. but more fully related here.*

AND they came over unto the other ſide of the Sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when he was come out of the ſhip, immediately there met him out of the tombs, a man with an unclean ſpirit, 3 Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs, and no man could bind him, no not with chains: 4 Becauſe that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked aſunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: Neither could any man tame him. 5 And always night and day he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himſelf with ſtones. 6 But when he ſaw Jeſus afar off, he ran and worſhipped him, 7 And cryed with a loud voice, and ſaid, What have I to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of the moſt high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. 8 (For he ſaid unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean ſpirit.) 9 And he asked him, What *is* thy name? And he anſwered, ſaying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many. 10 And he beſought him much, that he would not ſend them away out of the country. 11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of ſwine feeding. 12 And all the devils beſought him, ſaying, Send us into the ſwine, that we may enter into them. 13 And forthwith Jeſus gave them leave. And the unclean ſpirits went out, and enter'd into the ſwine, and the herd ran violently down a ſteep place into the ſea (they were about two thouſand) and were choaked in the Sea. 14 And they that fed the ſwine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to ſee what it was that was done. 15 And they come to Jeſus, and ſee him that was poſſeſſed with the devil, and had the Legion, ſitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: And they were afraid. 16 And they that ſaw *it*, told them how it befel to him that was poſſeſſed with the devil, and alſo concerning the ſwine. 17 And they began to pray him to depart out of their coaſts. 18 And when he was come into the ſhip, he that had been poſſeſſed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. 19 Howbeit, Jeſus ſuffered him not, but ſaith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compaſſion on thee. 20 And he departed, and began to publiſh in Decapolis, how great things Jeſus had done for him: And all men did marvel.

We have here an Inſtance of Chriſt's diſpoſſeſſing the ſtrong Man armed, and diſpoſing of him as he pleaſed, to make it appear he was *ſtronger than he.* This he did when he was come *to the other ſide*, whither he went through a Storm, and his Buſineſs there was to reſcue this poor Creature out of the Hands of *Satan*, and when he had done that he returned. Thus he came from Heaven to Earth, and returned in a Storm to redeem a Remnant of Mankind out of the Hands of the Devil, tho' but a *little Remnant*, and did not think his Pains *ill beſtowed.*

In *Matthew* they were ſaid to be *two* poſſeſſed with Devils, here 'tis ſaid to be a *Man* poſſeſſed with an unclean Spirit. If there were *two* there was one, and *Mark* doth not ſay there was *but one*, ſo that this Difference cannot give us any juſt Offence; 'tis likely one of them was much more remarkable than the other, and ſaid what was ſaid. Now obſerve here,

1. The miſerable Condition that this poor Creature was in; he was under the Power of an *unclean Spirit*, the Devil got Poſſeſſion of him, and the Effect of it was not as in many a ſilent Melancholy, but a raging Frenzy; he was raving Mad; his Condition ſeems to have been worſe than any of thoſe that were poſſeſſed that were Chriſt's Patients.

1. He had *his dwelling among the Tombs*, among the Graves of dead People. Their Tombs were out of the Cities in *deſolate Places*, Job 3. 14. which gave the Devil great Advantage: For *woe to him that is alone.* Perhaps the Devil drove him to *the Tombs*, to make People fanſie that the Souls of the Dead were turn'd into Dæmons, and did what miſchief was done, ſo to excuſe themſelves from it. The Touch of a Grave was polluting, *Numb.* 19. 16. The *unclean Spirit* drives People into that Company that is *defiling*, and ſo keeps Poſſeſſion of them. Chriſt, by reſcuing Souls out of Satan's Power, ſaves *the living from among the dead.*

2. He was very ſtrong and ungovernable. *No Man could bind him*, as it is requiſite both for their Good, and for the Safety of others, that thoſe who are diſtracted ſhould be. Not only Cords would not hold him, but *Chains* and *Fetters of Iron* would not, *v.* 3, 4. The Caſe of ſuch is very deplorable, that *need to be* thus *bound*, and of all miſerable People in this World, they are moſt to be pitied; but his Caſe was worſt of all, in whom the Devil was ſo ſtrong that he could not be *bound.* This ſets forth the ſad Condition of thoſe Souls in which the Devil has Dominion; thoſe *Children of Diſobedience*, in whom that *unclean Spirit* works; ſome notoriouſly wilful Sinners are like this Mad-man; all are herein *like the Horſe and the Mule*, that they need to be *held in with Bit and Bridle*, but ſome are like the *wild Aſs*, that will not be ſo held. The Commands and Curſes of the Law are as *Chains* and *Fetters*, to reſtrain Sinners from their wicked Courſes, but they *break thoſe Bands in ſunder*; and it is an Evidence of the Power of the Devil in them.

3. He was a Terror and Torment to himſelf, and to all about him, *v.* 5. The Devil is a *cruel* Maſter to thoſe that are *led Captive* by him, a perfect Tyrant; this wretched Creature was *Night and Day in the Mountains, and in the Tombs, crying, and cutting himſelf with Stones*, either bemoaning his own deplorable Caſe, or in Rage and Indignation againſt Heaven. Men in Frenzies often wound and deſtroy themſelves; what is a Man when Reaſon is *dethron'd*, and Satan *enthron'd?* The Worſhippers of *Baal* in their Fury *cut themſelves*, like this Mad-man in his. The Voice of God is, *Do thy ſelf no harm*; the Voice of Satan is, *Do thy ſelf all the harm thou canſt*; yet God's Word is deſpiſed, and Satan's regarded. Perhaps his *cutting himſelf with Stones*, was only cutting his Feet with the ſharp Stones he ran bare-foot upon.

2. His Application to Chriſt, *v.* 6. *When he ſaw Jeſus afar off* coming a Shore, he *ran and worſhipped him.* He uſually *ran upon* others with *Rage*, but he *ran to* Chriſt with *Reverence.* That was done by an inviſible Hand of Chriſt, which could not be done with Chains and Fetters, his Fury was all on a ſudden curb'd : Even the Devil in this poor Creature was forced to tremble before Chriſt, and bow to him : Or rather the poor Man came and *worſhipped* Chriſt, in a Senſe of the need he had of his Help, the Power of Satan in and over him being for this inſtant ſuſpended.

3. The Word of Command Chriſt gave to the unclean Spirit to quit his Poſſeſſion, *v.* 8. *Come out of him, thou unclean Spirit.* He made the Man deſirous to be reliev'd, when he enabled him to *run and worſhip him*, and then put forth his Power for his Relief : If Chriſt *work in us* heartily to pray for a Deliverance from Satan, he will work for us that Deliverance. Here's an Inſtance of that Power and Authority with which Chriſt *commanded the unclean Spirits, and they obey'd him*, chap. 1. 27. He ſaid, *Come out of the Man.* The Deſign of Chriſt's Goſpel is to *expel* unclean Spirits out of the Souls of People ; *come out of the Man, thou unclean Spirit*, that the Holy Spirit may enter, may take Poſſeſſion of the Heart, and have Dominion in it.

4. The Dread which the Devil had of Chriſt. The *Man ran* and *worſhipped* Chriſt, but it was the Devil in the Man that *cried with a loud Voice* (making uſe of the poor Man's Tongue) *What have I to do with thee?* v. 7. juſt as that other unclean Spirit, *chap.* 1. 24. (1) He calls God the *moſt High God*, above all other Gods. By the Name *Elion*, the *moſt High*, God was *known* among the *Phœnicians*, and other the Nations that border'd upon *Iſrael*, and by that Name the Devil calls him. (2.) He owns *Jeſus* to be the *Son of God. Note*, It is no ſtrange thing to hear the beſt Words drop from the worſt Mouths. There is ſuch a way of ſaying this, as none can attain to, but by the *Holy Ghoſt*, 1 Cor. 12. 3. yet it may be ſaid after a ſort by the *unclean Spirit.* There's no judging of Men by their looſe Sayings, but by their Fruits ye ſhall know them. Piety from the Teeth outward, is an eaſie Thing. The moſt fair ſpoken Hypocrite, cannot ſay better than to call Jeſus the Son of God, and yet that the Devil did. (3.) He diſowns any Deſign againſt Chriſt, *what have I to do with thee?* I have no need of thee ; I pretend to none ; I deſire to have nothing to do with thee ; I *cannot ſtand* before thee, and *would not* fall. (4.) He deprecates his Wrath. I *adjure thee*, that is, I earneſtly beſeech thee, by all that's Sacred, I beg of thee for God's ſake, by whoſe Permiſſion I have got Poſſeſſion of this Man, that tho' thou drive me out hence, yet that thou *torment me not*, that thou do not reſtrain me from doing Miſchief ſomewhere elſe ; tho' I know I am *ſentenc'd*, yet let me not be *ſent* to the Chains of Darkneſs, or hinder'd from going to and fro to *devour.*

5. The Account Chriſt took from this unclean Spirit of his Name. This we had not in *Matthew.* Chriſt ask'd him, *what is thy Name?* not but that Chriſt could call all the fallen Stars, as well as the Morning-Stars, by their Names ; but he demands this, that the Standers by might be affected with the vaſt Numbers and Powers of thoſe malignant infernal Spirits ; as they had reaſon to be when the Anſwer was, *My Name is Legion, for we are many.* A *Legion* of Soldiers among the *Romans* conſiſted, ſome ſay, of ſix Thouſand Men, others of twelve Thouſand and five Hundred ; but the number of a Legion with them, no more than of a Regiment with us, was not always the ſame. Now this intimates, that the Devils, the infernal Powers, are (1.) *Military* Powers; a Legion is a number of Soldiers in Arms. The Devils war againſt God and his Glory, Chriſt and his Goſpel, Men and their Holineſs and Happineſs. They are ſuch as we are to *reſiſt*, and *wreſtle againſt*, Eph. 6. 12. (2.) That they are *numerous* he *owns*, or rather he *boaſts*, that *we are many*, as if he hoped to be *too many* for Chriſt himſelf to deal with. What Multitudes of Apoſtate Spirits were there, and all Enemies to God and Man, when here were a Legion poſted to keep Garriſon in one poor wretched Creature againſt Chriſt. Many there be that riſe up againſt us. (3.) That they are *unanimous* ; they are *many* Devils, and yet but *one Legion*, engaged in the ſame wicked Cauſe ; and therefore that Cavil of the *Phariſees*, which ſuppos'd Satan to caſt out Satan, and to be divided againſt himſelf, was altogether groundleſs. It was not *one* of this *Legion* that betrayed the reſt, for they all ſaid as one Man, *What have I to do with thee?* (4.) That they are very *powerful* ; who can ſtand before a *Legion?* We are not a Match for our ſpiritual Enemies in our own Strength ; but *in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might*, we ſhall be able to *ſtand againſt them*, tho' there are Legions of them. (5.) That there is *Order* among them, as there is in a *Legion* ; there are *Principalities and Powers, and Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World*, which ſuppoſeth there are thoſe of a lower Rank : The *Devil* and his Angels ; the *Dragon* and his ; the Prince of the Devils and his Subjects ; which makes thoſe Enemies the more formidable.

6. The Requeſt of this Legion, that Chriſt would ſuffer them to go into a Herd of Swine, that was *feeding nigh unto the Mountains*, v. 11. thoſe Mountains which the Demoniacks haunted, *v.* 5. Their Requeſt was, (1.) That he *would not ſend them away out of the Country*, v. 10. Not only that he would not *commit* them, or *confine* them to their infernal Priſon, and ſo *Torment them before their Time* ; but that he would not *baniſh* them *that Country*, as juſtly he might, becauſe in this poor Man they had been ſuch a Terror to it, and done ſo much Miſchief. They ſeem to have had a particular Affection for *that Country* ; or rather, a particular Spite to it ; and to have Liberty to *walk to and fro through* the reſt of *the Earth*, will not ſerve (*Job* 1. 7.) unleſs the *Range of theſe Mountains* be allow'd them for their Paſture, (*Job* 39. 8.) But why would they abide in *that Country? Grotius* ſaith, Becauſe in *that Country* there were many *Apoſtate Jews*, who had thrown themſelves out of the Covenant of God, and had thereby given *Satan* Power over them. And ſome ſuggeſt, that having by Experience got the Knowledge of the Diſpoſitions and Manners of the People of that Country, they could the more effectually do them Miſchief by their Temptations. (2.) That he would ſuffer them to *enter into the Swine* ; by deſtroying which they hoped to do more Miſchief to the Souls of all the People of the Country, than they could by entering into the Body of any particular Perſon, which therefore they did not ask leave to do, for they knew Chriſt would not grant it.

7. The Permiſſion Chriſt gave them to enter into the Swine, and their immediate Deſtruction thereby. *He gave them leave*, v. 13. he did not forbid or reſtrain them, but let them do as they had a mind. Thus he would let the *Gadarenes* ſee, what powerful ſpiteful Enemies Devils are, that they might thereby be induced to make him their Friend, who alone was able to controul and conquer them, and had made it appear he was ſo. Immediately the *unclean Spirits enter'd into the Swine*, which by the Law were unclean Creatures, and naturally love to *wallow in the Mire*, and therefore the fitteſt place for them. Thoſe that, like the Swine, delight in the *Mire* of ſenſual Luſts, are fit Habitations for *Satan*, and are like *Babylon*, the *Hold of every foul Spirit*, and a *Cage of every unclean and hateful Bird*, Rev. 18. 2. as pure Souls are Habitations of the Holy Spirit. The Conſequent of the Devils entering into the Swine was, that they all *ran mad* preſently, and run headlong into the adjoining Sea, where they were all drown'd, to the number of *Two thouſand.* The Man they poſſeſs'd did only *cut himſelf*, for God had ſaid, *He is in your Hands, only ſave his Life.* But thereby it appeared, that if he not been ſo reſtrain'd, the poor Man would have *drown'd himſelf.* See how much we are indebted to the Providence of God, and the Miniſtration of good Angels, for our Preſervation from malignant Spirits.

8. The Report of all this diſpers'd thro' the Country immediately. They that *fed the Swine*, haſten'd to the Owners to give an Account of their Charge, *v.* 14. This drew the People together to ſee what was done: And (1.) When they ſaw how wonderfully the poor Man was cur'd, they from thence conceiv'd a *Veneration for Chriſt*, v. 15. They ſaw him that was *poſſeſſed with the Devil*, and knew him well enough, by the ſame Token that they had many a Time been frighten'd at the ſight of him ; and were now as much ſurpriz'd to ſee him *ſitting clothed, and in his right Mind*: when Satan was caſt out he came to himſelf, and was his own Man preſently. *Note*, Thoſe who are grave and ſober, and live by Rule, and with Conſideration, thereby make it appear, that by the Power of Chriſt, the Devil's Power is broken in their Souls. The ſight of this *made them afraid*, i. e. it aſtoniſh'd them, and forc'd them to own the Power of Chriſt, and that he is *worthy to be feared.* But, (2.) When they found that their Swine were loſt, they thence conceiv'd a *Diſlike of Chriſt*, and wiſh'd to have rather his Room than his Company ; they pray'd him to *depart out of their Coaſts* ; for they think not any Good he can do them, ſufficient to make them amends for the loſs of ſo many Swine, fat Swine it may be, and ready for the Market. Now the Devils had what they would have, for by no handle do thoſe evil Spirits more effectually manage ſinful Souls, than by that of the Love of the World. They were afraid of ſome further Puniſhment, if Chriſt ſhould tarry among them, whereas if they would but part with their Sins, he had Life and Hapineſs for them ; but being loth to quit either their Sins or their Swine, they choſe rather to abandon their Saviour. Thus they do, who rather than let go a baſe Luſt, will throw away their Intereſt in Chriſt, and their Expectations from him. They ſhould rather have argued, if he has ſuch Power as this over Devils and all Creatures, 'tis good having him our Friend ; If the Devils have leave to tarry *in our Country*, (v. 10.) let us intreat him to tarry in it too, who alone can controul them. But inſtead of this, they wiſh'd him further off ; ſuch ſtrange Miſconſtructions do carnal Hearts make of the juſt Judgments of God ; inſtead of being by them driven to him, as they ought, they ſet him at ſo much a greater Diſtance ; tho' he hath ſaid, *Provoke me not, and I'll do ye no hurt*, Jer. 25. 6.

9. An Account of the Carriage of the poor Man that was deliver'd, after his Deliverance. (1.) He *deſir'd, that he might go along with Chriſt*, v. 18. perhaps for fear, leſt the evil Spirit ſhould again ſeize him, or rather, that he might receive Inſtruction from him, being unwilling to ſtay among thoſe *Heatheniſh* People that deſir'd him to depart. Thoſe that are freed from the evil Spirit, cannot but covet Acquaintance and Fellowſhip with Chriſt. (2.) Chriſt *would not ſuffer him* to go with him, leſt it ſhould ſavour of Oſtentation, and to let him know, that he could both protect and inſtruct him at a Diſtance. And beſides, he had other work for him to do, he muſt go home to his Friends, and tell them what *great Things the Lord had done for him*, the Lord Jeſus had done, that Chriſt might be honour'd, and his Neighbours and Friends might be edified, and invited to believe in Chriſt. He muſt take particular Notice, rather of Chriſt's Pity than of his Power, for that's it which eſpecially he glories in ; he muſt tell them what *Compaſſion* the Lord had had on him in his Miſery. (3.) The Man in a tranſport of Joy proclaimed it all the Country over, what *great Things Jeſus*

had done for him, v. 20. This is a Debt we owe both to Chriſt and to our Brethren, that he may be glorified, and they edified. And ſee what was the Effect of it, *all Men did marvel*, but few went any further. Many that cannot chuſe but wonder at the Work of Chriſt, yet do not as they ought *wonder after him*.

21 And when Jeſus was paſſed over again by ſhip unto the other ſide, much people gathered unto him, and he was nigh unto the Sea. 22 And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the Synagogue, Jairus by name, and when he ſaw him, he fell at his feet, 23 And beſought him greatly, ſaying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death, *I pray thee* come and lay thy hands on her, that ſhe may be healed, and ſhe ſhall live. 24 And *Jeſus* went with him, and much people followed him, and thronged him. 25 And a certain woman which had an iſſue of blood twelve years, 26 And had ſuffered many things of many Phyſicians, and had ſpent all that ſhe had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worſe, 27 When ſhe had heard of Jeſus, came in the preſs behind, and touched his garment. 28 For ſhe ſaid, If I may touch but his clothes, I ſhall be whole. 29 And ſtraightway the fountain of her blood was dried up: And ſhe felt in her body that ſhe was healed of that plague. 30 And Jeſus immediately knowing in himſelf, that virtue was gone out of him, turned him about in the preſs, and ſaid, Who touched my clothes? 31 And his diſciples ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt the multitude thronging thee, and ſayeſt thou, Who touched me? 32 And he looked round about, to ſee her that had done this thing. 33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34 And he ſaid unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

The *Gadarenes* having deſir'd Chriſt to leave their Country, he did not ſtay to trouble them long, but preſently went by Water, as he came, back *to the other ſide*, v. 21. and there *much People gather'd to him*. *Note*, If there be ſome that reject Chriſt, yet there are others that receive him, and bid him welcome. A deſpiſed Goſpel will *croſs the Water*, and go where it will have better Entertainment. Now among the many that applied themſelves to him,

1. Here's one that comes *openly* to *beg* a cure for a ſick Child; and 'tis no leſs a Perſon than one of the *Rulers of the Synagogue*, one that preſided in the Synagogue Worſhip, or as ſome think, one of the Judges of the Conſiſtory Court, which was in every City, conſiſting of *Twenty Three*. He was not nam'd in *Matthew*. He is here *Jairus*, or *Jair*, (*Judg*. 10. 3.) He addreſs'd himſelf to Chriſt, tho' a Ruler, with great Humility and Reverence; *when he ſaw him he fell at his* Feet, giving Honour to him as one really greater than he appear'd to be; and with great Importunity, he *beſought him greatly*, as one in earneſt, as one that not only valued the Mercy he came for, but that knew he could obtain it no where elſe. The Caſe is this, He has a *little Daughter* about Twelve Years old, the Darling of the Family, and ſhe *lies a dying*; but he believes if Chriſt will but come and *lay his Hands upon her*, ſhe will return even from the Gates of the Grave. He ſaid at firſt when he came, ſhe *lies a dying*, ſo *Mark*; but afterwards, upon freſh Information ſent him, he ſaith, *ſhe is even now dead*, ſo *Matthew*; but ſtill proſecutes his ſuit; ſee *Luke* 8. 42, 49. Chriſt readily agreed and went with him, *v*. 24.

2. Here's another that comes *clandeſtinely* to *ſteal* a Cure (if I may ſo ſay) for her ſelf, and ſhe got the Relief ſhe came for. This Cure was wrought by *the way*, as he was going to raiſe the Rulers Daughter, and was follow'd by a Crowd. See how Chriſt improv'd his Time, and loſt none of the precious Moments of it. Many of his Diſcourſes, and ſome of his Miracles, are dated *by the way-ſide*; we ſhould be doing Good, not only when we *ſit in the Houſe*, but when we *walk by the way*, Deut. 6. 7. Now obſerve,

1. The piteous Caſe of this poor Woman. She had a conſtant *Iſſue of Blood* upon her for *Twelve Years*, which had thrown her, no doubt, into great weakneſs, had embitter'd the Comfort of her Life, and threatned to be her Death in a little Time. She had had the beſt Advice of Phyſicians ſhe could get, and had made uſe of the many Medicines and Methods they preſcrib'd; as long as ſhe had any thing to give them, they had kept her in hopes they could cure her, but now ſhe had ſpent all ſhe had among them, they gave her up as incurable. See here, (1.) That Skin for Skin, and all that a Man has, will he give for Life and Health; ſhe ſpent all ſhe had upon Phyſicians. (2.) 'Tis ill with thoſe Patients, whoſe Phyſicians are their worſt Diſeaſe; that *ſuffer* by their Phyſicians, inſtead of being reliev'd by them. (3.) Thoſe that are not *better'd* by Medicines, commonly *grow worſe*, and the Diſeaſe gets the more ground. (4.) 'Tis uſual, that People do not apply themſelves to Chriſt, till they have try'd in vain all other Helpers; and find them, as certainly they will, *Phyſicians of no value*: And He will be found a *ſure Refuge*, even to thoſe who make him their *laſt Refuge*.

2. The ſtrong Faith that ſhe had in the Power of Chriſt to heal her; ſhe ſaid within her ſelf, tho' it doth not appear ſhe was encourag'd by any preceding Inſtance to ſay it, *If I may but touch his clothes, I ſhall be whole*, v. 28. She believ'd he cur'd not as a Prophet by Virtue *derived* from God, but as the Son of God by a Virtue *inherent* in himſelf. Her Caſe was ſuch, as ſhe could not in Modeſty tell him publickly, as others did, their Grievances, and therefore a private Cure was what ſhe wiſh'd for, and her Faith was ſuited to her Caſe.

3. The wonderful Effect produced by it. *She came in the* Crowd *behind* him, and with much ado got to *touch his Garment*, and immediately ſhe felt the Cure wrought, *v*. 29. The Flux of Blood was *dried up*, and ſhe felt herſelf perfectly well all over her, as well as ever ſhe was in her Life, in an Inſtant; by this it appears, that the Cure was altogether miraculous; for thoſe that in ſuch Caſes are cur'd by natural Means, recover their Strength ſlowly, and gradually, and not *per Saltum*, but *as for God his Work is perfect*. *Note*, Thoſe whom Chriſt heals of the Diſeaſe of Sin, that bloody Iſſue, cannot but Experience in themſelves an univerſal Change for the better.

4. Chriſt's Enquiry after his concealed Patient, and the Encouragement he gave her upon the Diſcovery of her. Chriſt *knew in himſelf that Virtue had gone out of him*, v. 30. He knew it not by any Deficiency of Spirits through the exhauſting of this Virtue, but rather by an Agility of Spirits in the exerting of it, and the innate and inſeparable Pleaſure he had in doing Good. And being deſirous to ſee his Patient, he ask'd not in Diſpleaſure as one affronted, but in Tenderneſs as one concern'd, *Who touched my Clothes?* The Diſciples, not without a Shew of Rudeneſs and Indecency, almoſt ridicul'd his Queſtion, *v*. 31. *The Multitudes throng thee, and ſayſt thou, Who touched me?* as if it had been an improper Queſtion. Chriſt paſs'd by the Affront, and *looks round* to *ſee her that had done this Thing*, not that he might *blame* her for her Preſumption, but that he might *commend* and *encourage* her Faith; and by his own Act and Deed might *warrant* and *confirm* the Cure; and *ratifie* to her, that which ſhe had *ſurreptitiouſly* obtain'd. He needed not that any ſhould inform him, for he had preſently his Eye upon her. *Note*, As ſecret Acts of Sin, ſo ſecret Acts of Faith are known to the Lord Jeſus, and are under his Eye. If Believers derive Virtue from Chriſt never ſo cloſely, he knows it, and is pleas'd with it. The poor Woman hereupon preſented her ſelf to the Lord Jeſus, *v*. 33. *fearing and trembling*, not knowing how he would take it. *Note*, Chriſt's Patients are often trembling, when they have reaſon to be triumphing. She might have come boldly, *knowing what was done in her*, yet *knowing that*, ſhe *fears* and *trembles*. It was a *ſurprize*, and was not yet, as it ſhould have been, a *pleaſing* Surprize. However, ſhe *fell down before him*. *Note*, There is nothing better for thoſe that fear and tremble, than to throw themſelves at the Feet of the Lord Jeſus; to humble themſelves before him, and refer themſelves to him. And ſhe *told him all the Truth*. *Note*, We muſt not be aſham'd to own the ſecret Tranſactions between Chriſt and our Souls, but when call'd to it, mention to his Praiſe, and others Encouragement, what he has done for our Souls, and the Experience we have had of *healing Virtue* derived from him. And the Conſideration of this, that nothing can be hid from Chriſt, ſhould engage us to confeſs all to him. And ſee what an encouraging Word he gave her, *v*. 34. *Daughter, thy Faith hath made thee whole*. *Note*, Chriſt puts Honour upon Faith, becauſe Faith gives Honour to Chriſt. But ſee how, *what is done by Faith* on Earth, is ratify'd in Heaven; Chriſt ſaith, *be whole of thy Diſeaſe*. *Note*, If our Faith ſets the Seal of its *Amen* to the Power and Promiſe of God, ſaying, ſo it is, and ſo let it be to me, God's Grace will ſet the Seal of its *Amen* to the Prayers and Hopes of Faith, ſaying, ſo be it, and ſo it ſhall be to thee. And therefore, *Go in Peace*; be well ſatisfied, that thy Cure is honeſtly come by, is effectually wrought, and take Comfort of it. *Note*, They that by Faith are heal'd of their ſpiritual Diſeaſes, have reaſon to *go in Peace*.

35 While he yet ſpake, there came from the Ruler of the Synagogue's *houſe*, *certain* which ſaid, Thy daughter is dead, why troubleſt thou the Maſter any further. 36 As ſoon as Jeſus heard the word that was ſpoken, he ſaith unto the Ruler of the Synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. 37 And he ſuffered no man to follow him, ſave Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. 38 And he cometh to the houſe of the Ruler of the Synagogue, and ſeeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. 39 And when he was come in, he ſaith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damſel is not dead, but ſleepeth. 40 And they laughed him to ſcorn: but when he had put them

all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damſel, and them that were with him, and entreth in where the damſel was lying. 41 And he took the damſel by the hand, and ſaid unto her, Talitha cumi, which is, being interpreted, Damſel (I ſay unto thee) ariſe. 42 And ſtraightway the damſel aroſe, and walked; for ſhe was *of the age* of twelve years: and they were aſtoniſhed with a great aſtoniſhment. 43 And he charg'd them ſtraitly, that no man ſhould know it: and commanded that ſomething ſhould be given her to eat.

Diſeaſes and Death came into the World by the Sin and Diſobedience of the firſt *Adam*; but by the Grace of the ſecond *Adam*, both are conquer'd; Chriſt having heal'd an incurable *Diſeaſe*, here goes on to triumph over *Death*, as in the beginning of the Chapter he had triumphed over an outragious *Devil*.

1. The melancholy News is brought to *Jairus* that his *Daughter is dead*, and therefore if Chriſt be as other Phyſicians, he comes too late; while there's Life there's Hope, and room for the Uſe of Means; but when Life is gone 'tis paſt recal, *Why troubleſt thou the Maſter any further?* v. 35. Ordinarily the proper Thought in this Caſe is, The Matter is determin'd, the Will of God is done, and I ſubmit, I acquieſce. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. While the Child was alive, I faſted and wept; for I ſaid, who can tell but God will yet be gracious to me*, and *the Child ſhall live*; but *now 'tis dead, wherefore ſhould I weep; I ſhall go to it, but it ſhall not return to me*: And with ſuch Words we ſhould *quiet our ſelves* at ſuch a Time, that our Souls may be *as a Child that is weaned from his Mother*: But here the Caſe was extraordinary; the Death of the Child doth not, as uſually, put an End to the Narrative.

2. Chriſt encourageth the afflicted Father yet to hope, that his Application to Chriſt on the behalf of this Child ſhould not be in vain. Chriſt had ſtay'd to work a Cure by the Way, but he ſhall be no ſufferer by that, nor loſer by others Gain. *Be not afraid, only believe.* We may ſuppoſe *Jairus* at a Pauſe whether he ſhould ask Chriſt to go on or no; but have we not as much occaſion for the Grace of God, and his Conſolations, and conſequently of the Prayers of our Miniſters and Chriſtian Friends when Death is in the Houſe, as when Sickneſs is, Chriſt therefore ſoon determines this Matter, *Be not afraid* that my coming will be to no Purpoſe, only believe that I'll make it turn to a good Account. *Note*, (1.) We muſt not deſpair concerning our Relations that are dead, nor *ſorrow* for them *as thoſe that have no hope.* See what is ſaid to *Rachel*, that *refuſed to be comforted concerning her Children*, upon Preſumption that they *were not*; *Refrain thy Voice from weeping, and thine Eyes from Tears, for there is hope in thine End that thy Children ſhall come again*, Jer. 31. 16, 17. Therefore fear not, faint not. (2.) Faith is the only Remedy againſt diſquieting Grief and Fear at ſuch a Time; Let that Silence them, *only believe.* Keep up a Confidence in Chriſt, and a Dependance upon him, and he will do what is for the beſt. Believe the Reſurrection, and then be not afraid.

3. He went with a ſelect Company to the Houſe where the dead Child was. He had by the Crowd that attended him, given Advantage to the poor Woman he laſt heal'd, and having done that, now he ſhook off the Crowd; and *ſuffered no Man to follow him*, to *follow him*, ſo the Word is, but his three boſom Diſciples, *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, a competent Number to be Witneſſes of the Miracle, but not ſuch a Number as that his taking them with him might look like vain Glory.

4. He rais'd the dead Child to Life; the Circumſtances of the Narrative here, are much the ſame as we had them in *Matthew*; only here we may obſerve,

1. That the Child was extreamly well beloved, for the Relations and Neighbours *wept and wailed greatly.* 'Tis very afflictive when that which is come forth like a Flower is ſo *ſoon cut down*, and withereth before it is grown up; when that grieves us of which we ſaid, *This ſame ſhall comfort us.*

2. That it was evident beyond Diſpute, that the Child was really and truly dead. Their *laughing* Chriſt to *ſcorn*, for ſaying, *She is not Dead, but ſleepeth*, tho' an ill thing, ſerves for the Proof of this.

3. That Chriſt put thoſe out as unworthy to be Witneſſes of the Miracle, who were noiſy in their Sorrow, and were ſo ignorant in the things of God, as not to underſtand him when he ſpoke of Death as a *Sleep*, or ſo ſcornful as to ridicule him for it.

4. That he took the Parents of the Child to be Witneſſes of the Miracle, becauſe in it he had an Eye to *their Faith*, and deſign'd it for their Comfort who were the *true*, for they were the *ſilent* Mourners.

5. That Chriſt rais'd the Child to Life by a Word of Power, which is recorded here, and recorded in *Syriac*, the Language in which Chriſt ſpoke, for the greater certainty of the Thing, *Talitha cumi, Damſel, I ſay unto thee, ariſe.* Dr. *Lightfoot* ſaith, it was cuſtomary with the *Jews*, when they gave Phyſick to one that was ſick, they ſaid, *Ariſe from thy Diſeaſe*, meaning, *we wiſh* thou may'ſt ariſe; but to one that was dead, Chriſt ſaid, *Ariſe from the dead*, meaning, *I command* that thou ariſe; nay, there is more in it, the Dead have not Power to ariſe, therefore Power goes along with this Word to make it effectual. *Da quod jubes, & jube quod vis.* Chriſt works while he commands, and works by the Command, and therefore may command what he pleaſeth, even the Dead to ariſe. Such is the Goſpel Call to thoſe that are by Nature dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins, and can no more riſe from that Death by their own Power, than this Child could; and yet that Word, *Awake, and ariſe from the dead*, is neither vain, nor in vain, when it follows immediately, *Chriſt ſhall give thee Life*, Epheſ. 5. 14. 'Tis by the Word of Chriſt that ſpiritual Life is given, *I ſaid unto thee, live*, Ezek. 16. 6.

6 That the Damſel, as ſoon as Life return'd, *aroſe and walked*, v. 42. Spiritual Life will appear by our *riſing* from the Bed of Sloth and Careleſneſs, and our *walking* in a religious Converſation; our walking *up and down* in Chriſt's Name and Strength; even from thoſe that are *of the Age of twelve Years*, it may be expected that they ſhould walk as thoſe whom Chriſt has *rais'd to Life*, otherwiſe than in the native *Vanity of their Minds.*

7. That all who ſaw it and heard of it admir'd the Miracle, and him that wrought it, *They were aſtoniſhed with a great Aſtoniſhment.* They could not but acknowledge that there was ſomething in it extraordinary and very great, and yet they knew not what to make of it, or infer from it. Their Wonder ſhould have work'd to a lively Faith, but it reſted in a *Stupor* or *Aſtoniſhment.*

8. That Chriſt endeavour'd to conceal it. *He charg'd them ſtraitly that no Man ſhould know it*: 'Twas ſufficiently known to a competent Number, but he would not have it as yet *proclaim'd* any further, becauſe his own Reſurrection was to be the great Inſtance of his Power over Death, and therefore the divulging of other Inſtances muſt be reſerv'd till that great Proof was given: Let one Part of the Evidence be kept private, till the other Part, on which the main Streſs lies, be made ready.

9. That Chriſt took Care ſomething ſhould be *given her to eat.* By this it appear'd that ſhe was rais'd not only to Life, but to a good State of Health, that ſhe had an Appetite to her Meat; even the new born Babes in Chriſt's Houſe deſire the ſincere Milk, 1 *Pet.* 2. 1, 2. And it is obſervable, that as Chriſt, when at firſt he had made Man, preſently provided Food for him, and Food out of the Earth of which he was made, *Gen.* 1. 29. So now when he had given a new Life, he took care that ſomething ſhould be given to eat; for if he have given *Life*, he may be truſted to give *Livelihood*, becauſe the *Life is more than Meat*, Mat. 6. 25. Where Chriſt hath given *Spiritual Life*, he will provide Food for the Support and Nouriſhment of it unto Life Eternal, for he will *never forſake*, or be wanting to the *Work of his own Hands.*

CHAP. VI.

A great Variety of obſervable Paſſages we have in this Chapter concerning our Lord Jeſus, the Subſtance of all which we had before in Matthew, *but divers Circumſtances we have, which we did not there meet with. Here's* (1.) *Chriſt contemned by his Countrymen, becauſe he was one of them, and they knew, or thought they knew his Original*, v. 1, — 6. (2.) *The juſt Power he gave his Apoſtles over unclean Spirits, and an Account given of their Negotiation*, v. 7, --- 13. (3.) *A ſtrange Notion which* Herod *and others had of Chriſt, upon which Occaſion, we have the Story of the Martyrdom of* John Baptiſt, v. 14, --- 29. (4.) *Chriſt's Retirement into a deſart Place with his Diſciples; the Crowds that follow'd him thither to receive Inſtruction from him, and his feeding five thouſand of them with five Loaves and two Fiſhes*, v. 30, --- 44. (5.) *Chriſt's walking upon the Sea to his Diſciples, and the abundance of Cures he wrought on the other Side the Water*, v. 45, --- 56.

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country, and his diſciples follow him. 2 And when the Sabbath-day was come, he began to teach in the Synagogue: and many hearing *him*, were aſtoniſhed, ſaying, From whence hath this man theſe things? and what wiſdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even ſuch mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the ſon of Mary, the brother of James and Joſes, and of Juda and Simon? And are not his ſiſters here with us? And they were offended at him. 4 But Jeſus ſaid unto them, A Prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own houſe. 5 And he could there do no mighty work, ſave that he laid his hands upon a few ſick folk, and healed *them.* 6 And he marvelled becauſe of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.

Here 1. Chriſt makes a Viſit to *his own Country*, the Place not of his Birth, but of his Education; that was *Nazareth*, where his Relations were. He had been in danger of his Life among them, *Luke* 4. 29. and yet he came among them again; ſo ſtrangely doth he wait to be gracious, and ſeek the Salvation of his Enemies; whither he went, tho' it was into danger, *his Diſciples followed him*, v. 1. for they had left all to follow him, whitherſoever he went.

2. There he *preach'd* in their *Synagogue* on the *Sabbath-Day*, v. 2. It ſeems there was no ſuch flocking to him there as in other Places, ſo that he had not Opportunity of preaching till they came together on the *Sabbath-Day*; and then he expounded a Portion of Scripture with great clearneſs. In religious Aſſemblies on Sabbath-Days, the Word of God is to be preach'd, according to Chriſt's Example. We *give Glory* to God by receiving Inſtruction from him.

3. They could not but own that which was very honourable concerning him. (1.) That he ſpoke with great *Wiſdom*, and that Wiſdom was *given to him*, for they knew he had no learned Education. (2.) That he did *mighty Works*, did them with his own Hands, for the confirming of the Doctrine he taught; they acknowledged the two great Proofs of the divine Original of his Goſpel, the *Divine Wiſdom* that appears in the Contrivance of it, and the *Divine Power* that was exerted for the ratifying and recommending of it; and yet, tho' they could not deny the Premiſes, they would not admit the Concluſion.

4. They ſtudy'd to diſparage him, and to raiſe Prejudices in the Minds of People againſt him notwithſtanding: All this *Wiſdom*, and all theſe *mighty Works*, ſhall be of no Account, becauſe he had had a Home-Education, had never travell'd, nor been at any Univerſity, or bred up at the Feet of any of their Doctors, *v.* 3. *Is not this the Carpenter?* In *Matthew* they upbraid him with being the Carpenter's Son, his ſuppoſed Father *Joſeph* being of that Trade: But it ſeems they could ſay further, *Is not this the Carpenter?* Our Lord Jeſus, 'tis probable, employing himſelf in that Buſineſs with his Father before he enter'd upon his publick Miniſtry, at leaſt ſometimes in Journey-Work. (1.) He would thus *humble himſelf*, and make himſelf of no Reputation, as one that had taken upon him the Form of a Servant, and came to miniſter. Thus low did our Redeemer ſtoop, when he came to redeem us out of our low Eſtate. (2.) He would thus teach us to *abhor Idleneſs*, and to find *our ſelves ſomething to do* in this World; and rather to take up with mean laborious Employments, and ſuch as no more is to be got by but a bare Livelihood, than indulge our ſelves in Sloth. Nothing is more pernicious for young People, than to get a *Habit of Sauntering*. The Jews had a good Rule for this, that their young Men who were deſign'd for Scholars, yet were bred up to ſome Trade, as *Paul* was a *Tent-maker*, that they might have ſome Buſineſs to fill up their Time with; and if need were, to get their Bread with. (3.) He would thus put an Honour upon deſpiſed Mechanicks, and encourage thoſe who eat the Labour of their Hands, tho' great Men look upon them with Contempt.

Another thing they upbraided him with was the Meanneſs of his Relations; He is *the Son of Mary*; his *Brethren* and *Siſters* are here *with us*; we know his Family and Kindred; and therefore tho' they were *aſtoniſhed* at his Doctrine, *v.* 2. yet they were *offended* at his Perſon, *v.* 2. were prejudiced againſt him; and look'd upon him with Contempt, and for that Reaſon would not receive his Doctrine, tho' never ſo well recommended. May we think that if they had not known his Pedigree, but he had dropt among them from the Clouds, without Father, without Mother, and without Deſcent, they would have entertain'd him with any more Reſpect? Truly, no; for in *Judea* where this was not known, that was made an Objection againſt him, *John* 9. 29. *As for this Fellow, we know not from whence he is.* Obſtinate Unbelief will never want Excuſes.

5. Let us ſee how Chriſt bore this Contempt.

1. He partly *excus'd it*, as a common Thing, and what might be expected, tho' not reaſonably or juſtly, *v.* 4. *A prophet is not deſpiſed any where but in his own Country.* Some Exceptions there may be to this Rule; doubtleſs many have got over this Prejudice, but ordinarily it holds good, That Miniſters are ſeldom ſo acceptable and ſucceſsful in their own Country as among Strangers; *Familiarity* in the younger Years breeds a Contempt, and the Advancement of one that was an inferior, begets *Envy*, and Men will hardly ſet thoſe among the Guides of their Soul, whoſe Fathers they were ready to ſet with the Dogs of their Flock; in ſuch a Caſe therefore it muſt not be thought hard; 'tis common Treatment, 'twas Chriſt's, and *Wiſdom is profitable to direct* to other Soil.

2. He did *ſome good* among them, notwithſtanding the Slights they put upon him, for he is kind even to the evil and unthankful; he *laid his Hands upon a few ſick Folks, and healed them. Note*, It is generous and becoming the Followers of Chriſt, to content themſelves with the Pleaſure and Satisfaction of doing good, tho' they be unjuſtly deny'd the Praiſe of it.

3. Yet he *could there do* no ſuch mighty Works, at leaſt not ſo many as in other Places, becauſe of the Unbelief that prevail'd among the People, by Reaſon of the Prejudices which their Leaders inſtill'd into them againſt Chriſt, *v.* 5. 'Tis a ſtrange Expreſſion, as if Unbelief ty'd the Hands of Omnipotence it ſelf: he *would have done* as many Miracles there as he had done elſewhere, but he could not, becauſe People would not make Application to him, nor ſue for his Favours; he could have wrought them, but they forfeited the Honour of having them wrought for them. *Note*, By Unbelief and Contempt of Chriſt, Men ſtop the Current of his Favours to them, and put a Bar in their own Door.

4. He *marvelled becauſe of their Unbelief*, v. 6. We never find Chriſt wondring but at the *Faith* of the *Gentiles* that were Strangers, as the Centurion, *Matt.* 8. 10. and the Woman of *Samaria*, and at the Unbelief of the *Jews* that were his own Countrymen. *Note*, The Unbelief of thoſe that enjoy the Means of Grace, is a moſt amazing Thing.

5. He *went round about the Villages teaching*. If we cannot do good where we would, we muſt do it where we can, and be glad if we may have any Opportunity, tho' but in the Villages, of ſerving Chriſt and Souls. Sometimes the Goſpel of Chriſt finds better Entertainment in the Country Villages, where there is leſs Wealth, and Pomp, and Mirth, and Subtilty, than in the populous Cities.

7 And he calleth unto him the twelve, and began to ſend them forth by two and two, and gave them power *over* unclean ſpirits. 8 And commanded them that they ſhould take nothing for *their* journey, ſave a ſtaff only: no ſcrip, no bread, no money in *their* purſe: 9 But *be* ſhod with ſandals, and not put on two coats. 10 And he ſaid unto them, In what place ſoever ye enter into an houſe, there abide till ye depart from that place. 11 And whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, ſhake off the duſt under your feet, for a teſtimony againſt them: Verily I ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. 12 And they went out, and preached that men ſhould repent. 13 And they caſt out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were ſick, and healed *them*.

Here's 1. The Commiſſion given to the twelve Apoſtles to go preach and work Miracles; 'Tis the ſame which we had more largely *Mat.* 10. *Mark* doth not name them here, as *Matthew* doth, becauſe he had nam'd them before, when they were firſt call'd into Fellowſhip with him, *Chap.* 3. 16. Hitherto they had been converſant with Chriſt, and had ſitten at his feet, had heard his Doctrine, and ſeen his Miracles; and now he determines to make ſome uſe of them; *they received* that *they* might *give*, had *learn'd* that they might *teach*; and therefore now he *began to ſend them forth*. They muſt not always be ſtudying in the Academy to get Knowledge, but they muſt go preach in the Country, to do good with the Knowledge they have got. Tho' they were not as yet ſo well accompliſh'd as they will be hereafter, yet according to their preſent Ability and Capacity they muſt be ſet to work, and make further Improvements afterwards. Now obſerve here,

1. That Chriſt ſent them forth *by two and two*; this *Mark* takes Notice of: They went two and two to a Place, that out of the Mouth of two Witneſſes every Word might be eſtabliſh'd; and that they might be Company for one another when they were among Strangers, and might ſtrengthen the Hands, and encourage the Hearts one of another; might help one another if any thing ſhould be amiſs, and keep one another in Countenance: Every common Soldier has his Comrade; and it's an approved Maxim, *Two is better than* One. Chriſt would thus teach his Miniſters to aſſociate, and both lend and borrow Help.

2. That he *gave them Power over unclean Spirits*: He commiſſion'd them to attack the Devil's Kingdom, and empower'd them, as a Specimen of their breaking his Intereſt in the Souls of Men by their Doctrine, to caſt him out of the Bodies of thoſe that were poſſeſs'd. Dr. *Lightfoot* ſuggeſts, That they cur'd Diſeaſes and caſt out Devils by the Spirit, but preach'd that only which they had learn'd from the Mouth of Chriſt.

3. That he *commanded them* not to take Proviſions along with them, neither *Victuals* nor *Money*, that they might appear where-ever they came, to be poor Men, Men not of this World, and therefore might with the better Grace call People off from it to another World: When afterwards he bid them *take Purſe and Scrip*, Luke 22. 36. that did not intimate (as Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves) that his Care of them was abated to what it had been; but that they ſhould meet with worſe Times and worſe Entertainment than they met with at their firſt Miſſion. In *Matthew* and *Luke* they are forbidden to *take Staves* with them, *i. e.* fighting Staves; but here in *Mark* they are bid to take nothing ſave a *Staff only*, i. e. a Walking-Staff; ſuch as Pilgrims carried — They muſt not put on *Shoes*, but *Sandals* only, which were only the Soles of Shoes ty'd under their Feet; or like Pumps or Slippers; they muſt go in the readieſt, plaineſt Dreſs they could, and muſt not ſo much as have *two Coats*; for their Stay abroad would be ſhort, they muſt return before Winter; and what they wanted, thoſe they preach'd to would cheerfully accommodate them with.

4. He directed *them* whatever City they came to, to make that Houſe their Head-Quarters, which happen'd to be their firſt Quarters, *v.* 10. *there abide till ye depart from that Place.* And ſince you know you come on an Errand ſufficient to make you welcome, have that Charity for your Friends that firſt invited you, as to believe they do not think you burthenſome.

5. He pronounceth a very heavy Doom upon thoſe that rejected the Goſpel they preached, *v.* 11. *Whoſoever ſhall not receive you*, or will not ſo much as *hear you, depart thence*, if one will not, another will, and *ſhake off the Duſt under your Feet for a Teſtimony againſt them.* Let them know that they have had a fair Offer of Life and Happineſs made them, witneſs that Duſt; but that ſince they have

refuſ'd

refuſed it, they cannot expect ever to have another; let them take up with their own Duſt, for ſo ſhall their Doom be. That Duſt like the Duſt of *Egypt*, *Exod.* 9. 9. ſhall turn into a Plague to them, and their Condemnation in the great Day will be more intolerable than *that of* Sodom; for the Angels were ſent to *Sodom*, and were abuſed there, yet that would not bring on ſo great a Guilt and ſo great a Ruin as the Contempt and Abuſe of the Apoſtles of Chriſt, that bring with them the Offers of Goſpel Grace.

2. The Apoſtles Actings in purſuance of their Commiſſion: Tho' they were conſcious to themſelves of great Weakneſs, and expected no ſecular Advantage by it, yet, in Obedience to their Maſter's Order, and in Dependance upon his Strength, they *went out*, as *Abraham*, not knowing whither they went. Obſerve here,

1. The Doctrine they preach'd; they preach'd *that Men ſhould repent*, v. 12. That they ſhould change their Minds and reform their Lives, in Conſideration of the near Approach of the Kingdom of the Meſſiah. *Note*, The great Deſign of Goſpel-Preachers, and the great Tendency of Goſpel-Preaching, ſhould be to bring People to Repentance, to a *new Heart*, and a *new Way*. They did not amuze People with curious Speculations, but told them they muſt repent of their Sins and turn to God.

2. The Miracles they wrought. The Power Chriſt gave them *over unclean Spirits*, was not ineffectual, nor did they receive it in vain, but us'd it, for they *caſt out many Devils*, v. 13. And they *anointed with Oil many that were ſick, and healed them*: Some think this Oil was us'd *medicinally*, according to the Cuſtom of the Jews: but I rather think it was us'd as a *Sign* of *miraculous* Healing, by the Appointment of Chriſt, tho' not mention'd; and it was afterwards us'd by thoſe *'Elders of the Church*, to whom *by the Spirit* was given the *Gift of Healing*, Jam. 5. 14. 'Tis certain here, and therefore probable there, that *Anointing the Sick with Oil*, is appropriated to that extraordinary Power which is long ceas'd, and therefore that *Sign* muſt ceaſe with it.

14 And king Herod heard *of him* (for his Name was ſpread abroad:) and he ſaid, That John the Baptiſt was riſen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do ſhew forth themſelves in him. 15 Others ſaid, That it is Elias. And others ſaid, That it is a Prophet, or as one of the Prophets. 16 But when Herod heard *thereof*, he ſaid, It is John, whom I beheaded, he is riſen from the dead. 17 For Herod himſelf had ſent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in priſon, for Herodias ſake, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. 18 For John had ſaid unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. 19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel againſt him, and would have killed him, but ſhe could not: 20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a juſt man, and an holy, and obſerved him: and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. 21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birth-day made a ſupper to his lords, high captains, and chief eſtates of Galilee: 22 And when the daughter of the ſaid Herodias came in, and danced, and pleaſed Herod, and them that ſate with him, the king ſaid unto the damſel, Ask of me whatſoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee. 23 And he ſwear unto her, Whatſoever thou ſhalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom. 24 And ſhe went forth, and ſaid unto her mother, What ſhall I ask? And ſhe ſaid, The head of John the Baptiſt. 25 And ſhe came in ſtraightway with haſte unto the king, and asked, ſaying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger, the head of John the Baptiſt. 26 And the king was exceeding ſorry, *yet* for his oaths ſake, and for their ſakes which ſate with him, he would not reject her. 27 And immediately the king ſent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the priſon; 28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damſel: and the damſel gave it to her mother. 29 And when his diſciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corps, and laid it in a tomb.

Here's, 1. The wild Notions that the People had concerning our Lord Jeſus, *v.* 15. His own Countrymen could believe nothing great concerning him, becauſe they knew his poor Kindred; but others that were not under the Power of that Prejudice againſt him, yet were willing to believe any Thing rather than the Truth, that he was the Son of God, and the true *Meſſias*: They ſaid, He is *Elias*, whom they expected, or, *He is a Prophet*, one of the Old Teſtament Prophets rais'd to Life, and return'd to this World: Or, *as one of the Prophets*, a Prophet now newly rais'd up equal to thoſe under the Old Teſtament.

2. The Opinion of *Herod* concerning him. He heard of his *Name* and *Fame*, of what he ſaid and what he did; and he ſaid, It is certainly *John Baptiſt*, v. 14. As ſure as we are here, *It is John whom I beheaded*, v. 16. He is *riſen from the Dead*; and tho' while he was with us *he did no Miracle*, yet having remov'd for a while to another World, he is come again with greater Power, and now *mighty Works do ſhew forth themſelves in him.*

Note (1.) Where there is an *idle Faith*, there is commonly a *working Fancy*. The People ſaid, it is a Prophet riſen from the Dead; *Herod* ſaid, It is *John Baptiſt riſen from the Dead*. It ſeems by this, that the *riſing of a Prophet from the Dead*, to do *mighty Works*, was a Thing expected, and was thought neither impoſſible nor improbable, and it was now readily ſuſpected when it was *not true*; but afterwards when *it was true* concerning Chriſt, and a Truth undeniably evidenc'd, yet then it was obſtinately gain-ſaid and deny'd. Thoſe who moſt wilfully diſbelieve the Truth, are commonly moſt credulous of Errors and Fancies.

(2.) They who fight againſt the Cauſe of God, will find themſelves baffled, even when they think themſelves Conquerors; they cannot gain their Point, for the Word of the Lord endures for ever. They who rejoyced when the Witneſſes were ſlain, fretted as much, when in three or four days they *roſe again* in their Succeſſors, *Rev.* 11. 10, 11. The impenitent unreformed Sinner, that eſcapeth the Sword of *Jehu*, ſhall *Eliſha* ſlay.

(3.) A guilty Conſcience needs no Accuſer or Tormentor but it ſelf. *Herod* charges himſelf with the Murther of *John*, which perhaps no one elſe durſt charge him with, *I beheaded him*; and the Terror of it made him imagine that Chriſt was *John* riſen: He fear'd *John* while he liv'd, and now when he thought he had got clear of him, fears him ten times worſe when he is dead: One had as good be haunted with Ghoſts and Furies, as with the Horror of an accuſing Conſcience; thoſe therefore who would keep an undiſturbed Peace, muſt keep an undefiled Conſcience, *Acts* 24. 16.

(4.) There may be the Terrors of ſtrong Conviction, where there is not the Truth of a ſaving Converſion. This *Herod*, that had this Notion concerning Chriſt, afterwards ſought to kill him, *Luke* 13. 31. and did ſet him at nought, *Luke* 13. 11. So that he will not be perſwaded, tho' it be *by one riſen from the dead*; no, not by a *John* the *Baptiſt* riſen from the Dead.

3. A Narrative of *Herod*'s putting *John Baptiſt* to Death, which is brought in upon this Occaſion, as it was in *Matthew*: And here we may obſerve,

1. The great Value and Veneration which *Herod* had ſometimes had for *John Baptiſt*, which is related only by this Evangeliſt, *v.* 20. Where we ſee what a great Way a Man may go towards Grace and Glory, and yet come ſhort of both, and periſh eternally.

(1.) He *feared John, knowing that he was a juſt Man and a holy.* It is poſſible that a Man may have a great Reverence for good Men, and eſpecially for good Miniſters; yea, and for that in them that is good, and yet himſelf be an ill Man. Obſerve (1.) *John* was a *juſt Man and a holy*; to make a compleat good Man, there is neceſſary both Juſtice and Holineſs; Holineſs towards God, and Juſtice towards Men. *John* was mortify'd to this World, and that's a good Friend both to Juſtice and Holineſs. (2.) *Herod* knew this, not only by common Fame, but by perſonal Acquaintance with him. Thoſe that have but little Juſtice and Holineſs themſelves, may yet diſcern it with reſpect in others. And (3.) He therefore *fear'd* him, he honour'd him. Holineſs and Juſtice command Veneration, and many that are not good themſelves, yet have Reſpect for thoſe that are.

(2) He *obſerv'd* him; he ſhelter'd him from the Malice of his Enemies; ſo ſome underſtand it: Or rather, he had a Regard to his exemplary Converſation, and took Notice of that in him that was Praiſe-worthy, and commended it in the Hearing of thoſe about him; he made it appear that he obſerv'd what *John* ſaid and did.

(3.) He *heard him preach*; which was great Condeſcenſion, conſidering how mean *John*'s Appearance was. To hear Chriſt himſelf preach in our Streets, will be but a poor Plea in the Great Day, *Luke* 13. 26.

(4.) He *did many of thoſe Things* which *John* in his preaching taught him. He was not only a *Hearer of the Word*, but in part a *Doer of the Work*. Some Sins which *John* in his preaching reprov'd, he forſook, and ſome Duties he bound himſelf to; but it will not ſuffice to do *many Things*, unleſs we have *reſpect to all* the Commandments.

(5.) He *heard him gladly*. He did not hear him with Terror, as *Felix* heard *Paul*, but heard him with Pleaſure. There is a flaſhy Joy, which an Hypocrite may have in hearing the Word; *Ezekiel* was to his Hearers a *lovely Song*; Ezek. 33. 32. and the *ſtony Ground received the Word with Joy*, Luke 8. 13.

2. *John*'s Faithfulneſs to *Herod*, in telling him of his Faults. *Herod* had marry'd his Brother *Philip's* Wife, *v.* 17. All the Country, no doubt, cry'd ſhame on him for it, and reproach'd him for it; but *John reprov'd* him, told him plainly, *It is not lawful for thee to have thy Brother's Wife.* This was *Herod*'s own Iniquity which he could not leave, when he did many Things that *John* taught him; and

therefore *John* tells him of this particularly. Tho' he were a King, he would not ſpare him, no more than *Elijah* did *Ahab* when he ſaid, *Haſt thou kill'd, and alſo taken Poſſeſſion?* Tho' *John* had an Intereſt in him, and he might fear this plain dealing would loſe him his Intereſt, yet he reprov'd him; for *faithful are the wounds of a Friend,* Prov. 27. 6. and tho' there are ſome Swine, that will *turn again and rend* thoſe that *caſt Pearls* before them, yet ordinarily, *he that rebuketh a Man* (if the Perſon reprov'd has any Thing of the Underſtanding of a Man) *afterwards ſhall find more Favour, than he that flattereth with his Tongue,* Prov. 28. 23. Tho' it was dangerous to offend *Herod*, and much more to offend *Herodias*, yet *John* would run the Hazard, rather than be wanting in his Duty. *Note,* Thoſe Miniſters that would be found faithful in the Work of God, muſt not be afraid of the Face of Man. If we ſeek to pleaſe Men, further than is for their ſpiritual Good, we are not the Servants of Chriſt.

3. The Malice which *Herodias* bore to *John* for this, *v.* 19. She *had a quarrel with him, and would have killed him*; but when ſhe could not obtain that, ſhe got him committed to Priſon, *v.* 17. *Herod* reſpected him, till he touch'd him in his *Herodias.* Many that pretend to honour prophecying, are for ſmooth Things only, and love good Preaching, if it keeps far enough from their beloved Sin; but if that be touch'd, they cannot bear it. No marvel if the World hate thoſe who teſtifie of it, that its Works are Evil. But Miniſters had better that Sinners ſhould perſecute them now for their Faithfulneſs, than curſe them eternally for their Unfaithfulneſs.

4. The Plot laid to take off *John*'s Head; and I am apt to think *Herod* was himſelf in the Plot, notwithſtanding his Pretences to be *diſpleas'd* and *ſurpriz'd,* and that the Thing was concerted between him and *Herodias*, for it is ſaid to be, *when a convenient Day was come,* v. 21. fit for ſuch a Purpoſe. (1.) There muſt be a Ball at Court upon the King's Birth-Day, and a Supper prepar'd for *his Lords, high Captains, and chief Eſtates of* Galilee. (2.) To grace the Solemnity, the Daughter of *Herodias* muſt *dance* publickly, and *Herod* muſt take on him to be wonderfully charm'd with her dancing: And if he be, they that *ſit with him* cannot but in Complement to him be ſo too. (3.) The King hereupon muſt make her an extravagant Promiſe, to give her *whatever ſhe would ask,* even to the *half of the Kingdom*; and yet that, if rightly underſtood, would not have reach'd the End deſign'd, for *John Baptiſt*'s Head was worth more than his *whole Kingdom.* This Promiſe is bound with an Oath, that no room might be left to fly off from it; *He ſware to her, whatſoever thou ſhalt ask, I will give.* I can ſcarce think, he would have made ſuch an unlimited Promiſe, but that he knew what ſhe would ask. (4.) She being inſtructed by *Herodias* her Mother, ask'd the *Head of John Baptiſt*; and ſhe muſt have it brought her *in a Charger,* as a pretty Thing for her to play with, *v.* 24, 25. And there muſt be no Delay, no Time loſt, ſhe muſt have it *by and by.* (5.) *Herod* granted it, and the Execution was done immediately, while the Company were together; which we can ſcarce think the King would have done, if he had not determin'd the Matter before. But he takes on him, (1.) To be very backward to it, and that he would not for all the World have done it, if he had not been ſurpriz'd into ſuch a Promiſe. The *King was exceeding ſorry*; that is, he ſeem'd to be ſo, he ſaid he was ſo, he look'd as if he had been ſo: But it was all Sham and Grimace, he was really pleas'd, that he had found a Pretence to get *John* out of the Way. *Qui neſcit diſſimulare neſcit regnare.* And yet he was not without Sorrow for it; he could not do it but with great Regret and Reluctancy; natural Conſcience will not ſuffer Men to ſin eaſily; the very Commiſſion of it is vexatious, what then will the Reflection upon it be? (2.) He takes on him to be very ſenſible of the *Obligation* of his Oath; whereas if the Damſel had ask'd but a fourth part of his Kingdom, I doubt not but he would have found out a way to evade his Oath. The Promiſe was raſhly made, and could not bind him to do an unrighteous Thing. Sinful Oaths muſt be *repented of,* and therefore not perform'd, for Repentance is the *undoing* of what we have done amiſs, as far as it is *in our Power.* When *Theodoſius* the Emperor was urg'd by a Suitor with a *Promiſe*; he anſwer'd, *I ſaid it,* but did not *promiſe* it, if it be unjuſt. If we may ſuppoſe, that *Herod* knew nothing of the Deſign when he made that raſh Promiſe, 'tis likely he was hurry'd into the doing of it by thoſe about him, only to carry on the Humour; for he did it *for their ſakes who ſate with him,* whoſe Company he was proud of, and therefore would do any Thing to gratifie them. Thus do Princes make themſelves Slaves to thoſe whoſe Reſpects they covet, and both *value* and *ſecure* themſelves by. None of *Herod*'s Subjects ſtood in more Awe of him, than he did of *his Lords, high Captains, and chief Eſtates.* The King ſent an *Executioner,* a *Soldier of his Guard.* Bloody Tyrants have Executioners ready to obey their moſt cruel and unrighteous Decrees. Thus *Saul* had a *Doeg* at hand, to *fall upon the Prieſts of the Lord,* when his own Footmen declin'd it.

5. The Effect of this is, (1.) That *Herod*'s wicked Court is *all in Triumphs,* becauſe this Prophet *tormented them*; the Head is made a Preſent of *to the Damſel,* and by her to her *Mother,* v. 28. (2.) That *John Baptiſt*'s ſacred College is *all in Tears*; the Diſciples of *John* little thought of this, but when they *heard of it,* they came and took up the neglected *Corps,* and *laid it in a Tomb*; where *Herod,* if he had pleas'd might have found it, when he frighten'd himſelf with the Fancy, that *John Baptiſt* was *riſen from the Dead.*

30 And the Apoſtles gathered themſelves together unto Jeſus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. 31 And he ſaid unto them, Come ye your ſelves apart into a deſert place, and reſt a while. For there were many coming and going, and they had no leiſure ſo much as to eat. 32 And they departed into a deſert place by ſhip privately. 33 And the people ſaw them departing, and many knew him, and ran a foot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. 34 And Jeſus, when he came out, ſaw much people, and was moved with compaſſion toward them, becauſe they were as ſheep not having a ſhepherd: and he began to teach them many things. 35 And when the day was now far ſpent, his diſciples came unto him, and ſaid, This is a deſert place, and now the time *is* far paſſed: 36 Send them away, that they may go into the countrey round about, and into the villages, and buy themſelves bread: for they have nothing to eat. 37 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they ſay unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred penny-worth of bread, and give them to eat? 38 He ſaith unto them, How many loaves have ye? Go and ſee. And when they knew, they ſay, Five, and two fiſhes. 39 And he commanded them to make all ſit down by companies upon the green graſs. 40 And they ſat down in ranks by hundreds, and by fifties. 41 And when he had taken the five loaves, and the two fiſhes, he looked up to heaven, and bleſſed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his diſciples to ſet before them, and the two fiſhes divided he among them all. 42 And they did all eat, and were filled. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fiſhes. 44 And they that did eat of the loaves, were about five thouſand men.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, The *Return* of the Apoſtles to Chriſt whom he had ſent forth, *v.* 7. to preach and work Miracles. They had diſpers'd themſelves into ſeveral Quarters of the Country for ſome time, but when they had made good their ſeveral Appointments, by conſent they *gather'd themſelves together* to compare Notes, and came to *Jeſus,* the Centre of their Unity, to give him an Account of what they had done purſuant to their Commiſſion, as the Servant that was ſent to invite to the Feaſt, and had received Anſwers from the Gueſts, came and *ſhewed his Lord all theſe things*; ſo did the Apoſtles here, they *told him all Things* both *what they had done, and what they had taught.* Miniſters are accountable both for what they *do,* and for what they *teach*; and muſt both watch over their own Souls, and watch for the Souls of others, as thoſe that muſt *give Account,* Heb. 13. 17. Let them not either *do* any Thing, or *teach* any Thing, but they are willing ſhould be related and repeated to the Lord Jeſus. It is a Comfort to faithful Miniſters, when they can appeal to Chriſt concerning their *Doctrine and Manner of Life,* both which perhaps have been miſrepreſented by Men; and he gives them leave to be free with him, and to lay open their Caſe before him, to *tell him all Things,* what Treatment they have met with, what Succeſs, and what Diſappointment.

Secondly, The *tender Care* Chriſt took for their *Repoſe,* after the Fatigue they had had, *v.* 31. *He ſaid unto them,* perceiving them to be almoſt ſpent, and out of breath, *Come ye your ſelves apart into a deſart place, and reſt a while.* It ſhould ſeem that *John*'s Diſciples came to Chriſt with the mournful Tidings of their Maſter's Death, much about the ſame Time that his own Diſciples came to him with the Report of their Negotiation. *Note,* Chriſt takes Cognizance of the *Frights* of ſome, and the *Toils* of others of his Diſciples, and provides ſuitable Relief for both, Reſt for thoſe that are tir'd, and Refuge for thoſe that are terrified. With what Kindneſs and Compaſſion doth Chriſt ſay to them, *come and reſt.* *Note,* The moſt active Servants of Chriſt cannot be always upon the ſtretch of Buſineſs, but have Bodies that require ſome Relaxation, ſome Breathing-time; we ſhall not be able to ſerve God without ceaſing, Day and Night, till we come to Heaven, where they *never reſt* from praiſing him, *Rev.* 4. 8. And the Lord is for the Body, conſiders its Frame, and not only *allows* it time to reſt, but puts it in mind of reſting. *Come, my People, enter thou into thy Chambers. Return to thy Reſt.* And thoſe that work diligently and faithfully, may chearfully retire to Reſt. *The Sleep of the labouring Man is ſweet.* But obſerve, (1.) Chriſt calls them to come *themſelves apart*; for if they had any Body with them, they would have ſomething to ſay, or ſomething to do for their Good; if they muſt *reſt,* they muſt be *alone.* (2.) He invites them not to ſome pleaſant Country Seat where there were fine Buildings, and fine Gardens, but *into a deſert place*, where the Accommodations were very poor, and which was fitted by Nature only, not by Art, for Quietneſs and Reſt. But it was of a piece with all the other Circumſtances he was in; no wonder that he who had but a Ship for his preaching Place, had but a Deſart for his reſting Place. (1.) He calls them only to reſt *a while*, they muſt not expect to reſt *long*, only to *get Breath*, and then go to work again. There is no *remaining Reſt* for the People of God, till they come to Heaven. (4.) The Reaſon given for this, is not ſo much, becauſe they had been in *conſtant Work*, but becauſe they now were in a *conſtant hurry*; ſo that they had not their Work in any Order, *for there were many coming and going, and they had no leiſure ſo much as to eat.* Let but proper Time be ſet and kept for every Thing, and a great deal of Work may be done with a great deal of eaſe; but if People are continually *coming and going*, and no Rule or Method be obſerv'd, a little Work will not be done without a deal of Trouble. (5.) They withdrew accordingly *by Ship*, not croſſing the Water, but making a coaſting Voyage to the Deſart of *Bethſaida*, v. 32. Going *by Water* was much leſs toilſome, than going *by Land* would have been. They went away *privately*, that they might be by themſelves. The moſt publick Perſons, cannot but wiſh to be *private* ſometimes.

Thirdly, The Diligence of the People to follow him. 'Twas rude to do ſo, when he and his Diſciples were deſirous for ſuch good Reaſon to *retire*, and yet they are not blam'd for it, nor bid to go back, but bid welcome: *Note*, A *failure* in *good Manners*, will eaſily be excus'd in thoſe who follow Chriſt, if it be but made up in a *Fulneſs* of *good Affections*. They follow'd him of their own Accord, without being call'd upon. Here's no Time ſet, no Meeting appointed, no Bell toll'd, yet they thus fly like a Cloud, and as the Doves to their Windows. They follow'd him *out of the Cities*, quitted their Houſes and Shops, their Callings and Affairs, to hear him preach. They followed him *afoot*, tho' he was gone by Sea; and ſo to try them, ſeem'd to put a ſlight upon them, and to endeavour to ſhake them off, yet they ſtuck to him. They *ran* afoot, and made ſuch haſte, as that they *out-went* the Diſciples, and *came together* to him, with an Appetite to the Word of God. Nay, they follow'd him, tho' it were into a *deſart place*, deſpicable, and inconvenient. The Preſence of Chriſt will turn a Wilderneſs into a Paradiſe.

Fourthly, The Entertainment Chriſt gave them, *v.* 34. *When he ſaw much People*, inſtead of being moved with Diſpleaſure, becauſe they diſturb'd him when he deſir'd to be private, as many a Man, many a good Man would have been, he was *moved with Compaſſion towards them*, and look'd upon them with Concern, and becauſe *they* were, *as Sheep having no Shepherd*, they ſeem'd to be well inclin'd, and manageable as Sheep, and willing to be taught, but they had *no Shepherd*; none to lead and guide them in the right way, none to feed them with good Doctrine: And therefore in Compaſſion to them, he not only *healed their ſick*, as 'tis in *Matthew*, but he *taught them many Things*, and we may be ſure they were all true and good, and fit for them to learn.

Fifthly, The Proviſion he made for them all; all his Hearers he generouſly made his Gueſts, and treated them at a *ſplendid* Entertainment: So it might truly be call'd, becauſe a *miraculous* one.

1. The Diſciples mov'd, that they ſhould be *ſent home*. When *the Day was now far ſpent*, and Night drew on, they ſaid, *This is a deſert Place*, and *much Time is now paſſed, ſend them away to buy Bread*, v. 35, 36. This the Diſciples ſuggeſted to Chriſt, but we do not find that the *Multitude* themſelves did. They did not ſay, *ſend us away*, no not tho' they could not but be hungry; for they *eſteemed the Words of Chriſt's Mouth, more than their neceſſary Food*, and forgat themſelves when they were hearing him; but the Diſciples thought it would be a Kindneſs to them to diſmiſs them. *Note*, Willing Minds will do more, and hold out longer in that which is Good, than one would expect from them.

2. Chriſt order'd that they ſhould all be fed, *v.* 37. *Give ye them to eat.* Tho' their crowding after him, and his Diſciples hinder'd them from eating, *v.* 31. yet he would not therefore, to be even with them, ſend them away Faſting; but to teach us to be Kind to thoſe who are Rude to us, he order'd Proviſion to be made for them; that Bread which Chriſt and his Diſciples took with them into the Deſart, that they might make a *quiet* Meal of it for themſelves, he will have them to partake of. Thus was he *given to Hoſpitality*. They attended on the ſpiritual Food of his Word, and then he took Care they ſhould not want corporal Food. The way of Duty, as it is the way of Safety, ſo it is the way to Supply. Let God alone to *fill the Pools* with Rain from Heaven, and ſo to *make* a Well even in the Valley of *Baca*, for thoſe that are going *Sion*-wards from Strength to Strength, *Pſalm* 84. 6, 7. Providence not *tempted*, but duly *truſted*, never yet fail'd any of God's faithful Servants, but has refreſh'd many with ſeaſonable and ſurprizing Relief. It has often been ſeen in the *Mount of the Lord*, *Jehovah Jireh*, that *the Lord will provide* for thoſe that wait on him.

3. The Diſciples objected againſt it as impracticable; *ſhall we go and buy two hundred penny-worth of Bread, and give them to eat?* Thus through the weakneſs of their Faith, inſtead of waiting for Directions from Chriſt, they perplex the Cauſe with Projects of their own. 'Twas a Queſtion, whether they had Two hundred Pence with them, and whether the Country would of a ſudden afford ſo much Bread if they had, and whether that would ſuffice ſo great a Company; but thus *Moſes* objected, *Numb.* 11. 22. *Shall the Flocks or Herds be ſlain for them?* Chriſt would let them ſee their Folly in fore-caſting for themſelves, that they might put the greater Value upon his Proviſion for them.

4. Chriſt effected it to univerſal Satisfaction. They had brought with them *Five Loaves*, for the Victualling of their Ship, and *Two Fiſhes*, perhaps they had caught as they came along, and that's the *Bill of Fare*. This was but little for Chriſt and his Diſciples, and yet this they muſt give away, as the Widow her *Two Mites*, and the Churches of *Macedonia's deep Poverty abounded to the Riches of their Liberality*. We often find Chriſt entertain'd at other Peoples Tables, dining with one Friend, and ſupping with another, but here we have him ſupping a great many at his own Charge, which ſhews, that when others *miniſter'd to him of their Subſtance*, it was not, becauſe he could not ſupply himſelf otherwiſe: If he were *Hungry* he needed not *tell them*, but it was a piece of Humiliation he was pleas'd to ſubmit to, nor was it agreeable to the Intention of Miracles, that he ſhould work them for himſelf. Obſerve,

1. The Proviſion was *ordinary*. Here were no Rarities, no Varieties, tho' Chriſt if he had pleaſed could have furniſh'd his Table with them: But thus he would teach us to be content with Food convenient for us, and *not to be deſirous of Dainties*. If we have for Neceſſity, 'tis no matter tho' we have not for Delicacy and Curioſity. God in love gives *Meat for our Hunger*, but in Wrath gives *Meat for our Luſts*, Pſal. 78. 18. The Promiſe to them that fear the Lord is, That verily they ſhall be fed; he doth not ſay they ſhall be feaſted. If Chriſt and his Diſciples took up with mean Things, ſure we may.

2. The Gueſts were *orderly*; for they *ſat down by Companies upon the green Graſs*, v. 39. they *ſat down in Ranks, by Hundreds and by Fifties*, v. 40. that the Proviſion might the more eaſily, and regularly be diſtributed among them; for God is the God of Order, and *not of Confuſion*. Thus Care was taken that every one ſhould have *enough*, and none be over-look'd, nor any have more than was fitting.

3. A Bleſſing was crav'd upon the Meat. *He look'd up to Heaven, and bleſſed.* Chriſt did not call one of his Diſciples to crave a Bleſſing, but did it himſelf, *v.* 41. And by virtue of this Bleſſing, the Bread ſtrangely *multiplied*, and ſo did the *Fiſhes*, for they did *all eat and were filled*, tho' they were to the Number of *Five Thouſand*, v. 42, 44. This Miracle was ſignificant, and ſhews that Chriſt came into the World to be the great Feeder, as well as the great Healer; not only to reſtore, but to preſerve and nouriſh ſpiritual Life; and in him there's enough for all that come to him, enough to fill the Soul, to fill the Treaſures; none are ſent empty away from Chriſt, but thoſe that come to him *full of themſelves*.

4. Care was taken of the Fragments that remained, with which they fill'd *Twelve Baskets*. Tho' Chriſt had Bread enough at Command, he would hereby teach us not to make waſte of any of God's good Creatures; remembring how many there are that do want, and that we know not, but we may ſome Time or other want ſuch Fragments as we throw away.

45 And ſtraightway he conſtrained his diſciples to get into the ſhip, and to go to the other ſide before unto Bethſaida, while he ſent away the people. 46 And when he had ſent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. 47 And when Even was come, the ſhip was in the midſt of the ſea, and he alone on the land. 48 And he ſaw them toyling in rowing, (for the wind was contrary unto them:) and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the ſea, and would have paſſed by them. 49 But when they ſaw him walking upon the ſea, they ſuppoſed it had been a ſpirit, and cried out, 50 (For they all ſaw him, and were troubled) and immediately he talked with them, and ſaith unto them, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. 51 And he went up unto them into the ſhip, and the wind ceaſed: and they were ſore amazed in themſelves beyond meaſure, and wondered. 52 For they conſidered not *the miracle* of the loaves: For their heart was hardened. 53 And when they had paſſed over, they came into the land of Geneſareth, and drew to the ſhore. 54 And when they were come out of the ſhip, ſtraightway they knew him, 55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds thoſe that were ſick, where they heard he was. 56 And whitherſoever he entred into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the ſick in the ſtreets, and beſought him that they might touch, if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him, were made whole.

The Paſſage or Story we had *Mat.* 14. 22, &c. only what was there related concerning *Peter* is omitted here. Here we have,

Firſt, The diſperſing of the Aſſembly. Chriſt *conſtrain'd his Diſciples* to go before *by Ship* to *Bethſaida*, intending to follow them, as they ſuppos'd *by Land*. The People were loth to ſcatter, ſo that it coſt him ſome time and Pains to *ſend them away*. Fow now they had got a good Supper, they were in no haſte to leave him. But as long as we are here in this World, we have no *continuing City*, no not in Communion with Chriſt. The Everlaſting Feaſt is reſerv'd for the future State.

Secondly, Chriſt departed *into a Mountain to pray*. Obſerve, (1.) He *pray'd*; tho' he had ſo much preaching Work upon his Hands, yet he was much in Prayer; he prayed often, and prayed long, which is an Encouragement to us to depend upon that Interceſſion, he is making for us at the right Hand of the Father, that *continual* Interceſſion. (2.) He went *alone* to pray; tho' he needed not to retire for the avoiding either of Diſtraction or of Oſtentation, yet to ſet us an Example, and to encourage us in our *ſecret* Addreſſes to God, he pray'd *alone*; and for want of a Cloſet, went up into a Mountain to pray. A good Man is never leſs alone, than when alone with God.

Thirdly, The Diſciples were in Diſtreſs at Sea; *the Wind was contrary*, v. 48. So that they *toil'd in rowing*, and could not get forward. This was a Specimen of the Hardſhips they were to expect, when hereafter he ſhould ſend them abroad to preach the Goſpel; 'twould be like ſending them to Sea at this Time with the *Wind in their Teeth*, they muſt expect to *toil in rowing*, they muſt work hard to ſtrive againſt ſo ſtrong a Stream; they muſt likewiſe expect to be *toſſed with Waves*, to be perſecuted by their Enemies, and by expoſing them now, he intended to train them up for ſuch Difficulties; that they might learn to *endure hardneſs*. The Church is often like a Ship at Sea, *toſſed with Tempeſts, and not comforted*, we may have Chriſt for us, and yet Wind and Tide againſt us; but it is a Comfort to Chriſt's Diſciples in a Storm, that their Maſter is in the heavenly Mount *interceeding* for them.

Fourthly, Chriſt made them a kind Viſit upon the Water. He could have check'd the Winds where he was, or have ſent an Angel to their Relief, but he choſe to help them in the moſt endearing manner poſſible, and therefore came to them himſelf.

1. He did not come 'till the *fourth Watch of the Night*, not 'till after *three a Clock* in the Morning; but then he came. *Note*, If Chriſt's viſits of his People be deferr'd long, yet at length he will come; and their Extremity is his Opportunity to appear for them ſo much the more ſeaſonably. Tho' the Salvation tarry, yet we muſt wait for it; *at the end it ſhall* ſpeak, in the fourth Watch of the Night, and not lye.

2. He came walking upon the Waters. The Sea was now toſſed with Waves, and yet Chriſt came walking upon it; for tho' the *Floods lifted up their Voice, the Lord on high is mightier*; Pſalm 93. 3, 4. No Difficulties can obſtruct Chriſt's gracious Appearances for his People, when the ſet Time is come. He will either *find* or force a way through the moſt tempeſtuous Sea for their Deliverance, *Pſal.* 42. 7, 8.

3. He *would have paſſed by them*; i. e. He ſet his Face, and ſteer'd his Courſe, as if he would have gone further, and took no notice of them; this he did to awaken them to call to him. *Note*, Providence, when 'tis acting deſignedly and directly for the Succour of God's People, yet ſometimes ſeems as if he were *giving them the Go-by*, and regarded not their Caſe. They thought *he would*, but we may be ſure he would not have *paſſed by them*.

4 They were frighten'd at the Sight of him, ſuppoſing him to have been an Apparition; *they all ſaw him and were troubled*, v. 50. thinking it had been ſome Dæmon, or evil Genius, that haunted them, and rais'd the Storm. We often perplex and frighten our ſelves with Phantaſms, the Creatures of our own fancy and imagination.

5. He encouraged them, and ſilenced their Fears by making himſelf known to them, *He talk'd* familiarly with them, ſaying, *Be of good chear, it is I, Be not afraid. Note*, 1. We know not Chriſt, 'till he is pleaſed to reveal himſelf to us. *It is I.* I your Maſter, I your Friend, I your Redeemer and Saviour. *It is I*, that came to a troubleſome Earth, and now to a tempeſtuous Sea, to look after you. 2. The Knowledge of Chriſt as he is in himſelf and near to us is enough to make the Diſciples of Chriſt chearful even in a Storm, and no longer fearful. *If it be ſo, why am I thus?* If 'tis Chriſt that is with thee, *Be of good chear, Be not afraid.* Our Fears are ſoon ſatisfy'd, if our Miſtakes be but rectified, eſpecially our Miſtakes concerning Chriſt. See *Gen.* 21. 19. 2 *Kings* 6. 15, 16, 17. Chriſt's Preſence with us in a ſtormy Day is enough to make us of good chear, tho' Clouds and Darkneſs be round about us. He ſaid; *It is I.* He doth not tell them who he was, that needed not, they knew his Voice, as the Sheep know the Voice of their own Shepherd, *John* 10. 4. How readily doth the Spouſe ſay once and again, *It is the Voice of my Beloved*, Cant. 2. 8. 5. 2. He ſaid ἐγώ εἰμι, *I am he*. Or, *I Am*; 'tis God's Name when he comes to deliver *Iſrael*, Exod. 3. 14. So 'tis Chriſt's, now he comes to deliver his Diſciples. When Chriſt ſaid to thoſe that came to apprehend him by force, *I am he*, they were ſtruck down by it, *John* 18. 6. When he ſaith to thoſe that come to apprehend him by Faith, I am he, they are rais'd up by it, and comforted.

6. He *went up to them into the Ship*, embark'd in the ſame Bottom with them, and ſo made them perfectly eaſie. Let them but have their Maſter with them, and all is well. And as ſoon as he was come into the Ship, *the Wind ceaſed.* In the former Storm that they were in, 'tis ſaid, *he aroſe and rebuked the Winds, and ſaid to the Sea, Peace, be ſtill*, Chap. 4. 39. but here we read of no ſuch formal Command given, only the Wind ceas'd all of a ſudden. *Note*, Our Lord Jeſus will be ſure to do his own Work always effectually, tho' not always alike ſolemnly, and with Obſervation. Tho' we hear not the Command given, yet if thus the Wind ceaſe, and we have the Comfort of a Calm, ſay, It is becauſe Chriſt is in the Ship, and his Decree is gone forth, *or ever we are aware*, Cant. 6. 12. When we come with Chriſt to Heaven, *the Wind ceaſeth* preſently; there are no Storms in the upper Region.

7. They were more ſurpriz'd and aſtoniſh'd at this Miracle than did become them, and there was that at the bottom of their Aſtoniſhment which was really culpable. *They were ſore amazed in themſelves*, were in a perfect *Extaſie*, as if 'twere a new and unaccountable Thing, as if Chriſt had never done the like before, and they had no Reaſon to expect he ſhould do it now; they ought to *admire* the Power of Chriſt, and to be confirm'd hereby in their Belief of his being the Son of God: But what needed all this *Confuſion* about it? It was, becauſe they *conſider'd not the Miracle of the Loaves*; had they given that its due Weight, they would not have been ſo much ſurpriz'd at this; for his multiplying the Bread was as great an Inſtance of his Power, as his *walking upon the Water.* They were ſtrangely ſtupid and unthinking, and *their Heart* was *harden'd*, or elſe they would not have thought it a Thing incredible, that Chriſt ſhould *command a Calm.* It is for want of a right Underſtanding of Chriſt's *former Works*, that we are tranſported at the thought of his preſent Works, as if there never were the like before.

Fifthly, When they came to the Land of *Geneſareth*, which lay between *Bethſaida* and *Capernaum*, the People bid them very welcome. *The Men of that Place* preſently *knew Jeſus*, v. 54. and knew what mighty Works he did where-ever he came, what an univerſal Healer he was; they *knew* likewiſe that he us'd to ſtay but a little while at a place, and therefore they were concern'd to improve the Opportunity of this kind Viſit he made them; *they ran through that whole Region round about*, with all poſſible Expedition, and *began to carry about in Beds thoſe that were ſick*, and not able to go themſelves, there was no danger of their getting cold when they hoped to get a Cure; *v.* 55. Let him go where he would he was crouded with Patients. In the *Towns*, in the *Cities*, in the *Villages* about the Cities, they *laid the Sick in the Streets* to be in his way, and begg'd leave for them to touch, if it were but *the border of his Garment*, as the Woman with the bloody Iſſue did, by whom it ſhould ſeem this Method of Application was firſt brought in, *and as many as touched were made whole.* We do not find that they were deſirous to be taught by him, only to be heal'd. If Miniſters could now cure People's bodily Diſeaſes, what Multitudes would attend them; but it is ſad to think, how much more concern'd the moſt of Men are about their Bodies, than about their Souls.

CHAP. VII.

In this Chapter; we have (1.) *Chriſt's diſpute with the* Scribes *and* Pharisees *about eating Meat with unwaſhen Hands*, v. 1,—13. *And the needful Inſtructions he gave to the People upon that Occaſion, and further explained to his Diſciples*, v. 14,—23. (2.) *His curing the Woman of* Canaan's *Daughter, that was poſſeſs'd*, v. 24.—30. (3.) *The Relief of a Man that was deaf, and had an Impediment in his Speech*, v. 31,—37.

THen came together unto him the Phariſees, and certain of the Scribes, which came from Jeruſalem. 2 And when they ſaw ſome of his diſciples eat bread with defiled (that is to ſay, with unwaſhen hands,) they found fault. 3 For the Phariſees and all the Jews, except they waſh *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the Elders. 4 And *when they come* from the market, except they waſh, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the waſhing of cups and pots, braſen veſſels, and of tables. 5 Then the Phariſees and Scribes asked him, Why walk not thy diſciples according to the tradition of the Elders, but eat bread with unwaſhen hands? 6 He anſwered and ſaid unto them, Well hath Eſaias propheſied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit, in vain do they worſhip me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. 8 For laying aſide the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the waſhing of pots and cups: and many other ſuch like things ye do. 9 And he ſaid unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moſes ſaid, Honour thy father and, thy mother: and whoſo curſeth father or mother, let him die the death. 11 But ye ſay, If a man ſhall ſay to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that

that is to ſay, a gift, by whatſoever thou mighteſt be profited by me: *he ſhall be free.* 12 And ye ſuffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother: 13 Making the word of God of none effect, through your tradition, which ye have deliver'd: And many ſuch like things do ye. 14 And when he had called all the people unto him, he ſaid unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and underſtand. 15 There is nothing from without a man, that entring into him, can defile him: but the things which come out of him, thoſe are they which defile the man. 16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 17 And when he was entred into the houſe from the people, his diſciples asked him concerning the parable. 18 And he ſaith unto them, Are ye ſo without underſtanding alſo? Do ye not perceive, that whatſoever thing from without entreth into the man, it cannot defile him, 19 Becauſe it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? 20 And he ſaid, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth a man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murthers, 22 Thefts, covetouſneſs, wickedneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, blaſphemy, pride, fooliſhneſs: 23 All theſe evil things come from within, and defile the man.

One great Deſign of Chriſt's coming, was to ſet aſide the Ceremonial Law, which God made, and to put an end to it, to make way for which he begins with the Ceremonial Law which Men had made, and added to the Law of God's making, and diſchargeth his Diſciples from the Obligation of that; which here he doth fully upon occaſion of the Offence, which the *Phariſees* took at them for the Violation of it. Theſe *Phariſees* and *Scribes* with whom he had this Argument are ſaid to *come from Jeruſalem*, down to *Galilee*, fourſcore or a hundred Miles to pick Quarrels with our Saviour there, where they ſuppos'd him to have the greateſt Intereſt and Reputation. Had they come ſo far to be taught by him, their Zeal had been commendable, but to come ſo far to oppoſe him, and to check the Progreſs of his Goſpel, was great wickedneſs. It ſhould ſeem that the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* at *Jeruſalem* pretended not only to a Preheminence above, but to an Authority over the Country Clergy, and therefore kept up their Viſitations, and ſent Inquiſitors among them; as they did to *John* when he appeared, *John* 1. 19.

Now in this Paſſage we may obſerve,

Firſt, What the Tradition of the Elders was; by it all were enjoin'd to *waſh their Hands* before Meat; a *cleanly* Cuſtom and no harm in it, and yet as ſuch to be over-nice in it, diſcovers too great a Care about the Body, which is *of the Earth*; but they plac'd Religion in it, and would not leave it *indifferent*, as it was in its own Nature; People were at their Liberty to do it, or not to do it; but they interpos'd their Authority, and commanded all to do it upon pain of Excommunication. This they kept up as a *Tradition of the Elders*: The *Papiſts* pretend a Zeal for the *Authority* and *Antiquity* of the Church and its Canons, and talk much of *Councils* and *Fathers*, when really it is nothing but a Zeal for their own Wealth, Intereſt and Dominion that governs them; and ſo it was with the *Phariſees*.

We have here an Account of the Practice of the *Phariſees*, and *all the Jews*, v. 3, 4. (1.) They *waſh'd their Hands oft*; they waſh'd them, πυγμῆ; the Criticks find a great deal of work about that Word, ſome making it to Note the frequency of their Waſhing, ſo we render it; others think it ſignifies the Pains they took in waſhing their Hands; they waſh'd with great Care, they waſh'd their Hands *to their wriſts*; ſo ſome; they lifted up their Hands when they were wet, that the Water might run *to their Elbows*. (2.) They particularly waſh'd before they *eat Bread*, i. e. before they ſate down to a ſolemn Meal; for that was the Rule; they muſt be ſure to waſh before they *eat the Bread* on which they begg'd a Bleſſing. *Whoſoever eats the Bread over which they recite the Benediction, Bleſſed be he that produceth Bread, muſt waſh his Hands before and after*, or elſe he was thought to be defil'd. (3.) They took ſpecial Care when they came in *from the Markets* to waſh their Hands; from the *Judgment Halls*, ſo ſome; it ſignifies any place of Concourſe, where there were People of all ſorts; and it might be ſuppos'd ſome *Heathen* or *Jews* under a Ceremonial Pollution, by coming near to whom they thought themſelves polluted; ſaying, *ſtand by thy ſelf, come not near me, I am holier than thou*, Iſa. 65. 5. They ſay the Rule of the *Rabbins* was, that if they waſh'd their Hands well in the Morning the firſt thing they did, that would ſerve for all Day, provided they kept alone; but if they went into Company, they muſt not at their Return either eat or pray, till they had *waſh'd their Hands*; thus the Elders *gain'd a Reputation* among the People for Sanctity, and thus they *exercis'd* and *kept up* an *Authority* over their Conſciences. (4.) They added to this, the waſhing of *Cups* and *Pots*, and *brazen Veſſels*, which they ſuſpected had been made uſe of by *Heathens*, or Perſons polluted; nay, and the very *Tables* on which they eat their Meat. There were many Caſes in which by the Law of *Moſes* Waſhings were appointed, but they *added* to them, and enforc'd the Obſervation of their own Impoſitions, as much as of God's Inſtitutions.

Secondly, What the Practice of Chriſt's Diſciples was; they knew what the Law was, and the common Uſage; but they underſtood themſelves ſo well, that they would not be bound up by it: They eat Bread with *defiled*, that is, with *unwaſhen Hands*, v. 2. Eating with *unwaſhen Hands*, they call'd eating with *defiled Hands*; thus Men keep up their ſuperſtitious Vanities, by putting every Thing into an ill Name, that contradicts them. The Diſciples knew ('tis probable) that the *Phariſees* had their Eyes upon them, and yet they would not humour them by a Compliance with their Traditions, but took their Liberty as at other Times, and eat Bread with *unwaſhen Hands*; and herein *their Righteouſneſs*, however it might ſeem to come ſhort, did really *exceed that of the* Scribes *and* Phariſees, *Matt.* 5. 20.

Thirdly, The Offence which the *Phariſees* took at this. They *found fault*, v. 2. they cenſur'd them as profane, and Men of a looſe Converſation, or rather as Men that would not *ſubmit to the Power of the Church*, to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and were therefore Rebellious, Factious, and Schiſmatical. They brought a complaint againſt them to their Maſter, expecting that he ſhould check them, and order them to conform, for they that are fond of their own Inventions and Impoſitions are commonly ready to appeal to Chriſt, as if he ſhould countenance them, and as if his Authority muſt interpoſe for the enforcing of them, and the rebuking of thoſe that do not comply with them. They do not ask, Why do not thy Diſciples *do as we do?* Tho' that was it they meant, coveting to make themſelves the Standard; but why do not they *walk according to the Tradition of the Elders?* v. 5. To which it was eaſie to anſwer, that by receiving the Doctrine of Chriſt, they had *more underſtanding than all their Teachers*, yea, *more than the Ancients*, Pſ. 119. 99, 100.

Fourthly, Chriſt's Vindication of them; in which,

1. He argues with the *Phariſees*, concerning the *Authority* by which the Ceremony was *impos'd*; and they were the fitteſt to be diſcours'd with concerning that, who were the great Sticklers for it: But this he did not ſpeak of *publickly* to the *Multitude* (as appears by his *calling the People* to him, *v.* 14.) leſt he ſhould have ſeem'd to ſtir them up to *Faction* and *Diſcontent* at their *Governours*, but addreſs'd it, as a Reproof to the Perſon concern'd, for the Rule is, *Suum cuique.*

(1.) He reproves them for their Hypocriſie in pretending to Honour God, when really they had no ſuch Deſign, in their religious Obſervances, *v.* 6, 7. *They honour me with their Lips*, they pretend it is for the Glory of God, that they impoſe thoſe Things, to diſtinguiſh themſelves from the *Heathen*, but really *their Heart is far from God*, and is govern'd by nothing but Ambition and Covetouſneſs. They would be thought hereby to appropriate themſelves, as a Holy People to the Lord their God, when really 'tis the *furtheſt Thing* in their Thought. They reſted in the *outſide* of all their Religious Exerciſes, and their Hearts were not right with God in them, and this was *worſhipping God in vain*, for neither was he pleas'd with ſuch Sham-Devotions, nor were they profited by them.

(2.) He reproves them for placing Religion in the Inventions and Injunctions of their Elders and Rulers. They *taught for Doctrines the Traditions of Men*; when they ſhould have been preſſing upon People the great Principles of Religion, they were inforcing the Canons of their Church, and judg'd of the Peoples being *Jews* or no, according as they did or did not conform to them, without any Conſideration had, whether they liv'd in Obedience to God's Laws or no. 'Twas true, there were *divers Waſhings* impos'd by the Law of *Moſes*, Heb. 9. 10. which were intended to ſignifie that inward Purification of the Heart from worldly fleſhly Luſts, which God requires as abſolutely neceſſary to our Communion with him; but inſtead of providing the Subſtance, they preſumptuouſly added to the Ceremony, and were very nice in *waſhing Pots and Cups*, and obſerve, he adds, *many other ſuch like Things ye do*, v. 8. *Note*, Superſtition is an endleſs Thing. If one human Invention and Inſtitution be admitted, tho' ſeemingly never ſo innocent, as this of waſhing of Hands, *Behold, a Troop comes*, a Door is open'd for *many other ſuch Things*.

(3.) He reproves them for *laying aſide the Commandment of God*, and over-looking that, not urging that in their Preaching, and in their Diſcipline conniving at the Violation of that, as if it were no longer of Force, *v.* 8. *Note*, It is the Miſchief of Impoſitions, that too often they who are Zealous for them, have little Zeal for the eſſential Duties of Religion, but can contentedly ſee them laid aſide. Nay, They *rejected the Commandment of God*, v. 9. *You do fairly diſanul and aboliſh the Commtndment of God*; and even *by your* Traditions *make the Word of God of none Effect*, v. 13. God's Statutes ſhall not only *lie forgotten*, as antiquated, obſolete Laws, but they ſhall in effect *ſtand repeal'd*, that their *Traditions* may take Place. They were intruſted to expound the Law, and to enforce it, and under pretence of uſing that Power they violated the Law, and diſſolv'd the Bonds of it; deſtroying the Text with the Comment.

This he gives them a particular Inſtance of, and a flagrant one: God commanded Children to *honour their Parents*, not only by the

Law of *Moſes*, but antecedent to that by the Law of Nature; and whoſo *reviletb*, or *ſpeaketh Evil* of Father or Mother, *let him die the Death*, v. 4. From whence it is eaſie to inferr, that it is the Duty of Children, if their Parents be poor, to *relieve* them according to their Ability; and if thoſe Children are worthy to die that Curſe their Parents, much more thoſe that Starve them. But if a Man will but conform himſelf in all Points to the Tradition of the Elders, they will find him out an Expedient by which he may be diſcharg'd from this Obligation, *v.* 11. If his Parents be in Want, and he has wherewithal to help them, but has no Mind to do it, let him Swear by the *Corban*, that is by the *Gold of the Temple*, and the *Gift upon the Altar*, that his Parents *ſhall not be profited* by him, that he will not relieve them; and if they ask any Thing of him, let him tell them this, and it is enough; as if by the Obligation of this wicked Vow, he had diſcharged himſelf from the Obligation of God's Holy Law, thus Dr. *Hammond* underſtands it: And it is ſaid to be an ancient Canon of the *Rabbins*, That *Vows take Place in Things commanded by the Law, as well as in Things indifferent*; ſo that if a Man makes a Vow which cannot be ratified without breaking a Commandment, the Vow muſt be ratified, and the Commandment violated; ſo Dr. *Whitby*. Such Doctrine as this the Papiſts teach, diſcharging Children from all Obligation to their Parents by their *Monaſtical Vows*, and their *entrance into Religion* as they call it: He concludes, and *many ſuch like Things do ye.* Where will Men ſtop when once they have made the Word of God give way to their Tradition? Theſe eager Impoſers of ſuch Ceremonies, at firſt only *made light* of God's Commandments *in Compariſon* with their Traditions, but afterwards *made void* God's Commandments, if they ſtood *in competition* with them. And all this in Effect *Iſaiah* propheſied of them; what he ſaid of the Hypocrites of his own Day was applicable to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, v. 6. *Note*, When we ſee and complain of the Wickedneſs of the preſent Times, yet we do not *enquire wiſely of that Matter*, if we ſay that all the *former Days* were *better* than theſe, *Eccleſ.* 7. 10. The worſt of Hypocrites and evil Doers have had their Predeceſſors.

2. He inſtructs the People concerning the Principles upon which this Ceremony was grounded: And it was requiſite that this Part of his Diſcourſe ſhould be publick, for it related to *daily Practice*, and was deſign'd to ratifie a great Miſtake which the People were led into by their Elders; he therefore *called the People unto him*, v. 14. and bid them *hear and underſtand. Note*, It is not enough for the common People to hear, but they muſt *underſtand* what they hear. When Chriſt would run down the Tradition of the Phariſees about waſhing before Meat, he ſtrikes at the Opinion which was the Root of it. *Note, Corrupt Cuſtoms* are beſt cur'd by rectifying *Corrupt Notions.*

Now that which he goes about to ſet them right in is, what the Pollution is, which we are in Danger of being damag'd by, *v.* 15. (1.) Not by the *Meat we eat*, tho' it be eaten *with unwaſhen Hands*, that's but *from without*, and goes through a Man. But (2.) 'Tis by the breaking out of the Corruption that is in our Hearts; the Mind and Conſcience is defiled, Guilt is contracted, and we become Odious in the Sight of God by that which *comes out* of us; our wicked Thoughts and Affections, Words and Actions, theſe defile us, and theſe only: Our Care muſt therefore be to *waſh our Hearts from Wickedneſs.*

3. He gives his Diſciples in private an Explication of the Inſtructions he gave the People. They *ask'd* him when they had him by himſelf *concerning the Parable*, v. 17. for to them it ſeems it was a Parable. Now in Anſwer to their Enquiry: (1.) He reproves their Dulneſs. *Are ye ſo without Underſtanding alſo?* Are you Dull *alſo?* As Dull as the People that *cannot* Underſtand, as Dull as the Phariſees that *will not?* Are ye *ſo* Dull? He doth not expect they ſhould underſtand every Thing, but are you ſo weak as not to underſtand *this?* (2.) He explains this Truth to them, that they might *perceive* it, and then they would *believe* it, for it carry'd its own Evidence along with it. Some Truths prove themſelves, if they be but rightly explained and apprehended. If we underſtand the Spiritual Nature of God, and of his Law, and what it is that is Offenſive to him, and diſfits us for Communion with him, we ſhall ſoon perceive, (1.) That that which we Eat and Drink *cannot defile* us ſo as to call for any *religious* Waſhing; it *goes into the Stomach*, and paſſeth the ſeveral Digeſtions and Secretions that Nature has appointed, and what there may be in it that is defiling, 'tis voided and gone; *Meats for the Belly, and the Belly for Meat*, but *God ſhall deſtroy both it and them.* But (2.) 'Tis that which *comes out from* the Heart, the corrupt-Heart, that defiles us: As by the Ceremonial Law, whatſoever (almoſt) comes out of a Man defiles him, *Lev.* 15. 2. *Deut.* 23. 13. So what comes out from the Mind of a Man is that which defiles him before God, and calls for a religious Waſhing, *v.* 21. *from within, out of the Heart of Men* which they boaſt of the *goodneſs* of, and think is the beſt Part of them; thence that which defiles doth proceed, thence comes all the Miſchief; as a corrupt Fountain ſends forth corrupt Streams, ſo doth a corrupt Heart ſend forth corrupt Reaſonings, corrupt Appetites and Paſſions, and all thoſe wicked Words and Actions which are produced by them. Divers Particulars are inſtanc'd in, as in *Matthew*, we had one there which is not here, and that's *falſe Witneſs bearing*; but here are *Seven* mention'd *here* to be added to thoſe we had *there*. (1.) *Covetouſneſſes*, for it is Plural: πλεονεξίαι, *immoderate Deſires* of more of the Wealth of the World, and the Gratifications of Senſe, and ſtill more, ſtill crying, give, give. Hence we read of a Heart *exercis'd with covetous Practices*, 2 Pet. 2. 14. (2.) *Wickedneſs*, πονηρίαι, Malice and Hatred, and Ill-Will, a Deſire to do Miſchief, and a Delight in Miſchief done. (3.) *Deceit*; which is Wickedneſs cover'd and diſguis'd, that it may be the more ſecurely and effectually committed. (4.) *Laſciviouſneſs*; that Filthineſs and fooliſh talking which the Apoſtle condemns: The Eye full of Adultery, and all wanton Dalliances. (5.) The *evil Eye*; i. e. the envious Eye, and the covetous Eye, grudging others the Good we give them, or do for them, *Prov.* 23. 6. or grieving at the good they do or enjoy (6.) *Pride*; ὑπερηφανία, exalting our ſelves in our own Conceit above others, and looking down with Scorn and Contempt upon others. (7.) *Fooliſhneſs*; ἀφροσύνη, Imprudence, Inconſideration; ſome underſtand it eſpecially of vain-glorious Boaſting, which St. *Paul* calls *Fooliſhneſs*, 2 Cor. 11. 1, 19. becauſe it is here join'd with *Pride*; I rather take it for that Raſhneſs in ſpeaking and acting, which is the Cauſe of ſo much Evil. *Ill thinking* is put firſt, as that which is the Spring of all our Commiſſions. And *unthinking* put laſt, as that which is the Spring of all our Omiſſions. Of all theſe he concludes, *v.* 23. (1.) That they *come from within*, from the corrupt Nature, the carnal Mind, the evil Treaſure in the Heart; juſtly is it ſaid, That the *inward Part is very Wickedneſs*, it muſt needs be ſo when all this comes from within. (2.) That they *defile the Man*, they render a Man unfit for Communion with God, they bring a Stain upon the Conſcience; and if not mortified and rooted out, will ſhut Men out of the *New Jeruſalem*, into which no *unclean Thing ſhall enter.*

24 And from thence he aroſe, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entred into an houſe, and would have no man know *it*, but he could not be hid: 25 For a certain woman whoſe young daughter had an unclean ſpirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet. 26 (The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation:) and ſhe beſought him that he would caſt forth the devil out of her daughter. 27 But Jeſus ſaid unto her, Let the children firſt be filled: for it is not meet to take the childrens bread, and to caſt *it* unto the dogs. 28 And ſhe anſwered, and ſaid unto him, Yes, Lord, yet the dogs under the table eat of the childrens crumbs. 29 And he ſaid unto her, For this ſaying, go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30 And when ſhe was come to her houſe, ſhe found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

See here, 1. How *humbly* Chriſt was pleas'd to *conceal himſelf.* Never Man was ſo cry'd up as he was in *Galilee*, and therefore to teach us, tho' not to decline any Opportunity of doing good, yet not to be fond of popular Applauſe, he aroſe from thence, and *went into the Borders* of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, where he was little known; and there he enter'd not into a Synagogue, or Place of Concourſe, but *into a* private *Houſe*, and he *would have no Man know it*, becauſe it was foretold concerning him, *he ſhall not ſtrive nor cry, neither ſhall his Voice be heard in the Streets.* Not but that he was willing to Preach and Heal here as well as in other Places, but for this he would be *ſought unto. Note*, As there is a Time to *appear*, ſo there is a Time to *retire*: Or he would not be known, becauſe he was upon the Borders of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, among Gentiles, to whom he would not be ſo forward to ſhew himſelf, as to the Tribes of *Iſrael*, whoſe Glory he was to be.

2. How *graciouſly* he was pleas'd to *manifeſt himſelf* notwithſtanding. Tho' he would not carry a Harveſt of miraculous Cures into thoſe Parts, yet it ſhould ſeem he came on Purpoſe to drop a Handful, to let fall this one which we have here an Account of. *He could not be hid*; for tho' a Candle may be put under a buſhel, the Sun cannot. Chriſt was too *well known* to be long *Incognito* any where; the Oyl of Gladneſs which he was anointed with, like the Oyntment of the right Hand, would betray it ſelf, and fill the Houſe with its Odour. Thoſe that had only heard his Fame could not Converſe with him, but they would ſoon ſay, This muſt be Jeſus. Now obſerve,

1. The Application made to him by a poor Woman in Diſtreſs and Trouble. She was a *Gentile*, a *Greek*, a *Stranger to the Common-Wealth of Iſrael, an Alien to the Covenant of Promiſe*; ſhe was by Extraction a *Syrophenician*, and not in any degree proſelyted to the *Jewiſh* Religion; ſhe had a *Daughter*, a young *Daughter* that was poſſeſs'd *with the Devil.* How many and grievous are the Calamities that young Children are ſubject to? Her Addreſs was, (1.) very *humble, preſſing* and *importunate*; *ſhe heard of him*, and *came and fell at his Feet. Note*, Thoſe that would obtain Mercy from Chriſt muſt throw themſelves *at his Feet*, i. e. muſt refer themſelves to him, humble themſelves before him, and give up themſelves to be rul'd by him. Chriſt never put any from him that *fell at his Feet*, which a poor trembling Soul may do that has not Boldneſs and Confidence to throw it ſelf into his Arms. (2.) It was very *particular*, ſhe tells him what ſhe wanted; Chriſt gave poor Supplicants leave to be thus free with him, ſhe beſought him that he would *caſt forth the Devil out of her Daughter*, v. 26. *Note*, The greateſt

Bleſſing we can ask of Chriſt for our Children, is, that he would break the Power of Satan, that is the Power of Sin in their Souls, and particularly, that he would caſt forth the *unclean Spirit*, that they may be Temples of the Holy Ghoſt, and he may dwell in them.

2. The Diſcouragement he gave to this Addreſs, *v.* 27. He ſaid unto her, *Let the Children firſt be fill'd*; Let the *Jews* have all the Miracles wrought for them that they have Occaſion for, who are in a particular manner God's choſen People, and let not that which was intended for them be thrown to thoſe who are not of God's Family, and who have not that Knowledge of him, and Intereſt in him which they have; and who are as *Dogs in Compariſon of them*, Vile and Profane, and who are as *Dogs to them*, ſnarling at them, ſpiteful towards them, and ready to worry them. *Note*, Where Chriſt knows the Faith of poor Supplicants to be ſtrong, he ſometimes delights to try it, and put it to the Stretch. But his ſaying, *Let the Children firſt be fill'd*, intimates that there was Mercy in reſerve for the *Gentiles*, and not far off; for the *Jews* began already to be ſurfeited with the Goſpel of Chriſt, and ſome of them had deſired him to *depart out of their Coaſts*. The Children begin to play with their Meat, and their Leavings, their Loathings would be a Feaſt for the *Gentiles*. The Apoſtles went by this Rule, *Let the Children firſt be fill'd*, let the *Jews* have the firſt Offer, and if their full Souls loth this Honey-comb, *Lo, we turn to the* Gentiles!

3. The turn ſhe gave to this Word of Chriſt which made againſt her, and her Improvement of it to make for her, *v.* 28. She ſaid, *yes Lord*, I own it is true that the *Children's Bread* ought not to be caſt to the Dogs, but they were never deny'd the *Crumbs* of that Bread; nay, it belongs to them, and they are allow'd a Place *under the Table*, that they may be ready to receive them; I ask not for a *Loaf*, no, nor for a *Morſel*, only for a *Crumb*, do not refuſe me that. This ſhe ſpeaks not as undervaluing the Mercy, or making light of it in it ſelf, but magnifying the abundance of miraculous Cures with which ſhe heard the *Jews* were feaſted, in Compariſon with which a ſingle Cure was but as a Crumb. *Gentiles* do not come in Crowds, as the *Jews* do; I come alone. Perhaps ſhe had heard of Chriſt's feeding five Thouſand lately at once, after which, even when they had gather'd up the Fragments, there could not but be ſome Crumbs left for the Dogs.

4. The Grant Chriſt thereupon made of her Requeſt, is, ſhe thus humble, thus earneſt, for *this Saying, go thy way*, thou ſhalt have what thou cameſt for, *the Devil is gone out of thy Daughter*, v. 29. This encourageth us to *Pray*, and not to *Faint*, to continue inſtant in Prayer, not doubting but to prevail at laſt; the Viſion at the end ſhall *ſpeak and not lye*. Chriſt's ſaying it *was done* did it effectually, as at other Times his ſaying, *Let it be done*; for v. 30. She *came to her Houſe* depending upon the Word of Chriſt that her Daughter was heal'd, and ſo ſhe *found it*, the *Devil was gone out*. *Note*, Chriſt can conquer Satan at a diſtance; and it was not only when the Dæmoniacks *ſaw him* that they yielded to his Power, as *Chap.* 3. 11. but when they ſaw him not, for the Spirit of the Lord is not *bound*, or *bounded*. She found her Daughter not in any Toſs or Agitation, but very quietly *laid on the Bed*, and repoſing her ſelf, waiting for her Mother's return to rejoice with her, that ſhe was ſo *finely well*.

31 And again departing from the coaſts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the ſea of Galilee, through the midſt of the coaſts of Decapolis. 32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his ſpeech, and they beſeech him to put his hand upon him. 33 And he took him aſide from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he ſpit, and touched his tongue. 34 And looking up to heaven, he ſighed, and ſaith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. 35 And ſtraightway his ears were opened, and the ſtring of his tongue was looſed, and he ſpake plain. 36 And he charged them that they ſhould tell no man: but the more he charged them, ſo much the more a great deal they publiſhed *it*, 37 And were beyond meaſure aſtoniſhed, ſaying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to ſpeak.

Our Lord Jeſus ſeldom ſtaid long in a Place, for he knew where his Work lay, and attended the changes of it. When he had cur'd the Woman of *Canaan*'s Daughter, he had done what he had to do in that Place, and therefore preſently left thoſe Parts, and return'd *to the Sea of Galilee*, whereabout his uſual Reſidence was; yet did not come directly thither, but fetch'd a compaſs *through the midſt of the Coaſts of Decapolis*, which lay moſtly on the other ſide *Jordan*; ſuch long Walks did our Lord Jeſus take, when he *went about doing Good*.

Now here we have the Story of a Cure that Chriſt wrought, which is not recorded by any other of the Evangeliſts; 'tis of one that was *Deaf* and *Dumb*.

1. His *Caſe* was *ſad*, v. 32. There were thoſe that brought to him one that was *Deaf*, ſome think born Deaf, and then he muſt be Dumb of courſe; others think, by ſome Diſtemper or Diſaſter he was become Deaf, or at leaſt thick of Hearing; and he had an *Impediment in his Speech*. He was μογιλάλος; ſome think he was quite Dumb, others that he could not ſpeak but with great Difficulty to himſelf, and ſo ſcarcely to be underſtood by thoſe that heard him: He was *Tongue-tied*, ſo that he was perfectly unfit for Converſation, and depriv'd both of the Pleaſure and of the Profit of it; he had not the Satisfaction either of hearing other People talk, or of telling his own Mind. Let us take Occaſion from hence to give Thanks to God, for preſerving to us the Senſe of Hearing, eſpecially that we may be capable of hearing the Word of God; and the Faculty of Speech, eſpecially that we may be capable of ſpeaking God's Praiſes; and let us look with Compaſſion upon thoſe that are Deaf or Dumb, and treat them with great Tenderneſs. They that brought this poor Man to Chriſt, beſought him that he would *put his Hand upon him*, as the Prophets did upon thoſe whom they *bleſſed* in the Name of the Lord. 'Tis not ſaid they beſought him to *Cure him*, but to *put his Hand upon him*, to take Cognizance of his Caſe, and put forth his Power to do to him as he pleaſed.

2. His *Cure* was *Solemn*, and ſome of the Circumſtances of it were ſingular.

1. Chriſt *took him aſide from the Multitude*, v. 33. Ordinarily he wrought his Miracles publickly before all the People, to ſhew that they would bear the ſtricteſt Scrutiny and Inſpection; but this he did privately, to ſhew that he did not *ſeek his own Glory*, and to teach us to avoid every Thing that ſavours of Oſtentation: Let us learn of Chriſt to be *humble*, and to do good where no Eye ſees, but his that is *all Eye*.

2. He us'd more ſignificant Actions in the doing of this Cure than uſual. (1.) He *put his Fingers into his Ears*, as if he would *Syringe* them, and fetch out that which ſtopped them up. (2.) He ſpit upon his own Finger, and then *touched his Tongue*, as if he would *moiſten* his Mouth, and ſo looſen that with which his *Tongue* was *ty'd*; theſe were no Cauſes that could in the leaſt contribute to his Cure, but only *Signs* of the exerting of that Power which Chriſt had in himſelf to Cure him, for the encouraging his Faith, and theirs that brought him. The Application was all from himſelf, it was his own *Fingers* that he put into his Ears, and his own *Spittle* that he put upon his *Tongue*; for he alone Heals.

3. *He look'd up to Heaven*, to give his Father the Praiſe of what he did; for he ſought his Praiſe, and did his Will, and as Mediator acted in Dependance on him, and with an Eye to him. Thus he ſignified that it was by a Divine Power, a Power he had as the Lord from Heaven, and brought with him thence, that he did this; for the *hearing Ear*, and the *ſeeing Eye* the *Lord has made*, and can remake, even *both of them*. He alſo hereby directed his Patient, who could *ſee*, tho' he could not *hear*, to look up *to Heaven* for Relief. *Moſes* with his ſtammering Tongue is directed to look that way, *Exod.* 4. 11. *Who hath made Man's Mouth? Or who maketh the Dumb or Deaf, or the Seeing, or the Blind? Have not I the Lord?*

4. He ſighed; not as if he found any Difficulty in working this Miracle, or obtaining Power to do it from his Father; but thus he expreſſeth his Pity of the Miſeries of Human Life, and his Sympathy with the Afflicted in their Afflictions, as one that was himſelf *touched with the feeling of their Infirmities*. And as to this Man, he *ſighed*, not becauſe he was loth to do him this Kindneſs, or did it with Reluctancy; but becauſe of the many Temptations which he would be expos'd to, and the Sins he would be in Danger of, the Tongue Sins, after the reſtoring of his Speech to him, which before he was free from. He had better be *Tongue-tied* ſtill, unleſs he have Grace to *keep his Tongue as with a Bridle*, Pſal. 39. 1.

5. He ſaid *Ephphatha*, that is, *Be opened*. This was nothing that look'd like *Spell*, or *Charm*, ſuch as they us'd that had *familiar Spirits*, who *peep'd and mutter'd*, Iſa. 8. 9. Chriſt ſpeaks as one having Authority, and Power went along with the Word. *Be open'd* ſerved both Parts of the Cure; let the *Ears* be *open'd*, let the *Lips* be *open'd*, let him hear and ſpeak freely, and let the Reſtraint be taken off, and the Effect was anſwerable, v. 35. *ſtraightway his Ears were open'd, and the ſtring of his Tongue looſed*, and all was well; and happy he, who, as ſoon as he had his Hearing and Speech, had the bleſſed Jeſus ſo near him to Converſe with.

Now this Cure was, (1.) A Proof of Chriſt's being the *Meſſiah*, for it was foretold that by his Power the *Ears of the Deaf ſhould be unſtopped*, and the *Tongue of the Dumb* ſhould be made to *Sing*, Iſa. 35. 5, 6. (2.) It was a Specimen of the Operations of his Goſpel upon the Minds of Men. The great Command of the Goſpel, and the Grace of Chriſt to poor Sinners, is *Ephphatha, Be open'd*. *Grotius* applies it thus, That the internal Impediments of the Mind are remov'd by the Spirit of Chriſt, as thoſe bodily Impediments were by the Word of his Power. He *opens the Heart*, as he did *Lydia's*, and thereby opens the Ear to receive the Word of God, and opens the Mouth in Prayer and Praiſes.

6. He order'd it to be kept very private, but it was made very publick. (1.) It was his Humility, that he *charged them they ſhould tell no Man*, v. 36. *Moſt Men will proclaim their own Goodneſs*, or at leaſt deſire that others ſhould proclaim it: but Chriſt, tho' he was himſelf in no danger of being puffed up with it; yet knowing that we are, would thus ſet us an Example of *Self-denial*, as in other things, ſo eſpecially in Praiſe and Applauſe. We ſhould take Pleaſure in doing good, but not in its being known. (2.) It was their Zeal, that tho' he charged them to ſay nothing of it, yet they *publiſhed it*, before Chriſt would have had it publiſhed: But they meant

Honeſtly, and therefore it is to be reckon'd rather an Act of Indiſcretion, than an Act of Diſobedience, *v.* 37. But they that told it, and they that heard it, were *beyond Meaſure aſtoniſh'd*, ὑπερπερισσῶς, *more than above Meaſure*; they were exceedingly affected with it, and this was ſaid by every body, 'twas the common Verdict, *He has done all Things well*, v. 37. whereas there were thoſe that hated and perſecuted him as an *Evil-doer*; they are ready to witneſs for him, not only that he has *done no Evil*, but that he has done a great deal of *Good*, and has done it *well*, modeſtly and humbly, and very devoutly, and all *gratis*, *without Money and without Price*, which added much to the Luſtre of his *good Works*. He *maketh both the Deaf to hear, and the Dumb to ſpeak*, and that's *well*, 'tis well for them, 'tis well for their Relations, to whom they had been a Burthen; and therefore they are inexcuſable who ſpeak Ill of him.

CHAP. VIII.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *Chriſt's miraculous Feeding four thouſand with ſeven Loaves and a few ſmall Fiſhes*, v. 1—9. (2.) *His refuſing to give the Phariſees a Sign from Heaven*, v. 10—13. (3.) *His cautioning his Diſciples to take heed of the Leaven of Phariſaiſm and Herodianiſm*, v. 14—21. (4.) *His giving Sight to a blind Man at Bethſaida*, v. 22—26. (5.) *Peter's Confeſſion of him*, v. 27—30. (6.) *The Notice he gave his Diſciples of his own approaching Sufferings*, v. 31—33. *and the Warning he gave them to prepare for Sufferings likewiſe*, v. 34—38.

IN thoſe days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jeſus called his diſciples unto him, and ſaith unto them, 2 I have compaſſion on the multitude, becauſe they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: 3 And if I ſend them away faſting to their own houſes, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. 4 And his diſciples anſwered him, From whence can a man ſatisfie theſe men with bread here in the wilderneſs? 5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they ſaid, Seven. 6 And he commanded the people to ſit down on the ground: and he took the ſeven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his diſciples to ſet before *them:* and they did ſet *them* before the people: 7 And they had a few ſmall fiſhes: and he bleſſed, and commanded to ſet them alſo before *them.* 8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left, ſeven baskets. 9 And they that had eaten were about four thouſand, and he ſent them away.

We had the Story of a Miracle very like this before in this Goſpel, *Chap.* 6. 35. and of this ſame Miracle, *Mat.* 15. 32. and here is little or no Addition, or Alteration, as to the Circumſtances. Yet obſerve,

1. That our Lord Jeſus was mightily followed. *The Multitude was very great*, v. 1. notwithſtanding the wicked Arts of the Scribes and Phariſees to blemiſh him, and to blaſt his Intereſt, the common People, who had more Honeſty, and therefore more true Wiſdom than their Leaders, kept up their high Thoughts of him. We may ſuppoſe this Multitude were generally of the meaner ſort of People; with ſuch Chriſt convers'd and was familiar; for thus he humbled himſelf, and made himſelf of no Reputation, and thus encourag'd the meaneſt to come to him for Life and Grace.

2. Thoſe that follow'd him underwent a great deal of Difficulty in following him. *They were with him three Days, and had nothing to eat*, that was hard Service: Never let the Phariſees ſay, That *Chriſt's Diſciples faſt not*. 'Tis likely there were thoſe that brought ſome Food with them from Home, but by this Time it was all ſpent, and they had a great way Home, and yet they *continued* with Chriſt, and did not ſpeak of leaving him, till he ſpoke of diſmiſſing them. *Note*, True Zeal makes nothing of Hardſhips in the way of Duty. They that have a full Feaſt for their Souls, may be content with ſlender Proviſion for their Bodies. 'Twas an old Saying among the Puritans, *Brown Bread and the Goſpel is good Fare.*

3. As Chriſt has a *Compaſſion* for all that are in Wants and Straits, ſo he has a ſpecial *Concern* for thoſe that are reduc'd to Straits by their Zeal and Diligence in attending on him. Chriſt ſaid, *I have Compaſſion on the Multitude*; whom the proud Phariſees look'd upon with Diſdain, the humble Jeſus look'd upon with Pity and Tenderneſs, and thus muſt we *honour all Men*: But that which he chiefly conſiders, is, *They have been with me Three Days, and have nothing to eat*. Whatever Loſſes we ſuſtain, or Hardſhips we go through for Chriſt's ſake, and in Love to him, he will take Care they ſhall be made up to us one way or other. *They that ſeek the Lord, ſhall not* long *want any good thing*, Pſal. 34. 10. Obſerve with what Sympathy Chriſt ſaith, *v.* 3. *If I ſend them away Faſting to their own Houſes, they will Faint by the way* for Hunger. Chriſt knows and conſiders our Frame; and he is *for the Body*, if with it we glorifie him, *verily we ſhall be fed*. He conſider'd that *many of them came from far*, and had a great way Home. When we ſee *Multitudes* attending upon the Word preach'd, it is comfortable to think that Chriſt knows whence they all come, tho' we do not. *I know thy Works, and where thou dwelleſt*, *Rev.* 2. 13. Chriſt would by no Means have them go Home faſting, for he doth not uſe to ſend thoſe *empty* away from him, that in a right manner attend on him.

4. The Doubts of Chriſtians are ſometimes made to work for the magnifying of the Power of Chriſt. The Diſciples could not imagine whence ſo many Men ſhould be *ſatisfied with Bread* here in this Wilderneſs, *v.* 4. That therefore muſt needs be *wonderful*, and appear ſo much the more ſo, which the Diſciples look'd upon as *impoſſible*.

5. Chriſt's Time to act for the Relief of his People is, when Things are brought to the laſt Extremity, when they were ready to *Faint* Chriſt provided for them; that he might not invite them to follow him for the *Loaves*, he did not ſupply them, but when they were utterly reduc'd, and then he *ſent them away*.

6. The Bounty of Chriſt is inexhauſtible, and to evidence that, Chriſt *repeated* this Miracle, to ſhew that he is ſtill the ſame for the Succour and Supply of his People that attend upon him. His Favours are renewed, as our Wants and Neceſſities are. In the former Miracle Chriſt us'd all the Bread he had, which were *five Loaves*, and fed all the Gueſts he had, which were *five thouſand*, and ſo he did now; tho' he might have ſaid, if five Loaves would feed five thouſand, four may feed four thouſand; he took all the ſeven Loaves, and fed with them the four thouſand, for he would teach us to take Things as they are, and accommodate our ſelves to them; to uſe what we have, and make the beſt of that which is: Here it was as in the diſpenſing of the *Manna, he that gather'd much had nothing over, and he that gather'd little had no lack.*

7. In our Father's Houſe, in our Maſter's Houſe *there is Bread enough and to ſpare*, there is a Fulneſs in Chriſt, which he communicates to all that paſſeth through his Hands; ſo that from it we receive, and *Grace for Grace*, *John* 1. 16. Thoſe need not fear wanting that have a Chriſt to live upon.

8. It's good for thoſe that follow Chriſt *to keep together*; theſe Followers of Chriſt continu'd in a Body, *four thouſand* of them together, and Chriſt fed them all; Chriſt's Sheep muſt abide by the Flock, and go forth by their Footſteps, and verily they ſhall be fed.

10 And ſtraightway he entered into a ſhip with his diſciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha. 11 And the Phariſees came forth, and began to queſtion with him, ſeeking of him a ſign from heaven, tempting him. 12 And he ſighed deeply in his ſpirit, and ſaith, Why doth this generation ſeek after a ſign? Verily I ſay unto you, There ſhall no ſign be given to this generation. 13 And he left them, and entring into the ſhip again, departed to the other ſide. 14 Now *the diſciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ſhip with them more than one loaf. 15 And he charged them, ſaying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Phariſees, and *of* the leaven of Herod. 16 And they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, *It is* becauſe we have no bread. 17 And when Jeſus knew *it*, he ſaith unto them, Why reaſon ye, becauſe ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither underſtand? have ye your hearts yet hardened? 18 Having eyes, ſee ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? 19 When I brake the five loaves among five thouſand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? they ſay unto him, Twelve. 20 And when the ſeven among four thouſand: how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? and they ſaid, Seven? 21 And he ſaid unto them, how is it that ye do not underſtand?

Still Chriſt is upon Motion, now he viſits the parts of *Dalmanutha*, that no Corner of the Land of *Iſrael* might ſay, but that they had had his Preſence with them. He came thither *by Ship*, v. 13. but meeting with Occaſions of Diſpute there, and not with Opportunities of doing Good, he *enter'd into the Ship again*, v. 13. and came back. In theſe Verſes we are told,

1. How he refus'd to gratifie the *Phariſees*, who challenged him to give them a *Sign from Heaven*. They *came forth* on purpoſe to *queſtion with him*, not to propoſe Queſtions to him that they might learn of him, but to croſs Queſtions with him that they might enſnare him. (1.) They demanded of him a *Sign from Heaven*, as if the Signs he gave them on Earth, which were more familiar to them, and were more capable of being examin'd, and enquir'd into, were not ſufficient. There was a Sign *from Heaven* at his Baptiſm, in the deſcent of the Dove, and the Voice, *Matt.* 3. 16, 17. 'twas publick enough; and if they had attended *John*'s Baptiſm as they ought to have done, they might themſelves have ſeen

it. Afterwards, when he was nail'd to the Croſs, they preſcrib'd a new Sign, *Let him come down from the Croſs, and we will believe him*; thus obſtinate Infidelity will ſtill have ſomething to ſay, tho' never ſo unreaſonable. They demanded this Sign, *tempting him*, not in Hopes he would give it them that they might be ſatisfied, but in Hopes he would not, that they might imagine themſelves to have a Pretence for their Infidelity.

(2.) He deny'd them their Demand. He *ſighed deeply in his Spirit*, v. 12. He *groan'd*, ſo ſome, being griev'd for the *Hardneſs of their Hearts*, and the little Influence that his Preaching and Miracles had had upon them. *Note*, The Infidelity of thoſe that have long enjoy'd the Means of Conviction, is a great Grief to the Lord Jeſus; it troubles him that Sinners ſhould thus ſtand in their own Light, and put a Bar on their own Door. (1.) He expoſtulates with them upon this Demand; *why doth this Generation ſeek after a Sign?* This Generation, that is ſo unworthy to have the Goſpel brought to it, and to have any Sign accompanying it. *This Generation*, that ſo greedily ſwallows the Traditions of the Elders without the Confirmation of any Sign at all. *This Generation*, into which, by the calculating of the Times prefix'd in the *Old Teſtament*, they might eaſily perceive that the coming of the Meſſiah muſt fall: *This Generation*, that has had ſuch Plenty of ſenſible and merciful Signs given them in the Cure of their Sick, what an Abſurdity is it for them to deſire a Sign? (2.) He refuſeth to anſwer their Demand; *verily I ſay unto you, there ſhall no Sign*, no ſuch Sign, *be given to this Generation.* When God ſpoke to particular Perſons in a particular Caſe, out of the Road of his common Diſpenſation, they were encourag'd to ask a Sign, as *Gideon* and *Ahaz*; but when he ſpeaks in general to all, as in the Law and Goſpel, ſending each with their own Evidence, 'tis Preſumption to preſcribe other Signs than what he has given. *Shall any teach God Knowledge?* He deny'd them, and then *left them*, as Men not fit to be talk'd with; if they will not be convinc'd, they ſhall not; leave them to their ſtrong Deluſions.

2. How he warn'd his Diſciples againſt the Leaven of the *Phariſees* and of *Herod.* Obſerve here,

1. What the Caution was, *v.* 15. *take heed, beware* leſt you partake of the *Leaven of the Phariſees*, leſt ye embrace the Tradition of the Elders which they are ſo wedded to, leſt you be Proud, and Hypocritical, and Ceremonious, like them; *Matthew* adds, *and of the Sadduces*; *Mark* adds, *and of Herod*; whence ſome gather, that *Herod* and his Courtiers were generally *Sadduces*, that is, *Deiſts*, Men of no Religion. Others give this Senſe, the *Phariſees* demanded a *Sign from Heaven*; and *Herod*, he was long *deſirous* to ſee ſome Miracle wrought by Chriſt, *Luke* 23. 7. ſuch as he ſhould preſcribe, ſo that the Leaven of both was the ſame; they were unſatisfy'd with the Signs they had, and would have others of their own deviſing; take heed of *this Leaven*, ſaith Chriſt, be convinc'd by the Miracles you have ſeen, and covet not to ſee more.

2. How they miſunderſtood this Caution. It ſeems at their putting to Sea this Time, they had *forgotten to take Bread*, and *had not in their Ship more than one Loaf*, v. 14. When therefore Chriſt bid them *beware of the Leaven of the Phariſees*, they underſtood it as an Intimation to them not to apply themſelves to any of the *Phariſees* for Relief when they came to the other Side, for they had lately been offended at them for eating with *unwaſhen Hands.* They *reaſoned among themſelves* what ſhould be the Meaning of this Caution, and concluded, *it is becauſe we have no Bread*; he ſaith this to reproach us for being ſo careleſs as to go to Sea, and go among Strangers, with but one Loaf of Bread; he doth in Effect tell us we muſt be brought to *ſhort Allowance*, and muſt eat our Bread by Weight. They *reaſon'd it*, *διελογίζοντο*, they *diſputed* about it; one ſaid 'twas long of you, and t'other ſaid it was long of you, that we are ſo ill provided for this Voyage; thus Diſtruſt of God makes Chriſt's Diſciples quarrel among themſelves.

3. The Reproof Chriſt gave them for their Uneaſineſs in this Matter, as it argued a Disbelief of his Power to ſupply them, notwithſtanding the abundant Experience they had had of it. The Reproof is given with ſome Warmth, for he knew their Hearts, and knew they needed to be thus ſoundly chidden; *perceive ye not yet? Neither underſtand* that which you have had ſo many Demonſtrations of? *Have ye your Hearts yet harden'd*, ſo as that nothing will make any Impreſſion upon them, or bring them to Compliance with your Maſter's Deſigns? *Having Eyes, ſee you not* that which is plain before your Eyes? *Having Ears, hear you not* that which you have been ſo often told? How ſtrangely ſtupid and ſenſeleſs are you? *Do ye not remember* that which was done but t'other Day, *when I break the five Loaves among the five thouſand*, and ſoon after the *ſeven Loaves among the four thouſand?* Do ye not remember *how many Baskets full ye took up* of the Fragments? Yes, they did remember, and could tell that they took up *Twelve* Baskets full one Time, and *Seven* another; why then, ſaith he, *How is it that ye do not underſtand?* As if he that multiplied *five* Loaves, and *ſeven*, could not multiply One; they ſeem'd to ſuſpect that that One was not Matter enough to work upon, if he ſhould have a mind to entertain his Hearers a third Time: And if that was their Thought, it was indeed a very ſenſeleſs one, as if it were not all alike to the Lord to ſave by many or few, and as eaſie to make one Loaf to feed five thouſand as five. It was therefore proper to mind them not only of the Sufficiency, but of the Overplus of the former Meals; and juſtly were they chidden for not underſtanding what Chriſt therein deſign'd, and what they from thence might have learned. *Note*, (1.) The Experiences we have had of God's Goodneſs to us in the way of Duty greatly aggravate our Diſtruſt of him, which is therefore very provoking to the Lord Jeſus. (2.) Our *not underſtanding* the true Intent and Meaning of God's Favours to us, is equivalent to our not remembring them. (3.) We are therefore overwhelm'd with preſent Cares and Diſtruſts, becauſe we do not *underſtand*, and *remember* what we have known and ſeen of the Power and Goodneſs of our Lord Jeſus. It would be a great Support to us to *conſider the Days of Old*, and we are wanting both to God and our ſelves if we do not. (4.) When we thus *forget the Works of God*, and diſtruſt him, we ſhould chide our ſelves ſeverely for it, as Chriſt doth his Diſciples here; Am I thus without Underſtanding? How is it that my Heart is thus harden'd?

22 And he cometh to Bethſaida, and they bring a
blind man unto him, and beſought him to touch him.
23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him
out of the town; and when he had ſpit on his eyes, and
put his hands upon him, he asked him, if he ſaw ought.
24 And he looked up and ſaid, I ſee men as trees walking.
25 After that, he put *his* hands again upon his eyes,
and made him look up: and he was reſtored, and ſaw
every man clearly. 26 And he ſent him away to his
houſe, ſaying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it*
to any in the town.

This Cure is related only by this Evangeliſt, and there is ſomething ſingular in the Circumſtances.

1. Here's a *blind Man* brought to Chriſt by his Friends, with a Deſire that he would *touch him*, v. 22. Here appears the Faith of thoſe that brought him, they doubted not but one touch of Chriſt's Hand would recover him his Sight, but the Man himſelf ſhew'd not that Earneſtneſs for, or Expectation of a Cure, that other blind Men did. If thoſe that are ſpiritually blind do not pray for themſelves, yet let their Friends and Relations pray for them, that Chriſt would be pleas'd to *touch them*.

2. Here's Chriſt *leading* this blind Man, *v.* 23. He did not bid his Friends lead him, but (which ſpeaks his wonderful Condeſcenſion) he himſelf *took him by the Hand and led him*, to teach us to be as *Job* was, *Eyes to the Blind*, Job 29. 15. Never had poor blind Man ſuch a Leader. He led him *out of the Town*: Had he herein only deſign'd Privacy, he might have led him into a Houſe, into an inner Chamber, and have cur'd him there; but he intended hereby to upbraid *Bethſaida* with the *mighty Works* that had *in vain* been done *in her*, Matt. 11. 21. and was telling her in Effect ſhe was unworthy to have any more done within her Walls. Perhaps Chriſt took the blind Man *out of the Town*, that he might have a larger Proſpect in the *open Fields* to try his Sight with, than he could have in the *cloſe Streets*.

3. Here's the Cure of the blind Man, by that bleſſed Oculiſt who came into the World to *preach the recovering of Sight to the blind*, Luke 4. 18. and to *give* what he *preach'd*. In this Cure we may obſerve, (1.) That Chriſt us'd a *Sign*; he *ſpit on his Eyes*, (ſpit *into* them, ſo ſome) and *put his Hands upon him*. He could have cured him, as he did others, with a Word ſpeaking, but thus he was pleaſed to aſſiſt his Faith, which was very weak, and to help him againſt his *Unbelief*. And this Spittle ſignified the *Eye-Salve* wherewith Chriſt anoints the Eyes of thoſe that are ſpiritually blind, *Rev.* 3. 18. (2.) That the Cure was wrought *gradually*, which was not uſual in Chriſt's Miracles. He *asked him if he ſaw ought*, v. 23. Let him tell what Condition his Sight was in, for the Satisfaction of thoſe about him. And he *looked up*; ſo far he *recovered his Sight*, that he could open his Eyes, and he ſaid, *I ſee Men as Trees walking*, he could not diſtinguiſh Men from Trees, otherwiſe than that he could diſcern them to move. He had ſome glimmerings of Sight, and betwixt the Earth and the Sky could perceive a Man erect like a Tree, but *could not diſcern the Form thereof.* But, (3.) It was ſoon compleated: Chriſt never doth *his Work* by the halves, nor leaves it till he can ſay, *It is finiſhed.* He *puts his Hands again upon his Eyes*, to diſperſe the remaining Darkneſs, and then bid him *look up* again, and he *ſaw every Man clearly*, v. 25. Now Chriſt took this Way, (1.) Becauſe he would not *tye himſelf to a Method*, but would ſhew with what Liberty he acted in all he did. He did not cure by *rote*, as I may ſay, and in a *road*, but *vary'd* as he thought fit. Providence gains the ſame End in different ways, that Men may attend its Motions with an *implicit Faith.* (2.) Becauſe it ſhould be to the Patient *according to his Faith*; and perhaps this Man's Faith was at firſt very weak, but afterwards gather'd Strength, and accordingly his Cure was. Not that Chriſt always went by this Rule, but thus he would ſometimes put a Rebuke upon thoſe who came to him doubting. (3.) Thus Chriſt would ſhew how, and in what Method thoſe are heal'd by his Grace, who by Nature are *ſpiritually blind*; at firſt their Knowledge is confus'd, they ſee *Men as Trees walking*, but like the Light of the Morning, it *ſhines more and more to the perfect Day*, and then they *ſee all things clearly*, Prov. 4. 18. Let us enquire then if we *ſee ought* of thoſe Things which *Faith* is the *Subſtance* and *Evidence* of; and if through Grace we ſee *any thing* of them, we may hope that we ſhall ſee yet *more* and *more*, for Jeſus Chriſt will *perfect* for ever thoſe that are *ſanctified*.

4. The Directions Chriſt gave the Man he had cur'd not to *tell it to any in the Town* of *Bethſaida*, not ſo much as to *go into the Town* where probably there were ſome expecting him to come back, who had ſeen Chriſt lead him out of the Town; but having been Eye-Witneſſes of ſo many Miracles, had not ſo much as the Curioſity to follow him: Let not ſuch be gratified with the ſight of him when he was cur'd, that would not ſhew ſo much Reſpect to Chriſt as to go a Step out of Town to ſee this Cure wrought. Chriſt doth not forbid him to tell it to others, but he muſt not tell it to *any in the Town*. Slighting Chriſt's Favours is forfeiting them; and Chriſt will make thoſe know the worth of their Privileges by the want of them, that would not know them otherwiſe. *Bethſaida*, in the Day of her Viſitation, would not know the Things that belong'd to her Peace, and now they are *hid from her Eyes*. They will not ſee, and therefore ſhall not ſee.

27 And Jeſus went out, and his diſciples, into the towns of Ceſarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his diſciples, ſaying unto them, Whom do men ſay that I am? 28 And they anſwered, John the Baptiſt: but ſome *ſay*, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. 29 And he ſaith unto them, But whom ſay ye that I am? And Peter anſwereth and ſaith unto him, Thou art the Chriſt. 30 And he charged them that they ſhould tell no man of him. 31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief prieſts and ſcribes, and be killed, and after three days riſe again. 32 And he ſpake that ſaying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33 But when he had turned about, and looked on his diſciples, he rebuked Peter, ſaying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men. 34 And when he had called the people unto him, with his diſciples alſo, he ſaid unto them, Whoſoever will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me. 35 For whoſoever will ſave his life, ſhall loſe it; but whoſoever ſhall loſe his life for my ſake and the goſpels, the ſame ſhall ſave it. 36 For what ſhall it profit a man, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? 37 Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul? 38 Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and ſinful generation, of him alſo ſhall the ſon of man be aſhamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

We have read a great deal of the Doctrine that Chriſt preach'd, and the Miracles he wrought, which were many, and ſtrange, and well atteſted, of various kinds, wrought in ſeveral Places, to the aſtoniſhment of the many that were Eye-witneſſes of them. It is now time for us to pauſe a little, and to conſider what theſe Things mean; the wondrous Works which Chriſt then forbad the publiſhing of, being recorded in theſe ſacred Writings, are thereby publiſh'd to all the World, to us, to all Ages; Now, what ſhall we think of them? Is the Record of thoſe Things deſign'd only for an Amuſement, or to furniſh us with Matter for Diſcourſe? No, certainly *theſe Things are written that we may believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God*, John 20. 31. and this Diſcourſe Chriſt had with his Diſciples, will aſſiſt us in making the neceſſary Reflections upon the Miracles of Chriſt, and a right Uſe of them. Three things we are here taught to inferr from the Miracles Chriſt wrought.

Firſt, They *prove* that he is *the true Meſſiah*, the Son of God, and Saviour of the World; This the Works he did witneſſed concerning him, and this his Diſciples, who were the Eye-witneſſes of thoſe Works, here profeſs their Belief of, which cannot but be a Satisfaction to us in making the ſame Inference from them.

1. Chriſt enquir'd of them what the Sentiments of the People were concerning him. *Whom do Men ſay that I am?* v. 27. *Note*, Tho' it is a ſmall thing for us to be judg'd of Man's Day, yet it may ſometimes do us good to know what People ſay of us, not that we may ſeek our own Glory, but may hear of our Faults. Chriſt ask'd them not that he might be inform'd, but that they might obſerve it themſelves, and inform one another.

2. The Account they gave him was ſuch as plainly ſpeaks the *high Opinion* the People had of him. Tho' they came ſhort of the Truth, yet they were convinc'd by his Miracles that he was an extraordinary Perſon, ſent from the inviſible World with a Divine Commiſſion. 'Tis probable they would have acknowledg'd him to be the *Meſſiah*, if they had not been poſſeſs'd by their Teachers with a Notion, That the *Meſſiah* muſt be a temporal Prince, appearing in external Pomp and Power, which the Figure Chriſt made would not comport with; yet (whatever the *Phariſees* ſaid, whoſe Copy-hold was touch'd by the ſtrictneſs and ſpirituality of his Doctrine) none of the People ſaid he was a Deceiver, but ſome ſaid *he was John Baptiſt*, others *Elias*, others *one of the Prophets*, v. 28. All agree he is one *riſen from the dead*.

3. The Account they gave him of their own Sentiments concerning him, ſpeak their abundant Satisfaction in him, and in their having left all to follow him, which now, after ſome time of Tryal, they ſee no Reaſon to repent. But *whom ſay ye that I am?* To this they have an anſwer ready, *Thou art the Chriſt*, the *Meſſiah* often promis'd, and long expected, *v.* 29. To be a Chriſtian indeed is ſincerely to believe that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, and to act accordingly; and that he is ſo, plainly appears by his wondrous Works. This they knew, and muſt ſhortly publiſh and maintain; but for the preſent they muſt keep in ſecret, *v.* 30. till the Proof of it was compleated, and they were compleatly qualified to maintain it by the pouring out of the Holy Ghoſt, and then let all the Houſe of *Iſrael* know aſſuredly that God has made this ſame Jeſus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Chriſt, *Acts* 2. 36.

Secondly, Theſe Miracles of Chriſt *take off* the *Offence of the Croſs*, and aſſure us, That Chriſt was in it not conquer'd, but a Conqueror. Now the Diſciples are convinc'd that Jeſus is the Chriſt, they may bear to hear of Sufferings, which Chriſt now *begins* to give them Notice of, *v.* 31.

1. Chriſt *taught* his Diſciples that he muſt *ſuffer many things*; tho' they had got over the vulgar Error of the *Meſſiah's* being a temporal Prince, ſo far as to believe their Maſter to be the *Meſſiah*, notwithſtanding his preſent Meanneſs, yet ſtill they retain'd it, ſo far as to expect that he would *ſhortly* appear in outward Pomp and Grandeur, and *reſtore the Kingdom to Iſrael*; and therefore to rectifie that Miſtake, Chriſt here gives them a proſpect of the contrary, that he muſt be *rejected of the Elders, and the chief Prieſts*, and *the Scribes*, who they expected ſhould be brought to own and prefer him; that inſtead of being crown'd, *he muſt be kill'd*, he muſt be crucified, and *after three Days he muſt riſe again* to a heavenly Life, and to be *no more in this World*. This he ſpake *openly*, v. 32. *παῤῥησίᾳ*. He ſaid it freely and plainly, and did not wrap it up in ambiguous Expreſſions. The Diſciples might eaſily underſtand it, if they had not been very much under the Power of Prejudice: Or it intimates, That he ſpoke as Chearfully, and without any Terror, and would have them to hear it ſo: He ſpake that Saying *boldly*, as one that not only knew he *muſt* ſuffer and die, but was reſolv'd he *would*, and made it his own Act and Deed.

2. *Peter* oppos'd it: He *took him, and began to rebuke him*. Here *Peter* ſhewed more Love than Diſcretion, a Zeal for Chriſt and his Safety, but not according to Knowledge. He *took him*, προσλαβόμενος αὐτὸν. He took hold of him, as it were to ſtop and hinder him, took him in his Arms, and embraced him, ſo ſome underſtand it; he fell on his Neck as impatient to hear that his dear Maſter ſhould ſuffer ſuch hard Things; or he took him aſide privately, and *began to rebuke him*. This was not the Language of the leaſt Authority, but of the greateſt Affection of that *Jealouſie* for the Welfare of thoſe we love, which is *ſtrong as Death*. Our Lord Jeſus allow'd his Diſciples to be free with him, but *Peter* here took too great a Liberty.

3. Chriſt check'd him for his Oppoſition, *v.* 33. He *turn'd about* as one offended, and *look'd on his Diſciples*, to ſee if the reſt of them were of the ſame Mind; and concurr'd with *Peter* in this, that if they did, they might take the Reproof to themſelves, which he was now about to give to *Peter*; and he ſaid, *Get thee behind me, Satan*. *Peter* little thought to have had ſuch a ſharp Rebuke for ſuch a kind Diſſwaſive, but perhaps expected as much Commendation now for his Love, as he had lately had for his Faith. *Note*, Chriſt ſees that amiſs in what we ſay and do, which we our ſelves are not aware of, and knows what manner of Spirit we are of, when we our ſelves do not. (1.) *Peter* ſpoke as one that did not rightly underſtand, nor had duly conſider'd the Purpoſes and Counſels of God. When he ſaw ſuch Proofs as he every Day ſaw of the *Power* of Chriſt, he might conclude that he could not be *compell'd to ſuffer*; the moſt potent Enemies could not overpower him, whom Diſeaſes and Death, whom Winds and Waves, and Devils themſelves were forc'd to obey and yield to: And when he ſaw ſo much of the *Wiſdom* of Chriſt every Day, he might conclude that he would not *chuſe to Suffer*, but for ſome very great and glorious Purpoſes; and therefore he ought not thus to have contradicted him, but to have acquieſc'd. He look'd upon his Death only as a *Martyrdom*, like that of the Prophets, which he thought might be prevented, if either he would take a little Care not to provoke the Chief Prieſts, or to keep out of the way; but he knew not that the Thing was neceſſary for the Glory of God, the Deſtruction of Satan, and the Salvation of Man, that the Captain of our Salvation muſt be *made perfect through Sufferings*, and ſo muſt *bring many Sons to Glory*. *Note*, The Wiſdom of Man is perfect Folly, when it pretends to give Meaſures to the Divine Counſels: The Croſs of Chriſt, the greateſt Inſtance of God's Power and Wiſdom, was to ſome a ſtumbling Block, and to others Fooliſhneſs. (2.) *Peter* ſpoke as one that did not rightly underſtand, nor had duly conſider'd the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom; he took it to be *Temporal* and *Humane*, whereas it is *Spiritual* and *Divine*. *Thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God, but thoſe that be of Men*; ȣ̓ φρονεῖς, thou *mindeſt not*, ſo the Word is render'd, *Rom.* 8. 5. *Peter* ſeem'd to mind more the things that relate to the lower World, and the Life that now is, than thoſe which relate to the upper World, and the Life to come.

Minding the *things of Men* more than the *things of God*; our own Credit, Eaſe and Safety, more than the *things of God* and his Glory, and Kingdom, is a very great Sin, and the Root of much Sin, and very common among Chriſt's Diſciples; and it will appear in Suffering-times, thoſe times of Temptation, when thoſe in whom the *things of Men* have the aſcendant, are in danger of falling off. *Non ſapis*, thou *art not Wiſe* (ſo it may be read) *in the things of God*, but in the *things of Men*. It is conſiderable what *Generation* we appear *Wiſe in*, Luke 16. 8. It ſeems Policy to ſhun Trouble, but if with that we ſhun Duty, 'tis fleſhly Wiſdom, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. and it will be Folly in the end.

Thirdly, Theſe Miracles of Chriſt ſhould engage us all to *follow him* whatever it coſt us, not only as they were *Confirmations* of his *Miſſion*, but as they were *Explications* of his *Deſign*, and the Tendency of that Grace which he came to bring; plainly intimating, that by his Spirit he would do that for our Blind, Deaf, Lame, Leprous, Diſeaſed, poſſeſſed *Souls*, which he did for the *Bodies* of thoſe many who in thoſe Diſtreſſes applied themſelves to him. Frequent Notice had been taken of the great Flocking that there was to him for Help in various Caſes: Now this is written, that we may believe that he is the great Phyſician of Souls, and may become his Patients, and ſubmit to his *Regimen*; and here he tells us upon what Terms we may be admitted, and he *call'd all the People to him* to hear this, who modeſtly ſtood at ſome diſtance when he was in private Converſation with his Diſciples. This is that which all are concern'd to know, and conſider, if they expect Chriſt ſhould heal *their Souls*.

1. They muſt not be *indulgent* of the *Eaſe of the Body*, for v. 34. *Whoſoever will come after me* for ſpiritual Cures, as theſe People do for bodily Cures, *let him deny himſelf*, and live a Life of Self-denial, Mortification and Contempt of the World; let him not pretend to be his own Phyſician, but renounce all Confidence in himſelf, and his own Righteouſneſs and Strength, and let him *take up his Croſs*, conforming himſelf to the Pattern of a crucified Jeſus, and accommodating himſelf to the Will of God in all the Afflictions he lies under, and thus let him continue to *follow me*, as many of thoſe did whom Chriſt heal'd: Thoſe that will be Chriſt's Patients muſt attend on him, Converſe with him, receive Inſtruction and Reproof from him, as thoſe did that *follow'd* him, and muſt reſolve they will never forſake him.

1. They muſt not be *ſollicitous*, no not for *the Life of the Body*, when they cannot keep it without quitting Chriſt, *v.* 35. Are we invited by the Words and Works of Chriſt to follow him, let us ſit down and count the Coſt, whether we can prefer our Advantages by Chriſt before Life it ſelf, whether we can bear to think of loſing our Life *for Chriſt's ſake and the Goſpel's*. When the Devil is drawing away Diſciples and Servants after him, he conceals the worſt of it, tells them only the Pleaſure, but nothing of the Peril of his Service, *ye ſhall not ſurely die*; but what there is of Trouble and Danger in the Service of Chriſt, he tells us of it before, tells us we ſhall *ſuffer*, perhaps we ſhall *die* in the Cauſe; and repreſents the Diſcouragement not *leſs*, but *greater* than commonly they prove, that it may appear he *deals fairly* with us; and he is not afraid we ſhould know the worſt, becauſe the *Advantages* of his Service abundantly ſuffice to *balance* the *Diſcouragements*, if we will but impartially ſet the one over againſt the other. In ſhort,

1. We muſt *not dread the Loſs of our Lives*, provided it be *in the Cauſe of Chriſt*, v. 35. *Whoſoever will ſave his Life* by declining Chriſt, and refuſing to come to him, or by diſowning and denying him after he has in Profeſſion come to Chriſt, he ſhall *loſe it*, ſhall loſe the Comfort of his natural Life, the Root and Fountain of his ſpiritual Life, and all his hopes of eternal Life, ſuch a bad Bargain will he make for himſelf: But whoſoever *ſhall loſe his Life*, ſhall be truly willing to loſe it, ſhall venture it, ſhall lay it down when he cannot keep it without denying Chriſt, he ſhall *ſave it*, i. e. he ſhall be an unſpeakable Gainer; for the Loſs of this Life ſhall be made up to him in a better Life. 'Tis look'd upon to be ſome kind of Recompence to thoſe who loſe their Lives in the Service of their Prince and Country, to have their Memories honour'd, and their Families provided for; but what's that to the Recompence which Chriſt makes in Eternal Life to all that die for him.

2. We muſt *dread the Loſs of our Souls*, yea, tho' we ſhould *gain the whole World* by it, *v.* 36, 37. *For what ſhall it profit a Man if he ſhould gain the whole World*, and all the Wealth, Honour and Pleaſure in it by denying Chriſt, and *loſe his own Soul?* True it is, ſaid Biſhop *Hooper*, the night before he ſuffer'd Martyrdom, That *Life is ſweet*, and *Death is bitter*, but *Eternal Death is more bitter*, and *Eternal Life is more ſweet*; ſo that as the Happineſs of Heaven with Chriſt is enough to countervail the Loſs of Life it ſelf for Chriſt, ſo the Gain of all the World *in Sin*, is not ſufficient to countervail the Ruin of the Soul *by Sin*.

What that is that Men do to *ſave their Lives*, and *gain the World*, he tells us, v. 38. and of what fatal Conſequence it will be to them; *Whoſoever therefore ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed.* Something like this we had, *Matt.* 10. 33. but 'tis here expreſs'd more fully. *Note*, (1.) The Diſadvantage that the Cauſe of Chriſt labours under in this World is, that it is to be own'd and profeſs'd in an *adulterous and ſinful Generation*; ſuch the Generation of Mankind is, gone a Whoring from God, in the impure Embraces of the World and the Fleſh, lying in Wickedneſs; ſome Ages, ſome Places are more-eſpecially adulterous and ſinful, as that was in which Chriſt liv'd: In ſuch a *Generation* the Cauſe of Chriſt is oppos'd and run down, and thoſe that own it are expos'd to Reproach and Contempt, and every where ridicul'd and *ſpoken againſt*. (2.) There are many, who tho' they cannot but own that the Cauſe of Chriſt is a righteous Cauſe, yet are *aſham'd* of it, becauſe of the Reproach that attends the profeſſing of it; they are *aſham'd* of their Relation to Chriſt, and *aſham'd* of the Credit they cannot but give to his *Words*; they cannot bear to be frown'd upon and deſpis'd, and therefore throw off their Profeſſion, and go down the Stream of a prevailing Apoſtaſie. (3.) There is a Day coming when the Cauſe of Chriſt will appear as bright and illuſtrious as now it appears mean and contemptible; when the Son of Man comes *in the Glory of his Father with his Holy Angels*, as the true *Shechinah*, the brightneſs of his Father's Glory, and the Lord of Angels. (4.) Thoſe that are aſham'd of Chriſt in this World, where he is deſpis'd, he will be aſham'd of them in that World where he is eternally ador'd. They ſhall not ſhare with him in his Glory then, that were not willing to ſhare with him in his Diſgrace now.

CHAP. IX.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) *Chriſt's Transfiguration upon the Mount,* v. 1,--13. (2.) *His caſting the Devil out of a Child, when the Diſciples could not do it,* v. 14,--29. (3.) *His Prediction of his own Sufferings and Death,* v. 30,--32. (4.) *The Check he gave to his Diſciples for diſputing who ſhould be greateſt,* v. 33,--37. *And to* John, *for rebuking one who caſt out Devils in Chriſt's Name, and did not follow with them,* v. 38,--41. (5.) *Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples of the Danger of offending one of his little ones,* v. 42. *And of indulging that in our ſelves which is an Offence, and an Occaſion of Sin to us,* v. 43,--50. *moſt of which Paſſages we had before,* Matt. 17, *and* 18.

AND he ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that there be ſome of them that ſtand here, which ſhall not taſte of death, till they have ſeen the kingdom of God come with power. 2 And after ſix days, Jeſus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themſelves: and he was transfigured before them. 3 And his raiment became ſhining, exceeding white as ſnow; ſo as no fuller on earth can white them. 4 And there appeared unto them Elias, with Moſes: and they were talking with Jeſus. 5 And Peter anſwered and ſaid unto Jeſus, Maſter, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias. 6 For he wiſt not what to ſay, for they were ſore afraid. 7 And there was a cloud that overſhadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. 8 And ſuddenly when they had looked round about, they ſaw no man any more, ſave Jeſus only with themſelves. 9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what things they had ſeen, till the Son of man were riſen from the dead. 10 And they kept that ſaying with themſelves, queſtioning one with another what the riſing from the dead ſhould mean. 11 And they asked him, ſaying, Why ſay the ſcribes that Elias muſt firſt come? And he anſwered and told them, Elias verily comes firſt, and reſtoreth all things, and how it is written of the Son of man, that he muſt ſuffer many things, and be ſet at nought. 13 But I ſay unto you, that Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatſoever they liſted, as it is written of him.

Here's, 1. A Prediction of Chriſt's Kingdom now near approaching, *v.* 1. That which is foretold is, (1.) That the *Kingdom of God* would *come*, and would come ſo as to be *ſeen*; the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* ſhall be ſet up in the World by the utter Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* Polity, which ſtood in the way of it; this was the reſtoring of the Kingdom of God among Men, which had been in a manner loſt by the woful Degeneracy both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*. (2.) That it would come *with Power*, ſo as to make its own way, and bear down the Oppoſition that was given to it. It came *with Power*, when Vengeance was taken on the *Jews* for crucifying Chriſt, and when it conquer'd the Idolatry of the *Gentile* World. (3.) That it would come while ſome now *preſent* were *alive*. There are ſome *ſtanding here that ſhall not taſte of Death* till they *ſee* it; This ſpeaks the ſame with *Mat.* 24. 34. This *Generation ſhall not* *paſs till all thoſe things be fulfilled.* Thoſe that were ſtanding here with Chriſt ſhould ſee it, when the others could not diſcern it to be the Kingdom of God, for it came not with Obſervation.

2. A Specimen of that Kingdom in the Transfiguration of Chriſt, *ſix Days* after Chriſt ſpoke that. He had begun to give Notice to his Diſciples of his Death and Sufferings; and to prevent their Offence at that, he gives them this glimpſe of his Glory, to ſhew that his Sufferings were voluntary, and what a Vertue the Dignity and Glory of his Perſon would put into them, and to prevent the *Offence of the Croſs.*

1. It was on the top of a *high Mountain*, like the Converſe *Moſes* had with God, which was on the top of Mount *Sinai*, and his Proſpect of *Canaan* from the top of Mount *Piſgah*. Tradition ſaith 'twas on the top of Mount *Tabor* that Chriſt was transfigured; and if ſo, that Scripture was fulfilled, *Tabor* and *Hermon ſhall rejoyce in thy Name*, Pſal. 89. 12, 13. Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerving that the laſt Place we find Chriſt, was in the Coaſts of *Cæſarea Philippi*, which was far from Mount *Tabor*, rather thinks it was a high Mountain which *Joſephus* ſpeaks of near *Cæſarea.*

2. The Witneſſes of it were *Peter*, *James* and *John*, theſe were *Three* that were to *bear record on Earth*, anſwering to *Moſes*, *Elias*, and the *Voice from Heaven*, the three that were to bear record from above. Chriſt did not take all the Diſciples with him, becauſe the Thing was to be kept very private. As there are diſtinguiſhing Favours which are given to Diſciples, and not to the World, ſo there are to ſome Diſciples and not to others. All the Saints are a People *near to Chriſt*, but ſome lie in his Boſom. *James* was the firſt of all the twelve that dy'd for Chriſt, and *John* ſurviv'd them all to be the laſt Eye-witneſs of this Glory; he bore Record, *Joh.* 1. 14. *We ſaw his Glory*, and ſo did *Peter*, 2 Pet. 1. 16, 17, 18.

3. The Manner of it. *He was transfigur'd before them*: He appear'd in another Manner than he us'd to do. This was a change of the Accidents, the Subſtance remaining the ſame, and it was a Miracle: But Tranſubſtantiation, the change of the Subſtance, all the Accidents remaining the ſame, is not a Miracle, but a Fraud and Impoſture, ſuch a Work as Chriſt never wrought. See what a great change Human Bodies are capable of when God is pleas'd to put an Honour upon them, as he will upon the Bodies of the Saints at the Reſurrection. He was transfigur'd *before them*; 'tis likely the change was *gradual*, from Glory to Glory, ſo that the Diſciples, who had their Eye upon him all the while, had the cleareſt and moſt certain Evidence they could have, that this glorious Appearance was no other than the Bleſſed Jeſus himſelf, and there was no Illuſion in it. *John* ſeems to refer to this, 1 *John* 1. 1. when he ſpeaks of the *Word of Life*, as that which they had *ſeen with their Eyes, and look'd upon.* His *Raiment became ſhining*; ſo that tho' probably it was ſad colour'd, if not black, yet it was now *exceeding white as Snow*, beyond what the Fuller's Art could do towards whitening it.

4. His Companions in this Glory were *Moſes* and *Elias*, v. 4. They appear'd *talking with him*, not to *teach* him, but to *teſtifie* to him, and to be *taught* by him; by which it appears there is Converſe and Intercourſe between glorified Saints, they have ways of talking one with another which we underſtand not. *Moſes* and *Elias* liv'd at a great diſtance of Time one from another, but that breaks no ſquares in Heaven, where the *firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt firſt*, that is all one in Chriſt.

5. The great Delight that the Diſciples took in ſeeing this Sight, and hearing this Diſcourſe, is expreſs'd by *Peter*, the Mouth of the reſt. He ſaid, *Maſter, it is good for us to be here*, v. 5. Tho' Chriſt was transfigur'd, and was in Diſcourſe with *Moſes* and *Elias*, yet he gave *Peter* leave to ſpeak to him, and to be as free with him as he us'd to do. *Note*, Our Lord Jeſus in his Exaltation and Glory, doth not at all abate of his condeſcending Kindneſs to his People. Many when they are in their Greatneſs oblige their Friends to keep their Diſtance, but even to the glorified Jeſus true Believers have acceſs with Boldneſs, and Freedom of Speech with him. Even in this heavenly Diſcourſe there was room for *Peter* to put in a word; and this is it, *Lord, It is good to be here*, 'tis good *for us* to be here: Here *let us make Tabernacles*; let this be our Reſt for ever. *Note*, Gracious Souls reckon it *good to be* in Communion with Chriſt, good to be near him, good to be *in the Mount* with him, tho' it be a cold and ſolitary Place; it's good to be here retir'd from the World, and alone with Chriſt: And if it is good to be with Chriſt transfigur'd, only upon a Mountain with *Moſes* and *Elias*, how good will it be to be with Chriſt glorified in Heaven with all the Saints? But obſerve, while *Peter* was for ſtaying here he forgot what need there was of the Preſence of Chriſt, and the Preaching of his Apoſtles among the People. At this very time the other Diſciples wanted them greatly, *v.* 14. *Note*, When it is well with us, we are apt to be mindleſs of others, and in the fulneſs of our *Enjoyments* to forget the *Neceſſities* of our Brethren; 'twas a weakneſs in *Peter* to prefer private Communion with God before publick Uſefulneſs. *Paul* is willing to *abide in the Fleſh*, rather than depart to the Mountain of Glory, ('tho' that be far better) when he ſees it needful for the Church, *Phil.* 1. 24, 25. *Peter* talk'd of making three diſtinct Tabernacles for *Moſes*, *Elias*, and *Chriſt*, which was not well contriv'd; for ſuch a perfect Harmony there is between the Law, the Prophets, and the Goſpel, that one Tabernacle will hold them all: they dwell together in Unity. But whatever was incongruous in what he ſaid, he may be excus'd, for they were all *ſore afraid*; and he for his part *wiſt not what to ſay*, v. 6. not knowing what would be the end thereof.

6. The Voice that came from Heaven was an atteſtation of Chriſt's Mediatorſhip, v. 7. *There was* a Cloud that *overſhadow'd them*, and was a ſhelter to them: *Peter* had talk'd of making Tabernacles for Chriſt and his Friends, but *while he yet ſpake*, ſee how his Project was ſuperſeded; this Cloud was unto them inſtead of Tabernacle for their ſhelter, *Iſa.* 4. 5. while he *ſpake* of his Tabernacles, God created his Tabernacles *not made with hands.* Now out of this Cloud (which was but a Shade to *the excellent Glory Peter* ſpeaks of from whence *this Voice* came) it was ſaid, *This is my beloved Son, hear him.* God owns him, and accepts him as his beloved Son, and is ready to accept of us in him; we muſt then own and accept him as our beloved Saviour, and muſt give up our ſelves to be rul'd by him.

7. The Viſion being deſign'd only to introduce this Voice, when that was deliver'd, diſappear'd, *v.* 8. *Suddenly when they had looked round about*, as Men amaz'd to ſee where they were, all was gone, *they ſaw no Man any more*, *Elias* and *Moſes* were vaniſh'd out of ſight, and *Jeſus* only remain'd with them, and he not transfigur'd, but as he us'd to be. *Note*, Chriſt doth not leave the Soul when extraordinary Joys and Comforts leave it. Tho' more ſenſible and raviſhing Communions may be withdrawn, Chriſt's Diſciples have, and ſhall have his ordinary Preſence with him always even to the end of the World, and that's it we muſt depend upon. Let us thank God for *daily Bread*, and not expect a continnual Feaſt on this ſide Heaven.

8. We have here the Diſcourſe between Chriſt and his Diſciples, as they came down from the Mount.

1. He charg'd them to keep this Matter very private 'till he was *riſen from the Dead*, which would compleat the Proof of his Divine Miſſion, and then this muſt be produc'd with the reſt of the Evidence, *v.* 9. And beſides, he being now in a ſtate of Humiliation, would have nothing publickly taken Notice of that might ſeem diſagreeable to ſuch a State; for to that, he would in every Thing accommodate himſelf. This enjoining of Silence to the Diſciples, would likewiſe be of Uſe to them to prevent their boaſting of the Intimacy they were admitted to, that they might not be *puffed up* with the *abundance of the Revelations.* 'Tis a Mortification to a Man to be ty'd up from telling of his Advancements, and may help to hide Pride from him.

2. The Diſciples were at a loſs what the *riſing from the Dead* ſhould mean; they could not form any Notion of the Meſſiah's dying, *Luke* 18. 34. and therefore were willing to think that the *Riſing* he ſpeaks of was Figurative, his riſing from his preſent mean and low Eſtate to the Dignity and Dominion they were in expectation of. But if ſo, here's another Thing that embarraſſeth them, v. 11. *Why, ſay the Scribes*, that before the appearing of the Meſſiah in his Glory, according to the Order ſettled in the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, *Elias muſt firſt come*; but *Elias* was gone, and *Moſes* too: Now that which rais'd this Difficulty was, that the *Scribes* taught them to expect the Perſon of *Elias*, whereas the Prophecy intended one *in the Spirit and Power of Elias.* *Note*, The miſunderſtanding of Scripture is a great Prejudice to the entertainment of Truth.

3. Chriſt gave them a Key to the Prophecy concerning *Elias*, v. 17, 18. It is indeed propheſied that *Elias* will come, and will *reſtore all Things*, and ſet them to rights; And (tho' you will not underſtand it) 'tis alſo propheſied of the *Son of Man* that he muſt *ſuffer many Things*, and be *ſet at naught*, muſt be a reproach of Men, and deſpiſed of the People: And tho' the *Scribes* do not tell you ſo, the *Scriptures* do, and you have as much Reaſon to expect that as the other, and ſhould not *make ſo ſtrange* of it; but as to *Elias*, I tell you, *he is come*; and if you conſider a little, you will underſtand who I mean, 'tis one to whom they have *done whatſoever they liſted*, which was very applicable to the ill uſage they had given *John Baptiſt.* Many of the Ancients, and the *Popiſh* Writers generally think, that beſides the coming of *John Baptiſt* in the Spirit of *Elias*, himſelf in his own Perſon is to be expected, with *Enoch*, before the ſecond Appearance of Chriſt, wherein the Prophecy of *Malachi* will have a more full Accompliſhment than it had in *John Baptiſt.* But it is a groundleſs Fancy; the true *Elias*, as well as the true *Meſſiah* promiſed, is come, and we are to look for *no other.* Theſe Words, *as it is* written of him, refer not to their *doing to him whatever they liſted*, that comes in in a Parentheſis, but only to his coming. He is come, and hath been, and done according as was *written of him.*

14 And when he came to *his* diſciples, he ſaw a great multitude about them, and the ſcribes queſtioning with them. 15 And ſtraightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him, ſaluted him. 16 And he asked the ſcribes, What queſtion ye with them? 17 And one of the multitude anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, I have brought unto thee my ſon, which hath a dumb ſpirit: 18 And whereſoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnaſheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I ſpake to thy diſciples, that they ſhould caſt him out, and they could not. 19 He anſwered him, and ſaith, O

faithleſs generation, how long ſhall I be with you?
how long ſhall I ſuffer you? bring him unto me.
20 And they brought him unto him: and when he
ſaw him, ſtraightway the ſpirit tare him, and he fell
on the ground, and wallowed, foaming. 21 And he
asked his father, How long is it ago ſince this came
unto him? and he ſaid, Of a child. 22 And ofttimes
it hath caſt him into the fire, and into the
waters to deſtroy him: but if thou canſt do any
thing, have compaſſion on us, and help us. 23 Jeſus
ſaid unto him, If thou canſt believe, all things *are*
poſſible to him that believeth. 24 And ſtraightway
the father of the child cried out, and ſaid with
tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.
25 When Jeſus ſaw that the people came running
together, he rebuked the foul ſpirit, ſaying unto him,
Thou dumb and deaf ſpirit, I charge thee, Come out
of him, and enter no more into him. 26 And *the*
ſpirit cried, and rent him ſore, and came out of him;
and he was as one dead, inſomuch that many ſaid, He is
dead. 27 But Jeſus took him by the hand, and lifted
him up, and he aroſe. 28 And when he was come
into the houſe, his diſciples asked him privately, Why
could not we caſt him out? 29 And he ſaid unto them,
This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and
faſting.

We have here the Story of Chriſt's caſting the Devil out of a Child, ſomewhat more fully related than it was *Matt.* 17. 14. &c. Obſerve here,

1. Chriſt's Return to his Diſciples, and the Perplexity he found them in. He laid aſide his Robes of Glory, and came to look after his Family, and to enquire what was become of them. Chriſt's Glory above doth not make him forget the Concerns of his Church below, which he viſits in *great Humility*, v. 14. And he came very ſeaſonably, when the Diſciples were embarraſs'd and run a-ground; the *Scribes*, who were ſworn Enemies both to him and them, had gain'd an Advantage againſt them: A Child poſſeſs'd with a Devil was brought to them, and they could not caſt out the Devil, whereupon the *Scribes* inſulted over them, and reflected upon their Maſter, and triumph'd as if the Day were their own. He *found the Scribes queſtioning with them*, in the hearing of the Multitude, ſome of whom perhaps began to be ſhock'd by it. Thus *Moſes* when he came down from the Mount, found the Camp of *Iſrael* in great diſorder, ſo ſoon were Chriſt and *Moſes* miſs'd. Chriſt's Return was very welcome, no doubt, to the Diſciples, and unwelcome to the *Scribes*. But particular Notice is taken of its being very ſurprizing to the People, who perhaps were ready to ſay, *As for this Jeſus, we wot not what's become of him*; but when they *beheld him* coming to them again, they were *greatly amazed*: ſome Copies; add, καὶ ἐξεφοβήθησαν, and *they were afraid*, and *running to him*; ſome Copies for προστρέχοντες read προσχαίροντες, *congratulating him*, or bidding him Welcome they ſaluted him. 'Tis eaſie to give a Reaſon why they ſhould be glad to ſee him; but why were they *amaz'd, greatly amaz'd* when they beheld him? Probably there might remain ſomething unuſual in his Countenance; as *Moſes*'s *Face ſhone* when he came down from the Mount, which made the People *afraid to come nigh him, Exod.* 34. 30. So perhaps did Chriſt's Face in ſome meaſure; at leaſt, inſtead of ſeeming *fatigu'd*, there appear'd a wonderful Briskneſs, and Sprightlineſs in his Looks, which *amaz'd* them.

2. The Caſe which perplex'd the Diſciples brought before him. He ask'd the *Scribes*, who he knew were always *vexatious* to his Diſciples, and *teazing* them upon every Occaſion, *What queſtion ye with them?* What's the Quarrel now? The *Scribes* made no Anſwer, for they were confounded at his Preſence; the Diſciples made none, for they were comforted, and now left all to him. But the Father of the Child open'd the Cauſe, *v.* 17, 18. (1.) His Child is poſſeſs'd with *a dumb Spirit*. He has the Falling-Sickneſs, and in his Fits *is Speechleſs*; his Caſe is very ſad, for whereſoever the Fit takes him, the Spirit *tears* him, throws him into ſuch violent Convulſions as almoſt pull him to Pieces; and which is very grievous to himſelf, and frightful to thoſe about him, *he foams* at the Mouth, and *gnaſheth with his Teeth*, as one in Pain and great Miſery; and tho' the Fits go off preſently, yet they leave him ſo weak that he *pines away*, is worn to a Skeleton; his Fleſh is *dry'd* away, ſo the Word ſignifies, *Pſalm* 102. 3, 4, 5. This was a conſtant Affliction to a tender Father. (2.) The Diſciples cannot give him any Relief. I *deſir'd they would caſt him out*, as they had done many, and they would willingly have done it, but *they could not*; and therefore thou couldſt never have come in better time, *Maſter, I have brought him to thee.*

3. The Rebuke he gave to them all, *v.* 19. O *faithleſs Generation, how long ſhall I be with you? How long ſhall I ſuffer you?* Dr. *Hammond* underſtands this as ſpoken to the Diſciples, reproving them for not exerting the Power he had given them, and becauſe they did not *Faſt* and *Pray*, as in ſome Caſes he had directed them to do. But Dr. *Whitby* takes it as a Rebuke to the *Scribes*, who gloried in this Balk that the Diſciples met with, and hop'd to run them down with it. Them he calls a *faithleſs Generation*, and ſpeaks as one weary of *being with them*, and of *bearing with* them. We never hear him complaining how long ſhall I be in this low Condition, and ſuffer that? But how long ſhall I be among theſe *faithleſs* People, and ſuffer them?

4. The deplorable Condition that the Child was actually in, when he was brought to Chriſt, and the doleful Repreſentation which the Father made of it. When the Child ſaw Chriſt, he fell into a Fit, *the Spirit ſtraightway tore him, boyl'd within him, troubled* him, ſo Dr. *Hammond*; as if the Devil would ſet Chriſt at defiance, and hop'd to be too hard for him to, and to keep Poſſeſſion in ſpite of him. The Child *fell* on the *Ground and wallow'd foaming*. We may put another Conſtruction upon it, that the Devil rag'd, and had ſo much the greater Wrath, becauſe he *knew* that *his Time was ſhort*, Rev. 12. 12. Chriſt ask'd, *How long ſince this came to him?* And it ſeems the Diſeaſe was of long ſtanding, it came to him *of a Child*, v. 21. which made the Caſe the more ſad, and the Cure the more difficult. We are all by Nature *Children of Diſobedience*, and in ſuch the evil Spirit *works*, and has done ſo from our Childhood; for *Fooliſhneſs is bound in the Heart of a Child*, and nothing but the mighty Grace of Chriſt can caſt it out.

5. The *preſſing Inſtances* which the Father of the Child makes with Chriſt for a Cure, *v* 22. *Oft-times it has caſt him into the Fire, and into the Waters, to deſtroy him. Note*, The Devil aims at the Ruin of thoſe in whom he Rules and Works, and ſeeks *whom he may devour*. But *if thou canſt do any Thing, have Compaſſion on us, and help us.* The Leper was confident of Chriſt's Power, but put an *If* upon his Will, *Mat.* 8. *If thou wilt, thou canſt.* This poor Man referr'd himſelf to his Good-Will, but put an *If* upon his Power, becauſe his Diſciples, who caſt out Devils *in his Name*, had been Non-plus'd in this Caſe. Thus Chriſt ſuffers in his Honour, by the Difficulties and Follies of his Diſciples.

6. The Anſwer Chriſt gave to his Addreſs, *v.* 23. *If thou canſt believe, all Things are poſſible to him that believeth.* Here (1.) He tacitly checks the weakneſs of his Faith. He put it upon Chriſt's Power, *If thou canſt do any thing*, and reflected on the want of Power in the Diſciples; but Chriſt turns it upon him, and puts him upon queſtioning his own Faith, and will have him impute the Diſappointment to the want of that; *if thou canſt believe.* (2.) He graciouſly encourageth the Strength of his Deſire; *all things are poſſible*, i. e. will appear poſſible *to him that believes* the Almighty Power of God, to which all Things are poſſible, or, that all be done by the Grace of God, for them that believe in the Promiſe of God, which ſeem'd utterly impoſſible. *Note*, In dealing with Chriſt very much is put upon our Believing, and very much promis'd to it. *Canſt thou believe?* i. e. Dareſt thou believe? Art thou willing to venture thy All in the Hands of Chriſt? To venture all thy Spiritual Concerns with him, and all thy Temporal Concerns for him? Canſt thou find in thy Heart to do this? If ſo, it is not impoſſible, but that tho' thou haſt been a great Sinner, thou may'ſt be reconcil'd; tho' thou art very mean and unworthy, thou may'ſt get to Heaven. *If thou canſt believe* it is poſſible that thy hard Heart may be ſoften'd, thy Spiritual Diſeaſes may be cur'd; and that weak as thou art, thou may'ſt be able to hold out to the End.

7. The *Profeſſion of Faith* which the poor Man made hereupon, *v.* 24. he cry'd out, *Lord, I believe*, I am fully perſuaded both of thy Power, and of thy Pity; and it ſhall never ſtick at that, *Lord, I believe*: And the Prayer he made for Grace to enable him more firmly to rely upon the Aſſurances he had of the Ability, and willingneſs of Chriſt to ſave, *Help thou my Unbelief. Note*, 1. Even thoſe who through Grace can ſay, *Lord, I believe*, yet have reaſon to complain of their Unbelief; that they cannot ſo readily apply to themſelves, and their own Caſe, the word of Chriſt as they ſhould, nor ſo chearfully depend upon it. 2. Thoſe that complain of Unbelief, muſt look up to Chriſt for Grace to *help* them againſt it, and *his Grace* ſhall be *ſufficient for them. Help mine Unbelief*, help me to a Pardon for it, help me with Power againſt it; help out what is wanting in my Faith, with thy Grace, the Strength of which is perfected in our Weakneſs.

8. The Cure of the Child, and the Conqueſt of this raging Devil in the Child. Chriſt *ſaw the People come running together*, expecting to ſee the iſſue of this Trial of Skill, and therefore kept them in ſuſpence no longer, but *rebuked the foul Spirit*, the *unclean Spirit*, ſo it ſhould be render'd, as in other Places. Obſerve, (1.) What the Charge was which Chriſt gave to this unclean Spirit: *Thou dumb and deaf Spirit*, that makeſt the poor Child dumb and deaf, but ſhalt thy ſelf be made to *hear* thy doom, and not be able to *ſay* any Thing againſt it, *come out of him* immediately, and *enter no more into him.* Let him not only be brought out of this Fit, but let his Fits never return. *Note*, Whom Chriſt cures, he cures effectually; Satan may *go out himſelf*, and yet recover Poſſeſſion, but if Chriſt *caſt* him out, he will *keep* him out. (2.) How the unclean Spirit took it; he grew yet more outragious, he *cried* and *rent him ſore*, gave him ſuch a Twiſt at parting, that he was *as one dead*; ſo loth was he to quit his hold, and ſo exaſperated at the ſuperiour Power of Chriſt, and ſo malicious to the Child, and ſo fain he would have kill'd him, *Many ſaid, He is dead.* Thus the Toſs that a Soul is in at the

breaking of Satan's Power in it, may perhaps be frightful for the preſent, but opens the Door to laſting Comfort. (3.) How the Child was perfectly reſtor'd; *v.* 27. *Jeſus took him by the Hand*, *κρατήσας*, took faſt hold of him, and ſtrongly bore him up, and he aroſe and recover'd, and all was well.

9. The Reaſon he gave to the Diſciples, why they could not caſt out this Devil: They *enquir'd* of him privately, *why they could not*, that wherein they were defective might be made up another Time, and they might not be again thus publickly ſhamed; and he told them, *v.* 29. *This Kind can come forth by nothing*, but *by Prayer and Faſting.* Whatever other Difference there really might be, none appears between this and other Kinds, but that the unclean Spirit had had Poſſeſſion of this poor Patient *from a Child*, and that ſtrengthen'd his Intereſt, and confirm'd his Hold. When *vitious Habits* are rooted by long Uſage, and begin to plead Preſcription, like Chronical Diſeaſes, they are *hardly cur'd. Can the Æthiopian change his Skin?* The Diſciples muſt not think to do their work always with a like Eaſe; ſome Services call them to take more than ordinary Pains; but Chriſt can do that with a Word ſpeaking, which they muſt prevail for the doing of by *Prayer and Faſting.*

30 And they departed thence, and paſſed through Galilee; and he would not that any man ſhould know *it*. 31 For he taught his diſciples, and ſaid unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they ſhall kill him, and after that he is killed, he ſhall riſe the third day. 32 But they underſtood not that ſaying, and were afraid to aſk him. 33 And he came to Capernaum, and being in the houſe, he aſked them, What was it that ye diſputed among your ſelves by the way? 34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had diſputed among themſelves, who *ſhould be* the greateſt. 35 And he ſat down and called the twelve, and ſaith unto them, If any man deſire to be firſt, the ſame ſhall be laſt of all, and ſervant of all. 36 And he took a child, and ſet him in the midſt of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he ſaid unto them, 37 Whoſoever ſhall receive one of ſuch children in my name, receiveth me: and whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that ſent me. 38 And John anſwered him, ſaying, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbad him, becauſe he followeth not us. 39 But Jeſus ſaid, Forbid him not: for there is no man which ſhall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly ſpeak evil of me. 40 For he that is not againſt us, is on our part.

Here, 1. Chriſt *foretels his* own approaching *Sufferings.* He *paſſed through* Galilee with more Expedition than uſual, and *would not that any Man ſhould know it*, v. 30. becauſe he had done many mighty and good Works among them in vain, they ſhall not be invited to ſee them, and have the Benefit of them as they have been. The Time of his Sufferings drew nigh, and therefore he was willing to be private a while; and to converſe only with his Diſciples, to prepare them for the approaching Trial, *v.* 31. He ſaid to them, The *Son of Man is deliver'd*, by the determinate Counſel and Fore-knowledge of God, *into the Hands of Men*, *v.* 31. and *they ſhall kill him.* Had he been deliver'd into the Hands of Devils, and they had worried him, it had not been ſo ſtrange, but that *Men*, who have *Reaſon*, and ſhould have *Love*, that they ſhould be thus ſpiteful to the *Son of Man*, who came to redeem and ſave them, is unaccountable. But ſtill it is obſervable, that when Chriſt ſpoke of his Death, he always ſpoke of his Reſurrection, which took away the Reproach of it from himſelf, and ſhould take away the Grief of it from his Diſciples. But they *underſtood not that ſaying*, v. 32. The Words were plain enough, but they could not be reconcil'd to the Thing, and therefore would ſuppoſe them to have ſome myſtical Meaning which they did not underſtand; and they were *afraid to aſk him*; not becauſe he was difficult of Acceſs, or ſtern to thoſe who conſulted him, but either becauſe they were loth to know the Truth, or becauſe they expected to be chidden for their backwardneſs to receive it. Many remain ignorant, becauſe they are aſham'd to enquire.

2. He *rebukes his Diſciples* for *magnifying themſelves.* When he came to *Capernaum*, he privately ask'd his Diſciples, what it was that they *diſputed among themſelves by the way*: v. 33. He knew very well what the Diſpute was, but he would know it *from them*, and would have them to confeſs their Fault and Folly in it. *Note*, (1.) We muſt all expect to be call'd to an Account by our Lord Jeſus, concerning what paſſeth while we are in the Way, in this State of Paſſage and Probation. (2.) We muſt in a particular Manner be call'd to an Account about our Diſcourſes among our ſelves, for by our Words we muſt be juſtified or condemn'd. (3.) As other our Diſcourſes among our ſelves by the Way, ſo eſpecially our Diſputes will be all call'd over again, and we ſhall be call'd to an Account about them. (4.) Of all Diſputes, Chriſt will be ſure to reckon with his Diſciples for their Diſputes about Precedency, and Superiority: That was the Subject of the Debate here, *who ſhould be the greateſt*, v. 34. Nothing could be more contrary to the two greateſt Laws of Chriſt's Kingdom, Leſſons of his School, and Inſtructions of his Example, which are *Humility* and *Love*, than *deſiring* Preferment in the World, and *diſputing* about it. This ill Temper he took all Occaſions to check, both becauſe it aroſe from a miſtaken Notion of his Kingdom, as if it were of this World; and becauſe it tended ſo directly to the debaſing of the Honour, and the corrupting of the Purity of his Goſpel, and he foreſaw would be ſo much the Bane of the Church.

Now, 1. They were willing to *cover this Fault*, v. 34. they *held their Peace.* As they would not *ask*, v. 32. becauſe they were aſham'd to own their Ignorance, ſo here they would not *anſwer*, becauſe they were aſham'd to own their Pride. (2.) He was willing to *amend this Fault* in them, and to bring them to a better Temper; and therefore *ſat down*, that he might have a ſolemn and full Diſcourſe with them about this Matter; He *call'd the Twelve to him*, and told them, (1.) That Ambition and Affectation of Dignity and Dominion, inſtead of gaining them Preferment in his Kingdom, would but poſtpone their Preferment; *If any Man deſire* and aim *to be firſt*, he *ſhall be laſt*; he that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and Men's *Pride* ſhall *bring them low.* (2.) That there is Preferment to be had under him, but an Opportunity for, and an Obligation to ſo much the more Labour and Condeſcenſion. *If any Man deſire to be firſt*, when he is ſo, he muſt be ſo much the more buſie, and ſerviceable to every Body; *he that deſires the Office of a Biſhop, deſires a good Work*, for he muſt, as St. *Paul* did, labour the more abundantly, and make himſelf the *Servant of all.* (3.) That thoſe who are moſt humble and ſelf-denying do moſt reſemble Chriſt, and ſhall be moſt tenderly owned by him. This he taught them by a Sign, he *took a Child in his Arms*, that had nothing of Pride and Ambition in it, Look you, ſaith he, *whoſoever ſhall receive* one like this Child, *receives me.* Thoſe of a humble, meek, mild Diſpoſition, are ſuch as I will own and countenance, and encourage every Body elſe to do ſo too, and will take what's done to them as done to my ſelf; and ſo will my Father too, for he who thus *receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me*, and it ſhall be plac'd to his Account, and repaid with Intereſt.

3. He rebukes them for *villifying all but themſelves*; while they are ſtriving which of them ſhould be greateſt, they will not allow thoſe who are not in Communion with them to be any Thing. Obſerve,

1. The Account which *John* gave him, of the Reſtraint they had laid upon one from making uſe of the Name of Chriſt, becauſe he was not of their Society. Tho' they were aſham'd to own their Conteſts for Preferment, they ſeem to boaſt of this Exerciſe of their Authority, and expected their Maſter ſhould not only juſtifie them in it, but commend them for it: and hoped he would not blame them for deſiring to be great, when they would thus uſe their Power for the maintaining of the Honour of the Sacred College. *Maſter*, ſaith *John*, we *ſaw one caſting out Devils in thy Name, but he follow'd not us*, v. 38. (1.) It was ſtrange, that one that was not a profeſs'd Diſciple and Follower of Chriſt, ſhould yet have Power to *caſt out Devils* in his Name, for that ſeem'd to be peculiar to thoſe whom he call'd, *Chap.* 6. 7. But ſome think, that he was a Diſciple of *John*, who made uſe of the Name of the *Meſſiah*, not as come, but as near at Hand, not knowing that Jeſus was he; it ſhould rather ſeem he made uſe of the Name of *Jeſus*, believing him to be the Chriſt, as the other Apoſtles did: And why might not he receive that Power from Chriſt, whoſe *Spirit* like the Wind *blows where it liſteth*, without ſuch an outward Call as the Apoſtles had, and perhaps there were many more ſuch: Chriſt's Grace is not ty'd to the viſible Church. (2.) It was ſtrange, that one who *caſt out Devils* in the Name of Chriſt, did not joyn himſelf to the Apoſtles, and follow Chriſt with them, but ſhould continue to act in *Separation* from them. I know of nothing that could hinder him from following them, unleſs becauſe he was loth to leave all to follow them; and if ſo, that was an ill Principle. The Thing did not look well, and therefore the Diſciples *forbad him* to make uſe of Chriſt's Name as they did, unleſs he would follow him as they did. This was like the Motion *Joſhua* made concerning *Eldad* and *Medad*, that propheſied in the Camp, and went not up with the reſt to the Door of the Tabernacle, *My Lord Moſes, forbid them*, Numb. 11. 28. Reſtrain them, ſilence them, for it is a Schiſm. Thus apt are we to imagine, that thoſe do not follow Chriſt at all, that do not follow him *with us*; and that thoſe do nothing well, who do not juſt as we do. But the *Lord knows them that are his*, however they are diſpers'd; and this Inſtance gives us a needful Caution, to take heed leſt we be carry'd by an exceſs of Zeal for the Unity of the Church, and for that which we are ſure is right and good, to oppoſe that which yet may tend to the Enlargement of the Church, and the Advancement of its true Intereſts another Way.

2. The Rebuke he gave to them for this, *v.* 39. *Jeſus ſaid, forbid him not*, nor any other that do likewiſe. This was like the check *Moſes* gave to *Joſhua, Envieſt thou for my ſake? Note*, That which is good and doth good muſt not be prohibited, tho' there may be ſome Defect or Irregularity in the manner of doing it. *Caſting out Devils*, and ſo deſtroying Satan's Kingdom, doing this *in Chriſt's Name*, and ſo owning him to be ſent of God, and giving Honour to him as the Fountain of Grace, preaching down Sin, and preaching up Chriſt, are good Things, very good Things, which ought not to be forbidden to any, meerly becauſe they *follow not with us.* If

Chriſt be preach'd, *Paul* therein doth and will rejoice, tho' he be eclips'd by it, *Phil.* 1. 18. Two Reaſons Chriſt gives, why ſuch ſhould not be forbidden. (1.) Becauſe we cannot ſuppoſe, that any Man that makes uſe of Chriſt's Name in working Miracles, ſhould blaſpheme his Name, as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* did. There were thoſe indeed, that did *in Chriſt's Name caſt out Devils*, and yet in other Reſpects were *workers of Iniquity*, but they did not *ſpeak evil of Chriſt.* (2.) Becauſe thoſe that differ'd in Communion, while they agreed to fight againſt Satan, under the Banner of Chriſt, ought to look upon one another as on the ſame ſide, notwithſtanding that Difference. *He that is not againſt us, is on our Part.* As to the great Controverſie between *Chriſt* and *Beelzebub*, he had ſaid, *He that is not with me, is againſt me*, Mat. 12. 30. He that will not own Chriſt, owns Satan: But among thoſe that own Chriſt, tho' not in the ſame Circumſtances, that follow him, tho' *not with us*, we muſt reckon, that tho' theſe differ from us, they are not againſt us, and therefore are *on our Part*, and we muſt not be any hindrance to their Uſefulneſs.

41 For whoſoever ſhall give you a cup of water to
drink in my name, becauſe ye belong to Chriſt,
verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall not loſe his reward.
42 And whoſoever ſhall offend one of *theſe* little ones
that believe in me, it is better for him that a milſtone
were hanged about his neck, and he were caſt into
the Sea. 43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is
better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having
two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never
ſhall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not,
and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot
offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter
halt into life, than having two feet to be caſt into hell,
into the fire that never ſhall be quenched: 46 Where
their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.
47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is
better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with
one eye, than having two eyes to be caſt into hell-
fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is
not quenched: 49 For every one ſhall be ſalted with
fire, and every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt.
50 Salt *is* good: but if the ſalt have loſt his ſaltneſs,
wherewith will you ſeaſon it? Have ſalt in your
ſelves, and have peace one with another.

Here, 1. Chriſt promiſeth a Reward to all thoſe, that are any way kind to his Diſciples, *v.* 41. *Whoſoever ſhall give you a Cup of Water* when you need it, and it will be a Refreſhment to you, *becauſe ye belong to Chriſt*, and are of his Family, *he ſhall not loſe his Reward. Note*, (1.) It is the Honour and Happineſs of Chriſtians that they *belong to Chriſt*, they have joined themſelves to him, and are owned by him; they wear his Livery as Retainers to his Family, nay, they are more nearly related, they are *Members of his Body.* (2.) They who belong to Chriſt, may ſometimes be reduc'd to ſuch Straights as to be glad of a *Cup of cold Water.* (3.) The Relieving of Chriſt's Poor in their Diſtreſſes is a good Deed, and will turn to a good Account; He accepts it, and will reward it. (4.) What Kindneſs is done to Chriſt's Poor, muſt be done them *for his ſake*, and *becauſe they belong to him*; for that's it that ſanctifies the Kindneſs, and puts a Value upon it in the ſight of God. (5.) This is a Reaſon, why we muſt not diſcountenance and diſcourage thoſe who are ſerving the Intereſts of Chriſt's Kingdom, tho' they are not in every Thing of our Mind and Way. It comes in here as a Reaſon, why thoſe muſt not be hinder'd that caſt out Devils in Chriſt's Name, tho' they did not follow him; for (as Dr. *Hammond* Paraphraſeth it) "'Tis not only the great, eminent "Performances which are done by you my conſtant Attendants "and Diſciples, that are accepted by me, but every the leaſt De- "gree of ſincere Faith and Chriſtian Performance, proportionable "but to the expreſſing the leaſt Kindneſs, as giving a Cup of Water "to a Diſciple of mine for being ſuch, ſhall be accepted and re- "warded." If Chriſt reckons *Kindneſſes to us*, Services to *him*, we ought to reckon *Services to him*, Kindneſſes to us, and to encourage them, tho' done by thoſe that follow not with us.

2. He threatens thoſe that *offend* his *little ones*, that wilfully are the occaſion of Sin or Trouble to them, *v.* 42. whoſoever ſhall grieve any true Chriſtians, tho' they be of the Weakeſt, ſhall oppoſe their *entrance* into the Ways of God, or diſcourage and obſtruct their *Progreſs* in thoſe Ways, ſhall either reſtrain them from doing Good, or draw them in to commit Sin, it were *better for him, that a milſtone were hang'd about his Neck, and he were caſt into the Sea*, his Puniſhment will be very great, and the Death and Ruin of his Soul, more terrible than ſuch a Death and Ruin of his Body would be. See *Mat.* 18. 6.

3. He warns all his Followers, to take heed of ruining their own Souls. This Charity muſt begin at home; if we muſt take heed of doing any Thing to hinder others from Good, and to occaſion their Sin; much more careful muſt we be to avoid every Thing, that will take us off from our Duty, or lead us to Sin; and that which doth ſo, we muſt part with it, tho' it be never ſo dear to us. This we had twice in *Matthew*, Chap. 5. 29, 30. and Chap. 18. 8, 9. It is here urg'd ſomewhat more largely and preſſingly; certainly this requires our ſerious Regard, which is ſo much inſiſted upon. Obſerve,

1. The Caſe ſuppos'd, that our own *Hand*, or *Eye*, or *Foot offends us*, that the impure *Corruption* we indulge, is as dear to us as an Eye or a Hand; or that which is to us as an Eye or a Hand, is become an invincible *Temptation* to Sin, or *Occaſion* of it. Suppoſe the Beloved is become a Sin, or the Sin a Beloved. Suppoſe we cannot keep that which is dear to us, but it will be a Snare and a ſtumbling Block; ſuppoſe we muſt part with it, or part with Chriſt and a good Conſcience.

2. The Duty preſcrib'd in that Caſe, *pluck out the Eye, cut off the Hand and Foot*, mortifie the darling Luſt, kill it, crucifie it, ſtarve it, make no Proviſion for it. Let the Idols that have been *delectable* Things, be caſt away as *deteſtable* Things; keep at a Diſtance from that which is a Temptation, tho' never ſo pleaſing. 'Tis neceſſary the part that's Gangreen'd ſhould be taken off, for the Preſervation of the whole. *Immedicabile vulnus enſe recidendum eſt, ne pars ſincera trahatur.* We muſt put our ſelves to Pain, that we may not bring our ſelves to Ruin; ſelf muſt be deny'd, that it may not be deſtroy'd.

3. The neceſſity of doing this. The Fleſh muſt be mortified, that we may *enter into Life*, v. 43, 45. into the Kingdom of God, *v.* 47. Tho' by abandoning Sin, we may for the preſent feel our ſelves, as if we were *halt* and *maim'd*, it may ſeem to be a force put upon our ſelves, and may create us ſome Uneaſineſs, yet it is for *Life*, and all that Men have they will give for their Lives: It is for a *Kingdom*, the *Kingdom of God*, which we cannot otherwiſe obtain; theſe *Halts* and *Maims* will be the *Marks of the Lord Jeſus*, will be in that Kingdom *Scars of Honour.*

4. The Danger of not doing this. The Matter is brought to this Iſſue, that either Sin muſt die, or we muſt die; if we will lay this *Delilah* in our Boſom, it wil betray us; if we be rul'd by Sin, we ſhall inevitably be *ruin'd* by it. If we muſt keep our *two Hands*, and *two Eyes*, and *two Feet*, we muſt with them be *caſt into Hell.* Our Saviour often preſs'd our Duty upon us, from the Conſideration of the Torments of Hell, which we run our ſelves into if we continue in Sin. With what an Emphaſis of Terror are thoſe Words repeated Three times here, *Where their Worm dieth not, and their Fire is not quenched*, which is quoted from *Iſa.* 66. 24. (1.) The Reflections and Reproaches of the Sinner's own Conſcience, are the *Worm that dieth not*; which will cleave to the damned Soul, as the Worms do to the dead Body, and prey upon it, and never leave it till 'tis quite devour'd. *Son, remember*, will ſet this Worm a gnawing, and how terribly will it bite with that Word, *Prov.* 5. 12, 13. *How have I hated Inſtruction!* The Soul that is Food to this Worm dies not, and the Worm is bred in it, and one with it, and therefore neither doth that die. Damned Sinners will be to Eternity accuſing, condemning and upbraiding themſelves with their own Follies, which, how much ſoever they are now in Love with them, will at the laſt *bite like a Serpent*, and *ſting like an Adder.* (2.) The Wrath of God faſtning upon a guilty and polluted Conſcience, is the *Fire* that is *not quenched*; for it is the Wrath of the living God, the Eternal God, into whoſe Hands it is a fearful Thing to fall. There are no Operations of the Spirit of Grace upon the Souls of damned Sinners, and therefore there is nothing to alter the Nature of the Fuel, which muſt remain for ever combuſtible; nor is there any Application of the Merit of Chriſt to them, and therefore there is nothing to appeaſe or quench the Violence of the Fire. Dr. *Whitby* ſhews, that the Eternity of the Torments of Hell was not only the conſtant Faith of the *Chriſtian* Church, but had been ſo of the *Jewiſh* Church. *Joſephus* ſaith, that the *Phariſees* held, that the Souls of the Wicked were to be *puniſhed with perpetual Puniſhment*; and that there was appointed for them *a perpetual Priſon.* And *Philo* ſaith, the Puniſhment of the Wicked is, *to live for ever dying*, and to be *for ever in Pains and Griefs that never ceaſe.*

The two laſt Verſes are ſomewhat difficult, and Interpreters agree not in the Senſe of them; *for every one* in general, or rather, every one *of them* that are caſt into Hell, ſhall be *ſalted with Fire, and every Sacrifice ſhall be ſalted with Salt.* Therefore *have Salt in your ſelves.* (1.) It was appointed by the Law of *Moſes*, that every Sacrifice ſhould be *ſalted with Salt*, not to *preſerve* it, for it was to be immediately conſum'd, but becauſe it was the Food of God's Table, and no Fleſh is eaten without Salt; it was therefore particularly requir'd in the Meat-offerings, *Lev.* 2. 12. (2.) The Nature of Man being *corrupt*, and as ſuch being call'd *Fleſh*, (*Gen.* 6. 3. *Pſalm* 78. 39.) ſome way or other muſt be *ſalted*, in order to its being a Sacrifice to God. The *Salting* of Fiſh (and I think of other Things) they call the *curing* of it. (3.) Our chief Concern is to preſent our ſelves *living Sacrifices* to the Grace of God, *Rom.* 12. 1. and in order to our Acceptableneſs, we muſt be *ſalted with Salt*, i. e. our corrupt Affections muſt be ſubdued and mortified, and we muſt have in our Souls a ſavour of Grace. Thus the *offering up*, or *ſacrificing* of the *Gentiles*, is ſaid to be *acceptable, being ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt*, as the Sacrifices were *ſalted*, *Rom.* 15. 16. (4.) Thoſe that have the Salt of Grace, muſt make it appear that they have it; that they *have Salt in themſelves*, a living Principle of Grace in their Hearts, which works out all corrupt Diſpoſitions, and every Thing in the Soul that tends to *Putrefaction*, and would *offend* our God, or our own Conſciences, as unſavoury Meat doth. Our *Speech* muſt be *always with Grace, ſeaſon'd with* this Salt, that no *corrupt Communication* may *proceed out of our Mouth*, but we may loath it as much as we would to put ſtinking Meat into our Mouths. (5.) As this gracious Salt will keep our own Conſciences void of Offence, ſo it will keep our Converſation with others ſo, that we may not offend any of Chriſt's little ones, but may be *at Peace one with another*. (6.) We muſt not only have this Salt of Grace, but we muſt always retain the Reliſh and Savour of it; for if this *Salt loſe its Saltneſs*, if a Chriſtian revolt from his Chriſtianity, if he loſe the Savour of it, and be no longer under the Power and Influence of it, what can recover him? Or *wherewith will ye ſeaſon him?* This was ſaid, *Matt.* 5. 13. (7.) Thoſe that preſent not themſelves *living* Sacrifices to God's Grace, ſhall be made for ever *dying* Sacrifices to his *Juſtice*, and ſince they would not give Honour to him, he will get him Honour upon them; they would not be *ſalted with the Salt* of Divine Grace, would not admit that to ſubdue their corrupt Affections, no, they would not ſubmit to the Operation, could not bear the Corroſives that were neceſſary to eat out the proud Fleſh; 'twas to them like cutting off a Hand, or plucking out an Eye; and therefore in Hell, they ſhall be *ſalted with Fire*; Coals of Fire ſhall be *ſcatter'd* upon them, *Ezek.* 10. 2. as Salt upon the Meat, and *Brimſtone*, Job 18. 15. as Fire and Brimſtone were rain'd on *Sodom*; the Pleaſures they have liv'd *in*, *ſhall eat their Fleſh, as it were Fire*, James 5. 3. The Pain of mortifying the Fleſh now, is no more to be compar'd with the Puniſhment for not mortifying it, than *ſalting* with *burning*. And ſince he had ſaid, that the *Fire* of Hell *ſhall not be quenched*, but it might be objected, that the Fuel will not laſt always, he here intimates, that by the Power of God, it ſhall be made to laſt always; for thoſe that are *caſt into Hell*, will find the Fire to have not only the *corroding* Quality of Salt, but its *preſerving* Quality; from whence it is us'd to ſignifie that which is *laſting*; a Covenant of *Salt*, is a *perpetual* Covenant. And *Lot*'s Wife being turn'd into a *Pillar of Salt*, made her a remaining Monument of Divine Vengeance. Now ſince this will certainly be the Doom of thoſe that do not crucifie the Fleſh with its Affections and Luſts; let us, knowing this *Terror of the Lord*, be *perſwaded* to do it.

CHAP. X.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *Chriſt's Diſpute with the* Phariſees, *concerning Divorce*, v. 1—12. (2.) *The kind Entertainment he gave to the little Children that were brought to him to be bleſſed*, v. 13—16. (3.) *His Trial of the Rich Man, that enquired what he muſt do to get to Heaven*, v. 17—22. (4.) *His Diſcourſe with his Diſciples upon that Occaſion, concerning the Peril of Riches*, v. 23—27. *and the Advantage of being impoveriſh'd for his Sake*, v. 28—31. (5.) *The repeated Notice he gave his Diſciples of his Sufferings and Death approaching*, v. 32—34. (6.) *The Counſel he gave to* James *and* John, *to think of ſuffering with him, rather than of reigning with him*, v. 35—45. (7.) *The Cure of* Bartimeus, *a poor blind Man*, v. 46—52. *All which Paſſages of Story, we had the Subſtance of before*, Matt. 19, *and* 20.

AND he aroſe from thence, and cometh into the coaſts of Judea, by the farther ſide of Jordan, and the people reſort unto him again: And as he was wont, he taught them again. 2 And the Phariſees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, What did Moſes command you? 4 And they ſaid, Moſes ſuffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, For the hardneſs of your heart, he wrote you this precept: 6 But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. 7 For this cauſe ſhall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain ſhall be one fleſh: ſo then they are no more twain, but one fleſh. 9 What therefore God hath joyned together, let no man put aſunder. 10 And in the houſe his diſciples asked him again of the ſame matter. 11 And he ſaith unto them, Whoſoever ſhall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery againſt her. 12 And if a woman ſhall put away her husband, and be married to another, ſhe committeth adultery.

Our Lord Jeſus was an Itinerant Preacher; did not continue long in a Place, for the whole Land of *Canaan* was his Pariſh or Dioceſs, and therefore he would viſit every Part of it, and give Inſtruction to thoſe in the remoteſt Corners of it. Here we have him in the Coaſts of *Judea*, by the further ſide of *Jordan* Eaſtward, as we found him not long ſince, in the utmoſt borders Weſtward, near *Tyre* and *Sidon*. Thus was his Circuit like that of the Sun, from whoſe Light and Heat nothing is hid. Now here we have him,

1. *Reſorted to* by the *People*; v. 1. where-ever he was, they flock'd after him in Crowds; they came to him *again*, as they had done, when he had formerly been in theſe Parts, and *as he was wont, he taught them again*. *Note*, Preaching was Chriſt's conſtant Practice; 'twas what he was us'd to, and where-ever he came, he did *as he was wont*. In *Matthew*, 'tis ſaid, he *healed them*, here 'tis ſaid, he *taught them*; His Cures were to confirm his Doctrine, and to recommend it, and his Doctrine was to explain his Cures, and illuſtrate them. His *Teaching* was *healing* to poor Souls, He *taught them again*. *Note*, Even thoſe whom Chriſt hath taught, have need to be taught *again*. Such is the Fulneſs of the Chriſtian Doctrine, that there is ſtill more to be learn'd, and ſuch our Forgetfulneſs, that we need to be minded of what we do know.

2. We have him *diſputed with* by the *Phariſees*, who envy'd the Progreſs of his ſpiritual Arms, and did all they could to obſtruct and oppoſe it; to divert him, to perplex him, and to prejudice the People againſt him.

Here's, 1. A Queſtion they ſtarted concerning Divorce, *v.* 2. *Is it lawful for a Man to put away his Wife?* This was a good Queſtion, if it had been well put, and with an humble Deſire to know the Mind of God in this Matter; but they propos'd it *tempting him*, ſeeking an Occaſion againſt him, and an Opportunity to expoſe him, which ſide ſoever he ſhould take of the Queſtion. Miniſters muſt ſtand upon their Guard, leſt under Pretence of being adviſ'd with, they be enſnar'd.

2. Chriſt's Reply to them with a Queſtion, *v.* 3. *What did Moſes command you?* This he ask'd them, to teſtifie his Reſpect to the Law of *Moſes*, and to ſhew that he came not to deſtroy it, and to engage them to an univerſal impartial Reſpect for *Moſes*'s Writings, and to compare one Part of them with another.

3. The fair Account they give of what they found in the Law of *Moſes*, expreſly concerning Divorce, *v.* 4. Chriſt asked, *What Moſes commanded*, they own *Moſes* only *ſuffer'd* or *permitted* a Man to write his Wife a *Bill of Divorce*, and to put *her away*; Deut. 24. 1. If you will do it, you muſt do it *in Writing*, deliver'd into her own Hand, and ſo put her away, and never return to her again.

4. The Anſwer that Chriſt gave to their Queſtion, in which he abides by the Doctrine he had formerly laid down in this Caſe, *Matt.* 5. 32. *That whoſoever puts away his Wife, except for Fornication, cauſeth her to commit Adultery.* And to clear this, he here ſhews,

1. That the Reaſon why *Moſes* in his *Law* permitted Divorce was ſuch, as that they ought not to make uſe of that Permiſſion; for it was only *for the Hardneſs of their Hearts*, v. 5. leſt if they were not permitted to divorce their Wives, they ſhould murther them; ſo that none muſt put away their Wives, but ſuch as were willing to own, that their Hearts were ſo hard as to need this Permiſſion.

2. That the Account which *Moſes* in this *Hiſtory gives* of the Inſtitution of Marriage, affords ſuch a Reaſon againſt Divorce, as amounts to a Prohibition of it. So that if the Queſtion be, *What did Moſes command?* v. 3. it muſt be anſwer'd, tho' by a temporary Proviſo he allow'd Divorce to the *Jews*, yet by an Eternal Reaſon he forbad it to all the Children of *Adam* and *Eve*, and that's it we muſt abide by.

Moſes tells us, (1.) That God made Man *Male and Female; one* Male and *one* Female; ſo that *Adam could not* put away his Wife and take another, for there was no other to take, which was an Intimation to all his Sons, that they *muſt not*. (2.) When this Male and this Female were by the Ordinance of God joined together in Holy Marriage, the Law was, that a Man muſt *leave his Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife*, v. 7. which intimates not only the Nearneſs of the Relation, but the Perpetuity of it; he ſhall ſo cleave to his Wife, as not to be ſeparated from her. (3.) The Reſult of the Relation is, that tho' they are *Two*, yet they are *One*, they are *one Fleſh*, v. 8. The Union between them is the moſt intimate that can be, and as Dr. *Hammond* expreſſeth it, a ſacred Thing that muſt not be violated. (4.) God himſelf has *join'd them together*. He has not only as Creator, fitted them to be Comforts and Help-meets for each other, but he has in Wiſdom and Goodneſs appointed them, who are thus join'd together, to live together in Love, till Death parts them. Marriage is not an Invention of Men, but a Divine Inſtitution; and therefore is to be religiouſly obſerv'd, and the more, becauſe it is a Figure of the myſtical inſeparable Union between Chriſt and his Church.

Now from all this he inferrs, That Men ought not to *put* their Wives *aſunder* from them, whom God has put ſo near to them. The Bond which God himſelf has ty'd, is not to be lightly unty'd. They who are for divorcing their Wives for every Offence, would do well to conſider what would become of them, if God ſhould in like manner deal with them. See *Iſa.* 50. 1. *Jer.* 3. 1.

5. Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples in private about this Matter, *v.* 10, 11. It was an Advantage to them, that they had Opportunity of perſonal Converſe with Chriſt, not only about Goſpel Myſteries, but about moral Duties, for their further Satisfaction. No more is here related of this private Conference, but the Law Chriſt laid down in this Caſe. That it is Adultery for a Man to put away his Wife and marry another, 'tis Adultery *againſt the Wife* he puts away, it is a wrong to her, and a breach of his Contract with her, *v.* 11. He adds, *If a Woman ſhall put away her Husband*, i. e. elope from him, leave him by Conſent, and *be married to another*,

ſhe *commits Adultery*, v. 12. and it will be no Excuſe at all to her to ſay, that it was with the Conſent of her Husband. Wiſdom and Grace, Holineſs and Love reigning in the Heart, will make thoſe Commands eaſie, which to the Carnal Mind may be as a heavy Yoke.

13 And they brought young children to him, that he ſhould touch them; and *his* diſciples rebuked thoſe that brought *them*. 14 But when Jeſus ſaw *it*, he was much diſpleaſed, and ſaid unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of ſuch is the kingdom of God. 15 Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein. 16 And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and bleſſed them.

It is look'd upon as the Indication of a kind and tender Diſpoſition, to take Notice of little Children, and this was remarkable in our Lord Jeſus; which is an Encouragement not only to little Children to apply themſelves to Chriſt when they are very young, but to grown People, who are conſcious to themſelves of Weakneſs and Childiſhneſs, and of being through manifold Infirmities helpleſs, and uſeleſs like little Children. Here we have,

1. Little Children brought to Chriſt, *v.* 13. Their Parents, or whoever they were that had the nurſing of them, brought them to him that he ſhould *touch them*, in Token of his commanding and conferring a Bleſſing on them. It doth not appear, they needed any bodily *Cure*, nor were they capable of being *taught*: But it ſeems, (1.) They that had the Care of them were moſtly concern'd *about their Souls*, their better Part, which ought to be the principal Care of all Parents for their Children; for that's the principal Part, and it's well with them, if it be well with their Souls. (2.) They believ'd that Chriſt's Bleſſing would do their Souls good, and therefore to him they bring them, that he might *touch* them, knowing that he could reach their Hearts, when nothing their Parents could ſay to them, or do for them, would reach them. We may preſent our Children to Chriſt now he is in Heaven, for from thence he can reach them with his Bleſſing, and therein we may act Faith upon the Fulneſs and Extent of his Grace, the kind Intimations he hath always given of Favour to the Seed of the Faithful, the Tenor of the Covenant with *Abraham*, and the Promiſe *to us and to our Children*, eſpecially that great Promiſe of pouring his *Spirit upon our Seed*, and his *Bleſſing* upon *our Off-ſpring*, Iſa. 44. 3.

2. The Diſcouragement which the Diſciples gave to the bringing of Children to Chriſt. They *rebuked them that brought them*; as if they had been ſure, they knew their Maſter's Mind in this Matter, whereas he had lately caution'd them not to *deſpiſe the little Ones*.

3. The Encouragement Chriſt gave to it. (1.) He took it very ill at his Diſciples for keeping them off: *When he ſaw it, he was much diſpleaſed*, v. 14. What do you mean? Will you hinder me from doing good, from doing good to the riſing Generation, to the Lambs of the Flock? Chriſt is very angry with his own Diſciples, if they diſcountenance any in coming to him themſelves, or in bringing their Children to him. (2.) He order'd that they ſhould be *brought to him*, and nothing ſaid or done to hinder them. Suffer *little Children*, as ſoon as they are capable, to *come to me*, to offer up their Supplications to me, and to receive Inſtructions from me. Little Children are welcome betimes to the Throne of Grace with their *Hoſanna*'s. (3.) He own'd them as Members of his Church, as they had been of the *Jewiſh* Church. He came to ſet up the *Kingdom of God* among Men, and took this Occaſion to declare, that that Kingdom admitted *little Children* to be the Subjects of it, and gave them a Title to the Privileges of Subjects. Nay, the Kingdom of God is to be kept up by ſuch: They muſt be taken in, when they are little Children, that they may be ſecur'd for hereafter to bear up the Name of Chriſt. (4.) That there muſt be ſomething of the Temper and Diſpoſition of little Children found in all that Chriſt will own and bleſs. We muſt *receive the Kingdom of God as little Children*, v. 15. That is, we muſt ſtand affected to Chriſt and his Grace, as little Children do to their Parents, Nurſes, and Teachers. We muſt be *inquiſitive* as Children, muſt learn as Children, that's the Learning Age, and in Learning muſt *believe, Oportet diſcentem credere*. The Mind of a Child is white Paper (*Tabula raſa*) you may write upon it what you will, ſo muſt our Minds be to the Pen of the Bleſſed Spirit. Children are under Government, ſo muſt we be, *Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?* We muſt receive the Kingdom of God as the Child *Samuel* did, *Speak, Lord, for thy Servant hears*. Little Children depend upon their Parent's Wiſdom and Care, and are carry'd in their Arms, go where they ſend them, and take what they provide for them; and thus muſt we receive the *Kingdom of God*, with an humble Reſignation of our ſelves to Jeſus Chriſt, and an eaſie Dependance upon him both for Strength and Righteouſneſs, for Tuition, Proviſion, and a Portion. (5.) He receiv'd the Children, and gave them what was deſir'd, *v.* 16. *He took them up in his Arms*, in Token of his affectionate Concern for them, *put his Hands upon them*, as was deſir'd, and *bleſſed them*. See how he out-did the Deſires of theſe Parents; they begg'd he would touch them, but he did more. 1. He *took them in his Arms*. Now the Scripture was fulfill'd, *Iſa.* 40. 11. *He ſhall gather the Lambs in his Arms, and carry them in his Boſom*. Time was when Chriſt himſelf was taken up in old *Simeon*'s Arms, *Luke* 2. 28. And now he took up theſe Children, not complaining of the Burthen, as *Moſes* did, when he was bid to *carry* Iſrael (that peeviſh Child) *in his Boſom, as a nurſing Father bears the ſucking Child*, Numb. 11. 12. but pleas'd with it. If we in a right manner bring our Children to Chriſt, he will take them up not only in the Arms of his Power and Providence, but in the Arms of his Pity and Grace, as *Ezek.* 16. 8. underneath them are the *Everlaſting Arms*. 2. He *put his Hands upon them*, noting the beſtowing of his Spirit upon them, (for that's the Hand of the Lord) and his ſetting them apart for himſelf. 3. He *bleſſed them* with the ſpiritual Bleſſings he came to give. Our Children are happy, if they have but the *Mediator's Bleſſing* for their Portion. 'Tis true, we do not read that he baptized theſe Children, Baptiſm was not fully ſettled, as the Door of Admiſſion into the Church, till after Chriſt's Reſurrection, but he aſſerted their viſible Church-memberſhip, and by another Sign beſtow'd thoſe Bleſſings upon them, which are now appointed to be convey'd and conferr'd by Baptiſm, the Seal of the Promiſe, which is *to us* and *our Children*.

17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? *There is* none good, but one, *that is* God. 19 Thou knoweſt the Commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. 20 And he anſwered and ſaid unto him, Maſter, all theſe have I obſerved from my youth. 21 Then Jeſus beholding him, loved him, and ſaid unto him, One thing thou lackeſt: go thy way, ſell whatſoever thou haſt, and give to the poor; and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven; and come, take up the croſs, and follow me. 22 And he was ſad at that ſaying, and went away grieved: for he had great poſſeſſions. 23 And Jeſus looked round about, and ſaith unto his diſciples, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God? 24 And the diſciples were aſtoniſhed at his words. But Jeſus anſwereth again, and ſaith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that truſt in riches, to enter into the kingdom of God! 25 It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they were aſtoniſhed out of meaſure, ſaying among themſelves, Who then can be ſaved? 27 And Jeſus looking upon them, ſaith, With men *it is* impoſſible, but not with God: for with God all things are poſſible. 28 Then Peter began to ſay unto him; Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, There is no man that hath left houſe, or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my ſake and the goſpels, 30 But he ſhall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houſes, and brethren, and ſiſters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with perſecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life. 31 But many *that are* firſt, ſhall be laſt: and the laſt, firſt.

Here's, 1. A *hopeful Meeting* between Chriſt and a *young Man*, ſo he is ſaid to be, *Mat.* 19. 20, 22. and a *Ruler*, Luke 18. 18. a Perſon of Quality. Some Circumſtances here are, which we had not in *Matthew*, which make his Addreſs to Chriſt very promiſing.

(1.) He came *running* to Chriſt, which was an Indication of his Humility; he laid aſide the Gravity and Grandeur of a Ruler, when he came to Chriſt: And of his Earneſtneſs and Importunity: He *ran* as one *in haſte*, and longing to be in Converſation with Chriſt. He had now an Opportunity of conſulting this great Prophet, in the Things that belong'd to his Peace, and he would not let ſlip the Opportunity.

(2.) He came to him when he was *in the Way*, in the midſt of Company; he did not inſiſt upon a private Conference with him by Night, as *Nicodemus* did, tho' like him he was a Ruler, but *when he ſhall find him without*, will embrace that Opportunity of adviſing with him, *and not be aſham'd*, Cant. 8. 1.

(3.) He *kneel'd to him*, in Token of the great Value and Veneration he had for him, as a Teacher come from God, and his earneſt Deſire to be taught by him. He bow'd the Knee to the Lord Jeſus, as one that would not only *do obeiſance* to him now, but would *yield Obedience* to him always; he *bow'd the Knee*, as one that meant to *bow the Soul* to him.

(4.) His Addreſs to him was ſerious and weighty. *Good Maſter, What ſhall I do, that I may inherit Eternal Life?* Eternal Life was an Article of his Creed, tho' then deny'd by the *Sadducees* a prevailing Party; he thinks it a Thing poſſible, that he may *inherit Eternal Life,* looking upon it not only as ſet before us, but offer'd to us; he asks, What he ſhall do now that he may be happy for ever? Moſt Men enquire for Good to be *had* in this World, *Pſalm* 4. 6. *Any Good,* he asks for *Good to be done* in this World, in order to the Enjoyment of the greateſt Good in the other World; not who will make us to *ſee Good,* but to *do Good;* he enquires for *Happineſs* in the way of *Duty;* the *Summum Bonum,* which *Solomon* was in Queſt of, was *that Good for the Sons of Men which they ſhould do,* Eccl. 2. 3. Now this was, (1.) A very ſerious Queſtion in it ſelf, 'twas about Eternal Things, and his own Concern in thoſe Things. *Note,* Then there begins to be ſome Hopes of People, when they begin to enquire ſolicitouſly, what they ſhould do to get to Heaven. (2.) It was propos'd to a right Perſon one that was every Way fit to anſwer it, being himſelf *the Way, the Truth,* and *the Life,* the true Way to Life, to Eternal Life; who came *from Heaven* on purpoſe, firſt to *lay open for us,* and then to *lay open to us;* firſt to make, and then to make known the way *to Heaven. Note,* Thoſe who would know what they ſhall do to be ſaved, muſt apply themſelves to Chriſt, and enquire of him; 'tis peculiar to the Chriſtian Religion both to ſhew eternal Life, and to ſhew the way to it. (3.) 'Twas propos'd with a good Deſign, to be inſtructed. We find this ſame Queſtion put by a Lawyer, not *kneeling,* but ſtanding up, *Luke* 10. 25. with a bad Deſign, to pick Quarrels with him; he *tempted him, ſaying, Maſter, What ſhall I do?* 'tis not ſo much the good *Words,* as the good *Intention* of them that Chriſt looks at.

(5.) Chriſt encouraged this Addreſs, (1.) By *aſſiſting his Faith,* v. 17. He call'd him, *Good Maſter,* and Chriſt would have him mean thereby, that he look'd upon him to be *God,* ſince there is none Good but *one,* that is *God,* who is one, and his Name one; *Zech.* 14. 9. Our *Engliſh* Word *God,* doubtleſs hath affinity with *Good;* as the *Hebrews* Name God by his Power, *Elohim,* the *ſtrong God,* ſo we by his Goodneſs, the *Good God.* (2.) By directing his Practice, *v.* 19. *Keep the Commandments,* and thou knoweſt what they are; he mentions the Six Commandments of the ſecond Table, which preſcribe our Duty to our Neighbour, he inverts the Order, putting the Seventh Commandent before the Sixth, to intimate that *Adultery* is a Sin no leſs heinous, than *Murther* it ſelf. The Fifth Commandment is here put laſt, as that which ſhould eſpecially be remember'd and obſerved, to keep us to all the reſt. Inſtead of the Tenth Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not covet,* our Saviour here puts, *Defraud not.* Μὴ ἀποστερήσῃς, That is, ſaith Dr. *Hammond,* Thou ſhalt reſt contented with thy own, and not ſeek to increaſe it by the Diminution of other Mens. 'Tis a Rule of Juſtice, not to advance or enrich our ſelves, by doing Wrong or Injury to any other.

(6.) The Young Man bid fair for Heaven, having been free from any open groſs Violations of the Divine Commands. Thus far he was able to ſay in ſome meaſure, *v.* 20. *Maſter, all theſe have I obſerved from my Youth;* he thought he had, and his Neighbours thought ſo too. *Note,* Ignorance of the extent and ſpiritual Nature of the Divine Law, makes People think themſelves in a better Condition than really they are. *Paul* was alive *without the Law.* But when he ſaw that to be *ſpiritual,* he ſaw himſelf to be *carnal,* Rom. 7. 9, 14. However, he that could ſay, he was free from ſcandalous Sin, went further than many in the way to Eternal Life. But tho' we know nothing by our ſelves, yet are we not thereby juſtified.

(7.) Chriſt had a Kindneſs for him. *Jeſus beholding him, loved him,* v. 21. He was pleas'd to find that he had liv'd inoffenſively, and pleas'd to ſee, that he was inquiſitive how to live better than ſo. Chriſt particularly *loves* to ſee young People, and rich People, *asking the way to Heaven, with their Faces thitherward.*

2. Here's a *ſorrowful Parting* between Chriſt and this young Man.

1. Chriſt gave him a Command of Trial, by which it would appear whether he did in Sincerity aim at eternal Life, and preſs towards it: He ſeem'd to have his Heart much upon it, and if ſo, he is what he ſhould be, but has he indeed his Heart upon it? Bring him to the Touchſtone. (1.) Can he find in his Heart to *part with his Riches* for the Service of Chriſt; He hath a good Eſtate, and now ſhortly at the firſt founding of the Chriſtian Church, the Neceſſity of the Caſe will require, that thoſe that have *Lands ſell them, and lay the Money at the Apoſtles Feet,* and how will he diſpenſe with that? *Acts* 4. 34. After a while Tribulation and Perſecution will ariſe, becauſe of the World; and he muſt be forc'd to ſell his Eſtate, or have it taken from him, and how will he like that? Let him know the worſt, now if he will not come up to theſe Terms, let him quit his Pretenſions; as good at firſt as at laſt. *Sell whatſoever thou haſt* over and above what is neceſſary for thy Support; probably he had no Family to provide for; let him therefore be a *Father to the Poor,* and make them his Heirs. Every Man according to his Ability muſt relieve the Poor, and be content, when there's Occaſion, to ſtraiten himſelf to do it. Worldly Wealth is given us not only as *Maintenance* to bear our Charges through this World according to our Place in it, but as a *Talent,* to be us'd and employ'd for the Glory of our great *Maſter,* in the World, who hath ſo order'd it, that the poor we ſhould have always with us, as his Receivers. (2.) Can he find in his Heart to go through the hardeſt coſtlieſt Services he may be call'd to as a Diſciple of Chriſt, and depend upon him for a Recompence *in Heaven.* He asks Chriſt what he ſhall do more than he has done to obtain *Eternal Life,* and Chriſt puts it to him, whether he has indeed that firm Belief of, and that high Value for Eternal Life, that he ſeems to have. Doth he really believe there is a Treaſure in Heaven ſufficient to make up all he can leave, or loſe, or lay out for Chriſt? Is he willing to deal with Chriſt *upon Truſt?* Can he give him Credit for all he is worth: And be willing to bear a preſent Croſs in expectation of a future Crown.

2. Upon this he flew off, *v.* 22. *He was ſad at that ſaying,* was ſorry he could not be a Follower of Chriſt upon any eaſier Terms than leaving all to follow him; that he could not *lay hold* on eternal Life, and *keep hold* of his temporal Poſſeſſions too. But ſince he could not come up to the Terms of Diſcipleſhip, he was ſo fair as not to pretend to it, *He went away griev'd.* Here appear'd the Truth of that, *Matt.* 6. 24. *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon,* while he held to *Mammon* he did in effect *deſpiſe* Chriſt, as all thoſe do who prefer the World before him. He that bids for what he has a Mind of in the Market, yet goes away griev'd, and leaves it, becauſe he cannot have it at his own Price. Two Words to a Bargain. Motions are not Marriages. That which ruin'd this young Man was, *he had great Poſſeſſions:* Thus the *Proſperity of Fools deſtroys them,* and thoſe who ſpend their Days in Wealth, are tempted to ſay to God, depart from us, or to their Hearts depart from God.

3. Here's Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples. We are tempted to wiſh that Chriſt had *mollified* that Saying which frighten'd this young Gentleman from following him, and by any Explanation taken of the Harſhneſs of it: But he knew all Men's Hearts, he would not court him to be his Follower, becauſe he was a *rich Man,* and a Ruler; but if he will go, let him go; Chriſt will keep no Man againſt his Will; and therefore we do not find that Chriſt called him back, but took this Occaſion to inſtruct his Diſciples, in two Things.

Firſt, The Difficulty of the Salvation of thoſe that have an Abundance of this World; becauſe there are few who have *a deal to leave* that can be *perſuaded to leave it* for Chriſt, or to lay it out in doing Good.

1. Chriſt aſſerts this here. *He look'd about* upon his *Diſciples,* becauſe he would have them all take Notice of what he ſaid, that by it they might have their Judgments rightly inform'd, and their Miſtakes rectified concerning worldly Wealth, which they were apt to over-rule. *How hardly ſhall they that have Riches enter into the Kingdom of God,* v. 23. They have many Temptations to grapple with, and many Difficulties to get over, which lie not in the Way of poor People. But he explains himſelf, *v.* 24. where he calls the Diſciples *Children,* becauſe as ſuch they ſhould be *taught* by him, and *portion'd* by him with better Things than this young Man left Chriſt to cleave to; and whereas he had ſaid how hardly thoſe that *have Riches* will get to Heaven; here he tells them that the Danger aroſe not ſo much from their *having Riches* as from their *truſting to them,* and placing their Confidence in them expecting Protection, Proviſion, and a Portion from them; ſaying that *to their Gold* which they ſhould ſay only to their God, *Thou art my Hope,* Job. 31. 24. They that have ſuch a Value as this for the Wealth of the World, will never be brought to put a right Value upon Chriſt and his Grace. They that *have* never ſo much Riches, but do not *truſt in them,* that ſee the Vanity of them, and their utter Inſufficiency to make a Soul happy, have got over the Difficulty, and can eaſily part with them for Chriſt: But they that have never ſo little, if they ſet their Hearts upon that little, and place their Happineſs in it, 'twill keep them from Chriſt. He enforceth this Aſſertion with, *v.* 25. *It is eaſier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle than for a rich Man* that *truſts in Riches,* or inclines to do ſo, to enter into the *Kingdom of God.* The Diſproportion here ſeems ſo great (tho' the more ſo, the more it anſwers the Intention) that ſome have labour'd to bring the Camel and the Eye of the Needle a little nearer together. (1.) Some imagine there might (be ſome Wicket-Gate or Door at *Jeruſalem,* commonly known by the Name of the Needle's Eye for its ſtraitneſs, thro' which a Camel could not be got, unleſs he were unloaded, and made to kneel, as thoſe Camels, *Gen.* 24. 11. So a rich Man cannot get to Heaven unleſs he be willing to part with the Burthen of his worldly Wealth and ſtoop to the Duties of a humble Religion, and ſo enter in *at the ſtrait Gate.* (2.) Others ſuggeſt that the Word we tranſlate a *Camel* ſometimes ſignifies a *Cable-Rope,* which tho' not to be got thro' a Needle's Eye, yet is of greater Affinity to it. A rich Man compar'd with the Poor, is as a Cable to a ſingle Thread, ſtronger but not ſo pliable, and 'twill not go thro' the *Needle's Eye* unleſs it be untwiſted; ſo the rich Man muſt be looſed and diſentangled from his Riches, and then there is ſome hopes of him, that Thread by Thread he may be got thro' the Eye of the Needle, otherwiſe he is good for nothing but to caſt Anchor in the Earth.

2. This Truth was very ſurprizing to the Diſciples, they were *aſtoniſh'd at his Words,* v. 24. *they were aſtoniſh'd out of Meaſure, and ſaid among themſelves, Who then can be ſaved?* They knew what were generally the Sentiments of the *Jewiſh* Teachers, that the Spirit of God chuſeth to reſide upon rich Men, nay, they knew what abundance of Promiſes there were in the Old Teſtament of temporal good Things: They knew likewiſe that all either are rich, or fain would be ſo, and that they who are Rich have ſo much the larger Opportunities of doing Good, and therefore were amazed to hear that it ſhould be ſo hard for rich People to go to Heaven.

3. Chriſt reconcil'd them to it by referring it to the Almighty Power of God to help even rich People over the Difficulties that lie in the Way of their Salvation, *v.* 23. He *look'd upon them,* to engage their Attention, and ſaid, *with Men it is impoſſible*; rich People cannot by their own Skill or Reſolution get over theſe Difficulties, but the Grace of God can do it, for *with him all things are poſſible.* If *the Righteous ſcarcely are ſaved,* much more may we ſay ſo of the *Rich*; and therefore when any get to Heaven they muſt give all the Glory to God, who worketh in them *both to will and to do.*

Secondly, The Greatneſs of the Salvation of thoſe that have but a little of this World, and leave it for Chriſt. This he ſpeaks of upon Occaſion of *Peter*'s mentioning what he and the reſt of the Diſciples had left to follow him. *Behold,* (ſaith he) *we have left all to follow thee,* v. 28. You have *done well,* ſaith Chriſt, and it will prove in the End that you have done well *for your ſelves,* you ſhall be abundantly recompens'd, and not only you ſhall be *re-imburs'd* who have left but a little, but thoſe that have never ſo much, tho' it were ſo much as this young man had that could not perſuade himſelf to quit it for Chriſt; yet they ſhall have much more than an equivalent for it. (1.) The Loſs is ſuppos'd to be very great; he inſtanceth, (1.) in worldly Wealth, *Houſes* are here put firſt, and *Lands* laſt: If a Man quit his *Houſe,* which ſhould be for his Habitation, and his *Land,* which ſhould be for his Maintenance, and ſo makes himſelf a Beggar and an Out-caſt; this has been the choice of ſuffering Saints, farewel Houſes and Lands, tho' never ſo convenient and deſirable, tho' the Inheritance of Father, for the Houſe which is from Heaven, and the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, where are many Manſions. (2.) In dear Relations, *Father and Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Siſters*; in theſe, as much as in any temporal Bleſſing the Comfort of Life is bound up, without theſe the World would be a Wilderneſs, yet when we muſt either forſake theſe, or Chriſt, we muſt remember, that we ſtand in nearer Relation to Chriſt, than we do to any Creature; and therefore to keep in with him, we muſt be content to break with all the World, and ſay to Father and Mother, as *Levi* did, *I have not known you.* The greateſt Trial of a good Man's Conſtancy is, when his Love to Chriſt comes to ſtand in Competition with a Love that is lawful, nay, that is his Duty. 'Tis eaſie to ſuch a one to forſake a Luſt for Chriſt, for he hath that within him that riſeth againſt it: But to forſake a *Father,* a *Brother,* a *Wife* for Chriſt, whom he knows he muſt love, is hard. And yet he muſt do ſo, rather than deny or diſown Chriſt. Thus great is the Lord ſuppos'd to be, but it is *for Chriſt's ſake,* that he may be honour'd, and the *Goſpel's* that may be promoted and propagated. It is not the *Sufferings,* but the *Cauſes* that makes the *Martyr.* And therefore, (2.) The Advantage will be great. (1.) *They ſhall receive a hundred-fold in this Time, Houſe and Brethren and Siſters*; not *in Specie,* but that which is equivalent. He ſhall have abundance of Comfort, while he lives, ſufficient to make up all his Loſſes; his Relation to Chriſt, his Communion with the Saints, and his Title to Eternal Life, ſhall be to him *Brethren,* and *Siſters,* and *Houſes,* and all. God's Providence gave *Job* double to what he had had, but ſuffering Chriſtians ſhall have a *hundred-fold* in the Comforts of the Spirit ſweetning their Creature Comforts. But obſerve, 'tis added here in *Mark, with Perſecutions.* Even when they are Gainers by Chriſt, let them ſtill expect to be ſufferers for him; and not to be out of the reach of Perſecution, till they come to Heaven. Nay, The *Perſecution* ſeems to come in here among *the Receivings* in this preſent Time, for unto you it is given, not only to believe in Chriſt, but alſo to *ſuffer for his Name,* yet this is not all. (2.) They ſhall have *Eternal Life in the World to come.* If they receive an hundred-fold in this World, one would think they ſhould not be encouraged to expect any more. Yet as if that were a ſmall Matter, they ſhall have *Life Eternal* into the Bargain; which is more than Ten thouſand-fold, Ten thouſand Times told, for all their Loſſes. But becauſe they talk'd ſo much, and really more than became them of *leaving all* for Chriſt, he tells them, tho' they were *firſt called,* yet there ſhould be Diſciples call'd after them, that ſhould be preferr'd before them, as St. *Paul,* who was one *born out of due Time,* and yet labour'd more abundanty than all the reſt of the Apoſtles, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. Then the *firſt* were *laſt,* and the *laſt firſt.*

32 And they were in the way going up to Jeruſalem. and Jeſus went before them: and they were amazed, and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things ſhould happen unto him. 33 *Saying,* Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and the Son of man ſhall be delivered unto the chief prieſts, and unto the ſcribes; and they ſhall condemn him to death, and ſhall deliver him to the Gentiles; 34 And they ſhall mock him, and ſhall ſcourge him, and ſhall ſpit upon him, and ſhall kill him: and the third day he ſhall riſe again. 35 And James and John the ſons of Zebedee come unto him, ſaying, Maſter, we would that thou ſhouldſt do for us whatſoever we ſhall deſire. 36 And he ſaid unto them, What would ye that I ſhould do for you? 37 They ſaid unto him, Grant unto us that we may ſit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy Glory. 38 But Jeſus ſaid unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptiſm that I am baptized with? 39 And they ſaid unto him, We can. And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Ye ſhall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptiſm that I am baptized withal, ſhall ye be baptized: 44 But to ſit on my right hand and on my left hand, is not mine to give, but *it ſhall be given* to them for whom it is prepared. 41 And when the ten heard *it,* they began to be much diſpleaſed with James and John. 42 But Jeſus called them to him, and ſaith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, exerciſe lordſhip over them; and their great ones exerciſe authority upon them. 43 But ſo ſhall it not be among you: but whoſoever will be great among you, ſhall be your miniſter: 44 And whoſoever of you will be the chiefeſt, ſhall be ſervant of all. 45 For even the Son of man came not to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many.

Here's *Firſt,* Chriſt's Prediction of his own Sufferings; this String he harped much upon, tho' in the Ears of his Diſciples it ſounded very harſh and unpleaſing.

1. See here how bold he was, when they were going up to *Jeruſalem, Jeſus went before them,* as the *Captain of our Salvation,* that was now to be *made perfect through Sufferings,* v. 32. Thus he ſhew'd himſelf forward to go on with his Undertaking, even when he came to the hardeſt part of it; now the Time was at hand, he ſaid, *Lo I come,* ſo far from *drawing back,* that now more than ever he *preſs'd forwards. Jeſus went before them, and they were amaz'd.* They began now to conſider what imminent Danger they run themſelves into, when they went to *Jeruſalem,* how very malicious the *Sanhedrim* which ſat there was againſt their Maſter and them, and they were ready to tremble at the Thought of it. To hearten them therefore, Chriſt *went before them:* Come, ſaith he, ſure you will venture where your Maſter ventures. *Note,* When we ſee our ſelves entring upon Sufferings, it is encouraging to ſee our Maſter go before us. Or, he *went before them,* and *therefore* they were *amaz'd,* they admir'd to ſee with what Chearfulneſs and Alacrity he went on, tho' he knew he was going to ſuffer and die. *Note,* Chriſt's Courage and Conſtancy in going on with his Undertaking for our Salvation, is, and will be the wonder of all his Diſciples.

2. See here how timorous and faint-hearted his Diſciples were. *As they followed they were afraid,* afraid for themſelves, as being apprehenſive of their own Danger; and juſtly might they be *aſham'd* of their being thus *afraid.* Their Maſter's Courage ſhould have put Spirit into them.

3. See here what Method he took to ſilence their Fears: He did not go about to make the Matter better than it was, nor to feed them with Hopes that he might eſcape the Storm, but told them *again* what he had often told them before, the *Things that ſhould happen to him.* He knew the worſt of it, and therefore went on thus boldly, and he will let them know the worſt of it. Come, *be not afraid*; for, (1.) There's no Remedy, the Matter is determin'd, and cannot be avoided. (2.) 'Tis only the *Son of Man* that ſhall ſuffer, their Time of Suffering was not at Hand; he will now provide for their Security. (3.) He *ſhall riſe again*; the iſſue of his Sufferings will be glorious to himſelf, and advantageous to all that are his, *v.* 33, 34. The Method and Particulars of Chriſt's Sufferings are more largely foretold here, than in any other of the Predictions; that he ſhall firſt be deliver'd up by *Judas,* to the *chief Prieſts and the Scribes*; that they ſhall condemn him to Death; but not having Power to put him to Death, they ſhall *deliver him to the* Gentiles, to the *Roman* Powers, and they ſhall *mock him,* and *ſcourge him,* and *ſpit upon him, and kill him.* Chriſt had a perfect foreſight, not only of his own Death, but of all the aggravating Circumſtances of it, and yet he thus went forth to meet it.

Secondly, The check he gave to Two of his Diſciples for their ambitious Requeſt. This Story is much the ſame here, as we had it, *Matt.* 20. 20. only there they are ſaid to have made their Requeſt by their Mother, here they are ſaid to make it themſelves; ſhe introduc'd them, and preſented their Petition, and then they ſeconded it, and aſſented to it. *Note,* 1. As on the one hand, there are ſome that do not *uſe,* ſo on the other hand, there are ſome that do *abuſe* the great Encouragements Chriſt has given us in Prayer. He hath ſaid, *Ask, and it ſhall be given you*; and it is a commendable Faith to ask for the great Things he has promis'd: But it was a culpable Preſumption in theſe Diſciples to make ſuch a boundleſs Demand upon their Maſter. *We would that thou ſhouldſt do for us, whatſoever we ſhall deſire*; we had much better leave it to him to do for us what he ſees fit, and he will do more than we can deſire, *Eph.* 3. 20.

2. We muſt be cautious how we make general Promiſes; Chriſt would not engage to do for them whatever they deſir'd, but would know from them what it was they did deſire. *What would ye that I ſhould do for you?* He would have them go on with their Suit, that they might be made aſham'd of it.

3. Many have been led into a Snare by falſe Notions of Chriſt's Kingdom, as if it were *of this World*, and like the Kingdoms of the Potentates of this World. *James* and *John* conclude if Chriſt *riſe again* he muſt be a King, and if he be a King his Apoſtles muſt be Peers, and one of theſe would willingly be the *Primus par Regni*, and the other next him, like *Joſeph* in *Pharaoh*'s Court, or *Daniel* in *Darius*'s.

4. Worldly Honour is a glittering Thing, with which the Eyes of Chriſt's own Diſciples have many a Time been dazled. Whereas to *be Good* ſhould be more our Care than to *look Great*, or to have the Preheminence.

5. Our Weakneſs and Short-ſightedneſs appears as much in our Prayers, as in any Thing. We cannot order our Speech when we ſpeak to God, by reaſon of Darkneſs, both concerning him and concerning our ſelves. 'Tis Folly to preſcribe to God, and Wiſdom to ſubſcribe.

6. It is the Will of Chriſt that we ſhould prepare for Sufferings, and leave it to him to recompence us for them. He needs not be put in Mind, as *Ahaſuerus* did, of the Services of his People; nor can he forget their *work of Faith and Labour of Love.* Our Care muſt be, that we may have Wiſdom and Grace to know how to ſuffer with him, and then we may truſt him to provide in the beſt manner how we ſhall reign with him, and when and where, and what the Degrees of our Glory ſhall be.

Thirdly, The Check he gave to the reſt of the Diſciples, for their uneaſineſs at it. *They began to be much diſpleaſed*, to have *Indignation about James and John*, v. 41. They were angry at them for affecting Precedency, not becauſe it did ſo ill become the Diſciples of Chriſt, but becauſe each of them hoped to have it themſelves. When the *Cynick* trampled on *Alexander*'s Foot-cloth, with *Calco faſtum Alexandri*, Now I tread on *Alexander*'s Pride, he was ſeaſonably check'd with *ſed majori faſtu*, but with greater Pride of thine own; ſo theſe diſcover'd their own Ambition in their Diſpleaſure at the Ambition of *James* and *John*; and Chriſt took this occaſion to warn them againſt it, and all their Succeſſors in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, *v.* 42, 43. He *call'd them to him* in a familiar Way, to give them an Example of Condeſcenſion, that when he was reproving their Ambition, and to teach them never to bid their Diſciples keep their Diſtance. He ſhews them,

1. That Dominion was generally *abus'd in the World*, v. 42. *They which ſeem to rule over the* Gentiles, that have the Name and Title of Rulers, *they exerciſe Lordſhip over them*, that's all they Study and Aim at, not ſo much to protect them, and provide for their Welfare, as to *exerciſe Authority upon them*; they *will be obey'd*, aim to be Arbitrary, and to have their Will in every Thing. *Sic volo, ſic jubeo, ſtat pro ratione voluntas.* Their Care is what they ſhall get by their Subjects, to ſupport their own Pomp and Grandeur, not what they ſhall do for them.

2. That therefore it ought not to be *admitted into the Church*; it ſhall *not be ſo among you*; thoſe that ſhall be put under your Charge, muſt be as Sheep under the Charge of the *Shepherd*; who is to tend them and feed them, and be a Servant to them, not as Horſes under the Command of the Driver, that works them and beats them, and gets his Pennyworths out of them. He that affects to be Great and Chief, that thruſts himſelf into a ſecular Dignity and Dominion, *he ſhall be Servant of all*, he ſhall be mean and contemptible in the Eyes of all that are Wiſe and Good; *He that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed.* Or rather, He that would be *truly* Great, and Chief, he muſt lay out himſelf to do Good to all, muſt ſtoop to the meaneſt Services, and labour in the hardeſt Services. Thoſe not only ſhall be moſt *honour'd* hereafter, but are moſt *honourable* now, who are moſt uſeful. To convince them of this, he ſets before them his own Example, *v.* 45. The *Son of Man* ſubmits firſt to the greateſt Hardſhips and Hazards, and then enters into his Glory, and can you expect to come to it any other way; or to have more eaſe and honour than he has? (1.) He takes upon him *the Form of a Servant*, comes not to be *miniſtred to*, and waited upon, but *to Miniſter*, and waits to be gracious. (2.) He becomes *obedient to Death*, and to its Dominion, for he *gives his Life a Ranſom for many*: Did he die for the Benefit of good People, and ſhall not we ſtudy to live for their Benefit?

46 And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his diſciples, and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the ſon of Timeus, ſat by the high-way ſide, begging. 47 And when he heard that it was Jeſus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and ſay, Jeſus, thou ſon of David, have mercy on me. 48 And many charged him that he ſhould hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou ſon of David, have mercy on me. 49 And Jeſus ſtood ſtill, and commanded him to be called: and they call the blind man, ſaying unto him, Be of good comfort, riſe; he calleth thee. 50 And he caſting away his garment, roſe, and came to Jeſus. 51 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him: What wilt thou that I ſhould do unto thee? The blind man ſaid unto him, Lord, that I might receive my ſight. 52 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his ſight, and followed Jeſus in the way.

This Paſſage of Story agrees with that, *Matt.* 20. 29, &c. only that there we were told of *Two* Blind Men, here and *Luke* 18. 35. only of *One*; but if there were *Two*, there was *One*: this One is named here, being a *blind Beggar* that was much talk'd of; *Bartimeus*, that is, the *Son of Timeus*; which ſome think ſignifies, *the Son of a Blind Man*; He was the blind Son of a blind Father, which made the Caſe the worſe, and the Cure the more wonderful, and the more proper to typifie the ſpiritual Cures wrought by the Grace of Chriſt, on thoſe that not only are born Blind, but are born of thoſe that are Blind.

1. This Blind Man ſate *begging*; as they do with us. *Note*, Thoſe who by the Providence of God are diſabled to get their livelihood by their own Labour, and have not any other way of ſubſiſting, are the moſt proper Objects of Charity; and particular Care ought to be taken of them.

2. He cried out to the Lord Jeſus for *Mercy*. *Have Mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of* David; Miſery is the Object of Mercy, his own miſerable Caſe he recommends to the Compaſſion of the *Son of David*, of whom it was foretold, That when he ſhould come to ſave us, *the Eyes of the Blind ſhould be open'd*, Iſa. 35. 5. In coming to Chriſt for Help and Healing, we ſhould have an Eye to him as the promiſed *Meſſiah*, the Truſtee of Mercy and Grace.

3. Chriſt encouraged him to Hope that he ſhould find Mercy, for he *ſtood ſtill, and commanded him to be called.* We muſt never reckon it a hindrance to us in our way to *ſtand ſtill*, when it is to do a good Work. Thoſe about him, who had diſcourag'd him at firſt, perhaps were now the Perſons that handed to him the gracious Call of Chriſt. *Be of good Comfort, riſe, he calls thee*, and if he call thee he will cure thee. *Note*, The gracious Invitations Chriſt gives us to come to him, are great Encouragements to our Hope, that we ſhall ſpeed well, if we come to him, and ſhall have what we come for. Let the Guilty, the Empty, the Tempted, the Hungry, the Naked be of good Comfort, for he *calls them* to be pardon'd, to be ſupply'd, to be ſuccour'd, to be fill'd, to be cloath'd, to have all that done for them, which their Caſe calls for.

4. The poor Man hereupon made the beſt of his Way to Chriſt. He *caſt away his* looſe upper *Garment*, and came to Jeſus, *v.* 50. He caſt away every Thing that might be in danger of throwing him down, or might any way hinder him in coming to Chriſt, or retard his Motion. Thoſe who would come to Jeſus, muſt caſt away the Garment of their own Sufficiency, muſt ſtrip themſelves of all Conceit of that, and muſt free themſelves from *every weight*, and the Sin that like long Garments doth *moſt eaſily beſet them*, Heb. 12. 1.

5. The particular Favour he begg'd was, that his *Eyes might be open'd*; that ſo he might be able to work for his Living, and might be no longer Burthenſome to others. It is a very deſirable Thing to be in a Capacity of Earning our own Bread; and where God has given Men their Limbs and Senſes, 'tis a ſhame for Men, by their Fooliſhneſs and Slothfulneſs, to make themſelves in effect *Blind* and *Lame*.

6. This Favour he receiv'd, his Eyes were open'd, *v.* 52. and two Things *Mark* here adds; which intimates, (1.) How Chriſt made it a double Favour to him, by putting the Honour of it upon his Faith. *Thy Faith has made thee whole*; Faith in Chriſt as the Son of *David*, and in his Pity and Power. Not thy Importunity, but *thy Faith*, ſetting Chriſt on Work, or rather Chriſt ſetting thy Faith on Work. Thoſe Supplies are moſt comfortable, that are fetch'd in by our Faith. (2.) How he made it a double Favour to himſelf; when he had *received his ſight*, he *follow'd Jeſus by the Way*; by this he made it appear, that he was throughly cured, that he no more needed one to lead him, but could go himſelf; and by this he evidenc'd the grateful Senſe he had of Chriſt's Kindneſs to him, that when he had his Sight, he made this uſe of it. It is not enough to *come to Chriſt* for ſpiritual Healing, but when we are heal'd, we muſt continue to follow him; that we may do Honour to him, and receive Inſtruction from him. Thoſe that have ſpiritual Eye-ſight ſee that Beauty in Chriſt, as will effectually draw them to *run after him.*

CHAP. XI.

We are now come to the Paſſion-Week, the Week in which Chriſt dy'd; and the great Occurrences of that Week. (1.) *Chriſt's riding in Triumph into* Jeruſalem, v. 1,--11. (2.) *His curſing the barren Fig-Tree*, v. 12,--14. (3.) *His driving thoſe out of the Temple that turn'd it into an Exchange*, v. 15,--19. (4.) *His Diſcourſe with his Diſciples concerning the Power of Faith, and Efficacy of Prayer, on occaſion of the withering of the Fig-Tree he curſed*, v. 20,--26. (5.) *His Reply to thoſe who queſtioned his Authority*, v. 27,--33.

AND when they came nigh to Jeruſalem, unto Bethphage, and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he ſendeth forth two of his diſciples, 2 And ſaith unto them, Go your way into the village over againſt you; and aſſoon as ye be enter'd into it, ye ſhall find a colt tied, whereon never man ſat; looſe him, and bring *him*. 3 And if any man ſay unto you, Why do ye this? Say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and ſtraightway he will ſend him hither. 4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met: and they looſe him. 5 And certain of them that ſtood there, ſaid unto them, What do ye looſing the colt? 6 And they ſaid unto them even as Jeſus had commanded: and they let them go. 7 And they brought the colt to Jeſus, and caſt their garments on him; and he ſat upon him. 8 And many ſpread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and ſtrewed *them* in the way. 9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, ſaying, Hoſanna, bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord. 10 Bleſſed *be* the kingdom of our Father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hoſanna in the higheſt. 11 And Jeſus entred into Jeruſalem, and into the temple; and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the even-tide was come, he went out into Bethany with the twelve.

We have here the Story of the publick Entry Chriſt made into *Jeruſalem*, four or five Days before his Death. And he came into Town thus remarkably. (1.) To ſhew that he was not afraid of the Power and Malice of his Enemies in *Jeruſalem*: He did not ſteal into the City *incognito*, as one that durſt not ſhew his Face; no, they needed not ſend Spies to ſearch for him, he comes in with Obſervation. This would be an Encouragement to his Diſciples that were timorous, and cow'd at the Thought of their Enemies Power and Rage; let them ſee how bravely their Maſter ſets them all at defiance. (2.) To ſhew that he was not caſt down, or diſquieted at the Thoughts of his approaching Sufferings, he not only came publickly, but came in Chearfully, and with Acclamations of Joy. Tho' he was now but taking the Field, and *girding on the Harneſs*, yet being fully aſſured of a compleat Victory, he thus Triumphs as tho' he had put it off.

Firſt, The *out-ſide* of this Triumph was very *mean*; he rode upon an *Aſſes Colt*, that being an *Aſs* look'd Contemptible, and made no Figure; and being but a *Colt*, *whereon never Man ſat*, we may ſuppoſe was rough and untrim'd; and not only ſo, but rude and ungovernable, and would diſturb and diſgrace the Solemnity. This *Colt* was borrow'd too. Chriſt went upon the Water in a *borrow'd* Boat, eat the Paſſover in a *borrow'd* Chamber, was bury'd in a *borrow'd* Sepulchre, and here rode on a *borrow'd* Aſs. Let not Chriſtians ſcorn to be beholden one to another, and when Need is, to go a borrowing, for our Maſter did not. He had no rich Trappings, they threw their Clothes upon the Colt, and ſo he *ſate upon him*, v. 7. The Perſons that attended were mean People; and all the ſhew they could make, was by *ſpreading their Garments in the way*, and *ſtrewing Branches of Trees in the way*, v. 8. as they us'd to do at the Feaſt of Tabernacles. All theſe were Marks of his Humiliation; even when he would be taken Notice of, he would be taken Notice of for his Meanneſs; and they are Inſtructions to us not to *mind high Things*, but to *condeſcend to them of low Eſtate*: How ill doth it become Chriſtians to *take State*, when Chriſt was ſo far from affecting it.

Secondly, The *in-ſide* of this Triumph was very *great*, not only as it was the fulfilling of the Scripture, which is not taken Notice of here, as it was in *Matthew*, but as there were ſeveral Rays of Chriſt's Glory ſhining forth in the midſt of all this Meanneſs. (1.) Chriſt ſhew'd his Knowledge of Things diſtant, and his Power over the Wills of Men, when he ſent his Diſciples for the Colt, v. 1, 2, 3, 4. By this it appears he can *do every Thing*, and *no Thought can be withholden from him*. (2.) He ſhew'd his Dominion over the *Creatures*, in riding on *a Colt that was never Back'd*. The Subjection of the inferior Part of the Creation to Man is ſpoken of, *Pſal.* 8. 5, 6. with Application to Chriſt, *Pſal.* 8. 5, 6. compar'd with *Heb.* 2. 8. For to him it was owing, and to his Mediation, that we have any remaining Benefit by that Grant God made to Man of a Soveraignty in this lower World, *Gen.* 1. 28. And perhaps Chriſt in riding the Aſſes Colt, would give a Shadow of his Power over the Spirit of Man, who is born as *the wild Aſſes Colt*, John 11. 12. (3.) The Colt was brought from a Place *where two Ways met*, v. 4. as if Chriſt would ſhew that he came to direct thoſe into the right Way who had *two Ways* before them, and were in danger of taking the wrong. (4.) Chriſt receiv'd the joyful *Hoſanna's* of the People: that is, both the *Welcome* they gave him, and their *good Wiſhes* to the Proſperity of his Kingdom, *v.* 9. It was God that put it into the Hearts of theſe People to cry *Hoſanna*, who were not by Art and Management brought to it, as thoſe were who afterwards cry'd, *Crucify, Crucify*. Chriſt reckons himſelf honour'd by the Faith and Praiſes of the Multitude, and it is God that brings People to do him this Honour, beyond their own Intentions.

1. They *welcom'd* his *Perſon*, v. 9. *Bleſſed is he that cometh*, the word is ὁ ἐρχόμενος, *He that ſhould come*, ſo often promis'd, ſo long expected; he comes *in the Name of the Lord*, as God's Embaſſador to the World, *Bleſſed be he*: Let him have our Applauſes, and beſt Affections; he is a *Bleſſed* Saviour, and brings Bleſſings to us, and Bleſſed be He that ſent him. Let him be *bleſſed in the Name of the Lord*, and let all the Nations and Ages call him *Bleſſed*, and think and ſpeak highly and honourably of him.

2. They *wiſh'd well* to his *Intereſt*, v. 10. They believ'd that as mean a Figure as he made, he had a *Kingdom*, which ſhould ſhortly be ſet up in the World, that it was the Kingdom of *their Father David*, (that Father of his Country) the Kingdom promis'd to him and his Seed for ever; a Kingdom that came *in the Name of the Lord*, ſupported by a Divine Authority. *Bleſſed be this Kingdom*; let it take Place, let it get Ground, let it come in the Power of it, and let all oppoſing Rule, Principality and Power be put down; let it go on *Conquering and to Conquer*. *Hoſanna* to this Kingdom; Proſperity be to it; all Happineſs attend it. The proper Signification of *Hoſanna* is that which we find, Rev. 7. 10. *Salvation to our God that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb*, i. e. Succeſs to Religion, both *natural* and *reveal'd*. *Hoſanna in the higheſt*. Praiſes be to our God, who is in the *higheſt Heavens* over all, God bleſſed for ever; or, let him be praiſed by his Angels that are *in the higheſt Heavens*, let our *Hoſanna*'s be an Echo to theirs.

Chriſt thus *attended*, thus *applauded*, came into the City, and went directly *to the Temple*. Here was no Banquet of Wine prepar'd for his Entertainment, nor the leaſt Refreſhment, but he immediately apply'd himſelf to his Work, for that was his *Meat and Drink*. He went *to the Temple* that the Scripture might be fulfill'd: *The Lord whom ye ſeek ſhall ſuddenly come to his Temple*, without ſending any immediate Notice before him; he ſhall ſurprize you with a *Day of Viſitation*, for he ſhall be *like a Refiner's Fire, and like* Fuller's Soap, *Mal.* 3. 1, 2, 3. He came to the Temple, and took a View of the preſent State of it, *v.* 11. He *looked round about upon all Things*, but as yet ſaid nothing. He ſaw many diſorders there, but *kept Silence*, *Pſal.* 50. 21. Tho' he intended to ſuppreſs them, he would not go about the doing of all *on a ſudden*, leſt he ſhould ſeem to have done it *raſhly*; but let Things be as they were for this Night, intending the next Morning to apply himſelf to the neceſſary Reformation, and to take the Day before him. We may be confident that God ſees all the Wickedneſs that is in the World, tho' he do not preſently reckon for it, nor caſt it out. Chriſt having made his Remarks upon what he ſaw in the Temple, retir'd in the Evening to a Friend's Houſe at *Bethany*, becauſe there he would be more out of the Noiſe of the Town, and out of the way of being ſuſpected as deſigning to head a Faction.

12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry. 13 And ſeeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not *yet*. 14 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his diſciples heard *it*. 15 And they come to Jeruſalem; and Jeſus went into the temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the ſeats of them that ſold doves; 16 And would not ſuffer that any man ſhould carry any veſſel through the temple. 17 And he taught, ſaying unto them, Is it not written, My houſe ſhall be called of all nations the houſe of Prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. 18 And the Scribes and chief Prieſts heard *it*, and ſought how they might deſtroy him: for they feared him, becauſe all the people was aſtoniſhed at his doctrine. 19 And when even was come, he went out of the city. 20 And in the morning, as they paſſed by, they ſaw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter calling to remembrance, ſaith unto him, Maſter, behold, the fig-tree which thou curſedſt is withered away. 22 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I ſay unto you, that whoſoever ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou caſt into the ſea, and ſhall not doubt in his heart, but ſhall believe that thoſe things which he ſaith ſhall come to paſs, he ſhall have whatſoever he ſaith. 24 Therefore I ſay unto you, What things ſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe

that ye receive *them*, and ye ſhall have *them.* 25 And when ye ſtand, praying, forgive, if ye have ought againſt any, that your Father alſo, which is in heaven, may forgive you your treſpaſſes. 26 But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven, forgive your treſpaſſes.

Here's, (1.) Chriſt's curſing the fruitleſs Fig-tree. He had a convenient reſting Place at *Bethany*, and therefore thither he went at reſting Time, but his Work lay at *Jeruſalem*, and thither therefore he return'd in the Morning, at working Time; and ſo intent was he upon his Work, that he went out from *Bethany* without Breakfaſt, which, before he was gone far, he found the want of, and *was hungry*, v. 12. for he was ſubject to all the ſinful Infirmities of our Nature. Finding himſelf in want of Food, he went to a *Fig-tree*, which he ſaw at ſome Diſtance, that being well *adorn'd* with *Green* Leaves, he hoped to find *enrich'd* with ſome ſort of Fruit. But he *found nothing but Leaves*; he hoped to find ſome Fruit, *for the Time of* gathering in *Figs*, tho' it was near, yet it *was not yet*; ſo that it could not be pretended, that it had had Fruit, but it was gather'd and gone; for it was not come to that yet. Or, he found none, for indeed *it was not a Seaſon of Figs*, it was no good Fig-year. But this was worſe than any other Fig-Tree, for there was not ſo much as one Fig to be found upon it, tho' it was ſo full of Leaves. However, Chriſt was willing to make an Example of it, not to the Trees, but to the Men of that Generation, and therefore curſed it, with that Curſe which is the Reverſe of the firſt Bleſſing, *Be fruitful*; He ſaid unto it, Never let any Man *eat Fruit of thee hereafter for ever*, v. 14. *Sweetneſs and Good Fruit* is in *Jotham's* Parable the Honour of the *Fig-tree*, Judg. 9. 11. and it's ſerviceableneſs therein to Man, preferable to the Preferment of being *promoted over the Trees*; now to be depriv'd of that was a grievous *Curſe*. This was intended to be a Type and Figure of the Doom paſt upon the *Jewiſh* Church, to which he came *ſeeking Fruit but found none*, Luke 13. 6, 7. and tho' it was not according to the Doom in the Parable, immediately cut down, yet according to this in the Hiſtory, *Blindneſs* and *Hardneſs* befel them, *Rom.* 11. 8, 25. So that they were from henceforth *good for nothing*. The *Diſciples heard* what Sentence Chriſt paſs'd on this Tree, and took Notice of it. Woes from Chriſt's Mouth are to be obſerv'd and kept in Mind, as well as Bleſſings.

2. His clearing the Temple of the Market People, that frequented it, and of thoſe that made it a Thorow-fair. We do not find that Chriſt met with Food elſewhere, when he miſs'd of it on the Fig-tree, but the Zeal of God's Houſe ſo eat him up, and made him forget himſelf, that he came hungry as he was to *Jeruſalem*, and went ſtrait to the Temple, and began to reform thoſe Abuſes, which the Day before he had mark'd out; to ſhew, that when the Redeemer came to *Zion*, his Errand was to *turn away Ungodlineſs from* Jacob, *Rom.* 11. 26. and that he came not, as he was falſly accus'd, to *deſtroy* the Temple, but to purifie and refine it, and reduce his Church to its Primitive Rectitude.

1. He caſt out the *Buyers* and *Sellers*, *overthrew the Tables of the Money-changers*, (and threw the Money to the Ground, the fitter Place for it) and threw down the *Seats of them that ſold Doves.* This he did as one having Authority, as *a Son in his own Houſe.* The Filth of the Daughter of *Zion* is purged away, not by Might, nor by Power, but by the *Spirit of Judgment, and the Spirit of Burning*; and he did it without Oppoſition, for what he did was manifeſted to be right and good, even in the Conſciences of thoſe that had conniv'd at it, and countenanc'd it; becauſe they got Money by it. *Note*, It may be ſome Encouragement to zealous Reformers, that many times the purging out of Corruptions, and the correcting of Abuſes, proves an eaſier Piece of Work than was apprehended. Prudent Attempts ſometimes prove ſucceſsful be-beyond Expectation, and there are not thoſe Lyons *found* in the Way that were fear'd to be.

2. He *would not ſuffer that any Man ſhould carry any Veſſel*, any ſort of Goods or Wares, *through the Temple*, or any of the Courts of it; becauſe it was the nearer Way, and would ſave them the Labour of going about, *v.* 16. The *Jews* own'd it was one of the Inſtances of Honour due to the Temple, not to make the Mountain of the Houſe, or the Court of the *Gentiles* a Road or common Paſſage, or to come into it with any Bundle.

3. He gave a good Reaſon for this; becauſe it was written, *My Houſe ſhall be called of all Nations, The Houſe of Prayer*, v. 17. So it is written, *Iſa.* 56. 7. It ſhall paſs among all People under that Character. *It ſhall be the Houſe of Prayer to all Nations*, it was ſo in the firſt Inſtitution of it; When *Solomon* dedicated it, 'twas with an Eye to the Sons of the Strangers, 1 *Kings* 8. 41. And it was propheſied, that it ſhould be yet more ſo; Chriſt will have the Temple as a Type of the Goſpel Church to be, (1.) A *Houſe of Prayer*; after he had turn'd out the Oxen and Doves, which were Things for Sacrifice, he reviv'd the Appointment of it as a *Houſe of Prayer*, to teach us, that when all Sacrifices and Offerings ſhould be aboliſh'd, the ſpiritual Sacrifices of Prayer and Praiſe ſhould continue and remain for ever. (2.) That it ſhould be ſo *to all Nations*, and not to the People of the *Jews* only; for *whoſoever ſhall call on the Name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved*, tho' not of the Seed of *Jacob*, according to the Fleſh. It was therefore inſufferable for them to *make it a Den of Thieves*, which would Prejudice thoſe Nations againſt it, whom they ſhould have invited to it. When Chriſt drove out the Buyers and Sellers at the beginning of his Miniſtry, he only charged them with making the Temple a Houſe of Merchandize, *John* 2. 16. But now he chargeth them with making it a *Den of Thieves*, becauſe ſince then, they had twice gone about to ſtone him in the Temple, *John* 8. 10, 31. or becauſe the Traders there were grown notorious for cheating their Cuſtomers, and impoſing upon the Ignorance and Neceſſity of the Country People, which is no better than down-right Thievery. Thoſe that ſuffer vain worldly Thoughts to lodge within them, when they are at their Devotions; turn the *Houſe of Prayer* into a *Houſe of Merchandize*: But they that make long Prayers for a Pretence to devour Widows Houſes, turn it into a *Den of Thieves.*

4. The *Scribes* and the chief Prieſts were extreamly nettled at this, *v.* 18. They hated him, and hated to be reform'd by him, and yet they *fear'd him*, leſt he ſhould next overthrow their Seats, and expel them, being conſcious to themſelves of the prophaning and abuſing of their Power. They found he had a great Intereſt, and that *all the People were aſtoniſh'd at his Doctrine*, and every Thing he ſaid was an Oracle, and a Law to them; and what durſt he not Attempt, what could he not Effect being thus ſupported? they therefore ſought not how they might make their Peace with him, but *how they might deſtroy him*: A deſperate Attempt, and which one would think, they themſelves could not but fear was *fighting againſt God.* But they care not what they do, to ſupport their own Power and Grandeur.

3. His Diſcourſe with his Diſciples, upon occaſion of the Fig-tree's withering away which he had curſed. At *Even*, as uſual, he *went out of the City*, v. 19. to *Bethany*, but 'tis probable it was in the dark, ſo that they could not ſee the Fig-tree; but the next Morning as they *paſſed by*, they obſerv'd the *Fig-tree dried up from the Roots*, v. 20. more is *included* many Times in Chriſt's Curſes than is *expreſſed*, as appears by the Effects of them. The Curſe was no more, but that it ſhould never bear Fruit again, but the Effect goes further, 'tis *dried up from the Roots.* If it bear not Fruit, it ſhall bear no Leaves to cheat People. Now obſerve,

1. How the Diſciples were affected with it. *Peter* remember'd Chriſt's Words, and ſaid with Surprize, *Maſter, behold, the Fig-tree which thou curſedſt is wither'd away*, v. 21. *Note*, Chriſt's Curſes have wonderful Effects; and make thoſe to wither preſently, that flouriſh'd like the Green Bay-tree, *Thoſe whom he curſeth; they are curſed indeed.* This repreſented the Character and State of the *Jewiſh* Church, which from hence-forward was as a Tree dried up from the Roots; no longer fit for Food, but for Fuel only. The firſt Eſtabliſhment of the *Levitical* Prieſthood, was ratified and confirm'd by the Miracle of a *Dry Rod*, which in *one Night* budded and bloſſom'd, and brought forth Almonds, *Numb.* 17. 8. a happy Omen of the Fruitfulneſs and Flouriſhing of that Prieſthood: And now, by a contrary Miracle, the Expiration of that Prieſthood was ſignified by a flouriſhing Tree dried up in a Night; the juſt Puniſhment of thoſe Prieſts that had abus'd it. And this ſeem'd very ſtrange to the Diſciples, and ſcarce credible that the *Jews* that had been ſo long God's own, his only profeſſing People in the World, ſhould be thus abandon'd. They could not imagine, how that *Fig-tree* ſhould *ſo ſoon wither away*, but this comes of rejecting Chriſt, and being rejected by him.

2. The good Inſtructions Chriſt gave them from it, for of *thoſe* even this *wither'd* Tree was *fruitful.*

1. Chriſt teacheth them from hence to *pray in Faith*, v. 22. *Have Faith in God.* They admir'd the Power of Chriſt's Word of Command, why, ſaith Chriſt, a lively active Faith would put as great a Power into your Prayers, *v.* 23, 24. *Whoſoever ſhall ſay to this Mountain*, this Mount of *Olives, Be removed, and be caſt into the Sea*: If he has but any Word of God, general or particular, to build his Faith upon, and if he *ſhall not doubt in his Heart, but ſhall believe that thoſe Things which he ſaith*, according to the warrant he has from what God hath ſaid, *ſhall come to paſs, he ſhall have whatſoever he ſaith*; through the Strength and Power of God in Chriſt, the greateſt Difficulty ſhall be got over, and the Thing ſhall be effected. And therefore, *v.* 24. *What Things ſoever ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye ſhall* receive them; nay, believe that ye *do receive them*, and he that has Power to give them, ſaith, *ye ſhall have them. I ſay unto you*, you ſhall, *v.* 24. *Verily* I ſay unto you, ye ſhall, *v.* 23. Now this is to be applied, (1.) To that *Faith of Miracles*, which the Apoſtles and firſt Preachers of the Goſpel were endued with, which did Wonders in *Things natural*, healing the Sick, raiſing the Dead, caſting out Devils; theſe were in Effect the removing of Mountains. The Apoſtle ſpeaks of a Faith which would do that, and yet might be found where Holy Love was not, 1 *Cor.* 13. 2. (2.) It may be applied to that *Miracle of Faith*, which all true Chriſtians are endued with, which doth Wonders in *Things ſpiritual. It juſtifies* us, *Rom.* 5. 1. and ſo removes Mountains of Guilt, and caſts them into the Depths of the Sea, never to riſe up in Judgment againſt us, *Mic.* 7. 19. It *purifies* the Heart, *Acts* 15. 10. and ſo removes Mountains of Corruption, and *makes them plain* before the Grace of God, *Zech.* 4. 7. 'Tis by Faith that the World is conquer'd, Satan's Fiery Darts quenched, a Soul is crucified with Chriſt, and yet lives; by Faith we ſet the Lord always before us, and ſee him that is Inviſible, and have him preſent to our Minds, and this is Effectual to remove Mountains; for at the Preſence of the Lord, at the Preſence of the God of *Jacob*, the Mountains were not only moved, but removed, *Pſalm* 114. 6, 7.

2. To this is added here that neceſſary Qualification of the prevailing Prayer, that we freely forgive thoſe who have been any way injurious to us, and be in Charity with all Men, *v.* 25, 26. *When ye ſtand Praying*, forgive. *Note*, Standing is no improper Poſture for Prayer; 'twas generally us'd among the *Jews*; hence they call'd their Prayers, their *Standings*; when they would ſay how the World was *kept up* by Prayer, they expreſs'd it thus, *Stationibus ſtat mundus*: But the primitive Chriſtians generally us'd the more humble and reverent Geſture of Kneeling, eſpecially on Faſting-Days, tho' not on Lord's-Days. When we are at Prayer we muſt remember to pray for others, particularly for our Enemies, and thoſe that have wrong'd us; now we cannot pray ſincerely that God would do them good, if we bear Malice to them, and wiſh them Ill. If we had injur'd others before we pray, we muſt go and *be reconciled to them*, Matt. 5. 23. But if they have injur'd us, we go a nearer Way to work, and muſt immediately from our Hearts forgive them. (1.) Becauſe this is a *good Step* towards obtaining the *Pardon* of our own Sins: *Forgive*, that *your Father may forgive you*, i. e. That you may be qualified to receive Forgiveneſs; that he may forgive you without Injury to his Honour, as it would be if he ſhould ſuffer thoſe to have ſuch Benefit by his Mercy as are ſo far from being conformable to the Pattern of it. (2.) Becauſe the want of this is a certain Bar to the obtaining of the Pardon of our Sins. *If ye do not forgive* thoſe who have injur'd you, if you hate their Perſons, bear them a Grudge, meditate Revenge, and take all Occaſions to ſpeak ill of them, *neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes*. This ought to be remembred in Prayer, becauſe one great Errand we have to the Throne of Grace, is to pray for the Pardon of our Sins: And Care about it ought to be our daily Care, becauſe Prayer is a Part of our daily Work. Our Saviour often inſiſts on this, for it was his great Deſign to engage his Diſciples to love one another.

27 And they come again to Jeruſalem: And as he was walking in the Temple, there come to him the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders, 28 And ſay unto him, By what authority doſt thou theſe Things? And who gave thee this Authority to do theſe Things? 29 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, I will alſo ask of you one queſtion, and anſwer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do theſe Things. 30 The Baptiſm of John, was it from Heaven, or of men? anſwer me. 31 And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay from Heaven, he will ſay, Why then did ye not believe him? 32 But if we ſhall ſay, Of men, they feared the People: for all Men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they anſwered and ſaid unto Jeſus, We cannot tell. And Jeſus anſwering, ſaith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do theſe things.

We have here Chriſt examin'd by the Great *Sanhedrim* concerning his Authority; for they claim'd a Power to call Prophets to an Account concerning their Miſſion. They came to him when he was *walking in the Tenple*, not for his Diverſion, but *teaching* the People, firſt one Company, and then another. The *Peripatetick* Philoſophers were ſo call'd from the Cuſtom they had of *walking* when they taught. The Cloyſters or Piazza's in the Courts of the Temple, were fitted for this Purpoſe: The great Men were vex'd to ſee him follow'd, and heard with Attention, and therefore *came to him* with ſome Solemnity, and did as it were arraign him at the Bar with this Queſtion, *By what Authority doſt thou theſe Things?* v. 28. Now obſerve,

1. How they deſign'd hereby to run him a-ground, and to embarraſs him; if they could make it out before the People, that he had not a *legal Miſſion*, that he was not duly *ordain'd*, tho' he was never ſo well-qualified, and preach'd never ſo profitably and well, they would tell the People they *ought not to hear him*. And this they made the laſt Refuge of an obſtinate Unbelief, becauſe they were reſolv'd not to receive his Doctrine, they were reſolv'd to find ſome Flaw or other in his Commiſſion, and will conclude it invalid if it be not produc'd and ratified in their Court. Thus the *Papiſts* reſolve their Controverſy with us very much into the Miſſion of our Miniſters, and if they have but any Pretence to overthrow that, they think they have gain'd their Point, tho' we have the Scripture never ſo much on our Side. But this is indeed a Queſtion which all that act either as Magiſtrates or Miniſters, ought to be furniſh'd with a good Anſwer to, and often put it to themſelves, *By what Authority do I theſe Things?* For *how can Men preach except they be ſent?* Or how can they act with Comfort or Confidence, or hope of Succeſs, except they be authoriz'd? *Jer.* 33. 32.

2. How he effectually run them aground, and embarraſs'd them with a Queſtion, what their Thoughts were concerning the *Baptiſm of John, was it from Heaven, or of Men?* By what Authority did *John* preach, and baptize, and gather Diſciples? *Anſwer me*, v. 30. Deal fairly and ingenuouſly, and give a categorical Anſwer either one Way or t'other. By the reſolving of *their* Queſtion into *this*, our Saviour intimates how near akin his Doctrine and Baptiſm was to *John*'s; they had the ſame Original, and the ſame Deſign and Tendency to introduce the Goſpel Kingdom. Chriſt might with the better Grace put this Queſtion to *them*, becauſe they had ſent a Committee of their own Houſe to examine John, *John* 1. 19. Now, ſaith Chriſt, What was the Reſult of your Enquiries concerning him?

They knew what they *thought* of this Queſtion; they could not but think that *John Baptiſt* was a Man ſent of God. But, the Difficulty was, what they ſhould *ſay to it* now: And Men that oblige not themſelves to ſpeak *as they think*, which is a certain Rule, cannot avoid perplexing themſelves thus:

1. If they own the Baptiſm of *John* to be *from Heaven*, as really it was, they *ſhame themſelves*, for Chriſt will preſently turn it upon them, *why did ye not then believe him*, and receive his Baptiſm? They could not bear that Chriſt ſhould ſay this, but they could bear it that their own Conſciences ſhould ſay ſo, becauſe they had an Art of ſtifling, and ſilencing them, and becauſe what Conſcience ſaid, tho' it might gall and grate them a little, it would not *ſhame them*, and then they would do well enough, who look'd no further than *Saul's* Care when he was convicted, *Honour me now before this People*, 1 Sam. 15. 30.

2. If they ſay it is *of Men*, that he was not ſent of God, but his Doctrine and Baptiſm were Inventions of his own, they *expoſe themſelves*, the People will be ready to do them a Miſchief, or at leaſt clamor upon them; for *all Men counted John that he was a Prophet indeed*, and therefore they could not bear that he ſhould be reflected on. *Note*, There is a carnal ſlaviſh Fear, which not only wicked Subjects, but wicked Rulers likewiſe are liable to, which God makes uſe of as a Means to keep the World in ſome Order, and to ſuppreſs *Violence*, that it ſhall not always *grow up into a Rod of Wickedneſs*. Now by this Dilemma, to which Chriſt brought them, (1.) They were confounded and baffled, and forc'd to make a diſhonourable Retreat; to pretend Ignorance, *we cannot tell*, (and that was Mortification enough to thoſe proud Men) but really to diſcover the greateſt Malice and Wilfulneſs. What Chriſt did by his Wiſdom, we muſt labour to do by our Well-doing, *put to ſilence the Ignorance of fooliſh Men*, 1 Pet. 2. 15. (2.) Chriſt came off with Honour, and juſtified himſelf in denying to give them an Anſwer to their imperious Demand, *Neither tell I you by what Authority I do theſe Things*. *They* did not deſerve to be *told*; who, 'twas plain, did not contend for Truth but Victory; Nor did *he* need to *tell them*, for the Works which he did, told them plainly that he had Authority from God to do what he did; ſince no Man could do thoſe Miracles which he did unleſs God were with him. Let them wait but three or four Days, and his Reſurrection ſhall tell them who gave him his Authority, for by that he will be *declar'd to be the Son of God with Power*, as by their rejecting him, notwithſtanding they will be declar'd to be the Enemies of God.

CHAP. XII.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) *The Parable of the Vineyard let out to unthankful Husbandmen, repreſenting the Sin and Ruin of the* Jewiſh *Church*, v. 1,—12. (2.) *Chriſt's ſilencing thoſe who thought to enſnare him with a Queſtion about paying Tribute to* Cæſar, v. 13,—17. (3.) *His ſilencing the* Sadducees, *who attempted to perplex the Doctrine of the Reſurrection*, v. 18,—27. (4.) *His Conference with a* Scribe *about the firſt and great Command of the Law*, v. 28,—34. (5.) *His puzling the* Scribes *with a Queſtion about Chriſt's being the Son of* David, v. 35,—37. (6.) *The Caution he gave the People to take heed of the* Scribes, v. 38,—40. (7.) *His Commendation of the poor Widow that caſt her two Mites into the Treaſury*, v. 41,—44.

AND he began to ſpeak unto them by parables. A *certain* man planted a Vineyard, and ſet an hedge about it, and digged *a place for* the wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to Husbandmen, and went into a far country. 2 And at the ſeaſon he ſent to the husbandmen a ſervant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the Vineyard. 3 And they caught *him*, and beat him, and ſent *him* away empty. 4 And again he ſent unto them another ſervant; and at him they caſt ſtones, and wounded *him* in the head, and ſent *him* away ſhamefully handled. 5 And again, he ſent another, and him they killed: and many others, beating ſome, and killing ſome. 6 Having yet therefore one ſon, his well-beloved, he ſent him alſo laſt unto them, ſaying, They will reverence my ſon. 7 But thoſe husbandmen ſaid amongſt themſelves, This is the Heir; come, let us kill him, and the Inheritance ſhall be ours. 8 And they took him, and kill'd *him*, and caſt *him* out of the Vineyard. What ſhall therefore the Lord of the Vineyard do? he will come and deſtroy the Husbandmen, and will give the Vineyard unto others.

10 And have ye not read this ſcripture? The ſtone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner. 11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. 12 And they ſought to lay hold on him, but feared the people; for they knew that he had ſpoken the parable againſt them: and they left him, and went their way.

Chriſt had formerly in Parables ſhew'd how he deſign'd to ſet up the Goſpel Church, now he begins in Parables to ſhew how he would lay aſide the *Jewiſh* Church, which it might have been grafted into the *Stock of*, but was built upon the *Ruins of*. This Parable we had juſt as we have it here, *Matt.* 21. 33. We may obſerve here,

1. They that enjoy the Privileges of the viſible Church, have a Vineyard let out to them, which is capable of great Improvement, and from the Occupiers of which, Rent is juſtly expected. When God *ſhow'd his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and Judgments unto Iſrael*, Pſalm 147. 19. When he ſet up his Temple among them, his Prieſthood, and other his Ordinances, then he *let out* to them the *Vineyard* he had *planted*; which he *hedg'd*, and in which he *built a Tower*, v. 1. Members of the Church are God's Tenants, and they have both a good Landlord, and a good Bargain, and may live well upon it if it be not their own Fault.

2. Thoſe whom God lets out his Vineyard to, he ſends his Servants to, to put them in mind of his juſt Expectations from them, *v.* 2. He was not *haſty* in his Demands, nor *high*, for he did not ſend for the Rent till they could make it, *at the Seaſon*; nor did he put them to the Trouble of making Money of it, but was willing to take it *in Specie*.

3. 'Tis ſad to think what baſe Uſage God's faithful Miniſters have met with in all Ages from thoſe that have enjoy'd the Privileges of the Church, and have not brought forth Fruit anſwerable. The Old-Teſtament Prophets were perſecuted even by thoſe that went under the Name of the Old-Teſtament Church. They *beat them*, and *ſent them empty away*, v. 3. that was bad; they *wounded them*, and *ſet them away ſhamefully intreated*, v. 4. that was worſe: Nay, at length they came to ſuch a pitch of Wickedneſs, that they *kill'd them*, v. 5.

4. It was no wonder if thoſe who abus'd the Prophets, abus'd Chriſt himſelf. God did at length ſend them his Son, his *Well-belov'd*; it was therefore ſo much the greater Kindneſs in him to ſend him; as in *Jacob* to ſend *Joſeph* to viſit his Brethren, *Gen.* 37. 14. And it might be expected that he whom their Maſter *lov'd*, they alſo ſhould reſpect and love, *v.* 6. *They will reverence my Son*, and in reverence to him will pay their Rent. But inſtead of *reverencing* him becauſe he was the Son and Heir, they therefore hated him, *v.* 7. Becauſe Chriſt in calling to Repentance and Reformation, made his Demands with more Authority than the Prophets had done, they were the more enrag'd againſt him, and determin'd to put him to Death, that they might engroſs all Church Power to themſelves, and all the Reſpects and Obedience of the People might be paid to them only. *The Inheritance ſhall be ours*, we will be Lords Paramount, and bear all the Sway. There is an *Inheritance* which if they had duly *reverenc'd the Son*, might have been theirs, a heavenly Inheritance, but they ſlighted that, and would have their Inheritance in the Wealth and Pomp and Powers of this World. So they *took him, and kill'd him*, they had not done it yet, but they would do it in a little Time; and they *caſt him out of the Vineyard*, i. e. they refus'd to admit his Goſpel when he was gone; it would by no Means agree with their Scheme, and ſo they threw it out with Diſdain and Deteſtation.

5. For ſuch ſinful ſhameful doings nothing can be expected but a fearful Doom, *v.* 9. *What ſhall therefore the Lord of the Vineyard do?* 'Tis eaſie to ſay what, for nothing could be done more provoking. 1. He will *come and deſtroy the Husbandmen*, whom he would have ſav'd. When they only deny'd the Fruit, he did not *diſtrain* upon them for the Rent, nor *diſſeize* them and *diſpoſſeſs* them for *Non-Payment*; but when they killed his Servants, and his Son, he determin'd to *deſtroy* them; and this was fulfilled when *Jeruſalem* was laid waſte, and the *Jewiſh* Nation extirpated, and made a Deſolation.

2. He will *give the Vineyard to others*. If he have not the Rent from them, he will have it from another People, for God will be no Loſer by any. This was fulfill'd in the taking in of the *Gentiles*, and the Abundance of Fruit which the *Goſpel brought forth in all the World*, Col. 1. 6. *Note*, If ſome from whom we expected well prove bad, it doth not follow but that others will be better. Chriſt encouraged himſelf with this in his Undertaking, *Tho' Iſrael be not gather'd*, not gather'd to him, but gather'd againſt him, *yet ſhall I be glorious*, Iſa. 49. 5, 6. as a *Light to lighten the Gentiles*.

3. Their Oppoſition to Chriſt's Exaltation ſhall be no Obſtruction to it, *v.* 10, 11. *The Stone which the Builders rejected*, notwithſtanding that, is become *the Head of the Corner*, is highly advanc'd as the *Head-Stone*, and of neceſſary Uſe and Influence as the *Corner-Stone*. God will ſet Chriſt as *his King* upon his *Holy Hill of Zion*, in ſpite of their Project who would *break his Bands aſunder*. And all the World ſhall ſee and own this to be *the Lord's doing*, in Juſtice to the *Jews*, and in Compaſſion to the *Gentiles*. The Exaltation of Chriſt was *the Lord's doing*, and it is *his doing* to exalt him in our Hearts, and to ſet up his Throne there, and if it be done, it cannot but be marvellous in our Eyes.

Now, what Effect had this Parable upon the Chief Prieſts and Scribes, whoſe Conviction was deſign'd by it? They knew *he ſpake this Parable againſt them*, v. 12. They could not but ſee their own Faces in the Glaſs of it; and one would think it ſhew'd them their Sin ſo very heinous, and their Ruin ſo certain and great, that it ſhould have frighten'd them into a Compliance with Chriſt and his Goſpel, ſhould have prevail'd to bring them to Repentance, at leaſt to make them deſiſt from their malicious Purpoſe againſt him; but inſtead of that, (1.) They *ſought to lay hold on him*, and make him their Priſoner immediately, and ſo to fulfil what he had juſt now ſaid they would do to him, *v.* 8. (2.) Nothing reſtrain'd them from it but the Awe they ſtood in of the People; they did not *reverence* Chriſt, nor had any *Fear of God* before their Eyes, but were afraid if they ſhould publickly lay hold on Chriſt, the Mob would ariſe, and lay hold on them and reſcue him. (3.) They *left him and went their Way*; if they could not do Hurt to him, they reſolv'd he ſhould not do Good to them, and therefore they got out of the Hearing of his powerful Preaching, *leſt they ſhould be converted and heal'd*. *Note*, If Mens Prejudices be not conquer'd by the Evidence of Truth, they are but confirm'd; and if the Corruptions of the Heart be not ſubdued by faithful Reproofs, they are but enrag'd and exaſperated. If the Goſpel be not a *Savour of Life unto Life*, it will be a *Savour of Death unto Death*.

13 And they ſend unto him certain of the Phariſees, and of the Herodians, to catch him in *his* words. 14 And when they were come, they ſay unto him, Maſter, we know that thou art true, and careſt for no man: for thou regardeſt not the perſon of men, but teacheſt the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Ceſar, or not? 15 Shall we give, or ſhall we not give? But he knowing their hypocriſie, ſaid unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may ſee *it*. 16 And they brought *it*: and he ſaith unto them, Whoſe *is* this image and ſuperſcription? And they ſaid unto him, Ceſars. 17 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Render to Ceſar the things that are Ceſars, and to God the things that are Gods. And they marvelled at him.

When the Enemies of Chriſt, who thirſted for his Blood, could not find Occaſion againſt him from what he ſaid againſt them, they try'd to enſnare him by putting Queſtions to him. Here we have him tempted, or attempted rather with a Queſtion about the Lawfulneſs of paying Tribute to *Ceſar*: We had this Story, *Matt.* 22. 15.

1. The Perſons they employ'd were the *Phariſees* and the *Herodians*, Men that in this Matter were contrary to one another, and yet concurr'd againſt Chriſt, *v.* 13. The *Phariſees* were great Sticklers for the *Jews* Liberty, and if he ſhould ſay it was lawful to give Tribute to *Ceſar*, they would incenſe the common People againſt him, and the *Herodians* would underhand aſſiſt them in it: The *Herodians* were great Sticklers for the *Roman* Power, and if he ſhould diſcountenance the paying of Tribute to *Ceſar*, they would incenſe the Governour againſt him, yea, and the *Phariſees* againſt their own Principles would join with them in it. 'Tis no new Thing for thoſe that are at Variance in other Things, to join in a Confederacy againſt Chriſt.

2. The Pretence they made was, That they deſir'd him to reſolve them a Caſe of Conſcience, which was of great Importance in the preſent Juncture; and they take on them to have a mighty Opinion of his Ability to reſolve it, *v.* 14. They complimented him at a high Rate, call'd him *Maſter*, own'd him for a Teacher of the *Way of God*, a Teacher of it *in Truth*, he taught what was good, and upon Principles of Truth, that he would not be brought by Smiles or Frowns to depart a Step from the Rules of Equity and Goodneſs; *thou careſt for no Man*, nor *regardeſt the Perſon of Men*, thou art not afraid of offending either the jealous Prince on one hand, or the jealous People on the other; *thou art right*, and always in the right, and doſt in a right Manner declare Good and Evil, Truth and Falſhood. If they ſpoke as they thought concerning Chriſt, when they ſaid *we know that thou art right*, their perſecuting him and putting him to Death as a Deceiver, was a Sin againſt Knowledge; they knew him, and yet crucified him. However, a Man's Teſtimony ſhall be taken moſt ſtrongly againſt himſelf, and *out of their own Mouths are they judged*; they knew that he taught the Way of God in Truth, and yet rejected the Council of God againſt themſelves. The Profeſſions and Pretences of Hypocrites will be produc'd in Evidence againſt them, and they will be ſelf-condemn'd: But if they did not know or believe it, they *ly'd unto God with their Mouth, and flatter'd him with their Tongue*.

3. The Queſtion they put was, *Is it lawful to give Tribute to Ceſar or not?* They would be thought deſirous to know their Duty; *As a Nation that did Righteouſneſs, they ask of God the Ordinances of Juſtice*, when really they deſired nothing but to know what he would ſay, in hopes that which Side ſoever he took of the Queſtion, they might take Occaſion from it to accuſe him. Nothing more likely to enſnare Miniſters than bringing them to meddle with Controverſies about Civil Rights, and to ſettle the Land-marks between

the Prince and the Subject, which 'tis fit ſhould be done, but not at all fit that they ſhould have the doing of it. They ſeem'd to refer the determining of this Matter to Chriſt, and he indeed was fit to determine it, for *by him Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice*; for they put the Queſtion fairly, *Shall we give, or ſhall we not give?* They ſeem'd reſolv'd to ſtand to his Award; if thou ſayeſt we muſt pay Tribute, we will do it, tho' we be made Beggars by it: If thou ſayeſt we muſt not, we will not, tho' we be made Traitors for it. Many ſeem deſirous to know their Duty that are no ways diſpos'd to do it, as thoſe proud Men, *Jer.* 42. 20.

4. Chriſt determin'd the Queſtion, and evaded the Snare, by referring them to their national Conceſſions, already made, by which they were precluded from diſputing this Matter, *v.* 15, 16, 17. He *knew their Hypocriſy*, the Malice that was in their Hearts againſt him, while *with their Mouth they ſhew'd all this Love*. Hypocriſy, tho' never ſo artfully managed, cannot be conceal'd from the Lord Jeſus: he ſees the *Potſherd* that's *cover'd* with the *Silver Droſs*: He knew they intended to enſnare him, and therefore contriv'd the Matter ſo as to enſnare them, and to oblige them by their own Words to do what they were unwilling to do, which was to pay their Taxes honeſtly and quietly, and yet at the ſame Time, to skreen himſelf againſt their Exceptions. He made them acknowledge that the current Money of their Nation was *Roman* Money, had the Emperor's *image* on one Side, and his *Superſcription* on the Reverſe; and if ſo, (1.) *Cæſar* might command their Money, for the Publick Benefit, becauſe he has the Cuſtody and Conduct of the State, wherein he ought to have his Charges born; *Render unto Cæſar the Things that are Cæſar*'s. The Circulation of the Money is from him as the Fountain, and therefore it muſt return to him. As far as it is *his*, ſo far it muſt be render'd *to him*, and how far it is *his*, and may be commanded by him is to be judg'd by the Conſtitution of the Government, according as it is and hath ſettled the Prerogative of the Prince, and the Property of the Subject. (2.) *Cæſar* might not command their Conſciences, nor did he pretend to it; he offer'd not to make any Alteration in their Religion. Pay your Tribute therefore without murmuring or diſputing, but be ſure to *render unto God the Things that are God's*. Perhaps referring to the Parable he had juſt now put forth, in which he had condemn'd them for not *rendring* the Fruits to the Lord of the Vineyard, *v.* 2. Many that ſeem careful to give to Men their Due, are in no Care to give unto God, *the Glory due to his Name*; whereas our Hearts and beſt Affections are as much due to him as ever Rent was to a Landlord, or a Tribute to a Prince. All that heard Chriſt *marvelled* at the Diſcretion of his Anſwer, and how ingeniouſly he avoided the Snare; but I doubt none were brought by it as they ought to be to render to God themſelves and their Devotions. Many will commend the Wit of a Sermon, that will not be commanded by the divine Laws of a Sermon.

18 Then come unto him the Sadducees, which ſay
there is no reſurrection; and they asked him, ſaying,
19 Maſter, Moſes wrote unto us, If a man's brother
die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no
children, that his brother ſhould take his wife, and
raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 20 Now there were
ſeven brethren: and the firſt took a wife, and dying,
left no ſeed. 21 And the ſecond took her and died,
neither left he any ſeed: and the third likewiſe.
22 And the ſeven had her, and left no ſeed: laſt
of all the woman died alſo. 23 In the reſurrection
therefore, when they ſhall riſe, whoſe wife ſhall ſhe
be of them? for the ſeven had her to wife. 24 And
Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Do ye not therefore
err, becauſe ye know not the ſcriptures, neither the
power of God? 25 For when they ſhall riſe from
the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage:
but are as the Angels which are in heaven.
26 And as touching the dead, that they riſe: have ye
not read in the book of Moſes, how in the buſh God
ſpake unto him, ſaying, *I am* the God of Abraham,
and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob: 27 He
is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living:
ye therefore do greatly err.

The *Sadducees*, that were the Deiſts of that Age, here attack our Lord Jeſus, it ſhould ſeem not as the Scribes and Phariſees, and Chief Prieſts with any malicious Deſign upon his Perſon; they were not Bigots and Perſecutors, but Scepticks and Infidels, and their Deſign was upon his Doctrine, to hinder the ſpreading of that: They deny'd that there was any Reſurrection, any World of Spirits, any State of Rewards and Puniſhments on t'other ſide Death: Now thoſe great and fundamental Truths which they had deny'd, Chriſt made it his Buſineſs to eſtabliſh and prove, and had carry'd the Notion of them much further than ever it was before carry'd; and therefore they ſet themſelves to perplex his Doctrine.

1. See here the Method they take to entangle it; they quote the ancient Law, by which if a Man dy'd without Iſſue, his Brother was oblig'd to marry his Widow, *v.* 19. They ſuppoſe a Caſe to happen, that according to that Law ſeven Brothers were ſucceſſively the Husbands of one Woman, *v.* 20. Probably theſe *Sadducees* according to their wonted Profaneneſs intended hereby to ridicule that Law, and ſo to bring the whole Frame of the Moſaick Inſtitution into Contempt, as abſurd and inconvenient in the Practice of it. Theſe who deny Divine Truths, commonly ſet themſelves to diſparage Divine Laws and Ordinances. But this only by the by; their Deſign was to expoſe the Doctrine of the Reſurrection; for they ſuppoſe that if there be a future State, it muſt be ſuch a one as this, and then the Doctrine they think is clogg'd either with this invincible Abſurdity, that a Woman in this State muſt have ſeven Husbands; or elſe with this unſolvable Difficulty, whoſe Wife ſhe muſt be. See with what Subtilty theſe Hereticks *undermine* the Truth; they do not *deny* it, nor ſay *there can be* no Reſurrection; Nay, they do not ſeem to doubt of it, nor ſay, *If there be a Reſurrection*, whoſe Wife ſhall ſhe be? As the Devil to Chriſt, *If thou be the Son of God*; but as tho' theſe Beaſts of the Field were more ſubtil than the Serpent himſelf; they pretend to own the Truth, as if they were not *Sadducees*, no not they, who ſaid they deny'd the Reſurrection? They take it for granted there is a Reſurrection, and would be thought to deſire Inſtruction concerning it, when they are really deſigning to give it a fatal Stab, and think they ſhall do it. *Note*, It is the common Artifice of Hereticks and Sadducees to perplex and entangle the Truth, which they have not the Impudence to deny.

2. See here the Method Chriſt takes to clear and eſtabliſh this Truth, which they attempted to darken and give a Shock to. This was a Matter of Moment, and therefore Chriſt doth not paſs it over lightly, but enlargeth upon it, that if they ſhould not be reclaim'd, yet others might be confirm'd.

1. He chargeth the *Sadducees* with *Error*, and chargeth that upon their *Ignorance*. They who banter the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, as ſome do in our Age, would be thought the only knowing Men, becauſe the only *Free-Thinkers*, when really they are the Fools in *Iſrael*, and the moſt *enſlav'd* and prejudic'd Thinkers in the World. *Do ye not therefore err?* Ye cannot but be ſenſible of it your ſelves, and that the Cauſe of your Error is, (1.) Becauſe ye do not *know the Scriptures*; not but that the *Sadducees* had read the Scriptures, and perhaps were ready in them, and yet they might be truly ſaid not to *know the Scriptures*, becauſe they did not know the Senſe and Meaning of them, but put falſe Conſtructions upon them, or they did not receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, but ſet up their own corrupt Reaſonings in Oppoſition to the Scripture, and would believe nothing but what they could ſee. *Note*, A right Knowledge of the Scripture, as the Fountain whence all reveal'd Religion now flows, and the Foundation on which it is built, is the beſt Preſervative againſt Error; keep the Truth, the Scripture Truth, and it ſhall keep thee. (2.) Becauſe you *know not the Power of God*. They could not but know that God is Almighty, but they would not apply that Doctrine to this Matter, but gave up the Truth to the Objections of the Impoſſibility of it, which would all have been anſwer'd if they had but ſtuck to the Doctrine of God's Omnipotence, to which *nothing is impoſſible*. This therefore which God hath ſpoken once, we are concern'd to hear twice, to hear and believe, to hear and apply, that *Power belongs to God*, Pſal. 62. 10. Rom. 4. 19, 20, 21. The ſame Power that made Soul and Body, and preſerv'd them while they were together, can preſerve the Body ſafe, and the Soul active, when they are parted, and can unite them together again; for, *Behold the Lord's Arm is not ſhorten'd*. The Power of God ſeen in the Return of the Spring, *Pſal.* 104. 30. In the reviving of the Corn, *John* 12. 24. In the reſtoring of an abject People to their Proſperity, *Ezek.* 37. 12, 13. 14. In the raiſing ſo many to Life miraculouſly both in the Old Teſtament and in the New, and eſpecially in the Reſurrection of Chriſt, *Epheſ.* 1. 19, 20. are all Earneſts of our Reſurrection by the ſame Power, *Phil.* 3. 21. *according to the mighty working whereby he is able to ſubdue all Things to himſelf.*

2. He ſets aſide all the Force of their Objection, by ſetting the Doctrine of the future State in a true Light, *v.* 25. *When they ſhall riſe from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage.* 'Tis Folly to ask, *Whoſe Wife ſhall ſhe be of the Seven?* When the Relation between Husband and Wife, tho' inſtituted in the earthly Paradiſe, will not be known in the heavenly one. *Turks* and *Infidels* expect ſenſual Pleaſures in their Fools Paradiſes, but Chriſtians *know* better Things, That *Fleſh and Blood ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 15. 50. And *expect* better Things, even a full Satisfaction in God's Love and Likeneſs, *Pſal.* 17. 14, 15. They are *as the Angels of God in Heaven*, and we know they have neither Wives nor Children. It is no Wonder if we confound our ſelves with endleſs Abſurdities, when we meaſure our Idea's of the World of Spirits, by the Affairs of this World of Senſe.

4. He builds the Doctrine of the future State, and of the Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous in that State upon the Covenant of God with *Abraham*, which God was pleas'd to own, being after *Abraham*'s Death, *v.* 26, 27. He appeals to the Scriptures, *Have ye not read in the Book of Moſes?* We have ſome Advantage in dealing with thoſe that have *read the Scriptures*, tho' many that have read them *wreſt them* as theſe *Sadducees* did to *their own Deſtruction*. Now that which he refers them to, is what God ſaid to *Moſes* at the Buſh, *I am the God of Abraham*; not only I *was* ſo, but I *am* ſo; I am the Portion and Happineſs of *Abraham*, a God all-ſufficient to him. *Note*, It is abſurd to think that God's Relation to *Abraham* ſhould

be continued, and thus ſolemnly recogniz'd, if *Abraham* was annihilated, or that the *Living God* ſhould be the Portion and Happineſs of a Man that's dead, and muſt be for ever ſo; and therefore you muſt conclude, (1.) That *Abraham*'s Soul exiſts and acts in a State of Separation from the Body. (2.) That therefore ſome time or other the Body muſt riſe again, for there is ſuch an innate Inclination in a human Soul towards its Body, as would make a total and everlaſting Separation inconſiſtent with the Eaſe and Repoſe, much more with the Bliſs and Joy of thoſe Souls, that have the Lord for their God. Upon the whole Matter he concludes, *ye therefore do greatly Err*. Thoſe that deny the Reſurrection greatly Err, and ought to be told ſo.

28 And one of the Scribes came, and having heard them reaſoning together, and perceiving that he had anſwered them well, asked him, Which is the firſt commandment of all? 29 And Jeſus anſwered him, The firſt of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Iſrael, The Lord our God is one Lord; 30 And thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy ſtrength: this is the firſt commandment. 31 And the ſecond *is* like, *namely* this, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf: there is none other commandment greater than theſe. 32 And the Scribe ſaid unto him, Well, Maſter, thou haſt ſaid the truth: for there is one God, and there is none other but he. 33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the underſtanding, and with all the ſoul, and with all the ſtrength, and to love *his* neighbour as himſelf, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and ſacrifices. 34 And when Jeſus ſaw that he anſwered diſcreetly, he ſaid unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durſt ask him any queſtion.

The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were (however bad otherwiſe, yet) Enemies to the *Sadducees*; now one would have expected, that when they heard Chriſt argue ſo well againſt the *Sadducees*, they ſhould have countenanc'd him, as they did *Paul*, when he appear'd againſt the *Sadducees*, Acts 23.9. but it had not that Effect; becauſe he did not fall in with them in the Ceremonials of Religion, his agreeing with them in the Eſſentials, gain'd him no manner of Reſpect with them. Only we have here an Account of *one* of them, a *Scribe*, who had ſo much Civility in him as to take notice of Chriſt's Anſwer to the *Sadducees*, and to own that he had *anſwered well*, and much to the Purpoſe, *v.* 28. and we have reaſon to hope he did not join with other the *Scribes*, in perſecuting Chriſt; for here we have his Application to Chriſt for Inſtruction, and it was ſuch as became him, not tempting Chriſt, but deſiring to improve his Acquaintance with him.

1. He enquir'd *Which is the firſt Commandment of all*, v. 28. He doth not mean the *firſt* in Order, but the firſt in Weight and Dignity; which is that Command, which we ought to have in a ſpecial manner an Eye to, and our Obedience to which, will lay a Foundation for our Obedience to all the reſt. Not that any Commandment of God is little, they are all the Commands of a Great God, but ſome are greater than others, Moral Precepts than Rituals, and of ſome we may ſay, they are the *greateſt of all*.

2. Chriſt gave him a direct Anſwer to this Enquiry, *v.* 29, 30, 31. Thoſe that ſincerely deſire to be inſtructed concerning their Duty, Chriſt will *guide in Judgment*, and *teach his Way*. He tells him,

(1.) That the Great Commandment of all, which is indeed incluſive of all, is, that of *loving God with all our Hearts*; (1.) Where this is the commanding Principle in the Soul, there is a Diſpoſition to every other Duty. Love is the leading Affection of the Soul, the Love of God is the leading Grace in the renewed Soul. (2.) Where this is not, nothing elſe that's good is done, or not done aright, or not accepted, or not done long. Loving God with all our Heart, will effectually take us off from, and arm us againſt all thoſe Things that are Rivals with him for the Throne in our Souls, and will engage us to every Thing by which he may be honour'd, and with which he will be pleas'd. And no Commandment will be grievous, where this Principle commands, and has the Aſcendant. Now here in *Mark*, our Saviour prefixeth to this Command, the great Doctrinal Truth upon which it is built, *v.* 29. Hear, O *Iſrael*, *The Lord our God is one Lord*; if we firmly believe this, it will follow, that we ſhall love him *with all our Hearts*; He is *Jehovah*, who has all amiable Perfections in himſelf; He is *our God*, to whom we ſtand related, and oblig'd; and therefore we ought to *love him*, to ſet our Affections on him, let out our Deſire towards him, and take a Delight in him; and he is *one Lord*, therefore he muſt be lov'd with our *whole Heart*; he has the ſole *Right to us*, and therefore ought to have the ſole *Poſſeſſion of us*. If he be one, our Hearts muſt be one with him, and ſince there is no God but he, no Rival muſt be admitted with him upon the Throne.

(2.) That the Second great Commandment is, To *love our Neighbour as our ſelves*, v. 31. as truly and ſincerely as we love our ſelves, and in the ſame Inſtances, and we muſt ſhew it by *doing as we would be done by*. As we muſt therefore love God better than our ſelves, becauſe he is *Jehovah*, a Being infinitely better than we are; and muſt love him with *all our Heart*, becauſe he is *one Lord*, and there is no other like him; ſo we muſt *love our Neighbour as our ſelves*, becauſe he is of the ſame Nature with our ſelves; our Hearts are faſhion'd alike, and my Neighbour and my ſelf are of one Body, of one Society, that of the World of Mankind; and if a Fellow Chriſtian, and of the ſame ſacred Society, the Obligation is the ſtronger. *Has not one God created us?* Mal. 2. 10. Has not one Chriſt redeemed us?—Well might Chriſt ſay, *There is no other Commandment greater than theſe*; for in theſe all the Law is fulfill'd; and if we make Conſcience of Obedience to theſe, all other Inſtances of Obedience will follow of Courſe.

3. The *Scribe* conſented to what Chriſt ſaid, and deſcanted upon it, *v.* 32, 33. (1.) He commends Chriſt's Deciſion of this Queſtion; *Well, Maſter, Thou haſt ſaid the Truth*. Chriſt's Aſſertions needed not the *Scribe's* Atteſtations; but this *Scribe* being a Man in Authority, that it would put ſome Reputation upon what Chriſt ſaid, to have it commended by him; and it ſhall be brought in Evidence againſt thoſe who perſecuted Chriſt as a Deceiver, that one of themſelves, even a *Scribe* of their own, confeſs'd that he *ſaid the Truth*, and ſaid it *well*. And thus muſt we ſubſcribe to Chriſt's Sayings, muſt ſet to our Seal that they are true. (2.) He Comments upon it; Chriſt had quoted that great Doctrine, That *the Lord our God is one Lord*; and this he not only aſſented to, but added, and *there is none other but he*; and therefore we muſt have no other God but him. This excludes all Rivals with him, and ſecures the Throne in the Heart intire for him. Chriſt had laid down that great Law of loving God *with all our Heart*: And this alſo he explains, that 'tis loving him *with the Underſtanding*, as thoſe that know what abundant Reaſon we have to love him; our Love to God, as it muſt be an *intire*, ſo it muſt be an *intelligent* Love: We muſt love him with *all* the Underſtanding, ἐξ ὅλης τῆς συνέσεως, *out of the whole Underſtanding*, our rational Powers and Faculties muſt all be ſet on Work to lead out the Affections of our Souls towards God. Chriſt had ſaid, That to love God and our Neighbour is the greateſt Commandment of all, yea, ſaith the *Scribe*, it is better, it is *more than all whole Burnt-Offerings and Sacrifices*; more acceptable to God, and will turn to a better Account to our ſelves. There were thoſe who held, That the Law of *Sacrifices* was the *greateſt Commandment* of all, but this *Scribe* readily agreed with our Saviour in this, That the Law of Love to God and our Neighbour is greater than that of *Sacrifice*, even than that of *whole Burnt-Offerings*, which were intended purely for the Honour of God.

4. Chriſt approv'd of what he ſaid, and encouraged him to proceed in his Enquiries of him, *v.* 34. (1.) He own'd that he underſtood himſelf well as far as he went; ſo far, ſo good; *Jeſus ſaw that he anſwer'd diſcreetly*, and was the more pleas'd with it, becauſe he had of late met with ſo many, even of the *Scribes*, Men of Letters, that anſwer'd *indiſcreetly*, not as thoſe that had *no Underſtanding*, nor deſir'd to have any. He anſwer'd νουνεχῶς, as one that had a Mind, as a rational intelligent Man, as one that had his Wits about him. As one whoſe Reaſon was not blinded, whoſe Judgment was not biaſs'd, and whoſe fore-thought was not fetter'd by the Prejudices, which other *Scribes* were ſo much under the Power of. He anſwer'd as one that allow'd himſelf Liberty and Leiſure to conſider, and as one that had conſider'd. (2.) He own'd that he ſtood fair for a further advance; *Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God*, the Kingdom of Grace and Glory; thou art in a likely way to be a Chriſtian, a Diſciple of Chriſt. For the Doctrine of Chriſt inſiſts moſt upon theſe Things, and is deſign'd, and has a Tendency direct to bring thee to this. *Note*, There is hopes of thoſe who make a good uſe of the Light they have, and go as far as that will carry them, that by the Grace of God, they will be led further, by the clearer Diſcoveries God has to make to them. What came of this *Scribe* we are not told, but would willingly hope that he took the Hint Chriſt hereby gave him, and that having been told by him ſo much to his Satisfaction, what was the great Commandment of the Law, he proceeded to enquire of him, or his Apoſtles, what was the great Commandment of the Goſpel too! yet if he did not, but took up here, and went no further, we are not to think it ſtrange, for there are many who are *not far from the Kingdom of God*, and yet never come thither. Now one would think, this ſhould have invited many to conſult him; But it had a contrary Effect, *no Man after that durſt ask him any Queſtion*; every Thing he ſaid was ſpoken with ſuch Authority and Majeſty, that every one ſtood in awe of him; thoſe that deſir'd to *learn* were *aſham'd* to ask, and thoſe that deſign'd to *cavil* were *afraid* to ask.

35 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, while he taught in the temple, How ſay the Scribes that Chriſt is the ſon of David? 36 For David himſelf ſaid by the holy Ghoſt, The Lord ſaid to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footſtool. 37 David therefore himſelf calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his ſon? And the common people heard him gladly. 38 And he ſaid unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the Scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* ſaluta-

tions in the market-places, 39 And the chief ſeats in the ſynagogues, and the uppermoſt rooms at feaſts: 40 Which devour widows houſes, and for a pretence make long prayers: theſe ſhall receive greater damnation.

Here, 1: Chriſt ſhews the People, how weak and defective the *Scribes* were in their Preaching, and how unable to ſolve the Difficulties that occurr'd in the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, which they undertook to expound. Of this he gives an Inſtance, which is not ſo fully related here, as 'twas in *Matthew*. Chriſt was *teaching in the Temple*, and many Things he ſaid which were not written; but Notice is taken of this, becauſe it will ſtir us up to enquire *concerning Chriſt*, and to enquire *of him*: For none can have the right Knowledge of him but *from himſelf*; it is not to be had from *the Scribes*, for they will ſoon be run a-ground.

1. They told the People, that the *Meſſiah* was to be the *Son of* David, *v.* 35. and they were in the right; he was not only to deſcend from his Loins, but to fill his Throne, *Luke* 1. 32. *The Lord God ſhall give him the Throne of his Father* David. The *Scripture* ſaid it often, but the People took it, as what the *Scribes* ſaid, whereas the Truths of God ſhould rather be quoted from our Bibles than from our Miniſters; for there's the Original of them; *Dulcius ex ipſo fonte bibuntur Aquæ.*

2. Yet they could not tell them how, notwithſtanding that it was very proper for *David* in Spirit, the Spirit of Prophecy, to call him *his Lord*, as he doth, *Pſal.* 110. 1. They had taught the People, that concerning the *Meſſiah* which would be for the Honour of their Nation, that he ſhould be a Branch of their Royal Family; but had not taken Care to teach them, that which was the Honour of the *Meſſiah* himſelf, that he ſhould be the Son of God, and as ſuch, and not otherwiſe, *David's Lord*; thus they *held the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs*, and were *Partial* in the Goſpel, as well as in the Law of the Old Teſtament. They were able to ſay it, and prove it, That Chriſt was to be *David*'s Son; but if any ſhould object, *How then doth* David *himſelf call him Lord*, they would not know how to avoid the force of the Objection. *Note*, Thoſe are unworthy to ſit in *Moſes*'s Seat, who, tho' they are able to preach the Truth, are not in ſome Meaſure able to defend it, when they have preach'd it, and to convince Gain-ſayers.

Now this gall'd the *Scribes*, to have their Ignorance thus expos'd, and no doubt incens'd them more againſt Chriſt; but the *common People heard him gladly*, v. 37. What he preach'd was ſurprizing and affecting, and tho' it reflected upon the *Scribes*, 'twas inſtructive to them, and they had never heard ſuch Preaching. Probably there was ſomething more than ordinary commanding and charming in his Voice and way of Delivery, which recommended him to the Affections of the common People; for we do not find, that any were wrought upon to *believe* in him, and to *follow* him, but he was to them as a *lovely Song of one that could play well on an Inſtrument*, as *Ezekiel* was to his Hearers, *Ezek.* 33. 32. And perhaps ſome of theſe cry'd *crucifie him*, as *Herod* heard *John Baptiſt* gladly, and yet cut off his Head.

2. He cautions the People to take heed of ſuffering themſelves to be impos'd upon by the *Scribes*, and of being infected with their Pride and Hypocriſie. *He ſaid unto them in his Doctrine, Beware of the* Scribes, *v.* 38. ſtand upon your Guard, that you neither imbibe their peculiar Opinions nor the Opinions, of the People concerning them. 'Twas a long Charge drawn up againſt them in the parallel Place, *Mat* 23. 'tis here contracted.

1. They affect to appear *very Great*; for they go in *long clothing*, with Veſtures *down to their Feet*, and in thoſe they walk *about the Streets*, as Princes, or Judges, or Gentlemen of the Long Robe. Their going in ſuch Clothing was not ſinful, but their *loving* to go in it, priding themſelves in it, valuing themſelves by it, commanding Reſpect by it, ſaying to their long Cloaths, as *Saul* to *Samuel*, *Honour me now before this People*; this was a Product of Pride. Chriſt would have his Diſciples go with *their Loins girt*.

2. They affect to appear *very Good*; for they pray, they make *long Prayers*, as if they were very intimate with Heaven, and had a deal of Buſineſs there. They took Care it ſhould be known that they pray'd, that they pray'd long, which ſome think intimates, that they pray'd not for themſelves only, but for *others*, and therein were very particular and very large; this they did *for a Pretence*, that they might ſeem to love Prayer, not only for God's ſake, whom thereby they pretended to glorifie; but for their Neighbour's ſake, whom hereby they pretended to be ſerviceable to.

3. They herein aim'd to *Advance* themſelves; they coveted Applauſe, and were fond of it: they lov'd *Salutations in the Market places*, and the *chief Seats in the Synagogues, and the uppermoſt Rooms at Feaſts*, theſe pleas'd a vain Fancy; to have theſe given them, they thought expreſs'd the value they had for them that did know them, and gain'd them Reſpect from thoſe that did not.

4. They herein aim'd to *Enrich* themſelves. They *devour'd Widow's Houſes*, made themſelves Maſters of their Eſtates by ſome Trick or other, and it was to ſcreen themſelves from the Suſpicion of Diſhoneſty, that they put on the Maſk of Piety; and that they might not be thought as bad as the worſt, they were ſtudious to ſeem as good as the beſt. Let Fraud and Oppreſſion be thought the worſe of for their having *prophan'd* and *diſgrac'd* long Prayers; but let not Prayers, no, nor *long Prayers*, be thought the worſe of, if made in Humility and Sincerity, for their having been by ſome thus abus'd. But as Iniquity, thus diſguis'd with a ſhew of Piety is *double* Iniquity, ſo its Doom will be doubly heavy; *theſe ſhall receive greater Damnation*, greater than thoſe that live without Prayer; greater than they ſhould have receiv'd for the Wrong done to the poor Widows, if it had not been thus diſguis'd. *Note*, The Damnation of Hypocrites, will be of all other the greateſt Damnation.

41 And Jeſus ſate over againſt the treaſury, and beheld how the people caſt money into the treaſury: and many that were rich caſt in much. 42 And there came a certain poor widow, and ſhe threw in two mites, which make a farthing. 43 And he called unto his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, that this poor widow hath caſt more in, than all they which have caſt into the treaſury: 44 For all *they* did caſt in of their abundance: but ſhe of her want, did caſt in all that ſhe had, *even* all her living.

This Paſſage of Story was not in *Matthew*, but is here, and in *Luke*; 'tis Chriſt's Commendation of the poor Widow, that caſt *Two Mites* into the Treaſury, which our Saviour, as buſie as he was in Preaching, found Leiſure to take notice of. Obſerve,

1. There was a *publick Fund* for Charity, into which Contributions were brought, and out of which Diſtributions were made; a Poor's Box, and this in *the Temple*; for Works of Charity and Works of Piety very fitly go together; where God is honour'd by our Worſhip, 'tis proper he ſhould be honour'd by the Relief of his Poor; and we often find *Prayers* and *Alms* in Conjunction, as *Acts* 20. 1, 2. 'Tis good to erect publickly Receptacles of Charity, for the inviting and directing of private Hands in giving to the Poor; nay, it is good for thoſe who are of Ability to have Funds of their own, to *lay by has God as proſpered them*, 1 Cor. 16. 2. that they may have ſomething ready to give, when an Object of Charity offers it ſelf, which is before dedicated to ſuch Uſes.

2. Jeſus Chriſt had *an Eye* upon it. *He ſate over againſt the Treaſury, and beheld how the People caſt Money into it*; not grudging either that he had none to caſt in, or had not the diſpoſal of that which was caſt in, but obſerving what was caſt in. *Note*, Our Lord Jeſus takes Notice, what we contribute to pious and charitable Uſes; whether we give liberally, or give ſparingly; whether Chearfully, or with Reluctancy and Ill-will; nay, he looks at the Heart; he obſerves what Principles we act upon, and what our Views are in giving Alms; and whether we do it as unto the Lord, or only to be ſeen of Men.

3. He ſaw *many that were Rich caſt in much*; and it was a good ſight, to ſee rich People charitable, to ſee *many* rich People ſo, and to ſee them not only caſt in, but caſt in *much*; *Note*, Thoſe that are Rich ought to give richly; if God give abundantly to us, he expects we ſhould give abundantly to the Poor, and it is not enough for thoſe that are rich to ſay, They give as much as others do, who perhaps have much leſs of the World than they have, but they muſt give in Proportion to their Eſtates; and if Objects of Charity do not preſent themſelves that require ſo much, they ought to enquire them out, and to *deviſe liberal Things.*

4. There was a *poor Widow that caſt in Two Mites, which make a Farthing*, v. 42. And our Lord Jeſus highly commended her; *call'd his Diſciples* to him, and bid them take notice of it, *v.* 43. tells them ſhe could very ill ſpare that which ſhe gave, ſhe had ſcarce enough for her ſelf, it was *all her Living*, all ſhe had to live upon for that Day, and perhaps a great part of what ſhe had earn'd by her Labour the Day before; and that foraſmuch as he knew, ſhe did it from a truly charitable Diſpoſition, he reckon'd it more than all that put together, which the rich People threw in; for they did *caſt in of their abundance*, but ſhe of *her want*, v. 44. Now many would have been ready to cenſure this *poor Widow*, and to think ſhe did ill; why ſhould ſhe give to others, when ſhe had little enough for her ſelf? Charity begins at home; or, if ſhe would give it, why did ſhe not beſtow it upon ſome poor Body that ſhe knew, what need ſhe bring it to the *Treaſury*, to be diſpos'd of by the chief Prieſts, who we have reaſon to fear were partial in the Diſpoſal of it. 'Tis ſo rare a Thing to find any that would not blame this Widow, that we cannot expect to find any that will imitate her, and yet our Saviour commends her, and therefore we are ſure ſhe did very well and wiſely; if Chriſt ſaith *well-done*, no Matter who ſaith otherwiſe; and we muſt from hence learn, (1.) That *giving Alms* is an excellent good Thing, and highly pleaſing to the Lord Jeſus; and if we be humble and ſincere in it, he will graciouſly accept of it, tho' in ſome Circumſtances there may not be all the Diſcretion in the World. (2.) Thoſe that have but a *little*, yet ought to give Alms out of *their little*. Thoſe that live by their Labour, from Hand to Mouth, yet muſt *give thoſe that need*; Eph. 4. 28. (3.) It is very good for us to ſtraiten and deny our ſelves, that we may be able to give the more to the Poor; not only to deny our ſelves Superfluities, but even Conveniencies for the ſake of Charity; we ſhould in many Caſes pinch our ſelves, that we may ſupply others Neceſſities; this is loving our Neighbours as our ſelves. (4.) Publick Charities ſhould be encouraged, for they bring upon a Nation publick Bleſſings; and tho' there may be ſome Miſmanagement of them, yet that is not a good Reaſon, why he ſhould not bring in

our *quota* to them. (5.) Tho' we can give but *a little* in Charity, yet if it be according to our Ability, and be given with an upright Heart, it ſhall be accepted of by Chriſt, who requires *according to what a Man has, and not according to what he has not*; Two Mites ſhall be put upon the Score and brought to Account, if given in a right Manner, as if it had been Two Pounds. (6.) It is much to the Praiſe of Charity, when we give not only *to our Power*, but *beyond our Power*, as the *Macedonian* Churches, whoſe *deep Poverty abounded to the riches of their Liberality*, 2 Cor. 8. 2, 3. When we can chearfully provide for others, out of our own neceſſary Proviſion, as the Widow of *Sarepta* for *Elijah*, and Chriſt for his Five Thouſand Gueſts, and truſt God to provide for us ſome other way, *this is Thank-worthy.*

CHAP. XIII.

We have here the Subſtance of that Prophetical Sermon, which our Lord Jeſus preached, pointing at the Deſtruction of Jeruſalem, *and the Conſummation of all Things; it was one of the laſt of his Sermons, and not* ad Populum, *but* ad Clerum; *it was Private, preach'd only to Four of his Diſciples, with whom his Secret was. Here's,* 1. *The Occaſion of his Prediction, his Diſciples admiring the Buildings of the Temple,* v. 1, 2. *and their Enquiry, concerning the Time of the Deſolation of them,* v. 3, 4. 2. *The Predictions themſelves,* (1.) *Of the Riſe of Deceivers,* v. 5, 6, 21, 22, 23. (2.) *Of the Wars of the Nations,* v. 7, 8. (3.) *Of the Perſecution of Chriſtians,* v. 9,—13. (4.) *Of the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *v.* 14,—20. (5.) *Of the End of the World,* v. 24,—27. (3.) *Some general Intimations concerning the Time of them,* v. 28,—32. (4.) *Some practical Inferences from all,* v. 33,—37.

AND as he went out of the Temple, one of his diſciples ſaith unto him, Maſter, ſee what manner of ſtones, and what buildings *are here.* 2 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Seeſt thou theſe great buildings? there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down. 3 And as he ſat upon the mount of Olives, over againſt the Temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew asked him privately; 4 Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? And what *ſhall be* the ſign when all theſe things ſhall be fulfilled?

We may here ſee,

1. How apt many of Chriſt's own Diſciples are to idolize Things that look *great*, and have been long look'd upon as *ſacred*; they had heard Chriſt complain of thoſe who had made the Temple a *Den of Thieves*, and yet, when he quitted it for the Wickedneſs that remain'd in it, they court him to be as much in love, as they were, with the ſtately Structure and adorning of it. One of them ſaid to him, Look Maſter, *what manner of Stones, and what Buildings are here*, v. 1. We never ſaw the like in *Galilee*; O do not leave this fine Place.

2. How little Chriſt values external Pomp, where there is not real Purity; *ſeeſt thou theſe great Buildings*, ſaith Chriſt, and thou admireſt them, I tell thee, the Time is at Hand, when *there ſhall not be left one Stone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down*, v. 2. And the Sumptuouſneſs of the Fabrick ſhall be no Security to it, no, nor move any Compaſſion in the Lord Jeſus towards it. He looks with *Pity* upon the Ruin of precious Souls, and weeps over them, for on them he has put a great Value; but we do not find him look with any Pity upon the Ruin of a magnificent Houſe, when he is driven out of it by Sin, for that's of ſmall Value with him. With what little concern doth he ſay, *not one Stone ſhall be left on another!* Much of the Strength of the Temple lay in the largeneſs of the Stones, and if theſe be thrown down, no Footſtep, no Remembrance of it will remain. While any Part remain'd ſtanding, there might be ſome Hopes of the Repair of it, but what Hope is there, when not one Stone is *left upon another*.

3. How natural it is to us to deſire to know Things to come, and the Times of them; more inquiſitive we are apt to be about that, than about our Duty. His Diſciples knew not how to *digeſt* this Doctrine of the Ruin of the Temple, which they thought muſt be their Maſter's Royal Palace, and in which they expected their Preferment, and to have the Poſts of Honour; and therefore were in pain till they got him alone, and got more out of him concerning this Matter. As he was returning to *Bethany* therefore, he *ſat upon the Mount of* Olives, *over againſt the Temple*, where he had a full View of it; and there Four of them agreed to *ask him privately*, what he meant by the deſtroying of the Temple, which they underſtood no more than they did the Predictions of his own Death, ſo inconſiſtent was it with their Scheme. Probably, tho' theſe Four propos'd the Queſtion, yet Chriſt's Diſcourſe in anſwer to it, was in the hearing of the reſt of the Diſciples, yet *privately*, i. e. apart from the Multitude. Their Enquiry is, *When ſhall theſe Things be?* They will not Queſtion, at leaſt not ſeem to Queſtion whether they ſhall be or no, for their Maſter has ſaid they ſhall, but are willing to hope, 'tis a great way off. Yet they ask not preciſely the Day and Year, therein they were modeſt, but tell us, *What ſhall be the Sign, when all theſe Things ſhall be fulfill'd?* What Preſages ſhall there be of them, and how may we Prognoſticate their Approach?

5 And Jeſus anſwering them, began to ſay, Take heed leſt any man deceive you. 6 For many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am *Chriſt:* and ſhall deceive many. 7 And when ye ſhall hear of wars, and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: For *ſuch things* muſt needs be; but the end *ſhall* not *be* yet. 8 For nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom: and there ſhall be earthquakes in *divers* places, and there ſhall be famines and troubles: theſe *are* the beginnings of ſorrows. 9 But take heed to your ſelves: for they ſhall deliver you up to councils; and in the Synagogues ye ſhall be beaten, and ye ſhall be brought before rulers and kings for my ſake, for a teſtimony againſt them. 10 And the goſpel muſt firſt be publiſhed among all nations. 11 But when they ſhall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought before hand what ye ſhall ſpeak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatſoever ſhall be given you in that hour, that ſpeak ye: for it is not ye that ſpeak, but the holy Ghoſt. 12 Now the brother ſhall betray the brother to death, and the Father the ſon; and children ſhall riſe up againſt *their* parents, and ſhall cauſe them to be put to death. 13 And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my name's ſake: but he that ſhall endure unto the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved.

Our Lord Jeſus, in Reply to their Queſtion, ſets himſelf not ſo much to ſatisfie their Curioſity, as to direct their Conſciences: leaves them ſtill in the dark, concerning the *Times* and *Seaſons*, which the Father has *kept in his own Power*, and which *it was not for them to know*: But gives them the Cautions which were needful, with Reference to the Events that ſhould now ſhortly come to paſs.

1. They muſt take heed, that they be not *deceiv'd* by the *Seducers* and *Impoſtors* that ſhould now ſhortly ariſe, *v.* 5, 6. *Take heed, leſt any Man deceive you*, leſt having found the *true Meſſiah*, you loſe him again in the Crowd of *Pretenders*; or be inveigled to embrace others in rivalſhip with him. Many ſhall come *in my Name*, not in the Name of *Jeſus*, but ſaying, *I am Chriſt*, and ſo claiming the Dignities which I only am intitled to. After the *Jews* had rejected the true Chriſt, they were *impos'd upon*, and ſo *expos'd* by many falſe Chriſts, but never before; thoſe falſe Chriſts *deceiv'd many*, therefore *take heed leſt they deceive you. Note*, When many are deceiv'd, we ſhould thereby be awakened to look to our ſelves.

2. They muſt take heed, that they be not *diſturb'd* at the noiſe of Wars, which they ſhould be alarm'd with, v. 7, 8. Sin introduc'd *Wars*, and they come *from Mens Luſts*. But at ſome times the Nations are more diſtracted and waſted with Wars, than at other times; ſo it ſhall be now. Chriſt was born into the World when there was a general Peace, but ſoon after he went out of the World, there were general Wars; *Nation ſhall riſe againſt Nation, and Kingdom againſt Kingdom*. And what will become of them then, who are to preach the Goſpel to every Nation? *Inter Arma ſilent Leges*. But *be not troubled at it*. (1.) Let it be no *Surprize* to you, you are bid to expect it, and *ſuch Things muſt needs be*, for God has appointed them, in Order to the further Accompliſhment of his Purpoſes, and by the *Wars of the Jews* (which *Joſephus* has given us a large Account of) God will puniſh the *Wickedneſs of the Jews*. (2.) Let it be no *Terrour* to you, as if your Intereſt were in danger of being overthrown, or your work obſtructed, by theſe Wars; you have no Concern in them, and therefore need not be apprehenſive of any Damage by them. *Note*, Thoſe that deſpiſe the Smiles of the World, and do not court and covet them, may deſpiſe the Frowns of the World, and need not fear them. If we ſeek not to riſe with them that *riſe in the World*, why ſhould we dread falling with them that fall in the World? (3.) Let it not be look'd upon as an Omen of the approaching Period of the World, for the *End is not yet*, v. 7. Think not that theſe *Wars* will bring the World to a Period; no, there are other intermediate Counſels to be fulfill'd betwixt, and the End of all Things, which are deſign'd to prepare you for the End, but not to haſten it out of due Time. (4.) Let it not be look'd upon as if in them God had done his worſt: No, he has more Arrows in his Quiver, and they are *ordain'd againſt the Perſecutors*; be not troubled at the Wars you ſhall hear of, for they are but *the Beginning of Sorrows*; and therefore inſtead of being diſturb'd at *them*, you ought to *prepare for worſe*; for there ſhall alſo be *Earthquakes in divers Places*, which ſhall bury Multitudes in the Ruins of their own Houſes; and there *ſhall be Famines*, by which many of the Poor ſhall periſh for want of Bread; and *Troubles* and Commotions, ſo that there ſhall be no Peace to him that *goes out*, or *comes in*. The World ſhall be be full of *Troubles*, but *be not ye troubled*; without are *fightings*, within are *fears*, but *fear not ye their fear*. *Note*, The Diſciples of Chriſt, if it be not their own Fault,

may enjoy a Holy Security and Serenity of Mind, when all about them is in the greateſt Diſorder.

3. They muſt take heed that they be not *drawn away* from Chriſt, and from their Duty to him by the Sufferings they ſhould meet with for Chriſt's ſake. Again, he ſaith *take heed to your ſelves*, v. 9. Tho' you may eſcape the *Sword of War*, better than ſome of your Neighbours, becauſe you Intereſt not your ſelf in the publick Quarrels, yet be not ſecure; you will be expos'd to the *Sword of Juſtice* more than others, and the Parties that contend with one another will unite againſt you. *Take heed* therefore leſt you *deceive* your ſelves with the hopes of outward Proſperity, and ſuch a temporal Kingdom as you have been dreaming of, when 'tis *through many Tribulations* that *you muſt enter into the Kingdom of God.* Take heed leſt you needleſly expoſe your ſelves to Trouble, and pull it upon your own Head: *Take heed* what you ſay and do, for you'll have many Eyes upon you. Obſerve,

1. What the Trouble is they muſt expect.

(1.) They ſhall be *hated of all Men*; Trouble enough! The Thoughts of *being hated*, are grievous to a tender Spirit, and the Fruits of that Hatred muſt needs be a conſtant Vexation; thoſe that are *Malicious* will be *Miſchievous*. 'Twas not for any Thing amiſs in them, or done amiſs by them, that they were *hated*, but for Chriſt's Name ſake, becauſe they were called by his Name, called upon his Name, preach'd his Name, and wrought Miracles in his Name. The World hated'em becauſe he lov'd 'em.

(2.) Their own *Relations* ſhall *betray them*, thoſe to whom they were moſt nearly ally'd, and on whom therefore they depended for Protection; they *ſhall betray you*, ſhall inform againſt you, and be your Proſecutors: If a Father has a Child that is a Chriſtian, he ſhall become void of natural Affection, it ſhall all be ſwallow'd up in Bigottry, and he ſhall betray his own Child to the Perſecutors, as if he were a worſhipper of other Gods, *Deut.* 13. 6.

(3.) Their *Church Rulers* ſhall inflict *their Cenſures* upon them. You ſhall be *deliver'd up* to the great *Sanhedrin* at *Jeruſalem*, and to the inferiour Courts and Conſiſtories in other Cities, and ſhall be *beaten in the Synagogues* with forty Stripes at a time, as Offenders againſt the Law which was read in the Synagogue. 'Tis no new Thing for the Church's Artillery through the Treachery of its Officers to be turn'd againſt ſome of its beſt Friends.

(4.) *Governours* and *Kings* ſhall uſe their Power againſt them: Becauſe the *Jews* have not Power to put them to Death, they ſhall incenſe the *Roman* Powers againſt them, as they did *Herod* againſt *James* and *Peter*, and they ſhall *cauſe you to be put to Death*, as Enemies to the Empire. They muſt reſiſt unto Blood, and ſtill reſiſt.

2. What they ſhall have to comfort themſelves with in the midſt of theſe great and ſore Troubles.

1. That the Work they were call'd to ſhould be carry'd on and proſper, notwithſtanding all this Oppoſition they ſhould meet with in it, v. 10. *The Goſpel* ſhall for all this, be *publiſhed among all Nations*, and before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* the *ſound* of it ſhall *go forth into all the Earth*; not only through all the Nation of the *Jews*, but to all the Nations of the Earth. 'Tis Comfort to thoſe who ſuffer for the Goſpel, that tho' they may be cruſh'd, and born down, the Goſpel cannot; it ſhall keep its Ground and carry the Day.

2. That their Sufferings, inſtead of obſtructing their Work ſhould forward it; your being *brought before Governours and Kings* ſhall be for a *Teſtimony to them*, ſo ſome read it, *v.* 9. It ſhall give you an Opportunity of preaching the Goſpel to thoſe before whom you are brought as Criminals, to whom otherwiſe you could not have acceſs. Thus St. *Paul's* being brought before *Felix* and *Feſtus*, and *Agrippa*, and *Nero*, was a Teſtimony to them concerning Chriſt and his Goſpel. Or, as we read it, it ſhall be for a Teſtimony *againſt them*, againſt both the Judges and the Proſecutors, who purſue thoſe with the utmoſt Rage that appear upon Examination to be not only Innocent, but excellent Perſons. The Goſpel is a Teſtimony to us concerning Chriſt and Heaven; if we receive it, it will be a Teſtimony for us, 'twill juſtifie and ſave us; if not, 'twill be a Teſtimony *againſt* us in the great Day.

3. That when they were brought before Kings and Governours for Chriſt's ſake, they ſhould have ſpecial Aſſiſtance from Heaven, to plead Chriſt's Cauſe and their own, v. 11, *Take no thought before hand what you ſhall ſpeak*, be not ſollicitous how to addreſs your ſelves to great Men, ſo as to obtain their Favour, your Cauſe is Juſt and Glorious, and needs not to be ſupported by premeditated Speeches and Harangues: But *whatſoever ſhall be given you in that Hour*, whatſoever ſhall be ſuggeſted to you, and put into your Minds, and into your Mouths, *pro re natâ*, that *ſpeak you*, and fear not the Succeſs of it, becauſe it is *off Hand*, for *it is not ye that ſpeak* purely by the Strength of your own Wiſdom, Conſideration and Reſolution, but it is *the Holy Ghoſt*. *Note*, Thoſe whom Chriſt calls out to be Advocates for him, ſhall be furniſh'd with full Inſtructions: And when we are engag'd in the Service of Chriſt, we may depend upon the Aids of the Spirit of Chriſt.

4. That Heaven at laſt would *make amends for all*. You will meet with a great deal of Hardſhip in your way, but have a good Heart on it, your Warfare will be accompliſh'd, and your Teſtimony finiſh'd, and *he that ſhall endure to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved*, v. 13. Perſeverance gains the Crown. The Salvation here promis'd is more than a Deliverance from Evil, 'tis an Everlaſting Bleſſedneſs, which will be an abundant Recompence for all their Services and Sufferings. All this we have, *Matt.* 10. 17. &c.

14 But when ye ſhall ſee the abomination of deſolation ſpoken of by Daniel the prophet, ſtanding where it ought not, (let him that readeth underſtand) then let them that be in Judea, flee to the mountains: 15 And let him that is on the houſe-top, not go down into the houſe, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his houſe. 16 And let him that is in the field, not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17 But wo to them that are with child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days. 18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. 19 For in thoſe days ſhall be affliction, ſuch as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, neither ſhall be. 20 And except that the Lord had ſhortned thoſe days, no fleſh ſhould be ſaved: but for the elects ſake whom he hath choſen, he hath ſhortned the days. 21 And then if any man ſhall ſay to you, Lo, here *is* Chriſt, or lo, *he is* there: believe *him* not. 22 For falſe Chriſts, and falſe prophets ſhall riſe, and ſhall ſhew ſigns and wonders, to ſeduce, if *it were* poſſible, even the elect. 23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

The *Jews* in rebelling againſt the *Romans*, and in perſecuting the Chriſtians, were haſtening their own Ruin apace, both efficiently and meritoriouſly were ſetting both God and Man againſt them, ſee 1 *Theſ.* 2. 15. Now here we have a Prediction of that Ruin which came upon them, within leſs than forty Years after this: We had it before, *Matt.* 24. 15, &c. Obſerve,

1. What is here foretold concerning it.

(1.) That the *Roman Armies* ſhould make a Deſcent upon *Judea*, and inveſt *Jeruſalem*, the Holy City. Theſe were the *abomination* of *Deſolation*, which the *Jews* did *abominate*, and by which they ſhould be made *deſolate*. The Country of thine Enemy is called the *Land which thou abhorreſt*, Iſa. 7. 16. Therefore it was an Abomination, becauſe it brought with it nothing but Deſolation. They had rejected Chriſt as an *Abomination*, who would have been their *Salvation*, and now God brought upon them an Abomination that would be their *Deſolation*, thus ſpoken of by *Daniel the Prophet*, Chap. 9. 27. as that by which this Sacrifice and Offering ſhould be made to ceaſe. This Army ſtood *where it ought not*, in and about the *Holy City*, which the Heathen ought not to have approach'd, nor ſhould have been ſuffer'd to do, if *Jeruſalem* had not firſt profan'd the Crown of their Holineſs. This the Church complains of, *Lam.* 1. 10. The *Heathen enter'd into her Sanctuary, whom thou didſt command that they ſhould not enter into the Congregation*; but Sin made the Breach, at which the Glory went out, and the Abomination of Deſolation broke in and *ſtood where it ought not*. Now, let *him that readeth* this *underſtand* it, and endeavour to take it right. Prophecies ſhould not be too plain, and yet intelligible to thoſe that ſearch them; and they are beſt underſtood, by comparing them firſt with one another, and at laſt with the Event.

(2.) That when the *Roman Army* ſhould come into the Country, there would be no Safety any where but by quitting the Country, and that with all poſſible Expedition; 'twill be in vain to *fight*, the Enemies will be too hard for them, in vain to *abſcond*, the Enemies will find them out, and in vain to *capitulate*, the Enemies will give them no Quarter; a Man cannot have ſo much as his Life given him for a Prey, but by *fleeing to the Mountains*, out of *Judea*, and let him take the firſt Alarm, and make the beſt of his way. If he be *on the Houſe-top*, trying from thence to diſcover the Motions of the Enemy, and ſpies them coming, let him not *go down* to *take any Things out of the Houſe*, for it will loſe time, which is more precious than his beſt Goods, and will but encumber him, and embarraſs his Flight; if he be in the Field, and there diſcovers the Approach of the Enemy, let him get away as he is, and not *turn back again* to *take up his Garment*, v. 16. If he can ſave his Life, let him reckon it a good Bargain, tho' he can ſave nothing elſe; and be thankful to God, that tho' he is cut ſhort, he is not cut off.

(3.) That it would go very hard at that time with poor Mothers and Nurſes, *v.* 17. *Wo to them that are with Child*, that dare not go into ſtrange Places, that cannot ſhift for themſelves, nor make haſte as another can. And *wo to them that give ſuck*, that know not how either to leave the tender Infants behind them, or to carry them along with them. Such is the Vanity of the Creature, that the Time may often be, when the greateſt Comforts may prove the greateſt Burthens. It would likewiſe be very uncomfortable, if they ſhould be forc'd to flee *in the Winter*, v. 18. when the *Weather* and *Ways* were bad, when the Roads would be ſcarce paſſable, eſpecially in thoſe Mountains to which they muſt flee. If there be no Remedy but that Trouble muſt come, yet we may deſire and pray, That if it be God's Will, the Circumſtances of it may be ſo order'd, as to be a Mitigation of the Trouble; and when Things are bad, we ought to conſider they might have been worſe. 'Tis bad to be forc'd to flee, but it would have been worſe if it had been *in the Winter*.

(4.) That throughout all the Country of the *Jews*, there ſhould be ſuch Deſtruction and Deſolation made, as could not be parallell'd in any Hiſtory, *v.* 19. *In thoſe Days ſhall be Affliction, ſuch as was not from the beginning* of *Time*, that is, *of the Creation which God created*, for Time and Creation are of equal date *unto this Day, neither ſhall be* to the end of Time. Such a Complication of Miſeries, and of ſuch Continuance. The Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Chaldeans* was very terrible, but this exceeded it. It threaten'd an univerſal Slaughter of all the People of the *Jews*, ſo barbarouſly did they devour one another, and the *Romans* devour them all; that if their Wars had continued a little longer, *no Fleſh could have been ſaved*, not one *Jew* could have been left alive; but in the midſt of Wrath, God remember'd Mercy; and, (1.) He *ſhorten'd the Days*, he let fall his Controverſie before he had *made a full end.* As a Church and Nation the Ruin was compleat, but many particular Perſons had their Lives gain'd them for a prey, by the Storm *taken up* when it did. (2.) It was *for the Elect's ſake*, that thoſe Days were ſhorten'd; *many* among them fared the better, for the ſake of the *few* among them that believ'd in Chriſt, and were faithful to him. There was a Promiſe, that *a Remnant ſhould be ſav'd*, Iſa. 10. 22. and that God would not, for his Servants ſakes *deſtroy them all*, Iſa. 56. 9. and theſe Promiſes muſt be fulfill'd; God's own *Elect cry Day and Night to him*, and their Prayers muſt be anſwer'd, *Luke* 18. 7.

2. What Directions are given to the Diſciples with reference to it.

1. They muſt ſhift for the Safety of *their Lives*; when you ſee the Country invaded, and the City inveſted, flatter not your ſelves with Thoughts that the Enemy will retire, or that you may be able to make your Part good with them; but without further Deliberation or Delay, *let them which be in* Judea *flee to the Mountains*, v. 14. Meddle not with Strife that *belongs not to you*; *let the Potſherds ſtrive with the Potſherds of the Earth*, but do you go out to the Ship when you ſee it ſinking, that you die not the *Death of the uncircumciſed* in Heart.

2. They muſt provide for the Safety of *their Souls*; *Seducers* will be buſie at that time, for they love to fiſh in troubled Waters, and therefore then you muſt double your Guard: *then if any Man ſhall* ſay unto you, *Lo, here is Chriſt*, or, *Lo, he is here*, you know he is in Heaven, and will come again at the end of Time to judge the World, and therefore *believe them not*; having receiv'd *Chriſt*, be not drawn into the Snares of any *Antichriſt*; for *falſe Chriſts*, and *falſe Prophets ſhall ariſe*, v. 22. When the Goſpel Kingdom was in the ſetting up, Satan muſter'd all his force to oppoſe it, and made uſe of all his Wiles; and God permitted it for the Trial of the Sincerity of ſome, and the Diſcovery of the Hypocriſie of others, and the Confuſion of thoſe who rejected Chriſt, when he was offered to them. *Falſe Chriſts* ſhall *riſe*, and falſe Prophets that ſhall preach them up; or ſuch, as tho' they pretend not to be Chriſts, ſet up for *Prophets*, and undertake to foretel Things to come, and they ſhall *ſhew Signs* and lying *Wonders*; ſo early did the *Myſtery of Iniquity* begin to *work*; 2 *Theſ.* 1. 7. They *ſhall ſeduce, if it were poſſible, the very Elect*; ſo plauſible ſhall their Pretences be, and ſo induſtrious ſhall they be to impoſe upon People, that they ſhall draw away many that were forward and zealous Profeſſors of Religion, many that were very likely to have perſever'd, for nothing will be effectual to ſecure Men but that Foundation of God which ſtands immoveably ſure, *The Lord knows them that are his*, who ſhall be preſerv'd when the Faith of ſome is overthrown; 2 *Tim.* 2. 18, 19. They *ſhall ſeduce, if it were poſſible, the very Elect*; but it is not poſſible to ſeduce them; the *Election ſhall obtain*, who-ever are *blinded*, *Rom.* 11. 7. But in Conſideration hereof, let the Diſciples be Cautious who they give Credit to, *v.* 23. But *take ye heed*, Chriſt knew they were of the *Elect*, who could not poſſibly be *ſeduc'd*, and yet he ſaid to them, *take heed.* An Aſſurance of perſevering, and Cautions againſt Apoſtacy will very well conſiſt. Tho' Chriſt ſaid to them, *take heed*, it doth not therefore follow, that their Perſeverance was doubtful, for they were kept by the Power of God; and tho' their Perſeverance was ſecur'd, yet it doth not therefore follow, that this Caution was needleſs, becauſe they muſt be kept in the uſe of proper Means: God will keep them, but they muſt keep themſelves. *I have foretold you all Things*; have foretold you of this Danger, that being forewarn'd, you may be fore-arm'd; I have foretold *all Things*, which you needed to have foretold to you, and therefore take heed of hearkning to ſuch as pretend to be Prophets, and to foretel more than I have foretold. The ſufficiency of the Scripture is a good Argument againſt liſtning to ſuch as pretend to Inſpiration.

24 But in thoſe days after that Tribulation, the ſun ſhall be darkned, and the moon ſhall not give her light: 25 And the ſtars of heaven ſhall fall, and the powers that are in heaven ſhall be ſhaken. 26 And then ſhall they ſee the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then ſhall he ſend his angels, and ſhall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermoſt part of the earth to the uttermoſt part of heaven.

Theſe Verſes ſeem to point at Chriſt's ſecond coming to judge the World; the Diſciples in their Queſtion, had confounded the *Deſtruction* of *Jeruſalem*, and the *End of the World*, Mat. 24. 3. which was built upon a Miſtake, as if the Temple muſt needs ſtand as long as the World ſtands; this Miſtake Chriſt rectifies, and ſhews, that the *End of the World, in thoſe Days*, thoſe other Days you enquire about, the Day of Chriſt's coming, and the Day of Judgment ſhall be *after that Tribulation*, and not coincident with it; let thoſe that live to ſee the *Jewiſh* Nation deſtroy'd, take heed of thinking that becauſe the Son of Man doth not viſibly come in the Clouds *then*, he will never *ſo* come; no, he will come *after that.* And here he foretells,

1. The final Diſſolution of the preſent Frame and Fabrick of the World: even of that Part of it which ſeems leaſt liable to change, even the upper Part; the purer and more refined Part; the *Sun ſhall be darken'd*, and the *Moon* ſhall no more *give her Light*; for they ſhall be quite out ſhone by the Glory of the Son of Man, *Iſa.* 24, 23. The *Stars of Heaven*, that from the beginning had kept their Place, and regular Motion, ſhall fall as Leaves in Autumn; and the *Powers that are in Heaven*, the heavenly Bodies, the fixed Stars, *ſhall be ſhaken.*

2. The viſible Appearance of the Lord Jeſus, to whom the Judgment of that Day ſhall be committed, *v.* 26. *Then ſhall they ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds.* Probably over that very Place where he ſate when he ſaid this; for the Clouds are in the lower Region of the Air. He ſhall come with *great Power and Glory*, ſuch as will be ſuited to the Errand on which he comes. *Every Eye ſhall then ſee him.*

3. The gathering together of all the Elect to him, *v.* 27. He ſhall *ſend his Angels*, and *gather together his Elect* to him to meet him in the Air, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 17. They ſhall be fetch'd from one end of the World to the other, ſo that none ſhall be miſſing from that *general* Aſſembly; they ſhall be fetch'd *from the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth*, moſt remote from the Place where Chriſt's Tribunal ſhall be ſet, and ſhall be brought to the *uttermoſt Part of Heaven*; ſo ſure, ſo ſwift, ſo eaſie ſhall their Conveyance be, that there ſhall none of them miſcarry, tho' they were to be brought from the uttermoſt Part of the Earth one way, to the uttermoſt Part of the Heaven another way. A faithful *Iſraelite* ſhall be carry'd ſafely, tho' it were from the utmoſt border of the Land of Bondage, to the utmoſt border of the Land of Promiſe.

28 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree: when her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that ſummer is near. 29 So ye in like-manner, when ye ſhall ſee theſe things come to paſs, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors. 30 Verily I ſay unto you, That this generation ſhall not paſs, till all theſe things be done. 31 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away: but my words ſhall not paſs away. 32 But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. 33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 *For the Son of man is*, as a man taking a far journey, who left his houſe, and gave authority to his ſervants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore, (for ye know not when the maſter of the houſe cometh, at even, or at mid-night, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning) 36 Leſt coming ſuddenly, he find you ſleeping. 37 And what I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.

We have here the Application of this Prophetical Sermon; *now learn*, to look forward in a right Manner.

1. As to the *Deſtruction* of *Jeruſalem*, *expect* it to come very *ſhortly*; as when the *Branch of the Fig-tree becomes ſoft*, and the *Leaves ſprout forth*, ye expect that Summer will come ſhortly, *v.* 28. When ſecond Cauſes begin to work, you expect their Effects in their proper Order and Time. So when *ye ſee theſe Things come to paſs*, when you ſee the *Jewiſh* Nation embroil'd in Wars, diſtracted by falſe Chriſts, and Prophets, and drawing upon them the Diſpleaſure of the *Romans*, eſpecially when you ſee them perſecuting you for your Maſter's ſake, and thereby ſtanding to what they did, when they put him to Death, and repeating it, and ſo filling up the Meaſure of their Iniquity, then ſay, that their *Ruin is nigh, even at the Door*, and provide for your ſelves accordingly. The Diſciples themſelves were indeed of all them, except *John*, taken away from the Evil to come, but the next Generation whom they were to train up would live to ſee it; And by theſe Inſtructions Chriſt left behind him, would be kept from ſharing in it. *This Generation* that's now riſing up, ſhall not all be worn off before *all theſe Things* come to paſs, which I have told you of relating to *Jeruſalem*, and they ſhall begin to take Effect now ſhortly. And as this Deſtruction is near and within Ken, ſo it is ſure: The Decree is gone forth, 'tis a *Conſumption determined*, Dan. 9. 27. Chriſt doth not ſpeak theſe Things only to frighten them; no, they are the Declarations of God's fixed Purpoſe; *Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away*, at the end of Time: But *my words ſhall not paſs away*, v. 31. not one of theſe Predictions ſhall fail of a punctual Accompliſhment.

2. As to the *End of the World*, do not enquire when it will come, for it is not a Queſtion fit to be aſk'd, for of *that Day*, and *that Hour, knoweth no Man*; 'tis a Thing at a great Diſtance, the exact Time is fix'd in the Council of God, but is not reveal'd by any Word of God, either to *Men* on Earth, or to *Angels in Heaven*; the Angels ſhall have timely Notice to prepare to attend in that Day, and it ſhall be publiſh'd when it comes to the Children of Men with ſound of Trumpet; but at preſent *Men* and *Angels* are kept in the Dark, concerning the preciſe time of it, that they both attend to their proper Services in the preſent Day. But it follows, *neither the Son*; but is there any Thing which the Son is ignorant of? We read indeed of a Book which was ſeal'd till the Lamb open'd the Seals, But did not he know what was in it before the Seals were open'd? Was not he conſcious to the writing of it? There were thoſe in the primitive Times who thought from this Text, that there were ſome Things that Chriſt as Man was *ignorant* of, and from thence were call'd *Agnoetæ*; they ſaid it was no more abſurd to ſay ſo, than to ſay that his humane Soul ſuffer'd Grief and Fear; and many of the Orthodox Fathers approv'd of this. Some would evade it by ſaying that Chriſt ſpoke this in a Way of prudential Oeconomy, to divert the Diſciples from further Enquiry: But to this one of the Ancients anſwers, That it is not fit to ſpeak too nicely in this Matter, ὐ δεῖ πάνυ ἀκριβολογεῖν, ſo *Leontius* in Dr. *Hammond*. "'Tis certain (ſaith Arch-Biſhop *Tillotſon*) that Chriſt, as God, " could not be ignorant of any Thing; but the Divine Wiſdom " which dwelt in our Saviour did communicate it ſelf to his " human Soul according to the Divine Pleaſure; ſo that his hu- " man Nature might at ſometimes not know ſome Things; there- " fore Chriſt is ſaid to grow in Wiſdom, *Luke* 2. 52. Which he could " not be ſaid to do, if the human Nature of Chriſt did neceſſarily " know all Things by Vertue of its Union with the Divinity." Dr. *Lightfoot* explains it thus: Chriſt calls himſelf the *Son* as *Meſſiah*. Now the *Meſſiah* as ſuch was the Father's Servant, *Iſa* 42. 1. ſent, and deputed by him, and as ſuch a one he refers himſelf often to his Father's Will and Command, and owns he *did nothing of himſelf*, John 5. 19. and in like Manner he might be ſaid to *know nothing of himſelf*. The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt was what *God gave unto him*, Rev. 1. 1. He thinks therefore we are to diſtinguiſh between thoſe Excellencies and Perfections of his which reſulted from the perſonal Union between the Divine and Human Nature, and thoſe which flow'd from the Anointing of the Spirit; from the former flow'd the infinite Dignity of his Perſon, and his perfect Freedom from all Sin; but from the latter flow'd his Power of working Miracles, and his Fore-knowledge of Things to come: What therefore (ſaith he) were to be reveal'd by him to his Church, he was pleas'd to take, not from the Union of the Human Nature with the Divine, but from the Revelation of the Spirit, by which he yet knew not this. But *the Father* only knows it; that is, God only, the Deity; for (as Arch-Biſhop *Tillotſon* explains it) it is not us'd here *perſonally* in Diſtinction from the Son and the Holy Ghoſt, but as the Father is, *Fons & Principium Deitatis*.

3. As to both, their Duty is to *watch and pray*. Therefore the Time is kept a Secret, that we might be engag'd to ſtand always upon our guard, *v.* 33. *Take ye heed* of every Thing that would indiſpoſe you for your Maſter's coming, and would render your Accounts *perplex'd*, and your Spirits ſo too; *watch* for his coming, that it may not at any Time be a Surprize to you, and *pray* for that Grace which is neceſſary to qualify you for it, for *ye know not when the Time is*; and we are concern'd to be ready for that *every Day*, which may come *any Day*. This he illuſtrates in the Cloſe by a Parable.

1. Our Maſter is gone away, and left us ſomething in truſt, in charge, which we muſt give account of, *v.* 34. He is *as a Man taking a far Journey*, for he is gone to be away a great while, he has *left his Houſe* on Earth, and left his Servants in their Offices, gave *Authority* to ſome who were to be Overſeers, and *Work* to others that were to be Labourers; they that have *Authority* given them, in that had *Work* aſſign'd them, for thoſe that have the greateſt *Power* have the moſt *Buſineſs*; and to them to whom he gave *Work*, he gave ſome ſort of *Authority* to do that Work. And when he took his laſt leave, he *appointed the Porter to watch*, to be ſure to be ready to open to him at his Return; and in the mean Time to take Care to whom he open'd his Gates, not to Thieves and Robbers, but only to his Maſter's Friends and Servants. Thus our Lord Jeſus, when he *aſcended on high*, left ſomething for all his Servants to do, expecting they ſhould all do him Service in his Abſence, and be ready to receive him at his Return. *All* are appointed to work, and ſome authoriz'd to rule.

2. We ought to be always upon our Watch, in Expectation of his Return, *v.* 35, 36, 37. (1.) Our Lord *will come*, and will come as the *Maſter of the Houſe*, to take Account of his Servants, and of their Work, and of the Improvement they have made. (2.) We know not *when he will come*; and he has very wiſely kept up at uncertainty, that we might be always ready. We know not *when he will come*, juſt at what preciſe Time; the *Maſter of the Houſe* perhaps will come *at Even*, at Nine at Night, or it may be *at Midnight*, or at *Cock-crowing* at the Three in the Morning, or perhaps not till Six. This is applicable to his coming to us in particular at our Death, as well as to the general Judgment. Our preſent Life is a *Night*, a dark Night compar'd with the other Life, we know not in which Watch of the Night our Maſter will come, whether in the Days of Youth, or middle Age, or old Age, but as ſoon as we are born we begin to die; and therefore as ſoon as we are capable of expecting any Thing, we muſt expect Death. (3.) Our great Care muſt be, that whenever our Lord comes he do not *find us ſleeping*; ſecure in our ſelves, off our guard, indulging our ſelves in Eaſe and Sloth, mindleſs of our Work and Duty, and thoughtleſs of our Lord's coming; *ready* to ſay he will not come, and *unready* to meet him. (4.) His coming will indeed be *coming ſuddenly*, 'twill be a great *Surprize* and *Terror* to thoſe that are careleſs and aſleep, 'twill come upon them as a Thief in the Night. (5.) It is therefore the indiſpenſible Duty of all Chriſt's Diſciples to *watch*, to be awake, and keep awake. *What I ſay unto you* Four, *v.* 3. *I ſay unto all* the Twelve, or rather to *you* Twelve, I ſay unto all my Diſciples and Followers; what I ſay to you of this Generation, I ſay to all that ſhall believe in me through your Word in every Age, *Watch, Watch*, expect my ſecond Coming, prepare for it, that you may be found in Peace, without Spot and Blameleſs.

CHAP. XIV.

At this Chapter begins the Account which this Evangeliſt gives of the Death and Sufferings of our Lord Jeſus, which we are all concerned to be acquainted not only with the Hiſtory of, but with the Myſtery of. Here's, (1.) *The Plot of the Chief Prieſts and* Scribes *againſt Chriſt*, v. 1, 2. (2.) *The Anointing of Chriſt's Head at a Supper in* Bethany *two Days before his Death*, v. 3,—9. (3.) *The Contract* Judas *made with the Chief Prieſts to betray him*, v. 10, 11. (4.) *Chriſt's eating the Paſſover with his Diſciples, his inſtituting the Lord's Supper, and his Diſcourſe with his Diſciples, at, and after Supper*, v. 12,—31. (5.) *Chriſt's Agony in the Garden*, v. 32,—42. (6.) *The betraying of him by* Judas, *and the apprehending of him by the Chief Prieſt's Agents*, v. 43,—52. (7.) *His Arraignment before the High Prieſt, his Conviction, and the Indignities done him at that Bar*, v. 53,—65. (8.) Peter's *denying him*, v. 66,—72. *Moſt of which Paſſages we had before*, Matt. 26.

AFter two days, was *the feaſt of* the paſſover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief prieſts and the ſcribes ſought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. 2 But they ſaid, Not on the feaſt-*day*, leſt there be an uproar of the people. 3 And being in Bethany, in the houſe of Simon the leper, as he ſat at meat, there came a woman, having an alabaſter-Box of ointment of ſpikenard, very precious; and ſhe brake the Box, and poured it on his head. 4 And there were ſome that had indignation within themſelves, and ſaid, Why was this waſte of the ointment made? 5 For it might have been ſold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the Poor. And they murmured againſt her. 6 And Jeſus ſaid, Let her alone, why trouble ye her? ſhe hath wrought a good work on me. 7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whenſoever ye will, ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8 She hath done what ſhe could: ſhe is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. 9 Verily I ſay unto you, Whereſoever this goſpel ſhall be preach'd throughout the whole World, *this* alſo that ſhe hath done ſhall be ſpoken of for a memorial of her. 10 And Judas Iſcariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief prieſts, to betray him unto them. 11 And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promis'd to give him money. And he ſought how he might conveniently betray him.

We have here Inſtances,

Firſt, Of the *Kindneſs of Chriſt's Friends*, and the Proviſion made of Reſpects and Honours for him: And ſome Friends he had, even in and about *Jeruſalem*, that lov'd him, and never thought they could do enough for him, among whom, tho' *Iſrael* be not gather'd, he is and will be glorious.

1. Here was *one Friend* that was ſo kind as to *invite him to ſup with him*, and he was ſo kind as to accept the Invitation, *v.* 3. Tho' he had a Proſpect of his Death approaching, yet he did not abandon himſelf to a melancholy Retirement from all Company, but convers'd as freely with his Friends as uſual.

2. Here was *another Friend* that was ſo kind as to *anoint his Head* with very precious Ointment as he *ſat at Meat*. This was an extraordinary piece of Reſpect paid him by a good Woman that thought nothing too good to beſtow upon Chriſt, and to do him honour; now the Scripture was fulfill'd, *when the King ſits at his Table, my Spikenard ſendeth forth the Smell thereof*, Cant. 1. 12. Let us *anoint* Chriſt as our *Beloved*, kiſs him with a Kiſs of *Affection*; and anoint him as our *Sovereign*, kiſs him with a Kiſs of *Allegiance*.

Did he pour out his Soul unto Death for us, and ſhall we think any Box of Ointment too precious to pour out upon him? And it is obſervable ſhe took Care to pour it all out upon Chriſt's Head; ſhe *brake the Box*, ſo we read it; but becauſe it was an *Alabaſter Box*, not eaſily broken, nor was it neceſſary it ſhould be broken to get out the Ointment; ſome read it ſhe *ſhook* the Box, or *knock'd it to the Ground*, to looſen what was in it, that it might be got out the better; or ſhe *rubb'd* and *ſcrap'd* out all that ſtuck to the Sides of it. Chriſt muſt be honour'd with *all we* have, and we muſt not think to keep back any Part of the Price. Do we give him the *precious Ointment* of our beſt Affections, let him have them *all*; love him *with all the Heart*.

Now, 1. There were thoſe that put a *worſe Conſtruction* upon this than it deſerv'd. They call'd it a *Waſte of the Ointment*, v. 4. Becauſe they could not have found in their Hearts to put themſelves to ſuch an Expence for the honouring of Chriſt, they thought ſhe was *prodigal* that did. *Note*, as the *vile Perſon* ought not to be *call'd liberal*, nor the *Churl* ſaid to be *bountiful*, Iſa. 32. 5. So the *Liberal* and *Bountiful* ought not to be call'd *waſteful*. They pretended it might have been *ſold*, and *given to the Poor*, v. 5. But as a *common Piety* to the *Corban*, will not excuſe from a *particular Charity* to a poor Parent, *Chap.* 7. 11. ſo a common Charity to the Poor will not excuſe from a particular Act of Piety to the Lord Jeſus. What thy Hand finds to do that is good, *do it with thy Might*.

2. Our Lord Jeſus put a *better Conſtruction* upon it than for ought appears was *deſign'd*. Probably ſhe intended no more but to ſhew the great Honour ſhe had for him before all the Company, and to compleat his Entertainment. But Chriſt makes it to be an Act of *great Faith*, as well as *great Love*, v. 8. *ſhe is come aforehand to anoint my Body to the Burying*, as if ſhe foreſaw that my Reſurrection would prevent her doing it afterwards. This Funeral Rite was a Kind of Preſage of, or Prælludium to his Death approaching. See how Chriſt's Heart was fill'd with the Thoughts of his Death, how every Thing was conſtrued with a Reference to that, and how familiarly he ſpoke of it upon all Occaſions. 'Tis uſual for thoſe who are *condemn'd to die* to have their Coffins prepar'd, and other Proviſion made for their Funerals, while they are yet alive; and *ſo* Chriſt accepted *this*. Chriſt's Death and Burial were the loweſt Steps of his Humiliation, and therefore tho' he chearfully ſubmitted to them, yet he would have ſome Marks of Honour to attend them, which might help to take off the *Offence of the Croſs*, and be an Intimation how *precious in the Sight of the Lord* the *Death of his Saints is*. Chriſt never rode in Triumph into *Jeruſalem*, but when he came thither to ſuffer, nor had ever his Head anointed but for *his Burial*.

3. He recommended this Piece of Heroick Piety to the Applauſe of the Church in all Ages. *Wherever this Goſpel ſhould be preach'd, it ſhall be ſpoken of for a Memorial of her*, v. 9. *Note*, The Honour which attends well-doing even in this World is ſufficient to balance the Reproach and Contempt that's caſt upon it. *The Memory of the Juſt is bleſſed*, and they that had *Tryal of cruel Mockings*, yet *obtained a good Report*, Heb. 11. 36, 39. Thus was this good Woman repaid for her Box of Ointment, *nec oleum perdidit, nec operam*; ſhe got it by that good Name which is *better than precious Ointment*. Thoſe that *honour* Chriſt *he will honour*.

Secondly, Of the *Malice of Chriſt's Enemies*, and the Preparation made by them to do him Miſchief.

1. The Chief Prieſts, his *open Enemies*, conſulted how they might *put him to Death*, v. 1, 2. The Feaſt of the *Paſſover* was now at Hand, and at that Feaſt he muſt be crucified. (1.) That his Death and Sufferings might be the more publick, and that all *Iſrael*, even thoſe *of the Diſperſion*, who came from all Parts to the Feaſt, might be Witneſſes of it, and of the Wonders that attended it. (2.) That the Anti-Type might anſwer the Type. Chriſt our Paſſover was ſacrific'd for us, and brought us out of the Houſe of Bondage, at the ſame Time that the Paſchal Lamb was ſacrific'd, and *Iſrael*'s Deliverance out of *Egypt* was *commemorated*.

Now ſee, (1.) How *ſpiteful* Chriſt's Enemies were, they did not think it enough to baniſh or impriſon him, for they aim'd not only to *ſilence* him and *ſtop* his Progreſs for the future, but to be reveng'd on him for all the Good he had done. (2.) How *Subtil* they were: *Not on the Feaſt-Day*, when the People are together, they do not ſay, leſt they ſhould be diſturb'd in their Devotions, and diverted from them, but *leſt there ſhould be an uproar*, v. 2. leſt they ſhould riſe and reſcue him, and *fall foul* upon thoſe that *attempt* any Thing againſt him. They who *deſir'd* nothing more than the *Praiſe* of Men, dreaded nothing more than the Rage and Diſpleaſure of Men.

2. *Judas*, *his diſguis'd Enemy*, contracted with them for the betraying of him, *v.* 10, 11. He is ſaid to be *one of the Twelve*, that were Chriſt's Family, intimate with him, train'd up for the Service of his Kingdom, and he *went to the chief Prieſts* to tender his Service in this Affair.

1. That which he propos'd to them was to *betray Chriſt* to them; to give them Notice when and where they might find him, and ſeize him without making *an Uproar among the People*, which they were afraid of, if they ſhould ſeize him when he appear'd in *Publick*, in the Midſt of his Admirers. Did he know then what help it was they wanted, and where they were run a ground in their Councils? It's like he did not, for the Debate was held in their cloſe *Cabal*. Did they know that he had a Mind to ſerve them and make court to him? No, they could not imagine that any of his Intimates ſhould be ſo baſe; but *Satan* who was enter'd into *Judas* knew what Occaſion they had for him, and could guide him to be *Guide to them*, who were contriving to *take Jeſus*. *Note*, The Spirit that works in all the Children of Diſobedience, knows how to bring them in to the Aſſiſtance of one another in a wicked Project, and then to harden them in it, with the Fancy that Providence favours them.

2. That which he propos'd to himſelf was, to *get Money* by the Bargain; he had what he aim'd at when *they promis'd to give him Money*. Covetouſneſs was *Judas*'s Maſter Luſt, *his own Iniquity*, and that betray'd him to the Sin of betraying his Maſter; the Devil ſuited his Temptation to *that*, and ſo conquer'd him; 'tis not ſaid they promis'd him Preferment, he was not *ambitious* of that, but they promis'd him *Money*. See what need we have to double our Guard againſt the Sin that *moſt eaſily beſets us*. Perhaps it was *Judas*'s Covetouſneſs that brought him at firſt to *follow Chriſt*, having a Promiſe that he ſhould be Caſh-Keeper or Purſer to the Society, and he lov'd in his Heart to be fingering Money; and now there was Money to be got on t'other Side, he was as ready to betray him, as ever he had been to follow him. *Note*, Where the Principle of Mens Profeſſion of Religion is carnal and worldly, and the ſerving of a ſecular Intereſt, the very ſame Principle, whenever the Wind turns, will be the bitter Root of a vile and ſcandalous Apoſtacy.

3. Having ſecur'd the Money, he ſet himſelf to make good his Bargain. He ſought *how he might conveniently betray him*, how he might *ſeaſonably deliver him up*, ſo as to anſwer the Intention of thoſe who had hired him. See what need we have to be careful that we do not enſnare our ſelves in ſinful Engagements: If at any Time we be ſo enſnar'd in the Words of our Mouths, we are concern'd to deliver our ſelves by a ſpeedy Retreat, *Prov* 6. 1—5. It is a Rule in our Law, as well as in our Religion, that an *Obligation* to do an *evil Thing* is *null* and *void*; it binds to Repentance, not to Performance. See how the Way of Sin is down-hill, when Men are *in* they muſt *on*; and what *wicked* Contrivances many have in their ſinful Purſuits, to compaſs their Deſigns *conveniently*; but ſuch Conveniencies will prove Miſchiefs in the End.

12 And the firſt day of unleavened bread, when
they killed the paſſover, his diſciples ſaid unto him,
Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou
mayeſt eat the paſſover? 13 And he ſendeth forth
two of his diſciples, and ſaith unto them, Go ye into
the city, and there ſhall meet you a man bearing a
pitcher of water: follow him. 14 And whereſoever
he ſhall go in, ſay ye to the good man of the houſe,
The maſter ſaith, Where is the gueſt-chamber, where
I ſhall eat the paſſover with my diſciples? 15 And
he will ſhew you a large upper room furniſhed and
prepared: there make ready for us. 16 And his diſciples
went forth, and came into the city, and found
as he had ſaid unto them: and they made ready the
paſſover. 17 And in the evening he cometh with
the twelve. 18 And as they ſat, and did eat, Jeſus
ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, one of you that eateth
with me, ſhall betray me. 19 And they began to be
ſorrowful, and to ſay unto him one by one, Is it
I? and another *ſaid*, Is it I? 20 And he anſwered
and ſaid unto them, *It is* one of the twelve, that dippeth
with me in the diſh. 21 The ſon of man indeed
goeth, as it is written of him: but wo to that
man by whom the ſon of man is betrayed: good
were it for that man if he had never been born.
22 And as they did eat, Jeſus took bread, and bleſſed,
and brake *it*, and gave to them, and ſaid, Take,
eat: this is my body. 23 And he took the cup,
and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them:
and they all drank of it. 24 And he ſaid unto them,
This is my blood of the New Teſtament, which is ſhed
for many. 25 Verily I ſay unto you, I will drink
no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that
I drink it new in the kingdom of God. 26 And
when they had ſung an hymn, they went out into
the mount of Olives. 27 And Jeſus ſaith unto them,
All ye ſhall be offended becauſe of me this night:
for it is written, I will ſmite the ſhepherd, and the
ſheep ſhall be ſcattered. 28 But after that I am
riſen, I will go before you into Galilee. 29 But
Peter ſaid unto him, Although all ſhall be offended,
yet *will* not I. 30 And Jeſus ſaith unto him, Verily
I ſay unto thee, that this day, *even* in this night, before
the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice.

31 But he ſpake the more vehemently, If I ſhould die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wiſe. Likewiſe alſo ſaid they all.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Chriſt's eating the Paſſover with his Diſciples, the Night before he dy'd, with the Joys and Comforts of which Ordinance he prepar'd himſelf for his approaching Sorrows; the full Proſpect of which did not indiſpoſe him for that Solemnity. *Note,* No Apprehenſion of Trouble, come or coming, ſhould put us by, or put us out of Frame for our Attendance on Holy Ordinances, as we have Opportunity for it.

1. Chriſt eat the Paſſover at the *uſual Time,* when the other *Jews* did, as Dr. *Whitby* has fully made out, and not as Dr. *Hammond* would have it the Night before. It was on the firſt Day of that Feaſt, which (taking in all the Eight Days of the Feaſt) was call'd *The Feaſt of unleavened Bread,* even that Day when they *killed the Paſſover,* v. 12.

2. He directed his Diſciples how to find the Place where he intended to eat the Paſſover; and hereby gave ſuch another Proof of his infallible Knowledge of Things diſtant and future, which to us ſeem altogether *contingent,* as he had given when he ſent them for the Aſs on which he rode in Triumph, *Chap.* 11. 6. *Go into the City* (for the *Paſſover* muſt be *eaten* in *Jeruſalem*) and *there ſhall meet you a Man bearing a Pitcher of Water,* a Servant ſent for Water to clean the Rooms in his Maſter's Houſe, *follow him, go in* where he *goes,* enquire for his Maſter, *the good Man of the Houſe, v.* 14. and deſire him to ſhew you a Room; no doubt the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem* had Rooms fitted up to be *let out* for this Occaſion to thoſe that came up out of the Country to keep the Paſſover, and one of thoſe Chriſt made uſe of; not any Friend's Houſe, nor any Houſe he had formerly frequented, for then he would have ſaid, go to ſuch a Friend, or you know where we us'd to be, go thither and prepare: Probably he went where he was not known, that he might be *undiſturb'd* with his Diſciples. Perhaps he notify'd it by *a Sign* to conceal it from *Judas,* that he might not know till he came to the Place; and by *ſuch a Sign* to intimate that he will dwell in the *clean Heart,* that's *waſhed* as with *pure Water.* Where he deſigns to come, a Pitcher of Water muſt go before him. See *Iſa.* 1. 16, 17, 18.

3. He eat the Paſſover in an *upper Room furniſhed,* ἐςρωμένον, *laid with Carpets.* So Dr. *Hammond;* it would ſeem to have been a very handſome *dining Room;* Chriſt was far from affecting any Thing that look'd ſtately in eating his common Meals; on the contrary, he choſe that which was homely, ſat down on the Graſs; but when he was to keep a ſacred Feaſt, in Honour of that, he would be at the Expence of as good a Room as he could get. God looks not at *outward Pomp,* but he looks at the Tokens and Expreſſions of *inward Reverence* for a Divine Inſtitution, which 'tis to be fear'd thoſe want, who, to ſave Charges, deny themſelves Decencies in the Worſhip of God.

4. He eat it *with the Twelve,* who were his *Family,* to teach thoſe who have the Charge of Families, not only Families of *Children,* but Families of *Servants,* or Families of *Scholars* or *Pupils,* to keep up Religion among them, and worſhip God with them. If Chriſt came *with the Twelve,* then *Judas* was with them, tho' he was at this Time contriving to betray his Maſter, and 'tis plain by what follows, *v.* 20. that he was there: He did not abſent himſelf, leſt he ſhould have been ſuſpected; had his *Seat* been *empty* at this Feaſt, they would have ſaid as *Saul* of *David, He is not clean, ſurely he is not clean,* 1 Sam. 20. 26. Hypocrites tho' they know it is at their Peril, yet crowd into ſpecial Ordinances, to keep up their Repute, and palliate their ſecret Wickedneſs. Chriſt did not *exclude* him from the Feaſt, tho' he *knew* his Wickedneſs, for it was not as yet become publick and ſcandalous; Chriſt deſigning to put the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven* into the Hands of Men, who can but judge according to outward Appearance; he would hereby both direct and encourage them in their Admiſſions to his Table to be ſatisfy'd with a juſtifiable Profeſſion, becauſe they cannot diſcern the *Root of Bitterneſs* till it *ſprings up.*

Secondly, Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples as they were *eating* the Paſſover. 'Tis likely they had Diſcourſe, according to the Cuſtom of the Feaſt, of the Deliverance of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt,* and the Preſervation of the Firſt-born, and were as pleaſant as they us'd to be together on this Occaſion, till Chriſt told them that which would mix *Trembling* with their *Joys.*

1. They were *pleaſing* themſelves with the Society of *their Maſter;* but he tells them they muſt now preſently loſe him; *The Son of Man is betray'd,* and they knew, for he had often told them, what followed; If he be *betray'd,* the next News you'll hear of him is, that he is *crucified* and *ſlain;* God hath determin'd it concerning him, and he agrees to it, *The Son of Man goes, as it is written of him, v.* 21. 'Twas *written* in the Counſels of God, and *written* in the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, not one *Jot* or *Tittle* of either of which can *fall to the Ground.*

2. They were *pleaſing* themſelves with the Society *one of another,* but Chriſt caſts a Damp upon the Joy of that by telling them, *One of you that eateth with me ſhall betray me,* v. 18. Chriſt ſaid this, if it might be to ſtartle the Conſcience of *Judas,* and to awaken him to repent of his Wickedneſs, and to draw back (for it was not yet too late) from the Brink of the Pit. But for ought appears, he who was *moſt concern'd in* the Warning, was *leaſt concern'd at* it. All the reſt were affected with it. (2.) They began to be *ſorrowful.* As the Remembrance of our former Falls into Sin, ſo the Fear of the like again, doth oftentimes much embitter the Comfort of our ſpiritual Feaſts, and damp our Joy. Here were the *bitter Herbs* with which this *Paſſover Feaſt* was taken. (2.) They began to be *ſuſpicious* of themſelves; they ſaid *one by one, Is it I?* And *another ſaid, Is it I?* They are to be commended for their *Charity,* that they were more jealous of *themſelves* than of *one another.* 'Tis the Law of Charity to *hope the beſt,* 1 Cor. 13. 5, 7. Becauſe we aſſuredly *know,* therefore we may juſtly *ſuſpect* more Evil by our ſelves than by our Brethren. They are alſo to be commended for their Acquieſcence in what Chriſt ſaid; they truſted more to *his Words* than to *their own Hearts;* and therefore do not ſay, I am ſure *it is not I,* but, *Lord, Is it I?* See if there be ſuch a *Way of Wickedneſs in us,* ſuch a *Root of Bitterneſs,* and diſcover it to us, that we may pluck up that *Root,* and ſtop up that *Way.*

Now in Anſwer to their Enquiry, Chriſt ſaith that (1.) which would make them eaſy; 'tis not you, nor *you;* 'Tis this Man that now *dips with me in the Diſh,* the Adverſary and Enemy is this wicked *Judas.* (2.) Which one would think ſhould make *Judas* very *uneaſy.* If he go on in his Undertaking, 'tis upon the Sword's Point, for *Wo to that Man by whom the Son of Man is betray'd;* He is undone, for ever undone; his Sin will ſoon *find him out;* and it were *better for him he had never been born,* had never had a Being, than ſuch a miſerable one as he muſt have. 'Tis very probable *Judas* encourag'd himſelf in it with *this* Thought, that his Maſter had often ſaid he muſt be betray'd, and if it muſt be done, ſurely God *will not find Fault* with him that doth it, for who *has reſiſted his Will?* as that Objector argues, *Rom.* 9. 19. But Chriſt tells him, this will be no Shelter or Excuſe to him; *The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him,* as a Lamb to the Slaughter, but *wo to that Man by whom he is betray'd.* God's Decrees, to permit the Sins of Men and bring Glory to himſelf out of them, do neither neceſſitate their Sins, nor determine to them, nor will they be any *Excuſe* of the Sin or *Mitigation* of the Puniſhment. Chriſt was deliver'd indeed by *the determinate Council and Fore-knowledge of God;* but notwithſtanding that, 'tis *with wicked Hands that he is crucified and ſlain;* Acts 2. 23.

Thirdly, The Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper.

1. It was inſtituted in the Cloſe of a *Supper,* when they were ſufficiently fed with the *Paſchal Lamb,* to ſhew that in the Lord's Supper there is no *bodily Repaſt* intended; to preface it with ſuch a Thing, is to revive *Moſes* again.' But it is Food for *the Soul* only, and therefore a very little of that which is for the Body, as much as will ſerve for a *Sign,* is enough, 'Twas at the Cloſe of the *Paſſover Supper,* which by this was evangeliz'd, and then ſuperſeded and ſet aſide. Much of the Doctrine and Duty of the Euchariſt is illuſtrated to us by the Law of the Paſſover, *Exod.* 12. For the Old Teſtament Inſtitutions, tho' they do not *bind us,* yet *inſtruct us,* by the Help of a Goſpel Key to them. And theſe Two Ordinances lying here ſo near together, it may be good to compare them, and obſerve how much ſhorter and plainer the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper is, than that of the Paſſover was: Chriſt's Yoke is eaſie in Compariſon with that of the Ceremonial Law, and his Ordinances more *ſpiritual.*

2. It was inſtituted by the Example of Chriſt himſelf; not with the Ceremony and Solemnity of a Law, as the Ordinance of Baptiſm was after Chriſt's Reſurrection, *Matt.* 28. 19. with, *Be it enacted by the Authority aforeſaid,* by a Power given to Chriſt *in Heaven and on Earth,* v. 18. But by the Practice of our Maſter himſelf, becauſe intended for thoſe who are already his Diſciples, and taken into Covenant with him: But it has the Obligation of a Law, and was intended to remain in full Force, Power and Virtue, till his ſecond Coming.

3. It was inſtituted with *Bleſſing* and *giving of Thanks;* the Gifts of common Providence are to be ſo receiv'd, 1 *Tim.* 4. 4, 5. much more the Gifts of ſpecial Grace. He *bleſſed,* v. 22. and *gave Thanks,* v. 23. At his other Meals he was wont to *bleſs* and *give Thanks, Mark* 6. 41. 8. 7. ſo remarkably, that he was known by it, *Luke* 24. 30, 31. And he did the ſame at this Meal.

4. It was inſtituted to be a *Memorial* of his *Death;* and therefore he *broke* the Bread, to ſhew how it pleas'd the Lord to *bruiſe him:* And he call'd the *Wine,* which is the Blood of the Grape, the *Blood of the New Teſtament.* The Death Chriſt dy'd, was a *bloody Death,* and frequent mention is made of the *Blood,* the *precious* Blood, as the Price of our Redemption; for the Blood is *the Life,* and made *Atonement for the Soul,* Lev. 17. 11, 14. The pouring out of the Blood was the moſt ſenſible Indication of the *pouring out of his Soul,* Iſa. 53. 12. Blood has a *Voice,* Gen. 4. 10. and therefore the Blood is ſo often mention'd becauſe it was to *ſpeak,* Heb. 12. 24. 'Tis call'd the *Blood of the New Teſtament,* for the Covenant of Grace became a *Teſtament,* and of Force by the Death of Chriſt the Teſtator, Heb. 9. 16. 'Tis ſaid to be *ſhed for many,* to juſtify *many,* Iſa. 53. 12. To bring many Sons to Glory, *Heb.* 2. 10. It was ſufficient for *many,* being of infinite Value; it has been of uſe to *many;* we read of a great Multitude which no Man could number, that had all *waſhed their Robes,* and *made them white in the Blood of the Lamb,* Rev. 7. 9, 14. And ſtill it is a *Fountain open'd.* How comfortable is this to poor repenting Sinners, that the Blood of Chriſt is *ſhed for many,* and if for *many,* why not for *me?* If for Sinners, Sinners of the *Gentiles,* the chief of Sinners, then *why not for me?*

5. It was inſtituted to be a *Ratification* of the *Covenant* made with us in him, and a Sign of the Conveyance of thoſe Benefits to

us, which were purchas'd for us by his Death: And therefore he broke the Bread *to them*, v. 22. and ſaid, *Take, Eat* of it; He gave the Cup *to them*, and order'd them to *drink of it*, v. 23. Apply the Doctrine of Chriſt crucified to your ſelves, and let it be *Meat* and *Drink* to your Souls, ſtrengthening, and nouriſhing, and refreſhing to you, and the Support and Comfort of your Spiritual Life.

6. It was inſtituted with an Eye to the Happineſs of Heaven, and to be an Earneſt and Fore-taſte of that, and thereby to put our Mouths out of taſte to all the Pleaſures and Delights of Senſe, *v.* 25. *I will drink no more of the Fruit of the Vine*, as it is a bodily Refreſhment: I have done with it, *no one having taſted Spiritual* Delights, *ſtraightway deſires* ſenſitive Ones, for he ſaith, the *Spiritual* is better, *Luke* 5.39. But *every one* that hath taſted *ſpiritual* Delights, ſtraightway deſires *eternal Ones*, for he ſaith thoſe are *better ſtill*; and therefore let me *drink no more of the Fruit of the Vine*, 'tis dead and flat to thoſe that have been made to *drink* of the *River* of God's Pleaſures; but Lord haſten the Day, when I ſhall *drink* it new and freſh *in the Kingdom of God*, where it ſhall be for ever new, and in Perfection.

7. It was cloſ'd with a *Hymn*, v. 26. Tho' Chriſt was in the midſt of his Enemies yet he did not for fear of them baulk this ſweet Duty of ſinging Pſalms. *Paul* and *Silas* ſung, when the *Priſoners heard them*. This was an *Evangelical Song*, and Goſpel Times are often ſpoken of in the Old Teſtament, as Times of Rejoycing and Praiſe expreſs'd by *ſinging*. This was Chriſt's *Swan-like* Song, which he ſung juſt before he enter'd upon his Agony; probably that which was uſually ſung, *Pſalm* 114, to *Pſalm* 119.

Fourthly, Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples as they were returning to *Bethany*, by *Moon-light*. When they had *ſung the Hymn* preſently they *went out*. It was now pretty near Bed-time, but our Lord Jeſus had his Heart ſo much upon his Suffering, that he would not *come into the Tabernacle of his Houſe*, nor *go up into his Bed*, nor *give ſleep to his Eyes*, when that work was to be done, *Pſalm* 132. 3, 4. The *Iſraelites* were forbidden to go out of their Houſes that Night that they eat the Paſſover, for fear of the Sword of the deſtroying Angel, *Exod.* 12. 22, 23. But becauſe Chriſt the *great Shepherd* was to be *ſmitten*, he *went out* purpoſely to expoſe himſelf to the Sword as a Champion; they *evaded* the Deſtroyer, but Chriſt *conquer'd* him, and brought *Deſtructions to a perpetual End*.

1. Chriſt here foretells, that in his Sufferings he ſhould be *deſerted* by all his Diſciples. *You will all be offended becauſe of me this Night*. I know you will, *v.* 27. and what I tell you now, is no other but what the Scripture has told you before, *I will ſmite the Shepherd*, and then *the Sheep will be ſcatter'd*. Chriſt knew this before, and yet welcom'd them at his Table; he foreſees the Falls and Miſcarriages of his Diſciples, and yet doth not refuſe them. Nor ſhould we be diſcourag'd from coming to the Lord's-Supper, by the fear of relapſing into Sin afterward; but the greater our Danger is, the more need we have to fortifie our ſelves by the diligent conſcientious Uſe of Holy Ordinances. Chriſt tells them, they would be *offended in him*, would begin to Queſtion, Whether he were the *Meſſiah* or no, when they ſaw him *over-power'd* by his Enemies. Hitherto they had *continued with him in his Temptations*, tho' they had ſometimes offended him, yet they had not been *offended in him*, nor turn'd the back upon him: But now the Storm would be ſo Great, that they would all *ſlip their Anchors*, and be in danger of *Shipwrack*. Some Trials are more particular, as *Rev.* 2. 10. *The Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into Priſon*, but others are more general, an *Hour of Temptation, which ſhall come upon all the World*, Rev. 3, 10. The *ſmiting* of the Shepherd, is often the *ſcattering* of the Sheep: Magiſtrates, Miniſters, Maſters, of Families, if theſe are as they ſhould be *Shepherds* to thoſe under their Charge, when any Thing comes amiſs to them, the whole Flocks ſuffers for it, and is endanger'd by it.

But Chriſt encourages them with a Promiſe that they ſhall rally again, ſhall return both to their Duty, and to their Comfort; *v.* 28. *After I am riſen*, I will *gather you in* from all the Places *whither you are ſcatter'd*, Ezek. 34. 12. And will *go before you into* Galilee, will ſee our Friends, and enjoy one another there.

2. He foretells, that he ſhould be *deny'd* particularly by *Peter*. When they *went out* to go to the Mount of *Olives*, we may ſuppoſe they dropt *Judas*, he ſtole away from them, whereupon the reſt began to think *highly* of themſelves, that they *ſtuck* to their Maſter when *Judas* quitted him. But Chriſt tells them that tho' they ſhould be kept by his Grace from *Judas*'s Apoſtacy, yet they would have no Reaſon to boaſt of their Conſtancy. *Note*, Tho' God keep us from being as bad as the worſt, yet we may well be aſham'd to think that we are not better than we are.

1. *Peter* is confident, that he ſhould not *do ſo ill* as the reſt of the Diſciples, *v.* 29. *Tho' all ſhould be offended*, all his Brethren here preſent, *yet will not I.* He ſuppoſeth himſelf not only ſtronger than others, but ſo much ſtronger as to be able to receive the ſhock of a Temptation, and bear up againſt it, *all alone*; to *ſtand* tho' no Body ſtood *by him*; it's bred in the Bone with us to *think well* of our ſelves, and *truſt* to *our own Hearts*.

2. Chriſt tells them, he will *do worſe* than any of them: They will all *deſert* him but he will *deny* him; not once, but *thrice*; and that preſently; *this Day, even this Night before the Cock crow'd twice*, thou wilt *deny* that ever thou hadſt any Knowledge of me, or Acquaintance with me, as one aſham'd and afraid to own me.

3. He ſtands to his Promiſe; *If I ſhould die with thee, I will not deny thee.* I'll ſtick to thee, tho' it coſt me my Life, and no doubt he thought as he ſaid. *Judas* ſaid nothing like this, when Chriſt told him he would betray him. He ſinn'd by Contrivance. *Peter* by ſurprize; He *deviſ'd the Wickedneſs*, (*Mic.* 2. 1.) *Peter* was *overtaken in this Fault*, Gal. 6. 1. 'Twas ill done of *Peter* to contradict his Maſter, if he had ſaid with fear and trembling, Lord give me Grace to keep me from denying thee, lead me not into this Temptation, deliver me from this Evil, it might have been prevented: But they were all thus confident; they who ſaid, *Lord, is it I?* Now ſaid, *It ſhall never be I.* Being acquitted from their Fear of betraying Chriſt, they were now ſecure. But he that thinks he ſtands, muſt learn to take heed leſt he fall; and he that *girdeth on the Harneſs*, not boaſt *as tho' he had put it off*.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethſemane: and he ſaith to his diſciples, Sit ye here while I ſhall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be ſore amazed, and to be very heavy, 34 And ſaith unto them, My ſoul is exceeding ſorrowful unto death: tarry ye here and watch, 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed, that if it were poſſible the hour might paſs from him. 36 And he ſaid, Abba, Father, all Things *are* poſſible unto thee, take away this Cup from me: Neverthèleſs, not what I will, but what thou wilt. 37 And he cometh and findeth them ſleeping, and ſaith unto Peter, Simon, ſleepeſt thou? couldſt not thou watch one hour? 38 Watch ye, and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation: the ſpirit truly *is* ready, but the fleſh *is* weak. 39 And again he went away and prayed, and ſpake the ſame words. 40 And when he returned, he found them aſleep again (for their eyes were heavy) neither wiſt they what to anſwer him. 41 And he cometh the third time, and ſaith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your reſt: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of ſinners. 42 Riſe up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

Chriſt is here entring upon his Sufferings, and begins with theſe which were the ſoreſt of all his Sufferings in his *Soul*. Here we have him in his *Agony*; this Melancholy Story we had in *Matthew*; this *Agony* in Soul was the *Wormwood and the Gall* in the *Affliction* and *Miſery*; and thereby it appear'd no Sorrow was *forc'd* upon him, but 'twas what he *freely* admitted.

1. He *retired* for Prayer. *Sit ye here* (ſaith he to his Diſciples) while I go a little further, and *pray*. He had lately pray'd *with them*, John 17. and now *he* appoints them to withdraw, while he goes to his Father, upon an Errand peculiar to himſelf. *Note*, Our Praying with our Families, will not excuſe our neglect of ſecret Worſhip. When *Jacob* enter'd into *his* Agony, he firſt *ſent over all that he had*, and was *left alone*, and then *there wreſtled a Man with him*, Gen. 32. 23, 24. tho' he had been at Prayer before, *v.* 9. 'tis likely with his Family.

2. Even into that Retirement, he took with him *Peter and James and John*, v. 33. Three Competent Witneſſes of this Part of his Humiliation, and tho' great Spirits care not how few knew any Thing of their Agonies, he was not aſham'd they ſhould ſee. Theſe Three had bragg'd moſt of their Ability and Willingneſs to ſuffer with him, *Peter* here in this Chapter, and *James* and *John*, *Chap.* 10. 39. and therefore Chriſt takes them to ſtand by, and ſee what a ſtruggle he had with the *bloody Baptiſm*, and the *bitter Cup*, to convince them they knew not what they ſaid. 'Tis fit that they who are moſt confident ſhould be *firſt* tried, that they may be made ſenſible of their Folly and Weakneſs.

3. There he was in a mighty Toſs, *v.* 33. *He began to be ſore amaz'd*, ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι, a Word not us'd in *Matthew*, but very ſignificant; it ſpeaks ſomething like that *horrour of great Darkneſs*, which *fell upon Abraham*, *Gen.* 15. 12. or rather, ſomething much worſe, and more frightful. The *Terrours of God ſet themſelves in array againſt him*, and he allow'd himſelf the actual and intent Contemplation of them. Never was *Sorrow* like unto *his* at that Time; never any had ſuch Experience, as he had had from Eternity of Divine Favours, and therefore never any had, or could have ſuch a Senſe as he had of Divine Favours. Yet there was not the leaſt Diſorder or Irregularity in this Commotion of his Spirits; his Affections roſe not tumultuouſly, but under Direction, and as they were call'd up, for he had no corrupt Nature to mix with them, as we have. If Water have a Sediment at the Bottom, tho' it may be pretty clear while it ſtands ſtill, yet ſhake it, and it goes muddy, ſo it is with our Affections; but pure Water in a clean Glaſs, tho' never ſo much ſtirr'd continues clear, and ſo it was with Chriſt. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks it very probable, that the Devil did now appear to our Saviour in a viſible Shape, in his *own Shape* and *proper Colour* to terrrifie and affright him, and to drive him from his Hope in God, (which he aim'd at in perſecuting *Job*, a Type of Chriſt, to make

him *Curſe God and die*) and to deter him from the further Proſecution of his Undertaking; and whatever hinder'd him from that, he look'd upon as coming from Satan, *Matt.* 16. 23. When the Devil had tempted him in the Wilderneſs, 'tis ſaid he *departed from him for a Seaſon*, Luke 4. 3. intending another grapple with him, and in another way; finding that he could not by his Flatteries *allure him* into Sin, he would try by his Terrors to *affright* him into it, and ſo *make void* his Deſign.

4. He made a ſad Complaint of this Toſs he was in. He ſaid, *My Soul is exceeding ſorrowful.* (1.) He was *made Sin for us*, and therefore was thus *ſorrowful*; He fully knew the Malignity of the *Sins* he was to *ſuffer for*, and having the higheſt Degrees of Love to God, who was *offended* by them, and of Love to Man, who was damag'd and endanger'd by them, now theſe were ſet in order before him, no marvel, that *his Soul* was *exceeding ſorrowful.* Now he was made to *ſerve with our Sins*, and was thus *wearied with our Iniquities.* (2.) He was *made a Curſe* for us, the Curſes of the Law were transferr'd to him, as our Surety and Repreſentative, not as originally *Bound with us*, but as *Bail to the Action:* And when his Soul was thus exceeding ſorrowful, he did as it were yield to them, and lie down under the Load, until by his Death he had ſatisfied for Sin, and ſo for ever aboliſh'd the Curſe. He now *taſted Death*, as he is ſaid to do, *Heb.* 2. 9. Which is not an extenuating Expreſſion, as if he did *but* taſte it, no, he *drunk up* even the Dregs of the Cup; but 'tis rather *aggravating*, it did not go down by wholeſale, but he *taſted* all the Bitterneſs of it. This was that *Fear* the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, *Heb.* 5. 7. a natural Fear of Pain and Death, which 'tis natural to human Nature to ſtartle at.

Now the Conſideration of Chriſt's Sufferings in *his Soul*, and his *Sorrows* for us, ſhould be of uſe to us.

(1.) To *embitter our Sins:* Can we ever think a *favourable*, or ſo much as a *ſlight* Thought of Sin, when we ſee what Impreſſion Sin (tho' but imputed) made upon the Lord *Jeſus?* Shall that *ſit light* upon our Souls, which ſate *ſo heavy* upon his? Was Chriſt in ſuch an Agony for our Sins, and ſhall we never be in Agony about them? How ſhould we look upon him whom we have *preſſed*, whom we have *pierced*, and *mourn*, and not be *in Bitterneſs.* It becomes us to be *exceeding ſorrowful* for Sin, becauſe Chriſt was ſo, and never to *make a mock* at it. If Chriſt thus ſuffer'd for Sin, let us *arm our ſelves with the ſame Mind.*

(2.) To *ſweeten our Sorrows*; if our Souls be at any time *exceeding ſorrowful*, through the Afflictions of this preſent Time, let us remember that our Maſter was ſo before us, and the *Diſciple is not greater than his Lord.* Why ſhould we affect to *drive away Sorrow*, when Chriſt for our ſakes courted it, and ſubmitted to it, and thereby not only took out the *Sting* of it, and made it *tolerable*; but put *Vertue* into it, and made it *profitable*, for *by the ſadneſs of the Countenance the Heart is made better*; nay, and put *ſweetneſs* into it, and made it comfortable. Bleſſed *Paul* was *ſorrowful*, and yet *always rejoycing.* If we be *exceeding ſorrowful*, it is but unto *Death*; that will be the Period of all our Sorrows if Chriſt be *ours*; when the *Eyes* are clos'd, all Tears are *wiped away* from them.

5. He ordered his Diſciples to ſtick to him, not becauſe he needed their Help, but becauſe he would have them to *look upon him, and receive Inſtruction.* He ſaid to them, *tarry ye here and watch:* He had bid the other Diſciples only ſit ye here, *v.* 32. but theſe Three he bids to tarry *and watch*, as expecting more from them than from the reſt.

6. He addreſs'd himſelf to God by Prayer, *v.* 35. He *fell on the Ground and pray'd.* 'Twas but a little before this, that in Prayer he *lift up his Eyes*, John 17. 1. but here being in an Agony, he *fell upon his Face*, accommodating himſelf to his preſent Humiliation, and teaching us thus to abaſe our ſelves before God; it becomes us to *be low* when we come into the Preſence of the *moſt High.* (1.) As *Man* he *deprecated* his Sufferings, that *if it were poſſible the Hour might paſs from him*, v. 35. This *ſhort*, but *ſharp* Affliction. That which I am now *this Hour* to enter upon, let Man's Salvation be, *if poſſible*, accompliſhed without it. We have his very Words, *v.* 36. *Abba, Father.* The *Syriac* Word is here retain'd which Chriſt us'd, and which ſignifies *Father*, to intimate what an Emphaſis our Lord Jeſus in his Sorrows laid upon it, and would have us to lay. 'Tis with an Eye to this, that St. *Paul* retains this Word, putting it into the Mouths of all that have the *Spirit of Adoption*, they are taught to cry *Abba, Father*, Rom. 8. 15. Gal. 4. 6. Father, *All things are poſſible to thee.* *Note*, Even that which we cannot expect ſhould be done for us, we ought yet to believe God is *able to do.* And when we ſubmit to his Will, and refer our ſelves to his Wiſdom and Mercy, it muſt be with a believing Acknowledgment of his Power, that *all Things are poſſible to him.* (2.) As *Mediator*, he *acquieſced* to the Will of God concerning them; *nevertheleſs, not as I will, but what thou wilt.* I know the Matter is ſettled, and cannot be alter'd, *I muſt ſuffer* and die, and I bid it welcome.

7. He *rous'd* his Diſciples, who were *dropp'd aſleep* while he was at Prayer, *v.* 37, 38. He comes to look after them, ſince they did not look after him, and he *findeth them ſleeping*, ſo little affected were they with his Sorrows, his Complaints and Prayers. This Careleſneſs of theirs, was a Preſage of their further Offence in deſerting him; and it was an Aggravation of it, that he had ſo lately commended them for *continuing with him in his Temptations*, tho' they had not been without their Faults; was he ſo willing to make the beſt of them, and were they ſo indifferent in approving themſelves to him: They had lately promis'd not to be *offended in him*, what? and yet mind him ſo little. He particularly upbraided *Peter* with his Drowſineſs, *Simon, ſleepeſt thou,* καὶ σὺ τέκνον, *What thou, my Son?* Thou that didſt ſo poſitively promiſe thou wouldſt not deny me, doſt thou ſlight me thus? From thee I expected better Things. *Couldſt thou not watch one Hour?* He did not require him to watch *all Night* with him, only for *one Hour.* It aggravates our faintneſs and ſhort-ſpiritedneſs in Chriſt's Service, that he doth not over-task us, nor weary us with it, *Iſa.* 43. 23. He puts upon us *no other Burthen*, but to *hold faſt till he comes*, Rev. 2. 24, 25. and behold *he comes quickly*, Rev. 3. 11.

As thoſe whom Chriſt *loves* he *rebukes* when they do amiſs, ſo thoſe whom he *rebukes* he counſels and comforts. (1.) 'Twas a very wiſe and faithful Word of Advice, which Chriſt here gave to his Diſciples; *watch and pray, leſt ye enter into Temptation*, v. 38. 'Twas bad to *ſleep* when Chriſt was in his Agony, but they were entring into further Temptation, and if they did not ſtir up themſelves, and fetch in Grace and Strength from God by Prayer, they would *do worſe*; and ſo they did, when they all forſook him and fled. (2.) 'Twas a very kind and tender Excuſe that Chriſt made for them, *the Spirit truly is willing*, I know it is, 'tis *ready*, 'tis *forward*, you would willingly *keep awake*, but you cannot. This may be taken as a Reaſon for that Exhortation, *watch and pray*, becauſe tho' *the Spirit is willing*, I grant it is, you have ſincerely reſolv'd never to be *offended in me*, but *the Fleſh is weak*; and if you do not *watch* and *pray*, and uſe the Means of Perſeverance, you may be overcome notwithſtanding. The Conſideration of the *Weakneſs and Infirmity of our Fleſh*, ſhould engage and quicken us to *Prayer* and *Watchfulneſs*, when we are entring into Temptation.

8. He *repeated* his Addreſs to the Father, *v.* 39. *He went again, and prayed*, ſaying τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον, *the ſame Word*, or Matter, or Buſineſs; he ſpoke to the ſame Purpoſe, and again *the third Time.* This teacheth us, that *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint*, Luke 18. 1. Tho' the Anſwers to our Prayers do not come quickly, yet we muſt renew our Requeſts, and *continue inſtant in Prayer*; for *the Viſion is for an appointed Time, and at the End it ſhall ſpeak and not lye*, Hab. 2. 3. *Paul*, when he was *buffeted by a Meſſenger of Satan, beſought the Lord thrice*, as Chriſt did here, before he obtain'd an Anſwer of Peace, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. A little before this, when Chriſt, in the *Trouble of his Soul* pray'd, *Father, glorifie thy Name*, he had an immediate Anſwer by a Voice from Heaven, *I have both glorified it, and I will glorifie it yet again*; but now he muſt come a ſecond, and third Time, for the Viſits of God's Grace in Anſwer to Prayer, come ſooner or later, according to the Pleaſure of his Will, that we may be kept depending.

9. He *repeated* his Viſits to his Diſciples. Thus he gave a Specimen of his continued Care for his Church on Earth, even when 'tis *half aſleep*, and not duly concern'd for it ſelf, while he ever lives, making Interceſſion with his Father *in Heaven.* See how, as became a *Mediator*, he paſſeth and repaſſeth between both. He came the *ſecond Time* to his Diſciples, and *found them aſleep again*, v. 40. See how the Infirmities of Chriſt's Diſciples *return* upon them, notwithſtanding their Reſolutions, and *over-power* them notwithſtanding their Reſiſtance; and what Clogs thoſe Bodies of ours are to our Souls, which ſhould make us long for that bleſſed State, in which they ſhall be no more our Encumbrance. This ſecond Time he ſpoke to them as before, but *they wiſt not what to anſwer him*; they were aſhamed of their Drowſineſs, and had nothing to ſay in Excuſe for it. Or, they were ſo over-power'd with it, that, like Men between Sleep and Wake, they knew not where they were, or what they ſaid. But the *third Time*, they were bid to *ſleep* if they could, *v.* 41. *Sleep on now, and take your Reſt.* I have now no more Occaſion for your watching, you may ſleep if you will for me. *It is enough*; we had not that Word in *Matthew.* You have had Warning enough to keep awake, and would not take it, and now you ſhou'd ſee what little Reaſon you had to be ſecure: 'Ἀπέχει, I *diſcharge you* from any *further Attendance*; ſo ſome underſtand it; now *the Hour is come* in which I knew you would all forſake me, and e'en take your Courſe, as he ſaid to *Judas*, *What thou doſt, do quickly.* The *Son of Man* is now *betray'd into the Hands of Sinners*, the Chief Prieſts and Elders, thoſe *worſt* of Sinners; becauſe they made a Profeſſion of Sanctity. Come, *Riſe up*, do not lie dozing there. *Let us go* and meet the Enemy, for *Lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand*, and I muſt not now think of making an Eſcape; when we ſee Trouble at the Door, we are concern'd to ſtir up our ſelves to get ready for it.

43 And immediately, while he yet ſpake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with ſwords and ſtaves, from the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes, and the elders. 44 And he that betrayed him, had given them a token, ſaying, Whomſoever I ſhall kiſs, that ſame is he; take him, and lead *him* away ſafely. 45 And aſſoon as he was come, he goeth ſtraightway to him, and ſaith, Maſter, maſter; and kiſſed him. 46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him. 47 And one of them that ſtood by, drew a ſword, and ſmote a ſervant of the high prieſt, and cut off his ear. 48 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Are

ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and *with* ſtaves, to take me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple, teaching, and ye took me not: but the ſcriptures muſt be fulfilled. 50 And they all forſook him, and fled. 51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth caſt about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him. 52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

We have here the *ſeizing* of our Lord Jeſus, by the Officers of the Chief Prieſts. This was what his Enemies had long aim'd at, they had often ſent to *take him*, but he had eſcaped out of their Hands, becauſe *his Hour was not come*; nor could they now have taken him, had he not freely ſurrender'd himſelf. He began firſt to ſuffer *in his Soul*, but afterwards ſuffer'd in his Body, that he might ſatisfie for Sin, which begins in the Heart, but afterwards makes the Members of the Body *Inſtruments of Unrighteouſneſs*.

1. Here's a parcel of rude Miſcreants employ'd to *take* our Lord Jeſus, and make him a Priſoner; *a great Multitude with Swords and Staves*. There is no Wickedneſs ſo black, no Villany ſo horrid, but there may be found among the children of Men fitting Tools to be us'd in it, that will not boggle at it, ſo miſerably deprav'd and vitiated is Mankind. At the Head of this Rabble is *Judas, one of the twelve*, one of thoſe that had been many Years intimately converſant with our Lord *Jeſus*, had propheſied in his Name, and in his Name caſt out Devils, and yet *betray'd* him. It is no new Thing for a very fair and plauſible Profeſſion, to end in a ſhameful and fatal Apoſtaſie. *How art thou fallen, O Lucifer.*

2. Men of no leſs Figure than the *Chief Prieſts, and the Scribes*, and and *the Elders*, ſent them, and ſet them on Work, who pretended to expect the *Meſſiah*, and to be ready to welcome him, and yet when he *is come*, and has given undeniable Proofs, that it is he that *ſhould come*, yet becauſe he doth not make Court to them, nor Countenance and Support their Pomp and Grandeur; becauſe he appears not as a temporal Prince, but ſets up a ſpiritual Kingdom, and preacheth Repentance, Reformation, and a Holy Life, and directs Men's Thoughts, and Affections, and Aims to another World, they ſet themſelves againſt him, and, without giving the Credentials he produceth an impartial Examination, reſolve to run him down.

3. *Judas* betray'd him *with a Kiſs*; abuſing the Freedom Chriſt us'd to allow his Diſciples, of kiſſing his Cheek at their Return, when they had been any Time abſent. He call'd him *Maſter, Maſter*, and *kiſs'd him. Rabbi, Rabbi*, as if he had been now more reſpectful to him than ever. 'Tis enough to put one for ever out of Conceit with being called of Men *Rabbi, Rabbi*, (Mat. 23. 7.) when it was with this Compliment that Chriſt was betray'd. He bid them take him, and *lead him away ſafely*. Some think he ſpoke this *Ironically*, knowing that they could not ſecure him unleſs he pleas'd, this *Sampſon* could break their Bonds aſunder, as Threads of Tow, and make his eſcape, and then he ſhould get the Money, and Chriſt the Honour, and no Harm done; and I ſhould think ſo too, but that *Satan was enter'd into him*, ſo that the worſt and moſt malicious Intention of this Action is not too black to be ſuppos'd. Nay, he had often heard his Maſter ſay, That being *betray'd*, he ſhould be *crucified*, and had no other Reaſon to think otherwiſe.

4. They arreſted him and made him their Priſoner, *v.* 46. *They laid their Hands on him*, rude and violent Hands, and *took him* into Cuſtody; triumphing, 'tis likely, that they had done that which had been often before attempted in vain.

5. *Peter* laid about him in defence of his Maſter, and wounded one of the Aſſailants, being for the preſent mindful of his Promiſe to venture his Life with his Maſter. He was *one of them that ſtood by*, of them that *were with him*, ſo the Word ſignifies, of *them three* Diſciples that *were with him* in the Garden; he *drew a Sword*, and aim'd it's likely to cut off the Head, but miſs'd his Blow, and only *cut off the Ear* of a Servant of the High Prieſt, *v.* 47. It's eaſier to *fight* for Chriſt, than to die for him; but Chriſt's good Soldiers overcome not by taking away other People's Lives, but by laying down their own, *Rev.* 12. 11.

6. Chriſt argues with them that had ſeiz'd him, and ſhews them the Abſurdity of their Proceedings againſt him. (1.) That they came out *againſt him* as againſt a *Thief*, whereas he was *innocent* of any Crime; he *taught daily in the Temple*, and if he had had any wicked Deſign there, it would ſome time or other have been diſcover'd; nay, the Officers of theſe *Chief Prieſts* being *Retainers* to the Temple, may be ſuppos'd to have heard his Sermons there, (I was *with you* in the Temple) and had he not taught them an excellent Doctrine, even his Enemies themſelves being Judges, were not *all the Words of his Mouth in Righteouſneſs?* Was there any thing *froward or perverſe in them?* Prov. 8. 8. By his Fruits he was known to be a good Tree; why then did they come out againſt him *as a Thief?* (2.) That they came to take him thus *privately*, whereas he was neither *aſhamed* or *afraid* to appear *publickly* in the Temple. He was none of thoſe *Evil-doers* that *hate the Light*, neither come *to the Light*, John 3. 20. If their Maſters had any thing to ſay to him, they might meet him any Day in the Temple, where he was ready to anſwer all Challenges, all Charges: And there they might do as they pleas'd with him, for the Prieſts had the Cuſtody of the Temple, and the Command of the Guards about it; but to come upon him thus at Midnight, and in the Place of his Retirement, was baſe and cowardly, This was to do as *David*'s Enemy, that *ſate in the lurking Places of the Villages to murther the Innocent*, Pſalm 10. 8. But this was not all, (3.) They came *with Swords and Staves*, as if he had been in Arms againſt the Government, and muſt have the *Poſſe Comitatus* rais'd to reduce him. There was no occaſion for thoſe Weapons, but they made this ado, (1.) To ſecure themſelves from the Rage of ſome; they came arm'd, becauſe they *feared the People*; but thus *were they in great Fear, where no fear was*, Pſalm 53. 5. (2.) To expoſe him to the Rage of others. By coming *with Swords and Staves to take him*, they repreſented him to the People (who are apt to take Impreſſions this way) as a dangerous, turbulent Man, and ſo endeavour'd to incenſe them againſt him, and make them cry out, *Crucifie him, Crucifie him*, having no other way to gain their Point.

7. He reconcil'd himſelf to all this injurious, ignominious Treatment, by referring himſelf to the Old Teſtament Predictions of the *Meſſiah*. I am hardly us'd, *but* I ſubmit, for *the Scriptures muſt be fulfill'd*, v. 49. (1.) See here what a Regard Chriſt had to the *Scriptures*; he would bear any Thing, rather than the leaſt *Jot* or Tittle of the Word of God ſhould fall to the Ground; and as he had an Eye to them in his Sufferings, ſo he has in his Glory; for what is Chriſt doing in the Government of the World, but *fulfilling the Scriptures*. (2.) See what uſe we are to make of the Old Teſtament, we muſt ſearch for Chriſt, the true *Treaſure hid in that Field*; as the Hiſtory of the New Teſtament expounds the Prophecies of the Old, ſo the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament illuſtrate the Hiſtory of the New.

8. All Chriſt's Diſciples hereupon deſerted him, *v.* 50. they all *forſook him and fled*. They were very confident they ſhould ſtick to him, but even good Men know not what they will do till they are try'd. It was ſuch a Comfort to him, as he had lately intimated, that they had hitherto *continued with him* in his leſſer Trials, *Luke* 22. 28. We may well imagine what a Grief it was to him, that they deſerted him now in the greateſt, when they might have done him ſome Service, when he was abus'd, to protect him, and when accus'd, to witneſs for him. Let not thoſe that ſuffer for Chriſt, think it ſtrange if they be thus deſerted, and if all the Herd ſhun the wounded Deer; they are not better than their Maſter, nor can expect to be better us'd either by their Enemies, or by their Friends. When St. *Paul* was in Peril none *ſtood by him*, but *all Men forſook him*, 2 Tim. 4. 16.

9. The Noiſe diſturb'd the Neighbourhood, and ſome of the Neighbours were brought into Danger by the Riot, *v.* 51, 52. This Paſſage or Story we have not in any other of the Evangeliſts. Here's an Account of a *certain Young Man*, that as it ſhould ſeem was no Diſciple of Chriſt, nor as ſome have imagin'd, a Servant of the Houſe wherein Chriſt had eaten the Paſſover, who *follow'd him* to ſee what would become of him, as the *Sons of the Prophets*, when they underſtood that *Elijah* was to be *taken up*, went to *view afar off*, 2 *Kings* 2. 7. But ſome young Man that liv'd near the Garden, perhaps in the Houſe to which the Garden belong'd. Now obſerve concerning him,

1. How he was *frighten'd out of his Bed*, to be a *Spectator* of Chriſt's Sufferings. Such a *Multitude* ſo arm'd, and coming with ſo much Fury, in the dead of the Night, and in a quiet Village, could not but make a mighty Hubbub, this alarm'd our *Young Man*, who perhaps thought there was ſome Tumult or riſing in the City, ſome *uproar among the People*, and had the Curioſity to go and ſee what the Matter was; and was in ſuch haſte to inform himſelf, that he could not ſtay to dreſs himſelf, but threw a Sheet about him, as if he would appear like a walking Ghoſt, in grave Clothes, to frighten thoſe who had frighten'd him, and run in among the thickeſt of them with this Queſtion, *What's to do here?* And being told, had a mind to ſee the Iſſue; having no doubt heard much of the Fame of this *Jeſus*, and therefore when all his Diſciples had quitted him, he continued to *follow him*, deſirous to *hear* what he would ſay, and *ſee* what he would do. Some think his having no other Garment but this *Linen Cloth* upon his naked Body, intimates, that he was one of thoſe *Jews* who made a greater Profeſſion of Piety than their Neighbours; and in Token of that, among other Inſtances of Auſterity and Mortification of the Body, they us'd no Cloaths but one Linen Garment, which, tho' contriv'd to be modeſt enough, was thin and cold. But I rather think, this was not his conſtant wear.

2. See how he was *frighten'd into his Bed* again, when he was in danger of being made a *Sharer* in Chriſt's Sufferings. His own Diſciples had out-run him; but this young Man having no Concern for him, thought he might ſecurely attend him, eſpecially being ſo far from being arm'd, that he was not ſo much as cloath'd; but *the Young Men*, the *Roman* Soldiers, who were call'd in to aſſiſt, *laid hold of him*, for all was Fiſh that came to their Net. Perhaps they were now vex'd at themſelves, that they had ſuffer'd the Diſciples to *run away*, and they being got out of their Reach, they reſolv'd to ſeize the firſt they could *lay their Hands on*; tho' this young Man was perhaps one of the *ſtricteſt Sect* of the *Jewiſh* Church, yet the *Roman* Soldiers made no Conſcience of abuſing him upon this Occaſion. Finding himſelf in Danger, he *left the Linnen Cloth* by which they had *caught hold of him*, and *fled away naked*. This Paſſage is recorded, to ſhew what a barbarous Crew this was that was ſent to ſeize Chriſt, and what a narrow Scape the Diſciples had of falling into their Hands, out of which nothing could have kept them but their Maſter's Care of them, *If ye ſeek me, let*

theſe go their Way, John 18. 8. It alſo intimates that there's *no Hold* of thoſe who are led by Curioſity only, and not by Faith and Conſcience to follow Chriſt.

53 And they led Jeſus away to the high prieſt: and with him were aſſembled all the chief prieſts, and the elders, and the ſcribes. 54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the Palace of the high prieſt: and he ſat with the Servants, and warmed himſelf at the Fire. 55 And the chief prieſts, and all the council ſought for witneſs againſt Jeſus to put him to death; and found none. 56 For many bare falſe witneſs againſt him, but their witneſs agreed not together. 57 And there aroſe certain, and bare falſe witneſs againſt him, ſaying, 58 We heard him ſay, I will deſtroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59 But neither ſo did their witneſs agree together. 60 And the high prieſt ſtood up in the mids, and asked Jeſus, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? what is it which theſe witneſs againſt theee? 61 But he held his peace, and anſwered nothing. Again the high prieſt asked him, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the Chriſt, the Son of the bleſſed? 62 And Jeſus ſaid, I am: and ye ſhall ſee the Son of man ſitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63 Then the high prieſt rent his clothes, and ſaith, What need we any further Witneſſes? 64 Ye have heard the blaſphemy: what think ye? and they all condemned him to be guilty of death. 65 And ſome began to ſpit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to ſay unto him, Propheſie: and the ſervants did ſtrike him with the palms of their hands.

We have here Chriſt's Arraignment, Trial, Conviction and Condemnation in the *Eccleſiaſtical* Court before the Great *Sanhedrin*, of which the *High Prieſt* was Preſident, or Judge of the Court; the ſame *Caiaphas* that had lately adjudg'd it expedient he ſhould be put to death, guilty, or not guilty, *John* 11. 50. And therefore might juſtly be excepted againſt as partial.

1. Chriſt was hurry'd away to his *Houſe*, his *Palace* it is call'd, ſuch State did he live in. And there, tho' in the dead of the Night, *all the Chief Prieſts, and Elders, and Scribes* that were in the Secret, were *aſſembled* ready to receive the Prey; ſo ſure were they of it.

2. *Peter follow'd* at a Diſtance, ſuch a Degree of Cowardice was his late Courage dwindled into, *v.* 54. But when he came to the Chief Prieſt's Palace, he *ſneakingly* went and *ſate with the Servants*, that he might not be ſuſpected to belong to Chriſt. The High Prieſt's Fire-ſide was no proper Place, nor his Servants proper Company for *Peter*, but it was his *Entrance into a Temptation.*

3. Great Diligence was us'd to procure for Love or Money falſe Witneſſes againſt Chriſt. They had ſeiz'd him as a Malefactor, and now they had him they had no Indictment to prefer againſt him, no Crime to lay to his Charge, but they *ſought for Witneſſes againſt him*, pump'd ſome with enſnaring Queſtions, offer'd Bribes to others if they *would accuſe him, and endeavour to frighten others if they would not*, v. 55, 56. The Chief Prieſts and Elders were by the Law intruſted with the proſecuting and puniſhing of *falſe Witneſſes*, *Deut.* 19. 16. Yet thoſe were now Ringleaders in a Crime that tends to the Overthrow of all Juſtice. It's time to cry *help Lord*, when the Phyſicians of a Land are its Troublers, and thoſe that ſhould be the Conſervators of Peace and Equity, are the Corrupters of both.

4. He was at length charg'd with Words ſpoken ſome Years ago, which as they were repreſented ſeem'd to threaten *the Temple*, which they had made no better than an Idol of, *v.* 57, 58. But the Witneſſes to this Matter did not agree, *v.* 59. For one ſwore that he ſaid, *I am able to deſtroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three Days*, ſo 'tis in *Matthew*; the other ſwore that he ſaid, *I will deſtroy this Temple, that is made with Hands, and within three Days I will build* not it, but *another made without Hands*; now theſe two differ much from each other οὐδὲ ἴση ἦν ἡ μαρτυρία. Their *Teſtimony was not ſufficient*, nor equal to the Charge of a Capital Crime; ſo *Dr. Hammond*; they did not accuſe him of that upon which a *Sentence of Death* might be founded, no not by the utmoſt Stretch of their Law.

5. He was urg'd to be his own Accuſer, *v.* 60. The *High Prieſt ſtood up* in a Heat, and ſaid, *anſwereſt thou nothing?* This he ſaid under Pretence of Juſtice and fair Dealing, but really with a Deſign to enſnare him, that they might *accuſe him*, Luke 11. 53, 54. and 20. 20. We may well imagine with what an Air of Haughtineſs and Diſdain this proud High-Prieſt brought our Lord Jeſus to this Queſtion: Come you the Priſoner at the Bar, you hear what's ſworn againſt you, what have you now to ſay for your ſelf? Pleas'd to think that he ſeem'd ſilent who had ſo often ſilenc'd thoſe that pick'd Quarrels with him. Still Chriſt *anſwered nothing*, that he might ſet us an Example, (1.) Of *Patience* under Calumnies, and falſe Accuſations; when we are *revil'd*, let us not *revile again*, 1 Pet. 2. 22. And (2.) Of *Prudence*; when a Man ſhall be made an *Offender for a Word*, Iſa. 29. 21. and our *Defence* made our *Offence*: 'Tis an evil Time indeed when the Prudent ſhall *keep Silence*, (leſt they make ill worſe) *and commit their cauſe to him that judgeth righteouſly.*

But, 6. When he was ask'd, *whether he was the Chriſt*, he confeſs'd and deny'd not, that *he was*, v. 16, 62. He ask'd *art thou the Son of the Bleſſed?* (i. e.) The Son of *God*, for as Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, The *Jews*, when they nam'd *God*, generally added, *bleſſed for ever*, and thence *the Bleſſed* is the Title of *God*, a peculiar Title, and apply'd to Chriſt, *Rom.* 9. 5. And for the Proof of his being the *Son of God* he binds them over to his ſecond Coming, *ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man ſitting on the right Hand of Power*,—That *Son of Man* that now appears ſo mean and deſpicable, whom you *ſee* and trample upon, *Iſa.* 53. 2, 3. you ſhall ſhortly ſee and *tremble before*. Now one would think ſuch a Word as this, which our Lord Jeſus ſeems to have ſpoken with a Grandeur and Majeſty not agreeable to his preſent Appearance (for tho' the thickeſt Cloud of his Humiliation ſome Rays of Glory were ſtill darted forth) ſhould have ſtartled the Court, and at leaſt in the Opinion of ſome of them ſhould have amounted to a *Demurrer*, or *Arreſt of Judgment*, and that they ſhould have ſtaied Proceſs 'till they had conſider'd further of it; when *Paul* at the Bar reaſon'd of the *Judgment to come*, the Judge *trembled*, and adjourn'd the Trial, *Acts* 24. 25. But theſe Chief Prieſts were ſo miſerably blinded with Malice and Rage, that like the Horſe ruſhing into the Battle, they *mocked at Fear, and were not afrighted*, neither *believ'd they that it was the Sound of the Trumpet*, Job 39. 22, 23. And ſee *Job* 15. 25, 26.

7. The High Prieſt upon this Confeſſion of his, convicted him as *a Blaſphemer*, v. 63. He *rent his Cloaths*, χιτῶνας αὐτοῦ, ſome think the Word ſignifies his Pontifical Veſtments, which for the greater State he had put on, tho' in the Night, upon this Occaſion. As before in his Enmity to Chriſt, he ſaid he knew not what, *John* 11. 51, 52. So now he did he knew not what. If *Saul*'s rending *Samuel*'s Mantle was made to ſignifie the rending of the Kingdom from him, 1 *Sam.* 15. 27, 28. Much more did *Caiaphas*'s rending his own Cloaths ſignifie the rending of the Prieſthood from him, as the rending of the Vail at Chriſt's Death ſignify'd the throwing of all open. Chriſt's Cloaths even when he was crucify'd, were kept entire, and not rent; for when the *Levitical* Prieſthood was rent in Pieces, and done away, *This Man becauſe he continues ever, has an unchangeable Prieſthood.*

1. They agreed he was a Blaſphemer, and as ſuch was guilty of a Capital Crime, *v.* 64. The Queſtion *ſeem'd* to be put fairly *what think ye?* But it was really *prejudg'd*, for the High Prieſt had ſaid, *ye have heard the Blaſphemy*; He gave Judgment firſt, who, as Preſident of the Court, ought to have voted laſt. So they *all condemn'd him* to be *guilty of Death*; what Friends he had in the great *Sanhedrim* did not appear, 'tis likely they had not Notice.

9. They ſet themſelves to abuſe him, and as the *Philiſtines* with *Sampſon*, to make Sport with him, *v.* 65. It ſhould ſeem ſome of the Prieſts themſelves that had condemn'd him, ſo far forgot the Dignity as well as Duty of their Place, and the Gravity which became them, that they help'd their Servants in playing the Fool with a condemn'd Priſoner. This they made their Diverſion, while they *waited for the Morning* to compleat their Villany. That *Night of Obſervations* (as the Paſſover Night was call'd) they *made a merry Night of*. If they did not think it below them to abuſe Chriſt, ſhall we think any Thing below us by which we may do him Honour?

66 And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high prieſt. 67 And when ſhe ſaw Peter warming himſelf, ſhe looked upon him, and ſaid, And thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Nazareth. 68 But he denied, ſaying, I know not, neither underſtand I what thou ſayeſt. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. 69 And a maid ſaw him again, and began to ſay to them that ſtood by, This is *one* of them. 70 And he denied it again. And a litle after, they that ſtood by ſaid again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy ſpeech agreeth *thereto*. 71 But he began to curſe and to ſwear, *ſaying*, I know not this man of whom ye ſpeak. 72 And the ſecond time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jeſus ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

We have here the Story of *Peter*'s denying Chriſt.

1. It began in *keeping at a Diſtance* from him. *Peter* had followed *afar off*, v. 54. and now was *beneath in the Palace*, at the lower End of the Hall. Thoſe that are *ſhy* of Chriſt are in a fair Way to *deny* him, that are ſhy of attending on Holy Ordinances, ſhy of the Communion of the Faithful, and loth to be ſeen on the Side of deſpis'd Godlineſs.

2. It was occaſion'd by his aſſociating with the High-Prieſt's Servants, and ſitting among them. They that think it dangerous to be in Company with Chriſt's Diſciples, becauſe thence they may be drawn in to *ſuffer for him*, will find it much more dangerous to be in Company with his Enemies, becauſe there they may be drawn in to *ſin againſt him*.

3. The Temptation was, his being charg'd as a Diſciple of Chriſt; *Thou alſo waſt with Jeſus of Nazareth*, v. 67. *This is one of them*, v. 69. *for thou art a Galilean*, one may know that by thy ſpeaking broad, *v.* 70. It doth not appear that he was *challeng'd* upon it, or in Danger of being *proſecuted* as a Criminal for it, but only *banter'd* upon it, and in Danger of being ridicul'd as a Fool for it. While the Chief Prieſts were abuſing the Maſter, the Servants were abuſing the Diſciples. Sometimes the Cauſe of Chriſt ſeems to fall ſo much on the loſing Side, that every Body has a Stone to throw at it, and even the *Abjects gather themſelves together againſt* it. When *Job* was on the Dunghil, he was had in Deriſion of thoſe that were the *Children of baſe Men*, Job 30. 8.— Yet all things conſider'd, the Temptation could not be call'd *formidable*; 'Twas only a *Maid* that caſually caſt her Eye upon him, and for ought appears without Deſign of giving him any Trouble, ſaid, *Thou art one of them.* To which he needed not to have made any Reply, or might have ſaid, and if I be, I hope that's no Treaſon.

4. The Sin was very great; He *deny'd Chriſt before Men*, at a Time when he ought to have confeſs'd and own'd him, and to have appear'd in Court a Witneſs for him. Chriſt had often given Notice to his Diſciples of his own Sufferings, yet when they came, they were to *Peter* as great a Surprize and Terror, as if he had never heard of them before. He had often told them that they muſt *ſuffer* for him, muſt *take up their Croſs* and follow him, and yet *Peter* is ſo terribly afraid of ſuffering, upon the very firſt Alarm of it, that he will lye and ſwear, and do any Thing to avoid it.— When Chriſt was admir'd and flock'd after, he could readily own him, but now he is deſerted, and deſpis'd, and run down, he is aſham'd of him, and will own no relation to him.

5. His Repentance was very ſpeedy. He repeated his Denial Thrice, and the third was worſt of all, for then he *curs'd* and *ſwore* to confirm his Denial; and that third Blow, which one would think ſhould have *ſtunn'd him*, and knock'd him down, *ſtartled him*, and rouz'd him up. Then the *Cock crew* the ſecond time, which put him in mind of his Maſter's Words, the Warning he had given him, with that particular Circumſtance of the *Cock crowing twice*, and by recollecting that he was made ſenſible of his Sin and the Aggravations of it; and when he thought thereon he wept. Some obſerve, that this Evangeliſt, who wrote, as ſome have thought, by St. *Peter*'s Direction, ſpeaks as fully of *Peter*'s Sin as any of them, but more briefly of his *Sorrow*, which *Peter* in Modeſty would not have to be magnify'd, and becauſe he thought he could never ſorrow enough for ſo great a Sin. His Repentance here is thus expreſs'd, ἐπιβαλὼν ἔκλαιε, where ſomething muſt be ſupply'd. He *added, to weep*, ſo ſome, making it a Hebraiſm; He wept, and the more he thought of it, the more he wept: He continued weeping: He *flung out* and wept: *Burſt out* into Tears: *Threw himſelf down* and wept: He *cover'd his Face* and wept, ſo ſome: Caſt his Garment about his Head, that he might not be ſeen to weep. He *caſt his Eyes* upon his Maſter, who turn'd, and look'd upon him, ſo Dr. *Hammond* ſupplies it, and 'tis a probable Conjecture. Or, as we underſtand it, *fixing his Mind upon it*, he wept. 'Tis not a tranſient Thought of that which is humbling that will ſuffice, but we muſt dwell upon it: Or, what if this Word ſhould mean his *laying Load* upon himſelf, throwing Confuſion into his own Face; he did as the *Publican* that ſmote his Breaſt in Sorrow for Sin; and this amounts to his weeping bitterly.

CHAP. XV.

What we read of the Sufferings of Chriſt in the foregoing Chapter, was but the Prologue or Introduction; here we have the compleating of them. We left him condemn'd by the Chief Prieſts, but they could only ſhow their Teeth, *they could not* bite. *Here we have him,* (1.) *Arraign'd and accus'd before* Pilate *the* Roman *Governour*, v. 1,—5. (2.) *Cry'd out againſt by the common People at the Inſtigation of the Prieſts*, v. 6,—14. (3.) *Condemn'd to be crucified immediately*, v. 15. (4.) *Banter'd and abus'd as a Mock-King by the* Roman *Soldiers*, v. 16,—19. (5.) *Led out to the Place of Execution, with all poſſible Ignominy and Diſgrace*, v. 20,—24. (6.) *Nail'd to the Croſs between two Thieves*, v. 25,—28. (7.) *Revil'd and abus'd by all that paſs'd by*, v. 29,—32. (8.) *Forſaken for a Time by his Father*, v. 33,—36. (9.) *Dying and rending the Vail*, v. 37, 38. (10.) *Atteſted and witneſſed to by the* Centurion, *and others*, v. 39,—41. (11.) *Buried in the Sepulchre of* Joſeph *of* Arimathea, v. 42,—47.

AND ſtraightway in the morning the chief prieſts
held a conſultation with the elders and ſcribes,
and the whole Council, and bound Jeſus, and carried
him away, and deliver'd *him* to Pilate. 2 And
Pilate asked him, Art thou the king of the Jews?
And he anſwering, ſaid unto him, Thou ſayeſt it.
3 And the chief Prieſts accuſed him of many things:
but he anſwered nothing. 4 And Pilate asked him
again, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou nothing? Behold how
many things they witneſs againſt thee. 5 But Jeſus
yet anſwered nothing; ſo that Pilate marvelled.
6 Now at the feaſt he releaſed unto them one priſoner
whomſoever they deſired. 7 And there was
one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them
that had made inſurrection with him, who had committed
murther in the inſurrection. 8 And the multitude
crying aloud, began to deſire *him to do* as he had
ever done unto them. 9 But Pilate anſwered them,
ſaying, Will ye that I releaſe unto you the king of
the Jews? 10 (For he knew that the chief prieſts
had delivered him for envy) 11 But the chief prieſts
moved the people, that he ſhould rather releaſe Barabbas
unto them. 12 And Pilate anſwered, and ſaid
again unto them, What will ye then that I ſhall do
unto him whom ye call the king of the Jews? 13 And
they cryed out again, Crucifie him. 14 Then Pilate
ſaid unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And
they cryed out the more exceedingly, Crucifie him.

Here we have,

1. A *Conſultation* held by the Great *Sanhedrin*, for the effectual Proſecution of our Lord Jeſus. They met *early in the Morning* about it, and went into a Grand Committee, to find out *Ways and Means* to get him put to Death; they loſt no Time, but follow'd their Blow in good Earneſt, leſt there ſhould be an *uproar among the People*. The unwearied Induſtry of wicked People in doing that which is Evil, ſhould ſhame us for our backwardneſs and ſlothfulneſs in that which is Good. They that *War* againſt Chriſt and thy Soul are up early, *How long then wilt thou ſleep, O Sluggard?*

2. The delivering of him up a priſoner to *Pilate*, they *bound him*. He was to be the great Sacrifice, and Sacrifices muſt be bound with Cords, *Pſal.* 118. 27. Chriſt was bound to make Bonds eaſie to us, and to enable us, as *Paul* and *Silas*, to ſing in Bonds. 'Tis good for us often to *remember the Bonds* of the Lord Jeſus, as bound with him who was *bound for us*. They led him through the Streets of *Jeruſalem*, to expoſe him to Contempt, who, whilſt he taught in the Temple but a Day or two before, was had *in Veneration*; and we may well imagine how miſerably he look'd, after ſuch a Night's Uſage as he had; ſo buffeted, ſpit upon, and abus'd. Their delivering him to the *Roman* Power, was a Type of the Ruin of their Church, which hereby they merited and brought upon themſelves; it ſignified that the Promiſe, and the Covenant, and the Oracles of God, and the viſible Church-State, which were the Glory of *Iſrael*, and had been ſo long in their Poſſeſſion, ſhould now be deliver'd up to the *Gentiles*. By delivering up the *King*, they do in Effect deliver up the *Kingdom of God*, which is therefore as it were by their own Conſent taken from them, and given to another Nation. If they had deliver'd up Chriſt to gratifie the Deſires of the *Romans*, or to ſatisfie any Jealouſies of theirs concerning him, it had been another Matter, but they voluntarily betray'd him that was *Iſrael's Crown*, to them that were *Iſrael's Yoke*.

3. The examining of him by *Pilate* upon Interrogatories, *v.* 2. *Art thou King of the Jews?* Doſt thou pretend to be ſo, to be that *Meſſiah* whom the *Jews* expect as a temporal Prince? Yea, ſaith Chriſt, it is as *thou ſayeſt*, I am that *Meſſiah*, but not ſuch a one as they expect. He is the King that rules and protects his *Iſrael* according to the Spirit, that are *Jews* inwardly by the Circumciſion of the Spirit, and the King that will reſtrain and puniſh the carnal *Jews* that continue in Unbelief.

4. The Articles of Impeachment exhibited againſt him, and his Silence under the Charge and Accuſation. The Chief Prieſts forgot the Dignity of their Place when they turn'd Informers, and did in *Perſon accuſe* Chriſt of *many Things*, v. 3. and witneſs againſt him, *v.* 4. Many of the Old Teſtament Prophets charge the Prieſts of their Times with great Wickedneſs, in which *well did they Propheſy* of theſe Prieſts, ſee *Ezek.* 22. 26. *Hoſ.* 5. 1.—6. 9. *Mic.* 3. 11. *Zeph.* 3. 4. *Mal.* 1. 6.—2. 8. The Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* by the *Chaldeans* is ſaid to be for the *Iniquity of the Prieſts that ſhed the Blood of the Juſt*, Lam. 4. 13. *Note*, Wicked Prieſts are generally the worſt of Men. The better any Thing is, the worſe it is when it is corrupted. Lay-Perſecutors have been generally found more compaſſionate than Eccleſiaſticks. Theſe Prieſts were very eager and noiſy in their Accuſation; but Chriſt *anſwered nothing*, v. 3. When *Pilate* urg'd him to clear himſelf, and was deſirous he ſhould, *v.* 4. Yet he ſtood mute, *v.* 5. He *anſwered nothing*, which *Pilate* thought very ſtrange: He gave *Pilate* a direct Anſwer, *v.* 2. But would not anſwer the Proſecutors and Witneſſes, becauſe the Things they alledg'd were notoriouſly falſe, and he knew *Pilate* himſelf was convinc'd they were ſo. *Note*, As Chriſt ſpoke to Admiration, ſo he kept ſilence to Admiration.

5. The Propoſal *Pilate* made to the People to have Jeſus releaſed to them, ſince it was the Cuſtom of the Feaſt to grace the Solemnity with the Releaſe of one Priſoner. The People expected and demanded that he ſhould do *as he had ever done to them*, v. 1. 'Twas an ill Uſage, but they would have it kept up. Now *Pilate* perceiv'd

that the chief Prieſts deliver'd up Jeſus *for Envy*; becauſe he had got ſuch a Reputation among the People, as eclips'd their's; *v.* 10. It was eaſie to ſay, comparing the Eagerneſs of the Perſecutors, with the ſlenderneſs of their Proofs, that it was not his *Guilt* but his *Goodneſs*; not any Thing *miſchievous* or *ſcandalous*, but ſomething *meritorious* and *glorious* that they were provoked at. And therefore hearring how much he was the Darling of the Crowd, he thought he might ſafely appeal from the Prieſts to the People, and that they would be proud of reſcuing him out of the Prieſt's Hands; and he propoſeth an Expedient for their doing it, without danger of an *uproar*; let them demand him to be *releas'd*, and *Pilate* will readily do it, and ſtop the Mouths of the Prieſts with it, that the People inſiſted upon his Releaſe. There was indeed another Priſoner, one *Barabbas*, that had an Intereſt, and would have ſome Votes, but he queſtion'd not but Jeſus would out-poll him.

6. The unanimous outragious Clamours of the People to have Chriſt *put to Death*, and particularly to have him *crucified*. 'Twas a great Surprize to *Pilate*, when he found the People ſo much under the Influence of the Prieſts, that they all agreed to deſire that *Barabbas* might be *releas'd*, v. 11. *Pilate* oppos'd it all he could, *What will ye that I ſhall do to him, whom ye call the King of the Jews?* Would not you then have him releas'd too? *v.* 12. No, ſay they, *Crucifie him*; the Prieſts having put that in their Mouths, they inſiſt upon it; when *Pilate* objected, *why, what Evil has he done?* A very material Queſtion in ſuch a Caſe; they do not pretend to anſwer it, but *cried out the more exceedingly*, as they were more and more inſtigated and irritated by the Prieſts, *Crucifie him, Crucifie him.* Now the Prieſts, who were very buſy, diſperſing themſelves and their Creatures among the *Mob*, to keep up the Cry, promis'd themſelves that it would influence *Pilate* two Ways to condemn him. (1.) It might incline him to believe Chriſt *guilty*, when there was ſo general an Out-cry againſt him; ſurely, might *Pilate* think, he muſt needs be an ill man whom all the World is weary of; He would now conclude he had been *miſinform'd*, when he was told what an Intereſt he had in the People, and that the Matter was not ſo. But the Prieſts had hurried on the Proſecution with ſo much Expedition, that we may ſuppoſe they that were Chriſt's Friends, and would have oppos'd this Cry, were at t'other end of the Town, and knew nothing of the Matter. *Note*, It has been the common Artifice of *Satan*, to put Chriſt and his Religion into an ill Name, and ſo to run them down. When once this Sect, as they call'd it, comes to be *every where ſpoken againſt*, tho' *without Cauſe*, then that is look'd upon as *Cauſe enough* to condemn it. But let us *judge* of Perſons and Things by their Merits, and the Standard of God's Word, and not prejudge by common Fame, and the Cry of the Country. (2.) It might induce him to condemn Chriſt to *pleaſe* the People, and indeed for *fear* of *diſpleaſing* them. Tho' he was not ſo *weak* as to be govern'd by their Opinion to believe him guilty, yet he was ſo *wicked*, as to be ſway'd by their Outrage to condemn him, tho' he believ'd him innocent; induced thereunto by Reaſons of State, and the Wiſdom of this World. Our Lord Jeſus dying as a *Sacrifice* for the *Sins of many*, he fell a Sacrifice to the *Rage of many*.

15 And *ſo* Pilate willing to content the people, releaſed Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jeſus, when he had ſcourged *him*, to be crucified. 16 And the ſoldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they called together the whole band. 17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*. 18 And began to ſalute him, Hail King of the Jews. 19 And they ſmote him on the head with a reed, and did ſpit upon him, and bowing *their* knees, worſhipped him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucifie him. 21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who paſſed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his croſs.

Here, 1. *Pilate*, to gratifie the *Jews* Malice, delivers Chriſt to be *crucified*; v. 15. *Willing to content the People*, to *do enough* for them, ſo the Word is, and make them eaſie, that he might keep them quiet, *releas'd* Barabbas *unto them*, that was the Scandal and Plague of their Nation, and *deliver'd Jeſus* to be *crucified*, who was the Glory and Bleſſing of their Nation. Tho' he *had ſcourged him* before, hoping that would *content* them, and then not deſigning to crucifie him, yet he went on to that; for he that could perſwade himſelf to *chaſtiſe* one that was innocent, (*Luke* 23. 16.) no wonder he could by degrees perſwade himſelf to *crucifie him*.

Chriſt was *crucified*, for that was (1.) A *Bloody* Death, and *without Blood no Remiſſion*, Heb. 9. 22. The Blood is *the Life*, Gen. 9. 4. 'tis the *Vehicle* of the *Animal* Spirits, which *connect* the Soul and Body, ſo that the exhauſting of the Blood, is the exhauſting of the Life. Chriſt was to lay down *his Life* for us, and therefore ſhed *his Blood*. Blood *made atonement for the Soul*, Lev. 17. 11. and therefore in every Sacrifice of Propitiation, ſpecial Order was given for the *pouring out* of the Blood, and the *ſprinkling* of that before the Lord. Now, that Chriſt might anſwer all theſe Types, he *ſhed his Blood*. (2.) 'Twas a *painful* Death; the Pains were exquiſite and acute, for Death made its Aſſaults upon the Vitals, by the exterior Parts, which are *quickeſt of Senſe*. Chriſt dy'd, ſo as that he might *feel himſelf die*, becauſe he was to be both the Prieſt and the Sacrifice; ſo as that he might be *active* in dying, becauſe he was to *make his Soul an Offering* for Sin. *Tully* calls Crucifixion, *Teterrimum ſupplicium*; Chriſt would meet Death in its greateſt Terror, and ſo conquer it. (3.) 'Twas a *ſhameful* Death, the Death of Slaves, and the vileſt Malefactors; ſo it was accounted among the *Romans*. The *Croſs* and the *Shame* are put together; God having been injur'd in his Honour by the Sin of Man, 'tis *in his Honour* that Chriſt makes him *Satisfaction*, not only by denying himſelf in, and diveſting himſelf of the Honours due to his Divine Nature, for a Time, but by ſubmitting to the greateſt Reproach and Ignominy the Human Nature was capable of being loaded with. Yet this was not the worſt. (4.) 'Twas a *curſed* Death; thus it was branded by the *Jewiſh* Law, *Deut.* 21. 23. *He that is hang'd is accurſed of God*, is under a particular Mark of God's Diſpleaſure. 'Twas the Death that *Saul's* Sons were put to, when the Guilt of their Father's Bloody Houſe was to be expiated, 2 *Sam.* 21. 6. *Haman* and his Sons were *hang'd*, Eſth. 7. 10: 9. 13. We do not read of any of the Prophets of the Old Teſtament that were *hang'd*; but now Chriſt has ſubmitted to be *hang'd upon a Tree*, the Reproach and Curſe of that kind of Death is quite roll'd away, ſo that it ought not to be any hindrance to the Comfort of thoſe, who die either innocently or penitently, nor any Diminution from, but rather an Addition to the Glory of thoſe who die Martyrs for Chriſt, to be as he was hang'd upon a Tree.

2. *Pilate*, to gratifie the gay Humour of his *Roman* Soldiers, deliver'd him to them to be abus'd and ſpitefully treated, while they were preparing for the Execution. They call'd together *the whole Regiment* that was then in waiting, and they went into an Inner Hall, where they ignominiouſly abus'd our Lord Jeſus as a King, juſt as in the High Prieſt's Hall, his Servants had ignominiouſly abus'd him as a Prophet and Saviour. (1.) Do Kings uſe to wear Robes of Purple and Scarlet? They *clothed him with Purple.* This Abuſe done to Chriſt in his Apparel, ſhould be an Intimation to Chriſtians not to make the putting on of an Apparel *their adorning*, 1 Pet. 3. 4. Shall a Purple or Scarlet Robe be matter of Pride to a Chriſtian, which was matter of Reproach and Shame to Chriſt? (2.) Do Kings wear *Crowns?* they *platted a Crown of Thorns*, and *put it on his Head.* A Crown of Straw and Ruſhes would have been banter enough, but this was Pain alſo. He wore the Crown of Thorns which we had deſerv'd, that we might wear the Crown of Glory which he merited. Let us be *taught* by theſe *Thorns*, as *Gideon* taught the Men of *Succoth*, to hate Sin, and be uneaſie under it, and to be in Love with Jeſus Chriſt, who is here a Lilly among Thorns. If we be at any Time afflicted with a *Thorn in the Fleſh*, let it be our Comfort, that our Great High Prieſt is touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, having himſelf known what *Thorns in the Fleſh* meant. (3.) Are Kings attended with the Acclamations of their Subjects, *O King, live for ever!* that alſo is mimick'd, they ſaluted him with, *Hail King of the* Jews, ſuch a Prince and ſuch a People, e'en good enough for one another. (4.) Kings uſe to have *Scepters* put into their Hand, Marks of Dominion, as the Crown is of Dignity; and to reſemble that, they put a *Reed in his right Hand.* Thoſe who deſpiſe the Authority of the Lord Jeſus, as not to be obſerv'd and obey'd, that regard not either the Precepts of his Word, or the Threatnings of his Wrath, do in Effect *put a Reed in his Hand*; nay, and as theſe here *ſmite him on the Head* with it, ſuch is the Indignity they do him. (5.) Subjects, when they ſware Allegiance, were wont to *kiſs* their Sovereign, and this they offer'd to do, but inſtead of that, *ſpit upon him.* (6.) Kings us'd to be addreſs'd to upon the *Knee*, and this alſo they brought into the Jeſt, they *bowed the Knee, and worſhipped him*; this they did in ſcorn, to make themſelves and one another laugh. We were by Sin become liable to *everlaſting Shame and Contempt*; to deliver us from which, our Lord Jeſus ſubmitted to this Shame and Contempt for us. He was thus mock'd, not in *his own Clothes*, but in another's, to ſignifie that he ſuffer'd not for his own Sin; the Crime was our's, the Shame his. Thoſe who pretend Subjection to Chriſt, but at the ſame Time give themſelves up to the Service of the World and the Fleſh, do in Effect the ſame that they did, who bow'd the Knee to him in Mockery, and abus'd him with, *Hail King of the* Jews, when they ſaid, *We have no King but* Cæſar. Thoſe that bow the Knee to Chriſt, but do not bow the Soul; that *draw nigh to him with their Mouths*, and *Honour him with their Lips*, but *their Hearts are far from him*, put the ſame Affront upon him, that theſe here did.

3. The Soldiers at the Hour appointed, led him away from *Pilate*'s Judgment Hall to the Place of Execution, *v.* 20. as a Sheep to the Slaughter; He was *led forth with the Workers of Iniquity*, tho' he did no Sin. But leſt his Death under the Load of his Croſs, which he was to carry, ſhould prevent the further Cruelties they intended, they compelled one *Simon* of *Cyrene* to carry his Croſs for him. He *paſſed by, coming out of the Country*, or out of the *Fields*, not thinking of any ſuch Matter. *Note*, We muſt not think it ſtrange, if Croſſes come upon us ſuddenly, and we be ſurpriz'd by them. The Croſs was a very troubleſome unweildly Load, but he that carry'd it a few Minutes, had the Honour to have his Name upon Record in the Book of God, tho' otherwiſe an obſcure Perſon: So that where-ever this Goſpel is preach'd, there ſhall this be told for a Memorial of him; ſo, tho' *no Affliction*, no croſs *for the preſent be joyous, but grievous*, yet afterwards it yields a Crown of Glory to them that are exercis'd thereby.

22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha,
which is, being interpreted, the place of a ſcull.
23 And they gave him to drink, wine mingled with
myrrh: but he received *it* not. 24 And when they
had crucified him, they paarted his garments, caſting
lots upon them, what every man ſhould take. 25 And
it was the third hour, and they crucified him.
26 And the ſuperſcription of his accuſation was writ-
ten over, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 27 And
with him they crucified two thieves; the one on his
right hand, and the other on his left. 28 And the
ſcripture was fulfilled, which ſaith, And he was num-
bred with the tranſgreſſours. 29 And they that
paſſed by, railed on him, wagging their heads, and
ſaying, Ah, thou that deſtroyeſt the temple, and
buildeſt *it* in three days, 30 Save thy ſelf, and come
down from the croſs. 31 Likewiſe alſo the chief
prieſts, mocking, ſaid among themſelves, with the
ſcribes, He ſaved others, himſelf he cannot ſave. 32
Let Chriſt the king of Iſrael deſcend now from the
croſs, that we may ſee and believe. And they that were
crucified with him, reviled him.

We have here the *Crucifixion* of our Lord Jeſus.

1. The *Place where* he was crucified, 'twas called *Golgotha*, the *Place of a Scull.* Some think, becauſe of the Heads of Malefactors that were there cut off; 'twas the common Place of Execution, as *Tyburn*, for he was in all Reſpects numbred with the Tranſgreſſours. I know not how to give any Credit to it, but divers of the Ancients mention it as a current Tradition, that in this Place our firſt Father *Adam* was buried, and they think it highly congruous that there Chriſt ſhould be crucified; for as in *Adam* all die, ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive. *Tertullian, Origen, Chryſoſtom*, and *Epiphanius*, (great Names) take Notice of it; nay, *Cyprian* adds, *Creditur à piis*, many good People believe that the Blood of Chriſt crucified, did trickle down upon the Scull of *Adam*, who was buried in the ſame Place. Some think more credible is the Tradition, that this Mount *Calvary* was *that Mountain in the Land of* Moriah, (and in the Land of *Moriah* 'tis certain it was, for ſo the Country about *Jeruſalem* was call'd) on which *Iſaac* was to be offer'd, and the Ram was offer'd inſtead of him, and then *Abraham* had an Eye to *this Day* of Chriſt, when he call'd the Place *Jehovah jireh*, The *Lord will provide*, expecting that ſo 'twould be ſeen in the *Mount of the Lord.*

2. The *Time when* he was crucified; it was the *third Hour*, v. 25. He was brought before *Pilate* about the *ſixth Hour* (*John* 19. 14.) according to the *Roman* way of reckoning, which *John* uſeth, with which ours at this Day agrees, that is, at Six a Clock in the Morning; and then at the *third Hour*, according to the *Jews* way of reckoning, that is, about Nine of the Clock in the Morning, or ſoon after, they nail'd him to the Croſs. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, the *Third Hour* is here mention'd, to intimate an Aggravation of the Wickedneſs of the Prieſts, that they were here proſecuting Chriſt to the Death, tho' it was after the *Third Hour*, when they ought to have been attending the Service of the Temple, and offering the Peace-offerings, it being the firſt Day of the *Feaſt of unleavened Bread*, when there was to be a *Holy Convocation.* At that very Time, when they ſhould have been, according to the Duty of their Place, preſiding in the Publick Devotions, were they here venting their Malice againſt the Lord Jeſus; yet theſe were the Men that ſeem'd ſo zealous for the Temple, and condemn'd Chriſt for ſpeaking againſt it; *Note*, There are many who pretend to be *for the Church*, who yet care not how ſeldom they *go to Church.*

3. The Indignities that were done him, when he was nail'd to the Croſs; as if that had not been ignominious enough, they added ſeveral Things to the Ignominy of it.

1. It being the Cuſtom to give *Wine* to Perſons that were to be *put to Death*, they *mingled* his with *Myrrh*, which was *bitter* and made it *nauſeous*; he *taſted* it, but would not drink it; was willing to admit the Bitterneſs of it, but not the Benefit of it.

2. The Garments of thoſe that were crucified, being as with us the Executioner's Fee, the Soldiers *caſt Lots* upon his Garments, *v.* 24. threw Dice (as our Soldiers uſe to do upon a Drum Head) for them. So making themſelves merry with his Miſery, and ſitting at their Sport, while he was hanging in Pain.

3. They ſet a Superſcription over his Head, by which they intended to reproach him, but really did him both Juſtice and Honour, *The King of the Jews*, v. 26. Here was no Crime alledg'd, but his Sovereignty own'd. Perhaps *Pilate* meant to caſt Diſgrace upon Chriſt, as a baffled King, or upon the *Jews*, who by their Importunity had forc'd him againſt his Conſcience to condemn Chriſt, as a People that deſerv'd no better a King than he ſeem'd to be. However God intended it to be the proclaiming even of Chriſt upon the Croſs, the *King of Iſrael*; tho' *Pilate* knew not what he wrote, no more than *Caiaphas* what he ſaid, *John* 21. 51, Chriſt crucified, is King of his Church, his ſpiritual *Iſrael*; and even then when he hung on the Croſs he was like a King *conquering* his and his Peoples Enemies, and *triumphing* over them, *Col.* 2. 15. Now he was writing his Laws in his own Blood, and preparing his Favours for his Subjects. Whenever we look unto Chriſt crucified, we muſt remember the Inſcription over his Head, that he is a King, and muſt give up our ſelves to be his Subjects, as *Iſraelites* indeed.

4. They crucified *two Thieves* with him, one *on his right Hand, the other on his left*, and he in the Midſt, as the worſt of the Three, *v.* 27. So great a Degree of Diſhonour did they hereby intend him. And no doubt it gave him *Diſturbance* too: Some that have been impriſon'd in the common Goals for the Teſtimony of Jeſus, have complain'd of the Company of curſing ſwearing Priſoners, more than of any other of the Grievances of their Priſon: Now in the midſt of ſuch our Lord Jeſus was *crucified*: While he liv'd, he had, as there was Occaſion, *aſſociated* with Sinners to do them good, and now when he dy'd he was for the ſame Purpoſe joyn'd with them, for he *came into the World*, and went out of it to *ſave Sinners*, even the Chief. But this Evangeliſt takes particular Notice of the fulfilling of the Scriptures in it, *v.* 28. In that famous Prediction of Chriſt's Sufferings, *Iſa.* 53. 12. it was foretold that he ſhould be number'd with the *Tranſgreſſors*, becauſe he was made *Sin for us.*

5. The Spectators, that is, the Generality of them, inſtead of condoling his Miſery, added to it by inſulting over him. Surely never was ſuch an Inſtance of barbarous Inhumanity towards the vileſt Malefactor: But thus the Devil ſhew'd the utmoſt Rage againſt him, and thus he ſubmitted to the greateſt Diſhonours that could be done him.

1. Even they that *paſſed by*, that were no way concern'd, yet *rail'd on him*, v. 29. If their Hearts were ſo hardned, that their Compaſſions were not moved with ſuch a Spectacle, yet they ſhould have thought it enough to have their Curioſity gratified, but that will not ſerve, as if they were not only diveſted of all Humanity, but were Devils in human Shape; they taunted him, and expreſs'd themſelves with the utmoſt Deteſtation of him, and Indignation at him, and ſhot thick at him their Arrows, even *bitter Words.* The chief Prieſts no doubt put theſe Sarcaſms into their Mouths, *Thou that deſtroyeſt the Temple, and buildeſt it in three days, now*, if thou canſt, *ſave thy ſelf* and *come down from the Croſs.* They triumph as if now they had got him to the Croſs, there were no Danger of his *deſtroying the Temple*, whereas the *Temple* of which *he* ſpoke he was now *deſtroying*, and did within *three days build it up*: And the Temple of which *they* ſpake, he did by Men, that were *his Sword*, and *his Hand*, deſtroy not many Years after. When ſecure Sinners think the Danger is over, it is then moſt ready to ſeize them: The Day of the Lord *comes as a Thief* upon thoſe that deny his Coming, and ſay, Where is the Promiſe of it? Much more upon thoſe that *defy* his Coming, and ſay, *Let him make Speed, and haſten his Work.*

3. Even the chief Prieſts, who being *taken from among Men*, and ordain'd for Men, ſhould have Compaſſion even on thoſe that are out of the Way, ſhould be tender of thoſe that are ſuffering and dying, *Heb.* 5. 1, 2. Yet they poured Vinegar inſtead of Oil into his Wounds, they *talk'd to the Grief* of him *whom God had ſmitten*, *Pſal.* 69. 26. they *mocked him*, they ſaid *he ſaved others*, heal'd and helped them, but now it appears it was not by his own Power, for *himſelf he cannot ſave.* They challenge him to *come down from the Croſs* if he could, *v.* 32. Let them but *ſee* that, and they would *believe*; whereas they would not believe when he gave them a more convincing Sign than that, when he came up from the Grave. Theſe Chief Prieſts, one would think, might now have found themſelves *other Work* to do: If they would not go to do their Duty in *the Temple*, yet they might have been imploy'd in an Office not foreign to their Profeſſion; tho' they would not offer any Counſel or Comfort to the Lord Jeſus, yet they might have given ſome Help to the Thieves in their dying Moments; (the Monks and Prieſts in *Popiſh* Countries are very officious about Criminals broken upon the Wheel, a Death much like that of the Croſs) but they did not think that their Buſineſs.

3. Even they that were crucified with him reviled him, *v.* 32. one of them did, ſo wretchedly was his Heart harden'd even in the Depth of Miſery, and at the Door of Eternity.

33 And when the ſixth hour was come, there was
darkneſs over the whole land, until the ninth hour.
34 And at the ninth hour Jeſus cried with a loud
voice, ſaying, Eloi, Eloi, lama ſabachthani? which is,
being interpreted, My God, my God, why haſt thou
forſaken me? 35 And ſome of them that ſtood by,
when they heard *it*, ſaid, Behold, he calleth Elias.
36 And one ran, and filled a ſpunge full of vinegar,
and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, ſay-
ing, Let alone; let us ſee whether Elias will come
to take him down. 37 And Jeſus cried with a loud
voice, and gave up the ghoſt. 38 And the vail of
the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the
bottom. 39 And when the centurion which ſtood
over againſt him, ſaw that he ſo cried out, and gave
up the ghoſt, he ſaid, Truly this man was the Son
of God. 40 There were alſo women looking on
afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and

Mary the mother of James the leſs, and of Joſes, and Salome; 41 Who alſo when he was in Galilee; followed him, and miniſtred unto him; and many other women which came up with him unto Jeruſalem.

Here we have an Account of Chriſt's Dying, how his Enemies abus'd him, and God honour'd him at his Death.

1. There was a thick *Darkneſs* over *the whole Land*, (ſome think over the whole Earth) for three Hours from Noon, till three of the Clock. Now the Scripture was fulfill'd, *Amos* 8. 9. *I will cauſe the Sun to go down at Noon*, and will *darken the Earth in the clear Day*, and *Jer.* 15. 9. *Her Sun is gone down while it was yet Day.* The *Jews* had often demanded of Chriſt a *Sign from Heaven*, and now they had one, but ſuch a one as ſignified the blinding of their Eyes. 'Twas a Sign of the Darkneſs that was come and coming upon the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation. They were doing their utmoſt to extinguiſh the Son of Righteouſneſs which was now ſetting, and the riſing again of which they would never own; and what then might be expected among them but a worſe than *Egyptian* Darkneſs. This intimated to them that the Things which belong'd to their Peace were now *hid from their Eyes*, and that the Day of the Lord was at Hand, which ſhould be to them a *Day of Darkneſs and Gloomineſs*, Joel 2. 1, 2. 'Twas the Power of Darkneſs they were now under, the Works of Darkneſs they were now doing, and ſuch as this ſhould their Doom juſtly be who *loved Darkneſs rather than Light*.

2. Towards the Cloſe of this Darkneſs, our Lord Jeſus in the Agony of his Soul cried out, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* v. 34. The Darkneſs ſignified the preſent Cloud which the human Soul of Chriſt was under, when he was making it an *Offering for Sin.* Mr. *Fox* in his *Acts and Monuments*, Vol. 3. p. 160. tells of one Mr. *Hunter*, a Martyr in Queen *Mary's* Time, that being faſten'd to the Stake to be burnt, he put up this ſhort Prayer, *Son of God ſhine upon me*; and immediately the Sun in the Firmament ſhone out of a dark Cloud ſo full in his Face, that he was forced to look another way, which was very comfortable to him: But our Lord Jeſus on the contrary was denied the Light of the Sun when he was in his Sufferings, to ſignifie the withdrawing of the Light of God's Countenance. And this he complained of more than any thing; he did not complain of his Diſciples forſaking him, but of his Father's, (1.) Becauſe this *wounded his Spirit*; and that's a Thing *hard to bear*, Prov. 18. 14. This brought the Waters into his Soul, *Pſal.* 69. 1, 2, 3. (2.) Becauſe in this eſpecially he was *made Sin for us*; our Iniquities had deſerved Indignation and Wrath upon the Soul, *Rom.* 2. 7. and therefore Chriſt being made a *Sacrifice*, underwent as much of it as he was capable of; and it could not but bear hard indeed upon him who had lain *in the Boſom* of the Father from Eternity, and was *always his Delight*. Theſe Symptoms of Divine Wrath which Chriſt was under in his Sufferings, were like that Fire from Heaven, which had been ſent ſometimes in extraordinary Caſes to conſume the Sacrifices, as *Lev.* 9. 24. 2 *Chron.* 7. 1. 1 *Kings* 18. 38. and it was always a Token of God's Acceptance; the Fire that ſhould have fallen upon the *Sinner*, if God had not been *pacified*, fell upon the *Sacrifice*, as a Token that he was ſo; therefore it now fell upon Chriſt, and extorted from him this *loud* and *bitter* Cry. When *Paul* was to be *offer'd* as a Sacrifice for the *Service of Saints*, he could *joy* and *rejoyce*, Phil. 2. 17. But it is another Thing to be offer'd as a Sacrifice for *the Sins of Sinners.* Now at the *ſixth Hour*, and ſo to the *ninth*, the *Sun* was *darken'd* by an extraordinary Eclipſe; and if it be true, as ſome Aſtronomers compute, that in the Evening of this Day on which Chriſt dy'd, there was an Eclipſe of the Moon that was natural and expected, in which Seven Digits of the Moon were darken'd, and it continued from Five a Clock till Seven; 'tis remarkable, and yet farther ſignificant of the Darkneſs of the Time that then was. When the *Sun* ſhall be *darken'd*, the *Moon* alſo ſhall *not give her Light*.

3. Chriſt's Prayer was banter'd by them that ſtood by, *v.* 35, 36. Becauſe he cry'd, *Eli, Eli*, or (as *Mark* has it according to the *Syriac* Dialect) *Eloi, Eloi*, they ſaid, *he calls for Elias*, tho' they knew very well what he ſaid, and what it ſignified, *My God, my God.* Thus did they repreſent him as *praying to Saints*, either becauſe he had abandoned God, or God had abandoned him; and hereby they would make him more and more odious to the People: One of them *fill'd a Spunge with Vinegar*, and reach'd it up to him upon a Reed; let him cool his Mouth with that, 'twas Drink good enough for him, *v.* 36. This was intended for a further Affront and Abuſe to him; and whoever it was that check'd him who did it, did but add to the Reproach; *Let him alone*, he has call'd for *Elias*, *Let us ſee whether Elias will come to take him down*, and if not we may conclude that he alſo hath abandoned him.

4. Chriſt did again *cry with a loud Voice*, and ſo *gave up the Ghoſt*, *v.* 37. He was now commending his Soul into his Father's Hands, and tho' God is not mov'd with any *bodily Exerciſe*, yet this loud Voice ſignified that great Strength and Ardency of Affection wherewith he did it, to teach us in every Thing wherein we have to do with God, to put forth our utmoſt Vigour, and to perform all the Duties of Religion, particularly that of *Self-Reſignation* with our whole Heart and our whole Soul; and then tho' Speech fails that we cannot *cry with a loud Voice* as Chriſt did, yet if God be the *Strength of the Heart*, that will not fail. Chriſt was really and truly *dead*, for he *gave up the Ghoſt*, his human Soul departed to the World of Spirits, and left his Body a breathleſs Clod of Clay.

5. Juſt at that Inſtant that Chriſt dy'd upon Mount *Calvary*, the Veil of the *Temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom*, v. 38. This ſpoke a great deal, (1.) of Terror to the unbelieving *Jews*, for it was a Preſage of the utter Deſtruction of their Church and Nation which followed not long after; 'twas like the cutting aſunder of the *Staff of Beauty*, (for this Veil was exceeding ſplendid and glorious, *Exod.* 26. 31.) and that was done, at the ſame time when they gave for his Price *thirty Pieces of Silver*, Zech. 11. 10, 12. to *brake the Covenant which he had made with that People.* Now it was time to cry *Ichabod, The Glory is departed from Iſrael.* Some think that Story which *Joſephus* relates of the Temple Door opening of its own Accord with that Voice, *let us depart hence*, ſome Years before the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, is the ſame with this here, but that's not probable; however this had the ſame Signification, according to that, *Hoſ.* 5. 14. *I will tear and go away.* (2.) It ſpeaks a deal of Comfort to all believing Chriſtians, for it ſignified the conſecrating and laying open to us a *new and living Way into the Holieſt* by the *Blood of Jeſus.*

6. The *Centurion* who commanded that Detachment which had the Overſight of the Execution, was convinced and confeſs'd that this Jeſus was the *Son of God*, v. 39. One Thing that ſatisfy'd him was, that he *ſo cry'd out and gave up the Ghoſt*: That one who was ready to give up the Ghoſt, ſhould be able to cry out ſo was very ſurprizing. Of all the ſad Spectacles of this Kind, he never obſerv'd the like; and that one who had Strength to cry ſo loud, ſhould yet immediately give up the Ghoſt, this alſo made him wonder; and he ſaid to the Honour of Chriſt and the Shame of thoſe that abus'd him, *Truly this Man was the Son of God.* But what Reaſon had he to ſay ſo? I anſwer (1.) He had Reaſon to ſay that he ſuffer'd *unjuſtly*, and had a great deal of Wrong done him: *Note*, He ſuffer'd for ſaying, he was the *Son of God*; and it was true he did ſay ſo, ſo that if he ſuffer'd unjuſtly, as it was plain by all the Circumſtances of his Sufferings he did, then what he ſaid was true, and he was indeed *the Son of God.* (2.) He had Reaſon to ſay that he was a *Favourite of Heaven*, and one for whom the Almighty Power was particularly engaged, ſeeing how Heaven did him Honour at his Death, and frown'd upon his Perſecutors. Surely thinks he, this muſt be ſome Divine Perſon, highly beloved of God. This he expreſſeth by ſuch Words as ſpeak his eternal Generation as God, and his ſpecial Deſignation to the Office of Mediator, tho' he meant not ſo. Our Lord Jeſus even in the Depth of his Sufferings and Humiliation was the Son of God, and was declared to be ſo *with Power.*

7. There were ſome of his Friends, the good Women eſpecially, that attended him, *v.* 40, 41. *There were Women looking on afar off*: The Men durſt not be ſeen at all, the Mob was ſo very outrageous, (*Currenti cede furori*, they thought was good Counſel now). The Women durſt not come near, but ſtood at a Diſtance, overwhelm'd with Grief: Some of theſe Women are here nam'd, *Mary Magdalen* was one, ſhe had been his Patient, and ow'd all her Comfort to his Power and Goodneſs, which reſcued her out of the Poſſeſſion of Seven Devils, in Gratitude for which ſhe thought ſhe could never do enough for him. *Mary the Mother of James the little*, (*Jacobus Parvus*) ſo the Word is, probably he was ſo call'd becauſe he was like *Zacheus*, little of Stature. This *Mary* was the Wife of *Cleophas*, or *Alpheus*, Siſter to the Virgin *Mary*. Theſe Women had followed Chriſt from *Galilee*, tho' they were not required to attend the Feaſts as the Men were; but 'tis likely they came in Expectation that his temporal Kingdom would now ſhortly be ſet up, and big with Hopes of Preferment for themſelves and their Relations under him. 'Tis plain the Mother of *Zebedee*'s Children was ſo, *Mat.* 20. 21. And now to ſee him upon a Croſs, whom they thought to have ſeen upon a Throne, could not but be a great Baulk to them. *Note*, Thoſe that follow Chriſt in Expectation of great Things in this World by him, and by the Profeſſion of his Religion, may probably live to ſee themſelves ſadly diſappointed.

42 And now when the even was come, (becauſe it was the preparation, that is, the day before the ſabbath) 43 Joſeph of Arimathea, an honourable counſellour, which alſo waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jeſus. 44 And Pilate marvelled, If he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead. 45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joſeph. 46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a ſepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a ſtone unto the door of the ſepulchre. 47 And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joſes, beheld where he was laid.

We are here attending the Funeral of our Lord Jeſus, a ſolemn mournful Funeral. O that we may by Grace be planted in the Likeneſs of it. Obſerve,

1. How the Body of Chriſt was, *begg'd.* It was as the dead Bodies of Malefactors uſe to be, at the diſpoſe of the Government. Thoſe that hurried him to the Croſs, deſign'd he ſhould make *his Grave with the Wicked,* but God deſign'd he ſhould make it *with the rich,* Iſa. 53. 9. and ſo he did. We are here told,

1. When the Body of Chriſt was begg'd, in order to its being buried, and why ſuch haſte was made with the Funeral; the *Even was come,* and it was *the Preparation,* that is, *The Day before the Sabbath,* v. 42. The *Jews* were more ſtrict in the Obſervation of the Sabbath, than of any other Feaſt; and therefore, tho' this Day was it ſelf a *Feaſt-Day,* yet they obſerv'd it more religiouſly, as the *Eve* of the *Sabbath;* when they prepared their Houſes and Tables, for the *ſplendid* and *joyful* ſolemnizing of the Sabbath-Day. *Note,* The Day before the Sabbath ſhould be a Day of Preparation for the Sabbath, not of our Houſes and Tables, but of our Hearts, which as much as poſſible ſhould be *freed* from the Cares and Buſineſs of the World, and *fix'd,* and put in Frame for the Service and Enjoyment of God. Such Work is to be done, and ſuch Advantages gain'd on the Sabbath Day, that 'tis requiſite we ſhould get ready for it a Day before; nay, the whole Week ſhould be divided between the Improvement of the foregoing Sabbath, and Preparation for the following Sabbath.

2. Who it was that begg'd the Body, and took Care for the decent Interment of it; 'twas *Joſeph of Arimathea,* who is here call'd an *honourable Counſellor,* v. 43. A Perſon of Character and Diſtinction, and in an Office of publick Truſt; ſome think *in the State,* and that he was one of *Pilate*'s Privy-Council; his Poſt rather ſeems to have been *in the Church,* he was one of the *Great Sanhedrin* of the *Jews;* or one of the High Prieſts Council. He was ἐυσχήμων βȣλευτὴς, A Counſellor that carry'd himſelf in his Place as it *became him.* Thoſe are truly honourable, and thoſe only, in Places of Power and Truſt, that make Conſcience of their Duty, and whoſe Deportment is agreeable to their Preferment. But here is a more ſhining Character put upon him, he was one that *waited for the Kingdom of God,* the Kingdom of Grace on Earth, and of Glory in Heaven; the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah. Note,* Thoſe who *wait for the Kingdom of God,* and hope for an Intereſt in the Privileges of it, muſt ſhew it by their forwardneſs to own Chriſt's Cauſe and Intereſt, even then when it ſeems to be cruſh'd and run down. Obſerve, Even among the *honourable Counſellors,* there were ſome, there was *one* at leaſt, that waited for the Kingdom of God, whoſe Faith will condemn the Unbelief of all the reſt. This Man God rais'd up for this neceſſary Service, when none of Chriſt's Diſciples could or durſt undertake it, having neither Purſe, nor Intereſt, nor Courage for it. *Joſeph went in boldly* to *Pilate;* though he knew how much it would affront the Chief Prieſts, who had loaded him with ſo much Reproach, to ſee any Honour done him, yet he *put on Courage;* perhaps at firſt he was a little afraid, but τολμήσας, *taking Heart on it,* he determin'd to ſhew this Reſpect to the Remains of the Lord Jeſus, let the worſt come to the worſt.

3. What a ſurprize it was to *Pilate* to hear that he was *dead,* perhaps expecting that he would have ſav'd himſelf, and come down from the Croſs; eſpecially that he was *already dead,* that one who ſeem'd to have a more than ordinary Vigour ſhould ſo ſoon yield to Death. Every Circumſtance of Chriſt's dying was marvellous, for from firſt to laſt his Name was call'd *Wonderful. Pilate* doubted (ſo ſome underſtand it) whether he were yet dead or no, fearing leſt he ſhould be impos'd upon, and the Body ſhould be *taken down alive,* and recover'd, whereas the Sentence was, as with us, to hang *till the Body be dead.* He therefore call'd the *Centurion,* his own Officer, and ask'd him, *Whether he had been any while dead,* v. 44. Whether it was ſo long ſince they perceiv'd any Sign of Life in him, any Breath or Motion, that they might conclude he was dead paſt recal. The *Centurion* could aſſure him of this, for he had particularly obſerv'd how he *gave up the Ghoſt,* v. 39. There was a ſpecial Providence in it, that *Pilate* ſhould be ſo ſtrict in examining this, that there might be no Pretence to ſay he was bury'd alive, and ſo to take away the Truth of his Reſurrection; and ſo fully was this determin'd, that that Objection was never ſtarted. Thus the Truth of Chriſt gains Confirmation, ſometimes even from the Enemies of it.

2. How the Body of Chriſt was *buried. Pilate* gave *Joſeph* leave to take down the Body, and do what he pleas'd with it. 'Twas a wonder the Chief Prieſts were not too quick for him, and had not firſt begg'd the Body of *Pilate,* to expoſe it, and drag it about the Streets, but that remainder of their Wrath did God reſtrain, and gave that invaluable Prize to *Joſeph,* who knew how to value it; and the Hearts of the Prieſts were ſo influenc'd, that they did not oppoſe it. *Sit Divus modo non ſit vivus.*

1. *Joſeph* bought *fine Linen* to wrap the Body in, tho' in ſuch a Caſe Old Linen that had been worn might have been thought ſufficient. In paying Reſpects to Chriſt, it becomes us to be *generous,* and to ſerve him with the *beſt* that can be got, not with that which can be got at the beſt Hand.

2. He *took down* the Body, mangled and macerated as it was, and *wrapt it in the Linen,* as a Treaſure of great worth. Our Lord Jeſus hath himſelf commanded to be delivered to us, Sacramentally in the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which we ſhould receive in ſuch a manner as may beſt expreſs our Love to him, who loved us and died for us.

3. He *laid it in a Sepulchre* of his own, in a private Place. We ſometimes find it ſpoken of in the Story of the Kings of *Judah,* as a Slur upon the Memory of the wicked Kings, that they were not bury'd in the *Sepulchres of the Kings;* our Lord Jeſus, tho' he did no Evil, but much Good, and to him was given the Throne of his Father *David,* yet was bury'd in the Graves of common People, for it was not in this World, but in the other, that *his Reſt was glorious.* This Sepulchre belong'd to *Joſeph; Abraham,* when he had no other Poſſeſſion in the Land of *Canaan,* yet had a Burying-Place, but Chriſt had not ſo much as that. This Sepulchre was *hewn out of a Rock,* for Chriſt dy'd to make the Grave a *Refuge* and Shelter to the Saints, and being hewn out of a Rock, it is a *ſtrong* Refuge. *O that thou wouldſt hide me in the Grave!* Chriſt himſelf is a *hiding Place* to his People, that is, *as the Shadow of a great Rock.*

4. He *roll'd a Stone to the Door of the Sepulchre,* for ſo the manner of the *Jews* was to bury. When *Daniel* was put into the Lions Den, a Stone was laid to the Mouth of it, to keep him in, as here to the Door of Chriſt's Sepulchre, but neither of them could keep off the Angels viſits to the Priſoners.

5. Some of the good Women attended the Funeral, and *beheld where he was laid,* that they might come after the Sabbath to anoint the dead Body, becauſe they had not Time to do it now. When *Moſes* the Mediator and Lawgiver of the *Jewiſh* Church was bury'd, care was taken that no Man ſhould *know of his Sepulchre,* Deut. 34. 6. becauſe the Reſpects of the People towards his Perſon, were to die with him; but when our great Mediator and Lawgiver was bury'd, ſpecial Notice was taken of his Sepulchre, becauſe he was to *riſe again:* And the care taken of his Body ſpeaks the Care which he himſelf will take concerning his Body the Church, even then when it ſeems to be a dead Body, and as a Vally full of dry Bones, it ſhall be preſerv'd in order to a Reſurrection; as ſhall alſo the dead Bodies of the Saints, with whoſe Duſt there is a Covenant in force which ſhall not be forgotten. Our Meditations on Chriſt's Burial ſhould lead us to think of our own, and ſhould help to make the Grave familiar to us, and ſo to make that bed eaſy, which we muſt ſhortly make in the Darkneſs. Frequent Thoughts of it would not only take off the Dread and Terror of it, but quicken us, ſince the *Graves* are always ready for us, to get ready for the Graves, *Job* 17. 1.

CHAP. XVI.

In this Chapter we have a ſhort Account of the Reſurrection and Aſcenſion of the Lord Jeſus, and the Joys and Triumphs which it furniſheth all Believers with, will be very acceptable to thoſe who ſympathiz'd and ſuffer'd with Chriſt in the foregoing Chapters. Here's (1.) *Chriſt's Reſurrection notify'd by an Angel to the Women that came to the Sepulchre to anoint him,* v. 1—8. (2.) *His Appearance to* Mary Magdalen, *and the Account ſhe gave of it to the Diſciples,* v. 9—11. (3.) *His Appearance to the Two Diſciples going to* Emmaus, *and the Report they made of it to their Brethren,* v. 12, 13. (4.) *His Appearance to the Eleven, with the Commiſſion he gave them to ſet up his Kingdom in the World, and full Inſtructions, and Credentials in order thereunto,* v. 14—18. (5.) *His Aſcenſion into Heaven, and the Apoſtles cloſe Application to their Work, and God's owning them in it,* v. 19, 20.

AND when the Sabbath was paſt, Mary Magdalene, and Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome, had bought ſweet ſpices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning, the firſt *day* of the week, they came unto the ſepulchre, at the riſing of the ſun. 3 And they ſaid among themſelves, Who ſhall roll us away the ſtone from the door of the ſepulchre? 4 (And when they looked, they ſaw that the ſtone was rolled away) for it was very great. 5 And entring into the ſepulchre, they ſaw a young man ſitting on the right ſide, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 6 And he ſaith unto them, Be not affrighted; ye ſeek Jeſus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is riſen, he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7 But go your way, tell his Diſciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee: there ſhall ye ſee him, as he ſaid unto you. 8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the ſepulchre; for they trembled, and were amazed: neither ſaid they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

Never was there ſuch a *Sabbath,* ſince the Sabbath was firſt inſtituted, as this was, which the firſt Words of this Chapter tell us was *now paſt;* during all this Sabbath our Lord Jeſus lay in the Grave. 'Twas *to him* a Sabbath of *reſt,* but a *ſilent* Sabbath; 'twas to his Diſciples a melancholy Sabbath, ſpent in Tears and Fears: Never were the Sabbath-Services in the Temple ſuch an *abomination to God,* tho' they had been often ſo, as they were now, when the Chief Prieſts that preſided in them had their Hands full of Blood, the Blood of Chriſt. Well, this Sabbath is over, and the firſt Day of the Week is the firſt Day of the New World. We have here,

1. The affectionate Viſit which the good Women that had attended Chriſt now made to his Sepulchre, not a *Superſtitious* one, but

a *Pious* one. They ſet out from their Lodgings *very early in the Morning*, at break of Day, or ſooner; but either they had a long Walk, or met with ſome Hindrance, ſo that it was *Sun-riſing* by that time they got to the Sepulchre. They had *bought ſweet Spices* too, and come not only to *bedew* the dead Body with their Tears, for nothing could more renew their Grief than this, but to *perfume* it with their *Spices*, v. 1. *Nicodemus* had bought a very large Quantity of *dry Spices, Myrrh* and *Aloes*, which ſerv'd to dry the Wounds, and dry up the Blood, *John* 19. 39. But theſe good Women did not think that enough, they bought Spices, perhaps of another kind, ſome perfum'd Oils to *anoint him*. *Note*, The Reſpects which others have ſhew'd to *Chriſt's* Name, ſhould not hinder us from ſhewing our Reſpects to it.

2. The Care they were in about the rolling away of the Stone, and the ſuperſeding of that Care, *v.* 3, 4. *They ſaid among themſelves*, as they were coming a long, and now drew near the Sepulchre, who *ſhall roll us away the Stone from the Door of the Sepulchre?* For it was very great, more than they with their united Strength could move. They ſhould have thought of this before they came out, and then Diſcretion would have bid them not go, unleſs they had thoſe to go with them who could do it. And there was another Difficulty much greater than this to be got over which they knew nothing of, to wit, a Guard of Soldiers ſet to *keep* the Sepulchre; who, had they come before they were frighten'd away, would have frighten'd them away. But their gracious Love to Chriſt carry'd them to the Sepulchre, and ſee how by that time they came thither both thoſe Difficulties were remov'd, both the *Stone* which they *knew of*, and the *Guard* which they *knew not of*. They *ſaw that the Stone was roll'd away*, which was the firſt Thing that amaz'd them. *Note*, They who are carried by a Holy Zeal to ſeek Chriſt diligently, will find the Difficulties that lie in their Way ſtrangely to vaniſh, and themſelves help'd over them beyond their Expectation.

3. The Aſſurance that was given them by an Angel that the Lord Jeſus was riſen from the Dead, and had taken Leave of his Sepulchre, and had left him there to tell thoſe ſo who came thither to enquire after him.

1. They *enter'd into the Sepulchre*, at leaſt a little Way in, and ſaw the Body of Jeſus was not there where they left it the other Night. He who by his Death undertook to pay our Debt, in his Reſurrection took out our Acquittance, for it was his Diſcharge out of Priſon, and it was a fair and legal Diſcharge, by which it appear'd that his Satisfaction was accepted to all the Purpoſes for which it was intended, and the Matter in Diſpute was determin'd by an unconteſtable Evidence that he was the Son of God.

2. They ſaw a *young Man ſitting on the right Side* of the Sepulchre: The Angel appear'd in the Likeneſs of *a Man*, of a *young Man*, for Angels tho' created in the Beginning grew not *old*, but are always in the ſame Perfection of Beauty and Strength, and ſo ſhall glorified Saints be when they are *as the Angels*. This Angel was *ſitting on the right Hand*, as they went into the Sepulchre, *cloath'd with a long white Garment*, a Garment down to the Feet, ſuch as great Men were array'd with. The Sight of him might juſtly have encourag'd them, but they were *affrighted*. Thus many Times that which ſhould be matter of Comfort to us, through our own Miſtakes and Miapprehenſions, proves a Terror to us.

3. He ſilenceth their Fears by aſſuring them here was Cauſe enough for Triumph, but none for Trembling, *v.* 6. *He ſaith to them, be not affrighted*. *Note*, Angels as they rejoyce in the Converſion of Sinners, ſo they do alſo in the Conſolation of Saints. Be not affrighted, for (1) You are faithful Lovers of Jeſus Chriſt, and therefore inſtead of being *confounded* ought to be *comforted*. *Ye ſeek Jeſus of Nazareth which was crucified*. *Note*, The Enquiries of believing Souls after Chriſt, have a particular Regard to him as *crucified*, 1 Cor. 2. 2. that they may know him and the Fellowſhip of his Sufferings. His being *lifted up from the Earth*, is that which *draws all Men unto him*. Chriſt's Croſs is the Enſign to which the *Gentiles* ſee. Obſerve he ſpeaks of Jeſus as one that *was crucified*; the Thing is *paſt*, that Scene is over, you muſt not dwell ſo much upon the ſad Circumſtances of his Crucifixion as to be unapt to believe the joyful News of his Reſurrection. He was *crucified in Weakneſs*, yet that doth not hinder but that he may be rais'd in Power, and therefore ye that ſeek him be not *afraid* of *miſſing* of him: He *was* crucified, but he *is* glorified; and the Shame of his Sufferings is ſo far from leſſening the Glory of his Exaltation, that that Glory perfectly wipes away all the Reproach of his Sufferings. And therefore after his Entrance upon his Glory he never drew any Veil over his Sufferings, nor was ſhy of having his Croſs ſpoken of: The Angel here that proclaims his Reſurrection calls him Jeſus that *was crucified*. He himſelf owns, *Rev.* 1. 18. *I am he that liveth and was dead*; and he appears in the Midſt of the Praiſes of the heavenly Hoſt as a *Lamb that had been ſlain*, Rev. 5. 6.

(2.) It will therefore be good News to you to hear, that inſtead of anointing him dead, you may rejoyce in him living. *He is riſen, he is not here*, not dead but alive again; we cannot as yet ſhew you *him*, hereafter you will ſee him, but you may here ſee *the Place where they laid him*, and you ſee he is gone hence, not ſtollen either by his Enemies or by his Friends, but *riſen*.

4. He orders them to give ſpeedy Notice of this to his Diſciples: Thus they were made the Apoſtles of the Apoſtles, which was a Recompence of their Affection and Fidelity to him, in attending him on the Croſs, to the Grave, and in the Grave: They firſt came and were firſt ſerv'd; no other of the Diſciples durſt come near his Sepulchre, or enquire after him; ſo little Danger was there of their coming by Night to *ſteal him away*, that none came near him but a few Women, who were not able ſo much as to *roll away the Stone*.

(1.) They muſt tell the *Diſciples* that *he is riſen*: It's a diſmal Time with them, their dear Maſter is dead, and all their Hopes and Joys are buried in his Grave; they look upon their Cauſe as ſunk, and themſelves ready to fall an eaſie Prey into the Hands of their Enemies, ſo that there remains no more Spirit in them, they are perfectly at their Wits end, every one is contriving how to ſhift for himſelf: O go quickly to them, ſaith the Angel, tell them *their Maſter is riſen*, that will put ſome Life and Spirit into them, and keep them from ſinking into Deſpair. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt is not aſham'd to own his poor Diſciples, no not now he is in an exalted State; his Preferment doth not make him ſhy of them, for he took early Care to have it *notified* to them. (2.) Chriſt is not extreme to mark what they do amiſs whoſe Hearts are upright with him. The Diſciples had very unkindly deſerted him, and yet he teſtified this Concern for them. (3.) Seaſonable Comforts ſhall be ſent to thoſe that are lamenting after the Lord Jeſus, and he will find a time to manifeſt himſelf to them.

(2.) They muſt be ſure to tell *Peter*. This is particularly taken Notice of by this Evangeliſt, who is ſuppos'd to have written by *Peter*'s Direction. If it were told the Diſciples, it would be told *Peter*, for, as a Token of his Repentance for diſowning his Maſter, he ſtill aſſociated with his Diſciples; yet he is particularly nam'd, tell *Peter*, for (1) it will be good News to him, more welcome to him than to any of them, for he is in Sorrow for Sin, and no Tydings can be more welcome to true Penitents than to hear of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, becauſe he roſe again for *their Juſtification*. (2) He will be afraid leſt the Joy of this good News do not belong to him. Had the Angels ſaid only, *go tell the Diſciples*, poor *Peter* would have been ready to ſigh and ſay, But I doubt I cannot look upon my ſelf as one of them, for I diſown'd him, and deſerv'd to be diſown'd by him; to obviate that, Go to *Peter* by Name, and tell him he ſhall be as welcome as any of the reſt to *ſee* him in *Galilee*. *Note*, A Sight of Chriſt will be very welcome to a true Penitent, and a true Penitent ſhall be very welcome to a Sight of Chriſt, for there is Joy in Heaven concerning him.

(3.) They muſt appoint them all, and *Peter* by Name, to give him the Meeting in *Galilee*, as *he ſaid unto you*, Matt. 26. 32. In their Journey down into *Galilee* they would have Time to recollect themſelves, and call to mind what he had often ſaid to them there, That he ſhould ſuffer and die, and *the third Day be rais'd again*, whereas while they were at *Jeruſalem*, among Strangers and Enemies, they could not recover themſelves from the Fright they had been in, nor compoſe themſelves to the due Entertainment of better Tydings. *Note*, 1. All the Meetings between Chriſt and his Diſciples are of his own appointing. 2. Chriſt never forgets his Appointment, but will be ſure to meet his People with the promis'd Bleſſing in every Place where he records his Name. 3. In all Meetings between Chriſt and his Diſciples, he is the moſt for ward; *He goes before you*.

4. The Account which the Women did bring of this to the Diſciples, *v.* 8. They *went out quickly*, and *ran from the Sepulchre*, to make all the haſte they could to the Diſciples, *trembling* and *amaz'd*. See how much we are Enemies to our ſelves and our own Comfort, in not conſidering and mixing Faith with what Chriſt hath ſaid to us; Chriſt had often told them that *the third Day he would riſe again*, had they given that its due Notice and Credit, they would have come to the Sepulchre expecting to have found him riſen, and would have receiv'd the News of it with a joyful Aſſurance, and not with all this Terror and Amazement. But being order'd to tell the Diſciples, becauſe they were to tell it to all the World, they would not tell it to any one elſe, they ſhewed not any thing of it to any Man that they *met by the Way*, for *they were afraid*, afraid it was too good News to be true. *Note*, Our diſquieting Fears often hinder us from doing that Service to Chriſt, and to the Souls of Men, which, if Faith and the *Joy of Faith* were ſtrong, we might do.

9 Now when *Jeſus* was riſen early, the firſt *day* of
the week, he appeared firſt to Mary Magdalene, out
of whom he had caſt ſeven devils. 10 *And* ſhe went
and told them that had been with him, as they mourned
and wept. 11 And they, when they had heard that
he was alive, and had been ſeen of her, believed not.
12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of
them, as they walked, and went into the countrey.
13 And they went and told *it* unto the reſidue: neither
believed they them.

We have here a very ſhort Account of two of Chriſt's Appearances, and the little Credit which the Report of them gain'd with the Diſciples.

1. He appear'd to *Mary Magdalen*, to her firſt in the Garden, which we have a particular Narrative of, *John* 20. 14. 'Twas ſhe *out of whom he had caſt ſeven Devils*, much was forgiven her, and much was given her, and done for her, and ſhe *loved much*; and this Honour Chriſt did her, that ſhe was the firſt that ſaw him after

his Reſurrection. The cloſer we cleave to Chriſt, the ſooner we may expect to ſee him, and the more to ſee of him.

Now, (1.) She brings Notice of what ſhe had ſeen to the Diſciples; not only to the *Eleven*, but to the reſt that followed him, *as they mourned and wept*, v. 10. Now was the Time of which Chriſt had told them, that they ſhould *mourn and lament*, John 16. 20. And it was an Evidence of their great Love to Chriſt, and the deep Senſe they had of their Loſs of him. But when their *weeping* had *endur'd a Night* or two, Comfort return'd, as Chriſt had promis'd them, *I will ſee you again, and your Heart ſhall rejoyce.* Better News cannot be brought to Diſciples in Tears, than to tell them of Chriſt's Reſurrection. And we ſhould ſtudy to be Comforters to Diſciples that are Mourners, by communicating to them our Experiences, and what we have *ſeen of Chriſt*.

(2.) They could not give Credit to the Report ſhe brought them. They heard that *he was alive*, and had been ſeen of her. The Story was plauſible enough, and yet they *believed not*; they would not ſay that ſhe made the Story her ſelf, or deſigned to deceive them, but they fear ſhe is *impos'd upon*, and it was but a Fancy that ſhe *ſaw him*. Had they believ'd the *frequent* Predictions of it from his own Mouth, they would not have been now ſo incredulous of the Report of it.

2. He appear'd to two of the Diſciples *as they went into the Country*, v. 12. This refers no doubt to that which is largely related, *Luke* 24. 13. of what paſs'd between Chriſt and the two Diſciples, *going to Emmaus*. He is here ſaid to have appear'd to them in *another Form*, in another Dreſs than what he uſually wore, in the Form of a *Traveller*; as in the Garden in ſuch a Dreſs, that *Mary Magdalen* took him for the Gardener; but that he had really his own Countenance appears by this, that *their Eyes were holden that they ſhould not know him*, and when that Reſtraint on *their Eyes* was taken off, immediately they *knew him*, Luke 24. 16, 31. Now,

1. Theſe *two* Witneſſes gave in their *Teſtimony* to this Proof of Chriſt's Reſurrection. *They went and told it to the Reſidue*, v. 13. being *ſatisfied* themſelves, they were deſirous to give their Brethren the *Satisfaction* they had, that they might be comforted as they were.

2. This did not gain Credit with all, *neither believed they them.* They ſuſpected that their Eyes alſo deceiv'd them. Now there was a wiſe Providence in it, that the Proofs of Chriſt's Reſurrection were given in thus *gradually*, and admitted thus *cautiouſly*, that ſo the Aſſurance with which the Apoſtles preach'd this Doctrine afterwards, when they ventured their All upon it, might be the more ſatisfying; we have the more Reaſon to believe thoſe who did themſelves believe ſo ſlowly; had they ſwallowed it preſently, they might have been thought *credulous*, and their Teſtimony the leſs to be *regarded*; but their *disbelieving* at firſt, ſhews that they did not believe it afterwards but upon a full Conviction.

14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they ſat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardneſs of heart, becauſe they believed not them which had ſeen him after he was riſen. 15 And he ſaid unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the goſpel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned. 17 And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe; In my name ſhall they caſt out devils, they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues. 18 They ſhall take up ſerpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it ſhall not hurt them; they ſhall lay hands on the ſick, and they ſhall recover.

Here's, 1. The *Conviction* which Chriſt gave his Apoſtles of the Truth of his Reſurrection, *v.* 14. He *appear'd to them* himſelf, when they were all together, *as they ſat at Meat*, which gave him an Opportunity to *eat and drink with them* for their full Satisfaction, ſee *Acts* 10. 41. And ſtill when he appear'd to them, he *upbraided them with their Unbelief, and Hardneſs of Heart*, for even at the general-Meeting in *Galilee*, *ſome doubted*, as we find *Matt.* 28. 17. *Note*, The Evidences of the Truth of the Goſpel are ſo full, that thoſe who receive it not may juſtly be upbraided with their Unbelief; and it is owing not to any Weakneſs or Deficiency in the Proofs, but to the *Hardneſs of the Heart*, and the Senſeleſneſs and Stupidity of that: Tho' they had not till now ſeen him themſelves, they are juſtly blam'd *becauſe they believ'd not them which had ſeen him after he was riſen*; and perhaps it was owing in part to the *Pride of their Hearts* that they did not; for they thought, if indeed he were riſen, *to whom ſhould he delight to do the Honour* of ſhewing himſelf but to them. And if he *paſs them by*, and ſhew himſelf to *others* firſt, they cannot believe 'tis he. Thus many disbelieve the Doctrine of Chriſt, becauſe they think it *below them* to give Credit to ſuch as he had choſen to be the Witneſſes and Publiſhers of it. Obſerve, It will not ſuffice for an Excuſe of our Infidelity in the great Day, to ſay *we did not ſee him* after he was riſen, for we ought to have believ'd the Teſtimony of thoſe who did ſee him.

2. The *Commiſſion* which he gave them to ſet up his Kingdom among Men by the Preaching of his *Goſpel*, the glad Tidings of Reconciliation to God through a Mediator. Now obſerve,

1. *To whom* they were to preach *the Goſpel.* Hitherto they had been ſent only to *the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael*, and were forbidden to go into the *Way of the Gentiles*, or into any City of the *Samaritans*: But now their Commiſſion is enlarged, and they are authoriz'd to *go into all the World*, into all Parts of the World, the habitable World, and to *preach the Goſpel* of Chriſt to *every Creature*, to the *Gentiles* as well as to the *Jews*; to every human Creature that is capable of receiving it. Inform them concerning Chriſt, the Hiſtory of *his Life*, and *Death*, and *Reſurrection*; inſtruct them in the *Meaning* and *Intention* of theſe, and of the Advantages which the Children of Men have, or may have hereby; and invite them without Exception to come and ſhare in them. This is *Goſpel*, let this be preach'd in all Places, to all Perſons: Theſe eleven Men could not themſelves preach it to all the World, much leſs to *every Creature* in it, but they and the other Diſciples, Seventy in Number, with thoſe who ſhould afterwards be added to them, muſt *diſperſe* themſelves ſeveral Ways, and wherever they went, carry the Goſpel along with them. They muſt ſend *others* to thoſe Places, whither they could not *go themſelves*; and in ſhort make it the Buſineſs of their Lives to ſend thoſe glad Tidings *up and down the World*, with all poſſible Fidelity and Care, not as an Amuſement or Entertainment, but as a ſolemn Meſſage from God to Man, and an appointed Means of making Men happy. Tell as many as you can, and bid them tell others, 'tis a Meſſage of univerſal Concern, and therefore ought to *have* an univerſal Welcome, becauſe it *gives* an univerſal Welcome.

2. What is the *Summary of the Goſpel* they are to preach, *v.* 16. Set before the World Life and Death, Good and Evil. Tell the Children of Men that they are all in a State of Miſery and Danger, *condemn'd* by their Prince, and *conquer'd* and *enſlav'd* by their Enemies. This is ſuppos'd in their being *ſav'd*, which they would not need to be if they were not *loſt*. Now go and tell them, (1.) That if they *believe the Goſpel*, and give up themſelves to be Chriſt's Diſciples; if they *renounce* the Devil, the World, and the Fleſh, and be *reconcil'd* to Chriſt as their Prophet, Prieſt, and King, and to God in Chriſt as their God in Covenant, and evidence by their conſtant Adherence to this Covenant their Sincerity herein, they *ſhall be ſav'd* from the Guilt and Power of Sin, it ſhall not *rule* them, it ſhall not *ruin* them. He that is a true Chriſtian ſhall be ſav'd thro' Chriſt. *Baptiſm* was appointed to be the *inaugurating* Rite, by which thoſe that embrac'd Chriſt own'd him; but it is here put rather for the *Thing ſignified* than for the Sign, for *Simon Magus believ'd* and was *baptiz'd*, yet not *ſav'd*, Acts 8. 13. *Believing with the Heart, and confeſſing with the Mouth the Lord Jeſus*, Rom. 10. 9. ſeems to be much the ſame with this here. Or thus, we muſt aſſent to Goſpel Truths, and *conſent* to Goſpel Terms. (2.) *If they believe not*, if they receive not the Record God gives concerning his Son, they cannot expect any other Way of Salvation, but muſt inevitably periſh, *they ſhall be damned*, by the Sentence of a *deſpiſed Goſpel*, added to that of a broken Law. And even this is *Goſpel*, 'tis good News, that nothing elſe but Unbelief ſhall damn Men, which is a Sin againſt the Remedy. Dr. *Whitby* here obſerves, That they who hence infer, “ That the Infant Seed of Believers are not capable of “ Baptiſm becauſe they cannot believe, muſt hence alſo infer that “ they cannot be ſav'd; *Faith* being here more expreſly requir'd “ to Salvation than to Baptiſm. And that in the latter Clauſe Ba- “ ptiſm is omitted, becauſe it is not ſimply the Want of Baptiſm, “ but the contemptuous Neglect of it, which makes Men guilty of “ Damnation, otherwiſe Infants might be damn'd for the Miſtakes “ or Profaneneſs of their Parents.

3. What Power they ſhould be endow'd with for the Confirmation of the Doctrine they were to preach, *v.* 17. *Theſe Signs ſhall follow them that believe*; not that all who believe ſhall be able to produce theſe Signs, but ſome, even as many as were employed in propagating the Faith, and bringing others to it; for Signs are intended *for them that believe not*, ſee 1 *Cor.* 14. 22. It added much to the Glory and Evidence of the Goſpel, that the Preachers not only wrought Miracles themſelves, but conferr'd upon others a Power to work Miracles, which Power *followed* ſome of them that believed where-ever they went to preach. They ſhall do Wonders *in Chriſt's Name*, the ſame Name into which they were baptiz'd, in the Virtue of Power derived from him, and fetch'd in by Prayer: Some particular Signs are mention'd; (1.) They ſhall *caſt out Devils*; this Power was more common among Chriſtians than any other, and laſted longer, as appears by the Teſtimonies of *Juſtin Martyr*, *Origen*, *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Minutius Felix*, and others, cited by *Grotius* on this Place. (2.) They ſhall *ſpeak with new Tongues*, which they had never learn'd or been acquainted with; and this was both a *Miracle* (a Miracle *upon the Mind*) for the confirming of the Truth of the Goſpel, and a *Means* of ſpreading the Goſpel among thoſe Nations that had not heard it. It ſaved the Preachers a vaſt Labour in learning the Languages; and no doubt they who by *Miracle* were made *Maſters of Languages*, were compleat Maſters of them, and of all their native Elegancies which were proper both to *inſtruct* and *affect*, which would very much recommend them and their preaching. (3.) They ſhall *take up Serpents*: This was fulfill'd in *Paul*, who was not hurt by the *Viper* that *faſten'd on his Hand*, which was acknowledg'd a great Miracle by the barbarous People, *Acts* 28. 5, 6. They ſhall be kept unhurt by that *Generation of Vipers*, among whom they live, and by the Malice of the *Old Serpent*. (4.) If they be compell'd by their Perſecutors to *drink any deadly* poiſonous Thing, it *ſhall not hurt them.* Of which very Thing ſome Inſtances are found

in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory. (5.) They ſhall not only be preſerved from Hurt themſelves, but they ſhall be enabled to do Good to others; *they ſhall lay Hands on the Sick, and they ſhall recover,* as Multitudes had done by their Maſter's *healing* Touch. Many of the Elders of the Church had this Power, as appears by *Jam.* 5. 14. whereas an inſtituted Sign of this miraculous *Healing*, they are ſaid to *anoint* the Sick *with Oil in the Name of the Lord:* With what Aſſurance of Succeſs might they go about the executing of their Commiſſion, when they had ſuch Credentials as theſe to produce?

19 So then after the Lord had ſpoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and ſat on the right hand of God. 20 And they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them; and confirming the word with ſigns following. Amen.

Here's 1. Chriſt *welcomed* into the *upper World*, v. 19. *after the Lord had ſpoken* what he had to ſay to his Diſciples, he *went up into Heaven* in a Cloud; which we have a particular Account of *Acts* 1. 9. and he had not only an Admiſſion, but an abundant *Entrance* into his Kingdom there; he was *received up*, received in State with loud Acclamations of the heavenly Hoſts; and he *ſat on the Right Hand of God:* Sitting is a Poſture of *Reſt*, for now he had finiſhed his Work, and a Poſture of *Rule*, for now he took Poſſeſſion of his Kingdom; he ſate *at the Right Hand of God*, which notes the Sovereign Dignity he is advanced to, and the univerſal Agency he is intruſted with. Whatever God doth concerning us, gives to us, or accepts from us, 'tis *by his Son.* Now he is glorified with the Glory he had before the World.

2. Chriſt *welcomed* in this *lower World*; his being *believed on in the World*, and *received up into Glory* are put together, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. (1) We have here the Apoſtles working diligently for him; they *went forth and preathed every where* far and near; tho' the Doctrine they preach'd was *ſpiritual* and *heavenly*, and directly contrary to the *Spirit* and *Genius* of the World, tho' it met with Abundance of Oppoſition, and was utterly deſtitute of all ſecular Supports and Advantages, yet the Preachers of it were neither *afraid* nor *aſham'd*; they were ſo induſtrious in ſpreading the Goſpel, that within a few Years the Sound of it *went forth into the Ends of the Earth*, Rom. 10. 18. (2.) We have here God *working* effectually *with them*, to make their Labours ſucceſsful, by *confirming the Word with Signs following,* partly by the Miracles that were wrought upon the *Bodies* of People, which were Divine Seals to the Chriſtian Doctrine, and partly the Influence it had upon the *Minds* of People, through the Operation of the Spirit of God, ſee *Heb.* 2. 4. Theſe were properly *Signs following* the Word, the Reformation of the World, the Deſtruction of Idolatry, the Converſion of Sinners, the Comfort of Saints; and theſe Signs ſtill follow it, and that they may do ſo more and more, for the Honour of Chriſt and the Good of Mankind, the Evangeliſt prays and teaches us to ſay *Amen.* Father in Heaven, thus let thy Name be hallowed, and let thy Kingdom come.

AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
Goſpel according to St. *LVKE.*
WITH
PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are now entring into the Labours of another Evangeliſt; *his Name* Luke; *which ſome take to be a Contraction of* Lucilius; *born at* Antioch, *ſo St.* Jerom: *Some think the only one of all the Penmen of the Scripture that was not of the Seed of* Iſrael: *He was a Jewiſh Proſelyte, and as ſome Conjecture, converted to Chriſtianity by the Miniſtry of St.* Paul *at* Antioch; *and after his coming into* Macedonia, Acts 16. 10. *he was his conſtant Companion. He had employ'd himſelf in the Study and Practice of Phyſick, hence* Paul *calls him* Luke *the* beloved Phyſician, Col. 4. 14. *And ſome of the pretended Ancients tell you he was a Painter, and drew a Picture of the Virgin* Mary. *But Doctor* Whitby *thinks there is nothing certain to the contrary*; *and that therefore 'tis probable he was one of the ſeventy Diſciples, and a follower of Chriſt when he was here upon Earth*; *and if ſo, he was a Native* Iſraelite: *And I ſee not what can be objected againſt this, except ſome uncertain Traditions of the Ancients, which we can build nothing upon*; *and againſt which may be oppos'd the Teſtimonies of* Origen *and* Epiphanus, *who both ſay, That he was one of the ſeventy Diſciples. He is ſuppos'd to have written this Goſpel when he was Aſſociate with St.* Paul *in his Travels, and by Direction from him: And ſome think this is the* Brother *whom* Paul *ſpeaks of,* 2 Cor. 8. 18. Whoſe Praiſe is in the Goſpel, throughout all the Churches of Chriſt; *as if the meaning of it were, That he was celebrated* in all the Churches *for writing* this Goſpel; *and that St.* Paul *means this, when he ſpeaks ſometimes of* his *Goſpel, as* Rom. 2. 16. *But there's no ground at all for that. Dr.* Cave *obſerves, that his way and manner of Writing is accurate and exact, his Stile polite and elegant, ſublime and lofty, yet perſpicuous*; *and that he expreſſeth himſelf in a vein of purer Greek than is to be found in the other Writers of the Holy Story: Thus he relates divers Things more copiouſly than the other Evangeliſts*; *and thus he eſpecially treats of thoſe Things which relate to the Prieſtly Office of Chriſt. 'Tis uncertain when, or about what time this Goſpel was written: Some think it was written in* Achaia *during his Travels with* Paul, *ſeventeen Years, twenty two Years ſay others, after Chriſt's Aſcenſion*; *others, That it was written at* Rome, *a little before he wrote his Hiſtory of the* Acts of the Apoſtles, *(which is a Continuation of this) when he was there with* Paul, *while he was a Priſoner, and preaching in* his own hir'd Houſe, *with which the Hiſtory of the* Acts *concludes*; *and then* Paul *ſaith,* only Luke was with him, 2 Tim. 4. 11. *When he was under that voluntary Confinement with* Paul, *he had leiſure to compile theſe two Hiſtories: And many excellent Writings the Church has been indebted to a Priſon for: If ſo, 'twas written about twenty ſeven Years after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, and about the fourth Year of* Nero. Jerom *ſaith he dy'd when he was Eighty four Years of Age, and was never marry'd. Some write, That he ſuffer'd Martyrdom*; *but if he did, where and when is uncertain. Nor indeed is there much more Credit to be given to the Chriſtian Traditions concerning the Writers of the New Teſtament, than to the Jewiſh Traditions concerning thoſe of the Old Teſtament.*

CHAP. I.

The Narrative which this Evangeliſt gives us, (or rather God by him) of the Life of Chriſt, begins earlier than either Matthew *or* Mark; *we have reaſon to thank God for them all, as we have for all the Gifts and Graces of Chriſt's Miniſters, which in one, make up what is wanting in the other, while all put together make a Harmony. In this Chapter we have* (1.) Luke's *Preface to his Goſpel, or his Epiſtle Dedicatory to his Friend* Theophilus, *v.* 1,—4. (2.) *The Propheſie and Hiſtory of the Conception of* John Baptiſt, *who was Chriſt's Forerunner,* v. 5,—25. (3.) *The Annunciation of the Virgin* Mary, *or the Notice given to her, that ſhe ſhould be the Mother of the* Meſſiah, *v.* 26,—38. (4.) *The Interview between* Mary *the Mother of* Jeſus, *and* Eliſabeth *the Mother of* John, *when they were both with Child of thoſe pregnant Births, and the Propheſies they both utter'd upon that Occaſion,* v. 39,—56. (5.) *The Birth and Circumciſion of* John Baptiſt, *ſix Months before the Birth of Chriſt,* v. 57,—66. (6.) Zacharias's *Song of Praiſe, in thankfulneſs for the Birth of* John, *and in proſpect of the Birth of* Jeſus, *v.* 67,—69. (7.) *A ſhort Account of* John Baptiſt's *Infancy,* v. 80. *And theſe do more than give us an entertaining Narrative*; *they will lead us into the underſtanding of the Myſtery of Godlineſs,* God manifeſt in the Fleſh.

FOraſmuch as many have taken in hand to ſet forth in order a declaration of thoſe things which are moſt ſurely believed amongſt us. 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witneſſes, and miniſters of the word: 3 It ſeemed good to me alſo, having had perfect underſtanding of things from the very firſt, to write to thee in order, moſt excellent Theophilus. 4 That thou mighteſt know the certainty of thoſe things wherein thou haſt been inſtructed.

Complemental Prefaces and Dedications, the Language of Flattery, and the Food and Fuel of Pride, are juſtly condemn'd by the Wiſe and Good; but it doth not therefore follow, that ſuch as are Uſeful and Inſtructive are to be run down; ſuch is this here, in which St. *Luke* dedicates his Goſpel to his Friend *Theophilus*, not as to his *Patron*, tho' he was a Man of Honour to protect it, but as to his *Pupil* to learn it, and hold it faſt. 'Tis not certain who this *Theophilus* was; the Name ſignifies a *Friend of God*, and ſome think it doth not mean any particular Perſon, but every one that is a *Lover of God*; and Dr. *Hammond* quotes ſome of the Ancients underſtanding it ſo: And then it teaches us, That thoſe who are truly Lovers of God, will heartily welcome the Goſpel of Chriſt, the Deſign and Tendency of which is to bring us to God. But it is rather to be underſtood of ſome particular Perſon, probably a Magiſtrate; becauſe *Luke* gives him here the ſame Title of Reſpect which St. *Paul* gave to *Feſtus* the Governour, κρατίϛε, *Acts* 26. 25. which we there tranſlate *moſt Noble Feſtus*, and here *moſt Excellent Theophilus*. *Note*, Religion doth not deſtroy Civility and good Manners, but teaches us, according to the Uſages of our Country, to *give Honour to them to whom Honour is due*.

Now obſerve here,

1. Why St. *Luke* wrote his Goſpel; 'tis certain, he was moved by the Holy Ghoſt, not only *to* the Writing, but *in* the Writing of it; but in both he was moved as a reaſonable Creature, and not as a meer Machine; and he was made to conſider,

(1.) That the Things he wrote of, were Things that were *moſt ſurely believed among all Chriſtians*, and therefore Things which they ought to be inſtructed in, that they may know what they believe; and Things which ought to be tranſmitted to Poſterity, who are as much concerned in them as we are; and in order to that, to be committed to Writing, which is the ſureſt way of Conveyance to the Ages to come. He will not write about Things of *doubtful Diſputations*: Things about which Chriſtians may ſafely differ from one another, and heſitate within themſelves; but the Things which are and ought to be moſt *ſurely believed*, πράγματα πεπληροφορημένα; the Things which *were perform'd*, ſo ſome, which Chriſt and his Apoſtles did, and did with ſuch Circumſtance, as gave a full Aſſurance that they were really done; ſo that they have gain'd an eſtabliſh'd laſting Credit. *Note*, Tho' it is not the Foundation of our Faith, yet it is a Support to it, that the Articles of our Creed are Things that have been long *moſt ſurely believed*. The Doctrine of Chriſt is what Thouſands of the wiſeſt and beſt of Men have *ventur'd their Souls upon*, with the greateſt Aſſurance and Satiſfaction.

(2.) That 'twas requiſite there ſhould be a *Declaration made in order* of thoſe Things; That the Hiſtory of the Life of Chriſt ſhould be *Methodiz'd*, and committed to Writing, for the greater Certainty of the Conveyance. When Things are *put in Order*, we know the better where to *find them*, for *our own* Uſe, and how to *keep* them for the Benefit of *others*.

(3.) That there were *many who had undertaken* to *publiſh* Narratives of the *Life of Chriſt*; many well-meaning People that *deſign'd* well, and *did* well, and what they publiſh'd had *done good*, tho' not none by Divine Inſpiration, nor ſo well done as might be, nor intended for Perpetuity. *Note*, 1. The Labours of others in the Goſpel of Chriſt, if Faithful and Honeſt, we ought to *commend* and *encourage*, and not to *deſpiſe*, tho' chargeable with many Deficiencies. (2.) Others Services to Chriſt muſt not be reckon'd to ſuperſede ours, but rather to quicken them.

(4.) That the Truth of the Things he had to Write, was *confirm'd* by the *concurring Teſtimony* of thoſe that were competent and unexceptionable Witneſſes of them; what had been publiſh'd in Writing already, and what he was now about to publiſh, agreed with that which had been deliver'd by Word of Mouth, over and over, by thoſe who from the beginning were *Eye-witneſſes and Miniſters of the Word*, v. 2. *Note*, (1.) The Apoſtles were *Miniſters of the Word* of Chriſt, who is *the Word*, ſo ſome underſtand it, or of the Doctrine of Chriſt, they having received it themſelves, miniſtred it to others, 1 *John* 1. 1. They had not a Goſpel to make as Maſters, but a Goſpel to preach as Miniſters. (2.) The *Miniſters of the Word* were *Eye-Witneſſes* of the Things which they preach'd, and which is alſo included *Ear-Witneſſes*; They did themſelves *hear* the Doctrine of Chriſt, and *ſee* his Miracles, and had them not by Report, at ſecond hand; and therefore could not but ſpeak with the greateſt Aſſurance the Things they had *ſeen and heard*, Acts 4. 20. (3.) They were ſo *from the beginning* of Chriſt's Miniſtry, *v.* 2. He had his Diſciples with him when he wrought his *firſt Miracle*, *John* 2. 11. They *companied with him all the Time that he went in and out among them*, Acts 1. 21. So that they not only heard, and ſaw all that which was ſufficient to confirm their Faith, but if there had been any Thing to ſhock it, they had an Opportunity to diſcover it. (4.) The *written* Goſpel which we have to *this Day*, exactly agrees with the Goſpel that was *preach'd* in the *firſt Days* of the Church. (5.) That he himſelf had a *perfect Underſtanding* of the *Things* he wrote of *from the firſt*, v. 3. Some think here is a tacit Reflection upon thoſe that had written before him, that they had not a *perfect Underſtanding* of what they wrote, and therefore here am I, ſend me; (—*facit indignatio verſum*) or rather without reflecting on them, he aſſerts his own Ability for this Undertaking; it ſeemed good to me, having attain'd to the exact Knowledge of all Things, ἄνωθεν, *from above*, ſo I think it ſhould be rendred; for if he meant the ſame with *from the beginning*, v. 2. as our Tranſlation intimates, he would have uſed the ſame Word. (1.) He had diligently *ſearch'd* into theſe Things, had *follow'd* after them; ſo the Word is, as the Old Teſtament Prophets are ſaid to have *enquir'd* and *ſearch'd diligently*, 1 Pet. 1. 10. He had not taken Things ſo eaſily and ſuperficially, as others who had written before him, but made it his Buſineſs to inform himſelf concerning Particulars. (2.) He had receiv'd his Intelligence not only by Tradition, as others had done, but by Revelation, confirming that Tradition, and ſecuring him from any Error or Miſtake in the recording of it. He ſought it *from above*, ſo the Word intimates, and from thence he had it; thus, like *Elihu*, he *fetch'd his Knowledge* from afar. He wrote his Hiſtory, as *Moſes* wrote his, of Things *reported* by Tradition, but *ratified* by Inſpiration. (3.) He could therefore ſay, That he had a *perfect Underſtanding* of theſe Things: He knew them ἀκριβῶς, accurately, exactly. Now having received this *from above*, it ſeemed good to me to communicate it, for ſuch a Talent as this ought not to be bury'd.

2. Obſerve why he ſent it to *Theophilus*: I wrote unto thee theſe Things *in order*, not that thou may'ſt give Reputation to the Work, but thou may'ſt be edified by it; *v.* 4. *That thou mighteſt know the certainty of thoſe Things wherein thou haſt been inſtructed*. (1.) It is imply'd, that he had been *inſtructed* in theſe Things either before his Baptiſm, or ſince, or both, according to the Rule, *Matt.* 28. 19, 20. Probably *Luke* had baptized him, and knew how well inſtructed he was; περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης, *concerning which thou haſt been Catechiz'd*, ſo the Word is; the moſt knowing Chriſtians began with being Catechiz'd. *Theophilus* was a Perſon of Quality, perhaps of Noble Birth, and ſo much the more Pains ſhould be taken with ſuch, when they are young, to teach them the Principles of the Oracles of God, that they may be fortified againſt the Temptations, and furniſh'd for the Opportunities of a high Condition in the World. (2.) It was intended that he ſhould *know the certainty of thoſe Things*, ſhould underſtand them more clearly, and believe them more firmly. There is a *certainty* in the Goſpel of Chriſt, there is that in them which we may build upon: And thoſe who have been well inſtructed in the Things of God when they were Young, ſhould afterwards give Diligence to *know the Certainty* of thoſe Things; to know not only what we believe, but why we believe it, that we may be able to give a *Reaſon of the Hope that is in us*.

5 ¶ THere was in the days of Herod the King of Judea, a certain Prieſt named Zacharias, of the courſe of Abia, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Eliſabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameleſs. 7 And they had no child, becauſe that Eliſabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well ſtricken in years. 8 And it came to paſs, that while he executed the prieſts office before God in the order of his courſe, 9 According to the cuſtom of the prieſts office, his lot was to burn incenſe when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10 And the whole multitude of the People were praying without, at the time of incenſe. 11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, ſtanding on the right ſide of the altar of incenſe. 12 And when Zacharias ſaw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel ſaid unto him, Fear not Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Eliſabeth ſhall bear thee a ſon, and thou ſhalt call his name John. 14 And thou ſhalt have joy and gladneſs, and many ſhall rejoyce at his birth. 15 For he ſhall be great in the ſight of the Lord, and ſhall drink neither wine nor ſtrong drink; and he ſhall be filled with the holy Ghoſt, even from his mothers womb. 16 And many of the children of Iſrael ſhall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he ſhall go before him in the ſpirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. 18 And Zacharias ſaid unto the angel, Whereby ſhall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well ſtricken in years. 19 And the angel anſwering, ſaid unto him, I am Gabriel, that ſtand in the preſence of God: and am ſent to ſpeak unto thee, and to ſhew thee theſe glad tidings. 20 And behold, thou ſhalt be dumb, and not able to ſpeak, until the day that theſe things ſhall be performed, becauſe thou believeſt not my words, which ſhall be fulfilled in their ſeaſon. 21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried ſo long in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he could not ſpeak unto them: and they perceived that he had ſeen a viſion in the temple: for he beckened unto them, and remained ſpeechleſs. 23 And it

came to paſs, that aſſoon as the days of his miniſtration were accompliſhed, he departed to his own houſe. 24 And after thoſe days his wiſe Eliſabeth conceiv'd, and hid her ſelf five months, ſaying, 25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

The two preceeding Evangeliſts had agreed to begin the Goſpel with the Baptiſm of *John*, and his Miniſtry; which commenc'd about Six Months before our Saviour's Publick Miniſtry, (and now Things were near a Criſis, Six Months was *a deal* of time, which before was but *a little*) and therefore this Evangeliſt deſigning to give a more particular Account than had been given of our Saviour's Conception and Birth, determines to do ſo of *John Baptiſt*; for in both he was his Harbinger and Fore-runner, the Morning-Star to the Sun of Righteouſneſs; not only becauſe it is commonly reckon'd a Satisfaction, and an Entertainment, to know ſomething of the Original Extraction, and early Days of thoſe who afterwards prove great Men, but becauſe in the beginning of theſe, there were many Things Miraculous, and preſages of what they afterwards prov'd; in theſe Verſes our inſpir'd Hiſtorian begins as early as the Conception of *John Baptiſt*.

Now obſerve here,

Firſt, The Account given of *his Parents*, v. 5. They liv'd *in the Days of Herod the King*, who was a Foreigner, and a Deputy for the *Romans*, who had lately made *Judæa* a Province of the Empire: This is taken Notice of, to ſhow that the Scepter was quite departed from *Judah*, and therefore now was the Time for *Shiloh* to come, according to *Jacob*'s Propheſie, *Gen*. 49. 10. The Family of *David* was now ſunk, when it was to riſe and flouriſh again in the Meſſiah. *Note*, None ought to deſpair of the reviving and flouriſhing of Religion, even then when Civil Liberties are loſt: *Iſrael* is enſlav'd, yet then comes the Glory of *Iſrael*.

Now the Father of *John Baptiſt* was a Prieſt, a Son of *Aaron*, his Name *Zacharias*. No Families in the World were ever ſo honour'd of God, as thoſe of *Aaron* and *David*; with one was made the Covenant of Prieſthood, with the other that of Royalty; they had both forfeited their Honour, yet the Goſpel again puts Honour upon both in their latter Days, on that of *Aaron* in *John Baptiſt*, on that of *David* in *Chriſt*, and then they were both extinguiſh'd and loſt. Chriſt was of *David*'s Houſe, his Fore-runner of *Aaron*'s, for his Prieſtly Agency and Influence opened the way to his Kingly Authority and Dignity. This *Zacharias* was *of the Courſe of* Abia; when in *David's* time the Family of *Aaron* was multiply'd, he divided them into Twenty four Courſes, for the more regular Performance of their Office, that it might never be either *neglected* for want of Hands, or *engroſs'd* by a few. The Eighth of thoſe was that of *Abia*, 1 *Chron*. 24. 10. who was deſcended from *Eleazar*, *Aaron*'s eldeſt Son: But Doctor *Lightfoot* ſuggeſts, That many of the Families of the Prieſts were loſt in the Captivity, ſo that after their return, they took in thoſe of other Families, but retaining the Names of the Heads of the reſpective Courſes. The *Wife* of this *Zacharias* was of the Daughters of *Aaron* too, and her Name *Elizabeth*, the very ſame Name with *Eliſheba* the Wife of *Aaron*, *Exod*. 6. 23. The Prieſts (*Joſephus* ſaith) were very careful to marry within their own Family, that they might maintain the Dignity of the Prieſthood, and keep it without Mixture.

Now that which is obſerv'd concerning *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* is,

1. That they were a very Religious Couple, *v*. 6. *They were both Righteous before God*; they were ſo in his ſight, whoſe Judgment we are ſure is *according to Truth*; they were ſincerely and really ſo. They are Righteous indeed that are ſo *before God*, as *Noah* in his Generation, *Geneſis* 7. 1. They *approv'd* themſelves *to him*, and he was graciouſly pleaſed to accept them. It's a happy Thing, when thoſe that are joyn'd to each other in Marriage, are both *joyn'd to the Lord*: And it is eſpecially requiſite that the Prieſts, the Lord's Miniſters, ſhould with their Yoke-fellows be *Righteous before God*, that they may be *Examples to the Flock*, and rejoyce their Hearts. *They walked in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameleſs*. (1.) Their being *Righteous before God* was evidenc'd by the Courſe and Tenor of their Converſations; they ſhew'd it not by their Talk, but by their *Works*; by the Way they walked in, and the Rule they walked by. (2.) They were *of a piece* with themſelves; for their Devotions and their Converſations agreed. They walk'd not only in the *Ordinances of the Lord*, which related to Divine Worſhip, but *in the Commandments of the Lord*, which have Reference to all the Inſtances of a good Converſation, and muſt be regarded. (3.) They were univerſal in their Obedience, not that they never did in any Thing *come ſhort* of their Duty, but it was their conſtant Care and Endeavour to *come up* to it. (4.) Herein, tho' they were not *Sinleſs*, yet they were *Blameleſs*; no Body could charge them with any open ſcandalous Sin; they liv'd *Honeſtly* and *Inoffenſively*, as Miniſters and their Families are in a ſpecial Manner concern'd to do, that the Miniſtry be not blam'd in *their* Blame.

2. That they had been long *Childleſs*, v. 7. Children are a *Heritage of the Lord*. But there are many of his Heirs in a marry'd State, that yet are deny'd this *Heritage*; they are valuable, deſervable Bleſſings; yet many there are who are *Righteous before God*, and if they had Children, would bring them up in his Fear, that yet are not thus Bleſſed, while the *Men of this World are full of Children*, Phil. 17. 14. *And ſent forth their little Ones like a Flock*, John 21. 11. *Elizabeth* was *barren*, and they began to deſpair of ever having Children, for they were both now *well ſtricken in Years*, when the Women that have been moſt Fruitful *leave off bearing*. Many Eminent Perſons were born of Mothers that had been long Childleſs, as *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Joſeph*, *Samſon*, *Samuel*, and ſo here *John Baptiſt*, to make their Birth the more Remarkable, and the Bleſſing of it the more Valuable to their Parents; and to ſhew that when God keeps his People long waiting for a Mercy, he ſometimes is pleaſed to recompence them for their Patience, by *doubling* the Worth of it when it comes.

Secondly, The appearing of an Angel to his Father *Zacharias*, as he was Miniſtring in the Temple, *v*. 8, 11. *Zacharias* the Prophet was the laſt of the Old Teſtament that was converſant with Angels, and *Zacharias* the Prieſt, the firſt in the New Teſtament.

Obſerve,

1. How *Zacharias* was employ'd in the Service of God, *v*. 8. He *executed the Prieſts Office before God in Order of his Courſe*; it was his *Week of waiting*, and he was *upon Duty*. Tho' his Family was not built up, or made to grow, yet he made Conſcience of doing the Work of his own Place and Day. Tho' we have not *deſired* Mercies, yet we muſt keep cloſe to *enjoyned* Services; and in our diligent and conſtant Attendance on them, we may hope that Mercy and Comfort will come at laſt. Now it fell to *Zacharias*'s Lot to burn incenſe Morning and Evening, for that Week of his waiting, as other Services fell to other Prieſts *by lot* likewiſe. The Services were directed by Lot, that ſome might not decline them, and others engroſs them; and that the *diſpoſal of the Lot* being *from the Lord*, they might have the Satisfaction of a Divine Call to the Work. This was not the High Prieſt's burning Incenſe on the Day of Attonement, as ſome have fondly imagin'd, and thought by that to find out the Time of our Saviour's Birth; but it is plain, 'twas the burning of the daily Incenſe at the *Altar of Incenſe*, v. 11. which was *in the Temple*, v. 9. not in the moſt Holy Place, into which the High Prieſt enter'd. The *Jews* ſay, That one and the ſame Prieſt burn'd not Incenſe twice in all his Days, there were ſuch a Multitude of them; at leaſt, never more than one Week: It is very probable that this was *upon the Sabbath Day*, becauſe there was a *Multitude of People* attending, *v*. 10. which ordinarily was not on a Week Day; and thus God uſually puts Honour upon *his own Day*. And then if Doctor *Lightfoot* reckon, with the help of the *Jewiſh* Calendars, that this Courſe of *Abia* fell on the Seventeenth Day of the Third Month, the Month *Sivan*, anſwering to part of *May* and part of *June*; it is worth obſerving, That the Portions of the Law and the Prophets, which were read this Day in the Synagogues, were very agreeable to that which was doing in the Temple; namely the Law of the *Nazarites*, *Numb*. 6. and the Conception of *Samſon*, *Judges* 13.

While *Zacharias* was burning Incenſe in the Temple, *the whole Multitude of the People were praying without*, v. 10. Dr. *Lightfoot* ſaith, there were conſtantly in the Temple, at the Hour of Prayer, the Prieſts of that Courſe that then ſerv'd, and if it were the *Sabbath Day*, thoſe of that Courſe alſo, that had been in waiting the Week before; and the Levites that ſerv'd under the Prieſts, and the *Men of the Station*, as the Rabbins call them, who were the Repreſentatives of the People in putting their Hands upon the Head of the Sacrifices, and many beſides, who, mov'd by Devotion, left their Employments for that Time, to be preſent at the Service of God; and thoſe would make up *a great Multitude*, eſpecially on Sabbaths and Feaſt-Days: Now theſe all addreſs'd themſelves to their Devotions (in Mental Prayer, for their Voice was not heard) when by the Tinkling of a Bell they had Notice that the Prieſt was gone in to burn Incenſe. Now obſerve here, (1.) That the true *Iſrael* of God, always were a *praying* People; and Prayer is the Great and Principal Piece of Service, by which we give Honour to God, and fetch in Favours from him, and keep up our Communion with him. (2.) That then when Ritual and Ceremonial Appointments were in full Force, as this of *burning Incenſe*, yet moral and ſpiritual Duties were requir'd to go along with them, and were principally look'd at. *David* knew that when he was at a Diſtance from the Altar, his Prayer might be heard *without Incenſe*, for it might be directed before God *as Incenſe*, Pſalm 141. 2. But when he was *compaſſing the Altar*, the Incenſe could not be accepted *without Prayer*, no more than the Shell without the Kernel. (3.) That it is not enough for us to be where God is worſhipped, if our Hearts do not joyn in the Worſhip, and go along with the Miniſter in all the Parts of it. If he burn the Incenſe never ſo well, in the moſt penitent, judicious, lively Prayer, if we be not at the ſame Time *praying* in Concurrence with him, what will it avail us? (2.) All the Prayers we offer up to God here, in his Courts, are acceptable and ſucceſsful only in the Virtue of the Incenſe of Chriſt's Interceſſion, in the Temple of God above. To this Uſage in the Temple-Service, there ſeems to be an Alluſion, *Rev.* 8. 1, 3, 4. where we find that *there was Silence in Heaven*, as there was in the Temple, *for half an hour*, while the People were *ſilently* lifting up their Hearts to God in Prayer; and that there was an *Angel*, the Angel of the Covenant, who offer'd up *much Incenſe, with the Prayers of all Saints, before the Throne.* We cannot expect an Intereſt in Chriſt's Interceſſion, if we do not *pray*, and pray *with our Spirits*, and continue inſtant in Prayer. Nor can we expect that the beſt of our Prayers ſhould gain Acceptance, and bring in an Anſwer of Peace, but through the Mediation of Chriſt, who *ever lives making Interceſſion.*

2. How, when he was thus employ'd, he was *honour'd* with a Meſſenger, a ſpecial Meſſenger ſent from Heaven to him, *v.* 11. *There appear'd unto him an Angel of the Lord.* Some obſerve, That we never read of an Angel appearing in the Temple with a Meſſage from God, but only this one to *Zacharias*; becauſe *there* God had other Ways of making known his Mind, as the *Urim* and *Thummim*, and by a ſtill ſmall Voice from between the Cherubims; but the Ark and the Oracle were wanting in the ſecond Temple, and therefore when an Expreſs is to be ſent to a Prieſt in the Temple, an Angel was to be employ'd in it, and thereby the Goſpel was to be introduc'd, for *that*, as the *Law*, was given at firſt very much by *the Miniſtry of Angels*, the Appearance of which we often read of in the Goſpel and the *Acts*, tho' the Deſign both of the Law and of the Goſpel, when brought to Perfection, was, to ſettle another Way of Correſpondence, more ſpiritual, between God and Man. This Angel ſtood *on the right Side of the Altar of Incenſe*, the North-ſide of it, ſaith Doctor *Lightfoot*, on *Zacharias*'s right Hand; compare this with *Zech.* 3. 1. where *Satan* ſtands at the *right Hand* of *Joſhua* the Prieſt, to *reſiſt him*; but *Zacharias* has a good Angel ſtanding *at his right Hand* to encourage him. Some think this Angel appear'd, coming *out of the moſt Holy Place*, which led him to ſtand at the right Side of the Altar.

3. What Impreſſion this made upon *Zacharias*, v. 12. *When Zacharias ſaw him*, 'twas a Surprize upon him, even to a Degree of Terror, for he was *troubled*, and *Fear fell upon him*, v. 12. Tho' he was *righteous before God*, and *blameleſs* in his Converſation, yet he could not be without ſome frightful Apprehenſions at the Sight of one, whoſe Viſage and ſurrounding Luſtre ſpoke him more than *Humane.* Ever ſince Man ſinn'd, his Mind has been unable to bear the Glory of ſuch Revelations, and his Conſcience afraid of evil Tydings brought by them; even *Daniel* himſelf could not bear it, *Dan.* 10. 8. And for this Reaſon God chuſeth to ſpeak to us by Men like our ſelves, whoſe *Terror ſhall not make us afraid.*

Thirdly, The Meſſage which the Angel had to deliver to him, *v.* 13. He began his Meſſage as Angels generally did, with, *Fear not*. Perhaps it had never been *Zacharias*'s Lot to *burn Incenſe* before, and being a very ſerious, conſcientious Man, we may ſuppoſe him full of Care to do it *well*, and perhaps when he ſaw the Angel, was afraid leaſt he came to rebuke him for ſome Miſtake or Miſcarriage; no, ſaith the Angel, *Fear not*, I have no ill Tydings to bring thee from Heaven. *Fear not*, but compoſe thy ſelf, that thou may'ſt with a ſedate and even Spirit receive the Meſſage I have to deliver to thee.

Let us ſee what that is,

1. The *Prayers* he has often made, ſhall now receive an *Anſwer of Peace. Fear not Zacharias, for thy Prayer is heard.* (1.) If he means his particular Prayer *for a Son*, to build up his Family, it muſt be the Prayers he has formerly made for that Mercy, when he was likely to have Children, but we may ſuppoſe, now he and his Wife were both *well ſtricken in Years*, as they had done expecting it, ſo they had done praying for it: Like *Moſes*, it *ſufficeth them*, and they *ſpeak no more to God of that Matter*, Deut. 3. 26. But God will now, in giving this Mercy, look a great Way back, to the Prayers that he had made long ſince, for and with his Wife, as *Iſaac* for and with his, *Geneſ.* 25. 21. *Note*, Prayers of Faith are *filed* in Heaven, and are not *forgotten*, tho' the Thing pray'd for is not preſently *given* in. Prayers made when we were young and coming into the World, may be anſwer'd when we are old and going out of the World. But (2.) If he means the Prayers he was *now making*, and offering up with his Incenſe, we may ſuppoſe thoſe were, according to the Duty of his Place, for the Iſrael of God, and their Welfare, and the Performance of the Promiſes made to them concerning the Meſſiah, and the coming of his Kingdom; this *Prayer* of thine is now *heard*; for thy Wife ſhall now ſhortly conceive him that is to be the *Meſſiah*'s Forerunner. Some of the Jewiſh Writers themſelves ſay, That the Prieſt, when he burnt Incenſe, pray'd for the *Salvation of the whole World*, and now that Prayer ſhall be heard. Or (3.) In general, The Prayers thou now makeſt, and all thy Prayers, are accepted of God, and *come up for a Memorial* before him, as the Angel ſaid to *Cornelius*, when he viſited him at Prayer, *Acts* 10. 30, 31. And this ſhall be the Sign that thou art accepted of God, *Elizabeth* ſhall *bear thee a Son. Note*, It is very comfortable to praying People, to know that their *Prayers* are *heard*; and thoſe Mercies are *doubly ſweet* that are given in anſwer to Prayer.

2. He ſhall have a *Son* in his old Age, by *Elizabeth* his Wife, who had been long barren, that by this Birth, which was *next Door* to miraculous, People might be prepar'd to receive and believe a *Virgin*'s bringing forth a Son, which was *perfectly* miraculous. He is directed what Name to give his Son, *Call him John*; in Hebrew *Johanan*, a Name we often meet with in the Old Teſtament: It ſignifies *Gracious*. The Prieſts muſt *beſeech God that he will be Gracious*, Mal. 1. 9. and muſt ſo *bleſs the People*, Numb. 6. 25. *Zacharias* was now praying thus, and the Angel tells him his Prayer is heard, and he ſhall have a Son, whom, in Token of an Anſwer to his Prayer, he ſhall call *Gracious*; or, *the Lord will be Gracious*, Iſa. 30. 18, 29.

3. This Son ſhall be the Joy of his Family, and of all his Relations, *v.* 14. he ſhall be another *Iſaac*, thy Laughter; and ſome think that is partly intended in his Name, *John*; he ſhall be a *welcome Child. Thou* for thy Part *ſhalt have Joy and Gladneſs. Note*, Mercies that have been long *waited for*, when they *come at laſt* are the more acceptable. He ſhall be ſuch a Son as thou ſhalt have Reaſon to rejoyce in; many Parents, if they could foreſee what their Children will prove, inſtead of *rejoycing* at their Birth, would wiſh they had *never been*; but I'll tell thee what thy Son will be; and then thou wilt not need to *rejoyce with Trembling* at his Birth, as the beſt muſt do, but may'ſt rejoyce with Triumph at it. Nay, and *many ſhall rejoyce at his Birth*; all the Relations of the Family will rejoyce in it, and all its Well-wiſhers, becauſe 'tis for the Honour and Comfort of the Family, *v.* 58. All good People will rejoyce, that ſuch a religious Couple as *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth* have a Son, becauſe they will give him a good Education, ſuch as it may be hoped will make him a publick Bleſſing to his Generation. Yea, and perhaps many ſhall rejoyce by an *unaccountable Inſtinct*, as a Preſage of the joyous Days the Goſpel will introduce.

4. This Son ſhall be a mighty *Favourite of Heaven*, and a mighty *Bleſſing to the Earth.* The Honour of having *a Son* is nothing to the Honour of having *ſuch a Son.*

1. He ſhall be *great in the Sight of the Lord*; and thoſe are great indeed that are ſo in God's Sight, not thoſe that are ſo in the Eye of a vain and carnal World. God will *ſet him before his Face* continually, will employ him in his Work, and ſend him on his Errands, and that ſhall make him truly *great* and honourable. He ſhall be a *Prophet*, yea, *more than a Prophet*, and upon that Account, as great as any that ever were *born of Women*, Matt. 11. 11. He ſhall live very much *retir'd* from the World, out of Mens Sight; and when he makes a publick Appearance, it will be very *mean*, but he ſhall be *much*, he ſhall be *great in the Sight of the Lord.*

2. He ſhall be a *Nazarite*, ſet apart to God from every thing that is *polluting*; and in Token of that, according to the Law of *Nazariteſhip*, he *ſhall drink neither Wine nor ſtrong Drink*, or rather, neither *old Wine* nor *new*; for moſt think the Word here tranſlated *ſtrong Drink*, ſignifies ſome ſort of Wine; perhaps thoſe that we call *made Wines*, or any thing that is *intoxicating*. He ſhall be as *Sampſon* was by the Divine Precept, *Judg.* 13. 7. and *Samuel* by his Mother's Vow, 1 *Sam.* 1. 11. a *Nazarite* for Life. 'Tis ſpoken of, as a great Inſtance of God's Favour to his People, that he *raiſed up* of *their Sons for Prophets*, and their *young Men for Nazarites*, Amos 2. 11. as if thoſe that were deſign'd for Prophets were train'd up under the Diſcipline of the *Nazarites*; *Samuel* and *John Baptiſt* were; which intimates that thoſe that would be *eminent* Servants of God, and employ'd in *eminent* Services, muſt learn to live a Life of Self-Denial and Mortification, muſt be dead to the Pleaſures of Senſe, and keep their Minds from every thing that is darkning and diſturbing to them.

3. He ſhall be abundantly fitted and qualified for thoſe great and eminent Services, to which in due Time he ſhall be called, *He ſhall be filled with the Holy Ghoſt, even from his Mothers Womb*, and as ſoon as it is poſſible, he ſhall appear to have been ſo. Obſerve (1.) Thoſe that would be filled with the Holy Ghoſt, muſt be ſober and temperate, and very moderate in the Uſe of Wine and ſtrong Drink; for *that*'s it that fits him for *this*: *Be not drunk with Wine*, but *be filled with the Spirit*, with which that is not conſiſtent, *Eph.* 5. 18. (2.) It is poſſible that Infants may be wrought upon by the *Holy Ghoſt*, even from their *Mother's Womb*, for *John Baptiſt* even then was *fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt*, who took Poſſeſſion of his Heart betimes; and an early Specimen was given of it, when he *leaped in his Mother's Womb for Joy*, at the Approach of the Saviour; and afterwards it appeared very early that he was *ſanctified.* God has promis'd to *pour out his Spirit* upon the *Seed* of Believers, *Iſa.* 44. 3. and their firſt *ſpringing up*, in a Dedication of themſelves betimes to God, is the Fruit of it, *v.* 4, 5. Who then can forbid Water that they ſhould not be baptiz'd, who, for ought we know (and we can ſay no more of the Adult, witneſs *Simon Magus*) have received the Holy Ghoſt as well as we, and have the *Seeds of Grace* ſown in their Hearts, *Acts* 10. 47.

3. He ſhall be Inſtrumental for the Converſion of many Souls to God, and the preparing of them to receive and entertain the Goſpel of Chriſt, *v.* 16, 17.

1. He ſhall be ſent to the *Children of Iſrael*, to the Nation of the *Jews*, to whom the *Meſſiah* alſo was *firſt* ſent, and not

to the Gentiles; to the *whole* Nation, and not to the Family of *the Prieſts only*, with which, tho' he was himſelf of that Family, we do not find he had any particular Intimacy, nor Influence upon them.

2. He ſhall go before *the Lord their God*, i. e. before the *Meſſiah*, whom they muſt expect to be not *their King*, in the Senſe wherein they commonly take it, a *Temporal Prince* to their Nation, but *their Lord* and *their God*, to rule and defend, and ſerve them in a *Spiritual* Way, by his Influence on their Hearts. *Thomas* knew this when he ſaid to Chriſt, *my Lord*, and *my God*, better than *Nathaniel* did, when he ſaid, Rabbi, *Thou art the King of Iſrael*. *John* ſhall *go before him*, a little before him, to give Notice of his Approach, and to prepare People to receive him.

3. He ſhall go *in the Spirit and Power of Elias*. That is, (1.) He ſhall be ſuch a Man as *Elias* was, and do ſuch Work as *Elias* did; ſhall like him, wear a Hairy Garment, and a Leathern Girdle, and live retir'd from the World; ſhall like him Preach the Neceſſity of Repentance and Reformation to a very Corrupt and Degenerate Age; ſhall like him be Bold and Zealous in reproving Sin, and witneſſing againſt it even in the greateſt; and be hated and perſecuted for it, by a *Herod* and his *Herodias*, as *Elijah* was by an *Ahab*, and his *Jezebel*. He ſhall be carried on in his Works as *Elijah* was, by a Divine *Spirit* and Power, which ſhall Crown his Miniſtry with wonderful Succeſs. As *Elias* went *before* the *writing* Prophets of the Old Teſtament, and did as it were *uſher* in that *ſignal* Period of the Old Teſtament Diſpenſation by a little *Writing* of his own, 2 *Chron*. 21. 12. So *John Baptiſt* went before Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and introduc'd the Goſpel Diſpenſation, by preaching the Subſtance of the Goſpel Doctrine and Duty, *Repent, with an Eye to the Kingdom of Heaven*. (2.) He ſhall be that very Perſon who was propheſied of by *Malachi*, under the Name of *Elijah*, Mal. 4. 5. who ſhould be ſent *before the coming of the Day of the Lord*. Behold! I *ſend you a Prophet, even Elias*, not *Elias* the *Tiſhbite*, as the *Setpuagint* have corruptly read it, to favour the *Jews* Traditions, but a Prophet *in the Spirit and Power of Elias*, as the Angel here expounds it.

4. He ſhall *turn many of the* Children *of Iſrael to the Lord their God*, i. e. ſhall incline their Hearts to receive the Meſſiah, and bid him Welcome, by awakening them to a Senſe of Sin, and a Deſire of Righteouſneſs. Whatever has a Tendency to *turn us from Iniquity*, as *John*'s Preaching and Baptiſm had, will turn us to Chriſt as *our Lord and our God*: For thoſe who through Grace are wrought upon to ſhake off the Yoke of Sin, that is, the Dominion of the World and the Fleſh, will ſoon be perſuaded to take upon them the Yoke of the *Lord Jeſus*.

5. Hereby he ſhall *turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children*, i. e. of the Jews to the Gentiles; ſhall help to Conquer the rooted Prejudices which the Jews have againſt the Gentiles, which was done by the Goſpel, as far as it prevail'd: and was began to be done by *John Baptiſt*, who came *for a Witneſs that all through him might believe*, who baptiz'd and taught *Roman* Soldiers, as well as *Jewiſh* Phariſees, and who cur'd the Pride and Confidence of thoſe Jews who gloried in their having *Abraham* to their Father; and told them, That God would *out of Stones raiſe up Children unto Abraham*, Matt. 3. 9. which would tend to *cure* their Enmity to the Gentiles. Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves, that it is the conſtant Uſage of the Prophets to ſpeak of the Church of the *Gentiles*, as Children to the Jewiſh Church, *Iſa*. 54. 5, 6. 13.—60. 4. 9.—62. 5.—66. 12. When the Jews that embrac'd the Faith of Chriſt were brought to joyn in Communion with the Gentiles, that did ſo too, then the Heart of the Fathers was turn'd to the Children. And he ſhall *turn the Diſobedient to the Wiſdom of the Juſt*, i. e. He ſhall introduce the Goſpel, by which the Gentiles that are now *Diſobedient* ſhall be *turn'd*, not ſo much to their Fathers, the Jews, but to the Faith of Chriſt, here called the *Wiſdom of the Juſt*, in Communion with the believing Jews; or thus, He ſhall *turn the Hearts of the Fathers with the Children*, i. e. of Old and Young; ſhall be inſtrumental to bring ſome of every Age to be *Religious*, to work a great Reformation in the Jewiſh Nation, to bring them *off from* a ritual Traditional Religion, which they had reſted in, and to bring them up to *ſubſtantial ſerious* Godlineſs: And the Effect of this will be, that Enmities will be ſlain, and Diſcord made to ceaſe; and they that are at variance being united in his Baptiſm, will be better reconcil'd one to another. And this agrees with the account *Joſephus* gives of *John Baptiſt*, *Antiq. Lib*. 18. *Cap*. 7. "That he was a good Man, and taught the "Jews the Exerciſe of Virtue, in Piety towards God and Righteouſ-"neſs towards one another, and that they ſhould convene and knit "together in Baptiſm." And he ſaith. "The People flock'd af-"ter him, and were exceedingly delighted in his Doctrine." Thus he turn'd the Hearts of Fathers and Children to God, and one another, by *turning the Diſobedient to the Wiſdom of the Juſt*. Obſerve, (1.) True Religion is *the Wiſdom of Juſt Men*, in diſtinction from the *Wiſdom of this World*: It is both our Wiſdom, and our Duty to be Religious, there is both Equity and Prudence in it. (2.) It is not impoſſible but that thoſe who have been unbelieving and *diſobedient*, may be turn'd to the *Wiſdom of the Juſt*; Divine Grace can conquer the greateſt Ignorances and Prejudices. (3.) The great Deſign of the Goſpel is, to bring People *home* to God, and to bring them nearer to *one another*; and on this Errand *John Baptiſt* is ſent. And in the mention that is *twice* made of his *turning* People, there ſeems to be an Alluſion to the Name of the *Tiſbite*, which is given to *Elijah*, which ſome think doth not denote the Country, or City he was of, but has an appellative Signification, and therefore they render it *Elijah* the *Converter*; one that was much employ'd, and very ſucceſsful in *Converſion Work*: The *Elias* of the New Teſtament is therefore ſaid to *turn*, or *convert* many to the Lord their God.

6. Hereby he ſhall *make ready a People prepared for the Lord*; ſhall diſpoſe the Minds of People to receive the Doctrine of Chriſt, that thereby they may be *prepared* for the Comforts of his Coming. *Note*, 1. All that are to be *devoted* to the Lord, and *made* happy in him, muſt firſt be *prepar'd* and *made ready* for him. We muſt be prepar'd by Grace in this World, for Glory in the other; by the Terrors of the Law, for the Comforts of the Goſpel; by the Spirit of Bondage, for the Spirit of Adoption. 2. Nothing has a more direct Tendency to prepare People for Chriſt, than the Doctrine of Repentance receiv'd and ſubmitted to: When Sin is thereby made grievous, Chriſt will become very precious.

Fourthly, *Zacharias*'s Unbelief of the Angel's Prediction, and the Rebuke he was laid under for that Unbelief. He heard all that the Angel had to ſay, and ſhould have bow'd his Head, and worſhipped the Lord, ſaying, *Be it unto thy Servant according to the Word* which thou haſt ſpoken, but it was not ſo: We are here told,

1. What his Unbelief ſpoke, *v*. 18. He ſaid to the Angel, *Whereby ſhall I know this?* This was not an humble Petition for the confirming of his Faith, but a peeviſh Objection againſt what was ſaid to him, as altogether incredible; as if he ſhould ſay, I can never be made to believe this. He could not but perceive that it was *an Angel* that ſpake to him; the Meſſage deliver'd having Reference to the Old Teſtament Prophecies, carry'd much of its own Evidence along with it. There are many Inſtances in the Old Teſtament, of thoſe that had Children when they were Old, yet he cannot believe he ſhall have this Child of Promiſe, *for I am an old Man*, and my Wife has not only been all her Days barren, but is now well *ſtricken in Years*, and not likely ever to have Children; therefore he muſt have *a Sign* given him, or he will not believe. Tho' the Appearance of an Angel, which had been long diſus'd in the Church, was Sign enough; tho' he had this Notice given him in the Temple, the Place of God's Oracles, where he had Reaſon to think no evil Angel would be permitted to come; tho' it was given him when he was praying and burning Incenſe: And tho' a firm Belief of that great Principle of Religion, That God has an Almighty Power, and with him *nothing is impoſſible*, which he ought not only to *know*, but to teach others, was enough to ſilence all Objections; yet conſidering his own Body, and his Wives too, much unlike a Son of *Abraham*, he *ſtagger'd at the Promiſe*, Rom. 4. 19, 20.

2. How his Unbelief was *ſilenc'd*, and he *ſilenc'd* for it.

1. The Angel *ſtops his Mouth* by *aſſerting* his Authority; doth he ask *whereby ſhall I know this?* Let him know it by this, *I am Gabriel*, v. 19. He puts his Name to his Propheſie, doth as it were Sign it with his own Hand, *teſte meipſo*; take my Word for it. Angels have ſometimes refus'd to tell their Names, as to *Manoah* and his Wife; but this Angel readily ſaith, I am *Gabriel*, which ſignifies *the Power of God*; or the *mighty One of God*, intimating, That the God who bid him ſay this, was able to make it good. He alſo makes himſelf known by this Name, to put him in mind of the Notices of the *Meſſiah*'s Coming ſent to *Daniel* by the *Man Gabriel*, Dan. 8. 16.—9. 21. *I am the ſame* that was ſent then, and am ſent now in purſuance of the ſame Intention. He is *Gabriel* that *ſtands in the Preſence of God*, an immediate Attendant upon the Throne of God. The prime Miniſters of State in the *Perſian* Court are deſcrib'd by this, That they ſaw the *King's Face*, Eſther 1. 14. Tho' I am now talking with thee here, yet *I ſtand in the Preſence of God*: I know his Eye is upon me, and I dare not ſay any more than I have Warrant to ſay. But, I declare *I am ſent to ſpeak to thee*, ſent on purpoſe, to *ſhew thee theſe glad Tydings*, which being ſo well worthy of all acceptation, thou oughteſt to have receiv'd chearfully.

2. The Angel *ſtops his Mouth* indeed, by *exerting his Power*, that thou mayeſt object no more, *behold thou ſhalt be Dumb*, v. 20. If thou wilt have a Sign for the Support of thy Faith, it ſhall be ſuch a one as ſhall be alſo the Puniſhment of thine Unbelief, thou *ſhalt not be able to ſpeak 'till the Day that theſe Things ſhall be performed*, v. 20. Thou ſhalt be both *Dumb* and *Deaf*, the ſame Words ſignify both; and it is plain, that he loſt his Hearing as well as his Speech, for his Friends *made Signs* to him, *v*. 26. as well as he to them, *v*. 22. Now in ſtriking him Dumb, (1.) God dealt juſtly with him, becauſe he had objected againſt God's Word: And from hence we may take occaſion to admire the Patience of God, and his Forbearance towards us, that we, who have ſo often ſpoke to his Diſhonour, yet have not been ſtruck Dumb, as *Zacharias* was, as we had been if God had dealt with us according to our Sins.

(2.) God dealt *kindly* with him, and very tenderly and graciouſly. For (1.) Thus he prevented his ſpeaking any more ſuch diſtruſtful, unbelieving Words. If he have *thought Evil*, and will not himſelf *lay his Hand upon his Mouth*, nor keep it as with a Bridle, God will: 'Tis better not to ſpeak at all, than to *ſpeak wickedly*. (2.) Thus he *confirmed* his Faith; and by his being *diſabled* to ſpeak, he is *enabled* to think the better: If by the Rebukes we are under for our Sin, we be brought to give more Credit to the Word of God, we have no reaſon to complain of them. (3.) Thus he was kept from *divulging* the Viſion, and *boaſting* of it, which otherwiſe he would have been apt to do, whereas 'twas deſign'd for the preſent to be lodg'd as a Secret with him. (4.) It was a great Mercy that God's Word ſhould be fulfill'd in its Seaſon, notwithſtanding his ſinful diſtruſt. The *unbelief of Man* ſhall not *make the Promiſes of God of none effect*, they ſhall be *fulfilled in their Seaſon*, and he ſhall not be for ever *dumb*, but only *'till the Day that theſe things ſhall be performed*, and then thy *Lips* ſhall be *opened*, that thy *Mouth* may *ſhew forth God's Praiſe*. Thus, though God *chaſten* the *Iniquity* of his People *with the Rod*, yet his *loving Kindneſs* he *will not take away*.

Fifthly, The Return of *Zacharias* to the People, and at length to his Family, and the Conception of this Child of Promiſe, the Son of his old Age.

1. The People ſtaid expecting *Zacharias* to come out of the Temple, becauſe he was to pronounce the Bleſſing upon them, in the Name of the Lord; and though he ſtaid beyond the uſual time, yet they did not, as is too common in Chriſtian Congregations, hurry away without the Bleſſing, but *waited* for him, marvelling that he *tarry'd ſo long in the Temple*, and afraid leſt ſomething was amiſs, *v.* 21.

2. When he came out he was *Speechleſs*, v. 22. He was now to have diſmiſs'd the Congregation with a Bleſſing, but is Dumb, and not able to do it, that the People may be minded to expect the *Meſſiah* who can *command* the Bleſſing, who *bleſſeth indeed*, and in whom all *the Nations of the Earth are bleſſed*, *Aaron*'s Prieſthood is now ſhortly to be *ſilenc'd*, and *ſet aſide*, to make way for the *bringing in* of a *better Hope*.

3. He made a ſhift to give them to underſtand that he had *ſeen a Viſion*, by ſome awful Signs he made, for he *becken'd to them*, and *remain'd ſpeechleſs*, v. 22. This repreſents to us the Weakneſs and Deficiency of the Levitical Prieſthood, in compariſon with Chriſt's Prieſthood, and the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel. The Old Teſtament ſpeaks by Signs, gives us ſome Intimations of Divine and Heavenly Things, but *imperfect* and uncertain; it *beckens to us*, but *remains ſpeechleſs*; 'tis the Goſpel that ſpeaks to us articulately, and gives us a clear view of that which in the Old Teſtament was ſeen *through a Glaſs darkly*.

4. He ſtaid out the *Days of his Miniſtration*; for his Lot being to *burn Incenſe*, he could do that, though he was *Dumb* and *Deaf*. When we cannot perform the Service of God ſo well as we would, yet if we perform it ſo well as we can, God will accept of us in it.

5. He then returned to his Family, and his *Wife conceived*, v. 23, 24. She conceived by vertue of the Promiſe, and being ſenſible of it, *ſhe hid her ſelf five Months*; ſhe kept Houſe, and kept it private, and did not go Abroad ſo much as ſhe us'd to do, (1.) Leſt ſhe ſhould do her ſelf any prejudice, ſo as might occaſion her *miſcarrying*, or any hurt to the Conception. (2.) Leſt ſhe ſhould contract any Ceremonial Pollution, which might intrench upon the Nazariteſhip of her Child, remembring the Command given to *Samſon*'s Mother in a like Caſe; and applying it to her ſelf, ſhe muſt not *touch any unclean Thing* while ſhe is with Child of a *Nazarite*, *Judges* 13. 14. And tho' *Five Months* are mention'd, becauſe of what follows *in the Sixth Month*, yet we may ſuppoſe, ſhe did in like manner take Care of her ſelf during the whole Time of her being with Child. (3.) Some think 'twas in an exceſs of Modeſty that ſhe *hid her ſelf*, aſhamed it ſhould be ſaid that one of her Age ſhould be with Child: *Shall ſhe have Pleaſure being old, her Lord being old alſo?* Gen. 18. 12. Or, 'twas in Token of her Humility, that ſhe might not ſeem to boaſt of the Honour God had put upon her. (4.) She *hid her ſelf* for Devotion, that ſhe might ſpend her Time in Prayer and Praiſe. The Saints are God's *hidden ones*; ſhe gives this Reaſon for her Retirement, for *thus hath the Lord dealt with me*; not only thus *graciouſly*, in giving me a Child, but thus *honourably*, in giving me ſuch a Child as is to be a *Nazarite*, for ſo her Husband might by Writing ſignifie to her. He hath *taken away my reproach among Men*. Fruitfulneſs was look'd upon to be ſo great a Bleſſing among the *Jews*, becauſe of the Promiſes of the Increaſe of their Nation, and the riſing of the Meſſiah among them, that it was a great Reproach to be barren; and thoſe who were ſo, though never ſo *blameleſs*, yet were concluded to be guilty of ſome great Sin *unknown*, for which they were ſo puniſhed: Now *Elizabeth* triumphs, that not only this Reproach is taken away, but great Glory is put upon her inſtead of it; *Thus hath the Lord dealt with me* beyond any thought or expectation of mine *in the Days wherein he looked on me*. *Note*, In God's gracious Dealings with us, we ought to obſerve his gracious Regards to us. He has *look'd on us* with Compaſſion and Favour, and therefore hath thus *dealt with us*.

26 And in the ſixth month, the angel Gabriel was ſent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin eſpouſed to a man whoſe name was Joſeph, of the houſe of David; and the virgins name *was* Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and ſaid, Hail thou that art highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: bleſſed *art* thou among women. 29 And when ſhe ſaw him, ſhe was troubled at his ſaying, and caſt in her mind what manner of ſalutation this ſhould be. 30 And the angel ſaid unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou haſt found favour with God. 31 And behold, thou ſhalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a ſon, and ſhalt call his name Jeſus. 32 He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt; and the Lord God ſhall give unto him the throne of his father David. 33 And he ſhall reign over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there ſhall be no end. 34 Then ſaid Mary unto the angel, How ſhall this be, ſeeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel anſwered and ſaid unto her, The holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee: therefore alſo that holy thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God. 36 And behold, thy couſin Eliſabeth, ſhe hath alſo conceived a ſon in her old age: and this is the ſixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing ſhall be impoſſible. 38 And Mary ſaid, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

We have here Notice given us of all 'twas fit we ſhould know concerning the Incarnation and Conception of our bleſſed Saviour, Six Months after the Conception of John. The ſame Angel, *Gabriel*, that was employ'd in making known to *Zacharias* God's purpoſe concerning *his Son*, is employ'd in *this* alſo; for in this, the ſame glorious Work of Redemption, which was *begun* in that, is *carried on*. As bad Angels are none of the Redeemed, ſo good Angels are none of the Redeemers, yet they are employ'd by the Redeemer, as his Meſſengers, and they go chearfully on his Errands, becauſe they are his Father's *humble Servants*, and his Childrens *hearty Friends* and Well-wiſhers.

Firſt, We have here an Account given of the Mother of our Lord, of whom he was to be born, whom tho' we are not to pray to, yet we ought to praiſe God for.

1. Her Name was *Mary*, the ſame Name with *Miriam*, the Siſter of *Moſes* and *Aaron*; the Name ſignifies *exalted*, and a great Elevation it was to her indeed, to be thus *favour'd* above all the Daughters of the Houſe of *David*.

2. She was a Daughter of the Royal Family, lineally deſcended from *David*, and ſhe her ſelf, and all her Friends knew it, for ſhe went under the Title and Character of the *Houſe of David*, tho' ſhe was poor and low in the World: And ſhe was enabled, by God's Providence, and the Care of the *Jews* to preſerve their Genealogies, to *make it out*; and as long as the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* was to be fulfilled, 'twas *worth keeping*; but for thoſe now, who are brought low in the World, to have deſcended from Perſons of Honour, is not worth mentioning.

3. She was *a Virgin*, a pure unſpotted one, but *eſpouſed* to one of the ſame Royal Stock, but, like her, of low Eſtate; ſo that upon both accounts, there was (as 'tis fit there ſhould be) an equality between them; his Name *Joſeph*, he alſo was *of the Houſe of David*, Matt. 1. 20. Chriſt's Mother was a *Virgin*, becauſe he was not to be born by ordinary Generation, but miraculouſly; 'twas neceſſary he ſhould be ſo, that tho' he muſt partake of the Nature of Man, yet not the Corruption of that Naure: But he was born of a *Virgin eſpouſed*, made up to be Married, and contracted, to put Honour upon the married State, That that might not be brought into Contempt, (which was an Ordinance in Innocency) by the Redeemer's being born of a Virgin.

4. She liv'd in *Nazareth*, a *City of Galilee*, a remote Corner of the Country, and in no Reputation for Religion or Learning, but it border'd upon the Heathen, and therefore was called *Galilee of the Gentiles*; Chriſt's having his Relations Reſident there, intimates Favour in reſerve for the Gentile World. And Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves, That *Jonah* was by Birth a *Galilean*, and *Elijah* and *Eliſha* very much converſant in *Galilee*, who were all Famous *Prophets of the Gentiles*. The Angel was ſent to her to *Nazareth*. *Note*, No diſtance, or diſadvantage of Place, ſhall be a Prejudice to thoſe whom God has Favours in Store for. The Angel Gabriel carries his Meſſage as chearfully to *Mary* at *Nazareth* in *Galilee*, as to *Zacharias* in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*.

Secondly, The *Addreſs* of the Angel to her, *v.* 28. We are not told what ſhe was doing, or how employ'd, when the Angel came *unto her*; but he ſurpriz'd her with this Salutation, *Hail, thou that art highly favour'd*: This was intended to raiſe in her, (1.) A Value for *her ſelf*; and tho' 'tis very rare, that any need to have any Sparks ſtruck into their Breaſt with ſuch Deſign, yet in ſome, who, like *Mary*, pore only upon their *low Eſtate*, there is Occaſion for it. (2.) An Expectation of great News, not from Abroad, but from Above. Heaven deſigns, no doubt, uncommon Favours for one whom an Angel makes Court to with ſuch Reſpect. *Hail thou*, Χαῖρε, *rejoyce thou*; 'twas the uſual Form of Salutation; it expreſſeth an Eſteem of her, and Good-will to her and her Proſperity.

1. She is dignified: Thou art *highly favour'd*; God in his Choice of thee to be the Mother of the *Meſſiah*, has put an Honour upon thee, peculiar to thy ſelf, above that of *Eve*, who was the Mother of *all Living*. The vulgar Latin tranſlates this *Gratia plena*, and from thence gathers, That ſhe had more of the inherent Graces of the Spirit than ever any had; whereas 'tis certain, this ſpeaks no other than the ſingular Favour done her, in preferring her to conceive and bear our Bleſſed Lord; an Honour, which ſince he was to be the *Seed of the Woman*, ſome Woman muſt have, not for *perſonal Merit*, but purely for the ſake of *free Grace*, and ſhe is pitch'd upon; *Even ſo Father, becauſe it ſeemed good unto thee.*

2. She has the Preſence of God with her; *The Lord is with thee*, tho' poor and mean, and perhaps now forecaſting how to get a Livelihood, and maintain a Family in the marry'd State. The Angel with this Word rais'd the Faith of *Gideon*, Judg. 6. 12. *The Lord is with thee.* Nothing is to be deſpair'd of, not the Performance of any Service, not the obtaining of any Favour, tho' never ſo great, if we have *God with us*. This Word might put her in mind of the *Immanuel, God with us*, which a Virgin ſhall *conceive*, and bear, *Iſa.* 7. 14. and why not ſhe?

3. She has the Bleſſing of God upon her; *Bleſſed art thou among Women*; not only thou ſhalt be accounted ſo by Men, but thou ſhalt be ſo. Thou that art ſo *highly favour'd* in this Inſtance, may'ſt expect in other Things to be *bleſſed*: She explains this her ſelf, *v.* 48. *All Generations ſhall call me bleſſed*; compare it with that which *Deborah* ſaith of *Jael*, another that was the Glory of her Sex, *Judg.* 5. 24. *Bleſſed ſhall ſhe be above Women in the Tent.*

Thirdly, The Conſternation ſhe was in upon this Addreſs, *v.* 29. *when ſhe ſaw him*, and the Glories with which he was ſurrounded, ſhe was *troubled* at the Sight of him, and much more *at his ſaying*. Had ſhe been a proud, ambitious young Woman, that aim'd high, and flattered her ſelf with the Expectation of great Things in the World, ſhe would have been *pleas'd* at his ſaying, would have been puffed up with it, and (as we have Reaſon to think, ſhe was a young Woman of very good Senſe) would have had an Anſwer ready, ſignifying ſo much: But inſtead of that, ſhe is *confounded* at it, as not conſcious to her ſelf of any thing that either *merited*, or *promiſed* any ſuch great Things: And ſhe *caſt in her Mind what manner of Salutation this ſhould be*; was it from Heaven or of Men, was it to amuſe her, was it to enſnare her, was it to banter her, or was there ſomething Subſtantial and Weighty in it? But of all the Thoughts ſhe had *what manner of Salutation it ſhould be*, I believe ſhe had not the leaſt Idea of its being ever intended, or us'd for a Prayer, as it is, and has been for many Ages, by the corrupt, degenerate, and Anti-Chriſtian Ages of the Church, and to be ten times repeated for the Lord's-Prayer once; ſo it is in the Church of *Rome*. But her Thoughtfulneſs upon this Occaſion, gives a very uſeful Intimation to young People of her Sex, when Addreſſes are made to them, to conſider and *caſt in their Minds*, what manner of *Salutations* they are; whence they come, and what their Tendency is, that they may receive them accordingly, and may always *ſtand on their Guard.*

Fourthly, The Meſſage it ſelf which the Angel had to deliver to her. Some Time the Angel gives her to *pauſe*; but obſerving that That did but increaſe her Perplexity, he went on with his Errand, *v.* 30. To what he had ſaid ſhe made no Reply, he therefore confirms it, *Fear not Mary*, I have no other Deſign but to aſſure thee, that *thou haſt found Favour with God* more than thou thinkeſt of, as there are many who think they are more favour'd of God than really they are. *Note*, Thoſe that have *found Favour with God*, ſhould not give way to diſquieting diſtruſtful Fears. Doth God favour thee? Fear not though the World frown upon thee. Is he for thee? No matter who is againſt thee.

1. Tho' ſhe is a *Virgin*, ſhe ſhall have the Honour of being a *Mother*; thou ſhalt *conceive in thy Womb, and bring forth a Son*, and thou ſhalt have the naming of him, thou ſhalt *call his Name Jeſus*, v. 31. It was the Sentence upon *Eve*, that tho' ſhe ſhould have the Honour to be the *Mother of all living*, yet this Mortification ſhall be an Allay to that Honour, that *her Deſire ſhall be to her Husband*, and *he ſhall rule over her*, Gen. 3. 17. But *Mary* has the Honour without the Allay.

2. Tho' ſhe lives in *Poverty* and *Obſcurity*, yet ſhe ſhall have the Honour to be the Mother of the *Meſſiah*; her Son ſhall be named *Jeſus*, a *Saviour*, ſuch a one as the World *needs*, rather than ſuch a one as the *Jews expect.*

1. He will be very *nearly ally'd* to the *upper World*; He *ſhall be great*, truly great, unconteſtably great, for he ſhall be called *the Son of the Higheſt*, the Son of God, who is the *Higheſt*; of the ſame Nature, as the Son is of the ſame Nature with the Father; and very dear to him, as the Son is to the Father. He ſhall be *called*, and not *miſcalled* the *Son of the Higheſt*, for he is himſelf *God over all, Bleſſed for evermore*, Rom. 9. 3. *Note*, Thoſe who are the Children of God, tho' but by Adoption, and Regeneration, are *truly great*, and therefore are concern'd to be *very good*, 1 John 3. 1, 2.

2. He will be very *highly preferr'd* in the *lower World*; for tho' born under the moſt diſadvantageous Circumſtances poſſible, and appearing in the Form of a Servant, yet *the Lord God ſhall give unto him the Throne of his Father David*, v. 32. He puts her in mind that ſhe was *of the Houſe of David*; and that therefore ſince neither the *Salique Law*, nor the Right of Primogeniture took Place in the Entail of *his* Throne, it was not impoſſible but that *ſhe* might bring forth an *Heir* to it, and therefore might the more eaſily *believe* it, when ſhe was told by an Angel from Heaven, that *ſhe ſhould* do ſo: That after the Scepter had been long *departed* from that Ancient and Honourable Family, it ſhould now at length return to it again, to remain in it; not by Succeſſion, but in the ſame Hand to Eternity. His People will not *give him that Throne*, will not acknowledge his Right to *rule them*; but the *Lord God* ſhall give him a Right to *rule them*, and ſet him as *his King* upon the *Holy Hill of Zion*. He aſſures her, (1.) That his Kingdom ſhall be *Spiritual*; he ſhall *reign over the Houſe of Jacob*, not Iſrael *according to the Fleſh*, for they neither came into his Intereſts, nor did they continue long a People; it muſt therefore be a *Spiritual* Kingdom, the Houſe of Iſrael, *according to Promiſe*, that he muſt *rule over*. (2.) That it ſhall be Eternal: He ſhall reign *for ever*, and *of his Kingdom there ſhall be no End*, as there had been long ſince of the Temporal Reign of *David*'s Houſe, and would ſhortly be of the State of *Iſrael*: Other Crowns endure not *to every Generation*, but Chriſt's doth, *Prov.* 27. 4. The Goſpel is the *laſt* Diſpenſation, we are to look for no other.

Fifthly, The further Information given her, upon her Enquiry concerning the Birth of this Prince.

1. 'Tis a juſt Enquiry which ſhe makes, *How ſhall this be?* v. 34. How can I now preſently conceive a Child, (for ſo the Angel meant) when *I know not a Man*; muſt it therefore be otherwiſe than by *ordinary Generation?* If ſo, let me know *how?* She knew that the Meſſiah muſt be born of *a Virgin*, and if ſhe muſt be his Mother, ſhe deſires to know *how*. This was not the Language of her Diſtruſt, or any Doubt of what the Angel ſaid, but of a Deſire to be further inſtructed.

2. 'Tis a ſatisfactory Anſwer that is given to it, *v.* 35. (1.) She ſhall conceive by *the Power of the Holy Ghoſt*, whoſe proper Work and Office it is to *Sanctifie*; and therefore to ſanctifie the Virgin for this Purpoſe, the Holy Ghoſt is called the *Power of the Higheſt*; doth ſhe ask how this ſhall be? This is enough to help her over all the Difficulty there appears in it; a Divine Power will undertake it, not the Power of an Angel imploy'd in it, as in other Works of Wonder, but the Power of *the Holy Ghoſt* himſelf.

(2.) She muſt *ask no Queſtions* concerning the Way and Manner how it ſhall be wrought; for the Holy Ghoſt, as the *Power of the Higheſt*, ſhall *over-ſhadow* her, as the *Cloud* cover'd the Tabernacle, when the Glory of God took Poſſeſſion of it, to conceal it from thoſe that would too curiouſly obſerve the Motions of it, and pry into the Myſtery of it. The Formation of every Babe in the Womb, and the Entrance of the Spirit of Life into it, is a Myſtery in Nature; none knows *the way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones are form'd in the Womb of her that is with Child*, Eccleſ. 11. 5. We were *made in ſecret*, Pſalm 139. 15, 16. Much more was the Formation of the Child Jeſus a *Myſtery*; without Controverſie, *great was the Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſted in the Fleſh*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. 'Tis a *New Thing created in the Earth*, Jer. 31. 22. Concerning which, we muſt not covet to be *Wiſe above what is written.*

(3.) The Child ſhe ſhall conceive is a *Holy Thing*, and therefore muſt not be conceiv'd by *ordinary Generation*, becauſe he muſt not ſhare in the common Corruption and Pollution of the Human Nature; He's ſpoken of emphatically, *That Holy Thing*, ſuch as never was: And he ſhall be called *the Son of God*, as the Son of the Father by Eternal Generation, and as an Indication of that, he ſhall now be form'd by the Holy Ghoſt in the preſent Conception. His Human Nature muſt be ſo produced, as 'twas fit that ſhould be, which was to be taken into Union with the Divine Nature.

3. 'Twas a further Encouragement to her Faith, to be told that *her Couſin Elizabeth*, tho' ſtricken in Years, was *with Child*, v. 36. Here's an Age of Wonders beginning, and therefore be not ſurpriz'd: Here's one among thy own Relations truly great, though not altogether ſo great as this; 'tis uſual with God to advance in working Wonders. *Greater Works than theſe ſhall ye do.* Though *Elizabeth* was on the Father's Side of the *Daughters of Aaron*, ver. 5. yet on the Mother's Side ſhe might be of the Houſe of *David*, for thoſe Two Families often intermarry'd, as an earneſt of the uniting of the Royalty, and the

Prieſthood in the Meſſiah. This is *the ſixth Month with her that was called barren:* This intimates, as Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, That all the Inſtances in the Old Teſtament, of thoſe having Children that had been long barren, which was above Nature, were deſign'd to prepare the World for the Belief of a Virgin's bearing a Son, which was againſt Nature. And therefore, even in the Birth of *Iſaac, Abraham* ſaw Chriſt's Day, foreſaw ſuch a Miracle in the Birth of Chriſt: The Angel aſſures *Mary* of this, to encourage her Faith, and concludes with that great Truth of undoubted Certainty and univerſal Uſe, for *with God nothing ſhall be impoſſible*, v. 37. And if nothing, then not this: *Abraham* therefore ſtagger'd not at the Belief of the Divine Promiſe, becauſe he was ſtrong in his Belief of the Divine Power, *Rom.* 4. 20, 21. No *Word* of God muſt be *incredible to us*, as long as no *Word* of God is *impoſſible to him.*

Sixthly, Her acquieſcence in the Will of God concerning her, *v.* 38. She owns her ſelf, 1. A believing *Subject* to the Divine Authority. *Behold the Hand-maid of the Lord*; Lord, I am at thy Service, at thy Diſpoſe, to do what thou commandeſt me. She objects not the Danger of ſpoiling her Marriage, and blemiſhing her Reputation, but leaves the Iſſue with God, and ſubmits entirely to his Will. 2. A believing *expectant* of the Divine Favour: She is not only content it ſhould be ſo, but humbly deſires it may be ſo; *be it unto me according to thy Word*: Such a Favour as this, it was not for her to ſlight, or be indifferent to; and for what God has *promis'd*, he will be *ſought unto* by Prayer; we muſt put our *Amen*, or *ſo be it*, to the Promiſe. *Remember*, and perform *thy Word unto thy Servant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* We muſt, as *Mary* here, *guide* our Deſires *by* the Word of God, and *ground* our Hopes *upon* it. Be it unto me *according to thy Word*; juſt ſo, and no otherwiſe.

Hereupon *the Angel departed from her*; having compleated the Errand he was ſent upon, return'd to give Account of it, and receive new Inſtructions. Converſe with Angels was always a tranſient Thing, and ſoon over, 'twill be conſtant and permanent in the future State. And it is generally ſuppos'd, that juſt at this Inſtant the Virgin *conceiv'd*, by the *over-ſhadowing Power* of the Holy Ghoſt: But the Scripture being decently ſilent concerning that, it doth not become us to be *inquiſitive*, much leſs *poſitive.*

39 And Mary aroſe in thoſe days, and went into
the hill-country with haſte, into a city of Juda,
40 And entered into the houſe of Zacharias, and ſalu-
ted Eliſabeth. 41 And it came to paſs, that when Eli-
ſabeth heard the ſalutation of Mary, the babe leaped
in her womb: and Eliſabeth was filled with the holy
Ghoſt. 42 And ſhe ſpake out with a loud voice, and
ſaid, Bleſſed *art* thou among women, and bleſſed *is*
the fruit of thy womb. 43 And whence *is* this to me,
that the mother of my Lord ſhould come to me?
44 For lo, aſſoon as the voice of thy ſalutation ſound-
ed in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.
45 And bleſſed *is* ſhe that believed: for there ſhall
be a performance of thoſe things which were told her
from the Lord. 46 And Mary ſaid, My ſoul doth
magnifie the Lord; 47 And my ſpirit hath rejoyced
in God my Saviour. 48 For he hath regarded the
low eſtate of his handmaiden: for behold, from hence-
forth all generations ſhall call me bleſſed. 49 For he
that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy
is his name. 50 And his mercy *is* on them that fear
him, from generation to generation. 51 He hath
ſhewed ſtrength with his arm, he hath ſcattered the
proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He
hath put down the mighty from *their* ſeats, and exalted
them of low degree. 53 He hath filled the hungry with
good things, and the rich he hath ſent empty away.
54 He hath holpen his ſervant Iſrael, in remembrance
of *his* mercy, 55 As he ſpake to our fathers, to Abra-
ham and to his ſeed for ever. 56 And Mary abode
with her about three months, and returned to her own
houſe.

We have here an Interview between the two happy Mothers, *Elizabeth* and *Mary:* The Angel, by intimating to *Mary* the Favour beſtowed on her Couſin *Elizabeth*, *v.* 36. gave Occaſion for it; and ſometimes it may prove a better piece of Service than we think, to bring good People together, to compare Notes. Here's,

Firſt, The Viſit which *Mary* made to *Elizabeth*; *Mary* was the *younger*, and younger with Child; and therefore, if they muſt come together, 'twas fitteſt that *Mary* ſhould take the Journey, not inſiſting on the Preference which the greater Dignity of her Conception gave her, *v.* 39. She *aroſe*, and left her Affairs, to attend this greater Matter: *In thoſe Days*, i. e. *at that Time*, (as 'tis commonly explain'd, *Jer.* 33. 15. — 50. 4.) in a Day or two after the Angel had viſited her, taking ſome Time firſt, as 'tis ſuppos'd, for her Devotion, or rather, haſtening away to her Couſins, where ſhe would have more Leiſure, and better Help in the Family of a Prieſt. She went, μετὰ σπουδῆς, with *Care*, and *Diligence*, and *Expedition*; not as young People commonly go Abroad, and viſit their Friends, to *divert* her ſelf, but to *inform* her ſelf: She went *to a City of Judah in the Hill-Country*; 'tis not named, but by comparing the Deſcription of it here with *Joſhua* 21. 10, 11. it appears to be *Hebron*, for that is there ſaid to be *in the Hill-Country of Judah*, and to belong to the Prieſts the Sons of *Aaron:* Thither *Mary* haſtened, tho' it was a long Journey, ſome Scores of Miles.

1. Dr. *Lightfoot* offers a Conjecture, that ſhe was to *conceive* of our Saviour there at *Hebron*, and perhaps had ſo much intimated to her by the Angel, or ſome other way; and therefore ſhe made ſuch Haſte thither. He thinks it probable, that *Shiloh* of the Tribe of *Judah*, and the Seed of *David*, ſhould be *conceived* in a City of *Judah* and of *David*, as he was to be born in *Bethlehem*, another City which belonged to them both. In *Hebron* the Promiſe was given of *Iſaac*, Circumciſion was inſtituted: Here (ſaith he) *Abraham* had his *firſt Land*, and *David* his firſt Crown: Here lay interr'd the Three Couple, *Abraham* and *Sarah*, *Iſaac* and *Rebecca*, *Jacob* and *Leah*, and, as Antiquity has held, *Adam* and *Eve:* He therefore thinks it ſuits ſingularly with the Harmony and Conſent which God uſeth in his Works, that the Promiſe ſhould begin to take Place by the Conception of the Meſſiah, even among thoſe Patriarchs to whom it was given. I ſee no Improbability in the Conjecture, but add this for the Support of it, That *Elizabeth* ſaid, *v.* 45. *There ſhall be a Performance*; as if it were not performed *yet*, but was to be performed there.

2. It is generally ſuppos'd, That ſhe went thither for the confirming of her Faith, by the Sign which the Angel had given her, her Couſin's being with Child; and to rejoyce with her Siſter Favourite. And beſides, ſhe went thither, perhaps, that ſhe might be more retired from Company, or elſe might have more agreeable Company than ſhe could have in *Nazareth*. We may ſuppoſe ſhe did not acquaint any of her Neighbours at *Nazareth*, with the Meſſage ſhe had received from Heaven, yet longed to *talk over* a Thing ſhe had a Thouſand Times *thought over*, and knew no Perſon in the World with whom ſhe could *freely* converſe concerning it, but her Couſin *Elizabeth*, and therefore ſhe haſtened to her. *Note*, It is very beneficial and comfortable, for thoſe that have a good Work of Grace begun in their Souls, and *Chriſt* in the *forming* there, to conſult thoſe who are *in the ſame Caſe*, that they may communicate Experiences one to another; and they will find that as in Water, Face anſwers to Face, ſo doth the Heart of Man to Man, of Chriſtian to Chriſtian.

Secondly, The Meeting between *Mary* and *Elizabeth*; *Mary* enter'd into the Houſe of *Zacharias*, but he being *Dumb* and *Deaf*, 'tis likely he kept his Chamber, and ſaw no Company, and therefore ſhe *ſaluted Elizabeth*, v. 90. told her ſhe was come to make her a Viſit, to know her State, and *rejoyce with her* in her Joy.

Now at their firſt coming together, for the Confirmation of the Faith of both of them, there was ſomething very extraordinary: *Mary* knew that *Elizabeth* was with Child, but it doth not appear that *Elizabeth* had been told any thing of her Couſin *Mary*'s being deſign'd for the Mother of the Meſſiah; and therefore, what Knowledge ſhe appears to have had of it, muſt come by a *Revelation*, which would be a great Encouragement to *Mary*.

1. The Babe *leaped in her Womb:* 'Tis very probable ſhe had been ſeveral Weeks *quick*, for ſhe was Six Months gone, and that ſhe had often felt the Child ſtir; but this was a more than ordinary Motion of the Child, and which alarm'd her to expect ſomething very extraordinary, ἐσκίρτησε. 'Tis the ſame Word that is us'd by the Seventy, *Gen.* 25. 22. for the *ſtruggling* of *Jacob* and *Eſau* in *Rebecca*'s Womb, and the Mountains *skipping*, *Pſalm* 114. 4. The *Babe leap'd*, as it were to give a Signal to his Mother, that he was now at Hand, whoſe Forerunner he was to be, about Six Months in Miniſtry, as he was in Being; or, it was the Effect of ſome ſtrong Impreſſion made upon the Mother. Now began to be fulfill'd what the Angel ſaid to his Father, *v.* 15. That he ſhould be *filled with the Holy Ghoſt even from his Mother's Womb*; and perhaps he himſelf had ſome Reference to this, when he ſaid, *John* 3. 29. *The Friend of the Bridegroom rejoyceth greatly, becauſe of the Bridegroom's Voice* heard, tho' not by him, yet by his Mother.

2. *Elizabeth* was her ſelf *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, or a Spirit of Prophecy; by which, as well as by the particular Suggeſtions of the Holy Ghoſt, ſhe was fill'd with, ſhe was given to underſtand, That the *Meſſiah* was at hand, in whom Prophecy ſhould revive, and by whom the Holy Ghoſt ſhould be more plentifully poured out than ever, according to the Expectations of thoſe who *waited for the Conſolation of Iſrael.* The uncommon Motion of the Babe in her Womb, was a Token of the extraordinary Emotion of her Spirit under a Divine Impulſe.

Note, Thoſe whom Chriſt graciouſly viſits, may know it by their being *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, for *if any Man hath not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.*

Thirdly, The Welcome which *Elizabeth*, by the Spirit of Prophecy, gave to *Mary* the Mother of our Lord; not as to a common Friend, making a common Viſit, but as to one of whom the *Meſſiah* was to be born.

1. She *congratulates* her Honour, and though perhaps ſhe knew not of it till *juſt now*, ſhe acknowledged it with the greateſt Aſſurance and Satisfaction. She *ſpoke with a loud Voice*, which doth not at all intimate (as ſome think) that there was a Floor or a Wall between them, but that ſhe was in a Tranſport or Exaltation of Joy, and ſaid, what ſhe car'd not who knew. And this ſhe ſaid, *Bleſſed art thou among Women*, the ſame Word that the Angel had ſaid, *v.* 28. for thus this Will of God concerning honouring the Son, ſhould be done *on Earth*, as it is *done in Heaven*. But *Elizabeth* adds a Reaſon, therefore *Bleſſed art thou*, becauſe *Bleſſed is the Fruit of thy Womb*, thence it was that ſhe deriv'd this excellent Dignity. *Elizabeth* was the Wife of a Prieſt, and in Years, yet ſhe *grudgeth* not that her Kinſwoman, who was many Years younger than ſhe, and every way her inferior, ſhould have the Honour of conceiving in her Virginity, and being the Mother of the *Meſſiah*; whereas the Honour put upon her was *much leſs*; but *rejoyceth* in it, and is well pleas'd, as her Son was afterwards, that ſhe that *cometh after her*, is *preferr'd before her*, John 1. 27. *Note*, While we cannot but own that we are more *favour'd* of God than we *deſerve*, let us by no means *envy* that others are *more highly* favour'd than we are.

2. She *acknowledgeth* her *Condeſcenſion* in making her this Viſit, *v.* 43. *Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord ſhould come to me?* Obſerve, (1.) She calls the Virgin *Mary* the *Mother of her Lord*, for *David* in Spirit call'd the *Meſſiah* Lord, *his Lord*, for ſhe knew he was to be *Lord of All*. (2.) She not only bids her welcome to her Houſe, tho' perhaps ſhe came but in mean Circumſtances, but reckons this Viſit a great Favour, which ſhe thought herſelf unworthy of. *Whence is this to me?* 'Tis in Reality and not in Compliment that ſhe ſaith, This was a greater Favour than ſhe could have expected. *Note*, Thoſe that are filled with the Holy Ghoſt, have *low Thoughts* of their own Merits, and high Thoughts of God's Favours. Her Son the Baptiſt ſpoke to the ſame Purpoſe with this, when he ſaid, *Comeſt thou to me?* Matt. 3. 14.

3. She acquaints her with the Concurrence of the Babe in her Womb, in this Welcome to her, *v.* 44. Thou certainly bringeſt ſome extraordinary Tydings, ſome extraordinary Bleſſing with thee, for *as ſoon as the Voice of thy Salutation ſounded in mine Ears*, not only my Heart *leaped for Joy*, tho' I knew not immediately why or wherefore, but the *Babe in my Womb*, who was not capable of knowing it, *did ſo* too. He *leaped* as it were *for Joy*, that the *Meſſiah*, whoſe Harbinger he was to be, would himſelf come ſo ſoon after him. This would ſerve very much to ſtrengthen the Faith of the Virgin, that there were ſuch Aſſurances as theſe given to others; and it would be in part the Accompliſhment of what had been ſo often foretold, That there ſhould be a *Univerſal Joy before the Lord when he cometh*, Pſalm 98. 8, 9.

4. She commends her Faith, and encourageth it, *v.* 45. *Bleſſed is ſhe that believeth*, believing Souls, are bleſſed Souls will be found ſo at laſt; this Bleſſedneſs cometh *through Faith*, even the Bleſſedneſs of being related to Chriſt, and having him *formed in the Soul*. They are *bleſſed* who *believe* the Word of God, for that Word will not fail them; *there ſhall* without doubt *be a Performance of thoſe things which are told her from the Lord*. *Note*, The inviolable Certainty of the Promiſe, is the undoubted Felicity of thoſe that build upon it, and expect their All from it. The Faithfulneſs of God is the Bleſſedneſs of the Faith of the Saints. Thoſe that have experienc'd the Performance of God's Promiſes themſelves, ſhould encourage others to hope that he will be as good as his Word to them alſo; *I'll tell you* what *God has done for my Son*.

Fourthly, *Mary*'s Song of Praiſe upon this Occaſion. *Elizabeth*'s Prophecy was an Echo to the Virgin *Mary*'s Salutation, and this Song is yet a ſtronger *Echo* to that Prophecy, and ſhews her to be no leſs filled with the Holy Ghoſt than *Elizabeth* was. We may ſuppoſe the Bleſſed Virgin to come in, very much *fatigu'd* with her Journey, yet ſhe forgets that, and is inſpir'd with New Life, and Vigour and Joy, upon the Confirmation ſhe here meets with of her Faith; and ſince by this ſudden Inſpiration and Tranſport, ſhe finds that this was deſign'd to be her Errand hither, as weary as ſhe is, like *Abraham's* Servant, ſhe would *neither eat nor drink till ſhe had told her Errand.*

1. Here are the Expreſſions of Joy and Praiſe, and God alone the Object of the Praiſe and Centre of the Joy. Some compare this Song with that which her Name-ſake *Miriam*, the Siſter of *Moſes*, ſung, upon the triumphant Departure of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, and their triumphant Paſſage thro' the Red-Sea; others think it better compared with the Song of *Hannah*, upon the Birth of *Samuel*, which, like this, paſſeth from a Family Mercy, to a publick and general one. *This* begins like *that*, *My heart rejoyceth in the Lord*, 1 Sam. 2. 1. Obſerve how *Mary* here ſpeaks of God.

1. With great Reverence of him, as *the Lord*. *My Soul doth magnify the Lord*; I never ſaw him ſo *great*, as now I find him ſo *good*. *Note*, Thoſe and thoſe only are *advanc'd* in Mercy, who are thereby brought to think the more *highly and honourably* of God; whereas there are thoſe whoſe Proſperity and Preferment makes them ſay, *What is the Almighty, that we ſhould ſerve him?* The more Honour God has any Ways put upon us, the more Honour we muſt ſtudy to give to him: And then only are we accepted in magnifying the Lord, when our *Souls* magnify him, and *all that is within us*. Praiſing-Work muſt be Soul-Work.

2. With great Complacency in him, as *her Saviour*. *My Spirit rejoyceth in God my Saviour*. This ſeems to have reference to the *Meſſiah*, whom ſhe was to be the Mother of; ſhe calls him *God her Saviour*, for the Angel had told her, That he ſhould be the *Son of the Higheſt*, and that his Name ſhould be *Jeſus*, a *Saviour*; this ſhe faſten'd upon, with the Application to her ſelf, he is *God my Saviour*, Even the Mother of our Lord had need of an Intereſt in him as her *Saviour*, and would have been undone without it. And ſhe glories more in that Happineſs, which ſhe had in common with all Believers, than in being his Mother, which was an Honour peculiar to her ſelf; which agrees with the Preference Chriſt gave to obedient Believers, above his Mother and Brethren, ſee *Matt.* 12. 50. *Luke* 11. 27, 28. *Note*, Thoſe that have Chriſt for their God and Saviour, have a great deal of Reaſon to rejoyce, to *rejoyce in Spirit*, that's rejoycing as Chriſt did, *Luke* 10. 21. with ſpiritual Joy.

3. Here are juſt Cauſes aſſign'd for this Joy and Praiſe, 1. Upon *her own* Account, *v.* 48, 49. (1.) Her *Spirit rejoyceth in the Lord*, becauſe of the *kind* things he had done for her; His *Condeſcenſion* and *Compaſſion* to her; *he has regarded the low Eſtate of his Handmaiden*, i. e. he has *look'd* upon her *with Pity*, for ſo the Word is commonly us'd. He has choſen me to this Honour, notwithſtanding my great Meanneſs, Poverty and Obſcurity; nay, the Expreſſion ſeems to intimate not only (to allude to that of *Gideon*, *Judges* 6. 12.) that her *Family* was poor in *Judah*, but that ſhe was the *leaſt in her Father's Houſe*, as if ſhe were under ſome particular Contempt and Diſgrace among her Relations, was unjuſtly neglected, and the Outcaſt of the Family, and God put this Honour upon her to balance abundantly that Contempt. I the rather ſuggeſt this, for we find ſomething toward ſuch Honour as this put upon others, on the like Conſideration. Becauſe God ſaw that *Leah was hated*, he *open'd her Womb*, Gen. 29. 31. Becauſe *Hannah* was provoked and made to fret, and inſulted over by *Peninah*, therefore God gave her a Son, 1 *Sam.* 1. 19. Whom Men wrongfully *depreſs* and *deſpiſe*, God ſometimes, in Compaſſion towards them, eſpecially if they have born it patiently, doth prefer and advance; ſee *Judges* 11. 7. So in *Mary*'s Caſe. And if God *regard her low Eſtate*, he not only thereby gives a Specimen of his Favour to the whole Race of Mankind, whom he *remembers in their low Eſtate*, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, *Pſal.* 136. 23. but ſecures a laſting Honour to her (for ſuch the Honour is that God beſtows, Honour that fades not away) *from henceforth all Generations ſhall call me Bleſſed*, i. e. ſhall think me a happy Woman, and highly advanc'd. All that embrace Chriſt and his Goſpel will ſay, *Bleſſed was the Womb that bore him, and the Paps which he ſucked*, Luke 11. 27. *Elizabeth* had once and again called her *Bleſſed*, but that is not all, ſaith ſhe, all Generations, of Gentiles as well as Jews, ſhall call me ſo. (2.) Her *Soul magnifies* the Lord, becauſe of the *wonderful* things he has done for her, *v.* 49. *He that is mighty has done to me great things.* A *great* thing indeed, that a *Virgin* ſhould *conceive*. A *great* thing indeed, that *Meſſiah*, who had been ſo long ago promis'd to the Church, and ſo long expected by the Church, ſhould now at length be born. 'Tis the *Power of the Higheſt* that appears in this. She adds, *and holy is his Name*, for ſo *Hannah* ſaith in her Song, *There is none holy as the Lord*, which ſhe explains in the next Words, *for there is none beſide thee*, 1 Sam. 2. 2. God is a Being *by himſelf*, and he manifeſts himſelf to be ſo, eſpecially in the Work of our Redemption. He that is *mighty*, even he *whoſe Name is Holy*, has *done to me great Things*. Glorious things may be expected from him that is both *mighty* and *holy*; who *can do every thing*, and *will* do every thing *well* and *for the beſt*.

4. Upon the Account of *others*. The Virgin *Mary*, as the Mother of the *Meſſiah*, is become a kind of publick Perſon, wears a publick Character, and is therefore preſently endu'd with another Spirit, a more publick Spirit, than before ſhe had, and therefore *looks abroad*, looks *about her*, looks *before her*, and takes Notice of God's various Dealings with the Children of Men, *v.* 50. &c. as *Hannah*, 1 Sam. 2. 3. and in this ſhe has eſpecially an Eye to the Coming of the Redeemer, and God's manifeſting himſelf therein.

1. It is a certain Truth, That *God has Mercy in Store*, Mercy in Reſerve, *for all that have a Reverence for his Majeſty*, and a due Regard to his Sovereignty and Authority: But never did this appear ſo, as in ſending his Son into the World to ſave us, *v.* 50. *His Mercy is on them that fear him*, it has always been ſo, he has ever look'd upon them with an Eye of *peculiar Favour*, who have look'd up to him with an Eye of *Filial Fear*. But he hath manifeſted this *Mercy*, ſo as never before

in ſending his Son to bring in an Everlaſting Righteouſneſs, and work out an Everlaſting Salvation for them that fear him; and this *from Generation to Generation*, for there are Goſpel Privileges tranſmitted by entail, and intended for Perpetuity. Thoſe that *fear God*, as their Creator and Judge, are encourag'd to hope for *Mercy in him*, through their Mediator and Advocate; and in him *Mercy* is ſettled upon all that *fear God*, pardoning Mercy, healing Mercy, accepting Mercy, crowning Mercy, *from Generation to Generation*, while the World ſtands. In Chriſt he *keepeth Mercy for Thouſands*.

2. It has been a common Obſervation, That God in his Providence doth put *Contempt* upon the *haughty*, and *Honour* upon the *humble*, and this he has done remarkably in the whole Oeconomy of the Work of Man's Redemption. As God had with his *Mercy* to her ſhew'd himſelf *mighty* alſo, *v.* 48, 49. ſo he had with his *Mercy on them that fear him*, *ſhewed Strength* likewiſe *with his Arm*. (1.) In the Courſe of his Providence, it is his uſual Method to *croſs the Expectations of Men*, and proceed quite otherwiſe than they promiſe themſelves. *Proud Men* expect to carry all before them, to have their Way, and have their Will, but he *ſcatters them in the Imagination of their Hearts*; breaks their Meaſures, blaſts their Projects, nay, and brings them low, and brings them down, by thoſe very Counſels with which they thought to advance and eſtabliſh themſelves. The *Mighty* think to ſecure themſelves by Might *in their Seats*, but he *puts them down*, and overturns their Seats; while on the other Hand, thoſe of *low Degree*, who deſpair'd of ever advancing themſelves, and thought of no other but of being *very low*, are wonderfully *exalted*. And this Obſervation concerning *Honour*, holds likewiſe concerning *Riches*; many that were ſo poor, that they had not Bread for themſelves and their Families, by ſome ſurprizing Turn of Providence in Favour of them, come to be *filled with good Things*; while on the other Hand, thoſe that were rich, and thought no other but that to Morrow ſhould be as this Day, that their Mountain ſtood ſtrong and ſhould never be moved, are ſtrangely impoveriſh'd and *ſent away empty*. Now this is the ſame Obſervation that *Hannah* had made, and enlarg'd upon in her Song, with Application to the Caſe of herſelf and her Adverſary, 1 *Sam.* 2. 4, 5, 6, 7. which very much illuſtrates this here. And compare alſo *Pſalm* 107. 33, — 41. and *Pſalm* 113. 7, 8, 9. and *Eccl.* 9. 11. God takes a Pleaſure in *diſappointing* their Expectations that promiſe themſelves *great Things* in the World, and in *out-doing* the Expectations of thoſe that promiſe themſelves but *a little*. As a *righteous* God, it is his Glory to *abaſe* thoſe that *exalt* themſelves, and ſtrike Terror on the ſecure; and as a good God, it is his Glory to exalt thoſe that humble themſelves, and to ſpeak Comfort to thoſe that fear before him. (2.) This doth eſpecially appear in the Methods of Goſpel-Grace.

(1.) In the *Spiritual Honours* it diſpenſeth. When the proud *Phariſees* were rejected, and *Publicans and Sinners* went *into the Kingdom of Heaven* before them; when the *Jews* that *followed after the Law of Righteouſneſs*, did not attain it, and the *Gentiles* that never thought of it, attained to Righteouſneſs, *Rom.* 9. 30, 31. When God choſe not the *wiſe Men after the Fleſh*, not the *mighty* or the *noble*, to preach the Goſpel and plant Chriſtianity in the World, but the *fooliſh* and *weak* things of the World, and things that were deſpiſed, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26, 27. then he *ſcattered the proud*, and *put down the mighty*, but *exalted them of low Degree*. When the Tyranny of the Chief Prieſts and Elders was brought down, who had long *Lorded it over God's Heritage*, and hoped *always* to do ſo; and Chriſt's Diſciples, a Company of poor deſpiſed Fiſhermen, by the Power they were clothed with, were made to *ſit on Thrones* judging the Twelve Tribes of *Iſrael*; when the Power of the Four Monarchies was broken, and the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, that *Stone cut out of the Mountain without Hands*, is made to *fill the Earth*, then are the *proud ſcatter'd*, and thoſe of low Degree *exalted*.

(2.) In the *ſpiritual Riches* it diſpenſeth, *v.* 53. (1.) Thoſe that ſee their need of Chriſt, and are importunately deſirous of Righteouſneſs and Life in him, he *fills* thoſe with *good Things*, with the *beſt Things*, he gives liberally to them, and they are *abundantly ſatisfied* with the Bleſſings he gives. They that are weary and heavy laden ſhall find Reſt with Chriſt, and thoſe that *thirſt* are call'd to *come to him and drink*; for they only know how to value his Gifts; *to the hungry Soul every bitter Thing is ſweet*, Manna is Angels Food, and to the *thirſty* fair Water *is Honey out of the Rock*. (2.) Thoſe who are rich, who are not *hungry*, who like *Laodicea* think they have *need of nothing*, are full of themſelves and their own Righteouſneſs, and think they have a Sufficiency in themſelves, thoſe he *ſends away* from his Door, they are not welcome to him, he ſends them *empty away*, they come *full of ſelf*, and are all ſent away *empty of Chriſt*. He ſends them to the *Gods whom they ſerv'd*, to their own Righteouſneſs and Strength which they truſted to.

3. It was always expected, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be in a ſpecial Manner the Strength and Glory of his People *Iſrael*, and ſo he is in a peculiar Manner, *v.* 54. *He hath holpen his Servant Iſrael*, ἀντελάβετο. He hath taken them by the Hand, and *helped them up* that were fallen, and could not help themſelves. Thoſe that were ſunk under the Burdens of a broken Covenant of Innocency, are *help'd up* by the Bleſſings of a renewed Covenant of Grace. The ſending of the *Meſſiah*, on whom *Help* was *laid* for poor Sinners, was the greateſt Kindneſs that could be done, the greateſt Help that could be provided for his People *Iſrael*; and that which magnifies it, is,

1. That it is *in Remembrance of the Mercy*; the Mercifulneſs of his Nature, the Mercy he has in Store for *his Servant Iſrael*. While this Bleſſing was deferr'd, his People, who waited for it, were often ready to aſk, *Has God forgotten to be gracious?* But now he made it appear, That he had not forgotten, but *remember'd his Mercy*. He remember'd his former Mercy, and repeated that to them in *ſpiritual Bleſſings*, which he had done formerly to them in *temporal* Favours. *He remember'd the Days of old*; *where is he that brought them out of the Sea*; out of *Egypt?* Iſa. 1. 63, 11. and therefore he will do the like again; which that was a Type of.

2. That it is *in Performance of his Promiſe*; 'tis a Mercy not only deſign'd, but declar'd, *v.* 55. 'twas *what he ſpake to our Fathers*, that the Seed of the Woman ſhould break the Head of the Serpent; that God ſhould dwell in the Tents of *Shem*: And particularly to *Abraham*, that *in his Seed all the Families of the Earth ſhall be bleſſed*, with the beſt of Bleſſings, with the Bleſſings that are *for ever*, and to the Seed that ſhall be for ever, that is, his *ſpiritual* Seed, for his carnal Seed were *cut off*, a little after this. *Note*, What God has ſpoken he will perform; what he has ſpoken to the Fathers, will be performed to their Seed; to their Seed's Seed; in Bleſſings that ſhall laſt for ever.

Laſtly, *Mary*'s Return to *Nazareth*, *v.* 56. after ſhe had continued with *Elizabeth* about *three Months*; ſo long as to be fully ſatisfy'd concerning herſelf, that ſhe was *with Child*, and to be confirm'd therein by her Couſin *Elizabeth*. Some think, though her Return is here mentioned before *Elizabeth*'s being deliver'd, becauſe the Evangeliſt would finiſh this Paſſage concerning *Mary*, before he proceeded with the Story of *Elizabeth*, yet that *Mary* ſtaid till her Couſin was (as we ſay) *down and up again*; that ſhe might attend on her, and be with her in her lying-in, and have her own Faith confirm'd by the full Accompliſhment of the Promiſe of God concerning *Elizabeth*. But moſt bind themſelves to the Order of the Story as it lies, and think ſhe return'd again when *Elizabeth* was near her Time, becauſe ſhe ſtill affected Retirement, and therefore would not be there, when the Birth of this Child of Promiſe would draw a great deal of Company to the Houſe. Thoſe in whoſe Hearts Chriſt is form'd, take more Delight than they us'd to do in *ſitting alone*, and *keeping Silence*.

57 Now Eliſabeth's full time came, that ſhe ſhould be delivered; and ſhe brought forth a ſon. 58 And her neighbours and her couſins heard how the Lord had ſhewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoyced with her. 59 And it came to paſs, that on the eighth day they came to circumciſe the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60 And his mother anſwered and ſaid, Not *ſo*; but he ſhall be called John. 61 And they ſaid unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this Name. 62 And they made ſigns to his father, how he would have him called. 63 And he aſked for a writing-table, and wrote, ſaying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. 64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *looſed*, and he ſpake, and praiſed God. 65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all theſe ſayings were noiſed abroad throughout all the hill-countrey of Judea. 66 And all they that had heard *them*, laid *them* up in their hearts, ſaying, What manner of child ſhall this be? And the hand of the Lord was with him.

In theſe Verſes we have,

1. The Birth of *John Baptiſt*, v. 57. Tho' he was conceiv'd in the Womb by Miracle, he continued in the Womb according to the ordinary Courſe of Nature. So did our Saviour. *Elizabeth's full Time came that ſhe ſhould be deliver'd*, and then *ſhe brought forth a Son*. Promis'd Mercies are to be expected, when the *full time* for them is come, and not before.

2. The great Joy that was among all the Relations of the Family, upon this extraordinary Occaſion, *v.* 58. *Her Neighbours and her Couſins heard of it*, for it would be in every Body's Mouth, as next to miraculous: Doctor *Lightfoot* obſerves, that *Hebron* was inhabited by Prieſts of the Family of *Aaron*, and thoſe were the *Couſins* here ſpoken of; but the Fields and Villages about, by the Children of *Judah*, and thoſe were the *Neighbours*. Now theſe here diſcover'd, (1.) A *pious* Regard to God; they acknowledge that *the Lord had magnified his Mercy to her*, ſo the Word is. 'Twas a Mercy to have her Reproach taken away, a Mercy to have her Family built up, and the more being a Family of *Prieſts*, devoted to God, and employ'd for him. Many things concurr'd to make the Mercy *great*, that ſhe had

been long barren, was now old, but eſpecially that the Child ſhould be *great in the Sight of the Lord.* (2.) A *Friendly* Regard to *Elizabeth*; when ſhe rejoyced, they *rejoyced with her*. We ought to take *Pleaſure* in the Proſperity of our Neighbours and Friends, and to be thankful to God for *their* Comforts, as for our own.

3. The Diſpute that was among them concerning the naming him, *v.* 59. *On the eighth Day*, as God had appointed, they *came together* to *circumciſe the Child*; and it was here in *Hebron*, that *Circumciſion* was firſt inſtituted, and *Iſaac*, who like *John Baptiſt* was born *by Promiſe*, was one of the firſt that ſubmitted to it, at leaſt the chief ey'd in the Inſtitution of it. They that rejoyced in the Birth of the Child, came together to the circumciſing of him. *Note*, The greateſt Comfort we can take in our Children, is in *giving them up to God*, and recognizing their Covenant Relation to him. The Baptiſm of our Children ſhould be more our Joy than their Birth.

Now it was the Cuſtom when they circumcis'd their Children, to *name them*; becauſe when *Abram* was circumcis'd, God gave him a New Name, and call'd him *Abraham*; and 'tis not unfit that they ſhould be left *nameleſs*, till they are by Name *given up to God*. Now,

1. Some propos'd that he ſhould be call'd by his Father's Name, *Zacharias*; of which we have not any Inſtance in the Scripture, that the Child ſhould bear the Father's Name, but perhaps it was of late come into Uſe among the Jews, as it is with us; and they intended hereby to do Honour to the Father, who was not likely to have another Child.

2. The Mother oppos'd it, and would have him call'd *John*; having learn'd either by Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, (as is moſt probable) or by Information in Writing from her Husband, that God appointed that ſhould be his Name, *v.* 60. *He ſhall be called Johanan, Gracious*; becauſe he ſhall introduce the Goſpel of Chriſt, wherein God's Grace ſhines more bright than ever.

3. The Relations objected againſt that, v. 61. *There is none of thy Kindred*, none of the Relations of thy Family, that is *called by that Name*; and therefore, if he may not have his Father's Name, yet let him have the Name of ſome of his Kindred, that will take it as a piece of Reſpect to have ſuch a *Child of Wonders* as this named from them. *Note*, As thoſe that *have Friends* muſt *ſhew themſelves Friendly*, ſo thoſe that have Relations muſt be *obliging* to them, in all the uſual Regards that are paid to *Kindred*.

4. They appeal'd to the *Father*, and would try if they could poſſibly get to know his Mind, for it was his Office to *name the Child*, v. 62. They *made Signs* to him, by which it appears he was *Deaf*, as well as *Dumb*; nay, it ſhould ſeem *mindleſs* of any thing, elſe one would think, they ſhould at firſt have deſir'd him to write down his Child's Name, if he had ever yet communicated any Thing by Writing ſince he was *ſtruck*. However, they would carry the Matter as far as they could, and gave him to underſtand what the Diſpute was, which he only could determine; whereupon he made Signs to them to give him a *Table-Book*, ſuch as they then us'd; and with the Pencil he wrote theſe Words: *His Name is John*, v. 63. Not, it ſhall be ſo, or I would have it ſo; but it is ſo; the Matter is determin'd already; the *Angel* had given him that Name. Obſerve, When *Zacharias* could not *ſpeak* he *wrote*. When Miniſters have their Mouths ſtopp'd, that they cannot Preach, yet they may be doing good, as long as they have not their Hands ty'd, that they cannot write. Many of the Martyrs in Priſon wrote Letters to their Friends, which were of great Uſe; bleſſed *Paul* himſelf did ſo. *Zacharias*'s pitching upon the ſame Name that *Elizabeth* had choſen, was a great Surpriſe to the Company, *they marvell'd all*; for they knew that though by Reaſon of his Deafneſs and Dumbneſs, they could not *converſe together*, yet they were both guided by *one and the ſame Spirit*: Or, perhaps they *marvell'd* that he wrote ſo diſtinctly, and intelligently, which (the Stroke he was under being ſomewhat like that of a Palſie) he had not done before.

He thereupon recover'd the Uſe of his Speech, v. 64. *His Mouth was open'd immediately*. The Time prefix'd for his being ſilenc'd, was *till the Day that theſe Things ſhall be fulfilled*, v. 20. not *all the Things* going before concerning *John*'s Miniſtry, but thoſe which relate to his Birth and Name, *v.* 13. and that Time was now expir'd, whereupon the Reſtraint was taken off, and God gave him the *opening of the Mouth again*, as he did to *Ezekiel*, Chap. 3. 27. Doctor *Lightfoot* compares this Caſe of *Zacharias* with that of *Moſes*, Exod. 4. 24, 26. *Moſes* for Diſtruſt is in Danger of his Life, as *Zacharias* for the ſame Fault is *ſtruck Dumb*; but upon the circumciſing of his Child, and recovery of his Faith, there, as here, the Danger is removed. Infidelity clos'd his Mouth, and now Believing opens it again; *he believes, therefore he ſpeaks*: *David* lay under Guilt from the Conception of his Child, till a few Days after its Birth; then *the Lord takes away his Sin*; upon his Repentance, he ſhall not Dye, ſo here he ſhall be no longer Dumb; *his Mouth was open'd, and he ſpake, and praiſed God*. *Note*, When God opens our Lips, our Mouths muſt *ſhew forth his Praiſe*; as good be without our Speech, as not uſe it in *praiſing God*; for then our Tongue is moſt *our Glory*, when it is employ'd for *God's Glory*.

6. Theſe things were told all the Country over, to the great Amazement of all that heard them, *v.* 65, 66. The Sentiments of the People are not to be ſlighted, but taken Notice of. We are here told, (1.) That *theſe Sayings* were *diſcours'd of*, and were the common Talk all about the *Hill Country of Judea*, and it was pity but a Narrative of them had been drawn up, and publiſh'd in the World immediately. (2.) That moſt People who heard of theſe Things, were put in a Conſternation by them; *Fear came on all them that dwelt round about* there. If we have not a *good Hope*, as we ought to have, built upon the Goſpel, we may expect that the Tydings of it will fill us with *Fear*. They believed and trembled, whereas they ſhould have believ'd and triumph'd. (3.) It rais'd the Expectations of People concerning this Child, and oblig'd them to have their Eye upon him, to ſee what he would come to. They *laid up theſe Preſages in their Hearts*, treaſur'd them up in Mind and Memory, as foreſeeing they ſhould hereafter have occaſion to *recollect* them. *Note*, What we hear that may be of Uſe to us, we ſhould *treaſure* up, that we may be able to bring forth for the Benefit of others, things new and old; and when things come to perfection, may be able to look back upon the Preſages of it, and to ſay, 'twas what we might expect. They ſaid *within* themſelves, and ſaid *among* themſelves, *What manner of Child ſhall this be?* What will be the Fruit when theſe are the Buds, or rather, when the *Root* is out of ſuch a *dry Ground?* *Note*, When Children are born into the World, 'tis very uncertain what they will prove; yet ſometimes, there have been early Indications of ſomething great, as in the Birth of *Moſes*, *Samſon*, *Samuel*, and here of *John*. And we have Reaſon to think, that there were ſome of thoſe living at the Time when *John* began his publick Miniſtry, who could, and did remember theſe Things, and relate them to others, which contributed as much as any thing to the *great flocking* there was after him.

Laſtly, 'Tis ſaid, *the Hand of the Lord was with him*, i. e. He was taken under the ſpecial Protection of the Almighty from his Birth, as one deſign'd for ſomething great and conſiderable, and there were many Inſtances of it. It appear'd likewiſe, that the Spirit was at Work upon his Soul very early: As ſoon as he began to ſpeak, or go, you might perceive ſomething in him very extraordinary. *Note*, God has ways of operating upon Children in their Infancy, which we cannot account for. God never made a Soul, but he knew how to ſanctifie it.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the
holy Ghoſt, and propheſied, ſaying, 68 Bleſſed be the
Lord God of Iſrael, for he hath viſited and redeemed
his people, 69 And hath raiſed up an horn of Salvation
for us, in the houſe of his ſervant David;
70 As he ſpake by the mouth of his holy prophets,
which have been ſince the world began; 71 That we
ſhould be ſaved from our enemies, and from the hand
of all that hate us. 72 To perform the mercy *promiſed*
to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant:
73 The oath which he ſware to our father Abraham,
74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered
out of the hands of our enemies, might ſerve
him without fear, 75 In holineſs and righteouſneſs
before him, all the days of our life. 76 And thou,
child, ſhalt be called the prophet of the Higheſt: for
thou ſhalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare
his ways; 77 To give knowledge of ſalvation unto
his people, by the remiſſion of their ſins, 78 Through
the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day-ſpring
from on high hath viſited us, 79 To give light to them
that ſit in darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of death, to
guide our feet into the way of peace. 80 And the
child grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit, and was in
the deſerts till the day of his ſhewing unto Iſrael.

We have here the Song wherewith *Zacharias praiſed God* when his *Mouth* was *open'd*, in it he is ſaid to *Propheſie*; v. 67. and ſo he did, in the ſtricteſt Senſe of *Propheſying*, for he foretold Things to come concerning the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, to which all the Prophets are Witneſs. Obſerve,

1. How he was qualified for this: He was *filled with the holy Ghoſt*, was endued with more than ordinary Meaſures and Degrees of it, for this Purpoſe. He was Divinely inſpir'd. God not only *forgave* him his Unbelief and Diſtruſt, which was ſignified by diſcharging of him from the Puniſhment of it, but as a *Specimen* of the *abounding* of Grace towards Believers, he *fill'd him* with the *Holy Ghoſt*, and put this Honour upon him, to employ him for his Honour.

2. What the Matter of his Song was. Here's nothing ſaid of the private Concerns of his own Family, the rolling away the Reproach from it, and putting of a Reputation upon it by the Birth of this Child, though, no doubt, he found a Time to

give Thanks to God for this, with his Family: But in this Song, he is wholly taken up with the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, and the publick Bleſſings to be introduc'd by it: He could have little Pleaſure in this *fruitfulneſs* of his *Vine*, and the *hopefulneſs* of his *Olive Plant*, if herein he had not foreſeen the *good of Jeruſalem*, *Peace upon Iſrael*, and *Bleſſings* on both *out of Zion*, Pſalm 121. 3, 5, 6. The Old Teſtament Propheſies are expreſs'd many times in *Praiſes*, and *new Songs*, ſo is this beginning of New Teſtament Prophecy, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael*. The *God of the whole Earth ſhall he be called*; yet *Zacharias*, ſpeaking of the Work of Redemption, called him the *Lord God of Iſrael*, becauſe to Iſrael the Propheſies, Promiſes and Types of the Redemption had hitherto been given, and to them the firſt Proffers and Propoſals of it were now to be made. *Iſrael* as a choſen People, was a Type of the *Elect of God* out of all Nations, whom God had a particular Eye to, in ſending the Saviour; and therefore he is therein called the *Lord God of Iſrael*.

Now *Zacharias* here bleſſeth God,

Firſt, For the Work of *Salvation* that was to be wrought out by the *Meſſiah* himſelf, *v.* 68,—75. This is it that *fills him*, when he is *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, and 'tis that which all that have the *Spirit of Chriſt* are *full of*.

1. In ſending the *Meſſiah*, God has *made a gracious Viſit* to his People, whom for many Ages he had ſeem'd to neglect, and to be eſtranged from; he hath *viſited them*, as a Friend, to take cognizance of their Caſe. God is ſaid to have *viſited* his People in Bondage, when he *deliver'd* them, *Exod.* 3. 16.—4. 31. to have *viſited* his People in Famine, when he *gave them Bread*, Ruth 1. 6. He had often ſent to them by his Prophets, and had ſtill kept up a Correſpondence with them, but now he himſelf made them a *Viſit*.

2. He has *wrought out a Redemption* for them; he hath *redeem'd his People*: This was the Errand on which Chriſt *came into the World*, to redeem thoſe that were ſold *for Sin*, and ſold *under Sin*; even God's own People, his Iſrael, his Son, his *firſt born*, his *free born* need to be *Redeemed*, and are undone if they be not. Chriſt redeems them by *Price* out of the Hands of God's Juſtice, and redeems them by *Power* out of the Hands of Satan's Tyranny, as *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*.

3. He has fulfill'd the *Covenant of Royalty* made with the moſt Famous *Old Teſtament Prince*, that was *David*: Glorious Things had been ſaid of his Family, that on him, as a *mighty One*, *Help* ſhould be *laid*, that *his Horn ſhould be exalted*, and his *Seed* perpetuated, *Pſalm* 89. 19, 20, 24, 29. But that Family had been long in a manner *caſt off* and *abhorred*, Pſalm 89. 38. Now here it is gloried in, that according to the Promiſe, the *horn* of *David* ſhould again be *made to Bud*, for *Pſalm* 132. 27. He hath *raiſed up an Horn of Salvation for us, in the Houſe of his Servant David*, v. 69. there where it was promis'd, and expected to ariſe. *David* is call'd God's *Servant*, not only as a good Man, but as a King that *rul'd for God*: And he was an Inſtrument of the *Salvation* of Iſrael, by being employ'd in the *Government* of Iſrael, ſo Chriſt is the *Author of eternal Redemption to thoſe* only *that obey him*. There is in Chriſt, and in him only *Salvation for us*, and it is a *Horn of Salvation*; for (1.) It is an *honourable Salvation*, 'tis *rais'd up* above all other Salvations, none of which are to be compar'd with it: In it the Glory both of the Redeemer, and of the Redeemed are advanc'd, and their *Horn exalted with Honour*. (2.) It is a *plentiful Salvation*; 'tis a *Cornucopia*, a Horn of Plenty, a *Salvation*, in which we are bleſſed with *Spiritual Bleſſings in Heavenly Things* abundantly. (3.) It is a *powerful Salvation*, the Strength of the Beaſt is in his *Horn*; he hath rais'd up ſuch a Salvation as ſhall *pull down* our Spiritual Enemies, and *protect* us from them. In the *Chariots* of this *Salvation* the Redeemer ſhall go forth, and go on *conquering, and to conquer*.

4. He hath fulfill'd all the precious Promiſes made to the Church by the moſt Famous *Old Teſtament Prophets*, v. 70. *As he ſpake by the Mouth of his Holy Prophets.* His Doctrine of Salvation by the Meſſiah is confirm'd by an Appeal to the Prophets, and the Greatneſs and Importance of that Salvation thereby evidenc'd and magnified; 'tis the ſame they ſpoke of, which therefore ought to be expected and welcom'd: 'Tis what they *enquir'd and ſearch'd diligently after*, 1 Peter 1. 10, 11. and therefore ought not to be ſlighted, or thought meanly of. God is now *doing* that which he has long ago *ſpoken of*, and therefore *be ſilent*, O *all Fleſh*, *before him*, and attend to him. See (1.) How *ſacred* the Propheſies of this Salvation were; the Prophets who deliver'd them were *Holy Prophets*, who durſt not deceive, and who aim'd at promoting Holineſs among Men; and it was the *Holy God* himſelf that *ſpake by* them. (2.) How *ancient* they were; ever *ſince the World began*; God having promis'd when the World began, That the *Seed of the Woman ſhould break the Serpents Head*; that Promiſe was eccho'd to when *Adam* call'd his Wife's Name *Eve*, *Life*, for the ſake of that Seed of hers: When *Eve* call'd her firſt Son *Cain*, ſaying, *I have gotten a Man from the Lord*; and another Son *Seth*, *ſettled*; when *Noah* was call'd *Reſt*, and foretold that God ſhould dwell in the Tents of *Shem*. And it was not long after the New World began in *Noah*, that the Promiſe was made to *Abraham*, that in his Seed the *Nations of the Earth* ſhould be *bleſſed*. (3.) What a wonderful *Harmony* and *Concert* there was among them; God ſpake the ſame thing by them all, and therefore 'tis ſaid to be διὰ στόματος, not by the *Mouths*, but by the *Mouth* of the Prophets, for 'they all ſpake of Chriſt as it were with *one Mouth*.

Now what is this *Salvation* which was propheſied of?

1. It is a *Reſcue* from the Malice of our *Enemies*. It is σωτηρίαν ἐξ ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν, a Salvation out of our Enemies, from among them, and *out of the Power of them that hate us*, v. 71. 'Tis a Salvation from Sin, and the Dominion of Satan over us, both by Corruptions within, and Temptations without. The carnal Jews expected to be deliver'd from under the Roman Yoke, but Intimation was betimes given, that it ſhould be a Redemption of another Nature: He ſhall *ſave his People from their Sins*, that they may not have Dominion over them, *Matt.* 1. 21.

2. It is a *Reſtoration* to the *Favour of God*, 'tis to *perform the Mercy promiſed to our Fore-fathers*, v. 72. The Redeemer ſhall not only break the Serpent's Head, that was the Author of our Ruin, but he ſhall *reinſtate* us in the *Mercy of God*, and *re-eſtabliſh* us in *his Covenant*; he ſhall bring us as 'twere into a Paradiſe again, which was ſignified by the *Promiſes* made to the Patriarchs, and the *Holy Covenant* made with them; *the Oath which he ſware to our Father Abraham*, v. 73. Obſerve, (1.) That which was promis'd to the Fathers, and is perform'd to us, is *Mercy*, pure Mercy, nothing in it is owing to our *Merit*, we deſerve Wrath, and the Curſe, but all to the *Mercy* of God, which *deſign'd* us Grace and Life; *ex mero Motu*, he loved us becauſe he would love us. (2.) God herein had an Eye to *his Covenant*, his *Holy* Covenant, that Covenant with *Abraham*; I *will be a God to thee and thy Seed*. This his Seed had *really forefeited* by their Tranſgreſſions, this he *ſeem'd to have forgotten* in the Calamities brought upon them, but he will now *remember* it, will make it appear that he remembers it, for upon that is grounded all his Returns of Mercy, *Levit.* 26. 42. *Then will I remember my Covenant.*

3. It is a Qualification for, and an Encouragement to the Service of God. This was *the Oath he ſware to our Father Abraham*, That he would *give us* Power and Grace to *ſerve him* in an acceptable manner, and a comfortable Manner to our ſelves, *v.* 74, 75. Here ſeems to be an alluſion to the Deliverance of Iſrael out of *Egypt*, which God tells *Moſes*, was in purſuance of the Covenant he made with *Abraham*, *Exod.* 3. 6, 7, 8. and that this was the Deſign of his bringing them out of *Egypt*, *that they might ſerve God upon this Mountain*, Exod. 3. 12. *Note*, The great Deſign of Goſpel Grace is, not to diſcharge us from, but to engage us to, and encourage us in the Service of God. Under this Notion Chriſtianity was always to be look'd upon, as intended to make us truly religious, to admit us into the Service of God, to bind us in it, and to quicken us in it. We are therefore delivered from the Iron Yoke of Sin, that our Necks may be put under the ſweet and eaſie Yoke of the Lord Jeſus: *The very Bonds which he has looſ'd, do bind us faſter unto him*, Pſalm 116. 16. See *Rom.* 18. 19. We are hereby enabled, (1.) To ſerve God *without Fear*, ἀφόβως; we are therefore put into a State of *holy Safety*, that we might ſerve God with a *holy Security*, and *Serenity of Mind*, as thoſe that are *quiet from the Fears of Evil*. God muſt be ſerv'd with a *filial Fear*, a reverent obedient Fear, an awakening quickening Fear, but not with a *ſlaviſh Fear*, like that of the ſlothful Servant, who repreſented him to himſelf as a *hard Maſter*, and unreaſonable; not with that Fear that has *Torment* and *Amazement* in it; not with the Fear of a Legal Spirit, a *Spirit of Bondage*, but with the Boldneſs of an Evangelical Spirit, a *Spirit of Adoption*. (2.) To ſerve him *in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs*, which includes the whole Duty of Man towards God and our Neighbour. 'Tis both the *Intention*, and the direct Tendency of the Goſpel, to renew upon us that Image of God, in which Man was at firſt made, which conſiſted *in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*, Eph. 4. 24. Chriſt redeem'd us *that we might ſerve God*, not in the Legal Services of Sacrifice and Offerings, but in the *ſpiritual Services* of *Holineſs and Righteouſneſs*, Pſalm 50. 14. (3.) To ſerve him *before him*, in the Duties of his immediate Worſhip, wherein we preſent our ſelves *before the Lord*, to ſerve him as thoſe that have an Eye always upon him, and ſee his Eye always upon us, upon our inward Man; that's ſerving *before him*. (4.) To ſerve him *all the Days of our Life*: The Deſign of the Goſpel is to engage us to Conſtancy, and Perſeverance in the Service of God, by ſhewing us how much depends upon it, that we do not draw back; and by ſhewing us how Chriſt *lov'd us to the End*, and thereby engag'd us to *love him to the End*.

2. He *bleſſeth God* for the Work of *Preparation*, for this Salvation, which was to be done by *John Baptiſt*, v. 76. *Thou Child*, though now but a Child of eight Days old, ſhalt be called *the Prophet of the Higheſt*; Jeſus Chriſt is *the Higheſt*, for he is *God over all, bleſſed for evermore*, Rom. 9. 5. equal with the Father; *John Baptiſt* was *his Prophet*, as *Aaron* was *Moſes*'s Prophet, *Exod.* 7. 1. What he *ſaid* was as his Mouth, what he *did* was as his Harbinger. Prophecy had now long ceaſed, but in *John* it *reviv'd*, as it had done in *Samuel*, who was born of an aged Mother, as *John* was, after a long Ceſſation. *John*'s Buſineſs was,

1. To *prepare* People for the Salvation, by preaching Repentance and Reformation, as great Goſpel Duties; *Thou ſhalt go before the Face of the Lord*, and but a little before him, to *prepare his Ways*, to call People to make room for him, and get ready for his Entertainment. Let every Thing that may obſtruct his Progreſs, or embarraſs it, or may hinder People from coming to him, be taken away: See *Iſa.* 40. 3, 4. Let *Valleys be fill'd*, and *Hills* be brought *low*.

2. To give People a general Idea of the Salvation, that they might know not only what to do, but what to expect; for the Doctrine he preach'd, was, that the *Kingdom of Heaven* is at Hand. There are two Things in which you muſt know this Salvation conſiſts.

1. The *Forgiveneſs* of what we have *done amiſs*; 'tis Salvation *by the Remiſſion of Sins*, thoſe Sins which ſtand in the Way of the Salvation, and by which we were all become liable to Ruin and Condemnation, *v.* 77. *John* Baptiſt gave People to underſtand, that tho' their Caſe was ſad by Reaſon of Sin, it was not deſperate, for Pardon might be obtain'd *through the tender Mercy of our God*; the *Bowels of Mercy*, ſo the Word is: There was nothing in us but a *piteous Caſe* to recommend us to the Divine Compaſſion.

2. *Direction* to *do better* for the Time to come. The Goſpel-Salvation not only encourageth us to hope that the Works of Darkneſs ſhall be forgiven us, but ſets up a clear and true Light, by which we may order our Steps aright. In it *the Day-Spring hath viſited us from on high*, v. 78. and this alſo is owing to the *tender Mercy of our God:* Chriſt is ἀνατολὴ, the *Morning Light*, the *Riſing-Sun*, Mal. 4. 2. The Goſpel brings *Light* with it, *John* 3. 19. leaves us not to wander in Darkneſs of Pagan Ignorance, or in the Moon-Light of the Old Teſtament Types, or Figures, but in it the Day dawns; in *John Baptiſt* it began to break, but increas'd apace, and *ſhone more and more to the perfect Day*. We have as much Reaſon to welcome the Goſpel-Day, who enjoy it, as thoſe have to welcome the Morning who had long waited for it. (1.) The Goſpel is *diſcovering*, it ſhews us that which before we were utterly in the Dark about, *v.* 79. 'tis to *give Light to them that ſit in Darkneſs*, the *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*; the Day-Spring *viſited* this dark World to *lighten the Gentiles*, Acts 26. 18. (2.) It is *reviving*; it brings Light to them that ſit *in the Shadow of Death*, as condemn'd Priſoners in the Dungeon, to bring them the Tidings of a *Pardon*, at leaſt of a *Reprieve*, and Opportunity of procuring a Pardon; it proclaims the *opening of the Priſon*, *Iſa.* 61. 1. brings the *Light of Life:* How pleaſant is that Light! (3.) It is *directing*, 'tis to *guide our Feet into the Way of Peace*, into that Way which will bring us to Peace at laſt. 'Tis not only a Light *to our Eyes*, but a Light *to our Feet*, Pſal. 119. 105. It guides us into the Way of making our Peace with God, of keeping up a comfortable Communion; that *Way of Peace*, which as Sinners, we have wandred from, and *have not known*, Rom. 3. 17. nor could ever have known of ourſelves.

In the laſt Verſe we have a ſhort Account of the younger Years of *John Baptiſt:* Tho' he was the Son of a Prieſt, he did not like *Samuel*, go up when he was a Child, to miniſter before the Lord, for he was to prepare the Way for a better Prieſthood. But we are here told,

1. Of his *Eminency*, as to the *inward Man*. The *Child grew* in Parts, and the Capacities of his Mind much more than other Children; ſo that he *waxed ſtrong in Spirit*, had a ſtrong Judgment, and ſtrong Reſolution. Reaſon and Conſcience (both which are the Candle of the Lord) were ſo ſtrong in him, that he had the inferior Faculties of Appetite and Paſſion in compleat Subjection betimes. By this, it appear'd he was betimes *fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt*, for thoſe that are ſtrong in the Lord, are *ſtrong in Spirit*.

2. Of his *Obſcurity*, as to the *outward Man:* He was *in the Deſarts*; not that he liv'd a *Hermite*, cut off from the Society of Men; no, we have Reaſon to think he went up to *Jeruſalem*, at the *Feaſts*, and frequented the Synagogues on the Sabbath-Day, but his conſtant Reſidence was in ſome of thoſe ſcatter'd Houſes that were in the Wilderneſſes of *Zuph*, or *Maon*, which we read of in the Story of *David*. There he ſpent moſt of his Time in Contemplation, and Devotion, and had not his Education in the Schools, or at the Feet of the Rabbins. *Note*, There's many a one qualified for great Uſefulneſs, who yet is bury'd alive; and many are long ſo, who are deſign'd, and are thereby in the fitting for ſo much greater Uſefulneſs at laſt; as *John Baptiſt*, who was *in the Deſart*, only *till the Day of his ſhewing to Iſrael*, when he was in the 30th Year of his Age. *Note*, There is a Time fix'd for the *ſhewing* of thoſe Favours to *Iſrael*, which are reſerv'd: *The Viſion* of them *is for an appointed Time, and at the End it ſhall Speak, and ſhall not Lye.*

CHAP. II.

In this Chapter we have an Account of the Birth, and Infancy of our Lord Jeſus, having had Notice of his Conception, and of the Birth, and Infancy of his Fore-runner in the former Chapter. The Firſt-begotten *is here* brought into the World, *let us go meet him with our* Hoſanna's, Bleſſed *is* he that cometh. *Here's* (1.) *The Place, and other Circumſtances of his Birth, which ſpake him the true* Meſſiah, *and ſuch a one as we needed, but not ſuch a one as the* Jews *expected*, v. 1,—7. (2.) *The notifying of his Birth to the Shepherds in that Neighbourhood by an Angel, the Song of Praiſe which the Angels ſung upon that Occaſion, and the Spreading of the Report of it by the Shepherds*, v. 9.—20. (3.) *The Circumciſion of Chriſt, and the naming of him*, v. 21. (4.) *The Preſenting of him in the Temple*, v. 22,—24. (5.) *The Teſtimonies of* Simeon, *and* Anna *the Propheteſs, concerning him*, v. 25.—39. (6.) *Chriſt's Growth and Pregnancy*, v. 40. —52. (7.) *His obſerving the Paſſover at twelve Years old, and his diſputing with the Doctors in the Temple*, v. 41—51. *And this, with what we have met with*, Matth. 1, *and* 2. *is all we have concerning our Lord Jeſus, till he enter'd upon his publick Work, in the 30th Year of his Age.*

1 AND it came to paſs in thoſe days, that there went out a decree from Ceſar Auguſtus, that all the world ſhould be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was firſt made when Cyrenius was governour of Syria) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joſeph alſo went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (becauſe he was of the houſe and linage of David.) 5 To be taxed with Mary his eſpouſed wife, being great with child. 6 And ſo it was, that while they were there, the days were accompliſhed that ſhe ſhould be delivered. 7 And ſhe brought forth her firſt-born ſon, and wrapped him in ſwadling clothes, and laid him in a manger, becauſe there was no room for them in the inn.

The *Fulneſs of Time* was now come, when God would ſend forth his Son *made of a Woman*, and *made under the Law*; and it was foretold that he ſhould be born at *Bethlehem:* Now here we have an Account of the Time, Place, and Manner of it.

Firſt, The *Time* when our Lord Jeſus was born: And ſeveral Things may be gather'd out of theſe Verſes, which intimate to us that it was the *proper Time*.

1. He was born at the Time when the *fourth Monarchy* was in its Height, juſt when it was become more than any of the Three before it, a *Univerſal Monarchy*. He was born *in the Days* of *Auguſtus Caeſar*, when the *Roman* Empire extended itſelf further than ever, before or ſince, including *Parthia* one Way, and *Britain* another Way; ſo that it was then call'd *Terrarum Orbis Imperium*, and here that Empire is call'd *all the World*, *v.* 1. for there was ſcarce any Part of the civiliz'd World, but what was dependant on it: Now this was the Time when the Meſſiah was to be born, according to *Daniel*'s Propheſy, *Dan.* 2. 44. *In the Days of theſe Kings*, the Kings of the fourth Monarchy, *ſhall the God of Heaven ſet up a Kingdom which ſhall never be deſtroyed*

2. He was born when *Judea* was become a Province of the Empire, and Tributary to it, as appears evidently by this, that when all the *Roman* Empire was taxed, the *Jews* were taxed among the reſt; *Jeruſalem* was taken by *Pompey*, the *Roman* General, about ſixty Years before this, who granted the Government of the Church to *Hircanus*, but not the Government of the State; and by degrees it was more and more reduc'd, till now at length it was quite ſubdu'd; for *Judea* was rul'd by *Cyreneus*, the *Roman* Governor of *Syria*, *v.* 2. The *Roman* Writers call him *Sulpitius Quirinius*. Now juſt at this Juncture the Meſſiah was to be born, for ſo was dying *Jacob*'s Propheſy, That *Shiloh* ſhould come when the *Scepter* was *departed from* Judah, and the *Law-giver from between his Feet*, Gen. 49. 10. This was the *firſt taxing* that was made in *Judea*, the *firſt* Badge of their Servitude, therefore now *Shiloh* muſt come to ſet up his Kingdom.

3. There is another Circumſtance as to the Time, which is imply'd in this general Enrollment of all the Subjects of the Empire; which is, That there was now a *Univerſal Peace* in the Empire: The Temple of *Janus* was now ſhut, which it never us'd to be, if any Wars were on foot: And now it was fit for the Prince of Peace to be born, in whoſe Days *Swords ſhould be beaten into Plow-Shares*.

Secondly, The *Place* where our Lord Jeſus was born, is very obſervable; he was born at *Bethlehem*, ſo it was foretold, *Mic.* 5. 2. The Scribes ſo underſtood it, *Mat.* 2. 5, 6. ſo did the common People, *John* 7. 42. The Name of the Place was ſignificant, *Bethlehem* ſignifies *The Houſe of Bread*; a proper Place for him to be born in, who is the Bread of Life, the Bread that *came down from Heaven*. But that was not all, *Bethlehem* was the City of *David*, where he was born, and therefore there he muſt be born, who was the *Son of David*. *Zion* was alſo called the City of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 5. 7. yet Chriſt was not born there; for *Bethlehem* was that City of *David*, where he was born in Meaneſs, to be a *Shepherd*; and that our Saviour, when he give Thanks to God for this, with his Family: But in this Song, he is wholly taken up with the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, and the publick Bleſſings to be introduc'd by it: He could have little Pleaſure in this *fruitfulneſs* of his *Vine*, and the *hopefulneſs* of his *Olive Plant*, if herein he had not foreſeen the *good of Jeruſalem*, *Peace upon Iſrael*, and *Bleſſings* on both *out of Zion*, Pſalm 121. 3, 5, 6. The Old Teſtament Propheſies are expreſs'd many times in *Praiſes*, and *new Songs*, ſo is this beginning of New Teſtament Prophecy, *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael.* The *God of the whole Earth ſhall he be called*; yet *Zacharias*, ſpeaking of the Work of Redemption, called him the *Lord God of Iſrael*, becauſe to Iſrael the Propheſies, Promiſes and Types of the Redemption had hitherto been given, and to them the firſt Proffers and Propoſals of it were now to be made. *Iſrael* as a choſen People, was a Type of the *Elect of God* out of all Nations, whom God had a particular Eye to, in ſending the Saviour; and therefore he is therein called the *Lord God of Iſrael.*

Now *Zacharias* here bleſſeth God,

Firſt, For the Work of *Salvation* that was to be wrought out by the *Meſſiah* himſelf, *v.* 68,—75. This is it that *fills him*, when he is *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, and 'tis that which all that have the *Spirit of Chriſt* are *full of.*

1. In ſending the *Meſſiah*, God has *made a gracious Viſit* to his People, whom for many Ages he had ſeem'd to neglect, and to be eſtranged from; he hath *viſited them*, as a Friend, to take cognizance of their Caſe. God is ſaid to have *viſited* his People in Bondage, when he *deliver'd* them, *Exod.* 3. 16.—4. 31. to have *viſited* his People in Famine, when he *gave them Bread*, Ruth 1. 6. He had often ſent to them by his Prophets, and had ſtill kept up a Correſpondence with them, but now he himſelf made them a *Viſit.*

2. He has *wrought out a Redemption* for them; he hath *redeem'd his People*: This was the Errand on which Chriſt *came into the World*, to redeem thoſe that were ſold *for Sin*, and ſold *under Sin*; even God's own People, his Iſrael, his Son, his *firſt born*, his *free born* need to be *Redeemed*, and are undone if they be not. Chriſt redeems them by *Price* out of the Hands of God's Juſtice, and redeems them by *Power* out of the Hands of Satan's Tyranny, as *Iſrael* out of *Egypt.*

3. He has fulfill'd the *Covenant of Royalty* made with the moſt Famous *Old Teſtament Prince*, that was *David*: Glorious Things had been ſaid of his Family, that on him, as a *mighty One*, *Help* ſhould be *laid*, that *his Horn ſhould be exalted*, and his *Seed* perpetuated, *Pſalm* 89. 19, 20, 24, 29. But that Family had been long in a manner *caſt off* and *abhorred*, Pſalm 89. 38. Now here it is gloried in, that according to the Promiſe, the *horn* of *David* ſhould again be *made to Bud*, for *Pſalm* 132. 27. He hath *raiſed up an Horn of Salvation for us, in the Houſe of his Servant David*, v. 69. there where it was promis'd, and expected to ariſe. *David* is call'd God's *Servant*, not only as a good Man, but as a King that *rul'd for God*: And he was an Inſtrument of the *Salvation* of Iſrael, by being employ'd in the *Government* of Iſrael, ſo Chriſt is the *Author of eternal Redemption to thoſe* only *that obey him.* There is in Chriſt, and in him only *Salvation for us*, and it is a *Horn of Salvation*; for (1.) It is an *honourable Salvation*, 'tis *rais'd up* above all other Salvations, none of which are to be compar'd with it: In it the Glory both of the Redeemer, and of the Redeemed are advanc'd, and their *Horn exalted with Honour.* (2.) It is a *plentiful Salvation*; 'tis a *Cornucopia*, a Horn of Plenty, a *Salvation*, in which we are bleſſed with *Spiritual Bleſſings in Heavenly Things* abundantly. (3.) It is a *powerful Salvation*, the Strength of the Beaſt is in his *Horn*; he hath rais'd up ſuch a Salvation as ſhall *pull down* our Spiritual Enemies, and *protect* us from them. In the *Chariots* of this *Salvation* the Redeemer ſhall go forth, and go on *conquering, and to conquer.*

4. He hath fulfill'd all the precious Promiſes made to the Church by the moſt Famous *Old Teſtament Prophets*, v. 70. *As he ſpake by the Mouth of his Holy Prophets.* His Doctrine of Salvation by the Meſſiah is confirm'd by an Appeal to the Prophets, and the Greatneſs and Importance of that Salvation thereby evidenc'd and magnified; 'tis the ſame they ſpoke of, which therefore ought to be expected and welcom'd: 'Tis what they *enquir'd and ſearch'd diligently after*, 1 Peter 1. 10, 11. and therefore ought not to be ſlighted, or thought meanly of. God is now *doing* that which he has long ago *ſpoken of*, and therefore *be ſilent*, O *all Fleſh*, *before him*, and attend to him. See (1.) How *ſacred* the Propheſies of this Salvation were; the Prophets who deliver'd them were *Holy Prophets*, who durſt not deceive, and who aim'd at promoting Holineſs among Men; and it was the *Holy God* himſelf that *ſpake by* them. (2.) How *ancient* they were; ever *ſince the World began*; God having promis'd when the World began, That the *Seed of the Woman ſhould break the Serpents Head*; that Promiſe was eccho'd to when *Adam* call'd his Wife's Name *Eve*, *Life*, for the ſake of that Seed of hers: When *Eve* call'd her firſt Son *Cain*, ſaying, *I have gotten a Man from the Lord*; and another Son *Seth*, *ſettled*; when *Noah* was call'd *Reſt*, and foretold that God ſhould dwell in the Tents of *Shem.* And it was not long after the New World began in *Noah*, that the Promiſe was made to *Abraham*, that in his Seed the *Nations of the Earth* ſhould be *bleſſed.* (3.) What a wonderful *Harmony* and *Concert* there was among them; God ſpake the ſame thing by them all, and therefore 'tis ſaid to be διὰ στόματος, not by the *Mouths*, but by the *Mouth* of the Prophets, for they all ſpake of Chriſt as it were with *one Mouth.*

Now what is this *Salvation* which was propheſied of?

1. It is a *Reſcue* from the Malice of our *Enemies.* It is σωτηρίαν ἐξ ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν, a Salvation out of our Enemies, from among them, and *out of the Power of them that hate us*, v. 71. 'Tis a Salvation from Sin, and the Dominion of Satan over us, both by Corruptions within, and Temptations without. The carnal Jews expected to be deliver'd from under the Roman Yoke, but Intimation was betimes given, that it ſhould be a Redemption of another Nature: He ſhall *ſave his People from their Sins*, that they may not have Dominion over them, *Matt.* 1. 21.

2. It is a *Reſtoration* to the *Favour of God*, 'tis to *perform the Mercy promiſed to our Fore-fathers*, v. 72. The Redeemer ſhall not only break the Serpent's Head, that was the Author of our Ruin, but he ſhall *reinſtate* us in the *Mercy of God*, and *re-eſtabliſh* us in *his Covenant*; he ſhall bring us as 'twere into a Paradiſe again, which was ſignified by the *Promiſes* made to the Patriarchs, and the *Holy Covenant* made with them; *the Oath which he ſware to our Father Abraham*, v. 73. Obſerve, (1.) That which was promis'd to the Fathers, and is perform'd to us, is *Mercy*, pure Mercy, nothing in it is owing to our *Merit*, we deſerve Wrath, and the Curſe, but all to the *Mercy* of God, which *deſign'd* us Grace and Life; *ex mero Motu*, he loved us becauſe he would love us. (2.) God herein had an Eye to *his Covenant*, his *Holy* Covenant, that Covenant with *Abraham*; I *will be a God to thee and thy Seed.* This his Seed had *really forefeited* by their Tranſgreſſions, this he *ſeem'd to have forgotten* in the Calamities brought upon them, but he will now *remember* it, will make it appear that he remembers it, for upon that is grounded all his Returns of Mercy, *Levit.* 26. 42. *Then will I remember my Covenant.*

3. It is a Qualification for, and an Encouragement to the Service of God. This was *the Oath he ſware to our Father Abraham*, That he would *give us* Power and Grace to *ſerve him* in an acceptable manner, and a comfortable Manner to our ſelves, *v.* 74, 75. Here ſeems to be an alluſion to the Deliverance of Iſrael out of *Egypt*, which God tells *Moſes*, was in purſuance of the Covenant he made with *Abraham*, *Exod.* 3. 6, 7, 8. and that this was the Deſign of his bringing them out of *Egypt*, *that they might ſerve God upon this Mountain*, Exod. 3. 12. *Note*, The great Deſign of Goſpel Grace is, not to diſcharge us from, but to engage us to, and encourage us in the Service of God. Under this Notion Chriſtianity was always to be look'd upon, as intended to make us truly religious, to admit us into the Service of God, to bind us in it, and to quicken us in it. We are therefore delivered from the Iron Yoke of Sin, that our Necks may be put under the ſweet and eaſie Yoke of the Lord Jeſus: *The very Bonds which he has looſ'd, do bind us faſter unto him*, Pſalm 116. 16. See *Rom.* 18. 19. We are hereby enabled, (1.) To ſerve God *without Fear*, ἀφόβως; we are therefore put into a State of *holy Safety*, that we might ſerve God with a *holy Security*, and *Serenity of Mind*, as thoſe that are *quiet from the Fears of Evil.* God muſt be ſerv'd with a *filial Fear*, a reverent obedient Fear, an awakening quickening Fear, but not with a *ſlaviſh Fear*, like that of the ſlothful Servant, who repreſented him to himſelf as a *hard Maſter*, and unreaſonable; not with that Fear that has *Torment* and *Amazement* in it; not with the Fear of a Legal Spirit, a *Spirit of Bondage*, but with the Boldneſs of an Evangelical Spirit, a *Spirit of Adoption.* (2.) To ſerve him *in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs*, which includes the whole Duty of Man towards God and our Neighbour. 'Tis both the *Intention*, and the direct Tendency of the Goſpel, to renew upon us that Image of God, in which Man was at firſt made, which conſiſted *in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs*, Eph. 4. 24. Chriſt redeem'd us *that we might ſerve God*, not in the Legal Services of Sacrifice and Offerings, but in the *ſpiritual Services* of *Holineſs and Righteouſneſs*, Pſalm 50. 14. (3.) To ſerve him *before him*, in the Duties of his immediate Worſhip, wherein we preſent our ſelves *before the Lord*, to ſerve him as thoſe that have an Eye always upon him, and ſee his Eye always upon us, upon our inward Man; that's ſerving *before him.* (4.) To ſerve him *all the Days of our Life*: The Deſign of the Goſpel is to engage us to Conſtancy, and Perſeverance in the Service of God, by ſhewing us how much depends upon it, that we do not draw back; and by ſhewing us how Chriſt *lov'd us to the End*, and thereby engag'd us to *love him to the End.*

2. He *bleſſeth God* for the Work of *Preparation*, for this Salvation, which was to be done by *John Baptiſt*, v. 76. *Thou Child*, though now but a Child of eight Days old, ſhalt be called *the Prophet of the Higheſt*; Jeſus Chriſt is *the Higheſt*, for he is *God over all, bleſſed for evermore*, Rom. 9. 5. equal with the Father; *John Baptiſt* was *his Prophet*, as *Aaron* was *Moſes*'s Prophet, *Exod.* 7. 1. What he *ſaid* was as his Mouth, what he *did* was as his Harbinger. Prophecy had now long ceaſed, but in *John* it *reviv'd*, as it had done in *Samuel*, who was born of an aged Mother, as *John* was, after a long Ceſſation. *John*'s Buſineſs was,

1. To *prepare* People for the Salvation, by preaching Repentance and Reformation, as great Goſpel Duties; *Thou ſhalt go before the Face of the Lord,* and but a little before him, to *prepare his Ways,* to call People to make room for him, and get ready for his Entertainment. Let every Thing that may obſtruct his Progreſs, or embarraſs it, or may hinder People from coming to him, be taken away: See *Iſa.* 40. 3, 4. Let *Valleys be fill'd,* and *Hills* be brought *low.*

2. To give People a general Idea of the Salvation, that they might know not only what to do, but what to expect; for the Doctrine he preach'd, was, that the *Kingdom of Heaven* is at Hand. There are two Things in which you muſt know this Salvation conſiſts.

1. The *Forgiveneſs* of what we have *done amiſs*; 'tis Salvation *by the Remiſſion of Sins,* thoſe Sins which ſtand in the Way of the Salvation, and by which we were all become liable to Ruin and Condemnation, *v.* 77. *John* Baptiſt gave People to underſtand, that tho' their Caſe was ſad by Reaſon of Sin, it was not deſperate, for Pardon might be obtain'd *through the tender Mercy of our God*; the *Bowels of Mercy,* ſo the Word is: There was nothing in us but a *piteous Caſe* to recommend us to the Divine Compaſſion.

2. *Direction* to *do better* for the Time to come. The Goſpel-Salvation not only encourageth us to hope that the Works of Darkneſs ſhall be forgiven us, but ſets up a clear and true Light, by which we may order our Steps aright. In it *the Day-Spring hath viſited us from on high, v.* 78. and this alſo is owing to the *tender Mercy of our God:* Chriſt is ἀνατολὴ, the *Morning Light,* the *Riſing-Sun,* Mal. 4. 2. The Goſpel brings *Light* with it, *John* 3. 19. leaves us not to wander in Darkneſs of Pagan Ignorance, or in the Moon-Light of the Old Teſtament Types, or Figures, but in it the Day dawns; in *John Baptiſt* it began to break, but increas'd apace, and *ſhone more and more to the perfect Day.* We have as much Reaſon to welcome the Goſpel-Day, who enjoy it, as thoſe have to welcome the Morning who had long waited for it. (1.) The Goſpel is *diſcovering,* it ſhews us that which before we were utterly in the Dark about, *v.* 79. 'tis to *give Light to them that ſit in Darkneſs,* the *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*; the Day-Spring *viſited* this dark World to *lighten the Gentiles,* Acts 26. 18. (2.) It is *reviving*; it brings Light to them that ſit *in the Shadow of Death,* as condemn'd Priſoners in the Dungeon, to bring them the Tidings of a *Pardon,* at leaſt of a *Reprieve,* and Opportunity of procuring a Pardon; it proclaims the *opening of the Priſon, Iſa.* 61. 1. brings the *Light of Life:* How pleaſant is that Light! (3.) It is *directing,* 'tis to *guide our Feet into the Way of Peace,* into that Way which will bring us to Peace at laſt. 'Tis not only a Light *to our Eyes,* but a Light *to our Feet,* Pſal. 119. 105. It guides us into the Way of making our Peace with God, of keeping up a comfortable Communion; that *Way of Peace,* which as Sinners, we have wandred from, and *have not known,* Rom. 3. 17. nor could ever have known of ourſelves.

In the laſt Verſe we have a ſhort Account of the younger Years of *John Baptiſt:* Tho' he was the Son of a Prieſt, he did not like *Samuel,* go up when he was a Child, to miniſter before the Lord, for he was to prepare the Way for a better Prieſthood. But we are here told,

1. Of his *Eminency,* as to the *inward Man.* The *Child grew* in Parts, and the Capacities of his Mind much more than other Children; ſo that he *waxed ſtrong in Spirit,* had a ſtrong Judgment, and ſtrong Reſolution. Reaſon and Conſcience (both which are the Candle of the Lord) were ſo ſtrong in him, that he had the inferior Faculties of Appetite and Paſſion in compleat Subjection betimes. By this, it appear'd he was betimes *fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt,* for thoſe that are ſtrong in the Lord, are *ſtrong in Spirit.*

2. Of his *Obſcurity,* as to the *outward Man:* He was *in the Deſarts*; not that he liv'd a *Hermite,* cut off from the Society of Men; no, we have Reaſon to think he went up to *Jeruſalem,* at the *Feaſts,* and frequented the Synagogues on the Sabbath-Day, but his conſtant Reſidence was in ſome of thoſe ſcatter'd Houſes that were in the Wilderneſſes of *Zuph,* or *Maon,* which we read of in the Story of *David.* There he ſpent moſt of his Time in Contemplation, and Devotion, and had not his Education in the Schools, or at the Feet of the Rabbins. *Note,* There's many a one qualified for great Uſefulneſs, who yet is bury'd alive; and many are long ſo, who are deſign'd, and are thereby in the fitting for ſo much greater Uſefulneſs at laſt; as *John Baptiſt,* who was *in the Deſart,* only *till the Day of his ſhewing to Iſrael,* when he was in the 30th Year of his Age. *Note,* There is a Time fix'd for the *ſhewing* of thoſe Favours to *Iſrael,* which are reſerv'd: *The Viſion* of them *is for an appointed Time, and at the End it ſhall Speak, and ſhall not Lye.*

CHAP. II.

In this Chapter we have an Account of the Birth, and Infancy of our Lord Jeſus, having had Notice of his Conception, and of the Birth, and Infancy of his Fore-runner in the former Chapter. The Firſt-begotten *is here* brought into the World, *let us go meet him with our* Hoſanna's, Bleſſed *is* he that cometh. *Here's* *(1.) The Place, and other Circumſtances of his Birth, which ſpoke him the true* Meſſiah, *and ſuch a one as we needed, but not ſuch a one as the* Jews *expected,* v. 1,—7. *(2.) The notifying of his Birth to the Shepherds in that Neighbourhood by an Angel, the Song of Praiſe which the Angels ſung upon that Occaſion, and the Spreading of the Report of it by the Shepherds,* v. 9.—20. *(3.) The Circumciſion of Chriſt, and the naming of him,* v. 21. *(4.) The Preſenting of him in the Temple,* v. 22,—24. *(5.) The Teſtimonies of* Simeon, *and* Anna *the Propheteſs, concerning him,* v. 25.—39. *(6.) Chriſt's Growth and Pregnancy,* v. 40.—52. *(7.) His obſerving the Paſſover at twelve Years old, and his diſputing with the Doctors in the Temple,* v. 41—51. *And this, with what we have met with,* Matth. 1, *and* 2. *is all we have concerning our Lord Jeſus, till he enter'd upon his publick Work, in the 30th Year of his Age.*

1 **AND it came to paſs in thoſe days, that there went out a decree from Ceſar Auguſtus, that all the world ſhould be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was firſt made when Cyrenius was governour of Syria) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joſeph alſo went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (becauſe he was of the houſe and linage of David.) 5 To be taxed with Mary his eſpouſed wife, being great with child. 6 And ſo it was, that while they were there, the days were accompliſhed that ſhe ſhould be delivered. 7 And ſhe brought forth her firſt-born ſon, and wrapped him in ſwadling clothes, and laid him in a manger, becauſe there was no room for them in the inn.**

The *Fulneſs of Time* was now come, when God would ſend forth his Son *made of a Woman,* and *made under the Law*; and it was foretold that he ſhould be born at *Bethlehem:* Now here we have an Account of the Time, Place, and Manner of it.

Firſt, The *Time* when our Lord Jeſus was born: And ſeveral Things may be gather'd out of theſe Verſes, which intimate to us that it was the *proper Time.*

1. He was born at the Time when the *fourth Monarchy* was in its Height, juſt when it was become more than any of the Three before it, a *Univerſal Monarchy.* He was born *in the Days of Auguſtus Cæſar,* when the *Roman* Empire extended itſelf further than ever, before or ſince, including *Parthia* one Way, and *Britain* another Way; ſo that it was then call'd *Terrarum Orbis Imperium,* and here that Empire is call'd *all the World, v.* 1. for there was ſcarce any Part of the civiliz'd World, but what was dependant on it: Now this was the Time when the Meſſiah was to be born, according to *Daniel's* Propheſy, *Dan.* 2. 44. *In the Days of theſe Kings,* the Kings of the fourth Monarchy, *ſhall the God of Heaven ſet up a Kingdom which ſhall never be deſtroyed*

2. He was born when *Judea* was become a Province of the Empire, and Tributary to it, as appears evidently by this, that when all the *Roman* Empire was taxed, the *Jews* were taxed among the reſt; *Jeruſalem* was taken by *Pompey,* the *Roman* General, about ſixty Years before this, who granted the Government of the Church to *Hircanus,* but not the Government of the State; and by degrees it was more and more reduc'd, till now at length it was quite ſubdu'd; for *Judea* was rul'd by *Cyreneus,* the *Roman* Governor of *Syria, v.* 2. The *Roman* Writers call him *Sulpitius Quirinius.* Now juſt at this Juncture the Meſſiah was to be born, for ſo was dying *Jacob's* Propheſy, That *Shiloh* ſhould come when the *Scepter* was *departed from* Judah, and the *Law-giver from between his Feet,* Gen. 49. 10. This was the *firſt taxing* that was made in *Judea,* the *firſt* Badge of their Servitude, therefore now *Shiloh* muſt come to ſet up his Kingdom.

3. There is another Circumſtance as to the Time, which is imply'd in this general Enrollment of all the Subjects of the Empire; which is, That there was now a *Univerſal Peace* in the Empire: The Temple of *Janus* was now ſhut, which it never us'd to be, if any Wars were on foot: And now it was fit for the Prince of Peace to be born, in whoſe Days *Swords ſhould be beaten into Plow-Shares.*

Secondly, The *Place* where our Lord Jeſus was born, is very obſervable; he was born at *Bethlehem,* ſo it was foretold, *Mic.* 5. 2. The Scribes ſo underſtood it, *Mat.* 2. 5, 6. ſo did the common People, *John* 7. 42. The Name of the Place was ſignificant, *Bethlehem* ſignifies *The Houſe of Bread*; a proper Place for him to be born in, who is the Bread of Life, the Bread that *came down from Heaven.* But that was not all, *Bethlehem* was the City of *David,* where he was born, and therefore there he muſt be born, who was the *Son of David. Zion* was alſo called the City of *David,* 2 *Sam.* 5. 7. yet Chriſt was not born there; for *Bethlehem* was that City of *David,* where he was born in Meaneſs, to be a *Shepherd*; and that our Saviour, when he humbled himſelf, choſe for the Place of his Birth; not *Zion*, where he rul'd in Power and Proſperity, That was to be a Type of the Church of Chriſt, *that Mount Zion.* Now when the Virgin *Mary* was with Child, and near her Time, Providence ſo order'd it, that by Order from the Emperor, all the Subjects of the *Roman Empire* were to be *taxed*; that is, they were to *give in their Names* to the proper Officers, and they were to be *regiſter'd* and *enroll'd*, according to their Families, which is the proper Signification of the Word here us'd, and their being *tax'd* was but Secondary; 'tis ſuppos'd they made Profeſſion of Subjection to the *Roman* Empire, either by ſome ſet Form of Words, or at leaſt, by Payment of ſome ſmall Tribute, a Penny ſuppoſe, in Token of their Allegiance, like a Man's *atturning* Tenant. Thus are they Vaſſals upon Record, and may thank themſelves.

Now according to this *Decree*, the *Jews*, (who were now nice in diſtinguiſhing their Tribes and Families) provided that in their Inrollments particular Care ſhould be had to preſerve the Memory of them. Thus fooliſhly are they ſollicitous to ſave the *Shadow*, when they had loſt the *Subſtance.*

Now that which *Auguſtus* deſign'd, was either to gratify his *Pride*, in knowing the Numbers of his People, and proclaiming it to the World; or he did it in *Policy*, to ſtrengthen his Intereſt, and make his Government appear the more formidable; but Providence had another Reach in it. All the World ſhall be at the Trouble of being *enroll'd*, only that *Joſeph* and *Mary* may; this brought them up from *Nazareth* in *Galilee*, to *Bethlehem* in *Judea*, becauſe they were *of the Stock and Lineage of* David, v. 4, 5. and perhaps being poor and low, they thought the Royalty of their Extraction rather a Burthen and Expence to them, than a Matter of Pride: Becauſe it is difficult to ſuppoſe, that every *Jew* (Women as well as Men) was oblig'd to repair to the City of which their Anceſtors were, and there be enroll'd. Now, at a Time when they kept not to the Bounds of their Tribes as formerly, it may be offer'd as a Conjecture, that this great Exactneſs was us'd only with the *Family of David*, concerning which 'tis probable the Emperor gave particular Orders, it having been the Royal Family, and ſtill *talk'd of*, as deſign'd to be ſo, that he might know the Number and Strength of that. And divers Ends of Providence was ſerv'd by this.

1. Hereby the Virgin *Mary* was brought big with Child to *Bethlehem*, to be *deliver'd* there, according to the Prediction; whereas ſhe had deſign'd to lye in at *Nazareth*. See how *Man purpoſeth, and God diſpoſeth*; and how Providence orders all Things for the fulfilling of the Scripture, and makes Uſe of the Projects Men have for the ſerving their own Purpoſes, quite beyond their Intention to ſerve his.

2. Hereby it appear'd, that *Jeſus Chriſt* was of the *Seed* of *David*, for elſe what brings his Mother to *Bethlehem* now, but becauſe ſhe *was of the Stock and Lineage of* David? And this was a material Thing to be prov'd, and requir'd ſuch an *Authentick* Proof as this. *Juſtin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, two of the moſt early Advocates for the Chriſtian Religion, appeal to theſe *Rolls* or *Records* of the *Roman Empire*, for the Proof of Chriſt's being born of the Houſe of *David.*

3. Hereby it appear'd that he was *made under the Law*, for he became a Subject of the *Roman Empire* as ſoon as he was born, a *Servant of Rulers*, Iſa. 49. 7. Many ſuppoſe that being born during the Time of the Taxing, he was enroll'd as well as his Father and Mother, that it might appear how *he made himſelf of no Reputation*, and *took upon him the Form of a Servant*; inſtead of having Kings Tributaries to him, when he came into the World he was himſelf a Tributary.

Thirdly, The Circumſtances of his Birth, which were very *mean*, and under all poſſible Marks of Contempt. He was indeed a *Firſt-born Son*, but it was poor Honour to be the Firſt-born of ſuch a poor Woman as *Mary* was, who had no Inheritance to which he might be entitled as Firſt-born, but what was *in Nativity.*

1. He was under ſome Abaſements in common with other Children; he *was wrapped in ſwadling Clothes*, as other Children are, when they are new born, as if he could be bound, or needed to be kept ſtraight. He that makes Darkneſs a *ſwadling Band for the Sea*, was himſelf wrapp'd in *ſwadling Bands*, Job. 38. 9. The Everlaſting Father became a Child of Time, and Men ſaid of him, whoſe Out-going were of Old from Everlaſting, *We know this Man whence he is*, Joh. 7. 27. The Ancient of Days became an Infant of a Span-long.

2. He was under ſome Abaſements peculiar to himſelf.

1. He was born *at an Inn.* That Son of *David* that was the Glory of his Father's Houſe, had no Inheritance that he could command, no, not in the City of *David*; no, nor a Friend that would accommodate his Mother in Diſtreſs, with Lodgings to be brought to Bed in. Chriſt was born *in an Inn*, to intimate, that he came into the World but to ſojourn here for a while, as in an Inn, and to teach us to do likewiſe. An Inn receives *all Comers*, and ſo doth Chriſt. He hangs out the Banner of Love for his Sign, and whoever comes to him, he will in no wiſe caſt out; only, unlike other Inns, he welcomes thoſe that come *without Money and without Price.* All on Free-Coſt.

2. He was born *in a Stable*; ſo ſome think the Word ſignifies, which we tranſlate *a Manger*; a Place for Cattle to ſtand to be fed in, becauſe there was *no Room in the Inn*; and for want of Conveniencies, nay, for want of Neceſſaries, he was laid *in the Manger*, inſtead of a Cradle. And the Word which we render *ſwadling Clothes*, ſome derive from a Word that ſignifies to *rend* or *tear*; and thence infer, that he was ſo far from having a good Suit of Childbed Linnen, that his very Swaddles were ragged and torn. His being born in a *Stable*, and *laid in a Manger*, was an Inſtance (1.) Of the Poverty of his Parents; had they been rich, Room would have been made for them, but being poor, they muſt *ſhift* as they *could*. (2.) Of the Corruption and Degeneracy of Manners in that Age; that a Woman in Reputation for Vertue and Honour, ſhould be us'd ſo barbarouſly. If there had been any common Humanity among them, they would not have turn'd a Woman in Travel into a Stable. (3.) 'Twas an Inſtance of the Humiliation of our Lord Jeſus. We were become by Sin like an out-caſt Infant, helpleſs and forlorn; and ſuch a one Chriſt was. Thus he would anſwer the Type of *Moſes*, the Great Prophet, and Law-giver of the Old Teſtament, who was in his Infancy caſt out in an Ark of Bulruſhes, as Chriſt *in a Manger.* Chriſt would hereby put a Contempt upon all Worldly Glory, and teach us to ſlight it. Since *his own received him not*, let us not think ſtrange if they *receive us not.*

8 And there were in the ſame country, ſhepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them; and they were ſore afraid. 10 And the angel ſaid unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Chriſt the Lord. 12 And this *ſhall be* a ſign unto you; Ye ſhall find the babe wrapped in ſwaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And ſuddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hoſt praiſing God, and ſaying, 14 Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, good will towards men. 15 And it came to paſs, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the ſhepherds ſaid one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and ſee this thing which is come to paſs, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haſte, and found Mary and Joſeph, and the babe lying in the manger. 17 And when they had ſeen *it*, they made known abroad the ſaying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard *it*, wonder'd at thoſe things which were told them by the ſhepherds. 19 But Mary kept all theſe things, and pondered *them* in her heart. 20 And the ſhepherds returned, glorifying and praiſing God for all the things that they had heard and ſeen, as it was told unto them.

The meaneſt Circumſtances of Chriſt's Humiliation, were all along attended with ſome Diſcoveries of his Glory to balance them, and take off the Offence of them; for even when he humbled himſelf, God did in ſome Meaſure exalt him, and gave him Earneſts of his future Exaltation. When we ſaw him *wrap'd in ſwadling Clothes*, and *laid in a Manger*, we were tempted to ſay, ſure this cannot be the *Son of God*; but ſee his Birth attended as it is here, with a Choir of Angels, and we ſhall ſay, ſurely it can be no other but the *Son of God*, concerning whom it was ſaid, when he was *brought into the World*, *Let all the Angels of God worſhip him*, Heb. 1. 6.

We had in *Matthew* an Account of the Notice given of the Arrival of this Embaſſador, this Prince from Heaven, to the wiſe Men who were Gentiles, by a Star; here we are told of the Notice given of it to the Shepherds, who were *Jews*, by an Angel: To each God choſe to ſpeak, in the Language they were moſt converſant with.

1. See here how the Shepherds were employ'd, they were *abiding in the Fields* adjoining to *Bethlehem*, and *keeping Watch over their Flocks by Night*, v. 5. The Angel was not ſent to the Chief Prieſts, or the Elders, they were not prepar'd to receive theſe Tidings, but to a Company of poor Shepherds, that were like *Jacob*, *plain Men dwelling in Tents*, not like *Eſau*, *cunning Hunters.* The Patriarchs were Shepherds, *Moſes* and *David* particularly were call'd from keeping Sheep to rule God's People; and by this Inſtance, God would ſhew that he had ſtill a Favour for thoſe of that innocent Employment. Tidings were brought to *Moſes*, of the Deliverance of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, when he was keeping Sheep, and to theſe Shepherds, who, 'tis probable were devout, pious Men; the Tidings were brought of a *greater Salvation.* Obſerve (1.) They were not *ſleeping* in their Beds when this News was brought them (tho' many had very acceptable Intelligence from Heaven in *Slum-*

bring upon the Bed) but *abiding in the Fields* and *watching.* Thoſe that would hear from God, muſt *ſtir up themſelves.* They were broad awake, and therefore could not be deceiv'd in what they ſaw and heard, ſo as thoſe may who are half aſleep. (2.) They were not now employ'd in Acts of Devotion, but in the Buſineſs of their Calling; they were *keeping watch over their Flock,* to ſecure them from Thieves and Beaſts of Prey, it probably being in the Summer Time, when they kept their Cattel out all Night as we do now, and did not houſe them. *Note,* We are not out of the Way of divine Viſits, when we are ſenſibly employ'd in an honeſt Calling, and abide with God in it.

2. How they were ſurpriz'd with the Appearance of an Angel to them, *v.* 9. *Behold an Angel of the Lord came upon them,* of a ſudden, ἐπέστη, *ſtood over them*; moſt probably in the Air over their Heads, as coming immediately from Heaven: We read it, *The Angel,* as if it were the ſame that appear'd once and again in the Chapter before, *the Angel Gabriel,* that was cauſed to fly ſwiftly, but that is not certain. The Angel's *coming upon them,* intimates, that they little thought of ſuch a Thing, or expected it; for 'tis in a preventing Way that gracious Viſits are made us from Heaven, *or ever we are aware.* That they might be ſure 'twas an Angel from Heaven, they ſaw and heard the *Glory of the Lord round about them,* ſuch as made the Night as bright as Day; ſuch a Glory as uſed to attend God's Appearance, a heavenly Glory, or, an exceeding great Glory, ſuch as they could not bear the dazling Luſtre of. This made them ſore afraid, put them into a mighty Conſternation, as fearing ſome evil Tidings; while we are conſcious to ourſelves of ſo much Guilt, we have Reaſon to fear, leſt every Expreſs from Heaven be a Meſſenger of Wrath.

3. What the Meſſage was which the Angel had to deliver to the Shepherds, *v.* 10, 11, 12. (1.) He gives a *ſupercedeas* to their *Fears*; *fear not,* for we have nothing to ſay to you that needs be a Terror to you, you need not fear your Enemies, and ſhould not fear your Friends. (2.) He furniſhes them with abundant Matter for Joy. Behold, I *evangelize to you great Joy,* I ſolemnly declare it, and you have Reaſon to bid it Welcome, for it ſhall bring Joy to all People, and not to the People of the Jews only; That unto you is born this Day, at this Time, a Saviour, the Saviour that has been ſo long expected, *which is Chriſt the Lord, in the City of David, v.* 11. *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt,* the Meſſiah, the Anointed; he is the Lord, Lord of all; is a ſoveraign Prince: Nay, he is God, for the Lord, in the *Old Teſtament,* anſwers to *Jehovah.* He is a Saviour, and he will be a Saviour to thoſe only that accept of him for their Lord. The Saviour *is born,* he is born *this Day*; and ſince 'tis Matter of *great Joy to all People,* 'tis not to be kept ſecret, you may proclaim it, may tell it to whom you pleaſe. He is born in the Place where it was foretold he ſhould be born, in the *City of David*; and he is born to you, to you *Jews* he is ſent, in the firſt Place to bleſs you, to you Shepherds, tho' poor and mean in the World. This refers to *Iſa.* 9. 6. *Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.* To you Men, not to us Angels, he took not on him our Nature. This is Matter of Joy, indeed to all People, great Joy, long look'd for is come at laſt: Let Heaven and Earth rejoyce before this Lord, *for he cometh.* (3.) He gives them a Sign for the confirming of their Faith in this Matter. How ſhall we find out this Child in *Bethlehem,* which is now full of the Deſcendants from *David*? You'll find him by this Token, he is lying in a Manger, where ſure never any new born Infant was laid before. They expected to be told, you ſhall find him, tho' a Babe, dreſt up in Robes, and lying in the beſt Houſe in the Town, lying in State, with a numerous Train of Attendants, in rich Liveries; no, you'll find him wrap'd in *Swadling Clothes,* and *laid in a Manger.* When Chriſt was here upon Earth, he diſtinguiſh'd himſelf, and made himſelf remarkable, by nothing ſo much as the Inſtances of his Humiliation.

4. The Angels *Doxology* to God, and *Congratulations* of Men upon this ſolemn Occaſion, *v.* 13, 14. The Meſſage was no ſooner deliver'd by one Angel, that was ſufficient to go Expreſs, but ſuddenly there was with that Angel, *a Multitude of the Heavenly Hoſts,* enough we may be ſure to make a *Chorus* that were heard by the Shepherds *praiſing God*; and to be ſure their Song was not like that, *Rev.* 14. 3. which *no man could learn,* for it was deſign'd we ſhould all learn it. (1.) Let God have the honour of this Work, *Glory to God in the Higheſt.* God's Good-will to Men, manifeſted in ſending the Meſſiah, redounds very much to his Praiſe; and Angels in the higheſt Heavens, tho' not immediately intereſted in it themſelves, yet will celebrate it to his Honour, *Rev.* 5. 11, 12. *Glory to God,* whoſe Kindneſs and Love deſign'd this Favour, and whoſe Wiſdom contriv'd it in ſuch a way, as that one divine Attribute ſhould not be glorify'd at the Expence of another, but the Honour of all effectually ſecur'd and advanc'd. Other Works of God are for his Glory, but the Redemption of the World is for his *Glory in the Higheſt.* (2.) Let Men have the Joy of it; *on Earth Peace, Good-will towards Men.* God's *Good-will* in ſending the Meſſiah, intoduc'd Peace in this lower World, ſlew the Enmity that Sin had rais'd between God and Man, and reſettled a peacable Correſpondence. If God be at Peace with us, all Peace reſults from thence; Peace of Conſcience, Peace with Angels, Peace between Jew and Gentile; Peace is here put for *all Good,* all that Good which flows to us from the Incarnation of Chriſt: All the *Good* we have, or hope, is owing to God's *Good-will*; and if we have the Comfort of it, he muſt have the Glory of it. Nor muſt any *Peace,* any *Good,* be expected in a Way inconſiſtent with the Glory of God; therefore not in any *Way of Sin,* nor in any Way but by a Mediator. Here was the *Peace proclaim'd* with great Solemnity, whoever will, let them come and take the Benefit of it; 'tis on Earth Peace, to *Men of Good Will,* ſo ſome Copies read it, ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκίας; to Men that have a *Good-will to God,* and are willing to be reconcil'd; or, to Men whom God has a *Good-will* to, tho' Veſſels of his Mercy. See how well affected the Angels are to Man, and to his Welfare and Happineſs; how well pleas'd they were in the Incarnation of the Son of God, tho' he paſs'd by their Nature, and ought not we much more to be affected with it. This is a faithful ſaying, atteſted by an innumerable Company of Angels, and well *worthy of all Acceptation,* That *the Good-will of God towards Men, is Glory to God in the Higheſt, and Peace on the Earth.*

5. The Viſit which the Shepherds made to the new-born Saviour. (1.) They conſulted about it, *v.* 15. while the Angels were ſinging their Hymn, they could attend to that only, but *when they were gone away from them into Heaven*; for Angels when they appear'd, never made any long ſtay, but return'd as ſoon as they had diſpatch'd their Buſineſs, *the Shepherds ſaid one to another, let us go to Bethlehem. Note,* When extraordinary Meſſages from the upper World, are no more to be expected, we muſt ſet ourſelves to improve the Advantages we have for the confirming of our Faith, and the keeping up of our Communion with God in this lower World. And it is no Reflection upon the Teſtimony of Angels, no, nor upon a Divine Teſtimony itſelf, to get it corroborated by Obſervation and Experience. But obſerve, theſe Shepherds do not ſpeak doubtfully, let us go ſee whether it be ſo or no; but with Aſſurance, *Let us go ſee this Thing which is come to paſs*; for, what Room was left to doubt of it, when *the Lord had* thus *made it known to them*; the *Word ſpoken by Angels was ſtedfaſt* and unqueſtionably true. (2.) They immediately made the Viſit, *v.* 16. They loſt no Time, but *came with Haſte* to the Place, which probably, the Angel directed them to more particularly than is recorded: Go to the Stable of ſuch an Inn, and there *they found Mary and Joſeph,* and *the Babe lying in the Manger*; and the Poverty and Meanneſs in which they found *Chriſt the Lord,* was no Shock to their Faith, who themſelves knew what it was to live a Life of comfortable Communion with God, in very poor and mean Circumſtances. We have Reaſon to think, that the Shepherds told *Joſeph* and *Mary* of the Viſion of the Angels they had ſeen, and the Song of the Angels they had heard, which was a great Encouragement to them, more than if a Viſit had been made them by the beſt Ladies in the Town. And 'tis probable, *Joſeph* and *Mary* told the Shepherds what Viſions they had had concerning the Child; and ſo by communicating their Experiences to each other, they greatly ſtrengthned one another's Faith.

6. The Care which the Shepherds took to ſpread the Report of this, *v.* 17. *when they had ſeen it,* tho' they ſaw nothing in the Child, that ſhould induce them to believe that he was *Chriſt the Lord,* yet the Circumſtances, how mean ſoever they were, agreeing with the Sign that the Angel had given them, they were abundantly ſatisfy'd: And as the Lepers argued, 2 *Kings* 7. 9. This being *a Day of good Tidings,* they dare not *hold their Peace,* but *make known Abroad* the whole Story of what was *told them,* both by the *Angels,* and by *Joſeph* and *Mary, concerning this Child,* That he was the *Saviour,* even *Chriſt the Lord,* That in him there is *Peace on Earth,* and that he was *conceiv'd by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt,* and *born of a Virgin.* This they told to every Body, and agreed in their Teſtimony concerning it: And now, if when he *is in the World,* the World knows him not, it is *their own Faults,* for they have ſufficient Notice given them. And what Impreſſion did it make upon People? Why truly, *All they that heard it, wonder'd at thoſe Things which were told them by the Shepherds, v.* 18. The Shepherds were plain, down-right *honeſt Men,* and they could not ſuſpect them guilty of any Deſign to impoſe upon them; what they ſaid, therefore, it's likely might be true; and if it were true, they could not but wonder at it, That the *Meſſiah* ſhould be born *in a Stable,* and not in a Palace; that Angels ſhould bring News of it to *poor Shepherds,* and not to the chief Prieſts. They wonder'd, but never *enquired any farther* about the Saviour, their Duty to him, or Advantages by him, but let the Thing drop as a *nine Days Wonder*: O the amazing Stupidity of the Men of that Generation! Juſtly were the Things which belong'd to their Peace *hid from their Eyes,* when they thus wilfully *ſhut their Eyes* againſt them.

7 The Uſe which thoſe made of thoſe Things who did believe them, and receive the Impreſſion of them.

1. The Virgin *Mary* made them the Matter of her *private Meditation.* She ſaid little, but *kept all theſe Things,* and *ponder'd them in her Heart,* v. 19. She laid the Evidences together, and kept them in Reſerve, to be compared with the Diſcoveries that ſhould after be made her. As ſhe had ſilently left

it to God to clear up her Honeſty, when that was ſuſpected, ſo ſhe ſilently leaves it to him to publiſh her Honour, now when it was vail'd; and 'tis Satisfaction enough to find, that if nobody elſe takes Notice of the Birth of her Child, Angels do. *Note*, The Truths of Chriſt are worth keeping; and the Way to keep them ſafe, is to ponder them: Meditation is the beſt Help to Memory.

2. The *Shepherds* made them the Matter of their more publick Praiſes. If others were not affected with thoſe Things, yet they themſelves were, *v.* 20. They *return'd glorifying and praiſing God*, in Concurrence with the Holy Angels: If others would not regard the Report they made to them, God would accept the Thankſgivings they offer'd to him. They praiſ'd God for what *they had heard* from the Angel, and for what *they had ſeen*, the Babe *in the Manger*; and juſt then *in the Swadling*, when they came in, as it had been ſpoken to them. They thanked God they had ſeen Chriſt, tho' in the Depth of his Humiliation, as afterwards the Croſs of Chriſt, ſo now his *Manger*, tho' to ſome it was *Fooliſhneſs*, and a *Stumbling-Block*, yet others ſaw in it, and admir'd, and praiſ'd the *Wiſdom of God*, and the *Power of God*.

21 And when eight days were accompliſh'd for the circumciſing of the child, his name was called Jeſus, which was ſo named of the Angel before he was conceived in the womb. 22 And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moſes, were accompliſhed, they brought him to Jeruſalem, to preſent him to the Lord, 23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb ſhall be called holy to the Lord) 24 And to offer a ſacrifice acording to that which is ſaid in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

Our Lord Jeſus being *made of a Woman, was made under the Law*, *Gal.* 4. 4. He was not only as the Son of a Daughter of *Adam*, made under the Law of Nature, but as the Son of a Daughter of *Abraham*, he was made under the Law of *Moſes*; he puts his Neck under that Yoke, tho' it was a heavy Yoke, and a *Shadow of good Things to come*: And tho' its Inſtitutions were *beggerly Elements*, and *Rudiments of this World*, as the Apoſtle calls them, Chriſt ſubmitted to it, that he might with the *better Grace* cancel it, and ſet it aſide for us.

Now here we have two Inſtances of his being made under that Law, and ſubmitting to it.

1. He was *circumciſ'd* on the very Day that the Law appointed, *v.* 21. *When eight Days were accompliſh'd*, that Day Sevennight that he was born, they *circumciſ'd* him. (1.) Tho' it was a *painful* Operation, *ſurely a bloody Husband thou art*, ſaith *Zipporah* to *Moſes*, *becauſe of the Circumciſion*, *Exod.* 4. 25. yet Chriſt would undergo it for us; nay, therefore he ſubmitted to it, to give an Inſtance of his early Obedience, his Obedience unto Blood. Then he ſhed his Blood by Drops, which afterwards he pour'd out in purple Streams. (2.) Tho' it ſuppoſed him a Stranger, that was, by that Ceremony, to be admitted into Covenant with God, whereas he had always been his *beloved Son*: Nay, tho' it ſuppos'd him a *Sinner*, that needed to have his Filthineſs taken away, whereas he had no Impurity, or Superfluity of Naughtineſs to be cut off, *yet* he ſubmitted to it; nay, *therefore* he ſubmitted to it, becauſe he would be made in the Likeneſs not only of *Fleſh*, but of *ſinful Fleſh*, *Rom.* 8. 3. (3.) Tho' thereby he made himſelf a *Debtor to the whole Law*, *Gal.* 5. 3. yet he ſubmitted to it; nay, *therefore* he ſubmitted to it, becauſe he would take upon him the Form of a Servant, tho' he was Free-born. Chriſt was circumciſ'd, (1.) That he might own himſelf of the Seed of *Abraham*, and of that Nation *of whom as concerning the Fleſh Chriſt came*, and who was to *take on him the Seed of Abraham*, *Heb.* 2. 16. (2.) That he might own himſelf a Surety for our Sins, and an Undertaker for our Safety. Circumciſion (ſaith Dr. *Goodwin*) was our *Bond* whereby we acknowledg'd ourſelves *Debtors to the Law*; and Chriſt, by being circumciſ'd, did, as it were, ſet his Hand to it, *being made Sin for us*. The Ceremonial Law conſiſted much in Sacrifices, Chriſt hereby oblig'd himſelf to offer not the Blood of Bulls or Goats, but his own Blood, which none that ever were circumciſ'd could oblige themſelves to, but he only. (3.) That he might juſtify and put an Honour upon the Dedication of the Infant Seed of the Church to God by that Ordinance which is the inſtituted Seal of the Covenant, and of the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith, as Circumciſion was, (*Rom.* 4. 11.) and Baptiſm is. And certainly his being circumciſ'd at eight Days old, doth make much more for the dedicating of the Seed of the Faithful by Baptiſm, in their Infancy, then his being baptiz'd at thirty Years old doth for the deferring of it till they are grown up. The Change of the Ceremony alters not the Subſtance.

At his Circumciſion, according to the Cuſtom, he had his Name given him; he was called *Jeſus*, or *Joſhua*, for he was *ſo named of the Angel* to his Mother *Mary*, *before he was conceiv'd in the Womb*, *Luke* 1. 31. and to his ſuppos'd Father *Joſeph* after, *Mat.* 1. 21. (1.) It was a *common Name* among the Jews, as *John* was, (*Col.* 4. 11.) and in this he would be made *like unto his Brethren*. (2.) It was the Name of two eminent Types of him in the Old Teſtament, *Joſhua*, the Succeſſor of *Moſes*, that was Commander of *Iſrael*, and Conqueror of *Canaan*, and *Joſhua* the High Prieſt, who was therefore purpoſely crown'd, that he might prefigure Chriſt as *a Prieſt upon his Throne*, *Zach.* 6. 11, 13. (3.) It was very ſignificant of his Undertaking: *Jeſus* ſignifies a *Saviour*. He would be denominated not from the Glories of his divine Nature, but from his gracious Deſigns as Mediator, he *brings Salvation*.

2. He was *preſented* in the Temple: This was done with an Eye to the Law, and at the Time appointed by the Law, when he was forty Days old, *when the Days of her Purification was accompliſh'd*, v. 22. many Copies, and authentick ones, read αὐτῶν for αὐτῆς, *the Days of their Purification*, the Purification both of the Mother and of the Child, for ſo it was intended to be by the Law; and our Lord Jeſus, tho' he had no Impurity to be cleans'd from, yet ſubmitted to it, as he did to Circumciſion, becauſe he was made *Sin for us*; and that, as by the *Circumciſion of Chriſt*, we might be *circumciſ'd* in the Virtue of our Union, and Communion with him, with a Spiritual Circumciſion *made without Hands*, *Col.* 2. 11. So in the *Purification* of Chriſt, we might be ſpiritually purified from that Filthineſs and Corruption which we brought into the World with us. Now, according to the Law,

1. The Child Jeſus being a Firſt-born Son, was preſented to the Lord in one of the Courts of the Temple: The Law is here recited, v. 23. *every Male that opens the Womb ſhall be called Holy to the Lord*, becauſe by a ſpecial Writ of Protection, the Firſt-born of *Iſrael* were preſerv'd, when the Firſt-born of the *Egyptians* were ſlain by the deſtroying Angel; ſo that the Chriſt, as Firſt-born, was a Prieſt by a Title ſurer than that of *Aaron's* Houſe. Chriſt was the Firſt-born among many Brethren, and was *called Holy to the Lord*, ſo as never any other was, yet he was *preſented to the Lord*, as other Firſt-born were, and no otherwiſe. Tho' he was newly come out of the Boſom of the Father, yet he was preſented to him by the Hands of a Prieſt, as if he had been a Stranger that needed one to introduce him. His being *preſented to the Lord*, now ſignify'd his *preſenting himſelf* to the Lord as Mediator, when he was cauſed to *draw near*, and *approach unto him*, *Jer.* 30. 21. But according to the Law he was *redeemed*, Num. 18. 15. *The Firſt-born of Man ſhalt thou redeem*, and *five Shekels* was the Value, *Lev.* 27. 6. *Num.* 18. 16. But probably in caſe of Poverty, the Prieſt was allow'd to take leſs, or perhaps nothing, for no Mention is made of it here. Chriſt was preſented to the Lord, not to be brought back, for his Ear was bored to God's *Door-Poſt*, to ſerve him for ever; and tho' he is not left in the Temple as *Samuel* was, to miniſter there, yet, like him, he is given to the Lord *as long as he lives*, and miniſters to him in the true Temple *not made with Hands*.

2. The Mother brought her Offering, *v.* 24. when ſhe had preſented that Son of hers unto the Lord, who was to be the great Sacrifice, ſhe might have been excus'd from offering any other; but ſo *it is ſaid in the Law of the Lord*, that Law which was yet in force, and therefore ſo it muſt be done; ſhe muſt offer *a Pair of Turtle-Doves, or two young Pigeons*; had ſhe been of Ability, ſhe muſt have brought a *Lamb for a Burnt Offering*, and a *Dove for a Sin Offering*; but, being poor, and not able to reach the Price of a Lamb, ſhe brings *two Doves*, one for *a Burnt Offering*, and the other for *a Sin Offering*, See *Lev.* 12. 7, 8. To teach us in every Addreſs to God, and particularly in thoſe upon ſpecial Occaſions, both to give Thanks to God for his Mercies to us, and to acknowledge with Sorrow and Shame our Sins againſt him, and in both we muſt give Glory to him; nor do we ever want Matter for both. Chriſt was not *conceived* and *born in Sin*, as others are, ſo that there was not that Occaſion in his Caſe that is in others; yet, becauſe he was made under the Law, he comply'd with it, *Thus it became him to fulfill all Righteouſneſs*. Much more doth it become the beſt of Men to join in Confeſſions of Sin, for, *who can ſay I have made my Heart clean*?

25 And behold there was a Man in Jeruſalem, whoſe name *was* **Simeon; and the ſame man** *was* **juſt and devout, waiting for the conſolation of Iſrael; and the holy Ghoſt was upon him. 26 And it was revealed unto him by the holy Ghoſt, that he ſhould not ſee death before he had ſeen the Lords Chriſt. 27 And he came by the ſpirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jeſus, to do for him after the cuſtom of the law. 28 Then took he him up in his arms, and bleſſed God, and ſaid, 29 Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy word. 30 For mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation: 31 Which thou haſt prepared before the face of all people: 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Iſrael. 33 And Joſeph and his mother marvelled at thoſe things which were ſpoken of him.**

him. 34 And Simeon bleſſed them, and ſaid unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is ſet for the fall and riſing again of many in Iſrael; and for a ſign which ſhall be ſpoken againſt: 35 (Yea, a ſword ſhall pierce through thy own ſoul alſo) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. 36 And there was one Anna a propheteſs, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aſer; ſhe was of great age, and had lived with an huſband ſeven years from her virginity: And ſhe *was* a widow of about fourſcore and four years: which departed not from the temple, but ſerved *God* with faſtings and prayers night and day. 38 And ſhe coming in that inſtant, gave thanks likewiſe unto the Lord, and ſpake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jeruſalem. 39 And when they had perform'd all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40 And the child grew, and waxed ſtrong in ſpirit, filled with wiſdom; and the grace of God was upon him.

Still Chriſt has Honour done him, then when he humbles himſelf, to ballance the Offence of it: That we might not be ſtumbled at the *Meanneſs of his Birth*, *Angels* than did him Honour; and now, that we may not be offended at his being preſented in the Temple, like other Children born in Sin, and without any manner of Solemnity peculiar to him; but ſilently, and in the Crowd of other Children, *Simeon* and *Anna* now do him Honour, by the Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt.

Firſt, A very honourable Teſtimony is born to him by *Simeon*, which was both a Reputation to the Child, and an Encouragement to the Parents, and might have been a happy introducing of the Prieſts into an Acquaintance with the Saviour, if thoſe *Watch-men* had not been *blind*. Now obſerve here,

1. The Account that is given us concerning this *Simeon*, or *Simon*. He dwelt now in *Jeruſalem*, and was eminent for his Piety and Communion with God: Some learned Men, that have been converſant with the Jewiſh Writers, find that there was at this Time one *Simeon*, a Man of great Note in *Jeruſalem*, the Son of *Hillel*, and the firſt to whom they gave the Title of *Rabban*, the higheſt Title that they gave to their Doctors, and which was never given but to Seven of them: He ſucceeded his Father *Hillel* as Preſident of the College which his Father founded, and of the great *Senhedrin*. The Jews ſay, he was endued with a *Prophetical* Spirit, and that he was turn'd out of his Place, becauſe he witneſſed againſt the common Opinion of the Jews concerning the temporal Kingdom of the Meſſiah; and they likewiſe obſerve, that there is no mention of him in their *Miſhna*, or Book of Traditions, which intimates that he was no Patron of thoſe Fooleries. One Thing objected againſt this Conjecture is, that at this Time his Father *Hillel* was living, and that he himſelf liv'd many Years after this, as appears by the Jewiſh Hiſtories; but as to that, he is not here ſaid to be *Old*; and his ſaying *now let thy Servant depart*, intimates, that he was willing to dye *now*, but doth not conclude, that therefore he did dye quickly. St. *Paul* liv'd many Years after he had ſpoken of his Death as *near*, Acts 20. 25. Another thing objected is, That the Son of *Simeon* was *Gamaliel*, a Phariſee, and an Enemy to Chriſtianity; but as to that, 'tis no new Thing for a faithful Lover of Chriſt, to have a Son a bigotted Phariſee.

The Account given of him here is, (1.) That he was *Juſt* and *Devout*, *Juſt* towards Men, and *Devout* towards God; theſe two muſt always go together, and each will befriend the other, but neither will attone for the Defect of the other. (2.) That he *waited for the Conſolation of Iſrael*, i. e. for the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, in whom alone the Nation of *Iſrael* that was now miſerably harraſs'd, and oppreſs'd, would find *Conſolation*. Chriſt is not only the Author of his Peoples Comfort, but the Matter and Ground of it, the *Conſolation of Iſrael*. He was long a coming, and they who believed he would come continued *waiting*, *deſiring* his coming, and *hoping* for it with *Patience*; I had almoſt ſaid with ſome Degree of *Impatience*, waiting till it came. He *underſtood by Books*, as *Daniel*, that the Time was at hand, and therefore was now, more than ever, big with Expectation of it. The unbelieving Jews, who ſtill expect that which is already come, uſe it as an Oath, or ſolemn Proteſtation, *As ever I hope to ſee the Conſolation of Iſrael*, ſo, and ſo it is. *Note*, The Conſolation of *Iſrael* is to be waited for, and 'tis worth waiting for, and it will be very welcome to thoſe who have *waited* for it, and continue waiting. (3.) The *Holy Ghoſt* was upon him, not only as a Spirit of Holineſs, but as a Spirit of Propheſy; he was *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, and enabled to ſpeak Things above himſelf. (4.) He had a gracious Promiſe made him, that before he died he ſhould have a Sight of the *Meſſiah*, v. 26. He was ſearching *what Manner of Time* the Spirit of Chriſt, in the *Old Teſtament* Prophets, did ſignify, and whether it were not now at Hand; and he receiv'd *this Oracle* (for ſo the Word ſignifies) *that he ſhould not ſee Death before he had ſeen* the Meſſiah, *the Lord's Anointed*. *Note*, Thoſe, and thoſe only, can with Courage *ſee Death*, and look it in the Face without Terror, that have had by Faith a Sight of Chriſt.

2. The ſeaſonable coming of *Simeon* into the Temple, at the Time when Chriſt was preſented there, *v.* 27. Juſt then, when *Joſeph* and *Mary* brought in the Child to be regiſter'd, as it were, in the Church-Book, among the Firſt-born; *Simeon* came by Direction of *the Spirit* into the Temple. The ſame Spirit that had provided for the *Support* of his *Hope*, now provided for the *Tranſport* of his *Joy*. 'Twas whiſper'd in his Ear, Go to the Temple now, and you ſhall ſee what you have long'd to ſee. *Note*, Thoſe that would ſee Chriſt muſt go to his Temple, for there *the Lord whom ye ſeek* ſhall ſuddenly come to *meet you*, and there you muſt be ready to *meet him*.

3. The abundant Satisfaction wherewith he welcom'd this Sight; he *took him up in his Arms*, v. 28. he *embrac'd* him with the greateſt Affection imaginable, laid him in his Boſom, as near his Heart as he could, which is as full of Joy as it can hold. He *took him up in his Arms* to preſent him to the Lord, ſo ſome think, either to do the Parent's Part, or the Prieſt's Part; for divers of the Ancients ſay, he was himſelf a Prieſt. When we receive the Record which the Goſpel gives us of Chriſt, with a lively Faith, and the Offer it makes us of Chriſt, with Love and Reſignation, then we *take Chriſt in our Arms*. 'Twas promis'd him he ſhould have a Sight of Chriſt, but more is *perform'd* than was *promis'd*; he has him in his Arms.

4. The ſolemn Declaration he made hereupon: He *bleſſed God*, and ſaid, *Lord now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace*, v. 29, 30, 31, 32.

1. He has a pleaſant Proſpect *concerning himſelf*, and (which is a great Attainment) is got quite above the Love of Life, and Fear of Death; nay, he is arriv'd to a holy Contempt of Life, and Deſire of Death; *Lord now letteſt thou thy Servant depart*, for mine Eyes have ſeen the Salvation I was promis'd a Sight of before I dy'd. Here's (1.) An Acknowledgment that God had been *as good as his Word*; there has not fail'd one Tittle of his good Promiſes as *Solomon* owns, 1 *Kings* 8. 56. *Note*, Never any that hop'd in God's Word were made aſham'd of their Hope. (2.) A Thankſgiving for it: He *bleſſed God*, that he ſaw that Salvation in his Arms which many Prophets and Kings deſired to ſee, and might not. (3.) A Confeſſion of this Faith, that this Child in his Arms, was the *Saviour*, the *Salvation* itſelf; *thy Salvation*, the Salvation of thine appointing; the Salvation *which thou haſt prepared* with a great deal of Contrivance. And while it has been thus long *in the coming*, it hath ſtill been *in the preparing*. (4.) It is a Farewell to this World, *Now let thy Servant depart*: Now mine Eyes have been bleſs'd with this Sight, let them be clos'd, and ſee no more in this World. The Eye is not ſatisfy'd with ſeeing, *Eccl.* 1. 8. till it hath *ſeen Chriſt*, and then it is. What a poor Thing doth this World look, to one that hath Chriſt in his Arms, and Salvation in his Eye. Now adieu to all my Friends and Relations, all my Enjoyments and Employments here, even the Temple itſelf. (5.) It is a Welcome to Death, *Now let thy Servant depart*. *Note*, Death is a Departure, the Soul's Departure out of the Body, from the World of Senſe to the World of Spirits. We muſt not depart till God gives us our Diſcharge, for we are his *Servants*, and muſt not quit his Service till we have accompliſh'd our Time. *Moſes* was promis'd that he ſhould ſee *Canaan*, and then *dye*, but he pray'd that that Word might be alter'd, *Deut.* 3. 24, 25. *Simeon* is promis'd that he ſhould not *ſee Death*, till he had *ſeen Chriſt*, and he is willing to conſtrue that beyond what was expreſs'd, as an Intimation, that when he had ſeen Chriſt, he ſhould dye; *Lord be it ſo*, ſaith he, *Now let me depart*. See here (1.) How *Comfortable* the Death of a good Man is; he departs *as God's Servant* from the Place of his Toil, to that of his Reſt. He departs in *Peace*. Peace with God, Peace with his own Conſcience; in Peace with Death, well reconcil'd to it, well acquainted with it; he departs *according to God's Word*, as *Moſes* at *the Mouth of the Lord*, Deut. 34. 5. The Word of Precept, *Go up and dye*. The Word of Promiſe, *I will come again and receive you to myſelf*. (2.) What is the Ground of this Comfort? *For mine Eyes have ſeen thy Salvation*. This ſpeaks more than a great Complacency in the Sight, like that of *Jacob*, Gen. 46. 30. *Now let me dye, ſince I have ſeen thy Face*; it ſpeaks a believing Expectation of a happy State on t'other Side Death, through this Salvation he now had a Sight of, which not only takes off the Terror of Death, but makes it *Gain*, Phil. 1. 21. *Note*, Thoſe that have welcom'd Chriſt, may welcome Death.

2. He has a pleaſant Proſpect concerning the World, and concerning the Church. This Salvation ſhall be,

1. A Bleſſing to the World. 'Tis *prepair'd before the Face of all People*, not to be hid in a Corner, but to be made known; to be a *Light to lighten the Gentiles* that now ſit in Darkneſs: They ſhall have the Knowledge of him, and of God, and another World through him: This has Reference to *Iſa.* 49. 6. *I will give thee for a Light to the Gentiles*, for Chriſt came to be

the Light of the World, not a Candle in the Jewiſh Candleſtick, but the *Son of Righteouſneſs.*

2. A Bleſſing to the Church: *The Glory of thy People Iſrael.* It was an Honour to the Jewiſh Nation, that the Meſſiah ſprung out of one of their Tribes, and was born, and liv'd, and dy'd among them. And of thoſe who were *Iſraelites* indeed, of the ſpiritual Iſrael, he was indeed *the Glory,* and will be ſo to Eternity, *Iſa.* 60. 19. They ſhall *glory* in him, *In the Lord ſhall all the Seed of* Iſrael *be juſtify'd, and ſhall glory,* Iſa. 45. 25. When Chriſt order'd his Apoſtles to preach the Goſpel to all Nations, therein he made himſelf a *Light to lighten the* Gentiles; and when he added *beginning at* Jeruſalem, he made himſelf *the Glory of his People* Iſrael.

5. The Prediction concerning this Child, which he deliver'd with his Bleſſing to *Joſeph* and *Mary.* They *marvell'd at theſe Things,* which were ſtill more and more fully, and plainly ſpoken concerning this Child, *v.* 33. And becauſe they were affected with, and had their Faith ſtrengthned by that which was ſaid to them, here is more ſaid to them.

1. *Simeon* ſhews them what Reaſon they had to *rejoyce*; for he *bleſſed them,* v. 34. he pronounc'd them bleſſed who had the Honour to be related to this Child, and were intruſted with the bringing him up: He *pray'd* for them that God would *bleſs* them, and would have others do ſo too. They had Reaſon to rejoyce, for this Child ſhould be not only a Comfort, and Honour to them, but a publick Bleſſing: He is ſet *for the Riſing again of many in* Iſrael, *i. e.* for the Converſion of many to God that are dead and bury'd in Sin, and for the Conſolation of many in God, that are ſunk and loſt in Sorrow and Deſpair. And thoſe whom he is ſet *for the Fall of,* may be the ſame with thoſe whom he is ſet for the *Riſing again of:* He is ſet εἰς πτῶσιν ϗ ἀνάϛασιν, for their *Fall* in order to their *Riſing again*; to humble and abaſe them, and bring them off from all Confidence in themſelves, that they may be exalted by relying on Chriſt. Wounds, and then Heals. Paul *falls* and riſes again.

2. He ſhews them likewiſe what Reaſon they had to *rejoyce with Trembling,* according to the Advice given of old, with Reference to the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, *Pſal.* 2. 11. Leſt *Joſeph,* and *Mary* eſpecially, ſhould be *lifted up* with the Abundance of the Revelations; here is a *Thorn in the Fleſh* for them, an Allay to their Joy, and 'tis what we ſometimes need.

1. It is true, Chriſt ſhall be a Bleſſing to *Iſrael,* but there are thoſe in *Iſrael* whom he is *ſet for the Fall of,* whoſe Corruptions will be provok'd, who will be prejudic'd and enrag'd againſt him, and offended, and whoſe Sin and Rnin will be aggravated by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt; many that will extract Poiſon to themſelves out of the Balm of *Gilead,* and ſplit their Souls on the Rock of Salvation, to whom this precious Foundation-Stone will be a *Stone of Stumbling.* This refers to that Propheſy, *Iſa.* 8. 14, 15. He ſhall be *for a Sanctuary* to ſome, and yet for a *Snare* to others, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. *Note,* As it is pleaſant to think how many there are to whom Chriſt and his Goſpel are a Savor of Life unto Life, ſo it is ſad to think how many there are to whom 'tis a Savor of Death unto Death. He is ſet for *a Sign,* to be admir'd by ſome, but by others, by many, ſpoken againſt. He had many *Eyes upon him* during the Time of his publick Miniſtry, he was *a Sign,* but he had many *Tongues againſt him,* the Contradiction and Reproach of Sinners; he was continually cavill'd at and abus'd; and the Effects of this will be, that the *Thoughts of many Hearts will be reveal'd,* v. 35. *i. e.* upon this Occaſion Men will *ſhew themſelves,* will diſcover, and ſo diſtinguiſh themſelves. The ſecret good Affections, and Diſpoſitions in the Minds of ſome, will be reveal'd by their embracing Chriſt, and cloſing with him; the ſecret Corruptions, and vicious Diſpoſitions of others, that otherwiſe would never have appear'd ſo bad, will be reveal'd by their Enmity to Chriſt, and their Rage againſt him. Men will be judg'd of by the Thoughts of their Hearts, their Thoughts concerning Chriſt; are they for him, or are they for his Adverſaries? The *Word of God* is a Diſcerner of the *Thoughts* and *Intents of the Heart,* and by it we are diſcover'd to ourſelves, and ſhall be judg'd hereafter.

2. It is true, Chriſt ſhall be a Comfort to his Mother, but be not thou too proud of it, for a *Sword ſhall paſs through thine own Soul alſo.* He ſhall be a Suffering Jeſus; and (1.) Thou ſhalt *ſuffer with him,* by Sympathy, more than other of his Friends, becauſe of the Nearneſs of thy Relation, and Strength of Affection to him. When he was abus'd, 'was *a Sword in her Bones.* When ſhe ſtood by his Croſs, and ſaw him dying, we may well think her inward Grief was ſuch, that it might truly be ſaid, *a Sword pierced through her Soul,* it cut her to the Heart. (2.) Thou ſhalt *ſuffer for him*; many underſtand it as a Prediction of her Martyrdom; and ſome of the Ancients ſay, it had its Accompliſhment in that. *Note,* In the midſt of our greateſt Delights, and Advancements in this World, 'tis good for us to know that Bonds and Afflictions abide us.

Secondly, He is taken Notice of by one *Anna,* or *Ann* a *Propheteſs,* that one of each Sex might bear Witneſs to him, in whom both *Men* and *Women* are invited to believe, that they may be ſaved. Obſerve

1. The Account here given of this *Anna,* who ſhe was; ſhe was (1.) A *Propheteſs,* the Spirit of Propheſy now began to revive, which had ceaſed in *Iſrael* above three Hundred Years. Perhaps no more is meant, but that ſhe was one who had Underſtanding in the Scriptures above other Women, and made it her Buſineſs to inſtruct the *younger Women* in the Things of God. Tho' 'twas a very degenerate Age of the Church, yet God *left not himſelf without Witneſs.* (2.) She was the Daughter of *Phanuel*; her Father's Name (ſaith *Grotius*) is mention'd, to put us in mind of *Jacob's Phanuel,* or *Penuel,* Gen. 32. 30. that now the Myſtery of that ſhould be unfolded, when in Chriſt we ſhould, as it were, ſee God Face to Face, and our Lives be preſerv'd; and her Name ſignifies *Gracious.* (3.) She was of *the Tribe of Aſher,* which was in *Galilee,* this, ſome think, is taken Notice of, to refute thoſe who ſaid *out of Galilee ariſeth no Prophet,* when no ſooner did Propheſy revive, but it appear'd from *Galilee.* (2.) She was of *a great Age,* a Widow of about eighty-four Years; ſome think ſhe had now been eighty-four Years a Widow, and then ſhe muſt be conſiderably above a Hundred Years old; others, rather than ſuppoſe that a Woman ſo very old ſhould be capable of Faſting and Praying, as ſhe did, ſuppoſe that ſhe was only eighty-four Years of Age, and had been long a Widow: Tho' ſhe was a young Widow, and had liv'd with her Husband but ſeven Years, yet ſhe never marry'd again, but continu'd a Widow to her dying Day, which is mention'd to her Praiſe. (5.) She was a conſtant Reſident *in,* or at leaſt Attendant *on* the Temple. Some think ſhe had Lodgings in the Courts of the Temple, either in an Alms-Houſe, being maintain'd by the Temple Charities, or, as a Propheteſs ſhe was lodg'd there, as in a proper Place to be conſulted, and adviſ'd with, by thoſe that deſired to know the Mind of God. Others think, her not *departing from the Temple* means no more, but that ſhe was conſtantly there at the Time of Divine Service: When any good Work was to be done, ſhe was ready to join with it. 'Tis moſt probable ſhe had an Apartment of her own among the Out-Buildings of the Temple; and beſides her conſtant Attendance on the publick Worſhip, abounded in private Devotions, for ſhe *ſerved God with Faſtings and Prayers Night and Day:* Having no ſecular Buſineſs to employ her ſelf in, or being paſt it, ſhe gave up her ſelf wholly to her Devotions, and not only *faſted twice in the Week,* but always liv'd a mortified Life, and ſpent that Time in Religious Exerciſes, which others ſpent in Eating, and Drinking, and Sleeping; ſhe not only obſerv'd the *Hours of Prayer,* but pray'd *Night and Day*; was always in a praying Frame, liv'd a Life of Prayer, gave herſelf to Prayer, frequent in Ejaculations, large in ſolemn Prayers, and very particular in her Interceſſions. And in thoſe ſhe *ſerv'd* God; that was it that put a Value upon them, and an Excellency into them: The Phariſees *faſted oft,* and made *long Prayers,* but they ſerv'd themſelves, and their own Pride and Covetouſneſs in their Faſtings and Prayers; but this good Woman not only did that which was good, but did it from a good Principle, and with a good End; ſhe *ſerved God,* and aim'd at his Honour, in *Faſting and Prayers. Note,* 1. Devotion is a Thing we ought to be conſtant in, other Duties are in Seaſon now and then, but we muſt *Pray always.* 2. It is a pleaſant Sight to ſee aged Chriſtians abounding in Acts of Devotion, as thoſe that are not *weary of well-doing,* that do not think themſelves *above* theſe Exerciſes, or *paſt* them, but that take more and more Pleaſure in them, and ſee more and more need of them, till they come to Heaven. 3. Thoſe who are diligent and faithful in improving the Light and Means they have, ſhall have further Diſcoveries made them. *Anna* is now at length abundantly recompenc'd for her Attendance ſo many Years in the Temple.

2. The Teſtimony ſhe bore to our Lord Jeſus, *v.* 38. *She came in at that Inſtant,* when the Child was preſented, and *Simeon* diſcours'd concerning him; ſhe who was ſo *conſtant* to the Temple, could not miſs the Opportunity.

Now (1.) She *gave Thanks likewiſe to the Lord,* juſt as *Simeon,* perhaps like him, wiſhing now to depart in Peace. *Note,* Thoſe to whom Chriſt is *made known,* have Reaſon enough to *give Thanks to the Lord* for ſo great a Favour; and we ſhould be excited to that Duty by the Praiſes and Thankſgivings of others; why ſhould not we *give Thanks likewiſe,* as well as they? *Anna* concurr'd with *Simeon,* and help'd to make up the Harmony. *She confeſſed unto the Lord,* ſo it may be read; ſhe made an open Profeſſion of her Faith concerning this Child.

(2.) She, as a Propheteſs, inſtructed others concerning him: She *ſpake of him to all them* that believ'd the *Meſſiah* would come, and with him *look'd for Redemption in Jeruſalem.* Redemption was the Thing wanted, waited for, and wiſh'd for; Redemption *in Jeruſalem,* for from thence the *Word of the Lord* was to *go forth,* Iſa. 2. 3. Some there were in *Jeruſalem* that *looked for Redemption,* yet but a few; for *Anna,* it ſhould ſeem, had Acquaintance with them all, that were joint Expectants with her of the Meſſiah; ſhe knew where to find them, or they where to find her, and ſhe told them all the good News, *that ſhe had ſeen the Lord*; and it was great News; this of his Birth now, as afterwards that of his Reſurrection. *Note,* Thoſe that have got an Acquaintance with Chriſt *themſelves,* ſhould do all they can to bring *others* acquainted with him.

Laſtly, Here's a ſhort Account of the Infancy and Childhood of our Lord Jeſus.

1. Where he ſpent it, *v.* 39. When the Ceremony of preſenting the Child, and purifying the Mother was all over, they *returned into Galilee.* *Luke* relates no more concerning them till they were returned into *Galilee*; but it appears by St. *Matthew's* Goſpel, *Chap.* 2. that from *Jeruſalem* they return'd to *Bethlehem,* where the Wiſe Men of the Eaſt found them, and there they continued till they were directed to flee into *Egypt,* to eſcape the Malice and Rage of *Herod*; and returning from thence when *Herod* was dead, they were directed to go to their old Quarters, in *Nazareth,* from whence they had been, perhaps, ſome Years abſent. 'Tis here call'd *their own City,* becauſe there they had lived a great while, and their Relations were there. He was order'd further from *Jeruſalem,* becauſe his Kingdom, and Prieſthood, were to have no Affinity with the preſent Government of the *Jewiſh* Church, or State. He is ſent into a Place of Obſcurity and Reproach, for in this, as in other Things, he muſt humble himſelf, and *make himſelf of no Reputation.*

2. How he ſpent it, *v.* 40. In all Things *it behoved him to be made like unto his Brethren,* and therefore he paſt through Infancy, and Childhood as other Children did, yet without Sin; nay, yet with manifeſt Indications of a divine Nature in him. As other Children, he *grew* in Stature of Body, and the Improvement of Underſtanding, in his humane Soul, that his *natural* Body might be a Figure of his *myſtical* Body, which tho' animated by a perfect Spirit, yet *maketh Increaſe of it ſelf,* till it comes to the *perfect Man,* Eph. 4. 13. 16. But (1.) Whereas other Children are weak in Underſtanding and Reſolution, he was *ſtrong in Spirit.* By the Spirit of God, his human Soul was endued with extraordinary Vigour, and all his Faculties perform'd their Offices in an extraordinary Manner, He reaſon'd ſtrongly, and his Judgment was penetrating. (2.) Whereas other Children have *Fooliſhneſs bound in their Hearts,* which appears in what they ſay or do, he was *filled with Wiſdom,* not by any Advantages of Inſtruction and Education, but by the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt; every thing he ſaid, and did, was wiſely ſaid, and wiſely done, above his Years. (3.) Whereas other Children ſhew that the Corruption of Nature is in them, and the *Tares of Sin* grow up with the *Wheat of Reaſon,* he made it appear, that nothing but *the Grace of God was upon him,* the Wheat ſprung up without Tares; and that whereas other Children are by Nature Children of Wrath, he was *greatly beloved,* and high in the Favour of God; that God lov'd him, and cheriſh'd him, and took a particular Care of him.

41 Now his parents went to Jeruſalem every year at the feaſt of the paſſover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jeruſalem, after the cuſtom of the feaſt. 43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jeſus tarried behind in Jeruſalem; and Joſeph and his Mother knew not *of it.* 44 But they ſuppoſing him to have been in the company, went a days journey; and they ſought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance. 45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jeruſalem, ſeeking him. 46 And it came to paſs, that after three days, they found him in the temple, ſitting in the midſt of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them queſtions. 47 And all that heard him were aſtoniſhed at his underſtanding and anſwers. 48 And when they ſaw him, they were amazed: and his mother ſaid unto him, Son, why haſt thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have ſought thee ſorrowing. 49 And he ſaid unto them, How is it that ye ſought me? wiſt ye not that I muſt be about my fathers buſineſs? 50 And they underſtood not the ſaying which he ſpake unto them. 51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto them: but his mother kept all theſe ſayings in her heart. 52 And Jeſus increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favour with God and Man.

We have here the only Paſſage of Story recorded concerning our Bleſſed Saviour from his Infancy, to the Day of his ſhewing to *Iſrael* at Twenty nine Years old, and therefore we are concern'd to make much of this, for it's in vain to wiſh we had more. Here's

Firſt, Chriſt's *going up with his Parents* to *Jeruſalem,* at the Feaſt of the Paſſover, *v.* 41, 42.

1. It was their conſtant Practice to attend there, according to the Law, tho' it was a long Journey, and they were poor and perhaps not well able, without ſtraitning themſelves, to bear the Expences of it. *Note,* Publick Ordinances muſt be frequented, and we muſt *not forſake the aſſembling our ſelves together as the Manner of ſome is*: Worldly Buſineſs muſt give way to Spiritual Concerns. *Joſeph* and *Mary* had a Son in the Houſe with them, that was able to teach them better than all the *Rabbins* at *Jeruſalem,* yet they *went up* thither *after the Cuſtom of the Feaſt*: *The Lord loves the Gates of Zion more than all the Dwellings of Jacob,* and ſo ſhould we. We have Reaſon to ſuppoſe that *Joſeph* went up likewiſe, at the Feaſts of *Pentecoſt* and *Tabernacles,* for all the Males were to appear there *thrice a Year,* but *Mary* only at the *Paſſover,* which was the greateſt of the three Feaſts, and had moſt Goſpel in it.

2. The Child *Jeſus* at *twelve Years old* went up with them: The *Jewiſh* Doctors ſay, that at twelve Years old, Children muſt begin to Faſt from Time to Time, that they may learn to Faſt on the Day of Atonement: And at thirteen Years old, a Child begins to be *a Son of the Commandment,* i. e. oblig'd to the Duties of adult Church Memberſhip, having been from his Infancy, by Vertue of his Circumciſion, a *Son of the Covenant.* It is not ſaid that this was the *firſt time* that Jeſus went up to *Jeruſalem* to Worſhip at the Feaſt, probably he had done it for ſome Years before, having Spirit and Wiſdom above his Years; and all ſhould attend on publick Worſhip that can *bear with Underſtanding, Neh.* 8. 2. Thoſe Children that are forward in other things, ſhould be put forward in Religion, 'Tis for the Honour of Chriſt, that Children ſhould attend on publick Worſhip, and he is pleaſed with their *Hoſanna's.* And thoſe Children that were in their Infancy dedicated to God, ſhould be call'd upon when they are grown up, to come to the *Goſpel Paſſover,* to the Lord's Supper, that they may make it their own Act and Deed to joyn themſelves to the Lord.

Secondly, Chriſt's *tarrying behind his Parents at* Jeruſalem, unknown to them, in which he deſign'd to give an early Specimen of what he was reſerv'd for.

1. His Parents did not return till they had *fulfilled the Days*; had ſtaid there all the ſeven Days at the Feaſt, tho' it was not abſolutely neceſſary they ſhould ſtay longer than the two firſt Days, after which many went home. *Note,* It is good to ſtay to the Concluſion of an Ordinance, as becomes thoſe who ſay, *it is good to be here,* and not to haſten away, as if we were like *Doeg, detained before the Lord.*

2. The Child *tarried behind in Jeruſalem,* not becauſe he was loth to go Home, or ſhy of his Parents Company, but becauſe he had Buſineſs to do there, and would let his Parents know that he had a *Father in Heaven,* whom he was to be *obſervant* of, more than of *them*; and Reſpect to *him,* muſt not be conſtru'd Diſrepect *to them*: Some conjecture that he tarry'd behind in the Temple, for it was the Cuſtom of the pious *Jews,* that Morning that they were to go home, to go firſt to the Temple to worſhip God, and there he *ſtaid behind,* and found Entertainment there till they found him again; or perhaps he ſtaid at the Houſe where they lodg'd, or ſome other Friend's Houſe, (and ſuch a Child as he was, could not but be the Darling of all that knew him, and every one would court his Company) and went up to the Temple only at Church-Time; but ſo it was that he ſtaid behind. 'Tis good to ſee young People willing to *dwell in the Houſe of the Lord*; they are then like Chriſt.

3. His Parents went the *firſt Day's Journey* without any Suſpicion that he was left behind, for they *ſuppos'd him to have been in the Company,* v. 44. On theſe Occaſions the Crowd was very great, eſpecially the firſt Day's Journey, and the Roads full of People, and they concluded he came along with ſome of their Neighbours, and they *ſought him among their Kindred and Acquaintance,* that were upon the Road going down; Pray did *you* ſee our Son? Or, did *you* ſee him? Like the Spouſes Enquiry, *Saw you him whom my Soul loveth.* This was a Jewel worth ſeeking after; they knew every one would be deſirous of his *Company,* and he would be willing to do Good among *his Kinsfolks and Acquaintance,* but among them they *found him not,* v. 45. There are many, too many, who are our Kinsfolks and Acquaintance, that we cannot avoid converſing with, among whom we find little or nothing of Chriſt. When they could not hear of him in this, and t'other Company upon the Road, yet they hoped they ſhould meet with him at the Place where they lodg'd at Night, but *there* they could learn no Tidings of him. Compare this with *Job* 23. 8, 9.

4. When they found him not at their Quarters at Night, they *turn'd back again,* next Morning, *to Jeruſalem ſeeking him. Note,* Thoſe that would find Chriſt, muſt *ſeek till they find,* for he will at length be found of thoſe that ſeek him, and will be found their bountiful *Rewarder.* They that have loſt their Comforts in Chriſt, and the Evidences of their Intereſt in him, muſt bethink themſelves where, and when, and how they loſt them, and muſt *turn back again* to the Place where they laſt had them; muſt *remember whence they are fallen,* and repent, and *do their firſt Works,* and *return to their firſt Love,* Rev. 2. 4, 5. Thoſe that would recover their loſt Acquaintance with Chriſt, muſt go to *Jeruſalem,* the *City of our Solemnities,* the Place which he has *choſen to put his Name there*; muſt attend upon him in his Ordinances, in the Goſpel Paſſover, there they may hope to meet him.

5. The *third Day* they found him *in the Temple,* in ſome of the Apartments belonging to the Temple, where the Doctors of the Law kept not their Courts, but their Conferences rather,

ther, or their Schools for Diſputation, and there they found him *ſitting in the midſt of them*, v. 46. not ſtanding as a *Catecumen* to be examin'd, or inſtructed by them; for he had diſcover'd ſuch Meaſures of Knowledge and Wiſdom, that they admitted him to ſit among them as a Fellow, or Member of their Society. This is an Inſtance, not only that he was *filled with Wiſdom*, v. 40. but that he had both a Deſire to increaſe it, and a Readineſs to communicate it; and herein he is an Example to Children, and young People, who ſhould learn of Chriſt, to delight in the Company of thoſe they may *get Good by*, and chuſe to *ſit in the midſt of the* Doctors, rather than in the midſt of the Players. Let them begin at *twelve Years Old*, and ſooner, to enquire after Knowledge, and to aſſociate with thoſe that are able to inſtruct them; 'tis a hopeful and promiſing Preſage in Youth, to be deſirous of Inſtruction. Many a Youth at Chriſt's Age now, would been playing with the *Children in the Temple*, but he was ſitting with the *Doctors in the Temple*. (1.) He *heard* them: Thoſe that would *learn* muſt be *ſwift to hear*. (2.) He *ask'd them Queſtions*, whether as a Teacher, he had Authority ſo to ask, or, as a Learner, he had Humility ſo to ask, I know not; or, whether as an Aſſociate, or Joint-Searcher after Truth, which muſt be found out by mutual amicable Diſquiſitions. (3.) He return'd *Anſwers* to them, which were very ſurprizing and ſatisfactory, *v.* 47. And his Wiſdom and Underſtanding appear'd as much in the Queſtions he ask'd, as in the Anſwers he gave: ſo that all that heard him *were aſtoniſhed*. They never heard one ſo young, nor indeed any of their greateſt Doctors, talk Senſe at that Rate that he did; like *David*, he had *more Underſtanding than all his Teachers, yea, than the Ancients*, Pſal. 119. 99, 100. Now Chriſt ſhew'd forth ſome Rays of his Glory, which were preſently drawn in again: He *gave them a Taſte* (ſaith *Calvin*) of his Divine Wiſdom and Knowledge. Methinks this publick Appearance of Chriſt in the Temple as a Teacher, was like *Moſes*'s early Attempt to deliver *Iſrael*, which *Stephen* put this Conſtruction upon, that *he ſuppos'd his Brethren would have underſtood* by that, *how God by his Hand would deliver them*, Acts 7. 24, 25. They might have taken the Hint, and been deliver'd then, but *they underſtood not*; ſo they here might have had Chriſt (for ought I know) to enter upon his Work now, but they were only *aſtoniſhed*, and *underſtood not* the Indication, and therefore like *Moſes*, he retires into Obſcurity again, and they hear no more of him of many Years after.

6. His Mother talk'd with him privately about it; when the Company broke up, ſhe took him aſide, and examin'd him about it with a deal of Tenderneſs and Affection, *v.* 48. *Joſeph* and *Mary* were both *amaz'd* to find him there, and to find that he had ſo much Reſpect ſhew'd him as to be admitted *to ſit among the Doctors*, and to be taken Notice of. His Father knew he had only the Name of a Father, and therefore ſaid nothing. But (1.) His Mother told him how ill they took it; *Son, why haſt thou dealt thus with us?* Why didſt thou put us into ſuch a Fright? They were ready to ſay as *Jacob* of *Joſeph, a wild Beaſt has devour'd him*; or, he is fallen into the Hands of ſome more cruel Enemy, who at length found out that he was that young Child, whoſe Life *Herod* had ſought ſome Years ago; a thouſand Imaginations, we may ſuppoſe they had concerning him, each more frightful than other. Now, why haſt thou given us Occaſion for theſe Fears, *thy Father and I have ſought thee ſorrowing*; not only troubled that we loſt thee, but vex'd at ourſelves that we did not take more Care of thee, to bring thee along with us. *Note*, Thoſe may have Leave to complain of their Loſſes, that think they have loſt Chriſt; but their *weeping* did not hinder his *ſowing*; they did not ſorrow, and ſit down in Deſpair, but ſorrow'd and *ſought*. *Note*, If we would find Chriſt, we muſt ſeek him *ſorrowing*; ſorrowing that we have loſt him, that we have provok'd him to withdraw, and that we have ſought him no ſooner. They that thus ſeek him in Sorrow, ſhall find him at length with ſo much the greater Joy. (2.) He gently reprov'd their inordinate Sollicitude about him, *v.* 49. *How is it that ye ſought me?* You might have depended upon it, I would have follow'd you Home when I had done the Buſineſs I have to do here; I could not be loſt in *Jeruſalem*: Wiſt ye not that I *ought to* be *ἐν τοῖς τȣ̃ πατρὸς μȣ, in my Father's Houſe*, ſo ſome read it, where elſe ſhould the Son be, who *abideth in the Houſe for ever*. I ought to be, (1.) *Under my Father's Care* and Protection, and therefore you ſhould have caſt the Care of me upon him, and not have burthen'd yourſelves with it. Chriſt is a Shaft hid in his Father's Quiver, *Iſa.* 49. 2. He takes Care of his Church likewiſe, and therefore let not us ever deſpair of its Safety. (2.) *At my Father's Work*, ſo we take it, I muſt be *about my Father's Buſineſs*, and therefore could not go Home ſo ſoon as you might. *Wiſt ye not?* Have you not already perceiv'd that concerning me, that I have devoted myſelf to the Service of Religion, and therefore muſt employ myſelf in the Affairs of it. Herein he hath left us an Example, for it becomes the Children of God, in Conformity to Chriſt, to attend their Heavenly Father's Buſineſs, and to make all other Buſineſs give Way to it. This Word of Chriſt we now think we underſtand very well, for he hath explain'd it in what he hath done, and ſaid; 'twas his Errand into the World, and his Meat and Drink in the World, to do his Father's Will, and finiſh his Work? And yet at that Time, his Parents *underſtood not this Saying*, v. 50. They did not underſtand what Buſineſs he had to do then in the Temple for his Father: They believ'd him to be the *Meſſiah*, that ſhould have the Throne of his Father *David*, but they thought that ſhould rather bring him to the Royal Palace, than to the Temple. They underſtood not his Prophetical Office, and he was to do much of his Work in that.

Laſtly, Here's their Return to *Nazareth*. This Glimpſe of his Glory was to be ſhort, it was now over, and he did not urge his Parents either to come and ſettle at *Jeruſalem*, or to ſettle him there, tho' that was the Place of Improvement and Preferment, and where he might have the beſt Opportunities of ſhewing his Wiſdom; but very willingly retir'd into his Obſcurity at *Nazareth*, where, for many Years, he was as it were buried alive. Doubtleſs, he came up to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip at the Feaſts three Times a Year, but whether he ever went again into the Temple to diſpute with the Doctors there, we are not told; it is not improbable but he might. But here we are told,

1. That he was *ſubject to his Parents*; tho' once to ſhew that he was *more than a Man*, he withdrew himſelf from his Parents, to attend his Heavenly Father's Buſineſs, yet he did not, as yet, make that his conſtant Practice, nor of many Years after; but was *ſubject to them*, obſerv'd their Orders, and went and came as they directed; and, as it ſhould ſeem, work'd with his Father at the Trade of a *Carpenter*. Herein he hath given an Example to Children to be dutiful, and obedient to their Parents in the Lord. Being *made of a Woman*, he was made under the Law of the 5th Commandment, to teach the *Seed* of the Faithful thus to approve themſelves to him a faithful Seed. Tho' his Parents were poor and mean; tho' his Father, only his ſuppoſed Father, yet he was *ſubject to them*; tho' he was *ſtrong in Spirit*, and *fill'd with Wiſdom*; nay, tho' he was the Son of God, yet he was ſubject to his Parents; how then will they anſwer it, who, tho' fooliſh and weak, yet are diſobedient to their Parents.

2. That his Mother, tho' ſhe did not perfectly underſtand her Son's Sayings, yet *kept them in her Heart*, expecting that hereafter they would be explain'd to her, and ſhe ſhould fully underſtand them, and know how to make uſe of them. However we may neglect Mens Sayings becauſe they are obſcure, *ſi non vis intelligi debes negligi*, if it be not intelligible, it is not valuable; yet we muſt not think ſo of God's Sayings. That which at firſt is dark, and we know not what to make of it, may afterwards become plain and eaſy; we ſhould therefore *lay it up* for hereafter, ſee *John* 2. 22. We may find Uſe for that another Time, which now we ſee not how it can be made uſeful to us. A *Scholar* keeps thoſe Grammar Rules in Memory which at preſent he underſtands not the Uſe of, becauſe he is told they will hereafter be of Uſe to him, ſo we muſt do by Chriſt's Sayings.

3. That he improv'd, and came on to Admiration, *v.* 52. *He increaſed in Wiſdom and Stature.* In the Perfections of his Divine Nature there could be no Increaſe, but this is meant of his Humane Nature, his Body increaſed in *Stature*, and Bulk, he grew in the growing Age; and his Soul increaſed in *Wiſdom*, and in all the Endowments of a Human Soul. Tho' the eternal Word was united to the Human Soul from his Conception, yet the Divinity that dwelt in him, manifeſted itſelf to his Humanity by Degrees, *ad modum recipientis*; as the Faculties of his Human Soul grew more and more capable, the Gifts it received from the Divine Nature were more and more communicated. And he increaſed in *Favour with God and Man*, *i. e.* in all thoſe Graces that render'd him acceptable both to God and Man. Herein Chriſt accommodated himſelf to his Eſtate of Humiliation, that as he condeſcended to be an Infant, a Child, a Youth, ſo the Image of God ſhone brighter in him when he grew up to be a Youth, than it did, or could while he was an *Infant* and a *Child*. *Note*, Young People as they grown in Stature, ſhould grow in Wiſdom; and then as they grow in Wiſdom, they ſhall grow in Favour *with God and Man.*

CHAP. III.

Nothing is related concerning our Lord Jeſus from his Twelfth Year, to his Entrance on his Thirtieth Year, we oft think it would have been a Pleaſure and Advantage to us, if we had Journals, or at leaſt Annals of Occurrences concerning him; but we have as much as infinite Wiſdom thought fit to communicate to us, and if we improve not that, neither would we have improv'd none if we had had it. The great Intention of the Evangeliſts *was, to give us an Account of the Goſpel of Chriſt, which we are to believe, and by which we hope for Salvation: Now that begun in the Miniſtry and* Baptiſm *of* John, *and therefore they haſten to give us an Account of that. We could wiſh, perhaps, that* Luke *had wholly paſt by what was related by* Matthew *and* Mark, *and had written only what was New, as he had done in his two firſt Chapters: But it was the Will of the Spirit, that ſome Things ſhould be eſtabliſh'd, not only out of the Mouth of* Two, *but of* Three *Witneſſes, and* *we muſt not reckon it a needleſs Repetition, nor will we do ſo, if we renew our Meditations upon theſe Things with ſuitable Affections. In this Chapter we have (1.) the Beginning of* John's *Baptiſm, and the Scope and Intention of it,* v. 1---6. *His Exhortation to the Multitude,* v. 7.---9. *And the particular Inſtructions he gave to thoſe who deſired to be told their Duty,* v. 10,---14. (2.) *The Notice he gave them of the Approach of the Meſſiah,* v. 15,---18. *To which is added (tho' it happen'd after what follows) the Mention of his Impriſonment,* v. 19, 20. (3.) *Chriſt coming to be baptiz'd of* John, *and his Entrance therein upon the Execution of his Prophetical Office,* v. 21, 22. (4.) *His Pedigree and Genealogy recorded up to* Adam, v. 23,---38.

1 NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Ceſar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lyſanias the tetrarch of Abilene. 2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high prieſts, the word of God came unto John the ſon of Zacharias in the wilderneſs. 3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins; 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Eſaias the prophet, ſaying, The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight. 5 Every valley ſhall be filled, and every mountain and hill ſhall be brought low; and the crooked ſhall be made ſtraight, and the rough ways ſhall be made ſmooth; 6 And all fleſh ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God. 7 Then ſaid he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who have warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to ſay within your ſelves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I ſay unto you, that God is able of theſe ſtones to raiſe up children unto Abraham. 9 And now alſo the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewen down, and caſt into the fire. 10 And the people asked him, ſaying, What ſhall we do then? 11 He anſwereth and ſaith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewiſe. 12 Then came alſo publicans to be baptized, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, what ſhall we do? 13 And he ſaid unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. 14 And the ſouldiers likewiſe demanded of him, ſaying, And what ſhall we do? And, he ſaid unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuſe *any* falſly, and be content with your wages.

John's Baptiſm introducing a new Diſpenſation, it was requiſite we ſhould have a particular Account of it. Glorious Things were ſaid of *John*, what a mighty Favourite of Heaven he ſhould be, and what a great Bleſſing to this Earth, *Chap.* 1. 15, 17. But we loſt him in the Deſarts, and there he remains until *the Day of his ſhewing unto Iſrael*, *Chap.* 1. 80. And now at laſt that Day dawns, and a welcome Day it was to them that waited for it, more than they that waited for the Morning. Obſerve here,

Firſt, The Date of the Beginning of *John*'s Baptiſm, when it was that he appeared; this is here taken Notice of, which was not by the other Evangeliſts, that the Truth of the Thing might be confirmed by the exact fixing of the Time. And it is dated,

1. By the Government of the Heathen, which the *Jews* were under, to ſhew that they were a conquer'd People, and therefore 'twas time for the *Meſſiah* to come, to ſet up a ſpiritual Kingdom, and an eternal one, upon the Ruins of all the temporal Dignity and Dominion of *David* and *Judah*.

(1.) 'Tis dated by the Reign of the *Roman* Emperor; it was in the fifteenth Year of *Tiberius Cæſar*, the third of the twelve *Cæſars*, a very ill Man, given to Covetouſneſs, Drunkenneſs, and Cruelty; ſuch a Man is mentioned firſt, (ſaith Dr. *Lightfoot*) as it were, to teach us what to look for from that cruel and abominable City, wherein Satan reigned in all Ages and Succeſſions. The People of the *Jews*, after a long Struggle, were of late made a Province of the Empire, and were under the Dominion of this *Tiberius*: And that Country, which when Time was, had made ſo great a Figure, and had many Nations Tributaries to it, in the Reigns of *David* and *Solomon*, is now itſelf an inconſiderable, deſpicable Part of the *Roman* Empire, and rather trampled upon than triumph'd in; *en quo diſcordia cives perduxit miſeros!* The Law-giver was now departed from between *Judah*'s Feet; and, as an Evidence of that, their publick Acts are dated by the Reign of the *Roman* Emperor, and therefore now *Shiloh* muſt come.

(2.) 'Tis dated by the Governments of the Vice-Roys that rul'd in the ſeveral Parts of the Holy Land, under the *Roman* Emperor, which was another Badge of their Servitude, for they were all Foreigners, which ſpeaks a ſad Change with that People whoſe *Governours* us'd to be *of themſelves*, *Jer.* 30. 21. and it was their Glory. *How is the Gold become dim!* (1.) *Pilate* is here ſaid to be the Governor, Preſident, or Procurator of *Judea*: This Character is given of him by ſome other Writers, That he was a wicked Man, and one that made no Conſcience of a Lye. He reign'd ill, and at laſt was diſplac'd by *Vitellius*, Preſident of *Syria*, and ſent to *Rome* to anſwer for his Male-Adminiſtrations. (2.) The other three are called *Tetrarchs*, ſome think from the Countries which they had the Command of, each of them being over a *Fourth Part* of that which had been entirely under the Government of *Herod the Great*. Others think they are ſo called from the Poſt of Honour they were in in the Government; they had the *Fourth Place*, or were *Fourth Rate* Governors: The Emperor was the *Firſt*; the *Proconſul* that govern'd a Province, the *Second*; a *King* the *Third*; and a *Tetrarch* the *Fourth*. So Dr. *Lightfoot*.

2. By the Government of the *Jews* among themſelves, to ſhew that they were a corrupt People, and therefore 'twas time the Meſſiah ſhould come to reform them, *v.* 2. *Annas* and *Caiphas* were the *High Prieſts*; God had appointed that there ſhould be but one *High Prieſt* at a Time, but here were two to ſerve ſome ill Turn or other, one ſerv'd one Year, and tother the other Year, ſo ſome. One was the *High Prieſt*, and the other the *Sagon*, as the *Jews* call'd him, to officiate for him when he was diſabled; or, as others ſay, one was High Prieſt, and repreſented *Aaron*, and that was *Caiaphas*; *Annas*, the other, was *Naſi*, or Head of the *Sanhedrin*, and repreſented *Moſes*. But to us there is but one High Prieſt, one Lord of all, to whom all Judgment is committed.

Secondly, The Original and Tendency of *John*'s Baptiſm.

1. The Original of it was *from Heaven*, the Word of *the Lord came unto John*, v. 2. He received full Commiſſion, and full Inſtructions from God, to do what he did; 'Tis the ſame Expreſſion that is uſed concerning the Old Teſtament Prophets, *Jer.* 1. 2. for *John* was a Prophet, yea, more than a Prophet, and in him Propheſy reviv'd, which had been long ſuſpended. We are not told how *the Word of the Lord came to John*, whether by an Angel, as to his Father, or by Dream, or Viſion, or Voice, but it was to *his* Satisfaction, and ought to be to *ours*. *John* is here called *the Son of Zacharias*, to refer us to what the Angel ſaid to his Father, when he aſſur'd him he ſhould have this Son. The Word of the Lord came to him *in the Wilderneſs*, for thoſe whom God *fits*, he will find out, whereever they are. As the Word of the Lord is not *bound* in a Priſon, ſo it is not *loſt* in a *Wilderneſs*. The *Word of the Lord* made its Way to *Ezekiel* among the Captives, by the River of *Chebar*, and to *John* in the Iſle *Patmos*. *John* was the *Son of a Prieſt*, now entring upon the thirtieth Year of his Age; and therefore, according to the Cuſtom of the Temple, he was now to be admitted into the Temple-Service, where he ſhould have attended as a Candidate five Years before: But God had called him to a more honourable Miniſtry, and therefore the Holy Ghoſt enrolls him here, ſince he was not enroll'd in the Archives of the Temple, *John the Son of Zacharias began his Miniſtration* ſuch a Time.

2. The Scope and Deſign of it was to bring all the People of his Country off from their Sins, and home to their God, *v.* 3. *He came* firſt *into all the Country about Jordan*, the Neighbourhood wherein he reſided, that Part of the Country which *Iſrael* took Poſſeſſion of firſt, when they enter'd the Land of Promiſe under *Joſhua*'s Conduct, there was the Banner of the Goſpel firſt diſplay'd. *John* reſided in the moſt ſolitary Part of the Country, but when the Word of the Lord came to him, he quitted his Deſarts, and *came* into the inhabited Country. Thoſe that are *beſt pleas'd* in their Retirements, muſt chearfully *exchange* them when God calls them into Places of Concourſe. *He came* out of the Wilderneſs *into all the Country*, with ſome Marks of Diſtinction, *preaching* a new *Baptiſm*; not a Sect, or Party, but a *Profeſſion*, or diſtinguiſhing Badge; the Sign, or Ceremony, ſuch as was ordinarily us'd among the *Jews*, *waſhing with Water*, by which Proſelytes were ſometimes admitted, or Diſciples to ſome great Maſter: But the Meaning of it was, *Repentance for the Remiſſion of Sins*. That is, all that ſubmitted to his Baptiſm,

1. Were thereby oblig'd to *repent of their Sins*, to be *ſorry* for what they had done amiſs, and to go and *do ſo no more*; the former they *profeſs'd*, and were concern'd to be *ſincere* in their Profeſſions; the latter they *promis'd*, and were concern'd to *make good* what they promis'd. He bound them not to ſuch ceremonious Obſervances as were impoſed by the Tradition of the Elders, but to change their Mind, and change their Way, to *caſt away from them all their Tranſgreſſions*, and the *make*

them new Hearts, and to live new Lives. The Deſign of the Goſpel which now began, was to make Men devout and pious, holy and heavenly, humble and meek, ſober and chaſt, juſt and honeſt, charitable and kind, and good in every Relation, who had been much otherwiſe; and this is to *repent.*

2. They were thereby aſſured of the Pardon of their Sins, upon their Repentance. As the Baptiſm he adminiſtred, bound them not to ſubmit to the Power of Sin, ſo it ſealed to them a gracious and pleadable Diſcharge from the Guilt of Sin. *Turn yourſelves from all your Tranſgreſſions, ſo Iniquity ſhall not be your Ruin*, agreeing with the Word of the Lord, by the Old Teſtament Prophets, *Ezek.* 18. 30.

Thirdly, The fulfilling of the Scripture, in the Miniſtry of *John.* The other Evangeliſts had referr'd us to the ſame Text that is here referr'd to, that of *Eſaias*, chap. 40. 3. 'Tis *written in the Book of the Words of Eſaias the Prophet*, which he heard from God, which he ſpoke for God, thoſe Words of his, which were *written* for the Generations to come. Among them it is found, that there ſhould *be the Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs*, and *John* is that Voice; a clear diſtinct Voice, a loud Voice, an articulate one; he cries, *Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, and make his Paths ſtraight. John*'s Buſineſs is to *make way* for the Entertainment of the Goſpel in the Hearts of People; to bring them into ſuch a Frame and Temper, as that Chriſt might be welcome to them, and they welcome to Chriſt. *Luke* goes further on with the Quotation, than *Matthew* and *Mark* had done, and applies the following Words likewiſe to *John*'s Miniſtry, *v.* 5, 6. *Every Valley ſhall be filled.* Dr. *Hammond* underſtands this, as a Prediction of the Deſolation coming upon the People of the *Jews* for their Infidelity: The Land ſhould be made plain by the Pioneers for the *Roman* Army, and ſhould be laid waſte by it, and there ſhould then be a viſible Diſtinction made between the Impenitent on the one Side, and the Receivers of the Goſpel on the other Side. But it ſeems rather to be meant, of the immediate Tendency of *John*'s Miniſtry, and of the Goſpel of Chriſt, which that was the Introduction of. (1.) The Humble ſhall by it be *enrich'd* with Grace, for *every Valley* that lies *low* and *moiſt* ſhall be *filled* and be *exalted.* (2.) The Proud ſhall by it be humbled; the *Self-confident* that ſtand upon *their own Bottom*, and the *Self-conceited* that lift up *their own Top*, ſhall have Contempt put upon them, for *every Mountain and Hill ſhall be brought low*; if they repent, they are brought to the Duſt; if not, to the loweſt Hell. (3.) Sinners ſhall be converted to God; for the *crooked Ways*, and the *crooked* Spirits, ſhall be made *ſtreight*; for tho' *none can make that ſtreight, which God hath made crooked*, Eccl. 7. 13. yet God by his Grace can make that ſtreight which Sin hath made crooked. (4.) Difficulties that were hindring and diſcouraging in the Way to Heaven, ſhall be removed; *the rough ways ſhall be made ſmooth*; and they that love God's Law, ſhall have *great Peace*, and *nothing ſhall offend them.* The Goſpel has made the Way to Heaven *plain*, and eaſy to be *found*; *ſmooth* and eaſy to be *walk'd in.* (5.) The Great Salvation ſhall be more fully diſcover'd than ever, and the Diſcovery of it ſhall ſpread further, *v.* 6. *all Fleſh ſhall ſee the Salvation of God*; not the *Jews* only, but the *Gentiles.* All ſhall *ſee* it, *i. e.* they ſhall have it ſet before them, and offer'd to them; and ſome of all Sorts ſhall *ſee* it, *i. e.* enjoy it, and have the Benefit of it. When Way is made for the Goſpel into the Heart, by the captivating of high Thoughts, and bringing them into Obedience to *Chriſt*, by the levying of the Soul, and the removing of all Obſtructions that ſtand in the Way of Chriſt and his Grace, then prepare to bid the Salvation of God welcome.

Fourthly, The General Warnings and Exhortations, which he gave to thoſe who ſubmitted to his Baptiſm, *v.* 7, 8, 9. In *Matthew* he is ſaid to have preach'd theſe ſame Things to *many of the Phariſees and Sadduces* that *came to his Baptiſm*, Mat. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10. but here he is ſaid to have ſpoken them *to the Multitude, that came forth to be baptized of him*, v. 7. This was the Purport of his Preaching to all that came to him, and he did not altar it in Complement to the *Phariſees* and *Sadduces*, when they came, but dealt as plainly with them as with any other of his Hearers. And as he did not flatter the *Great*, ſo neither did he complement the *many*, or make his Court to them, but gave the ſame Reproofs of Sin, and Warnings of Wrath to the *Multitude*, that he did to the *Sadduces* and *Phariſees*; for if they had not the ſame Faults, they had others as bad. Now obſerve here,

1. That the guilty, corrupted Race of Mankind, is become a *Generation of Vipers*, not only poiſoned, but poiſonous; hateful to God, hating one another. This magnifies the Patience of God in continuing the Race of Mankind upon the Earth, and not deſtroying that *Neſt of Vipers.* He did it once by Water, and will again by Fire.

2. This Generation of Vipers is fairly warned to *flee from the Wrath to come*, which is certainly before them, if they continue ſuch; and their being a *Multitude*, will not be at all their Security; for it will be neither *Reproach*, nor *Loſs* to God, to cut them off. We are not only warn'd of this Wrath, but are put into a Way to eſcape it, if we look about us in Time.

3. There is no Way of *fleeing from the Wrath to come*, but by *Repentance.* They that ſubmitted to the Baptiſm of Repentance, thereby evidenc'd that they were *warn'd* to flee from the Wrath to come, and *took* the Warning; and we by our Baptiſm profeſs to have fled out of *Sodom*, for fear of what's coming upon it.

4. Thoſe that profeſs Repentance, are highly concern'd to live like Penitents, *v.* 8. *bring forth therefore Fruits meet for Repentance*, elſe, notwithſtanding your Profeſſions of Repentance, you cannot eſcape the *Wrath to come.* By the Fruits of Repentance it will be known whether it be ſincere or no. By the Change of our Way, muſt be evidenc'd the Change of our Mind.

5. If we be not really holy both in Heart and Life, our Profeſſion of Religion, and Relation to God, and his Church, will ſtand us in no ſtead at all. *Begin not* now to frame Excuſes from this great Duty of Repentance, by *ſaying within yourſelves we have Abraham to our Father*; what will it avail us to be the Children of Godly Parent, if we be not Godly; to be within the Pale of the Church, if we be not brought into the Bond of the Covenant.

6. We have therefore no Reaſon to depend upon our external Privileges, and Profeſſions of Religion, becauſe God has no need of us, or of our Services, but can effectually ſecure his own Honour and Intereſt without us. If we were cut off and ruin'd, he could raiſe up to himſelf a Church out of the moſt unlikely; *Children to Abraham*, even *out of Stones.*

7. The greater Profeſſions we make of Repentance, and the greater Aſſiſtances and Encouragements are given us in Repentance, the nearer, and the ſorer will our Deſtruction be, if we do not *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance.* Now the Goſpel begins to be preach'd, now the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand, now the *Ax is laid to the Root of the Tree*; Threatnings to the Wicked and Impenitent, are now more terrible than before, as Encouragements to the Penitent, are now more comfortable. Now you are upon your Behaviour, look to yourſelves.

8. Barren Trees will be caſt into the Fire at length, 'tis the fitteſt Place for them. *Every Tree* that doth not bring forth Fruit, *good Fruit*, is *hewn down*, and *caſt into the Fire.* If it ſerve not for Fruit to the Honour of God's Grace, let it ſerve for Fuel to the Honour of his Juſtice.

Fifthly, The particular Inſtructions he gave to ſeveral Sorts of Perſons, that enquir'd of him concerning their Duty; the *People*, the *Publicans*, and the *Soldiers.* Some of the *Phariſees* and *Sadduces* came to his Baptiſm, but we do not find them asking, *What ſhall we do?* For they thought they knew what they had to do, as well as he could tell them; or were determin'd to do what they pleas'd, whatever he told them. But the *People*, the *Publicans*, and the *Soldiers*, that knew they had done amiſs, and knew they ſhould do better, and were conſcious to themſelves of great Ignorance, and Unacquaintedneſs with the Divine Law, were particularly inquiſitive, *What ſhall we do?* Note, 1 Thoſe that are *baptiz'd* muſt be *taught*, and thoſe that have baptiz'd them, are concern'd, as they have Opportunity, to teach them, *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. 2. Thoſe that profeſs and promiſe Repentance in general, muſt evidence it by particular Inſtances of Reformation, according as their Place and Condition is. 3. They that would *do* their Duty, muſt deſire to *know* their Duty, and enquire concerning it. The firſt good Word *Paul* ſaid when he was converted, was, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Theſe here require, not *what ſhall this Man do*, but what ſhall *we do?* What *Fruits meet for Repentance* ſhall we *bring forth*? Now *John* gives Anſwer to each, according to their Place and Station.

1. He tells *the People* their Duty, and that is, to be charitable, *v.* 11. *He that has two Coats*, and conſequently one to ſpare, let him *give*, or *lend* at leaſt, *to him that has none*, to keep him warm. Perhaps he ſaw among his Hearers, ſome that were overloaded with Clothes, while others were ready to periſh in Rags; and he puts thoſe who had Superfluities, upon contributing to the Relief of thoſe that had not Neceſſaries. The Goſpel requires *Mercy*, and not Sacrifice; and the Deſign of it is, to engage us to do all the good we can. *Food and Raiment* are the two Supports of Life; he that hath *Meat* to ſpare, let him give to him that is deſtitute of *Daily Food*, as well as he that has Clothes to ſpare: What we have, we are but Stewards of, and muſt uſe it accordingly, as our Maſter directs.

2. He tells the *Publicans* their Duty, the Collectors of the Emperor's Revenue, *v.* 13. *Exact no more than that which is appointed you.* They muſt do Juſtice between the Government and the Merchant, and not oppreſs the People in levying the Taxes, nor any Way make them heavier, or more burthenſome, than the Law had made them. They muſt not think, that becauſe it was their Office, to take Care that the People did not defraud the Prince, they might therefore, by the Power they had, bear hard upon the People; as thoſe that had never ſo little a Branch of Power, are apt to abuſe it: No, keep to your *Book of Rates*, and reckon it enough, that you collect for *Cæſar* the Things that are *Cæſar*'s, and do not enrich yourſelves by taking more. The Publick Revenues muſt be applied to the Publick Service, and not to gratify the Avarice of private Perſons. Obſerve, He doth not direct the *Publicans* to quit their Places, and to go no more to the Receipt of Cuſtom; the Employment is in itſelf Lawful, and Neceſſary, but let them be Juſt and honeſt in it.

3. He tells the Soldiers their Duty, *v.* 14. Some think theſe Soldiers were of the Jewiſh Nation and Religion, others think they were *Romans*; for it was not likely, either that the Jews would ſerve the *Romans*, or the *Romans* truſt the Jews in their Garriſons, in their own Nation; and then 'tis an early Inſtance of Gentiles embracing the Goſpel, and ſubmitting to it. Military Men ſeldom ſeem inclin'd to Religion, yet theſe ſubmitted even to the Baptiſt's ſtrict Profeſſion, and deſired to receive the *Word of Command* from him, *What muſt we do*? Thoſe, who more than other Men, have their Lives in their Hands, and are in Deaths oft, are concern'd to enquire what they ſhall do, that they may be *found in Peace*? In anſwer to this Enquiry, *John* doth not bid them lay down their Arms, and deſert the Service; but cautions them againſt the Sins that Soldiers were commonly guilty of; for this is Fruit meet for Repentance, to *keep ourſelves from our Iniquity*, (1.) They muſt not be injurious to the People among whom they were quarter'd, and over whom indeed they were ſet, *Do Violence to no Man.* Your Buſineſs is to keep the Peace, and prevent Men's doing Violence to one another, but do not you do Violence to any; *ſhake no Man*, ſo the Word ſignifies: Do not put People into Fear; for the Sword of War as well as that of Juſtice, is to be a Terror only to evil Doers, but a Protection to thoſe that do well. Be not rude in your Quarters; force not Money from People, by frightening them. Shed not the Blood of War, in Peace; offer no Incivility either to Man or Woman; nor have any Hand in the barbarous Devaſtations that Armies ſometimes make. Nor muſt they accuſe any falſly to the Government, thereby to make themſelves formidable, and get Bribes. (2.) They muſt not be injurious to their Fellow-Soldiers; for ſome think that Caution not to *accuſe falſly*, has ſpecial Reference to them; Be not forward to complain one of another to your ſuperior Officers, that you may be reveng'd on thoſe you have a Pique againſt, or undermine thoſe above you, and get into their Places. Do not *oppreſs* any, ſo ſome think the Word here ſignifies, as uſed by the *Seventy* in ſeveral Paſſages of the Old Teſtament. (3.) They muſt not be given to Mutiny, nor contend with their Generals about their Pay; *be content with your Wages.* While you have what you agreed for, do not murmur that it is not more. 'Tis Diſcontent with what they have, that makes Men oppreſſive and injurious: they that never think they have enough themſelves, will not ſtick at any the moſt irregular Practices, to make it more, by defrauding others. 'Tis a Rule to all Servants, that they *be content with their Wages*; for they that indulge themſelves in Diſcontents, expoſe themſelves to many Temptations, and 'tis Wiſdom to make the beſt of that which is.

15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men muſed in their hearts of John, whether he were the Chriſt or not; 16 John anſwered ſaying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water, but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to unlooſe: he ſhall baptize you with the holy Ghoſt and with fire. 17 Whoſe fan *is* in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. 18 And many other things in *his* exhortation preached he unto the people. 19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philips wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, 20 Added yet this above all, that he ſhut up John in priſon.

We are now drawing near to the Appearance of our Lord Jeſus publickly; the Sun will not be long after the Morning-Star. We are here told,

Firſt, How the People took Occaſion, from the Miniſtry and Baptiſm of *John*, to think of the *Meſſiah*; and to think of him as at the Door, as now come. Thus the Way of the Lord was prepar'd, and People were prepar'd to bid Chriſt Welcome; for when Men's Expectations are raiſ'd, that which they are in Expectation of, becomes doubly acceptable. Now when they obſerv'd what an excellent Doctrine *John Baptiſt* preach'd, what a divine Power went along with it, and what a Tendency it had to reform the World:

1. They began preſently to conſider, that now was the Time for the *Meſſiah* to appear; the Scepter was departed from *Judah*, for they had no King but *Cæſar*; nay and the Law-giver too was gone from between his Feet, for *Herod* had lately ſlain the *Sanhedrim*; *Daniel's* ſeventy Weeks were now expiring, and therefore 'twas but three or four Years after this, that they looked that the Kingdom of Heaven ſhould appear preſently, *Luke* 19. 11. never did the corrupt State of the Jews more need a Reformation, nor their diſtreſſed State more need a Deliverance, than now.

2. Their next Thought was, Is not this he that ſhall come? *All* thinking *Men muſed*, or reaſon'd in their Hearts concerning *John, whether he were the Chriſt or not.* He had indeed nothing of that external Pomp and Grandeur in which they generally expected the Meſſiah to appear; but his Life was holy and ſtrict, his Preaching powerful, and with Authority, and therefore why may we not think him to be the *Meſſiah*, and that he will ſhortly throw of this Diſguiſe, and appear in more Glory? *Note*, That which puts People upon conſidering, reaſoning with themſelves, prepares the Way for Chriſt.

Secondly, How *John* diſown'd all Pretenſions to the Honour of being himſelf the Meſſiah, but confirm'd them in their Expectations of him that really was the Meſſiah, *v.* 16, 17. *John's* Office, as a Cryer or Herald, was to give notice that the *Kingdom of God*, and the *King* of that Kingdom, was *at Hand*; and therefore, when he had told all manner of People ſeverally, what they muſt do, you muſt do this, and you muſt do that; he tells them one thing more, which they muſt all do, they muſt expect the Meſſiah now ſhortly to appear. And this ſerves as an Anſwer to their Muſings and Debates concerning himſelf. Tho' he knew not their Thoughts, yet in declaring this, he anſwer'd them.

1. He declares, the utmoſt he could do was to baptize them *with Water*; he had no Acceſs to *the Spirit*, nor could command *that*, or work upon *that*; he could only oblige them to *repent*; and aſſure them of *Forgiveneſs* upon *Repentance*; he could not work Repentance in them, nor confer Remiſſion on them.

2. He conſigns them, and turns them over, as it were, to *Jeſus Chriſt*; for whom he was ſent to *prepare the Way*, and to whom he was ready to transfer all the Intereſt he had in the Affections of the People, and would have them no longer to *debate* whether *John* was the *Meſſiah* or no, but to look for him that was really ſo.

1. *John* owns the Meſſiah to have a greater Excellency than he had; and that he was in all things preferable to him; he is one, the *Latchet of whoſe Shoe* he doth not think himſelf *worthy to unlooſe*; he doth not think himſelf worthy to be the Meaneſt of his Servants, to help him on and off with his Shoes. *John* was *a Prophet*, yea *more than a Prophet*, more ſo, than any of the Old Teſtament Prophets; but Chriſt was a Prophet more than *John*; for it was both *by the Spirit of Chriſt*, and *of the Grace of Chriſt*, that all the Prophets prophecy'd, and *John* among the reſt, 1 *Pet.* 1. 10, 11. This was a great Truth, which *John* came to preach, but the Manner of his expreſſing it, ſpeaks his Humility; and in it he not only doth Juſtice to the Lord Jeſus, but *doth him honour*: He is one I am not worthy to approach, or draw nigh to, no not as a Servant. Thus highly doth it always become us to ſpeak of Chriſt, and thus humbly of our ſelves.

2. He owns him to have a greater *Energy* than he had. He is *mightier than I*, and doth that which I cannot do, both for the Comfort of the Faithful, and for the Terror of Hypocrites and Diſſemblers. They thought a wonderful Power went along with *John*, but what was that compar'd with the Power which Jeſus would come clothed with. (1.) *John* can do no more but *baptize with Water*, in Token of this, that they ought to purify and cleanſe themſelves; but Chriſt can and will *baptize with the Holy Ghoſt*, he can give the Spirit to cleanſe and purify the Heart, not only as *Water* waſhes off the *Dirt* on the Out-ſide, but as *Fire* purges out the *Droſs* that is within, and *melts down* the Metal, that it may be caſt into a *new Mold.* (2.) *John* can only preach a *diſtinguiſhing* Doctrine, and by Word and Sign *ſeparate between the Precious and the Vile*; but Chriſt hath his *Fan in his Hand*, with which he can, and will perfectly part between the Wheat and the Chaff, he will *throughly purge his Floor*, 'tis *his own*, and therefore he will *purge* it, and will caſt out of his Church the unbelieving, impenitent *Jews*, and confirm in his Church all that faithfully follow him. (3.) *John* can only ſpeak Comfort to thoſe that receive the Goſpel, and like other Prophets, *ſay to the Righteous*, that, *it ſhall be well with them*; but Jeſus Chriſt will *give them Comfort.* *John* can only promiſe them they ſhall be ſafe, but Chriſt will make them ſo, he will *gather his Wheat into his Garner*: Good, ſerious, ſolid People he will now gather into his Church on Earth, which ſhall be made up of ſuch, and he will ſhortly gather them into his Church in Heaven, where they ſhall be for ever ſhelter'd, (4.) *John* can only threaten Hypocrites, and tell the *barren Trees* that they ſhall be *hewn down* and *caſt into the Fire*; but Chriſt can execute that Threatning: thoſe that are as *Chaff*, light, and vain, and worthleſs, *he will burn with Fire unquenchable.* *John* refers here to *Mal.* 3. 18. 4. 1, 2. *Then*, when the *Floor is purged*, *ye ſhall return and diſcern between the Righteous and the Wicked*, for *the Day comes that ſhall burn as an Oven.*

The Evangeliſt concludes his Account of *John's* Preaching, with an *et cætera*, v. 8. *Many other Things in his Exhortation preached he unto the People*, which are not recorded. (1.) *John* was an affectionate Preacher; he was Παρακαλῶν, *Exhorting*, beſeeching, he preſs'd things home upon his Hearers, follow'd his Doctrine cloſe, as one in earneſt. (2.) He was a *practical* Preacher, much of his Preaching was *Exhortation*, quickning them to their Duty, and directing them in it, and not amuſing them with Matters of nice Speculation. (3.) He was a *popular* Preacher, tho' he had *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, Men of polite Learning, attending his Miniſtry, and *Sadduces*, Men of *Free Thought*, as they pretended, yet he adreſs'd himſelf to the *People*, πρὸς τὸν λαὸν, to the *Laity*, and accommodated himſelf to their Capacity, as promiſing himſelf beſt Succeſs among them. (4.) He was an *Evangelical* Preacher, for ſo the word here uſed ſignifies, εὐηγγελίζετο, he *preached the Goſpel* to the People; in all his *Exhortations* he directed People to Chriſt, and excited and encourag'd their Expectations of *him*. When we preſs Duty upon People, we muſt direct them to Chriſt both for Righteouſneſs and Strength. (5.) He was a *copious* Preacher; *many other things he preach'd* πολλὰ μὲν καὶ ἕτερα, *many* Things and *different*. He preach'd a great deal, ſhunn'd not to declare the whole Counſel of God; and he *vary'd* in his Preaching, that thoſe who were not reach'd, and touch'd and wrought upon by one Truth, might by another.

Thirdly, How a full Stop was put to *John's* Preaching, when he was in the midſt of his Uſefulneſs, going on thus ſucceſsfully he was impriſon'd by the Malice of *Herod*, v. 19, 20. *Herod the Tetrarch being reproved by him*, not only for living in Inceſt with his Brother *Philip's* Wife, but for the many other *Evils which Herod had done*; for thoſe that are wicked in one Inſtance, are commonly ſo in many other; he could not *bear it*, but contracted an Antipathy to him for his plain Dealing, and *added* this Wickedneſs to all the reſt which was indeed *above all*, that he *ſhut up John in Priſon*; put that burning and ſhining Light under a Buſhel: Becauſe he could not bear his Reproofs, others ſhould be deprived of the Benefit of his Inſtructions and Counſels. Some little Good he might do to thoſe who had Acceſs to him, when he was in Priſon; but nothing to what he might have done, if he had had Liberty to go about all the Country as he had done. We cannot think of *Herod's* doing this, without the greateſt Compaſſion and Lamentation; nor of God's permitting it, without admiring the depth of the divine Counſels, which we cannot account for; muſt he be ſilenc'd, who is the *Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs*? Muſt ſuch a Preacher be ſhut up in Priſon, who ought to have been ſet up in the Courts of the Temple? But thus the Faith of his Diſciples muſt be try'd, the Unbelief of thoſe who rejected him muſt be puniſh'd.

Thus he muſt be Chriſt's Forerunner in Suffering as well as Preaching; and thus having been for about a Year and half preparing People for Chriſt, he muſt now give Way to him, and the Sun being riſen, the Morning-Star muſt of courſe diſappear.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to paſs, that Jeſus alſo being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened: 22 And the holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily ſhape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which ſaid, Thou art my beloved ſon, in thee I am well pleaſed. 23 And Jeſus himſelf began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was ſuppoſed) the ſon of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Heli, 24 Which was *the ſon* of Matthat, which was *the ſon* of Levi, which was *the ſon* of Melchi, which was *the ſon* of Janna, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, 25 Which was *the ſon* of Mattathias, which was *the ſon* of Amos, which was *the ſon* of Naum, which was *the ſon* of Eſli, which was *the ſon* of Nagge, 26 Which was *the ſon* of Maath, which was *the ſon* of Mattathias, which was *the ſon* of Semei, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Judah, 27 Which was *the ſon* of Joanna, which was *the ſon* of Rheſa, which was *the ſon* of Zorobabel, which was *the ſon* of Salathiel, which was *the ſon* of Neri, 28 Which was *the ſon* of Melchi, which was *the ſon* of Addi, which was *the ſon* of Coſam, which was *the ſon* of Elmodam, which was *the ſon* Er, 29 Which was *the ſon* of Joſe, which was *the ſon* of Eliezer, which was *the ſon* of Jorim, which was *the ſon* of Matthat, which was *the ſon* of Levi, 30 Which was *the ſon* of Simeon, which was *the ſon* of Juda, which was *the ſon* of Joſeph, which was *the ſon* of Jonan, which was *the ſon* of Eliakim, 31 Which was *the ſon* of Melea, which was *the ſon* of Menan, which was *the ſon* of Mattatha, which was *the ſon* of Nathan, which was *the ſon* of David, 32 Which was *the ſon* of Jeſſe, which was *the ſon* of Obed, which was *the ſon* of Booz, which was *the ſon* of Salmon, which was *the ſon* of Naaſſon, 33 Which was *the ſon* of Aminadab, which was *the ſon* of Aram, which was *the ſon* of Eſrom, which was *the ſon* of Phares, which was *the ſon* of Judah, 34 Which was *the ſon* of Jacob, which was *the ſon of* Iſaac, which was *the ſon* of Abraham, which was *the ſon* of Thara, which was *the ſon* of Nachor, 35 Which was *the ſon* of Saruch, which was *the ſon* of Ragau, which was *the ſon* of Phalec, which was *the ſon* of Heber, which was *the ſon* of Sala, 36 Which was *the ſon* of Cainan, which was *the ſon* of Arphaxad, which was *the ſon* of Sem, which was *the ſon* of Noe, which was *the ſon* of Lamech, 37 Which was *the ſon* of Mathuſala, which was *the ſon* of Enoch, which was *the ſon* of Jared, which was *the ſon* of Malaleel, which was *the ſon* of Cainan, 38 Which was *the ſon* of Enos, which was *the ſon* of Seth, which was *the ſon* of Adam, which was *the ſon* of God.

The Evangeliſt mention'd *John*'s Impriſonment before *Chriſt*'s being baptiz'd, tho' it was near a Year after it, becauſe he would finiſh the Story of *John*'s Miniſtry, and then introduce that of Chriſt. Now here we have,

Firſt, A ſhort Account of Chriſt's Baptiſm, which had been more fully related by St. *Matthew*. *Jeſus* came to be baptiz'd of *John*, and he was ſo, *v.* 21, 22.

1. It is here ſaid, That, *When all the People were baptized*, then *Jeſus was baptiz'd*; all that were then preſent; Chriſt would be baptiz'd laſt, among the common People, and in the Rear of them; thus he humbled himſelf, and made himſelf of no Reputation, as one of the leaſt, nay, as leſs than the leaſt. He ſaw what Multitudes were hereby prepar'd to receive him, and then he appear'd.

2. Notice is here taken of Chriſt's *Praying* when he was *baptiz'd*, which was not in *Matthew*; being baptiz'd and *praying*. He did not *confeſs Sin* as others did, for he had none to confeſs, but he *pray'd* as others did, for he would thus keep up Communion with his Father. *Note*, The inward and ſpiritual Grace, which Sacraments are the outward and viſible Signs of, muſt be fetch'd in by Prayer; and therefore Prayer muſt always accompany them. We have Reaſon to think that Chriſt now pray'd for this Manifeſtation of God's Favour to him, which immediately follow'd; he pray'd for the Diſcovery of his Father's Favour to him, and the Deſcent of the Spirit. What was promis'd to Chriſt, he muſt obtain by Prayer; *Ask of me, and I will give thee*, &c. thus he would put an Honour upon Prayer, would tye us to it, and encourage us in it.

3. When he pray'd, *the Heaven was open'd*; he that by his Power parted the Waters, to make a Way through them to *Canaan*, now by his Power parted the Air, another fluid Element, to open a Correſpondence with the Heavenly *Canaan*. Thus was there open'd to Chriſt, and by him to us, *a new and living Way into the Holieſt*; Sin had ſhut up Heaven, but Chriſt's Prayer open'd it again. Prayer is an Ordinance that *opens Heaven*; *Knock, and it ſhall be opened to you.*

4. *The holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily Shape like a Dove, upon him*; our Lord Jeſus was now to receive greater Meaſures of the Spirit than before, to qualify him for his prophetical Office, *Iſa.* 61. 1. When he begins to preach, *the Spirit of the Lord is upon him.* Now this is here expreſs'd by a ſenſible Evidence for his Encouragement in his Work, and for the Satisfaction of *John Baptiſt*; for he was told before, that by this Sign it ſhould be notify'd to him, which was the Chriſt. Dr. *Lightfoot* ſuggeſts, that the Holy Ghoſt deſcended in a bodily Shape, that he might be reveal'd to be a perſonal Subſtance, and not merely an Operation of the Godhead: And thus (ſaith he) was made a full, clear, and ſenſible Demonſtration of the Trinity, at the Beginning of the Goſpel, and very fitly is this done at Chriſt's Baptiſm, who was to make the Ordinance of Baptiſm a Badge of the Profeſſion of that Faith, in the Doctrine of the Trinity, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.*

5. There came *a Voice from Heaven*, from God the Father, from the *excellent Glory*, ſo 'tis expreſs'd, 2 *Pet.* 1. 17. *Thou art my beloved Son.* Here, and in *Mark*, 'tis expreſs'd as ſpoken to *Chriſt*; in *Matthew*, as ſpoken *of him*, *This is my beloved Son*; It comes all to one, 'twas intended to be a Notification to *John*, and as ſuch, properly expreſs'd by *this is my beloved Son*; and likewiſe an Anſwer to his Prayer, and ſo it is moſt fitly expreſſed by *thou art.* 'Twas foretold concerning the *Meſſiah*, *I will be his Father, and he ſhall be my Son*, 2 Sam. 7. 14. *I will make him my Firſt-born*, Pſal. 89. 27. that he ſhould be God's *Elect*, *in whom his Soul delighted*, Iſa. 42. 1. and accordingly 'tis here declar'd, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.*

Secondly, A long Account of Chriſt's Pedegree, which had been more briefly related by St. *Matthew*. Here's

1. His Age. He now *began to be about Thirty Years of Age.* So old *Joſeph* was when he ſtood before *Pharoah*, Gen. 41. 46. *David*, when he began to reign, 2 *Sam.* 5. 4. and at this Age the Prieſts were to enter upon the full Execution of their Office, *Numb.* 4. 3. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks it's plain by the Manner of the Expreſſion here, that he was juſt Twenty-nine Years old compleat, and entering upon his Thirtieth Year, in the Month *Tiſri*, after this he liv'd Three Years and a Half, and dy'd when he was Thirty-two Years old and a Half. *Three Years and a Half*, the Time of Chriſt's Miniſtry, is a Period of Time very remarkable in Scripture; *Three Years and Six Months* the Heavens were ſhut up in *Elijah*'s Time, *Luke* 4. 25. *Jam.* 5. 17. This was the half Week in which the Meſſiah was to confirm the Covenant, *Dan.* 2. 27. This Period is expreſs'd in the Prophetical Wri-

tings by a Time, Times, and half a Time, *Dan.* 12. 7. *Rev.* 12. 14. and by Forty Two Months, and a Thouſand Two Hundred and Threeſcore Days, *Rev.* 11. 2, 3. where it is the Time fix'd for the Witneſſes propheſying in Sackcloth, in Conformity to Chriſt's Preaching in his Humiliation juſt ſo long.

2. His Pedigree, *v.* 23, *&c. Matthew* had given us ſomewhat of this, he goes on higher than *Abraham*, but *Luke* brings it as high as *Adam*; *Matthew* deſign'd to ſhew that Chriſt was the Son of *Abraham*, in whom *all the Families of the Earth are bleſſed*, and that he was Heir to the Throne of *David*, and therefore he begins with *Abraham*, and brings the Genealogy down to *Jacob*, who was the Father of *Joſeph*, an Heir Male of the Houſe of *David*; but *Luke* deſigning to ſhew that Chriſt was the *Seed of the Woman*, that ſhould break the Serpent's Head, traceth his Pedigree upwards as high as *Adam*, and begins it with *Eli*, or *Heli*, who was the Father, not of *Joſeph*, but of the Virgin *Mary*. And ſome ſuggeſt, that the Supply which our Tranſlators all along inſert here, is not right, and that it ſhould not be read *which*, i. e. which *Joſeph* was the Son of *Heli*, but which *Jeſus*; he was *the Son of Joſeph, of Eli, of Matthat*, &c. And he, *i. e. Jeſus*, was the Son *of Seth, of Adam, of God*, v. 38. The difference between the two Evangeliſts in the Genealogy of Chriſt, has been a ſtumbling Block to Infidels that cavil at the Word; but ſuch a one as has been removed by the Labours of learned Men, both in the early Ages of the Church, and in latter Times, to which we refer ourſelves. *Matthew* draws the Pedigree from *Solomon*, whoſe natural Line ended in *Jechonias*, the legal Right was transferr'd to *Salathiel*, who was of the Houſe of *Nathan*, another Son of *David*, which Line *Luke* here purſues, and ſo leaves out all the Kings of *Judah*. 'Tis well for us that our Salvation doth not depend upon our being able to ſolve all theſe Difficulties, nor is the Divine Authority of the Goſpels at all weaken'd by them; for the Evangeliſts are not ſuppos'd to write theſe Genealogies either of their own Knowledge, or by Divine Inſpiration, but to have copy'd them out of the Authentick Records of the Genealogies among the Jews, the Herald's Books, which therefore they were oblig'd to follow; and in them they found the Pedigree of *Jacob*, the Father of *Joſeph*, to be as it is ſet down in *Matthew*; and the Pedigree of *Heli*, the Father of *Mary*, to be as it is ſet down here in *Luke*; and this is the Meaning of *ὡς ἐνομίζετο, v.* 23. not *as it was ſuppos'd*, referring only to *Joſeph*, but *uti ſancitum eſt lege*, as it is enter'd into the Books, as we find it upon Record, by which it appear'd that *Jeſus* was both by Father and Mother's Side the Son of *David*, witneſs this Extract out of their own Records, which any one might at that Time have liberty to compare with the Original, and further the Evangeliſts needed not to go; nay, had they vary'd from that, they had not gain'd their Point. And its not being contradicted at that Time, is Satisfaction enough to us now, that it is a true Copy; as it is further worthy our obſerving, that when thoſe Records of the Jewiſh Genealogies had continu'd thirty or forty Years after theſe Extracts out of them, long enough to juſtify the Evangeliſts therein, they were all loſt and deſtroy'd with the Jewiſh State and Nation, for now there was no more Occaſion for them.

Here is one Difficulty occurrs between *Abraham* and *Noah*, which gives us ſome Perplexity, *v.* 35, 36. *Sala* is ſaid to be the Son of *Cainan*, and he the Son of *Arphaxad*, whereas *Sala* was the Son of *Arphaxad*, *Gen.* 10. 24.---11. 12. and there is no ſuch Man as *Cainan* found there. But as to that, its ſufficient to ſay that the Seventy Interpreters who before our Saviour's Time tranſlated the *Old Teſtament* into *Greek*, for Reaſons beſt known to themſelves, inſerted that *Cainan*; and St. *Luke*, writing among the *Helleniſt* Jews, was oblig'd to make Uſe of that Tranſlation, and therefore to take it as he found it.

The Genealogy concludes with this, *who was the Son of Adam, the Son of God*. (1.) Some refer it to *Adam*, he was in a peculiar Manner the *Son of God*, being more immediately than any of his Off-ſpring, the Off-ſpring of God by Creation. (2.) Others refer it to Chriſt, and ſo make the laſt Words of this Genealogy to ſpeak his Divine and Humane Nature: He was both the *Son of Adam* and the *Son of God*, that he might be a proper Mediator between God and the Sons of *Adam*, and might bring the Sons of *Adam* to be through him the *Sons of God*.

CHAP. IV.

We left Chriſt newly baptiz'd, and own'd by a Voice from Heaven, and the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon him. Now in this Chapter we have, 1. *A further Preparation of him for his publick Miniſtry, by his being* tempted in the Wilderneſs, *which we had the ſame Account of before in* Matthew, *which we have here.* (2.) *His Entrance upon his publick Work in* Galilee, *v.* 14, 15. *particularly* (1.) *At* Nazareth, *the City where he had been bred up,* ver. 16.---30. *which we had no Account of before in* Matthew. (2.) *At* Capernaum, *where having preach'd to Admiration,* v. 31, 32. *he caſt the Devil out of a Man that was poſſeſſed,* v. 33.---37. Cur'd Peter's *Mother-in-law of a Fever,* 38, 39. *And many other that were ſick, and poſſeſs'd,* v. 40, 41. *And then went and did the ſame in other Cities of* Galilee, v. 42.---44.

1 AND Jeſus being full of the Holy Ghoſt, returned from Jordan, and was led by the ſpirit into the wilderneſs, 2 Being forty days tempted of the devil; and in thoſe days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungred. 3 And the devil ſaid unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this ſtone that it be made bread. 4 And Jeſus anſwered him, ſaying, It is written, That man ſhall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. 5 And the devil taking him into an high mountain, ſhewing unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil ſaid unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomſoever I will, I give it. 7 If thou therefore wilt worſhip me, all ſhall be thine. 8 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve. 9 And he brought him to Jeruſalem, and ſet him on a pinacle of the temple, and ſaid unto him, If thou be the Son of God, caſt thy ſelf from hence. 10 For it is written, He ſhall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee. 11 And in *their* hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone. 12 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, It is ſaid, Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 13 And when the devil had ended all temptation, he departed from him for a ſeaſon.

The laſt Words of the foregoing Chapter, that Jeſus was the *Son of Adam*, ſpeak him to be the *Seed of the Woman*; being ſo, we have him here according to the Promiſe *breaking the Serpent's Head*, baffling and foiling the Devil in all his Temptations, who by one Temptation had baffled and foil'd our firſt Parents. Thus in the Beginning of the War he made Repriſals upon him, and conquer'd the Conqueror.

In this Story of Chriſt's Temptation obſerve,

Firſt, How he was *prepar'd* and *fitted* for it. He that deſign'd him the Tryal, furniſh'd him accordingly; for tho' we knew not what Exerciſes may be before us, nor what Encounters we may be reſerv'd for, Chriſt did, and was provided accordingly; and God doth for us, and we hope will provide accordingly.

1. He was *full of the Holy Ghoſt*, who had *deſcended* on him *like a Dove*, had now greater Meaſures of the Gifts, Graces, and Comforts of the Holy Ghoſt than ever before. *Note*, Thoſe are well arm'd againſt the ſtrongeſt Temptations that are *full of the Holy Ghoſt*.

2. He was newly *return'd from Jordan* where he was baptized, and own'd by a Voice from Heaven to be the beloved Son of God, and thus he was *prepared* for this Combate. *Note*, When we have had the moſt comfortable Communion with God, and the cleareſt Diſcoveries of his Favour to us, we may expect that Satan will ſet upon us; the richeſt Ship is the Pyrate's Prize; and that God will ſuffer him to do ſo, that the Power of his Grace may be manifeſted and magnified.

3. He was *led by the Spirit into the Wilderneſs*, by the good Spirit who led him as a Champion into the Field, to fight the Enemy that he was ſure to conquer. His being *led into the Wilderneſs*, (1.) *gave* ſome Advantage to the Tempter, for there he had him alone, no Friend with him by whoſe Prayers and Advice he might be aſſiſted in the Hour of Temptation. *Wo to him that is alone!* He might give Satan Advantage who knew his own Strength; we may not, who know our own Weakneſs. (2.) He *gain'd* ſome Advantage to himſelf during his forty Days Faſting in the Wilderneſs, we may ſuppoſe that he was wholly taken up in proper Meditation, and in the Conſideration of his own Undertaking, and the Work he had before him, that he ſpent all this Time in immediate intimate Converſe with his Father, as *Moſes* in the Mount, without any Diverſion, Diſtraction, or Interruption. Of all the Days of Chriſt's Life in the Fleſh, theſe ſeem to come neareſt to the angelic Perfection, and the heavenly Life, and this prepar'd him for Satan's Aſſaults, and hereby he was fortified againſt them.

4. He continued Faſting, *v.* 2. *In thoſe Days he did eat nothing.* This Faſt was altogether miraculous, like thoſe of *Moſes* and *Elijah*, and ſhews him to be like them, a Prophet *ſent of God*; 'tis probable it was in the Wilderneſs of *Horeb*, the ſame Wilderneſs in which *Moſes* and *Elijah* faſted. As by retiring into the *Wilderneſs*, he ſhew'd himſelf perfectly indifferent to the *World*, ſo by this *Faſting* he ſhew'd himſelf perfectly indifferent to the *Body*; and Satan cannot eaſily take hold of thoſe who are thus looſen'd from, and dead to the *World* and the *Fleſh*. The more we *keep under the Body*, and bring it into Subjection, the leſs Advantage Satan has again us.

Secondly, How he was aſſaulted by one Temptation after another, and how he defeated the Deſign of the Tempter in every Aſſault, and became more than a Conqueror. During the *Forty Day* he was *tempted of the Devil*, v. 2. not by any inward Suggeſtions, for the Prince of this World had nothing in Chriſt, by which to *inject* any ſuch, but by outward Sollicitations, perhaps in the Likeneſs of a Serpent, as he tempted our firſt Parents. But at the End of the Forty Days he came nearer him, and did as it were cloſe with him, when he perceiv'd *that he was an hungred*, v. 2. probably our Lord Jeſus then began to look about among the Trees, to ſee if he could find any thing that was eatable, from whence the Devil took Occaſion to make the following Propoſal to him.

1. He tempted him to *diſtruſt his Father's Care* of him, and to *ſet up for himſelf*, and ſhift for Proviſion for himſelf in ſuch a Way as his Father had not appointed for him, *v.* 3. *If thou be the Son of God*, as the Voice from Heaven declar'd, *command this Stone to be made Bread.* (1.) I counſel thee to do it, for God, if he be thy Father, has forgotten thee, and it will be long enough, e'er he ſends either Ravens or Angels to feed thee. If we begin to think of being our own Carvers, and of living by our own Forecaſt, without depending upon Divine Providence, of getting Wealth *by our Might, and Power of our Hands*; we muſt look upon it as a Temptation of *Satan*'s, and reject it accordingly, 'tis Satan's Counſel to think of an Independency upon God. (2.) I *challenge* thee to do it, if thou canſt; if thou doſt not do it, I will ſay thou art *not the Son of God*; for *John Baptiſt* ſaid lately, *That God is able of Stones to raiſe up Children to Abraham*, which is the greater; thou therefore haſt not the Power of the *Son of God*, if thou doſt not *of Stones make Bread* for thy ſelf when thou needeſt it, which is the leſſer. Thus was God himſelf tempted in the Wilderneſs; *Can he furniſh a Table? Can he give Bread?* Pſal. 78. 19, 20.

Now 1. Chriſt yielded not to the Temptation; he would not *turn* that *Stone* into *Bread*, no, not tho' he was hungry; (1.) Becauſe he would not do what Satan bid him do, for that would have look'd as if there had been indeed a Compact between him and the Prince of the Devils. *Note*, We muſt not do any thing that looks like *giving Place to the Devil*; Miracles were wrought for the confirming of Faith, and the Devil had no Faith to be confirm'd, and therefore he would not do it *for him*. He did his Signs *in the Preſence of his Diſciples*, John 20. 30. and particularly the *Beginning of his Miracles*, turning Water into Wine, which he did, that his Diſciples might believe on him, *John* 2. 11. but here in the Wilderneſs he had no Diſciples with him. (2.) He wrought Miracles for the Ratification of his Doctrine; and therefore, till he began to *Preach*, he would not begin to *work Miracles*. (3.) He would not work Miracles *for himſelf*, and his own Supply, leſt he ſhould ſeem impatient of *Hunger*; whereas he came not to *pleaſe himſelf*, but to *ſuffer Grief*, and that Grief among others; and becauſe he would ſhew that he *pleaſed not himſelf*, he would rather *turn Water into Wine*, for the Credit and Convenience of his Friends, than *Stones into Bread* for his own *neceſſary Supply*. (4.) He would reſerve the Proof of his being the Son of God, for hereafter, and would rather be upbraided by *Satan*, with being Weak and not able to do it, than be perſwaded by Satan to do that which it was not fit for him to do; thus he was upbraided by his Enemies, as if he could not *ſave himſelf*, and *come down from the Croſs*, when he could have come down, but would not, becauſe it was not fit he ſhould. (5.) He would not do any Thing that look'd like Diſtruſt of his Father, or *acting ſeparately* from him, or any Thing diſagreeable to his preſent State. Being in all Things *made like unto his Brethren*, he would like other the Children of God, live in a Dependance upon the Divine Providence and Promiſe, and truſt him, either to ſend him Supply into the Wilderneſs, or *lead him to a City of Habitation*, where there was Supply, as he us'd to do, *Pſal.* 107. 5, 6, 7. And in the mean Time would *Support* him, tho' he was Hungry, as he had done theſe Forty Days paſt.

2. He return'd a Scripture Anſwer to it, *v.* 4. *It is written.* This is the firſt Word recorded, as ſpoken by Chriſt, after his Inſtallment in his Prophetical Office, and it is a Quotation out of the *Old Teſtament*, to ſhew, that he came to Aſſert and Maintain the Authority of the Scripture, as uncontrolable even by *Satan himſelf*: And tho' he had the Spirit without Meaſure, and had a Doctrine of his own to Preach, and a Religion to found, yet it agreed with *Moſes* and the Prophets, whoſe Writings he therefore lays down as a Rule to himſelf, and recommends, to us as a Reply to Satan and his Temptations. The Word of God is our *Sword*, and Faith in that Word is our *Shield*; we ſhould therefore be *mighty in the Scriptures*, and *go in that Might*, go forth, and go on in our Spiritual Wareſare. Know *what is written*, for it is *for our Learning*, for *our Uſe*. The Text of Scripture he makes Uſe of, is quoted from *Deut.* 8. 3. *Man ſhall not live by Bread alone*; I need not turn the Stone into Bread, for God can ſend *Manna* for my Nouriſhment as he did for *Iſrael*; Man can live *by every Word of God*, i. e. by whatever God will appoint that he ſhall live. How had Chriſt liv'd, liv'd comfortably theſe Forty Days laſt paſt, not *by Bread*, but by the *Word of God*, by Meditation upon that Word, and Communion with it, and with God in and by it; and in like Manner he could *live yet*, tho' now he began to be *an hungred*. God has many Ways of providing for his People without the ordinary Means of Subſiſtence, and therefore he is not at any Time to be diſtruſted, but at all Times to be depended upon in the Way of Duty. If Meat be wanting, God can take away the Appetite, or give ſuch Degrees of Patience as will enable a Man even to *laugh at Deſtruction and Famine*, Job. 5. 22. or make *Pulſe and Water* more nouriſhing than *all the Portion of the King's Meat*, Dan. 1. 12, 13. and enable his People to *rejoyce in the Lord*, when the *Fig-Tree doth not Bloſſom*, Hab. 1. 12, 13. She was an active Believer that ſaid, ſhe had many a Meal's Meat of the Promiſes, when ſhe wanted Bread.

2. He tempted him to *accept from him* the Kingdom, which as the *Son of God*, he expected to receive from *his Father*, and to *do him Homage* for it, *v.* 5, 8, 7. This Evangeliſt put this Temptation ſecond, which *Matthew* had put laſt, and which it ſhould ſeem was really the laſt; but *Luke* was full of it, as the blackeſt and moſt violent, and therefore haſten'd to it. In the Devil's tempting our firſt Parents, he repreſented to them the forbidden Fruit, firſt as *good for Food*, and then as *pleaſant to the Eyes*, and they were overpower'd by both theſe Charms: *Satan* here firſt tempted Chriſt to turn the Stones into Bread, which would be good for Food, and then ſhew'd him the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, which was *pleaſant to the Eyes*; but in both theſe he overpower'd Satan, and perhaps with an Eye to that, *Luke* changeth the Order. Now obſerve,

1. How Satan *manag'd* this Temptation, to prevail with Chriſt to become a Tributary to him, and to receive his Kingdom by Delegation from him.

1. He gave him a Proſpect of *all the Kingdoms of the World in a Moment of Time*, an airy Repreſentation of them, ſuch as he thought moſt likely to ſtrike the Fancy, and ſeem a *real* Proſpect; and to humour the Thing, he *took him up* for this Purpoſe *into a high Mountain*; and becauſe we, next after the Temptation, find Chriſt on the other Side *Jordan*, ſome think it probable that it was to the Top of *Piſgah*, that the Devil took him, from whence *Moſes* had a Sight of *Canaan*. And that it was but a Phantaſm, that the Devil here preſented our Saviour with, as the Prince of the Power of the Air, is confirm'd by that Circumſtance, which *Luke* here takes Notice of, that it was done *in a Moment of Time*; whereas, if a Man take a Proſpect of but one Country, he muſt do it ſucceſſively, muſt turn himſelf round, and take a View firſt of one Part, and then of another. Thus the Devil thought to impoſe upon our Saviour with a Fallacy, a *Deceptio viſus*; and by making him believe that he could *ſhew him all the Kingdoms of the World*, would draw him into an Opinion that he could *give him* all thoſe Kingdoms.

(2.) He boldly alledg'd that theſe Kingdoms were *all deliver'd to him*, that he had Power to diſpoſe of them, and all their *Glory*, and to give it to *whomſoever he would*, v. 6. Some think herein he pretended to be an Angel of Light, and that as one of the Angels that was ſet over the Kingdoms, he had bought out, or fought out all the reſt, and ſo was *intruſted* with the Diſpoſal of them all; and in God's Name, would give them him, knowing they were deſign'd for him; but clog'd with this Condition, that he ſhould *fall down and worſhip him*; which a good Angel would have been ſo far from demanding, that he would not have admitted it, no, not upon ſhewing much greater Things than theſe, as appears *Rev.* 14. 10——22. 9. But I rather take it, that he claim'd this Power as *Satan*, and as *deliver'd to him*, not by *the Lord*, but by the Kings and People of theſe Kingdoms, who gave their Power and Honour to the Devil, *Eph.* 2. 2 Hence he is call'd the *God of this World*, and the *Prince of this World*. It was promiſ'd to the Son of God, that he ſhould have *the Heathen for his Inheritance*, *Pſal.* 2. 8. Why, ſaith the Devil, the Heathen are *mine*, are my Subjects and Votaries; but however, they ſhall be thine, I'll give them *thee*, upon Condition that thou *worſhip me* for them, and ſay they are the *Rewards which I have given thee* as others have done before *thee*, Hoſ. 2. 12. and conſent to have and *hold them, by, from, and under me.*

(3) He demanded of him Homage and Adoration. *If thou wilt worſhip me, all ſhall be thine*, v. 7. (1.) He would have him worſhip him himſelf; perhaps he doth not mean ſo as never to worſhip God, but let him worſhip him in Conjunction with God; for the Devil knows if he can but once come in a Partner, he ſhall ſoon be ſole Proprietor. (2.) He would indent with him, that when according to the Promiſe made to him, he had got Poſſeſſion of the Kingdoms of this World, he ſhould make no Alteration of Religions in them, but permit and ſuffer the Nations as they had done hitherto, to *Sacrifice to Devils*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 20. That he ſhould ſtill keep up *Dæmon-Worſhip* in the World, and then let him take all the Power and Glory of the Kingdoms if he pleaſ'd. Let who will take the Wealth and Grandeur of this Earth, *Satan* has all he would have, if he can but have Men's Hearts and Affections, and Adorations; can but *work in the Children of* Diſobedience, for then he effectually *devours them.*

2. How our Lord Jeſus *triumph'd* over this Temptation. He gave it a peremptory Repulſe, rejected it with Abhorrence, *v.* 8. *Get thee behind me Satan*, I cannot bear the mention of it; What! Worſhip the Enemy of God would I came to ſerve? And of Man whom I came to ſave? No, I'll never do it. Such a Temptation as this was not to be *reaſon'd with*, but immedi-

ately refus'd; it was preſently knock'd on the Head with one Word, *It is written thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God*; and not only ſo, but *him only*, him, and *no other*. And therefore Chriſt will not worſhip *Satan*, nor when he has the *Kingdoms of the World delivered to him* by his Father, as he expects ſhortly to have, will he ſuffer any Remains of the Worſhip of the Devil to continue in them: No, it ſhall be perfectly rooted out and aboliſhed wherever his Goſpel comes: He will make no Compoſition with him, *Polytheiſm* and *Idolatry* muſt go down, as Chriſt's Kingdom gets up: Men muſt be *turn'd from the Power of Satan unto God*; from the Worſhip of Devils, to the Worſhip of the only Living and True God; this is the great Divine Law that Chriſt will re-eſtabliſh among Men, and by his Holy Religion reduce Men to the Obedience of, *That God only is to be ſerv'd and worſhipped*; and therefore whoever ſet up any Creature as the Object of religious Worſhip, tho' it were a Saint, or an Angel, or the Virgin *Mary* herſelf, they directly thwart Chriſt's Deſign, and relapſe into Heatheniſm.

3. He tempted him to be his own Murtherer, in a preſumptuous Confidence of his Father's Protection, ſuch as he had no Warrant for. Obſerve,

1. What he deſign'd in this Temptation: *If thou be the Son of God caſt thy ſelf down*, v. 4. (1.) He would have him ſeek for a new Proof of his being the *Son of God*, as if that which his Father had given him by the Voice from Heaven, and the Deſcent of the Spirit upon him, were not ſufficient, which would have been a Diſhonour to God, as if he had not choſen the moſt proper Way of giving him the Aſſurance of it; and it would have argued a Diſtruſt of the Spirits dwelling in him, which was the great and moſt convincing Proof to himſelf of his being the *Son of God*, *Heb.* 1, 8, 9. (2.) He would have him ſeek a new Method of proclaiming and publiſhing this to the World. The Devil in effect ſuggeſts, That it was in an *obſcure Corner* that he was atteſted to be the Son of God, among a Company of ordinary People, who attended *John*'s Baptiſm, that his Honours were proclaim'd; but if he would now declare from the *Pinnacle of the Temple*, among all the great People who attended the Temple-Service, That he was the Son of God, and then for Proof of it, throw himſelf down unhurt, he would preſently be received by every Body as a Meſſenger ſent from Heaven. Thus Satan would have him ſeek Honours of his deviſing, in Contempt of thoſe which God had put on him, and manifeſt himſelf in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, whereas God deſign'd he ſhould be more manifeſt among *John*'s Penitents, to whom his Doctrine would be more welcome than to the Prieſts. (3.) 'Tis likely he had ſome Hopes, that tho' he could not throw himſelf down to do him the leaſt Miſchief, yet if he would but throw himſelf down, the Fall might be his Death, and then he ſhould have got him finely out of the Way.

2. How he back'd and enforc'd this Temptation. He ſuggeſted, *It is written*, v. 10. Chriſt had quoted Scripture againſt him, and he thought he would be quits with him, and would ſhew that he could quote Scripture as well as he. It has been uſual with Hereticks and Seducers, to pervert Scripture, and to preſs the ſacred Writings into the Service of the worſt of Wickedneſſes. *He ſhall give his Angels charge over thee*, if thou be his Son, and *in their Hands they ſhall bear the up*. And now he was upon the Pinnacle of the Temple, he might eſpecially expect this Miniſtration of Angels; for if he were the Son of God, the *Temple* was the proper Place for him to be in, *Luke* 2. 41. and if any Place under the Sun had a Guard of Angels conſtantly, it muſt needs be that, *Pſal.* 68. 17. It is true, God has promis'd the Protection of Angels to encourage us to truſt him, not to tempt him; as far as the Promiſe of God's Preſence with us, ſo far the Promiſe of the Angel's Miniſtration goes, but no further; they ſhall keep thee when thou goeſt on the Ground, where thy Way lies, but not if thou wilt preſume to fly in the Air.

3. How he was baffled and defeated in the Temptation, *v.* 12. Chriſt quoted *Deut.* 6. 16. where it is ſaid, *Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, by deſiring a Sign for the Proof of Divine Revelation, when he has already given that which is ſufficient, for ſo *Iſrael* did when they *tempted God in the Wilderneſs*, ſaying, He *gave us Water out of the Rock, but can he give Fleſh alſo*? This Chriſt would be guilty of, if he ſhould ſay, He did indeed prove me to be the Son of God, by ſending the Spirit upon me, which is the *greater*; but can he alſo give his Angels a Charge concerning me, which is the *leſſer*?

Thirdly, What was the Reſult and Iſſue of this Combate, *v.* 13. Our victorious Redeemer kept his Ground, and came off a Conqueror, not for himſelf only, but for us alſo.

1. The Devil emptied his Quiver, he *ended all the Temptation*; Chriſt gave him Opportunity to ſay and do all he could againſt him, he let him try all his Force, and yet defeated him. Did Chriſt ſuffer being tempted, till all the Temptation was ended; and muſt not we expect alſo to paſs all our Tryals, to go through the *Hour of Temptation* aſſign'd us?

2. He then quitted the Field, he *departed from him*, he ſaw it was to no Purpoſe to attack him; he had *nothing in him* for his fiery Darts to faſten upon; he had no blind Side, no weak or unguarded Part in his Wall, and therefore gave up the Cauſe. *Note*, If we reſiſt the Devil, he will flee from us.

3. Yet he continued his Malice againſt him, and departed with a Reſolution to attack him again; he departed but *for a Seaſon*, ἄχρι καιρȣ̃ *till a Seaſon*, or, till the Seaſon when he was again to be let looſe upon him, not as a *Tempter*, to draw him to *Sin*, and ſo to ſtrike at *his Head*, which was what he now aim'd at, and was wholly defeated in it; but as a *Perſecutor*, to bring him to *ſuffer*, by *Judas*, and the other wicked Inſtruments whom he employ'd, and ſo to *bruiſe his Heel*, which it was told him, *Gen.* 3. 15. he ſhould have power to do, and would do, tho' it would be the breaking of *his own Head*. He *departed now*, till that Seaſon came which Chriſt calls the *Power of Darkneſs*, *Luke* 22. 53. and when the Prince of this World would again *come*, *John* 14. 30.

14 ¶ And Jeſus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. 15 And he taught in their ſynagogues, being glorified of all. 16 ¶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his cuſtom was, he went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath day, and ſtood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Eſaias; and when he had opened the book, he found the place were it was written, 18 The ſpirit of the Lord *is* upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the goſpel to the poor, he hath ſent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed. 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he cloſed the book, and he gave *it* again to the miniſter, and ſat down: and the eyes of all them that were in the ſynagogue were faſtened on him. 21 And he began to ſay unto them, This day is this ſcripture fulfilled in your ears. 22 And all bare him witneſs, and wondred at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they ſaid, Is not this Joſeph's ſon? 23 And he ſaid unto them, Ye will ſurely ſay unto me this proverb, Phyſician, heal thy ſelf: whatſoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do alſo here in thy country. 24 And he ſaid, Verily I ſay unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you of a truth, Many widows were in Iſrael in the days of Elias, when the heaven was ſhut up three years and ſix months, when great famine was throughout all the land: 26 But unto none of them was Elias ſent, ſave unto Serepta, *a city* of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. 27 And many lepers were in Iſrael in the time of Eliſeus the prophet: and none of them was cleanſed, ſaving Naaman the Syrian. 28 And all they in the ſynagogue, when they heard theſe things, were filled with wrath. 29 And roſe up, and thruſt him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill (whereon their city was built) that they might caſt him down headlong. 30 But he paſſed through the midſt of them, went his way:

After Chriſt had vanquiſh'd the evil Spirit, he made it appear how much he was under the Influence of the good Spirit; and having defended himſelf againſt the Devil's Aſſaults, he now begins to act *offenſively*, and to make thoſe Attacks upon him by his Preaching and Miracles, which he could not reſiſt or repel. Obſerve,

1. What is here ſaid in general of his Preaching, and the Entertainment it met with *in Galilee*, a remote Part of the Country, diſtant from *Jeruſalem*; 'twas a Part of Chriſt's Humiliation that he began his Miniſtry there. But (1.) Thither he came *in the Power of the Spirit*: The ſame Spirit that qualified him for the Exerciſe of his Prophetical Office, ſtrongly inclin'd him to it. He was not to wait for a Call from Men, for he had Light and Life in himſelf. (2.) There he *taught in their ſynagogues*, their Places of publick Worſhip, where they met, not as in the Temple, for Ceremonial Services, but for the moral Acts of Devotion, to read and expound, and apply the Word, to pray and praiſe; and for Church Diſcipline; theſe came to be more frequented ſince the Captivity, when the Ceremonial Worſhip was near expiring. (3.) This he did ſo, as that he gain'd a great Reputation, *a Fame of him went through all that Region*, v. 14. and it was a good Fame; for *v.* 15. he was *glorified of all*: Every Body admir'd him, and cry'd him up, they never heard ſuch Preaching in all their Lives. Now at firſt he met with no Contempt, or Contradiction, all *glorified* him, and there were none as yet that vilified him.

2. Of his Preaching at *Nazareth*, the City where he was brought up, and the Entertainment it met with there. And here we are told, how he *preach'd* there, and how he was *perſecuted*

Firſt, How he preach'd there. And in that obſerve, (1.) The Opportunity he had for it. *He came to Nazareth*, when he had gain'd a Reputation in other Places, in Hopes that thereby ſomething, at leaſt, of the Contempt and Prejudice with which his Countrymen would look upon him, might be worn off. There he took Occaſion to preach (1.) *In the Synagogue*, the proper Place, where it had been his Cuſtom to attend, when he was a private Perſon, *v.* 16. We ought to attend on the publick Worſhip of God as we have Opportunity. But now he was enter'd upon his publick Miniſtry, there he preach'd. Where the Multitudes of Fiſh were, there this wiſe Fiſherman would caſt his Net. (2.) On the *Sabbath-Day*, the proper Time, which the pious Jews ſpent, not in a mere ceremonial Reſt from worldly Labour, but in the Duties of God's Worſhip, as of old they frequented the Schools of the Prophets, on the *New Moons* and the *Sabbaths*. *Note*, It is good to keep Sabbaths in ſolemn Aſſemblies.

(2.) The Call he had to it. (1.) He *ſtood up for to read*; they had in their Synagogues ſeven Readers every Sabbath, the firſt a Prieſt, the ſecond a Levite, and the other five *Iſraelites* of that Synagogue. We often find Chriſt *preaching* in other Synagogues, but never reading, but only in this Synagogue at *Nazareth*, of which he had been many Years a Member; now he offer'd his Service, as he had, perhaps, often done, he read one of the Leſſons out of the Prophets, *Acts* 13. 15. *Note*, Reading the Scriptures is very proper Work to be done in religious Aſſemblies; and Chriſt himſelf did not think it any Diſparagement to him to be employed in it. (2.) The *Book of the Prophet Iſaias* was *deliver'd to him*, either by the Ruler of the Synagogue, or by the Miniſter mentioned, *v.* 20. ſo that he was no Intruder, but duly authoriz'd *pro hac vice*. The ſecond Leſſon for that Day being in the Prophecy of *Eſaias*, they gave him that Volume to read in.

(3.) The Text he preach'd upon. He *ſtood up to read*, to teach us Reverence in *reading* and *hearing* the Word of God. When *Ezra* open'd the Book of the Law, *all the People ſtood up*, Neh. 8. 5. So did Chriſt here, when he read in the Book of the Prophets. Now the Book being *deliver'd to him*; (1.) He *opened it*. The Books of the Old Teſtament were in a Manner ſhut up, till Chriſt open'd them, *Iſa.* 29. 11. Worthy *is the Lamb that was ſlain, to take the Book and open the Seals*, for he can open, not the Book only, but the Underſtanding. (2.) He *found* the Place that was appointed to be read *that Day* in Courſe, which he needed not be directed to; he ſoon found it, ~~and~~ read it, and took it for his Text: Now his Text was taken out of *Iſa.* 61. 1, 2. which is here quoted at large, *v.* 18, 19. There was a Providence in it, that that Portion of Scripture ſhould be read that Day, which ſpeaks ſo very plainly of the *Meſſiah*, that they might be left inexcuſable, who *knew him not*, tho' they heard the *Voices of the Prophets* read *every Sabbath Day*, which bear Witneſs of him, *Acts* 13. 27. This Text gives a full Account of Chriſt's Undertaking, and the Work he came into the World to do. Obſerve,

1. How he was qualify'd for the Work; *the Spirit of the Lord is upon me*; all the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit were conferr'd upon him, not by Meaſure, as upon other Prophets, but without Meaſure, *Joh.* 3. 34. He now came, *in the Power of the Spirit*, v. 14.

2. How he was commiſſion'd, *becauſe he has anointed me*, and *ſent me*. And his extraordinary Qualification amounted to a Commiſſion; his being *anointed* ſignifies both his being fitted for the Undertaking, and called to it. Thoſe whom God *appoints* to any Service, he anoints for it; becauſe he hath ſent me, he hath ſent his Spirit along with me.

3. What his Work was; he was qualify'd and commiſſion'd,

1. To be a great *Prophet*, he was *anointed to preach*, that's three times mentioned here, for that was the Work he was now entering upon. Obſerve, (1.) To *whom* he was to *preach*; to the *Poor*; to thoſe that were poor in the World, whom the Jewiſh Doctors diſdain'd to undertake the Teaching of, and ſpoke of with Contempt. To thoſe that were *poor in Spirit*, to the Meek and Humble, and to thoſe that are truly ſorrowful for Sin. To them the Goſpel and the Grace of it will be welcome, and they ſhall have it, *Mat.* 11. 5. (2.) *What* he was to *preach*; in general, he muſt preach *the Goſpel*. He is ſent εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, to *evangelize* them: Not only to preach to them, but to make that Preaching effectual; to bring it not only to their Ears, but to their Hearts, and to deliver them into the Mold of it.

Three Things he is to preach;

1. *Deliverance to the Captives*; the Goſpel is a Proclamation of Liberty, like that to *Iſrael* in *Egypt*, in *Babylon*. By the Merit of Chriſt, Sinners may be looſed from the Bonds of Guilt, and by his Spirit and Grace, from the Bondage of Corruption. 'Tis a Deliverance from the worſt of Thraldoms, which all thoſe ſhall have the Benefit of, that are willing to make Chriſt their Head, and are willing to be ruled by him.

2. *Recovering of Sight to the Blind*; he came not only by the Word of his Goſpel to bring *Light* to them that ſate *in the Dark*; but by the Power of his Grace, to give Sight to them that were *blind*; not only the Gentile World, but every unregenerate Soul, that is not only in *Bondage*, but in *Blindneſs*, like *Sampſon* and *Zedekiah*. Chriſt came to tell us that he has *Eye-Salve* for us, which we may have for the asking, That if our Prayer be, *Lord that our Eyes may be opened*, his Anſwer ſhall be, *Receive your Sight*.

3. *The acceptable Year of the Lord*, v. 19. He came to let the World know, that the God whom they had offended, was willing to be reconcil'd to them, and to accept of them upon new Terms; that there was yet a Way of making their Services acceptable to him; that there is now a Time of *Good-will towards Men*. It alludes to the Year of *Releaſe*, or that of *Jubilee*, which was an *acceptable Year* to Servants, that were then ſet at Liberty, to Debtors, againſt whom all Actions then drop'd, and to thoſe who had mortgag'd their Lands, for then they return'd to them again. Chriſt came to ſound the *Jubilee* Trumpet, and bleſſed were they that heard the *joyful Sound*, Pſal. 89. 15. 'twas an accepted Time, for it was a Day of Salvation.

2. Chriſt came to be a great *Phyſician*, for he was ſent to *heal the broken hearted*, to comfort and cure afflicted Conſciences, and to give Peace to thoſe that were troubled and humbled for Sins, and under a Dread of God's Wrath againſt them for them; and to bring them to Reſt, who were weary and heavy laden, under the Burthen of Guilt and Corruption.

3. To be a great *Redeemer*, he not only proclaims Liberty to the Captives, as *Cyrus* did to the Jews in *Babylon*, *whoever will may go up*; but he ſets at Liberty them that are bruiſed, he doth by his Spirit *incline* and *enable* them to make uſe of the Liberty granted, as then none did, but thoſe *whoſe Spirits God ſtirred up*, Ezra 1. 5. He came in God's Name to diſcharge poor Sinners, that were Debtors and Priſoners to Divine Juſtice; the Prophets could but *proclaim Liberty*, but Chriſt, as one having Authority, as one that had *Power on Earth to forgive Sins*, came to *ſet at Liberty*, and therefore this Clauſe is added here; and Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, that according to a Liberty the Jews allow'd their Readers, to compare Scripture with Scripture in their Reading, for the Explication of the Text, Chriſt added it from *Iſa.* 58. 6. where it is made the Duty of the acceptable Year, to let the *Oppreſſed go free*, where the Phraſe the LXX uſe, is the ſame with this here.

(4.) Here is Chriſt's Application of this Text to himſelf, *v.* 21. When he had read it, he *rolled up the Book*, and gave it again *to the Miniſter* or *Clark* that attended, and *ſate down*, according to the Cuſtom of the Jewiſh Teachers; he *ſate daily in the Temple teaching*, Mat. 26. 55. Now he *began* his Diſcourſe thus, *This Day is this Scripture fulfilled in your Ears*. This which *Iſaiah* wrote by way of Propheſy, I have now read to you by way of Hiſtory. It now began to be fulfilled in Chriſt's Entrance upon his publick Miniſtry. *Now*, in the Report they heard of his Preaching and Miracles in other Places; *now*, in his Preaching to them in their own Synagogue. 'Tis more probable *Chriſt* went on, and ſhew'd particularly how this Scripture was fulfilled, in the Doctrine he preach'd concerning *the Kingdom of Heaven at Hand*, that that was preaching Liberty, and Sight, and Healing, and all the Bleſſings of the *exceptable Year of the Lord*; many other gracious Words proceeded out of his Mouth, which theſe were but the *Beginning* of; for Chriſt often preach'd long Sermons, which we have but a ſhort Account of. This was enough to introduce a great deal, *This Day is this Scripture fulfilled*. *Note*, 1. All the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, that were to be fulfilled in the *Meſſiah*, had their full Accompliſhment in the Lord Jeſus, which abundantly proves that this was *he that ſhould come*. 2. In the Providences of God, it is fit to obſerve the *fulfilling of the Scriptures*. The Works of God are not only the Accompliſhment of his ſecret Word, but of his Word reveal'd; and it will help us to underſtand both the Scriptures, and the Providences of God, to compare them one with another.

(5.) Here's the *Attention* and *Admiration* of the Auditors.

1. Their *Attention*, v. 20. *The Eyes of all them that were in the Synagogue*, and probably there were a great many, *were faſten'd on him*, big with Expectation what he would ſay, having heard ſo much of late concerning him. *Note*, It is good in hearing the Word, to keep the Eye fix'd upon the Miniſter, by whom God is ſpeaking to us; for as the Eye affects the Heart, ſo uſually the Heart follows the Eye, and is wandering or fix'd as that is. Or rather, let us learn hence, to keep the Eye fix'd upon Chriſt ſpeaking to us in and by the Miniſter. *What ſaith my Lord unto his Servants?*

2. Their *Admiration*, v. 22. They *all bare him Witneſs*, that he ſpoke admirably well, and to the Purpoſe; they all commended him, and *wonder'd at the gracious Words that proceeded out of his Mouth*; and yet, as appears by what follows, they did not *believe in him*. *Note*, It is poſſible, that thoſe who are Admirers of good Miniſters and good Preaching, may yet be themſelves no true Chriſtians. Obſerve (1.) What it was they admir'd; the *gracious Words which proceeded out of his Mouth*. The *Words of Grace*; good Words, and ſpoken in a winning, melting way. *Note*, Chriſt's Words are *Words of Grace*, for Grace being *pour'd into his Lips*, Pſal. 45. 2. Words of Grace pour'd from them; and theſe Words of Grace are to be *wonder'd at*; Chriſt's Name was *Wonderful*, and in nothing was he more ſo,

than in his Grace, in the Words of his Grace, and the Power that went along with thoſe Words. We may well wonder that he ſhould ſpeak ſuch *Words of Grace* to ſuch graceleſs Wretches as we are. (2.) What it was that encreas'd their Wonder; and that was, the Conſideration of his Original; *they ſaid, is not this Joſeph's Son?* and therefore his Extraction mean, and his Education mean. Some from this Suggeſtion took Occaſion perhaps ſo much the more to admire his *gracious Words*, concluding he muſt needs be *taught of God*, for they knew no one elſe had taught him; while others perhaps with this Conſideration corrected their Wonder at his gracious Words, and concluded there could be nothing *really* admirable in them, whatever appear'd, becauſe he was the *Son of Joſeph.* Can any Thing great, or worthy our Regard, come from one ſo mean?

(6.) Chriſt's anticipating an Objection, which he knew to be in the Minds of many of his Hearers. Obſerve

1. What the Objection was, *v.* 23. *Ye will ſurely ſay to me, Phyſician heal thy ſelf*, i. e. Becauſe ye know that I am the Son of *Joſeph*, your Neighbour, you will expect that I ſhould work Miracles among you, as I have done in other Places; as one wou'd expect that a Phyſician, if he be able, ſhould heal not only himſelf, but thoſe of his own Family and Fraternity. Moſt of Chriſt's Miracles were *Cures*, now why ſhould not the Sick in thine own City be *heal'd*, as well as thoſe in other Cities? They were deſign'd to cure People of their Unbelief, now why ſhould not the Diſeaſe of Unbelief, if it be indeed a Diſeaſe, be cur'd in thoſe of thine own City, as well as in thoſe of others? *Whatſoever we have heard done in Capernaum*, that has been ſo much talk'd of, *do here alſo in thine own Country.* They were pleas'd with Chriſt's *gracious Words*, only becauſe they hoped they were but the Introduction to ſome *wondrous Works* of his; they wanted to have their lame, and blind, and ſick, and lepers heal'd and help'd, that the Charge of their Town might be eas'd; and that was the chief thing they look'd at. They thought their own Town as worthy to be the Stage of Miracles as any others; and why ſhould not he rather draw Company to that, than to any other? And why ſhould not his Neighbours and Acquaintance have the Benefit of his preaching and Miracles, rather than any other?

2. How he anſwers this Objection againſt the Courſe he took.

1. By a plain and poſitive Reaſon why he wou'd not make *Nazareth* his Head-Quarters, *v.* 24. becauſe it generally holds true, *That no Prophet is accepted in his own Country*, at leaſt not ſo well, nor with ſuch Probability of doing good, as in ſome other Country; Experience ſeals to this. When Prophets have been ſent with Meſſages and Miracles of Mercy, few of their own Countrymen, that have known their Extraction and Education have been fit to *receive* them: So Dr. *Hammond.* Familiarity breeds Contempt; and we are apt to think meanly of thoſe whoſe Converſation we have been accuſtomed to; and they will ſcarce be duly honour'd as *Prophets*, who were well known when they were in the Rank of *private Men.* That is moſt eſteem'd that is *far fetch'd* and *dear bought*, above what is *home bred*, tho' really more excellent. This ariſeth likewiſe from the Envy which Neighbours commonly have towards one another, ſo that they cannot endure to ſee him their *Superior*, whom a while ago they took to be every Way their *Inferior.* For this Reaſon, Chriſt declin'd working of Miracles or doing any Thing extraordinary at *Nazareth*, becauſe of the rooted Prejudices they had againſt him there.

2. By pertinent Examples of two of the moſt famous Prophets of the Old Teſtament, who choſe to diſpenſe their Favours among Foreigners, rather than among their own Countrymen, and that no doubt by divine Direction.

1. *Elijah* maintain'd a *Widow of Sarepta, a City of Sidon*, one that was a Stranger to the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, when there was a *Famine in the Land*, v. 25, 26. The Story we have 1 *King.* 17. 9. It is ſaid here, that the Heaven was ſhut up *three Years and ſix Months*, whereas it is ſaid, 1 *King.* 18. 1. that in *the third Year Elijah* ſhew'd himſelf to *Ahab*, and there was *Rain*; but that was not the third Year of the Drought, but the third Year of *Elijah*'s ſojourning with the Widow at *Sarepta.* As God would hereby ſhow himſelf a *Father to the Fatherleſs*, and a *Judge of the Widows*, ſo he would ſhew, that he was rich in Mercy to all, even to the Gentiles.

2. *Eliſha* cleans'd *Naaman* the *Syrian* of his Leproſy, tho' he was a *Syrian*, and not only a Foreigner, but an Enemy to *Iſrael*, v. 27. *Many Lepers were in Iſrael in the Days of Elizeus*, four particularly, that brought the News of the *Syrians* raiſing the Siege of *Samaria* with Precipitation, and leaving the Plunder of their Tents to enrich *Samaria*, when *Eliſha* was himſelf in the beſieg'd City, and this was the Accompliſhment of his Prophecy too, ſee 2 *King.* 7. 1, 3, &c. And yet we do not find that *Eliſha* cleans'd them, no, not for a Reward of their Service, and the good Tidings they brought, but only this *Syrian*, for none but he had Faith to apply himſelf to the Prophet for a Cure. Chriſt himſelf often met with greater Faith among the *Gentiles* than in *Iſrael.* And here he mentions both theſe Inſtances, to ſhew, that he did not diſpence the Favour of his Miracles by private Reſpects, but according to God's wiſe Appointment. And the People of *Iſrael* might as juſtly have ſaid to *Elijah* or *Eliſha*, as the *Nazarenes* to Chriſt, *Phyſician heal thy ſelf*; nay, Chriſt wrought his Miracles, tho' not among his Townſmen, yet among *Iſraelites*; whereas theſe great Prophets wrought theirs among the *Gentiles.* The Examples of the Saints, tho' they will not make a bad Action good, yet will help to free a good Action from the Blame of exceptious People.

Secondly, How he was *perſecuted* at *Nazareth.*

1. That which provok'd them was, his taking Notice of the Favour which God by *Elijah* and *Eliſha* ſhew'd to the Gentiles. *When they heard theſe Things they were filled with Wrath*, v. 28. they were *all ſo*; a great Change ſince, *v.* 22. when they *wonder'd at the gracious Words that proceeded out of his Mouth*; thus uncertain are the Opinions and Affections of the Multitude, and ſo very fickle. If they had mix'd Faith with thoſe gracious Words of Chriſt, which they wonder'd at, they would have been awaken'd by theſe latter Words of his, to take Heed of ſinning away their Opportunities; but thoſe only *pleas'd the Ear*, and went no farther, and therefore *theſe grated on the Ear*, and irritated their Corruptions. They were angry that he ſhould compare himſelf, whom they knew to be the Son of *Joſeph*, with thoſe great Prophets, and compare them with the Men of that corrupt Age, when all had bow'd the Knee to *Baal.* But that which eſpecially exaſperated them was, that he intimated ſome Kindneſs God had in Reſerve for the Gentiles, which the Jews could by no means bear the Thoughts of; *Acts* 22. 21. Their pious Anceſtors pleas'd themſelves with the Hopes of adding the Gentiles to the Church, witneſs many of *David's* Pſalms, and *Iſaiah*'s Propheſies; but this degenerate Race, when they had forfeited the Covenant themſelves, hated to think that any others ſhould be taken in.

2. They were provok'd to that Degree, that they made an Attempt upon his Life. This was a ſevere Trial, now at his ſetting out, but a Specimen of the Uſage he met with, when he *came to his own* and they *receiv'd him* not. (1.) They *roſe up* in a tumultuous Manner againſt him, interrupted him in his Diſcourſe, and themſelves in their Devotions, for they could not ſtay till their Synagogue Worſhip was over. (2.) They *thruſt him out of the City*, as one not worthy to have a Reſidence among them, tho' there he had had a Settlement ſo long. They thruſt from them the Saviour and the Salvation, as if he had been the Off-ſcouring of all Things. How juſtly might he have call'd for Fire from Heaven upon them, but this was the Day of his Patience. (3.) They *led him to the Brow of the Hill*, with a Purpoſe to *throw him down Head-long*, as one not fit to live. Tho' they knew how inoffenſively he had for ſo many Years liv'd among them, how ſhining his Converſation had been, tho' they had heard ſuch a Fame of him, and had but juſt now themſelves *admir'd his gracious Words*, tho' in Juſtice he ought to have been allow'd a fair Hearing, and Liberty to explain himſelf, yet they hurry'd him away in a popular Fury or Frenzy rather, to put him to Death in a moſt barbarous Manner. Sometimes they were ready to ſtone him for the *good Works* he did, *Joh.* 10. 32. here, for not doing the good Works they expected from him. To ſuch a Height of Wickedneſs was Violence ſprung up.

3. Yet he eſcap'd, becauſe his Hour was not yet come. He *paſſed through the midſt of them* unhurt; either he blinded their Eyes, as the *Sodomites* and *Syrians* were, or he bound their Hands or fill'd them with Confuſion, ſo that they could not do what they deſign'd; for his Work was not done, 'twas but juſt begun; his Hour was not yet come, when it was come he freely ſurrender'd himſelf. They *drove* him from them, and he *went his Way.* He would have gather'd *Nazareth*, but they *would not*, and therefore their Houſe is *left to them deſolate.* This added to the Reproach of his being *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, that not only it was a Place whence no good Thing was expected, but that it was ſuch a wicked, rude Place, and ſo *unkind* to him. Yet there was a Providence in it, that he ſhould not be much reſpected by the Men of *Nazareth*, for that would have look'd like a Colluſion between him and his old Acquaintance; but now tho' they *reciev'd him not*, there were thoſe that did.

31 And he came down to Capernaum a city of Galilee, and taught them on the ſabbath-days. 32 And they were aſtoniſhed at his doctrine: for his word was with power. 33 ¶ And in the ſynagogue there was a man which had a ſpirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, 34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jeſus of Nazareth? art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee who thou art; the holy one of God. 35 And Jeſus rebuked him, ſaying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the Devil had thrown him in the mids, he came out of him, and hurt him not. 36 And they were all amazed, and ſpake among themſelves, ſaying, What a word *is* this? for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean ſpirits, and they come out. 37 And the fame of him went

out into every place of the country round about. 38
¶ And he aroſe out of the ſynagogue, and entred into
Simons houſe: now Simons wives mother was taken
with a great fever; and they beſought him for
her. 39 And he ſtood over her, and rebuked the fever,
and it left her. And immediately ſhe aroſe and
miniſtred unto them. 40 ¶ Now when the ſun was
ſetting, all they that had any ſick with divers diſeaſes,
brought them unto him: and he laid his hands
on every one of them, and healed them. 41 And
devils came out of many, crying out, and ſaying,
Thou art Chriſt the Son of God. And he rebuking
them, ſuffered them not to ſpeak: for they knew
that he was Chriſt. 42 And when it was day, he
departed, and went into a deſert place: and the people
ſought him, and came unto him, and ſtayed him,
that he ſhould not depart from them. 43 And he ſaid
unto them, I muſt preach the kingdom of God to other
cities alſo: for therefore am I ſent. 44 And he
preached in the ſynagogues of Galilee.

When Chriſt was expell'd *Nazareth*, he came to *Capernaum*, another City of *Galilee*; the Account we have in theſe Verſes, of his Preaching and Miracles there, we had before, *Mark* 1. 21. &c. Obſerve,

1. His Preaching. He *taught them on the Sabbath-Days*, v. 31. In hearing the Word preach'd, as an Ordinance of God, we *worſhip God*, and it is a proper Work for *Sabbath-Days*. Chriſt's Preaching much affected People, *v.* 31. they were *aſtoniſh'd at his Doctrine*, there was Weight in every Word he ſaid, and admirable Diſcoveries were made to them by it. The Doctrine it ſelf was aſtoniſhing, and not only as it came from one that had not had a liberal Education; *his Word was with Power:* There was a commanding Force in it, and a working Power went along with it to the Conſciences of Men. The Doctrine *Paul* preach'd, hereby prov'd itſelf to be of God, that it came *in Demonſtration of the Spirit and of Power*.

2. His Miracles. Of theſe we have here

1. Two particularly inſtanc'd in, ſhewing Chriſt to be

1. A *Controller* and *Conqueror* of *Satan*, in the World of Mankind, and in the Souls of People, by his Power to caſt them out of the Bodies of thoſe he had taken Poſſeſſion of; for *for this Purpoſe was he manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the Works of the Devil.*

Obſerve, (1.) The Devil is an *unclean Spirit*, his Nature directly contrary to that of the pure and *holy* God, and degenerated from what it was at firſt. (2.) This unclean Spirit works in the Children of Men; in the Souls of many, as then in Men's Bodies. (3.) It is poſſible, that thoſe who are very much under the Power and Working of Satan, may yet be found *in the Synagogue* among the Worſhippers of God. (4.) Even the Devils *know and believe* that *Jeſus Chriſt is the Holy one of God*, is ſent of God, and is a *Holy one.* (5.) They believe and *tremble*; this unclean Spirit *cry'd out with a loud Voice*, under a *certain fearful looking for of Judgment*, and apprehenſive that Chriſt was now come to deſtroy him. Unclean Spirits are ſubject to continual Frights. (6.) The Devils have *nothing to do with Jeſus Chriſt*, nor deſire to have any Thing to do with him, for he took not on him the Nature of Angels. (7.) Chriſt has the Devil under Check; *he rebuk'd him*, ſaying, *Hold thy Peace*, and this Word he ſpake *with Power*, *Φιμώθητι*, *be muzzel'd*; Chriſt did not only enjoin him Silence, but ſtopt his Mouth, and forc'd him to be ſilent againſt his Will. (8.) In the breaking of Satan's Power, both the Enemy that's conquer'd ſhews his Malice, and Chriſt the Conqueror ſhews his over-ruling Grace. Here (1.) The Devil ſhew'd what he would have done, when he *threw the Man in the midſt*, with Force and Fury, as if he would have daſh'd him to Pieces. But (2.) Chriſt ſhew'd what a Power he had over him, in that he not only forc'd him to leave him, but to leave him without ſo much as *hurting* him, without giving him a parting Blow, a parting Gripe. Whom Satan cannot *deſtroy*, he will do all the *Hurt* he can to; but this is a Comfort, he can harm them no farther than Chriſt permits; nay, he ſhall not do them any real Harm. He *came out* and *hurt him not*, i. e. the poor Man was perfectly well in an Inſtant, tho' the Devil left him with ſo much Rage, that all that were preſent thought he had torn him to Pieces. (9.) Chriſt's Power over Devils was univerſally acknowledg'd and ador'd, *v.* 36. No one doubted of the Truth of the Miracle, 'twas evident beyond Contradiction, nor was any Thing ſuggeſted to diminiſh the Glory of it, for they were *all amaz'd, ſaying, What a Word is this!* They that pretended to caſt out Devils, did it with Abundance of Charms and Spells, to pacify the Devil, and lull him aſleep as it were; but Chriſt commanded them *with Authority and Power*, which they could not gainſay or reſiſt. Even the *Prince of the Power of the Air* is his Vaſſal, and trembles before him. (10.) This, as much as any Thing, gain'd Chriſt a Reputation, and ſpread his Fame. This Inſtance of his Power, which many now-a-days make light of, was then, by them that were Eye-Witneſſes of it, and thoſe no Fools neither, but Men of Penetration, magnify'd, and was look'd upon as greatly magnifying him, *v.* 37. upon the Account of this, *the Fame of him went out* more than ever, *into every Place of the Country round about.* Our Lord Jeſus when he ſet out at firſt in his publick Miniſtry, was mightily talk'd of, more than afterwards, when Peoples Admiration wore off with the Novelty of the Thing.

2. Chriſt ſhew'd himſelf to be *a Healer of Diſeaſes*; in the former he ſtruck at the Root of Man's Miſery, which was Satan's Enmity, the Origin of all the Miſchief: In this he ſtrikes at one of the moſt ſpreading Branches of it, one of the moſt common Calamities of human Life, and that is, Bodily Diſeaſes, which came in with Sin, are the moſt common and ſenſible Corrections for it in this Life, and contribute as much as any Thing towards the making our few Days *full of Trouble.* Theſe our Lord Jeſus came to take away the Sting of, and as an Indication of that Intention, when he was on Earth, choſe to confirm his Doctrine by ſuch Miracles moſtly, as took away the Diſeaſes themſelves. Of all bodily Diſeaſes none more common or fatal to grown People, than *Fevers*, theſe come ſuddenly, and ſuddenly cut off the Number of Mens Months in the midſt; are ſometimes *Epidemical*, and *ſlay their Thouſands* in a little Time. Now here we have Chriſt's curing of a Fever, with a Word ſpeaking; the Place was in *Simon*'s Houſe, his Patient was *Simon*'s Wife's Mother, *v.* 38, 39. Obſerve (1.) Chriſt is a Gueſt that will pay well for his Entertainment; thoſe that bid him welcome into their Hearts and Houſes, ſhall be no Loſers by him; he comes with healing. (2.) Even Families that Chriſt viſits, yet may be viſited with Sickneſs. Houſes that are bleſs'd with his *diſtinguiſhing Favours*, yet are liable to the *common Calamities* of this Life. *Simon*'s Wife's Mother was *ill of a Fever*; *Lord behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick.* (3.) Even good People may ſometimes be exercis'd with the ſharpeſt Afflictions, mor grievous than others; ſhe was *taken with a great Fever*, very acute, and high, and threatning; perhaps it ſeiz'd her Head, and made her *delirious.* The moſt gentle Fevers may by Degrees prove dangerous, but this was at firſt *a great Fever.* (4.) No Age can exempt from Diſeaſes. 'Tis likely *Peter*'s Mother-in-law was *in Years*, and yet in a *Fever.* (5.) When our Relations are ſick, we ought to apply ourſelves to Chriſt by Faith and Prayer on their Account. *They beſought him for her*; and there is a particular Promiſe, that the Prayer of Faith ſhall benefit the Sick. (6.) Chriſt has a tender Concern for his People, when they are in Sickneſs and Diſtreſs; he *ſtood over her*, as one concern'd for her, and compaſſionating her Caſe. (7.) Chriſt had and ſtill has, a ſovereign Power over bodily Diſeaſes, he *rebuked the Fever*, and with a Word ſpeaking commanding it away, and *it left her.* He ſaith to Diſeaſes, Go, and they go, come, and they come; and can ſtill *rebuke Fevers*, even great Fevers. (8.) This proves Chriſt's Cures to be miraculous, that they were done in a Inſtant, *immediately ſhe aroſe.* (9.) Where Chriſt gives a new Life, in Recovery from Sickneſs, he deſigns and expects that it ſhou'd be a new Life indeed, ſpent more than ever in his Service, to his Glory. If Diſtempers be rebuk'd, and we ariſe from a Bed of Sickneſs, we muſt ſet ourſelves to miniſter to Jeſus Chriſt. (10.) Thoſe that miniſter to Chriſt, muſt be ready to miniſter to all that are his, for his Sake. She *miniſter'd to them*, not only to *him* that had cur'd her, but to them that had *beſought him for her.* We muſt ſtudy to be grateful to them that have pray'd for us.

2. A general Account given by wholeſale, of many other Miracles of the ſame Kind, which Chriſt did.

1. He *cur'd many that were diſeaſed*, even all without Exception that made their Application to him, *v.* 40. 'Twas *when the Sun was ſetting*, v. 40. in the Evening of that Sabbath Day which he had ſpent in the *Synagogue.* *Note*, It's good to do a full Sabbath Day's Work, to abound in the Work of the Day, in ſome good Work or other, even 'till Sun ſet; as thoſe that call the Sabbath and the Buſineſs of it, a Delight. Obſerve, he cur'd *all that were ſick*, Poor as well as Rich, and tho' they were ſick of *divers Diſeaſes*; ſo that there was no Room to ſuſpect that he had only a Specifick for ſome one Diſeaſe; he had a Remedy for every Malady. The Sign he us'd in healing was, *laying his Hands* on the Sick; not lifting up his Hands for them, for he heal'd as having Authority. He heal'd by his own Power. And thus he would put Honour upon that Sign which was afterwards us'd in conferring the Holy Ghoſt.

2. He caſt the Devil out of many that were poſſeſs'd, *v.* 41. Confeſſions were extorted from the Demoniacks, they ſaid, *Thou art Chriſt the Son of God*, but they ſaid it *crying* with Rage and Indignation, 'twas a Confeſſion upon the Rack, and therefore was not admitted in Evidence; Chriſt *rebuked them*, and did not *ſuffer them to ſay, that they knew him to be the Chriſt*, that it might appear beyond all Contradiction, that he had obtain'd a Conqueſt over them, and not a Compact with them.

3. Here is his Removal from *Capernaum*, v. 42, 43.

1. He *retir'd* for a while into a Place of *Solitude*; 'twas but a little while that he allow'd himſelf for Sleep; not only becauſe a *little ſerv'd him*, but becauſe he was *content with a little*,

and never indulg'd himſelf in Eaſe; but *when it was Day he went into a Deſart Place*; not to live conſtantly like an Hermite; but to be ſometimes *alone with God*, as even thoſe ſhould be, and contrive to be, that are moſt engag'd in publick Work, or elſe their Work will go on but poorly, and they will find themſelves never *leſs alone*, than when *thus alone*.

2. He *return'd* again to the Places of *Concourſe*, and to the Work he had to do there. Tho' a *Deſart Place* may be a convenient *Retreat*, yet it is not a *convenient Reſidence*, becauſe we were not ſent into this World to *live to ourſelves*, no not to the *beſt Part* of ourſelves only, but to glorify God, and do good in our Generation.

1. He was extremely *courted* to *Capernaum* again. *The People* were mighty fond of him, I doubt more becauſe he had heal'd their Sick, than becauſe he had preach'd Repentance to them; *they ſought him*, enquir'd which Way he went, and tho' it was in a *Deſart Place*, they *came unto him*. A Deſart is no Deſart, if we be *with Chriſt* there; and they *ſtay'd him, that he ſhould not depart from them*, ſo that if he wou'd go, it ſhould not be for Want of Invitation. His old Neighbours at *Nazareth*, had driven him from them, but his new Acquaintance at *Capernaum* were very importunate for his Continuance with them. *Note*, It ought not to diſcourage the Miniſters of Chriſt, that ſome reject them, for they will meet with others, that will welcome them and their Meſſage.

2. He choſe rather to *diffuſe* the Light of his Goſpel to *many* Places, than to fix it to *one*, that no one might pretend to be a *Mother Church* to the reſt. Tho' he was welcome at *Capernaum*, and had done abundance of good there, yet he is *ſent to preach the Goſpel to other Cities alſo*; and *Capernaum* muſt not inſiſt upon his Stay there. They that enjoy the Benefit of the Goſpel, muſt be willing that others alſo ſhould ſhare in that Benefit, and not covet the *Monopoly* of it. And thoſe Miniſters who are not *driven* from one Place, may yet be *drawn* to another, by a Proſpect of greater Uſefulneſs. Chriſt, tho' he preach'd not in vain in the *Synagogue* at *Capernaum*, yet wou'd not be ty'd to that, but *preach'd in the Synagogues of Galilee*, v. 44. *Bonum eſt ſui diffuſivum.* 'Tis well for us, that our Lord Jeſus has not ty'd himſelf to any one Place or People, but wherever two or three are gather'd in his Name, he will be in the midſt of them: And even in *Galilee of the Gentiles*, his ſpecial Preſence is in the Chriſtian Synagogues.

CHAP. V.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) *Chriſt's preaching to the People out of* Peter's *Ship, for want of a better Pulpit,* v. 1,---3. (2.) *The Recompence he made to* Peter *for the Loan of his Boat, in a miraculous Draught of Fiſhes; by which he intimated to him and his Partners his Deſign to make them as Apoſtles, Fiſhers of Men,* v. 4, 11. (3.) *His cleanſing the Leper,* v. 12,---15. (4.) *A ſhort Account of his private Devotion, and publick Miniſtry,* v. 16, 17. (5.) *His Cure of the Man ſick of the Palſy,* v. 18, 26. (6.) *His calling* Levi *the Publican, and converſing with Publicans on that Occaſion,* v. 27,---32. (4.) *His juſtifying his Diſciples, in not faſting ſo frequently as the Diſciples of* John *and the Phariſees did,* v. 33, ad fin.

1 AND it came to paſs, that as the people preſſed upon him to hear the word of God, he ſtood by the lake of Genneſareth, 2 And ſaw two ſhips ſtanding by the lake: but the fiſhermen were gone out of them, and were waſhing *their* nets. 3 And he entered into one of the ſhips, which was Simons, and prayed him that he would thruſt a little out from the land: and he ſat down, and taught the people out of the ſhip. 4 Now when he had left ſpeaking, he ſaid unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. 5 And Simon anſwering ſaid unto him, Maſter, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: Nevertheleſs at thy word I will let down the net. 6 And when they had this done, they encloſed a great multitude of fiſhes; and their net brake. 7 And they beckened unto *their* partners which were in the other ſhip, that they ſhould come and help them. And they came and filled both the ſhips, ſo that they began to ſink. 8 When Simon Peter ſaw *it*, he fell down at Jeſus knees, ſaying, Depart from me, for I am a ſinful man, O Lord. 9 For he was aſtoniſhed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fiſhes which they had taken: 10 And ſo *was* alſo James and John the ſons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jeſus ſaid unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou ſhalt catch men. 11 And when they had brought their ſhips to land, they forſook all, and followed him.

This Paſſage of Story, fell in Order of Time, before the two Miracles we had in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, and is the ſame with that which was more briefly related by *Matthew* and *Mark*, of Chriſt's calling *Peter* and *Andrew* to be *Fiſhers of Men*, Mat. 4. 18. and *Mark* 1. 16. They had not related this miraculous Draught of Fiſhes at that Time, having only in View the Calling of his Diſciples, but *Luke* gives us that Story, as one of the many Signs which *Jeſus* did in the Preſence of his Diſciples, which *had not been written* in the foregoing Books, *Joh.* 20. 30, 31. Obſerve here

1. What vaſt *Crowds* attended Chriſt's Preaching; *the People preſſed upon him to hear the Word of God*, v. 1. Inſomuch that no Houſe would contain them; but he was forc'd to draw them out to the *Strand*, that they might be minded of the Promiſe made to *Abraham*, that his Seed ſhould be *as the Sand upon the Sea-Shore*, Gen. 22. 17. and yet of them but *a Remnant ſhall be ſaved*, Rom. 9. 27. The People *flock'd about him*, ſo the Word ſignifies; they ſhow'd Reſpect to his Preaching; tho' not without ſome Rudeneſs to his Perſon, which was very excuſable, for they *preſs'd upon him*. Some wou'd reckon this a Diminution to him, to be thus cry'd up by the Vulgar, when none of the *Rulers or of the Phariſees believed on him*; but he reckoned it an Honour to him, for their Souls were as precious as the Souls of the Grandees; and it is his Aim to bring not ſo much the Mighty as the *many Sons* to God; and it was foretold concerning him, that *to him ſhould the gathering of the People be*. Chriſt was a *popular* Preacher, and tho' he was able at *twelve* to *diſpute* with the *Doctors*, yet he choſe at *thirty* to preach to the Capacity of the Vulgar. See how the People reliſh'd *good Preaching*, tho' under all external Diſadvantages; they preſs'd to *hear the Word of God*; they could perceive it to be the *Word of God*, by the Divine Power and Evidence that went along with it, and therefore they coveted to hear it.

2. What poor *Conveniencies* Chriſt had for preaching, he ſtood *by the Lake of Genneſareth*, v. 1. upon the Level with the Crowd, ſo that they could not ſee him, or hear him; he was loſt among them, and every one ſtriving to get near him, he was crowded, and in Danger of being crowded into the Water. What muſt he do? It doth not appear that his Hearers had any Contrivance to give him Advantage, but *there were two Ships* or *Fiſher-Boats* brought to Shore, one belong'd to *Simon* and *Andrew*, the other to *Zebedee* and *his Sons*, v. 2. At firſt Chriſt ſaw *Peter* and *Andrew* Fiſhing at ſome Diſtance, ſo *Matthew* tells us, *chap.* 4. 18. but he waited till they came to Land, and till the *Fiſhermen*, that is, the Servants, were *gone out of them*, having waſh'd their Nets and thrown them by for that Time; ſo Chriſt *enter'd* into that *Ship* that belong'd to *Simon*, and beg'd of him, that he would lend it him for *a Pulpit*; and tho' he might have commanded him, yet for Love's Sake he rather *pray'd him* that he would *thruſt out a little from the Land*, which would be the worſe for his being *heard*, but Chriſt would have it ſo, that he might the better be *ſeen*; and it is his being *lifted up* that *draws Men to him*. Wiſdom cries *in the Top of High Places*, Prov. 8. 2. It intimates, that Chriſt had a ſtrong Voice, ſtrong indeed, for he made the *Dead* to hear it, and that he did not deſire to favour himſelf. There he *ſate down* and *taught the People* the good Knowledge of the Lord.

3. What a particular Acquaintance Chriſt hereupon fell into with theſe Fiſhermen. They had had ſome Converſation with him before, which began at *John*'s Baptiſm, *Joh.* 1. 40, 41. they were with him at *Cana of Galilee*, Joh. 2. 2. and in *Judea*, Joh. 4. 2. but as yet they were not call'd to attend him conſtantly, and therefore here we have them at their Calling; and now it was that they were called into a more intimate Fellowſhip with Chriſt.

1. When Chriſt had done preaching, he order'd *Peter* to apply himſelf to the Buſineſs of his Calling again. *Launch out into the Deep, and let down your Nets*, v. 4. It was not the *Sabbath-day*, and therefore as ſoon as the Lecture was over, he ſet them to Work. Time ſpent on Week-Days in the publick Exerciſes of Religion, may be but little Hindrance to us *in Time*, and a great Furtherance to us in *Temper of Mind*, in our worldly Buſineſs. With what Chearfulneſs may we go about the Duties of our Calling, when we have been *in the Mount* with God, and from thence fetch a double Bleſſing into our worldly Employments, and thus have them ſanctified to us, by the Word and Prayer. It is our Wiſdom and Duty, ſo to manage our Religious Exerciſes, as that they may befriend our worldly Buſineſs, and ſo to manage our worldly Buſineſs, as that it may be no Enemy to our Religious Exerciſes.

2. *Peter* having *attended* upon Chriſt in his *Preaching*, Chriſt will *accompany* him in his *Fiſhing*; he ſtaid with Chriſt at the Shore, and now Chriſt will *launch out* with him *into the Deep*. *Note*, Thoſe that will be conſtant Followers of Chriſt, ſhall have him a conſtant Guide to them.

3. Chriſt orders *Peter* and his Ships Crew to *caſt their Nets into the Sea*, which they do in Obedience to him, tho' they had been hard at it all Night, and had *caught nothing*, v. 4, 5.

We may obſerve here

1. How melancholy their Buſineſs had now been. *Maſter we have toiled all the Night*, when we ſhou'd have been aſleep in our Bed, *and have taken nothing*, but have had our Labour for our

Pains; one wou'd have thought, that ſhould have excus'd them from hearing the Sermon, but ſuch a Love had they to the Word of God, that it was more refreſhing and reviving to them after a weariſom Night, than the ſofteſt Slumbers. But they mention it to Chriſt when he bids them go a Fiſhing again. *Note*, (1.) Some *Callings* are much more *toilſom* than others are, and more perillous; yet Providence has ſo order'd it for the common Good, that there is no uſeful Calling ſo diſcouraging, but ſome or other have a Genius for it. Thoſe that follow their Buſineſs, and yet abundance by it, with a great deal of Eaſe, ſhou'd think with Compaſſion of thoſe who cannot follow theirs, but with a great Fatigue, and hardly get a bare Livelihood by it. When we have *reſted all Night*, let us not forget thoſe who have *toiled all Night*, as *Jacob* when he kept *Laban*'s Sheep. (2.) Be the Calling never ſo laborious, 'tis good to ſee People diligent in it, and make the beſt of it: Theſe Fiſhermen that were thus *induſtrious*, Chriſt ſingled out for his Favourites. They were fit to be preferr'd as good Soldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, that had thus learn'd to *endure Hardneſs*. (3.) Even thoſe that are moſt diligent in their Buſineſs, yet often meet with Diſappointments; they that *toil'd all Night* yet *caught nothing*; for the *Race* is not always *to the ſwift*. God will have us to be diligent, purely in Duty to his Command, and Dependance upon his Goodneſs, rather than with an Aſſurance of worldly Succeſs. We muſt do our Duty, and then leave the Event to God. (4.) When we are tir'd with our worldly Buſineſs, and croſs'd in our worldly Affairs, we are welcome to come to Chriſt and ſpread our Caſe before him, who will take Cognizance of it.

2. How ready their Obedience was to the Command of Chriſt, *Nevertheleſs at thy Word I will let down the Net*. 1. Tho' they had *toil'd all Night*, yet if Chriſt bid them, they will renew their Toil, for they know, that they that *wait on him ſhall renew their Strength*, as Work is renew'd upon their Hands; for every freſh Service, they ſhall have a freſh Supply of *Grace ſufficient*. 2. Tho' they have *taken* nothing, yet if Chriſt bid them *let down for a Draught*, they will hope to take *ſomething*. *Note*, We muſt not preſently quit the Callings wherewith we are called, becauſe we have not the Succeſs in them we promis'd our ſelves. The Miniſters of the Goſpel muſt continue to *let down* that *Net*, tho' they have perhaps *toil'd long* and *caught nothing*; and this is thank-worthy, to continue unwearied in our Labours, tho' we ſee not the Succeſs of them. 3. In this they have an Eye to the *Word of Chriſt*, and a Dependance upon that; *at thy Word I will let down the Net*, becauſe thou doſt enjoin it, and thou doſt encourage it. We are then likely to ſpeed well, when we follow the Conduct of Chriſt's Word.

3. The Draught of Fiſh they caught, was ſo much beyond what was ever known, that it amounted to a Miracle, *v.* 6. They *incloſ'd a great Multitude of Fiſhes*, ſo that *their Net brake*, and yet, which is ſtrange, they did not loſe their Draught; 'Twas ſo great a *Draught*, that they had not Hands enow to draw it up; but they were fain to becken to their Partners, who were at a Diſtance, out of Call, to come and help them, *v.* 7. But the greateſt Evidence of the Vaſtneſs of the Draught was, that they filled both the Ships with Fiſh, to that Degree, that they over-loaded them, and they *began to ſink*, ſo that the Fiſh had like to have been loſt again, with their own Weight; as many an over-grown Eſtate rais'd out of the Water, returns to the Place from whence it came. Suppoſe theſe Ships were but five or ſix Tuns a-piece; What a vaſt Quantity of Fiſh muſt there be to *load*, nay to *over-load* them both!

Now by this vaſt Draught of Fiſhes, (1.) Chriſt intended to ſhew his *Dominion* in the *Seas* as well as on the *Dry-Land*; over its *Wealth* as over its *Waves*; thus he would ſhew that he was that *Son of Man*, under whoſe Feet all Things were put, and particularly the *Fiſh of the Sea*, and *whatſoever paſſeth through the Paths of the Sea*, Pſal. 8. 8. (2.) He intended hereby to confirm the Doctrine he had juſt now preach'd out of *Peter*'s Ship. We may ſuppoſe that the People on the Shore who heard the Sermon, having a Notion that the Preacher was a Prophet ſent of God, carefully attended his Motions afterwards, and ſtaid halting about there, to ſee what he would do next, that this Miracle immediately following, wou'd be a Confirmation to their Faith, and of his being at leaſt *a Teacher come from God*. (3.) He intended hereby to repay *Peter* for the Loan of his Boat, for Chriſt's *Goſpel* now, as his *Ark* formerly in the Houſe of *Obed-Edom*, will be ſure to make amends, rich amends, for its *kind* Entertainment. None ſhall *ſhut a Door*, or *kindle a Fire* in God's Houſe *for Naught*, Mal. 1. 10. Chriſt's Recompences for Services done to his Name, are abundant, they are ſuper-abundant. (4.) He intended hereby, to give a Specimen, to thoſe who were to be his Embaſſadors to the World, of the Succeſs of their Embaſſy, that tho' they might for a Time, and in one particular Place *toil*, and *catch nothing*, yet that they ſhould be inſtrumental to bring in many to Chriſt, and incloſe many in the Goſpel Net.

5. The Impreſſion which this miraculous Draught of Fiſhes made upon *Peter*, was very remarkable.

1. All *concern'd* were *aſtoniſh'd*, and the more *aſtoniſh'd* for their being *concern'd*: All the Boat's Crew were *aſtoniſh'd at the Draught of Fiſhes which they had taken*, v. 9. they were all ſurpriz'd; and the more they conſider'd it, and all the Circumſtances of it, the more they were *Wonder-ſtruck*, I had almoſt ſaid *Thunder-ſtruck* at the Thought of it, *And ſo were alſo James and John, which were Partners with Simon*, v. 10. and who for ought appears, were not ſo well acquainted with Chriſt before this, as *Peter* and *Andrew* were. Now they were the more *affected* with it. (1.) Becauſe they *underſtood* it better than others did: They that were all acquainted with this Sea, and 'tis likely had *ply'd* upon it many Years, had never ſeen ſuch a Draught of Fiſhes fetch'd out of it, nor any thing like it, any thing near it, and therefore could not be tempted to diminiſh it as others might, by ſuggeſting that it was accidental at this *Time*, and what might as well have happened at *any Time*. It greatly corroborates the Evidence of Chriſt's Miracles, that thoſe who were beſt *acquainted* with them, moſt *admir'd* them. (2.) Becauſe they were moſt *intereſted* in it, and *benefited* by it. *Peter* and his Part-owners were Gainers by this great Draught of Fiſhes, 'twas a rich Booty for them, and therefore it tranſported them, and their *Joy* was a *Helper* to their *Faith*. *Note*, When Chriſt's Works of Wonder are to us in particular, Works of Grace, then eſpecially they command our Faith in his Doctrine.

2. *Peter* above all the reſt was aſtoniſh'd to ſuch a Degree, that he *fell down at Jeſus's Knees* as he ſate in the Stern of his Boat, and ſaid, as one in an Eſtaſy or Tranſport that knew not where he was, or what he ſaid, *Depart from me, for I am a ſinful Man, O Lord*, v. 8. not that he fear'd the Weight of the Fiſh would ſink him, becauſe he was a ſinful Man, but that he thought himſelf unworthy of the Favour of Chriſt's Preſence in his Boat, and worthy that it ſhould be to him a Matter rather of Terror than of Comfort. This Word of *Peter*'s came from the ſame Principle with theirs, that under the *Old Teſtament* ſo often ſaid they did *exceedingly fear and quake* at the extraordinary Diſplays of the Divine Glory and Majeſty. 'Twas the Language of *Peter*'s Humility and Self-denial, and had not the leaſt Tincture of the Devil's Dialect, *What have we to do with thee, Jeſus thou Son of God*. (1.) His Acknowledgement was very juſt, and what becomes us all to make: *I am a ſinful Man, O Lord*. *Note*, Even the *beſt Men* are *ſinful Men*, and ſhould be ready upon all Occaſions to own it, and eſpecially to own it to Jeſus Chriſt; for to whom elſe, but to him who came into the World to *ſave Sinners*, ſhould *ſinful Men* apply themſelves. (2.) His Inference from it was, what *might have been* juſt, tho' really it was not ſo. If I be a *ſinful Man*, as indeed I am, I ought to ſay, *Come to me, O Lord*, or let me come to thee, or I am undone, *for ever udone*: But conſidering what Reaſon *ſinful Men* have to tremble before the holy Lord God, and to dread his Wrath, *Peter* may well be excus'd, if in a Senſe of his own Sinfulneſs and Vileneſs he cry'd out on a ſudden, *Depart from me*. *Note*, Thoſe whom Chriſt deſigns to admit to the moſt *intimate Acquaintance* with him, he firſt makes ſenſible that they deſerve to be ſet at the *greateſt Diſtance* from him. We muſt all own ourſelves *ſinful Men*, and that therefore Jeſus Chriſt might juſtly *depart from us*, but we muſt therefore *fall down at his Knees*, to pray him that he would not depart; for *Wo unto us* if he *leave* us, if the *Saviour* depart from the ſinful Man.

6. The Occaſion which Chriſt took from hence, to intimate to *Peter*, v, 10. and ſoon after to *James* and *John*, Matt. 4. 21. his Purpoſe to make them his Apoſtles, and Inſtruments of his planting Religion in the World: He *ſaid unto Simon*, who was in the greateſt Surprize of any of them, at this prodigious Draught of Fiſhes, Thou ſhalt both ſee, and do greater Things than theſe; *fear not*, let not this aſtoniſh thee, be not afraid, that after having done this Honour, 'tis ſo great that I ſhall never do thee more; No, *from henceforth thou ſhalt catch Men*, by incloſing them in the Goſpel Net, and that ſhall be a greater Inſtance of the Redeemer's Power, and his Favour to thee than this is. That ſhall be a more *Aſtoniſhing* Miracle, and infinitely more *Advantagious* than this. When by *Peter*'s Preaching *three thouſand Souls* were *in one Day* added to the Church, then the Type of this great Draught of Fiſhes was abundantly anſwer'd.

Laſtly, The Fiſhermen's Farewell to their Calling, in order to their conſtant Attendance on Chriſt, *v.* 11. *When they had brought their Ships to Land*, inſtead of going to ſeek for a Market for their Fiſh, that they might make the beſt Hand they could of this Miracle, they *forſook all and follow'd him*, being more ſolicitous to ſerve the Intereſts of Chriſt, than to advance any ſecular Intereſts of their own. It is obſervable, that they *left all to follow Chriſt*, when their Calling proſper'd in their Hands more than ever it had done, and they had had uncommon Succeſs in it. When *Riches increaſe*, and we are therefore moſt in Temptation to *ſet our Hearts* upon them, then to quit them for the Service of Chriſt, this is *Thank-worthy*.

12 ¶ And it came to paſs, when he was in a certain city, behold, a man full of leproſy: who ſeeing Jeſus, fell on *his* face, and beſought him, ſaying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt make me clean. 13 And he

put forth *his* hand, and touched him, ſaying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately the leproſy departed from him. 14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go and ſhew thy ſelf to the prieſt, and offer for thy cleanſing, according as Moſes commanded, for a teſtimony unto them. 15 And ſo much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their Infirmities. 16 ¶ And he withdrew himſelf into the wilderneſs, and prayed.

Here's 1. The cleanſing of a Leper, *v.* 12,—14. This Story we had both in *Matthew* and *Mark*; 'tis here ſaid to have been *in a certain City*, v. 12. 'twas in *Capernaum*: But the Evangeliſt would not name it, perhaps becauſe it was a Reflection upon the Government of the City, that a Leper was ſuffer'd to be *in it*. This Man is ſaid to be *full of Leproſy*, he had that Diſtemper in a high Degree, which doth the more fitly repreſent our natural Pollution by Sin; we are *full of that Leproſy, from the Crown of the Head, to the Sole of the Foot, there is no Soundneſs in us.* Now let us learn here,

1. What we muſt do in the Senſe of our ſpiritual Leproſy. (1.) We muſt *ſee Jeſus*, enquire after him, and acquaint our ſelves with him, and reckon the Diſcoveries made us of Chriſt by the Goſpel, the moſt acceptable and welcome Diſcoveries that could be made us. (2.) We muſt humble our ſelves before him; and this Leper ſeeing Jeſus, *fell on his Face*. We muſt be *aſham'd* of our Pollution, and in the Senſe of it, bluſh to lift up our Faces before the *Holy Jeſus*. (3.) We muſt earneſtly deſire to be *cleanſed* from the Defilement, and cur'd of the Diſeaſe of Sin, which renders us unfit for Communion with God. (4.) We muſt firmly believe Chriſt's Ability and Sufficiency to cleanſe us; Lord, *Thou canſt make me clean*, tho' I be *full of Leproſy*; no Doubt is to be made of the Merit and Grace of Chriſt. (5.) We muſt be importunate in Prayer for pardoning Mercy, and renewing Grace, he *fell on his Face and beſought him*; they that would be cleanſed muſt reckon it a Favour worth wreſtling for. (6.) We muſt refer our ſelves to the Good-will of Chriſt; *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt*: This is not ſo much the Language of his *Diffidence*, or *Diſtruſt* of the Good-will of Chriſt, as of his Submiſſion, and Reference of himſelf and his Caſe to the Will, to the Good-will of Jeſus Chriſt.

2. What we may expect from Chriſt, if we thus apply our ſelves to him. (1.) We ſhall find him very *condeſcending*, and forward to take Cognizance of our Caſe, *v.* 13. *He put forth his Hand and touched him.* When Chriſt viſited this Leprous World, unask'd, unſought unto, he ſhew'd how low he could ſtoop to do Good. His *touching* the Leper was wonderful Condeſcenſion; but 'tis much greater to us when he is himſelf *touch'd with the Feeling of our Infirmities.* (2.) We ſhall find him very *Compaſſionate*, and ready to relieve us; he ſaid, *I will*, never doubt of that; whoſoever comes to me to be heal'd, *I will in no wiſe caſt out*; he is as willing to cleanſe Leprous Souls, as they can be to be cleanſed. (3.) We ſhall find him All-ſufficient, and able to heal and cleanſe us, tho' we be never ſo full of this loathſome Leproſy. One Word, one Touch from Chriſt did the Buſineſs, *immediately the Leproſy departed from him.* If Chriſt ſaith, I will, be thou *juſtified*, be thou *ſanctified*, it is done; for he has Power on Earth to *forgive* Sin, and Power to give the Holy Spirit, *1 Cor.* 6. 11.

3. What he requires from thoſe that are cleanſed, *v.* 14. Has Chriſt ſent his Word and healed us? (1.) We muſt be very *humble*, v. 12. *He charg'd him to tell no Man*: It ſhould ſeem this did not forbid him telling it to the Honour of Chriſt, but he muſt not tell it to his own Honour. Thoſe whom Chriſt hath heal'd and cleans'd, muſt know that he hath done it in ſuch a Way as doth for ever exclude Boaſting. (2.) We muſt be very *Thankful*, and make a grateful Acknowledgement of the Divine Grace; *Go, and offer for thy cleanſing.* Chriſt did not require him to give him a Fee, but bring the Sacrifice of Praiſe to God, ſo far was he from uſing his Power to the Prejudice of the Law of *Moſes*. (3.) We muſt *keep cloſe to our Duty*; go *to the Prieſt*, and thoſe that attend him. The Man whom Chriſt had made whole he *found in the Temple*, John 5. 14. Thoſe that by any Affliction have been detain'd from publick Ordinances, when the Affliction is remov'd, ſhould attend on them the more diligently, and adhere to them the more conſtantly.

2. Chriſt's *Publick Serviceableneſs* to Men, and his *Private Communion* with God; theſe are put together here to give Luſtre to each other.

1. Tho' never any had ſo much *Pleaſure* in his *Retirements* as Chriſt had, yet he was *much in a Crowd* to do Good, *v.* 15. Tho' the Leper ſhould altogether hold his Peace, yet the Thing could not be hid, *ſo much the more went there a Fame abroad of him*; the more he ſought to conceal himſelf under a Vail of Humility, the more Notice did People take of him; for Honour is like a Shadow which flies from thoſe that purſue it, *for a Man to ſeek his own Glory, is not Glory*; but it follows thoſe that decline it, and draw from it. The leſs Good, Men ſay of themſelves, the more will others ſay of them. But Chriſt reckon'd it a ſmall Honour to him that his *Fame went abroad*, it was much more ſo, that hereby Multitudes were brought to receive Benefit by him. (1.) By his Preaching; they came together to *hear* him, and to receive Inſtruction from him concerning the Kingdom of God. (2.) By his Miracles; they came *to be healed by him of their Infirmities*, and that invited them to come to hear him, confirm'd his Doctrine, and recommended it.

2. Tho' never any did ſo much *Good in Publick*, yet he found Time for *Pious* and *Devout Retirements*, v. 16. He *withdrew himſelf into the Wilderneſs, and pray'd*, not that he needed to avoid either Diſtraction, or Oſtentation, but he would ſet us an Example, who need to order the Circumſtances of our Devotion, ſo as to guard againſt both. It is likewiſe our Wiſdom, ſo to order our Affairs, as that our publick Work, and our ſecret Work may not intrench upon, or interfere with one another. *Note*, Secret Prayer muſt be perform'd ſecretly; and thoſe that have never ſo much to do of the beſt Buſineſs in this World, muſt keep up conſtant ſtated Times for it.

17 And it came to paſs on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Phariſees and doctors of the law ſitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jeruſalem: and the power of the Lord was *preſent* to heal them. 18 ¶ And behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with the palſy: and they ſought means to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him. 19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, becauſe of the multitude, they went upon the houſe-top, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch, into the midſt before Jeſus. 20 And when he ſaw their faith, he ſaid unto him, Man, thy ſins are forgiven thee. 21 And the ſcribes and the Phariſees began to reaſon, ſaying, Who is this which ſpeaketh blaſphemies? Who can forgive ſins, but God alone? 22 But when Jeſus perceived their thoughts, he anſwering ſaid unto them, What reaſon ye in your hearts? 23 Whether is eaſier to ſay, Thy ſins be forgiven thee, or to ſay, Riſe up and walk? 24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive ſins, (he ſaid unto the ſick of the palſy) I ſay unto thee, Ariſe, and take up thy couch, and go into thine houſe. 25 And immediately he roſe up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own houſe, glorifying God. 26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, ſaying, We have ſeen ſtrange things to day.

Here's 1. A general Account of Chriſt's Preaching and Miracles, *v.* 17. (1.) He was *teaching on a certain Day*, not on the Sabbath-day, then he would have ſaid ſo, but on a *Week-Day*; *ſix Days ſhalt thou labour*, not only for *the World*, but for *thy Soul*, and the Welfare of that. Preaching and Hearing the Word of God is *good Work*, if it be *done well*, any Day in the *Week*, as well as on Sabbath-days. 'Twas not in the *Synagogue*, but in a *private Houſe*; for even there, where we ordinarily Converſe with our Friends, it is not improper to give and receive good Inſtruction. (2.) There he *taught*, he *heal'd*, as before, *v.* 15. *and the Power of the Lord was to heal them*, ἦν εἰς τὸ ἰᾶσθαι αὐτοὺς; it was *mighty* to heal them, 'twas *exerted* and *put forth* to heal them: To *heal them* whom he *taught*; we may underſtand it ſo; to heal their Souls, to cure them of their Spiritual Diſeaſes, and to give them a New Life, a New Nature. *Note*, Thoſe who receive the Word of Chriſt in Faith, will find a Divine Power going along with that Word to *heal them*; for Chriſt came with his Comforts to *heal the broken hearted*, Chap. 4. 18. The Power of the Lord is *preſent with* the Word, *preſent to thoſe* that pray for it, and ſubmit to it, *preſent to heal them*: Or it may be meant (and ſo 'tis generally taken) of the healing of thoſe that were *diſeaſed in Body*, who came to him for Cures. Whenever there was Occaſion, Chriſt was not *to ſeek* for his Power, it was *preſent to heal*. (3.) There were ſome Grandees preſent in this Aſſembly, and as it ſhould ſeem more than uſually, *There were Phariſees* and *Doctors of the Law ſitting by*, not ſitting *at his Feet* to learn of him, then I ſhould have been willing to take the following Clauſe as referring to *them*, who were ſpoken of, immediately before, the *Power of the Lord was preſent to heal them*, and why might not the Word of Chriſt teach their Hearts; But by what follows, *v.* 21. it appears they were *not heal'd*, but cavill'd at Chriſt, which forceth us to make that to refer to others, not to them; for they *ſate by*, as *Perſons unconcern'd*, as if the Word of Chriſt were nothing to them. They ſate by as Spectators, and Cenſors, and Spies, to pick up ſomething on which to ground a Reproach, or Accuſation. How many are there in the midſt of our Aſſemblies, where the Goſpel *is* preach'd, that do not *ſit under* the Word, but *ſit by*? It is to them as a *Tale* that is *told them*, not as a *Meſſage* that is *ſent them*; they are willing we ſhould preach *before them*, not that we ſhould preach *to them*. Theſe *Phariſees* and *Scribes* (or Doctors of the Law) *came out of every Town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jeruſalem*, they came from all Parts of the Nation; 'tis likely they appointed to meet at this Time, and Place, to ſee what Remarks they could make upon Chriſt, and what he ſaid and did: They were in a Confederacy, as thoſe that ſaid, *Come and let us deviſe Devices againſt Jeremiah, and agree to ſmite him with the Tongue*, Jer. 18. 18. *Report, and we will report it*, Jer. 20. 10. Obſerve, Chriſt went on with his Work of *Preaching* and *Healing*, tho' he ſaw theſe *Phariſees* and *Dons* of the *Jewiſh* Church *ſitting by*, who he knew *deſpis'd* him, and watch'd to *enſnare* him.

2. A particular Account of the Cure of the Man *ſick of the Palſy*, which was related much as it is here, by both the foregoing Evangeliſts; let us therefore only obſerve in ſhort,

1. The Doctrines that are taught us, and confirm'd to us by the Story of this Cure. (1.) That Sin is the Fountain of all Sickneſs, and the Forgiveneſs of Sin is the only Foundation upon which a Recovery from Sickneſs can comfortably be built. They preſented the *ſick Man* to Chriſt, and he ſaid, *Man, thy Sins are forgiven thee*, v. 20. That's the Bleſſing thou art moſt to prize and ſeek; for if thy Sins be *forgiven thee*, tho' the Sickneſs be continued, 'tis in Mercy; if they be not, tho' the Sickneſs be remov'd, 'tis in Wrath. They are the Cords of our Iniquity, that are the Bands of our Affliction. (2.) That Jeſus Chriſt has Power on Earth to *forgive Sins*, and his healing Diſeaſes was an *unconteſtable* Proof of it. This was the Thing intended to be prov'd, v. 24. *That ye may know* and believe *that the Son of Man*, tho' now upon Earth, in his State of Humiliation, *hath Power to forgive Sins*, and to releaſe Sinners upon Goſpel Terms from the eternal Puniſhment of Sin, he *ſaith to the Sick of the Palſy, Ariſe and walk*, and he is cur'd immediately. Chriſt claims one of the Prerogatives of the King of Kings, when he undertakes to *forgive Sin*, and 'tis juſtly expected he ſhould produce a good Proof of it: Well, ſaith he, I'll put it upon this Iſſue, here's a Man ſtruck with a Palſy, and *for his Sin*, if I do not with a Word's ſpeaking cure his Diſeaſe in an Inſtant, which cannot be done by Nature or Art, but purely by the immediate Power and Efficacy of the God of Nature, then ſay, I am not entitled to the Prerogative of forgiving Sin, am not the Meſſiah, am not the Son of God, and King of *Iſrael*: But if I do, you muſt own *I have Power to forgive Sins*: Thus was it put upon a fair Tryal, and one Word of Chriſt determin'd it. He did but ſay *Ariſe, take up thy Couch*, and that *chronical* Diſeaſe had an *inſtantaneous* Cure, *immediately he aroſe before them*; they muſt all own there could be no Cheat or Fallacy in it; they that brought him could atteſt how perfectly *lame* he was before; they that ſaw him could atteſt how perfectly *well* he was now; inſomuch that he had Strength enough to take up, and carry away the Bed he lay upon. How well is it for us, that this moſt comfortable Doctrine of the Goſpel, That *Jeſus Chriſt*, our *Redeemer and Saviour*, has *Power to forgive Sin*, has ſuch a full Atteſtation. (3.) That Jeſus Chriſt is God. He appears to be ſo, (1.) By *knowing the Thoughts* of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, v. 21. which 'tis God's Prerogative to do; tho' thoſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees* knew as well how to conceal their Thoughts, and keep their Countenances as moſt Men, and probably were induſtrious to do it at this Time, for they *lay in wait ſecretly*. (2.) By doing that which their Thoughts own'd none could do but God only, *v.* 21. *Who can forgive Sins*, ſay they, *but only God*? I'll prove, ſaith Chriſt that I can forgive Sins; and what follows then, but that *he is God*? What horrid Wickedneſs then were they guilty of, who charg'd him with ſpeaking the *worſt of Blaſphemies*, then when he ſpoke the *beſt of Bleſſings, Thy Sins be forgiven thee!*

2. The Duties that are taught us, and recommended to us by this Story. (1.) In our Applications to Chriſt, we muſt be very *preſſing* and *urgent*; that's an Evidence of Faith, and is very pleaſing to Chriſt, and prevailing with him. They that were the Friends of this ſick Man, *ſought Means to bring him in before Chriſt*, v. 28. and when they were baffled in their Endeavour, yet did not give up the Cauſe; but when they could not get in by *the Door*, it was ſo crouded, they untyl'd the Houſe, and let the poor Patient down through the Roof, *into the midſt before Jeſus*, v. 19. In this Jeſus Chriſt *ſaw their Faith*, v. 19. Now here he has taught us (and 'twere well if we could learn the Leſſon) to *put the beſt Conſtruction* upon Words and Actions that they *will bear*. When the *Centurion*, and the Woman of *Canaan*, were in no Care at all to bring the Patients they interceded for, into Chriſt's Preſence, but believ'd that he could Cure them *at a Diſtance*, he commended *their Faith*: But tho' in *theſe* there ſeem'd to be a *different* Notion of the Thing, and an Apprehenſion that it was requiſite the *Patient* ſhould be *brought into his Preſence*, yet he did not *cenſure* and *condemn* their Weakneſs, did not ask them what need you give this Diſturbance to the Aſſembly? Are you under ſuch a Degree of Infidelity, as to think I could not have cur'd him tho' he had been out of Doors? But he made the beſt of it, and even in *this* he ſaw *their Faith*. It is a Comfort to us that we ſerve a Maſter that is willing to *make the beſt* of us. (2.) When we are Sick we ſhould be more in Care to get our Sins pardon'd, than to get our Sickneſs remov'd. Chriſt in what he ſaid to this Man, taught us when we ſeek to God for Health, to begin with ſeeking to him for Pardon. (3.) The Mercies which we have the Comfort of, God muſt have the Praiſe of. The Man *departed to his own Houſe glorifying God*, v. 25. To him belong the Eſcapes from Death, and in them therefore he muſt be *glorified*. (4.) The Miracles which Chriſt wrought were *amazing* to them that ſaw them, and we ought to *glorify* God in them, *v.* 26. They ſaid, *We have ſeen ſtrange Things to Day*, ſuch as we never ſaw before, nor our Fathers before us, they are altogether New. But they *glorified* God, who had ſent into their Country ſuch a Benefactor to it; and were *filled with Fear*, with a Reverence of God, with a Jealouſy that this was the Meſſiah, and that he was not treated by their Nation as he ought to be, which might prove in the End the Ruin of their State; perhaps they were ſome ſuch Thoughts as theſe that *fill'd them with Fear*, and a Concern likewiſe for themſelves.

27 ¶ And after theſe things he went forth, and ſaw a publicane named Levi, ſitting at the receipt of cuſtom: and he ſaid unto him, Follow me. 28 And he left all, roſe up, and followed him. 29 And Levi made him a great feaſt in his own houſe: and there was a great company of publicans, and of others that ſat down with them. 30 But the ſcribes and phariſees murmured againſt his diſciples, ſaying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and ſinners? 31 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, They that are whole need not a phyſician: but they that are ſick. 32 I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance. 33 ¶ And they ſaid unto him, Why do the diſciples of John faſt often, and make prayers, and likewiſe *the diſciples* of the Phariſees; but thine eat and drink? 34 And he ſaid unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber faſt, while the bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them, and then they ſhall faſt in thoſe days. 36 ¶ And he ſpake alſo a parable unto them, No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwiſe, then both the new maketh a Rent, and the piece that was *taken* out of the new, agreeth not with the old. 37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; elſe the new wine will burſt the bottles, and be ſpilled, and the bottles ſhall periſh. 38 But new wine muſt be put into new bottles; and both are preſerved. 39 No man alſo having drunk old *wine*, ſtraitway deſireth new: for he ſaith, The old is better.

All this, except the laſt Verſe, we had before in *Matthew* and *Mark*; 'tis not the Story of any *Miracle in Nature* wrought by our Lord Jeſus; but 'tis an Account of ſome of the *Wonders of his Grace*, which to thoſe who underſtand Things aright, are no leſs cogent Proofs of Chriſt's being ſent of God, than the other.

1. It was a *Wonder of his Grace*, that he would call a *Publican* from the *Receipt of Cuſtom* to be his Diſciple and Follower, *v.* 27. 'Twas a wonderful Condeſcenſion that he would admit poor Fiſhermen to that Honour. Men of the *loweſt Rank*; but much more wonderful that he would admit *Publicans*, Men of the *worſt Reputation*, Men of *ill Fame*; in this Chriſt *humbled himſelf*, and appear'd *in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*; by this he *expos'd himſelf*, and got the invidious Character of a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners*.

2. It was a *Wonder of his Grace*, that that Call was made *effectual*, became immediately ſo, *v.* 28. This Publican, tho' thoſe of that Employment commonly had little Inclination to Religion, yet for his Religion's Sake he left a good Place in the Cuſtom-houſe, which probably was his Livelyhood, and where he ſtood fair for better Preferment, and *roſe up and followed Chriſt*. There is no Heart too hard for the Spirit and Grace of Chriſt to work upon, nor any Difficulties in the Way of a Sinner's Converſion inſuperable to his Power.

3. It was a *Wonder of his Grace*, that he would not only admit a converted Publican into this Family, but would keep Company with unconverted Publicans, that he might have an Opportunity of doing their Souls good; and juſtified himſelf in it, as agreeing with the great Deſign of his coming into the World. Here's a Wonder of Grace indeed, that Chriſt undertakes to be the Phyſician of Souls *diſtemper'd* by Sin, and ready to *dye* of the Diſtemper, *v.* 31. He is a Healer by Office: That he has a particular Regard to the Sick, to Sinners,

as his Patients, convinced, awakened Sinners, that ſee their Need of their Phyſician: That he came to call *Sinners*, the worſt of Sinners to Repentance, and to aſſure them of Pardon upon Repentance, *v.* 32. This is glad Tydings of great Joy indeed.

4. It was a *Wonder of his Grace*, that he did ſo patiently bear the *Contradiction of Sinners againſt* himſelf and his Diſciples, *v.* 30. He did not expreſs his Reſentments of the Cavils of the Scribes and Phariſees, as he juſtly might have done, but anſwer'd them with Reaſon and Meekneſs; and inſtead of taking that Occaſion to ſhew his Diſpleaſure againſt the Phariſees, as afterwards he did, or of recriminating upon them, he took that Occaſion to ſhew his Compaſſion to poor Publicans, another Sort of Sinners, and to encourage them.

5. It was a *Wonder of his Grace*, that in the Diſcipline which he train'd his Diſciple up under, he *conſider'd their Frame*, and proportion'd their Services to their Strength and Standing, and to the Circumſtances they were in. It was objected, as a Blemiſh upon his Conduct, that he did not make *his Diſciples* to *faſt* ſo often as thoſe of the *Phariſees*, and *John Baptiſt* did, *v.* 33. He inſiſted moſt upon that which is the *Soul* of Faſting, the Mortification of Sin, the Crucifying of the Fleſh, and living a Life of Self-denial, which is as much better than Faſting and corporal Penances, as *Mercy* is, than *Sacrifice*.

6. It was a *Wonder of his Grace*, that Chriſt reſerv'd the Trials of his Diſciples for their latter Times, when by his Grace, they were in ſome good Meaſure better prepar'd, and fitted for them, than they were at firſt. Now they were as the *Children of the Bride-Chamber*, when the *Bridegroom* is *with them*, when they have Plenty, and Joy, and every Day is a Feſtival; Chriſt was welcom'd wherever he came, and they for his Sake, and as yet they met with little or no Oppoſition: But this will not laſt always, *the Days will come* when the *Bridegroom ſhall be taken away from them*, v. 35. When Chriſt ſhall leave them with their Hearts full of Sorrow, their Hands full of Work, and the World full of Enmity and Rage againſt them, *then ſhall they faſt*, ſhall not be ſo well fed as they are now, *We both hunger and thirſt, and are naked*, 1 Cor. 4. 11. Then they ſhall keep many more *religious Faſts* than they do now, for Prodence will call them to it, they will then ſerve the Lord *with Faſtings*, Acts 13. 2.

7. It was a *Wonder of his Grace*, that he proportion'd their Exerciſes to their Strength. He would not put *new Cloth upon an old Garment*, v. 36. nor *new Wine into old Bottles*, v. 37, 38. would not, aſſoon as ever he had call'd them out of the World, put them upon the Strictneſſes and Auſterities of Diſcipleſhip, leſt they ſhould be tempted to *fly off*: When God brought *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, he would not bring them *by the Way of the Philiſtines*, leſt they ſhould *repent* when they *ſaw War*, and *return into Egypt*, Exod. 13. 17. So Chriſt would train up his Followers gradually to the Diſcipline of his Family; for no Man having *drank old Wine*, will *of a ſudden*, ſtraitway *deſire new*, or reliſh it, but will ſay *the old is better*, becauſe he has been *uſed to it*, v. 39. The Diſciples will be tempted to think their old Way of living better, till they are by Degrees train'd up to this Way whereunto they are call'd: Or, turn it the other Way; let them be *accuſtom'd* a while to religious Exerciſes, and then they will *abound* in them as much as you do, but we muſt not be too haſty with them. *Calvin* takes it as an Admonition to the *Phariſees* not to boaſt of their Faſting, and the Noiſe and Shew they made with it; nor to diſpiſe his Diſciples, becauſe they did not in like manner *ſignalize* themſelves; for the Profeſſion the *Phariſees* made, was, indeed, *pompous* and *gay*, like *new Wine* that's brisk and ſparkling, whereas all wiſe Men ſay, *the old is better*; which tho' it doth not give its Colour ſo well in the Cup, yet is more warming in the Stomach, and more wholſome. Chriſt's Diſciples, tho' they had not ſo much of the *Form of Godlineſs*, yet they had more of the *Power of it*.

CHAP. VI.

In this Chapter we have Chriſt's Expoſition of the Moral Law, which he came not to deſtroy, but to fulfill, *and to fill up by his Goſpel.* (1.) *Here is a Proof of the Lawfulneſs of Works of* Neceſſity, *and* Mercy *on the Sabbath-day; the former in Vindication of his Diſciples plucking the Ears of Corn, the latter, in Vindication of himſelf healing the wither'd Hand on that Day*, v. 1.---11. (2.) *His Retirement for ſecret Prayer*, v. 12. (3.) *His calling his twelve Apoſtles*, v. 13.-----16. (4.) *His curing the Multitudes of thoſe under various Diſeaſes, who made their Application to him*, v. 17.---19. (5.) *The Sermon that he preach'd to his Diſciples and the Multitude, inſtructing them in their Duty both to God and Man*, v. 25.-----49.

1 AND it came to paſs on the ſecond ſabbath after the firſt, that he went through the cornfields: and his diſciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing *them* in *their* hands. 2 And certain of the Phariſees ſaid unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the ſabbath-day? 3 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, Have ye not read ſo much as this, what David did, when himſelf was an hungred, and they which were with him: 4 How he went into the houſe of God, and did take and eat the ſhew-bread, and gave alſo to them that were with him, which is not lawful to eat, but for the prieſts alone? 5 And he ſaid unto them, That the Son of Man is Lord alſo of the ſabbath. 6 And it came to paſs alſo on another ſabbath, that he entred into the ſynagogue and taught: and there was a man whoſe right hand was withered. 7 And the ſcribes and Phariſees watched him, whether he would heal on the ſabbath-day; that they might find an accuſation againſt him. 8 But he knew their thoughts, and ſaid to the man which had the withered hand, Riſe up, and ſtand forth in the mids. And he aroſe, and ſtood forth. 9 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them, I will ask you one thing, Is it lawful on the ſabbath-days to good, or to do evil? to ſave life, or to deſtroy *it*? 10 And looking round about upon them all, he ſaid unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did ſo: and his hand was reſtored whole as the other. 11 And they were filled with madneſs; and communed one with another what they might do to Jeſus.

Theſe two Paſſages of Story we had both in *Matthew* and *Mark*, and they were there laid together, *Matt.* 12. 1. *Mark* 2. 23.—3. 1. becauſe, tho' happening at ſome Diſtance of Time from each other, yet both were deſign'd to rectify the Miſtakes of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* concerning the Sabbath-day, on the *bodily Reſt* of which, they laid greater Streſs, and requir'd greater Strictneſs, than the Lawgiver intended. Here

1. Chriſt juſtifies his Diſciples in a *Work of Neceſſity* for themſelves on that Day, and that was *plucking the Ears of Corn*, when they were hungry, on that Day. This Story here has a Date, which we had not in the other Evangeliſts, it was *on the ſecond Sabbath after the firſt*, v. 1. that is, as Dr. *Whitby* thinks is pretty clear, the *firſt Sabbath after the ſecond Day of unleavened Bread*, from which Day they reckon'd the *ſeven Weeks* to the Feaſt of Pentecoſt; the firſt of which the call'd Σάββατον δευτερόπρωτον, the ſecond δευτεροδεύτερον, and ſo on. Bleſſed be God we need not be critical in this Matter: Whether this Circumſtance be mention'd, to intimate, that this Sabbath was thought to have ſome peculiar Honour upon it, which aggravated the Offence of the Diſciples, or only to intimate, that being the firſt Sabbath after the Offering of the firſt Fruits 'twas the Time of the Year when Corn was near ripe, is not material. We may obſerve,

(1.) Chriſt's Diſciples ought not to be nice and curious in their Diet, not at any Time, eſpecially not on Sabbath-days, but take up with what is eaſieſt got, and be thankful. Theſe Diſciples *pluck'd the Ears of Corn, and did eat*, v. 1, 2. a little ſerv'd them, and that which had no Delicacy in it.

(2.) Many that are themſelves guilty of the greateſt Crimes, are forward to cenſure others for the moſt innocent and inoffenſive Actions, *v.* 2. The Phariſees quarrel'd with them as doing that which it *was not lawful to do on the Sabbath-days*, when it was their own Practice to feed deliciouſly on Sabbath-days, more than on all other Days.

(3.) Jeſus Chriſt will juſtify his Diſciples when they are unjuſtly cenſur'd, and will own and accept of them in many a Thing, which Men tell them *it is not lawful for them to do*: How well is it for us that Men are not to be our Judges, and that Chriſt will be our Advocate!

(4.) Ceremonial Appointments may be diſpens'd with in Caſes of Neceſſity; as the appropriating of the Shew-bread to the Prieſts was diſpens'd with, when *David* was by Providence brought into ſuch a Strait, that he muſt either have that, or none, *v.* 3, 4. And if God's own Appointments might be thus ſet aſide for a greater Good, much more many the Traditions of Men.

(5.) Works of Neceſſity are particularly allowable on the Sabbath-day; but we muſt take head that we turn not this Liberty into Licentiouſneſs, and abuſe God's favourable Conceſſions and Condeſcenſions, to the Prejudice of the Work of the Day.

(6.) Jeſus Chriſt, tho' he allow'd Works of Neceſſity on the Sabbath-day, yet will have us to know, and remember, that it is his Day, and therefore is to be ſpent in his Service, and to his Honour, *v.* 5. *The Son of Man is Lord alſo of the Sabbath*, i. e. In the Kingdom of the Redeemer, the *Sabbath-day* is to be turn'd into a *Lord's-Day*; the Property of it is, in ſome Reſpects, to be alter'd, and it is to be obſerv'd chiefly in Honour of the Redeemer, as it had been before in Honour of the Creator, (*Jer.* 16. 14, 15.) and in Token of this, it ſhall not only have a New Name, the *Lord's-Day*, (yet not forgetting the Old, for it is a Sabbath of Reſt ſtill) but ſhall be transferred to a New Day, the firſt Day of the Week.

2. He juſtifies himſelf in doing *Works of Mercy* for others, on the Sabbath-day. Obſerve in this,

1. That Chriſt on the Sabbath-day *enter'd into the Synagogue. Note*, It is our Duty, as we have Opportunity, to ſanctify Sabbaths in Religious Aſſemblies: On the Sabbath there ought to be a *Holy Convocation*; and that our Place muſt not be empty, without very good Reaſon.

2. In the Synagogue on the Sabbath-day *he Taught*. Giving and receiving Inſtruction from Chriſt is very proper Work for a *Sabbath-Day*, and for a *Synagogue*. Chriſt took all Opportunities to teach, not only his Diſciples, but the Multitude.

3. That Chriſt's Patient was one of his Hearers. There was *a Man whoſe right Hand was wither'd*, he came to learn from Chriſt; whether he had any Expectation to be heal'd by him, doth not appear: But thoſe that would be *cur'd* by the Grace of Chriſt, muſt be willing to *learn* the Doctrine of Chriſt.

4. That among thoſe that were the Hearers of Chriſt's excellent Doctrine, and the Eye-witneſſes of his glorious Miracles, there were ſome who came with no other Deſign but to pick Quarrels with him, *v.* 7. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* would not, as became *generous* Adverſaries, give him fair Warning, That if he did *heal* on the Sabbath-day, they would conſtrue it a Violation of the Fourth Commandment, which they ought in Honour and Juſtice to have done, becauſe it was a Caſe *without Precedent*, none having ever cured as he did, and therefore could not be an *adjudg'd* Caſe; but baſely *watch'd him*, as the Lion doth his Prey, whether he would *heal on the Sabbath-day, that they might find an Accuſation againſt him*, and ſurprize him with a Proſecution.

5. That Jeſus Chriſt was neither *aſham'd*, nor *afraid* to own the Purpoſes of his Grace, in the Face of thoſe whom he knew confronted them, *v.* 8. *He knew their Thoughts*, and what they deſign'd, and he bid the Man *riſe and ſtand forth*, hereby to try the Patient's Faith and Boldneſs,

6. He appeal'd to his Adverſaries themſelves, and to the Convictions of Natural Conſcience, whether it was the Deſign of the Fourth Commandment to reſtrain Men from doing good on the Sabbath-day, that Good which their Hand finds to do, which they have an Opportunity for, and which cannot ſo well be put off to another Time, *v.* 9. *Is it lawful to do Good, or Evil on the Sabbath-days*? No wicked Men are ſuch *abſurd* and *unreaſonable* Men, as *Perſecutors* are, who ſtudy to *do Evil* to Men for *doing Good*.

7. He heal'd the poor Man, and reſtor'd him to the preſent Uſe of his right Hand with a Word's ſpeaking, tho' he knew his Enemies would not only take Offence at it, but take Advantage againſt him for it, *v.* 10. Let us not be drawn off either from Duty or Uſefulneſs, by the Oppreſſion we meet with in it.

8. His Adverſaries were hereby enrag'd ſo much the more againſt him, *v.* 11. inſtead of being convinc'd by this Miracle, as they ought to have been, that he was a Teacher come from God,; inſtead of being brought to be in love with him as a Benefactor to Mankind, they were *filled with Madneſs*, vex'd that they could not frighten him from doing good, nor hinder the Growth of his Intereſt in the Affections of the People. They were *mad* at Chriſt, *mad* at the People, *mad* at themſelves: Anger is a *ſhort Madneſs*, Malice is a *long* one; *impotent* Malice, eſpecially, *diſappointed* Malice, ſuch was theirs. When they could not prevent his working this Miracle, they *communed one with another what they might do to Jeſus*, what other Way they might take to run him down. We may well ſtand amaz'd at it, that the Sons of Men ſhould be ſo wicked as to do thus, and that the Son of God ſhould be ſo patient as to ſuffer it.

12 And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13 ¶ And when it was day, he called unto him his diſciples: and of them he choſe twelve, whom alſo he named Apoſtles: 14 Simon (whom he alſo named Peter) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew. 15 Matthew and Thomas, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Simon called Zelotes, 16 And Judas *the brother* of James, and Judas Iſcariot, which alſo was the traitor. 17 ¶ And he came down with them, and ſtood in the plain, and the company of his diſciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jeruſalem, and from the ſea-coaſt of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diſeaſes; 18 And they that were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed. 19 And the whole multitude ſought to touch him: for there went vertue out of him, and healed them all.

In theſe Verſes we have our Lord Jeſus in *Secret*, in *his Family*, and in *Publick*, and in all three acting like himſelf.

1. In *Secret* we have him *praying to God*, v. 12. This Evangeliſt takes frequent Notice of Chriſt's Retirements, to give us an Example of ſecret Prayer, by which we muſt keep up our Communion with God daily, and without which 'tis impoſſible the Soul ſhould proſper. *In thoſe Days*, when his Enemies were filled with Madneſs againſt him, and were contriving what to do to him, he went out to *pray*; that he might anſwer the Type of *David*, Pſalm 104. 4. *For my Love they are my Adverſaries, but I give myſelf unto Prayer*. Obſerve, (1.) He was *alone* with God; He *went out into a Mountain to pray*, where he might have no Diſturbance or Interruption given him; we are never leſs alone than when we are thus alone. Whether there was any convenient Place built upon this Mountain, for devout People to retire to, for their private Devotions, as ſome think, and that that *Oratory*, or *Place of Prayer* is meant here by ἡ προσευχὴ τοῦ Θεοῦ, to me ſeems very uncertain: He went into a Mountain for Privacy, and therefore probably would not go to a Place frequented by others. (2.) He was *long* alone with God: *He continued all Night in Prayer*. We think one half Hour a great deal to ſpend in the *Duties of the Cloſet*, but Chriſt continued a *whole Night* in Meditation and ſecret Prayer. We have a great deal of *Buſineſs* at the Throne of Grace, and we ſhould take a great *Delight* in Communion with God, and by both theſe may be kept ſometimes long at Prayer.

2. In his *Family* we have him nominating his immediate Attendants, that ſhould be the conſtant Auditors of his Doctirne, and Eye-witneſſes of his Miracles, that hereafter they might be ſent forth as *Apoſtles*, his Meſſengers to the World, to preach his Goſpel to it, and plant his Church in it, *v*, 13. After he had *continued all Night in Prayer*, one would have thought that *when it was Day* he ſhould have repos'd himſelf, and got ſome Sleep: No, aſſoon as any body was ſtirring, he *call'd unto him his Diſciples*. In ſerving God, our great Care ſhould be not to *loſe Time*, but to make the End of one good Duty the Beginning of another. Miniſters are to be ordain'd with *Prayer*, more than ordinarily *ſolemn*. The Number of the Apoſtles was *twelve*; their Names are here recorded, and it is the *third time* we have met with them, and in each of the *three* Places, the *Order* of them differs; to teach both Miniſters and Chriſtians not to be nice in Precedency, not in *giving* it, much leſs in *taking* it, but looking upon it as a Thing not worth taking Notice of, let it be as it lights. He that in *Mark* was called *Thaddeus*, in *Matthew Lebbeus*, whoſe Sirname was *Thaddeus*, is here call'd *Judas the Brother of James*, the ſame that wrote the Epiſtle of *Jude*. *Simon*, that in *Matthew* and *Mark* was called the *Canaanite*, is here called *Simon Zelotes*, perhaps for his great Zeal in Religion. Concerning theſe twelve here named, we have Reaſon to ſay, as the *Queen* of *Sheba* did of *Solomon*'s Servants, *Happy are thy Men, and happy are theſe thy Servants that ſtand continually before thee, and hear thy Wiſdom*; never were Men ſo priviledg'd, and yet one of them had a Devil, and prov'd a Traitor, *v.* 16. yet Chriſt when he choſe him was not deceiv'd in him.

3. In *Publick* we have him *preaching* and *healing*, the two great Works between which he divided his Time, *v.* 17. He came down with the Twelve from the Mountain, and *ſtood in the Plain*, ready to recieve thoſe that reſorted to him; and there were preſently gather'd about him not only the *Company of his Diſciples*, who uſed to attend him, but alſo a great *Multitude of People*, a mixt Multitude *out of all Judea and Jeruſalem*, tho' it was ſome Scores of Miles from *Jeruſalem*, to that Part of *Galilee* where Chriſt now was; though at *Jeruſalem* they had abundance of famous *Rabbins* that had great Names, and bore a mighty Sway, yet they came to hear Chriſt. They came alſo from the *Sea-Coaſt of Tyre and Sidon*, tho' they, who liv'd there, were generally Men of Buſineſs, and tho' they border'd upon *Canaanites*, yet there were ſome well-affected to Chriſt, ſuch there were diſpers'd in all Parts, here and there, one.

1. They *came to hear him*, and he *preach'd* to them. Thoſe that have not good preaching near them, had better travel far for it than be without it. It's worth while to go a great Way to hear the Word of Chriſt, and to go out of the Way of other Buſineſs for it.

2. They came to be *cur'd* by him, and he *healed* them; ſome were troubled in *Body*, and ſome *in Mind*; ſome had *Diſeaſes*, ſome had *Devils*, but both the one and the other upon their Application to Chriſt were *heal'd*, for he has Power over *Diſeaſes* and *Devils*, *v.* 17, 18. over the Effects, and over the Cauſes. Nay, it ſhould ſeem, thoſe that had no *particular Diſeaſes* to complain of, yet found it a great Confirmation and Renovation to their bodily *Health* and *Vigour*, to partake of the *Virtue that went out of him*, for *v.* 19. *the whole Multitude ſought to touch him*, thoſe that were in Health as well as thoſe that were Sick, and they were all, one Way or other, the better for him, he *heal'd them all*; and who is there that doth not need, upon ſome Account or other, to be *heal'd*? *Note*, There is a *Fulneſs of Grace* in Chriſt, and healing Vertue in him, and ready to go out from him, that is enough for all, enough for each.

20 ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his diſciples, and ſaid, Bleſſed *be* ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. 21 Bleſſed *are* ye that hunger now: for ye ſhall be filled. Bleſſed *are* ye that weep now: for ye ſhall

laugh. 22 Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall hate you,
and when they ſhall ſeparate you *from their company*,
and ſhall reproach *you*, and caſt out your name as
evil, for the Son of mans ſake. 23 Rejoyce ye in
that day, and leap for joy: for behold, your reward
is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their
fathers unto the prophets. 24 But wo unto you that
are rich: for ye have received your conſolation. 25
Wo unto you that are full: for ye ſhall hunger. Wo
unto you that laugh now: for ye ſhall mourn and
weep. 26 Wo unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well
of you: for ſo did their fathers to the falſe prophets.

Here begins a practical Diſcourſe of Chriſt, which is continu'd to the End of the Chapter, moſt of which is found in the *Sermon upon the Mount*, Matt. 5. and 7. Some think this was preach'd at ſome other Time and Place, and there are other Inſtances of Chriſt's preaching the ſame Things, or to the ſame Purpoſe at different Times: But it is probable, that this is only the Evangeliſt's Abridgment of that Sermon, and perhaps that in *Matthew* too is but an Abridgment; the Beginning and the Concluſion is much the ſame; and the Story of the Cure of the Centurion's Servant follows preſently upon it, both there and here; but it is not material.

In theſe Verſes we have,

1. Bleſſings pronounc'd upon *ſuffering Saints*, as *happy* People, tho' the World *pities them*, v. 20. He *lift up his Eyes upon his Diſciples*, not only the *twelve*, but the whole *Company of them*, v. 17. and directed his Diſcourſe to them; for when he had heal'd the Sick in *the Plain*, he went up again *to the Mountain* to preach; there he *ſate*, as one having Authority, and thither *they came to him*, *Matt.* 5. 1. and to them he directed his Diſcourſe, to them he apply'd it, and taught them to apply it to themſelves. When he had laid it down for a Truth, *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit*, he added, *Bleſſed are ye Poor.* All Believers that take the Precepts of the Goſpel to themſelves, and *live by them*, may take the Promiſes of the Goſpel to themſelves, and *live upon them.* And the Application as it is here, ſeems eſpecially deſign'd to encourage the Diſciples, with Reference to the Hardſhips and Difficulties they were likely to meet with in following Chriſt.

1. You are *Poor*, you have *left all to follow me*, are content to live upon Alms with me, are never to expect any worldly Preferment in my Service; you muſt work hard, and fare hard as poor People do; but you are bleſſed in your Poverty, it ſhall be no Prejudice at all to your Happineſs; nay, you are bleſſed for it, all your Loſſes ſhall be abundantly made up to you, for *yours is the Kingdom of God*, all the Comforts and Graces of his Kingdom here, and all the Glories and Joys of his Kingdom hereafter; yours it *ſhall be*, nay, yours *it is.* Chriſt's *Poor* are *rich in Faith*, Jam. 2. 5.

2. You *Hunger now*, v. 21. you are not *fed to the full* as others are; many Times riſe hungry, your *Commons* are ſo *ſhort*, or are ſo intent upon your Work, that you have not Time to eat Bread, are glad of a few *Ears of Corn* for a Meals Meat; thus you hunger *now* in this World, but in the other World *you ſhall be fill'd*, ſhall *hunger no more*, nor *thirſt any more.*

3. You *Weep now*, are often in Tears, Tears of Repentance, Tears of Sympathy, you are of them that mourn in Zion. But *bleſſed are ye*, your preſent Sorrows are no *Prejudices* to, but *Preparatories* for your future Joy, *ye ſhall laugh.* You have Triumphs in reſerve, you are but *ſowing in Tears*, and ſhall ſhortly *reap in Joy*, *Pſalm* 126. 5, 6. They that now *Sorrow after a godly ſort*, are treaſuring up Comforts for themſelves, or rather, God is treaſuring up Comforts for them; and the Day is coming when their *Mouth ſhall be filled with laughing, and their Lips with rejoycing*, Job. 8. 21.

4. You now undergo *the World's Ill-Will*; you muſt expect all the baſe Treatment that a ſpiteful World can give you, for Chriſt's Sake, becauſe you ſerve him and his Intereſts, you muſt expect that wicked Men will *hate you*, becauſe your Doctrine and Life convicts and condemns them; and thoſe that have Church-Power in their Hands will *ſeparate you*, will force you to ſeperate your ſelves, and then Excommunicate you for ſo doing, and lay you under the moſt *ignominious* Cenſures, will pronounce *Anathema's* againſt you, as *ſcandalous* and *incorrigible* Offenders; and will do this with all poſſible Gravity and Solemnity, and the Pomp and Pageantry of Appeals to Heaven, to make the World believe, and almoſt you your ſelves too, that 'tis ratify'd in Heaven; thus will they endeavour to make you odious to others, and a Terror to your ſelves. This is ſuppos'd to be the proper Notion of *ἀφορίσωσιν ὑμᾶς*, they ſhall *caſt you out of their Synagogues.* And they that have not this Power, will not fail to ſhew their Malice to the utmoſt of their Power, for *they ſhall reproach you*, ſhall charge you with the blackeſt Crimes, which you are perfectly innocent of, ſhall faſten upon you the blackeſt Characters which you do not deſerve; they ſhall *caſt out your Name as Evil*, your Name as Chriſtians, as Apoſtles, they ſhall do all they can to render theſe Names odious. This is the Application of the eighth Beatitude, *Matt.* 5. 10, 11, 12.

Such Uſage as this ſeems hard, but *bleſſed are ye* when ye are ſo us'd; 'tis ſo far from depriving you of your Happineſs, that it will greatly *add to it*; 'tis an Honour to you, as it is to a brave Hero to be employ'd in the Wars, in the Service of his Prince, and therefore *rejoyce ye in that Day, and leap for Joy*, v. 23. Do not only *bear it*, but *triumph* in it: For 1. You are hereby *highly dignify'd* in the *Kingdom of Grace*; for you are treated as the *Prophets* were before you, and therefore not only need not be aſham'd of it, but may juſtly rejoyce in it, for it will be an Evidence for you that you *walk in the ſame Spirit*, and *in the ſame Steps*, are engag'd in the ſame Cauſe, and employ'd in the ſame Service with them. 2. You will for this be abundantly *recompens'd* in the *Kingdom of Glory*, not only your Services for Chriſt, but your Sufferings will come into the Account; *your Reward is great in Heaven.* Venture upon your Sufferings, in a full Belief that the Glory of Heaven will abundantly Countervail all theſe Hardſhips; ſo that tho' you may be loſers for Chriſt, you ſhall not be Loſers by him in the End.

2. *Woes* denounc'd againſt *proſpering Sinners as miſerable People*, tho' the World *envies them.* Theſe we had not in *Matthew.* It ſhould ſeem the beſt Expoſition of *theſe Woes*, compar'd with the foregoing *Bleſſings*, is the Parable of the *rich Man* and *Lazarus*; *Lazarus* had the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe that are *poor*, and *hunger*, and *weep* now, for in *Abraham*'s Boſom all the Promiſes made to them who did ſo, were *made good* to him; but the rich Man had the *Woes* that follow here, as he had the Character of thoſe on whom theſe Woes are entail'd.

1. Here's a *Woe* to them that are *Rich*, that is, that *truſt in Riches*, that have abundance of this World's Wealth, and inſtead of ſerving God with it, ſerve their Luſts with it; woe to them, for *they have receiv'd their Conſolation*, that which they plac'd their Happineſs in, and were willing to take up with for a Portion, *v.* 24. They in their Life-time receiv'd *their good Things*, which in their Account were the *beſt Things*, and all the good Things they are ever likely to receive from God. You that are *Rich* are in Temptation to *ſet your Hearts* upon a *ſmiling* World, and to ſay, *Soul take thine Eaſe* in the Embraces of it, *This is my Reſt for ever, here will I dwell*; and *then Woe unto you.* (1.) It is the *Folly* of carnal Worldlings that they make the Things of this World *their Conſolation*, which were only intended for their *Convenience*; they pleaſe themſelves with them, pride themſelves in them, and make them their *Heaven upon Earth*; and to them the *Conſolations of God* are ſmall, and of no Account. (2.) It is their *Miſery* that they are *put off* with them, as *their Conſolation*; let them know it to their Terror, when they are parted from theſe Things, there's an End of all their Comfort, a final End of it, and nothing remains to them but everlaſting Miſery and Torment.

2. Here's a *Woe* to them that are *full*, v. 25. that are *fed to the full*, and have *more than Heart could wiſh*, *Pſalm* 73. 7. that have their *Bellies fill'd with the hid Treaſures of this World*, *Pſalm* 17. 14. that when they have abundance of theſe, are *full*, and think they have *enough*, they *need no more*, they *deſire no more*, Rev. 3. 17. *Now ye are full, now ye are rich*, 1 Cor. 4. 8. they are *full of themſelves* without God and Chriſt: Woe to ſuch for *they ſhall hunger*, they ſhall ſhortly be *ſtript* and *emptied* of all thoſe Things they are ſo proud of; and when they ſhall have *left behind them* in the World all thoſe things which are their Fulneſs, they ſhall *carry away with them* ſuch Appetites and Deſires, as the World they remove to will afford them no Gratifications of; for all the Delights of Senſe which they are now ſo full of, will in Hell be *deny'd* and in Heaven *ſuperſeded.*

3. Here's a *Woe* to them that *laugh now*, that have always a *Diſpoſition to be merry*, and always ſomething to *make merry with*; that know no other Joy but that which is carnal and Senſual, and know no other Uſe of this World's Good, but purely to endulge that carnal ſenſual Joy; that baniſhes Sorrow, even godly Sorrow from their Minds, and are always entertaining themſelves with the Laughter of the Fool; *Woe unto ſuch*, for it is but *now*; for a little Time that they *laugh*, they ſhall *mourn and weep* ſhortly, ſhall *mourn and weep* eternally, in a World where there is nothing but *weeping and wailing*, endleſs, eaſeleſs, and remedileſs Sorrow.

4. Here's a *Woe* to them *whom all Men ſpeak well of*, i. e. that make it their great and only Care to gain the Praiſe and Applauſe of Men, that value themſelves by that, more than by the Favour of God and his Acceptance, *v.* 26. *Woe unto you*, i. e. it would be a bad Sign that you were not Faithful to your Truſt, and to the Souls of Men, if you preach'd ſo as that no Body would be diſguſted; for your Buſineſs is to tell People of their Faults, and if you do that as you ought, you will get that *Ill-Will* which never *ſpeaks well.* The falſe Prophets indeed that flatter'd your Fathers in their wicked Ways, that *propheſied ſmooth Things* to them, were careſs'd and ſpoken well of; and if you be in like manner cry'd up, you will be juſtly ſuſpected to deal deceitfully as they did. We ſhould deſire to have the Approbation of thoſe that are Wiſe and Good, and not be indifferent what People ſay of us; but as we ſhould deſpiſe the Reproaches, ſo we ſhould alſo deſpiſe the Praiſes of the Fools in *Iſrael.*

27 ¶ But I ſay unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you: 28 Bleſs them that curſe you, and pray for them which deſpitefully uſe you. 29 And unto him that ſmiteth thee on the *one* cheek, offer alſo the other: and him that taketh away thy cloke, forbid not *to take thy* coat alſo. 30 Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask *them* not again. 31 And as ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye alſo to them likewiſe. 32 For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo love thoſe that love them. 33 And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo do even the ſame. 34 And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for ſinners alſo lend to ſinners, to receive as much again. 25 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again: and your reward ſhall be great, and ye ſhall be the children of the Higheſt: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and *to* the evil. 36 Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father alſo is merciful.

Theſe Verſes agree pretty much with *Matt.* 5. 38. to the End of that Chapter; *I ſay unto you which hear*, v. 27. to *all* you that hear, and not to Diſciples only, for theſe are Leſſons of univerſal Concern. *He that has an Ear let him hear.* Thoſe that diligently hearken to Chriſt, ſhall find he has ſomething to ſay to them well worth their Hearing. Now the Leſſons Chriſt here teacheth us, are,

1. That we muſt render to all their Due, and be honeſt and juſt in all our Dealings, *v.* 31. *As ye would that Men ſhould do to you, do ye alſo to them likewiſe*, for this is *loving our Neighbour as ourſelves*; what we would expect in Reaſon to be done to us, either in Juſtice or Charity by others, if they were in our Condition, and we in theirs, that, as the Matter ſtands, we muſt do to them. We muſt *put our Souls into their Souls Stead*, and then pity and ſuccour them, as we would deſire, and juſtly expect to be ourſelves pity'd and ſuccour'd.

2. That we muſt be free in *giving* to them that *need*, v. 30. *Give to every Man that asketh of thee*, to every one that is a proper Object of Charity, that wants Neceſſaries, which thou haſt wherewithal to ſupply out of thy Superfluities. Give to thoſe that are not able to help themſelves, to thoſe that have not Relations in a Capacity to help them. Chriſt would have his Diſciples ready to diſtribute, and willing to communicate *to their Power* in ordinary Caſes, and beyond their Power in extraordinary.

3. That we muſt be generous in *forgiving* thoſe that have been any Way injurious to us.

1. We muſt not be *extreme* in *demanding* our Right, when it is deny'd us. *Him that taketh away thy Cloak*, either forcibly or fraudulently, *forbid him not*, by any violent Means, to *take thy Coat alſo*, v. 29. Let him have that too, rather than fight for it. And *v.* 30. *of him that taketh thy Goods*, ſo Dr. *Hammond* thinks it ſhould be read, that borrows them, or that *takes them up* from thee upon Truſt, of ſuch do not *exact them*; if Providence have made ſuch *inſolvent*, do not take the Advantage of the Law againſt them, but rather loſe it, than *take them by the Throat*, Matt. 18. 28. If a Man run away in thy Debt, and *take away thy Goods* with him, do not *perplex thy ſelf*, nor be *incens'd* againſt him.

2. We muſt not be rigorous in revenging a Wrong when it is done us; *unto him that ſmiteth thee on the one Cheek*, inſtead of bringing an Action againſt him, or ſending for a Writ for him, or bringing him before a Juſtice, *offer alſo the other*, i. e. paſs it by, tho' thereby thou ſhouldſt be in Danger of bringing upon thy ſelf another like Indignity; which is commonly pretended in Excuſe of taking the Advantage of the Law in ſuch a Caſe. If any one *ſmite thee on the Cheek*, rather than give another Blow to him, be ready to receive another from him; that is, leave it to God to plead thy Cauſe, and do thou ſit down ſilent under the Affront; and when we do thus, God will *ſmite our Enemies*, as far as they are his, *upon the Cheek Bone*, ſo as to *break the Teeth of the Ungodly*, Pſal. 3. 7. for he hath ſaid, *Vengeance is mine*, and he will make it appear that it is ſo, when we leave it to him to take Vengeance.

3. Nay, we muſt *do Good to them that do Evil to us.* This is that which our Saviour in theſe Verſes chiefly deſigns to teach us, as a Law peculiar to his Religion, and a Branch of the Perfection of it.

1. We muſt be kind to thoſe from whom we have *receiv'd Injuries.* We muſt not only *love our Enemies*, and bear a good Will to them, but we muſt *do good* to them, be as ready to do any good Office to them as to any other Perſon, if their Caſe call for it, and it be in the Power of our Hands to do it. We muſt ſtudy to make it appear by poſitive Acts, if there be an Opportunity for them, that we bear them no Malice, nor ſeek Revenge. Do they *curſe* us, ſpeak ill of us, and wiſh ill to us? Do they *deſpitefully uſe us* in Word or Deed? Do they endeavour to make us contemptable or odious? Let us *bleſs them*, and *pray for them*, ſpeak well of them, the beſt we can, wiſh well to them, eſpecially to their Souls, and be Interceſſors with God for them. This is repeated, *v.* 35. *Love ye your Enemies* and *do them good.* To recommend this difficult Duty to us, 'tis repreſented as a generous Thing, and an Attainment few arrive to. *To love thoſe that love us*, has nothing *uncommon* in it, nothing peculiar to Chriſt's Diſciples, for *Sinners* will *love thoſe that love them*; there's nothing Self-denying in that, 'tis but following Nature, even in its corrupt State, and puts no Force at all upon it, *v.* 32. 'tis no Thanks to us, to love thoſe that ſay and do juſt as we wou'd have them. And *v.* 33. *If ye do good to them which do good to you*, and return their Kindneſſes, 'tis from a common Principle of Cuſtom, Honour, and Gratitude, and therefore *What Thank have ye?* What Credit are ye to the Name of Chriſt, or what Reputation do you bring to it? For *Sinners alſo*, that know nothing of Chriſt and his Doctrine, *do even the ſame.* But it becomes you to do ſomething more Excellent and Eminent, herein to out-do your Neighbours, to do that which Sinners will not do, and which no Principle of theirs can pretend to reach to; you muſt *render Good for Evil*; not that any Thanks is due to us, but then we are to our God *for a Name and a Praiſe*, and he will have the Thanks.

2. We muſt be kind to thoſe from whom we expect no Manner of Advantage, *v.* 35. *lend, hoping for nothing again.* 'Tis meant of the *Rich* lending to the *Poor* a little Money for their Neceſſity, to buy daily Bread for themſelves and their Families, or to keep them out of Priſon; in ſuch a Caſe we muſt *lend*, with a Reſolution not to demand Intereſt for what we lend, as we may moſt juſtly from thoſe that borrow Money to make Purchaſes withal, or to trade with; but that's not all, we muſt *lend*, tho' we have Reaſon to ſuſpect, that what we *lend* we *loſe.* Lend to thoſe that are ſo poor, that 'tis not probable they will be able to pay us again. This Precept will be beſt illuſtrated by that Law of *Moſes*, Deut. 15. 7, 8, 9, 10. which obliges them to lend to a *poor Brother* as much as he *needed*, tho' the *Year of Releaſe* was at Hand.

Here are two Motives to this generous Charity.

1. It will redound to our Profit, for our *Reward ſhall be great*, *v.* 35. what is given, or laid out, or lent, and loſt on Earth, from a true Principle of Charity, it will be made up to us in the other World, unſpeakably to our Advantage. You ſhall not only be *repaid*, but *rewarded*, greatly rewarded; 'twill be ſaid to you, *Come ye bleſſed, inherit the Kingdom.*

2. It will redound to our Honour, for herein we ſhall reſemble God in his Goodneſs, which is his greateſt Glory. *Ye ſhall be the Children of the Higheſt*; ſhall be own'd by him as his Children, being like him. It is the Glory of God, that he is *kind to the Unthankful and to the Evil*; beſtows the Gifts of common Providence even upon the worſt of Men, who are every Day provoking him, and rebelling againſt him, and uſing thoſe very Gifts to his Diſhonour. Hence he infers, *v.* 36. *Be merciful as your Father is merciful*; this explains *Mat.* 5 48. *Be perfect as your Father is perfect.* Imitate your Father in thoſe Things that are his brighteſt Perfections. Thoſe that are *merciful* as God is *merciful*, even *to the Evil and the Unthankful*, are *perfect* as God is *perfect*; ſo he is pleaſed graciouſly to accept it, tho' infinitely falling ſhort. *Charity* is call'd the *Bond of Perfectneſs*, *Col.* 3. 14. And this ſhould ſtrongly engage us to be merciful to our Brethren, even ſuch as have been injurious to us; not only that God is ſo to others, but that he is ſo to us, tho' we have been, and are Evil and Unthankful; 'tis of his Mercies that *we* are not conſum'd.

37 Judge not, and ye ſhall not be judged: condemn not, and ye ſhall not be condemned: forgive, and ye ſhall be forgiven: 38 Give, and it ſhall be given unto you; good meaſure, preſſed down, and ſhaken together, and running over, ſhall men give into your boſom. For with the ſame meaſure that ye mete withall, it ſhall be meaſured to you again. 39 And he ſpake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? ſhall they not both fall into the ditch? 40 The diſciple is not above his maſter: but every one that is perfect ſhall be as his maſter. 41 And why beholdeſt thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but perceiveſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? 42 Either how canſt thou ſay to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyſelf beholdeſt not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, caſt out firſt the beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brothers eye. 43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth a corrupt tree

bring forth good fruit. 44 For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-buſh gather they grapes. 45 A good man out of the good treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good: and an evil man out of the evil treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth ſpeaketh. 46 ¶ And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I ſay? 47 Whoſoever cometh to me, and heareth my ſayings, and doeth them, I will ſhew you to whom he is like. 48 He is like a man which built an houſe, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood aroſe, the ſtream beat vehemently upon that houſe, and could not ſhake it: for it was founded upon a rock. 49 But he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an houſe upon the earth againſt which the ſtream did beat vehemently and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that houſe was great.

All theſe Sayings of Chriſt we had before, in *Matthew*, ſome of them, *Chap.* 7. others in other Places. They were Sayings Chriſt often uſ'd, they needed only to be mentioned, 'twas eaſy to apply them: *Grotius* thinks we need not be critical here in ſeeking for the Coherence: They are golden Sentences, like *Solomon*'s *Proverbs*, or Parables. Let us obſerve here,

1. That we ought to be very *candid* in our *Cenſures* of others, becauſe we need Grains of Allowance our ſelves: Therefore *judge not* others, becauſe then you your ſelves *ſhall not be judged*; therefore *condemn not* others, becauſe then *you* your ſelves *ſhall not be condemn'd*, v. 37. Exerciſe towards others that Charity which *thinketh no Evil*, which *bears all Things*, *believes* and *hopes all Things*; and then others will exerciſe that Charity towards you; God will not *judge* and *condemn* you, Men will not. They that are Merciful to other People's Names, ſhall find others Merciful to theirs.

2. That if we are of a *giving* and a *forgiving* Spirit, we ſhall ourſelves reap the Benefit of it; *forgive and ye ſhall be forgiven.* They that forgive others Injuries, others will forgive them their Inadvertencies. They that forgive others Treſpaſſes againſt *them*, God will forgive them their Treſpaſſes againſt *him*. And he will be no leſs mindful of the *Liberal*, that *deviſe liberal Things*, v. 38. *Give, and it ſhall be given to you.* God in his Providence will recompenſe it to you; 'tis *lent* to him, and *he is not unrighteous*, to *forget* it, *Heb.* 6. 10 but he will *pay it again. Men* ſhall *return it into your Boſom*; for God makes uſe of *Men* many Times as Inſtruments, not only of his *avenging*, but of his *rewarding* Juſtice. If we in a right Manner give to others when they need, God will incline the Hearts of others to give to us when we need, and to give liberally, *good Meaſure, preſſed down and ſhaken together*. They that *ſow plentifully* ſhall *reap plentifully.* Whom God recompenſeth he *abundantly* recompenſeth.

3. That we muſt expect to be dealt with our ſelves, as we deal with others. *With the ſame Meaſure that ye mete, it ſhall be meaſur'd to you again.* Thoſe that deal *hardly* with others, muſt acknowledge as *Adoni-bezek* did, *Jud.* 1. 7. that God is Righteous, if others deal hardly with them, and they may expect to be paid in their own Coin; but they that deal *kindly* with others, have Reaſon to hope that when they have Occaſion, God will raiſe them up Friends that will deal kindly with them. Tho' Providence doth not always go by this Rule, becauſe the full and exact Retributions are reſerv'd for another World, yet ordinarily it obſerves a Proportion ſufficient to deter us from all Acts of Rigour, and to encourage us in all Acts of Beneficence.

4. That thoſe who put themſelves under the Conduct of the Ignorant and Erroneous, are likely to periſh with them, *v.* 39. *Can the blind lead the blind?* Can the Phariſees that are blinded with Pride, and Prejudice, and Bigottry, *lead the blind* People into the right Way, *ſhall not both fall* together *into the Ditch?* How can they expect any other? Thoſe that are led by the common Opinion, Courſe, and Cuſtom of this World, are themſelves blind, and are led by the Blind, and will periſh with the World that *ſits in Darkneſs*. They that ignorantly, and at a Venture *follow the Multitude to do Evil*, follow the Blind in the broad Way that leads the many to *Deſtruction*.

5. That Chriſt's Followers cannot expect better Treatment in the World than their Maſter had, *v.* 40. Let them not promiſe themſelves more Honour, or Pleaſure in the World than Chriſt had, nor aim at that worldly Pomp and Grandeur which he never was ambitious of, but always declin'd; nor affect that Power in ſecular Things, which he would not aſſume: But every one that would ſhew himſelf *perfect*, an eſtabliſh'd Diſciple, let him be *as his Maſter*, dead to the World, and every Thing in it, as his Maſter is; let him live a Life of Labour and Self-denial, as his Maſter doth, and make himſelf a Servant of all; let him ſtoop, and let him toil, and do all the Good he can, and then he will be a compleat Diſciple.

6. That thoſe who take upon them to rebuke and reform others, are concern'd to look to it, that they be themſelves blameleſs, and harmleſs, and without Rebuke, *v.* 41, 42. (1.) Thoſe with a very ill Grace cenſure the Faults of others, who are not aware of their own Faults. 'Tis very abſurd for any to pretend to be ſo quick-ſighted as to ſpy ſmall Faults in others, like a Mote in the Eye, when they are themſelves ſo perfectly paſt feeling, as not to perceive *a Beam in their own Eye*, (2.) Thoſe are altogether unfit to help to reform others, whoſe reforming Charity doth not begin at Home. How can'ſt thou offer thy Service to thy Brother to *pull out the Mote from his Eye*, which requires a good Eye as well as a good Hand, when thou thy ſelf haſt a *Beam in thine own Eye*, and makeſt no Complaint of it? (3.) Thoſe therefore that would be ſerviceable to the Souls of others, muſt firſt make it appear that they are ſollicitous about their own Souls. To help to pull the Mote out of our Brother's Eye is a good Work, but then we muſt qualify our ſelves for it by beginning with our ſelves; and our reforming our own Lives, may, by the Influence of Example, contribute to others reforming theirs.

7. That we may expect Men's Words and Actions will be according as they are, according as their Hearts are, and according as their Principles are.

1. The Heart is the *Tree*, and the Words and Actions are Fruit according to the Nature of the Tree, *v.* 43, 44. If a Man be really a *good Man*, if he has a Principle of Grace in his Heart, and the prevailing Bent and Biaſs of the Soul be towards God and Heaven, tho' perhaps he may not abound in Fruit, tho' ſome of his Fruits be blaſted, tho' he may be ſometimes like a Tree in Winter, yet he doth not *bring forth corrupt Fruit*, tho' he may not do you all the Good he ſhould, yet he will not in any material Inſtance do you hurt: If he cannot reform ill Manners, he will not *corrupt good Manners.* If the Fruit that a Man brings forth be *corrupt*, if a Man's Devotion tends to debauch the Mind and Converſation, if a Man's Converſation be vicious, if he be a Drunkard or Fornicator, if he be a Swearer or Lyar, if he be in any Inſtance unjuſt, or unnatural, his *Fruit* is *corrupt*, and you may be ſure he is not a *good Tree.* On the other Hand, a *corrupt Tree doth not bring forth good Fruit*, tho' he may bring forth green Leaves, *for of Thorns Men do not gather Figs, nor of a Bramble do they gather Grapes.* You may if you pleaſe ſtick Figs upon Thorns, and hang a Bunch of Grapes upon a Bramble, but they neither are, nor can be the natural Product of the Trees; ſo neither can you expect any *good Carriage* from thoſe that have juſtly an *ill Character.* If the Fruit be good, you may conclude the Tree is ſo; if the Converſation be holy and heavenly, and regular, tho' you cannot infallibly know the Heart, yet you may charitably hope that that is upright with God, for *every Tree is known by its own Fruit:* But the *vile Perſon will ſpeak Villany*, Iſa. 32. 6. and the Experience of the Moderns herein, agrees with the *Proverb of the Ancients*, that *Wickedneſs proceedeth from the Wicked*, 1 Sam. 24. 13.

2. The Heart is the *Treaſure*, and the Words and Actions are the Expences or Produce from that Treaſure, *v.* 45. This we had, *Matt.* 12. 34, 35. The reigning Love of God and Chriſt in the Heart, denominates a Man *a good Man*, and it is *a good Treaſure in the Heart*, it enricheth a Man, it furniſheth him with a good Stock to ſpend upon, for the Benefit of others; out of ſuch a *good Treaſure* a Man may bring forth that which is good; but where the Love of the World and the Fleſh reign, there's an *evil Treaſure* in the Heart, out of which an *evil Man* is continually bringeth forth *that which is Evil*, and by what is brought forth, you may know what is in the Heart; as you may know what is in the Veſſel, Water or Wine, by what is *drawn out from it*; Joh. 2. 8. *Of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth ſpeaks*; what the Mouth doth ordinarily ſpeak, doth ſpeak with Reliſh and Delight, generally agrees with what is innermoſt and uppermoſt in the Heart; *he that ſpeaks of the Earth is earthly*, Joh. 3. 31. Not but that a good Man may poſſibly drop an ill Word, and a wicked Man make uſe of a good Word to ſerve an ill Turn: But, for the moſt Part, the Heart is, as the Words are, *vain* or *ſerious*; it therefore concerns us to get our Hearts fill'd, not only with *good*, but with *Abundance* of it.

8. That it is not enough to *hear* the Sayings of Chriſt, but we muſt *do* them; not enough to profeſs Relation to him, as his Servants, but we muſt make Conſcience of obeying him.

1. It is putting an *Affront upon him*, to call him *Lord, Lord*, as if we were wholly at his Command, and had devoted ourſelves to his Service, if we do not make Conſcience of conforming to his Will, and ſerving the Intereſts of his Kingdom. We do but mock Chriſt, as they that in Scorn ſaid, *Hail King of the Jews*, if we call him never ſo often, *Lord, Lord*, and yet walk in the Way of our own Hearts, and in the Sight of our own Eyes. Why do we call him *Lord, Lord*, in Prayer, (compare *Matt.* 7. 21, 22.) if we do not obey his Commands: He that *turns away his Ear from hearing the Law, his Prayer ſhall be an Abomination.*

2. It is *putting a Cheat* upon ourſelves, if we think that a bare Profeſſion of Religion will ſave us, that *hearing* the Sayings

ings of Chriſt will bring us to Heaven without *doing* them. This he illuſtrates by a Similitude, *v.* 47, 48, 49. which ſhews,

1. That thoſe only make ſure Work for their Souls and Eternity, and take the Courſe that will ſtand them in ſtead in a trying Time, who do not only *come* to Chriſt as his Scholars, and *hear his Sayings*, but do them; who think and ſpeak and act in every Thing, according to the eſtabliſh'd Rules of his Holy Religion. They are like a *Houſe built on a Rock*; theſe are they that *take Pains* in Religion, as they do that *build on a Rock*; that *begin low*, as they do that *dig deep*; that found their Hope upon Chriſt who is the Rock of Ages, and other Foundation can no Man lay; theſe are they who *provide for hereafter*, who get ready for the worſt, who lay up in Store a good Foundation for the *Time to come*, for the *Eternity to come*, 1 Tim. 6. 19. They that do thus, do well for themſelves; for (1.) They ſhall keep their Integrity in Times of Temptation and Perſecution; when others fall from their own Stedfaſtneſs, as the Seed on the ſtony Ground, they ſhall *ſtand faſt in the Lord.* (2.) They ſhall keep their Comfort, and Peace, and Hope, and Joy, in the midſt of the greateſt Diſtreſſes. The *Storms* and *Streams* of Affliction ſhall not ſhock them, for their Feet are *ſet upon a Rock*, a Rock *higher than they.* (3.) Their everlaſting Welfare is ſecur'd. In Death and Judgment they are ſafe. Obedient Believers are *kept by the Power of Chriſt, thro' Faith, unto Salvation*, and ſhall never periſh.

2. That thoſe who reſt in a bare Hearing of the Sayings of Chriſt, and do not live up to them, are but preparing for a fatal Diſappointment. *He that heareth and doth not*, that knows his Duty, but lives in the Neglect of it; he is like a Man that *built a Houſe without a Foundation.* He pleaſeth himſelf with Hopes that he has no Ground for, and his Hopes will fail him, when he moſt needs the *Comfort* of them, and when he expects the *crowning* of them, when the *Stream beats vehemently* upon his Houſe, it's gone, the Sand it is built upon is waſh'd away, and *immediately it falls.* Such is the *Hope of the Hypocrite, tho' he has gain'd when God takes away his Soul*; 'tis as the Spider's Web, and the giving up of the Ghoſt.

CHAP. VII.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *Chriſt confirming the Doctrine he had preached in the former Chapter, with two glorious Miracles, The Curing of one at a* Diſtance, *and that was the Centurion's Servant,* v. 1,----10. *and the raiſing of one to Life that was dead, the Widow's Son at* Naim, *v.* 11,---18. (2.) *Chriſt confirming the Faith of* John, *who was now in Priſon, and of ſome of his Diſciples, by ſending him a ſhort Account of the Miracles he wrought, in anſwer to a Queſtion he rceiv'd from him,* v. 19,----23. *To which he adds, an honourable Teſtimony concerning* John, *and a juſt Reproof to the Men of that Generation, for the Contempt they put upon him and his Doctrine,* v. 24,---35. (3.) *Chriſt comforting a poor Penitent, that apply'd herſelf to him all in Tears of godly Sorrow for Sin, aſſuring her, that her Sins were pardon'd; and juſtifying himſelf in the Favour he ſhew'd her, againſt the Cavils of a proud Phariſee.*

1 NOW when he had ended all his ſayings in the
audience of the people, he enter'd into Capernaum.
2 And a certain centurions ſervant, who was
dear unto him, was ſick, and ready to die. 3 And
when he heard of Jeſus, he ſent unto him the elders
of the Jews, beſeeching him that he would come
and heal his ſervant. 4 And when they came to Jeſus,
they beſought him inſtantly, ſaying, That he was
worthy for whom he ſhould do this. 5 For he loveth
our nation, and he hath built us a ſynagogue. 6 Then
Jeſus went with them. And when he was now not
far from the houſe, the centurion ſent friends to him,
ſaying unto him, Lord, trouble not thy ſelf, for I am
not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt enter under my roof.
7 Wherefore neither thought I my ſelf worthy to
come unto thee: but ſay in a word, and my ſervant
ſhall be healed. 8 For I alſo am a man ſet under
authority, having under me ſouldiers, and I ſay
unto one, Go, and he goeth: and to another, Come,
and he cometh: and to my ſervant, Do this, and he
doeth it. 9 When Jeſus heard theſe things, he marvelled
at him, and turned him about, and ſaid unto
the people that followed him, I ſay unto you,
I have not found ſo great faith, no, not in Iſrael. 10
And they that were ſent, returning to the houſe,
found the ſervant whole that had been ſick.

Some Difference there is between this Story of the Cure of the Centurion's Servant, as it is related here, and as we had it, *Matt.* 8. 5, &c. for there it was ſaid, that the Centurion came to Chriſt, here it is ſaid, that he ſent to him, firſt ſome of the *Elders of the Jews*, v. 3. and afterwards ſome other *Friends*, v. 6. But it is a Rule, that *we* are ſaid to *do that*, which we do *by another*; *Quod facimus per aleum, id ipſum facere Judicamur.* The Centurion might be ſaid to do that which he did by his Proxies; as a Man takes Poſſeſſion by his Attorney. But 'tis probable the Centurion himſelf came at laſt, when Chriſt ſaid to him, *Matt.* 8. 13. *as thou haſt believed, ſo be it done unto thee.*

This Miracle is here ſaid to have been wrought by our Lord Jeſus, *when he had ended all his Sayings in the Audience of the People*, v. 1. What Chriſt ſaid, he ſaid *publickly*; whoever would might come and hear him; *in Secret have I ſaid nothing*, Joh. 18. 20. Now to give an undeniable Proof of the *Authority* of his *preaching Word*, he here gives an unconteſtable Proof of the *Power* and *Efficacy* of his *healing Word.* He that had ſuch a commanding Empire in the Kingdom of Nature, as that he could command away Diſeaſes, no doubt has ſuch a Sovereignty in the Kingdom of Grace, as to enjoyn Duties diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood, and bind under the higheſt Penalties to the Obſervance of them. This Miracle was wrought in *Capernaum*, where moſt of Chriſt's mighty Works were done, *Matt.* 11. 23.

Now obſerve

1. That the Centurion's Servant that was ſick, was *dear to his Maſter*, v. 2. 'Twas the Praiſe of the Servant, that by his Diligence and Faithfulneſs, and a manifeſt Concern for his Maſter and for his Intereſt, as for himſelf and for his own, he recommended himſelf to his Maſter's Eſteem and Love. Servants ſhould ſtudy to *endear* themſelves to their Maſters. 'Twas likewiſe the Praiſe of the Maſter, that when he had a good Servant, he knew how to value him. Many Maſters that are haughty and imperious, think it Favour enough to the beſt Servants they have, not to rate 'em, and beat 'em, and be cruel to 'em, whereas they ought to be kind to them, and tender of them, aud ſollicitous for their Welfare and Comfort.

2. That the Maſter *when he heard of Jeſus*, was for making Application to him, *v.* 3. Maſters ought to take particular Care of their Servants when they are *ſick*; and not to neglect them then. This *Centurion* begg'd that *Chriſt would come and heal his Servant*; we may now by faithful and fervent Prayer apply ourſelves to Chriſt in Heaven, and ought to do ſo when Sickneſs is in our Families; for Chriſt is ſtill the great Phyſician.

3. That he ſent ſome of the *Elders of the Jews* to Chriſt, to *repreſent* the Caſe, and *ſollicit* for him, thinking that a greater Piece of Reſpect to Chriſt, than if he had come himſelf, becauſe he was an uncircumcis'd Gentile, whom he thought, Chriſt, being a Prophet, would not care for converſing with. For that Reaſon he ſent *Jews*, whom he acknowledg'd to be Favourites of Heaven, and not ordinary Jews neither, but *Elders of the Jews*, Perſons in Authority, that the Dignity of the Meſſengers might give Honour to him to whom they were ſent; *Balak* ſent *Princes* to *Balaam*.

4. That the Elders of the Jews were hearty Interceſſors for the Centurion, *they beſought him inſtantly*, v. 4. were very urgent with him, pleading for the Centurion, that which he wou'd never have pleaded for himſelf, *That he was worthy for whom he ſhould do this.* If any Gentile was qualify'd to receive ſuch a Favour, ſure he was. The Centurion ſaid, *I am not* ſo much as *worthy* of a Viſit, *Matt.* 8. 8. but the Elders of the Jews thought him worthy of the Cure; thus *Honour ſhall uphold the humble in Spirit.* Let another Man praiſe thee, and not thy own Mouth. But that which they inſiſted upon in particular was, that tho' he was a Gentile, yet he was a hearty Well-wiſher to the Jewiſh Nation and Religion, *v.* 5. they thought there needed as much with Chriſt, as there did with them, to remove the Prejudices againſt him, as a Gentile, and a Roman, and an Officer of the Army, and therefore mention this; (1.) That he was well affected to the People of the Jews; *he loveth our Nation*, which few of the Gentiles did. Probably he had read the Old Teſtament, from whence it was eaſy to advance a very high Eſteem of the Jewiſh Nation, as favour'd by Heaven above all People. *Note*, Even Conquerors, and thoſe *in Power*, ought to keep up an Affection for the conquer'd, and thoſe they have *Power over.* (2.) That he was well affected to their Worſhip; he *built them a* new *Synagogue* at *Capernaum*, finding that what they had, was either gone to Decay, or not large enough to contain the People; and that the Inhabitants were not of Ability to build one for themſelves. Hereby he teſtify'd his Veneration for the God of *Iſrael*, and his Belief of his being the one only, living and true God, and his Deſire, like that of *Darius*, to have an Intereſt in the Prayers of God's *Iſrael*, Ezr. 6. 10. This Centurion built a Synagogue at his own proper Coſts and Charges, and probably employ'd his Soldiers that were in Garriſon there, in the Building, to keep them from Idleneſs. *Note*, Building of Places of meeting for religious Worſhip, is a very *good Work*, is an Inſtance of Love to God and his People, and thoſe who do good Works of that kind, are *worthy of double Honour.*

5. That Jeſus Chriſt was very ready to ſhew Kindneſs to the Centurion. He preſently *went with them*, v. 6. tho' he was a Gentile; for *is he the Saviour of the Jews only? Is he not alſo of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles alſo*, Rom. 3. 29. The Centurion did not think himſelf worthy to viſit Chriſt, *v.* 7. Yet Chriſt thought him worthy to be viſited by him; for thoſe that *humble themſelves, ſhall be exalted.*

6. That the Centurion when he heard that Chriſt was doing him the Honour to come to his Houſe, gave further Proofs, both of his Humility and of his Faith. Thus the Graces of the Saints, are quickened by Chriſt's Approaches towards them. *When he was now not far from the Houſe*, and the Centurion had Notice of it, inſtead of ſetting his Houſe in Order for his Reception, he *ſends Friends* to meet him with freſh Expreſſions, (1.) Of his *Humility*; *Lord trouble not thy ſelf*, for I am unworthy of ſuch an Honour, becauſe I am a Gentile; this ſpeaks not only his low Thoughts of himſelf, notwithſtanding the Greatneſs of his Figure, but his high Thoughts of Chriſt, notwithſtanding the Meanneſs of his Figure in the World. He knew how to honour a Prophet of God, tho' he was deſpis'd and rejected of Man. (2.) Of his *Faith*, Lord *trouble not thyſelf*, for I know it doth not need, thou canſt *cure* my Servant without coming *under my Roof*, by that Almighty Power from which *no Thought can be withholden*. *Say in a Word and my Servant ſhall be healed*; ſo far was this Centurion from *Naaman*'s Fancy, that he ſhould come to him, and ſtand and *ſtrike his Hand over the* Patient, and ſo *recover* him, 2 *King*. 5. 11. He illuſtrates this Faith of his, by a Compariſon taken from his own Profeſſion, and is confident Chriſt can as eaſily command away the Diſtemper, as he can command any of his Soldiers; can as eaſily ſend an Angel, with Commiſſion to cure this Servant of his, as he can ſend a Soldier on an Errand, *v.* 8. Chriſt hath a Sovereign Power over all the Creatures, and all their Actions, and can change the Courſe of Nature as he pleaſeth, can rectify its Diſorders, and repairs its Decaies in human Bodies, for *all Power is given to him*.

7. That our Lord Jeſus was wonderfully well pleaſed with the Faith of the Centurion, and the more ſurpriz'd at it, becauſe he was a Gentile; and the Centurion's Faith having thus honour'd Chriſt, ſee how he honour'd it, *v.* 9. he *turn'd him about*, as one amaz'd, and *ſaid to the People that follow'd him, I have not found ſo great Faith, no not in Iſrael*. *Note*, Chriſt will have thoſe that follow him, to obſerve and take Notice of the great Examples of Faith, that are ſometimes ſet before them, eſpecially when any ſuch are found among thoſe that do not follow Chriſt ſo cloſely, as they do in Profeſſion; that we may be ſham'd by the Strength of their Faith, out of the Weakneſſes and Waverings of ours.

8. That the Cure was *preſently* and *perfectly* wrought, *v.* 10. *They that were ſent* knew they had their Errand, and therefore went back, and found the Servant well, and under no Remains at all of his Diſtemper. Chriſt will take Cognizance of the diſtreſſed Caſe of poor Servants and be ready to relieve them, for there *is no Reſpect of Perſons with him*. Nor was the Gentiles excluded from the Benefit of his Grace; nay, this was a Specimen of that much greater Faith, which would be found among the Gentiles, when the Goſpel would be publiſh'd, than among the Jews.

11 ¶ And it came to paſs the day after, that he went into a city called Naim; and many of his diſciples went with him, and much people. 12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only ſon of his mother, and ſhe was a widow, and much people of the city was with her. 13 And when the Lord ſaw her, he had compaſſion on her, and ſaid unto her, Weep not. 14 And he came and touched the biere, (and they that bare him ſtood ſtill) and he ſaid, Young man I ſay unto thee, Ariſe. 15 And he that was dead ſat up, and began to ſpeak: and he delivered him to his mother. 16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorify'd God, ſaying, That a great prophet is riſen up among us; and, That God hath viſited his people. 17 And this rumour of him went out throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about. 18 And the diſciples of John ſhewed him of all theſe things.

We have here the Story of Chriſt's raiſing to Life a Widow's Son at *Naim*, that was dead, and in the carrying out to be bury'd; which *Matthew* and *Mark* had made no Mention of; only in the general, *Matthew* had recorded it in Chriſt's Anſwer to the Diſciples [illegible] *John*, that *the Dead were raiſed* up, *Matt.* 11. 5.

Obſerve [illegible] Where and when this Miracle was wrought. It was the *next Day after* [illegible] had cur'd the Centurion's Servant, *v.* 11. Chriſt was doing [illegible] *every Day*, and never had Cauſe to complain that he had [illegible] *a Day*. It was done at the Gate of a ſmall City, or Town, call'd *Naim*; not far from *Capernaum*. Probably the ſame with a City call'd *Nais*, which *Jerom* ſpeaks of.

2. Who were the Witneſſes of it; 'tis as well atteſted as can be, for it was done in the Sight of two Crowds, that met in or near the Gate of the City. There was a Croud of *Diſciples* and other *People* attending Chriſt, *v.* 11. and a Crowd of Relations and Neighbours attending the Funeral of the young Man, *v.* 12. Thus there were a ſufficient Number to atteſt the Truth of this Miracle, for it was a greater Proof of Chriſt's divine Authority than his healing of Diſeaſes, for by no Power of Nature, or any Means, can the Dead be rais'd.

3. How it was wrought by our Lord Jeſus.

1. The Perſon rais'd to Life was a *young Man*, cut off by Death in the Beginning of his Days; a common Caſe; *Man comes forth like a Flower, and is cut down*. That he was really dead, was univerſally agreed; there could be no Colluſion in the Caſe, for Chriſt was *entring into the Town*, and had not ſeen him, 'till now that he met him upon the Bier. He was *carried out* of the City, for the Jews Burying-Places were without their Cities, and at ſome Diſtance from them. This young Man was the *only Son of his Mother*, and *ſhe a Widow*. She depended upon him to be the Staff of her old Age, but he proves a broken Reed; every Man at his beſt Eſtate is ſo. How numerous, how various, how very calamitous are the Afflictions of the afflicted in this World? What a Vale of Tears is it; What a *Bochim*, a Place of Weepers. We may well think how deep the *Sorrow* of this poor Mother was, *for her only Son*; that's us'd to expreſs the greateſt Grief, *Zech.* 12. 10. and the deeper, in that ſhe was *a Widow*, broken with Breach upon Breach, a *full End* made of her Comforts. *Much Poople of the City was with her*, by *condoling* her Loſs, to *comfort* her.

2. Chriſt ſhew'd both his *Pity* and his *Power* in raiſing him to Life, that he might give a Specimen of both, which ſhine ſo bright in Man's Redemption.

1. See how *tender* his *Compaſſions* are towards the Afflicted, *v.* 13. *When the Lord ſaw* the poor Widow following her Son to the Grave, *he had Compaſſion on her*. Here was no Application made to him for her, not ſo much as that he would ſpeak ſome Words of Comfort to her, but *ex mero motu*, purely from the Goodneſs of his Nature, he was troubled for her. The Caſe was piteous, and he look'd upon it with Pity. His Eye affected his Heart; and he *ſaid unto her, Weep not*. *Note*, Chriſt has a Concern for the Mourners, for the Miſerable, and often *prevents them with the Bleſſings of his Goodneſs*. He undertook the Work of our Redemption and Salvation, *in his Love and in his Pity*, Iſa. 63. 9. What a pleaſing Idea doth this give us of the Compaſſions of the Lord Jeſus, and the Multitude of his *tender Mercies*, which may be very comfortable to us, when at any Time we are in Sorrow. Let poor Widows comfort themſelves in their Sorrows with this, that Chriſt *pities them*, and knows their Souls in Adverſity; and if others deſpiſe their Grief, he does not. Chriſt ſaid, *Weep not*; and he could give her a Reaſon for it, which no one elſe could; weep not for a *dead Son*, for he ſhall preſently become a *living one*. This was a Reaſon peculiar to her Caſe; yet there is a Reaſon common to all who ſleep in *Jeſus*, which is of equal Force againſt inordinate and exceſſive Grief for their Death; that they ſhall riſe again, ſhall riſe in Glory, and therefore we muſt not Sorrow, as thoſe that have no Hope, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 13. Let *Rachel* that *weeps for her Children, refrain her Eyes from Tears*, for there is Hope in thine End, ſaith the Lord, that *thy Children ſhall come again to their own Border*, Jer. 31. 17. And let our *Paſſion* at ſuch a Time be check'd and calm'd by the Conſideration of Chriſt's Compaſſion.

2. See how *triumphant* his *Commands* are, over even Death itſelf, *v.* 14. *He came and touch'd the Bier* or *Coffin*, in or upon which the dead Body lay; for to him it would be no Pollution; hereby he intimated to the Bearers, that they ſhould not proceed; he had ſomething to ſay to the dead young Man; *Deliver him from going down to the Pit, I have found a Ranſom*, Job. 32. 24. Hereupon, *they that bare him ſtood ſtill*, and probably let down the Bier from their Shoulders to the Ground, and open'd the Coffin, if it were clos'd up; and then, with Solemnity, as one that had Authority, and to whom belong'd the Iſſues from Death, he ſaid, *young Man, I ſay unto thee, Ariſe*. The young Man was *dead*, and cou'd not ariſe by any Power of his own, no more can thoſe that are ſpiritually dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins; yet it was no Abſurdity at all for Chriſt to bid him *ariſe*, when a Power went along with that Word to *put Life* into him. The Goſpel Call to all People, to young People particularly, is *Ariſe*, ariſe from the Dead, and Chriſt ſhall give you Light and Life. Chriſt's Dominion over Death, was evidenc'd by the immediate Effect of his Word, *v.* 15. *He that was dead ſate up* without any Help. When Chriſt put Life into him, he made it to appear by his *ſitting up*. Have we Grace from Chriſt, let us ſhew it. Another Evidence of Life was, that he *began to ſpeak*; for whenever Chriſt gives us ſpiritual Life, he *opens the Lips*, in Prayer and Praiſe. And *laſtly*, he wou'd not oblige this young Man, to whom he had given a new Life, to go along with him, either as his Diſciple to miniſter to him, tho' he ow'd him even his own ſelf; much leſs as a Trophy, or a Shew to get Honour by him, but *deliver'd him to his Mother*, to attend her, as became a dutiful Son; for Chriſt's Miracles were Miracles of Mercy; and a great Act of Mercy this was to this Widow; now ſhe was *comforted*, according to the Time in which ſhe had been afflicted; and much more; for ſhe could now look upon this Son, as a particular Favourite of Heaven, with more Pleaſure than if he had not dy'd.

4. What Influence it had upon the People, *ver.* 16. *There came a Fear on all*; it frightned them all to ſee a dead Man ſtart up alive out of his Coffin in the open Street, at the Command of a Man; they were all ſtruck with Wonder at this Miracle, and *glorified God.* The Lord and his Goodneſs, as well as the Lord and his Greatneſs, are to be feared. The Inference they drew from it was, That *a great Prophet is riſen up among us*; the great Prophet that we have been long looking for, doubtleſs he is one divinely inſpired, who can thus breath Life into the Dead: And that in him *God had viſited his People* to redeem them, as was expected, *Luke* 1. 68. This would be *Life from the Dead* indeed, to all them that waited for the Conſolation of *Iſrael.* When dead Souls are thus rais'd to ſpiritual Life by a Divine Power going along with the Goſpel, we muſt glorify God, and look upon it as a gracious Viſit to his People. The Report of this Miracle was carry'd (1.) In general, all the Country over, *v.* 17. *This Rumour of him*, that he was the great Prophet, *went forth* upon the Wings of Fame *through all Judea*, which lay a great Way off, and throughout all *Galilee*, which was the *Region round about.* Moſt got this Notion of him, yet few believed in him, and gave up themſelves to him. Many have the *Rumour* of Chriſt's Goſpel in their Ears, that have not the *Savour* and *Reliſh* of it in their Souls. (2.) In particular, it was carefully brought to *John Baptiſt*, who was now in Priſon, *v.* 18. *His Diſciples came* and gave him an Account of all Things, that he might know, that tho' he was bound, yet *the Word of the Lord was not bound*; God's Work was going on tho' he was laid aſide.

19 ¶ And John calling unto him two of his diſciples, ſent *them* unto Jeſus, ſaying, Art thou he that ſhould come, or look we for another? 20 When the men were come unto him, they ſaid, John Baptiſt hath ſent us unto thee, ſaying, Art thou he that ſhould come, or look we for another? 21 And in that ſame hour he cured many of *their* infirmities, and plagues, and of evil ſpirits, and unto many that were blind he gave ſight. 22 Then Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have ſeen and heard, how that the blind ſee, the lame walk, the lepers are cleanſed, the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed, to the poor the goſpel is preached. 23 And bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall not be offended in me. 24 ¶ And when the meſſengers of John were departed, he began to ſpeak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderneſs for to ſee? A reed ſhaken with the wind? 25 But what went ye out for to ſee? a man clothed in ſoft rayment? Behold, they that are gorgeouſly apparell'd, and live delicately, are in kings courts. 26 But what went ye out for to ſee? A prophet? Yea, I ſay unto you, and much more than a prophet. 27 This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I ſend my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee. 28 For I ſay unto you, Among thoſe that are born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptiſt: but he that is leaſt in the kingdom of God, is greater than he. 29 And all the people that heard *him*, and the publicans juſtified God, being baptized with the baptiſm of John. 30 But the Phariſees and lawyers rejected the Counſel of God againſt themſelves, being not baptized of him. 31 ¶ And the Lord ſaid, Whereunto then ſhall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? 32 They are like unto children ſitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and ſaying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced: we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. 33 For John the Baptiſt came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine; and ye ſay, He hath a devil. 34 The Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and ye ſay, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners. 35 But Wiſdom is juſtified of all her children.

All this Diſcourſe concerning *John Baptiſt*, occaſion'd by his ſending to aſk whether he was the Meſſiah or no, we had, much as it is here related, *Matt.* 11. 2,--19.

Firſt, We have here the Meſſage *John Baptiſt* ſent to Chriſt, and the Return he made to it. Obſerve,

1. The great Thing we are to enquire concerning, is, whether he be he that ſhould come to redeem and ſave Sinners, or whether we are to look for another, *v.* 19, 20. We are ſure God has promis'd that a Saviour ſhall come, an anointed Saviour; we are as ſure, that what he has promis'd he will perform in its Seaſon: If this Jeſus be that promis'd Meſſias, we will receive and will look for no other; but if not, we will continue our Expectations, and tho' he tarry, we will wait for him.

2. The Faith of *John Baptiſt* himſelf, or at leaſt of his Diſciples, wanted to be *confirm'd* in this Matter; for Chriſt had not yet publickly declar'd himſelf to be indeed the Chriſt, nay, he would not have his Diſciples, who knew him to be ſo, to ſpeak of it, 'till the Proofs of his being ſo were compleated in his Reſurrection. The great Men of the *Jewiſh* Church had not own'd him, nor had he gain'd any Intereſt that was like to ſet him upon the Throne of his Father *David.* Nothing of that Power and Grandeur was to be ſeen about him, in which it was expected the Meſſiah would appear. And therefore it is not ſtrange that they ſhould aſk, *Art thou the Meſſiah?* not doubting but that if he were not, he would direct them what other to *look for.*

3. Chriſt left it to his own Works to praiſe him in the Gates, to tell what he was and to prove it. While *John*'s Meſſengers were with him he wrought many miraculous Cures, *in that ſame Hour*; which perhaps intimates, that they ſtaid but *an Hour* with him; and what a deal of good Work did Chriſt do in a little Time! *ver.* 21. *He cured many of their Infirmities, and Plagues* in Body, and of *evil Spirits* that affected the Mind, either with Frenzy or Melancholy; and *unto many that were blind, he gave Sight.* He multiply'd the Cures, that their might be no Ground left to ſuſpect a Fraud. And then, *v.* 22. he bid them *go tell John what they had ſeen.* And he and they might eaſily argue, as even the common People did, *John* 7. 31. *When Chriſt cometh, will he do more Miracles than theſe, which this Man has done?* Theſe Cures which they ſaw him work, were not only Confirmations of his Commiſſion, but Explications of it. The Meſſiah much come to cure a diſeaſed World, to give Light and Sight to them that ſit in Darkneſs, and to reſtrain and conquer evil Spirits; you ſee that Jeſus doth this to the Bodies of People, and therefore muſt conclude, This is he that ſhould come to do it to the Souls of People; and you are to *look for no other.* To his Miracles in the Kingdom of Nature, he adds this in the Kingdom of Grace, *v.* 22. *To the Poor the Goſpel is preached*; which they knew was to be done by the Meſſiah, for he was anointed to *preach the Goſpel to the Meek*, Iſa. 61. 1. and to *ſave the Souls of the Poor and Needy*, Pſal. 72. 13. Judge therefore whether you can look for any other that will more fully anſwer the Characters of the Meſſiah, and the great Intentions of his Coming.

4. He gave them an Intimation of the Danger People were in of being prejudic'd againſt him, notwithſtanding theſe evident Proofs of his being the *Meſſiah*, v. 23. *Bleſſed is he whoſoever ſhall no be offended in me*, or *ſcandaliz'd* at me. We are here in a State of Trial and Probation, and it is agreeable to ſuch a State, that as there are ſufficient Arguments to *confirm the Truth* to thoſe that are *honeſt* and *impartial* in ſearching after it, and have their Minds prepar'd to receive it; ſo there ſhould be alſo Objections to *cloud the Truth*, to thoſe that are careleſs, and worldly, and ſenſual; Chriſt's Education at *Nazareth*, his Reſidence in *Galilee*, the Meanneſs of his Family and Relations, his Poverty, and the the Deſpicableneſs of his Followers, theſe and the like, were Stumbling-Blocks to many, which all the Miracles he wrought, could not help them over: He is *bleſſed*, for he is wiſe, and humble, and well-diſpos'd, that is not overcome by theſe Prejudices: It is a Sign God *bleſſeth* him, for 'tis by his Grace that he is help'd over theſe Stumbling-Stones; and *he ſhall be bleſſed* indeed, bleſſed in Chriſt.

Secondly, We have here the high *Encomium* which Chriſt gave of *John Baptiſt*; not while his Meſſengers were preſent, leaſt he ſhould ſeem to flatter him, but *when they were departed*, v. 24. to make the People ſenſible of the Advantages they had enjoy'd in *John*'s Miniſtry, and were deprived of by his Impriſonment. Let them now conſider, *What they went out into the Wilderneſs to ſee?* Who that was, about whom their had been ſo much Talk, and ſuch a great and general Amazement. Come, ſaith Chriſt, I'll tell you.

1. He was a Man of unſhaken *Self-Conſiſtence*; a Man of Steadineſs and Conſtancy; he was not *a Reed ſhaken with the Wind*, firſt in one Way, and then in another, ſhifting with every Wind, he was *firm* as a *Rock*, not *fickle* as a *Reed*; if he could have bow'd like a *Reed* to *Herod*, and have complied with the Court, he might have been a Favourite there; but *none of theſe Things mov'd him.*

2. He was a Man of unparallell'd *Self-Denial*; a great Example of Mortification and Contempt of the World; he was not *a Man clothed in ſoft Raiment*, nor did he live *delicately*, v. 25. But on the contrary, he liv'd in a Wilderneſs, and was clad and fed accordingly; inſtead of adorning and pampering the Body, he brought it under, and kept it in Subjection.

3. He was *a Prophet*, had his Commiſſion and Inſtructions immediately from God, and not of Man, or by Man. He was by Birth a *Prieſt*, but that is never taken Notice of; for his Glory as a Prophet, eclips'd the Honour of his Prieſthood; nay, he was *more*, he was *much more than a Prophet*, v. 26. than any of the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, for they ſpake of Chriſt as at a Diſtance, he ſpake of him as at the Door.

4. He was the Harbinger and Fore-runner of the *Meſſiah*, and he was himſelf propheſied of in the *Old Teſtament*, v. 27. *This is he of whom it is written*, Mal. 3. 1. *Behold I ſend my Meſſenger before thy Face.* Before he ſent the Maſter himſelf, he ſent a Meſſenger to give Notice of his Coming, and prepare People to receive him: Had the Meſſiah been to appear as a *temporal Prince*, under which Character the carnal Jews expected him, his *Meſſenger* would have appear'd either in the *Pomp* of a *General*, or the *Gaiety* of a *Herald at Arms*; but it was a *previous* Indication, plain enough, of the *Spiritual* Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, that the Meſſenger he ſent before him to prepare *his Way*, did it by preaching Repentance, and Reformation of Men's Hearts and Lives, certainly that Kingdom was not of this World, which was thus uſher'd in.

5. He was upon this Account ſo great, that really there was not a *greater Prophet* than he. *Prophets* were really the *greateſt* that were *born of Women*, more honourable than Kings and Princes, and *John* was the *greateſt* of all the *Prophets*; the Country was not ſenſible what a *valuable*, what an *invaluable* Man it had in it, when *John Baptiſt* went about preaching and baptizing. And yet *he that is leaſt in the Kingdom of God is greater than he*. The leaſt Goſpel Miniſter that has obtain'd Mercy of the Lord, to be *skilful* and *faithful* in his Work; or the meaneſt of the *Apoſtles* and firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, being *employ'd* under a more *excellent* Diſpenſation, are in a more honourable Office than *John Baptiſt*. The meaneſt of thoſe that *follow the Lamb*, far excel the greateſt of thoſe that went before him. Thoſe therefore who live under the Goſpel Diſpenſation, have ſo much the more to anſwer for.

Thirdly, We have here the juſt Cenſure of the Men of that Generation, that were not wrought upon by the Miniſtry either of *John Baptiſt*, or of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf.

1. Chriſt here ſhews what Contempt was put upon *John Baptiſt*, while he was preaching and baptizing. (1.) Thoſe that did ſhew him any Reſpect, were but the common ordinary Sort of People; that in the Eye of the gay Part of Mankind, were rather a Diſgrace to him than any Credit, *v.* 29. *The People* indeed, the vulgar Herd, of whom it was ſaid, *This People who knows not the Law, are curſed*, Joh. 7. 49. And the *Publicans*, Men of ill Fame, as being generally Men of ill Morals, or taken to be ſo, theſe were *baptiz'd with his Baptiſm*, and became his Diſciples; and theſe, tho' glorious Monuments of Divine Grace, yet did not *magnify John* in the Eye of the World; but by their Repentance and Reformation they *juſtified God*, juſtified his Conduct, and the Wiſdom of it, in appointing ſuch a one as *John Baptiſt* to be the Forerunner of the *Meſſiah*; they hereby made it to appear, that it was the beſt Method that could be taken, for it was not in vain to *them*, whatever it was to others. (2.) The Great Men of their Church and Nation, the *Polite* and the *Politicians*, that wou'd have done him ſome Credit in the Eye of the World, did him all the Diſhonour they cou'd; they heard him indeed, but they were not *baptiz'd of him*, v. 30. the *Phariſees* that were moſt in Reputation for Religion and Devotion, and the *Lawyers* that were celebrated for their Learning, eſpecially their Knowledge of the Scriptures, they *rejected the Counſel of God againſt themſelves*, they *fruſtrated it*, they *received the Grace of God* in the Baptiſm of *John* in *vain*. God in ſending that *Meſſenger* among them, had a kind *Purpoſe* of good to them, *deſign'd* their Salvation by it, and if they had clos'd with the Counſel of God, it had been *for themſelves*, they had been made for ever; but they *rejected it*, wou'd not comply with it, and it was *againſt themſelves*, it was to their own Ruin; they came ſhort of the Benefit intended them, and not only ſo, but forfeited the Grace of God, put a Bar in their own Door, and by refuſing that Diſcipline, which was to fit them for the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, ſhut themſelves out of it, and they not only excluded themſelves, but hinder'd others, and ſtood in their Way.

2. He here ſhews the ſtrange *Perverſeneſs* of the Men of that Generation, in their Cavils both againſt *John* and Chriſt, and the Prejudices they conceiv'd againſt them.

1. They made but a jeſting Matter of the Methods God took to do them good, *v.* 31. *Whereunto ſhall I liken the Men of this Generation?* What can I think of, abſurd enough to repreſent them by? They are then, *like Children ſitting in the Market-Place*, that mind nothing that's ſerious, but are as full of Play as they can hold; as if God were but in Jeſt with them, in all the Methods he takes to do them good, as Children are with one another in the Market-Place, *v.* 32. they turn it all off with a Banter, and are no more affected with it than a Piece of Pageantry. This is the Ruin of Multitudes, they can never perſwade themſelves to be *ſerious* in the Concerns of their Souls: Old Men ſitting in the *Sanhedrin*, were but as *Children ſitting in the Market-Place*; and no more affected with the Things that belong'd to their everlaſting Peace, than People are with Children's Play. O the amazing Stupidity and Vanity of the blind and ungodly World! The Lord awaken them out of their Security!

2. They ſtill found ſomething or other to carp at.

1. *John Baptiſt* was a reſerv'd auſtere Man, liv'd much in Solitude, and ought to have been admir'd for being ſuch a humble, ſober, ſelf-denying Man, and hearken'd to, as a Man of Thought and Contemplation; but this which was his Praiſe, was turn'd to his Reproach; becauſe he came *neither eating nor drinking*, ſo freely, and plentifully, and chearfully, as others did, *ye ſay, he has a Devil*, he's a melancholy Man, he's poſſeſs'd as the Demoniack, whoſe Dwelling was *among the Tombs*, tho' he be not all out ſo wild.

2. Our Lord Jeſus was of a more free and open Converſation, he *came eating and drinking*, v. 34. he wou'd go and dine with *Phariſees*, tho' he knew they did not care for him; and with *Publicans*, tho' he knew they were no Credit to him; yet in hopes of doing good both to the one and the other, he convers'd familiarly with them. By this it appears that the Miniſters of Chriſt may be of very different Tempers and Diſpoſitions, very different Ways of Preaching and Living, and yet all good and uſeful; *Diverſity of Gifts*, but each given to *profit withal*; therefore none muſt make themſelves a Standard to all others, nor judge hardly of thoſe that do not do juſt as they do. *John Baptiſt* bore Witneſs to Chriſt, and Chriſt applauded *John Baptiſt*, tho' they were the Reverſe of each other in their Way of Living. But the common Enemies of them both, reproach'd them both. The very ſame Men that had repreſented *John* as *craz'd in his Intellectuals*, becauſe he came *neither eating nor drinking*, repreſented our Lord Jeſus as *corrupt in his Morals*, becauſe he came *eating and drinking*; he is a *gluttonous Man and a Wine-bibber*. Ill-will never ſpeaks well. See the Malice of wicked People, and how they put the worſt Conſtruction upon every thing they meet with in the Goſpel, and in the Preachers and Profeſſors of it; and hereby they think to diminiſh them; but really deſtroy themſelves.

Laſtly, He ſhews, that notwithſtanding this, God will be glorified in the Salvation of a choſen Remnant, *v.* 35. *Wiſdom is juſtified of all her Children.* There are thoſe who are given to Wiſdom *as her Children*, and they ſhall be brought by the Grace of God, to ſubmit to Wiſdom's Conduct and Government, and thereby to juſtify Wiſdom in the Ways ſhe takes of bringing them to that Submiſſion; for to them they are effectual, and thereby appear well-choſen. Wiſdom's Children are herein *unanimous*, one and all, they have all a Complacency in the Methods of Grace, which divine Wiſdom takes; and think never the worſe of 'em, for their being *ridicul'd* by ſome.

36 ¶ And one of the Phariſees deſired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Phariſee's houſe, and ſat down to meat. 37 And behold, a woman in the city, which was a ſinner, when ſhe knew that Jeſus ſat at meat in the Phariſee's houſe, brought an alablaſter box of ointment, 38 And ſtood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to waſh his feet with tears, and did wipe *them* with the hairs of her head, and kiſſed his feet, and anointed *them* with the ointment. 39 Now when the Phariſee which had bidden him, ſaw *it*, he ſpake within himſelf ſaying, *This* man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman *this is* that touched him: for ſhe is a ſinner. 40 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto him, Simon, I have ſomewhat to ſay unto thee. And he ſaith, Maſter, ſay on. 41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him moſt? 43 Simon anſwered and ſaid, I ſuppoſe that he to whom he forgave moſt. And he ſaid unto him thou haſt rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and ſaid unto Simon, Seeſt thou this woman; I entred into thine houſe, thou gaveſt me no water for my feet: but ſhe hath waſhed my feet with tears, and wiped *them* with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gaveſt me no kiſs: but this woman, ſince the time I came in, hath not ceaſed to kiſs my feet. 46 Mine head with oyl thou didſt not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I ſay unto thee, Her ſins, which are many, are forgiven; for ſhe loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the ſame loveth little. 48 And he ſaid unto her, Thy ſins are forgiven. 49 And they that ſat at meat with him, began to ſay within themſelves, Who is this that forgiveth ſins alſo? 50 And he ſaid to the woman, thy faith hath ſaved thee; go in peace.

When and where this Paſſage of Story happen'd, doth not appear; this Evangeliſt doth not obſerve Order of Time in his Narratives, ſo much as the other Evangeliſts do; but it comes in here upon Occaſion of Chriſt's being reproach'd as *a Friend to Publicans and Sinners*, to ſhew that it was only for their Good, and to bring them to Repentance, that he convers'd with them;

and that thoſe he admitted near him were reform'd, or in a hopeful Way to be ſo. Who this Woman was, that here teſtified ſo great an Affection for Chriſt, doth not appear; 'tis commonly ſaid to be *Mary Magdalen*, but I find no Ground in Scripture for it; ſhe is deſcrib'd, *Chap* 8. 2. and *Mark* 16. 9. to be one, *out of whom Chriſt had caſt ſeven Devils*; but that is not mentioned here; and therefore, 'tis probable, it was not ſhe.

Now obſerve here,

1. The civil Entertainment which a Phariſee gave to Chriſt, and his gracious Acceptance of that Entertainment, *v.* 36. *one of the Phariſees deſired him, that he would eat with him*; either becauſe he thought it would be a Reputation to him to have ſuch a Gueſt at his Table, or becauſe his Company would be an Entertainment to him, and his Family, and Friends. It appears that this *Phariſee* did not believe in Chriſt, for he will not own him to be a *Prophet*, v. 36. and yet our Lord Jeſus accepted his Invitation, *went into his Houſe and ſat down to Meat*; that they might ſee he took the ſame Liberty with Phariſees that he did with Publicans, in hopes of *doing them good*. And thoſe may venture further into the Society of ſuch as are prejudic'd againſt Chriſt and his Religion, who have Wiſdom and Grace ſufficient to inſtruct and argue with them, than others may.

2. The great Reſpects which a poor penitent Sinner ſhew'd him, when he was at Meat in the *Phariſees* Houſe. 'Twas a Woman in the City *that was a Sinner*, a Gentile, I doubt a *Harlot*, known to be ſo, and infamous; ſhe *knew that Jeſus ſat at Meat in the Phariſee's Houſe*, and having been converted from her wicked Courſe of Life, by his Preaching, ſhe came to acknowledge her Obligations to him (having no Opportunity of doing it any other Way) by *waſhing* his Feet, and anointing them with ſome ſweet Ointment that ſhe brought with her for that Purpoſe. The Way of ſitting at Table then was ſuch as that their Feet were partly *behind them*. Now this Woman did not look Chriſt in the Face, but came *behind him*, and did the Part of the *Maid-Servant*, whoſe Office it was to *waſh the Feet* of the Gueſts, 1 *Sam.* 25. 41. and to prepare the Ointments, 1 *Sam.* 8. 13.

Now in what this good Woman did, We may obſerve,

(1.) Her *deep Humiliation* for Sin; ſhe ſtood behind him *weeping*, her Eyes had been the Inlets and Outlets of Sin, and now ſhe makes them Fountains of Tears. Her Face is now *blubber'd* that perhaps us'd to be *painted*. Her Hair now made a Towel of, which before had been plaited and adorn'd. We have Reaſon to think ſhe had before ſorrow'd for Sin, but now ſhe had an Opportunity of coming into the Preſence of Chriſt, the Wound bled afreſh, and her Sorrow renew'd. *Note*, It well becomes Penitents, upon all their Approaches to Chriſt to renew their godly Sorrow and Shame for Sin; *when he is pacified*, Ezek. 16. laſt.

(2.) Her *ſtrong Affection* to the Lord Jeſus; this was it that our Lord Jeſus took ſpecial Notice of, that ſhe *loved much*, *v.* 42, 47. She *waſhed his Feet* in Token of her ready Submiſſion to the meaneſt Office in which ſhe might *do him Honour*. Nay, ſhe waſh'd them with *her Tears*, Tears of Joy, ſhe was in a Tranſport to find herſelf ſo near her Saviour, whom her Soul loved. She *kiſſed his Feet*, as one unworthy of the Kiſſes of his Mouth, which the Spouſe coveted, *Cant.* 1. 2. 'Twas a Kiſs of Adoration, as well as Affection; ſhe *wiped them with her Hair*, as one entirely devoted to his Honour; her Eyes ſhall yeild Water to waſh them, and her Hair be a Towel to wipe them; and ſhe *anointed* his Feet *with the Ointment*; owning him hereby to be the *Meſſiah*, the *anointed*,; ſhe anointed his Feet, in Token of her Conſent to God's Deſign in anointing his Head with the *Oil of Gladneſs*. *Note*, All true Penitents have a dear love to the Lord Jeſus.

3. The Offence which the Phariſee took at Chriſt, for admitting the Reſpects which this poor Penitent paid him, *v.* 39. *He ſpake within himſelf*, little thinking that Chriſt knew what he thought, *This Man, if he were a Prophet*, would then have ſo much *Knowledge* as to perceive that *this Woman is a Sinner*, is a *Gentile*, is a Woman of ill Fame; and ſo much *Sanctity* as *therefore* not to ſuffer her to come ſo near him, for can one of ſuch a Character approach a Prophet, and his Heart not riſe at it? See how apt proud and narrow Souls are to think that others ſhould be as haughty and cenſorious as themſelves. *Simon*, if ſhe had touch'd him, would have ſaid, *Stand by thy ſelf, Come not near me, I am holier than thou*, Iſa. 65. 5. and he thought Chriſt ſhould ſay ſo too.

4. Chriſt's Juſtification of the Woman, in what ſhe did to him, and of himſelf, in admitting it. Chriſt knew what the *Phariſee* ſpake *within himſelf*, and made Anſwer to it. *Simon I have ſomewhat to ſay unto thee*, v. 41. Tho' he was kindly entertain'd at his Table, yet even there he reprov'd him for what he ſaw amiſs in him, and would not *ſuffer Sin upon him*. Thoſe whom Chriſt hath *ſomething againſt*, he hath ſomething to *ſay to*, for his *Spirit* ſhall *reprove*. *Simon* is willing to give him the Hearing, *he ſaith, Maſter, ſay on.* Tho' he could not believe him to be a Prophet, becauſe he was not ſo nice and preciſe as he was, yet he can complement him with the Title of *Maſter* among thoſe that cry, *Lord, Lord*, but *do not the Things which he ſaith.* Now Chriſt in his Anſwer to the *Phariſee*, reaſons thus; 'tis true, this Woman has been a Sinner, he knows it; but ſhe is a *pardon'd* Sinner, which ſuppoſeth her to be a *penitent* Sinner; that what ſhe did to him was an Expreſſion of her *great Love* to her Saviour, by whom her Sins were forgiven; that if ſhe was pardon'd who had been *ſo great a Sinner*, it might reaſonably be expected that ſhe ſhould love her Saviour more than others, and ſhould give greater Proofs of it than others; and if this was the Fruit of her Love, and flowing from a Senſe of the Pardon of her Sins, it became him to accept of it, and it ill became the Phariſee to be offended at it. Now Chriſt has a further Reach in this; the Phariſee doubted whether he was a *Prophet* or no, nay, he did in Effect deny it, but Chriſt ſhews that he was more than a Prophet, for he is one that has *Power* on Earth to forgive *Sins*, and to whom are owing the Affections and thankful Acknowledgments of penitent, pardon'd Sinners.

Now in his Anſwer,

1. He doth by a Parable force *Simon* to acknowledge that the greater Sinner this Woman had been, the greater Love ſhe ought to ſhew to Jeſus Chriſt when her *Sins* are *pardon'd*, v, 41, 42, 43. A Man had *two Debtors* that were both Inſolvent, but one of them ow'd him *ten times* more than the other; he very freely *forgave them both*, and did not take the Advantage of the Law againſt them, did not order them and their Children to be Sold, or *deliver them to the Tormentors*: Now they were both ſenſible of the great Kindneſs they had receiv'd, but *which of them will love him moſt*? Certainly ſaith the *Phariſee*, he to *whom he forgave moſt*, and herein he rightly judg'd. Now we being oblig'd to *forgive*, as we are and hope to be *forgiven*, we may from hence learn the Duty between Debtor and Creditor. (1.) The *Debtor* if he have *any thing* to *pay*, ought to make Satisfaction to his *Creditor*. No Man can reckon that *his own*, or have any comfortable Enjoyment of it, but that which is ſo when *all his Debts are paid.* (2.) If God in his Providence hath diſabled the Debtor to pay his Debt, the Creditor ought not to be ſevere with him, nor to go to the utmoſt Rigour of the Law with him, but *freely to forgive* him. *Summum jus eſt ſumma injuria.* Let the unmerciful Creditor read that Parable, *Mat.* 18. 23, &c. and tremble, for they ſhall have Judgment without Mercy that ſhew no Mercy. (3.) The Debtor that has found his Creditors merciful, ought to be very grateful to them; and if he cannot otherwiſe recompenſe them, ought to love them. Some inſolvent Debtors inſtead of being *grateful*, are *ſpiteful* to their Creditors that loſe by them, and cannot give them a good Word, only becauſe they Complain, whereas Loſers may have Leave to ſpeak: But this Parable ſpeaks of God as the Creditor, (or rather the Lord Jeſus himſelf, for he it is that forgives, and is beloved by the Debtor) and Sinners are the Debtors: And ſo we may learn here,

1. That *Sin is a Debt*, and *Sinners are Debtors* to God Almighty. As Creatures, we owe a Debt of Obedience to the Precept of the Law, and for non-payment of that as Sinners, we become liable to the Penalty. We have not paid our Rent, nay, we have waſted our Lord's Goods, and ſo we become Debtors. God has an Action againſt us for the Injury we have done him, and the Omiſſion of our Duty to him.

2. That ſome are deeper in Debt to God by Reaſon of Sin than others are; *one ow'd five Hundred Pence, the other Fifty.* The Phariſee was the leſs Debtor, yet he a Debtor too, which was more than he thought himſelf, but rather that God was his Debtor, *Luke* 18. 10, 11. This Woman that had been a ſcandalous notorious Sinner was the *greater Debtor*. Some Sins are in themſelves greater Debts than others, and ſome Sinners by Reaſon of divers aggravating Circumſtances greater Debtors. As thoſe that have ſin'd moſt openly and ſcandalouſly, that have ſin'd againſt greater Light and Knowledge, more Convictions and Warnings, and more Mercies and Means.

3. That whether our Debt be more or leſs, 'tis more than we are able to pay. *They had nothing to pay*, nothing at all to make a Compoſition with, for the Debt is great, and we have nothing at all to pay it with; Silver and Gold will not pay our Debt, nor will Sacrifice and Offering, no not *thouſands of Rams*. No Righteouſneſs of our own will pay it, no not our Repentance, and Obedience for the future; for it is what we are already bound to, and 'tis God that works it in us.

4. That the God of Heaven is *ready* to forgive, *franckly to forgive* poor Sinners upon Goſpel Terms, tho' their Debt be never ſo great. If we repent and believe in Chriſt, our Iniquity ſhall not be our Ruin, it ſhall not be laid to our Charge. God has proclaim'd his Name Gracious and Merciful, and ready to forgive Sin; and his Son having purchas'd Pardon for penitent Believers, his Goſpel promiſeth it to them, and his Spirit ſeals it, and gives them the Comfort of it.

5. That thoſe who have their Sins *pardon'd*, are oblig'd to *love him* that pardon'd them; and the more is forgiven them, the more they ſhould love him. The *greater Sinners* any have been before their Converſion, the *greater Saints* they ſhould be after; the more they ſhould Study to do for God, and the more their Hearts ſhould be enlarged in Obedience. When a *perſecuting Saul* became a preaching *Paul*, he *labour'd more abundantly.*

2. He applies this Parable to the different Temper and Carriage of the *Phariſee*, and the *Sinner* towards Chriſt. Tho' the Phariſee would not allow Chriſt to be a Prophet, Chriſt ſeems ready to allow him to be in a juſtify'd State; and that he was one

forgiven, tho' to him *leſs was forgiven*. He did indeed ſhew ſome Love to Chriſt in inviting him to his Houſe, but nothing to what this poor Woman ſhew'd. Look thee, ſaith Chriſt to him, ſhe is one that has much forgiven her, and therefore according to thine own Judgment, it might be expected ſhe ſhould love much more than thou doſt, and ſo it appears, *v.* 44. *See'ſt thou this Woman?* Thou lookeſt upon her with Contempt, but conſider what a kinder Friend ſhe is to me than thou art; ſhould I then accept thy Kindneſs, and refuſe hers?

1. Thou didſt not ſo much as order a Baſon of Water to be brought to waſh my Feet in, when I came in weary'd and dirty'd with my Walk, which would have been ſome Refreſhment to me; but ſhe has done much more, *ſhe hath waſh'd my Feet with Tears*, Tears of Affection to me, Tears of Affliction for Sin, and has *wiped them with the Hairs of her Head*, in Token of her great Love to me.

2. Thou didſt not ſo much as kiſs my Cheek, which was an uſual Expreſſion of a hearty and affectionate Welcome to a Friend, but *this Woman hath not ceaſed to kiſs my Feet*, v. 45. thereby expreſſing both a humble and an affectionate Love.

3. Thou didſt not provide me a little common Oyl as uſual to anoint my Head with, but ſhe has beſtow'd a Box of *precious Ointment* upon *my Feet*, v. 46. ſo far hath ſhe out-done thee. The Reaſon why ſome People blame the Pains and Expence of zealous Chriſtians in Religion is, becauſe they are not willing themſelves to come up to it, but reſolve to reſt in a *cheap* and *eaſie* Religion.

3. He ſilenc'd the *Phariſee*'s Cavil, *v.* 47. *I ſay unto thee*, Simon, *her Sins which are many are forgiven*. He owns ſhe had been guilty of *many Sins*, but they are *forgiven* her, and therefore it is no way unbecoming me to accept her Kindneſs. They *are forgiven, for ſhe loved much*. It ſhould be render'd, *therefore ſhe loved much*; for it is plain, by the Tenor of Chriſt's Diſcourſe, that her loving much was not the *Cauſe*, but the *Effect* of her Pardon, and of her comfortable Senſe of it; for *we love God*, becauſe *he firſt loved us*; he did not forgive us becauſe we firſt loved him. But *to whom little is forgiven*, as is to thee, *the ſame loveth little*, as thou doſt. Hereby he intimates to the Phariſee that his Love to Chriſt was ſo little, that he had Reaſon to queſtion whether he lov'd him at all in Sincerity; and conſequently whether indeed his Sins, tho' comparatively *little* were forgiven him. Inſtead of grudging great Sinners the Mercy they find with Chriſt upon their Repentance, we ſhould be ſtirr'd up by their Example to examine our ſelves, whether we be indeed forgiven, and do love Chriſt.

4. He ſilenc'd her Fears, who probably was diſcourag'd by the *Phariſee*'s Offence, and yet would not ſo far yield to the Diſcouragement as to fly off. (1.) Chriſt ſaid unto her, *Thy Sins are forgiven*, v. 48. *Note*, The more we expreſs our Sorrow for Sin, and our Love to Chriſt, the clearer Evidence we have of the Forgiveneſs of our Sin; for 'tis by the Experience of a *Work of Grace* wrought *in us*, that we obtain the Aſſurance of an *Act of Grace* wrought *for us*. How well was ſhe paid for her Pains and Coſt, when ſhe was diſmiſs'd with this Word from Chriſt, *thy Sins are forgiven*, and what an effectual Prevention would this be of her Return to ſin again.

(2.) Tho' there were thoſe preſent who quarrel'd with Chriſt in their own Minds for preſuming to forgive Sin, and pronounce Sinners abſolv'd, *v.* 49. as thoſe had done, *Matt.* 9. 3. yet he *ſtood to what he had ſaid*; for as he had there prov'd that he had *Power to forgive Sin*, by curing the Man ſick of the Palſie, and therefore would not here take Notice of the Cavil, ſo he would now ſhew that he had *Pleaſure in forgiving Sin*, and it was his Delight; he loves to ſpeak Pardon and Peace to Penitents, v. 50. *He ſaid to the Woman, Thy Faith hath ſav'd thee.* This would confirm and double her Comfort in the Forgiveneſs of her Sin, that ſhe was *juſtify'd by her Faith*. All theſe Expreſſions of Sorrow for Sin, and Love to Chriſt, were the Effects and Products of *Faith*; and therefore as Faith of all Graces doth moſt honour God, ſo Chriſt doth of all Graces put moſt Honour upon Faith. *Note*, They who know their Faith hath ſaved them, may go in Peace, may go on their Way rejoycing.

CHAP. VIII.

Moſt of this Chapter is a Repetition of divers Paſſages of Chriſt's Preaching and Miracles, which we had before in Matthew *and* Mark, *and they are all of ſuch Weight, that they are worth repeating, and therefore they are repeated, that out of the Mouth not only of* two, *but of* three *Witneſſes every Word may be eſtabliſh'd. Here's* (1.) *A general Account of Chriſt's Preaching, and how he had Subſiſtence for himſelf and his numerous Family, by the charitable Contributions of good People*, v. 1.------3. (2.) *The Parable of the Sower, and the four Sorts of Ground, with the Expoſition of it, and ſome Inferences from it*, v. 4.---18. (3.) *The Preference which Chriſt gave to his Obedient Diſciples, before his neareſt Relations according to the Fleſh*, v. 19.-------21. (4.) *His ſtilling a Storm at Sea with a Word's ſpeaking*, v. 22---25. (5.) *His caſting a Legion of Devils out of a Man that was poſſeſs'd by them*, v. 26.------40. (6.) *His healing the Woman that had the bloody Iſſue, and raiſing* Jairus's *Daughter to Life*, v. 41,----56.

AND it came to paſs afterward, that he went throughout every city and village preaching, and ſhewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the *twelve* were with him; 2 And certain women which had been healed of evil ſpirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went ſeven devils, 3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herods ſteward, and Suſanna, and many others, which miniſtred unto him of their ſubſtance.

We are here told,

1. *What* Chriſt *made* the *conſtant Buſineſs* of his *Life*, and that was *preaching*; in that Work he was indefatigable, and went about doing Good, v. 1. *afterwards*, ἐν τῷ καθεξῆς, *ordine*, in the proper *Time* or *Method*. Chriſt took his Work before him, and went about it regularly; he obſerv'd a *Series*, or Order of Buſineſs, ſo as that the End of one good Work was the Beginning of another. Now obſerve here, (1.) *Where* he preach'd; he *went about*, διώδευε, *peragrabat*. He was an *itinerant* Preacher, did not confine himſelf to one Place, but diffus'd the Beams of his Light. *Circumibat*, he went his Circuit as a Judge, having found his Preaching perhaps moſt *acceptable* where it was *new*. He went about *through every City*, that none might plead Ignorance. Hereby he ſet an Example to his Diſciples; they muſt traverſe the Nations of the Earth, as he did the Cities of Iſrael. Nor did he confine himſelf to the *Cities*, but went into the *Villages* among the plain Country People to preach, *to the Inhabitants of the Villages*, Jud. 5. 11.

(2.) What he preach'd. He *ſhew'd the glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God*, that it was now to be ſet up among them. Tidings of the *Kingdom of God* are *glad Tidings*, and thoſe Jeſus Chriſt came to bring; to tell the Children of Men that God was willing to take all thoſe *under his Protection*, that were willing to return *to their Allegiance*; 'twas *glad Tidings* to the World, that there was Hopes of it's being *reform'd* and *reconcil'd*.

(3.) Who were his Attendants. The *twelve were with him*, not to preach if he were preſent, but to learn from him what, and how to preach hereafter; and if Occaſion were, to be ſent to Places where he could not go. Happy were theſe his Servants that heard his Wiſdom.

2. *Whence* he *had* the *neceſſary Supports* of Life, he liv'd upon the Kindneſs of his Friends. There were *certain Women* who frequently attended his Miniſtry, that *miniſtred to him of their Subſtance*, v. 2, 3. Some of them are nam'd, but there were *many others*, who were zealouſly affected to the Doctrine of Chriſt, and thought themſelves bound *in Juſtice* to *encourage* it, having themſelves found Benefit; and in *Charity*, hoping that many others might find Benefit by it too.

1. They were ſuch for the moſt Part as had been *Chriſt's Patients*, and were the Monuments of his Power and Mercy; they had been *heal'd by him of evil Spirits and Infirmities*. Some of them had been troubled in Mind and Melancholy, others of them afflicted in Body, and he had been to them a powerful Healer: He is the Phyſician both of Body and Soul, and thoſe who have been *heal'd by him*, ought to ſtudy what they ſhall *render to him*. We are bound in *Intereſt* to attend him, that we may be ready to apply our ſelves to him for Help in Caſe of a Relapſe; and we are bound in *Gratitude* to ſerve him and his Goſpel, who hath *ſav'd* us, and ſav'd us *by it*.

2. One of them was *Mary Magdalen*, out of whom had been *caſt ſeven Devils*; a certain Number for an uncertain. Some think ſhe was one that had been *very wicked*, and then we may ſuppoſe her to be the Woman that was *a Sinner*, mention'd juſt before, *Chap.* 7. and Dr. *Lightfoot* finding in ſome of the *Talmudiſts* Writings that *Mary Magdalen*, ſignified *Mary the Plaiter of Hair*, thinks it applicable to her, ſhe having been noted in the Days of her Iniquity and Infamy, for that *plaiting of Hair*, which is oppos'd to *modeſt Apparel*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 9. But tho' ſhe had been an immodeſt Woman, upon her Repentance and Reformation ſhe found Mercy, and became a zealous Diſciple of Chriſt. *Note*, The greateſt of Sinners muſt not deſpair of Pardon; and the worſe any have been before their Converſion, the more they ſhould ſtudy to do for Chriſt after. Or rather, ſhe was one that had been *very Melancholy*, and then probably it was *Mary*, the Siſter of *Lazarus*, who was a Woman of a *ſorrowful Spirit*; might be originally of *Magdala*, but removed to *Bethany*. This *Mary Magdalen* was attending on Chriſt's *Croſs* and his *Sepulchre*, and if ſhe were not *Mary* the Siſter of *Lazarus*, either that particular Friend and Favourite of Chriſt's did not attend then, or the Evangeliſts did not take Notice of her, neither of which we can ſuppoſe; thus Dr. *Lightfoot* argues; yet there is this to be objected againſt it, that *Mary Magdalen* is reckon'd *among the Women that followed Jeſus from Galilee*, Matt. 27. 55, 56. whereas *Mary* the Siſter of *Lazarus* had her Reſidence in *Bethany*.

3. Another of them was *Joanna the Wife of Chuza Herod's Steward*; ſhe had been his Wife, ſo ſome, but was now a Widow, and left in good Circumſtances; if ſhe was now his Wife, we have Reaſon to think that her *Husband*, tho' preferr'd in *Herod's* Court, had receiv'd the Goſpel, and was very willing that his Wife ſhould be both a Hearer of Chriſt, and a Contributor to him.

4. There were many of them that *miniſter'd to Chriſt of their Subſtance.* 'Twas an Inſtance of the Meaneſs of that Condition to which our Saviour humbled himſelf that he needed it, and his great Humility and Condeſcention that he accepted of it. Tho' he was rich, yet for our Sakes he *became poor* and liv'd upon Alms. Let none ſay, they ſcorn to be beholden to the Charity of their Neighbours, when Providence has brought them into Straits: but let them ask it, and be thankful for it as a Favour. Chriſt would rather be beholden to his known Friends for a Maintenance for himſelf and his Diſciples, than be burthenſom to Strangers in the *Cities* and *Villages* whither he came to preach. *Note,* It is the Duty of thoſe who are taught in the Word, to communicate to them who teach them in all good Things: And thoſe who are herein liberal and chearful, honour the Lord with their Subſtance, and bring a Bleſſing upon it.

¶ And when much people were gathered together,
and were come to him out of every city, he ſpake
by a parable: 5 A ſower went out to ſow his ſeed,
as he ſowed ſome fell by the ways ſide, and it was
trodden-down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.
6 And ſome fell upon a rock, and aſſoon as it was
ſprung up, it withered away, becauſe it lacked moiſture.
7 And ſome fell among thorns, and the thorns
ſprang up with it, and choaked it. 8 And other fell
on good ground, and ſprung up, and bare fruit an hundred
fold. And when he had ſaid theſe things, he
cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 9 And
his diſciples asked him, ſaying, What might this parable
be? 10 And he ſaid, Unto you it is given to
know the myſteries of the kingdom of God: but to
others in parables; that ſeeing they might not ſee, and
hearing they might not underſtand, 11 Now the parable
is this: The ſeed is the word of God. 12 Thoſe
by the way-ſide, are they that hear: then cometh the
devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts,
leſt they ſhould believe and be ſaved. 13 They on the
rock, *are they*, which when they hear, receive the word
with joy; and theſe have no root, which for a while
believe, and in time of temptation fall away: 14 And
that which fell among thorns, are they, which when
they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares,
and riches, and pleaſures of *this* life, and bring no fruit
to perfection. 15 But that on the good ground, are
they which in an honeſt and good heart, having heard
the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.
16 ¶ No man when he hath lighted a candle, covereth
it with a veſſel, or putteth *it* under a bed: but ſetteth
it on a candleſtick, that they which enter in may ſee
the light. 17 For nothing is ſecret, that ſhall not be
made manifeſt: neither any thing hid, that ſhall not
be known, and come abroad. 18 Take heed therefore
how ye hear: for whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given:
and whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken
even that which he ſeemeth to have. 19 ¶ Then came
to him his mother and his brethren, and could not
come at him for the preſs. 20 And it was told him *by
certain*, which ſaid, Thy mother and thy brethren ſtand
without deſiring to ſee thee. 21 And he anſwered and
ſaid unto them, My mother and my brethren are
theſe which hear the word of God and do it.

The former Paragraph began with an Account of Chriſt's Induſtry in *preaching*, v. 1. This begins with an Account of the People's Induſtry in Hearing, *v.* 4. He *went into every City* to preach; ſo they, one would think, ſhould have contented themſelves to hear him when he came to their own City, we know thoſe that would: But there were thoſe here that came *to him out of every City*, would not ſtay till he came to *them*, nor think they had enough when he left *them*, but *met him* when he was coming towards them, and *followed him* when he was going from them. Nor did he excuſe himſelf with this, from going *to the Cities*, that there were ſome *from* the Cities that *came to him*; for tho' there were, yet the moſt had not Zeal enough to bring them to him, and therefore ſuch is his wonderful Condeſcenſion, that he will go to them; for *he is found of thoſe that ſought him not*, Iſa. 65. 1.

Here was, it ſeems, a vaſt Concourſe, *much People were gathered together*, abundance of Fiſh to caſt the Net among; and he was as ready, and willing to *teach*, as they were to be *taught*. Now in theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Neceſſary and excellent Rules and Cautions for hearing the Word in the Parable of *the Sower*, and the Reddition and Application of it, all which we had twice before more largely. When Chriſt had put forth this Parable, (1.) The Diſciples were *inquiſitive* concerning the Meaning of it, *v.* 9. they ask'd him, *what might this Parable be? Note,* We ſhould covet earneſtly to know the true Intent, and full Extent of the Word we hear, that we may neither be miſtaken in our own Knowledge, nor *defective* in it. (2.) Chriſt made them ſenſible of what great Advantage it was to them, that they had Opportunity of acquainting themſelves with the Myſtery and Meaning of his Word, which others had not, *v.* 10. *Unto you it is given. Note,* Thoſe who would receive Inſtruction from Chriſt, muſt know and conſider what a Privilege it is to be inſtructed by him, what a diſtinguiſhing Privilege to be led into the Light, ſuch a Light; when others are left in Darkneſs, ſuch a Darkneſs. Happy are we, and for ever indebted to free Grace, if the ſame Thing that is a *Parable* to others, with which they are only *amus'd*, is a *plain Truth* to us, by which we are *enlighten'd* and *govern'd*, and into the Mold of which we are deliver'd.

Now from the Parable itſelf, and the Explication of it. Obſerve,

1. The *Heart of Man* is as *Soil* to the *Seed of God's Word*; it is capable of receiving it, and bringing forth the Fruits of it; but unleſs that Seed be ſown in it, it will bring forth nothing valuable, our Care therefore muſt be to bring the *Seed* and the *Soil* together. To what Purpoſe have we the *Seed* in the Scripture, if it be not *ſown*: And to what Purpoſe have we the Soil in our own Hearts, if it be not ſown with that Seed.

2. The *Succeſs* of the *Seedneſs* is very much, according to the Nature and Temper of the *Soil*, and as that is, or is not diſpos'd to receive the Seed. The Word of God *is to us* as *we are*, a *Savour of Life unto Life*, or *of Death unto Death.*

3. The Devil is a ſubtle and ſpiteful Enemy, that makes it his Buſineſs to hinder our profiting by the Word of God. He takes the Word out of the Hearts of *careleſs* Hearers, v. 12. *leſt they ſhould believe and be ſav'd*; that's added here to teach us, 1. That we cannot be *ſav'd* unleſs we believe: The Word of the Goſpel will not be a ſaving Word to us, unleſs it be mix'd with Faith. 2. That therefore the Devil doth all he can to keep us from *believing*, to make us not heed the Word when we read and hear it; or if we heed it for the preſent, to make us forget it again, and let it ſlip, (*Heb.* 2. 1.) or if we remember it, to create Prejudices in our Mind againſt it, or *direct* our Minds from it to ſomething elſe; and all is, *leſt we ſhould believe and be ſav'd*, leſt we ſhould believe and rejoyce, while he believes and trembles.

4. Where the Word of God is heard *careleſly*, there is commonly a Contempt put upon it too. It is added here in the Parable, that the Seed which fell by the Way-ſide was *trodden down*, v. 5. They that wilfully ſhut their Ears againſt the Word, do, in Effect, trample it under their Feet; they *deſpiſe the Commandment of the Lord.*

5. Thoſe on whom the Word makes *ſome* Impreſſions, but they are not deep and *durable* ones, will ſhew their Hypocriſy in a Time of Tryal; as the Seed ſown upon the Rock where it gains no Root, *v.* 13. theſe, *for a while, believe*; a little while; their Profeſſion promiſeth ſomething, but in *Time of Temptation they fall away* from their good Beginnings; whether the Temptation ariſe from the Smiles, or from the Frowns of the World they are eaſily overcome by it.

6. That the Pleaſures of this Life are as dangerous, and miſchievous Thorns to choke the good Seed of the Word, as any other. That's added here, *v.* 14. which was not in the other Evangeliſts. Thoſe that are *not entangled in the Cares of this Life*, nor inveigled with the *Deceitfulneſs of Riches*, but boaſt that they are dead to them, yet may be kept from Heaven by an affected Indolence, and the Love of Eaſe and Pleaſure. The Delights of Senſe may ruin the Soul, even lawful Delights endulg'd, and too much delighted in.

7. That it is not enough that the Fruit be brought forth, but it muſt be *brought to Perfection*, it muſt be fully ripen'd; if it be not, it is as if there was no Fruit at all brought forth; for that which in *Matthew* and *Mark* is ſaid to be *unfruitful*, is the ſame that here is ſaid to *bring forth none to Perfection*: For *factum non dicitur, quod non perſeverat.*

8. The good Ground which brings forth *good Fruit*, is an *honeſt* and *good Heart*, well diſpos'd to receive Inſtruction and Commandment, *v.* 19. a Heart free from ſinful Pollutions, and firmly fix'd for God and Duty, an upright Heart, a tender Heart, and a Heart that *trembles at the Word*, is an honeſt and good Heart; that having heard the Word, *underſtands* it, ſo 'tis in *Matthew*; *receives* it, ſo 'tis in *Mark*; *and keeps it*, ſo 'tis here, as the Soil not only *receives*, but keeps the Seed; and the Stomach not only receives, but keeps the Food or Phyſick.

9. Where the Word is well kept, there is Fruit brought forth *with Patience*; that alſo is added here; there muſt be both *bearing* Patience, and *waiting* Patience; Patience to ſuffer the *Tribulation* and *Perſecution* which may *ariſe becauſe of the Word*: Patience to continue to the End in Well-doing.

10. In Conſideration of all this, we ought to take *heed how we hear*, v. 18 take heed of thoſe Things that will hinder our profiting by the Word we hear, watch over our Hearts in Hearing, and take heed leſt they betray us. Take heed *leſt* we hear

careleſly, and ſlightly, leſt we entertain Prejudices againſt the Word we hear upon any Account; and take heed to the Frame of our Spirits after we have heard the Word, leſt we loſe what we have gain'd.

2. Needful Inſtructions given to thoſe that are appointed to preach the Word, and to thoſe alſo that have heard it.

(1.) Thoſe that have *received the Gift*, muſt *miniſter the ſame*: Miniſters that have the diſpenſing of the Goſpel committed to them, People that have profited by the Word, and are thereby qualify'd to profit others, muſt look upon themſelves as *lighted Candles*; Miniſters muſt in ſolemn authoritative Preaching, and People in brotherly familiar Diſcourſe, diffuſe their Light: For *a Candle* muſt not be *cover'd with a Veſſel*, or *put under a Bed*, *v.* 16. Miniſters and Chriſtians are to be Lights in the World, *holding forth the Word of Life*, their Light muſt ſhine before Men; they muſt not only *be good*, but *do good*.

(2.) We muſt expect that what is now done *in ſecret*, and from unſeen Springs, will ſhortly be *manifeſted* and *made known*, *v.* 17. What is committed to you *in ſecret*, ſhould be made manifeſt *by you*; for your Maſter did not give you Talents to be bury'd, but to be traded with: Let that which is now hid, be *made known*; for if it be not manifeſted *by you*, it will be manifeſted *againſt you*, will be produc'd in Evidence of your Treachery.

(3.) The Gifts we have, will either be continued to us, or taken from us according as we do or do not make Uſe of them for the Glory of God and the Edification of our Brethren, *v.* 18. *Whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given*; he that hath Gifts, and doth good with them, ſhall have more; he that *buries his Talent* ſhall loſe it. From him that has not, ſhall be taken away even *that which he hath*, ſo it is in *Mark*, that which he *ſeemeth to have*, ſo it is in *Luke*. *Note*, The Grace that is loſt, was but *ſeeming* Grace, was never *true*. Men do but *ſeem* to have what they do not *uſe*, and Shews of Religion will be loſt and forfeited; they *went out from us, becauſe they were not of us*, 1 Joh. 2. 19. Let us ſee to it that we have Grace in Sincerity, the *Root of the Matter* found in us, and that's a good Part which ſhall never be taken away from thoſe that have it.

3. Great Encouragement given to thoſe that prove themſelves faithful *Hearers of the Word*, by being *Doers of the Work*, in a particular Inſtance of Chriſt's Reſpect to his Diſciples, in preferring them even before his neareſt Relations, *v.* 19, 20, 21. which Paſſage of Story we had twice before. Obſerve, (1.) What crowding there was after Chriſt, there was no coming near for the Throng of People that attended him; who, tho' they were crowded never ſo much, would not be crowded out from his Congregation. (2.) That ſome of his neareſt Kindred were leaſt ſollicitous to hear him Preach. Inſtead of getting *within*, as they might eaſily have done, if they had come in Time, deſiring to *hear him*, they ſtood without deſiring to *ſee him*; and probably out of a fooliſh Fear leſt he ſhould ſpend himſelf with too much ſpeaking, deſigning nothing but to interrupt him, and oblige him to break off. (3.) That Jeſus Chriſt would rather be buſy at his Work, than converſing with his Friends. He would not leave his Preaching to ſpeak with *his Mother* and *his Brethren*, for it was his *Meat and Drink* to be ſo employ'd. (4.) That Chriſt is pleas'd to own thoſe as his neareſt and deareſt Relations, that *hear the Word of God, and do it*; they are to him more than *his Mother* and *Brethren*.

22 ¶ Now it came to paſs on a certain day, that he went into a ſhip with his diſciples: and he ſaid unto them, Let us go over unto the other ſide of the lake. And they lanched forth. 23 But as they ſailed, he fell aſleep: and there came down a ſtorm of wind on the lake, and they were filled *with water*, and were in jeopardy. 24 And they came to him, and awoke him, ſaying, Maſter, maſter, we periſh. Then he aroſe, and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water: and they ceaſed, and there was a calm. 25 And he ſaid unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid, wondred, ſaying one to another, What manner of man is this? for he commanded even the winds and water, and they obey him. 26 ¶ And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over againſt Galilee. 27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city, a certain man which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in *any* houſe, but in the tombs. 28 When he ſaw Jeſus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice ſaid, What have I to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of God moſt high? I beſeech thee torment me not. 29 (For he had commanded the unclean ſpirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderneſs) 30 And Jeſus asked him, ſaying, What is thy name? And he ſaid, Legion: becauſe many devils were entred into him. 31 And they beſought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. 32 And there was there an herd of many ſwine feeding on the mountain: and they beſought him that he would ſuffer them to enter into them. And he ſuffered them. 33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entred into the ſwine: and the herd ran violently down a ſteep place into the lake, and were choked. 34 When they that fed them ſaw what was done, they fled, and went and told *it* in the city and in the country. 35 Then they went out to ſee what was done; and came to Jeſus, and found the man out of whom the devils were departed, ſitting at the feet of Jeſus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid. 36 They alſo which ſaw *it*, told them by what means he that was poſſeſſed of the devils, was healed. 37 ¶ Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about, beſought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ſhip, and returned back again. 38 Now the man out of whom the devils were departed, beſought him that he might be with him: but Jeſus ſent him away, ſaying, 39 Return to thine own houſe, and ſhew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and publiſhed throughout the whole city, how great things Jeſus had done unto him.

We have here two illuſtrious Proofs of the Power of our Lord Jeſus, which we had before: His Power over the *Winds*, and his Power over the *Devils*.

Firſt, His Power over the Winds, thoſe *Powers of the Air* that are ſo much a Terror to Men, eſpecially upon Sea, and occaſion the Death of ſuch Multitudes. Obſerve,

1. Chriſt order'd his Diſciples to put to Sea, that he might ſhew his Glory upon the Water in ſtilling the Waves, and might do an Act of Kindneſs to a poor poſſeſſed Man on t'other ſide the Water, *v.* 22. *He went into a Ship with his Diſciples*. They that obſerve Chriſt's Orders, may aſſure themſelves of his Preſence. If Chriſt ſends his Diſciples, he goes *with them*: And thoſe may ſafely and boldly venture any where, that have Chriſt accompanying them. *He ſaid, Let us go over unto the other ſide*, for he had a Piece of good Work to do there. He might have gone by Land, a little Way about, but he choſe to go by *Water*; that he might ſhew his *Wonders in the Deep*.

2. Thoſe that put to Sea in a Calm, yea, and at Chriſt's Word, yet muſt *prepare for a Storm*, and for the utmoſt Peril in that Storm, *v.* 23. There *came down a Storm of Wind on the Lake*, as if 'twere there and no where elſe, and preſently their Ship was ſo toſs'd, that it was fill'd with Water, and they were in *Jeopardy* of their Lives. Perhaps the Devil, who is the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, and who *raiſeth Winds* by the Permiſſion of God, had ſome Suſpicion, perhaps from ſome Words that Chriſt might let fall, that he was coming over the Lake now, on purpoſe to caſt that Legion of Devils out of the poor Man, on the other Side, and therefore pour'd this Storm upon the Ship he was in, deſigning, if poſſible, to have ſunk him, and prevented that Victory.

3. Chriſt was *aſleep* in the Storm, *v.* 23. Some bodily Refreſhment he muſt have, and choſe to take it then when it would be leaſt a Hindrance to him in his Work. The Diſciples of Chriſt may really have his gracious Preſence with them at Sea, and in a Storm, and yet he may ſeem as if he were *aſleep*; may not preſently appear for their Relief, no not when Things ſeem to be brought even to the laſt Extremity. Thus he will try their Faith and Patience, and quicken them by Prayer to awake, and make their Deliverance the more welcome when it comes at laſt.

4. A Complaint to Chriſt of our Danger, and the Diſtreſs his Church is in, is enough to engage him to awake, and appear for us, *v.* 24. They cry'd *Maſter, Maſter, we periſh*. The Way to have our Fears ſilenc'd, is to bring them to Chriſt, and lay them before him. Thoſe that in Sincerity call Chriſt *Maſter*, and with Faith and Fervency call upon him as their *Maſter*, may be ſure he will not let them *periſh*. No Relief for poor Souls that are under Senſe of Guilt, and Fear of Wrath, like this, to go to Chriſt and call him *Maſter*, and ſay, I am *undone* if thou do not *help me*.

5. Chriſt's Buſineſs is to *lay Storms*, as 'tis Satan's Buſineſs to *raiſe* them. He can do it, he has done it, he delights to do it, for he came to *proclaim Peace on Earth*, v. 24. He *rebuked the Wind and the Raging of the Water*, and immediately *they ceaſed*;

not as at other Times by Degrees, but all of a ſudden *there was a great Calm.* Thus Chriſt ſhew'd, that tho' the Devil pretends to be the Prince of the Power of the Air, yet even there he has him in a Chain.

6. When our Dangers are over, it becomes us to take to our ſelves the Shame of our own Fears, and to give to Chriſt the Glory of his Power. When Chriſt had turn'd the *Storm* into a *Calm, then were they glad becauſe they were quiet,* Pſal. 107. 30. And then (1.) Chriſt gives them a Rebuke for their inordinate Fear, v. 25. *Where is your Faith? Note,* Many that have *true Faith,* have it to ſeek when they have Occaſion to uſe it; they tremble, and are diſcourag'd if ſecond Cauſes frown upon them, a little Thing diſheartens them, and *where is their Faith* then? (2.) They give him the Glory of his Power; *they being afraid, wonder'd.* Thoſe that had fear'd the Storm, now the Danger was over, with good Reaſon fear'd him that had ſtill'd it; and *ſaid one to another,* what *manner of Man is this?* They might as well have ſaid, *Who is a God like unto thee?* For it is God's Prerogative to *ſtill the Noiſe of the Sea, the Noiſe of the Waves,* Pſalm 65. 7.

Secondly, His Power over *the Devil,* the *Prince of the Power of the Air:* In the next Paſſage of Story, he comes into a cloſer Grapple with him than he did when he commanded *the Winds.* Preſently after the Winds were ſtill'd, they were brought to their deſired Haven, and *arriv'd at the Country of the Gadarenes,* and there went aſhore, *v.* 26, 27. and he ſoon met with that which was his Buſineſs over, and thought it worth his while to go through a Storm to it.

We may learn a great deal out of this Story, concerning the World of infernal malignant Spirits, which tho' not working now ordinarily, in the ſame Way as here, yet we are all concern'd, at all Times, to ſtand upon our Guard againſt.

1. Theſe *malignant* Spirits are very *numerous.* They that had taken Poſſeſſion of this one Man call'd themſelves *Legion,* v. 30. becauſe *many Devils had entred into him:* He had *had Devils along time,* v. 27. But perhaps thoſe that had been long in Poſſeſſion of him, upon ſome Foreſight of our Saviour's coming to make an Attack upon them, and finding they could not prevent it by the Storm they had rais'd, ſent for Recruits, intending this to be a *deciſive* Battle, and hoping now to be too hard for him that had caſt out ſo many unclean Spirits, and to give him a Defeat; and either were, or at leaſt would be thought to be a *Legion* of them, formidable as an *Army with Banners*; and now at leaſt, to be was the *twentieth Legion* of the Roman Army which was long quarter'd at *Cheſter* was ſtill'd, *Legio Victrix,* a *Victorious Legion.*

2. They have an *inveterate Enmity* to Man, and all his Conveniences and Comforts. This Man in whom the Devil had got Poſſeſſion, and kept it long, being under his Influence, *wore no Cloaths, neither abode in any Houſe,* v. 27. tho' *Clothing,* and a *Habitation,* are two of the neceſſary Supports of this Life. Nay, and becauſe Men has a natural Dread of the Habitations of the Dead, he forc'd this Man to *abide in the Tombs,* to make him ſo much the more a Terror to himſelf and to all about him, ſo that his Soul had as much Cauſe as ever any Man's had to be weary of his Life, and to *chuſe Strangling and Death rather.*

3. They are very *ſtrong* and *fierce,* and unruly, and hated and ſcorn'd to be reſtrain'd, *v.* 29. *He was kept bound with Chains and in Fetters,* that he might not be miſchievous either to others or to himſelf, but he *brake the Bands. Note,* Thoſe that are *ungovernable* by any other, thereby ſhew that they are under Satan's Government: And this is the Language of thoſe that are ſo, even concerning God and Chriſt their beſt Friends, that would not either bind them *from,* or bind them *to* any Thing but for their own Good, *Let us brake their Bands in ſunder. He was driven of the Devil*; thoſe that are under Chriſt's Government, are *ſweetly led* with the Cords of a Man, and the Bands of Love; thoſe that are under the Devil's Government, are *furiouſly driven.*

4. They are much enrag'd againſt our Lord Jeſus, and have a great Dread and Horror of him. *When the Man* whom they had Poſſeſſion of, and who ſpake as they would have him, *ſaw Jeſus,* he *roar'd out* as one in an Agony, and *fell down before him,* to deprecate his Wrath, and own'd him to be *the Son of God moſt High,* that was infinitely above him, and quite too hard for him; but proteſted againſt having any League, or Confederacy with him, (which might ſufficiently have ſilenc'd the blaſphemous Cavils of the Scribes and Phariſees) *What have I to do with thee?* The Devils have neither Inclination to do Service to Chriſt, nor Expectation to receive Benefit by him; *What have we to do with thee?* But they dreaded his Power and Wrath, *I beſeech thee torment me not.* They do not ſay, *I beſeech thee ſave me,* but only *torment me not.* See whoſe Language they ſpeak, that have only a Dread of Hell as a Place of Torment, but no Deſire of Heaven as a Place of Holineſs and Love.

5. They are perfectly *at the Command,* and under *the Power* of our Lord Jeſus, and they knew it, for they *beſought him that he would not commanded them to go εἰς τὸν ἄβυσσον, into the Deep,* the Place of their Torment, which they acknowledge he could eaſily and juſtly do. O what a Comfort is this to the Lord's People, that all the Powers of Darkneſs are under the Check and Controul of the Lord Jeſus! He has them all in a Chain, He can ſend them to *their own Place* when he pleaſeth.

6. They delight in *doing Miſchief.* When they found there was no Remedy, but they muſt quit their Hold of this poor Man, they beg'd they might have leave to take Poſſeſſion of a *Herd of Swine,* v. 32. When the Devil at firſt brought Man into a miſerable State, he brought a Curſe likewiſe upon the whole Creation, and that became Subject to Enmity. And here as an Inſtance of that extenſive Enmity of his, when he could not deſtroy the Man, he would deſtroy the Swine. If he could not hurt them in their Bodies, he would hurt them in their Goods, which ſometimes proves a great Temptation to Men, to draw them from Chriſt, as here. Chriſt *ſuffer'd them to enter into the Swine,* to convince the Country what Miſchief the Devil could do in it, if he ſhould ſuffer him. No ſooner had the Devils Leave, but they enter'd into the *Swine*; and no ſooner had they enter'd into them, but the Herd ran violently *down a ſteep Place into the Lake,* and were *drown'd.* For it is a Miracle of Mercy, if thoſe whom *Satan* poſſeſſeth are not brought to *Deſtruction* and *Perdition.* This, and other Inſtances, ſhew that that roaring Lyon, and red Dragon, ſeeks *what,* and whom he may devour.

7. When the Devil's Power is broke in any Soul, that Soul recovers itſelf, and returns into a right Frame; which ſuppoſeth, that thoſe whom Satan gets Poſſeſſion of, are put out of the Poſſeſſion of themſelves. *The Man out of whom the Devils were departed, ſate at the Feet of Jeſus,* v. 35. while he was under the Devil's Power, he was ready to *fly in the Face* of Jeſus, but now he *ſits at his Feet*; which is a Sign that he is come to his *right Mind.* If God have Poſſeſſion of us, he preſerves to us the Government and Enjoyment of ourſelves, but if Satan have Poſſeſſion of us, he robs us of both; let his Power therefore in our Souls be overturn'd, and let him come, whoſe Right our Hearts are, and give them him; for we are never more our own, than when we are his.

Let us now ſee what was the Effect of this Miracle, of caſting the Legion of Devils out of this Man.

1. What Effect it had upon the People of that Country, who had loſt their Swine by it. *The Swineherds went and told it both in the City and Country,* v. 34. perhaps with a Deſign to incenſe People againſt Chriſt; they told *by what Means he that was poſſeſs'd of the Devils was heal'd,* v. 36. that it was by ſending the Devils into the Swine, which was capable of an invidious Repreſentation; as if Chriſt could not otherwiſe have deliver'd the Man out of their Hands, but by delivering the Swine into them. *The People came out to ſee what was done,* and to enquire into it, and *they were afraid,* v. 35. they were *taken with great Fear,* v. 37. they were ſurpriz'd and amaz'd at it, and knew not what to ſay to it; they thought more of the Deſtruction of the Swine, than of the Deliverance of their poor afflicted Neighbour, and of the Country from the Terror of his Frenzy, for it was become a publick Nuſance; and therefore *the whole Multitude beſought Chriſt to depart from them,* for fear he ſhou'd bring ſome other Judgment upon them; whereas indeed, none need to be afraid of Chriſt, that are willing to forſake their Sins, and give up themſelves to him. But Chriſt took them at their Word; he *went up into the Ship, and returned back again.* Thoſe loſe their Saviour and their Hopes in him, that love their Swine better.

2. What Effect it had upon the poor Man, who had recover'd himſelf by it. He *deſir'd* Chriſt's Company as much as others *dreaded* it, he beſought Chriſt that *he might be with him,* as others were, *that had been healed by him of evil Spirits and Infirmities, v.* 2. that Chriſt might be to him a Protector, and Teacher, and that he might be to Chriſt for a Name and a Praiſe. He was loth to ſtay among thoſe rude and brutiſh *Gadarenes,* that deſir'd Chriſt to depart from them. *O gather not my Soul with theſe Sinners!* But Chriſt would not take him along with him, but ſent him Home, to publiſh among thoſe that knew him, the great Things God had done for him, and ſo might be a Bleſſing to his Country as he had been a Burden to it. We muſt ſometimes deny our ſelves the Satisfaction even of Spiritual Benefits and Comforts, to gain an Opportunity of being ſerviceable to the Souls of others. Perhaps Chriſt knew that when the Reſentment of the Loſs of their Swine was a little over, they would be better diſpoſed to conſider the Miracle, and therefore left the Man among them to be a ſtanding Monument, and Monitor to them of it.

40 And it came to paſs, that when Jeſus was re-
turned, the people *gladly* received him: for they were
all waiting for him. 41 ¶ And behold there came a
man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the ſynagogue:
and he fell down at Jeſus feet, and beſought him that
he would come into his houſe: 42 For he had one on-
ly daughter, about twelve years of age, and ſhe lay a
dying. (But as he went, the people thronged him.
43 ¶ And a woman having an iſſue of blood twelve
years, which had ſpent all her living upon phyſicians,
neither could be healed of any. 44 Came behind him,

and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her iſſue of blood ſtanched. 45 And Jeſus ſaid, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter, and they that were with him, ſaid, Maſter, the multitude throng thee, and preſs *thee*, and ſayeſt thou, Who touched me? 46 And Jeſus ſaid, Some body hath touched me: for I perceive that vertue is gone out of me. 47 And when the woman ſaw that ſhe was not hid, ſhe came trembling, and falling down before him, ſhe declared unto him before all the people, for what cauſe ſhe had touched him, and how ſhe was healed immediately. 48 And he ſaid unto her, daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. 49 ¶ While he yet ſpake, there cometh one from the ruler of the ſynagogues *houſe*, ſaying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Maſter. 50 But when Jeſus heard *it*, he anſwered him, ſaying, Fear not: believe only, and ſhe ſhall be made whole. 51 And when he came into the houſe, he ſuffered no man to go in, ſave Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. 52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he ſaid, Weep not; ſhe is not dead, but ſleepeth. 53 And they laughed him to ſcorn, knowing that ſhe was dead. 54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, ſaying, Maid, ariſe. 55 And her ſpirit came again, and ſhe aroſe ſtraightway: and he commanded to give her meat. 56 And her parents were aſtoniſhed: but he charged them that they ſhould tell no man what was done.

Chriſt was driven away by the *Gadarenes*, they were weary of him, and willing to be rid of him: But when he had croſs'd the Water, and return'd to the *Galileans*, they *gladly receiv'd him*; *wiſh'd* and *waited* for his Return, and *welcom'd* him with all their Hearts when he did return, *v.* 40. If ſome *will not* accept the Favours Chriſt offers them, others will. If the *Gadarenes* be not gather'd, yet there are many, among whom *Chriſt ſhall be glorious*. When Chriſt had done his Work on the other Side the Water, he return'd and found Work to do in the Place whence he came, freſh Work. They that will lay out themſelves to do good ſhall never want Occaſion for it. The Wanting you have always with you.

We have here two Miracles interwoven, as they were in *Matthew* and *Mark*: The raiſing of *Jairus*'s Daughter to Life, and the Cure of the Woman that had an Iſſue of Blood, as he was going in a Crowd to *Jairus*'s Houſe. We have here,

Firſt, A *publick Addreſs* made to Chriſt by *a Ruler of the Synagogue*, whoſe Name was *Jairus*, on the Behalf of a little Daughter of his that was very ill, and, in the Apprehenſion of all about her, *lay a dying*. This Addreſs was very humble and reverent; *Jairus*, tho' a *Ruler*, *fell down at Jeſus's Feet*, as owning him to be a Ruler *above* him. It was very importunate, he *beſought him* that he would *come into his Houſe*; not having the *Faith*, at leaſt not having the *Thought* of the Centurion, that deſir'd Chriſt only *to ſpeak the* healing *Word* at a Diſtance. But Chriſt comply'd with his Requeſt, *he went along* with him; ſtrong Faith ſhall be applauded, and yet weak Faith ſhall not be rejected. In the Houſes where Sickneſs and Death is, 'tis very deſireable to have the Preſence of Chriſt. When Chriſt was going, *the People throng'd him*, ſome out of Curioſity to ſee him, others out of an Affection to him. Let us not complain of a Crowd, and a Throng, and a Hurry, as long as we are in the Way of our Duty, and *doing good*; but otherwiſe, 'tis what every wiſe Man will keep himſelf out of, as much as he can.

Secondly, Here's a *ſecret Application* made to Chriſt by a Woman ill of a *bloody Iſſue*, which had been the Conſumption of her Body, and the Conſumption of her Purſe too, for *ſhe had ſpent all her Living upon Phyſicians*, and was never the better, *v.* 43. The Nature of her Diſeaſe was ſuch, that ſhe did not care for making a publick Complaint of it, 'twas agreeable to the Modeſty of her Sex to be very ſhy of ſpeaking of it, and therefore ſhe took this Opportunity of coming to Chriſt *in a Crowd*; and the more People were preſent, the more likely ſhe thought it was that ſhe ſhould be *conceal'd*. Her *Faith* was very *ſtrong*, for ſhe doubted not but by the *Touch* of the *Hem of his Garment*, ſhe would derive from him healing Virtue ſufficient for her Relief, looking upon him to be ſuch a full Fountain of Mercies that ſhe could *ſteal* a Cure, and he not *miſs it*. Thus there's many a poor Soul *heal'd* and *help'd*, and *ſav*'d by Chriſt, that's *loſt in a Crowd*, and that nobody takes Notice of. The Woman found an immediate Change for the better in herſelf, and that her Diſeaſe was cur'd, *v.* 44. As Believers have comfortable Communion with Chriſt, ſo they have comfortable Communications from him *incognito*; *Meat to eat*, that the *World knows not* of, and *Joy*, that a *Stranger doth not intermeddle with*.

Thirdly, Here's a *Diſcovery* of this ſecret Cure, to the Glory both of the Phyſician and the Patient.

1. Chriſt takes Notice that there is a Cure wrought, *Virtue is gone out of me*, v. 46. Thoſe that have been heal'd by Virtue deriv'd from Chriſt, muſt *own* it, for he *knows it*. He ſpeaks of it here not in a Way of *Complaint*, as if he were hereby either *weaken'd* or *wrong'd*, but in a Way of *Complaſency*; it was his Delight that *Virtue* was gone out of him to do any good, and he did not grudge it to the meaneſt, they were as welcome to it as to the Light and Heat of the Sun; nor had he the leſs Virtue *in him*, for the going out of Virtue *from him*, for he is an *over-flowing* Fountain.

2. The poor Patient owns her Caſe, and the Benefit ſhe had receiv'd, v. 47. *When ſhe ſaw that ſhe was not hid, ſhe came and fell down before him*. *Note*, The Conſideration of this that we cannot be *hid from Chriſt*, ſhould engage us to *pour* out *our Hearts before* him, and to ſhew before him all our Sin, and all our Trouble. *She came trembling*, and yet *her Faith ſav'd her*, v. 48. *Note*, There may be *trembling*, where yet there is ſaving Faith. She *declar'd before all the People for what Cauſe ſhe had touched* him, becauſe ſhe believ'd that a Touch would cure her, and it did ſo. Chriſt's Patients ſhould communicate their Experiences to one another.

3. The great Phyſician confirms her Cure, and ſends her away with the Comfort of it, v. 48. *Be of good Comfort, thy Faith hath made thee whole*. *Jacob* got the Bleſſing from *Iſaac* clandeſtinely, and by a Wile; but when the Fraud was diſcover'd, *Iſaac* ratify'd it deſignedly; 'twas obtain'd *ſurreptitiouſly* and *under-hand*, but it was ſecur'd and ſeconded *above Board*, ſo was the Cure here. He is *bleſſed* and he *ſhall be bleſſed*; ſo here ſhe *is* healed, and ſhe *ſhall be* healed.

Fourthly, Here's an *Encouragement* to *Jairus* not to diſtruſt the Power of Chriſt, *tho' his Daughter was* now *dead*, and they that brought him the Tydings, adviſ'd him not to give *the Maſter any* farther *trouble* about her; *fear not*, ſaith Chriſt, *believe only*. *Note*, Our *Faith in Chriſt* ſhould be bold and daring, as well as our *Zeal for him*. And they that are willing to do any Thing for him, may depend upon his doing great Things for them, above what they are able to ask or think. When the Patient is dead there is no Room for Prayer, or the Uſe of Means; but here, tho' the Child is dead, yet *believe*, and all ſhall be well. *Poſt Mortem Medicus* is an Abſurdity, but not *Poſt Mortem Chriſtus*.

Fifthly, The *Preparatives* for the raiſing of her to Life again. (1.) The *Choice* Chriſt made of Witneſſes that ſhould ſee the Miracle wrought. A *Crowd* follow'd him, but perhaps they were rude and noiſy; however it was not fit to let ſuch a Multitude come into a Gentlemans Houſe, eſpecially now they were all in Sorrow, and therefore he ſent them back; and not becauſe he was afraid to let the Miracle paſs their Scrutiny, for he rais'd *Lazarus* and the Widow's Son *publickly*. He took none with him but *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, that Triumvirate of his Diſciples that he was moſt intimate with, deſigning them three, with the Parents, to be the only Spectators of the Miracle, they being a competent Number to atteſt the Truth of it. (2.) The *Check* he gave to the Mourners; *they all wept and bewail'd her*; for it ſeems ſhe was a very agreeable hopeful Child, and dear not only to the Parents, but to all the Neighbours. But Chriſt bid them *not weep*, for *ſhe is not dead but ſleepeth*. He means, as to her peculiar Caſe, that ſhe was not dead for good and all, but that ſhe ſhould now ſhortly be rais'd to Life, ſo that it would be to her Friends but as if ſhe had been but a few Hours a ſleep. But it is applicable to all that dye in the Lord, therefore we ſhould not ſorrow for them as thoſe have *no Hope*, becauſe Death is but a *Sleep* to them; not only as it is a *Reſt* from all the *Toils* of the *Days of Time*, but as there will be a *Reſurrection*, a waking and riſing again to all the *Glories* of the *Days of Eternity*. This was a comfortable Word which Chriſt ſaid to theſe Mourners, yet they wickedly ridicul'd it, and *laugh'd him to Scorn* for it; here was *a Pearl caſt before Swine*. They were ignorant of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, who banter'd it as an abſurd Thing to call Death a *Sleep*; yet *this* Good came out of *that* Evil, that hereby the Truth of the Miracle was evinc'd, for they *knew that ſhe was dead*, they were certain of it, and therefore nothing leſs than a *Divine Power* could reſtore her to Life. We find not any Anſwer that he made them, but he ſoon *explain'd himſelf*, I hope to their Conviction, and that they would never again laugh at any Word of his. But he *put them all out*, *v.* 54. They were unworthy to be the Witneſſes of this Work of Wonder; they, who in the midſt of their Mourning were ſo merrily diſpos'd as to laugh at him for what he *ſaid*, would, it may be, have found ſomewhat to laugh at in what he *did*, and therefore are juſtly ſhut out.

Sixthly, Her return to Life, after a *ſhort* Viſit to the *Congregation of the Dead*, v. 55. *He took her by the Hand*, as we do by one that we would awake out of ſleep, and help up, and he call'd, ſaying, *Maid ariſe*: Thus the *Hand of Chriſt's Grace* goes along with the *Calls of his Word*, to make them effectual. Here it is expreſs'd what was only imply'd in the other Evangeliſts, that *her Spirit came again*; her Soul return'd again to animate her Body. This plainly proves that the Soul exiſts and acts in a

State of Separation from the Body, and therefore is immortal; that Death doth not extinguiſh this *Candle of the Lord*, but take it out of a *dark Lanthorn*. It is not, as *Grotius* well obſerves, the *κρᾶσις* or Temperament of the Body, or any Thing that dies with it; but it is *αὐθυπόστατόν τι*, ſomething that ſubſiſts by it ſelf, which after Death is ſomewhere elſe than where the Body is. Where the Soul of this Child was in this Interval we are not told, 'twas in the Hand of the *Father of Spirits*, to whom all Souls at Death return. When *her Spirit came again* ſhe aroſe, and made it appear ſhe was alive by her Motion, as ſhe did alſo by her Appetite, for Chriſt *commanded to give her Meat*. As Babes new born, ſo thoſe that are newly raiſ'd deſire ſpiritual Food, that they may *grow thereby*. In the laſt Verſe we need not wonder to find *her Parents aſtoniſh'd*, but if that implies that *they only* were ſo, and not the other By-ſtanders, who had laugh'd Chriſt to ſcorn, we may well wonder at their Stupidity, which perhaps was the Reaſon why Chriſt would not have it proclaim'd, as well as to give an Inſtance of his Humility.

CHAP. IX.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *The Commiſſion Chriſt gave his twelve Apoſtles to go out for ſome Time to preach the Goſpel, and confirm it by Miracles*, v. 1.-----6. (2.) Herod'*s Terror at the growing Greatneſs of our Lord Jeſus*, v. 7.-----9. (3.) *The Apoſtle's Return to Chriſt, his Retirement with them into a Place of Solitude; the great Reſort of People to them notwithſtanding, and his feeding five thouſand Men with five Loaves and two Fiſhes*, v. 10.-----17. (4.) *His Diſcourſe with his Diſciples concerning himſelf, and his own Sufferings for them, and theirs for him*, v. 18.----27. (5.) *Chriſt's Tranſfiguration*, v. 28.-----36. (6.) *The Cure of a lunatick Child*, v. 37.----42. (7.) *The repeated Notice Chriſt gave his Diſciples of his approaching Sufferings*, v. 43.-----45. (8.) *His Check to the Ambition of the Diſciples*, v. 46.-----48. *and to their monopolizing of their Power over Devils to themſelves*, v. 49, 50. (9.) *The Rebuke he gave them for an over-due Reſentment of an Affront given him by a Village of the* Samaritans, v. 51.-----56. (10.) *The Anſwers he gave to ſeveral that were inclin'd to follow him, but not conſiderately, or not zealouſly, and heartily ſo inclin'd*, v. 57.----62.

1 THEN he called his twelve diſciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diſeaſes. 2 And he ſent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the ſick. 3 And he ſaid unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither ſtaves, nor ſcrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. 4 And whatſoever houſe ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. 5 And whoſoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, ſhake off the very duſt from your feet for a teſtimony againſt them. 6 And they departed and went through the towns, preaching the goſpel, and healing every where. 7 ¶ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, becauſe that it was ſaid of ſome, that John was riſen from the dead: 8 And of ſome, that Elias had appeared: and of others, that one of the old prophets was riſen again. 9 And Herod ſaid, John have I beheaded: but who is this of whom I hear ſuch things? And he deſired to ſee him.

Here's 1. The Method Chriſt took to ſpread his Goſpel; to diffuſe and enforce the Light of it. He had travell'd about *himſelf* preaching and healing, but he could be only in one Place at a time; and therefore now he *ſent* his twelve Diſciples abroad, who by this Time were pretty well inſtructed in the Nature of the preſent Diſpenſation, and able to inſtruct others, and to *deliver to them* what they had *received from the Lord*: Let them diſperſe themſelves ſome one Way, and ſome another, to *preach the Kingdom of God*, as it was now about to be ſet up by the *Meſſiah*; to bring People acquainted with the ſpiritual Nature and Tendency of it, and to perſwade them to come into the Intereſts and Meaſures of it. And for the confirming of their Doctrine becauſe it was new and ſurprizing, and very different from what they had been taught by the Scribes and Phariſees, and becauſe ſo much depended upon Men's riceiving, or not receiving it, he empower'd them to confirm it by Miracles, *v.* 1, 2. He *gave them Authority over all Devils*, to diſpoſſeſs them, and caſt them out, tho' never ſo numerous, ſo ſubtil, ſo fierce, ſo obſtinate. Chriſt deſign'd a total Rout and Ruin to the Kingdom of Darkneſs, and therefore gave them Power over *all* Devils. He authoriz'd and appointed them likewiſe to *cure Diſeaſes*, and to *heal the Sick*, which would make them welcome wherever they came; and not only convince People's Judgments, but gain their Affections.

This was their Commiſſion: Now obſerve,

1. What Chriſt directed them to do, in Proſecution of this Commiſſion at this Time, when they were not to *go far*, or be *out long*.

(1.) They muſt not be ſollicitous to recommend themſelves to People's Eſteem by their outward Appearance. Now they begin to ſet up for themſelves, they muſt have no Dreſs, nor ſtudy to make any other Figure than what they had made while they followed him; they muſt *go as they were*, and not change their Clothes, or ſo much as put on a Pair of new Shoes.

(2.) They muſt depend upon Providence, and the Kindneſs of their Friends to furniſh them with what was convenient for them. They muſt not take with them *either Bread*, *or Money*, and yet believe they ſhould not want. Chriſt would not have his Diſciples *ſhy* of receiving the Kindneſſes of their Friends, but rather to *expect* them: Yet St. *Paul* ſaw Cauſe not to go by this Rule, when he *labour'd with his Hands* rather than be Burthenſome.

(3.) They muſt not *change their Lodgings*, as ſuſpecting that thoſe that entertain'd them were *weary* of them; they have no Reaſon to be ſo, for the Ark is a Gueſt that always pays well for its Entertainment, *v.* 4. *Whatſoever Houſe ye enter into, there abide*, that People may know where to find you; that your Friends may know you are not backward to *ſerve* them, and your Enemies may know you are not aſham'd, or afraid to *face* them, *there abide*, till you *depart* out of that City; ſtay with thoſe you are us'd to.

(4.) They muſt put on Authority, and ſpeak *Warning* to thoſe who *refus'd* them, as well as Comfort to thoſe that *receiv'd* them, *v.* 5. If there be any Place that will not entertain you, if the Magiſtrates deny you Admiſſion, and threaten to treat you as Vagrants, leave them, do not force your ſelves upon them, nor run your ſelves into Danger among them, but at the ſame Time bind them over to the Judgment of God for it; *ſhake off the Duſt of your Feet*, for a *Teſtimony againſt them*, that will as it were be produc'd in Evidence againſt them, that the Meſſengers of the Goſpel had been among them to make them a fair Offer of Grace and Peace, for this Duſt they left behind there; ſo that when they periſh at laſt in their Infidelity, this will lay and leave their Blood upon their own Heads. *Shake off the Duſt of your Feet*, as much as to ſay, you abandon their City, and will have no more to do with them.

2. What they did in Proſecution of this Commiſſion, *v.* 6. *They departed*, tho' from their Maſter's Preſence, yet having ſtill his Spiritual Preſence with them, his *Eye* and his *Arm* going along with them, and thus born up in their Work, they *went through the Towns* ſome or other of them, all the Towns within the Circuit appointed them, *preaching the Goſpel, and healing every where:* Their Work was the ſame with their Maſter's, doing good both to Souls and Bodies.

3. Here's *Herod's* Perplexity and Vexation at this. The *deriving* of Chriſt's Power to thoſe who were ſent forth in his Name, and acted by Authority from him, was an *amazing* and *convincing* Proof of his being the *Meſſiah*, above any thing elſe; that he could not only work Miracles *himſelf*, but empower others to work Miracles too; this ſpread his Fame more than any Thing, and made the Raies of this *Sun of Righteouſneſs* the ſtronger by the *Reflection* of them, even from *the Earth*, from ſuch mean illiterate Men as the Apoſtles were, who had nothing elſe to recommend them, or to raiſe any Expectation from them, but that *they had been with Jeſus*, Acts 4. 13. When the Countrey ſees ſuch as thoſe *healing the Sick* in the Name of *Jeſus*, it gives it an Alarm. Now obſerve,

1. The *various Speculations* it *raiſ'd* among the People; who tho' they thought not *rightly*, yet could not but think *honourably* of our Lord Jeſus, and that he was an extraordinary Perſon, one come from the other World; that either *John Baptiſt* who was lately perſecuted and ſlain for the Cauſe of God, or *one of the Old* Prophets that had been perſecuted and ſlain long ſince in that Cauſe, was *riſen again*, to be recompens'd for their Sufferings by this Honour put upon them. Or that *Elias* who was taken alive to Heaven in a fiery Chariot, *had appear'd* as an Expreſs from Heaven, *v.* 7, 8.

2. The *great Perplexity* it *created* in the Mind of *Herod*; *when he had heard of all that was done* by Chriſt, his guilty Conſcience flew in his Face, and he was ready to conclude with them that ſaid *John was riſen from the dead*. He thought he had got clear of *John*, and ſhould be never more troubled with him, but it ſeems he is miſtaken; either *John* is come to Life again, or here's another in his Spirit and Power, for God will never *leave himſelf without Witneſs*. What ſhall I do now? Saith *Herod*, John *have I beheaded, but who is this*? Is he carrying on *John's* Work, or is he come to avenge *John's* Death? *John* baptiz'd, but he doth not; *John did no Miracle*, but he doth; and therefore appears more formidable than *John*. *Note*, Thoſe who oppoſe God will find themſelves more and more *embaraſs'd*. However he *deſir'd to ſee him* whether he reſembled *John* or no; but he might ſoon have been put out of this Pain, if he would but have inform'd himſelf of that which thouſands knew, that Jeſus preach'd and wrought Miracles a great while before *John* was beheaded, and therefore could not be *John* raiſed from the dead. He *deſir'd to ſee him*, and why did he

not go and ſee him? 'Tis likely, becauſe he thought it *below him* either to go to him, or to ſend for him; he had enough of *John Baptiſt*, and cared not for having to do with any more ſuch Reprovers of Sin. He deſir'd to ſee him, but we do not find that he ever did, till he ſaw him at his Bar, and then *he, and his Men of War ſet him at naught*, Luke 23. 11. Had he proſecuted his Convictions now, and gone to ſee him, who knows but a happy Change might have been wrought in him; but delaying it now, his Heart was harden'd; and when he did ſee him, he was as much prejudic'd againſt him as any other.

10 ¶ And the Apoſtles, when they were returned, told him all they had done. And he took them, and went aſide privately into a deſert place, belonging to the city called Bethſaida. 11 And the people, when they knew *it*, followed him: and he received them, and ſpake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing. 12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve and ſaid unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are in a deſert place. 13 But he ſaid unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they ſaid, We have no more but five loaves and two fiſhes; except we ſhould go and buy meat for all this people. 14 For they were about five thouſand men. And he ſaid to his diſciples, Make them ſit down by fifties in a company. 15 And they did ſo, and made them all ſit down. 16 Then he took the five loaves, and the two fiſhes, and looking up to heaven, he bleſſed them, and brake, and gave to the diſciples to ſet before the multitude. 17 And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them, twelve baskets.

Here's 1. The Account which the twelve gave their Maſter of the Succeſs of their Miniſtry. They were not long out, but when they return'd, they told him all that they had done, as became Servants who were ſent on an Errand. They told him *what they had done*, that if they had done any thing amiſs, they might mend it next Time.

2. Their *Retirement* for a little *Breathing*. He *took them and went aſide privately into a deſert Place*, that they might have ſome Relaxation from Buſineſs, and not be always upon the Stretch. *Note*, He that hath appointed our Man-Servant and Maid-Servant to reſt, would have his Servants to reſt too. Thoſe in the moſt publick Stations, and that are moſt publickly uſeful, yet muſt ſometimes go aſide privately, both for the Repoſe of their Bodies to recruit them, and for the furniſhing of their Minds by Meditation for farther publick Work.

3. The *Reſort* of the People to him, and the kind *Reception* he gave them. They *follow'd* him, tho' it were in a *deſert Place*; for that's no Deſert where Chriſt is. And tho' they hereby diſturb'd the Repoſe he deſign'd here for himſelf and his Diſciples, yet he *welcom'd* them, *v.* 11. *Note*, Pious Zeal may excuſe a little Rudeneſs, it did with Chriſt, and ſhould with us. Tho' they came unſeaſonably, yet Chriſt gave them what they came for. (1.) He *ſpake unto them of the Kingdom of God*, the Laws of that Kingdom with which they muſt be bound, and the Privileges of that Kingdom with which they might be bleſs'd. (2.) He *healed them that had need of healing*, and in a Senſe of their Need, made their Application to him: Tho' the Diſeaſe was never ſo inveterate, and incurable by the Phyſicians, tho' the Patient was never ſo poor and mean, yet Chriſt *healed them*. There is Healing in Chriſt for all that *need* it, whether for Soul or Body. Chriſt hath ſtill a Power over bodily Diſeaſes, and heals his People that *need healing*. Sometimes he ſees that we need the *Sickneſs* for the Good of our Souls, more than the *Healing*, for the Eaſe of our Bodies, and then we muſt be willing *for a Seaſon*, becauſe *there is need* to be in *Heavineſs*; but when he ſees we *need healing*, we ſhall have it. Death is his Servant, to heal the Saints of *all Diſeaſes*. He heals Spiritual Maladies by his Graces, by his Comforts, and has for each what their Caſe calls for; Relief for every Exigence.

4. The plentiful Proviſion Chriſt made for the Multitude that attended him; with *five Loaves* of Bread, and *two Fiſhes*, he fed *five thouſand Men*. This Story we had twice before, and ſhall meet with it again; and it is the only Miracle of our Saviour's that is recorded by all the four Evangeliſts.

Let us only obſerve out of it,

1. That thoſe who diligently attend upon Chriſt in the Way of Duty, and therein deny, or expoſe themſelves, or are made to forget themſelves and their outward Conveniencies, by their Zeal for God's Houſe, are taken under his particular Care, and may depend upon *Jehovah jireh*, the *Lord will provide*. He will not ſee thoſe that fear him, and ſerve him faithfully, want any good Thing.

2. That our Lord Jeſus was of a free and generous Spirit. His Diſciples ſaid, *Send them away, that they may get Victuals*; but Chriſt ſaid, no, *give ye them to eat*; let what we have go as far as it will reach, and they are welcome to it. Thus he has taught both Miniſters and Chriſtians to *uſe Hoſpitality without Grudging*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 9. Thoſe that have but a little, let them do what Good they can with that little, and that's the Way to make it more. There is that ſcatters, and yet increaſes.

3. Jeſus Chriſt has not only Phyſick, but Food for all thoſe that by Faith apply themſelves to him; he not only *heals them that need healing*, cures the Diſeaſes of the Soul, but feeds them too that need feeding, ſupports the Spiritual Life, relieves the Neceſſities of it, and ſatisfies the Deſires of it. Chriſt has provided not only to ſave the Soul from periſhing by its Diſeaſes, but to nouriſh the Soul unto Life Eternal, and ſtrengthen it for all Spiritual Exerciſes.

4. All the Gifts of Chriſt are to be receiv'd by the Church in a regular orderly Manner: *Make them ſit down by Fifties in a Company*. The Number of each Company is taken Notice of here, *v.* 14. which Chriſt appointed for the better Diſtribution of the Meat, and the eaſier Computation of the Number of the Gueſts.

5. When we are receiving our Creature-Comforts, we muſt *look up to Heaven*; Chriſt did ſo, to teach us to do ſo. We muſt acknowledge that we receive them from God, and that we are unworthy to receive them; that we owe them all, and all the Comfort we have in them, to the Mediation of Chriſt, by whom the Curſe is remov'd, and the Covenant of Peace ſettled; that we depend upon God's Bleſſing upon them to make them ſerviceable to us, and deſire that Bleſſing.

6. The Bleſſing of Chriſt will make a little to go a great Way, and the *Little that the righteous Man has, better than the Riches of many Wicked*, a Dinner of Herbs better than a ſtalled Ox.

7. Thoſe whom Chriſt *feeds*, he *fills*; to whom he gives, he gives enough; as there is in him enough for *all*, ſo there is enough for *each*. He repleniſhes every hungry Soul, abundantly ſatisfies it with *the Goodneſs of his Houſe*. Here were *Fragments taken up*, to aſſure us, that in our Father's Houſe there is *Bread enough and to ſpare*. We are not ſtraiten'd, or ſtinted in him.

18 ¶ And it came to paſs as he was alone praying, his diſciples were with him: and he asked them, ſaying, Whom ſay the people that I am? 19 They anſwering, ſaid, John the baptiſt: but ſome *ſay*, Elias: and others *ſay*, that one of the old prophets is riſen again. 20 He ſaid unto them, but whom ſay ye that I am? Peter anſwering, ſaid, The Chriſt of God. 21 And he ſtraitly charged them, and commanded *them* to tell no man that thing, 22 Saying, the Son of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be ſlain, and be raiſed the third day. 23 ¶ And he ſaid to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow me. 24 For whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it: but whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake, the ſame ſhall ſave it. 25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and loſe himſelf, or be caſt away? 26 for whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of *me* and of my words, of him ſhall the ſon of man be aſhamed, when he ſhall come in his own glory and *in his* father's, and of the holy angels. 27 But I tell you of a truth, there be ſome ſtanding here which ſhall not taſte of death till they ſee the kingdom of God.

In theſe Verſes we have Chriſt diſcourſing with his Diſciples, about the great Things that *pertained to the Kingdom of God*; and one Circumſtance of this Diſcourſe is taken Notice of here, which we had not in the other Evangeliſts, that Chriſt was *alone praying*, and his *Diſciples with him*, when he enter'd into this Diſcourſe, *v.* 18. Obſerve (1.) Tho' Chriſt had much publick Work to do, yet he found ſome Time to be alone in Private, for Converſe both with himſelf, and with his Father, and with his Diſciples. (2.) When Chriſt was alone he was *Praying*. 'Tis good for us to improve our Solitudes for Devotion, that *when we alone*, we may *not be alone*, but may have *the Father with us*. (3.) When Chriſt was alone praying, his *Diſciples were with him*, to join with him in his Prayer; ſo that this was a Family Prayer. Houſe-keepers ought to pray with their Houſeholds, Parents with their Children, Maſters with their Servants, Teachers and Tutors with their Scholars and Pupils. (4.) Chriſt *pray'd* with them before he examin'd them, that they might be directed and encourag'd to anſwer him, by his Prayers for them. Thoſe we give Inſtructions to, we ſhould put up Prayers for and with. He diſcourſeth with them,

1. Concerning himſelf: And enquires,

(1.) What the People ſaid of him. *Whom ſay the People that I am*? Chriſt knew better than they did, but would have his Diſciples made ſenſible by the Miſtakes of others, concerning him, how happy they were that were led into the Knowledge of him, and of the Truth concerning him. We ſhould take Notice of others Ignorances and Errors, that we may be the more thankful to him who has *manifeſted himſelf to us, and not unto the World*, and may *pity* them, and do what we can to help them, and to teach them better.

They tell him what Conjectures concerning him, they had heard in their Converſe with the common People: And Miniſters would know how the better to ſuit their Inſtructions, Reproofs, and Counſels, to the Caſe of ordinary People, if they did but converſe more frequently and familiarly with them; they would then be the better able to ſay what is proper to rectify their Notions, and correct their Irregularities, and remove their Prejudices. The more converſant the Phyſician is with his Patient, the better he knows what to do for him. Some ſaid he was *John Baptiſt*, who was beheaded but t'other Day; others *Elias*, or *one of the old Prophets*; any thing but what he was.

(2.) What they ſaid of him. Now ſee what an Advantage you have by your Diſcipleſhip, you know better Things; ſo we do, ſaith *Peter*, thanks be to our Maſter for it, we know that thou art *the Chriſt of God*, the *anointed* of God, the *Meſſiah* promis'd. 'Tis Matter of unſpeakable Comfort to us, that our Lord Jeſus is *God's Anointed*, for then he has an unqueſtionable Authority and Ability for his Undertaking; for his being *anointed*, ſignifies his being both appointed to it, and qualify'd for it.

Now one would have expected that Chriſt ſhould have charg'd his Diſciples who were ſo fully appriz'd and aſſur'd of this Truth, to publiſh it to every one they met with, no, he *ſtraitly charged them to tell no Man that Thing*, as yet, becauſe there is a Time for all Things: After his Reſurrection, which compleated the Proof of it, *Peter* made the Temple ring of it, that *God has made this ſame Jeſus both Lord and Chriſt*, Acts 2. 36. But, as yet, the Evidence was not ready to be ſumm'd up, and therefore it muſt be conceal'd; and while it was ſo, we may conclude that the believing of it was not neceſſary to Salvation.

2. Concerning his own Sufferings and Death, of which he had yet ſaid little. But now his Diſciples were well eſtabliſh'd in the Belief of his being the Chriſt, and able to bear it, he ſpeaks of them expreſly, and with great Aſſurance, *v.* 22. It comes in as a Reaſon, why they muſt not yet preach that he was *the Chriſt*, becauſe the Wonders that would attend his Death and Reſurrection, would be the moſt convincing Proof of his being *the Chriſt of God*. It was by his *Exaltation* to the *right Hand of the Father*, that he was fully declar'd to be *the Chriſt*, and by the ſending of the Spirit thereupon, *Acts* 2. 33. and therefore wait till that is done.

3. Concerning their Suffering for him: So far muſt they be from thinking how to *prevent* his Sufferings, that they muſt rather prepare for their own.

1. We muſt *accuſtom* ourſelves to all Inſtances of *Self-denial* and *Patience*, *v.* 23. This is the beſt Preparative for Martyrdom: We muſt live a Life of Self-denial, and Mortification, and Contempt of the World; we muſt not indulge our Eaſe and Appetite, for then it will be hard to bear Toil, and Wearineſs, and Want for Chriſt. We are *daily* ſubject to Affliction, and we muſt *accommodate* ourſelves to it, and *acquieſce* in the Will of God in it, and muſt learn to endure Hardſhip. We frequently meet with Croſſes in the Way of Duty, tho' we muſt not pull them upon our own Heads; yet when they are laid for us, we muſt *take them up*, carry them after Chriſt, and make the beſt of them.

2. We muſt *prefer the Salvation and Happineſs of our Souls* before any *ſecular Concern* whatſoever. Reckon upon it, (1.) That he, who, to preſerve his Liberty or Eſtate, his Power or Preferment, nay, or to ſave his Life, denies Chriſt and his Truths, wilfully wrongs his Conſcience, and ſins againſt God; will not only be not a *Saver*, but and unſpeakable *Loſer* in the Iſſue, when the *Profit* and *Loſs* come to be ballanc'd. *He that will ſave his Life upon thoſe Terms will loſe it*, ſhall loſe that which is of infinitely more Value, his precious Soul. (2.) We muſt firmly believe, alſo, That if we loſe our Lives for cleaving to Chriſt and our Religion, we ſhall *ſave* them to our unſpeakable Advantage; for it ſhall be abundantly recompenc'd in the Reſurrection of the Juſt, when we ſhall have it again a new and eternal Life. (3.) That the Gain of all the World, if we ſhould forſake Chriſt, and fall in with the Intereſts of the World, would be ſo far from countervailing the eternal Loſs and Ruin of the Soul, that it would bear no Manner of Proportion to it, *v.* 25. If we could be ſuppos'd to gain all the Wealth, Honour, and Pleaſure in the World by denying Chriſt, yet, when by *ſo doing* we *loſe ourſelves* to all Eternity, and are caſt away at laſt, what good will our worldly Gain do us? Obſerve, in *Matthew* and *Mark* the dreadful Iſſue is a Man's *loſing his own Soul*, here it is *loſing himſelf*; which plainly intimates that *our Souls are our ſelves*; *Animus cujuſque, is eſt quiſque*. The Soul is the Man; and it is well or ill with us, according as it is well or ill with our Souls. If they periſh for ever under the Weight of their own Guilt and Corruption, 'tis certain we are undone; the Body cannot be happy, if the Soul be miſerable in t'other World; but the Soul may be happy, tho' the Body be greatly afflicted and oppreſs'd in this World. If a Man be himſelf *caſt away*, ἢ ζημιωθεὶς; *if he be damag'd*; or if he be puniſh'd; *ſi mulctetur*, if he have a *Mulct* put upon his Soul by the righteous Sentence of Chriſt, whoſe Cauſe and Intereſt he has treacherouſly deſerted; if it be adjudg'd a Forfeiture of all his Bleſſedneſs, and the Forfeiture be taken, Where is his Gain? What is his Hope?

3. We muſt therefore *never be aſham'd* of Chriſt and his Goſpel, nor of any Diſgrace or Reproach that we may undergo for our faithful Adherence to him and it. For *v.* 26. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me and of my Words, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſham'd*, and juſtly. When the Service and Honour of Chriſt call'd for his Teſtimony and Agency, he deny'd them, becauſe the Intereſt *of Chriſt* was a *deſpiſed* Intereſt, and *every where ſpoken againſt*; and therefore he can expect no other, but that in the Great Day, when his Caſe calls for Chriſt's Appearance on his Behalf, Chriſt will be aſham'd to own ſuch a cowardly, worldly, ſneaking Spirit, and will ſay, He is none of mine, he belongs not to me. As Chriſt had, ſo his Cauſe has a State of *Humiliation* and of *Exaltation*; they, and they only that are willing to ſuffer with it, when it ſuffers, ſhall reign with it, when it reigns: But thoſe that cannot find in their Hearts to ſhare with it in its *Diſgrace*, and to ſay, If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile; 'tis certain they ſhall have no Share with it in its *Triumphs*. Obſerve here, how Chriſt, to ſupport himſelf and his Followers, under preſent Diſgraces, ſpeaks *magnificently* of the Luſtre of his ſecond Coming, in Proſpect of which, he *endur'd the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame*. (1.) He ſhall come *in his own Glory*. This was not mention'd in *Matthew* and *Mark*. He ſhall come in the Glory of the Mediator, *all that Glory* which the Father *reſtor'd to him*, which he had with God before the Worlds were, which he had *depoſited* and *put in Pledge*, as it were, for the accompliſhing of his Undertaking, and demanded up again, when he had gone thro' it: *Now, O Father, glorify thou me*, Joh. 17. 4, 5. He ſhall come in *all that Glory* which the Father *conferred upon him* when *he ſet him at his own right Hand*, and *gave him to be Head over all Things to the Church*. In all the Glory that is due to him, as the Aſſerter of the Glory of God, and the Author of the Glory of all the Saints. This is *his own Glory*. (2.) He ſhall come *in his Father's Glory*; the Father will judge the World by him, having committed all Judgment to him; and therefore will publickly own him in the Judgment, as the *Brightneſs of his Glory*, and the *expreſs Image* of his Perſon. (3.) He ſhall come in *the Glory of the Holy Angels*; they ſhall all *attend* him, and *miniſter* to him, and add every Thing they can to the Luſtre of his Appearance. What a Figure will the bleſſed Jeſus make in that Day! Did we believe it, we would never be aſham'd of him or his Words now.

Laſtly, To encourage them in ſuffering for him, he aſſures them that *the Kingdom of God* would now, *ſhortly*, be *ſet up*, notwithſtanding the great Oppoſition that was made to it, *v.* 27. Tho' the ſecond Coming of the Son of Man is at a great Diſtance, the Kingdom of God ſhall come in its Power in the preſent Age, while ſome here preſent are alive. They *ſaw the Kingdom of God* when the Spirit was pour'd out, when the Goſpel was preach'd to all the World, and Nations brought to Chriſt by it; they ſaw the Kingdom of God triumph over the *Gentile* Nations in their *Converſion*, and over the *Jewiſh* Nation in its *Deſtruction*.

28 ¶ And it came to paſs about an eight days after theſe ſayings, he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. 29 And as he prayed, the faſhion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was* white and gliſtering. 30 And behold, there talked with him two Men, which were Moſes and Elias. 31 Who appeared in glory, and ſpake of his deceaſe which he ſhould accompliſh at Jeruſalem. 32 But Peter, and they that were with him, were heavy with ſleep: and when they were awake, they ſaw his glory, and the two men that ſtood with him. 33 And it came to paſs, as they departed from him, Peter ſaid unto Jeſus, Maſter, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moſes, and one for Elias: not knowing what he ſaid. 34 While he thus ſpake, there came a cloud and overſhadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. 35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, ſaying, This is my beloved ſon, hear him. 36 And when the voice was paſt, Jeſus was found alone: and they kept *it* cloſe, and told no man in thoſe days any of thoſe things which they had ſeen.

We have here the Story of Chriſt's Transfiguration, which was deſign'd for a *Specimen* of that Glory of *his*, in *which he* will come to judge the World, of which he had lately been ſpeaking, and conſequently an Encouragement to his Diſciples to ſuffer for him, and never to be aſham'd of him. We had this Story before in *Matthew* and *Mark*, and it is well worthy to be repeated to us, and re-conſider'd by us, for the *Confirmation of our Faith* in the Lord Jeſus, as *the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory*, and the Light of the World; for the *filling* of our Minds with *high* and *honourable* Thoughts of him, notwithſtanding his being clothed with a Body, and the *giving* of us *ſome Idea* of the *Glory* which he enter'd into at his *Aſcenſion*, and in which he now *appears* within the Veil; and the *raiſing* and *encouraging* of our *Hopes* and *Expectations* concerning the Glory reſerv'd for all Believers in the future State.

1. Here is one Circumſtance of the Story, that ſeems to differ from the other two Evangeliſts that related it. They ſaid it was *ſix Days* after the foregoing Sayings, *Luke* ſaith it was about *eight Days after*, that is, 'twas that Day Sennight; ſix whole Days intervening, and it was the eighth Day. Some think 'twas in the Night that Chriſt was transfigur'd, becauſe the Diſciples were ſleepy, as in his Agony, and *in the Night*, his Appearance in Splendor wou'd be the more illuſtrious; and if in the Night, the Computation of the Time would be the more doubtful and uncertain; probably in the Night, between the ſeventh and eighth Day, and ſo about eight Days.

2. Here are divers Circumſtances added and explain'd, which are very material.

1. We are here told, that Chriſt had this Honour put upon him when he was *praying*. He *went up into the Mountain to pray*, as he frequently did, *v.* 28. and *as he prayed* he was *transfigured*; when Chriſt *humbled* himſelf to pray, he was thus *exalted*. He knew before, that this was deſign'd for him at this Time, and therefore ſeeks it by Prayer; Chriſt himſelf muſt *ſue out* the Favours that were purpos'd for him, and promis'd to him; *Ask of me and I will give thee*, Pſal. 2. 8. And thus he intended to put an *Honour* upon the Duty of Prayer, and to *recommended* it to us. It is a transfiguring, transforming Duty; if our Hearts be elevated and enlarg'd in it, ſo as in it to *behold the Glory of the Lord*, we ſhall be chang'd *into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. By Prayer we fetch in that Wiſdom and Grace, and Joy, which *makes the Face to ſhine*.

2. *Luke* doth not uſe the Word *transfigur'd* μεταμορφώθη, which *Matthew* and *Mark* us'd, perhaps, becauſe it had been us'd ſo much in the Pagan Theology, but makes Uſe of a Phraſe equivalent, τὸ εἶδος τοῦ προσώπου ἕτερον, *the Faſhion of his Countenance was another Thing from what it had been*; his Face ſhone far beyond what *Moſes*'s did when he came down from the Mount; and *his Raiment* was *white and gliſtering*; 'twas ἐξαστράπτων, a Word uſed only here; *bright like Lightning*; ſo that he ſeem'd to be array'd all with Light, to *cover himſelf with Light as with a Garment*.

3. 'Twas ſaid in *Matthew* and *Mark*, that *Moſes* and *Elias* appear'd to them; here it is ſaid, they *appear'd in Glory*; to teach us, that Saints departed are *in Glory*; are in a *glorious* State; they ſhine in Glory, he being in Glory, they *appear'd with him in Glory*, as all the Saints ſhall ſhortly do.

4. We are here told what was the Subject of the Diſcourſe between Chriſt and the two great Prophets of the Old Teſtament, *they ſpake of his Deceaſe, which he ſhould accompliſh at Jeruſalem*. Ἔλεγον τὴν ἔξοδον αὐτοῦ — his *Exodus*, his Departure; that is, *his Death*. (1.) The Death of Chriſt is here call'd his *Exit*, his *going out*, his *leaving the World*. *Moſes* and *Elias* ſpoke of it to him under that Notion, to reconcile him to it, and to make the Foreſight of it the more eaſy to his human Nature. The Death of the Saints is their *Exodus*, their Departure out of the *Egypt* of this World, their Releaſe out of a *Houſe of Bondage*. Some think the *Aſcenſion* of Chriſt is included here in his Departure, for the Departure of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, was a Departure in *Triumph*; ſo was *his*, when he went from Earth to Heaven. (2.) This Departure of his he *muſt accompliſh*, for thus it was determin'd, the Matter was immutably fix'd in the Counſel of God, and could not be alter'd. (3.) He muſt accompliſh it at *Jeruſalem*, tho' his Reſidence was moſtly in *Galilee*; for his moſt ſpiteful Enemies were at *Jeruſalem*, and there the Sanhedrin ſate, that took upon them to judge of Prophets. (4.) *Moſes* and *Elias* ſpake of this, to intimate, that the *Sufferings* of Chriſt and his *Entrance into his Glory*, was what *Moſes* and *the Prophets* had *ſpoken of*; ſee *Luke* 24. 26, 27. 1 *Pet.* 1. 11. (5.) Our Lord Jeſus, even in his Transfiguration, was willing to enter into a Diſcourſe concerning his Death and Sufferings; to teach us, that Meditations on Death, as it is own Departure out of this World to another, are never unſeaſonable, but in a ſpecial Manner ſeaſonable, when at any time we are *advanc'd*, leſt we ſhou'd be *lifted up above Meaſure*. In our greateſt Glories on Earth, let us remember, that here *we have no continuing City*.

5. We are here told, which we were not before, that the Diſciples *were heavy with Sleep*, v. 32. when the Viſion firſt began, *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, were drowſy, and inclin'd to Sleep; either it was late, or they were weary, or had been diſturb'd in their Reſt the Night before, or perhaps a charming compoſing Air; or ſome ſweet melodious Sounds which diſpos'd them to ſoft and gentle Slumbers, were a Preface to the Viſion; or perhaps it was owing to a ſinful Careleſneſs, when Chriſt was at Prayer with them, they did not regard his Prayers as they ſhou'd have done, and to puniſh them for that, they were left to *ſleep on now*, when he began to be *transfigur'd*, and ſo ſlipt an Opportunity of ſeeing how that Work of Wonder was wrought. Theſe three were now aſleep, when Chriſt was in *his Glory*, as afterwards they were, when he was in *his Agony*; ſee the *Weakneſs* and *Frailty* of Human Nature, even in the beſt, and what Need they have of the Grace of God. Nothing could be more affecting to theſe Diſciples, one would think, than the *Glories* and the *Agonies* of their Maſter, and both in the higheſt Degree, and yet neither the one nor the other would ſerve to *keep them awake*. What need have we to pray to God for quickening Grace, to make us not only *alive*, but *lively*. Yet that they might be competent Witneſſes of *this Sign from Heaven*, to thoſe that demanded one, after a while they *recover'd themſelves*, and became perfectly awake; and then they took an exact View of all thoſe Glories, ſo that they were able to give a particular Account, as we find one of them doth, of all that paſs'd when they were with Chriſt *in the holy Mount*, 2 Pet. 1. 17.

6. It is here obſerv'd, that it was when *Moſes* and *Elias* were now about to depart, that *Peter* ſaid, *Lord, it is good to be here, let us make three Tabernacles*; thus many Times we are not ſenſible of the Worth of our Mercies, 'till we are about to loſe 'em; nor covet and court their Continuance, till they are upon the Departure. *Peter* ſaid this, *not knowing what he ſaid*. Thoſe know not what they ſay, that talk of making Tabernacles on Earth for glorify'd Saints in Heaven, who have better Manſions in the Temple there, and long to return to them.

7. It is here added concerning the *Cloud* that *overſhadow'd them*, that they *fear'd as they entered into the Cloud*. The Cloud was a Token of God's more peculiar Preſence, 'twas in a Cloud that God of old took Poſſeſſion of the Tabernacle and Temple, and when the Cloud *cover'd the Tabernacle, Moſes was not able to enter*, Exod. 40. 34, 35. and when it fill'd the Temple, the *Prieſts cou'd not ſtand to miniſter by Reaſon of it*, 2 Chron. 5. 14. ſuch a Cloud was this, and then no Wonder the Diſciples were *afraid to enter into it*. But never let any be afraid to enter into a Cloud with Jeſus Chriſt, for he will be ſure to bring them ſafe through it.

8. The *Voice* which came from Heaven, is here and in *Mark* related not ſo fully as in *Matthew*; *this is my beloved Son, hear him*; tho' theſe Words, in whom I am well pleas'd, which we have both in *Matthew* and *Peter*, are not expreſs'd, they are imply'd in that, *this is my beloved Son*; for whom he *loves*, and in whom he is *well pleaſed*, comes all to one; we are *accepted in the Beloved*.

Laſtly, The Apoſtles are here ſaid to have kept this Viſion private, they *told no Man in theſe Days*; reſerving the Diſcovery of it for another Opportunity; when the Evidences of Chriſt's being the Son of God were compleated, in the pouring out of the Spirit, and that Doctrine was to be publiſh'd to all the World. As there is a Time to ſpeak, ſo there is a Time to *keep Silence*. Every Thing is beautiful and uſeful in its Seaſon.

37 ¶ And it came to paſs, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him, 38 And behold, a man of the company cried out, ſaying, Maſter, I beſeech thee, look upon my ſon, for he is mine only child. 39 And lo, a ſpirit taketh him, and he ſuddenly crieth out, and it teareth him that he fometh again, and bruiſing him, hardly departeth from him. 40 And I beſought thy diſciples to caſt him out, aud they could not. 41 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, O faithleſs and perverſe generation, how long ſhall I be with you, and ſuffer you? Bring thy ſon hither. 42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare *him*: and Jeſus rebuked the unclean ſpirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

This Paſſage of Story in *Matthew* and *Mark*, follows immediately upon that of Chriſt's Transfiguration, and his Diſcourſe with his Diſciples after it; but here it is ſaid to be *on the next Day, as they were coming down from the Hill*; which confirms the Conjecture, that Chriſt was transfigur'd *in the Night*, and it ſhould ſeem, tho' they did not *make Tabernacles* as *Peter* propos'd, yet they found ſome Shelter to repoſe themſelves in, all Night, for it was not till next Day, that they *came down from the Hill*; and then he found Things in ſome Diſorder among his Diſciples, tho' not ſo bad as *Moſes* did when he came down from the Mount. When wiſe and good Men are in their beloved Retirements, they would do well to conſider whether they are not wanted in their *publick Stations*.

In this Story here, obſerve,

1. How forward the People were to receive Chriſt, at his return to them, tho' he had been but a little while abſent, *much People met him*, as at other Times, much People follow'd him; for ſo it was foretold concerning him, that *to him ſhould the Gathering of the People be.*

2. How importunate the Father of the Lunatick Child was with Chriſt, for Help for him, *v.* 38. *I beſeech thee look upon my Son*; that's his Requeſt, and it is a very modeſt one; one compaſſionate Look from Chriſt, is enough to ſet every thing to rights. Let us bring ourſelves and our Children to Chriſt to be *look'd upon*. His Plea is, he is *mine only Child*; they that have many Children, may ballance their Affliction in one, with their Comfort in the reſt; yet if it be an only Child that is a Grief, the Affliction in that may be balanc'd with the Love of God, in giving his only begotten Son for us.

3. How *deplorable* the Caſe of the *Child* was, *v.* 39. He was under the Power of an evil *Spirit*, that *took him*; and Diſeaſes of that Nature are more frightful, than ſuch as ariſe merely from natural Cauſes; when the Fit ſeiz'd him, without any Warning given, he ſuddenly *cry'd out*, and many a Time his Shrieks had pierc'd the Heart of his tender Father. This malicious Spirit *tare him*, and bruis'd him, and *departed not from him*, but with great Difficulty, and a deadly Gripe at parting. O the Afflictions of the Afflicted in this World! And what Miſchief doth Satan do, where he gets Poſſeſſion! But happy they that have Acceſs to Chriſt.

4. How defective the Diſciples were in their Faith. Tho' Chriſt had given them *Power over unclean Spirits*, yet they could not caſt out this *evil Spirit*, *v.* 40. Either they diſtruſted the Power they were to fetch in Strength from, or the Commiſſion given to them, or did not exert themſelves in Prayer as they ought, for this Chriſt reprov'd them. *O faithleſs and perverſe Generation.* Dr. *Clark* underſtands this as ſpoken to his Diſciples; "*will ye be* yet ſo faithleſs and full of Diſtruſt, that ye cannot "execute the Commiſſion I have given you?

5. How effectually the Cure was which Chriſt wrought upon this Child, *v.* 42. Chriſt can do that for us, which his Diſciples cannot. *Jeſus rebuked the unclean Spirit*, then when he raged moſt. The Devil threw the Child down and tare him, diſtorted him, ſo as if he would have pulled him to Pieces. But one Word from Chriſt *healed the Child*, and made good the Damage the Devil had done him. And it is here added, that he *deliver'd him again to his Father. Note*, When our Children are recover'd from Sickneſs, we muſt receive them as deliver'd to us again, receive them as Life from the Dead, and as when we firſt receiv'd them. 'Tis comfortable to receive them from the Hand of Chriſt, to ſee him delivering them to us again, Here, take this Child and be thankful; take it, and bring it up for me, for thou haſt it again from me. Take it, and do not ſet thy Heart too much upon it. With ſuch Cautions as theſe, Parents ſhould receive their Children *from Chriſt's Hands*, and then with Comfort put them again *into his Hands*.

43 ¶ And they were all amaz'd at the mighty power of God: but while they wondred every one at all things which Jeſus did, he ſaid unto his diſciples, 44 Let theſe ſayings ſink down into your ears: for the ſon of man ſhall be delivered into the hands of men. 45 But they underſtood not this ſaying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that ſaying. 46 ¶ Then there aroſe a reaſoning among them, which of them ſhould be greateſt. 47 And Jeſus perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and ſet him by him, 48 And ſaid unto them, Whoſoever ſhall receive this child in my name, receiveth me: and whoſoever ſhall receive me, receiveth him that ſent me: for he that is leaſt among you all, the ſame ſhall be great. 49 ¶ And John anſwered and ſaid, Maſter, we ſaw one caſting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, becauſe he followeth not with us. 50 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not againſt us, is for us.

We may obſerve here,

1. The Impreſſion which Chriſt's Miracles made upon all that beheld them, *v.* 43. *They were all amaz'd at the mighty Power of God*, which they could not but ſee in all the Miracles Chriſt wrought. *Note*, The Works of God's Almighty Power are amazing, eſpecially thoſe that were wrought by the Hand of the Lord Jeſus; for he is *the Power of God*, and his Name is *Wonderful*. Their Wonder was univerſal, they wonder'd every one, and ſo were the Cauſes of it, they wonder'd at *all Things which Jeſus did*, all his Actions had ſomething uncommon and ſurprizing in them.

2. The Notice Chriſt gave to his Diſciples of his approaching Sufferings; *the Son of Man ſhall be delivered into the Hands of Men*, wicked Men, Men of the worſt Character; they ſhall be permitted to abuſe him at their Pleaſure. That's here *imply'd* which is *expreſs'd* by the other Evangeliſts, *they ſhall kill him*. But that which is peculiar here, is (1.) The Connexion of this with what goes next before, of the Admiration with which the People were ſtruck, at beholding of Chriſt's Miracles, *v.* 43. *while they all wonder'd at all things which Jeſus did, he ſaid* this *to his Diſciples*. They had a fond Conceit of his temporal Kingdom, and that he ſhou'd reign, and they with him, in ſecular Pomp and Power; and now they thought this mighty Power of his wou'd eaſily effect the Thing, and his Intereſt gain'd by his Miracles in the People, wou'd contribute to it; and therefore Chriſt, who knew what was in their Hearts, takes this Occaſion to tell them again, what he had told them before, that he was ſo far from having Men *deliver'd into his Hands*, that he muſt be *deliver'd into the Hands of Men*; ſo far from living in Honour, that he muſt die in Diſgrace; and all his Miracles, and the Intereſt he has by them gain'd in the Hearts of the People, will not be able to prevent it. (2.) The ſolemn Preface with which it is introduc'd; *Let theſe Sayings ſink down into your Ears*, i. e. take ſpecial Notice of what I ſay, and mix Faith with it; let not the Notions you have of the temporal Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, ſtop your Ears againſt it, nor make you unwilling to believe it. Admit what I ſay, and ſubmit to it. *Let it ſink down into your Hearts*; ſo the *Syriac* and *Arabick* read it: The Word of Chriſt doth us no good, unleſs we let it ſink down into our Heads and Hearts. (3.) The unaccountable Stupidity of the Diſciples, with Reference to this Prediction of Chriſt's Sufferings. 'Twas ſaid in *Mark, they underſtood not that Saying*, 'twas plain enough, but they *wou'd not* underſtand it in the literal Senſe, becauſe it agreed not with their Notions; and they cou'd not underſtand it in any other, *and were afraid to ask him*, leſt they ſhou'd be undeceiv'd and awak'd out of their pleaſing Dream; but it is here added, that *it was hid from them, that they perceived it not*, thro' the Weakneſs of Faith, and the Power of Prejudice. We cannot think it was *in Mercy* hid from them, leſt they ſhould be ſwallow'd up with overmuch Sorrow at the Proſpect of it; but that it was a Paradox, becauſe they made it ſo to themſelves.

3. The Rebuke Chriſt gave to his Diſciples, for their diſputing among themſelves which ſhou'd be greateſt, *v.* 46,---48. This Paſſage we had before, and, the more's the Pity, ſhall meet with the like again. Obſerve here,

(1.) That Ambition of Honour, and Strife for Superiority and Precedency, is a Sin that doth moſt eaſily beſet the Diſciples of our Lord Jeſus, for which they deſerve to be ſeverely rebuk'd, and it flows from Corruptions, which they are highly concern'd to ſubdue and mortify, *v.* 46. They that expect to be *great* in this World, commonly aim high, and nothing will ſerve them ſhort of being *greateſt*; which expoſeth them to a great deal of Temptation and Trouble, which they are ſafe from, that are content to be *little*, to be *leaſt*, *to be leſs than the leaſt*.

(2.) That Jeſus Chriſt is perfectly acquainted with the Thoughts and Intents of our Hearts, *v.* 47. he *perceiv'd their Thoughts*; they are *Words* to him, and *whiſpers* loud Cries. 'Tis a good Reaſon why we ſhou'd keep up a ſtrict Government of our Thoughts, becauſe Chriſt takes a ſtrict Cognizance of them.

(3.) That Chriſt will have his Diſciples to aim at that Honour that is to be obtain'd by a quiet and condeſcending Humility, and not at that which is to be obtain'd by a reſtleſs and aſpiring Ambition. Chriſt *took a Child and ſet him by him*, *v.* 47. for he always expreſs'd a Tenderneſs and Kindneſs for little Children; and he propos'd *this Child* to them for an Example; (1.) Let them be of the *Temper* of this Child, *humble*, and *quiet*, and eaſy to itſelf; let them not affect worldly Pomp or Grandeur, or high Titles, but be as dead to them as this Child; let them bear no more Malice to their Rivals and Competitors, than this Child did. Let them be willing to be *the leaſt*, if that would contribute any thing to their Uſefulneſs, to ſtoop to the meaneſt Office, whereby they might do good. (2.) Let them aſſure themſelves, that this was the Way to Preferment; for this wou'd recommend them to the Eſteem of their Brethren, they that lov'd Chriſt, wou'd therefore *receive them in his Name*, becauſe they did moſt reſemble him; and they would likewiſe recommend themſelves to his Favour, for Chriſt would take the Kindneſſes done to them, as done to himſelf. *Whoſoever ſhall receive one ſuch Child*, a Preacher of the Goſpel, that is of ſuch a Diſpoſition as this, he placeth his Reſpects aright, and *receiveth me*; and *whoſoever receiveth me* in ſuch a Miniſter, *receives him that ſent me*: And what greater Honour can any Man attain to in this World, than to be received by Men as a Meſſenger of God and Chriſt, and to have God and Chriſt own themſelves receiv'd and welcom'd in him; this Honour have all the humble Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, and thus they ſhall be truly great that are leaſt among them.

4. The Rebuke Chriſt gave to his Diſciples for diſcouraging one that honour'd him, and ſerv'd him, but was not of their Communion, not only not one of the twelve, or one of the Seventy, but not one of thoſe that ever aſſociate with them, or attend on them; but upon occaſional Hearing of Chriſt, believ'd in him, and made Uſe of his Name with Faith and Prayer, in a ſerious Manner, for the caſting out of Devils. Now

(1.) This Man they *rebuk'd and reſtrain'd*; they would not let him pray and preach, tho' it was to the Honour of Chriſt, tho' it did good to Men, and weaken'd *Satan's* Kingdom, becauſe he did *not follow* Chriſt *with them*; he ſeparated from their Church, was not ordained as they were, paid them no Reſpect, nor gave them the right Hand of Fellowſhip. Now if ever any Society of Chriſtians in this World, had Reaſon to ſilence thoſe that were not of their Communion, the twelve Diſciples at this Time had, and yet (2.) Jeſus Chriſt chid them for what they did, and warn'd them not to do the like again, nor any that profeſs to be the Succeſſors of the Apoſtles; *Forbid him not*, v. 50. but rather encourage him, for he is carrying on the ſame Deſign that you are, tho' for Reaſons beſt known to himſelf, he doth not follow *with you*; and he will meet you in *the ſame* End, tho' he doth not accompany you in *the ſame Way*. You *do well* to do as you do, but it doth not therefore follow that he *doth ill* to do as he doth, and that you do well to put him under an Interdict; for *he that it not againſt us, is for us*, and therefore ought to be countenanc'd by us. We need not loſe any of our Friends, while we have ſo few, and ſo many Enemies. Thoſe may be found faithful Followers of Chriſt, and as ſuch may be accepted of him, tho' they do not follow *with us*. See *Mark* 9. 38, 39. O what a great deal of Miſchief to the Church, even from thoſe that boaſt of Relation to Chriſt, and pretend to *envy for his Sake*, wou'd be prevented, if this Paſſage of Story were but duly conſider'd.

51 ¶ And it came to paſs, when the time was come that he ſhould be received up, he ſtedfaſtly ſet his face to go to Jeruſalem, 52 And ſent meſſengers before his face: and they went, and enter'd into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him. 53 And they did not receive him, becauſe his face was as though he would go to Jeruſalem 54 And when his diſciples James and John ſaw this, they ſaid, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and conſume them, even as Elias did? 55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and ſaid, Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of 56 For the Son of man is not come to deſtroy men lives, but to ſave *them*. And they went to another village.

This Paſſage of Story we have not in any other of the Evangeliſts, and it ſeems to come in here, for the Sake of its Affinity with that next before, for in this alſo Chriſt rebuk'd his Diſciples, becauſe they envy'd for his Sake; there under Colour of Zeal for Chriſt, they were for ſilencing and reſtraining Separatiſts, here under the ſame Colour they were for putting Infidels to Death, and as for *that*, ſo for *this* alſo, Chriſt reprimanded them; for a Spirit of Bigottry and Perſecution is directly contrary to the Spirit of Chriſt and Chriſtianity.

Obſerve here,

1. The *Readineſs* and *Reſolution* of our Lord Jeſus in proſecuting his great Undertaking, for our Redemption and Salvation. Of this we have an Inſtance, *v.* 51. *When the Time was come that he ſhould be received up, he ſtedfaſtly ſet his Face to go to Jeruſalem.* Obſerve (1.) There was a Time fix'd for the Sufferings and Death of our Lord Jeſus, and he knew well enough when it was, and had a clear and certain Foreſight of it, and yet was ſo far from keeping out of the Way, that then he appear'd moſt publickly of all, and was moſt buſy, knowing that his Time was ſhort. (2.) When he ſaw his Death and Sufferings approaching, he look'd through them, and beyond them to the Glory that ſhould follow; he look'd upon it as the Time when he ſhould be *receiv'd up into Glory*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. reciev'd up into the higheſt Heavens to be enthron'd there. *Moſes* and *Elias* ſpoke of his Death as his Departure out of this World, which made it not *formidable*, but he went farther, and look'd upon it as his Tranſlation to a better World, which made it very *deſireable*. All good Chriſtians may frame to themſelves the ſame Notion of Death, and may call it their being *receiv'd up*, to be with Chriſt where he is; and when the *Time* of their being *receiv'd up* is at Hand, let them lift up their Heads, knowing that *their Redemption draws nigh*. (3.) On this Proſpect of the Joy ſet before him, he *ſtedfaſtly ſet his Face to go to Jeruſalem*, the Place where he was to ſuffer and die. He was fully *determin'd* to go, and would not be diſuaded; he went *directly* to *Jeruſalem*, becauſe there now his Buſineſs lay, and he did not go about to other Towns, or fetch a Compaſs, which if he had done, as commonly he did, he might have avoided going through *Samaria*. He went cearfully and courageouſly thither, tho' he knew the Things which ſhould befall him there. He did not *fail, or was diſcourag'd*, but *ſet his Face as a Flint*, *knowing* that he ſhould be not only *juſtify'd* but glorify'd, *Iſa.* 50. 7. not only not *run down*, but *receiv'd up*. How ſhould this ſhame us *for*, and ſhame us *out of* our Backwardneſs to do and ſuffer for Chriſt; we draw back, and turn our Faces another Way from his Service, who ſtedfaſtly ſet his Face againſt all Oppoſition, to go through with the Work of our Salvation.

2. The *Rudeneſs* of the *Samaritans* in a *certain Village*, not nam'd, not deſerving to be ſo, who would not *receive him*, nor ſuffer him to bait in their Town, tho' his Way lay through it. Obſerve here (1.) How *civil* he was to them. *He ſent Meſſengers before his Face*, ſome of his Diſciples, that went to take up Lodgings, and to know whether he might have Leave to accomodate himſelf and his Company among them; for he wou'd not come to *give Offence*; or if they took any Umbrage at the Number of his Followers. He ſent ſome to *make ready* for him, not for State, but Convenience, and that his coming might be no Surprize. (2.) How *uncivil* they were to him, *v.* 53. they did not *receive him*, wou'd not ſuffer him to come into their Village, but order'd their Watch to keep him out: He wou'd have *paid* for all he *beſpoke*, and been a generous Gueſt among them, wou'd have done them good, and preach'd the Goſpel to them, as he had done ſome Time ago to another City of the *Samaritans*, Joh. 4. 41. He would have been, if they pleas'd, the greateſt Bleſſing that ever came to their Village, and yet they forbid him Entrance. Such Treatment his Goſpel and Miniſters have often met with. Now the Reaſon was *becauſe his Face was as tho' he would go to Jeruſalem*, they obſerv'd by his Motions, that he was ſteering his Courſe that Way. The great Controverſy between the Jews and the Samaritans, was about the Place of Worſhip, whether *Jeruſalem* or Mount *Gerizzim* near *Sychar*; ſee *Joh.* 4. 20. And ſo hot was the Controverſy between them, that the *Jews would have no Dealings with the Samaritans*, nor they with them, *Joh.* 4. 9. Yet we may ſuppoſe they did not deny other Jews Lodgings among them, no not when they went up to the Feaſts, for if that had been their conſtant Practice, Chriſt would not have attempted it; and it wou'd have been a great Way about, for ſome of the *Galileans* to go to *Jeruſalem* any other Way, but through *Samaria*, but they were particularly incens'd againſt Chriſt, who was a celebrated Teacher, for owning and adhering to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, when the Prieſts of that Temple were ſuch bitter Enemies to him, which they hop'd would have driven him to come and worſhip at *their* Temple, and bring that into Reputation; but when they ſaw he wou'd go forward to *Jeruſalem*, notwithſtanding this, they wou'd not ſhew him the common Civility, which probably they us'd formerly to ſhew him, in his Journey thither.

3. The *Reſentment* which *James* and *John* had of this Affront, *v.* 54. When theſe two heard this Meſſage brought, they were all in a Flame preſently, and nothing will ſerve them but *Sodom's* Doom upon this Village; Lord, ſay they, give us Leave to command Fire to come down from Heaven, not to *frighten* them only, but to *conſume* them. Here indeed they ſhow'd (1.) A great Confidence in the Power they had receiv'd from Jeſus Chriſt; tho' this had not been particularly mention'd in their Commiſſion, yet they could with a Word's ſpeaking fetch *Fire from Heaven*. Θέλεις εἴπωμεν, wilt thou that we *ſpeak the Word*, and the Thing will be done. (2.) A great Zeal for the Honour of their Maſter; they took it very heinouſly, that he who did good wherever he came, and found hearty Welcome, ſhou'd be deny'd the Liberty of the Road by a parcel of paltry *Samaritans*; they could not think of it without Indignation, that their Maſter ſhould be thus ſlighted. (3.) A Submiſſion notwithſtanding, to their Maſter's good Will and Pleaſure; they will not offer to do ſuch a Thing, unleſs Chriſt give Leave; *Wilt thou* that we do it? (4.) A Regard to the Examples of the Prophets that were before them; 'tis doing *as Elias did*; they would not have thought of ſuch a Thing, if *Elijah* had not done it upon the Soldiers that came to take him, once and again, 2 *King.* 1. 10, 12. They thought this *Precedent* would be their *Warrant*; ſo apt are we to miſapply the Examples of good Men, and to think to juſtify ourſelves by them in the irregular Liberties we give ourſelves, when the Caſe is not parallel.

But tho' there was ſomething well in what they ſaid, yet there was much more amiſs. (1.) This was not the firſt Time, by a great many, that our Lord Jeſus had been in like Manner affronted, witneſs the *Nazarenes* thruſting him out of their City, and the *Gadarenes* deſiring him to depart out of their Coaſt, and yet he never call'd for any Judgment upon them, but patiently put up the Injury. (2.) Theſe were *Samaritans*, from whom better was not to be expected, and perhaps they had heard that Chriſt had forbidden his Diſciples *to enter into any of the Cities of the Samaritans*, Matt. 10. 5. and therefore it was not ſo bad in them as in others, that knew more of Chriſt, and had receiv'd ſo many Favours from him. (3.) Perhaps it was only ſome few of the Town, that knew any Thing of the Matter, or that ſent that rude Meſſage to him, while for ought they knew, there were many in the Town, who, if they had heard of Chriſt's being ſo near them, wou'd have gone to meet him, and welcom'd him; and muſt the whole Town be laid in Aſhes for the Wickedneſs of a few? Will they have the Righteous deſtroy'd with the Wicked? (4.) Their Maſter had never yet, upon any Occaſion, call'd for *Fire from Heaven*, nay, he had refus'd to give the Phariſees any *Sign from Heaven*, when they demanded it, *Matt.* 16. 1, 2. and why ſhould they think to introduce it. *James* and *John* were the two Diſciples whom Chriſt had call'd *Boanerges, Sons of Thunder*, Mark 3. 17. and will not that ſerve them, but they muſt be *Sons of Lightning* too? (5.)

The Example of *Elias* did not reach the Caſe. *Elijah* was ſent to diſplay the Terrors of the Law, and to give Proof of that, and to witneſs, as a bold Reprover, againſt the Idolatries and Wickedneſſes of the Court of *Ahab*, and it was agreeable enough to him to have his Commiſſion thus prov'd, but it is a Diſpenſation of Grace that is now to be introduc'd, to which ſuch a terrible Diſplay of Divine Juſtice will not be at all agreeable. Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* ſuggeſts, that their being now near *Samaria*, where *Elijah* call'd for Fire from Heaven, that might help to put it in their Heads; perhaps at the very Place; but tho' the *Place* was the ſame, the *Times* were alter'd.

4. The *Reproof* he gave to *James* and *John* for their fiery, furious Zeal, *v.* 55. He *turued* with a juſt Diſpleaſure, *v.* 55. and *rebuked them*, for *as many as he loves he rebukes and chaſtens*, particularly for what they do that's irregular and unbecoming them, under Colour of Zeal for him.

1. He ſhews them in particular their Miſtake. *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of*, that is (1.) Ye *are not aware* what an *evil Spirit* and Diſpoſition you are of; how much there is of Pride and Paſſion, and perſonal Revenge cover'd under this Pretence of Zeal for your Maſter. *Note*, There may be much Corruption lurking, nay, and ſtirring too in the Hearts of good People, and they themſelves not be ſenſible of it. (2.) Ye *do not conſider* what a *good Spirit*, directly contrary to this, ye *ſhould be of*. Surely you are yet to learn, tho' you have been ſo long learning, what the Spirit of Chriſt, and Chriſtianity is: Have you not been taught to *love your Enemies*, and to *bleſs them that curſe you*, and to call for Grace from Heaven, not Fire from Heaven, upon them. You know not how contrary your Diſpoſition herein is, to that which it was the Deſign of the Goſpel you ſhould be *deliver'd* into. You are not now under the Diſpenſation of Bondage, and Terror, and Death, but under the Diſpenſation of Love, and Liberty, and Grace, which was uſher'd in with a Proclamation of *Peace on Earth*, and *Good-will towards Men*; to which you ought to accommodate yourſelves, and not by ſuch Imprecations as theſe oppoſe yourſelves.

2. He ſhews them the general Deſign and Tendency of his Religion, *v.* 56. *The Son of Man* is not himſelf come, and therefore doth not ſend you abroad *to deſtroy Men's Lives, but to ſave them.* He deſign'd to propagate his holy Religion by Love and Sweetneſs, and every thing that's inviting and endearing, not by Fire and Sword, and Blood and Slaughter; by Miracles of Healing, not by Plagues and Miracles of Deſtruction, as *Iſrael* was brought out of *Egypt*. Chriſt came to *ſlay* all *Enmities*, not to foſter them. Thoſe are certainly deſtitute of the Spirit of the Goſpel, that are for anathematizing and rooting out by Violence and Perſecution all that are not of their Mind and Way, that cannot in Conſcience ſay as they ſay, and do as they do. Chriſt came not only to ſave Men's *Souls*, but to ſave their *Lives* too, witneſs the many Miracles he wrought for the Healing of Diſeaſes that would otherwiſe have been *mortal*. By which, and a thouſand other Inſtances of Benificence, it appears that Chriſt wou'd have his Diſciples do good to all, to the utmoſt of their Power, but Hurt to none; to draw Men into his Church with the *Cords of a Man, and the Bands of Love*, but not think to drive Men into it with a *Rod of Violence*, or the *Scourge of the Tongue*.

5. His *Retreat* from this Village; Chriſt wou'd not only not puniſh them for their Rudeneſs, but wou'd not inſiſt upon his Right of travelling the Road, which was as free to him as to other his Neighbours; wou'd not attempt to force his Way, but quietly and peaceably *went to another Village*, where they were not ſo ſtingy and bigotted, and there refreſh'd himſelf, and went on his Way. *Note*, When a Stream of Oppoſition is ſtrong, 'tis Wiſdom to get out of the Way of it, rather than to contend with it. If ſome be very rude, inſtead of revenging it, we ſhou'd try whether others will not be more civil.

57 ¶ And it came to paſs that as they went in the way, a certain man ſaid unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt. 58 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air *have* neſts, but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head. 59 And he ſaid unto another, Follow me: But he ſaid, Lord, ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my father. 60 Jeſus ſaid unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. 61 And another alſo ſaid, Lord, I will follow thee: but let me firſt go bid them farewel which are at my houſe. 62 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

We have here an Account of three ſeveral Perſons that offer'd themſelves to follow Chriſt, and the Anſwers that Chriſt gave to each of them: The two former we had an Account of, *Matt.* 19. 21.

Firſt, Here's one that is extremely forward to follow Chriſt immediately, but ſeems to have been too raſh, and haſty, and inconſiderate, and not to have ſitten down, and counted the Coſt.

1. He makes Chriſt a very large Promiſe, *v.* 57. *As they went in the Way*, going up to *Jeruſalem*, where it was expected Chriſt wou'd firſt appear in his Glory, one ſaid to him, *Lord, I will follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt*; this muſt be the Reſolution of all that will be found Chriſt's Diſciples indeed; they *follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes*, Rev. 14. 4. tho' it be thro' Fire and Water, to Priſons and Deaths.

2. Chriſt gives him a neceſſary Caution, not to promiſe himſelf great Things in the World, in following him; but on the contrary, to count upon Poverty and Meaneſs, for *the Son of Man has not where to lay his Head*.

We may look upon this, (1.) As *ſetting forth* the *very low Condition* that our Lord Jeſus was in, in this World. He not only wanted the Delights and Ornaments that great Princes uſe to have, but even ſuch Accommodations for mere Neceſſity, as the *Foxes* have, and the *Birds of the Air*. See what a *Depth of Poverty* our Lord Jeſus ſubmitted to for us, to encreaſe the Worth and Merit of his Satisfaction, and to purchaſe for us a larger *Allowance of Grace, that we thro' his Poverty might be rich*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 9. He that made all, did not make a Dwelling-Place for himſelf, nor a Houſe of his own to put his Head in, but what he was beholden to others for. He here calls himſelf the *Son of Man*, a Son of *Adam*, Partaker of Fleſh and Blood. He glories in his Condeſcenſion towards us, not only to the Meaneſs of our Nature, but to the meaneſt Condition in that Nature, to teſtify his Love to us, and to teach us a holy Contempt of the World, and of great Things in it; and a continual Regard to another World. Chriſt was thus poor, to ſanctify and ſweeten Poverty to his People; the Apoſtles had no certain Dwelling-Place, 1 *Cor.* 4. 11. which they might the better bear, when they knew their Maſter had not, *allud.* 2 *Sam.* 11. 11. we may well be content to fare as Chriſt did. (2.) As propoſing this to the Conſideration of thoſe who intend to be his Diſciples. If we mean to follow Chriſt, we muſt lay aſide the Thoughts of great Things in the World, and not reckon upon making any Thing *more than Heaven* of our Religion, as we muſt reſolve not to take up with any Thing *leſs*. Let us not go about to compound the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity with ſecular Advantages; Chriſt has *put them aſunder*, let not us think of *joining them together*; on the contrary, we muſt expect to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven through many Tribulations, muſt *deny ourſelves* and *take up our Croſs*. Chriſt tells this Man what he muſt count upon, if he follow'd him, to lie cold, and uneaſy, to fare hard, and live in Contempt; if he cou'd not ſubmit to that, let him not pretend to follow Chriſt. This Word ſent him back, for ought appears, but it will be no Diſcouragement to any, that know what there is in Chriſt and Heaven to ſet in the Scale againſt this.

Secondly, Here's another that ſeems *reſolv'd* to follow Chriſt, but he *begs Day*, v. 59. To this Man Chriſt firſt gave the Call, he ſaid to him, *Follow me*. He that propos'd the Thing of himſelf, fled off when he heard of the Difficulties that attended it; but this Man to whom Chriſt gave a Call, tho' he heſitated at firſt, yet as it ſhould ſeem, afterwards yielded; ſo true was that of Chriſt, *you have not choſen me, but I have choſen you*, Joh. 15. 16. It is not of *him that willeth*, and *of him that runneth*, as that forward Spark in the foregoing Verſes, but of God that ſheweth Mercy, that *gives* the Call, and *makes* it *effectual*. As to this Man here. Obſerve

1. The Excuſe he made; *Lord, ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my Father*. I have an aged Father at home, who cannot live long, and will need me while he doth live; let me go and attend on him, 'till he is dead, and I have perform'd my laſt Office of Love to him, and then I'll do any Thing. We may here ſee three Temptations, by which we are in Danger of being drawn and kept from following Chriſt; which therefore we ſhould guard againſt. (1.) We are tempted to *reſt* in a *Diſcipleſhip at large*, in which we may be *at a looſe End*, and not to come *cloſe*, and give up ourſelves to be *ſtrict* and *conſtant*. (2.) We are tempted to *defer* the doing of that which we know to be our Duty, and to put it off to ſome other Time: When we have got clear of ſuch a Care and Difficulty, when we have diſpatch'd ſuch a Buſineſs, rais'd an Eſtate to ſuch a Pitch, then we will begin to think of being religious; and ſo we are cozen'd of all our Time, by being cozen'd of the preſent Time. (3.) We are tempted to think, that our Duty to our Relations will excuſe us from our Duty to Chriſt; 'tis a plauſible Excuſe, indeed, let me go *bury my Father*, let me take Care of my Family, and provide for my Children, and then I'll think of ſerving Chriſt; whereas the *Kingdom of God, and the Righteouſneſs thereof*, muſt be ſought and minded *in the firſt Place*

2. Chriſt's Anſwer to it, *v.* 60. *Let the dead bury their dead*, Suppoſe (which is not likely) that there were none but the dead to bury their dead, or none but thoſe that are themſelves aged and dying, who are *as good as dead*, and fit for no other Service, yet thou haſt other Work to do: *Go thou and preach the Kingdom of God.* Not that Chriſt wou'd have his Followers or his Miniſters to be *unnatural*; our Religion teaches us to be

kind and good in every Relation, to *ſhew Piety at Home*, and to *requite our Parents*: But we muſt not make theſe Offices an Excuſe from our Duty to God. If the neareſt and deareſt Relations we have in the World, ſtand in our Way to keep us from Chriſt, 'tis neceſſary we have a Zeal that will make us forget *Father and Mother*, as *Levi* did, *Deut.* 33. 9. This Diſciple was call'd to be a Miniſter, and therefore muſt not *entangle himſelf with the Affairs of this World*, 2 Tim. 2. 4. And it is a Rule, That whenever Chriſt calls to any Duty, we muſt not *conſult with Fleſh and Blood*, Gal. 1. 15, 16. No Excuſes muſt be admitted, againſt a preſent Obedience to the Call of Chriſt.

Thirdly, Here's another that's willing to follow Chriſt, but he muſt have a *little Time* to *talk with his Friends* about it.

Obſerve,

1. His Requeſt for a Diſpenſation, *v.* 61. He ſaid, *Lord, I will follow thee*, I deſign no other, I am determin'd to do it, but *let me firſt go bid them farewell that are at Home*. This ſeem'd reaſonable, it was what *Eliſha* deſir'd when *Elijah* call'd him, *Let me kiſs my Father and my Mother*; and it was allow'd him: But the Miniſtry of the Goſpel is *preferable*, and the Service of it more urgent than that of the Prophets, and therefore here it wou'd not be allow'd. Suffer me ἀποτάξασθαι τοῖς εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου, let me go and *ſet in Order my Houſhold Affairs*, and give Direction concerning them: So ſome underſtand it. Now that which was amiſs in this, is (1.) That he look'd upon his following Chriſt as a melancholy, troubleſome, dangerous Thing, 'twas to him as if he were *going to die*, and therefore he muſt take *dear Leave* of all his Friends, never to *ſee them again*, or never *with any Comfort*; whereas in following Chriſt he might be more a Comfort and Bleſſing to them, than if he had continued with them. (2.) That he ſeem'd to have his worldly Concerns more upon his Heart than he ought to have, and than would conſiſt with a cloſe Attendance to his Duty as a Follower of Chriſt. He ſeem'd to hanker after his Relations and Family Concerns, and he could not part eaſily and cleverly from them, but they ſtuck to him. It may be, he had bidden them *farewell* once, but *loth to depart, bids oft Farewell*, and therefore he muſt bid them *farewell* once more, for they are *at Home, at my Houſe.* (3.) That he was willing to enter into a Temptation, from his Purpoſe of following Chriſt. To go bid them *farewell* that were *at Home at his Houſe*, would be to expoſe himſelf to the ſtrongeſt Sollicitations imaginable, to alter his Reſolution, for they wou'd all be againſt it, and would *beg* and *pray* that he would not *leave them.* Now it was Preſumption in him to thruſt himſelf into ſuch a Temptation. Thoſe that reſolve to walk with their Maker, and follow their Redeemer, muſt reſolve that they will not ſo much as parley with their Tempter.

2. The Rubuke which Chriſt gave him for this Requeſt, *v.* 62. *No Man having put his Hand to the Plough*, and deſigning to make good Work of his Ploughing, will *look back*, or look behind him, for then he makes Balks with his Plough, and the Ground he ploughs is *not fit* to be ſown; ſo thou, if thou hadſt deſign'd to follow me, and to reap the Advantages of thoſe that do ſo, if thou *lookeſt back* to a worldly Life again, and hankereſt after that, if thou *lookeſt back* as *Lot*'s Wife did to *Sodom*, which ſeems to be alluded to here, *thou art not fit for the Kingdom of God.* (1.) Thou art not *Soil* fit to receive the *good Seed* of the Kingdom of God, if thou art thus *plough'd* by the *Halves*, and not gone thro' with. (2.) Thou art not a *Sower* fit to *ſcatter* the good Seed of the Kingdom, if thou canſt *hold the Plough* no better. Ploughing is in Order to ſowing. As thoſe are not fit to be *ſown* with Divine Comforts, whoſe *fallow Ground* is not firſt *broken up*; ſo thoſe are not fit to be imploy'd in Sowing, that know not how to break up the fallow Ground; but when they have *laid their Hand to the Plough*, upon every Occaſion look back, and think of quitting it. *Note*, Thoſe who begin with the Work of God, muſt reſolve to *go on* with it, or they will make nothing of it. Looking back inclines to *drawing back*, and *drawing back* is *to Perdition.* Thoſe are not fit for Heaven, who having ſet their Faces Heavenward, face about. But he, and he only that *endures to the End ſhall be ſaved.*

CHAP. X.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *The ample Commiſſion which Chriſt gave to the Seventy Diſciples to preach the Goſpel, and to confirm it by Miracles; and the full Inſtructions he gave them how to manage themſelves in the Execution of their Commiſſions, and great Encouragements therein,* v. 1.-----16. (2.) *The Reports which the Seventy Diſciples made to their Maſter of the Succeſs of their Negotiation, and his Diſcourſe thereupon,* v. 17.---24. (3.) *Chriſt's Diſcourſe with a Lawyer concerning the Way to Heaven, and the Inſtructions Chriſt gave him by a Parable, to look upon every one as his Neighbour whom he had Occaſion to ſhew Kindneſs to, or receive Kindneſs from,* v. 25.---37. (4.) *Chriſt's Entertainment at* Martha's *Houſe, the Reproof he gave to her for her Care about the World, and his Commendation of* Mary *for her Care about her Soul,* v. 38.----42.

1 AFter theſe things, the Lord appointed other ſe-
venty alſo, and ſent them two and two before
his face into every city, and place, whither he him-
ſelf would come. 2 Therefore ſaid he unto them,
The harveſt truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few:
pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt, that he
would ſend forth labourers into his harveſt. 3 Go
your ways: behold, I ſend you forth as lambs among
wolves. 4 Carry neither purſe, nor ſcrip, nor
ſhoes: and ſalute no man by the way. 5 And into
whatſoever houſe ye enter, firſt ſay, Peace *be* to this
houſe. 6 And if the Son of Peace be there, your
peace ſhall reſt upon it: if not, it ſhall turn to you
again. 7 And in the ſame houſe remain, eating
and drinking ſuch things as they give: for the labourer
is worthy of his hire. Go not from houſe to
houſe. 8 And into whatſoever houſe ye enter, and
they receive you, eat ſuch things as are ſet before
you. 9 And heal the ſick that are therein, and ſay
unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto
you. 10 But into whatſoever city ye enter, and
they receive you not, go your ways out into the
ſtreets of the ſame, and ſay, 11 Even the very duſt
of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off
againſt you; notwithſtanding, be ye ſure of this,
that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you:
12 But I ſay unto you, that it ſhall be more tolerable
in that day for Sodom, then for that city. 13 Wo unto
thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethſaida: for if the
mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which
have been done in you, they had a great while ago
repented, ſitting in ſackcloth and aſhes. 14 But it
ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the
Judgment, then for you. 15 And thou Capernaum,
which art exalted to heaven, ſhalt be thruſt down to
hell. 16 He that heareth you, heareth me: and he
that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me: and he that deſpiſeth
me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.

We have here the ſending forth of ſeventy Diſciples two and two, into divers Parts of the Country to preach the Goſpel, and to work Miracles in thoſe Places which Chriſt himſelf deſign'd to viſit, to make Way for his Entertainment. This is not taken Notice of by the other Evangeliſts; but the Inſtructions here given them, are much the ſame with thoſe given to the twelve. Obſerve,

1. Their Number: They are Seventy. As in the Choice of twelve Apoſtle, Chriſt had an Eye to the twelve Patriarchs, the twelve Tribes, and the twelve Princes of thoſe Tribes, ſo here he ſeems to have an Eye to the *ſeventy* Elders of *Iſrael*. So many went up with *Moſes* and *Aaron* to the Mount, and *ſaw the Glory of the God of Iſrael*, Exod. 24. 1, 9. And ſo many were afterwards choſen to be aſſiſting to *Moſes* in the Government, in order to which the Spirit of Propheſy came upon them, *Num.* 11. 24, 25. The *twelve Wells of Water*, and the ſeventy *Palm-Trees* that were at *Elim*, were a Figure of the *twelve Apoſtles* and the *ſeventy Diſciples*, Exod. 15. 27. They were ſeventy Elders of the Jews, that were employ'd by *Ptolomy* King of *Egypt*, in turning the *Old Teſtament* into *Greek*, whoſe Tranſlation is thence call'd the *Septuagint*. The great *Sanhedrin* conſiſted of this Number. Now

(1.) We are glad to find that Chriſt had ſo many Followers fit to be ſent forth; his Labour was not altogether in vain, tho' he met with much Oppoſition. *Note*, Chriſt's Intereſt is a *growing* Intereſt, and his Followers, like *Iſrael* in *Egypt*, tho' *afflicted*, ſhall *multiply*. Theſe *Seventy*, tho' they did not attend him ſo cloſely and conſtantly as the *Twelve* did, yet they were the conſtant Hearers of his Doctrine, and Witneſſes of his Miracles, and believ'd in him. Thoſe three mentioned in the cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, might have been of theſe Seventy, if they would have apply'd themſelves in good Earneſt to their Buſineſs. Theſe Seventy were thoſe whom *Peter* ſpeaks of, as *the Men which companied with us, all the Time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among us*, and were Part of the one hundred and twenty there ſpoken of, *Acts* 1. 15, 21. Many of thoſe that were the Companions of the Apoſtles, whom we read of in the *Acts* and the *Epiſtles*, we may ſuppoſe were of theſe Seventy Diſciples.

(2.) We are glad to find there was Work for ſo many Miniſters; Hearers for ſo many Preachers: Thus the Grain of Muſtard-Seed began to *grow*, and the Savor of the Leven to diffuſe itſelf in the Meal, in order to the Leavening of the whole.

2. Their Work and Buſineſs. He ſent them *two and two*, that they might ſtrengthen and encourage one another. *If one fall, the other will help to raiſe him up*. He ſent them, not to all the Cities of *Iſrael*, as he did the *Twelve*, but only *to every City and Place whither he himſelf would come*, v. 1. as his Harbingers;

and we muſt ſuppoſe, tho' it be not recorded, that Chriſt did ſoon after come to all thoſe Places whither he now ſent them, tho' he could ſtay but a little while in a Place. Two Things they were order'd to do, the ſame that Chriſt did wherever he came, (1.) They muſt *heal the Sick*, v. 9. heal them *in the Name of Jeſus*, which wou'd make People to long to ſee that Jeſus, and ready to entertain him whoſe Name was ſo powerful. (2.) They muſt publiſh the Approach of the Kingdom of God, its Approach *to them*; tell them this, *The Kingdom of God is come nigh to you*, and you now ſtand fair for an Amiſſion into it, if you will but look about you. Now is the *Day of your Viſitation*, know and underſtand it. 'Tis good to be made ſenſible of our Advantages and Opportunities, that we may lay hold on them. When *the Kingdom of God comes nigh us*, it concerns us to go forth to meet it.

3. The Inſtructions he gives them.

1. They muſt ſet out with Prayer, *v.* 2. and in Prayer, (1.) They muſt be duly affected with the Neceſſities of the Souls of Men, which call'd for their Help. They muſt *look about* and ſee how *great the Harveſt was*, what abundance of People there where that wanted to have the Goſpel preach'd to them, and were willing to receive it; nay, that had at this Time their Expectations rais'd of the coming of the *Meſſiah*, and of his Kingdom. There was Corn ready to ſhed and be loſt for want of Hands to gather it in. *Note*, Miniſters ſhould apply themſelves to their Work under a deep Concern for *precious Souls*, looking upon them as the Riches of this World, which ought to be ſecur'd for Chriſt. They muſt likewiſe be concern'd that the *Labourers were ſo few*. The Jewiſh Teachers were indeed many, but they were not Labourers; they did not gather in Souls to God's Kingdom, but to their own Intereſt and Party. *Note*, Thoſe that are good Miniſters themſelves, wiſh there were more good Miniſters, for there's Work for more. 'Tis common for Tradeſmen not to care how few there are of their own Trade? But Chriſt would have the Labourers in his Vineyard reckon it a Matter of Complaint when the *Labourers are few*.

(2.) They muſt earneſtly deſire to receive their Miſſion from God; that he would ſend them forth as *Labourers into his Harveſt*, who is the *Lord of the Harveſt*; and that he would ſend others forth; for if God ſend them forth, they may hope he will go along with them, and give them Succeſs. Let them therefore ſay as the Prophet, *Iſa. 6. 8. Here I am, ſend me.* 'Tis deſireable to receive our Commiſſion from God, and then we may go on boldly.

2. They muſt ſet out with an Expectation of Trouble and Perſecution, *Behold I ſend you forth as Lambs among Wolves*, but *Go your Ways* and reſolve to make the beſt of it. Your Enemies will be as *Wolves*, bloody and cruel, and ready to pull you to Pieces; in their Threatnings and Revilings they will be as *howling* Wolves to *terrify* you; in their Proſecutions of you, they will be as *ravening* Wolves to *tear* you. But you muſt be as *Lambs*, peaceable and patient, tho' made an eaſy Prey of. It wou'd have been very hard thus to be ſent forth, as *Sheep among Wolves*, if he had not endued them with his Spirit and Courage.

3. They muſt not encumber themſelves with a Load of Proviſions, as if they were going a long Voyage, but depend upon God and their Friends, to provide what was convenient for them; carry neither a *Purſe* for Money, nor a *Scrip* or Knap-ſack for Clothes or Victuals, nor new *Shoes*, as before to the twelve, *Chap.* 9. 3. and *ſalute no Man by the Way*: This Command *Eliſha* gave to his Servant, when he ſent him to ſee the *Shunamite*'s dead Child, 2 *King*. 4. 29. Not that Chriſt would have his Miniſters to be rude, and moroſe, and miſmanner'd; but (1.) They muſt go as Men *in Haſte*, that had their particular Places aſſign'd them, where they muſt deliver their Meſſage; and in their Way directly to thoſe Places, muſt not hinder or retard themſelves with needleſs Ceremonies or Complements. (2.) They muſt go as *Men of Buſineſs*, Buſineſs that relates to another World, which they muſt be intent in, and intent upon, and therefore muſt not entangle themſelves with Converſation about ſecular Affairs. *Miniſter Verbi es, hoc age.* (3.) They muſt go as *ſerious* Men, and *Men in Sorrow*; it was the Cuſtom of Mourners, in the ſeven firſt Days of their Mourning, not to *ſalute any*, Job 2. 13. Chriſt was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief, and it was fit that by this and other Signs, his Meſſengers ſhould reſemble him, and likewiſe ſhew themſelves affected with the Calamities of Mankind, which they came to relieve, and touch'd with a *Feeling* of them.

4. They muſt ſhew not only *their good Will*, but *God's good Will*, to all to whom they came, and leave the Iſſue and Succeſs to him that knows the Heart, *v.* 5, 6.

1. The Charge given them was, Whatſoever *Houſe* they *enter'd* into, They muſt ſay, *Peace be to this Houſe*. Here (1.) They are ſuppos'd to enter into *private Houſes*, for being not admitted into the Synagogues, they were forc'd to preach where they could have Liberty. And as their publick Preaching was driven into Houſes, ſo thither they carry'd it: Like their Maſter, wherever they *viſited*, they *preach'd*, *from Houſe to Houſe*, Act. 5. 42. 20. 20. Chriſt's Church was at firſt very much *a Church in the Houſe*. (2.) They are inſtructed to ſay *Peace be to this Houſe*, to all under this Roof, to this Family, and all that belong to it. *Peace be to you*, was the common Form of Salutation among the Jews; they muſt *not uſe it in Formality*, according to Cuſtom, to thoſe they meet on the Way, becauſe they muſt uſe it with *Solemnity*, to thoſe whoſe Houſes they enter'd into; *ſalute no Man by the Way* in Complement, but thoſe into whoſe Houſe ye enter, ſay to them, *Peace be to you*, with Seriouſneſs, and in Reality; for this is intended to be more than a Complement. Chriſt's Miniſters go into all the World, to ſay in Chriſt's Name *Peace be to you.* (2.) We are to *propoſe* Peace to all; to *preach Peace by Jeſus Chriſt*, to proclaim the Goſpel of Peace, the Covenant of Peace, *Peace on Earth*, and to invite the Children of Men to come and take the Benefit of it. (2.) We are to *pray* for Peace to all. We muſt earneſtly deſire the Salvation of the Souls of thoſe we preach to, and offer up thoſe Deſires to God in Prayer, and it may be well to let them know we do thus pray for them, and bleſs them in the Name of the Lord.

2. The Succeſs was different, according to the different Diſpoſition of thoſe they preach'd to and pray'd for. According as the Inhabitants are, Sons of Peace or not, accordingly our Peace will or will not *reſt upon the Houſe*; *recipitur ad modum recipientis.* (1.) You will meet with ſome that are the *Sons of Peace*, that by the Operations of the Divine Grace, purſuant to the Deſignations of the Divine Counſel, are ready to admit the Word of the Goſpel in the Light and Love of it, and have their Hearts made as ſoft Wax to receive the Impreſſions of it. Thoſe are qualify'd to receive the Comforts of the Goſpel, in whom there is a good Work of Grace wrought. And as to thoſe, *your Peace* ſhall find them out, and *reſt upon them*, your Prayers for them ſhall be heard, the Promiſes of the Goſpel ſhall be *confirm'd* to them, the Privileges of it *conferr'd* on them, and the Fruit of both ſhall remain and continue with them; a good Part that ſhall not be *taken away*. (2.) You will meet with others that are no Ways diſpos'd to hear or heed your Meſſage; whole Houſes that have not one *Son of Peace* in them: Now it is certain, our Peace ſhall *not come* upon *them*, they have no Part or Lot in the Matter; the Bleſſing that reſts upon the *Sons of Peace*, ſhall never come upon the Sons of *Belial*; nor can any expect the Bleſſings of the Covenant, that will not come under the Bonds of it. But it ſhall *return to us again*, that is, we ſhall have the Comfort of having done our Duty to God, and diſcharg'd our Truſt. Our Prayers, like *David's*, ſhall return *into our own Boſom*, Pſalm 35. 13. and we ſhall have Commiſſion to go on in the Work. Our Peace ſhall return to us again, not only to be enjoy'd by ourſelves, but to be communicated to others, to the next we meet, with them that are *Sons of Peace*.

5. They muſt *receive* the Kindneſſes of thoſe that did *entertain* them, and *bid them welcome*, v. 7, 8. Thoſe that receive the Goſpel, will receive you that preach it, and give you Entertainment; you muſt not think to raiſe Eſtates, but you may depend upon a Subſiſtence; and (1.) Be not *ſhy*; do not ſuſpect your Welcome, nor be afraid of being troubleſome, but *eat and drink* heartily *ſuch Things as they give*; for whatever Kindneſs they ſhow you, it is but a ſmall Return for the Kindneſs you do them, in bringing the glad Tidings of *Peace*. You well deſerve it, for *the Labourer is worthy of his Hire*, the Labourer in the Work of the Miniſtry is ſo, if he be indeed a *Labourer*; and it is not an Act of Charity, but of Juſtice in them, who are *taught in the Word* to *communicate to them that teach them.* (2.) Be not *nice* and *curious* in your Diet, *eat and drink ſuch Things as they give*, v. 7. *ſuch Things as are ſet before you*, v. 8. Be thankful for plain Food, and do nor find Fault, tho' it be not dreſs'd according to Art. It ill becomes Chriſt's Diſciples to be *deſirous of Dainties.* As he had not ty'd them up to the Phariſees ſuperſtitious Faſts, ſo he has not allow'd them the luxurious Feaſts of the Epicures. Probably Chriſt here refers to the Traditions of the Elders about their Meat, which were ſo many, that thoſe who obſerv'd them were extreamly critical; you could hardly ſet a Diſh of Meat before them, but there was ſome Scruple or other concerning it; but Chriſt would not have them to regard thoſe Things, but eat what was given them, *asking no Queſtion for Conſcience ſake.*

6. They muſt *denounce* the Judgments of God againſt thoſe who *rejected* them and their *Meſſage*. If you *enter into a City*, and they *do not receive you*, if there be none their diſpos'd to hearken to your Doctrine, leave them, *v.* 10. If they will not *give you welcome* into their Houſes, do you *give them Warning* in their Street; he orders them to do as, *Chap.* 9. 5. he had order'd the Apoſtles to do, ſay to them, not with Rage, or Scorn, or Reſentment, but with Compaſſion to their poor periſhing Souls, and a holy Dread of the Ruin which they are bringing upon themſelves, *even the Duſt of your City which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off againſt you*, v. 11. from them do not receive any Kindneſſes at all, be not beholden to them; it coſt that Prophet of the Lord dear, who accepted a Meals Meat with a Prophet in *Bethel*, 1 King 13. 21, 22. Tell them you will not carry away with you the Duſt of their City, let them take it to themſelves, for *Duſt they are.* It ſhall be a Witneſs for Chriſt's Meſſengers, that they had been their according to their Maſter's Order; *Tender* and *Refuſal* was a Diſcharge of their

Truſt: But it ſhall be a Witneſs againſt the Recuſants, that they wou'd not give Chriſt's Meſſengers any Entertainment, no, not ſo much as Water to waſh their Feet with, but they were forc'd to wipe off the Duſt. But tell them plainly, and bid them *be ſure* of it, *The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* Here's a fair Offer made you, if you have not the Benefit of it, 'tis your own Fault. The Goſpel is brought to your Doors, if you ſhut your Doors againſt it, your Blood is upon your own Head. Now the *Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*, if you will not come up to it, and come into it, your Sin will be inexcuſable, and your Condemnation intolerable. *Note*, The fairer Offers we have of Grace and Life by Chriſt, the more we ſhall have to anſwer for another Day, if we ſlight theſe Offers. *It ſhall be more tolerable for Sodom, than for that City*, *v.* 12. The *Sodomites* indeed rejected the Warning given them by *Lot*, but rejecting the Goſpel is a more heinous Crime, and will be puniſh'd accordingly *in that Day*; he means the Day of Judgment, *v.* 14. but calls it by Way of Emphaſis *that Day*, becauſe it is the Laſt and Great Day, the Day when we muſt account for all the *Days of Time*, and have our State determin'd for the *Days of Eternity*.

Upon this Occaſion the Evangeliſt repeats

1. The particular Doom of thoſe Cities wherein moſt of Chriſt's mighty Works were done, which we had *Mat.* 11. 21, *&c. Chorazin*, and *Bethſaida*, and *Capernaum*, all bordering upon the Sea of *Galilee*, where Chriſt was moſt converſant, are the Places here mention'd. (1.) They enjoy'd greater Privileges; Chriſt's *mighty Works were done in them*, and they were all gracious Works, Works of Mercy. They were hereby *exalted to Heaven*, not only dignified and honour'd, but put into a fair Way of being happy; they were brought as near Heaven as external Means could bring them. (2.) God's Deſign in favouring them thus, was to bring them to *Repentance* and *Reformation* of Life; *to ſit in Sackcloth and Aſhes*, both in Humiliation for the Sins they had committed, and in Humility, and a meek Subjection to God's Government. (3.) Their fruſtrating this Deſign, and their receiving the Grace of God therein in vain; it is imply'd, that they *repented not*, they were not wrought upon by all the Miracles of Chriſt, to think the better of him, or the worſe of Sin. They did not bring forth Fruits agreeable to the Advantages they enjoy'd. (4.) There was Reaſon to think, morally ſpeaking, that if Chriſt had gone to *Tyre* and *Sidon*, Gentile Cities, and had preach'd the ſame Doctrine to them, and wrought the ſame Miracles among them that he did in theſe Cities of *Iſrael*, they would have repented *long ago*, ſo ſpeedy would their Repentance have been; and that in *Sackcloth and Aſhes*, ſo deep would it have been. Now to underſtand the Wiſdom of God, in *giving* the Means of Grace to thoſe who wou'd not improve them, and *denying* them to thoſe that wou'd, we muſt wait for the great Day of Diſcovery. (5.) The Doom of thoſe who thus receiv'd the Grace of God in vain, will be very fearful; they that were thus exalted, not making uſe of their Elevation, will be *thruſt down to Hell*; thruſt down with Diſgrace and Diſhonour; they will thruſt in to get into Heaven, in the Crowd of Profeſſors, but in vain, they ſhall be *thruſt down* to their everlaſting Grief and Diſappointment, into the loweſt Hell, and Hell will be Hell indeed to them. (6.) In the Day of Judgment *Tyre* and *Sidon* will fare better, and it will be more tolerable for them than for theſe Cities.

2. The general Rule which Chriſt would go by, as to thoſe to whom he ſent his Miniſters; he will reckon himſelf treated according as they treated his Miniſters, *v.* 16. What is done to the Embaſſador, is done, as it were, to the Prince that ſends him. (1.) *He that heareth you*, and regardeth what you ſay, *heareth me*, and therein doth me Honour. But (2.) He that *deſpiſeth you*, doth, in Effect, *deſpiſe me*, and ſhall be reckon'd with, as having put an Affront upon me; nay, he *deſpiſeth him that ſent me*. *Note*, Thoſe that contemn the Chriſtian Religion, do, in Effect, put a Slight upon natural Religion, which it is perfective of. And they who deſpiſe the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, who, tho' they do not hate and perſecute them, yet think meanly of them, look ſcornfully upon them, and turn their Backs upon their Miniſtry, will be reckon'd with as Deſpiſers of God and Chriſt.

17 ¶ And the ſeventy return'd again with joy, ſaying, Lord, even the devils are ſubject unto us thro' thy name. 18 And he ſaid unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. 19 Behold I give unto you power to tread on ſerpents and ſcorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing ſhall by any means hurt you. 20 Notwithſtanding in this rejoyce not, that the ſpirits are ſubject unto you: but rather rejoyce becauſe your names are written in heaven. 21 ¶ In that hour Jeſus rejoyced in ſpirit, and ſaid, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou haſt hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and haſt revealed them unto babes: even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight. 22 All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the ſon is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the ſon, and he to whom the ſon will reveal *him*. 23 ¶ And he turned him unto *his* diſciples, and ſaid privately, Bleſſed *are* the eyes which ſee the things that ye ſee. 24 For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have deſir'd to ſee thoſe things which ye ſee, and have not ſeen *them*; and to hear thoſe things which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

Chriſt ſent forth the ſeventy Diſciples as he was going up to *Jeruſalem*, to the *Feaſt of the Tabernacles*, when he *went up not openly*, but *as it were in ſecret*, *John* 7. 10. having ſent Abroad ſo great a Part of his ordinary Retinue; and Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks it was before his Return from that Feaſt, and while he was yet at *Jeruſalem* or *Bethany*, which was hard by, for there he was, *v.* 38. that they, or at leaſt ſome of them, return'd to him. Now here we are told,

1. What Account they gave him of the Succeſs of their Expedition, *v.* 17. *They returned again with Joy*; not complaining of the Fatigue of their Journies, or of the Oppoſition and Diſcouragement they met with, but rejoycing in their Succeſs, eſpecially in caſting out unclean Spirits; *Lord, even the Devils are ſubject unto us through thy Name*; tho' the *Healing of the Sick* only was mention'd in their Commiſſion, *v.* 16. yet no doubt the *caſting out* of Devils was included, and in this they had wonderful Succeſs: (1.) They give Chriſt the Glory of this: 'Tis *through thy Name*. *Note*, All our Victories over Satan are obtain'd by Power deriv'd from Jeſus Chriſt: We muſt *in his Name* enter the Liſt with our Spiritual Enemies, and whatever Advantages we gein, he muſt have all the Praiſe; if the Work be done *in his Name*, the Honour is due *to his Name*. (2.) They entertain themſelves with the Comfort of it; they ſpeak of it with an Air of Exultation, *even the Devils*, thoſe potent Enemies are *ſubject to us*. *Note*, The Saints have no greater Joy or Satisfaction in any of their Triumphs than in thoſe over *Satan*. If Devils are *ſubject to us*, what can ſtand before us?

2. What Acceptance they found with him, and how he entertain'd this Account.

1. He confirm'd what they ſaid, as agreeing with his own Obſervation, *v.* 18. My Heart and Eye went along with you; I took Notice what Succeſs you had, and I *ſaw Satan fall as Lightning from Heaven*. *Note*, Satan and his Kingdom fell before the preaching of the Goſpel; I ſee how it is, ſaith Chriſt, as you get Ground, the Devil loſeth Ground. He falls *as Lightning falls from Heaven*, ſo ſuddenly, ſo irrecoverably, ſo viſibly, that all may perceive it, and ſay, ſee how Satan's Kingdom totters, ſee how it tumbles. They triumph'd in the caſting of Devils out of the Bodies of People; but Chriſt ſees and rejoyces in the Fall of the Devil, from the Intereſt he has in the Souls of Men; which is call'd his Power *in high Places*, Eph. 6. 12. He foreſees this to be but an Earneſt of what ſhould now be ſhortly done, and was already begun, the deſtroying of Satan's Kingdom in the World, by the extirpating of Idolatry, and the turning of the Nations to the Faith of Chriſt. *Satan falls from Heaven*, when he falls from the Throne in Mens Hearts, *Acts* 26. 18. And Chriſt foreſaw that the Preaching of the Goſpel, which would *fly like Lightning* through the World, would, where-ever it went, pull down Satan's Kingdom. *Now is the Prince of this World caſt out*. Some have given another Senſe of this, as looking back to the Fall of the Angels, and deſign'd for a Caution to theſe Diſciples, leſt their Succeſs ſhould puff them up with Pride: I ſaw Angels turn'd into Devils by *Pride*, that was the Sin for which Satan was *caſt down from Heaven*; where he had been an Angel of Light; I *ſaw* it, and give you an Intimation of it, leſt you being *lifted up with Pride, ſhould fall into that Condemnation of the Devil*, who fell by Pride, 1 *Tim.* 3. 6.

2. He repeated, ratify'd, and enlarg'd their Commiſſion, *v.* 19. *Behold I give you Power to tread on Serpents.* *Note*, To him that hath, and uſeth well what he hath, more ſhall be given. They had employ'd their Power vigorouſly againſt *Satan*, and now Chriſt entruſts them with greater Power. (1.) An *Offenſive* Power, Power to *tread on Serpents and Scorpions*, i. e. Devils, malignant Spirits, the old Serpents; you ſhall *bruiſe their Heads* in my Name, according to the firſt Promiſe, *Gen* 3. 15. Come *ſet your Feet* on *the Necks* of theſe Enemies; you ſhall tread upon theſe *Lions* and *Adders* wherever you meet with them, you ſhall *trample them under Foot*, Pſal. 91. 13. You ſhall *tread upon all the Power of the Enemy*, and the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* ſhall be every where ſet up upon the Ruins of the Devil's Kingdom; as the Devils have now been *ſubject to you*, ſo they ſhall ſtill be. (2.) A *Defenſive* Power; *nothing ſhall by any Means hurt you*; not *Serpents* or *Scorpions*, if you ſhall be chaſtiſed with them, or thrown into Priſons and Dungeons among them; you ſhall be unhurt by the moſt venomous Creatures, as St. *Paul* was, *Acts* 28. 5. and as is promis'd, *Mat.* 16. 18. If wicked Men be as *Serpents* to you, and you *dwell* among thoſe *Scorpions*, as *Ezek.* 2. 6. you may deſpiſe their Rage, and *tread* upon it, *it* needs not diſturb you, for they have no Power againſt you but what is

given them from above; they may *Hiſs*, but they cannot *Hurt*. You may play upon the Hole of the Aſp, for *Death it ſelf ſhall not Hurt or Deſtroy*, Iſa. 11. 8, 19. 25. 8.

3. He directed them to turn their Joy into the right Channel, v. 20. *Notwithſtanding, in this rejoyce not, that the Spirits are ſubject unto you*, that they have been ſo, and ſhall be ſtill ſo; Do not rejoyce in this only as it is your Honour, and a Confirmation of your Miſſion, and as it ſets you a Degree above other good People, do not rejoyce in this only, or in this *cheifly*, but *rather rejoyce, becauſe your Names are written in Heaven*, i. e. becauſe you are choſen of God to eternal Life, and are the Children of God through Faith. Chriſt, who knew the Counſels of God, could tell them, that their *Names were written in Heaven*, for it is the *Lamb's Book of Life* that they are written in. All Believers are, through Grace, entitled to the Inheritance of Sons, and have receiv'd the Adoption of Sons, and the Spirit of Adoption, which is the Earneſt of that Inheritance, and ſo are enroll'd among his Family; now this is Matter of Joy, greater Joy than caſting out Devils. *Note*, Power to become the Children of God, is to be valu'd more than a Power to work Miracles: For we read of thoſe who did *in Chriſt's Name caſt out Devils*, as *Judas* did, and yet will be diſown'd by Chriſt in the Great Day; but they whoſe *Names are written in Heaven*, ſhall never Periſh, they are *Chriſt's Sheep*, to whom he will *give eternal Life*. Saving Graces are more to be rejoyc'd in than Spiritual Gifts; Holy Love is a more excellent Way than ſpeaking with Tongues.

4. He offer'd up a ſolemn Thankſgiving to his Father, for employing ſuch mean People as his Diſciples were, in ſuch high and honourable Services, *v.* 21, 22. this we had before, *Mat.* 11. 25, 26, 27. only here it is prefix'd, that *in that Hour Jeſus rejoyc'd*, 'twas fit particular Notice ſhould be taken of *that* Hour, becauſe there were ſo few ſuch, for he was a *Man of Sorrows*, in *that Hour* he ſaw Satan fall, and heard of the good Succeſs of his Miniſters, *in that Hour he rejoyced*. *Note*, Nothing rejoyceth the Heart of the Lord Jeſus ſo much, as the Progreſs of the Goſpel, and its getting Ground of *Satan*, by the Converſion of Souls to Chriſt. Chriſt's Joy was a ſolid ſubſtantial Joy, an inward Joy, *He rejoyced in Spirit*; but his Joy, like deep Waters, made no Noiſe; 'twas Joy that a Stranger did not intermeddle with; before he apply'd himſelf to *thank his Father*, he ſtirred up himſelf to *rejoyce*; for as *thankful Praiſe* is the genuine Language of *holy Joy*, ſo *holy Joy* is the Root and Spring of *thankful Praiſe*. Two Things he gives Thanks for.

(1.) For what was *revealed* by the *Father* through the *Son*, v. 21. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth*. In all our Adorations of God we muſt have an Eye to him, both as the Maker of Heaven and Earth, and as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and in him our Father. Now, that which he gives Thanks for is, (1.) That the Counſels of God concerning Man's Reconciliation to himſelf, were *reveal'd* to ſome of the Children of Men, who might be fit alſo to *teach others*, and it is God that *by his Son* hath ſpoken theſe Things *to us*, and by his Spirit has reveal'd them in us; *he* hath *revealed* that which had been *kept ſecret* from the Beginning of the World. (2.) That they were reveal'd to *Babes*, to thoſe that were of mean Parts and Capacities, whoſe Extraction and Education had nothing in it promiſing, who were but *Children in Underſtanding*, till God by his Spirit elevated their Faculties, and furniſh'd them with this Knowledge, and an Ability to communicate it. We have Reaſon to thank God, not ſo much for the Honour he has hereby put upon the Babes, as for the Honour he has hereby done himſelf in perfecting Strength out of Weakneſs. (3.) That at the ſame Time when he revealed them unto Babes, he *hid them from the Wiſe and Prudent*, the Gentile Philoſophers, the Jewiſh Rabbins. He *did not reveal* the Things of the Goſpel to them, nor employ them in preaching up his Kingdom, Thanks be to God that the Apoſtles were not fetch'd from their Schools: For, (1.) They would have been apt to mingle their Notions with the Doctrine of Chriſt, which would have corrupted it, as afterwards it prov'd. For Chriſtianity was much corrupted by the *Platoniſt*'s Philoſophy, in the firſt Ages of it, and by the *Peripatetick* in its latter Ages, and by the Judaizing Teachers at the firſt Planting of it. (2.) If *Rabbins* and *Philoſophers* had been made *Apoſtles*, the Succeſs of the Goſpel would have been aſcrib'd to their Learning and Wit, and the Force of their Reaſonings and Eloquence, and therefore they muſt not be emyloy'd leſt they ſhould have taken too much to themſelves, and others ſhould have attributed too much to them; they were paſt by for the ſame Reaſon that *Gideon's* Army was reduc'd, *The People are yet too many*, Jud. 7. 4. *Paul* indeed was bred a Scholar among the Wiſe and Prudent, but he became a *Babe* when he became an Apoſtle, and laid aſide the *enticing Words of Man's Wiſdom*, forgot them all, and made neither Shew nor Uſe of any other Knowledge, but that of *Chriſt and him crucified*, 1 Cor. 2. 2, 4. (4.) That God herein acted in it by Way of Sovereignty, *even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy Sight*. If God gives his Grace and the Knowledge of his Son to ſome that are leſs likely, and do not give it to others whom we would think better able to deliver it with Advantage, this muſt ſatisfy, ſo it pleaſeth God, whoſe Thoughts are infinitely above ours. He chuſeth to entruſt the diſpenſing of his Goſpel in the Hands of thoſe, who with a *Divine Energy*, will give it the *ſetting on*; rather than in theirs, who with humane Art will give it the *ſetting off*.

(2.) For what was *ſecret* between the *Father* and *the Son*, v. 22. (1.) The vaſt *Confidence* that the Father *puts* in the Son. *All Things are delivered to me of my Father*: All Wiſdom and Knowledge; all Power and Authority; all that Grace and Comfort which is intended for the choſen Remnant, 'tis all deliver'd into the Hands of the Lord Jeſus; in him all Fulneſs muſt *dwell*, and from him it muſt be deriv'd: He is the great *Truſtee* that manageth all the Concerns of God's Kingdom. (2.) The good Underſtanding that there is between the Father and the Son, and their *mutual Conſciouſneſs*, ſuch as no Creature can be admitted to. *No Man knows who the Son is*, nor what his Mind is, *but the Father*, who *poſſeſſed him in the Beginning of his Ways, before his Works of old*, Prov. 8. 22. Nor *who the Father is*, and what his Counſels are, *but the Son*, who lay in his Boſom from Eternity, was *by him as one brought up with him, and was daily his Delight*, Prov. 8. 20. *And he to whom the Son*, by the Spirit, *will reveal him*. The Goſpel is the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, and to him we owe all the Diſcoveries made us of the Will of God for our Salvation, and here he ſpeaks of it as that which was a great Pleaſure to himſelf, and for which he was very thankful to his Father to be ſo intruſted.

5. He told his Diſciples how well it was for them that they had theſe Things revealed to them, *v.* 23, 24. Having addreſs'd himſelf to his Father, he *turned him to his Diſciples*, deſigning to make them ſenſible how much it was for their Happineſs, as well as for the Glory and Honour of God, that they knew the Myſteries of the Kingdom, and were employed to lead others into the Knowledge of them, conſidering (1.) What a Step it is *towards* ſomething better, tho' the bare Knowledge of theſe Things is not ſaving, yet it puts us in the Way of Salvation; *bleſſed are the Eyes which ſee the Things which ye ſee*. God therein bleſſeth them, and if it be not their own Fault, it will be an eternal Beſſedneſs to them. (2.) What a Step it is *above* thoſe that went before them, even the greateſt Saints, and thoſe that were moſt the Favourites of Heaven, *many Prophets and righteous Men*, ſo it is, *Mat.* 13. 17. *many Prophets and Kings*, ſo it is here, have *deſir'd* to ſee and hear thoſe Things which you are daily and intimately converſant with, and *have not ſeen* and *heard* them. The Honour and Happineſs of the New Teſtament Saints, far exceeds that even of the *Prophets* and Kings of the *Old Teſtament*, tho' they alſo were highly favour'd. The general Ideas which the Old Teſtament Saints had, according to the Intimations given them of the Graces and Glories of the Meſſiah's Kingdom, made them wiſh a thouſand Times, that their Lot had been reſerv'd for thoſe bleſſed Days, and that they might ſee the Subſtance of thoſe Things which they had faint Shadows of. *Note*, The Conſideration of the great Advantages which we have in the New Teſtament Light, above what they had who liv'd in Old Teſtament Times, ſhould awaken our Diligence in the Improvement of it, for if it do not, 'twill aggravate our Condemnation for the Non-improvement of it.

25 ¶ And behold, a certain lawyer ſtood up, and tempted him, ſaying, Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 He ſaid unto him, What is written in the law? how readeſt thou? 27 And he anſwering, ſaid, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy ſtrength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thy ſelf. 28 And he ſaid unto him, Thou haſt anſwered right: this do, and thou ſhalt live. 29 But he willing to juſtify himſelf, ſaid unto Jeſus, And who is my neighbour? 30 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid, A certain man went down from Jeruſalem to Jericho, and fell among theives, which ſtripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. 31 And by chance there came down a certain prieſt that way; and when he ſaw him, he paſs'd by on the other ſide. 32 And likewiſe a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on *him*, and paſſed by on the other ſide. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he ſaw him, he had compaſſion *on him*. 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oyl and wine, and ſet him on his own beaſt, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the hoſt, and ſaid unto him, Take care of him; and whatſoever thou ſpendeſt more, when I come again, I will repay thee. 36 Which now of theſe three, thinkeſt thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37 And he ſaid, He that ſhewed mercy on him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, Go, and do thou likewiſe.

We have here Chriſt's Diſcourſe with a Lawyer about ſome Points of Conſcience, which we are all concern'd to be rightly inform'd in, and are ſo here from Chriſt, though the Queſtions were propos'd with no good Intention.

Firſt, We are concern'd to know what that Good is which we ſhould do in *this* Life, in order to our attaining *eternal Life*: A Queſtion to this Purpoſe was propos'd to our Saviour, by a *certain Lawyer*, or *Scribe*, only with a Deſign to *try* him; not with a Deſire to be inſtructed by him, *v.* 25. The Lawyer *ſtood up*, and *asked him, Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal Life*? If Chriſt had any thing peculiar to preſcribe, by this Queſtion he would get it out of him, and perhaps expoſe him for it; if not, he would expoſe his Doctrine as needleſs, ſince it would give no other Direction for obtaining Happineſs than what they had already receiv'd: Or, perhaps he had no malicious Deſign againſt Chriſt, as ſome of the Scribes had, only he was willing to have a little Talk with him, juſt as People go to Church to hear what the Miniſter will ſay. This was a good Queſtion, *What ſhall I do to inherit eternal Life*? But it loſt all its Goodneſs when it was propos'd with an ill Deſign, or a very mean one. *Note*, It is not enough to ſpeak of the Things of God, and to enquire about them, but we muſt do it with an agreeable Concern. If we ſpeak of *eternal Life*, and *the Way* to it in a careleſs Manner, merely as Matter of Diſcourſe, eſpecially as Matter of Diſpute, we do but take the Name of God in vain, as the Lawyer here did.

Now this Queſtion being ſtarted, obſerve,

1. How Chriſt turn'd him over to the Divine Law, and bid him follow the Direction of that: Though he knew the Thoughts and Intents of *his* Heart, he doth not anſwer him according to the Folly of that, but according to the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of the Queſtion he ask'd. He anſwer'd him with a Queſtion, *What is written in the Law, how readeſt thou?* v. 26. He came to catechize Chriſt, and to know him, but Chriſt will catechize him, and make him know himſelf. He talks to him as a *Lawyer*, as one converſant in the Law, the Studies of his Profeſſion would inform him; let him practiſe according to his Knowledge, and he ſhould not come ſhort of *eternal Life*. *Note*, It will be of great Uſe to us in our Way to Heaven, to conſider *what is written in the Law*, and what *we read* there. We muſt have Recourſe to our Bibles, to the Law, as 'tis now in the Hand of Chriſt, and walk in the Way that is *ſhew'd* us there. 'Tis a great Mercy that we have the Law *written*, that we have it thereby reduc'd to a Certainty, and that thereby 'tis capable of ſpreading the *further*, and laſting the *longer*. Having it *written*, it is our Duty to read it, and to read it with Underſtanding, and to treaſure up what we read, ſo that when there is Occaſion, we may be able to tell *what is written in the Law*, and *how we read*. And to this we muſt appeal, by this we muſt try Doctrines, and end Diſputes; this muſt be our Oracle, our Touch-ſtone, our Rule, our Guide: What is written in the Law, how do we read? If there be Light in us, 'twill have Regard to this Light.

2. What a good Account he gave of the Law, of the principal Commandments of the Law, which we muſt bind ourſelves to the Obſervance of, if we would inherit eternal Life. He did not like a *Phariſee*, refer himſelf to the Tradition of the Elders, but like a good Textuary faſten'd upon the two firſt and greateſt Commandments of the Law, as thoſe which he thought muſt be moſt ſtrictly obſerv'd in Order to the obtaining of *eternal Life*, and which included all the reſt, *v.* 27. (1.) We muſt love *God with all our Hearts*; muſt look upon him as the beſt of Beings in himſelf, moſt amiable, and infinitely perfect and excellent, as one whom we lye under the greateſt Obligations to, both in Gratitude and Intereſt. We muſt prize him, and value our ſelves by our Relation to him; muſt pleaſe ourſelves in him, and devote ourſelves intirely to him. Our Love in him muſt be ſincere and hearty, and fervent; it muſt not only be a ſuperlative Love, a Love that's as ſtrong as Death, but an intelligent Love, and ſuch as we can give a good Account of the Grounds and Reaſons of. It muſt be an *intire* Love, he muſt have our *whole* Souls, and muſt be ſerv'd with *all that is within us*. We muſt love nothing *beſide him*, but what we love *for him*, and in ſubordination to him. (2.) We muſt love our Neighbours as *our ſelves*, which we ſhall eaſily do, if (as we ought) we love God *better than our ſelves*. We muſt wiſh well to all, and ill to none; muſt do all the Good we can in the World, and no Hurt, and muſt fix it as a Rule to our ſelves to do to others as we would they ſhould do to us, and this is to love our Neighbour *as ourſelves*.

3. Chriſt's Approbation of what he ſaid, *v.* 28. Though he came to tempt him, yet what he ſaid that was good, Chriſt commended; *thou haſt anſwer'd right*. Chriſt himſelf faſten'd upon thoſe as the Two great Commandments of the Law, *Matt.* 22. 37. both Sides agreed in this. Thoſe who do well ſhall have Praiſe of the ſame, and ſo all thoſe have that ſpeak well; ſo far is Right: But the hardeſt Part of this Work yet remains, *this do, and thou ſhalt live*; thou ſhalt *inherit eternal Life*.

4. His Care to avoid the Conviction which was now ready to faſten upon him. When Chriſt ſaid, *This do, and thou ſhalt live*, he began to be aware that Chriſt intended to draw from him an Acknowledgment that he *had not done this*, and therefore an Enquiry what he ſhould do, and which Way he ſhould look to get his Sins pardon'd; and likewiſe an Acknowledgment that he *could not do this* perfectly, for the Future, by any Strength of his own, and therefore an Enquiry which Way he might fetch in Strength to enable him to do it; but he was *willing to juſtifie himſelf*, and therefore cared not for carrying on that Diſcourſe, but ſaith, in Effect, as another did, *Mat.* 19. 20. *All theſe Things have I kept from my Youth up*. *Note*, Many ask good Queſtions with a Deſign rather to *juſtify themſelves*, than to *inform themſelves*; rather proudly to ſhew what is good in them, than humbly to ſee what is bad in them.

Secondly, We are concern'd to know who is our Neighbour; whom by the Second Great Commandment we are oblig'd to *Love*. And this is another of this Lawyer's Queries, which he ſtarted only that he might *drop* the former, leſt Chriſt ſhould have forc'd him in the Proſecution of it to *condemn himſelf*, when he was reſolv'd to *juſtify* himſelf. As to loving God he was willing to ſay no more of it, but as to his *Neighbour*, he was ſure there he had come up to the Rule; for he had always been very kind and reſpectful to all about him. Now obſerve,

1. What was the corrupt Notion of the Jewiſh Teachers in this Matter: Dr. *Lightfoot* quotes their own Words to this Purpoſe, where he ſaith, *Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour, he excepts all Gentiles*, for they are not *our Neighbours*, but thoſe only that are of our own Nation and Religion. They would not put an *Iſraelite* to Death for killing a *Gentile*, for he was not *his Neighbour*: Indeed they ſay, they ought not to kill a *Gentile*, that they were not at War with; but if they ſaw a *Gentile* in *Danger of Death*, they thought themſelves under no Obligation to help to *ſave his Life*. Such wicked Inferences did they draw from that holy Covenant of Peculiarity, which God had diſtinguiſh'd them by; and by abuſing it thus they had forfeited it; and God juſtly took the Forfeiture, and transferr'd Covenant Favours to the Gentile World, to whom they brutiſhly deny'd common Favours.

2. How Chriſt corrected this inhumane Notion, and ſhew'd by a Parable, that whoever we *have need* to receive Kindneſs *from*, and *find ready* to ſhew us the Kindneſs *we need*, we cannot but look upon as our *Neighbour*; and therefore ought to look upon all thoſe as ſuch who need our Kindneſs, and to ſhew them Kindneſs accordingly, though they be not of our own Nation and Religion. Now obſerve,

1. The Parable it ſelf, which repreſents to us a poor *Jew* in diſtreſs'd Circumſtances, ſuccour'd and reliev'd by a good *Samaritan*. Let us ſee here,

1. How he was *abus'd* by his *Enemies*: The honeſt Man was travelling peaceably upon his lawful Occaſions in the Road, and it was a great Road that leads from *Jeruſalem* to *Jericho*, *v.* 30. The mentioning of thoſe Places intimates that it was Matter of Fact, and not a Parable, and probably it happen'd lately, juſt as it is here related. The Occurrences of Providence would yield us many good Inſtructions, if we would carefully obſerve and improve them; and would be equivalent to Parables fram'd on purpoſe for Inſtruction, and be more *affecting*. This poor Man *fell among Thieves*. Whether they were *Arabians*, *Rapparees* that liv'd by Spoil, or ſome profligate Wretches of his own Nation, or ſome of the *Roman* Soldiers, who notwithſtanding the ſtrict Diſcipline of their Army did this Villany, doth not appear; but they were very *barbarous*, they not only took his Money, but ſtrip'd him of his Clothes; and that he might not be able to purſue them, or only to gratify a cruel Diſpoſition (for otherwiſe *what profit was there in his Blood*?) they *wounded him*, and left him *half dead*, ready to dye of his Wounds. We may here conceive a juſt Indignation at *Highwaymen*, that have diveſted themſelves of all Humanity, and are as natural Brute-Beaſts, Beaſts of Prey, made to be *taken and deſtroyed*; and at the ſame Time we cannot but think with Compaſſion on thoſe that fall into the Hands of ſuch wicked and unreaſonable Men, and be ready when it is in our Power to help them. And what Reaſon have we to thank God for our Preſervation from Perils by Robbers!

2. How he was *ſlighted* by thoſe that ſhould have been his Friends, who were not only Men of his own Nation and Religion, but one a *Prieſt*, and t'other a *Levite*, Men of a publick Character and Station: Nay, they were Men of profeſs'd Sanctity, whoſe Offices oblig'd them to Tenderneſs and Compaſſion, *Heb.* 5. 2. who ought to teach others their Duty in ſuch a Caſe as this, which was to *deliver them that were drawn unto Death*, yet they would not themſelves do it. Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us that many of the Courſes of the Prieſts had their Reſidence in *Jericho*, and from thence came up to *Jeruſalem*, when it was their turn to officiate there, and ſo back again, which occaſion'd abundance of *paſſing* and *repaſſing* of *Prieſts* that Way, and *Levites*, their Attendants; they came *this Way*, and ſaw the poor wounded Man, 'tis likely they heard his Groans, and could not but perceive that if he were not help'd he muſt quickly periſh. The *Levite* not only ſaw him, but *came and look'd on him*, *v.* 32. but they *paſſed by on the other Side*; when they ſaw his Caſe they got as far off him as ever they could, as if they would have had a Pretence to ſay, *Behold, we knew it not*. 'Tis ſad when

thoſe who ſhould be Examples of Charity, were Prodigies of Cruelty; and who ſhould, by diſplaying the Mercies of God, open the Bowels of others Compaſſion, ſhut up their own.

3. How he was *ſuccour'd* and *reliev'd* by a *Stranger*, a *certain Samaritan*, of that Nation, which, of all other, the *Jews* deſpis'd and deteſted, and would have no Dealings with, this Man had ſome Humanity in him, *v.* 33. The *Prieſt* had his Heart harden'd againſt one of *his own People*, but the *Samaritan* had his open'd towards one of *another* People; *when he ſaw him he had Compaſſion on him*, and never took into Conſideration what Countrey he was of: Though he was a *Jew*, he was a *Man*, and a Man in *Miſery*, and he has learn'd to honour all Men: He knows not how ſoon this poor Man's Caſe may be his own, and therefore pities him, as he himſelf would deſire and expect to be pity'd in the like Caſe. That ſo great Love ſhould be found in a *Samaritan*, was, perhaps, thought as great as that *Faith* which Chriſt admir'd in a *Roman*, in a Woman of *Canaan*; but really was not ſo, for Pity is the Work of a Man, but Faith is the Work of Divine *Grace*.

The *Compaſſion* of this *Samaritan* was not an idle Compaſſion; he did not think it enough to ſay, be healed, be help'd (*Jam.* 2. 16.) but when he *drew out his Soul*, he *reach'd forth his Hand* alſo to this poor *needy* Creature, *Iſa.* 58. 7. 10. *Prov.* 31. 20. See how friendly this good *Samaritan* was, (1.) He *went to* the poor Man, whom the *Prieſt* and *Levite* kept at a Diſtance from; he enquir'd, no doubt, how he came into this deplorable Condition, and condol'd him. (2.) He did the Surgeon's Part, for want of a better; he *bound up his Wounds*, making Uſe of his own Linnen, 'tis likely for that Purpoſe; and pour'd *in Oil and Wine*, which, perhaps, he had with him; Wine to waſh the Wound, and Oil to mollify it, and cloſe it up: He did all he could to eaſe the Pain, and prevent the Peril of his Wounds, as one whoſe Heart bled with them. (3.) He *ſet him on his own Beaſt*, and went on Foot himſelf, and *brought him to an Inn*. And a great Mercy it is to have Inns upon the Road, where we may be furniſh'd for our Money with all Conveniences for Food and Reſt. Perhaps the *Samaritan*, if he had not met with this Hindrance, would have got that Night to his Journey's End, but in Compaſſion to that poor Man he takes up ſhort at an *Inn*. Some think the *Prieſt* and *Levite* pretend they could not ſtay to help the poor Man, becauſe they were in Haſte to go and attend the Temple-Service at *Jeruſalem*. We ſuppoſe this *Samaritan* went upon Buſineſs; but he underſtood that both his own Buſineſs and God's Sacrifice too muſt give Place to ſuch an Act of Mercy as this. (4.) He *took care of him* in the Inn, got him to Bed, had Food for him that was proper, and due Attendance, and it may be, pray'd with him. Nay, (5.) As if he had been his own Child, or one he was oblig'd to look after, when he left him next Morning, he left Money with the Landlord to be laid out for his Uſe, and paſs'd his Word for what he ſhould ſpend more. *Two Pence* of their Money was about Fifteen-pence of ours, which, according to the Rate of Things then, would go a great Way; however here 'twas an Earneſt of Content to the full of all Demands. Now all this was kind and generous, and as much as one could have expected from a Friend or a Brother; and yet here it is done by a Stranger and Foreigner.

Now this Parable is applicable to another Purpoſe than that for which 'twas intended; and doth excellently ſet forth the Kindneſs and Love of God our Saviour towards ſinful, miſerable Man. We were like this poor diſtreſſed Traveller; Satan, our Enemy, had *rob'd* us, *ſtripp'd* us, *wounded* us, ſuch is the Miſchief that Sin hath done us; we are by Nature more than *half dead*, twice dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins; utterly unable to help our ſelves, for we were without *Strength*. The Law of *Moſes*, like, the *Prieſt* and *Levite*, the Miniſters of that Law, *looks upon us*, but has no Compaſſion on us, gives us no Relief, it *paſſeth by on the other Side*, as having neither Pity nor Power to help us: But then comes the bleſſed Jeſus, that good *Samaritan*, (and they ſaid of him by Way of Reproach, *He is a Samaritan*) he has Compaſſion on us, he binds up our bleeding Wounds, (*Pſ.* 147. 3. *Iſa.* 6. 1.) pours in, not *Oil and Wine*, but that which is infinitely more precious, *his own Blood*: He takes Care of us, and bids us put all the Expence of our Cure upon his Account; and all this, tho' he was none of us, till he was pleas'd by his voluntary Condeſcention to make himſelf ſo, but infinitely above us. This magnifies the Riches of his Love, and obligeth us all to ſay, How much are we indebted, and what ſhall we render?

2. The Reddition or Application of the Parable.

1. The Truth contained in it is extorted from the Lawyer's own Mouth. Now tell me, ſaith Chriſt, *Which of thoſe three was Neighbour to him that fell among Thieves*, v. 36. the Prieſt, the Levite, or the *Samaritan*? Which of theſe did the Neighbour's Part? To this the Lawyer would not Anſwer as he ought to have done, doubtleſs the *Samaritan* was; but *he that ſhewed Mercy on him*, doubtleſs he was a good Neighbour to him, and very neighbourly, and he could not but ſay it was a good Work thus to ſave an honeſt Jew from Periſhing.

2. The Duty inferr'd from it is preſs'd home upon the Lawyer's own Conſcience; *Go and do thou likewiſe*. The Duty of Relations is mutual and reciprocal; the Titles of Friends, Brethren, Neighbours, are, as *Grotius* here ſpeaks, τῶν πρός τι, equally binding on both Sides: If one Side be bound, the other cannot be looſe, as is agreed in all Contracts. If a *Samaritan* doth well that helps a diſtreſſed *Jew*, certainly a *Jew* doth not well, if he do not in like Manner help a diſtreſſed *Samaritan*. *Petimuſque damuſque viciſſim*. And therefore *go thou* and do as the *Samaritan* did, whenever Occaſion offers; ſhew Mercy to thoſe that needs thy Help, and do it freely, and with Concern and Compaſſion, though they be not of thy own Nation, and thy own Profeſſion, Opinion and Communion in Religion. Let thy Charity be thus extenſive before thou boaſteſt of having conform'd thy ſelf to that great Commandment of *loving thy Neighbour*. This *Lawyer* valued himſelf much upon his Learning, and his Knowledge of the Laws, and in that he thought to have puzzled Chriſt himſelf, but Chriſt ſends him to School to a *Samaritan* to learn his Duty; go and do like him. *Note*, It is the Duty of every one of us, in our Places, and according to our Ability, to ſuccour, help, and relieve all that are in Diſtreſs and Neceſſity, and of Lawyers particularly, and herein we muſt ſtudy to excel many that are proud of their being Prieſts and Levites.

38 ¶ Now it came to paſs, as they went, he entred into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha, received him into her houſe. 39 And ſhe had a ſiſter called Mary, which alſo ſat at Jeſus feet, and heard his word. 40 But Martha was cumbred about much ſerving, and came to him, and ſaid, Lord, doſt thou not care that my ſiſter hath left me to ſerve alone? bid her therefore that ſhe help me. 41 And Jeſus anſwer'd, and ſaid unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled about many things: 42 But one thing is needful. And Mary hath choſen that good part, which ſhall not be taken away from her.

We may obſerve in this Story,

Firſt, The Entertainment which *Martha* gave to Chriſt and his Diſciples at her Houſe, *v.* 38. Obſerve, 1. Chriſt's coming to the Village where *Martha* liv'd. *As they went* (Chriſt and his Diſciples together) he and they with him *enter'd into a certain Village*. This Village was *Bethany*, nigh to *Jeruſalem*, whither Chriſt was now going up, and he took this in his Way. *Note*, 1. Our Lord Jeſus went about doing good, *Acts* 10. 38. ſcattering his benign Beams and Influences as the true Light of the World. 2. Wherever Chriſt went, his Diſciples went along with him. 3. Chriſt honour'd the Country Villages with his Preſence and Favour, and not the great and populous Cities only, for as he *choſe Privacy*, ſo he *countenanc'd Poverty*.

2. His Reception at *Martha*'s Houſe. *A certain Woman nam'd* Martha *receiv'd him into her Houſe*, and bid him welcome, for ſhe was the Houſe-keeper. *Note*, 1. Our Lord Jeſus when he was here upon Earth, was ſo poor, that he was neceſſitated to be beholden to his Friends for a Subſiſtence. Though he was *Sion*'s *King*, he had no Houſe of his own, either in *Jeruſalem* or near it. 2. There were ſome that were Chriſt's particular Friends, whom he lov'd more than other of his Friends, and them he viſited moſt frequently. He *lov'd* this Family, *Joh.* 11. 5. and often invited himſelf to them. Chriſt's Viſits are the Token of his Love, *Joh.* 14. 22. 3. There were thoſe who kindly receiv'd Chriſt into their Houſes, when he was here upon Earth. 'Tis call'd *Martha*'s Houſe, for probably ſhe was a Widow, and was the Houſe-keeper. Though it was chargeable to entertain Chriſt, for he did not come alone, but brought his Diſciples with him, yet ſhe would not ſtick at the Expence of it: How can we ſpend what we have better than in Chriſt's Service? Nay, though at this Time it was grown dangerous to entertain him, eſpecially ſo near *Jeruſalem*, yet ſhe car'd not what Hazard ſhe run, for his Name's Sake, though there were many that rejected him, and would not entertain him, yet there was one that bid him welcome. Though Chriſt is every where ſpoken againſt; yet there is a Remnant to whom he is dear, and that are dear to him.

Secondly, The Attendance which *Mary*, the Siſter of *Martha* gave upon the Word of Chriſt, *v.* 20. (1.) She *heard his Word*. It ſeems our Lord Jeſus as ſoon as he came into *Martha's* Houſe, even before Entertainment was got for him, addreſs'd himſelf to his great Work of preaching the Goſpel: He preſently took the Chair with Solemnity, for *Mary* ſat to hear him, which intimates that it was a continu'd Diſcourſe. *Note*, A good Sermon is never the worſe for being preach'd in a Houſe; and the Viſits of our Friends ſhould be ſo manag'd, as to make them turn to a ſpiritual Advantage. *Mary* having this Price put into her Hands, ſate herſelf to improve it, not knowing when ſhe ſhould have ſuch another. Since Chriſt is forward to ſpeak, we ſhould be *ſwift to hear*. 2. She *ſate* to hear, which notes a cloſe Attention; her Mind was compos'd, and ſhe reſolv'd to abide by it; not to catch a Word now and then, but to receive all that Chriſt deliver'd. She *ſate at his Feet*, as Scholars at the Feet of their Tutors when they read their Lectures; hence *Paul* is ſaid to be *brought up at the Feet of* Gamaliel. Our ſitting at Chriſt's Feet, when we hear his Word, ſignifies a Readineſs to receive his Word, and a Submiſſion, and entire Reſignation of ourſelves to the Conduct of it. We muſt either ſit at Chriſt's Feet, or be made his Foot-ſtool; but if we ſit with him at his Feet now, we ſhall ſit with him on his Throne ſhortly.

Thirdly, The Care of *Martha* about her domeſtick Affairs. *But* Martha *was cumber'd about much ſerving*, v. 40. and that was the Reaſon why ſhe was not where *Mary* was, ſitting at Chriſt's Feet to hear his Word. She was providing for the Entertainment of Chriſt, and thoſe that came with him. Perhaps ſhe had no Notice before of his coming, and ſhe was unprovided, but was in Care to have every Thing handſome upon this Occaſion, ſhe had not ſuch Gueſts every Day. And Houſe-keepers know what Care and Buſtle there muſt be, when a great Entertainment is to be made. Obſerve here,

1. Something *commendable*, which muſt not be overlook'd. (1.) Here was a commendable *Reſpect to our Lord Jeſus*, for we have Reaſon to think 'twas not for Oſtentation, but purely to teſtifie her good Will to him that ſhe made this Entertainment for. *Note*, Thoſe who truly love Chriſt, will think that well beſtow'd that is laid out for his Honour. (2.) Here was a commendable *Care of her Houſhold Affairs*. It appears by the Reſpects ſhew'd to this Family among the *Jews*, (*Joh.* 11. 19.) that they were Perſons of ſome Quality and Diſtinction, and yet *Martha* herſelf did not think it a Diſparagement to her to lay her Hand even to the *Service* of the Family, when there was Occaſion for it. *Note*, It is the Duty of thoſe who have the Charge of Families, to *look well to the Ways of their Houſhold*. The Affectation of State, and the Love of Eaſe, makes many Families neglected.

2. Here was ſomething *culpable*, which we muſt take Notice of too. (1.) She was for *much Serving*; her Heart was upon it, to have a very ſumptuous and ſplendid Entertainment; great Plenty, great Variety, and great Exactneſs, according to the Faſhion of the Place. She was in Care, περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν concerning *much Attendance*. *Note*, It doth not become the Diſciples of Chriſt to affect *much Serving*, to affect Varieties, Dainties, and Superfluities in Eating and Drinking; what needs *much Serving*, when much leſs will ſerve? (2.) She was *cumber'd* about it περιεσπᾶτο. She was juſt *diſtracted* with it. *Note*, Whatever Cares the Providence of God caſts upon us, we muſt not be *cumber'd* with them, nor be diſquieted and perplex'd by them. Care is good, and Duty, but *Cumber* is Sin and Folly. (3.) She was then *cumber'd* about *much Serving*, when ſhe ſhould have been with her Siſter ſitting at Chriſt's Feet, to hear his Word. *Note*, Worldly Buſineſs is then a Snare to us, when it hinders us from ſerving God, and getting Good to our Souls.

Fourthly, The *Complaint* which *Martha* made to Chriſt, againſt her Siſter *Mary*, for not *aſſiſting* her upon this Occaſion in the *Buſineſs of the Houſe*, v. 40. *Lord, doſt thou not care that my Siſter*, who is concern'd as well as I to have Things done well, *has left me to ſerve alone*; therefore diſmiſs her from attending thee and bid her come help me.

Now, 1. This Complaint of *Martha*'s may be conſider'd as a *Diſcovery* of her *Worldlineſs*: It was the Language of her inordinate Care and Cumber. She ſpeaks as one in a mighty Paſſion with her Siſter, elſe ſhe would not have troubled Chriſt with the Matter. *Note*, The Inordinancy of Worldly Cares and Purſuits is often the Occaſion of Diſturbance in Families, and of Strife and Contention among Relations. And thoſe that are eager upon the World themſelves, are apt to blame and cenſure thoſe that are not ſo too; and while they juſtify themſelves in their Worldlineſs, and judge of others by their Serviceableneſs to them in their worldly Purſuits, they are ready to condemn thoſe who addict themſelves to the Exerciſes of Religion, as if they neglected the *main Chance*, as they call it. *Martha* being angry at her Siſter, appeal'd to Chriſt, and would have him to ſay, ſhe *did well to be angry*. *Lord, doſt not thou care that my Siſter has left me to ſerve alone?* It ſhould ſeem as if Chriſt had ſometimes expreſs'd himſelf tenderly concern'd for her, and her Eaſe and Comfort, and would not have her go thro' ſo much Toil and Trouble, and ſhe expected he ſhould now bid her Siſter take her Share in it. When *Martha* was caring, ſhe muſt have *Mary* and Chriſt, and all to *care* too, or elſe ſhe is not pleas'd. *Note*, Thoſe are not always in the Right, that are moſt forward to appeal to God; we muſt therefore take Heed leſt we at any Time expect that Chriſt ſhould eſpouſe our unjuſt and groundleſs Quarrels. The Cares he caſts upon us, we may chearfully caſt upon him, but not thoſe which we fooliſhly draw upon ourſelves. He will be the Patron of the poor and injur'd, but not of the turbulent and injurious.

2. It may be conſider'd as a Diſcouragement of *Mary's* Piety and Devotion. Her Siſter ſhould have *commended* her for it; ſhould have told her that ſhe was in the Right; but inſtead of that ſhe *condemns* her as wanting in the Duty. *Note*, It is no ſtrange Thing for thoſe that are zealous in Religion, to meet with Hindrances and Diſcouragements from thoſe that are about them, not only with Oppoſition from Enemies, but with Blame and Cenſure from their Friends; *David's Faſting*, and his Dancing *before the Ark*, were turn'd *to his Reproach*.

Fifthly, The Reproof which Chriſt gave to *Martha*, for her inordinate Care, v. 41. ſhe appeal'd to him, and he gives Judgment againſt her. *Martha, Martha, Thou art careful and troubled about many Things*, whereas but *one Thing is needful*.

1. He reprov'd her, tho' he was at this Time her Gueſt, and her Fault was her over Solicitude to entertain him, and ſhe expected he ſhould juſtify her in it, yet he publickly check'd her for it. *Note, As many as Chriſt loves he rebukes and chaſtens*. Even thoſe that are dear to Chriſt, if any Thing be amiſs in them, ſhall be ſure to hear of it. *Neverthleſs, I have ſomething againſt thee*.

2. When he reprov'd her, he call'd her by her Name, *Martha*. For Reproofs are then moſt likely to do good, when they are *particular*, apply'd to particular Perſons and Caſes, as *Nathan*'s to *David*: *Thou art the Man*. He repeated her Name, *Martha, Martha*; he ſpeaks as one in earneſt, and deeply concern'd for her Welfare. Thoſe that are *entangled* in the Cares of this Life, are not eaſily *diſentangled*. To them we muſt call again and again, *O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the Lord*.

3. That which he reprov'd her for, was her being *careful and troubled about many Things*. He was not *pleas'd* that ſhe ſhould think to *pleaſe him* with a rich and ſplendid Entertainment, and with perplexing herſelf to prepare it for him; whereas he would teach us, as not to be *ſenſual* in uſing ſuch Things, ſo not to be *ſelfiſh* in being willing others ſhould be *troubled*, no Matter who, or how many, ſo we may be gratify'd. Chriſt reproves her both for the *Intenſeneſs* of her Care; thou art *careful and troubled, divided* and *diſturb'd* by thy Care; and for the *Extenſiveneſs of it*, about *many Things*: Thou doſt *graſp* at many *Enjoyments*, and ſo art troubled at many *Diſappointments*. Poor *Martha*, thou haſt many Things to fret at, and that puts thee out of Humour, whereas leſs ado would ſerve. *Note*, Inordinate Care and Trouble about many Things in this World, is a common Fault among Chriſt's Diſciples, and is very diſpleaſing to Chriſt, and 'tis that for which they often come under the Rebukes of Providence. If they fret for no juſt Cauſe, 'tis juſt with him to order them ſomething to fret at.

4. That which aggravated the Sin and Folly of her Care was, that *but one Thing is needful*. 'Tis a *low* Conſtruction which ſome put upon this, that whereas *Martha* was in Care to provide *many* Diſhes of Meat, there was Occaſion but for one; one would be enough. *There is need but of one Thing*, ἑνὸς δέ ἐστι χρεία. If we take it ſo, it furniſheth us with a Rule of *Temperance*, not to affect Varieties and Dainties, but content to ſit down to *one* Diſh of Meat, to *half one*, *Prov.* 23. 1, 2, 3. 'Tis a *forc'd* Conſtruction which ſome of the Antienrs put upon it, *but Oneneſs is needful*, in Oppoſition to Diſtractions: There is need of *one Heart* to attend upon the Word, not divided and hurry'd to and fro, as *Martha*'s was at this Time. But *the one Thing needful* is certainly meant of that which *Mary* made her Choice, *ſitting at* Chriſt's Feet to hear his Word. She was troubl'd about *many Things*, when ſhe ſhould have apply'd herſelf to one; Godlineſs *unites* the Heart which the World had *divided*. The *many Things* ſhe was troubled about were *needleſs*, while the *one Thing* ſhe neglected was *needful*. *Martha*'s Care and Work was good in its proper Seaſon and Place, but now ſhe had ſomething elſe to do, which was unſpeakably more needful, and therefore ſhould be done firſt, and moſt minded. She expected Chriſt to have blamed *Mary* for not doing as ſhe did, but he blamed her for not doing as *Mary* did; and we are ſure the *Judgment of Chriſt* is *according to Truth*. And the Day will come, when *Martha* will wiſh ſhe had ſitten where *Mary* did.

Sixthly, Chriſt's Approbation and Commendation of *Mary* for her ſerious Piety, *Mary hath choſen the good Part*. *Mary* ſaid nothing in her own Defence; but ſince *Martha* has appeal'd to the Maſter, to him ſhe is willing to refer it, and will abide by his Award; and here we have it.

1. She had juſtly given the Preference to that which beſt deſerv'd it. For *one Thing is needful*, this one Thing that ſhe has done to give up herſelf to the Conduct of Chriſt, and *receive the Law* from his Mouth. *Note*, Serious Godlineſs is a *needful* Thing, it is the *one Thing needful*, for nothing without this, will do us any real Good in this World, and nothing but this, will go with us into another World.

2. She had herein wiſely done well for herſelf. Chriſt *juſtify'd Mary* againſt her Siſter's Clamours; however we may be cenſur'd and condemn'd by Men for our Piety and Zeal, our Lord Jeſus will take our Part; *but thou ſhalt anſwer, Lord, for me*. Let not us then condemn the pious Zeal of any, leſt we ſet Chriſt *againſt us*; never be diſcourag'd if we be cenſur'd for our pious Zeal. for we have Chriſt for us. *Note*, Sooner or later, *Mary's* Choice will be juſtify'd, and all thoſe who make that Choice, and abide by it. But this was not all, he *applauded* her for her Wiſdom, ſhe *hath choſen the Part*, for ſhe choſe to be with Chriſt, to take her Part with him; ſhe choſe the better Buſineſs, and the better Happineſs, and took the better Way of *honouring* Chriſt, and of *pleaſing* him, by receiving his Word into her Heart, than *Martha* did by providing for his Entertainment in her Houſe. *Note*, (1.) A *Part with Chriſt* is a *good Part*, 'tis a Part for the Soul and Eternity,

the Part Chriſt gives to his Favourites, *Job.* 13. 8. who are Partakers *of Chriſt*, *Heb.* 3. 14. and Partakers *with Chriſt*, *Rom.* 8. 17. (2.) It is a Part that ſhall *never be taken away from thoſe that have it.* A Portion in this Life will certainly be *taken away* from us, at the fartheſt, when we ſhall be taken away from it: But *nothing ſhall ſeparate us from the Love of Chriſt*, and our Part in that Love. Men and Devils cannot take it away from us, and God and Chriſt will not. (3.) It is the Wiſdom and Duty of every one of us to chuſe this *good Part*, to chuſe the Service of God for our Buſineſs, and the Favour of God for our Happineſs, and an Intereſt in Chriſt in order to both. In particular Caſes we muſt chuſe that which has a Tendency to Religion; and reckon that beſt for us, that's beſt for our Souls. *Mary* was at her Choice whether ſhe would partake with *Martha* in her Care, and get the Reputation of a fine *Houſekeeper*, or ſit at the Feet of Chriſt, and approve herſelf a *zealous Diſciple*; and by her Choice in this Particular, Chriſt judgeth of her general Choice. (4.) Thoſe who *chuſe this good Part*, ſhall not only have what they chuſe, but ſhall have their Choice commended in the Great Day.

CHAP. XI.

In this Chapter, (1.) *Chriſt teacheth his Diſciples to pray, and quickens and encourageth them to be frequent, and inſtant, and importunate in Prayer,* v. 1.---33. (2.) *He fully anſwereth the blaſphemous Imputation of the Phariſees, who charg'd him with caſting out Devils by Vertue of a Compact and Confederacy with* Belzebub, *the Prince of the Devils; and ſhews the Abſurdity and Wickedneſs of it,* v. 14.----26. (3.) *He ſhews the Honour of obedient Diſciples to be greater than that of his own Mother,* v. 27, 28. (4.) *He upbraids the Men of that Generation for their Infidelity and Obſtinacy, notwithſtanding all the Means of Conviction offered to them,* v. 29.---36. (5.) *He ſeverely reproved the Phariſees and Lawyers for their Hypocriſy, Pride, and their oppreſſing the Conſciences of thoſe that ſubmitted to them, and their hating and perſecuting thoſe that witneſſed againſt their Wickedneſs,* v. 37.—54.

1 AND it came to paſs, that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceaſed, one of his diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John alſo taught his Diſciples. And he ſaid unto them, When ye pray, ſay, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy Will be done, as in heaven, ſo in earth. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our Sins; for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. 5 And he ſaid unto them, Which of you ſhall have a friend, and ſhall go unto him at midnight, and ſay unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves: 6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to ſet before him: 7 And he from within ſhall anſwer and ſay, Trouble me not: the door is now ſhut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot riſe and give thee. 8 I ſay unto you, Though he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his friend: yet becauſe of his importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he needeth. 9 And I ſay unto you, Aſk, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that aſketh, receiveth: and he that ſeeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened. 11 If a ſon ſhall aſk bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a ſtone? or if *he aſk* a fiſh, will he for a fiſh give him a ſerpent? 12 Or if he ſhall aſk an egg, will he give him a ſcorpion? 13 If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more ſhall *your* heavenly Father give the holy ſpirit to them that aſk him?

Prayer is one of the great Laws of natural Religion: That Man is a Brute, is a Monſter, that never Prays; that never gives Glory to his Maker, nor feels his Favour, nor owns his Dependance upon him. One great Deſign therefore of Chriſtianity is, to *aſſiſt us in Prayer*; to enforce the Duty upon us, and to inſtruct us in it, and encourage us to expect Advantage by it. Now here,

1. We find Chriſt himſelf *praying in a certain Place*, probably where he uſed to pray, *v.* 1. As God he was *pray'd to*, as Man he *pray'd*, and tho' he were a Son, yet learned he this Obedience. This Evangeliſt has taken particular Notice of Chriſt's *praying often*, more than other of the Evangeliſts, when he was baptiz'd, *Chap.* 3. 21. he was *praying*: He *withdrew into the Wilderneſs and pray'd*, Chap. 5. 16. He *went out into a Mountain to pray, and continued all Night in Prayer.* He was *alone praying*, Chap. 9. 18. And ſoon after, he *went up into a Mountain to pray, and as he prayed, he was transfigured*, Chap. 9. 28, 29. And here he was *praying in a certain Place.* Thus like a genuine Son of *David*, he *gave himſelf unto Prayer*, Pſal. 109. 4. whether Chriſt was now *alone* praying, and the Diſciples only knew that he was ſo, or whether he pray'd with them, is uncertain; 'tis moſt probable they were joyning with him.

2. His Diſciples apply'd themſelves to him for Direction in Prayer; when he was praying, they aſk'd, *Lord, teach us to pray.* *Note*, The Gifts and Graces of others ſhould excite us to covet earneſtly the ſame: Their Zeal ſhould provoke us to a holy Imitation and Emulation, Why ſhould not we do as well as they? *Obſerve*, They came to him with this Requeſt *when he ceaſed*; for they would not diſturb him when he was at Prayer, no, not with this good Motion. Every Thing is beautiful in its Seaſon. *One of his Diſciples*, in the Name of the reſt, and perhaps by their Appointment, ſaid, *Lord, teach us.* *Note*, Tho' Chriſt is *apt to teach*, yet he will for this be enquir'd of, and his Diſciples muſt attend him for Inſtruction.

Now, (1.) Their Requeſt is, *Lord, teach us to pray*; give us a Rule or Model by which to go in Praying, and put Words into our Mouths. *Note*, It becomes the Diſciples of Chriſt to apply themſelves to him for Inſtruction in Prayer. *Lord, teach us to pray*, is it ſelf a good Prayer, and a very needful one, for it is a hard Thing to *pray well*; and it is Jeſus Chriſt only that can *teach us* by his Word and Spirit *how to pray.* Lord, teach me what it is to pray; Lord excite and quicken me to the Duty; Lord, direct me what to pray for; Lord, give me praying Graces, that I may ſerve God acceptably in Prayer; Lord, teach me to pray in proper Words; give me a Mouth and Wiſdom in Prayer, that I may ſpeak as I ought; *teach me what I ſhall ſay.*

(2.) Their Plea is, *as* John *alſo taught his Diſciples.* He took Care to inſtruct his Diſciples in this neceſſary Duty, and we would be taught as they were, for we have a better Maſter than they had. Dr. *Lightfoot*'s Notion of this is, That whereas the *Jews* Prayers were generally Adorations and Praiſes of God, and Doxologies, *John* taught his Diſciples ſuch Prayers as were more fill'd up with Petitions and Requeſts; for it is ſaid of them that they did δεήσεις ποιεῖν, *make Prayers*, Luke. 5. 33. The Word ſignifies ſuch Prayers as are properly Petitionary: Now, Lord, teach us thoſe, to be added to thoſe Benedictions of the Name of God, which we have been accuſtom'd to from our Childhood. And according to this Senſe, Chriſt did there teach them a Prayer conſiſting wholly of Petitions, and even omitting the Doxology which had been affix'd; and the *Amen* which was uſually ſaid in the *giving of Thanks*, 2 Cor. 14. 16. and in the *Pſalms* is added to Doxologies only. This Diſciple needed not to have urg'd *John Baptiſt*'s Example: Chriſt was more ready to teach than ever *John Baptiſt* was, and particularly taught to pray better than *John* did or cou'd teach his Diſciples.

3. Chriſt gave them Direction; much the ſame that he had given them before in his Sermon upon the Mount, *Mat.* 6. 9. We cannot think that they had forgot it, but they thought to have had further and fuller Inſtructions, and he did not as yet think fit to give them any; when the Spirit ſhould be poured out upon them from on High, they would find all their Requeſts couch'd in theſe few, and would be able, in Words of their own, to expatiate and enlarge upon them. In *Matthew* he had directed them to pray *after this Manner*: Here, *when ye pray, ſay*; which intimates that the Lord's Prayer was intended to be uſed both as a Form of Prayer and a Directory.

1. There are ſome Differences between the Lord's Prayer in *Matthew* and in *Luke*, by which it appears it was not the Deſign of Chriſt that we ſhould be *ty'd up* to theſe very Words, for then there would have been no Variation. Here is one Difference in the Tranſlation only, which ought not to have been, when there is none in the Original, and that's in the third Petition; *as in Heaven, ſo in Earth*; whereas the Words are the very ſame, and in the ſame Order as in *Matthew*; but there's a Difference in the 4th Petition; in *Matthew* we pray, give us daily Bread *this* Day; here, give it us *Day by Day*, καθ' ἡμέραν, *Day by Day* is, give us *each Day* the Bread our Bodies require, as they call for it: Not give us *this Day* Bread for many Days to come; but as the *Iſraelites* had *Manna*, let us have Bread *to Day* for *to Day*, and to *Morrow* for to *Morrow*, that thus we may be kept in a *continual Dependance* upon God, as Children upon their Parents, and may have our Mercies freſh from his Hand daily, and may find our ſelves under *freſh* Obligations to do the Work of every Day in the Day, according as the *Duty of the Day requires*, becauſe we have from God the Supplies of every Day in the Day, according as the Neceſſity of the Day requires.

Here is likewiſe ſome Difference in the 5th Petition: In *Matthew* it is *forgive us our Debts, as* we forgive: Here it is *forgive us our Sins*, which prove that our Sins are our Debts, *for we forgive*; not that our forgiving thoſe that have offended us can *merit* Pardon from God, or be an Inducement to him to forgive us; he forgives for his own Name's Sake, and his Son's Sake; but this is a very neceſſary Qualification for Forgiveneſs; and if God have wrought it in us, we may plead that Work of his Grace for the enforcing of our Petitions for the Pardon of our Sins; Lord, forgive us, for thou haſt thyſelf inclined us to forgive others. Here is another Addition here; we plead not only in general, we forgive *our Debtors*, but in particular we profeſs *to forgive every one that is indebted to us*, without Exception. We ſo *forgive our Debtors*, as not to bear Malice or Ill-will to any, but true Love to all, without any Exception whatſoever.

Here alſo the Doxology in the Cloſe is wholly omitted, and the *Amen*; for Chriſt would leave them at Liberty to uſe that or any other Doxology fetch'd out of *David*'s Pſalms; or rather he left a *Vacuum* here for to be fill'd up by a Doxology more peculiar to the Chriſtian Inſtitutes, aſcribing Glory to *Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*.

2. Yet it is for Subſtance the ſame; and we ſhall therefore here only gather up ſome general Leſſons from it.

1. That in Prayer we ought to come to God, as Children to *a Father*, a common Father to us and *all Mankind*, but in a peculiar Manner a Father to all the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt. Let us therefore in our Requeſts, both for others, and for ourſelves, come to him with an humble Boldneſs, confiding in his Power and Goodneſs.

2. That at the ſame Time, and in the ſame Petitions wherein we addreſs to God for *ourſelves*, we ſhould take in with us *all the Children of Men*, as God's Creatures, and our Fellow-Creatures. A rooted Principle of *Catholick Charity*, and of *Chriſtian ſanctified Humanity* ſhould go along with us, and dictate to us throughout this Prayer, which is ſo worded as to be accommodated to that *noble* Principle.

3. That in order to the confirming of the Habit of Heavenly-mindedneſs in us, which ought to act and govern us in the whole Courſe of our Converſation, we ſhou'd in all our Devotions with an Eye of Faith look *Heavenwards*, and eye the God we pray to as our Father *in Heaven*, that we may make the *upper World* more familiar to us, and may ourſelves become better prepar'd for the future State.

4. That in Prayer, as well as in the Tenor of our Lives, we muſt *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and the Righteouſneſs thereof*, by aſcribing Honour to his Name, his *holy* Name, and Power to his Government, both that of his Providence in the World, and that of his Grace in the Church. O! that both the one and the other may be more manifeſted, and we and others more manifeſtly brought into Subjection to both.

5. That the *Principles* and *Practices* of the *upper* World, the *unſeen* World (which therefore by *Faith* only we are *appriz'd of*) are the *great Original* (the Ἀρχέτυπον) to which we ſhould deſire the Principles and Practices of this *lower* World, both in others, and in ourſelves may be more conformable. Thoſe Words, *As in Heaven, ſo on Earth*, refer to all the Three firſt Petitions; Father, let *thy Name be ſanctified and glorified*, and thy Kingdom prevail, and thy Will be done on this Earth, that is now alienated from thy Service as it is in yonder Heaven, that is intirely devoted to thy Service.

6. That thoſe who faithfully and ſincerely mind the Kingdom of God and the Righteouſneſs thereof, may humbly hope that *all other Things*, as far as to infinite Wiſdom ſeems good, *ſhall be added to them*, and they may in Faith pray for them. If our firſt chief Deſire and Care be that God's Name may be ſanctified, and his Kingdom come, and his Will be done, we may then come boldly to the Throne of Grace for our *daily Bread*, which will then be ſanctified to us, when we are ſanctified to God, and God is ſanctified by us.

7. That in our Prayers for temporal Bleſſings we muſt *moderate* our Deſires, and confine them to a *Competency*. The Expreſſion here uſed of *Day by Day*, is the very ſame with our *daily Bread*, and therefore ſome think we muſt look for another Signification of the Word ἐπιούσιος, than that of *daily*, which we give it, and that it means our *neceſſary* Bread; that Bread that is *ſuited* to the Cravings of our Nature: The Fruit that is brought out of the Earth for our Bodies that are made of the Earth, and are earthly, *Pſal.* 104. 14.

8. That Sins are Debts we are daily contracting, and which therefore we ſhould every Day pray for the Forgiveneſs of. We are not only going behind of our Rent every Day, by *Omiſſions* of Duty, and in Duty, but are daily incurring the Penalty of the Law, as well as the Forfeiture of our Bond, by our *Commiſſions*; every Day adds to the Score of our Guilt, and it is a Miracle of Mercy, that we have ſo much Encouragement given us to come every Day to the Throne of Grace, to pray for the Pardon of our Sins of daily Infirmity. God *multiplies to Pardon* beyond ſeventy Times ſeven.

9. That we have no Reaſon to expect, nor can with any Confidence pray, that God would forgive our Sins againſt him, if we do not *ſincerely*, and from a truly Chriſtian Principle of *Charity*, forgive thoſe that have at any Time affronted us, or been injurious to us. Tho' the *Words of our Mouth* be even *this* Prayer to God, if the *Meditation of our Heart* at the ſame Time be, as often as it is, Malice and Revenge to our Brethren, we are not accepted, nor can we expect an Anſwer of Peace.

10. That Temptations to Sin ſhould be as much dreaded and deprecated by us as Ruin by Sin; and it ſhould be as much our Care and Prayer to get the Power of Sin broken in us, as to get the Guilt of Sin removed from us; and tho' Temptation may be a charming, fawning, flattering Thing, we muſt be as earneſt with God that we may not be led into that, as that we may not be led by that to Sin, and by Sin to Ruin.

Laſtly, That God is to be depended upon, and ſought unto for our Deliverance *from all Evil*; and we ſhould pray not only that we may not be left to ourſelves to run into Evil, but that we may not be left to Satan to bring Evil upon us. Dr. *Lightfoot* underſtands it of being deliver'd *from the evil one*, that is, the Devil, and ſuggeſts that we pray particularly againſt the Apparitions of the Devil and his Poſſeſſions. The Diſciples were employ'd to *caſt out Devils*, and therefore were concern'd to pray that they might be guarded againſt the particular Spite he would always be ſure to have againſt them.

4. He ſtirs up and encourageth Importunity, Fervency, and Conſtancy in Prayer; by ſhewing,

1. That Importunity will go far in our Dealings with Men, *v.* 5, 6, 7, 8. Suppoſe a Man upon a ſudden Emergency goes to borrow a Loaf or two of Bread of a Neighbour, at an unſeaſonable Time of Night, not for himſelf, but for his Friend that came unexpectedly to him: His Neighbour will be loth to accommodate him, for he has waken'd him with his Knocking, and put him out of Humour, and he has a great deal to ſay in his Excuſe; the Door is ſhut and lock'd, his Children are aſleep, in Bed in the ſame Room with him, and if he make a Noiſe he ſhall diſturb them; his Servants are aſleep, and he cannot make them hear, and for his own Part he ſhall catch Cold if he riſe to give him: But his Neighbour will have no Nay, and therefore he continues *knocking* ſtill, and tells him he will do ſo, till he has what he comes for; ſo that he muſt give it him to be rid of him; *he will riſe and give him as many as he needs, becauſe of his Importunity.* He ſpeaks this Parable with the ſame Intent that he ſpeaks that, *Luke* 18. 1. *That Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* Not that God can be wrought upon by Importunity, we cannot be troubleſome to him, nor by being ſo change his Counſels: We prevail with Men by Importunity, becauſe they are *diſpleas'd* with it, but with God, becauſe he is *pleas'd* with it. Now this Similitude may be of Uſe to us,

(1.) To direct us in Prayer. (1.) We muſt come to God with *Boldneſs* and *Confidence*, for what we need, as a Man doth to the Houſe of his Neighbour or Friend, who he knows loves him, and is inclin'd to be kind to him. (2.) We muſt come for *Bread*, for that which is *needful*, and which we cannot be without. (3.) We muſt come to him by Prayer *for others*, as well as *for ourſelves*. This Man did not come for Bread for himſelf, but for his Friend. The Lord *accepted Job* when he pray'd for his Friends, *Job* 42. 10. We cannot come to God upon a more pleaſing Errand, than when we come to him for Grace to enable us to do good, to *feed many* with *our Lips*; to entertain and edify thoſe that come to us. (4.) We may come with the more Boldneſs to God in a Strait, if it be a Strait that we have not brought ourſelves into by our own Folly and Careleſsneſs, but Providence has led us into it. This Man would not have wanted Bread if his Friend had not come in *unexpectedly*. The Care which Providence caſts upon us, we may with Cheerfulneſs caſt back upon Providence. (5.) We ought to *continue inſtant* in Prayer, and watch in the ſame with all Perſeverance.

(2.) To encourage us in Prayer. If Importunity could prevail thus with *a Man* that was angry at it, much more with a God who is infinitely more kind and ready to do good *to us* than we are *to one another*, and is not angry at our Importunity, but accept it, eſpecially when it is for ſpiritual Mercies that we are importunate. If he do not anſwer our Prayers preſently, yet he will in due Time, if we continue to pray.

2. That God hath promiſed to give us what we aſk of him. We have not only the Goodneſs of his Nature to take Comfort from, but the Word which he hath ſpoken, *v.* 9, 10. *Aſk and it ſhall be given you*; either the Thing itſelf you ſhall aſk, or that which is equivalent; either the Thorn in the Fleſh removed, or Grace ſufficient given in. We had this before, *Matt.* 7. 7, 8. *I ſay unto you.* We have it from Chriſt's own Mouth, who knows his Father's Mind, and in whom all Promiſes are Yea and Amen. We muſt not only *aſk*, but we muſt *ſeek* in the Uſe of Means, muſt ſecond our Prayers with our Endeavours: And in *aſking* and *ſeeking*, we muſt continue *preſſing*, ſtill knocking at the ſame Door, and we ſhall at length prevail, not only by our Prayers in Concert, but by our particular Prayers, *every one that asketh receiveth*, even the meaneſt Saint that aſks in Faith. *This poor Man cried, and the Lord heard him*, Pſal. 34. 6. When we aſk of God thoſe Things which Chriſt had juſt now directed us to aſk, that his Name may be ſanctified, that his Kingdom may come, and his Will be done; in theſe Requeſts we muſt be importunate, muſt *never hold our Peace Day or Night*; we muſt not *keep Silence*, nor *give God any Reſt, until he eſtabliſh, until he make* Jeruſalem *a Praiſe on the Earth*, Iſa. 62. 6.

5. He gives both Inſtruction and Encouragement in Prayer, from the Conſideration of our Relation to God as a Father. Here is,

1. An *Appeal* to the *Bowels* of *Earthly Fathers*. Let any of you that *is a Father*, and knows the Heart of a Father, a Father's Affection to a Child, and Care for a Child, tell me, if

his Son *aſk Bread* for his Break-faſt, *will he give him a Stone* to break-faſt on? *If he aſk a Fiſh* for his Dinner (when, it may be, 'tis a Fiſh-day) *will he for a Fiſh give him a Serpent* that will poyſon and ſting him? Or *if he ſhall aſk an Egg* for his Supper, an Egg and to Bed, *will he offer him a Scorpion?* You know you could not be ſo unnatural to your own Children, *v.* 11, 12.

2. An *Application* of this to the *Bleſſings* of our *heavenly Father,* v. 13. *If ye then being Evil,* give, and know how to *give good Gifts to your Children, much more ſhall God give you the Spirit:* He ſhall give *good Things*; ſo 'tis in *Matthew.* Obſerve,

1. The *Direction* he gives us, what to *pray for*; we muſt aſk for the *Holy Spirit,* not only as neceſſary in order to our *praying well,* but as incluſive of all the good Things we are to pray for, we need no more to make us happy, for the Spirit is the Worker of Spiritual Life, and the Earneſt of Eternal Life. *Note,* The Gift of the Holy Ghoſt is a Gift we are every one of us concern'd earneſtly and conſtantly to pray for.

2. The *Encouragement* he gives us to hope that we ſhall ſpeed in this Prayer; *your heavenly Father will give.* It is *in his Power* to give the Spirit; he has all good Things to beſtow, wrapt up in that one, but that is not all, it is *in his Promiſe*; the Gift of *the Holy Ghoſt* is in the Covenant, *Acts* 2. 3. And it is here inferred from Parents Readineſs to *ſupply* their Childrens *Needs,* and *gratify* their *Deſires,* when they are natural and proper. If the Child aſk for a *Serpent* or the *Scorpion,* the Father in Kindneſs denies him, but not if he aſks for what's *needful* and will be *nouriſhing.* When God's Children aſk for the Spirit, they do in Effect aſk for *Bread,* for the Spirit is the Staff of Life; nay, he is the Author of the Soul's Life. If our earthly Parents, tho' *evil,* be yet ſo kind; if they, tho' *weak,* be yet ſo *knowing,* they not only give, but give with Diſcretion, give what is beſt, in the beſt Manner and Time, much more ſhall your *heavenly Father,* who infinitely excells the Fathers of our Fleſh both in Wiſdom and Goodneſs, give you his *Holy Spirit.* If earthly Parents are willing to lay out for the Education of their Children, to whom they deſign to leave their Eſtates, much more will your heavenly Father give the Spirit of Sons to all thoſe whom he has predeſtinated to the Inheritance of Sons.

14 ¶ And he was caſting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to paſs, when the devil was gone out, the dumb ſpake: and the people wondred. 15 But ſome of them ſaid, He caſteth out devils through Belzebub, the chief of the devils. 16 And others tempting *him,* ſought of him a ſign from heaven. 17 But he knowing their thoughts, ſaid unto them, Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf, is brought to deſolation: and a houſe *divided* againſt a houſe, falleth. 18 If Satan alſo be divided againſt himſelf, how ſhall his kingdom ſtand? becauſe ye ſay, that I caſt out devils thro' Belzebub. 19 And if I by Belzebub caſt out devils, by whom do your Sons caſt them out: therefore ſhall they be your judges. 20 But if I with the finger of God caſt out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. 21 When a ſtrong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace. 22 But when a ſtronger than he ſhall come upon him, and overcometh him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he truſted, and divideth his ſpoils. 23 He that is not with me is againſt me: and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth. 24 When the unclean ſpirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, ſeeking reſt: and finding none, he ſaith, I will return unto my houſe whence I came out. 25 And when he cometh, he findeth *it* ſwept and garniſhed. 26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him ſeven other ſpirits more wicked than himſelf, and they enter in, and dwell there: and the laſt ſtate of that man is worſe than the firſt.

The Subſtance of theſe Verſes we had, *Mat.* 12. 22. and Chriſt is here giving a general Proof of his Divine Miſſion, by a particular Proof of his Power over Satan; his Conqueſt of whom, was an Indication of his great Deſign in coming into the World, which was to *deſtroy the Works of the Devil*; and an Earneſt of the Succeſs of that Undertaking. He is here caſting out *a Devil* that made the poor poſſeſſed Man *dumb,* in *Matthew* we are told that he was *blind* and *dumb:* And when the Devil was forced out by the Word of Chriſt, the *dumb* ſpake immediately, eccho'd to Chriſt's Word, and the Lips were open'd to ſhew forth his Praiſe. Now,

1. Some were *affected* with this Miracle: The People *wondered*; they admir'd the Power of God, and eſpecially that it ſhould be exerted by the Hand of one who made ſo ſmall a Figure, that one who did the Work of the Meſſiah, ſhould have ſo little of that Pomp of the Meſſiah they expected.

2. Others were offended at it; and to juſtify their Infidelity, ſuggeſted that it was by Virtue of a League with *Belzebub,* the Prince of the Devils, that he did this, *v.* 15. It ſeems in the Devil's Kingdom there are *Chiefs,* which ſuppoſeth that there are *Subalterns.* Now they would have it *thought* or *ſaid* at leaſt, that there was a Correſpondence ſettled between Chriſt and the Devil, that the Devil ſhould have the Advantage in the Main, and be victorious at laſt, but that in Order hereto in particular Inſtances he ſhould yield Chriſt the Advantage, and retire by Conſent. And ſome to *corroborate* this Suggeſtion, and *confront* the Evidence of Chriſt's miraculous Power, challeng'd him to *give them a Sign from Heaven,* v. 16. To confirm his Doctrine by ſome Appearance in the *Clouds,* ſuch as was upon Mount *Sinai,* when the Law was given; as if a *Sign from Heaven,* not diſproveable by any Sagacity of theirs, could not have been given them as well by a Compact and Colluſion with *the Prince of the Power of the Air, who works with Power and lying Wonders,* as the *caſting out of a Devil*; nay that would not have been any preſent Prejudice to his Intereſt, which this manifeſtly was. *Note,* Obſtinate Infidelity will never be to ſeek for ſomething to ſay in its own Excuſe, tho' never ſo frivolous and abſurd.

Now Chriſt here returns a full and direct Anſwer to this Cavil of theirs: In which he ſhews,

1. That it can by no Means be imagin'd that ſuch a ſubtil Prince as *Satan* is, ſhould ever give into Meaſures that had ſuch a direct Tendency to his own Overthrow, and the undermining of his own Kingdom, *v.* 17, 18. What they objected they kept to themſelves, afraid to ſpeak it, leſt it ſhould be anſwer'd and baffled; but Jeſus *knew their Thoughts,* even when they induſtriouſly ſought to conceal them, and he ſaid, You yourſelves cannot but ſee the Groundleſſneſs, and conſequently the Spitefulneſs of this Charge, for it is an allow'd Maxim, confirm'd by every Day's Experience, that no Intereſt can ſtand that is divided againſt itſelf; not the more *publick* Intereſt of a *Kingdom*; not the *private* Intereſt of a Houſe or Family, if either the one or the other be *divided againſt itſelf,* it cannot ſtand. Satan would herein act againſt himſelf, not only by the Miracle, which turn'd him out of Poſſeſſion of the Bodies of People, but much more in the Doctrine which the Miracle was wrought for the Explication and Confirmation of, which had a direct Tendency to the Ruin of Satan's Intereſt in the Minds of Men, by mortifying Sin, and turning Men to the Service of God: Now if Satan ſhould thus be *divided againſt himſelf,* he would haſten his own Overthrow, which you cannot ſuppoſe an Enemy to do, that acts ſo ſubtily for his own Eſtabliſhment, and is ſo ſollicitous to have his Kingdom ſtand.

2. That it was a very *partial ill-natur'd* Thing for them to impute that in him to a Compact with *Satan,* which yet they applauded and admir'd in others that were of their own Nation, *v.* 19. *By whom do your Sons caſt them out?* Some of their own *Kindred* as Jews, nay, and ſome of their own *Followers* as Phariſees, have undertaken in the Name of the God of *Iſrael* to caſt out Devils, and they were never charg'd with ſuch a helliſh Combination as I am charg'd with. *Note,* It is groſs Hypocriſy to *condemn* that in thoſe who *reprove* us, which yet we *allow* of, in thoſe that *flatter* us.

3. That in oppoſing the Conviction of this Miracle, they were Enemies to themſelves, ſtood in their own Light, and put a Bar in their own Door, for they thruſt from them the Kingdom of God, *v.* 20. *If I with the Finger of God caſt out Devils,* as you may aſſure yourſelves I do, *no Doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you*; the Kingdom of the Meſſiah offers itſelf and all its Advantages to you, and if you receive it not, 'tis at your Peril. In *Matthew* 'tis *by the Spirit of God,* here *by the Finger of God*; the Spirit is the *Arm of the Lord,* Iſa. 53. 1. His moſt great and mighty Works were wrought by *his Spirit*; but if the Spirit in this Work is ſaid to be the *Finger of the Lord,* which perhaps may intimate how *eaſily* Chriſt did and could conquer *Satan,* even with the *Finger of God*; the exerting of the Divine Power in a leſs and lower Degree than in many other Inſtances. He needed not make bare his *everlaſting Arm,* that Roaring Lyon, when he pleaſeth, is cruſh'd like a Moth with the Touch of *a Finger.* Perhaps here's an Alluſion to the Acknowledgment of *Pharaoh*'s Magicians, when they were run aground, *Exod.* 8. 19. This *is the Finger of God.* Now if the *Kingdom of God* be herein *come to you,* and you be found by thoſe Cavils and Blaſphemies fighting againſt it, it will come *upon you,* as a victorious Force which you cannot ſtand before.

4. That his caſting out of Devils was really the deſtroying of them and their Power, for it confirm'd a Doctrine which had a direct Tendency to the ruining of his Kingdom, *v.* 21, 22. Perhaps there had been ſome who had caſt out the inferiour Devils by Compact with *Belzebub* their Chief; but that was without any real Damage or Prejudice to Satan and his Kingdom; what he loſt one Way he gain'd another. The Devil and ſuch Exorciſts *play'd Booty,* as we ſay, and while the forlorn Hope of his Army *gave Ground,* the main Body thereby *gain'd Ground*; the Intereſt of Satan in the Souls of Men was not weaken'd by it in the leaſt. But when Chriſt caſt out Devils, he needed not do it by any Compact with them, for he was *ſtronger than they,* and could do it *by Force,* and did it ſo as to ruin Satan's Power, and blaſt his great Deſign by a Doctrine and Grace

that breaks the Power of Sin, and ſo routs Satan's main Body, takes from him *all his Armour*, and *divides his Spoils*, which no one Devil ever did to another, or ever will. Now this is applicable to Chriſt's Victories over Satan, both in the World, and in the Hearts of particular Perſons, by that Power which went along with the Preaching of his Goſpel, and doth ſtill. And ſo we may obſerve here,

1. The miſerable Condition of an unconverted Sinner: In his Heart, which was fitted to be a Habitation of God, the Devil has his Palace, and all the Powers and Faculties of the Soul being employ'd by him in the Service of Sin, are *his Goods*. *Note*, 1. The Heart of every unconverted Sinner is the *Devil's Palace*, where he *reſides*, and where he *rules*; he *works* in the *Children of Diſobedience*. The Heart is a *Palace*; a noble Dwelling; but the unſanctified Heart is the *Devil's Palace*. His Luſts are done, his Intereſts are ſerv'd, and the Militia is in his Hands; he *uſurps* the Throne in the Soul. 2. The Devil, as a *ſtrong Man arm'd, keeps* this Palace, does all he can to ſecure it to himſelf, and to teſtify it againſt Chriſt. All the Prejudices with which he hardens Men's Hearts againſt Truth and Holineſs, are the *ſtrong Holds* which he erects for the *keeping of his Palace*; this Palace is his *Garriſon*. 3. There is a kind of *Peace* in the Palace of an unconverted Soul, while the Devil, as a *ſtrong Man armed*, keepeth it. The Sinner has a good Opinion of himſelf, is very ſecure, and merry, has no Doubt concerning the Goodneſs of his State, nor any Dread of the Judgment to come; he flatters himſelf it his own Eyes, and cries Peace to himſelf. Before Chriſt appear'd, all was quiet, becauſe all *went one Way*; but the Preaching of the Goſpel diſturb'd the Peace of the Devil's Palace.

2. The wonderful Change that is made in Converſion, which is Chriſt's Victory over this Uſurper: *Satan* is as a *ſtrong Man armed*; but our Lord Jeſus is *ſtronger than he*, as God, as Mediator: *If we ſpeak of Strength, he is ſtrong*; more are *with* us, than *againſt us*.

Obſerve 1. The Manner of this Victory. *He comes upon him* by Surprize, when his *Goods are in Peace*, and the Devil thinks it's all *his own* for ever, and *overcomes* him. *Note*, The Converſion of a Soul to God, is Chriſt's Victory over the Devil, and his Power in that Soul, reſtoring the Soul to its Liberty, and recovering his own Intereſt in it, and Dominion over it.

2. The Evidences of this Victory. (1.) He *taketh from him all his Armour wherein he truſted*. The Devil is a *confident* Adverſary, he *truſts* to his *Armour*, as *Pharaoh* to his Rivers, *Ezek.* 29. 3. But Chriſt diſarms him. When the Power of Sin and Corruption in the Soul is broken, when the Miſtakes are rectify'd, the Eyes open'd, the Heart humbled and changed, and made ſerious and ſpiritual, then Satan's *Armour is taken away*. (2.) He *divideth the Spoils*: he *takes Poſſeſſion* of them for himſelf, all the Endowments of Mind or Body, the Eſtate, Power, Intereſt, which before were made Uſe of in the Service of Sin and Satan, are now converted to Chriſt's Service, and employ'd for him, yet that is not all, he *makes a Diſtribution* of them among his Followers, and having conquer'd Satan, gives to all Believers the Benefit of that Victory.

Now from hence he infers, that ſeeing the whole Drift of his Doctrine and Miracles was to break the Power of the Devil, that great Enemy of Mankind, it was the Duty of all to join with him, and to follow his Conduct, to receive his Goſpel, and come heartily into the Intereſts of it, for otherwiſe they would juſtly be reckon'd as ſiding with the Enemy, *v.* 23. *He that is not with me is againſt me*. Thoſe therefore who rejected the Doctrine of Chriſt, and ſlighted his Miracles, were look'd upon as Adverſaries to him, and in the Devil's Intereſt.

5. That there was a vaſt Difference between the Devil's *going out* by Compact, and his being *caſt out* by Compulſion. Thoſe out of whom Chriſt *caſt him*, he never enter'd into again, for ſo was Chriſt's Charge, *Mark* 9. 25. Whereas if he had *gone out* whenever he ſaw fit, he would have made a Re-entry, for that's the Way of the unclean Spirit, when he voluntarily, and with Deſign *goes out of a Man*, v. 24, 25, 26. The Prince of the Devils may *give Leave*, nay, may *give Order* to his Forces to Retreat, or make a Feint, to draw the poor deluded Soul into an *Ambuſh*; but Chriſt as he gives a *total*, ſo he gives a *final* Defeat to the Enemy.

And in this Part of the Argument he has a further Reach, which is to repreſent the State of thoſe who have had fair Offers made them, among whom, and in whom, God has begun to break the Devil's Power, and overthrow his Kingdom, but they reject his Counſel againſt themſelves, and relapſe into a State of Subjection to Satan. Here we have,

1. The Condition of a *formal Hypocrite*, his *bright Side*, and his *dark Side*; his Heart ſtill remains the *Devil's Houſe*, he calls it his own, and he retains his Intereſt in it; and yet (1.) the *unclean Spirit is gone out*; he was not *driven out* by the Power of converting Grace, there was none of that *Violence* which the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffers; but he *went out*, withdrew for a Time, ſo that the Man ſeems not to be under the Power of Satan as formerly, nor ſo follow'd with his Temptations; Satan is *gone*, or has *turn'd himſelf into an Angel of Light*. (2.) The *Houſe is ſwept* from common Pollutions, by a forced Confeſſion of Sin, as *Pharaoh*'s, a feigned Contrition for it, as *Ahab*'s, and a partial Reformation, as *Herod*'s: There are thoſe that have *eſcap'd the Pollutions of the World*, and yet are ſtill under the Power of the *God of this World*, 2 Pet. 2. 20. The Houſe is *ſwept*, but 'tis not *waſh'd*, and Chriſt hath ſaid, *If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no Part with me*; the Houſe muſt be *waſh'd*, or 'tis *none of his*. Sweeping takes off only the looſe Dirt, while the Sin that *beſets* the Sinner, the beloved Sin, is untouch'd. 'Tis ſwept from the Filth that lies open to the Eye of the World, but it is not ſearch'd and ranſack'd for ſecret Filthineſs, *Matt.* 23. 25. 'Tis *ſwept*, but the *Leproſy is in the Wall*, and will be, 'till ſomething more be done. (3.) The Houſe is *garniſh'd* with common Gifts and Graces. 'Tis not *furniſh'd* with any true Grace, but *garniſh'd* with the Pictures of all Graces. *Simon Magus* was *garniſh'd* with Faith; *Balaam* with good Deſires; *Herod* with a Reſpect for *John*; the *Phariſees* with many external Performances; it's garniſh'd, but it's like a *Potſherd cover'd with Silver Droſs*, it's all Paint and Varniſh, not real, not laſting. The Houſe is *garniſh'd*, but the Property is not alter'd, it was never ſurrender'd to Chriſt, nor inhabited by the Spirit. Let us therefore take Heed of reſting in that which a Man may have, and yet come ſhort.

2. Here's the Condition of a *final Apoſtate*, into whom the Devil returns after he had *gone out*, v. 26. *Then goes he and takes ſeven other Spirits more wicked than himſelf*; a certain Number for an uncertain, as *ſeven Devils* are ſaid to be caſt out of *Mary Magdalen*; *ſeven wicked Spirits* are oppoſed to the *ſeven Spirits of God*, Rev. 3. 1. theſe are ſaid to be more wicked than himſelf: It ſeems even Devils are not all alike wicked; probably the Degrees of their Wickedneſs now they are *fallen*, are as the Degrees of their Holineſs were while they ſtood. When the Devil would do Miſchief moſt effectually, he employs thoſe that are more miſchievous than himſelf. Theſe *enter in* without any Difficulty or Oppoſition, they are welcom'd, and they *dwell there*, there they *work*, there they *rule*, and the *laſt State of that Man is worſe than the firſt*. *Note*, 1. Hypocriſy is the High Road to Apoſtacy. If the Heart remains in the Intereſt of Sin and Satan, the Shews and Shadows will *come to nothing*; thoſe that have not ſet that right, will not long be ſteadfaſt; where ſecret Haunts of Sin are kept up under the Cloak of a viſible Profeſſion, Conſcience is debauch'd, God is provok'd to withdraw his reſtraining Grace, and the *cloſe* Hypocrite commonly proves an *open* Apoſtate. 2. The laſt State of ſuch is *worſe than the firſt*, in Reſpect both of Sin and Puniſhment. Apoſtates are uſually the worſt of Men, the moſt vain and profligate, the moſt bold and daring; their Conſciences are ſear'd, and their Sins of all others the moſt aggravated. God often ſets Marks of his Diſpleaſure upon them in *this World*, and in the other World they will *receive the greater Damnation*. Let us therefore hear and fear, and hold faſt our Integrity.

27 ¶ And it came to paſs, as he ſpake theſe things, a certain woman of the company lift up her voice, and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed *is* the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou haſt ſucked. 28 But he ſaid, Yea, rather bleſſed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

We had not this Paſſage in the other Evangeliſts, nor can we tack it as Dr. *Hammond* doth, to that of Chriſt's Mother and Brethren, deſiring to ſpeak with him, for this Evangeliſt alſo had related that ſome Time ago, *Chap.* 8. 19. but it contains an Interruption much like that, and like that, Occaſion is taken from it for an Inſtruction.

1. The Applauſe which an effectionate, honeſt, well-meaning Woman gave to our Lord Jeſus, upon hearing his excellent Diſcourſes: While the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* deſpis'd and blaſphem'd them, this good Woman, (and probably ſhe was a Perſon of ſome Quality) admir'd them, and the Wiſdom and Power with which he ſpake, *v.* 27. *as he ſpake theſe Things*, with a convincing Force and Evidence, a *certain Woman of the Company* was ſo pleas'd to hear how he had confounded the Phariſees, and conquered them, and put them to Shame, and clear'd himſelf from their vile Inſinuations, that ſhe could not forbear crying out, *Bleſſed is the Womb that bare thee*. What an admirable, what an excellent Man is this, ſurely never was there a greater or better born of a Woman! Happy the Woman that hath him for her Son. I ſhould have thought myſelf very happy to be the Mother of one that *ſpeaks as never Man ſpake*; that hath ſo much of the Grace of Heaven in him, and is ſo great a Bleſſing to this Earth. This was *well ſaid*, as it expreſſed her high Eſteem of Chriſt, and that for the Sake of his Doctrine; and it was not amiſs that it reflected Honour upon the Virgin *Mary* his Mother, for it agreed with what ſhe herſelf had ſaid, *Chap.* 1. 48. *All Generations ſhall call me Bleſſed*; ſome even of this Generation, as bad as it was. *Note*, To all that believe the Word of Chriſt, the Perſon of Chriſt is precious, and he is *an Honour*, 1 Pet. 2. 7. Yet we muſt be careful, leſt, as this good Woman, we too much magnify the Honour of his natural Kindred, and ſo *know him after the Fleſh*, whereas we muſt now henceforth *know him ſo no more*.

2. The Occaſion which Chriſt took from thence to pronounce them more happy who are his faithful and obedient Followers than ſhe was who bare and nurs'd him. He doth not deny what this Woman ſaid, nor refuſe her Reſpects to him and his Mother, but leads her from this to that which was of a higher Conſideration, and which more concern'd her, *Yea rather bleſſed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it*, v. 28. He thinks them ſo, and his ſaying they are ſo, makes them ſo, and ſhou'd make uſe of his Mind. This is intended partly as a *Check* to her, for doting ſo much upon his bodily Preſence, and his humane Nature, partly as an Encouragement to her to hope that ſhe might be as happy as his own Mother, whoſe Happineſs ſhe was ready to envy, if ſhe would *hear the Word of God and keep it*. *Note*, Tho' it is a great Privilege to hear the Word of God, yet thoſe only are truly bleſſed, that is, bleſſed of the Lord, that hear it and *keep it*; that keep it in Memory, and keep to it as their Way and Rule.

29 ¶ And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to ſay, This is an evil generation: they ſeek a ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given it, but the ſign of Jonas the prophet. 30 For as Jonas was a ſign unto the Ninevites, ſo ſhall alſo the ſon of man be to this generation. 31 The queen of the ſouth ſhall riſe up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for ſhe came from the utmoſt parts of the earth, to hear the wiſdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon *is* here. 32 The men of Nineve ſhall riſe up in the judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas *is* here 33 No man when he hath lighted a candle, putteth *it* in a ſecret place, neither under a buſhel; but on a candleſtick, that they which come in may ſee the light. 34 The light of the body is the eye; therefore when thine eye is ſingle, thy whole body alſo is full of Light: but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body alſo is full of darkneſs. 35 Take heed therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkneſs. 36 If thy whole body therefore *be* full of light, having no part dark, the whole ſhall be full of light, as when the bright ſhining of a candle doth give thee light.

Chriſt's Diſcourſe in theſe Verſes ſhews two Things,

1. What is the *Sign* we may *expect* from God, for the *Confirmation* of our *Faith*: The great and moſt convincing Proof of Chriſt's being ſent of God, and which they were yet to wait for, after the many Signs that had been given them, was the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead. Here is,

1. A Reproof to the People for demanding other Signs than what had already been given them in great Plenty, *v.* 29. *The People were gathered thick together*, a vaſt Crowd of them, expecting not ſo much to have their Conſciences inform'd by the Doctrine of Chriſt, as to have their Curioſity gratify'd by his Miracles: And Chriſt knew what brought ſuch a Multitude together, they came *ſeeking a Sign*, they came to gaze, to have ſomething to talk of when they came Home; and it is an *evil Generation* which nothing will awaken and convince, no not the moſt ſenſible Demonſtrations of Divine Power and Goodneſs.

2. A Promiſe that yet there ſhould be *one Sign* more given them, different from any that had yet been given them, even the *Sign of* Jonas *the Prophet*, which in *Matthew* is explain'd, as meaning the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*. As *Jonas* being caſt into the Sea, and lying there three Days, and then coming up alive, and preaching Repentance to the *Ninevites*, was a Sign to them, upon which they turned from their evil Way, ſo ſhall the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, and the preaching of his Goſpel immediately after to the Gentile World, be the laſt Warning to the Jewiſh Nation; if they be provoked to a *holy Jealouſy* by that, well and good; but if that do not work upon them, let them look for nothing elſe but utter Ruin. *The Son of Man ſhall be a Sign to this Generation*, v. 30. A Sign, ſpeaking to them, tho' a Sign ſpoken againſt by them.

3. A Warning to them to improve this Sign, for it was at their Peril if they did not.

1. The *Queen of* Sheba would *riſe up in Judgment again them*, and condemn *their Unbelief*, v. 31. She was a Stranger to the Common-wealth of *Iſrael*, and yet ſo readily gave Credit to the Report ſhe heard of the Glories of a King of *Iſrael*, that notwithſtanding the Prejudices we are apt to conceive againſt Foreigners, ſhe came from the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth to *hear his Wiſdom*; not only to ſatisfy her Curioſity, but to inform her Mind, eſpecially in the Knowledge of the true God, and his Worſhip, which is upon Record to her Honour; and behold a *greater than* Solomon *is here*, πλεῖον Σολομῶντος, *more than a* Solomon *is here*; that is, ſaith Dr. *Hammond*, more of Wiſdom, and more heavenly divine Doctrine than ever was in all *Solomon*'s Words or Writings; and yet theſe wretched Jews will give no manner of Regard to what Chriſt ſaith to them, tho' he be in the Midſt of them.

2. The *Ninevites* would riſe up in Judgment againſt them, and condemn their Impenitency, *v.* 32. They *repented at the Preaching of* Jonas, but here is Preaching which far exceeds that of *Jonas*, is more powerful and awakening, and threatens a much ſorer Ruin than that of *Nineve*, and yet none are ſtartled by it to turn *from their evil Way*, as the *Ninevites* did.

2. He ſhews what is the *Sign* that God expects from us for the *evidencing* of our Faith; and that is the ſerious Practice of that Religion which we profeſs to believe, and a Readineſs to entertain all divine Truths, when brought to us in their proper Evidence. Now obſerve,

1. That they had *the Light* with all the Advantage they could deſire: For God having *lighted the Candle* of the Goſpel, did not put it in a *ſecret Place*, or *under a Buſhel*; Chriſt did not preach in Corners. The Apoſtles were order'd to preach the Goſpel to every Creature; and both Chriſt and his Miniſters, Wiſdom and her Maidens cry in the *chief Places of Concourſe*, v. 33. It is a great Privilege that the Light of the Goſpel is put on a *Candleſtick*, ſo that all that come in may *ſee it*, and may *ſee by it* where they are, and whither they are going, and what is the true, and ſure, and only Way to Happineſs.

2. That having the *Light*, there Concern was to have the *Sight*, or elſe to what Purpoſe had they the Light. Be the Object never ſo *clear*, if the *Organ* be not *right*, we are never the better, *v.* 34. *The Light of the Body is the Eye*, which receives the Light of the Candle, when 'tis brought into the Room: So the Light of the Soul is the Underſtanding and Judgment, and its Power of diſcerning between Good and Evil, Truth and Falſhood. Now, according as this is, accordingly the Light of Divine Revelation is to us, and our Benefit by it; accordingly it's a Savour of Life unto Life, or of Death unto Death.

1. If this Eye of the Soul be *ſingle*, if it ſee *clear*, ſee Things as they are, and judge impartially concerning them, if it aim at *Truth* only, and ſeek it for its own Sake, and have not any ſiniſter By-Looks and Intentions, the *whole Body*, that is, the whole Soul is *full of Light*, it receives and entertains the Goſpel, which will bring along with it into the Soul both *Knowledge* and *Joy*; this ſpeaks the ſame Thing with that of the good Ground *receiving the Word*, and *underſtanding* it. If our Underſtanding admit the Goſpel in its full Light, it fills the Soul, and it has enough to *fill it*. And if the Soul be thus *fill'd* with the Light of the Goſpel, *having no Part dark*, if all its Powers and Faculties be ſubjected to the Government and Influence of the Goſpel, and none left unſanctify'd, then *the whole Soul ſhall be full of Light*, full of Holineſs and Comfort; *it was Darkneſs* itſelf, but is now Light in the Lord, *as when the bright Shining of a Candle doth give thee Light*, v. 36. *Note*, The Goſpel will come into thoſe Souls whoſe Doors and Windows are thrown open to receive it, and where it comes it will bring Light with it. But,

2. If the *Eye of the* Soul be *evil*, if the Judgment be *brib'd* and *bias'd* by the corrupt and vicious Diſpoſitions of the Mind, by Pride and Envy, by the Love of the World and ſenſual Pleaſures; if the Underſtanding be *prejudic'd* againſt divine Truths, and reſolv'd not to admit them tho' brought with never ſo convincing an Evidence, it is no wonder that the *whole Body*, the whole Soul is *full of Darkneſs*, v. 34. How can they have Inſtruction, Information, Direction, or Comfort from the Goſpel, that wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt it, and what Hope is there of ſuch, what Remedy for them? The Inference from hence therefore is, *v.* 35. *Take heed that the Light which is in thee be not Darkneſs*. Take heed that the Eye of the Mind be not blinded by Partiality and Prejudice, and ſinful Aims. Be ſincere in your Enquiries after Truth, and ready to receive it in the Light, and Love, and Power of it; and not as the Men of *this Generation* whom Chriſt preach'd to, that never ſincerely deſir'd to know God's Will, or deſign'd to do it; and therefore no Wonder they *walk'd on in Darkneſs*, wander'd *endleſly*, and periſh'd *eternally*.

37 ¶ And as he ſpake, a certain Phariſee beſought him to dine with him: and he went in and ſate down to meat. 38 And when the Phariſee ſaw *it*, he marvelled that he had not firſt waſhed before dinner. 39 And the Lord ſaid unto him, Now do ye Phariſees make clean the outſide of the cup and the platter: but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedneſs. 40 Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within alſo? 41 But rather give alms of ſuch things as you have: and behold, all things are clean unto you. 42 But wo unto you Phariſees: for ye tithe the mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and paſs over judgment and the love of God: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 43 Wo unto you Phariſees: for ye love the uppermoſt ſeats in the ſynagogues, and greetings in the market. 44 Wo unto

you ſcribes and Phariſees, hypocrites: for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over *them*, are not aware *of them*. 45 ¶ Then anſwered one of the lawyers, and ſaid unto him, Maſter, thus ſaying, thou reproacheſt us alſo. 46 And he ſaid, Wo unto you alſo ye lawyers: for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be born, and ye yourſelves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. 47 Wo unto you: for ye build the ſepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48 Truly ye bear witneſs that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their ſepulchres. 49 Therefore alſo ſaid the wiſdom of God, I will ſend them prophets and apoſtles, and *ſome* of them they ſhall ſlay and perſecute: 50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was ſhed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation. 51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which periſhed between the altar and the temple: verily I ſay unto you, it ſhall be required of this generation. 52 Wo unto you lawyers: for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entred not in your ſelves, and them that were entering in ye hindred. 53 And as he ſaid theſe things unto them, the ſcribes and Phariſees began to urge *him* vehemently, and to provoke him to ſpeak of many things. 54 Laying wait for him, and ſeeking to catch ſomething out of his mouth, that they might accuſe him.

Chriſt here ſaith many of thoſe Things to a Phariſee and his Gueſts, in a *private* Converſation at Table, which he afterwards ſaid in a *publick* Diſcourſe in the Temple, *Mat.* 23. for what he ſaid in publick and private was *of a Piece*. He would not ſay that in a Corner which he durſt not repeat and ſtand to in the great Congregation; nor would he give thoſe Reproofs to any Sort of Sinners in general, which he durſt not apply to them in particular as he met with them, for he was and is the *faithful Witneſs*. Here's,

Firſt, Chriſt's going to dine with a Phariſee, that very civilly invited him to his Houſe, *v.* 37. *As he ſpake*, even while he was ſpeaking, a *certain Phariſee* interrupted him with a Requeſt to him to come and *dine with him*, to come *forthwith*, for it was dinner Time. We are willing to hope the *Phariſee* was ſo well pleas'd with his Diſcourſe, that he was willing to ſhew him Reſpect, and deſirous to have more of his Company, and therefore gave him this Invitation, and bid him truly *Welcome*; and yet we have ſome Cauſe to ſuſpect, that it was with an *Ill Deſign* to break off his Diſcourſe to the People, and to have an Opportunity of enſnaring him, and getting ſomething out of him which might ſerve for Matter of Accuſation or Reproach, *v.* 53, 54. We know not the Mind of this *Phariſee*, but whatever it was Chriſt knew it: If he meant ill, he ſhall know Chriſt doth not fear him; if well, he ſhall know Chriſt is willing to do him Good; ſo *he went in and ſate down to Meat*. *Note*, Chriſt's Diſciples muſt learn of him to be *converſable*, and not *moroſe*. Tho' we have need to be *cautious* what Company we keep, yet we need not be *rigid*, nor muſt we therefore *go out of the World*.

Secondly, The Offence which the *Phariſee* took at Chriſt, as thoſe of that Sort had ſometimes done at the Diſciples of Chriſt for not *waſhing before Dinner*, v. 38. He wonder'd that a Man of his Sanctity, a Prophet, a Man of ſo much Devotion, and ſuch a ſtrict Converſation, would ſit down to Meat, and not firſt *waſh his Hands*, eſpecially being newly come out of a mixt Company, and there being in the Phariſees Dining-Room no Doubt all Accommodations ſet ready for it; ſo that he need not fear being *troubleſome*; and the Phariſee himſelf and all his Gueſts no doubt *waſhing*, ſo that he could not be *ſingular*, what and yet not waſh? What Harm had it been if he had waſh'd? Was it not ſtrictly commanded by the Canons of their Church? It was ſo, and therefore Chriſt would not do it becauſe he would witneſs againſt their aſſuming a Power to impoſe that as a Matter of Religion which God *commanded them not*. The Ceremonial Law conſiſted in *divers Waſhings*, but *this* was none of them, and therefore Chriſt would not practiſe it, no not in *Complaiſance* to the Phariſee who invited him, nor tho' he knew that Offence would be taken at his omitting it.

Thirdly, The ſharp Reproof which Chriſt upon this Occaſion gave to the *Phariſee*, without begging Pardon even of the Phariſee, whoſe Gueſt he now was; for we muſt not flatter our beſt Friends in any evil Thing.

1. He reproves them for placing Religion ſo much in thoſe Inſtances of it that are only external, and fall under the Eye of Man, while thoſe were not only *poſt-pon'd*, but quite *expung'd* which reſpect the Soul, and fall under the Eye of God, *v.* 39, 40. Now obſerve here, (1.) The Abſurdity they were guilty of. *You Phariſees make clean the outſide* only, you waſh your Hands with Water, but do not *waſh your Hearts from Wickedneſs*; thoſe are full of Covetouſneſs and Malice, *Covetouſneſs* of Mens Goods, and Malice againſt good Men. Thoſe would never be reckon'd *cleanly* Servants, that waſh only the *Outſide of the Cup* their Maſter drinks out of, or *the Platter* he eats out of, and take no Care to make the *Inſide clean*, which immediately *affects* the Meat and Drink, and mingles it with it if there be any Filth. The Frame and Temper of the Mind in every religious Service is the *Inſide* of the Cup and Platter, the Impurity of that *infects* the Services, and therefore to keep ourſelves free from ſcandalous Enormites, and yet to live under the Dominion of ſpiritual Wickedneſs, is as great an Affront to God, as it would be for a Servant that gives the Cup into his Maſter's Hand, clean wip'd from all the Duſt on the Outſide, but *within* full of Cobwebs and Spiders. *Ravening* and *Wickedneſs*; that is *reigning Worldlineſs* and *reigning Spitefulneſs*, which Men think they can find ſome Cloak or Cover for, are the dangerous damning Sins of many, who have made the *Outſide of the Cup* clean from the more groſs, and ſcandalous, and inexcuſable Sins of Whoredem and Drunkeneſs. (2.) A particular Inſtance of the Abſurdity of it, *v.* 40. *Ye Fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within alſo?* Did not that God who in the Law of *Moſes* appointed divers ceremonial Waſhings, with which you juſtifie yourſelves in theſe Practices and Impoſitions, appoint alſo that ye ſhou'd cleanſe and purify your Hearts? He who made Laws for that which is *without*, did not he, even in thoſe Laws, further intend ſomething within? and by other Laws ſhew, how little he regarded the *purifying of the Fleſh*, and the *putting away of the Filth* of that, if the Heart be not made clean. Or it may have Regard to God, not only as a *Lawgiver*, but (which the Words ſeem rather to import) as a Creator. Did not God who made us theſe Bodies (and they *are fearfully and wonderfully made*) make us theſe *Souls* alſo, which are more fearfully and wonderfully made; now if he made both, he juſtly expects we ſhould take Care of both; and therefore not only waſh the *Body* which he is the *Former* of, and make the Hands clean in Honour of his Work, but waſh the *Spirit* which he is the *Father* of, and get the Leproſie in the Heart cleans'd.

To this he ſubjoins a Rule for making of our Creature Comforts clean to us, *v.* 41. Inſtead of *waſhing your Hands* before you go to Meat, *give Alms of ſuch Things as you have*, τὰ ἔνοντα, of ſuch Things as are ſet before you, and preſent with you, let the Poor have their Share out of them, and then *all Things are clean to you*, and you may uſe them comfortably. Here is a plain Alluſion to the Law of *Moſes*, by which it was provided that certain Portions of the Increaſe of their Land ſhould be given *to the Levite, the Stranger, the Fatherleſs, and the Widow*, and when that was done, what was reſerv'd for their own Uſe was *clean to them*, and they could in Faith pray for a Bleſſing upon it, *Deut.* 26. 12, 15. Then we can with Comfort enjoy the Gifts of God's Bounty ourſelves, when we *ſend Portions to them for whom nothing is prepared*, Neh. 8. 10. *Job eats not his Morſel alone*, but *the Fatherleſs eat thereof*, and ſo it was *clean to him*, Job 31. 17. *Clean*, that is permitted and allowed to be us'd, and then only it can be us'd comfortably. *Note*, What we have is not our own, unleſs God have his Dues out of it; and it is by *Liberality to the Poor*, that we clear up to ourſelves our *Liberty* to make Uſe of our Creature Comforts.

2. He reproves them for laying Streſs upon Trifles, and neglecting the weighty Matters of the Law, *v.* 42. (1.) Thoſe Laws which related only to the *Means of Religion*, they were very exact in the Obſervance of, as particularly thoſe concerning the Maintenance of the Prieſts, ye *pay Tith of Mint and Rue*, pay it in Kind, and to the full, and will not put off the Prieſts with a *Modus decimandi*, or *compound* for it; by this they would gain a Reputation with the People, as ſtrict Obſervers of the Law, and would make an Intereſt in the Prieſts, in whoſe Power it was many a Time to do them a Kindneſs; and no wonder if the *Prieſts* and the *Phariſees* contriv'd how to ſtrengthen one anothers Hands. Now Chriſt doth not condemn them for being ſo exact in paying Tithes, *theſe Things ought ye to have done*, but for thinking that that would atone for the Neglect of their greater Duties; for (2.) Thoſe Laws which relate to the *Eſſentials of Religion* they made nothing of, ye *paſs over Judgment and the Love of God*, you make no Conſcience of giving Men their *Dues* and God your *Hearts*.

3. He reproves them for their Pride and Vanity, and Affectation of Precedency, and Praiſe of Men, *v.* 43. *ye love the uppermoſt Seats in the Synagogues*, or Conſiſtories where the Elders met for Government; if you have not thoſe Seats, you are ambitious of them, if you have, you are proud of them; and ye *love Greetings in the Markets*, to be complemented by the People, and to have their Cap and Knee. 'Tis not ſitting uppermoſt, or being greeted, that is reprov'd, but *loving it*.

4. He reproves them for their Hypocriſy, and their colouring over the Wickedneſs of their Hearts and Lives with ſpecious Pretences, *v.* 44. *ye are* as *Graves* overgrown with Graſs, which therefore *appear not*, and *the Men that walk over them are not aware of them*, and ſo they contract the ceremonial Pollution which by the Law aroſe from the *Touch of a Grave*. Theſe

Phariſees were *within* full of *Abominations*, as a Grave of Putrefaction, full of Covetouſneſs, Envy and Malice, and yet they conceal'd it ſo artfully, with a Profeſſion of Devotion, that it did not appear, ſo that they who converſ'd with them and follow'd their Doctrine, were defil'd with Sin, infected with their Corruptions, and ill Morals, and yet they making a Shew of Piety, ſuſpected no Danger by them. The Contagion *inſinuated* itſelf, and was *inſenſibly* caught, and thoſe that caught it thought themſelves never the worſe.

Fourthly, The Teſtimony which he bore alſo againſt the *Lawyers or Scribes*, who made it their Buſineſs to *expound* the Law according to the Tradition of the Elders, as the Phariſees did to *obſerve* the Law according to that Tradition.

1. There was one of that Profeſſion who reſented what he ſaid againſt the *Phariſees*; v. 45. *Maſter, thus ſaying, thou reproacheſt us alſo*, for we are *Scribes*; and are we therefore *Hypocrites? Note*, It is a common Thing for unhumbled Sinners to call and count Reproofs Reproaches. It is the Wiſdom of thoſe that deſire to have their Sin mortified, to make a *good Uſe* of Reproaches that come from *ill Will*, and to turn them into Reproofs; If we can that Way hear of our Faults and amend them, it is well: But 'tis the Folly of thoſe who are wedded to their Sins, and reſolv'd not to part with them, to make an *ill Uſe* of the faithful and friendly Admonitions given them, which come from Love, and to have their Paſſions provok'd by them, as if they were intended for *Reproaches*, and therefore fly in the Face of their Reprovers, and juſtifie themſelves in rejecting the Reproof. Thus the Prophet complain'd, *Jer.* 6. 10. *The Word of the Lord is to them a Reproach, they have no Delight in it.* This Lawyer eſpous'd the Phariſees Cauſe, and ſo made himſelf Partaker of his Sins.

2. Our Lord Jeſus thereupon took them to Task, *v.* 46. *Woe unto you alſo, ye Lawyers*; and again, *v.* 52. *Woe unto you Lawyers.* They bleſs'd themſelves in the Reputation they had among the People, who thought them happy Men becauſe they ſtudy'd the Law, and were always converſant with that, and had the Honour of inſtructing People in the Knowledge of that, but Chriſt denounc'd *Woes* againſt them, for he ſees not as Man ſees. This was juſt upon him for taking the Phariſees Part, and quarrelling with Chriſt, becauſe he reproved them. *Note*, Thoſe who quarrel with the Reproof of others, and ſuſpect them to be Reproaches to them, do but get *Woes of their own* by ſo doing.

1. The Lawyers are reprov'd for making the Services of Religion more *burthenſome* to others, but more *eaſie* to themſelves than God had made them, *v.* 46. *Ye lade Men with Burthens grievous to be born*, by your Traditions, which *bind them out from* many Liberties God has allow'd them, and *bind them up to* many Slaveries which God never enjoyn'd them; to ſhew your Authority, and to keep People in Awe: But *ye yourſelves touch them not with one of your Fingers*, i. e. (1.) You will not *burthen* yourſelves with them, nor be yourſelves bound by thoſe Reſtraints with which you hamper others. They would ſeem, by the Hedges they pretended to make about the Law, to be very ſtrict for the Obſervance of the Law, but if you could ſee their Practiſes, you would find, not only that they make nothing of thoſe Hedges themſelves, but make nothing of the Law itſelf neither: Thus the Confeſſors of the Romiſh Church, are ſaid to do with their Penitents. (2.) You will not *lighten* them to thoſe you have Power over; *you will not touch them*, that is, either to repeal or to diſpenſe with them, when you find them burthenſome and grievous to the People. They would come in with *both Hands* to diſpenſe with a Command of God, but not with *a Finger* to mitigate the Rigour of any of the Traditions of the Elders.

2. They are reproved for pretending a Veneration for the Memory of the Prophets, whom their Fathers kill'd, when yet they hated and perſecuted thoſe in their own Day, who were ſent to them on the ſame Errand, to call them to Repentance, and to direct them to Chriſt, *v.* 47, 48, 49.

(1.) Theſe Hypocrites among other Pretences of Piety *built the Sepulchres of the Prophets*, i. e. They erected Monuments over their Graves, in Honour of them, probably with large Inſcriptions, containing high Encomiums of them: They were not ſo ſuperſtitious to enſhrine their Reliques, or to think the Devotions the more acceptable to God for their being paid at the *Tombs of the Martyrs*; they did not burn Incenſe or pray to them, or plead their Merits with God, they did not add that Iniquity to their Hypocriſie, but as if they own'd themſelves the *Children of the Prophets*, their Heirs and Executors, they *repair'd* and *beautify'd* their Monuments, ſacred to their *pious Memory*.

(2.) Notwithſtanding this they had an inveterate *Enmity* to thoſe in their *own Day*, that came to them in the *Spirit* and *Power* of thoſe Prophets, and tho' they had not yet had an Opportunity of carrying it far, yet they would ſoon do it, for the *Wiſdom of God ſaid*, i. e. Chriſt himſelf would *ſo order* it, and did *now foretell* it, that they would *ſlay* and *perſecute* the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles* that ſhould be ſent them: The *Wiſdom of God* would thus make Tryal of them, and diſcover their odious Hypocriſie, by ſending them *Prophets* to reprove them for their Sins, and warn them of the Judgments of God. Thoſe *Prophets* ſhould prove themſelves *Apoſtles* or Meſſengers ſent from Heaven by Signs and Wonders, and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt: Or *I will ſend them Prophets* under the Stile and Title of *Apoſtles*, who yet ſhall produce as good an Authority as any of the old Prophets did; and thoſe they ſhall not only contradict and oppoſe, but *ſlay* and *perſecute*, and put to Death. Chriſt foreſaw this, and yet did not otherwiſe than became the *Wiſdom of God* in ſending them, for he knew how to bring Glory to himſelf in the Iſſue, by the Recompences reſerv'd both for the *Perſecutors* and the *Perſecuted* in the future State.

(3.) That therefore God will juſtly put another Conſtruction upon their *building* the *Tombs* of the *Prophets* than what they would be thought to intend, and it ſhall be interpreted their *allowing the Deeds of their Fathers*, v. 45. for ſince by their preſent Actions it appear'd they had no true Value for their Prophets, their *building their Sepulchres* ſhall have this Senſe put upon it, that they reſolv'd to keep them in their Graves, whom their Fathers had hurry'd thither. *Joſiah* that had a *real* Value for Prophets, thought it enough not to diſturb the Grave of the *Man of God* at *Bethel*, *let no Man move his Bones*, 2 Kings 23. 17, 18. If theſe Lawyers will carry the Matter further, and will build *their Sepulchres*, 'tis ſuch a Piece of *over-doing*, as gives Cauſe to ſuſpect an ill Deſign in it, and that 'tis meant as a Cover for ſome Deſign againſt Prophecy itſelf, like the Kiſs of a Traytor, as *he that bleſſeth his Friend with a loud Voice, riſing early in the Morning, it ſhall be counted a Curſe to him*, Prov. 27. 14.

(4.) That they muſt expect no other, but to be reckon'd with as the *Fillers up* of the *Meaſure* of Perſecution, *v.* 50, 51. They keep up the Trade as it were in Succeſſion, and therefore are reſponſable for the *Debts of the Company*, even thoſe it has been in *contracting* all along, from *the Blood of Abel* when the World began, to that of *Zecharias*, and ſo forward to the End of the Jewiſh State, it ſhall all be *required of this Generation*, this laſt Generation of the Jews, whoſe Sin in perſecuting Chriſt's Apoſtles would exceed any of the Sins of that Kind that their Fathers were guilty of, and ſo would bring *Wrath* among them *to the uttermoſt*, 1 Theſ. 2. 15, 16. And their Deſtruction by the *Romans* was ſo terrible as might well be reckon'd the compleating of God's Vengeance upon that perſecuting Nation.

3. They are reprov'd for oppoſing the Goſpel of Chriſt, and doing all they could to obſtruct the Progreſs and Succeſs of it, *v.* 52. (1.) They had not according to the Duty of their Place faithfully expounded to the People thoſe Scriptures of the old Teſtament which pointed at the *Meſſiah*, which if they had been led into the right Underſtanding of by the Lawyers, they would readily have embrac'd him and his Doctrine: But inſtead of that, they had perverted theſe Texts, and had caſt a Miſt before the Eyes of the People by their corrupt Gloſſes upon them, and this is call'd *taking away the Key of Knowledge*; inſtead of *uſing* that Key for the People, and helping them to uſe it aright, they *hid it* from them; this is call'd in *Matthew*, *ſhutting up the Kingdom of God againſt Men*, Matt. 23. 13. *Note*, Thoſe who take away the Key of Knowledge, ſhut up the *Kingdom of Heaven*. (2.) They themſelves did not embrace the Goſpel of Chriſt, tho' by their Acquaintance with the old Teſtament, they could not but know that the *Time* was *fulfill'd*, and the *Kingdom of God was at Hand*; they ſaw the Prophecies accompliſh'd in that Kingdom, which our Lord Jeſus was about to ſet up, and yet would not themſelves *enter into it*. Nay, (3.) Them that without any Conduct or Aſſiſtance of theirs were *entring in*, they did all they could to *hinder* and diſcourage; by threatning to *caſt them out of the Synagogue*, and otherwiſe terrifying them. 'Tis bad for People to be *averſe* to Revelation, but much worſe to be *adverſe* to it.

Laſtly, In the Cloſe of the Chapter we are told, how ſpitefully and maliciouſly the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* contriv'd to draw him into a Snare, *v.* 53, 54. They could not bear thoſe cutting Reproofs which they muſt own to be juſt, but ſince what he had ſaid againſt them in particular, wou'd not *bear an Action*, nor could they ground upon it any *criminal* Accuſation, and therefore, as if becauſe his Reproofs were warm, they hop'd to ſtir him up to ſome intemperate Heat and Paſſion, ſo as to put him off his Guard; they *began to urge him vehemently*, to be very fierce upon him, and to *provoke him to ſpeak to many Things*, to propoſe dangerous Queſtions to him, *laying wait* for ſomething which might ſerve the Deſign they had, of making him either *odious* to the People, or *obnoxious* to the Government, or both. Thus did they ſeek Occaſion againſt him, like *David's* Enemies, that did *every Day wreſt his Words*, Pſal. 56. 5. *Evil Men dig up Miſchief. Note*, Faithful Reprovers of Sin muſt expect to have many Enemies, and have need to ſet a Watch before the Door of their Lips, becauſe of *their Obſervers* that watch for their halting. The Prophet complains of thoſe in his Time, who *make a Man an Offender for a Word, and lay a Snare for him that reproveth in the Gate*, Iſa. 29. 21. That we may bear Tryals of this Kind with Patience, and get thro' them with Prudence, let us *conſider him who endur'd ſuch Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf*.

CHAP. XII.

In this Chapter we have divers excellent Diſcourſes of our Saviour's upon various Occaſions; many of which are to the ſame Purpoſe *with what we had in* Matthew *upon other the like Occaſions; for we may ſuppoſe our Lord Jeſus preach'd the ſame Doctrines, and preſs'd the ſame Duties at ſeveral Times, in ſeveral Companies, and one of the Evangeliſts took them as he deliver'd them at one Time, and another at another Time; and we need thus to have* Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line. *Here* (1.) *Chriſt warns his Diſciples to take heed of Hypocriſy, and of Cowardice in profeſſing Chriſtianity and preaching the Goſpel,* v. 1,—12. (2.) *He gives a Caution againſt Covetouſneſs, upon Occaſion of a covetous Motion made to him, and illuſtrates that Caution by a Parable of a rich Man ſuddenly cut off by Death in the midſt of his worldly Projects and Hopes,* v. 13,---21. (3.) *He encourageth his Diſciples to caſt all their Care upon God, and to live eaſy in a Dependance upon his Providence, and engageth them to make Religion their main Buſineſs,* v. 22,---34. (4.) *He ſtirs them up to Watchfulneſs for their Maſter's coming, from the Conſideration of the Reward of thoſe who are then found faithful, and the Puniſhment of them who are found unfaithful,* v. 35,---48. (5.) *He bids them expect Trouble and Perſecution,* v. 49,---53. (6.) *He warns the People to obſerve and improve the Day of their Opportunities, and to make their Peace with God in Time,* v. 54,---59.

IN the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, inſomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to ſay unto his diſciples firſt of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſie. 2 For there is nothing covered, that ſhall not be revealed; neither hid, that ſhall not be known. 3 Therefore whatſoever ye have ſpoken in darkneſs, ſhall be heard in the light: and that which ye have ſpoken in the ear in cloſets, ſhall be proclaimed on the houſe-tops. 4 And I ſay unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. 5 But I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to caſt into hell; yea, I ſay unto you, Fear him. 6 Are not five ſparrows ſold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? 7 But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value then many ſparrows. 8 Alſo I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before men, him ſhall the Son of man alſo confeſs before the angels of God. 9 But he that denieth me before men, ſhall be denied before the angels of God. 10 And whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a word againſt the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him: but unto him that blaſphemeth againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven. 11 And when they bring you unto the ſynagogues, and *unto* magiſtrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye ſhall anſwer, or what ye ſhall ſay: 12 For the Holy Ghoſt ſhall teach you in the ſame hour, what we ought to ſay.

We find here, 1. A vaſt Auditory that was got together to hear Chriſt preach. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* ſought to *accuſe him*, and do him Miſchief, but the People that were not under the Bias of their Prejudices and Jealouſies, ſtill *admir'd* him, attended on him, and did him Honour, *v.* 1. *In the mean Time*, while he was in the *Phariſees* Houſe, contending with them that ſought to enſnare him, the People got together for an Afternoon Sermon; a Sermon after *Dinner*, after Dinner with a *Phariſee*; and he would not diſappoint them. Tho' in the Morning Sermon, when they were *gathered thick together*, Chap. 11. 29. he had ſeverely reprov'd them, as an *evil Generation that ſeek a Sign*, yet they renew'd their Attendance on him, ſo much better could the People bear *their* Reproofs, than the *Phariſees theirs*. The more the *Phariſees* ſtrove to drive the People from Chriſt, the more flocking there was to him. Here was an *innumerable Multitude of People gathered together, ſo that they trod one upon another* in labouring to get foremoſt, and to come within Hearing. 'Tis a good Sight to ſee People thus forward to hear the Word, and venture upon Inconvenience and Danger, rather than miſs an Opportunity for their Souls. Who are theſe that thus *fly like the Doves to their Windows*, Iſa. 60. 8. When the Net is caſt where there's ſuch a Multitude of Fiſh, it may be hoped that ſome will be incloſ'd.

2. The Inſtructions which he gave his Followers in the hearing of this Auditory

Firſt, He began with a Caution againſt *Hypocriſy*. This he ſaid *to his Diſciples firſt of all*; either to the Twelve or the Seventy. Theſe were his more peculiar Charge, his Family, his School, and therefore he particularly *warn'd them* as his *beloved Sons*; they made more a Profeſſion of Religion than others, and Hypocriſy in *that* was the Sin they were moſt in Danger of. They were to preach to others, and if they *prevaricate*, corrupt the Word, and deal deceitfully, Hypocriſy would be worſe in them than in others. And beſides, there was a *Judas* among them that was an Hypocrite, and Chriſt knew it, and would hereby ſtartle him, or leave him inexcuſable. Chriſt's Diſciples were for ought we know the *beſt Men* then in the World, yet need to be caution'd againſt Hypocriſy. Chriſt ſaid this to the Diſciples *in the Hearing* of this great Multitude, rather than *privately* when he had them by themſelves, to add the greater Weight to the Caution, and to let the World know that he would not countenance Hypocriſy, no not in *his own Diſciples*. Now obſerve,

1. The Deſcription of that Sin which he warns them againſt, *It is the Leaven of the* Phariſees. (1.) 'Tis *Leaven*, 'tis *ſpreading* as Leaven, *inſinuates* itſelf into the whole Man, and all that he doth; 'tis *ſwelling* and *ſowering* as Leaven, for it puffs Men up with Pride, and imbitters them with Malice, and makes their Service unacceptable to God. (2.) It is the Leaven of the *Phariſees*, i. e. it is the Sin they are moſt of them found in. Take heed of imitating them; be not you of their Spirit; do not you diſſemble in Chriſtianity as they do in Judaiſm; make not you Religion a *Cloak of Maliciouſneſs* as they do *theirs*.

2. A good Reaſon againſt it, *v.* 2, 3. *For there is nothing cover'd that ſhall not be revealed.* 'Tis to no Purpoſe to diſſemble, for ſooner or later Truth will come out; and *a lying Tongue is but for a Moment.* If you *ſpeak in Darkneſs* that which is unbecoming you, and is inconſiſtent with your publick Profeſſions, *it ſhall be heard in the Light*, ſome how or other it will be diſcover'd, *a Bird of the Air ſhall carry the Voice*, Eccl. 10. 20. and your Folly and Falſhood will be *made manifeſt*. The Iniquity that is conceal'd with a Shew of Piety, will be diſcover'd perhaps in this World, as *Judas*'s was, and *Simon Magus*'s, however in the great Day, when the *Secrets of all Hearts* ſhall be *made manifeſt*, Eccl. 12. 14. *Rom.* 2. 16. If Men's Religion prevail not to conquer and cure the Wickedneſs of their Hearts, it ſhall not always ſerve for a Cloak. The Day is coming when Hypocrites will be ſtrip'd of their Fig-Leaves.

Secondly, To this he added a Charge to them, to be faithful to the Truſt repoſ'd in them, and not to betray it thro' Cowardice or baſe Fear. Some make *v.* 2. 3. to be a Caution to them not to *conceal* thoſe Things which they had been *inſtructed* in, and were *employ'd* to publiſh to the World. Whether Men will *hear*, or whether they will *forbear*, tell them the *Truth*; the *whole* Truth, and *nothing but* the Truth; what has been ſpoken to you, and you have talk'd of among yourſelves *privately* and in Corners, that do you preach *publickly*, whoever is offended; for if you *pleaſe Men*, you are not *Chriſt's Servants*, nor can you pleaſe him, *Gal.* 1. 10.

But this was not the worſt of it, 'twas likely to be a *ſuffering* Cauſe, tho' never a *ſinking* one; let them therefore arm themſelves with Courage, and divers Arguments hear are to ſteal them with a holy Reſolution in their Work. Conſider,

1. The Power of your Enemies is a limited Power, *v.* 4. *I ſay unto you, my Friends*; Chriſt's Diſciples are his Friends, he calls them *Friends*, and gives them this *friendly* Advice, *Be not afraid*; do not diſquiet yourſelves with tormenting Fears of the Power and Rage of Men. *Note*, Thoſe whom Chriſt owns for *his Friends* need not be afraid of any Enemies. *Be not afraid* no not of them that *kill the Body*, let it not be in the Power, not only of *Scoffers*, but not of *Murtherers*, to drive you off from your Work, for you that have learned to triumph over Death, may ſay, even of them, let them do their worſt, *after that there is no more that they can do*; the immortal Soul lives and is happy, and enjoys itſelf and its God, and ſets them all at Defiance. *Note*, Thoſe can do Chriſt's Diſciples no real Harm, and therefore ought not to be dreaded, who can but *kill the Body*, for they only ſend that to its Reſt, and the Soul to its Joy the ſooner.

2. God is to be fear'd more than the moſt powerful Men, *v.* 5. *I will forewarn you whom you ſhall fear*; that you may fear Man leſs, fear God more; *Moſes* conquers his Fear of the *Wrath of the King*, by having an Eye to him *that is inviſible*. By *owning Chriſt* you may incur the Wrath of Men, which can reach no further than to *put you to Death*, and without God's Permiſſion they cannot do that; but by *denying* Chriſt and diſowning him, you will incur the Wrath of God, which has Power to ſend *you to Hell*, and there's no reſiſting it. Now of two Evils the leaſt is to be choſen, and the greateſt to be dreaded, and therefore *I ſay unto you, Fear him.* 'Tis true, ſaid that bleſſed Martyr Biſhop *Hooper*, Life is ſweet, and Death bitter, but Eternal Life is more ſweet, and Eternal Death more bitter.

3. The Lives of good Chriſtians and good Miniſters are the particular Care of the Divine Providence, *v.* 6, 7. To encourage us in Times of Difficulty and Danger, we muſt have Recourſe to our firſt Principles, and build upon them; now a firm Belief of the Doctrine of God's univerſal Providence, and the Extent of it, wou'd be ſatisfying to us, when at any Time we are in Peril, and encourage us to truſt God in the Way of Duty. (1.) Providence takes Cognizance of the *meaneſt Creatures*; even of *the Sparrows*. Tho' they are of ſuch ſmall Account that *five* of them are ſold for *two Farthings*, yet not one of them is *forgotten of God*, but is provided for, and Notice is taken of its Death. Now, *ye are of more Value than many Spar-*

rows, and therefore you may be ſure you *are not forgotten* though impriſon'd, tho' baniſh'd, tho' forgotten by your Friends; much more *precious in the Sight of the Lord is the Death of Saints* than the Death of Sparrows. (2.) Providence takes Cognizance of the *meaneſt Intereſt* of the Diſciples of Chriſt, *v.* 7. even *the very Hairs of your Head are all numbered*, much more are your Sighs and Tears number'd, and the Drops of your Blood you ſhed for Chriſt's Name's ſake. An Account is kept of all your Loſſes, that they *may be*, and without doubt they ſhall be recompens'd unſpeakably to your Advantage.

4. You will be own'd or diſown'd by Chriſt in the Great Day, according as you now own or diſown him, *v.* 8, 9. (1.) To engage us to *confeſs Chriſt before Men*, whatever we may loſe or ſuffer for our Conſtancy to him, and how dear ſoever it may coſt us, we are aſſur'd, that they who *confeſs Chriſt* now, ſhall be own'd by him in the great Day *before the Angels of God*, to their everlaſting Comfort and Honour. Jeſus Chriſt will *confeſs* not only that he ſuffer'd for them, and they are to have the Benefit of *his* Sufferings, but that they ſuffer'd *for him*; and his Kingdom and Intereſt on Earth was advanc'd by *their* Sufferings, and what greater Honour can be done them? (2.) To deter us from denying Chriſt, and a cowardly *deſerting* of his Truths and Ways, we are here aſſur'd, that thoſe who *deny Chriſt*, and treacherouſly depart from him, whatever they may ſave by it, tho' it were Life itſelf, and whatever they may gain by it, tho' it were a Kingdom, will be vaſt Looſers at laſt, for they ſhall be *denied before the Angels of God*; Chriſt will not know them, will not own them, will not ſhew them any Favour, which will turn to their everlaſting Terror and Contempt. By the Streſs here laid upon their being *confeſs'd* or *deny'd before the Angels of God*, it ſhould ſeem to be a conſiderable Part of the Happineſs of glorified Saints, that they will not only ſtand *right*, but ſtand *high* in the Eſteem of the *holy Angels*; they will love them, and honour them, and own them, if they be Chriſt's Servants, they are their Fellow-Servants, and they will take them for their Companions. And on the contrary, a conſiderable Part of the Miſery of Damned Sinners will be, that the holy Angels will abandon them, and will be the pleaſed Witneſſes not only of their Diſgrace as here, but of their Miſery, for they ſhall be *tormented in the Preſence of the holy Angels*, Rev. 14. 10. who will give them no Relief.

5. The Errand they were ſhortly to be ſent out upon, was of the higheſt and laſt Importance to the Children of Men, to whom they were ſent, *v.* 10. Let them be bold in preaching the Goſpel, for a ſorer and heavier Doom would attend thoſe that rejected them, after the Spirit was pour'd out upon them, which was to be the *laſt* Method of Conviction, than thoſe that now rejected Chriſt himſelf, and oppos'd him. *Greater Works than theſe ſhall ye do*, and conſequently greater will be the Puniſhment of thoſe that blaſpheme the Gifts and Operations of the Holy Ghoſt in you. *Whoſoever ſhall ſpeak a Word againſt the Son of Man*, that ſhall ſtumble at the Meaneſs of his Appearance, and ſpeak *ſlightly* and *ſpitefully* of him, it is capable of ſome Excuſe; *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* But unto him that *blaſphemeth the Holy Ghoſt*, that blaſphemes the Chriſtian Doctrine, and maliciouſly oppoſeth it, and after the pouring out of the Spirit, and his Atteſtation of Chriſt's *being glorified*, Acts 2. 33.--5. 32. The Privilege of the *Forgiveneſs of Sin* ſhall be deny'd, he ſhall have no Benefit by Chriſt and his Goſpel; you may ſhake off the Duſt of your Feet againſt thoſe that do ſo, and give them over as incurable: They have forfeited that *Repentance* and *Remiſſion* which Chriſt was exalted to give, and which you are *commiſſion'd to preach*. The Sin, no doubt, was the more daring, and conſequently the Caſe the more deſperate, during the Continuance of the *extraordinary* Gifts and Operations of the Spirit in the Church, which were intended for a *Sign to them who believed not*, 1 Cor. 14. 22. Thoſe who tho' they were not convinc'd by them at firſt, yet admir'd them, there were Hopes of, but thoſe who *blaſphem'd* them were given over.

6. Whatever *Trials* they ſhould be call'd out to, they ſhould be ſufficiently *furniſh'd* for them, and honourably brought through them, *v.* 11, 12. The faithful Martyr for Chriſt has not only *Sufferings* to *undergo*, but a *Teſtimony* to *bear*, a *good Confeſſion* to *witneſs*, and is concern'd to do that *well*, ſo as that the Cauſe of Chriſt may not ſuffer, tho' he ſuffer for it: And if this be his Care, let him caſt it upon God, when they *bring you unto the Synagogues*, before Church-Rulers, before the Jewiſh Courts, or before *Magiſtrates and Powers*; Gentile Rulers, Rulers in the State, to be examined about your Doctrine, what it is, and what the Proof of it; *Take no Thought what ye ſhall anſwer*, (1.) that you may *ſave yourſelves*: Do not ſtudy by what Art or Rhetorick to mollify your Judges, or by what Tricks in Law to bring yourſelves off; if it be the Will of God that you ſhould come off, and your Time is not yet come, he will bring it about effectually. (2.) That you may *ſerve your Maſter*, aim at this, but do not perplex yourſelves about it, for *the Holy Ghoſt*, as a Spirit of Wiſdom, *ſhall teach you what ye ought to ſay*, and how to ſay it, ſo as it may be for the Honour of God and his Cauſe.

13 And one of the company ſaid unto him, Maſter, ſpeak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. 14 And he ſaid unto him, Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you? 15 And he ſaid unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetouſneſs: for a mans life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth. 16 And he ſpake a parable unto them, ſaying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. 17 And he thought within himſelf, ſaying, what ſhall I do, becauſe I have no room where to beſtow my fruits? 18 And he ſaid, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater: And there will I beſtow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years; take thine eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God ſaid unto him, Thou fool, this night ſhall thy Soul be required of thee: then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be which thou haſt provided? 21 So *is* he that layeth up treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich towards God.

We have in theſe Verſes,

Firſt, The *Application* that was made to Chriſt very *unſeaſonably*, by one of his Hearers, deſiring him to interpoſe *between him and his Brother*, in a Matter that concern'd the Eſtate of the Family, *v.* 13. *Maſter ſpeak to my Brother*; ſpeak as a Prophet, ſpeak as a King, ſpeak with Authority, he is one that will have a Regard to what thou ſayeſt; ſpeak to him *that he divide the Inheritance with me*. Now,

1. Some think his Brother *did him Wrong*, and he appeals to Chriſt to *right him*, becauſe he knew the Law was coſtly. His Brother was ſuch a one as the Jews call'd *Ben-hameſen*, a *Son of Violence*, that took not only his own Part of the Eſtate, but his Brothers too, and forcibly detain'd it from him. Such Brethren there are in the World, that have no Senſe at all, either of *natural Equity*, or *natural Affection*, who make a Prey of thoſe whom they ought to patronize and protect. They who are ſo wrong'd, have a God to go to, who will *execute* Judgment and Juſtice for *thoſe that are oppreſſed*.

2. Others think he had a Mind to *do his Brother Wrong*, and would have Chriſt to *aſſiſt him*; that whereas the Law gave the elder Brother a double Portion of the Eſtate, and the Father himſelf could not diſpoſe of what he had, but by that Rule, *Deut.* 21. 16, 17. He would have Chriſt to *alter that Law*, and to oblige his Brother, who was perhaps a Follower of Chriſt at large, to *divide the Inheritance* equally *with him*, in Gavel-Kind, Share and Share alike, and to allot him as much as his elder Brother: I ſuſpect that this was the Caſe, becauſe Chriſt takes Occaſion from it to warn againſt *Covetouſneſs*, πλεονεξια. A Deſire of *having more*, more than God in his Providence has allotted us. It was not a lawful Deſire of getting his own, but a *ſinful* Deſire of getting more than his own.

Secondly, Chriſt's Refuſal to interpoſe in this Matter, *v.* 14. *Man, who made me a Judge or Divider over you.* In Matters of this Nature Chriſt would not aſſume either a *Legiſlative* Power to alter the ſettled Rule of Inheritance, or a *judicial* Power to determine Controverſies concerning them; he could have done the Judges Part, and Lawyers, as well as he did the Phyſicians, and have ended Suits at Law as happily as he had Diſeaſes, but he would not, for it was not in his Commiſſion, *who made me a Judge*? Probably he refers to the Indignity done to *Moſes* by his Brethren in *Egypt*, which *Steven* upbraided the *Jews* with, *Acts* 7. 27, 35. If I ſhould offer to do this, you would taunt me as you did *Moſes*, *who made thee a Judge or a Divider*? He corrects the Man's Miſtake, will not admit his Appeal, 'twas *coram non judice*, and ſo *diſmiſſeth* his Bill. If he had come to him to deſire him to aſſiſt his Purſuits of his Heavenly Inheritance, Chriſt would have given him his beſt Help, but as to this Matter he has nothing to do, *who made me a Judge? Note*, Jeſus Chriſt was no Uſurper, he took no Honour, no Power to himſelf, but what was given him, *Heb.* 5. 5. Whatever he did, he could tell by what Authority he did it, and who gave him that Authority.

Now this ſhews us what is the Nature and Conſtitution of Chriſt's Kingdom; it is a Spiritual Kingdom, and not of this World. (1.) It doth not *interfere* with Civil Powers, nor take the Authority of Princes out of their Hands: Chriſtianity leaves the Matter as it found it, as to Civil Power. (2.) It doth not intermeddle with Civil Rights; it obligeth all to do juſtly, according to the ſettled Rules of Equity, but Dominion is not founded in Grace. (3.) It doth not *encourage* our *Expectations* of worldly Advantages by our Religion. If this Man will be a Diſciple of Chriſt, and expects that in Conſideration of that, Chriſt ſhould give him his Brother's Eſtate, he is miſtaken; the Rewards of Chriſt's Diſciples are of another Nature. (4.) It doth not *encourage* our *Conteſts* with our Brethren, and our being rigorous and high in our Demands, but rather for Peace ſake to recede from our Right. (5.) It doth not allow Miniſters to *entangle* themſelves in the Affairs of this Life, 2 Tim. 3. 4. to *leave the Word of God to ſerve Tables.* There are thoſe whoſe Buſineſs it is, let it be left to them, *tractent fabrilla fabri.*

Thirdly, The neceſſary Caution which Chriſt took Occaſion from hence to give to his Hearers. Tho' he came not to be a *Divider* of Mens Eſtates, he came to be a Director of their Conſciences about them, and would have all take Heed of Harbouring that corrupt Principle, which they ſaw to be in others the *Root* of *ſo much Evil*. Here's,

1. The Caution itſelf, *v.* 15. *Take heed and beware of Covetouſneſs*, ὁρᾶτε, *Obſerve yourſelves*, keep a *jealous Eye* upon your own Hearts, leſt covetous Principles ſteal into them, and φυλάσσεσθε *preſerve yourſelves*, keep a *ſtrict Hand* upon your own Hearts, leſt covetous Principles rule and give Law in them. Covetouſneſs is a Sin which we have need conſtantly to *watch againſt*, and therefore frequently to be *warn'd againſt*.

2. The Reaſon of it, or an Argument to enforce this Caution: For *a Man's Life conſiſteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he poſſeſſeth*, i. e. Our Happineſs and Comfort doth not depend upon our having a great deal of Wealth in this World. (1.) The Life of the *Soul* to be ſure doth not depend upon it, and the Soul is the Man. The Things of the World will not ſute the Nature of a Soul, nor ſupply its Needs, nor ſatisfy its Deſires, nor laſt ſo long as it will laſt. Nay, (2.) Even the Life of the Body, and the Happineſs of that, doth not conſiſt in an *Abundance* of theſe Things, for many live very contentedly, and eaſily, and get through the World very comfortably, that have but a little of the Wealth of it, a Dinner of Herbs with holy Love, is better than a *Feaſt of fat Things:* And on the other Hand, many live very miſerably, that have a great deal of the Things of this World, they poſſeſs abundance, and yet have no Comfort of it; they *bereave their Soul of Good*, Eccl. 4. 8. Many that have abundance are diſcontented and fretting, as *Ahab* and *Haman*, and then what good doth their Abundance to them?

3. The Illuſtration of this by a Parable: The Sum of which is to ſhew the Folly of carnal Worldlings while they live, and their Miſery when they die, which is intended, not only for a Check to that Man who came to Chriſt with an Addreſs about his Eſtate, while he was in no Care about his Soul and another World; but for the enforcing of that neceſſary Caution to us all, to *take heed of Covetouſneſs*. The Parable gives us the Life and Death of *a rich Man*, and leaves us to judge whether he was a *happy* Man.

1. Here's an Account of his worldly Wealth and Abundance, *v.* 16. *The Ground of a certain rich Man brought forth plentifully*, χώρα, *Regio*, He had a whole Country to himſelf, a Lordſhip of his own; he was a little Prince. Obſerve, His Wealth lay much in the Fruit of the Earth, for *the King himſelf is ſerved of the Field*, Eccl. 1. 9. He had a great deal of Ground, and his Ground was *fruitful*; much would have *more*, and he *had more*. *Note*, The Fruitfulneſs of the Earth is a great Bleſſing, but is a Bleſſing which God often gives plentifully to wicked Men, to whom it is a Snare, that we may not think to judge of his Love or Hatred by what is before us.

2. Here are the Workings of his Heart in the midſt of this Abundance. We are here told what *he thought within himſelf*, v. 17. *Note*, The God of Heaven knows and obſerves whatever we think within ourſelves, and we are accountable to him for it: He is both a Diſcerner and Judge of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart. We miſtake if we imagine Thoughts are *hid*, and Thoughts are *free*.

Let us here obſerve,

1. What his Cares and Concerns were. When he ſaw an extraordinary Crop upon his Ground, inſtead of *thanking* God for it, or rejoycing in the Opportunity it would give him of doing the more Good, he afflicts himſelf with this Thought, *what ſhall I do, becauſe I have no Room where to beſtow my Fruits?* He ſpeaks as one at *a Loſs*, and full of Perplexity. *What ſhall I do now?* The pooreſt Beggar in the Country, that did not know where to have a Meals Meat, could not have ſaid a more anxious Word. Diſquieting Care is the common Fruit of an Abundance of this World, and the common Fault of thoſe that have Abundance. The more Men have, the more Perplexity they have with it, and the more ſollicitous they are to keep what they have, and to add to it, how to ſpare, and how to ſpend, ſo that even the *Abundance* of the Rich will not ſuffer them to *Sleep*, for thinking what they ſhall do with what they have, and how they ſhall diſpoſe of it. The rich Man ſeems to ſpeak it with a Sigh, *what ſhall I do?* And if you aſk, why what's the Matter? truly he has *Abundance of Wealth*, and wants a Place to *put it in*; that's all.

2. What his *Projects* and *Purpoſes* were, which were the Reſult of his Cares, and were indeed abſurd and fooliſh like them, *v.* 18. *This will I do*, and 'tis the wiſeſt Courſe I can take, *I will pull down my Barns*, for they are too little, and I will *build greater*, and *there will I beſtow all my Fruits and my Goods*, and then I ſhall be at Eaſe. Now here (1.) It was Folly for him to call the Fruits of the Ground *his* Fruits, and *his* Goods: He ſeems to lay a pleaſing Emphaſis upon that, *my* Fruits, and *my* Goods, whereas what we have is but *lent* us for our Uſe, the Property is ſtill in God; we are but Stewards of our *Lord's Goods*, Tenants at Will of our Lord's Land. 'Tis *my Corn* (ſaith God) and *my Wine*, Hoſ. 2. 8, 9. (2.) It was Folly for him to *hoard up* what he had, and then to think it *well beſtow'd*. There will I beſtow it *all*; as if none muſt be beſtow'd upon the Poor, none upon his Family, none upon the *Levite* and the *Stranger*, the *Fatherleſs and the Widow*, but all in the great Barn. (3.) It was Folly for him to let his *Mind* riſe with his *Condition*, when his Ground brought forth more plentifully than uſual, then to talk of bigger Barns, as if the next Year muſt needs be as fruitful as this, and much more abundant; whereas the Barn might be as much too big the next Year, as it was too little this: Years of Famine commonly follow Years of Plenty, as they did in *Egypt*; and therefore he had better to have *ſtack'd* ſome of his Corn this once. (4.) It was Folly for him to think to eaſe his Care by building new Barns, for the building of them would but increaſe his Care, thoſe know that, who know any Thing of the Spirit of Building. The Way that God preſcribes for the Cure of inordinate Care is certainly ſucceſsful, but the Way of the World doth but increaſe it. And beſides, when he had done this, there were other Cares would ſtill attend him, the greater the Barns, ſtill the greater the Cares, *Eccl.* 5. 10. (5.) It was Folly for him to contrive and reſolve all this *abſolutely*, and *without Reſerve*. This *I will do*, *I will* pull down my Barns, and *I will* build greater, yea, that *I will*, without ſo much as that neceſſary Proviſo, *If the Lord will I ſhall live*, Jam. 4. 13, 14. Peremptory Projects, are fooliſh Projects, for our Times are in God's Hand, and not in our own; and we do not ſo much as *know what ſhall be on the Morrow*.

What his *pleaſing Hopes* and *Expectations* were when he had made good thoſe Projects: Then *I will ſay to my Soul* upon the Credit of this Security, whether God ſay it or no, *Soul*, mark what I ſay, *Thou haſt much Goods laid up for many Years*, in theſe Barns: Now *take thine Eaſe*, enjoy thy ſelf, *Eat, Drink, and be merry*, v. 19. and here alſo appears his Folly, as much in the Enjoyment of his Wealth, as in the Purſuit of it. (1.) It was Folly for him to put of his Comfort in his Abundance, till he had compaſs'd his Projects concerning it. When he has built bigger Barns and fill'd them, which will be a Work of Time, then he will *take his Eaſe*, and might he not as well have *done that now?* *Grotius* here quotes the Story of *Phyrrus*, that was projecting to make himſelf Maſter of *Sicily*, *Africa*, and other Places, in the Proſecution of his Victories; well, ſaith his Friend *Cyneas*, and what muſt we do then? *Poſtea Vivimus*, ſaith he; Then *we will live*; *at hoc jam licet*, ſaith *Cyneas*, we *may live now* if we pleaſe. (2.) It was Folly for him to be confident that his Goods were *laid up for many Years*, as if his bigger Barns would be *ſafer* than thoſe he had; whereas in an Hour's Time they might be burnt to the Ground, perhaps by Lightning, which there is no Defence againſt, and all that was laid up in them. A few Years may make a great Change; *Moth and Ruſt may corrupt, or Thieves break thro' and ſteal*. (3.) It was Folly for him to count upon certain *Eaſe*, when he laid up abundance of the Wealth of this World, whereas there are many Things that make People uneaſy in the midſt of their greateſt Abundance: One dead Fly may ſpoil a whole Pot of precious Ointment; and one Thorn a whole Bed of Down. Pain and Sickneſs of Body, Diſagreeableneſs of Relations, and eſpecially a guilty Conſcience, may rob a Man of his Eaſe, that has never ſo much of the Wealth of this World. (4.) It was Folly for him to think of making no other Uſe of his Plenty, but to *Eat* and *Drink*, and to *be Merry*; to indulge the Fleſh, and gratifie the ſenſual Appetite, without any Thought of doing good to others, and being put thereby into a better Capacity of ſerving God and his Generation. As if we did *live* to *eat*, and not *eat* to *live*, and the Happineſs of Man conſiſted in nothing elſe, but in having all the Gratifications of Senſe wound up to the Height of Pleaſurableneſs. (5.) It was the greateſt Folly of all, to ſay all this to his Soul. If he had ſaid, *Body, take thine Eaſe*, for *thou haſt Goods laid up for many Years*, there had been Senſe in it; but the Soul, conſider'd as an immortal Spirit, ſeparable from the Body, was no way intereſted in a Barn full of Corn, or a Bag full of Gold. If he had had the *Soul of a Swine*, he might have bleſs'd it with the Satisfaction of *Eating* and *Drinking*; but what is this to the *Soul of a Man*, that has Exigences and Deſires which theſe Things will be no Ways ſuited to. It is the great Abſurdity which the Children of this World are guilty of, that they portion their Souls in the Wealth of the World, and the Pleaſures of Senſe.

3. Here's God's Sentence upon all this; and we are ſure that his Judgment is according to Truth. He ſaid to himſelf, ſaid to his Soul, *Take thine Eaſe*; and if God had ſaid ſo too, the Man had been happy, as his Spirit witneſſes with the Spirit of Believers, to make them eaſy, *but God ſaid* quite otherwiſe; and by his Judgment of us we muſt ſtand or fall, not by ours of ourſelves, 2. *Cor.* 10. His Neighbours bleſſed him, *Pſal.* 10. 3. prais'd him *as doing well for himſelf*, Pſ. 44. 18. but God ſaid he did ill for himſelf, *Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul ſhall be required of thee*, v. 20. *God ſaid to him*, i. e. decreed this concerning him, and let him know it, either by his Conſcience, or by ſome awakening Providence, or rather by both together. This was ſaid when he was in the Fulneſs of his Sufficiency, *Job* 20. 22. when his Eyes were held waking upon his Bed with his Cares and Contrivances about enlarging his Barns, not

by adding a Bay or two more of Building to them, which might ſerve to anſwer the End, but by pulling them down and building greater, which was requiſite to pleaſe his Fancy: When he was forecaſting this, and had brought it to an Iſſue, and then lull'd himſelf aſleep again, with a pleaſing Dream of many Years Enjoyment of his preſent Improvements, *then* God ſaid this to him: Thus *Belſhazzar* was ſtruck with Terror by the Hand-writing on the Wall in the midſt of his Jolitry. Now obſerve what God ſaid, (1.) The Character he gave him, *Thou Fool*, thou *Nabal*, alluding to the Story of *Nabal*, that *Fool*; *Nabal* is his Name, and Folly is with him, whoſe Heart was ſtruck dead *as a Stone*, when he was regaling himſelf in his abundance of his Proviſion for his Sheep-Shearers. *Note*, Carnal Worldlings are Fools, and the Day is coming when God will call them by their own Name, *thou Fool*, and they will call themſelves ſo. (2.) The Sentence he paſt upon him, a Sentence of Death; *This Night thy Soul ſhall be required of thee; they ſhall require thy Soul*, ſo the Words are, and then *whoſe ſhall thoſe Things be which thou haſt provided?* He thought he had Goods that ſhould be his many Years, but he muſt part from them *this Night*: He thought he ſhould enjoy them himſelf, but he muſt leave them to he knows not who. *Note*, The Death of carnal Worldlings is miſerable in itſelf, and terrible to them.

1. It is a *Force*, an *Arreſt*, 'tis the *requiring of the Soul*, that Soul that thou art making ſuch a Fool of; what haſt thou to do with a Soul that canſt uſe it no better. Thy Soul ſhall be *requir'd*; that intimates that he is loth to part with it. A good Man that has taken his Heart off from this World, chearfully reſigns his Soul at Death, and gives it up; but a Worldly Man has it *torn* from him with Violence, 'tis a Terror to him to think of leaving this World. *They ſhall require thy Soul*; God ſhall require it, *i. e.* he ſhall require an Account of it; Man, Woman, what haſt thou done with thy Soul? give an Account of that Stewardſhip. *They ſhall*, i. e. Evil Angels, as the Meſſengers of God's Juſtice. As good Angels receive gracious Souls, to carry them to their Joy, ſo evil Angels receive wicked Souls to carry them to the Place of Torment; they ſhall *require it*, as a guilty Soul to be puniſh'd. The Devil requires the Soul as his own, for it did in Effect give itſelf to him.

2. It is a *Surprize*, an *unexpected* Force. 'Tis in *the Night*, and Terrors in the Night are moſt terrible. The Time of Death is Day-time to a good Man, 'tis his Morning; but 'tis Night to a Worldling, a dark Night, he *lies down in Sorrow*. 'Tis *this Night*, this *preſent* Night without Delay, there's no giving Bail, or begging Day, this *pleaſant* Night when thou art promiſing thyſelf many Years to come, now thou muſt die and go to Judgment: Thou art entertaining thyſelf with the Fancy of many a merry Day, and merry Night, and merry Feaſt, but in the midſt of all, here's an end of all, *Iſa.* 21. 4.

3. It is the leaving of all *thoſe Things* behind *which they have provided*, which they have labour'd for, and prepar'd for hereafter, with abundance of Toil and Care. All that which they have plac'd their Happineſs in, and built their Hope upon, and rais'd their Expectations from, they muſt leave behind: *Their Pomp ſhall not deſcend after them*, Pſal. 44. 17. but they ſhall go as naked out of the World, as they came into it, and they ſhall have no Benefit at all by what they have hoarded up, either in Death, in Judgment, or in their everlaſting State.

4. It is leaving them to they *know not who*. Then *whoſe ſhall thoſe Things be*? Not *thine* to be ſure, and thou knoweſt not what they will prove for whom thou didſt deſign them, thy Children and Relations, whether they will be *Wiſe* or *Fools*, Eccl. 2. 18, 19. whether ſuch will bleſs thy Memory or curſe it, be a Credit to thy Family, or a Blemiſh; do good or hurt with what thou leaveſt them, keep it or ſpend it; nay thou knoweſt not but thoſe for whom thou doſt deſign it, may be prevented from the Enjoyment of it, and it may be turn'd to ſome Body elſe thou little thinkeſt of it: Nay, tho' thou knoweſt to whom thou leaveſt it, thou knoweſt not to whom they will leave it, nor into whoſe Hand it will come at laſt. If many a Man could have foreſeen to whom his Houſe would have come after his Death, he would rather have burnt it than beautify'd it.

5. It is a Demonſtration of his Folly. Carnal Worldlings are *Fools* while they live; *this their Way is their Folly*, Pſal. 49. 13. but their Folly is made moſt evident when they die, *at his End he ſhall be a Fool*, Jer. 17. 11. for then it will appear he took Pains to lay up Treaſure in a World he was haſtening from, but took no Care to lay it up for the World he was haſtning to.

Laſtly, Here's the Reddition of this Parable, *v.* 21. *ſo is he*, ſuch a Fool, a Fool in God's Judgment, a Fool upon Record, that *layeth up Treaſure for himſelf, and is not rich towards God.* This is the Way, and this is the End of ſuch a Man. Obſerve here,

1. The Deſcription of a worldly Man. He *lays up Treaſure for himſelf*, for the Body, for the World, for *himſelf*, in Oppoſition to God, for that *ſelf*, that is to be *deny'd*. (1.) It is his Error that he counts his *Fleſh himſelf*, as if the *Body* were the *Man*. If *ſelf* be rightly ſtated and underſtood, 'tis only the true Chriſtian that lays up Treaſure for himſelf, and is *wiſe for himſelf*, Prov. 9. 12. (2.) It is his Error, that he makes it his Buſineſs *to lay up for the Fleſh*, which he calls laying up *for himſelf*. All his Labour is *for his Mouth*, Eccl. 6. 7. *making Proviſion for the Fleſh*. (3.) 'Tis the Error, that he counts thoſe Things his *Treaſure*, which are thus *laid up* for the World and the Body, and the Life that now is, they are the Wealth he truſts to, and ſpends upon, and lets out his Affection towards. (4.) The greateſt Error of all is, that he is in no Care to be *rich towards God*, rich in the *Account of God*, whoſe accompting us rich makes us ſo, *Rev.* 2. 9. rich in the *Things of God*, rich *in Faith*, Jam. 2. 5. rich in *good Works*, in the *Fruits of Righteouſneſs*, 1 Tim. 6. 18. rich in Graces and Comforts, and ſpiritual Gifts. Many that have abundance of this World, are wholly deſtitute of that which will enrich their Souls, which will make them rich towards God, rich for Eternity.

2. The Folly and Miſery of a worldly Man; *ſo is he*. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who knows what the End of Things will be, has here told us what the End will be. *Note*, It is the unſpeakable Folly of the moſt of Men to mind and purſue the Wealth of this World more than the Wealth of the other World, that which is for the Body only, and for Time, more than that which is for the Soul and Eternity.

22 ¶ And he ſaid unto his diſciples, Therefore
I ſay unto you, Take no thought for your life,
what ye ſhall eat; neither for the body, what ye
ſhall put on. 23 The life is more then meat, and
the body *is more* then raiment. 24 Conſider the ravens:
for they neither ſow nor reap, which neither
have ſtore-houſe or barn; and God feedeth them:
How much more are ye better then the fowls?
25 And which of you with taking thought can add
to his ſtature one cubit? 26 If ye then be not able
to do that thing which is leaſt, why take ye thought
for the reſt? 27 Conſider the lillies how they grow:
They toil not, they ſpin not: and yet I ſay unto you,
that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like
one of theſe. 29 If then God ſo clothe the graſs,
which is to day in the field, and to morrow his caſt
into the oven: how much more *will he clothe* you,
O ye of little faith? 29 And ſeek not what ye ſhall
eat, or what ye ſhall drink; neither be ye of doubtful
mind. 30 For all theſe things do the nations of
the world ſeek after, and your Father knoweth that
ye have need of theſe things. 31 ¶ But rather ſeek
ye the kingdom of God, and all theſe things ſhall be
added unto you. 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is
your Fathers good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.
33 Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide your
ſelves bags which wax not old, a treaſure in the heavens
that faileth not, where no thief approacheth,
neither moth corrupteth. 34 For where your treaſure
is, there will your heart be alſo. 35 Let your loins
be girded about, and *your* lights burning? 36 And ye
your ſelves like unto men that wait for their Lord,
when he will return from the wedding, that when he
cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.
37 Bleſſed *are* thoſe ſervants whom the
Lord when he cometh ſhall find watching: verily I
ſay unto you, that he ſhall gird himſelf, and make
them to ſit down to meat, and will come forth and
ſerve them. 38 And if he ſhall come in the ſecond
watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* ſo,
bleſſed are thoſe ſervants. 39 And this know, that
if the good-man of the houſe had known what hour
the thief would come, he would have watched, and
not have ſuffered his houſe to be broken through. 40
Be ye therefore ready alſo; for the Son of man cometh
at an hour when ye think not.

Our Lord Jeſus is here inculcating ſome needful, uſeful Leſſons upon his Diſciples, which he had before taught them, and had Occaſion afterwards to preſs upon them; for they need to have *Precept upon Precept, and Line upon Line*: *Therefore*, becauſe there are ſo many that are ruin'd by Covetouſneſs and an inordinate Affection to the Wealth of this World, *I ſay unto you*, my Diſciples, take heed of it: *Thou O Man of God flee theſe Things*, as well as thou O Man of the World, 1 *Tim.* 6. 11.

Firſt, He chargeth them not to afflict themſelves with diſquieting perplexing Cares, about the neceſſary Supports of Life, *v.* 22. *Take no Thought for your Life.* In the foregoing Parable he had given us Warning againſt that Branch of Covetouſneſs which rich People are moſt in Danger of, and that is a *Senſual Complacency* in Abundance of this World's Goods. Now his Diſciples might think they were in no Danger of that, for they had no Plenty or Variety to glory in; and therefore he here warns them againſt another Branch of Covetouſneſs, which they are moſt in Temptation to, that have but a little of this World, which was the Caſe of the Diſciples at beſt, and much more now they had left all to follow Chriſt; and that was an *anxious Sollicitude* about the neceſſary Supports of Life, *Take no Thought for your Life*, either for the Preſervation of it, if it be in Danger, or for the Proviſion that is to be made for it, either of Food or Clothing, *what ye ſhall eat*, or *what ye ſhall put on*. This is the Caution he had largely inſiſted upon, *Mat.* 6. 25. *&c.* And the Arguments here us'd are much the ſame, deſign'd for our Encouragement to caſt all our Care upon God, which is the *right Way* to *eaſe* ourſelves of it. Conſider then,

1. God that has done the greater for us, may be depended upon to do the leſſer: He hath, without any Care or Forecaſt of our own, given us *Life* and a *Body*, and therefore we may chearfully leave it to him to provide *Meat* for the Support of that Life, and *Raiment* for the Defence of that Body.

2. God that provides for the inferior Creatures may be depended upon to provide for good Chriſtians. Truſt God for *Meat*, for he *feeds the Ravens*, v. 24. they *neither ſow nor reap*, they take neither Care nor Pains before hand to provide for themſelves, and yet they are *fed*, and never periſh for Want: Now conſider *how much better ye are than the Fowls*, than the Ravens: Truſt God for Clothing, for he cloaths the Lillies *v.* 27, 28. they make no Preparation for their own Clothing, they *toil not*, they *ſpin not*, the Root in the Ground is a naked Thing, and without Ornament, and yet as the Flower grows up, it appears wonderfully *beautify'd*: Now, if God has ſo cloth'd the Flowers, which are fading periſhing Things, *ſhall he not much more clothe* you with ſuch Clothing as is fit for you, and with Clothing ſuited to your Nature as theirs is? When God fed *Iſrael* with *Manna* in the Wilderneſs, he alſo took Care for their Clothing; for tho' he did not furniſh them with new Clothes, yet (which came all to one) he provided that thoſe they had ſhould not *wax old upon them*, Deut. 8. 4. Thus will he cloth his ſpiritual *Iſrael*, but then let not them be *of little Faith*. *Note*, Our inordinate Cares are owing to the Weakneſs of our Faith, for a powerful practical Belief of the All-ſufficiency of God, his Covenant Relation to us, as a Father, and eſpecially his precious Promiſes, relating both to this Life and that to come, would be mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the ſtrong Holds of theſe diſquieting perplexing Imaginations.

3. Our Cares are fruitleſs and vain, and inſignificant, and therefore 'tis Folly to indulge them; they will not gain us our Wiſhes, and therefore ought not to hinder our Repoſe, *v.* 25. *Which of you by taking Thought* can *add to his Stature one Cubit?* no, not one Inch; can add to *his Age* one Year; no, nor one Hour. Now if ye be *not able to do that which is leaſt*, if it be not in your Power to alter your Statures, why ſhould you perplex yourſelves about other Things that are as much out of your Power, and about which it is as neceſſary that we refer ourſelves to the Providence of God? *Note*, As in our *Stature*, ſo in our *State*; it is our Wiſdom to take *it as it is*, and make the beſt of it, for fretting and vexing, carking and caring will not mend it.

4. An inordinate ſollicitous Purſuit of the Things of this World, even neceſſary Things, doth very ill become the Diſciples of Chriſt, *v.* 29, 30. Whatever others do, *Seek not ye what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink*; do not ye afflict yourſelves with perplexing Cares, nor weary yourſelves with conſtant Toils; do not you hurry hither and thither with Enquiries *what you ſhall eat or drink*, as *David*'s Enemies, that *wander'd up and down for Meat*, Pſal. 59. 15. or as the Eagle that *ſeeks the Prey afar off*, Job 39. 29. Let not the Diſciples of Chriſt thus ſeek their Food, but ask it of God, Day by Day; let not them be *of doubtful Mind*, μὴ μετεωρίζεσθε. Be not as *Meteors* in the Air, that are blown hither and thither with every Wind; do not like them *riſe* and *fall*, but mantain a Conſiſtency with yourſelves; be even and ſteady, and have your Hearts fix'd; *live not in careful Suſpence*; let not your Minds be continually perplex'd between Hope and Fear, even upon the Rack. Let not the Children of God make themſelves uneaſy: For,

1. This is to make themſelves like the Children of this World; *all theſe Things do the Nations of the World ſeek after*, *v.* 30. They that take Care for the Body only, and not for the Soul, for this World only, and not for the other, look no further than what they ſhall *eat* and *drink*; and having no all-ſufficient God to ſeek to and confide in, they burthen themſelves with anxious Cares about thoſe Things; but it ill becomes you to do ſo: You who are called out of the World, ought not to be thus conformed to the World, and to *walk in the Way of this People*, Iſa. 8. 11, 12. When inordinate Cares prevail over us, we ſhould think, what am I, a Chriſtian or a Heathen; Baptiz'd or not Baptiz'd; If a Chriſtian, if baptiz'd, ſhall I rank myſelf with Gentiles, and joyn with them in their Purſuits?

2. It is needleſs for them to diſquiet themſelves with Care about the neceſſary Supports of Life, for they have a Father in Heaven who doth and will take Care for them. *Your Father knows that you have need of theſe Things*, and conſiders it, and will ſupply your Needs *according to his Riches in Glory*, for he is *your Father*, who *made* you ſubject to theſe Neceſſities, and therefore will ſuit his Compaſſions to them; *your Father* who *maintains* you, educates you, and deſigns an Inheritance for you, and therefore will take Care that you *want no good Thing*.

3. They have better Things to mind and purſue, *v.* 31. *But rather ſeek ye the Kingdom of God*, and mind that; you my Diſciples that are to *preach the Kingdom of God*, Let your Hearts be upon your Work, and your great Care how to do that well, and that will effectually divert your Thoughts from inordinate Care about the Things of the World. And let all that have Souls to ſave, *ſeek the Kingdom of God*, in which only they can be *ſafe*: Seek Admiſſion into it, ſeek Advancement in it, ſeek the *Kingdom of Grace*, to be Subjects in that; the *Kingdom of Glory*, to be Princes in that, and then *all theſe Things ſhall be added to you*; mind the Affairs of your Souls with Diligence and Care, and then truſt God with all your other Affairs.

4. They have better Things to expect and hope for, *v.* 32. *Fear not, little Flock*: For the baniſhing of inordinate Cares, 'tis neceſſary that Fears ſhould be ſuppreſs'd, when we frighten ourſelves with an Apprehenſion of Evil to come, we put ourſelves upon the Stretch of Care how to avoid it, when after all perhaps 'tis but the Creature of our own Imagination; therefore *fear not, little Flock*, but *hope to the End*, for *it is your Father's good Pleaſure to give you the Kingdom*. This comfortable Word we had not in *Matthew*. *Note*, 1. Chriſt's Flock in this World is a *little Flock*, his Sheep are but few and feeble: The Church is a Vineyard, a Garden, a ſmall Spot, compar'd with the Wilderneſs of this World, as *Iſrael*, 1 Kings 20. 27. who were *like* two little Flocks of Kids, when *the* Syrians *filled the Country*. 2. Tho' it be a little Flock, quite *over-number'd*, and therefore in Danger of being *over-power'd* by its Enemies, yet it is the Will of Chriſt that they ſhould not *be afraid*. *Fear not little Flock*, but ſee yourſelves ſafe under the Protection and Conduct of the great and good Shepherd, and lie eaſy. 3. God has a *Kingdom* in Store for all that belong to Chriſt's *little Flock*; a Crown of Glory, 1 *Pet.* 5. 4. a Throne of Power, *Rev*, 3. 21. unſearchable Riches, far exceeding the peculiar Treaſures of *Kings and Provinces*. The *Sheep on the right Hand* are called to *come* and *inherit the Kingdom*, 'tis theirs for ever; a Kingdom for each. 4. The Kingdom is given according to the *good Pleaſure* of the Father; *'tis your Father's good Pleaſure*, 'tis given not of Debt, but of Grace, free Grace, ſovereign Grace, *even ſo Father, becauſe it ſeemed good unto thee*: The Kingdom is his, and may he not do what he will with his own? 5. The believing Hopes and Proſpects of *the Kingdom*, ſhould ſilence and ſuppreſs the Fears of Chriſt's little Flock in this World. Fear no Trouble, for tho' it ſhould come, it ſhall not come between you and the Kingdom, that's ſure, 'tis near; that's not an Evil worth trembling at the Thought of, which cannot ſeparate us from the Love of God. *Fear not the Want* of any Thing that's good for you, for if it be *your Father's good Pleaſure to give you the Kingdom*, you need not queſtion but he will *bear your Charges* thither.

Secondly, He chargeth them to make ſure Work for their Souls, by laying up their Treaſure in Heaven, *v.* 33, 34. And thoſe who have done this may be very eaſy, as to all the Events of Time.

1. *Sit looſe to this World*, and to all your Poſſeſſions in it. *Sell that ye have*, and *give Alms*, i. e. rather than want wherewith to relieve thoſe that are truly *neceſſitous*, ſell that which you have *ſuperfluous*, all that you can ſpare from the Support of yourſelves and Families, and give it *to the Poor*. *Sell that ye have*, if ye find it a Hindrance from, or Encumbrance in the Service of Chriſt. Do not think yourſelves undone, if by being fin'd, impriſon'd or baniſh'd for the Teſtimony of Jeſus, you be forc'd to ſell your Eſtates, tho' they be *the Inheritance of your Fathers*. Do not ſell to *hoard up* the Money, or becauſe you can make more of it by Uſury, but *ſell and give Alms*; and what is given in Alms, in a right Manner, is put out to the *beſt* Intereſt, upon the *beſt* Security.

2. *Set your Hearts upon the other World*, and your Expectations from that World. *Provide yourſelves Bags that wax not old*, that wax not empty, not of Gold, but of Grace in the Heart, and good Works in the Life; theſe are Bags that will laſt; Grace will *go with us* into another World, for it is *woven* into the Soul, and our good Works will *follow us*, for *God is not unrighteous to forget* them. Theſe will be *Treaſures in Heaven* that will enrich us to Eternity. (1.) 'Tis Treaſure that will not be *exhauſted*; we may ſpend upon it to Eternity, and it will not be at all the leſs; there's no Danger of ſeeing the Bottom of it. (2.) 'Tis Treaſure that we are in no Danger of being robb'd of, for *no Thief approacheth* near it; what is laid up in Heaven is out of the Reach of Enemies. (3.) 'Tis Treaſure that will not *ſpoil* with *keeping*, no more than it will *waſte* with *ſpending*, the *Moth* doth not *corrupt*, as it doth our Garments we now wear. Now by this it doth appear that we have laid up our Treaſure in Heaven, if our *Hearts* be *there*, while we *are here*, v. 34. If we think much of Heaven, and keep our Eye upon it, if we quicken ourſelves with the Hopes of it, and keep ourſelves in Awe with the Fear of falling ſhort of it. But if your Hearts be ſet upon the Earth, and the Things of it, it is to be

fear'd you have your Treaſure and Portion in it, and are undone when you leave it.

Thirdly, He chargeth them to get ready, and to keep in a Readineſs for Chriſt's Coming; when all thoſe who have laid up their Treaſure in Heaven, ſhall enter upon the Enjoyment of it, *v.* 35. &c.

1. Chriſt is our *Maſter*, and we are his *Servants*, not only *working* Servants, but *waiting* Servants, Servants that are to do him Honour in *waiting* on him, and attending his Motions: If any Man ſerve me, let him follow me, follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes; but that is not all, they muſt do him Honour in *waiting for him*, and expecting his Return. We muſt be as Men that *wait for their Lord*, that ſit up late, while he ſtays out late, to be ready to receive him.

2. Chriſt our Maſter, tho' now *gone from us*, will *return again*, return *from the Wedding*; from *ſolemnizing* the Nuptials abroad, to *compleat* them at home. Chriſt's Servants are now in a State of Expectation, *looking for their Maſter's glorious Appearing*, and doing every Thing with an Eye to *that*, and in Order to *that*. He *will come* to take Cognizance of his Servants, and that being a *critical Day*, they ſhall either ſtay with him or be turn'd out of Doors, according as they are found in that Day.

3. The Time of our Maſter's Return is uncertain; 'twill be *in the Night*, 'twill be *far* in the Night, when he has long *deferr'd* his coming, and when many have done looking for him; in the *ſecond Watch*, juſt before Midnight, or in the *third Watch*, next after Midnight, *v.* 38. His coming to us at our Death is uncertain, and to many it will be a great Surprize, for *v.* 40. *The Son of Man cometh at an Hour that ye think not*, without giving Notice before-Hand. This ſpeaks not only the Uncertainty of the Time of his Coming, but the prevailing Security of the greateſt Part of Men, that are *unthinking*, and altogether regardleſs of the Notices given them, ſo that whenever he comes, 'tis *an Hour that they think not of*.

4. That which he expects and requires from his Servants, is, that they be *ready to open to him immediately*, whenever he comes, *v.* 36. that is, that they be in a Frame fit to receive him, or rather to be received by him; that they may be found *as* his Servants, in the Poſture that becomes them, with their *Loins girded about*, alluding to Servants that are ready to go where their Maſter ſends them, and do what their Maſter bids them, having their long Garments tuck'd up, which otherwiſe would hang about them, and hinder them; and *their Lights burning*, with which to light their Maſter into the Houſe, and up to his Chamber.

5. Thoſe Servants will be happy who are found ready and in a good Frame when their Lord comes, *v.* 37. *Bleſſed are thoſe Servants* who after having waited long, continue in a waiting Frame, 'till the Hour that their Lord comes, and are then found awake, and aware of his firſt Approach, of his firſt Knock; and again, *v.* 38. *Bleſſed are thoſe Servants*, for then will be the Time of their Preferment. And here is ſuch an Inſtance of Honour done them, as is ſcarce to be found among Men, he *ſhall make them ſit down to Meat, and ſerve them*; for the Bridegroom to wait upon his Bride at Table, is not uncommon, but to wait upon his Servants is not *the Manner of Men*; yet Jeſus Chriſt was among his Diſciples as *one that ſerved*; and did once, to ſhew his Condeſcenſion, *gird himſelf* and *ſerve them*, when he *waſh'd their Feet*, Joh. 13. 4, 5. and it ſignified the Joy with which they ſhall be received into the other World by the Lord Jeſus, who is gone before to prepare for them, and has told them that his *Father* will *honour* them, *John* 12. 26.

6. We are therefore kept at Uncertainty concerning the preciſe Time of his Coming, that we may be always ready; for its no Thanks to a Man to be ready for an Attack, if he know before hand juſt the Time when it will be made: The *good Man of the Houſe, if he had known what Hour the Thief would have come*, tho' he were never ſo careleſs a Man, yet *would have watch'd*, and have frighten'd away the Thieves, *v.* 39. But we do not know at what Hour the Alarm will be given us, and therefore are concern'd to watch at all Times, and never to be off our Guard. Or this may intimate the miſerable Caſe of thoſe who are careleſs and unbelieving in this great Matter. If the *good Man of the Houſe* had Notice of his Danger of being robb'd ſuch a Night, he would have ſitten up and ſav'd his Houſe; but we have Notice of the Day of the Lord's Coming, *as a Thief in the Night*, to the Confuſion and Ruin of all ſecure Sinners, and yet do not thus *watch*. If Men will take ſuch Care of their Houſes, O let us be thus wiſe for our Souls; *Be ye therefore ready alſo*, as ready as the good Man of the Houſe wou'd be, *if he knew what Hour the Thief would come*.

41 ¶ Then Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, ſpeakeſt thou this Parable unto us, or even unto all? 42 And the Lord ſaid, Who then is that faithful and wiſe ſteward, whom *his* lord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give *them their* portion of meat in due ſeaſon? 43 Bleſſed *is* that ſervant, whom his lord when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing. 44 Of a truth I ſay unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. 45 But if that ſervant ſay in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and ſhall begin to beat the men-ſervants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken: 46 The lord of that ſervant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in ſunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. 47 And that ſervant which knew his lords will, and prepared not *himſelf*, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many *ſtripes*. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few *ſtripes*: For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. 49 ¶ I am come to ſend fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled? 50 But I have a baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitned till it be accompliſhed! 51 Suppoſe ye that I come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay, but rather diviſion. 52 For from henceforth there ſhall be five in one houſe divided, three againſt two, and two againſt three. 53 The father ſhall be divided againſt the ſon, and the ſon againſt the father? the mother againſt the daughter, and the daughter againſt the mother: the mother in law againſt her daughter in law, and the daughter in law againſt her mother in law.

Here's 1. *Peter*'s Queſtion which he puts to Chriſt, upon Occaſion of the foregoing Parable, *v.* 41. *Lord, ſpeakeſt thou this Parable to us*, that are thy conſtant Followers, to us that are Miniſters, *or alſo to all* that come to be taught by thee, to all the Hearers, and in them to all Chriſtians. *Peter* was now, as often, Spokeſman for the Diſciples. We have Reaſon to bleſs God that there are ſome ſuch forward Men, that have a Gift of Utterance, and let thoſe that are ſuch, take heed of being proud. Now *Peter* deſires Chriſt to explain himſelf, and to direct the Arrow of the foregoing Parable to the Mark he intended. He calls it a Parable, becauſe it was not only figurative, but weighty, ſolid, and inſtructive. Lord, ſaith *Peter*, was it intended for *us*, or for *all*; To this Chriſt gives a direct Anſwer, *Mark* 13. 6. *What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all.* Yet here he ſeems to ſhew that the Apoſtles were primarily concern'd in it. *Note*, We are all concern'd to take to our ſelves what Chriſt in his Word deſigns for us, and to enquire accordingly concerning it, *ſpeakeſt thou this to us?* To me? Speak Lord for thy Servant hears. Doth this Word belong to me? ſpeak it to *my Heart*.

2. Chriſt's Reply to this Queſtion, directed to *Peter* and the reſt of the Diſciples. If what Chriſt had ſaid before, did not ſo peculiarly concern them, but in common with other Chriſtians, who muſt all watch and pray for Chriſt's Coming, as his *Servants*; yet this that follows is peculiarly adapted to Miniſters, who are the *Stewards* in Chriſt's Houſe: Now our Lord Jeſus here tells them,

1. What was their *Duty* as *Stewards*, and what the *Truſt* committed to them. (1.) They are made *Rulers of God's Houſhold*, under Chriſt, whoſe own the Houſe is; Miniſters derive an Authority from Chriſt to preach the Goſpel, and to adminiſter the Ordinances of Chriſt, and apply the Seals of the Covenant of Grace. (2.) Their Buſineſs is to give God's Children and Servants *their Portion of Meat*, that which was proper for them, and allotted to them. Convictions and Comfort to thoſe to whom they reſpectively belong. *Suum cuique.* This is *rightly to divide the Word of Truth*, 2 Tim. 2. 15. (3.) To give it them *in due Seaſon*, at that Time, and in that Way, as is moſt ſuitable to the Temper and Condition of thoſe that are to be fed; a Word *in Seaſon* to him *that is weary*. (4.) Herein they muſt approve themſelves *faithful* and *wiſe*; *faithful* to their Maſter, by whom this great Truſt is repoſed in them, and faithful to their Fellow-Servants, for whoſe Benefit they are put in Truſt; and *wiſe* to improve an Opportunity of doing Honour to their Maſter, and Service in the Family. Miniſters muſt be both *skilful* and *faithful*.

2. What would be their Happineſs if they approv'd themſelves faithful and wiſe, *v.* 43. *Bleſſed is that Servant*, (1.) That is *doing*, and is not idle, nor indulgent of his Eaſe; even the Rulers of the Houſhold muſt be *doing*, and make themſelves *Servants of all*. (2.) That is *ſo* doing, doing as he ſhould be, giving them their *Portion of Meat*, by publick Preaching, and perſonal Application. (3.) That is *found* ſo doing when his Lord comes; that perſeveres to the End, notwithſtanding the Difficulties he may meet with in the Way. Now his Happineſs is illuſtrated by the Performance of a Steward, that has approv'd himſelf within a lower and narrower Degree of Service, he ſhall be preferr'd to a larger and higher, *v.* 44. *He will make him Ruler over all that he has*, which was *Joſeph's* Preferment in *Pharaoh*'s Court. *Note*, Miniſters that obtain Mercy

of the Lord to be faithful, ſhall obtain further Mercy, to be abundantly rewarded for their Faithfulneſs in the Day of the Lord.

3. What a dreadful Reckoning there would be, if they were treacherous and unfaithful, *v.* 45, 46. If that Servant began be quarrelſome and profane, he ſhall be called to an Account, and ſeverely puniſh'd. We had all this before in *Matthew*, and therefore ſhall here only obſerve, (1.) Our looking upon Chriſt's ſecond Coming as a Thing at a Diſtance, is the Cauſe of all thoſe Irregularities which render the Thought of it terrible to us: *He ſaith in his Heart, my Lord delays his Coming.* Chriſt's Patience is very often miſinterpreted his *Delay*, to the Diſcaurageⁿment of his People, and the Encouragement of his Enemies. (2.) The Perſecutors of God's People are commonly abandon'd to Security and Senſuality ; *they beat their Fellow Servants*, and then *eat and drink with the drunken*, altogether unconcern'd either at their own Sin or their Brethrens Sufferings, as the *King* and *Haman* that *ſate down to drink when the City* Shuſhan *was perplex'd :* Thus they drank to drown the Clamours of their own Conſciences, and baffle them, which otherwiſe would fly in their Faces. (3.) Death and Judgment will be very terrible to all wicked People, but eſpecially to wicked Miniſters, 'twill be a Surprize to them, *at an Hour when they are not aware*, 'twill be the determining of them to endleſs Miſery, they ſhall be cut in ſunder, and have their Portion aſſign'd them with the *Unbelievers.*

4. What an Aggravation it would be of their Sin and Puniſhment, that they knew their Duty and did not do it, *v.* 47, 48. For *that Servant that knew his Lord's Will, and did it not, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes*, ſhall fall under a ſorer Puniſhment, and *he that knew not ſhall be beaten with few Stripes* ; his Puniſhment ſhall, in Conſideration of that, be mitigated. Here ſeems to be an Alluſion to the Law, which made a Diſtinction between Sins committed through Ignorance, and preſumptuous Sins, *Lev.* 5. 15. *Numb.* 15. 29, 30. As alſo to another Law concerning the Number of Stripes given to a Malefactor, to be acccording to the Nature of the Crime, *Deut.* 25. 2. Now, (1.) Ignorance of our Duty is an Extenuation of Sin. He *that knew not his Lord's Will*, through Careleſneſs and Neglect, and his not having ſuch Opportunities as ſome others had of coming to the Knowledge of it, and *did Things worthy of Stripes*, he ſhall *be beaten*, becauſe he might have known his Duty better, but *with few Stripes* ; his Ignorance excuſes in Part, but not in whole. Thus *through Ignorance* the Jews put Chriſt to Death, *Acts* 3. 17. 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. and Chriſt pleaded that Ignorance in their Excuſe, they *know not what they do.* (2.) The Knowledge of our Duty is an Aggravation of our Sin. *That Servant that knew his Lord's Will*, and yet did his own Will, ſhall be *beaten with many Stripes* : God will juſtly inflict more upon him, for abuſing the Means of Knowledge he afforded him, which others would have made a better Uſe of, and becauſe it argues a great Degree of Wilfulneſs and Contempt to ſin againſt Knowledge, of how much ſorer Puniſhment then ſhall they be thought worthy, beſides the many Stripes that their own Conſciences will give them? Son remember. Here is a good Reaſon for this added, *to whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much required*, eſpecially when it is *committed* as a Truſt he is to account for. Thoſe that have greater Capacities of Mind than others, more Knowledge and Learning, more Acquaintance and Converſe with the Scriptures, to them *much is given*, and their Account will be accordingly.

3. A further Diſcourſe concerning his own Sufferings which he expected, and concerning the Suffering of his Followers which he would have them alſo to live in Expectation of in general, *v.* 49. *I am come to ſend Fire on the Earth.* By which ſome underſtand the Preaching of the Goſpel, and the pouring out of the Spirit, holy Fire, this Chriſt came to ſend with a Commiſſion to refine the World, and to purge away its Droſs, to burn up its Chaff, and it was *already kindled* ; the Goſpel was begun to be preach'd, ſome Prefaces that were to the pouring out of the Spirit: Chriſt baptiz'd with the holy Ghoſt, and with Fire, this Spirit deſcended in fiery Tongues; but by what follows, it ſeems rather to be underſtood of the Fire of *Perſecution :* Chriſt is not the Author of it as it is the Sin of the Incendiaries, the *Perſecutors* ; but he *permits* it, nay, he *commiſſions* it as a *refining* Fire for the *Trial* of the *Perſecuted.* This Fire was *already kindled* in the Enmity of the carnal Jews to Chriſt and his Followers. *What will I that it may preſently be kindled* ; *what thou doſt, do quickly. If it be already kindled, what will I* ? Shall I wait the *quenching* of it ? No, for it muſt faſten upon myſelf, and upon all, and Glory will redound to God from it.

1. He muſt himſelf ſuffer many Things ; he muſt paſs thro' this Fire that was already kindled, *v.* 50. *I have a Baptiſm to be baptized with.* Afflictions are compared both to *Fire* and *Water*, Pſal. 66. 12. 69. 1, 2. Chriſt's Sufferings were both, he calls them a *Baptiſm*, Mat. 20. 22. for he was water'd or ſprinkled with them, as *Iſrael* was baptiz'd *in the Cloud*, and dipt into them, as *Iſrael* was baptiz'd *in the Sea*, 1 Cor. 10. 2. He muſt be ſprinkled with his own Blood, and with the Blood of his Enemies, *Iſa.* 63. 3. See here (1.) Chriſt's *Foreſight* of his Sufferings ; he knew what he was to undergo, and the Neceſſity of undergoing it. *I am to be baptized with a Baptiſm* ; he calls his Sufferings by a Name that *mitigates* them, 'tis a Baptiſm, not a Deluge, I muſt be dipt in them, not *drown'd* in them ; and by a Name that *ſanctifies* them, for *Baptiſm* is a ſacred Rite. Chriſt in his Sufferings *devoted* himſelf to his Father's Honour, and *conſecrated* himſelf a Prieſt for evermore, *Heb.* 7. 27, 28. (2.) Chriſt's *Forwardneſs* to his Sufferings. *How am I ſtraitned till it be accompliſh'd* ; he doth long for the Time when he ſhould ſuffer and die, having an Eye to the glorious Iſſue of his Sufferings ; 'tis an Alluſion to a Woman in Travail, that is *pain'd to be deliver'd*, and welcomes her Pains, becauſe they haſten the Birth of the Child, and wiſhes them ſharp and ſtrong that the *Work* may be *cut ſhort* : Chriſt's Sufferings were the *Travel of his Soul*, which he chearfully underwent, in Hope that he ſhould by them *ſee his Seed*, Iſa. 53. 10, 11. So much was his Heart upon the Redemption and Salvation of Man.

2. He tells thoſe about him, that they alſo muſt bear with Hardſhips and Difficulties, *v.* 51. *Suppoſe ye that I came to give Peace on Earth*, i. e. to give you a peaceable Poſſeſſion of the Earth, and outward Proſperity on the Earth : 'tis intimated that they went upon this Suppoſition, that the Goſpel would meet with a *univerſal* Welcome, that People would *unanimouſly* embrace it, and would therefore ſtudy to make the Preachers of it *eaſy* and *great*, that Chriſt, if he did not give them *Pomp* and *Power*, would at leaſt give them *Peace* ; and herein they were encourag'd by divers Paſſages of the *Old Teſtament*, which ſpeak of the Peace of the *Meſſiah*'s Kingdom, which they were willing to underſtand of external Peace. But ſaith Chriſt, you will be miſtaken, the Event will declare the contrary, and therefore do not flatter yourſelves into a Fool's Paradiſe: You will find,

1. That the Effect of the preaching of the Goſpel will be *Diviſion.* Not but that the Deſign of the Goſpel and its proper Tendency is to unite the Children of Men to one another, to knit them together in holy Love, and if all would receive it, this would be the Effect of it; but there being Multitudes that not only will not recieve it, but oppoſe it, and have their Corruptions exaſperated by it, and are enrag'd at thoſe that do recieve it, it proves, tho' not the *Cauſe*, yet the *Occaſion* of *Diviſion.* While *the ſtrong Man armed kept his Palace*, in the Gentile World, *his Goods were at Peace*, all was quiet, for all went one Way, the Sects of Philoſophers agreed well enough, ſo did the Worſhippers of different Deities ; but when the Goſpel was preach'd, and many were enlighten'd by it, and turn'd from the Power of Satan to God, then there was a Diſturbance, *a Noiſe and a Shaking*, Ezek. 37. 7. Some *diſtinguiſh'd* themſelves by their embracing the Goſpel, and others were angry that they did ſo. Yea, and among them that receiv'd the Goſpel, there would be different Sentiments in leſſer Things, which would occaſion *Diviſion*, and Chriſt permits it for holy Ends, 1 *Cor.* 11. 12. that Chriſtians may learn and practiſe mutual Forbearance, *Rom.* 14. 1, 2.

2. That this *Diviſion* will reach into private Families, and the Preaching of the Goſpel will give Occaſion for Diſcord among the neareſt Relations, *v.* 53. *The Father ſhall be divided againſt the Son, and the Son againſt the Father*, when the one turns Chriſtian, and the other doth not ; for that which doth turn Chriſtian will be zealous by Arguments and Endearments to turn the other too, 1 *Cor.* 7. 16. as ſoon as ever *Paul* was converted, he *diſputed*, Acts 9. 29. And that which continues in Unbelief, will be provok'd, and will hate and perſecute that which by his Faith and Obedience witneſſeth againſt, and condemneth his Unbelief and Diſobedience. A Spirit of Biggotry and Perſecution will break through the ſtrongeſt Bonds of Relation and natural Affection, ſee *Mat.* 10. 34. 24. 7. Even *Mothers* and *Daughters* fall out about Religion ; and thoſe that believe not are ſo violent and outragious, that they are ready to deliver up into the Hands of the bloody Perſecutors thoſe that believe, tho' otherwiſe very near and dear to them. We find in the *Acts*, that wherever the Goſpel came, *Perſecution* was *ſtirr'd up* ; it was *every where ſpoken againſt*, and there was *no ſmall Stir about that Way* : Therefore let not the Diſciples of Chriſt promiſe themſelves *Peace upon Earth*, for they are ſent forth *as Sheep in the midſt of Wolves.*

54 ¶ And he ſaid alſo to the people, When ye ſee a cloud riſe out of the weſt, ſtraitway ye ſay, There cometh a ſhowre ; and ſo it is. 55 And when *ye ſee* the ſouthwind blow, ye ſay, There will be heat ; and it cometh to paſs. 56 Ye hypocrites, ye can diſcern the face of the skie, and of the earth : but how is it, that ye do not diſcern this time ? 57 Yea, and why even of yourſelves judge ye not what is right ? 58 ¶ When thou goeſt with thine adverſary to the magiſtrate, *as thou art* in the way, give diligence that thou mayeſt be delivered from him ; leſt he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer caſt thee into priſon. 59 I tell thee, thou ſhalt not depart thence, till thou haſt paid the very laſt mite.

Having given his Diſciples their Leſſon in the foregoing Verſes, here Chriſt turns to *the People*, and gives them *theirs*, v. 54.

He *ſaid alſo to the People* ; he preach'd *ad Populum*, as well as *ad Clerum*, and in general he would have them be as wiſe in the Affairs of their Souls, as they are in their outward Affairs: Two Things he inſtanceth in.

Firſt, Let them learn to *diſcern the Way of God towards them*, that they may *prepare* accordingly, they were *weather-wiſe*, and by obſerving the Winds and Clouds, could foreſee when there wou'd be *Rain*, and when there wou'd be *hot Weather*, (*v.* 54, 55.) and they did accordingly either houſe their Hay and Corn, or throw it abroad, and equipt themſelves for a Journey, according as they foreſaw the Weather would be. Even in the Change of the Weather God gives Warning to us, what is coming, and Art has improv'd thoſe Notices of Nature in Weather-Glaſſes. Theſe Preparations here ſpoken of, were made by repeated Obſervations upon the Chain of Cauſes; from what *has been* we conjecture what *will be* ; ſee the Benefit of Experience, by *taking Notice* we may come to *give Notice*, whoſo is wiſe, will *obſerve*, and *learn*. See now

1. The Particulars of the Preſages: *Ye ſee a Cloud ariſing out of the Weſt* ; the *Hebrew* would ſay, *Out of the Sea* ; perhaps 'tis at firſt *no bigger than a Man's Hand*, 1 *Kings* 18. 44. but you ſay there's a Shower in the Womb of it, and it proves ſo. When ye *obſerve* the *South-wind blow*, ye ſay *there will be Heat*, for the hot Countries of *Africa* lay not far *South* from *Judea*, and it comes to *paſs* ordinarily; yet Nature has not ty'd itſelf to ſuch a Track, but that *ſometimes* we are out in our Prognoſticks.

2. The Inferences from them, *v.* 56. *Ye Hypocrites*, who pretend to be wiſe, but really are not ſo, who pretend to expect the Meſſiah and his Kingdom (for ſo the Generality of the Jews did) and yet are no Ways diſpos'd to receive and entertain it, *how is it that ye do not diſcern this Time?* That ye do not diſcern that according to the Indications given in the *old Teſtament* Prophecies, now is the Time for the Meſſiah to appear, and that according to the Marks given of him, I am he! Why are ye not aware that you have now an Opportunity which you *will not have long*, and which you *may never have again* of ſecuring to yourſelves an Intereſt in the Kingdom of God, and the Privileges of that Kingdom? *now is the accepted Time*, Now or Never. 'Tis the Folly and Miſery of Man that he *knows not his Time*, Eccl. 9. 12. This was the Ruin of the Men of that Generation, that they *knew not the Day of their Viſitation*, Luke 19. 44. But a *wiſe Man's Heart diſcerns Time and Judgment* ; ſuch was the Wiſdom of the Men of *Iſſachar*, who *had Underſtanding of the Times*, 1 Chron. 12. 32. He adds, *v.* 57. *Yea, and why even of yourſelves*, tho' you had not theſe loud Alarms given you, *Judge ye not what is right?* You are not only ſtupid and regardleſs in Matters that are purely of divine Revelation, and take not the Hints which that gives you, but you are ſo even in the Dictates of the very Light and Law of Nature. Chriſtianity has Reaſon and natural Conſcience on its Side; and if Men would allow themſelves the Liberty of *judging what is right*, they would ſoon find that all Chriſt's Precepts concerning all Things are right, and there is nothing more equitable in it ſelf, nor better becoming us, than to ſubmit to them, and be rul'd by them.

Secondly, Let them haſten to *make their Peace with God* in Time, before it be too late, *v.* 55, 59. This we had upon another Occaſion, *Mat.* 5. 26.

1. We reckon it our Wiſdom in our temporal Affairs to *compound* with thoſe with whom we cannot *contend*, to *agree with our Adverſary* upon the beſt Terms we can, before the Equity be *forecloſ'd*, and we be left to the Rigour of the Law. *When thou goeſt with thine Adverſary to the Magiſtrate*, to whom the Appeal is made, and knoweſt that he has an Advantage againſt thee, and thou art in Danger of being caſt, you know 'tis the moſt prudent Courſe to make the Matter away between yourſelves, *As thou art in the Way, give Diligence to be delivered from him*, to get a Diſcharge, leſt Judgment be given, and Execution awarded according to Law. Wiſe Men will not let their Quarrels go to an Extremity, but accommodate them in Time.

2. Let us do thus in the Affairs of our Souls, we have by Sin made God our *Adverſary*, have provok'd his Diſpleaſure againſt us, and he has both *Right* and *Might* on his Side; ſo that 'tis to no Purpoſe to think of carrying on the Controverſy with him either at *Bar* or in *Battle*. Chriſt, to whom all Judgment is committed, is the Magiſtrate before whom we are haſtening to appear: If we ſtand a Trial before him, and inſiſt upon our own Juſtification, the Cauſe will certainly go againſt us, the *Judge* will *deliver* us to the *Officer*, the Miniſters of his Juſtice, and we ſhall be *caſt into* the *Priſon* of Hell, and the Debt will be exacted to the utmoſt, tho' we cannot make a full Satisfaction for it, will be continually demanded, *till the laſt Mite be paid*, which will not be to all Eternity. Chriſt's Sufferings were ſhort, yet the *Value* of them made them fully ſatisfactory. In the Sufferings of damned Sinners what is wanting in Value, muſt be made up in an endleſs Duration. Now in Conſideration of this, let us give Diligence to be deliver'd *out of* the Hands of God as an Adverſary, into his Hands as a Father, and this *as we are in the Way*, which has the chief Streſs laid upon it here. While we are alive we are *in the Way*; and *now* is our *Time*, by Repentance and Faith through Chriſt (who is the Mediator as well as the Magiſtrate) to get the Quarrel taken up, while it may be done, before it be too late. Thus was God in Chriſt *reconciling the World to himſelf, beſeeching us to be reconcil'd.* Let us take hold on the Arm of the Lord ſtretch'd out in this gracious Offer, that we may make Peace, and we *ſhall make Peace*, Iſa. 27. 4, 5. for we cannot *walk together* till we be *agreed.*

CHAP. XIII.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *The good Improvement Chriſt made of a Piece of News that was brought him concerning ſome* Galileans *that were lately maſſacred by* Pilate, *as they were ſacrificing in the Temple at* Jeruſalem, v. 1-----5. (2.) *The Parable of the fruitleſs Fig-tree, by which we are warn'd to bring forth Fruits meet for that Repentance which he had in the foregoing Paſſage call'd us to*, v. 6----9. (3.) *Chriſt's healing a poor infirm Woman, on the Sabbath-day, and juſtifying himſelf in it*, v. 11----------17. (4.) *A Repetition of the Parables of the Grain of Muſtard-Seed, and the Leaven*, v. 18----22. (5.) *His Anſwer to the Queſtion concerning the Number of the* Saved, v. 23---30. (6.) *The Slight he put upon* Herod's *Malice and Menaces, and the Doom of* Jeruſalem *read*, v. 31----35.

THERE were preſent at that ſeaſon, ſome that
told him of the Galileans, whoſe blood Pi-
late had mingled with their ſacrifices. 2 And Je-
ſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, Suppoſe ye that
theſe Galileans were ſinners above all the Galileans,
becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? 3 I tell you,
Nay: but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe
periſh. 4 Or thoſe eighteen, upon whom the
towre in Siloam fell, and ſlew them, think ye that
they were ſinners above all men that dwelt in Je-
ruſalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but except ye re-
pent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.

Here's 1. Tidings brought to Chriſt of the Death of ſome *Galileans* lately, whoſe Blood *Pilate had mingled with their Sacrifices*, v. 1. Let us conſider,

1. What this tragical Story was: 'Tis briefly related here, and is not met with in any of the Hiſtorians of thoſe Time, *Joſephus* indeed mentions *Pilate*'s killing of ſome *Samaritans*, who under the Conduct of a factious Leader, were going in a tumultuous Manner to Mount *Gerrizim*, where the *Samaritans* Temple was; but we can by no Means allow that Story to be the ſame with this. Some think theſe *Galileans* were of the Faction of *Judas Gaulonita*, who is call'd, *Judas of Galilee*, Acts 5. 37. who diſown'd *Cæſar*'s Authority, and refus'd to pay Tribute to him: Or, perhaps, theſe being *Galileans* were only ſuſpected by *Pilate* to be of that Faction, and barbarouſly murdered, becauſe thoſe who were in with that Pretender, were out of his Reach. The *Galileans* being *Herod*'s Subjects, 'tis probable this Outrage committed upon them by *Pilate*, occaſion'd the Quarrel that was between *Herod* and *Pilate*, which we read of, *Luke* 23. 12. We are not told what Number they were, perhaps *but a Few*, whom *Pilate* had ſome particular *Pique* againſt; (and therefore the Story is overlook'd by *Joſephus*) but the Circumſtance remark'd is, that he *mingled their Blood with their Sacrifices*, in the Court of the Temple. Tho' perhaps they had Reaſon to fear *Pilate*'s Malice, yet they would not under Pretence of that Fear keep away from *Jeruſalem*, whither the Law oblig'd them to go up with their Sacrifices. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks it probable that they were *themſelves* killing their Sacrifices, which was allow'd; for the Prieſt's Work (they ſaid) began with the *ſprinkling of the Blood*: And *Pilate*'s Officers came upon them by Surprize, juſt at that Time, when they were off their Guard, (for otherwiſe the *Galileans* were mettled Men, and generally went well arm'd) and mingled the Blood of the Sacificers with the Blood of the Sacrifices, as if it had been equally acceptable to God. Neither the Holineſs of the Place, nor of the Work, would be a Protection to them from the Fury of an unjuſt Judge, that neither *fear'd God* nor *regarded Man*. The Altar that us'd to be a Sanctuary, and Place of Shelter, is now become a Snare and a Trap, a Place of Danger, of Slaughter.

2. Why it was related *at this Seaſon* to our Lord Jeſus. (1.) Perhaps meerly as a Matter of News, which they ſuppos'd he had not heard before, and as a Thing which they lamented, and believ'd he would do ſo too; for the *Galileans* were their Country-men. *Note*, Sad Providences ought to be obſerv'd by us, and the Knowledge of them communicated to others, that they and we may be ſuitably affected with them, and make a good Uſe of them. (2.) Perhaps 'twas intended as a Confirmation of what Chriſt had ſaid in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, concerning the Neceſſity of making our Peace with God in Time, before we be *deliver'd to the Officer*, that is, to *Death*, and ſo *caſt into Priſon*, and then it will be too late to make Agreements: Now ſay they, Maſter, here's a freſh Inſtance of ſome that were ſuddenly *deliver'd to the Officer*, that were taken away by Death when they little expected it, and therefore we have all need to be ready. *Note*, It will be of good Uſe to us, both to explain the Word of God, and to enforce

it upon ourſelves by obſerving the Providences of God. (3.) Perhaps they would ſtir him up, being himſelf of *Galilee*, and a Prophet, and one that had a great Intereſt in that Country, to find out a Way to revenge the Death of theſe *Galileans* upon *Herod:* If they had any Thought of this Kind they were quite out, for Chriſt was now going up to *Jeruſalem* to be *deliver'd into the Hands of* Pilate, and to have his Blood, not mingled with his Sacrifice, but itſelf made a Sacrifice. (4.) Perhaps this was told Chriſt to *deter* him from going up to *Jeruſalem* to Worſhip, (*v.* 22.) leſt he ſhould ſerve him as he had ſerved theſe *Galileans*, and ſhould ſuggeſt againſt *him*, as probably he had inſinuated againſt thoſe *Galileans* in Vindication of his Cruelty, that they came to ſacrifice as *Abſolom* did, with a *ſeditious* Deſign, under Colour of ſacrificing to raiſe Rebellion. Now leſt *Pilate*, when his Hand was in, ſhould proceed further, they think it adviſeable that Chriſt ſhould for the preſent keep out of the Way. (5.) Chriſt's Anſwer intimates that they told him this with a ſpiteful *Inuendo*, that tho' *Pilate* was unjuſt in killing them, yet that without doubt they were ſecretly ill Men, elſe God would not have permitted *Pilate* thus barbarouſly to cut them off. 'Twas very invidious, rather than they would allow them to be Martyrs, tho' they dy'd ſacrificing, and perhaps ſuffered for their Devotion, they will without any Colour of Proof ſuppoſe them to be Malefactors; and it may be for no other Reaſon, but becauſe they are not of their Party and Denomination, differ'd from them, or had Difference with them; this Fate of theirs, which was capable not only of a favourable, but an honourable Conſtruction, ſhall be call'd a *juſt Judgment* of God *upon them*, tho' they knew not for what.

2. Chriſt's Reply to this Report: In which,

1. He ſeconded it with another Story, which like it gave an Inſtance of Peoples being taken away by ſudden Death: It is not long ſince *the Tower in* Siloam *fell*, and there were eighteen Perſons kill'd and bury'd in the Ruins of it. Dr. *Lightfoot*'s Conjecture is, that this Tower adjoin'd to *the Pool* of *Siloam*, which was the ſame with the Pool of *Bethſaida*, and that it belong'd to thoſe *Porches* which were by the *Pool*, in which the *impotent Folk* lay that *waited for the ſtirring* of the Water, *John* 5. 3. and they who were killed were ſome of them, or ſome of thoſe who in this Pool us'd to purify themſelves for the Temple Service, for it was near the Temple. Whoever they were, 'twas a ſad Story, yet ſuch melancholy Accidents we often hear of: For *as the Birds are caught in a Snare, ſo are the Sons of Men ſnared in an evil Time, when it falls ſuddenly upon them*, Eccl. 9. 12. Towers that were built for Safety, oft prove Mens Deſtruction.

2. He cautioned his Hearers not to make an ill Uſe of theſe and ſuch like Events, not from thence to cenſure *great Sufferers*, as if they were therefore to be accounted *great Sinners: Suppoſe ye that theſe* Galileans, who were ſlain as they were ſacrificing, *were Sinners above all the* Galileans, *becauſe they ſuffer'd ſuch Things, I tell you nay*, v. 2, 3. Perhaps they that told him the Story of the *Galileans* were *Jews*, and were glad of any Thing that furniſh'd them with Matter of Reflection upon the *Galileans*, and therefore Chriſt retorted upon them, the Story of the *Men of Jeruſalem*, that came to an untimely End, for *with what Meaſure* of that kind *we mete*, it *it ſhall be meaſur'd to us again.* Now ſuppoſe ye that *thoſe Eighteen* who met with their Death from the Tower of *Siloam*, while perhaps they were expecting their Cure from the Pool of *Siloam*, that they were *Debtors* to Divine Juſtice *above all Men that dwelt at* Jeruſalem, *I tell you nay:* Whether it make for us or againſt us, we muſt abide by this Rule, that we cannot judge of Mens *Sins* by their *Sufferings* in this World; for many are thrown into the Furnace as Gold, to be purified, not as Droſs and Chaff to be conſumed. We muſt therefore not be harſh in our Cenſures of thoſe that are afflicted more than their Neighbours, as *Job*'s Friends were in their Cenſures of him, leſt we add Sorrow to the Sorrowful; nay, *leſt we condemn the Generation of the Righteous*, Pſal. 73. 14. If we will be judging, we have enough to do to judge ourſelves; nor indeed can we *know Love and Hatred by all that is before us*, becauſe *all Things come alike to all*, Eccl. 9. 1, 2. And we might as juſtly conclude that the *Oppreſſors*, and *Pilate* among the reſt, *on whoſe Side there is Power* and Succeſs, are the greateſt Saints, as that the *oppreſſed*, and thoſe *Galileans* among the reſt that are all in Tears, and they have no Comforter, no, not the Prieſts and Levites that attended the Altar, are the *greateſt Sinners.* Let us in our Cenſures of others, do as we would be done by, for as we do we ſhall be done by; *Judge not, that ye be not judged*, Mat. 7. 1.

3. On theſe Stories he founded a Call to Repentance, adding to each of them this awakening Word, *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh*, v. 3, 4. (1.) This intimates that we all deſerve to *periſh* as much as *they did*, and had we been dealt with according to our Sins, according to the *Iniquity of our holy Things*, our Blood had been long e're this mingled with our Sacrifices, by the Juſtice of God. It muſt moderate our Cenſures not only that we are *Sinners*, but that we are as great Sinners as they, have as much Sin to repent of, as they had to ſuffer for. (2.) That therefore we are all concern'd to *repent*, to be ſorry for what we have done amiſs, and to do ſo no more. The Judgments of God upon others, are loud Calls to us to *Repent.* See how Chriſt improv'd every thing for the preſſing of that great Duty, which he came not only to *gain Room* for, and *give Hopes* to, but to enjoin upon us, and that is to *repent.* (3.) That Repentance is the Way to eſcape periſhing, and it is a ſure Way; *ſo Iniquity ſhall not be your Ruin*, but upon no other Terms. (4.) That if we repent not, we ſhall certainly periſh, as others have done before us. Some lay an Emphaſis upon the Word *likewiſe*, and apply it to the Deſtruction that was coming upon the People of the Jews, and particularly upon *Jeruſalem*, who were deſtroyed by the Romans at the Time of their Paſſover, and ſo like the *Galileans*, they had *their Blood mingled with their Sacrifices*, and many of them, both in *Jeruſalem* and in other Places, were deſtroy'd by the Fall of Walls and Buildings which were batter'd down about their Ears, as thoſe that dy'd by the Fall of the Tower of *Siloam*: But certainly it looks further, except we repent we ſhall periſh eternally, as they periſh'd out of this World. The ſame Jeſus that bids us *repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, bids us *repent*, for otherwiſe we ſhall periſh; ſo that he hath ſet before us Life and Death, Good and Evil, and put us to our Choice. (5.) The periſhing of thoſe in their Impenitency, will be in a particular Manner aggravated, who have been moſt harſh and ſevere in judging others.

6 ¶ He ſpake alſo this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and ſought fruit thereon, and found none. 7 Then ſaid he unto the dreſſer of his vineyard, Behold, theſe three years I come ſeeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground? 8 And he anſwering, ſaid unto him, Lord, let it alone this Year alſo, till I ſhall dig about it, and dung *it:* 9 And if it bear fruit, *well:* and if not, *then* after that, thou ſhalt cut it down.

This Parable is intended to enforce that Word of Warning, immediately going before, *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe Periſh*; except you be reform'd, you will be ruin'd, as the barren Tree, except it bring forth Fruit, it will be cut down.

1. This Parable primarily refers to the Nation and People of the Jews: God choſe them for his own, made them a People near to him, gave them Advantages for knowing and ſerving him above any other People, and expected anſwerable Returns of Duty and Obedience from them, which turning to his Praiſe and Honour, he would have accounted *Fruit*; but they diſappointed his Expectations, they did not do their Duty, they were a Reproach inſtead of being a Credit to their Profeſſion; upon this he juſtly determin'd to abandon them, and cut them off, to deprive them of their Privileges, to unchurch and unpeople them; but upon Chriſt's, as of old upon *Moſes*'s Interceſſion, he graciouſly gave them further Time, and further Mercy; try'd them as it were another Year, by ſending his Apoſtles among them to call them to Repentance, and in Chriſt's Name to offer them Pardon upon Repentance; and ſome of them were wrought upon to *repent*, and bring forth Fruit, and with them all was well; but the Body of the Nation continued impenitent, and unfruitful, and Ruin without Remedy came upon them, about 40 Years after they were cut down and caſt into the Fire, as *John Baptiſt* had told them, *Mat.* 3. 10. which Saying of his, this Parable enlargeth upon.

2. Yet it has without doubt a further Reference, and is deſign'd for the awakening of all that enjoy the Means of Grace, and the Privileges of the viſible Church, to ſee to it, that the Temper of their Minds, and the Tenor of their Lives, be anſwerable to their Profeſſions and Opportunities, for that's the *Fruit* requir'd. Now obſerve here,

1. The Advantages which this Fig-tree had; it was *planted in a Vineyard*, in better Soil, and where it had more Care taken of it, and more Pains taken with it than other Fig-trees had, that commonly grew not in *Vineyards*, (thoſe are for Vines) but by the *Way-ſide*, Mat. 21. 19. This Fig-tree belong'd to a *certain Man* that own'd it, and was at Expence upon it. *Note*, The Church of God is *his Vineyard*, diſtinguiſh'd from the Common, and fenc'd about, *Iſa.* 5. 1, 2. We are *Fig-trees planted* in this Vineyard by our Baptiſm; we have a Place and a Name in the viſible Church, and 'tis our Privilege and Happineſs that we have ſo, 'tis a diſtinguiſhing Favour: He has not *dealt ſo with other Nations.*

2. The Owner's Expectation from it: *He came and ſought Fruit thereon*, and he had Reaſon to expect it. He did not *ſend*, but came himſelf, noting his Deſire to find Fruit. Chriſt came into this World, *came to his own*, to the *Jews*, ſeeking Fruit. *Note*, The God of Heaven requires and expects *Fruit* from thoſe that have a Place in his Vineyard. He has *his Eye* upon thoſe that *enjoy* the Goſpel, to ſee whether they *live* up to it; he ſeeks Evidences of their getting Good by the Means of Grace they enjoy. *Leaves* will not ſerve, crying, Lord, Lord; *Bloſſoms* will not ſerve, beginning well, and promiſing fair, there muſt be *Fruit:* Our Thoughts, Words, and Actions, muſt be according to the Goſpel Light and Love.

3. The Diſappointment of his Expectation: *He found none*, none at all, not one Fig. *Note*, Tis ſad to think how many enjoy the Privileges of the Goſpel, and yet do nothing at all to the Honour of God, not to anſwer the End of his entruſting them with thoſe Privileges; and it is a Diſappointment to him, and a Grief to the Spirit of his Grace. (1.) He here complains of it to the Dreſſer of the Vineyard; I come *ſeeking Fruit*, but am diſappointed; *I find none*, looking for Grapes, but behold, *wild Grapes*; he is grieved with ſuch a Generation. (2.) He aggravates it with two Conſiderations; 1. That he waited long, and yet was diſappointed; as he was not *high* in his Expectations, he only expected Fruit, not *much* Fruit, ſo he was not *haſty, he came three Years*, Year after Year: Applying it to the *Jews*, he came one Space of Time before the Captivity, another after that, and another in the Preaching of *John Baptiſt*, and of Chriſt himſelf; or it may allude to the three Years of Chriſt's publick Miniſtry which were now expiring. In general, it teacheth us, that the Patience of God is ſtretched out to Long-Suffering, with many that enjoy the Goſpel, and do not bring forth the Fruits of it; and this Patience is wretchedly abus'd, which provokes God to ſo much the greater Severity. How many times three Years has God come to many of us, *ſeeking Fruit*, but has *found none*, or next none, or worſe than none. 2. That this Fig-tree did not only bring forth no Fruit, but it did Hurt, it *cumber'd the Ground*, it took up the room of a fruitful Tree, and was injurious to all about it. *Note*, Thoſe who do not *do Good*, commonly *do Hurt*, by the Influence of their bad Example; they grieve and diſcourage thoſe that are Good, they harden and encourage thoſe that are bad. And the Miſchief is the greater, and the Ground the more cumber'd, if it be a high large ſpreading Tree, and if it be an old Tree of long ſtanding.

4. The Doom paſt upon it; *cut it down.* He ſaith to the *Dreſſer of the Vineyard*, to Chriſt, to whom all Judgment is committed, to the Miniſters who are in his Name to declare this Doom. *Note*, No other can be expected concerning barren Trees, but that they ſhould be *cut down*. As the unfruitful Vineyard is diſmantled, and thrown open to the Common, *Iſa.* 5. 5, 6. ſo the unfruitful Trees in the Vineyard are caſt out of it, and wither, *John* 15. 6. 'Tis cut down by the Judgments of God, eſpecially ſpiritual Judgments, ſuch as thoſe on the *Jews* that believed not, *Iſa.* 6. 9, 10. 'Tis cut down by Death, and caſt into the Fire of Hell, and good Reaſon, for *why cumbers it the Ground*? What Reaſon is there why it ſhould have a Place in the Vineyard to no Purpoſe?

5. The Dreſſers Interceſſion for it. Chriſt is the great Interceſſor, he ever lives interceding: Miniſters are Interceſſors; they that *dreſs* the Vineyard ſhould *intercede* for it: Thoſe we *preach to*, we ſhould *pray for*, for we muſt give ourſelves to the *Word of God*, and to *Prayer*. Now obſerve,

1. What it is he prays for, and that is a Reprieve, *Lord, let it alone this Year alſo.* He doth not pray, Lord let it never be cut down, but Lord not now: Lord do not remove the Dreſſer, do not with-hold the Dews, do not pluck up the Tree. *Note*, 1. 'Tis deſirable to have a barren Tree repriev'd: Thoſe that have not yet Grace to repent, yet 'tis a Mercy to them to have *Space to repent*, as it was to the whole World to have One Hundred and Twenty Years allowed them to make their Peace with God. 2. We owe it to Chriſt, the great Interceſſor, that *barren* Trees are not cut down preſently: Had it not been for this Interpoſal, the whole World had been cut down upon the Sin of *Adam*; but he ſaid, *Lord let it alone*, and it is he that upholds all Things. 3. We are encourag'd to pray to God, for the merciful Reprieve of barren Fig-Trees: Lord *let them alone*, continue them a while in their Probation; bear them a little longer, and wait to be gracious. Thus muſt we ſtand in the Gap to turn away Wrath. 4. Reprieves of Mercy are but for a Time: *Let it alone this Year alſo*, a ſhort Time, but a ſufficient Time to make Trial. When God has born long, we may hope he will bear yet a little longer, but he cannot expect he ſhould bear always. 5. Reprieves may be obtain'd by the Prayers of others for us, but not Pardons; there muſt be our own Faith, and Repentance, and Prayers, elſe no Pardon.

2. How he promiſeth to improve this Reprieve, if it be obtain'd: *Till I ſhall dig about it and dung it.* *Note*, 1. In general, our Prayers muſt always be ſeconded with our Endeavours. The Dreſſer ſeems to ſay, Lord, it may be I have been wanting in that which is my Part, but let it alone this Year, and I will do more than I have done towards its Fruitfulneſs. Thus in all our Prayers we muſt requeſt God's Grace with a humble Reſolution to do our Duty, elſe we mock God, and ſhow that we do not rightly value the Mercies we pray for. 2. In particular, when we pray to God for Grace for ourſelves or others, we muſt follow our Prayers with Diligence in the Uſe of the Means of Grace. The Dreſſer of the Vineyard engageth to do *his* Part, and therein teacheth Miniſters to do *theirs*. He will *dig about* the Tree, and will *dung* it; unfruitful Chriſtians muſt be *awaken'd* by the Terrors of the Law, which *break up the fallow Ground*, and then encourag'd by the Promiſes of the Goſpel, which are warming and fatning, as Manure to the Tree; both Methods muſt be try'd, the one prepares for the other, and all little enough.

3. Upon what Foot he leaves the Matter: Let us try it, and try what we can do with it one Year more, *and if it bear Fruit well*, v. 19. It is poſſible, nay, there is Hope that yet it may be fruitful, and in that Hope the Owner will have Patience with it, and the Dreſſer will take Pains with it, and if it ſhould have the deſired Succeſs, both will be pleas'd that it was not cut down. The Word *well* is not in the Original, but the Expreſſion is abrupt, *If it bear Fruit*, ſupply it how you pleaſe, ſo as to expreſs how wonderfully well-pleas'd both the Owner and Dreſſer will be, if it bear Fruit, there will be Cauſe of Rejoycing, we have what he would have; but it cannot be better expreſs'd than as we do, *well*. *Note*, Unfruitful Profeſſors of Religion, if after long Unfruitfulneſs they will repent and amend, and bring forth Fruit, *as ſhall be well*; God will be *pleas'd*, for he will be *prais'd*; Miniſters Hands will be ſtrengthned, and ſuch Penitents will be their Joy now, and their Crown ſhortly: Nay, there will be Joy in Heaven for it; the Ground will be no longer cumber'd but better'd, the Vineyard beautify'd, and the good Trees in it made better. And as for the Tree itſelf, 'tis *well* for it; it ſhall not only not be cut down, but it ſhall *receive Bleſſing from God*, Heb. 6. 7. it ſhall be *purged*, and *ſhall bring forth more Fruit*, for the Father is its Husbandman, *John* 15. 2. And it ſhall at laſt be tranſplanted from the Vineyard on Earth, to the Paradiſe above.

But he adds, *If not then, after that thou ſhalt cut it down:* Obſerve here, 1. That tho' God bear long, he will not bear always with unfruitful Profeſſors; his Patience will have an End, and if it be abus'd, will give Way to that Wrath which will have no End. Barren Trees will certainly be *cut down* at laſt, and *caſt into the Fire*. 2. The longer God hath *waited*, and the more Coſt he has been at upon them, the greater will their Deſtruction be: To be cut down *after that*, after all theſe Expectations from it, theſe Debates concerning it, this Concern for it, will be ſad indeed, and will aggravate the Condemnation. 3. Cutting down, tho' 'tis Work that ſhall be done, yet 'tis Work that God doth not take Pleaſure in: For, obſerve here, the Owner ſaid to the Dreſſer, Do thou *cut it down*, for it cumber'd the Ground: Nay, ſaid the Dreſſer, if it muſt be done at laſt, *thou ſhalt cut it down*, let not my Hand be upon it. 4. Thoſe that now intercede for barren Trees, and take Pains with them, if they perſiſt in their Unfruitfulneſs, will be e'en content to ſee them cut down, and will not have one more Word to ſay for them. Their beſt Friends will acquieſce in, nay, they will approve and applaud the righteous Judgment of God, in the Day of the Manifeſtation of it, *Rev.* 15. 3, 4.

10 And he was teaching in one of the ſynagogues on the ſabbath. 11 ¶ And behold, there was a woman which had a ſpirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wiſe lift up *her ſelf*. 12 And when Jeſus ſaw her, he called *her* to him, and ſaid unto her, Woman, thou art looſed from thine infirmity. 13 And he laid *his* hands on her: and immediately ſhe was made ſtraight, and glorified God. 14 And the ruler of the ſynagogue anſwered with indignation, becauſe that Jeſus had healed on the ſabbath-day, and ſaid unto the people, There are ſix days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the ſabbath-day. 15 The Lord then anſwered him, and ſaid, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the ſabbath looſe his ox or *his* aſs from the ſtall, and lead *him* away to watering? 16 And ought not this woman being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo theſe eighteen years, be looſed from this bond on the ſabbath-day? 17 And when he had ſaid theſe things, all his adverſaries were aſhamed: and all the people rejoyced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Here's 1. The miraculous Cure of a Woman that had been long under a Spirit of Infirmity. Our Lord Jeſus ſpent his *Sabbaths* in the *Synagogues*, v. 10. We ſhould make Conſcience of doing ſo, as we have Opportunity; and not think we can ſpend the Sabbath as well at Home in reading a good Book, for religious Aſſemblies are a Divine Inſtitution, which we muſt bear our Teſtimony to, tho' but of two or three. And when he was in the Synagogues on the *Sabbath-Day*, he was teaching there, ἦν διδάσκων; it notes a continued Act; he *ſtill taught the People Knowledge.* He was in his Element when he was Teaching. Now to confirm the Doctrine he preach'd, and recommend it as faithful and well-worthy of all Acceptation, he wrought a Miracle, a Miracle of Mercy.

(1.) The Object of Charity that preſented itſelf, was a Woman in the Synagogue, that had *a Spirit of Infirmity eighteen Years*, v. 11. *i. e.* She had an Infirmity, which an evil Spirit by Divine Permiſſion had brought upon her, which was ſuch as that ſhe was *bowed together* by ſtrong Convulſions, and could *in no wiſe lift up herſelf*; and having been ſo long thus, the Diſeaſe was incurable, ſhe could not ſtand erect, which is reckon'd Man's Honour above the Beaſts. Obſerve, tho' ſhe was under this Infirmity, by which ſhe was much *deform'd*, and made to look mean, and not only ſo, but as is ſuppos'd, Motion was very painful to her, yet ſhe went to the *Synagogue on the Sabbath-day*. *Note*, Even bodily Infirmities, unleſs they be very grievous indeed, ſhould not keep us from publick Worſhip on Sabbath-days; for God can help us beyond our Expectation.

(2.) The Offer of this Cure to one that ſought it not, ſpeaks the preventing Mercy and Grace of Chriſt, *v.* 11. *When Jeſus ſaw her, he call'd her to him.* It doth not appear that ſhe made any Application to him, or had any Expectation from him, but *before ſhe call'd he anſwer'd.* She came to him to be *taught*, and to get Good to her Soul, and then Chriſt gave this Relief to her bodily Infirmity. *Note*, Thoſe whoſe firſt and chief Care is for their Souls, do beſt befriend the true Intereſts of their Bodies likewiſe, for *other Things ſhall be added to them.* Chriſt in his Goſpel calls and invites thoſe to come to him for Healing, that labour under *Spiritual Infirmities*, and if he *calls us*, he will undoubtedly help us when we come to him.

(3.) The Cure effectually and immediately wrought, ſpeaks his almighty Power. He *laid his Hands on her*, and ſaid, *Woman thou art looſed from thine Infirmity.* Tho' thou haſt been long labouring under it, thou art at length releaſed from it. Let not thoſe deſpair whoſe Diſeaſe is *inveterate*, who have been long in Affliction, God can at length relieve them, therefore tho' he tarry, wait for him. Tho' it was a *Spirit of Infirmity*, an Evil Spirit, that ſhe was under the Power of, Chriſt has a Power ſuperior to that of *Satan*, is *ſtronger than he.* Tho' *ſhe could in no wiſe lift up herſelf*, Chriſt could lift her up, and enable her to lift up herſelf: She that had been *crooked*, was *immediately made ſtraight*, and the Scripture was fulfilled, *Pſal.* 146. 8. *The Lord raiſeth them that are bowed down.*

And this Cure repreſents the Work of Chriſt's Grace upon the Souls of People. (1.) In the *Converſion* of Sinners, unſanctified Hearts are under this *Spirit of Infirmity*, they are diſtorted, the Faculties of the Soul are quite out of Place and Order; they are *bowed down* towards Things below, *O curvæ in Terram animæ*; they can in no wiſe *lift up themſelves* to God and Heaven; the Bent of the Soul in its natural State, is the quite contrary way. Such crooked Souls ſeek not to Chriſt, but he calls them to him, lays the Hand of his Power and Grace upon them, ſpeaks a healing Word to them, by which he *looſeth them from their Infirmity*, makes the Soul *ſtraight*, reduceth it to Order, raiſeth it above worldly Regards, and directs its Affections, and aims Heavenwards. Tho' *Man cannot make that ſtraight which God has made crooked*, Eccl. 7. 13. yet the Grace of God can make that ſtraight which the Sin of Man has made crooked. (2.) In the *Conſolation* of good People. Many of the Children of God are long under a *Spirit of Infirmity*, a Spirit of Bondage, through prevailing Grief and Fear, their *Souls* are *caſt down* and *diſquieted* within them; *they are troubled, they are bowed down greatly, they go Mourning all the Day long*, Pſal. 38. 6. But Chriſt by his Spirit of Adoption looſeth them from this Infirmity in due Time, and raiſeth them up.

(4.) The preſent Effect of this Cure upon the Soul of the Patient, as well as upon her Body; ſhe *glorified God*, gave him the Praiſe of her Cure, to whom all Praiſe is due. When crooked Souls are made ſtraight, they will ſhew it by their glorifying God.

2. The Offence that was taken at this by the *Ruler of the Synagogue*, as if our Lord Jeſus had committed ſome heinous Crime in healing this poor Woman. He *had Indignation* at it, becauſe it was *on the Sabbath-day*, v. 14. One would think the Miracle ſhould have convinc'd him, and that the Circumſtance of its being done on the *Sabbath-day* could not have ſerv'd to evade the Conviction; but what Light can ſhine ſo clear, ſo ſtrong, which a Spirit of Bigotry and Enmity to Chriſt and his Goſpel will not ſerve to ſhut Mens Eyes againſt. Never was ſuch Honour done to the Synagogue he was Ruler of, as Chriſt had now done it, and yet he had Indignation at it. He had not indeed the Impudence to quarrel with Chriſt, but he ſaid *to the People*, reflecting upon Chriſt in what he ſaid, *There are ſix Days in which Men ought to work, in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day.* See here how light he made of the Miracles Chriſt wrought, as if they were *Things of Courſe*, and no more but what Quacks and Mountebanks did every Day; you may *come and* be heal'd any Day of the Week. Chriſt's Cures were become in his Eyes cheap and common Things. See alſo how he ſtretcheth the Law beyond his Intention, or any juſt Conſtruction that could be put upon it, in making either Healing, or being heal'd, with a Touch of the Hand, or a Word's ſpeaking, to be that *Work* which is *forbidden* on the *Sabbath-day.* This was evidently *the Work of God*; and when God ty'd us out from working that Day, did he tye himſelf out? The ſame Word in Hebrew ſignifies both Godly and Merciful, (*Cheſed*) to intimate that Works of *Mercy* and *Charity* are in a Manner Works of *Piety*, 1 Tim. 5. 4. and are therefore very proper on Sabbath-days.

3. Chriſt's Juſtification of himſelf in what he had done, *v.* 15. *The Lord then anſwered him*, as he had anſwered others, who in like Manner cavill'd at him, *Thou Hypocrite.* Chriſt who knows Mens Hearts, may call thoſe Hypocrites, whom it would be Preſumption for us to call ſo, who *muſt* judge charitably, and *can* judge but according to the outward Appearance. Chriſt knew he had a real Enmity to him, and to his Goſpel, and he did but cloak that with a pretended Zeal for the Sabbath-day; and that when he bid the People come on the *ſix Days* and be heal'd, he really would not have them be heal'd any Day. Chriſt could have told him this, but he vouchſafes to reaſon the Caſe with him: And,

(1.) He *Appeals* to the common Practice among the *Jews*, which was never diſallow'd, that of *watering* their Cattle on the Sabbath-day; thoſe Cattle that are kept up in the Stable, are conſtantly *loos'd from the Stall on the Sabbath-day*, and *led away to Watering:* It would be a barbarous Thing not to do it; for *a merciful Man regardeth the Life of his Beaſt*, his own Beaſt that ſerves him. Letting the Cattle *reſt* on Sabbath-day, as the Law directed, would be worſe than working them, if they muſt be made to faſt on that Day, as the *Ninevites* Cattle on their Faſt-day, that were not permitted to *feed* or *drink Water*, Jonah 3: 7.

(2.) He applies this to the preſent Caſe, *v.* 16. Muſt an *Ox* or an *Aſs* have Compaſſion ſhew'd them on the Sabbath-day, and have ſo much Time and Pains beſtow'd upon them *every* Sabbath, to be loos'd from the Stall, led away perhaps a great Way to the Water, and then back again; and ſhall not this Woman only with a Touch of the Hand, and a Word's ſpeaking, *be looſe* from a much *greater* Grievance than that which the Cattle undergo, when they are kept a Day without Water. For conſider, (1.) She is *a Daughter of* Abraham, whom you all pride yourſelves in a Relation to; ſhe is *your Siſter*, and ſhall ſhe be deny'd a Favour that you grant to an Ox or an Aſs, diſpenſing a little with the ſuppoſed Strictneſs of the Sabbath-day. She is *a Daughter of* Abraham, and therefore is entitled to the Meſſiah's Bleſſings, to the *Bread* which belongs to the *Children.* (2.) She is one whom *Satan has bound*, he had a Hand in the Affliction, and therefore it was not only an Act of Charity to the poor Woman, but of Piety to God, to break the Power of the Devil and baffle him. (3.) She has been in this deplorable Condition, *lo theſe eighteen Years*, and therefore now there is an Opportunity of delivering her, it ought not to be defer'd *a Day* longer, as you would have it, for any of you would have thought eighteen Years Affliction full long enough.

4. The different Effect that this had upon thoſe that heard him. He had ſufficiently made it out, not only that it was lawful, but that it was highly fit and proper to heal this poor Woman *on the Sabbath-day*, and thus publickly in the Synagogue, that they might all be Witneſſes of the Miracle: And now obſerve,

1. What a Confuſion this was to the Malice of his Perſecutors, *When he had ſaid theſe Things, all his Adverſaries were aſhamed*, v. 17. They were put to Silence, and were vex'd that they were ſo, that they had not a Word to ſay for themſelves; it was not a Shame that work'd Repentance, but Indignation rather. *Note*, Sooner or later all the Adverſaries of Chriſt and his Doctrine and Miracles will be made *aſham'd.*

2. What a Confirmation this was to the Faith of his Friends: *All the People* who had a better Senſe of Things, and judg'd more impartially than their Rulers, rejoic'd *for all the glorious Things that were done by him.* The Shame of his Foes, was the Joy of his Followers; the Increaſe of his Intereſt, was what the one fretted at, and the other triumph'd in. The Things Chriſt did, were *glorious Things*, they were all ſo, and tho' now clouded perhaps will appear ſo, and we ought to rejoyce in them. Every Thing that is the Honour of Chriſt, is the Comfort of Chriſtians.

18 ¶ Then ſaid he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto ſhall I reſemble it? 19 It is like a grain of muſtard-ſeed, which a man took and caſt into his garden, and it grew, and waxed a great tree: and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. 20 And again he ſaid, Whereunto ſhall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three meaſures of meal, till the whole was leavened. 22 And he went through the cities and villages, teaching and journeying towards Jeruſalem.

Here's, 1. The Goſpel's Progreſs foretold, in two Parables, which we had before, *Mat.* 13. 31, 33. The *Kingdom of the* Meſſiah is the *Kingdom of God;* for it advanceth his Glory; this Kingdom was yet a Myſtery, and People were generally in the Dark, and under Miſtakes about it: Now when we would deſcribe a Thing to thoſe that are Strangers to it, we chuſe to do it by Similitudes, ſuch a Perſon you know not, but I'll tell you who he is like, ſo Chriſt undertakes here to ſhew *what the Kingdom of God is like*, v. 18. and *whereunto ſhall I liken the Kingdom of God*, v. 20. 'twill be quite another Thing from what you expect, and will operate and gain its Point in quite another Manner.

1. You expect it will appear *great*, and will arrive at its Perfection all of a ſudden; but you are miſtaken, *it is like a Grain of Muſtard-Seed*, a little Thing, takes up but little Room, makes but a little Figure, and promiſeth but little, and yet when ſown in Soil proper to receive it, it *waxes a great Tree*, v. 19. Many perhaps were prejudic'd againſt the Goſpel, and loth to come in *to the Obedience* of it, becauſe its beginning what ſo ſmall; they were ready to ſay of Chriſt, *Can this Man ſave us*? And of his Goſpel, *Is this likely ever to come to any Thing?* Now Chriſt would remove this Prejudice by aſſuring them, that tho' *its Beginning was ſmall, its latter End ſhould greatly increaſe*; ſo that many ſhould come, ſhould come upon the Wing, ſhould *fly like a Cloud*, to lodge in the Branches of it with more Safety and Satisfaction than in the Branches of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Tree, *Dan.* 9. 21.

2. You expect it will make its Way by *external* Means, by ſubduing Nations, and vanquiſhing Armies, tho' it ſhall work *like Leaven*, ſilently, and inſenſibly, and without any Force or Violence, *v.* 21. A little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump, ſo the Doctrine of Chriſt will ſtrangely *diffuſe* its Reliſh into the World of Mankind; in this it triumphs, that *the Savour of the Knowledge of it* is unaccountably made manifeſt *in every Place*, beyond what one could have expected, 2 *Cor.* 2. 14. But you muſt *give it Time*, wait what will be the Iſſue of the preaching of the Goſpel to the World, and you'll find it doth Wonders, and alters the Property of the Souls of Men. By Degrees *the whole will be leaven'd*, even as many as are like *the Meal* to the *Leaven*, prepar'd to receive the Savour of it.

2. Chriſt's Progreſs towards *Jeruſalem* recorded, *v.* 22, *He went through the Cities and Villages teaching and Journeying.* Here we find Chriſt an *Itinerant*, but an *Itinerant* Preacher, journeying toward *Jeruſalem*, to the Feaſt of Dedication, which was *in the Winter*, when Travelling was uncomfortable, yet he would be about his Father's Buſineſs; and therefore whatever Cities or Villages he could make in his Way, he gave them a Sermon or two, not only in the *Cities*, but in the Country *Villages.* Wherever Providence brings us, we ſhould endeavour to be doing all the Good we can.

23 Then ſaid one unto him, Lord, are there
few that ſhall be ſaved? And he ſaid unto them,
24 ¶ Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for
many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and
ſhall not be able. 25 When once the maſter of
the houſe is riſen up, and hath ſhut to the door,
and ye begin to ſtand without, and to knock at
the door, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and
he ſhall anſwer, and ſay unto you, I know you
not whence you are: 26 Then ſhall ye begin to
ſay, we have eaten and drunk in thy preſence,
and thou haſt taught in our ſtreets. 27 But he
ſhall ſay, I tell you, I know you not whence you
are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.
28 There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth,
when ye ſhall ſee Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob,
and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and
you *your ſelves* thruſt out. 29 And they ſhall
come from the eaſt, and *from* the weſt, and from
the north, and *from* the ſouth, and ſhall ſit down
in the kingdom of God. 30 And behold, there
are laſt which ſhall be firſt, and there are firſt
which ſhall be laſt.

We have here,

1. A Queſtion put to our Lord Jeſus; who it was that put it, we are not told, whether a Friend or a Foe; for he gave both a great Liberty of Queſtioning with him, and return'd Anſwers to the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart. The Queſtion was, 1. *Are there few that be ſaved?* v. 33. εἰ ὀλίγοι οἱ σωζόμενοι, *If the Saved be few*, Maſter, I have heard thou ſhould'ſt ſay ſo? Is it true?

(1.) Perhaps it was a *captious* Queſtion; that he put it to him tempting him, with Deſign to enſnare him, and leſſen his Reputation. If he ſhould ſay many wou'd be ſav'd, they wou'd reproach him as too looſe, and making Salvation cheap; if few they wou'd reproach him as preciſe and ſtrait-lac'd. The Jewiſh Doctors ſaid, That *all* Iſrael *ſhould have a Place in the World to come*, and would he dare to contradict that! Thoſe that have ſuck'd in a corrupt Notion, are ready to make it the Standard by which to meaſure all Mens Judgments; and in nothing do Men more betray their Ignorance, Preſumption, and Partiality, than in judging of the Salvation of others.

(2.) Perhaps it was a *curious* Queſtion, a nice Speculation, which he had lately been diſputing upon with his Companions, and they all agreed to refer it to Chriſt. *Note*, Many are more inquiſitive who ſhall be ſav'd, and who not, than what they ſhall do to be ſav'd. 'Tis commonly ask'd, may ſuch and ſuch be ſav'd; but 'tis well we may be ſav'd without knowing that.

(3.) Perhaps it was an *admiring* Queſtion: He had taken Notice how ſtrict the Law of Chriſt was, and how bad the World was, and comparing theſe together cries out, How few are there that will be ſav'd? *Note*, We have Reaſon to wonder, that of the many to whom the Word of Salvation is ſent, there are ſo few to whom it is indeed a ſaving Word.

(4.) Perhaps it was an *enquiring* Queſtion; *If there be few that be ſav'd*, what then? What Influence ſhould this have upon me? *Note*, It concerns us all, ſeriouſly to improve the great Truth of the Fewneſs of thoſe that are ſav'd.

2. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Queſtion, which directs us what Uſe to make of this Truth. Our Saviour did not give a direct Anſwer to his Enquiry, for he came to *guide* Men *Conſciences*, not to *gratify* their *Curioſity*. Ask not how many ſhall be ſaved, but be they more or fewer, ſhall I be one of them? Not what ſhall be come of ſuch and ſuch, and *what ſhall this Man do*? but *what* ſhall I do? and what will become of me? Now in Chriſt's Anſwer obſerve,

1. A quickning Exhortation and Direction. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate:* This is directed not to him only that ask'd the Queſtion, but to all, to us, 'tis in the plural Number, *ſtrive ye. Note*, (1.) All that will be ſav'd, muſt *enter in at the ſtrait Gate*, muſt undergo a Change of the whole Man, ſuch as amounts to no leſs than being born again, and muſt ſubmit to a ſtrict Diſcipline. (2.) Thoſe that would enter in at the ſtrait Gate, muſt *ſtrive to enter.* 'Tis a hard Matter to get to Heaven, and a Point that will not be gain'd without a great deal of Care and Pains, of Difficulty and Diligence. We muſt ſtrive with God in Prayer, wreſtle as *Jacob*, ſtrive againſt Sin and Satan; we muſt ſtrive in every Duty of Religion, ſtrive with our own Hearts, ἀγωνίζεσθε be *in an Agony*, ſtrive as thoſe that run for a Prize, excite and exert yourſelves to the utmoſt.

2. Divers awakening Conſiderations to enforce this Exhortation: O that we may be all awakened and quickned by them! They are ſuch Conſiderations as will ſerve to anſwer the Queſtion, *Are there few that ſhall be ſav'd*?

1. Think how many take *ſome Pains* for Salvation, and yet periſh becauſe they don't take *enough*; and you will ſay, that there are *few that will be ſav'd*, and that it highly concerns us to *ſtrive*; *Many will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able*; they *ſeek*, but they do not *ſtrive. Note*, The Reaſon why many come ſhort of Grace and Glory is, becauſe they reſt in a *lazy Seeking* of that which will not be attain'd without a *laborious Striving*. They have a *good Mind of Happineſs*, and a *good Opinion of Holineſs*, and take ſome *good Steps* towards both, but their Convictions are weak, they do not conſider what they know and believe, and conſequently their Deſires are cold, and their Endeavours feeble and there is no Strength or Steadineſs in their Reſolutions; and thus they *come ſhort*, and looſe the Prize, becauſe they do not preſs forward. Chriſt avers this upon his own Word, *I ſay unto you*, and we may take it upon his Word, for he knows both the Counſels of God, and the Hearts of the Children of Men.

2. Think of the *diſtinguiſhing* Day that is coming, and the *Deciſions* of that Day, and you will ſay there are *few that ſhall be ſav'd*, and that we are concern'd to ſtrive. The *Maſter of the Houſe* will *riſe up, and ſhut to the Door*, v. 25. Chriſt is the *Maſter of the Houſe*, that will take Cognizance of all that frequent his Houſe, and are Retainers to it, will examine Comers and Goers, and thoſe that paſs and repaſs. Now he ſeems as if he left Things at large, but the Day is coming when he will *riſe up and ſhut to the Door.* What Door? (1.) A Door of *Diſtinction:* Now within the Temple of the Church there are *carnal* Profeſſors who worſhip in the *Outer-Court*, and *ſpiritual* Profeſſors, who worſhip *within the Vail*, between theſe the Door is now open, and they meet *promiſcuouſly* in the ſame external Performances; but when the *Maſter of the Houſe is riſen up*, the Door will be ſhut between them, that thoſe who are in the *Outer-Court* may be kept out, and left to be *trodden under Foot with the Gentiles*, Rev. 11. 2. They *that are filthy*, ſhut the Door upon them, and let them be *filthy ſtill*; and that thoſe who are within may be kept within, that are *holy, may be holy ſtill.* The Door is ſhut to *ſeparate* between the *precious* and the *vile*, that *Sinners* may no longer *ſtand in the Congregation of the Righteous.* Then you ſhall diſcern betwixt them. (2.) A Door of *Denial* and Excluſion. The Door of *Mercy* and *Grace* hath long *ſtood open* to them, but they would *not come in by it*, would not be beholden to the *Favour* of that Door, they hop'd to *climb up ſome other Way*, and to get to Heaven by their own Merits; and therefore when the Maſter of the Houſe is riſen up, he will juſtly *ſhut that Door*; let them not expect to enter by it, but let them take their own Meaſures. Thus when *Noah* was ſafe in the Ark, God *ſhut* the Door, to *exclude* all thoſe that depended upon Shelters of their own, in the approaching Flood.

3. Think how many that were very *confident* they ſhould be *ſav'd*, will be rejected in the Day of Tryal, and their Confidence will deceive them; and you will ſay, there are *few* that *ſhall be ſav'd*, and we are all concern'd to *ſtrive:* Conſidering,

(1.) What an *Aſſurance* they had of *Admiſſion*, and how far their Hope carry'd them, even to *Heaven's Gate*, there they *ſtand and knock*, knock as if they had Authority, knock as thoſe that belong to the Houſe, *ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us*, for we think we have a Right to enter: Take us in among the *ſaved ones*, for we joyn'd ourſelves to them. *Note*, Many are ruin'd by an ill-grounded Hope of Heaven, which they never diſtruſted or call'd in Queſtion, and therefore conclude their State is good, becauſe they never doubted it. They call Chriſt *Lord*, as if they were his Servants; nay, in Token of their Importunity they double it, *Lord, Lord.* They are deſirous now to enter in by that Door which they had formerly made light of, would now gladly come in among thoſe ſerious Chriſtians, whom they had ſecretly deſpiſ'd.

(2.) What *Grounds* they had for this *Confidence*. Let us ſee what their Plea is, *v.* 26. (1.) They had been *Chriſt's Gueſts*, had had an intimate Converſe with him, and had ſhar'd in his Favours. *We have eaten and drunk in thy Preſence*, at thy Table; *Judas* eat Bread with Chriſt, dipt with him in the Diſh. Hypocrites under the Diſguiſe of their external Profeſſion receive the Lord's Supper, and in it partake of the Childrens Bread, as if they were Children. (2.) They had been *Chriſt's Hearers*; had receiv'd Inſtruction from him, and were well acquainted with his Doctrine and Law: *Thou haſt taught in our Streets*, a diſtinguiſhing Favour which few had, and ſure it might be taken as a Pledge of diſtinguiſhing Favour now: For would'ſt thou teach us, and not ſave us?

(3.) How their Confidence will fail them, and all their Pleas be rejected as frivolous, Chriſt will ſay to them, *I know you not, whence you are*, v. 25. And again, *v.* 26. *I tell you I know you not, Depart from me.* He doth not deny but that which they pleaded was true, they had *eaten and drunk in his Preſence*, by by the ſame Token that they had deſpis'd his Inſtruction and would not ſubmit to it. And therefore, (1.) He *diſowns* them, *I know you not*; you do not belong to my Family. *The Lord knows them that are his*, but them that are not, he doth not know, he has nothing to do with them. *I know you not whence you are.* You are not of me, you are not from above, you are not Branches of my Houſe, of my Vine. (2.) He *diſcards* them; *Depart from me:* 'Tis the Hell of Hell to depart from Chriſt! The principal Part of the Miſery of the damned: Depart from my Door, here's nothing for you, no, not a Drop of Water. (3.) He gives them ſuch a Character as is the Reaſon of this Doom. *Ye are Workers of Iniquity*; this is their Ruin, that under a Pretence of Piety they kept up ſecret Haunts of Sin, and did the Devil's Drudgery in Chriſt's Livery.

(4.) How terrible their Puniſhment will be, *v.* 28. *There ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*; the utmoſt Degree of Grief and Indignation; and that which is the Cauſe of it, and contributes to it, is a Sight of the Happineſs of thoſe that are ſaved; ye ſhall ſee *the Patriarchs and Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and yourſelves thruſt out.* Obſerve here, (1.) That the *Old Teſtament Saints* are in the Kingdom of God; thoſe had Benefit by the *Meſſiah* who dy'd before his coming; for they *ſaw his Day* at a Diſtance, and it reflected Comfort upon them. (2.) That *New Teſtament Sinners* will be *thruſt out* of the Kingdom of God, it intimates that they will be *thruſting in*, and will preſume upon Admiſſion, but in vain, they ſhall be *thruſt out* with Shame as having no Part or Lot in the Matter. (3.) That the Sight of the Saints Glory will be a great Aggravation of the Sinners Miſery; they ſhall thus far *ſee the Kingdom of God*, that they ſhall ſee the *Prophets* in it, whom they hated and deſpis'd, and themſelves who thought themſelves ſure of it *thruſt out.* This is that at which they will *gnaſh their Teeth*, Pſal. 112. 20.

4. Think who are they that ſhall be ſav'd notwithſtanding, *v.* 29, 36. *They ſhall come from the Eaſt and the Weſt; and the laſt ſhall be firſt.*

1. By what Chriſt had ſaid, it appear'd that but *few ſhould be ſav'd*, of thoſe that we think moſt likely, and that bid faireſt for it: Yet do not ſay then that the Goſpel is preach'd in vain, for tho' *Iſrael* be not *gather'd*, Chriſt will be *glorious.* There ſhall come many from all Parts of the Gentile World, that ſhall be admitted into the Kingdom of Grace in this World, and of Glory in the other. Plainly thus, when we come to Heaven, we ſhall meet a great many there whom we little thought to have met there; and miſs a great many thence whom we verily expected to have found there.

2. Thoſe that *ſit down in the Kingdom of God*, are ſuch as had taken Pains to get thither, for they came from far; *from the Eaſt, and from the Weſt; from the North, and from the South*; had paſt through different Climates, had broke through many Difficulties and Diſcouragements, which ſhews that they who would enter into that Kingdom muſt *ſtrive*, as the Queen of *Sheba*, that came from the utmoſt *Parts of the Earth to hear the Wiſdom of* Solomon. They that *travel* now in the Service of God and Religion, ſhall *ſit down* to reſt ſhortly in the *Kingdom of God.*

3. Many that ſtood fair for Heaven, came ſhort, and others that ſeem'd caſt behind, and thrown quite out of the Way, will win and wear this Prize, and therefore it concerns us to *ſtrive to enter.* Let us be *provok'd*, as *Paul* deſir'd the Jews might be, to a holy Emulation, by the Zeal and Forwardneſs of the Gentiles, *Rom.* 11. 14. Shall I be outſtript by my Juniors? Shall I that ſtarted firſt, and ſtood neareſt, miſs of Heaven, when others leſs likely enter into it? If it be got by ſtriving, why ſhould not I ſtrive?

31 ¶ The ſame day there came certain of the Phariſees, ſaying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. 32 And he ſaid unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I caſt out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem. 34 O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, which killeſt the prophets, and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen *doth gather* her brood under *her* wings, and ye would not: 35 Behold, your houſe is left unto you deſolate: And verily I ſay unto you, ye ſhall not ſee me, untill the time come when ye ſhall ſay, Bleſſed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Here's 1. A Suggeſtion to Chriſt of his Danger by *Herod*, now he was in *Galilee* within *Herod's* Juridiction, *v.* 31. *Certain of the Phariſees* (for there were thoſe of that Sect diſpers'd all the Nation over) they *came* to Chriſt pretending Friendſhip and a Concern for his Safety, and ſaid, *Get thee* out of this Country, and *depart hence*, for otherwiſe *Herod will kill thee*, as he did *John*: Some think thoſe *Phariſees* had no Ground at all for this, that *Herod* had not given out any Words to this Purpoſe, but they fram'd this Lye to drive him out of *Galilee*, where he had a great and growing Intereſt, and to drive him into *Judea*, where they knew there were thoſe that really ſought his Life. But Chriſt's Anſwer being directed to *Herod* himſelf, it ſhould ſeem the *Phariſees* had Ground for what they ſaid, and that *Herod* was enrag'd againſt Chriſt, and deſign'd him a Miſchief for the honourable Teſtimony he had born to *John Baptiſt*, and to the Doctrine of Repentance which *John* preach'd. *Herod* was willing to get rid of Chriſt, out of his Dominions; and when he durſt not put him to Death, he hop'd to *frighten him away*, by ſending him this threatning Meſſage.

2. His Defiance of *Herod*'s Rage, and the Phariſees too; he fears neither the one nor the other. *Go ye and tell that Fox* ſo, v. 32. In calling him a *Fox*, he gives him his true Character; for he was ſubtil as a Fox, noted for his Craft and Treachery, and Baſeneſs, and preying, as they ſay of a Fox, furtheſt from his own Den. And tho' it be a black and ugly Character, yet it did not ill become Chriſt to give it him, nor was it in him a Violation of that Law, *Thou ſhalt not ſpeak Evil of the Ruler of the People*: For Chriſt was a Prophet, and Prophets always had a Liberty of Speech in reproving Princes and great Men: Nay, Chriſt was more than a Prophet, he was a King, he was King of Kings, and the greateſt of Men were accountable to him, and therefore it became him to call this proud King by his own Name, but it is not to be drawn into an Example by us. Go and tell *that* Fox, yea, and *this* Fox too, ſo it is in the Original τῆ Ἀλώπεκι ταύτῃ *that Phariſee*, whoever he is that whiſpers this in my Ear, let him know that *I do not fear him* nor regard his Menaces: For,

1. I know I muſt die, and muſt die ſhortly; I expect it, and count upon it, *the third Day*, i. e. very ſhortly; my Hour is at Hand. *Note*, It will help us very much above the Fear of Death, and of them that have the Power of Death, to make Death familiar to us, to expect it, think of it, and converſe with it, and ſee it at the Door, If *Herod* ſhould kill me, he will not ſurprize me.

2. I know that Death will be not only no Prejudice to me, but it will be my Preferment, and therefore tell him I do not fear him; when I die, *I ſhall be perfected*; I ſhall then have *finiſh'd* the hardeſt Part of my Undertaking, I ſhall have compleated my Buſineſs τελειοῦμαι *I ſhall be conſecrated*: When Chriſt dy'd, he is ſaid to have *ſanctify'd himſelf*; he conſecrated himſelf to his prieſtly Office, with his own Blood.

3. I know that neither he nor any one elſe can kill me, *till I have done my Work.* Go and tell him I value not his impotent Rage. *I will caſt out Devils, and do Cures to Day and to morrow*, i. e. now, and for ſome little Space of Time yet to come, in Spite of him and all his Threats. I *muſt walk*, I muſt *go on* in my intended Journey, and it is not in his Power to hinder me, I muſt *go about*, as I now do, preaching and healing, *to Day and to Morrow, and the Day following. Note*, It is good for us to look upon the Time we have before us, as but a little, Two or Three Days perhaps may be the utmoſt, that we may thereby be quicken'd to *do the Work of the Day in its Day.* And it is a Comfort to us, in Reference to the Power and Malice of our Enemies, that they can have no Power to take us off, as long as God has any Work for us to do. The Witneſſes were not *ſlain* till they had *finiſh'd their Teſtimony.*

4. I know that *Herod* can do me no Harm, not only becauſe *my Time* is not yet come, but becauſe the Place appointed for my Death is *Jeruſalem*, which is not within his Juriſdiction.

It cannot be that a Prophet periſh out of Jeruſalem, *i. e.* any where elſe but at *Jeruſalem.* If a *true Prophet* was put to Death, he was proſecuted as a *falſe Prophet.* Now none undertook to try Prophets, and to judge concerning them, but the great *Sanhedrin,* which always ſat at *Jeruſalem,* 'twas a Cauſe which the inferior Courts did not take Cognizance of, and therefore if a *Prophet* be *put to Death,* it muſt be at *Jeruſalem.*

3. His Lamentation for *Jeruſalem,* and his Denunciation of Wrath againſt that City, *v.* 34, 35. This we had, *Mat.* 23. 37, 38, 39. perhaps this was not ſaid now in *Galilee,* but the Evangeliſt not deſigning to bring it in its proper place, inſerts it here, upon Occaſion of Chriſt's mentioning his being put to Death at *Jeruſalem.*

Note, 1. The Wickedneſs of Perſons and Places that more eminently than others profeſs Religion and Relation to God, is in a particular Manner provoking and grieving to the Lord Jeſus. How pathetically doth he ſpeak of the Sin and Ruin of that holy City, *O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem.*

2. Thoſe that enjoy great Plenty of the Means of Grace, if they are not profited by them, many Times are prejudic'd againſt them. They that would not hearken to the Prophets, nor welcome thoſe whom God ſent to them, *kill'd* them, and *ſton'd* them. If Mens Corruptions are not conquer'd they are provok'd.

3. Jeſus Chriſt has ſhew'd himſelf willing, freely willing, to receive and entertain poor Souls that come to him, and put themſelves under his Protection: *How often would I have gather'd thy Children together,* as a Hen gathers her Brood under her Wings, with ſuch Care and ſuch Tenderneſs.

4. The Reaſon why Sinners are not protected and provided for by the Lord Jeſus, as the Chickens are by the Hen, is becauſe they will not. *I would,* I often would, and *ye would not.* Chriſt's Willingneſs aggravates Sinners Unwillingneſs, and leaves their Blood upon their own Heads.

5. The Houſe that Chriſt leaves, is *left deſolate.* The Temple, tho' richly adorn'd, tho' hugely frequented, yet is deſolate if Chriſt have deſerted it. He leaves it *to them,* they had made an Idol of it, and let them take it to themſelves, aud make their beſt of it, Chriſt will trouble it no more.

6. Chriſt juſtly withdraws from thoſe that drive him from them. They would not be *gather'd* by him, and therefore ſaith he, *You ſhall not ſee me,* you ſhall not hear me any more: As *Moſes* ſaid to *Pharaoh* when he forbid him his Preſence, *Exod.* 10. 28, 29.

7. The Judgment of the great Day will effectually convince Unbelievers that would not now be convinc'd: Then you will ſay, *Bleſſed is he that cometh,* i. e. will be glad to be among thoſe that ſay ſo, and *will not ſee me* to be the Meſſiah till then when 'tis too late.

CHAP. XIV.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *The Cure which our Lord Jeſus wrought upon a Man that had the Dropſie, on the Sabbath-day, and his juſtifying himſelf therein againſt thoſe who were offended at his doing it on that Day,* v. 1.-----6. (2.) *A Leſſon of Humility given to thoſe who were ambitious of the higheſt Rooms,* v. 7.----11. (3.) *A Leſſon of Charity to thoſe who* feaſted *the Rich, and did not* feed *the Poor,* v. 12.-----14. (4.) *The Succeſs of the Goſpel Offer foretold, in the Parable of the Gueſts invited to a Feaſt, ſignifying the Rejection of the Jews, and all others that ſet their Hearts upon this World, and the Entertainment of the Gentiles, and all others that come empty of ſelf to be fill'd with Chriſt,* v. 15.----24. (5.) *The great Law of Diſcipleſhip laid down, with a Caution to all that will be Chriſt's Diſciples, to undertake it deliberately, and with Conſideration, and particularly to Miniſters, to retain their Savour,* v. 25.----35.

AND it came to paſs, as he went into the houſe of one of the chief Phariſees to eat bread on the ſabbath-day, that they watched him. 2 And behold, there was a certain Man before him, which had the dropſie. 3 And Jeſus anſwering ſpake unto the lawyers and Phariſees, ſaying, Is it lawful to heal on the ſabbath day? 4 And they held their peace. And he took *him,* and healed him, and let *him* go: 5 And anſwered them, ſaying, Which of you ſhall have an aſs, or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not ſtraightway pull him out on the ſabbath-day? 6 And they could not anſwer him again to theſe things.

In this Paſſage of Story we find,

1. That *the Son of Man came eating and drinking,* converſing familiarly with all Sorts of People; not declining the Society of Publicans, tho' they were of *ill Fame,* nor of Phariſees, tho' they bare him *ill Will,* but accepting the friendly Invitations both of the one and of the other; that if poſſible he might do good to *both.* Here *he went into the Houſe of one of the chief Phariſees,* a Ruler it may be, and a Magiſtrate in his Country, *to eat Bread on the Sabbath-day,* v. 1. See how favourable God is to us, that he allows us Time even on his own Day for bodily Refreſhments; and how careful we ſhould be not to abuſe that Liberty, or turn it into Licentiouſneſs: Chriſt went only to *eat Bread,* to take ſuch Refreſhment as was neceſſary, on the Sabbath-Day. Our Sabbath-Meals muſt with a particular Care be guarded againſt all Manner of Exceſs: On Sabbath-days we muſt do as *Moſes* and *Jethro* did, *eat Bread before God,* Exod. 18. 12. and as is ſaid of the primitive Chriſtians on the Lord's Day, muſt *eat and drink* as thoſe that muſt *pray again before we go to Reſt,* that we may not be unfit for that.

2. That he *went about doing good.* Wherever he came he *ſought* Opportunities to *do good,* and not only improv'd thoſe that *fell in his Way*; there was *a certain Man before him, which had the Dropſie,* v. 2. We do not find that he offered himſelf, or that his Friends offer'd him to be Chriſt's Patient, but Chriſt *prevented him* with the Bleſſings of his Goodneſs, and *before he call'd* he anſwer'd him. *Note,* It's a happy Thing to be were Chriſt is, to be preſent *before him,* tho' we be not preſented *to him.* This Man had the *Dropſie,* 'tis probable in a high Degree, and that he appear'd much ſwell'd with it; probably he was ſome Relation of the *Phariſee's,* that now *lodg'd* in his Houſe, which is more likely than that he ſhould be an *invited Gueſt* at the Table.

3. That he *endured the Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf,* v. 1. *They watched him.* The Phariſee that invited him, it ſhou'd ſeem did it with a Deſign to pick ſome Quarrel with him: if it were ſo, Chriſt *knew* it, and yet *went,* for he knew himſelf a Match for the moſt *ſubtil* of them, and how to order his Steps, with an Eye to *his Obſervers.* Thoſe that are *watch'd* had need to be *wary.* It was, as Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, contrary to all Laws of Hoſpitality, to ſeek Advantage againſt one that you invited to be your Gueſt, for ſuch a one you have taken under your Protection. Theſe *Lawyers* and *Phariſees,* like the *Fowler* that lies in wait to *enſnare* the Birds, *held their Peace,* and acted very *ſilently.* When Chriſt ask'd them *whether* they thought it *lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day* (and herein he is ſaid to *anſwer* them, for it was an Anſwer to *their Thoughts,* and Thoughts are *Words* to Jeſus Chriſt) they would ſay neither *Yea,* nor *No,* for their Deſign was to *inform againſt him,* not to be *inform'd by him.* They would not ſay, *It was lawful to heal,* for then they would preclude themſelves from imputing it to him as a Crime: And yet the Thing was ſo plain and ſelf-evident, that they could not for Shame ſay, It was *not lawful. Note,* Good Men have often been perſecuted for doing that which even their Perſecutors, if they would but give their Conſciences Leave to ſpeak out, could not but own to be lawful and good. Many a *good Work* Chriſt did, for which they *caſt Stones* at him and his Name.

4. That Chriſt would not be hinder'd from *doing good,* by the *Oppoſition* and *Contradiction* of Sinners, *v.* 4. He *took him, and heal'd him, and let him go.* Perhaps he *took him aſide* into another Room, and heal'd him *there,* becauſe he would neither *proclaim* himſelf, ſuch was his Humility, nor *provoke* his Adverſaries, ſuch was his Wiſdom, his *Meekneſs of Wiſdom. Note,* Tho' we muſt not be driven off from our Duty by the Malice of our Enemies, yet we ſhould order the Circumſtances of it, ſo as to make it the leaſt offenſive. Or, he *took him,* i. e. he *laid Hands* on him to cure him; ἐπιλαβόμενος, *complexus,* he embrac'd him, took him in his Arms, big and unweildy as he was, for ſo *dropſical* People uſe to be, and reduc'd him to Shape. The Cure of a Dropſie, as much as of any Diſeaſe, one would think ſhould be gradual, yet Chriſt cur'd even *that* Diſeaſe, perfectly cur'd it in a Moment. He then let him go, leſt the Phariſees ſhould fall upon him for *being heal'd,* tho' he was purely paſſive; for what Abſurdities wou'd not ſuch Men as they were be guilty of?

5. That our Lord Jeſus *did nothing but what he could juſtifie,* to the Conviction and Confuſion of thoſe that quarrel'd with him, *v.* 5, 6. He ſtill anſwer'd their Thoughts, and made them *hold their peace* for *Shame,* who before held their Peace for *Subtilty,* by an Appeal to their own Practice, as he had been us'd to do upon ſuch Occaſions, that he might ſhew them how in condemning him they condemn'd themſelves; *which of you ſhall have an Aſs or an Ox fallen into a Pit,* by Accident, *will he not pull him out on the Sabbath-day*? and that *ſtraitway,* not deferring it 'till the Sabbath be over, leſt it periſh. Obſerve, it is not ſo much out of *Compaſſion to the poor Creatures,* that they do it, but a Concern for their own Intereſt. It is *their own Ox,* and *their own Aſs* that's worth Money, that they will diſpenſe with the Law of the Sabbath for the *ſaving of.* Now this was an Evidence of their Hypocriſie, and that it was not out of any real Regard to the Sabbath, that they found Fault with Chriſt for healing on the *Sabbath-day,* that was only the Pretence, but really they were angry at the *miraculous good Works* which Chriſt wrought, the *Proof* he thereby *gave* of his divine Miſſion, and the Intereſt he thereby *gain'd* among the People. Many can eaſily diſpenſe with that for their own Intereſt, which they cannot diſpenſe with for God's Glory and the Good of their Brethren. This Queſtion *ſilenc'd* them, *they could not anſwer him again to theſe Things,* v. 6. Chriſt will be juſtified when he ſpeaks, and every Mouth ſtop'd before him.

7 ¶ And he put forth a parable to thoſe which
were bidden, when he marked how they choſe out
the chief rooms; ſaying unto them, 8 When thou
art bidden of any man to a wedding, ſit not down
in the higheſt room: leſt a more honourable man
than thou be bidden of him; 9 And he that bade
thee and him, come and ſay to thee, Give this man
place; and thou begin with ſhame to take the loweſt
room. 10 But when thou art bidden, go and
ſit down in the loweſt room; that when he that
bade thee cometh, he may ſay unto thee, Friend,
go up higher: then ſhalt thou have worſhip in the
preſence of them that ſit at meat with thee. 11
For whoſoever exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and
he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted. 12 ¶
Then ſaid he alſo to him that bade him, When thou
makeſt a dinner or a ſupper, call not thy friends,
nor thy brethren, neither thy kinſmen, nor *thy* rich
neighbours; leſt they alſo bid thee again, and a recompence
be made thee. 13 But when thou makeſt
a feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the
blind: 14 And thou ſhalt be bleſſed; for they cannot
recompence thee: for thou ſhalt be recompenſed
at the reſurrection of the juſt.

Our Lord Jeſus here ſets us an Example of profitable edifying Diſcourſe at our Tables, when we are in Company with our Friends. We find him when he had none but his Diſciples, that were his own Family, with him at his Table, his Diſcourſe with them was *good, and to the Uſe of edifying*; and not only ſo, but when he was in Company with Strangers, nay, with Enemies that *watch'd him*, he took Occaſion to reprove what he ſaw amiſs in them, and to inſtruct them; tho' the *Wicked were before him*, he did not *keep Silence from Good* (as *David* did) *Pſal.* 39. 1, 2. for notwithſtanding the Provocation given him, he had not his *Heart hot within him*, nor was *his Spirit ſtirr'd.* We muſt not only not allow any corrupt Communication at our Tables, ſuch as that of the *hypocritical Mockers at Feaſts*, but we muſt not content ourſelves with common, harmleſs Talk, but we ſhould take Occaſion from God's Goodneſs to us at our Tables, to ſpeak well of him, and learn to *ſpiritualize* common Things. The Lips of the Righteous ſhould then *feed many*.

Our Lord Jeſus was among Perſons of Quality, yet as one that had not Reſpect of Perſons.

Firſt, He takes Occaſion to reprove *the Gueſts* for ſtriving to *ſit uppermoſt*, and from thence gives us a Leſſon of *Humility*.

1. He obſerv'd how theſe *Lawyers* and *Phariſees* affected the *higheſt Seats*, towards the Head-End of the Table, *v.* 7. He had charg'd that Sort of Men with this in general, *Luke* 11. here he brings home the Charge to particular Perſons; for Chriſt will give *every Man his own*. He *mark'd* how they *choſe out the chief Rooms*, every Man as he came in got as near the beſt Seat as he could. *Note*, Even in the common Actions of Life, Chriſt's Eye is upon us, and he *marks* what we do, not only in our religious Aſſemblies, but at our Tables, and *makes Remarks* upon it.

2. He obſerv'd how thoſe who were thus aſpiring, oftentimes expos'd themſelves, and came off *with a Slur*; whereas thoſe that were modeſt, and ſeated themſelves in the loweſt Seats, oftentimes *gain'd Reſpect* by it. (1.) Thoſe that when they come in, aſſume the higheſt Seats, perhaps may be *degraded*, and forc'd to *come down*, to give Place to one *more honourable*, v. 8, 9. *Note*, It ought to check our high Thoughts of ourſelves, to think how many there are that are *more honourable* than we, not only in Reſpect of worldly Dignities, but perſonal Merits and Accompliſhments. Inſtead of being proud that ſo many give Place to us, it ſhould be humbling to us, that there are ſo many that we muſt give Place to. The Maſter of the Feaſt will marſhal his Gueſts, and will not ſee the *more honourable* kept out of the Seat that is his due, and therefore will make bold to take him lower that uſurp'd it, *Give this Man Place*; and this will be a Diſgrace to him that would be thought more deſerving than really he was, before all the Company. *Note*, Pride will have *Shame*, and will at laſt have a *Fall*. (2.) Thoſe that when they come in, content themſelves with the loweſt Seats, are likely to be preferr'd, *v.* 10. Go and *ſeat thyſelf in the loweſt Room*, as taking it for granted, that thy Friend who invited thee has Gueſts to come, that are of better Rank and Quality than thou art; but perhaps it may not prove ſo, and then it will be ſaid to thee, *Friend, Go up higher*. The Maſter of the Feaſt will be ſo juſt to thee, as not to keep thee at the lower End of the Table, becauſe thou waſt ſo *modeſt* as to ſeat thyſelf there. *Note*, The Way to *riſe high*, is to *begin low*; and this recommends a Man to thoſe about him. *Thou ſhalt have Honour and Reſpect before thoſe that ſit with thee.* They will ſee thee to be an *honourable Man*, beyond what at firſt they thought, and Honour appears the brighter for ſhining *out of Obſcurity*. And they will likewiſe ſee thee to be a *humble Man*, which is the greateſt Honour of all. Our Saviour here refers to that Advice of *Solomon*, Prov. 25. 6, 7. *Stand not in the Place of Great Men, for better it is that it be ſaid unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou ſhouldſt be put lower.* And Dr. *Lightfoot* quotes a Parable out of one of the *Rabbins*, ſomewhat like this; "Three Men (ſaid he) were bidden to a Feaſt; "one ſate higheſt, for, ſaid he, I am a Prince; the other next, "for, ſaid he, I am a wiſe Man; the other loweſt, for, ſaid he, "I am a humble Man. The King ſeated the humble Man "higheſt, and put the Prince loweſt."

3. He apply'd this generally, and wou'd have us all learn not to *mind high Things*, but to content themſelves with mean Things; as for other Reaſons, ſo for this, Becauſe Pride and Ambition are diſgraceful before Men, for *whoſoever exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed*; but Humility and Self-denial are really honourable, *he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted*, v. 11. We ſee it in other Inſtances, that *a Man's Pride will bring him low*, but *Honour ſhall uphold the humble in Spirit*; and *before Honour is Humility*.

Secondly, He takes Occaſion to reprove the Maſter of the Feaſt, for inviting ſo many *rich People*, who had wherewithal to dine very well at home, when he ſhou'd rather have *invited the Poor*, or which was all one, have *ſent Portions to them for whom nothing is prepared*, and who could not afford themſelves a good Meal's Meat. See *Neh.* 8. 10. And our Saviour here teacheth us, that the uſing of what we have in Works of Charity, is better, and will turn to a better Account, than uſing it in Works of Generoſity, and in magnificent Houſe-keeping.

1. Covet not to *treat the Rich*, v. 12. invite not *thy Friends, and Brethren, and Neighbours, that are rich.* This doth not *prohibit* the entertaining of ſuch, there may be Occaſion for it, for the cultivating of Friendſhip among Relations and Neighbours, but (1.) Do not *uſe it*; ſpend as little as thou canſt that Way, that thou mayſt not diſable thyſelf to lay out a much better Way, in Almſgiving. Thou wilt find it very expenſive and troubleſome; one Feaſt for the Rich, will make a great many Meals for the Poor. *Solomon* ſaith, *He that giveth to the Rich, ſhall ſurely come to want*, Prov. 22. 16. Give (ſaith *Pliny, Epiſt.*) to thy Friends, but let it be to thy *poor* Friends, not to thoſe that need thee not. (2.) Be not *proud of it*. Many *make Feaſts* only to *make a Shew*, as *Ahaſuerus* did, *Eſth.* 1. 3, 4. and its no Reputation to them, they think, if they have not Perſons of Quality to dine with them, and thus rob their Families to pleaſe their Fancies. (3.) Aim not at being paid again in your own Coin. This is that which our Saviour blames in making ſuch Entertainments, you commonly do it in Hopes you will be invited by them, and ſo *a Recompence will be made you*; you will be gratified with ſuch Dainties and Varieties as you treat your Friends with, and this will feed your Senſuality and Luxury, and you will be no real Gainer at laſt.

2. Be forward to *relieve the Poor*, v. 13, 14. *When thou makeſt a Feaſt*, inſtead of furniſhing thyſelf with what is rare and nice, get thy Table ſpread with a Competency of plain and wholeſome Meat, which will not be ſo coſtly, and invite *the Poor, and Maimed*; ſuch as have nothing to live upon, nor are able to work for their Living. Theſe are Objects of Charity, they want Neceſſaries, furniſh them, and they will recompence thee with their Prayers; they will commend thy Proviſions, which the Rich it may be will deſpiſe. They will go away and thank God for thee, when the Rich will go away and reproach thee. Say not thou art a *Loſer*, becauſe *they cannot recompence thee*, thou art ſo much out of Pocket; no, 'tis ſo much let out to the beſt Intereſt, on the beſt Security, for *thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the Reſurrection of the Juſt*. There will be a *Reſurrection of the Juſt*; a *Future State* of the Juſt. There is a State of Happineſs reſerv'd for them in t'other World: And we may be ſure the *Charitable* will be remember'd in the *Reſurrection of the Juſt*, for Alms are *Righteouſneſs*. Works of Charity perhaps may not be rewarded *in this World*, for the Things of this World are not the *beſt Things*, and therefore God doth not pay the beſt Men in *thoſe Things*; but they ſhall *in no wiſe loſe their Reward*; they ſhall be recompenced in the *Reſurrection*. And it will be found that the longeſt Voyages make the richeſt Returns, and the Charitable will be no Loſers, but unſpeakable Gainers, by having their Recompence adjourn'd *'till the Reſurrection*.

15 ¶ And when one of them that ſat at meat
with him, heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him,
Bleſſed *is* he that ſhall eat bread in the kingdom of
God. 16 Then he ſaid unto him, A certain man
made a great ſupper, and bade many: 17 And
ſent his ſervant at ſupper-time to ſay to them that
were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.
18 And they all with one *conſent* began to make
excuſe. The firſt ſaid unto him, I have bought a
piece of ground, and I muſt needs go and ſee it:
I pray thee have me excuſed. 19 And another
ſaid, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to
prove them: I pray thee have me excuſed. 20
And another ſaid, I have married a wife, and there-

ſore I cannot come. 21 So that ſervant came and ſhewed his lord theſe things. Then the maſter of the houſe being angry, ſaid to his ſervant, Go out quickly into the ſtreats and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. 22 And the ſervant ſaid, Lord, it is done as thou haſt commanded, and yet there is room. 23 And the Lord ſaid unto the ſervant, Go out into the high-ways, and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my houſe may be filled. 24 For I ſay unto you, that none of thoſe men which were bidden, ſhall taſte of my ſupper.

Here's another Diſcourſe of our Saviour's, in which he *ſpiritualizeth* the Feaſt he was invited to; which is another Way of keeping up good Diſcourſe in the midſt of common Actions.

1. The Occaſion of the Diſcourſe was given by one of the Gueſts, who when Chriſt was giving Rules about Feaſting, ſaid to him, *Bleſſed is he that ſhall eat Bread in the Kingdom of God*, v. 15. which ſome tell us was a Saying commonly us'd among the Rabbins.—But with what Deſign doth this Man bring it in here? (1.) Perhaps this Man, obſerving that Chriſt reprov'd firſt the Gueſts, and then the Maſter of the Houſe, fearing he ſhould put the Company out of Humour, ſtarted this, to *divert* the Diſcourſe to ſomething elſe. Or (2.) Admiring the good Rules of Humility and Charity which Chriſt had now given, but deſpairing to ſee them liv'd up to in the preſent degenerate State of Things, he longs for *the Kingdom of God*, when theſe and other good Laws ſhall obtain, and pronounceth them *bleſſed*, who ſhall have a Place in that Kingdom. Or (3.) Chriſt having mentioned *the Reſurrection of the Juſt*, as a Recompence for Acts of Charity to the Poor, he here confirms what he had ſaid, Yea, Lord, they that ſhall be recompenc'd in the Reſurrection of the Juſt, ſhall *eat Bread in the Kingdom*, and that's a greater Recompence than being re-invited to the Table of the greateſt Man on Earth. Or (4.) Obſerving Chriſt to be ſilent after he had given the foregoing Leſſons, he was willing to draw him in again to further Diſcourſe, ſo wonderfully well-pleas'd was he with what he ſaid; and he knew nothing more likely to engage him, than to mention the *Kingdom of God*. *Note*, Thoſe that are not of Ability to carry on good Diſcourſe themſelves, yet ought to put in a Word now and then to countenance it, and help it forwards.

Now that which this Man ſaid, was a plain and acknowledg'd Truth, and it was quoted very *appoſitely* now they were *ſitting at Meat*; for we ſhould take Occaſion from common Things, to think and ſpeak of thoſe heavenly and ſpiritual Things which in Scripture are *compared* to them; for that is our End of borrowing Similitudes from them. And it will be good for us, when we are receiving the Gifts of God's Providence, to paſs thro' them to the Conſideration of the Gifts of his Grace, thoſe *better Things*. This Thought will be very ſeaſonable when we are partaking of bodily Refreſhments, *Bleſſed are they that ſhall eat Bread in the Kingdom of God*. (1.) In the Kingdom of Grace, in the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, which was expected now ſhortly to be ſet up. Chriſt promis'd his Diſciples that they ſhould *eat and drink with him in his Kingdom*.---They that partake of the Lord's-Supper, *eat Bread in the Kingdom of God*. (2.) In the Kingdom of Glory, at the Reſurrection. The Happineſs of Heaven is an *Everlaſting Feaſt*; bleſſed are they that ſhall ſit down at that Table, whence they ſhall riſe no more.

2. The Parable which our Lord Jeſus put forth upon this Occaſion, *v.* 16, *&c.* Chriſt joins with the good Man in what he ſaid; 'tis very true, *Bleſſed are they that ſhall partake* of the Privileges of the Meſſiah's Kingdom. But who are they that ſhall enjoy that Privilege? You *Jews* that think to have the Monopoly of it, will generally reject it, and the *Gentiles* will be the greateſt Sharers in it. This he ſhews by a Parable, for if he had ſpoken it plainly, the Phariſees would not have born it.

Now in the Parable we may obſerve,

1. The Free-Grace and Mercy of God ſhining in the Goſpel of Chriſt; it appears (1.) In the rich Proviſion he has made for poor Souls, for their Nouriſhment, Refreſhment, and Entertainment, *v.* 16. *A certain rich Man made a great Supper.* There is that in Chriſt and the Grace of the Goſpel, which will be *Food* and a *Feaſt* for the Soul of Man, that knows its own Capacities, for the Soul of a Sinner, that knows its own Neceſſities and Miſeries. 'Tis call'd a *Supper*, becauſe in thoſe Countries Supper-time was the chief Feaſting-time, when the Buſineſs of the Day was over. The Manifeſtation of the Goſpel Grace to the World, was the Evening of the World's Day. And the Fruition of the Fulneſs of that Grace in Heaven, is reſerv'd for the Evening of our Day. (2.) In the gracious Invitation given us, to come and partake of this Proviſion. Here's (1.) A general Invitation given, he *bade many*. Chriſt invited the whole Nation and People of the Jews to partake of the Benefits of his Goſpel. There's Proviſion enough for as many as come, 'twas propheſy'd of as *a Feaſt for all People*, Iſa. 25. 6. Chriſt in the Goſpel, as he keeps a *good* Houſe, ſo he keeps an *open* Houſe. (2.) A particular Memorandum given, when the Supper-time was at Hand; the Servant was ſent round to put them in mind of it, *Come, for all Things are now ready*. When the Spirit was pour'd out, and the Goſpel Church planted, thoſe who before were invited, were more cloſely preſs'd to come in *preſently*, now *all Things are ready*, the full Diſcovery of the Goſpel Myſtery is now made, all the Ordinances of the Goſpel are now inſtituted, the Society of Chriſtians is now incorporated, and which crowns all, the Holy Ghoſt is now given. This is the Call now given to us, *All Things are now ready*, now is the *accepted Time*, 'tis now and *has not* been long, 'tis now and *will not* be long; 'tis a Seaſon of Grace that will be ſoon over, and therefore *come now*; do not delay; accept the Invitation; believe yourſelves welcome; *eat, O Friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, O Beloved.*

2. The cold Entertainment which the Grace of the Goſpel meets with. The invited Gueſts declin'd coming, they did not ſay flat and plain they *would not come*, but *they all with Conſent began to make Excuſe*, v. 18. One would have expected they ſhould *all with one Conſent* have come to a good Supper, when they were ſo kindly invited to it, who would have refus'd ſuch an Invitation? Yet, on the contrary, they all found out ſome Pretence or other to ſhift off their Attendance. This ſpeaks the general Neglect of the Jewiſh Nation to cloſe with Chriſt, and accept of the Offers of his Grace, and the Contempt they put upon the Invitation. It ſpeaks alſo the Backwardneſs that is in moſt People to cloſe with the Goſpel-Call. They cannot for Shame avow their Refuſal, but they deſire to be *excus'd*; they all ἀπὸ μιᾶς, ſome ſupply ὥρας, *all ſtraitway*, they could give an Anſwer *extempore*, and needed not to ſtudy for it; were *not to ſeek* for an Excuſe. Others ſupply γνώμης, they were unanimous in it, *with one Voice.*

(1.) Here were *two* were *Purchaſers*, and were in ſuch Haſte to go ſee their Purchaſes, that they could not find Time to go to this Supper. One had *purchas'd Land*, he had *bought a Piece of Ground*, which was repreſented to him to be a good Bargain, and he was needs *go ſee* whether it was ſo or no, and therefore *I pray thee have me excus'd.* His Heart was ſo much upon the enlarging of his Eſtate, that he could neither be civil to his Friend, nor kind to himſelf. *Note*, Thoſe that have their Hearts full of the World, and fond of *laying Houſe to Houſe, and Field to Field*, have their Ears deaf to the Goſpel Invitation. But what a frivolous Excuſe was this! He might have deferr'd going to ſee his Piece of Ground 'till the next Day, and have found it in the ſame Place and Plight it was now in, if he had ſo pleas'd. Here was another had purchas'd *Stock* for his Land, *I have bought five Yoak of Oxen* for the Plough, and I muſt juſt now go *prove them*, muſt go try whether they be fit for my Purpoſe, and therefore excuſe me for this Time. The former intimates that inordinate *Complacency* in the World, this, that inordinate *Care* and *Concern* about the World, which keeps People from Chriſt and his Grace; both intimate a Preference given to the Body above the Soul, and to the Things of Time above thoſe of Eternity. *Note*, 'Tis an ill Thing when we are call'd to any Duty, to make Excuſes for our Neglect of it. 'Tis a Sign there are Convictions that 'tis Duty, but no Inclination to it. Theſe Things here that were the Matter of the Excuſes, were (1.) *Little Things*, and of ſmall Concern. It had better become them to have ſaid, I am invited *to eat Bread in the Kingdom of God*, and therefore muſt be excus'd from going to ſee the *Ground*, or the *Oxen*. (2.) *Lawful Things*. *Note*, Things lawful in themſelves, when the Heart is too much ſet upon them, prove fatal Hindrances in Religion, *Licitis perimus omnes.* It is a hard Matter ſo to manage our Worldly Affairs, that they may not divert us from ſpiritual Purſuits; and this ought to be our great Care.

(2.) Here was one that was *newly marry'd*, and could not leave his Wife to go out to Supper, no not for once, *v.* 20. *I have marry'd a Wife, and therefore*, in ſhort, *I cannot come.* He pretends he *cannot*, when the Truth is he *will not*. Thus many pretend *Inability* for the Duties of Religion, when really they have an *Averſion* to them. He has *marry'd a Wife*; 'tis true, he that was marry'd was excus'd by the Law from going to War for the firſt Year, *Deut.* 24. 5. but would that excuſe him from going up to the Feaſts of the Lord, which all the Males were yearly to attend? Much leſs will it excuſe from the Goſpel Feaſt, which the other were but Types of. *Note*, Our Affection to our Relations, often proves a Hindrance to us in our Duty to God. *Adam*'s Excuſe was, *The Woman that thou gaveſt me, perſwaded me to eat*; this here was, *the Woman perſwaded me not to eat*. He might have gone, and taken his Wife along with him, they ſhould both have been welcome.

3. The Account which was brought to the Maſter of the Feaſt, of the Affront put upon him by his Friends whom he had invited, who now ſhow'd how little they valu'd him, *v.* 21. *That Servant came, and ſhew'd his Lord theſe Things*; told him with Surprize, that he was likely to ſup alone, for the Gueſts that were invited, tho' they had had timely Notice a good while before, that they might order their Affairs accordingly, yet were now engag'd to ſome other Buſineſs. He made the Matter neither better nor worſe, but related it juſt as it was. *Note*, Miniſters muſt give Account of the Succeſs of their Miniſtry.

niſtry. They muſt do it now at the Throne of Grace, if they ſee of *the Travel of their Soul*, they muſt go to God with their *Thanks*; If they *labour in vain*, they muſt go to God with their *Complaints:* They will do it hereafter at the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt; they ſhall be produc'd as Witneſſes *againſt* thoſe who perſiſt and periſh in their Unbelief, to prove that they were fairly invited: And for thoſe who accepted the Call, *Behold I and the Children thou haſt given me.* The Apoſtle urges this as a Reaſon why People ſhould give Ear to the Word of God ſent them by his Miniſters; for *they watch for your Souls, as thoſe that muſt give Account*, Heb. 13. 17.

4. The Maſter's juſt Reſentment of this Affront; *he was angry*, v. 21. *Note*, The Ingratitude of thoſe that ſlight Goſpel Offers, and the Contempt they put upon the God of Heaven thereby, is a very great Provocation to him, and juſtly ſo. Abus'd Mercy turns into the greateſt Wrath. The Doom he paſt upon them was, *None of the Men that were bidden ſhall taſte of my Supper.* This was like the Doom paſt upon ungrateful *Iſrael*, when they deſpis'd the pleaſant Land. God *ſware in his Wrath that they ſhould not enter into his Reſt.* *Note*, Grace deſpis'd, is Grace forfeited, like *Eſau*'s Birth-right. They that will not have Chriſt when the *may*, ſhall not have him when they *would.* Even thoſe that *were bidden*, if they ſlight the Invitation, *ſhall be forbidden*; when the Door is ſhut, the fooliſh Virgins ſhall be deny'd Entrance.

5. The Care that was taken to furniſh the Table with Gueſts, as well as Meat. Go (ſaith he to the Servants) *Go firſt into the Streets and Lanes of the City*, and invite, not the Merchants that are going from the Cuſtom-Houſe, or the Tradeſmen that are ſhutting up their Shops, they will *deſire to be excus'd:* One is going to his Compting-Houſe to caſt up his Books, another to the Tavern to drink a Bottle with his Friend; but that you may invite thoſe that will be glad to come, Bring in *hither the Poor and the Maimed, the Halt and the Blind*; pick up the common Beggars. The Servants object not that it will be a Diſparagement to the Maſter and his Houſe to have ſuch Gueſts at his Table, for they knew his Mind, and they ſoon gather enow ſuch Gueſts. *Lord it is done as thou haſt commanded.* Many of the *Jews* are brought in, not of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, ſuch as Chriſt was now *at Dinner with*, who thought themſelves moſt likely to be Gueſts at the *Meſſiah*'s Table, but Publicans and Sinners, theſe are *the Poor and the Maimed.* But *yet there is Room* for more Gueſts, and Proviſion enough for them all. Go then, (2.) *Into the Highways and Hedges*; go out into the Country, and pick up the Vagrants, or thoſe that are returning now in the Evening from their Work in the Field, from Hedging and Ditching there, and *compel them to come in*, not by Force of Arms, but by Force of Arguments; be earneſt with them, for in this Caſe it would be neceſſary to convince them that the Invitation was *ſincere*, and not a *Banter*; they will be ſhy and modeſt, and will hardly believe that they ſhall be welcome, and therefore be importunate with them, and do not leave them till you have prevail'd with them. This refers to the *Calling of the Gentiles*, to whom the Apoſtles were to *turn* when the *Jews* refus'd the Offer, and with them the Church was fill'd.

Now obſerve here, (1.) That the Proviſion made for precious Souls in the Goſpel of Chriſt, ſhall appear not to have been made *in vain*; for if ſome *reject it*, yet others will thankfully *accept* the Offer of it. Chriſt comforts himſelf with this, that *tho'* Iſrael *be not gathered*, yet he ſhall be *glorious*, as *a Light to the Gentiles*, Iſa. 44. 5,6. God will have a Church in the World, tho' there are thoſe that are unchurch'd, for *the Unbelief of Man ſhall not make the Promiſe of God of none Effect.* (2.) Thoſe that are very poor and low in the World, ſhall be as welcome to Chriſt as the Rich and Great; nay, and many Times the Goſpel has greateſt Succeſs among thoſe that labour under worldly Diſadvantages, as the *Poor*, and bodily Infirmities, as *the Maimed, and the Halt*, and *the Blind.* Chriſt here plainly refers to what he had ſaid juſt before in Direction to us, to invite to our Tables the *Poor and Maimed, the Lame and Blind*, v. 13. For the Conſideration of the Countenance which Chriſt's Goſpel gives to the Poor, ſhould engage us to be charitable to them. His Condeſcenſions and Compaſſions towards them, ſhould engage ours. (3.) Many Times the Goſpel hath the *greateſt Succeſs* among thoſe that are *leaſt likely* to have the Benefit of it, and whoſe Submiſſion to it was leaſt expected: The Publicans and Harlots went into the Kingdom of God before the Scribes and Phariſees; *ſo the laſt ſhall be firſt, and the firſt laſt.* Let us not be *confident* concerning thoſe that are moſt forward, nor deſpair of thoſe that are leaſt promiſing. (4.) Chriſt's Miniſters muſt be both very expeditious and very importunate in inviting to the Goſpel-Feaſt. *Go out quickly*, v. 21. loſe no Time, becauſe *all Things are now ready:* Call them to come *to Day, while it is call'd to Day.* And *compel them to come in* by ſpeaking them fair, and *drawing* them *with the Cords of a Man, and the Bands of Love.* Nothing can be more abſurd than fetching an Argument from hence for compelling Mens Conſciences, nay, for compelling Men againſt their Conſciences in Matters of Religion: You ſhall receive the Lord's-Supper, or you ſhall be fin'd and impriſon'd, and ruin'd in your Eſtate. Certainly nothing like this was the Compulſion here meant, but only that of Reaſon and Love, for *the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal.* Tho' many have been brought in to partake of the Benefits of the Goſpel, yet ſtill *there is Room for more*; for the Riches of Chriſt are *unſearchable*, and *inexhauſtible*; there is in him enough for all, and enough for each; and the Goſpel excludes none that do not exclude themſelves. (6.) Chriſt's Houſe, tho' it be *large*, it ſhall it laſt be *filled*, it will be ſo when the Number of the Elect is compleated, and as many as were *given him*, are *brought to him.*

25 ¶ And there went great multitudes with
him: and he turned, and ſaid unto them, 26 If
any man come to me, and hate not his father, and
mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and
ſiſters, yea, and his own life alſo, he cannot be my
diſciple. 27 And whoſoever doth not bear his
croſs, and come after me, cannot be my diſciple.
28 For which of you intending to build a towre,
ſitteth not down firſt, and counteth the coſt, whether he have *ſufficient* to finiſh *it?* 29 Leſt haply
after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to
finiſh *it*, all that behold *it*, begin to mock him, 30
Saying, This man began to build, and was not able
to finiſh. 31 Or what king going to make war
againſt another king, ſitteth not down firſt, and
conſulteth whether he be able with ten thouſand to
meet him that cometh againſt him with twenty
thouſand? 32 Or elſe, while the other is yet a great
way off, he ſendeth an ambaſſage, and deſireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewiſe, whoſoever he be
of you, that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple. 34 ¶ Salt *is* good: but if the
ſalt have loſt his ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſeaſoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for
the dunghil; *but* men caſt it out. He that hath ears
to hear, let him hear.

See how Chriſt in his Doctrine ſuited himſelf to thoſe to whom he ſpake, and *gave every one their Portion of Meat.* To Phariſees he preach'd Humility and Charity: He is in theſe Verſes directing his Diſcourſe to the Multitudes that crowded after him, and ſeem'd zealous in following him, and his Exhortation to them is to underſtand the Terms of Diſcipleſhip, before they undertook the Profeſſion of it, and to conſider what they did. See here,

1. How zealous People were in their Attendance on Chriſt, *v.* 25. *There went great Multitudes with him*, many for Love, and more for Company, for where there are *many*, there will be *more.* Here was a *mixt Multitude*, like that which went with *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*; ſuch we muſt expect there will always be in the Church, and it will therefore be neceſſary that Miniſters ſhould carefully ſeparate *between the Precious and the Vile.*

2. How *conſiderate* he would have them to be in their Zeal: Thoſe that undertake to follow Chriſt, muſt count upon the worſt, and prepare accordingly.

1. He tells them what the worſt is they muſt count upon; much the ſame with what he had gone through before them, and for them. He takes it for granted they had a Mind to be *his Diſciples*, that they might be *qualified* for Preferment in his Kingdom: They expected he ſhould ſay, If any Man come to me, and be my Diſciple, he ſhall have Wealth and Honour in Abundance, let me alone to make him a great Man; but he tells them the quite contrary.

(1.) That they muſt be willing to *quit* that which was *very dear*, and therefore muſt come to him throughly *weaned from* all their Creature-Comforts, and *dead* to them, ſo as chearfully to part with them, rather than quit their Intereſt in Chriſt, *v.* 26. A Man cannot be Chriſt's Diſciple, but he muſt *hate Father and Mother, and his own Life.* He is not *ſincere*, he will not be *conſtant* and perſevering, unleſs he love Chriſt better than any Thing in this World, and be willing to part with that which he may and muſt leave, either as a *Sacrifice*, when Chriſt may be glorify'd by our parting with it; ſo the Martyrs, who *loved not their Lives to Death*; or as a *Temptation*, when by our Parting with it, we are put into a better Capacity of ſerving Chriſt: Thus *Abraham* parted with his own Country, and *Moſes* with *Pharaoh*'s Court. Mention is not made here of *Houſes* and *Lands*; Philoſophy will teach a Man to look upon thoſe with Contempt; but Chriſtianity carries it higher. (1.) Every good Man loves *his Relations*, and yet if he be a Diſciple of Chriſt he muſt comparatively *hate them*, muſt love them *leſt than Chriſt*, as *Leah* is ſaid to be *hated* when *Rachel* was better lov'd. Not that there Perſons muſt be in any Degree hated, but our Comfort and Satisfaction in them muſt be loſt and ſwallow'd up in our Love to Chriſt, as *Levi*'s was when he *ſaid to his Father, I have not ſeen him*, Deut. 33. 9. When our Duty to our Parents comes in Competition with our evident Duty to Chriſt, we muſt give Chriſt the Preference. If we muſt either *deny Chriſt*, or be *baniſh'd* from our Families and Relations, (as many of the Primitive Chriſtians were) we muſt rather loſe their Society than his

Favour. (2.) Every Man loves *his own Life*, no Man ever yet *hated it*; and we cannot be Chriſt's Diſciples, if we do not love him better than our own Lives, ſo as rather to have our Lives *embitter'd* by cruel *Bondage*, nay, and *taken away* by cruel *Deaths*, than to diſhonour Chriſt, or depart from any of his Truths and Ways. The Experience of the Pleaſures of the *Spiritual Life*, and the believing Hopes and Proſpects of *Eternal Life*, will make this *hard Saying* eaſy. When Tribulation and Perſecution ariſeth, becauſe of the Word, then chiefly the Trial is, whether we love better Chriſt, or our Relations and Lives; yet even in *Days of Peace* this Matter is ſometimes brought to the Trial. Thoſe that decline the Service of Chriſt, and Opportunities of Converſe with him, and are aſham'd to confeſs him, for fear of diſobliging a Relation or Friend, or loſing a Cuſtomer, give Cauſe to ſuſpect they love them better than Chriſt.

(2.) That they muſt be willing to *bear* that which was very *heavy*, v. 27. *Whoſoever doth not carry his Croſs*, as thoſe did that were condemn'd to be crucify'd, in *Submiſſion* to the Sentence, and in *Expectation* of the Execution of it, and ſo *come after me*, whitherſoever I ſhall lead him, he *cannot be my Diſciple*; that is, (ſaith Dr. *Hammond*) he is not *for my Turn*, and my Service being ſo ſure to bring Perſecution along with it, will not be *for his*. Tho' the Diſciples of Chriſt are not *all crucify'd*, yet they all *bear their Croſs*, as if they counted upon being crucify'd. They muſt be content to be put into an ill Name, and to be loaded with Infamy and Diſgrace, for no Name more ignominious than *Furcifer*, the *Bearer of the Gibbet*. He muſt bear his Croſs, and *come after Chriſt*, i. e. he muſt bear it in the Way of his Duty, whenever it lies in that Way. He muſt bear it when Chriſt calls him to it, and in bearing it he muſt have an Eye to Chriſt, and fetch Encouragements from him, and live in Hope of a Recompence with him.

2. He bids them count upon it, and then conſider of it: Since he has been ſo *juſt to us*, as to tell us plainly what Difficulties we ſhall meet with in following him, let us be ſo *juſt to ourſelves* as to weigh the Matter ſeriouſly before we take upon us a Profeſſion of Religion. *Joſhua* oblig'd the People to conſider what they did, when they promis'd to *ſerve the Lord*, Joſh. 24. 19. 'Tis better never begin than not proceed, and therefore before we begin, we muſt conſider what it is to proceed. This is to act rationally, and as becomes Men, and as we do in other Caſes. And the Cauſe of Chriſt will bear a Scrutiny: Satan ſhews the beſt, but hides the worſt, becauſe his Beſt will not countervail his Worſt; but Chriſt's will abundantly. Thus conſidering of the Caſe is neceſſary to Perſeverance, eſpecially in ſuffering Times. Our Saviour here illuſtrates the Neceſſity of it by two Similitudes: The former ſhewing that we muſt conſider the Perils of it.

1. When we take upon us a Profeſſion of Religion, we are like a Man that undertakes to *build a Tower*, and therefore muſt conſider the *Expence of it*, v. 28, 29, 30. *Which of you intending to build a Tower*, or ſtately Houſe for himſelf, *ſitteth not down firſt and counteth the Coſt*, and he muſt be ſure to count upon a great deal more than his Workmen will tell him 'twill lye him in: Let him compare the Charge with his Purſe, leſt he make himſelf to be laugh'd at, by *beginning to build* what he is *not able to finiſh*.

Note, 1. All that take upon them a Profeſſion of Religion, undertake to *build a Tower*, not as the Tower of *Babel*, in Oppoſition to Heaven, which therefore was left unfiniſh'd, but in Obedience to Heaven, which therefore ſhall have its *Top Stone brought forth*. Begin low, and lay the Foundation deep, lay it on the Rock, and make ſure Work, and then aim as high as Heaven. 2. Thoſe that intend to build this Tower, muſt *ſit down and count the Coſt*; let them conſider, it *will coſt them* the mortifying of their Sins, even the moſt beloved Luſts, it will coſt them a Life of Self-denial and Watchfulneſs, and a conſtant Courſe of holy Duties: It *may* perhaps *coſt them* their Reputation among Men, their Eſtates and Liberties, and all that's dear to them in this World, even Life itſelf. And if it coſt us all this, what is it, in Compariſon with what it coſt Chriſt to purchaſe the Advantages of Religion for us, which come to us without Money and Price. 3. Many that begin to *build this Tower*, do not *go on with it*, nor perſevere in it, and it is their Folly; they have not Courage and Reſolution, have not a rooted, fixed Principle, and ſo bring nothing to paſs. It is true, we have none of us in ourſelves *ſufficient to finiſh* this Tower, but Chriſt hath ſaid, *my Grace is ſufficient for thee*, and that Grace ſhall not be wanting to any of us, if we ſeek for it, and make uſe of it. 4. Nothing is more *ſhameful*, than for thoſe that have begun well in Religion to break off; every one will juſtly *mock him*; as having loſt all his Labour hitherto, for want of Perſeverance. We *loſe the Things we have wrought*, 2 Joh. 8. and all we have done and ſuffer'd is *in vain*, Gal. 3. 4, 5.

2. When we undertake to be Chriſt's Diſciples, we are like a Man that *goes to War*, and therefore muſt conſider the *Hazard* of it, and the Difficulties that are to be encounter'd, *v.* 31, 32. A King that proclaims War with a neighbouring Prince, conſiders whether he have Strength wherewith to make his Party good, and if not, he will lay aſide his Thoughts of War. *Note*, 1, The State of a Chriſtian in this World is a Military State. *Is not* the Chriſtian *Life a Warfare*? We have many Paſſes in our Way, that muſt be diſputed with Dint of Sword; nay, we muſt fight every Step we go, ſo reſtleſs are our ſpiritual Enemies, in their Oppoſition. 2. We ought to conſider whether we can *endure the Hardneſs* which a good Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt muſt expect and count upon, before we liſt ourſelves under Chriſt's Banner. *Whether* we are able to encounter the Forces of Hell and Earth, which come againſt us *Twenty Thouſand* ſtrong. 3. Of the two, 'tis better make the beſt Terms we can with the World, than pretend to renounce it, and afterwards, when Tribulation and Perſecution ariſeth becauſe of the Word, to *return to it*. That *Young Man* that cou'd not find in his Heart to part with his Poſſeſſions for Chriſt, did better to go away from Chriſt *ſorrowing*, than to have ſtaid with him *diſſembling*.

This Parable is another Way applicable, and may be taken as deſign'd to teach us to begin *ſpeedily* to be religious, rather than to begin *cautiouſly*; and may mean the ſame with *Mat.* 5. 25. *Agree with thine Adverſary quickly*. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe that perſiſt in Sin, make War againſt God, the moſt unnatural, unjuſtifiable War; they rebel againſt their lawful Sovereign, whoſe Government is perfectly juſt and good. (2.) The proudeſt and moſt daring Sinner, is no equal Match for God; the Diſproportion of Strength is much greater than that here ſuppos'd between *ten thouſand* and *twenty Thouſand*. *Do we provoke the Lord to Jealouſy? Are we ſtronger than he?* no, ſure; *Who knows the Power of his Anger?* In Conſideration of this, it is our Intereſt to make Peace with him; we need not ſend to *deſire Conditions of Peace*, they are offer'd to us, and are unexceptionable, and highly to our Advantage; let us acquaint ourſelves with them, and be at Peace; do this in Time, *while the other is yet a great Way off*, for Delays in ſuch a Caſe are highly dangerous, and make after Applications difficult.

But the Application of this Parable here, *v.* 33. is to the Conſideration that ought to be when we take upon us a Profeſſion of Religion. *Solomon* ſaith, *with good Advice make War*, Prov. 20. 18. for he that *draws the Sword, throws away the Scabbard*; ſo *with good Advice* enter upon a Profeſſion of Religion, as thoſe that know that *except you forſake all you have, you cannot be Chriſt's Diſciples*; that is, except you count upon forſaking all, and conſent to it, for all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt *ſuffer Perſecution*, and yet continue to *live godly*.

3. He warns them againſt Apoſtacy, and a Degeneracy of Mind from the truly Chriſtian Spirit and Temper, for that would make them utterly uſeleſs, *v.* 34, 35. (1.) Good Chriſtians are *the Salt of the Earth*, and good Miniſters eſpecially, *Mat.* 5. 13. and this *Salt is good*, and of great Uſe; by their Inſtructions and Examples they ſeaſon all they converſe with, to keep them from putrifying, and to quicken them and make them ſavory. (2.) Degenerate Chriſtians, that rather than part with what they have in the World, will throw up their Profeſſion, and then of Courſe become carnal and worldly, and wholly deſtitute of a Chriſtian Spirit, they are like *Salt that has loſt his Savour*; like that which the Chymiſts call the *Caput Mortuum*, that has all its Salts drawn from it, that is the moſt uſeleſs, worthleſs thing in the World; it has no Manner of Vertue or good Property in it. (1.) It can never be recover'd, *wherewith ſhall it be ſeaſon'd?* You cannot ſalt it. This intimates, that it is extremely difficult, and next to impoſſible, to recover an Apoſtate, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. If Chriſtianity will not prevail to cure Men of their Worldlineſs and Senſuality, if that Remedy have been try'd in vain, their Caſe muſt e'en be concluded deſperate. (2.) 'Tis of no Uſe; 'tis *not fit* as Dung is *for the Land*, to manure that, nor will it be the better if it be laid in the Dunghil to rot, there's nothing to be got out of it. A Profeſſor of Religion whoſe Mind and Manners are deprav'd, is the moſt *inſipid* Animal that can be. If he do ſpeak of the Things of God, which he hath had ſome Knowledge of, 'tis ſo *awkardly*, that none are the better for it: 'Tis *a Parable in the Mouth of a Fool*. (3.) 'Tis abandon'd; *Men caſt it out*, as that which they ſhall have no more to do with. Such ſcandalous Profeſſors ought to be caſt out of the Church, not only becauſe they have forfeited all the Honours and Privileges of their Church-Memberſhip, but becauſe there is Danger that others will be infected by them. Our Saviour concludes this with a Call to all to take Notice of it, and to take Warning; *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear*. How can the Faculty of Hearing be better employ'd, than in attending to the Word of Chriſt, and particularly to the Alarms he has given us of the Danger we are in *of* Apoſtacy, and the Danger we run ourſelves *by* Apoſtacy.

CHAP. XV.

Evil Manners, we ſay, beget good Laws; ſo in this Chapter, the Murmuring of the Scribes and Phariſees at the Grace of Chriſt, and the Favour he ſhow'd to Publicans and Sinners, gave Occaſion for a more full Diſcovery of that Grace, than perhaps otherwiſe we ſhould have had, in theſe three Parables which we have in this Chapter, the Scope of all which is the ſame, to ſhew, not only what God had ſaid and ſworn in the Old Teſtament, that he had no Pleaſure in the Death and Ruin of Sinners, but that he has great Pleaſure in their Return and Repentance, and rejoyceth in the gracious Entertainment he gives them thereupon. Here's (1.) *The Offence which the Phariſees took at Chriſt, for converſing with Heathen Men and Publicans, and Preaching his Goſpel to them,* v. 1, 2. (2.) *Juſtifying himſelf in it, by the Deſign and proper Tendency* *of it, and which with many had been the* Effect *of it, and that was, the bringing of them to repent and reform their Lives, than which there could not be a more pleaſing and acceptable Service done to God, which he ſhews in the Parable* (1.) *Of the loſt Sheep that was brought Home with Joy,* v. 4,---7. (2.) *Of the loſt Silver, that was found with Joy,* v. 8,---10. (3.) *Of the loſt Son that had been a Prodigal, but return'd to his Father's Houſe, and was receiv'd with great Joy, tho' his Elder Brother, like theſe Scribes and Phariſees, was offended at it,* v. 11,---32.

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and ſinners for to hear him. 2 And the Phariſees and ſcribes murmured, ſaying, this man receiveth ſinners, and eateth with them. 3 ¶ And he ſpake this parable unto them, ſaying, 4 What man of you having an hundred ſheep, if he looſe one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderneſs, and go after that which is loſt, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found *it*, he layeth *it* on his ſhoulders, rejoycing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, ſaying unto them, Rejoyce with me, for I have found my ſheep which was loſt. 7 I ſay unto you, that likewiſe joy ſhall be in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine juſt perſons, which need no repentance. 8 ¶ Either what woman having ten pieces of ſilver, if ſhe loſe one piece, doth not light a candle, and ſweep the houſe, and ſeek diligently till ſhe find *it?* 9 And when ſhe hath found *it*, ſhe called her friends and her neighbours together, ſaying, Rejoyce with me, for I have found the piece which I had loſt. 10 Likewiſe I ſay unto you, There is joy in the preſence of the angels of God, over one ſinner that repenteth.

Here's 1. The diligent Attendance of the Publicans and Sinners upon Chriſt's Miniſtry. *Great Multitudes* of Jews *went with him,* chap. 14. 25. with ſuch an Aſſurance of Admiſſion into the Kingdom of God, that he found it requiſite to ſay that to them which would ſhake their vain Hopes. Here Multitudes of *Publicans* and *Sinners* drew near to him, with a humble modeſt Fear of being *rejected* by him, and to them he found it requiſite to give Encouragement, eſpecially becauſe there were ſome haughty ſupercilious People that frown'd upon them. The *Publicans* that collected the Tribute paid to the *Romans*, were perhaps ſome of them *ill Men*, but they were all induſtriouſly put into an *ill Name*, becauſe of the Prejudices of the Jewiſh Nation againſt their Office; they are ſometimes rank'd with *Harlots*, Mat. 21. 32. here and elſewhere with *Sinners*, ſuch as were openly vicious, that traded with *Harlots*; known Rakes. Some think the Sinners here were *Heathen*, and that Chriſt was now on the other Side *Jordan*, or in *Galilee of the Gentiles*. Theſe *drew near*, when perhaps the Multitude of the *Jews*, that had follow'd him, were (upon his Diſcourſe in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter) *dropt off*; thus afterwards the *Gentiles* took their Turn in hearing the Apoſtles, when the *Jews* had rejected them. *They drew near to hear him*; being afraid of drawing nearer than juſt to come within *Hearing*. They drew near to him, not as ſome did, for Curioſity, to *ſee him*, nor as others did, to ſollicit for Cures, but to hear his excellent Doctrine. *Note*, In all our Approaches to Chriſt, this we muſt have in our Eye, to *hear him*; to hear the Inſtructions he gives us, and his Anſwers to our Prayers.

2. The Offence which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* took at this, *v.* 2. they *murmured*, and turn'd it to the Reproach of our Lord Jeſus, *This Man receiveth Sinners, and eateth with them.* (1.) They were angry that *Publicans* and *Heathens* had the Means of Grace allow'd them, were call'd to repent, and encourag'd to hope for Pardon upon Repentance; for they look'd upon their Caſe as *deſperate*, and that none but *Jews* had the Privilege of repenting and being pardoned, tho' the Prophets preach'd Repentance to Nations, and *Daniel* particularly to *Nebuchadnezzar.* (2.) They thought it a Diſparagement to Chriſt, and inconſiſtent with the Dignity of his Character, to make himſelf familiar with ſuch Sort of People; to *admit* them into his Company, and *to eat with them*. They could not for Shame condemn him for *preaching to them*, tho' that was the Thing they were moſt enrag'd at, and therefore they reproach'd him for *eating with them*, which was more expreſly contrary to the Tradition of the Elders. Cenſure will fall, not only upon the moſt innocent and moſt excellent Perſons, but upon the moſt innocent and moſt excellent Actions, and we muſt not think it ſtrange.

3. Chriſt's juſtifying of himſelf in it, by ſhewing that the worſe theſe People were to whom he preach'd, the more Glory wou'd redound to God, and the more Joy there would be in Heaven, if by his Preaching they were brought to Repentance. 'Twould be a more pleaſing Sight in Heaven, to ſee *Gentiles* brought to the Worſhip of the true God, than to ſee *Jews* go on in it; and to ſee Publicans and Sinners live an orderly Sort of Life, than to ſee *Scribes* and *Phariſees* go on in living ſuch a Life. This he here illuſtrates by two Parables, the Reddition of both which is the ſame.

Firſt, The Parable of the *loſt Sheep*. Something like it we had, *Mat.* 18. 12. there it was deſign'd to ſhew the Care God takes for the Preſervation of Saints, as a Reaſon why we ſhou'd not offend them; here it is deſign'd to ſhew the Pleaſure God takes in the Converſion of Sinners, as a Reaſon why we ſhould rejoyce in it. We have here,

1. The Caſe of a Sinner that goes on in ſinful Ways, he is like a *loſt Sheep*; a Sheep *gone aſtray*; *loſt* to God, who has not the Honour and Service he ſhou'd have from him; *loſt* to the Flock, that has not Communion with him; *loſt* to himſelf, he knows not where he is, wanders endleſly, is continually expos'd to the Beaſts of Prey, ſubject to Frights and Terrors, from under the Shepherd's Care, and wanting the Green Paſtures; and it cannot of itſelf find the Way back to the Fold.

2. The Care the God of Heaven takes of poor wandring Sinners. He *continues* his Care of the Sheep that did not go aſtray, they are *ſafe in the Wilderneſs*; but there is a particular Care to be taken of this loſt Sheep; and tho' he has an hundred Sheep, a conſiderable Flock, yet he will not *loſe* that *one*; but he goes after it, and ſhews Abundance of Care, (1.) In *finding it out*; he follows it, enquiring after it, and looking about for it, 'till he *finds* it; God follows backſliding Sinners with the Calls of his Word, and the Strivings of his Spirit, 'till at length they are wrought upon to think of returning. (2.) In *bringing it Home*; tho' he finds it *weary*, and perhaps *worry'd*, and worn away with its Wandrings, and not able to bear being driven Home, yet he doth not leave it to periſh, and ſay, its not worth carrying Home; but *lays it on his Shoulders*, and with a great deal of Tenderneſs and Labour, brings it to the Fold. This is very applicable to the great Work of our Redemption; Mankind was gone aſtray, *Iſa.* 53. 6. The Value of the whole Race to God, was not ſo much as that of one Sheep to him that had a Hundred; what Loſs would it have been to God, if they had all been left to periſh? There's a World of holy Angels that are as the ninety-nine Sheep, a noble Flock, yet God ſends his Son to *ſeek and ſave that which was loſt*, Luke 19. 10. Chriſt is ſaid to *gather the Lambs in his Arms*, and carry *them in his Boſom*, noting his Pity and Tenderneſs towards poor Sinners; here he is ſaid to bear them *upon his Shoulder*, noting the Power wherewith he bears and ſupports them up; thoſe can never periſh whom he carries upon his Shoulders.

3. The Pleaſure that God takes in repenting, returning Sinners; he *lays it on his Shoulders rejoycing*, that he had not loſt his Labour in ſeeking; and the Joy is the greater, becauſe he began to be out of Hope of finding it. And he *calls his Friends and Neighbours*, the Shepherds that kept their Flocks about him, *ſaying, rejoyce with me*; perhaps among the Paſtoral Songs, which the Shepherds uſed to ſing, there was one for ſuch an Occaſion as this, which theſe Words might be the Burthen of, *Rejoyce with me, for I have found my Sheep which was loſt*, whereas they never ſung, *Rejoyce with me, for I have loſt none.* Obſerve, he calls it *his Sheep* tho' a *Stray*, a wandring Sheep; he has a Right to it; all Souls are mine; and he will claim his own, and recover his Right; therefore he looks after it himſelf, *I have found it*; did not ſend a Servant, but his own Son, the great and good Shepherd, who will find what he ſeeks, and will be found of thoſe who ſeek him not.

Secondly, The Parable of the *loſt Piece of Silver.*

1. The *Loſer* is here ſuppos'd to be a *Woman*, who will more paſſionately grieve for her Loſs, and rejoyce in the finding of what ſhe loſt, than perhaps a Man would do, and therefore it the better ſerves the Purpoſe of the Parable. She hath *ten Pieces of Silver*, and out of them looſes only one. Let this keep up in us high Thoughts of the Divine Goodneſs, notwithſtanding the Sinfulneſs and Miſery of the World of Mankind, that there is nine to one of God's Creation, that retain their Integrity, in whom God *is* prais'd, and never *was* diſhonour'd. O the numberleſs Beings, for ought we know, numberleſs Worlds of Beings, that never were loſt, or ſtept aſide from the Laws and Ends of their Creation!

2. That which is loſt is a Piece of Silver, δραχμὴν, the *fourth Part of a Shekel.* The Soul is *Silver* of intrinſick Worth and Value; not of baſe Metal, as Iron or Lead, but of *Silver*; the Mines of which are *Royal Mines.* The Hebrew Word for *Silver* is taken from the *Deſireableneſs* of it. 'Tis *Silver Coin*, for ſo the *Drachma* was; 'tis ſtampt with God's *Image and Superſcription*, and therefore muſt be *render'd to him.* Yet it is comparatively but of ſmall Value; 'twas but Seven-pence-half-penny; intimating, that if ſinful Men be left to periſh, God would be no Loſer. This Silver was loſt *in the Dirt*; a Soul plung'd in the World, and overwhelm'd with the Love of it, and Care about it, is like a Piece of Money in the Dirt, any one would ſay, 'tis a thouſand Pities it ſhould *lye there.*

3. Here's a great deal of Care and Pains taken in queſt of it. The Woman *lights a Candle*, to look behind the Door, under the Table, and in every Corner of the Houſe, *ſweeps the Houſe*, and

ſeek diligently till ſhe find it. This repreſents the various Means and Methods God makes uſe of to bring loſt Souls home to himſelf: He hath *lighted the Candle* of the Goſpel, not to ſhew himſelf the Way to us, but to ſhew us the Way to him, to diſcover us to ourſelves; he hath *ſwept the Houſe* by the Convictions of the Word; he *ſeeks diligently*, his Heart is upon it, to bring loſt Souls to himſelf.

4. Here's a great deal of Joy for the finding of it, *v.* 9. *Rejoyce with me for I have found the Piece which I had loſt.* Thoſe that rejoyce, deſire that others ſhould rejoyce with them; that are merry, would have others merry with them; ſhe was glad ſhe had found the Piece of Money, tho' ſhe ſhould ſpend it entertaining thoſe whom ſhe call'd to *make merry with her.* The pleaſing Surprize of finding it, put her for the preſent in a kind of Tranſport, *ἕυρηκα, ἕυρηκα, I have found, I have found*, is the Language of Joy.

Thirdly, The Reddition of theſe two Parable is to the ſame Purpoſe, *v.* 7. 10. *There is Joy in Heaven, Joy in the Preſence of the Angels of God, over one Sinner that repenteth*, as thoſe Publicans and Sinners did, ſome of them at leaſt (and if but *one of them* did repent, Chriſt would reckon it worth his while) more than over a great Number of *juſt Perſons which need no Repentance.* Obſerve,

1. The *Repentance* and *Converſion* of *Sinners* on Earth, is *Matter of Joy* and Rejoycing *in Heaven.* It is poſſible that the greateſt Sinners may be brought to Repentance; while there's Life there's Hope, and the worſt are not to be deſpair'd of; and the worſt of Sinners, if they repent and turn, ſhall find Mercy. Yet that is not all, (1.) God will *delight* to ſhew them Mercy; will reckon their Converſion a Return for all the Expence he has been at upon them. There is always Joy in Heaven; God *rejoyceth in all his Works*, but particularly in the Works of his Grace: He rejoyceth to do Good to penitent Sinners, with his *whole Heart*, and his *whole Soul.* He rejoyceth not only in the Converſion of Churches and Nations, but even over *one Sinner that repenteth*, tho' but *one.* (2.) The good Angels will be glad that Mercy is ſhewn them, ſo far are they from repining at it, tho' thoſe of their Nature that ſinned be left to periſh, and no Mercy ſhew'd to them; tho' thoſe Sinners that repent that are ſo mean, and have been ſo vile, are upon their Repentance to be taken into Communion with them, and ſhortly to be made like them, and equal to them. The Converſion of Sinners, is the Joy of Angels, and they gladly become miniſtring Spirits to them for their Good, upon their Converſion. The Redemption of Mankind was Matter of Joy, in the Preſence of the Angels, for they ſung *Glory to God in the higheſt*, Luk. 2. 14.

2. There is more Joy over *one Sinner that repenteth*, and turns to be religious from a Courſe of Life that had been notoriouſly vile and vicious, than there is *over ninety-nine juſt Perſons who need no Repentance.* (1.) More Joy for the Redemption and Salvation of fallen Man, than for the Preſervation and Confirmation of the Angels that ſtand, and did indeed need no Repentance. (2.) More Joy for the Converſion of the Sinners of the Gentiles, and of thoſe Publicans that now heard Chriſt preach, than for all the Praiſes and Devotions, and all the *God I thank thees* of the Phariſees, and other the ſelf-juſtifying *Jews*, who thought that they *needed no Repentance*, and that therefore God ſhould abundantly rejoyce in them, and *make his boaſt* of them, as thoſe that were moſt *his Honour*; but Chriſt tells them 'twas quite otherwiſe, that God was more praiſed *in*, and pleaſed *with* the penitent broken Heart of one of thoſe deſpis'd envy'd Sinners, than all the long Prayers which the Scribes and Phariſees made, that could not ſay any Thing amiſs in themſelves. Nay, (3.) More Joy for the Converſion of one ſuch great Sinner, ſuch a Phariſee as *Paul* had been in his Time, than for the regular Converſation of one that had always carry'd himſelf decently and well, and comparatively *needs no Repentance*, need not ſuch a univerſal Change of the Life, as thoſe great Sinners need. Not but that it is beſt not to go aſtray; but the Grace of God, both the Power and the Pity of that Grace is moſt manifeſted in the *reducing* of great Sinners, more than in the *conducting* of thoſe that never went aſtray. And many Times thoſe that have been great Sinners before their Converſion, prove more eminently and zealouſly good after; of which *Paul* is an Inſtance, and therefore in him God was greatly *glorified*, Gal. 1. 24. They to whom much is forgiven, will love much. It is ſpoken after the Manner of Men; we are mov'd with a more ſenſible Joy for the Recovery of what we had loſt, than for the Continuance of what we had always enjoy'd; for Health out of Sickneſs, than for Health from Sickneſs. 'Tis as *Life from the Dead*; a conſtant Courſe of Religion may in itſelf be more valuable, and yet a ſudden Return from an evil Courſe and Way of Sin, may yield a more ſurprizing Pleaſure. Now if there is ſuch *Joy in Heaven* for the Converſion of Sinners, then the Phariſees were very much Strangers to a heavenly Spirit, who did all they could to hinder it, and were grieved at it; and who are exaſperated at Chriſt when he was doing a Piece of Work that was of all other moſt grateful to Heaven.

11 ¶ And he ſaid, A certain man had two ſons: 12 And the younger of them ſaid to *his* father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth *to me.* And he divided unto them *his* living. 13 And not many days after, the younger ſon gathered all together, and took his journey into a far countrey, and there waſted his ſubſtance with riotous living. 14 And when he had ſpent all, there aroſe a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joyned himſelf to a citizen of that country; and he ſent him into his fields to feed ſwine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the ſwine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 And when he came to himſelf, he ſaid, How many hired ſervants of my fathers have bread enough and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger. 18 I will ariſe and go to my father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy ſon: make me as one of thy hired ſervants. 20 And he aroſe, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father ſaw him, and had compaſſion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him. 21 And the ſon ſaid unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon. 22 But the father ſaid to his ſervants, Bring forth the beſt robe, and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand, and ſhoes on *his* feet. 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill *it*; and let us eat and be merry. 24 For this my ſon was dead, and is alive again; he was loſt, and is found. And they began to be merry. 25 Now his elder ſon was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the houſe, he heard muſick and dancing. 26 And he called one of the ſervants, and asked what theſe things meant. 27 And he ſaid unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, becauſe he hath received him ſafe and ſound. 28 And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out and intreated him. 29 And he anſwering, ſaid to *his* father, Lo, theſe many years do I ſerve thee, neither tranſgreſſed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never giveſt me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30 But as ſoon as this thy ſon was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou haſt killed for him the fatted calf. 31 And he ſaid unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. 32 It was meet that we ſhould make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was loſt, and is found.

We have here the Parable of the Prodigal Son; the Scope of which is the ſame with thoſe before, to ſhew how pleaſing to God the Converſion of Sinners is, of great Sinners, and how ready he is to receive and entertain ſuch upon their Repentance; but the Circumſtances of the Parable do much more largely and fully ſet forth the Riches of the Goſpel Grace than thoſe did, and it has been, and will be while the World ſtands, of unſpeakable Uſe to poor Sinners, both to direct and to encourage them in repenting and returning to God. Now,

1. The Parable repreſents God as a *common Father* to all Mankind; to the whole Family of *Adam*; we all are his *Off-ſpring*; have all *one Father*, and *one God created us*, Mal. 2. 10. *From him* we *had* our Being, *in him* we ſtill *have it*, and from him we receive our *Maintenance:* He is *our Father*, for he has the *educating* and *portioning* of us, and will *put us in* his Teſtament, or *leave us out*, according as we are or are not dutiful Children to him. Our Saviour hereby intimates to thoſe proud Phariſees, that theſe Publicans and Sinners, whom they thus deſpis'd, were their Brethren, Partakers of the ſame Nature, and therefore they ought to be glad of any Kindneſs ſhewn them; God is the God *not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles*, Rom. 3. 29. The *ſame Lord over all, that is rich in Mercy to all that call upon him.*

2. It repreſents the Children of Men as of different Characters, tho' all related to God as their common Father: He had *two Sons*, one of them a ſolid grave Youth, *reſerv'd* and *auſtere*, ſober himſelf, but not at all *good humour'd* to thoſe about him;

ſuch a one would adhere to his Education, and not be eaſily drawn from it; but the other *volatile* and *mercurial*, and impatient of Reſtraint, Roving, and willing to try his Fortune, and if he fall into ill Hands, likely to be a Rake, notwithſtanding his virtuous Education. Now this latter repreſents the Publicans and Sinners whom Chriſt is endeavouring to bring to Repentance, and the Gentiles whom the Apoſtles were to be ſent forth to *preach Repentance* to: The former, the Jews in general, and particularly the Phariſees, whom he was endeavouring to reconcile to that Grace of God which was offer'd to, and beſtow'd upon Sinners.

The *younger Son* is the Prodigal, whoſe Character and Caſe is here deſign'd to repreſent that of a Sinner, that of every one of us in our natural State, but eſpecially of ſome.

Now we are to obſerve concerning him,

Firſt, His *Riot* and *Ramble*, when he was a Prodigal, and the Extravagances and Miſeries he fell into. We are told,

1. What his Requeſt to his Father was, *v.* 12. *He ſaid to his Father* proudly and pertly enough, *Father give me*, (he might have put a little more into his Mouth, and have ſaid, *Pray give me*, or, *Sir, if you pleaſe, give me*; but he makes an imperious Demand) *Give me the Portion of Goods that falleth to me*, not ſo much as you *think fit* to allot me, but that which falls to me as *my Due. Note*, 'Tis ill, and the beginning of worſe, when Men look upon God's Gifts as due Debts. *Give me the Portion*, all *my Child*'s Part, that falls to me; not *try me with a little*, and ſee how I can manage that, and accordingly truſt me with more, but give it me all at preſent in Poſſeſſion, and I'll never expect any Thing in *Reverſion*, any Thing *hereafter. Note*, The great Folly of Sinners, and that which ruins them is, being content to have *their Portion in Hand*; now in this Life-time to *receive their good Things*. They look only at the Things that are ſeen, that are temporal, and covet only a preſent Gratification, but have no Care for a future Felicity, when that's ſpent and gone.

And why did he deſire to have his Portion in his own Hands? Was it that he might apply himſelf to Buſineſs and Trade with it, and ſo make it more? No, he had no Thought of that: But (1.) He was *weary* of his *Father's Government*; ſick of the good Order and Diſcipline of his Father's Family, and was fond of Liberty, falſly ſo call'd; but indeed the greateſt Slavery, for ſo a *Liberty to Sin* is. See the Folly of many young Men that are religiouſly educated, but are impatient of the Confinement of their Education, and never think themſelves their own Maſters, their own Men, till they have broke all God's Bands in ſunder, and caſt away their Cords from them, and inſtead of them, bound themſelves with the Cords of their own Luſt. Here is the Original of the Apoſtacy of Sinners from God, they will not be ty'd up to the Rules of *God's Government*, will themſelves *be as Gods*, knowing no other *Good and Evil*, but what themſelves pleaſe. (2.) He was willing to get *from under his Father's Eye*, for that was always a Check upon him, and often gave a Check to him. A Shineſs of God, and a Willingneſs to disbelieve his Omniſcience, is at the Bottom of the Wickedneſs of the Wicked. (3.) He was diſtruſtful of his *Father's Management*; he would have his *Portion of Goods* himſelf, for he thought his Father would be laying up hereafter for him, and in order to that would limit him in his preſent Expences, and that he did not like. (4.) He was *proud of himſelf*, and had a *great Conceit of his own Sufficiency:* He thought if he had but his Portion in his own Hands, he could manage it better than his Father did, and make a better Figure with it. There are more young People ruin'd by *Pride*, than by any one Luſt whatſoever. Our firſt Parents ruin'd themſelves, and all theirs, by a fooliſh Ambition to be *independent*, and not to be beholden even to God himſelf; and this is at the Bottom of Sinners perſiſting in their Sin, they will be *for themſelves*.

2. How kind his Father was to him. *He divided unto them his Living:* He computed what he had to diſpoſe of between his Sons, and gave the younger Son *his Share*, and offer'd the elder his, which ought to be a *double Portion*; but it ſhould ſeem he deſired his Father to keep it in his own Hands ſtill, and we may ſee what he got by it, *v.* 31. *All that I have is thine.* He got all by ſtaying for ſomething in Reſerve. He gave the younger Son what he ask'd, and the Son had no Reaſon to complain that he did him any Wrong in the Dividend; he had as much as he expected, and perhaps more. (1.) Thus he might *now* ſee *his Father's Kindneſs*, how willing he was to pleaſe him, and make him eaſy, and that he was not ſuch an unkind Father as he was willing to repreſent him when he wanted an Excuſe to be gone. (2.) Thus he would in a little Time be made to ſee *his own Folly*, and that he was not ſuch a wiſe Manager for himſelf, as he would be thought to be. *Note*, God is a kind Father to all his Children, and gives to them all *Life and Breath, and all Things*, even to the Evil and Unthankful, διεῖλεν αὐτοῖς τὸν βίον, *he divided to them Life*; God's giving us Life, is putting us in a Capacity to ſerve and glorify him.

3. How he manag'd himſelf when he had got his Portion in his own Hands; he ſet himſelf to ſpend it as faſt as he could; and as Prodigals uſe to do, in a little Time he made himſelf a Beggar, *not many Days after*, v. 13. *Note*, If God leaves us never ſo little to ourſelves, it will not be long e'er we depart from him. As ſoon as ever the Bridle of reſtraining Grace is taken off, we are ſoon gone. That which the younger Son determin'd, was to *be gone* preſently, and in order to that he *gather'd all together.* Sinners that go aſtray from God *venture their all.*

Now the Condition of the Prodigal in this Ramble of his, repreſents to us a *ſinful* State, that *miſerable* State into which Man is *fallen*.

1. A ſinful State is a State of *Departure* and *Diſtance* from God: (1.) 'Tis the *Sinfulneſs* of Sin that it is an Apoſtacy from God. He *took his Journey* from his Father's Houſe; Sinners are fled from God, they *go a Whoring from him*; they revolt from their Allegiance to him, as a Servant that out-runs his Service, or a Wife that treacherouſly departs from her Husband, and they ſay unto God *depart*. They get as far off him as they can. This World's the *far Country*, in which they take up their Reſidence, and are as at Home, and in the Service and Enjoyment of it they ſpend their all. (2.) 'Tis the Miſery of Sinners that they are afar off from God, from him who is the Fountain of all Good, and are going further and further from him. What is Hell itſelf but being *afar off* from God?

2. A ſinful State is a *ſpending* State. There he *waſted his Subſtance with riotous Living*, v. 13. devour'd it *with Harlots*, v. 30. and in a little Time *he had ſpent all*, v. 14. He bought fine Cloths, ſpent a deal in Meat and Drink, treated high, convers'd with thoſe that help'd him make an End of what he had in a little Time. As to this World, they that *live riotouſly waſte* what they have, and will have a great deal to anſwer for, that they ſpend that upon their Luſts, which ſhould be for the neceſſary Subſiſtence of themſelves and their Families; but this is to be apply'd ſpiritually; wilful Sinners waſte their Patrimony, for they miſemploy their Thoughts, and all the Powers of their Souls, miſ-ſpending their Time, and all their Opportunities; do not only bury, but embezzel the Talents they are entruſted to trade with for their Maſter's Honour. And the Gifts of Providence which were intended to enable them to ſerve God, and do good with, are made Food and Fuel of their Luſts. The Soul that is made a Drudge either to the World or to the Fleſh, *waſtes its Subſtance*, and *lives riotouſly. One Sinner deſtroy much good*, Eccl. 9. 18. The Good he deſtroys is valuable, and 'tis none of his own, they are his *Lord's Goods* that he *waſtes*, which muſt be accounted for.

3. A ſinful State is a *wanting State. When he had ſpent all* upon his Harlots, they left him to ſeek ſuch another Prey, and *there aroſe a mighty Famine in that Land*, every Thing was ſcarce and dear, and *he began to be in Want*, v. 14. *Note*, Wilful Waſte brings woeful Want. Riotous Living in Time, perhaps in a little Time, brings Men to a *Morſel of Bread*; eſpecially when *ill Times* haſten on the Conſequences of *ill Husbandry*, which good Husbandry would have *provided for*. This repreſents the Miſery of *Sinners*, who have thrown away their own Mercies, the Favour of God, their Intereſt in Chriſt, the Strivings of the Spirit, and the Admonitions of Conſcience, theſe they *game away* for the Pleaſure of Senſe, and the Wealth of the World, and are ready to periſh for want of them. Sinners want Neceſſaries for their Souls, they have neither Food nor Raiment for them, nor any Proviſion for hereafter. A ſinful State is like a Land where *Famine reigns*, a *mighty Famine*; for the *Heaven is as Braſs*, the Dews of God's Favour and Bleſſing are withheld, and we muſt needs want good Things, if God deny them us: And the *Earth is as Iron:* The Sinner's Heart that ſhould bring forth good Things is dry and barren, and has no good in it, thoſe Sinners are *wretchedly* and *miſerably poor*; and what aggravates it, they brought themſelves into that Condition, and keep themſelves in it by refuſing the Supplies offer'd.

4. A ſinful State, is *a vile ſervile State.* When this young Man's Riot had brought him to Want, his Want brought him to Servitude, *v.* 15. *He went and joined himſelf to a Citizen of that Country*. The ſame wicked Life as was before repreſented by *riotous Living*, is here repreſented by *ſervile Living*; for Sinners are perfect Slaves. The Devil is the *Citizen of that Country*, for he is both in City and Country; Sinners *join themſelves* to him, hire themſelves into his Service, to do *his Work*, to be at *his Beck*, and to depend upon him for Maintenance and a Portion. They that commit Sin are the *Servants of Sin*, John 8. 34. How did this young Gentleman debaſe and diſparage himſelf, when he hired himſelf into ſuch a Service, and under ſuch a Maſter as this. He *ſent him into the Fields*, not to feed Sheep, there had been ſome Credit in that Employment, *Jacob* and *Moſes*, and *David*, kept Sheep, but to *feed Swine.* The Buſineſs of the Devil's Servants is to *make Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof*, and that's no better than feeding greedy, dirty, noiſy Swine, and how can rational immortal Souls more diſgrace themſelves?

5. A ſinful State is a State of *perpetual Diſſatisfaction.* When the Prodigal began to be in Want, he thought to help himſelf by *going to Service*; and he muſt be content with the Proviſion, which not the Houſe, but the Field afforded, but 'tis poor Proviſion, *v.* 16. He *would fain have fill'd his Belly*, ſatisfy'd his Hunger, and nouriſh'd his Body *with the Husks that the Swine*

did eat. A fine Paſs my young Maſter had brought himſelf to, to be Fellow-Commoner with the Swine. *Note,* That which Sinners, when they *depart from God,* promiſe themſelves *Satisfaction in,* will certainly diſappoint them; they are *labouring for that which ſatisfies not,* Iſa. 55. 2. That which is the *Stumbling-Block of their Iniquity,* will never *ſatisfy their Souls, nor fill their Bowels,* Ezek. 7. 19. Husks are Food for Swine, but not for Men: The Wealth of the World, and the Entertainments of Senſe will ſerve for Bodies, but what are thoſe to *precious Souls?* They neither ſute their Nature, nor ſatisfy their Deſires, nor ſupply their Needs. He that takes up with them, *feeds on Wind,* Hoſ. 12. 1. *Feeds on Aſhes,* Iſa. 44. 20.

6. A ſinful State, is a State *cannot expect Relief from any Creature.* This Prodigal when he could not earn his Bread by *Working,* took to *Begging,* but *no Man gave unto him,* becauſe they knew he had brought all this Miſery upon himſelf, and becauſe he was rakiſh and provoking to every Body, ſuch Poor are *leaſt pity'd:* This is the Application of the Parable intimating that thoſe who depart from God, cannot be help'd by any Creature. In vain do we cry to the World and the Fleſh, thoſe Gods we have ſerv'd, they have that which will poiſon a Soul, but have nothing to give it that will *feed* and *nouriſh* it. If thou refuſe God's Help, whence ſhall any Creature help thee?

7. A ſinful State, is a *State of Death,* v. 24, 32. This *my Son was dead.* A Sinner is not only dead in Law, as he is under a Sentence of Death, but dead in State too, dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins; deſtitute of Spiritual Life; no Union with Chriſt; no Spiritual Senſes exercis'd; no living to God, and therefore *dead.* The Prodigal in the *far Country* was *dead* to his Father and his Family, cut off from them, as a Member from the Body, or a Branch from the Tree, and therefore *dead,* and 'tis his own doing.

8. A ſinful State is a *loſt State. This my Son was loſt,* loſt to every Thing that was good; loſt to all Virtue and Honour; loſt o his Father's Houſe, they had no Joy of him. Souls that are ſeparated from God are *loſt Souls;* loſt as a *Traveller* that is out of his Way, and if infinite Mercy prevent not, will ſoon be *loſt,* as a Ship that is ſunk at Sea, loſt irrecoverably.

9. A ſinful State, is a State of *Madneſs* and *Frenzy.* This is intimated in that Expreſſion, *v.* 17. *when he came to himſelf,* which intimates that he had been *beſide himſelf,* ſure he was ſo when he left his Father's Houſe, and much more ſo, when he join'd himſelf to the Citizen of that Country. *Madneſs* is ſaid to be *in the Heart of Sinners,* Eccl. 9. 3. Satan has got Poſſeſſion of the Soul, and how raging mad was he that was poſſeſs'd by *Legion.* Sinners like thoſe that are *mad* deſtroy themſelves with *fooliſh Luſts,* and yet at the ſame Time deceive themſelves with *fooliſh Hopes,* and they are of all diſeaſed Perſons moſt Enemies to their own Cure.

Secondly, We have here his *Return* from this *Ramble,* his *penitent Return* to his Father again. When he was brought to the laſt Extremity, then he bethought himſelf how much it was his Intereſt to go Home. *Note,* We muſt not deſpair of the worſt, for while there's Life there's Hope. The Grace of God can ſoften the hardeſt Heart, and give a happy Turn to the ſtrongeſt Stream of Corruption. Now obſerve here,

1. What was the Occaſion of his Return and Repentance, it was his *Affliction,* when he was in *Want,* then he *came to himſelf. Note,* Afflictions when they are ſanctify'd by Divine Grace, prove happy Means of turning Sinners from the Error of their Ways. By them the Ear is open'd to Diſcipline, and the Heart diſpos'd to receive Inſtruction; and they are ſenſible Proofs both of the Vanity of the World, and of the Miſchievouſneſs of Sin. Apply it ſpiritually when we find the Inſufficiency of Creatures to make us happy, and having try'd all other Ways of Relief for our poor Souls in vain, then 'tis Time to think of returning to God. When we ſee what miſerable Comforters, what Phyſicians of no Value, all but Chriſt are, for a Soul that groans under the Guilt and Power of Sin, and no *Man gives unto us* what we need, then ſure we will apply ourſelves to Jeſus Chriſt.

2. What was the *Preparative* in it, and that was *Conſideration:* He ſaid within himſelf, he reaſon'd with himſelf, when he recovered his right Mind, *How many hired Servants of my Father's have Bread enough? Note,* Conſideration is the firſt Step towards Converſion, *Ezek.* 18. 28. *He conſiders and turns.* To conſider, is to retire into ourſelves, to reflect upon ourſelves, and to compare one thing with another, and determine accordingly.

Now obſerve what it was that he conſider'd,

1. He conſider'd how bad his Condition was, *I periſh with Hunger:* Not only I am *hungry,* but *I periſh with Hunger,* for I ſee not what Way to expect Relief. *Note,* Sinners will not come to the Service of Chriſt, till they are brought to ſee themſelves juſt ready to periſh in the Service of Sin, and the Conſideration of that ſhould drive us to Chriſt. *Maſter, ſave us, we periſh.* And tho' we be thus driven to Chriſt, he will not therefore reject us, nor think himſelf diſhonoured by our being forc'd to him, but rather honour'd by his being apply'd to in a deſperate Caſe.

(2.) He conſider'd how much better it might be made, if he would but return, *How many hired Servants of my Father's,* the meaneſt in his Family, the very Day-Labourers, *have Bread enough and to ſpare;* ſuch a good Houſe doth he keep. *Note,* In our *Father's Houſe,* there is Bread for all his Family; this was taught by the twelve Loaves of *Shew-Bread,* that were conſtantly upon the holy Table in the Sanctuary, a Loaf for every Tribe. 2. There's *enough* and to *ſpare,* enough for all, enough for each, enough to ſpare for ſuch as will join themſelves to his Domeſticks, enough and *to ſpare* for *Charity: Yet there is Room;* there are *Crumbs* that fall from his Table, which many would be glad of, and thankful for. 3. Even the *hired Servants* in God's Family are well provided for; the meaneſt that will but hire themſelves into his Family, to *do* his Work, and *depend* upon his Rewards, ſhall be well provided for. 4. The Conſideration of this ſhould encourage Sinners that have gone aſtray from God, to think of returning to him. Thus that Adultereſs reaſons with herſelf, when ſhe is diſappointed in her new Lovers. *I will go and return to my firſt Husband, for then it was better with me than now,* Hoſ. 2. 7.

3. What was the Purpoſe of it. Since it is ſo that his Condition is ſo bad, and may be better'd by returning to his Father, his Conſideration iſſues at length in this Concluſion, *I will ariſe and go to my Father. Note,* Good Purpoſes are good Things, but ſtill good Performances are all in all.

1. He determin'd what to do, *I will ariſe and go to my Father.* He will not take any longer Time to conſider of it, but will *forthwith* ariſe and go. Tho' he be in a *far Country,* a great Way off from his Father's Houſe, yet as far as it is, he will return; every Step of Backſliding from God, muſt be a Step back again in return to him. Tho' he be *joined to a Citizen of this Country,* he makes no Difficulty of breaking his Bargain with him: We *are not Debtors to the Fleſh,* we are under no Obligation at all to our *Egyptian* Task-Maſters, to give them Warning, but are at Liberty to quit the Service when we will. Obſerve with what Reſolution he ſpeaks, *I will ariſe and go to my Father,* I'm reſolv'd I will, whatever the Iſſue be, rather than *ſtay* here and *ſtarve.*

2. He determin'd what to ſay. True Repentance is a Riſing and Coming to God; *Behold we come unto thee.* But what Words ſhall we take with us? He here conſiders what to ſay. *Note,* In all our Addreſſes to God, it is good to deliberate with ourſelves before-hand what we ſhall ſay, that we may *order our Cauſe before him,* and *fill our Mouth with Arguments.* We have *Liberty of Speech,* and we ought to conſider ſeriouſly with ourſelves how we may uſe that Liberty to the utmoſt, and yet not abuſe it.

Let us obſerve what he purpos'd to ſay:

1. He would confeſs his Fault and Folly; *I have ſinned. Note,* Foraſmuch as we have all ſinned, it behoves, as well becomes us, to own that we have ſinned. The Confeſſion of Sin is required and inſiſted upon as a neceſſary Condition of Peace and Pardon. If we plead *not guilty,* we put ourſelves upon a Tryal by the Covenant of Innocency, which will certainly condemn us: If we plead *guilty,* with a contrite, penitent and obedient Heart, we refer ourſelves to the Covenant of Grace, which offers Forgiveneſs to thoſe that *confeſs their Sins.*

2. He would aggravate it, and would be ſo far from extenuating the Matter, that he would *lay Load* upon himſelf for it. I have ſinned *againſt Heaven,* and *before thee.* Let thoſe that are *undutiful* to their *earthly Parents,* think of this, they ſin *againſt Heaven, and before God.* Offences againſt them, are Offences againſt God. Let us all think of this, as that which renders our *Sin exceeding ſinful,* and ſhould renders us exceeding ſorrowful for it. (1.) That Sin is committed in Contempt of God's Authority over us. We have *ſinned againſt Heaven.* God is here call'd *Heaven,* to ſignify how highly he is exalted above us, and the Dominion he has over us, for the *Heavens do rule.* The Malignity of Sin aims high, 'tis *againſt Heaven.* The daring Sinner is ſaid to have *ſet his Mouth againſt the Heavens,* Pſal. 73. 9. Yet 'tis *impotent* Malice, for we cannot hurt the Heavens: Nay, 'tis fooliſh Malice, what is ſhot *againſt the Heavens,* will return upon the Head of him that ſhoots it, *Pſal.* 7. 16. Sin is an Affront to the *God of Heaven,* 'tis a Forfeiture of the Glories and Joys of Heaven, and a Contradiction of the Deſigns of the Kingdom of Heaven. (2.) 'Tis committed in Contempt of God's Eye upon us. I have ſinned *againſt Heaven,* and yet *before thee,* and under thine Eye, than which there could not be a greater Affront put upon him.

3. He would judge and condemn himſelf for it, and acknowledge himſelf to have forfeited all the Privileges of the Family; *I am no more worthy to be called thy Son,* v. 29. He doth not deny the Relation, for that was all he had to truſt to, but he owns his Father might juſtly deny the Relation, and ſhut his Doors againſt him. He had at his own Demand the Portion of Goods that belong'd to him, and had Reaſon to expect no more. *Note,* It becomes Sinners to acknowledge themſelves unworthy to receive any Favour from God, and to humble and abaſe themſelves before him.

4. He would nevertheleſs ſue for Admiſſion into the Family, tho' it were in the meaneſt Poſt there. *Make me as one of thy hired Servants;* that's good enough, and too good for me.

Note, True Penitents have a high Value for God's Houſe, and the Privileges of it, and will be glad of any Place, ſo they may but be in it, tho' it be but as *Door-keepers*, Pſal. 84. 10. If it be impos'd on him as a Mortification, to ſit with the Servants, he will not only ſubmit to it, but count it a Preferment in Compariſon with his preſent State. Thoſe that return to God from whom they have revolted, cannot but be deſirous ſome Way or other to be employ'd for him, and put into a Capacity of ſerving and honouring him. *Make me as a hired Servant*, that I may ſhew I love my Father's Houſe as much as ever I ſlighted it.

5. In all this he would have an Eye to his Father as a Father. I will ariſe and go to *my Father*, and *will ſay unto him, Father. Note*, Eying God as a Father, and our Father, will be of great Uſe in our Repentance and Return to him. 'Twill make our Sorrow for Sin genuine, our Reſolutions againſt it ſtrong, and encourage us to hope for Pardon. God delights both by Penitents and Petitioners to be call'd *Father* ; *Is not* Ephraim *a dear Son ?*

4. What was the Performance of this Purpoſe. *He aroſe and came to his Father.* His good Reſolve he put in Execution without Delay ; he ſtruck while the Iron was hot, and did not adjourn the Thought to ſome more convenient Seaſon. *Note*, 'Tis our Intereſt ſpeedily to cloſe with our Convictions. Have we ſaid We will ariſe and go ? Let us immediately ariſe and come. He did not come half-way, and then pretend he was tir'd and could get no further, but weak and weary as he was he made a thorough Buſineſs of it. *If thou wilt return, O Iſrael, return unto me*, and *do thy firſt Works.*

Thirdly, We have here his Reception and Entertainment with his Father. *He came to his Father* ; but was he welcome ? Yes, heartily welcome. And by the Way, it is an Example to Parents whoſe Children have been fooliſh and diſobedient, if they repent and ſubmit themſelves, not to be harſh and ſevere with them, but to be govern'd in ſuch a Caſe, by the Wiſdom that is from above, which is *gentle and eaſie to be intreated* ; herein let them be Followers of God, and merciful as he is: But it is chiefly deſign'd to ſet forth the Grace and Mercy of God to poor Sinners, that repent, and return to him, and his Readineſs to forgive them. Now here obſerve,

1. The great Love and Affection wherewith the Father received the Son, *v.* 20. *When he was yet a great Way off his Father ſaw him.* He expreſs'd his Kindneſs, before the Son expreſs'd his Repentance ; for God prevents us with the Bleſſings of his Goodneſs, even *before we call, he anſwers* ; for he knows what is in our Hearts. *I ſaid I will confeſs, and thou forgaveſt.* How lively are the Images of this here ! (1.) Here were *Eyes of Mercy*, and thoſe Eyes quick-ſighted ; *when he was yet a great Way off his Father ſaw him*, before any other of the Family were aware of him, as if from the Top of ſome high Tower, he had been looking that Way that his Son was gone, with ſuch a Thought as this, O that I could ſee yonder wretched Son of mine, coming home ! This intimates God's Deſire of the Converſion of Sinners, and his Readineſs to meet them that are coming towards him. *He looketh on Men* when they are gone aſtray from him, to ſee whether they will return to him, and he is aware of the firſt Inclination towards him. (2.) Here were *Bowels of Mercy*, and thoſe Bowels turning within him, and yearning at the Sight of his Son, he *had Compaſſion.* Miſery is the Object of Pity, even the Miſery of a Sinner, tho' he has brought it upon himſelf, yet God compaſſionates him. *His Soul was grieved for the Miſery of Iſrael*, Hoſ. 11. 8. Jud. 10. 16. (3.) Here were *Feet of Mercy*, and thoſe Feet quick-paced, *he ran*, this notes how ſwift God is to ſhew Mercy. The prodigal Son came ſlowly, under a Burthen of Shame and Fear, but the tender Father ran to meet him with his Encouragements. (4.) Here were *Arms of Mercy*, and thoſe Arms ſtretch'd out to embrace him ; *he fell on his Neck* ; tho' guilty, and deſerving to be beaten, tho' dirty and newly come from feeding Swine, that any one that had not the ſtrongeſt and tendereſt Compaſſions of a Father, would have loathed to touch him ; yet he thus takes him in his Arms, and lays him in his Boſom. Thus dear are true Penitents to God, thus welcome to the Lord Jeſus. (5.) Here are *Lips of Mercy*, and thoſe Lips dropping as a Honey-Comb, *he kiſſed him* ; this Kiſs not only *aſſur'd* him of his *Welcome*, but *ſeal'd his Pardon* ; his former Follies ſhall be all forgiven, and not mention'd againſt him, nor is one Word ſaid by Way of upbraiding. This was like *David*'s kiſſing *Abſalom*, 2 Sam. 14. 33. And all this ſpeaks how ready, and free, and forward the Lord Jeſus is, to receive and entertain poor returning, repenting Sinners, according to his Father's Will.

2. The penitent Submiſſion which the poor Prodigal made to his Father, *v.* 21. He *ſaid unto him, Father I have ſinned.* As it commends the good Father's Kindneſs, that he ſhew'd it before the Prodigal expreſs'd his Repentance ; ſo it commends the Prodigal's Repentance, that he expreſs'd it after his Father had ſhew'd him ſo much Kindneſs. When he had receiv'd the Kiſs which ſeal'd his Pardon, yet he ſaid, *Father, I have ſinned. Note*, Even thoſe that have receiv'd the Pardon of their Sins, and the comfortable Senſe of their Pardon, yet muſt have in their Hearts, a ſincere Contrition for it, and with their Mouths muſt make a penitent Confeſſion of it, even of thoſe Sins which they have Reaſon to hope are pardon'd. *David* penn'd *Pſal.* 51. after *Nathan* had ſaid, *The Lord has taken away thy Sin, thou ſhalt not die.* Nay, the comfortable Senſe of the Pardon of Sin, ſhould increaſe our Sorrow for it, and that's ingenuous evangelical Sorrow, which is increas'd by ſuch a Conſideration. See *Ezek.* 16. 6. *Thou ſhalt be aſham'd and confounded, when I am pacified towards thee.* The more we ſee of God's Readineſs to *forgive us*, the more difficult it ſhould be to us to *forgive ourſelves.*

3. The ſplendid Proviſion which this kind Father made for the returning Prodigal. He was going on in his Submiſſion, but one Word we find in his Purpoſe what to ſay, *v.* 19. which we do not find he did ſay, *v.* 21. and that was, *make me as one of the hired Servants.* We cannot think he *forgot* it, much leſs that he *chang'd his Mind*, and was now either leſs *deſirous* to be in the Family, or leſs *willing to be a hired Servant* there, than when he made that Purpoſe ; but his Father interrupted him, prevented his ſaying it ; Hold, Son, talk no more of thine Unworthineſs, thou art heartily welcome, and tho' not *worthy to be call'd a Son*, ſhalt be treated as a *dear Son*, as a *pleaſant Child.* He who is thus entertain'd at firſt, needs not ask to be made *as a hired Servant.* Thus when *Ephraim bemoaned himſelf*, God comforted him, *Jer.* 31. 18, 20. 'Tis ſtrange that here is not one Word of Rebuke, why did you not ſtay with your Harlots and your Swine ? You could never find the Way Home, 'till beaten hither with your own Rod. No, here's nothing like this, which intimates, that when God forgives the Sins of true Penitents, he forgets them, he remembers them no more, they *ſhall not be mention'd againſt them*, Ezek. 18. 22.

But this is not all ; here is rich and royal Proviſion made for him, according to his Birth and Quality, far beyond what he did or could expect. He would have thought it ſufficient, and been very thankful, if his Father had but taken Notice of him, and bid him go to the Kitchen and get his Dinner with the Servants ; but God doth for thoſe who return to their Duty, and caſt themſelves upon his Mercy, abundantly above what they are able to ask or think. The Prodigal came Home between Hope and Fear, Fear of being rejected, and Hope of being receiv'd ; but his Father was not only better to him than his Fears, but better to him than his Hopes, not only *receiv'd* him, but receiv'd him with Reſpect.

1. He came home *in Rags*, and his Father not only *cloth'd* him but *adorn'd* him. He *ſaid to the Servants*, who all attended their Maſter, upon Notice that his Son was come, *Bring forth the beſt Robe, and put it on him.* The worſt old Clothes in the Houſe might have ſerv'd, and had been good enough for him ; but the Father calls not for a *Coat*, but for a *Robe*, the Garment of Princes and great Men, the *beſt Robe*, τὴν Στόλην τὴν πρώτην, there's a double Emphaſis, *that Robe, that principal Robe*, you know which I mean ; the *firſt Robe*, ſo it may be read, the Robe he wore before he run his Ramble. When Backſliders repent and do their *firſt Works*, they ſhall be receiv'd, and dreſt in their *firſt Robes.* Bring hither that Robe, and put it on him ; he will be aſham'd to wear it, and think it ill becomes him, who comes home in ſuch a dirty Pickle, but *put it on him* and do not offer it him only. And *put a Ring on his Hand*, a Signet Ring, with the Arms of the Family, in Token of his being own'd as a Branch of the Family : Rich People wore Rings, and his Father hereby ſignified, that tho' he had ſpent one Portion, yet upon his Repentance he intended him another. He came home barefoot, his Feet perhaps ſore with Travel, and therefore put *Shoes on his Feet*, to make him eaſie. Thus doth the Grace of God provide for true Penitents. (1.) The *Righteouſneſs of Chriſt* is the Robe, that *principal Robe* with which they are cloth'd ; they *put on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, are *cloth'd* with that *Sun.* The *Robe of Righteouſneſs* is the *Garment of Salvation*, Iſa. 61. A *new Nature* is this *beſt* Robe, true Penitents are cloth'd with that, being ſanctified throughout. (2.) The *Earneſt* of the Spirit, by whom we are ſeal'd to the Day of Redemption, is the *Ring on the Hand.* After that *ye believed, ye were ſealed.* They that are ſanctified are adorn'd and dignify'd, are put in Power, as *Joſeph* was by *Pharaoh*'s giving him a Ring. *Put a Ring on his Hand*, to be before him a conſtant Memorial of his Father's Kindneſs, that he may never forget it. (3.) The *Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace*, is *Shoes for our Feet*, Eph. 6. 13. ſo that compar'd with this here ſignifies, (ſaith *Grotius*) that God when he receives true Penitents into his Favour, makes Uſe of them for the convincing and converting of others, by their Inſtructions, at leaſt by their Examples. *David* when pardon'd will teach Tranſgreſſors God's Ways, and *Peter* when he is converted will ſtrengthen his Brethren. Or it intimates, that they ſhall go on chearfully and with Reſolution in the Way of Religion, as a Man doth when he hath Shoes on his Feet, over as he does when he is barefoot.

2. He came home *hungry*, and his Father not only *fed him*, but *feaſted him*, v. 23. *Bring hither the fatted Calf*, that has been Stall fed, and long reſerv'd for ſome ſpecial Occaſion, and *kill it*, that my Son may have his Belly full of the beſt we have. Cold Meat might have ſerv'd, or the Leavings of the laſt Meal, but he ſhall have freſh Meat and hot Meat, and the fatted Calf can never be better beſtow'd. *Note*, There is excellent Food

provided by our heavenly Father, for all thoſe that *ariſe* and *come to him*. Chriſt himſelf is the Bread of Life; his Fleſh is Meat indeed, and his Blood Drink indeed; in him there is a Feaſt for Souls, a Feaſt of fat Things. 'Twas a great Change with the Prodigal, who but a while ago *would fain have fill'd his Belly with Husks*. How ſweet will the Supplies of the new Covenant be, and the Reliſhes of its Comforts, to thoſe who have been *labouring in vain* for Satisfaction in the Creature: Now he found his own Words made good, *In my Father's Houſe there is Bread enough and to ſpare*.

4. The great Joy and Rejoycing that there was for his Return. The bringing of the fatted Calf was deſign'd to be not only a *Feaſt* for him, but a *Feſtival* for the Family, *let us all eat and be merry*, for it is a good Day; for *this my Son was dead*, when he was in his Ramble, but his Return is as *Life from the dead*, he *is alive again*; we thought he was dead, having heard nothing from him of a long Time, but behold *he lives*; he *was loſt*, we gave him up for loſt, we diſpair'd of hearing of him, but he *is found*. *Note*, 1. The Converſion of a Soul from Sin to God, is the Raiſing of that Soul from Death to Life, and the finding of that which ſeem'd to be loſt. 'Tis a great, and wonderful, and happy Change. What was in itſelf *dead*, is made *alive*, what was *loſt* to God and his Church, is *found*, and what was *unprofitable*, becomes *profitable*, Philem. 11. 'tis ſuch a Change as that upon the Face of the Earth when the Spring returns. 2. The Converſion of Sinners is greatly pleaſing to the God of Heaven, and all that belong to his Family ought to rejoyce in it; thoſe in Heaven do, and thoſe on Earth ſhould. Obſerve, 'twas *the Father* that began the Joy, and ſet all the reſt on rejoycing; therefore we ſhould be glad of the Repentance of Sinners, becauſe it accompliſhes God's Deſigns, it is the bringing of thoſe to Chriſt, whom the Father had given him, and in whom he will be for ever glorified. *We joy for your Sakes before our God*, with an Eye to him, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 9. and *ye are our Rejoycing in the Preſence of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, who is the Maſter of the Family, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 19.

The Family comply'd with the Maſter, *they began to be merry*. *Note*, God's Children and Servants ought to be affected with Things as he is.

Fourthly, We have here the *repining and envying of the elder Brother*, which is deſcrib'd by Way of Reproof to the Scribes and Phariſees, to ſhew them the Folly and Wickedneſs of their Diſcontent at the Repentance and Converſion of the Publicans and Sinners, and the Favour Chriſt ſhow'd them; and he repreſents it ſo as not to aggravate the Matter, but as allowing them ſtill the Privileges of elder Brethren; the Jews had ſo, tho' the Gentiles were favour'd, for the preaching of the Goſpel muſt *begin* at *Jeruſalem*. Chriſt, when he reproves them for their Fault, yet ſpoke them fair, to ſmooth them into a good Temper towards the poor Publicans. But by the *elder Brother* here, we may underſtand thoſe that are really good, and have been ſo from their Youth up, and never went aſtray into any vicious Courſe of Living; who *comparatively* need no Repentance: And to ſuch theſe Words in the Cloſe, *Son, thou art ever with me*, are applicable without any Difficulty, but not to the Scribes and Phariſees.

Now concerning the elder Brother, Obſerve

1. How *fooliſh* and *fretful* he was, upon Occaſion of his Brother's Reception, and how he was diſguſted at it. It ſeems he was abroad *in the Field*, in the Country, when his Brother came, and by that Time he was return'd home, the *Mirth* was *begun*; when *he drew nigh to the Houſe, he heard Muſick and Dancing*, either while the Dinner was in getting ready, or rather after they had eaten and were full; *v.* 25. He enquir'd *what thoſe Things meant*, v. 26. and was inform'd, that his Brother was come, and his Father had made him a Feaſt for his *Welcome home*, and great Joy there was, *becauſe he had receiv'd him ſafe and ſound*, v. 27. 'Tis but one Word in the Original, he had *receiv'd* him, ὑγιαίνοντα, *in Health*, well both in Body and Mind. He receiv'd him not only well in Body, but a Penitent, return'd to his *right Mind*, and well reconcil'd to his Father's Houſe, cur'd of his Vices, and his rakiſh Diſpoſition, elſe he had not been receiv'd *ſafe* and *ſound* Now this diſoblig'd him to the higheſt Degree; *he was angry and would not go in*, v. 28. not only becauſe he was reſolv'd he would not himſelf join in the Mirth, but becauſe he would ſhew his Diſpleaſure at it, and would intimate to his Father, that he ſhould have kept out his younger Brother. This ſhews what is a common Fault, (1.) In Men's Families, That thoſe who have always been a Comfort to their Parents, think they ſhould have the Monopoly of their Parents Favours, and are apt to be *too ſharp* upon thoſe who have tranſgreſs'd, and to grudge their Parents Kindneſs to them. (2.) In God's Family, Thoſe that are comparatively *Innocents*, ſeldom know how to be compaſſionate towards thoſe that are manifeſtly *Penitents*. The Language of ſuch we have here in what the *elder Brother* ſaid, *v.* 29, 30. and it is written for Warning to thoſe that by the Grace of God are kept from ſcandalous Sin, and kept in the Way of Virtue and Sobriety, that they ſin not after the Similitude of this Tranſgreſſion. Let us obſerve the Particulars of it.

(1.) He *boaſted of himſelf*, and of *his own Virtue* and *Obedience*. He had not only not out-ran his Father's Houſe, as his Brother did, but had made himſelf as a *Servant* in it, and had done ſo long. *Lo theſe many Years do I ſerve thee, neither tranſgreſſed I at any Time thy Commandment*. *Note*, It is too common for thoſe that are better than their Neighbours to brag of it, yea, and to make their Boaſts of it before God himſelf, as if he were indebted to them for it. I am apt to think this elder Brother ſaid more than was true, when he glory'd that he had *never tranſgreſſed his Father's Commands*, for then I believe he would not have been ſo obſtinate as now he was, to *his Father's Intreaties*. However we will admit it comparatively, he had not been ſo diſobedient as his Brother had been. O what need have good Men to take heed of Pride, a Corruption that ariſeth out of the Aſhes of other Corruptions. Thoſe that have long ſerv'd God, and been kept from groſs Sin, have a great deal to be humbly thankful for; but nothing proudly to boaſt of.

2. He *complain'd of his Father*, as if he had not been ſo kind to him as he ought to have been, who had been ſo dutiful; *thou never gaveſt me a Kid, that I might make merry with my Friends*. He was out of Humour now, elſe he would not have made this Complaint; for no Queſtion if he had ask'd ſuch a Thing at any Time, he might have had it at firſt Word; and we have Reaſon to think he did not deſire it; but the *killing of the fatted Calf* put him upon making this peiviſh Reflection. When Men are *in Paſſion* they are apt to reflect ſo as they would not, if they were in their right Mind. He had been fed at his Father's Table, and had many a Time been merry with him and the Family, but his Father had never given him ſo much as a Kid, which was but a ſmall Token of Love compar'd with the *fatted Calf*. *Note*, Thoſe that think *highly* of themſelves and their Services, are apt to think *hardly* of their Maſter, and meanly of his Favours. We ought to own ourſelves utterly unworthy of thoſe Mercies which God hath thought fit to give us, much more of thoſe that he hath not thought fit to give us, and therefore we muſt not *complain*. He would have had a Kid to *make merry with his Friends* abroad, whereas the *fatted Calf* he grudg'd ſo much, was given to his Brother, not to *make merry with his Friends* abroad, but *with the Family* at home: The Mirth of God's Children ſhould be with their Father and his Family, in Communion with God and his Saints, and not with any *other Friends*.

3. He was very *ill-humour'd* towards his younger Brother, and harſh in what he thought and ſaid concerning him. Some good People are apt to be overtaken in this Fault, nay, and to indulge themſelves too much in it; to look with Diſdain upon thoſe who have not preſerved their Reputation ſo clean as they have done, and to be ſower and moroſe towards them, yea, tho' they have given very good Evidences of their Repentance and Reformation; this is not the Spirit of Chriſt, but of the Phariſees. Let us obſerve the Inſtances of it.

1. He *would not go in*, except his Brother be *turn'd out*; one Houſe ſhall not hold him and his own Brother, no not his *Father's Houſe*. The Language of this, was that of the Phariſee, *Iſa.* 65. 5. *Stand by thy ſelf, come not near me, for I am holier than thou*: and *Luke* 18. 11. *I am not as other Men are, nor even as this Publican*. *Note*, Tho' we are to ſhun the Society of thoſe Sinners whom we are in Danger of being infected by, yet we muſt not be ſhy of the Company of Penitent Sinners, whom we may get good by. He ſaw his Father had *taken him in*, and yet he would not *go in* to him. *Note*, We think too well of ourſelves, if we cannot find in our Hearts to *receive* thoſe God *hath received*, and to admit thoſe into Favour and Friendſhip, and Fellowſhip with us, whom we have Reaſon to think God has a Favour for, and are taken into Friendſhip and Fellowſhip with him.

2. He would not call him *Brother*; but this *thy Son*, which ſounds arrogantly, and not without Reflection upon his Father, as if his Indulgence had made him a Prodigal; he is *thy Son*, thy Darling. *Note*, Forgetting the Relation we ſtand in to our Brethren, as Brethren, and diſowning that, is at the Bottom of all our Neglects of our Duty to them, and our Contradictions to that Duty. Let us give our Relations, both in the Fleſh and in the Lord, the Titles that belong to them. Let the rich call the poor *Brethren*, and let the Innocents call the Penitents ſo.

3. He *aggravated his Brother's Faults*, and made the worſt of them, endeavouring to incenſe his Father againſt him: he is *thy Son, who hath devoured thy Living with Harlots*. 'Tis true, he had ſpent his own Portion fooliſhly enough, whether *upon Harlots* or no, we are not told before, perhaps that was only the Language of his elder Brother's Jealouſy and ill Will; but that he had devour'd *all his Father's Living* was falſe, the Father had ſtill a good Eſtate; now this ſhows how apt we are in cenſuring our Brethren to *make the worſt* of every Thing, and to ſet it out in the blackeſt Colours,, which is not doing as we would be done by, nor as our heavenly Father doth by us, who is not extreme to mark Iniquities.

4. He *grudg'd* him the *Kindneſs* that his Father *ſhew'd him*. *Thou haſt kill'd for him the fatted Calf*, as if he were ſuch a Son as ſhould be. *Note*, It is an ill Thing to *envy* Penitents the Grace of God, and to have our Eye evil, becauſe he is good. As we muſt not envy thoſe that *are* the worſt of Sinners, the Gifts of common Providence, *Let not thine Heart envy Sinners*,

ſo we muſt not envy thoſe that *have been* the worſt of Sinners, the Gifts of Covenant Love upon their Repentance; we muſt not envy them their Pardon and Peace, and Comfort, no, nor any extraordinary Gift God beſtows upon them, which makes them eminently acceptable or uſeful. *Paul* before his Converſion had been a Prodigal, had *devour'd* his heavenly Father's *Living*, by the *Havock* he made of the *Church*, yet when after his Converſion he had greater Meaſures of Grace given him, and more Honour put upon him than the other Apoſtles, they who were the elder Brethren, that had been *ſerving Chriſt*, when he was perſecuting him, and had not tranſgreſſed at any Time his Commandments, did not envy him his Viſions and Revelations, nor his more extenſive Uſefulneſs, but *glorified God in him*, which ought to be an Example to us, as the Reverſe of this elder Brother.

2. Let us now ſee how *favourable* and *friendly* his Father was in *his Carriage towards him*, when he was thus ſower and ill-humour'd, and this is as ſurprizing as the former. Methinks the Mercy and Grace of our God in Chriſt ſhines almoſt as bright in his tender and gentle bearing with *pieviſh Saints*, repreſented by his elder Brother here, as before in his Reception of prodigal Sinners upon their Repentance, repreſented before by the younger Brother. The Diſciples of Chriſt themſelves had many Infirmities, and were Men ſubject to like Paſſions as others, yet Chriſt bare with them, as a Nurſe with her Children, See 1 *Theſ.* 2. 7.

1. When he would not come in, *his Father came out and intreated him*, ſpoke him fair, gave him good Words, and deſir'd him to come in. He might juſtly have ſaid, If he will not come in, let him ſtay out, ſhut the Doors againſt him, and ſend him to ſeek a Lodging where he can find it: Is not the Houſe my own, and may I not do what I pleaſe in it? The fatted Calf my own, and may I not do what I pleaſe with it? No, as he went to meet the younger Son, ſo now he goes to court the elder, did not ſend a Servant out with a kind Meſſage to him, but went himſelf. Now (1.) This is deſign'd to *repreſent* to us the Goodneſs of God; how ſtrangely gentle and winning he has been towards thoſe that were ſtrangely froward and provoking. He reaſon'd with *Cain*, *Why art thou Wrath*? He *bare* Iſrael's *Manners in the Wilderneſs*, Acts 15. 18. How mildly did God reaſon with *Elijah*, when he was upon the Fret, 1 *Kings* 19. 4, 5, 6. and eſpecially with *Jonah*, whoſe Caſe was very parallel with this here, for he was there diſquieted at the Repentance of *Nineveh*, and the Mercy ſhow'd it, as the elder Brother here, and thoſe Queſtions, *Doſt thou well to be angry*? And *ſhould I not ſpare* Nineveh? are not unlike theſe Expoſtulations of the Father with the elder Brother here. (2.) It is to teach all Superiors to be mild and gentle with their Inferiors, even when they are in a Fault, and paſſionately juſtifie themſelves in it, than which nothing can be more provoking, and yet even in that Caſe let Fathers *not provoke their Children to more Wrath*, and *Maſter's forbear Threatning*, and both *ſhew all Meekneſs*.

2. His Father aſſur'd him that the kind Entertainment he gave his younger Brother, neither was any Reflection upon him, nor ſhould be any Prejudice to him, *v.* 31. Thou ſhalt fare never the worſe for it, nor have ever the leſs for it: *Son, thou art ever with me*, the Reception of him is no Rejection of thee, nor what is laid out on him any ſenſible Diminution of what I deſign for thee, thou ſhalt ſtill remain entitled to the *Pars enitia*, ſo our Law calls it, the *double Portion*, ſo the Jewiſh Law call'd it, thou ſhalt be *Heres ex Aſſo*, ſo the Roman Law call'd it, *All that I have is thine*, by an indefeaſable Title. If he had not *given him a Kid to make merry with his Friends*, he had eaten Bread at his Table continually: And 'tis better be *happy with our Father* in Heaven, than *merry* with any *Friend* we have in this World. *Note*, (1.) 'Tis the unſpeakable Happineſs of all the Children of God, who keep cloſe to their Father's Houſe, that they are and ſhall be ever with him; they are ſo in this World by Faith, they ſhall be ſo in the other World by Fruition, and all that he has is theirs; for *if Children, then Heirs*, Rom. 8. 17. (2.) Therefore we ought not to envy others God's Grace to them, becauſe we ſhall have never the leſs for their ſharing in it. If we be true Believers, all that God is, and all that he has is *ours*; and if others come to be true Believers, all that he is, and all that he has is theirs too, and yet we have not the leſs: As they that walk in the Light and Warmth of the Sun, have all the Benefit they can have by it, and yet not the leſs for others having as much: For Chriſt in his Church is like as they ſay of the Soul in the Body, 'tis *tota in toto*, and yet *tota in qualibet Parte*.

3. His Father gave him a good Reaſon for this uncommon Joy in the Family, *v.* 32. *It was meet that we ſhould make merry and be glad.* He might have inſiſted upon his own Authority; it was *my Will* that the Family ſhould make merry and be glad, *ſtat pro Ratione Voluntas.* But it doth not become even thoſe that have Authority to be vouching and appealing to it upon every Occaſion, that doth but make it cheap and common; 'tis better give a convincing Reaſon, as the Father doth here; *it was meet* and very becoming *that we ſhould make merry*, for the Return of a prodigal Son, more than for the Perſeverance of a dutiful Son, for tho' the latter be a greater Bleſſing to a Family, yet the former is a more ſenſible Pleaſure. Any Family would be much more tranſported with Joy at the raiſing of a dead Child to Life, yea, or at the Recovery of a Child from a Sickneſs that was adjudg'd mortal, than for the continued Life and Health of many Children. *Note*, God will be juſtified when he ſpeaks, and all Fleſh ſhall ſooner or later be ſilent before him. We do not find any Reply that the elder Brother made to what his Father ſaid, which intimates that he was intirely ſatisfy'd, and acquieſced in his Father's Will, and was well reconcil'd to his prodigal Brother; and his Father put him in Mind that he was his Brother; *this thy Brother*. *Note*, A good Man, tho' he have not ſuch Command of himſelf at all Times as to *keep his Temper*, yet will, with the Grace of God, *recover his Temper*, tho' *he fall, yet ſhall he not be utterly caſt down.* But as for the Scribes and Phariſees, for whoſe Conviction it was primarily intended, for ought appears they continued the ſame Diſaffection to the Sinners of the Gentiles, and to the Goſpel of Chriſt, becauſe it was preach'd to them.

CHAP. XVI.

The Scope of Chriſt's Diſcourſe in this Chapter, is to awaken and quicken us all, ſo to uſe this World as not to abuſe it; ſo to manage all our Poſſeſſions and Enjoyments here, as that they may make for us, *and may not make* againſt us, *in the other World, for they will do either the one or the other, according as we uſe them now.* (1.) *If we do Good with them, and lay out what we have in Works of Piety and Charity, we ſhall reap the Benefit of it in the World to come, and this he ſhews in the Parable of the unjuſt Steward, who made ſo good a Hand of his Lord's Goods, as that when he was turn'd out of his Stewardſhip, he had a comfortable Subſiſtence to betake himſelf to. The Parable itſelf we have,* v. 1.---8. *The Reddition and Application of it,* v, 9.----13. *And the Contempt which the Phariſees put upon the Doctrine Chriſt preach'd to them, for which he ſharply reprov'd them, adding ſome other weighty Sayings,* v. 14.----18. (2.) *If inſtead of doing Good with our worldly Enjoyments, we make them the Food and Fuel of our Luſts, of our Luxury and Senſuality, and deny Relief to the Poor, we ſhall certainly periſh eternally, and the Things of this World which were thus abus'd, will but add to our Miſery and Torment: This he ſhews in the other Parable of the* rich Man *and* Lazarus, *which has likewiſe a further Reach, and that is to awaken us all to take the Warning given us by the written Word, and not to expect immediate Meſſages from the other World,* v. 19.----31.

AND he ſaid unto his diſciples, There was a certain rich man which had a ſteward; and the ſame was accuſed unto him that he had waſted his Goods. 2 And he called him, and ſaid unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy ſtewardſhip: for thou mayeſt be no longer ſteward. 3 Then the ſteward ſaid within himſelf, what ſhall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the ſtewardſhip: I cannot dig, to beg I am aſhamed. 4 I am reſolved what to do, that when I am put out of the ſtewardſhip, they may receive me into their houſes. 5 So he called every one of his lords debtors unto him, and ſaid unto the firſt, How much oweſt thou unto my lord? 6 And he ſaid, An hundred meaſures of oyl, And he ſaid unto him, Take thy bill, and ſit down quickly, and write fifty. 7 Then ſaid he to another, And how much oweſt thou? And he ſaid, an hundred meaſures of wheat. And he ſaid unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourſcore. 8 And the lord commended the unjuſt ſteward, becauſe he had done wiſely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiſer than the children of light. 9 And I ſay unto you, Make to yourſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs; that when you fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations. 10 He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, is faithful alſo in much: and he that is unjuſt in the leaſt, is unjuſt alſo in much. 11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your truſt the true *riches*? 12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another mans, who ſhall give you that which is your own? 13 ¶ No ſervant can ſerve two maſters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or elſe he will hold to the one, and deſpiſe the other. Ye cannot ſerve God and mammon. 14 And the Phariſees alſo who were covetous, heard all theſe things: and they derided him. 15 And he ſaid unto them, Ye are they which juſtifie your ſelves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly eſteemed amongſt men, is abomination in the ſight of God. 16 The law and the prophets *were* until John: ſince that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man preſſeth into it. 17 And it is eaſier for heaven and earth to paſs, then one tittle of the law to fail. 18 Whoſoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whoſoever marrieth her that is put away from *her* husband, committeth adultery.

We miſtake if we imagine that the Deſign of Chriſt's Doctrine and holy Religion was either to amuſe us with Notions of divine Myſteries, or to entertain us with Notions of divine Mercies: No, The divine Revelation of both thoſe in the Goſpel is intended to engage and quicken us to the Practice of Chriſtian Duties, and as much as any one Thing to the Duty of Benificence, and doing Good to thoſe who ſtand in Need of any Thing that either we have, or can do for them. This our Saviour is here preſſing us to, by minding us that we are but *Stewards of the manifold Grace of God*, and ſince we have in divers Inſtances been unfaithful, and have forfeited the Favour of our Lord, 'tis our Wiſdom to think how we may ſome other Way make what we have in this World turn to a good Account. Parables muſt not be forc'd beyond their primary Intention, and therefore we muſt not hence infer that any one can befriend us if we lye under the Diſpleaſure of our Lord, but that in the general we muſt ſo lay out what we have in Works of Piety and Charity, as that we may meet it again with Comfort on t'other Side Death and the Grave. If we would act wiſely, we muſt be as diligent and induſtrious to employ our Riches in the Acts of Piety and Charity, in Order to promote our future and eternal Welfare, as worldly Men are in laying them out to the greateſt temporal Profit, in making to themſelves Friends with them, and ſecuring other ſecular Intereſts. So Dr. *Clark*.

Now let us conſider,

Firſt, The Parable itſelf, in which all the Children of Men are repreſented as *Stewards* of what they have in this World, and we are but Stewards; whatever we have, the Property of it is God's, we have only the Uſe of it, and that according to the Direction of our great Lord, and for his Honour, Rabbi *Kimchi* quoted by Dr. *Lightfoot* ſaith, "This World is a Houſe, Heaven "the Roof; the Stars the Lights; the Earth with its Fruits "a Table ſpread: The Maſter of the Houſe is the holy and "bleſſed God; Man is the Steward, into whoſe Hands the Goods "of this Houſe are deliver'd; if he behave himſelf well he ſhall "find Favour in the Eyes of his Lord, if not, he ſhall be turn'd "out of his Stewardſhip. Now,

1. Here is the *Diſhoneſty* of this *Steward*. He *waſted his Lord's Goods*, embezzel'd them, miſapply'd them, or through Careleſſneſs ſuffer'd them to be loſt and damag'd; and for this he was *accus'd to his Lord*, v. 1. We are all *liable* to the ſame Charge; we have not made a due Improvement of what God has intruſted us with in this World, but have perverted his Purpoſe. And that we may not be for this *judg'd of our Lord*, it concerns us to *judge ourſelves*.

2. His *Diſcharge* out of his Place. His Lord *call'd for him*, and ſaid, *How is it that I hear this of thee?* I expected better Things from thee: he ſpeaks as one ſorry to find himſelf diſappointed in him, and under a Neceſſity of diſmiſſing him from his Service: It troubles him to hear it, but the Steward cannot deny it, and therefore theirs no Remedy, he muſt make up his Accounts, and be gone in a little Time, *v.* 2. Now this is deſign'd to teach us, (1.) That we muſt all of us ſhortly be diſcharg'd from *our Stewardſhip* in this World; we muſt not always enjoy thoſe Things we now enjoy: Death will come and *diſmiſs* us from our Stewardſhip, will *deprive* us of the Abilities and Opportunities we now have of doing Good, and others will come in our Places and have the ſame. (2.) That our Diſcharge from our Stewardſhip at Death is *juſt*, and what we have deſerv'd, for we have waſted our Lord's Goods, and thereby forfeited our Truſt, ſo that we cannot complain of any Wrong done us. (3.) That when our Stewardſhip is taken from us, we muſt *give an Account* of it to our Lord; *after Death the Judgment*; both which, both our Diſcharge, and our Account, we are fairly warn'd of, and ought to be frequently thinking of.

3. His *After-Wiſdom*; now he began to conſider, *What ſhall I do?* v. 3. He would have done well to have conſider'd that, before he had ſo fooliſhly thrown himſelf out of a good Place by his Unfaithfulneſs; but 'tis better to *conſider* late, than never. *Note*, Since we have all receiv'd Notice that we muſt ſhortly be turn'd out of our Stewardſhip, we are concern'd to conſider what we ſhall do then? He muſt live, which Way ſhall he have a Livelihood? (1.) He knows he has not ſuch a Degree of Induſtry in him, as to get his Living by Work; *I cannot dig*; I cannot earn my Bread by my Labour; but why can he not dig? It doth not appear that he was either old or lame, but the Truth is he is *lazy*; his *cannot* is a *will not*; 'tis not a natural, but a moral Diſability that he labours under; if his Maſter when he turn'd him out of the Stewardſhip, had continued him in his Service as a Labourer, and ſet a Task-Maſter over him, he would have made him dig. He *cannot dig*, for he was never us'd to it; now this intimates, that we cannot get a Livlihood for our Souls, by any Labour for this World; nor indeed can do any Thing to Purpoſe for our Souls, by any Ability of our own.

(2.) He knows he has not ſuch a Degree of *Humility* as to get his Bread by begging; *to beg I am aſham'd.* This was the Language of his Pride, as the former of his Slothfulneſs; thoſe whom God in his Providence has diſabled to help themſelves, ſhould not be *aſham'd* to ask Relief of others. This Steward had more Reaſon to be aſham'd of his cheating his Maſter than of begging his Bread.

(3.) He therefore determines to make Friends of his Lord's Debtors, or his Tenants that were behind of their Rent, and had given Notes under their Hand for it, *v.* 4. *I am reſolved what to do.* My Lord turns me out of his Houſe, I have none of my own to go to. I am acquainted with my Lord's Tenants, have done them many a good Turn, and now I'le do them one more, which will ſo oblige them, that they will bid me welcome to their Houſes; and the beſt Entertainment they afford; and ſo long as I live, at leaſt till I can better diſpoſe of myſelf, I'le quarter upon them, and go from one good Houſe to another. Now the Way he would take to make them his Friends, was by ſtriking off a conſiderable Part of their Debt to his Lord, and giving it in his Accounts ſo much leſs than it was. Accordingly he ſent for one that ow'd his Lord *a hundred Meaſures of Oyl*, in that Commodity he paid his Rent, *Take thy Bill*, ſaid he, here it is, and *ſit down quickly, and write fifty*, v. 6. ſo he reduc'd his Debt to the one half. Obſerve, he was in haſte to have it done, *ſit down quickly* and do it, leſt we be taken treating, and ſuſpected. He took another that ow'd his Lord an hundred Meaſures of Wheat, and from his Bill he cut of a fifth Part, and bid him write *fourſcore*, v. 7. and probably he did the like by others; abating more or leſs according as he expected Kindneſs from them. See here what uncertain Things our worldly Poſſeſſions are; and moſt ſo to thoſe that have moſt of them, who devolve upon others all the Care concerning them, and ſo put it into their Power to *cheat them*, becauſe they will not trouble themſelves to ſee with their own Eyes. See alſo what Treachery is to be found, even among thoſe in whom Truſt is repoſed. How hard is it to find one that a Confidence can be repos'd in? Let God be true, but every Man a Liar. Tho' this Steward is turn'd out for dealing diſhoneſtly, yet ſtill he doth ſo. So rare is it for Men to mend of a Fault, tho they ſmart for it.

4. The Approbation of this, *v.* 8. *The Lord commended the unjuſt Steward, becauſe he had done wiſely.* Whether it be meant of *his Lord*, the Lord of that Servant, who tho' he could not but be angry at his Knavery, yet was pleas'd with his Ingenuity and Policy for himſelf; but taking it ſo, the latter Part of the Verſe muſt be the Words of *our Lord*, and therefore I think the whole is meant of him. Chriſt did as it were ſay, Now commend me to ſuch a Man as this, that knows how to do well for himſelf, how to improve a preſent Opportunity, and how to provide for a future Neceſſity. He doth not commend him becauſe he had done *falſly* to his Maſter, but becauſe he had done *wiſely* for himſelf. Yet perhaps herein he did well for his Maſter too, and but juſtly with the Tenants. He knew what *hard Bargains* he had *ſet them*, ſo that they could not pay their Rent, but having been ſcrew'd up by this Rigor, were thrown *behind Hand*, and they and their Families were likely to go to Ruin; and in Conſideration of this, he now at going off, did as he ought to do both in Juſtice and Charity, not only eaſing them of Part of their Arrears, but abating of their Rent for the future. *How much oweſt thou?* may be meant, what Rent doſt thou ſit upon? Come, ſaith he, I'le ſet thee an eaſier Bargain, and yet no eaſier than what thou oughteſt to have. He had been *all for his Lord*, but now he begins to conſider the Tenants; that he might have *their Favour* when he had loſt *his Lord's*. The abating of their Rent would be a laſting Kindneſs, and more likely to engage them than abating their Arrears only.

Now this Forecaſt of his, for a comfortable Subſiſtence in this World, ſhames our Improvidence for another World. *The Children of this World*, that chuſe and have their Portion in it, *are wiſer for their Generation*, act more conſiderately, and better conſult their worldly Intereſt and Advantage than the *Children of Light*, who enjoy the Goſpel in *their Generation*, i. e. in the Concerns of their Souls and Eternity. *Note*, 1. The Wiſdom of worldly People in the Concerns of this World, is to be *imitated* by us in the Concerns of our Souls; 'tis their Principle to improve their Opportunities; to do that firſt which is moſt needful; in Summer and Harveſt to lay up for Winter; to take a good Bargain when 'tis offer'd them; to truſt the *faithful* and not the *falſe*; O that we were thus wiſe in our ſpiritual Affairs! 2. The Children of Light are commonly *out-done* by the Children of this World. Not that the Children of this World are *truly wiſe*, but only *in their Generation*; but in that they are *wiſer than the Children of Light in theirs*: for tho' we are told that we muſt ſhortly be *turn'd out of our Stewardſhip*, yet we do not provide as we ſhould for ſuch a Day; we live as if we were to be *here always*, and as if there were not *another Life after this*; and are not ſollicitous, as this Steward was, to provide for *hereafter*; tho' as *Children of the Light*, that Light to which Life and Immortality are brought by the Goſpel, we cannot but ſee *another World* before us, yet do not prepare for it, do not ſend our beſt Effects and beſt Affections thither, as we ſhould.

5. The Application of this Parable; and the Inferences drawn from it, *v.* 9. *I ſay unto you*, you my Diſciples, for to them this Parable is directed, *v.* 1. Tho you have but little in this World, conſider how you may do good with that little: Obſerve,

(1.) What it is that our Lord Jeſus here exhorts us to; to provide for our comfortable Reception, to the Happineſs of another World, by making good Uſe of our Poſſeſſions and Enjoyments in this World, *Make to yourſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*, as the Steward with his Lord's Goods made his Lord's Tenants his Friends. 'Tis the Wiſdom of the Men of this World ſo to manage their Money, as that they may have the Benefit of it hereafter, and not for the preſent only; therefore they put it out to Intereſt, buy Land with it, put it into this or the other Fund. Now we ſhould learn of them to make Uſe of our Money, ſo as that we may be the better for it hereafter in another World, as they do, in Hopes to be the better for it hereafter in this World: So *caſt it upon the Waters*, as that we may *find it again after many Days*; Eccl. 11. 1. And in our Caſe, tho' whatever we have is *our Lord's Goods*; yet as long as we diſpoſe of them among *our Lord's Tenants*, and for their Advantage, 'tis ſo far reckon'd from being a Wrong to our Lord, that it is Duty to him as well as Policy for ourſelves.

Note, 1. The Things of this World are the *Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*, or the falſe *Mammon*; not only becauſe often got by Fraud and Unrighteouſneſs, but becauſe thoſe who truſt to it for Satisfaction and Happineſs will certainly be deceiv'd; for Riches are periſhing Things, and will diſappoint thoſe that raiſe their Expectations from them. 2. Tho' this *Mammon of Unrighteneſs* is not to be *truſted to* for a Happineſs, yet it may and muſt be *made Uſe of* in Subſerviency to our Purſuits of that which is our Happineſs. Tho' we cannot find true Satisfaction in it, yet we may *make to ourſelves Friends* with it, not by Way of *Purchaſe* or *Merit*, but *Recommendation*; ſo we may make God and Chriſt our Friends, the good Angels and Saints our Friends, and the Poor our Friends; and 'tis a deſireable Thing to be *befriended* in the Account and State to come. 3. At Death we muſt all *fail* ὅταν ἐκλίπητε. *When ye ſuffer an Eclipſe.* Death eclipſeth us. A Tradeſman is ſaid to *fail* when he becomes a *Bankrupt*; we muſt all thus fail ſhortly; Death ſhuts up the Shop, ſeals up the Hand. Our Comforts and Enjoyments on Earth will *all fail us*; Fleſh and Heart fail. 4. It ought to be our great Concern to make it ſure to ourſelves, that *when we fail* at Death, we may be *receiv'd into everlaſting Habitations* in Heaven. The *Habitations* in Heaven are *everlaſting*; not *made with Hands*, but *eternal*, 2 Cor. 5. 1. Chriſt is gone before, to prepare a Place for thoſe that are his, and is there ready to *receive them*; the Boſom of *Abraham* is ready to receive them, and when a *Guard of Angels* carries them thither, a *Choir of Angels* is ready to receive them there. The poor Saints that are gone before to Glory, will receive thoſe that in this World diſtributed to their Neceſſities. 5. This is a good Reaſon why we ſhould uſe ſuch as we have in the World for the Honour of God, and the Good of our Brethren, that thus we may with them *lay up in Store a good Bond*, a good Security, a good Foundation for the Time to come, for an Eternity to come: See 1 *Tim.* 6. 17, 18, 19. which explains this here.

(2.) With what Arguments he preſſeth this Exhortation; he abounds in Works of Piety and Charity.

1. If we do not make a right Uſe of the *Gifts of God's Providence*, how can we expect from him thoſe preſent and future Comforts which are the *Gifts of his ſpiritual Grace.* Our Saviour here compares theſe, and ſhews that tho' our faithful Uſe of the Things of this World cannot be thought to merit any Favour at the Hand of God, yet our Unfaithfulneſs in the Uſe of them may be juſtly reckon'd a *Forfeiture* of that Grace which is neceſſary to bring us to Glory, and that's it which our Saviour here ſhews, *v.* 10, 11, 12.

(1.) The Riches of this World are the *leſs*; Grace and Glory are the *greater*: Now if we be unfaithful in the leſs, if we uſe the Things in this World to other Purpoſes than thoſe for which they were given us, it may juſtly be fear'd we ſhall be ſo in the Gifts of God's Grace, that we will receive them alſo in vain, and therefore they will be deny'd us. *He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, is faithful alſo in much.* He that ſerves God, and doth Good with his Money, will ſerve God, and do Good with the more noble and valuable Talents of Wiſdom and Grace, and ſpiritual Gifts, and the Earneſtneſs of Heaven; but he that buries the *one Talent* of this World's Wealth, will never improve the *five Talents* of ſpiritual Riches. God witholds his Grace from covetous worldly People, more than we are aware of.

(2.) The Riches of this World are *deceitful* and *uncertain*, 'tis the *unrighteous Mammon*, which is haſting from us apace, and which, if we will make any Advantage of, we muſt beſtir ourſelves quickly; but if we do not, how can we expect to be intruſted with ſpiritual Riches, which are the only *true Riches*, v. 11. Let us be convinc'd of this, that thoſe are *truly* rich, and *very* rich, who are rich *in Faith*, and rich *towards God*, rich in Chriſt, and in the Promiſes, and in the Earneſts of Heaven; and therefore let us lay up a Treaſure in them, and expect our Portion from them, and mind them in the firſt Place, the *Kingdom of God, and the Righteouſneſs thereof*, and then, if other Things be added to us, uſe them *in Ordine ad Spiritualia*, ſo as that by uſing them well we may take the faſter hold of the *true Riches*, and may be qualified to receive yet *more Grace* from God, for *God giveth to a Man that is good in his Sight*, that is, to a free-hearted charitable Man, *Wiſdom, and Knowledge, and Joy*, Eccl. 2. 26. that is, to a Man that is *faithful in the unrighteous Mammon*, he gives the *true Riches.*

(3.) The Riches of this World are *another Man's*; they are τὰ ἀλλότεια, not *our own*, for they are *foreign* to the Soul and its Nature and Intereſt: They are not *our own*, for they are God's, his Title to them is prior and ſuperior to ours; the Property remains in him, we are but Unfructuaries; they are *another Man's*, we have them from others; we uſe them for others, and *what Good has the Owner* from his *Goods* that *increaſe*, ſave *the beholding of them with his Eyes*, while ſtill *they are increaſed that eat them*; and we muſt ſhortly leave them to others, and we know not who. But ſpiritual and eternal Riches are *our own*, they enter into the Soul that becomes *poſſeſs'd* of them, and *inſeparably*; they are a good Part that will never be taken away from us: If we make Chriſt our own, and the Promiſes our own, and Heaven our own, we have that which we may truly call *our own.* But how can we expect God ſhould *enrich us* with theſe, if we do not ſerve him with our worldly Poſſeſſions, which we are but Stewards of?

2. We have no other Way to prove ourſelves the Servants of God, but by giving up ourſelves ſo intirely to his Service, as to make *Mammon*, that is, all our worldly Gain, ſerviceable to us in his Service, *v.* 13. *No Man can ſerve two Maſters*, whoſe Commands are ſo inconſiſtent as thoſe of God and *Mammon* are. If a Man will *love* the World, and *hold to that*, it cannot be but he will *hate God*, and *deſpiſe him*: He will make all his Pretenſions of Religion truckle to his ſecular Intereſts and Deſigns, and the Things of God ſhall be made to help him in ſerving and ſeeking the World; but on the other Hand, If a Man will *love God* and *adhere to him*, he will comparatively *hate* the World (whenever God and the World come in Competition) and will *deſpiſe* it, and make all his Buſineſs and Succeſs in the World ſome Way or other conducive to the Furtherance of him in the Buſineſs of Religion; and the Things of the World ſhall be made to help him in ſerving God, and working out his Salvation. The Matter is here laid plainly before us, *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* So divided are their Intereſts, that their Services can never be *compounded.* If therefore we be determin'd to *ſerve God*, we muſt diſclaim and abjure the Service of the World.

(3.) We are here told what Entertainment this Doctrine of Chriſt met with among the *Phariſees*, and what Rebuke he gave them.

1. They wickedly *ridicul'd* him, *v.* 14. The *Phariſees who were covetous heard all theſe Things*, and could not contradict him, but *they derided him.* Let us conſider this, (1.) As their *Sin*, and the Fruit of their *Covetouſneſs*, which was their reigning Sin, their own Iniquity. *Note*, Many that make a great Profeſſion of Religion, have much Knowledge, and abound in the Exerciſe of Devotion, yet are ruin'd by the Love of the World; nor doth any Thing harden the Heart more againſt the Word of Chriſt. Theſe covetous *Phariſees* could not bear to have that *touch'd* which was their *Dalilah*, their Darling Luſt, for this they derided him, ἐξεμυκτήριζον αὐτόν. They ſnuff'd up their Noſes at him, or blew their Noſes on him; 'tis an Expreſſion of the utmoſt Scorn and Diſdain imaginable; *The Word of the Lord was to them a Reproach*, Jer. 6. 10. They laugh'd at him for going ſo contrary to the Opinion and Way of the World, for endeavouring to recover them from a Sin which they were reſolv'd to hold faſt. *Note*, 'Tis common for thoſe to *make a Jeſt* of the Word of God, who are reſolv'd they will not be rul'd by it, but they will find at laſt it cannot be turn'd off ſo. (2.) As *his Suffering.* Our Lord Jeſus endur'd not only the *Contradiction* of Sinners, but their *Contempt*, they *had him in Deriſion* all the Day. He that ſpake as never Man ſpake, yet was banter'd and ridicul'd that his faithful Miniſters, whoſe Preaching is unjuſtly *derided* may not be diſheartned at it. 'Tis no Diſgrace to a Man to be *laught* at, but to *deſerve to be laught at.* Chriſt's Apoſtles were *mock'd*, and no Wonder; the *Diſciple* is not *greater than his Lord.*

2. He juſtly reprov'd them; not for *deriding* him, he knew how to *deſpiſe the Shame*; but for *deceiving* themſelves with the Shews and Colours of Piety, when they were Strangers to the Power of it, *v.* 15. Here's,

(1.) Their *ſpecious Out-ſide*; nay, it was a *ſplendid* one: (1.) They *juſtified themſelves before Men*, they deny'd whatever Ill was laid to their Charge, even by Chriſt himſelf: They claim'd to be look'd upon as Men of ſingular Sanctity and Devotion, and juſtified themſelves in that Claim. *You are they that* do that ſo as none ever did, that make it your Buſineſs to court the Opinion of Men, and right or wrong will juſtify yourſelves before the World, ſo you are *notorious* for this. (2.) They were *highly eſteem'd among*

Men did not only *acquit* them for any Blame they were under, but *applauded* them and had them in Veneration, not only as *good Men*, but as the *beſt of Men*: Their Sentiments were eſteem'd as Oracles, their Directions as Laws, and their Practices as inviolable Preſcriptions.

(2.) Their *odious Inſide*, which was under the Eye of God: He *knows your Heart*, and it is in his Sight an *Abomination*, for it is full of all Manner of Wickedneſs. *Note*, 1. It is Folly to *juſtify ourſelves before Men*, and to think this enough to bear us out, and bring us off in the Judgment of the great Day, that Men *know no ill* by us, for God who knows our Heart, knows that Ill by us which no one elſe can know. This ought to check our Value for ourſelves, and our Confidence in ourſelves, that *God knows our Hearts*, and how much there is there, for we have Reaſon to abaſe and diſtruſt ourſelves. 2. 'Tis Folly to *judge of Perſons and Things* by the Opinion of Men concerning them, and to go down with the Stream of vulgar Eſtimate; for that which is *highly eſteem'd among Men*, who judge according to outward Appearance, is, perhaps, *an Abomination in the Sight of God*, who ſees Things as they are, and whoſe Judgment we are ſure is according to Truth: And on the contrary there are thoſe whom Men deſpiſe and condemn, that yet are accepted and aproved of God, 2 *Cor.* 10. 18.

3. He turned from them to the Publicans and Sinners, as more likely to be wrought upon by his Goſpel, than thoſe covetous, conceited Phariſees, *v.* 16. The *Law and the Prophets were* indeed *until* John; the old Teſtament Diſpenſation, which was *confin'd* to you Jews, continu'd till *John Baptiſt* appear'd, and you ſeem'd to have the Monopoly of Righteouſneſs and Salvation, and you are puff'd up with this, and this gains you Eſteem among Men, that you are Students in the Law and the Prophets; but ſince *John Baptiſt* appear'd, the *Kingdom of God is preach'd*, a new Teſtament Diſpenſation, which doth not value Men at all for their being Doctors of the Law, but *every Man preſſeth* into the Goſpel Kingdom; Gentiles as well as Jews, and no Man thinks himſelf bound in good Manners to let his Betters go before him into it, or to ſtay till the *Rulers* and the *Phariſees* have led him that Way. 'Tis not ſo much a political national Conſtitution as the Jewiſh Oeconomy was when *Salvation was of the Jews*; but 'tis made a particular perſonal Concern, and therefore *every Man* that is convinc'd he has a Soul to ſave, and an Eternity to provide for, thruſts to get in, leſt he ſhould come ſhort by trifling and complementing. Some give this Senſe of it; they derided Chriſt for ſpeaking in Comtempt of Riches, for though there were not many Promiſes of Riches and other temporal good Things in the *Law and the Prophets*; yet were not many of the beſt of God's Servants very rich, as *Abraham* and *David*? 'Tis true, ſaith Chriſt, ſo it was, but now the Kingdom of God is begun to be preach'd, Things take a new Turn; now bleſſed are the poor and the Mourners and the Perſecuted. The Phariſees to requite the People for their high Opinion of them, allow'd them in a cheap eaſy formal Religion; but ſaith Chriſt, now the *Goſpel is preach'd*, the Eyes of the People are open'd, and as they cannot now have a Veneration for the Phariſees as they have had, ſo they cannot content themſelves with ſuch an Indifferency in Religion as they have been train'd up in, but they preſs with a holy Violence into the Kingdom of God. *Note*, Thoſe that would go to Heaven muſt take Pains, muſt ſtrive againſt the Stream, muſt preſs againſt the Crowd that are going the contrary Way.

4. Yet ſtill he proteſts againſt any Deſign to invalidate the Law, *v.* 17. *It is eaſier for Heaven and Earth to paſs*, παρελθεῖν, to paſs by, to paſs away, tho' the Foundations of the Earth, and the Pillars of Heaven are ſo firmly eſtabliſh'd, *than one Tittle of the Law to fail.* The moral Law is confirm'd and ratify'd, and not one Tittle of that fails; the Duties enjoyn'd by it are Duties ſtill; the Sins forbidden by it are Sins ſtill: Nay, the Precepts of it are explain'd and enforc'd by the Goſpel, and made to appear more ſpiritual. The ceremonial Law is perfected in the Goſpel, and its Shades fill'd up with the Goſpel Colours; not *one Tittle* of that *fails*, for 'tis found printed off in the Goſpel, where tho' the Force of it as a Law is taken off, yet the Figure of it as a Type ſhines very bright, witneſs the Epiſtle to the Hebrews. And there were ſome Things which were conniv'd at by the Law, for the preventing of greater Miſchiefs, which the Goſpel has indeed taken away the Permiſſion of, but without any Detriment or Diſparagement to the Law, for it has thereby reduc'd them to the primitive Intention of the Law, as in the Caſe of Divorce, *v.* 18. which we had before, *Mat.* 5. 32. 19. 9. Chriſt would not allow Divorces, for his Goſpel is intended to ſtrike at the bitter Root of Mens corrupt Appetites and Paſſions, to kill them, and pluck them up, and therefore they muſt not be ſo far *indulg'd*, as that Permiſſion did *indulge* them, for the more they are indulg'd, the more impetuous and head-ſtrong they grow.

19 ¶ There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple, and fine linen, and far'd ſumptuouſly every day. 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of ſores, 21 And deſiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich mans table: moreover the dogs came and licked his ſores. 22 And it came to paſs that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abrahams boſom: the rich man alſo died, and was buried. 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and ſeeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom. 24 And he cried and ſaid, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and ſend Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham ſaid, Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedſt thy good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beſides all this, between us and you there is a great gulph fixed: ſo that they which would paſs from hence to you, cannot; neither can they paſs to us, that *would come* from thence. 17 Then he ſaid, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldſt ſend him to my fathers houſe: 28 For I have five brethren; that he may teſtiſie unto them, leſt they alſo come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham ſaith unto him, They have Moſes and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he ſaid, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he ſaid unto him, If they hear not Moſes and the prophets, neither will they be perſwaded, though one roſe from the dead.

As the Parable of the prodigal Son ſet before us the Grace of the Goſpel, which is encouraging to us all; ſo this ſets before us the *Wrath to come*, and is deſign'd for our awakening; and very faſt aſleep thoſe are in Sin that will not be awakened by it. The Phariſees made a Jeſt of Chriſt's Sermon againſt Worldlineſs; now this Parable was intended to make thoſe Mockers ſerious. The Tendency of the Goſpel of Chriſt is both to reconcile us to Poverty and Affliction, and to arm us againſt Temptations to Worldlineſs and Senſuality; Now this Parable by drawing the Curtain, and letting us ſee what will be the End of both in the other World, goes very far in proſecuting thoſe two great Intentions.

This Parable is not like Chriſt's other Parables, in which ſpiritual Things are repreſented by Similitudes borrow'd from worldly Things, as thoſe of the Sower and the Seed, and that of the Sheep and Goats, the prodigal Son, and indeed all the reſt but this: But here the *ſpiritual Things themſelves* are repreſented in a Narrative or Deſcription of the different State of good and bad in this World and the other, yet we need not call it a Hiſtory of a particular Occurrence, but is *Matter of Fact*, that's true every Day; that poor godly People whom Men neglect and trample upon die away out of their Miſeries, and go to heavenly Bliſs, and Joy, which is made the more pleaſant to them by their preceding Sorrows; and that rich Epicures, that live in Luxury, and are unmerciful to the Poor, die and go into a State of inſupportable Torment, which is the more grievous and terrible to them, becauſe of the ſenſual Lives they liv'd; and that there's no gaining any Relief for their Torments. Is this a Parable? What Similitude is there in this? The Diſcourſe indeed between *Abraham* and the rich Man is only an Illuſtration of the Deſcription, to make it the more affecting, like that between God and Satan in the Story of *Job*. Our Saviour came to bring us acquainted with another World, and to ſhew us the Reference which *this* World has to *that*; and here he doth it.

In this Deſcription (for ſo I ſhall chuſe to call it) we may obſerve,

Firſt, The different Condition of a *wicked rich Man*, and a *godly poor Man* in this World. We know that as ſome of late, ſo the Jews of old, were ready to make Proſperity one of the Marks of a true Church, of a good Man and a Favourite of Heaven, ſo that they could hardly have any favourable Thoughts of a *poor Man*: This Miſtake Chriſt upon all Occaſions ſet himſelf to correct, and here very fully: Where we have,

1. A wicked Man, and one that will be for ever miſerable, in the Height of Proſperity, *v.* 29. *There was a certain rich Man*, from the Latin we commonly call him *Dives*, a *rich Man*; but as Biſhop *Tillotſon* obſerves, he has no Name given him, as the poor Man has, becauſe it had been invidious to have nam'd any particular rich Man in ſuch a Deſcription as this, and apt to provoke and gain ill Will. But others obſerve, that Chriſt would not do the rich Man ſo much Honour as to name him, tho' when perhaps he call'd his Lands by his own Name, he thought it ſhould long ſurvive that of the Beggar at his Gate, which yet is here preſerv'd, when that of the rich Man is buried in Oblivion. Now we are told concerning this rich Man. (1.) That he was *cloth'd in Purple and fine Linnen*, and that was his *adorning*. He had *fine Linnen* for *Pleaſure*, and clean no doubt, every Day; Night-Linnen, and Day-Linnen. He had *Purple* for *State*, for that was the Wear of Princes; which has made ſome conjecture that Chriſt had an Eye to *Herod* in it. He never appear'd abroad, but 'twas in great Magnificence. (2.) He *fared* deliciouſly and *ſumptuouſly every Day*. His Table was furniſh'd with all the

rities and Dainties that Nature and Art could furniſh him with. His Side-Table richly adorn'd with Plate, and his Servants that waited at Table in rich Liveries; and the Gueſts at his Table, no doubt, ſuch as he thought *grac'd* it.

Well, and what Harm was there in all this? 'Tis no Sin to be rich, no Sin to wear Purple and fine Linnen, nor to keep a plentiful Table, if a Man's Eſtate will afford it. Nor are we told that he got his Eſtate by Fraud, Oppreſſion, or Extortion, no, nor that he was drunk, or made others drunk; but (1.) Chriſt would hereby ſhew, that a Man may have a great deal of the Wealth and Pomp and Pleaſure of this World, and yet lye and periſh for ever under God's Wrath and Curſe. We cannot infer from Men's living great, either that God loves them *in* giving them ſo much, or that they love God *for* giving them ſo much; Happineſs conſiſts not in theſe Things. (2.) That Plenty and Pleaſure is a very *dangerous*, and to many, a *fatal* Temptation of Luxury and Senſuality, and Forgetfulneſs of God and another World. This Man might have been happy if he had not had great Poſeſſions and Enjoyments. (3.) That the Indulgence of the Body, and the Eaſe and Pleaſure of that, is the Ruin of many a Soul, and the Intereſts of it. 'Tis true, eating good Meat, and wearing good Cloaths, is lawful; but 'tis as true, that it often becomes the Food and Fuel of Pride aud Luxury, and ſo turns into Sin to us. (4.) The Feaſting ourſelves and our Friends, and at the ſame Time forgetting the Diſtreſſes of the poor and afflicted, is very provoking to God, and damning to the Soul. The Sin of this rich Man, was not ſo much his Dreſs or his Diet, but his providing for himſelf only.

2. Here's a godly Man, and one that will be for ever happy in the Depth of Adverſity and Diſtreſs, *v.* 20. *There was a certain Beggar* named *Lazarus*, a Beggar of that Name, eminently devout, and in great Diſtreſs, was probably well known among good People at that Time: A Beggar, ſuppoſe ſuch a one as *Eleazer*, or *Lazarus*. Some think *Eleazer* a proper Name for any poor Man, for it ſignifies the *Help of God*, which they muſt fly to, that are deſtitute of *other Helps*. This poor Man was reduc'd to the laſt Extremity, as miſerable as you can lightly ſuppoſe a Man to be in this World, as to outward Things. (1.) His Body was *full of Sores* like *Job*: To be ſick and weak in Body, is a great Affliction; but Sores, are more *painful* to the Patient, and more *loathſome* to thoſe about him. (2.) He was forc'd to beg his Bread, and to take up with ſuch Scraps as he could get at rich People's Doors. He was ſo ſore and lame, that he could not go himſelf, but he was carried by ſome compaſſionate Hand or other, and *laid at the rich Man's Gate*. *Note*, Thoſe that are not able to help the Poor with their *Purſes*, ſhould help them with their *Pains*; that cannot lend them *a Penny*, ſhould lend them *a Hand*; that have not wherewithal to give to them themſelves, ſhould either bring them, or go for them to thoſe that have. *Lazarus* in his Diſtreſs had nothing of his own to ſubſiſt on, no Relation to go to, nor did the Pariſh take Care of him. 'Tis an Inſtance of the Degeneracy of the Jewiſh Church at this Time, that ſuch a godly Man as *Lazarus* was, ſhould be ſuffer'd to periſh for Want of neceſſary Food. Now obſerve,

1. His Expectations from the rich Man's Table; *he deſir'd to be fed with the Crumbs*, v. 21. He did not look for a Meſs from off his Table, tho' he ought to have had one, one of the beſt; but would be thankful for the Crumbs from under the Table, the broken Meat, which was the rich Man's Leavings; nay, the Leavings of his Dogs. *The poor uſeth Intreaties*, and muſt be content with ſuch as they can get. Now this is taken Notice of, to ſhew (1.) What was the Diſtreſs, and what the Diſpoſition of the poor Man. He was *poor*, but he was *poor in Spirit*, contentedly poor. He did not lie at the rich Man's Gate complaining and bawling, and making a Noiſe, but ſilently and modeſtly deſiring to be *fed with the Crumbs*. This miſerable Man was a good Man, and in Favour with God. *Note*, 'Tis often the Lot of ſome of the deareſt of God's Saints and Servants to be greatly afflicted in this World, while wicked People proſper and have abundance; ſee *Pſal.* 73. 7. 10. 14. Here's a Child of Wrath, and an Heir of Hell, ſitting in the Houſe, faring ſumptuouſly; and a Child of Love, and an Heir of Heaven, lying at the Gate, periſhing for Hunger. And is Men's ſpiritual State to be judg'd of then by their outward Condition? (2.) What was the Temper of the rich Man towards him; we are not told that he abus'd him, or forbid him his Gate, or did him any Harm, but 'tis intimated that he ſlighted him; he had no Concern for him, took no Care about him. Here was a *real* Object of Charity, and a very *moving* ond which ſpoke for itſelf; 'twas preſented to him at *his own Gate*; the poor Man had a good Character, and a good Carriage, and every Thing that could recommend him: A *little* Thing would be a *great* Kindneſs to him, and yet he took no Cognizance of his Caſe, did not order him to be taken in and lodg'd in the Barn, or ſome of the Out-Buildings, but let him lye there. *Note*, 'Tis not enough, not to oppreſs and trample upon the Poor, we ſhall be found unfaithful Stewards of our Lord's Goods in the great Day, if we do not ſuccour and relieve them. The Reaſon given for the moſt fearful Doom is, *I was hungry, and you gave me no Meat*. I wonder how theſe rich People who have read the Goſpel of Chriſt, and ſay they believe it, can be ſo unconcern'd as they often are, in the Neceſſities and Miſeries of the poor and afflicted.

2. The Uſage he had from the Dogs. *The Dogs came and licked his Sores*. The rich Man kept a Kennel of Hounds it may be, or other Dogs, for their Diverſion, and to pleaſe his Fancy, and thoſe were fed to the full, when poor *Lazarus* could not get enough to keep him alive. *Note*, Thoſe will have a great deal to anſwer for hereafter, that feed their Dogs but neglect the Poor: And 'tis a great Aggravation of the Uncharitableneſs of many rich People, that they beſtow that upon their Fancies and Follies which would ſupply the Neceſſity, and rejoyce the Heart of many a good Chriſtian in Diſtreſs. Thoſe offend God, nay, and they put a Contempt upon the humane Nature, that pamper their Dogs and Horſes, and let the Families of their poor Neighbours ſtarve. Now thoſe Dogs *came and licked the* Sores of poor *Lazarus*, which may be taken (1.) As an Aggravation of his Miſery: His Sores were *bloody*, which tempted the Dogs to come and lick them, as they did the Blood of *Naboth* and *Ahab*, 1 *King*. 21. 19. And we read of the *Tongue of the Dogs dipp'd* in the *Blood* of *Enemies*, Pſal. 68. 22. They attack'd him while he was yet alive, as if he had been already dead, and he had not Strength himſelf to keep them off, nor would any of the Servants be ſo civil as to check them. The Dogs were like their Maſter, and thought they far'd ſumptuouſly when they regal'd themſelves with humane Gore: Or it may be taken (2.) As ſome Relief to him in his Miſery, ἀλλα καὶ, the Maſter was *hard-hearted* towards him, *but* the Dogs *came and licked his Sores*, which mollify'd and eas'd them; 'tis not ſaid they *ſuck'd* them, but *lick'd* them, which was good for them. The Dogs was more kind to him than their Maſter was.

Secondly, Here's the *different Condition* of this *godly poor Man*, and this *wicked rich Man, at*, and *after Death*. Hitherto the wicked Man ſeems to have the Advantage, but *Exitus Acta probat.* Let us wait awhile to ſee the End hereof.

1. They both dye, *v.* 22. The *Beggar died*. The *rich Man alſo died*. Death is the common Lot of rich and poor, godly and ungodly, there they meet together. One dieth *in his full Strength*, and another in *the Bitterneſs of his Soul*, but they ſhall *lye down alike in the Duſt*, Job. 21. 26. Death favours not either the rich Man for his Riches, or a poor Man for his Poverty. Saints die that they may bring their Sorrows to an End, and may enter upon their Joys: Sinners die that they may go to give up their Account. It concerns us both rich and poor, to prepare for Death, for it waits for them both. *Mors Sceptra Legionibus æquat; æquo pulſat Pede Pauperum Tabernas, Regumque Turres.*

2. The Beggar *dy'd firſt*: God many Times takes godly People out of the World, when he leaves the wicked to flouriſh ſtill. 'Twas an Advantage to the Beggar, that ſuch a ſpeedy End was put to his Miſeries, and ſince he could find no other Shelter or reſting Place, he was *hid in the Grave*, where the *weary are at Reſt*.

3. The rich Man *dy'd and was buried*. Nothing is ſaid of the Interment of the poor Man, they digg'd a Hole any where, and tumbled his Body in without any Solemnity; he was *bury'd with the Burial of an Aſs*: Nay, 'tis well if they that let the Dogs lick his Sores, did not let them gnaw his Bones. But the rich Man had a pompous Funeral, lay in State; had a Train of Mourners to attend him to his Graves, and a ſtately Monument ſet up over it; probably he had a funeral Oration in Praiſe of him, and his generous Way of Living, and the good Table he kept, which thoſe would commend that had been feaſted at it. 'Tis ſaid of the wicked Man, that he is *brought to the Grave*, with no ſmall adoe, and *laid in the Tomb*; and *the Clods of the Valley*, were it poſſible, are made *ſweet to him*; Job 21. 32, 33. How foreign is the Ceremony of a Funeral to the Happineſs of the Man.

4. The Beggar dy'd, and was carried by Angels into *Abraham*'s *Boſom*. How much did the Honour done to his Soul, by this Convoy of it to its Reſt, exceed the Honour done to the rich Man, by the carrying of his Body with ſo much Magnificence to its Grave. Obſerve (1.) His Soul *exiſted* in a State of Separation from its Body. It did not *dye* or *fall aſleep* with the Body, his Candle was not put out with him, but liv'd and acted, and knew what it did, and what was done to it. (2.) His Soul *remov'd* to another World, to the World of Spirits; it return'd to God who gave it, to its native Countrey; this is imply'd in its being *carry'd*. The Spirit of a Man goes upward. (3.) Angels took Care of it, it was *carry'd by Angels*. They are miniſtring Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation, not only while they live, but when they dye, and have a Charge concerning them to *bear them up in their Hands*, not only in their Journies too and fro on Earth, but to their great Journey, to their long Home in Heaven, to be both their Guide and their Guard through Regions unknown and unſafe. The Soul of Man, if not chain'd to this Earth, and clogg'd by it as unſanctify'd Souls are, has in itſelf an elaſtick Virtue, by which it *ſprings upward*, as ſoon as it gets clear of the Body; but Chriſt will not truſt thoſe that are his to that, and therefore will ſend ſpecial Meſſengers to fetch them to himſelf. One Angel one would think were ſufficient, but here are more, as were ſent for *Elijah*. *Amaſis*, King of *Egypt*, had his Chariot drawn by Kings, but what was that Honour to this? Saints aſcend in the Virtue of Chriſt's Aſcenſion; but the Convoy of Angels is added for State and *Decorum*; Saints ſhall be brought Home, not only ſafely, but honourably. What were the Bearers of the rich Man's Funeral,

the

tho' probably thoſe of the firſt Rank, compar'd with *Lazarus*'s Bearers? The Angels were not ſhy of touching him, for his Sores were on his Body, not on his Soul, that was preſented to God, *without Spot or Wrinkle, or any ſuch Thing.* Now, bleſſed Angels, ſaid a good Man juſt expiring, now come and do your Office. (4.) It was carried *into* Abraham's *Boſom*. The Jews expreſs'd the Happineſs of the righteous at Death, three Ways; They go *to the Garden of Eden*; they go *to be under the Throne of Glory*, and they go *to the Boſom of* Abraham, and that's it our Saviour here makes Uſe of. *Abraham* was the *Father of the faithful*; and whither ſhould the Souls of the faithful be gather'd, but to him, who as a tender Father lays them *in his Boſom*, eſpecially at their firſt coming, to bid them welcome, and to refreſh them when newly come from the Sorrows and Fatigues of this World. He was carry'd *to his Boſom*, i. e. to feaſt with him, for at Feaſts the Gueſts are ſaid to lean on one anothers Breaſts; and the Saints in Heaven *ſit down with* Abraham, *and* Iſaac, *and* Jacob. *Abraham* was a great and rich Man, yet in Heaven he doth not diſdain to lay poor *Lazarus* in his Boſom. Rich Saints and poor, meet in Heaven. This poor *Lazarus* that might not be admitted within the rich Man's Gate, is conducted into the Dining-Room, into the Bed-Chamber of the heavenly Palace, and he is laid in the Boſom of *Abraham*, whom the rich Glutton ſcorn'd to *ſet with the Dogs of his Flock.*

5. The next News you hear of the *rich Man*, after the Account of his *Death* and *Burial*, is, that *in Hell he lift up his Eyes being in Torment*, v. 23.

1. His State is very miſerable. *He is in Hell*, in *Hades*, in the State of ſeparate Souls, and there he is in *the utmoſt Miſery* and *Anguiſh* poſſible. As the Souls of the Faithful immediately *after they are deliver'd from the Burthen of the Fleſh, are in Joy and Felicity*, ſo wicked and unſanctified Souls, immediately after they are fetch'd from the Pleaſures of the Fleſh by Death, are in Miſery and Torment endleſs, uſeleſs, and remedileſs, and which will be much increas'd and compleated at the Reſurrection. This *rich Man* had intirely devoted himſelf to the Pleaſures of the *World of Senſe*, was wholly *taken up* with them, and *took up with them* for his Portion, and therefore was wholly unfit for the Pleaſures of the *World of Spirits*, and to ſuch a carnal Mind as his they would indeed be no Pleaſure, nor could he have any Reliſh of them, and therefore he as of Courſe excluded from them. Yet that is not all, he was hard-hearted to God's Poor, and therefore he is not only cut off from Mercy, but he has *Judgment without Mercy*, and falls under a Puniſhment of *Senſe*, as well as a Puniſhment of *Loſs*.

2. The Miſery of his State is aggravated by his Knowledge of the Happineſs of *Lazarus*. He *lifts up his Eyes*, and *ſees* Abraham *afar off*, and *Lazarus in his Boſom*. 'Tis the Soul that is *in Torment*, and they are the Eyes of the Mind that are lifted up: Now he began to conſider what was become of *Lazarus*, he doth not find him where he is, nay, he plainly ſees him, and with as much Aſſurance as if he had ſeen him with his bodily Eyes afar off in the Boſom of *Abraham*. This ſame Aggravation of the Miſeries of the damn'd we had before, *Chap.* 13. 28. *Ye ſhall ſee* Abraham, *and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and yourſelves thruſt out.* (1.) He ſaw *Abraham afar off.* To ſee *Abraham*, we would think a *pleaſing* Sight, but to ſee him afar off was a tormenting Sight. Near him he ſaw Devils and damn'd Companions, frightful Sights, and painful ones; afar off he ſaw *Abraham*. *Note*, Every Sight in Hell is aggavating. (2.) He ſaw *Lazarus in his Boſom*, that ſame *Lazarus* whom he had look'd upon with ſo much Scorn and Contempt, as not worthy his Notice, he now ſees to be preferr'd and envy'd. The Sight of him brought to his Mind his own cruel and barbarous Carriage towards him; and the Sight of him in that Happineſs made his own Miſery the more grievous.

Thirdly, Here's an Account of what paſs'd between the rich Man and *Abraham*, in the ſeparate State, a State of Separation one from another, and of both from this World: And tho' 'tis probable there will not be, nor are any ſuch Dialogues or Diſcourſes between gorify'd Saints and damned Sinners, yet 'tis very proper, and what is uſually done in Deſcriptions, eſpecially ſuch as are deſign'd to be pathetical and moving, by ſuch Dialogues to repreſent what will be the Mind and Sentiments both of the one and of the other. And ſince we find damned Sinners tormented *in the Preſence of the Lamb*, Rev. 14. 10. and the faithful Servants of God looking upon thoſe that have *tranſgreſſed the Covenant*, there where their *Worm dies not, and their Fire is not quenched*, Iſa. 66. 23, 24. Such a Diſcourſe as this is not incongruous to be ſuppos'd.

Now in this Diſcourſe we have,

1. The Requeſt which the rich Man made to *Abraham* for ſome Mitigation of his preſent Miſery, v. 24. Seeing *Abraham* afar off, *he cry'd to him*, cry'd aloud, as one in earneſt, and as one in Pain and Miſery, mixing Shrieks with his Petitions, to enforce them by moving Compaſſion. He that us'd to *command* aloud, now *begs* aloud, louder than ever *Lazarus* did at his Gate. The Songs of his Riot and Revels are all turn'd into Lamentations. Obſerve here,

(1.) The Title he gives to *Abraham*. *Father Abraham.* *Note*, There are many in Hell that can call *Abraham* Father; that were *Abraham*'s Seed after the Fleſh: Nay, and many that were in Name and Profeſſion the Children of the Covenant made with *Abraham*. Perhaps this rich Man in his carnal Mirth had ridicul'd *Abraham*, and the Story of *Abraham*, as the Scoffers of the latter Days do; but now he gives him a Title of Reſpect, *Father Abraham*. *Note*, The Day is coming when wicked Men will be glad to ſcrape Acquaintance with the righteous, and to claim Kindred to them, tho' now they ſlight them. *Abraham* in this Deſcription repreſents *Chriſt*, for to him all Judgment is committed, and it is his Mind that *Abraham* here ſpeaks. Thoſe that now ſlight Chriſt, will ſhortly make their Court to him, *Lord, Lord.*

(2.) The Repreſentation he makes to him of his preſent deplorable Condition; *I am tormented in this Flame.* 'Tis the Torment of his Soul that he complains of, and therefore ſuch a Fire as will operate upon Souls; and ſuch a Fire the *Wrath of God* is, faſtning upon a guilty Conſcience; ſuch a Fire Horror of Mind is, and the Reproaches of a ſelf-accuſing, ſelf-condemning Heart. Nothing more painful and terrible to the Body, than to be tormented with Fire; by that therefore the Miſeries and Agonies of damned Souls are repreſented.

(3.) His Requeſt to *Abraham*, in Conſideration of this Miſery. *Have Mercy on me.* *Note*, The Day is coming when thoſe that make light of divine Mercy, will beg hard for it. O for *Mercy, Mercy*, when the Day of Mercy is over, and Offers of Mercy no more made. He that had no Mercy on *Lazarus*, yet expects *Lazarus* ſhould have Mercy on him, for, thinks he, *Lazarus* is better natur'd than ever I was. The particular Favour he begs is, *Send* Lazarus *that he may dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue.* (1.) Here he complains of the Torment of his *Tongue* particularly, as if he were more tormented there than in any other Part, the Puniſhment anſwering the Sin. The *Tongue* is one of the Organs of Speech, and by the Torment of that he is put in Mind of all the wicked Words that he had ſpoken againſt God and Man; his curſing and ſwearing, and Blaſphemy, all his *hard Speeches*, and *filthy Speeches*; by his Words *he is condemned*, and therefore in his Tongue he is tormented. The Tongue is alſo one of the Organs of *Taſting*; and therefore the Torments of that will mind him of his inordinate Reliſh of the Delights of Senſe, which he had *roll'd under his Tongue*. (2.) He deſires *a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue*. He doth not ſay, Father *Abraham*, ſend for me to thy Boſom, to lie where *Lazarus* lies; unſanctify'd Souls do not, cannot truly *deſire* the Happineſs of Heaven: Nay, he doth not ſay, Father *Abraham* order me a Releaſe from this Miſery, help me out of this Pit, for he utterly *deſpair'd* of that; but he asks as ſmall a Thing as could be ask'd, *a Drop of Water*, to cool his Tongue for one Moment. (3.) He deſires that *Lazarus* might bring it. I have ſometimes ſuſpected that he had herein an ill Deſign upon *Lazarus*, and hoped if he could get him within his Reach, he would keep him from returning to the Boſom of *Abraham* again. The Heart that is filled with Rage againſt God, is fill'd with Rage againſt the People of God. But we will think more charitably even of a damned Sinner, and ſuppoſe he intended here to ſhew Reſpect to *Lazarus*, as one whom he would now gladly be beholden to. He *names* him, becauſe he *knows* him, and thinks *Lazarus* will not be unwilling to do him this good Office for old Acquaintance Sake. *Grotius* here quotes *Plato*, deſcribing the Torments of wicked Souls, and among other Things he ſaith, they are *continually raving* on thoſe whom they have *murther'd*, or been any way *injurious to*, calling upon them to *forgive them* the Wrongs they did them. *Note*, There is a Day coming, when thoſe who now hate and deſpiſe the People of God would gladly receive Kindneſs from them.

2. The Reply which *Abraham* gave to this Requeſt: In general, he did not grant it: He would not allow him one *Drop of Water to cool* his Tongue. *Note*, The damned in Hell ſhall not have any the leaſt Abatement or Mitigation of their Torment. If we now improve the Day of our Opportunities, we may have a full and laſting Satisfaction in the Streams of Mercy; but if we now ſlight the Offer, 'twill be in vain in Hell to expect the leaſt Drop of Mercy. See how juſtly this rich Man is paid in his own Coin. He that deny'd a Crumb is deny'd a Drop. Now 'tis ſaid to us, *Ask, and it ſhall be given you*; but if we let ſlip this accepted Time, we may ask and it ſhall not be given us. But this is not all, had *Abraham* only ſaid, you ſhall have nothing to abate your Torment, it had been ſad; but he ſaith a great deal which would add to his Torment, and make the Flame the hotter, for every Thing in Hell will be tormenting.

(1.) He calls him *Son*, a kind and civil Title; but here ſerves only to aggravate the Denial of his Requeſt, which ſhut up the Bowels of the Compaſſion of a Father from him. He had been a Son, but a rebellious one, and now an abandon'd diſinherited one. See the Folly of thoſe who rely on that *Plea, we have* Abraham *to our Father*, when we find one in Hell, and likely to be there for ever, whom *Abraham* calls *Son*.

(2.) He puts him in Mind of what had been both in his own Condition, and the Condition of *Lazarus* in their *Life-time. Son remember*; this is a cutting Word. The Memories of damned Souls will be their Tormentors, and Conſcience will then be awaken'd and ſtirr'd up to do its Office, which here they would not ſuffer it to do. Nothing will bring more Oil to the Flames of Hell than *Son remember*. Now Sinners are call'd upon to *remember*, but they do not, they will not, they find Ways to avoid it. *Son remember* thy Creator, thy Redeemer, *remember* thy latter End; but they can turn a deaf Ear to theſe Mementos, and forget that for which they have their Memories; juſtly therefore will their everlaſting Miſery ariſe from a *Son remember*, which they will not be able to turn a deaf Ear to. What a dreadful Peal will this ring in our Ears, *Son, remember* the many Warnings that were given thee not to come to this Place of Torment, which thou would'ſt not regard; remember the fair Offers made thee of eternal Life and Glory, which thou wouldſt not accept. But that which he is here put in Mind of is, (1.) That *thou in thy Life Time received'ſt thy good Things*. He doth not tell him he had *abus'd* them, but he had *receiv'd* them. Remember what a bountiful Benefactor God has been to thee, how ready he was to do thee Good, thou canſt not therefore ſay he owes thee any Thing, no, not a *Drop of Water*. What he gave thee *thou received'ſt*, and that was all, thou never gaveſt him a Receipt for them, in a thankful Acknowledgment of them, much leſs didſt thou ever make any grateful Return for them, or Improvement of them; thou haſt been the Grave of God's Bleſſings, in which they were bury'd, not the Field of them in which they were ſown. Thou received'ſt *thy good Things*, i. e. thou received'ſt them, and uſed'ſt them, as if they had been *thine own*, and thou hadſt not been at all accountable for them: Or rather they were the Things which thou didſt chuſe for thy *good Things*, which were in thine Eye the *beſt Things*, which thou didſt content thyſelf with, and portion thyſelf in: Thou hadſt Meat and Drink, and Clothes of the richeſt and fineſt, and thoſe were the Things thou didſt place thine Happineſs in, they were *thy Reward, thy Conſolation*, the *Penny* thou didſt *agree for*, and thou hadſt it. Thou waſt for the *good Things of thy Life Time*, and hadſt no Thoughts of better Things in another Life, and therefore haſt no Reaſon to expect them. The Day of thy *good Things* are paſt and gone, and now is the Day of *thine evil Things*, of Recompence for all thine evil Deeds. Thou haſt already had the laſt Drop of the *Vials of Mercy*, that thou couldſt expect to fall to thy Share; and there remains nothing but *Vials of Wrath* without Mixture. (2.) Remember too what *evil Things* Lazarus *received*. Thou envieſt him his Happineſs here, but think what a large Share of Miſeries he had *in his Life Time*: Thou hadſt *as much Good* as could be thought to fall to the Lot of ſo *ill a Man*, and he *as much Evil* as could be thought to fall to the Lot of *ſo good a Man*. He *receiv'd* his evil Things, *i. e.* he bore them patiently, receiv'd them from the Hand of God, as *Job* did, *Chap.* 2. 10. *Shall we receive Good at the Hand of the Lord, and ſhall we not receive Evil alſo?* He *receiv'd* them as Phyſick appointed for the Cure of his ſpiritual Diſtempers, and the Cure was effected. As wicked People have *good Things* only in this Life, and at Death they are for ever ſeparated from all Good; ſo godly People have evil Things only in *this Life*, and at Death they are for ever put out of the Reach of them. Now *Abraham*, by putting him in Mind of both theſe together, awaking his Conſcience, to mind him how he had carry'd it towards *Lazarus* when he was revelling in his *good Things*, and *Lazarus* groaning under his *evil Things*: He cannot forget that then he would not help *Lazarus*, and then how could he expect that *Lazarus* ſhould now help him? Had *Lazarus* in his Life-time afterwards grown rich, and he poor, *Lazarus* would have thought it his Duty to relieve him, and not to have upbraided him for his former Unkindneſs: but in the future State of Recompence and Retribution, thoſe that are now dealt with, both by God and Man better than they deſerve, muſt expect to be rewarded *every Man according to his Works*.

(3.) He puts him in Mind of *Lazarus*'s preſent Bliſs, and his own Miſery. *But now* the Tables are turn'd, and ſo they muſt abide for ever; *now he is comforted, and thou art tormented*. He did not need to be told that he was *tormented*, he felt it to his Coſt, he knew likewiſe that one who lay in the Boſom of *Abraham* could not but be comforted there, yet *Abraham* puts him in Mind of it, that he might by comparing one Thing with another, obſerve the *Righteouſneſs of God*, in recompenſing *Tribulation to them who trouble his People*, and *to thoſe who are troubled, Reſt*, 2 Theſ. 1. 6, 7. Obſerve, (1.) Heaven is *Comfort*, and *Hell* is *Torment*: Heaven is *Joy*, Hell is *Weeping and Wailing*, and Pain in Perfection. (2.) The Soul as ſoon as it leaves the Body, goes either to Heaven or Hell, to Comfort or Torment immediately, and doth not ſleep or go into Purgatory. (3.) Heaven will be Heaven indeed to thoſe that go thither through many and great Calamities in this World; thoſe that had Grace but little of the Comfort of it here, perhaps their Souls refuſed to be comforted, yet when they are fallen aſleep in Chriſt, you may truly ſay, Now *they are comforted*: now *all their Tears are wiped away*, and all their Fears are vaniſh'd. In Heaven there is everlaſting Conſolation. And on the other Hand, Hell will be Hell indeed to thoſe that go thither from the Midſt of the Enjoyment of all the Delights and Pleaſures of Senſe; to them the Torture is the greater, as temporal Calamities are deſcrib'd to be to the *tender and delicate Woman that would not ſet ſo much as the Sole of her Foot to the Ground, for Tenderneſs and Delicacy*, Deut. 28. 56.

(4.) He aſſures him 'twas to no Purpoſe to think of having any Relief by the Miniſtry of *Lazarus*; for, *v.* 26. *beſides all this, worſe yet, between us and you there is a great Gulph fixed*, an impaſſable one. A *great Chaſm*, that ſo there can be no Communication between glorify'd Saints and damned Sinners. (1.) The kindeſt Saint in Heaven cannot make a Viſit to the Congregation of the Dead and Damned to comfort or relieve any there, that when Time was, were their Friends. *They that would paſs from hence to you cannot*; they cannot leave beholding the Face of their Father, nor the Work about his Throne, to fetch Water for you; that's no Part of their Buſineſs. (2.) The daring'ſt Sinner in Hell cannot force his Way out of that Priſon, cannot get over that great Gulph. *They cannot paſs to us, that would come from thence.* 'Twas not to be expected, for the Door of Mercy is ſhut, the Bridge is drawn; there's no coming out upon Parol or Bail, no; not for one Hour. In this World bleſſed be God there is no Gulph fix'd between a State of Nature and Grace, but we may paſs from the one to the other: From Sin to God; but if we die in our Sins, if we throw ourſelves into the Pit of Deſtruction, there's no coming out, 'Tis a Pit *in which there's no Water*, and *out of which there is no Redemption*. The Decree and Counſel of God has fix'd this Gulph, which all the World cannot unfix. This abandons this miſerable Creature to Diſpair; 'tis now too late for any Change of his Condition, or any the leaſt Relief: It might have been prevented *in Time*, but it cannot now be remedied *to Eternity*. The State of damned Sinners is fix'd by an irreverſible and unalterable Sentence. A Stone is roll'd to the Door of the Pit, which cannot be roll'd back.

3. The further Requeſt he had to make to his Father *Abraham*; not for himſelf, his Mouth is ſtop'd, and he has not a Word to ſay in Anſwer to *Abraham*'s Denial of a Drop of Water: Damned Sinners are made to know that the Sentence they are under is juſt, and they cannot alleviate their own Miſery by making any Objection againſt it. And ſince he cannot obtain a Drop of Water to *cool his Tongue*, we may ſuppoſe he *gnaw'd his Tongue for Pain*, as thoſe are ſaid to do, on whom one of the *Vials* of God's Wrath is *pour'd out*, Rev. 16. 10. the hideous Shrieks, and Outcries which we may ſuppoſe to be now utter'd by him; but ſince he has an Opportunity of ſpeaking to *Abraham*, he will improve it for his Relations whom he had left behind, ſince he cannot improve it for his own Advantage. Now as to this,

1. He begs that *Lazarus* might be *ſent to his Father's Houſe*, upon an Errand thither, *v.* 27. *I pray thee therefore, Father.* Again he calls *Abraham*, and in this Requeſt he is importunate, *I pray thee*. O deny me not this. When he was on Earth, he might have pray'd and been heard, but now he prays in vain. *Therefore* becauſe thou haſt deny'd me the former Requeſt, ſurely thou wilt be ſo compaſſionate as not to deny this: Or, *therefore*, becauſe *there is a great Gulph fixed*, ſeeing there is no getting out hence when they are once here, O ſend to prevent their coming hither. Or tho' there is a *great Gulph fix'd* between you and me, yet ſince there is no ſuch Gulph fix'd between you and them, ſend him thither. Send him back *to* my *Father's Houſe*; he knows well enough where 'tis, has been there many a Time, by the ſame Token that he was deny'd the Crumbs that fell from the Table. He knows I have *five Brethren* there, if he appear to them they'll *know him*, and will regard what he ſaith, for they knew him to be an honeſt Man; let him *teſtify to them*; let him tell them what Condition I am in, and that I brought myſelf to it by my Luxury and Senſuality, and my Unmercifulneſs to the Poor. Let him warn them not to tread in my Steps, nor to go on in the Way wherein I led them, and left them, *leſt they alſo come into this Place of Torment*, v. 28. Some obſerve, that he ſpeaks of *five Brethren* only, whence they infer that he had *no Children*, elſe he would have mention'd them, and then it was an Aggravation of his Uncharitableneſs that he had no Children to provide for. Now he would have them ſtopt in their ſinful Courſe. He doth not ſay, Give me leave to go to them, that I may teſtify to them, for he knew that there was a *Gulph fixed*, and deſpair'd of a Permiſſion ſo favourable to himſelf: His going would frighten them *out of their Wits*, but ſend *Lazarus*, whoſe Addreſs will be leſs terrible, and yet his Teſtimony ſufficient to frighten them *out of their Sins*.

Now he deſir'd the Preventing of their Ruin, partly in Tenderneſs to *them*, for whom he could not but retain a *natural Affection*: He knew their Temper, their Temptations, their Ignorance, their Infidelity, their Inconſideration, and wiſhed to prevent the Deſtruction they were running into. Partly in Tenderneſs *to himſelf*, for their coming to him to that *Place of Torment* would but aggravate the Miſery to him, who had help'd to ſhew them the Way thither, as the Sight of *Lazarus* help'd to aggravate his Miſery. When Partners in Sin, come to be Sharers in Woe, as Tares bound in Bundles for the Fire, they will be a Terror to one another.

2. *Abraham* denies him this Favour too. There is no Requeſt granted in Hell: Thoſe who make the rich Man's praying to *Abraham*, a Juſtification of their praying to Saints departed, as they are far to ſeek for Proofs, when the Practice of a damned Sinner muſt be valu'd for an Example, ſo they have little Encouragement to follow the Example, when all his Prayers were made *in vain*. *Abraham* leaves them to the Teſtimony of *Moſes*, and the Prophets, the ordinary Means of Conviction and Converſion, they have the written Word which they may read, and hear read; *let them attend to that ſure Word of Prophecy*, for God will

not go out of the common Method of his Grace for them. Here's their Privilege, *they have* Moſes *and the Prophets*, and their Duty, let them *hear them*, and mix Faith with them, and that will be ſufficient to keep them from this Place of Torment. By this it appears that there is ſufficient Evidence in the Old Teſtament, in *Moſes* and *the Prophets*, to convince thoſe that will hear them impartially, that there is another Life after this, and a State of Rewards and Puniſhments for good and bad Men, for that was the Thing which the rich Man would have his Brethren aſſur'd of, and for that they are turn'd over to *Moſes* and the *Prophets.*

3. He urgeth his Requeſt yet further, *v.* 30. *Nay, Father* Abraham, give me leave to preſs this. 'Tis true, they have *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, and if they would but give a due Regard to them, it would be ſufficient; but they do not, they will not, yet it may be hoped *if one went to them from the Dead, they would repent*; that would be a more ſenſible Conviction to them. They are us'd to *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, and therefore regard them the leſs, but this would be a *new Thing*, and more ſtartling; ſurely that would bring them to *repent*, and to change their wicked Habit and Courſe of Life. *Note*, Fooliſh Men are apt to think any Method of Conviction better than that which God has choſen and appointed.

4. *Abraham* inſiſts upon the Denial of it, with a concluſive Reaſon, *v.* 31. *If they hear not* Moſes *and the Prophets*, and will not believe the Teſtimony, nor take the Warning they give, *neither will they be perſwaded tho' one roſe from the dead:* If they regard not the publick Revelation which is confirm'd by Miracles, neither would they be wrought upon by a private Teſtimony to themſelves. (1.) The Matter was long ſince ſettled upon Tryal, that God ſhould ſpeak by *Moſes*, and ſuch *Prophets*, and not by immediate Meſſengers from Heaven: *Iſrael* choſe it in Mount *Sinai*, becauſe they could not bear the Terrors of ſuch Expreſſes. (2.) A Meſſenger from the Dead could ſay no more than what is ſaid in the Scriptures, nor ſay it with more Authority. (3.) There would be every Jot as much Reaſon to ſuſpect that to be a Cheat and a Deluſion, as to ſuſpect the Scriptures to be ſo, and much more; and Infidels in one Caſe, would certainly be ſo in another. (4.) The ſame Strength of Corruption that breaks through the Convictions of the written Word, would certainly triumph over thoſe by a Witneſs *from the Dead*: And tho' a Sinner might be frighten'd at firſt, by ſuch a Teſtimony, when the Fright was over, he would ſoon return to his Hardneſs. (5.) The Scripture is now the ordinary Way of God's making known his Mind to us, and 'tis ſufficient, and 'tis Preſumption for us to preſcribe any other Way, nor have we any Ground to expect or pray for the Grace of God to work upon us in any other Way, abſtracted from that, and when that is rejected and ſet aſide. This that our Saviour here ſaid, was ſoon after verify'd in the unbelieving Jews, who would not hear *Moſes* and the Prophets, Chriſt and the Apoſtles, and then would not be perſuaded, tho' *Lazarus roſe from the Dead*; (and perhaps 'twas with ſome Eye to him, that Chriſt nam'd this poor Man *Lazarus*) nay, they conſulted to put him to Death, and did put him that rais'd him to Death, and would not be perſwaded by him neither, tho' he alſo *roſe from the Dead.* When *Eutychus* was rais'd to Life, the People that were preſent continu'd to hear *Paul* preach, but did not turn to enquire of him, *Acts* 20. 10, 11. Let us not therefore deſire Viſions and Apparitions, nor ſeek to the Dead, but *to the Law and to the Teſtimony*, Iſa. 8. 19, 20. for that's *the ſure Word of Prophecy*, which we may depend upon.

CHAP. XVII.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) *Some particular Diſcourſes Chriſt had with his Diſciples, in which he teaches them to take Heed of giving Offence, and to forgive the Injuries done them,* v. 1---4. *Encourageth them to pray for the Increaſe of their Faith,* v. 5, 6. *And then teacheth them Humility, whatever Service they had done for God,* v. 7.---10. (2.) *His cleanſing of Ten Lepers, and the Thanks he had from one of them only, and he a* Samaritan, *v.* 11.-----19. (3.) *His Diſcourſe with his Diſciples upon Occaſion of an Enquiry of the Phariſees, when the Kingdom of God ſhould appear,* v. 20.--37.

THen he ſaid unto the diſciples, It is impoſſible but that offences will come: but wo *unto him* through whom they come. 2 It were better for him that a mil-ſtone were hanged about his neck, and he caſt into the ſea, then that he ſhould offend one of theſe little ones. 3 ¶ Take heed to yourſelves, If thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a day, and ſeven times in a day turn again to thee, ſaying, I repent; thou ſhalt forgive him. 5 And the apoſtles ſaid unto the Lord, Increaſe our Faith. 6 And the Lord ſaid, If ye had faith as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, ye might ſay unto this ſycamine-tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the ſea; and it ſhould obey you. 7 But which of you having a ſervant plowing, or feeding cattle, will ſay unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go, and ſit down to meat? 8 And will not rather ſay unto him, Make ready wherewith I may ſup and gird thy ſelf, and ſerve me till I have eaten and drunken and afterward thou ſhalt eat and drink? 9 Doth he thank that ſervant becauſe he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. 10 So likewiſe ye, when ye ſhall have done all thoſe things which are commanded you, ſay, We are unprofitable ſervants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

We are here taught,

Firſt, That *giving Offences* is a *great Sin*, and that which we ſhould every one of us avoid, and carefully watch againſt, *v.* 1, 2. We can expect no other, but that Offences will come, conſidering the Perverſeneſs and Frowardneſs that is in the Nature of Man, and the wiſe Purpoſe and Counſel of God, which will carry on his Work even by thoſe Offences, and bring Good out of Evil. '*Tis* almoſt *impoſſible but that Offences will come*, and therefore we are concern'd to provide accordingly; but *Woe to him through whom they come*, his Doom will be heavy, *v.* 2. more terrible than that of the worſt of Malefactors, who are condemn'd to be thrown into the Sea, for they periſh under a Load of Guilt more *ponderous* than that of *Milſtones.*

This ſpeaks a Woe (1.) To Perſecutors, that offer any Injury to the leaſt of Chriſt's *little Ones*, in Word or Deed, by which they are diſcourag'd in ſerving Chriſt, and doing their Duty, or in Danger of being driven off from it. (2.) To Seducers that corrupt the Truths of Chriſt and his Ordinances, and ſo *trouble the Minds of the Diſciples*, for they are thoſe by whom *Offences come.* (3.) To thoſe that under the Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Name live ſcandalouſly, and thereby weaken the Hands, and ſadden the Hearts of God's People, for by them the Offence comes; and 'tis no Abatement of their Guilt, nor will be any of their Puniſhment, that 'tis impoſſible but that Offences will come.

Secondly, That *forgiving Offences* is a *great Duty*, and that which we ſhould every one of us make Conſcience of, *v.* 3. *Take Heed to yourſelves.* This may refer either to what goes before, or to what follows. *Take Heed that ye offend not one of theſe little ones.* Miniſters muſt be very careful, not to ſay or do any Thing that may be a Diſcouragement to weak Chriſtians, there is Need of great Caution, and they ought to ſpeak and act very conſiderately for Fear of this: Or, when *your Brother treſpaſſeth againſt you*, doth any Injury, puts any Slight or Affront upon you, if he be acceſſary to any Damage done you in your Property, or Reputation, *Take Heed to yourſelves at ſuch a Time*, leſt you be put into a Paſſion, leſt when your Spirits are provok'd, you *ſpeak unadviſedly*, and raſhly vow Revenge, *Prov.* 24. 29. *I will do ſo to him, as he has done to me.* Take Heed what you ſay at ſuch a Time, leſt you ſay amiſs.

(1.) If you are permitted to *rebuke him*, you are adviſ'd to do ſo: Smother not the Reſentment, but give it Vent, *tell him his Faults*, ſhew him wherein he has not done well, nor fairly by you, and it may be you will perceive (and you muſt be very willing to perceive it) that you miſtook him, that it was not a *Treſpaſs againſt* you, or not deſign'd, but an *Over-ſight*, and then you'll beg his Pardon for miſunderſtanding him, as *Joſh.* 22. 30, 31.

(2.) You are commanded upon his Repentance to forgive him, and to be perfectly reconcil'd to him: *If he repent, forgive him*; forget the Injury, never think of it again, much leſs upbraid him with it. Tho' he do not repent, you muſt not therefore bear Malice to him, or meditate Revenge; but if he do not at leaſt *ſay he repents*; you are not bound to be ſo free and familiar with him as you have been. If he be guilty of groſs Sin, to the Offence of the Chriſtian Community he is a Member of, let him be gravely and mildly reprov'd for his Sin, and upon his Repentance receiv'd into Friendſhip and Communion again. This the Apoſtle calls *Forgiveneſs*, 2 Cor. 2. 7.

(3.) You are to repeat this every Time he repeats his Treſpaſs, *v.* 4. If he could be ſuppos'd to be either ſo negligent, or ſo impudent, as to *treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven Times in a Day*, and as often profeſſes himſelf ſorry for his Fault, and promiſeth not again to offend in like Manner, continue to *forgive him. Humanum eſt errare. Note*, Chriſtians ſhould be of a forgiving Spirit, willing to make the beſt of every Body, and all about them eaſy; forward to extenuate Faults and not to aggravate them, and ſhould contrive as much to ſhew that they have forgiven an Injury, as others to ſhew that they reſent it.

Thirdly, That we have all Need to get our *Faith* ſtrengthen'd, becauſe as that Grace grows, all other Graces grow. The more firmly we believe the Doctrine of Chriſt, and the more confidently we rely upon the Grace of Chriſt, the better it will be with us every Way. Now obſerve here,

1. The Addreſs which the Diſciples made to Chriſt for the ſtrengthening of their Faith, *v.* 5. *The Apoſtles* themſelves, ſo they are here call'd, tho' they were prime Miniſters of State in Chriſt's Kingdom, yet acknowledg'd the Weakneſs and Deficiency of their Faith, and ſaw their Need of Chriſt's Grace for the Im-

provement of it; they *ſaid unto the Lord, increaſe our Faith*, and perfect what is lacking in it. Let the Diſcoveries of Faith be more clear, the Deſires of Faith more ſtrong, the Dependancies of Faith more firm and fix'd, the Dedications of Faith more intire and reſolute, and the Delights of Faith more pleaſing. *Note*, The Increaſe of our Faith, is what we ſhould earneſtly deſire, and offer up that Deſire to God in Prayer. Some think they put up this Prayer to Chriſt, upon Occaſion of his preſſing upon them the Duty of forgiving Injuries; *Lord increaſe our Faith*, or we ſhall never be able to practiſe ſuch a difficult Duty as this. Faith in God's pardoning Mercy will enable us to get over the greateſt Difficulties that lye in the Way of our forgiving our Brother. Others think 'twas upon ſome other Occaſion, when the Apoſtles were run aground in working ſome Miracle, and were reprov'd by Chriſt for the Weakneſs of their Faith, as *Mat.* 17. 16. To him that *blam'd* them they muſt apply themſelves for Grace to *mend* them; to him they cry, *Lord, increaſe our Faith*.

2. The Aſſurance Chriſt gave them of the wonderful Efficacy of true Faith, *v.* 6. *If ye had Faith as a Grain of Muſtard-Seed*, ſo *ſmall* as Muſtard-ſeed, but yours is yet leſs than the leaſt; or ſo *ſharp* as *Muſtard-Seed*, ſo pungent, ſo exciting to all other Graces, as Muſtard to the animal Spirits, and therefore us'd in Palſies, you might do Wonders much beyond what you now do; nothing would be too hard for you, that were fit to be done for the Glory of God, and the Confirmation of the Doctrine you preach, yea, tho' it were the *tranſplanting of a Tree* from the Earth *to the Sea*, See *Mat.* 17. 20. As with God *nothing is impoſſible*, ſo are *all Things poſſible to him that can believe*.

Fourthly, That whatever we do in the Service of Chriſt, we muſt be very humble, and not imagine that we can merit any Favour at his Hand, or claim it as a Debt, even the Apoſtles themſelves, who did ſo much more for Chriſt than others, muſt not think they had thereby made him their Debtor.

1. We are all *God's Servants*, his *Apoſtles* and *Miniſters* are in a ſpecial Manner *ſo*, and as Servants are bound to do all we can for his Honour; our whole Strength, and our whole Time are to be employ'd for him; for *we are not our own*, not at our own Diſpoſe, but at our Maſter's.

2. As God's Servants it becomes us to fill up our Time with Duty, and we have a Variety of Work appointed us to do, we ought to make the End of one Service, the Beginning of another. The Servant that has been *ploughing* or *feeding Cattel in the Field*, when he *comes Home* at Night, has Work to do ſtill, he muſt *wait at Table*, *v.* 7, 8. When we have been employ'd in the Duties of a religious Converſation, that will not excuſe us from the Exerciſes of Devotion, when we have been *working for God*, ſtill we muſt be *waiting on God*, waiting on him continually.

3. Our principal Care here muſt be to do the Duty of our Religion, and leave it to our Maſter to give us the Comfort of it, when and how he thinks fit. No Servant expects that his Maſter ſhould ſay to him, *Go and ſit down to Meat*, 'tis Time enough to do that, when we have *done our Days Work*. Let us be in Care to finiſh our Work, and to do that well, and then the Reward will come in due Time.

4. 'Tis fit Chriſt ſhould be firſt ſerv'd before us: *Make ready wherewith I may ſup, and afterwards they ſhall eat and drink*. Doubting Chriſtians ſay, they cannot give to Chriſt the Glory of his Love as they ſhould, becauſe they have not yet obtain'd the Comfort of it; but this is wrong, firſt let Chriſt have the Glory of it, let us attend him with our Praiſes, and then we ſhall *eat and drink* in the Comfort of that Love, and in that there is a Feaſt.

5. Chriſt's Servants when they are to wait upon him, muſt *gird themſelves*, muſt free themſelves from every Thing that is entangling and incumbring, and fit themſelves with a cloſe Application of Mind to go on, and go through with their Work; muſt *gird up the Loyns of their Mind*. When we have prepar'd for Chriſt's Entertainment, have *made ready wherewith he may ſup*, we muſt then *gird ourſelves* to attend him. This is expected from Servants, and Chriſt might require it from us, but he doth not inſiſt upon it: He was *among his Diſciples, as one that ſerved*, and came not as other Maſters, to take State, and *to be miniſtred unto, but to miniſter*, witneſs his waſhing his Diſciples Feet.

6. Chriſt's Servants do not ſo much as merit Thanks for any Service they do him. *Doth he thank that Servant*? Doth he reckon himſelf indebted to him for it? No, by no Means. No good Works of ours can merit any Thing at the Hand of God. We expect God's Favour, not becauſe we have by our Services made him a Debtor to us, but becauſe he has by his Promiſes made himſelf a Debtor to his own Honour, and that we may plead with him, but cannot ſue for a *Quantum meruit*.

7. Whatever we do for Chriſt, tho' it ſhould be more perhaps than ſome others do, yet 'tis no more than is our Duty to do. Tho' we ſhould *do all Things that are commanded us*, and alaſs in many Things we come ſhort of that, yet there is no Work of *Supererogation*, 'tis but what we are bound to by that firſt and great Commandment of *loving God* with *all our Heart and Soul*, which includes the utmoſt.

8. The beſt Servants of Chriſt, even when they do the beſt Services, muſt humbly acknowledge that they are *unprofitable Servants*, tho' they are not thoſe unprofitable Servants that bury their Talent, and ſhall be caſt into *utter Darkneſs*, yet as to Chriſt, and any Advantage that can accrue to him by their Services, they are *unprofitable*; our *Goodneſs extendeth not unto God*, neither *if we are righteous is he the better*, Pſal. 16. 2. Job. 22. 2, 35. God cannot be a *Gainer* by our Services, and therefore cannot be made a *Debtor* by them. He has no need of us, nor can our Services make any Addition to his Perfections, it becomes us therefore to call ourſelves *unprofitable Servants*, but to call his Service a profitable Service, for God is happy without us, but we are undone without him.

11 ¶ And it came to paſs, as he went to Jeruſalem, that he paſſed through the midſt of Samaria and Galilee. 12 And as he entred into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which ſtood afar off: 13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and ſaid, Jeſus Maſter, have mercy on us. 14 And when he ſaw *them*, he ſaid unto them, Go ſhew yourſelves unto the prieſts. And it came to paſs, that as they went, they were cleanſed. 15 And one of them, when he ſaw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God. 16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritane. 17 And Jeſus anſwering him ſaid, Were there not ten cleanſed? but where *are* the nine? 18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, ſave this ſtranger. 19 And he ſaid unto him, Ariſe, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole.

We have here an Account of the Cure of ten Lepers, which we had not in any other of the Evangeliſts. The Leproſy was a Diſeaſe which the Jews ſuppos'd to be inflicted for the Puniſhment of ſome particular Sin, and to be more than other Diſeaſes a Mark of God's Diſpleaſure, and therefore Chriſt who came to take away Sin, and turn away Wrath, took particular Care to cleanſe the Lepers that fell in his Way. Chriſt was now in his Way to *Jeruſalem*, about the Mid-way, where he had leaſt Acquaintance, in Compariſon to what he had either at *Jeruſalem* or in *Galilee*; he was now in the Frontier Country, the Marches that lay between *Samaria* and *Galilee*; he went that Road, to find out theſe Lepers, and to cure them, for he is *found of them that ſought him not*. Obſerve,

Firſt, The Addreſs of theſe Lepers to Chriſt, they were ten in a Gang: For though they were ſhut out from Society with others, yet thoſe that were infected were at Liberty to converſe with one another, which would be ſome Comfort to them, as giving them an Opportunity to compare Notes, and to condole with one another. Now obſerve,

1. They *met* Chriſt *as he enter'd into a certain Village*: They did not ſtay till he had refreſh'd himſelf for ſome Time after the Fatigue of his Journey, but met him as he *enter'd* the Town, weary as he was, and yet he did not put them off, or adjourn their Cauſe. They *ſtood afar off*, knowing that by the Law, their Diſeaſe oblig'd them *to keep their Diſtance*. Senſe of our ſpiritual Leproſy ſhould make us very humble in all our Approaches to Chriſt: Who are we that we ſhould draw near to him that is infinitely pure, who are impure?

2. Their Requeſt was unanimous, and very importunate, *v.* 13. *They lifted up their Voices*, being at a Diſtance, and cry'd, *Jeſus, Maſter, have Mercy on us*. Thoſe that expect Help from Chriſt, muſt take him for their Maſter, and be at his Command. If he be *Maſter*, he will be *Jeſus*, a Saviour, and not otherwiſe. They ask not in particular to be cur'd of their Leproſy, but *have Mercy on us*; and 'tis enough to refer ourſelves to the Compaſſions of Chriſt, for they *fail not*. They had heard the Fame of this Jeſus, tho' he had not been much converſant in that Country, and that was ſuch as encourag'd them to make Application to him; and if but one of them began in ſo cheap and eaſy an Addreſs, they would all join.

3. Chriſt ſent them to *the Prieſt*, to be *inſpected* by him, who was the Judge of the Leproſy. He did not tell them poſitively they ſhould be *cur'd*, but bid them *go ſhew themſelves to the Prieſts*, *v.* 14. This was a Trial of their Obedience, and 'twas fit it ſhould be ſo try'd, as *Naaman*'s in a like Caſe, *Go waſh in* Jordan. *Note*, Thoſe that expect Chriſt's Favours, muſt take them in his Way and Method. Some of theſe Lepers perhaps would be ready to quarrel with the Preſcription, let him either cure or ſay he will not, and not ſend us to the Prieſt on a Fool's Errand; but over-rul'd by the reſt, they all *went to the Prieſt*. While the ceremonial Law was yet in force, Chriſt took Care it ſhould be obſerv'd, and the Reputation of it kept up, and due Honour paid to the Prieſts in Things pertaining to their Function; but probably he had here a further Deſign, which was to have the Prieſt's *Judgment of*, and *Teſtimony to* the Perfectneſs of the Cure, and that the Prieſt might be awaken'd, and others by him, to enquire after one that had ſuch a commanding Power over bodily Diſeaſes.

4. *As they went, they were cleanſed*, and ſo became fit to be look'd upon by the Prieſt, and to have a Certificate from him that they were clean. Obſerve, Then we may expect God to meet us with Mercy, when we are found in the Way of Duty. If we do what we can, God will not be wanting to do that for us which we cannot. Go, attend upon inſtituted Ordinances, go and pray, and

his Stuff behind him, than ſtay to look after it, and *periſh with them that believe* not. 'Twill be their Concern to do as *Lot* and his Family were charg'd to do; *eſcape for thy Life. Save your ſelves from this untoward Generation.*

(2.) When they have made their Eſcape they muſt not think of returning, *v.* 32. *Remember Lot's Wife*; and take Warning by her, not only to flee from this *Sodom* (for ſo *Jeruſalem* is become, *Iſa.* 1. 10.) but to perſevere in your Flight, and do not *look back* as ſhe did; be not loth to leave a Place mark'd for Deſtruction, whoever or whatever you leave behind you that is ever ſo dear to you. Thoſe who have left the *Sodom* of a natural State, let them go forward, and not ſo much as look a kind Look towards it again. Let them not *look back*, leſt they ſhould be tempted to *go back*; nay, leſt that be conſtrued a *going back in Heart*, or an Evidence that the Heart was left *behind. Lot's* Wife was *turn'd into a Pillar of Salt*, that ſhe might remain a laſting Monument of God's Diſpleaſure againſt Apoſtates, that *begin in the Spirit and end in the Fleſh.*

(3.) There would be no other Way of ſaving their Lives but by quitting the Jews, and if they thought to ſave themſelves by a Coalition with them, they would find themſelves miſtaken, *v.* 31. *Whoſoever ſhall ſeek to ſave his Life* by declining from his Chriſtianity, and complying with the Jews, he ſhall *loſe it* with them, and periſh in the common Calamity; but whoſoever is willing to venture his Life with the Chriſtians, upon the ſame Bottom on which they venture, to take his Lot with them in Life and in Death, he ſhall *preſerve* his Life, for he ſhall make ſure *eternal Life*; and is in a likelier Way at that Time to ſave his Life than thoſe who embark in a Jewiſh Bottom, or *enſure* upon their Securities. *Note*, Thoſe do beſt for themſelves that truſt God in the Way of Duty.

7. That all good Chriſtians ſhould certainly eſcape, but many of them very *narrowly* from that Deſtruction, *v.* 34, 35, 36. When God's Judgments are laying all waſte, he will take an effectual Courſe to preſerve thoſe that are his, by remarkable Providences diſtinguiſhing between them and others, that were neareſt to them; *Two in a Bed, one taken and the other left*; one ſnatch'd out of the Burning, and taken into a Place of Safety, while the other is left to periſh in the common Ruin. *Note*, Tho' the Sword devours one as well as another, and *all Things* ſeem to *come alike to all*, yet ſooner or later it ſhall be made to appear that the Lord knows them that are his, and are not, and how to *take out the Precious from the Vile.* We are ſure *the Judge of all the Earth will do right*; and therefore when he ſends a Judgment on Purpoſe to avenge the Death of his Son, upon thoſe that crucified him, he will take Care that none of thoſe who glorify'd him, and glory'd in his Croſs, ſhall be *taken away* by that Judgment.

Laſtly, That this diſtinguiſhing, dividing, diſcriminating Work ſhall be done in all Places, as far as the Kingdom of God ſhall extend, *v.* 37. *Where Lord?* They had enquir'd concerning the Time, and he would not gratifie their Curioſity with any Information concerning that, they therefore try'd him with another Queſtion, *Where Lord?* Where ſhall thoſe be *ſafe* that are *taken?* Where ſhall thoſe *periſh* that are *left?* The Anſwer is proverbial, and may be explain'd ſo as to anſwer each Side of the Queſtion, *Whereſoever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gather'd together.* (1.) Wherever the Wicked are that are mark'd for Perdition, they ſhall *be found out*, by the Judgments of God; as wherever a dead Carcaſe is, the Birds of Prey will ſmell it out, and make a Prey of it. The Jews having made themſelves a dead and putrified Carcaſe, *odious* to God's Holineſs, and *obnoxious* to his Juſtice, wherever any of that unbelieving Generation is, the Judgments of God ſhall faſten upon them, as the Eagles do upon the Prey, *Thine Hand ſhalt find out all thine Enemies*, Pſal. 21. 9. Tho' they *ſet their Neſts among the Stars*, Obad. 4. The Roman Soldiers will hunt the Jews out of all their Receſſes and Faſtneſſes, and none ſhall eſcape. (2.) Wherever the Godly are that are mark'd for Preſervation, they *ſhall be found* happy in the Enjoyment of Chriſt. As the Diſſolution of the Jewiſh Church ſhall be extended to all Parts, ſo ſhall the Conſtitution of the Chriſtian Church: Wherever Chriſt is, Believers will flock to him, and meet in him, as Eagles about the Prey, without being directed or ſhow'd the Way, by the Inſtinct of the new Nature. Now Chriſt is where his Goſpel, and his Ordinances, and Church are, *For where Two or Three are gathered in his Name, there is he in the Midſt of them*, and thither therefore others will be gather'd to him. The Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* is not to have one particular Place for it's *Metropolis*, ſuch as *Jeruſalem* was to the Jewiſh Church, to which all Jews were to reſort: But *wherever the Body is*, wherever the Goſpel is preach'd, and Ordinances are miniſtred, thither will pious Souls reſort, there they will find Chriſt, and by Faith feaſt upon him. *Wherever Chriſt records his Name, he will meet his People and bleſs them*, John 4. 21. 1 Tim. 2. 8. Many good Interpreters underſtand it, of the gathering of the Saints together to Chriſt in the Kingdom of Glory; ask not where the Carcaſs will be, and how they ſhall find the Way to it, for they ſhall be under an infallible Conduct, to him who is their living quickning Head, and the Center of their Unity; to him ſhall the Gathering of the People be.

CHAP. XVIII.

In this Chapter we have (1.) The Parable of the importunate Widow, deſign'd to teach us Fervency in Prayer, v. 1---8. *(2.) The Parable of the Phariſee and Publican, deſign'd to teach us Humility, and Humiliation for Sin in Prayer*, v. 9---14. *(3.) Chriſt's Favour to little Children that were brought to him*, v. 15,---17. *(4.) The Trial of a rich Man that had a Mind to follow Chriſt, whether he lov'd better Chriſt or his Riches, his coming ſhort upon that Trial, and Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples upon that Occaſion*, v. 18.-----30. *(5.) Chriſt's foretelling of his own Death and Sufferings*, v. 31.----34. *(6.) His reſtoring Sight to a blind Man*, v. 35.----43. *And theſe four Paſſages we had before in* Matthew *and* Mark.

AND he ſpake a parable unto them, *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. 3 And there was a widow in that city, and ſhe came unto him, ſaying, Avenge me of my adverſary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he ſaid within himſelf, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet becauſe this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, leſt by her continual coming ſhe weary me. 6 And the Lord ſaid, hear what the unjuſt Judge ſaith. 7 And ſhall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them ſpeedily. Nevertheleſs, when the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find Faith on the earth?

This Parable has its Key hanging at the Door; the Drift and Deſign of it is *prefix'd*; Chriſt ſpoke it with this Intent, to teach us that *Men ought always to pray and not to faint*, *v.* 1. (1.) It ſuppoſeth that all God's People are *praying* People, all God's Children keep up both a *conſtant* and an *occaſional* Correſpondence with him, ſend to him *ſtatedly*, and upon *every Emergence.* It is our Privilege and Honour that we *may* pray, it is our Duty, we *ought to pray*, we ſin if we neglect it. It is to be our conſtant Work, we ought *always* to pray, 'tis that which *the Duty of every Day requires*; we muſt pray and never grow weary of praying, nor think of giving it off, till it comes to be ſwallow'd up in everlaſting Praiſe. But that which ſeems particularly deſign'd here is to teach us Conſtancy and Perſeverance in our Requeſts for ſome ſpiritual Mercies that we are in Purſuit of, relating either to ourſelves, or to the Church of God; when we are praying for Strength againſt our ſpiritual Enemies, our Luſts and Corruptions, which are our worſt Enemies; we muſt continue inſtant in Prayer, muſt pray and *not faint*, for we ſhall not *ſeek God's Face in vain.* So we muſt likewiſe in our Prayers for the Deliverance of the People of God out of the Hands of their Perſecutors and Oppreſſors.

Firſt, Chriſt ſhews by a Parable the *Power of Importunity* among Men, who will be ſway'd by that when nothing elſe will influence, to do that which is juſt and right. He gives you an Inſtance of an honeſt Cauſe that was carry'd before an unjuſt Judge, not by the Equity and Compaſſionableneſs of it, but purely by *Dint of Importunity.* Obſerve here,

1. The ill Character of the Judge that was in a certain City, he *neither feared God nor regarded Man*; i. e. he had no Manner of Concern, either for his Conſcience or for his Reputation; he ſtood in no Awe either of the Wrath of God againſt him, or of the Cenſures of Men concerning him. Or he took no Care to do his Duty either to God or Man. He was a perfect Stranger both to Godlineſs and Honour, and had no Notion of either. Thoſe that have caſt off the Fear of their Creator, it is not ſtrange if they be altogether regardleſs of their Fellow-Creatures: Where no *Fear of God* is, no Good is to be expected. Such a Prevalency of Irreligion and Inhumanity is bad in any, but very bad in a *Judge* that has Power in his Hand, in the Uſe of which he ought to be guided by the Principles of Religion and Juſtice, and if he be not, inſtead of doing Good with his Power, he will be in Danger of doing Hurt. *Wickedneſs in the Place of Judgment*, was one of the soreſt Evils *Solomon* ſaw under the Sun, *Eccl.* 3. 16.

2. The diſtreſſed Caſe of a poor Widow that was neceſſitated to make her Appeal to him, being wrong'd by ſome one that thought to bear her down with Power and Terror; ſhe had manifeſtly Right on her Side; but it ſhould ſeem, in ſolliciting to have Right done her, ſhe ty'd not herſelf to the Formalities of the Law, but made perſonal Application to the Judge from Day to Day at his own Houſe, ſtill crying, *avenge me of mine Adverſary*, that is, *do me Juſtice againſt mine Adverſary*, not that ſhe deſir'd to be reveng'd on him for any Thing he had done againſt her, but that he might be oblig'd to reſtore what Effects he had of hers in

his Hands, and might be diſabled any more to oppreſs her. *Note*, Poor Widows have often many Adverſaries, who barbarouſly take Advantage of their weak and helpleſs State, to invade their Rights, and defraud them of what little they have; and Magiſtrates are particularly charg'd, not only not to do *Violence to the Widow*, Jer 22. 3. but to *judge the Fatherleſs and plead for the Widow*, Iſa. 1. 17. to be their Patrons and Protectors; then they are *as Gods*, for God is ſo, Pſal. 68. 5.

3. The Difficulty and Diſcouragement ſhe met with in her Cauſe; *He would not for a While*, according to his uſual Practice, he frown'd upon her, took no Notice of her Cauſe, but conniv'd at all the Wrong her Adverſary did her, for ſhe had no Bribe to give him, no great Man whom he ſtood in any Awe of, to ſpeak for her, ſo that he did not at all incline to redreſs her Grievances; and he himſelf was conſcious of the Reaſon of his Dilatorineſs, and cou'd not but own within himſelf that he *neither fear'd God, nor regarded Man*; 'tis ſad a Man ſhould know ſo much amiſs by himſelf, and be in no Care to amend it.

4. The gaining of her Point by continual *dunning* of this unjuſt *Judge*, v. 5. *becauſe this Widow troubles me*, gives me a continual Toil, I will hear her Cauſe, and do her Juſtice, not ſo much leſt by her Clamour againſt me ſhe bring me into an ill Name, as leſt by her Clamour to me ſhe weary me; for ſhe is reſolv'd ſhe will give me no Reſt till it is done, and therefore I'le do it to ſave my ſelf further Trouble; as good at firſt as at laſt. Thus ſhe got Juſtice done her by continual Craving; ſhe beg'd it at his Door, follow'd him in the Streets, ſollicited him in open Court, and ſtill her Cry was, *Avenge me of mine Adverſary*, which he was forc'd to do, to get rid of her; for his Conſcience, as bad as he was, would not ſuffer him to ſend her to Priſon for an Affront upon the Court.

Secondly, He applies this for the Encouragement of God's praying People, to pray with Faith and Fervency, and to perſevere therein.

1. He aſſures them, that God will at length be gracious to them, *v.* 7. *Hear what the unjuſt Judge ſaith*; how he owns himſelf quite overcome by a conſtant Importunity, and from thence infers, *Shall not God avenge his own Elect*? Obſerve,

(1.) What is it that they deſire and expect? That God would *avenge his own Elect*. *Note*, 1. There is a People in the World that are God's People, his *Elect*, his *own Elect*, a choice People, a choſen People. And this he has an Eye to in all he doth for them, 'tis becauſe they are his *Choſen*, and in Purſuance of the Choice he has made of them. 2. God's own Elect meet with a great deal of Trouble and Oppoſition in this World, there are *many Adverſaries* that fight againſt them; *Satan* is their great Adverſary. 3. That which is wanted and waited for, is God's preſerving and protecting them, and the Work of his own Hands in them; his ſecuring the Intereſt of the Church in the World, and of his Grace in the Heart.

(2.) What is it that is requir'd of God's People, in Order to the obtaining of this; they muſt *cry Day and Night to him*, not that he needs their Remonſtrances, or can be mov'd by their Pleadings, but this he has made their Duty, and to this he has promis'd Mercy. We ought to be particular in praying againſt our ſpiritual Enemies, as St. *Paul* was, *For this Thing I beſought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me*, like this importunate Widow. Lord mortifie *this* Corruption, Lord arm me againſt *this* Temptation. We ought to concern ourſelves for the perſecuted and oppreſſed Churches, and to pray that God would do them Juſtice, and ſet them in Safety. And herein we muſt be very urgent; we muſt *cry* with Earneſtneſs; we muſt cry *Day and Night* as thoſe that believe Prayer will be heard at laſt; we muſt *wreſtle with God*, as thoſe that know how to value the Bleſſing, and will have no Nay. God's praying People are bid to *give him no Reſt*, Iſa. 62. 6, 7.

(3.) What Diſcouragements they may perhaps meet with in their Prayers and Expectations; he may *bear long with them*, and may not preſently appear for them, in Anſwer to their Prayers. He is μακροθυμῶν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς: He *exerciſeth Patience towards the Adverſaries of his People*, and doth not take Vengeance on them; and he *exerciſeth the Patience of his People*, and doth not plead for them: He *bore long* with the *Cry of the Sin* of the *Egyptians* that oppreſſed *Iſrael*, and with the *Cry of the Sorrows* of thoſe that were oppreſſed.

(4.) What Aſſurance they have that Mercy will come at laſt tho' it be delay'd, and how it is ſupported by what the unjuſt Judge ſayeth, If this Widow prevail by being importunate, much more ſhall God's Elect prevail. For, (1.) This Widow was a *Stranger*, nothing related to the Judge, but God's praying People are his own Elect, whom he knows, and loves, and delights in, and has always concern'd himſelf for. (2.) She was but *one*, but the praying People of God are *many*, that all come to him on the ſame Errand, and *agree* to ask what they need, *Mat.* 18. 19. As the Saints of Heaven ſurround the Throne of Glory with united Praiſes, ſo Saints on Earth beſiege the Throne of Grace with their united Prayers. (3.) She came to a *Judge* that bid her *keep her Diſtance*, we come to a *Father* that bids us *come boldly* to him, and teaches us to cry *Abba Father*. (4.) She came to an *unjuſt Judge*, we come to a *righteous Father*, Joh. 17. 25. one that regards his own Glory, and the Comforts of his poor Creatures, eſpecially thoſe in Diſtreſs, as *Widows* and *Fatherleſs*. (5.) She came to this Judge purely upon her own Account; but God is himſelf engag'd in the Cauſe which we are ſolliciting; and we can ſay, *Ariſe, O Lord, plead thine* own Cauſe; and *what wilt thou do to thy great Name*? (6.) She had no Friend to ſpeak for her, to add Force to her Petition, and to uſe Intereſt for her more than her own; but we have an *Advocate with the Father*, his own Son, who *ever lives to make Interceſſion* for us, and has a powerful prevailing Intereſt in Heaven. (7.) She had no Promiſes of ſpeeding, no, nor any Encouragement given her to ask, but we have the golden Sceptre held out to us, are bid to ask, and 'tis promis'd it ſhall be given us. (8.) She could have Acceſs to the Judge, only at ſome certain Times; but we may cry to God *Day and Night*, at all Hours, and therefore may the rather hope to prevail by Importunity. (9.) Her Importunity was provoking to the Judge, and ſhe might fear leſt it ſhould ſet him more againſt her; but our Importunity is pleaſing to God; the Prayer of the Upright is *his Delight*, and therefore we may hope ſhall avail much, if it be an effectual fervent Prayer.

2. He intimates to them, that notwithſtanding this, they will begin to be weary of waiting for him, *v.* 8. *Nevertheleſs*, tho' ſuch Aſſurances are given, that God will avenge his own Elect, yet *when the Son of Man comes ſhall he find Faith on the Earth*? The Son of Man will come to *avenge his own Elect*, to plead the Cauſe of perſecuted Chriſtians, againſt the perſecuting Jews, he will come in his Providence to plead the Cauſe of his injured People in every Age, and at the great Day he will come finally to determine the Controverſies of *Zion*. Now when he comes, will he find Faith in the Earth? The Queſtion implies a ſtrong Negation, no, he ſhall not; he himſelf foreſees it. (1.) This ſuppoſeth that it is *on Earth* only, that there is Occaſion for *Faith*: For Sinners in Hell are *feeling* that which they would not believe, and Saints in Heaven are *enjoying* that which they did believe. (2.) It ſuppoſeth that *Faith* is the great Thing, that Jeſus Chriſt *looks for*. He *looks down* upon the Children of Men, and doth not ask, is there Innocency? but *is there Faith*? He enquired concerning the Faith of thoſe who applied themſelves to him for Cures. (3.) It ſuppoſeth that if there were Faith, tho' never ſo little, he would diſcover it, and *find it out*. The weakeſt Believer, and moſt obſcure, his Eye is upon. (4.) 'Tis foretold, that when Chriſt comes to plead his People's Cauſe, he will find but *little Faith* in Compariſon with what one might expect. That is,

1. In general, he will find but *few good People*, few that are really and truly good. Many that have the Form and Faſhion of Godlineſs, but few that have Faith, that are ſincere and honeſt; Nay, he will find little *Fidelity* among Men, the *Faithful fail*, Pſal. 12. 1, 2. Even to the End of Time there will ſtill be Occaſion for the ſame Complaint; the World will grow no better, no, not when 'tis drawing towards it Period. Bad it is, and bad it will be, and worſt of all juſt before Chriſt's coming; the laſt Times will be the moſt perrillous.

2. In particular, he will find Few that have *Faith* concerning his coming. When he comes to *avenge his own Elect*, he looks if there be any Faith *to help*, and *to uphold*, and wonders that there is none, *Iſa.* 59. 16. 63. 5. It intimates that Chriſt, both in his particular Comings for the Relief of his People, and in his general Coming at the End of Time, may, and will delay his Coming ſo long as that, (1.) Wicked People will begin to *defy it*, and to ſay, *Where is the Promiſe of his coming?* 2 Pet. 3. 4. They will challenge him to come, *Iſa.* 5. 19. *Amos* 5. 18. and his Delay will harden them in their Wickedneſs, *Mat.* 24. 48. Even his own People will begin to *deſpair* of it, and to conclude he will never come, becauſe he has paſt their Reckoning. God's Time to appear for his People is, when Things are brought to the laſt Extremity, and when *Sion* begins to ſay, *the Lord has forſaken me*. See *Iſa.* 49. 14. 40. 27. But this is our Comfort, that when the Time appointed comes, it will appear that the Unbelief of Man has not made the Promiſe of God of none Effect.

9 And he ſpake this parable unto certain which
truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and
deſpiſed others: 10 Two men went up into the
temple to pray; the one a Phariſee, and the other
a publican. 11 The phariſee ſtood and prayed
thus with himſelf, God, I thank thee, that I am
not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjuſt, adulte-
rers, or even as this publican. 12 I faſt twice in
the week, I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs. 13
And the publican ſtanding afar off, would not lift
up ſo much as his eyes unto heaven, but ſmote upon
his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner.
14 I tell you, this man went down to his houſe
juſtified, *rather* than the other: for every one that
exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that hum-
bleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted.

the Scriptures; *Go ſhew thyſelf to the Prieſt*; go and open thy Caſe to a faithful Miniſter, and tho' the Means will not heal thee of themſelves, God will heal thee in the diligent Uſe of thoſe Means.

5. One of them, and but one *return'd to give Thanks*, v. 15. When he *ſaw that he was heal'd*, inſtead of going forward to the Prieſt to be by him declar'd clean, and ſo diſcharg'd from his Confinement, which was all that the reſt aim'd at, he *turn'd back* towards him that was the Author of his Cure, who he is deſirous ſhould have the Glory of it, before he receiv'd the Benefit of it. He appears to have been very hearty and affectionate in his Thankſgivings, *with a loud Voice he glorified God*, acknowledging it to come originally from *him*; and he *lifted up his Voice* in his Praiſes, as he had done in his Prayers, *v.* 13. Thoſe that have receiv'd Mercy from God, ſhould publiſh it to others, that they may praiſe God too, and may be encourag'd by our Experiences to truſt in him. But he alſo made a particular Addreſs of Thanks to Chriſt, v. 16. *He fell down at his Feet*, put himſelf into the moſt humble reverent Poſture he could, and *gave him Thanks. Note*, We ought to give Thanks for the Favours Chriſt beſtows upon us, and particularly for Recoveries from Sickneſs: And we ought to be ſpeedy in our Returns of Praiſe, and not to defer them, leſt Time wear out the Senſe of the Mercy. And it becomes us to be very humble in our Thankſgivings, as well as in our Prayers. It becomes the Seed of *Jacob*, like him, to own themſelves *leſs than the leaſt of all* God's *Mercies*, when they have receiv'd them, as well as when they are in Purſuit of them.

6. Chriſt took Notice of this one that had thus diſtinguiſh'd himſelf, for it ſeems he was a *Samaritan*, whereas the reſt were *Jews*, v. 16. The *Samaritans* were Separatiſts from the Jewiſh Church, and had not that pure Knowledge and Worſhip of God among them that the Jews had, and yet it was one of them that *glorified God*, when the Jews forgot, or when it was mov'd to them, *refus'd* to do it. Now obſerve here,

1. The particular Notice Chriſt *took of him*, of the grateful Return he made, and the Ingratitude of thoſe that were Sharers with him in the Mercy. That he who was a *Stranger* to the Common-Wealth of *Iſrael*, was the only one that *return'd to give Glory to God*, v. 17, 18. See here, (1.) How *rich* Chriſt is in *doing good*; *were there not Ten cleanſed?* Here was a Cure by *wholeſale*, a whole *Hoſpital* heal'd with *one* Word's ſpeaking. *Note*, There is an abundance of healing cleanſing Virtue in the Blood of Chriſt, ſufficient for all his Patients, tho' never ſo many. Here's *Ten at a Time* cleans'd; we ſhall have never the leſs Grace for others ſharing. (2.) How *poor* we are in our Returns, *where is the Nine*? Why did not they return to give Thanks? This intimates that Ingratitude is a very common Sin: Of the many that receive Mercy from God, there are but few, very few, that *return to give Thanks* in a right Manner, ſcarce *One in Ten*, who render according to the Benefit done unto them. (3.) How thoſe often prove moſt grateful from whom it was leaſt expected: A *Samaritan* gives Thanks, and a *Jew* doth not. Thus many who profeſs revealed Religion, are out-done, and quite ſhamed, by ſome that are govern'd only by natural Religion, not only in moral Virtue, but in Piety and Devotion. This ſerves here to aggravate the Ingratitude of thoſe Jews, from whom Chriſt ſpeaks, as *taking it very ill* that his Kindneſs was ſo ſlighted. And it intimates how juſtly he reſents the Ingratitude of the World of Mankind, for whom he had *done ſo much*, and from whom he has *receiv'd ſo little*.

2. The great Encouragement Chriſt gave him, *v.* 19. The reſt had their *Cure*, and had it not *revok'd* as juſtly it might have been for their Ingratitude, tho' they had ſuch a good Example of Gratitude ſet before them; but he had his Cure confirm'd particularly with an Encomium, *Thy Faith has made thee whole*. The reſt were *made whole* by the Power of Chriſt, in Compaſſion to their Diſtreſs, and in Anſwer to their Prayer; but he was made whole *by his Faith*, which Chriſt ſaw him differenced by from the reſt. *Note*, Temporal Mercies are then doubled and ſweeten'd to us, when they are *fetch'd* in by the Prayers of Faith, and *returned* by the Praiſes of Faith.

20 ¶ And when he was demanded of the Phariſees, when the kingdom of God ſhould come; he anſwered them, and ſaid, The kingdom of God cometh not with obſervation. 21 Neither ſhall they ſay, Lo here, or lo there: for behold, the kingdom of God is within you. 22 And he ſaid unto the diſciples, The days will come, when ye ſhall deſire to ſee one of the days of the Son of man, and ye ſhall not ſee *it*. 23 And they ſhall ſay to you, See here, or ſee there: go not after *them*, nor follow *them*. 24 For as the lightning that lightneth out of the one *part* under heaven, ſhineth unto the other *part* under heaven: ſo ſhall alſo the Son of man be in his day. 25 But firſt muſt he ſuffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. 26 And as it was in the days of Noe, ſo ſhall it be alſo in the days of the Son of man. 27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entred into the ark: and the flood came and deſtroyed them all. 28 Likewiſe alſo as it was in the days of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded: 29 But the ſame day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimſtone from heaven, and deſtroyed them all; 30 Even thus ſhall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. 31 In that day, he which ſhall be upon the houſe-top, and his ſtuff in the houſe, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewiſe not return back. 32 Remember Lots wife. 33 Whoſoever ſhall ſeek to ſave his Life, ſhall loſe it: and whoſoever ſhall loſe his life, ſhall preſerve it. 34 I tell you, in that night there ſhall be two men in one bed; the one ſhall be taken, and the other ſhall be left. 35 Two women ſhall be grinding together; the one ſhall be taken, and the other left. 36 Two men ſhall be in the field, the one ſhall be taken, and the other left. 37 And they anſwered and ſaid unto him, Where, Lord? And he ſaid unto them, Whereſoever the body *is*, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

We have here a Diſcourſe of Chriſt's, concerning the *Kingdom of God*, i. e. the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, which was now ſhortly to be *ſet up*, and of which there was great Expectation.

1. Here's the Demand of the Phariſees concerning it, which occaſion'd this Diſcourſe; they ask'd *when the Kingdom of God ſhould come:* Forming a Notion of it as a *temporal Kingdom*, which ſhould advance the Jewiſh Nation above the Nations of the Earth; they were impatient to hear ſome Tidings of its Approach; they underſtood perhaps that Chriſt had taught his Diſciples to pray for the coming of it, and they had long preach'd that it was *at Hand:* Now ſay the Phariſees when will that glorious View open? When ſhall we ſee this *long-look'd for* Kingdom?

2. Chriſt's Reply to that Demand, directed to the Phariſees firſt, and afterwards to his own Diſciples who knew better how to underſtaed it, *v.* 22. what he ſaid to both, he ſaith to us.

1. That the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was to be a *ſpiritual Kingdom*, and not temporal and external. They ask'd *when* it would come: You know not what you ask, ſaith Chriſt, it may come, and you not be aware of it: For it has not an *external Shew* as other Kingdoms have; the Advancements and Revolutions of which are taken Notice of by the Nations of the Earth, and fill the News-Papers, ſo they expected this Kingdom of God would do: No, ſaith Chriſt, (1.) 'Twill have a ſilent Entrance, without Pomp, without Noiſe, it *cometh not with Obſervation*, μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, with *outward Shew*. They deſir'd to have their Curioſity ſatisfy'd concerning the *Time* of it, to which Chriſt doth not give them any Anſwer, but will have their Miſtakes rectify'd concerning the *Nature* of it. *'Tis not for you to know the Times* of this Kingdom, thoſe are *ſecret Things*, which belong not to you; but the great Intentions of this Kingdom, thoſe are *Things reveal'd*. When *Meſſiah* the Prince comes to ſet up his Kingdom, they ſhall not ſay *Loe here*, or *loe there*, as when a Prince goes in Progreſs to viſit his Territories, it is in every Body's Mouth, he is here, or he is there; for *where the King is, there is the Court:* Chriſt will not come with all that Talk; it will not be ſet up in this or that particular Place; nor will the Court of that Kingdom be *here* or *there*; Nor will it be *here* or *there*, what Country Men are of, or where they dwell, as if that would place them to, or further from that Kingdom. Thoſe who confine Chriſtianity and the Church to this Place, or that Party, cry, *Loe here*, or *loe there*, than which nothing is more contrary to the Deſigns of catholick Chriſtianity; ſo do they who make Proſperity and external Pomp a Mark of the true Church. (2.) It has a *ſpiritual* Influence. *The Kingdom of God is within you.* It is not *of this World*, John 18. 36. It's Glory doth not ſtrike Mens Fancies, but affect their Spirits, and its Power is over their Souls and Conſciences, and from them it receives Homage, and not their Bodies only. The *Kingdom of God* will not change Mens outward Condition, but their Hearts and Lives; then it *comes* when it makes thoſe humble and ſerious, and heavenly, that were proud, vain, and carnal, when it *weans* thoſe from the World that were *wedded* to the World, and therefore look for the Kingdom of God in the Revolutions of the Heart, not of the civil Government. The Kingdom of God is *among you*, ſo ſome read it: You enquire when it will come, and you are not aware that it is already begun to be ſet up *in the Midſt of you*. The Goſpel is preach'd, 'tis *confirm'd* by Miracles, 'tis *embrac'd* by Multitudes, ſo that 'tis *in your* Nation, tho' not in your Hearts. *Note*, 'Tis the Folly of many curious Enquirers concerning the Times to come, that they look for that *before them* which is already *among them*.

2. That the ſetting up of this Kingdom, was a Work that would meet with a great deal of *Oppoſition* and *Interruption*, *v.* 22. The *Diſciples* thought they ſhould carry all before them, and expected a conſtant Series of Succeſs in their Work; but Chriſt tells them it would be otherwiſe, *The Days will come*, before you have finiſh'd your Teſtimony, and done your Work, *when you ſhall deſire to ſee one of the Days of the Son of Man*, one ſuch Day as we *now* have, of the Proſperity and Progreſs of the Goſpel, and *ſhall not ſee it.* At firſt indeed you will have wonderful Succeſs, ſo they had, when *Thouſands* were added to the Church *in a Day*, but do not think it will be always ſo; No, you will be perſecuted and ſcatter'd, ſilenc'd and impriſon'd; ſo that you will not have Opportunities of preaching the Goſpel without Fear, as you now have: People will grow cool to it when they have enjoy'd it a while, ſo that you will not ſee ſuch Harveſts of Souls gather'd in to Chriſt afterwards as at firſt, nor ſuch Multitudes flocking to him *as Doves to their Windows.* This looks forward to his Diſciples in after Ages; they muſt expect much Diſappointment; the Goſpel will not be always preach'd with like Liberty and Succeſs. Miniſters and Churches will ſometimes be under *outward Reſtraints.* Teachers will be remov'd into Corners, and ſolemn Aſſemblies ſcatter'd, then they will wiſh to ſee ſuch Days of Opportunity as they have formerly enjoy'd, Sabbath Days, Sacrament Days, preaching Days, praying Days, thoſe are *Days of the Son of Man*, in which we hear from him, and converſe with him; the Time may come when we may in vain wiſh for ſuch Days. God teacheth us to know the Worth of ſuch Mercies by the Want of them: It concerns us while they are continued to improve them, and in the Years of Plenty, to lay up in Store for the Years of Famine. Sometimes they will be under *inward Reſtraints*, will not have ſuch Tokens of the *Preſence of the Son of Man* among them, as they have ſometimes had; the Spirit is withdrawn from them, they *ſee not their Signs*, the Angel comes not down to ſtir the Waters, there's a great Stupidity among the Children of Men, and a great Lukewarmneſs among the Children of God; then we would wiſh to ſee ſuch *victorious, triumphant* Days of the *Son of Man* as we have ſometimes ſeen, when he has ridden forth with his Bow and his Crown conquering and to conquer, but we cannot ſee them. *Note*, We muſt not think that Chriſt's Church and Cauſe are loſt, becauſe not always alike viſible and prevailing.

3. That Chriſt and his Kingdom are not to be look'd for in this or that particular Place, but his Appearance will be general, in all Places at once, *v.* 23, 24. *They will ſay to you, ſee here, or ſee there*, here's one that will deliver the Jews out of the Hands of the oppreſſing *Romans*, or there's one that will deliver the Chriſtians out of the Hands of the oppreſſing Jews, here's the Meſſiah, and there's his Prophet: *Here* in *this* Mountain, or *there* at *Jeruſalem*, you will find the true Church. *Go not after them, or follow them*, do not heed ſuch Suggeſtions, the Kingdom of God was not deſign'd to be the Glory of one People only, but to *give Light to the Gentiles*; for *as the Lightning that lightens out of one Part under Heaven, ſhines* all on a ſudden irreſiſtably *to the other Part under Heaven*; *ſo ſhall alſo the Son of Man be in his Day.* (1.) The *Judgments* that are to deſtroy the Jewiſh Nation, to lay them waſte, and to deliver the Chriſtians from them, ſhall *fly like Lightning* through the Land, ſhall lay all waſte from one End of it to another; and thoſe that are mark'd for this Deſtruction, can no more avoid it or oppoſe it than they can a *Flaſh of Lightning.* (2.) The Goſpel that is to ſet up Chriſt's Kingdom in the World, ſhall *fly like Lightning* through the Nations; the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* is not to be a *local* Thing, but is to be diſpos'd far and wide over the Face of the whole Earth; it ſhall *ſhine* from *Jeruſalem* to all Parts about, and that *in a Moment*; the Kingdoms of the Earth ſhall be leaven'd by the Goſpel e're they are aware of it. The Trophies of Chriſt's Victories ſhall be erected on the Ruins of the Devil's Kingdom, even in thoſe Countries that could never be ſubdued to the Roman Yoke. The Deſign of the ſetting up Chriſt's Kingdom, was not to make *one Nation great*, but to make *all Nations good*, ſome at leaſt of all Nations, and this Point ſhall be gain'd, tho' the *Nations rage*, and the *Kings of the Earth ſet themſelves* with all their Might againſt it.

4. That the Meſſiah muſt *ſuffer* before he muſt *reign*, *v.* 25. *Firſt muſt he ſuffer many Things*, many hard Things, and *be rejected of this Generation*; and if he be thus treated, his Diſciples muſt expect no other, but to *ſuffer* and be *rejected* too for his Sake. They thought of having the Kingdom of the Meſſiah ſet up in external Splendor, no ſaith Chriſt, we muſt go by the Croſs to the Crown. The *Son of Man muſt ſuffer many Things*, Pain, and Shame and Death are thoſe *many Things*, he muſt be *rejected by this Generation* of unbelieving Jews, before he be embrac'd by another Generation of believing Gentiles; that his Goſpel might have the Honour of triumphing over the greateſt Oppoſition, from thoſe who ought to have given it the greateſt Aſſiſtance; and thus the Excellency of the Power, wou'd appear to be *of God and not of Man*; for tho' *Iſrael* be not *gather'd*, yet he will be *glorious* to the Ends of the Earth.

5. That the ſetting up the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, would introduce the Deſtruction of the Jewiſh Nation, whom it would find in a dead Sleep of *Security*, and drown'd in *Senſuality*, as the old World was in the Days of *Noah*, and *Sodom* in the Days of *Lot*, v. 26. *&c.* Obſerve,

1. How it had been with Sinners formerly, and what Poſture the Judgments of God, which they had been fairly warn'd of, did at Length find them in. Look as far back as the *old World*, when all Fleſh had *corrupted their Way*, and the *Earth was fill'd with Violence*; come a little lower, and think how it was with the Men of *Sodom*, who were *wicked and Sinners before the Lord exceedingly*; now obſerve concerning both theſe, (1.) That they had *fair Warning given them* of the Ruin that was coming upon them for their Sins; *Noah* was a *Preacher of Righteouſneſs* to the old World, ſo was *Lot* to the *Sodomites*, they gave them timely Notice, what would be in the End of their wicked Ways, and that it was not far off. (2.) That they did not regard the Warning given them, and gave no Credit, no Heed to it; they were very ſecure, went on in their Buſineſs as unconcern'd as you would imagine, *they did eat, they drank*, indulg'd themſelves in their Pleaſures, and took no Care of any Thing elſe but *to make Proviſion for the Fleſh*, counted upon the Perpetuity of their preſent flouriſhing State, and therefore married Wives and *were given in Marriage*, that their Families might be built up; they were all very merry; ſo were the Men of *Sodom*, and yet very buſy too, *they bought, they ſold, they planted, they builded.* Theſe were lawful Things, but the Fault was, they minded theſe inordinately, and their Hearts were entirely ſet upon them, ſo that they had no Heart at all to prepare againſt the threatned Judgments; when they ſhould have been as the Men of *Niniveh, faſting and praying, repenting* and *reforming*, upon Warning given them of an approaching Judgment; they were going on ſecurely, *eating Fleſh* and *drinking Wine*, when God calls *to Weeping and to Mourning*, Iſa. 22. 12, 13. (3.) That they continued in their Security and Senſuality, till the threaten'd Judgment came; until the Day that *Noah entred into the Ark*, and *Lot went out of Sodom*, nothing ſaid or done to them, ſerv'd to alarm or awaken them. *Note*, The Stupidity of Sinners in a ſinful Way, tho' it is as ſtrange as it is *without Excuſe*, yet we are not to think it ſtrange, for it is not without Example. 'Tis the *old Way that wicked Men have trodden*, that have gone ſlumbering to Hell, as if their Damnation ſlumber'd while they did. (4.) That God took Care for the Preſervation of thoſe that were his, who believ'd and fear'd and took the Warning themſelves, which they gave to others. *Noah* entred *into the Ark*, and there he was ſafe; *Lot* went out of *Sodom*, and ſo went out of Harm's Way. If ſome run on *heedleſs* and *headlong* into Deſtruction, that ſhall be no Prejudice to the Salvation of them that believe. (5.) That they were ſurpriz'd with the Ruin which they would not fear, and were ſwallow'd up in it to their unſpeakable Horror and Amazement. The *Flood came*, and deſtroy'd all the Sinners of the old World; *Fire and Brimſtone* came, and *deſtroy'd* all the Sinners of *Sodom*, God has many Arrows in his Quiver, and uſeth which he will in making War upon his rebellious Subjects, for he can make which he will effectual. But that which is eſpecially intended here, is to ſhew what a dreadful Surprize Deſtruction will be to thoſe who are ſecure and ſenſual.

2. How it will be with Sinners ſtill, *v.* 30. *Thus ſhall it be in the Day when the Son of Man is reveal'd*, when Chriſt comes to deſtroy the *Jewiſh* Nation by the *Roman* Armies, the Generality of that Nation, will be found under ſuch a reigning Security and Stupidity as this. They have Warning given by Chriſt now, and will have it repeated to them by the Apoſtles after him, as they had by *Noah* and *Lot*, but it will be all *in vain.* They will continue ſecure, will go on in their Neglect and Oppoſition of Chriſt and his Goſpel, till all the Chriſtians are withdrawn from among them, and gone to the Place of Refuge. God will provide for them on the other Side *Jordan*, and then a Deluge of Judgments ſhall flow in upon them, which ſhall deſtroy all the unbelieving Jews. One would have thought this Diſcourſe of our Saviour's which was publick, and not long after *publiſh'd* to the World, ſhould have awaken'd them, but it did not, for the Hearts of that People were harden'd to their Deſtruction. And in like Manner, when Jeſus Chriſt ſhall come to judge the World at the End of Time, Sinners will be found in the ſame ſecure and careleſs Poſture, altogether regardleſs of the Judgment approaching, which will therefore come upon them as a Snare; and in like Manner the Sinners of every Age, go on ſecurely in their evil Ways, and *remember not their latter End*, nor the Account that they muſt give. *Wo to them that are thus at Eaſe in Zion.*

6. That it ought to be the Care of his Diſciples and Followers, to diſtinguiſh themſelves from the unbelieving Jews in that Day, and leaving them, their City and Country to themſelves, to flee at the Signal given, according to the Direction that ſhould be given, let them retire as *Noah* to his Ark, and *Lot* to his *Zoar.* You *would have heal'd Jeruſalem* as of old *Babylon, but ſhe is not heal'd*, and therefore *forſake her, flee out of the Midſt of her, and deliver every Man his Soul*, Jer. 51. 6, 9.

(1.) This Flight of theirs from *Jeruſalem* muſt be *expeditious*, and muſt not be retarded by any Concern about their worldly Affairs, *v.* 31. *He that ſhall be on the Houſe-top* when the Alarm is given, *let him not come down to take it away*; both becauſe he cannot ſpare ſo much Time, and becauſe the carrying away of his Effects will but incumber him and retard his Flight. Let him not *regard* his *Stuff* at ſuch a Time, when it will be next to a Miracle of Mercy if he have his *Life given him for a Prey.* Better leave his Stuff behind him, than ſtay to look after it, and *periſh with them that believe* not. 'Twill be their Concern to do as *Lot* and his Family were charg'd to do; *eſcape for thy Life. Save your ſelves from this untoward Generation.*

(2.) When they have made their Eſcape they muſt not think of returning, *v.* 32. *Remember Lot's Wife*; and take Warning by her, not only to flee from this *Sodom* (for ſo *Jeruſalem* is become, *Iſa.* 1. 10.) but to perſevere in your Flight, and do not *look back* as ſhe did; be not loth to leave a Place mark'd for Deſtruction, whoever or whatever you leave behind you that is ever ſo dear to you. Thoſe who have left the *Sodom* of a natural State, let them go forward, and not ſo much as look a kind Look towards it again. Let them not *look back*, leſt they ſhould be tempted to *go back*; nay, leſt that be conſtrued a *going back in Heart*, or an Evidence that the Heart was left *behind*. *Lot's* Wife was *turn'd into a Pillar of Salt*, that ſhe might remain a laſting Monument of God's Diſpleaſure againſt Apoſtates, that *begin in the Spirit and end in the Fleſh.*

(3.) There would be no other Way of ſaving their Lives but by quitting the Jews, and if they thought to ſave themſelves by a Coalition with them, they would find themſelves miſtaken, *v.* 31. *Whoſoever ſhall ſeek to ſave his Life* by declining from his Chriſtianity, and complying with the Jews, he ſhall *loſe it* with them, and periſh in the common Calamity; but whoſoever is willing to venture his Life with the Chriſtians, upon the ſame Bottom on which they venture, to take his Lot with them in Life and in Death, he ſhall *preſerve* his Life, for he ſhall make ſure *eternal Life*; and is in a likelier Way at that Time to ſave his Life than thoſe who embark in a Jewiſh Bottom, or *enſure* upon their Securities. *Note*, Thoſe do beſt for themſelves that truſt God in the Way of Duty.

7. That all good Chriſtians ſhould certainly eſcape, but many of them very *narrowly* from that Deſtruction, *v.* 34, 35, 36. When God's Judgments are laying all waſte, he will take an effectual Courſe to preſerve thoſe that are his, by remarkable Providences diſtinguiſhing between them and others, that were neareſt to them; *Two in a Bed, one taken and the other left*; one ſnatch'd out of the Burning, and taken into a Place of Safety, while the other is left to periſh in the common Ruin. *Note*, Tho' the Sword devours one as well as another, and *all Things* ſeem to *come alike to all*, yet ſooner or later it ſhall be made to appear that the Lord knows them that are his, and are not, and how to *take out the Precious from the Vile.* We are ſure *the Judge of all the Earth will do right*; and therefore when he ſends a Judgment on Purpoſe to avenge the Death of his Son, upon thoſe that crucified him, he will take Care that none of thoſe who glorify'd him, and glory'd in his Croſs, ſhall be *taken away* by that Judgment.

Laſtly, That this diſtinguiſhing, dividing, diſcriminating Work ſhall be done in all Places, as far as the Kingdom of God ſhall extend, *v.* 37. *Where Lord?* They had enquir'd concerning the Time, and he would not gratifie their Curioſity with any Information concerning that, they therefore try'd him with another Queſtion, *Where Lord?* Where ſhall thoſe be *ſafe* that are *taken?* Where ſhall thoſe *periſh* that are *left?* The Anſwer is proverbial, and may be explain'd ſo as to anſwer each Side of the Queſtion, *Whereſoever the Body is, thither will the Eagles be gather'd together.* (1.) Wherever the Wicked are that are mark'd for Perdition, they ſhall *be found out*, by the Judgments of God; as wherever a dead Carcaſe is, the Birds of Prey will ſmell it out, and make a Prey of it. The Jews having made themſelves a dead and putrified Carcaſe, *odious* to God's Holineſs, and *obnoxious* to his Juſtice, wherever any of that unbelieving Generation is, the Judgments of God ſhall faſten upon them, as the Eagles do upon the Prey, *Thine Hand ſhalt find out all thine Enemies*, Pſal. 21. 9. Tho' they *ſet their Neſts among the Stars*, Obad. 4. The Roman Soldiers will hunt the Jews out of all their Receſſes and Faſtneſſes, and none ſhall eſcape. (2.) Wherever the Godly are that are mark'd for Preſervation, they *ſhall be found* happy in the Enjoyment of Chriſt. As the Diſſolution of the Jewiſh Church ſhall be extended to all Parts, ſo ſhall the Conſtitution of the Chriſtian Church: Wherever Chriſt is, Believers will flock to him, and meet in him, as Eagles about the Prey, without being directed or ſhow'd the Way, by the Inſtinct of the new Nature. Now Chriſt is where his Goſpel, and his Ordinances, and Church are, *For where Two or Three are gathered in his Name, there is he in the Midſt of them*, and thither therefore others will be gather'd to him. The Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* is not to have one particular Place for it's *Metropolis*, ſuch as *Jeruſalem* was to the Jewiſh Church, to which all Jews were to reſort: But *wherever the Body is*, wherever the Goſpel is preach'd, and Ordinances are miniſtred, thither will pious Souls reſort, there they will find Chriſt, and by Faith feaſt upon him. *Wherever Chriſt records his Name, he will meet his People and bleſs them*, John 4. 21. 1 Tim. 2. 8. Many good Interpreters underſtand it, of the gathering of the Saints together to Chriſt in the Kingdom of Glory; ask not where the Carcaſs will be, and how they ſhall find the Way to it, for they ſhall be under an infallible Conduct, to him who is their living quickning Head, and the Center of their Unity; to him ſhall the Gathering of the People be.

CHAP. XVIII.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *The Parable of the importunate Widow, deſign'd to teach us Fervency in Prayer*, v. 1---8. (2.) *The Parable of the Phariſee and Publican, deſign'd to teach us Humility, and Humiliation for Sin in Prayer*, v. 9---14. (3.) *Chriſt's Favour to little Children that were brought to him*, v. 15,---17. (4.) *The Trial of a rich Man that had a Mind to follow Chriſt, whether he lov'd better Chriſt or his Riches, his coming ſhort upon that Trial, and Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples upon that Occaſion*, v. 18.-----30. (5.) *Chriſt's foretelling of his own Death and Sufferings*, v. 31.----34. (6.) *His reſtoring Sight to a blind Man*, v. 35.----43. *And theſe four Paſſages we had before in* Matthew *and* Mark.

AND he ſpake a parable unto them, *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint. 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man. 3 And there was a widow in that city, and ſhe came unto him, ſaying, Avenge me of my adverſary. 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he ſaid within himſelf, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; 5 Yet becauſe this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, leſt by her continual coming ſhe weary me. 6 And the Lord ſaid, hear what the unjuſt Judge ſaith. 7 And ſhall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? 8 I tell you that he will avenge them ſpeedily. Nevertheleſs, when the Son of man cometh, ſhall he find Faith on the earth?

This Parable has its Key hanging at the Door; the Drift and Deſign of it is *prefix'd*; Chriſt ſpoke it with this Intent, to teach us that *Men ought always to pray and not to faint*, *v.* 1. (1.) It ſuppoſeth that all God's People are *praying* People, all God's Children keep up both a *conſtant* and an *occaſional* Correſpondence with him, ſend to him *ſtatedly*, and upon *every Emergence.* It is our Privilege and Honour that we *may* pray, it is our Duty, we *ought to pray*, we ſin if we neglect it. It is to be our conſtant Work, we ought *always* to pray, 'tis that which *the Duty of every Day requires*; we muſt pray and never grow weary of praying, nor think of giving it off, till it comes to be ſwallow'd up in everlaſting Praiſe. But that which ſeems particularly deſign'd here is to teach us Conſtancy and Perſeverance in our Requeſts for ſome ſpiritual Mercies that we are in Purſuit of, relating either to ourſelves, or to the Church of God; when we are praying for Strength againſt our ſpiritual Enemies, our Luſts and Corruptions, which are our worſt Enemies; we muſt continue inſtant in Prayer, muſt pray and *not faint*, for we ſhall not *ſeek God's Face in vain.* So we muſt likewiſe in our Prayers for the Deliverance of the People of God out of the Hands of their Perſecutors and Oppreſſors.

Firſt, Chriſt ſhews by a Parable the *Power of Importunity* among Men, who will be ſway'd by that when nothing elſe will influence, to do that which is juſt and right. He gives you an Inſtance of an honeſt Cauſe that was carry'd before an unjuſt Judge, not by the Equity and Compaſſionableneſs of it, but purely by *Dint of Importunity.* Obſerve here,

1. The ill Character of the Judge that was in a certain City, he *neither feared God nor regarded Man*, i. e. he had no Manner of Concern, either for his Conſcience or for his Reputation; he ſtood in no Awe either of the Wrath of God againſt him, or of the Cenſures of Men concerning him. Or he took no Care to do his Duty either to God or Man. He was a perfect Stranger both to Godlineſs and Honour, and had no Notion of either. Thoſe that have caſt off the Fear of their Creator, it is not ſtrange if they be altogether regardleſs of their Fellow-Creatures: Where no *Fear of God* is, no Good is to be expected. Such a Prevalency of Irreligion and Inhumanity is bad in any, but very bad in a *Judge* that has Power in his Hand, in the Uſe of which he ought to be guided by the Principles of Religion and Juſtice, and if he be not, inſtead of doing Good with his Power, he will be in Danger of doing Hurt. *Wickedneſs in the Place of Judgment*, was one of the foreſt Evils *Solomon* ſaw under the Sun, *Eccl.* 3. 16.

2. The diſtreſſed Caſe of a poor Widow that was neceſſitated to make her Appeal to him, being wrong'd by ſome one that thought to bear her down with Power and Terror; ſhe had manifeſtly Right on her Side; but it ſhould ſeem, in ſolliciting to have Right done her, ſhe ty'd not herſelf to the Formalities of the Law, but made perſonal Application to the Judge from Day to Day at his own Houſe, ſtill crying, *avenge me of mine Adverſary*, that is, *do me Juſtice againſt mine Adverſary*, not that ſhe deſir'd to be reveng'd on him for any Thing he had done againſt her, but that he might be oblig'd to reſtore what Effects he had of hers in

his Hands, and might be diſabled any more to oppreſs her. *Note*, Poor Widows have often many Adverſaries, who barbarouſly take Advantage of their weak and helpleſs State, to invade their Rights, and defraud them of what little they have; and Magiſtrates are particularly charg'd, not only not to do *Violence to the Widow*, Jer 22. 3. but to *judge the Fatherleſs and plead for the Widow*, Iſa. 1. 17. to be their Patrons and Protectors; then they are *as Gods*, for God is ſo, Pſal. 68. 5.

3. The Difficulty and Diſcouragement ſhe met with in her Cauſe; *He would not for a While*, according to his uſual Practice, he frown'd upon her, took no Notice of her Cauſe, but conniv'd at all the Wrong her Adverſary did her, for ſhe had no Bribe to give him, no great Man whom he ſtood in any Awe of, to ſpeak for her, ſo that he did not at all incline to redreſs her Grievances; and he himſelf was conſcious of the Reaſon of his Dilatorineſs, and cou'd not but own within himſelf that he *neither fear'd God, nor regarded Man*; 'tis ſad a Man ſhould know ſo much amiſs by himſelf, and be in no Care to amend it.

4. The gaining of her Point by continual *dunning* of this unjuſt *Judge*, v. 5. *becauſe this Widow troubles me*, gives me a continual Toil, I will hear her Cauſe, and do her Juſtice, not ſo much leſt by her Clamour againſt me ſhe bring me into an ill Name, as leſt by her Clamour to me ſhe weary me; for ſhe is reſolv'd ſhe will give me no Reſt till it is done, and therefore I'le do it to ſave my ſelf further Trouble; as good at firſt as at laſt. Thus ſhe got Juſtice done her by continual Craving; ſhe beg'd it at his Door, follow'd him in the Streets, ſollicited him in open Court, and ſtill her Cry was, *Avenge me of mine Adverſary*, which he was forc'd to do, to get rid of her; for his Conſcience, as bad as he was, would not ſuffer him to ſend her to Priſon for an Affront upon the Court.

Secondly, He applies this for the Encouragement of God's praying People, to pray with Faith and Fervency, and to perſevere therein.

1. He aſſures them, that God will at length be gracious to them, *v.* 7. *Hear what the unjuſt Judge ſaith*; how he owns himſelf quite overcome by a conſtant Importunity, and from thence infers, *Shall not God avenge his own Elect?* Obſerve,

(1.) What is it that they deſire and expect? That God would *avenge his own Elect*. *Note*, 1. There is a People in the World that are God's People, his *Elect*, his *own Elect*, a choice People, a choſen People. And this he has an Eye to in all he doth for them, 'tis becauſe they are his *Choſen*, and in Purſuance of the Choice he has made of them. 2. God's own Elect meet with a great deal of Trouble and Oppoſition in this World, there are *many Adverſaries* that fight againſt them; *Satan* is their great Adverſary. 3. That which is wanted and waited for, is God's preſerving and protecting them, and the Work of his own Hands in them; his ſecuring the Intereſt of the Church in the World, and of his Grace in the Heart.

(2.) What is it that is requir'd of God's People, in Order to the obtaining of this; they muſt *cry Day and Night to him*, not that he needs their Remonſtrances, or can be mov'd by their Pleadings, but this he has made their Duty, and to this he has promis'd Mercy. We ought to be particular in praying againſt our ſpiritual Enemies, as St. *Paul* was, *For this Thing I beſought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me*, like this importunate Widow. Lord mortifie *this* Corruption, Lord arm me againſt *this* Temptation. We ought to concern ourſelves for the perſecuted and oppreſſed Churches, and to pray that God would do them Juſtice, and ſet them in Safety. And herein we muſt be very urgent; we muſt *cry* with Earneſtneſs; we muſt cry *Day and Night* as thoſe that believe Prayer will be heard at laſt; we muſt *wreſtle with God*, as thoſe that know how to value the Bleſſing, and will have no Nay. God's praying People are bid to *give him no Reſt*, Iſa. 62. 6, 7.

(3.) What Diſcouragements they may perhaps meet with in their Prayers and Expectations; he may *bear long with them*, and may not preſently appear for them, in Anſwer to their Prayers. He is μακροθυμῶν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς: He *exerciſeth Patience towards the Adverſaries of his People*, and doth not take Vengeance on them; and he *exerciſeth the Patience of his People*, and doth not plead for them: He *bore long* with the *Cry of the Sin* of the *Egyptians* that oppreſſed *Iſrael*, and with the *Cry of the Sorrows* of thoſe that were oppreſſed.

(4.) What Aſſurance they have that Mercy will come at laſt tho' it be delay'd, and how it is ſupported by what the unjuſt Judge ſayeth, If this Widow prevail by being importunate, much more ſhall God's Elect prevail. For, (1.) This Widow was a *Stranger*, nothing related to the Judge, but God's praying People are his own Elect, whom he knows, and loves, and delights in, and has always concern'd himſelf for. (2.) She was but *one*, but the praying People of God are *many*, that all come to him on the ſame Errand, and *agree* to ask what they need, *Mat.* 18. 19. As the Saints of Heaven ſurround the Throne of Glory with united Praiſes, ſo Saints on Earth beſiege the Throne of Grace with their united Prayers. (3.) She came to a *Judge* that bid her *keep her Diſtance*, we come to a *Father* that bids us *come boldly* to him, and teaches us to cry *Abba Father*. (4.) She came to an *unjuſt Judge*, we come to a *righteous Father*, Joh. 17. 25. one that regards his own Glory, and the Comforts of his poor Creatures, eſpecially thoſe in Diſtreſs, as *Widows* and *Fatherleſs*. (5.) She came to this Judge purely upon her own Account; but God is himſelf engag'd in the Cauſe which we are ſolliciting; and we can ſay, *Ariſe, O Lord, plead thine* own Cauſe; and *what wilt thou do to thy great Name?* (6.) She had no Friend to ſpeak for her, to add Force to her Petition, and to uſe Intereſt for her more than her own; but we have an *Advocate with the Father*, his own Son, who *ever lives to make Interceſſion* for us, and has a powerful prevailing Intereſt in Heaven. (7.) She had no Promiſes of ſpeeding, no, nor any Encouragement given her to ask, but we have the golden Sceptre held out to us, are bid to ask, and 'tis promis'd it ſhall be given us. (8.) She could have Acceſs to the Judge, only at ſome certain Times; but we may cry to God *Day and Night*, at all Hours, and therefore may the rather hope to prevail by Importunity. (9.) Her Importunity was provoking to the Judge, and ſhe might fear leſt it ſhould ſet him more againſt her; but our Importunity is pleaſing to God; the Prayer of the Upright is *his Delight*, and therefore we may hope ſhall avail much, if it be an effectual fervent Prayer.

2. He intimates to them, that notwithſtanding this, they will begin to be weary of waiting for him, *v.* 8. *Nevertheleſs*, tho' ſuch Aſſurances are given, that God will avenge his own Elect, yet *when the Son of Man comes ſhall he find Faith on the Earth?* The Son of Man will come to *avenge his own Elect*, to plead the Cauſe of perſecuted Chriſtians, againſt the perſecuting Jews, he will come in his Providence to plead the Cauſe of his injured People in every Age, and at the great Day he will come finally to determine the Controverſies of *Zion*. Now when he comes, will he find Faith in the Earth? The Queſtion implies a ſtrong Negation, no, he ſhall not; he himſelf foreſees it. (1.) This ſuppoſeth that it is *on Earth* only, that there is Occaſion for *Faith*: For Sinners in Hell are *feeling* that which they would not believe, and Saints in Heaven are *enjoying* that which they did believe. (2.) It ſuppoſeth that *Faith* is the great Thing, that Jeſus Chriſt *looks for*. He *looks down* upon the Children of Men, and doth not ask, is there Innocency? but *is there Faith*? He enquired concerning the Faith of thoſe who applied themſelves to him for Cures. (3.) It ſuppoſeth that if there were Faith, tho' never ſo little, he would diſcover it, and *find it out*. The weakeſt Believer, and moſt obſcure, his Eye is upon. (4.) 'Tis foretold, that when Chriſt comes to plead his People's Cauſe, he will find but *little Faith* in Compariſon with what one might expect. That is,

1. In general, he will find but *few good People*, few that are really and truly good. Many that have the Form and Faſhion of Godlineſs, but few that have Faith, that are ſincere and honeſt; Nay, he will find little *Fidelity* among Men, the *Faithful fail*, Pſal. 12. 1, 2. Even to the End of Time there will ſtill be Occaſion for the ſame Complaint; the World will grow no better, no, not when 'tis drawing towards it Period. Bad it is, and bad it will be, and worſt of all juſt before Chriſt's coming; the laſt Times will be the moſt perrillous.

2. In particular, he will find Few that have *Faith* concerning his coming. When he comes to *avenge his own Elect*, he looks if there be any Faith *to help*, and *to uphold*, and wonders that there is none, *Iſa.* 59. 16. 63. 5. It intimates that Chriſt, both in his particular Comings for the Relief of his People, and in his general Coming at the End of Time, may, and will delay his Coming ſo long as that, (1.) Wicked People will begin to *defy it*, and to ſay, *Where is the Promiſe of his coming?* 2 Pet. 3. 4. They will challenge him to come, *Iſa.* 5. 19. *Amos* 5. 18. and his Delay will harden them in their Wickedneſs, *Mat.* 24. 48. Even his own People will begin to *deſpair* of it, and to conclude he will never come, becauſe he has paſt their Reckoning. God's Time to appear for his People is, when Things are brought to the laſt Extremity, and when *Sion* begins to ſay, *the Lord has forſaken me*. See *Iſa.* 49. 14. 40. 27. But this is our Comfort, that when the Time appointed comes, it will appear that the Unbelief of Man has not made the Promiſe of God of none Effect.

9 And he ſpake this parable unto certain which truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others: 10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Phariſee, and the other a publican. 11 The phariſee ſtood and prayed thus with himſelf, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjuſt, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I faſt twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I poſſeſs. 13 And the publican ſtanding afar off, would not lift up ſo much as his eyes unto heaven, but ſmote upon his breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a ſinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his houſe juſtified, *rather* than the other: for every one that exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that humbleth himſelf, ſhall be exalted.

The Scope of this Parable likewiſe is perfix'd to it, and we are told, *v.* 9. who they were that it was levell'd at, and for whom it was calculated: He deſign'd it for the Conviction of ſome who *truſted in themſelves, that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others.* They were ſuch as had (1.) A great *Conceit of themſelves*, and their own Goodneſs; they thought themſelves as holy as they needed to be, and holier than all their Neighbour, and ſuch as might ſerve for Examples to them all. But that was not all. (2.) They had a *Confidence in themſelves* before God; and not only had a high Opinion of their own Righteouſneſs, but depended upon the Merit of it, whenever they addreſs'd to God, as their Plea; they *truſted in themſelves, as being righteous*; they thought they had made God their Debtor, and might demand any Thing from him: And, (3.) They deſpis'd others, and look'd upon them with Contempt, as not worthy to be compar'd with them. Now Chriſt by this Parable would ſhew ſuch their Folly, and that thereby they ſhut themſelves out from Acceptance with God. This is call'd a *Parable*, tho' there be Nothing of Similitude in it; but is rather a Deſcription of the different Temper and Language of thoſe that *proudly juſtify themſelves*, and thoſe that *humbly condemn themſelves*; and their different ſtanding before God. 'Tis Matter of Fact every Day.

Firſt, Here are both of theſe addreſſing themſelves to the Duty of Prayer, at the ſame Place and Time, *v.* 10. *Two Men went up into the Temple* (for the Temple ſtood upon a Hill) *to pray*. 'Twas not the Hour of publick Prayer, but they went thither to offer up their perſonal Devotions, as was uſual with good People at that Time, when the Temple was not only the *Place*, but the *Medium* of Worſhip, and God has promis'd in Anſwer to *Solomon*'s Requeſt, that whatever Prayer was made in a right Manner, *in or towards* that Houſe, it ſhould *therefore* the rather be accepted. Chriſt is our Temple, and to him we muſt have an Eye in all our Approaches to God. The *Phariſee* and the *Publican* both went to *the Temple to pray*. *Note*, Among the Worſhippers of God, in the viſible Church, there is a Mixture of good and bad; of ſome that are accepted of God, and ſome that are not; and ſo it has been ever ſince *Cain* and *Abel* brought their Offering to the ſame Altar. The Phariſee, as proud as he was, could not think himſelf above Prayer: Nor could the Publican, as humble as he was, think himſelf ſhut out from the Benefit of it; but we have Reaſon to think theſe went with different Views.

1. The *Phariſee* went *to the Temple* to pray, becauſe it was a *publick* Place, more publick than the Corners of the Streets, and therefore he ſhould have many Eyes upon him, who would applaud his Devotion, which perhaps was more than was expected. The Character Chriſt gave of the Phariſees, that *all their Works they did to be ſeen of Men*, gives us Occaſion for this Suſpicion. *Note*, Hypocrites keep up the external Performances of Religion, only to *ſave or gain* Credit. There are many we ſee *every Day* at the Temple, whom 'tis to be fear'd we ſhall not ſee in the great Day at Chriſt's right Hand.

2. The *Publican* went to the Temple, beacuſe it was appointed to be a *Houſe of Prayer* for all People, *Iſa.* 56. 7. The Phariſee came to the Temple upon a *Compliment*, the Publican upon *Buſineſs*; the Phariſee to make his Appearance, the Publican to make his Requeſt. Now God ſees with what Diſpoſition and Deſign we come to wait upon him in holy Ordinances, and will judge of us accordingly.

Secondly, Here's the *Phariſee*'s Addreſs to God (for a Prayer I cannot call it) he *ſtood* and *pray'd thus with himſelf*, *v.* 11, 12. *ſtanding by himſelf he pray'd thus*, ſo ſome read it, he was wholly intent upon himſelf, had nothing in his Eye but *ſelf*, his own Praiſe and not God's Glory: Or ſtanding in ſome conſpicuous Place, where he diſtinguiſh'd himſelf; or *ſetting himſelf* in Print with a great Deal of State and Formality, he pray'd thus. Now that which he is here ſuppos'd to ſay, is that which ſhews,

1. That he *truſted to himſelf that he was righteous*. A great many good Things he ſaith of himſelf, which we will ſuppoſe to be true, that he was free from groſs and ſcandalous Sins: He was not an *Extortioner*, not a Uſurer, not oppreſſive to Debtors or Tenants, but fair and kind to all that had Dependance upon him: He was not *unjuſt* in any of his Dealings; Did no Man any Wrong: He could ſay as *Samuel*, *Whoſe Ox or whoſe Aſs have I taken?* He was *no Adulterer*, but had poſſeſs'd his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour. Yet this was not all, he *faſted twice in the Week*, partly as an Act of Temperance, partly of Devotion: The Phariſees and their Diſciples faſted twice a Week, *Monday* and *Thurſday*; thus he glorify'd God with his Body: Yet that was not all, he *gave Tithes of all that he poſſeſs'd*, according to the Law, and ſo glorify'd God with his worldly Eſtate: Now all this was very well and commendable. Miſerable is the Condition of thoſe who come ſhort of the Righteouſneſs of this *Phariſee*, and yet he was not accepted, and why was he not? (1.) His giving God Thanks for this, tho' in itſelf a good Thing, yet ſeems to be a meer Formality: He doth not ſay, *By the Grace of God I am that I am*, as *Paul* did, but turns it off with a Slight, *God I thank thee*, which is intended but for a plauſible Introduction to a proud vain-glorious Oſtentation to himſelf. (2.) He makes his Boaſt of this, and dwells with Delight upon this Subject, as if all his Buſineſs to the Temple was to tell God Almighty how very good he was; and he is ready to ſay with thoſe Hypocrites that we read of, *Iſa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not?* (3.) He *truſted* to it as a Righteouſneſs, and not only mentions it, but pleaded it, as if hereby he had merited at the Hands of God, and made him his Debtor. (4.) Here is not one Word of Prayer in all he ſaith: He went *up to the Temple to pray*, but forgot his Errand, was ſo full of himſelf and his own Goodneſs, that he thought he had Need of Nothing, no, not of the Favour and Grace of God, which it ſhould ſeem he did not think worth asking.

2. That he *deſpis'd others*. (1.) He thought meanly of all Mankind but himſelf, *I thank thee that I am not as other Men are.* He ſpeaks indefinitely, as if he were better than any. We may have Reaſon to thank God that we are not as *ſome Men* are, that are notoriouſly wicked and vile; but to ſpeak at random thus, as if we only were good, and all beſides us were Reprobates, is to judge by Wholeſale. (2.) He thought meanly in a particular Manner of this Publican, whom he had left behind, 'tis probably, in the Court of the Gentiles, and whoſe Company he had fallen into as he came to the Temple. He knew he was a *Publican*, and therefore very uncharitably concluded that he was an *Extortioner, Unjuſt*, and all that's naught. Suppoſe it had been ſo, and he had known it, what Buſineſs had he to take Notice of it? Could not he *ſay his Prayers* (and that was all the *Phariſees* did) without Reproaching his Neighbours? Or was this a Part of his *God I thank thee*? And was he as much pleas'd with the Publican's Badneſs, as with his own Goodneſs? There could not be a plainer Evidence not only of the Want of Humility and Charity, but of reigning Pride and Malice, than this was.

Thirdly, Here is the *Publican*'s *Addreſs* to God, which was the Reverſe of the Phariſees, as full of *Humility* and *Humiliation*, as his was of *Pride* and *Oſtentation*; and of *Repentance* for Sin, and *Deſire* towards God, as his was of *Confidence* in *himſelf*, and his own Righteouſneſs and Sufficiency.

1. He expreſs'd his Repentance and Humility in *what he did*; and his Geſture when he addreſs'd himſelf to his Devotions, was *expreſſive* of great Seriouſneſs and Humility, and the proper Clothing of a broken penitent and obedient Heart. (1.) He *ſtood afar off*. The Phariſee *ſtood*, but crowded up as high as he could to the upper End of the Court. The Publican in a Senſe of his Unworthineſs to draw near to God, *kept at a Diſtance*, and perhaps for Fear of offending the Phariſee, whom he obſerv'd to look ſcornfully upon him, and of diſturbing his Devotions. Hereby he own'd, that God might juſtly *behold him afar off*, and ſend him in a State of eternal Diſtance from him, and that it was a great Favour that God was pleas'd to admit him *thus nigh*. (2.) He *would not lift up ſo much as his Eyes to Heaven*, much leſs his *Hands*, as was uſual in Prayer. He did *lift up his Heart* to God in the Heavens, in *holy Deſires*, but through prevailing Shame and Humiliation, he did not lift up his Eyes in *holy Confidence* and *Courage*. His *Iniquities* are *gone over his Head, as a heavy Burthen*, ſo that he is *not able to look up*, Pſal. 40. 12. The Dejection of his Looks is an Indication of the Dejection of his Mind, at the Thought of Sin. (3.) He *ſmote upon his Breaſt*, in a holy Indignation at himſelf for Sin: Thus would I ſmite this wicked Heart of mine, the poyſon'd Fountain out of which flow all the Streams of Sin, If I could come at it. The Sinner's Heart firſt ſmites in a penitent Rebuke, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. *David*'s *Heart ſmote him*, Sinner, what haſt thou done? and then he ſmites his Heart with penitent Remorſe, *O wretched Man that I am*. *Ephraim* is ſaid to *ſmite upon his Thigh*, Jer. 31. 19. Great Mourners are here repreſented *tearing upon their Breaſts*, Nah. 2. 7.

2. He expreſs'd it *in what he ſaid*: His Prayer was *ſhort*; Fear and Shame hinder'd him from ſaying much; Sighs and Groans ſwallow'd up his Words; but what he ſaid was to the Purpoſe, *God be merciful to me a Sinner!* And bleſſed be God that we have this Prayer upon Record, as an anſwer'd Prayer, and that we are ſure he that pray'd it went to his Houſe juſtify'd; and ſo ſhall we, if we pray it as he did, through Jeſus Chriſt; *God be merciful to me a Sinner*; the God of infinite Mercy be merciful to me, for if he be not, I am for ever undone, for ever miſerable. God be merciful to me, for I have been cruel to myſelf. (1.) He owns himſelf *a Sinner* by Nature, by Practice, guilty before God; *Behold I am vile, what ſhall I anſwer thee?* The *Phariſee* denies himſelf to be a *Sinner*; none of his Neighbours can charge him, and ſees no Reaſon to charge himſelf with any Thing amiſs; *he is clean, he is pure from Sin*; but the Publican gives himſelf no other Character but that of a *Sinner*, a convicted Criminal at God's Bar. (2.) He has no Dependance but upon the *Mercy of God*, that, and that only he relies upon. The Phariſee had inſiſted upon the *Merit* of his Faſtings and Tithes, but the poor Publican diſclaims all Thought of Merit, and flies to Mercy, as his City of Refuge, and takes hold of the Horn of that Altar. Juſtice condemns me, Nothing will ſave me but Mercy, Mercy. (3.) He earneſtly prays for the Benefit of that Mercy, *O God be merciful*, be *propitious to me*; forgive my

Sins, be reconcil'd to me; take me into thy Favour; receive me graciouſly; love me freely. He comes as a Beggar for an Alms, when he is ready to periſh for Hunger. Probably he repeated this Prayer with renew'd Affections, and perhaps ſaid more to the ſame Purpoſe; made a particular Confeſſion of his Sins, and mention'd the particular Mercies he wanted, and waited upon God for, but ſtill this was the Burthen of the Song, *God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

Fourthly, Here's the Publican's *Acceptance with God*: We have ſeen how differently theſe Two addreſs'd themſelves to God, 'tis now worth while to enquire how they ſpeed: There were thoſe who would cry up the *Pharſee*, and by whom he would go to his Houſe applauded, and who would look with Contempt upon this ſneaking whining Publican: But our Lord Jeſus, to whom all Hearts are open, all Deſires known, and from whom no Secret is hid, who is perfectly acquainted with all Proceedings in the Court of Heaven, aſſures us that this poor penitent broken-hearted Publican *went to his Houſe juſtify'd, rather than the other.* The *Phariſee* thought, if one of them two muſt be juſtify'd, and not the other, certainly it muſt be he, rather than the *Publican*: No, ſaith Chriſt, *I tell you*, I affirm it with the utmoſt Aſſurance, and declare it to you with the utmoſt Concern, *I tell you*, 'tis the Publican rather than the *Pharſee.* The proud *Phariſee* goes away rejected of God, his Thankſgivings are ſo far from being accepted, that they are an *Abomination*: He is *not juſtify'd*, his Sins are not pardon'd, nor is he deliver'd from Condemnation: He is not accepted as Righteous in God's ſight, becauſe he is ſo Righteous in his own ſight; but the Publican, upon this humble Addreſs to Heaven, obtains the Remiſſion of his Sins; and he whom the *Phariſee* would not ſet *with the Dogs of his Flock*, God ſets with the *Children of his Family.*

And the Reaſon given for this, is, becauſe God's Glory is to *reſiſt the Proud, and give Grace to the Humble.* (1.) Proud Men that *exalt themſelves*, are Rivals with God, and therefore *they ſhall* certainly be *abaſed.* God, in his Diſcourſe with *Job*, appeals to this Proof, that he is God, that he *looks upon* every *one that is proud, and brings him low*, Job 40. 12. (2.) Humble Men that *abaſe themſelves*, are *Subjects to God*, and they ſhall be *exalted*: God has Preferment in ſtore, for thoſe that will take it as a Favour, not for thoſe that demand it as a Debt. He ſhall be *exalted* into the Love of God, and Communion with him; ſhall be exalted into a Satisfaction in himſelf, and exalted at laſt as high as Heaven. See how the Puniſhment anſwers the Sin, *He that exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed*; ſee how the Recompence anſwers the Duty, *He that humbles himſelf, ſhall be exalted.* See alſo the Power of God's Grace, in bringing Good out of Evil; the Publican had been a great Sinner, and out of the Greatneſs of his Sin was brought the Greatneſs of his Repentance; *out of the Eater came forth Meat*: And on the contrary, the Power of *Satan*'s Malice in bringing Evil out of Good; 'twas Good that the *Phariſee* was no Extortioner or Unjuſt; but the Devil made him proud of this to his Ruin.

15 And they brought unto him alſo Infants, that he would touch them: but when *his* diſciples ſaw *it*, they rebuked them. 16 But Jeſus called them unto him, and ſaid, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of ſuch is the kingdom of God. 17 Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein.

This Paſſage of Story we had both in *Matthew* and *Mark*, it very fitly follows here after the Story of the Publican, as a Confirmation of the Truth which was to be illuſtrated by that Parable, that thoſe ſhall be accepted with God and honour'd, who humble themſelves, and for them Chriſt has *Bleſſings in Store*, the choiceſt and beſt of Bleſſings. Obſerve here,

1. That thoſe who are themſelves bleſſed in Chriſt, ſhould deſire to have their Children alſo bleſſed in him, and ſhould hereby teſtify the true Honour they have for Chriſt, by their making uſe of him; and the true Love they have for their Children, by their Concern about their Souls. They brought to him *Infants* very young, not able to go, Sucking Children as ſome think. None too little, too young, to bring to Chriſt, who knows how to ſhew Kindneſs to them, that are not capable of doing Service to him.

2. One gracious Touch of Chriſt's, will make our Children happy: They *brought Infants to him, that he might touch them*, in Token of the Application of his Grace and Spirit to them, for that always makes way for his *Bleſſing*, which likewiſe they expected; ſee *Iſa.* 44. 3. *I will* firſt *pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and* then *my Bleſſing upon thine Offspring.*

3. 'Tis no ſtrange Thing for thoſe that make their Application to Jeſus Chriſt for themſelves, or for their Children, to meet with Diſcouragement, even from thoſe that ſhould countenance and encourage them. *When the Diſciples ſaw it*, they thought (if this were admitted) it would bring an endleſs Trouble upon their Maſter, and therefore *they rebuked them*, and frown'd upon them. The Spouſe complain'd of *the Watchmen*, Cant. 3. 3—5. 7.

4. Many whom the Diſciples rebuke, the Maſter invites. *Jeſus call'd them unto him*, when, upon the Diſciples check, they were retiring. They did not *Appeal* from the Diſciples to the Maſter, but the Maſter took Cognizance of their deſpiſed Cauſe.

5. 'Tis the Mind of Chriſt, that *little Children* ſhould be brought to him, and preſented as living Sacrifices to his Honour. *Suffer little Children to come to me, and forbid them not*; let nothing be done to hinder them, for they ſhall be as welcome as any. *The Promiſe is to us, and to our Seed*, and therefore he that has the Diſpenſing of promiſed Bleſſings, will bid them welcome to him with us.

6. The Children of thoſe that belong to the Kingdom of God, do likewiſe belong to that Kingdom, as the Children of Freemen are Freemen. If the Parents be Members of the viſible Church, the Children are ſo too; for if the Root be Holy, the Branches are ſo.

7. So welcome are *Children* to Chriſt, that thoſe grown People are moſt welcome to him, that have in them moſt of the Diſpoſition of Children; *v.* 17. *Whoſoever ſhall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child*, that is, receive the Benefits of it with Humility and Thankfulneſs, not pretending to merit them, as the *Phariſee* did; but gladly owning himſelf indebted to free Grace for them, as the Publican did, unleſs a Man be brought to this Self-denying Frame, he ſhall *in no wiſe enter* into that Kingdom. They muſt receive the Kingdom of God, as *Children* receive their Eſtates by Deſcent and Inheritance, not by Purchaſe, and call it their *Father's Gift.*

18 And a certain ruler asked him, ſaying, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life? 19 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? none *is* good ſave one, *that is* God. 20 Thou knoweſt the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Honour thy father and thy mother. 21 And he ſaid, All theſe have I kept from my youth up. 22 Now when Jeſus heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him, Yet lackeſt thou one thing: ſell all that thou haſt, and diſtribute unto the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come follow me. 23 And when he heard this, he was very ſorrowful: for he was very rich. 24 And when Jeſus ſaw that he was very ſorrowful, he ſaid, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 25 For it is eaſier for a camel to go thro' a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they that heard *it*, ſaid, Who then can be ſaved? 27 And he ſaid, The things which are impoſſible with men, are poſſible with God. 28 Then Peter ſaid, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. 29 And he ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, there is no man that hath left houſe, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's ſake, 30 Who ſhall not receive manifold more in this preſent time, and in the world to come life everlaſting.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Chriſt's Diſcourſe with a Ruler, that had a good mind to be directed by him in the Way to Heaven. In which we may obſerve,

1. 'Tis a Bleſſed Sight to ſee Perſons of Diſtinction in the World, diſtinguiſh themſelves from others of their Rank, by their Concern about their Souls and another Life. *Luke* takes Notice of it, that he was a *Ruler*; few of the Rulers had any Eſteem for Chriſt, but here was one that had, whether a Church or State Ruler doth not appear, but he was one *in Authority.*

2. The great Thing we are every one of us concern'd to enquire after, is, what we ſhall do to get to Heaven; *what we ſhall do to inherit Eternal Life*; which implies ſuch a Belief of an Eternal Life after this, as Atheiſts and Infidels have not; ſuch a Concern to make it ſure, as a careleſs unthinking World have not, and ſuch a Willingneſs to comply with any Terms that it may be made ſure, as thoſe have not that are reſolvedly devoted to the World and the Fleſh.

3. Thoſe that would inherit Eternal Life, muſt apply themſelves to Jeſus Chriſt as their *Maſter*, their *Teaching* Maſter, ſo it ſignifies here; (διδασκαλε) and their *Ruling* Maſter here, and ſo they ſhall for certain find him. There's no learning the Way to Heaven, but in the School of Chriſt, by thoſe that enter themſelves into it, and ſtick to it.

4. Thoſe that come to Chriſt as their Maſter, muſt believe him to have not only a *Divine Miſſion*, but a *Divine Goodneſs.* Chriſt would have this Ruler know, that if he underſtood himſelf aright in calling him *Good*, he did in Effect call him *God*, and indeed he was ſo, *v.* 19. *Why calleſt thou me Good?* Thou knoweſt *there is none Good but One, that is God*; and doſt thou then take me for God? If ſo, thou art in the Right.

The Scope of this Parable likewiſe is perfix'd to it, and we are told, *v.* 9. who they were that it was levell'd at, and for whom it was calculated : He deſign'd it for the Conviction of ſome who *truſted in themſelves, that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others.* They were ſuch as had (1.) A great *Conceit of themſelves*, and their own Goodneſs ; they thought themſelves as holy as they needed to be, and holier than all their Neighbour, and ſuch as might ſerve for Examples to them all. But that was not all. (2.) They had a *Confidence in themſelves* before God ; and not only had a high Opinion of their own Righteouſneſs, but depended upon the Merit of it, whenever they addreſs'd to God, as their Plea ; they *truſted in themſelves, as being righteous* ; they thought they had made God their Debtor, and might demand any Thing from him : And, (3.) They deſpis'd others, and look'd upon them with Contempt, as not worthy to be compar'd with them. Now Chriſt by this Parable would ſhew ſuch their Folly, and that thereby they ſhut themſelves out from Acceptance with God. This is call'd a *Parable*, tho' there be Nothing of Similitude in it ; but is rather a Deſcription of the different Temper and Language of thoſe that *proudly juſtify themſelves*, and thoſe that *humbly condemn themſelves* ; and their different ſtanding before God. 'Tis Matter of Fact every Day.

Firſt, Here are both of theſe addreſſing themſelves to the Duty of Prayer, at the ſame Place and Time, *v*, 10. *Two Men went up into the Temple* (for the Temple ſtood upon a Hill) *to pray.* 'Twas not the Hour of publick Prayer, but they went thither to offer up their perſonal Devotions, as was uſual with good People at that Time, when the Temple was not only the *Place*, but the *Medium* of Worſhip, and God has promis'd in Anſwer to *Solomon*'s Requeſt, that whatever Prayer was made in a right Manner, *in* or *towards* that Houſe, it ſhould *therefore* the rather be accepted. Chriſt is our Temple, and to him we muſt have an Eye in all our Approaches to God. The *Phariſee* and the *Publican* both went to *the Temple to pray. Note*, Among the Worſhippers of God, in the viſible Church, there is a Mixture of good and bad ; of ſome that are accepted of God, and ſome that are not ; and ſo it has been ever ſince *Cain* and *Abel* brought their Offering to the ſame Altar. The Phariſee, as proud as he was, could not think himſelf above Prayer : Nor could the Publican, as humble as he was, think himſelf ſhut out from the Benefit of it ; but we have Reaſon to think theſe went with different Views.

1. The *Phariſee* went *to the Temple* to pray, becauſe it was a *publick* Place, more publick than the Corners of the Streets, and therefore he ſhould have many Eyes upon him, who would applaud his Devotion, which perhaps was more than was expected. The Character Chriſt gave of the Phariſees, that *all their Works they did to be ſeen of Men*, gives us Occaſion for this Suſpicion. *Note*, Hypocrites keep up the external Performances of Religion, only to *ſave* or *gain* Credit. There are many we ſee *every Day* at the Temple, whom 'tis to be fear'd we ſhall not ſee in the great Day at Chriſt's right Hand.

2. The *Publican* went to the Temple, beacuſe it was appointed to be a *Houſe of Prayer* for all People, *Iſa.* 56. 7. The Phariſee came to the Temple upon a *Compliment*, the Publican upon *Buſineſs* ; the Phariſee to make his Appearance, the Publican to make his Requeſt. Now God ſees with what Diſpoſition and Deſign we come to wait upon him in holy Ordinances, and will judge of us accordingly.

Secondly, Here's the *Phariſee*'s Addreſs to God (for a Prayer I cannot call it) he *ſtood* and *pray'd thus with himſelf*, *v.* 11, 12. *ſtanding by himſelf he pray'd thus*, ſo ſome read it, he was wholly intent upon himſelf, had nothing in his Eye but *ſelf*, his own Praiſe and not God's Glory : Or ſtanding in ſome conſpicuous Place, where he diſtinguiſh'd himſelf ; or *ſettting himſelf* in Print with a great Deal of State and Formality, he pray'd thus. Now that which he is here ſuppos'd to ſay, is that which ſhews,

1. That he *truſted to himſelf that he was righteous.* A great many good Things he ſaith of himſelf, which we will ſuppoſe to be true, that he was free from groſs and ſcandalous Sins : He was not an *Extortioner*, not a Uſurer, not oppreſſive to Debtors or Tenants, but fair and kind to all that had Dependance upon him : He was not *unjuſt* in any of his Dealings ; Did no Man any Wrong : He could ſay as *Samuel*, *Whoſe Ox or whoſe Aſs have I taken?* He was *no Adulterer*, but had poſſeſs'd his Veſſel in Sanctification and Honour. Yet this was not all, he *faſted twice in the Week*, partly as an Act of Temperance, partly of Devotion : The Phariſees and their Diſciples faſted twice a Week, *Monday* and *Thurſday* ; thus he glorify'd God with his Body : Yet that was not all, he *gave Tithes of all that he poſſeſs'd*, according to the Law, and ſo glorify'd God with his worldly Eſtate : Now all this was very well and commendable. Miſerable is the Condition of thoſe who come ſhort of the Righteouſneſs of this *Phariſee*, and yet he was not accepted, and why was he not? (1.) His giving God Thanks for this, tho' in itſelf a good Thing, yet ſeems to be a meer Formality : He doth not ſay, *By the Grace of God I am that I am*, as *Paul* did, but turns it off with a Slight, *God I thank thee*, which is intended but for a plauſible Introduction to a proud vain-glorious Oſtentation to himſelf. (2.) He makes his Boaſt of this, and dwells with Delight upon this Subject, as if all his Buſineſs to the Temple was to tell God Almighty how very good he was ; and he is ready to ſay with thoſe Hypocrites that we read of, *Iſa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted, ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not?* (3.) He *truſted* to it as a Righteouſneſs, and not only mentions it, but pleaded it, as if hereby he had merited at the Hands of God, and made him his Debtor. (4.) Here is not one Word of Prayer in all he ſaith : He went *up to the Temple to pray*, but forgot his Errand, was ſo full of himſelf and his own Goodneſs, that he thought he had Need of Nothing, no, not of the Favour and Grace of God, which it ſhould ſeem he did not think worth asking.

2. That he *deſpis'd others.* (1.) He thought meanly of all Mankind but himſelf, *I thank thee that I am not as other Men are.* He ſpeaks indefinitely, as if he were better than any. We may have Reaſon to thank God that we are not as *ſome Men* are, that are notoriouſly wicked and vile ; but to ſpeak at random thus, as if we only were good, and all beſides us were Reprobates, is to judge by Wholeſale. (2.) He thought meanly in a particular Manner of this Publican, whom he had left behind, 'tis probably, in the Court of the Gentiles, and whoſe Company he had fallen into as he came to the Temple. He knew he was a *Publican*, and therefore very uncharitably concluded that he was an *Extortioner*, *Unjuſt*, and all that's naught. Suppoſe it had been ſo, and he had known it, what Buſineſs had he to take Notice of it? Could not he *ſay his Prayers* (and that was all the *Phariſees* did) without Reproaching his Neighbours? Or was this a Part of his *God I thank thee*? And was he as much pleas'd with the Publican's Badneſs, as with his own Goodneſs? There could not be a plainer Evidence not only of the Want of Humility and Charity, but of reigning Pride and Malice, than this was.

Thirdly, Here is the *Publican*'s *Addreſs* to God, which was the Reverſe of the Phariſees, as full of *Humility* and *Humiliation*, as his was of *Pride* and *Oſtentation* ; and of *Repentance* for Sin, and *Deſire* towards God, as his was of *Confidence* in *himſelf*, and his own Righteouſneſs and Sufficiency.

1. He expreſs'd his Repentance and Humility in *what he did* ; and his Geſture when he addreſs'd himſelf to his Devotions, was *expreſſive* of great Serioufneſs and Humility, and the proper Clothing of a broken penitent and obedient Heart. (1.) He *ſtood afar off.* The Phariſee *ſtood*, but crowded up as high as he could to the upper End of the Court. The Publican in a Senſe of his Unworthineſs to draw near to God, *kept at a Diſtance*, and perhaps for Fear of offending the Phariſee, whom he obſerv'd to look ſcornfully upon him, and of diſturbing his Devotions. Hereby he own'd, that God might juſtly *behold him afar off*, and ſend him in a State of eternal Diſtance from him, and that it was a great Favour that God was pleas'd to admit him *thus nigh.* (2.) He *would not lift up ſo much as his Eyes to Heaven*, much leſs his *Hands*, as was uſual in Prayer. He did *lift up his Heart* to God in the Heavens, in *holy Deſires*, but through prevailing Shame and Humiliation, he did not lift up his Eyes in *holy Confidence* and *Courage.* His *Iniquities* are *gone over his Head, as a heavy Burthen*, ſo that he is *not able to look up*, Pſal. 40. 12. The Dejection of his Looks is an Indication of the Dejection of his Mind, at the Thought of Sin. (3.) He *ſmote upon his Breaſt*, in a holy Indignation at himſelf for Sin : Thus would I ſmite this wicked Heart of mine, the poyſon'd Fountain out of which flow all the Streams of Sin, If I could come at it. The Sinner's Heart firſt ſmites in a penitent Rebuke, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. David'*s Heart ſmote him*, Sinner, what haſt thou done? and then he ſmites his Heart with penitent Remorſe, *O wretched Man that I am. Ephraim* is ſaid to *ſmite upon his Thigh*, Jer. 31. 19. Great Mourners are here repreſented *tearing upon their Breaſts*, Nah. 2. 7.

2. He expreſs'd it *in what he ſaid* : His Prayer was *ſhort* ; Fear and Shame hinder'd him from ſaying much ; Sighs and Groans ſwallow'd up his Words; but what he ſaid was to the Purpoſe, *God be merciful to me a Sinner!* And bleſſed be God that we have this Prayer upon Record, as an anſwer'd Prayer, and that we are ſure he that pray'd it went to his Houſe juſtify'd ; and ſo ſhall we, if we pray it as he did, through Jeſus Chriſt ; *God be merciful to me a Sinner* ; the God of infinite Mercy be merciful to me, for if he be not, I am for ever undone, for ever miſerable. God be merciful to me, for I have been cruel to myſelf. (1.) He owns himſelf *a Sinner* by Nature, by Practice, guilty before God ; *Behold I am vile, what ſhall I anſwer thee?* The *Phariſee* denies himſelf to be a *Sinner* ; none of his Neighbours can charge him, and ſees no Reaſon to charge himſelf with any Thing amiſs ; *he is clean, he is pure from Sin* ; but the Publican gives himſelf no other Character but that of a *Sinner*, a convicted Criminal at God's Bar. (2.) He has no Dependance but upon the *Mercy of God*, that, and that only he relies upon. The Phariſee had inſiſted upon the *Merit* of his Faſtings and Tithes, but the poor Publican diſclaims all Thought of Merit, and flies to Mercy, as his City of Refuge, and takes hold of the Horn of that Altar. Juſtice condemns me, Nothing will ſave me but Mercy, Mercy. (3.) He earneſtly prays for the Benefit of that Mercy, *O God be merciful*, be *propitious to me* ; forgive my

Sins, be reconcil'd to me; take me into thy Favour; receive me gracioufly; love me freely. He comes as a Beggar for an Alms, when he is ready to periſh for Hunger. Probably he repeated this Prayer with renew'd Affections, and perhaps ſaid more to the ſame Purpoſe; made a particular Confeſſion of his Sins, and mention'd the particular Mercies he wanted, and waited upon God for, but ſtill this was the Burthen of the Song, *God be merciful to me a Sinner.*

Fourthly, Here's the Publican's *Acceptance with God*: We have ſeen how differently theſe Two addreſs'd themſelves to God, 'tis now worth while to enquire how they ſpeed: There were thoſe who would cry up the *Pharſee*, and by whom he would go to his Houſe applauded, and who would look with Contempt upon this ſneaking whining Publican: But our Lord Jeſus, to whom all Hearts are open, all Deſires known, and from whom no Secret is hid, who is perfectly acquainted with all Proceedings in the Court of Heaven, aſſures us that this poor penitent broken-hearted Publican *went to his Houſe juſtify'd, rather than the other.* The *Phariſee* thought, if one of them two muſt be juſtify'd, and not the other, certainly it muſt be he, rather than the *Publican*: No, ſaith Chriſt, *I tell you*, I affirm it with the utmoſt Aſſurance, and declare it to you with the utmoſt Concern, *I tell you*, 'tis the Publican rather than the *Pharſee.* The proud *Phariſee* goes away rejected of God, his Thankſgivings are ſo far from being accepted, that they are an *Abomination*: He is *not juſtify'd*, his Sins are not pardon'd, nor is he deliver'd from Condemnation: He is not accepted as Righteous in God's ſight, becauſe he is ſo Righteous in his own ſight; but the Publican, upon this humble Addreſs to Heaven, obtains the Remiſſion of his Sins; and he whom the *Phariſee* would not ſet *with the Dogs of his Flock*, God ſets with the *Children of his Family.*

And the Reaſon given for this, is, becauſe God's Glory is to *reſiſt the Proud, and give Grace to the Humble.* (1.) Proud Men that *exalt themſelves*, are Rivals with God, and therefore *they ſhall* certainly be *abaſed.* God, in his Diſcourſe with *Job*, appeals to this Proof, that he is God, that he *looks upon* every *one that is proud, and brings him low*, Job 40. 12. (2.) Humble Men that *abaſe themſelves*, are *Subjects to God*, and they ſhall be *exalted*: God has Preferment in ſtore, for thoſe that will take it as a Favour, not for thoſe that demand it as a Debt. He ſhall be *exalted* into the Love of God, and Communion with him; ſhall be exalted into a Satisfaction in himſelf, and exalted at laſt as high as Heaven. See how the Puniſhment anſwers the Sin, *He that exalteth himſelf, ſhall be abaſed*; ſee how the Recompence anſwers the Duty, *He that humbles himſelf, ſhall be exalted.* See alſo the Power of God's Grace, in bringing Good out of Evil; the Publican had been a great Sinner, and out of the Greatneſs of his Sin was brought the Greatneſs of his Repentance; *out of the Eater came forth Meat*: And on the contrary, the Power of *Satan's* Malice in bringing Evil out of Good; 'twas Good that the *Phariſee* was no Extortioner or Unjuſt; but the Devil made him proud of this to his Ruin.

15 And they brought unto him alſo Infants, that he would touch them: but when *his* diſciples ſaw *it*, they rebuked them. 16 But Jeſus called them unto him, and ſaid, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of ſuch is the kingdom of God. 17 Verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever ſhall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, ſhall in no wiſe enter therein.

This Paſſage of Story we had both in *Matthew* and *Mark*, it very fitly follows here after the Story of the Publican, as a Confirmation of the Truth which was to be illuſtrated by that Parable, that thoſe ſhall be accepted with God and honour'd, who humble themſelves, and for them Chriſt has *Bleſſings in Store*, the choiceſt and beſt of Bleſſings. Obſerve here,

1. That thoſe who are themſelves bleſſed in Chriſt, ſhould deſire to have their Children alſo bleſſed in him, and ſhould hereby teſtify the true Honour they have for Chriſt, by their making uſe of him; and the true Love they have for their Children, by their Concern about their Souls. They brought to him *Infants* very young, not able to go, Sucking Children as ſome think. None too little, too young, to bring to Chriſt, who knows how to ſhew Kindneſs to them, that are not capable of doing Service to him.

2. One gracious Touch of Chriſt's, will make our Children happy: They *brought Infants to him, that he might touch them*, in Token of the Application of his Grace and Spirit to them, for that always makes way for his *Bleſſing*, which likewiſe they expected; ſee *Iſa.* 44. 3. *I will* firſt *pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and* then *my Bleſſing upon thine Offſpring.*

3. 'Tis no ſtrange Thing for thoſe that make their Application to Jeſus Chriſt for themſelves, or for their Children, to meet with Diſcouragement, even from thoſe that ſhould countenance and encourage them. *When the Diſciples ſaw it*, they thought (if this were admitted) it would bring an endleſs Trouble upon their Maſter, and therefore *they rebuked them*, and frown'd upon them. The Spouſe complain'd of *the Watchmen*, Cant. 3. 3—5. 7.

4. Many whom the Diſciples rebuke, the Maſter invites. *Jeſus call'd them unto him*, when, upon the Diſciples check, they were retiring. They did not *Appeal* from the Diſciples to the Maſter, but the Maſter took Cognizance of their deſpiſed Cauſe.

5. 'Tis the Mind of Chriſt, that *little Children* ſhould be brought to him, and preſented as living Sacrifices to his Honour. *Suffer little Children to come to me, and forbid them not*; let nothing be done to hinder them, for they ſhall be as welcome as any. *The Promiſe is to us, and to our Seed*, and therefore he that has the Diſpenſing of promiſed Bleſſings, will bid them welcome to him with us.

6. The Children of thoſe that belong to the Kingdom of God, do likewiſe belong to that Kingdom, as the Children of Freemen are Freemen. If the Parents be Members of the viſible Church, the Children are ſo too; for if the Root be Holy, the Branches are ſo.

7. So welcome are *Children* to Chriſt, that thoſe grown People are moſt welcome to him, that have in them moſt of the Diſpoſition of Children; *v.* 17. *Whoſoever ſhall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child*, that is, receive the Benefits of it with Humility and Thankfulneſs, not pretending to merit them, as the *Phariſee* did; but gladly owning himſelf indebted to free Grace for them, as the Publican did, unleſs a Man be brought to this Self-denying Frame, he ſhall *in no wiſe enter* into that Kingdom. They muſt receive the Kingdom of God, as *Children* receive their Eſtates by Deſcent and Inheritance, not by Purchaſe, and call it their *Father's Gift.*

18 And a certain ruler asked him, ſaying, Good Maſter, what ſhall I do to inherit eternal life? 19 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? none *is* good ſave one, *that is* God. 20 Thou knoweſt the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not ſteal, Do not bear falſe witneſs, Honour thy father and thy mother. 21 And he ſaid, All theſe have I kept from my youth up. 22 Now when Jeſus heard theſe things, he ſaid unto him, Yet lackeſt thou one thing: ſell all that thou haſt, and diſtribute unto the poor, and thou ſhalt have treaſure in heaven: and come follow me. 23 And when he heard this, he was very ſorrowful: for he was very rich. 24 And when Jeſus ſaw that he was very ſorrowful, he ſaid, How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 25 For it is eaſier for a camel to go thro' a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 26 And they that heard *it*, ſaid, Who then can be ſaved? 27 And he ſaid, The things which are impoſſible with men, are poſſible with God. 28 Then Peter ſaid, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee. 29 And he ſaid unto them, Verily I ſay unto you, there is no man that hath left houſe, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's ſake, 30 Who ſhall not receive manifold more in this preſent time, and in the world to come life everlaſting.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Chriſt's Diſcourſe with a Ruler, that had a good mind to be directed by him in the Way to Heaven. In which we may obſerve,

1. 'Tis a Bleſſed Sight to ſee Perſons of Diſtinction in the World, diſtinguiſh themſelves from others of their Rank, by their Concern about their Souls and another Life. *Luke* takes Notice of it, that he was a *Ruler*; few of the Rulers had any Eſteem for Chriſt, but here was one that had, whether a Church or State Ruler doth not appear, but he was one *in Authority.*

2. The great Thing we are every one of us concern'd to enquire after, is, what we ſhall do to get to Heaven; *what we ſhall do to inherit Eternal Life*; which implies ſuch a Belief of an Eternal Life after this, as Atheiſts and Infidels have not; ſuch a Concern to make it ſure, as a careleſs unthinking World have not, and ſuch a Willingneſs to comply with any Terms that it may be made ſure, as thoſe have not that are reſolvedly devoted to the World and the Fleſh.

3. Thoſe that would inherit Eternal Life, muſt apply themſelves to Jeſus Chriſt as their *Maſter*, their *Teaching* Maſter, ſo it ſignifies here; (Διδάσκαλε) and their *Ruling* Maſter here, and ſo they ſhall for certain find him. There's no learning the Way to Heaven, but in the School of Chriſt, by thoſe that enter themſelves into it, and ſtick to it.

4. Thoſe that come to Chriſt as their Maſter, muſt believe him to have not only a *Divine Miſſion*, but a *Divine Goodneſs.* Chriſt would have this Ruler know, that if he underſtood himſelf aright in calling him *Good*, he did in Effect call him *God*, and indeed he was ſo, *v.* 19. *Why calleſt thou me Good?* Thou knoweſt *there is none Good but One, that is God*; and doſt thou then take me for God? If ſo, thou art in the Right.

5. Our Maſter, Chriſt himſelf, has not alter'd the Way to Heaven from what it was before his coming, but only has made it more plain and eaſy, and comfortable, and provided for our Relief, in caſe we take any falſe Step. *Thou knoweſt the Commandments*; Chriſt came not to deſtroy the Law and the Prophets, but to eſtabliſh them. Would'ſt thou inherit Eternal Life, govern thyſelf by the Commandments.

6. The Duties of the Second Table muſt be conſcientiouſly obſerv'd, in order to our Happineſs, and we muſt not think that any Acts of Devotion, how plauſible ſoever, will atone for the Neglect of them. Nor is it enough to keep ourſelves free from the groſs Violations of theſe Commandments, but we muſt *know theſe Commandments*, as Chriſt has *explain'd them* in his Sermon upon the Mount, in their Extent and Spiritual Nature, and ſo obſerve them.

7. Men think themſelves *Innocent*, becauſe they are *Ignorant*, ſo this Ruler did: He ſaid, *All theſe have I kept from my Youth up*, v. 21. He knows no more Evil by himſelf, than the *Phariſee* did, *v.* 11. He boaſts that he began *early* in a Courſe of Virtue; that he had continu'd in it to this day, and that he had not in any Inſtance tranſgreſs'd. Had he been acquainted with the Extent and Spiritual Nature of the Divine Law, with the Workings of his own Heart, had he been but Chriſt's Diſciple a while, and learn'd of him, he would have ſaid the quite contrary, *All theſe have* I broken from my Youth up, in Thought, Word, and Deed.

8. The great Things by which we are to try our Spiritual State, are, how we ſtand affected to Chriſt and to our Brethren, to this World, and to the other; by theſe this Man was try'd: For, (1.) if he has a true *Affection to Chriſt*, he will *come and follow him*, will attend to his Doctrine, and ſubmit to his Diſcipline, whatever it coſt him. None ſhall inherit Eternal Life, who are not willing to take their Lot with the Lord Jeſus, to follow the Lamb whereſoever he goes. (2.) If he have a true *Affection to his Brethren*, he will, as there is Occaſion, *diſtribute to the Poor*, who are God's Receivers of his Dues, out of our Eſtates. (3.) If he think meanly of *this World*, as he ought, he will not ſtick at *ſelling what he has*, if there be a Neceſſity for it, for the Relief of God's Poor. (4.) If he think highly of the other World, as he ought, he will deſire no more but to have *Treaſure in Heaven*, and will reckon that a ſufficient abundant Recompence for all that he hath left or loſt, or laid out for God in this World.

9. There are many that have a great deal in them, that is very commendable, and yet they periſh *for lack of ſome one Thing*; ſo this *Ruler* here, he broke with Chriſt upon this, he liked all his Terms very well, but this, which would part between him and his Eſtate: In this, I pray thee, have me excus'd. If this be the Bargain, 'tis no Bargain.

10. Many that are loth to leave Chriſt, yet do leave him. After a long Struggle between their Convictions and their Corruptions, their Corruptions carry the Day at laſt; they are very ſorry they cannot ſerve God and Mammon both, but if one muſt be quitted, it ſhall be their God, not their worldly Gain.

Secondly, Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples upon this Occaſion: In which we may obſerve,

1. That Riches are a great Hindrance to many, in the Way to Heaven. Chriſt took Notice of the Reluctancy and Regret with which the Rich Man broke off from him, he *ſaw that he was very ſorrowful*, and was ſorry for him; but from thence he infers, *How hardly ſhall they that have Riches enter into the Kingdom of God*? v. 24. If this Ruler had had but as little of the World, as *Peter*, and *James*, and *John* had, in all Probability he would have left it to follow Chriſt as they did; but having a great Eſtate, it had a great Influence upon him, and he choſe rather to take his Leave of Chriſt, than to lay himſelf under an Obligation to diſpoſe of his Eſtate in charitable Uſes. Chriſt aſſerts the Difficulty of the Salvation of Rich People very emphatically, *v.* 25. *It is eaſier for a Camel to go thro' a Needle's Eye, than for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God.* 'Tis a proverbial Expreſſion, that ſpeaks the Thing extremely difficult.

2. That ſuch a general Affection there is in the Hearts of all People to this World, and the Things of it, that ſince Chriſt has requir'd it as neceſſary to Salvation, that we ſhould ſit looſe to this World, 'tis really very hard for any to get to Heaven: If we muſt *ſell all*, or break with Chriſt, *who then can be ſav'd?* v. 26. They do not find fault with what Chriſt requir'd, as hard and unreaſonable: No, 'tis very fit, that they who expect an Eternal Happineſs in the other World, ſhould be willing to forego all that's dear to them in this World, in Expectation of it. But they know how cloſely the Hearts of the moſt of Men cleave to this World, and are ready to deſpair of their being ever brought to this.

3. That there are ſuch Difficulties in the Way of our Salvation, as could never be got over but by pure Omnipotence; by that Grace of God which is Almighty; and to which that is *poſſible*, which exceeds all created Power and Wiſdom. The *things which are impoſſible with Men*, and utterly impoſſible it is that Men ſhould work ſuch a Change upon their own Spirits as to turn them from the World to God, ('tis like *dividing the Sea*, and *driving* Jordan *back*) theſe Things are *poſſible with God*: His Grace can work upon the Soul, ſo as to alter the Bent and Biaſs of it, and give it a contrary Ply; and 'tis he that works in us *both to will and to do.*

4. That there is an Aptneſs in us to ſpeak too much of what we have left and loſt, of what we have done and ſuffer'd for Chriſt. This appears in *Peter*, v. 28. *Lo, we have left all and followed thee*; when it came in his Way, he could not forbear magnifying his own and his Brethrens Affections to Chriſt, in *quitting* all to follow him. But this we ſhould be ſo far from boaſting of, that we ſhould rather acknowledge it not worth taking Notice of, and be aſham'd of ourſelves that there has been any Regret and Difficulty in the doing of it, and any Hankerings towards thoſe Things afterwards.

5. That whatever we have left or laid out for Chriſt, it ſhall, without fail, be abundantly made up to us in this World, and that to come, notwithſtanding our Weakneſſes and Infirmities, *v.* 29, 30. *There is no Man that has left* the Comfort of his Eſtate or Relations *for the Kingdom of God's ſake*, rather than they ſhould hinder either his Services to that Kingdom, or his Enjoyments of it, *who ſhall not receive manyfold more in this preſent Time*, in the Graces and Comforts of God's Spirit, in the Pleaſures of Communion with God, and of a good Conſcience; Advantages which (to thoſe who know how to value and improve them) will abundantly countervail all their Loſſes. Yet, that is not all, in the World to come they *ſhall receive Life everlaſting*, which is the Thing that the Ruler ſeem'd to have his Eye and Heart upon.

31 ¶ Then he took unto him the twelve, and ſaid unto them, Behold, we go up to Jeruſalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the ſon of man ſhall be accompliſhed. 32 For he ſhall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and ſhall be mocked, and ſpitefully treated, and ſpitted on; 33 And they ſhall ſcourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he ſhall riſe again. 34 And they underſtood none of theſe things: and this ſaying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were ſpoken.

Here's 1. The Notice Chriſt gave to his Diſciples of his Sufferings and Death approaching, and of the glorious Iſſue of them, which he himſelf had a perfect Sight and Foreknowledge of, and thought it neceſſary to give them Warning of, that it might be the leſs Surprize and Terror to them.

Two Things here are, which we had not in the other Evangeliſts. (1.) That the *Sufferings* of Chriſt are here ſpoken as the *Fulfilling of the Scriptures*, with which Conſideration Chriſt reconcil'd himſelf to them, and would reconcile them. *All things that are written by the Prophets, concerning the Son of Man*, eſpecially the Hardſhips he ſhould undergo, *ſhall be accompliſh'd*.

Note, The Spirit of Chriſt, in the Old Teſtament Prophets, *teſtify'd before-hand his Sufferings*, and *the Glory that ſhould follow*, 1 Pet. 1. 11. This proves that the Scriptures are the *Word of God*, for they had their exact and full Accompliſhment; and that Jeſus Chriſt was *ſent of God*, for they had their Accompliſhment *in him*; this was *he that ſhould come*, for whatever was *foretold* concerning the *Meſſiah*, was verify'd in him; and he would ſubmit to any Thing for the fulfilling of Scripture, that not one Jot or Tittle of that ſhould fall to the Ground. This makes the *Offence of the Croſs to ceaſe*, and puts an Honour upon it. *Thus it was written, and thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer*; thus it became him. (2.) That the Ignominy and Diſgrace done to Chriſt in his Sufferings is here moſt inſiſted upon. The other Evangeliſts had ſaid, he ſhould be *mocked*; but here it is added, *He ſhould be ſpitefully treated*, ὑβρισθήσεται, he ſhall be loaded with Contumely and Contempt, ſhall have all poſſible Reproach put upon him. This was that part of his Sufferings, by which, in a Spiritual Manner, he ſatisfy'd God's Juſtice for the Injury we had done him in his Honour by Sin. Here's one particular Inſtance of Diſgrace done him, that *he was ſpit upon*, which had been particularly foretold, *Iſa.* 50. 6. But here, as always, when Chriſt ſpoke of his Sufferings and Death, he foretold his Reſurrection, as that which took off both the Terror and Reproach of his Sufferings; *The Third Day he ſhall Riſe again.*

2. The Confuſion that the Diſciples were hereby put into; this was ſo contrary to the Notions they had had of the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom, ſuch a Baulk to their Expectations from their Maſter, and ſuch a Breaking of all their Meaſures, that *they underſtood none of theſe Things*, v. 34. Their Prejudices were ſo ſtrong, that they *would not* underſtand them literally, and they *could not* underſtand them otherwiſe, ſo that they did not underſtand them at all; 'twas a Myſtery, 'twas a Riddle to them, it muſt be ſo, it muſt be ſo; but they think it impoſſible to be reconcil'd with the Glory and Honour of the *Meſſiah*, and the Deſigns of ſetting up his Kingdom. This Saying was *hid from them*, κεκρυμμένον ἀπ' αὐτῶν, 'twas *Apocrypha* to them, they could not receive it; for their Parts, they had read the Old Teſtament many a Time, but they could never ſee any Thing in it that ſhould be *accompliſh'd*,

in the Diſgrace and Death of this *Meſſiah*. They were ſo intent upon the Prophecies, that ſpoke of his Glory, that they overlook'd thoſe which ſpoke of his *Sufferings*, which the *Scribes* and Doctors of the Law ſhould have directed them to take Notice of, and ſhould have brought into their Creeds and Catechiſms as well as the other; but they did not ſuit their Scheme, and therefore were laid aſide. *Note*, Therefore it is that People run into Miſtakes, becauſe they *read their Bibles by the Halves*, and are as partial in the Prophets as they are *in the Law*. They are only for the *ſmooth Things*; Iſa. 30. 10. Thus now we are too apt in reading the Prophecies, that are yet to be fulfill'd, to have our Expectations rais'd of the Glorious State of the Church in the latter Days; but we overlook its Wilderneſs, Sackcloth State, and are willing to fancy that's over, and nothing is reſerv'd for us, but the Halcyon Days; and then, when Tribulation and Perſecution ariſeth, we do not *underſtand* it, neither *know we the Things that are done*; tho' we are told as plainly as can be, that *thro' many Tribulations we muſt enter into the Kingdom of God.*

35 ¶ And it came to paſs, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man ſat by the way ſide begging. 36 And hearing the multitude paſs by, he asked what it meant. 37 And they told him, that Jeſus of Nazareth paſſeth by. 38 And he cried, ſaying, Jeſus, thou ſon of David, have mercy on me. 39 And they which went before, rebuked him, that he ſhould hold his peace: but he cried ſo much the more, Thou ſon of David, have mercy on me. 40 And Jeſus ſtood and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, 41 Saying, What wilt thou that I ſhall do unto thee? And he ſaid, Lord, that I may receive my ſight. 42 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Receive thy ſight: thy faith hath ſaved thee. 43 And immediately he received his ſight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they ſaw *it*, gave praiſe unto God.

Chriſt came not only to bring *Light* to a *Dark* World, and ſo to ſet before us the *Objects* we are to have in View, but alſo to give *Sight* to blind *Souls*, and by healing the Organ to enable them to view thoſe Objects: As a Token of this, he cured many of their Bodily Blindneſs; we have now an Account of one to whom he *gave Sight* near *Jericho*. *Mark* gives us an Account of one, and names him, whom he cured *as he went out of* Jericho, *Mark* 10. 46. *Matthew* ſpeaks of two, whom he cured *as they departed* from *Jericho*, Mat. 20. 30. *Luke* ſaith it was ἐν τῷ ἐγγίζειν αὐτὸν, when he was near to *Jericho*, which might be when he was going out of it, as well as when he was coming into it. Obſerve,

1. This poor blind Man *ſat by the Way-ſide begging*, v. 35. It ſeems he was not only *blind* but *poor*, had nothing to ſubſiſt on, nor any Relations to maintain him; the fitter Emblem of the World of Mankind, which Chriſt came to heal and ſave; they are therefore *wretched* and *miſerable*, for they are both *poor and blind*, Rev. 3. 17.--- He ſat begging, for he was blind and could not work for his Living. *Note*, Thoſe ought to be relieved by Charity, whom the Providence of God has any way diſabled to get their own Bread. Such Objects of Charity, *by the Way-ſide*, ought not to be overlook'd by us; Chriſt here caſt a favourable Eye upon a *Common Beggar*, and tho' there are Cheats among ſuch, yet they muſt not therefore be all thought ſo.

2. Hearing the Noiſe of a Multitude paſſing by, he ask'd *what it meant*, v. 36. This we had not before; it teacheth us that it is good to be *Inquiſitive*, and thoſe who are ſo, ſome Time or other find the Benefit of it. Thoſe that want their *Sight*, ſhould make ſo much the better Uſe of their *Hearing*; and when they cannot ſee with their own Eyes, ſhould, by *asking Queſtions*, make Uſe of other People's Eyes. So this blind Man did, and by that Means came to underſtand that *Jeſus of Nazareth paſſed by*, v. 37. It's good being in Chriſt's Way; and when we have an Opportunity of applying ourſelves to him, not to let it ſlip.

3. His Prayer has in it a great deal both of Faith and Fervency, *Jeſus thou Son of David, have Mercy on me*, v. 38. He owns Chriſt to be the *Son of* David, the Meſſiah promis'd, he believes him to be *Jeſus*, a Saviour, he believes he is able to help and ſuccour him, and earneſtly begs his Favour; *have Mercy on me*, pardon my Sin, pity my Miſery. Chriſt is a merciful King, thoſe that apply themſelves to him as the *Son of* David, ſhall find him ſo, and ask enough for themſelves, when they pray *have Mercy on us*; for Chriſt's Mercy includes all.

4. Thoſe that are in good Earneſt for Chriſt's Favours and Bleſſings, will not be put by from the Purſuit of them, tho' they meet with Oppoſition and Rebuke. They that went along chid him as troubleſome to the Maſter, noiſy and impertinent, and bid him *hold his Peace*; but he went on with his Petition; nay, the Check given him was but as a Dam to a full Stream, which makes it ſwell ſo much the more; He *cried the louder, Son of David have Mercy on me.* Thoſe that would ſpeed in Prayer, muſt be importunate in Prayer. This Hiſtory in the Cloſe of the Chapter ſpeaks the ſame Thing with the Parable in the Beginning of the Chapter, That *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*

5. Chriſt encourageth poor Beggars, whom Men frown upon, and invites them to come to him, and is ready to entertain them, and bid them welcome; *He commanded him to be brought to him. Note*, Chriſt has more Tenderneſs and Compaſſion for diſtreſſed Supplicants, than any of his Followers have. Tho' Chriſt was upon his Journey, yet he ſtop'd, and *ſtood*, and *commanded him to be brought to him.* Thoſe that have check'd him, muſt now lend him their Hands to lead him to Chriſt.

6. Tho' Chriſt knows all our Wants, he will know them from us; *v.* 41. *What wilt thou that I ſhall do unto thee?* By ſpreading our Caſe before God, and a particular Remonſtrance of our Wants and Burthens, we teach ourſelves to value the Mercy we are in purſuit of; and 'tis neceſſary we ſhould, elſe we are not fit to receive it. This Man pour'd out his Soul before Chriſt, when he ſaid, *Lord, that I may receive my Sight.* Thus particular ſhould we be in Prayer, upon particular Occaſions.

7. The Prayer of Faith guided by Chriſt's encouraging Promiſes, and grounded on them, ſhall not be in vain; nay, it ſhall not only receive an *Anſwer of Peace*, but of *Honour*, v. 42. Chriſt ſaid, *Receive thy Sight, thy Faith has made thee whole.* True Faith will produce Fervency in Prayer, and both together will fetch in Abundance of the Fruits of Chriſt's Favour; and they are then doubly comfortable, when they come in that Way; when we are *ſaved by Faith.*

8. The *Grace of Chriſt* ought to be thankfully acknowledged to the *Glory of God*, v. 43. (1.) The poor Beggar himſelf that had his Sight reſtor'd, *follow'd Chriſt, glorifying God.* Chriſt made it his Buſineſs to glorify his Father; and thoſe whom he heal'd, then *pleas'd him* beſt when they *prais'd God*, as thoſe ſhall *pleaſe God* beſt that *praiſe Chriſt*, and do him Honour; for in *confeſſing that he is Lord*, we *give Glory to God the Father.* 'Tis for the *Glory of God* if we *follow Chriſt*, as thoſe will do whoſe *Eyes* are *open'd.* (2.) The *People that ſaw it* could not forbear *giving Praiſe to God*, who had given ſuch Power to the *Son of Man*, and by him had confer'd ſuch Favours on the *Sons of Men. Note*, We muſt give Praiſe to God for his Mercies to others, as well as for Mercies to ourſelves.

CHAP. XIX.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) *The Converſion of* Zaccheus *the Publican at* Jericho, *v.* 1---10. (2.) *The Parable of the Pounds which the King entruſted with his Servants, and of his Rebellious Citizens,* v. 11---27. (3.) *Chriſt's riding in Triumph* (*ſuch Triumph as it was*) *into* Jeruſalem; *and his Lamentation in Proſpect of the Ruin of that City,* v. 28---44. (4.) *His Teaching in the Temple, and caſting the Buyers and Sellers out of it,* v. 45---48.

1 AND *Jeſus* entred, and paſſed thro' Jericho. 2 And behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3 And he ſought to ſee Jeſus who he was, and could not for the preſs, becauſe he was little of ſtature. 4 And he ran before, and climbed up in a ſycomore-tree to ſee him; for he was to paſs that way. 5 And when Jeſus came to the place, he looked up and ſaw him, and ſaid unto him, Zaccheus, make haſte, and come down; for to day I muſt abide at thy houſe. 6 And he made haſte, and came down, and received him joyfully. 7 And when they ſaw *it*, they all murmured, ſaying, That he was gone to be gueſt with a man that is a ſinner. 8 And Zaccheus ſtood, and ſaid unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have taken any thing from any man by falſe accuſation, I reſtore *him* four-fold. 9 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, This day is ſalvation come to this houſe, forſomuch as he alſo is the ſon of Abraham. 10 For the ſon of man is come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.

Many, no doubt, were converted to the Faith of Chriſt, of whom no Account is kept in the Goſpels; but the Converſion of ſome, whoſe Caſe had ſomething in it extraordinary, is recorded, as this of *Zaccheus*. Chriſt paſſed thro' *Jericho*; v. 1. That City was built under a Curſe, yet Chriſt honour'd it with his Preſence, for the Goſpel *takes away the Curſe.* Tho' it ought not to have been built, yet it was not therefore a Sin to live in it when it was built. Chriſt was now going from the other ſide *Jordan* to *Bethany*, near *Jeruſalem*, to raiſe *Lazarus* to Life; when he was going to do one good Work, he contrived to do many by the Way. He did Good both to the *Souls* and to the *Bodies* of People; we have here an Inſtance of the former. Obſerve,

Firſt, Who and what this *Zaccheus* was.

His Name ſpeaks him a *Jew*, *Zaccai* was a common Name among the *Jews*; They had a famous *Rabbin* much about this Time of that Name. Obſerve,

1. His Calling and the Poſt he was in; *He was the Chief among the Publicans*, Receiver-General; other Publicans were Officers

under him; He was, as ſome think, Farmer of the Cuſtoms. We often read of Publicans coming to Chriſt. But here was one that was *Chief* of the Publicans, was in Authority, that enquir'd after him. God has his Remnant among all Sorts; Chriſt came to ſave even the *Chief of Sinners*, and therefore even the *Chief of Publicans*.

2. His Circumſtances in the World were very conſiderable. *He was rich.* The inferior Publicans were commonly Men of broken Fortunes, and low in the World, but he that was *Chief of the Publicans* had rais'd a good Eſtate. Chriſt had lately ſhew'd how *hard* it is for *rich People to enter into the Kingdom of God*, yet preſently produceth an Inſtance of one rich Man, that had been loſt, and was found, and that not as the Prodigal, by being reduc'd to want.

Secondly, How he came in Chriſt's Way, and what was the Occaſion of his Acquaintance with him.

1. He had a great *curioſity to ſee Jeſus*, what kind of Man he was, having heard great talk of him, *v.* 3. 'Tis natural to us to come in Sight of thoſe whoſe Fame has fill'd our Ears, as being apt to imagine there is ſomething extraordinary in their Countenances; at leaſt he would be able to ſay hereafter, he had ſeen ſuch and ſuch *Great Men*. But the Eye is *not ſatisfy'd with ſeeing*. We ſhould now *ſeek to ſee Jeſus* with an Eye of Faith: to ſee *who he is*; ſhould addreſs ourſelves in holy Ordinances with this in our Eye, *We ſhould ſee Jeſus*.

2. He could not get his Curioſity gratify'd in this Matter; becauſe he was *little*, and the Croud was *great*. Chriſt did not ſtudy to *ſhew himſelf*, was not carry'd on Mens Shoulders, as the Pope is in Proceſſion, that all Men might ſee him; neither he nor his Kingdom *came with Obſervation*; he did not ride in an open Chariot as Princes do, but as *one of us*, he was *loſt in a Crowd*; for that was the Day of his Humiliation. *Zaccheus* was *low of Stature*, and over-topt by all about him, ſo that he could not get a Sight of Jeſus. Many that are little of Stature have large Souls, and are lively in Spirit. Who would not rather be a *Zaccheus* than a *Saul*, tho' he was *higher by Head and Shoulders* than all about him? Let not thoſe that are little of Stature, *take Thought* of adding *Cubits* to it.

3. Becauſe he would not baulk his Fancy, he *forgot his Gravity*, as Chief of the Publicans, and *run before* like a Boy, and *climb'd up into a Sycomore-Tree to ſee him*. *Note*, Thoſe that ſincerely deſire a Sight of Chriſt, will uſe the proper Means for gaining a Sight of him, and will break through a deal of Difficulty and Oppoſition, and be willing to take pains to ſee him. Thoſe that find themſelves *little*, muſt take all the Advantages they can get to *raiſe themſelves* to a Sight of Chriſt, and not be aſham'd to own that they need them, and all little enough. Let not Dwarfs deſpair with good help by aiming high to reach high.

Thirdly, The Notice Chriſt took of him, and the Call he gave him to a further Acquaintance, *v.* 5. and the Efficacy of that Call, *v.* 6.

1. Chriſt *invited himſelf* to *Zaccheus*'s Houſe, not doubting of his Hearty Welcome there: Nay, where-ever Chriſt comes, as he brings his own *Entertainment* along with him, ſo he brings his own *Welcome*, he opens the Heart, and inclines it to receive him. Chriſt *look'd* up into the Tree, and *ſaw Zaccheus*. He came to look upon Chriſt, and reſolv'd to take particular Notice of him, but little thought of being taken Notice of by Chriſt. That was an Honour too great, and too far above his Merit for him to have any Thought of. See how Chriſt *prevented* him with the Bleſſings of his Goodneſs, and *out-did* his Expectations: And ſee how he *encourag'd* very weak Beginnings, and help'd them forward. He that had a mind to know Chriſt, ſhall be *known of him*; that only courted to ſee him, ſhall be admitted to converſe with him. *Note*, Thoſe that are faithful in a little, ſhall be intruſted with more. And ſometimes, thoſe that come to hear the Word of Chriſt, as *Zaccheus* did, only for Curioſity, beyond what they thought of, have their Conſciences awakened, and their Hearts chang'd. Chriſt call'd him *by Name*, *Zaccheus*, for he knows his Choſen *by Name*, *are they not in his Book*? He might aſk as *Nathanael* did, *Joh.* 1. 48. *Whence knoweſt thou me*? But before he climb'd the Sycomore-Tree, Chriſt ſaw him, and knew him. He bid him *make haſte and come down*. Thoſe that Chriſt calls, muſt *come down*, muſt humble themſelves, and not think to climb to Heaven by any Righteouſneſs of their own: And they muſt *make haſte* and come down, for Delays are dangerous. *Zaccheus* muſt not heſitate but haſten: He knows it is not a matter that needs conſideration whether he ſhould welcome ſuch a Gueſt to his Houſe. He muſt *come down*, for Chriſt intends this Day to *bait at his Houſe*, and ſtay an Hour or two with him. *Behold he ſtands at the Door and knocks.*

2. *Zaccheus* was *overjoy'd* to have ſuch an Honour put upon his Houſe, *v.* 6. *he made haſte and came down and received him joyfully.* And his receiving him *into his Houſe* was an Indication and Token of his receiving him *into his Heart*. *Note*, When Chriſt *calls* to us, we muſt *make haſte* to anſwer his Calls, and when he *comes to us* we muſt *receive him joyfully*: *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates.* We may well *receive him joyfully*, who brings all Good along with him, and when he takes poſſeſſion of the Soul opens Springs of Joy there, which ſhall flow to Eternity. How often has Chriſt ſaid to us, *Open to me*, when we have with the Spouſe made Excuſes, *Cant.* 5. 2, 3. *Zaccheus*'s Forwardneſs to receive Chriſt, will ſhame us. We have not now *Chriſt* to entertain in our Houſes; but we have his Diſciples, and what is done to them, he takes as done to himſelf.

Fourthly, The Offence which the People took at this *kind Greeting* between Chriſt and *Zaccheus*. Thoſe narrow-ſoul'd cenſorious Jews *murmured*, ſaying, that he was *gone to be a Gueſt with a Man that is a Sinner*, παρὰ ἁμαρτωλῷ ἀνδρὶ, with a *ſinful Man*: And were not they themſelves ſinful Men? Was it not Chriſt's Errand into the world to ſeek and ſave *Men* that are *Sinners*? But *Zaccheus* they think to be a Sinner above all Men that dwelt in *Jericho*; ſuch a Sinner as was not fit to be convers'd with.

Now this was very unjuſt to blame Chriſt for going to *his Houſe*; For (1.) tho' *he* was a Publican, and many of the Publicans were *ill Men*, it did not therefore follow that they were *all ſo*. We muſt take heed of condemning Men in the Lump, or by common Fame, for at God's Bar every Man will be judg'd as he is. (2.) Tho' he *had been* a Sinner, it did not therefore follow that he was now as bad as he had been; tho' they knew his paſt Life to be bad, Chriſt might know his preſent Frame to be good. God allows room for Repentance, and ſo muſt we. (3.) Tho' he was *now a Sinner*, they ought not to blame Chriſt for going to him, becauſe he was in *no Danger* of getting hurt by a Sinner, but in *great Hopes* of doing good to a Sinner; whither ſhould the Phyſician go, but to the Sick? Yet ſee how that which is *well done* may be *ill conſtrued*.

Fifthly, The Proofs which *Zaccheus* gave publickly, that tho' he had been a *Sinner*, he was now a *Penitent*, and a *true Convert*, *v.* 8. He doth not expect to be juſtify'd by his Works, as the *Phariſee*, who boaſted of what he had done, but by his *good Works* he will through the Grace of God evidence the *Sincerity* of his *Faith* and *Repentance*; and here he declares what his Determination was. He makes this Declaration *ſtanding*, that he might be ſeen and heard by thoſe who murmur'd at Chriſt for coming to his Houſe; *with the Mouth Confeſſion is made* of Repentance as well as Faith. He *ſtood*, which notes his ſaying it deliberately and with ſolemnity; in the Nature of a Vow to God. He addreſs'd himſelf to Chriſt in it, not to the People, they were not to be his Judges; but to the Lord, and he *ſtands* as it were at his Bar. What we do that is good, we muſt do *as unto him*: We muſt appeal to him, and approve ourſelves to him in our Integrity, in all our good Purpoſes and Reſolutions. He makes it appear that there is a change *in his Heart*, (and that's Repentance) for there is a change in his Way.

His Reſolutions are of Second-Table Duties; for Chriſt upon all Occaſions laid great Streſs on them; and they are ſuch as are ſuited to his Condition and Character; for in them will beſt appear the Truth of our Repentance.

1. *Zaccheus* had a good Eſtate, and whereas he had been in it hitherto, laying up Treaſure for himſelf, and doing hurt to himſelf, now he reſolves that for the future he will be all towards God, and do good to others with it, *Behold, Lord, the half of my Goods I give to the Poor.* Not I *will* give it by my Will, when I die, but I *do* give it now. Probably he had heard of the Command or Trial, Chriſt gave to another rich Man, to ſell what he had and give to the Poor, *Mat.* 19. 21. and how he broke with Chriſt upon it. But ſo will not I, ſaith *Zaccheus*, I agree to it, at the firſt Word; tho' hitherto I have been uncharitable to the Poor, now I will relieve them, and give ſo much the more for having neglected the Duty ſo long: Even the *half of my Goods*, which is a very large Proportion to be ſet apart for Works of Piety and Charity. The Jews uſed to ſay that a 5th Part of a Man's Income yearly was very fair to be given to pious Uſes, and about that ſhare the Law directed, but *Zaccheus* would go much farther, and give the one Moiety to the Poor; which would oblige him to retrench all his extravagant Expences, as his retrenching thoſe would enable him to relieve many with his Superfluities. If we were but more temperate and ſelf-denying, we ſhould be more charitable; and were we content with leſs ourſelves, we ſhould have the more to give to them that need. This he mentions here as a Fruit of his Repentance. *Note*, It well becomes Converts to God to be charitable to the Poor.

2. *Zaccheus* was conſcious to himſelf that he had not gotten all he had honeſtly and fairly, but ſome by indirect and unlawful Means, and of what he had gotten by ſuch Means he promiſeth to make Reſtitution; If *I have taken any Thing from any Man by falſe Accuſation*, or, if I have wrong'd any Man in the way of my Buſineſs as a *Publican*, exacting more than was appointed, I do promiſe to reſtore him *four-fold*, the Reſtitution that a Thief was to make, *Exod.* 22. 1. (1.) He ſeems plainly to own that he had *done wrong*; his Office as a Publican gave him Opportunity to do wrong, of impoſing upon the Merchants to curry Favour with the Government. True Penitents will own themſelves not only in general guilty before God, but will particularly reflect upon that which has been their own Iniquity, and which by reaſon of their Buſineſs and Imployment in the World has moſt eaſily beſet them. (2.) That he had done wrong *by falſe Accuſation*, this was the Temptation of the Publicans, which *John Baptiſt* had warn'd them of particularly, *Luke* 3. 14. They had the Ear of the Government, and every Thing would be ſtretch'd in Favour of the Revenue; which gave them an Opportunity of gratifying their Revenge, if they bore a Man an ill Will. (3.) He promiſeth to reſtore *four-fold*, as far as he could recollect, or find by his Books that he had *wrong'd any Man*. He doth not

ſay, if I be ſued, and compell'd to it, I'll make Reſtitution; ſome are *honeſt* when they cannot help it; but he'll do it *voluntarily*, it ſhall be my *own Act and Deed*. *Note*, Thoſe who are convinc'd of having done wrong, cannot evidence the Sincerity of their Repentance but by *making Reſtitution*. Obſerve, he doth not think his giving half his Eſtate to the Poor, will atone for the wrong he has done; God *hates Robbery for Burnt Offerings*, and we muſt firſt *do juſtly* and then *love Mercy*. It is no Charity but Hypocriſy to give that which is none *of our own*, and we are not to reckon that our own which we have not come honeſtly by; nor that our own which is not ſo, when all our Debts are paid, and Reſtitution made for wrong done.

Sixthly, Chriſt's *Approbation* and *Acceptance* of *Zaccheus*'s Converſion, by which alſo he clear'd himſelf from any Imputation in going to be a Gueſt with him, *v.* 9, 10.

1. *Zaccheus* is declared to be now a *happy Man*; now he is turn'd from Sin to God, now he has bid Chriſt welcome to his Houſe, and is become an honeſt charitable good Man, *This Day is Salvation come to this Houſe*. Now he is converted, he is in effect *ſaved*; ſaved from his Sins, from the Guilt of them, from the Power of them. All the Benefits of Salvation are his; *Chriſt is* come *to his Houſe*, and where Chriſt comes, he brings Salvation along with him; he is and will be the *Author of eternal Salvation* to all that own him, as *Zaccheus* did. Yet this is not all: Salvation this Day comes to his *Houſe*. (1.) When *Zaccheus* becomes a Convert, he will be more than he had been a *Bleſſing to his Houſe*. He will bring the means of Grace and Salvation to his Houſe; for he is a *Son of Abraham* indeed now, and therefore like *Abraham* will teach his Houſhold to *keep the way of the Lord*. *He that is greedy of Gain, troubleth his own Houſe*, and brings a Curſe upon it, *Hab.* 2. 9. But he that is charitable to the Poor, doth a Kindneſs to his own Houſe, and brings a Bleſſing upon it, and Salvation to it, temporal at leaſt, *Pſal.* 112. 3. (2.) When *Zaccheus* is brought to Chriſt himſelf, his *Family* alſo became related to Chriſt, and his Children are admitted Members of his Church, and ſo *Salvation comes to his Houſe*, for that he is *a Son of Abraham*, and therefore intereſted in God's Covenant with *Abraham*, that *Bleſſing* of *Abraham* which comes upon the Publicans, *upon the Gentiles* through Faith, that God will be a God to *them and to their Children*; and therefore when he believes, *Salvation comes* to his Houſe, as to the Jaylor's, to whom it was ſaid, Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *and thou ſhalt be ſaved and thine Houſe*, Acts 16. 31. *Zaccheus* is by Birth a Son of *Abraham*, but being a *Publican*, he was deem'd a *Heathen*, they are put upon a level, *Mat.* 18. 17. and as ſuch the *Jews* were ſhy of converſing with him, and expected Chriſt ſhould be ſo; but he ſhews that being a true Penitent, he is become *rectus in Curia*, as good a Son of *Abraham* as if he had never been a *Publican*, which therefore ought not to be mentioned againſt him.

2. What Chriſt had done to make him in particular a happy Man, was conſonant to the great Deſign and Intention of his coming into the World, *v.* 10. with the ſame Argument he had before juſtified his converſing with Publicans, *Mat.* 9. 13. There he pleaded that he came to *call Sinners to Repentance*: Now that he came to *ſeek and ſave that which was loſt*; τὸ ἀπόλωλος, *the loſt Thing*. Obſerve, (1.) the *deplorable Caſe of the Sons of Men*; they were loſt; but here the whole Race of Mankind is ſpoken of as *one Body*. *Note*, The whole World of Mankind by the Fall is become a *loſt World*. Loſt as a City is loſt when it is revolted to the Rebels; as a Traveller is loſt, when he has miſs'd his Way in a Wilderneſs; loſt as a ſick Man is loſt, when his Diſeaſe is incurable; or as a Priſoner is loſt, when Sentence is paſs'd upon him. (2.) The *gracious Deſign* of the *Son of God*, he came to *ſeek and ſave*, to ſeek in order to ſaving. He came from Heaven to Earth (a long Journey) to *ſeek* that which was *loſt*, i. e. which had *wandred and gone aſtray*, and to bring it back, *Mat.* 18. 11, 12. And to *ſave* that which was loſt, *i. e.* which was periſhing, and in a manner deſtroy'd and cut off. Chriſt undertook the Cauſe when it was given up for loſt; undertook to bring thoſe to themſelves that were loſt to God and all Goodneſs. Obſerve, Chriſt *came* into this loſt World to ſeek and ſave it. His Deſign was to *ſave*, when *there was not Salvation in any other*. And in Proſecution of that Deſign he *ſought*, took all probable means to effect that Salvation. He ſeeks thoſe that were not worth ſeeking to; he ſeeks to thoſe that ſought him not, and ask'd not for him, as to *Zaccheus* here.

11 And as they heard theſe things, he added, and ſpake a parable, becauſe he was nigh to Jeruſalem, and becauſe they thought that the kingdom of God ſhould immediately appear. 12 He ſaid therefore, A certain noble man went into a far country, to receive for himſelf a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called his ten ſervants, and delivered them ten pounds, and ſaid unto them, Occupy till I come. 14. But his citizens hated him, and ſent a meſſage after him, ſaying, We will not have this Man to reign over us. 15 And it came to paſs, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded theſe ſervants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the firſt, ſaying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17 And he ſaid unto him, Well, thou good ſervant; becauſe thou haſt been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18 And the ſecond came, ſaying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19. And he ſaid likewiſe to him, Be thou alſo over five cities. 20 And another came, ſaying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 For I feared thee, becauſe thou art an auſtere man: thou takeſt up that thou layedſt not down, and reapeſt that thou didſt not ſow. 22 And he ſaith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked ſervant. Thou kneweſt that I was an auſtere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not ſow: 23 Wherefore then gaveſt not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with uſury? 24 And he ſaid unto them that ſtood by, Take from him the pound, and give *it* to him that hath ten pounds. 25 (And they ſaid unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds) 26 For I ſay unto you, that unto every one which hath, ſhall be given: and from him that hath not, even that he hath ſhall be taken away from him. 27 But thoſe mine enemies, which would not that I ſhould reign over them, bring hither, and ſlay *them* before me.

Our Lord Jeſus is now upon his way to *Jeruſalem*, to his laſt Paſſover, when he was to ſuffer and die; now here we are told,

1. How the Expectations of his Friends were *rais'd* upon this Occaſion. *They thought that the Kingdom of God ſhould immediately appear*, v. 11. The Phariſees expected it about this Time, *Ch.* 17. 20. and it ſeems ſo did Chriſt's own Diſciples; but they both had a miſtaken Notion of it: The Phariſees thought it muſt be introduced by ſome other temporal Prince or Potentate; the Diſciples thought their Maſter ſhould introduce it, but with temporal Pomp and Power, which with the Power he had to work Miracles, they knew he could cloath himſelf with in a ſhort time whenever he pleas'd. *Jeruſalem* they concluded muſt be the Seat of his Kingdom, and therefore now he is going directly thither, they doubt not but in a little time to ſee him upon the Throne there. *Note*, Even good Men are ſubject to Miſtakes concerning the Kingdom of Chriſt, and to form wrong Notions of it, and are ready to think that ſhould *immediately* appear, which is reſerv'd for hereafter.

2. How their Expectations were *check'd*, and the Miſtakes *rectify'd*, upon which they were founded; and this he doth in three Things.

Firſt, They expected that he ſhould appear in his Glory now *preſently*, but he tells them he muſt not be publickly inſtall'd in his Kingdom of a great while yet: He is like *a certain Nobleman*, ἀνθρωπος τις ἐυγενὴς, *a certain Man of high Birth*, ſo Dr. *Hammond*, for he is Lord from Heaven, and is intitled by Birth to the Kingdom; but he *goes into a far Country, to receive for himſelf a Kingdom*. Chriſt muſt go to Heaven, to ſit down at the right Hand of the Father there, and to receive from him *Honour and Glory* before the Spirit was poured out, by which his Kingdom was to be ſet up on Earth, and before a Church was to be ſet up for him in the *Gentile* World. He muſt receive the Kingdom, and then *return*; Chriſt return'd when the Spirit was pour'd out; when *Jeruſalem* was deſtroy'd, by which time that Generation both of Friends and Enemies, which he had perſonally convers'd with, was wholly worn off by Death, and gone to give up their Account. But his chief Return here meant, is that at the Great Day, which we are yet in Expectation of. That which they thought ſhould *immediately appear*, Chriſt tells them will not appear, till this ſame Jeſus, which is taken into Heaven, ſhall *in like manner come again*, ſee *Acts* 1. 11.

Secondly, They expected that his Apoſtles and immediate Attendants ſhould be advanc'd to Dignity and Honour; that they ſhould all be made Princes and Peers, Privy-Counſellors and Judges, and have all the Pomp and Preferments of the Court, and of the Town: but Chriſt here tells them, that inſtead of that, he deſign'd them to be *Men of Buſineſs*, they muſt expect no other Preferment in this World, but that of the trading End of the Town: he would ſet them up with a Stock under their Hands, that they might employ it to themſelves in ſerving him, and the Intereſt of his Kingdom among Men. That's the true Honour of a Chriſtian and a Miniſter, which if we be, as we ought to be, truly ambitious of, we ſhall be able to look upon all temporal Honours with a holy Comtempt. The Apoſtles had dream'd of *ſitting on his right Hand, and on his left in his Kingdom*, enjoying Eaſe after their preſent Toil, and Honour after the preſent Contempt put upon them, and were pleaſing themſelves with this

Dream; but Chriſt tells them that, which if they underſtood it aright, would fill them with Care and Concern, and ſerious Thoughts, inſtead of thoſe *aſpiring* ones they fill'd their Heads with.

1. They have a *Great Work* to do now: Their Maſter leaves them to receive his Kingdom, and at parting he gives each of them a *Pound*; which the Margin of our common Bibles tells us amounts in our Money to *Three Pounds* and *Half a Crown:* This ſignifies the ſame thing with the Talents in the Parable, that's parallel to this, *Mat.* 25. all the Gifts with which Chriſt's Apoſtles were endued, and the Advantages and Capacities they had of ſerving the Intereſts of Chriſt in the World, and others, both Miniſters and Chriſtians like them in a lower Degree. But perhaps it is in the Parable thus repreſented to make them the more Humble: Their Honour in this World is only that of *Traders*, and that not of topping Merchants that have vaſt Stocks to begin upon, but that of poor Traders, that muſt take a great deal of Care and Pains to make any thing of what they have.

He gave theſe Pounds to his Servant, not to buy rich Liveries, much leſs Robes, and a ſplendid Equipage for themſelves to appear in, as they expected; but with this Charge, *Occupy till I come*, or, (as it might much better be tranſlated) *Trade till I come.* (πραγματεύσασθε) *Be buſy*, ſo the Word properly ſignifies. You are ſent forth to preach the Goſpel, to ſet up a Church for Chriſt in the World, to bring the Nations to the Obedience of Faith, and to build them up in it; *Ye ſhall receive Power to do this*, for ye ſhall be filled *with the Holy Ghoſt*, Acts 1.8. When Chriſt *breathed on* the Eleven Diſciples, ſaying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*, then he deliver'd them *Ten Pounds*; Now, ſaith he, mind your Buſineſs, and make a Buſineſs of it, ſet about it in good earneſt, and ſtick to it, lay out yourſelves to do all the Good you can to the Souls of Men, and to gather them in to Chriſt. *Note*, (1.) All Chriſtians have *Buſineſs* to do for Chriſt in this World, and Miniſters eſpecially; the one was not *Baptiz'd* nor the other *Ordain'd* to be idle. (2.) Thoſe that are call'd to Buſineſs for Chriſt, he furniſheth with Gifts neceſſary for their Buſineſs; and, on the other hand, thoſe to whom he gives Power, from them he expects Service. He delivers the *Pounds* with this Charge, Go Work, go Trade. *The Manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal*, 1 Cor. 12.7. And as *every one has received the Gift*, ſo let him *miniſter the ſame*, 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. (3.) We muſt continue to mind our Buſineſs *till our Maſter comes*, whatever Difficulties or Oppoſition we may meet with in it; thoſe only that *endure to the End* ſhall *be ſaved.*

2. They have a *great Account* to make ſhortly. Theſe Servants are *call'd to him*, to ſhew what Uſe they made of the Gifts they were dignify'd with, what Service they had done to Chriſt, and what Good to the Souls of Men, *that he might know what every Man had gain'd by Trading.* *Note*, 1. They that trade diligently and faithfully in the Service of Chriſt, ſhall be *Gainers.* We cannot ſay ſo of the Buſineſs of the World; many a labouring Tradeſman has been a Loſer, but thoſe that trade for Chriſt ſhall be *Gainers*; tho' *Iſrael be not gathered*, yet they *will be Glorious.* 2. The Converſion of Souls is the *Winning* of them; every true Convert is clear Gain to Jeſus Chriſt. Miniſters are but Factors for him, and to him they muſt give an Account what Fiſh they have incloſ'd in the Goſpel Net, what Gueſts they have prevailed with to come to the Wedding-Supper; that is, what they have gain'd *by Trading.* Now, in the Account given up, obſerve,

1. The *Good Account*, which was given by *ſome* of the Servants, and the Maſter's Approbation of them. Two ſuch are inſtanc'd, *v.* 16——19.

1. They had both made conſiderable Improvements, but not both *alike*; one had *gain'd ten Pounds* by his Trading, and another *Five.* Thoſe that are diligent and faithful in ſerving Chriſt, are commonly bleſs'd in being made Bleſſings to the Places where they live. They ſhall *ſee the Travail of their Soul*, and not *labour in vain.* And yet all that are alike *faithful*, are not alike *ſucceſsful.* And perhaps tho' they were both faithful, 'tis intimated, that one of them took more Pains, and applied himſelf more cloſely to his Buſineſs than the other, and ſped accordingly. Bleſſed *Paul* ſure was this Servant that gain'd *Ten Pounds*, double to what any of the reſt did, for he *labour'd more abundantly than they all*, and *fully preach'd the Goſpel of Chriſt.*

2. They both acknowledged their Obligations to their Maſter for entruſting them with theſe Abilities and Opportunities to do him Service; Lord, 'tis not my Induſtry, but *thy* Pound that has gained *ten Pounds.* *Note*, God muſt have all the Glory of all our Gains; *Not unto us*, but unto him muſt be *the Praiſes*; Pſal. 115. 1. *Paul*, who gained the *ten Pounds*, acknowledges, *I laboured, yet not I*; *By the Grace of God, I am what I am*, and do what I do, and *his Grace was not in vain*, 1 Cor. 15.10. and will not ſpeak of what he had done, but of what *God had done by him*, Rom. 15.18.

3. They were both commended for their Fidelity and Induſtry, *Well done thou good Servant*, v. 17. And to the other he *ſaid likewiſe*, v. 19. *Note*, They who do that which is good, ſhall have *Praiſe of the ſame.* *Do well*, and Chriſt will ſay to thee, *well done*; and if he ſaith *well done*, the Matter is not great who ſaith otherwiſe. See *Gen.* 4.7.

4. They were *prefer'd* in Proportion to the Improvement they had made. *Becauſe thou haſt been faithful in a very little*, and didſt not ſay, as good ſit ſtill as go to trade with one Pound, what can one do with ſo ſmall a Stock; but didſt humbly and honeſtly apply thy ſelf to the Improvement of that, *have thou Authority over ten Cities.* *Note*, Thoſe are in a fair Way to riſe, who are content to begin low. *He that hath uſed the Office of a Deacon well, purchaſeth to himſelf a good Degree*; 1. Tim. 3.13. Two Things are hereby promiſed the Apoſtles; (1.) That when they have taken Pains to *plant* many Churches, they ſhall have the Satisfaction and Honour of preſiding in them, and governing among them; they ſhall have great Reſpect paid them, and have a great Intereſt in the Love and Eſteem of good Chriſtians. *He that keepeth the Fig-Tree, ſhall eat the Fruit thereof*; and he that *laboureth in the Word and Doctrine*, ſhall be counted *worthy of double Honour.* (2.) That when they have ſerv'd their Generation according to the Will of Chriſt, tho' they paſs thro' this World deſpis'd and trampled upon, and perhaps paſs out of it under Diſgrace and Perſecution, as the Apoſtle did; yet in the other World they ſhall reign as Kings, with Chriſt; ſhall ſit with him on his Throne, ſhall have *Power over the Nations*, Rev. 2. 26. The Happineſs of Heaven will be a much greater Advancement to a good Miniſter, or Chriſtian, than it would be to a poor Tradeſman, that with much ado hath clear'd ten Pound, to be made Governour of ten Cities. He that had gained but *five Pounds*, had Dominion over *five Cities.* This intimates that there are *Degrees of Glory* in Heaven: Every Veſſel will be alike *full*, but not alike *large*; and the Degrees of Glory there, will be according to the Degrees of Uſefulneſs here.

2. The *Bad Account* that was given by *one* of them, and the Sentence paſs'd upon him, for his Slothfulneſs and Unfaithfulneſs, *v.* 20, *&c.*

2. He own'd that he had not *traded* with the Pound, with which he had been intruſted, *v.* 20. *Lord, behold here is thy Pound*; 'tis true I have not made it *more*, but withal I have not made it *leſs*, I have kept it ſafe laid up in a *Napkin.* This repreſents the Careleſſneſs of thoſe who have Gifts, but never lay out themſelves to do Good with them; 'tis all one to them whether the Intereſts of Chriſt's Kingdom ſink or ſwim, go backward or forward; for their Parts they will take no Care about it, no Pains, be at no Expences, run no Hazard; thoſe are the Servants that lay up their Pound *in a Napkin*, who think 'tis enough to ſay, they have done no Hurt in the World, but *did no good.*

2. He juſtified himſelf in his Omiſſion, with a Plea that made the Matter worſe and not better, *v.* 21. *I feared thee becauſe thou art an auſtere Man*, rigid and ſevere, ἄνθρωπος ἀυστήρος εἶ; *Auſtere* is the *Greek* Word itſelf, a *ſharp* Man; *thou takeſt up that thou laidſt not down.* He thought his Maſter put a Hardſhip upon his Servants, when he required and expected the Improvement of their Pounds, that it was *Reaping where he did not Sow*; whereas really it was reaping where he had *ſown*, and as the Husbandman expects, in Proportion to what he had ſown. He had no Reaſon to fear his Maſter's Auſterity, nor blame his Expectations; but this was a mere Sham, a frivolous groundleſs Excuſe for his Idleneſs, which there was no manner of Colour for. *Note*, the Pleas of Slothful Profeſſors, when they come to be examined, will be found more to their *Shame* than in their *Juſtification.*

3. His Excuſe is turned upon him, *v.* 22. *Out of thine own Mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked Servant.* He will not only be *condemned* by his Crime; but *ſelf-condemn'd* by his Plea. If thou didſt look upon it as hard that I ſhould expect the Profits of thy Trading, which would have been the greater Profit, yet if thou hadſt had any Regard to my Intereſt, thou mighteſt have put it *into the Bank*, into ſome of the Funds, that I might have had not only mine *own*, but mine own *with Uſury*; which tho' a leſs Advantage, would have been *ſome.* If he durſt not *trade* for fear of *loſing* the Principal, and ſo being made accountable to his Lord for it, tho' it was loſt, which he pretends, yet that would be no Excuſe for his not ſetting it out to Intereſt, where it would be ſure. *Note*, Whatever may be the Pretences of ſlothful Profeſſors in Excuſe of their Slothfulneſs, the true Reaſon of it is a reigning Indifference to the Intereſts of Chriſt and his Kingdom, and their Coldneſs therein. They care not whether Religion gets Ground or loſes Ground, ſo they can but live at Eaſe.

4. His Pound is taken from him, *v.* 24. It is fit thoſe ſhould *loſe* their Gifts, that will not *uſe* their Gifts; and thoſe who have dealt falſly, ſhould be no longer truſted. Thoſe that will not ſerve their Maſter with what he beſtows upon them, why ſhould they be ſuffered to ſerve themſelves with it? *Take from him the Pound.*

5. It is given to him that had got the *ten Pounds.* And when this was objected againſt by the Standers by, becauſe he had ſo much already, *Lord he has ten Pounds*, v. 25. it is anſwered *v.* 26. *Unto every one that hath, ſhall be given.* It is the Rule of Juſtice, (1.) That thoſe ſhould be moſt encouraged that have been moſt induſtrious, and that thoſe who have laid out themſelves moſt to do good, ſhould have their Opportunities of doing Good *enlarg'd*, and be put into a higher and more extenſive Sphere of Uſefulneſs. To him that hath gotten, ſhall more be given, that he may be in a Capacity to get more. (2.) That thoſe who have their Gifts as if they had them not, that have them to no Purpoſe, that do no Good with them, ſhould be depriv'd of them. Thoſe that endeavour to increaſe the Grace they have, God will increaſe

it; Thoſe that neglect it, and ſuffer it to decline, can expect no other, but that God ſhould do ſo too. This needful Warning Chriſt gives to his Diſciples, leſt, while they were gaping for Honours on Earth, they ſhould neglect their Buſineſs, and ſo come ſhort of their Happineſs in Heaven.

Thirdly, Another Thing they expected, was, that when the Kingdom of God ſhould appear, the Body of the *Jewiſh* Nation ſhould immediately fall in with it, and ſubmit to it, and all their Averſions to Chriſt and his Goſpel ſhould immediately vaniſh; but Chriſt tells them, that after his Departure the Generality of them would perſiſt in their Obſtinacy and Rebellion, and it would be their Ruin. This is ſhew'd here,

1. In the Meſſage which his Citizens ſent after him, *v.* 14. They not only oppos'd him while he was in obſcurity, but when he was gone in Glory to be inveſted in his Kingdom, then they continued their Enmity to him, proteſted againſt his Dominion, and ſaid, *We will not have this Man to Reign over us.* (1.) This was fulfill'd in the prevailing Infidelity of the *Jews* after the Aſcenſion of Chriſt and the ſetting up of the Goſpel Kingdom; they would not ſubmit their Necks to his Yoke, nor touch the Top of his Golden Scepter. They ſaid, *Let us break his Bands in ſunder*, Pſal. 2. 1,2,3. Acts 4. 26. (2.) It ſpeaks the Language of all Unbelievers; they could be content that Chriſt ſhould *Save them*, but they will not have him to *Reign over them*; whereas Chriſt is a Saviour to thoſe only to whom he is a Prince, and who are willing to obey him.

3. In the Sentence paſs'd upon them at his Return, *v.* 27. *Thoſe mine Enemies—— bring hither* —— When his faithful Subjects are prefer'd and rewarded, then he will take Vengeance on his Enemies; and particularly of the *Jewiſh* Nation, the Doom of which is here read. When Chriſt had ſet up his Goſpel Kingdom, and thereby put a Reputation upon the Goſpel Miniſtry, then he comes to *reckon with the Jews*; then 'tis remembred againſt them, *that* they had particularly diſclaim'd and proteſted againſt his Kingly Office; when they ſay, *we have no King but Cæſar*, nor would own him for their King, they appealed to *Cæſar*, and to *Cæſar* they ſhall go; *Cæſar* ſhall be their Ruin. Then the *Kingdom of God appeared*, when Vengeance was taken on thoſe irreconcilable Enemies to Chriſt and his Government, they were *brought forth and ſlain before him.* Never was ſo much Slaughter made in any War, as in the Wars of the *Jews.* That Nation liv'd to ſee Chriſtianity victorious in the *Gentile* World, in ſpite of their Enmity and Oppoſition to it, and then it was taken away *as Droſs.* The Wrath of Chriſt came upon them to the uttermoſt, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 25, 26. and their Deſtruction redounded very much to the Honour of Chriſt and the Peace of the Church. But this is applicable to all others who *perſiſt* in their Infidelity, and will undoubtedly periſh in it. *Note*, 1. Utter Ruin will certainly be the Portion of all Chriſt's Enemies: In the Day of Vengeance they ſhall all be brought *forth* and *ſlain before him. Bring them hither* to be made a Spectacle to Saints and Angels, ſee *Joſh.* 10. 22,24. *Bring them hither*, that they may ſee the Glory and Happineſs of Chriſt and his Followers, whom they hated and perſecuted. *Bring them hither*, to have their frivolous Pleas over-rul'd, and to receive Sentence according to their Merits. Bring them and *ſlay them before me*, as *Agag* before *Samuel.* The Saviour whom they have ſlighted, will ſtand by and ſee them ſlain, and not interpoſe on their Behalf. 2. Thoſe that *will not have Chriſt to Reign over them*, ſhall be reputed and dealt with as his Enemies. We are ready to think none are Chriſt's Enemies, but Perſecutors of Chriſtianity, or Scoffers at leaſt, but you ſee thoſe will be accounted ſo, that diſlike the Terms of Salvation, will not ſubmit to Chriſt's Yoke, but will be their own Maſters. *Note*, whoever will not be ruled by the Grace of Chriſt, will inevitably be ruin'd by the Wrath of Chriſt.

28 ¶ And when he had thus ſpoken, he went before, aſcending up to Jeruſalem. 29 And it came to paſs, when he was come nigh to Bethpage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he ſent two of his diſciples, 30 Saying, Go ye into the village over againſt *you*; in the which, at your entering, ye ſhall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man ſat: looſe him, and bring *him* hither. 31 And if any man aſk you, Why do ye loſe *him?* thus ſhall ye ſay unto him, Becauſe the Lord hath need of him. 32 And they that were ſent, went their way, and found even as he ſaid unto them. 33 And as they were looſing the colt, the owners thereof ſaid unto them, Why looſe ye the colt? 34 And they ſaid, The Lord hath need of him. 35 And they brought him to Jeſus: and they caſt their garments upon the colt, and they ſet Jeſus thereon. 36 And as he went, they ſpread their clothes in the way. 37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the deſcent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the diſciples began to rejoice, and praiſe God with a loud Voice, for all the mighty works that they had ſeen, 38 Saying, Bleſſed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven and glory in the higheſt. 39 And ſome of the Phariſees from among the multitude ſaid unto him, Maſter rebuke thy diſciples. 40 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, I tell you, that if theſe ſhould hold their peace, the ſtones would immediately cry out.

We have here the ſame Account of Chriſt's riding in ſome ſort of Triumph (ſuch as it was) into *Jeruſalem*, which we had before in *Matthew* and *Mark*; let us therefore here only obſerve,

1. That Jeſus Chriſt was forward and willing to ſuffer and die for us. He went forward *bound in the Spirit to* Jeruſalem, knowing very well the *Things* that ſhould *befall him there*, and yet *he went before aſcending up to Jeruſalem*, v. 28. He was the foremoſt of the Company, as if he long'd to be upon the Spot, long'd to engage, to take the Field, and to enter upon Action. Was he ſo forward to ſuffer and die for us, and ſhall we draw back from any Service we are capable of doing for him?

2. It was no ways inconſiſtent either with Chriſt's Humility, or with his preſent State of Humiliation, to make a *Publick Entry* into *Jeruſalem* a little before he died. Thus he made himſelf to be the more taken notice of, that the Ignominy of his Death might appear the greater.

3. Chriſt is entitled to a Dominion over all the Creatures, and may uſe them when and as he pleaſeth. No Man has a Property in his Eſtate againſt Chriſt, but that his Title is prior and ſuperior. Chriſt ſent to fetch an *Aſs* and her *Colt from* their *Owners* and *Maſter's Crib*, when he had Occaſion for their Service, and might do ſo, for all the *Beaſts of the Foreſts are his*, and the tame Beaſts too.

4. Chriſt has all Mens Hearts, both under his Eye and in his Hand. He could influence thoſe to whom the Aſs and the Colt belong'd, to conſent to their taking them away, as ſoon as they were told the Lord had occaſion for them.

5. Thoſe that go on Chriſt's Errands, are ſure to ſpeed, *v.* 32. *They that were ſent, found* what he told them they ſhould find, and the Owners willing to part with them. It is a Comfort to Chriſt's Meſſengers, that what they are ſent for, if indeed the Lord has Occaſion for it, they ſhall bring it.

6. The Diſciples of Chriſt, who fetch that for him from others which he has Occaſion for, and which they have not, ſhould not think that enough; but whatever they have themſelves, wherewith he may be ſerved and honoured, they ſhould be ready to ſerve him with it. Many can be willing to attend Chriſt at other Peoples Expence, that care not at being at any Charge upon him themſelves; but thoſe Diſciples not only fetch'd the Aſs's Colt for him, but *caſt their own Garments upon the Colt*, and were willing thoſe ſhould be uſed for his Trappings.

7. Chriſt's Triumphs are the Matter of his Diſciples Praiſes. When Chriſt came nigh to *Jeruſalem*, God put it of a ſudden into the Hearts of the *whole Multitude of the Diſciples*, not to the twelve only, but abundance more that were Diſciples at large, *to rejoice and praiſe God*, v. 37. and their *ſpreading their Clothes in the way*, v. 36. was a common Expreſſion of Joy, as at the Feaſt of Tabernacles. Obſerve, (1.) What was the Matter or Occaſion of their Joy and Praiſe: they praiſed God *for all the mighty Works they had ſeen*, all the Miracles Chriſt had wrought, eſpecially the raiſing of *Lazarus*, which is particularly mentioned, *John* 12. 17,18. That brought others to mind, for freſh Miracles and Mercies ſhould revive the Remembrance of the former. (2.) How they expreſs'd their Joy and Praiſe, *v.* 38. *Bleſſed be the King that comes in the Name of the Lord*; Chriſt is *the King*, He comes *in the Name of the Lord*, cloth'd with a Divine Authority, commiſſioned from Heaven to give *Law*, and treat of *Peace*; *Bleſſed be He.* Let us praiſe him, let God *proſper him.* He is *Bleſſed* for ever, and he will ſpeak well of him. *Peace in Heaven, i. e.* Let the God of Heaven ſend Peace and Succeſs to his Undertaking, and then there will be *Glory in the higheſt.* 'Twill redound to the Glory of the moſt high God, and the Angels; the Glorious Inhabitants of the upper World, will give him the Glory of it. Compare this Song of the Saints on Earth, with that of the Angels, *Luke* 2.14. they both agree to give Glory to God in the Higheſt, there the Praiſes of both centre; the Angels ſay, *on Earth Peace*, rejoicing in the Benefit which Men on Earth have by Chriſt; the Saints ſay, *Peace in Heaven*, rejoicing in the Benefits which the Angels have by Chriſt; ſuch is the Communion we have with the Holy Angels, that as they rejoice in the *Peace on Earth*, ſo *we* rejoice in the *Peace in Heaven*, the *Peace God makes in his High Places*, Job 25. 2. and both in Chriſt, who hath reconciled all Things to himſelf, whether *Things on Earth or Things in Heaven.*

8. Chriſt's Triumphs and his Diſciples joyful Praiſes of them, are the Vexation of proud *Phariſees*, that are Enemies to him and his Kingdom. There were ſome *Phariſees* among the *Multitude*, that were ſo far from joining with them, that they were enrag'd at them; and Chriſt being a famous Example of Humility, they thought he would not admit ſuch Acclamations as theſe, and therefore expected that he ſhould *rebuke his Diſciples*, v. 39. But it is the Honour of Chriſt, that as he deſpiſeth the Contempt of the Proud, ſo he accepts the Praiſes of the Humble.

9. Whether Men praiſe Chriſt or no, he will, and ſhall, and muſt be praiſed, *v.* 40. *If theſe ſhould hold their peace*, and not ſpeak the Praiſes of the Meſſiah's Kingdom, *the Stones would immediately cry out*, rather than that Chriſt ſhould not be praiſed; which was in Effect literally fulfill'd, when upon Mens reviling Chriſt upon the Croſs, inſtead of praiſing him, and his own Diſciples ſinking into a profound Silence, the *Earth did quake, and the Rocks rent*. Phariſees would ſilence the Praiſes of Chriſt, but they cannot gain their Point, for as God can *out of Stones raiſe up Children unto Abraham*, ſo he can out of the Mouths of thoſe Children perfect Praiſe.

41 ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42 Saying, If thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43 For the days ſhall come upon thee, that thine enemies ſhall caſt a trench about thee, and compaſs thee round, and keep thee in on every ſide. 44 And ſhall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they ſhall not leave in thee one ſtone upon another: becauſe thou kneweſt not the time of thy viſitation. 45 And he went into the temple, and began to caſt out them that ſold therein, and them that bought, 46 Saying unto them, It is written, My houſe is the houſe of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. 47 And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief prieſts and the Scribes, and the chief of the people ſought to deſtroy him, 48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

The great Ambaſſador from Heaven is here making his publick Entry into *Jeruſalem*, not to be *reſpected* there, but to be *rejected*; He knew what a Neſt of Vipers he was throwing himſelf into; and yet here ſee two Inſtances of his Love to that Place, and his Concern for it.

Firſt, The *Tears* he *ſhed* for the *approaching Ruin* of the *City*, v. 41. *When he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it.* Probably 'twas when he was coming down the Deſcent of the Hill from the *Mount of Olives*, where he had a full View of the City, the large Extent of it, and the many ſtately Structures in it, and his Eye affected his Heart, and his Heart his Eye again. See here, (1.) What a tender Spirit Chriſt was of, we never read that he laugh'd, but we often find him in Tears. In this very Place his Father *David* wept, and thoſe that were with him, tho' he and they were *Men of War*. There are Caſes, in which 'tis no Diſparagement to the ſtouteſt of Men to melt into Tears. (2.) That Jeſus Chriſt *wept* in the Midſt of his Triumphs, *wept* when all about him were *rejoicing*, to ſhew how little he was elevated with the Applauſe and Acclamation of the People. Thus he would teach us to *rejoice with trembling*, and *as tho' we rejoice not*. If Providence do not ſtain the Beauty of our Triumphs, we may ourſelves ſee Cauſe to ſully it with our Sorrows. (3.) That he *wept over Jeruſalem*. *Note*, There are Cities to be wept over, and none to be more lamented than *Jeruſalem*, that had been the holy City, and the Joy of the whole Earth, if it be degenerated. But why did Chriſt weep at the Sight of *Jeruſalem*, was it becauſe yonder is the City in which I muſt be betrayed and bound, ſcourged and ſpit upon, condemn'd and crucify'd? No, he himſelf gives us the Reaſon of his Tears.

1. *Jeruſalem* has not improv'd the Day of her Opportunities. He wept and ſaid, *If thou hadſt known, even thou at leaſt in this thy Day*, if thou wouldſt but yet know, while the Goſpel is preached to thee, and Salvation offer'd thee by it; if thou wouldſt at length bethink thyſelf, and underſtand *the Things that belong to thy Peace*, the making of thy Peace with God, and the ſecuring of thine own ſpiritual and eternal Welfare; but thou *doſt not know the Day of thy Viſitation*, v. 44. The Manner of ſpeaking is abrupt; If *thou hadſt known.----O that thou hadſt*, ſo ſome take it; like that, *O that my People had hearken'd unto me*, Pſal. 81. 13. Iſa. 48. 18. Or, *If thou hadſt known*, well, like that of the *Fig-tree*, Luke 13. 9. how happy had it been for thee. Or, if thou hadſt known, thou wouldſt have wept for thyſelf, and I ſhould have no Occaſion to weep for thee, but ſhould have rejoiced rather; what he ſaith, lays all the Blame of *Jeruſalem*'s impending Ruin upon herſelf. *Note*, 1. There are Things that *belong to our Peace*, which we are all concern'd to *know* and *underſtand*; the Way how Peace is made, the Offers made of Peace, the Terms on which we may have the Benefit of Peace. The things that belong to our Peace, are thoſe things that relate to our preſent and future Welfare; theſe we muſt know with Application. 2. There is a *Time of Viſitation*, when thoſe things which *belong to our Peace* may be *known by us*, and known to good Purpoſe. When we enjoy the Means of Grace in great Plenty, as powerfully preach'd to us, when the Spirit ſtrives with us, and our own Conſciences are ſtartled and awakened, then is the *Time of Viſitation*, which we are concern'd to improve. 3. Thoſe that have long neglected the Time of their Viſitation, if at length, if at laſt in this their Day, their Eyes be opened, and they bethink themſelves, all will be well yet. Thoſe ſhall not be refus'd, that come into the Vineyard at *the Eleventh Hour*. 4. It is the amazing Folly of Multitudes that enjoy the Means of Grace, and 'twill be of fatal Conſequence to them, that they do not improve the Day of their Opportunities. The *things of their Peace* are revealed to them, but are not minded or regarded by them; they *hide their Eyes* from them, as if they were not worth taking Notice of. They are not aware of the *accepted Time*, and the *Day of Salvation*, and ſo let it ſlip, and periſh through meer Careleſſneſs. None ſo *blind* as thoſe that will not *ſee*; nor have any the Things of their Peace more certainly hid from their Eyes, than thoſe that turn their Back upon them. 5. The Sin and Folly of thoſe that perſiſt in a Contempt of Goſpel Grace, is a great Grief to the Lord Jeſus, and ſhould be ſo to us. He looks with weeping Eyes upon loſt Souls that continue impenitent, and run headlong upon their own Ruin; He had rather they would *turn and live*, than *go on and die*, for he is not willing any ſhould periſh.

2. *Jeruſalem* cannot eſcape the Day of her Deſolation. The *Things of her Peace* are now in a Manner hid from her Eyes; they will be ſhortly. Not but that after this the Goſpel was preached to them by the Apoſtles, *all the Houſe of Iſrael* were call'd to *know aſſuredly*, that Chriſt was their *Peace*, Acts 2. 36. and Multitudes were convinc'd and converted. But as to the Body of the Nation, and the leading Part of it, it was ſeal'd up under Unbelief, God had *given them the Spirit of Slumber*, Rom. 11. 8. They were ſo prejudic'd and enrag'd againſt the Goſpel, and thoſe few that did embrace it then, nothing leſs than a Miracle of Divine Grace (like that which converted *Paul*) would work upon them; and it could not be expected ſuch a Miracle ſhould be wrought, and ſo they were juſtly given up to *judicial* Blindneſs and Hardneſs. The *peaceful Things* are not *hid from the Eyes* of particular Perſons; but 'tis too late to think now of the Nation of the Jews, *as ſuch*, becoming a Chriſtian Nation, by embracing Chriſt.

And therefore they are mark'd for Ruin, which Chriſt here foreſees and foretells, as the certain Conſequence of their rejecting Chriſt. *Note*, Neglecting the great Salvation, often brings temporal Judgments upon a People; it did ſo upon *Jeruſalem* in leſs than 40 Years after this; when all that Chriſt here foretold was exactly fulfill'd. (1.) The *Romans* beſieged the City, *caſt a Trench about it, compaſs'd it round*, and *kept their* Inhabitants in *on every Side*. *Joſephus* relates, that *Titus* run up a Wall in a very ſhort Time, which ſurrounded the City, and cut off all Hopes of eſcaping. (2.) They *laid it even with the Ground*. *Titus* commanded his Soldiers to *dig up the City*, and the whole Compaſs of it was levell'd, except three Towers; ſee *Joſephus*'s Hiſtory of the Wars of the Jews, *Lib.* 5. *cap.* 27. *Lib.* 7. *cap.* 1. Not only the City, but the Citizens, were laid even with the Ground, *thy Children within thee*, by the cruel Slaughters that were made of them. And there was ſcarce one Stone *left upon another*. This was for their crucifying Chriſt, this was becauſe they *knew not the Day of their Viſitation*. Let other Cities and Nations take Warning.

Secondly, The *Zeal* he *ſhew'd* for the *preſent purifying the Temple*. Tho' it muſt be deſtroy'd e'er long, it doth not therefore follow that no Care muſt be taken of it in the mean time.

1. Chriſt clear'd it of thoſe who profan'd it. He went ſtrait to the Temple, and *began to caſt out the Buyers and Sellers*, v. 45. Hereby (tho' he was repreſented as an Enemy to the Temple, and that was the Crime laid to his Charge before the High Prieſt) he made it to appear, that he had a truer Love for the Temple, than they had who had ſuch a Veneration for its Corban, its Treaſury, as a ſacred Thing; for its Purity was more its Glory than its Wealth was. Chriſt gave a Reaſon for his diſlodging the Temple-Merchants, *v.* 46. The Temple is a *Houſe of Prayer*, ſet apart for Communion with God: The *Buyers* and *Sellers* make it a *Den of Thieves*, by the fraudulent Bargains they made there; which was by no means to be ſuffer'd, for it would be a Diſtraction to thoſe who came there to pray.

2. He put it to the beſt Uſe that ever it was put to, for he *taught daily in the Temple*, v. 47. *Note*, It is not enough that the Corruptions of a Church be purg'd out, but the preaching of the Goſpel muſt be encourag'd. Now when Chriſt preach'd in the Temple, Obſerve here,

1. How ſpiteful the Church-Rulers were againſt him; how induſtrious to ſeek an *Opportunity*, or *Pretence* rather, to do him a Miſchief, *v.* 47. *The Chief Prieſts and Scribes and the chief of the People*, i. e. the great Sanhedrim, that ſhould have attended him, and ſummon'd the People too, to attend him, they *ſought to deſtroy him*, and put him to Death.

2. How reſpectful the common People were to him. They were *very attentive to hear him*; he ſpent moſt of his Time in the Country, and did not then preach in the Temple, but when he did, the People paid him great Reſpect; attended on his Preaching with Diligence, and let no Opportunity ſlip of hearing him; attended to it with Care, and would not loſe a Word. Some read it, *All the People as they heard him took his Part*; and ſo it comes in very properly, as a Reaſon why his Enemies *could not find what they might* do againſt him; they ſaw the People ready to fly in their Faces, if they offer'd him any Violence. Till his Hour

was come, his Intereſt in the common People protected him: But when his Hour was come, the chief Prieſts Influence upon the common People deliver'd him up.

CHAP. XX.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *Chriſt's Anſwer to the chief Prieſt's Queſtion concerning his Authority,* v. 1——8. (2.) *The Parable of the Vineyard let out to the unjuſt and Rebellious Husbandmen,* v. 9——19. (3.) *Chriſt's Anſwer to the Queſtion propos'd to him concerning the Lawfulneſs of paying Tribute to* Cæſar, *v.* 20——26. (4.) *His Vindication of that great Fundamental Doctrine of the* Jewiſh *and Chriſtian Inſtitutes, the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the future State, from the fooliſh Cavils of the Sadducees,* v. 27——38. (5.) *His puzzling the Scribes with a Queſtion concerning the* Meſſiah's *being the Son of* David, v. 39——44. (6.) *The Caution he gave his Diſciples to take heed of the Scribes,* v. 45——47. *All which Paſſages we had before in* Matthew *and* Mark, *and therefore need not enlarge upon them here, unleſs on thoſe Particulars which we had not there.*

1 AND it came to paſs, that on one of thoſe days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the goſpel, the chief prieſts and the ſcribes came upon him, with the elders. 2 And ſpake unto him, ſaying, Tell us, By what authority doſt thou theſe things? or who is he that gave thee this authority? 3 And he anſwered and ſaid unto them, I will alſo aſk you one thing, and anſwer me: 4 The baptiſm of John, was it from heaven, or of men? 5 And they reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay, From heaven, he will ſay, Why then believed ye him not? 6 But and if we ſay, Of Men, all the people will ſtone us: for they be perſuaded that John was a prophet. 7 And they anſwered, that they could not tell whence *it was.* 8 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do theſe things.

In this Paſſage of Story, nothing is added here to what we had in the other Evangeliſts; but only in the Firſt Verſe, where we are told,

1. That he was now *teaching the People in the Temple,* and *preaching the Goſpel. Note,* Chriſt was a Preacher of his own Goſpel. He not only *purchas'd* the Salvation for us, but *publiſh'd* it to us, which is a great Confirmation of the Truth of the Goſpel, and gives abundant Encouragement to us to receive it, for it's a Sign the Heart of Chriſt was much upon it to have it receiv'd. This likewiſe puts an Honour upon the Preachers of the Goſpel, and upon their Office and Work, how much ſoever it is deſpis'd by a vain World. It puts an Honour upon the *popular Preachers* of the Goſpel; Chriſt condeſcended to the Capacities of the *People,* in preaching the Goſpel, and *taught them.* And obſerve, when he was *preaching the Goſpel to the People,* he had this Interruption given him. *Note,* Satan and his Agents do all they can to hinder the *Preaching of the Goſpel to the People,* for nothing weakens the Intereſt of Satan's Kingdom more.

2. That his Enemies are here ſaid to *come upon him,* ἐπέστησαν, that Word is us'd only here, and it intimates, (1.) That they thought to ſurprize him with this Queſtion, they *came upon him* ſuddenly, hoping to catch him unprovided with an Anſwer, as if this were not a thing he had himſelf thought of. (2.) That they thought to frighten him with this Queſtion. They *came upon him* in a Body with Violence. But how could he be terrified with the *Wrath of Men,* when it was in his *own Power to reſtrain it,* and make it turn to his Praiſe. From this Story itſelf we may learn,

1. That it is not to be thought ſtrange, if even that which is evident to a Demonſtration, be diſputed and call'd into Queſtion as a doubtful thing, by thoſe that ſhall ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light. Chriſt's Miracles plainly ſhew'd *by what Authority he did theſe Things,* and ſeal'd his Commiſſion, and yet this is that which is here *arraign'd.*

2. Thoſe that queſtion Chriſt's Authority, if they be but catechiz'd themſelves in the plaineſt and moſt evident Principles of Religion, will have their Folly made manifeſt unto all Men. Chriſt anſwered theſe Prieſts and Scribes with a Queſtion concerning the Baptiſm of *John,* a plain Queſtion, which the meaneſt of the common People could anſwer, *Was it from Heaven, or of Men?* They all knew it was *from Heaven,* there was nothing in it that had an earthly Reliſh or Tendency, but it was all Heavenly and Divine. And this Queſtion gravell'd them, and run them aground, and ſerved to ſhame them before the People.

3. Thoſe that are govern'd by Reputation and ſecular Intereſt, it is not ſtrange if they impriſon the plaineſt Truths, and ſmother and ſtifle the ſtrongeſt Convictions, as theſe Prieſts and Scribes did, who to ſave their Credit, would not own that *John's* Baptiſm was *from Heaven;* and had no other Reaſon why they did not ſay it was *of Men,* but becauſe they *feared the People.* What Good can be expected from Men of ſuch a Spirit?

4. Thoſe that bury the Knowledge they have, are juſtly denied further Knowledge. They who knew the Baptiſm of *John* to be from *Heaven,* and would not believe in him, nor own their Knowledge, it was juſt with Chriſt to refuſe to give them an acccount of his Authority, v. 7, 8.

9 Then began he to ſpeak to the people this parable: A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. 10 And at the ſeaſon, he ſent a ſervant to the husbandmen, that they ſhould give him of the fruit of the vineyard; but the husbandmen beat him and ſent *him* away empty. 11 And again he ſent another ſervant; and they beat him alſo, and entreated *him* ſhamefully, and ſent *him* away empty. 12 And again he ſent a third, and they wounded him alſo, and caſt *him* out. 13 Then ſaid the Lord of the vineyard, What ſhall I do? I will ſend my beloved Son: it may be they will reverence *him* when they ſee him. 14 But when the husbandmen ſaw him, they reaſoned among themſelves, ſaying, This is the Heir: come let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. 15 So they caſt him out of the vineyard, and killed *him.* What therefore ſhall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them? 16 He ſhall come and deſtroy theſe husbandmen, and ſhall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard *it,* they ſaid, God forbid. 17 And he beheld them, and ſaid, What is this then that is written, The Stone which the builders rejected, the ſame is become the head of the corner? 18 Whoſoever ſhall fall upon that ſtone ſhall be broken: but on whomſoever it ſhall fall, it will grind him to powder. 19 ¶ And the chief Prieſts and ſcribes the ſame night ſought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people; for they perceived that he ſpoke this parable againſt them.

Chriſt ſpoke this Parable againſt thoſe who were reſolv'd not to own his Authority, tho' the Evidence of it was never ſo full and convincing; and it comes in very ſeaſonably, to ſhew that by queſtioning his Authority, they forfeited their own. Their diſowning the Lord of their Vineyard, was a Defeaſance of their Leaſe of the Vineyard, and a giving up all their Title.

1. The Parable has nothing added here to what we had before in *Matthew* and *Mark.* The Scope of it is to ſhew, that the *Jewiſh* Nation, by perſecuting the Prophets, and at length Chriſt himſelf, had provok'd God to take away from them all their Church Privileges, and to abandon them to Ruin. It teacheth us,

1. That thoſe who enjoy the Privileges of the viſible Church, are as Tenants and Farmers that have a Vineyard to look after, and Rents to pay for it. God by ſetting up reveal'd Religion, and inſtituted Orders in the World, hath planted a Vineyard, which he lets out to thoſe People among whom his Tabernacle is, *v.* 9. And they have *Vineyard Work* to do, needful and conſtant Work, but pleaſant and profitable. Whereas Man was for Sin condemn'd to *Till the Ground;* they that have a place in the Church, are reſtor'd to that which was *Adam's* Work in Innocency, to *dreſs the Garden,* and to keep it, for the Church is a Paradiſe, and Chriſt the Tree of Life in it. They have alſo *Vineyard Fruits* to preſent to the Lord of the Vineyard. There are Rents to be paid, and Services to be done, which tho' bearing no Proportion to the Value of the Premiſes, yet muſt be *done* and muſt be *paid.*

2. That the Work of God's Miniſters, is to call upon thoſe that enjoy the Privileges of the Church, to *bring forth Fruit* accordingly. They are God's Rent-gatherers, to put the Husbandmen in mind of their Arrears, or rather to put them in mind that they have a *Landlord,* who expects to hear from them, and to receive ſome Acknowledgement of their Dependance on him, and Obligations to him, *v.* 10. The Old Teſtament Prophets were ſent on this Errand to the *Jewiſh* Church, to demand from them the Duty and Obedience they ow'd to God.

3. It has often been the Lot of God's Faithful Servants to be wretchedly abuſed by his own Tenants, they have been *beaten* and *treated* ſhamefully by thoſe that reſolved to *ſend them empty away.* They that are reſolved not to do their Duty to God, cannot bear to be call'd upon to do it. Some of the beſt Men in the World, have had the hardeſt Uſage from it, for their beſt Services.

4. God ſent his Son into the World, to carry on the ſame Work that the Prophets were employ'd in, to *gather the Fruits of the Vineyard* for God, and one would have thought he ſhould have been reverenced and receiv'd. The Prophets ſpoke as *Servants, Thus ſaith the Lord,* but Chriſt *as a Son,* among his own, *Verily I ſay unto you.* Putting ſuch an Honour as this upon them, to ſend him, one would have thought ſhould have won upon them.

5. Thoſe that reject Chriſt's Miniſters, would reject Chriſt himſelf, if he ſhould come to them; for it has been tried and found that the Proſecutors and Murtherers of his Servants the Prophets, were the Perſecutors and Murtherers of him himſelf. They ſaid, *This is the Heir, come let us kill him*. When they ſlew the Servants, there were other Servants ſent; but if we can but be the Death of the Son, there's never another Son to be ſent, and then we ſhall be no longer moleſted with theſe Demands; we may have a quiet Poſſeſſion of the Vineyard for ourſelves. The Scribes and Phariſees promis'd themſelves, that if they could but get Chriſt out of the way, they ſhould for ever ride Maſters in the *Jewiſh* Church; and therefore they took that bold Step, they *caſt him out of the Vineyard and kill'd him*.

6. The putting of Chriſt to Death fill'd up the Meaſure of the *Jewiſh* Iniquity, and brought upon them Ruin without Remedy. No other could be expected, but that God ſhould *deſtroy thoſe wicked Husbandmen*. They began in not *paying their Rent*, but then proceeding to beat and kill the Servants, and at length their young Maſter himſelf. *Note*, Thoſe that live in the neglect of their Duty to God, know not what Degrees of Sin and Deſtruction they are running themſelves into.

2. To the Application of the Parable is added here, which we had not before, their Deprecation of the Doom included in it, *v.* 16. *When they heard it, they ſaid, God forbid* μὴ γένοιτο, *Let not this be done*, ſo it ſhould be read; tho' they could not but own, that for ſuch a Sin, ſuch a Puniſhment was juſt, and what might be expected, yet they could not bear to hear it. *Note*, 'Tis an Inſtance of the Folly and Stupidity of Sinners, that they proceed and perſevere in their ſinful Ways, tho' at the ſame time they have a foreſight and dread of the Deſtruction that is at the end of thoſe Ways. And ſee what a Cheat they put upon themſelves to think to avoid it by a Cold *God forbid*, when they do nothing towards the preventing of it; but will this make the Threatning ofn one Effect? No, they ſhall know whoſe Word ſhall ſtand, God's or theirs.

Now obſerve what Chriſt ſaid in anſwer to this childiſh Deprecation of their Ruin. (1.) He *beheld them*. That's taken Notice of only by this Evangeliſt, *v.* 17. He *look'd upon them* with Pity and Compaſſion, griev'd to ſee them cheat themſelves thus in their own Ruin. He *beheld them*, to ſee if they would bluſh at their own Folly, or if he could diſcern in their Countenances any ſhew of Relenting. (2.) He refer'd them to the Scripture, *What is this then that is written?* How can you eſcape the Judgment of God, when you cannot prevent the Exaltation of him whom you deſpiſe and reject? The Word of God hath ſaid it, That *the Stone which the Builders rejected, is become the Head of the Corner*. The Lord Jeſus will be exalted to the Father's Right Hand, he has all Judgment and all Power committed to him, he is the Corner Stone, and Top-Stone of the Church, and if ſo, his Enemies can expect no other but to be deſtroy'd: For even thoſe that ſlight him, that ſtumble at him, and are offended in him, they *ſhall be broken*, 'twill be their Ruin; but thoſe that not only reject him, but hate and perſecute him, as the *Jews* did, he will fall upon them, and cruſh them to Pieces, will *grind them to Powder*. The Condemnation of ſpiteful Perſecutors will be much ſorer than that of careleſs Unbelievers.

Laſtly, We are told how the chief Prieſts and Scribes were exaſperated by this Parable, *v.* 19. They *perceiv'd that he ſpoke this Parable againſt them*, and ſo he did. A guilty Conſcience needs no Accuſer; but they, inſtead of yielding to the Convictions of Conſcience, fell into a Rage at him, who awakened that ſleeping Lion in their own Boſoms, and *ſought to lay Hands on him*. Their Corruptions rebel'd againſt their Convictions, and got the Victory. And it was becauſe they had not any fear of God, or of his Wrath before their Eyes, but only becauſe they *feared the People*, that they did not now fly in his Face, and take him by the Throat. They were juſt ready to make his Words good; *This is the Hair, come let us kill him*. *Note*, When the Hearts of the Sons of Men are fully ſet in them to do Evil, the faireſt Warnings both of the Sin they are about to commit, and of the Conſequences of it, make no Impreſſion upon them. Chriſt tells them, that inſtead of *kiſſing the Son of* God, they would *kill him*, upon which they ſhould have ſaid, *What is thy Servant a Dog?* But they do in Effect ſay this, and ſo we will have at him now. And tho' they deprecate the Puniſhment of the Sin, in the next Breath they are projecting the Commiſſion of it.

20 And they watched *him*, and ſent forth ſpies,
which ſhould feign themſelves juſt men, that they might
take hold of his words, that ſo they might deliver him
unto the power and authority of the governour. 21
And they asked him, ſaying, Maſter, we know that
thou ſayeſt and teacheſt rightly, neither accepteſt thou
the perſon *of any*, but teacheſt the way of God truly.
22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæſar, or no?
23 But he perceived their craftineſs, and ſaid unto
them, Why tempt ye me? 24 Shew me a penny:
whoſe image and ſuperſcription hath it? They anſwer'd
and ſaid, Cæſar's. 25 And he ſaid unto them,
Render therefore unto Cæſar the things which be Cæſar's,
and unto God the things which be God's. 26 And
they could not take hold of his words before the people:
and they marvelled at his anſwer, and held their
peace.

We have here Chriſt's evading a Snare, which his Enemies laid for him, by propoſing a Queſtion to him about Tribute. We had this Paſſage before, both in *Matthew* and *Mark*. Here's,

1. The Miſchief deſign'd him, and that's more fully related here than before. The Plot was to *deliver him unto the Power and Authority of the Governour*, v. 20. They could not themſelves put him to Death by courſe of Law, nor otherwiſe than by a *popular Tumult*, which they could not depend upon. And ſince they cannot be his Judges, they'll willingly condeſcend to be his Proſecutors and Accuſers, and will themſelves *inform* againſt him. They hoped to gain their Point, if they could but incenſe the Governour againſt him. *Note*, It has been the common Artifice of perſecuting Church-Rulers, to make the Secular Powers the Tools of their Malice, and oblige the *Kings of the Earth to do* their Drudgery, who if they had not been inſtigated, would have let their Neighbours live quietly by them, as *Pilate* did Chriſt, till the chief Prieſts and the Scribes preſented Chriſt to him. But thus Chriſt's Word muſt be fulfill'd by their curſed Politicks, that he ſhould be *delivered into the Hands of the Gentiles*.

2. The Perſons they employ'd; *Matthew* and *Mark* told us they were Diſciples of the Phariſees, with ſome *Herodians*: Here 'tis added, that they were Spies, *which ſhould feign themſelves juſt Men*. *Note*, 'Tis no new Thing for *ill Men* to feign themſelves *juſt Men*, and to cover the moſt wicked Projects with moſt ſpecious and plauſible Pretences. The Devil can *transform himſelf into an Angel of Light*, and a Phariſee appear in the Garb, and ſpeak the Language of a Diſciple of Chriſt. A Spy muſt go in Diſguiſe. Theſe Spies muſt take on them to have a Value for Chriſt's Judgment, and to depend upon it as an Oracle, and therefore muſt deſire his Advice in a Caſe of Conſcience. *Note*, Miniſters are concern'd to ſtand upon their Guard, againſt ſome that feign themſelves to be *juſt Men*, and to be *wiſe as Serpents*, when they are in the midſt of a *Generation of Vipers* and *Scorpions*.

3. The Queſtion they propos'd, with which they hoped to enſnare him. (1.) Their Preface is very courtly, *Maſter, we know that thou ſayeſt and teacheſt rightly*, v. 21. Thus they thought to flatter him into an incautelous Freedom and Openneſs with them, and ſo gain their Point. They that are proud, and love to be commended, will be brought to do any thing for thoſe that will but flatter them, and ſpeak them fair; but they were much miſtaken, who thought thus to impoſe upon the humble Jeſus. He was not pleas'd with the Teſtimony of ſuch Hypocrites, nor thought himſelf honoured by it. 'Tis true, that he *accepts not the Perſon of any*; but 'tis as true, that he knows the Hearts of all, and knew theirs, and the ſeven *Abominations* that were there, tho' they *ſpeak fair*. 'Twas certain that he *taught the way of God truly*; but he knew that they were unworthy to be taught by him, who came to *take hold of his Words*, not to be *taken hold of* by them. (2.) Their Caſe is very nice: Is it lawful *for us*, (that's added here in *Luke*) *to give Tribute to* Cæſar? for us *Jews*, us the Free-born Seed of *Abraham*, us that pay the Lord's Tribute, may we give Tribute to *Cæſar*? Their Pride and Covetouſneſs made them loth to pay Taxes, and then they would have it a Queſtion, whether it was lawful or no? Now if Chriſt ſhould ſay *it was lawful*, the People would take it ill, who expected that he who ſet up to be the *Meſſiah*, ſhould in the firſt Place free them from the *Roman* Yoke, and ſtand by them in denying Tribute to *Cæſar*: But if he ſhould ſay *it was not lawful*, as they expected he would, (for if he had not been of that Mind, they thought he could not have been ſo much the Darling of the People as he was) then they ſhould have ſomething to accuſe him of to the Governour, which was what they wanted.

4. His evading of the Snare which they laid for him; *He perceived their Craftineſs*, v. 23. *Note*, Thoſe that are moſt crafty in their Deſigns againſt Chriſt and his Goſpel, cannot with all their Art conceal them from his Cognizance. He can ſee thro' the moſt political Diſguiſes, and ſo break through the moſt dangerous Snare; for *ſurely in vain is the Net ſpread in the Sight of any Bird*. He did not give them a direct Anſwer, but reprov'd them for offering to impoſe upon him, *Why tempt ye me?* and call'd for a *Piece of Money*, current Money with the Merchants; *Shew me a Penny*; and ask'd them whoſe Money it was? whoſe Stamp it bore? who coin'd it? They own 'tis *Cæſar*'s Money; why then, ſaith Chriſt, you ſhould firſt have ask'd whether it was lawful to *pay* and *receive Cæſar*'s Money among yourſelves, and to admit that to be the Inſtrument of your Commerce: But you having granted that by a common Conſent, you are concluded by your own Act, and no doubt you ought to give Tribute to him, who furniſh'd you with this Convenience for your Trade,

protects you in it, and lends you the Sanction of his Authority, for the Value of your Money. You muſt therefore *render to* Cæſar *the Things that are* Cæſar's. In civil Things you ought to ſubmit to the civil Powers, and ſo if *Cæſar* protects you in your civil Rights, by Laws and the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, you ought to *pay him Tribute*; but in Sacred things, God only is your King; you are not bound to be of *Cæſar*'s Religion; you muſt *render to God the things that are God*'s, muſt worſhip and adore him only, and not any Golden Image that *Cæſar* ſets up; and we muſt worſhip and adore him in ſuch way as he has appointed, and not according to the Inventions of *Cæſar*. 'Tis God only that has Authority to ſay, *My Son, give me thy Heart.*

5. The Confuſion they were hereby put into, *v.* 26. (1.) The Snare is broke; *They could not take hold of his Words before the People.* They could not faſten upon any thing wherewith to incenſe either the Governour or the People againſt him. (2.) Chriſt is honoured; even the Wrath of Man is made to praiſe him. They *marvelled at his Anſwer*, it was ſo diſcreet and unexceptionable, and ſuch an Evidence of that Wiſdom and Sincerity which make the Face to ſhine. (3.) Their Mouths are ſtop'd. They held their Peace. They had nothing to object, and durſt ask him nothing elſe, leſt he ſhould ſhame and expoſe them.

27 ¶ Then came to him certain of the Sadducees (which deny that there is any Reſurrection) and they asked him, 28 Saying, Maſter, Moſes wrote unto us, If any man's Brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother ſhould take his wife, and raiſe up ſeed unto his brother. 29 There were therefore ſeven brethren: and the firſt took a wife, and died without children. 30 And the ſecond took her to wife, and he died childleſs. 31 And the third took her; and in like manner the ſeven alſo. And they left no children, and died. 32 Laſt of all the woman died alſo. 33 Therefore in the reſurrection, whoſe wife of them is ſhe? for ſeven had her to wife. 34 And Jeſus anſwering, ſaid unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage. 35 But they which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the reſurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. 36 Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the reſurrection. 37 Now that the dead are raiſed, even Moſes ſhewed at the buſh, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. 38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

This Diſcourſe with the *Sadducees* we had before, juſt as it is here, only that the Deſcription Chriſt gives of the future State, is ſomewhat more full and large here. Obſerve here,

1. That in every Age there have been Men of corrupt Minds that have endeavoured to ſubvert the fundamental Principles of revealed Religion. As there are Deiſts now, who call themſelves Free-thinkers, but are really Falſe-thinkers; ſo there were *Sadducees* in our Saviour's time, that bantered the Doctrine of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Life of the World to come, tho' they were plainly reveal'd in the Old Teſtament, and were Articles of the *Jewiſh* Faith. The *Sadducees* deny that *there is any Reſurrection*, any *future State*; ſo ἀνάστασις may ſignify; not only no Return of the Body *to Life*, but no Continuance of the Soul *in Life*; no World of Spirits, no State of Recompence and Retribution for what was done in the Body. Take away this, and all Religion falls to the Ground.

2. 'Tis common for thoſe that deſign to undermine any Truth of God, to perplex it, and load it with Difficulties: So thoſe *Sadducees* here did, when they would weaken Peoples Faith in the Doctrine of the Reſurrection, they put a Queſtion upon the Suppoſition of it, which they thought could not be anſwered either way to Satisfaction. The Caſe, perhaps, was Matter of Fact, however it might be ſo, of a Woman that had *Seven Husbands*: Now in the Reſurrection *whoſe Wife ſhall ſhe be*? Whereas it was not at all material whoſe ſhe was, for when Death puts an end to that Relation, 'tis not to be reſum'd again.

3. There's a great deal of Difference between the State of the Children of Men on Earth, and that of the Children of God in Heaven; a vaſt Unlikeneſs between *this World, and that World*; and we wrong ourſelves, and wrong the Truth of Chriſt, when we form our Notions of that World of Spirits by our preſent Enjoyments in this World of Senſe.

1. The Children of Men in this World, *Marry, and are given in Marriage*; ὑιοὶ τοῦ ἀιῶνος τούτου. *The Children of this Age*, this Generation, both good and bad, marry themſelves, and give their Children in Marriage. Much of our Buſineſs in this World, is, to raiſe and build up Families, and to provide for them: Much of our Pleaſure in this World, is our Relations, our Wives and Children; Nature inclines to it: Marriage is inſtituted for the Comfort of human Life here in this State, where we carry Bodies about with us. 'Tis likewiſe a Remedy againſt Fornication, that natural Deſires might not become brutal, but be under Direction and Controul. The *Children of this* World are dying and going off the Stage, and therefore they marry, and give their Children in Marriage, that they may furniſh the World of Mankind with needful Recruits; that as one Generation paſſeth away, another may come, and that they may have ſome of their own Offſpring to leave the Fruit of their Labours to, eſpecially that the choſen of God in future Ages may be introduced, for 'tis a *godly Seed* that is ſought by Marriage, *Mal.* 2. 15. A Seed to ſerve the Lord, that ſhall be a *Generation to him.*

2. The World to come is quite another thing; 'tis call'd *that World*, by way of Emphaſis and Eminency. *Note*, There are more Worlds than one; a preſent miſerable World, and a future inviſible World; and it is the Concern of every one of us to compare Worlds, *this World* and *that World*, and give the Preference in our Thoughts and Cares to that which deſerves it. Now obſerve,

1. Who ſhall be the Inhabitants of *that World*; they that ſhall be *accounted worthy to obtain it*, i. e. that are intereſted in *Chriſt's Merit*, who purchas'd *it for us*, and have a holy *Meetneſs* for it wrought in them by the Spirit, whoſe Buſineſs it is to prepare us for it. They have not a *legal* Worthineſs upon the account of any Thing in them, or done by them, but an *Evangelical* Worthineſs upon the account of the ineſtimable Price which Chriſt paid for the *Redemption of the purchaſed Poſſeſſion.* 'Tis a Worthineſs imputed, by which we are glorified, as well as a Righteouſneſs imputed, by which we are juſtified; καταξιωθέντες, they are *made agreeable to that World.* The Diſagreeableneſs that there is in the corrupt Nature, is taken away, and the Diſpoſitions of the Soul are, by the Grace of God, conform'd to that State. They are by Grace, made and *counted worthy to obtain that World*; it intimates ſome *Difficulty* in reaching after it, and danger of coming ſhort. We muſt ſo run, as that we may obtain. They ſhall obtain the *Reſurrection from the dead*, i. e. the bleſſed Reſurrection: For that of *Condemnation*, as Chriſt calls it, *Joh.* 5. 29. is rather a Reſurrection *to Death*, a ſecond Death, an eternal Death, than *from Death.*

2. What ſhall be the happy State of the Inhabitants of that World, we cannot conceive or expreſs it, 1 *Cor.* 2. 9. See what Chriſt here ſaith of it.

1. They *neither marry, nor are given in Marriage.* Thoſe that are entered into the Joy of their Lord, are entirely taken up with that, and need not the Joy of the Bridegroom in his Bride. The Love in that World of Love is all Seraphick, and ſuch as eclipſeth and loſeth the pureſt and moſt pleaſing Loves we entertain ourſelves with, in this World of Senſe; where the Body itſelf ſhall be a ſpiritual Body, the Delights of Senſe are all vaniſh'd; and where there is a Perfection of Holineſs, there's no occaſion for Marriage, as a Preſervative from Sin; into that new *Jeruſalem* there enters nothing that defiles.

2. They cannot *die any more*; and this comes in as a Reaſon why they do not *marry*. In this dying World there muſt be Marriage, in order to the filling up of the Vacancies made by Death; but where there are no Burials, there needs no Weddings. This crowns the Comfort of that World, that there's no more Death there, which ſullies all the Beauty, and damps all the Comfort of this World. Here Death reigns, but thence 'tis for ever excluded.

3. They are *equal unto the Angels.* In the other Evangeliſts 'twas ſaid, they are as the Angels, ὡς ἄγγελοι, but here they are ſaid to be *equal to the* Angels, ἰσάγγελοι, *Angels Peers*; they have a Glory and Bliſs no way inferiour to that of the holy Angles: they ſhall ſee the ſame Sight, be employ'd in the ſame Work, and ſhare in the ſame Joys, with the holy Angels. Saints when they come to Heaven ſhall be naturaliz'd; and tho' by Nature Strangers, yet having *obtained this Freedom* with a *great Sum*, which Chriſt paid for them, they have in all Reſpects equal Privileges with them that were Free-born, the Angels that are the Natives, and *Aborigines* of that Country. They ſhall be Companions with the Angels, and converſe with thoſe bleſſed Spirits that love them dearly, and to an innumerable Company of whom they are are now come in Faith, Hope, and Love.

4. They are *the Children of God*, and ſo they are as the Angels, who are called the *Sons of God*: In the *Inheritance of Sons*, the *Adoption of Sons* will be compleated. Hence Believers are ſaid to *wait for the Adoption*, even the *Redemption of the Body*, Rom. 8. 23. For till the Body is redeem'd from the Grave, the Adoption is not compleated. *Now are we the Sons of God*, 1 John 3. 2. We have the Nature and Diſpoſition of Sons, but that will not be *perfected* till we come to Heaven.

5. They are the *Children of the Reſurrection*, i. e. They are made capable of the Employments and Enjoyments of the future State; they are born *to that World*, belong to that Family, had their Education for it here, and ſhall there have their

Inheritance in it. They are the *Children of God*, being the *Children of the Reſurrection*. *Note*, God owns thoſe only for his Children that are the Children of the Reſurrection, that are born from above, are ally'd to the World of Spirits, and prepar'd for that World, who are the Children of that Family.

4. It is an undoubted Truth, that there is another Life after this, and there were eminent Diſcoveries made of this Truth, in the early Ages of the Church, *v.* 37, 38. Moſes *ſhewed this, as it was ſhewed to* Moſes *at the Buſh*, and he hath ſhewed it to us, when *he calleth the Lord*, as the Lord calleth himſelf, the *God of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob*; *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, were then *dead* as to our World, they were departed out of it many Years before, and their Bodies were turn'd into Duſt in the Cave of *Macpelah*: How then could God ſay, not *I was*, but *I am* the *God of Abraham*? 'Tis abſurd that the living God and Fountain of Life ſhould continue related to them, as their God, if there were no more of them in being but what lay in that Cave, undiſtinguiſh'd from common Duſt: We muſt therefore conclude, that they were then in being in another World, for *God is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living*. *Luke* here adds, *for all live unto him*, *i. e.* All that, like them, are true Believers, tho' they are dead, yet they *do live*; their Souls which *return to God that gave them*, Eccl. 12.7. live to him as the Father of Spirits: and their Bodies ſhall live again at the end of time by the Power of God; for he calleth things that are not, as tho' they were, becauſe he is the God that *quickens the Dead*, Rom. 4.17. But there is more in it yet; when God calls himſelf the *God* of theſe Patriarchs, he meant, that he was their Felicity and Portion, a *God All-ſufficient to them*, Gen. 17.1. their *exceeding great Reward*, Gen. 15.1. Now 'tis plain by their Story, that he never did that for them in this World, which would anſwer the *true Intent, and full Extent* of that great Undertaking, and therefore there muſt be another Life after this, in which he will do that for them, as will amount to a *Diſcharge in full* of that Promiſe, that he would be to them a God, which he is able to do, for *all live to him*, and he has wherewithal to make every Soul happy that lives to him; enough for *all*, enough for *each*.

39 ¶ Then certain of the ſcribes anſwering, ſaid,
Maſter, thou haſt well ſaid. 40 And after that they
durſt not ask him any queſtions at all. 41 And he ſaid
unto them, How ſay they that the Chriſt is David's
ſon? 40 And David himſelf ſaith in the book of
Pſalms, the Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my
right hand, 43 Till I make thine Enemies thy foot-
ſtool. 44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is
he then his ſon? 45 ¶ Then in the audience of all
the people, he ſaid unto his diſciples, 46 Beware of
the ſcribes, which deſire to walk in long robes, and
love greetings in the markets, and the higheſt ſeats in
the ſynagogues, and the chief rooms at feaſts; 47
Which devour widows houſes, and for a ſhew make
long Prayers: the ſame ſhall receive greater damnation.

The *Scribes* were *Students* in the Law, and *Expoſitors* of it to the People; Men in Reputation for Wiſdom and Honour; the Generality of them were Enemies to Chriſt and his Goſpel; now here we have ſome of them attending him, and four things we have in theſe Verſes concerning them, which we had before.

1. We have them here commending the Reply which Chriſt made to the *Sadducees*, concerning the Reſurrection, *v.* 39. *Certain of the Scribes ſaid, Maſter thou haſt well ſaid.* Chriſt had the Teſtimony of his Adverſaries, that he ſaid well; and therefore the Scribes were his Enemies, becauſe he would not *conform* to the Traditions of the Elders, but yet when he vindicated the Fundamental Practices of Religion, and appeared in Defence of them, even the Scribes commended his Performance, and own'd he ſaid well. Many that call themſelves Chriſtians, come ſhort even of that Spirit.

2. We have them here ſtruck with an Awe of Chriſt, and of his Wiſdom and Authority, *v.* 40. *They durſt not ask him any Queſtions at all*, becauſe they ſaw that he was too hard for all that contended with him. His own Diſciples, tho' weak, yet being willing to receive his Doctrine, durſt *ask him any Queſtion*; but the *Sadducees* who contradicted and cavill'd at his Doctrine, durſt ask him none.

3. We have them here *puzzled* and run aground, with a Queſtion concerning the *Meſſiah*, v. 41. 'Twas plain by many Scriptures, that Chriſt was to be the Son of *David*, even the blind Man knew that, *Chap.* 18.39. and yet it was plain, that *David* call'd the Meſſiah *his Lord*, v. 42, 43. his Owner and Ruler and Benefactor, *The Lord ſaid to my Lord*; God ſaid it to the Meſſiah, *Pſal.* 101. 1. Now if he be his *Son*, why doth he call him *his Lord*? if he be his *Lord*, why do *we call* him *his Son*? This he left them to conſider of, but they could not reconcile his ſeeming Contradiction; Thanks be to God we can; that Chriſt *as God* was *David's Lord*, but Chriſt *as Man* was *David's* Son. He was both the *Root* and the *Offspring of David*, Rev. 22. 16. By his *Human Nature* he was the *Offspring of David*, a Branch of his Family; by his *Divine Nature* he was the *Root of David*, from whom he had his Being and Life, and all the Supplies of Grace.

4. We have them here deſcrib'd in their black Characters, and a publick Caution given to the Diſciples to take heed of them, *v.* 45, 46, 47. This we had juſt as it is here, *Mark* 12. 38. and more largely, *Mat.* 23. Chriſt bid his Diſciples, *Beware of the Scribes*; *i. e.* 1. Take heed of being drawn *into Sin* by them, of learning their Way, and going into their Meaſures; beware of ſuch a Spirit as they are govern'd by. Be not you ſuch in the Chriſtian Church, as they are in the *Jewiſh* Church. 2. Take heed of being *brought into Trouble* by them; in the ſame Senſe that he had ſaid, *Mat.* 10.17. *Beware of Men, for they will deliver you up to the Councils*; beware of the Scribes, for they do ſo. Beware of them, for,

1. They are proud and haughty; they *deſire to* walk about the Streets in *long Robes*, as thoſe that are above Buſineſs, for Men of Buſineſs went with their *Loins girt up*, and as thoſe take State, and take Place. *Cedant Arma Togæ.* —They lov'd in their Hearts to have People make their Honouts to them in *the Markets*, that many might ſee what Reſpect was paid them; and were very proud of the Precedency that was given them in all Places of Concourſe. They *loved the higheſt Seats in the Synagogues*, and *the chief Rooms at Feaſts*, and when they were plac'd in them, look'd upon themſelves with great Conceit, and upon all about them with a great Contempt. *I ſit as a Queen.*

2. They are *covetous and oppreſſive*, and make their Religion a Cloak and Cover for it. They *devour Widows Houſes*, get their Eſtates into their Hands, and then by ſome Trick or other, make them their own; or they live upon them, and eat up what they have. And Widows are an eaſy Prey to them, becauſe they are apt to be deluded by their ſpecious Pretences; *for a Show they make long Prayers*, perhaps long Prayers with the Widows when they are in Sorrow, as if they had not only a *piteous*, but a *pious* Concern for them, and thus endeavour to ingratiate themſelves with them, and get their Money and Effects into their Hands. Such devout Men ſure may be truſted with *untold Gold*; but they will give ſuch an Account of it as they think fit.

Chriſt reads them their Doom in a few Words, *Theſe ſhall receive a more abundant Judgment*; a double Damnation, both for their Abuſe of the poor *Widows*, whoſe Houſes they devoured; and for their Abuſe of Religion, and particularly of Prayer, which they had made uſe of, as a Pretence for the more plauſible and effectual carrying on of their worldly and wicked Projects; for *diſſembled Piety is double Iniquity.*

CHAP. XXI.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) *The Notice Chriſt took, and the Approbation he gave, of a poor Widow that caſt two Mites into the Treaſury,* v. 1——4. (2.) *A Prediction of future Events, in anſwer to his Diſciples Enquiries concerning them,* v. 5——7. 1 *Of what ſhould happen between that and the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem, *falſe Chriſts ariſing, bloody Wars and Perſecutions of Chriſt's Followers,* v. 8——19. 2. *Of that Deſtruction itſelf,* v. 20——24. 3. *Of the ſecond Coming of Jeſus Chriſt to judge the World, under the Type and Fgure of that,* v. 25——33. (3.) *A practical Application of this by way of Caution and Counſel,* v. 34——36. *And an Account of Chriſt's Preaching, and the People's Attendance on it,* v. 37, 38.

1 AND he looked up, and ſaw the rich men caſting
their gifts into the Treaſury. 2 And he ſaw al-
ſo a certain poor widow, caſting in thither two mites.
3 And he ſaid, Of a truth I ſay unto you, that this
poor widow hath caſt in more than they all. 4 For
all theſe have of their abundance caſt in unto the
offerings of God: but ſhe of her penury hath caſt in all
the living that ſhe had.

This ſhort Paſſage of Story, we had before in *Mark*. It is thus recorded twice, to teach us,

1. That *Charity* to the poor is a *main Matter* in Religion; our Lord Jeſus took all occaſions to commend it, and recommend it. He had juſt mentioned the Barbarity of the Scribes that devour'd *poor Widows*, Chap. 20. and perhaps this is deſign'd as an Aggravation of it, that the poor Widows were the beſt Benefactors to the publick Funds, which the Scribes had the Diſpoſal of.

2. That Jeſus Chriſt has his Eye upon us, to obſerve what we give to the Poor, and what we contribute to Works of Piety and Charity. Chriſt, tho' intent upon his Preaching, look'd up to ſee what *Gifts were caſt into the Treaſury*, v. 1. He obſerves whether we give largely and liberally, in Proportion to what we have, and whether we be ſneaking and paultry in it; nay, his Eye goes further, he obſerves whether we give charitably and with a willing Mind, or grudgingly and with Reluctance. This ſhould make us afraid of coming ſhort of our Duty in this Matter: Men may be deceived with Excuſes which Chriſt knows to be frivolous; and this ſhould encourage us to be abundant in it, without deſiring that Men ſhould know it, 'tis enough that Chriſt doth, he ſeeth in ſecret, and will reward openly.

3. That Chriſt obſerves and accepts the Charity of the Poor, in a particular Manner. Thoſe that have nothing *to give*, may yet *do* a great deal in Charity, by miniſtring to the Poor, and helping them, and begging for them that cannot *help* themſelves, or *beg* for themſelves: But here was one that was herſelf poor, and yet *gave* what little ſhe had to the Treaſury. It was but *Two Mites*, which make a Farthing; but Chriſt magnify'd it as a Piece of Charity exceeding all the reſt: *She has caſt in more than they all.* Chriſt doth not blame her for Indiſcretion, in giving what ſhe wanted herſelf, nor for Vanity in giving among the Rich to the Treaſury; but commended her Liberality, and her Willingneſs to part with what little ſhe had for the Glory of God; which proceeded from a Belief of, and Dependance upon God's Providence, to take Care of her. *Jehovah jireh*, the Lord will provide.

4. That whatever may be called *the Offerings of God*, we ought to have a Reſpect for, and to our Power, yea, and beyond our Power, to contribute chearfully to. Theſe have *caſt in unto the Offerings of God*. What is given to the Support of the Miniſtry and the Goſpel, to the ſpreading and propagating of Religion, the Education of Youth, the Releaſe of Priſoners, the Relief of Widows and Strangers, and the Maintenance of poor Families, is given to the *Offerings of God*, and it ſhall be ſo accepted and recompenc'd.

5 ¶ And as ſome ſpake of the temple, how it was adorn'd with goodly ſtones, and gifts, he ſaid, 6 *As for* theſe things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there ſhall not be left one ſtone upon another, that ſhall not be thrown down. 7 And they asked him, ſaying, Maſter, but when ſhall theſe things be? and what ſign *will there be* when theſe things ſhall come to paſs? 8 And he ſaid, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many ſhall come in my name, ſaying, I am *Chriſt*; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. 9 But when ye ſhall hear of wars, and commotions, be not terrify'd: for theſe things muſt firſt come to paſs, but the end *is* not by and by. 10 Then ſaid he unto them, Nation ſhall riſe againſt nation, and kingdom againſt kingdom: 11 And great earthquakes ſhall be in divers places, and famines, and peſtilences, and fearful ſights, and great ſigns ſhall there be from heaven. 12 But before all theſe, they ſhall lay their hands on you, and perſecute *you*, delivering *you* up to the ſynagogues, and into priſons, being brought before kings and rulers for my names ſake. 13 And it ſhall turn to you for a teſtimony. 14 Settle *it* therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye ſhall anſwer. 15 For I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay, nor reſiſt. 16 And ye ſhall be betray'd both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *ſome* of you ſhall they cauſe to be put to death. 17 And ye ſhall be hated of all men for my names ſake. 18 But there ſhall not an hair of your head periſh. 19 In your patience poſſeſs ye your ſouls.

See here, (1.) With what Admiration ſome ſpake of the external Pomp and Magnificence of the Temple, and they were ſome of Chriſt's own Diſciples too; and they took Notice of it to him *how it was adorn'd with goodly Stones and Gifts*, v. 5. The Outſide was built up with goodly Stones, and within it was beautified and enriched with the *Preſents* that were offer'd up for that Purpoſe, and were *hung up* in it. They thought their Maſter ſhould be as much affected with thoſe Things as they were, and ſhould as much regret the Deſtruction of them as they did. When we *ſpeak of the Temple*, it ſhould be of the Preſence of God in it, and of the Ordinances of God adminiſtred in it, and the Communion which his People there have with him; it is a poor Thing, when we ſpeak of the Church, to let our Diſcourſe dwell upon its Pomps and Revenues, and the Dignities and Powers of its Officers and Rulers; for the King's Daughter is all *glorious within*.

(2.) With what Contempt Chriſt ſpoke of them, and with what Aſſurance of their being all made deſolate very ſhortly, *v.* 6. *As for thoſe Things which you behold*, thoſe dear Things which you are ſo much in love with, *behold the Days will come*, and ſome now living may live to ſee them, *in which there ſhall not be left one Stone upon another.* This Building, which ſeems ſo beautiful, that one would think none could for Pity pull it down, and which ſeems ſo ſtrong, that one would think none ſhould be able to pull it down, yet ſhall be utterly ruin'd; and this ſhall be done as ſoon as ever the ſpiritual Temple of the Goſpel Church (the Subſtance of that Shadow) begins to flouriſh in the World. Did we by Faith foreſee the Blaſting and Withering of all external Glory, we ſhould not ſet our Hearts upon it, as thoſe do that cannot ſee, or will not look ſo far before them.

(3.) With what Curioſity thoſe about him, enquire concerning the Time when this great Deſolation ſhall be, *v.* 7. *Maſter, when ſhall theſe Things be?* 'Tis natural to us to covet to know future Things, and the Time of them, which *it is not for us to know*; when we are more concern'd to ask what is our Duty in the Proſpect of theſe Things, and how we may prepare for them. This it is for us to know. They inquire *what Sign there ſhall be, when theſe Things ſhall come to paſs.* They ask not for a *preſent* Sign to confirm the Prediction itſelf, and to induce them to believe it, Chriſt's Word was enough for that: But what the future Signs will be of the approaching Accompliſhment of the Prediction, by which they may be put in mind of it. Theſe *Signs of the Times* Chriſt had taught them to obſerve.

(4.) With what Clearneſs and Fulneſs Chriſt anſwers their Enquiries as far as was neceſſary to direct them in their Duty; for all Knowledge is deſirable as far as it is in order to practiſe.

Firſt, They muſt expect to hear of falſe Chriſts, and falſe Prophets appearing, and falſe Prophecies given out, *v.* 8. *Many ſhall come in my Name*; he doth not mean, *in the Name of Jeſus*, tho' there were ſome Deceivers who pretended Commiſſions from him, as *Acts* 19. 13. but uſurping the Title and Character of the *Meſſiah*. Many pretended to be the Deliverers of the Jewiſh Church and Nation from the *Romans*, and to fix the Time when the Deliverance ſhould be wrought, by which Multitudes were drawn into a Snare to their Ruin. They ſhall ſay, ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, *That I am he*, or, *I am*, as if they would aſſume that incommunicable Name of God, by which he made himſelf known, when he came to deliver *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, *I am*: and, to encourage People to follow them, they added, *the Time draws near* when the Kingdom ſhall be reſtored to *Iſrael*, and if they will follow him, they ſhall ſhare in it.

Now, as to this, he gives them a needful Caution, 1. *Take heed that ye be not deceived*; do not you imagine that I ſhall myſelf come again in external Glory to take Poſſeſſion of the Throne of Kingdoms. No, you muſt not expect any ſuch Thing, for my Kingdom is not of this World. When they ask'd ſollicitouſly and eagerly, *Maſter, when ſhall theſe Things be?* The firſt Word Chriſt ſaid, was, *Take heed that ye be not deceived. Note*, Thoſe that are moſt *inquiſitive* in the Things of God (tho' it is very good to be ſo) yet are in moſt Danger of being impos'd upon, and have moſt need to be upon their Guard. 2. *Go ye not after them*, you know the *Meſſiah* is come, and you are not to look for any other; and therefore do not ſo much as hearken after them, nor have any thing to do with them. If we are ſure that *Jeſus* is the *Chriſt*, and his Doctrine is the *Goſpel of God*, we muſt be deaf to all Intimations of another Chriſt, and another Goſpel.

Secondly, They muſt expect to hear of great Commotions in the Nations, and many terrible Judgments inflicted upon the *Jews* and their Neighbours. (1.) There ſhall be *bloody Wars*, v. 10. *Nation ſhall riſe againſt Nation*; one Part of the Jewiſh Nation againſt another, or rather the Whole againſt the *Romans*. Encouraged by the falſe Chriſts, they ſhall wickedly endeavour to throw off the *Roman* Yoke, by taking up Arms againſt the *Roman* Powers. When they had rejected the Liberty with which Chriſt would have made them free, they were left to themſelves to graſp at their Civil Liberty, in ways that were *ſinful*, and therefore could not be *ſucceſsful*. (2.) There ſhall be *Earthquakes*, great Earthquakes, *in divers Places*, which ſhall not only frighten People, but deſtroy Towns and Houſes, and bury many in the Ruins of them. (3.) There ſhall be *Famines* and *Peſtilences*, the common Effects of War, which deſtroy the Fruits of the Earth, and by expoſing Men to ill Weather, and reducing them to ill Diet, occaſion infectious Diſeaſes. God has various ways of puniſhing a provoking People. The four Sorts of Judgments which the O. T. Prophets ſo often ſpeak of, are threatned by the N. T. Prophets too; for tho' Spiritual Judgments are more commonly inflicted in Goſpel Times, yet God makes uſe of Temporal Judgments alſo. (4.) There ſhall be *fearful Sights*, and *great Signs from Heaven*, uncommon Appearances in the Clouds, Comets and blazing Stars, which frighten the ordinary Sort of Beholders, and have always been look'd upon as *ominous*, and *portending* ſomething bad.

Now, as to theſe, the Caution he gives them, is, *Be not terrified.* Others will be frighten'd at them, but be not you frighten'd, *v.* 9. As to the *fearful Sights*, let not them be *fearful* to you, who look above the viſible Heavens to the Throne of God's Government in the higheſt Heavens. *Be not diſmay'd at the Signs of Heaven, for the Heathen are diſmay'd at them*, Jer. 10. 2. And as to the *Famines* and *Peſtilences*, you fall into the Hands of God, who has promis'd to thoſe who are his, that *in the Days of Famine they ſhall be ſatisfy'd*, and that he will keep them from the *noiſome Peſtilence*; Truſt therefore in him, and *be not afraid.* Nay, when you hear of Wars, when without are Fightings, and within are Fears, yet then *be not you terrify'd*; you know the worſt that any of theſe Judgments can do you, and therefore be not afraid of them: For (1.) 'tis your Intereſt to *make the beſt of that which is*, for all your Fears cannot alter it; *theſe Things muſt firſt come to paſs*, there's no Remedy, 'twill be your Wiſdom to make yourſelves eaſy by accommodating yourſelves to them. (2.) There's *worſe behind*; flatter not yourſelves with a Fancy that you'll ſoon ſee an End of theſe Troubles, no, not ſo ſoon as you think of, *the End is not by and by*, not *ſuddenly*. Be not *terrify'd*, for if you begin ſo quickly to be diſcourag'd, how will you bear up under what is yet before you?

Thirdly, They muſt expect to be themſelves for *Signs* and *Wonders* in *Iſrael*; their being *perſecuted* would be a Prognoſtick of the Deſtruction of the City and Temple, which he had now foretold. Nay, this ſhould be the *firſt* Sign of their Ruin coming, *Before all theſe they ſhall lay their Hands on you.* The Judgment ſhall begin at the Houſe of God; you muſt ſmart firſt for a Warning to them, that if they have any Conſideration they may conſider, *If this be done to the Green Tree, what ſhall be done to the Dry*? See 1 *Pet.* 4. 17, 18. But that is not all; this muſt be conſider'd, not only as the *Suffering* of the *Perſecuted*, but as the *Sin* of the *Perſecution*: *Before* God's Judgments are brought upon them, they ſhall fill up the Meaſure of their Iniquity, by *laying their* hands on you. *Note*, The Ruin of a People is always introduced by their Sin; and nothing introduces a ſurer and ſorer Ruin, than the Sin of Perſecution. This is a *Sign* that God's Wrath is coming upon a People to the uttermoſt, when their *Wrath* againſt the Servants of God *comes to the uttermoſt*.

Now, as to this,

1. Chriſt tells them what hard Things they ſhould ſuffer for his Name's ſake, much to the ſame Purpoſe with what he had told them when he firſt call'd them to follow him, *Mat.* 10. They ſhould know the Wages of it, that they might *ſit down and count the Coſt*. St. *Paul*, who was the greateſt Labourer and Sufferer of them all, not being now among them, was told by himſelf what *great Things he ſhould ſuffer for Chriſt's Name's ſake*, Acts 9. 16. ſo neceſſary is it, that all that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhould count upon Perſecution. The Chriſtians having themſelves been originally Jews, and ſtill retaining an equal Veneration with them for the Old Teſtament, and all the Eſſentials of their Religion, and differing only in Ceremony, might expect fair Quarter with them; but Chriſt bids them not expect it: No, they ſhall be the moſt forward to *perſecute you.* (1.) They ſhall uſe their own Church-Power againſt you, *they ſhall deliver you up to the Synagogues*, to be ſcourged there, and ſtigmatiz'd with their *Anathemas.* (2.) They ſhall incenſe the Magiſtrates againſt you; they ſhall *deliver you into Priſons*, that you may be *brought before Kings and Rulers for my Name's ſake*, and be puniſh'd by them. (3.) Your own Relations will betray you, *v.* 16. *your Parents, Brethren, and Kinsfolks, and Friends*; ſo that you will not know whom to put a Confidence in, nor where to be ſafe. (4.) Your Religion will be made a Capital Crime, and you will be call'd to *reſiſt unto Blood*; *ſome of you ſhall they cauſe to be put to Death*, ſo far muſt you be from expecting Honour and Wealth, that you muſt expect nothing but Death in its moſt frightful Shapes; Death in all its dreadful Pomp. Nay, (5.) *You ſhall be hated of all Men for my Name's ſake.* This is worſe than Death itſelf, and was fulfill'd when the Apoſtles were not only *appointed to Death*, but made a *Spectacle to the World*, and counted as the *Filth of the World*, and the *Off-ſcouring of all Things*, which every body loaths, 1 *Cor.* 4. 9, 13. They were hated of *all Men*, i. e. of all ill Men; who could not bear the Light of the Goſpel, becauſe it diſcover'd their evil Deeds, and therefore hated thoſe who brought in that Light, flew in their Faces, and would have pull'd them to pieces. The wicked World that hated to be reform'd, hated Chriſt the Great Reformer, and all that were his, for his ſake. The Rulers of the Jewiſh Church, knowing very well that if the Goſpel obtain'd among the Jews, their uſurped abuſed Power was at an end, rais'd all their Forces againſt it, put it into an ill Name, fill'd Peoples Minds with Prejudices againſt it, and ſo made the Preachers and Profeſſors of it, odious to the Mob.

2. He encourageth them to bear up under their Tryals, and to go on in their Work, notwithſtanding the Oppoſition they would meet with.

1. God will bring Glory both to himſelf and them, out of their Sufferings, *v.* 13. *It ſhall turn to you for a Teſtimony.* Your being ſet up thus for a Mark, and publickly *perſecuted*, will make you, and your Doctrine and Miracles the more taken notice of and enquir'd into; your being brought *before Kings and Rulers*, will give you an opportunity of preaching the Goſpel to them, who otherwiſe would never have come within hearing of it; your ſuffering ſuch ſevere Things, and being ſo hated by the worſt of Men, of the moſt vicious Lives, will be a Teſtimony that you are Good, elſe you would not have ſuch ill Men your Enemies; your Courage, and Cheerfulneſs, and Conſtancy under your Sufferings, will be a Teſtimony for you that you believe what you preach, and that you are ſupported by a Divine Power, and the Spirit of God and Glory reſts upon you.

2. God will ſtand by you, and own you, and aſſiſt you in your Tryals; you are his Advocates, and you ſhall be well furniſhed with Inſtructions, *v.* 14, 15. Inſtead of ſetting your Hearts on work to contrive an Anſwer to Informations, Indictments, Articles, Accuſations, and Interrogatives that will be exhibited againſt you in the Eccleſiaſtical and Civil Courts; on the contrary, *ſettle it in your Hearts*, impreſs it upon them, take pains with them to perſuade them *not to meditate before what ye ſhall anſwer*; i. e. Do not *depend* upon your own Wit and Ingenuity, your own Prudence and Policy, and do not *diſtruſt* or *deſpair* of the immediate and extraordinary Aids of the Divine Grace. Think not to bring yourſelves off in the Cauſe of Chriſt, as you would in a Cauſe of your own, by your own Parts and Application, with the common Aſſiſtances of Divine Providence; but promiſe yourſelves, for I promiſe you, the ſpecial Aſſiſtance of Divine Grace; *I will give you a Mouth and Wiſdom.* This proves Chriſt to be God, for it is God's Prerogative to *give Wiſdom*, and he it is that *made Man's Mouth.* *Note*, (1.) A *Mouth* and *Wiſdom* together, compleatly fit a Man both for Services and Sufferings; *Wiſdom* to know what to ſay, and a *Mouth* wherewith to ſay it as it ſhould be ſaid. It's a great Happineſs to have both *Matter* and *Words* wherewith to honour God and do Good; to have in the Mind a *Store-Houſe* well furniſhed with Things *New and Old*, and a *Door of Utterance* by which *to bring them forth.* (2.) Thoſe that plead Chriſt's Cauſe, may depend upon him to give them *a Mouth and Wiſdom*, which Way ſoever they are call'd to plead it, eſpecially when they are brought before Magiſtrates for his Name's ſake. It is not ſaid, he will ſend an Angel from Heaven to anſwer for them, tho' he could do that, but he will give them a *Mouth* and *Wiſdom* to enable them to anſwer for themſelves; which puts a greater Honour upon them, which requires them to uſe the Gifts and Graces Chriſt furniſheth them with, and redounds the more to the Glory of God, who *ſtills the Enemy and the Avenger out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings.* (3.) When Chriſt gives to his Witneſſes a *Mouth and Wiſdom*, they are enabled to ſay that, both for him and themſelves, which *all their Adverſaries are not able to gainſay and reſiſt*, ſo that they are ſilenc'd, and put to Confuſion. This was remarkably fulfill'd, preſently after the pouring out of the Spirit, by whom Chriſt gave his Diſciples this *Mouth* and *Wiſdom*, when the Apoſtles were brought before the Prieſts and Rulers, and anſwer'd them ſo as to make them aſham'd, *Acts* 4. 5, 6.

3. You ſhall ſuffer no real Damage by all the Hardſhips they ſhall put upon you, *v.* 18. *There ſhall not a Hair of your Head periſh.* Shall ſome of them loſe their Heads, and yet not loſe a Hair? 'Tis a proverbial Expreſſion, ſpeaking the greateſt Indemnity and Security imaginable; 'tis frequently uſed both in the O. T. and N. in that Senſe. Some think it refers to the Preſervation of the Lives of all the Chriſtians that were among the Jews, when they were cut off by the *Romans*; Hiſtorians tell us, there was not one Chriſtian periſhed in that Deſolation. Others reconcile it with the Deaths of Multitudes in the Cauſe of Chriſt; and take it figuratively, in the ſame Senſe that Chriſt ſaith, *He that loſeth his Life for my ſake, ſhall find it.* Not a Hair of your Head ſhall periſh, but (1.) I ſhall take *Cognizance* of it. To this End he had ſaid, *Mat.* 10. 30. *The Hairs of your Head are all number'd*, and an Account is kept of them, ſo that none of them ſhall periſh, but he will miſs it. (2.) It ſhall be upon a *valuable Conſideration*; we do not reckon that *loſt* or *periſhing*, which is laid out for good Purpoſes, and will turn to a good Account. If we drop the Body itſelf for Chriſt's Name's ſake, it doth not periſh, but is well beſtow'd. (3.) It ſhall be abundantly recompenc'd; when you come to ballance Profit and Loſs, you'll find there's nothing periſh'd, but on the contrary you have great Gain in preſent Comforts, eſpecially in the Joys of a Life Eternal. So that tho' we may be Loſers for Chriſt, we ſhall not, we cannot be Loſers by him in the End.

4. It is therefore your Duty and Intereſt in the midſt of your own Sufferings and thoſe of the Nation, to maintain a Holy Sincerity and Serenity of Mind, which will keep you always eaſy, *v.* 19. *In your Patience poſſeſs ye your Souls*; get and keep Poſſeſſion of your Souls. Some read it as a Promiſe, you *may*, or *ſhall* poſſeſs your Souls: It comes all to one. *Note*, 1. It is our Duty and Intereſt at all Times, eſpecially in perillous trying Times, to ſecure the Poſſeſſion of our own Souls; not only that they be not deſtroy'd and loſt for ever, but that they be not diſtemper'd now, nor our Poſſeſſion of them diſturb'd and interrupted. *Poſſeſs your Souls*, i. e. be your own Men, keep up the Authority and Dominion of Reaſon, and keep under the Tumults of Paſſion, that neither Grief nor Fear may tyrannize over you, or turn you out of the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of yourſelves. In difficult Times, when we can keep Poſſeſſion of nothing elſe, then let us make that ſure, which will be made ſure, and keep Poſſeſſion of our Souls. 2. It is by Patience, Chriſtian Patience, that we keep Poſſeſſion of our own Souls. In ſuffering Times, ſet Patience upon the Guard, for the preſerving of your Souls; by it keep your Souls compos'd and in a good Frame, and keep out all thoſe Impreſſions which would ruffle you, and put you out of Temper.

20 And when ye ſhall ſee Jeruſalem compaſſed with
armies, then know that the deſolation thereof is nigh.
21 Then let them which are in Judea, flee to the
mountains; and let them which are in the midſt of
it, depart out; and then let not them that are in the
countries, enter thereinto. 22 For theſe be the days of
vengeance, that all things which are written may be
fulfilled. 23 But woe unto them that are with child,
and to them that give ſuck in thoſe days: for there
ſhall be great diſtreſs in the land, and wrath upon this
people. 24 And they ſhall fall by the edge of the
ſword, and ſhall be led away captive into all nations:
and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles,
until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.
25 ¶ And there ſhall be ſigns in the ſun, and in the

moon, and in the ſtars: and upon the earth diſtreſs of nations, with perplexity, the ſea and the waves roaring; 26 Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after thoſe things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven ſhall be ſhaken. 27 And then ſhall they ſee the ſon of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when theſe things begin to come to paſs, then look up, and lift up your Heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

Having given them an Idea of the Times for about 38 Years next enſuing, he here comes to ſhew them what all thoſe Things would iſſue in at laſt, namely, the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the utter Diſperſion of the Jewiſh Nation; which would be a little Day of Judgment; a Type and Figure of Chriſt's ſecond coming; which was not ſo fully ſpoken of here as in the parallel Place, *Mat.* 24. yet glanc'd at; for the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* would be as it were the Deſtruction of the World, to thoſe whoſe Hearts were bound up in it.

1. He tells them that they ſhould ſee *Jeruſalem* beſieg'd, *compaſſed with Armies*, v. 20. the *Roman* Armies; and when they ſaw that, they might conclude that *its Deſolation was nigh*; for in that the Siege would infallibly *end*, tho' it might be a long Siege. *Note*, As in Mercy, ſo in Judgment, when God begins, he will make an End.

2. He warns them upon this Signal given to ſhift for their own Safety, *v.* 21. *Then let them which are in* Judea, quit the Country, and *flee to the Mountains*; *Let them which are in the Midſt of it*, i. e. of *Jeruſalem, depart out*, before the City be cloſely ſhut up, and (as we ſay now) before the Trenches be open'd; and let not them that are in the Countries and Villages about, enter into the City, thinking to be ſafe there. Do you abandon a City and Country, which you ſee God has abandon'd and given up to Ruin. *Come out of her my People.*

3. He foretels the terrible Havock that ſhould be made of the Jewiſh Nation, *v.* 22. *Thoſe be the Days of Vengeance*, ſo often ſpoken of by the O. T. Prophets, which would compleat the Ruin of that provoking People: All their Predictions muſt now be fulfill'd; and the Blood of all the O. T. Martyrs muſt now be requir'd; *All Things that are written muſt be fulfill'd* at length. After Days of Patience, long abus'd, there will come *Days of Vengeance*; for Reprieves are not Pardons. The Greatneſs of that Deſtruction is ſet forth, (1.) By the inflicting Cauſe of it; 'Tis *Wrath upon this People*, the Wrath of God, that will kindle this devouring conſuming Fire. (2.) By the particular Terror it would be to Women with Child, and poor Mothers that are Nurſes. *Wo to them*, not only becauſe they are moſt ſubject to Frights, and leaſt able to ſhift for their own Safety; but becauſe it will be a very great Torment to them, to think of having borne and nurs'd Children for the Murtherers. (3.) By the general Confuſion that ſhould be all the Nation over. There ſhall be *great Diſtreſs in the Land*, for Men will not know what Courſe to take, nor how to help themſelves.

4. He deſcribes the Iſſue of the Struggles between the *Jews* and the *Romans*, and what they will come to at laſt; in ſhort, (1.) Multitudes of them *ſhall fall by the Edge of the Sword.* 'Tis computed in thoſe Wars of the *Jews*, there fell by the Sword above Eleven Hundred Thouſand: And the Siege of *Jeruſalem* was in Effect a Military Execution. (2.) The reſt ſhall be *led away captive*, not into *one* Nation, as when they were conquer'd by the *Chaldeans*, which gave them an Opportunity of keeping together; but *into all Nations*, which made it impoſſible for them to *correſpond* with each other, much leſs to *incorporate.* (3.) *Jeruſalem* itſelf was *trodden down of the* Gentiles. The *Romans*, when they had made themſelves Maſters of it, laid it quite waſte, as a *rebellious and bad City, hurtful to Kings and Provinces*, and therefore hateful to them.

5. He deſcribes the great Frights that People ſhould generally be in. Many frightful *Sights* ſhall be *in the Sun, Moon and Stars*, Prodigies in the Heaven; and here in this lower World, the *Sea and the Waves roaring*, with terrible Storms and Tempeſts, ſuch as had not been known, and above the ordinary Working of Natural Cauſes. The Effect of which ſhall be a univerſal Confuſion, and Conſternation, *upon the Earth, Diſtreſs of Nations with Perplexity*, v. 25. Dr. *Hammond* underſtands *by the Nations*, the ſeveral Governments or Tetrarchies of the Jewiſh Nation, *Judea, Samaria*, and *Galilee*: Theſe ſhall be brought to the laſt Extremity. *Mens Hearts ſhall fail them for Fear*, v. 26. ἀποψυχόντων ἀνθρώπων. *Men being* quite *exanimated*, diſpirited, *un-ſoul'd*, dying away for Fear. Thus they are *kill'd all the Day long*, (by whom Chriſt's Apoſtles were ſo, *Rom.* 8. 36.) that is, they are all the Day long in Fear of being kill'd; ſinking under that which lies upon them, and yet ſtill trembling for fear of worſe, and *looking after thoſe Things, which are coming upon the World*: When *Judgment begins at the Houſe of God*, it will not end there; it ſhall be as if all the World were falling in Pieces, and where can any be ſecure then? The *Powers of Heaven ſhall be ſhaken*, and then the Pillars of the Earth cannot but tremble. Thus ſhall the preſent *Jewiſh* Policy, Religion, Laws and Government, be all entirely diſſolv'd, by a Series of unparallel'd Calamities, attended with the utmoſt Confuſion. So Dr. *Clark*. But our Saviour makes uſe of theſe Figurative Expreſſions, becauſe at the End of Time, they ſhall be literally accompliſh'd, when the *Heavens ſhall be roll'd together as a Scroll*, and all their Powers not only ſhaken, but broken, and the *Earth* and *all the Works that are therein* ſhall be burnt up, 2 *Pet.* 3. 10, 12. As that Day was all Terror and Deſtruction to the unbelieving *Jews*, ſo the great Day will be to all Unbelievers.

6. He makes this to be a kind of *Appearing of the Son of Man*, v. 27. *Then ſhall they ſee the Son of Man coming in a Cloud with Power and great Glory.* The Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* was in a particular Manner an Act of Chriſt's Judgment, the Judgment committed to the Son of Man: His Religion could never be thoroughly Eſtabliſhed, but by the Deſtruction of the Temple, and the Aboliſhing of the *Levitical* Prieſthood and Oeconomy, after which, even the converted *Jews*, and many of the *Gentiles* too; were ſtill hankering, till they were deſtroy'd; ſo that it might juſtly be look'd upon as a *Coming of the Son of Man in Power and great Glory.* Yet not viſibly, but *in the Clouds*; for in Executing ſuch Judgments as theſe, *Clouds and Darkneſs are round about him.* Now this was (1.) An *Evidence* of the firſt Coming of the *Meſſiah*, ſo ſome underſtand it. Then the unbelieving *Jews* ſhall be convinc'd, when it is too late, that Jeſus was the *Meſſiah*; They that would not ſee him coming in the Power of his Grace to *ſave them*, ſhall be made to ſee him coming in the Power of his Wrath to *deſtroy them*; that would not have him to *Reign over them*, ſhall have him to *Triumph over them.* (2.) It was an *Earneſt* of his ſecond Coming. *Then*, in the Terrors of that Day, they ſhall *ſee the Son of Man coming in a Cloud*, and all the Terrors of the laſt Day. They ſhall ſee a *Specimen* of it, a faint Reſemblance of it. If this be ſo terrible, what will that be?

7. He encourageth all the faithful Diſciples, in Reference to the Terrors of that Day, *v.* 28. *When theſe Things begin to come to paſs*, when *Jeruſalem* is beſieg'd, and every Thing is concurring to the Deſtruction of the Jews, *then* do you look *up*, when others are looking down, look Heaven-wards in Faith, Hope, and Prayer, and *lift up your Heads* with Chearfulneſs and Confidence, *for your Redemption draws nigh.* (1.) When Chriſt came to deſtroy the *Jews*, he came to *Redeem* the *Chriſtians* that were perſecuted and oppreſs'd by them; *then had the Churches Reſt.* (2.) When he comes to judge the World at the laſt Day, he will *redeem* all that are his from all their Grievances. And the Foreſight of that Day, is as pleaſant to all good Chriſtians, as 'tis terrible to the Wicked and Ungodly. Their Death itſelf is ſo; when they ſee that Day approaching, they can *lift up their Heads with Joy*, knowing that *their Redemption draws nigh*, their Remove to their Redeemer.

8. Here is one Word of Prediction that looks further than the Deſtruction of the Jewiſh Nation, which is not eaſily underſtood; we have it, *v.* 24. that *Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the Times of the Gentiles be fulfill'd.* (1.) Some underſtand it of what is paſt; ſo Dr. *Hammond.* The Gentiles that have conquer'd *Jeruſalem*, ſhall keep Poſſeſſion of it, and it ſhall be purely Gentile, till the Times of the Gentiles be fulfill'd, till a great Part of the Gentile World is become Chriſtian, and then after *Jeruſalem* is rebuilt by *Adrian* the Emperor, with an Excluſion of all the Jews from it, many of the Jews ſhall turn Chriſtians, ſhall join with the Gentile Chriſtians, to ſet up a Church in *Jeruſalem*, which ſhall flouriſh there for a long Time. (2.) Others underſtand it of what is yet to come; ſo Dr. *Whitby.* *Jeruſalem* ſhall be poſſeſs'd by the Gentiles, of one Sort or other for the moſt Part, till the Time comes when the Nation that yet remain Infidels ſhall embrace the Chriſtian Faith, when the Kingdoms of this World ſhall become Chriſt's Kingdoms, and then all the Jews ſhall be converted. *Jeruſalem* ſhall be inhabited by them, and neither they nor their City any longer trodden down by the Gentiles.

29 And he ſpake to them a parable, Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; 30 When they now ſhoot forth, ye ſee and know of your own ſelves, that ſummer is now nigh at hand. 31 So likewiſe ye, when ye ſee theſe things come to paſs, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. 32 Verily I ſay unto you, This generation ſhall not paſs away, till all be fulfill'd. 33 Heaven and earth ſhall paſs away: but my word ſhall not paſs away. 34 ¶ And take heed to yourſelves, leſt at any time your hearts be overcharged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs, and cares of this life, and ſo that day come upon you unawares. 35 For as a ſnare ſhall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the ſon of man. 37 And in the day-time he was teaching in the temple, and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called *the mount* of Olives. 38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

Here, in the Cloſe of this Diſcourſe;

1. Chriſt appoints his Diſciples to obſerve the Signs of the Times, which they might judge by, if they had an Eye to the

foregoing Directions, with as much Certainty and Aſſurance as they could judge of the Approach of Summer by the Budding forth of the Trees, *v.* 29, 30, 31. As in the Kingdom of Nature there is a Chain of Cauſes, ſo in the Kingdom of Providence there is a Conſequence of one Event upon another. When we ſee a Nation filling up the Meaſure of their Iniquity, we may conclude their Ruin is nigh; when we ſee the Ruin of perſecuting Powers haſtning on, we may from thence infer that *the Kingdom of God is nigh at Hand*; that when the Oppoſition given to it is remov'd, it ſhall gain Ground. As we may lawfully prognoſticate the Change of the Seaſons, when ſecond Cauſes have begun to work, ſo we may in the Diſpoſal of Events expect ſomething uncommon, when God is already rais'd up *out of his Holy Habitation*, Zech. 2. *Then ſtand ſtill and ſee his Salvation.*

2. He chargeth them to look upon thoſe Things, neither as *doubtful* nor *diſtant*, for then they would not make a due Impreſſion on them, but as *ſure*, and very *near*. The Deſtruction of the Jewiſh Nation, (1.) was *near*, v. 32. *This Generation ſhall not paſs away till all be fulfill'd.* There were ſome now alive that ſhould ſee it; ſome that now heard the Prediction of it. (2.) 'Twas *ſure*, the Sentence was irreverſible, 'twas a *Conſumption determin'd*, the Decree was gone forth, *v.* 33. *Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away*, ſooner than any Word of mine: Nay, they certainly ſhall paſs away, but *my Words ſhall not*; whether they *take hold* or no, they will *take Effect*, and not one of them fall to the Ground, 1 *Sam.* 3. 19.

3. He cautions them againſt Security and Senſuality, by which they would diſfit themſelves for the trying Times that were coming on, and make them to be a great Surprize and Terror to them, *v.* 34, 35. *Take heed to yourſelves*; This is the Word of Command given to all Chriſt's Diſciples, *Take heed to yourſelves*, that you be not overpowered by Temptations, nor betray'd by your own Corruptions. *Note*, We cannot be *ſafe*, if we be *ſecure*. It concerns us at all Times, but eſpecially at ſome Times, to be very cautious. See here, (1.) what our *Danger* is, that *the Day* of Death and Judgment ſhould *come upon us unawares*, when we do not *expect* it, and are not *prepar'd* for it, leſt when we are call'd to meet our Lord, that be found the *fartheſt* Thing in our Thoughts, which ought always to be laid *neareſt* our Hearts, leſt it *come upon us as a Snare*; for ſo *it will come upon* the moſt of Men, who *dwell upon the Earth*, and mind *earthly Things only*, and have no Converſe with Heaven; to them it will be *as a Snare*, ſee *Eccleſ.* 9. 12. 'Twill be a *Terror* and a *Deſtruction* to them; 'twill put them into an unexpreſſible Fright, and hold them faſt for a Doom yet more frightful. (2.) What our *Duty* is, in Conſideration of this Danger; we muſt *take heed leſt our hearts be overcharg'd*, leſt they be burthened and overloaded, and ſo diſfitted and diſabled to do what muſt be done in Preparation for Death and Judgment. Two Things we muſt watch againſt, leſt our Hearts be overcharg'd with them. (1.) The indulging of the Appetites of the Body, and allowing ourſelves in the Gratifications of Senſe, to an Exceſs. *Take heed leſt you be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs*; the immoderate Uſe of Meat and Drink, which burthen the Heart, not only with the Guilt thereby contracted, but by the ill Influence which ſuch Diſorders of the Body have upon the Mind; they make Men dull and lifeleſs to their Duty, dead and liſtleſs in their Duty; they ſtupify the Conſcience, and make the Mind *unaffected* with thoſe Things that are moſt *affecting*. (2.) The inordinate Purſuit of the good Things of this World. The Heart is overcharged with *the Cares of this Life*. The former is the Snare of thoſe that are given to their Pleaſures; this is the Snare of the Men of Buſineſs, that *will be rich*. We have need to guard on both Hands, not only leſt at the Time when Death comes, but leſt *at any ime* our Hearts ſhould be thus overcharged. Our Caution againſt Sin, and our Care of our own Souls, muſt be *conſtant*.

4. He counſels them to prepare and get ready for this great Day, *v.* 36. Where ſee, (1.) what ſhould be *our Aim*, that we may be *accounted worthy to eſcape all thoſe Things*; that when the Judgments of God are abroad, we may be preſerved from the Malignity of them; that either we may not be involved in the common Calamity, or it may not be that to us, that it is to others; that in the Day of Death we may eſcape the Sting of it, which is the Wrath of God, and the Damnation of Hell. Yet we muſt aim, not only to *eſcape that*, but to *ſtand before the Son of Man*; not only to ſtand *acquitted* before him as our Judge, (*Pſal.* 1. 5.) to have Boldneſs in the Day of Chriſt, that's ſuppos'd in our *eſcaping* all thoſe Things; but to *ſtand before him*, to attend on him as our Maſter, to ſtand continually before his Throne, and ſerve him Day and Night in his Temple, *Rev.* 7. 15. always to *behold his Face*, as the Angels, *Mat.* 18. 10. The Saints are here ſaid to be *accounted worthy*, as before, *Chap.* 20. 35. God by the good Work of his Grace in them, *makes them meet* for this Happineſs, and by the good Will of his Grace towards them, *accounts them worthy* of it: But, as *Grotius* here ſaith, a great Part of our Worthineſs lies in an Acknowledgment of our own Unworthineſs. (2.) What ſhould be our *Actings* in theſe Aims, *Watch therefore, and pray always.* Watching and praying muſt go together, *Neh.* 4. 9. Thoſe that would eſcape the Wrath to come, and make ſure the Joys to come, muſt *watch* and *pray*, and muſt do it always, muſt make it the conſtant Buſineſs of their Lives, (1.) To keep a Guard upon themſelves; watch againſt Sin, watch to every Duty, and to the Improvement of every Opportunity of doing Good. Be awake, and keep awake, in Expectation of your Lord's coming, that you may be in a right Frame to receive him, and bid him welcome. (2.) To keep up their Communion with God, *Pray always:* Be always in an habitual Diſpoſition to that Duty; keep up ſtated Times for it, abound in it. Pray upon all Occaſions. Thoſe ſhall be accounted worthy to live a Life of Praiſe in the other World, that live a Life of Prayer in this World.

In the two laſt Verſes we have an Account how Chriſt diſpos'd of himſelf, during thoſe three or four Days betwixt his riding in Triumph to *Jeruſalem*, and the Night in which he was betray'd.

1. He was *all Day teaching in the Temple.* Chriſt preach'd on Week-Days, as well as Sabbath-Days. He was an indefatigable Preacher, he preach'd in the Face of Oppoſition, and in the Midſt of thoſe that he knew ſought Occaſion againſt him.

2. At Night he went out to lodge at a Friend's Houſe, in the Mount of *Olives*, about a Mile out of Town. 'Tis likely he had ſome Friends in the City that would gladly have lodg'd him, but he was willing to retire in the Evening, out of the Noiſe of the Town, that he might have more Time for ſecret Devotion, now his Hour was at hand.

3. Early in the Morning he was in the Temple again, where he had a Morning Lecture for thoſe that were willing to attend it, and the People were forward to hear one that they ſaw forward to preach, *v.* 38. *They all came early in the Morning*, flocking to the Temple like Doves to their Windows, *for to hear him*, tho' the Chief Prieſts and Scribes did all they could to prejudice them againſt him. Sometimes the Taſte and Reliſh which ſerious, honeſt, plain People have of good Preaching, is more to be valu'd and judg'd by, than the Opinion of the Witty and Learned, and thoſe in Authority.

CHAP. XXII.

All the Evangeliſts, whatever they omit, give us a particular Account of the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, becauſe he died for our Sins, and roſe for our Juſtification. And this Evangeliſt, as fully as any, and with many Circumſtances and Paſſages added, which we had not before. In this Chapter we have, (1.) *The Plot to take Jeſus, and* Judas*'s coming into it,* v. 1——6. (2.) *Chriſt's eating the Paſſover with his Diſciples,* v. 7——18. (3.) *The Inſtituting of the Lord's-Supper,* v. 19, 20. (4.) *Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples, after Supper, upon ſeveral Heads,* v. 21——38. (5.) *His Agony in the Garden,* v. 39——46. (6.) *The Apprehending of him, by the Aſſiſtance of* Judas, v. 47——53. (7.) Peter*'s denying him,* v. 54——62. (8.) *The Indignities done to Chriſt by thoſe that had him in Cuſtody, and his Tryal and Condemnation in the Eccleſiaſtical Court,* v. 63——71.

1 NOW the feaſt of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the paſſover. 2 And the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſought how they might kill him; for they feared the people. 3 ¶ Then entred Satan into Judas, ſurnamed Iſcariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief prieſts and captains, how he might betray him unto them. 5 And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. 6 And he promiſed, and ſought opportunity to betray him unto them in the abſence of the multitude.

The *Year of the Redeemed* is now *come*, which had been from Eternity fix'd in the Divine Counſels, and long look'd for by them that waited for the Conſolation of *Iſrael*; after the Revolutions of many Ages, 'tis at length come, *Iſa.* 63. 4. And 'tis obſervable, 'tis in the very *firſt Month* of that Year, that the Redemption is wrought out, ſo much in Haſte was the Redeemer to perform his Undertaking, ſo was he *ſtreighten'd* 'till 'twas *accompliſh'd*. 'Twas in the ſame Month, and at the ſame Time of the Month, (in the *Beginning of Months*, Exod. 12. 2.) that God by *Moſes* brought *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, that the Antitype might anſwer the Type. Chriſt is here deliver'd up, *when the Feaſt of Unleaven'd Bread drew nigh*, v. 1. About as long before that Feaſt, as they began to make Preparation for it, here was Preparation a making for our Paſſover's being offer'd for us.

1. Here we have his ſworn Enemies contriving it, *v.* 2. *The Chief Prieſts*, Men of Sanctity, and the *Scribes*, Men of Learning, *ſeeking how they might kill him*, either by Force or Fraud; could they have had their Will, it had been ſoon done; but they *fear'd the People*, and the more, for what they now ſaw of their diligent Attendance upon his Preaching.

2. A treacherous Diſciple joining in with them, and coming to their Aſſiſtance, *Judas*, ſur-nam'd *Iſcariot*, he is here ſaid to be

Of the Number of Twelve, that dignify'd diſtinguiſh'd Number. One would wonder that Chriſt, who *knew* all Men, ſhould take a Traytor into *that Number*; and that one of *that Number*, who could not but *know Chriſt*, ſhould be ſo baſe as to betray him; but Chriſt had wiſe and holy Ends in taking *Judas* to be a Diſciple, and how he who knew Chriſt ſo well, yet came to betray him, we are here told, *v.* 3. *Satan enter'd into* Judas. 'Twas the Devil's Work, who thought hereby to ruin Chriſt's Undertaking, to have broke his Head, but it prov'd only the bruiſing of his Heel. Whoever betrays Chriſt or his Truths, or Ways, 'tis *Satan* that puts them upon it. *Judas* knew how deſirous the Chief Prieſts were to get Chriſt into their Hands, and that they could not do it ſafely without the Aſſiſtance of ſome that knew his Retirements, as he did: He therefore went himſelf, and made the Motion to them, *v.* 4. *Note*, 'Tis hard to ſay whether more Miſchief is done to Chriſt's Kingdom by the Power and Policy of its open Enemies, or by the Treachery and Self-ſeeking of its pretended Friends: Nay, without that, its Enemies could not gain their Point as they do. When you ſee *Judas* communing with the *Chief Prieſts*, be ſure ſome Miſchief is in hatching; 'tis for no Good that they are laying their Heads together.

The Iſſue of the Treaty between them is, (1.) That *Judas* muſt *betray Chriſt to them*, muſt bring them to a Place where they might ſeize him without Danger of Tumult, and this they would be *glad of*. (2.) They muſt give him a Sum of Money for doing it, and that he would be glad of, *v.* 5. They *covenanted to give him Money*. When the Bargain was made, *Judas* ſought *Opportunity to betray him*: Probably he ſlily enquir'd of *Peter* and *John*, who were more intimate with their Maſter than he was, where he would be at ſuch a Time, and whither he would retire after the Paſſover, and they were not ſharp enough to ſuſpect him. Some how or other, in a little Time, he gain'd the Advantage he ſought, and fix'd the Time and Place where it might be done, *in the Abſence of the Multitude*, and *without Tumult.*

7 ¶ Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the paſſover muſt be killed. 8 And he ſent Peter and John, ſaying, Go and prepare us the paſſover, that we may eat. 9 And they ſaid unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? 10 And he ſaid unto them, Behold, when ye are entred into the city, there ſhall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the houſe where he entereth in. 11 And ye ſhall ſay unto the good man of the Houſe, The maſter ſaith unto thee, Where is the gueſt-chamber, where I ſhall eat the paſſover with my diſciples? 12 And he ſhall ſhew you a large upper room furniſh'd: there make ready. 13 And they went and found as he had ſaid unto them: and they made ready the paſſover. 14 And when the hour was come, he ſat down, and the twelve apoſtles with him. 15 And he ſaid unto them, With deſire I have deſired to eat this paſſover with you before I ſuffer. 16 For I ſay unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. 17 And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and ſaid, Take this, and divide *it* among your ſelves. 18 For I ſay unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God ſhall come. 19 ¶ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, ſaying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. 20 Likewiſe alſo the cup after ſupper, ſaying, This cup *is* the new teſtament in my blood, which is ſhed for you.

What a hopeful Proſpect had we of Chriſt's doing a great deal of Good by his preaching in the Temple, during the Feaſt of Unleavened Bread, which continued Seven Days, when the People were *every* Morning, and *early* in the Morning, ſo attentive to hear him! But here's a Stop put to it: He muſt enter upon Work of another Kind, but in that he ſhall do more Good than in the other, for neither Chriſt's, nor his Church's ſuffering Days, are their idle empty Days.

Now, here we have,

1. The Preparation that was made for Chriſt's eating the Paſſover with his Diſciples, upon the very *Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Paſſoever muſt be kill'd* according to the Law, *v.* 7. Chriſt was made under the Law, and obſerv'd the Ordinances of it, and particularly that of the Paſſover, to teach us in like Manner to obſerve his Goſpel Inſtitutions, particularly that of the Lord's-Supper, and not to neglect them. 'Tis probable he went to the Temple to preach in the Morning, when he ſent *Peter* and *John* another Way into the City to *prepare the Paſſover.* Thoſe who have Attendants about them, to do their Secular Buſineſs for them in a great Meaſure, muſt not think that that *allows* them to be *idle*, but it engageth them to employ themſelves more in *Spiritual* Buſineſs, or Service to *the Publick.* He directed thoſe whom he employ'd whither they ſhould go, *v.* 9, 10. *They muſt follow a Man bearing a Pitcher of Water*, and he muſt be their Guide to the Houſe: Chriſt could have deſcrib'd the Houſe to them, probably 'twas a Houſe they knew, and he might have ſaid no more, but go to ſuch a one's Houſe, or to a Houſe in ſuch a Street, with ſuch a Sign, *&c.* But he directed them thus, to teach them to depend upon the Conduct of Providence, and to follow that *Step by Step.* They went, not knowing *whither they went*, but *whom they follow'd.* Being come to the Houſe, they muſt deſire the Maſter of the Houſe to ſhew them a Room, *v.* 11. and he will readily do it, *v.* 12. Whether it was a Friend's Houſe, or a Publick-Houſe, doth not appear; but the Diſciples found their Guide, and the Houſe, and the Room, juſt as he had ſaid to them, *v.* 13. for they need not fear a Diſappointment who go upon Chriſt's Word; and according to the Orders given them, they got every Thing in Readineſs for *the Paſſover*, v. 13.

2. The ſolemnizing of the Paſſover according to the Law. When *the Hour was come*, that they ſhould go to Supper, *he ſat down*, 'tis likely, at the Head End of the Table, and *the Twelve Apoſtles with him*, *Judas* not excepted; for 'tis poſſible that they whoſe Hearts are fill'd with *Satan* and all manner of Wickedneſs, may yet continue a plauſible Profeſſion of Religion, and be found in the Performance of its external Services. And while 'tis in the Heart, and doth not break out into any Thing ſcandalous, ſuch cannot be deny'd the external Privileges of their external Profeſſion. Tho' *Judas* has already been Guilty of an *Overt-Act* of Treaſon, yet it not being publickly known, Chriſt admits him to ſit down, with the reſt, at the Paſſover. Now obſerve,

(1.) How Chriſt *bids this Paſſover welcome*, to teach us in like Manner to welcome his Paſſover, the Lord's-Supper, and to come to it with an Appetite, *v.* 15. *With Deſire I have deſir'd*, I have moſt earneſtly deſir'd to *eat this Paſſover with you, before I ſuffer.* He knew 'twas to be the Prologue of his Sufferings, and therefore he deſir'd it, becauſe 'twas in order to his Father's Glory, and Man's Redemption. He *delighted* to do even this Part of the *Will of God*, concerning him as Mediator. Shall we be *backward* to any Service for him, who was ſo *forward* in the Work of our Salvation? See the Love he had to his Diſciples, he deſir'd to eat it *with them*, that he and they might have a little Time together, themſelves, and none but they, for private Converſation, which they could not have in *Jeruſalem*, but upon this Occaſion. He was now about to leave them, but was very deſirous to *eat this Paſſover with them, before he ſuffer'd*, as if the Comfort of that would carry him the more chearfully thro' his Sufferings, and make them the eaſier to him. *Note*, Our Goſpel-Paſſover eaten by Faith with Jeſus Chriſt, will be an excellent Preparation for Sufferings and Tryals, and Death itſelf.

(2.) How Chriſt in it *takes his Leave of all Paſſovers*, thereby ſignifying his Abrogating of all the Ordinances of the Ceremonial Law, of which that of the Paſſover was one of the *Earlieſt*; and one of the moſt *Eminent*, v. 16. *I will not any more eat thereof*, nor ſhall it be any more celebrated by my Diſciples, *until it be fulfill'd in the Kingdom of God.* (1.) 'Twas fulfill'd when Chriſt, our Paſſover, was ſacrificed for us, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. And therefore that Type and Shadow was laid aſide, becauſe now in the *Kingdom of God* the Subſtance was come which ſuperſeded them. (2.) 'Twas fulfill'd in the *Lord's-Supper*, an Ordinance of the Goſpel Kingdom, in which the Paſſover had its Accompliſhment, and which the Diſciples, after the pouring out of the Spirit, did frequently celebrate, as we find, *Acts* 2. 42, 46. They eat of it, and Chriſt might be ſaid to eat with them, becauſe of the Spiritual Communion they had with him in that Ordinance: He is ſaid to *ſup with them*, and *they with him*, Rev. 3. 20. But (3.) The compleat Accompliſhment of that Commemoration of Liberty will be in the Kingdom of Glory, when all God's Spiritual *Iſrael* ſhall be releas'd from the Bondage of Death and Sin, and be put in Poſſeſſion of the Land of Promiſe.

What he had ſaid of his eating of the Paſchal-Lamb, he repeats concerning his drinking of the *Paſſover Wine*; the Cup of *Bleſſing*, or of Thankſgiving, in which all the Company pledg'd the Maſter of the Feaſt, at the Cloſe of the Paſſover Supper. This Cup *he took*, according to the Cuſtom, and *gave Thanks* for the Deliverance of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*, and the Preſervation of their Firſt-born, and then ſaid, *Take this, and divide it among yourſelves*, v. 17. This is not ſaid afterwards of the Sacramental Cup, probably that being of much more Weight and Value, being the *New Teſtament in his Blood*, he might give that into every one's Hand, to teach them to make a particular Application of it to their own Souls; but as for the Paſchal-Cup, which is to be aboliſh'd, 'tis enough to ſay, *Take* it and *divide it among yourſelves*, do what you will with it, for we ſhall have no more Occaſion for it, *v.* 18. *I will not drink of the Fruit of the Vine any more*; I will not have it any more drunk of, *till the Kingdom of God ſhall come*, till the Spirit be pour'd out, and then you ſhall in *the Lord's-Supper* commemorate a much more glorious Redemption; of which, both the Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and the Paſſover Commemoration of it, were Types and Figures. The Kingdom of God is now ſo near being ſet up, that you will not need to eat or drink any more till it comes, Chriſt dying next Day open'd it. As Chriſt, with a great deal of Pleaſure, took Leave of all the legal Feaſts (which fell of Courſe with the Paſſover) for the Evangelical ones, both Spiritual and Sacramental; ſo may good Chriſtians, when they are call'd to remove from the Church Militant to that which is Triumphant, chearfully exchange even their Spiritual Repaſts, much more their Sacramental Ones, for the Eternal Feaſt.

3. The Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, *v.* 19, 20. The *Paſſover* and the *Deliverance* out of *Egypt*, were *typical* and *prophetick Signs* of a *Chriſt* to come, that ſhould by dying deliver us from Sin and Death, and the Tyranny of *Satan*; but they ſhall no more ſay, *the Lord liveth that brought us up out of the Land of* Egypt, a much greater Deliverance ſhall eclipſe the Luſtre of that, and therefore the Lord's-Supper is inſtituted, to be a commemorative Sign or Memorial of a Chriſt already come, that *has* by dying deliver'd us; and it is his Death that is in a ſpecial Manner ſet before us in that Ordinance.

5. The *breaking of Chriſt's Body* as a *Sacrifice for us*, is here commemorated by the *breaking of Bread*; and the Sacrifices under the Law, were call'd the *Bread of our God*, Lev. 21. 6, 8, 17. *This is my Body which is given for you:* And there is a Feaſt upon that Sacrifice inſtituted, in which we are to apply it to ourſelves, and to take the Benefit and Comfort of it; this Bread that was given for us, is given *to us*, to be Food to our Souls, for nothing can be more *nouriſhing* and *ſatisfying* to our Souls, than the Doctrine of Chriſt's making Atonement for Sin, and the Aſſurance of our Intereſt in that Atonement; this Bread that was *broken* and *given for us*, to ſatisfy for the Guilt of our Sins, is *broken* and *given to us*, to ſatisfy the Deſire of our Souls. And this we do in *Remembrance* of what he did for us, when he dy'd for us, and for a *Memorial* of what we *do* in making ourſelves *Partakers of him*, and joining ourſelves to him in an Everlaſting Covenant; like the Stone *Joſhua* ſet up for a *Witneſs*, Joſ. 24. 27.

2. The *Shedding of Chriſt's Blood*, by which the Atonement was made, (*for the Blood made Atonement for the Soul*, Lev. 17. 11.) as repreſented by the Wine in the Cup, and that Cup of Wine is a Sign and Token of the *New Teſtament*, or New Covenant made with us. It *commemorates* the Purchaſe of the Covenant by the Blood of Chriſt, and *confirms* the Promiſes of the Covenant, which are all *Yea* and *Amen* in him. This will be reviving and refreſhing to our Souls, as Wine that *makes glad the Heart*. In all our Commemorations of the ſhedding of Chriſt's Blood, we muſt have an Eye to it as ſhed for us; we needed it, we take hold of it, we hope to have Benefit by it, *who loved me, and gave himſelf for me*. And in all our Regards to the *New Teſtament*, we muſt have an eye to the *Blood of Chriſt*, which gave Life and Being to it, and ſeals to us all the Promiſes of it. Had it not been for the Blood of Chriſt, we had never had the New Teſtament; and had it not been for the New Teſtament, we had never known the Meaning of Chriſt's Blood-ſhed.

21 ¶ But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me, *is* with me on the table. 22 And truly the ſon of man goeth as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betray'd. 23 And they began to enquire among themſelves, which of them it was that ſhould do this thing. 24 ¶ And there was alſo ſtrife among them, which of them ſhould be accounted the greateſt. 25 And he ſaid unto them, the kings of the Gentiles exerciſe lordſhip over them; and they that exerciſe authority upon them, are called benefactors. 26 But ye *ſhall* not *be* ſo: but he that is greateſt among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth ſerve. 27 For whether *is* the greater, he that ſitteth at meat, or he that ſerveth? *is* not he that ſitteth at meat? but I am among you as one that ſerveth. 28 Ye are they which continued with me in my Temptations. 29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my father hath appointed unto me: 30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and ſit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Iſrael. 31 ¶ And the Lord ſaid, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath deſired *to have* you, that he may ſift *you* as wheat: 32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy brethren. 33 And he ſaid unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into priſon, and to death. 34 And he ſaid, I tell thee, Peter, the cock ſhall not crow this day, before that thou ſhalt thrice deny that thou knoweſt me. 35 And he ſaid unto them, When I ſent you without purſe, and ſcrip, and ſhoes, lacked ye any thing? And they ſaid, Nothing. 36 Then ſaid he unto them, But now he that hath a purſe, let him take *it*, and likewiſe *his* ſcrip: and he that hath no ſword, let him ſell his garment, and buy one. 37 For I ſay unto you, that this that is written, muſt yet be accompliſh'd in me; and he was reckon'd among the tranſgreſſors: for the things concerning me have an end. 38 And they ſaid, Lord, behold, here *are* two ſwords. And he ſaid unto them, It is enough.

We have here Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples after Supper, much of which is new here, and in St. *John's* Goſpel, we ſhall find more that is new ſtill. We ſhould take Example from him, to entertain and edify our Family and Friends with ſuch Diſcourſe at Table as is good, and to the Uſe of edifying, which may miniſter Grace to the Hearers; but eſpecially after we have been at the Lord's Table, by Chriſtian Conference to keep one another in a ſuitable Frame. The Matters Chriſt here diſcourſed of, were of Weight, and to the preſent Purpoſe.

Firſt, He diſcours'd with them concerning him that ſhould betray him, who was now preſent.

1. He ſignifies to them that the Traytor was now among them, and one of them, *v.* 21. By the placing of this after the Inſtitution of the Lord's-Supper, which in *Matthew* and *Mark* is plac'd before it, it ſeems plain, that *Judas* did receive the Lord's-Supper, did *eat of that Bread*, and *drink of that Cup*; for after the Solemnity was over, Chriſt ſaid, *Behold the Hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the Table.* There have been thoſe that have eaten Bread with Chriſt, and yet have betray'd him.

2. He foretels that the Treaſon would take Effect, *v.* 22. *Truly the Son of Man goes as it was determin'd*; goes to the Place where he will be betray'd; for he is delivered up by the Counſel and Foreknowledge of God, elſe *Judas* could not have delivered him up. Chriſt was not driven to his Sufferings, but chearfully *went to them.* He ſaid, *Lo I come.*

3. He threatens the Traytor, *Woe to that Man by whom he is betray'd. Note*, Neither the Patience of the Saints under their Sufferings, nor the Counſel of God concerning their Sufferings, will be any Excuſe for thoſe that have any Hand in their Sufferings, or that perſecute them. Tho' God has *determined* that Chriſt ſhall be betrayed, and he himſelf has chearfully ſubmitted to it, yet *Judas's* Sin or Puniſhment is not at all the leſs.

4. He frightens the reſt of the Diſciples into a Suſpicion of themſelves, by ſaying it was one of them, and not naming which, *v.* 23. *They began to enquire among themſelves*, to interrogate themſelves, to put the Queſtion to themſelves, *who it was that ſhould do this Thing*, that could be ſo baſe to ſo good a Maſter. The Enquiry was not, Is it you? Or, Is it ſuch a one? But, *Is it I?*

Secondly, Concerning the Strife that was among them for Precedency or Supremacy.

1. See what the Diſpute was; *which of them ſhould be accounted the greateſt.* Such, and ſo many Conteſts as we find among the Diſciples, for Dignity and Dominion, *before* the Spirit was poured upon them, was a ſad Preſage of the like Strifes for, and Affectations of Supremacy in the Churches, after the Spirit ſhould be provoked to depart from them. How inconſiſtent is this with that in the Verſe before? There they were enquiring which would be the Traytor, and here which ſhould be the Prince. Could ſuch an Inſtance of Humility, and ſuch an Inſtance of Pride and Vanity, be found in the ſame Men, ſo near together? This is like *ſweet* Waters and *bitter*, proceeding at the ſame Place out of the ſame Fountain: What a Self-contradiction is the deceitful Heart of Man?

2. See what Chriſt ſaid to this Diſpute: He was not ſharp upon them, as might have been expected, he having ſo often reproved them for this very Thing; but mildly ſhewed them the Sin and Folly of it.

1. This was to make themſelves like the *Kings of the Gentiles*, that affect worldly Pomp, and with worldly Power, *v.* 25. They *exerciſe Lordſhip* over their Subjects, and are ever and anon ſtriving to exerciſe Lordſhip too over the *Princes* that are about them, tho' as *good* as themſelves, if they think them not *ſo ſtrong* as themſelves. *Note*, The *exerciſing of Lordſhip*, better becomes the *Kings of the Gentiles*, than the Miniſters of Chriſt. But obſerve, *They that exerciſe Authority*, and take upon themſelves to bear Sway, and give Law, they are call'd *Benefactors*, 'Ευεργέται, they call themſelves ſo, and ſo their Flatterers call them, and thoſe that ſet themſelves to ſerve their Intereſts. 'Tis pretended, that they have *been* Benefactors, and upon *that* Account they ſhould be admitted to *have Rule*; nay, that in exerciſing Authority they are Benefactors; however they really ſerve themſelves, they would be thought to *ſerve their Country.* One of the *Ptolemy's* was ſur-nam'd *Euergetes*, the Benefactor. Now, our Saviour, by taking Notice of this, intimates, (1.) That to *do Good* is much more honourable than *to look Great*; for thoſe Princes, that were the *Terror of the Mighty*, yet would not be call'd ſo, but rather the *Benefactors of the Needy*; ſo that by their own Confeſſion a Benefactor to his Country, is much more valued than a Ruler of his Country. (2.) That to *do Good* is the ſureſt Way to be *Great*, elſe they that aim'd to be *Rulers*, would not have been ſo ſolicitous to be call'd *Benefactors*: This therefore he would have his Diſciples believe, that their greateſt Honour would be to do all the Good they could in the World. They would indeed be *Benefactors* to the World, by bringing the Goſpel to it. Let them value themſelves upon that Title, which they would indeed be *intitled* to, and then they need not ſtrive which ſhould be the Greateſt, for they would be

all be *greater*; greater Bleſſings to Mankind than the Kings of the Earth, that exerciſe Lordſhip over them. If they have that which is confeſſedly the *greater* Honour, of being Benefactors, let them deſpiſe the leſſer, of being Rulers.

2. It was to make themſelves unlike the Diſciples of Chriſt, and unlike Chriſt himſelf, *v.* 26, 27. *Ye ſhall not be ſo.* 'Twas never intended that you ſhould *rule*, any otherwiſe than by the Power of Truth and Grace, but that you ſhould *ſerve*. When Church-Rulers affect external Pomp and Power, and bear up themſelves by ſecular Intereſts and Influences, they debaſe their Office, and it is an Inſtance of Degeneracy like that of *Iſrael*, when they would have a King like the Nations that were round about them, whereas the Lord was their King.

See here, (1.) What is the Rule Chriſt gave to his Diſciples. He that is *greater among you*, that is *Senior*, to whom Precedency is due upon the Account of his Age, let him be as the *Younger*; both in Point of *Lowneſs of Place*, let him condeſcend to ſit with the Younger, and be free and familiar with them; and in Point of *Labour* and *Work*. We uſed to ſay, *Juniores ad Labores, Seniores ad Honores*; but let the Elder take Pains as well as the Younger; their Age and Honour, inſtead of warranting them to take their Eaſe, binds them to double Work. And he *that is Chief*, the ὁ ἡγούμενος the *Preſident* of the College or Aſſembly, let him be *as he that* doth ſerve, ὡς ὁ διακονῶν as the *Deacon*, let him ſtoop to the meaneſt and moſt toilſome Services for the publick Good, if there be Occaſion.

(2.) What was the Example which he himſelf gave to this Rule. *Whether is greater, he that ſitteth at Meat, or he that ſerveth?* He that attendeth, or he that is attended on? Now Chriſt was among his Diſciples, juſt like one that waited at Table; he was ſo far from *taking State*, or *taking his Eaſe*, by commanding their Attendance upon him, that he was ready to do any Office of Kindneſs and Service for them; witneſs his *waſhing* their Feet. Shall they take upon them the Form of Princes, who call themſelves Followers of him, that *took upon him the Form of a Servant*?

They ought not to ſtrive for worldly Honour and Grandeur, becauſe he had better Honours in Reſerve for them of another Nature, a *Kingdom*, a *Feaſt*, a *Throne* for each of them, wherein they ſhould be all Share and Share alike, and ſhould have no Occaſion to ſtrive for Precedency, *v.* 28, 29. Where obſerve,

1. The Commendation Chriſt gives of his Diſciples for their Faithfulneſs to him, and this was Honour enough for them, they needed not to ſtrive for any greater. 'Tis ſpoken with an Air of Encomium and Applauſe, *Ye are they which have continued with me in my Temptation*; you are they which have ſtood by me, and ſtuck to me, when others have deſerted me, and turned their Backs upon me. Chriſt had his Temptations, he was deſpis'd and rejected of Men, reproach'd and revil'd, and *endur'd the Contradiction of Sinners*. But his Diſciples continued with him, and were afflicted in all his Afflictions. 'Twas but little Help that they could give him, or Service that they could do him, but however he took it kindly that they *continued with him*, and he here owns their Kindneſs, tho' it was by the Aſſiſtance of his own Grace that they did continue. Chriſt's Diſciples had been very defective in their Duty; we find them guilty of many Miſtakes and Weakneſſes, they were very dull, and very forgetful, and often blunder'd, yet their Maſter has paſs'd all by and forgotten it, doth not upbraid them with their Infirmities, but gives them this memorable Teſtimonial, *Ye are they which have continued with me.* Thus doth he praiſe at parting, to ſhew how willing he is to make the beſt of thoſe, whoſe Hearts he knows to be upright with him.

2. The Recompence he deſign'd them for their Fidelity; And *I appoint*, διατίθεμαι *I bequeath unto you a Kingdom.* Or thus, *I appoint to you, as my Father has appointed a Kingdom to me, that you may eat and drink at my Table.* Underſtand it,

1. Of what ſhould be done for them in this World. God gave his Son a *Kingdom among Men*, the Goſpel Church, which he is the living, quickning, ruling Head of; this *Kingdom* he *appointed* to his Apoſtles and their Succeſſors in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, that they ſhould enjoy the Comforts and Privileges of the Goſpel, and help to communicate them to others by Goſpel Ordinances; and ſhould ſit on Thrones as Officers of the Church, not only declaratively, but as exhortatively *judging the Tribes of Iſrael*, that perſiſt in their Infidelity, and denouncing the Wrath of God againſt them; and ruling the Goſpel *Iſrael*, the ſpiritual *Iſrael*, by the inſtituted Diſcipline of the Church, adminiſtred with Gentleneſs and Love. This is the Honour reſerv'd for you. Or,

2. Of what ſhould be done for them in the other World; which I take to be chiefly meant. Let them go on in their Services in this World, their Preferments ſhall be in the other World; God will give them *the Kingdom*, in which they ſhall be ſure to have, (1.) The *richeſt Dainties*, for they ſhall *eat and drink at Chriſt's Table in his Kingdom*, of which he had ſpoken, *v.* 16, 18. They ſhall partake of thoſe Joys and Pleaſures, which were the Recompence of his Services and Sufferings. They ſhall have a full Satisfaction of Soul, in the Viſion and Fruition of God; and herein they ſhall have the beſt Society, as at a Feaſt, in the Perfection. (2.) The *higheſt Dignities*. You ſhall not only be provided for at the Royal Table, as *Mephiboſheth* at *David's*, but you ſhall be preferred to the Royal Throne; ſhall *ſit down with me on my Throne*, Rev. 3. 21. In the great Day you ſhall *ſit on Thrones*, as Aſſeſſors with Chriſt, to approve of, and applaud his Judgment of the *Twelve Tribes of Iſrael*. If the *Saints ſhall judge the World*, 1 Cor. 6. 2. much more the Church.

Thirdly, Concerning *Peter's* denying of him. And in this Part of the Diſcourſe, we may obſerve,

1. The General Notice Chriſt gives to *Peter* of the Devil's Deſign upon him and the reſt of the Apoſtles, *v.* 31. *The Lord ſaid, Simon, Simon,* obſerve what I ſay, *Satan has deſired to have you*, to have you all in his Hands, *that he may ſift you as Wheat*. *Peter* that uſed to be the Mouth of the reſt in ſpeaking to Chriſt, is here made the Ear of the reſt, and what is deſign'd for Warning to them all, *All you ſhall be offended becauſe of me*, is directed to *Peter*, becauſe he was principally concern'd, being in a particular Manner ſtruck at by the Tempter. *Satan has deſired to have you.* Probably *Satan* had *accus'd* the Diſciples to God, as mercenary in following Chriſt, and aiming at nothing elſe therein, but enriching and advancing themſelves in this World, as he accus'd *Job*: No, ſaith God, they are honeſt Men, and Men of Integrity; give me leave to try them, ſaith *Satan*, and *Peter* particularly. He deſired to have them, *that he might ſift them*, that he might ſhew them to be Chaff, and not Wheat. The Troubles that were now coming upon them were *ſifting*, wou'd try what there was in them: But that was not all, *Satan* deſired to ſift them by his Temptations, and endeavouring by thoſe Troubles to draw them into Sin; to put them into a Loſs and Hurry, as Corn when it is ſifted, to bring the Chaff uppermoſt, or rather, to ſhake out the Wheat and leave nothing but the Chaff. Obſerve, Satan could not ſift them, unleſs God gave him leave; he *deſired to have them*, as he begg'd of God a Permiſſion to try and tempt *Job*; ἐξητήσατο *he hath challenged you*, has undertaken to prove you a Company of Hypocrites, and *Peter* eſpecially, the forwardeſt of you. Some ſuggeſt, that Satan demanded leave to ſift them, as their Puniſhment for ſtriving who ſhould be greateſt, in which Conteſt, *Peter* perhaps was very warm. Leave them to me to ſift them for it.

3. The particular Encouragement he gave to *Peter* in Reference to this Trial; *I have prayed for thee*, becauſe, tho' he deſired to have them all, he was permitted to make his ſtrongeſt Onſet upon thee only; thou wilt be moſt violently aſſaulted, *but I have prayed for thee that thy Faith fail not*, that it may not totally and finally fail. *Note*, (1.) If Faith be kept up in an Hour of Temptation, tho' we may fall, yet we ſhall not be utterly caſt down. Faith will quench Satan's fiery Darts. (2.) Tho' there may be many Failings in the Faith of true Believers, yet there ſhall not be a total and final Failure of their Faith. 'Tis their Seed, their Root remaining in them. (3.) 'Tis owing to the Mediation and Interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, that the Faith of his Diſciples, tho' ſometimes ſadly ſhaken, yet is not ſunk. If they were left to themſelves, they would fail, but they are *kept by the Power of God*, and the Prayer of Chriſt. The Interceſſion of Chriſt is not only general, for all that believe, but for *particular* Believers, I have pray'd *for thee*; which is an Encouragement for us to pray for ourſelves, and an Engagement upon us to pray for others too.

3. The Charge he gives to *Peter* to help others, as he ſhould himſelf be helped of God, *When thou art converted, ſtrengthen thy Brethren*; when thou art recovered by the Grace of God, and brought to Repentance, do what thou canſt to recover others; when thou haſt found thy Faith kept from failing, labour to confirm the Faith of others, and to eſtabliſh them: When thou haſt found Mercy with God thyſelf, encourage others to hope that they alſo ſhall find Mercy. *Note*, 1. Thoſe that are fallen into Sin, muſt be *converted from it*; that have turn'd aſide, muſt *return*; that have left their firſt Love, muſt do their firſt Works. 2. Thoſe that through Grace are converted from Sin, muſt do what they can to ſtrengthen their Brethren that ſtand, and to prevent *their Falling*. See *Pſal.* 51. 11, 12, 13. 1 *Tim.* 1. 13.

4. *Peter's* declar'd Reſolution to cleave to Chriſt, whatever it coſt him, *v.* 33. *Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into Priſon and to Death.* This was a great Word, and yet I believe no more than he thought at this Time, and thought he ſhould *make good* too. *Judas* never proteſted thus againſt denying Chriſt, tho' often warn'd of it; for his Heart was as fully ſet in him *to* the Evil, as *Peter's* was againſt it. *Note*, All the true Diſciples of Chriſt ſincerely deſire and deſign to *follow him whitherſoever he goes*, and whitherſoever he leads them, tho' into a Priſon, tho' out of the World.

5. Chriſt's expreſs Prediction of his denying him thrice, *v.* 34. *I tell thee, Peter*, thou doſt not know thine own Heart, but muſt be left to thyſelf a little, that thou mayſt know it, and mayſt never truſt to it again; and then, the *Cock ſhall not crow this Day, before thou even deny that thou knoweſt me.* *Note*, Chriſt knows us better than we know ourſelves, and knows the Evil that is in us, and will be done by us, which we ourſelves do not ſuſpect. 'Tis well for us, that Chriſt knows where we are weak, better than we do, and therefore where to come in with Grace ſufficient; that he knows how far a Temptation will prevail, and therefore when to ſay, *Hitherto ſhall it come, and no further.*

Fourthly, Concerning the Condition of all the Diſciples.

1. He appeals to them concerning what had been, *v.* 35. He had own'd that they had been faithful Servants to him, *v.* 28. now he expects at parting, that they ſhould acknowlegde that he

had been a kind and careful Maſter to them, ever ſince they left all to follow him. *When I ſent you without Purſe, lacked you any Thing?* (1.) He owns that he had ſent them out in a very poor and bare Condition, bare-foot, and no Money in their Purſes, becauſe they were not to go far, nor be out long, and he would thus teach them to depend upon the Providence of God; and under that, upon the Kindneſs of their Friends. If God thus ſend us out into the World, remember, Better than we have thus begun low. (2.) Yet he will have them own, that notwithſtanding this, they had *lacked nothing*; they then liv'd as plentifully and comfortably as ever; and they readily acknowledg'd it, *Nothing, Lord,* I have all, and abound. *Note,* 1. 'Tis good for us often to review the Providences of God that have been concerning us all our Days, and to obſerve how we have got thro' the Streights and Difficulties we have met with. 2. Chriſt is a good Maſter, and his Service a good Service, for tho' his Servants may ſometimes be brought low, yet he will help them; and tho' he *try* them, yet will not he leave them. *Jehovah Jireh.* 3. We muſt reckon ourſelves well done by, and muſt not complain, but be thankful if we have had the neceſſary Supports of Life, tho' we have had neither Dainties nor Superfluities, tho' we have lived from Hand to Mouth, and lived upon the Kindneſs of our Friends. The Diſciples lived upon Contributions, and yet did not complain that their Maintenance was precarious; but owned, to their Maſter's Honour, that 'twas ſufficient, they had wanted nothing.

2. He gives them Notice of a very great Change of their Circumſtances now approaching. For,

1. He that was their Maſter was now entring upon his Suffering, which he had often foretold, *v.* 37. *Now that which is written muſt be fulfilled in me*; that among the reſt, *He was numbered among the Tranſgreſſors*; he muſt ſuffer and die as a Malefactor, and in Company with ſome of the Vileſt of Malefactors. This is that which is *yet to be accompliſhed,* after all the reſt, and then *the Things concerning me,* the Things written concerning me, will have an End; then I ſhall ſay, *'Tis finiſhed. Note,* It may be the Comfort of ſuffering Chriſtians, as 'twas of a ſuffering Chriſt, that their Sufferings were foretold and *determined* in the Counſels of Heaven, and will ſhortly *determine* in the Joys of Heaven. They were *written* concerning them, and they *will have an End,* and will end well, everlaſtingly well.

2. They muſt therefore expect Troubles, and muſt not think now to have ſuch an eaſy fair Life as you have had; no, the Scene will alter. They muſt now in ſome Degree ſuffer *with* their Maſter, and when he is gone they muſt expect to ſuffer *like* him. The Servant is no better than his Lord. 1. They muſt not now expect that their Friends would be ſo kind and generous to them as they had been, and therefore *he that has a Purſe let him take it,* for he may have Occaſion for it, and for all the good Huſbandry he can uſe. (2.) They muſt now expect that their Enemies would be more fierce upon them, than they had been, and they would need Magazines as well as Stores. *He that has no Sword* wherewith to defend himſelf againſt Robbers and Aſſaſſins, (2 *Cor.* 11. 26.) will find a great Want of it, and will be ready to wiſh ſome time or other, that he had ſold his Garment and bought one. This is intended only to ſhew the Times would be perillous, ſo that no Man would think himſelf ſafe if he had not a Sword by his Side. But the *Sword of the Spirit* is the Sword which the Diſciples of Chriſt muſt furniſh themſelves with; *Chriſt having ſuffered for us,* we muſt *arm ourſelves* with the ſame Mind, 1 *Pet.* 4. 1. arm ourſelves with an Expectation of Trouble, that it may not be a Surprize to us, and with a Holy Reſignation to the Will of God in it, that there may be no Contradiction in us to it. And then we are better prepared than if we had ſold a Coat to buy a Sword. The Diſciples hereupon enquire what Strength they had, and find they had among them *Two Swords,* v. 38. of which One was *Peter's.* The *Galileans* generally travelled with Swords. Chriſt wore none himſelf, but he was not againſt his Diſciples wearing them. But how little he would have them depend upon that, he intimates, when he ſaith, *'tis enough.* Which ſome think is ſpoken ironically. Two Swords among Twelve Men, you are bravely armed indeed, when our Enemies are now coming out againſt us in great Multitudes, and every one a Sword: Yet Two Swords are enow to thoſe who need none, having God himſelf to be *the Shield of their Help, and the Sword of their Excellency,* Deut. 32. 29.

39 ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his diſciples alſo followed him. 40 And when he was at the place, he ſaid unto them, Pray, that ye enter not into temptation. 41 And he was withdrawn from them about a ſtone's caſt, and kneeled down, and prayed, 42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheleſs, not my will, but thine be done. 43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, ſtrengthening him. 44 And being in an agony, he prayed more earneſtly: and his ſweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. 45 And when he roſe up from prayer, and was come to his diſciples, he found them ſleeping for ſorrow, 46 And ſaid unto them, Why ſleep ye? riſe and pray, leſt ye enter into temptation.

We have here the awful Story of Chriſt's *Agony in the Garden* juſt before he was betray'd, which was largely related by the other Evangeliſts. In it Chriſt *accommodated himſelf* to that Part of his Undertaking which he was now entring upon, the making of *his Soul an Offering for Sin:* He afflicted his own Soul with Grief for the Sin he was to ſatisfy for, and an Apprehenſion of the Wrath of God, to which Man had by Sin made himſelf obnoxious, which he was pleas'd as a Sacrifice to admit the Impreſſions of; the conſuming of a Sacrifice with Fire from Heaven, being the ſureſt Token of its Acceptance. In it, Chriſt entered the Liſts with the Powers of Darkneſs, gave them all the Advantages they could deſire, and yet conquer'd them.

That which we have here in this Story, which we had before, is, (1.) That when Chriſt went out, tho' 'twas in the Night, and a long Walk, yet *his Diſciples followed him,* Eleven of them, for *Judas* had given them the ſlip. Having continued with him hitherto in his Temptations, they would not leave him now. (2.) That he went to the Place *where he was wont* to be private, which intimates that Chriſt accuſtomed himſelf to Retirement, was oft alone, to teach us to be ſo, for Freedom of Converſe with God and our own Hearts. Tho' Chriſt had no Conveniency for Retirement, but a Garden, yet he retired. This ſhould particularly be our Practice, after we have been at the Lord's-Table; we have then Work to do, which requires us to be private. (3.) That he exhorted his Diſciples to *pray,* that tho' the approaching Tryal could not be avoided, yet that they might not in it *enter into Temptation* to Sin; that when they were in the greateſt Fright and Danger, yet they might not have any Inclination to deſert Chriſt, nor take a Step towards it. Pray that ye may be *kept from Sin.* (4.) That he withdrew from them and prayed himſelf; they had their Errands at the Throne of Grace, and he had his, and therefore 'twas fit they ſhould pray ſeparately, as ſometimes, when they had joint Errands, they prayed together. He withdrew about a *Stone's Caſt* further into the Garden, which ſome reckon about 50 or 60 Paces, and there he *kneeled down,* ſo 'tis here, upon the bare Ground; but the other Evangeliſts ſay, that afterwards he *fell on his Face,* and there *prayed,* that if it were the Will of God this Cup of Suffering, this bitter Cup, might be *removed from him.* This was the Language of that innocent Dread of Suffering, which, being really and truly Man, he could not but have in his Nature. (5.) That he knowing it to be his Father's Will that he ſhould ſuffer and die; and that as the Matter was now ſettled, it was neceſſary for our Redemption and Salvation, preſently withdrew that Petition, did not inſiſt upon it, but reſigned himſelf to his heavenly Father's Will: *Nevertheleſs not my will be done*; not the Will of my Human Nature, but the Will of God, as it is written concerning me in the Volume of the Book, *which I delight to do,* Let that be done, *Pſal.* 40. 7, 8. (6.) That his Diſciples were *aſleep,* when he was at Prayer, and when they ſhould have been themſelves praying, *v.* 45. When he *roſe from Prayer he found them ſleeping,* unconcerned in his Sorrows: But ſee what a favourable Conſtruction is here put upon it, which we had not in the other Evangeliſts, they were *ſleeping for Sorrow.* The great Sorrow they were in upon the mournful Farewels their Maſter had been this Evening giving them, had exhauſted their Spirits, and made them very dull and heavy, which (it being now late) diſpoſed them to ſleep. This teacheth us to make the beſt of our Brethrens Infirmities, and if there be one Cauſe better than another, charitably impute them to that. (7.) That when he waked them, then he exhorted them to pray, *v.* 46. *Why ſleep ye?* Why do you allow yourſelves to ſleep, *riſe and pray. Shake off* your Drowſineſs, that you may be *fit to pray;* and *pray for Grace,* that you may be able to *ſhake off* your Drowſineſs. This was like the Ship-Maſter's Call to *Jonah* in a Storm, *Jonah* 1. 6. *Ariſe, call upon thy God.* When we find ourſelves, either by our outward Circumſtances, or inward Diſpoſitions, entring into Temptation, it concerns us to *riſe and pray,* Lord help me in this *Time of Need.*

But here are three Things in this Paſſage, which we had not in the other Evangeliſts.

1. That when Chriſt was in his Agony, *there appeared* to him *an Angel from Heaven, ſtrengthening him,* v. 43. (1.) It was an Inſtance of the deep Humiliation of our Lord Jeſus, that he *needed* the Aſſiſtance of an Angel, and would *admit* it. The Influence of the Divine Nature withdrew for the preſent, and then as to his Human Nature he was for a little while *lower than the Angels,* and was capable of receiving Help from them. (2.) When he was not delivered from his Sufferings, yet he was *ſtrengthened* and ſupported under them, and that was *equivalent.* If God proportion the Shoulders to the Burthen, we ſhall have no Reaſon to complain, whatever he is pleaſed to lay upon us. *David* owns this a ſufficient *Anſwer to his Prayer,* in the Day of Trouble, that God ſtrengthened him with ſtrength in his Soul, and ſo doth the Son of *David,* Pſal. 138. 3. (3.) The Angels

miniſter'd to the Lord Jeſus in his Sufferings: He could have had Legions of them to reſcue him; nay, this one could have done it, could have chas'd and conquer'd the whole Band of Men that came to take him; but he made Uſe of his Miniſtration only to *ſtrengthen him*; and the very Viſit which this Angel made him now, in his Grief, when his Enemies were awake, and his Friends aſleep, was ſuch a ſeaſonable Token of the Divine Favour, as would be a very great ſtrengthening to him. Yet this was not all: He probably *ſaid ſomething to him* to *ſtrengthen* him; put him in mind that his Sufferings were in order to his Father's Glory, to his own Glory, and to the Salvation of thoſe that were given him, repreſented to him the *Joy ſet before him*, the *Seed* he ſhould *ſee*; with theſe and the like Suggeſtions he encourag'd him to go on chearfully, and what is comforting is ſtrengthening. Perhaps he *did ſomething* to *ſtrengthen him*, wiped away his Sweat and Tears, perhaps miniſter'd ſome Cordial to him, as after his Temptation, or it may be, took him by the Arm and help'd him off the Ground, or bore him up when he was ready to faint away; and in theſe Services of the Angel, the holy Spirit was ἐνισχύων ἀυτὸν, *putting Strength into him*, for ſo the Word ſignifies. *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him*, indeed, yet, *did he plead againſt him with his great Power?* No, but he *put ſtrength in him*, Job. 23. 6. as he had promis'd, *Pſal.* 89. 21. *Iſa.* 49. 8.—50. 7.

2. That *being in an Agony he prayed more earneſtly*, v. 54. As his Sorrow and Trouble grew upon him, he grew more importunate in Prayer; not that there was before any Coldneſs or Indifferency in his Prayers, but there was now a greater Vehemency in them, which was expreſs'd in his Voice and Geſture. *Note*, Prayer, tho' never out of Seaſon, is in a ſpecial Manner ſeaſonable when we are in an Agony; and the ſtronger our Agonies are, the more lively and frequent our Prayers ſhould be. Now it was that Chriſt offer'd up Prayers and Supplications with ſtrong Crying and Tears, and was heard in that he fear'd, *Heb.* 5. 7. and in his Fear *wreſtled*, as *Jacob* with the Angel.

3. That in this Agony *his Sweat was as it were great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground.* Sweat came in with Sin, and was a Branch of the Curſe, *Gen.* 3. 19. And therefore when Chriſt was made Sin, and a Curſe for us, he underwent a grievous Sweat, that *in the Sweat of his Face* we might eat Bread, and that he might ſanctify and ſweeten all our Tryals to us. 'Tis ſome Diſpute among the Criticks, whether this *Sweat* is only *compar'd to* Drops of *Blood*, being much *thicker* than Drops of Sweat commonly are, the Pores of the Body being more than ordinarily open'd: Or, that *real* Blood out of the Capillary Veins mingled with it, ſo that 'twas in colour like Blood, and might truly be call'd a *Bloody Sweat*; the Matter is not great. Some reckon this One of the Times when Chriſt *ſhed his Blood* for us, for without ſhedding of Blood no Remiſſion. Every Pore was, as it were, a bleeding Wound, and his Blood ſtain'd all his Raiment. This ſhew'd the *Travail of his Soul.* He was now abroad in the open Air, in a cool Seaſon, upon the cold Ground, far in the Night, which one would think had been enough to ſtrike in a Sweat, yet now he breaks out into a Sweat; which ſpeaks the Extremity of the Agony he was in.

47 ¶ And while he yet ſpake, behold, a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jeſus, to kiſs him. 48 But Jeſus ſaid unto him, Judas, betrayeſt thou the Son of man with a kiſs? 49 When they which were about him, ſaw what would follow, they ſaid unto him, Lord, ſhall we ſmite with the ſword? 50 ¶ And one of them ſmote the ſervant of the high prieſt, and cut off his right ear. 51 And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him. 52 Then Jeſus ſaid unto the chief prieſts, and captains of the temple, and the elders which were come to him, Be ye come out as againſt a thief, with ſwords and ſtaves? 53 When I was daily with you in the temple, ye ſtretched forth no hands againſt me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkneſs.

Satan finding himſelf baffled in his Attempt to terrify our Lord Jeſus, and ſo to put him out of the Poſſeſſion of his own Soul, betakes himſelf (according to his uſual Method) to Force and Arms, and brings a Party into the Field to ſeize him, and Satan was *in them*: Here's,

1. The marking of him by *Judas*. Here's a numerous Party appears, and *Judas* at the Head of them, for he was *Guide to them that took Jeſus*; they knew not where to *find him*: but he brought them to the Place; when they were there, they knew not which was he; but *Judas* told them that whoever he ſhould kiſs, that ſame was he, ſo he *drew near to him to kiſs him*, according to the wonted Freedom and Familiarity which our Lord Jeſus admitted his Diſciples to. *Luke* takes notice of the Queſtion Chriſt ask'd him, which we have not in the other Evangeliſts, *Judas, Betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs*? What, is that the Signal? *v.* 48. Muſt the Son of Man be *betrayed*, as if any Thing could be conceal'd from him, and a Plot carry'd on againſt him unknown to him? Muſt one of his own Diſciples betray him, as if he had been a hard Maſter to them, or deſerv'd ill at their Hands? Muſt he be betray'd with a Kiſs? Muſt the Badge of Friendſhip be the Inſtrument of Treachery? Was ever a Love-Token ſo deſecrated and abus'd? *Note*, Nothing can be a greater Affront or Grief to the Lord Jeſus, than to be betray'd, and betray'd with a Kiſs by thoſe that profeſs Relation to him, and an Affection for him. Thoſe do ſo, who under pretence of Zeal for his Honour, perſecute his Servants, who, under the Cloke of a ſeeming Affection for the Honour of Free Grace, give a Blow to the Root of Holineſs, and Strictneſs of Converſation. Many Inſtances there are of Chriſt's being betray'd with a Kiſs, by thoſe who, under the Form of Godlineſs, fight againſt the Power of it. 'Twere well if their own Conſciences would put this Queſtion to them which Chriſt here puts to *Judas*, *Betrayeſt thou the Son of Man with a Kiſs?* And will he not reſent it? Will he not revenge it?

2. The Effort which his Diſciples made for his Protection, *v.* 49. *When they ſaw what would follow*, that thoſe armed Men were come to ſeize him, they ſaid, *Lord, ſhall we ſmite with the Sword?* Thou didſt allow us to *have* Two Swords, ſhall we now make uſe of them? Never more Occaſion; and to what Purpoſe ſhould we have them if we do not uſe them? They ask'd the Queſtion, as if they would not have drawn the Sword without Commiſſion from their Maſter; but they were in too much *Haſte*, and too much *Heat* to ſtay for an Anſwer: But *Peter* aiming at the Head of one of the *Servants* of the *High Prieſt*, miſs'd his Blow, and *cut off his right Ear.* As Chriſt, by throwing them to the Ground that came to take him, ſhew'd what he could have done, ſo *Peter* by this Exploit ſhew'd what he would have done too in ſo good a Cauſe, if he had had leave. The other Evangeliſts tell us what was the Check Chriſt gave to *Peter* for it. *Luke* here tells us, (1.) How Chriſt excus'd the Blow, *Suffer ye thus far*, *v.* 51. Dr. *Whitby* thinks he ſaid this to his Enemies, who came to take him, to qualify them, that they might not be provok'd by it to fall upon the Diſciples, whom he had undertaken the Preſervation of. *Paſs by* this Injury and Affront, 'twas without Warrant from me, and there ſhall not be another Blow ſtruck: Tho' Chriſt had Power to have ſtruck them down, and ſtruck them dead, yet he *ſpeaks them fair*, and, as it were, *begs their Pardon* for an Aſſault made upon them by one of his Followers, to teach us to give good Words even to our Enemies. (2.) How he cur'd the Wound, which was more than amends ſufficient for the Injury: *He touched his Ear, and healed him*; faſten'd his Ear on again, that he might not ſo much as go away *ſtigmatiz'd*, tho' he well deſerv'd it. Chriſt hereby gave them a Proof: (1.) Of his Power: He that could *heal*, could *deſtroy*, if he pleas'd, which ſhould have oblig'd them in Intereſt to ſubmit to him. Had they return'd the Blow upon *Peter*, he would immediately have heal'd him; and what could not a ſmall Regiment do, that had ſuch a Surgeon to it, immediately to help the *Sick* and *Wounded.* (2.) Of his Mercy and Goodneſs: Chriſt here gave an illuſtrious Example to his own Rule of *doing Good* to *them that hate us*, as afterwards he did of *praying for them that deſpitefully uſe us.* Thoſe who render Good for Evil, do as Chriſt did. One would have thought this generous Piece of Kindneſs ſhould have overcome them, that ſuch Coals heap'd on their Heads ſhould have *melted them*, that they could not have bound him as a Malefactor, who had approved himſelf ſuch a Benefactor; but their Hearts were harden'd.

3. Chriſt's Expoſtulation with the Officers of the Detachment that came to apprehend him, to ſhew what an abſurd Thing it was for them to make all this Rout and Noiſe, *v.* 52, 53. *Matthew* relates it as ſaid to *the Multitude*: *Luke* tells us 'twas ſaid to the *Chief Prieſts and Captains of the Temple*, who commanded the ſeveral Orders of the Prieſts, and therefore are here put between the *Chief Prieſts* and *the Elders*, ſo that they were all Eccleſiaſticks, Retainers to the Temple, who were employ'd in this odious Piece of Service; and ſome of the firſt Rank too diſparag'd themſelves ſo far as to be ſeen in it. Now ſee here,

1. How Chriſt *reaſons* with them concerning their Proceedings: What needed they come out in the dead of the Night, and *with Swords and Staves.* (1.) They knew that he was one that would not *reſiſt*, or raiſe the Mob againſt them, he never had done any Thing like that: Why then *are ye come out as againſt a Thief*? (2.) They knew he was one that would not *abſcond*, for he was daily with *them* in the *Temple*, in the midſt of them, and never ſought to conceal himſelf, nor did they offer to lay Hands on him. Before his Hour was come, 'twas Folly for them to think to take him, and when his Hour was come, it was Folly for them to make all this ado to take him.

2. How he reconciles himſelf to their Proceedings; and this we had not before. *But this is your Hour, and the Power of Darkneſs.* How hard ſoever it may ſeem, that I ſhould be thus expos'd, I ſubmit, for ſo 'tis *determin'd*; this is the Hour *allowed you*, to have your Will againſt me, there is an Hour *appointed*

me to reckon for it. Now the *Power of Darkneſs*, Satan the *Ruler of the Darkneſs of this World*, is permitted to do his worſt, to bruiſe the Heel of the Seed of the Woman, and I reſolve to acquieſce; let him do his worſt. *The Lord ſhall laugh at him, for he ſees that his Day*, his Hour *is coming*, Pſal. 37. 13. Let this quiet us under the Prevalency of the Church's Enemies; let it quiet us in a dying Hour, That (1.) 'tis but an *Hour* that's permitted for the Triumph of our Adverſary, a ſhort Time, a limited Time. (2.) 'Tis *their Hour*, which is appointed them, and in which they are permitted to try their Strength, that Omnipotence may be the more glorify'd in their Fall. (3.) 'Tis the *Power of Darkneſs* that *rides Maſter*, and Darkneſs muſt give Way to Light, and the Power of Darkneſs be made to truckle to the Prince of Light. Christ was willing to wait for his Triumphs till his Warfare was accompliſh'd, and we muſt be ſo too.

54 ¶ Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high prieſt's houſe. And Peter followed afar off. 55 And when they had kindled a fire in the midſt of the hall, and were ſet down together, Peter ſat down among them. 56 But a certain maid beheld him as he ſat by the fire, and earneſtly looked upon him, and ſaid, This man was alſo with him. 57 And he denied him, ſaying, Woman, I know him not. 58 And after a little while another ſaw him, and ſaid, Thou art alſo of them. And Peter ſaid, Man, I am not. 59 And about the ſpace of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, ſaying, Of a truth this *fellow* alſo was with him; for he is a Galilean. 60 And Peter ſaid, Man, I know not what thou ſayeſt. And immediately while he yet ſpake, the cock crew. 61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembred the word of the Lord, how he had ſaid unto him, Before the cock crow, thou ſhalt deny me thrice. 62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

We have here the melancholy Story of *Peter*'s denying his Maſter, at the Time when he was arraign'd before the High Prieſt, with thoſe that were of the *Cabal*, that were ready to receive the Prey, and to prepare the Evidence for his Arraignment, *as ſoon as it was Day*, before the *great* Sanhedrin, *v.* 66. But Notice is not taken here, as was in the other Evangeliſts, of Chriſt's being now upon his Examination before the High Prieſt, only of his being brought into *the High Prieſt's Houſe*, v. 54. But the Manner of Expreſſion is obſervable, they *took him, and led him, and brought him*; which, methinks, is like that concerning *Saul*, 1 Sam. 15. 13. *He is gone about, and paſſed on, and gone down*; and intimates that even when they had ſeiz'd their Prey, they were in Confuſion, and for fear of the People, or rather ſtruck with inward Terror, upon what they had ſeen and heard; they took him the furtheſt Way about, or rather knew not which Way they hurry'd him, ſuch a hurry were they in, in their own Boſoms. Now obſerve,

1. *Peter*'s Falling. (1.) It began in *Sneaking*. He *follow'd Chriſt* when he was had away Priſoner, that was well, and ſhew'd a Concern for his Maſter? but he follow'd *afar off*, that he might be out of Danger. He thought to Trim the Matter; to *follow Chriſt*, and ſo to ſatisfy his Conſcience; but to follow *afar off*, and ſo to ſave his Reputation, and ſleep in a whole Skin. (2.) It proceeded in keeping his Diſtance ſtill, and aſſociating himſelf with the High Prieſt's Servants, when he ſhould have been at his Maſter's Elbow. The *Servants kindled a Fire in the midſt of the Hall*, and *ſat down together* to talk over their Night-Expedition. Probably *Malchus* was among them, and *Peter ſat down among them*, as if he had been one of them, at leaſt would be thought to be ſo. (3.) His Fall itſelf was diſclaiming all Acquaintance with Chriſt, and Relation to him, diſowning him, becauſe he was now in Diſtreſs and Danger. He was charg'd by a ſorry ſimple Maid, that belong'd to the Houſe, with being a Retainer to this *Jeſus*, about whom there was now ſo much Noiſe: She *look'd wiſtly* upon him as he *ſat by the Fire*, only becauſe he was a Stranger, and one whom ſhe had not ſeen before; and concluding that at this Time of Night there were no Neuters there, and knowing him not to be any of the Retinue of the High Prieſt, ſhe concludes him to be one of the Retinue of this Jeſus; or perhaps ſhe had been ſome time or other looking about her in the Temple, and had ſeen *Jeſus* there, and *Peter* with him, officious about him, and remember'd him; *and this Man was with him*, ſaith ſhe. And *Peter*, as he had not the Courage to *own* the Charge, ſo he had not the Wit and Preſence of Mind to *turn it off*, as he might have done many Ways, and therefore flat and plain denies it, *Woman, I know him not.* (4.) His Fall was repeated a *ſecond* Time, *v.* 58. *After a little while*, before he had Time to recollect himſelf, *another ſaw him*, and ſaid, *Even thou art one of them*, as ſlily as thou ſitteſt here among the High Prieſt's Servants: *Not I*, ſaith *Peter*, *Man I am not*. And a *third* Time, *about the ſpace of an Hour after*; for, ſaith the Tempter, when he is down, down with him; let us follow the Blow, till we get him paſt Recovery; *Another* confidently affirms, *ſtrenuouſly* aſſerts it, *Of a truth this Fellow alſo was with him*, let him deny it if he can, for you may all perceive *he is a* Galilean. But he that has once told a Lye is ſtrongly tempted to perſiſt in it, the *beginning of* that *Sin is as the letting forth of Water*. *Peter* now not only denies that he is a Diſciple of Chriſt, but that he knows any Thing of him, *v.* 60. *Man, I know not what thou ſayeſt*, I never heard of this Jeſus.

2. *Peter's getting up again.* See how happily he recover'd himſelf, or rather the Grace of God recover'd him. See how 'twas brought about,

1. The *Cock crew*, juſt as he was the third Time denying that he knew Chriſt; and this ſtartled him, and put him upon thinking. *Note*, Small Accidents may have great Influences.

2. *The Lord turn'd and look'd upon him.* This Circumſtance we had not in the other Evangeliſts, but it is a very remarkable one. Chriſt is here call'd *the Lord*, for there was much of Divine Knowledge, Power and Grace appearing in this. Obſerve, tho' Chriſt had now his Back upon *Peter*, and was upon his Tryal, when one would think he had ſomething elſe to mind, yet he knew all that *Peter* ſaid. *Note*, Chriſt takes more Notice of what we ſay and do, than we think he doth; when *Peter* diſown'd Chriſt, yet Chriſt did not diſown him, tho' he might juſtly have caſt him off, and never look'd upon him more, but have deny'd him before his Father. 'Tis well for us that Chriſt doth not deal with us as we deal with him. Chriſt *look'd upon Peter*, not doubting but that *Peter* would ſoon be aware of it; for he knew, that tho' he had deny'd him with his Lips, yet his Eye would ſtill be towards him. Obſerve, tho' *Peter* had now been guilty of a very great Offence, and which was very provoking, yet Chriſt would not *call to him*, leſt he ſhould *ſhame* him or *expoſe* him, only gave him *a Look*, which none but *Peter* would underſtand the Meaning of, and it had a great deal in it. (1.) It was a *convincing* Look. *Peter* ſaid, he did not *know Chriſt*; Chriſt *turn'd and look'd upon him*, as if he ſhould ſay, Doſt thou not know me, *Peter*? Look me in the Face and tell me ſo. (2.) It was a *chiding* Look; we may ſuppoſe he look'd upon him, and *frown'd*, or ſome way ſignified his Diſpleaſure. Let us think with what an angry Countenance Chriſt juſtly looks upon us, when we have ſinn'd. (3.) It was an *expoſtulating* upbraiding Look. What, *Peter*, art thou he that diſowneſt me now, when thou ſhouldſt come and witneſs for me? What, thou a Diſciple! thou that waſt the moſt forward to confeſs me to be the Son of God, and didſt ſolemnly promiſe thou wouldſt never diſown me! (4.) It was a *compaſſionate* Look; he look'd upon him with Tenderneſs; Poor *Peter*, how weak is thine Heart! how art thou fallen and undone, if I do not help thee! (5.) It was a *directing* Look; Chriſt *guided him with his Eye*, gave him a Wink to go out from that ſorry Company, to *retire*, and bethink himſelf a little, and then he would ſoon ſee what he had to do. (6.) It was a ſignificant Look: It ſignified the conveying of Grace to *Peter*'s Heart to enable him to repent: The Crowing of the Cock would not have brought him to Repentance without this Look; nor will the external Means, without ſpecial efficacious Grace. Power went along with this Look to change the Heart of *Peter*, and to bring him to himſelf, to his *right Mind*.

3. Peter *remember'd the Words of the Lord. Note*, The *Grace of God* works in and by the *Word of God*, brings that to mind, and ſets that home upon the Conſcience, and ſo gives the Soul the happy Turn. *Tolle & lege.*

4. Then *Peter went out and wept bitterly.* One Look from Chriſt melted him into Tears of Godly Sorrow for Sin. The Candle was newly put out, and then a little thing lighted it again. Chriſt look'd upon the Chief Prieſts, and made no Impreſſion upon them as it did on *Peter*, who had the Divine Seed remaining in him, to work upon. 'Twas not the Look from Chriſt, but the Grace of God with it, that recover'd *Peter*, and brought him to rights.

63 ¶ And the men that held Jeſus, mocked him, and ſmote *him*. 64 And when they had blindfolded him, they ſtroke him on the face, and asked him, ſaying, Propheſy, who is it that ſmote thee? 65 And many other things blaſphemouſly ſpake they againſt him. 66 ¶ And as ſoon as it was day, the elders of the people, and the chief prieſts, and the ſcribes came together, and led him into their council, 67 Saying, Art thou the Chriſt? tell us. And he ſaid unto them, If I tell you, you will not believe. 68 And if I alſo ask *you*, you will not anſwer me, nor let *me* go. 69 Hereafter ſhall the Son of man ſit on the right hand of the power of God. 70 Then ſaid they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he ſaid unto them, Ye ſay that I am. 71 And they ſaid, What need we any further Witneſs? for we our ſelves have heard of his own mouth.

We are here told, as before, in the other Goſpels, 1. How our Lord Jeſus was *abus'd* by the Servants of the High Prieſts, *The*

Abjects gather'd themſelves together againſt him, the rude and barbarous Servants. They that *held Jeſus*, that had him in Cuſtody till the Court ſate, they *mock'd him*, and *ſmote him*, v. 63. they would not allow him to *repoſe* himſelf one Minute, tho' he had had no Sleep all Night, nor to *compoſe* himſelf, tho' he was hurry'd to his Trial, and no Time given him to prepare for it. They made Sport with him: This ſorrowful Night to him ſhall be a merry Night to them; and the bleſſed Jeſus, like *Samſon*, is made the Fool in the Play. They *hood-wink'd* him, and then according to the common Play that young People have among them, they *ſtruck him on the Face*, and continued to do ſo till he nam'd the Perſon that ſmote him, *v.* 64. intending hereby an Affront to his Prophetical Office, and that Knowledge of ſeveral Things, which he was ſaid to have. We are not told that he ſaid *any Thing*, but *bore every Thing*; Hell was let looſe, and he ſuffered it to do its worſt. A greater Indignity could not be done to the Bleſſed Jeſus, yet this was but one Inſtance of many; for *v.* 65. *many other Things blaſphemouſly ſpake they againſt him.* They that condemn'd him for a Blaſphemer, were themſelves the vileſt Blaſphemers that ever were.

2. How he was accus'd and condemn'd by the Great *Sanhedrim*, conſiſting of the *Elders of the People, the chief Prieſts, and the Scribes*, who were all up betimes, and got together *as ſoon as it was Day*, about Five a-Clock in the Morning, to proſecute this Matter. They were *working this Evil upon their Beds*, and as ſoon as ever the *Morning* was *light*, *practis'd* it, *Mic.* 2. 1. They would not have been up ſo early for any good Work.

'Tis but a ſhort Account that we have here of his Trial in the Eccleſiaſtical Court.

1. They ask him, *Art thou the Chriſt*? He was generally believ'd by his Followers to be the Chriſt, but they could not prove it upon him that he had ever ſaid ſo *totidem verbis*, and therefore urge him to own it to them, *v.* 67. If they had ask'd him this Queſtion with a Willingneſs to admit that he was the Chriſt, and to receive him accordingly, if he could give ſufficient Proof of his being ſo, it had been *well*, and might have been for ever *well with them*. But they ask'd it with a Reſolution not to believe him, but a Deſign to enſnare him.

2. He juſtly complain'd of their unfair and unjuſt Uſage of him, *v.* 67, 68. They all as Jews profeſs'd to expect the *Meſſiah*, and to expect him at *this Time*, no other appear'd or had appear'd that pretended to be the *Meſſiah*; he had no Competitor, nor likelihood of any; he had given amazing Proofs of a Divine Power going along with him, which made his Claims very well worthy of a free and impartial Enquiry: It had been but juſt for theſe Leaders of the People to have taken him into their Council, and examin'd him there as a *Candidate* for the Meſſiahſhip, not at the Bar as a *Criminal*; But, ſaith he, (1.) *If I tell you that I am the Chriſt*, and give you never ſuch convincing Proofs of it, you are reſolv'd *you will not believe.* Why ſhould the Cauſe be brought on before you, who have already prejudg'd it, and are reſolv'd right or wrong to run it down, and to condemn it. (2.) *If I ask you* what you have to object againſt the Proofs I produce, *you will not anſwer me.* Here he refers to their Silence when he puts a Queſtion to them, which would have led them to own his Authority, *Chap.* 20. 5, 6, 7. They were neither fair Judges nor fair Diſputants, but when they were pinch'd with an Argument, would rather be ſilent than own their Conviction; *you will neither anſwer me, nor let me go.* If I be *not* the Chriſt, you ought to *anſwer* the Arguments with which I prove that I am: If I be, you ought to *let me go*, but you will do neither.

3. He refer'd them to his ſecond Coming, for the full Proof of his being the Chriſt to their Confuſion, ſince they would not now admit the Proof of it to their Conviction, *v.* 69. *Hereafter ſhall the Son of Man ſit*, and be ſeen to ſit *on the right Hand of the Power of God*, and then you will not need to ask whether he be the Chriſt or no?

4. Hence they infer'd that he ſet up himſelf as the Son of God, and ask'd him *whether he were ſo* or *no*? v. 70. *Art thou then the Son of God*? He call'd himſelf the *Son of Man*, referring to *Daniel*'s Viſion of the *Son of Man* that *came near before the Ancient of Days*, Dan. 7. 13, 14. But they underſtood ſo much as to know, that if he was *that Son* of Man, he was alſo *the Son of God*; and art thou ſo? By this it appears to have been the Faith of the Jewiſh Church, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be both *Son of Man*, and *Son of God.*

5. He owns himſelf to be the Son of God; *ye ſay that I am*, i. e. I am, as ye ſay; compare *Mark* 14. 62. *Jeſus ſaid, I am.* This confirms Chriſt's Teſtimony concerning himſelf, that he was the Son of God, that he ſtood to it, when he knew he ſhould ſuffer for ſtanding to it.

6. Upon this they ground his Condemnation, *v.* 71. *What need we any further Witneſs*? 'Twas true they needed not any further Witneſs to prove that he ſaid he was *the Son of God*, they had it from *his own Mouth*: But did they not need Proof that he was not ſo, before they condemn'd him as a Blaſphemer for ſaying that he was ſo? Had they no Apprehenſion that it was poſſible he might be ſo, and then what horrid Guilt they ſhould bring upon themſelves in putting him to Death? No, *They knew not, neither will they underſtand.* They cannot think poſſible he ſhould be the *Meſſiah*, tho' never ſo evidently cloth'd with Divine Power and Grace, if he appear not as they expect, in worldly Pomp and Grandeur. Their Eyes being blinded with the Admiration of that, they ruſh on in this dangerous Proſecution, as the Horſe into the Battle.

CHAP. XXIII.

This Chapter carries on and concludes the Hiſtory of Chriſt's Sufferings and Death: We have here (1.) *his Arraignment before* Pilate *the* Roman *Governour*, v. 1—5. (2.) *His Examination before* Herod, *who was Tetrarch of* Galilee, *under the* Romans *likewiſe*, v. 6—12. (3.) Pilate*'s Struggle with the People to releaſe Jeſus; his repeated Teſtimonies concerning his Innocency, but his yielding at length to their Importunity, and condemning him to be crucify'd*, v. 13—25. (4.) *An Account of what paſs'd as they led him to be crucified, and his Diſcourſe to the People that follow'd*, v. 26—34. (5.) *An Account of what paſs'd at the Place of Execution, and the Indignities done him there*, v. 32—38. (6.) *The Converſion of one of the Thieves, as Chriſt was hanging on the Croſs*, v. 39—43. (7.) *The Death of Chriſt, and the Prodigies that attended it*, v. 44—49. (8.) *His Burial*, v. 50—56.

1 AND the whole multitude of them aroſe, and led him unto Pilate. 2. And they began to accuſe him, ſaying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæſar, ſaying, that he himſelf is Chriſt, a king. 3 And Pilate asked him, ſaying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he anſwered him and ſaid, Thou ſayeſt *it*. 4 Then ſaid Pilate to the chief prieſts and *to* the people, I find no fault in this man. 5 And they were the more fierce, ſaying, He ſtirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. 6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilean. 7 And as ſoon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's juriſdiction, he ſent him to Herod, who himſelf was alſo at Jeruſalem at that time. 8 ¶ And when Herod ſaw Jeſus, he was exceeding glad: for he was deſirous to ſee him of a long ſeaſon, becauſe he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have ſeen ſome miracle done by him. 9 Then he queſtioned with him in many words; but he anſwered him nothing. 10 And the chief prieſts and ſcribes ſtood and vehemently accuſed him. 11 And Herod, with his men of war, ſet him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and ſent him again to Pilate. 12 ¶ And the ſame day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themſelves.

Our Lord Jeſus was condemn'd as a Blaſphemer in the Spiritual Court, but it was the moſt *impotent Malice* that could be, that that Court was acted by; for when they had *condemn'd* him, they knew they could not *put him to Death*, and therefore take another Courſe.

Firſt, They accuſe him before *Pilate*; the *whole Multitude of them aroſe*, when they ſaw they could go no further with him in their Court, and *led him unto Pilate*, tho' it was no Judgment Day, no Aſſizes or Seſſions, and they *demand Juſtice* againſt him, not as a Blaſphemer, that was no Crime that he took Cognizance of, but as one *diſaffected to the Roman Government*; which they, in their Hearts did not look upon as any Crime at all; or if it were one, they themſelves were much more chargeable with it than he was; only it would ſerve the turn, and anſwer the Purpoſe of their Malice: And it is obſervable, that that which was the *pretended Crime*, for which they employ'd the *Roman* Powers to deſtroy Chriſt, was the *real Crime*, for which the *Roman* Powers not long after deſtroy'd them.

1. Here is the Indictment drawn up againſt him, *v.* 2. in which they pretended a Zeal for *Cæſar*, only to ingratiate themſelves with *Pilate*, but it was all *Malice* againſt Chriſt, and nothing elſe. They miſrepreſented him, (1.) As making the People *rebel againſt Cæſar*. It was true, and *Pilate* knew it, that there was a general Uneaſineſs in the People under the *Roman* Yoke, and they wanted nothing but an Opportunity to ſhake it off: Now, they would have *Pilate* believe that this Jeſus was active to foment that general Diſcontent, which if the Truth were known, they themſelves were the Aiders and Abetters of. *We have found him perverting the Nation*; as if converting them to God's Government were *perverting them* from the Civil Government; whereas nothing tends more to make Men good Subjects, than making them Chriſt's faithful Followers. Chriſt had particularly taught that they *ought to give Tribute to Cæſar*, tho' he knew there were thoſe that would be offended at him for it, and yet he is here falſly accus'd, as *forbidding to give Tribute to Cæſar.* Innocency is no Fence againſt Calumny. (2.) As making himſelf a *Rival with Cæſar*; tho' the very Reaſon why they rejected him and would not own him to be the Meſſiah, was becauſe he did not appear in worldly Pomp and Power, and did not ſet up for a Temporal Prince, nor offer to do any thing

againſt *Cæſar*, yet that's it they charge him with, that he ſaid, *He himſelf is Chriſt, a King.* He did ſay, He was *Chriſt*, and if ſo, then *a King*, but not ſuch a King as was ever likely to give diſturbance to *Cæſar.* When his Followers would have made him a King, *Joh.* 6. 15. he declin'd it, tho' by the many Miracles he wrought, he made it appear, that if he would have ſet up in competition with *Cæſar*, he would have been too hard for him.

2. His Pleading to the Inditement. *Pilate aſk'd him, Art thou the King of the Jews?* v. 3. To which he anſwered, *Thou ſayeſt it*, i. e. It it as thou ſayeſt, that I am entitled to the Government of the Jewiſh Nation, but in Rivalſhip with the Scribes and Phariſees, who tyrannize over them in Matters of Religion; not in Rivalſhip with *Cæſar*, whoſe Government relates only to their Civil Intereſts. Chriſt's Kingdom is wholly ſpiritual, and will not interfere with *Cæſar*'s Juriſdiction. Or, *Thou ſayeſt it*; But canſt thou prove it? what Evidence haſt thou for it? All that know him, know the contrary, that he never pretended to be the *King of the Jews*, in Oppoſition to *Cæſar* as Supreme, or to the Governours, that were ſent by him, but the contrary.

3. *Pilate*'s Declaration of his Innocency, *v.* 4. He *ſaid to the Chief Prieſts, and the People* that ſeem'd to join with them in the Proſecution, *I find no fault in this Man.* What Breaches of your Law he may have been guilty of, I am not concern'd to enquire, but I find nothing prov'd upon him, that makes him obnoxious to our Court.

4. The continued Fury and Outrage of the Proſecutors, *v.* 5. inſtead of being moderated by *Pilate*'s Declaration of his Innocency, and conſidering as they ought to do, whether they were not bringing the Guilt of innocent Blood upon themſelves, they were the more exaſperated, more exceeding *fierce.* We do not find that they have any particular Fact to produce, much leſs any Evidence to prove it, but they reſolve to carry it with Noiſe and Confidence, and ſay it, tho' they cannot prove it: *He ſtirs up the People*, to rebel againſt *Cæſar, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, to this Place.* He did *ſtir up the People*, but it was not to any thing factious or ſeditious, but to every thing that was virtuous and praiſe-worthy. He did *teach*, but they could not charge him with teaching any Doctrine that tended to diſturb the publick Peace, or make the Government uneaſy, or jealous.

Secondly, They accuſe him before *Herod.*

1. *Pilate* remov'd him and his Cauſe to *Herod*'s Court. The Accuſers mention'd *Galilee* the Northern Part of *Canaan*; why, ſaith *Pilate*, Is he of that Country? Is he a *Galilean*? v. 6. Yes, ſaid they, That's his Head-Quarters, there he hath ſpent moſt of his Time: Let's ſend him to *Herod* then, (ſaith *Pilate*) for *Herod* is now in Town, and 'tis but fit he ſhould have cognizance of his Cauſe, ſince he belongs to *Herod*'s Juriſdiction. *Pilate* was already ſick of the Cauſe, and deſirous to rid his Hands of it, and that ſeems to be the true Reaſon of ſending him to *Herod.* But, God order'd it ſo for the more evident fulfilling of the Scripture, as appears, *Acts* 4. 26, 27. where that of *David, Pſal.* 2. 2. *The Kings of the Earth, and the Rulers ſet themſelves againſt the Lord and his Anointed*, is expreſly ſaid to be fulfilled in *Herod* and *Pontius Pilate.*

2. *Herod* was very willing to have the Examining of him, *v.* 8. *when he ſaw Jeſus, he was exceeding glad*, and perhaps the more glad becauſe he ſaw him a Priſoner, ſaw him in Bonds; he had *heard many Things of him* in *Galilee*, where his Miracles had for a great while been all the talk of the Country, and he *long'd to ſee him*; not for any Affection he had for him, or his Doctrine, but purely out of Curioſity; and it was only to gratify that, that he *hoped to have ſeen ſome Miracles done by him*, which would ſerve him to talk of as long as he liv'd. And in order to this, he *queſtioned with him in many Things*, that at length he might bring him to ſomething, in which he might ſhew his Power. Perhaps he pump'd him concerning Things *ſecret*, or Things *to come*, or concerning his curing of Diſeaſes. But Jeſus *anſwered him nothing*; nor would he gratify him ſo much as with the Repetition of one Miracle. The pooreſt Beggar that aſk'd a Miracle for the Relief of his Neceſſity, was *never deny'd*; but this proud Prince that aſk'd a Miracle meerly for the gratifying of his Curioſity, is deny'd; he might have ſeen Chriſt and his wondrous Works many a Time in *Galilee*, and *would not*, and therefore 'tis juſtly ſaid, now he would ſee them and *ſhall not*; they are hid from his Eyes, becauſe he knew not the Day of his Viſitation. *Herod* thought now he had him in Bonds he might *command* a Miracle, but Miracles muſt not be made cheap, nor Omnipotence be at the Beck of the greateſt Potentate.

3. His Proſecutors appear'd againſt him before *Herod*, for they were reſtleſs in the Proſecution; *they ſtood and vehemently accus'd him*, v. 10. *impudently* and *boldly*, ſo the Word ſignifies. They would make *Herod* believe that he had poiſon'd *Galilee* too with his ſeditious Notions. *Note*, It is no new Thing for good Men and good Miniſters, that are real and uſeful Friends to the Civil Government, to be falſly accus'd as factious and ſeditious, and Enemies to Government.

4. *Herod* was very *abuſive* to him; he with *his Men of War*, his Attendants, and Officers, and great Men, *ſet him at nought.* They *made nothing* of him, ſo the Word is: Horrid Wickedneſs! to *make nothing* of him, who *made all Things.* They laugh'd at him as *a Fool*, for they knew he had wrought many Miracles to befriend others, and why would he not now work one to befriend himſelf; or elſe as one that had loſt his Power, and was become weak as other Men. *Herod* that had been acquainted with *John Baptiſt*, and had more Knowledge of Chriſt too, than *Pilate* had, was more *abuſive* to Chriſt than *Pilate* was: For Knowledge, without Grace, doth but make Men the more *ingeniouſly* wicked. *Herod* array'd Chriſt in a *gorgeous Robe*, ſome gaudy painted Cloths, as a mock King; and ſo he taught *Pilate*'s Soldiers afterwards to do him the ſame Indignity. He was Ring-Leader in that Abuſe.

5. *Herod* return'd him to *Pilate*, and it prov'd an Occaſion of the making of them Friends, they having been for ſome Time before at variance. *Herod* could not get ſight of a Miracle, but would not condemn him neither, as a Malefactor, and therefore *ſent him again to Pilate*, v. 11. and ſo return'd *Pilate*'s Civility and Reſpect in ſending the Priſoner to him; and this mutual Obligation, with the Meſſages that paſs'd between them on this Occaſion, brought them to a better underſtanding one of another, than there had been of late between them, *v.* 12. They had been *at enmity between themſelves*, probably upon *Pilate*'s killing the *Galileans*, who were *Herod*'s Subjects, *Luke* 13. 1. Or ſome other ſuch Matter of Controverſy as uſes to be among Princes and Great Men. Obſerve how thoſe that quarrell'd with one another, yet could unite againſt Chriſt, as *Gebal* and *Ammon* and *Amalek*, tho' divided among themſelves, were confederate againſt the *Iſrael of God*, Pſal. 83. 7. Chriſt is the great Peace-maker; both *Pilate* and *Herod* own'd his Innocency, and their agreeing in that, cur'd their Diſagreeing in other Things.

13 ¶ And Pilate when he had called together the
chief prieſts, and the rulers, and the people, 14 Said
unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one
that perverteth the people: and behold, I having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this
man touching thoſe things whereof ye accuſed him;
15 No, nor yet Herod: for I ſent you to him, and
lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. 16 I
will therefore chaſtiſe him, and releaſe *him.* 17 For
of neceſſity he muſt releaſe one unto them at the
feaſt. 18 And they cried out all at once, ſaying, Away
with this *man*, and releaſe unto us Barabbas: 19 (Who
for a certain ſedition made in the city, and for murder was caſt in priſon) 20 Pilate therefore willing
to releaſe Jeſus, ſpake again to them. 21 But they
cried, ſaying, Crucify *him*, crucify him. 22 And he
ſaid unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath
he done? I have found no cauſe of death in him:
I will therefore chaſtiſe him, and let *him* go. 23
And they were inſtant with loud voices, requiring
that he might be crucified: and the voices of them,
and of the chief prieſts prevailed. 24 And Pilate
gave ſentence that it ſhould be as they required.
25 And he releaſed unto them him that for ſedition
and murder was caſt into priſon, whom they had deſired; but he delivered Jeſus to their will.

We have here the Bleſſed Jeſus run down by the Mob, and hurry'd to the Croſs in the Storm of a popular Noiſe and Tumult, rais'd by the Malice and Artifice of the *Chief Prieſts*, as Agents for the Prince of the Power of the Air.

1. *Pilate* ſolemnly proteſts, that he believes he has done nothing worthy of Death or of Bonds. And if he did believe ſo, he ought immediately to have *diſcharg'd* him, and not only ſo, but to have *protected* him from the Fury of the Prieſts and Rabble, and to have bound his Proſecutors to their good Behaviour for their inſolent Carriage. But being himſelf an ill Man, he had no Kindneſs for Chriſt. And having made himſelf otherwiſe obnoxious, was afraid of diſpleaſing either the Emperor or the People; and therefore, for want of Integrity, he *call'd together the chief Prieſts, and Rulers, and People*; whom he ſhould have diſpers'd, as a *riotous, routous* and *ſeditious Aſſembly*, and forbid 'em to come near him; and will hear what they have to ſay, to whom he ſhould have turn'd a deaf Ear, for he plainly ſaw what Spirit acted them, *v.* 14. *You have brought* (ſaith he) *this Man to me*, and becauſe I have a Reſpect for you, *I have examin'd him before you*, and have heard all you have to alledge againſt him, and I can make nothing of it, *I find no Fault in him*, you cannot prove the Things whereof you accuſe him.

2. He appeals to *Herod* concerning him, *v.* 15. *I ſent you to him*, who is ſuppos'd to have known more of him than I have done, and he hath *ſent him back*, not convicted of any thing, nor under any Mark of his Diſpleaſure; in his Opinion his Crimes are not Capital. He has laugh'd at him as a weak Man, but has not ſtigmatiz'd him as a dangerous Man; he thought *Bedlam* a fitter Place for him than *Tyburn.*

3. He propoſeth to releaſe him, if they will but conſent to it. He ought to have done it without aſking leave of them, *Fiat Juſtitia, ruat Cœlum.* But the Fear of Man brings many into this Snare, that whereas Juſtice ſhould take Place, tho' Heaven and Earth come together, they will do an unjuſt Thing againſt their

Conſciences rather than pull an old Houſe about their Ears. *Pilate* declares him innocent, and therefore has a mind to releaſe him; yet to pleaſe the People, (1.) He will releaſe him under the Notion of a Malefactor, becauſe *of Neceſſity he muſt releaſe one*, v. 17. ſo that whereas he ought to have been releas'd by an *Act of Juſtice*, and thanks to no body, he would have him releas'd by an *Act of Grace*, and not be beholden to the People for it. (2.) He will *chaſtize* him and releaſe him. If *no Fault* be to be *found in him*, why ſhould he be chaſtized? there's as much Injuſtice in ſcourging as in crucifying an innocent Man; nor would it be juſtified by pretending that this would ſatisfy the Clamours of the People, and make him the Object of their Pity, who was now to be the Object of their Envy. We muſt not do Evil that Good may come.

4. The People chuſe rather to have *Barabbas* releas'd; a wretched Fellow, that had nothing to recommend himſelf to their Favour, but the Daringneſs of his Crimes: He was impriſon'd for a *Sedition made in the City*, and for *Murther*, of all Crimes among Men the leaſt pardonable, yet this was the Criminal that was preferred before Chriſt, *v.* 18, 19. *Away with this Man, and releaſe unto us Barabbas:* And no wonder, that ſuch a Man is the Favourite and Darling of ſuch a *Mob*, he that was really ſeditious, rather than he that was really loyal, and falſly accus'd of Sedition.

5. When *Pilate* urg'd the ſecond Time that Chriſt ſhould be releas'd, they cry'd out, *crucify him, crucify him*, v. 20, 21. They not only will have him die, but will have him die ſo great a Death; nothing leſs will ſerve, but he muſt be crucified: *Crucify him, crucify him.*

6. When *Pilate* the third Time reaſoned with them, to ſhew them the Unreaſonableneſs and Injuſtice of it, they were the more peremptory and outrageous, *v.* 22. *Why, what Evil hath he done*? name his Crime; *I have found no Cauſe of Death*, and you cannot ſay what Cauſe of Death you have found in him; and therefore if you will but ſpeak the Word, *I will chaſtize him and let him go.* But popular Fury, the more it is complimented, the more furious it grows, they were *inſtant with loud Voices*, with great Noiſes, or Outcries, not requeſting, but *requiring that he might be crucified*; as if they had as much Right at the Feaſt to demand the crucifying of one that was innocent, as the Releaſe of one that was guilty.

7. *Pilate*'s yielding at length to their Importunity. The Voice of the People, and of the *Chief Prieſts prevail'd*, and were too hard for *Pilate*, and over-rul'd him to go contrary to his Convictions and Inclination. He had not Courage to go againſt ſo ſtrong a Stream, but *gave Sentence that it ſhould be as they required*, v. 24. Here is Judgment *turn'd away backward*, and *Juſtice ſtanding afar off*, for fear of popular Fury: *Truth is fallen in the Street, and Equity cannot enter*, Iſa. 59. 14. *Judgment* was look'd for, but *behold Oppreſſion, Righteouſneſs*, but *behold a Cry*, Iſa. 5. 7. This is repeated, *v.* 25. with the aggravating Circumſtance of the Releaſe of *Barabbas*; *he releaſed unto them him that for Sedition and Murther, was caſt into Priſon*, who hereby would be hardened in his Wickedneſs, and do the more Miſchief, becauſe *him they had deſir'd*, being altogether ſuch an one as themſelves, but he *deliver'd Jeſus to their Will*; and he could not deal more barbarouſly with him, than to deliver him to *their Will*, who *hated* him with a *perfect Hatred*, and whoſe *tender Mercies* were *Cruelty*.

26 And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the croſs, that he might bear *it* after Jeſus. 27 ¶ And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which alſo bewailed and lamented him. 28 But Jeſus turning unto them, ſaid, Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me, but weep for your ſelves, and for your children. 29 For behold, the days are coming, in which they ſhall ſay, Bleſſed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave ſuck. 30 Then ſhall they begin to ſay to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. 31 For if they do theſe things in a green tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?

We have here the bleſſed Jeſus, the Lamb of God, led as *a Lamb to the Slaughter*, to the Sacrifice. 'Tis ſtrange, with what Expedition they went through his Trial; how they could do ſo much Work in ſo little Time, tho' they had ſo many great Men to deal with; Attendance on whom, uſeth to be a Work of Time. He was brought before the Chief Prieſts at break of Day, *Chap.* 22. 66. after that to *Pilate*, then to *Herod*, then to *Pilate* again, and there ſeems to have been a long Struggle between *Pilate* and the People about him. He was ſcourg'd and crown'd with Thorns, and contumeliouſly uſed, and all this was done in Four or Five Hours time, or Six at moſt; for he was crucified between Nine a-clock and Twelve. Chriſt's Perſecutors reſolve to loſe no time, for fear, leſt his Friends at t'other End of the Town ſhould get Notice of what they were doing, and ſhould riſe to reſcue him. Never any one was ſo *chaſed out of the World* as Chriſt was, but ſo he himſelf ſaid, *Yet a little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me*, a very little while indeed.

Now as they led him away to Death, we find,

1. One that was a *Bearer*, that carried his Croſs, *Simon* by Name, a *Cyrenian*, who probably was a Friend of Chriſt, and was known to be ſo, and this was done to put a Reproach upon him; they laid Chriſt's Croſs upon him, that he might *bear it after Jeſus*, v. 26. leſt Jeſus ſhould faint under it, and die away, and ſo prevent the further Inſtances of Malice they deſign'd. 'Twas a Pity; but a *cruel Pity* that gave him this Eaſe.

2. Many that were *Mourners*, true Mourners, who follow'd him *bewailing* and *lamenting* him. Theſe were not only his Friends and Well-wiſhers, but the common People that were not his Enemies, and were mov'd with Compaſſion towards him, becauſe they had heard the Fame of him, and what an excellent uſeful Man he was, and had reaſon to think he ſuffer'd unjuſtly: This drew a great Crowd after him, as is uſual at Executions, eſpecially of thoſe that have been Perſons of Diſtinction. *A great Company of People followed him*, eſpecially of Women, *v.* 27. ſome led by Pity, others by Curioſity; but they *alſo* (as well as thoſe that were his particular Friends and Acquaintance) *bewailed and lamented him.* Tho' there were many that reproach'd and revil'd him, yet there were that valu'd him, and pity'd him, and were ſorry for him, and were Partakers with him in his Sufferings. The dying of the Lord Jeſus, may perhaps move natural Affections in many, that are Strangers to devout Affections; many bewail Chriſt that do not believe in him, and lament him, that do not love him above all.

Now here we are told what Chriſt ſaid to theſe Mourners, tho' one would think he ſhould be wholly taken up with his own Concern, yet he found Time and Heart to take Cognizance of their Tears. Chriſt *dy'd lamented*, and has a Bottle for the Tears of thoſe that lamented him. He *turn'd to them*, tho' they were Strangers to him, and bid them *not weep for him, but for themſelves*; he diverts their Lamentation into another Channel, *v.* 28.

1. He gives them a general Direction concerning their Lamentations; *Daughters of Jeruſalem, weep not for me*; not that they were to be blam'd for weeping for him, but commended rather; thoſe Hearts were hard indeed, that were not affected with ſuch Sufferings of ſuch a Perſon; but they muſt not weep only for him, thoſe were profitleſs Tears that they ſhed for him, but rather let them *weep for themſelves and for their Children*, with an Eye to the Deſtruction that was coming upon *Jeruſalem*, which ſome of them might live to ſee, and ſhare in the Calamities of, or at leaſt their Children would, for whom they ought to be ſolicitous. *Note*, When with an Eye of Faith we behold Chriſt crucified, we ought to weep, not for him but for ourſelves. We muſt not be affected with the Death of Chriſt as with the Death of a common Perſon, whoſe Calamity we pity, or of a common Friend, whom we are like to part with; the Death of Chriſt was a thing peculiar, 'twas his Victory and Triumph over his Enemies; 'twas our Deliverance, and the Purchaſe of eternal Life for us. And therefore weep not for him, but let us weep for our own Sins, and the Sins of our Children, that were the Cauſe of his Death; and weep for fear (ſuch were the Tears here preſcrib'd) of the Miſeries we ſhall bring upon ourſelves if we ſlight his Love and reject his Grace, as the Jewiſh Nation did, which brought upon them the Ruin here foretold. When our dear Relations and Friends die in Chriſt, we have no Reaſon to weep for them, who have put off the Burthen of the Fleſh, are made perfect in Holineſs, and are entred into perfect Reſt and Joy, but for ourſelves and our Children, who are left behind in a World of Sins, and Sorrows, and Snares.

2. He gives them a particular Reaſon why they ſhould *weep for themſelves and for their Children: For behold*, ſad Times are coming upon your City, it will be deſtroy'd, and you will be involv'd in the common Deſtruction. When Chriſt's own Diſciples ſorrow'd after a *godly ſort* for his leaving them, he wiped away their Tears with the Promiſe that he would *ſee them again*, and they ſhould *rejoice*, John 16. 22. But when theſe Daughters of *Jeruſalem bewailed him* only with a *Worldly* Sorrow, he turn'd their Tears into another Channel, and told them they ſhould have ſomething given them to cry for. Let them *be afflicted, and mourn, and weep*, Jam. 4. 9. He had lately wept over *Jeruſalem* himſelf, and now he bids them weep over it. Chriſt's Tears ſhou'd ſet us a weeping. Let the Daughters of *Zion*, that own Chriſt for their King, rejoice in him, for he comes to ſave them; but let the Daughters of *Jeruſalem*, that only weep for him, but do not take him for their King, weep and tremble to think of his coming to judge them.

Now the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* is here foretold by two proverbial Sayings that might then fitly be uſed, which both ſpeak it very terrible, that what People commonly dread they would then deſire, to be *written Childleſs*, and to be *bury'd alive*. (1.) They would wiſh to be *written Childleſs*. Whereas, commonly thoſe that have no Children, envy thoſe that have, as *Rachel* envied *Leah*; then thoſe that have Children will find them ſuch a Burthen in attempting to eſcape, and ſuch a Grief when they ſee them either *fainting* for Famine, or *falling* by the Sword, that they will envy thoſe that have none, and ſay, *Bleſſed are the Barren, and the Wombs that never bare*, that have no Children to be *given up* to the Murtherer, or to be *ſnatch'd* out of his Hands. It would not only go ill with thoſe, who at that Time were *with Child* or *giving ſuck*, as Chriſt had ſaid, *Mat.* 24. 19. but it would be terrible to thoſe who ever had had Children, and ſuckled them, and had them now alive. See *Hoſ.* 9. 11, 12, 13, 14. See the Vanity of the Creatures, and the Uncertainty of its Comforts, for ſuch may be the Changes of Providence concerning us, that thoſe very things may become the greateſt Burthens, Cares and Griefs to us, which we have delighted in as the greateſt Bleſſings. (2.) They would wiſh to be *bury'd alive*, v. 30. They ſhall begin *to ſay to the Mountains, fall on us, and to the Hills, cover us.* This alſo refers to a Paſſage in the ſame Prophecy with the former, *Hoſ.* 10. 8. They ſhall wiſh to be hid in the darkeſt Caves, that they might be out of the Noiſe of theſe Calamities. They will be willing to be ſheltred upon any Terms, tho' with the hazard of being cruſh'd to pieces. This would be the Language, eſpecially of the great and mighty Men, *Rev. 6.* 16. They that would not flee to Chriſt for Refuge, and put themſelves under his Protection, will in vain call to *Hills* and *Mountains* to ſhelter themſelves from his Wrath.

3. He ſhews how natural it was for them to infer that Deſolation from his Sufferings, *v.* 31. *If they do theſe things in a green Tree, what ſhall be done in the dry?* Some think this is borrow'd from *Ezek.* 20. 47. *The Fire ſhall devour every green Tree in thee, and every dry Tree.* Theſe Words may be apply'd, (1.) more particularly to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, which Chriſt here foretold, and which the Jews, by putting him to Death, brought upon themſelves. *If they*, i. e. the Jews, and the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem, do theſe things upon the green Tree*, if they do thus abuſe an innocent and excellent Perſon for his *good Works*, how may they expect God to deal with them *for their ſo doing*, who have made themſelves a *dry Tree*, a corrupt and wicked Generation, and good for nothing. If this be their Sin, what do you think will be their Puniſhment? Or take it thus; If they, *i. e.* the *Romans*, their Judges, and their Soldiers, abuſe me thus, who have given them no Provocation, who am to them as a green Tree, which you ſeem to be as much enrag'd at, *what will they do by Jeruſalem*, and the Jewiſh Nation, who will be ſo very provoking to them, and make themſelves as a *dry Tree*, as Fuel to the Fire of their Reſentments? If God ſuffer thoſe things to be done to me, what will he appoint to be done to thoſe barren Trees, of whom it had been often ſaid, that they ſhould be *hewn down and caſt into the Fire*? Mat. 3. 10, and 7. 19. (2.) It may be apply'd more generally, to all the Revelations of God's Wrath againſt Sin and Sinners. If God deliver me up to ſuch Sufferings as theſe, becauſe I am made a Sacrifice for Sin, what will he do with Sinners themſelves? Chriſt was a *green Tree*, fruitful and flouriſhing: Now if ſuch things were done to him, we may from thence infer, what ſhould have been done to the whole Race of Mankind, if he had not *interpos'd*, and what ſhall be done to thoſe that continue dry Trees, notwithſtanding all that is done to make them fruitful: If God did this to the Son of his Love, when he found but Sin imputed to him, what ſhall he do to the Generation of his Wrath, when he finds Sin reigning in them? If the Father were pleas'd in doing theſe things to the green Tree, why ſhould he be loth to do it to the dry? *Note*, The Conſideration of the bitter Sufferings of our Lord Jeſus, ſhould engage us to ſtand in awe of the Juſtice of God, and to tremble before him. The beſt Saints compar'd with Chriſt, are *dry Trees*; if he ſuffer, why may not they expect to ſuffer; and what then ſhall the Damnation of Sinners be?

32 And there were alſo two other malefactors led with him to be put to death. 33 And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors; one on the right hand, and the other on the left. 34 ¶ Then ſaid Jeſus, Father forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and caſt lots. 35 And the people ſtood beholding: and the rulers alſo with them derided *him*, ſaying, He ſaved others; let him ſave himſelf, if he be Chriſt the choſen of God. 36 And the ſoldiers alſo mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar, 37 And ſaying, If thou be the king of the Jews, ſave thy ſelf. 38 And a ſuperſcription alſo was written over him in letters of Greek and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 39 ¶ And one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, ſaying, If thou be Chriſt, ſave thy ſelf and us. 40 But the other anſwering, rebuked him, ſaying, Doſt not thou fear God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame condemnation? 41 And we indeed juſtly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiſs. 42 And he ſaid unto Jeſus, Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy kingdom. 43 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Verily I ſay unto thee, To day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe.

In theſe Verſes we have,

1. Divers Paſſages which we had before in *Matthew* and *Mark*, concerning Chriſt's Sufferings.

(1.) That there were *Two other Malefactors led with him* to the Place of Execution; who, 'tis probable, had been for ſome time under Sentence of Death, and were deſign'd to be executed at this Day, which was probably the Pretence for making ſuch haſte in the Proſecution of Chriſt, that he and theſe two Malefactors might together, and one Solemnity might ſerve.

(2.) That he was crucified at a Place call'd *Calvary*, Κρανίου; the Greek Name for *Golgotha*, the Place of a *Skull*; an ignominious Place, to add to the Reproach of his Sufferings, but ſignificant, for there he triumph'd over Death, as it were upon his own Dunghill. He was *crucified*, i. e. his Hands and Feet were nail'd to the Croſs, as it lay upon the Ground; and then it was *lifted* up, and faſten'd into the Earth, or ſome Socket to receive it. This was a painful and ſhameful Death, above any other.

(3.) That he was crucified *in the midſt between two Thieves*, as if he had been the worſt of the three; thus he was not only treated as a Tranſgreſſor, but *numbred with them*, the worſt of them.

(4.) That the Soldiers, who were employ'd in the Execution, ſeiz'd his Garments as their Fee, and divided them among themſelves *by Lot*; *they parted his Raiment and caſt Lots*; it was worth ſo little, that if it were divided, it would come to next nothing, and therefore they caſt Lots for it.

(5.) That he was revil'd, and reproach'd, and treated with all the Scorn and Contempt imaginable, when he was *lifted up* upon the Croſs. It was ſtrange, that ſo much Barbarity ſhould be found in the Humane Nature: *The People ſtood beholding*, not at all concern'd, but rather pleaſing themſelves with the Spectacle; and *the Rulers*, whom from their Office, one would take to be Men of Senſe and Men of Honour, they ſtood among the Rabble, *and derided him*, to ſet thoſe on that were about them, to do ſo too: And they ſaid, *He ſaved others, let him ſave himſelf:* Thus is he upbraided for the good Works he had done, as it were indeed *for theſe* that they *crucified* him. They triumph over him as if they had conquer'd him, whereas he was himſelf then more than a Conqueror; they challenge him to ſave himſelf from the Croſs, when he was ſaving others by the Croſs; *If he be the Chriſt the Choſen of God*, let him ſave himſelf. They knew that the *Chriſt* is the *Choſen of God*; deſign'd by him, and dear to him. If he, as the Chriſt, would deliver our Nation from the *Romans*, (and they could not form any other Idea, but that of the Meſſiah) let him deliver himſelf from the *Romans*, that have him now in their Hands. Thus the Jewiſh *Rulers* jeer'd him as captiv'd by the *Romans*, inſtead of ſubduing them: The *Roman Soldiers* jeer'd him as *the King of the Jews*; a People good enough for ſuch a Prince, and a Prince good enough for ſuch a People. They *mock'd him*, v. 36, 37. they made ſport with him, and made a Jeſt of his Sufferings; and when they were drinking ſharp ſour Wine themſelves, ſuch as was generally allotted them, they triumphantly ask'd him, if he would pledge them, or drink with them. And they ſaid, *If thou be the King of the Jews, ſave thyſelf*; for as the Jews proſecuted him under the Notion of a pretended Meſſiah, ſo the *Romans*, under the Notion of a pretended King.

(6.) That the Superſcription over his Head, ſetting forth his Crime, was, *This is the King of the Jews*, v. 38. He is put to Death for pretending to be the King of the Jews, ſo they meant it; but God intended it to be a Declaration of what he really was, notwithſtanding his preſent Diſgrace: He is *the King of the Jews*, the King of the Church, and his Croſs is the way to his Crown. This was written in thoſe that are call'd the *three learned Languages, Greek and Latin, and Hebrew*, for thoſe are beſt learn'd that have learn'd Chriſt. It was written in theſe three Languages, that it might be known and read of all Men; but God deſigned by it, to ſignify that the Goſpel of Chriſt ſhould be preach'd to all Nations, *beginning at Jeruſalem*, and be read in all Languages. The Gentile Philoſophy made the Greek Tongue famous, the *Roman* Laws and Government made the Latin Tongue ſo, and the Hebrew excell'd them all for the ſake of the Old-Teſtament. In theſe three Languages, is Jeſus Chriſt *proclaim'd King*. Young Scholars that are taking pains at School, to make themſelves Maſters of theſe three Languages, ſhould aim at this, that in the Uſe of them they may encreaſe their Acquaintance with Chriſt.

2. Here are two Paſſages which we had not before, and they are very remarkable ones.

1. Chriſt's Prayer for his Enemies, *v.* 34. *Father forgive them.* Seven remarkable Words Chriſt ſpoke after he was nail'd to the Croſs, and before he dy'd, and this is the firſt. One Reaſon why he dy'd the Death of the Croſs was, that he might have Liberty of Speech to the laſt, and ſo might glorify his Father, and edify thoſe about him. As ſoon as ever he was faſten'd to the Croſs, or while they were nailing him, he pray'd this Prayer; in which obſerve,

1. The Petition, *Father forgive them*; one would think he ſhould have pray'd, Father conſume them, the Lord look upon it, and requite it: The Sin they were now guilty of, might juſtly have been made unpardonable, and juſtly might they have been excepted by Name, out of the Act of Indemnity: No, theſe are particularly *pray'd for*. Now he made Interceſſion for Tranſgreſſors, as was foretold, *Iſa.* 53. 12. and it is to be added to his Prayer, *John* 17. to compleat the Specimen he gave of his Interceſſion within the Vail: That for Saints, this for Sinners. Now the Sayings of Chriſt upon the Croſs, as well as his Sufferings, had a further reach than they ſeem'd to have. This was a mediatorial Word, and explicatory of the Intent and Meaning of his Death. *Father forgive them*, not only theſe, but all that ſhall repent and believe the Goſpel, and he did not intend that theſe ſhould be forgiven upon any other Terms. Father, that which I am now ſuffering and dying for, is in order to this, that poor Sinners may be pardon'd. *Note*, 1. The great Thing which Chriſt dy'd to purchaſe and procure for us, is the Forgiveneſs of Sin. 2. This is that which Chriſt interceeds for, for all that repent

and believe in the Virtue of his Satisfaction: His Blood ſpeaks this, *Father, forgive them.* 3. The greateſt Sinners may, through Chriſt, upon their Repentance, hope to find Mercy. Father, forgive *them*, tho' they were his Perſecutors and Murtherers.

2. The Plea; *For they know not what they do:* For, *if they had known*, they would not have crucify'd him, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. There was a Vail upon his Glory, and upon their Underſtandings, and how could they ſee through Two Vails? They wiſh'd his Blood on them and their Children; but had they known what they did, they would have unwiſh'd it again. *Note*, 1. The Crucifiers of Chriſt *know not what they do:* They that ſpeak ill of Religion, ſpeak ill of that which they know not, and 'tis becauſe they will not know it. (2.) There is a kind of Ignorance that doth, in part, excuſe Sin: Ignorance, through want of the means of Knowledge, or of a Capacity to receive Inſtruction, through the Infelicities of Education, or Inadvertency. The Crucifiers of Chriſt were kept in Ignorance by their Rulers, and had Prejudices againſt him inſtill'd into them; ſo that in what they did againſt Chriſt and his Doctrine, they thought they did God ſervice, *John* 16. 2. Such are to be pity'd and pray'd for. This Prayer of Chriſt was anſwer'd not long after, when many of thoſe that had a hand in his Death were converted by *Peter*'s Preaching.

This is written alſo for Example to us. (1.) We muſt in Prayer call God Father, and come to him with Reverence and Confidence, as Children to a Father. (2.) The great Thing we muſt beg of God, both for ourſelves and others, is, the Forgiveneſs of Sins. (3.) We muſt pray for *our Enemies*, and thoſe that hate and perſecute us; muſt extenuate their Offences, and not aggravate them, as we muſt our own; *they know not what they do*; *peradventure it was an overſight*; and muſt be earneſt with God in Prayer, for the Forgiveneſs of their Sins, their Sins againſt us. This is Chriſt's Example to his own Rule, *Mat.* 5. 44, 45. *Love your Enemies*, and it very much ſtrengthens the Rule; for if Chriſt lov'd and pray'd for ſuch Enemies, what Enemies can we have, which we are not oblig'd to *love* and *pray for*?

2. The Converſion of the Thief upon the Croſs, which is an illuſtrious Inſtance of Chriſt's triumphing over Principalities and Powers, then when he ſeem'd to be triumph'd over by them. Chriſt was crucify'd between Two Thieves, and in them was repreſented the different Effects which the Croſs of Chriſt would have upon the Children of Men, to whom it would be *brought near* in the preaching of the Goſpel. They are all Malefactors, all guilty before God. Now the Croſs of Chriſt is to ſome a *Savour of Life unto Life*; to others, of *Death unto Death*. To them that periſh 'tis Fooliſhneſs, but to them that are ſav'd, 'tis the Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God.

1. Here was one of theſe Malefactors that was *harden'd to the laſt*. At the Croſs of Chriſt he *rail'd on him*, as others did, *v.* 39. he ſaid, *If thou be the Chriſt*, as they ſay thou art, *ſave thyſelf and us.* Tho' he was now in Pain and Agony, and in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, yet that did not humble his proud Spirit, nor teach him to give good Language, no, not to his Fellow-Sufferer. *Tho' thou bray a Fool in a Mortar, yet will not his Fooliſhneſs depart from him.* No Troubles will of themſelves work a Change in a wicked Heart, but ſometimes they *irritate* the Corruption, which one would think they ſhould *mortify*. He challengeth Chriſt to *ſave both himſelf and them. Note*, There are ſome that have the Impudence to rail upon Chriſt, and yet the Confidence to expect to be ſav'd by him; nay, and to conclude that if he do not ſave them, he is not to be look'd upon as the Saviour.

2. Here was the other of them that was *ſoften'd at the laſt.* 'Twas ſaid in *Matthew* and *Mark*, that tho' the *Thieves*, even *they that were crucify'd with him, revil'd him*, which ſome think is by a Figure put for *one* of them; but others think they both *revil'd him* at firſt, till the Heart of one of them was wonderfully chang'd, and with it his Language on a ſudden. This Malefactor, when juſt ready to fall into the Hands of Satan, was ſnatch'd as a Brand out of the Burning, and made a Monument of Divine Mercy and Grace, and Satan was left to roar as a Lion diſappointed of his Prey. This gives no Encouragement to any, to put off their Repentance to their Death-bed, or to hope that then they ſhall find Mercy; for tho' 'tis certain that true Repentance is never too late, 'tis as certain that late Repentance is ſeldom true. None can be ſure that they ſhall have Time to repent at Death, but every Man may be ſure he cannot have the Advantages that this penitent Thief had, whoſe Caſe was altogether extraordinary. He never had any Offer of Chriſt, nor Day of Grace before now: He was deſign'd to be made a ſingular Inſtance of the Power of Chriſt's Grace, now at a time when he was *crucify'd in Weakneſs*. Chriſt having conquer'd Satan in the Deſtruction of *Judas*, and the Preſervation of *Peter*, erects this further Trophy of his Victory over him, in the Converſion of this Malefactor, as a Specimen of what he would do.

We ſhall ſee the Caſe extraordinary, if we obſerve,

1. The extraordinary Operations of God's Grace upon him, which appear'd in what he ſaid. Here were ſo many Evidences given in a ſhort Time of a bleſſed Change wrought in him, as that more could not have been given in ſo little Compaſs.

1. See what he ſaid to the other Malefactor, *v.* 40, 41. (1.) He reprov'd him for railing on Chriſt, as deſtitute of the *Fear of God*, and having no Senſe at all of Religion; *Doſt not thou fear God?* This implies that it was the Fear of God which reſtrain'd him from following the Multitude to do this Evil. I fear God, and therefore dare not do it; and doſt not thou? All that have their Eyes open'd, ſee this to be at the bottom of the Wickedneſs of the Wicked, that they have not the Fear of God before their Eyes. If thou hadſt any Humanity in thee, thou would'ſt not inſult over one that is thy Fellow-Sufferer; *thou art in the ſame Condition*; thou art a *dying Man* too; and therefore whatever theſe wicked People do, it ill becomes thee to abuſe a dying Man. (2.) He owns that he deſerv'd what was done to him; *We indeed juſtly*; 'tis likely they both ſuffer'd for one and the ſame Crime, and therefore he ſpake with the more Aſſurance, *We receive the due Reward of our Deeds.* This magnifies Divine Grace, as acting in a diſtinguiſhing Way: Theſe two had been Comrades in Sin and Suffering, and yet one is *ſav'd*, and the other *periſheth*; two that had gone together all along hitherto, and yet now *one taken, and the other left.* He doth not ſay *thou* indeed juſtly, *but we. Note*, True Penitents acknowledge the Juſtice of God, in all the Puniſhments of their Sin. God has *done right*, but *we have done wickedly.* (3.) He believes Chriſt to have ſuffer'd *wrongfully.* Tho' he was condemn'd in two Courts, and run upon as if he had been the worſt of Malefactors, yet this penitent Thief is convinc'd by his Carriage in his Sufferings, that *he has done nothing amiſs.* The Chief Prieſts would have him crucify'd *between* the Malefactors, as *one of them*; but this Thief has more Senſe than they, and owns he is *one of them*, οὐδὲν ἄτοπον, nothing abſurd or unbecoming his Character. Whether he had before heard of Chriſt, and of his wondrous Works, doth not appear, but the Spirit of Grace enlighten'd him with this Knowledge, and enabled him to ſay, this Man has *done nothing amiſs.*

2. See what he ſaid to our Lord Jeſus, *v.* 42. *Lord, remember me when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom.* This is the Prayer of a *dying Sinner*, to a *dying Saviour.* 'Twas the Honour of Chriſt to be *thus pray'd to*, tho' he was upon the Croſs reproach'd and revil'd; 'twas the Happineſs of the Thief *thus to pray*; perhaps he never pray'd before, and yet now was heard, and ſav'd at the laſt gaſp. While there's Life, there's Hope; and while there's Hope, there's Room for Prayer.

1. Obſerve his *Faith* in this Prayer. In his Confeſſion of Sin, *v.* 44. he diſcover'd *Repentance toward God.* In this Petition he diſcover'd *Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* He owns him to be *Lord*, and to have a *Kingdom*, and that he was going to that Kingdom; that he ſhould have Authority in that Kingdom, and that thoſe ſhould be happy whom he favours; and to *believe* and *confeſs* all this, was a *great Thing* at this time of Day. Chriſt was now in the Depth of Diſgrace, deſerted by his own Diſciples, revil'd by his own Nation, ſuffering as a Pretender, and not deliver'd by his Father: He made this Profeſſion before thoſe Prodigies happen'd, which put Honour upon his Sufferings, and which ſtartled the Centurion; yet *verily we have not found ſo great Faith, no, not in* Iſrael. He believ'd *another Life* after this, and deſir'd to be happy in *that* Life, not as the other Thief, to be *ſav'd from the Croſs*, but to be well done for, when the Croſs had done its worſt.

2. Obſerve his Humility in this Prayer. All his Requeſt is, *Lord, remember me*: He doth not pray, Lord, *prefer me*, as they did, *Mat.* 20. 21. tho' he having the Honour ſo as none of the Diſciples had, to drink of Chriſt's Cup, and to be baptiz'd with his Baptiſm, either *on* his *right Hand*, or *on his left* in his Sufferings, when his own Diſciples had deſerted him, he might have had ſome Colour to ask as they did, to ſit on his right Hand, and on his left in his Kingdom: Acquaintance in Sufferings hath ſometimes gain'd ſuch a Point, *Jer.* 52. 31, 32. But he is far from the Thought of it; all he begs is, *Lord, remember me*, referring himſelf to Chriſt in what way to remember him. 'Tis a Requeſt like that of *Joſeph to the chief Butler, think on me*, Gen. 40. 14. and it ſped better, the chief Butler *forgat* Joſeph, but Chriſt remember'd this Thief.

3. There is an Air of Importunity and Fervency in this Prayer. He doth, as it were, breath out his Soul in it; *Lord, remember me*, and I have enough, I deſire no more; into thy Hands I commit my Caſe. *Note*, To be remember'd by Chriſt now he is in his Kingdom, is what we ſhould earneſtly deſire and pray for, and it will be enough to ſecure our Welfare, living and dying. Chriſt is *in his Kingdom* interceding; *Lord, remember me*, and intercede for me. He is there ruling; Lord, remember me, and rule in me by thy Spirit. He is there preparing Places for thoſe that are his; Lord, remember me, and prepare a Place for me: Remember me *at Death*, remember me *in the Reſurrection.* See *Job* 14. 13.

2. The extraordinary Grants of Chriſt's Favour to him; *Jeſus ſaid unto him*, in Anſwer to his Prayer, *Verily, I ſay unto thee*; I the *Amen*, the faithful Witneſs, I ſay *Amen* to this Prayer, put my *Fiat* to it: Nay, thou ſhalt have more than thou didſt ask, *This Day thou ſhalt be with me in Paradiſe*, v. 43. Obſerve,

1. *To whom* this was ſpoken; To the penitent Thief, to him, and not to his Companion; Chriſt upon the Croſs, is like Chriſt upon the Throne, for *now is the Judgment of this World*, one departs with a Curſe, the other with a Bleſſing. Tho' Chriſt was now himſelf in the greateſt Struggle and Agony, yet he had a Word of Comfort to ſpeak to a poor Penitent, that committed himſelf to him. *Note*, Even great Sinners, if they be true Penitents, ſhall, through Chriſt, obtain not only the Pardon of their Sins, but a Place in the Paradiſe of God, *Heb.* 9. 15. This magnifies the Riches of Free-Grace, that Rebels and Traytors ſhall not only be pardoned, but preferr'd, thus preferr'd.

2. *By whom* this was ſpoken: This was another mediatorial Word which Chriſt ſpoke, tho' upon a particular Occaſion; yet with a general Intention to explain the true Intent and Meaning of his Sufferings, as he dy'd to purchaſe the *Forgiveneſs of Sins* for

us, *v.* 34. ſo alſo to purchaſe *eternal Life* for us. By this Word we are given to underſtand, that Jeſus Chriſt died to *open the Kingdom of Heaven to all penitent obedient Believers.*

1. Chriſt here lets us know that he was going to Paradiſe himſelf; to *Hades*, to the inviſible World; his human Soul was removing to the Place of ſeparate Souls; not to the Place of the Damn'd, but to Paradiſe, the Place of the Bleſſed. By this he aſſures us, that his Satisfaction was accepted, and the Father was well pleas'd in him, elſe he had not gone to Paradiſe; that was the Beginning of the Joy ſet before him, which he comforted himſelf with the Proſpect of. He went by the Croſs to the Crown, and we muſt not think of going any other Way, or of being perfected but by Sufferings.

2. He lets all penitent Believers know, that when they die, they ſhall go to be with him there. He was now as a Prieſt purchaſing this Happineſs for them, and is ready as a King to confer it upon them, when they are prepar'd and made ready for it. See here how the Happineſs of Heaven is ſet forth to us. (1.) 'Tis *Paradiſe*, a Garden of Pleaſure, the *Paradiſe of God*, Rev. 2. 7. alluding to the Garden of *Eden*, in which our firſt Parents were placed, when they were innocent. In the Second *Adam*, we are reſtor'd to all we loſt in the firſt *Adam*, and more, to a heavenly Paradiſe, inſtead of an earthly one. (2.) 'Tis being *with Chriſt* there. That's the Happineſs of Heaven to ſee Chriſt, and ſit with him, and ſhare in his Glory, *John* 17. 24. (3.) 'Tis immediate upon Death. *This Day thou ſhalt be with me*; to-night, before to-morrow. *The Souls of the Faithful, after they are delivered from the Burthen of the Fleſh*, immediately *are in Joy and Felicity*; the Spirits of juſt Men are immediately *made perfect*. *Lazarus* departs, and *is comforted* preſently; and *Paul* with Chriſt immediately, *Phil.* 1. 23.

44 And it was about the ſixth hour, and there was a darkneſs over all the earth, until the ninth hour. 45 And the ſun was darkened, and the vail of the temple was rent in the mids. 46 ¶ And when Jeſus had cried with a loud voice, he ſaid, Father, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit: and having ſaid thus, he gave up the ghoſt. 47 Now when the centurion ſaw what was done, he glorified God, ſaying, Certainly this was a righteous man. 48 And all the people that came together to that ſight, beholding the things which were done, ſmote their breaſts, and returned. 49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, ſtood afar off beholding theſe things.

In theſe Verſes we have Three Things.

Firſt, Chriſt's dying *magnify'd* by the *Prodigies* that attended it: Only Two are here mentioned, which we had an Account of before.

1. The *darkning of the Sun at Noon-Day*: 'Twas now about the *Sixth Hour*, that is, according to our Computation, Twelve a-clock at Noon; and there was *a Darkneſs over all the Earth until the Ninth Hour*; the Sun was eclips'd, and the Air exceedingly clouded at the ſame Time, both which concurr'd to this thick Darkneſs, which continued *three Hours*, not *three Days*, as that of *Egypt* did.

2. The *rending of the Vail of the Temple*. The former Prodigy was in the *Heavens*; this in the *Temple*: for both theſe are the Houſes of God, and could not but feel it when the Son of God was thus abus'd, and thus ſignify their Reſentment of it. By this rending of the Vail, was ſignified the taking away of the Ceremonial Law, which was a Wall of Partition between Jews and Gentiles, and of all other Difficulties and Diſcouragements in our approach to God, ſo that now we may *come boldly to the Throne of Grace.*

Secondly, Chriſt's dying *explain'd*, (*v.* 46.) by the Words with which he breath'd out his Soul. Jeſus *had cry'd* with a loud Voice when he ſaid, *Why haſt thou forſaken me*? So we are told in *Matthew* and *Mark*; and it ſhould ſeem it was with a *loud Voice* that he ſaid this too, to ſhew his Earneſtneſs, and that all the People might take Notice of it: And this he ſaid, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.*

1. He borrowed theſe Words from his Father *David*, Pſal. 31. 5. not that he needed to have Words put into his Mouth, but he choſe to make uſe of *David*'s Words, to ſhew that it was the Spirit of Chriſt that teſtify'd in the Old-Teſtament Prophets, and that he came to fulfil the Scripture. Chriſt died with Scriptures in his Mouth; thus he directs us to make Uſe of Scripture-Language in our Addreſſes to God.

2. In this Addreſs to God, he calls him *Father*; when he complained of being forſaken, he cry'd, *Eli, Eli, my God, my God*; but to ſhew that that dreadful Agony of his Soul was now over, he here calls God *Father*. When he was giving up his Life and Soul for us, he did for us call God *Father*, that we, through him, might receive the Adoption of Sons.

3. Chriſt made uſe of theſe Words in a Senſe peculiar to himſelf as Mediator. He was now to *make his Soul an Offering for our Sin*, Iſa. 53. 10. To *give his Life a Ranſom for many*, Mat. 20. 28. *By the eternal Spirit to offer himſelf*, Heb. 9. 14. He was himſelf both the Prieſt and the Sacrifice; our Souls were forfeited, and his muſt go to redeem the Forfeiture. The Price muſt be paid *into the Hands* of God, the Party offended by Sin; to him he had undertaken to make full Satisfaction. Now by theſe Words, he *offered up the Sacrifice*, did, as it were, lay his Hand upon the Head of it, and ſurrender it, τίθημι, I *depoſite* it, I pay it down into thy Hands: Father, accept of my Life and Soul, inſtead of the Lives and Souls of the Sinners I die for. The *Animus Offerentis*, the good Will of the Offerer was requiſite to the Acceptance of the Offering. Now Chriſt here expreſſeth his chearful Willingneſs to offer himſelf, as he had done when it was firſt propos'd to him, *Heb.* 10. 9, 10. *Lo, I come to do thy Will*; *by the which Will we are ſanctify'd.*

4. Chriſt hereby ſignifies his Dependance upon his Father for his Reſurrection, by the Re-union of his Soul and Body. He commends his Spirit into his Father's Hand, to be *received* into Paradiſe, and *returned* the third Day. By this, it appears, that our Lord Jeſus, as he had a *true Body*, ſo he had a reaſonable Soul, which exiſted in a State of Separation from the Body, and thus he was made like unto his Brethren; this Soul he lodged in his Father's Hand, committed to his Cuſtody, reſting in Hope, that it ſhould not be left in *Hades*, in its *State of Separation* from the Body; no, not ſo long as that the Body might ſee Corruption.

5. Chriſt has hereby left us an Example; has fitted thoſe Words of *David* to the Purpoſe of dying Saints, and hath, as it were, ſanctify'd them for their Uſe. In Death, our great Care ſhould be about our Souls; and we cannot more effectually provide for their Welfare, than by committing them now into the Hands of God, as a Father, to be ſanctified and governed by his Spirit and Grace; and at Death, committing them into his Hands, to be made perfect in Holineſs and Happineſs. We muſt ſhew, that we are freely willing to die, that we firmly believe another Life after this, and are deſirous of it, by ſaying, *Father, into thy Hands I commit my Spirit.*

Thirdly, Chriſt's dying improved, by the impreſſions it made upon thoſe that attended him.

1. The Centurion that had Command of the Guard, was much affected with what he ſaw, *v.* 47. He was a Roman, a Gentile, a Stranger to the Conſolations of *Iſrael*, and yet he *glorified God*. He never ſaw ſuch amazing Inſtances of Divine Power, and therefore took Occaſion from thence to adore God as the *Almighty*: And he bore a Teſtimony to the patient Sufferer, *Certainly this was a righteous Man*, and was unjuſtly put to death. God's manifeſting his Power ſo much to do him Honour, was a plain Evidence of his Innocency. His Teſtimony in *Matthew* and *Mark* goes further: *Truly this was the Son of God*; but in his Caſe, this amounts to the ſame; for if he was *a righteous Man*, he ſaid very truly when he ſaid *he was the Son* of God; and therefore that Teſtimony of his concerning himſelf, muſt be admitted; for if it were falſe, he was not a *righteous Man.*

2. The diſintereſted Spectators could not but be concern'd. This is taken Notice of only here, *v.* 48. *All the People that came together to that Sight*, as is uſual upon ſuch Occaſions, *beholding the Things which were done*, could not but go away very ſerious for the Time, whatever they were when they came Home; *They ſmote their Breaſts and returned.* (1.) They laid the Thing very much to Heart for *the preſent*: They looked upon it as a wicked Thing, to put him to death, and could not but think that ſome Judgment of God would come upon their Nation for it. Probably thoſe very People were of thoſe that had cryed, *Crucify him, Crucify him!* and when he was nail'd to the Croſs, reviled and blaſphemed him; but now were ſo terrified with the Darkneſs and Earthquake, and the uncommon Manner of his expiring, that they had not only their Mouths ſtop'd, but their Conſciences ſtartled, and in Remorſe for what they had done, as the Publican, they *ſmote upon their Breaſts*, beat upon their own Hearts, as thoſe that had Indignation at themſelves. And ſome think this was a happy Step towards that good Work, which was afterwards wrought upon them, when they were prick'd to the Heart, *Acts* 2. 37. (2.) Yet it ſhould ſeem the Impreſſion ſoon wore off; they *ſmote their Breaſts and returned.* They did not ſhow any further Token of Reſpect to Chriſt, nor enquire more concerning him, but went Home, and we have Reaſon to fear, in a little Time, they quite forgot it. Thus many that ſee Chriſt evidently ſet forth, crucify'd among them in the Word and Sacraments, are a little affected for the preſent, but it doth not continue; they ſmite *their Breaſts* and *return.* They ſee Chriſt's Face in the Glaſs of the Ordinances, and admire him, but they *go away, and ſtraightway forget what manner of Man he is*, and what Reaſon they have to love him.

3. His own Friends and Followers were forc'd to keep their Diſtance, and yet got as near as they could, and durſt, to ſee what was done, *v.* 49. *All his Acquaintance* that knew him, and were known of him, *ſtood afar off*, for fear, leſt if they had been near him they ſhould have been taken up as Favourites of him; this was Part of his Sufferings, as of *Job*'s, Chap. 19. 13. *He has put my Brethren far from me, and mine Acquaintance are verily eſtranged from me*, Pſal. 88. 18. And *the Women that followed him*, together *from* Galilee, *were beholding theſe Things*, not knowing what to make of them; nor ſo ready as they ſhould have been to take them for certain *Preludiums* of his Reſurrection. Now was Chriſt *ſet for a Sign that ſhould be ſpoken againſt*, as *Simeon* foretold,

told, *that the Thoughts of many Hearts might be revealed*, Luke 2. 34, 35.

50 ¶ And behold, *there was* a man named Joſeph,
a counſeller, *and he was* a good man, and a juſt: 51
(The ſame had not conſented to the counſel and deed
of them) *he was* of Arimathea, a city of the Jews
(who alſo himſelf waited for the kingdom of God.)
52 This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body
of Jeſus. 53 And took it down, and wrapped it in
linnen, and laid it in a ſepulchre that was hewn in
ſtone, wherein never man before was laid. 54 And
that day was the preparation, and the ſabbath drew
on. 55 And the women alſo which came with him
from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the ſepulchre,
and how his body was laid. 56 And they returned,
and prepared ſpices and ointments; and reſted the
ſabbath-day, according to the commandment.

We have here an Account of Chriſt's Burial: For he muſt be brought, not only to Death, but to the Duſt of Death, *Pſal.* 22. 15. according to the Sentence, *Gen.* 3. 19. *To the Duſt thou ſhalt return:* Obſerve,

1. Who bury'd him: His Acquaintance *ſtood afar off*; they had neither Money to bear the *Charge*, nor Courage to bear the *Odium* of burying him decently; but God rais'd up one that had both; a *Man nam'd* Joſeph, *v.* 50. His Character is, that he was *a good Man, and a juſt*, a Man of unſpotted Reputation for Virtue and Piety; was not only *juſt* to all, but good to all that needed him: and Care to *bury the Dead*, as becomes the Hope of the Reſurrection of the Dead, is one Inſtance of Goodneſs and Beneficence: He was a Perſon of Quality, a *Counſellor*, a *Senator*, a Member of the *Sanhedrin*, one of the Elders of the Jewiſh Church. Having ſaid this of him, 'twas neceſſary to add, that tho' he was of that Body of Men who had put Chriſt to death, yet he *had not conſented to their Counſel and Deed*, v. 51. tho' 'twas carry'd by the Majority, yet he enter'd his Proteſt againſt it, and follow'd not the Multitude to do Evil. *Note*, That evil Counſel and Deed, ſhall not be reckon'd our Act, which we have not conſented to: Nay, he not only *diſſented* openly from thoſe that were Enemies to Chriſt, but he *conſented* ſecretly with thoſe that were his Friends: He *himſelf waited for the Kingdom of God*; he believed the Old-Teſtament Prophecies of the *Meſſiah*, and his Kingdom, and expected the Accompliſhment of them. This was the Man that appears, upon this Occaſion, to have a true Reſpect for the Lord Jeſus. *Note*, There are many who are hearty in Chriſt's Intereſts, who, tho' they do not make any ſhew in their outward Profeſſion of it, yet will be more ready to do him a Piece of real Service when there is Occaſion, than others that make a greater Figure and Noiſe.

2. What he did towards the burying of him; (1.) He *went to* Pilate, the Judge that condemn'd him, and *begged the Body of Jeſus*, for it was at his Diſpoſal; and though he might have rais'd a Party ſufficient to have carry'd off the Body by Violence, yet he would take the regular Courſe, and do it peaceably. (2.) He *took it down*, it ſhould ſeem with his own Hands, and *wrapped it in Linnen.* They tell us it was the Manner of the Jews (and that the Word here uſed ſignifies ſo much) to *roll* the Bodies of the Dead, as we do little Children, in their *Swaddling-Cloths*; ſo that the Piece of fine Linnen, which he bought whole, he cut into many Pieces for that Purpoſe. 'Tis ſaid of *Lazarus*, he was *bound Hand and Foot*, John 11. 44. *Grave Cloths* are to the Saints, as *Swaddling-Cloths*, which they ſhall out-grow and put off, when they *come to the perfect Man.*

3. Where he was bury'd; *in a Sepulchre that was hewn in Stone*, that the Priſon of the Grave might be made ſtrong; as the Church when ſhe was brought into Darkneſs, had her Way *incloſ'd with hewn Stone*, Lam. 3. 2, 9. But it was *a Sepulchre in which never Man before was laid*, for he was bury'd on ſuch an Account as never any one before him was bury'd, only in order to his riſing again the third Day, by his own Power; and he was to triumph over the Grave, ſo as never any Man did.

4. When he was bury'd, *v.* 54. *On the Day of the Preparation, when the Sabbath drew on.* This is given as a Reaſon why they made ſuch haſte with the Funeral, becauſe the *Sabbath drew* on, which requir'd their Attendance to other Work, preparing for the Sabbath, and going forth to welcome it. *Note*, Weeping muſt not hinder Sowing: Tho' they were in Tears for the Death of Chriſt, yet they muſt apply themſelves to the ſanctifying of the Sabbath. And when the Sabbath draws on, there muſt be *Preparation*: Our worldly Affairs muſt be ſo order'd, as that they may not hinder us from our Sabbath Work; and our holy Affections muſt be ſo excited, as that they may carry us on in it.

5. Who attended the Funeral, *v.* 55. not any of the Diſciples, but only *the Women that came with him from* Galilee, *v.* 55. who as they ſtaid by him while he hung on the Croſs, ſo they *follow'd* him, all in Tears, no doubt, and *beheld the Sepulchre* where it was, what was the Way to it, and *how his Body was laid in it.* They were led to this, not by their Curioſity, but by their Affection to the Lord Jeſus, which was *ſtrong as Death, cruel as the Grave*, and which *many Waters could not quench.* Here was a ſilent Funeral, and not a ſolemn one, and yet *his Reſt was glorious.*

6. What Preparation was made for the embalming of his Body after he was bury'd, *v.* 56. *They returned and prepar'd Spices and Ointments*, which was more an Evidence of their Love than of their Faith; for had they *remembered* and *believed* what he had ſo often told them, that he ſhould *riſe again the third Day*, they would have ſpar'd their *coſt* and *pains* herein, as knowing that in a ſhort Time there would be a greater Honour put upon his Body, by the Glory of his Reſurrection, than they could put upon it with their moſt *precious Ointments.* But as buſy as they were in this Preparation, they *reſted on the Sabbath-day*, and did none of this ſervile Work thereon, not only according to the Cuſtom of their Nation, but *according to the Commandments* of their God, which tho' the Day be alter'd, is ſtill in full force: *Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.*

CHAP. XXIV.

Our Lord Jeſus went glorioſly *down to Death, in ſpite of the Malice of his Enemies, who did all they could to make his Death ignominious; but he roſe again more glorioſly; of which we have an Account in this Chapter: And the Proofs and Evidences of Chriſt's Reſurrection, are more fully related by this Evangeliſt, than they were by* Matthew *and* Mark. *Here's* (1.) *Aſſurances given by Two Angels, to the Women who viſited the Sepulchre, that the Lord Jeſus was riſen from the Dead, according to his own Word, which the Angels refer them to*, v. 1—7. *and the Report of this to the Apoſtles*, v. 8—11. (2.) *The Viſit which* Peter *made to the Sepulchre, and his Diſcoveries there*, v. 12. (3.) *Chriſt's Conference with the Two Diſciples that were going to* Emmaus, *and his making of himſelf known to them*, v. 13—35. (4.) *His appearing to the eleven Diſciples themſelves, the ſame Day at Evening*, v. 36—48. (5.) *The Farewel he gave them, and his Aſcenſion into Heaven, and the Joy and Praiſe of his Diſciples whom he left behind*, v. 49—53.

1 NOW upon the firſt *day* of the week, very early
in the morning, they came unto the ſepulchre,
bringing the ſpices which they had prepared, and
certain *others* with them. 2 And they found the ſtone
rolled away from the ſepulchre. 3 And they entred
in, and found not the body of the Lord Jeſus. 4
And it came to paſs, as they were much perplexed
thereabout, behold, two men ſtood by them in ſhining garments. 5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they ſaid unto them,
Why ſeek ye the living among the dead? 6 He is not
here, but is riſen: remember how he ſpake unto you
when he was yet in Galilee, 7 Saying, The Son of
man muſt be delivered into the hands of ſinful men,
and be crucified, and the third day riſe again. 8 And
they remembred his words, 9 And returned from
the ſepulchre, and told all theſe things unto the eleven, and to all the reſt. 10 It was Mary Magdalene,
and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other
women that were with them, which told theſe things
unto the apoſtles. 11 And their words ſeemed to
them as idle tales, and they believed them not. 12
Then aroſe Peter, and ran unto the ſepulchre, and
ſtooping down, he beheld the linnen cloths laid by
themſelves, and departed, wondring in himſelf, at
that which was come to paſs.

The Manner of the re-uniting of Chriſt's Soul and Body in his Reſurrection is a Myſtery, one of the *Secret Things* that *belong not to us*; but the *Infalliable Proofs* of his Reſurrection, that he did indeed riſe from the Dead, and was thereby prov'd to be the Son of God, are *Things reveal'd, which belong to us and to our Children*, and ſome of them we have here in theſe Verſes; which relate the ſame Story for Subſtance that we had in *Matthew* and *Mark.*

1. We have here the Affection and Reſpect, which the good Women that had follow'd Chriſt ſhew'd to him, after he was dead and buried, *v.* 1. As ſoon as ever they could after the Sabbath was over, they *came to the Sepulchre* to embalm his Body, not to take it out of the Linnen in which *Joſeph* had wrapp'd it, but to anoint the Head and Face, and perhaps the wounded Hands and Feet, and to ſcatter ſweet Spices upon and about the Body; as it is uſual with us to ſtrew Flowers about the dead Bodies and Graves of our Friends, only to ſhew our good Will towards the taking off the Deformity of Death, if we could, and to make them ſomewhat the leſs loathſome to thoſe that are about them. The Zeal of thoſe good Women for Chriſt did continue; the Spices which they had prepar'd the Evening before the Sabbath, at a great Expence, they did not, upon the ſecond Thoughts, when they had ſlept upon it, diſpoſe of otherwiſe, ſuggeſting, *to what Purpoſe is this Waſte*? But they brought them to the Sepulchre on the Morning after the Sabbath, early, very early. 'Tis a Rule of Charity, *Every Man, according as he purpoſeth in his Heart, ſo let him give*, 2 Cor. 9. 7.

what is prepared for Chriſt, let it be uſed for him. Notice is taken of the Names of theſe Women, *Mary Magdalen*, and *Joanna*, and *Mary the Mother of James*, grave matronly Women, it ſhould ſeem they were; Notice is alſo taken of certain others with them, *v.* 1. and again, *v.* 10. Theſe that had not join'd in preparing the Spices, yet would go along with them to the Sepulchre; as if the Number of Chriſt's Friends increas'd when he was dead, *John* 12. 24, 32. The Daughters of *Jeruſalem*, when they ſaw how inquiſitive the Spouſe was after her Beloved, were deſirous to ſeek him with her, *Cant.* 6. 1. ſo were theſe *other Women*. The Zeal of ſome provokes others.

2. The Surprize they were in, when they found the Stone roll'd away, and the Grave empty, *v.* 2, 3. They were *much perplexed* at that, (*v.* 4.) which they had much Reaſon to rejoice in, that *the Stone was roll'd away from the Sepulchre*, by which it appear'd that he had a legal Diſcharge, and Leave to come out; and that they *found not the Body of the Lord Jeſus*, by which it appear'd he had made uſe of his Diſcharge, and was come out. *Note*, Good Chriſtians often perplex themſelves about that with which they ſhould comfort and encourage themſelves.

3. The plain Account which they had of Chriſt's Reſurrection from two Angels, that appear'd to them *in ſhining Garments*, not only white, but bright, and caſting a Luſtre about them; They firſt ſaw *one* Angel without the Sepulchre, who preſently went in, and ſat with another Angel in the Sepulchre, *one at the Head, and t'other at the Feet, where the Body of Jeſus had lain*; ſo the Evangeliſts may be reconcil'd.

The Women, when they ſaw the Angels, *were afraid*, leſt they had ſome ill News for them; but, inſtead of inquiring of them, *bow'd down their Faces to the Earth*, to look for their dear Maſter in the Grave; They would rather find him in his *Grave Cloths*, than Angels themſelves in their *ſhining Garments:* A dying Jeſus has more Beauty in the Eyes of a Believer, than Angels themſelves. Theſe Women, like the Spouſe, when found by the Watchman, (and Angels are call'd Watchers) enter not into any other Converſation with them; but *Saw ye him whom my Soul loveth*? Now here,

(1.) They upbraid the Women with the Abſurdity of the Search they were making, *v.* 5. *Why ſeek ye the Living among the Dead*? Witneſs is hereby given to Chriſt, that he is *living*, of him *it is witneſſed that he liveth*, Heb. 7. 8. and it is the Comfort of all the Saints, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*; for becauſe he lives, we ſhall live alſo. But a Reproof is given to thoſe that look for him *among the Dead*; among the dead Heroes, that the Gentiles worſhipped, as if he were but like one of them; that look for him in an Image, or a Crucifix, the Work of Mens Hands, or among unwritten Traditions, and the Inventions of Men. And indeed all they that expect Happineſs and Satisfaction in the Creature, or Perfection in this imperfect State, may be ſaid to *ſeek the Living among the Dead.*

(2.) They aſſure them that he is riſen from the Dead, *v.* 6. *He is not here, but is riſen*, is riſen by his own Power: He has quitted his Grave, to return no more to it. Theſe Angels were competent Witneſſes, for they had been ſent Expreſs from Heaven with Orders for his Diſcharge. And we are ſure that their Record is true; they durſt not tell a Lye.

(3.) They refer them to his own Words; *Remember what he ſpoke to you, when he was yet in Galilee.* If they had duly believ'd and obſerv'd the Prediction of it, they would eaſily have believ'd the Thing itſelf when it came to paſs; and therefore, that the Tidings might not be ſuch a Surprize to them as it ſeem'd to be, he repeats to them what Chriſt had often ſaid, in their hearing, The Son of Man muſt be *deliver'd into the Hands of Sinful Men*; and tho' it was done by the determinate Counſel and Fore-knowledge of God, yet they that did it were not the leſs *ſinful* for doing it: He told them that he *muſt be crucified*, ſurely they could not forget that which they had with ſo much Concern ſeen fulfilled; and would not that bring to their Mind, that which always follow'd, the *third Day he ſhall riſe again*? Obſerve, theſe Angels from Heaven bring not any *New Goſpel*, but put them in mind, as the Angels of the Churches do, of the Sayings of Chriſt, and teach them how to improve and apply them.

(4.) Their Satisfaction in this Account, *v.* 8. The Women ſeem'd to acquieſce: They *remember'd his Words*, when they were thus put in mind of them, and concluded from thence, if he were riſen it was no more than they had Reaſon to expect; and now were aſham'd of the Preparations they had made to embalm him on the third Day, who had often ſaid he would on the third Day riſe again. *Note*, A ſeaſonable Remembrance of the Words of Chriſt, will help us to a right underſtanding of his Providence.

(5.) The Report they brought of this to the Apoſtles; *They return'd from the Sepulchre, and told all theſe Things to the Eleven, and to all the Reſt* of Chriſt's Diſciples, *v.* 9. It doth not appear that they were together in a Body, they were *ſcatter'd every one to his own*, perhaps ſcarce two or three of them together in the ſame Lodgings, but one went to ſome of them, and another to others of them, ſo that in a little Time, that Morning, they got them all notice of it. But we are told, *v.* 11. how the Report was receiv'd, *their Words ſeem'd to them as idle Tales, and they believ'd them not.* They thought it was only the Fancy of the Women, and imputed it to the Power of Imagination; for they alſo had forgotten Chriſt's Words, and wanted to be put in mind of them, not only what he had ſaid to them in *Galilee* ſome Time ago, but what he had ſaid very lately in the Night wherein he was betray'd, —— *Again a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me —— I will ſee you again.* One would be amaz'd at the Stupidity of theſe Diſciples, who had themſelves ſo often profeſs'd, that they believ'd Chriſt to be the Son of God and the true Meſſiah, had been ſo often told he muſt die and riſe again, and then enter into his Glory, had ſeen him more than once raiſe the Dead, that they ſhould be ſo backward to believe his raiſing himſelf; ſurely it would ſeem the leſs ſtrange to them, when hereafter this Complaint would juſtly be taken up *by them*, to remember, that when Time was, it might juſtly have been taken up againſt them, *who hath believed our Report*?

(6.) The Enquiry which *Peter* made hereupon, *v.* 12. 'Twas *Mary Magdalen* that brought the Report to him, as appears *Joh.* 1. 2. where this Story of his running to the Sepulchre is more particularly related: (1.) *Peter* haſten'd to the Sepulchre, upon the Report; perhaps aſham'd of himſelf, to think that *Mary Magdalen* ſhould have been there before him; and yet perhaps he had not been ſo ready to go thither now, if the Women had not told him, among other things, that *the Watch was fled:* Many that are *ſwift-footed* enough, when there's no Danger, are but *cow-hearted* when there is. *Peter* now *ran to the Sepulchre*, who but t'other Day *run from his Maſter.* (2.) He look'd into the Sepulchre, and took Notice how orderly the Linnen Cloths, in which Chriſt was wrap'd, were taken off, and folded up, and laid by themſelves, but the Body gone. He was very particular in making his Obſervations, as if he would rather credit his own Eyes than the Teſtimony of the Angels. (3.) He went away, as he thought, not much the wiſer, *wondering in himſelf at that which was come to paſs.* Had he remembred the Words of Chriſt, even this was enough to ſatisfy him that he was riſen from the Dead; but having forgotten them, he is only amaz'd with the Thing, and knows not what to make of it. There's many a Thing puzzling and perplexing to us, which would be both plain and profitable if we did but rightly underſtand the Words of Chriſt, and had them ready to us.

13 ¶ And behold, two of them went that ſame
day to a village called Emmaus, which was from
Jeruſalem *about* threeſcore furlongs. 14 And they
talked together of all theſe things which had happened.
15 And it came to paſs, that while they communed
together, and reaſoned, Jeſus himſelf drew near,
and went with them. 16 But their eyes were
holden, that they ſhould not know him. 17 And he
ſaid unto them, What manner of communications are
theſe that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and
are ſad? 18 And the one of them, whoſe name was
Cleophas, anſwering, ſaid unto him, Art thou only
a ſtranger in Jeruſalem, and haſt not known the
things which are come to paſs there in theſe days?
19 And he ſaid unto them, What things? And they
ſaid unto him, Concerning Jeſus of Nazareth, which
was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God,
and all the people: 20 And how the chief prieſts and
our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death,
and have crucified him. 21 But we truſted that it
had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael: and
beſide all this, to day is the third day ſince theſe
things were done. 22 Yea, and certain women alſo
of our company made us aſtoniſhed, which were
early at the ſepulchre: 23 And when they found not
his body, they came, ſaying, that they had alſo ſeen
a viſion of angels, which ſaid that he was alive.
24 And certain of them which were with us, went
to the ſepulchre, and found *it* even ſo as the women
had ſaid; but him they ſaw not. 25 Then he ſaid
unto them, O fools, and ſlow of heart to believe all
that the prophets have ſpoken! 26 Ought not Chriſt
to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his
glory? 27 And beginning at Moſes, and all the
prophets, he expounded unto them in all the
ſcriptures, the things concerning himſelf. 28 And they
drew nigh unto the village, whither they went:
and he made as tho' he would have gone further.
29 But they conſtrained him, ſaying, Abide with
us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far ſpent.
And he went in to tarry with them. 30 And it
came to paſs as he ſat at meat with them, he took
bread, and bleſſed *it*, and brake, and gave to them.
31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him;
and he vaniſhed out of their ſight. 32 And they
ſaid one to another, Did not our heart burn within

us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the ſcriptures? 33 And they roſe up the ſame hour, and returned to Jeruſalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, 34 Saying, The Lord is riſen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. 35 And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking bread

This Appearance of Chriſt, to the *two Diſciples*, going to *Emmaus*, was mention'd, and but juſt mention'd before, *Mark* 16. 12. here it is largely related; It happen'd the ſame Day, that Chriſt roſe, the firſt Day of the New World, that roſe with him. One of theſe two Diſciples was *Cleophas*, or *Alpheus*, ſaid by the Ancients to be the Brother of *Joſeph*, Chriſt's ſuppoſed Father; who the other was, is not certain. Some think it was *Peter*; it ſhould ſeem indeed that Chriſt did appear particularly to *Peter* that Day, which the Eleven ſpoke of among themſelves, *v.* 34. and *Paul* mentions, 1 *Cor.* 15. 5. But it could not be *Peter* that was one of the *Two*, for he was one of the *Eleven* to whom the *Two* return'd; And beſides, we know *Peter* ſo well, as to think, that if he had been one of the Two, he would have been the *Chief Speaker*, and not *Cleophas*. It was one of thoſe that were Aſſociate with the Eleven mention'd, *v.* 9.

Now, in this Paſſage of Story, we may obſerve,

1. The *Walk* and *Talk* of theſe two Diſciples. *They went to a Village call'd Emmaus*, which is reckon'd to be about two Hours Walk from *Jeruſalem*; 'tis here ſaid to be about 60 Furlongs, ſeven meaſur'd Miles, *v.* 13. Whether they went thither upon Buſineſs, or to ſee ſome Friend, doth not appear: I ſuſpect they were going homewards to *Galilee*, with an Intention not to enquire more after this Jeſus; that they were meditating a Retreat, and ſtole away from their Company, without asking Leave, or taking Leave; for the Accounts brought them that Morning of their Maſter's Reſurrection, ſeem'd to them *as idle Tales*; and if ſo, no Wonder they began to think of making the beſt of their way Home.

But, as they travel'd, they *talked together of all theſe Things which had happen'd*, v. 14. They had not Courage to *confer* of theſe Things, and *conſult* what was to be done in the preſent Juncture at *Jeruſalem*, for fear of the Jews; but when they were got out of the hearing of the Jews, they could talk it over with more Freedom. They *talk'd over theſe Things*, reaſoning with themſelves concerning the Probabilities of Chriſt's Reſurrection, for, according as theſe appear'd, they would either go forward, or return back to *Jeruſalem*. *Note*, It well becomes the Diſciples of Chriſt when they are together, to talk of his Death and Reſurrection; thus they may improve one another's Knowledge, refreſh one another's Memory, and ſtir up one another's devout Affections.

2. The good Company they met with upon the Road, when Jeſus himſelf came and join'd himſelf to them, *v.* 15. *They communed together, and reaſoned*, and perhaps were warm at the Argument, one hoping that their Maſter was riſen, and would ſet up his Kingdom, the other deſpairing; *Jeſus himſelf drew near*, as a Stranger, that ſeeing them travel the ſame Way that he *went*, told them he ſhould be *glad of their Company*.

We may obſerve it for our Encouragement to keep up Chriſtian Conference, and Edifying Diſcourſe among us, That where but two together are well employ'd in Work of that Kind, Chriſt will come to them and make a third. When they that fear the Lord, *ſpeak one to another*, the Lord *hearkens and hears*, and is with them of a Truth; ſo that two thus twiſted in Faith and Love become a *three-fold Cord, not eaſily broken*, Eccl. 4. 12. They, in their Communings and Reaſonings together, were ſearching for Chriſt, comparing Notes concerning him, that they might come to more Knowledge of him, and now Chriſt comes to them. *Note*, They who ſeek Chriſt ſhall find him; he will maniſeſt himſelf to thoſe that enquire after him; and give Knowledge to thoſe who uſe the Helps for Knowledge, which they have. When the Spouſe enquir'd of the Watchmen concerning her Beloved, *It was but a little that ſhe paſſed from them*, but ſhe found him, *Cant.* 3. 4.

But, tho' they had Chriſt with them, they were not at firſt aware of it, *v.* 16. *Their Eyes were held, that they ſhould not know him*; it ſhould ſeem there was both an Alteration of the *Object*, for it is ſaid in *Mark*, that now *he appear'd in another Form*; and a Reſtraint upon the Organ, for here it is ſaid that *their Eyes were held* by a Divine Power; or, as ſome think, there was a Confuſion in the *Medium*; the Air was ſo diſpos'd that they could not diſcern who it was. No matter *how* it was, but *ſo* it was, they did not *know him*; Chriſt ſo ordering it, that they might the more freely diſcourſe with him, and he with them; and that it might appear, that his Word, and the Influence of it, did not depend upon his Bodily Preſence, which the Diſciples had too much doated upon, and muſt be weaned from; but he could teach them, and warm their Hearts by others, who ſhould have his Spiritual Preſence with them, and ſhould have his Grace going along with them unſeen.

3. The Conference that was between Chriſt and them, when he knew them, and they knew not him. Now Chriſt and his Diſciples, as is uſual, when Friends meet incognito, or in a diſguiſe, are here croſſing Queſtions.

1. Chriſt's firſt queſtion to them, is, concerning *their* preſent *Sadneſs*, which plainly appear'd in their Countenances, *v.* 17. *What manner of Communications are theſe that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are ſad*? it is a very kind and friendly Enquiry. Obſerve,

(1.) They were *ſad*, it appear'd to a Stranger that they were ſo. (1.) They had loſt their dear Maſter, and were in their own Apprehenſions quite diſappointed in their Expectations from him. They had given up the Cauſe, and knew not what Courſe to take to retrieve it. *Note*, Chriſt's Diſciples have Reaſon to be ſad when he withdraws from them; to *faſt* when the *Bridegroom* is taken from them. (2.) Tho' he was riſen from the Dead, yet either they did not know it, or did not believe it, and ſo they were ſtill in Sorrow. *Note*, Chriſt's Diſciples are often ſad and ſorrowful, even then when they have Reaſon to rejoice; but through the Weakneſs of their Faith, they cannot take the Comfort that is offer'd to them. (3.) Being ſad, they had *Communications one with another* concerning Chriſt. *Note*, 1. It becomes Chriſtians to talk of Chriſt. Were our Hearts as full of him, and of what he has done and ſuffer'd for us, as they ſhould be, *out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth would ſpeak*, not only of God and his Providence, but of Chriſt, and his Grace and Love. (2.) Good Company and good Converſe is an excellent Antidote againſt prevailing Melancholy. When Chriſt's Diſciples were ſad, they did not each one get by himſelf, but continued as he ſent them out, two and two, for two is better than one, eſpecially in times of Sorrow. Giving *vent* to the Grief, may perhaps give *eaſe* to the grieved; and by talking it over, we may talk ourſelves, or our Friends may talk us into a better Frame. Joint-mourners ſhould be mutual Comforters: Comforts ſometimes come beſt from ſuch.

(3.) Chriſt came up to them and enquir'd into the Matter of their Talk, and the Cauſe of their Grief, *what manner of Communications are theſe*? Tho' Chriſt was now enter'd into his State of Exaltation, yet he continued tender of his Diſciples, and concern'd for their Comfort. He ſpeaks as one troubled to ſee their Melancholy; *Wherefore look ye ſo ſadly* to Day? *Gen.* 40. 7. *Note*, Our Lord Jeſus takes notice of the Sorrow and Sadneſs of his Diſciples, and is afflicted in their Afflictions. Chriſt has hereby taught us, (1.) To be *converſable*: Chriſt here fell into Diſcourſe with two grave ſerious Perſons, tho' he was a Stranger to them, and they knew him not, and they readily embraced it. It doth not become Chriſtians to be moroſe and ſhy, but to take Pleaſure in good Society. (2.) We are hereby taught to be *compaſſionate*. When we ſee our Friends in Sorrow and Sadneſs, we ſhould, like Chriſt here, take cognizance of their Grief, and give them the beſt Counſel and Comfort we can. *Weep with them that weep.*

2. In anſwer to this, they put a Queſtion to him concerning *his Strangeneſs*, v. 18. *Art thou only a Stranger in Jeruſalem, and haſt not known the things that are come to paſs there in theſe Days*? Obſerve,

(1.) *Cleophas* gave him a civil Anſwer; he doth not rudely ask him, what's that to you what we are talking of, and bid him go about his Buſineſs. *Note*, We ought to be civil to thoſe who are civil to us, and to carry ourſelves obligingly to all, both in Word and Deed. 'Twas a dangerous Time now with Chriſt's Diſciples, yet he was not jealous of this Stranger, that he had any Deſign upon them, to inform againſt them, or bring them into Trouble. Charity is not forward to *think Evil*, no not of Strangers.

(2.) He is full of Chriſt himſelf, and of his Death and Sufferings, and wonders that every body elſe is not ſo too. What, art thou ſuch a Stranger in *Jeruſalem*, as not to know what has been done to our Maſter there? *Note*, Thoſe are Strangers indeed in *Jeruſalem*, that know not of the Death and Sufferings of Chriſt. What, are they *Daughters of Jeruſalem*, and yet ſo little acquainted with Chriſt, as to ask, *what is thy Beloved more than another Beloved?*

(3.) He is very willing to inform this Stranger concerning Chriſt, and to draw on further Diſcourſe with him upon this Subject. He would not have any one that had the Face of a Man, to be ignorant of Chriſt. *Note*, Thoſe who have, themſelves, the Knowledge of Chriſt crucified, ſhould do what they can to ſpread that Knowledge, and lead others into an Acquaintance with him. And it is obſervable, theſe Diſciples that were ſo forward to inſtruct the Strangers, were inſtructed by him; for to him that has, and uſes what he has, ſhall be given.

(4.) It appears by what *Cleophas* ſaith, that the Death of Chriſt made a mighty Noiſe in *Jeruſalem*, ſo that it could not be imagin'd any Man ſhould be ſuch a Stranger in the City, as not to know of it; 'twas all the Talk of the Town, and diſcours'd of in all Companies. Thus the Matter of Fact came to be univerſally *known*, which after the pouring out of the Spirit was to be *explained*.

5. Chriſt, by way of Reply, ask'd concerning *their Knowledge*, v. 19. *He ſaid unto them, what Things*? Thus making himſelf yet more a Stranger. Obſerve,

(1.) Jeſus Chriſt made light of his own Sufferings in compariſon with the Joy ſet before him, which was the Recompence of it. Now he was entring upon his Glory, ſee with what Unconcernedneſs he looks back upon his Sufferings; *What Things*? He had Reaſon to know what Things, for to him they were bitter Things, and heavy Things, and yet he asks *What Things*? The Sorrow was forgotten, for Joy that the Man-Child of our Salvation was born. He took pleaſure in Infirmities for our Sakes, to teach us to do ſo for his Sake.

(2.) Thoſe whom Chriſt will teach, he will firſt examine how far they have learn'd: They muſt tell him *what Things* they know, and then he will tell them, what was the Meaning of theſe Things, and lead them into the Myſtery of them.

(4.) They hereupon give him a particular Account, concerning Chriſt, and the preſent Poſture of his Affairs. Obſerve the Story they tell, *v.* 19, *&c.*

(1.) Here's a Summary of Chriſt's *Life* and *Character*. The *Things* they are full of, are concerning *Jeſus of Nazareth*, ſo he was commonly call'd, *who was a Prophet*, a Teacher come from God: He preach'd a true and excellent Doctrine, which had manifeſtly its Riſe from Heaven, and its Tendency towards Heaven: He confirm'd it by many glorious Miracles, Miracles of Mercy; ſo that he was *mighty in Deed and Word before God and all the People*; i. e. He was both a mighty Favourite of Heaven, and a mighty Bleſſing to this Earth. He was, and appear'd to be, greatly beloved of God, and much the Darling of his People. He had great Acceptance with God, and a great Reputation in the Country. Many are *great before all the People*, and are careſs'd by them, who are not ſo *before God*, as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; but Chriſt was Mighty both in his *Doctrine* and in his *Doings*, *before God and all the People*. Thoſe were Strangers in *Jeruſalem*, that did not know this.

(2.) Here's a modeſt Narrative of his Sufferings and Death, *v.* 20. Tho' he was ſo dear both to God and Man, yet the *Chief Prieſts and our Rulers*, in Contempt of both, *deliver'd him* to the *Roman* Power, *to be condemn'd to Death*, and *they have crucified him.* 'Tis ſtrange they did not aggravate the Matter more, and lay more Load upon thoſe that had been guilty of crucifying Chriſt; but perhaps, becauſe they ſpoke to one that was a Stranger, they thought it Prudence to avoid all Reflections upon the Chief Prieſts and their Rulers, how juſt ſoever.

(3.) Here's an Intimation of their Diſappointment in him, as the Reaſon of their Sadneſs; *we truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeem'd Iſrael*, v. 4. we are of thoſe who not only look'd upon him to be a *Prophet*, like *Moſes*, but like him a *Redeemer* too: He was depended upon, and great Things expected from him by them that *looked for Redemption*, and in it for the Conſolation of *Iſrael*. Now, if *Hope deferr'd maketh the Heart ſick*, Hope diſappointed, eſpecially ſuch a Hope, kills the Heart dead. But ſee how they made that the Ground of their Deſpair; which, if they had underſtood it aright, was the ſureſt Ground of their Hope; and that was the dying of the Lord Jeſus: *We truſted* (ſay they) *that it had been he that ſhould have redeemed* Iſrael: And, is it not he that doth redeem *Iſrael?* Nay, is he not, by his Death, paying the Price of their Redemption? Was it not neceſſary, in Order to his ſaving *Iſrael* from their Sins, that he ſhould ſuffer? So that now that moſt difficult Part of his Undertaking was got over, they had more Reaſon than ever to *truſt*, that *this is he that ſhall deliver* Iſrael; yet now they are ready to give up the Cauſe.

(4.) Here's an Account of their preſent Amazement with reference to his Reſurrection. (1.) *This is the Third Day* ſince he was crucified and died; and that was the Day, when it was expected, if ever, that he ſhould riſe again, and riſe in Glory and outward Pomp, and ſhew himſelf as publickly in Honour, as he had been ſhewn three Days before in Diſgrace; but we ſee no Sign of it: Nothing appears, as we expected, to the Conviction and Confuſion of his Proſecutors, and the Conſolation of his Diſciples; but all is ſilent. (2.) They own, that there was a Report among them that he was riſen; but they ſeem to ſpeak of it very ſlightly, and as what they gave no Credit at all to, *v.* 22, 23. *Certain Women alſo of our Company made us aſtoniſhed*, and that was all, which were *early at the Sepulchre*, and found the Body gone; and they ſaid they had *ſeen a Viſion of Angels*, *which ſaid he was alive*; but we are ready to think it was only their Fancy, and no real Thing; for Angels would have been ſent to the Apoſtles, not to the Women; and Women are eaſily impos'd upon. (3.) They acknowledge that ſome of the Apoſtles had made a Viſit to the Sepulchre, and found it *empty*, v. 24. but *him they ſaw not*; and therefore we have Reaſon to fear that he *is not riſen*, for if he were, ſurely he would have *ſhewed himſelf* to them. So that upon the whole Matter, we have no great Reaſon to think that he is riſen, and therefore have no Expectations from him now; our Hopes were all nailed to his Croſs, and buried in his Grave.

(5.) Our Lord Jeſus, tho' not known by Face to them, makes himſelf known to them by his Word.

(1.) He reproves them for their Incogitancy, and the Weakneſs of their Faith in the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, *v.* 25. *O Fools, and ſlow of Heart to believe:* When Chriſt forbad us to ſay to our Brother, *thou Fool*, it was intended to reſtrain us from giving unreaſonable Reproaches, not from giving juſt Reproofs. Chriſt called them *Fools*, not as it ſignifies *wicked Men*, in which Senſe he forbad it us; but as it ſignifies *weak Men.* He might call them *Fools*, for he *knows our Fooliſhneſs*, the Fooliſhneſs that is bound in our Hearts. They are Fools that act againſt their own Intereſt; ſo they did, who would not admit the Evidence given them, that their Maſter was riſen; but put away the Comfort of it. That which is condemn'd in them as their *Fooliſhneſs*, is, (1.) Their *Slowneſs to believe.* Believers are branded as Fools, by Atheiſts, and Infidels, and Free-Thinkers, and their moſt Holy Faith cenſured as a fond Credulity; but Chriſt tells us, that thoſe are *Fools* who are *ſlow of Heart to believe*, and are kept from it by Prejudices never impartially examin'd. (2.) Their Slowneſs to believe *the Writings of the Prophets.* He doth not ſo much blame them for their Slowneſs to believe the Teſtimony of the Women, and of the Angels, but for that which was the Cauſe thereof, their *Slowneſs to believe* the Prophets; for if they had given the Prophets of the Old Teſtament their due Weight and Conſideration, they would have been as ſure of Chriſt's *riſing from the Dead* that Morning, being the third Day after his Death, as they were of the *Riſing of the Sun*; for the *Series* and *Succeſſion* of Events, as it is ſettled by *Prophecy*, is no leſs certain and inviolable, than as it is ſettled by *Providence*: were we but more *converſant* with the Scripture and the Divine Counſels, as far as they are made known in the Scripture, we ſhould not be ſubject to ſuch Perplexities as we oft *intangle* ourſelves in.

(2.) He ſhews them that the Sufferings of Chriſt, which were ſuch a Stumbling-Block to them, and made them unapt to believe his Glory, were really the appointed Way to his Glory, and he could not go to it any other Way, *v.* 26. *Ought not the Chriſt* (the *Meſſiah*) to *have ſuffered theſe Things, and to enter into his Glory*? was it not decreed, and was not that Decree *declared*, that the promiſed *Meſſiah* muſt firſt Suffer, and then Reign? That he muſt go by his Croſs to his Crown? Had they never read the Fifty third of *Iſaiah*, and the Ninth of *Daniel*, where the Prophets ſpeak ſo very plainly of the *Sufferings of Chriſt*, and the *Glory that ſhould follow*, 1 Pet. 1. 11. The Croſs of Chriſt, was it, that they could not reconcile themſelves to; now here he ſhews them two Things, which take off the Offence of the Croſs: (1.) That the Meſſiah *ought to ſuffer* theſe Things; and therefore his Sufferings were not only no Objection againſt his being the *Meſſiah*, but really a Proof of it, as the Afflictions of the Saints are an Evidence of their Sonſhip; and they were ſo far from ruining their Expectations, that really they were the Foundation of their Hopes. He could not have been a *Saviour*, if he had not been a *Sufferer*. Chriſt's undertaking our Salvation was voluntary; but having undertaken it, it was neceſſary he ſhould ſuffer and die. (2.) That when he had ſuffer'd theſe Things, he ſhould *enter into his Glory*; which he did at his Reſurrection, that was his firſt Step upwards. Obſerve, 'tis call'd *his* Glory; becauſe he was *duly entitled* to it, and it was the Glory he had before the World was; he *ought* to enter into it, for in that, as well as in his Sufferings, the Scripture muſt be fulfilled. He *ought* to ſuffer firſt, and then to enter into his Glory; and thus the *Reproach* of the Croſs is for ever *rolled away*; and we are directed to expect the Crown of *Thorns*, and then that of *Glory*.

(3.) He expounded to them the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, which ſpake of the *Meſſiah*, and ſhewed them how they were fulfilled in *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*; and now can tell them more concerning him, than they could before tell him, *v.* 27. *Beginning at Moſes*, the firſt inſpired Writer of the Old Teſtament, he went in Order thro' *all the Prophets*, and *expounded to them the Things concerning himſelf*, ſhewing that the Sufferings he had now gone thro', were ſo far from defeating the Prophecies of the Scripture concerning him, that they were the Accompliſhment of them. He begun at *Moſes*, who recorded the firſt Promiſe, in which it was plainly foretold that the *Meſſiah* ſhould have his *Heel bruis'd*; but that by it the Serpent's Head ſhould be incurably broken. *Note*, 1. There are Things diſpers'd throughout *all the Scriptures* concerning Chriſt, which it is of great Advantage to have *collected* and *put together.* You cannot go far in any Part of Scripture but you meet with ſomething that has Reference to Chriſt, ſome Prophecy, ſome Promiſe, ſome Prayer, ſome Type or other; for he is the true *Treaſure hid in the Field* of the Old Teſtament. A Golden Throne of Goſpel Grace runs thro' the whole Web of the Old Teſtament. There's an *Eye* of that *White* to be diſcerned in every Place. 2. The Things concerning Chriſt need to be *expounded.* The *Eunuch*, tho' a Scholar, would not pretend to underſtand them, *except ſome Man ſhould guide him*, Acts 8. 31. for they were delivered darkly, according to that Diſpenſation: But now the Vail is taken away, the New Teſtament expounds the Old. 3. Jeſus Chriſt is himſelf the beſt Expoſitor of Scripture, particularly the Scriptures concerning himſelf; and even after his Reſurrection, it was in this Way that he led People into the Knowledge of the Myſtery concerning himſelf; not by advancing new Notions independent upon the Scripture, but by ſhewing how the Scripture was fulfill'd, and turning them over to the Study of them. Even the Apocalypſe itſelf, is but a ſecond Part of the Old-Teſtament Prophecies, and has continually an Eye to them; *If Men believe not Moſes and the Prophets*, they are incurable. 4. In *Studying* the Scriptures it is good to be *methodical* and to take them in order; for the Old Teſtament's Light ſhone *gradually* to the *perfect Day*, and it is good to obſerve how *at ſundry Times* and in *divers Manners* (ſubſequent Predictions improving and giving Light to the preceding ones) God ſpake to the Fathers *concerning* his Son, by whom he has now *ſpoken* to us. Some begin their Bible at the wrong End, that ſtudy the *Revelations* firſt, but Chriſt has here taught us to *begin at Moſes.* Thus far the Conference between them.

(4.) Here is the Diſcovery which Chriſt at length made of himſelf to them. One would have given a great deal for a Copy of the Sermon Chriſt preached to them by the Way, of that Expoſition of the Bible he gave them, but it is not thought fit we ſhould have it; we have the Subſtance of it in other Scriptures. The Diſciples are ſo charmed with it, that they think they are come too ſoon to their Journey's-End; but ſo it is, *They drew nigh to the Village whither they went*, v. 28. where it ſhould ſeem they determined to *take up*, for that Night. And now,

1. They courted his Stay with them. *He made as tho' he would have gone further*, he did not *ſay* he would, but he ſeem'd to them to be going further, and did not really turn into their Friend's Houſe, which it would not be decent for a Stranger to do, unleſs he were invited; he would have gone further if they had not courted his Stay; ſo that here was nothing like Diſſimulation in the Caſe. If a Stranger be *ſhy*, every one knows the Meaning of it, he will not thruſt himſelf *rudely* upon your Houſe or Company; but if you make it appear that you are freely deſirous of him for your Gueſt or Companion, he knows not but he may accept your Invitation; and this was all that Chriſt did, when he *made as tho' he would have gone further*. *Note*, Thoſe that would have Chriſt dwell with them, muſt invite him, and be importunate with him; tho' he is often *found of thoſe that ſeek him not*, yet thoſe only that *ſeek* can be ſure to *find*; and if he ſeem to *draw off* from us, it is but to draw out our Importunity, as here; *They conſtrained him*; both of them laid hold on him, with a kind and friendly Violence, ſaying, *Abide with us*. *Note*, Thoſe that have experienc'd the Pleaſure and Profit of Communion with Chriſt, cannot but covet more of his Company, and beg of him, not only to *walk with them* all Day, but to *abide with them* at Night. When *the Day is far ſpent*, and it is *towards Evening*, we begin to think of retiring for our Repoſe, and then 'tis proper to have our eye to Chriſt, and beg of him to *abide with us*; to manifeſt himſelf to us, and to fill our Minds with good Thoughts of him, and good Affections to him. Chriſt yielded to their Importunity, he *went in to tarry with them*. Thus ready is Chriſt to give further Inſtructions and Comforts to thoſe, who improve what they have receiv'd. He has promiſed, that *if any Man open the Door* to bid him Welcome, he will *come in to him*, Rev. 3. 20.

2. He manifeſted himſelf to them, *v.* 30, 31. We may ſuppoſe he continued his Diſcourſe with them, which he began upon the Road; for thou muſt talk of the Things of God, *when thou ſitteſt in the Houſe, as well as when thou walkeſt by the Way*; while Supper was a getting ready, which perhaps was ſoon done, the Proviſion was ſo ſmall and mean, 'tis likely he entertained them with ſuch Communication as was *Good, and to the Uſe of Edifying*; and ſo likewiſe, *as they ſate at Meat*, his *Lips fed* them. But ſtill they little thought that it was *Jeſus* himſelf, that was all this while talking with them: till at length he was pleaſed to throw off his Diſguiſe, and then to withdraw.

1. They began to ſuſpect it was he; when, as they *ſat down to Meat*, he undertook the Office of the Maſter of the Feaſt, which he performed ſo like himſelf, and like what he uſed to do among his Diſciples, that by it they diſcern'd him: He *took Bread and bleſſed it*, and *brake, and gave to them*. This he did with his uſual Air both of Authority and Affection, with the ſame Geſtures and Mien, with the ſame Expreſſions, perhaps, in craving a Bleſſing, and in giving the Bread to them. This was not a *miraculous* Meal, like that of the Five Loaves; nor a *ſacramental* Meal, like that of the Euchariſt, but a *common* Meal; yet Chriſt here did the ſame as he did in thoſe, to teach us to keep up our Communion with God, thro' Chriſt, in common Providences, as well as in ſpecial Ordinances; and to crave a Bleſſing and give Thanks at every Meal; and to ſee our Daily Bread provided for us, and broken to us by the Hand of Jeſus Chriſt, the Maſter, not only of the Great Family, but of all our Families. Where-ever we *ſit down to eat*, let us ſet Chriſt at the Upper-end of the Table, take our Meat as *bleſſed to us* by him, and *eat and drink* to his Glory; and receive contentedly and thankfully what he is pleas'd to *carve* out to us, be the Fare never ſo coarſe and mean; we may well receive it chearfully, if we can by Faith ſee it coming to us *from* Chriſt's Hand, and with his Bleſſing.

2. Preſently *their Eyes were opened*, and then they ſaw who it was, and *knew him* well enough; whatever it was, which hath hitherto concealed him from them, 'twas now taken out of the Way, the Miſts were ſcattered, the Veil taken off, and then they made no Queſtion but it was their Maſter; he might for wiſe and holy Ends put on the Shape of another, but no other could put on his; and therefore it muſt be he. See how Chriſt by his Spirit and Grace makes himſelf known to the Souls of his People. (1.) He opens the Scriptures to them, for they are they which teſtify of him, to thoſe who *ſearch them*, and ſearch for him in them. (2.) He meets them at his Table in the Ordinance of the Lord's-Supper, and commonly there makes further Diſcoveries of himſelf to them; is *known to them in the breaking of Bread*. But (3.) The Work is compleated by the opening of the Eyes of their Mind, and cauſing the Scales to fall off from them, as from *Paul*'s in his Converſion. If he that gives the Revelation, do not give the Underſtanding, we are in the Dark ſtill.

3. He immediately diſappear'd; he *vaniſhed out of their Sight*. Ἄφαντος ἐγένετο, He *withdrew himſelf* from them; ſlipt away of a ſudden, and went *out of Sight*. Or, *he became not viſible by them*; was made inconſpicuous from them. It ſhould ſeem that tho' Chriſt's Body after his Reſurrection was the very *ſame Body* in which he ſuffer'd and died, as appear'd by the Marks in it, yet it was ſo far changed, as to become either *viſible* or *not viſible*, as he thought fit to make it, which was a Step towards his being made a *glorious* Body. As ſoon as he had given his Diſciples one Glimpſe of him, he was gone preſently; ſuch ſhort and tranſient Views have we of Chriſt in this World, we ſee him, but in a little while loſe the Sight of him again; when we come to Heaven, the Viſion of him will have no Interruptions.

5. Here's the Reflection which theſe Diſciples made upon this Conference, and the Report they made of it to their Brethren at *Jeruſalem*.

1. The Reflection they each of them made upon the Influence which Chriſt's Diſcourſe had upon them, *v.* 32. *They ſaid one to another, did not our Hearts burn within us*. I'm ſure mine did, ſaith one; and ſo did mine, ſaith t'other, I never was ſo affected with any Diſcourſe in all my Life. Thus do they not ſo much *compare Notes*, as *compare Hearts*, in Review of the Sermon Chriſt had preached to them. They found the Preaching powerful, even when they knew not the Preacher; it made Things very plain and clear to them; and which was more, brought a *Divine Heat*, with a *Divine Light* into their Souls, ſuch as put their Hearts into a Glow, and kindled a Holy Fire of pious and devout Affections in them. Now this they take Notice of, for the confirming of their Belief, that it was indeed, as at laſt they ſaw, *Jeſus himſelf* that had been talking with them all along: What Fools were we, that we were not ſooner aware who it was? For none but he, no Word but his could *make our Hearts burn within us* as they did, it muſt be he that has the Key of the Heart, it could be no other. See here (1.) What *Preaching* is likely to *do Good*; ſuch as Chriſt's was, *plain Preaching*, and that which is familiar and level to our Capacity; he *talked with us by the Way*: And *Scriptural* Preaching; he *opened to us the Scriptures*, the Scriptures relating to himſelf. Miniſters ſhould ſhow People their Religion in their Bibles, and that they preach no other Doctrine to them but what is there; muſt ſhow that they make that the Foundation of their Knowledge, and the Foundation of their Faith. *Note*, The Expounding of thoſe Scriptures which ſpeak of Chriſt, has a direct Tendency to warm the Hearts of his Diſciples, both to quicken them, and to comfort them. (2.) What *Hearing* is likely to *do Good*, that which makes the *Heart burn*; when we are much affected with the Things of God, eſpecially with the Love of Chriſt, in dying for us, and have our Hearts thereby drawn out in Love to him, and drawn up in holy Deſires and Devotions; then our Hearts *burn within us*, when our Hearts are raiſed and elevated, and are as the Sparks which *fly upward* towards God, and when they are kindled and carry'd out with a Holy Zeal and Indignation againſt Sin, both in others and in ourſelves, and we are in ſome meaſure refined and purified from it by the *Spirit of Judgment*, and the *Spirit of Burning*, then we may ſay, thro' Grace, our Hearts are thus inflam'd.

2. The Report they brought of this to their Brethren at *Jeruſalem*, v. 33. *They riſe up the ſame Hour*, ſo tranſported with Joy at this Diſcovery Chriſt had made of himſelf to them, that they could not ſtay to make an End of their Supper, but returned with all Speed to *Jeruſalem*, tho' it was towards Evening. If they had had any Thoughts of quitting their Relation to Chriſt, this ſoon baniſhed all ſuch Thoughts out of their Mind, and there needed no more to ſend them back to his Flock. However, it ſhould ſeem they intended at leaſt to take up their Quarters to-night at *Emmaus*; but now they had ſeen Chriſt, they could not reſt, till they had brought the good News to the Diſciples, both for the Confirmation of their trembling Faith, and for the Comfort of their ſorrowful Spirits, with the *ſame Comforts wherewith they were comforted of God*. *Note*, It is the Duty of thoſe to whom Chriſt hath manifeſted himſelf, to let others know what he has done for their Souls. When thou art converted, inſtructed, comforted, ſtrengthen thy Brethren. Theſe Diſciples were *full* of this Matter themſelves, and muſt go to their Brethren, to give Vent to their Joys, as well as to give them Satisfaction that their Maſter was riſen. Obſerve,

1. How they found them, juſt when they came in among them, diſcourſing on the ſame Subject, and relating another Proof of the Reſurrection of Chriſt. They found the Eleven, and thoſe that were their uſual Companions, *gathered together* late in the Night, to pray together, it may be, and to conſider what was to be done, in this Juncture; and they found them *ſaying* among themſelves, (λέγοντας, 'tis the Saying of the *Eleven*, not of the *Two*; as is plain by the Original) and when theſe two came in, they repeated to them, with Joy and Triumph, *The Lord is riſen indeed, and hath appeared to* Simon, *v.* 34. That *Peter* had a Sight of him before the reſt of the Diſciples had, appears, 1 *Cor.* 15. 6. where it is ſaid, *he was ſeen of* Cephas, *then of the Twelve*; the Angel having ordered the Women to tell *Petter* of it particularly, *Mark* 16. 7. for his Comfort; 'tis highly probable that our Lord Jeſus did himſelf preſently the ſame Day appear to *Peter*, tho' we have no particular Narrative of it, to *confirm the Word of his Meſſengers*. This he had related to his Brethren; but obſerve, *Peter* doth not here proclaim it, and boaſt of it himſelf, he thought that did not become a Penitent, but the other Diſciples ſpeak of it with Exultation, *The Lord is riſen indeed*, ὄντως, *really*; 'tis now paſt Diſpute; no Room is left to doubt it, for he has appeared not only to the Women, but to *Simon*.

2. How they ſeconded their Evidence with an Account of what they had ſeen, *v.* 35. *They told what Things were done in the Way*. The words that were ſpoken by Chriſt to them in the Way, having a wonderful Effect and Influence upon them, are here called the *Things* that were *done in the Way*: For the Words that Chriſt ſpeaks are not empty Sound, but *they are Spirit, and they are Life*, and wondrous Things are *done* by them, done *by the Way*, by the By, as it were, where 'tis not expected. They told alſo how he was at length *known to them in the Breaking of Bread*; then when he was carving out Bleſſings to them, God opened their Eyes to

diſcern who it was. *Note*, It would be of great Uſe for the Diſcovery and Confirmation of Truth, if the Diſciples of Chriſt would compare their Obſervations and Experiences, and communicate to each other what they know, and have felt in themſelves.

36 ¶ And as they thus ſpake, Jeſus himſelf ſtood in the midſt of them, and ſaith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and ſuppoſed that they had ſeen a ſpirit. 38 And he ſaid unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts ariſe in your hearts? 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my ſelf: handle me, and ſee, for a ſpirit hath no fleſh and bones, as ye ſee me have. 40 And when he had thus ſpoken, he ſhewed them *his* hands and *his* feet. 41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he ſaid unto them, Have ye here any meat? 42 And they gave him a piece of broiled fiſh, and of an honey-comb. 43 And he took *it*, and did eat before them. 44 And he ſaid unto them, Theſe *are* the words which I ſpake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things muſt be fulfilled which were writtten in the law of Moſes, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the pſalms concerning me. 45 Then opened he their underſtanding, that they might underſtand the ſcriptures, 46 And he ſaid unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remiſſion of ſins ſhould be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jeruſalem. 48 And ye are witneſſes of theſe things.

Five times Chriſt was ſeen the ſame Day that he roſe; by *Mary Magdalen* alone in the Garden, *Joh.* 20. 14. By the Women, as they were going to tell the Diſciples, *Mat.* 28. 9. By *Peter* alone; by the Two Diſciples going to *Emmaus*; and now at Night by the Eleven; which we have an Account of in theſe Verſes, as alſo *Joh.* 20. 19. Obſerve,

1. The great *Surprize*, which his Appearing gave them. He came in among them very *ſeaſonably*, as they were comparing Notes concerning the Proofs of his Reſurrection; *As they thus ſpake*, and were ready perhaps to *put it to the Queſtion*, whether the Proofs produced amounted to Evidence ſufficient of their Maſter's Reſurrection, or no; and how they ſhould proceed? *Jeſus himſelf ſtood in the midſt of them*, and *put it out of Queſtion*. *Note*, Thoſe who make the beſt Uſe they can of their Evidences for their Comfort, may expect further Aſſurances, and that the *Spirit of Chriſt* will *witneſs with their Spirits*, (as Chriſt here witneſſed with the Diſciples, and confirmed their Teſtimony) that they are the *Children of God*, and riſen with Chriſt. Obſerve, (1.) The *Comfort* Chriſt ſpoke to them; *Peace be unto you*. This intimates in general, that it was a kind Viſit which Chriſt now made them, a Viſit of Love and Friendſhip. Tho' they had very unkindly deſerted him in his Sufferings, yet he takes the firſt Opportunity of ſeeing them together; for he deals not with us as we deſerve. They did not *credit* thoſe who had ſeen him, therefore he *comes himſelf*, that they might not continue in their diſconſolate Incredulity. He had promis'd that after his Reſurrection he would *ſee them in Galilee*; but ſo deſirous was he to ſee them and ſatisfy them, that he anticipated the Appointment, and *ſees them* at *Jeruſalem*. *Note*, Chriſt is often *better* than his Word, but never *worſe*. Now his firſt Word to them, was, *Peace be to you*, not in a Way of Compliment, but of Conſolation. This was a common Form of Salutation among the Jews, and Chriſt would thus expreſs his uſual Familiarity with them, tho' he was now entered into his State of Exaltation. Many when they are advanced forget their old Friends, and take State upon them, but we ſee Chriſt as free with them as ever. Thus Chriſt would at the firſt Word intimate to them, that he did not come to quarrel with *Peter* for *denying* him, and the Reſt for *out-running* him; no, he *came peaceably*, to ſignify to them that he had forgiven them, and was reconciled to them. (2.) The *Fright* which they put themſelves into upon it, *v.* 37. They were *terrified*, ſuppoſing that *they had ſeen a Spirit*, becauſe he came in among them without any Noiſe, and was in the midſt of them e'er they were aware. The Word uſed, *Mat.* 14. 26. when they ſaid, *It is a Spirit*, is Φάντασμα, 'tis a *Spectre*, an *Apparition*; but the Word here uſed is πνεῦμα, the Word that properly ſignifies *a Spirit*; They ſuppoſed it to be a Spirit not cloath'd with a real Body. Tho' we have an Alliance and Correſpondence with the World of Spirits, and are haſtning to it; yet, while we are here in this World of Senſe and Matter, 'tis a Terror to us to have a Spirit ſo far change its own Nature, as to become viſible to us, and converſable with us, for it is ſomething, and bodes ſomething very extraordinary.

2. The great *Satisfaction*, which his Diſcourſe gave them; wherein we have,

Firſt, The Reproof he gave them for their cauſeleſs Fears, *v.* 38. *Why are ye troubled, and why do* frightful *Thoughts ariſe in your Hearts?* Obſerve here, (1.) That when at any Time we are *troubled*, *Thoughts* are apt to *riſe in our Hearts*, that do us Hurt. Sometimes the Trouble is the Effect of the *Thoughts* that *ariſe in our Hearts*; our Griefs and Fears take Riſe from thoſe Things, that are the Creatures of our own Fancy: Sometimes the Thoughts ariſing in the Heart, are the Effect of the Trouble; without are Fightings, and then within are Fears. Thoſe that are melancholy and troubled in Mind, have *Thoughts ariſing in their Hearts*, which reflect Diſhonour upon God, and create Diſquiet to themſelves. *I am cut off from thy Sight. The Lord has forſaken and forgotten me.*

(2.) That many of the troubleſome Thoughts, with which our Minds are diſquieted, ariſe from our Miſtakes concerning Chriſt. They here thought they had *ſeen a Spirit*, when they ſaw Chriſt, and that put them into this Fright; we forget that Chriſt is our *Elder Brother*, and look upon him to be at as great a diſtance from us, as the World of Spirits is from this World, and therewith terrify ourſelves. When Chriſt is by his Spirit convincing and humbling us, when he is by his Providence trying and converting us, we *miſtake him*, as if he deſigned our Hurt, and that troubles us.

(3.) That all the troubleſome Thoughts which riſe in our Hearts at any Time, are known to the Lord Jeſus, even at the firſt Riſe of them; and they are diſpleaſing to him. He chid his Diſciples for ſuch *Thoughts*, to teach us to chide ourſelves for them. *Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul: Why art thou troubled?* Why do *Thoughts ariſe*, that are neither *True* nor *Good*, that have neither *Foundation*, nor *Fruit*: But hinder our Joy in God, diſfit us for our Duty, give Advantage to *Satan*, and deprive us of the Comforts laid up for us.

Secondly, The Proof he gave them of his Reſurrection, both for the *Silencing* of their *Fears*, by convincing them that he was *not a Spirit*; and for the *Strengthning* of their *Faith* in that Doctrine, which they were to preach to the World, by giving them a full Satisfaction concerning his Reſurrection; which, if not true, their Faith and Preaching was *all vain*. Two Proofs he gives them.

1. He ſhews them his Body, particularly *his Hands and his Feet*. They ſaw that he had the Shape, and Features, and exact Reſemblance of their Maſter; but is it not his Ghoſt? No, ſaith Chriſt, *Behold my Hands and my Feet*, you ſee I have *Hands* and *Feet*, and therefore have a *true* Body; you ſee I can *move* theſe Hands and Feet, and therefore have a *living* Body; and you ſee the Marks of the Nails in my Hands and Feet, and therefore it is *my own* Body, the *ſame* that you ſaw crucified, and not a *borrowed* one. He lays down this Principle, That a *Spirit has not Fleſh and Bones*, it is not compounded of groſs Matter, ſhap'd into various Members, and conſiſting of divers heterogeneous Parts, as our Bodies are; he doth not tell us what a *Spirit* is, 'tis Time enough to know that, when we go to the World of Spirits, but what it is not; it *has not Fleſh and Bones*. Now hence he infers, *it is I myſelf*, whom you have been ſo intimately acquainted with, and have had ſuch familiar Converſation with; 'tis *I myſelf*, whom you have Reaſon to rejoice in, and not to be afraid of. Thoſe who *know Chriſt* aright, and know him *as their's*, will have no Reaſon to be terrified at his Appearance, at his Approaches.

He appeals to their *Sight*, *ſhews* them *his Hands* and *his Feet*, which were pierced with the Nails; Chriſt retained the Marks of them in his glorified Body, that they might be Proofs that it was he himſelf, and he was willing they ſhould be *ſeen*; he afterwards ſhewed them to *Thomas*, for he is not aſhamed of his Sufferings for us; little Reaſon then have we to be aſhamed of them, or of our's for him. As he ſhewed his Wounds here to his Diſciples, for the enforcing of his Inſtructions to them, ſo he ſhewed them to his Father, for the enforcing of his Interceſſions with him. He appears in Heaven, *as a Lamb that hath been ſlain*, Rev. 5. 6. his *Blood ſpeaks*, Heb. 12. 24. He makes Interceſſion in the Virtue of his Satisfaction; he ſaith to the Father, as here to the Diſciples, *Behold my Hands and my Feet*, Zech. 13. 6, 7.

He appeals to their *Touch*; *Handle me, and ſee*. He would not let *Mary Magdalen* touch him at that Time, *John* 20. 17. But the Diſciples here are intruſted to do it, that they who were to preach his Reſurrection, and to ſuffer for doing ſo, might be themſelves abundantly better ſatisfied concerning it. He bid them *handle him*, that they might be convinced that he was not a *Spirit*. If there were really no Spirits, or Apparitions of Spirits, as by this and other Inſtances, 'tis plain the Diſciples did believe there were; now had been a proper Time for Chriſt to have undeceiv'd them, by telling them there were no ſuch Things; but he ſeems to take it for granted that there have been, and may be, Apparitions of Spirits, elſe what needed ſo much Pains to prove that he was not one? There were many Hereticks in the primitive Times, Atheiſts I rather think they were, who ſaid that Chriſt had never any Subſtantial Body, but that it was a meer Phantaſm, which was neither really born, nor truly ſuffer'd; ſuch wild Notions as theſe, we are told, the *Valentinians* and *Manichees* had, and the Followers of *Simon Magus*; they were called Δοκῆται and Φαντασιασταὶ. Bleſſed be God theſe Hereſies are ſince *buried*; and we know, and are ſure, that Jeſus Chriſt was no *Spirit* or *Apparition*, but had a true and real Body, even after his Reſurrection.

2. He *eats* with them; to ſhew that he had a real and true Body, and that he was willing to converſe freely and familiarly with his Diſciples, as one Friend with another. St. *Peter* lays a great Streſs upon this, *Acts* 10. 41. We *did eat and drink with him, after he roſe from the Dead*.

1. When they *ſaw his Hands and his Feet*, yet they knew not what to ſay; *They believed not for Joy, and wonder'd*, v. 14. 'Twas their Infirmity that they *believed not*, that *yet* they believed

not, ἔτι ἀπιςούντων αὐτῶν, they *as yet* being Unbelievers. This very much corroborates the Truth of Chriſt's Reſurrection, that the Diſciples were ſo ſlow to believe it. Inſtead of ſtealing away his Body, and ſaying *he is riſen*, when he is not, as the Chief Prieſts ſuggeſted they would do, they are ready to ſay again and again, *he is not riſen*, when he is. Their being incredulous of it at firſt, and inſiſting upon the utmoſt Proofs of it, ſhews that when afterwards they did believe it, and venture their All upon it, it was not but upon the fulleſt Demonſtration of the thing that could be.

But tho' it was their Infirmity, yet 'twas an excuſable one; for it was not from any contempt of the Evidence offered them, that they believed not: But, (1.) they *believed not for Joy*, as *Jacob*, when he was told that *Joſeph* was alive; they thought it too good News to be true. When the Faith and Hope are therefore *Weak*, becauſe the Love and Deſires are *Strong*, that weak Faith ſhall be helped and not rejected. (2.) They *wondered:* They thought it not only *too Good*, but *too Great* to be true; forgetting both the Scriptures and the Power of God.

2. For their further Conviction and Encouragement, he *called for ſome Meat*. He ſat down to Meat with the two Diſciples at *Emmaus*; but 'tis not ſaid that he did eat with *them:* Now, leſt that ſhould be made an Objection, he here did actually *eat* with *them* and *the reſt*, to ſhew that his Body was really and truly *returned to Life*; tho' he did not eat and drink, and converſe conſtantly with them as he had done; and (as *Lazarus* did after his Reſurrection, who not only returned to Life, but to his former State of Life, and to die again) becauſe it was not agreeable to the Oeconomy of that State he was riſen to.

They gave him a *Piece of broiled Fiſh, and of an Honey Comb*, v.42. The Honey-Comb, perhaps, was uſed as Sauce to the broiled Fiſh, for *Canaan* was a Land *flowing with Honey*. This was mean Fare; yet, if it be the Fare of the Diſciples, their Maſter will fare as they do; becauſe, in the Kingdom of our Father, they ſhall fare as he does, ſhall eat and drink with him in his Kingdom.

Thirdly, The *Inſight* he gave them into the Word of God, which they had *heard* and *read*, by which Faith in the Reſurrection of Chriſt is wrought in them, and all the Difficulties cleared.

1. He refers them to the *Word* which they had *heard* from him, when he was with them, and puts them in mind of that, as the Angel had done, *v.* 44. *Theſe are the Words which I ſaid unto you* in private many a time, *while I was yet with you.* We ſhould better *underſtand* what Chriſt *doth*, if we did but better *remember* what he hath ſaid, and had but the Art of comparing them together.

2. He refers them to the Word they had read in the Old Teſtament, which the Word they had heard from him directed them to; *All things muſt be fulfilled which were written.* Chriſt had given them this general Hint, for the regulating of their Expectations, that whatever they found written concerning the *Meſſiah*, in the Old Teſtament, muſt be fulfilled in him; what was written concerning his Sufferings, as well as what was written concerning his Kingdom; thoſe God had *joined together* in the Prediction, and it could not be thought they ſhould be *put aſunder* in the Event. *All things* muſt be fulfilled, even the *Hardeſt*, even the *Heavieſt*, even the *Vinegar*; he could not die till he had that, becauſe he could not till then ſay, *it is finiſhed.* The ſeveral Parts of the Old Teſtament are here mentioned, as containing each of them concerning Chriſt: *The Law of* Moſes, *i. e.* The *Pentateuch*, or the *Five* Books written by *Moſes*; the *Prophets*, containing not only the Books that are purely Prophetical, but thoſe Hiſtorical Books that were written by Prophetical Men: The *Pſalms* contain alſo the other Writings, which they called the *Hagiographa*. See in what various ways of Writing, God did of old reveal his Will; but all proceeded from one and the ſelf-ſame Spirit, who by them gave Notice of the Coming and Kingdom of the *Meſſiah:* for to *him bear all the Prophets Witneſs.*

3. By an immediate preſent Work upon their Minds, which they themſelves could not but be ſenſible of; he gave them to apprehend the true Intent and Meaning of the Old Teſtament Prophecies of Chriſt, and to ſee them all fulfilled in him, *v.* 45. *Then opened he their Underſtanding, that they might underſtand the Scriptures.* In his Diſcourſe with the two Diſciples, he took the Vail from off the Text, by opening the Scriptures; here he took the Veil from off the Heart, *by opening the Mind.* Obſerve here, (1.) That Jeſus Chriſt, by his Spirit, operates on the Minds of Men, on the Minds of all that are his: He has Acceſs to our Spirits, and can immediately influence them. 'Tis obſervable, how he did now, after his Reſurrection, give a *Specimen* of thoſe two great Operations of *his Spirit* upon the *Spirits of Men*; his enlightning the Intellectual Faculties with a divine Light, when he opened the Underſtandings of his Diſciples; and his invigorating of the active Powers with a Divine Heat, when he made their Hearts burn within them. (2.) Even good Men need to have their *Underſtandings opened*; for tho' they are not *Darkneſs*, as they were by Nature, yet in many things they are in the *Dark. David* prays, *Open mine Eyes. Give me an Underſtanding.* And St. *Paul*, that knows ſo much of Chriſt, ſees his Need to learn more. (3.) Chriſt's Way of working Faith in the Soul, and gaining the Throne there, is, by *opening the Underſtanding*, to diſcern the Evidence of thoſe Things that are to be believed. Thus he comes into the Soul by *the Door*, while *Satan*, as a Thief and a Robber, climbs up ſome other way. (4.) The Deſign of opening the Underſtanding, is, *that we may underſtand the Scriptures:* not that we may be *Wiſe above what is written*, but that we may be *Wiſer in what is written*; and may be made *Wiſe to Salvation* by it. The Spirit in the Word, and the Spirit in the Heart, ſay the ſame Thing. Chriſt's Scholars never learn *above their Bibles* in this World; but they need to be learning ſtill more and more out of *their Bibles*, and to grow more *ready* and *mighty* in the Scriptures. That we may have right Thoughts of Chriſt, and our Miſtakes concerning him rectified, there needs no more but to be made to underſtand the Scriptures.

Fourthly, The Inſtructions he gave them as *Apoſtles*, who were to be employ'd in ſetting up his Kingdom in the World. They expected, while their Maſter was with them, that they ſhould be preferred to Poſts of Honour, which they thought themſelves quite diſappointed of when he was dead: No, ſaith he, you are now to enter upon them. *Ye are* to be *Witneſſes of theſe Things*, v. 48. to carry the Notice of them to all the World; not only to *report* them as Matter of News, but to *aſſert* them, as Evidence given upon the Tryal of the great Cauſe that has been ſo long depending between God and *Satan*, the Iſſue of which muſt be, the caſting down, and caſting out of the *Prince of this World.* You are fully aſſured of theſe Things yourſelves, you are Eye and Ear-Witneſſes of them; go and aſſure the World of them, and the ſame Spirit that hath enlightened you, ſhall go along with you for the enlightning of others. Now here they are told,

1. *What they muſt preach*; they muſt preach the Goſpel, muſt preach the *New Teſtament*, as the full Accompliſhment of the *Old*, as the Continuation and Concluſion of Divine Revelation. They muſt take their Bible along with them, (eſpecially when they preached to the Jews: nay, and *Peter* in his firſt Sermon to the Gentiles, directed them to conſult the Prophets, *Acts* 10.43.) and muſt ſhew People how it was written of old, concerning the *Meſſiah*, and the Glories and Graces of his Kingdom, and then muſt tell them how, upon their certain Knowledge, all this was fulfill'd in the Lord Jeſus.

(1.) The great *Goſpel Truth* concerning the *Death* and *Reſurrection* of Jeſus Chriſt, muſt be publiſh'd to the Children of Men, *v.* 46. *Thus it was written in the* ſealed Book of the Divine Counſels from Eternity, the Volume of that Book of the Covenant of Redemption; and thus it was written in the open Book of the Old Teſtament, among the Things revealed, and therefore *thus it behoveth Chriſt to ſuffer*, for the Divine Counſels muſt be performed, and Care taken that no Word of God fall to the ground. Go and tell the World, (1.) That Chriſt *ſuffered*, as it was written of him. Go preach *Chriſt crucified*, be not aſham'd of his Croſs, nor aſham'd of a ſuffering Jeſus. Tell them what he ſuffered, and why he ſuffered, and how all the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament were fulfilled in his Sufferings. Tell them that it *behoved him to ſuffer*; that it was neceſſary to the taking away of the Sin of the World, and the Deliverance of Mankind from Death and Ruin: Nay, it *became him* to be perfected thro' *Sufferings*, Heb. 2.10. (2.) That he roſe from the Dead on *the Third Day*, by which not only all the Offence of the Croſs was roll'd away, but he was declared to be the Son of God with Power, and in this alſo *the Scriptures were fulfilled.* See 1 Cor. 15.3,4. Go tell the World how often you ſaw him, after he roſe from the Dead, and how intimately you converſed with him: *Your Eyes ſee* (as *Joſeph* ſays to his Brethren, when his diſcovering of himſelf to them was as Life from the Dead) *that 'tis my Mouth that ſpeaketh unto you*, Gen.45.12. Go and tell them then, that he that *was dead, is alive*, and *lives for evermore*, and *has the Keys of Death and the Grave.*

(2.) The great *Goſpel Duty of Repentance* muſt be *preſs'd* upon the Children of Men. *Repentance for Sin* muſt be preached in *Chriſt's Name*, and by his Authority, *v.* 47. *All Men every where* muſt be call'd and *commanded to repent*, Acts 17.30. Go and tell People, that the God that made them, and the Lord that bought them, expect and require that immediately, upon this Notice given, they turn from the Worſhip of the Gods they have made, to the Worſhip of the God that made them; and not only ſo, but from ſerving the Intereſts of the World and the Fleſh, they muſt turn to the Service of God in Chriſt; muſt mortify all ſinful Habits, and forſake all ſinful Practices. Their Hearts and Lives muſt be changed, and they muſt be univerſally renewed and reformed.

(3.) The great *Goſpel Privilege* of the *Remiſſion of Sins* muſt be *propos'd* to all, and aſſured to all, that *repent and believe the Goſpel.* Go tell a guilty World, that ſtands convicted and condemned at God's Bar, that there is an Act of Indemnity paſs'd the Royal Aſſent, which all that Repent and Believe ſhall have the Benefit of, and not only be *pardoned*, but *prefer'd* by. Tell them *there is Hope* concerning them.

2. *To whom they muſt preach:* Whither muſt they carry theſe Propoſals, and how far doth their Commiſſion extend. They are here told, (1.) That they muſt preach this *among all Nations.* They muſt diſperſe themſelves like the Sons of *Noah*, after the Flood, ſome one way, and ſome another, and carry this Light along with them where-ever they went. The Prophets had preached *Repentance* and *Remiſſion* to the *Jews*, but the Apoſtles muſt preach them to all the World. None are *exempted* from the Obligations the Goſpel lays upon Men to *repent*, nor are any *excluded* from thoſe ineſtimable Benefits which are included in the Remiſſion of Sins, but thoſe that by their Unbelief and Impenitency, put a Bar in their own Door.

(2.) That they muſt *begin at* Jeruſalem : There they muſt preach their firſt *Goſpel Sermon* ; there the *Goſpel Church* muſt be firſt form'd ; there the Goſpel Day muſt dawn, and thence that Light ſhall go forth, which muſt take hold on the Ends of the Earth. And why muſt they begin there ? (1.) Becauſe *thus it was written*, and therefore it *behov'd them* to take this Method. *The word of the* Lord muſt go *forth from* Jeruſalem, *Iſa.*2.3. And ſee *Joel* 2. 32.—3. 16. *Obad.* 21. *Zech.* 14. 8. (2.) Becauſe there the Matters of Fact, on which the Goſpel was founded, were tranſacted ; and therefore there they were firſt atteſted, where, if there had been any juſt Cauſe for it, they might be beſt conteſted and diſprov'd. So ſtrong, ſo bright, is the firſt ſhining forth of the Glory of the riſen Redeemer, that it dares face thoſe daring Enemies of his, that had put him to an ignominious Death, and ſets them at Defiance. *Begin* at *Jeruſalem*, that the chief Prieſts may try their Strength to cruſh the Goſpel, and may rage to ſee themſelves diſappointed. (3.) Becauſe he would give us a further Example of forgiving Enemies. *Jeruſalem* had put the greateſt Affronts imaginable upon him, both the Rulers and the Multitude, for which that City might juſtly have been excepted by Name out of the Act of Indemnity : No, ſo far from that, the firſt Offer of Goſpel Grace is made to *Jeruſalem*, and thouſands there are in a little time, brought to partake of that Grace.

3. What *Aſſiſtance they ſhould have in Preaching* : 'Tis a vaſt Undertaking they are here call'd to, a very large and difficult Province, eſpecially conſidering the oppoſition this Service would meet with, and the Sufferings it would be attended with : If therefore they aks, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things* ? Here's an Anſwer ready, *v.* 49. *Behold, I ſend the Promiſe of my Father upon you*, and *ye ſhall be endued with Power from on high.* He here aſſures them, that in a little time the Power ſhould be poured out upon them, in greater Meaſures than ever, and they ſhould thereby be furniſh'd with all thoſe Gifts and Graces which were neceſſary to their diſcharge of this great Truſt : and therefore they muſt *tarry at Jeruſalem*, and not enter upon it till this be done. *Note*, 1. Thoſe *who receive the Holy Ghoſt*, are thereby *endued with a power from on high*, a ſupernatural Power ; a Power above any of their own ; 'Tis *from on high*, and therefore draws the Soul upwards, and makes it to *aim high*. 2. Chriſt's Apoſtles could never have planted his Goſpel, and ſet up his Kingdom in the World, as they did, if they had not been endued with ſuch a Power, and their admirable Atchievements prove that there was an excellency of Power going along with them. 3. *This Power from on high* was the *Promiſe of the Father*, the great Promiſe of the New Teſtament, as the Promiſe of the coming of Chriſt, was of the Old Teſtament. And if it be the *Promiſe of the Father*, we may be ſure that the Promiſe is *inviolable*, and the Thing promis'd *invaluable*. 4. Chriſt would not leave his Diſciples till the time was juſt at hand for the performing of this Promiſe. It was but ten days after the *Aſcenſion* of Chriſt, that there came the *Deſcent* of the Spirit. 5. Chriſt's Ambaſſadors muſt ſtay till they have their Powers, and not venture upon their Embaſſy, till they have receiv'd full Inſtructions and Credentials; tho' one would think never was ſuch haſte as now for the preaching of the Goſpel, yet the Preachers muſt tarry till they be endued with Power from on high, and *tarry at* Jeruſalem, tho' a Place of Danger, becauſe there this Promiſe of the Father was to find them, *Joel* 2.28.

50 ¶ And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lift up his hands, and bleſſed them. 51 And it came to paſs, while he bleſſed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worſhipped him, and returned to Jeruſalem with great joy. 53 And were continually in the temple, praiſing and bleſſing God. Amen.

This Evangeliſt omits the ſolemn Meeting between Chriſt and his Diſciples in *Galilee* ; but what he ſaid to them there, and at other Interviews, he tacks to what he ſaid to them at the firſt Viſit he made them, on the Evening of the Day he roſe ; and has now nothing more to account for, but his Aſcenſion into Heaven, which we have a very brief Narrative of, in theſe Verſes : In which we are told,

Frſt, How ſolemnly Chriſt took leave of his Diſciples : Chriſt's Deſign being to reconcile Heaven and Earth, and continue a Days-man between them, 'twas neceſſary he ſhould lay his Hands on them both, and in order thereunto that he ſhould *paſs and repaſs* : He had Buſineſs to do in both Worlds, and accordingly came from Heaven to Earth in his Incarnation, to diſpatch his Buſineſs here, which when he had finiſh'd, he return'd to Heaven, to reſide there, and negociate our Affairs with the Father. Obſerve,

1. From whence he aſcended ; from *Bethany near Jeruſalem*, adjoining to the *Mount of Olives* : There he had done eminent Services for his Father's Glory, and there he entered upon his Glory : There was the *Garden* in which his Sufferings began ; there he was in his Agony, and *Bethany* ſignifies *the Houſe of Sorrow* : Thoſe that would go to Heaven, muſt aſcend thither from the Houſe of Sufferings and Sorrow ; muſt go by Agonies to their Joys. The Mount of *Olives* was pitch'd upon, long ſince, to be the Place of Chriſt's Aſcenſion, *Zech.*14.4. *His Feet ſhall ſtand in that Day upon the Mount of* Olives. And here it was, that a while ago he began his triumphant Entry into *Jeruſalem*, Chap.19.29.

2. Who were the Witneſſes of his Aſcenſion : He *led out his Diſciples* to ſee him : Probably 'twas very early in the Morning that he aſcended, before People were ſtirring; for he never ſhew'd himſelf openly to all the People, after his Reſurrection, but only to *choſen Witneſſes.* The Diſciples did not ſee him riſe out of the Grave, becauſe his Reſurrection was capable of being prov'd by their ſeeing him alive afterwards : but they ſaw him *aſcend* into Heaven, becauſe they could not otherwiſe have an *ocular* Demonſtration of his Aſcenſion. They were *led out* on purpoſe to ſee him aſcend; had their Eye upon him when he aſcended, and were not looking another way.

3. What was the Farewell he gave them : *He lift up his Hands and bleſſed them* : He did not go away in Diſpleaſure, but in Love ; he left a Bleſſing behind him ; *He lift up his Hands* as the High Prieſt did when he bleſſed the People : See *Lev.* 9.22. He bleſſed as one having Authority, commanded the Bleſſing, which he had purchas'd : *He bleſſed them as* Jacob bleſſed his Sons. The Apoſtles were now as the Repreſentatives of the twelve Tribes; ſo that in bleſſing them, he bleſſed all his Spiritual *Iſrael*, and put his Father's Name upon them : he bleſſed them as *Jacob* bleſſed his Sons, and *Moſes* the Tribes at parting, to ſhew, that having lov'd his own which were in the World, he lov'd them unto the end.

4. How he left them ; while *he was bleſſing them he was parted from them* ; not as if he were taken away before he had ſaid all he had to ſay, but to intimate, that his being parted from them did not put an end to his bleſſing of them ; for the Interceſſion which he went to Heaven to make for all his, is a Continuation of that Bleſſing : He *began* to bleſs them on Earth; but he went to Heaven to *go on* with it. Chriſt was now ſending his Apoſtles to preach his Goſpel to the World, and he gives them his Bleſſing ; not for *themſelves* only, but to be conferred in his Name, upon all that ſhould believe on him, through their Word ; for in him *all the Families of the Earth were to be bleſſed.*

5. How his Aſcenſion is deſcrib'd. (1.) He was *parted from them* ; was taken from their Head, as *Elijah* from *Eliſha*'s. *Note*, The deareſt Friends muſt part. Thoſe that love us, and pray for us, and inſtruct us, muſt be *parted from us.* The bodily Preſence of Chriſt himſelf, was not to be expected always in this World ; thoſe that knew him after the Fleſh, muſt now henceforth know him ſo no more. (2.) He was *carried up into Heaven* ; not by Force, but by his own Act and Deed. As he aroſe, ſo he aſcended by his own Power, yet attended by Angels. There needed no Chariot of Fire, or Horſes of Fire ; he knew the way ; and being the *Lord from Heaven*, could go back himſelf : He aſcended in a Cloud, as the Angel in the Smoke of *Manoah*'s Sacrifice, *Judg.*13.20.

Secondly, How chearfully his Diſciples continued their Attendance on him, and on God through him, even now he was parted from them.

1. They paid their Homage to him at his going away, to ſignify, that tho' he was going into a far Country, yet they would continue his Loyal Subjects, that were willing to have him reign over them ; *They worſhipped him*, *v.* 52. *Note*, Thoſe that receive *Bleſſings* from Chriſt, he expects *Adoration* from them. He *bleſſed them*, in token of Gratitude for which they worſhipped *him*. This freſh Diſplay of Chriſt's Glory, drew from them freſh Acknowledgements and Adorations of it. They knew that tho' he was *parted from them*, yet he could and did take Notice of their Adorations of him : The Cloud that received him out of their Sight, did not put them, or their Services, out of his Sight.

2. They *returned to* Jeruſalem *with great Joy*. There they were ordered to continue till the Spirit ſhould be poured out upon them, and thither they went accordingly, tho' it was into the Mouth of Danger : thither they went, and there they ſtaid *with great Joy*. This was a wonderful Change, and an effect of the opening of their Underſtandings. When Chriſt told them he muſt leave them, Sorrow fill'd their Hearts ; yet now they ſee him go, they are *fill'd with Joy*, being convinc'd at length, that it was expedient for them, and for the Church, that he ſhould go away to ſend the Comforter. *Note*, the Glory of Chriſt is the Joy, the exceeding Joy of all true Believers, even while they are here in this World ; much more will it be ſo, when they go to the New *Jeruſalem*, and find him there in his Glory.

3. They abounded in Acts of Devotion, while they were in Expectation of the Promiſe of the Father, *v.*53. (1.) They attended the Temple Service at the Hours of Prayer : God had not, as yet quite forſaken it, and therefore they did not. *They were continually in the Temple* as their Maſter was, when he was at *Jeruſalem*. *The Lord loves the Gates of* Zion, and ſo ſhould we. Some think they had their place of Meeting as Diſciples, in ſome of the Chambers of the Temple, which belong'd to ſome *Levite* that was well *affected to them* : But others think it's not likely that either could be *concealed from*, or would be *connived at*, by the chief Prieſts and *Rulers of the Temple*. (2.) Temple Sacrifices, they knew, were ſuperſeded by Chriſt's Sacrifice, but the Temple Songs they join'd in. *Note*, While we are waiting for God's Promiſes, we muſt go forth to meet them with our Praiſes. Praiſing and Bleſſing God is Work that is never out of Seaſon ; and nothing doth better prepare the Mind for the receiving of the Holy Ghoſt, than Holy Joy and Praiſe, Fears are ſilenc'd, Sorrows ſweeten'd and allay'd, and Hopes kept up.

The *Amen* that concludes, ſeems to be added by the Church, and every Believer, to the Reading of the Goſpel ; ſignifying an Aſſent to the Truths of the Goſpel, and a hearty Concurrence with all the Diſciples of Chriſt in praiſing and bleſſing God. *Amen*, Let him be continually prais'd and bleſs'd.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE Goſpel according to St. *JOHN.* WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

IT is not material to enquire when and where this Goſpel was written: We are ſure it was given by Inſpiration of God to John, *the Brother of* James, *one of the Twelve Apoſtles, diſtinguiſh'd by the honourable Character of* that Diſciple whom Jeſus loved; *one of the firſt Three of the Worthies of the Son of* David, *whom he took to be the Witneſſes of his Retirements, particularly of his Transfiguration and Agony. The Ancients tell us, that* John *liv'd longeſt of all the Twelve Apoſtles, and was the only one of them that died a natural Death, all the reſt ſuffering Martyrdom; and ſome of them ſay he wrote this Goſpel at* Epheſus, *at the Requeſt of the Miniſters, of the ſeveral Churches of* Aſia, *in Oppoſition to the Hereſy of* Cerinthus, *and the* Ebionites, *who held that our Lord was a* meer Man. *It ſeems moſt probable, that he wrote it before his Baniſhment into the Iſle of* Patmos, *for there he wrote his* Apocalypſe, *the Cloſe of which ſeems deſign'd for the cloſing up of the Canon of Scripture; and if ſo, this Goſpel was not written after. I cannot therefore give Credit to thoſe later Fathers, who ſay, he wrote it in his Baniſhment, or after his Return from it, many Years after the Deſtruction of* Jeruſalem; *when he was 90 Years old, ſaith one of them; when he was an hundred, ſaith another of them. However, 'tis clear, he wrote laſt of the Four Evangeliſts; and comparing his Goſpel with theirs, we may obſerve,* (1.) *That he* relates *what they had* omitted; *he* brings up the Rear, *and his Goſpel is as the* Rear-ward, *or* Gathering-Hoſt, *it gleans up what they had paſſed by. Thus there was a* later *Collection of* Solomon's *wiſe Sayings,* Prov. 25. 1. *and yet far ſhort of what he deliver'd,* 1 Kings 4. 32. (2.) *That he gives us more of the* Myſtery *of that, which the other Evangeliſts gave us only the* Hiſtory *of. It was neceſſary that the Matters of Fact ſhould be firſt ſettled, which was done in their* Declarations of thoſe things which Jeſus began both to do and teach, *Luke* 1. 1. *Acts* 1. 1. *But that being done out of the Mouth of two or three Witneſſes,* John goes on to Perfection, *Heb.* 6. 1. not laying again the Foundation, *but building upon it; leading us more within the Veil. Some of the Ancients obſerve, that the other Evangeliſts wrote more of the τὰ σωματικὰ, the* bodily *things of Chriſt; but* John *writes of the τὰ πνευματικὰ, the* ſpiritual *things of the Goſpel, the Life and Soul of it; therefore ſome have called this Goſpel the* Key of the Evangeliſts. *Here it is that a* Door *is* open'd in Heaven, *and the firſt Voice we hear is,* Come up hither, *come up higher; ſome of the Ancients, that ſuppos'd the Four living Creatures in* John's *Viſion to repreſent the Four Evangeliſts, make* John *himſelf to be the* Flying-Eagle, *ſo* high *doth he* ſoar, *and ſo* clearly *doth he* ſee *into divine and heavenly things.*

CHAP. I.

The Scope and Deſign of this Chapter is, to confirm our Faith in Chriſt, as the eternal Son of God, and the true Meſſiah *and Saviour of the World, that we may be brought to receive him, and rely upon him, as our Prophet, Prieſt and King, and to give up ourſelves to be ruled, and taught, and ſav'd by him. In order to this, we have here,* (1.) *An Account given of him by the inſpired Pen-man himſelf, fairly laying down in the Beginning, what he deſign'd his whole Book ſhould be the Proof of,* v. 1—5. *And again,* v. 10—14. *And again,* v. 16—18. (2.) *The Teſtimony of* John Baptiſt *concerning him,* v. 6—9. *And again,* v. 15. *But moſt fully and particularly,* v. 19—37. (3.) *His own Manifeſtation of himſelf to* Andrew *and* Peter, *v.* 38—42. *to* Philip *and* Nathanael, *v.* 43—51.

IN the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The ſame was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light ſhineth in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehended it not.

Auſtin ſaith (*de Civ. Dei.* l. 10. c. 29.) that his Friend *Simplicianus* told him, he had heard a Platoniok Philoſopher ſay, That theſe firſt Verſes of St. *John*'s Goſpel were *worthy to be written in Letters of Gold.* The learned *Francis Junius*, in the Account he gives of his own Life, tells how he was in his Youth infected with looſe Notions in Religion, and by the Grace of God was wonderfully recover'd, by reading accidentally theſe Verſes in a Bible, which his Father had deſignedly laid in his way; he ſaith, that he obſerv'd ſuch a Divinity in the Argument, ſuch an Authority and Majeſty in the Style, that his Fleſh trembled, and he was ſtruck into ſuch an Amazement, that for a whole Day he ſcarce knew where he was, or what he did, and from thence he dates the Beginning of his being religious. Let us enquire what there is in thoſe ſtrong Lines. The Evangeliſt here lays down the great Truth he is to prove, That Jeſus Chriſt is God, one with the Father. Obſerve,

Firſt, Who he ſpeaks of. *The Word*, ὁ λόγος. This is an Idiom peculiar to *John*'s Writings. See 1 *John* 1. 1. ch. 5. 7. *Rev.* 19. 13. yet ſome think Chriſt is meant by *the Word*, Acts 20. 32. Heb. 4. 12. Luke 1. 2.

The *Chaldee* Paraphraſe very frequently calls the *Meſſiah* (*Memra*) the *Word* of *Jehovah*, and ſpeaks of many things in the Old Teſtament, ſaid to be done by *the Lord*, as done by that *Word of the Lord*; even the vulgar *Jews* were taught, that the *Word of God* was the ſame with God. The Evangeliſt, in the Cloſe of his Diſcourſe, *v.* 18. plainly tells us, why he calls Chriſt *the Word*, *becauſe he is the only begotten Son, which is in the Boſom of the Father, and has declared him.* Word is two-fold, λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, Word *conceiv'd*; and λόγος προφόρικος, Word *utter'd*. The λόγος ὁ ἔσω, and ὁ ἔξω, *Ratio* and *Oratio*.

1. There's the *Word conceiv'd*; that is, *Thought*, which is the firſt and only immediate Product and Conception of the Soul, all the Operations of which are perform'd by *Thought*, and it is one with the Soul. And thus the ſecond Perſon in the Trinity is fitly call'd, *The Word*; for he is the *firſt Begotten of the Father*; that Eternal Eſſential Wiſdom, which *the Lord poſſeſſed*, as the Soul doth its Thought, *in the Beginning of his Way*, Prov. 8. 22. There's nothing we are more ſure of than *that we think*, yet nothing we are more in the dark about than *how we think*; who can declare the Generation of *Thought* in the Soul? Surely then

the Generations and Births of the eternal Mind, may well be allowed to be great Myſteries of Godlineſs, the Bottom of which we cannot fathom, while yet we adore the Depth.

2. There's the *Word utter'd*, and that is *Speech*, the chief and moſt natural Indication of the Mind. And thus Chriſt is *the Word*, for *by him* God has in *theſe laſt Days ſpoken to us*, Heb. 1. 1. and has directed us to *hear him*, Mat. 17. 5. He has made known God's Mind to us, as a Man's Word or Speech makes known his Thoughts as far as he pleaſeth, and no further. Chriſt is called, *That wonderful Speaker*, Dan. 8. 13. The *Speaker of things hidden*, and *ſtrange*. He is *the Word* ſpeaking *from* God to us, and *to God* for us. *John Baptiſt* was *the Voice*, but Chriſt *the Word*; being *the Word*, he is *the Truth*, the *Amen*, the *faithful Witneſs* of the Mind of God.

Secondly, What he ſaith of him, enough to prove beyond Contradiction that *he is God*. He aſſerts,

1. His Exiſtence in the Beginning: *In the Beginning was the Word*. This ſpeaks his Exiſtence, not only before his Incarnation, but before all Time. The Beginning of Time, in which all Creatures were produc'd, and brought into Being, found this Eternal Word in Being. The World was *from* the Beginning, but the Word was *in* the Beginning: Eternity is uſually expreſs'd, by being *before the Foundation of the World*. The Eternity of God is ſo deſcribed, *Pſal.* 90. 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth*. So *Prov.* 8. 23. The Word had a Being before the World had a Beginning. He that *was* in the Beginning *never* begun, and therefore *ever* was, ἄχρονος. So *Nonnus*.

2. His Co-exiſtence with the Father; *The Word was with God, and the Word was God*. Let none ſay, that when we invite them to Chriſt, we would draw them from God; for Chriſt is *with God*, and *is God*: 'Tis repeated again, *v.* 2. *the ſame*, the very ſame that we believe in and preach, was *in the Beginning with God*, i. e. he was ſo from Eternity: In the Beginning the World was *from God*, as it was created by him; but the Word was *with God*, as ever with him. The Word was with God, (1.) In reſpect of *Eſſence* and *Subſtance*, for *the Word was God*; a diſtinct Perſon or Subſiſtence, for he was *with God*; and yet the ſame in Subſtance, for he *was God*, Heb. 1. 3. (2.) In reſpect of *Complacency* and *Felicity*; there was a Glory and Happineſs which Chriſt had *with God*, before the World was, *John* 17. 5. the Son infinitely happy in the Enjoyment of his Father's Boſom, and no leſs the Father's Delight, the Son of his Love, *Prov.* 8. 30. (3.) In reſpect of *Counſel* and *Deſign*: the Myſtery of Man's Redemption, by this Word incarnate, was *hid in God* before all Worlds, *Eph.* 3. 9. He that undertook to *bring us to God*, (1 Pet. 3. 18.) was himſelf from Eternity *with God*: So that this grand Affair of Man's Reconciliation to God, was concerted between the Father and Son from Eternity, and they underſtand one another perfectly well in it, *Zech.* 6. 13. *Mat.* 11. 27. He was *by him as one brought up with him* for this Service, *Prov.* 8. 30. He was *with God*, and therefore is ſaid to *come forth from the Father*.

3. His Agency in making the World, *v.* 3. This is here, (1.) expreſly aſſerted, *All Things were made by him*. He was *with God*, not only ſo as to be *acquainted* with the Divine Counſels from Eternity, but to be *active* in the Divine Operations in the Beginning of Time. *Then was I by him*, Prov. 8. 30. God made the World *by a Word*, Pſal. 33. 6. and Chriſt was *that Word*: By him, not as a ſubordinate Inſtrument, but as a co-ordinate Agent, God *made the World*, Heb. 1. 2. not as the Work-man cuts by his Ax, but as the Body ſees by the Eye. (2.) The contrary is deny'd, *Without him was not any Thing made that was made*, from the higheſt Angel to the meaneſt Worm: God the Father did nothing without him in that Work. Now, (1.) This proves that *he is God*; for he that *built all Things is God*, Heb. 3. 4. The God of *Iſrael* often prov'd himſelf to be God with this, that he *made all Things*, Iſa. 40. 12, 28. ch. 42. 5. and ſee *Jer.* 10. 11, 12. (2.) This proves the Excellency of the Chriſtian Religion; the Author and Founder of it is the ſame, who was the Author and Founder of the World. How excellent muſt that Conſtitution needs be, which derives its Inſtitution from him who is the Fountain of all Excellency! When we worſhip Chriſt, we worſhip Him, to whom the Patriarchs gave Honour, as the Creator of the World, and on whom all Creatures depend. (3.) This ſhews how well qualify'd he was for the Work of our Redemption and Salvation: Help was laid upon one that was mighty indeed; for it was laid upon him that made all Things; and he is appointed the Author of our Bliſs, that was the Author of our Being.

4. The Original of Life and Light that is in him, *v.* 4. *In him was Life*. This further proves that he is God, and every way qualify'd for his Undertaking: For, (1.) he has *Life in himſelf*; not only the *true* God, but the *living God*. God is Life, he ſwears by himſelf, when he ſaith, *As I live*. (2.) All living Creatures have their Life in him; not only all the *Matter* of the Creation was *made* by him, but all the *Life* too that is in the Creation is deriv'd from him, and ſupported by him. 'Twas the Word of God that produc'd the *moving Creatures having Life*, Gen. 1. 20. Acts 17. 25. He is that Word by which Man lives, more than by Bread, *Mat.* 4. 4. (3.) Reaſonable Creatures have their *Light* from him: That *Life*, which is *the Light of Men*, comes from him. Life in Man is ſomething greater and nobler than it is in other Creatures; 'tis *rational*, and not meerly *animal*: When Man became a *living Soul*, his Life was *Light*, his Capacities ſuch as diſtinguiſh'd him from, and dignified him above the Beaſts that periſh. The *Spirit of a Man is the Candle of the Lord*, and it was the eternal Word that lighted this Candle. The Light of Reaſon, as well as the Life of Senſe, is deriv'd from him, and depends upon him. This proves him fit to undertake our Salvation; for Life and Light, ſpiritual and eternal Life and Light, are the two great Things that fallen Man, who lies ſo much under the Power of *Death* and *Darkneſs*, has need of: From whom may we better expect the Light of Divine Revelation than from him, who gave us the Light of human Reaſon? And if, when God gave us natural Life, that Life was in his Son; how readily ſhould we receive the Goſpel-Record, that he hath given us *Eternal* Life, and *that Life* too *is in his Son*.

5. The Manifeſtation of him to the Children of Men. It might be objected, if this eternal Word was all in all thus in the Creation of the World, whence is it that he has been ſo little taken notice of, and regarded? To this he anſwers, *v.* 5: *The Light ſhines, but the Darkneſs comprehends it not*. Obſerve,

1. The Diſcovery of the eternal Word to the lapſed World, even before he was manifeſted in the Fleſh; *The Light ſhineth in Darkneſs*. Light is Self-evidencing, and will make itſelf-known; this Light, from whence the Light of Men comes, hath ſhined, and doth ſhine. (1.) The eternal Word, *as God*, ſhines in *the Darkneſs* of *natural Conſcience*: Tho' Men, by the Fall, are become *Darkneſs*, yet that which may be known of God, is manifeſted in them: See *Rom.* 1. 19, 20. The Light of Nature, is this Light ſhining in Darkneſs: Something of the Power of the Divine Word, both as *Creating*, and as *Commanding*, all Mankind has an innate Senſe of; were it not for that, this Earth would be a Hell, a Place of *utter Darkneſs*; bleſſed be God it is not ſo yet. (2.) The eternal Word, as *Mediator*, ſhone in the Darkneſs of the *Old Teſtament* Types and Figures, and the Prophecies and Promiſes which were of the *Meſſiah*, from the Beginning. He that had commanded the Light of this World to ſhine out of Darkneſs, was himſelf long a Light *ſhining in Darkneſs*; there was a *Veil* upon this *Light*, 2 Cor. 3. 13.

2. The Diſability of the degenerate World to receive this Diſcovery: The *Darkneſs comprehended it not*; the moſt of Men receiv'd the Grace of God in theſe Diſcoveries in vain. (1.) The World of Mankind *comprehended not* the Natural Light that was in their Underſtandings, but became *vain in their Imaginations* concerning the eternal God, and the eternal Word, *Rom.* 1. 21, 27. The Darkneſs of Error and Sin over-power'd and quite eclips'd this Light. God *ſpoke once, yea, twice*, but *Man perceived it not*, Job 33. 14. (2.) The *Jews* that had the Light of the *Old Teſtament*, yet comprehended not Chriſt in it. As there was a Veil upon *Moſes*'s Face, ſo there was upon the People's Hearts. In the *Darkneſs* of the Types and Shadows, the Light ſhone; but ſuch was the *Darkneſs* of their Underſtandings, that they could not *ſee* it. It was therefore requiſite, that Chriſt ſhould come both to rectify the Errors of the Gentile World, and to improve the Truths of the Jewiſh Church.

6 There was a man ſent from God, whoſe name *was* John. 7 The ſame came for a witneſs, to bear witneſs of the light, that all men through him might believe. 8 He was not that light, but *was ſent* to bear witneſs of that light. 9 *That* was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. 11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the ſons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name. 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the word was made fleſh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.

The Evangeliſt deſigns to bring in *John Baptiſt*, bearing an honourable Teſtimony to Jeſus Chriſt. Now in theſe Verſes, before he doth that,

Firſt, He gives us ſome Account of this Witneſs he is about to produce. His Name is *John*, which ſignifies *gracious*; his Converſation was auſtere, but he was not the leſs *gracious*. Now,

1. We are here told concerning him in general, that he was a *Man ſent of God*. The Evangeliſt had ſaid concerning Jeſus Chriſt, that he was *with God*, and that he *was God*; but here concerning *John*, that he was a *Man*, a meer Man. God is pleas'd to ſpeak to us by Men like ourſelves. *John* was a *great Man*, but he was a *Man*, a Son of Man; he was *ſent from God*, he was God's Meſſenger, ſo he is call'd, *Mal.* 3. 1. God gave him both his Miſſion, and his Meſſage, both his Credentials and his Inſtructions. *John* wrought no Miracle, nor do we find that he had Viſions and Revelations; but the Strictneſs and Purity of

his Life and Doctrine, and the direct Tendency of both to reform the World, and to revive the Intereſts of God's Kingdom of Men, were plain Indications that he was ſent *of God*.

2. We are here told what his Office and Buſineſs was, *v.* 7. *The ſame came for a Witneſs*, an Eye-Witneſs, a leading Witneſs. He came εἰς μαρτυρίαν, *for a Teſtimony*. The legal Inſtitutions had been long a Teſtimony for God, in the *Jewiſh* Church; by them revealed Religion was kept up, hence we read of the *Tabernacle of the Teſtimony, the Ark of the Teſtimony, the Law and the Teſtimony*; but now Divine Revelation is to be turned into another Channel: Now the Teſtimony of *Chriſt* is the Teſtimony of *God*, 1 Cor. 1.6. and 2. 1. Among the *Gentiles*, God indeed had not *left himſelf without Witneſs*, Acts 14. 17. but the Redeemer had no Teſtimonies borne him among them: There was a profound Silence concerning him, till *John Baptiſt* came for a Witneſs to him. Now obſerve,

(1.) The *Matter* of his Teſtimony; he came to *bear Witneſs of the Light*. Light is a Thing which witneſſeth for itſelf, and carries its own Evidence along with it: But to thoſe who ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light, 'tis neceſſary there ſhould be thoſe that bear Witneſs to it. Chriſt's Light needs not Man's Teſtimony, but the World's Darkneſs doth. *John* was like the Night Watchman that goes round the Town, proclaiming the Approach of the Morning Light to thoſe that have cloſ'd their Eyes, and are not willing themſelves to obſerve it; or like that *Watchman* that was ſet to tell thoſe who aſk'd, *What of the Night*, that the *Morning comes*, and *if ye will enquire, enquire ye*; Iſa. 21. 11, 12. He was ſent of God, to tell the World that the long look'd for *Meſſias* was now come, who ſhould be a *Light to lighten the* Gentiles, *and the Glory of his People* Iſrael; and that Diſpenſation at hand, which would bring *Life and Immortality to light*.

(2.) The *Deſign* of his Teſtimony, *That all Men through him might believe*; not *in him*, but *in Chriſt*, whoſe *Way* he was ſent to *prepare*: He taught Men to look *through him*, and paſs *through him* to Chriſt; through the Doctrine of Repentance *for Sin*, to that of *Faith in Chriſt*. He prepared Men for the Reception and Entertainment of Chriſt and his Goſpel, by awakening them to a Sight and Senſe of Sin; and their Eyes being thereby opened, they might be ready to admit thoſe Beams of Divine Light which in the Perſon and Doctrine of the Meſſiah were now ready to ſhine in their Faces. If they would but receive this *Witneſs of Man*, they would ſoon find that the *Witneſs of God was greater*, 1 John 5. 9. See *John* 10. 41. Obſerve, it was deſign'd that *all Men* thro' him might believe, excluding none from the kind and beneficial Influences of his Miniſtry, that did not exclude themſelves, as Multitudes did, who *rejected the Counſel of God againſt themſelves*, and ſo *received the Grace of God in vain*.

(3.) We are here cautioned not to miſtake him for *the Light*, who only came to bear Witneſs to it; *v.* 8. *He was not that Light* that was expected and promiſed, but only was ſent to bear Witneſs of that great and ruling Light. He was a *Star*, like that which guided the wiſe Men to Chriſt: A Morning Star, but he was not the *Sun*, nor the Bridegroom, but a Friend of the Bridegroom; not the Prince, but his Harbinger. There were thoſe who reſted in *John*'s Baptiſm, and look'd no farther, as thoſe *Epheſians*, Acts 19.3. To rectify whoſe Miſtake, the Evangeliſt here, when he ſpeaks very honourably of him, yet ſhews that he muſt veil to Chriſt. He was great as the Prophet *of the Higheſt*, but not the *Higheſt* himſelf. *Note*, We muſt take heed of over-valuing Miniſters, as well as under-valuing them; they are not our Lords, nor have they Dominion over our Faith, but Miniſters by whom we believe, Stewards of our Lord's Houſe. We muſt not give up ourſelves by an implicit Faith to their Conduct, for they are not that Light; but we muſt attend to, and receive their Teſtimony, for they are ſent to *bear Witneſs of that Light*; ſo then let us eſteem of them, and not otherwiſe. Had *John* pretended to be that *Light*, he had not been ſo much as a *faithful Witneſs* of that Light. Thoſe who uſurp the Honour of Chriſt, forfeit the Honour of being the Servants of Chriſt; yet *John* was very ſerviceable as a Witneſs to the Light, tho' *he was not that Light*. Thoſe may be of great Uſe to us, who yet ſhine with a *borrowed Light*.

Secondly, Before he goes on with *John*'s Teſtimony, he returns to give us a farther Account of this Jeſus, to whom *John* bore *Record*. Having ſhew'd, in the beginning of the Chapter, the Glories of his God-head, he here comes to ſhew the Graces of his Incarnation, and his Favours to Man as Mediator.

1. Chriſt was the true Light, *v.* 9. not as if *John Baptiſt* were a *falſe* Light; but in compariſon with Chriſt, he was a very *ſmall* Light: Chriſt is that *great* Light that deſerves to be call'd ſo; other Lights are but figuratively and equivocally call'd ſo; Chriſt is the *true* Light. The Fountain of all Knowledge and of all Comfort muſt needs be the *true Light*. He is the *true Light*, and for the Proof of it, he doth not refer us to the Emanations of his Glory in the inviſible World, the Beams with which he enlightens that; but to thoſe Rays of his Light which are darted downwards, and with which this dark World of ours is enlightned. But how doth Chriſt *lighten every Man that comes into the World*?

(1.) By his Creating Power, he lightens every Man with the Light of Reaſon; that Life which is the Light of Men, is from him: All the Diſcoveries and Directions of Reaſon, all the Comfort it gives us, and all the Beauty it puts upon us, is from Chriſt.

(2.) By the Publication of his Goſpel to all Nations, he doth in effect lighten *every Man*. *John* Baptiſt was a Light, but he enlightened only *Jeruſalem* and *Judea*, and the Region round about *Jordan*, like a Candle that enlightens one Room; but Chriſt is the *true Light*, for he is a *Light to lighten the* Gentiles. His everlaſting Goſpel is to be preach'd to every *Nation and Language*, Rev. 14. 6. Like the Sun wich *lightens every Man* that will open his Eyes and receive its Light, *Pſal.* 19.6. to which the Preaching of the Goſpel is compar'd, *Rom.* 10.18. Divine Revelation is not now to be confin'd, as it had been, to one People, but to be diffuſed to all People, *Mat.* 5.15.

(3) By the Operation of his Spirit and Grace, he *lighteth* all thoſe that are *enlightened* to Salvation: And thoſe that are not enlightened by him, periſh in Darkneſs. The *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God* is ſaid to be *in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*, and is compared with that Light which was at the beginning *commanded to ſhine out of Darkneſs*, and which *lighteth every Man that comes into the World*. Whatever Light any Man has, he is indebted to Chriſt for it, whether it be natural, or ſupernatural.

2. Chriſt *was in the World*, v. 10. He was in the World as the eſſential Word before his Incarnation, upholding all Things; but this ſpeaks of his being in the World, when he took our Nature upon him, and dwelt among us; ſee *John* 16. 28. *I am come into the World*. The Son of the *Higheſt* was here in this *lower* World; that *Light* in this *dark* World, that *Holy Thing* in this ſinful polluted World. He left a World of Bliſs and Glory, and was here in this melancholy, miſerable World. He undertook to reconcile the World to God, and therefore was *in the World* to treat about it, and ſettle that Affair; to ſatisfy God's Juſtice for the World, and diſcover God's Favour to the World. He was in the World, but not of it, and ſpeaks with an Air of Triumph, when he can ſay, *Now I am no more in it*, John 17.11. The greateſt Honour that ever was put upon this World, which is ſo mean and inconſiderable a part of the Univerſe, was, that the Son of God was once *in the World*; and as it ſhould engage our Affections to things above, that there Chriſt is, ſo it ſhould reconcile us to our preſent Abode in this World, that once Chriſt was here: He *was* in the World for a while, but it is ſpoken of as a Thing paſt; and ſo it will be ſaid of us ſhortly, *we were in the World*: Oh that when we are here no more, we may be where Chriſt is! Now obſerve here,

(1.) What reaſon Chriſt had to expect the moſt affectionate and reſpectful Welcome poſſible into this World, for *the World was made by him*: Therefore he came to ſave a loſt World, becauſe it was a World of his own making. Why ſhould not he concern himſelf to revive the Light that was of his own kindling, to reſtore a Life of his own infuſing, and to renew the Image that was originally of his own impreſſing? The World was *made by him*, and therefore ought to do him Homage.

(2.) What cold Entertainment he met with notwithſtanding: *The World knew him not*. The great Maker, Ruler, and Redeemer of the World was in it, and few or none of the Inhabitants of the World were aware of it. The *Ox knows his Owner*, but the more brutiſh World did not; they did not own him, did not bid him Welcome, becauſe they did not know *him*; and they did not know him, becauſe he did not make himſelf known in that way that they expected, in external Glory and Majeſty: His Kingdom came not *with Obſervation*, becauſe it was to be a Kingdom of Trial and Probation. When he ſhall come as a Judge, the World ſhall know him.

3. He *came to his own*, v. 11. not only to the World, which was *his own*, but to the People of *Iſrael*, that were peculiarly his *own* above all People; of them he came, among them he liv'd, and to them he was *firſt ſent*. The *Jews* were at this time a mean deſpicable People; *the Crown was fallen from their Head*; yet in remembrance of the ancient Covenant, as bad as they were, and as poor as they were, Chriſt was not aſhamed to look upon them as his own. Τὰ ἴδια, his *own Things*, not τοὺς ἰδίους, his own Perſons, as *true Believers* are call'd, *John* 13.1. The *Jews* were *his*, as a Man's Houſe and Lands, and Goods are *his*, which he uſeth and poſſeſſeth; but Believers are his, as a Man's Wife and Children are his own, which he loves and enjoys. He came to his own, to ſeek and ſave them, becauſe they were his *own*. He was ſent to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, for it was he whoſe own the Sheep were. Now obſerve,

1. That the generality *rejected* him; *His own received him not*. He had Reaſon to expect that thoſe who were his own, ſhould have bidden him Welcome, conſidering how great the *Obligations* were which they *lay under* to him; and how fair the *Opportunities* were, which they had of coming to the Knowledge of him. They had the Oracles of God, who told them beforehand *when* and *where* to expect him, and of what Tribe and Family he ſhould ariſe. He came among them himſelf, introduc'd with Signs and Wonders, and himſelf the greateſt; and therefore it is not ſaid of them as it was of the World, *v.* 10. that they *knew him not*; but his *own*, tho' they could not but know him, yet they received *him not*; did not receive his Doctrine, did not welcome him as the Meſſiah, but fortified themſelves againſt him. The *Chief Prieſts*, that were in a particular man-

ner *his own*, for the *Levites* were God's Tribe, were Ring-leaders in this Contempt put upon him: Now this was very *unjuſt*, becauſe they were *his own*, and therefore he might *command* their Reſpects; and it was very *unkind* and *ungrateful*, becauſe he came to them to ſeek and ſave them, and ſo *court* their Reſpects. *Note*, Many who in Profeſſion are *Chriſt's own*, yet do not *receive him*, becauſe they will not part with their Sins, nor have him to reign *over them*.

2. That yet there was a Remnant who *own'd* him, and were faithful to him. Tho' his own receiv'd him not, yet there were thoſe that *received him*, v. 12. *But as many as received him.* *Tho' Iſrael were not gathered*, yet Chriſt was *glorious*: Tho' the Body of that Nation perſiſted and periſhed in Unbelief, yet there were many of them that were wrought upon to ſubmit to Chriſt, and many more that *were not of that Fold*. Obſerve here,

1. The true Chriſtian's *Deſcription* and *Property*: And that is, that he *receives* Chriſt, and *believes on his Name*; the latter explains the former. *Note*, (1.) To be a Chriſtian indeed, is to *believe on Chriſt's Name*; 'tis to *aſſent* to the Goſpel Diſcovery, and *conſent* to the Goſpel Propoſal concerning him. His Name is *the Word of God*; *the King of Kings*; *the Lord of Righteonſneſs*; *Jeſus a Saviour*. Now to believe on his Name, is to *acknowledge* that he is what theſe great Names ſpeak him, and to *acquieſce* in it, that he be ſo *to us*. (2.) Believing in Chriſt's Name, is *receiving* him as a Gift from God. We muſt receive his Doctrine as true and good; receive his Law as juſt and holy; receive his Offers as kind and advantageous; and we muſt receive the Image of his Grace, and Impreſſions of his Love, as the governing Principle of our Affections and Actions.

2. The true Chriſtian's Dignity and Privilege are Two-fold.

1. The *Privilege of Adoption*, which takes them into the Number of God's Children; *To them gave he Power to become the Sons of God*. Hitherto the Adoption pertained to the *Jews* only; *Iſrael is my Son, my Firſt-born*; but now by Faith in Chriſt, *Gentiles* are the *Children of God*, Gal. 3.26. They have *Power*, ἐξουσίαν, *Authority*; for no Man taketh this Power to himſelf, but who is *authorized* by the Goſpel Charter. To them gave he a *Right*; to them gave he this Prehimence. *This Power have all the Saints. Note*, (1.) It is the unſpeakable Privilege of all good Chriſtians, that they are become the *Children of God*. They were by Nature Children of Wrath, Children of this World. If they be the *Children of God*, they *become* ſo, are *made* ſo. *Fiunt non naſcuntur Chriſtiani.* Tertul. *Behold what manner of Love is this.* 1 John 3.1. God calls them his Children, they call him Father, and are entitled to all the Privileges of Children; thoſe of their Way, and thoſe of their Home. (2.) The Privilege of Adoption is entirely owing to *Jeſus Chriſt*; he gave this Power to them that believe on his Name. God is his *Father*, and ſo ours; and it is by virtue of our Eſpouſals to him, and Union with him, that we ſtand related to God as a *Father*. 'Twas in Chriſt that we were *predeſtinated to the Adoption*; from him we receive both the Character and the Spirit of Adoption, and he is the *Firſt-born among many Brethren*. The Son of God became a Son of Man, that the Sons and Daughters of Men might become the Sons and Daughters of God Almighty.

2. The *Privilege of Regeneration*, v. 13. *Which were born. Note*, All the Children of God are born again; all that are adopted are regenerated: This *Real Change* evermore attends that *Relative* one. Where-ever God confers the Dignity of Children, he creates the Nature and Diſpoſition of Children; Men cannot do ſo when they adopt. Now here we have an Account of the Original of this new Birth. 1. Negatively, (1.) It is not *propagated* by *Natural Generation* from our Parents. It is not of *Blood*, *nor of the Will of the Fleſh*, nor of *corruptible Seed*; 1 Pet. 1. 23. Man is called Fleſh and Blood, becauſe thence he has his Original; but we do not become the Children of God, as we become the Children of our Natural Parents. *Note*, Grace doth not run in a Blood, as Corruption doth. Man polluted, *begat a Son in his own Likeneſs*, Gen. 5. 3. But Man ſanctified and renewed, doth not beget a Son in *that* Likeneſs. The *Jews* gloried much in their Parentage, and the noble Blood that run in their Veins; we are *Abraham*'s Seed, and therefore to them *pertained the Adoption*, becauſe they were born of that Blood; but this New Teſtament Adoption is not founded in any ſuch natural Relation. (1.) It is not *produced* by the Natural Power of our own Will. As it is not of *Blood*, or of *the Will of the Fleſh*, ſo neither is it of the *Will of Man*: That labours under a moral Impotency of determining itſelf to that which is Good; ſo that the Principles of the Divine Life are not of our own Planting, 'tis the Grace of God that makes us willing to be *his*: Nor can human Laws or Writings prevail to ſanctify and regenerate a Soul; if they cou'd, the new Birth would be by the Will of Man. But 2. Poſitively, it is of *God*. This new Birth is owing to the Word of God, as the Means, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. and to the Spirit of God as the great and ſole Author. True Believers are *born of God*, 1 John 3.9. and 5.1. and this is neceſſary to their Adoption; for we cannot expect the *Love of God*, if we have not ſomething of his *Likeneſs*, nor claim the Privilege of Adoption, if we be not under the Power of Regeneration.

4. The *Word was made Fleſh*, v. 14. This expreſſeth Chriſt's Incarnation more clearly than thoſe before. By his Divine Preſence he always *was in the World*, and by his Prophets he *came to his own*. But now the Fulneſs of time was come, he was ſent forth after another manner, *made of a Woman*, Gal. 4. 4. God manifeſted in the Fleſh, according to the Faith and Hope of holy *Job*, Chap. 19. 26. *Yet ſhall I ſee God in my Fleſh.* Obſerve here,

1. The *Human Nature of Chriſt* with which he was veil'd; and that expreſs'd two Ways.

(1.) *The Word was made Fleſh.* Foraſmuch as the Children who were to become the Sons of God, were Partakers of Fleſh and Blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe *took part of the ſame*, Heb. 2. 14. The *Socinians* agree, that Chriſt is both God and Man, but they ſay, he was *Man*, and was made *God*, as *Moſes*, Exod. 7. 1. directly contrary to *John* here, who ſaith, θεὸς ἦν, *he was God*, but σὰρξ ἐγένετο, he was made *Fleſh*. Compare, *v.* 1. with this. This ſpeaks not only that he was really and truly Man, but that he ſubjected himſelf to the Miſeries and Calamities of the Human Nature. He was made *Fleſh*, the meaneſt part of Man; Fleſh ſpeaks Man *weak*, and he was crucified through *Weakneſs*, 2 Cor. 13. 4. *Fleſh* ſpeaks Man *Mortal* and *Dying*, Pſal. 78. 39. and Chriſt was *put to death in the Fleſh*, 1 Pet. 3. 18. Nay, *Fleſh* ſpeaks Man *tainted with Sin*, Gen. 6. 3. And Chriſt, tho' he was perfectly holy and harmleſs, yet appeared *in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. and was made *Sin for us*, 2 Cor. 5. 6. When *Adam* had ſinn'd, God ſaid to him, *Duſt thou art*, not only becauſe made out of the Duſt, but becauſe by Sin he was ſunk into Duſt: His Fall did σωματῶν τὴν ψύχην, *turn him* as it were *all into Body*, made him Earthly: Therefore he that was made a Curſe for us, was made *Fleſh*, and condemn'd Sin in the Fleſh, *Rom.* 8. 3. Wonder at this, that the Eternal Word ſhould be made Fleſh, when Fleſh was come into ſuch an ill Name; that he who made *all Things*, ſhould himſelf be made Fleſh, one of the meaneſt things, and ſubmit to that from which he was at the greateſt diſtance. The Voice that uſhered in the Goſpel, cried, *All Fleſh is Graſs*, Iſa. 40. 1. to make the Redeemer's Love the more wonderful; who to redeem and *ſave* us, was made Fleſh, and wither'd as Graſs, but the *Word of the Lord*, who was made Fleſh, endures for ever; when made Fleſh, he ceaſed not to be the Word of God.

(2.) He *dwelt among us*, here in this lower World. Having taken upon him the Nature of Man, he put himſelf into the Place and Condition of other Men. The Word might have been made Fleſh, and dwelt among the Angels; but having taken a *Body* of the ſame Mould with us, in it he came and reſided in the ſame World with us. He *dwelt among us*, us Worms of the Earth, us that he had no need of, us that he got nothing by; us that were *corrupt* and *depraved*, and revolted from God. The Lord God came and dwelt even *among the Rebellious*, Pſal. 68, 18. He that dwelt among Angels, thoſe noble and excellent Beings, came and dwelt *among us* that are a *Generation of Vipers*; us *Sinners*, which was worſe to him than *David*'s dwelling in *Meſech* and *Kedar*; or *Ezekiel*'s dwelling among *Scorpions*; or the Church of *Pergamus*, dwelling where *Satan*'s *Seat is*. When we look upon the upper World, the World of Spirits, how mean and contemptible doth this Fleſh, this Body appear, which we carry about with us, and this World in which our Lot is caſt; and how hard is it to a contemplative Mind to be reconciled to them? But that the Eternal Word was *made Fleſh*, was cloath'd with a Body as we are, and dwelt in this World as we do; this has put an Honour upon them both, and ſhould make us willing to abide in the Fleſh while God has any Work for us to do; for Chriſt dwelt in this lower World, as bad as it is, till he had finiſhed what he had to do there, *John* 17.4. He dwelt *among us* Jews, that the Scripture might be fulfill'd. *He ſhall dwell in the Tents of* Shem, *Gen.* 9.27. And ſee *Zech.* 2. 10. Tho' the *Jews* were unkind to him, yet he continued to dwell among them; tho', (as ſome of the antient Writers tell us) he was invited to better Treatment by *Abgarus*, King of *Edeſſa*, yet he removed not to any other Nation.

He *dwelt* among us. He was in the World, not as a Wayfaring Man that tarries but for a *Night*, but he *dwelt* among us, made a long Reſidence: The Original Word is obſervable, ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, he dwelt among us, he dwelt *as in a Tabernacle*; which intimates, (1.) That he dwelt here in very *mean* Circumſtances, as Shepherds that dwell in Tents: He did not dwell among us *as in a Palace*, but as in a *Tent*; for he had not where to lay his Head, and was always upon the remove. (2.) That his State here was a *Military* State; Soldiers *dwell in Tents*, he had long ſince proclaim'd War with the *Seed of the Serpent*, and now he takes *the Field* in Perſon; ſets up his Standard, and pitcheth his Tent, to proſecute this War. (3.) That his Stay among us was not to be perpetual. He dwelt here as *in a Tent*, not as at *Home*. The Patriarchs by dwelling in Tabernacles, *confeſſed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth*, and ſought the better Country, and ſo did Chriſt, leaving us an example, *Heb.* 13. 13, 14. (4.) That as of old God dwelt in the Tabernacle of *Moſes*, by the *Shechinah*, between the Cherubims, ſo now he dwells in the human Nature of Chriſt; that is now the true *Shechinah*, the Symbol of God's peculiar Preſence: And we are to make all our Addreſſes to God through Chriſt, and from him to receive Divine Oracles.

2. The *Beams of his Divine Glory* that *darted* through this *Veil*

of Fleſh. We beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. The Sun is ſtill the Fountain of Light, tho' eclips'd or clouded; ſo Chriſt was ſtill the Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, even then when he *dwelt among us* in this lower World. And how ſlightly ſoever the *Jews* thought of him, there were thoſe that ſaw through the Veil. Obſerve,

1. Who were the Witneſſes of this Glory; *We*, his Diſciples and Followers, that convers'd moſt freely and familiarly with him; we among whom he *dwelt*. Other Men diſcover their Weakneſſes to thoſe that are moſt familiar with them, but it was not ſo with Chriſt; thoſe that were moſt intimate with him, ſaw moſt of his Glory. As it was with his *Doctrine*, the Diſciples knew the Myſteries of it, while others had it *under the Veil of Parables*; ſo it was with his *Perſon*, they ſaw the Glory of his Divinity, while others ſaw only the Veil of his human Nature. He manifeſted himſelf *to them, and not unto the World.* Theſe Witneſſes were a competent Number, Twelve of them, a whole Jury of Witneſſes; Men of Plainneſs and Integrity, and far from any Thing of Deſign or Intrigue.

2. What Evidence they had of it; we *ſaw it*. They had not their Evidence by Report, at ſecond hand, but were themſelves Eye-Witneſſes of thoſe Proofs on which they built their Teſtimony, that he was the *Son of the Living God*; We *ſaw it*. The Word ſignifies a fixed abiding Sight, ſuch as gave them an Opportunity of making their Obſervations. This Apoſtle himſelf explains this, *What we declare unto you* of the Word of Life, is, what we have *ſeen with our Eyes*, and what *we have look'd upon*, 1 John 1.1.

3. What the Glory was; *The Glory as of the only begotten of the Father.* The Glory of the *Word made Fleſh*, was ſuch a Glory as became the only *begotten Son of God*, and could not be the Glory of any other. *Note* (1.) Jeſus Chriſt is the only begotten of the Father: Believers are the Children of God by the ſpecial Favour of Adoption, and the ſpecial Grace of Regeneration; they are in a Senſe ὁμοιούσιοι, of a like Nature, 1 *Pet.* 1.4. and have the Image of his Perfections; but Chriſt is ὁμοούσιος, of the ſame Nature, and is the expreſs Image of his Perſon, and the Son of God by an eternal Generation. Angels are Sons of God, but he never ſaid to any of them, *This Day have I begotten thee*, *Heb.* 1.5. (2.) He was evidently declared to be the only begotten of the Father, by that which was ſeen of his Glory when he dwelt among us. Tho' he was in the *Form of a Servant* in reſpect of outward Circumſtances, yet in reſpect of Graces, his Form was as that of the *Fourth* in the fiery Furnace, *like the Son of God*. His Divine Glory appeared in the Holineſs and Heavenlineſs of his Doctrine; in his Miracles, which extorted from many this Acknowledgement, that he was the *Son of God*; it appeared in the Purity and Goodneſs, and Beneficence of his whole Converſation: God's Goodneſs is his Glory, and he went about doing good: He ſpoke and acted in every thing as an incarnate Deity. Perhaps the Evangeliſt had a particular Regard to the Glory of his *Transfiguration*, which he was an Eye-Witneſs of; ſee 2 *Pet.* 1.16,17,18. God's calling him his *beloved Son in whom he was well pleas'd*, ſpoke him the *only begotten of the Father*; but the full Proof of this was at his Reſurrection.

4. What Advantage thoſe he dwelt among had from this. He dwelt among them full *of Grace and Truth*. In the *Old* Tabernacle wherein God dwelt was the *Law*, in *this* was Grace; in that were *Types*, in this was *Truth*. The incarnate Word was every way qualified for his Undertaking as Mediator, for he was *full of Grace and Truth*, the two great things that fallen Man ſtands in need of; and this proved him to be the *Son of God* as much as the Divine Power and Majeſty that appeared in him. (1.) He has a Fulneſs of Grace and Truth *for himſelf*; he had the Spirit without Meaſure. He was full *of Grace*, *i. e.* fully acceptable to his Father, and therefore qualified to interceed for us; and full of *Truth*, *i. e.* fully appris'd of thoſe things he was to reveal, and therefore fit to inſtruct us. He had a Fulneſs of Knowledge and a Fulneſs of Compaſſion. (2.) He has a Fulneſs of Grace and Truth *for us*. He *receiv'd* that he might *give*, and God was well pleaſed in him, that he might be well pleaſed with us in him; and this was the *Truth* of the legal *Types*.

15 ¶ John bare Witneſs of him, and cried, ſaying, This was he of whom I ſpake. He that cometh after me, is preferred before me; for he was before me. 16 And of his Fulneſs have all we received, and grace for grace. 17 For the Law was given by Moſes, but grace and truth came by Jeſus Chriſt. 18 No man hath ſeen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the Boſom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

In theſe Verſes,

Firſt, The Evangeliſt begins again to give us *John Baptiſt*'s Teſtimony concerning Chriſt, *v.* 15. He had ſaid, *v.* 8. that he *came for a Witneſs*; now here he tells us that he did accordingly *bear Witneſs*.

Here, 1. Obſerve, *how he expreſs'd* his Teſtimony, he *cried*, according to the Prediction, that he ſhould be the Voice of one *crying*. The Old Teſtament Prophets cried aloud to ſhew People their *Sins*; this New Teſtament Prophet cried aloud to ſhew People their *Saviour*. This intimates, (1.) That it was an open *publick* Teſtimony proclaimed, that all manner of Perſons might take Notice of it, for all are concerned in it. Falſe Teachers *entice ſecretly*, but Wiſdom publiſhes her Dictates in the chief Places of Concourſe. (2.) That he was free and hearty in bearing this Teſtimony. He *cried* as one that was both *well aſſured* of, and *well affected* to the Truth he witneſſed of. He that had leaped in his *Mother's Womb for Joy* of Chriſt's Approach when newly conceived, doth now with a like Exultation of Spirit, *welcome* his publick Appearance.

2. What his *Teſtimony* was. He appeals to what he had ſaid at the Beginning of his Miniſtry, when he had directed them to expect one that ſhould *come after him*, whoſe Fore-runner he was, and never intended any other but to lead them to him, and to prepare his Way. This he had given them notice of from the Firſt. *Note*, It is very comfortable to a Miniſter to have the Teſtimony of his Conſcience for him, that he ſet out in his Miniſtry with honeſt Principles and ſincerce Intentions, with a ſingle Eye to the Glory and Honour of Chriſt. Now what he had then ſaid, he applies to this Jeſus whom he had lately baptiz'd, and who was ſo remarkably owned from Heaven: *This was he of whom I ſpake.* *John* did not tell them there would ſhortly appear ſuch a one among them, and then leave them to find him out; but in this he went beyond all the Old Teſtament Prophets, that he particularly ſpecified the Perſon, *this was he*, that's the very Man I told you of, and to him all I ſaid is to be accommodated. Now what was it he ſaid?

1. He had given the Preference to this Jeſus: *He that comes after me, is preferred before me.* In the time of his Birth and publick Appearance; that ſucceeds me in Preaching, and making Diſciples, yet is a more excellent Perſon upon all Accounts; as the Prince or Peer that comes *after*, is prefer'd before the Harbinger, or Gentleman-Uſher that makes way for him. *Note*, Jeſus Chriſt, who was to be called the Son *of the higheſt*, Luke 1.32. was prefer'd before *John Baptiſt*, who was to be called only the *Prophet of the higheſt*, Luke 1.76. *John* was a Miniſter of the New Teſtament, but Chriſt was the Mediator of the New Teſtament. And obſerve, Tho' *John* was a great Man, and had a great Name and Intereſt, yet he was forward to give the Preference to him to whom it belonged. *Note*, all the Miniſters of Chriſt muſt prefer him and his Intereſt, before themſelves and all their own Intereſt? They will make an ill Account, *That ſeek their own Things, not the Things of Chriſt*, Phil. 2.21. He *comes after me*, and yet is *preferred before me*. *Note*, God diſpenſeth his Gifts according to his good Pleaſure, and many times croſſeth Hands, as *Jacob* did, preferring the *Younger* before the *Elder*. *Paul* far outſtrip'd thoſe that were in Chriſt before him.

2. He here gives a good Reaſon for it, *for he was before me.* Πρῶτός μου ἦν, He was my firſt, or firſt to me; he was my firſt Cauſe, my Original. The *Firſt* is one of *God's Names*, *Iſa.* 44. 6. He is *before me*, is *my Firſt*. (1.) In reſpect of *Seniority*, he was *before me*, for he was before *Abraham*, John 8. 58. Nay he was before *all Things*, Col. 1.17. I but of Yeſterday, he from Eternity. It was but in *thoſe Days* that *John Baptiſt* came, *Mat.* 3.1. but the goings forth of our Lord Jeſus *were of Old, from Everlaſting*, *Mic.* 5.2. This proves two Natures in Chriſt; Chriſt, as Man, *came after John*, as to his publick Appearance; Chriſt as God, was *before him*; and how could he otherwiſe be before him, but by an eternal Exiſtence? (2.) In reſpect of Supremacy, for he was *my Prince*; ſo ſome Princes are call'd the *Firſt*; πρῶτον: 'Tis he for whoſe Sake and Service I am ſent; he is my Maſter, I am his Miniſter and Meſſenger.

Secondly, He preſently returns again to ſpeak of Jeſus Chriſt, and cannot go on with *John Baptiſt*'s Teſtimony till *v.* 19. The 16th Verſe has a manifeſt Connexion with *v.* 14. where the incarnate Word was ſaid to be *full of Grace and Truth*. Now here he makes this not only the Matter of our Adoration, but of our Thankfulneſs, becauſe *from that Fulneſs* of his *we all have received. He received Gifts for Men*, Pſal. 68. 18. that he might *give Gifts to Men*, Eph. 4.8. He was fill'd that he might *fill all in all*, Eph. 1. 23. might *fill our Treaſures*, Prov. 8.21. He has a Fountain of Fulneſs overflowing. *We all have received. All we* Apoſtles, ſo ſome. We have received the Favour of this Apoſtleſhip, that's *Grace*; and a Fitneſs for it, that's *Truth*; or rather, *All we Believers*, as many as received him, *v.* 17. received from him. *Note*, All true Believers receive from Chriſt's Fulneſs; the beſt and greateſt Saints cannot live without him, the meaneſt and weakeſt may live by him. This excludes proud boaſting, that we have nothing but *we have received it*; and ſilenceth perplexing Fears, that we want nothing but *we may receive it*.

Let us ſee what it is that we have received.

1. We have received *Grace for Grace*. Our Receivings by Chriſt are all ſummed up in this one Word *Grace*; we have received, καὶ χάριν, *even Grace*, ſo great a Gift, ſo rich, ſo invaluable; we have received *no leſs* than Grace; that's a Gift to be ſpoken of with an Emphaſis. 'Tis repeated, *Grace for Grace*; for to every Stone in this Building, as well as *to the top Stone*, we muſt cry, *Grace, Grace*. Obſerve,

1. The Bleſſing receiv'd; 'tis *Grace*: the good Will of God towards us, and the good Work of God in us. God's good Will works the good Work, and then the good Work qualifies us for further Tokens of his good Will. As the Ciſtern receives Water from the Fulneſs of the Fountain, the Branches Sap from the Fulneſs of the Root, and the Air Light from the fulneſs of the Sun, ſo we receive Grace from the Fulneſs of Chriſt.

2. The manner of its Reception; *Grace for Grace*, χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος. The Phraſe is ſingular, and Interpreters put different Senſes upon it, each of which will be of uſe to illuſtrate the unſearchable Riches of the Grace of Chriſt. *Grace for Grace* ſpeak,

1. The *Freeneſs* of his Grace; 'tis Grace for Grace ſake; ſo *Grotius*. We receive Grace, not for *our ſakes*, be it known to us, but even ſo, Father, *becauſe it ſeem'd good in thy ſight*. 'Tis a *Gift according to Grace*, Rom.12.6. It is Grace *to us* for the ſake of Grace to Jeſus Chriſt. God was well pleas'd in him, and is therefore well pleaſed with us in him, *Eph.*1.6.

2. The *Fulneſs* of this Grace. *Grace for Grace* is abundance of Grace, Grace upon Grace; ſo *Camero*; one Grace heap'd upon another; as *Skin for Skin*, is Skin after Skin, even all that a Man has, *Job* 2.4. 'Tis a Bleſſing pour'd out that there ſhall not be room to receive it; *plenteous Redemption*. One Grace a Pledge of more Grace. *Joſeph, he will add.* 'Tis ſuch a Fulneſs, as is called the Fulneſs of God, which we are fill'd with. We are not ſtraiten'd in the Grace of Chriſt, if we be not ſtraiten'd in our own Boſoms.

3. The *Serviceableneſs* of this Grace. Grace for Grace, is Grace for the promoting and advancing of Grace. Grace to be *exercis'd* by ourſelves, gracious Habits for gracious Acts; Grace to be *miniſter'd to others*, gracious Vouchſafements for gracious Performances. Grace is a Talent to be traded with. The Apoſtles received Grace, *Rom.*1.5. *Eph.*3.8. that they might communicate it, 1 *Pet.*4.10.

4. The *Subſtitution* of New Teſtament Grace, *in the room and ſtead* of Old Teſtament Grace; ſo *Beza*. And this Senſe is confirm'd by what follows, *v.* 17. for the Old Teſtament had Grace in Type, the New Teſtament has Grace in Truth. There was a Grace under the Old Teſtament, the Goſpel was preach'd then, *Gal.*3.8. but that Grace is ſuperſeded, and we have Goſpel Grace inſtead of it, a *Glory which excelleth*, 2 Cor.3.10. Diſcoveries of Grace are now more clear, Diſtributions of Grace far more plentiful; this is Grace inſtead of Grace.

5. It ſpeaks the *Augmentation* and *Continuance of Grace*; Grace for Grace, is one Grace to improve, confirm, and perfect another Grace. We are changed into the Divine Image, *from Glory to Glory*, from one degree of glorious Grace to another, 2 *Cor.* 3.18. Thoſe that have *true* Grace, have that for *more Grace*, Jam. 4.6. When God gives Grace, he ſaith, Take this *in part*, for he which hath promiſed will perform.

6. It ſpeaks the *Agreeableneſs and Conformity* of Grace in the Saints, to the Grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt: ſo Mr. *Clerk*. *Grace for Grace* is Grace in us anſwering to Grace in him, as the Impreſſion upon the Wax anſwers the Seal, Line for Line. The Grace we receive from Chriſt *changeth us into the ſame Image*, 2 Cor. 3.18. the Image of the Son, *Rom.* 8.29. the *Image of the Heavenly*, 1 Cor.15.49.

2. We have received *Grace and Truth*, v.17. He had ſaid *v.*14. that Chriſt was full *of Grace and Truth*; now here he ſaith, that by him *Grace and Truth* come to us. From Chriſt we *receive Grace*, this is a String he delights to harp upon, he cannot go off from it. Two things he further obſerves in this Verſe concerning this Grace.

(1.) Its *Preference* above the Law of *Moſes*. *The Law was given by* Moſes, and it was a glorious Diſcovery, both of God's Will concerning Man, and his good Will to Man; but the Goſpel of Chriſt is a much clearer Diſcovery, both of Duty and Happineſs. That which was given by *Moſes*, was purely terrifying and threatning, and bound with Penalties, a Law which could not *give Life*, which was given with abundance of Terror, *Heb.*12.18. But that which is given by Jeſus Chriſt, is of another Nature, it has all the beneficial Uſes of the Law, but not the Terror, for it is *Grace*. *Grace teaching*, Tit.2.11. Grace *reigning*, Rom.5.21. It is a Law, but a remedial Law. The Endearments of Love are the Genius of the Goſpel, not the Affrightments of Law and the Curſe.

(2.) Its *Connexion* with Truth; *Grace and Truth*. In the Goſpel we have the Diſcovery of the greateſt *Truths*, to be embrac'd by the Underſtanding, as well as of the richeſt *Grace* to be embrac'd by the Will and Affections. It is a *faithful Saying*, and *worthy of all Acceptation*, i. e. it is Grace and Truth. The Offers of *Grace* are *ſincere*, and what we may venture our Souls upon; they are made *in earneſt*, for it is *Grace and Truth*. 'Tis *Grace and Truth*, with reference to the *Law* that was given by *Moſes*: For it is, (1.) the Performance of all the Old Teſtament Promiſes. In the Old Teſtament, we often find *Mercy* and *Truth* put together, *i. e.* Mercy according to Promiſe; ſo here *Grace and Truth* is Grace according to Promiſe: See *Luke* 1.72. 1 *Kings* 8.56. (2.) It is the Subſtance of all the Old Teſtament Types and Shadows. Something of Grace there was both in the Ordinances that were inſtituted for *Iſrael*, and the Providences that were concerning *Iſrael*; but they were only Shadows of good Things to come, even of that Grace that is to be brought to us *by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt*. He is the *true* Paſchal Lamb, the *true* Scape-Goat, the true *Manna*, &c. They had Grace in the Picture, we have Grace in the Perſon, that's *Grace and Truth*. *Grace and Truth* came, ἐγένετο, *was made*; the ſame Word that was uſed, *v.*3. concerning Chriſt's *making all things*. The Law was only *made known* by *Moſes*, but the *Being* of this Grace and Truth, as well as the Diſcovery of it, is owing to Jeſus Chriſt; this was made by him, as the World at firſt was; and by him this *Grace and Truth* do *conſiſt*.

3. Another thing we receive from Chriſt, is, a clear Revelation of God to us, *v.*18. He hath declared God to us, whom *no Man hath ſeen at any time*. This was the Grace and Truth which came by Chriſt, the Knowledge of God, and an Acquaintance with him. Obſerve,

1. The Inſufficiency of all other Diſcoveries; *No Man hath ſeen God at any Time.* This ſpeaks, (1.) That the Nature of God being *Spiritual*, he is inviſible to bodily Eyes, he is a Being *whom no Man hath ſeen or can ſee*, 1 Tim. 6.16. we have therefore need to *live by Faith*, by which we ſee *him that is inviſible*, Heb.11.27. (2.) That the Revelation which God made of himſelf in the Old Teſtament, was very ſhort and imperfect, in compariſon with that which he has made by Chriſt; *no Man hath ſeen God at any Time*, i. e. what was ſeen and known of God before the Incarnation of Chriſt, was nothing to that which is now ſeen and known; Life and Immortality are now brought to a much clearer Light than they were then. (3.) That none of the Old Teſtament Prophets were ſo well qualified to make known the Mind and Will of God to the Children of Men, as our Lord Jeſus was, for none of them had *ſeen God at any time*; Moſes *beheld the Similitude of the Lord*, Num.12.8. but was told he could not ſee his *Face*, Exod.33.20. But this recommends Chriſt's Holy Religion to us, that it was founded by one that had ſeen God, and knew more of his Mind than any one elſe ever did, for he had *ſeen him*, which they never did.

2. The All-ſufficiency of the Goſpel Diſcovery, prov'd from its Author, *the only begotten Son which is in the Boſom of the Father, he has declared him.* Obſerve here,

1. How *fit* he was to make this Diſcovery, and every way qualified for it. He, and none but he, was *worthy to take the Book and open the Seals*, Rev. 5.9. For (1.) He is *the only begotten Son*, and who ſo likely to know the Father as the Son; or in whom is the Father better known than in the Son, *Mat.*11.27. He is of the ſame Nature with the Father, ſo that he who hath *ſeen him* hath ſeen *the Father*, John 14.9. The Servant is not ſuppos'd to know ſo well *what his Lord doth*, as the Son. *John* 15.15. *Moſes was faithful as a Servant*, but *Chriſt as a Son*. (2.) He is *in the Boſom of the Father*. He had lain in his Boſom from Eternity; when he was here upon Earth, yet ſtill as God he was in the Boſom of the Father, and thither he returned when he *aſcended*: *In the Boſom of the Father*, i.e. 1. In the Boſom of his *ſpecial Love*, dear to him, in *whom he was well pleas'd*, always his Delight. All God's Saints are *in his Hand*, but his Son was *in his Boſom*, in the Nature and Eſſence, and therefore in the higheſt Degree one *in Love*. 2. In the Boſom of his *ſecret Counſels*. As there was a mutual *Complacency*, ſo there was mutual *Conſciouſneſs* between the Father and Son, *Mat.*11.27. None ſo fit as he to make known God, for none knew his Mind ſo as he did. Our moſt ſecret Counſels we are ſaid to hide *in our Boſom* (*in petto*) Chriſt was privy to the *Boſom Counſels* of the Father. The Prophets *ſat down at his Feet* as Scholars, Chriſt lay in his Boſom as a Friend. See *Eph.*3.11.

2. How *free* he was in making this Diſcovery: *He hath declared*; *Him* is not in the Original. He hath declar'd that of God, which no Man had at any time ſeen or known; not only that which was hid of God, but that which was hid in God, *Eph.*3.9. ἐξηγήσατο, it ſignifies a plain, clear, and full Diſcovery, not by general and doubtful Hints, but by particular Explications: He that runs may now read the Will of God, and the Way of Salvation. This is the *Grace*, this the *Truth* that came by Jeſus Chriſt.

19. ¶ And this is the record of John, when the Jews ſent Prieſts and Levites from Jeruſalem, to aſk him, Who art thou? 20 And he confeſſed, and denied not: but confeſſed, I am not the Chriſt. 21 And they aſked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he ſaith, I am not. Art thou that Prophet? And he anſwered, No. 22 Then ſaid they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an anſwer to them that ſent us: what ſayeſt thou of thy ſelf? 23 He ſaid, I *am* the Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs, Make ſtrait the way of the Lord, as ſaid the Prophet Eſaias. 24 And they which were ſent, were of the Phariſees. 25 And they aſked him, and ſaid unto him, Why baptizeſt thou then, if thou be not that Chriſt, nor Elias, neither that prophet? 26 John anſwered them,

ſaying, I baptize with water: but there ſtandeth one among you, whom ye know not; 27 He it is, who coming after me, is preferred before me, whoſe ſhoes latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe. 28 Theſe things were done in Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

We have here the Teſtimony of *John*, which he delivered to the Meſſengers, which were ſent from *Jeruſalem* to examine him. Obſerve here,

Firſt, Who they were that ſent to him, and who they were that were ſent.

1. They that ſent to him were *the Jews at* Jeruſalem; the great *Sanhedrim*, or High-Commiſſion Court, which ſate at *Jeruſalem*, and was the Repreſentative of the *Jewiſh* Church, who took Cognizance of all Matters relating to Religion. One would think, they that were the Fountains of Learning, and the Guides of the Church, ſhould have (by Books) underſtood the Times ſo well, as to know that the *Meſſiah* was at hand, and therefore ſhould preſently have known him that was his Forerunner, and readily embraced him; but, inſtead of that, they ſent Meſſengers to *croſs Queſtions* with him. Secular Learning, Honour and Power, ſeldom diſpoſe Mens Minds to the Reception of Divine Light.

2. They that were ſent, were, (1.) *Prieſts and Levites*, probably Members of the Council, Men of Learning, Gravity and Authority; *John Baptiſt* was himſelf a Prieſt, of the Seed of *Aaron*, and therefore 'twas not fit he ſhould be examined by any but Prieſts. It was propheſied concerning *John*'s Miniſtry, that it ſhould *purify the Sons of* Levi, *Mal.* 3. 3. and therefore they were jealous of him and his Reformation. (2.) They were *of the Phariſees*, proud, Self-juſtitiaries, that thought they needed no Repentance; and therefore could not bear one that made it his Buſineſs to preach Repentance.

Secondly, On what Errand they were ſent; 'twas to enquire concerning *John* and *his Baptiſm*. They did not ſend for *John* up to them, probably becauſe they *feared the People*, leſt the People where *John* was, ſhould be provoked to riſe, or leſt the People, where they were, ſhould be brought acquainted with him; they thought 'twas good keeping him at a Diſtance.

They enquire concerning him, (1.) To ſatisfy their Curioſity; as the *Athenians* enquired concerning *Paul's* Doctrine, for the Novelty of it, *Acts* 17. 19, 20. Such a proud Conceit they had of themſelves, that the Doctrine of Repentance was to them ſtrange Doctrine. (2.) 'Twas to ſhew their Authority. They thought they *looked great*, when they called him to Account, whom all Men counted as a Prophet, and arraigned him at their Bar. (3.) 'Twas with a Deſign to *ſuppreſs* him, and ſilence him, if they could find any Colour of it, for they were jealous of his growing Intereſt; and his Miniſtry agreed neither with the *Moſaick* Diſpenſation, which they had been long under, nor with the Notions they had formed of the Meſſiah's Kingdom.

Thirdly, What was the Anſwer he gave them, and his Account, both concerning himſelf, and concerning his Baptiſm, in both which he witneſſed to Chriſt.

1. Concerning himſelf, and what he profeſſed himſelf to be. They asked him, Σὺ τίς εἶ; *Thou, who art thou?* *John*'s appearing in the World was ſurprizing; he was in the Wilderneſs till the Day of his ſhewing unto *Iſrael*; his Spirit, his Converſe, his Doctrine, had ſomething in them, which commanded, and gained Reſpect; but he did not, as Seducers do, give out himſelf to be *ſome great One.* He was more induſtrious to *do Good*, than to *appear Great*; and therefore waved ſaying any thing of himſelf, till he was legally interrogated. Thoſe ſpeak beſt for Chriſt, that ſay leaſt of themſelves, whoſe *own Works* praiſe them, not *their own Lips*.

He anſwers their Interrogatory,

1. *Negatively*. He was not that great One, whom ſome took him to be. God's faithful Witneſſes ſtand more upon their Guard, *againſt undue Reſpects*, than againſt *unjuſt Contempts*. *Paul* writes as warmly againſt thoſe that over-valued him, and ſaid, *I am of Paul*, as againſt thoſe that under-valued him, and ſaid, his bodily Preſence was weak, and rent his Cloths when he was called a God.

1. *John* diſowns himſelf to be *the Chriſt*, v. 20. he ſaid, *I am not the Chriſt*, who was now expected and waited for. *Note*, The Miniſters of Chriſt muſt remember that *they are not Chriſt*, and therefore muſt not uſurp his Powers and Prerogatives, nor aſſume the Praiſes due to him only. They are not Chriſt, and therefore muſt not lord it over God's Heritage, nor pretend to a Dominion over the Faith of Chriſtians. They cannot create Grace and Peace, they cannot enlighten, convert, quicken, comfort, for they are not *Chriſt*. Obſerve how emphatically this is here expreſs'd concerning *John*: He *confeſſed and denied not, but confeſſed*; it notes his Vehemence and Conſtancy in making this Proteſtation. *Note*, Temptations to Pride, and aſſuming that Honour to ourſelves which doth not belong to us, ought to be reſiſted with a great deal of Vigour and Earneſtneſs. When *John* was taken to be the *Meſſiah*, he did not connive at it with a *Si populus vult decipi decipiatur*; but openly and ſolemnly without any Ambiguities, confeſſed, *I am not the Chriſt*; ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ ἐγὼ ὁ Χριστὸς; *I am not the Chriſt, not I*; another is at hand who is he, but I am not. His diſowning himſelf to be the Chriſt, is call'd his *confeſſing*, and not *denying* Chriſt. *Note*, Thoſe that humble and abaſe themſelves, thereby confeſs Chriſt, and give Honour to him; but thoſe that will not deny themſelves, do in effect deny Chriſt.

2. He diſowns himſelf to be *Elias*, v. 21. The *Jews* expected the Perſon of *Elias* to return from Heaven, and to live among them, and promis'd themſelves great Matters from it; and hearing of *John's* Character, Doctrine, and Baptiſm, and obſerving that he appear'd as one dropt from Heaven, in the ſame Part of the Country from which *Elijah* was carry'd to Heaven, it is no wonder that they were ready to take him for this *Elijah*; but he diſown'd this Honour too. He was indeed propheſy'd of under the Name of *Elijah*, *Mal.* 4. 5. and he came in the *Spirit and Power of* Elias, *Luke* 1. 17. and was the *Elias* that was to come, *Mat.* 11. 14. but he was not the Perſon of *Elias*; not that *Elias* that went to Heaven in the fiery Chariot, as he was that met Chriſt in his Transfiguration: He was the *Elias* that God had promiſed, not the *Elias* that they fooliſhly dream'd of. *Elias* did come, and *they knew him not*, Mat. 17. 12. nor did he make himſelf known to them as the *Elias*, becauſe they had promis'd themſelves ſuch an *Elias* as God never promis'd them.

3. He diſowns himſelf to be that *Prophet*, or the Prophet. (1.) He was not *that* Prophet which *Moſes* ſaid, *the Lord* would *raiſe up to them, of their Brethren*, like unto him. If they meant that, they needed not ask that Queſtion, for that Prophet was no other than the *Meſſiah*, and he had ſaid already, *I am not the Chriſt*. (2.) He was ſuch a Prophet as they expected and wiſh'd for, who like *Samuel*, and *Elijah*, and ſome other of the Prophets, would interpoſe in publick Affairs, and reſcue them from under the *Roman* Yoke. (3.) He was not one of the old Prophets rais'd from the Dead, as they expected one to come before *Elias*, as *Elias* before the *Meſſiah*. (4.) Tho' *John* was a Prophet, yea, more than a Prophet, yet he had his Revelation not by Dreams and Viſions, as the Old Teſtament Prophets had theirs; his Commiſſion and Work was of another Nature, and belong'd to another Diſpenſation. If *John* had ſaid that he was *Elias*, and was a *Prophet*, he might have made his Words good, but Miniſters muſt upon all Occaſions expreſs themſelves with the utmoſt Caution, both that they do not confirm People in any Miſtakes, and particularly, that they give not Occaſion to any to think of them *above what is meet*.

2. *Affirmatively*. The Committee, that was ſent to examine him, preſs'd for a poſitive Anſwer, v. 22. urging the Authority of *them that ſent them*, which they expected he ſhould pay a Deference to: Tell us, *What art thou?* Not that we may believe thee, and be baptized by thee, but that we may *give an Anſwer* to them that ſent us, and it may not be ſaid that we were ſent on a Fool's Errand: *John* was look'd upon as a Man of Sincerity, and therefore they believ'd he would not give an evaſive, ambiguous Anſwer, but would be fair, and above-board, and give a plain Anſwer to a plain Queſtion; *What ſayeſt thou of thyſelf?* And he did ſo, *I am the Voice of one crying in the Wilderneſs*. Obſerve,

1. He gives his Anſwer in the Words of Scripture, to ſhew that the Scripture was fulfill'd in him; and that his Office was ſupported by a Divine Authority. What the Scripture ſaith of the Office of the Miniſtry, ſhould be often thought of by thoſe of that high Calling, who muſt look upon themſelves as that, and that only, which the Word of God makes them.

2. He gives in his Anſwer in very humble, modeſt, ſelf-denying Expreſſions; he chuſeth to apply that Scripture to himſelf, which ſpoke not his Dignity, but his Duty and Dependance, which ſpeaks him little; *I am the Voice*, as if he were, *Vox & preterea nihil*.

3. He gives ſuch an Account of himſelf as might be profitable to them, and might excite and awaken them to hearken to him, for he *was the Voice*: ſee *Iſa.* 40. 3. a Voice to alarm; an articulate Voice to inſtruct. Miniſters are but the *Voice*, the Vehicle by which God is pleas'd to communicate his Mind: What is *Paul*, and *Apollos*, but Meſſengers? Obſerve,

1. He was a *human* Voice. The People were prepared to receive the Law by the Voice of Thunders, and a Trumpet exceeding loud, ſuch as made them tremble; but they were prepar'd for the Goſpel by the Voice of a Man like ourſelves, *a ſtill ſmall Voice*, ſuch as that in which God came to *Elijah*, 1 *Kings* 19. 12.

2. He was the Voice of *one crying*; which notes, (1.) His *Earneſtneſs* and *Importunity* in calling People to Repentance; he *cry'd aloud* and *did not ſpare*. Miniſters muſt preach as thoſe that are in earneſt, and are themſelves affected with thoſe Things which they deſire to affect others with. Thoſe Words are not likely to *thaw* the Hearers Hearts, that *freeze* between the Speakers Lips. (2.) His *open Publication* of the Doctrine he preach'd; he was the Voice of one *crying*, that all manner of Perſons might hear and take Notice. *Doth not Wiſdom cry*; Prov. 8. 3.

3. 'Twas in the *Wilderneſs* that this Voice was crying; in a Place of Silence and Solitude, out of the Noiſe of the World, and the Hurry of its Buſineſs; the more retir'd we are from the Tumult of ſecular Affairs, the better prepar'd are we to hear from God.

4. That which he cried, was, *Make ſtrait the way of the Lord*; that is, (1.) He came to *rectify* the Miſtakes of People concerning the ways of God; 'tis certain they are right Ways; but the Scribes and Phariſees, with their corrupt Gloſſes upon the Law, had made them crooked: Now *John* Baptiſt calls People to return to the Original Rule. (2.) He came to prepare and diſpoſe People for the Reception and Entertainment of Chriſt and his Goſpel. 'Tis an Alluſion to the Harbingers of a Prince, or great Men, that cry, *make Room*. *Note*, When God is coming towards us, we muſt prepare to meet him, and let the Word of the Lord have a *free Courſe*: See *Pſal.* 24. 7.

2. Here is his Teſtimony concerning *his Baptiſm*.

1. The Enquiry which the Committee made about it, *v.* 25. *Why Baptizeſt thou, if thou be not the Chriſt, nor* Elias, *nor that Prophet?* (1.) They readily apprehended Baptiſm to be fitly and properly uſed as a ſacred Rite and Ceremony, for the *Jewiſh* Church had uſed it with Circumciſion in the Admiſſion of Proſelytes, to ſignify the cleanſing them from the Pollutions of their former State: That Sign was made uſe of in the Chriſtian Church, that it might be the more paſſable. Chriſt did not affect Novelty, nor ſhould his Miniſters. (2.) They expected it would be uſed in the Days of the *Meſſiah*, becauſe it was promiſed that then there ſhould be a *Fountain opened*, Zech. 13. 1. and *clean Water ſprinkled*, Ezek. 36. 25. 'Tis taken for granted that Chriſt, and *Elias* and *that Prophet* would baptize, for they came *to purify a polluted* World. Divine Juſtice drowned the old World *in its Filth*, but divine Grace has provided for the cleanſing of this new World *from its Filth*. (3.) They would therefore know by what Authority *John* baptized, his denying himſelf to be *Elias*, or *that Prophet*, ſubjected him to this further Queſtion, *Why baptizeſt thou?* *Note*, It is no new thing for a Man's Modeſty to be turned againſt him, and improved to his Prejudice; but it is better Men ſhould take Advantage of our low Thoughts of ourſelves *to trample upon us*, than the Devil take Advantage of our high Thoughts of ourſelves, to *tempt us* to Pride, and draw us into his Condemnation.

2. The Account he gave of it, *v.* 26, 27.

1. He owned himſelf to be only the Miniſter of the outward Sign; *I baptize with Water*, and that's all; I am no more, and do no more than what you ſee, I have no other Title but *John* the Baptiſt; I cannot confer the ſpiritual Grace ſignified by it. *Paul* was in Care that none ſhould think of him above what they ſaw him to be, 2 *Cor.* 12. 6. ſo was *John* Baptiſt. Miniſters muſt not ſet up for Maſters.

2. He directed them to one that was greater than himſelf, and would do that for them, if they pleas'd, which he could not do. *I baptize with Water*, and that's the utmoſt of my Commiſſion; I have nothing to do, but by this to lead you to one that comes after me, and conſign you to him. *Note*, The great Buſineſs of Chriſt's Miniſters, is to direct all People to him; we preach not ourſelves, but *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*. *John* gave the ſame Account to this Committee, that he had given to the People, *v.* 15. *This was he of whom I ſpake.* *John* was conſtant and uniform in his Teſtimony, not as a Reed ſhaken with the Wind. The *Sanhedrim* were jealous of his Intereſt in the People, but he is not afraid to tell them that there is one at the Door that will go beyond him.

1. He tells them of Chriſt's *Preſence among them*, now at this Time; *there ſtands one among you*, at this time, *whom ye know not*: Chriſt ſtood among the common People, and was as one of them. *Note* 1. There is much true Worth lies hid in this World: Obſcurity is often the Lot of real Excellency. Saints are God's *hidden ones*, therefore *the World knows them not*. 2. God himſelf is often nearer us than we are aware of, *The Lord is in this Place*, and *I knew it not*. They were gazing in Expectation of the Meſſiah, *Lo he is here*, or he is there, when the Kingdom of God was abroad, and already among *them*, Luke 17. 21.

2. He tells them of his *Preference above himſelf*; he comes *after me*, and yet is *preferred before me*: This he had ſaid before; he adds here, whoſe *Shoe-Latchet I am not worthy to unlooſe*; I am not fit to be named the ſame day with him; 'tis an Honour too great for me to pretend to be in the meaneſt Office about him. Allude, 1 *Sam.* 25. 41. Thoſe to whom Chriſt is precious, reckon his Service, even the moſt deſpiſed Inſtances of it, an Honour to them. See *Pſal.* 84. 10. If ſo great a Man as *John* accounted himſelf unworthy of the Honour of being near Chriſt, how unworthy then ſhould we account ourſelves! Now one would think theſe Chief Prieſts and Phariſees, upon this Intimation given concerning the Approach of the *Meſſiah*, ſhould preſently have asked, who and where this excellent Perſon was; and who more likely to tell them, than he who had given them this general Notice? No, they did not think that was any part of their Buſineſs or Concern; they came to moleſt *John*, not to receive any Inſtructions from him: So that their Ignorance was *wilful*; they might have known Chriſt, and would not.

Laſtly, Notice is taken of the Place where all this was done, *v.* 28. *In* Bethabara *beyond* Jordan. *Bethabara* ſignifies the *Houſe of Paſſage*; ſome think it was the very Place where *Iſrael* paſſed over *Jordan* into the Land of Promiſe, under the Conduct of *Joſhua*; there was opened the way into the Goſpel State by Jeſus Chriſt. It was at a great *Diſtance* from *Jeruſalem*, beyond *Jordan*; probably becauſe what he did *there* would be leaſt offenſive to the Government; *Amos* muſt go propheſy in the Country, not near the Court; but it was ſaid that *Jeruſalem* ſhould put ſo far from her the things that belonged to *her Peace*. He made this Confeſſion in the ſame Place where he was *Baptizing*, that all thoſe who attended his Baptiſm might be Witneſſes of it, and none might ſay, they knew not what to *make of him*.

29. ¶ The next Day John ſeeth Jeſus coming unto him, and ſaith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſin of the World. 30 This is he of whom I ſaid, after me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not: but that he ſhould be made manifeſt to Iſrael, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32 And John bare record, ſaying, I ſaw the Spirit deſcending from heaven, like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that ſent me to baptize with water, the ſame ſaid unto me, Upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending, and remaining on him, the ſame is he which baptizeth with the holy Ghoſt. 34 And I ſaw and bare record that this is the Son of God. 35 ¶ Again, the next day after John ſtood, and two of his diſciples: 36 And looking upon Jeſus as he walked, he ſaith, Behold the Lamb of God.

We have in theſe Verſes an Account of *John*'s Teſtimony concerning Jeſus Chriſt, which he witneſſed to his own Diſciples that followed him. As ſoon as ever Chriſt was *Baptiz'd*, he was immediately hurried into the Wilderneſs to be *Tempted*; there he was forty Days; during his Abſence, *John* had continued to bear Teſtimony to him, and to tell the People of him; but now at laſt he *ſees Jeſus coming to him*, returning from the Wilderneſs of Temptation: As ſoon as that Conflict was over, Chriſt preſently returned to *John*, who was *Preaching and Baptizing*. Now Chriſt was tempted for Example and Encouragement to us; and this teaches us, (1.) That the *Hardſhips* of a tempted State ſhould engage us to keep cloſe to Ordinances, to go into the *Sanctuary of God*, Pſal. 73. 17. Our Combats with Satan ſhould oblige us to keep cloſe to the Communion of Saints: Two is better than One. (2.) That the *Honours* of a Victorious State muſt not ſet us *above Ordinances*. Chriſt had triumph'd over Satan, and been attended by Angels; and yet after all, he returns to the Place where *John* was Preaching and Baptizing. As long as we are on this ſide Heaven, whatever extraordinary Viſits of Divine Grace we may have here at any Time, we muſt ſtill keep cloſe to the ordinary Means of Grace and Comfort, and walk with God in them.

Now here are *Two Teſtimonies* borne by *John* to Chriſt, but thoſe Two *agree in One*.

Firſt, Here's his Teſtimony to Chriſt on the firſt Day, that he ſaw him coming from the Wilderneſs; and here four Things are witneſſed by him concerning Chriſt, when he had him before his Eyes.

1. That he *is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World*, v. 29. Let us learn here,

1. That Jeſus Chriſt is the *Lamb of God*, which ſpeaks him the great Sacrifice by whom Atonement is made for Sin, and Man reconciled to God. Of all the legal Sacrifices, he chuſeth to allude to the *Lambs* that were offered, not only becauſe a Lamb is an Emblem of Meekneſs, and Chriſt muſt be led as a *Lamb to the Slaughter*, Iſa 53. 7. but with a ſpecial Reference, (1.) To the *daily Sacrifice* which was offered every Morning and Evening continually, and that was always a *Lamb*, Exod. 29. 38. which was a Type of Chriſt, as the everlaſting Propitiation, whoſe Blood continually ſpeaks. (2.) To the *Paſchal Lamb*, the Blood of which being ſprinkled upon the Door-Poſts, ſecured the *Iſraelites* from the Stroke of the deſtroying Angel. Chriſt is *our Paſſover*, 1 Cor. 5. 7.

He is the Lamb *of God*; he is appointed by *him*, Rom. 3. 25. he was devoted to him; *John* 17. 19. and he was accepted with him; in him he was well pleaſed. The Lot which fell on the Goat that was to be offered for a Sin-Offering, is call'd the Lord's Lot, *Lev.* 18. 8, 9. So Chriſt, who was to make Atonement for Sin, is call'd the *Lamb of God*.

2. That Jeſus Chriſt, as the *Lamb of God, takes away the Sin of the World*. This was his Undertaking, he appeared to *put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*, Heb. 9. 26. *John* Baptiſt had called People to repent of their Sins, in order to the Remiſſion of them: Now here he ſhews how, and by whom that Remiſſion was to be expected; what Ground of Hope have we that our Sins ſhall be pardoned upon our Repentance, tho' our Repentance makes no Satisfaction for them? This Ground of Hope we have, Jeſus Chriſt is *the Lamb of God*.

(1.) He *takes away Sin*. He being Mediator between God and Man, takes away that which is above any thing offenſive to the *Holineſs* of God, and deſtructive to the *Happineſs* of Man. He came, 1. To take away the Guilt of Sin by the Merit of his Death, to vacate the Judgment, and reverſe the Attainder which Mankind lay under, by an Act of Indemnity, which all penitent, obedient Believers may claim the Benefit of. 2. To take away the Power of Sin by the Spirit of his Grace, ſo that it ſhall not have Dominion, *Rom.* 6. 14. Chriſt, as the Lamb of God, waſheth us from our Sins in his own Blood, *i. e.* he both *juſtifies* and *ſanctifies* us: He *taketh away Sin.* He is ὁ αἴρων, he is *taking away* the Sin of the World; which ſpeaks it not a ſingle, but a continued Act; it is his conſtant Work and Office, to take *away Sin,* which is ſuch a *Work of Time,* that it will never be compleated till Time ſhall be no more. He is always *taking away* Sin by the continual Interceſſion of his Blood in Heaven, and the continual Influence of his Grace on Earth.

(2.) He takes away the *Sin of the World*; purchas'd Pardon for all thoſe that repent and believe the Goſpel, of what Country, Nation, or Language ſoever they be. The legal Sacrifices had Reference only to the Sins of *Iſrael,* to make Atonement for them; but the Lamb of God was offered to be a Propitiation for the *Sin of the whole World*; ſee 1 *John* 2.12. This is encouraging to our Faith; if Chriſt takes away the Sin of the World, then why not my Sin? Chriſt levell'd his Force at the main Body of Sin's Army, ſtruck at the Root, and aim'd at the Overthrow of that *Wickedneſs* which the *whole World lay in*: God was in him reconciling the World to himſelf.

(3.) He doth this by *taking it upon himſelf.* He is the Lamb of God that *bears the Sin of the World,* ſo the Margin reads it. He bore Sin *for us,* and ſo bears it *from us*; he *bore the Sin of many,* as the Scape-Goat had the Sins of *Iſrael* put upon his Head, *Lev.* 16. 21. God would have taken away the Sin, by taking away the Sinner, as he took away the Sin of the old World; but he has found out a way of aboliſhing the Sin, and yet ſparing the Sinner, by making his Son *Sin for us.*

3. That it is our Duty with an Eye of Faith, to *behold* the Lamb of God thus taking away the *Sin of the World.* See him taking away Sin, and let that increaſe our Hatred of Sin, and Reſolutions againſt it: Let us hold that faſt, which the Lamb of God came to take away; for Chriſt will either take our Sins away, or take us away. Let it increaſe our Love to Chriſt, who *loved us, and waſhed us from our Sins in his own Blood,* Rev. 1. 5. Whatever God is pleas'd to take away from us, if withal he take away our Sins, we have Reaſon to be thankful, and no Reaſon to complain.

2. That this was he of whom he had ſpoken before, *v.* 30,31. *This is he,* this Perſon whom I now point at, you ſee where he ſtands: *This is he of whom I ſaid, after me cometh a Man.* Obſerve,

(1.) This Honour *John* had above all the Prophets, that whereas they ſpoke of him as one that ſhould come, he ſaw him already come; *This is he*: He ſees him *now,* he ſees him *nigh,* Numb. 24. 17. Such a difference there is between preſent *Faith,* and future *Viſion.* Now we love one whom we have not ſeen, then we ſhall ſee him whom our Souls love; ſhall ſee him, and ſay, This is he of whom I ſaid, *my Chriſt,* and *my All*; *my Beloved,* and *my Friend.*

(2.) *John* calls Chriſt *a Man*; after me comes a Man, ἀνὴρ, a *ſtrong Man*: Like the Man, the Branch, or the *Man of God's right Hand.*

(3.) He refers himſelf to what he had ſaid of him before; *This is he of whom I ſaid.* *Note,* Thoſe who have ſaid the moſt honourable Things of Chriſt, will never ſee Cauſe to unſay them; but the more they know him, the more they are confirm'd in their Eſteem of him. *John* ſtill thinks as meanly of himſelf, and as highly of Chriſt as ever. Tho' Chriſt appeared not in any external Pomp or Grandeur, yet *John* is not aſhamed to own, *This is he I meant,* that is *preferred before me.* And it was neceſſary that *John* ſhould thus ſhew them the Perſon, otherwiſe they could not have believed, that one who made ſo mean a Figure ſhould be he of whom *John* had ſpoken ſuch great Things.

(4.) He proteſts againſt any Confederacy or Combination with this Jeſus; *And I knew him not.* Tho' there was ſome Relation between them, *Elizabeth* was Couſin to the Virgin *Mary,* yet there was no Acquaintance at all between them; *John* had no perſonal Knowledge of Jeſus, till he ſaw him come to his Baptiſm. Their manner of Life had been different; *John* had ſpent his Time in the Wilderneſs, in Solitude, *Jeſus* at *Nazareth,* in Converſation: There was no Correſpondence, no Interviews between them, that the matter might appear to be wholly carried on by the Direction and Diſpoſal of Heaven, and not by any Deſign or Concert of the Perſons themſelves. And as he hereby diſowns all Colluſion, ſo alſo all Partiality and ſiniſter Regard in it; he could not be ſuppoſed to favour him as a Friend, for there was no Friendſhip or Familiarity between them. Nay, as he could not be byaſs'd to ſpeak honourably of him, becauſe he was a Stranger to him; ſo really being ſuch a Stranger to him, he was not able to ſay any thing of him but what he *receiv'd from above,* to which he appeals, *John* 3. 27. *Note,* They who are taught, believe and confeſs one whom they have not ſeen, and bleſſed are they who *yet have believed.*

(5.) That the great Intention of *John's* Miniſtry and Baptiſm was to introduce Jeſus Chriſt. That he ſhould be *made manifeſt to* Iſrael, *therefore am I come baptizing with Water.* Obſerve, (1.) Tho' *John* did not know Jeſus by Face, yet he knew that he ſhould be made manifeſt. *Note,* We may know the Certainty of that which yet we do not fully know the Nature and Intention of. We know that the Happineſs of Heaven *ſhall be made manifeſt to* Iſrael, but cannot deſcribe it. (2.) The general Aſſurance *John* had that Chriſt *ſhould be made manifeſt,* ſerv'd to carry him with Diligence and Reſolution through his Work, tho' he was kept in the Dark concerning Particulars: *Therefore am I come.* Our Aſſurance of the Reality of Things, tho' they are unſeen, is enough to quicken us to our Duty. (3.) God reveals himſelf to his People by degrees. At firſt *John* knew no more concerning Chriſt, but that he ſhould be made manifeſt; in confidence of that he came baptizing, and now he is favour'd with a Sight of him. They that upon God's Word believe what they do not ſee, ſhall ſhortly ſee what they now believe. (4.) The Miniſtry of the Word and Sacraments is deſigned for no other end, but to lead People to Chriſt, and to make him more and more manifeſt. (5.) Baptiſm with Water, made way for the manifeſting of Chriſt, as it ſuppos'd our Corruption and Filthineſs, and ſignified our cleanſing by him who is the *Fountain open'd.*

3. That this was he *upon whom the Spirit deſcended from Heaven like a Dove.* For the confirming of his Teſtimony concerning Chriſt, he here voucheth the extraordinary Appearance at his Baptiſm, in which God himſelf bore Witneſs to him: This was a conſiderable Proof of Chriſt's Miſſion. Now to aſſure us of the Truth of it, we are told, *v.* 32,33.

1. That *John Baptiſt* ſaw it; he *bare Record*; did not relate it as a Story, but ſolemnly atteſted it, with all the Seriouſneſs and Solemnity of *Witneſs-bearing*: He made Affidavit of it; *I ſaw the Spirit deſcending* from Heaven: *John* could not ſee the *Spirit,* but he ſaw the Dove, which was a Sign and Repreſentation of the Spirit. The Spirit came now upon Chriſt, both to *make him fit* for his *Work,* and to *make him known* to the *World.* Chriſt was notify'd, not by the Deſcent of a Crown upon him, or by a Transfiguration, but by the Deſcent of the Spirit as a Dove upon him, to qualify him for his Undertaking. Thus the firſt Teſtimony given to the Apoſtles, was by the Deſcent of the Spirit upon them: God's Children are made manifeſt by their *Graces,* their Glories are reſerv'd for their future State. Obſerve, (1.) The Spirit deſcended *from Heaven,* for every good and perfect Gift is *from above.* (2.) He deſcended *like a Dove,* an Emblem of Meekneſs, and Mildneſs, and Gentleneſs, which makes him *fit to teach.* The Dove brought the Olive-Branch of Peace, *Gen.* 8. 11. (3.) The Spirit that deſcended upon Chriſt, *abode upon him,* as was foretold, *Iſa.* 11. 2. The Spirit did not *move him at Times,* as *Sampſon,* Judg. 13. 25. but *at all Times.* The Spirit was given to him *without Meaſure*; 'twas his Prerogative to have the Spirit always upon him, ſo that he could at no time be found either *unqualified* for his Work himſelf, or *unfurniſhed* for the Supply of thoſe that ſeek to him for his Grace.

2. That he was *bidden to expect it,* which very much corroborates the Proof. It was not *John's* bare Conjecture, that ſurely he on whom he ſaw the Spirit deſcending, was the Son of God; but it was an *inſtituted* Sign given him before, by which he might know it for certain, *v.* 33. *I knew him not.* This he inſiſts much upon, that he knew no more of him than other People did, otherwiſe than by Revelation: But *he that ſent me to Baptize,* gave me this Sign, *upon whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcending, the ſame is he.*

1. See here what ſure Grounds *John* went upon in his Miniſtry and Baptiſm, that he might proceed with all imaginable Satisfaction. (1.) He did not run *without ſending*; God *ſent him to Baptize*: He had a warrant from Heaven for what he did. When a Miniſter's Call is clear, his Comfort is ſure, tho' his Succeſs is not always ſo. (2.) He did not run *without ſpeeding*; for when he was ſent to *Baptize with Water,* he was directed to one that ſhould *Baptize with the Holy Ghoſt*; under that Notion *John* Baptiſt was taught to expect Chriſt, as one who would give that Repentance and Faith which he call'd People to, and would carry on and compleat that bleſſed Structure, which he was now laying the Foundation of. *Note,* It is a great Comfort to Chriſt's Miniſters in their Adminiſtration of the outward Signs, that he, whoſe Miniſters they are, can confer the Grace ſignified thereby, and ſo put Life and Soul, and Power, into their Miniſtrations; can ſpeak to the Heart what they ſpeak to the Ear, and *breath* upon the dry Bones, on which they *propheſy.*

2. See what ſure Grounds he went upon in his Deſignation of the Perſon of the Meſſiah. God had before given him a Sign, as he did to *Samuel* concerning *Saul*; on whom thou ſhalt ſee the Spirit deſcend, *that ſame is he*; this not only prevented any Miſtakes, but gave him Boldneſs in his Teſtimony: When he had ſuch Aſſurance as this given him, he could ſpeak with Aſſurance. When *John* was told this before, his Expectations could not but be very much rais'd; and when the Event exactly anſwer'd the Prediction, his Faith could not but be much confirm'd. And theſe Things are written that we may believe.

4. That he is the *Son of God.* This is the Concluſion of *John's* Teſtimony, that in which all the Particulars centre, as the *quod erat demonſtrandum*; v. 34. *I ſaw and bare Record, that this is the Son of God.*

1. The Truth aſſerted, is, That *this is the Son of God*; the Voice from Heaven proclaim'd him, and *John* ſubſcrib'd to it; not only that he ſhould Baptize with the Holy Ghoſt by a Divine Authority, but that he has a Divine Nature: This was the peculiar Chriſtian Creed, that *Jeſus* is the Son of God, *Mat.* 16. 16. and here's the firſt framing of it.

2. *John*'s Teſtimony to it; *I ſaw and bare Record.* Not only I now bear Record of it, but I did ſo as ſoon as I had ſeen it. Obſerve, (1.) What he *ſaw* he was forward to *bear Record* of, as they, *Acts* 4. 20. *We cannot but ſpeak the Things which we have ſeen.* (2.) What he *bare Record* of, was what he *ſaw.* Chriſt's Witneſſes are Eye-Witneſſes, and therefore the more to be credited: They did not ſpeak by Hearſay and Report, 2 *Pet.* 1.16.

Secondly, Here is *John*'s Teſtimony to Chriſt the next Day after, *v.* 35,36. Where obſerve,

1. He took every Opportunity that offered itſelf to lead People to Chriſt; John *ſtood looking upon Jeſus as he walked.* It ſhould ſeem *John* was now retired from the Multitude, and was in cloſe Converſation with *two* of his Diſciples. *Note*, Miniſters ſhould not only in their publick Preaching, but in their private Converſe, witneſs to Chriſt, and ſerve his Intereſts. He ſaw Jeſus *walking* at ſome diſtance, yet did not go to him, himſelf, becauſe he would ſhun every thing that might give the leaſt Colour to ſuſpect a Combination. He was *looking upon Jeſus*, ἐμβλέψας, he look'd ſtedfaſtly, and fix'd his Eyes upon him. Thoſe that would lead others to Chriſt, muſt be diligent and frequent in the *Contemplation* of him themſelves. *John* had ſeen Chriſt before, but now look'd upon him, 1 *John* 1.1.

2. He repeated the ſame Teſtimony which he had given to Chriſt the Day before, tho' he could have delivered ſome other great Truth concerning him; but thus he would ſhew that he was uniform and conſtant in his Teſtimony, and conſiſtent with himſelf. His Doctrine was the ſame in private that it was in publick, as *Paul*'s was, *Acts* 20. 20,21. 'Tis good to have that repeated which we have heard, *Phil.* 3.1. The Doctrine of Chriſt's Sacrifice for the taking away of the Sin of the World, ought eſpecially to be inſiſted upon by all good Miniſters. Chriſt the Lamb of God, *Chriſt and him crucified.*

3. He intended this eſpecially for his two Diſciples that ſtood with him; he was willing to turn them over to Chriſt, for to this end he bore Witneſs to Chriſt in their hearing, that they might leave all to follow him; even that they might leave *him.* He did not reckon that he loſt thoſe Diſciples that went over from him to Chriſt, any more than the Schoolmaſter reckons that Scholar loſt whom he ſends to the Univerſity. *John* gathered Diſciples, not for himſelf, but for Chriſt, to *prepare them for the Lord*, Luke 1.17. So far was he from being jealous of Chriſt's growing Intereſt, that there was nothing he was more deſirous of. Humble, generous Souls, will give others their due Praiſe, without fear of diminiſhing themſelves by it. What we have of Reputation, as well as of other things, will not be the leſs for our giving every body their own.

37 And the two diſciples heard him ſpeak, and they followed Jeſus. 38 Then Jeſus turned, and ſaw them following, and ſaith unto them, What ſeek ye? They ſaid unto him, Rabbi, (which is to ſay, being interpreted, Maſter) where dwelleſt thou? 39 He ſaith unto them, Come and ſee. They came and ſaw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two which heard John *ſpeak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41. He firſt findeth his own brother Simon, and ſaith unto him, We have found the Meſſias, which is, being interpreted, the Chriſt. 42 And he brought him to Jeſus. And when Jeſus beheld him, he ſaid, Thou art Simon the Son of Jonah: thou ſhalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a ſtone.

We have here the turning over of two Diſciples from *John* to *Jeſus*, and one of them fetching in a third, and theſe are the firſt Fruits of Chriſt's Diſciples; ſee how ſmall the Church was in its Beginnings, and what the Dawning of the Day of its great Things were.

Firſt, *Andrew*, and another with him, were the two that *John* Baptiſt had directed to Chriſt, *v.* 37. who the other was, we are not told; ſome think it was *Thomas*, comparing *chap.* 21.2. others that it was *John* himſelf, the Penman of this Goſpel, who uſeth induſtriouſly to conceal his Name, *John* 13.23. and 20.3.

1. Here's their Readineſs to go over to Chriſt, they heard *John ſpeak* of Chriſt as the *Lamb of God*, and they *followed Jeſus.* Probably they had heard *John* ſay the ſame thing the day before, and then it had not the effect upon them which now it had; ſee the Benefit of Repetition, and of private, perſonal Converſe. They heard him ſpeak of Chriſt as the *Lamb of God that takes away the Sin of the World*, and that made them *follow him. Note*, The ſtrongeſt and moſt prevailing Argument with a ſenſible awakened Soul to follow Chriſt, is, that it is he, and he only, that *takes away Sin.*

2. The kind Notice Chriſt took of them, *v.* 38. they came behind him; but tho' he had his Back towards them, he was ſoon aware of them, and *turn'd* and *ſaw them following. Note*, Chriſt takes early Cognizance of the firſt Motions of a Soul towards him, and the firſt Step taken in the way to Heaven; ſee *Iſa.* 64.5. *Luke* 15.20. He did not ſtay till they begg'd leave to ſpeak with him, but ſpoke firſt: What Communion there is between a Soul and Chriſt, 'tis he that *begins the Diſcourſe.* He ſaith unto them, *What ſeek ye*? This was not a Reprimand for their Boldneſs in intruding into his Company; he that came to *ſeek us*, never check'd any for *ſeeking* him; but on the contrary, tis a kind Invitation of them into his Acquaintance, whom he ſaw baſhful and modeſt; come, what have you to ſay to me? What is your Petition? What is your Requeſt? *Note*, They whoſe Buſineſs it is to inſtruct People in Affairs of their Souls, ſhould be humble and mild, and eaſy of Acceſs, and ſhould encourage thoſe that apply to them. The Queſtion Chriſt put to them, is what we ſhould all put to ourſelves, when we begin to follow Chriſt, and take upon us the Profeſſion of his Holy Religion; *What ſeek ye*? What do we deſign, and deſire? Thoſe that follow Chriſt, and yet ſeek the World, or themſelves, or the Praiſe of Men, deceive themſelves. *What ſeek we* in ſeeing Chriſt, do we ſeek a Teacher, Ruler and Reconciler? In following Chriſt do we ſeek the Favour of God and Eternal Life? If our *Eye* be *ſingle* in this, we are *full of Light.*

3. Their modeſt Enquiry concerning the Place of his Abode? *Rabbi, where dwelleſt thou*? (1.) In calling him *Rabbi*, they intimate, that their Deſign in coming to him, was to be *taught by him*; *Rabbi* ſignifies *Maſter*, a teaching Maſter; the *Jews* called their Doctors, or Learned Men, *Rabbies.* The Word comes from *Rab*, *multus*, or *magnus*, a *Rabbi*, a *great Man*, and one that, as we ſay, hath *much in him.* Never was there ſuch a *Rabbi* as our Lord Jeſus, ſuch a great one, in whom were *hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge.* Theſe came to Chriſt to be his *Scholars*, ſo muſt all thoſe that apply themſelves to him. *John* had told them he was the *Lamb of God*, now this *Lamb* is worthy to *take the Book, and open the Seals* as a *Rabbi*, Rev. 5.9. and unleſs we give up ourſelves to be ruled and taught by him, he will not *take away our Sins.* (2.) In asking where *he dwelt*, they intimate a deſire to be better acquainted with him: Chriſt was a Stranger in this Country, ſo that they mean where was his *Inn* where he *lodged*? For there they would attend him at ſome ſeaſonable time when he ſhould appoint, to receive Inſtruction from him; they would not preſs rudely upon him, when it was not proper: Civility and good Manners well become thoſe who follow Chriſt. And beſides, they hoped to have more from him than they could have in a ſhort Conference now by the way. They reſolved to make a Buſineſs, not a By-Buſineſs of converſing with Chriſt. Thoſe that have had ſome Communion with Criſt, cannot but deſire, (1.) A *further Communion* with him; they follow on to know more of him. (2.) A *fixed Communion* with him; where they may ſit down at his Feet, and abide by his Inſtructions: 'Tis not enough to take a Turn with Chriſt now and then, but we muſt *lodge with him.*

4. The courteous Invitation Chriſt gave them to his Lodgings; *He ſaith unto them, Come and ſee*: Thus ſhall good Deſires towards Chriſt, and Communion with him be countenanced. (1.) He invites them to come to his Lodgings: The nearer we approach to Chriſt, the more we ſee of his Beauty and Excellency. Deceivers maintain their Intereſt in their Followers, by keeping them at a Diſtance, but that which Chriſt deſired to recommend him to the Eſteem and Affections of his Followers, was, that they would *come and ſee*; *Come and ſee* what a mean Lodging I have, what poor Accommodations I take up with, that you may not expect any worldly Advantage by following me, as they did, who made their Court to the Scribes and Phariſees, and call'd them *Rabbi. Come and ſee* what you muſt count upon if you follow me; ſee *Mat.* 8.20. (2.) He invites them to come *preſently* and without delay. They ask'd where he lodged, that they might wait upon him at a more convenient Seaſon, but Chriſt invites them immediately to *come and ſee*; never in better time than now. Hence learn, (1.) As to others, That it's beſt taking People when they are in a good Mind; ſtrike while the Iron is hot. (2.) As to ourſelves, That it is Wiſdom to embrace the preſent Opportunities; *Now is the accepted Time*, 2 Cor. 6.2.

5. Their chearful, and (no doubt) thankful Acceptance of his Invitation; they *came and ſaw where he dwelt*, and *abode with him that Day.* It had been more Modeſty and Manners than had done them good, if they had refuſed this Offer. (1.) They readily went along with him; they *came and ſaw where he dwelt.* Gracious Souls chearfully accept Chriſt's gracious Invitations; as *David*, Pſal. 27.8. They enquired not how they might be accommodated with him, but would put that to the venture, and make the beſt of what they found: 'Tis good being where Chriſt is, where-ever it be. (2.) They were ſo well pleaſed with what they found, that they *abode with him that Day*; Maſter, it is good to be here, and he bid them welcome. It was about the tenth Hour: Some think that *John* reckons according to the *Roman* Computation, and that it was about Ten a-clock in the Morning, and they ſtaid with him till Night; others think that *John* reckons, as the other Evangeliſts did, according to the *Jewiſh* Computation, and that it was four a-clock in the Afternoon, and they abode with him that Night, and the next Day. Dr. *Lightfoot* conjectures, that this next day that they ſpent with Chriſt, was a *Sabbath Day*, and it being late, they could not get home before the Sabbath. As it is our Duty, where-ever we are, to contrive to ſpend the Sabbath, as much

as may be to our Spiritual Benefit and Advantage; ſo they are Bleſſed, who by the lively Exerciſes of Faith, Love, and Devotion, ſpend their Sabbaths in Communion with Chriſt. Theſe are Lord's Days indeed, *Days of the Son of Man.*

Secondly, Andrew brought his Brother *Peter* to Chriſt; if *Peter* had been the Firſt-born of Chriſt's Diſciples, the Papiſts would have made a Noiſe with it: He did, indeed, afterwards come to be more eminent in Gifts, but *Andrew* had the Honour firſt to be acquainted with Chriſt, and to be the Inſtrument of bringing *Peter* to him. Obſerve,

(1.) The *Information* which *Andrew* gave to *Peter*, with an Intimation to come to Chriſt.

1. He *found him*: He *firſt finds his own Brother* Simon; his finding implies his ſeeking him. *Simon* came along with *Andrew* to attend *John*'s Miniſtry and Baptiſm, and *Andrew* knew where to look for him. Perhaps the other Diſciple that was with him, went out to ſeek ſome Friend of his, at the ſame Time, but *Andrew* ſped firſt; *he firſt findeth* Simon, who came only to attend on *John*, but has his Expectations out-done, he meets with *Jeſus.*

2. He told him whom they had found; We have found the Meſſias. Obſerve, (1.) He ſpeaks *humbly*, not *I* have found, aſſuming the Honour of the Diſcovery to himſelf, but *we* have, rejoicing that he had ſhared with others in it. (2.) He ſpeaks *exultingly*, and with Triumph; *we have found* that Pearl of great Price, that true Treaſure; and having found it, he proclaims it, as thoſe Lepers, 2 *Kings* 8. 9. for he knows he ſhall have never the Leſs in Chriſt for others ſharing. (3.) He ſpeaks *intelligently*; *we have found the Meſſias*, which was more than had yet been ſaid: *John* had ſaid he is the *Lamb of God*, and the *Son of God*; which *Andrew* compares with the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, and comparing them together, concludes he is the *Meſſiah* promiſed to the Fathers, for 'tis now that the Fulneſs of Time is come: Thus by *making God's Teſtimonies his Meditation*, he ſpeaks more clearly concerning Chriſt than ever *his Teacher* had done, *Pſal.* 119. 99.

3. He *brought him to Jeſus*; would not undertake to inſtruct him himſelf, but brought him to the Fountain-Head, perſuaded him to come to Chriſt, and introduc'd him. Now this was, (1.) An Inſtance of true Love to his Brother, *his own* Brother, ſo he is called here, becauſe he was very dear to him. *Note*, We ought, with a particular Concern and Application, to endeavour the Spiritual Welfare of thoſe that are related to us; for their Relation to us, adds both to the *Obligation*, and to the *Opportunity* of doing Good to their Souls. (2.) 'Twas an Effect of his Day's Converſation with Chriſt. *Note*, The beſt Evidence of our profiting by the Means of Grace, is the Piety and Uſefulneſs of our Converſation afterwards: Hereby it appeared that *Andrew* had *been with Jeſus*, that he was ſo full of him, that he had been *in the Mount*, for his Face ſhone. He knew there was enough in Chriſt for all; and having taſted that he is gracious, could not reſt till thoſe he lov'd had taſted it too. *Note*, True Grace hates Monopolies, and loves not to eat its Morſels alone.

(2.) The *Entertainment* that Jeſus Chriſt gave to *Peter*, who was never the leſs welcome for his being influenced by his Brother to come, *v.* 43. Obſerve,

1. Chriſt called him by his Name: *When Jeſus beheld him, he ſaid, Thou art* Simon, *the Son of* Jona. It ſhould ſeem that *Peter* was utterly a Stranger to Chriſt; and if ſo, (1.) It was a Proof of Chriſt's Omniſcience, that upon the firſt Sight, without any Enquiry, he could tell the Name both of him and of his Father: *The Lord knows them that are his*; and their whole Caſe. However, (2.) It was an Inſtance of his condeſcending Grace and Favour, that he did thus freely and affably call him by his Name, tho' he was of mean Extraction, and *Vir nullius nominis.* 'Twas an Inſtance of God's Favour to *Moſes*, that he *knew him by Name*, Exod. 33. 17. Some obſerve the Signification of theſe Names, *Simon, Obedient*; *Jona, a Dove.* An Obedient, Dove-like Spirit, qualifies us to be the Diſciples of Chriſt.

2. He gave him a New Name; *Cephas.*

1. His giving him a Name, ſpeaks *Chriſt's Favour* to him. A new Name ſpeaks ſome great Dignity, *Rev.* 2. 17. *Iſa.* 62. 2. By this, Chriſt not only wiped off the Reproach of his mean and obſcure Parentage, but adopted him into his Family, as one of his own.

2. The Name which he gave him, ſpeaks his *Fidelity* in Chriſt. *Thou ſhalt be called* Cephas, that's *Hebrew* for a Stone, *which is by Interpretation*, Peter; ſo it ſhould be render'd, as *Acts* 9. 39. *Tabitha, which by Interpretation is called* Dorcas: the former *Hebrew*, the latter *Greek*, for a *young Roe. Peter's* Natural Temper was ſtiff, and hardy, and reſolute, which I take to be the principal Reaſon why Chriſt called him *Cephas, a Stone.* When Chriſt afterwards prayed for him, that his Faith might not fail, that ſo he might be firm to Chriſt himſelf, and at the ſame Time bid him *ſtrengthen his Brethren*, and lay out himſelf for the Support of others, then he *made him* what he here called him, *Cephas, a Stone.* Thoſe that come to Chriſt muſt come with a fixed Reſolution to be firm and conſtant to him, *like a Stone*, ſolid and ſtedfaſt; and it is by his Grace that they are ſo: His ſaying, *be thou ſteddy*, makes them ſo. Now, this doth no more prove that *Peter* was the ſingular or only Rock upon which this Church is built, than the calling of *James* and *John Boanerges*, proves them the only *Sons of Thunder*; or the calling of *Joſes Barnabas*, proves him the only *Son of Conſolation.*

43 ¶ The day following, Jeſus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and ſaith unto him, Follow me. 44 Now Philip was of Bethſaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and ſaith unto him, We have found him of whom Moſes in the law, and the prophets did write, Jeſus of Nazareth, the ſon of Joſeph. 46 And Nathanael ſaid unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip ſaith unto him, Come and ſee. 47 Jeſus ſaw Nathanael coming to him, and ſaith of him, Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom is no guile. 48 Nathanael ſaith unto him, Whence knoweſt thou me? Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Before that Philip called thee when thou waſt under the fig-tree, I ſaw thee. 49 Nathanael anſwered and ſaith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the ſon of God, thou art the king of Iſrael. 50 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Becauſe I ſaid unto thee, I ſaw thee under the fig-tree, believeſt thou? thou ſhalt ſee greater things than theſe. 51 And he ſaith unto him, Verily, verily, I ſay unto you, Hereafter you ſhall ſee heaven open, and the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the ſon of man.

We have here the Call of *Philip* and *Nathanael.*

Firſt, Philip was called immediately to Chriſt himſelf, not as *Andrew*, who was directed to Chriſt by *John*; or *Peter*, who was invited by his Brother. God has various Methods of bringing his choſen ones home to himſelf. But whatever Means he *uſes*, he is not *tied* to any.

1. *Philip* was called in a *preventing* Way: *Jeſus findeth* Philip, Chriſt ſought us, and found us, before we made any Enquiries after him. The Name *Philip* is of a *Greek* Original, and much uſed among the *Gentiles*, which ſome make an Inſtance of the Degeneracy of the *Jewiſh* Church at this Time, and their Conformity to the Nations; yet Chriſt changed not his Name.

2. He was call'd the *Day following*: See how cloſely Chriſt applied himſelf to his Buſineſs. When Work is to be done for God, we muſt not *loſe a Day.* Yet obſerve, Chriſt now called One or Two a Day; but after the Spirit was poured out, there were Thouſands a Day effectually called, in which was fulfilled *John* 14. 12.

3. Jeſus *would go forth into* Galilee to call him. Chriſt will find out all thoſe that are given to him, where-ever they are, and none of them ſhall be loſt.

4. *Philip* was brought to be a Diſciple, by the Power of Chriſt going along with that Word, *Follow me.* See the Nature of true Chriſtianity; 'tis *following Chriſt*, devoting ourſelves to his *Converſe* and *Conduct*, attending his Motions, and treading in his Steps. See the Efficacy of the Grace of Chriſt making the Call of his Word to prevail; 'tis the *Rod of his Strength.*

5. We are told that *Philip* was of *Bethſaida*, and *Andrew* and *Peter* were ſo too, *v.* 44. Theſe eminent Diſciples received not Honour from, but reflected Honour upon the Place of their Nativity. *Bethſaida* ſignifies the *Houſe of* Nets, becauſe inhabited moſtly by Fiſhermen; thence Chriſt choſe Diſciples, who were to be furniſhed with extraordinary Gifts, and therefore needed not the ordinary Advantages of Learning. *Bethſaida* was a wicked Place, *Mat.* 11. 21. yet even there was a Remnant, according to the Election of Grace.

Secondly, Nathanael was invited to Chriſt by *Philip*, and much is ſaid concerning him. In which we may obſerve,

1. What paſſed between *Philip* and *Nathanael*, in which appears an obſervable Mixture of pious Zeal with Weakneſs, ſuch as is uſually found in Beginners, that are yet but *asking the Way to Zion.* Here's,

(1.) The joyful News that *Philip* brought to *Nathanael*, v. 45. As *Andrew* before, ſo *Philip* here, having got ſome Knowledge of Chriſt himſelf, reſts not till he has *made manifeſt the Saviour of that Knowledge. Philip*, tho' newly come into an Acquaintance with Chriſt himſelf, yet ſteps aſide to ſeek *Nathanael. Note*, When we have the faireſt Opportunities of getting Good to our own Souls, yet even then we muſt ſeek Opportunities of doing Good to the Souls of others; remembring the Words of Chriſt, *It is more Bleſſed to give than to receive*, Acts 20. 35. O, ſaith *Philip*, *we have found him of whom* Moſes *and the Prophets did write.* Obſerve here, (1.) What a Tranſport of Joy *Philip* was in upon this new Acquaintance with Chriſt; we have found him whom we have ſo often talked of, ſo long wiſhed and waited for: At laſt *he is come, he is come*, and *we* have found him. (2.) What an Advantage it was to him, that he was ſo well acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, which prepared his Mind for the Reception of Evangelical Light, and made the Entrance of it much the more eaſy: *Him of whom* Moſes *and the Prophets did write.* What was written entirely, and from Eternity, in the *Book of the Divine Counſels*, was in Part at ſundry Times, and in divers Manners, copied out into the Book of the *Divine Revelations.* Glorious Things were written there concerning the Seed of the Woman, the Seed of *Abraham*, *Shiloh*, the Prophet like *Moſes*, the Son of *David*, *Immanuel*, the Man, the Branch, Meſſiah, the Prince: *Philip* had ſtudied theſe Things, and was full of them, which made him readily welcome Chriſt. (3.) What Miſtakes and Weakneſſes he laboured under; he called Chriſt, *Jeſus of* Nazareth, whereas he was of *Bethlehem*; and the *Son of Joſeph*, whereas he was but his *ſuppoſed* Son. Young Beginners in Religion are ſubject to Miſtakes, which Time and the Grace of God will rectify. It was his Weakneſs to ſay, *We have found him*, for Chriſt found them, before they found Chriſt: He did not yet *apprehend*, as *Paul* did, how he was *apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. 3. 12.

(2.) The Objection which *Nathanael* made againſt this, *v.* 46. *Can there any good Thing come out of* Nazareth? Here, (1.) His *Caution* was commendable, that he did not lightly aſſent to every Thing that was ſaid, but took it into Examination; our Rule is to *prove all Things.* But, (2.) His Objection aroſe from Ignorance. If he meant that no good Thing could come out of *Nazareth*, it was owing to his Ignorance of the Divine Grace, as if that were leſs affected to one Place than another, or ty'd itſelf to Mens fooliſh and ill-natured Obſervations. If he meant that the *Meſſiah*, that great good Thing could not come out of *Nazareth*, ſo far he was right; *Moſes*, in the Law, ſaid that he ſhould come out of *Judah*, and the Prophets had aſſigned *Bethlehem* for the Place of his Nativity; but then he was ignorant of the Matter of *Fact*, that this Jeſus was born at *Bethlehem*; ſo that the Blunder *Philip* made, in calling him Jeſus of *Nazareth*, occaſioned this Objection. *Note*, The Miſtakes of Preachers often give Riſe to the Prejudices of Hearers.

(3.) The ſhort Reply which *Philip* gave to this Objection; *Come and ſee.* (1.) It was his *Weakneſs* that he could not give a ſatisfactory Anſwer to it; yet 'tis the common Caſe of young Beginners in Religion: We may *know* enough to *ſatisfy* ourſelves, and yet not be able to *ſay* enough to *ſilence* the Cavils of a ſubtle Adverſary. (2.) It was his *Wiſdom* and Zeal, that when he could not anſwer the Objection himſelf, he would have him go to one that could; *Come and ſee.* Let not us ſtand arguing here, and raiſing Difficulties to ourſelves which we cannot get over; let us go and converſe with Chriſt himſelf, and theſe Difficulties will all vaniſh preſently. *Note*, It is Folly to ſpend that Time in doubtful Diſputation, which might be better ſpent, and to much better Purpoſe, in the Exerciſes of Piety and Devotion. *Come and ſee*; not *go and ſee*, but *come*, and I'll go along with thee; as *Iſa.* 2. 3. *Jer.* 50. 5. From this Parley between *Philip* and *Nathanael*, we may obſerve, (1.) That many People are kept from the Ways of Religion, by the unreaſonable Prejudices they have conceived againſt Religion, upon the Account of ſome foreign Circumſtances which do not at all touch the Merits of the Cauſe.

(2.) The beſt Way to remove thoſe Prejudices they have entertained againſt Religion, is to prove themſelves, and make Trial of it. Let us not anſwer this Matter before we hear it.

2. What paſs'd between *Nathanael* and our Lord Jeſus. He came and *ſaw* not in vain.

1. Our Lord Jeſus bore a very honourable Teſtimony to *Nathanael's* Integrity, *Jeſus ſaw him* coming, and met him with favourable Encouragement; he ſaid of him to thoſe about him, *Nathanael* himſelf being within hearing, *Behold an* Iſraelite *indeed.* Obſerve,

1. That he did *commend* him; not to flatter him, or puff him up with a good Conceit of himſelf, but perhaps, becauſe he knew him to be a *modeſt* Man, if not a *melancholy* Man, one that had mean and hard Thoughts of himſelf; was ready to doubt his own Sincerity, and Chriſt by this Teſtimony put the Matter out of doubt. *Nathanael* had more than any of the Candidates objected againſt Chriſt, but Chriſt hereby ſhewed that he excus'd it, and was not extreme to mark what he ſaid amiſs, becauſe he knew his Heart was upright. He did not retort upon him, *Can any good Thing come out of* Cana? (*John* 21. 2.) an obſcure Town in *Galilee*; but kindly gives him this Character, to encourage us to hope for Acceptance with Chriſt, notwithſtanding our Weakneſs, and to teach us to ſpeak honourably of thoſe, who without Cauſe have ſpoken ſlightly of us, and to give them their due Praiſe.

2. That he commended him for his Integrity.

1. *Behold an* Iſraelite *indeed*! 'Tis Chriſt's Prerogative to know what Men are *indeed*; we can but *hope the beſt.* The whole Nation were *Iſraelites* in Name, but *all are not* Iſrael *that are of* Iſrael, *Rom.* 9. 6. but here was *an Iſraelite indeed.* (1.) A ſincere Follower of the good Example of *Iſrael*, whoſe Character it was, that he was a *plain Man*, in Oppoſition to *Eſau's* Character of a *cunning Man.* He was a genuine Son of *honeſt Jacob*, not only of his *Seed*, but of his *Spirit.* (2.) A ſincere Profeſſor of the Faith of *Iſrael*; he was true to the Religion he profeſs'd, and liv'd up to it; he was really as good as he ſeem'd, and his Practice *of a piece* with his Profeſſion. He is the *Jew* that is one *inwardly*, Rom. 2. 29. ſo he *the Chriſtian.*

2. He is one in whom is *no Guile*, that's the Character of an *Iſraelite* indeed, a Chriſtian indeed. *No Guile* towards Men; a Man without Trick or Deſign; a Man that one may truſt: *No Guile* towards God, that is, ſincere in his Repentance for Sin; ſincere in his Covenanting with God; in whoſe Spirit is *no Guile*, Pſal. 32. 2. he doth not ſay *without Guilt*, but without Guile. Tho' in many Things he is fooliſh and forgetful, yet in nothing falſe, nor *wickedly departing from God*: There is no allowed, approved Guilt in him; not painted, tho' he have his Spots; *Behold* this *Iſraelite* indeed. (1.) Take notice of him, that you may learn his Way, and do like him. (2.) Admire him; *Behold* and *wonder.* The Hypocriſy of the Scribes and Phariſees had ſo leavened the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation, and their Religion was ſo degenerated into Formality, or State-Policy, that an *Iſraelite* indeed was a *Man wondered at*; a Miracle of Divine Grace, like *Job*, Chap. 1. 8.

2. *Nathanael* is much ſurprized at this, upon which Chriſt gives him a further Proof of his Omniſciency, and a kind Memorial of his former Devotion.

1. Here's *Nathanael's* Modeſty, in that he was ſoon put out of Countenance at the kind Notice Chriſt was pleaſed to take of him; *Whence knoweſt thou me*? Me, that am unworthy of thy Cognizance; *who am I, O Lord God*? 2 Sam. 7. 18. This was an Evidence of his Sincerity, that he did not catch at the Praiſe he met with, but declined it. Chriſt knows us better than we know ourſelves; we know not what is in a Man's Heart by looking in his Face, but all Things are naked and open before Chriſt, *Heb.* 4. 12, 13. Doth Chriſt know us? Let us covet to know him.

(2.) Here's Chriſt's further *Manifeſtation* of himſelf to him; *Before* Philip *called thee, I ſaw thee.*

(1.) He gives him to underſtand that he *knew him*, and ſo manifeſts his Divinity. 'Tis God's Prerogative infallibly to know all Perſons, and all Things; by this Chriſt prov'd himſelf to be God upon many Occaſions. 'Twas propheſied concerning the *Meſſiah*, that he ſhould be of *quick Underſtanding in the Fear of the Lord*, i. e. in judging the Sincerity and Degree of the Fear of God in others, and that he ſhould not judge after the Sight of his Eyes, *Iſa.* 11. 2, 3. Here he anſwers that Prediction. See 2 *Tim.* 2. 19.

(2.) That before *Philip* call'd him, he ſaw him under the Fig-tree; this manifeſts a particular Kindneſs for him. (1.) His Eye was towards him before *Philip* called him, which was the firſt Time that ever *Nathanael* was acquainted with Chriſt: Chriſt has Knowledge of us, before we have any Knowledge of him; ſee *Iſa.* 45. 4. *Gal.* 4. 9. (2.) His Eye was upon him when he was *under the Fig-Tree*; this was a private Token which no body underſtood but *Nathanael*: When thou waſt retired *under the Fig-Tree* in thy *Garden*, and thoughteſt no Eye ſaw thee, I had then mine Eye upon thee, and ſaw that which was very acceptable. 'Tis moſt probable, *Nathanael* under the Fig-Tree, was employ'd as *Iſaac* in the Field, in Meditation and Prayer, and Communion with God. Perhaps, then, and there it was, that he ſolemnly joined himſelf to the Lord in an inviolable Covenant: Chriſt ſaw in ſecret, and by this publick Notice of it, did, in part, reward him openly. *Sitting under the* Fig-Tree, notes Quietneſs and Compoſedneſs of Spirit, which much befriends Communion with God: See *Mic.* 4. 4. *Zech.* 3. 10. *Nathanael* herein was an *Iſraelite* indeed, that like *Iſrael* he *wreſtled with God alone*, Gen. 32. 24. pray'd, not like the Hypocrites in the Corners of the Streets, but under the Fig-Tree.

3. *Nathanael* hereby obtained a full Aſſurance of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, expreſſed in that noble Acknowledgment, *v.* 49. *Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of* Iſrael: That is, in ſhort, thou art the true *Meſſiah.* Obſerve here,

1. How *firmly* he believ'd *with the Heart.* Tho' he had lately laboured under ſome Prejudices concerning Chriſt, they were now all vaniſhed. *Note*, The Grace of God in working Faith caſts down Imaginations. Now he asks no more, Can any good Thing come out of *Nazareth*? for he believes Jeſus of *Nazareth* to be the Chief Good, and embraceth him accordingly.

2. How *freely* he confeſs'd *with the Mouth.* And his Confeſſion is made in Form of an Adoration, directed to our Lord Jeſus himſelf, which is a proper Way of confeſſing our Faith. (1.) He confeſſeth Chriſt's prophetical Office, in calling him *Rabbi*, a Title which the *Jews* commonly gave to their Teachers: Chriſt is the great *Rabbi*, at whoſe Feet we muſt all be *brought up.* (2.) He confeſſeth his Divine Nature and Miſſion, in calling him the Son of God, that Son of God ſpoken of, *Pſal.* 2. 7. tho' he had but a Human *Form* and *Aſpect*, yet having a Divine Knowledge, the Knowledge of the Heart, and of Things diſtant and ſecret, from thence he concludes him to be the *Son of God.* (3.) He confeſſeth, *Thou art the King of* Iſrael; that King of *Iſrael* whom we have been long waiting for. If he be the Son of God, he is King of the *Iſrael* of God. *Nathanael* hereby proves himſelf an *Iſraelite* indeed, that he ſo readily owns and ſubmits to the King of *Iſrael.*

4. Chriſt hereupon raiſeth the Hopes and Expectations of *Nathanael* to ſomething further, and greater than all this, *v.* 50, 51. Chriſt is very tender of young Converts, and will encourage good Beginnings, tho' weak, *Mat.* 12. 20.

1. He here ſignifies his Acceptance, and (it ſhould ſeem) his Admiration of the ready Faith of *Nathanael*; *Becauſe I ſaid I ſaw thee under the Fig-Tree, believeſt thou*? He wonders that ſuch a ſmall Indication of Chriſt's Divine Knowledge ſhould have ſuch an Effect; 'twas a Sign *Nathanael's* Heart was prepar'd beforehand, elſe the Work had not been done ſo ſuddenly. *Note*, It is

much for the Honour of Chriſt and his Grace, when the Heart is ſurrender'd to him at the firſt Summons.

2. He promiſeth him much greater Helps for the Confirmation and Encreaſe of his Faith, than he had had for the firſt Production of it.

1. In general, *Thou ſhalt ſee greater Things than theſe*, ſtronger Proofs of my being the Meſſiah; the Miracles of Chriſt and his Reſurrection. *Note*, 1. To him that hath, and makes good Uſe of what he hath, more ſhall be given. 2. Thoſe who truly believe the Goſpel, will find its Evidences grow upon them, and will ſee more and more cauſe to believe it. 3. Whatever Diſcoveries Chriſt is pleas'd to make of himſelf to his People, while they are here in this World, he hath ſtill greater Things than theſe to make known to them; a Glory yet further *to be revealed*.

2. In particular; not thou only, but *ye*, all you my Diſciples, whoſe Faith this is intended for the Confirmation of, ye *ſhall ſee Heaven open'd*; that's more than telling *Nathanael* of his being under the Fig-Tree. This is introduc'd with a ſolemn Preface, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you.* This commands both a *fixed Attention* to what is ſaid, as very weighty, and a *full Aſſent* to it as undoubtedly true; I ſay it, whoſe Word you may rely upon. *Amen, Amen.* None uſed this Word at the Beginning of a Sentence but Chriſt, tho' the *Jews* often uſed it at the Cloſe of a Prayer, and ſometimes doubled it. It is a ſolemn Aſſeveration. Chriſt is call'd the *Amen*, Rev. 3. 14. and ſo ſome take it here, *I the Amen, the Amen ſay unto you*; I the faithful Witneſs. *Note*, The Aſſurances we have of the Glory to be reveal'd, are built upon the Word of Chriſt.

Now ſee what it is that Chriſt aſſures them of. *Hereafter*, or *within a while*, or *e'er long*, or from henceforth ye ſhall ſee Heaven open'd.

1. It is a mean Title that Chriſt here takes to himſelf, *the Son of Man*; a Title frequently apply'd to him in the Goſpel, but always by himſelf. *Nathanael* had call'd him the *Son of God*, and *King of* Iſrael: He calls himſelf *Son of Man*, (1.) To expreſs his *Humility* in the midſt of the Honours done him. (2.) To teach his *Humanity*, which is to be believ'd as well as his Divinity. (3.) To intimate his preſent State of Humiliation, that *Nathanael* might not expect this King of *Iſrael* to appear in external Pomp.

2. Yet they are great Things he here foretels; ye *ſhall ſee Heaven open'd*, and *the Angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of Man.*

1. Some underſtand it literally, as pointing at ſome particular Event. Either, (1.) There was ſome Viſion of Chriſt's Glory, in which this was exactly fulfill'd, which *Nathanael* was an Eyewitneſs of, as *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, were of his Transfiguration. There were many Things which Chriſt did, and thoſe in the Preſence of his Diſciples, which were not written, *John* 20. 30. and why not that? Or, (2.) It was fulfill'd in the many Miniſtrations of the Angels to our Lord Jeſus, eſpecially that at his Aſcenſion, when Heaven was open'd to receive him, and the Angels *aſcended* and *deſcended* to attend him, and to do him Honour, and this in the Sight of the Diſciples. Chriſt's Aſcenſion was the great Proof of his Miſſion, and much confirm'd the Faith of his Diſcipies, *John* 6. 6, 7. Or, (3.) It may refer to Chriſt's ſecond Coming to judge the World, when the Heavens ſhall be *open*, and every Eye ſhall ſee him, and the Angels of God ſhall aſcend and deſcend about him, as Attendants on him, every one employ'd, and a buſy Day it will be. See 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 10.

2. Others take it figuratively, as ſpeaking of a State or Series of Things, to commence *from henceforth*; and ſo we may underſtand it, (1.) Of Chriſt's *Miracles*. *Nathanael* believ'd, becauſe Chriſt, as the Prophets of old, could tell him Things ſecret; but what is this? Chriſt is now beginning a Diſpenſation of Miracles, much more great and ſtrange than this, as if Heaven were open'd, and ſuch a Power ſhall be exerted by the Son of Man, as if the Angels which excel in Strength, were continually attending his Orders. Immediately after this, Chriſt began to work Miracles, *Chap.* 2. 11. Or, (2.) Of his *Mediation*, and that bleſſed Intercourſe which he hath ſettled between Heaven and Earth, which his Diſciples ſhould, by degrees, be let into the Myſtery of. (1.) By Chriſt, as Mediator, they ſhall ſee *Heaven open'd*, that we may *enter into the Holieſt*, by his Blood, *Heb.* 10. 19 20. Heaven open'd, that by Faith we may *look in*, and at length may *go in*; may now behold the Glory of the Lord, and hereafter enter into the Joy of our Lord. And, (2.) They ſhall *ſee Angels aſcending and deſcending upon the Son of Man.* Through Chriſt we have Communion with, and Benefit by the Holy Angels, and Things in Heaven and Things on Earth are *reconcil'd*, and *gather'd together.* Chriſt is to us as *Jacob*'s Ladder, *Gen.* 28. 12. by whom Angels continually aſcend and deſcend for the good of the Saints.

CHAP. II.

In the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, we had an Account of the firſt Diſciples whom Jeſus call'd, Andrew *and* Peter, Philip *and* Nathanael. *Theſe were the firſt Fruits to God and to the Lamb*, Rev. 14. 4. *Now in this Chapter, we have,* (1.) *The Story of the firſt Miracle which Jeſus wrought, turning Water into Wine, at* Cana *of* Galilee, *v.* 1—11. *and his appearing at* Capernaum, *v.* 12. (2.) *The Story of the firſt Paſſover he kept at* Jeruſalem, *after he began his publick Miniſtry. His driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple,* v. 13—17. *and the Sign he gave to thoſe who quarrel'd with him for it,* v. 18—22. *with an Account of ſome half-thick Believers that follow'd him thereupon, for ſome time,* v. 23—25. *but he knew them too well to put any Confidence in them.*

AND the third day there was a marriage in Cana
of Galilee; and the mother of Jeſus was there.
2 And both Jeſus was called, and his diſciples, to
the marriage. 3 And when they wanted wine, the
mother of Jeſus ſaith unto him, They have no wine.
4 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with
thee? mine hour is not yet come. 5 His mother ſaith
unto the ſervants, Whatſoever he ſaith unto you, do *it*.
6 And there were ſet there ſix water-pots of ſtone, after
the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two
or three firkins a-piece. 7 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Fill
the water-pots with water, and they filled them up to
the brim. 8 And he ſaith unto them, Draw out now,
and bear unto the governour of the feaſt. And they
bare *it*. 9 When the ruler of the feaſt had taſted the
water that was made wine, and knew not whence
it was, (but the ſervants which drew the water
knew) the governour of the feaſt called the bridegroom,
10 And ſaith unto him, Every Man at
the beginning doth ſet forth good wine; and when
men have well drunk, then that which is worſe: *but*
thou haſt kept the good wine until now, 11 This
beginning of miracles did Jeſus in Cana of Galilee,
and manifeſted forth his glory; and his diſciples believed
on him.

We have here the Story of Chriſt's miraculous converting of Water into Wine at a Marriage in *Cana* of *Galilee.* There were ſome few ſo well diſpos'd as to believe in Chriſt, and to follow him when he *did no Miracle*; yet it was not likely many ſhould be wrought upon, till he had ſomething wherewith to anſwer thoſe that ask'd, *what Sign ſheweſt thou?* He could have wrought Miracles before, could have made them the common Actions of his Life, and the common Entertainments of his Friends; but Miracles being deſign'd for the ſacred and ſolemn Seals of his Doctrine, he began not to work any till he began to preach his Doctrine. Now obſerve,

Firſt, The Occaſions of this Miracle. *Maimonides* obſerves it to be the Honour of *Moſes*, that all the Signs he did in the Wilderneſs, he did them *upon Neceſſity*; we needed Food, he brought us *Manna*, and ſo did Chriſt. Obſerve,

1. The Time, the *third Day*, after he came into *Galilee*; the Evangeliſt keeps a Journal of Occurrences, for no Day paſſed without ſomething extraordinary done or ſaid. Our Maſter fill'd up his time better than his Servants do, and never lay down at Night complaining, as the *Roman* Emperor did, that he had *loſt a Day.*

2. The Place; 'twas at *Cana* in *Galilee*; in the Tribe of *Aſher*, *Joſh.* 19. 28. of which before it was ſaid, that *he ſhall yield royal Dainties*, Gen. 49. 20. Chriſt began to work Miracles in an obſcure Corner of the Country, remote from *Jeruſalem*, which was the publick Scene of Action, to ſhew that he *ſought not Honour from Men*, John 5. 41. but would put Honour *upon the Lowly.* His Doctrine and Miracles would not be ſo much oppos'd by the plain honeſt *Galileans*, as they would be by the proud and prejudic'd Rabbins, Politicians, and Grandees at *Jeruſalem.*

3. The Occaſion it ſelf was a *Marriage*: probably one or both of the Parties were a-kin to our Lord Jeſus. The *Mother of Jeſus* is ſaid to be *there*, and not to be *call'd*, as Jeſus and his Diſciples were; which intimates that ſhe was there as one at home. Obſerve the Honour which Chriſt hereby put upon the Ordinance of Marriage, that he grac'd the Solemnity of it, not only with his Preſence, but with his firſt Miracle; becauſe it was inſtituted and bleſs'd in Innocency; becauſe by it he would ſtill *ſeek a godly Seed*; becauſe it reſembles the myſtical Union between him and his Church; and becauſe he foreſaw that in the Papal Kingdom, while the Marriage Ceremony would be unduly *dignified*, and advanced into a *Sacrament*, the *married State* would be unduly *vilified*, as inconſiſtent with any ſacred Function. There was a *Marriage*, γάμος, a *Marriage-Feaſt*, to grace the Solemnity; Marriages were uſually celebrated with Feſtivals; *Gen.* 29. 22. *Jud.* 14. 10. in token of Joy, and friendly Reſpect, and for the confirming of Love.

4. Chriſt and his Mother and Diſciples were principal Gueſts at this Entertainment. *The Mother of Jeſus* (that was her moſt honourable Title) *was there*; no mention being made of *Joſeph*, we conclude him dead before this: Jeſus was *call'd*, and he

came, accepted the Invitation, and feaſted with them; to teach us to be *reſpectful* to our Relations, and *ſociable* with them, tho' they be mean. Chriſt was to come in a Way different from that of *John Baptiſt*, who came *neither eating nor drinking*, Mat. 11. 18, 19. It is the Wiſdom of the Prudent, to ſtudy how to *improve* Converſation, rather than how to *decline* it.

There was a Marriage, and Jeſus was called. *Note*, 1. It is very deſirable, when there is a *Marriage*, to have Jeſus Chriſt *preſent* at it; to have his ſpiritual, gracious Preſence, to have the Marriage owned and bleſſed by him, the *Marriage* is then *honourable* indeed: And they that *marry in* the Lord, (1 *Cor.* 7. 39.) do not marry *without him*. 2. They that would have Chriſt with them at their Marriage, muſt invite him by Prayer; that's the Meſſenger that muſt be ſent to Heaven for him; and he will come; *Thou ſhalt call, and I will anſwer*. And he'll turn the Water into Wine.

The Diſciples alſo were invited; thoſe Five whom he had call'd, *Chap.* 1. for as yet he had no more; they were his Family, and were invited with him. They had thrown themſelves upon his Care, and they ſoon find, tho' he had no Wealth, he had good Friends. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe that *follow* Chriſt ſhall *feaſt* with him, they ſhall *fare* as he *fares*, ſo he has *beſpoke* for them, *John* 12. 26. *Where I am, there ſhall my Servant be.* (2.) Love to Chriſt is teſtify'd by a Love to thoſe that are his for his ſake; *our Goodneſs extendeth not to him*, but *to the Saints*. *Calvin* obſerves how *generous* the Maker of the Feaſt was, tho' he ſeems to be but of ſmall Subſtance, to invite four or five Strangers more than he thought of, becauſe they were Followers of Chriſt, which ſhews (ſaith he) there is more of Freedom and Liberality, and true Friendſhip, in the Converſation of ſome meaner Perſons, than among many of higher Rank.

Secondly, The Miracle it ſelf. In which obſerve,

1. They *wanted Wine*, v. 3. (1.) There was *Want* at a *Feaſt*; tho' much provided, yet all ſpent. While we are in this World, we ſometimes find ourſelves *in Straits*, even then when we think ourſelves in the *Fulneſs of our Sufficiency*. If always *ſpending*, perhaps all's *ſpent* e'er we are aware. (2.) There was Want at a *Marriage-Feaſt*. *Note*, They that being *married*, are come to *care for the Things of the World*, muſt expect *Trouble in the Fleſh*, and count upon Diſappointment. (3.) It ſhould ſeem the Occaſion of this Want was, Chriſt and his Diſciples being there, were more Company than they expected, when the Proviſion was made; but they who ſtraiten themſelves for Chriſt, ſhall not loſe by him.

2. The *Mother of Jeſus* ſollicited him to aſſiſt her Friends in this Strait. We are told, *v.* 3, 4, 5. what paſs'd between Chriſt and his Mother upon this Occaſion.

1. She acquaints him with the Plunge they were at, *v.* 3. *She ſaith unto him, They have no Wine.* Some think ſhe did not expect from him any miraculous Supply, he having as yet wrought no Miracle; but that ſhe would have him make ſome *decent* Excuſe to the Company, and make the beſt of it to ſave the Bridegroom's Reputation, and keep him in Countenance. Or (as *Calvin* ſuggeſts) would have him make up the Want of Wine with ſome holy profitable Diſcourſe; but moſt probably ſhe look'd for a Miracle; for ſhe knew he was now appearing as the great Prophet, like unto *Moſes*, who ſo oft ſeaſonably ſupply'd the Wants of *Iſrael*; and tho' this was his firſt publick Miracle, perhaps he had ſometimes relieved her and her Husband in their low Eſtate. The Bridegroom might have ſent out for more Wine, but ſhe was for going to the Fountain-Head. *Note*, (1.) We ought to be concerned for the Wants and Straits of our Friends, and not *ſeek our own Things* only. (2.) In our own and our Friends Straits, 'tis our Wiſdom and Duty to apply ourſelves to Chriſt by Prayer. (3.) In our Addreſſes to Chriſt, we muſt not preſcribe to him, but humbly ſpread our Caſe before him, and then *refer ourſelves* to him to do as he pleaſeth.

2. He gave her a Reprimand for it, for he ſaw more amiſs in it than we do, elſe he had not treated it thus.

Here's, 1. The Rebuke it ſelf, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* As many as Chriſt loves, he rebukes and chaſtens. He calls her *Woman*, not *Mother*; when we begin to be aſſuming, we ſhould be minded what we are, *Men* and *Women*, frail, fooliſh, and corrupt. The Queſtion, τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ, might be read, *what is that to me and thee?* what is it to us if they do want? but it is always uſed, as we render it, *What have I to do with thee?* as *Judg.* 11. 12. 2 *Sam.* 16. 10. *Ezra* 4. 3. *Mat.* 8. 29. And therefore ſpeaks a Reſentment, yet not at all inconſiſtent with that Reverence and Subjection which he paid to his Mother, according to the Fifth Commandment, *Luke* 2. 51. for there was a Time when it was *Levi*'s Praiſe, that he *ſaid to his Father, I have not known him*, Deut. 33. 9. Now this was intended to be, (1.) A Check to his Mother, for interpoſing in a Matter, which was the Act of his God-head, which had no dependance on her, and which ſhe was not the Mother of. Tho', as Man, he was *David*'s Son, and her's; yet, as God, he was *David*'s Lord, and *her's*, and he would have her know it. The greateſt Advancements muſt not make us forget ourſelves, and our Place; nor the Familiarity which the Covenant of Grace admits us to, breed Contempt, Irreverence, or any kind or degree of Preſumption. (2.) 'Twas an Inſtruction to others of his Relations, many of whom were preſent here, that they muſt never expect him to have any regard to his Kindred, according to the Fleſh, in his working Miracles, or that therein he ſhould gratify them, who in this Matter were no more to him than other People. In the Things of God, we muſt not *know Faces*. (3.) 'Tis a ſtanding Teſtimony againſt that Idolatry, which he foreſaw his Church would in after Ages ſink into, in giving undue Honours to the Virgin *Mary*; a Crime which the Roman Catholicks, as they call themſelves, are notoriouſly guilty of, when they call her the *Queen of Heaven*, the *Salvation of the World*, their *Mediatrix*, their *Life* and *Hope*; not only depending upon her Merit and Interceſſion, but beſeeching her to *command her Son* to do them good: *Monſtra te eſſe Matrem—Juſſu Matris impera Salvatori.*—Doth he not here expreſly ſay, when a Miracle was to be wrought, even in the Days of his Humiliation, and his Mother did but tacitly hint an Interceſſion, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* which was plainly deſign'd either to *prevent* or *aggravate* ſuch groſs Idolatry, ſuch horrid Blaſphemy. The Son of God is appointed our Advocate with the Father, but the Mother of our Lord was never deſign'd to be our Advocate with the Son.

2. The Reaſon of this Rebuke; *Mine Hour is not yet come*; for every thing Chriſt did, and that was done to him, he had *his Hour*, the *fixed* time, and the *fitteſt* time, which was punctually obſerv'd. (1.) Mine Hour for *working Miracles* is not yet come, yet afterwards he wrought this, before the Hour, becauſe he foreſaw it would confirm the Faith of his Infant Diſciples, *v.* 11. which was the End of all his Miracles; ſo that this was an Earneſt of the many Miracles he would work when his *Hour was come*. (2.) Mine Hour of working Miracles *openly* is *not yet come*, therefore do not talk of it thus *publickly*. (3.) Is *not the Hour* of my Exemption from thine Authority *yet come*, now I have begun to act as a Prophet? So *Gregory Nyſſen*. (4.) Mine Hour for working *this Miracle* is not yet come. His Mother moved him to help them *when the Wine began to fail*, ſo it may be read, *v.* 2. But his Hour was not come, till it was quite ſpent, and there was a *total Want*; not only to prevent any Suſpicion of mixing ſome of the Wine that was left with the Water, but to teach us, that Man's Extremity is God's Opportunity, to appear for the Help and Relief of his People. Then *his Hour is come*, when we are reduc'd to the utmoſt Strait, and know not what to do. This encouraged thoſe that waited for him, to believe, that tho' his Hour was not *yet come*, it would come. *Note*, The Delays of Mercy are not to be conſtrued the Denials of Prayer. *At the End it ſhall ſpeak.*

3. Notwithſtanding this, ſhe encouraged herſelf with Expectation, that he would help her Friends in this Strait, for ſhe bid the Servants *obſerve his Orders*, v. 5.

1. She took the Reproof very ſubmiſſively, and did not reply to it. 'Tis beſt not to deſerve Reproof from Chriſt, but next beſt to be meek and quiet under it, and to count it a Kindneſs, *Pſal.* 141. 5.

2. She kept her Hope in Chriſt's Mercy, that he would yet grant her Deſire. When we come to God in Chriſt for any Mercy, two Things diſcourage us. (1.) Senſe of our *own Follies* and Infirmities; ſurely ſuch imperfect Prayers as ours cannot ſpeed. (2.) Senſe of *our Lord's Frowns and Rebukes*. Afflictions are continued, Deliverances delay'd, and God ſeems angry at our Prayers; this was the Caſe of the Mother of our Lord here, and yet ſhe encourageth herſelf with Hope, that he will at length give in an Anſwer of Peace; to teach us, to wreſtle with God by Faith and Fervency in Prayer, even then, when he ſeems in his Providence to walk contrary to us. We muſt *againſt Hope believe in Hope*, Rom. 4. 18.

3. She directed the Servants to have an Eye *to him* immediately, and not to make their Applications to her, as it is probable *they had done*. She quits all Pretenſions to an *Influence* upon him, or *Interceſſion* with him; let their Souls *wait only* on him, *Pſal.* 62. 5.

4. She directed them punctually to obſerve his Orders, without diſputing or asking Queſtions. Being conſcious to herſelf of a Fault in *preſcribing* to him, ſhe cautions the Servants to take heed of the ſame Fault, and to attend both his Time and his Way for Supply; *Whatſoever he ſaith unto you, do it*, tho' you may think it never ſo improper. If he ſaith, Give the Gueſts Water when they call for Wine, do it. If he ſaith, Pour out from the Bottom of the Veſſels that are ſpent, do it; He can make a few Drops of Wine multiply to ſo many Draughts. *Note*, Thoſe that expect Chriſt's *Favours*, muſt with an implicit Obedience obſerve his *Orders*. The Way of Duty is the Way to Mercy; and Chriſt's Methods muſt not be objected againſt.

4. Chriſt did at length miraculouſly ſupply them, for he is often better than his Word, but never worſe.

1. The Miracle itſelf was *turning Water into Wine*. The Subſtance of Water acquiring a new Form, and having all the Accidents and Qualities of Wine; ſuch a *Transformation* is a *Miracle*. But the Popiſh *Tranſubſtantiation*, the Subſtance chang'd, but the Accidents remaining the ſame, is a Monſter. By this Chriſt ſhewed himſelf to be the God of Nature, who maketh the Earth to bring forth Wine, *Pſal.* 104. 14, 15. The extracting the Blood of the Grape every Year from the Moiſture of the Earth, is no leſs a Work of Power, tho' being according to the common Law of Nature, it is not ſuch a Work of Wonder as

this. The Beginning of *Moſes*'s Miracles, was turning Water into Blood, *Exod.* 4. 9. *ch.* 7. 20. the Beginning of Chriſt's Miracles, was turning Water into Wine; which intimates the Difference between the Law of *Moſes*, and the Goſpel of Chriſt. The Curſe of the Law turns Water into Blood, common Comforts into Bitterneſs and Terror; the Bleſſing of the Goſpel turns Water into Wine. Chriſt hereby ſhew'd, that his Errand into the World was to heighten and improve Creature-Comforts to all Believers, and make them Comforts indeed. *Shiloh* is ſaid to *waſh his Garments in Wine*, Gen. 49. 11. the Water for waſhing being *turn'd into Wine*. And the Goſpel Call is, *Come ye to the Waters and buy Wine*, Iſa. 55. 1.

2. The Circumſtances of it magnified it, and freed it from all Suſpicion of Cheat or Colluſion: For,

1. It was done in Water-pots, *v.* 6. *There were ſet there ſix Water-pots of Stone.* Obſerve, (1.) For what Uſe theſe Water-pots were intended, *viz.* for their legal Purifications from ceremonial Pollutions, enjoin'd by the Law of God, and many more by the Tradition of the Elders; the *Jews eat not except they waſh oft*, Mark 7. 3. and they uſed much Water in their waſhing, for which Reaſon here were ſix large Water-pots provided. 'Twas a Saying among them, *Qui multâ utitur aquâ in lavando multas conſequetur in hoc mundo divitias.* (2.) To what Uſe Chriſt put them; quite different from what they were intended; to be the Receptacles of the miraculous Wine. Thus Chriſt came to bring in the Grace of the Goſpel, which is as *Wine*, that cheareth God and Man, *Judg.* 9. 13. inſtead of the Shadows of the Law, which were as Water, *weak and beggarly Elements.* Theſe were *Water-pots* that had never been uſed to have Wine in them; and of *Stone*, which is not apt to retain the Scent of former Liquors, if ever they had had Wine in them. They contained *two or three Firkins a-piece*; two or three *Meaſures, Baths*, or *Ephahs*; the Quantity is uncertain, but very conſiderable. We may be ſure it was not intended to be all drank at this Feaſt, but for a further Kindneſs to the new-married Couple, as the multiplied Oil was to the poor Widow, out of which ſhe might *pay her Debt*, and *live of the reſt*, 2 Kings 4. 7. Chriſt gives like himſelf; gives abundantly, according to his Riches in Glory. 'Tis the Pen-man's Language to ſay, they contain'd *two or three Firkins*, for the holy Spirit could have aſcertain'd juſt how much; thus *John* 6. 19. to teach us to ſpeak cautiouſly, and not confidently of thoſe Things whereof we have not good Aſſurance.

2. The Water-pots were fill'd *up to the Brim* by the Servants, at Chriſt's Word, *v.* 7. As *Moſes*, the Servant of the Lord, when God bid him, went to the Rock to draw Water; ſo theſe Servants, when Chriſt bid them, went to the Water to fetch Wine. *Note*, Since no Difficulties can be oppos'd to the Arm of God's Power, no Improbabilities are to be objected againſt the Word of his Command.

3. The Miracle was wrought ſuddenly, and in ſuch a manner, as greatly magnified it. As ſoon as they had fill'd the Water-pots, preſently he ſaid, *Draw out now*, v. 8. It was done,

(1.) Without any Ceremony in the Eye of the Spectators. One would have thought, as *Naaman*, he ſhould have come out and *ſtood*, and *call'd on the Name of God*, 2 Kings 5. 11. No, he ſits ſtill in his Place, ſaith not a Word, but *wills* the Thing, and ſo works it. *Note*, Chriſt doth great Things and marvellous, *without Noiſe*, works manifeſt Changes in a hidden way. Sometimes Chriſt, in working Miracles, uſed Words and Signs, but it was *for their Sakes that ſtood by*, John 11. 47.

(2.) Without any Heſitation or Uncertainty in his own Breaſt. He did not ſay, *Draw out now*, and let me *taſte it*, queſtioning whether the Thing were done as he will'd it or no; but with the greateſt Aſſurance imaginable, tho' it was his *firſt Miracle*, he recommends it to the Maſter of the Feaſt *firſt*. As he knew what he would do, ſo he knew what he could do, and made no Eſſays in his Work; but all good, very good, even in the Beginning.

Our Lord Jeſus directed the Servants,

1. To *draw it out*; not let it alone in the Veſſel to be admir'd, but *draw it out* to be drunk. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt's Works are all *for uſe*; he gives no Man a Talent to be *bury'd*, but to be *traded with*. Has he turn'd thy Water into Wine, given thee Knowledge and Grace? 'tis to *profit withal*, and therefore *Draw out now*. 2. Thoſe that would know Chriſt, muſt make Trial of him; muſt attend upon him in the Uſe of ordinary Means, and then may expect extraordinary Influences. That which is *laid up*, for all that *fear God*, is *wrought for thoſe that truſt in him*, Pſal. 33. 19. that by the Exerciſe of Faith, *draw out* what is *laid up*.

2. To preſent it to *the Governour of the Feaſt*. Some think this *Governour of the Feaſt* was only the chief Gueſt, that ſate at the upper End of the Table; and if ſo, ſure our Lord Jeſus ſhould have had that Place, for he was upon all Accounts the principal Gueſt; but it ſeems another had the uppermoſt Room, probably one that *lov'd* it, *Mat.* 23. 6. and *choſe* it, *Luke* 14. 7. And Chriſt, according to his own Rule, *ſate down in the loweſt Room*; but tho' he was not treated as the Maſter of the Feaſt, he kindly approv'd himſelf a Friend to the Feaſt, and if not its Founder, yet its beſt Benefactor. Others think this *Governour* was the Inſpector and Monitor of the Feaſt: The ſame with *Plutarch*'s *Sympoſiarcha*, whoſe Office it was to ſee that each had enough, and none did exceed, and that there were no Indecencies, or Diſorders. *Note*, Feaſts have need of Governours, becauſe too many, when they are at Feaſts, have not the Government of themſelves. Some think this *Governour* was the *Chaplain*, ſome Prieſt or Levite that crav'd a Bleſſing, and gave Thanks, and Chriſt would have the Cup brought to him, that he might bleſs it, and bleſs God for it; for the extraordinary Tokens of Chriſt's Preſence and Power were not to ſuperſede or joſtle out the ordinary Rules and Methods of Piety and Devotion.

4. The Wine which was thus miraculouſly provided, was of the beſt and richeſt Wine, which was acknowledg'd by the Governour of the Feaſt; and that it was really ſo, and not his Fancy, is certain, becauſe he knew not whence it was, *v.* 9. 10. (1.) It was certain this was *Wine*. The *Governour* knew that when he drank it, tho' he knew not *whence it was*; the Servants knew whence it was, but had not yet taſted it. If the Taſter had ſeen the drawing of it, or the Drawers had had the taſting of it, ſomething might have been imputed to Fancy; but now no room is left for Suſpicion. (2.) That 'twas the beſt Wine. *Note*, Chriſt's Works commend themſelves even to thoſe that know not their Author. The Products of Miracles were always the beſt in their kind. This Wine had a *ſtronger Body*, and *better Flavour*, than ordinary. This the Governour of the Feaſt takes notice of to the Bridegroom, with an Air of Pleaſantneſs, as *uncommon*. (1.) The common Method was otherwiſe. Good Wine is brought out to the beſt Advantage at the Beginning of a Feaſt, when the Gueſts have their Heads clear, and their Appetites freſh, and can reliſh it, and will commend it; but *when they have well drunk*, when their Heads are muddy, and their Appetites pall'd, good Wine is but thrown away upon them, worſe will ſerve them: See the Vanity of all the Pleaſures of Senſe, they ſoon ſurfeit, but never ſatiſfy; the longer they are enjoy'd, the leſs pleaſant they grow. (2.) This Bridegroom obliged his Friends with a Reſerve of the beſt Wine, for the Grace-Cup; *Thou haſt kept the good Wine till now*; not knowing whom they were indebted to for this good Wine, he returns the Thanks of the Table to the Bridegroom. *She did not know that I gave her Corn and Wine*, Hoſ. 2. 8.

Now, 1. Chriſt in providing thus plentifully for the Gueſts, tho' he hereby allows a ſober, chearful Uſe of Wine, eſpecially in Times of Rejoicing, *Neh.* 8. 10. yet he doth not invalidate his own Caution, nor invade it in the leaſt, which is, that our Hearts be not *at any time*, no not at a Marriage Feaſt, *overcharg'd with Surfeiting and Drunkenneſs*, Luke 21. 34. When Chriſt provided ſo much *good Wine* for them that had *well drank*, he intended to try their Sobriety, and to teach them *how to abound*, as well as *how to want*. Temperance *per force*, is a thankleſs Virtue; but if Divine Providence give us abundance of the Delights of Senſe, and Divine Grace enable us to uſe them moderately, this is Self-denial that's praiſe-worthy. He alſo intended that ſome ſhould be left for the Confirmation of the Truth of the Miracle to the Faith of others. And we have Reaſon to think that the Gueſts at this Table were ſo well *taught*, or at leaſt were now ſo well aw'd by the Preſence of Chriſt, that none of them abus'd this Wine to exceſs. And theſe two Conſiderations drawn from this Story, may be ſufficient at any time to fortify us againſt Temptations to Intemperance. (1.) That our Meat and Drink are the *Gifts of God's Bounty* to us, and we owe our Liberty to uſe them, and our Comfort in the Uſe of them, to the Mediation of Chriſt; 'tis therefore ungrateful and impious to abuſe them. (2.) That where-ever we are, Chriſt has his Eye upon us; we ſhould *eat Bread before God*, Exod. 18. 12. and then we ſhould not *feed ourſelves without Fear*.

2. He hath given us a Specimen of the Method he takes in dealing with thoſe that deal with him, which is to reſerve the *beſt* for the *laſt*, and therefore they muſt *deal upon Truſt*. The Recompence of their Services and Sufferings is reſerv'd for the other World; it is a Glory *to be reveal'd*. The Pleaſures of Sin give their Colour in the Cup, but *at the laſt, bite*; but the Pleaſures of Religion will be *Pleaſures for evermore*.

In the Concluſion of this Story, *v.* 11. we are told,

1. That this was *the Beginning of Miracles* which Jeſus did. Many Miracles have been wrought *concerning* him at his Birth, and Baptiſm, and he himſelf was the greateſt Miracle of all; but this was the firſt that was wrought *by* him. He could have wrought Miracles when he diſputed with the Doctors, but his Hour was not come. He had Power, but there was a *Time of the hiding of his Power*.

2. That herein he *manifeſted his Glory*; hereby he prov'd himſelf to be the Son of God, and his Glory to be that of the only begotten of the Father. He alſo diſcover'd the Nature and End of his Office; the Power of a God, and the Grace of a Saviour appearing in all his Miracles, and particularly in this, manifeſted the Glory of the long expected Meſſiah.

3. That *his Diſciples believed on him*. Thoſe whom he had call'd, *Chap.* 1. who had ſeen no Miracle, and yet follow'd him, now ſaw this, ſhar'd in it, and had their Faith ſtrengthen'd by it. *Note*, 1. Even the Faith that is true, at firſt is but weak. The ſtrongeſt Men were once Babes, ſo were the ſtrongeſt Chriſtians. 2. The manifeſting of the Glory of Chriſt is the great Confirmation of the Faith of Chriſtians,

12 ¶ After this, he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his diſciples, and they continued there not many days. 13 ¶ And the Jews paſſover was at hand, and Jeſus went up to Jeruſalem, 14 And found in the temple thoſe that ſold oxen, and ſheep, and doves, and the changers of money, ſitting: 15 And when he had made a ſcourge of ſmall cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the ſheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers of money, and overthrew the tables; 16 And ſaid unto them that ſold doves, Take theſe things hence; make not my father's houſe an houſe of merchandiſe. 17 And his diſciples remembred that it was written, The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up. 18 ¶ Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, What ſign ſheweſt thou unto us, ſeeing that thou doeſt theſe things? 19 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up. 20 Then ſaid the Jews, Forty and ſix years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raiſe it up in three days? 21 But he ſpake of the temple of his body. 22 When therefore he was riſen from the dead, his diſciples remembred that he had ſaid this unto them: and they believed the ſcripture, and the word which Jeſus had ſaid.

Here we have,

Firſt, The ſhort Viſit Chriſt made to *Capernaum*, v. 12. 'Twas a large and populous City, about a Day's Journey from *Cana*; 'tis called *his own City*, Mat. 9. 1. becauſe he made it his Head Quarters in *Galilee*, and what little Reſt he had, was there. 'Twas a Place of Concourſe, and therefore Chriſt choſe it, that the Fame of his Doctrine and Miracles might from thence ſpread the further. Obſerve,

1. The Company that attended him thither; *His Mother, his Brethren, and his Diſciples.* Where-ever Chriſt went, 1. He *would not* go alone, but would take thoſe with him, who had put themſelves under his Conduct, that he might inſtruct them, and they might atteſt his Miracles. 2. He *ſhould not* go alone, but they would follow him, becauſe they lik'd the Sweetneſs either of his Doctrine, or of his Wine, *John* 6. 26. His Mother, tho' he had lately given her to underſtand, that in the Works of his Miniſtry he ſhould pay no more Reſpect to her than to any other Perſon, yet followed him; not to intercede with him, but to learn of him. His *Brethren* alſo, and Relations, that were at the Marriage, and were wrought upon by the Miracle there; and *his Diſciples*, who attended him where-ever he went. It ſhould ſeem People were more affected with Chriſt's Miracles at firſt, than they were afterwards, when Cuſtom made them ſeem leſs ſtrange.

2. His Continuance there, which was at this time *not many Days*, deſigning now only to *begin* the Acquaintance, he would afterwards *improve* there. Chriſt was ſtill upon the Remove, would not confine his Uſefulneſs to *one* Place, becauſe *many* needed him. And he would teach his Followers to look upon themſelves but as *Sojourners* in this World; and his Miniſters to follow their Opportunities, and go where their Work led them. We do not now find Chriſt in the Synagogues, but he privately inſtructed his Friends, and thus enter'd upon his Work *by Degrees*: 'Tis good for young Miniſters to accuſtom themſelves to pious and edifying Diſcourſe in private, that they may with the better Preparation, and greater Awe, approach their publick Work. He did not ſtay long at *Capernaum*, becauſe the Paſſover was at hand, and he muſt attend it at *Jeruſalem*, for every thing is beautiful in its Seaſon. The leſs Good muſt give way to the greater; and all the Dwellings of *Jacob* muſt veil to the Gates of *Zion*.

Secondly, The Paſſover he kept at *Jeruſalem*; 'tis the *firſt* after his Baptiſm, and the Evangeliſt takes Notice of all the Paſſovers he kept henceforward, which were four in all, the *fourth*, that at which he ſuffer'd, three Years after this; and half a Year was now paſt ſince his Baptiſm. Chriſt being *made under the Law*, obſerv'd the Paſſover at *Jeruſalem*; ſee *Exod.* 23. 17. Thus he taught us by his Example a ſtrict Obſervance of Divine Inſtitutions, and a diligent Attendance on Religious Aſſemblies. He went up to *Jeruſalem* when *the Paſſover was at hand*, that he might be there *with the firſt*. 'Tis called, *The Jews Paſſover*, becauſe it was peculiar to them: Chriſt is *our* Paſſover; now ſhortly God will no longer own it for his. Chriſt kept the Paſſover at *Jeruſalem* yearly, ever ſince he was 12 Years old, in Obedience to the Law; but now he is enter'd upon his publick Miniſtry, we may expect ſomething more from him than before; and Two Things we are here told he did there.

1. He *purged the Temple*, ver. 14—17. Obſerve here,

1. The firſt Place we find him in at *Jeruſalem*, was the *Temple*, and it ſhould ſeem he did not make any publick Appearance till he came thither; for his Preſence and Preaching there, was that Glory of the latter Houſe, which was to *exceed the Glory of the former*, Hag. 2. 9. It was foretold, *Mal.* 3. 1. *I will ſend my Meſſenger*, John Baptiſt; he never preach'd in the Temple, but *the Lord, whom ye ſeek*, he ſhall *ſuddenly come to his Temple*, ſuddenly after the Appearing of *John Baptiſt*; ſo that this was the Time, and the Temple the Place, when and where the Meſſiah was to be expected.

2. The firſt Work we find him at in the Temple, was the *purging* of it; for ſo it was foretold there, *Mal.* 3. 2, 3. *He ſhall ſit as a Refiner, and purify the Sons of* Levi. Now was come the *Time of Reformation*, Chriſt came to be the great Reformer; and according to the Method of the Reforming Kings of *Judah*, he firſt *purged out* what was amiſs, (and that uſed to be Paſſover Work too, as in *Hezekiah*'s time, 2 *Chron.* 30. 14, 15. and *Joſiah's*, 2 Kings 23. 4, *&c.*) and then taught them to do well; firſt *purge out the Old Leaven*, and then *keep the Feaſt*. Chriſt's Deſign in coming into the World, was to reform the World, and he expects that all who come to him, ſhould reform their Hearts and Lives, *Gen.* 35. 2. And this he has taught us by purging the Temple.

See here, 1. What were the Corruptions that were to be purged out. He found a Market in one of the Courts of the Temple, that which was called, the *Court of the Gentiles*, within the *Mountain of that Houſe*. There, (1.) They ſold *Oxen, and Sheep, and Doves* for Sacrifice; we will ſuppoſe not for common Uſe, but for the Conveniency of thoſe who came out of the Country, and could not bring their Sacrifices *in Specie* along with them; ſee *Deut.* 14. 24, 25, 26. This *Market* perhaps had been kept by the Pool of *Betheſda*, Chap. 5. 2. but was admitted into the Temple by the chief Prieſts, for filthy Lucre; for no doubt, the Rents for ſtanding there, and Fees for ſearching the Beaſts ſold there, and certifying that they were *without Blemiſh*, would be a conſiderable Revenue to them. Great Corruptions in the Church owe their Riſe to the Love of Money, 1 *Tim.* 6. 5, 10. (2.) They *chang'd Money*, for the Conveniency of thoſe that were to pay a half Shekel *in Specie* every Year, by way of Poll, for the Service of the Tabernacle, *Exod.* 30. 12. and no doubt they got by it.

2. What Courſe our Lord took to purge out thoſe Corruptions. He had ſeen theſe in the Temple formerly, when he was in a private Station, but never went about to drive them out till now, when he had taken upon him the publick Character of a Prophet. He did not complain to the chief Prieſts, for he knew they countenanced thoſe Corruptions: But he himſelf,

1. *Drove out the Sheep and Oxen*, and thoſe that *ſold them*, out of the Temple. He never uſed *Force* to drive any *into* the Temple, but only to drive thoſe out that profaned it: He did not ſeize the Sheep and Oxen for himſelf, did not *diſtrain* and impound them, tho' he found them *Damage faiſſant*, actual Treſpaſſers upon his Father's Ground, but only drove them out, and their Owners with them. He made a Scourge of *ſmall Cords*, which probably they had led their Sheep and Oxen with, and thrown them away upon the Ground, thence Chriſt gathered them. Sinners prepare the Scourges, with which they themſelves will be driven out from the Temple of the Lord. He did not make a Scourge to chaſtiſe the Offenders, his Puniſhments are of another Nature, but only to drive out the Cattle; he aim'd no further than at Reformation. See *Rom.* 13. 3, 4. 2 *Cor.* 10. 8.

2. He *pour'd out the Changers Money*, τὸ κέρμα; The *ſmall Money*. The *Nummorum Famulus*. In *pouring out* the Money, he ſhew'd his Contempt of it, he threw it to the Ground, to the Earth as it *was*. In *overthrowing* the Tables, he ſhew'd his Diſpleaſure againſt thoſe that make Religion a Matter of worldly Gain. Money-Changers in the Temple are the Scandal of it. *Note*, In Reformation 'tis good to make thorough Work; he *drove them all out*; and not only threw out the Money, but in overturning the Tables, threw out the Trade too.

3. *He ſaid to them that ſold Doves*, (Sacrifices for the Poor) *Take theſe Things hence*. The Doves, tho' they took up leſs Room, and were a leſs Nuſance than the Oxen and Sheep, yet muſt not be allowed there. The Sparrows and Swallows were welcome that were left to God's Providence, *Pſal.* 84. 3. but not the Doves that were appropriated to Man's Profit. God's Temple muſt not be made a Pigeon-houſe. But ſee Chriſt's Prudence in his Zeal. When he drove out the Sheep and Oxen, the Owners might follow them; when he poured out the Money, they might gather it up again; but if he had turned the Doves flying, perhaps they could not have been retrieved; therefore to them that ſold Doves, he ſaid, *Take theſe Things hence*. *Note*, Diſcretion muſt always guide and govern our Zeal, that we do nothing unbecoming ourſelves, or miſchievous to others.

4. He gave them a good Reaſon for what he did, *Make not my Father's Houſe a Houſe of Merchandize.* Reaſon for Conviction ſhould accompany Force for Correction.

1. Here is a Reaſon why they ſhould not profane the Temple; becauſe it was the *Houſe of God*, and not to be made a Houſe of Merchandize. Merchandize is a good thing in the Exchange, but not in the Temple. This was, (1.) To *alienate* that which was dedicated to the Honour of God; 'twas *Sacrilege*; 'twas robbing God. (2.) 'Twas to debaſe that which was ſolemn and awful, and to make it mean. (3.) 'Twas to diſturb and diſtract

thoſe Services, in which Men ought to be moſt ſolemn, ſerious, and intent. 'Twas particularly an Affront to the *Sons of the Stranger* in their Worſhip, to be forced to herd themſelves with the Sheep and Oxen, and to be diſtracted in their Worſhip by the Noiſe of a Market, for this Market was kept in the Court of the *Gentiles*. (4.) 'Twas to make the Buſineſs of Religion ſubſervient to a ſecular Intereſt; for the Holineſs of the Place muſt advance the Market, and promote the Sale of their Commodities. Thoſe make God's Houſe a Houſe of Merchandize, (1.) Whoſe Minds are fill'd with Cares about worldly Buſineſs, when they are attending on religious Exerciſes, as thoſe, *Amos* 8.5. *Ezek.* 33. 31. (2.) Who perform Divine Offices for filthy Lucre, and ſell the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, *Acts* 8.18.

2. Here is a Reaſon why he was concerned to purge it; becauſe it is *my Father's Houſe*. And (1.) Therefore he had Authority to purge it, for he was faithful as a Son *over his own Houſe*, Heb. 3. 5,6. In calling God his Father, he intimates that he was the *Meſſiah*, of whom it was ſaid, *He ſhall build a Houſe for my Name, and I will be his Father*, 2 Sam. 7. 12,13. (2.) Therefore he had a Zeal for the purging of it. It is my *Father's Houſe*, and therefore I cannot bear to ſee it prophaned, and *him* diſhonoured. *Note*, if God be our Father in Heaven, and it be therefore our Deſire that his Name may be ſanctified, it cannot but be our Grief to ſee it polluted.

Chriſt's purging the Temple thus, may juſtly be reckoned among his *wonderful Works*; *Inter omnia ſigna qua fecit Dominus hoc mihi videtur eſſe mirabilius*, *Hieron*. Conſidering, 1. That he did it without the *Aſſiſtance* of any of his *Friends*; Probably it had been no hard Matter to have raiſed the *Mob*, who had a great Veneration for the Temple, againſt theſe Prophaners of it, but Chriſt never countenanced any thing that was tumultuous or diſorderly. There was none to *uphold*, but his own Arm did it. 2. That he did it without the *Reſiſtance* of any of his *Enemies*, either the Market People themſelves, or the chief Prieſts that gave them their Licences, and had the *Poſſe Templi* at their Command. But the Corrruption was too plain to be juſtified; Sinners own Conſciences are Reformers beſt Friends; yet that was not all, there was a Divine Power put forth herein, a Power over the Spirits of Men; and in this Non-reſiſtance of theirs, that Scripture was fulfilled, *Mal.* 3. 2, 3, *Who ſhall ſtand when he appears?*

Laſtly, Here's the Remark which his Diſciples made upon it, *v.* 17. *They remembred that it was written, The Zeal of thine Houſe hath eaten me up.* They were ſomewhat ſurprized at firſt, to ſee him whom they were directed to as the *Lamb of God* in ſuch a Heat; and him whom they believed to be the *King of Iſrael*, take ſo little State upon him as to do this himſelf: But one Scripture came to their Thoughts, which taught them to reconcile this Action both with the Meekneſs of the *Lamb of God*, and with the Majeſty of the *King of* Iſrael; for *David* ſpeaking of the *Meſſiah*, takes Notice of his *Zeal for God's Houſe*, as ſo great, that it even *eat him up*, it made him forget himſelf, *Pſal.* 69. 9. Obſerve,

1. The Diſciples came to underſtand the Meaning of what Chriſt did, by remembring the Scriptures; *They remembered* now *that it was written*. *Note*, The Word of God, and the Works of God, do mutually explain and illuſtrate each other. Dark Scriptures are expounded by their Accompliſhment in Providence, and difficult Providences are made eaſy by comparing them with the Scriptures. See of what great uſe it is to the Diſciples of Chriſt, to be *ready* and *mighty* in the Scriptures, and to have their Memories well ſtored with Scripture Truths, by which they will be *furniſhed for every good Work*.

2. The Scripture they remember'd was very oppoſite; *The Zeal of thine Houſe has eaten me up*: *David* was in this a Type of Chriſt, that he was *zealous for God's Houſe*, Pſal. 132. 2, 3. what he did for it, was *with all his Might*; ſee 1 *Chron.* 29. 2. the latter part of that Verſe; *Pſal.* 69. 9. is applied to Chriſt, *Rom.* 15. 3. as the former part of it here. All the Graces that were to be found among the Old Teſtament Saints, were eminently in Chriſt, and particularly this of Zeal for the Houſe of God; and in them as they were Patterns to us, ſo they were Types of him. Obſerve, 1. Jeſus Chriſt was zealouſly affected to the Houſe of God, his Church, lov'd it, and was always jealous for its Honour and Welfare. 2. This Zeal did even *eat him up*; it made him *humble* himſelf, and *ſpend* himſelf, and *expoſe* himſelf. *My Zeal has conſumed me*, Pſal. 119. 139. Zeal for the Houſe of God forbids us to conſult our own Credit, Eaſe, and Safety, when they come in Competition with our Duty and Chriſt's Service; and ſometimes carries on our Souls in our Duty ſo far, and ſo faſt, that our Bodies cannot keep pace with them, and makes us as deaf as our Maſter was, to thoſe who ſuggeſt, *Spare thy ſelf*. The Grievances here redreſs'd might ſeem but ſmall, and ſuch as ſhould have been conniv'd at; but ſuch was Chriſt's Zeal, that he could not bear even *them* that *ſold and bought in the Temple*; *Si ibi ebrios inveniret, quid faceret Dominus?* ſaith St. *Auſtin*: If he had found Drunkards in the Temple, how much more would he have been diſpleaſed?

2. Chriſt having thus purged the Temple, gave a Sign to thoſe who demanded it, to prove his Authority for ſo doing. Obſerve here,

1. Their Demand of a Sign; *Then anſwered the* Jews, *i. e.* the Multitude of the People, with their Leaders. Being *Jews*, they ſhould rather have ſtood by him, and aſſiſted him to vindicate the Honour of their Temple; but inſtead of that, they objected againſt it. *Note*, They who apply themſelves in good earneſt to the Work of Reformation, muſt expect to meet with Oppoſition. And when they could object nothing againſt the thing itſelf, they queſtioned his Authority to do it; *What Sign ſheweſt thou unto us*, to prove thy ſelf authoriſed and commiſſioned to do theſe things? It was indeed a good Work to purge the Temple; but what had he to do to undertake it, who was in no Office there? They look'd upon it as an Act of Juriſdiction, and that he muſt prove himſelf *a Prophet, yea more than a Prophet*. But was not the Thing itſelf Sign enough? His Ability to drive ſo many from their Poſts without Oppoſition, was a Proof of his Authority; he that was armed with ſuch a Divine Power, ſure was armed with a Divine Commiſſion. *What ailed theſe* Buyers and Sellers, *that they fled? that they were driven back?* Surely it was *at the Preſence of the Lord*, Pſal. 114. 5, 7. no leſs a Preſence.

2. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Demand, *v.* 19. He did not immediately work a Miracle to convince them, but gives them a Sign in ſomething *to come*, the Truth of which muſt appear by the Event, according to *Deut.* 18.21.

Now, 1. The Sign that he gives them, is, his own *Death* and *Reſurrection*; He refers them to that which would be: (1.) His *laſt* Sign. If they would not be convinced by what they ſaw and heard, let them *wait*. (2.) The *great Sign* to prove him to be the Meſſiah; for concerning him, it was foretold that he ſhould be bruiſed, *Iſa.* 53. 5. *cut off*, Dan. 9.26. and yet that he ſhould not ſee Corruption, *Pſal.* 16. 10. Theſe Things were fulfilled in the Bleſſed Jeſus, and therefore, *Truly he was the Son of God*, and had Authority in the Temple, his Father's Houſe.

2. He foretels his Death and Reſurrection, not in plain Terms, as he often did to his Diſciples, but in figurative Expreſſions; as afterwards, when he gave this for a Sign, he call'd it the *Sign of the Prophet* Jonas; ſo here *Deſtroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raiſe it up.* Thus ſpake he to them who were willingly ignorant, in Parables, that *they might not perceive*, Mat. 13. 13. They that will not ſee, ſhall not ſee. Nay, this figurative Speech uſed here, proved ſuch a *ſtumbling Block* to them, that it was produced in Evidence againſt him at his Trial, to prove him a Blaſphemer, *Mat.* 26. 60,61. Had they humbly ask'd him the meaning of what he ſaid, he would have told them, and it had been a Savour of Life unto Life to them; but they were reſolved to cavil, and it prov'd a Savour of Death unto Death. They that would not be convinced, were hardened, and the manner of the Expreſſion of his Prediction, occaſioned the Accompliſhment of the Prediction itſelf.

(1.) He foretels his Death by the *Jews* Malice in theſe Words, *Deſtroy ye this Temple*, i. e. ye will deſtroy it, I know ye will, I will permit you to deſtroy it. *Note*, Chriſt, even at the Beginning of his Miniſtry, had a clear Foreſight of all his Sufferings at the end of it, and yet went on chearfully in it. 'Tis good at *ſetting out* to expect the *worſt*.

(2.) He foretels his Reſurrection by his own Power; in *three Days I will raiſe it up*. There were others that *were raiſed*, but Chriſt raiſed himſelf, reſumed his own Life.

Now he choſe to expreſs this by *deſtroying* and *re-edifying* the Temple, (1.) Becauſe he was now to juſtify himſelf in purging the Temple, which they had profan'd, *q. d.* you that defile one Temple, will deſtroy another, and I'll prove my Authority to *purge* what you have *defiled*, by *raiſing* what you will *deſtroy*. The profaning of the Temple is the deſtroying *of it*, and its Reformation its *Reſurrection*. (2.) Becauſe the Death of Chriſt was indeed the Deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* Temple, the procuring Cauſe of it; and his Reſurrection was the raiſing up of another Temple, the Goſpel Church, *Zech.* 6.12. the Ruins of their *Place* and Nation, *John* 11. 48. were the Riches of the World. See *Amos* 9. 11. *Acts* 15.16.

3. Their Cavil at this Anſwer, *ver.* 20. *Forty and ſix Years was this Temple in building.* Temple-work was always ſlow Work, and can'ſt thou make ſuch quick Work of it? Now here, (1.) They ſhew ſome *Knowledge*, they could tell how long the Temple was in Building. Dr. *Lightfoot* computes that it was juſt 46 Years from the founding of *Zerubbabel*'s Temple, in the ſecond Year of *Cyrus*, to the compleat Settlement of the Temple-Service, in the 32d Year of *Artaxerxes*; and alſo, that from *Herod*'s beginning to build this Temple, in the 18th Year of his Reign, to this very time, when the *Jews* ſaid this, was juſt 46 Years; Forty and Six Years ᾠκοδομήθη, *hath this Temple been built.* (2.) They ſhew more *Ignorance*, (1.) Of the *meaning of Chriſt's Words*. *Note*, Men oft run into groſs Miſtakes, by underſtanding that literally, which the Scripture ſpeaks figuratively; what abundance of Miſchief has been done, by interpreting, *This is my Body*, after a corporal and carnal manner! (2.) Of the *Almighty Power of Chriſt*, as if he could do no more than another Man. Had they known that this was he who *built all things* in ſix Days, they would not have made it ſuch an Abſurdity, that he ſhould build a Temple in three Days.

4. A Vindication of Chriſt's Anſwer from their Cavil. The Difficulty is ſoon ſolv'd by explaining the Terms; *He ſpake of the Temple of his Body*, v. 21. Tho' Chriſt had diſcovered a

great Reſpect for the Temple in *purging* it, yet he will have us know, that the Holineſs of it, which he was ſo jealous for, was but *typical*, and leads us to the Conſideration of another Temple, which that was but a ſhadow of, the Subſtance being Chriſt, *Heb.* 9.9. *Col.* 2.17. Some think when he ſaid, deſtroy *this* Temple, he pointed to his own Body, or laid his Hand upon it; however, 'tis certain he *ſpake of the Temple of his Body. Note*, The Body of Chriſt is the true Temple, of which that at *Jeruſalem* was a Type. (1.) Like the Temple, 'twas built by immediate Divine Direction, a Body haſt thou *prepared me*, 1 Chron. 28. 19. (2.) Like the Temple 'twas a *holy Houſe*, 'tis called *that holy thing*. (3.) 'Twas like the Temple, the Habitation of God's Glory; there the eternal Word dwelt, the true *Shechinah*. He is *Emanuel*, God with us. (4.) The Temple was the Place and *Medium* of Intercourſe between God and *Iſrael*; there God reveal'd himſelf to them, there they preſented themſelves and their Services to him. Thus by Chriſt God ſpeaks to us, and we ſpeak to him. Worſhippers look'd *towards* that Houſe, 1 *Kings* 8.30,35. So we muſt worſhip God with an Eye to Chriſt.

5. A Reflection which the Diſciples made upon this long after, inſerted here to illuſtrate the Story, *ver.* 22. *When he was riſen from the Dead*, ſome Years after, *his Diſciples remembred that he had ſaid this.* We found them, *ver.* 17. remembring what had been *written before of him*, and here remembring what they had *heard from him. Note*, The Memories of Chriſt's Diſciples ſhould be like the Treaſure of the good Houſholder, furniſhed with Things both *new*, and *old*, Matth. 13. 52. Now obſerve,

1. *When* they *remembred* that Saying; *when he was riſen from the Dead.* It ſeems they did not at this time fully underſtand Chriſt's Meaning, for they were as yet but Babes in Knowledge; but they laid it up in their Hearts, and afterwards it became both intelligible and uſeful. *Note*, It is good to *hear for the time to come*, Iſa. 42. 23. The Juniors in Years and Profeſſion ſhould treaſure up thoſe Truths, which at preſent they do not well underſtand either the meaning or uſe of, for they will be ſerviceable to them hereafter, when they come to greater Proficiency. 'Twas ſaid of the Scholars of *Pythagoras*, that his Precepts ſeem'd to freeze in them till they were 40 Years old, and then they began to thaw; ſo this Saying of Chriſt reviv'd in the Memories of his Diſciples, when *he was riſen from the Dead*: and why then? (1.) Becauſe *then* the Spirit was poured out to bring Things to their Remembrance, which Chriſt had ſaid to them, and to make them both *eaſy* and *ready* to them, *John* 14. 26. That very Day that Chriſt roſe from the Dead, he *opened their Underſtandings*, Luke 24.45. (2.) Becauſe then this Saying of Chriſt was fulfilled, when the Temple of his Body had been *deſtroy'd* and was *raiſ'd again*; and that upon the *third Day*, then they remembred this among other Words Chriſt had ſaid to this Purpoſe. *Note*, It contributes much to the Underſtanding of the Scripture, to obſerve the fulfilling of the Scripture. The Event will expound the Prophecy.

2. What Uſe they made of it; *They believed the Scripture, and the Word that Jeſus had ſaid*; i. e. their Belief of theſe was confirm'd and receiv'd freſh Support and Vigour. They were ſlow of Heart to believe, *Luke* 24.25. but they were *ſure*. The *Scripture*, and the *Word of Chriſt*, are here put together, not becauſe they concur and exactly agree together, but becauſe they mutually illuſtrate and ſtrengthen each other. When the Diſciples ſaw both what they had read in the Old Teſtament, and what they had heard from Chriſt's own Mouth, fulfill'd in his Death and Reſurrection, they were the more confirm'd in their Belief of both.

23 ¶ Now when he was at Jeruſalem at the paſſover, in the feaſt-*day*, many believed in his name, when they ſaw the miracles which he did. 24 But Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them, becauſe he knew all men. 25 And needed not that any ſhould teſtify of man: for he knew what was in man.

We have here an Account of the Succeſs, the poor Succeſs of Chriſt's Preaching and Miracles at *Jeruſalem*, while he kept the Paſſover there. Obſerve,

1. That our Lord Jeſus, when he was at *Jeruſalem*, at the Paſſover, did preach and work Miracles. Peoples *believing on him*, implied that he preach'd, and 'tis expreſly ſaid, they *ſaw the Miracles he did* He was now in *Jeruſalem*, the holy City; whence the *Word of the Lord* was to *go forth*; his Reſidence was moſtly in *Galilee*, and therefore when he was in *Jeruſalem*, he was very buſy. The Time was holy Time, *the Feaſt-Day*, time appointed for the Service of God; at the Paſſover the *Levites taught the good Knowledge of the Lord*, 2 Chron. 30. 22. and Chriſt took that Opportutunity of preaching, when the Concourſe of People was great, and thus he would own and honour the Divine Inſtitution of the Paſſover.

2. That hereby many were brought to *believe in his Name*, to acknowledge him *a Teacher come from God*, as *Nicodemus* did, *ch.*3.2. a great Prophet; and probably ſome of thoſe who *look'd for Redemption in* Jeruſalem, believ'd him to be the *Meſſiah* promiſed, ſo ready were they to welcome the firſt Appearance of that *bright and Morning Star.*

3. That yet *Jeſus did not commit himſelf unto them*, v. 24. ȣ̓κ ἐπίϛευεν ἑαυτὸν ἀυτοῖς. He did not *truſt* himſelf with them. 'Tis the ſame Word that is uſed for *believing* in him. So that to believe in Chriſt, is to *commit ourſelves to him*, and to his Conduct. Chriſt did not ſee Cauſe to repoſe any Confidence in theſe new Converts at *Jeruſalem*, where he had many Enemies, that ſought to deſtroy him; either, (1.) Becauſe they were *falſe*, at leaſt ſome of them, and would betray him if they had an Oppotunity, or were ſtrongly tempted to it. He had more Diſciples that he could truſt among the *Galileans*, than among the Dwellers at *Jeruſalem.* In dangerous Times and Places, 'tis Wiſdom to take heed who you confide in, μέμνησο ἀπιϛεῖν, *Learn to diſtruſt.* Or, (2.) Becauſe they were *weak*, and I would hope that this was the worſt of it; not that they were *treacherous*, and deſigned him a Miſchief: But, (1.) They were *timorous* and wanted Zeal and Courage, and might perhaps be frightened to do an ill Thing. In times of Difficulty and Danger, Cowards are not fit be truſted. Or, (2.) They were *tumultuous*, and wanted Diſcretion and Conduct. Theſe in *Jeruſalem* perhaps had their Expectations more raiſ'd than others, of the *temporal* Reign of the *Meſſiah*, and in that Expectation would be ready to give ſome bold Strokes at the Government, if Chriſt would have *committed himſelf to them*, and put himſelf at the Head of them; but he would not, for his Kingdom is not of this World. We ſhould be ſhy of turbulent unquiet People, as our Maſter here was, tho' they profeſs to *believe in Chriſt* as theſe did.

4. That the Reaſon why he did not *commit himſelf* to them, was, becauſe he *knew* them, *v.* 25. knew the Wickedneſs of ſome, and the Weakneſs of others. The Evangeliſt takes this Occaſion to aſſert Chriſt's Omniſcience.

1. He *knew all Men*, not only their Names and Faces, as it is poſſible for us to know many; but their Nature, Diſpoſitions, Affections, Deſigns, ſo as we do not know *any Man*, ſcarce *ourſelves.* He knows *all Men*, for his powerful Hand made them all, his piercing Eye ſees them all, ſees into them. He knows his *ſubtle Enemies* and all their ſecret Projects; his *falſe Friends*, and their true Characters; what they really are, whatever they pretend to be. He knows them that are truly his, knows their Integrity, and knows their Infirmity too. He *knows their Frame.*

2. He *needed not that any ſhould teſtify of Man.* His Knowledge was not by Information from others, but by his own infallible Intuition. 'Tis the Infelicity of earthly Princes, that they muſt ſee with other Mens Eyes, and hear with other Mens Ears, and take Things as they are repreſented to them; but Chriſt goes purely upon his own Knowledge. Angels are his Meſſengers, but not his Spies, for *his own Eyes run to and fro through the Earth*, 2 Chron. 16.9. This may comfort us in reference to Satan's Accuſations, that Chriſt will not take Mens Characters from him.

3. He *knew what was in Man*; in particular Perſons, in the Nature and Race of Man. We know what is done *by Men*, Chriſt knows what is *in them*, *tries the Heart and* the *Reins.* This is the Prerogative of that eſſential eternal Word, *Heb.* 4. 12, 13. we invade his Prerogative, if we preſume to judge Mens Hearts. How fit is Chriſt to be the *Saviour of Men*, very fit to be the Phyſician, who hath ſuch a perfect Knowledge of the Patient's State and Caſe, Temper, and Diſtemper; knows what's in him. How fit alſo to be the *Judge of all*, for the Judgment of him who knows *all Men*, all in Men, muſt needs be *according to Truth.*

Now this is all the Succeſs of Chriſt's Preaching and Miracles at *Jeruſalem*, in this Journey. The Lord comes to his Temple, and none come to him, but a Parcel of weak, ſimple People, that he can neither have *Credit* from, nor put *Confidence* in; yet he ſhall at length *ſee of the Travel of his Soul.*

CHAP. III.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) Chriſt's Diſcourſe with Nicodemus, *a* Phariſee, *concerning the great Myſteries of the Goſpel, which he here privately lets him into,* v. 1 —— 21. (2.) John Baptiſt's *Diſcourſe with his Diſciples concerning Chriſt, upon Occaſion of his coming into the Neighbourhood where he was,* v. 22 —— 36. *in which he fairly and faithfully reſigns all his Honour and Intereſt to him.*

1 THere was a man of the Phariſees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The ſame came to Jeſus by night, and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do theſe miracles that thou doſt, except God be with him. 3 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Verily verily I ſay unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus ſaith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the ſecond time into his mother's womb and be born? 5 Jeſus anſwered, Verily verily I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born

of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh: and that which is born of the ſpirit, is ſpirit. 7 Marvel not that I ſaid unto thee, Ye muſt be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit. 9 Nicodemus anſwered and ſaid unto him, How can theſe things be? 10 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Art thou a maſter of Iſrael, and knoweſt not theſe things? 11 Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, we ſpeak that we do know, and teſtify that we have ſeen; and ye receive not our witneſs. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believed not, how ſhall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13 And no man hath aſcended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven. 14 ¶ And as Moſes lifted up the ſerpent in the wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal life. 16 ¶ For God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life. 17 For God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world: but that the world thro' him might be ſaved. 18 ¶ He that believeth on him, is not condemned: but he that believeth not, is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved. 21 But he that doeth truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God.

We found in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, that few were brought to Chriſt at *Jeruſalem*; yet here was *one*, a conſiderable one; 'tis worth while to go a great way for the Salvation, tho' but of *one Soul*. Obſerve,

1. Who this *Nicodemus* was. Not many mighty and noble are called, yet ſome are, and here was one. *Not many of the Rulers, or of the Phariſees*; yet, (1.) This was a *Man of the Phariſees*, bred to Learning, a Scholar; let it not be ſaid, that all Chriſt's Followers are *unlearned and ignorant Men*. The Principles of the Phariſees, and the Peculiarities of their Sect, were directly contrary to the Spirit of Chriſtianity, yet there were ſome, in whom even thoſe high Thoughts were caſt down, and brought into Obedience to Chriſt. The Grace of Chriſt is able to ſubdue the greateſt Oppoſition. (2.) He was a *Ruler of the Jews*, a Member of the great *Sanhedrin*, a Senator, a Privy-Counſellor, a Man of Authority in *Jeruſalem*. As bad as Things were, there were ſome Rulers *well inclin'd*, who yet could do little Good, becauſe the Stream was ſo ſtrong againſt them; they were over-rul'd by the Majority, and yoak'd with thoſe that were corrupt, ſo that the Good which they would do, they could not do it; yet *Nicodemus* continued in his Place, and did what he could, when he could not do what he would.

2. His ſolemn Addreſs to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *v.* 2. See here,

1. When he came; *He came to Jeſus by Night*. Obſerve,

1. He made a private and particular Addreſs to Chriſt, and did not think it enough to hear his publick Diſcourſes. He reſolved to talk with him by himſelf, where he might be free with him. Perſonal Converſe with ſkilful faithful Miniſters, about the Affairs of our Souls, would be of great uſe to us, *Mal.* 2.7.

2. He made this Addreſs *by Night*, which may be conſider'd either, (1.) As an Act of *Prudence* and *Diſcretion*. Chriſt was engaged all Day in *publick* Work, and he would not interrupt him then, nor expect his Attendance then; but obſerved *Chriſt's Hour*, and waited on him when he was *at Leiſure*. *Note*, Private Advantages to ourſelves, and our own Families, muſt give way to thoſe that are publick, and of more general Uſe. The greater Good muſt be preferred before the leſs. Chriſt had many Enemies, and therefore *Nicodemus* came *incognito* to him, leſt, if the Chief Prieſts had known it, they ſhould have been the more enraged againſt Chriſt. (2.) As an Act of *Zeal* and *Forwardneſs*. *Nicodemus* was a Man of Buſineſs, and could not ſpare Time all Day to make Chriſt a Viſit, and therefore he would rather take Time from the Diverſions of the *Evening*, or the reſt of the *Night*, than not converſe with Chriſt. When others were Sleeping, he was getting Knowledge, as *David* by Meditation, *Pſal.* 63. 6. and 119. 148. Probably 'twas the very next Night after he ſaw Chriſt's Miracles, and he would not ſlip the firſt Opportunity of purſuing his Convictions. He knew not how ſoon Chriſt might leave the Town, nor what might happen betwixt that and another Feaſt, and therefore would loſe no Time. In the Night his Converſe with Chriſt would be more free, and leſs liable to Diſturbance. Theſe were *Noctes Chriſtianæ*, much more inſtructive than the *Noctes Atticæ*. Or, (3.) As an Act of *Fear* and *Cowardice*: He was afraid or aſham'd to be *ſeen* with Chriſt, and therefore came *in the Night*. When Religion is out of *Faſhion*, there are many *Nicodemites*, eſpecially among the Rulers, who have a better Affection to Chriſt and his Religion, than they would be known to have. But Obſerve, (1.) Tho' he came by Night, Chriſt bid him welcome, accepted his Integrity, and pardoned his Infirmity; conſidered his *Temper*, which perhaps was *timorous*, and the *Temptation* he was in from his Place and Office; and hereby taught his Miniſters to become all Things to all Men, and to encourage good Beginnings, tho' they are weak. Paul *preached privately to them of Reputation*, Gal.2. 2. (2.) Tho' now he came *by Night*, yet afterwards, when there was occaſion, he own'd Chriſt *publickly*, John 7.50. and 19. 39. The Grace which at firſt is but a Grain of Muſtard-Seed, may grow to be a great Tree.

2. What he ſaid. He did not come to talk with Chriſt about Politicks and State Affairs, tho' he was a Ruler, but about the Concern of his own Soul, and its Salvation, and without Circumlocutions comes preſently to the Buſineſs; he calls Chriſt *Rabbi*, which ſignifies a *great Man*; ſee *Iſa.* 19. 20. *He ſhall ſend them a Saviour and a great one*; *a Saviour and a Rabbi*, ſo the Word is. There is Hopes of thoſe who have a reſpect for Chriſt, and think and ſpeak honourably of him. He tells Chriſt how far *he had attained*; *we know that thou art a Teacher*. Obſerve,

1. His *Aſſertion* concerning Chriſt: *Thou art a Teacher come from God*; not educated or ordained by Men, as other Teachers, but ſupported with Divine Inſpiration, and Divine Authority. He that was to be Sovereign Ruler, came firſt to be a *Teacher*, for he would rule with Reaſon, not with Rigor; by the Power of Truth, not of the Sword. The World lay in Ignorance and Miſtake; the *Jewiſh* Teachers were corrupt, and cauſed them to err; *it's time for the Lord to work*: He came a *Teacher from God*, from God as the *Father of Mercies*, in pity to a dark deceived World; from God as the *Father of Lights*, and *Fountain of Truth*; all that Light and Truth which we may venture our Souls upon.

2. His *Aſſurance of it*; *We know*, not only I, but *others*; ſo he took it for granted, the Thing being ſo plain and ſelf-evident. Perhaps he knew that there were divers of the Phariſees and Rulers with whom he convers'd, that were under the ſame Convictions, but had not the Grace to own it. Or, we may ſuppoſe he ſpeaks in the Plural Number, *we know*, becauſe he brought with him one or more of his Friends and Pupils, to receive Inſtructions from Chriſt, knowing them to be of common Concern. Maſter, (ſaith he) we come with a deſire to be taught, to be thy Scholars, for we are fully ſatisfied thou art a Divine Teacher.

3. The Ground of this Aſſurance; *No Man can do theſe Miracles that thou doſt, except God be with him*. Here, 1. We are aſſured of the Truth of Chriſt's Miracles, and that they were not counterfeit. Here was *Nicodemus*, a judicious, ſenſible, inquiſitive Man, one that had all the *Reaſon* and *Opportunity* imaginable to examine them, was ſo fully ſatisfied they were real Miracles, that he was wrought upon by them, to go contrary to his Intereſt, and the Stream of thoſe of his own Rank, who were prejudic'd againſt Chriſt.

2. We are directed what Inference to draw from Chriſt's Miracles; therefore we are to receive him as a *Teacher come from God*: His Miracles were his Credentials. The Courſe of Nature could not be altered but by the Power of the God of Nature, who we are ſure is the God of Truth and Goodneſs, and would never ſet his Seal to a Lye, or a Cheat.

3. The Diſcourſe between Chriſt and *Nicodemus* hereupon, or rather the Sermon Chriſt preach'd to him; the Contents of it, and that perhaps an Abſtract of Chriſt's publick Preaching: ſee *v.* 11,12.

Four Things our Saviour here diſcourſeth of.

Firſt, Concerning the *Neceſſity and Nature of Regeneration*, and the *New-Birth*, v. 3——8.

Now we muſt conſider this, (1.) As *pertinently anſwered* to *Nicodemus*'s Addreſs: Jeſus *anſwered*, v. 3. This Anſwer was either, 1. A *Rebuke* of what he ſaw *defective* in the Addreſs of *Nicodemus*. It was not enough for him to admire Chriſt's Miracles, and acknowledge his Miſſion, but he muſt be *born again*. 'Tis plain he expected the *Kingdom of Heaven*, i. e. the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* now ſhortly to appear; is betimes aware of the Dawning of that Day, and according to the common Notion of the *Jews*, he expects it to appear in external Pomp and Power; doubts not but this *Jeſus* who works theſe Miracles, is either the Meſſiah, or his Prophet; and therefore makes his Court to him, compliments him, and ſo hopes to ſecure a Share to himſelf of the Advantages of that Kingdom. But Chriſt tells him he can have no Benefit by that *change of the State,* unleſs there be a *change of the Spirit,* of the Principles and Diſpoſitions, equivalent to a new Birth. *Nicodemus* came *by Night,* but this will not do, ſaith Chriſt: His Religion muſt be own'd before Men; ſo Dr. *Hammond.* Or, 2. A *Reply* to what he ſaw *deſign'd* in his Addreſs. When *Nicodemus* own'd Chriſt a *Teacher come from God,* one intruſted with an extraordinary Revelation from Heaven, he plainly intimated a Deſire to know what it was, and a Readineſs to receive it, and Chriſt gives it him. (2.) We may conſider this as *poſitively* and *vehemently* aſſerted by our Lord Jeſus; *Verily, Verily, I ſay unto thee, I the Amen, the Amen ſay it,* ſo it may be read: I the faithful and true Witneſs. The Matter is ſettled irreverſibly, That *except a Man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God:* I ſay it *to thee,* tho' a Phariſee, tho' a Maſter in *Iſrael.* Obſerve,

1. What it is that is requir'd; to be *born again:* that is, (1.) We muſt *live a new Life.* Birth is the beginning of Life; to be *born again,* is to begin anew, as thoſe that have hitherto liv'd either much amiſs, or to little Purpoſe. We muſt not think to patch up the old Building, but begin from the Foundation. (2.) We muſt *have a new Nature,* new Principles, new Affections, new Aims. We muſt be born *ἄνωθεν,* which ſignifies both *denuo,* and *deſuper.* (1.) We muſt be born *anew,* ſo the Word is taken, *Gal.* 4. 9. and *ab initio,* Luke 1. 3. By our *firſt Birth* we were corrupt, ſhapen in Sin and Iniquity, we muſt therefore undergo a ſecond Birth; our Souls muſt be *faſhion'd* and *enliven'd* anew. (2.) We muſt be born *from above,* ſo the Word is uſed by the Evangeliſt, *Chap.* 3. 31. and 19. 11. and I take it to be eſpecially intended here, not excluding the other; for to be born *from above,* ſuppoſeth being *born again.* But this new Birth hath its riſe *from* Heaven, *Chap.* 1. 13. and its Tendency *to* Heaven: 'Tis to be born to a *divine* and *heavenly* Life, a Life of Communion with God and the upper World, and in order to this, 'tis to partake of a *divine Nature,* and bear the *Image of the heavenly.*

2. The Indiſpenſible Neceſſity of this; except *a Man* (any one that partakes of the human Nature, and conſequently of the Corruptions of that, except he) *be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God:* The Kingdom of the Meſſiah begun in *Grace,* and perfected in *Glory.* Except we be *born from above,* we cannot *ſee* this. That is, (1.) We cannot *underſtand* the *Nature* of it. Such is the Nature of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, (in which *Nicodemus* deſired to be inſtructed) that the Soul muſt be new modell'd and molded; the natural Man muſt become a ſpiritual Man, before he is capable of receiving and underſtanding them, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. (2.) We cannot *receive the Comfort* of it; cannot expect any Benefit by Chriſt and his Goſpel, not have any part or lot in the Matter. *Note,* Regeneration is abſolutely neceſſary to our Happineſs here and hereafter. Conſidering what we are by Nature, how corrupt and ſinful; what *God* is, in whom alone we can be happy, and what *Heaven* is, to which the Perfection of our Happineſs is reſerv'd, it will appear in the Nature of the Thing that we muſt be *born again;* becauſe 'tis impoſſible we ſhould be *happy,* if we be not *Holy;* ſee 2 *Cor.* 6. 11, 12.

This great Truth, of the Neceſſity of Regeneration, being thus ſolemnly laid down;

1. It is objected againſt by *Nicodemus,* v. 4. how *can a Man be born when he is old;* old as I am; *γέρων ὢν,* being an old Man, *Can he enter the ſecond Time into his Mother's Womb and be born?* Herein appears, 1. His Weakneſs in Knowledge; what Chriſt ſpoke ſpiritually, he ſeems to have underſtood after a corporal and carnal Manner; as if there were no other way of regenerating and new molding an immortal Soul, but by new framing the Body, and bringing that back to the *Rock out of which it was hewn;* as if there were ſuch a connexion between the Soul and the Body, that there could be no faſhioning the *Heart anew,* but by forming the *Bones anew. Nicodemus,* as the other *Jews,* valued himſelf, no doubt, very much by his *firſt Birth,* and the Dignities and Privileges of that; the *Place* of it, the holy Land, perhaps the holy City; his *Parentage,* ſuch as that which *Paul* could have glory'd in, *Phil.* 3. 5. And therefore 'tis a great ſurprize to him to hear of being *born again:* Could he be better bred and born, than bred and born an *Iſraelite?* Or by any other Birth ſtand fairer for a Room in the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah?* Indeed they look'd upon a proſelyted *Gentile* to be as one *born again,* or *born anew,* but could not imagine how a *Jew,* a *Phariſee,* could ever *better himſelf* by being *born again;* he therefore thinks if he muſt be *born again,* it muſt be of *her* that *bare him firſt.* They that are proud of their *firſt Birth,* are hardly brought to a *new Birth.* 2. His Willingneſs to be taught. He doth not turn his back upon Chriſt, becauſe of this hard Saying, but ingenuouſly acknowledges his Ignorance, which implies a Deſire to be better inform'd; and ſo I take this, rather than that he had ſuch groſs Notions of the new Birth Chriſt ſpoke of. Lord, make me to underſtand this, for it is a Riddle to me; I am ſuch a Fool, as to know no other Way for a Man to be born, but of his Mother. When we meet with that in the Things of God, which is *dark,* and *hard to be underſtood,* we muſt with Humility and Induſtry continue our Attendance upon the Means of Knowledge, till God *ſhall reveal even that unto us.*

2. It is opened and further explained by our Lord Jeſus, *v.* 5, 6, 7, 8. From the Objection, he takes occaſion,

1. To repeat and confirm what he had ſaid, *v.* 5. *Verily, Verily, I ſay unto thee,* the very ſame that I ſaid before. *Note,* The Word of Chriſt is not Yea and Nay, but Yea and Amen; what he hath ſaid he will abide by, whoever ſaith againſt it; nor will he retract any of his Sayings for the Ignorance and Miſtakes of Men. Tho' *Nicodemus* underſtood not the Myſtery of Regeneration, yet Chriſt aſſerts the Neceſſity of it as poſitively as before. *Note,* 'Tis Folly to think of evading the Obligation of Evangelical Precepts, by pleading that they are unintelligible. *Rom.* 3. 3, 4.

2. To expound and clear what he had ſaid concerning Regeneration; for the Explication of which, he further ſhews,

1. The *Author* of this bleſſed Change, and who it is that works it. To be born again, is to be *born of the Spirit,* v. 5, 6, 8. 'Tis not wrought by any Wiſdom or Power of our own, but by the Power and Influence of the bleſſed Spirit of Grace: 'Tis the *Sanctification of the Spirit,* 1 Pet. 1. 2. and *renewing of the Holy Ghoſt,* Tit. 3. 5. The Word he works by, is his Inſpiration; and the Heart to be wrought on, he has acceſs to.

2. The *Nature* of this Change, and what that is which is wrought; it is *Spirit,* v. 6. Thoſe that are regenerated are made *Spiritual,* and refined from the Droſs and Dregs of Senſuality. The Dictates and Intereſts of the Rational and Immortal Soul have retrieved the Dominion they ought to have over the Fleſh. The Phariſees placed their Religion in external Purity, and external Performances; and it would be a mighty Change indeed with them, no leſs than a new Birth, to become *Spiritual.*

3. The *Neceſſity* of this Change.

(1.) Chriſt here ſhews that it is neceſſary in the *Nature of the Thing,* for we are not fit to enter into the Kingdom of God till we are born again; *v.* 6. *That which is born of the Fleſh, is Fleſh.* Here's our Malady, and the Cauſes of it, which are ſuch as ſpeak plain, that there's no Remedy but we muſt be *born again.*

(1.) We are here told *what we are;* we are *Fleſh,* not only Corporeal, but *Corrupt,* Gen. 6. 3. The Soul is ſtill a Spiritual Subſtance, but ſo wedded to the Fleſh, ſo captivated by the Will of the Fleſh, ſo in love with the Delights of the Fleſh, ſo employ'd in making Proviſion for the Fleſh, that it is juſtly called *Fleſh;* 'tis carnal. And what Communion can there be between God who is a *Spirit,* and a Soul in this Condition?

(2.) How we *came to be ſo;* by being *born of the Fleſh:* It is a Corruption that is bred *in the Bone* with us; and therefore we cannot have a new Nature but we muſt be *born again.* The corrupt Nature which is *Fleſh,* takes Riſe from our *firſt Birth;* and therefore the new Nature which is *Spirit,* muſt take Riſe from a ſecond Birth. *Nicodemus* ſpoke of entring again into his Mother's Womb and being born; but if he could do ſo, to what Purpoſe? If he were born of his Mother a hundred Times, that would not mend the Matter, for ſtill that *which is born of the Fleſh, is Fleſh;* a clean Thing cannot be brought out of an unclean: He muſt ſeek for another Original, muſt be born of the Spirit, or he cannot become Spiritual. The Caſe is in ſhort this; Man, tho' made to conſiſt of Body and Soul, yet his Spiritual Part had then ſo much the Dominion over his Corporeal Part, that he was denominated a *Living Soul,* Gen. 2. 7. but by indulging the Appetite of the Fleſh in eating the forbidden Fruit, he proſtituted the juſt Dominion of the Soul to the Tyranny of ſenſual Luſt, and became no longer a *Living Soul,* but Fleſh; *Duſt thou art:* The living Soul became dead and unactive; thus in *the Day* he ſinn'd he *ſurely died,* and ſadly he became *Earthly.* In this degenerate State he begat a Son *in his own Likeneſs,* he tranſmitted the human Nature, which had been intirely depoſited in his Hands, thus corrupted and deprav'd; and in the ſame plight it is ſtill propagated. Corruption and Sin are woven into our Nature; we are *ſhapen in Iniquity,* which makes it neceſſary that the Nature be changed. It is not enough to put on a new Coat, or a new Face, but we muſt put on the *new Man,* we muſt be *new Creatures.*

(2.) Chriſt makes it further neceſſary by his own Word, *v.* 7. *Marvel not that I ſaid unto thee, ye muſt be born again.* (1.) Chriſt hath ſaid it, and as he himſelf never did nor ever will unſay it, ſo all the World cannot gainſay it, that we *muſt be born* again. He who is the great *Law-giver,* whoſe Will is a Law; he who is the great *Mediator* of the New Covenant, and has full Power to ſettle the Terms of our Reconciliation to God, and Happineſs in him; he who is the great *Phyſician* of Souls, knows their Caſe, and what is neceſſary to their Cure; he hath ſaid *ye muſt be born again.* I ſaid unto *thee* that which all are concerned in, *ye* muſt, ye all, one as well as another, *ye muſt be born again:* Not only the common People, but the Rulers, the *Maſters in* Iſrael. (2.) We are not to *marvel* at it; for when we conſider the Holineſs of the God with whom we have to do, the great deſign of our Redemption, the Pravity of our Nature, and the Conſtitution of the Happineſs ſet before us, we ſhall not think it ſtrange that ſo much ſtreſs is laid upon this, as the one Thing needful, that *we muſt be born again.*

4. This Change is illuſtrated by Two Compariſons.

1. The regenerating Work of the Spirit is compared to *Water,* v. 5. To be born again is to be *born of Water,* and of the Spirit, *i. e.* of the Spirit working like Water, as *Mat.* 3. 11. *with the*

Holy Ghoſt and with Fire, means, with the Holy Ghoſt *as* with Fire.

1. That which is primarily intended here, is to ſhew that the Spirit in ſanctifying a Soul, (1.) *Cleanſeth* and purifieth it as Water; takes away its Filth, by which 'twas unfit for the Kingdom of God. 'Tis the *waſhing of Regeneration*, Tit. 3. 5. *Ye are waſhed*, 1 Cor. 6.11. ſee *Ezek.* 36. 25. (2.) *Cools* and refreſheth it, as Water doth the hunted Hart, and the weary Traveller. The Spirit is compared to Water, *Iſa.* 44. 3. *John* 7.38,39. In the firſt Creation the Fruits of Heaven were *born of Water*, Gen. 1.20. in alluſion to which, perhaps they that are born from above, are born of Water.

2. 'Tis probable Chriſt had an Eye to the Ordinance of Baptiſm, which *John* had uſed, and he himſelf had begun to uſe. You muſt be born again of the Spirit, which Regeneration by the Spirit ſhould be ſignified by waſhing with Water, as the viſible Sign of that ſpiritual Grace: Not that all they, and they only, that are baptized are ſaved; but without that new Birth which is wrought by the Spirit, and ſignified by Baptiſm, none ſhall be look'd upon as the *protected, privileg'd* Subjects of the *Kingdom of Heaven*. The *Jews* cannot partake of the Benefits of the Meſſiah's Kingdom they had ſo long look'd for, unleſs they quit all Expectations of being juſtified by the Works of the Laws, and ſubmit to the *Baptiſm of Repentance*, the great Goſpel Duty, *for the Remiſſion of Sins*, the great Goſpel Privilege.

2. It is compar'd to Wind, *v.* 8. *The Wind blows where it liſteth—ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.* The ſame Word (πνεῦμα) ſignifies both the Wind and the Spirit. The Spirit came upon the Apoſtles in a *ruſhing mighty Wind*, Acts 2. 2. His *ſtrong* Influences on the Hearts of Sinners are compared to the *breathing of the Wind*, Ezek. 37. 9. and his *ſweet* Influences on the Souls of Saints, to the North and South Wind, *Cant.* 4.16. This Compariſon is here uſed, to ſhew,

1. That the Spirit in Regeneration works *Arbitrarily*, and as a free Agent. The *Wind blows where it liſteth* for us, and doth not attend our Order, nor is ſubject to our Command; God *directs* it, it *fulfils his Word*, Pſal. 148.8. The Spirit diſpenſeth his Influences where, and when, on whom, and in what Meaſure and Degree he pleaſeth; *dividing to every Man ſeverally as he will*, 1 Cor. 12.11.

2. That he works *Powerfully*, and with evident Effects: *Thou heareſt the Sound thereof*; tho' its Cauſes are hidden, its Effects are manifeſt. When the Soul is brought to mourn for Sin, to groan under the Burthen of Corruption, to breathe after Chriſt, to cry Abba, Father, then we *hear the Sound of the Spirit*; we find he is at work, as *Acts* 9. 11. *Behold he prays.*

3. That he works *Myſteriouſly*, and in ſecret hidden Ways; *Thou canſt not tell whence it comes, or whither it goes.* How it gathers, and how it ſpends its Strength, is a Riddle to us; ſo the Manner and Methods of the Spirit's working, is a Myſtery: *Which Way went the Spirit?* 1 King. 22.24. See *Eccl.* 11.5. and compare it with *Pſal.* 139.14.

Secondly, Here's a Diſcourſe concerning the *Certainty, and Sublimity of Goſpel Truths*, which Chriſt takes occaſion for, from the Weakneſs of *Nicodemus*.

Here's, 1. The Objection which *Nicodemus* ſtill made, *v.* 9. *How can theſe Things be?* Chriſt's Explication of the Doctrine of the Neceſſity of Regeneration, it ſhould ſeem, made it never the clearer to him. The Corruption of Nature, which makes it *neceſſary*, and the Way of the Spirit which makes it *practicable*, are as much Myſteries to him as the Thing itſelf: Tho' he had in general owned Chriſt a Divine Teacher, yet he was unwilling to receive his Teachings when they did not agree with the Notions he had imbibed. Thus many profeſs to admit the Doctrine of Chriſt in general, and yet will neither believe the Truths of Chriſtianity, nor ſubmit to the Laws of it further than *they pleaſe*: Chriſt ſhall be their Teacher, provided they may chuſe their Leſſon. Now here,

(1.) *Nicodemus* owns himſelf ignorant of Chriſt's meaning after all; *How can theſe Things be?* They are Things I do not underſtand, my Capacity will not reach them: Thus the *Things of the Spirit of God* are *Fooliſhneſs to the natural Man.* He is not only eſtranged from them, and therefore they are dark to him, but prejudic'd againſt them, and therefore they are Fooliſhneſs to him.

(2.) Becauſe this Doctrine was *unintelligible* to him, (ſo he was pleas'd to make it) he queſtions the Truth of it; as if becauſe it was a *Paradox* to him, 'twas a *Chimera* in itſelf. Many have ſuch an Opinion of their own Capacity, as to think that cannot be *prov'd* which they cannot *believe*; by *Wiſdom* they *knew not* Chriſt.

2. The Reproof which Chriſt gave him for his Dulneſs and Ignorance; *Art thou a Maſter in* Iſrael; Διδάσκαλος, a Teacher, a Tutor, one that ſits in *Moſes*'s Chair, and yet not only unacquainted with the Doctrine of Regeneration, but uncapable of underſtanding it? This Word is a Reproof, (1.) To thoſe that undertake to teach others, and yet are ignorant and unſkilful in the Word of Righteouſneſs themſelves. (2.) To thoſe that ſpend their Times in learning and teaching Notions and Ceremonies in Religion, Niceties and Criticiſms in the Scripture, and neglect that which is practical, and tends to reform the Heart and Life. Two Words in the Reproof are very emphatical. (1.) The Place where his Lot was caſt; in *Iſrael*, where there was ſuch great Plenty of the Means of Knowledge, where Divine Revelation was. He might have learned this out of the Old Teſtament. (2.) The Things he was thus ignorant in; *theſe* Things, theſe *neceſſary* Things, theſe *great* Things, theſe *divine* Things; had he never read, *Pſal.* 50.5,10. *Ezek.*18.13. and 36.25,26.

3. Chriſt's Diſcourſe hereupon, of the certainty and ſublimity of Goſpel Truths, *v.* 11,12,13. To ſhew the Folly of thoſe who make ſtrange of theſe things, and to recommend them to our ſearch. Obſerve here,

1. That the Truths Chriſt taught were very *certain*, and what we may venture upon, *v.* 11. *We ſpeak that we do know*; *We*, whom doth he mean beſides himſelf? Some underſtand it of thoſe that bore Witneſs of him, and with him on Earth; the Prophets and *John Baptiſt*, they ſpoke what they knew, and had ſeen and were themſelves abundantly ſatisfied in: Divine Revelation carries its own Proof along with it. Others of thoſe that bore Witneſs from Heaven, the Father and the Holy Ghoſt; the Father was with him, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; therefore he ſpeaks in the plural Number, as *Joh.* 14.23. *We will come unto him.* Obſerve, (1.) That the Truths of Chriſt are of undoubted Certainty. We have all the Reaſon in the World to be aſſured, that the Sayings of Chriſt are *faithful Sayings*, and ſuch as we may venture our Souls upon; for he is not only a *credible* Witneſs, who would not go about to deceive us, but a *competent* Witneſs, who could not himſelf be deceived: *We teſtify that we have ſeen.* He ſpoke not upon Hearſay, but upon the cleareſt Evidence, and therefore with the greateſt Aſſurance. What he ſpoke of God, of the inviſible World, of Heaven and Hell, and of the Divine Will concerning us, and the Counſels of Peace, was what he *knew*, and *had ſeen*, for he was *by him as one brought up with him*, Prov. 8.30. Whatever Chriſt ſpoke, he ſpoke *of his own Knowledge.* (2.) That the Unbelief of Sinners is greatly aggravated by the infallible Certainty of the Truths of Chriſt. The Things are thus ſure, thus clear, and yet, *ye receive not our Witneſs.* Multitudes to be *Unbelievers* of that which yet, (ſo cogent are the Motives of Credibility) they cannot *disbelieve*.

2. The Truths Chriſt taught, tho' communicated in Language and Expreſſions borrow'd from common and earthly Things, yet in their own Nature were moſt ſublime and heavenly; this is intimated, *v.* 12. *If I had told them earthly Things*, i. e. have told them the great Things of God in ſimilitudes taken from earthly Things, to make them the more eaſy and intelligible, as that of the *new Birth*, and the *Wind*: If I have thus accommodated myſelf to your Capacities, and liſp'd to you in your own Language, and cannot make you to underſtand my Doctrine, *what would you do*, if I ſhould accommodate myſelf to the Nature of the Things, and ſpeak with the Tongue of Angels, that Language which Mortals cannot utter; if ſuch *familiar Expreſſions* be ſtumbling Blocks, what would *abſtract Ideas* be, and ſpiritual Things painted proper? Now we may learn hence, (1.) To admire the height and depth of the Doctrine of Chriſt; 'tis a great Myſtery of Godlineſs. The Things of the Goſpel are heavenly things, out of the Road of the Enquiries of human Reaſon, and much more out of the reach of its Diſcoveries. (2.) To acknowledge with thankfulneſs the Condeſcenſion of Chriſt, that he is pleas'd to ſuit the Manner of the Goſpel Revelation to our Capacities; to *ſpeak to us as to Children.* He conſiders our *Frame*, that we are of the Earth, and our *Place*, that we are *on* the Earth, and therefore ſpeaks to us earthly Things, and makes Things ſenſible the Vehicle of Things ſpiritual, to make them the more eaſy and familiar to us: Thus he has done both in Parables, and in Sacraments. (3.) To lament the Corruption of our Nature, and our great unaptneſs to receive and entertain the Truths of Chriſt. *Earthly* Things are deſpis'd becauſe they are *vulgar*, and heavenly Things becauſe they are *abſtruſe*; and ſo whatever Method is taken, ſtill ſome fault or other is found with it, *Mat.* 11.17. but Wiſdom is, and will be *juſtified of her Children* notwithſtanding.

3. Our Lord Jeſus, and none but he, was fit to reveal to us a Doctrine thus certain, thus ſublime; *v.* 13. *No Man hath aſcended up into Heaven, but he*——

1. None but he was able to reveal to us the Will of God for our Salvation. *Nicodemus* addreſs'd to Chriſt as a Prophet, but we muſt know that he is greater than all the Old Teſtament Prophets, for none of them *had aſcended into Heaven.* They wrote by Divine Inſpiration, but not of their own Knowledge; ſee *Joh.* 1.18. *Moſes* aſcended into the Mount, but not into Heaven: No Man hath attained to the certain Knowledge of God, and heavenly Things, ſo as Chriſt has; ſee *Mat.* 11.27. It is not for us to ſend to Heaven for Inſtructions, we muſt wait to receive what Inſtructions Heaven will ſend to us; ſee *Prov.* 30. 4. *Deut.* 30.12.

2. Jeſus Chriſt is able and fit, and every way qualified to reveal the Will of God to us; for it is *he that came down from Heaven, and is in Heaven.* He had ſaid, *v.* 12. *How ſhall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly Things.* Now here, (1.) He gives them an Inſtance of thoſe *heavenly Things* which he could tell them of, when he tells them of one that *came down from Heaven*, and yet is the *Son of Man*; is the *Son of Man*, and yet is *in Heaven*. If the Regeneration of the *Soul of Man* was ſuch a Myſtery,

what then is the Incarnation of the *Son of God?* Theſe are divine and heavenly things indeed. We have here an Intimation of Chriſt's two diſtinct Natures in one Perſon; his divine Nature, in that he *came down from Heaven*; his human Nature, in that he is the *Son of Man*; and that Union of thoſe Two, in that while he is the Son of Man, yet he is *in Heaven*. (2.) He gives them a Proof of his Ability to ſpeak to them *heavenly Things*, and to lead them into the *Arcana* of the Kingdom of Heaven, by telling them,

1. That he *came down from Heaven*. The Intercourſe ſettled between God and Man began *above*; the firſt Motion towards it did not ariſe from this Earth, but *came down from Heaven*. We love him, and ſend to him, becauſe he firſt loved us, and ſent to us. Now this ſpeaks, (1.) Chriſt's divine Nature. He that came down from Heaven, is certainly more than a mere Man; he is the *Lord from Heaven*, 1 Cor. 15. 47. (2.) His intimate Acquaintance with the Divine Counſels; for coming from the Court of Heaven, he had been from Eternity converſant with them. (3.) It ſpeaks *God manifeſt*. Under the Old Teſtament God's Favours to his People are expreſſed by his *hearing from Heaven*, 2 Chron. 7. 14. *looking from Heaven*, Pſal. 80. 14. *ſpeaking from Heaven*, Neh. 9. 13. ſending from Heaven, *Pſal.* 57. 3. But the New Teſtament ſhews us God *coming down* from Heaven to teach and ſave us. That he thus *deſcended*, is an admirable *Myſtery*, for the Godhead cannot change Places, nor did he bring his Body from Heaven; but that he thus *condeſcended* for our Redemption, is a more admirable *Mercy*; herein he commended his Love.

2. That *he is the Son of Man, that* Son of Man ſpoken of by *Daniel*, chap. 7.13. by which the *Jews* always underſtand to be meant the *Meſſiah*. Chriſt, in calling himſelf the *Son of Man*, ſhews that he is the *ſecond Adam*, for the firſt *Adam* was the *Father of Man*. And of all the Old Teſtament Titles of the Meſſiah, he choſe to make uſe of *this*, becauſe it was moſt expreſſive of his *Humility*, and moſt agreeable to his preſent State of *Humiliation*.

3. That he *is in Heaven*. Now at this Time when he is talking with *Nicodemus* on Earth, yet as God he is *in Heaven*; the *Son of Man*, as ſuch, was not in Heaven till his Aſcenſion; but he that was the Son of Man, by his Divine Nature, was now every where preſent, and particularly in *Heaven*. Thus the Lord of Glory, as ſuch, could not be crucified, nor God, as ſuch, ſhed his Blood; yet that Perſon who was the Lord of Glory was crucified, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. and *God* purchaſed the Church with *his own Blood*, Acts 20.28. So cloſe is the Union of the Two Natures in one Perſon, that there is a Communication of Properties. He doth not ſay ὃς ἐστι but ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, GOD is the ὁ ὢν, he that *is*, and Heaven is the Habitation of his *Holineſs*.

Thirdly, Chriſt here diſcourſeth of the *great Deſign of his own coming into the World, and the Happineſs of thoſe that believe in him*, v. 14——18. Here we have the very Marrow and Quinteſſence of the whole Goſpel; that faithful Saying, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. that Jeſus Chriſt came to ſeek and to ſave the Children of Men from Death, and recover them to Life. Now Sinners are *dead Men* upon a twofold Account. (1.) As one that is mortally wounded, or ſick of an incurable Diſeaſe, is ſaid to be a *dead Man*, for he is dying; and ſo Chriſt came to ſave us, by *healing* us as the brazen Serpent heal'd the *Iſraelites*, v. 14, 15. (2.) As one that is juſtly condemned to die for an unpardonable Crime, is a *dead Man*; he is *dead in Law*; and in reference to this Part of our Danger, Chriſt came to ſave as a Prince or a Judge, publiſhing an Act of Indemnity, or general Pardon, under certain Proviſo's; this ſaving here is oppoſed to condemning, *v.* 16, 17, 18.

1. Jeſus Chriſt came to ſave us, by *healing* us, as the Children of *Iſrael* that were ſtung with fiery Serpents, were cur'd, and *liv'd*, by looking up to the brazen Serpent; we have the Story of it, *Numb.* 21.6,7,8,9. 'Twas the laſt Miracle that paſs'd through the Hand of *Moſes* before his Death.

Now in this Type of Chriſt we may obſerve,

1. The *deadly* and *deſtructive* Nature of *Sin*, that's implied here. The Guilt of Sin is like the *Pain* of the Biting of a fiery Serpent; the Power of Corruption is like the *Venom* diffuſed thereby. The Devil is the old Serpent, *ſubtle* at firſt, *Gen.* 3. 1. but ever ſince *fiery*, and his Temptations *fiery Darts*; his Aſſaults terrifying, his Victories deſtroying. Aſk awakened Conſciences, aſk damned Sinners, and they will tell you how charming ſoever the Allurements of Sin are, *at the laſt it bites like a Serpent*, Prov. 23. 30,31. God's Wrath againſt us for Sin, is as thoſe fiery Serpents which God ſent among the People to puniſh them for their Murmurings. The Curſes of the Law are as fiery Serpents, ſo are all the Tokens of Divine Wrath.

2. The powerful Remedy provided againſt this fatal Malady. The Caſe of poor Sinners is deplorable, but is it deſperate? Thanks be to God it is not, there is Balm in *Gilead*. The *Son of Man is lifted up*, as the *Serpent of Braſs* was by *Moſes*, which cur'd the ſtung *Iſraelites*. (1.) It was a *Serpent of Braſs* that cur'd them. Braſs is *bright*; we read of Chriſt's Feet *ſhining like Braſs*, Rev. 1. 15. 'Tis durable, Chriſt is the ſame; 'twas made in the Shape of a *fiery Serpent*, and yet had no Poiſon, no Sting fitly repreſenting Chriſt, who was *made Sin for us*, and yet knew no Sin; was *made in the likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, and yet not ſinful; as harmleſs as a Serpent of Braſs. The Serpent was a curſed Creature, Chriſt was made a *Curſe*. That which cured them, minded them of their Plague; ſo in Chriſt, Sin is ſet before us moſt fiery and formidable. (2.) It was lifted up upon a Pole, and ſo muſt the Son of Man be lifted; thus it *behoved him*, Luke 24. 26, 46. No Remedy now, Chriſt is lifted up, 1. In his *Crucifixion*; he was lifted up upon the Croſs: His Death is call'd his being *lifted up*, Joh. 12. 32,33. he was lifted up as a Spectacle, as a Mark; lifted up between Heaven and Earth, as if he had been unworthy of either, and abandon'd by both. 2. In his *Exaltation*; he was lifted up to the Father's right Hand, to give Repentance and Remiſſion; he was lifted up to the Croſs, to be further lifted up to the Crown. 3. In the *publiſhing* and *preaching* of his everlaſting Goſpel, *Rev.* 14. 6. The Serpent was lifted up, that all the Thouſands of *Iſrael* might ſee it; Chriſt in the Goſpel is exhibited to us, evidently ſet forth; Chriſt is *lifted up* as an Enſign, *Iſa.* 11. 10. (3.) It was lifted up by *Moſes*; Chriſt was made under the Law of *Moſes*, and *Moſes* teſtified of him. (4.) Being thus lifted up, 'twas appointed for the Cure of thoſe that were bitten by fiery Serpents; he that ſent the Plague, provided the Remedy; none could redeem and ſave us, but he whoſe Juſtice had condemned us: 'Twas God himſelf that *found the Ranſom*, and the Efficacy of it depends upon his Appointment. The *fiery Serpents* were ſent to puniſh them for their *tempting Chriſt*, ſo the Apoſtle ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 10.9. and yet they were healed by Virtue derived from him. He whom we have offended is *our Peace*.

3. The way of *applying* this Remedy, and that is by *believing*, which plainly alludes to the *Iſraelites looking up* to the brazen Serpent, in order to their being healed by it. If any ſtung *Iſraelite* was either ſo little ſenſible of his Pain and Peril, or had ſo little Confidence in the Word of *Moſes*, as not to look up to the brazen Serpent, juſtly did he die of his Wound; but every one that *look'd up to it* did well, *Num.* 21.9. If any ſo far ſlight either their Diſeaſe, by Sin, or the Method of Cure by Chriſt, as not to embrace Chriſt upon his own Terms, their Blood is upon their own Head: He hath ſaid, *Look and be ſaved*, Iſa. 45.22. look and live. We muſt take a complacency in, and give conſent to the Methods which infinite Wiſdom has taken of ſaving a guilty World, by the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, as the great Sacrifice and Interceſſor.

4. The great Encouragements given us by Faith to look up to him. (1.) 'Twas for this end that he was *lifted up*, that his Followers might be ſaved, and he will purſue his End. (2.) The Offer that's made of Salvation by him is general, That *whoſoever believes* in him, without Exception, might have Benefit by him. (3.) The Salvation offered is compleat. (1.) They *ſhall not periſh*, ſhall not die of their Wounds, tho' they may be pain'd, and ill frightened, Iniquity ſhall not be their Ruin. But that's not all. (2.) They ſhall *have eternal Life*. They ſhall not only not die of their Wounds in the Wilderneſs, but they ſhall reach *Canaan*, (which they were then juſt ready to enter into) they ſhall enjoy the promis'd Reſt.

2. Jeſus Chriſt came to ſave us by *pardoning us*, that we might not die by the Sentence of the Law, *v.* 16, 17. Here's *Goſpel* indeed, good News, the beſt that ever came from Heaven to Earth: Here's *much*, here's *all* in a little, the Word of Reconciliation in Miniature.

1. Here's God's *Love* in *giving his Son for the World*, v. 16. where we have three Things.

1. The great *Goſpel Myſtery* reveal'd; *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son.* The Love of God the Father, is the Original of our Regeneration by the Spirit, and our Reconciliation by the lifting up of the Son. *Note*, 1. Jeſus Chriſt is the only *begotten Son of God*. This magnifies his Love in giving him for us, in giving him to us; now know we that he loves us, when he has given his *only begotten Son for us*, which ſpeaks not only his Dignity in himſelf, but his Dearneſs to his Father: he was *always his Delight*. 2. In order to the Redemption and Salvation of Man, it pleaſed God to *give his only begotten Son*. He not only *gave him*, i. e. ſent him into the World with full and ample Power to negotiate a Peace between Heaven and Earth, but he *gave him*, i. e. he gave him up to ſuffer and die for us, as the great Propitiation, or expiatory Sacrifice. It comes in here as a Reaſon why he *muſt be lifted up*, for ſo it was determined and deſigned by the Father, who gave him for this Purpoſe, and *prepared him a Body* in order to it. His Enemies could not have *taken him*, if his Father had not given *him*. Tho' he was not yet crucified, yet in the determinate Counſel of God, he was *given* up, *Acts* 2. 23. Nay further, God hath *given him*, that is, he hath made an Offer of him to all, and given him to all true Believers, to all the Intents and Purpoſes of the New Covenant. He has given him to be our *Prophet*, a *Witneſs to the People*; the High-Prieſt of our Profeſſion; to be our Peace; to be Head of the Church, and Head over all Things to the Church: To be to us all we need. 3. Herein God has commended his *Love to the World*. God ſo *loved the World*; ſo really, ſo richly. Now his Creatures ſhall ſee that he loves them, and wiſhes them well. So loved the World of fallen Man, as he did not love that of fallen Angels; ſee *Rom.* 5.8. 1 *Joh* 4.10. Behold and wonder, that the *great God* ſhould love ſuch a *worthleſs* World! That the *holy God* ſhould love ſuch a *wicked* World,

with a Love of good Will, when he could not look upon it with any Complacency! This was a *Time of Love indeed*, Ezek. 16. 6, 8. The *Jews* vainly conceited that the Meſſiah ſhould be ſent only in Love to *their Nation*, and to advance that upon the Ruins of their Neighbours; but Chriſt tells them he came in Love to the *whole World*, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, 1 John 2. 2. Tho' many of the World of Mankind periſh, yet God's giving his only begotten Son was an Inſtance of his Love to the whole World, becauſe through him there is a *general Offer* of Life and Salvation made to all. 'Tis Love to the revolted, rebellious Province, to iſſue out a Proclamation of Pardon and Indemnity to all that will come in, plead it upon their Knees, and return to their Allegiance. So *far God loved the* apoſtate, lapſed *World*, that he ſent his Son with this fair Propoſal, That *whoſoever believes in him*, one or other, *ſhall not periſh*. *Salvation* has been *of the Jews*, but now Chriſt is *known*, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*; a *common Salvation.*

2. Here's the great Goſpel Duty, and that is to *believe in Jeſus Chriſt*, whom God hath thus given, given *for us*, given *to us*, to accept the Gift, and anſwer the Intention of the Giver. We muſt yield an unfeigned Aſſent and Conſent to the Record God hath given in his Word concerning his Son. God having given him to us to be our Prophet, Prieſt, and King, we muſt give up ourſelves to be ruled, and taught, and ſaved by him.

3. Here's the great Goſpel Benefit, That *whoſoever believes in Chriſt ſhall not periſh.* This he had ſaid before, and here repeats it. It is the unſpeakable Happineſs of all true Believers, which they are eternally indebted to Chriſt for, (1.) That they are ſaved from the Miſeries of Hell, delivered from *going down to the Pit*, they *ſhall not periſh:* God has taken away their Sin, they ſhall not die; a Pardon is purchas'd, and ſo the Attainder is reverſed. (2.) They are intitled to the Joys of Heaven: They ſhall *have everlaſting Life.* The convicted Traytor is not only pardon'd, but preferred, and made a Favourite, and treated as one whom the King of Kings *delights to honour*. *Out of Priſon he cometh to reign*, Eccl. 4. 14. If Believers, then Children; and if *Children, then Heirs.*

2. Here's God's Deſign in ſending his Son into the World; it was, *that the World through him might be ſaved.* He came into the World with Salvation in *his Eye*, with Salvation *in his Hand.* Therefore the fore-mentioned Offer of Life and Salvation is ſincere, and ſhall be made good to all that by Faith accept it. *V.* 47. *God ſent his Son into the World*, this guilty, rebellious, apoſtate World; ſent him as his Agent, or Ambaſſador, not as ſometimes he had ſent Angels into the World, as Viſitants, but as Reſident. Ever ſince Man ſinned, he has dreaded the approach and appearance of any ſpecial Meſſenger from Heaven, as being conſcious of Guilt, and looking for Judgment; *we ſhall ſurely die, for we have ſeen God.* If therefore the Son of God himſelf come, we are concerned to enquire on what Errand he comes; *is it Peace*? Or, as they ask'd *Samuel*, trembling, *Comeſt thou peaceably*? And this Scripture returns the Anſwer, *Peaceably.*

1. He did not come to *condemn the World.* We had Reaſon enough to expect he ſhould, for it is a guilty World; 'tis *convicted*, and what Cauſe can be ſhewn why Judgment ſhould not be given, and Execution awarded according to Law. That *one Blood* of which all *Nations* of Men are made, *Acts* 17. 26. is not only *tainted* with an hereditary *Diſeaſe*, like *Gehazi's* Leproſy, but it is *tainted* with an hereditary *Guilt*, like that of the *Amalekites*, with whom God had War *from Generation to Generation*; and juſtly may ſuch a World as this be *condemn'd*; and if God would have ſent to condemn it, he had Angels at Command to pour out the Vials of his Wrath; a Cherubim with a flaming Sword ready to do Execution. *If the Lord had been pleaſed to kill us*, he would not have ſent his Son among us. He came with full Powers indeed to *execute Judgment*, Joh. 5. 22, 27. but did not begin with a Judgment of Condemnation, did not proceed upon the Out-lawry, nor take Advantage againſt us for the breach of the *Covenant of Innocency*, but puts us upon a new Trial before a *Throne of Grace.*

2. He came *that the World through him might be ſaved*; that a Door of Salvation might be opened to the World, and whoever would, might enter in by it. God was in Chriſt *reconciling the World to himſelf*, and ſo *ſaving* it. An Act of Indemnity is paſs'd and publiſhed, through Chriſt a remedial Law made; and the World of Mankind dealt with not according to the Rigors of the firſt Covenant, but according to the Riches of the ſecond. *That the World* through him might be ſaved, for it could never be ſaved but *through him; there is not Salvation in any other.* This is good News to a convinced Conſcience, healing to broken Bones and bleeding Wounds, that Chriſt our Judge came not to *condemn*, but to *ſave.*

3. From all this is inferred the Happineſs of true Believers; *v.* 18. *he that believed on him, is not condemned.* Tho' he have been a Sinner, a great Sinner, and *ſtands convicted*, (*habes confitentem reum*) yet upon his believing, Proceſs is ſtay'd, Judgment is arreſted, and he is *not condemned.* This ſpeaks more than a Reprieve; he *is not condemned*, that is, he is acquitted; he *ſtands upon his Deliverance* (as we ſay) and if he be not condemned, he is diſcharged; *ȣ κρίνεται, he is not judged*; not dealt with in ſtrict Juſtice according to the deſert of his Sins. He is *accuſed*, and he cannot plead *not Guilty* to the Indictment, but he can plead *in Bar*, can plead a *Noli proſequi* upon the Indictment, as bleſſed *Paul* doth, *who is he that condemns? it is Chriſt that died.* He is *afflicted*, chaſtened of God, perſecuted by the World, but he is not *condemned.* The Croſs perhaps lies heavy upon him, but he is ſaved from the Curſe. Condemn'd *by the World*, it may be, but not *condemn'd with the World*, Rom. 8. 1. 1 Cor. 11. 32.

Fourthly, Chriſt in the cloſe diſcourſeth concerning the *deplorable Condition of thoſe that perſiſt in Unbelief, and wilful Ignorance*, v. 18—21.

1. Read here the Doom of thoſe that will not *believe in Chriſt*; they *are condemn'd already.* Obſerve, (1.) How great the *Sin* of Unbelievers is; 'tis aggravated from the Dignity of the Perſon they ſlight; they *believe not in the Name of the only begotten Son of God*, who is infinitely *true*, and deſerves to be believ'd; *infinitely good*, and deſerves to be embrac'd. God ſent one to ſave us that was *deareſt* to himſelf, and ſhall not he be *deareſt to us*? Shall we not believe on his Name, who has a Name above every Name? (2.) How great the *Miſery* of Unbelievers is; they are *condemn'd already*; which ſpeaks, (1.) A *certain* Condemnation. They are as ſure to be condemned in the Judgment of the great Day, as if they were condemned already. (2.) A *preſent* Condemnation. The Curſe has already taken hold of them, the Wrath of God now faſtens upon them. They are condemned already, for their own Hearts condemn them. (3.) A Condemnation *grounded upon the former Guilt*: He is condemned *already*, for he lies open to the Law for all his Sins; the Obligation of the Law is in full Force, Power, and Virtue againſt him, becauſe he is not by Faith intereſted in the Goſpel defeaſance; *He is condemned already, becauſe he has not believ'd.* Unbelief may truly be called the great damning Sin, becauſe it leaves us under the Guilt of all our other Sins; it is a Sin againſt the *Remedy*, againſt our *Appeal.*

2. Read alſo the Doom of thoſe that would not ſo much as *know him*, v. 19. Many *inquiſitive* People had Knowledge of Chriſt and his Doctrine, and Miracles, but they were prejudic'd againſt him; and would not believe in him, while the generality were ſottiſhly careleſs and ſtupid, and would not *know* him. And *this is the Condemnation*, the Sin that ruined them, *that Light is come into the World, and they loved Darkneſs rather.* Now here obſerve, (1.) That the Goſpel is Light, and when the Goſpel came, *Light came into the World.* Light is *ſelf-evidencing*, ſo is the Goſpel, it proves its own Divine Original. Light is *diſcovering*, and *truly the Light is ſweet*, and rejoiceth the Heart. 'Tis a Light ſhining in a dark Place, and a dark Place indeed the World would be without it. It is *come into all the World*, Col. 1. 6. and not confin'd to one Corner of it, as the Old Teſtament Light was. (2.) It is the unſpeakable Folly of the moſt of Men, that they loved Darkneſs rather than Light, rather than *this* Light. The *Jews* lov'd the dark Shadows of their Law, and the Inſtructions of their *blind Guides*, rather than the Doctrine of Chriſt. The *Gentiles* loved their ſuperſtitious Services of an *unknown God*, whom they *ignorantly worſhipp'd*, rather than the *reaſonable Service* which the Goſpel enjoins. Sinners, that were wedded to their Luſts, lov'd their Ignorance and Miſtakes, which ſupported them in their Sins, rather than the Truths of Chriſt that wou'd have parted them from their Sins. Man's Apoſtacy began in an Affectation of forbidden Knowledge, but is kept up by an Affectation of forbidden Ignorance. Wretched Man is in love with his Sickneſs, in love with his Slavery, and will not be made *free*, will not be made whole. (3.) The true Reaſon why Men love Darkneſs rather than Light, is, *becauſe their Deeds are evil.* They love Darkneſs, becauſe they think 'tis an excuſe for their evil Deeds; and they hate the Light becauſe it robs them of the good Opinion they had of themſelves, by ſhewing them their Sinfulneſs and Miſery. Their Caſe is ſad, and becauſe they are reſolved they will not *mend it*, they are reſolved they will not *ſee* it. (4.) Wilful Ignorance is ſo far from excuſing Sin, that it will be found at the great Day to aggravate the Condemnation. *This is the Condemnation*, this is it that ruins Souls, that they ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light, and will not ſo much as admit a Parley with Chriſt and his Goſpel; they ſet God ſo much at defiance, that they deſire not the Knowledge of his Ways, *Job* 21. 14. We muſt account in the Judgment, not only for the Knowledge we *had* and *uſed not*, but for the Knowledge we *might have had*, and *would not*; not only for the Knowledge we *ſinn'd againſt*, but for the Knowledge we *ſinn'd away.*

For the further Illuſtration of this, he ſhews, *v.* 20, 21. That according as Mens Hearts and Lives are good or bad, accordingly they ſtand affected to the Light Chriſt has brought into the World.

1. It is not ſtrange, if thoſe that do Evil, and reſolve to perſiſt in it, hate the Light of Chriſt's Goſpel, for it is a common Obſervation, that *every one that doth Evil, hateth the Light*, v. 20. Evil-doers ſeek Concealment, out of Senſe of Shame, and Fear of Puniſhment, ſee *Job* 24. 13, *&c.* Sinful Works are *Works of Darkneſs*, Sin from the firſt affected Concealment, *Job.* 31. 33. The *Light ſhakes* the Wicked, *Job* 38. 12, 13. Thus the Goſpel is a Terror to the wicked World; they *come not to this Light*, but keep as far off it as they can, *leſt their Deeds ſhould be reproved.* *Note*, 1. The Light of the Goſpel *is* ſent into the

World to *reprove the evil Deeds* of Sinners; to make them manifeſt, *Eph.* 5. 13. to *ſhew* People *their Tranſgreſſions*; to ſhew that to be Sin, which was not thought to be ſo; and to ſhew them the Evil of their Tranſgreſſions, *that Sin by the* new *Commandment* might appear *exceeding ſinful*. The Goſpel has its Convictions to make way for its Conſolations. 2. 'Tis for this Reaſon that Evil-doers *hate the Light* of the Goſpel. There were thoſe that *had done evil*, and were ſorry for it, who had this Light welcome, as the *Publicans and Harlots*. But he that *doth Evil*, that doth it, and reſolves to go on in it, *hates the Light*; cannot bear to be told of his Faults. All that Oppoſition which the Goſpel of Chriſt has met with in the World, comes from the *wicked Heart*, influenced by the *wicked one*. Chriſt is hated becauſe Sin is loved. 3. They who do not *come to the Light*, thereby evidence a ſecret *Hatred* of the Light. If they had not an Antipathy to *ſaving Knowledge*, they would not ſit down ſo contentedly in *damning Ignorance*.

2. On the other hand, upright Hearts that approve themſelves to God in their Integrity, bid this Light welcome, *v.* 20. *He that doth Truth, comes to the Light*. It ſeems then, tho' the Goſpel had many Enemies, it had ſome Friends. It is a common Obſervation, that *Truth ſeeks no Corners*. They who mean and act honeſtly, dread not a Scrutiny, but deſire it rather; now this is applicable to the Goſpel Light; as it *convinceth* and *terrifies* Evil doers, ſo it *confirms* and *comforts* thoſe that walk in their Integrity. Obſerve here,

1. The Character of a *good Man*. (1.) He is one that *doth Truth*; i. e. he acts truely and ſincerely in all he doth. Tho' ſometimes he comes ſhort of *doing good*, the Good he would do, yet he *doth Truth*; he aims honeſtly; he has his Infirmities, but holds faſt his Integrity; as *Gaius*, that *did faithfully*, 3 John 5. as *Paul*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. as *Nathanael*, John 1. 37. as *Aſa*, 1 Kings 15. 14. (2.) He is one that *cometh to the Light*. He is ready to receive and entertain Divine Revelation, as far as it appears to him to be ſo, what Uneaſineſs ſoever it may create him. He that *doth Truth*, is willing to know the *Truth* by himſelf, and to *have his Deeds made manifeſt*. A good Man is much in trying himſelf, and deſirous that God would try him, *Pſal.* 26. 2. He is ſollicitous to *know* what the Will of God is, and reſolves to *do* it, tho' never ſo contrary to his own Wills and Intereſts.

2. Here's the Character of a *good Work*; it is *wrought in God*, in Union with him by a covenanting Faith, and in Communion with him by devout Affections. Our Works are then *good*, and will bear the Teſt, when the Will of God is the Rule of them, and the Glory of God the End of them: when they are done in his Strength, and for his ſake, to him, and not to Men; and if by the Light of the Goſpel it be manifeſt to us, that our Works are thus wrought, *then ſhall we have rejoicing*, Gal. 6. 4. 2 Cor. 1. 12.

Thus far we have Chriſt's Diſcourſe with *Nicodemus*; 'tis likely much more paſs'd between them, and it had a good Effect, for we find, *John* 19. 39. that *Nicodemus*, tho' he was puzzled at firſt, yet afterwards became a faithful Diſciple of Chriſt.

22 ¶ After theſe things came Jeſus and his diſciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them, and baptized. 23 ¶ And John alſo was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, becauſe there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. 24 For John was not yet caſt into priſon. 25 ¶ Then there aroſe a queſtion between *ſome* of John's diſciples and the Jews, about purifying. 26 And they came unto John, and ſaid unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bareſt witneſs, behold, the ſame baptizeth, and all men come to him. 27 John anſwered and ſaid, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28 Ye yourſelves bear me witneſs, that I ſaid, I am not the Chriſt, but that I am ſent before him. 29 He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which ſtandeth and heareth him, rejoyceth greatly, becauſe of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30 He muſt increaſe, but I *muſt* decreaſe. 31 He that cometh from above, is above all: he that is of the earth, is earthly, and ſpeaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven, is above all. 32 And what he hath ſeen and heard, that he teſtifieth; and no man receiveth his teſtimony. 33 He that hath received his teſtimony, hath ſet to his ſeal, that God is true. 34 For he whom God hath ſent, ſpeaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the ſpirit by meaſure *unto him*. 35 The father loveth the ſon, and hath given all things into his hand. 36 He that believeth on the ſon, hath everlaſting life: and he that believeth not the ſon, ſhall not ſee life: but the wrath of God abideth on him.

In theſe Verſes we have,

1. *Chriſt's* Removal into the Land of *Judea*, v. 22. and there he tarried with his Diſciples. Obſerve,

(1.) Our Lord Jeſus, after he enter'd upon his publick Work, travell'd much, and remov'd often, as the Patriarchs in their Sojournings. As it was a good part of his Humiliation, that he had no certain dwelling Place, but was as *Paul, in Journeyings often*; ſo it was an Inſtance of his unwearied Induſtry in the Work, for which he came into the World, that he went about in Proſecution of it; many a weary Step he took, to do good to Souls. This *Sun of Righteouſneſs* took a large Circuit, to diffuſe his Light and Heat, *Pſal.* 19. 6.

(2.) He was not wont to ſtay long at *Jeruſalem*; tho' he went frequently thither, yet he ſoon returned into the Country; as here, *After theſe Things*, after he had had this Diſcourſe with *Nicodemus*, he came into the Land of *Judea*; not ſo much for *greater Privacy*, tho mean and obſcure Places beſt ſuited the humble Jeſus in his humble State, but for *greater Uſefulneſs*; his Preaching and Miracles perhaps made *moſt Noiſe* at *Jeruſalem*, the Fountain Head of News, but did *leaſt Good* there, where the Topping Men of the Jewiſh Church had ſo much the Aſcendant.

(3.) When he came into the Land of *Judea*, his *Diſciples came with him*, for theſe were *they that continued with him in his Temptations*. Many that flocked to him at *Jeruſalem*, would not follow his Motions into the Country, they had no Buſineſs there, but his Diſciples attended him. If the Ark remove, it's better *remove and go after it*, (as they did, *Joſh.* 3. 3.) than ſit ſtill without it, tho' it be in *Jeruſalem* itſelf.

(4.) There he *tarried with them*, διέτριβε. He *converſ'd* with them, *diſcourſ'd* with them. He did not retire into the Country for his Eaſe and Pleaſure, but for more free Converſation with his Diſciples and Followers. See *Cant.* 7. 11, 12. *Note*, Thoſe that are ready to *go with Chriſt*, ſhall find him as ready to *ſtay with them*. 'Tis ſuppos'd he now ſtaid 5 or 6 Months in this Country.

(5.) There *he baptized*; he admitted Diſciples, ſuch as believed in him, and had more Honeſty and Courage than thoſe had at *Jeruſalem*, *Chap.* 2. 24. *John* began to baptize in the Land of *Judea*, *Mat.* 3. 1. therefore Chriſt began there, for *John* had ſaid, *There comes one after me*. He *baptized* not himſelf, with his own Hand, but his Diſciples by his Order and Directions, as appears, *ch.* 4. 4. But his Diſciples baptizing, was his baptizing. Holy Ordinances are Chriſt's, tho' adminiſtred by weak Men.

2. *John's* Continuance in his Work as long as his Opportunities laſted, *v.* 23, 24. Here we are told,

1. That *John was baptizing*. Chriſt's Baptiſm was for Subſtance the ſame with *John's*, for he bore Witneſs to Chriſt, and therefore they did not at all claſh or interfere with one another. But, (1.) Chriſt began to preach and baptize before *John laid it down*, that he might be ready to receive *John's* Diſciples when he ſhould be taken off, and ſo the Wheels might be kept a going. It is a Comfort to uſeful Men, when they are going off the Stage, to ſee thoſe riſing up, who are likely to fill up their Room. (2.) *John* continued to preach and baptize, tho' Chriſt had *taken it up*; for he would ſtill, according to the *Meaſure given to him*, advance the Intereſts of God's Kingdom. There was ſtill Work for *John* to do, for Chriſt was not yet *generally known*, nor the Minds of People *thoroughly prepared* for him by Repentance. From Heaven *John* had received his *Command*, and he would go on in his Work, till from thence he received his *Countermand*, and would have his *Diſmiſſion* from the ſame Hand that gave him his *Commiſſion*. He doth not *come in* to Chriſt, leſt what had formerly paſt ſhould look like a Combination between them; but he *goes on* with his Work, till Providence lays him aſide. The greater Gifts of ſome do not *render* the Labours of others that come ſhort of them *needleſs*, and *uſeleſs*; there is Work enough for all Hands. They are ſullen that will ſit down and do nothing, when they ſee themſelves out-ſhone. Tho' we have but one Talent, we muſt account for that; and when we ſee ourſelves *going off*, yet muſt *go on* to the laſt.

2. That he baptized in *Enon* near *Salim*, Places we find no where elſe mention'd; and therefore the Learned are altogether at a loſs where to find them; where-ever it was, it ſeems *John* removed from *Place to Place*; he did not think there was any Virtue in *Jordan*, becauſe Jeſus was baptized there, which ſhould engage him to ſtay there; but as he ſaw cauſe, remov'd to other Waters. Miniſters muſt follow their Opportunities; and he choſe a Place where there was much Water; ὕδατα πολλὰ, *many Waters*, i. e. many *Streams* of Water; ſo that where-ever he met with any that were willing to ſubmit to his Baptiſm, Water was at hand to baptize them with; *ſhallow* perhaps, as is uſual where there are *many* Brooks, but ſuch as would ſerve his purpoſe. And in that Country, plenty of Water was a valuable Thing.

3. That thither People *came to him*, and *were baptized*. Tho' they did not come in ſuch vaſt Crowds, as they did when he firſt appear'd, yet now he was not without Encouragement,

but there were ſtill thoſe that attended and own'd him. Some refer this both to *John* and to *Jeſus*; *They came and were baptized*, i. e. ſome came to *John*, and were baptized by him, ſome to Jeſus, and were baptized by him; and as their Baptiſm was one, ſo were their Hearts.

4. It is noted, *v.* 4. that *John was not yet caſt into Priſon*, to clear the Order of the Story, and to ſhew that theſe Paſſages related here, *Chap.* 2. and 3. in the Harmony, are to come in before *Mat.* 4. 12. *John* never deſiſted from his Work as long as he had his Liberty; nay, he ſeems to have been the more induſtrious, becauſe he foreſaw his Time was ſhort; he was not *yet caſt into Priſon*, but he expected it e'er long, *John* 9. 4.

3. A Conteſt between *John's Diſciples and the Jews, about purifying*, v. 25. See how the Goſpel of Chriſt came not to *ſend Peace upon Earth*, but *Diviſion.* Obſerve,

1. Who were the Diſputants; *ſome of* John's *Diſciples, and the Jews*, who had not ſubmitted to his Baptiſm of Repentance. Penitents and Impenitents divide this ſinful World. In this Conteſt it ſhould ſeem *John's* Diſciples were the *Aggreſſors*, and gave the *Challenge*, and 'tis a Sign they were Novices that had more Zeal than Diſcretion. The Truths of God have often ſuffer'd by the Raſhneſs of ſome, that have undertaken to defend them, before they were able to do it.

2. What was the Matter in Diſpute, about *Purifying*, about *religious Waſhing.* (1.) We may ſuppoſe that *John's* Diſciples cry'd up his Baptiſm, his Purifying, as *inſtar omnium*, and gave the Preference to that as perfecting and ſuperſeding all the Purifications of the *Jews*; and they were in the right: but *young* Converts are too apt to boaſt of their Attainments, whereas he that has found the *Treaſure* ſhould *hide it*, till he's ſure he has it, and not talk of it too much at firſt. (2.) No doubt, but the *Jews*, with as much Aſſurance, applauded the *Purifyings* that were in uſe among them, both thoſe that were inſtituted by the Law of *Moſes*, and thoſe that were impos'd by the Tradition of the Elders; for the former they had a Divine Warrant, and for the latter the Uſage of the Church. Now it's very likely, that the *Jews* in this Diſpute, when they could not *deny* the excellent Nature and Deſign of *John's* Baptiſm, rais'd an Objection againſt it from Chriſt's Baptiſm, which gave Occaſion for the Complaint that follows here, *v.* 26. Here's *John* baptizing in one Place, (ſay they) and *Jeſus* at the ſame time baptizing in another Place, and therefore *John's* Baptiſm, which his Diſciples ſo much applaud, is either, (1.) *Dangerous*, and of *ill Conſequence* to the Peace of the Church and State, for you ſee it opens a Door to endleſs Parties; now *John* has begun, we ſhall have every little Teacher ſet up for a Baptiſt preſently. Or, (2.) That at the beſt it was *defective* and *imperfect.* If *John's* Baptiſm, which you cry up thus, have any good in it, yonder's the Baptiſm of *Jeſus* goes beyond it; ſo that for your Parts, you are ſhaded already by a greater Light, and your Baptiſm is ſoon gone out of Requeſt. Thus Objections are made againſt the Goſpel, from the Advancement and Improvement of Goſpel Light; as if Childhood and Manhood were contrary to each other, and the Superſtructure were againſt the Foundation. There was no Reaſon to object Chriſt's Baptiſm againſt *John's*, for they conſiſted very well together.

4. A Complaint which *John's* Diſciples made to their Maſter concerning Chriſt, and his baptizing, *v.* 26. They being *nonplus'd* by the fore-mention'd Objection, and probably *ruffled*, and put into a Heat by it, come to their Maſter, and tell him, *Rabbi, he that was with thee*, and was baptized of thee, is now ſet up for himſelf, he *baptizeth, and all Men come to him*; and wilt thou ſuffer it? Their Itch of diſputing occaſion'd this. 'Tis common for Men, when they find themſelves run aground in the Heat of Diſputation, to fall foul upon thoſe that do them no harm. If theſe Diſciples of *John* had not undertaken to diſpute about *Purifying*, before they underſtood the *Doctrine of Baptiſm*, they might have anſwer'd the Objection without being put into a Paſſion. In their Complaint they ſpeak reſpectfully to their own Maſter, *Rabbi*; but ſpeak very ſlightly of our Saviour, tho' they do not name him.

1. They ſuggeſt that Chriſt's ſetting up a Baptiſm of his own was a Piece of Preſumption, very unaccountable; as if *John* having firſt ſet up this Right of Baptizing, he muſt have the Monopoly of it, and as it were a Patent for the Invention. *He that was with thee beyond* Jordan, as a Diſciple of thine, *behold* and wonder, *the ſame*, the very ſame *baptizeth*, and takes thy Work out of thy Hand. Thus the voluntary Condeſcenſions of the Lord Jeſus, as that of his being baptized by *John*, are often unjuſtly and very unkindly turn'd to his Reproach.

2. They ſuggeſt that it was a Piece of Ingratitude to *John*; He *to whom thou beareſt Witneſs*, baptizeth; as if Jeſus ow'd all his Reputation to the honourable Character *John* gave of him, and yet had very unworthily improv'd it to the Prejudice of *John*. But Chriſt needed not *John's* Teſtimony, *John* 5. 36. He reflected more Honour upon *John* than he received from him; yet thus it is incident to us to think, that others are more indebted to us than really they are. And beſides, Chriſt's Baptiſm was not in the leaſt an *Impeachment*, but indeed the greateſt *Improvement* of *John's* Baptiſm; which was but to lead the Way to Chriſt's. *John* was *juſt* to Chriſt in bearing Witneſs to him, and Chriſt's anſwering his Teſtimony, did rather enrich than impoveriſh *John's* Miniſtry.

3. They conclude that it would be a total Eclipſe to *John's* Baptiſm, for *all Men come to him*; they that uſed to follow with us, now flock after him, it's therefore time for us to look about us. It was not indeed ſtrange that *all Men came to him.* As far as Chriſt is *manifeſted*, he will be *magnified*; but why ſhould *John's* Diſciples grieve at that? *Note*, Aiming at the Monopoly of Honour and Reſpect, has been in all Ages the Bane of the Church, and the Shame of its Members and Miniſters; as alſo a Vying of Intereſts, and a Jealouſy of Rivalſhip and Competition. We miſtake if we think, that the excelling Gifts and Graces, and Labours and Uſefulneſs of one, is a Diminution and Diſparagement to another, that has obtained Mercy to be faithful; for the Spirit is a free Agent, *diſpenſing to every one ſeverally as he will. Paul* rejoic'd in the Uſefulneſs, even of thoſe that *oppos'd* him, *Phil.* 1. 18. we muſt leave it to God to chuſe, employ, and honour his own Inſtruments as he pleaſeth, and not covet to be *placed alone.*

5. Here's *John's* Anſwer to this Complaint, which his Diſciples made, *v.* 27, *&c.* His Diſciples expected he ſhould have reſented this Matter as they did; but Chriſt's *Manifeſtation* to *Iſrael* was no *ſurprize* to *John*, but what he looked for; 'twas no *Diſturbance* to him, but what he wiſh'd for. He therefore check'd the Complaint, as *Moſes, Envieſt thou for my ſake?* and took this Occaſion to confirm the Teſtimonies he had formerly borne to Chriſt, as ſuperior to him, chearfully conſigning and turning over to him all the Intereſt he had in *Iſrael.* In this Diſcourſe here, the firſt Miniſter of the Goſpel (for ſo *John* was) is an excellent Pattern to all Miniſters to *humble* themſelves, and to *exalt* the Lord Jeſus.

Firſt, John here *abaſeth himſelf in compariſon with Chriſt*, v. 27, to 30. The more others magnify us, the more we muſt humble ourſelves; and fortify ourſelves againſt the Temptation of Flattery and Applauſe, and the Jealouſy of our Friends for our Honour, by remembring our Place, and what we are, 1 *Cor.* 3. 5.

1. *John acquieſceth* in the Divine Diſpoſal, and ſatisfieth himſelf with that, *v.* 27. *A Man can receive nothing, except it be given him from Heaven*, whence *every good Gift* comes, *Jam.* 1. 18. A general Truth very applicable in this Caſe. Different Employments are according to the Direction of Divine Providence; different Endowments according to the Diſtribution of the Divine Grace. *No Man can take* any true *Honour* to himſelf, *Heb.* 5.4. We have as neceſſary and conſtant a Dependance upon the Grace of God in all the Motions and Actions of the ſpiritual Life, as we have upon the Providence of God in all the Motions and Actions of the natural Life. Now this comes in here as a Reaſon, (1.) Why we ſhould not *envy* thoſe that have a larger Share of Gifts than we have, or move in a larger Sphere of Uſefulneſs. *John* minds his Diſciples, that *Jeſus* had not thus excelled him, *except he had received it from Heaven*, for as *Man* and *Mediator* he *received Gifts*; and if God gave him *the Spirit without Meaſure*, v. 34. ſhall they grudge at it? The ſame Reaſon will hold as to others. If God is *pleas'd* to give to others more Ability and Succeſs, than to us, ſhall we be *diſpleas'd* at it, and reflect upon him as unjuſt, unwiſe, and partial. See *Mat.* 20. 15. (2.) Why we ſhould not be *diſcontented*, tho' we be inferior to others in Gifts and Uſefulneſs, and be eclips'd by their Excellencies. *John* was ready to own that it was the Gift, the free Gift of Heaven, that made him a Preacher, a Prophet, a Baptiſt; it was God that gave him the Intereſt he had in the Love and Eſteem of the People, and if now his Intereſt decline, God's Will be done: He that *gives* may *take.* What we *receive* from Heaven, we muſt take as it is *given*: Now *John* never received a Commiſſion for a ſtanding *perpetual* Office, but only for a *temporary* one, which muſt ſoon expire, and therefore when he has fulfill'd his Miniſtry, he can contentedly ſee it go out of date. Some give quite another Senſe of theſe Words; *John* had taken pains with his Diſciples to teach them the Reference which his Baptiſm had to Chriſt, who ſhould come after him, and yet be preferred before him, and do that for them which he could not do; and yet after all, they doat upon *John*, and grudge this Preference of Chriſt above him: Well, ſaith *John*, I ſee, *A Man can receive*, i. e. perceive, *nothing, except it be given him from Heaven.* The Labour of Miniſters is all loſt Labour, unleſs the Grace of God make it effectual. Men do not underſtand that which is made moſt *plain*, nor believe that which is made moſt *evident*, unleſs it be given them from Heaven to underſtand and believe it.

2. *John* appeals to the Teſtimony he had formerly given concerning Chriſt, *v.* 18. you can bear me Witneſs, that I ſaid again and again, *I am not the Chriſt, but that I am ſent before him.* See how ſteddy and conſtant *John* was in his Teſtimony to Chriſt, and not as a *Reed ſhaken with the Wind*; neither the Frowns of the chief Prieſts, nor the Flatteries of his own Diſciples, could make him change his Note. Now this ſerves here, (1.) As a *Conviction* to his Diſciples, of the Unreaſonableneſs of their Complaint. They had ſpoken of the Witneſs which their Maſter bore to *Jeſus*, v. 26. Now, ſaith *John*, Do not you remember what the Teſtimony was that I did bear? Call that to mind, and you will ſee your own Cavil anſwer'd. Did I not ſay, *I am not the Chriſt*, why then do you ſet me up as a Rival with him that is? Did I not ſay, *I am ſent before him*? Why then doth it ſeem

ſtrange to you that I ſhould ſtand by and give way to him? (2.) It's a *Comfort* to himſelf, that he had never *given* his Diſciples *any Occaſion* thus to ſet him up in Competition with Chriſt; but on the contrary, had particularly *caution'd* them againſt this Miſtake, tho' he might have made a Hand of it for himſelf. It is a Satisfaction to faithful Miniſters, if they have done what they could in their Places, to prevent any Extravagancies that their People ran into. *John* had not only not encouraged them to hope that he was the *Meſſiah*, but had plainly told them the contrary; which was now a Satisfaction to him. 'Tis a common Excuſe for thoſe who have undue Honour paid them, *Si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*; but that's an ill Maxim for them to go by, whoſe Buſineſs it is to *undeceive* People. *The Lip of Truth ſhall be eſtabliſhed.*

3. *John* profeſſeth the great Satisfaction he had in the Advancement of Chriſt and his Intereſt. He was ſo far from *regretting* it, as his Diſciples did, that he *rejoic'd* in it: This he expreſſeth, *v.* 29. by an elegant Similitude. (1.) He compares our Saviour to the *Bridegroom*; *He that has the Bride, is the Bridegroom. Do all Men come to him?* It's well, whither elſe ſhould they go? Has he got the Throne in Mens Affections? Who elſe ſhould have it? 'Tis his Right; to whom ſhould the Bride be brought but to the Bridegroom? Chriſt was propheſied of in the Old Teſtament as a Bridegroom, *Pſal.* 45. *The Word was made fleſh*, that the Diſparity of Nature might not be a *Bar to the Match*; Proviſion is made for the Purifying of the Church, that the Defilement of Sin might be no Bar; Chriſt eſpouſeth his Church to himſelf; he *has the* Bride, for he has her Love, he has her Promiſe; *The Church is ſubject to Chriſt.* As far as particular Souls are devoted to him in Faith and Love, ſo far the Bridegroom has the Bride. (2.) He compares himſelf to the *Friend of the Bridegroom*, who attends upon him, to do him Honour and Service, aſſiſts him in proſecuting the Match, ſpeaks a good Word for him, uſeth his Intereſt on his Behalf, rejoiceth when the Match goes on, and moſt of all, when the Point is gain'd, and he *hath the Bride*. All that *John* had done in preaching and baptizing, was to introduce him; and now he was come, he had what he wiſh'd for. The *Friend of the Bridegroom ſtands and hears him*, ſtands expecting him, and waiting for him, *rejoiceth with Joy, becauſe of the Bridegroom's Voice*, becauſe he is come to the Marriage, after he had been long expected. *Note*, 1. Faithful Miniſters are Friends of the Bridegroom, to recommend him to the Affections and Choice of the Children of Men; to bring Letters and Meſſages from him, for he courts by Proxy; and herein they muſt be faithful to him. 2. The Friends of the Bridegroom muſt *ſtand and hear the Bridegroom's Voice*, muſt receive Inſtructions from him, and attend his Orders; muſt deſire to have Proofs of Chriſt ſpeaking in them and with them, 2 *Cor.* 13. 3. that's the *Bridegroom's Voice.* 3. The eſpouſing of Souls to Jeſus Chriſt, in Faith and Love, is the fulfilling of the Joy of every good Miniſter. If the Day of Chriſt's Eſpouſals be the Day of the Gladneſs of his Heart, *Cant.* 3. *ult.* it cannot but be theirs too, who love him, and wiſh well to his Honour and Kingdom. Surely they have *no greater Joy.*

4. He owns it highly fit and neceſſary, that the Reputation and Intereſt of Chriſt ſhould be advanced, and his own diminiſhed, *v.* 30. *He muſt increaſe, but I muſt decreaſe.* If they grieve at the growing Greatneſs of the Lord Jeſus, they will have more and more Occaſion to grieve, as they have that indulge themſelves in Envy and Emulation. *John* ſpeaks of Chriſt's Increaſe, and his own Decreaſe, not only as *neceſſary* and *unavoidable*, which could not be *help'd*, and therefore muſt be *borne*, but as highly *juſt* and *agreeable*, and is entirely ſatisfied in it. (1.) He was *well pleas'd* to ſee the Kingdom of Chriſt getting ground; *He muſt increaſe.* You think he has gain'd a deal, but 'tis nothing to what he will gain. *Note*, The Kingdom of Chriſt is and will be a growing Kingdom, like the Light of the Morning, like the Grain of Muſtard-ſeed. (2.) He was not at all *diſpleas'd*, that the Effect of this was the diminiſhing of his own Intereſt; *I muſt decreaſe.* Created Excellencies are under this Law, they *muſt decreaſe*; *I have ſeen an End of all Perfection.* *Note*, 1. The ſhining forth of the Glory of Chriſt eclipſeth the Luſtre of all other Glory. The Glory that ſtands *in Competition* with Chriſt, that of the World and the Fleſh, decreaſeth and loſeth Ground in the Soul, as the Knowledge and Love of Chriſt increaſe and get ground; but it is here ſpoken of that which is *ſubſervient* to him. As the Light of the Morning increaſeth, that of the Morning-Star decreaſeth. 2. If our Diminution and Abaſement may but in the leaſt contribute to the Advancement of Chriſt's Name, we muſt chearfully ſubmit to it, and be content to be *any thing*, to be *nothing*, ſo that Chriſt may be *all.*

Secondly, *John Baptiſt* here *advanceth* Chriſt, and inſtructs his Diſciples concerning him, that they might be ſo far from grieving that ſo many come to him, that they might come to him themſelves.

1. He inſtructs them concerning the *Dignity of Chriſt's Perſon*, *v.* 31. *He that cometh from above*, that *cometh from Heaven, is above all.* Here, (1.) He ſuppoſeth his Divine Original, that he came *from above*, from *Heaven*, which ſpeaks not only his Divine Extraction, but his Divine Nature. He had a being before his Conception, a heavenly Being. None but he that came from Heaven, was fit to ſhew us the Will of Heaven, or the Way to Heaven. When God would ſave Man, he *ſent from above.* (2.) Hence he infers his Sovereign Authority, he is *above all*; above all Things, and all Perſons, *God over all, bleſſed for evermore.* 'Tis daring Preſumption to diſpute Precedency with him. When we come to ſpeak of the Honours of the Lord Jeſus, we find they tranſcend all Conception and Expreſſion, and we can ſay but this, He is *above all.* 'Twas ſaid of *John Baptiſt*, there *was not a greater came from Heaven.* His Deſcent from Heaven put ſuch a Dignity upon him, as he was not diveſted of by his being made Fleſh; ſtill he was *above all.*

This he further illuſtrates by the Meanneſs of thoſe, who ſtood in Competition with him; *He that is of the Earth is earthly*, ὁ ὢν ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐστι, *He that is of the Earth is of the Earth*; he that has his Original of the Earth, has his Food out of the Earth, has his Converſe with earthly things, and his Concern is for them. *Note*, 1. Man has his Riſe out of the Earth; not only *Adam* at firſt, but we alſo ſtill are *formed out of the Clay*, Job 33. 6. Look to the Rock whence we were hewn. 2. Man's Conſtitution is therefore *earthly*; not only his Body frail and mortal, but his Soul corrupt and carnal, and its Bent and Biaſs ſtrong towards earthly things. The Prophets and Apoſtles were of the ſame Mould with other Men; they were but *earthen Veſſels*, tho' they had a rich Treaſure lodg'd in them; and ſhall theſe be ſet up as Rivals with Chriſt? *Let the Potſherds ſtrive with the Potſherds of the Earth*, but let them not cope with him that *came from Heaven.*

2. Concerning the *Excellency and Certainty of his Doctrine.* His Diſciples were diſpleas'd, that Chriſt's Preaching was admir'd and attended upon more than his; but he tells them there was Reaſon enough for it. For,

1. He, for his part, *ſpoke of the Earth*, and ſo do all thoſe that are *of the Earth.* The Prophets were Men, and ſpoke like Men, *of themſelves* they could not ſpeak, but *of the Earth*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. The Preaching of the Prophets, and of *John*, was but low and flat, compared with Chriſt's Preaching; as Heaven is high above the Earth, ſo were his Thoughts above theirs. By them God ſpoke *on Earth*, but in Chriſt he ſpeaketh *from Heaven.*

2. But he that cometh from Heaven, is not only in his Perſon, but in his Doctrine, above all the Prophets that ever liv'd on Earth; none teacheth like him. The Doctrine of Chriſt is here recommended to us,

(1.) As infallibly *ſure* and *certain*, and to be entertain'd accordingly, *v.* 32. *What he hath ſeen and heard, that he teſtifieth.* See here, (1.) Chriſt's Divine Knowledge; he teſtified nothing but *what he had ſeen and heard*, what he was perfectly appriz'd of, and throughly acquainted with. What he diſcover'd of the Divine Nature, and of the inviſible World, was what he had *ſeen*; what he reveal'd of the Mind of God, was what he had *heard* immediately from him, and not at ſecond-hand. The Prophets teſtified what was made known to them in Dreams and Viſions, by the Mediation of Angels, but not what they had ſeen and heard. *John* was the Crier's *Voice*, that ſaid, *Make room for the Witneſs*, and *keep Silence*, while the Charge is given; but then leaves it to the Witneſs to give in his Teſtimony himſelf, and the Judge to give the Charge himſelf. The Goſpel of Chriſt is not a doubtful Opinion, like an Hypotheſis, or new Notion in Philoſophy, which every one is at liberty to believe, or not; but it is a Revelation of the Mind of God, which is of *eternal Truth* in it ſelf, and of *infinite Concern* to us. (2.) His Divine Grace and Goodneſs; that which he had *ſeen* and *heard*, becauſe he knew it nearly concern'd us, he was pleas'd to make known to us. What *Paul* had ſeen and heard in the third Heavens, he could not teſtify, 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. but Chriſt knew how to utter what he had *ſeen and heard.* Chriſt's Preaching, is here called his *teſtifying*, to note, (1.) The *convincing Evidence* of it; 'twas not *reported* as News by hearſay, but it was *teſtified* as Evidence given in Court, with great Caution and Aſſurance. (2.) The affectionate Earneſtneſs of the Delivery of it; 'twas teſtified with Concern and Importunity, as *Acts* 18. 5.

From the *Certainty* of Chriſt's Doctrine, *John* takes Occaſion, (1.) To lament the Infidelity of the moſt of Men; tho' he teſtifies what is infallibly true, yet *no Man receiveth his Teſtimony*, i. e. very few, next none, none in compariſon with thoſe that refuſe it. They receive it not, they will not hear it, they do not heed it, or give credit to it. This he ſpeaks of, not only as Matter of *Wonder*, that ſuch a Teſtimony ſhould not be receiv'd; Who hath believed our Report? how ſtupid and fooliſh is the greateſt Part of Mankind, what Enemies to themſelves! But as Matter of *Grief*; *John*'s Diſciples griev'd that *all Men came to Chriſt*, v. 26. they thought his Followers too many. But *John* grieves that *no Man came to him*, he thought them too few. *Note*, The Unbelief of Sinners is the Grief of Saints. 'Twas for this that St. *Paul* had *great Heavineſs*, Rom. 9. 2. (2.) He takes Occaſion to commend the Faith of the choſen Remnant, v. 37. *He that hath received his Teſtimony* (and ſome ſuch there were, tho' very few) hath *ſet to his Seal that God is true*; God is true, tho' we do not *ſet our Seal* to it; let God be true, and every Man a Lyar; his Truth needs not our Faith to ſupport it, but by Faith we do ourſelves the Honour and Juſtice to ſubſcribe to his Truth, and hereby God reckons himſelf honour'd. God's Promiſes are all *Yea, and Amen*, by Faith we put our *Amen* to them; as *Rev.* 22. 20. Obſerve, He that receives the Teſtimony of Chriſt, ſubſcribes not only to the Truth of *Chriſt*, but to the Truth of *God*, for his Name is the *Word of God*; the Commandments of God, and the Teſtimony of Chriſt, are put together, *Rev.* 12. 17. By believing in Chriſt we ſet to our Seal, (1.) That God is true to all the Promiſes which he has made *concerning Chriſt*; that which he ſpake by the Mouth of *all his holy Prophets*; what he *ſware to our Fathers* is all accompliſh'd, and not one Iota or Tittle of it fallen to the Ground, *Luke* 1. 70, &c. *Acts* 13. 32, 33. (2.) That he is true to all the Promiſes he has made *in Chriſt*; we venture our Souls upon God's Veracity, being ſatisfied that he is *true*; we are willing to deal with him *upon Truſt*, and to quit all in this World for a Happineſs in Reverſion, and out of Sight. By this we greatly honour God's Faithfulneſs. Whom we *give Credit* to, we *give Honour to.*

(2.) 'Tis recommended to us as a *Divine* Doctrine; not his own, but *his that ſent him*, v. 39. *For he whom God hath ſent, ſpeaks the Word of God*, which he was ſent to ſpeak, and enabled to ſpeak, *for God giveth not the Spirit by Meaſure unto him.* The Prophets were as Meſſengers that brought Letters from Heaven; but Chriſt came under the Character of an *Embaſſador*, and treats with us as ſuch: For, (1.) He ſpoke the *Words of God*, and nothing he ſaid, ſavoured of human Infirmity; both Subſtance and Language were divine. He proved himſelf *ſent of God*, John 3. 1. and therefore his Words are to be receiv'd as the Words of God. By this Rule we may try the Spirits; thoſe that ſpeak *as the Oracles of God*, and propheſy *according to the Proportion of Faith*, are to be received as *ſent of God*. (2.) He ſpoke ſo as no other Prophet did; for *God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure to him.* None can ſpeak the *Words of God*, without the *Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 10, 11. The Old Teſtament Prophets had the Spirit, and in different Degrees, 2 *Kings* 2. 9, 10. But whereas God gave them the Spirit by *Meaſure*, 1 Cor. 12. 4. he gave him to Chriſt *without Meaſure*; all Fulneſs dwelt in him, the Fulneſs of the Godhead, an unmeaſurable Fulneſs. The Spirit was not in Chriſt as in a Veſſel, but as in a Fountain, as in a bottomleſs Ocean. "The Prophets that had the Spirit in a limited "manner, only with reſpect to ſome particular Revelation, "ſometimes ſpake *of themſelves*, but he that had the Spirit al-"ways reſiding in him without ſtint, always ſpoke *the Words of* "*God.* So Dr. *Whitby*.

3. Concerning *the Power and Authority he is inveſted with*, which gives him the Preheminence above all others, and a more excellent Name than they.

1. He is the *beloved Son of the Father*, v. 35. *The Father loveth the Son.* The Prophets were faithful as Servants, but Chriſt as a Son; they were employ'd as Servants, but Chriſt *beloved* as a Son, always *his Delight*, Prov. 8. 30. The Father was well pleas'd in him; not only he *did* love him, but he *doth* love him; he continued his Love to him, even in his Eſtate of Humiliation, lov'd him never the leſs for his Poverty and Sufferings.

2. He is *Lord of all.* The Father, as an Evidence of his Love to him, *hath given all things into his Hand.* Love is generous. The Father took ſuch a Complacency, and had ſuch a Confidence in him, that he conſtituted him the great *Feoffee in Truſt* for Mankind. Having given *him the Spirit without meaſure*, he gave him *all things*, for he was thereby qualified to be the Maſter and Manager of all. *Note*, It is the Honour of Chriſt, and the unſpeakable Comfort of all Chriſtians, that the Father hath *given all things* into the Hand of the Mediator. (1.) All *Power*; ſo 'tis explain'd, *Mat.* 28. 18. All the Works of Creation being put under his Feet, all the Affairs of Redemption are put into his Hand; he is Lord of all. Angels are his Servants, Devils are his Captives. He has *Power over all Fleſh*; the *Heathen* given *him for his Inheritance.* The Kingdom of Providence is committed to his Adminiſtration. He has Power to ſettle the Terms of the Covenant of Peace as the great *Plenipotentiary*, to govern his Church as the great *Law-giver*, to diſpenſe Divine Favours as the great *Almoner*, and to call all to account as the great *Judge*. Both the Golden Sceptre, and the Iron Rod are given into his Hand. (2.) All *Grace* is given into his Hand as the Channel of Conveyance; *all things*, i. e. all thoſe good Things which God intended to give to the Children of Men; *Eternal Life*, and all its Preliminaries. We are unworthy that the Father ſhould give thoſe things *into our Hands*, for we have made ourſelves the *Children of his Wrath*; he hath therefore appointed the *Son of his Love* to be Truſtee for us, and the things he intended for us, he gives *into his Hands*, who is worthy, and has merited both Honours for himſelf, and Favours for us. They are given *into his Hands*, by him to be given into ours. This is a great Encouragement to Faith, that the Riches of the New Covenant are depoſited in ſo ſure, ſo kind, ſo good a Hand, the Hand of him that purchaſed them for us, and us for himſelf; who is able to keep all that which both God and Believers have agreed to *commit to him.*

3. He is the Object of that Faith which is made the great Condition of eternal Happineſs, and herein he has the Preheminence above all others, *v.* 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath Life.* We have here the Application of what he had ſaid concerning Chriſt and his Doctrine, and it is the *Concluſion of the whole Matter.* If God has put this Honour upon the Son, we muſt by Faith give Honour to him. As God offers and conveys good things to us, by the *Teſtimony* of Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe Word is the Vehicle of Divine Favours; ſo we receive and partake of thoſe Favours, by *believing* the Teſtimony, and entertaining that Word as *true* and *good*; this way of *receiving* fitly anſwers that way of *giving*. We have here the Sum of that Goſpel, which is to be preached to every Creature, *Mark* 16. 16. Here is,

1. The bleſſed State of all true Chriſtians; *He that believes on the Son, hath everlaſting Life. Note*, 1. It is the Character of every true Chriſtian, that he believes on *the Son of God*; not only *believes him*, that what he ſaith is true, but believes *on him*, conſents to him, and confides in him. The Benefit of true Chriſtianity is no leſs than *Everlaſting Life*; that's it which Chriſt came to purchaſe for us, and confer upon us; it can be no leſs than the Happineſs of an immortal Soul *in* an immortal God. 3. True Believers, even now, *have* everlaſting Life; not only they ſhall have it hereafter, but they have it now. For, (1.) They *have* very good Security for it. 2. The Deed by which it paſſeth, is ſeal'd and deliver'd to them, and ſo they *have* it; 'tis put into the Hands of their Guardian for them, and ſo they have it, tho' the Uſe be not yet transferred into Poſſeſſion. They have the Son of God, and in him *they have Life*; and the Spirit of God the *Earneſt* of this Life. (2.) They have the comfortable *Foretaſtes* of it, in preſent Communion with God, and the Tokens of his Love. Grace is Glory begun.

2. The wretched and miſerable Condition of Unbelievers; *He that believeth not the Son*, is undone, ὁ ἀπειθῶν. The Word includes both *Incredulity*, and *Diſobedience.* An Unbeliever is one that gives not Credit to the Doctrine of Chriſt, nor is in Subjection to the Government of Chriſt. Now thoſe that will neither be *taught* nor *rul'd* by Chriſt, (1.) They *cannot be happy* in this World, or that to come; *he ſhall* not *ſee Life*, that Life which Chriſt came to beſtow. He ſhall not enjoy it, he ſhall not have any comfortable *Proſpect* of it, ſhall never come within ken of it, except to aggravate his Loſs of it. (2.) They *cannot but be miſerable*; the Wrath of God *abides upon* an Unbeliever. He is not only under the *Wrath of God*, which is as ſurely *the Soul's Death* as his Favour is *its Life*; but it *abides upon him.* All the Wrath he has made himſelf liable to, by the Violation of the Law, if not remov'd by the Grace of the Goſpel, is *bound* upon him. God's Wrath for his daily actual Tranſgreſſions, lights and lies upon him. Old Scores lie undiſcharged, and new ones added. Something done every Day to fill the Meaſure, and nothing to empty it. Thus the Wrath of God *abides*, for it is *treaſur'd up againſt the Day of Wrath.*

CHAP. IV.

It was more than any Thing elſe the Glory of the Land of Iſrael, *that it was* Immanuel's *Land*, Iſa. 8. 9. *Not only the Place of his Birth, but the Scene of his Preaching and Miracles. This Land, in our Saviour's Time, was divided into Three Parts:* Judea *in the South*, Galilee *in the North, and* Samaria *lying between them. Now in this Chapter, we have Christ in each of theſe Three Parts of that Land* 1. *Departing out of* Judea, *v.* 1—3. 2. *Paſſing through* Samaria, *which, tho' a Viſit* in tranſitu, *here takes up moſt Room.* (1.) *His coming into* Samaria, *v.* 4—6. (2.) *His Diſcourſe with the* Samaritan *Woman at a Well*, v. 7—26. (3.) *The Notice which the Woman gave of him to the City*, v. 27—30. (4.) *Chriſt's Talk with his Diſciples in the mean time*, v. 31—38. (5.) *The good Effect of this among the* Samaritans, *v.* 39—42. 3. *We find him reſiding for ſome Time in* Galilee, *v.* 43—46. *and his curing of a Nobleman's Son there, that was at death's door*, v. 46—54.

WHEN therefore the Lord knew how the Phariſees had heard that Jeſus made and baptized more diſciples than John, 2 (Though Jeſus himſelf baptized not, but *his* diſciples) 3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

We read of Chriſt's coming into *Judea*, chap. 3. 22. after he had kept the Feaſts at *Jeruſalem*; and now he left *Judea* four Months before Harveſt, as is ſaid here, *v.* 35. ſo that 'tis computed he ſtaid in *Judea* about ſix Months, to build upon the Foundation *John* had laid there. We have no particular Account of his Sermons and Miracles there, only in general, *v.* 1.

1. That he *made Diſciples*; he prevail'd with many to embrace his Doctrine, to follow him as a Teacher come from God. His Miniſtry was ſucceſsful, notwithſtanding the Oppoſition it met with, *Pſal.* 110. 3. μαθητὰς ποιεῖ, it ſignifies the ſame with μαθητεύω, to *Diſciple.* Compare *Gen.* 12. 5. *The Souls which they had gotten*; which they had *made*; ſo the Word is, which they had *made Proſelytes. Note*, It is Chriſt's Prerogative to *make Diſciples*: Firſt to bring them to his Foot, and then form and faſhion them to his Will. *Fit, non naſcitur Chriſtianus.* Tertull.

2. That he *baptiz'd* thoſe whom he *made Diſciples*; admitted them by *waſhing them with Water*; not himſelf, but by the Miniſtry of his Diſciples, *v.* 2. (1.) Becauſe he would put a difference between his Baptiſm and that of *John*, who baptized all himſelf; for he baptized as a Servant, Chriſt as a Maſter. (2.) He would apply himſelf more to Preaching-Work, which was the more excellent, 1 *Cor.* 1. 17. (3.) He would put Honour upon his Diſciples, by empowering and employing them to do it; and ſo train them up to further Services. (4.) If he had baptiz'd ſome himſelf, they would have been apt to value themſelves upon that, and deſpiſe others; which he would prevent, as *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 13, 14. (5.) He would reſerve himſelf for the Honour of baptizing with the Holy Ghoſt, *Acts* 1. 5. (6.) He would teach us, that the Efficacy of Sacraments depends not on any Virtue in the Hand that adminiſters them; as alſo, that what is done by his Miniſters, according to his Direction, he owns as done by himſelf.

3. That he made and baptized more *Diſciples than John*; not only more than *John* did at this time, but more than he had done at any time. Chriſt's Converſe was more winning than *John's*. His Miracles were convincing, and the Cures he wrought *gratis* very inviting.

4. That the *Phariſees* were inform'd of this; they heard what Multitudes he baptized; for they had from his firſt appearing a jealous Eye upon him, and wanted not Spies to give them notice concerning him. Obſerve, (1.) When the Phariſees thought they had got rid of *John*, (for he was by this time clapt up) and were pleaſing themſelves with that, *Jeſus* appears, who was a greater Vexation to them than ever *John* had been. The Witneſſes will riſe again. (2.) That which grieved them, was, that Chriſt made ſo many Diſciples. The Succeſs of the Goſpel exaſperates its Enemies, and it's a good Sign it is getting ground, when the Powers of Darkneſs are enrag'd againſt it.

5. That our Lord Jeſus knew very well what Informations were given in againſt him to the Phariſees. 'Tis likely the Informers were willing to have their Names concealed, and the *Phariſees* loth to have their Deſigns known; but none can dig ſo deep as to hide *their Counſels from the Lord*, Iſa. 29.15. and Chriſt is here call'd *the Lord*. He knew what was told the *Phariſees*, and how much 'tis likely it exceeded the Truth; for it is not likely that Jeſus had yet baptized *more than John*; but ſo the thing was repreſented, to make him appear the more formidable. See 2 *Kings* 6. 12.

6. That hereupon our Lord Jeſus *left Judea*, and *departed again* to go to *Galilee*.

1. He *left Judea*, becauſe he was likely to be perſecuted there, even to the Death, ſuch was the Rage of the Phariſees againſt him, and ſuch their impious Politicks to devour the Man Child in his Infancy. To eſcape their Deſigns, Chriſt quitted the Country, and went thither, where what he did would be leſs provoking than juſt under their Noſe. For (1.) His Hour was not yet come, (*John* 7. 38.) the Time fixed in the Counſels of God, and the Old Teſtament Prophecies for *Meſſiah's* being cut off. He had not finiſhed his Teſtimony, and therefore would not ſurrender or expoſe himſelf. (2.) The Diſciples he had gather'd in *Judea*, were not able to bear Hardſhips, and therefore he would not expoſe them. (3.) Hereby he gave an Example to his own Rule; *When they perſecute you in one City, flee to another.* We are not call'd to ſuffer, while we may avoid it without Sin; and therefore tho' we may not for our own Preſervation, change our Religion, yet we may change our Place. Chriſt ſecured himſelf not by Miracle, but in a Way *common to Men*, for the Direction and Encouragement of his ſuffering People.

2. He departed into *Galilee*, becauſe he had Work to do there, and many Friends and fewer Enemies. He went to *Galilee* now, (1.) Becauſe *John's* Miniſtry had now *made Way* for him there; for *Galilee*, which was under *Herod's* Juriſdiction, was the laſt Scene of *John's* Baptiſm. (2.) Becauſe *John's* Impriſonment had now *made Room* for him there: That Light being now put under a Buſhel, the Minds of People would not be divided between him and Chriſt. Thus both the Liberties and Reſtraints of good Miniſters, are for the Furtherance of the Goſpel, *Phil.* 1. 12. But to what purpoſe doth he go into *Galilee* for Safety? *Herod*, the Perſecutor of *John*, will never be the Protector of Jeſus. *Chemnitius* here notes, *Pii in hâc vitâ quos fugiant, habent; ad quos vero fugiant, ut in tuto ſint, non habent, niſi ad te Deus, qui ſolus refugium noſtrum es.*

4 And he muſt needs go through Samaria. 5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his ſon Joſeph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jeſus therefore being wearied with *his* journey, ſat thus on the well: and it was about the ſixth hour. 7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jeſus ſaith unto her, Give me to drink. 8 For his diſciples were gone away into the city to buy meat. 9 Then ſaith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou being a Jew, askeſt drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. 10 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, If thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldeſt have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. 11 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, thou haſt nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then haſt thou that living water? 12 Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himſelf, and his children, and his cattel? 13 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, Whoſoever drinketh of this water, ſhall thirſt again: 14 But whoſoever drinketh of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt: but the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up unto everlaſting life. 15 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirſt not, neither come hither to draw. 16 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Go, call thy husband and come hither. 17 The woman anſwered and ſaid, I have no husband. Jeſus ſaid unto her, Thou haſt well ſaid, I have no husband: 18 For thou haſt had five husbands, and he whom thou now haſt is not thy husband: in that ſaidſt thou truly. 19 The woman ſaith unto him, Sir, I peceive that thou art a prophet: 20 Our fathers worſhipped in this mountain; and ye ſay, that in Jeruſalem is the place where men ought to worſhip. 21 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye ſhall neither in this mountain, nor at Jeruſalem, worſhip the Father. 22 Ye worſhip ye know not what: we know what we worſhip: for ſalvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth; for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him. 24 God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip *him* in ſpirit and in truth. 25 The woman ſaith unto him, I know that Meſſias cometh, which is called Chriſt: when he is come, he will tell us all things. 26 Jeſus ſaith unto her, I that ſpeak unto thee am *he*.

We have here an account of the Good Chriſt did in *Samaria*, when he paſſed through that Country in his way to *Galilee*. The *Samaritans* both in *Blood* and *Religion* were *mongrel Jews*; the Poſterity of thoſe Colonies which the King of *Aſſyria* planted there after the Captivity of the ten Tribes, with whom the Poor of the Land that were left behind, and many other *Jews*, afterwards incorporated themſelves. They worſhipped the God of *Iſrael* only, to whom they erected a Temple on Mount *Gerizzim*, in competition with that of *Jeruſalem*. There was great Enmity between them and the *Jews*; the *Samaritans* would not admit Chriſt when they ſaw he was going to *Jeruſalem*, Luke 9. 53. The *Jews* thought they could not give him a worſe Name, than to ſay *He is a Samaritan.* When the *Jews* were in Proſperity, the *Samaritans* claim'd kindred to them, *Ezra* 4. 2. but when they were in Diſtreſs, they were *Medes* and *Perſians*: See *Joſeph. Antiq. l.* 11. *c.* 8. *l.* 12. *c.* 7. Now obſerve,

1. Chriſt's coming into *Samaria*. He charged his Diſciples not to *enter into any City of the Samaritans*, Mat. 10. 5. viz. not to preach the Goſpel, or work Miracles; nor did he here preach publickly, or work any Miracle, his Eye being to the *loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael*. But what Kindneſs he here did them, was *accidental*; 'twas only a *Crumb* of the Childrens Bread that uſually *fell from the Maſter's Table*.

1. His *Road* from *Judea* to *Galilee*, lay through the *Country* of *Samaria*, v. 4. *He muſt needs go thro' Samaria.* There was no other Way, unleſs he would have fetch'd a Compaſs on the other ſide *Jordan*, a great way about. The wicked and prophane are at preſent ſo intermix'd with God's *Iſrael*, that unleſs we go *out of the World*, we cannot avoid *going through* the Company of ſuch, 1 *Cor.* 5.10. We have therefore need of the Armour of Righteouſneſs on the Right Hand and on the Left, that we may neither give *Provocation* to them, nor contract *Pollution* by them. We ſhould not go into Places of Temptation, but when we *needs muſt*; and then we ſhould not reſide in them, but *haſten through* them. Some think that therefore Chriſt *muſt needs* go through *Samaria*, becauſe of the good Work he had to do there; a poor Woman to be converted, a loſt Sheep to be ſought and ſaved: This was Work his Heart was upon, and therefore he *muſt needs* go this Way. It was happy for *Samaria*, that it lay in *Chriſt's way*, which gave him an Opportunity

of calling on them; *When I paſſed by thee, I ſaid unto thee, live*, Ezek. 16. 6.

2. His Baiting Place happened to be at a *City of Samaria*. Now obſerve,

1. The Place deſcribed. 'Twas call'd *Sychar*; probably the ſame with *Sichem*, or *Shechem*, a Place which we read much of in the Old Teſtament. Thus are the Names of Places commonly corrupted by Tract of Time. *Shechem* yielded the firſt Proſelytes that ever came into the Church of *Iſrael*, Gen. 34. 29. and 35. 2. and now it is the firſt Place where the Goſpel is preached out of the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*; ſo Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves; as alſo, that the *Valley of* Achor, which was given for a *Door of Hope*, Hope to the poor *Gentiles*, ran along by this City, *Hoſ*. 2. 15. *Abimelech* was made King here; 'twas *Jeroboam*'s Royal Seat; but the Evangeliſt, when he would give us the Antiquities of the Place, takes notice of *Jacob*'s Intereſt there, which was more its Honour, than its crowned Heads. 1. Here lay *Jacob*'s Ground, the *Parcel of Ground which Jacob* gave to his Son *Joſeph*, whoſe Bones were buried in it, *Gen*. 48. 22. *Joſh*. 24. 32. Probably this is mentioned, to intimate that Chriſt, when he repos'd himſelf hard by here, took occaſion from the Ground which *Jacob* gave *Joſeph*, to meditate on the good Report which the Elders by Faith obtained. *Jerom* choſe to live in the Land of *Canaan*, that the Sight of the Places might affect him the more with Scripture Stories. 2. Here was *Jacob*'s Well which he digg'd, or at leaſt uſed for himſelf and his Family. We find no mention of this Well in the Old Teſtament, but the Tradition was, that it was *Jacob*'s Well.

2. The Poſture of our Lord Jeſus at this Place: *Being wearied with his Journey, he ſat thus on the Well*. We have here our Lord Jeſus,

1. Labouring under the common Fatigue of Travellers: He was *wearied with his Journey*. Tho' it was yet but the ſixth Hour, and he had perform'd but half his Day's Journey, yet he was weary; or, *becauſe* it was the ſixth Hour, the Time of the Heat of the Day, therefore he was weary. Here we ſee, (1.) That he was a *true Man*, and ſubject to the common Infirmities of the human Nature. Toil came in with Sin, *Gen*. 3. 19. and therefore Chriſt having made himſelf a Curſe for us, ſubmitted to it. (2.) That he was a *poor Man*, elſe he might have travelled on Horſeback, or in a Chariot. To this Inſtance of Meanneſs and Mortification he humbled himſelf for us, that he went all his Journies on foot. When *Servants* were on *Horſes*, *Princes walked as Servants on the Earth*, Eccl. 10. 7. When we are carry'd eaſily, let us think on the Wearineſs of our Maſter. (3.) It ſhould ſeem he was but a *tender Man*, and not of a robuſt Conſtitution; it ſhould ſeem his Diſciples were not tired, for they went into the Town without any Difficulty, when their Maſter ſat down, and could not go a Step further. Bodies of the fineſt Mold are moſt ſenſible of Fatigue, and can worſt bear it.

4. We have him here betaking himſelf to the common Relief of Travellers; *being wearied, he ſat thus on the Well*. (1.) He ſat *on the Well*, an *uneaſy Place*, cold and hard; he had no Coach, no eaſy Chair to repoſe himſelf in, but took to that which was *next Hand*, to teach us not to be nice and curious in the Conveniencies of this Life, but content with *mean Things*. (2.) He ſat *thus*, in an *uneaſy Poſture*; ſat careleſly; (*incurioſe & neglectim*) or, he ſat *ſo*, as People that are wearied with Travelling uſe to ſit.

2. His Diſcourſe with a *Samaritan* Woman, which is here recorded at large, while Chriſt's Diſpute with the Doctors, and his Diſcourſe with *Moſes* and *Elias* on the Mount, are bury'd in ſilence.

This Diſcourſe is reducible to four Heads.

Firſt, They diſcourſe *concerning the Water*, v. 7—15. Notice is firſt taken of the Circumſtances that gave occaſion to this Diſcourſe.

1. There comes a *Woman* of *Samaria* to *draw Water*. This intimates her Poverty, ſhe had no Servant to be a *Drawer of Water*; and her Induſtry, ſhe would do it herſelf. See here, (1.) How God owns and approves of honeſt humble Diligence in our Places. Chriſt was made known to the Shepherds when they were keeping their Flock. (2.) How the Divine Providence brings about glorious Purpoſes by Events which ſeem to us fortuitous and accidental. This Woman's meeting with Chriſt at the Well, may mind us of the Stories of *Rebekah*, *Rachel*, and *Jethro*'s Daughter, who all met with Husbands, good Husbands, no worſe than *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, and *Moſes*, when they came to the Wells for Water. (3.) How the preventing Grace of God ſometimes brings People unexpectedly under the Means of Converſion and Salvation. He is found of them that ſought him not.

2. His Diſciples were *gone away into the City to buy Meat*. Hence learn a Leſſon, (1.) Of Juſtice and Honeſty. The Meat Chriſt eat, he bought and paid for, as *Paul*, 2 Theſ. 3. 8. (2.) Of daily Dependance upon Providence; Take no Thought for the Morrow. Chriſt did not go into the City to eat, but ſent his Diſciples to fetch his Meat thither; not becauſe he ſcrupled eating in a *Samaritan* City; but, (1.) Becauſe he had a good Work to do at that Well, which might be done while they were *catering*. 'Tis Wiſdom to fill up our vacant Minutes with that which is good, that the *Fragments* of Time may *not be loſt*. *Peter*, while his Dinner was getting, fell into a Trance, *Acts* 10. 12. (2.) Becauſe it was more private and retir'd, more cheap and homely to have his Dinner brought him hither, than to go into the Town for it. Perhaps his Purſe was low, and he would teach us *good Husbandry*; to *ſpend* according to what we *have*, and not go beyond it: However, he would teach us not to affect great Things. Chriſt could eat his Dinner as well upon a *Draw-Well*, as in the beſt Inn in the Town. Let us *comport* with our Circumſtances.

Now this gave Chriſt an Opportunity of diſcourſing with this Woman about Spiritual Concerns, and he improv'd it; he often preached to Multitudes that crowded after him for Inſtruction, yet here he condeſcends to teach a ſingle Perſon, a Woman, a poor Woman, a Stranger, a *Samaritan*, to teach his Miniſters to do likewiſe; as thoſe that know what a glorious Atchievement it is to help to ſave, tho' but *one Soul*, from Death.

Let us obſerve the Particulars of this Diſcourſe.

1. Jeſus begins with a modeſt Requeſt for a Draught of Water; *Give me to drink*. He that *for our ſakes became poor*, here becomes a Beggar, that they who are in want, and cannot dig, may not be aſhamed to beg. Chriſt ask'd for it, not only becauſe he needed it, and needed her help to come at it, but becauſe he would draw on further Diſcourſe with her; and teach us to be willing to be beholden to the meaneſt when there is occaſion. Chriſt is ſtill begging in his poor Members, and a *Cup of cold Water*, like this here, given to them in his Name, ſhall not loſe its Reward.

2. The Woman, tho' ſhe doth not deny his Requeſt, yet quarrels with him, becauſe he did not carry on the Humour of his own Nation; *v.* 9. *How is it*? Obſerve, (1.) What a mortal Feud there was between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*; the *Jews have no Dealings with the* Samaritans. The *Samaritans* were the *Adverſaries of Judah*, Ezra 4. 1. were, upon all Occaſions, miſchievous to them. The *Jews* were extremely malicious againſt them, "look'd upon them as having no part in the "Reſurrection; excommunicated and curſed them by the ſe-"cret Name of God; by the glorious Writing of the Tables, "and by the Curſe of the Upper and Lower Houſe of Judg-"ment; with this Law, That no *Iſraelite* eat of any Thing "that is a *Samaritan*'s, for it is as if he eat Swines Fleſh." So Dr. *Lightfoot*, out of *Rabbi Tanchum*. *Note*, Quarrels about Religion are uſually the moſt implacable of all other. Men were made to *have Dealings* one with another; but if Men, becauſe one worſhips at one Temple, and another at another, will deny the Offices of Humanity and Charity, and common Civility, will be moroſe and unnatural, ſcornful and cenſorious, and this under colour of Zeal for Religion, they plainly ſhew, that however their Religion may be *true*, they are not *truly Religious*; but pretending to ſtickle for Religion, ſubvert the Deſign of it.

(2.) How ready the Woman was to upbraid Chriſt with the Haughtineſs and Ill-nature of the *Jewiſh* Nation: *How is it, that thou being a* Jew, *askeſt Drink of me*? By his Dreſs, or Dialect, or both, ſhe knew him to be a *Jew*, and *thinks it ſtrange* that he runs not to the ſame exceſs of Riot againſt the *Samaritans* with other *Jews*. *Note*, Moderate Men of all ſides, are (like *Joſhua*, and his Fellows, *Zech*. 3. 8.) *Men wondered at*. Two Things this Woman wonders at. (1.) That he ſhould ask this Kindneſs; for it was the Pride of the *Jews* that they would endure any Hardſhip, rather than be beholden to a *Samaritan*. 'Twas part of Chriſt's Humiliation, that he was born of the *Jewiſh* Nation, which was *now* not only in an *ill State*, ſubject to the *Romans*, but in an *ill Name* among the Nations: With what diſdain did *Pilate* ask, *Am I a Jew*? Thus he *made himſelf* not only *of no Reputation*, but of *ill Reputation*; but herein he has ſet us an Example of ſwimming againſt the Stream of common Corruptions. We muſt, like our Maſter, put on *Goodneſs*, and *Kindneſs*, tho' it ſhould be never ſo much the Genius of our Country, or the Humour of our Party, to be moroſe and ill-natured. This Woman expected that Chriſt ſhould be as other *Jews* were; but it is unjuſt to charge upon every individual Perſon, even the common Faults of the Community. No Rule, but has ſome Exceptions. (2.) She wonders he ſhould *expect to receive* this Kindneſs from her that was a *Samaritan*: You *Jews* could deny it to one of our Nation, and why ſhould we grant it to one of yours? Thus Quarrels are propagated endleſly by Revenge and Retaliation.

3. Chriſt takes this Occaſion to inſtruct her in Divine Things; *v.* 10. *If thou knewest the Gift of God, thou wouldſt have asked*. Obſerve, (1.) He waves her Objection of the Feud between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*, and takes no notice of it. Some Differences are beſt *heal'd* by being *ſlighted*, and by avoiding all Occaſions of *entering into Diſpute* about them. Chriſt will convert this Woman, not by ſhewing her that the *Samaritan* Worſhip was *Schiſmatical*, tho' really it was ſo, but by ſhewing her her own Ignorance and Immoralities, and her need of a Saviour. (2.) He poſſeſſeth her with an Apprehenſion that ſhe had now an Opportunity (a fairer Opportunity than ſhe was aware of) of gaining that which would be of unſpeakable Advantage to her. She had not the Helps that the *Jews* had, to diſcern the Signs of the Times, and therefore Chriſt tells her expreſly, ſhe had now a Seaſon of Grace; this was the *Day of her Viſitation*.

(1.) He hints to her what ſhe *ſhould know*, but was ignorant of; *If thou kneweſt the Gift of God*, that is, as the next Words explain it, *Who it is that ſaith, give me to drink*. If thou kneweſt *who I am*: She ſaw him to be a *Jew*, a poor weary Traveller, but he would have her know ſomething more concerning him than did yet appear. *Note*, (1.) Jeſus Chriſt is the *Gift of God*; the richeſt Token of God's Love to us, and the richeſt Treaſure of all Good for us. A *Gift*, not a Debt which we could demand from God; not a *Loan*, which he will demand from us again; but a Gift, a free Gift, *Joh.* 3. 16. (2.) It is an unſpeakable Privilege to have this Gift of God propos'd and offer'd to us; to have an Opportunity of embracing it. He who is the Gift of God, is now ſet before thee, and addreſſeth himſelf to *thee*; 'tis he that ſaith, *give me to drink*; this Gift comes a begging to thee. (3.) Tho' Chriſt is ſet before us, and ſues to us in and by his Goſpel, yet there are Multitudes that *know him not*. They know not who it is that ſpeaks to them in the Goſpel, that ſaith, *give me to drink*; they perceive not that 'tis the Lord that calls them.

(2.) He hopes concerning her, what ſhe would have done if ſhe had known him; to be ſure ſhe would not have given him ſuch a rude and uncivil Anſwer; nay, ſhe would have been ſo far from affronting him, that ſhe would have made her Addreſſes to him; *Thou wouldſt have ask'd*. *Note*, 1. Thoſe that would have any Benefit by Chriſt, muſt ask for it, muſt be earneſt in Prayer to God for it. 2. Thoſe that have a right Knowledge of Chriſt, will ſeek to him; and if we do not ſeek unto him, 'tis a Sign we do not know him, *Pſal.* 9. 10. 3. Chriſt knows what they that want the Means of Knowledge would have done, if they had had them, *Mat.* 11. 21.

(3.) He aſſures her what he would have done for her, if ſhe had applied herſelf to him. He *would have given thee* (and not have upbraided thee, as thou doſt me) *living Water*. By this living Water is meant the *Spirit*, who is not like the Water in the Bottom of the Well, which he ask'd for ſome of, but like *living* or *running* Water, which was much more valuable. *Note*, 1. The Spirit of Grace is as *living Water*; ſee *John* 7. 38. Under this Similitude the Bleſſings of the Meſſiah had been promis'd in the Old Teſtament, *Iſa.* 12. 3. and 35. 7. and 44. 3. and 55. 1. *Zech.* 14. 8. The Graces of the Spirit, and his Comforts, ſatiſfy the thirſting Soul, that knows its own Nature and Neceſſity. 2. Jeſus Chriſt *can* and *will* give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him; for he *receiv'd* that he might *give*.

4. The Woman objects againſt, and cavils at the gracious Intimation Chriſt gave her; *v.* 11, 12. *Thou haſt nothing to draw with*; and beſides, *Art thou greater than our Father Jacob?* What he ſpoke figuratively, ſhe took literally; *Nicodemus* did ſo too. See what confus'd Notions they have of ſpiritual Things, who are wholly taken up with the Things that are ſenſible. Some reſpect ſhe pays to his Perſon, in calling him *Sir*, or *Lord*; but little reſpect to what he ſaid, which ſhe doth but banter.

1. She doth not think him capable of furniſhing her with any Water, no, not this in the Well, that is juſt at hand: *Thou haſt nothing to draw with, and the Well is deep.* This ſhe ſaid, not knowing the Power of Chriſt, for he who *cauſeth the Vapours* to aſcend from the Ends of the Earth, needs *nothing to draw.* But there are thoſe who will truſt Chriſt no further than they can ſee him, and will not believe his Promiſe, unleſs the Means of the Performance of it be *viſible*; as if he were ty'd to our Methods, and could not draw Water without our Buckets. She asks ſcornfully, *Whence haſt thou this living Water?* I ſee not whence thou canſt have it. *Note*, The Springs of that living Water, which Chriſt has for thoſe that come to him, are ſecret and undiſcovered: The Fountain of Life is hid with Chriſt. Chriſt has enough for us, tho' we ſee not whence he hath it.

2. She doth not think it poſſible he ſhould furniſh her with any better Water than this, which ſhe could come at, but he could not; *Art thou greater than our Father* Jacob, *who gave us the Well*——

1. We will ſuppoſe the Tradition true, that *Jacob himſelf, and his Children, and Cattle did drink of this Well.* And we may obſerve from it, (1.) The Power and Providence of God, in the Continuance of the Fountains of Water from Generation to Generation, by the conſtant Circulation of the Rivers, like the Blood in the Body, *Eccl.* 1. 7. to which Circulation, perhaps the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, like the Pulſes of the Heart, doth contribute. (2.) The Plainneſs of the Patriarch *Jacob*, his Drink was Water, and he and his Children drank of the ſame Well with his Cattle.

2. Yet allowing that to be true, ſhe was out in ſeveral Things; As (1.) In calling *Jacob* Father. What Authority had the *Samaritans* to reckon themſelves of the Seed of *Jacob*? They were deſcended from that mix'd Multitude, which the King of *Aſſyria* had placed in the Cities of *Samaria*; what have they to do then with *Jacob*? Becauſe they were the *Invaders* of *Iſrael*'s Rights, and the unjuſt Poſſeſſors of *Iſrael*'s Lands; were they therefore the *Inheritors* of *Iſrael*'s Blood and Honour? How abſurd were thoſe Pretenſions? (2.) She is out in claiming this Well as *Jacob*'s Gift, whereas he did no more give it, than *Moſes* gave the *Manna*, John 6. 32. But thus we are apt to call the Meſſengers of God's Gifts, the Donors of them; and to look ſo much at the Hands they *paſs through*, as to forget the Hand they *come from*. *Jacob* gave it to his Sons, not to *them*. Yet thus the Church's Enemies not only *uſurp*, but monopolize the Church's Privileges. (3.) She was out in ſpeaking of Chriſt, as not worthy to be compared with our Father *Jacob*. An over-fond Veneration for Antiquity, make's God's Graces in the good People of our own Day to be ſlighted.

5. Chriſt anſwers this Cavil, and makes it out that the *living Water* he had to give, was far better than that of *Jacob*'s Well, *v.* 13, 14. Tho' ſhe ſpoke perverſly, Chriſt did not caſt her off, but inſtructed, and encouraged her. He ſhews her,

1. That the Water of *Jacob*'s Well yielded but a *tranſient* Satisfaction and Supply; *Whoſo drinketh of this Water, ſhall thirſt again.* 'Tis no better than other Water, 'twill quench the preſent Thirſt, but the Thirſt will return, and in a few Hours a Man will have as much *need*, and as much *deſire* of Water as ever he had. This ſpeaks, (1.) The *Infirmities* of our Bodies in this preſent State; they are ſtill *neceſſitous* and ever *craving*. Life is a *Fire*, a *Lamp*, which will ſoon go out, without continual Supplies of Fuel and Oil: The natural Heat preys upon itſelf. (2.) The *Imperfections* of all our Comforts in this World, they are not laſting, nor our Satisfaction in them remaining. Whatever Waters of Comfort we drink of, we ſhall *thirſt again.* Yeſterday's Meat and Drink will not do to-day's Work.

2. That the living Waters he would give, ſhould yield a laſting Satisfaction and Bliſs, *v.* 14. Chriſt's Gifts appear moſt valuable, when they come to be compared with the Things of this World; for there will appear no Compariſon between them. Whoever partakes of the Spirit of Grace, and the Comforts of the Everlaſting Goſpel, (1.) He ſhall *never thirſt*, he ſhall never want that which will abundantly ſatisfy his Soul's Deſires; they are *longing*, but not *languiſhing*. A *deſiring* Thirſt he has, nothing more *than* God, but ſtill more and more *of* God, but not a *deſpairing* Thirſt. (3.) Therefore he ſhall never thirſt, becauſe this Water that Chriſt gives *ſhall be in him a Well of Water.* He can never be reduced to Extremity, that has in himſelf a *Fountain* of Supply and Satisfaction. (1.) *Ever ready*, for it ſhall be *in him.* The Principle of Grace planted *in him* is the Spring of his Comfort; ſee *John* 7. 38. A good Man is *ſatisfied from himſelf*, for Chriſt *dwells in his Heart.* The Anointing abides in him; he needs not ſneak to the World for Comfort; the *Work*, and the *Witneſs* of the Spirit in the Heart, furniſheth him with a firm Foundation of Hope, and an over-flowing Fountain of Joy. (2.) *Never failing*, for it ſhall be in him a *Well of Water.* He that has at hand but a Bucket of Water, needs not thirſt as long as that laſts, but that will ſoon be *exhauſted*; but Believers have in them a *Well of Water*, over-flowing, ever flowing. The *Principles* and *Affections* which Chriſt's holy Religion *forms* in the Souls of thoſe that are captivated to the Power of it, are this *Well of Water.* (1.) 'Tis *ſpringing up*, ever in Motion, which ſpeaks the Actings of Grace ſtrong and vigorous. If good Truths *ſtagnate* in our Souls, like ſtanding Water, they do not anſwer the End of our receiving them: If there be a good Treaſure in the Heart, we muſt thence bring forth good Things. (2.) 'Tis ſpringing up *unto everlaſting Life*; which ſpeaks, (1.) The *Aims* of gracious Actings. A ſanctified Soul has its Eye upon Heaven; means that, deſigns that, doth all for that, will take up with nothing ſhort of that. Spiritual Life ſprings up towards its own Perfection in eternal Life. (2.) The *Conſtancy* of thoſe Actings, 'twill continue ſpringing up till it come to Perfection. (3.) The Crown of them, eternal Life at laſt. The living Water riſeth *from* Heaven, and therefore riſeth *towards* Heaven; ſee *Eccl.* 1. 7. And now, is not this Water better that that of *Jacob*'s Well?

6. The Woman (whether in jeſt or earneſt is heard to ſay) begs of him to give her ſome of this Water; *v.* 13. *Give me this Water, that I thirſt not.* (1.) Some think ſhe ſpeaks *tauntingly*, and ridicules what Chriſt had ſaid as meer ſtuff, and in deriſion of it; not *deſires*, but *challengeth* him to give her ſome of this Water. A rare Invention; 'twill ſave me a deal of *Pain* if I *thirſt not*, and a deal of *Pains* if I never *come hither to draw.* But, (2.) Others think 'twas a *well-meant*, but weak and ignorant Deſire. She apprehended that he meant ſomething very good and uſeful, and therefore ſaith *Amen* at a venture: *Whatever it be*, let me have it; *who will ſhew me any good?* And *Eaſe* or ſaving of Labour is a valuable Good to poor labouring People. *Note*, 1. Even thoſe that are weak and ignorant, may yet have ſome faint and fluctuating Deſires towards Chriſt and his Gifts, and ſome good Wiſhes of Grace and Glory. 2. Carnal Hearts, in their beſt Wiſhes, look no higher than carnal Ends. Give it me, ſaith ſhe, not that I may have everlaſting Life, which Chriſt propos'd, but that I *come not hither to draw.*

Secondly, The next Subject of Diſcourſe with this Woman, is *concerning her Husband*, v. 16, 17, 18. 'Twas not to let fall the Diſcourſe of the Water of Life, that Chriſt ſtarted this, as many who will bring in any *Impertinence* in Converſation, that they may drop a ſerious Subject; but it is with a gracious Deſign that Chriſt mentioned it. What he had ſaid concerning his Grace and eternal Life, he found had made little Impreſſion upon her, becauſe ſhe had not been convinced of Sin; therefore waving the Diſcourſe about the living Water, he ſets himſelf to awaken her Conſcience, to open the Wound of Guilt, and then ſhe would more eaſily apprehend the Remedy by Grace. And this is the Method of dealing with Souls; they muſt firſt be made *weary* and *heavy laden* under the Burthen of Sin, and then brought to Chriſt for Reſt; firſt prick'd to the Heart, and then heal'd. This is the Courſe of Spiritual Phyſick, and if we proceed not in this Order, we begin at the wrong End.

Obſerve, 1. How diſcreetly and decently Chriſt introduceth this Diſcourſe, *v.* 16. *Go call thy Husband and come hither.* How, (1.) This Order Chriſt gave her, had a *very good Colour. Call thy Husband*, that he may teach thee, and help thee to underſtand theſe Things, which thou art ſo ignorant of. The Wives that will learn, muſt *ask their Husbands*, 1 Cor. 14. 35. who muſt dwell with them, *as Men of Knowledge*, 1 Pet. 3. 7. *Call thy Husband*, that he may learn with thee; that then ye may be *Heirs together of the Grace of Life. Call thy Husband*, that he may be Witneſs to what paſſeth between us; Chriſt would thus teach us to *provide Things honeſt in the Sight of all Men*, and to ſtudy that which is of good Report. (2.) As it had a good Colour, ſo it had a *good Deſign*, for from hence he would take Occaſion to call her Sin to Remembrance. There is need of Art and Prudence in giving Reproofs; to fetch a Compaſs, as the Woman of *Tekoa*, 2 Sam. 14. 20.

2. How induſtriouſly the Woman ſeeks to evade the Conviction, and yet inſenſibly convicts herſelf, and e'er ſhe is aware, owns her Fault; ſhe ſaid, *I have no Husband.* Her Saying this, intimated no more, but that ſhe did not care to have her Husband ſpoken of, nor that Matter mentioned any more. She would not have her Husband come thither, leſt in further Diſcourſe, the Truth of the Matter ſhould come out to her Shame; and therefore pray go on to talk of ſomething elſe, *I have no Husband*; ſhe would be thought a *Maid* or a *Widow*, whereas, tho' ſhe had no Husband, ſhe was neither. The carnal Mind is very ingenious to *ſhift off* Convictions, and to keep them from faſtning; careful to *cover the Sin.*

3. How cloſely our Lord Jeſus brings home the Conviction to her Conſcience. 'Tis probable he ſaid more than is here recorded, for ſhe thought he told her all that ever ſhe did, *v.* 29. but that which is here recorded is concerning her Husbands: Here's (1.) A *ſurprizing Narrative* of her *paſt* Converſation; *thou haſt had five Husbands.* Doubtleſs it was not her *Affliction*, the burying of ſo many Husbands, but her *Sin*, that Chriſt intended to upbraid her with; either ſhe had *eloped* (as the Law ſpeaks) had *over-run* her *Husbands*, and married others; or by her undutiful, unclean diſloyal Carriage, had provoked them to *divorce her*; or by indirect Means had, contrary to Law, *divorc'd them.* Thoſe who make light of ſuch ſcandalous Practices as theſe, as no more but *nine Days Wonder*, and as if the Guilt were over as ſoon as the Talk is over, ſhould remember that Chriſt keeps Account of all. (2.) A ſevere Reproof of her preſent State of Life; *He whom thou now haſt, is not thy Husband:* Either ſhe was never married to him at all, or he had ſome other Wife; or which is moſt probable, her former Husband, or Husbands were living; ſo that in ſhort, *ſhe liv'd in Adultery.* Yet obſerve how mildly Chriſt tells her of it; he doth not call her a *Whore*, but tells her, *He with whom thou liveſt is not thy Husband*; and then leaves it to her own Conſcience to tell her ſo. *Note*, Reproofs are ordinarily *moſt profitable*, when they are *leaſt provoking.* (3.) Yet in this he puts a better Conſtruction than it would well bear, upon what ſhe ſaid, by way of Shuffle and Evaſion; *Thou* haſt well ſaid, *I have no Husband*; and again, in that *ſaidſt thou truly.* What ſhe intended as a *Denial of the Fact*, that ſhe had none with whom ſhe lived as a Husband, he favourably interpreted, or at leaſt turn'd upon her as a *Confeſſion of the Fault. Note*, Thoſe who would win Souls, ſhould *make the beſt* of them, whereby they may hope to *work* upon their *good Nature*; for if they *make the worſt* of them, they certainly *exaſperate* their *ill Nature.*

Thirdly, The next Subject of Diſcourſe with this Woman, is concerning *the Place of Worſhip*, v. 19—24. Where we may obſerve,

1. A Caſe of Conſcience propos'd to Chriſt, by the Woman, concerning the Place of Worſhip, *v.* 19, 20. And there,

1. The Inducement ſhe had to put this Caſe; *Sir, I perceive that thou art a Prophet.* She doth not deny the Truth of what he had charged her with, but by her Silence owns the Juſtice of the Reproof; nor is ſhe put into a Paſſion by it, as many are when they are touched in a ſore Place; doth not impute his Cenſure to the general Diſguſt the *Jews* had to the *Samaritans*; but (which is a rare Thing) can bear to be told of a Fault. But that is not all, ſhe goes further; (1.) She ſpeaks reſpectfully to him, calls him *Sir.* Thus ſhould we *honour* thoſe that deal faithfully with us. This was the Effect of Chriſt's Meekneſs in reproving her; he gave her no ill Language, and then ſhe gave him none. (2.) She acknowledges him to be a *Prophet*, one that had a Correſpondence with Heaven. *Note*, The Power of the Word of Chriſt in ſearching the Heart, and convincing the Conſcience of ſecret Sins, is a great Proof of its Divine Authority, 1 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. (3.) She deſires ſome further Inſtruction from him. Many that are not *angry* at their Reprovers, nor fly in their Faces, yet are *afraid* of them, and keep out of their Way; but this Woman was willing to have ſome more Diſcourſe with him that told her of her Faults.

2. The Caſe itſelf that ſhe propounded, concerning the *Place of Religious Worſhip in Publick.* Some think ſhe ſtarted this to ſhift off further Diſcourſe concerning her Sin. Controverſies in Religion often prove great Prejudices to ſerious Godlineſs: But it ſhould ſeem ſhe propos'd it with a good Deſign; ſhe knew ſhe muſt worſhip God, and deſired to do it aright; and therefore meeting with a Prophet, begs his Direction. *Note*, It is our Wiſdom to improve all Opportunities of getting Knowledge in the Things of God. When we are in Company with thoſe that are *fit to teach*, let us be *forward to learn*; and have a *good Queſtion* ready to put to thoſe who are able to give a *good Anſwer.*

It was agreed between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*, that God is to be worſhipped; thoſe who were ſuch Fools as to worſhip *falſe* Gods, yet were not ſuch Brutes as to worſhip *none.* And that Religious Worſhip is an Affair of great Importance: Men would not *contend* about it, if they were not *concerned* about it. But the Matter in variance was, *where* they ſhould worſhip God? Obſerve how ſhe ſtates the Caſe;

1. As for the *Samaritans, Our Fathers worſhipped in this Mountain*, near adjoining to this City, and this Well; there the *Samaritan* Temple was built by *Sanballat*; in favour of which ſhe inſinuates, (1.) That whatever the Temple was, the Place was Holy; 'twas Mount *Gerizzim*, the Mountain on which the Bleſſings were pronounced; and ſome think the ſame on which *Abraham* built his Altar, *Gen.* 12. 6, 7. and *Jacob* his, *Gen.* 33. 18. (2.) That it might plead Preſcription, for *our Fathers* worſhipped here. She thinks they have Antiquity, Tradition, and Succeſſion on their Side: A *vain Converſation* oft ſupports itſelf with this, that it was *received by Tradition from our Fathers.* But ſhe had little Reaſon to boaſt of *their Fathers*, for when *Antiochus* perſecuted the *Jews*, the *Samaritans*, for fear of ſharing with them in their Sufferings, not only renounced all Relation to the *Jews*, but ſurrender'd their Temple to *Antiochus*, with a requeſt that it might be dedicated to *Jupiter Olympius*, and call'd by his Name. *Joſeph. Antiqu.* l. 12. c. 7.

2. As to the *Jews*; Ye ſay, that *in Jeruſalem is the Place where Men ought to worſhip.* The *Samaritans* govern'd themſelves by the five Books of *Moſes*, and (ſome think) received *them only* as Canonical: Now tho' they found frequent mention there of the Place God would chuſe, yet they did not find it named there; and they ſaw the Temple at *Jeruſalem* ſtript of many of its ancient Glories, and therefore think themſelves at Liberty to ſet up another Place; Altar againſt Altar.

2. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Caſe of Conſcience, *v.* 21. &c. Thoſe that apply themſelves to Chriſt for Inſtruction, ſhall find him *Meek, to teach the Meek his Way.* Now here,

1. He puts *a ſlight* upon the Queſtion as ſhe had propos'd it, concerning the Place of Worſhip, *v.* 21. *Woman, believe me*, as a Prophet, and mark what I ſay, 'Thou art expecting the *Hour to come*, when either by ſome Divine Revelation, or ſome ſignal Providence, this Matter ſhall be decided in favour either of *Jeruſalem*, or of Mount *Gerizzim*; but I tell thee, the Hour is at hand, when it ſhall be no more a Queſtion; that which thou haſt been taught to lay ſo much weight on, ſhall be ſet aſide as a Thing *indifferent. Note*, It ſhould cool us in our Conteſts, to think that thoſe Things which now fill us, and which we make ſuch a Noiſe about, ſhall ſhortly *vaniſh*, and be *no more*; the very Things we are ſtriving about, are paſſing away. *The Hour comes, when ye ſhall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at* Jeruſalem, *worſhip the Father.* (1.) The Object of Worſhip is ſuppoſed to continue ſtill the ſame, *God*, as a Father; under that Notion the very Heathen worſhipped God, the *Jews* did ſo, and probably the *Samaritans.* (2.) But a Period ſhall be put to all Niceneſs, and all Differences about the Place of Worſhip. The approaching Diſſolution of the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy, and the erecting of the Evangelical State, ſhall ſet this Matter *at large*, and lay all *in common*, ſo that it ſhall be a Thing perfectly indifferent, whether in either of theſe Places, or any other, Men worſhip God, for they ſhall not be ty'd to any Place; neither *here* nor *there*, but *both*, and *any where*, and *every where. Note*, The Worſhip of God is not now under the Goſpel appropriated to any Place, as it was under the Law, but 'tis God's Will that Men pray every where, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. *Mal.* 1. 11. Our Reaſon teacheth us to conſult *Decency* and *Convenience* in the Places of our Worſhip; but our Religion gives no preference to one Place above another in reſpect of Holineſs, and Acceptableneſs to God. They who prefer any Worſhip, meerly for the ſake of the Houſe or Building in which it is perform'd (tho' it were as Magnificent, and as *ſolemnly* Conſecrated as ever *Solomon*'s Temple was) forget that the *Hour is come*, when there ſhould be no difference put in God's Account; no not between *Jeruſalem*, which *had been* ſo famous for Sanctity, and the Mountain of *Samaria*, which *had been* ſo infamous for Impiety.

2. He *lays a Streſs* upon other Things in the Matter of Religious Worſhip. When he made ſo light of the Place of Worſhip, he did not intend to leſſen our Concern about the Thing itſelf, which therefore he takes occaſion to diſcourſe of more fully.

1. As to the preſent State of the Controverſy, he *determines* againſt the *Samaritan* Worſhip, and in favour of the *Jews*, v. 22. He tells her here,

(1.) That the *Samaritans* are certainly *in the wrong*; not meerly becauſe they worſhipped in this Mountain, tho' while *Jeruſalem's* Choice was in force, that was ſinful, but becauſe they were out in the Object of their Worſhip; if the Worſhip itſelf had been as it ſhould be, its Separation from *Jeruſalem* might have been conniv'd at, as the *high Places* were in the beſt Reigns, but *ye worſhip ye know not what*; or, *that which ye do not know*; they worſhipped the God of *Iſrael*, the true God, *Ezr.* 4. 2. 2 *Kings* 17. 32. but they were ſunk into groſs Ignorance; they worſhipped him as the *God of that Land*, 2 Kings 17. 27, 33. as a local Deity, like the Gods of the Nations; whereas God muſt be ſerved *as God*, as the univerſal Cauſe and Lord. *Note*, Ignorance is ſo far from being the Mother of Devotion, that it is the Murtherer of it. Thoſe that worſhip God *ignorantly*, offer the *Blind for Sacrifice*, and it is the *Sacrifice of Fools*.

(1.) That the *Jews* were certainly *in the Right*. For,

(1.) *We know what we worſhip*. We go upon ſure Grounds in our Worſhip, for our People are catechiz'd and train'd up in the Knowledge of God, as he has revealed himſelf in the Scripture. *Note*, Thoſe who by the Scriptures have obtained ſome Knowledge of God (a *certain*, tho' not a *perfect* Knowledge) may worſhip him *comfortably* to themſelves, and *acceptably* to him, for they *know what they worſhip*. Chriſt elſewhere condemns the Corruptions of the *Jews* Worſhip, *Mat.* 15. 9. and yet here defends the Worſhip itſelf; the Worſhip may be *true*, where yet it is not *pure* and *entire*. Obſerve, our Lord Jeſus was pleas'd to reckon himſelf among the *Worſhippers* of God; *we worſhip*. *Tho' he were a Son* (and then are the Children free) *yet learned he this Obedience* in the Days of his Humiliation. Let not the greateſt of Men think the Worſhip of God below them, when the Son of God himſelf did not.

(2.) *Salvation is of the Jews*, and therefore they know what they worſhip, and what Ground they go upon in their Worſhip. Not that all the *Jews* were ſaved, or that it was not poſſible but that many of the Gentiles and *Samaritans* might be ſaved; for in *every Nation*, he that fears God, and works Righteouſneſs, is *accepted of him*. But, (1.) The Author of Eternal Salvation come of the *Jews*, and appears among them, *Rom.* 9. 8. and is ſent firſt to *bleſs* them. (2.) The Means of eternal Salvation are afforded to them. The *Word of Salvation* (Acts 13. 26.) was *of the Jews*. It was delivered to them, and was through them derived to other Nations. This was a ſure Guide to them in their Devotions, and they followed it, and therefore knew what they worſhipped. To them were committed the *Oracles of God*, *Rom.* 3. 2. and the *Service of God*, Rom. 9. 4. The *Jews* therefore being thus privileged and advanced, it was Preſumption for the *Samaritans* to vye with them.

2. He deſcribes the Evangelical Worſhip, and which only God would accept of, and be well pleas'd with; having ſhew'd that the Place is *indifferent*, he comes to ſhew what is *neceſſary* and *eſſential*; That we worſhip God *in Spirit and in Truth*, v. 23, 24. The Streſs is not to be laid upon the Place where we worſhip God, but with what *Mind* we worſhip him. *Note*, The moſt effectual Way to make up Differences in the *leſſer* Matters of Religion, is to be more *zealous* in the *greater*. They who daily make it the Matter of their *Care* to worſhip *God in the Spirit*, one would think ſhould not make it the Matter of their *Strife*, whether he ſhould be worſhipped here or there. Chriſt had juſtly preferr'd the *Jewiſh* Worſhip before the *Samaritan*, yet here he intimates the Imperfection of that. The Worſhip was *Ceremonial*, Heb. 9. 1, 10. The Worſhippers were generally *carnal*, and much Strangers to the *inward Part* of Divine Worſhip. *Note*, It is poſſible we may be better than our Neighbours, and yet not ſo good as we ſhould be. It concerns us to be right, not only in the *Objects* of our Worſhip, but in the *Manner* of it; and that's it which Chriſt here inſtructs us in. Obſerve,

1. The great and glorious Revolution which ſhould introduce this Change; *The Hour cometh, and now is*. The fixed ſtated Time, concerning which it was of old determined, when it ſhould come, and how long it ſhould laſt. The Time of its *Appearance* is *fix'd* to an Hour, ſo punctual and exact are the divine Counſels; the Time of its *Continuance* is *limited* to an Hour, ſo cloſe and preſſing is the Opportunity of Divine Grace, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. This Hour *cometh*, it is coming in its full Strength, Luſtre and Perfection, it *now is* in the Embryo and Infancy. The *perfect Day* is *coming*, and now it *dawns*. 2. The bleſſed Change itſelf. In Goſpel-times the *true Worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in Spirit, and in Truth*. As Creatures, we worſhip the Father of *all*: As Chriſtians, we worſhip *the Father of our Lord Jeſus*. Now the Change ſhall be, (1.) In the *Nature* of the Worſhip; Chriſtians ſhall worſhip God, not in the Ceremonial Obſervances of the Moſaick Inſtitution, but in *Spiritual* Ordinances, conſiſting leſs in *bodily Exerciſe*, and animated and invigorated more with a divine Power and Energy. The Way of Worſhip Chriſt has inſtituted is rational and intellectual, and refined from thoſe external Rites and Ceremonies with which the Old-Teſtament Worſhip was both *clouded* and *clogg'd*. This is called *true* Worſhip, in oppoſition to that which was *typical*: The Legal Services were *Figures of the true*, Heb. 9. 9, 24. They that revolted from Judaiſm to Chriſtianity, are ſaid to *begin in the Spirit, and end in the Fleſh*, Gal. 3. 3. Such was the Difference between Old Teſtament and New Teſtament Inſtitutions.

(2.) In the *Temper* and *Diſpoſition* of the Worſhippers; and ſo the *true* Worſhippers are good Chriſtians, diſtinguiſhed from Hypocrites; all *ſhould*, and they *will* worſhip God *in Spirit and in Truth*. 'Tis ſpoken of, *v.* 23. as their Character, and *v.* 24. as their Duty. *Note*, It is required of all that worſhip God, that they worſhip him *in Spirit and in Truth*. (1.) We muſt worſhip God *in Spirit*, Phil. 3. 3. We muſt depend upon *God's Spirit* for Strength and Aſſiſtance, laying our Souls under his Influences and Operations; we muſt devote *our own Spirits* to, and employ them in the Service of God, *Rom.* 1. 9. muſt worſhip him with Fixedneſs of Thought, and a Flame of Affection; with *all that is within us*. *Spirit* is ſometimes put for the new Nature, in oppoſition to the *Fleſh*, which is the corrupt Nature; and ſo to worſhip God *with our Spirit*, is to worſhip him *with our Graces*, Heb. 12. 28. (2.) *In Truth*, that is, in *Sincerity*; God requires not only the *inward Part* in our Worſhip, but *Truth in the outward Part*, Pſal. 51. 6. We muſt mind the Power more than the Form; muſt aim at God's Glory, and not to be *ſeen of Men*; draw near with a *true Heart*, Heb. 10. 22.

3. The Reaſons why God muſt be thus worſhipped.

1. Becauſe in Goſpel-times they, and they only, are accounted the *true* Worſhippers. The Goſpel erects a ſpiritual Way of Worſhip, ſo that the Profeſſors of the Goſpel are not true in their Profeſſion, do not live up to the Goſpel Light and Laws, if they do not worſhip God *in Spirit and in Truth*.

2. Becauſe *the Father ſeeketh ſuch Worſhippers of him*. This intimates, (1.) That ſuch Worſhippers are very rare, and ſeldom met with, *Jer.* 30. 21. The Gate of ſpiritual Worſhipping is ſtrait. (2.) That ſuch Worſhip is neceſſary, and what the God of Heaven inſiſts upon. When God comes to *enquire* for Worſhippers, the Queſtion will not be, Who worſhipped at *Jeruſalem*: But, who worſhipped in Spirit? That will be the Touchſtone. (3.) That God is greatly well pleaſed with, and graciouſly accepts of ſuch Worſhip, and ſuch Worſhippers. *I have deſired it*, Pſal. 132. 13, 14. Cant. 2. 14. (4.) That there has been, and will be, to the End, a Remnant of ſuch Worſhippers; his *ſeeking* ſuch Worſhippers, implies his *making* them ſuch; God is in all Ages gathering in to himſelf a Generation of ſpiritual Worſhippers.

3. Becauſe *God is a Spirit*. Chriſt came to *declare God* to us, *John* 1. 18. And this he has declared concerning him; he declared it to this poor *Samaritan* Woman, for the meaneſt are concerned to know God, and with this Deſign to rectify her Miſtakes concerning religious Worſhip; to which nothing would contribute more than the right Knowledge of God. *Note*, 1. *God is a Spirit*, for he is an infinite and eternal Mind, an intelligent Being, Incorporeal, Immaterial, Inviſible, and Incorruptible. 'Tis eaſier to ſay, what God is not, than what he is; a Spirit *has not Fleſh and Bones*; but *who knows the way of a Spirit*: If God were not *a Spirit*, he could not be *perfect*, nor infinite, nor eternal, independent, nor the Father of Spirits. (2.) The Spirituality of the Divine Nature is a very good Reaſon for the Spirituality of Divine Worſhip. If we don't worſhip God who is *a Spirit*, *in the Spirit*, we neither *give him the Glory due to his Name*, and ſo do not perform the *Act* of Worſhip; nor can we hope to obtain his Favour and Acceptance, and ſo we miſs of the *End* of Worſhip, *Mat.* 15. 8, 9.

Fourthly, The laſt Subject of Diſcourſe with this Woman, is concerning the *Meſſias*, v. 25, 26. Obſerve here,

1. The Faith of the Woman by which ſhe expected the *Meſſiah*; *I know that Meſſias cometh*——*and he will tell us all Things*. She had nothing to object againſt what Chriſt had ſaid; his Diſcourſe was, for ought ſhe knew, what might become the Meſſiah then expected; but *from him* ſhe ſhould receive it, and in the mean time thinks beſt to ſuſpend her Belief. Thus many have no Heart to the Price *in their Hand*, (Prov. 17. 16.) becauſe they think they have a better *in their Eyes*, and deceive themſelves with a Promiſe that they will learn that *hereafter*, which they neglect *now*. Obſerve here,

(1.) Whom ſhe expects; *I know that Meſſias cometh*. The *Jews* and *Samaritans*, tho' ſo much at variance, agreed in the Expectation of the *Meſſiah*, and his Kingdom. The *Samaritans* received the Writings of *Moſes*, and were no Strangers to the Prophets, nor to the Hopes of the Jewiſh *Nation*; thoſe who knew leaſt, knew this, that *Meſſias* was to come; ſo general and unconteſted was the Expectation of him; and at this time more rais'd than ever, for the Sceptre was departed from *Judah*, *Daniel*'s Weeks were near expiring, ſo that ſhe concludes, not only he will come, but ἔρχεται he *comes*, he is juſt at hand, *Meſſias which is called Chriſt*. The Evangeliſt, tho' he retains the *Hebrew* Word *Meſſiah*, which the Woman uſed, in honour to the holy Language, and to the *Jewiſh* Church, that uſed it familiarly, yet writing for the Uſe of the *Gentiles*, he takes care to render it by a *Greek* Word of the ſame Signification, *which is called Chriſt*, Anointed; giving an Example to the Apoſtle's Rule, that whatever is ſpoken in an unknown, or leſs vulgar Tongue, ſhould be *interpreted*, 1 Cor. 14. 27, 28.

(2.) What ſhe expects from him; *He will tell us all things* relating to the Service of God, which are needful for us to know; will tell us that which will ſupply our Defects, rectify our Miſtakes, and put an end to all our Diſputes. He will tell us the Mind of God fully and clearly, and keep back nothing. Now this implies an Acknowledgement, (1.) Of the Deficiency and Imperfection of the Diſcovery they now had of the Divine Will, and the Rule they had of the Divine Worſhip, it *could not make the Comers thereunto perfect*, and therefore they expected ſome great Advance and Improvement in matters of Religon, a Time of Reformation. (2.) Of the Sufficiency of the Meſſiah to make this Change; He will *tell us all Things*, which we want to know, and about which we wrangle in the dark. He will introduce *Peace*, by *leading us into all Truth*, and diſpelling the Miſts of Error. It ſeems this was the Comfort of good People in thoſe dark Times, that Light would ariſe; if they found themſelves at a loſs, and run a-ground, it was a Satisfaction to them to ſay, *When Meſſias comes, he will tell us all things*; as it may be to us now, with reference to his ſecond Coming; now we ſee through a Glaſs, but then *Face to Face.*

2. The Favour of our Lord Jeſus in making himſelf known to her, *v.* 26. *I that ſpeak to thee am he.* Chriſt did never make himſelf known ſo expreſly to any, as he did here to this poor *Samaritan*, and to the blind Man, *John* 9. 37. no not to *John Baptiſt*, when he ſent to him, *Mat.* 11. 4, 5. no not to the *Jews* when they challeng'd him to tell them whether he was the Chriſt, *John* 10.24. But (1.) Chriſt would thus put an Honour upon ſuch as were poor and deſpis'd, *Jam.* 2. 6. (2.) This Woman, for ought we know, had never any Opportunity of ſeeing Chriſt's Miracles, which were then the ordinary Method of Conviction. *Note*, To thoſe who have not the Advantage of the *external* Means of Knowledge and Grace, God hath *ſecret* Ways of making up the Want of them; we muſt therefore judge charitably concerning ſuch. God can make the Light of Grace ſhine *into the Heart*, even where he doth not make the Light of the Goſpel ſhine *in the Face.* (3.) This Woman was better prepared to receive ſuch a Diſcovery than others were; ſhe was big with Expectation of the Meſſiah, and ready to receive Inſtruction from him. Chriſt will manifeſt himſelf to thoſe, who with an honeſt humble Heart, deſire to be acquainted with him. *I that ſpeak to thee am he.* See here, 1. How near Jeſus Chriſt was to her, when ſhe knew not who he was, *Gen.* 28. 16. Many are lamenting Chriſt's Abſence, and longing for his Preſence, when at the ſame time he is ſpeaking to them. 2. How Chriſt makes himſelf known to us, by *ſpeaking to us. I that ſpeak unto thee* ſo cloſely, ſo convincingly, with ſuch Aſſurance, with ſuch an Authority, *I am he.*

27 ¶ And upon this came his diſciples, and marvelled
that he talked with the woman: yet no man ſaid, What
ſeekeſt thou? or why talkeſt thou with her? 28 The
woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into
the city, and ſaith to the men, 29 Come, ſee a man
which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the
Chriſt? 30 Then they went out of the city, and came
unto him. 31 ¶ In the mean while his diſciples prayed
him, ſaying, Maſter eat. But he ſaid unto them, I
have meat to eat that ye know not of. 33 Therefore
ſaid the diſciples one to another, Hath any man brought
him *ought* to eat? 34 Jeſus ſaith unto them, My meat
is to do the will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his
work. 35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and
then cometh harveth? behold I ſay unto you, Lift up
your Eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white
already to harveſt. 36 And he that reapeth, receiveth
wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both
he that ſoweth, and he that reapeth may rejoice together.
37 And herein is that ſaying true, One ſoweth,
and another reapeth. 38 I ſent you to reap that whereon
ye beſtowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye
are entered into their labours. 39 ¶ And many of the
Samaritans of that city believed on him, for the ſaying
of the woman, which teſtified, He told me all that
ever I did. 40 So when the Samaritans were come
unto him, they beſought him that he would tarry
with them: and he abode there two days. 41 And
many more believed, becauſe of his own word: 42
And ſaid unto the woman, Now we believe, not becauſe
of thy ſaying: for we have heard him ourſelves,
and know that this is indeed the Chriſt, the Saviour of
the world.

We have here the Remainder of the Story, of what happen'd when Chriſt was in *Samaria*, after the long Conference he had with the Woman.

Firſt, The *Interruption given to this Diſcourſe*, by the Diſciples coming. 'Tis likely much more was ſaid than is recorded; but juſt when the Diſcourſe was brought to a head, when Chriſt had made himſelf known to her as the true *Meſſiah, then came the Diſciples.* The *Daughters of Jeruſalem* ſhall not *ſtir up nor awake my Love till he pleaſe.* (1.) They admired at Chriſt's Converſe with this Woman; marvelled that he talk'd thus earneſtly, (as perhaps they obſerv'd at a diſtance) with a Woman, a ſtrange Woman alone; he uſed to be more *reſerved*; eſpecially with a *Samaritan* Woman, that was not of the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of *Iſrael*; they thought their Maſter ſhould be as ſhy of the *Samaritans* as the other *Jews* were, at leaſt that he ſhould not preach the Goſpel to them. They wonder'd he ſhould condeſcend to talk with ſuch a poor contemptible Woman, forgetting what deſpicable Men they themſelves were, when Chriſt firſt call'd them into Fellowſhip with himſelf. (2.) Yet they acquieſc'd in it, they knew it was for ſome good Reaſon, and ſome good End, which he was not bound to give them an account of, and therefore none of them asked, *What ſeekeſt thou?* or, *Why talkeſt thou with her?* Thus when particular Difficulties occur in the Word and Providence of God, it is good to ſatisfy ourſelves with this in general, that all is well which Jeſus Chriſt ſaith and doth. Perhaps there was ſomething *amiſs* in their *marvelling* that *Chriſt talked with the Woman*, and that it was ſomething like the Phariſees being offended at his eating with Publicans and Sinners. But whatever they *thought*, they ſaid *nothing*; *If thou haſt thought Evil* at any time, *lay thy Hand upon thy Mouth*, to keep that evil Thought from turning into an evil Word, *Prov.* 30.32. *Pſal.*39. 1,2,3.

Secondly, The Notice which the Woman gave to her Neighbours, what an extraordinary Perſon ſhe had happily met with, *v.* 28,29. Obſerve here,

1. How ſhe *forgot her Errand to the Well*, v. 28. Therefore becauſe the Diſciples were come, and broke up the Diſcourſe, and perhaps ſhe obſerved they were not pleaſed with it, ſhe *went her way.* She withdrew in Civility to Chriſt, that he might have leiſure to *eat his Dinner.* She delighted in his Diſcourſe, but would not be *rude*; every thing is beautiful in its Seaſon. She ſuppoſed that Jeſus when he had din'd, would go forward in his Journey, and therefore haſtened to tell her Neighbours, that they might come quickly; *Yet a little while is the Light with you.* See how ſhe improv'd time; when one good Work was done, ſhe applied herſelf to another. When Opportunities of *getting good* ceaſe, or are interrupted, we ſhould ſeek Opportunities of *doing good*; when we have done *hearing* the Word, then is a time to be *ſpeaking* of it.

Notice is taken of her *leaving her Water-Pot*, or *Pail.* (1.) She left it in Kindneſs to Chriſt, that he might have to drink with his Dinner; and fair Water was his drink; he turn'd Water into Wine for others, but not for himſelf. Compare this with *Rebecca*'s Civility to *Abraham*'s Servant, *Gen.* 24. 18. and ſee that Promiſe, *Mat.* 10.42. (2.) She left it, that ſhe might make the more haſte into the City, to carry thither theſe good Tidings. Thoſe whoſe Buſineſs it is to publiſh the Name of Chriſt, muſt not encumber or entangle themſelves with any thing that will retard or hinder them therein. When the Diſciples were to be made Fiſhers of Men, they muſt *forſake all.* (3.) She left her Water-Pot as one *careleſs of it*, being wholly taken up with better Things. *Note*, Thoſe who are brought to the Knowledge of Chriſt, will ſhew it by a holy Contempt of this World, and the Things of it. And thoſe who are newly acquainted with the Things of God, muſt be *excus'd*, if at firſt they be ſo taken up with that new World, into which they are brought, that the things of this World ſeem to be for a time wholly neglected. Mr. *Hilderſham*, in one of his Sermons on this Verſe, from this Inſtance, largely juſtifies thoſe, who leave their worldly Buſineſs on Week-days to go hear Sermons.

2. How ſhe *minded her Errand to the Town*, for her Heart was upon it; ſhe *went into the City*, and ſaid to *the Men*, probably the Aldermen, the Men in Authority, whom, it may be, ſhe found met together upon ſome publick Buſineſs; or to *the Men*, *i. e.* to every Man ſhe met in the Streets; ſhe proclaim'd it in the chief Places of Concourſe; *Come, ſee a Man which told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Chriſt?* Obſerve,

1. How *ſolicitous* ſhe was to *bring her Friends and Neighbours* acquainted with Chriſt. When ſhe had found that Treaſure, ſhe *called together her Friends and Neighbours*, as *Luke* 15. 4. not only to rejoice with her, but to ſhare with her, knowing there was enough to enrich herſelf, and all that would partake with her. *Note*, They that have been themſelves with Jeſus, and have found Comfort in him, ſhould do all they can to bring others to him; has he done us the Honour to make himſelf known to us, let us do him the Honour to make him known to others; nor can we do ourſelves a greater Honour: This Woman becomes an Apoſtle, *Quæ ſcortum fuerat egreſſa, regreditur magiſtra Evangelica*, ſaith *Aretius.* Chriſt had bid her *call her Husband*, which ſhe thought was warrant enough to *call every body:* She went into the *City*, the City where ſhe dwelt, among her Kinsfolks and Acquaintance. Tho' every Man is my Neighbour that I have Opportunity of doing good to, yet I have moſt *Opportunity*, and therefore lie under the moſt *Obligations* to do good to thoſe that live near me. *Where the Tree falls*, there let it be made uſeful.

2. How fair and ingenuous ſhe was in the Notice ſhe gave them concerning this Stranger ſhe had met with.

(1.) She *tells them* plainly what induced her to admire him; *He has told me all things that ever I did.* No more is recorded but what he told her of her Husbands; but it is not improbable he had told her more of her Faults. Or, his telling her of that which ſhe knew he could not by any ordinary Means come to the Knowledge of, convinc'd her that he could have told her of all that ever ſhe did. If he has a *Divine* Knowledge, it muſt be an Omniſcience. He told her that which none knew but God, and her own Conſcience. Two things affected her, (1.) The *Extent of his Knowledge*; we ourſelves cannot tell *all things that ever we did*; many things paſs *unheeded*, and more paſs away, and are forgotten, but Jeſus Chriſt knows all the Thoughts, Words and Actions of all the Children of Men. See *Heb.* 4. 13. He hath ſaid, *I know thy Works.* (2.) The *Power of his Word*; this made a great Impreſſion upon her, that he told her her *ſecret Sins*, with ſuch an unaccountable Power and Energy, that being told of one, ſhe is *convinc'd of all, and judg'd of all.* She doth not ſay, Come ſee a Man that has told me ſtrange Things concerning religious Worſhip, and the Laws of it; that has decided the Controverſy between this Mountain and *Jeruſalem*, a Man that calls himſelf the *Meſſias*, but come ſee a Man that has told me of my Sins; ſhe faſtens upon that part of Chriſt's Diſcourſe, which one would think ſhe ſhould have been moſt ſhy of repeating: but experimental Proofs of the Power of Chriſt's Word and Spirit, are of all other the moſt cogent and convincing; and that *Knowledge of Chriſt*, into which we are led by the Conviction of Sin and Humiliation, is moſt likely to be *ſound* and *ſaving.*

(2.) She *invites them to come and ſee him* whom ſhe had conceiv'd ſo high an Opinion of. Not barely come and look upon him; ſhe doth not invite them to him as a *Shew*, but come and converſe with him, come and *hear his Wiſdom* as I have done, and you'll be of my mind. She would not undertake to manage the Arguments, which had convinc'd her in ſuch a manner as to convince others; all that ſee the Evidence of Truth themſelves, are not able to make others ſee it; but come and talk with him, and you'll find ſuch a Power in his Word, as far exceeds all other Evidence. *Note*, Thoſe who can do little elſe towards the Conviction and Converſion of others, may and ſhould bring them to thoſe means of Grace, which they themſelves have found effectual. Jeſus was now at the Town's End, now come ſee him. When Opportunities of getting the Knowledge of God are brought to our Doors, we are inexcuſable if we neglect them; ſhall we not go over the Threſhold to ſee him, whoſe Day Prophets and Kings deſired to ſee?

(3.) She reſolves to *appeal to themſelves*, and their own Sentiments upon the Trial; *Is not this the Chriſt?* She does not peremptorily ſay, He is the Meſſiah, how clear ſoever ſhe was in her own Mind; and yet ſhe very prudently mentions the *Meſſiah*, whom otherwiſe they would not have thought of, and then refers it to themſelves; ſhe will not *impoſe* her Faith upon them, but only *propoſe* it to them. By ſuch fair, but forcible Appeals as theſe, Mens Judgments and Conſciences are ſometimes taken hold of, e'er they are aware.

3. What Succeſs ſhe had in this Invitation, *v.* 30. They *went out of the City and came to him.* Tho' it might ſeem very improbable, that a Woman of ſo *ſmall* a Figure, and ſo *ill* a Character, ſhould have the Honour of the firſt Diſcovery of the *Meſſiah* among the *Samaritans*, yet it pleaſed God to incline their Hearts to take notice of her Report, and not to ſlight it as an idle Tale. Time was, when Lepers were the firſt that brought Tidings to *Samaria*, of a great Deliverance, 2 *Kings* 7. 3, *&c.* They *came unto him*; did not ſend for him into the City to them, but, in token of their Reſpect to him, and the Earneſtneſs of their Deſire to ſee him, they *went out to him*: Thoſe that would know Chriſt, muſt meet him where he records his Name.

Thirdly, Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples, while the Woman was abſent, *v.* 31——34. See how induſtrious our Lord Jeſus was to *redeem Time*, to husband every Minute of it, and to *fill up* the Vacancies of it. When the Diſciples were gone into the Town, his Diſcourſe with the Woman was *edifying*, and ſuited to her Caſe; when ſhe was gone into the Town, her Diſcourſe with them was no leſs edifying, and ſuited to their Caſe; 'twere well if we could *thus* gather up the Fragments of Time, that none of it may be loſt.

Two Things are obſervable in this Diſcourſe:

1. How Chriſt *expreſſeth the Delight* which he himſelf had in his Work. His Work was to *ſeek and ſave* that which was loſt, to go about doing good. Now this Work we here find him wholly taken up with.

For, 1. He *neglected his Meat and Drink for his Work.* When he ſate down upon the Well he was *weary*, and needed Refreſhment; but this Opportunity of ſaving Souls made him forget his Wearineſs and Hunger. And he minded *his Food* ſo little, that, (1.) His Diſciples were forced to invite him to it; they *pray'd him*, they preſſed him, ſaying, *Maſter eat.* 'Twas an Inſtance of their *Love to him*, that they invited him, leſt he ſhould be fainty and ſick for want of ſome Support; but it was a greater Inſtance of his *Love to Souls*, that he needed Invitation; let us learn hence a holy Indifferency, even to the needful Supports of Life, in compariſon with ſpiritual Things. (2.) He minded it ſo little, that they ſuſpected he had Meat brought him in their Abſence, *v.* 33. *Has any Man brought him ought to eat?* He had ſo little Stomach to his Dinner, that they were ready to think he had din'd already. They that make Religion their Buſineſs, when any of its Affairs are to be attended, will prefer them before their Food; as *Abraham*'s Servant, that would not eat till he had told his Errand, *Gen.* 24. 33. and *Samuel*, that would not ſit down till *David* was anointed, 1 *Sam.* 16. 11.

2. He *made his Work his Meat and Drink.* The Work he *had done* in inſtructing the Woman; the Work he *had to do* among the *Samaritans*; the Proſpect he now had of doing good to many, this was *Meat and Drink* to him; 'twas the greateſt Pleaſure and Satisfaction imaginable. Never did a hungry Man, or an Epicure, expect a plentiful Feaſt with ſo much deſire, nor feed upon its Dainties with ſo much Delight, as our Lord Jeſus expected, and improv'd an Opportunity of doing good to Souls. Concerning this, he ſaith, (1.) That it was ſuch *Meat* as the Diſciples *knew not of.* They did not imagine that he had any Deſign or Proſpect of planting his Goſpel among the *Samaritans*; this was a piece of Uſefulneſs they never thought of. *Note*, Chriſt, by his Goſpel and Spirit, doth more good to the Souls of Men, than his own Diſciples *know of*, or *expect.* This may be ſaid of good Chriſtians too, who live by Faith, that they have Meat to eat, which others know not of; Joy, which a Stranger doth not intermeddle with. Now this Word made them aſk, *Has any Man brought him ought to eat?* So apt were even his own Diſciples to underſtand him after a corporal and carnal manner, when he uſed Similitudes. (2.) That the Reaſon why his Work was his Meat and Drink, was, becauſe it was his Father's Work, his Father's Will, *v.* 34. *My Meat is to do the Will of him that ſent me. Note*, (1.) The Salvation of Sinners is the *Will of God*, and the Inſtruction of them in order thereunto, is his *Work*: See 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. There's a choſen Remnant, whoſe Salvation is in a particular manner his Will. (2.) Chriſt was *ſent into the World* on this Errand, to bring People to God; to know him, and to be happy in him. (3.) He made this Work his Buſineſs and Delight. When his Body needed Food, his Mind was ſo taken up with this, that he forgot both Hunger and Thirſt, both Meat and Drink. Nothing could be more grateful to him than doing good: When he was invited to *Meat*, he went, that he might do good; for that was his Meat always. (4.) He was not only ready upon all Occaſions to go to his Work, but he was *earneſt*, and in care to go *through* it, and to *finiſh his Work*, in all the Parts of it. He reſolv'd never to quit it, or lay it down till he could ſay, *It is finiſh'd.* Many have Zeal to carry them *out* at firſt, but not Zeal to carry them *on* to the laſt; but our Lord Jeſus was intent upon *finiſhing his Work.* Our Maſter has herein left us an Example, that we may learn to do the Will of God as he did. (1.) With Diligence and cloſe Application, as thoſe that make a Buſineſs of it. (2.) With Delight and Pleaſure; in it as in our Element. (3.) With Conſtancy and Perſeverance; not only minding to *do*, but aiming to *finiſh* our Work.

2. See here, how Chriſt having expreſs'd his Delight in *his* Work, *excites* his Diſciples to *Diligence* in *their Work*; they were Workers with *him*, and therefore ſhould be Workers *like him*, and make their Work their *Meat* as he did. The Work they had to do, was to *preach the Goſpel*, and by it to ſet up the Kingdom of the Meſſiah. Now this Work he here compares to *Harveſt-Work*, which is the gathering in of the Fruits of the Earth; and this Similitude he proſecutes throughout this Diſcourſe, *v.* 35——38. *Note*, Goſpel-Time is Harveſt-Time, and Goſpel-Work Harveſt-Work. The Harveſt is before *appointed* and expected, ſo was the Goſpel. Harveſt-Time is *buſy* Time; all Hands muſt be then at work; every one muſt work for *himſelf*, that he may reap the Graces and Comforts of the Goſpel. Miniſters muſt work *for God*, to gather in Souls to him. Harveſt-Time is *Opportunity*, a ſhort and limited Time, which will not laſt always; and Harveſt-Work is Work that muſt be done *then*, or not at all: ſo the Time of the Enjoyment of the Goſpel is a particular Seaſon, which muſt be improv'd for its proper Purpoſes; for once paſs'd, it cannot be recall'd.

The Diſciples were to gather in a Harveſt of Souls for Chriſt. Now he here ſuggeſts three Things to them, to quicken them to Diligence.

1. That is was *neceſſary Work*, and the *Occaſion* for it very urgent and preſſing, *v.* 35. *Ye ſay 'tis four Months to Harveſt*, but I ſay, *The Fields* are *already white.* Here's, (1.) A Saying of Chriſt's Diſciples, concerning the *Corn-Harveſt*: There *are yet four Months, and then comes Harveſt*; which may be taken either *generally*: You ſay, for the Encouragement of the Sower at Seed-time, that it will be but four Months to the Harveſt. With us 'tis but about four Months between the Barley Seedneſs, and the Barley Harveſt; probably 'twas ſo with them as to other Grain: or particularly, now at this Time you reckon 'twill be four Months to next Harveſt, according to the ordinary Courſe of Providence. The *Jews* Harveſt began at the Paſſover, about *Eaſter*, much earlier in the Year than ours; by which it appears, that this Journey of Chriſt from *Judea* to *Galilee*, was in the Winter, about the End of *November*, for he travelled *all Weathers* to do

Good. God has only promis'd us a Harveſt every Year, but has appointed the *Weeks of Harveſt:* ſo that we know *when* to expect it, and take our Meaſures accordingly. (2.) Here's a Saying of Chriſt's, concerning the *Goſpel Harveſt*; his Heart was as much upon the Fruits of his Goſpel, as the Hearts of others were upon the Fruits of the Earth; and to that he would lead the Thoughts of his Diſciples. *Look—the Fields are already white unto the Harveſt.* 1. Here in *this* Place where they *now* were, there was Harveſt-Work for *him* to do. They would have him to *eat*, v. 31. Eat, ſaith he, I have other Work to do that is more needful: *Look* what Crowds of *Samaritans* are coming out of the Town, over the Fields, that are ready to receive the Goſpel; probably there were many now *in View.* Peoples Forwardneſs to hear the Word, is a great Excitement to Miniſters Diligence and Liveliness in preaching it.

2. In *other Places*, all the Country over, there was Harveſt-Work enough for them all to do. *Conſider the Regions*; think of the State of the Country, and you'll find there are Multitudes as ready to receive the Goſpel, as a Field of Corn that's fully ripe is ready to be reaped. The Fields were now made *white to the Harveſt.* (1.) By the *Decree of God* reveal'd in the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament. Now was the Time when the Gathering of the People ſhould be to Chriſt, *Gen.* 44. 10. when great Acceſſions ſhould be made to the Church, and the Bounds of it ſhould be enlarg'd, and therefore 'twas Time for them to be buſy. 'Tis a great Encouragement to us to engage in any Work for God; if we underſtand by the Signs of the Times, that this is the proper Seaſon for that Work, for then it will proſper. (2.) By the *Diſpoſition of Men. John Baptiſt* had *made ready a People prepared for the Lord*, Luke 1. 17. Since he began to preach the Kingdom of God, *every Man preſſed into it*, Luke 16. 16. This therefore was a Time for the Preachers of the Goſpel to apply themſelves to their Work with the utmoſt Vigour; *to thruſt in their Sickle*, when the Harveſt was ripe, *Rev.* 14. 15. It was *neceſſary* to work now, pity ſuch a Seaſon ſhould be let ſlip. If the Corn that's *ripe* be not reaped, it will *ſhed*, and be loſt, and the Fowls will pick it up. If Souls that are under Convictions, and have ſome good Inclinations, be not help'd now, their hopeful Beginnings will come to nothing, and they will be a Prey to Pretenders: It was alſo *eaſy* to work now; when the Peoples Hearts are *prepared*, the Work will be done *ſuddenly*, 2 Chr. 29. 36. It cannot but quicken Miniſters to take *Pains* in preaching the Word, when they obſerve that People *take Pleaſure* in hearing it.

2. That it was *profitable* and *advantageous* Work, which they themſelves would be Gainers by; *v.* 36. *He that reapeth, receiveth Wages*, and ſo ſhall you. Chriſt has undertaken to pay thoſe well whom he employs in his Work; for he will never do as *Jehoiakim* did, that *uſed his Neighbour's Service without Wages*, Jer. 22. 13. or thoſe, who *by Fraud kept back the Hire of thoſe* particularly *who reaped down their Corn-Fields*, Jam. 5. 4. Chriſt's Reapers, tho' they cry *to him* Day and Night, ſhall never have cauſe to cry *againſt him*, nor to ſay they ſerv'd a hard Maſter. He that reapeth, not only *ſhall* receive Wages, but *doth* receive it. There is a preſent Reward in the Service of Chriſt, and his Work is *its own Wages.*

(1.) Chriſt's Reapers have *Fruit*; *he gathereth Fruit unto Life Eternal*, i. e. he ſhall both ſave himſelf and thoſe that hear him, 1 *Tim.* 4. 16. If the faithful Reaper ſave his own Soul, that's Fruit abounding to his Account, 'tis Fruit gather'd to *Life Eternal.* And if over and above this, he be inſtrumental to ſave the Souls of others too, there's *Fruit gather'd:* Souls gather'd to Chriſt are Fruit, good Fruit, the Fruit that Chriſt ſeeks for, *Rom.* 1. 13. 'tis gathered for Chriſt, *Cant.* 8. 11, 12. 'tis gathered to *Life Eternal.* This is the Comfort of faithful Miniſters, that their Work has a Tendency to the Eternal Salvation of precious Souls.

(2.) They have *Joy*; *that he that ſows, and they that reap, may rejoice together.* The Miniſter, who is the happy Inſtrument of beginning a good Work, is *he that ſows*, as *John Baptiſt* was; He that is employ'd to carry it on, and perfect it, is *he that reaps*, and both ſhall rejoice together. *Note*, 1. Tho' God is to have all the Glory of the Succeſs of the Goſpel, yet faithful Miniſters may themſelves take the Comfort of it. The Reapers ſhare in the *Joy of Harveſt*, tho' the Profits belong to the Maſter, 1 *Theſ.* 2. 19. 2. Thoſe Miniſters who are variouſly gifted and employed, ſhould be ſo far from envying one another, that they ſhould rather mutually rejoice in each other's Succeſs and Uſefulneſs. Tho' all Chriſt's Miniſters are not alike *ſerviceable*, nor alike *ſucceſsful*, yet if they have obtain'd Mercy of the Lord to be *faithful*, they ſhall all enter *together into the Joy of their Lord* at laſt.

3. That it was *eaſy Work*, and Work that was half done to their Hands by thoſe that were gone before them, *v.* 37, 38. *One ſoweth and another reapeth.* This ſometimes ſpeaks a grievous Judgment upon him that ſows, *Mic.* 6. 15. *Deut.* 28. 30. *Thou ſhalt ſow and another ſhall reap*; as *Deut.* 6. 11. *Houſes full of all good Things which thou filledſt not.* So here *Moſes* and the Prophets, and *John Baptiſt* had *pav'd* the Way to the Goſpel, had ſown the good Seed, which the New Teſtament Miniſters did in effect but gather the Fruit of. *I ſent you to reap that whereon ye beſtowed*, in compariſon, no *Labour*; Iſa. 40. 3, 4, 5.

This ſpeaks *Two Things* concerning the Old Teſtament Miniſtry. (1.) That it was very much *ſhort* of the New Teſtament Miniſtry. *Moſes* and the *Prophets* ſowed, but they could not be ſaid to *reap*, ſo little did they ſee of the Fruit of their Labours. Their Writings have done much more good ſince they left us, than ever their Preaching did. (2.) That it was very much *ſerviceable* to the New Teſtament Miniſtry, and made Way for it; the Writings of the Prophets, which were read in the Synagogues every Sabbath Day, rais'd Peoples Expectations of the Meſſiah, and ſo prepared them to bid him Welcome. Had it not been for the Seed ſown by the Prophets, this *Samaritan* Woman could not have ſaid, *We know that the Meſſias cometh.* The Writings of the Old Teſtament are, in ſome reſpect, more uſeful to us, than they could be to thoſe to whom they were firſt written, becauſe better underſtood by the Accompliſhment of them. See 1 Pet. 1. 12. *Heb.* 4. 2. *Rom.* 16. 25, 26.

This alſo ſpeaks *Two Things* concerning the Miniſtry of the *Apoſtles of Chriſt.* (1.) That it was a *fruitful* Miniſtry; they were Reapers that gathered in a great Harveſt of Souls to Jeſus Chriſt, and did more in Seven Years towards the ſetting up of the Kingdom of God among Men, than the Prophets of the Old Teſtament had done in twice ſo many Ages. (2.) That it was much *facilitated*, eſpecially among the *Jews*, to whom they were firſt ſent, by the Writings of the Prophets. The Prophets *ſowed in Tears*, crying out, *We have laboured in vain*; the Apoſtles *reaped in Joy*, ſaying, *Thanks be to God who always cauſeth us to triumph. Note*, From the Labours of Miniſters that are dead and gone, much good Fruit may be reaped by the People that *ſurvive* them, and the Miniſters that *ſucceed* them. *John Baptiſt*, and thoſe that aſſiſted him, had *laboured*, and the Diſciples of Chriſt enter'd into their Labours, built upon their Foundation, and reaped the Fruit of what they ſowed. See what Reaſon we have to bleſs God for thoſe that are *gone before us*, for their Preaching and their Writing; for what they *did*, and *ſuffered* in their Day, for we are *entered into their Labours*; their Studies and Services have made our Work the eaſier. And when the ancient and modern Labourers, thoſe that came into the Vineyard at the Third Hour, and thoſe that came in at the Eleventh, meet in the Day of Account, they will be ſo far from envying one another the Honour of their reſpective Services, that both *they that ſowed*, and they that *reaped*, ſhall rejoice together; and the great Lord of the Harveſt ſhall have the Glory of all.

Fourthly, The *good Effect* which this Viſit Chriſt made to the *Samaritans* (*en paſſant*) had upon them, and the Fruit which was now preſently gathered among them, *v.* 39—42. See what Impreſſions were made on them.

1. By the *Woman's Teſtimony* concerning *Chriſt*; tho' a ſingle Teſtimony, and of one of no good Report, and the Teſtimony no more but this, *He told me all that ever I did*; yet it had a good Influence upon many. One would have thought his telling the Woman of her ſecret Sins, ſhould have made them afraid of coming to him, leſt he ſhould tell them alſo of their Faults; but they will venture that, rather than not be acquainted with one that they had reaſon to think was a Prophet. And *Two Things* they were brought to.

1. To *credit* Chriſt's *Word*, v. 39. *Many of the* Samaritans *of that City believed on him for the Saying of the Woman.* So far they *believed on him*, that they took him for a *Prophet*, and were deſirous to know the Mind of God from him; this is favourably interpreted a believing on him. Now obſerve,

(1.) Who they were that believed; *many of the Samaritans*, who were not of the Houſe of *Iſrael.* Their Faith was not only an *Aggravation* of the *Unbelief* of the *Jews*, from whom better might have been expected, but an *Earneſt* of the *Faith* of the *Gentiles*, who would welcome that which the *Jews* rejected.

(2.) Upon what Inducement they believed; *for the Saying of the Woman.* See here, (1.) How God is ſometimes pleas'd to uſe very weak and unlikely Inſtruments for the beginning and carrying on of a good Work. A little Maid directed a great Prince to *Eliſha*, 2 Kings 5. 2. (3.) How great a Matter a little Fire kindles: Our Saviour, by inſtructing one poor Woman, ſpread Inſtruction to a whole Town. Let not Miniſters be either *careleſs* in their preaching, or *diſcouraged* in it, becauſe their Hearers are *few* and *mean*, for by doing good to *them*, good may be convey'd to *more*, and thoſe that are more conſiderable: If they *teach every Man his Neighbour*, and *every Man his Brother*, a great Number may learn at *ſecond-hand. Philip* preached the Goſpel to a ſingle Gentleman in his Chariot upon the Road, and he not only received it himſelf, but carry'd it into his Country, and propagated it there. (3.) See how good it is to ſpeak *experimentally* of Chriſt, and the things of God. This Woman could ſay little of Chriſt, but what ſhe did ſay, ſhe ſpoke feelingly: *He told me all that ever I did.* Thoſe that are moſt likely to do good, that can tell what God has done *for their Souls*, Pſal. 66. 16.

2. They were brought to *court his Stay* among them; *v.* 40. when they were come to him, *they beſought him that he would tarry with them.* Upon the Woman's Report they believ'd him to be a Prophet, and *came to him*; and when they *ſaw* him, the Meanneſs of his Appearance, and the manifeſt Poverty of his outward Condition, did not leſſen their Eſteem of him, and Ex-

Expectations from him, but ſtill they reſpected him as a Prophet. *Note*, There is Hopes of thoſe who are got over the vulgar Prejudices that Men have againſt *true Worth* in a *low Eſtate*. Bleſſed are they that are not offended in Chriſt at the *firſt Sight*. So far were they from being offended in him, that they begg'd he would tarry with them. (1.) That they might *teſtify their Reſpects* to him, and treat him with the Honour and Kindneſs due to his Character. God's Prophets and Miniſters are welcome Gueſts to all thoſe who ſincerely embrace the Goſpel; as to *Lydia*, Acts 16. 15. (2.) That they might receive Inſtruction from him. Thoſe that are taught of God, are truly deſirous to learn more, and to be better acquainted with Chriſt. Many would have flock'd to one that would tell them *their Fortune*, but theſe flock'd to one that would tell them *their Faults*; tell them of Sin and Duty. The Hiſtorian ſeems to lay an Emphaſis upon their being *Samaritans*, as *Luke* 10. 33. and 17. 16. The *Samaritans* had not that Reputation for Religion that the *Jews* had; yet the *Jews*, who ſaw Chriſt's Miracles, drove him from them, while the *Samaritans*, who ſaw not his Miracles, nor ſhar'd in his Favours, invited him to them. The *Proof* of the Goſpel's Succeſs, is not always according to the *probability*, nor what is *experienc'd*, according to what is *expected* either way. The *Samaritans* were taught by the Cuſtom of their Country, to be ſhy of Converſation with the *Jews*. There were *Samaritans* that refus'd to let Chriſt go through their Town, *Luke* 9. 52. Yet theſe begg'd him to tarry with them. *Note*, It adds much to the Praiſe of our Love to Chriſt and his Word, if it conquers the Prejudices of Education and Cuſtom, and ſets light by the Cenſures of Men.

Now we are told that Chriſt granted their Requeſt. (1.) He *abode there*. Tho' it was a City of the *Samaritans*, near adjoining to their Temple, yet when he was *invited*, he *tarried* there; tho' he was upon a Journey, and had further to go, yet when he had an Opportunity of doing good, he *abode there*. That's no real *Hindrance* which will *further* our Account. Yet he abode there but *two Days*, becauſe he had other Places to viſit, and other Work to do, and thoſe *two* Days were as many as came to the ſhare of this City, out of the few Days of our Saviour's ſojourning upon Earth.

2. We are told what Impreſſions were made upon them by Chriſt's own Word, and his perſonal Converſe with them, *v.* 41, 42. What he *ſaid* and *did* there, is not related; whether he healed their Sick or no; but it is intimated in the Effect, that he ſaid and did that which convinc'd them that he was the Chriſt; and the Labours of a Miniſter are beſt told by the good Fruit of them. Their hearing of *him*, had a good Effect, but *now their Eyes ſee him*; and the Effect of that was,

1. That their Number grew, *v.* 41. *Many more believed*: Many that would not be perſuaded to go out of the Town to him, yet, when he came among them, were wrought upon to believe in him. *Note*, It is comfortable to ſee the Number of Believers; and ſometimes the Zeal and Forwardneſs of ſome, may be a means to provoke many, and to ſtir them up to a holy Emulation, *Rom.* 11. 14.

2. That their Faith grew. Thoſe who had been wrought upon by the Report of the Woman, now ſaw cauſe to ſay, *Now we believe, not for thy ſaying*, v. 42.

Here are Three Things in which their *Faith grew*.

1. In the *Matter* of it, or that which they did believe. Upon the Teſtimony of the Woman, they believ'd him to be *a Prophet*, or ſome extraordinary Meſſenger from Heaven, but now they have convers'd with him, they believe that he is *the Chriſt*, the *Anointed one*, the very ſame that was promis'd to the Fathers, and expected by them; and that being the *Chriſt*, he is the *Saviour of the World*; for that was the Work to which he was anointed, to *ſave his People from their Sins*. They believed him to be the Saviour, not only of the *Jews*, but *of the World*, which they hoped would take them in, tho' *Samaritans*, for it was promis'd that he ſhould be *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, Iſa. 49. 6.

2. In the *Certainty* of it; their Faith now grew up to a full Aſſurance; we *know* that this is indeed the *Chriſt*; ἀληθῶς; not a pretended Chriſt, but a real one; not a *typical* Saviour, as many under the Old Teſtament, but *truly* one. Such an Aſſurance as this of Divine Truths, is what we ſhould labour after; not only we think it probable, and are willing to ſuppoſe, that *Jeſus* may be the *Chriſt*, but we know that he is *indeed the Chriſt*.

3. In the *Ground* of it, which was a kind of ſpiritual Senſation and Experience: *Now we believe, not becauſe of thy Sayings, for we have heard him ourſelves*. They had before *believ'd for her ſaying*, and it was well, 'twas a good ſtep; but now they find *further*, and much *firmer* footing for their Faith; *now we believe*, becauſe we have *heard him ourſelves*, and have heard ſuch excellent and divine Truths, accompanied with ſuch commanding Power and Evidence, that we are abundantly ſatisfied and aſſured that *this is the Chriſt*. This is like what the Queen of *Sheba* ſaid of *Solomon*, 1 Kings 10. 6, 7. The *one half was not told me*. Theſe *Samaritans*, who believ'd for the Woman's ſaying, now gained further Light, for *to him that hath, ſhall be given*: He that is faithful in a little, ſhall be truſted with more.

In this Inſtance, we may ſee how *Faith comes by hearing*. (1.) Faith comes *to the Birth* by hearing the *Report of Men*. Theſe *Samaritans*, for the ſake of the Woman's Saying, believ'd ſo far as to *come and ſee*, to come and make Tryal. Thus the Inſtructions of Parents and Preachers, and the Teſtimony of the Church, and our experienced Neighbours, *recommend* the Doctrine of Chriſt *to our Acquaintance*, and incline us to entertain it as highly probable. But, (2.) Faith comes *to its Growth*, Strength, and Maturity, by hearing the Teſtimony of Chriſt himſelf; and this goes further, and recommends his Doctrine *to our Acceptance*, and obligeth us to believe it as undoubtedly certain. We are induced to look into the Scripture, *by the Saying* of thoſe who told us, that in them they had found eternal Life; but when we ourſelves find it in them too, have experienced the enlightning, convincing, regenerating, ſanctifying, comforting Power of the Word, now we believe, *not for their ſaying*, but becauſe we have ſearched them ourſelves. And, our Faith *ſtands not in the Wiſdom of Men, but in the Power of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 5. 1 Joh. 5. 9, 10.

Thus was the Seed of the Goſpel ſown in *Samaria*; what Effect there was of this afterward, doth not appear; but we find that Four or Five Years after, when *Philip* preached the Goſpel in *Samaria*, he found ſuch bleſſed Remains of this good Work now wrought, that the *People with one accord gave heed to thoſe Things which* Philip *ſpoke*, Acts 8. 5, 6, 8. But as ſome were pliable to Good, ſo were others to Evil, whom *Simon Magus* bewitch'd with his Sorceries, *v.* 9, 10.

43 ¶ Now after two days he departed thence, and
went into Galilee: 44 For Jeſus himſelf teſtified, that
a prophet hath no honour in his own country. 45
Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galileans
received him, having ſeen all the things that he did
at Jeruſalem at the feaſt: for they alſo went unto the
feaſt. 46 So Jeſus came again into Cana of Galilee,
where he made the water wine. And there was a
certain noble man, whoſe ſon was ſick at Capernaum.
47 When he heard that Jeſus was come out of Judea
into Galilee, he went unto him, and beſought him
that he would come down, and heal his ſon: for he
was at the point of death. 48 Then ſaid Jeſus unto
him, Except ye ſee ſigns and wonders, ye will not
believe. 49 The nobleman ſaith unto him, Sir, come
down e'er my child die. 50 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Go
thy way: thy ſon liveth. And the man believed the
word that Jeſus had ſpoken unto him, and he went
his way. 51 And as he was now going down, his
ſervants met him, and told *him*, ſaying, Thy ſon
liveth. 52 Then enquired he of them the hour, when
he began to amend: and they ſaid unto him, Yeſterday
at the ſeventh hour the fever left him. 53 So
the father knew that *it was* at the ſame hour, in the
which Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thy ſon liveth; and himſelf
believed, and his whole houſe. 54 This *is* again
the ſecond miracle *that* Jeſus did, when he was come
out of Judea into Galilee.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Chriſt's *coming* into *Galilee*, v. 43. Tho' he was as welcome among the *Samaritans* as he could be any where, and had better Succeſs; yet *after Two Days* he left them; not ſo much becauſe they were *Samaritans*, and he would not confirm thoſe in their Prejudices againſt them, who ſaid, *He is a Samaritan*, (John 8. 48.) but becauſe *he muſt preach to other Cities*, (Luke 4. 43.) He *went into Galilee*, for there he ſpent much of his Time. Now ſee here,

1. Whither Chriſt went, into *Galilee*, into the Country of *Galilee*, but not to *Nazareth*, which was ſtrictly *his own* Country; he went among the Villages, but declin'd going to *Nazareth*, the head City, for a Reaſon here given, which *Jeſus himſelf teſtify'd*, who knew the Temper of his Country-men, the Hearts of all Men, and the Experiences of all Prophets; and it is this, That *a Prophet has no Honour in his own Country*. *Note*, (1.) Prophets ought to have Honour, becauſe God has put Honour upon them, and we do or may receive Benefit by them. (2.) The Honour due to the Lord's Prophets; has very often been deny'd them, and Contempt put upon them. (3.) This *due* Honour is moſt frequently deny'd them *in their own Country*; ſee *Luke* 4. 24. *Mat.* 13. 57. not that it is univerſally true; no Rule but hath ſome Exceptions, but it holds for the moſt part. *Joſeph*, when he began to be a Prophet, was moſt hated by his Brethren; *David* diſdain'd by his Brother, 1 *Sam.* 17. 28. *Jeremiah* malign'd by the Men of *Anathoth*, Jer. 11. 21. *Paul* by his Country-men the *Jews*; and Chriſt's near Kinſmen ſpoke moſt ſlightly of him, *John* 7. 5. Mens Pride and Envy makes them ſcorn to be inſtructed by thoſe, that when Time was, were their School-fellows, and Play-fellows. Deſire of Novelty, and of

that which is far fetched, and dear bought, and ſeems to drop out of the Sky to them, makes them deſpiſe thoſe Perſons and Things which they have been long uſed to, and know the Riſe of. (4.) It is a great Diſcouragement to a Miniſter, to go among a People that have no Value for him or his Labours. Chriſt would not go to *Nazareth*, becauſe he knew how little Reſpect he ſhould have there. (5.) It's juſt with God to deny his Goſpel to thoſe that deſpiſe the Miniſters of it. They that mock the Meſſengers, forfeit the Benefit of the Meſſage, *Mat.* 21. 35, 41.

2. What Entertainment he met with among the *Galileans* in the Country, *v.* 45. They *received him*, bid him Welcome, and chearfully attended on his Doctrine. Chriſt and his Goſpel are not ſent in vain; if they have not Honour with *ſome*, they ſhall have with *others*. Now the Reaſon given why theſe *Galileans* were ſo ready to receive Chriſt, is becauſe they had *ſeen the Miracles he did at Jeruſalem*, v. 45. Obſerve, (1.) They went up to *Jeruſalem* at the Feaſt, the Feaſt of the Paſſover. The *Galileans* lay very remote from *Jeruſalem*, and their way thither lay through the Country of the *Samaritans*, which was troubleſome for a *Jew* to paſs through, worſe than *Baca*'s Valley of old; yet in Obedience to God's Command, they *went up to the Feaſt*, and there they became acquainted with Chriſt. *Note*, They that are diligent and conſtant in attending on publick Ordinances, ſome time or other meet with more ſpiritual Benefit than they expect. (2.) At *Jeruſalem* they *ſaw* Chriſt's Miracles, which recommended him and his Doctrine very much to their Faith, and Affections. The Miracles were wrought for the Benefit of them at *Jeruſalem*, yet the *Galileans*, who were accidentally there, got more Advantage by them, than they did for whom they were chiefly deſigned. Thus the Word preach'd to a *mix'd Multitude*, may perhaps edify *occaſional* Hearers more than the *conſtant* Auditory.

3. What City he went to when he would go to a City; he choſe to go to *Cana* of *Galilee*, *where he had made the Water Wine*, v. 46. thither he went to ſee if there were any good Fruits of that Miracle remaining; and if there were, to confirm their Faith, and to water what he had planted. The Evangeliſt mentions this Miracle here, to teach us to keep in remembrance what *we have ſeen* of the Works of Chriſt.

Secondly, His *curing* of the *Nobleman*'s *Son* that was ſick of a Fever. This Story is not recorded by any other of the Evangeliſts; it comes in *Mat.* 4. 23.

Obſerve, 1. Who the *Petitioner* was, and who the *Patient*; the Petitioner was a *Nobleman*, the Patient was his Son: *There was a certain Nobleman. Regulus*, ſo the *Latin*, a little King; ſo call'd, either for the Largeneſs of his Eſtate, or the Extent of his Power, or the Royalties that belong'd to his Manor. Some underſtand it as ſpeaking his *Preferment*, he was a Courtier, in ſome Office about the King; others as ſpeaking his *Party*, he was an *Herodian*, a Royaliſt, a Prerogative Man, one that eſpous'd the Intereſt of the *Herods*, Father and Son; perhaps it was *Chuza*, *Herod's* Steward, *Luke* 8. 3. or *Manaon*, *Herod's* forſter Brother, *Acts* 13. 1. There were Saints in *Caſar*'s Houſhold. The Father a Nobleman, and yet the Son ſick; for Dignities, and Titles of Honour, will be no Security to Perſons and Families from the Aſſaults of Sickneſs and Death. 'Twas Fifteen Miles from *Capernaum* where this Nobleman liv'd, to *Cana*, where Chriſt now was, yet this Affliction in his Family ſent him ſo far to Chriſt.

2. How the Petitioner made *his Application* to the Phyſician. Having heard that *Jeſus was come out of Judea to Galilee*, and finding that he did not come towards *Capernaum*, but turned off towards the other ſide of the Country, he *went to him* himſelf, and *beſought him to come heal his Son*, v. 47. See here, (1.) His *tender Affection* to his Son, that when he was ſick he would ſpare no Pains to get help for him. (2.) His *great Reſpect* to our Lord Jeſus; that he would come himſelf to wait upon him, when he might have ſent a Servant; and that he *beſought him*, when as a Man in Authority, ſome would think, he might have order'd his Attendance. The greateſt Men, when they come to God, muſt become Beggars, and ſue *ſub forma pauperis*.

As to the Errand he came upon, we may obſerve a Mixture in *his Faith*. (1.) There was *Sincerity* in it, he did believe that Chriſt could heal his Son, tho' his Diſeaſe was dangerous. 'Tis likely he had Phyſicians to him, who had given him over, but he believ'd that Chriſt could cure him when the Caſe ſeemed deplorable. (2.) Yet there was *Infirmity* in his Faith, he believ'd that Chriſt could heal his Son, but as it ſhould ſeem, he thought he could not heal him at a diſtance, and therefore he beſought him that he would *come down* and heal him, expecting, as *Naaman* did, that he will come and *ſtrike his Hand* over the Patient, as if he could not cure him but by a *Phyſical Contact*. Thus are we apt to *limit the Holy One of Iſrael*, and to ſtint him to our Forms. The Centurion, a *Gentile*, a Soldier, was ſo ſtrong in Faith, as to ſay, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou ſhould'ſt come under my Roof*, Mat. 8. 8. This Nobleman, a *Jew*, muſt have Chriſt to come down, tho' it was a good Day's Journey, and deſpairs of a Cure unleſs he come down, as if he muſt teach Chriſt how to work. We are encouraged to *pray*, but we are not allow'd to preſcribe; Lord heal me, but whether with a Word, or a Touch, *Thy Will be done*.

3. The gentle Rebuke he met with in this Addreſs; *v.* 48. *Jeſus ſaid unto him*, I ſee how it is, *Except ye ſee Signs and Wonders, ye will not believe*, as the *Samaritans* did, tho' they ſaw no Signs and Wonders, and therefore I muſt work Miracles among you. Tho' he was a *Nobleman*, and now in Grief about his Son, and had ſhew'd great Reſpect to Chriſt in coming ſo far to him, yet Chriſt gives him a Reproof; Men's Dignity in the World ſhall not exempt them from the Rebukes of the Word or Providence; for Chriſt reproves not *after the hearing of his Ears*, but *with Equity*, Iſa. 11. 3. Obſerve, Chriſt firſt ſhews him his Sin and Weakneſs, to prepare him for Mercy, and then grants him his Requeſt. Chriſt *humbles* thoſe firſt with his *Frowns*, whom he intends to honour with his *Favours*. The *Comforter* ſhall firſt *convince*. *Herod* long'd to ſee ſome Miracle, *Luke* 23. 8. and this Courtier was of the ſame mind, and the generality of the People too.

Now that which is blamed, is, (1.) That whereas they had heard by credible and unconteſtable Report of the Miracles he had wrought in other Places, they would not believe except they ſaw them with their own Eyes, *Luke* 4. 23. they muſt be *honoured*, and they muſt be *humour'd*, or they will not be *convinced*. Their Country muſt be graced, and their Curioſity gratified with Signs and Wonders, or elſe, tho' the Doctrine of Chriſt be ſufficiently prov'd by Miracles wrought elſewhere, they *will not believe*; like *Thomas*, they will yield to no Method of Conviction, but what they ſhall preſcribe. (2.) That whereas they had ſeen divers Miracles which they could not gainſay the Evidence of, but which ſufficiently prove Chriſt a Teacher come from God, and ſhould now have applied themſelves to him for Inſtruction in his Doctrine, which by its native Excellency would have *gently led them on* in believing to a ſpiritual Perfection; inſtead of this, they would go no further in believing, than they were *driven* by Signs and Wonders. The *ſpiritual* Power of the Word did not *affect them*, did not *attract them*, but only the *ſenſible* Power of Miracles, which were *for them* who believe not, but *Propheſying* for *them that believe*, 1 Cor. 14. 22. Thoſe that admire *Miracles* only, and *deſpiſe Propheſying*, rank themſelves with Unbelievers.

4. His continued Importunity in his Addreſs, *v.* 49. *Sir, come down e'er my Child die*, *Κύριε*, *Lord*, ſo it ſhould be rendered. In this Reply of his we have,

1. Something that was commendable; he took the Reproof patiently, he ſpoke to Chriſt reſpectfully; tho' he was one of thoſe that wore ſoft Cloathing, yet he could bear his Reproof. 'Tis none of the Privileges of Peerage to be above the Reproofs of the Word of Chriſt; but it is a Sign of a good Temper and Diſpoſition in Men, eſpecially in great Men, when they can be told of their Faults and not be angry. And as he did not take the Reproof for an Affront, ſo he did not take it for a Denial, but ſtill proſecuted his Requeſt, and continued to wreſtle till he prevailed. Nay, he might argue this, If Chriſt heal *my Soul*, ſure he will heal *my Son*; if he cure *my* Unbelief, he will cure *his* Fever. This is the Method Chriſt takes, firſt to work *upon* us, and then to work *for* us; and there's hopes, if we find him entring upon his Method.

2. Here's ſomething that was Blame-worthy; that was his Infirmity: for, 1. He ſeems to take no Notice of the Reproof Chriſt gave him, ſaith nothing to it, either by way of Confeſſion, or Excuſe, for he is ſo wholly taken up with Concern about his Child, that he can mind nothing elſe. *Note*, The Sorrow of the World is a great Prejudice to our profiting by the Word of Chriſt: Inordinate Care and Grief are Thorns that choke the good Seed; ſee *Exod.* 6. 9. 2. He ſtill diſcovered the Weakneſs of his Faith in the Power of Chriſt. (1.) He muſt have Chriſt to come down, thinking, elſe he could do the Child no Kindneſs. It's hard to perſuade ourſelves, that Diſtance of Time and Place are no Obſtructions to the Knowledge and Power of our Lord Jeſus; yet ſo it is, he ſees afar off, for his *Eyes run to and fro*; and he acts afar off, for his Word, the Word of his Power, *runs very ſwiftly*. (2.) He believes Chriſt could heal a *ſick* Child, but not that he could raiſe a *dead* Child, and therefore, *O come down e'er my Child die*; as if then it would be too late; whereas Chriſt has the ſame Power over Death, that he has over bodily Diſeaſes. He forgot that *Elijah* and *Eliſha* had rais'd dead Children, and is Chriſt's Power inferior to theirs? Obſerve what haſte he is in; *Come down e'er my Child die*; as if there were danger of Chriſt's ſlipping his Time. *He that believeth, doth not make haſte*, but refers himſelf to Chriſt; Lord, what, and when, and how thou pleaſeſt.

Fifthly, The Anſwer of Peace which Chriſt gave to his Requeſt at laſt, *v.* 50. *Go thy way, thy Son liveth.* Chriſt here give us an Inſtance,

1. Of his *Power*; that he not only could heal, but could heal with ſo much Eaſe, without the Trouble of a Viſit. Here's nothing *ſaid*, nothing *done*, nothing *order'd* to be done, and yet the Cure wrought; *thy Son liveth.* The healing Beams of the Sun of Righteouſneſs diſpenſe benign Influences from one end of Heaven to another, and *there is nothing hid from the Heat thereof.* Tho' Chriſt is now in Heaven, and his Church on Earth, he can *ſend from above.* This Nobleman would have Chriſt *come down and heal his Son*, Chriſt will heal his Son and not *go down*; and thus the Cure is the ſooner wrought, and the Nobleman's Miſtakes rectify'd, and his Faith confirm'd: ſo that the Thing

was better done in Chriſt's way. When he denies what we aſk, he gives what is much more to our Advantage; we aſk for Eaſe, he gives Patience. Obſerve, His Power was exerted by his Word: In ſaying, *thy Son lives*, he ſhew'd that he has *Life in himſelf*, and Power to *quicken whom he will.* Chriſt's ſaying *thy Soul lives*, makes it alive.

2. Of his *Pity*; he obſerv'd the Nobleman to be *in Pain* about his Son, and his natural Affection diſcover'd itſelf in that Word, *e'er my Child*, my dear Child die; and therefore Chriſt drop'd the Reproof, and gave him aſſurance of the Recovery of his Child; for *he knows how a Father pities his Children.*

Sixthly, The Nobleman's Belief of the Word of Chriſt; he *believed*, and *went away*. Tho' Chriſt did not gratify him ſo far, as to go down with him, he is ſatisfy'd with the Method Chriſt took, and reckons he has gained his Point. How quickly, how eaſily is that which is lacking in our Faith, perfected by the Word and Power of Chriſt! Now he *ſees no Sign or Wonder*, and yet *believes* the Wonder done.

1. Chriſt ſaid, *Thy Son liveth*, and the Man *believ'd* him; not only believ'd the Omniſcience of Chriſt, that he *knew* the Child recover'd, but the Omnipotence of Chriſt, that the Cure was *effected* by his Word. He left him *dying*, yet when Chriſt ſaid, *he lives*, like the Father of the Faithful, *againſt Hope he believ'd in Hope*, and *ſtagger'd not through Unbelief.*

2. Chriſt ſaid, *Go thy Way*, and as an Evidence of the Sincerity of his Faith, he *went his Way*, and gave neither Chriſt nor himſelf any further Diſturbance. He did not preſs Chriſt to come down, did not ſay, if he do recover, yet a Viſit will be acceptable; no, he ſeems no further ſollicitous, but like *Hannah*, he goes his way, and his Countenance is *no more ſad.* As one intirely ſatisfied, he made no great haſte home; did not hurry home that Night, but return'd leiſurely, as one that was perfectly eaſy in his own Mind.

Seventhly, The further Confirmation of his Faith, by comparing Notes with his Servants at his return.

1. His Servants met him with the agreeable News of the Child's Recovery, *v.* 51. Probably they met him not far from his own Houſe, and knowing what their Maſter's Cares were, they were willing as ſoon as they could to make him eaſy. *David*'s Servants were loth to tell him when the Child was dead. Chriſt ſaid, *Thy Son liveth*, and now the Servants ſay the ſame. Good News will meet thoſe that hope in God's Word.

2. He enquired what Hour the Child began to recover, *v.* 52. not as if he doubted the Influence of Chriſt's Word upon the Child's Recovery, but he was deſirous to have his Faith confirm'd, and might be able to ſatisfy any to whom he ſhould relate it; for it was a material Circumſtance. *Note*, 1. It is good to furniſh ourſelves with all the corroborating Proofs and Evidences that may be, to ſtrengthen our Faith in the Word of Chriſt, that it may grow up to *a full Aſſurance*; *ſhow me a Token for good.* 2. The diligent comparing of the Works of Chriſt with his Word, will be of great uſe to us for the confirming of our Faith. That was the Courſe this Nobleman took; *He enquired of the Servants the Hour when he began to amend*, and they told him, *Yeſterday at the ſeventh Hour*, (at One a-clock in the Afternoon, or, as ſome think this Evangeliſt reckons, at Seven a-clock at Night) the *Fever left him*; not only he began to amend, but he was perfectly well on a ſudden; ſo *the Father knew that it was at the ſame Hour*, when Jeſus ſaid to him, *Thy Son liveth.* As the Word of God well ſtudied, will help us to underſtand his Providences, ſo the Providence of God well obſerv'd will help us to underſtand his Word, for God is every day *fulfilling the Scripture.* Two Things would help to confirm his Faith. 1. That the Child's Recovery was *ſudden*, and not *gradual.* They name the preciſe Time to an Hour, *Yeſterday*, not about, but at the ſeventh Hour *the Fever left him*; not it abated, or began to decreaſe, but *left him* in an inſtant. The Word of Chriſt did not work like Phyſick, which muſt have Time to operate, and produce the Effect, and perhaps *cures by Expectation* only; no, with Chriſt it was *dictum, factum*, he ſpake and it was done; not, he ſpake and it was *ſet a doing.* 2. That it was juſt at the ſame Time that Chriſt ſpoke to him. *At that very Hour.* The Synchroniſms and Co-incidences of Events, add very much to the Beauty and Harmony of Providence. Obſerve the *Time*, and the *Thing* itſelf will be more illuſtrious, for every Thing is beautiful *in its Time*; at the very Time when 'tis *promiſed*, as *Iſrael*'s Deliverance, *Exod.* 12. 41. at the very Time when 'tis *pray'd for*, as *Peter*'s Deliverance. *Acts* 12. 12. In Mens Works, Diſtance of Place is the delay of Time, and the retarding of Buſineſs; but it is not ſo in the Works of Chriſt. The Pardon, and Peace, and Comfort, and ſpiritual Healing, which he ſpeaks in Heaven, is, if he pleaſes, at the ſame Time effected and wrought in the Souls of Believers; and when theſe Two come to be *compar'd* in the great Day, Chriſt will be *glorified in his Saints, and admir'd in all them that believe.*

Eighthly, The *happy Effect and Iſſue of this.* The bringing of the Cure to the Family, brought Salvation to it.

1. The Nobleman *himſelf believ'd.* He had before *believed* the Word of Chriſt with reference to this particular Occaſion, but now he *believed in Chriſt* as the Meſſiah promis'd, and became one of his Diſciples. Thus the *particular* Experience of the Power and Efficacy of *one* Word of Chriſt, may be a happy Means to introduce and ſettle the whole Authority of Chriſt's Dominion in the Soul. Chriſt has many ways of gaining the Heart, and by the Grant of a *temporal* Mercy, may make way for *better* Things.

2. His *whole Houſe* believed likewiſe. (1.) Becauſe of the *Intereſt* they all had in the Miracle, which preſerv'd the *Bloſſom* and *Hopes* of the Family; this affected them all, and endear'd Chriſt to them, and recommended him to their beſt Thoughts. (2.) Becauſe of the *Influence* the Maſter of the Family had upon them *all.* A Maſter of a Family cannot give Faith to thoſe under his Charge, nor *force* them to believe, but he may be inſtrumental to remove *external Prejudices* which obſtruct the Operation of the Evidence, and then the Work is more than half done. *Abraham* was famous for this, *Gen.* 18. 19. and *Joſhua*, ch. 24. 15. This was a *Nobleman*, and probably had a *great Houſhold*, but when he comes into Chriſt's School, he brings them all along with him. What a bleſſed Change was here in this Houſe, occaſioned by the Sickneſs of the Child; this ſhould reconcile us to Afflictions, we know not what Good may follow from them. Probably the Converſion of this *Nobleman*, and his Family at *Capernaum*, might invite Chriſt to come afterward and ſettle at *Capernaum* as his head Quarters in *Galilee.* When great Men receive the Goſpel, they may be inſtrumental to bring it to the Places where they live.

Laſtly, Here is the Evangeliſt's Remark upon this Cure, *v.* 54. *This is the ſecond Miracle*; referring to *Chap.* 2. 11. where the turning Water into Wine is ſaid to be the Firſt; that was ſoon after his firſt return out of *Judea*, this ſoon after his ſecond. In *Judea* he had wrought many Miracles, *Chap.* 3. 2. and 4. 45. they had the firſt Offer, but being driven thence, he wrought Miracles in *Galilee:* Somewhere or other Chriſt will find a Welcome. People may if they pleaſe ſhut the Sun out of *their own Houſes*, but cannot ſhut it *out of the World.* This is noted to be the *ſecond* Miracle, (1.) To remind us of the firſt wrought in the ſame Place ſome Months before. *Freſh* Mercies ſhould revive the Remembrance of former Mercies, as former Mercies ſhould encourage our Hopes of further Mercies. Chriſt keeps account of his Favours, whether we do or no. (2.) To let us know that *this* Cure was *before* thoſe many Cures which the other Evangeliſts mention to be wrought in *Galilee*, Mat. 4. 23. Mark. 1. 34. Luke 4. 40. Probably this Cure, the Patient being a Perſon of Quality, was the more talked of for that reaſon, and ſent him Crowds of Patients; when this Nobleman apply'd himſelf to Chriſt, Multitudes follow'd. What abundance of Good may great Men do, if they be good Men!

CHAP. V.

We have in the Goſpels a faithful Record of all that Jeſus began both to do and to teach, *Acts* 1. 1. *Theſe Two are interwoven, becauſe what he* taught *explained what he* did, *and what he* did *confirm'd what he* taught. *Accordingly, we have in this Chapter a Miracle and a Sermon.* (1.) *The Miracle was the Cure of an* impotent Man *that had been diſeaſed Thirty-eight Years, with the Circumſtances of that Cure,* v. 1—16. (2.) *The Sermon was Chriſt's Vindication of himſelf before the* Sanhedrin, *when he was proſecuted as a Criminal for healing the Man on the Sabbath-Day: In which,* (1.) *He aſſerts his Authority as Meſſiah, and Mediator between God and Man,* v. 17—29. (2.) *He proves it by the Teſtimony of his Father, of* John Baptiſt, *of his Miracles, and of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, and condemns the* Jews *for their Unbelief,* v. 30—47.

AFter this there was a feaſt of the Jews, and Je-
ſus went up to Jeruſalem. 2 Now there is at
Jeruſalem by the ſheep-*market* a pool, which is called
in the Hebrew tongue, Betheſda, having five por-
ches. 3 In theſe lay a great multitude of impotent
folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the mo-
ving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a
certain ſeaſon into the pool, and troubled the water:
whoſoever then firſt after the troubling of the water
ſtepped in, was made whole of whatſoever diſeaſe he
had. 5 And a certain man was there which had an
infirmity thirty and eight years. 6 When Jeſus ſaw
him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time
in *that caſe*, he ſaith unto him, Wilt thou be made
whole? 7 The impotent man anſwered him, Sir,
I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put
me into the pool: but while I am coming, another
ſteppeth down before me. 8 Jeſus ſaith unto him,
Riſe, take up thy bed and walk. 9 And immediate-
ly the man was made whole, and took up his bed and
walked: and on the ſame day was the ſabbath.
10 ¶ The Jews therefore ſaid unto him that was cured,
It is the ſabbath-day; it is not lawful for thee to

carry *thy* bed. 11 He anſwered them, He that made me whole, the ſame ſaid unto me, Take up thy bed and walk. 12 Then ask'd they him, What Man is that which ſaid unto thee, take up thy bed and walk? 13 And he that was healed, wiſt not who it was: for Jeſus had conveyed himſelf away, a multitude being in *that* place. 14 After Jeſus findeth him in the temple, and ſaid unto him, Behold thou art made whole: ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee. 15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jeſus which had made him whole. 16 And therefore did the Jews perſecute Jeſus, and ſought to ſlay him, becauſe he had done theſe things on the ſabbath-day.

This miraculous Cure is not recorded by any other of the Evangeliſts, who confine themſelves moſtly to the Miracles wrought in *Galilee*, but *John* relates thoſe wrought at *Jeruſalem*. Concerning this obſerve,

Firſt, *The Time when* this Cure was wrought; it was at a *Feaſt of the Jews*, i. e. the Paſſover, for that was the moſt celebrated Feaſt. Chriſt, tho' reſiding in *Galilee*, yet *went up to Jeruſalem*, at the Feaſt, *v.* 1.

1. Becauſe it was an *Ordinance of God*, which as a Subject he would obſerve, being made under the Law; tho' as a *Son*, he might have pleaded an Exemption. Thus he would teach us to attend Religious Aſſemblies, *Heb.* 10.25.

2. Becauſe it was an *Opportunity of Good*; for, (1.) There was great Numbers gathered together there at that Time; 'twas a general Rendezvous at leaſt of all ſerious, thinking People from all Parts of the Country, beſides Proſelytes from other Nations: And Wiſdom muſt *cry in the Places of Concourſe*, Prov. 1.21. (2.) It was to be hoped that they were in a *good Frame*, for they came together to *worſhip God*, and to ſpend their Time in religious Exerciſes. Now a Mind *inclined to Devotion*, and ſequeſtring itſelf to the Exerciſes of Piety, *lies very open* to the further Diſcoveries of divine Light and Love, and to it Chriſt will be acceptable.

Secondly, The *Place where* this Cure was wrought; at the *Pool of Betheſda*, which had a miraculous healing Virtue in it, and is here particularly deſcribed, *v.* 2,3,4.

1. Where it was ſituated; *At* Jeruſalem *by the Sheep-Market*; ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ; it might as well be rendered, The *Sheep-Cote*, where the Sheep were kept; or the *Sheep-Gate*, which we read of, *Neh.* 3. 1. through which the Sheep were *brought*; as the *Sheep-Market*, where they were *ſold*. Some think it was near the Temple, and if ſo, it yielded a melancholy but profitable Spectacle to thoſe that went up to the Temple to pray.

2. How it was called; it was a *Pool*, (a Pond, or Bath) *which is called in* Hebrew, *Betheſda*: The *Houſe of Mercy*; for therein appeared much of the *Mercy of God* to the Sick and Diſeaſed. In a World of ſo much Miſery as this is, 'tis well there are ſome *Betheſdas*, Houſes of Mercy, Remedies againſt theſe Maladies, that the Scene is not all Melancholy. An *Alms-Houſe*, ſo Dr. *Hammond*. Dr. *Lightfoot*'s Conjecture is, that this was the *upper Pool*, Iſa. 7.3. and the *old Pool*, Iſa. 22.11. That it had been uſed for *waſhing* from ceremonial Pollutions, for Convenience of which the Porches were built to dreſs and undreſs in, but was lately become Medicinal.

3. How it was fitted up; it had *five Porches*, *Cloyſters*, or *Piazzas*, or roofed Walks in which the Sick lay. Thus the Charity of Men concurred with the Mercy of God for the Relief of the diſtreſſed. Nature has provided *Remedies*, but Men muſt provide *Hoſpitals*.

4. How it was frequented with Sick and Cripples; *v.* 3. *In theſe lay a great Multitude of Impotent Folk.* How many are the Afflictions of the afflicted in this World? How full of Complaints are all Places, and what Multitudes of impotent Folk? It may do us good to viſit the Hoſpitals ſometimes, that we may take occaſion from the Calamities of others, to thank God for our Comforts. The Evangeliſt inſtances in three Sorts of diſeaſed People that lay here, *Blind*, *Halt*, and *Withered*, or *Sinew-ſhrunk*, either in one particular Part, as the Man with the *withered Hand*, or all over Paralytick. Theſe are mentioned, becauſe being leaſt able to help themſelves into the Water, they lay longeſt waiting in the *Porches*. Thoſe that were ſick of theſe bodily Diſeaſes, took the Pains to come *far*, and had the Patience to wait *long* for a Cure; any of us would have done the ſame, and we ought to do ſo: but O! that Men were as wiſe for their Souls, and as ſolicitous to get their ſpiritual Diſeaſes healed. We are all by Nature *impotent Folk* in ſpiritual Things, *Blind*, *Halt*, and *Withered*, but effectual Proviſion is made for our Cure, if we will but obſerve Orders.

5. What Virtue it had for the Cure of theſe impotent Folk; *v.* 4. *An Angel went down*, and *troubled the Water*; and *whoſo firſt ſtept in*, *was made whole.* That this ſtrange Virtue in the Pool, was *natural* or *artificial* rather, and was the effect of the waſhing of the Sacrifices, which impregnated the Water with I know not what healing Virtue, even for *blind* People; and that this Angel was a *Meſſenger*, a common Perſon ſent down to ſtir the Water, is altogether groundleſs; there was a Room in the Temple on purpoſe to waſh the Sacrifices in. Expoſitors generally agree, that the Virtue this Pool had, was ſupernatural. 'Tis true, the *Jewiſh* Writers, who do not uſe to be ſparing in recounting the Praiſes of *Jeruſalem*, do none of them make the leaſt mention of this *healing Pool*; of which Silence in this Matter, perhaps this was the Reaſon, that it was taken for a Preſage of the near Approach of the Meſſiah; and therefore, they who deny'd him to be come, induſtriouſly conceal'd ſuch an Indication of his coming; ſo that this here is all the Account we have of it. Obſerve,

1. The *Preparation* of the Medicine by an Angel, who *went down into the Pool*, and *ſtirred the Water.* Angels are God's Servants, and Friends to Mankind; and perhaps are more active in the removing of Diſeaſes, as evil Angels in the inflicting of them, than we are aware of. *Raphael*, the Apocryphal Name of an Angel, ſignifies, *Medicina Dei*, God's Phyſick, or Phyſician rather: See what mean Offices the holy Angels condeſcend to, for the Good of Men! If we would do the Will of God as the Angels do it, we muſt think nothing below us but Sin. The *troubling of the Water*, was the Signal given of the Deſcent of the Angel; as the *going upon the Top of the Mulberry Trees* was to *David*, and then they muſt *beſtir themſelves.* The Waters of the Sanctuary are then *healing*, when they are put *in Motion.* Miniſters muſt *ſtir up the Gift* that is in them: When they are cold and dull in their Miniſtrations, the Waters *ſettle*, and are not apt to *heal.* The Angel deſcended to *ſtir the Water*, not daily, perhaps not frequently, but *at a certain Seaſon*; ſome think at the Three ſolemn Feaſts, to grace thoſe Solemnities; or, *now and then*, as infinite Wiſdom thought fit: God is a free Agent, in diſpenſing his Favours.

2. The *Operation* of the Medicine; *Whoever firſt ſtept in*, *was made whole.* Here's, (1.) A miraculous Extent of the Virtue, as to the *Diſeaſes* cur'd; what Diſeaſe ſoever it was, this Water cured it. Natural and artificial Baths are as *hurtful* in ſome Caſes, as they are uſeful in others; but this was a Remedy for every Malady, even for thoſe that came from contrary Cauſes. The Power of Miracles *ſucceeds*, where the Power of Nature *ſuccumbs.* (2.) A miraculous *Limitation* of the Virtue, as to the *Perſons* cur'd; he that firſt ſtept in, had the Benefit, *i. e.* he, or they that ſtept in *preſently*, were cured, not thoſe that lingred and came in after. This teaches us to obſerve and improve our Opportunities, and to *look about us*, that we ſlip not a Seaſon which may never return. The Angel *ſtir'd* the Waters, but left the Diſeaſed to themſelves to *get in.* God has put Virtue into the Scriptures and Ordinances, for he would have heal'd us; but if we do not make a due Improvement of them, 'tis our own Fault, we *would not be healed.*

Now this is all the Account we have of this *ſtanding* Miracle; 'tis uncertain when it began, and when it ceas'd. Some conjecture it began when *Eliaſhib*, the High-Prieſt, began the building of the Wall about *Jeruſalem*, and ſanctified it with Prayer; and that God teſtified his Acceptance, by putting this Virtue into the adjoining Pool. Some think it began now lately, at Chriſt's Birth; nay, others at his Baptiſm. Dr. *Lightfoot* finding in *Joſephus Antiqu.* l. 15. c. 7. mention of a great Earthquake in the ſeventh Year of *Herod*, thirty Years before Chriſt's Birth, ſuppoſed, that ſince there uſed to be Earthquakes at the Deſcent of Angels, that then the Angel firſt deſcended to ſtir this Water. Some think it ceaſed with this Miracle, others at Chriſt's Death; however, 'tis certain it had a gracious Signification.

1. It was a *Token* of God's good Will to that People, and an Indication, that tho' they had been long without Prophets and Miracles, yet God had not *caſt them off*; tho' they were now an oppreſſed, deſpiſed People, and many were ready to ſay, *Where are all the Wonders that our Fathers told us of?* God did hereby let them know, that he had ſtill a Kindneſs for the *City of their Solemnities.*

We may from hence take occaſion to acknowledge with Thankfulneſs, God's Power and Goodneſs in the Mineral Waters, that contribute ſo much to the Health of Mankind, for God made *the Fountains of Water*, Rev. 14.7.

2. It was a Type of the Meſſiah, who is the *Fountain opened*; and was intended to raiſe Peoples Expectations of him, who is the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, that ariſeth *with healing under his Wings.* Theſe Waters had formerly been uſed for Purifying, now for Healing, to ſignify both the *cleanſing* and *curing* Virtue of the Blood of Chriſt, that incomparable Bath, which *heals all our Diſeaſes.* The Waters of *Siloam*, which fill'd this Pool, ſignified the Kingdom of *David*, and of Chriſt, the Son of *David*, Iſa. 8. 6. fitly therefore have they now this *ſovereign* Virtue put into them. The Laver of Regeneration is to us, as *Betheſda*'s Pool, healing our ſpiritual Diſeaſes; not at certain Seaſons, but at all Times: *Whoever will, let him come.*

Thirdly, The Patient on whom this Cure was wrought, *v.* 5. One that *had been infirm thirty-eight Years.*

1. His *Diſeaſe* was *grievous*; he had an *Infirmity*, a Weakneſs; he had loſt the Uſe of his Limbs, at leaſt on one Side, as is uſual in Palſies. 'Tis ſad to have the Body ſo diſabled, that inſtead of being the Soul's Inſtrument, it is become, even in the Affairs of this Life, its Burthen. What Reaſon have we to thank God

for bodily Strength, and to uſe it for him, and pity thoſe who are *his Priſoners !*

2. The *Duration* of it was *tedious, Thirty eight Years* ; he was lame longer than moſt live. Many are ſo long diſabled for the Offices of Life, that as the Pſalmiſt complains, they ſeem to be *made in vain* ; for Suffering, not for Service ; born to be always dying. Shall we complain of one weariſome Night, or one ill Fit, who perhaps for many Years have ſcarce known what it has been to be a Day ſick, when many others, better than we, have ſcarce known what it has been to be a Day well. Mr. *Baxter*'s Note on this Paſſage is very affecting ; " How great " a Mercy was it to live Thirty-eight Years under God's whole- " ſome Diſcipline —— O my God (ſaith he) I thank thee for " the like Diſcipline of Fifty-eight Years; how ſafe a Life is " this in compariſon of full Proſperity and Pleaſure."

Fourthly, The Cure and the Circumſtances of it briefly related, *v.* 6,7,8,9.

1. *Jeſus ſaw him lie.* Obſerve, when Chriſt came up to *Jeruſalem*, he viſited not the Palaces, but the Hoſpitals, which is an Inſtance of his Humility and Condeſcenſion, and tender Compaſſion, and an *Indication* of his great Deſign in coming into the World, which was to ſeek and ſave the Sick and Wounded. There was a great Multitude of poor Cripples here at *Betheſda*, but Chriſt faſtened his Eyes upon this one, and ſingled him out from the reſt, becauſe he was *Senior* of the Houſe, and in a more deplorable Condition than any of the reſt ; and Chriſt delights to help the helpleſs, and hath Mercy *on whom he will have Mercy*. Perhaps his Companions in Tribulation inſulted over him, becauſe he had been often diſappointed of a Cure, therefore Chriſt took him for his Patient : It is his Honour to ſide with the weakeſt, and bear up thoſe whom he ſees *run down*.

2. *He knew*, and conſidered *how long he had lain in* this Condition. Thoſe that have been long in Affliction, may comfort themſelves with this, that God keeps Account *how long*, and knows our Frame.

3. He ask'd him, *Wilt thou be made whole ?* A ſtrange Queſtion to be ask'd one that had been ſo long ſo ill. Some indeed would not be made whole, becauſe their Sores ſerve them to beg by, and ſerve them for an Excuſe for Idleneſs ; but this poor Man was as unable to *go a begging*, as to *work*, yet Chriſt put it to him, (1.) To *expreſs* his own Pity and Concern for him. Chriſt is tenderly inquiſitive concerning the Deſires of thoſe that are in Affliction, and is willing to know *what is their Petition* ; what ſhall I do for you ? (2.) To try him whether he would be beholden to him for a Cure, whom the great People were ſo prejudiced againſt, and ſought to prejudice others. (3.) To teach him to value the Mercy, and to excite in him Deſires after it. In ſpiritual Caſes, People are not willing to be cured of their Sins, are loth to part with them. If this Point therefore were but gained, if People were willing to be *made whole*, the Work were half done, for Chriſt is willing to heal, if we be but willing to be healed, *Mat.* 8. 3.

4. The poor impotent Man takes this Occaſion to renew his Complaint, and to ſet forth the Miſery of his Caſe, which makes his Cure the more illuſtrious, *v.* 7. *Sir, I have no Man to put me into the Pool.* He ſeems to take Chriſt's Queſtion as an Imputation of Careleſſneſs and Neglect : If thou hadſt had a mind to be healed, thou wouldſt have look'd better to thy hits, and have got into the healing Waters long before now ; no, Maſter, ſaith the poor Man, it is not for want of a *good Will*, but of a *good Friend*, that I am unhealed : I have done what I could to help myſelf, but in vain, for none elſe will help me.

(1.) He doth not think of any other Way of being cured, but by theſe Waters, and deſires no other Friendſhip, but to be help'd into *them* ; therefore when Chriſt cured him, his Imagination or Expectation could not contribute to it, for he thought of no ſuch thing.

(2.) He complains for want of Friends to help him in : *I have no Man*, no Friend to do me that Kindneſs. One would think ſome of thoſe that had been themſelves healed, ſhould have lent him a Hand, but 'tis common for the Poor to be deſtitute of Friends ; *no Man careth for their Soul.* To the Sick and Impotent, 'tis as true a piece of Charity to work for them, as to relieve them ; and thus the Poor are capable of being charitable to one another, and ought to be ſo, tho' we ſeldom find that they are ſo ; I ſpeak it to their Shame.

(3.) He bewails his Infelicity, that very often when *he* was coming, *another ſtept in before him :* But a Step between him and a Cure, and yet he continues Impotent. None had the Charity to ſay, your Caſe is worſe than mine, do you go in now, and I'll ſtay till the next Time ; for there's no getting over the old Maxim, *Every one for himſelf.* Having been ſo often baulk'd, he begins to deſpair, and now is Chriſt's Time to come into his Relief ; he delights to help in deſperate Caſes. Obſerve, How mildly this Man ſpeaks of the Unkindneſs of thoſe about him, without any peeviſh Reflections ; as we ſhould be thankful for the leaſt Kindneſs, ſo we ſhould be patient under the greateſt Contempts ; and let our Reſentments be *never ſo juſt*, yet our Expreſſions ſhould *ever be calm.* And obſerve farther to his praiſe, that tho' he had waited ſo long in vain, yet ſtill he continued lying by the Pool-ſide, hoping that ſome time or other help would come, *Hab.* 2. 3.

5. Our Lord Jeſus hereupon cures him with a Word ſpeaking, tho' he neither ask'd it, nor thought of it.

Here's, 1. The Word he ſaid, *v.* 8. *Riſe take up thy Bed.*

1. He is bidden to *riſe and walk* ; a ſtrange Command to be given to an *impotent* Man, that had been long diſabled ; but this Divine Word was to be the Vehicle of a Divine Power ; 'twas a Command to the Diſeaſe to *be gone*, to Nature to *be ſtrong*, but it is expreſs'd as a Command to him to *beſtir himſelf.* He muſt *riſe and walk*, i. e. attempt to do it, and in the Eſſay he ſhould receive Strength to do it. The Converſion of a Sinner is the Cure of a chronical Diſeaſe ; this is ordinarily done by the Word, a Word of Command, ariſe and walk ; *turn and live, make ye a new Heart* ; which no more ſuppoſes a Power in us to do it, without the Grace of God, *diſtinguiſhing* Grace, than this ſuppos'd ſuch a Power in the impotent Man. But if he had not attempted to help himſelf, he had not been cured, and he muſt have *borne the Blame* ; yet it doth not therefore follow, that when he did riſe and walk, it was by his own Strength ; no, 'twas by the Power of Chriſt, and he muſt *have all the Glory.* Obſerve, Chriſt did not bid him riſe and go into the Waters, but *riſe and walk.* Chriſt did that for us, which the Law could not do, and ſet that aſide.

2. He is bidden to *take up his Bed.* (1.) To make it to appear that it was a *perfect Cure*, and purely miraculous, for he did not recover Strength by degrees from the Extremity of Weakneſs and Impotency, he ſuddenly ſtept into the higheſt Degree of bodily Strength ; ſo that he was able to carry as great a Load as any Porter, that had been as long *uſed* to it, as he had been *diſuſed* : He who this Minute was not able to turn him in his Bed, the next Minute was able to carry his Bed. The Man ſick of the Palſy, *Mat.* 9. 6. was bidden to *go to his Houſe*, but probably this Man had no Houſe to go to, the Hoſpital was his Home ; therefore he is bidden to *riſe and walk.* (2.) 'Twas to *proclaim* the Cure, and make it publick ; for being the *Sabbath-Day*, whoever carried a Burthen through the Streets, made himſelf very remarkable, and every one would enquire what was the Meaning of it, thereby the Notice of the Miracle would ſpread to the Honour of God. (3.) Chriſt would thus witneſs againſt the Tradition of the Elders, which had ſtretch'd the Law of the Sabbath beyond its Intention ; and would likewiſe ſhew that he was *Lord of the Sabbath*, and had Power to make what Alterations he pleaſed about it, and to over-rule the Law. *Joſhua* and the Hoſt of *Iſrael*, march'd about *Jericho* on the Sabbath-Day, when God commanded them ; ſo did this Man carry his Bed in obedience to a Command. The Caſe may be ſuch, that it may become a Work of *Neceſſity*, or *Mercy*, to carry a Bed on the Sabbath-Day ; but here it was more, 'twas a Work of *Piety*, being deſigned purely for the Glory of God. (4.) He would hereby try the Faith and Obedience of his Patient. By carrying his Bed publickly, he expoſed himſelf to the Cenſure of the Eccleſiaſtical Court, and was liable at leaſt to be *ſcourged in the Synagogue.* Now will he run the venture of that, in Obedience to Chriſt ? Yes he will. Thoſe that have been *healed by Chriſt's Word*, ſhould be *ruled by his Word*, whatever it coſt them.

2. The Efficacy of this Word, *v.* 9. a Divine Power went along with it, and immediately he *was made whole, took up his Bed, and walked.* (1.) He felt the Power of Chriſt's Word healing him, *immediately he was made whole.* What a joyful Surprize was this to the poor Cripple to find himſelf, all of a ſudden, ſo eaſy, ſo ſtrong, ſo able to help himſelf ; what a new World was he in in an Inſtant ! Nothing is too hard for Chriſt to do. (2.) He obeyed the Power of Chriſt's Word commanding him ; He *took up his Bed and walked*, and did not care who blamed him, or threatned him for it. The Proof of our ſpiritual Cure, is our riſing and walking. Hath Chriſt healed our ſpiritual Diſeaſes, let us go whitherſoever he ſends us, and *take up* whatever he is pleas'd to lay upon us, and *walk before him.*

Fifthly, What came of the poor Man after he was cured. We are here told,

1. What paſs'd between him and the *Jews*, who ſaw him carry his Bed on the *Sabbath-Day* ; for on that Day this Cure was wrought, and it was the Sabbath that fell within the Paſſover Week, and therefore a *High Day*, John 19. 31. Chriſt's Work was ſuch, as that he needed not make any Difference between Sabbath-Days, and other Days, for he was always about his Father's Buſineſs ; but he wrought many remarkable Cures on that Day, perhaps to encourage his Church, to expect thoſe ſpiritual Favours from him, in their Obſervance of the Chriſtian Sabbath, which were typified by his miraculous Cures. Now, here,

1. The *Jews* quarrel with the Man for carrying his Bed on the Sabbath Day, telling him *it was not lawful*, v. 10. it doth not appear whether they were Magiſtrates, who had Power to *puniſh* him, or common People, who could only inform againſt him ; but thus far was commendable, that while they knew not by *what Authority* he did it, they were jealous for the Honour of the Sabbath, and could not unconcernedly ſee it *prophaned* ; like *Nehemiah*, chap. 13. 17.

2. The Man juſtifies himſelf in what he did, by a Warrant that would bear him out, v. 11. I do not do it in Contempt of the Law and the Sabbath, but in Obedience to one, who by *making me whole*, hath given an undeniable Proof that he is greater

than either. He that could work ſuch a Miracle, as to make me *whole*, no doubt might give me ſuch a Command, as to carry *my Bed*; he that could over-rule the Powers of Nature, no doubt might over-rule a poſitive Law, eſpecially in an Inſtance not of the Eſſence of the Law: He that was ſo kind as to make me whole, would not be ſo unkind as to bid me do what is ſinful. Chriſt, by curing another Paralytick, prov'd his Power to *forgive Sin*, here to *give Law*; if his Pardons are valid, his Edicts are ſo, and his Miracles prove both.

3. The *Jews* enquire further, who it was that gave him this Warrant; *v.* 12. *What Man is that?* Obſerve, How induſtriouſly they *over-look'd* that which might be a Ground of their *Faith in Chriſt.* They enquire not, no not for Curioſity, who is that that *made thee whole?* While they induſtriouſly catch'd at that which might be a Ground of Reflection upon Chriſt, *What Man is* that which ſaid unto thee, *take up thy Bed?* They would fain *ſubpœna* the Patient to be a Witneſs againſt his Phyſician, and to be his Betrayer. In their Queſtion obſerve, (1.) They reſolve to look upon Chriſt as a *mere Man*; *What Man is that?* For tho' he gave never ſuch convincing Proofs of it, they were reſolv'd they would never own him to be the *Son of God.* (2.) They reſolve to look upon him as an *ill Man*, and take it for granted that he who bid this Man carry his Bed, whatever divine Commiſſion he might *produce*, was certainly a Delinquent, and as ſuch they reſolve to proſecute him; *What Man is that* who durſt give ſuch Orders?

4. The poor Man was unable to give them any Account of him, *v.* 13. *He wiſt not who he was.*

1. Chriſt *was unknown* to him when he heal'd him. Probably he had heard of the Name of *Jeſus*, but had never ſeen him, and therefore would not tell that this was he. *Note*, Chriſt doth many a good Turn for thoſe that know him not, *Iſa.* 45. 4, 5. He enlightens, ſtrengthens, quickens, comforts us, and we *wiſt not who he is*; nor are aware how much we receive daily by his Mediation. This Man being unacquainted with Chriſt, could not actually believe in him for a Cure, but Chriſt knew the Diſpoſitions of his Soul, and ſuited his Favours to them, as to the blind Man in a like Caſe, *John* 9.36. Our Covenant and Communion with God, takes riſe, not ſo much from our Knowledge of him, as from his Knowledge of us. We *know God*, or rather are known of *him*, Gal. 4.9.

2. For the preſent he *kept himſelf unknown*; for as ſoon as he had wrought the Cure, he *convey'd himſelf away*, he *made himſelf unknown*, ſo ſome read it; *a Multitude being in that Place.* This is mentioned to ſhew either, (1.) *How* Chriſt conveyed himſelf away, by retiring into the Crowd, ſo as not to be diſtinguiſh'd from a common Perſon: He that was the Chief of Ten Thouſand, often made himſelf one of the Throng. It is ſometimes the Lot of thoſe who have by their Services ſignaliz'd themſelves, to be levell'd with the Multitude, and over-looked. Or, (2.) *Why* he convey'd himſelf away; becauſe there was a *Multitude* there, and he induſtriouſly avoided both the *Applauſe* of thoſe who would admire the Miracle, and *cry that up*, and the Cenſure of thoſe who would cenſure him as a Sabbath-breaker, and *run him down.* Thoſe that are active for God in their Generation, muſt expect to paſs by *evil Report*, and *good Report*; and it is Wiſdom as much as may be, to keep out of the hearing of both: leſt by the one we be *exalted*, and by the other *depreſs'd* above meaſure. Chriſt left the Miracle to commend itſelf, and the Man on whom it was wrought to juſtify it.

2. What paſs'd between him and our Lord Jeſus at their next Interview, *v.* 14. Obſerve here,

1. Where Chriſt found him, *in the Temple*, the Place of Worſhip, publick Worſhip; in our Attendance on publick Worſhip we may expect to meet with Chriſt, and improve our Acquaintance with him. Obſerve, (1.) Chriſt *went to the Temple*; tho' he had many Enemies, yet he appeared in Publick, becauſe there he bore his Teſtimony to divine Inſtitutions, and had Opportunity of doing Good. (2.) The Man that was cured *went to the Temple*, there Chriſt found him the ſame Day, as it ſhould ſeem, that he was healed; thither he ſtraightway went. (1.) Becauſe he had *by his Infirmity* been ſo long *detained thence*; perhaps he had not been there of Thirty-eight Years, and therefore as ſoon as ever the Embargo is taken off, his firſt Viſit ſhall be to the Temple, as *Hezekiah* intimates his ſhall be, *Iſa.* 38. 22. *What is the Sign that I ſhall go up to the Houſe of the Lord.* (2.) Becauſe he had *by his Recovery* a good Errand thither; he went up to the Temple, to return Thanks to God for his Recovery. When God has at any time reſtored us our Health, we ought to attend him with ſolemn Praiſes, *Pſal.* 116. 18,19. and the ſooner the better, while the Senſe of the Mercy is freſh. (3.) Becauſe he had by *carrying his Bed*, ſeem'd to put a Contempt upon the Sabbath, he would thus ſhew that he had an Honour for it, and made Conſcience of Sabbath Sanctification, in that on which the chief Streſs of it is laid, which is the *publick Worſhip* of God: Works of Neceſſity and Mercy are allowed, but when they are over, we muſt *go to the Temple.*

2. What he ſaid to him. When Chriſt has cured us, he has not done with us, he now applies himſelf to the healing of his Soul, and this *by the Word* too.

1. He gives him a *Memorandum* of his Cure, *Behold thou art made whole*; he found himſelf made whole, yet Chriſt calls his Attention to it. *Behold*, *conſider* it ſeriouſly, how ſudden, how ſtrange, how cheap, how eaſy the Cure was; *admire* it, behold and wonder; *remember* it, let the Impreſſions of it abide, and never be loſt, *Iſa.* 38.9.

2. He gives him a Caution againſt Sin; in Conſideration hereof, *being made whole, ſin no more.* This implies, that his Diſeaſe was the Puniſhment of Sin, whether of ſome remarkable flagrant Sin, or only of Sin in general, we cannot tell; but we know that Sin is the procuring Cauſe of Sickneſs, *Pſal.* 107. 17, 18. Some obſerve, that Chriſt did not make mention of Sin to any of his Patients, but only to this *impotent* Man, and to one other who was in like manner diſeaſed, *Mark.* 2. 5. While thoſe chronical Diſeaſes laſted, they prevented the outward Acts of many Sins; and therefore now the Diſability was removed, they had the more need to be watchful. Chriſt intimates to him, that thoſe who are *made whole*, that are eas'd of the preſent ſenſible Puniſhment of Sin, are in danger of returning to Sin, when the Terror and Reſtraint of that is over, unleſs divine Grace dry up the Fountain: When the Trouble, which only damm'd up the Current, is over, the Waters will return to their old Courſe; and therefore there is need of great Watchfulneſs, leſt after healing Mercy, we return again to Folly. The Miſery we were *made whole from*, warns us to ſin no more; having felt the Smart of Sin, the *Mercy* we were *made whole by*, is an Engagement upon us not to offend him who healed us. This is the Voice of every Providence, *Go, and ſin no more.* This Man began his new Life very hopefully *in the Temple*, yet Chriſt ſaw it neceſſary to give him this Caution; for 'tis common with People when they are ſick, to *promiſe much*, when newly recovered, to *perform ſomething*, but after a while to *forget all.*

3. He gives him warning of his Danger, in caſe he ſhould return to his former ſinful Courſe, *leſt a worſe thing come to thee.* Chriſt who knows all Mens Hearts, knew that he was one of thoſe that muſt be frightened from Sin. Thirty-eight Years Lameneſs, one would think, was a Thing ill enough; yet there's ſomething *worſe* that will come to him, if he relapſe into Sin, after God has *given him ſuch a Deliverance* as this, *Ezr.* 4.13,14. The Hoſpital where he lay, was a melancholy Place, but Hell much more ſo: The Doom of Apoſtates is a worſe thing than Thirty-eight Years Lameneſs.

Now after this Interview between Chriſt and his Patient, obſerve in the Two following Verſes,

1. The Notice which the poor ſimple Man gave to the *Jews* concerning Chriſt, *v.* 15. he told them it was Jeſus that had *made him whole.* We have Reaſon to think he intended this for the Honour of Chriſt, and the Benefit of the *Jews*, little thinking that he that had ſo much Power and Goodneſs, could have any Enemies; but thoſe that wiſh well to Chriſt's Kingdom, muſt have the *Wiſdom of the Serpent*, leſt they do more hurt than good with their Zeal, and not caſt Pearls before Swine.

2. The Rage and Enmity of the *Jews* againſt him; *Therefore did the* Rulers of the *Jews perſecute Jeſus.* See, (1.) How abſurd and unreaſonable their Enmity to Chriſt was. *Therefore*, becauſe he had made a poor ſick Man well, and ſo eas'd the publick Charge, upon which 'tis likely he had ſubſiſted; therefore they perſecuted him, becauſe he did good in *Iſrael.* (2.) How bloody and cruel it was, they *ſought to ſlay him*; nothing leſs than his Blood, his Life would ſatisfy them. (3.) How it was varniſh'd over with a colour of Zeal for the Honour of the Sabbath, for this was the pretended Crime, *becauſe he had done theſe things on the Sabbath Day*; as if that Circumſtance were enough to *vitiate* the beſt and moſt Divine Actions, and to render him obnoxious, whoſe Deeds were otherwiſe moſt meritorious. Thus Hypocrites often cover their real Enmity againſt the *Power* of Godlineſs, with a pretended Zeal for the *Form* of it.

17 ¶ But Jeſus anſwered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. 18 Therefore the Jews ſought the more to kill him, becauſe he not only had broken the ſabbath, but ſaid alſo that God was his Father, making himſelf equal with God. 19 Then anſwered Jeſus and ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, The Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſeeth the Father do; for what things ſoever he doth, theſe alſo doeth the Son likewiſe. 20 For the Father loveth the Son, and ſheweth him all things that himſelf doeth: and he will ſhew him greater works than theſe, that ye may marvel. 21 For as the Father raiſeth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*: even ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will. 22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. 23 That all men ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath ſent him. 24 Verily, verily I ſay unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life,

and ſhall not come into condemnation; but is paſſed
from death unto life. 25 Verily, verily I ſay unto
you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead
ſhall hear the voice of the ſon of God: and they that
hear ſhall live. 26 For as the Father hath life in
himſelf, ſo hath he given to the ſon to have life in
himſelf; 27 And hath given him authority to execute
judgment alſo, becauſe he is the ſon of man. 28 Marvel
not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which
all that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, 29 And
ſhall come forth, they that have done good, unto the
reſurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto
the reſurrection of damnation. 30 I can of mine own
ſelf do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment
is juſt; becauſe I ſeek not mine own will, but the will
of the father which hath ſent me.

We have here Chriſt's Diſcourſe upon Occaſion of his being accus'd as a Sabbath-breaker; and it ſeems to be his Vindication of himſelf before the *Sanhedrin*, when he was arraign'd before them; whether on the ſame Day, or two or three Days after, doth not appear, probably the ſame Day. Obſerve,

1. The Doctrine laid down, by which he juſtified what he did on the Sabbath-Day, *v.* 17. *He anſwered them.* This ſuppoſeth that he had ſomething laid to his Charge; or, what they ſuggeſted one to another, when they ſought to ſlay him, *v.* 16. he *knew*, and gave this Reply to, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* At other Times, in anſwer to the like Charge, he had pleaded the Example of *David* eating the Shew-bread, of the Prieſts ſlaying the Sacrifices, and of the Peoples watering their Cattle on the Sabbath-Day; but here he goes higher, and alledgeth the Example of his Father, and his Divine Authority: waving all other Pleas, he inſiſts upon that which was *inſtar omnium*, and abides by it, which he had mention'd, *Mat.* 12. 8. *The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath-Day*; but here enlarges on it.

1. He pleads that he was the *Son of God*, plainly intimated in his calling God *his Father*; and if ſo, his Holineſs was *unqueſtionable*, and his Sovereignty *unconteſtable*, and he might make what Alterations he pleas'd of the Divine Law. *Surely they will reverence the Son*, the Heir of all Things.

2. That he was a Worker together with God.

(1.) *My Father worketh hitherto.* The Example of God's reſting on the Seventh Day from all his Work, is in the Fourth Commandment made the Ground of our obſerving it as a *Sabbath*, or *Day of Reſt*. Now God reſted only from ſuch a Work as he had done the Six Days before; otherwiſe he *worketh hitherto*; he is every Day working, Sabbath-Days, and Week-Days, upholding and governing all the Creatures, and concurring by his common Providence to all the Motions and Operations of Nature, *to his own Glory*; therefore, when we are appointed to reſt on the Sabbath-Day, yet we are not reſtrained from doing that which has a direct Tendency *to the Glory of God*; as the Man's carrying his Bed had.

(2.) *I work*; not only therefore I *may* work, *like him*, in doing good on Sabbath-Days, as well as other Days, but I alſo *work with him.* As God created all Things by Chriſt, ſo he ſupports and governs all by him, *Heb.* 1. 3. This ſets what he doth above all Exception; he that is ſo great a Worker, muſt needs be an uncontroulable Governour; he that doth all, is Lord of all, and therefore *Lord of the Sabbath*; which particular Branch of his Authority, he would now aſſert, becauſe he was ſhortly to ſhew it further, in the Change of the Day from the Seventh to the Firſt.

2. The Offence that was taken at his Doctrine, *v.* 18. *The* Jews *ſought the more to kill him.* His Defence was made his Offence, as if by juſtifying himſelf, he had made ill worſe. *Note*, Thoſe that will not be enlightened by the Word of Chriſt, will be enraged and exaſperated by it; and nothing more vexeth the Enemies of Chriſt, than his aſſerting his Authority; ſee *Pſal.* 2. 3, 4, 5. They ſought to kill him,

(1.) Becauſe he had broken the Sabbath; for let him ſay what he would in his own Juſtification, they are reſolved, right or wrong, to *find him guilty* of Sabbath-breaking. When Malice and Envy ſit upon the Bench, Reaſon and Juſtice may e'en be ſilent at the Bar, for whatever they can ſay will undoubtedly be over-ruled.

(2.) Not only ſo, but he had ſaid alſo, *That God was his Father.* Now they pretend a Jealouſy for *God's Honour*, as before for the *Sabbath-Day*, and charge Chriſt with it as a heinous Crime, that he made himſelf equal with God; and a heinous Crime it had been, if he had not really been ſo. 'Twas the Sin of Lucifer, *I will be like the moſt High.* Now,

(1.) This was juſtly inferred from what he ſaid; that he was the *Son of God*, and that God was *his Father*, πατέρα ἴδιον, *his own Father*; his, ſo as he was no one's elſe. He had ſaid that he work'd with his Father, by the ſame Authority and Power, and hereby he made himſelf equal with God. *Ecce intelligunt* Judæi *quod non intelligunt* Ariani!

(2.) Yet it was unjuſtly imputed to him as an Offence, that he equal'd himſelf with God, for he was and is God equal with the Father, *Phil.* 2. 6. and therefore Chriſt, in anſwer to this Charge, doth not except againſt the Innuendo as ſtrained or forced, but makes out his Claim, and proves that he is equal with God, in Power and Glory.

3. Chriſt's Diſcourſe upon this Occaſion, which continues without Interruption to the End of the Chapter: In theſe Verſes he explains, and afterwards confirms his Commiſſion, as Mediator, and Plenipotentiary in the Treaty between God and Man. And as the Honours he is hereby *intitled to*, are ſuch as 'tis not fit for any Creature to receive, ſo the Work he is hereby intruſted with is ſuch, as it is not poſſible for any Creature to go thro' with, and therefore he is God equal with the Father.

1. *In general*; He is one with the Father in all he doth as Mediator, and there was a perfect good Underſtanding between them in the whole Matter. 'Tis uſhered in with a ſolemn Preface, *v.* 19. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you*; I the Amen, the Amen ſay it. This ſpeaks what is ſaid to be, (1.) Very Awful and Great, and ſuch as commands the moſt ſerious Attention. (2.) Very ſure, and ſuch as commands an unfeigned Aſſent. (3.) It intimates, that they are Matters purely of Divine Revelation; Things which Chriſt has told us, and which we could not otherwiſe have come to the Knowledge of. Two Things he ſaith in general, concerning the Son's Oneneſs with the Father in working.

1. That the Son *conforms to the Father*; v. 19. The *Son can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſees the Father do*, for *theſe Things doth the Son.* The Lord Jeſus as Mediator is, (1.) *Obedient to his Father's Will*; ſo entirely obedient, that he *can do nothing of himſelf*, in the ſame Senſe as it is ſaid *God cannot* lye, *cannot deny* himſelf; which ſpeaks the Perfection of his Truth, not any Imperfection in his Strength: So here, Chriſt was ſo entirely devoted to his Father's Will, that it was impoſſible for him in any Thing to act ſeparately. (2.) He is *obſervant of his Father's Counſel*; he can, he will do nothing *but what he ſees the Father do.* No Man can *find out the Work of God*, but the only begotten Son, who lay in his Boſom, ſees what he doth, and is intimately acquainted with his Purpoſes, and has the Plan of them ever before him. What he did as Mediator throughout his whole Undertaking, was the exact Tranſcript or Counterpart of what the Father did; that is, what he deſign'd when he formed the Plan of our Redemption in his eternal Counſels, and ſettled thoſe Meaſures in every Thing which never could be *broke*, nor ever needed to be *alter'd*; 'twas the Copy of that *great Original*; 'twas Chriſt's Faithfulneſs, as it was *Moſes*'s, that he did all *according to the Pattern ſhew'd him in the Mount.* This is expreſs'd in the preſent Tenſe, what he *ſees the Father do*, for the ſame reaſon, that when he was here upon Earth, 'twas ſaid he is in Heaven, *John* 3. 13. and *is* in the Boſom of the Father, *John* 1. 18. as he was even then by his Divine Nature preſent in Heaven, ſo the Things done in Heaven, were *preſent* to his Knowledge. What the Father did in his Counſels, the Son had ever in his View, and ſtill he had his Eye upon it, as *David* in Spirit ſpake of him, *I have ſet the Lord always before me*, Pſal. 16. 8. (3.) Yet he is *equal* with the Father in *working*, for *what Things ſoever* the Father doth, *theſe alſo doth the Son likewiſe*; he did the *ſame* Things, not *ſuch* Things, but ταῦτα, the *ſame* Things: and he did them in the *ſame manner*, ὁμοίως, *likewiſe*; with the ſame Authority and Liberty, and Wiſdom, the ſame Energy and Efficacy: Doth the Father enact, repeal, and alter poſitive Laws? Doth he over-rule the Courſe of Nature, know Mens Hearts? So doth the Son. The Power of the Mediator is a Divine Power.

2. That the Father *communicates* to the Son, *v.* 20. Obſerve, 1. The Inducement to it, *The Father loveth the Son*; he declar'd, *This is my beloved Son.* He had not only a good Will to the Undertaking, but an infinite Complacency in the Undertaker. Chriſt was now hated of Men, one whom the Nation abhorred, *Iſa.* 49. 7. but he comforted himſelf with this, that his Father lov'd him. 2. The Inſtances of it. He ſheweth it,

1. In what he *doth* communicate to him; *He ſheweth him all Things that himſelf doth.* The Father's Meaſures in making and ruling the World are ſhew'd to the Son, that he may take the ſame Meaſures in framing and governing the Church; which Work was to be a Duplicate of the Work of Creation and Providence, and is therefore called *the World to come.* He ſheweth him all Things, ἃ αὐτὸς ποιεῖ, *which he doth*, i. e. which the *Son* doth, ſo it might be conſtrued; all that the Son doth, is by Direction from the Father: He *ſhews* him,

2. In what he *will* communicate; he will *ſhew him*, i. e. will appoint and direct him to do *greater Works than theſe.* (1.) Works of greater *Power* than the *curing of the impotent Man*, for he ſhould raiſe the Dead, and ſhould himſelf riſe from the Dead. By the Power of Nature, with the Uſe of Means, a Diſeaſe may poſſibly in Time be cured; but Nature can never, by the Uſe of any Means, in any Time raiſe the Dead. (2.) Works of greater *Authority* than warranting the Man to *carry his Bed on the Sabbath-Day.* They thought that a daring Attempt, but what was that to his abrogating the whole Ceremonial Law, and inſtitu-

ting new Ordinances, which he would ſhortly do; *that ye may marvel.* Now they look'd upon his Works with Contempt and Indignation, but he will ſhortly do that which they will look upon with Amazement, *Luke* 7. 16. Many are brought to marvel at Chriſt's Works, whereby he has the Honour of them, that are not brought to believe, by which they would have the Benefit of them.

2. *In particular*; he proves his Equality with the Father, by inſtancing in ſome of thoſe Works which he doth, that are the peculiar Works of God. This is enlarged upon, *v.* 21—30. (1.) He doth, and ſhall do that which is the peculiar Work of God's Almighty Power, *raiſing the Dead*, and *giving Life*, v. 21, 25, 26, 28. (2.) He doth, and ſhall do that which is the peculiar Work of God's Sovereign Dominion and Juriſdiction, *judging*, and *executing Judgment*, v. 22, 23, 24, 27. Theſe two are interwoven, as being nearly connected; and what is ſaid once, is repeated and inculcated; put both together, and they'll prove that Chriſt ſaid not amiſs when he made himſelf *equal with God.*

Firſt, Obſerve what is here ſaid concerning the Mediator's Power to *raiſe the Dead*, and *give Life*. See,

1. His *Authority* to do it, *v.* 21. *As the Father raiſeth up the Dead, ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will.*

(1.) It is God's Prerogative to raiſe the Dead, and give Life, even his who firſt *breathed* into Man the *Breath of Life*, and ſo made him a *living Soul*; ſee *Deut.* 32. 30. 1 *Sam.* 2. 6. *Pſal.* 68. 20. *Rom.* 4. 17. This God had done by the Prophets *Elijah* and *Eliſha*, and it was a Confirmation of their Miſſion. A *Reſurrection from the Dead* never lay in the common Road of Nature, nor ever fell within the Thought of thoſe that ſtudied only the Compaſs of Nature's Power, one of whoſe received Axioms was point-blank againſt it; *A Privatione ad habitum non datur regreſſus*: it was therefore ridicul'd at *Athens* as an *abſurd* Thing, *Acts* 17. 32. It is purely the Work of a Divine Power, and the Knowledge of it purely by Divine Revelation. This the *Jews* would own.

(2.) The Mediator is inveſted with this Prerogative; *He quickeneth whom he will*; raiſeth whom he pleaſeth to Life, and when he pleaſes. He doth not enliven Things by natural Neceſſity, as the Sun doth, whoſe Beams revive of courſe; but he acts as a free Agent, has the diſpenſing of his Power in his own Hand, and is never either *conſtrained*, or *reſtrained* in the Uſe of it. As he has the Power, ſo he has the Wiſdom and Sovereignty of a God; has the *Keys of the Grave, and of Death*, Rev. 1. 18. not as a Servant, to open and ſhut, as he is bidden, for he has it as the *Key of David*, which he is Maſter of, *Rev.* 3. 7. An abſolute Prince is deſcribed by this, *Dan.* 5. 19. whom he would he ſlew, or kept alive; 'tis true of Chriſt without an Hyperbole.

2. His *Ability* to do it. Therefore he has Power to quicken whom he will as the Father doth, becauſe *he hath Life in himſelf, as the Father has*, v. 26.

(1.) 'Tis certain the Father *has Life in himſelf.* Not only he is a *Self-exiſtent* Being, who doth not derive from, or depend upon any other, *Exod.* 3. 14. but he is a ſovereign Giver of Life; he has the Diſpoſal of Life in himſelf, and of all Good, for ſo *Life* ſometimes ſignifies; 'tis all derived from him, and dependent on him; he is to his Creatures the Fountain of Life, and all Good; Author of their Being, and Well-Being; the living God, and the God of all Living.

(2.) 'Tis as certain, that he hath *given to the Son to have Life in himſelf.* As the Father is the Original of all natural Life and Good, being the great Creator, ſo the Son, as Redeemer, is the Original of all ſpiritual Life and Good; is that to the Church, that the Father is to the World; ſee 1 *Cor.* 8. 6. *Col.* 1. 19. The Kingdom of Grace, and all the Life in that Kingdom, is as fully and abſolutely in the Hand of the Redeemer, as the Kingdom of Providence is in the Hand of the Creator; and as God, who gives Being to all Things, has his Being of himſelf, ſo Chriſt, who gives Life, raiſed himſelf to Life, by his own Power, *John* 10. 18.

3. His *acting* according to this Authority and Ability. Having *Life in himſelf*, and being authorized to *quicken whom he will*, by virtue hereof there are accordingly Two Reſurrections performed by his powerful Word; both which are here ſpoken of.

1. A Reſurrection that *now is*, v. 29. a Reſurrection from the Death of Sin to the Life of Righteouſneſs, by the Power of Chriſt's Grace; *The Hour is coming, and now is.* 'Tis a Reſurrection begun already, and further to be carry'd on; *when the Dead ſhall hear the Voice of the Son of God.* This is plainly diſtinguiſhed from that, *v.* 28. which ſpeaks of the Reſurrection at the End of Time. This ſaith nothing, as that doth, of the Dead in their Graves, and of all them, and their coming forth. Now, (1.) Some think this was fulfill'd in thoſe whom he miraculouſly rais'd to Life, *Jairus*'s Daughter, the *Widow's* Son, and *Lazarus*; and it is obſervable, that all that Chriſt rais'd, were *ſpoken to*, as, *Damſel ariſe*, *Young Man ariſe*, *Lazarus come forth*; whereas, thoſe rais'd under the Old Teſtament, were rais'd not by Word, but other Applications, 1 *Kings* 17. 21. 2 *Kings* 4. 34. and 12. 21. Some underſtand it of thoſe Saints that roſe with Chriſt, but we do not read of the *Voice of the Son of God* calling them. But, (2.) I rather underſtand it of the Power of the Doctrine of Chriſt, for the recovering and quickning of thoſe that were *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, Eph. 1. 5, 6. The *Hour* was *coming*, when dead Souls ſhould be made alive by the *preaching* of the Goſpel, and a Spirit of Life from God accompanying it; nay, it *then was*, while Chriſt was upon Earth. It may refer eſpecially to the *calling of the Gentiles*, which is ſaid to be as Life from the Dead, and ſome think was prefigured by *Ezekiel*'s Viſion, *chap.* 37. 1. and foretold, *Iſa.* 26. 19. *Thy dead Men ſhall live.* But it is to be apply'd to all the wonderful Succeſs of the Goſpel, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; an Hour which ſtill *is*, and is ſtill *coming*, till all the Elect be effectually called. *Note*, 1. Sinners are ſpiritually *dead*, deſtitute of ſpiritual Life, Senſe, Strength, and Motion, dead to God, miſerable, but neither ſenſible of their Miſery, nor able to help themſelves out of it. 2. The Converſion of a Soul to God, is its Reſurrection from Death to Life; then it begins to live, when it begins to *live to God*, to breathe after him, and move towards him. 3. It is by the *Voice of the Son of God*, that Souls are rais'd to ſpiritual Life; 'tis wrought by his Power, and that Power conveyed and communicated by his Word; *the Dead ſhall hear*, ſhall be made to hear, to underſtand, receive and believe the *Voice of the Son of God*; to hear it as his Voice, then the Spirit by it gives Life, otherwiſe the *Letter kills.* 4. The Voice of Chriſt muſt be heard by us, that we may live by it. They that hear and attend to what they hear, ſhall live. *Hear, and your Soul ſhall live*, Iſa. 55. 3.

2. A Reſurrection yet *to come*; this is ſpoken of, *v.* 28, 29. introduc'd with, *Marvel not at this*, which I have ſaid of the *firſt* Reſurrection, do not reject it as incredible and abſurd, for at the End of Time you ſhall ſee a more ſenſible and amazing Proof of the Power and Authority of the Son of Man. As *his own* Reſurrection was reſerved to be the final and concluding Proof of his perſonal Commiſſion; ſo the Reſurrection of *all Men*, is reſerv'd to be a like Proof of his Commiſſion to be executed by his Spirit. Now obſerve here,

1. When this Reſurrection ſhall be: *The Hour is coming*; 'tis *fix'd* to an Hour; ſo very punctual is this great Appointment. The Judgment is not adjourn'd, *ſine die*, to ſome time, not yet pitch'd upon; no, *He hath appointed a Day. The Hour is coming.* (1.) It is *not yet* come, 'tis not the Hour ſpoken of at *v.* 5. that is coming, and *now is.* Thoſe erred dangerouſly, who ſaid the *Reſurrection was paſt already*, 2 Tim. 2. 18. But, (2.) It *will certainly* come, it is coming on, nearer every Day than other; it is at the Door. How far off it is, we know not, but we know that it is infallibly deſign'd, and unalterably determin'd.

2. Who ſhall be rais'd: *All that are in the Graves*, all that have died from the Beginning of Time, and all that ſhall die to the End of Time. 'Twas ſaid, *Dan.* 12. 2. many ſhall ariſe; Chriſt here tells us, thoſe *many* ſhall be *all*: *All* muſt appear before the Judge, and therefore *all* muſt be rais'd; every Perſon, and the whole of every Perſon; every Soul ſhall return to its Body, and every *Bone to its Bone.* The Grave is the Priſon of dead Bodies, where they are *detained*; their Furnace, where they are *conſum'd*, (Job 24. 19.) yet in proſpect of their Reſurrection we may call it their *Bed*, where they ſleep to be *awak'd* again; their Treaſury, where they are laid up to be uſed again. Thoſe that are not *put into Graves*, yet ſhall ariſe; but becauſe moſt are put into Graves, Chriſt uſeth this Expreſſion, *All that are in the Graves.* The *Jews* uſed the Word *Sheol*, for the *Grave*, which ſignifies *the State of the Dead*; all that are in that State *ſhall hear.*

3. How they ſhall be rais'd. Two Things are here told us.

1. The Efficient of this Reſurrection; they ſhall *hear his Voice*, i. e. he ſhall cauſe them to hear it, as *Lazarus* was made to hear that Word, *Come forth*; a Divine Power ſhall go along with the Voice, to put Life into them, and enable them to obey it. When Chriſt roſe, there was no Voice heard, not a Word ſpoken, becauſe he roſe by his own Power; but at the Reſurrection of the Children of Men, we find Three Voices ſpoken of, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 16. The Lord ſhall deſcend with a *Shout*, the Shout of a King, with *the Voice of the Archangel*; either Chriſt himſelf, the Prince of the Angels, or, the Commander in Chief under him, of the heavenly Hoſts; and with *the Trumpet of God.* The Soldiers Trumpet ſounding the Alarm of War, the Judges Trumpet publiſhing the Summons to the Court.

2. The Effect of it; they ſhall *come forth* out of their Graves, as Priſoners out of their Priſon-Houſe; they ſhall *ariſe out* of the Duſt, and ſhake themſelves from it; ſee *Iſa.* 52. 1, 2, 11. But that's not all, they ſhall *appear* before Chriſt's Tribunal; ſhall *come forth* as thoſe that are to be try'd, *come forth* to the Bar, publickly to receive their Doom.

4. To what they ſhall be rais'd; to a different State of Happineſs or Miſery, according to their different Character; to a State of Retribution, according to what they did in the State of Probation.

1. *They that have done Good ſhall come forth to the Reſurrection of Life*; they ſhall live again to live for ever. *Note*, 1. Whatever Name Men are call'd by, or whatever plauſible Profeſſion they make, it will be well in the great Day with thoſe only that have *done Good*, have done that which is pleaſing to God, and profitable to others. 2. The Reſurrection of the Body will be a Reſurrection of Life to all thoſe, and thoſe only, that have

been ſincere and conſtant in *doing Good.* They ſhall not only be publickly *acquitted*, as a pardoned Criminal, we ſay, has *his Life*, but they ſhall be *admitted* into the Preſence of God, and that's Life, 'tis better than Life; they ſhall be *attended* with Comforts in Perfection. To live is to be *happy*, and they ſhall be *advanc'd* above the Fear of Death; that's *Life* indeed, in which *Mortality* is for ever *ſwallowed* up.

2. *They that have done Evil, to the Reſurrection of Damnation*; they ſhall live again to be for ever dying. The *Phariſees* thought the Reſurrection pertained only to the Juſt, but Chriſt here rectifies that Miſtake. *Note*, 1. *Evil Doers*, whatever they pretend, will be treated in the Day of Judgment as *evil Men.* 2. The Reſurrection will be to evil Doers, that did not by Repentance undo what they had done amiſs, a *Reſurrection* of Damnation. They ſhall come forth to be publickly convicted of Rebellion againſt God, and publickly *condemn'd* to everlaſting Puniſhment; to be *ſentenc'd* to it, and immediately *ſent* to it without Reprieve; ſuch will the Reſurrection be.

Secondly, Obſerve what is here ſaid concerning the Mediator's *Authority to execute Judgment*, v. 22, 23, 24, 27. As he hath an Almighty Power, ſo he has a Sovereign Juriſdiction; and who ſo fit to preſide in the great Affairs of the other Life, as he who is the Father and Fountain of Life? Here's,

1. Chriſt's Commiſſion or Delegation to the Office of a Judge, which is twice ſpoken of here; *v.* 22. *He hath committed all Judgment to the Son*; and again, *v.* 27. *Hath given him Authority.*

(1.) The *Father judgeth no Man*; not that the Father has reſign'd the Government, but he is pleas'd to govern by Jeſus Chriſt; ſo that Man is not under the Terror of dealing with God immediately, but hath the comfort of Acceſs to him by a Mediator. The *Father judgeth no Man*, i. e. (1.) He doth not *rule* us by the *meer* right of *Creation*, but by *Covenant*, and upon certain Terms, ſettled by a Mediator. Having made us, he *may* do what he *pleaſeth* with us, as the Potter with the Clay; but he doth not do ſo, he draws us *with the Cords of a Man.* (2.) He doth not determine our everlaſting Condition by the *Covenant of Innocency*, nor take the Advantage he has againſt us, for the Violation of that Covenant, the Mediator having undertaken to make a *vicarious* Satisfaction, upon which the Matter is referred to him, and God is willing to enter upon a new Treaty. *Not under the Law* of the Creator, *but the Grace* of the Redeemer.

(2.) *He hath committed all Judgment to the Son*, hath conſtituted him *Lord of all*, Acts 10. 36. Rom. 14. 9. as *Joſeph* in *Egypt*, Gen. 41. 40. This was propheſied of, *Pſal.* 72. 1. *Iſa.* 11. 3, 4. *Jer.* 23. 5. *Mic.* 5. 1, 4. *Pſal.* 67. 4. and 96. 13. and 98. 9. All Judgment is committed to our Lord Jeſus; for, (1.) He is *entruſted* with the Adminiſtration of the *providential Kingdom*, is *Head over all Things*, Eph. 1. 20. Head of every Man, 1 *Cor.* 11. 3. All Things conſiſt by him, *Col.* 1. 17. (2.) He is impowered to make Laws, immediately to bind Conſcience. *I ſay unto you*, is now the Form in which the Statutes of the Kingdom of Heaven run: *Be it Enacted* by the Lord Jeſus, and by *his* Authority. All the Acts now in Force are touched with his Scepter. (3.) He is authorized to appoint and ſettle the Terms of the New Covenant, and to draw up the Articles of Peace between God and Man; 'tis God in Chriſt that reconciles the World, and to him he has given Power to confer Eternal Life. The Book of Life is the Lamb's Book; by his Award we muſt ſtand or fall. (4.) He is commiſſioned to carry on, and compleat the War with the Powers of Darkneſs; to caſt out, and *give Judgment againſt the Prince of this World*, John 12. 31. He is commiſſioned, not only to *judge*, but to *make War*, Rev. 19. 12. All that will fight *for God againſt Satan*, muſt liſt themſelves under *his* Banner. (5.) He is conſtituted ſole Manager of the Judgment of the great Day. The Ancients generally underſtood theſe Words of that *crowning Act* of his Judicial Power. The final and univerſal Judgment is committed to the Son of Man, the Tribunal is *his*, 'tis the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt; the Retinue is his, *his* mighty Angels; he will try the Cauſes, and paſs the Sentence, *Acts* 17. 31.

(3.) He hath *given him Authority to execute Judgment alſo*, v. 27. Obſerve, (1.) What the Authority is which our Redeemer is inveſted with: *an Authority to execute Judgment*; he has not only a Legiſlative and Judicial Power, but an *Executive* Power too. The Phraſe here is uſed particularly for the Judgment of Condemnation, *Jude* 15. ποιῆσαι κρίσιν, *to execute Judgment upon all*; the ſame with his *taking Vengeance*, 2 Theſ. 1. 8. The Ruin of impenitent Sinners comes from the Hand of Chriſt; he that *executes Judgment* upon them, is the ſame that would have *wrought Salvation* for them, which makes the Sentence unexceptionable; and there's no Relief againſt the Sentence of the Redeemer: Salvation itſelf cannot ſave thoſe whom the Saviour *condemns*, which makes the Ruin *remedileſs.* (2.) Whence he has that Authority; the Father *gave it him.* Chriſt's Authority, as Mediator, is delegated and derived; he acts as the Father's Vicegerent, as the Lord's Anointed, the Lord's Chriſt.

Now all this redounds very much to the Honour of Chriſt, acquitting him from the Guilt of Blaſphemy, in making himſelf *equal with God*; and very much to the Comfort of all Believers, who may, with the greateſt Aſſurance, venture their All in ſuch hands.

2. Here are the Reaſons (Reaſons of State) for which this Commiſſion was given him. He hath all Judgment committed to him for two Reaſons.

(1.) Becauſe he is the *Son of Man*; which ſpeaks theſe Three Things. (1.) His Humiliation and gracious Condeſcenſion. Man is a Worm, the Son of Man a Worm, yet this was the Nature, this the Character which the Redeemer aſſumed, in purſuance of the Counſels of Love; this low Eſtate he ſtoop'd to, and ſubmitted to all the Mortifications attending it, becauſe it was *his Father's Will*; in recompence therefore of this wonderful Obedience, God did thus dignify him; becauſe he condeſcended to be the *Son of Man*, his Father made him *Lord of All*, Phil. 2. 8, 9. (2.) His Affinity and Alliance to us. The Father has committed the Government of the Children of Men to him, becauſe being the *Son of Man*, he is of the ſame Nature with thoſe whom he is *ſet over*, and therefore the more unexceptionable, and the more acceptable as a Judge. *Their Government ſhall proceed from the midſt of them*, Jer. 30. 20. Of this that Law was typical: *One of thy Brethren ſhalt thou ſet King over thee*, Deut. 17. 15. (3.) His being the *Meſſiah* promis'd. In that famous Viſion of his Kingdom and Glory, *Dan.* 7. 13, 14. he is call'd the *Son of Man*; and, *Pſal.* 8. 4, 5, 6. thou haſt made the Son of Man have *Dominion over the Works of thy Hands.* He is the *Meſſiah*, and therefore is inveſted with all this Power. The *Jews* uſually called the Chriſt the *Son of David*; but Chriſt uſually called himſelf the *Son of Man*, which was the more humble Title, and ſpeaks him a Prince and Saviour, not to the *Jewiſh* Nation only, but to the whole Race of Mankind.

(2.) *That all Men ſhould honour the Son*, v. 23. The honouring of Jeſus Chriſt is here ſpoken of, (1.) As God's great Deſign. The Son intended to glorify the Father, and therefore the Father intended to glorify the Son, *John* 13. 32. (2.) As Man's great Duty in compliance with that Deſign. If God will have the Son honoured, it is the Duty of all thoſe to honour him, to whom he is made known. Obſerve here,

1. The *Dignity* that is to be done to our Lord Jeſus. We muſt *honour the Son*; muſt look upon him as one that is to be *honoured*, both upon the Account of his tranſcendent Excellencies and Perfections in himſelf, and the Relations he ſtands in to us, and muſt ſtudy to give him Honour accordingly; muſt *confeſs that he is Lord*, and worſhip him; muſt honour him who was diſhonoured for us.

2. The Degree of it; *Even as they honour the Father.* This *ſuppoſeth* it our Duty to *honour the Father*; for revealed Religion is founded on natural Religion, and *directs* us to *honour the Son*, to honour him with *Divine* Honour; we muſt honour the Redeemer with the ſame Honour that we honour the Creator with. So far was it from Blaſphemy, that he made himſelf *equal with God*, that it is the higheſt Injury that can be, for us to make him *otherwiſe.* The *Truths* and *Laws* of the Chriſtian Religion, as far as they are revealed, are as ſacred and honourable as thoſe of natural Religion, and to be equally had in eſtimation; for we lie under the ſame Obligations to Chriſt, the Author of our Well-Being, that we lie under to the Author of our Being; and have as neceſſary a dependance upon the Redeemer's Grace, as upon the Creator's Providence, which is a ſufficient Ground for this Law, to *honour the Son as we honour the Father.*

To enforce this Law, 'tis added, *He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father*, which hath ſent him. Some pretend a reverence for the Creator, and ſpeak *honourably* of him, who make light of their Redeemer, and ſpeak *contemptibly* of him; but let ſuch know, that the Honours and Intereſts of the Father and Son are ſo inſeparably twiſted and interwoven, that the Father never reckons himſelf *honoured* by any that *diſhonour* the Son. *Note*, (1.) Indignities done to the Lord Jeſus, reflect upon God himſelf, and will ſo be conſtrued and reckoned for in the Court of Heaven: The Son having ſo far eſpous'd the Father's Honour, as to take *to himſelf* the *Reproaches caſt on him*, Rom. 15. 3. The Father doth no leſs eſpouſe the Son's Honour, and counts himſelf ſtruck at through him. (2.) The Reaſon of this is, becauſe the Son is ſent and commiſſioned by the Father; 'tis the *Father which hath ſent him.* Affronts to an Ambaſſador are juſtly reſented by the Prince that ſends him. And by this Rule, thoſe who truly *honour the Son, honour the Father alſo*; ſee *Phil.* 2. 11.

3. Here's the Rule by which the Son goes in executing this Commiſſion, ſo thoſe Words ſeem to come in, *v.* 24. *He that heareth, and believeth*, hath *Everlaſting Life.* Where we have the Subſtance of the whole Goſpel; the Preface commands *Attention* to a Thing moſt weighty, and *Aſſent* to a Thing moſt certain; *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you*, I, to whom you hear *all Judgment is committed*, I, in whoſe Lips is a Divine Sentence: Take from me the Chriſtian's *Character* and *Charter.*

1. The *Character* of a Chriſtian; *He that heareth my Word, and believes on him that ſent me.* To be a Chriſtian indeed, is, (1.) To *hear the Word of Chriſt.* 'Tis not enough to be within hearing of it, but we muſt *attend on* it, as Scholars on the Inſtructions of their Teachers; and *attend to* it, as Servants to the Commands of their Maſters; we muſt hear and obey it, muſt abide by the Goſpel of Chriſt as the fixed Rule of our Faith and Practice. (2.) To *believe on him that ſent him*, for Chriſt's Deſign is to *bring us to God*; and as he is the firſt Original of all Grace,

ſo he is the laſt Object of all Faith. Chriſt is our *Way*, God is our *Reſt*. We muſt believe on God as *having ſent* Jeſus Chriſt, and recommended himſelf to our Faith and Love, by manifeſting his Glory in *the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 4. 6. as *his* Father and *our Father*.

2. The *Charter* of a Chriſtian, which all thoſe are intereſted in, that are Chriſtians indeed. See what we get by Chriſt; 1. A Charter of Pardon, *He ſhall not come into Condemnation:* The Grace of the Goſpel is a full Diſcharge from the Curſe of the Law. A Believer ſhall not only not *lie under* Condemnation eternally, but not come into *Condemnation* now; not come into the Danger of it, *Rom.* 8. 11. not *come into Judgment*, not be ſo much as arraign'd. 2. A Charter of Privileges; he is paſſed *out of Death to Life*, is inveſted in a preſent Happineſs in ſpiritual Life, and intituled to a future Happineſs in eternal Life. The Tenor of the firſt Covenant was, *Do this and live*; the Man that doth them ſhall live in them. Now this proves Chriſt equal with the Father, that he has Power to propoſe the *ſame* Benefit to the *Hearers of his Word*, that had been propoſed to the *Keepers of the old Law*, viz. Life; *hear and live, believe and live*, is what we may venture our Souls upon when we are diſabled to *do and live*, ſee *John* 17. 2.

4. Here's the Righteouſneſs of his Proceedings purſuant to this Commiſſion, *v.* 30. All Judgment being committed to him, we cannot but ask *how he manageth it*? And here he anſwers, *My Judgment is juſt*. All Chriſt's Acts of Government, both *Legiſlative* and *Judicial*, are exactly agreeable to the Rules of Equity, ſee *Prov.* 8. 8. There can lie no Exceptions againſt any of the Determinations of the Redeemer; and therefore as there ſhall be no *Repeal* of any of his Statures, ſo there ſhall be no *Appeal* from any of his Sentences.

His Judgments are certainly juſt, for they are directed,

1. By the Father's *Wiſdom*; *I can of my own ſelf* do nothing, nothing without the Father; but *as I hear, I judge*. As he had ſaid before, *v.* 19. the Son *can do nothing but what he ſees the Father do*; ſo here, nothing but what he hears the Father ſay. *As I hear*, (1.) From the ſecret eternal Counſels of the Father, *ſo I judge*. Would we know what we may depend upon in our dealing with God? *Hear the Word of* Chriſt; we need not dive into the Divine Counſels, thoſe *ſecret Things*, which belong not to us, but attend to the revealed Dictates of Chriſt's Government and Judgment, and thoſe will furniſh us with an unerring Guide; for what Chriſt has adjudged, is an exact Copy or Counterpart of what the Father has decreed. (2.) From the publiſhed Records of the Old Teſtament. Chriſt in all the Execution of his Undertaking, had an Eye to the Scripture, and made it his Buſineſs to conform to that, and *fulfil* that, *as it was written in the Volume of the Book.* Thus he has taught us to do *nothing of our ſelves*, but *as we hear* from the Word of God, *ſo to judge* of Things and act accordingly.

2. By the Father's *Will*; *My Judgment is juſt*, and cannot be otherwiſe, *becauſe I ſeek not mine own Will*, but *his who ſent me*. Not as if the Will of Chriſt were contrary to the Will of the Father, as the Fleſh is contrary to the Spirit in us. But (1.) Chriſt had, as Man, the natural and innocent Affections of the humane Nature, *Senſe of Pain*, and *Pleaſure*, an Inclination to Life, an Averſion to Death, yet he *pleaſed not himſelf*; did not confer with theſe, nor conſult theſe, when he was to go on in his Undertaking, but acquieſc'd intirely in the Will of his Father. (2.) What he did as Mediator was not the Reſult of any *peculiar, particular* Purpoſe and Deſign of his own; what he did *ſeek* to do, was not for his own Mind's ſake, but he was therein guided by his Father's Will, and the Purpoſe which he had *purpoſed to himſelf*. This our Saviour did upon all Occaſions *refer himſelf to*, and govern himſelf by.

Thus our Lord Jeſus has open'd his Commiſſion, (whether to the Conviction of his Enemies, or no) to his own Honour, and the Everlaſting Comfort of all his Friends, who here ſee him *able to ſave to the uttermoſt*.

31 ¶ If I bear witneſs of my ſelf, my witneſs is not true. 32 There is another that beareth witneſs of me, and I know that the witneſs which he witneſſeth of me, is true. 33 Ye ſent unto John, and he bare witneſs unto the truth. 34 But I receive not teſtimony from man: but theſe things I ſay, that ye might be ſaved. 35 He was a burning and a ſhining light: and ye were willing for a ſeaſon to rejoice in his light. 36 ¶ But I have a greater witneſs than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me. 37 And the Father himſelf which hath ſent me, hath born witneſs of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor ſeen his ſhape. 38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath ſent, him ye believe not. 39 ¶ Search the ſcriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which teſtify of me. 40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. 41 I receive not honour from men. 42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. 43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another ſhall come in his own name, him ye will receive. 44 How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and ſeek not the honour that *cometh* from God only. 45 Do not think that I will accuſe you to the Father: there is *one* that accuſeth you, *even* Moſes, in whom ye truſt. 46 For had ye believed Moſes, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. 47 But if ye believe not his writings, how ſhall ye believe my words?

In theſe Verſes our Lord Jeſus proves and confirms the Commiſſion he had produc'd, and makes it out that he was ſent of God, to be the Meſſiah.

1. He *ſets aſide* his own Teſtimony of himſelf, *v.* 31. *If I bear Witneſs of myſelf*, tho' it is infallibly true, *John* 8.14. yet according to the common Rule of Judgment among Men, you will not admit it as *legal Proof*, nor allow it to be *given in Evidence.* Now, (1.) This *reflects Reproach* upon the *Sons of Men*, and their Veracity and Integrity. Surely we may ſay deliberately, what *David* ſaid in haſte, *All Men are Lyars*, elſe it would never have been ſuch a received Maxim, That a Man's Teſtimony of himſelf is ſuſpicious, and not to be relied on; 'tis a Sign that Self-love is ſtronger than the Love of Truth. And yet, (2.) It reflects Honour on the Son of God, and ſpeaks his wonderful Condeſcenſion, that tho' he is the *faithful Witneſs*, the Truth itſelf, who may challenge to be credited *upon his Honour*, and his own ſingle Teſtimony, yet is pleas'd to *wave his Privilege*, and for the Confirmation of our Faith, refers himſelf to his *Vouchers*, that we might have full Satisfaction.

2. He produceth other Witneſſes that bear Teſtimony to him that he was ſent of God.

Firſt, The Father himſelf bore Teſtimony to him, *v.* 32. *There is another that beareth Witneſs*, which I take to be meant of God the Father, for Chriſt mentions *his* Teſtimony with his own, *John* 8. 18. *I bear Witneſs of myſelf, and the Father beareth Witneſs of me.* Obſerve,

1. The Seal which the Father put to his Commiſſion. He *beareth Witneſs of me*, not only hath done ſo by a Voice from Heaven, but ſtill doth ſo by the Tokens of his Preſence with me. See who they are to whom God will bear Witneſs. (1.) To thoſe whom he *ſends* and *employs*; where he gives Commiſſions, he gives Credentials. (2.) To thoſe who *bear Witneſs* to him; ſo Chriſt did. God will own and honour thoſe that own and honour him. (3.) To thoſe who decline *bearing Witneſs of themſelves*; ſo Chriſt did. Thoſe that humble and abaſe themſelves, and ſeek not their own Glory, God will take care they ſhall not *loſe by it*.

2. The Satisfaction Chriſt had in this Teſtimony; *I know that the Witneſs which he witneſſeth of me is true.* I am very well aſſured that I have a divine Miſſion, and do not in the leaſt heſitate concerning it, thus he had the *Witneſs in himſelf*. The Devil tempted him to queſtion his being the Son of God, but he never yielded.

Secondly, *John Baptiſt* witneſſed to Chriſt, *v.* 33, &c. *John* came to *bear Witneſs of the Light*, Chap. 1.7. his Buſineſs was to prepare his Way, and direct People to him; *Behold the Lamb of God*. Now the Teſtimony of *John* was, 1. A *ſolemn* and publick Teſtimony; ye ſent an Embaſſy of Prieſts and Levites to *John*, which gave him an Opportunity of publiſhing what he had to ſay; 'twas not a popular, but a judicial Teſtimony. 2. 'Twas a *true* Teſtimony; *he bore Witneſs to the Truth*, as a Witneſs ought to do; the *whole Truth*, and *nothing but the Truth*. Chriſt doth not ſay, he *bore Witneſs to me*, tho' every one knew he did, but like an honeſt Man, he *bore Witneſs to the Truth*. Now *John* was confeſſedly ſuch a holy, good Man, ſo mortified to the World, and ſo converſant with Divine Things, that it could not be imagined he ſhould be guilty of ſuch a Forgery and Impoſture, as to ſay what he did concerning Chriſt, if it had not been ſo, and if he had not been ſure of it.

Two Things are added concerning *John*'s Teſtimony.

1. That it was a Teſtimony, *ex abundanti*, more than he needed to vouch; *v.* 34. *I receive not Teſtimony from Men*. Tho' Chriſt ſaw fit to quote *John*'s Teſtimony, 'tis with a Proteſtation that it ſhall not be deemed or conſtrued ſo as to prejudice the Prerogative of his Self-ſufficiency. Chriſt needs no Letters of Commendation, no Teſtimonials or Certificates, but what his own Worth and Excellency brings with him: why then did Chriſt here urge the Teſtimony of *John*? Why, *theſe things I ſay that ye might be ſaved*. This he aimed at in all his Diſcourſes, to ſave not his own Life, but others Souls; he produced *John*'s Teſtimony, becauſe being one of *themſelves*, it was to be hoped they would hearken to it. *Note*, (1.) Chriſt deſires, and deſigns the Salvation, even of his Enemies and Perſecutors. (2.) The Word of Chriſt is the ordinary Means of Salvation. (3.) Chriſt in his

Word conſiders our Infirmities, and condeſcends to our Capacities; conſulting not ſo much what it befits ſo great a Prince to ſay, as what we can bear, and what will be moſt likely to do us good.

2. That it was a Teſtimony, *ad hominem*, becauſe *John* Baptiſt was one whom they had a Reſpect for, *v.* 35. *He was a Light* among you. Obſerve,

1. The Character of *John Baptiſt*, He was a *burning and a ſhining Light.* Chriſt oft ſpoke honourably of *John*, he was now in Priſon, under a Cloud, yet Chriſt gives him his *due Praiſe*, which we muſt be ready to do to all that faithfully ſerve God. (1.) He was *a Light* not, Φῶς, *Lux*; ſo Chriſt was *the* Light, but λύχνος, *Lucerna*, *a Luminary*, a derived, ſubordinate Light. His Office was to enlighten a dark World with Notices of the Meſſiah's Approach, to whom he was as the *Morning-Star.* (2.) He was a *burning* Light, which notes *Sincerity*; painted Fire may be made to ſhine, but that which burns, is true Fire. It notes alſo his Activity, Zeal, and Fervency, burning in Love to God, and the Souls of Men; Fire is always working on itſelf or ſomething elſe, ſo is a good Miniſter. (3.) He was a ſhining Light, which notes either his *exemplary Converſation*, in which our Light ſhines, *Mat.* 5.18. Or, an *eminent* diffuſive Influence. He was illuſtrious in the Sight of others; tho' he affected Obſcurity, Retirement, and was in *the Deſarts*, yet ſuch was his Doctrine, his Baptiſm, his Life, that he became very *remarkable*, and attracted the Eyes of the Nation.

2. The Affections of the People to him; *Ye were willing for a Seaſon to rejoice in his Light.* (1.) It was a *Tranſport* they were *in* upon the appearing of *John*; ye *were willing* ἠθελήσατε, *ye delighted* to *rejoice in the Light*; you were very proud that you had ſuch a Man among you that was the Honour of your Country; ye were willing, ἀγαλλιαθῆναι, willing to *dance* and make a Noiſe about his Light, as Boys about a Bonfire. (2.) It was but *Tranſient*, and ſoon over; ye were fond of him, πρὸς ὥραν, *for an Hour*, for *a Seaſon*, as little Children are fond of a new Thing; ye were pleas'd with *John* a while, but ſoon grew weary of him and his Miniſtry, and ſaid *he had a Devil*, and now you have him in Priſon. *Note*, Many that ſeem to be affected and pleas'd with the Goſpel at firſt, afterwards deſpiſe and reject it; 'tis common for forward and noiſy Profeſſors to cool and fall off. Theſe here rejoiced in *John*'s Light, but never walk'd in it, and therefore did not ſtick to it, like the ſtony Ground. While *Herod* was a Friend to *John Baptiſt*, the People careſs'd him, but when he fell under *Herod's* Frowns he loſt their Favours. *Ye were willing* to countenance *John*, πρὸς ὥραν, i. e. for *temporal Ends*, ſo ſome take it; you were glad of him, in hopes to make a Tool of him by his Intereſt, and under the Umbrage of his Name, to have ſhaken off the *Roman* Yoke, and recover'd the Civil Liberty and Honour of your Country. Now, (1.) Chriſt mentions their Reſpects to *John*, to *condemn* them for their preſent Oppoſition to *him*, to whom *John* bore Witneſs. If they had continued their Veneration for *John*, as they ought to have done, they would have embraced Chriſt. (2.) He mentions the paſſing away of their Reſpects, to juſtify God in depriving them, as he had now done, of *John*'s Miniſtry, and putting that Light under a Buſhel.

Thirdly, Chriſt's own Works witneſſed to him; *v.* 36. *I have a Teſtimony greater than that of* John, for *if we believe the Witneſs of Men*, ſent of God, as *John* was, the *Witneſs of God*, immediately, and not by the Miniſtry of Men, *is greater*, 1 Joh. 5.9. Obſerve, Tho' the Witneſs of *John* was a leſs *cogent*, and leſs *conſiderable* Witneſs, yet our Lord was pleas'd to make uſe of it. We muſt be glad of all the Supports that offer themſelves for the Confirmation of our Faith, tho' they may not amount to a Demonſtration, and not *invalidate* any, under pretence there are others more *concluſive*; we have occaſion for them all.

Now this greater Witneſs was the *Works* which his Father had given *him to finiſh.* That is,

1. In General. The whole Courſe of his Life and Miniſtry, his revealing God and his Will to us, ſetting up his Kingdom among Men, reforming the World, deſtroying Satan's Kingdom, reſtoring fallen Man to his Primitive Purity and Felicity, and ſhedding abroad in Men's Hearts the Love of God, and one another. All that Work, of which he ſaid when he died, *It is finiſhed*, it was all, from firſt, to laſt, *Opus Deo dignum*; all he ſaid and did was *holy* and *heavenly*, and a divine Purity, Power, and Grace ſhone in it, and prov'd abundantly that he was *ſent of God.*

2. In Particular. The Miracles he wrought for the Proof of his Divine Miſſion witneſſed of him. Now it is here ſaid, 1. That theſe Works were *given him by the Father*, that is, he was both *appointed*, and *impower'd* to work them, for as Mediator, he *derived* both Commiſſion and Strength from his Father. 2. They were given him to *finiſh*; he muſt do all thoſe Works of Wonder which the Counſel and Foreknowledge of God had before determined to be done; and his finiſhing them proves a Divine Power, for as *for God his Work is perfect.* 3. Theſe Works did *bear Witneſs of him*, did prove that he was ſent of God, and that what he ſaid concerning himſelf was true; ſee *Heb.* 2. 4. *Acts* 2. 22. That the *Father* had ſent him, as *a Father*, not as a Maſter ſends his Servant on an Errand, but as a Father ſends his Son to take Poſſeſſion for himſelf; if God had not ſent him, he would not have *ſeconded* him, would not have *ſeal'd* him, as he did by the Works he gave him to do, for the World's Creator will never be its Deceiver.

Fourthly, He produceth more fully than before his Father's Teſtimony concerning him, *v.* 27. *The Father that ſent me hath borne Witneſs of me.* The Prince doth not uſe to follow his Ambaſſador himſelf to confirm his Commiſſion, *viva voce*, but God was pleas'd to bear Witneſs of his Son himſelf, by a Voice from Heaven at his Baptiſm, *Mat.* 3. 17. This is my Ambaſſador, *This is my beloved Son.* The *Jews* reckon'd *Bath-kol*, the *Daughter of a Voice*, a Voice from Heaven, one of the Ways by which God made known his Mind; in that Way he had own'd Chriſt publickly and ſolemnly, and repeated it, *Mat.* 17. 5. *Note*, 1. Thoſe whom God *ſends*, he will *bear Witneſs* of; where he gives a Commiſſion, he will not fail to ſeal it; he that never *left himſelf without Witneſs*, (Acts 14. 17.) will never leave any of his Servants ſo, who go upon his Errand. 2. Where God demands Belief, he will not fail to give ſufficient *Evidence*, as he has done concerning Chriſt. That which was to be witneſſed concerning Chriſt, was chiefly this, that the God we had offended, was willing to accept of him as Mediator. Now concerning this, he has *himſelf* (and he was fitteſt to do it) given us full Satisfaction, declaring himſelf well pleaſed in him; if we be ſo, the Work is done.

Now it might be ſuggeſted, if God himſelf thus bore Witneſs of Chriſt, how came it to paſs that he was not univerſally receiv'd by the *Jewiſh* Nation, and their Rulers? To this Chriſt here anſwers, that it was not to be thought ſtrange, nor their Infidelity weaken his Credibility, for Two Reaſons.

1. Becauſe they were not acquainted with ſuch extraordinary Revelations of God and his Will; *Ye have neither heard his Voice at any Time, nor ſeen his Shape*, or *Appearance.* They ſhew'd themſelves to be as ignorant of God, tho' they profeſs'd Relation to him, as we are of a Man we never either ſaw or heard. But what do I talk to you of God's bearing Witneſs of me, he is one you know nothing of, nor have any Acquaintance or Communion with. *Note*, Ignorance of God is the true Reaſon of Men's rejecting the Record he has given concerning his Son. A right Underſtanding of *natural Religion*, would diſcover to us ſuch admirable *Congruities* in the *Chriſtian* Religion, as would greatly diſpoſe our Minds to the Entertainment of it. Some give this Senſe of it: The Father bore Witneſs of me by a *Voice*, and the *Deſcent of a Dove*, which is ſuch an extraordinary Thing, that you never ſaw or heard the like; and yet for my ſake there was ſuch a Voice and Appearance; yea, and you might have *heard that Voice*, you might have *ſeen that Appearance* as others did, if you had cloſely attended the Miniſtry of *John*, but by ſlighting it you miſs'd of that Teſtimony.

2. Becauſe they were not affected, no not with the ordinary Ways by which God had revealed himſelf to them; *v.* 38. *Ye have not his Word abiding in you.* They had the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, might they not by them be diſpoſed to receive Chriſt? Yes, if they had had their due Influence upon them. But, (1.) The Word of God was not in them; it was among them, in their Country, in their Hands, but not *in them*, in their Hearts; not ruling in their Souls, but only ſhining in their Eyes, and ſounding in their Ears. What did it avail them that they had the Oracles of God *committed* to them, *Rom.* 3. 2. when they had not theſe Oracles *commanding* in them? if they had, they would readily have embraced Chriſt. (2.) It did not *abide.* Many have the Word of God coming into them, and making ſome Impreſſions for a while, but it doth not *abide* with them, 'tis not conſtantly in them, as a Man at Home, but only now and then as a *way-faring Man.* If the Word *abide in* us, if we converſe with it by frequent Meditation, conſult with it upon every Occaſion, and conform to it in our Converſation, we ſhall then readily receive the Witneſs of the Father concerning Chriſt; ſee *John* 7. 17.

But how did it appear, that they *had not the Word of God abiding in them*? It appeared by this, *whom he hath ſent, him ye believe not.* There was ſo much ſaid in the Old Teſtament concerning Chriſt, to direct People when and where to look for him, and ſo to facilitate the Diſcovery of him, that if they had duly conſidered thoſe Things, they could not have avoided the Conviction of Chriſt's being ſent of God; ſo that their not believing in Chriſt, was a certain Sign that the Word of God did not abide in them. *Note*, The Indwelling of the Word and Spirit, and Grace of God in us, is beſt try'd by the Effects of it, particularly by our *receiving what he ſends*; the Commands he ſends, the Meſſengers, the Providences he ſends, eſpecially Chriſt, whom he hath ſent.

Fifthly, The laſt Witneſs he calls is the Old Teſtament, which witneſſed of him, and to it he appeals, *v.* 39, &c. *Search the Scriptures*, ἐρευνᾶτε; it may be read, either, (1.) *Ye do ſearch the Scriptures*, and ye do well to do ſo; you read them daily in your Synagogues, you have *Rabbies* and Doctors, and Scribes, that make it their Buſineſs to ſtudy them, and criticize upon them. The *Jews* boaſted of the flouriſhing of Scripture Learning in the Days of *Hillel*, who died about Twelve Years after Chriſt's Birth, and reckoned ſome of thoſe who were then Members of the Sanhedrin, the *Beauties of their Wiſdom*, and the *Glories of their Law*; and Chriſt owns, that they did indeed ſearch the Scriptures, but it was in ſearch of their *own Glory*; *ye do ſearch the Scriptures*, and therefore if ye were not *wilfully blind*, you would *believe in me*. *Note*, 'Tis poſſible for Men to be very ſtudious in the Letter of the Scripture, and yet to be ſtrangers to the Power and Influence of it. Or, (2.) As we read it, *Search the Scriptures*; and ſo, 1. It was ſpoken to *them* in the Nature of an *Appeal*; you profeſs to receive and believe the Scriptures, there I'll *join Iſſue* with you, let that be the Judge, provided you will not reſt in the Letter, (*hærere in cortice*) but will *ſearch* into it. *Note*, When Appeals are made to the Scriptures, they muſt be *ſearch'd*. Search the whole Book of Scripture *throughout*, compare one Paſſage with another, and explain one by another. We muſt likewiſe ſearch particular Paſſages *to the bottom*, and ſee not what they *ſeem* to ſay *prima facie*, but what they ſay, *indeed*. 2. It is ſpoken to *us* in the Nature of *Advice*, or Command to all Chriſtians to ſearch the Scriptures. *Note*, All thoſe who would *find Chriſt* muſt *ſearch the Scriptures*, not only read them and hear them, but ſearch them. Which notes, (1.) *Diligence* in ſeeking, Labour and Study, and a cloſe Application of Mind. (2.) *Deſire* and *Deſign* of finding. We muſt aim at ſome ſpiritual Benefit and Advantage in reading and ſtudying the Scripture, and often aſk, what am I now ſearching for? We muſt ſearch as for *hid Treaſures*, Prov. 2. 4. as thoſe that ſeek for Gold or Silver, or that *dive* for Pearl, *Job* 28. 1—11. This enobled the *Bereans*, Acts 17. 11.

Now there are two Things which we are here directed to have in our Eye in our ſearching of the Scripture; *Heaven* our End, and *Chriſt* our Way.

1. We muſt ſearch the Scriptures for *Heaven* as our *great End*; for *in them ye think ye have eternal Life*. The Scripture aſſures us of an eternal State ſet before us, and offers to us an eternal Life in that State; it contains the *Chart* that *deſcribes* it, the *Charter* that *conveys* it, the *Direction* in the Way that leads to it, and the *Foundation* upon which the Hope of it is built; and this is worth ſearching for there, where we are ſure to find it. But to the *Jews* Chriſt ſaith only, *ye think* ye have *eternal Life* in the Scriptures; becauſe tho' they did retain the Belief and Hope of eternal Life, and grounded their Expectations of it upon the Scriptures, yet herein they miſs'd it, that they looked for it by the bare reading and ſtudying of the Scripture. 'Twas a common but corrupt Saying among them, *He that has the Words of the Law, has eternal Life*; they thought they were ſure of Heaven, if they could ſay by *Heart*, or rather by *Rote*, ſuch and ſuch Paſſages of Scripture, as they were directed to by the Tradition of the Elders; as they thought all the *Vulgar* curſed, becauſe they did not thus know the Law, *John* 7. 49. ſo they concluded all the *Learned* undoubtedly *Bleſſed*.

2. We muſt *ſearch the Scriptures* for *Chriſt*, as the new and living *Way* that leads to this *End*. Thoſe are *they*, the great and principal Witneſſes *that teſtify of me*. *Note*, 1. The Scriptures, even thoſe of the Old Teſtament, *teſtify* of Chriſt, and by them God *bears Witneſs* to him. The Spirit of Chriſt in the Prophets teſtified before-hand of him, 1 *Pet.* 1. 11. the Purpoſes and Promiſes of God concerning him, and the previous Notices of him. The *Jews* knew very well that the Old Teſtament teſtified of the *Meſſias*, and were critical in their Remarks upon the Paſſages that looked that way, and yet were careleſs, and wretchedly over-ſeen in the Application of them. 2. Therefore we muſt *ſearch the Scriptures*, and may hope to find eternal Life in that ſearch, becauſe they teſtify of Chriſt; for this is *Life eternal to know him*, ſee 1 *John* 5. 11. Chriſt is the Treaſure hid in the Field of the Scriptures; the Water in thoſe Wells, the Milk in thoſe Breaſts.

To this Teſtimony he annexeth a Reproof of their Infidelity and Wickedneſs in four Inſtances; particularly,

1. Their *Neglect of him* and his Doctrine, *v.* 40. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life*. You ſearch the Scriptures, you believe the Prophets, which you cannot but ſee teſtify of me, and yet you will not *come to me*, to whom they direct you. Their Eſtrangement from Chriſt was not ſo much the fault of their *Underſtandings*, as of their *Wills*. This is expreſs'd as a Complaint; Chriſt offered Life, and it would not be accepted. *Note*, 1. There is Life to be had with Jeſus Chriſt for poor Souls; we may have Life, the Life of *Pardon* and *Grace*, and *Comfort* and *Glory*; Life is the Perfection of our Being, and incluſive of all Happineſs, and Chriſt is our Life. 2. Thoſe that would have this Life, muſt come to Jeſus Chriſt for it; we may have it for the coming for. It *ſuppoſeth* an Aſſent of the Underſtanding to the Doctrine of Chriſt, and the Record given concerning him; it *lies* in the Conſent of the Will to his Government and Grace, and it *produceth* an anſwerable Compliance in the Affections and Actions. 3. The only Reaſon why Sinners die, is becauſe they will *not come* to Chriſt for Life and Happineſs; 'tis not becauſe they *cannot*, but becauſe they *will not*. They will neither *accept* of the Life offered, becauſe *Spiritual* and *Divine*; nor will they *agree* to the Terms on which it is offered, nor *apply* themſelves to the uſe of the appointed Means; they will not be cured, for they will not obſerve the Methods of Cure. 4. The Wilfulneſs and Obſtinacy of Sinners in rejecting the Tenders of Grace, is a great Grief to the Lord Jeſus, and what he complains of.

Thoſe Words, *v.* 41. *I receive not Honour from Men*, come in a Parentheſis, to obviate an Objection againſt him, as if he ſought his own Glory, and made himſelf the Head of a Party, in obliging all to come to him, and applaud him. *Note*, 1. He did not *covet* or *court* the Applauſe of Men; did not in the leaſt affect that worldly Pomp and Splendor which the carnal *Jews* expected their *Meſſiah* to appear in. He charged thoſe he cured, not to make him known, and withdrew from thoſe that would have made him King. 2. He *had not* the Applauſe of Men. Inſtead of *receiving Honour* from Men, he received a great deal of *Diſhonour* and Diſgrace from Men, for he made himſelf of no Reputation. 3. He *needed* not the Applauſe of Men, 'twas no Addition to his Glory, whom all the Angels of God worſhip; nor was he any otherwiſe pleaſed with it, than as it was according to his Father's Will, and for the Happineſs of thoſe, who in giving Honour *to him*, received much greater Honour *from him*.

2. Their *want of the Love of God*, v. 42. *I know you* very well, *that you have not the Love of God in you*. Why ſhould I wonder that you do not come to me, when you want even the firſt Principle of *natural Religion*, which is the *Love of God*. *Note*, The Reaſon why People *ſlight Chriſt*, is becauſe they do not *love God*; for if we did indeed love God, we would love him who is his expreſs Image, and haſten to him by whom only we may be reſtored to the Favour of God. He had charged them, *v.* 37. with *Ignorance* of God, and here with want of Love to him; therefore Men have not the Love of God, becauſe they deſire not the Knowledge of him.

Obſerve, (1.) The Crime charged upon them; *You have not the Love of God in you*. They pretended a great Love to God, and thought they prov'd it by their Zeal for the Law, the Temple, and the Sabbath, and yet they were really without the Love of God. *Note*, There are many who make a great Profeſſion of Religion, that yet ſhew they want the Love of God, by their Neglect of Chriſt, and their Contempt of his Commandments; they hate his Holineſs, and undervalue his Goodneſs. Obſerve, 'Tis the Love of God *in* us, the Love that is ſeated *in the Heart*, and is a living, active Principle there, that God will *accept*; the Love *ſhed abroad* there, *Rom.* 5. 5.

(2.) The Proof of this Charge, by the perſonal Knowledge of Chriſt, *who ſearcheth the Heart*, Rev. 2. 23. and knows what is *in Man*; *I know you*. Chriſt ſees through all our Diſguiſes, and can ſay to each of us, *I know thee*. 1. Chriſt knows Men better than *their Neighbours know them*. The People thought that the Scribes and Phariſees were very devout and good Men, but Chriſt knew they had nothing of the Love of God in them. 2. Chriſt knows Men better *than they know themſelves*. Theſe *Jews* had a very good Opinion of themſelves, but Chriſt knew how corrupt their inſide was, notwithſtanding the plauſible Shews of their Outſide; we may deceive ourſelves, but we cannot deceive him. 3. Chriſt knows Men that do not, and will not know him; he looks *on* thoſe who induſtriouſly look *off* him, and calls them by their own Name, their true Name, who have not known him.

3. Another Crime charged upon them, is their Readineſs to entertain falſe Chriſts and falſe Prophets, while they obſtinately oppos'd him who was the true Meſſias; *v.* 43. *I am come in my Father's Name, and ye received me not; if another ſhould come in his own Name, him ye will receive*. *Be aſtoniſhed, O Heaven, at this*, Jer. 2. 12, 13. *For my People have committed Two Evils*, great Evils indeed. (1.) They have *forſaken the Fountain of living Waters*, for they would not receive Chriſt, who came in his Father's Name, had his Commiſſion from his Father, and did all for his Glory. (2.) They have *hewn out broken Ciſterns*, they hearken to every one who will ſet up in his own Name. They forſake their own Mercies, that's bad enough, and 'tis for *lying Vanities*, that's worſe. Obſerve here, (1.) Thoſe are falſe Prophets who come in their own Name, who run without being ſent, and ſet up for themſelves only. (2.) It is juſt with God to ſuffer thoſe to be deceived with falſe Prophets, who receive not the Truth in the Love of it, 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10, 11. The Errors of Antichriſt are the juſt Puniſhment of thoſe who obey not the Doctrine of Chriſt. They that ſhut their Eyes againſt the true Light, are by the Judgment of God given up to wander endleſly after *falſe Lights*, and to be led aſide after every *ignis fatuus*. (3.) It is the groſs Folly of many, that while they *nauſeate* ancient Truths, they are *fond* of upſtart Errors; they loath Manna, and at the ſame time *feed upon Aſhes*. After the *Jews* had rejected Chriſt and his Goſpel, they were continually haunted with Spectres, with falſe Chriſts, and falſe Prophets, *Mat.* 24. 24. and their Proneneſs to follow ſuch, occaſioned thoſe Diſtractions and Seditions that haſtened their Ruin.

4. They are here charg'd with Pride and Vain-glory, and Unbelief the Effects of it, *v.* 44. Having ſharply reprov'd their Unbelief, like a wiſe Phyſician, he here ſearcheth into the Cauſe, lays the Axe to the Root. They therefore ſlighted and under-valued Chriſt, becauſe they *admired* and *over valued* themſelves. Here's,

1. Their Ambition of worldly Honour. Chriſt deſpiſed it, *v.* 41. they ſet their Hearts upon it; *Ye receive Honour one of another*, i. e. ye look for a Meſſiah in outward Pomp, and promiſe your ſelves worldly Honour by him. *You receive Honour*, i. e. 1. You deſire to receive it, and aim at that in all you do.

2. Ye give Honour to others, and applaud them only that they may return it, and may applaud you. *Petimus dabimuſque viciſſim.* 'Tis the proud Man's Art to throw Honour upon others, only that it may rebound upon himſelf. 3. You are very careful to keep all the Honours to yourſelves, and confine them to your own Party, as if you had the Monopoly of that which is honourable. 4. What Reſpects are ſhew'd you, you *receive them* yourſelves, and do not tranſmit them to God, as *Herod.* Idolizing Men and their Sentiments, and affecting to be idoliz'd by them, and their Applauſes, are Pieces of Idolatry, as directly contrary to Chriſtianity as any other.

2. Their neglect of ſpiritual Honour, call'd here *the Honour that comes from God only*; this they ſought not, nor minded. *Note*, 1. True Honour is that which *comes from God only*, that's real and laſting Honour; thoſe are honourable indeed whom he takes into Covenant and Communion with himſelf. 2. *This Honour have all the Saints.* All that believe in Chriſt, through him receive the Honour that comes from God: He is not partial, but will give Glory where-ever he gives Grace. 3. This Honour that comes from God, we muſt *ſeek*, muſt aim at it, and aſk for it, and take up with nothing ſhort of it, *Rom.* 2. 1. we muſt account it *our Reward*, as the Phariſees accounted the Praiſe of Men. 4. Thoſe that will not come to Chriſt, and thoſe that are ambitious of worldly Honour, make it appear that they ſeek not the Honour that comes from God, and 'tis their Folly and Ruin.

3. The Influence this had upon their Infidelity; *How can ye believe* who are thus affected? Obſerve here, (1.) The Difficulty of believing ariſeth from ourſelves, and our own Corruption; we make our Work hard to ourſelves, and then complain it is impracticable. (2.) The Ambition and Affectation of worldly Honour is a great Hindrance to Faith in Chriſt. How can they believe, who make the Praiſe and Applauſe of Men their Idol? When the Profeſſion and Practice of ſerious Godlineſs is unfaſhionable, is *every where ſpoken againſt*; when Chriſt and his Followers are Men wondered at, and to be a Chriſtian, is to be like a *ſpeckled Bird*, (and this is the common Caſe) how can they believe, the Top of whoſe Ambition is to *make a fair ſhew in the Fleſh*?

Sixthly, The laſt Witneſs here called, is *Moſes*, v. 45, &c. The *Jews* had a great Veneration for *Moſes*, and valued themſelves upon their being the Diſciples of *Moſes*, and pretended to adhere to *Moſes* in their Oppoſition to Chriſt; but Chriſt here ſhews them,

1. That *Moſes* was a Witneſs againſt the unbelieving *Jews, and accuſed them to the Father*; *There is one that accuſeth you, even* Moſes. This may be underſtood, either, (1.) As ſhewing the Difference between the Law and the Goſpel. *Moſes*, that is, the Law, *accuſeth you*, for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin; it *condemns* you, 'tis to thoſe that truſt to it a Miniſtration of Death and Condemnation; but it is not the Deſign of Chriſt's Goſpel to *accuſe* us: *Think not that I will accuſe you.* Chriſt did not come into the World as a *Momus*, to find Fault, and pick Quarrels with every body, or as a *Spy* upon the Actions of Men, or a *Promoter* to fiſh for Crimes; no, He came to be an Advocate, not an Accuſer, to reconcile God and Man, and not to ſet them more at variance; what Fools were they then, that adhered to *Moſes* againſt Chriſt, and *deſired to be under the Law*? Gal. 4. 21. Or, (2.) As ſhewing the manifeſt Unreaſonableneſs of their Infidelity. Think not that I will appeal from your Bar to God's, and challenge you to anſwer there for what you do againſt me, as injured Innocency uſes to do; no, I do not need; you are already accus'd and caſt in the Court of Heaven; *Moſes* himſelf ſaith enough to convict you of, and condemn you for your Unbelief. Let them not miſtake *concerning Chriſt*, tho' he was a Prophet, he did not improve his Intereſt in Heaven againſt thoſe that perſecuted him: did not, as *Elias*, *make Interceſſion againſt Iſrael*, Rom. 11. 2. or as *Jeremiah*, deſire to *ſee God's Vengeance on them*, Jer. 20. 12. Inſtead of *accuſing* his Crucifiers to his Father, he pray'd *Father forgive them.* Nor let them miſtake concerning *Moſes*, as if he would ſtand by them in rejecting Chriſt; no, *There is one that accuſeth you, even* Moſes, *in whom ye truſt.* *Note* 1. External Privileges and Advantages, are commonly the vain Confidence of thoſe who reject Chriſt and his Grace. The *Jews truſted in Moſes*, and thought their having his Laws and Ordinances would ſave them. 2. Thoſe that confide in their Privileges, and do not improve them, will find, not only that their Confidence is diſappointed, but that thoſe very Privileges will be Witneſſes againſt them.

2. That *Moſes* was a Witneſs for Chriſt and to his Doctrine, *v.* 46, 47. he *wrote of me.* *Moſes* did particularly propheſy of Chriſt, as the Seed of the Woman, the Seed of *Abraham*, the *Shiloh*, the *great Prophet*; the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moſes*, were *Figures of him that was to come.* The *Jews* made *Moſes* the Patron of their Oppoſition to Chriſt, but Chriſt here ſhews them their Error, that *Moſes* was ſo far from writing againſt Chriſt, that he wrote *for him*, and *of him.* But,

1. Chriſt here charges it on the *Jews*, that *they did not believe Moſes.* He had ſaid, *v.* 45. that they *truſted* in *Moſes*, and yet here undertakes to make out that they did not believe *Moſes*; they truſted to his Name, but they did not receive his Doctrine in its true Senſe and Meaning; they did not rightly underſtand, nor give Credit to what there was in the Writings of *Moſes* concerning the Meſſiah.

2. He proves this Charge from their Disbelief of him; *Had ye believed* Moſes, *ye would have believed me. Note*, 1. The ſureſt Trial of Faith is by the Effects it produceth; many ſay they believe, whoſe Actions give their Words the Lye, for had they believed the Scriptures, they would have done otherwiſe than they did. 2. Thoſe who rightly believe one part of Scripture, will receive every part. The Prophecies of the Old Teſtament were ſo fully accompliſhed in Chriſt, that they who rejected Chriſt, did in effect deny thoſe Prophecies, and ſet them aſide.

3. From their Disbelief of *Moſes*, he infers that it was not ſtrange they rejected him; *If ye believe not his Writings, how ſhall ye believe my Words?* How can it be thought ye ſhould? (1.) If ye do not believe ſacred *Writings*, thoſe Oracles which are in black and white, which is the moſt certain Way of Conveyance? *How ſhall ye believe my Words*, which uſe to be leſs regarded? (2.) If you do not believe *Moſes*, for whom you have ſuch a profound Veneration, how is it likely you ſhould believe me, whom you look upon with ſo much Contempt? See *Exod.* 6. 12. (3.) If ye believe not what *Moſes* ſpake and wrote of me, which is a ſtrong and cogent Teſtimony for me, how ſhall ye believe me and my Miſſion? If we admit not the Premiſes, how ſhall we admit the Concluſion? The Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, it being a Matter purely of Divine Revelation, depends upon the Divine Authority of the Scripture; if therefore we believe not the Divine Inſpiration of thoſe Writings, how ſhall we receive the Doctrine of Chriſt?

Thus ends Chriſt's Plea for himſelf, in anſwer to the Charge exhibited againſt him; what Effect it had, we know not; it ſhould ſeem to have had this, their *Mouths* were ſtopt for the preſent, and they could not for ſhame but drop the Proſecution, and yet their Hearts were *hardened.*

CHAP. VI.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) *The Miracle of the Loaves,* v. 1—14. (2.) *Chriſt's walking upon the Water,* v. 15—21. (3.) *The Peoples flocking after him at* Capernaum, *v.* 22—25. (4.) *His Conference with them, occaſioned by the Miracle of the Loaves, in which he reproves them for ſeeking carnal Food, and directs them to ſpiritual Food,* v. 26, 27. *ſhewing them how they muſt labour for ſpiritual Food,* v. 28, 29. *and what that ſpiritual Food is,* v. 30—59. (5.) *Their Diſcontent at what he ſaid, and the Reproof he gave them for it,* v. 60—65. (6.) *The Apoſtacy of many from him, and his Diſcourſe with his Diſciples that adhered to him upon that Occaſion,* v. 66—71.

AFter theſe things Jeſus went over the ſea of Galilee, which is *the ſea* of Tiberias. 2 And a great multitude followed him, becauſe they ſaw his miracles which he did on them that were diſeaſed. 3 And Jeſus went up into a mountain, and there he ſat with his diſciples. 4 And the paſſover, a feaſt of the Jews, was nigh. 5 When Jeſus then lift up *his* eyes, and ſaw a great company come unto him, he ſaith unto Philip, Whence ſhall we buy bread that theſe may eat? 6 (And this he ſaid to prove him: for he himſelf knew what he would do.) 7 Philip anſwered him, Two hundred penny-worth of bread is not ſufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. 8 One of his diſciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, ſaith unto him, 9 There is a lad here, which hath five barley-loaves, and two ſmall fiſhes: but what are they among ſo many? 10 And Jeſus ſaid, Make the men ſit down. Now there were much graſs in the place. So the men ſat down, in number about five thouſand. 11 And Jeſus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he diſtributed to the diſciples, and the diſciples to them that were ſet down; and likewiſe of the fiſhes, as much as they would. 12 When they were filled, he ſaid unto his diſciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be loſt. 13 Therefore they gathered *them* together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten. 14 Then thoſe men, when they had ſeen the miracle that Jeſus did, ſaid, This is of a truth that prophet that ſhould come into the world.

We have here an Account of Chriſt's feeding Five Thouſand Men with Five Loaves and two Fiſhes: which Miracle is in this reſpect remarkable, that it is the only Paſſage of the Actions of *Chriſt's Life*, that is recorded by all the Four Evangeliſts.

John, who uſeth not to relate what had been recorded by thoſe who wrote before him, yet relates this, becauſe of the Reference the following Diſcourſes has to it.

Obſerve, 1. The *Place* and *Time*, where and when this Miracle was wrought, which are noted for the greater Evidence of the Truth of the Story; it is not ſaid that it was done once upon a Time, no Body knows where, but the Circumſtances are ſpecified, that the Fact might be enquired into.

1. The Country that Chriſt was in, *v.* 1. *He went over the Sea of Galilee*, call'd elſewhere the Lake of *Genneſareth*, here the *Sea of Tiberias*, from a City adjoining, which *Herod* had lately enlarged and beautified, and called ſo in Honour of *Tiberius* the Emperor, and probably had made his Metropolis. Chriſt did not go directly over, croſs this Inland Sea, but made a *coaſting* Voyage to another Place on the ſame Side. It is not tempting God to chuſe to go *by Water*, when there is Convenience for it, even to thoſe Places whither we might go *by Land*; for Chriſt never *tempted the Lord his God*, Mat. 4. 7.

2. The Company that he was attended with; *a great Multitude followed him becauſe they ſaw his Miracles*, *v.* 2. *Note*, 1. Our Lord Jeſus, while he went about *doing Good*, lived continually in *a Crowd*, which gave him more Trouble than Honour. Good and uſeful Men muſt not complain of a *Hurry* of Buſineſs when they are ſerving God and their Generation; 'twill be time enough to *enjoy ourſelves*, when we come to that World where we ſhall *enjoy God*. 2. Chriſt's Miracles drew many *after him* that were not effectually drawn *to him*. They had their Curioſity gratified by the Strangeneſs of them, who had not their Conſciences convinced by the Power of them.

3. Chriſt's poſting himſelf advantageouſly to entertain them, *v.* 3. *He went up into a Mountain*, and there he *ſat with his Diſciples*, that he might the more conveniently be ſeen and heard by the Multitude that crowded after him; this was a *natural* Pulpit, and not like *Ezra's*, made *for the Purpoſe*. Chriſt was now driven to be a *Field-Preacher*, but his Word was never the worſe, nor the leſs acceptable for that, to thoſe who knew how to value it; who followed him ſtill, not only when he *went out* to a deſart Place, but when he *went up* to a Mountain, tho' *up-hill* be *againſt Heart*. He *ſat* there, as Teachers uſe to do *in Cathedra*; he did not ſit at Eaſe, nor ſit in State; yet ſat as one having Authority; ſat ready to receive Addreſſes that were made to him, whoever would, might come and find him there. He ſat *with his Diſciples*, he condeſcended to take them to *ſit with him*, to put a Reputation upon them before the People, and give them an Earneſt of the Glory in which they ſhould ſhortly ſit with him. We are ſaid to ſit with him, *Eph.* 2. 6.

4. The Time when it was. The firſt Words *after thoſe Things*, do not ſignify that this immediately followed what was related in the foregoing Chapter, for it was a conſiderable Time after, and they ſignify no more but in proceſs of Time; but we are told, *v.* 4. that it was *when the Paſſover was nigh*; which is here noted, (1.) Becauſe, perhaps that had brought in all the Apoſtles from their reſpective Expeditions, whither they were ſent as Itinerant Preachers, that they might attend their Maſter to *Jeruſalem* to keep the Feaſt. (2.) Becauſe it was a Cuſtom with the *Jews*, religiouſly to obſerve the approach of the Paſſover *Thirty Days* before with ſome ſort of Solemnity; ſo long before they had it in their Eye, repair'd the Roads, mended Bridges if occaſion were, and diſcours'd of the Paſſover, and the Inſtitution of it. (3.) Becauſe, perhaps the Approach of the Paſſover, when every one knew Chriſt would go up to *Jeruſalem*, and be abſent for ſome Time, made the Multitude flock the more after him, and attend the more diligently on him. *Note*, The Proſpect of loſing our Opportunities, ſhould quicken us to improve them with double Diligence. And when ſolemn Ordinances are approaching, 'tis good to prepare for them by converſing with the Word of Chriſt.

2. The Miracle it ſelf. And there obſerve,

1. The Notice Chriſt took of the Crowd that attended him, *v.* 5. He *lift up his Eyes, and ſaw a great Company come to him*, poor, mean, ordinary People, no doubt; for ſuch make up the Multitudes, eſpecially in ſuch remote Corners of the Country; yet Chriſt ſhewed himſelf pleaſed with their Attendance, and concerned for their Welfare; to teach us to *condeſcend to them of low Eſtate*, and not to *ſet* thoſe *with the Dogs of our Flock*, whom Chriſt hath ſet with the Lambs of his. The Souls of the Poor are as precious to Chriſt, and ſhould be ſo to us, as thoſe of the Rich.

2. The Enquiry he made concerning the Way of providing for them. He directed himſelf to *Philip*, who had been his Diſciple from the firſt, and had ſeen all his Miracles, and particularly that of his turning Water into Wine; and therefore it might be expected that he ſhould have ſaid, Lord, if thou wilt, it is eaſy to thee to feed them all; thoſe that, like *Iſrael*, have been Witneſſes of Chriſt's Works, and have ſhared in the Benefit of them, are inexcuſable, if they ſay, *Can he furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs?* *Philip* was of *Bethſaida*, in the Neighbourhood of which Town Chriſt now was, and therefore he was moſt likely to help them to Proviſion at the beſt hand; and probably much of the Company was known to him, and he concerned for them. Now Chriſt ask'd, *Whence ſhall we buy Bread that theſe may eat?* (1.) He takes it for granted that they muſt all *eat with him*. One would think when he had taught and healed them, he had done his part, and now they ſhould rather have been contriving how to treat him and his Diſciples; for ſome of the People, it's likely, were *Rich*, and we are ſure that Chriſt and his Diſciples were *poor*, yet he is ſollicitous to entertain them. Thoſe that will accept Chriſt's ſpiritual Gifts, inſtead of *paying* for them, ſhall be *paid* for their Acceptance of them. Chriſt having fed their Souls with the Bread of Life, feeds their Bodies alſo with *Food convenient*, to ſhew that the Lord is for the Body, and to encourage us to pray for our daily Bread; and to ſet us an Example of Compaſſion to the Poor, *Jam.* 2. 15. (2.) His Enquiry is, *Whence ſhall we buy bread?* One would think, conſidering his Poverty, he ſhould rather have ask'd, Where ſhall we have Money to buy for them? But he will rather lay out all he has, than they ſhall want. He will buy to give, and we muſt *labour* that we may give, *Eph.* 4. 28.

3. The Deſign of this Enquiry, 'twas only to try the Faith of *Philip*, *for he himſelf knew not what would do*, v. 6. *Note*, 1. Our Lord Jeſus is never at a loſs in his Counſels; but how difficult ſoever the Caſe is, he knows what he has to do, and what courſe he will take; *Acts* 15. 18. *He knows the Thoughts he has towards his People*, Jer. 29. 11. and is never at Uncertainty; when we know not, he *himſelf knows what he will do*. 2. When Chriſt is pleas'd to *puzzle* his People, 'tis only with a Deſign to *prove* them. The Queſtion put *Philip* to a Non-plus, yet Chriſt propoſed it to try whether he would ſay, Lord, if thou wilt exert thy Power for them, we need not buy Bread.

4. *Philip*'s Anſwer to this Queſtion, *Two Hundred Pennyworth of Bread is not ſufficient*, v. 7. Maſter, it's to no purpoſe to talk of buying Bread for them, for neither will the Country afford ſo much Bread, nor can we afford to lay out ſo much Money, ask *Judas* elſe, who carries the Bag. Two Hundred Pence of *their* Money, amounts to about Six Pounds of *ours*; and if they lay out all that at once, it will exhauſt their Fund, and break them, and they muſt ſtarve themſelves. *Grotius* computes, that *Two Hundred Pennyworth of Bread* would ſcarce reach to *Two Thouſand*, but *Philip* would go as near hand as he could, will have *every one to take a little*; and Nature, we ſay, is content with a little. See the Weakneſs of *Philip*'s Faith, that in this Strait, as if the Maſter of the Family had been an *ordinary Perſon*, he look'd for Supply only in an *ordinary Way*. Chriſt might now have ſaid to him, as he did afterwards, Have I *been ſo long Time with you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip?* Or, as God to *Moſes*, in a like Caſe, *Is the Lord's Hand waxen ſhort?* We are apt thus to diſtruſt God's Power, when viſible and ordinary Means fail, that is, to truſt him no further than we can ſee him.

5. The Information which Chriſt received from another of his Diſciples, concerning the Proviſion they had. 'Twas *Andrew*, here ſaid to be *Simon Peter's Brother*; tho' he was ſenior to *Peter* in Diſcipleſhip, and inſtrumental to bring *Peter* to Chriſt, yet *Peter* afterwards ſo far out-ſhone him, that he is deſcribed by his Relation to *Peter*: He acquainted Chriſt with what they had at hand; and in that we may ſee,

(1.) The *Strength* of his *Love* to thoſe whom he ſaw his Maſter concern'd for, in that he was willing to bring out all they had, tho' he knew not but they might want themſelves, and any one would have ſaid, *Charity begins at home*. He did not go about to conceal it, under pretence of being a better *Husband* of their Proviſion than the Maſter was, but honeſtly gives in an Account of all they had. There is a Lad here, παιδάριον, a little Lad, probably one that uſed to follow this Company, as Sutlers do the Camp, with Proviſions to ſell, and the Diſciples had beſpoke what he had for themſelves; and it was *Five Barley Loaves*, and Two ſmall Fiſhes. Here, (1.) The Proviſion was *coarſe* and *ordinary*; they were *Barley-loaves*. *Canaan* was a *Land of Wheat*, Deut. 8. 8. its Inhabitants were commonly fed with the fineſt Wheat, *Pſal.* 81. 16. the Kidneys of Wheat, *Deut.* 32. 14. yet Chriſt and his Diſciples were glad of *Barley-bread*. It doth not follow hence, that we ſhould tye our ſelves to ſuch coarſe Fare, and place Religion in it; when God brings that which is finer to our Hands, let us receive it and be thankful; but it doth follow, that therefore we muſt not be *deſirous of Dainties*, Prov. 23. 5. nor murmur if we be reduced to coarſe Fare, but be content and thankful, and well reconciled to it; Barley-bread is what Chriſt *had*, and better than we *deſerve*: Nor let us deſpiſe the mean Proviſion of the Poor, nor look upon it with Contempt, remembring how Chriſt was provided for. (2.) It was but *ſhort* and *ſcanty*; there were but *Five Loaves*, and thoſe ſo ſmall, that one little Lad carried them all; and we find, 2 *Kings* 4. 42, 43. that *Twenty Barley-loaves*, with ſome other Proviſion to help out, would not dine a Hundred Men without a Miracle. There were but Two Fiſhes, and thoſe *ſmall* ones, δύο ὀψάρια, ſo ſmall that one of them was but a Morſel: *Piſciculi aſſati*, I take the Fiſh to be pickled or ſouſed, for they had not Fire to dreſs them with. The Proviſion of *Bread* was *little*, but that of *Fiſh* was *leſs*, in proportion to it, ſo that many a bit of dry Bread they muſt eat, before they could make a Meal of this Proviſion; but they were content with it. *Bread* is Meat for our Hunger, but they that murmured for Fleſh, 'tis ſaid, they *asked Meat for their Luſts*, Pſal. 78. 18. Well, *Andrew* was willing the People ſhould have this as far as it would go. *Note*, A diſtruſtful Fear of wanting

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ourſelves, ſhould not hinder us from needful Charity to others.

(2.) See here the *Weakneſs* of his *Faith*, in that Word; *But what are they among ſo many*? To offer that to ſuch a Multitude is but to mock them. *Philip* and he had not that actual Conſideration of the Power of Chriſt, which they had had ſuch large Experience of, as they ſhould have had. Who fed the Camp of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs? He that could make *one Man chaſe a Thouſand*, could make one Loaf feed a Thouſand.

6. The Directions Chriſt gave the Diſciples to ſeat the Gueſts, *v.* 20. *Make the Men ſit down*, tho' ye have nothing to ſet before them, and truſt me for that; this was like *ſending Providence* to *Market*, and going to buy without Money: Chriſt would thus try their Obedience. Obſerve, 1. The Furniture of the Dining-Room; *there was much Graſs in that Place*, tho' a deſart Place; ſee how bountiful Nature is, *makes Graſs to grow upon the Mountains*, Pſal. 147. 8. This Graſs was uneaten; God gives not only enough, but more than enough: Here was this Plenty of Graſs where Chriſt was Preaching; the Goſpel brings other Bleſſings along with it; *Then ſhall the Earth yield her increaſe*, Pſal. 67. 6. This Plenty of Graſs made the Place the more commodious for them that muſt ſit on the Ground, and ſerved them for Cuſhions, or *Beds*, (as they call'd what they ſat on at Meat, *Eſth.* 1. 6.) and conſidering what Chriſt ſaith of the Graſs of the Field, *Mat.* 6. 29, 30. theſe Beds excelled thoſe of *Ahaſuerus*: Nature's Pomp is the moſt Glorious. 2. The Number of the Gueſts, *about Five Thouſand*. A great Entertainment, repreſenting that of the Goſpel, which is a *Feaſt for all Nations*, Iſa. 25. 6. a Feaſt for all *Comers*.

7. The Diſtribution of the Proviſion, *v.* 11. Obſerve, 1. It was done with Thankſgiving; he *gave Thanks*. *Note*, 1. We ought to give thanks to God for our Food, for 'tis a Mercy to have it, and we have it from the Hand of God, and muſt *receive it with Thankſgiving*, 1 Tim. 4. 4, 5. And this is the Sweetneſs of our Creature-Comforts, that they will furniſh us with *Matter*, and give us occaſion for that excellent Duty of Thankſgiving. 2. Tho' our Proviſion be coarſe and ſcanty, tho' we have neither Plenty nor Dainty, yet we muſt give Thanks to God for what we have.

2. It was diſtributed from the Hand of Chriſt by the Hands of his Diſciples, *v.* 11. *Note*, 1. All our Comforts come to us *originally* from the Hand of Chriſt; whoever *brings* them, 'tis he that *ſends* them, he diſtributes to them, who diſtribute to us. 2. In diſtributing the Bread of Life to thoſe that follow him, he is pleaſed to make uſe of the Miniſtration of his Diſciples; they are the Servitors at Chriſt's Table, or rather, Rulers in his Houſhold, to give to *every one their Portion of Meat in due Seaſon*.

3. It was done to univerſal Satisfaction. They did not every one take a little, but all had *as much as they would*; not a ſhort Allowance, but a full Meal; and conſidering how long they had faſted, with what an Appetite they ſat down, how agreeable this miraculous Food may be ſuppos'd to be above common Food, it was not a little that ſerved them, when they eat as much as they would, and on Free-coſt. Thoſe whom Chriſt feeds with the Bread of Life, he doth not *ſtint*, Pſal. 81. 10. There were but *Two ſmall Fiſhes*, and yet they had *of them* too *as much as they would*. He did not reſerve them for the better ſort of the Gueſts, and put off the Poor with dry Bread, but treated them all alike, for they were all alike welcome. They who call feeding upon Fiſh *faſting*, reproach the Entertainment Chriſt here made, which was a *full Feaſt*.

8. The Care that was taken of the broken Meat.

1. The Orders Chriſt gave concerning it, *v.* 12. *When they were filled*, and every Man had within him a ſenſible Witneſs to the Truth of the Miracle, Chriſt *ſaid to the Diſciples*, the Servants he employ'd, *Gather up the Fragments*. *Note*, We muſt always take care that we make no waſte of any of God's good Creatures, for the Grant we have of them, tho' large and full, is with this Proviſo, *Wilful Waſte only excepted*. 'Tis juſt with God to bring us to the want of that which we make waſte of. The *Jews* were very careful not to loſe any Bread, or let it fall to the Ground to be trodden upon. *Qui panem contemnit, in gravem incidit paupertatem*, was a Saying among them. Tho' Chriſt could command Supplies whenever he pleas'd, yet he would have the Fragments gather'd up. When we are filled, we muſt remember that others want, and we may want. Thoſe that would have wherewith to be *charitable*, muſt be *provident*. Had this broken Meat been left upon the Graſs, the Beaſts and Fowls would have gather'd it up; but that which is fit to be Meat for Men, is waſted and loſt, if it be thrown to the brute Creatures. Chriſt did not order the broken Meat to be gather'd up till all were fill'd; we muſt not begin to hoard and lay up, till all is laid out that ought to be, for that's with-holding more than is meet. Mr. *Baxter* notes here, "How much leſs ſhould we loſe God's Word, or Helps, or our "Time, or ſuch greater Mercies?

2. The Obſervance of theſe Orders, *v.* 13. *They fill'd Twelve Baskets with the Fragments*; which was an Evidence, not only of the Truth of the Miracle, that they were fed, not with Fancy but with real Food, witneſs thoſe Remains, but of the Greatneſs of it; they were not only filled, but there was all this over and above: ſee how large the Divine Bounty is, it not only *fills* the Cup, but makes it *run over*; Bread enough, and to ſpare in our Father's Houſe. The Fragments fill'd Twelve Baskets, one for each Diſciple; they were thus repaid with Intereſt for their Willingneſs to part with what they had for publick Service; ſee 2 *Chron.* 31. 10. The *Jews* lay it as a Law upon themſelves, when they have eaten a Meal, to be ſure to leave a Piece of Bread upon the Table, upon which the Bleſſing after Meat may reſt; for it is a Curſe upon the wicked Man, *Job* 20. 21. that *there ſhall none of his meat be left*.

3. Here's the Influence which this Miracle had upon the People, who taſted of the Benefit of it, *v.* 14. they ſaid, *This is of a truth that Prophet*. *Note*, 1. Even the vulgar *Jews*, with great Aſſurance, expected the Meſſias to come into the World, and to be a *Great Prophet*. They ſpeak here with aſſurance of his coming. The Phariſees deſpis'd them, as *not knowing the Law*; but it ſhould ſeem they knew more of him, that is the *End of the Law*, than they did. 2. The Miracles which Chriſt wrought, did clearly demonſtrate that he was the *Meſſiah* promiſed, a Teacher come from God, the Great Prophet, and could not but convince the amazed Spectators, that this was he that ſhould come. 3. There were many who were convinc'd he was that Prophet which ſhould come into the World, who yet did not cordially receive his Doctrine, for they did not continue in it. Such a wretched incoherence and inconſiſtency there is between the Faculties of the corrupt, unſanctified Soul, that 'tis poſſible for Men to acknowledge that Chriſt is that Prophet, and yet turn a deaf Ear to him.

15 ¶ When Jeſus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himſelf alone. 16 And when even was *now* come, his diſciples went down unto the ſea. 17 And entered into a ſhip, and went over the ſea towards Capernaum: and it was now dark, and Jeſus was not come to them. 18 And the ſea aroſe, by reaſon of a great wind that blew. 19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty, or thirty furlongs, they ſee Jeſus walking on the ſea, and drawing nigh unto the ſhip: and they were afraid. 21 But he ſaith unto them, It is I, be not afraid. 21 Then they willingly received him into the ſhip, and immediately the ſhip was at the land whither they went.

Here's, 1. Chriſt's Retirement from the Multitude.

1. Obſerve, What induced him to retire; becauſe he perceived that they who acknowledged him to be that Prophet that ſhould come into the World, would come and *take him by force to make him a King*, v. 15. Now here we have an Inſtance,

(1.) Of the irregular Zeal of ſome of Chriſt's Followers; nothing would ſerve but they would make him *a King*.

Now, 1. This was *an Act of Zeal*, for the Honour of Chriſt, and againſt the Contempt which the ruling Part of the *Jewiſh* Church put upon him. They were concerned to ſee ſo great a Benefactor to the World, ſo little eſteem'd of in it, and therefore, ſince Royal Titles are counted the moſt Illuſtrious, they would make him a King, knowing that the Meſſiah was to be a King; and if a Prophet like *Moſes*, then a Sovereign Prince and Lawgiver like him; and if they cannot ſet him up, *upon the holy Hill of Zion*, a *Mountain* in *Galilee* ſhall ſerve for the preſent. Thoſe whom Chriſt has feaſted with the Royal Dainties of Heaven, ſhould, in return for his Favour, make him *their* King, and ſet him upon the Throne in their Souls: Let him that has *fed* us, *rule* us. But, 2. It was an *irregular* Zeal; for, 1. It was *grounded* upon a Miſtake concerning the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, as if it were to be *of this World*; and he muſt appear with outward Pomp, a Crown on his Head, and an Army at his Foot; ſuch a King as this they would make him, which was as great a Diſparagement to his Glory, as it would be to lacker Gold, or paint a Ruby. Right Notions of Chriſt's Kingdom, would keep us to right Methods for the advancing of it. 2. It was excited by the Love of the Fleſh; they would make him their King, who could feed them ſo plentifully without their Toil, and ſave them from the Curſe of *eating their Bread in the Sweat of their Face*. 3. It was intended to carry on a *ſecular* Deſign; they hoped this might be a fair Opportunity of ſhaking off the *Roman* Yoke, which they were weary of. If they had one to head them, who could victual an Army cheaper than another could provide for a Family, they were ſure of the Sinews of the War, and could not fail of Succeſs, and the Recovery of their ancient Liberties. Thus is Religion often proſtituted to a ſecular Intereſt, and Chriſt is ſerv'd only to *ſerve a Turn*, Rom. 16. 18. *Vix quæritur* Jeſus, *propter* Jeſum, *ſed propter aliud*, Aug. Nay, 4. 'Twas a tumultuous, ſeditious Attempt, and a Diſturbance of the Publick Peace; 'twould make the Country a Seat of War, and expoſe it to the Reſentments of the *Roman* Power. 5. It was contrary to the Mind of our Lord Jeſus himſelf; for they would take him *by force*, whether he would or no. *Note*, Thoſe who force Honours upon Chriſt, which he has not required at their Hands, diſpleaſe him, and do him the greateſt Diſhonour. They that ſay, *I am of Chriſt*, in Oppoſition to thoſe that are of *Apollos*, and *Cephas*, ſo making Chriſt the Head of a Party, take him by force to make him a King, contrary to his own Mind.

(2.) Here's an Inſtance of the Humility, and Self-denial of the Lord Jeſus, that when they would have made him a King, he *departed*; ſo far was he from countenancing the Deſign, that he effectually quaſhed it. Herein he has left a Teſtimony, (1.) Againſt Ambition, and Affectation of worldly Honour, to which he was perfectly mortified, and has taught us to be ſo. Had they come to take him by force, and make him a Priſoner, he could not have been more induſtrious to abſcond, than he was when they would make him a King. Let not us then covet to be the *Idols of the Crowd*, nor be *deſirous of vain Glory.* (2.) Againſt Faction and Sedition, Treaſon and Rebellion, and whatever tends to diſturb the Peace of Kings and Provinces. By this it appears he was no Enemy to *Cæſar*, nor would have his Followers be ſo, but the *quiet in the Land*; that he would have his Miniſters decline every Thing that looks *like* Sedition, or looks *towards* it, and improve their Intereſt only for their Works ſake.

2. Obſerve *whither* he retir'd, he *departed again into a Mountain*, εἰς το ὄρος, *into the* Mountain, the Mountain where he had preach'd, *v.* 3. whence he came down into the Plain to feed the People, and then returned to it alone, to be private. Chriſt, tho' ſo uſeful in the Places of Concourſe, yet choſe ſometimes to be alone, to teach us to ſequeſter ourſelves from the World now and then, for the more free Converſe with God and our own Souls; and *never leſs alone*, ſaith the ſerious Chriſtian, *than when alone.* Publick Services muſt not joſtle out private Devotions.

2. Here's the Diſciples Diſtreſs at Sea. *They that go down to the Sea in Ships, theſe ſee the Works of the Lord, for he raiſeth the ſtormy Wind*, Pſal. 107. 23. Apply that to theſe Diſciples.

1. Here's their *going down to the Sea* in a Ship, *v.* 16, 17. *When Even was come*, and they had done their Day's Work, it was time to look homewards, and therefore they went Abroad, and ſet ſail for *Capernaum.* This they did by particular Direction from their Maſter, with Deſign (as it ſhould ſeem) to get them out of the Way of the Temptation of countenancing thoſe that would have made him a King.

2. Here's the *ſtormy Wind* ariſing, and *fulfilling the Word of God.* They were Chriſt's Diſciples, and were now in the way of their Duty, and Chriſt was now in the Mount praying for them, and yet in this Diſtreſs. The Perils and Afflictions of this preſent Time, may very well conſiſt with our Intereſt in Chriſt and his Interceſſion. They had lately been feaſted at Chriſt's Table, but after the Sun-ſhine of Comfort, expect a Storm. (1.) *It was now dark*, this made the Storm the more dangerous and uncomfortable. Sometimes the People of God are in Trouble, and cannot ſee their Way out; in the Dark concerning the Cauſe of their Trouble, concerning the Deſign and Tendency of it, and what the Iſſue will be. (2.) Jeſus *was not come to them.* When they were in that Storm, *Mat.* 8. 21. *Jeſus was with them*, but now their Beloved had withdrawn himſelf, and was gone. The Abſence of Chriſt is the great Aggravation of the Troubles of Chriſtians. (3.) The *Sea aroſe by reaſon of a great Wind.* 'Twas calm and fair when they put to Sea; they were not ſo preſumptuous as to lanch out in a Storm, but it aroſe when they were *at Sea.* In Times of Tranquillity we muſt prepare for Trouble, for it may ariſe when we little think of it. Let it comfort good People, when they happen to be in Storms at Sea, that the Diſciples of Chriſt were ſo; and let the Promiſes of a gracious God ballance the Threats of an angry Sea; tho' in a Storm, and *in the Dark*, ſo were Chriſt's Diſciples. Clouds and Darkneſs ſometimes ſurround the Children of the Light, and of the Day.

3. Here's Chriſt's ſeaſonable Approach to them when they were in this Peril, *v.* 19. *They had row'd* (being forc'd by the contrary Winds to betake themſelves to their Oars) *about Twenty five or Thirty Furlongs.* The holy Spirit that indicted this, could have aſcertain'd the Number of Furlongs preciſely, but that being only circumſtantial, that's left to be expreſs'd according to the Conjecture of the Penman. And when they were got off a good way at Sea, they *ſee Jeſus walking on the Sea.* See here, (1.) The Power Chriſt has over the Laws and Cuſtoms of Nature, to controul and diſpenſe with them at his Pleaſure. 'Tis natural for heavy Bodies to ſink in Water, but Chriſt walk'd *upon* the Water, as upon dry Land; which was more than *Moſes*'s dividing the Water, and walking *through* the Water. (2.) The Concern Chriſt has for his Diſciples in Diſtreſs; *He drew nigh to the Ship*; for therefore he walk'd upon the Water, as he *rides upon the Heavens for the help of his People*, Deut. 33. 26. He will not leave them comfortleſs, when they ſeem to be *toſſed with Tempeſts*, and *not comforted.* When they are baniſh'd, as *John*, into remote Places, or ſhut up as *Paul* and *Silas* in cloſe Places, he will find Acceſs to them, and will be nigh them. (3.) The Relief Chriſt gives to his Diſciples in their Fears. They *were afraid*, more afraid of an Apparition (for ſo they ſuppos'd him to be) than of the Winds and Waves. 'Tis more terrible to wreſtle with the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, than with a tempeſtuous Sea. When they thought a *Dæmon* haunted 'em, and perhaps was inſtrumental to raiſe the Storm, they were more terrified than they had been, while they ſaw nothing in it but what was natural. *Note*, 1. Our real Diſtreſſes are often much increaſed by our imaginary ones, the Creatures of our own Fancy. 2. Even the Approaches of Comfort and Deliverance are often ſo miſconſtrued, as to become the Occaſions of Fear and Perplexity. We are often not only *worſe frighten'd than hurt*, but then moſt *frighten'd* when we are ready to be *help'd.* But when they were in this Fright, how affectionately did Chriſt ſilence their Fears with that compaſſionate Word, *v.* 20. *It is I, be not afraid.* Nothing more powerful to convince Sinners than that Word, *I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt*; nothing more powerful to comfort Saints than this, *I am Jeſus whom thou loveſt*: It is I that love thee, and ſeek thy good: Be not afraid of me, no nor of the Storm; when Trouble is nigh, Chriſt is nigh.

4. Here's their ſpeedy Arrival at the Port they were bound for, *v.* 17. (1.) They *welcom'd* Chriſt into the Ship; they *willingly received him. Note*, Chriſt's abſenting himſelf for a Time, is but ſo much the more to *endear himſelf* at his Return to his Diſciples, that value his Preſence above any Thing; ſee *Cant.* 3. 4. (2.) Chriſt *landed* them ſafe at the Shore; *immediately the Ship was at Land whither they went. Note*, 1. The Ship of the Church, in which the Diſciples of Chriſt have *embark'd* themſelves, and their All, may be much ſhatter'd and diſtreſs'd, yet it ſhall come ſafe to the Harbour at laſt; *toſs'd* at Sea, but not *loſt*; caſt down, but not deſtroy'd; the Buſh burning, but not conſum'd. 2. The Power and Preſence of the Church's King, ſhall expedite and facilitate her Deliverance, and conquer the Difficulties which have baffled the Skill and Induſtry of all her other Friends. The Diſciples had row'd hard, but could not make their Point till they had got Chriſt in the Ship, and then the Work was *done ſuddenly.* If we have received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, have received him willingly, tho' the Night be dark, and the Wind high, yet we may comfort ourſelves with this, we ſhall be at ſhore ſhortly, and are nearer to it than we think we are. Many a doubting Soul is fetch'd to Heaven by a pleaſing Surprize, or ever it is aware.

22 ¶ The day following, when the people which ſtood on the other ſide of the ſea, ſaw that there was none other boat there, ſave that one whereinto his diſciples were entered, and that Jeſus went not with his diſciples into the boat, but *that* his diſciples were gone away alone: 23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks.) 24 When the people therefore ſaw that Jeſus was not there, neither his diſciples, they alſo took ſhipping, and came to Capernaum, ſeeking for Jeſus. 25 And when they had found him on the other ſide of the ſea, they ſaid unto him, Rabbi, when cameſt thou hither? 26 Jeſus anſwered them, and ſaid, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Ye ſeek me, not becauſe ye ſaw the miracles, but becauſe ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. 27 Labour not for the meat which periſheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlaſting life, which the ſon of man ſhall give unto you: for him hath God the Father ſealed.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, The careful Enquiry which the People made afrer Chriſt, *v.* 23, 24. They ſaw the Diſciples go to Sea, they ſaw Chriſt retire to the Mountain, probably with an Intimation that he deſir'd to be private for ſome Time; but their Hearts being ſet upon it to *make him a King*, they way-laid his Return; and *the Day following*, the hot Fit of their Zeal ſtill continuing,

1. They are here *much at a Loſs* for him; he was gone, and they wot not what was become of him; they ſaw there was *no other Boat there*, but that in which the Diſciples went off, Providence ſo ordering it for the confirming of the Miracle of his walking on the Sea, for there was no Boat for him to go in. They obſerved alſo, that *Jeſus did not go with his Diſciples*, but they went off alone, and had left him among *them* on *their* Side of the Water. *Note*, Thoſe who would find Chriſt, muſt diligently obſerve all his Motions, and learn to underſtand the Tokens of his Preſence and Abſence, that they may ſteer accordingly.

2. They are very *induſtrious in ſeeking* him. They ſearched the Places thereabouts, and when *they ſaw that Jeſus was not there, nor his Diſciples*, neither he nor any one that could give Tidings of him, they reſolved to ſearch elſewhere. *Note*, Thoſe that would find Chriſt, muſt accompliſh a diligent Search; muſt ſeek till they find; muſt go from Sea to Sea to ſeek the Word of God, rather than live without it. And thoſe whom Chriſt has feaſted with the Bread of Life, ſhou'd have their Souls carry'd out in earneſt Deſires towards him. Much would have more in Communion with Chriſt. Now, 1. They reſolved to go to *Capernaum* in queſt of him; there was his Head Quarters, where he uſually reſided. Thither his Diſciples were gone, and they knew he would not be long abſent from *them*; they that would find Chriſt, muſt

go forth by the Foot-ſteps of the Flock. 2. Providence favour'd them with an Opportunity of going thither by Sea, which was the ſpeedieſt way; for there *came other Boats from* Tiberias, that lay further off upon the ſame Shore, *nigh*, tho' not ſo nigh to the Place where they did *eat Bread*, in which they might ſoon make a Trip to *Capernaum*, and probably the Boats were bound for that Port. *Note*, Thoſe that in Sincerity ſeek Chriſt, and ſeek Opportunities of Converſe with him, are commonly own'd and aſſiſted by Providence in thoſe Purſuits. The Evangeliſt, having Occaſion to mention their eating the *multiplied* Bread, adds, *after that the Lord had given Thanks*, v. 11. So much were the Diſciples affected with their Maſter's giving Thanks, that they can never forget the Impreſſions made upon them by it, but took a Pleaſure in remembring the gracious Words that then proceeded out of his Mouth. That was the Grace and Beauty of that Meal; and made it remarkable, their Hearts burn'd within them.

3. They laid hold on the Opportunity that offer'd itſelf, and *they alſo took ſhipping, and came to* Capernaum, *ſeeking for Jeſus.* They did not defer, in hopes to ſee him again *on this ſide the Water*, but their Convictions being ſtrong, and their Deſires warm, they follow'd him preſently. Good Motions are often cruſh'd, and come to nothing, for want of being *proſecuted* in *time*. They came to *Capernaum*, and for ought appears, theſe unſound hypocritical Followers of Chriſt had a *calm* and *pleaſant* Paſſage, while his ſincere Diſciples had a *rough* and *ſtormy* one. 'Tis not ſtrange if it fare worſt with the beſt Men in this evil World. They *came ſeeking Jeſus. Note*, Thoſe that would find Chriſt, and find Comfort in him, muſt be willing to take Pains, and, as thoſe here, *compaſs* Sea and Land to ſeek and ſerve him, who came from Heaven to Earth to ſeek and ſave us.

Secondly, The Succeſs of this Enquiry, *v.* 25. *They found him on the other ſide of the Sea. Note*, Chriſt will be found of thoſe that ſeek him, firſt or laſt; and it's worth while to croſs a Sea, nay to go *from Sea to Sea, and from the River to the Ends of the Earth*, to ſeek Chriſt, if we may but find him at laſt. Thoſe People appear'd afterwards to be unſound, and not acted by any good Principle, and yet were thus zealous. *Note*, Hypocrites may be very forward in their Attendance on God's Ordinances. If Men have *no more* to ſhew for their Love to Chriſt, *but* only their running after Sermons and Prayers, and their Pangs of Affection to good Preaching, they have Reaſon to ſuſpect themſelves no better than this *eager Croud*. But tho' theſe People were no better principled, and Chriſt knew it, yet he was willing to be found of them, and admitted them into Fellowſhip with him; if we could know the Hearts of Hypocrites, yet while their Profeſſion is plauſible, we muſt not exclude them our Communion, much leſs when we do not.

Thirdly, The Queſtion they put to him when they found him; *Rabbi, when cameſt thou hither?* It ſhould ſeem by *v.* 59. that they found him *in the Synagogue*. They knew that was the likelieſt Place to ſeek Chriſt in, for it was *his Cuſtom* to attend publick Aſſemblies for Religious Worſhip, *Luke* 4. 16. *Note*, Chriſt muſt be ſought, and will be found in the Congregations of his People, and in the Adminiſtration of his Ordinances; publick Worſhip is what Chriſt chuſeth to own, and grace with his Preſence, and the Manifeſtations of himſelf. There they found him, and all they had to ſay to him was, *Rabbi, when cameſt thou hither?* They ſaw he would not be made a King, and therefore ſay no more of that, but call him *Rabbi*, their Teacher. Their Enquiry refers not only to the *Time*, but to the *Manner* of his conveying himſelf thither, not only *when*, but how cameſt thou hither, for there was no Boat for him to come in. They were curious in asking concerning Chriſt's Motions, but not ſolicitous to obſerve their own.

Fourthly, The Anſwer Chriſt gave them, not direct to their Queſtion; What was it to them, when and how he came thither? but ſuch an Anſwer as their Caſe requir'd.

1. He diſcovers the *corrupt Principles* that they *acted from* in their following of him, *v.* 26. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you*, I that ſearch the Heart, and know what is in Man, I the *Amen*, the faithful Witneſs, *Rev.* 3. 14, 15. *Ye ſeek me*, that's well, but 'tis not from a good Principle; Chriſt knows not only *what* we do, but *why* we do it. Theſe follow'd Chriſt, 1. Not for his Doctrine ſake; *not becauſe ye ſaw the Miracles.* The Miracles were the great Confirmation of his Doctrine, *Nicodemus* ſought for him for the ſake of them, *John* 3. 2. and argued from the Power of his Works, to the Truth of his Word; but theſe here were ſo ſtupid and mindleſs, that they never conſider'd that. But, 2. It was for their own Bellies ſake, *becauſe ye did eat of the Loaves and were filled*; not becauſe he taught them, but becauſe he fed them. He had given them, 1. A *full* Meal's Meat, *they did eat, and were filled*; and ſome of them perhaps were ſo poor, that they had not known of a long time before now, what it was to have their Bellies full, to eat and leave. 2. A *dainty* Meal's Meat; 'tis probable as the miraculous Wine was the beſt Wine, ſo was the miraculous Food, more than ordinary pleaſant. 3. A *cheap* Meal's Meat, that coſt them nothing, no Reckoning brought in. *Note*, Many follow Chriſt for *Loaves*, and not for *Love*. Thus they do, who aim at ſecular Advantages in their Profeſſion of Religion, and follow it, becauſe by this Craft they got their Preferments; *Quanti profuit nobis hæc Fabula de Christo!* ſaid one of the Popes: Theſe People *complimented* Chriſt with *Rabbi*, and ſhew'd him great Reſpect, yet he told them thus faithfully of their Hypocriſy; his Miniſters muſt hence learn not to flatter thoſe that flatter them, not to be *bribed* by fair Words not to give faithful Reproofs where there is Cauſe for them; nor cry *Peace* to all that cry *Rabbi* to them.

2. He directs them to better Principles, *v.* 27. *Labour for that Meat that endures to everlaſting Life.* He had diſcours'd with the Woman of *Samaria*, under the Similitude of *Water*; here he ſpeaks of the ſame things under the Similitude of *Meat*, taking Occaſion from the Loaves they had eaten. His Deſign is,

1. To moderate our worldly Purſuits; *Labour not for the Meat that periſheth.* This doth not forbid honeſt Labour for Food convenient, 2 *Theſſ.* 3. 12. But we muſt not make the Things of this World our chief Care and Concern. *Note*, 1. The Things of the World are *Meat that periſheth.* Worldly Wealth, Honour and Pleaſure, theſe are *Meat*, they *feed the Fancy*, and many times that's all; and *fill the Belly*, things which Men *hunger* after as *Meat*, and glut themſelves with, and which a carnal Heart, as long as they laſt, may make a Shift to live upon; but they *periſh*, are of a periſhing Nature, wither of themſelves, and are expos'd to a thouſand Accidents; thoſe that have the largeſt Share of them, are not ſure to have them while they live, but are ſure to leave them and loſe them when they die. 2. It is therefore Folly for us inordinately to labour after them. 1. We muſt not labour in Religion, nor work the Works thereof, *for this periſhing Meat*, with an Eye to this; muſt not make our Religion ſubſervient to a worldly Intereſt, nor aim at *ſecular Advantages* in *ſacred Exerciſes.* 2. We muſt not at all *labour* for this Meat; that is, we muſt not make theſe periſhing things our *chief Good*, nor make our Care and Pains about them our *chief Buſineſs*; not ſeek thoſe things *firſt*, and *moſt*, Prov. 23. 45.

2. To quicken and excite our gracious Purſuits: Beſtow your Pains to better Purpoſe, and *labour for that Meat* which belongs to the Soul. Of which he ſhews,

1. That it is *unſpeakably deſirable*; 'tis Meat which *endures to everlaſting Life*; 'tis a Happineſs which will laſt as long as we muſt, which not only itſelf endures eternally, but will nouriſh us up to everlaſting Life. The Bleſſings of the New Covenant are our Preparative for eternal Life, our Preſervative to it, and the Pledge and Earneſt of it.

2. It is *undoubtedly attainable.* Shall all the Treaſures of the World be ranſack'd, and all the Fruits of the Earth gather'd together, to furniſh us with Proviſions that will laſt to Eternity; no, *The Sea ſaith, it is not in me*; among all the Treaſures hid in the Sand, *it cannot be gotten for Gold*: but it is that *which the Son of Man ſhall give*; ἣν δώσει, either which *Meat*, or which *Life* the Son of Man ſhall give. Obſerve here, 1. Who gives the Meat; the *Son of Man*, the great Houſholder, and Maſter of the Stores, who is entruſted with the Adminiſtration of the Kingdom of God among Men, and the Diſpenſation of the Gifts, Graces, and Comforts of that Kingdom, and has Power to give eternal Life, with all the Means of it, and Preparations for it. We are bid to *labour for it*, as if it were to be got by our own Induſtry, and ſold upon that valuable Conſideration (as the Heathen ſaid, *Dii Laboribus omnia vendunt.*) But when we have labour'd never ſo much for it, we have not merited it as our *Hire*, but the Son of Man *gives it.* And what more free than Gift? It is an Encouragement, that he who has the giving of it is the *Son of Man*, for then we may hope the *Sons of Men* that ſeek it, and labour for it, ſhall not fail to have it. 2. What Authority he has to give it; for *him hath God the Father ſealed*, τοῦτον γὰρ ὁ Πατὴρ ἐσφράγισεν ὁ θεὸς, *for him the Father hath ſealed* (*i. e.* prov'd and evidenc'd) *to be God*; ſo ſome read it; he has declar'd him to be the Son of God with Power. He hath *ſealed him*, i. e. hath given him full Authority to deal between God and Man, as God's *Embaſſador* to Man, and Man's *Interceſſor* with God; and has prov'd his Commiſſion by Miracles; having given him *Authority*, he hath given us *Aſſurance* of it; having intruſted him with *unlimited Powers*, he hath ſatisfied us with *undoubted Proofs* of them; ſo that as he might go on with Confidence in his Undertaking for us, ſo may we in our Reſignations to him. *God the Father* ſealed him with the Spirit that reſted on him, by the Voice from Heaven, by the Teſtimony he bore to him in Signs and Wonders. Divine Revelation is perfected in him, in him the *Viſion* and *Prophecy* is *ſealed up*, Dan. 9. 24. to him all Believers *ſeal* that he is true, *John* 3. 33. and in him they are all *ſealed*, 2 Cor. 1. 22.

28 Then ſaid they unto him, What ſhall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath ſent. 30 They ſaid therefore unto him, What ſign ſheweſt thou then, that we may ſee, and believe thee? what doſt thou work? 31 Our Fathers did eat manna in the deſert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. 32 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Moſes gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. 34 Then ſaid they unto

him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. 35 And Jeſus ſaid unto them, I am the bread of life, he that cometh to me ſhall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, ſhall never thirſt. 36 But I ſaid unto you, that ye alſo have ſeen me, and believe not. 37 All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that ſent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing, but ſhould raiſe it up again at the laſt day. 40 And this is the will of him that ſent me, that every one which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. 41 The Jews then murmured at him, becauſe he ſaid, I am the bread which came down from heaven. 42 And they ſaid, Is not this Jeſus the Son of Joſeph, whoſe father and mother we know? how is it then, that he ſaith, I came down from heaven? 43 Jeſus therefore anſwered and ſaid unto them, Murmur not among your ſelves. 44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. 45 It is written in the prophets, And they ſhall be all taught of God. Every Man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. 46 Not that any man hath ſeen the Father, ſave he which is of God, he ſath ſeen the Father. 47 Verily, verily I ſay unto you, He that believeth on me, hath everlaſting life. 48 I am that bread of life. 49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderneſs, and are dead. 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread, which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread, he ſhall live for ever: and the bread that I will give, is my fleſh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore ſtrove among themſelves, ſaying, How can this man give us *his* fleſh to eat? 53 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Except ye eat the fleſh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoſo eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. 55 For my fleſh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father hath ſent me, and I live by the Father: ſo he that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me. 58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread, ſhall live for ever. 59 Theſe things ſaid he in the ſynagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Whether this Conference was with the *Capernaites*, in whoſe Synagogue Chriſt now was, or with thoſe who came from the other ſide of the Sea, is not certain nor material; however it is an Inſtance of Chriſt's Condeſcenſion, that he gave them leave to aſk him Queſtions, and did not reſent the Interruption as an Affront; no not from his common Hearers, tho' not his immediate Followers. Thoſe that would be apt to teach, muſt be ſwift to hear, and ſtudy to anſwer. 'Tis the Wiſdom of Teachers, when they are aſk'd even impertinent unprofitable Queſtions, from thence to take Occaſion to anſwer that which is profitable, that the Queſtion may be rejected, but not the Queriſt.

Now, 1. Chriſt having told them, that *they* muſt *work for the Meat* he ſpoke of, muſt *labour* for it, they enquire what work they muſt do, and he anſwers them, *v.* 28, 29.

1. Their *Enquiry* was *pertinent* enough, *v.* 28. *What ſhall we do that we may work the Works of God?* Some underſtand it as a pert Queſtion, What Works of God can we do more and better than thoſe we do in Obedience to the Law of *Moſes*? but I rather take it as a humble ſerious Queſtion, ſpeaking to them to be at leaſt for the preſent in a good Mind, and willing to know and do their Duty; and I take it that they who aſk'd this Queſtion how and what, *v.* 30. and made that Requeſt, *v.* 34. were not the ſame Perſons with thoſe that murmured, *v.* 41, 42. and ſtrove, *v.* 52. for thoſe are expreſly called the *Jews*, which came out of *Judea*, (for thoſe were ſtrictly call'd *Jews*) to cavil, whereas theſe were of *Galilee*, and came to be taught. This Queſtion here intimates, that they were convinc'd, that they who would obtain this everlaſting Meat, (1.) They muſt aim to do ſomething great. They that look *high* in their Expectations, and hope to enjoy the *Glory of God*, muſt *aim high* in thoſe Endeavours, and ſtudy to *do the Works of God*, Works which he requires and will accept of, *Works of God* diſtinguiſh'd from the Works of worldly Men in their worldly Purſuits. 'Tis not enough to ſpeak the Words of God, but we muſt do the Works of God. (2.) That they muſt be willing to do any thing. *What ſhall we do?* Lord, I am ready to do whatever thou appointeſt, tho' never ſo diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood, *Acts* 9. 6.

2. Chriſt's Anſwer was plain enough, *v.* 29. *This is the Work of God, that ye believe. Note*, 1. The Work of Faith is the Work of God. They enquire after the *Works* of God, in the plural Number, being careful about *many things*; but Chriſt directs them to one Work, which includes all, the one thing needful, that *ye believe*, which ſuperſedes all the Works of the Ceremonial Law; the Work which is neceſſary to the Acceptance of all the other Works, and which produceth them, for without Faith, you cannot pleaſe God. 'Tis God's *Work*, for it is of his *working in us*, it ſubjects the Soul to his working on us, and quickens the Soul in working *for him*. 2. That Faith is the Work of God, which cloſeth with Chriſt, and relies upon him. 'Tis to *believe on him*, as one whom God *hath ſent*, as God's Commiſſioner in the great Affair of Peace between God and Man, and as ſuch to *reſt* upon him, and *reſign our ſelves* to him. See *John* 14. 1.

2. Chriſt having told them that the *Son of Man* would *give them this Meat*, they enquire concerning him, and he anſwers their Enquiry.

1. Their Enquiry is after *a Sign*, v. 30. *What Sign ſheweſt thou?* Thus far they were right, that ſince he required them to give him *Credit*, he ſhould produce his *Credentials*, and make it out by Miracle, that he was *ſent of God. Moſes* having confirm'd his Miſſion by *Signs*, 'twas requiſite that Chriſt, who came to ſet aſide the Ceremonial Law, ſhould in like manner confirm his. *What doſt thou work?* What doſt thou drive at? What laſting Characters of a divine Power doſt thou deſign to leave upon thy Doctrine? But herein they miſs'd it. (1.) That they over-look'd the many Miracles which they had ſeen wrought by him, and which amounted to an abundant Proof of his divine Miſſion: Is this a time of day to aſk what Sign ſheweſt thou, eſpecially at *Capernaum*, the *Staple* of Miracles, where he had done ſo *many mighty Works, Signs* ſo ſignificant of his Office and Undertaking? Were not theſe very Perſons but t'other day miraculouſly fed by him? None ſo blind as they that will not ſee, for they may be ſo blind, as to queſtion whether it be Day or no, when the Sun ſhines in their Faces. (2.) That they prefer'd the miraculous Feeding of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs before the Miracles Chriſt wrought, *v.* 31. *Our Fathers did eat Manna in the Deſart*; and to ſtrengthen the Objection, they quote a Scripture for it, he *gave them Bread from Heaven*, taken from *Pſal.* 78. 24. *He gave them of the Corn of Heaven.* What a good Uſe might be made of this Story which they here refer to! 'Twas a memorable Inſtance of God's Power and Goodneſs, often mentioned to the Glory of God, *Neh.* 9. 20, 21. yet ſee how theſe People perverted it, and made an ill Uſe of it.

1. Chriſt reproved them for their Fondeſs of the miraculous Bread, and bid them not ſet their Hearts upon *Meat which periſheth*; why, ſay they, *Meat for the Belly*, was the great good thing that God gave to our Fathers in the Deſart, and why ſhould not we then labour for that Meat? If God made much of them, why ſhould not we be for thoſe that will make much of us?

2. Chriſt had fed five thouſand Men with five Loaves, and had given them that as one Sign, to prove him *ſent of God*; but under colour of *magnifying* the Miracles of *Moſes*, they tacitly *under-value* that Miracle of Chriſt, and evade the Evidence of it. Chriſt fed his Thouſands, but *Moſes*, his hundred Thouſands: Chriſt fed them but once, and then reproved thoſe who follow'd him in hope to be ſtill fed, and put them off with a Diſcourſe of ſpiritual Food, but *Moſes* fed his Followers 40 Years, and Miracles were not their Rarities, but their daily Bread; Chriſt fed them with Bread out of *the Earth*, Barley Bread, and Fiſhes out of the *Sea*; but *Moſes* fed *Iſrael* with Bread *from Heaven*, Angels Food. Thus big did theſe *Jews* talk of the *Manna* which *their Fathers did eat*; but their Fathers had ſlighted it, as much as they did now the Barley Loaves, and call'd it *light Bread*, *Numb.* 21. 5. Thus apt are we to ſlight and over-look the Appearance of God's Power and Grace in our own Times, while we pretend to admire the Wonders which *our Fathers told us of.* Suppoſe *this* Miracle of Chriſt was out-done by that of *Moſes*, yet there were other Inſtances, in which Chriſt's Miracles out-ſhone his; and beſides, all true Miracles prove a divine Doctrine, tho' not equally illuſtrious in the Circumſtances, which were ever *diverſified* according as the Occaſion did require. As much as the Manna excell'd the Barley Loaves, ſo much, and much more did the Doctrine of Chriſt excel the Law of *Moſes*, and his heavenly Inſtitutions the carnal Ordinances of that Diſpenſation.

1. Here's Chriſt's Reply to this Enquiry; wherein,

1. He *rectifies* their *Miſtake* concerning the *Typical* Manna. It was true, their Fathers did eat *Manna* in the Deſart. But, 1. It was not *Moſes* that gave it them, nor were they obliged to him for it: He was but the Inſtrument, and therefore they muſt look

beyond him, to God. We do not find that *Moſes* did ſo much as pray to God for the *Manna*; and he ſpoke unadviſedly, when he ſaid, *Muſt we fetch Water out of the Rock*; for *Moſes* gave them not either *that* Bread, or *that* Water. 2. It was not given them, as they imagined, *from Heaven*, from the higheſt Heavens, but only from the *Clouds*, and therefore not ſo much excelling that which had its Riſe from the Earth, as they thought. Becauſe the Scripture ſaith, he gave them Bread from Heaven, it doth not follow that it was *heavenly Bread*, or was intended to be the Nouriſhment of Souls. Miſunderſtanding Scripture-Language, occaſions many Miſtakes in the Things of God.

2. He *informs* them concerning the *true* Manna, of which he was a Type; *But my Father giveth you the true Bread from Heaven*; that which is truly and properly the *Bread from Heaven*, of which that was but a Shadow and Figure, is *now given*, not to *your Fathers* who are dead and gone, but *to you* of this preſent Age, for whom the *better Things were reſerved*: He is *now giving* you that *Bread from Heaven*, which is *truly* ſo call'd: As much as the Throne of God's Glory is above the Clouds of the Air, ſo much doth the *ſpiritual Bread* of the everlaſting Goſpel excel the *Manna*. In calling God *his Father*, he ſpeaks himſelf greater than *Moſes*; for *Moſes* was faithful but as a *Servant*, Chriſt as a *Son*, Heb. 3. 5.

Now this Objection of theirs concerning the *Manna*, gave further occaſion to Chriſt, to diſcourſe of himſelf under the ſimilitude of *Bread*, and of *believing* under the ſimilitude of *eating and drinking*; to which, together with his putting of both together in the *eating* of *his Fleſh*, and *drinking* of his *Blood*, together with the Remarks made upon it by the Hearers, the reſt of this Conference may be reduced.

Firſt, Chriſt having ſpoken of *himſelf* as the great *Gift of God*, and the *true Bread*, v. 32. largely *explains* and *confirms* this, that we may rightly know him.

1. He here ſhews that he is the *true Bread*; this he repeats again and again, *v.* 33,35,48,49,50,51. Obſerve,

1. That Chriſt is *Bread*; is that to the Soul which Bread is to the Body, nouriſheth and ſupporteth the ſpiritual Life, is the Staff of it, as Bread doth the bodily Life; 'tis the *Staff of Life*. The Doctrine of the Goſpel concerning Chriſt; that he is the Mediator between God and Man, that he is our Peace, our Righteouſneſs, our Redeemer; *by theſe things do Men live.* Our Bodies could better live without Food, than our Souls without Chriſt. *Bread-Corn* is *bruiſed*, Iſa. 28. 28. ſo was Chriſt; he was born at *Bethlehem*, the *Houſe of Bread*, and typified by the *Shew-bread*.

2. That he is the *Bread of God*, v. 33. Divine Bread; 'tis he that is *of God*, v. 46. Bread which my Father gives, *v.* 32. which he has made to be the Food of our Souls; the Bread of God's Family, his *Children's Bread*. The Levitical Sacrifices are call'd the *Bread of God*, Lev. 21. 21,22. and Chriſt is the great Sacrifice; Chriſt in his Word ,and Ordinances the *Feaſt* upon the Sacrifice.

3. That he is the *Bread of Life*, v. 35. and again, *v.* 48. *that* Bread of Life, alluding to the Tree of Life in the midſt of the Garden of *Eden*, which was to *Adam* the Seal of that part of the Covenant, *do this and live*, of which he might *eat and live*. Chriſt is the Bread of Life, for he is the Fruit of the *Tree of Life*. (1.) He is the *living Bread*, ſo he explains himſelf, *v.* 51. *I am the living Bread.* Bread is itſelf a dead thing, and nouriſheth not, but by the help of the Faculties of a living Body; but Chriſt is himſelf *living Bread*, and nouriſheth by his own Power. Manna was a dead Thing, if kept but one Night it putrified, and bred Worms; but Chriſt is everliving, everlaſting Bread, that never moulds, or waxeth old. The Doctrine of Chriſt crucified, is now as ſtrengthening and comforting to a Believer as ever it was, and his Mediation ſtill of as much Value and Efficacy as ever. (2.) He *gives Life unto the World*, v. 33. ſpiritual and eternal Life; the Life of the Soul in Union and Communion with God here, and in the Viſion and Fruition of him hereafter; a Life that includes in it all Happineſs. The *Manna* did only preſerve and ſupport Life, did not preſerve and perpetuate Life, much leſs reſtore it; but Chriſt *gives* Life to thoſe that were dead in Sin. The Manna was ordained only for the Life of the *Iſraelites*, but Chriſt is given for the *Life of the World*; none are excluded from the Benefit of this Bread, but ſuch as exclude themſelves. Chriſt came to *put Life* into the Minds of Men; Principles productive of acceptable Performances.

4. That he is the *Bread which came down from Heaven*; this is oft repeated here, *v.* 33, 50, 51, 58. This notes, (1.) The Divinity of Chriſt's Perſon. As God he had a Being in Heaven, from whence he came to take our Nature upon him; *I came down from Heaven*, from whence we may infer his *Antiquity*, he was in the Beginning with God; his *Ability*, for Heaven is the Firmament of Power; and his *Authority*, he came with a Divine Commiſſion. (2.) The Divine Original of all that Good which flows to us through him. He *cometh*, not only καταβὰς, *v.* 51. but καταβαίνων, he is deſcending, noting a conſtant Communication of Light, Life, and Love from God to Believers thro' Chriſt, as the *Manna* deſcended daily: See *Eph*. 1. 3. *Omnia de ſuper.*

5. That he is *that Bread*, of which the *Manna* was a Type and Figure, *v.* 58. *that* Bread, the true Bread, *v.* 32. As the Rock that they drank of was Chriſt, ſo was the Manna they eat of *ſpiritual Bread*, 1 Cor. 10. 3, 4. *Manna* was given to *Iſrael*, ſo Chriſt to the ſpiritual *Iſrael*. There was *Manna* enough for them all, ſo in Chriſt a Fulneſs of Grace for all Believers; he that *gathers much* of this *Manna*, will have none to ſpare when he comes to uſe it; and he that gathers little, when his Grace comes to be perfected in Glory, ſhall find that *he has no lack*. *Manna* was to be gathered in the Morning, and thoſe that would find Chriſt, muſt *ſeek him early*. Manna was ſweet, and as the Author of the *Wiſdom of Solomon* tells us, *Chap.* 16. 20. was agreeable to every Palate; and to them that believe, Chriſt is *precious*. *Iſrael* liv'd upon *Manna* till they came to *Canaan*; and Chriſt is our Life. There was a Memorial of the *Manna* preſerv'd in the Ark, ſo of Chriſt in the Lord's Supper, as the Food of Souls.

2. He here ſhews what his Undertaking was, and what his Errand into the World. Laying aſide the Metaphor, he ſpeaks plainly, and ſpeaks no Proverb, giving us an Account of his Buſineſs among Men, *v.* 38,39,40.

1. He aſſures us in general, that he came from Heaven upon his Father's Buſineſs, *v.* 38. not to *do his own Will, but the Will of him that ſent him.* He *came from Heaven*, which ſpeaks him an intelligent, active Being, who voluntarily deſcended to this lower World, a long Journey, and a great Step downwards, conſidering the Glories of the World he came from, and the Calamities of the World he came to: We may well ask with wonder, what mov'd him to ſuch an Expedition? And here he tells us, he did not *come to do his own Will*, but the Will of his Father; not that he had any Will that ſtood in competition with the Will of his Father, but they to whom he ſpoke ſuſpected he might; no, ſaith he, my own Will is not the Spring I act from, nor the Rule I go by, but I am come to *do the Will of him that ſent me*; that is, 1. Chriſt did not come into the World as a *private* Perſon, that acts for himſelf only, but under a *publick Character*, to act for others, as an Ambaſſador, or Plenipotentiary, authoriz'd by a publick Commiſſion; he came into the World as God's Great Agent, and the World's Great Phyſician. It was not any Buſineſs that brought him hither, but he came to ſettle Affairs between Parties, no leſs conſiderable than the Great Creator, and the whole Creation. 2. Chriſt, when he was in the World, did not carry on any *private* Deſign, nor had any *ſeparate Intereſt* at all, diſtinct from theirs for whom he acted. The Scope of his whole Life was to glorify God, and do good to Men; he therefore never conſulted his own Eaſe, Safety, or Quiet, but when he was to lay down his Life, tho' he had a humane Nature which ſtartled at it, he ſet aſide the Conſideration of that, and reſolved his Will, as Man, into the Will of God; *not as I will, but as thou wilt.*

2. He acquaints us in particular with that Will of the Father, which he came to do; he here *declares the Decree*, the Inſtructions he was to purſue.

1. The *private Inſtructions* given to Chriſt, that he ſhould be ſure to ſave all the choſen Remnant; and this is the *Covenant of Redemption* between the Father and the Son; *v.* 38. *This is the Father's Will which hath ſent me*; this is the Charge I am intruſted with, that *of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe none.*

Note, (1.) There is a certain Number of the Children of Men, *given* by the Father to Jeſus Chriſt to be his Care, and ſo to be to him for a Name and a Praiſe; given him for *an Inheritance*, for a Poſſeſſion. Let him do all that for them which their Caſe requires; teach them, and heal them; pay their Debt, and plead their Cauſe; prepare them for, and preſerve them to eternal Life; and then let him make his beſt of them. The Father might diſpoſe of them as he pleas'd: As Creatures, their Lives and Beings were *derived from* him; as Sinners, their Lives and Beings were *forfeited to him*; he might have ſold them for the Satisfaction of his Juſtice, and delivered them *to the Tormentors*; but he pitch'd upon them to be the Monuments of his Mercy, and delivered them to the Saviour. Thoſe whom God choſe to be the Objects of his ſpecial Love, he lodg'd as a Truſt in the Hands of Chriſt.

(2.) Jeſus Chriſt has undertaken that he will *loſe none* of thoſe that were thus *given him* of the Father. The *many Sons* whom he was to *bring to Glory*, ſhall all be forth-coming, and none of them miſſing, *Mat.* 18.14. None of them ſhall be loſt for want of a ſufficient Price to purchaſe them, or ſufficient Grace to ſanctify them. *If I bring him not unto thee, and ſet him before thee, let me bear the Blame for ever*, Gen. 43. 9.

(3.) Chriſt's Undertaking for thoſe that are given him, extends to the Reſurrection of their Bodies; *I will raiſe it up again at the laſt Day*; which ſuppoſeth all that goes before, but this is to crown and compleat the Undertaking: the Body is a part of the Man, and therefore a part of Chriſt's Purchaſe and Charge; it pertains to the Promiſes, and therefore it ſhall not be *loſt*. The Undertaking is not only, that he ſhall *loſe none*, no *Perſon*, but that he ſhall *loſe nothing*, no part of the Perſon, and therefore not the Body. Chriſt's Undertaking will never be accompliſh'd till the Reſurrection, when the Souls and Bodies of the Saints ſhall be re-united, and gathered to Chriſt, that he may preſent them to the Father; *Behold I, and the Children that thou haſt given me!* Heb. 2. 13. 2 Tim. 1. 12.

(4.) The Spring and Original of all this, is the *Sovereign Will of God*; the Counſels of his Will, according to which he worketh all this. This was the Commandment he gave to his Son when he ſent him into the World, and to which the Son always had an Eye.

2. The *publick Inſtructions* which were to be given to the Children of Men, in what Way, and upon what Terms, they might obtain Salvation by Chriſt; and this is the *Covenant of Grace* between God and Man. Who the particular Perſons were that were given to Chriſt, is a *Secret*, *The Lord knows them that are his*; we do not, nor is it fit we ſhould; but tho' their Names are conceal'd, their Characters are publiſh'd. An Offer is made of Life and Happineſs upon Goſpel Terms, that by it thoſe that were given to Chriſt, might be brought to him, and others left inexcuſable, *v.* 40. *This is the Will*, the revealed Will *of him that ſent me*; the Method agreed upon, upon which to proceed with the Children of Men, that *every one*, *Jew* or *Gentile*, that *ſees the Son and believes on him*, may have *everlaſting Life*, and I *will raiſe him up*. This is *Goſpel* indeed, good News.

Is it not reviving to hear this? 1. That *eternal Life* may be had if it be not our own fault. That whereas upon the Sin of the firſt *Adam* the *Way of the Tree of Life* was block'd up; by the Grace of the ſecond *Adam* it is laid open again: The Crown of Glory is ſet before us as the Prize of our high Calling, which we may run for and obtain. 2. Every one may have it. This Goſpel is to be preach'd, this Offer made to all, and none can ſay it belongs not to me, *Rev.* 22. 17. 3. This everlaſting Life is ſure to all thoſe who believe in Chriſt, and to them only. He that *ſees the Son*, and *believes on him*, ſhall be ſav'd. Some underſtand this *ſeeing* as a *Limitation* of this Condition of Salvation to thoſe only that have the Revelation of Chriſt and his Grace made to them. Every one that has the Opportunity of being acquainted with Chriſt, and improves that ſo well as to *believe* in him, ſhall have everlaſting Life; ſo that none ſhall be condemn'd for Unbelief, however they may for other Sins, but thoſe who have had the Goſpel preached to them, who like theſe *Jews* here, *v.* 36. have *ſeen*, and yet have *not* believed; have known Chriſt, and yet truſted in him. But I rather underſtand *ſeeing*, here to mean the ſame Thing with *believing*, for 'tis θεωρῶν, which ſignifies not ſo much the Sight of the Eye, (as *v.* 36. ἑωράκατέ με) as the *Contemplation of the Mind*. Every one that *ſees the Son*, that is, *believes on him*, ſees him with an Eye of Faith, by which we come to be duly acquainted and affected with the Doctrine of the Goſpel concerning him. 'Tis to look upon him, as the ſtung *Iſraelites* upon the brazen Serpent. 'Tis not a *blind* Faith that Chriſt requires, that we ſhould be willing to have our *Eyes put out*, and then follow him; but that we ſhould *ſee him*, and ſee what Ground we go upon in our Faith. 'Tis then right, when 'tis not taken up upon *Hear-ſay*, believing as the Church believes, but is the Reſult of a due Conſideration of, and *Inſight* into the Motives of Credibility: *Now mine Eye ſees thee*; *we have heard him ourſelves*. 4. Thoſe who believe in Jeſus Chriſt, in order to their having everlaſting Life, ſhall be raiſed up by his Power at the laſt Day. He had it in charge as his Father's Will, *v.* 39. and here he ſolemnly makes it his own Undertaking, *I will raiſe him up*; which ſignifies not only the return of the Body to Life, but the putting of the *whole Man* into a full Poſſeſſion of the eternal Life promiſ'd.

Now Chriſt diſcourſing thus concerning himſelf, as the *Bread of Life* that came down from Heaven, let us ſee what Remarks his Hearers made upon it.

1. When they heard of ſuch a Thing as the *Bread of God*, which *gives Life*, they heartily pray'd for it, *v.* 34. *Lord evermore give us this Bread.* I cannot think that this is ſpoken ſcoffingly, and in a way of Deriſion, as moſt Interpreters underſtand it; give us ſuch Bread as this if thou canſt; let us be fed with it, not for one Meal, as with the Five Loaves, but *evermore*; as if this were no better a Prayer than that of the impenitent Thief, *If thou be the Chriſt, ſave thyſelf and us.* But I take this Requeſt to be made, tho' ignorantly, yet honeſtly, and to be well meant; for they call him *Lord*, and deſire a Share in what he *gives*, whatever he means by it. General, and confus'd Notions of Divine Things, produce in carnal Hearts ſome kind of Deſires towards them, and Wiſhes of them; like *Balaam*'s Wiſh, to die the *Death of the Righteous.* Thoſe who have an indiſtinct Knowledge of the Things of God, who ſee Men as Trees walking, make, as I may call them, *inarticulate* Prayers for ſpiritual Bleſſings. They think the Favour of God a *good Thing*, and Heaven a *fine Place*, and cannot but wiſh them their own, while they have no Value or Deſire at all of that Holineſs which is neceſſary both to the one, and to the other. Let this be the Deſire of our Souls; have we taſted that the Lord is gracious, been feaſted with the Word of God, and Chriſt in the Word? let us ſay, *Lord evermore give us this Bread*: Let the Bread of Life be our daily Bread, the heavenly Manna our continual Feaſt, and let us never know the want of it.

2. But when they underſtood, that by this *Bread of Life* Jeſus meant *himſelf*, then they *deſpis'd* it. Whether they were the ſame Perſons that had pray'd for it, *v.* 34. or ſome others of the Company, doth not appear; it ſeems to be ſome others, for they are called *Jews*. Now 'tis ſaid, *v.* 41. they *murmured* at him. This comes in immediately after that ſolemn Declaration Chriſt had made of God's Will, and his own Undertaking concerning Man's Salvation, *v.* 39, 40. which certainly were ſome of the moſt weighty and gracious Words that ever proceeded out of the Mouth of our Lord Jeſus, the moſt faithful, and beſt worthy of all Acceptation; one would think, that like *Iſrael* in *Egypt*, when they heard that God had thus *viſited* them, they ſhould have *bowed their Heads and worſhipped*; but on the contrary, inſtead of cloſing with the Offer made them, they *murmured*, quarrel'd with what Chriſt ſaid; and tho' they did not openly oppoſe and contradict it, yet they privately whiſpered among themſelves in contempt of it, and inſtill'd into one anothers Minds Prejudices againſt it. Many that will not profeſſedly contradict the Doctrine of Chriſt, their Cavils are ſo weak and groundleſs, that they are either aſham'd to own them, or afraid to have them ſilenced, yet ſay in their Hearts, they *do not like it.*

Now, 1. That which offended them, was Chriſt's aſſerting his Original to be *from Heaven*, v. 41, 42. How is it that he ſaith, *I came down from Heaven*? They had heard of Angels coming down *from Heaven*, but never of a Man; overlooking the Proofs he had given them of his being more than a Man.

2. That which they thought juſtified them herein, was, that they knew his Extraction on Earth, *Is not this Jeſus*, *the Son of* Joſeph, *whoſe Father and Mother we know*? They took it heinouſly that he ſhould ſay he came down from Heaven, when he was *one of them.* They ſpeak ſlightly of his bleſſed Name, *Jeſus*; *Is not this Jeſus*? They take it for granted that *Joſeph* was really his Father, tho' he was only *reputed* to be ſo. *Note*, Miſtakes concerning the Perſon of Chriſt, as if he were a mere Man, conceiv'd, and born by ordinary Generation, occaſion the Offence that is taken at his Doctrine and Offices. Thoſe who ſet him on a level with other the Sons of Men, whoſe Father and Mother we know, no wonder if they derogate from the Honour of his Satisfaction, and the Myſteries of his Undertaking, and like the *Jews* here, murmur at his Promiſe to *raiſe us up at the laſt Day.*

Secondly, Chriſt having ſpoken of Faith as the great *Work of God*, v. 29. diſcourſeth largely concerning this Work, inſtructing, and encouraging us in it.

1. He ſhews what it is to *believe in Chriſt.*

(1.) To believe in Chriſt, is to *come to Chriſt*; he that *comes to* me, is the ſame with him that *believes in me*, v. 35. and again *v.* 37. *He that comes unto me:* ſo *v.* 44, 45. Repentance towards God is *coming to him*, Jer. 3. 22. as our chief Good, and higheſt End; and ſo Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is coming to him as our Prince and Saviour, and our Way to the Father. It notes the Out-goings of our Affections towards him, for thoſe are the Motions of the Soul, and Actions agreeable; 'Tis to *come off* from all thoſe Things that ſtand in Oppoſition to him, or Competition with him, and to *come up* to thoſe Terms upon which Life and Salvation are offered to us through him. When he was here on Earth, 'twas more than barely coming where he was; ſo 'tis now, more than coming to his Word and Ordinances.

(2.) It is to *feed upon Chriſt*, v. 51. *If any Man eat of this Bread*; the former notes applying ourſelves to Chriſt, this notes applying Chriſt to ourſelves, with Appetite and Delight, that we may receive Life and Strength, and Comfort from him: To feed on him as the *Iſraelites* on the *Manna*, having quitted the *Fleſh-pots* of *Egypt*, and not depending on the *Labour of their Hands*, to eat of that, but living purely on the Bread given them from Heaven.

2. He ſhews what is to be got by believing in Chriſt, what will he give us if we *come to him*? What ſhall we be the better if we *feed upon him*? *Want*, and *Death*, are the chief Things we dread; may we but be aſſured of the Comforts of our Being, and the Continuance of it in the midſt of thoſe Comforts, we have enough; now theſe Two are here ſecured to true Believers.

1. They ſhall never want, *never hunger*, *never thirſt*, v. 35. Deſires they have, earneſt Deſires, but thoſe ſo ſuitable, ſo ſeaſonably, ſo abundantly ſatisfied, that they cannot be call'd Hunger and Thirſt, which is uneaſy and painful. Thoſe that did eat Manna, and drank of the Rock, hunger'd and thirſted afterwards; *Manna* ſurfeited them, Water out of the Rock fail'd them, but there is ſuch an *overflowing Fulneſs* in Chriſt, as can never be *exhauſted*, and ſuch *overflowing Communications* from him as can never be interrupted.

2. They ſhall *never die*, not die eternally; for, (1.) He that believeth on Chriſt *hath everlaſting Life*, v. 47. he hath the Aſſurance of it, the Grant of it, the Earneſt of it; he has it in the Promiſe and firſt Fruits. Union with Chriſt, and Communion with God in Chriſt, is *everlaſting Life* begun. (2.) Whereas they that did *eat Manna* died, Chriſt is ſuch Bread as a Man may eat of, and never die, *v.* 49, 50. Obſerve here,

1. The Inſufficiency of the Typical Manna; *Your Fathers did eat Manna in the Wilderneſs, and are dead.* There may be much good uſe made of the Death of our Fathers; their Graves ſpeak to us, and their Monuments are our Memorials, particularly of this, That the greateſt *Plenty* of the moſt *dainty* Food, will neither prolong the Thread of Life, nor put by the ſtroke of Death. Thoſe that did eat Manna, Angels Food, yet died like

other Men. There could be nothing amiſs in their Diet to ſhorten their Days, nor could their Deaths be haſten'd by the Toils and Fatigues of Life, for they neither ſow'd nor reap'd, and *yet they died.* (1.) Many of them died by the immediate Strokes of God's Vengeance for their Unbelief and Murmurings; for *tho' they did eat that ſpiritual Meat*, yet with many of them God *was not well pleas'd, but they were overthrown in the Wilderneſs*, 1 Cor. 10. 3, 4, 5. Their eating Manna was no Security to *them* from the *Wrath of God*, as believing in Chriſt is to *us*. (2.) The reſt of them died in a courſe of Nature, and their Carcaſſes fell under a Divine Sentence, in that Wilderneſs where they did *eat Manna*. In that very Age when Miracles were *daily Bread*, was the Life of Man reduc'd to the Stint it now ſtands at, as appears, *Pſal.* 90. 10. Let them not boaſt ſo much of *Manna* then.

2. The All-ſufficiency of the true *Manna*, of which the other was a Type; *This is the Bread that cometh down from Heaven*, that truly divine and heavenly Food, *that a Man may eat thereof and not die*, i. e. not fall under the Wrath of God, which is killing to the Soul; *not die* the ſecond Death, no nor the firſt Death finally and irrecoverably; *not die*, i. e. not periſh, nor come ſhort of the heavenly *Canaan*, as the *Iſraelites* did of the earthly, for want of *Faith*, tho' they had *Manna*.

This is further explained by that Promiſe in the next Words, *If any Man eat of this Bread, he ſhall live for ever*, v. 53. That's the Meaning of his *never dying*; tho' he go down *to Death*, he ſhall paſs through it to that World where there ſhall be *no more Death*. To *live for ever*, is not to *be* for ever, (the Damned in Hell ſhall *be* for ever; the Soul of Man was made for an endleſs State) but to be *happy* for ever. And becauſe the Body muſt needs die, and be as Water ſpilt upon the Ground, Chriſt here undertakes for the gathering of that up too, as before, *v.* 44. *I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day*; and even that ſhall live for ever.

3. He ſhews what Encouragements we have to believe in Chriſt. Chriſt here ſpeaks of ſome who *had ſeen him, and yet believed not*, v. 36. They ſaw his Perſon and Miracles, and heard him preach, and yet were not wrought upon to believe in him. Faith is not always the Effect of Sight; the Soldiers were Eye-witneſſes of his Reſurrection, and yet inſtead of *believing* in him, *bely'd* him; ſo that it is a difficult Thing to bring People to believe in Chriſt: And by the Operation of the Spirit of Grace, thoſe that *have not ſeen, yet have believed.*

Two Things we are here aſſured of, to encourage our Faith.

1. That the Son will bid all thoſe welcome that come to him; *v.* 37. *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* How welcome ſhould this Word be to our Souls, which bids us welcome to Chriſt. *Him* that comes, 'tis in the ſingular Number, ſpeaking Favour, not only to the Body of Believers in general, but to every particular Soul that applies itſelf to Chriſt. Here, 1. the Duty requir'd is a pure Goſpel-Duty; to *come to Chriſt*, that we may come to God by him. His Beauty and Love, thoſe great Attractives, muſt *draw* us to him; Senſe of Need, and Fear of Danger, muſt *drive* us to him; any thing to bring us to Chriſt. 2. The Promiſe is a pure Goſpel-Promiſe; *I will in no wiſe caſt out*, ȣ̓ μὴ ἐκϐαλῶ ἔξω; there are Two Negatives, *I will not, no, I will not.* 1. Much Favour is expreſs'd here. We have reaſon to fear that he ſhould *caſt us out*; conſidering our Meanneſs, our Vileneſs, our Unworthineſs to come, our Weakneſs in coming, we may juſtly expect that he ſhould frown upon us, and ſhut his Doors againſt us; but he obviates theſe Fears with this Aſſurance, he *will not* do it; will not diſdain us tho' we are mean, will not reject us tho' we are ſinful. Do poor Scholars come to him to be taught? Tho' they be dull and ſlow, he will not *caſt them out.* Do poor *Patients* come to him to be *cur'd?* Poor *Clients* come to him to be *adviſ'd?* Tho' their Caſe be bad, and tho' they come empty-handed, he will *in no wiſe caſt them out.* But, 2. More Favour is implied than is expreſs'd; when 'tis ſaid he will not caſt them out, the meaning is, he will receive them, and entertain them, and give them all that which they come to him for: As he will not refuſe them at their firſt coming, ſo he will not afterwards upon every Diſpleaſure caſt them out. His *Gifts and Callings are without Repentance.*

2. That the Father will, without fail, bring all thoſe to him in due Time that were given him. In the *ſeveral Tranſactions* between the Father and the Son, relating to *Man's Redemption*, as the Son undertook for the Juſtification, Sanctification, and Salvation of all that ſhould come to him; let me have them put into my Hands, and then leave the Management of them to me; ſo the Father, the Fountain, and Original of Being, Life and Grace, undertook to put into his Hand all that were given him, and bring them to him.

Now, 1. He here *aſſures* us *that* this ſhall be done, *v.* 37. *All that the Father giveth me ſhall come to me.* Chriſt had complain'd, *v.* 36. of thoſe, who, tho' they had *ſeen* him, yet would not *believe* on him; and then he adds this, (1.) For *their* Conviction and Awakening; plainly intimating, that their not coming to him, and believing on him, if they perſiſted in it, would be a certain Sign that they did not belong to the Election of Grace; for how can we think that God gave us to Chriſt, if we give ourſelves to the World and the Fleſh, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. (2.) For *his own* Comfort and Encouragement; *tho'* Iſrael *be not gather'd, yet ſhall I be glorious.* The Election *has obtain'd*, and ſhall, tho' Multitudes be *blinded*, Rom. 11. 7. Tho' he loſe many of his *Creatures*, yet none of his *Charge*; *All that the Father gives him ſhall come to him* notwithſtanding. Here we have,

1. The Election deſcribed; *All that the Father giveth me*, πᾶν ὃ δίδωσι, *every Thing* which the Father *gives to me.* The Perſons of the Elect, and all that belong to them; all their Services, all their Intereſts; as all that he hath is *theirs*, ſo all that they have is *his*, and he ſpeaks of them as his All: They were given him in full Recompence of his Undertaking. Not only all Perſons, but all Things are gather'd together in Chriſt, *Eph.* 1. 10. and reconciled, *Col.* 1. 20. The giving of the choſen Remnant to Chriſt, is ſpoken of, *v.* 39. as a Thing *done*, he *hath given* them; here 'tis ſpoken of as a Thing *in the doing*, he *giveth them*; becauſe, *when the firſt-begotten was brought into the World*, it ſhould ſeem there was a renewal of the Grant ſee *Heb.* 10. 5, &c. God was now about to *give him the Heathen for his Inheritance*, Pſal. 2. 8. to put him in Poſſeſſion of *the deſolate Heritages*, Iſa. 49. 8. to *divide him a Portion with the great*, Iſa. 53. 12. And tho' the *Jews*, who *ſaw* him, *believed not* on him, yet theſe (ſaith he) ſhall *come to me*; the other Sheep which are not of this Fold, ſhall be *brought*, John 10. 15. ſee *Acts* 13. 45——48.

2. The Effect of it ſecured; *they ſhall come to me.* This is not in the Nature of a *Promiſe*, but a *Prediction*, that as many as were in the Counſel of God ordain'd to Life, ſhall be brought to Life, by being brought to Chriſt. They are *ſcatter'd*, are mingled among the Nations, yet none of them ſhall be forgotten, not a Grain of God's Corn ſhall be loſt, as is promis'd, *Amos* 9. 9. They are by Nature *alienated* from Chriſt, and averſe to him, and yet *they ſhall come.* As God's Omniſcience is engag'd for the finding of them all out, ſo is his Omnipotence for the bringing of them all in. Not they ſhall be *driven* to me, but they ſhall come freely, ſhall be made *willing.*

2. He here *acquaints* us *how* it ſhould be done. How ſhall thoſe who are given to Chriſt be brought to him? Two Things are to be done in order to it.

1. Their *Underſtandings* ſhall be *enlighten'd*; that's promis'd, *v.* 45, 46. It is written in the Prophets, who ſpake of theſe Things before, *And they ſhall be all taught of God*; this we find, *Iſa.* 54. 13. and *Jer.* 31. 34. *They ſhall all know me.* *Note*, In order to our *believing in Jeſus Chriſt*, 'tis neceſſary that we be *taught of God*; that is, (1.) That there be a *Divine Revelation made to us*, diſcovering to us, both what we are to believe concerning Chriſt, and why we are to believe it. There are ſome Things which *even Nature teacheth*, but to bring us to Chriſt there is need of a higher Light. (2.) That there be a *Divine Work wrought in us*, enabling us to underſtand and receive theſe revealed Truths, and the Evidence of them. God is giving us Reaſon, teacheth us more than the Beaſts of the Earth; but in giving us Faith, he teacheth us more than the *natural Man.* Thus all the Church's Children, all that are *genuine*, are *taught of God*; he hath undertaken their Education.

It follows then, by way of Inference from this, That *every Man* that has *heard and learned of the Father, comes to Chriſt*, v. 45. (1.) It is here implied, that none will come to Chriſt but thoſe that have *heard*, and *learned of the Father*: We ſhall never be brought to Chriſt, but under a Divine Conduct. Except God, by his Grace, enlighten our Minds, inform our Judgments, and rectify our Miſtakes; and not only *tell* us that we may *hear*, but teach us that we may *learn* the Truth as it is in Jeſus, we ſhall never be brought to believe in Chriſt. (2.) That this *Divine Teaching* doth ſo neceſſarily produce the *Faith of God's Elect*, that we may conclude that thoſe who do not *come to Chriſt*, have never *heard*, or *learned* of the Father; for if they had, doubtleſs they would have come to Chriſt. In vain do Men pretend to be *taught of God*, if they believe not in Chriſt, for he teacheth no other Leſſon, *Gal.* 1. 8, 9. See how God deals with Men as reaſonable Creatures, draws them with *the Cords of a Man*, opens the Underſtanding firſt, and then by that in a regular way influenceth the inferiour Faculties; thus he comes in by the Door, but Satan as a Robber climbs up another way.

But leſt any ſhould dream of a viſible Appearance of God the Father to the Children of Men, to teach them theſe Things, and entertain any groſs Conceptions about hearing and learning of the Father, he adds, *v.* 46. *Not that any Man hath ſeen the Father*, 'tis implied, nor can ſee him with bodily Eyes, or may expect to learn of him as *Moſes* did, to whom he ſpake *Face to Face*; but God, in enlightning Men's Eyes, and teaching them, works in a ſpiritual Way. The Father of Spirits hath acceſs to, and influence upon Mens Spirits *undiſcerned.* Thoſe that have not ſeen his Face, have felt his Power. And yet there is one intimately acquainted with the Father, he *which is of God*, i. e. Chriſt himſelf, he hath *ſeen the Father*, John 1. 18. *Note*, 1. Jeſus Chriſt is of God in a peculiar manner, God of God, Light of Light; not only ſent of God, but begotten of God before all Worlds. 2. 'Tis the Prerogative of Chriſt to have *ſeen the Father*, perfectly to know him and his Counſels. 3. Even that Illumination which is preparative to Faith, is convey'd to us thro' Chriſt. Thoſe that *learn of the Father*, foraſmuch as they cannot ſee him themſelves, muſt learn of Chriſt, who alone hath ſeen him. As all Divine Diſcoveries are made through Chriſt, ſo through him all Divine Powers are exerted.

2. Their *Wills* ſhall be *bow'd.* If the Soul of Man had now its original Rectitude, there needed no more to influence the Will, but the Illumination of the Underſtanding; but in the depraved Soul of fallen Man, there is a Rebellion of the Will againſt the right Dictates of the Underſtanding; a *carnal Mind*, which is *Enmity* itſelf to the Divine Light and Law: 'Tis therefore requiſite that there be a Work of Grace wrought upon the Will, which is here call'd *drawing*; v. 44. *No Man can come to me, except the Father, which hath ſent me, draw him.* The *Jews* murmur'd at the Doctrine of Chriſt, not only would not receive it themſelves, but were angry that others did; Chriſt over-heard their ſecret Whiſperings, and ſaid, *v.* 43. *Murmur not among yourſelves*; lay not the Fault of your Diſlike of my Doctrine one upon another, as if 'tis becauſe you find it generally diſtaſted; no, 'tis long of yourſelves, and your own corrupt Diſpoſitions, which are ſuch as amount to a *moral Impotency*; your Antipathies to the Truths of God, and Prejudices againſt them are ſo ſtrong, that nothing leſs than a Divine Power can conquer them. And this is the Caſe of all Mankind; *No Man can come to me*, can perſuade himſelf to come up to the Terms of the Goſpel, *except the Father which hath ſent me draw him*, v. 44.

Obſerve, 1. The Nature of the Work, 'tis *drawing*, which ſpeaks not a *Force* put upon the Will, but a *Change* wrought in the Will, whereby of unwilling we are made willing, and a new Biaſs given to the Soul by which it inclines to God. This ſeems to be more than a *moral Suaſion*, for by that 'tis in the power of Man to *draw*; yet 'tis not to be called a *phyſical Impulſe*, for it lies out of the Road of *Nature*; but he that *formed the Spirit of Man within him* by his creating Power, and *faſhioneth the Hearts of Men* by his providential Influence, knows how to new-mould the Soul, and to alter its Bent and Temper, and make it conformable to himſelf, and his own Will, without doing any Wrong to its natural Liberty. 'Tis ſuch a drawing as works not only a *compliance*, but a chearful compliance, a complacency; *Draw us, and we will run after thee.*

2. The Neceſſity of it; *no Man* in this weak and helpleſs State can come to Chriſt without it. As we *cannot* do any natural Action without the Concurrence of *common Providence*, ſo we cannot do any Action morally good, without the influence of *ſpecial Grace*; in which the *new Man* lives, and moves, and has its Being, as much as the *meer Man* has in the Divine Providence.

3. The Author of it; *The Father which hath ſent me.* The Father having ſent Chriſt, will ſucceed him, for he would not ſend him on a fruitleſs Errand. Chriſt having undertaken to bring Souls to Glory, God promiſed him, in order thereunto, to bring them to him, and ſo to give him Poſſeſſion of thoſe whom he had given him a Right to. God having by Promiſe given the Kingdom of *Iſrael* to *David*, did at length *draw the Hearts* of the People to him; ſo having ſent Chriſt to ſave Souls, he ſends Souls to him to be ſaved by him.

4. The Crown and Perfection of this Work; and *I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day.* This is four Times mentioned in this Diſcourſe, and doubtleſs it includes all the intermediate and preparatory Workings of Divine Grace. When he *raiſes them up at the laſt Day*, he will put the *laſt Hand* to his Undertaking, will *bring forth the Top-ſtone.* If he undertake this, ſure he *can* do any Thing, and will do every Thing that is neceſſary in order to it. Let our Expectations be carry'd out towards a Happineſs reſerv'd for the *laſt Day*, when all the Years of Time ſhall be fully compleat and ended.

Thirdly, Chriſt having thus ſpoken of himſelf, as the *Bread of Life*, and of Faith as the *Work of God*, comes more particularly to ſhew, *what of himſelf* is this Bread, *viz.* his Fleſh, and that to believe, is to eat of that, *v.* 51—58. where he ſtill proſecutes the Metaphor of Food. Obſerve,

1. The *Preparation* of this Food; *The Bread that I will give, is my Fleſh*, v. 51. *The Fleſh of the Son of Man, and his Blood*, v. 53. *His Fleſh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed*, v. 55.

2. The *Participation* of this Food; we muſt *eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood*, v. 53. and again, *v.* 54. *Whoſo eateth my Fleſh and drinketh my Blood*; and the ſame Words, *v.* 56, and 57. he that *eateth me.* This is certainly a Parable, or figurative Diſcourſe, wherein the Actings of the Soul upon Things Spiritual and Divine are repreſented by bodily Actions about Things ſenſible; which made the Truths of Chriſt more intelligible to ſome, and leſs ſo to others, *Mark.* 4. 12. Now let us ſee,

1. How this Diſcourſe of Chriſt was liable to miſtake and miſconſtruction, that *Men might ſee and not perceive.*

(1.) It was miſconſtrued by the carnal *Jews*, to whom 'twas firſt delivered, *v.* 52. *They ſtrove among themſelves*; they whiſper'd in each others Ears their Diſſatisfaction, *How can this Man give us his Fleſh to eat?* Chriſt ſpoke, *v.* 51. of giving his Fleſh *for us* to ſuffer and die, but they, without due Conſideration, underſtood it of his giving it *to us* to be eaten, which gave occaſion to Chriſt to tell them, that however what he had ſaid was otherwiſe intended, yet even that alſo of *eating his Fleſh*, was no ſuch abſurd Thing, if rightly underſtood, as *prima facie* they took [illegible]o be.

(2.) It has been wretchedly miſconſtrued by the Church of *Rome*, for the Support of their monſtrous Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, which gives the Lye to our Senſes, contradicts the Nature of a Sacrament, and overthrows all convincing Evidence. They, like theſe *Jews* here, underſtand it of a corporal and carnal eating of Chriſt's Body, like *Nicodemus*, John 3. 4. The Lord's Supper was not yet inſtituted, and therefore it could have no reference to that; 'tis a *ſpiritual* eating and drinking that is here ſpoken of, not a *ſacramental.*

(3.) It is miſunderſtood by many ignorant, carnal People, who from hence infer, that if they take the Sacrament when they die, they ſhall certainly go to Heaven; which as it makes many that are weak cauſeleſly uneaſy if they want it, ſo it makes many that are wicked cauſeleſly eaſy if they have it. Let us ſee therefore,

2. How this Diſcourſe of Chriſt's is to be underſtood.

1. What is meant by the *Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt.* 'Tis call'd, *v.* 53. *The Fleſh of the Son of Man, and his Blood*; *his* as Meſſiah and Mediator: The *Fleſh and Blood* which he *aſſum'd* in his Incarnation, *Heb.* 2. 14. and which he *gave up* in his *Death* and *Sufferings*; *My Fleſh which I will give* to be crucified and ſlain. 'Tis ſaid to be *given for the Life of the World*, i. e. 1. *Inſtead* of the *Life of the World*, which was *forfeited* by Sin, Chriſt gives his own Fleſh as a Ranſom or Counter-price. Chriſt was our Bail, bound *Body for Body* (as we ſay) and therefore *his* Life muſt go for *ours*, that ours may be ſpared: *Here am I, let theſe go their way.* 2. *In order to* the *Life of the World*, to purchaſe a *general* Offer of eternal Life to all the World, and the *ſpecial* Aſſurances of it to all Believers. So that the *Fleſh and Blood* of the Son of Man, is the Redeemer *incarnate*, and *dying*; 'tis Chriſt and *him crucified*, and the Redemption wrought out by him, with all the precious Benefits of Redemption; Pardon of Sin, Acceptance with God, the Adoption of Sons, Acceſs to the Throne of Grace, the Promiſes of the Covenant, and eternal Life. Theſe are call'd the Fleſh and Blood of Chriſt, (1.) Becauſe they are *purchaſed* by his Fleſh and Blood, by the breaking of his Body, and the ſhedding of his Blood. Well may the purchaſed Privileges be denominated from the Price that was paid for them, for it puts a value upon them; write upon them *pretium ſanguinis.* (2.) Becauſe they are Meat and Drink to our Souls. *Fleſh with the Blood* was prohibited, *Gen.* 9. 4. but the Privileges of the Goſpel are as Fleſh and Blood to us, prepared for the Nouriſhment of our Souls. He had before compared himſelf to *Bread*, which is neceſſary Food; here to *Fleſh*, which is delicious. 'Tis a *Feaſt of fat Things*, Iſa. 25. 6. The Soul is ſatisfied with Chriſt as *with Marrow and Fatneſs*, Pſal. 63. 5. 'Tis *Meat indeed*, and *Drink indeed*; *truly ſo*, i. e. ſpiritually, ſo Dr. *Whitby*; as Chriſt is call'd the *true Vine*, or *truly Meat*, in oppoſition to the Shews and Shadows with which the World ſhams off thoſe that feed upon it. In Chriſt and his Goſpel there is a real Supply, and ſolid Satisfaction; that's *Meat indeed*, and *Drink indeed*, which ſatiates and repleniſheth, *Jer.* 31. 25, 26.

2. What is meant by *eating this Fleſh*, and *drinking this Blood*, which is ſo neceſſary and beneficial; 'tis certain it means neither more nor leſs than *believing* in Chriſt. As we partake of Meat and Drink by eating and drinking, ſo we partake of Chriſt and his Benefits by Faith: And *believing in Chriſt* includes theſe four Things which *eating and drinking* doth. (1.) It implies an *Appetite* to Chriſt. This ſpiritual eating and drinking begins with *hungring* and *thirſting*, Mat. 5. 6. earneſt and importunate Deſires after Chriſt, not willing to take up with any Thing ſhort of an Intereſt in him: Give me Chriſt, or elſe I die. (2.) An *Application* of Chriſt to ourſelves. Meat *look'd upon* will not nouriſh us, but Meat *fed upon*, and ſo made *our own*, and as it were *one with us.* We muſt ſo accept of Chriſt as to appropriate him to ourſelves; *My Lord, and my God*, John 20. 28. (3.) A *Delight* in Chriſt and his Salvation. The Doctrine of Chriſt crucified muſt be *Meat and Drink* to us, moſt pleaſant and delightful. We muſt feaſt upon the Dainties of the *New Teſtament in the Blood of Chriſt*, taking as great a Complacency in the Methods which infinite Wiſdom has taken to redeem and ſave us, as ever we did in the moſt needful Supplies, or grateful Delights of Nature. (4.) A *Derivation* or *Nouriſhment* from him, and a dependance upon him for the Support and Comfort of our ſpiritual Life, and the Strength, Growth, and Vigour of the new Man. To *feed upon Chriſt*, is to do all *in his Name*, in Union with him, and by Virtue drawn from him; 'tis to live upon him as we do upon our Meat. How our Bodies are nouriſhed by our Food, we cannot deſcribe, but that they are ſo, we know and find; ſo it is with this ſpiritual Nouriſhment. Our Saviour was ſo well pleaſed with this Metaphor, as very ſignificant and expreſſive, that when afterwards he would inſtitute ſome outward ſenſible Signs, by which to repreſent our *communicating* of the Benefits of his Death, he choſe thoſe of *eating* and *drinking*, and made them *ſacramental* Actions.

Having thus explained the general Meaning of this Part of Chriſt's Diſcourſe, the Particulars are reducible to Two Heads.

1. The *Neceſſity* of our *feeding upon Chriſt*, v. 53. *Except ye eat the Fleſh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you.* That is, 1. It is a certain Sign you *have no* ſpiritual *Life* in you, if you have no *deſire* towards Chriſt, nor *delight* in him. If the Soul doth not *hunger* and *thirſt*; certainly

it doth not *live*: 'Tis a Sign we are dead indeed, if we are dead to ſuch Meat and Drink as this. When *artificial* Bees, that by curious Springs were made to move to and fro, were to be *diſtinguiſhed* from *natural* ones, (they ſay) 'twas done by putting Honey among them, which the natural Bees only flock'd to, but the artificial ones minded it not, for *they had no Life in them*. 2. It is certain you *can have* no ſpiritual Life, unleſs you derive it from Chirſt by Faith; ſeparated from him, you can do nothing. Faith in Chriſt is the *primum vivens*, the firſt living Principle of Grace; without it we have not the *Truth* of ſpiritual Life, nor any Title to eternal Life: Our Bodies may as well live without Meat, as our Souls without Chriſt.

2. The *Benefit* and *Advantage* of it, in Two Things.

1. We ſhall be *one with Chriſt*, as our Bodies are with our Food when 'tis digeſted: *v.* 56. *He that eats my Fleſh, and drinks my Blood*, that lives by Faith in Chriſt crucified, ('tis ſpoken of as a continued Act) he *dwelleth in me, and I in him*. By Faith we have a cloſe and intimate Union with Chriſt; he is *in us*, and we *in him*, John 17. 21, 22, 23. 1 *Joh.* 3. 24. Believers dwell in Chriſt as their ſtrong Hold, or City of Refuge; Chriſt dwells in them as the Maſter of the Houſe, to rule it, and provide for it. Such is the Union between Chriſt and Believers, that he ſhares in their Griefs, and they ſhare in his Graces and Joys; he *ſups* with them upon their bitter Herbs, and *they with him* upon his *rich Dainties*. 'Tis an inſeparable Union, like that between the Body and the digeſted Food, *Rom.* 8. 35. 1 *Joh.* 4. 13.

2. We ſhall *live*, ſhall live eternally *by him*, as our Bodies live by our Food. 1. We ſhall *live by him*, v. 57. *As the living Father hath ſent me, and I live by the Father, ſo he that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me.* We have here the Series and Order of the Divine Life. (1.) God is the *living Father*, hath Life in, and of himſelf: *I am that I am* is his Name for ever. (2.) Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator lives *by the Father*; he has Life *in himſelf*, John 5. 26. but he has it of the Father; he that ſent him, not only qualified him with that Life which was neceſſary to ſo great an Undertaking, but conſtituted him the Treaſury of Divine Life to us; breath'd into the ſecond *Adam* the Breath of ſpiritual Lives, as into the firſt *Adam* the Breath of natural Lives. (3.) True Believers receive this Divine Life by virtue of their Union with Chriſt, which is inferr'd from the Union between the Father and the Son, as it is compar'd to it, *John* 17. 21. for therefore *he that eateth me*, or feeds on me, *even he ſhall live by me*: Thoſe that live upon Chriſt, ſhall live by him. The Life of Believers is *had from Chriſt*, John 1. 16. it is *hid with Chriſt*, Col. 3. 4. we live *by him* as the Members by the Head, the Branches by the Root; becauſe he lives, we ſhall live alſo. 2. We ſhall live *eternally* by him; *ver.* 54. *Whoſo eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood*, as it is prepared in the Goſpel to be the Food of Souls, he *hath eternal Life*; he hath it now, as *v.* 40. he hath that in him which is eternal Life begun; he has the Earneſt and Foretaſte of it, and the Hope of it; he ſhall live *for ever*, v. 54. His Happineſs ſhall run parallel with the longeſt Line of Eternity itſelf.

The Hiſtorian concludes with an Account *where* Chriſt had this Diſcourſe with the *Jews*, v. 59. *In the Synagogue, as he taught*; implying, that he taught them many other Things beſides theſe, but this was that in his Diſcourſe which was new. He adds this, that he ſaid theſe Things *in the Synagogue*, to ſhew, (1.) The Credit of Chriſt's Doctrine. His Truths ſought no Corners, but were publickly preach'd in mixt Aſſemblies, as able to abide the moſt ſevere and impartial Teſt. Chriſt pleaded this upon his Trial, *John* 18. 20. *I ever taught in the Synagogue.* (2.) The Credibility of his Narrative of it. To aſſure you that the Diſcourſe was fairly repreſented, he appeals to the Synagogue at *Capernaum*, where it might be examined.

60 Many therefore of his diſciples, when they had heard *this*, ſaid, This is an hard ſaying, who can hear it? 61 When Jeſus knew in himſelf, that his diſciples murmured at it, he ſaid unto them, Doth this offend you? 62 *What* and if ye ſhall ſee the ſon of man aſcend up where he was before? 63 It is the ſpirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, *they* are ſpirit, and *they* are life. 64 But there are ſome of you that believe not. For Jeſus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who ſhould betray him. 65 And he ſaid, Therefore ſaid I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. 66 ¶ From that *time* many of his diſciples went back, and walked no more with him. 67 Then ſaid Jeſus unto the twelve, Will ye alſo go away? 68 Then Simon Peter anſwered him, Lord, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life. 69 And we believe, and are ſure, that thou art that Chriſt, the ſon of the living God. 70 Jeſus anſwered them, Have not I choſen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? 71 He ſpake of Judas Iſcariot, *the ſon* of Simon: for he it was that ſhould betray him, being one of the twelve.

We have here an Account of the Effect of Chriſt's Diſcourſe; ſome were offended, and others edified by it; ſome driven *from him*, and others brought nearer *to him*.

Firſt, To ſome it was a *ſavour of Death unto Death*, not only to the *Jews*, who were profeſſed Enemies to him and his Doctrine, but even to many of *his Diſciples*, ſuch as were Diſciples *at large*, that were his frequent Hearers, and followed him *in publick*; a mixt Multitude, like thoſe among *Iſrael*, that began all the Diſcontents. Now here we have,

1. Their Murmurings at the Doctrine they heard, *v.* 60. not a few, but *many* of them were offended at it. Of the ſeveral ſorts of Ground that received the Seed, only one in four brought forth Fruit. See what they ſay to it, *v.* 60. *This is a hard Saying, who can hear it?* 1. They do not like it themſelves, what Stuff is this? *Eat the Fleſh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man?* If it be underſtood figuratively, it is not *intelligible*; if literally, not *practical*. What! muſt they turn *Cannibals*? Can they not be Religious, but they muſt be Barbarous? *Si Chriſtiani adorant quod comedunt* (ſaid *Averroes*) *ſit Anima mea cum Philoſophis*. Now, when they found it an hard Saying, if they had humbly begg'd of Chriſt to have *declar'd unto them this Parable*, he would have opened it, and their Underſtandings too, for *the Meek will he teach his way*; but they were not willing to have Chriſt's Sayings explained to them, becauſe they would not loſe this Pretence for rejecting them, that they were *hard Sayings*. 2. They think it impoſſible any one elſe ſhould like it, *Who can hear it?* Surely none can. Thus the Scoffers at Religion are ready to undertake, that all the intelligent Part of Mankind concur with them; they conclude with great Aſſurance that no *Man of Senſe* will admit the Doctrine of Chriſt, nor any *Man of Spirit* ſubmit to his Laws; becauſe they cannot bear to be ſo *tutored*, ſo *ty'd up* themſelves, they think none elſe can; *who can hear it*? Thanks be to God, Thouſands have *heard* theſe Sayings of Chriſt, and have found them not only eaſy, but pleaſant, as their *neceſſary Food*.

2. Chriſt's Animadverſions upon their Murmurings.

1. He well enough knew their Murmurings, *v.* 61. Their Cavils were ſecret in their own Breaſts, or whiſper'd among themſelves in a Corner. But, 1. Chriſt *knew* them, he ſaw them, he heard them. *Note*, Chriſt takes notice not only of the bold and open *Defiances* that are done to his Name and Glory by *daring Sinners*, but of the ſecret Slights that are put upon his Doctrine by carnal Profeſſors; he knows that which the *Fool ſaith in his Heart*, and cannot for Shame *ſpeak out*; he obſerves how his Doctrine is *reſented* by thoſe to whom 'tis *preach'd*; who *rejoice* in it, and who *murmur* at it; who are reconcil'd to it, and bow before it; and who quarrel with it, and rebel againſt it, tho' never ſo ſecretly. 2. He knew it *in himſelf*, not by any Information given him, or any external Indication of the Thing, but by his own Divine Omniſcience. He knew it, not as the Prophets, by a *Divine Revelation* made to him. That which the Prophets deſired to know, was ſometimes hid from them, as 2 *Kings* 4. 27. but by a *Divine Knowledge* in him. He is that eſſential Word that *diſcerns the Thoughts of the Heart*, Heb. 4. 12, 13. Thoughts are Words to Chriſt, we ſhould therefore take heed not only what we ſay and do, but what we think.

2. He well enough knew how to anſwer them; *Doth this offend you?* Is this a Stumbling-Block to you? See how People by their own wilful Miſtakes create Offences to themſelves! They take Offence where there is none given, and make it even there where there is nothing to make it of. *Note*, We may juſtly wonder that ſo much Offence ſhould be taken at the Doctrine of Chriſt for ſo little Cauſe. Chriſt ſpeaks of it here with wonder, *Doth this offend you?* How unreaſonable are your Quarrels?

Now in anſwer to thoſe who condemned his Doctrine as intricate and obſcure, (*Si non vis intelligi, debes negligi.*)

1. He gives them a Hint of his Aſcenſion into Heaven, as that which would give an irreſiſtible Evidence of the Truth of his Doctrine, *v.* 62. *What, and if ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man aſcend up where he was before?* And what then? 1. If I ſhould tell you of that, ſurely it would much more offend you, and you would think my Pretenſions too high indeed. If this be ſo hard a Saying that you cannot hear it, how will you digeſt it when I tell you of my returning *to* Heaven, from whence I came down? See *John* 3. 12. Thoſe who ſtumble at ſmaller Difficulties, ſhould conſider how they'll get over greater. 2. When you ſee the Son of Man aſcend, this will much more offend you, for then my Body will be leſs capable of being eaten by you in that groſs Senſe wherein you now underſtand it; ſo Dr. *Whitby*. Or, 3. When you ſee that, or hear it from thoſe that ſhall ſee it, ſurely then you will be ſatisfied. You think I take too much upon me, when I ſay, *I came down from Heaven*, for that was it you quarrel'd with, *v.* 42. but will you think ſo when you ſee me return to Heaven? If he *aſcended*, certainly he *deſcended*, Eph. 4. 9, 10. Chriſt did often refer himſelf thus to *ſubſequent* Proofs, as *John* 1. 50, 51. and 2. 14. *Mat.* 12. 40. and 26. 64. Let us wait a while till the Myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed, and then we ſhall ſee there was no reaſon to be offended at any of Chriſt's Sayings.

2. He gives them a general Key to this, and all ſuch parabolical Diſcourſes, teaching them that they are to be underſtood ſpiritually, and not after a corporeal and carnal manner; *v.* 63. *It is the Spirit that quickens, the Fleſh profiteth nothing.* As it is in the natural Body, the animal Spirits quicken and enliven it, and without theſe the moſt nouriſhing Food would profit nothing; what would the Body be the better for Bread, if it were not quickened and animated by the Spirit; ſo it is with the Soul. 1. The bare Participation of Ordinances, unleſs the Spirit of God work with them, and quicken the Soul by them, *profiteth nothing*; the Word and Ordinances, if the Spirit work with them, are as Food to a living Man; if not, they are as Food to a dead Man. Even the Fleſh of Chriſt, the Sacrifice for Sin, will avail us nothing, unleſs the bleſſed Spirit quicken our Souls thereby, and enforce the powerful Influences of his Death upon us, till we by his Grace are planted together in the Likeneſs of it. 2. The Doctrine of eating Chriſt's Fleſh, and drinking his Blood, if it be underſtood literally, *profits nothing*, but rather leads us into Miſtakes and Prejudices; but the Spiritual Senſe and Meaning of it quickens the Soul, makes it *alive*, and *lively*, for ſo it follows, *The Words that I ſpeak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life. To eat the Fleſh of Chriſt*, is a hard Saying, but to believe that Chriſt died for me, and to derive from that Doctrine, Strength and Comfort in my Approaches to God, my Oppoſitions of Sin, and Preparations for a future State; this is the *Spirit and Life* of that Saying, and conſtruing it thus, it is an excellent Saying. The Reaſon why Men *miſlike* Chriſt's Sayings, is becauſe they *miſtake* them. The literal Senſe of a Parable doth us no good, we are never the wiſer for it, but the ſpiritual Meaning is inſtructive. 3. *The Fleſh*, i. e. thoſe that *are in the Fleſh*, (ſo ſome underſtand it) that are under the Power of a carnal Mind, they *profit nothing* by Chriſt's Diſcourſes; but *the Spirit*, i. e. thoſe that have the Spirit, that are ſpiritual, they are quicken'd and enliven'd by them, for they are received *ad modum recipientis.* They found fault with Chriſt's Sayings, whereas the Fault was in themſelves; 'tis only to *ſenſual* Minds that ſpiritual Things are *ſenſeleſs* and *ſapleſs*, ſpiritual Minds *reliſh* them; ſee 1 *Cor.* 2. 14, 15.

3. He gives them an Intimation of his *Knowledge of them*, and that he had expected no better from them, tho' they call'd themſelves his Diſciples, *v.* 64, 65. Now was fulfilled that of the Prophet, ſpeaking of Chriſt and his Doctrine, *Iſa.* 53. 1. *Who hath believed our Report, and to whom is the Arm of the Lord reveal'd?* Both theſe Chriſt here takes notice of.

(1.) They did not *believe his Report.* There are *ſome of you*, who ſaid you would leave all to follow me, who yet *believe not*; and this was the Reaſon why the *Word preached did not profit them*, becauſe it was *not mixed with Faith*, Heb. 4. 2. They did not believe him to be the *Meſſiah*, elſe they would have acquieſced in the Doctrine he preached, and not have quarrel'd with it, tho' there were ſome Things in it *dark and hard to be underſtood. Oportet diſcentem credere.* Young Beginners in Learning, muſt take Things upon their Teachers Word. *Note*, 1. Among thoſe who are *nominal Chriſtians*, there are many that are *real Infidels.* 2. The Unbelief of Hypocrites, before it diſcovers it ſelf to the World, is naked and open before the Eyes of Chriſt. He *knew from the Beginning* who they were of the Multitudes that followed him, that *believed*, and who of the Twelve ſhould betray him; he knew *from the Beginning* of their Acquaintance with him, and Attendance on him, when they were in the hotteſt Pang of their Zeal, who were ſincere, as *Nathanael*, John 1. 47. and who were not. Before they diſtinguiſhed themſelves by any Overt-act, he could infallibly diſtinguiſh *who believed*, and who did not; whoſe Love was *counterfeit*, and whoſe *cordial.* We may gather thence, 1. That the Apoſtacy of thoſe who have long made a plauſible Profeſſion of Religion, is a certain Proof of their conſtant Hypocriſy, and that *from the Beginning they believed not*; but is not a Proof of the poſſibility of the total and final Apoſtacy of any true Believers: Such Revolts are not to be call'd the Fall of real Saints, but the Diſcovery of pretended ones; ſee 1 *John* 2. 19. *Stella cadens non ſtella fuit.* 2. That it is Chriſt's Prerogative to *know the Heart*; he knows who they are that *believe not*, but diſſemble in their Profeſſion, and yet continues them room in his Church, the Uſe of his Ordinances, and the Credit of his Name, and doth not diſcover them in this World, unleſs they by their own Wickedneſs diſcover themſelves, becauſe ſuch is the Conſtitution of his viſible Church, and the diſcovering Day is yet to come; but if we pretend to judge Men's Hearts, we ſtep into Chriſt's Throne, and anticipate his Judgment. We are often deceived in Men, and ſee cauſe to change our Sentiments of them; but this we are ſure of, that Chriſt knows all Men, and *his Judgment is according to Truth.*

(2.) The Reaſon why they did not believe his Report, was becauſe the *Arm of the Lord* was not *revealed* unto them; for, *v.* 65. *Therefore ſaid I unto you, that no Man can come to me except it were given unto him of my Father*, referring to *v.* 44. Chriſt therefore could not but know who believed, and who did not, becauſe Faith is the Gift and Work of God, and all his Father's Gifts and Works could not but be known to him, for they all paſſed through his Hands. There he had ſaid, none could *come to him except the Father draw him*; here he ſaith, *except it were given him of my Father*, which ſhews that God *draws* Souls by giving them Grace and Strength, and a Heart to come; without which, ſuch is the moral Impotency of Man in his fallen State, that he *cannot come.*

3. We have here their final Apoſtacy from Chriſt hereupon, *v.* 66. *From that Time many of his Diſciples went back and walked no more with him.* When we admit into our Minds hard Thoughts of the Word and Works of Chriſt, and conceive a ſecret Diſlike, and are willing to hear Inſinuations tending to their Reproach, we are then *entring into Temptation*; 'tis as the letting forth of Water, 'tis *looking back*, which if infinite Mercy prevent not, will end in *drawing back*; therefore *obſta Principiis*, take heed of the Beginnings of Apoſtacy.

1. See here the *Backſliding* of theſe *Diſciples*; *Many of them went back*, to their Houſes, and Families, and Callings, which they had left for a Time to follow him; *went back*, one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandiſe; went back, as *Orpah* did, to their People, and to their Gods, *Ruth* 1. 15. They had enter'd themſelves in Chriſt's School, but they *went back*, did not only play truant for once, but took leave of him and his Doctrine for ever. *Note*, The Apoſtacy of Chriſt's Diſciples from him, tho' really a ſtrange Thing, yet has been ſuch a common Thing, that we need not think ſtrange at it. Here were *many* that *went back*: 'Tis often ſo, when ſome backſlide, many backſlide with them; the Diſeaſe is infectious.

2. The Occaſion of this Backſliding. *From that Time*, from the Time that Chriſt preached this comfortable Doctrine, that he is the *Bread of Life*, and thoſe who by Faith feed *upon him*, ſhall live *by him*, which one would think ſhould have engaged them to cleave the more cloſely to him, from *that* Time they withdrew. *Note*, The corrupt and wicked Heart of Man often makes that an occaſion of Offence, which is indeed matter of the greateſt Comfort. Chriſt foreſaw that they would thus take Offence at what he ſaid, and yet he ſaid it. That which is the undoubted Word and Truth of Chriſt muſt be faithfully delivered, whoever are offended at it. Mens Humours muſt be captivated to God's Word, and not *that* accommodated to Men's Humours.

3. The Degree of their Apoſtacy; *they walked no more with him*, returned no more to him, and attended no more upon his Miniſtry. It is hard for thoſe who have been *once enlightened*, and have *taſted the good Word of God, if they fall away, to renew them again to Repentance*, Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6.

Secondly, This Diſcourſe was to others a *Savour of Life unto Life*; *many went back*, but Thanks be to God all did not; even then the *Twelve* ſtuck to him. Tho' the *Faith of ſome be overthrown*, yet the *Foundation of God ſtands ſure.* Obſerve here,

1. The affectionate Queſtion which Chriſt put to the Twelve, *v.* 67. *Will ye alſo go away?* He ſaith nothing to them which went back; *If the Unbelieving depart, let them depart*; 'twas no great *Loſs* of thoſe whom he never *had*; light come, light go: But he takes this Occaſion to ſpeak to the Twelve, to confirm them, and by trying their Stedfaſtneſs the more to fix them. *Will ye alſo go away?* 1. It is *at your Choice* whether ye will or no; if ye will forſake me, now is the Time when ſo many do: 'Tis an Hour of Temptation, if ye will go back, go now. *Note*, Chriſt will detain none with him againſt their Wills; his Soldiers are Volunteers, not preſſed Men. The Twelve now had Time enough to try how they lik'd Chriſt and his Doctrine, and that none of them might afterwards ſay they were trapan'd into Diſcipleſhip, and if it were to do again they would not do it; he here allows them a Power of Revocation, and leaves them at their Liberty, as *Joſh.* 24. 15. *Ruth* 1. 15. 2. It is *at your Peril* if you do go away. If there were any ſecret Inclination in the Heart of any of them to depart from him now, he ſtops it with this awakening Queſtion, *Will you alſo go away?* Think not that you hang at as looſe an end as they did, and may go away as eaſily as they can. They have not been ſo intimate with me as you have been, nor received ſo many Favours from me; they are gone, but will *you* go? Remember your Character, and ſay, whatever others do, we will never go away: *Should ſuch a Man as I flee?* Neh. 6. 11. *Note*, The nearer we have been to Chriſt, and the longer we have been with him, the more Mercies we have received from him, and the more Engagements we have laid ourſelves under to him, the greater will be our Sin if we deſert him. 3. I have Reaſon *to think you will not.* Will you go away? No, I have faſter hold of you than ſo; *I hope better Things of you*, Heb. 6. 9. for *you are they that have continued with me*, Luke 22. 28. When the Apoſtacy of ſome is a Grief to the Lord Jeſus, the Conſtancy of others is ſo much the more his Honour, and he is pleaſed with it accordingly. Chriſt and Believers know one another too well to part upon every Diſpleaſure.

2. The believing Reply which *Peter*, in the Name of the reſt, made to this Queſtion, *v.* 68, 69. Chriſt put the Queſtion to them, as *Joſhua* put *Iſrael* to their Choice whom they would ſerve, with a Deſign to draw out from them a Promiſe to adhere to him, and it had the like Effect; *Nay, but we will ſerve the Lord. Peter* was upon all Occaſions the *Mouth of the reſt*, not ſo much becauſe he had more of his Maſter's Ear than they, but becauſe he had more Tongue of his own; and what he ſaid was ſometimes approv'd, and ſometimes reprimanded, *Mat.* 16. 17, 23.

the common Lot of thoſe who are ſwift to ſpeak. This here was well ſaid, admirably well; and probably he ſaid it by the Direction, and with the expreſs Aſſent of his Fellow-Diſciples; at leaſt he knew their Mind, and ſpoke the Senſe of them all, and did not except *Judas*, for we muſt hope the beſt.

1. Here's a good Reſolution to adhere to Chriſt, and ſo expreſs'd, as to intimate that they would not entertain the leaſt Thought of leaving him; *Lord, to whom ſhall we go?* 'Twere Folly to go from thee, unleſs we knew where to mend ourſelves? no, Lord, we like our Choice too well to change. *Note*, Thoſe who leave Chriſt, would do well to conſider whom they will go to, and whether they can expect to find Reſt and Peace any where but in him. See *Pſal.* 73. 27, 28. *Hoſ.* 2. 9. *Whither ſhall we go?* Shall we make our Court to the World? It will certainly *deceive* us; ſhall we return to Sin? It will certainly *deſtroy* us; ſhall we leave the *Fountain of living Waters* for *broken Ciſterns?* The Diſciples reſolve to continue their Purſuit of Life and Happineſs, and will have a Guide to it, and will adhere to Chriſt as their Guide, for they can never have a better. Shall we go to the Heathen Philoſophers, and become their Diſciples? They are become vain in their Imaginations, and profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe in other Things, are become Fools in Religion: Shall we go to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, and ſit at their Feet? What good can they do us, who have made void the Commandments of God by their Traditions? Shall we go to *Moſes?* He will ſend us back again to thee. Therefore if ever we find the Way to Happineſs, it muſt be in following thee. *Note*, Chriſt's holy Religion appears to great Advantage, when it is compared with other Inſtitutions, for then it will be ſeen how far it excels them all. Let them who find fault with *this* Religion, before they quit it, find a better. A Divine Teacher we muſt have, can we find a better than Chriſt; a Divine Revelation we cannot be without, if the Scripture be not ſuch a one, where elſe may we look for it?

2. Here's a good Reaſon for this Reſolution. It was not the inconſiderate Reſolve of a blind Affection, but the Reſult of mature Deliberation. The Diſciples were reſolved never to go away from Chriſt,

(1.) Becauſe of the *Advantage* they promiſed themſelves by him; *Thou haſt the Words of eternal Life.* They themſelves did not fully underſtand Chriſt's Diſcourſe, for as yet the Doctrine of the Croſs was a Riddle to them; but in the general they were ſatisfied that *he had the Words of eternal Life:* i. e. (1.) That the Word of his Doctrine ſhew'd the Way to *eternal Life*, ſet it before us, and directed us what to do, that we might inherit it. (2.) That the Word of his *Doom* and *Determination* muſt confer eternal Life. His *having the Words of eternal Life*, is the ſame with his having *Power to give eternal Life to as many as were given him*, John 17. 2. He had in the foregoing Diſcourſe aſſur'd *eternal Life* to his Followers, theſe Diſciples faſten upon that plain Saying, and therefore reſolved to ſtick to him, when the other over-look'd that, and faſten'd upon the *hard Sayings*, and therefore forſook him. Tho' we cannot account for every Myſtery, every Obſcurity in Chriſt's Doctrine, yet we know in the general it is the Word of eternal Life, and therefore muſt live and die by it; for if we forſake Chriſt, we *forſake our own Merits.*

(2.) Becauſe of the Aſſurance they had concerning him, *v.* 69. *We know, and are ſure, that thou art that Chriſt.* If he be the promiſed *Meſſiah*, he muſt *bring in an everlaſting Righteouſneſs*, Dan. 9. 24. and therefore has the *Words of eternal Life*, for *Righteouſneſs reigns to eternal Life*, Rom. 5. *ult.* Obſerve, 1. The *Doctrine* they believed; that this Jeſus was the *Meſſiah* promiſed to the Fathers, and expected by them, and that he was not a mere Man, but the Son of the living God, the ſame to whom God had ſaid, *Thou art my Son*, Pſal. 2. 7. In Times of Temptation to Apoſtacy, it's good to have recourſe to our firſt Principles, and ſtick to them; and if we faithfully abide by that which is *paſt Diſpute*, we ſhall be the better able both to *find* and to *keep* the Truth in Matters of doubtful Diſputation. 2. The *Degree* of their Faith; it roſe up to a full Aſſurance, *we are ſure.* We have known it *by Experience*, that's the beſt Knowledge. We ſhould take Occaſion from others wavering, to be ſo much the more eſtabliſhed, eſpecially in that which is the preſent Truth. When we have ſo ſtrong a Faith in the Goſpel of Chriſt, as boldly to venture our Souls *upon it*, knowing *whom we have believed*, then, and not till then, we ſhall be willing to venture every thing elſe for it.

3. The melancholy Remark, which our Lord Jeſus made upon this Reply of *Peter's*, v. 70, 71. *Have not I choſen you Twelve, and one of you is a Devil?* And the Evangeliſt tells us who he meant; *He ſpake of* Judas Iſcariot. *Peter* had undertaken for them all, that they would be tight to their Maſter. Now Chriſt doth not condemn his Charity, 'tis always good to hope the beſt, but he tacitly corrects his Confidence. We muſt not be too ſure concerning any. God knows them that are his, we do not. Obſerve here,

1. Hypocrites and Betrayers of Chriſt are no better than Devils. *Judas* not only *had* a Devil, but he *was* a Devil. One of you is a *falſe Accuſer*, ſo διαβολὸς ſometimes ſignifies, 1 *Tim.* 3. 11. and 'tis probable that *Judas*, when he ſold his Maſter to the chief Prieſts, repreſented him to them as an ill Man, to juſtify himſelf in what he did. But I rather take it as we read it, *He is a Devil*; a Devil incarnate; a fallen Apoſtle, as the Devil a fallen Angel. He is *Satan*, an Adverſary, an Enemy to Chriſt. He is *Abaddon*, and *Apollyon*, a Son of Perdition. He was of his Father the Devil, did his Luſts, was in his Intereſts, as *Cain*, 1 John 3. 12. Thoſe whoſe Bodies were poſſeſſed by the Devil, are never call'd *Devils* (*Demoniacks*, but not Devils) but *Judas*, into whoſe *Heart* Satan entered, and filled it, is called a *Devil.*

2. Many that are ſeeming Saints are real Devils. *Judas* had as fair an Outſide as many of the Apoſtles, his Venom was like that of the Serpent, cover'd with a fine Skin. He *caſt out Devils*, and appeared an Enemy to the Devil's Kingdom, and yet himſelf a Devil all the while. Not only he *will be* one ſhortly, but he *is one* now. 'Tis *ſtrange*, and to be admired, Chriſt ſpeaks of it with Wonder, *Have not I?* 'Tis *ſad*, and to be lamented, that ever Chriſtianity ſhould be made a Cloak to Diaboliſm.

3. The Diſguiſes of Hypocrites, however they may deceive Men, and put a Cheat upon them, cannot deceive Chriſt, for his piercing Eye ſees through them. He can call thoſe *Devils* that call themſelves *Chriſtians*, like the Prophet's greeting to *Jeroboam's* Wife, when ſhe came to him in Maſquerade, 1 *Kings* 14. 6. *Come in, thou Wife of* Jeroboam. Chriſt's *Divine Sight*, far better than any *double Sight*, can ſee Spirits.

4. There are thoſe who are choſen by Chriſt to ſpecial Services, that yet prove falſe to him; *I have choſen you* to the *Apoſtleſhip*, for 'tis expreſly ſaid, *Judas* was not choſen to eternal Life, *John* 13. 18. and yet one of you is a Devil. *Note*, Advancement to Places of Honour and Truſt in the Church is no certain Evidence of ſaving Grace. *We have propheſied in thy Name.*

5. In the moſt *ſelect* Societies on this ſide Heaven, it is no new Thing to meet with thoſe who are corrupt. Of the Twelve that were choſen to an intimate Converſation with an *incarnate Deity*, as great an Honour and Privilege as ever Men were choſen to, one was an *incarnate Devil.* The Hiſtorian lays an Emphaſis upon this, that *Judas* was *one of the Twelve*, that were ſo dignify'd and diſtinguiſhed. Let us not therefore reject and unchurch the Twelve, becauſe *one of them is a Devil*; nor ſay they are all Cheats and Hypocrites, becauſe one of them was ſo; let thoſe that are ſo, bear the Blame, and not thoſe who, while they are undiſcovered, incorporate with them. There is a Society within the Veil, into which no unclean Thing ſhall enter; a Church of Firſt-born, in which are no *falſe Brethren.*

CHAP. VII.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) *Chriſt's declining for ſome time to appear publickly in* Judea, *v.* 1. (2.) *His Deſign to go up to* Jeruſalem, *at the Feaſt of Tabernacles, and his Diſcourſe with his Kindred in* Galilee, *concerning his going up to this Feaſt,* v. 3—13. (3.) *His preaching publickly in the Temple at the Feaſt.* 1. *In the midſt of the Feaſt,* v. 14, 15. *we have his Diſcourſe with the* Jews, (1.) *Concerning his Doctrine,* v. 16—18. (2.) *Concerning the Crime of Sabbath-breaking laid to his Charge,* v. 19—24. (3.) *Concerning himſelf, both whence he came, and whither he was going,* v. 25—26. 2. *On the laſt Day of the Feaſt,* (1.) *His gracious Invitation to poor Souls to come to him,* v. 37—39. (2.) *The Reception that it met with.* 1. *Many of the People diſputed about it,* v. 40—44. 2. *The chief Prieſts would have brought him into Trouble for it, but were firſt baulk'd by their Officers,* v. 45—49. *and then ſilenced by one of their own Court,* v. 50—53.

AFter theſe things, Jeſus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, becauſe the Jews ſought to kill him. 2 Now the Jews feaſt of tabernacles was at hand. 3 His brethren therefore ſaid unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy diſciples alſo may ſee the works that thou doſt. 4 For *there is* no man *that* doth any thing in ſecret, and he himſelf ſeeketh to be known openly: if thou do theſe things, ſhew thy ſelf to the world. 5 For neither did his brethren believe in him. 6 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. 7 The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, becauſe I teſtify of it, that the works thereof are evil. 8 Go ye up unto this feaſt: I go not up yet unto this feaſt, for my time is not yet full come. 9 When he had ſaid theſe words unto them, he abode ſtill in Galilee. 10 ¶ But when his brethren were gone up, then went he alſo up unto the feaſt, not openly, but as it were in ſecret. 11 Then the Jews ſought him at the feaſt, and ſaid, Where is he? 12 And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for ſome ſaid, He is a good man: others ſaid, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. 13 Howbeit, no man ſpake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

We have here,

1. The Reaſon given why Chriſt ſpent more of his Time in *Galilee* than in *Judea*, v. 1. *becauſe the Jews*, the People in *Judea* and *Jeruſalem* ſought to *kill him*, for curing the impotent Man on the Sabbath-day, *John* 5. 16. They thought to be the Death of him either by a popular Tumult, or by a legal Proſecution; in Conſideration of this, he kept at a diſtance in another Part of the Country, very much out of the Lines of *Jeruſalem*'s Communication: It is not ſaid he *durſt not*, but he *would not* walk in *Jewry*; 'twas not through Fear and Cowardiſe that he declined it, but in *Prudence*, becauſe his Hour was not yet come. *Note*, 1. Goſpel-Light is juſtly *taken away* from thoſe that endeavour to extinguiſh it, and blow it out. Chriſt will withdraw from thoſe that drive him from them, and hide his Face from thoſe that ſpit in it, and juſtly ſhut up his Bowels from thoſe that ſpurn at them. 2. In times of imminent Peril, 'tis not only *allowable* but *adviſable* to *withdraw* and *abſcond* for our own Safety and Preſervation, and to chuſe the Service of thoſe Places which are leaſt perillous, *Mat.* 10. 23. Then, and not till then, we are called to expoſe and lay down our Lives, when we cannot ſave them without Sin. 3. If the Providence of God caſt Perſons of *Merit* into Places of Obſcurity, and little Note, it muſt not be thought ſtrange, 'twas the Lot of our Maſter himſelf; he who was fit to have ſat in the higheſt of *Moſes*'s Seats, willingly walked in *Galilee* among the ordinary ſort of People. Obſerve, he did not ſit ſtill in *Galilee*, nor bury himſelf alive there, but *walked*; he went about doing good. When we cannot do *what* and *where* we *would*, we muſt do *what* and *where* we *can*.

2. The Approach of the *Feaſt of Tabernacles*, v. 2. one of the three Solemnities, which call'd for the perſonal Attendance of all the Males at *Jeruſalem*. See the Inſtitution of it, *Lev.* 23. 34, &c. and the Revival of it after a long Diſuſe, *Neh.* 8. 14. 'Twas intended to be both a *Memorial* of the Tabernacle State of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, and a *Figure* of the Tabernacle State of God's ſpiritual *Iſrael* in this World. This Feaſt, which was inſtituted ſo many hundred Years before, was ſtill religiouſly obſerved. *Note*, Divine Inſtitutions are never antiquated, nor go out of date by length of time; nor muſt Wilderneſs Mercies ever be forgotten. But 'tis called the *Jews Feaſt*, becauſe it was now ſhortly to be *aboliſh'd*, as a meer *Jewiſh* thing, and left to them that *ſerv'd the Tabernacle*.

3. Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his *Brethren*; ſome of his Kindred, whether by his Mother, or his ſuppoſed Father, is not certain, but they were ſuch as pretended to have an Intereſt in him, and therefore interpos'd to adviſe him in his Conduct. And obſerve,

1. Their Ambition and Vain-glory in urging him to make a more publick Appearance than he did. *Depart hence* (ſaid they) *and go into* Judea, *v.* 3. where thou wilt make a better Figure than thou canſt here. Two Reaſons they give for this Advice.

1. That it would be an Encouragement to thoſe in and about *Jeruſalem*, who had a Reſpect for him; for expecting his temporal Kingdom, the Royal Seat of which they concluded muſt be at *Jeruſalem*, they would have Diſciples *there*, to be particularly countenanc'd; and thought the Time he ſpent among his *Galilean* Diſciples, waſted and thrown away, and his Miracles turning to no account, unleſs they at *Jeruſalem* ſaw them. Or, that *thy Diſciples*, i. e. all of them in general, who will be gathered at *Jeruſalem* to keep the Feaſt, may *ſee thy Works*, and not as here, a few at one time, and a few at another.

2. That it would be for the advancing of his own Name and Honour; *There is no Man that doth any thing in ſecret*, if he himſelf *ſeeks to be known openly*. They take it for granted, that Chriſt ſought to make known himſelf, and therefore thought it abſurd for him to conceal his Miracles; *If thou do theſe things*, if thou be ſo well able to gain the Applauſe of the People, and the Approbation of the Rulers, by thy Miracles, venture abroad, and *ſhew thyſelf to the World*. Supported with theſe Credentials, thou canſt not fail of Acceptance, and therefore it's high time to ſet up for an Intereſt, and think of being *Great*.

Now one would not think there were any harm in this, and yet the Evangeliſt notes it as an Evidence of their Infidelity, for *neither did his Brethren believe in him*, v. 5. if they had, they would not have ſaid this. Obſerve, (1.) It was an Honour to be of the Kindred of Chriſt, but no *ſaving* Honour; they that hear his Word, and keep it, are the Kindred he values. Sure Grace runs in no Blood in the World, when not in that of Chriſt's Family. (2.) It was a ſign Chriſt did not aim at any ſecular Intereſt, for then his Kindred would have ſtruck in with him, and he would have ſecured them firſt. (3.) There were thoſe that were a-kin to Chriſt according to the Fleſh, who did believe in him, Three of the Twelve were *his Brethren*; and yet others as nearly ally'd to him as they, did not believe on him. Many that have the ſame external Privileges and Advantages, do not make the ſame Uſe of them.

But what was there amiſs in this Advice which they gave him? I anſwer, (1.) It was a piece of Preſumption for them to preſcribe to Chriſt, and to teach him what Meaſures to take; 'twas a Sign they *did not believe him* able to guide them, when they did not think him ſufficient to guide himſelf. (2.) They diſcovered a great Careleſſneſs of his Safety, when they would have him go to *Judea*, where they knew the *Jews* ſought to kill him. They that believed in him, and loved him, diſſuaded him from *Judea*, John 11. 8. (3.) Some think they hoped, that if his Miracles were wrought at *Jeruſalem*, the Phariſees and Rulers would try them, and diſcover ſome Cheat in them, which would juſtify their Unbelief. So Dr. *Whitby*. (4.) Perhaps they were weary of his Company in *Galilee*, (for *are not all theſe that ſpeak*, Galileans?) and this was in effect, a Deſire that he would *depart out of their Coaſts*. (5.) They cauſeleſly inſinuate, that he neglected his Diſciples, and deny'd them ſuch a *Sight of his Works*, as was neceſſary to the Support of their Faith. (6.) They tacitly reproach him as *mean-ſpirited*, that he durſt not enter the Liſts with the great Men, nor thruſt himſelf upon the Stage of publick Action; which if he had any thing of Courage, and a *great Soul*, he would do, and not ſneak thus, and ſculk in a Corner; thus Chriſt's Humility, and his Humiliation, and the ſmall Figure which his Religion has uſually made in the World, have been often turned to the Reproach both of *him* and *it*. (7.) They ſeem to queſtion the Truth of the Miracles he wrought, in ſaying, *If thou do theſe things*; if they will bear the Teſt of a publick Scrutiny, in the Courts above, produce them there. (8.) They think Chriſt altogether ſuch a one as themſelves, as ſubject as they to the Politicks of the World, and as deſirous as they to *make a fair Shew in the Fleſh*; whereas he ſought not Honour from Men. (9.) Self was at the Bottom of all; they hoped, if he would make himſelf as great as he might, they being his Kinſmen, ſhould ſhare in his Honour, and have Reſpect paid them for his ſake. *Note*, 1. Many carnal People go to publick Ordinances, to worſhip at the Feaſt only to *ſhew themſelves*, and all their Care is to make a *good Appearance*, to preſent themſelves handſomely to the World. 2. Many that ſeem to ſeek Chriſt's Honour, do really therein ſeek their own, and make it ſerve a Turn for themſelves.

2. The Prudence and Humility of our Lord Jeſus, which appear'd in his Anſwer to the Advice his Brethren gave him, *v.* 6, 7, 8. Tho' there were ſo many baſe Inſinuations in it, he anſwered them mildly. *Note*, Even that which is ſaid without *Reaſon*, yet ſhould be anſwered without *Paſſion*; we ſhould learn of our Maſter to reply with Meekneſs, even to that which is moſt *impertinent*, and *imperious*; and where it is eaſy to find much amiſs, to ſeem not to ſee it, and wink at the Affront.

They expected Chriſt's Company with them to the Feaſt, perhaps hoping he would bear their Charges. But here,

(1.) He ſhews the Difference between himſelf and them, in two things,

1. His *Time* was *ſet*, ſo was not *theirs*. *My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready.* Underſtand it of the time of his going up to this Feaſt. It was an indifferent thing to them when they went, for they had nothing of Moment to do, either where they were, to *detain* them *there*, or where they were going, to *haſten* them *thither*; but every Minute of Chriſt's time was precious, and had its own particular Buſineſs allotted to it. He had ſome Work yet to be done in *Galilee*, before he left the Country; in the Harmony of the Goſpels betwixt this *Motion* made by his Kindred, and his *going up* to this Feaſt, comes in the Story of his ſending forth the 70 Diſciples, *Luke* 10. 1, &c. which was an Affair of very great Conſequence; his time is *not yet*, for that muſt be done firſt. Thoſe that live uſeleſs Lives, have *their time always ready*, they can go and come when they pleaſe; but thoſe whoſe *Time* is fill'd up with *Duty*, will often find themſelves *ſtraiten'd*, and they have *not yet time* for that which others can do *at any time*. Thoſe that are made the Servants of God, as all Men are, and that have made themſelves the Servants of all, as all uſeful Men have, muſt not expect, nor covet to be *Maſters of their own Time*. The Confinement of Buſineſs is a thouſand times better than the Liberty of Idleneſs. Or, it may be meant of the *Time* of his appearing publickly at *Jeruſalem*: Chriſt, who knows all Men, and all Things, knew that the beſt and moſt proper Time for it would be about the *middle of the Feaſt*. We, who are ignorant and ſhort-ſighted, are apt to preſcribe to him, and to think he ſhould deliver his People, and to ſhew himſelf now, juſt now; the preſent Time is *our* Time, but he is fitteſt to judge, and it may be *his Time is not yet come*; his People are not yet ready for Deliverance, nor his Enemies ripe for Ruin: Let us therefore wait with Patience for *his Time*, for all he doth will be moſt glorious in its Seaſon.

2. His *Life* was *ſought*, ſo was not *theirs*, *v.* 7. They in *ſhewing themſelves* to the World, did not expoſe themſelves; *The World cannot hate you*, for ye are *of the World*, its Children, its Servants, and in with its Intereſts, and no doubt the World will *love its own*; ſee *John* 15. 19. Unholy Souls, whom the holy God *cannot love*, the World that lies in Wickedneſs *cannot hate*; but he, in ſhewing himſelf to the World, laid himſelf open to the greateſt Danger, for *me it hateth*; Chriſt was not only ſlighted as inconſiderable in the World, *The World knew him not*, but hated, as if he had been hurtful to the World: thus ill was he

required for his Love to the World; reigning Sin is a rooted Antipathy and Enmity to Chriſt.

But why did the World hate Chriſt, what Evil had he done it? Had he, like *Alexander*, under colour of conquering it, laid it waſte; no, but becauſe (ſaith he) *I teſtify of it, that the Works of it are evil. Note*, 1. The Works of an evil World are *evil Works*; as the Tree is, ſo are the Fruits: 'Tis a dark World, and an apoſtate World; and its Works, Works of Darkneſs and Rebellion. 2. Our Lord Jeſus, both by himſelf and by his Miniſters, did, and will both diſcover and teſtify againſt the evil Works of this wicked World. 3. It is a great Uneaſineſs, and Provocation to the World, to be convicted of the Evil of its Works. It is for the Honour of Virtue and Piety, that thoſe who are impious and vitious, do not care for hearing of it, for their own Conſciences make them *aſham'd* of the Turpitude there is *in* Sin, and *afraid* of the Puniſhment that follows *after* Sin. 4. Whatever is *pretended*, the *real* Cauſe of the World's Enmity to the Goſpel, is the Teſtimony it bears againſt Sin and Sinners. Chriſt's Witneſſes by their Doctrine and Converſation *torment* them that dwell on the Earth, and therefore are treated ſo barbarouſly, *Rev.* 11. 10. But 'tis better incur the World's Hatred, by our teſtifying againſt its Wickedneſs, than gain its good Will, by going down the Stream with it.

(2.) He *diſmiſſeth* them, with a deſign to ſtay behind for ſome time in *Galilee*, v. 8. *Go ye up to this Feaſt, I go not up yet.* 1. He allows their going to the Feaſt, tho' they were carnal and hypocritical in it. *Note*, Even thoſe who go not to holy Ordinances with right Affections, and ſincere Intentions, yet muſt not be hinder'd or diſcourag'd from going; who knows but they may be wrought upon there? 2. He denies them his Company, when they went to the Feaſt, becauſe they were carnal and hypocritical. Thoſe that go to Ordinances for Oſtentation, or to ſerve ſome ſecular Purpoſe, go without Chriſt, and will ſpeed accordingly. How ſad is the Condition of that Man, tho' he reckon himſelf a-kin to Chriſt, to whom he ſaith, *Go up* to ſuch an Ordinance, Go pray, Go hear the Word, Go receive the Sacrament, but *I go not up* with thee. *Go thou*, and appear before God, but I will not appear *for thee*, as *Exod.* 33. 1, 3. But if the Preſence of Chriſt go not with us, to what purpoſe ſhould we go up? *Go ye up, I go not up.* When we are going to, and coming from ſolemn Ordinances, it concerns us to be careful what Company we *have*, and *chuſe*, and to avoid that which is vain and carnal, leſt the Coal of good Affections be quench'd by corrupt Communication. *I go not up yet to this Feaſt*; he doth not ſay, I'll not go up at all, but not *yet*. There may be Reaſon for deferring a particular Duty, which yet muſt not be wholly omitted, or laid aſide. See *Numb.* 9. 11. The Reaſon he gives is, *My Time is not yet full come. Note*, Our Lord Jeſus is very exact and punctual in knowing and keeping his Time; and as it was the Time *fix'd*, ſo it was the *beſt* Time.

3. Chriſt's Continuance in *Galilee* till his *full time* was come, *v.* 9. He ſaying theſe things to them (ταῦτα δὲ εἰπὼν) *abode ſtill in* Galilee; becauſe of this Diſcourſe, he continued there; for, 1. He would not be influenc'd by thoſe that adviſ'd him to ſeek Honour from Men, nor go along with thoſe that put him upon making a Figure; he would not ſeem to countenance the Temptation. 2. He would not depart from his own Purpoſe. He had ſaid upon a clear Foreſight, and mature Deliberation, that he would not go up yet to this Feaſt, and therefore he abode ſtill in *Galilee*. It becomes the Followers of Chriſt thus to be *ſteddy*, and not to *uſe Lightneſs*.

4. His going up to the Feaſt when his Time was come.

Obſerve, 1. *When* he went. *When his Brethren were gone up.* He would not go up *with them*, leſt they ſhould have made a Noiſe and Diſturbance, under pretence of *ſhewing him to the World*; whereas it agreed both with the Prediction, and with his Spirit, not to *ſtrive* or *cry*, or let his *Voice be heard in the Streets*, Iſa. 42. 2. but he went up *after them*. We may lawfully join in the ſame religious Worſhip, with thoſe, that yet we ſhould decline an intimate Acquaintance and Converſe with; for the Bleſſing of Ordinances depends upon the Grace of God, and not upon the Grace of our Fellow-worſhippers. His carnal Brethren went up *firſt*, and then he went. *Note*, In the external Performances of Religion, 'tis poſſible that formal Hypocrites may *get the Start* of thoſe that are ſincere. Many come *firſt*, *to the Temple*, that are brought thither by Vain-glory, and go thence unjuſtified, as he, *Luke* 10. 10. 'Tis not who comes *firſt* that will be the Queſtion, but who comes *fitteſt*? If we bring our Hearts *with us*, 'tis no matter who gets *before us*.

2. How he went, ὡς ἐν κρυπτῷ, *as if he were hiding himſelf. Not openly, but as it were, in ſecret*, rather for fear of *giving Offence*, than of *receiving* Injury. He went up to the Feaſt, becauſe it was an Opportunity of honouring God, and doing good, but he went up as it were in ſecret, becauſe he would not provoke the Government. *Note*, Provided the Work of God be done effectually, 'tis beſt done when it's done with *leaſt Noiſe*. The Kingdom of God needs not come *with Obſervation*, Luke 17. 20. We may do the Work of God *privately*, and yet not do it *deceitfully*.

5. The great Expectation that there was of him among the *Jews* at *Jeruſalem*, *v.* 11, 12, 13. Having formerly come up to the Feaſts, and ſignalized himſelf by the Miracles he wrought, he had made himſelf the Subject of much Diſcourſe and Obſervation.

1. They could not but think of him, *v.* 11. *The Jews ſought him at the Feaſt; and ſaid, where is he?* (1.) The common People long'd to ſee him there, that they might have their Curioſity gratify'd with the Sight of his Perſon and Miracles. They did not think it worth while to go to him into *Galilee*, tho' if they had, they would not have loſt their Labour; but they hope the Feaſt will bring him to *Jeruſalem*, and then they ſhall ſee him. If an Opportunity of Acquaintance with Chriſt come to their Door, they can like it well enough. They *ſought him at the Feaſt*. When we attend upon God in his holy Ordinances, we ſhould ſeek Chriſt in them, ſeek him at the Goſpel Feaſts. And thoſe who wou'd *ſee* Chriſt at a Feaſt, muſt *ſeek* him there. Or, (2.) perhaps it was his Enemies that were thus waiting an Opportunity to ſeize him, and, if poſſible, to give an effectual Step to his Progreſs. They ſaid, *Where is he?* πȣ̃ ἐςιν ἐκεῖνος, *Where is that Fellow?* Thus ſcornfully and contemptibly do they ſpeak of him. Or it intimates how full their Hearts were with Thoughts of him, and their Town with Talk of him, they needed not name him. When they ſhould have welcomed the Feaſt as an Opportunity of ſerving God, they were glad of it as an Opportunity of perſecuting Chriſt. Thus *Saul* hoped to ſlay *David* at the New Moon, 1 *Sam.* 20. 27. Thoſe that ſeek *Opportunity to ſin* in ſolemn Aſſemblies for religious Worſhip, profane God's Ordinances to the laſt Degree, and defy him upon his own Ground; 'tis like ſtriking *within the Verge of the Court*.

2. The People differed much in their Sentiments concerning him, *v.* 12. *There was much murmuring*, or *muttering* rather, *among the People concerning him.* The Enmity of the Rulers againſt Chriſt, and their Enquiries after him, made him to be ſo much the more talked of, and obſerved among the People. This Ground the Goſpel of Chriſt hath got by the Oppoſition made to it, that it has been the more enquired into; and by being *every where ſpoken againſt*, it has come to be every where *ſpoken of*, and by that means has been ſpread the further, and the Merits of his Cauſe have been the more *ſearched into*. This Murmuring was not *againſt* Chriſt, but *concerning* him; ſome murmur'd at the Rulers, becauſe they did not countenance and encourage him; others murmured at them, becauſe they did not ſilence and reſtrain him. Some murmured that he had ſo great an Intereſt in *Galilee*; others, that he had ſo little Intereſt in *Jeruſalem. Note*, Chriſt and his Religion have been, and will be the Subject of much Controverſy and Debate, *Luke* 12. 51, 52. If all would agree to entertain Chriſt as they ought, there would be perfect Peace; but when ſome receive the Light, and others reſolve againſt it, there will be murmuring. The *Bones in the Valley*, while they were *dead* and *dry*, lay quiet; but when it was ſaid unto them, *Live*, there was *a Noiſe* and *a Shaking*, Ezek. 37. 7. But the Noiſe and Rencounter of Liberty and Buſineſs, are preferable ſure to the Silence and Agreement of a Priſon.

Now what were the Sentiments of the People concerning him?

1. Some ſaid, *He is a good Man.* This was Truth, but it was far ſhort of being the *whole Truth.* He was not only a *good Man*, but more than a Man, he was the *Son of God.* Many that have no ill Thoughts of Chriſt, yet have *low* Thoughts of him; and ſcarce honour him, even when they ſpeak well of him, becauſe they do not *ſay enough:* yet indeed it was his Honour, and the Reproach of thoſe that perſecuted him, that they who would not believe him to be the Meſſiah, yet could not but own he was a *good Man.*

2. Others ſaid, *Nay, but he deceiveth the People*; and if that had been true, he had been a very ill Man. The Doctrine he preached was ſound, and could not be conteſted; his Miracles real, and could not be diſprov'd; his Converſation manifeſtly holy and good, and yet it muſt be taken for granted, notwithſtanding, that there is ſome undiſcover'd Cheat at the Bottom, becauſe 'tis the Intereſt of the chief Prieſts to oppoſe him, and run him down. Such murmuring as there was among the *Jews* concerning Chriſt, there is ſtill among us; the *Socinians* ſay, *He is a good Man*, and further they ſay not: The *Deiſts* will not allow this, but ſay, *He deceived the People.* Thus ſome diminiſh him, others abuſe him; but *great is the Truth.*

3. They were frighten'd by their Superiors, from ſpeaking much of him, *v.* 13. *No Man ſpake openly of him, for fear of the* Jews. Either, 1. They durſt not openly ſpeak *well* of him. Whilſt any one was at Liberty to cenſure and reproach him, none durſt vindicate him. Or, 2. They durſt not ſpeak *at all* of him openly. Becauſe nothing could juſtly be ſaid *againſt* him, they would not ſuffer any thing to be ſaid *of* him. 'Twas a Crime to name him. Thus many have aim'd to ſuppreſs Truth, under colour of ſilencing Diſputes about it; and would have all Talk of Religion huſh'd, in hopes thereby to bury in oblivion Religion itſelf.

14 ¶ Now about the midſt of the feaſt, Jeſus went up into the temple, and taught. 15 And the Jews marvelled, ſaying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? 16 Jeſus anſwered them,

and ſaid, My doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent
me. 17 If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the
doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I ſpeak of my
ſelf. 18 He that ſpeaketh of himſelf, ſeeketh his own
glory: but he that ſeeketh his glory that ſent him, the
ſame is true, and no unrighteouſneſs is in him. 19 Did
not Moſes give you the law, and *yet* none of you keepeth
the law? Why go ye about to kill me? 20 The people
anſwered and ſaid, Thou haſt a devil: who goeth
about to kill thee? 21 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto
them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. 22
Moſes therefore gave unto you circumciſion, (not because
it is of Moſes, but of the fathers) and ye on the
ſabbath-day circumciſe a man. 23 If a man on the
ſabbath-day receive circumciſion, that the law of
Moſes ſhould not be broken; are ye angry at me becauſe
I have made a man every whit whole on the ſabbath-day?
24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge
righteous judgment. 25 Then ſaid ſome of them of
Jeruſalem, Is not this he whom they ſeek to kill?
26 But lo, he ſpeaketh boldly, and they ſay nothing
unto him: do the rulers know indeed that this is the
very Chriſt? 27 Howbeit we know this man whence
he is: but when Chriſt cometh, no man knoweth
whence he is. 28 Then cried Jeſus in the temple as
he taught, ſaying, Ye both know me, and ye know
whence I am: and I am not come of myſelf, but he
that ſent me is true, whom ye know not. 29 But I
know him, for I am from him, and he hath ſent me.
30 Then they ſought to take him: but no man laid
hands on him, becauſe his hour was not yet come.
31 And many of the people believed on him, and
ſaid, When Chriſt cometh, will he do more miracles
than theſe which this *man* hath done? 32 ¶ The Phariſees
heard that the People murmured ſuch things
concerning him: and the Phariſees, and the chief prieſts
ſent officers to take him. 33 Then ſaid Jeſus unto
them, Yet a little while am I with you, and *then* I go
unto him that ſent me. 34 Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not
find *me*: and where I am, *thither* ye cannot come. 35
Then ſaid the Jews among themſelves, Whither will he
go, that we ſhall not find him? will he go unto the
diſperſed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?
36 What *manner of* ſaying is this that he ſaid, Ye ſhall
ſeek me, and ſhall not find *me*: and where I am, *thither*
ye cannot come?

Here's, 1. Chriſt's publick preaching in the Temple, *v.* 14. He *went up into the Temple, and taught*, according to his Cuſtom when he was at *Jeruſalem.* His Buſineſs was to preach the Goſpel of the Kingdom, and he did it in every Place of Concourſe. His Sermon is not recorded, becauſe probably 'twas to the ſame Purpoſe with the Sermons he had preach'd in *Galilee*, which were recorded by the other Evangeliſts. For the Goſpel is the ſame to the *plain* and to the *polite.* But that which is obſervable here, is, That it was *about the midſt of the Feaſt*; the *4th* or *5th* Day of the Eight. Whether he did not come up to *Jeruſalem* till the middle of the Feaſt, or whether he came up at the Beginning, but kept private till now, is not certain. But, *Qu.* Why did he not go to the Temple *ſooner* to preach? *Anſ.* 1. Becauſe the People would have more Leiſure to hear him, and it might be hoped would be better diſpos'd to hear him, when they had ſpent ſome Days in their Booths, as they did at the Feaſt of Tabernacles. 2. Becauſe he would chuſe to appear then, when both his Friends and his Enemies had done looking for him; and ſo gave a Specimen of the Method he would obſerve in his Appearances, which is to come at Midnight, *Mat.* 25. 6. But why did he appear thus publickly now? Surely it was to *ſhame* his Perſecutors, the chief Prieſts and Elders, (1.) By ſhewing that tho' they were very bitter againſt him, yet he did not fear them, nor their Power. See *Iſa.* 50. 7, 8. (2.) By taking their Work out of their Hands. Their Office was to teach the People in the Temple, and particularly at the *Feaſt of Tabernacles*, Neh. 8. 17, 18. But they either did not teach them at all, or taught for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, and therefore he goes up to the Temple and teaches the People. When the Shepherds of *Iſrael* made a Prey of the Flock, 'twas time for the chief Shepherd to appear, as was promis'd, *Ezek.* 34. 22, 23. *Mal.* 3. 1.

2. His Diſcourſe with the *Jews* hereupon; and the Conference, is reducible to Four Heads.

Firſt, Concerning *his Doctrine.* See here,

1. How the *Jews admired it*, v. 15. *They marvelled*, ſaying, *How knows this Man Letters, having never learned*? Obſerve here, 1. That our Lord Jeſus was not educated in Schools of the Prophets, or at the Feet of the Rabbins; not only did not travel for Learning, as the Philoſophers did, but did not make any uſe of the Schools and Academies in his own Country. *Moſes* was taught the Learning of the *Egyptians*, but Chriſt was not taught ſo much as the Learning of the *Jews*; having receiv'd the Spirit *without Meaſure*, he needed not receive any Knowledge *from Man, or by Man.* At the time of Chriſt's appearing, Learning flouriſhed both in the *Roman* Empire, and in the *Jewiſh* Church, more than in any Age before or ſince; and in ſuch a time of Enquiry, Chriſt choſe to eſtabliſh his Religion, not in an illiterate Age, leſt it ſhould look like a Deſign to impoſe upon the World, yet he himſelf ſtudied not the Learning then in vogue. 2. That Chriſt had *Letters*, tho' he had never *learned* them; was mighty in the Scriptures, tho' he never had any Doctor of the Law for his Tutor. 'Tis neceſſary Chriſt's Miniſters ſhould have *Learning*, as he had; and ſince they cannot expect to have it as he had it, by Inſpiration, they muſt take Pains to get it in an ordinary way. 3. That Chriſt having Learning, tho' he had not been taught it, made him truly great and wonderful; the *Jews* ſpeak of it here with Wonder. 1. Some 'tis likely took Notice of it to his Honour; he that had no human Learning, and yet ſo far excell'd all that had, certainly muſt be endued with a Divine Knowledge. 2. Others probably mentioned it in Diminution and Contempt of him; whatever he *ſeems* to have, he cannot really have any true Learning, for he was never at the Univerſity, nor took his Degree. 3. Some perhaps ſuggeſted that he had got his Learning by Magick Arts, or ſome unlawful Means or other: ſince they know not how he could be a Scholar, they'll think him a Conjurer.

2. What he *aſſerted* concerning it; Three things.

1. That his *Doctrine* is *Divine*, v. 16. *My Doctrine is not mine, but his that ſent me.* They were offended, becauſe he undertook to *teach*, tho' he had never learned. In anſwer to which he tells them, that his Doctrine was ſuch as was not to be *learn'd*, for it was not the Product of *human Thought*, and natural Powers, enlarged and elevated by Reading and Converſation, but it was a *Divine Revelation.* As God equal with the Father, he might truly have ſaid, *My Doctrine is mine, and his that ſent me*; but being now in his Eſtate of Humiliation, and being, as Mediator, God's Servant, it was more congruous to ſay, *My Doctrine is not mine*, not mine only, or mine originally, as Man and Mediator, but *his that ſent me*; it doth not centre in myſelf, or lead ultimately to my ſelf, but to him that ſent me; God had promiſed concerning the great Prophet, that he would *put his Words into his Mouth*, Deut. 18. 18. to which Chriſt ſeems here to refer. *Note*, It is the Comfort of thoſe who embrace Chriſt's Doctrine, and the Condemnation of thoſe who reject it, that it is a Divine Doctrine, it is *of God and not of Man.*

2. That the moſt competent Judges of the Truth and Divine Authority of Chriſt's Doctrine, are thoſe that with a ſincere and upright Heart, deſire and endeavour to do the Will of God, *v.* 17. *If any Man be willing to do the Will of God*, hath his Will melted into the *Will of God, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God*, or, *whether I ſpeak of myſelf.* Obſerve here,

(1.) What the Queſtion is, concerning the Doctrine of Chriſt, *Whether it be of God*, or no, whether the Goſpel be a Divine Revelation or an Impoſture! Chriſt himſelf was willing to have his Doctrine enquired into, whether it were of God or no, much more ſhould his Miniſters; and we are concerned to examine what Grounds we go upon, for if we be deceived, we are miſerably deceiv'd.

(2.) Who are likely to ſucceed in this Search; Thoſe that *do the Will of God*, at leaſt are deſirous to do it. Now ſee, (1.) Who they are that *will do the Will of God*; they are ſuch as are *impartial* in their Enquiries concerning the Will of God, and are not biaſs'd by any Luſt or Intereſt; and ſuch as are reſolved by the Grace of God, when they find out what the Will of God is, to conform to it. They are ſuch as have an honeſt Principle of Regard to God, and are truly deſirous to glorify and pleaſe him. (2.) Whence it is that ſuch a one ſhall know of the Truth of Chriſt's Doctrine. 1. Chriſt has promis'd to *give Knowledge* to ſuch; he hath ſaid, *he ſhall know*, and he can give an Underſtanding. Thoſe who improve the Light they have, and carefully live up to it, ſhall be ſecured by Divine Grace from deſtructive Miſtakes. 2. They are diſpoſed and prepared to *receive* that Knowledge. He that is inclined to ſubmit to the Rules of the Divine Law, is diſpos'd to admit the Rays of Divine Light. *To him that has*, ſhall be given; thoſe have the *good Underſtanding*, that *do his Commandments*, Pſal. 111. 10. Thoſe who *reſemble* God, are moſt likely to *underſtand* him.

3. That hereby it appear'd Chriſt as a Teacher did not ſpeak *of himſelf*, becauſe he did not ſeek himſelf, *v.* 18.

1. See here the Character of a Deceiver; he *ſeeketh his own Glory*, which is a Sign he *ſpeaks of himſelf*, as the falſe Chriſts and falſe Prophets did. Here's the Deſcription of the *Cheat*, they *ſpeak of themſelves*, and have no Commiſſion or Inſtructions from God; no Warrant but their own Will, no Inſpiration but their

own Imagination, their own Politicks and Artifice. Ambaſſadors *ſpeak not of themſelves*; thoſe Miniſters diſclaim that Character, who glory in this, that they *ſpeak of themſelves*. But ſee the Diſcovery of the Cheat; by this their Pretenſions are diſprov'd, they conſult purely *their own Glory*; Self-ſeekers are Self-ſpeakers. They who ſpeak *from God*, will ſpeak *for God*, and for his Glory; they who aim at their own Preferment and Intereſt, make it appear they had no Commiſſion from God.

2. See the contrary Character Chriſt gives of himſelf and his Doctrine; *He that ſeeketh his Glory that ſent him*, as I do, makes it to appear that *he is true*. (1.) He was *ſent of God*. Thoſe Teachers, and thoſe only who were ſent of God, are to be received and entertain'd by us. Thoſe that bring a Divine Meſſage, muſt prove a Divine Miſſion, either by ſpecial Revelation, or regular Inſtitution. (2.) He *ſought the Glory of God*. It was both the Tendency of his Doctrine, and the Tenor of his whole Converſation, to *glorify God*. (3.) This was a Proof that he was *true*, and there was *no Unrighteouſneſs in him*. Falſe Teachers are moſt *unrighteous*; they are unjuſt to God, whoſe Name they abuſe; and unjuſt to the Souls of Men, whom they impoſe upon: There cannot be a greater Piece of Unrighteouſneſs than this. But Chriſt made it appear that he was *true*, that he was really what he ſaid he was, that there was *no Unrighteouſneſs in* him; no Falſhood in his Doctrine, no Fallacy or Fraud in his Dealings with us.

Secondly, The Diſcourſe concerning the Crime that was laid to his Charge for curing the impotent Man, and bidding him carry his Bed on the Sabbath-Day, for which they had formerly proſecuted him, and which was ſtill the Pretence of their Enmity to him.

1. He argues againſt them by way of *Recrimination*, convicting them of far worſe Practices, *v.* 19. How could they for ſhame cenſure him for a Breach of the Law of *Moſes*, when they themſelves were ſuch notorious Breakers of it? Did not *Moſes* give you the Law? And it was their Privilege that they had the Law; no Nation had ſuch a Law; but it was their Wickedneſs, that *none of them kept the Law*; that they rebell'd againſt it, and liv'd contrary to it: Many that have the Law given them, when they have it, do not keep it. Their Neglect of the Law was univerſal, *none of you* keep it; neither thoſe of them that were in *Poſts of Honour*, who ſhould have been moſt *knowing*, nor thoſe who were in *Poſts of Subjection*, that ſhould have been moſt *obedient*. They boaſted of the Law, and pretended a Zeal for it, and were enraged at Chriſt for ſeeming to tranſgreſs it, and yet none of them kept it; like thoſe that ſay they are for the Church, yet never go to Church. It was an Aggravation of their Wickedneſs in perſecuting Chriſt for breaking the Law, that they themſelves did not keep it: *None of you keepeth the Law*, why then go ye about to kill me for not keeping it? *Note*, Thoſe are commonly moſt cenſorious of others, who are moſt faulty themſelves. Thus Hypocrites, that are forward to pull a Mote out of their Brother's Eye, are not aware of a Beam in their own. *Why go ye about to kill me?* Some make this to be the Inſtance of their not keeping the Law; *ye keep not the Law*, if ye did, ye would underſtand yourſelves better than to go about to kill me for doing a good Work. Thoſe that ſupport themſelves and their Intereſt by Perſecution and Violence, whatever they pretend (tho' they may call themſelves *Cuſtodes utriuſque Tabulæ*) are not Keepers of the Law of God. *Chemnitius* underſtands this as a Reaſon why it is Time to ſuperſede the Law of *Moſes* by the Goſpel, becauſe the Law was found inſufficient to *reſtrain Sin*; *Moſes* gave you the Law, but you do not keep it, nor are kept by it from the greateſt Wickedneſs; there is therefore need of a clearer Light, and better Law to be brought it, why then do you aim to kill me for introducing it?

Here the *People* rudely interrupted him in his Diſcourſe, and contradicted what he ſaid, *v.* 20. *Thou haſt a Devil*; *who goes about to kill thee?* This ſpeaks, 1. The *good Opinion* they had of their Rulers, who they think would never attempt ſo ill a Thing as to kill him; no, ſuch a Veneration they had for their Elders and chief Prieſts, that they would ſwear for them, they would do no harm to an innocent Man. Probably the Rulers had their little Emiſſaries among the People, who ſuggeſted this to them; many deny that Wickedneſs, which at the ſame Time they are contriving. 2. The *ill Opinion* they had of our Lord Jeſus, *Thou haſt a Devil*, thou art poſſeſſed with a lying Spirit, and art an *ill Man* for ſaying ſo; ſo ſome: Or rather, thou art Melancholy, and art a *weak Man*; thou frighteneſt thy ſelf with cauſeleſs Fears, as Hypochondriacal People uſe to do. Not only open Phrenſies, but ſilent Melancholies were then commonly imputed to the Power of Satan: Thou art craz'd, haſt a diſtemper'd Brain. Let us not think it ſtrange if the beſt of Men be put under the worſt of Characters.

To this vile Calumny our Saviour returns no direct Anſwer, but ſeems as if he took no Notice of it. *Note*, Thoſe who would be like Chriſt, muſt put up Affronts, and paſs by the Indignities and Injuries done them; muſt not regard them, much leſs *reſent* them, and leaſt of all *revenge* them: *I as a deaf Man heard not*. When Chriſt was *reviled*, he *reviled not again*.

2. He argues by way of Appeal, and Vindication.

1. He appeals to *their own Sentiments*, of this Miracle, *v.* 21. *I have done one Work, and ye all marvel*. Ye cannot chuſe but marvel at it, as truly great, and altogether ſupernatural; you muſt *all* own it to be *marvellous*. Or, tho' I have done but *one Work* that you have any Colour to find fault with, yet you *marvel*, i. e. you are offended and diſpleaſed, as if I had been guilty of ſome heinous or enormous Crime.

2. He appeals to their own Practice in other Inſtances; *I have done one Work* on the Sabbath, and it was done eaſily, with a Word's ſpeaking, and you all marvel, you make a mighty ſtrange Thing of it, that a religious Man ſhould dare to do ſuch a thing, whereas you your ſelves *many a Time* do that which is a much more *ſervile* Work on the Sabbath-Day, in the caſe of Circumciſion; if it be lawful for you, nay, and your Duty to circumciſe a Child on the Sabbath-Day, when it happens to be the Eighth Day, as no doubt it is, much more was it lawful and good for me to heal a diſeaſed Man on that Day. Obſerve,

1. The Riſe and Original of Circumciſion; *Moſes gave you Circumciſion*, gave you the Law concerning it. Here's, 1. Circumciſion is ſaid to *be given* you, and *v.* 23. they are ſaid to *receive* it; 'twas not impos'd upon them as a Yoke, but conferred upon them as a Favour. *Note*, The Ordinances of God, and particularly thoſe which are Seals of the Covenant, are *Gifts given to Men*, and are to be received as ſuch. 2. *Moſes* is ſaid to give it, becauſe it was a part of that Law which was *given by Moſes*; yet as Chriſt ſaid of the *Manna*, ch. 6. 32. *Moſes* did not give it them, but God; nay, and it was not of *Moſes* firſt, but *of the Fathers*, v. 22. Tho' 'twas incorporated into the *Moſaick* Inſtitution, yet it was ordain'd long before, for it was a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith, and therefore commenc'd with the Promiſe Four Hundred and Thirty Years before, *Gal.* 3.17. The Church-memberſhip of Believers and their Seed, was not of *Moſes*, or his Law, and therefore did not fall with it; but was *of the Fathers*, belong'd to the Patriarchal Church, and was part of that Bleſſing of *Abraham*, which was to come upon the *Gentiles*, Gal. 3. 14.

2. The Reſpect had to the Law of Circumciſion above that of the Sabbath, in the conſtant Practice of the *Jewiſh* Church. The *Jewiſh* Caſuiſts frequently take Notice of it, *Circumciſio & ejus ſanatio pellit Sabbatum*; ſo that if a Child was born one Sabbath-Day, it was without fail circumciſed the next. If then, when the *Sabbath Reſt* was more ſtrictly inſiſted on, yet thoſe Works were allowed which were *in ordine ad ſpiritualia*, for the keeping up of Religion, much more are they allowed now under the Goſpel, when the Streſs is laid more upon the *Sabbath Work*.

3. The Inference Chriſt draws from hence in Juſtification of himſelf, and of what he had done, *v.* 23. *A Man Child on the Sabbath-Day receives Circumciſion, that the Law of* Circumciſion *might not be broken*; or, as the Margin reads it, *without breaking the Law*, viz. of the Sabbath. Divine Commmands muſt be conſtrued ſo as to agree with each other. Now, if this be allowed by yourſelves, how unreaſonable are you, who are *angry with me, becauſe I have made a Man every whit whole on the Sabbath Day*; ἐμοὶ χολᾶτε; the Word is uſed only here, from χόλη, *Fel.* They were angry at him with the greateſt Indignation; 'twas a *ſpiteful* Anger, Anger with *Gall* in it. *Note*, It is very abſurd and unreaſonable for us to condemn others for that which we juſtify our ſelves in. Obſerve the Compariſon Chriſt here makes between their *circumciſing a Child*, and his *healing a Man* on the Sabbath-Day. 1. Circumciſion was but a Ceremonial Inſtitution; 'twas *of the Fathers* indeed, but not from the beginning; but what Chriſt did, was a good Work by the Law of Nature, a more excellent Law than that which made Circumciſion a good Work. 2. Circumciſion was a *bloody* Ordinance, and *made ſore*; but what Chriſt did, was healing and made whole. The Law works Pain, and if that Work may be done on the Sabbath-Day, much more a Goſpel Work, which works Peace. 3. Eſpecially, conſidering that whereas when they had circumciſed a Child, yet care was only to heal up that Part which was circumciſed, which might be done, and yet the Child remain under other Illneſſes: Chriſt had made this Man *every whit whole*, ὅλον ἄνθρωπον ὑγιῆ, *I have made the whole Man heathful* and ſound. The *whole Body* was *healed*, for the Diſeaſe affected the whole Body, and it was a perfect Cure, ſuch as left no Relicks of the Diſeaſe behind; nay, Chriſt not only heal'd his Body, but his Soul too, by that Admonition, *Go, and ſin no more*; and ſo indeed made the *whole Man* ſound, for the Soul is the Man. Circumciſion indeed was intended for the Good of the Soul, and to make the *whole Man* as it ſhould be, but they had perverted it, and turn'd it into a meer carnal Ordinance; but Chriſt accompanied his outward Cures with inward Grace, and ſo made them Sacramental, and healed the *whole Man*.

He concludes this Argument with that Rule, *v.* 24. *Judge not according to the Appearance, but judge righteous Judgment*. This may be applied, either, (1.) In particular to this Work which they quarrel'd with as a Violation of the Law. Be not partial in your Judgement, judge not, κατ᾽ ὄψιν, *with Reſpect of Perſons*; knowing Faces, as the *Hebrew* Phraſe is, *Deut.* 1. 17. 'Tis contrary to the Law of Juſtice, as well as Charity, to cenſure thoſe who differ in Opinion from us as Tranſgreſſors, in taking that Liberty, which yet in thoſe of our own Party, and Way, and Opinion, we allow of; as it is alſo to commend that in ſome as neceſſary Strictneſs and Severity, which in others we condemn as Impoſition and Perſecution. Or, (2.) In general, To Chriſt's Perſon and Preaching, which they were offended at, and prejudic'd againſt. Thoſe Things that are falſe, and deſign'd to impoſe upon Men, commonly appear beſt, when they are judged of *according to the outward Appearance*; they appear moſt plauſible, *primâ facie*. This was it that gained the Phariſees ſuch an Intereſt and Reputation, that they *appear'd right* unto Men, *Mat.* 23. 27, 28. and Men judg'd of them by that Appearance, and ſo were ſadly miſtaken in them. But ſaith Chriſt, be not too confident that all are real Saints, who are ſeeming ones. And with reference to himſelf, his *outward Appearance* was far ſhort of his real Dignity and Excellency, for he took upon him the *Form of a Servant*, Phil. 2. 7. in the *Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. had *no Form or Comelineſs*, Iſa. 53. 2. So that they who undertook to judge whether he were the Son of God or no by his *outward Appearance*, were not likely to *judge righteous Judgment*. The *Jews* expected the outward Appearance of the *Meſſiah* to be pompous and magnificent, and attended with all the Ceremonies of ſecular Grandeur, and judging of Chriſt by that Rule, their Judgment was from firſt to laſt a *continual* Miſtake, for the Kingdom of Chriſt was not to be *of this World*, nor to *come with Obſervation*. If a Divine Power accompanied him, and God bare him Witneſs, and the Scriptures were fulfilled in him, tho' his Appearance was never ſo mean, they ought to receive him, and to judge by Faith, and not by the Sight of the Eye. See *Iſa.* 11. 3. and 1 *Sam.* 16. 7. Chriſt and his Doctrine, and Doings, deſire nothing but *righteous Judgment*; if Truth and Juſtice may but paſs the Sentence, Chriſt and his Cauſe will carry the Day. We muſt not judge concerning any by their *outward Appearance*, not by their Titles, the Figure they make in the World, and their fluttering Shew; but by their intrinſick Worth, and the Gifts and Graces of God's Spirit in them.

Thirdly, Chriſt diſcourſeth with them here concerning *himſelf*, whence he came, and whither he was going, *v.* 25——36.

1. *Whence he came*, v. 25——31. In the Account of this, obſerve,

1. The Objection concerning this, ſtarted by ſome of the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, who ſeem to have been of all others moſt prejudiced againſt him, *v.* 25. One would think that they who lived at the Fountain-Head of Knowledge and Religion, ſhould have been moſt ready to receive the *Meſſiah*, but it proved quite contrary; thoſe that have Plenty of the Means of Knowledge and Grace, if they are not *made better* by them, are commonly *made worſe*; and our Lord Jeſus has oft met with the leaſt Welcome from thoſe that one would expect the beſt from. But it was not without ſome juſt Cauſe, that it came into a Proverb, *The nearer the Church, the farther from God.*

Theſe People of *Jeruſalem* ſhew'd their ill Will to Chriſt, (1.) By their reflecting upon the Rulers, becauſe they let him alone. Is *not this he whom they ſeek to kill*; the Multitude of the People that came up out of the Country to the Feaſt, did not ſuſpect there was any Deſign on foot againſt him, and therefore they ſaid, *Who goes about to kill thee?* v. 20. But they of *Jeruſalem* knew the Plot, and irritated their Rulers to put it in execution. *Is not this he whom they ſeek to kill?* Why do they not do it then? who hinders them? They ſay they have a mind to get him out of the way, and yet lo, *he ſpeaketh boldly*, and *they ſay nothing to him*; do *the Rulers know indeed that this is the very Chriſt?* v. 26. Here they ſlily and maliciouſly inſinuate two things to exaſperate the Rulers againſt Chriſt, when indeed they needed no Spur. 1. That by conniving at his preaching, they *brought their Authority into Contempt*: Muſt a Man that is condemn'd by the *Sanhedrin* as a Deceiver, be permitted to *ſpeak boldly*, without any Check or Contradiction? this makes their Sentence to be but *Brutum Fulmen*; if our Rulers will ſuffer themſelves to be thus trampled upon, they may thank themſelves if none ſtand in awe of them and their Laws. *Note*, The worſt of Perſecutions have oft been carry'd on under colour of the neceſſary Support of Authority and Government. 2. That hereby they brought *their Judgment* into *Suſpicion*; *Do they know that this is the Chriſt?* 'Tis ſpoken ironically, How came they to change their Mind? What new Diſcovery have they lit on? They give People occaſion to think that they believe him to be the Chriſt, and are concern'd to act vigorouſly againſt him to clear themſelves from the Suſpicion. Thus the Rulers, who had made the People Enemies to Chriſt, made them *ſeven times more the Children of Hell than themſelves*, Mat. 23. 15. When Religion and the Profeſſion of Chriſt's Name are *out of Faſhion*, and conſequently *out of Repute*, many are ſtrongly tempted to perſecute and oppoſe them, only that they may not be thought to favour them, and incline to them. And for this Reaſon, Apoſtates, and the degenerate Offſpring of good Parents, have been ſometimes worſe than others, as it were to wipe off the Stain of their Profeſſion. 'Twas ſtrange the Rulers thus *irritated* did not ſeize Chriſt; but his Hour was not yet come; and God can tie Mens Hands to Admiration, tho' he do not turn their Hearts.

(2.) By their Exception againſt his being the Chriſt; in which appeared more Malice than Matter, *v.* 27. If the Rulers think him to be the Chriſt, we neither can, nor will believe him to be ſo, for we have this Argument againſt it, that *we know this Man whence he is*; *but when Chriſt comes, no Man knows whence he is*. Here's a Fallacy in the Argument, for the Propoſitions are not both *ad idem*. (1.) If they ſpeak of his *Divine Nature*, it is true, that when Chriſt comes, *no Man knows whence he his*, for he is a Prieſt after the Order of *Melchizedeck*, who was *without Deſcent*, and *his Goings forth have been of old from everlaſting*, Mic. 5. 2. But then it was not true, that as for this Man, they knew whence he was, for they knew not his Divine Nature, nor how *the Word* was *made Fleſh*. (2.) If they ſpeak of his *human Nature*, it was true that they knew whence he was, who was his Mother, and where he was bred up; but then it was falſe, that ever it was ſaid of the *Meſſiah*, that none ſhould know whence he was, for it was known before *where he ſhould be born*, Mat. 2. 4, 5. Obſerve, 1. How they *deſpis'd him*, becauſe they knew *whence he was*. Familiarity breeds Contempt, and we are apt to diſdain the *Uſe* of thoſe whom we know the *Riſe of*; Chriſt's own received him not, becauſe he was *their own*, for which very Reaſon they ſhould the rather have lov'd him; and been thankful that their Nation, and their Age was honour'd with his Appearance. 2. How they endeavoured unjuſtly to faſten the Ground of their Prejudice upon the Scriptures, as if they countenanced them, when there was no ſuch Thing. Therefore People err concerning Chriſt, becauſe they *know not the Scriptures*.

2. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Objection, *v.* 28, 29. He ſpoke freely and boldly, he *cried in the Temple, as he taught*; he ſpoke this louder than the reſt of his Diſcourſe, 1. To expreſs his Earneſtneſs, being *griev'd for the Hardneſs of their Hearts*; there may be a Vehemency in contending for the Truth, where yet there is no intemperate Heat or Paſſion. We may inſtruct Gainſayers with Warmth, and yet with *Meekneſs*. 2. The Prieſts, and thoſe that were prejudic'd againſt him, did not come near enough to hear his Preaching, and therefore he muſt ſpeak louder than ordinary what he will have them to hear. Whoever has Ears to hear, let him hear this.

Now Chriſt's Anſwer to their Cavil is,

1. By way of Conceſſion, granting that they did, or might, know his Original as to the Fleſh, *ye both know me, and ye know whence I am*. You know I am of your own Nation, and one of yourſelves. It's no Diſparagement to the Doctrine of Chriſt, that there is that in it, which is level to the Capacities of the Meaneſt; plain Truths diſcovered even by Nature's Light, of which we may ſay we know whence they are; ye *know me*, i. e. ye think ye know me, but ye are miſtaken; ye take me to be the Carpenter's Son, and born at *Nazareth*, but it is not ſo.

2. By way of Negation, denying that that which they did ſee in him, and know of him, was all that was to be known; and therefore if they look'd no further than that, they judged by the outward Appearance only. They knew whence he came perhaps, and where he had his Birth, but he will tell them what they knew not, *from whom* he came. 1. That he did not *come of himſelf*; that he did not run without ſending, nor come as a private Perſon, but with a publick Character. 2. That he was ſent of his Father; this is twice mentioned; *He hath ſent me*; and again, *He hath ſent me*, to ſay what I ſay, and do what I do. This he was himſelf well aſſur'd of, and therefore knew that his Father would bear him out; and 'tis well for us that we are aſſured of it too, that we may with holy Confidence go to God by him. 3. That he was *from his Father*, παρ' αὐτȣ̃ εἰμι, not only ſent from him as a Servant from his Maſter, but from him by eternal Generation, as a Son from his Father, by eſſential Emanation, as the Beams from the Sun. 4. *That the Father who ſent him is true*; he had promis'd to give the Meſſiah, and tho' the *Jews* had forfeited the Promiſe, yet he that made the Promiſe is *true*, and has perform'd it; he had promis'd that the *Meſſiah* ſhould ſee his Seed, and be ſucceſsful in his Undertaking; and tho' the Generality of the *Jews* reject him and his Goſpel, yet he *is true*, and will fulfil the Promiſe in the Calling of the Gentiles. 5. That theſe unbelieving *Jews* did *not know the Father*; *He that ſent me, whom ye know not*. There is much Ignorance of God, even with many that have a *Form of Knowledge*; and the true Reaſon why People reject Chriſt, is becauſe they do not *know God*; for there is ſuch a Harmony of the Divine Attributes in the Work of Redemption, and ſuch an admirable Agreement between natural and revealed Religion, that the right Knowledge of the former would not only admit, but introduce the latter. 6. Our Lord Jeſus was intimately acquainted with the Father that *ſent him*; *but I know him*. He knew him ſo well, that he was not at all *in doubt*, concerning his Miſſion from him, but perfectly *aſſur'd* of that, not at all *in the dark* concerning the Work he had to do, but perfectly *appriz'd* of that, *Mat.* 11. 27.

3. The Provocation which this gave to his Enemies, who therefore hated him becauſe he *told them the Truth*, v. 30. *They ſought therefore to take him*, to lay violent Hands on him, not only to do him a Miſchief, but ſome way or other to be the Death of him; but by the Reſtraint of an inviſible Power it was prevented, no body touch'd him, *becauſe his Hour was not yet come*; that was not the Reaſon why they did it not, but God's Reaſon why he hindered them from doing it. *Note*, (1.) The faithful Preachers of the Truths of God, tho' they behave themſelves with never ſo much Prudence and Meekneſs, yet muſt expect to be hated and perſecuted by thoſe, who think themſelves tormented by their Teſtimony, *Rev.* 11. 10. (2.) God has wicked Men in a Chain, and whatever Miſchief they *would do*, yet they *can do* no more than God will ſuffer them to do. The Malice of Perſecutors is *impotent*, even then when 'tis moſt *impetuous*, and when Satan *fills their Hearts*, yet God *ties their Hands*. (3.) God's Servants are

ſometimes wonderfully protected by undiſcernable, unaccountable Means: Their Enemies do not do the Miſchief they deſigned, and yet neither they themſelves, nor any one elſe can tell why they do not. (4.) Chriſt had *his Hour* ſet, which was to put a Period to his Day and Work on Earth, and ſo have all his People and all his Miniſters; and till that Hour comes, the Attempts of their Enemies againſt them are ineffectual, and their Day ſhall be lengthen'd as long as their Maſter has any Work for them to do; nor can all the Powers of Hell and Earth prevail againſt them, till they have *finiſhed their Teſtimony.*

4. The good Effect which Chriſt's Diſcourſe had, notwithſtanding this, upon ſome of his Hearers, *v.* 31. *Many of the People believed on him.* As he was ſet for the Fall of ſome, ſo for the Riſing again of others: Even there, where the Goſpel meets with Oppoſition, yet there may be a great deal of good done, 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 2. Obſerve here,

1. *Who* they were that believed: Not a few, but many, more than one would have expected when the Stream run ſo ſtrong the other way. But theſe *many* were *of the People*, ἐκ τȣ ὄχλȣ, of the *Multitude*, the Crowd, the inferior ſort, the Mob, the Rabble, ſome would have called them. We muſt not meaſure the Proſperity of the Goſpel, by its Succeſs among the great ones, nor muſt Miniſters ſay they labour in vain, tho' none but the *Poor*, and thoſe of no *Figure*, receive the Goſpel; 1 *Cor.* 1. 26.

2. What *induced* them to believe; the *Miracles which he did.* Which were not only the Accompliſhment of the Old-Teſtament Prophecies, *Iſa.* 35. 5,6. but an Argument of a Divine Power. He that had an Ability to do that which none but God *can do*, controul and over-rule the Powers of Nature, no doubt had Authority to enact that which none but God can *enact*, a Law that ſhall *bind Conſcience*, and a Covenant that ſhall *give Life.*

3. How *weak* their Faith was; they don't poſitively aſſert, as the *Samaritans* did, *This is indeed the Chriſt*; but they only argue, *When Chriſt comes, will he do more Miracles than theſe?* They take it for granted that Chriſt will come, and when he comes will do many Miracles; and is not this he then? In him we ſee, tho' not all that worldly Pomp we have *fancy'd*, yet all that Divine Power we have *believed* the *Meſſiah* ſhould appear in, and therefore why may not this be he? They believe it, but have not Courage to own it. *Note*, Even weak Faith may be true Faith, and ſo *accounted*, ſo *accepted* by the Lord Jeſus, who *deſpiſes not the Day of ſmall Things.*

2. *Whither he was going*, v. 32——36. Where obſerve,

1. The Deſign of the Phariſees and chief Prieſts againſt him, *v.* 32.

1. The Provocation given them was, they had Information brought them by their Spies, who inſinuated themſelves into the Converſation of the People, and gathered Stories to carry to their jealous Maſters, that *the People murmured ſuch Things concerning him*; that there were many who had a Reſpect and Value for him, notwithſtanding all they had done to make him odious. Tho' the People did but whiſper theſe Things, and had not Courage to ſpeak out, yet the Phariſees were enraged at it. The Equity of that Government is juſtly ſuſpected by others, which is ſo *ſuſpicious* of itſelf, as to take notice of or to be influenced by the ſecret various and uncertain *Muterings* of the common People. The Phariſees valued themſelves very much upon the Reſpects of the People, and were ſenſible that if Chriſt did thus *increaſe*, they muſt *decreaſe.*

2. The Project they laid hereupon, was to ſeize Jeſus, and take him into Cuſtody: *They ſent Officers to take him*, not to take up thoſe who murmured concerning him, and frighten them; no, the moſt effectual way to diſperſe the Flock, is to *ſmite the Shepherd.* The *Phariſees* ſeem to be the Ring-leaders in this Proſecution, but they *as ſuch* had no Power, and therefore they got the *chief Prieſts*, the Judges of the Eccleſiaſtical Court, to join with them, who were ready enough to do ſo. The *Phariſees* were the great Pretenders to *Learning*, and the *chief Prieſts* to *Sanctity.* As *the World by Wiſdom knew not God*, but the greateſt Philoſophers were guilty of the greateſt Blunders in natural Religion; ſo the *Jewiſh* Church by their Wiſdom knew not Chriſt, but their greateſt Rabbins were the greateſt Fools concerning him, nay, they were the moſt inveterate Enemies to him. Thoſe wicked Rulers had their Officers, Officers of their Court, Church Officers, whom they employ'd to take Chriſt, and who were ready to go on their Errand, tho' it was an ill Errand. If *Saul*'s Footmen will not go, he has a Herdſman that will *turn and fall upon the Prieſts of the Lord*, 1 Sam. 22. 18.

2. The Diſcourſe of our Lord Jeſus hereupon, *v.* 33, 34. *Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to him that ſent me; ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find me, and where I am, thither ye cannot come.* Theſe Words, like the Pillar of Cloud and Fire, have a *bright* Side, and a *dark* Side.

1. They have a *bright Side* towards our Lord Jeſus himſelf, and ſpeak abundance of Comfort to him, and all his faithful Followers, that are expoſed to Difficulties and Dangers for his Sake. Three things Chriſt here comforted himſelf with.

(1.) That he had but *a little Time* to continue here in this troubleſome World. He ſees he's never likely to have a quiet Day among them, but the beſt of it is, his Warfare will ſhortly be accompliſhed, and then he ſhall be *no more in this World*, John 17. 11. Whoever we are with in this World, Friends or Foes, 'tis but *a little while* we ſhall be with them. And it is Matter of Comfort to thoſe who are *in* the World, but not of it, and therefore are hated by it, and ſick of it, that they ſhall not be *in it always*, they ſhall not be *in it long.* We muſt be *a while* with thoſe that are pricking Briars, and grieving Thorns; but Thanks be to God, 'tis but a little while, and we ſhall be out of their Reach. Our Days being *evil*, 'tis well they are *few.*

(2.) That when he ſhould quit this troubleſome World, he ſhould *go to him that ſent him. I go*: Not I am driven away by Force, but I voluntarily *go*; having finiſhed my Embaſſy, I return to him, on whoſe Errand I came. *Then*, when I have done my Work with you, then, and not till then, I go to him *that ſent me*, and will *receive me*, will prefer me, as Embaſſadors are when they return. Their Rage againſt him would not only not hinder him from, but haſten him to the Glory and Joy that was ſet before him. Let thoſe who ſuffer for Chriſt, comfort themſelves with this, that they have a God to go to, and are going to him, going apace, to be for ever with him.

(3.) That tho' they perſecuted him here, where-ever he went, yet that none of their Perſecutions could follow him to Heaven; *Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find me.* It appears by their Enmity to his Followers when he was gone, that if they could have reached him, they would have perſecuted him, but ye cannot come into that Temple, as ye do into this. *Where I am*, i. e. where I then *ſhall be*; but he expreſſeth it thus, becauſe even when he was on Earth by his Divine Nature, and Divine Affections, he was in Heaven, *John* 3. 13.. Or it notes, that he ſhould be *ſo ſoon* there, that he was as good as there already. *Note*, It adds to the Happineſs of glorified Saints, that they are out of the Reach of the Devil and all his wicked Inſtruments.

2. Theſe Words have a *black and dark Side* towards theſe wicked *Jews* that hated and perſecuted Chriſt. They now long'd to be rid of him, Away with him from the Earth; but let them know,

(1.) That according to their Choice, ſo ſhould the Doom be. They were induſtrious to *drive him* from them, and their Sin ſhall be their Puniſhment, he will not trouble them long; yet a little while, and he will depart from them. It is juſt with God to forſake thoſe, that think his Preſence a Burthen. They that are weary of Chriſt, need no more to make them miſerable than to have *their Wiſh.*

(2.) That they would certainly repent their Choice when it was too late. 1 They ſhould in vain ſeek the Preſence of the Meſſiah; *Ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall not find me.* Ye ſhall expect the *Chriſt to come*, but your Eyes ſhall fail with looking for him, and ye ſhall never find him. They who rejected the true Meſſiah when he did come, were juſtly abandoned to a miſerable and endleſs Expectation of one that ſhould never come. Or, it may refer to the final Rejection of Sinners, from the Favour and Grace of Chriſt at the great Day; thoſe who now ſeek Chriſt, ſhall find him; but the Day is coming, when thoſe who now refuſe him, ſhall *ſeek him, and ſhall not find him.* See *Prov.* 1. 28. they will in vain cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us.* Or, perhaps theſe Words might be fulfill'd in the Deſpair of ſome of thoſe *Jews*, who poſſibly might be convinc'd, and not converted, who would wiſh in vain to ſee Chriſt, and to hear him preach again; but the Day of Grace is over, *Luke* 17. 22. Yet that is not all, 2. They ſhould in vain expect a Place in Heaven, *Where I am*, and where all Believers ſhall be with me, *thither ye cannot come*; not only becauſe they are *excluded* by the juſt and irreverſible Sentence of the Judge, and the Sword of the Angel at every Gate of the New *Jeruſalem*, to keep *the Way of the Tree of Life* againſt thoſe who have *no Right to enter*, but becauſe they are diſabled by their own Iniquity, and Infidelity; ye *cannot come*, becauſe ye *will not.* Thoſe that hate to be where Chriſt is, in his Word and Ordinances on Earth, are very unfit to be where he is in his Glory in Heaven; for indeed Heaven would be no Heaven to them, ſuch are the Antipathies of an unſanctified Soul to the Felicities of that State.

3. Their Deſcant upon this Diſcourſe, *v.* 35, 36. *They ſaid among themſelves, whither will he go?* See here,

(1.) Their wilful Ignorance and Blindneſs. He had expreſly ſaid whither he would go, to him that ſent him, to his Father in Heaven, and yet they ask, *Whither will he go?* and *what manner of Saying is this?* None ſo blind as thoſe that will not ſee, that will not heed. Chriſt's Sayings are *plain to him that underſtandeth*, and difficult only to thoſe that are minded to quarrel.

(2.) Their daring Contempt of Chriſt's Threatnings. Inſtead of trembling at that terrible Word, *ye ſhall ſeek me, and not find me*; which ſpeaks the utmoſt Degree of Miſery; they banter it, and make a Jeſt of it, as thoſe Sinners that *mock at Fear, and are not affrighted*, Iſa. 5. 19. Amos 5. 18. *Let him make Speed. But be ye not Mockers, leſt your Bands be made ſtrong.*

(3.) Their inveterate Malice and Rage againſt Chriſt. All they dreaded in his *Departure* was, that he would be out of the Reach of their Power, *Whither will he go, that we ſhall not find him?* If he be above Ground; we will have him; we will leave no Place unſearch'd, as *Ahab* in queſt of *Elijah*, 1 Kings 18. 10.

(4.) Their proud Diſdain of the Gentiles, whom they here call the *diſperſed of the Gentiles*; meaning either the *Jews* that were *ſcatter'd* abroad among the *Greeks*, *Jam.* 1. 1. 1 *Pet.* 1. 1. will ye go and make an Intereſt among thoſe ſilly People? Or, the *Gentiles diſperſed* over the World, in Diſtinction from the *Jews*, who were *incorporated* into one Church and Nation; will he make his Court to them?

(5.) Their Jealouſy of the leaſt Intimation of Favour to the Gentiles; will he go and *teach the Gentiles*? Will he carry his Doctrine to them? Perhaps they had heard of ſome Items of Reſpect ſhew'd by him to the Gentiles, as in his Sermon at *Nazareth*, and in the Caſe of the *Centurion*, and the Woman of *Canaan*, and there was nothing they dreaded more than the *Comprehenſion* of the Gentiles. So common is it for thoſe who have loſt the Power of Religion, to be very jealous for the Monopoly of the Name. They now made *a Jeſt* of his going to *teach the Gentiles*, but not long after he did it *in good Earneſt* by his Apoſtles and Miniſters, and gather'd thoſe *diſpers'd* People, ſorely to the grief of the *Jews*, *Rom.* 10. 19. So true is that of *Solomon*, *The Fear of the Wicked, it ſhall come upon him.*

37 In the laſt day, that great *day* of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, If any man thirſt, let him come unto me, and drink. 38 He that believeth on me, as the ſcripture hath ſaid, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water. 39 (But this ſpake he of the ſpirit, which they that believe on him, ſhould receive: for the holy Ghoſt was not yet *given*, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.) 40 ¶ Many of the people therefore, when they heard this ſaying, ſaid, Of a truth, this is the prophet. 41 Others ſaid, This is the Chriſt. But ſome ſaid, Shall Chriſt come out of Galilee? 52 Hath not the ſcripture ſaid, That Chriſt cometh of the ſeed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? 43 So there was a diviſion among the people, becauſe of him. 44 And ſome of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Chriſt's Diſcourſe, with the Explication of it, *v.* 37, 38, 39. 'Tis likely theſe are only ſhort Hints of what he enlarg'd upon, but they have in them the Subſtance of the whole Goſpel; here's a *Goſpel Invitation* to *come to Chriſt*, and a *Goſpel Promiſe* of Comfort and Happineſs in him. Now Obſerve,

1. When he made this Invitation. *On the laſt Day* of the Feaſt of Tabernacles, *that great Day*. The *Eighth Day*, which concluded that Solemnity, was to be a *holy Convocation*, Lev. 23. 36. Now on this Day Chriſt publiſh'd this Goſpel Call. Becauſe, 1. Much People were gather'd together; and if the Invitation was given to many, it might be hoped ſome would accept of it, *Prov.* 1. 7. Numerous Aſſemblies give Opportuinty of doing the more good. 2. The People were now returning to their Homes, and he would give them this to carry away with them as his parting Word. When a great Congregation is to be diſmiſs'd, and is about to ſcatter, as here, it is affecting to think, that in all probability they will never come all together again in this World; and therefore if we can ſay or do any thing to help them to Heaven, that muſt be the time. It is good to be lively at the Cloſe of an Ordinance. Chriſt made this Offer *on the laſt Day of the Feaſt*. (1.) To thoſe who had turn'd a deaf Ear to his Preaching on the foregoing Days of this ſacred Week; he will try them once more, and if they will yet hear his Voice, they ſhall live. (2.) To thoſe who perhaps might never have ſuch another Offer made them, and therefore were concerned to accept of this; it would be half a Year before there would be another Feaſt, and in that time they would many of them be in their Graves; *Behold now is the accepted Time.*

2. How he made this Invitation; *Jeſus ſtood and cried.* Which notes, 1. His great Earneſtneſs and Importunity. His Heart was upon it, to bring poor Souls in to himſelf. The Erection of his Body, and the Elevation of his Voice, were Indications of the Intenſeneſs of his Mind. Love to Souls will make Preachers lively. 2. His Deſire that all might take Notice, and take hold of this Invitation. He *ſtood and cried*, that he might the better be heard, for this is what every one that hath Ears is concern'd to hear. Goſpel *Truth* ſeeks no Corners, becauſe it fears no Trials. The Heathen Oracles were deliver'd clandeſtinely by them that *peeped and mutter'd*; but the Oracles of the Goſpel were proclaimed by one that *ſtood and cried.* How ſad is the Caſe of Man, that he muſt be *importun'd* to be happy, and how wonderful the Grace of Chriſt, that he will *importune* him! *Ho! every one*, Iſa. 55. 1.

3. The Invitation itſelf, which is, (1.) Very general; if *any Man* thirſt, whoever he be, he is invited to Chriſt. Be he high or low, rich or poor, young or old, bond or free, Jew or Gentile. (2.) Very *gracious*; *If any Man thirſt, let him come to me and drink.* If any Man deſires to be truly and eternally happy, let him apply himſelf to me, and be ruled by me, and I will undertake to make him ſo.

(1.) The Perſons invited are ſuch as *thirſt*, which may be underſtood, either, 1. Of the *Indigence* of their Caſes; either as to their *outward* Condition: If any Man be deſtitute of the Comforts of this Life, or fatigu'd with the Croſſes of it, let his Poverty and Afflictions draw him to Chriſt, for that Peace which the World can neither give nor take away: Or, as to their *inward* State, if any Man want ſpiritual Bleſſings, he may be ſupplied with me. Or, 2. Of the *Inclination* of their Souls, and their Deſires towards a ſpiritual Happineſs; If any Man hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, that is, truly deſire the good Will of God towards him, and the good Work of God in him.

(2.) The Invitation itſelf, *Let him come to me.* Let him not go to the Ceremonial Law, which would neither *pacify* the Conſcience, nor *purify it*, and therefore could not make the *Comers thereunto perfect*, Heb. 10. 1. Nor let him go to the heathen Philoſophy, that doth but beguile Men, lead them into a Wood, and leave them there; but let him *go to Chriſt*, admit his Doctrine, ſubmit to his Diſcipline, believe in him; come to him as the Fountain of living Waters, the Giver of all Comfort.

(3.) The Satisfaction promis'd; let him come *and drink*, he ſhall have what he comes for, and abundantly more; ſhall have that which will not only *refreſh*, but *repleniſh* a Soul that deſires to be happy.

4. A gracious Promiſe annexed to this gracious Call, *v.* 38. *He that believes on me, out of his Belly ſhall flow*——

1. See here what it is to come to Chriſt. 'Tis *to believe on him, as the Scripture hath ſaid*; 'tis to receive and entertain him as he is offer'd to us in the Goſpel. We muſt not frame a Chriſt according to our Fancy, but believe in a Chriſt according to the Scripture.

2. See how thirſty Souls that come to Chriſt ſhall be made *to drink*; *Iſrael* that believed *Moſes*, drank of the *Rock that follow'd them*, the Streams followed; but Believers drank of a Rock *in them*, Chriſt *in them*; he is in them a *Well of living Water*, John 4. 14. Proviſion is made not only for their *preſent* Satisfaction, but for their *continual perpetual* Comfort. Here is, (1.) *Living Water*, *running* Water, which the *Hebrew* Language calls *living*, becauſe ſtill in Motion. The Graces and Comforts of the Spirit are compared to *living*, meaning running *Water*, becauſe they are the active quickening Principles of ſpiritual Life, and the Earneſts and Beginnings of eternal Life. See *Jer.* 2. 13. (2.) *Rivers* of living Water, which notes both Plenty and Conſtancy. The Comfort flows in both *plentifully* and *conſtantly* as a River; ſtrong as a Stream to bear down the Oppoſitions of Doubts and Fears. There is a Fulneſs in Chriſt of Grace for Grace. (3.) Theſe flow out *of his Belly*, i. e. out of his Heart and Soul. That's the Subject of the Spirit's working, and the Seat of his Government. There *gracious Principles* are planted, and out of the Heart in which the Spirit dwells, flow the *Iſſues of Life*, Prov. 4. 23. There divine Comforts are lodged, and the *Joy* that a *Stranger doth not intermeddle with. He that believes, has the Witneſs in himſelf*, 1 John 5. 10. *Sat lucis intus.*

Obſerve further, Where there are *Springs* of Grace and Comfort in the Soul, they will *ſend forth Streams. Out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers.* (1.) That Grace and Comfort will *evidence itſelf.* Good Affections will produce good Actions, and a holy Heart will be ſeen in a holy Life; the Tree is known by its Fruits, and the Fountain by its Streams. (2.) It will *communicate itſelf* for the Benefit of others; a good Man is a common Good. His *Mouth* is a *Well of Life*, Prov. 10. 11. It is not enough that we *drink Waters out of our own Ciſtern*, that we ourſelves take the Comfort of the Grace given us, but we muſt let our *Fountains* be *diſpers'd abroad*, Prov. 5. 15, 16.

Theſe Words, *as the Scripture hath ſaid*, ſeem to refer to ſome Promiſe in the Old Teſtament to this Purpoſe, and there are many; as that God would *pour out* his Spirit, which is a Metaphor borrow'd from Waters, *Prov.* 1. 23. *Joel* 2. 28. *Iſa.* 44. 3. *Zech.* 12. 10. That the *dry Land ſhould* become *Springs of Water*, Iſa. 41. 18. That there ſhould be *Rivers in the Deſart*, Iſa. 43. 19. That gracious Souls ſhould be like *a Spring of Water*, Iſa. 58. 11. and the Church a *Well of living Water*, Cant. 4. 15. And here may be an Alluſion to the Waters iſſuing out of *Ezekiel*'s Temple, *Ezek.* 47. 1. compare *Rev.* 22. 1. and ſee *Zech.* 14. 8. Dr. *Lightfoot* and others tell us, 'twas a Cuſtom of the *Jews*, which they received by Tradition, on *the laſt Day of the Feaſt* of Tabernacles, to have a Solemnity, which they call'd *Libatio Aquæ*, The Pouring out of Water. They fetched a Golden Veſſel of the Water from the Pool of *Siloam*, brought it into the Temple with Sound of Trumpet and other Ceremonies, and upon the Aſcent to the Altar, pour'd it out before the Lord with all poſſible Expreſſions of Joy. Some of their Writers make the Water to ſignify *the Law*, and refer to *Iſa.* 12. 3. and 55. 1. Others, *the holy Spirit.* And 'tis thought our Saviour might here allude to this Cuſtom. Believers ſhall have the Comfort, not of a Veſſel of Water fetched from a Pool, but of a River flowing from themſelves. The Joy of the Law, and the pouring out of the Water, which ſignify'd that, is not to be compar'd with the Joy of the Goſpel in the Wells of Salvation.

5. Here's the Evangeliſt's Expoſition of this Promiſe, *v.* 39. *This ſpake he of the Spirit*; not of any outward Advantages

accruing to Believes, as perhaps ſome miſunderſtood him, but of the Gifts, Graces, and Comforts of the Spirit: See how Scripture is the beſt Interpreter of Scripture.

Obſerve, 1. It is promiſed to *all that believe* on Chriſt, that they ſhall *receive the Holy Ghoſt*. Some receiv'd his miraculous Gifts, *Mark* 16. 17, 18. all receive his ſanctifying Graces. The Gift of the Holy Ghoſt is one of the great Bleſſings promiſed in the New Covenant, *Acts* 2. 39. and if *promis'd*, no doubt *perform'd* to all that have an Intereſt in that Covenant.

2. The Spirit dwelling and working in Believers, is as a *Fountain of living*, running *Water*, out of which plentiful Streams flow, cooling and cleanſing as Water, mollifying and moiſtening as Water, making them fruitful, and others joyful; ſee *John* 3. 5. When the Apoſtles ſpoke ſo *fluently* of the Things of God as the Spirit gave them Utterance, *Acts* 2. 4. and afterwards preach'd and wrote the Goſpel of Chriſt with ſuch a *Flood* of Divine Eloquence, then this was fulfilled, *out of his Belly ſhall flow Rivers*.

3. This Plentiful Effuſion of the Spirit was yet the Matter of a Promiſe; for *the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe Jeſus was not yet glorified*. See here,

1. That *Jeſus was not yet glorified*. It was certain he ſhould be glorified, and he was ever worthy of all Honour, but he was as yet in a State of Humiliation and Contempt. He had never forfeited the Glory he had before all Worlds, nay, he had *merited* a further Glory; and beſides his *Hereditary* Honours, might claim the *Atchievement* of a *Mediatorial* Crown, and yet all this is in Reverſion. Jeſus is now *upheld*, Iſa. 42. 1. is now ſatisfied, *Iſa.* 53. 11. is now juſtified, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. but he is *not yet glorified*. And if Chriſt muſt wait for his Glory, let not us think much to wait for ours.

2. That *the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given*: οὔπω γὰρ ἦν πνεῦμα ἅγιον, *For the Holy Ghoſt was not yet*. The Spirit of God was from Eternity, for in the beginning he *mov'd upon the Face of the Waters*. He was in the Old Teſtament Prophets and Saints, and *Zachary* and *Elizabeth* were both *fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt*. This therefore muſt be underſtood of that eminent, plentiful and general Effuſion of the Spirit which was promiſed, *Joel* 2. 28. and accompliſh'd, *Acts* 2. 1. *The Holy Ghoſt was not yet given* in that viſible manner that was intended. If we compare the clear Knowledge, and ſtrong Grace of the Diſciples of Chriſt themſelves after that Day of *Pentecoſt*, with their Darkneſs and Weakneſs before, we ſhall underſtand in what Senſe *the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given*; the Earneſts and Firſt-fruits of the Spirit were given, but the full Harveſt was not yet come: That which is moſt properly call'd the *Diſpenſation of the Spirit*, did not yet commence. The *Holy Ghoſt was not yet given* in ſuch Rivers of living Water, as ſhould iſſue forth to water the whole Earth, even the *Gentile* World; not in the *Gifts of Tongues*, to which perhaps this Promiſe principally refers.

3. That the Reaſon why *the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given*, was becauſe *Jeſus was not yet glorified*. (1.) The Death of Chriſt is ſometimes called his Glorification, *John* 13. 31. for in his Croſs he conquer'd and triumph'd. Now the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt was purchas'd by the Blood of Chriſt; that was the *valuable Conſideration* upon which the *Grant* was grounded, and therefore till that *Price* was *paid* (tho' many other Gifts were beſtowed upon its being *ſecur'd* to be paid) the Holy Ghoſt was not given. (2.) There was not ſo much need of the Spirit, while Chriſt was himſelf here upon Earth, as there was when he was gone, to ſupply the Want of him. (3.) The giving of the Holy Ghoſt was to be both an *Anſwer* to Chriſt's *Interceſſion*, John 14. 16. and an *Act* of his *Dominion*; and therefore till he is glorified, and enters upon both theſe, the Holy Ghoſt is not given. (4.) The Converſion of the *Gentiles* was the glorifying of Jeſus. When certain *Greeks* began to enquire after Chriſt, he ſaid, *Now is the Son of Man glorified*, John 12. 23. Now the Time for that was not yet come, when the Goſpel ſhould be propagated in the Nations, and therefore there was as yet no occaſion for the *Gift of Tongues*, that *River of living Water*. But, obſerve, tho' the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, yet he was *promis'd*; 'twas now the great *Promiſe of the Father*, Acts 1. 4. Tho' the Gifts of Chriſt's Grace are *long deferr'd*, yet they are *well ſecur'd*; and while we are waiting for the Good promiſed, we have the Promiſe to live upon, which *ſhall ſpeak and ſhall not lye*.

Secondly, The Conſequents of this Diſcourſe; what Entertainment it met with; in general, it occaſioned Differences, *v.* 43. *There was a Diviſion among the People becauſe of him*. There was *a Schiſm*, ſo the Word is; there were Diverſities of Opinions, and thoſe manag'd with Heat and Contention: Various Sentiments, and thoſe ſuch as ſet them at *variance*. Think we that Chriſt came to ſend Peace, that all would unanimouſly embrace his Goſpel, no, but the Effect of the Preaching of his Goſpel would be *Diviſion*, for *while* ſome are *gather'd to it*, others will be *gather'd againſt it*; and this will put Things into a *ferment*, as here; but this is no more the fault of the Goſpel, than it is the fault of a wholeſome Medicine, that it ſtirs up the *peccant* Humours in the Body, in order to the Diſcharge of them. Obſerve what the Debate was.

1. Some were *taken with him*, and well affected to him. *Many of the People when they heard this ſaying*, heard him with ſuch Compaſſion and Kindneſs invite poor Sinners to him, and with ſuch Authority engage to make them happy, they could not but think highly of him. (1.) Some of them ſaid, *Of a truth this is the Prophet*, that Prophet which *Moſes* ſpake of to the Fathers who ſhould be *like unto him*: Or, this is *the Prophet*, who, according to the received Notions of the *Jewiſh* Church, is to be the Harbinger and Forerunner of the *Meſſiah*; or, *This is truly a Prophet*, one divinely inſpired, and ſent of God. (2.) Others went further, and ſaid, *This is the Chriſt*, v. 41. not the *Prophet* of the Meſſiah, but the *Meſſiah* himſelf. The *Jews* had at this Time a more than ordinary expectation of the Meſſiah, which made them ready to ſay upon every occaſion, *Lo here is Chriſt*, or *lo he is there*; and this ſeems to be only the Effect of ſome ſuch confus'd and floating Notions, which catched at the firſt Appearance, for we do not find that theſe People became his Diſciples and Followers; a good Opinion of Chriſt is far ſhort of a lively Faith in Chriſt; many give Chriſt a good Word, that give him no more. Theſe here ſaid, *This is the Prophet*, and *this is the Chriſt*, but could not perſuade themſelves to leave all and follow him; and ſo this their Teſtimony to *Chriſt*, was but a Teſtimony *againſt themſelves*.

2. Others were *prejudic'd againſt him*. No ſooner was this great Truth ſtarted, That *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, but immediately it was contradicted, and argued againſt; and this one Thing, that his Riſe and Original was (as they took it for granted) out of *Galilee*, was thought enough to anſwer all the Arguments for his being the Chriſt. For, *ſhall Chriſt come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture ſaid, That Chriſt comes of the Seed of David?*

See here, (1.) A laudable Knowledge of the Scripture. They were ſo far in the right, that the *Meſſiah* was to be a *Rod out of the Stem of* Jeſſe, *Iſa.* 11. 1. That out of *Bethlehem* ſhould *ariſe the Governour*, Mic. 5. 2. This even the common People knew by the traditional Expoſitions which their Scribes gave them. Perhaps theſe People, who had theſe Scriptures ſo ready to object againſt Chriſt, were not alike knowing in other Parts of Holy Writ, but had had theſe put into their Mouths by their Leaders, to fortify their Prejudices againſt Chriſt. Many that eſpouſe ſome corrupt Notions, and ſpend their Zeal in defence of them, ſeem to be very ready in the Scriptures, when indeed they know little more than thoſe Scriptures which they have been taught to *pervert*.

(2.) A culpable Ignorance of our Lord Jeſus. They ſpeak of it as certain, and paſt diſpute, that *Jeſus was in Galilee*, whereas by enquiring of himſelf, or his Mother, or his Diſciples, or by conſulting the Genealogies of the Family of *David*, or the Regiſter at *Bethlehem*, they might have known, that he was the Son of *David*, and a Native of *Bethlehem*; but *this they willingly are ignorant of*. Thus groſs Falſhoods in Matters of Fact concerning Perſons and Things, are often taken up by prejudiced and partial Men, and great Reſolves founded upon them, even in the ſame Place, and the ſame Age, wherein the Perſons live, and the Things are done, while the Truth might eaſily be found out.

3. Others were *enrag'd againſt him*, and they *would have taken him*, v. 44. Tho' what he ſaid was moſt ſweet and gracious, yet they were exaſperated againſt him for it: Thus did our Maſter ſuffer ill, for ſaying and doing well. *They would have taken him*; they hoped ſomebody or other would ſeize him, and if they had thought no one elſe would, they would have done it themſelves: They *would have taken him*, but no Man *laid Hands on him*, being reſtrain'd by an inviſible Power, becauſe his Hour was not come. As the Malice of Chriſt's Enemies is always *unreaſonable*, ſo ſometimes the Suſpenſion of it is *unaccountable*.

45 ¶ Then came the officers to the chief prieſts and phariſees; and they ſaid unto them, Why have ye not brought him? 46 The officers anſwered, Never man ſpake like this man. 47 Then anſwered them the Phariſees, Are ye alſo deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers, or of the Phariſees believed on him? 49 But this people who knoweth not the law, are curſed. 50 Nicodemus ſaith unto them, (he that came to Jeſus by night, being one of them) 51 Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doth? 52 They anſwered, and ſaid unto him, Art thou alſo of Galilee? Search and look: for out of Galilee ariſeth no prophet. 53 And every Man went unto his own Houſe.

The Chief Prieſts and Phariſees are here in a cloſe Cabal, contriving how to ſuppreſs Chriſt; tho' this was the *great Day of the Feaſt*, they attended not the religious Services of the Day, but left that to the Vulgar, to whom it was common for thoſe great Eccleſiaſticks to conſign and turn over the Buſineſs of Devotion, while they thought themſelves better employed in the Affairs of Church Policy. They ſat in the Council Chamber, expecting Chriſt to be brought a Priſoner to them, they having iſſued out Warrants for the apprehending of him, *v.* 32. Now here we are told,

Firſt, What paſs'd between them and their own Officers, who returned without him, *re infectâ*. Obſerve,

1. The Reproof they gave the Officers for not executing the Warrant they gave them; *Why have ye not brought him?* He appear'd publickly, the People were many of 'em diſguſted, and would have aſſiſted them in taking him; this was *the laſt Day of the Feaſt*, and they would not have ſuch another Opportunity; why then did you neglect your Duty? It vexed them that thoſe who were their own Creatures, who depended on them, and on whom they depended, into whoſe Minds they had inſtill'd Prejudices againſt Chriſt, ſhould thus diſappoint them. *Note*, Miſchievous Men fret that they cannot do the Miſchief they would, *Pſal.* 112. 10. *Neh.* 6. 16.

2. The Reaſon which the Officers gave for the Non-execution of their Warrant, *v.* 46. *Never Man ſpake like this Man.* Now, 1. This was a very great Truth, that *never any Man ſpake with* that Wiſdom, and Power, and Grace, that convincing Clearneſs, and that charming Sweetneſs wherewith Chriſt ſpoke; none of the Prophets, no not *Moſes* himſelf. 2. The very Officers that were ſent to take him, were taken with him, and acknowledg'd this. Tho' 'tis likely they were Men that had no quick Senſe of Reaſon or Eloquence, and 'tis certain had no Inclination to think well of Jeſus, yet ſo much *Self-evidence* was there in what Chriſt ſaid, that they could not but prefer him before all thoſe that ſate in *Moſes*'s Seat. Thus Chriſt was preſerv'd by the Power God has upon the Conſciences even of bad Men. 3. They ſaid this to their Lords and Maſters, who could not endure to hear any Thing that tended to the Honour of Chriſt, and yet could not avoid hearing this; Providence order'd it ſo, that this ſhould be ſaid to them, that it might be a Vexation in their Sin, and an Aggravation of their Sin: Their own Officers are Witneſſes againſt them, who could not be ſuſpected to be biaſs'd in favour of Chriſt. This Teſtimony of theirs ſhould have made them reflect upon themſelves with this Thought, Do we know what we are doing, when we are hating and perſecuting one that ſpeaks ſo admirably well?

3. The Phariſees endeavour to ſecure their Officers to their Intereſt, and to beget in them Prejudices againſt Chriſt, whom they ſaw them begin to be well affected to; to prevent which, they ſuggeſt Two Things.

1. That if they embrace the Goſpel of Chriſt, they will *deceive themſelves*; *v.* 47. *Are ye alſo deceived?* Chriſtianity has from its firſt Riſe been repreſented to the World as a great Cheat upon it, and they that embrac'd it as Men *deceiv'd*, then when they began to be *undeceiv'd*. They that look'd for a *Meſſiah* in external Pomp, thought them deceiv'd who believ'd in a Meſſiah that appear'd in Poverty and Diſgrace; but the Event declares, that none were ever more ſhamefully deceiv'd, nor put a greater Cheat upon themſelves, than thoſe who promis'd themſelves worldly Wealth, and ſecular Dominion with the Meſſiah. Obſerve what a *Complement* the Phariſees put upon theſe Officers, *Are ye alſo deceiv'd?* What! Men of your Senſe, and Thought, and Figure; Men that know better Things than to be impoſed upon by every Pretender, and upſtart Teacher? They endeavour to prejudice them againſt Chriſt, by perſuading 'em to think well of themſelves.

2. That they will *diſparage themſelves*. Moſt Men, even in their Religion, are willing to be govern'd by the Example of thoſe of the *firſt Rank*; theſe Officers therefore, whoſe Preferments, ſuch as they were, gave them a *Senſe of Honour*, are deſired to conſider,

1. That if they become Diſciples of Chriſt, they go contrary to thoſe who were Perſons of Quality and Reputation; *Have any of the Rulers, or of the Phariſees believ'd on him?* You know they have not, and you ought to be bound up by their Judgment, and to *believe* and *do* in Religion according to the Will of your Superiors; will you be wiſer than they? Some of the Rulers did embrace Chriſt, *Mat.* 9. 18. *John* 4. 53. and more believed in him, but wanted Courage to confeſs him, *John* 12. 42. But when the Intereſt of Chriſt runs low in the World, 'tis common for its Adverſaries to repreſent it as lower than really it is. But it was too true, that few, very few of them did. *Note*, 1. The Cauſe of Chriſt hath ſeldom had Rulers and Phariſees on its Side. It needs not ſecular Supports, nor propoſes ſecular Advantages, and therefore neither courts, nor is courted by the great Men of this World: *Self-denial*, and the *Croſs*, are hard Leſſons to *Rulers* and *Phariſees*. 2. This has confirm'd many in their Prejudices againſt Chriſt and his Goſpel, that the Rulers and Phariſees have been no Friends to them. Shall *ſecular* Men pretend to be more concern'd about *ſpiritual* Things, than ſpiritual Men themſelves? Or to ſee further into Religion than thoſe who make its Study their Profeſſion? If *Rulers* and *Phariſees* do not believe in Chriſt, they that do believe in him, will be the moſt ſingular, unfaſhionable, ungenteel People in the World, and quite out of the way of Preferment; thus are People fooliſhly ſway'd by *external Motives*, in Matters of *eternal Moment*, are willing to be damn'd for Faſhion ſake, and to go to Hell in a Compliment to the *Rulers* and *Phariſees*.

2. That they will link themſelves with the deſpicable, vulgar Sort of People, *v.* 49. *But this People who know not the Law are curſed*; meaning eſpecially, thoſe that were well-affected to the Doctrine of Chriſt. Obſerve,

1. How ſcornfully and diſdainfully they call them; *this People.* 'Tis not, λαὸς, this *Lay-People*, diſtinguiſh'd from them that were the Clergy, but ὄχλος οὗτος, this *Rabble People*, this pitiful, ſcandalous, ſcoundrel People, whom they diſdained to *ſet with the Dogs of their Flock*, tho' God had ſet them with the Lambs of his. If they mean the *Commonalty of the* Jewiſh *Nation*, they were the Seed of *Abraham*, and in covenant with God, and not to be ſpoken of with ſuch Contempt: The Church's common Intereſts are betray'd, when any one Part of it ſtudies to render the other mean and deſpicable. If they mean the *Followers of Chriſt*, tho' they were generally Perſons of ſmall Figure, and Fortune, yet by owning Chriſt, they diſcover'd ſuch a Sagacity, Integrity, and Intereſt in the Favours of Heaven, as made them truly great and conſiderable. *Note*, As the Wiſdom of God hath often choſen baſe Things, and Things which are deſpiſed, ſo the Folly of Men has commonly debas'd and deſpis'd thoſe whom God has choſen.

2. How unjuſtly they reproach them as ignorant of the Word of God; they *know not the Law*; as if none knew the Law but thoſe that knew it *from them*; and no Scripture-Knowledge were current, but what came out of their Mint; and as if none knew the Law, but ſuch as were obſervant of their Canons and Traditions. Perhaps many of thoſe whom they thus deſpis'd, *knew the Law*, and the Prophets too, better than they did. Many a plain, honeſt, unlearned Diſciple of Chriſt, by Meditation, Experience, Prayers, and eſpecially Obedience, attains to a more clear, ſound, and uſeful Knowledge of the Word of God, than ſome great Scholars with all their Wit and Learning: Thus *David* came to underſtand *more than the Ancients*, and *all his Teachers*, Pſal. 119. 99, 100. If the common People did not *know the Law*, yet the chief Prieſts and Phariſees of all Men ſhould not have upbraided them with it; for whoſe Fault was it but theirs, who ſhould have *taught them better*; but inſtead of that, *took away the Key of Knowledge*? Luke 11. 52.

3. How magiſterially they pronounce Sentence upon them; they are *curſed*; hateful to God, and all wiſe Men; ἐπικατάρατοι, an *execrable* People. 'Tis well their ſaying they were curſed did not make them ſo, for the *Curſe cauſleſs ſhall not come.* It is a Uſurpation of God's Prerogative, as well as great Uncharitableneſs, to ſay of any particular Perſons, much more of any Body of People, that they are Reprobates: We are unable to *try*, and therefore unfit to condemn, and our Rule is, *Bleſs and Curſe not.* Some think they mean no more, but they are *apt to be deceiv'd*, and *made Fools of*; but they uſe this odious Word, they are *curſed*, to expreſs their own Indignation, and to frighten their Officers from having any Thing to do with them: thus the Language of Hell in our prophane Age, calls every Thing that is diſpleaſing, *curſed*, and *damn'd*, and *confounded*. Now for ought appears, theſe Officers had their Convictions baffled, and ſtifled by theſe Suggeſtions, and they never enquire further after Chriſt; one Word from a *Ruler* or *Phariſee*, will ſway more with many, than the true Reaſon of Things, and the great Intereſts of their Souls.

Secondly, What paſs'd between them and *Nicodemus* a Member of their own Body, *v.* 50, &c. Obſerve,

1. The Juſt and rational Objection which *Nicodemus* made againſt their Proceedings. Even in their corrupt and wicked *Sanhedrin*, God left not himſelf quite *without* Witneſs againſt their Enmity; nor was the Vote againſt Chriſt carried *nemine contradicente*. Obſerve,

1. Who it was that appear'd againſt them; it was *Nicodemus*, *He that came to Jeſus by Night being one of them*, *v.* 50. Obſerve concerning him, 1. That tho' he had been with Jeſus, and taken him for his Teacher, yet he retained his Place in the Council, and his Vote among them: Some impute this to his *Weakneſs* and Cowardice, and think it was his Fault that he did not quit his Place; but Chriſt had never ſaid to him, *follow me*, elſe he would have done as others, that left all to follow him: therefore it ſeems rather to have been his *Wiſdom*, not preſently to throw up his Place, becauſe there he might have Opportunity of ſerving Chriſt and his Intereſt, and ſtemming the Tide of the *Jewiſh* Rage, which perhaps he did more than we are aware of. He might there be as *Huſhai* among *Abſalom*'s Counſellors, inſtrumental to *turn their Counſels into Fooliſhneſs.* Tho' we muſt in no Caſe deny our Maſter, yet we may wait for an Opportunity of confeſſing him to the beſt Advantage. God has his Remnant among all Sorts; and many times finds, or puts, or makes ſome good in the worſt Places and Societies: There was *Daniel* in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Court, and *Nehemiah* in *Artaxerxes*'s. 2. That tho' at firſt he came to Jeſus *by Night* for fear of being known, and ſtill continued in his Poſt, yet when there was occaſion, he boldly appeared in defence of Chriſt, and oppoſed the whole Council that were ſet againſt him. Thus many Believers, who at firſt were timorous, and ready to *flee at the ſhaking of a Leaf*, have at length by Divine Grace grown courageous, and able to *laugh at the ſhaking of a Spear.* Let none juſtify the diſguiſing of their Faith, by the Example of *Nicodemus*, unleſs like him they be ready upon the firſt Occaſion openly to appear in the Cauſe of Chriſt, tho' they ſtand alone in it; for ſo *Nicodemus* did here, and *John* 19. 39.

2. What he alledg'd againſt their Proceedings, *v.* 51. *Doth our Law judge any Man before it hear him*, (ἀκούσῃ παρ' αὐτοῦ, *hear for himſelf*) and *know what he doth?* By no means, nor doth the Law of any civiliz'd Nation allow it. Obſerve,

(1.) He prudently argues from the Principles of their own Law, and an unconteſtable Rule of Juſtice, that no Man is to be condemn'd *unheard.* Had he urged the Excellency of Chriſt's Doctrine, or the Evidence of his Miracles, or repeated to them his Divine Diſcourſe with him, *chap.* 3. it had been but to *caſt Pearls before Swine,* who would *trample them under their Feet,* and would *turn again and rent him*; therefore he waves them.

(2.) Whereas they had reproached the People, eſpecially the Followers of Chriſt as *ignorant of the Law*; he here tacitly retorts the Charge upon themſelves, and ſhews how ignorant they were of ſome of the firſt Principles of the Law, ſo unfit were they to give Law to others.

(3.) The Law is here ſaid to *judge* and *hear,* and *know*; when Magiſtrates that govern, and are govern'd by it, *judge,* and *hear,* and *know:* for they are the *Mouth of the Law,* and whatſoever they bind and looſe according to the Law, is juſtly ſaid to be bound and looſed by the Law.

(4.) It is highly fit that none ſhould come under the *Sentence* of the Law till they have firſt, by a fair Trial, undergone the *Scrutiny* of it. Judges, when they receive the Complaints of the Accuſer, muſt always reſerve in their Minds room for the Defence of the Accuſed; for they have two Ears, to mind them to hear both Sides; this is ſaid to be the manner of the *Romans,* Acts 25. 18. The Method of our Law is *Oyer* and *Terminer,* firſt to *hear,* and then to *determine.*

(5.) Perſons are to be judg'd not by what is *ſaid* of them, but by what they *do*; *our Law* will not aſk what Mens Opinions are of them, or Out-cries againſt them, but what have they done? What *Overt Acts* can they be convicted of? Sentence muſt be given, *ſecundum allegata & probata.* Facts, and not Faces, muſt be known in Judgment; and the *Scale* of Juſtice muſt be uſed before the *Sword* of Juſtice.

Now we may ſuppoſe the Motion *Nicodemus* made in the Houſe upon this, was, That Jeſus ſhould be deſir'd to come and give them an Account of Himſelf and his Doctrine, and they ſhould favour him with an impartial, unprejudic'd Hearing; but tho' none of them could gainſay his Maxim, none of them would ſecond his Motion.

2. What was ſaid to this Objection. Here's no direct Reply given to it, but when they could not reſiſt the Force of his Argument, they fell foul upon him, and what was to ſeek in *Reaſon,* they made up in Railing and Reproach. *Note,* 'Tis a ſign of a bad Cauſe, when Men cannot bear to *hear Reaſon,* and take it as an Affront to be minded of its Maxims: Whoever are *againſt Reaſon,* give Cauſe to ſuſpect that *Reaſon* is *againſt them.* See how they taunt him, *Art thou alſo of Galilee?* v. 52. Some think he was well enough ſerved for continuing among them, whom he knew to be Enemies to Chriſt, and for his ſpeaking no more on the behalf of Chriſt, than what he might have ſaid on behalf of the greateſt Criminal; that he ſhould not be condemn'd unheard. Had he ſaid, As for this Jeſus, I have heard him myſelf, and know he is a *Teacher come from God,* and you, in oppoſing him, fight againſt God, as he ought to have ſaid; he could not have been worſe abus'd, than he was for this feeble Effort of his Tenderneſs for Chriſt.

As to what they ſaid to *Nicodemus,* we may obſerve,

(1.) How *falſe* the Grounds of their arguing are; for, (1.) They ſuppoſe that Chriſt was of *Galilee,* and that was falſe, and if they would have been at the pains of an impartial Enquiry, they might have found it ſo. (2.) They ſuppoſe that becauſe moſt of his Diſciples were *Galileans,* they were all ſuch, whereas he had abundance of Diſciples in *Judea.* (3.) They ſuppoſe that out of *Galilee* no Prophet had *riſen,* and for this appeals to *Nicodemus*'s ſearch; yet this was falſe too, *Jonah* was of *Gath-hepher, Nahum* an *Elkoſhite,* both of *Galilee*: Thus do they *make Lyes their Refuge.*

(2.) How *abſurd* their Arguings were upon theſe Grounds, ſuch as were a Shame to *Rulers* and *Phariſees.* (1.) Is any Man of Worth and Virtue ever the worſe for the Poverty and Obſcurity of his Country. The *Galileans* were the *Seed* of *Abraham*; *Barbarians* and *Scythians* are the Seed of *Adam,* and *have we not all one Father*? (2.) Suppoſing no Prophet had riſen out of *Galilee,* yet it is not impoſſible that any ſhould ariſe thence? If *Elijah* was the firſt Prophet of *Gilead,* as perhaps he was; and if the *Gileadites* were call'd *Fugitives*; muſt it therefore be queſtion'd whether he were a Prophet or no?

3. The haſty Adjournment of the Court hereupon, they broke up the Aſſembly in Confuſion, and with Precipitation, and *every Man went to his own Houſe.* They met to take *Counſel together againſt the Lord, and his Anointed,* but they *imagined a vain Thing*; and not only he that ſits in Heaven laugh'd at them, but we may ſit on Earth and laugh at them too, to ſee all the Politicks of the cloſe Cabal broken to Pieces with one plain, honeſt Word. They were not willing to hear *Nicodemus,* becauſe they could not anſwer him. As ſoon as they perceiv'd they had one ſuch Man among them, they ſaw it was to no purpoſe to go on with their Deſign, and therefore put off the Debate to a more convenient Seaſon, when he was abſent. Thus the Counſel of the Lord is made to ſtand, in ſpite of the Devices in the Hearts of Men.

CHAP. VIII.

In this Chapter we have, 1. *Chriſt's evading the Snare which the* Jews *laid for him, in bringing to him a Woman taken in Adultery,* v. 1—11. 2. *Divers Diſcourſes, or Conferences, of his with the* Jews *that cavil'd at him, and ſought occaſion againſt him, and made every Thing be ſaid a Matter of Controverſy.* (1.) *Concerning his being the* Light of the World, *v.* 12—20. (2.) *Concerning the* Ruin *of the unbelieving* Jews, *v.* 21—30. (3.) *Concerning Liberty and Bondage,* v. 31—37. (4.) *Concerning his Father and their Father,* v. 38—47. (5.) *Here's his Diſcourſe in anſwer to their blaſphemous Reproaches,* v. 48—50. (6.) *Concerning the Immortality of Believers,* v. 51—59. *And in all this he endured the Contradiction of Sinners againſt himſelf.*

JESUS went unto the mount of Olives. 2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he ſat down, and taught them. 3 And the ſcribes and phariſees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had ſat her in the mids, 4 They ſay unto him, Maſter, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. 5 Now Moſes in the law commanded us, that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned: but what ſayeſt thou? 6 This they ſaid, tempting him, that they might have to accuſe him. But Jeſus ſtooped down, and with *his* finger wrote on the ground as though he heard them not. 7 So when they continued asking of him, he lift up himſelf, and ſaid unto them, He that is without ſin among you, let him firſt caſt a ſtone at her. 8 And again he ſtooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And they which heard *it,* being convicted by their own conſcience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldeſt, *even* unto the laſt: and Jeſus was left alone, and the woman ſtanding in the midſt. 10 When Jeſus had lift up himſelf, and ſaw none but the woman, he ſaid unto her, Woman, where are thoſe thine accuſers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She ſaid, No man, Lord. And Jeſus ſaid unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and ſin no more.

Tho' Chriſt was baſely abus'd in the foregoing Chapter, both by the Rulers, and by the People, yet here we have him ſtill at *Jeruſalem,* ſtill in the Temple; *how often would he have gather'd them.* Obſerve,

1. His Retirement in the Evening out of the Town, *v.* 1. *He went unto the Mount of Olives*; whether to ſome Friend's Houſe, or to ſome Booth pitch'd there, now at the Feaſt of Tabernacles, is not certain; whether he reſted there, or, as ſome think, continued all Night in Prayer to God, we are not told. But he went out of *Jeruſalem,* perhaps, becauſe he had never a Friend there that had either Kindneſs, or Courage enough to give him a Night's Lodging, while his Perſecutors had *Houſes* of their own to go to, *chap.* 7. 1. he could not ſo much as borrow a Place to lay his Head on, but he muſt go a Mile or two out of Town for. He retir'd (as ſome think) becauſe he would not expoſe himſelf to the Peril of a popular Tumult in the Night: 'Tis Prudence to go out of the way of Danger, whenever we can do it without going out of the way of Duty. In the Day-Time, when he had Work to do in the Temple, he willingly expoſed himſelf, and was under ſpecial Protection, *Iſa.* 49. 2. But in the Night, when he had not Work to do, he withdrew into the Country, and ſheltered himſelf there.

2. His return in the Morning to the Temple, and to his Work there, *v.* 2. Obſerve here,

(1.) What a diligent Preacher Chriſt was; *Early in the Morning he came again and taught.* Tho' he had been teaching the Day before, he taught again to-day: Chriſt was a *conſtant* Preacher, in Seaſon and out of Seaſon. Three Things are taken notice of here concerning Chriſt's Preaching. 1. The Time; *Early in the Morning.* Tho' he lodged out of Town, and perhaps had ſpent much of the Night in ſecret Prayer, yet he came *early.* When a Day's Work is to be done for God and Souls, 'tis good to begin betimes, and take the Day before us. 2. The Place, in the Temple; not ſo much becauſe it was a *conſecrated* Place, for then he would have choſen it at other Times, as becauſe it was now a *Place of Concourſe.* And he would hereby countenance ſolemn Aſſemblies for Religious Worſhip, and encourage People to come up to the Temple, for he had not yet left it deſolate. 3. His Poſture, he *ſat down* and taught, as one having Authority; and as one that intended to abide by it for ſome Time.

(2.) How diligently his Preaching was attended upon. *All the People came unto him*; and perhaps many of them were the Country People, who were this Day to return home from the Feaſt, and were deſirous to hear one Sermon more from the Mouth of Chriſt before they returned. They came to him, tho' he came *early.* They that *ſeek him early, ſhall find him.* Tho' the Rulers were diſpleas'd at thoſe that came to hear him, yet they would come; and *he taught them*, tho' they were angry at *him* too. Tho' there were few or none among them that were Perſons of any Figure, yet Chriſt bid them welcome, and taught them.

3. His dealing with thoſe that brought to them the *Woman taken in Adultery*; *tempting* him. The Scribes and Phariſees would not only not hear Chriſt patiently themſelves, but they diſturbed him when the People were attending on him. Obſerve here,

Firſt, The Caſe propos'd to him by the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, who herein contriv'd to pick a Quarrel with him, and bring him into a Snare, *v.* 3, 4, 5, 6.

1. They ſet the Priſoner to the Bar, *v.* 3. they brought him *a Woman taken in Adultery*; perhaps now lately taken, during the time of the Feaſt of Tabernacles, when it may be their dwelling in Booths, and their Feaſting and Joy might by wicked Minds, which corrupt the beſt things, be made Occaſions of Sin. Thoſe that were *taken in Adultery*, were by the Jewiſh Law to be put to Death, which the *Roman* Powers allow'd them the Execution of, and therefore ſhe was brought before the Eccleſiaſtical Court. Obſerve, ſhe was *taken in her Adultery*; tho' Adultery is a Work of Darkneſs, which the Criminals commonly take all the care they can to conceal, yet ſometimes 'tis ſtrangely brought to light. Thoſe that promiſe themſelves Secrecy in Sin, deceive themſelves. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* bring her to Chriſt, and ſet her in the midſt of the Aſſembly, as if they would leave her wholly to the Judgment of Chriſt, he having *ſate down* as a Judge upon the Bench..

2. They prefer an Indictment againſt her, *v.* 4. *Maſter, this Woman was taken in Adultery.* Here they call him *Maſter*, whom but the Day before, they had call'd a *Deceiver*; in hopes with their Flatteries to have enſnared him, as thoſe, *Luke* 20. 20. But tho' Men may be impos'd upon with Compliments, he that ſearcheth the Heart cannot.

(1.) The Crime for which the Priſoner ſtands indicted, is no leſs than *Adultery*; which even in the Patriarchal Age, before the Law of *Moſes*, was look'd upon as *an Iniquity to be puniſh'd by the Judges*, Job 31. 9, 11. *Gen.* 38. 24. The Phariſees, by their vigorous Proſecution of this Offender, ſeem'd to have a great Zeal againſt the Sin, when it appear'd afterwards that they themſelves were not free from it: nay, they were within *full of all Uncleanneſs*, Mat. 23. 27, 28. *Note*, It is common for thoſe that are indulgent to their own Sin, to be ſevere againſt the Sins of others.

(2.) The Proof of the Crime was from the notorious Evidence of the Fact; an unconteſtable Proof, ſhe was *taken in the Act*, ſo that there was no room left to plead not guilty; had ſhe not been taken in this Act, ſhe might have gone on to another; till her Heart had been perfectly hardned; but ſometimes it proves a Mercy to Sinners to have their Sin brought to light, that they may *do no more preſumptuouſly.* Better our Sin ſhou'd *ſhame* us, than *damn* us, and be ſet in order before us, for our Conviction, than for our Condemnation.

3. They produce *the Statute in this Caſe made and provided*, and upon which ſhe was indicted, *v.* 5. *Moſes* in the Law, commanded *that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned. Moſes* commanded that they ſhould be *put to Death*, Lev. 20. 10. Deut. 22. 22. but not that they ſhould be ſtoned, unleſs the Adultereſs was eſpouſed, not married, or was a Prieſt's Daughter, *Deut.* 22. 21. *Note*, Adultery is an exceeding ſinful Sin, for it is the Rebellion of a vile Luſt, not only againſt the Command, but againſt the Covenant of our God. It is the Violation of a Divine Inſtitution in Innocency, by the Indulgence of one of the baſeſt Luſts of Man in his Degeneracy.

4. They *pray his Judgment* in the Caſe: But *what ſayeſt thou?* who pretendeſt to be a Teacher come from God to repeal old Laws, and enact new ones; what haſt thou to ſay in this Caſe? If they had ask'd this Queſtion in Sincerity, with humble Deſire to know his Mind, it had been very commendable. They that are entruſted with the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, ſhould look up to Chriſt for Direction; but *this they ſaid tempting him, that they might have to accuſe him*, *v.* 6. (1.) If he ſhould confirm the Sentence of the Law, and let it take its Courſe, they would cenſure him as inconſiſtent with himſelf, he having receiv'd Publicans and Harlots, and with the Character of the *Meſſiah*, who ſhould be meek, and have Salvation, and proclaim a Year of Releaſe, and perhaps they would accuſe him to the *Roman* Governour, for countenancing the *Jews* in the Exerciſe of a judicial Power. But, (2.) If he ſhould acquit her, and give his Opinion that the Sentence ſhould not be executed, as they expected he would, they would repreſent him, 1. As an Enemy to the Law of *Moſes*, and as one that uſurp'd an Authority to correct and controul it, and would confirm that Prejudice againſt him, which his Enemies were ſo induſtrious to propagate, that he came to *deſtroy the Law and the Prophets.* 2. As a Friend to Sinners, and conſequently a Favourer of Sin; if he ſhould ſeem to connive at ſuch Wickedneſs, and let it go unpuniſhed, they would repreſent him as countenancing it; and being a Patron of Offences, if he were a Protector of Offenders; than which no Reflection could be more invidious upon one that profeſs'd the Strictneſs, Purity, and Buſineſs of a Prophet.

Secondly, The Method he took to reſolve this Caſe, and ſo to break this Snare.

1. He ſeem'd to ſlight it, and turn'd a deaf Ear to it, he *ſtooped down, and wrote on the Ground.* 'Tis impoſſible to tell, and therefore needleſs to ask what he wrote; but it is the only mention made in the Goſpels of Chriſt's Writings; *Euſebius* indeed ſpeaks of his writing to *Abgarus*, King of *Edeſſa.* Some think they have a Liberty of Conjecture what he wrote here. *Grotius* ſaith, 'twas ſome grave weighty Saying, and that it was uſual for wiſe Men, when they were thoughtful concerning any thing. to do ſo. *Jerom* and *Ambroſe* ſuppoſe he wrote, *Let the Names of theſe wicked Men be written in the Duſt.* Others this, *The Earth accuſeth the Earth, but the Judgment is mine.* Chriſt by this teacheth us to be ſlow to ſpeak, when difficult Caſes are propos'd to us, not quickly to ſhoot our Bolt; and when Provocations are given us, or we are banter'd; to pauſe and conſider before we reply; think twice before we ſpeak once: *The Heart of the Wiſe ſtudies to anſwer.* Our Tranſlation from ſome *Greek* Copies, which add, μὴ προσποιούμενος (tho' the moſt Copies have it not) gives this Account of the Reaſon of his writing on the Ground, *as tho' he heard them not.* He did, as it were, look another way, to ſhew that he was not willing to take notice of their Addreſs, ſaying in effect, *Who made me a Judge or a Divider?* It is ſafe in many Caſes to be deaf, to that which 'tis not ſafe to anſwer, *Pſal.* 38. 13. Chriſt would not have his Miniſters to be entangled in ſecular Affairs; let them rather employ themſelves in any lawful Studies, and fill up their Time with writing on the Ground, which no body will heed, than buſy themſelves in that which doth not belong to them. But when Chriſt ſeem'd, as tho' he heard them not, he made it appear, that he not only heard their Words, but knew their Thoughts.

2. When they importunately, or rather impertinently preſs'd him for an Anſwer, he turn'd the Conviction of the Priſoner upon the Proſecutors, *v.* 7.

1. They *continued asking him*, and his ſeeming not to take notice of them, made them the more vehement, for now they thought ſure enough they had run him aground, and that he could not avoid the Imputation of contradicting either the Law of *Moſes*, if he ſhould acquit the Priſoner, or his own Doctrine of Mercy and Pardon, if he ſhould condemn her; and therefore they puſh'd on their Appeal to him with Vigour: whereas they ſhould have conſtrued his Diſregard of them, as a Check to their Deſign, and an Intimation of them to *deſiſt*, as they tender'd their own Reputation.

2. At laſt he put them all to Shame and Silence with one Word, *He lift up himſelf*, awaking as one out of ſleep, *Pſal.* 78. 65. and *ſaid unto them, He that is without Sin among you, let him firſt caſt a Stone at her.*

1. Here Chriſt avoided the Snare which they laid for him, and effectually ſav'd his own Reputation. He neither reflected upon the Law, nor excus'd the Priſoner's Guilt; nor did he on the other hand encourage the Proſecution, or countenance their Heat; ſee the good Effect of Conſideration. When we cannot make our Point by ſteering a *direct Courſe*, 'tis good to *fetch a Compaſs.*

2. *In the Net which they ſpread is their own Foot taken.* They came with Deſign to accuſe him, but they were forced to accuſe themſelves. Chriſt owns 'twas fit the Priſoner ſhould be proſecuted, but appeals to their Conſciences, whether they were fit to be the Proſecutors.

1. He here refers to that Rule which the Law of *Moſes* preſcrib'd in the Execution of Criminals, that the *Hand of the Witneſſes muſt be firſt upon them*, Deut. 17. 7. as in the ſtoning of *Stephen*, Acts 7. 58. The Scribes, and Phariſees were the Witneſſes againſt this Woman. Now Chriſt puts it to them, whether according to their own Law they would dare to be the Executioners. Durſt they take away that Life with their Hands, which they were now taking away with their Tongues; would not their own Conſciences fly in their Faces if they did?

2. He builds upon an unconteſted Maxim in Morality, that it is very abſurd for Men to be zealous in puniſhing the Offences of others, while they are every whit as guilty themſelves, and they are no better than ſelf-condemn'd who judge others, and yet themſelves do the ſame thing. If there be any of you that is *without Sin*, i. e. without Sin of this Nature, that has not ſome time or other been guilty of Fornication or Adultery, let him caſt the firſt Stone at her. Not that Magiſtrates, who are conſcious of Guilt themſelves, ſhould therefore connive at others Guilt. But therefore, 1. Whenever we find fault with others, we ought to reflect upon ourſelves, and to be more ſevere againſt Sin in ourſelves than in others. 2. We ought to be favourable, tho' not to the Sins, yet to the Perſons of thoſe that offend, and to reſtore them with a *Spirit of Meekneſs*, conſidering ourſelves and our own corrupt Nature. *Aut ſumus, aut fuimus, vel poſſumus eſſe quod hic eſt.* Let this reſtrain us from *throwing Stones* at our Brethren, and proclaiming their Faults; *Let him that is without Sin*, begin ſuch Diſourſe as that, and then thoſe that are truly humbled for their own Sins, will bluſh at it, and be glad to *let it fall.*

3. Thoſe who are any way obliged to animadvert upon the Faults of others, are concerned to look well to themſelves, and keep themſelves pure ; *Mat.* 7.5. *Qui alterum incuſat probri, ipſum ſe intueri oportet.* The Snuffers of the Tabernacle were of *pure Gold.*

3. Perhaps he refers to the Trial of the ſuſpected Wife by the jealous Husband, with the Waters of Jealouſy. The Man was to bring her to the Prieſt, *Num.* 5. 15. as the Scribes and Phariſees brought this Woman to Chriſt. Now it was a received Opinion among the *Jews,* and confirmed by Experience, that if the Husband who brought his Wife to that Trial, had himſelf been at any Time guilty of Adultery, *Aquæ non explorant ejus Uxorem :* The bitter Water had no Effect upon the Wife. Come then, ſaith Chriſt, according to your own Tradition will I judge you, if you are without Sin, ſtand to the Charge, and let the Adultereſs be executed : but if not, tho' ſhe be *guilty,* while you that preſent her are equally ſo, according to your own Rule, ſhe ſhall be free.

4. In this he attended to the great Work which he came into the World about, and that was to bring Sinners to Repentance ; not to deſtroy, but ſo to ſave. He aim'd to bring, not only the Priſoner to Repentance, by ſhewing her his Mercy, but the Proſecutors too, by ſhewing them their Sins; they ſought to enſnare him, he ſought to convince and convert them. Thus *the Bloodthirſty hate the Upright, but the Juſt ſeek his Soul.*

3. Having given them this ſtartling Word, he left them to conſider of it, and *again ſtooped down, and wrote on the Ground,* *v.* 8. As when they made their Addreſs he ſeem'd to ſlight their Queſtion, ſo now he had given them an Anſwer, he ſlighted their Reſentment of it; not caring what they ſaid to it : nay, they needed not to make any Reply ; the Matter was lodged in their own Breaſts, let them make the beſt of it there. Or, he would not ſeem to wait for an Anſwer, leſt they ſhould on a ſudden juſtify themſelves, and then think themſelves bound in Honour to perſiſt in it ; but gives them time to pauſe, and to commune with their own Hearts. God ſaith, *I hearkened and heard,* Jer.8.6. Some *Greek* Copies here read, He *wrote on the Ground,* ἑνὸς ἑκάϛȣ αὐτῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας, *The Sins of every one of them* ; this he could do, for *he ſets our Iniquities before him* ; and this he will do, for he will *ſet them in Order* before us too ; he *ſeals up our Tranſgreſſions,* Job 14. 16. But he doth not write Mens Sins *in the Sand,* no, they are written as with a *Pen of Iron,* and the *Point of a Diamond,* Jer. 17. 1. never to be *forgotten* till they are *forgiven.*

4. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were ſo ſtrangely Thunder-ſtruck with the Word of Chriſt, that they let fall their Perſecution of Chriſt, whom they durſt no further tempt ; and their Proſecution of the Woman whom they durſt no longer accuſe ; *v.* 9. *They went out one by one.* (1.) Perhaps his Writing on the Ground frighten'd them, as the Hand-writing on the Wall frighten'd *Belſhazzar.* They concluded he was writing bitter things againſt them, writing their Doom : Happy they who have no reaſon to be afraid of Chriſt's Writing. (2.) However, what he ſaid frighten'd them, by ſending them to their own Conſciences, he had *ſhew'd them to themſelves,* and they were afraid if they ſhould ſtay till he lift up himſelf again, his next Word would *ſhew them to the World,* and ſhame them before Men, and therefore they thought it beſt to withdraw. They went out *one by one,* that they might go out *ſoftly,* and not by a noiſy Flight, diſturb Chriſt ; they gat them away by *Stealth,* as *People being aſham'd, ſteal away when they flee in Battle,* 2 Sam. 19. 3. The Order of their Departure is taken notice of, *beginning at the Eldeſt,* either becauſe they were moſt guilty, or firſt aware of the Danger they were in of being put to the Bluſh : And if the eldeſt quit the Field, and retreat ingloriouſly, no marvel if the younger follow them. Now ſee here,

(1.) The *Force* of the Word of Chriſt for the Conviction of Sinners : *They which heard it were convicted by their own Conſciences.* Conſcience is God's Deputy in the Soul, and one Word from him will ſet it on work, *Heb.* 4. 12. Thoſe that had been *old in Adulteries,* and long fix'd in a proud Opinion of themſelves, yet the eldeſt of them were here ſtartled by the Word of Chriſt, even *Scribes* and *Phariſees,* that were moſt conceited of themſelves, yet by the Power of Chriſt's Word are made to ſneak.

(2.) The *Folly* of Sinners under theſe Convictions, which appears in theſe Scribes and Phariſees. (1.) It is Folly for thoſe that are *under Convictions,* to make it their principal Care to *avoid ſhame,* as *Judah,* Gen. 38. 23. *leſt we be ſhamed.* Our Care ſhould be more to ſave our Souls, than to ſave our Credit. *Saul* evidenc'd his Hypocriſy, when he ſaid, *I have ſinned, yet now honour me I pray thee.* There's no way to *get the Honour* and Comfort of Penitents, but by *taking the Shame* of Penitents. (2.) It is folly for thoſe that are under Convictions, to contrive how to *ſhift off* their Convictions, and get rid of them. Theſe *Scribes* and *Phariſees* had the Wound *open'd,* and now they ſhould have been deſirous to have it *ſearch'd,* and then it might have been *heal'd,* but it was the Thing they *dreaded* and *declin'd.* (3.) It's Folly for thoſe that are under Convictions to *get away from Jeſus Chriſt,* as theſe here did, for he is the only one that can heal the Wounds of Conſcience, and ſpeak Peace to us. Thoſe that are *convicted* by their Conſciences, will be *condemned* by their Judge, if they be not *juſtified* by their Redeemer ; and will they then go from him ? To whom will they go ?

5. When the *Self-conceited* Proſecutors quitted the Field, and *fled for the ſame,* the *Self-condemning* Priſoner ſtood her Ground, with a Reſolution to abide by the Judgment of our Lord Jeſus. *Jeſus was left alone* from the Company of the Scribes and Phariſees, free from their Moleſtations, and the *Woman ſtanding in the midſt* of the Aſſembly that were attending on Chriſt's Preaching, where they ſet her, *v.* 3. ſhe did not ſeek to make her eſcape, tho' ſhe had Opportunity for it, but her Proſecutors had appealed unto Jeſus, and to him ſhe would go, on him ſhe would wait for her Doom. *Note,* Thoſe whoſe Cauſe is brought before our Lord Jeſus, will never have occaſion to remove it into any other Court, for he is the Refuge of Penitents. The Law which accuſes us, and calls for Judgment againſt us, is by the Goſpel of Chriſt made to withdraw, its Demands are anſwered, and its Clamours ſilenc'd by the Blood of Jeſus : Our Cauſe is lodged in the Goſpel-Court ; we are *left with Jeſus alone,* 'tis him only we have now to deal with, for to him all Judgment is committed ; let us therefore ſecure our Intereſt in him, and we are made for ever. Let his Goſpel *rule us,* and 'twill infallibly *ſave us.*

6. Here's the Concluſion of the Trial, and the Iſſue it was brought to, *v.* 10, 11. *Jeſus lift up himſelf, and he ſaw none but the Woman.* Tho' Chriſt may ſeem to take no notice of what is ſaid and done, but leave it to the *contending* Sons of Men to *deal it out among themſelves*; yet when the Hour of his Judgment is come, he will no longer keep Silence. When *David* had appealed to God, he prayed, *Lift up thyſelf,* Pſal. 7. 6. and 94. 2. The Woman, 'tis likely, ſtood *trembling* at the Bar, as one doubtful of the Iſſue. Chriſt was *without Sin,* and might caſt the firſt Stone ; but tho' none more ſevere than he againſt Sin, for he is infinitely Juſt and Holy, none more compaſſionate than he to Sinners, for he is infinitely Gracious and Merciful, and this poor Malefactor finds him ſo, now ſhe *ſtands upon her Deliverance.*

Here's the Method of Courts of Judicature obſerv'd :

1. The Proſecutors are call'd, *Where are thoſe thine Accuſers? Hath no Man condemned thee ?* Not but that Chriſt knew where they were, but he ask'd, that he might ſhame them who declin'd his Judgment, and encourage her who reſolv'd to abide by it. St. *Paul*'s Challenge is like this, *Who ſhall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect ?* Where are theſe their Accuſers ? The *Accuſer of the Brethren ſhall* be fairly *caſt out,* and all Indictments legally and regularly quaſhed.

2. They do not appear, when the Queſtion was ask'd, *Hath no Man condemned thee* ; ſhe ſaid, *No Man, Lord.* She ſpeaks reſpectfully to Chriſt, calls him *Lord,* but is ſilent concerning her Proſecutors, ſaith nothing in anſwer to that Queſtion which concerned them, *Where are thoſe thine Accuſers ?* Doth not triumph in their Retreat, or inſult over them, as Witneſſes againſt *themſelves,* not againſt *her.* If we hope to be forgiven by our Judge, we muſt forgive our Accuſers ; and if their Accuſations, how invidious ſoever, were the happy occaſion of awakening our Conſciences, we may eaſily *forgive them this Wrong.* But ſhe anſwered the Queſtion which concerned herſelf, *Has no Man condemned thee ?* True Penitents find it enough to give Account of themſelves to God, and will not undertake to give Account of other People.

3. The Priſoner is therefore diſcharg'd, *Neither do I condemn thee, go and ſin no more.* Conſider this,

1. As her Diſcharge from the temporal Puniſhment ; if they do not condemn thee to be *ſtoned to Death,* neither *do I.* Not that Chriſt came to diſarm the Magiſtrate of his Sword of Juſtice, or that it is his Will that Capital Puniſhments ſhould not be inflicted on Malefactors ; ſo far from that, the Adminiſtration of publick Juſtice is eſtabliſhed by the Goſpel, and made ſubſervient to Chriſt's Kingdom ; *by me Kings reign.* But Chriſt *would not condemn* this Woman, (1.) Becauſe it was *none of his Buſineſs,* he was no Judge, or Divider, and therefore would not intermeddle in ſecular Affairs. His *Kingdom* was *not of this World. Tractent Fabrilia Fabri.* (2.) Becauſe ſhe was proſecuted by thoſe that were *more guilty* than ſhe, and could not for ſhame inſiſt upon their Demand of Juſtice againſt her. This Law appointed the Hands of the Witneſſes to be firſt upon the Criminal, and afterward the Hands of all the People ; ſo that if they fly off, and do not *condemn* her, the Proſecution drops. The Juſtice of God in inflicting temporal Judgments, ſometimes takes notice of a *comparative Righteouſneſs,* and ſpares thoſe who are otherwiſe obnoxious, when the puniſhing of them would gratify thoſe that are worſe than they, *Deut.* 32. 26. But when Chriſt diſmiſs'd her, it was with this Caution, *Go and ſin no more.* Impunity emboldens Malefactors, and therefore thoſe who are guilty, and yet have found means to Eſcape the Edge of the Law, need not double their watch, *leſt Satan get Advantage* ; for the fairer the eſcape was, the fairer the Warning was, to go and ſin no more. They who help to ſave the Life of a Criminal, ſhould, as Chriſt here, help to ſave the Soul with this Caution.

2. As her Diſcharge from the Eternal Puniſhment. For Chriſt to ſay, I do not condemn thee, is in effect to ſay, I do forgive thee ; and the *Son of Man had Power on Earth to forgive Sins,*

Sins, and could upon good Grounds give this Abſolution; for as he knew the hardneſs and impenitent Hearts of the Proſecutors, and therefore ſaid that which would confound them, ſo he knew the Tenderneſs and ſincere Repentance of the Priſoner, and therefore ſaid that which would *comfort* her, as he did to that Woman that was a Sinner, ſuch a Sinner as this, who was likewiſe look'd upon with diſdain by a Phariſee, *Luke* 7. 48. *Thy Sins are forgiven thee, go in Peace.* So here, *Neither do I condemn thee. Note*, 1. They are truly happy whom Chriſt *doth not condemn*, for his Diſcharge is a ſufficient Anſwer to all other Challenges, they are all *coram non Judice.* 2. Chriſt will not condemn thoſe, who tho' they have ſinned will *go and ſin no more*, *Pſal.* 85. 8. *Iſa.* 55. 7. He will not take the Advantage he has againſt us for our former Rebellions, if we will but lay down our Arms and return to our Allegiance. 3. Chriſt's Favour to us in the Remiſſion of the Sins that are paſt, ſhould be a prevailing Argument with us to *go and ſin no more*, Rom. 6. 1, 2. Will not Chriſt condemn thee? Go then and ſin no more.

12 Then ſpake Jeſus again unto them, ſaying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life. 13 The Phariſees therefore ſaid unto him, Thou beareſt record of thy ſelf; thy record is not true. 14 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto them, Though I bear record of my ſelf, *yet* my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. 15 Ye judge after the fleſh, I judge no man. 16 And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that ſent me. 17 It is alſo written in your law, that the teſtimony of two men is true. 18 I am one that bear witneſs of my ſelf, and the Father that ſent me, beareth witneſs of me. 19 Then ſaid they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jeſus anſwered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father alſo. 20 Theſe words ſpake Jeſus in the treaſury as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come.

The reſt of this Chapter is taken up with Debates between Chriſt and *contradicting Sinners*, who cavil'd at the moſt gracious Words that proceeded out of his Mouth. 'Tis not certain whether theſe Diſputes were the ſame Day that the Adultereſs was diſcharg'd, 'tis probable they were, for the Evangeliſt mentions no other Day, and takes notice, *v.* 2. how early Chriſt began that day's Work. Tho' thoſe *Phariſees* that accus'd the Woman were abſconded, yet there were other Phariſees, *v.* 13. to confront Chriſt, who had Braſs enough in their Foreheads to keep them in Countenance, tho' ſome of their Party were put to ſuch a ſhameful Retreat; nay, perhaps that made them the more induſtrious to pick Quarrels with him, if poſſible, to retrieve the Reputation of their baffled Party.

In theſe Verſes we have,

1. A great Doctrine laid down, with the Application of it.

(1.) The Doctrine is, That *Chriſt is the Light of the World*; v. 12. *Then ſpake Jeſus again unto them*; tho' he had ſpoken a great deal to them to little purpoſe, and what he had ſaid was oppos'd, yet he *ſpake again*, for he *ſpeaketh once, yea twice*: They had turn'd a deaf Ear to what he ſaid, and yet he *ſpoke again to them*, ſaying, *I am the Light of the World. Note*, Jeſus Chriſt is the Light of the World. One of the *Rabbies* ſaith, *Light* is the Name of the *Meſſiah*, as it is written, *Dan.* 2. 22. *And Light dwelleth with him.* God is Light, and Chriſt is *the Image of the inviſible God*; God of Gods, Light of Lights. He was expected to be a *Light to lighten the Gentiles*, Luke 2. 22. and ſo the *Light of the World*, and not of the *Jewiſh* Church only. The viſible Light of the World is the Sun, and Chriſt is the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*: One Sun enlightens the whole World, ſo doth one Chriſt, and there needs no more. Chriſt's being the Light, ſpeaks, (1.) What he is in himſelf, moſt Excellent and Glorious. (2.) What he is to the World, the Fountain of Light, enlightening every Man. What a Dungeon would the World be without the Sun? ſo would it be without Chriſt, by whom *Light came into the World*, John 3. 19.

(2.) The Inference from this Doctrine is, *He that followeth me*, as a Traveller follows the Light in a dark Night, *ſhall not walk in Darkneſs*, but *ſhall have the Light of Life.* If Chriſt be the Light, then,

1. It is our Duty to *follow him*, to ſubmit ourſelves to his Conduct, and in every thing take Directions from him, in the way that leads to Happineſs. Many follow *falſe Lights*; there are *Ignes fatui* that lead them to Deſtruction, but Chriſt is the *true Light.* 'Tis not enough to *look at* this Light, and to *gaze* upon it, but we muſt follow it, believe in it, and walk in it, for 'tis a Light to *our Feet*, not *our Eyes* only.

2. It is the Happineſs of thoſe who follow Chriſt, that they *ſhall not walk in Darkneſs.* They ſhall not be left deſtitute of thoſe Inſtructions in the way of Truth, which are neceſſary to keep them from deſtroying Error, and thoſe Directions in the way of Duty, which are neceſſary to keep them from damning Sin. They ſhall have the *Light of Life*, that Knowledge and Enjoyment of God, which will be to them the Light of *ſpiritual* Life in this World, and of everlaſting Life in the other World, where there will be no Death nor Darkneſs. Follow Chriſt, and we ſhall undoubtedly be happy in both Worlds; Follow Chriſt, and we ſhall follow him to Heaven.

2. The Objection which the Phariſees made againſt this Doctrine, and it was very trifling and frivolous, *v.* 13. *Thou beareſt Record of thyſelf; thy Record is not true.* In this Objection they went upon the Suſpicion which we commonly have of Mens *Self-commendation*, which is concluded to be the native Language of *Self-love*, ſuch as we are all ready to condemn in others, but few are willing to own in themſelves. But in this Caſe the Objection was very unjuſt: For, (1.) they made that his Crime, and a Diminution to the Credibility of his Doctrine, which in the caſe of one who introduced a Divine Revelation was neceſſary and unavoidable. Did not *Moſes* and all the Prophets bear witneſs of themſelves, when they avouched themſelves to be God's Meſſengers? Did not the Phariſees ask *John* Baptiſt, what ſayeſt thou of thyſelf? (2.) They overlooked the Teſtimony of all the other Witneſſes, which corroborated the Teſtimony he bore of himſelf. Had he only born Record of himſelf, his Teſtimony had indeed been *ſuſpicious*, and the Belief of it might have been *ſuſpended*, but his Doctrine was atteſted by more than *Two or Three* credible *Witneſſes*, enough to *eſtabliſh every Word* of it.

3. Chriſt's Reply to this Objection, *v.* 14. He doth not retort upon them, as he might: You profeſs yourſelves to be devout and good Men, but your Witneſs is not *true*, but plainly vindicates himſelf; and tho' he had wav'd his own Teſtimony, *chap.* 5. 31. yet here he abides by it, that it did not derogate from the Credibility of his other Proofs, but was neceſſary to ſhew the Force of them. He is the Light of the World, and it is the Property of Light to be *Self-evidencing*: Firſt Principles prove themſelves.

He urgeth three Things to prove that his Teſtimony, tho' of himſelf, was true and cogent.

1. That he was *conſcious to himſelf* of his own *Authority*, and abundantly ſatisfied in himſelf concerning it. He did not ſpeak as one at uncertainty, nor propoſe a *diſputable* Notion which he himſelf heſitated about, but *declar'd a Decree*, and gave ſuch an Account of himſelf as he would *abide by*; *I know whence I come, and whither I go.* He was fully *appris'd* of his own Undertaking from firſt to laſt; knew whoſe Errand he went upon, and what his Succeſs would be; he knew what he *was* before his Manifeſtation to the World, and what he *ſhould be* after; that he came *from the Father*, and was going *to him*, John 16. 28. came *from Glory*, and was going *to Glory*, John 17. 5. This is the Satisfaction of all good Chriſtians, that tho' the World know them not, as it knew him not, yet they know *whence* their ſpiritual Life comes, and whither it tends, and go upon ſure Grounds.

2. That they were very incompetent Judges of him, and of his Doctrine, and not to be regarded.

(1.) Becauſe they were *ignorant* willingly, and reſolvedly *ignorant*; *ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.* To what purpoſe is it to talk with thoſe who know nothing of the Matter, nor deſire to know? He had told them of his coming from Heaven, and returning to Heaven, but it was *Fooliſhneſs to them*, they *received it not*, it was what the *brutiſh Man knows not*, Pſal. 92. 6. They took upon them to judge of that which they did not underſtand, which lay quite out of the Road of their Acquaintance. They that deſpiſe Chriſt's Dominions and Dignities, ſpeak evil of what they *know not*, Jude 8. 10.

(2.) Becauſe they were *partial*, v. 15. *Ye judge after the Fleſh.* When fleſhly Wiſdom gives the rule of Judgment, and outward Shews and Appearances only are given in Evidence, and the caſe decided according to them, then Men *judge after the Fleſh*, and when the Conſideration of a Secular Intereſt turns the Scale in judging of ſpiritual Matters; when we judge in favour of that which pleaſes the carnal Mind, and recommends us to a carnal World, we judge after the Fleſh; and the Judgment cannot be right when the Rule is wrong. The *Jews* judg'd of Chriſt and his Goſpel by outward Appearances, and becauſe he appear'd ſo mean, thought it impoſſible he ſhould be the Light of the World; as if the Sun under a Cloud were no Sun.

(3.) Becauſe they were *unjuſt* and *unfair* towards him; intimated in that, *I judge no Man.* I neither make nor meddle with your political Affairs, nor doth my Doctrine or Practice at all intrench upon, or interfere with your Civil Rights, or Secular Powers; he thus *judg'd no Man*; now if he did not *war after the Fleſh*, it was very unreaſonable for them to *judge him after the Fleſh*; and to treat him as an Offender againſt the Civil Government. Or, *I judge no Man*, i. e. not now in my firſt coming, that's deferr'd till I come again, *John* 3. 17. *Prima Diſpenſatio Chriſti medicinalis eſt, non judicialis.* Aug.

3. That his Teſtimony of himſelf was ſufficiently ſupported and corroborated by the Teſtimony of his Father *with him*, and *for him*, v. 16. *And yet if I judge, my Judgment is true.* He did in his Doctrine judge, *John* 9. 39. tho' not *politically*. Conſider him then,

1. As *a Judge*, and his own Judgment was valid. *If I judge*, I who have Authority to execute Judgments, I to whom all Things are delivered, I who am the Son of God, and have the Spirit of God, if I judge, *my Judgment is true*, of unconteſtable Rectitude, and uncontroulable Authority, *Rom.* 2. 2. *If I ſhould judge*, my Judgment muſt be true, and then you would be condemn'd; but the Judgment Day is not yet come, you are not yet to be condemn'd but ſpar'd, and therefore now *I judge no Man*: ſo *Chryſoſtom*.

Now that which makes his Judgment unexceptionable, is,

(1.) His Father's *Concurrence* with him, *I am not alone, but I and the Father*. He had the Father's concurring *Counſels* to *direct*; as he was with the Father before the World in forming the Counſels, ſo the Father was with him in the Word in proſecuting and executing thoſe Counſels, and never left him *Inops Conſilii*, Iſa. 11. 2. All the *Counſels of Peace* (and of War too) *were between them both*, Zech. 6. 13. He had alſo the Father's concurring Power to authorize and confirm what he did; ſee *Pſal.* 89. 21, &c. *Iſa.* 42. 1. He did not act *ſeparately*, but in his own Name, and his Father's, and *by the Authority aforeſaid*, John 5. 17. and 14. 9, 10.

(2.) His Father's *Commiſſion* to him, 'tis the Father that *ſent me*. *Note*, God will go along with them that he ſends, ſee *Exod.* 3. 10, 12. *Come, and I will ſend thee*, and *certainly I will be with thee*. Now if Chriſt had a *Commiſſion* from the Father, and the Father's *Preſence* with him in all his Adminiſtrations, no doubt his *Judgment* was *true* and valid; no Exception lay *againſt* it, no Appeal lay *from* it.

2. Look upon him as a *Witneſs*, and now he appear'd no otherwiſe (having not as yet taken the Throne of Judgment) and as ſuch his Teſtimony was true, and unexceptionable; this he ſhews, *v.* 17, 18. where,

1. He quotes a Maxim of the *Jewiſh* Law, *v.* 17. That *the Teſtimony of Two Men is true*. Not as if it were always true *in it ſelf*, for many a time Hand has joined in Hand to bear a *falſe* Teſtimony, 1 *Kings* 21. 10. But it is *allow'd* as *ſufficient* Evidence, upon which to ground a *Verdict* (*verum dictum*) and if nothing appear to the conttary, 'tis taken for granted to be *true*. Reference is here had to that Law, *Deut.* 17. 6. *At the Mouth of Two Witneſſes ſhall he that's worthy of Death be put to death.* And ſee *Deut.* 19. 5. *Num.* 35. 30. 'Tis in *favour of Life* that in capital Cauſes Two Witneſſes were required, as with us in Caſe of Treaſon. See *Heb.* 6. 18.

2. He applies this to the Caſe in hand, *v.* 18. *I am one that bears Witneſs of my ſelf, and the Father that ſent me bears Witneſs of me.* Behold Two Witneſſes! Tho' in human Courts, where Two Witneſſes are required, the Criminal, or Candidate, is not admitted to be a Witneſs for himſelf, yet in a Matter purely Divine, which can be prov'd only by a Divine Teſtimony, and God himſelf muſt be the Witneſs, if the Formality of Two or Three Witneſſes be inſiſted on, there can be no other than the eternal Father, the eternal Son of the Father, and the eternal Spirit. Now if the Teſtimony of Two diſtinct Perſons, that are *Man*, and therefore may deceive, or be deceived, is *concluſive*, much more ought the Teſtimony of the Son of God concerning himſelf, backed with the Teſtimony of his Father concerning him, to command Aſſent: ſee 1 *John* 5. 7, 9, 10, 11. Now this proves, not only that the Father and the Son are Two diſtinct Perſons, for their reſpective Teſtimonies are here ſpoken of as the Teſtimonies of Two ſeveral Perſons; but that theſe Two are One, not only one in their Teſtimony, but equal in Power and Glory, and therefore the ſame in Subſtance. St. *Auſtin* here takes occaſion to caution his Hearers againſt *Sabellianiſm* on the one hand, which confounded the Perſons in the Godhead, and *Arianiſm* on the other, which deny'd the Godhead of the Son and Spirit. *Alius eſt Filius, & alius Pater, non tamen aliud, ſed hoc ipſum eſt & Pater, & Filius, ſcil. unus Deus eſt*, Tract 36. *in* Joann.

Chriſt here ſpeaks of himſelf and the Father, as Witneſſes to the World, giving in Evidence to the Reaſon and Conſcience of the Children of Men, whom he deals with as Men. And theſe Witneſſes *to* the World now, will in the great Day be Witneſſes *againſt* thoſe that perſiſt in Unbelief, and *their* Word will judge Men.

This was the Sum of the firſt Conference between Chriſt and theſe carnal *Jews*; in the Concluſion of which we are told how their Tongues were let looſe, and their Hands ty'd. 1. How their *Tongues* were let *looſe* (ſuch was the Malice of Hell) to cavil at his Diſcourſe, *v.* 19. Tho' in what he ſaid there appear'd nothing of human Policy or Artifice, but a Divine Security, yet they ſet themſelves to *croſs Queſtions*, with him. None ſo incurably *blind*, as thoſe that reſolve they *will not ſee*.

Obſerve, (1.) How they evaded the *Conviction* with a *Cavil*; *Then ſaid they unto him, where is thy Father?* They might eaſily have underſtood by the Tenor of this, and other his Diſcourſes, that when he ſpoke of his *Father*, he meant no other but God himſelf; yet they pretend to underſtand him of a common Perſon; and ſince he had appeal'd to his Teſtimony, they bid him *call his Witneſs*, and challenge him, if he could, to produce him; *Where is thy Father?* Thus as Chriſt ſaid of them, *v.* 15. They *judge after the Fleſh*. Perhaps they hereby intend a Reflection upon the meanneſs and obſcurity of his Family; *where is thy Father*, that he ſhould be fit to give Evidence in ſuch a Caſe as this? Thus they turn it off with a Taunt, when they *could not reſiſt the Wiſdom and Spirit with which he ſpake*.

(2.) How he evaded the *Cavil* with a further *Conviction*; he did not tell them where his Father was, but charg'd them with wilful Ignorance; *ye neither know me nor my Father*. 'Tis to no purpoſe to diſcourſe to you about Divine Things, who talk of them as blind Men do of Colours. Poor Creatures, ye know nothing of the Matter.

1. He charged them with Ignorance of God; ye *know not my Father*. In *Judah* was God known, *Pſal.* 76. 1. they had ſome Knowledge of him as the God that made the World, but their Eyes were darkened that they could not ſee the Light of his Glory ſhining *in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*. The *little Children* of the Chriſtian Church *know the Father*, know him as a Father, *John* 2. 13. but theſe Rulers of the *Jews* did not, becauſe they would not ſo know him.

2. He ſhews them the true Cauſe of their Ignorance of God, *If ye had known me, ye ſhould have known my Father alſo.* The reaſon why Men are ignorant of God, is becauſe they are unacquainted with Jeſus Chriſt. Did we know Chriſt, 1. In knowing him we ſhould know the Father, whoſe Perſon he is the expreſs Image of, *John* 14. 9. *Chryſoſtom* proves hence the Godhead of Chriſt, and his Equality with his Father. We cannot ſay, he that knows a Man knows an Angel, or he that knows a Creature knows the Creator; but he that knows Chriſt, knows the Father. 2. By him we ſhall be inſtructed in the Knowledge of God, and introduced into an Acquaintance with him. If we *knew Chriſt* better, we ſhould *know the Father* better, but where the Chriſtian Religion is ſlighted and oppos'd, Natural Religion will ſoon be loſt and laid aſide: Deiſm makes way for Atheiſm. Thoſe become vain in their Imaginations concerning God, that will not learn of Chriſt.

2. See how their *Hands* were ty'd, tho' their *Tongues* were thus *let looſe*; ſuch was the Power of Heaven to reſtrain the Malice of Hell. *Theſe Words ſpake Jeſus*, theſe bold Words, theſe Words of Conviction and Reproof, *in the Treaſury*, an Apartment of the Temple, where to be ſure the Chief Prieſts, whoſe Gain was their Godlineſs, were moſtly reſident, attending the Buſineſs of the Revenue. Chriſt *taught in the Temple*, ſometimes in one part, ſometimes in another, as he ſaw occaſion. Now the Prieſts who had ſo great a *Stroke* in the Temple, and look'd upon it as their *Demeſn*, might eaſily, with the Aſſiſtance of their Janizaries that were at their beck, either have *ſeiz'd* him, and *expos'd* him to the Rage of the Mob, and that Puniſhment which they call'd the *beating of the Rebels*; or at leaſt have *ſilenced* him, and ſtopt his Mouth there, as *Amos*, tho' tolerated in the Land of *Judah*, was forbidden to propheſy in the King's Chappel, *Amos* 7. 12, 13. Yet even *in the Temple*, where they had him in their reach, *No Man laid Hands on him*, for *his Hour was not yet come*. See here, (1.) The Reſtraint laid upon his Proſecutors by an inviſible Power, none of them durſt meddle with him. God can ſet Bounds to the Wrath of Men, as he doth to the Waves of the Sea; let us not therefore fear Danger in the way of Duty, for God hath Satan and all his Inſtruments in a Chain. (2.) The Reaſon of this Reſtraint, *His Hour was not yet come*. The frequent mention of this intimates, how much the Time of our Departure out of the World depends upon the fixed Counſel and Decree of God. It *will* come, it's coming; not yet come, but it is at hand: Our Enemies cannot haſten it any ſooner, nor our Friends delay it any longer than the Time appointed of the Father, which is very comfortable to every good Man, who can look up, and ſay with Pleaſure, *My Times are in thy Hands*; and better there than in our own. His Hour was not yet come, becauſe his Work was not done, nor his Teſtimony finiſhed. To all God's Purpoſes *there is a Time*.

21 Then ſaid Jeſus again unto them, I go my way, and ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall die in your ſins: whither I go ye cannot come. 22 Then ſaid the Jews, Will he kill himſelf? becauſe he ſaith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. 23 And he ſaid unto them, Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world. 24 I ſaid therefore unto you, that ye ſhall die in your ſins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye ſhall die in your ſins. 25 Then ſaid they unto him, Who art thou? And Jeſus ſaith unto them, Even *the ſame* that I ſaid unto you from the beginning. 26 I have many things to ſay, and to judge of you: but he that ſent me is true, and I ſpeak to the world thoſe things which I have heard of him. 27 They underſtood not that he ſpeak to them of the Father. 28 Then ſaid Jeſus un-

to them, When ye have lift up the ſon of man, then ſhall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of my ſelf; but as my Father hath taught me, I ſpeak theſe things. 29 And he that ſent me, is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always thoſe things that pleaſe him. 30 As he ſpake theſe words, many believed on him.

Chriſt here gives fair Warning to the careleſs, unbelieving *Jews*, to conſider what would be the Conſequence of their Infidelity, that they might prevent it before it was too late; for he ſpake Words of Terror as well as Words of Grace. Obſerve here,

Firſt, The *Wrath threaten'd.* Ver. 21. *Jeſus ſaid again unto them* that which might be likely to do them good. He continued to teach in Kindneſs to thoſe few who receiv'd his Doctrine, tho' there were many that reſiſted it, which is an Example to Miniſters to go on with their Work, notwithſtanding Oppoſition, becauſe a Remnant ſhall be ſaved. Here Chriſt changes his Voice; he had *piped to them* in the Offers of his Grace, and they *had not danced*; now he mourns to them in the Denunciations of his Wrath, to try if they would lament. He ſaid, *I go my way, and ye ſhall ſeek me, and ſhall die in your Sins: Whither I go, ye cannot come.* Every Word is terrible, and ſpeaks ſpiritual Judgments, which are the ſoreſt of all others; worſe than War, Peſtilence, and Captivity, which the Old Teſtament Prophets denounc'd.

Four Things are here threaten'd againſt the *Jews.*

1. Chriſt's Departure from them. *I go my way*, i. e. it ſhall not be long but I will go, you need not take ſo much pains to drive me from you, I ſhall go of myſelf. They ſaid to him, *depart from us*, we deſire not the Knowledge of thy Ways, and he takes them at their Word; but woe to thoſe from whom Chriſt departs. *Ichabod*, The Glory is gone, our Defence is departed when Chriſt goes. Chriſt frequently warn'd them of his Departure before he left them; he *bid oft farewel*, as one *loth to depart*, and willing to be invited, and that would have them *ſtir up themſelves to take hold on him.*

2. Their Enmity to the true Meſſiah, and their fruitleſs and infatuated Enquiries after another Meſſiah, when he was gone away, which were both their Sins and their Puniſhments. *Ye ſhall ſeek me*, which ſpeaks, either, (1.) Their *Enmity* to the *true Chriſt*. Ye ſhall ſeek to ruin my Intereſt, by perſecuting my Doctrine and Followers with a fruitleſs Deſign to root them out. This was a continual Vexation and Torment to themſelves, made them incurably *ill-natur'd*, and brought *Wrath upon them*, (God's, and their own) *to the uttermoſt*. Or, (2.) Their *Enquiries* after *falſe Chriſts*. Ye ſhall continue your Expectations of the Meſſiah, and be the ſelf-perplexing Seekers of a Chriſt to come, when he is already come; like the *Sodomites*, who being ſtruck with Blindneſs, wearied themſelves to find the Door, *Rom.* 9. 31, 32.

3. Their final Impenitency: *Ye ſhall die in your Sins.* Here's an Error in all our *Engliſh* Bibles, even the old *Biſhops* Tranſlation, and that of *Geneva*, (the *Rhemiſts* only excepted) for all the *Greek* Copies have it in the ſingular Number, ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτία ὑμῶν, *In your Sin*, ſo all the *Latin* Verſions; and *Calvin* has a Note upon the Difference between this and *v.* 24. where it is plural, ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις, that here it is meant eſpecially of the Sin of Unbelief, *in hoc peccato veſtro*, in *this Sin* of yours. *Note*, Thoſe that live in Unbelief, are for ever undone if they die in Unbelief. Or, it may be underſtood in general, *Ye ſhall die in your Iniquity*, as *Ezek.* 3. 19. and 33. 9. Many that have long liv'd in Sin, yet by a timely Repentance, through Grace, are ſaved from *dying in Sin*; but for thoſe who go out of this World of Probation into that of Retribution under the Guilt of Sin *unpardon'd*, and the Power of Sin *unbroken*, there remaineth no Relief; Salvation itſelf cannot ſave them, *Job* 20. 11. *Ezek.* 32. 27.

4. Their eternal Separation from Chriſt and all Happineſs in him; *Whither I go, ye cannot come.* When Chriſt left the World, he went to a State of perfect Happineſs; he went to Paradiſe, thither he took the Penitent Thief with him that did not die in his Sins; but the Impenitent not only *ſhall not* come to him, but they *cannot*; 'tis morally impoſſible, for Heaven would not be Heaven to thoſe that die unſanctified, and *unmeet* for it. Ye cannot come, becauſe ye have *no right* to enter into that *Jeruſalem*, Rev. 22. 14. *Whither I go ye cannot come* to fetch me thence, ſo Dr. *Whitby*; and the ſame is the Comfort of all good Chriſtians, that when they are got to Heaven, they will be out of the Reach of their Enemies Malice.

Secondly, The *Jeſt they made of this* Threatning. Inſtead of trembling at this Word, they banter'd it, and turn'd it into ridicule; *v.* 22. *Will he kill himſelf?* See here, 1. What ſlight Thoughts they had of Chriſt's Threatnings, they could make themſelves and one another merry with them, as thoſe that mock'd the Meſſengers of the Lord, and turned the *Burthen of the Word of the Lord* into a *By-word*, and *Precept upon Precept, Line upon Line*, into a merry Song, *Iſa.* 28. 13. But *be ye not Mockers, leſt your Bands be made ſtrong.* 2. What ill Thoughts they had of Chriſt's Meaning, as if he had an inhuman Deſign upon his own Life, to avoid the Indignities done him, like *Saul.* This is indeed (ſay they) to go whither we cannot follow him, for we will never *kill ourſelves.* Thus they make him, not only ſuch a one as themſelves, but worſe; yet in the Calamities brought by the *Romans* upon the *Jews*, many of them in Diſcontent and Deſpair did *kill themſelves.* They had put a much more favourable Conſtruction upon this Word of his, *Chap.* 7. 34, 35. *Will he go to the diſperſed Gentiles?* But ſee how indulged Malice grows more and more malicious.

Thirdly, The Confirmation of what he had ſaid.

1. He had ſaid, *Whither I go ye cannot come*, and here he gives a Reaſon for that, *v.* 23. *Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this World, I am not of this World.* Ye are ἐκ τῶν κάτω, of *thoſe Things which are beneath*; noting, not ſo much their Riſe from beneath, as their Affection to theſe lower Things; ye are *in with theſe Things*, as thoſe that belong to them, how can you come where I go, when your Spirit and Diſpoſition is ſo directly contrary to mine? See here, (1.) What the *Spirit of the Lord Jeſus* was, not of *this World*, but from *above.* He was perfectly dead to the Wealth of the World, the Eaſe of the Body, and the Praiſe of Men, and was wholly taken up with divine and heavenly Things, and none ſhall be with him but thoſe who are *born from above*, and have their *Converſation in Heaven.* (2.) How contrary to this *their* Spirit was; ye are *from beneath*, and of this World. The Phariſees were of a carnal, worldly Spirit, and what Communion could Chriſt have with them.

2. He had ſaid, *Ye ſhall die in your Sin*, and here he ſtands to it; therefore I ſaid ye ſhall die in your Sins, becauſe *ye are from beneath*; and he gives this further Reaſon for it, *if ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your Sins*, v. 24. See here, 1. What we are requir'd to believe, *That I am he*, ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, *That I am*, which is one of God's Names, *Exod.* 3. 14. 'Twas the Son of God that there ſaid, *Ehejeh aſher Ehjeh, I will be* what I *will be*; for the Deliverance of *Iſrael* was but a Figure of good Things to come, but now he ſaith, *I am he*; he that ſhould come, he that you expect the Meſſias to be, that you would have me to be to you: I am more than the bare Name of the Meſſiah; I do not only call my ſelf ſo, but I *am he.* True Faith doth not *amuſe* the Soul with an empty Sound of Words, but *affects* it with the Doctrine of Chriſt's Mediation, as a real Thing, that has real Effects. 2. How neceſſary it is that we believe this, if we have not this Faith, *we ſhall die in our Sins*; for the Matter is ſo ſettled, that without this Faith, 1. We cannot be ſav'd from the Power of Sin while we live, and therefore ſhall certainly continue in them to the laſt. Nothing but the *Doctrine* of *Chriſt's Grace* will be an *Argument* powerful enough, and none but the *Spirit* of *Chriſt's Grace* will be an *Agent* powerful enough to turn us from Sin to God; and that Spirit is given, and that Doctrine given to be effectual to thoſe only who believe in Chriſt: So that if *Satan* be not by Faith diſpoſſeſs'd, he has a Leaſe of the Soul for its Life: If Chriſt do not cure us, our Caſe is deſperate, and we ſhall *die in our Sins.* 2. Without Faith we cannot be ſav'd from the Puniſhment of Sin when we die, for the *Wrath of God remains* upon them that believe not, *Mark* 16. 16. Unbelief is the damning Sin, 'tis a Sin againſt the Remedy. Now this implies the great Goſpel Promiſe, *If we believe that Chriſt is He*, and receive him accordingly, *we ſhall not die in our Sins.* The Law ſaith abſolutely to all, as Chriſt ſaid, *v.* 21. *Ye ſhall die in your Sin*, for we are all Guilty before God; but the Goſpel is a Defeaſance of the Obligation upon Condition of believing; the Curſe of the Law is vacated and annull'd to all that ſubmit to the Grace of the Goſpel: Believers die in Chriſt, in his Love, in his Arms, and ſo are ſav'd from dying *in their Sins.*

Fourthly, Here's a further Diſcourſe concerning *himſelf*, occaſion'd by his requiring Faith in himſelf as the Condition of Salvation, *v.* 25—29. Obſerve,

1. The Queſtion which the *Jews* put to him, *v.* 25. *Who art thou?* This they ask'd tauntingly, and not with any deſire to be inſtructed. He had ſaid, ye muſt believe that *I am he.* By his not ſaying expreſly who he was, he plainly intimated, that in *his Perſon* he was ſuch a one as could not be *deſcrib'd* by any, and *in his Office* ſuch a one as was *expected* by all that look'd for Redemption in *Iſrael*; yet this awful Manner of ſpeaking, which had ſo much Significancy in it, they turn'd to his Reproach, as if he know not what to ſay of himſelf. *Who art thou?* That we muſt, with an implicit Faith, believe in thee, that thou art ſome mighty HE; we know not *who*, or *what*, nor are *worthy to know.*

2. His Anſwer to this Queſtion, wherein he directs them three Ways for Information.

1. He refers himſelf to *what he had ſaid* all along. Do you ask who I am, *Even the ſame that I ſaid unto you from the Beginning.* The Original here is a little intricate, τὴν ἀρχὴν ὅ τι καὶ λαλῶ ὑμῖν, which ſome read thus; *I am the Beginning, which alſo I ſpeak unto you.* So *Auſtin* takes it, Chriſt is call'd Ἀρχὴ, the *Beginning*, Col. 1. 18. Rev. 1. 8. and 21. 6. and 3. 14. and ſo it agrees with *v.* 24. *I am he*, compare *Iſa.* 41. 4. *I am the firſt, I am he.* Thoſe who object that 'tis the Accuſative Caſe, and therefore not properly anſwering to τίς εἶ; muſt undertake to conſtrue by Grammar Rules that parallel Expreſſion, *Rev.* 1. 8. ὁ ὤν. But moſt Interpreters agree with our Verſion, Do you ask *who I am?*

(1.) I am *the ſame that I ſaid to you from the Beginning* of Time in the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, the ſame that from the Beginning was ſaid to be *the Seed of the Woman, that ſhould break the Serpent's Head.* The ſame that in all the Ages of the Church was the Mediator of the Covenant, and the Faith of the Patriarchs.

(2.) *From the Beginning* of my publick Miniſtry. The Account he had already given of himſelf, he reſolved to *abide by*; he had declared himſelf to be the *Son of God, ch.* 5. 16. to be the Chriſt, *ch.* 4. 26. and the Bread of Life, and had propoſed himſelf as the Object of that Faith which is neceſſary to Salvation, and to this he refers himſelf for an Anſwer to their Queſtion; Chriſt is *one with himſelf*, what he had ſaid from the Beginning, he ſaith ſtill. His is an *everlaſting Goſpel.*

2. He refers himſelf to his Father's Judgment, and the Inſtructions he had from him, *v.* 26. *I have many things*, more than you think of, *to ſay, and* in them to *judge of you.* But (why ſhould I trouble myſelf any further with you?) I know very well, *he that ſent me is true*, and will ſtand by me, and bear me out, for *I ſpeak to the World*, to which I am ſent as an Ambaſſador, *thoſe things*, all thoſe, and thoſe only, *which I have heard of him.* Here,

(1.) He *ſuppreſſeth* his *Accuſations* of them. He had *many things* to charge them with, and many Evidences to produce againſt them, but for the preſent he had ſaid enough. *Note*, Whatever Diſcoveries of Sin are made to us, he that ſearcheth the Heart hath ſtill *more to judge* of us, 1 *John* 3. 20. How much ſoever God reckons with Sinners in this World, there is ſtill a *further Reckoning* yet behind, *Deut.* 32. 34. Let us learn hence not to be forward to ſay all we can ſay, even againſt the worſt of Men; we may have many things to ſay by way of Cenſure, which yet it is better to leave *unſaid*, for what is it to us?

(2.) He *enters* his *Appeal* againſt them to his Father; *He that ſent me.* Here two Things comfort him;

(1.) That he had been *true to his Father*, and to the Truſt repoſed in him; *I ſpeak to the World*, for his Goſpel was to be preached to every Creature, *thoſe things which I have heard of him.* Being given for a *Witneſs to the People*, Iſa. 55. 4. He was *Amen*, a *faithful Witneſs*, Rev. 3. 14. He did not *conceal* his Doctrine, but ſpoke it *to the World*; being of common Concern, it was to be of common Notice; nor did he change or alter it, nor vary from the Inſtructions he received from him that ſent him.

(2.) That his Father would be *true to him*; true to the Promiſe, that he would *make his Mouth like a ſharp Sword*; true to his Purpoſe concerning him, which was a *Decree*, Pſal. 2. 7. True to the Threatnings of his Wrath againſt thoſe that ſhould reject him. Tho' he ſhould not *accuſe them* to his Father, yet the Father that ſent him would undoubtedly reckon with them, and would be *true* to what he had ſaid, *Deut.* 18. 19. that whoſoever would not hearken to that Prophet, whom God would raiſe up, *he would require it of him.* Chriſt would not accuſe them, for, ſaith he, he that ſent me is true, and will *paſs* Judgment on them, tho I ſhould not demand Judgment againſt them. Thus when he *lets fall* the preſent Proſecution; he *binds them over* to the Judgment Day, when it will be too late to *diſpute*, what they will not now be perſuaded to *believe. I, as a deaf Man, heard not, for thou wilt hear*, Pſal. 38. 14, 15.

Upon this Part of our Saviour's Diſcourſe, the Evangeliſt has a melancholy Remark, *v.* 27. *They underſtood not that he ſpake to them of the Father.* See here, (1.) The Power of Satan to blind the Minds of them which believe not; tho Chriſt ſpoke ſo plainly of God, as his Father in Heaven, yet they did not underſtand who he meant, but thought he ſpoke of ſome Father he had in *Galilee.* Thus the plaineſt Things are Riddles and Parables to thoſe who are reſolved to hold faſt their Prejudices; Day and Night are alike to the Blind. (2.) The Reaſon why the Threatnings of the Word make ſo little Impreſſion upon the Minds of Sinners, 'tis becauſe they underſtand not whoſe the Wrath is that is revealed in them: When Chriſt told them of the Truth of him that ſent him, as a Warning to them to prepare for his Judgment, which is *according to Truth*; they ſlighted the Warning, becauſe they underſtood not whoſe Judgment it was that they made themſelves obnoxious to.

3. He refers himſelf to *their own Convictions* hereafter, *v.* 28, 29. He finds they will not underſtand him, and therefore adjourns the Trial, till further Evidence ſhould come in; they that *will not ſee*, yet *ſhall ſee*, Iſa. 26. 11. Now obſerve here,

1. *What* they ſhould e'er long be *convinced of*; *Ye ſhall know that I am he*, that Jeſus is the true *Meſſiah.* Whether you will own it or no before Men, you ſhall be made to know it in your own Conſciences, the Convictions of which, tho you may *ſtifle*, yet you cannot *baffle. That I am he*, not which you repreſent me to be, but he that I preach myſelf to be, he that ſhould come: Two Things they ſhould be convinced of, in order to this. (1.) That he did nothing *of himſelf*, not of himſelf as Man, of himſelf alone, of himſelf without the Father, with whom he *was one.* He doth not hereby derogate from his own inherent Power, but only denies their Charge againſt him as a *falſe Prophet*, of whom it is ſaid, that they propheſied *out of their own Hearts*, and followed *their own Spirits.* (2.) That as *his Father taught him*, ſo he *ſpake theſe things*, that he was not αὐτοδίδακτος, but Θεοδίδακτος. The Doctrine he preached was the Counterpart of the Counſels of God, which he was intimately acquainted with, καθὼς ἐδίδαξε ταῦτα λαλῶ. I ſpeak thoſe things not only *which* he taught me, but *as* he taught me, with the ſame Divine Power and Authority.

2. *When* they ſhould be convinced of this. *When ye have lift up the Son of Man*, lifted him up upon the Croſs, as the brazen Serpent upon the Pole, *John* 3. 14. as the Sacrifices under the Law (for Chriſt is the great Sacrifice) which when they were offer'd, were ſaid to be *elevated* or *lifted up*; hence the Burnt-Offerings, the moſt antient and honourable of all, were called *Elevations* (*Gnoloth* from *Gnolah, aſcendit*) and in many other Offerings they uſed the ſignificant Ceremony, of *heaving* the Sacrifice up, and *moving* it before the Lord; thus was Chriſt *lifted up.* Or, it notes, That his Death was his Exaltation; they that put him to death, thought thereby for ever to have *ſunk* him and his Intereſt, but it proved to be the Advancement of both, *John* 12. 24. When the Son of Man was *crucified*, the Son of Man was *glorified.* Chriſt had called his dying, his *going away*; here his being lifted up: Thus the Death of the Saints, as it is their Departure out of this World, ſo it is their Advancement to a better. Obſerve, he ſpeaks of thoſe he is now talking with, as the *Inſtruments* of his Death, when *ye have lift up the Son of Man*, not that they were to be the *Prieſts* to offer him up; no, that was his own Act, he *offer'd up himſelf*, but they would be his Betrayers and Murderers: ſee *Acts* 2. 23. they *lifted him up* to the Croſs, but then he lifted up himſelf to his Father. Obſerve, with what Tenderneſs and Mildneſs Chriſt here ſpeaks to thoſe, who he certainly knew would put him to death, to teach us not to *hate* or *ſeek the Hurt* of any, tho we may have reaſon to think they *hate us*, and ſeek our Hurt.

Now Chriſt ſpeaks of his Death, as that which would be a powerful Conviction of the Infidelity of the *Jews*; *When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then ſhall ye know* this. And why then? (1.) Becauſe careleſs and unthinking People are often taught the *Worth* of Mercies by the *Want* of them, *Luke* 17. 22. (2.) The Guilt of their Sin in putting Chriſt to death, would ſo awaken their Conſciences, that they would be put upon ſerious Enquiries after a Saviour, and then would know that Jeſus was he, who alone could ſave them. And ſo it proved, when being told, that with wicked Hands they had *crucified and ſlain* the Son of God, they cried out, *What ſhall we do?* and were made to know aſſuredly, that this Jeſus was *Lord and Chriſt*, Acts 2. 37. (3.) There would be ſuch Signs and Wonders attending his Death, and the *lifting of him up* from Death in his Reſurrection, as would give a ſtronger Proof of his being the *Meſſiah*, than any that had been yet given: And Multitudes were hereby brought to believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt, who had before contradicted and oppoſed him. (4.) By the Death of Chriſt, the pouring out of the Spirit was purchaſed, who would convince the World that *Jeſus is he*, John 16. 7, 8. (5.) The Judgments which the *Jews* brought upon themſelves, by putting Chriſt to death, which filled up the Meaſure of their Iniquity, were a ſenſible Conviction to the moſt hardened among them, that *Jeſus was he*; Chriſt had often foretold that Deſolation, as the juſt Puniſhment of their invincible Unbelief, and *when it came to paſs*, (*lo! it did come*) they could not but know that the *great Prophet had been among them*, Ezek. 33. 33.

3. What ſupported our Lord Jeſus in the mean time, *v.* 29. *He that ſent me is with me*, in my whole Undertaking, *for the Father* (the Fountain and firſt Spring of this Affair, from whom, as its great Cauſe and Author, it is derived) *hath not left me alone* to manage it myſelf, nor deſerted the Buſineſs, or me in the Proſecution of it, for *I do always thoſe things that pleaſe him.*

Here's, 1. The Aſſurance which Chriſt had of his Father's *Preſence* with him, which includes both a Divine *Power* going along with him, to *enable* him for his Work, and a Divine *Favour* manifeſted to him, to *encourage* him in it. *He that ſent me, is with me, Iſa.* 42. 1. *Pſal.* 89. 21. This greatly *emboldens* our Faith in Chriſt, and our Reliance upon his Word, that he had, and knew he had his Father with him, to *confirm the Word of his Servant*, Iſa. 44. 26. The King of Kings accompany'd his own Ambaſſador, to *atteſt* his Miſſion, and *aſſiſt* his Management, and *never left him alone*, either *ſolitary* or *weak*; it alſo *aggravated* the Wickedneſs of thoſe that oppoſed him, and was an Intimation to them of the *Premunire* they run themſelves *into*, by reſiſting him, for thereby they were found *Fighters againſt God.* How eaſily ſoever they might think to cruſh him, and run him down, let them know he had one to back him, with whom 'tis the greateſt Madneſs that can be to *contend.*

2. The Ground of this Aſſurance; *For I do always thoſe things that pleaſe him.* That is, (1.) That great Affair which our Lord Jeſus was *continually* engaged in, was an Affair which the *Father that ſent him* was highly *well pleaſed with.* His whole Undertaking is called the *Pleaſure of the Lord*, Iſa. 53. 10. becauſe of the *Counſels* of the eternal Mind about it, and the *Complacency* of the eternal Mind of it. (2.) His Management of that Affair was in nothing *diſpleaſing* to his Father; in executing his Commiſſion, he punctually *obſerved* all his Inſtructions, and did in nothing *vary* from them; no meer Man ſince the Fall could ſay ſuch a Word as this, for *in many things we offend all*; but our Lord Jeſus never offended his Father in any thing, but as became him, he *fulfilled all Righteouſneſs*; and this was neceſſary

to the Validity and Value of the Sacrifice he was to offer up; for if he had in any thing *diſpleaſed* the Father himſelf, and ſo had had any Sin of his own to anſwer for, the Father could not have been pleaſed with him as a Propitiation for our Sins, but ſuch a Prieſt, and ſuch a Sacrifice became us, as was perfectly pure and ſpotleſs. We may likewiſe learn hence, that God's Servants may then expect God's Preſence with them, when they chuſe and do *thoſe things that pleaſe him*, Iſa. 56.45.

Fifthly, Here's the good Effect which this Diſcourſe of Chriſt's had upon ſome of his Hearers, *v.* 30. *As he ſpake theſe Words, many believed on him. Note*, 1. Tho' Multitudes periſh in their Unbelief, yet there is a Remnant according to the Election of Grace, who *believe to the ſaving of the Soul.* If *Iſrael*, the whole Body of the People, *be not gathered*, yet there are thoſe of them, in whom Chriſt will be *glorious*, Iſa. 49. 5. This the Apoſtle inſiſts upon, to reconcile the *Jews* Objection, with the *Promiſes made unto their Fathers.* There is a Remnant, *Rom.* 11. 5. 2. The Words of Chriſt, and particularly his *threatning* Words, are made effectual by the Grace of God, to bring in poor Souls to believe in him. When Chriſt told them, that if they *believed not*, they ſhould *die in their Sins*, and never get to Heaven, they thought it was time to look about them, *Rom.* 1.16,18. 3. Sometimes there is a *wide Door opened*, and an *effectual* one, even there where there are *many Adverſaries.* Chriſt will carry on his Work, tho' the *Heathen rage.* The Goſpel gains great Victories ſometimes there, where it meets with great Oppoſition. Let this encourage God's Miniſters to preach the Goſpel, tho' it be *with much Contention*, for they ſhall not *labour in vain.* Many may be *ſecretly* brought home to God by thoſe Endeavours, which are openly contradicted and cavill'd at by Men of corrupt Minds. *Auſtin* has an affectionate Ejaculation in his Lecture upon theſe Words, *Utinam & me loquenti multi credant, non in me, ſed mecum in eo!*

31 Then ſaid Jeſus to thoſe Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my Word, *then* are ye my diſciples indeed; 32 And ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free. 33 ¶ They anſwered him, we be Abraham's ſeed, and were never in bondage to any man: how ſayeſt thou, Ye ſhall be made free? 34 Jeſus anſwered them, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, Whoſoever committeth ſin, is the ſervant of ſin. 35 And the ſervant abideth not in the houſe for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. 36 If the Son therefore ſhall make you free, ye ſhall be free indeed. 37 I know that ye are Abraham's ſeed, but ye ſeek to kill me, becauſe my word hath no place in you.

We have in theſe Verſes,

Firſt, A comfortable Doctrine laid down concerning the *Spiritual Liberty* of Chriſt's Diſciples, intended for the Encouragement of *thoſe* Jews *which believed.* Chriſt knowing that his Doctrine began to work upon ſome of his Hearers, and perceiving that Virtue had gone out of him, turned his Diſcourſe from the proud Phariſees, and addreſſed himſelf to thoſe *weak* Believers; then when he had denounced Wrath againſt thoſe that were hardened in Unbelief, then he ſpoke Comfort to thoſe few feeble *Jews which believed in him.* See here, 1. How graciouſly the Lord Jeſus looks to thoſe that *tremble at his Word*, and are ready to receive it; he hath ſomething to ſay to thoſe who have hearing Ears, and will not paſs by thoſe who ſet themſelves in his way, without ſpeaking to them. 2. How carefully he cheriſheth the Beginnings of Grace, and meets thoſe that are coming towards him. Theſe *Jews that believed*, were yet but *weak*; but Chriſt did not therefore caſt them off, for he *gathers the Lambs in his Arms.* When Faith is in its Infancy, he hath *Knees to prevent it, Breaſts* for it to *ſuck*, that it may not *die from the Womb.*

In what he ſaid to them, we have two Things, which he ſaith to all that ſhould at any time believe.

1. The Character of a true Diſciple of Chriſt, *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Diſciples indeed.* When they *believed on him* as the great Prophet, they gave up themſelves to be *his Diſciples.* Now at their Entrance into his School, he lays down this for a ſettled Rule, that he would own none for *his Diſciples*, but thoſe that *continued in his Word.* 1. It is implied that there are many who profeſs themſelves Chriſt's Diſciples, that are not his *Diſciples indeed*; but only in Shew and Name. 2. It highly concerns thoſe that are not *ſtrong in Faith*, yet to ſee to it that they be *ſound in the Faith*; that tho' they be not Diſciples of the higheſt Form, yet that they be *Diſciples indeed.* 3. Thoſe that ſeem willing to be Chriſt's Diſciples, ought to be told that they had as good never come to him, unleſs they come with a Reſolution, by his Grace, to abide by him. Let thoſe that have Thoughts of covenanting with Chriſt, have no Thoughts of reſerving a Power of Revocation. Children are ſet to School and bound Apprentices only for a *few Years*; but thoſe only are Chriſt's, that are willing to be bound to him *for Term of Life.* 4. They only that *continue in Chriſt's Word*, ſhall be accepted as his *Diſciples indeed*, that *adhere* to his Word in every Inſtance, without Partiality, and *abide* by it to the End, without Apoſtacy. 'Tis μενεῖν, to *dwell* in Chriſt's Word, as a Man doth at home, which is his Centre, and Reſt, and Refuge. Our Converſe with the Word, and Conformity to it, muſt be conſtant. If we continue Diſciples to the laſt, then, and not otherwiſe, we approve ourſelves *Diſciples indeed.*

2. The Privilege of a true Diſciple of Chriſt. Here are two precious Promiſes made to thoſe who thus approve themſelves Diſciples indeed, *v.* 32.

(1.) *Ye ſhall know the Truth*, ſhall know all that Truth, which it is needful and profitable for you to know, and ſhall be more confirm'd in the Belief of it, ſhall know the Certainty of it. *Note*, 1. Even thoſe who are true Believers and Diſciples indeed, yet may be, and are much in the dark, concerning many Things which they ſhould know. God's Children are but Children, and underſtand and ſpeak as Children. Did we not need to be taught, we ſhould not need to be Diſciples. 2. It is a very great Privilege to *know the Truth*; to know the particular Truths which we are to believe in their mutual Dependencies and Connexions, and the Grounds and Reaſons of our Belief. To know what is Truth, and what proves it to be ſo. 3. It is a gracious Promiſe of Chriſt to all who continue in his Word, that they ſhall know the Truth as far as it is needful and profitable for them; Chriſt's Scholars are ſure to be well taught.

2. The *Truth ſhall make you free.* That is, (1.) The Truth which Chriſt teacheth, tends to make Men free, *Iſa.* 61. 1. Juſtification make us free from the Guilt of Sin, by which we were *bound over* to the Judgment of God, and *bound under* amazing Fears; Sanctification makes us free from the Bondage of Corruption, by which we were *reſtrained* from that Service which is perfect Freedom, and *conſtrained* to that which is perfect Slavery. Goſpel Truth frees us from the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law, and the more grievous Burthens of the Traditions of the Elders. It makes us free *from* our ſpiritual Enemies, free *in* the Service of God, free to the Privileges of Sons, and free *of* the *Jeruſalem* which is from above, which is free. (2.) The knowing, entertaining, and believing of this Truth, doth actually *make us free*, free from Prejudices, Miſtakes, and falſe Notions, than which nothing doth more *enſlave* and *entangle* the Soul; free from the Dominion of Luſt and Paſſion, and reſtores the Soul to the Government of itſelf, by reducing it into Obedience to its Creator. The Mind, by admitting the Truth of Chriſt in the Light and Power, is vaſtly enlarged, and hath Scope and Compaſs given it, is greatly elevated and raiſed above things of Senſe, and never acts with ſo true a Liberty, as when it acts under a Divine Command, 2 *Cor.* 3. 17. The Enemies of Chriſtianity pretend to *Free-thinking*, whereas really thoſe are the freeſt Reaſonings that are guided by Faith, and thoſe are Men of *free Thoughts*, whoſe Thoughts are captivated and brought into Obedience to Chriſt.

Secondly, The Offence which the carnal *Jews* took at this Doctrine, and their Objection againſt it. Tho' it was a Doctrine that brought glad Tidings of Liberty to the Captives, yet they cavilled at it, *v.* 33. The Phariſees, who grudg'd this comfortable Word to them that believed, the Standers-by, who had *no Part or Lot in this Matter*, they thought themſelves reflected upon and affronted by the gracious Charter of Liberty, granted to them that believed; and therefore with a great deal of Pride and Envy they anſwered him, *We* Jews *be* Abraham's *Seed*, and therefore are *Free-born*, and have not loſt our Birth-right Freedom, *we were never in Bondage to any Man, how ſayeſt thou then*, to us *Jews*, *ye ſhall be made free.*

See here what it was that they were aggrieved at, 'twas an *Innuendo* in thoſe Words, *Ye ſhall be made free*; as if the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation were in ſome ſort of Bondage, which reflected on the *Jews* in general; and as if all that did not believe in Chriſt, continued in that Bondage, which reflected on the Phariſees in particular. *Note*, The Privileges of the Faithful are the Envy and Vexation of Unbelievers, *Pſal.* 112. 10.

2. See what it was that they alledged againſt it; whereas Chriſt intimated that they needed to be made free, they urge, 1. We be *Abraham*'s Seed, and *Abraham* was a *Prince, and a great Man*; tho' we live in *Canaan*, we are not deſcended from *Canaan*, nor under his Doom, a *Servant of Servants ſhall be be*; we hold in *Franck-almoign*, and not in *Villenage.* 'Tis common for a ſinking decaying Family to boaſt of the Glory and Dignity of its Anceſtors, and to *borrow* Honour from that Name to which they *repay* Diſgrace; ſo the *Jews* here did. But this was not all: *Abraham* was in Covenant with God, and his Children by his Right, *Rom.* 11. 28. Now that Covenant no doubt was a Free-Charter, and inveſted them in Privileges not conſiſtent with a State of Slavery, *Rom.* 9. 4. And therefore they think they had no occaſion with ſo *great a Sum*, as they reckoned Faith in Chriſt to be, *to obtain this Freedom*, when they were thus *Free-born. Note*, It is the common Fault and Folly of thoſe that have pious Parentage and Education, to truſt to it, and boaſt of it, as if it would attone for the want of real Holineſs. They were *Abraham*'s *Seed*; but what would that avail them, when we find one in Hell, that could call *Abraham Father*? Saving Benefits are not like common Privileges convey'd by *Entail* to us and our Iſſue, nor can a Title to Heaven be made by *De-*

ſcent, neither may we claim as *Heirs at Law*, by making out our Pedigree ; our Title is purely by *Purchaſe*, not our own, but our Redeemer's for us, under certain Proviſo's and Limitations, which if we do not obſerve, it will not avail us to be *Abraham*'s Seed. Thus many when they are preſs'd with the Neceſſity of Regeneration, turn it off with this, we are the *Church's Children* ; but they are not all *Iſrael*, which are of *Iſrael*. 2. *We were never in Bondage to any Man.* Now obſerve, 1. How *falſe* this *Allegation* was. I wonder how they could have the Confidence to ſay a Thing in the Face of a Congregation, which was ſo notoriouſly *untrue* ; was not the Seed of *Abraham* in Bondage to the *Egyptians* ? Were they not oft in Bondage to the Neighbour Nations in the time of the Judges ? Were they not ſeventy Years Captives in *Babylon* ? Nay, were they not at this time Tributaries to the *Romans*, and tho' not in a *Perſonal*, yet in a *National* Bondage to them, and groaning to be made free ? And yet to confront Chriſt, they have the Impudence to ſay, *We were never in Bondage.* Thus they would expoſe Chriſt to the ill Will both of the *Jews*, who were very jealous for the Honour of their Liberty ; and of the *Romans*, who would not be thought to *enſlave* the Nations they *conquered*. 2. How *fooliſh* the *Application* was. Chriſt had ſpoken of a Liberty wherewith the Truth would make them free, which muſt be meant of a *ſpiritual* Liberty, for Truth as it is the *enriching*, ſo it is the *enfranchiſing* of the Mind, and the *enlarging* of that from the Captivity of Error and Prejudice ; and yet they plead againſt the Offer of *ſpiritual* Liberty, that they were never in *corporal* Thraldom : as if becauſe they were never in Bondage to any *Man*, they were never in Bondage to *any Luſt*. *Note*, Carnal Hearts are ſenſible of no other Grievances but thoſe that moleſt the Body, and diſtreſs the ſecular Affairs. Talk to them of Encroachments upon their Civil Liberty and Property, tell them of Waſte committed upon their Lands, or Damage done to their Houſes, and they underſtand you very well, and can give you a ſenſible Anſwer ; the thing toucheth them, and affects them : but diſcourſe to them of the Bondage of Sin, a Captivity to Satan, and a Liberty by Chriſt ; tell them of wrong done to their precious Souls, and the Hazard of their eternal Welfare, and *you bring certain ſtrange things to their Ears* ; they ſay of it, as they did, *Ezek.* 20. 49. *Doth he not ſpeak Parables ?* This here was much like the Blunder *Nicodemus* made about being *born again*.

Thirdly, Our Saviour's Vindication of this Doctrine from theſe Objections, and the further Explication of it, *v.* 34—37. where he doth theſe four Things.

1. He ſhews that notwithſtanding their civil Liberties, and their viſible Church-Memberſhip, yet it was poſſible they might be in a State of Bondage, *v.* 34. *Whoſoever commits Sin*, tho' he be of *Abraham*'s Seed, and never in Bondage to any Man, yet he is the *Servant of Sin.* Obſerve, Chriſt doth not upbraid them with the Falſhood of their Plea, or their preſent Bondage, but further explains what he had ſaid for their Edification. Thus Miniſters ſhould with Meekneſs inſtruct thoſe that oppoſe them, that they may *recover themſelves*, not with Paſſion provoke them to entangle themſelves yet more. Now here,

(1.) The Preface is very ſolemn, *Verily verily I ſay unto you* ; an awful Aſſeveration, which our Saviour oft uſed to command a reverend Attention and a ready Aſſent. The Style of the Prophets was, *Thus ſaith the Lord*, for they were *faithful as Servants* ; but Chriſt being a Son, ſpeaks in his own Name, *I ſay unto you*, I the *Amen*, the faithful Witneſs, he pawns his Veracity upon it : I ſay it to you, who boaſt of your Relation to *Abraham*, as if that would ſave you.

(2.) The Truth is of Univerſal Concern, tho' here delivered upon a particular Occaſion, *Whoſoever committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin*, and ſadly wants to be made free. A State of Sin is a State of Bondage.

1. See who it is on whom this Brand is faſtened, on him that *commits Sin* ; πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν ἁμαρτίαν, every one that *makes Sin*. There is not a *juſt Man* upon Earth, that *lives and ſins not* ; yet every one that ſins, is not a Servant of Sin, for then God would have no Servants ; but he that *makes Sin*, that *makes Choice* of Sin, prefers the Way of Wickedneſs before the Way of Holineſs, *Jer.* 44. 16, 17. That *makes a Covenant* with Sin, enters into League with it, and *makes a Marriage* with it ; and *makes Contrivances* of Sin, *makes Proviſion* for the Fleſh, and deviſeth Iniquity ; and that *makes a Cuſtom* of Sin, who walks after the Fleſh, and makes *a Trade of* Sin.

2. See what the Brand is, which Chriſt faſtens upon them that thus *commit Sin* ; he ſtigmatizeth them, gives them a Mark of Servitude. They are *Servants of Sin* ; impriſoned under the Guilt of Sin, under an Arreſt, in hold for it, *concluded under Sin*, and they are ſubject to the Power of Sin. He is a *Servant of Sin*, i. e. he makes himſelf ſo, and is ſo accounted ; he hath *ſold himſelf to work Wickedneſs* ; his Luſts give Law to him, he is at their Beck, and is not his own Maſter. He doth the Work of Sin, ſupports its Intereſt, and accepts its Wages, *Rom.* 6. 16.

2. He ſhews them, that being in a State of Bondage, their having a Room in the Houſe of God, would not entitle them to the Inheritance of Sons, for *v.* 35. *The Servant*, tho' he be in the Houſe for a while, yet being but a Servant, *abideth not in the Houſe for ever.* Services (we ſay) are no Inheritances, they are but *temporary*, and not for a *Perpetuity* ; *but the Son* of the Family abideth ever. Now, 1. This points primarily at the Rejection of the *Jewiſh* Church and Nation ; *Iſrael* had been *God's Son, his Firſt-born*, but they wretchedly degenerated into a *ſervile* Diſpoſition, were enſlaved to the World and the Fleſh ; and therefore tho' by virtue of their Birth-right, they thought themſelves ſecure of their Church-Memberſhip, Chriſt tells them, that having thus made themſelves Servants, they ſhould not *abide in the Houſe for ever. Jeruſalem*, by oppoſing the Goſpel of Chriſt, which proclaimed Liberty, and adhering to the *Sinai* Covenant, which gender'd to Bondage, after its Term was *expired*, came to be in *Bondage with her Children*, Gal. 4. 24, 25. and therefore was unchurched and disfranchiz'd, her Charter ſeiz'd, and taken away, and ſhe was caſt out as the Son of the Bond-woman, *Gen.* 21. 20. *Chryſoſtom* gives this Senſe of this Place, Think not to be made free from Sin by the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law of *Moſes*, for *Moſes* was but a Servant, and had not that perpetual Authority in the Church, which the Son had ; but if the Son make you free, 'tis well, *v.* 36. But, 2. It looks further to the Rejection of all that are the *Servants of Sin*, and receive not the Adoption of the *Sons of God* ; tho' thoſe unprofitable Servants may be in God's Houſe a while, as Retainers to his Family ; yet there is a Day coming, when the Children of the *Bond-woman* and the *Free* ſhall be diſtinguiſhed. True Believers only, who are the Children of the Promiſe, and of the Covenant, are accounted free, and ſhall abide for ever in the Houſe, as *Iſaac* : They ſhall have a *Nail* in the Holy Place on Earth, *Jer.* 9. 8. and *Manſions* in the Holy Place in Heaven, *John* 14. 12.

3. He ſhews them the way of Deliverance out of this State of Bondage, into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God, *Rom.* 8. 21. The Caſe of thoſe that are the Servants of Sin is ſad, but thanks be to God it is not *helpleſs*, it is not *hopeleſs*. As it is the Privilege of all the Sons of the Family, and their Dignity above the Servants, that they abide in the Houſe for ever ; ſo he, who is *the Son*, the Firſt-born of many Brethren, and the Heir of all Things, he has a Power, both of Manumiſſion and of Adoption ; *v.* 6. *If the Son ſhall make ye free, you ſhall be free indeed.*

Note, 1. *Jeſus Chriſt* in the Goſpel offers us our *Freedom* ; he has Authority and Power to *make free*. (1.) To *diſcharge Priſoners* ; this he doth in Juſtification, by making Satisfaction for *our Guilt*, on which the Goſpel Offer is grounded ; which is to all, a conditional *Act of Indemnity*, and to all true Believers, upon their believing, an abſolute *Charter of Pardon* : and for *our Debts*, for which we were by the Law arreſted and in Execution ; Chriſt is our Surety, or rather our Bail, (for he was not originally bound *with us*, but upon our Inſolvency bound *for us*) compounds with the Creditor, anſwers the Demands of injured Juſtice with more than an *Equivalent*, takes the *Bond* and *Judgment* into his own Hands, and gives them up *cancelled* to all that by Faith and Repentance give him (if I may ſo ſay) a *counter Security* to ſave his Honour harmleſs, and ſo they are *made free*, and from the Debt, and every Part thereof, they are for ever acquitted, exonerated, and diſcharged, and a general Releaſe ſealed of all Actions and Claims ; whilſt againſt thoſe who refuſe to come up to theſe Terms, the Securities lie ſtill in the Redeemer's hands in full Force. (2.) He has a Power to *reſcue Bond-ſlaves*, and this he doth in *Sanctification* ; by the powerful Arguments of his Goſpel, and the powerful Operations of his Spirit, he breaks the Power of Corruption in the Soul, rallies the ſcattered Forces of Reaſon and Virtue, and fortifies God's Intereſt againſt Sin and Satan, and ſo the Soul is made free. (3.) He has a Power to *naturalize Strangers and Foreigners*, and this he doth in *Adoption*. This is a farther Act of Grace, we are not only forgiven and healed, but *preferr'd*, there's a Charter of Privileges as well as Pardon, and thus the Son makes us free *Denizens* of the Kingdom of Prieſts, the Holy Nation, the New *Jeruſalem*.

2. Thoſe whom Chriſt makes free, are *free indeed*. It is not ἀληθῶς, the Word uſed, *v.* 31. for Diſciples *indeed*, but ὄντως, *really*. It notes, 1. The Truth and Certainty of the Promiſe ; the Liberty which the *Jews* boaſted of, was an *imaginary* Liberty, they boaſted of a *falſe Gift* ; but the Liberty which Chriſt gives is a certain thing, 'tis real, and has real Effects ; the Servants of Sin promiſe themſelves Liberty, and fancy themſelves free, when they have broke Religion's Bands aſunder ; but they cheat themſelves, none are *free indeed*, but thoſe whom Chriſt *makes free*. 2. It notes the ſingular Excellency of the Freedom promiſed ; 'tis a Fredom that deſerves the Name, in compariſon with which all other Liberties are no better than Slaveries, ſo much doth it turn to the Honour and Advantage of thoſe that are *made free* by it. 'Tis a *glorious* Liberty. 'Tis that which is : (ſo ὄντως ſignifies) 'tis *Subſtance*, Prov. 8. 21. while the Things of the World are Shadows ; Things that *are not*.

4. He applies this to theſe unbelieving cavilling *Jews*. In anſwer to their Boaſts of Relation to *Abraham*, v. 37. *I know* very well, *that ye are Abraham's Seed, but now ye ſeek to kill me*, and therefore have forfeited the Honour of your Relation to *Abraham*, *becauſe my Word hath no place in you.* Obſerve here,

1. The Dignity of their Extraction allowed them, *I know that ye are* Abraham's *Seed* ; every one knows it, and it is your Honour

nour. He grants them what was true, and in what they ſaid that was falſe, that they were *never* in Bondage to any, he doth not *contradict* them, for he ſtudy'd to *profit* them, and not to *provoke* them, and therefore ſaid that which would pleaſe them; *I know that ye are* Abraham'*s Seed.* They boaſted of their Deſcent from *Abraham*, as that which *aggrandiz'd* their Names, and made them exceeding honourable, whereas really it did but *aggravate* their Crimes, and make them exceeding ſinful. Out of their own Mouths will he judge vain-glorious Hypocrites, who boaſt of their Parentage and Education: Are you *Abraham*'s Seed, why then did you not tread in the Steps of his Faith and Obedience?

2. The Diſagreeableneſs of their Practice with this Dignity; *But ye ſeek to kill me.* They had attempted it ſeveral times, and were now deſigning it, which quickly appear'd, *v.* 59. when they *took up Stones to caſt at him.* Chriſt knows all the Wickedneſs, not only which Men *do*, but which they *ſeek* and deſign, and endeavour to do. To ſeek to kill any innocent Man, is a Crime black enough, but to *compaſs and imagine* the Death of him that was King of Kings, was a Crime which we want Words to expreſs the Heinouſneſs of.

3. The Reaſon of this Inconſiſtency; why were they that were *Abraham*'s Seed, ſo very inveterate againſt *Abraham*'s *promiſed Seed*, in whom they and *all the Families of the Earth* ſhould be *bleſſed*; our Saviour here tells them, 'tis becauſe *my Word hath no place in you*, οὐ χωρεῖ ἐν ὑμῖν, *Non capit in nobis*, ſo the Vulgar; my Word *doth not take with you*, you have no Inclination to it, no Reliſh of it, other Things are more taking, more pleaſing. Or, it doth not *take hold of you*, it hath no Power over you, makes no Impreſſion upon you. Some of the Criticks read it, *My Word doth not penetrate into you*; it deſcended as the Rain, but it came upon them as the Rain upon the Rock, which it runs off, and did not ſoak into their Hearts, as the Rain upon the plowed Ground. The *Syriac* reads it, Becauſe *ye do not acquieſce in my Word*; you are not perſuaded of the Truth of it, nor pleaſed with the Goodneſs of it. Our Tranſlation is very ſignificant, it *has no place in you.* They *ſought to kill him*, and ſo effectually to *ſilence* him, not becauſe he had done them any harm, but becauſe they could not bear the convincing commanding Power of his Word. *Note*, 1. The Words of Chriſt ought to have a Place in us, the innermoſt and uppermoſt Place; a *dwelling* Place, as a Man at home, and not as a Stranger or Sojourner; a *working* Place, it muſt have room to operate, to work Sin out of us, and to work Grace in us; it muſt have a *ruling* Place, its Place muſt be *upon the Throne*, it muſt dwell in us richly. 2. There are many that make a Profeſſion of Religion, in whom *the Word of* Chriſt has *no Place*; they will not *allow* it a Place, for they do not like it; Satan doth all he can to *diſplace* it; and other things poſſeſs the Place it ſhould have in us. 3. Where the Word of God has no Place, no good is to be expected, for room is left there for all Wickedneſs. If the unclean Spirit find the Heart empty of Chriſt's Word, he *enters in and dwells there.*

38 I ſpeak that which I have ſeen with my Father:
and ye do that which ye have ſeen with your
Father. 39 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Abraham
is our father. Jeſus ſaith unto them, If ye were
Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.
40 But now ye ſeek to kill me, a man that hath
told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this
did not Abraham. 41 Ye do the deeds of your father.
Then ſaid they to him, We be not born of fornication;
we have one Father, *even* God. 42 Jeſus ſaid unto
them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for
I proceeded forth, and came from God; neither came I
of my ſelf, but he ſent me. 43 Why do ye not underſtand
my ſpeech? even becauſe ye cannot hear my word. 44
Ye are of *your* father the devil; and the luſts of your father
ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning,
and abode not in the truth, becauſe there is no truth in
him. When he ſpeaketh a lye, he ſpeaketh of his
own: for he is a lyar, and the father of it. 45 And
becauſe I tell *you* of the truth, ye believe me not. 46
Which of you convinceth me of ſin? And if I ſay the
truth, why do ye not believe me? 47 He that is of
God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not,
becauſe ye are not of God.

Here Chriſt and the *Jews* are ſtill at it; he ſets himſelf to convince and convert them, while they ſtill ſet themſelves to contradict and oppoſe him.

1. He here traceth the Difference between his Sentiments and theirs, to a different Riſe and Original; *v.* 38. *I ſpeak that which I have ſeen with my Father*, and *ye* do *what ye have ſeen with the Father.* Here are two Fathers ſpoken of according to the two Families, into which the Sons of Men are divided, *God* and the *Devil*; and without Controverſy theſe are contrary the one to the other.

(1.) Chriſt's *Doctrine* was from *Heaven*, 'twas *copied* out of the *Councils* of infinite Wiſdom, and the kind Intentions of eternal Love. (1.) *I ſpeak that which I have ſeen.* The Diſcoveries Chriſt has made us, of God and another World, are not grounded upon Gueſs and Hearſay, but upon ocular Inſpection; ſo that he was thoroughly *appriz'd* of the Nature, and *aſcertain'd* of the Truth of all he ſaid. He that is given to be a Witneſs to the People, is an Eye-witneſs, and therefore unexceptionable (2.) 'Tis what I have ſeen *with my Father.* The Doctrine of Chriſt is not a *plauſible* Hypotheſis, ſupported by probable Arguments, but 'tis an exact Counterpart of the uncontestable Truths lodged in the eternal Mind. 'Twas not only what he had *heard from* his Father, but what he had *ſeen with him*, when *the Counſel of Peace was between them both. Moſes* ſpake what he heard from God, but he might not ſee the Face of God; *Paul* had been in the third Heaven, but what he had ſeen there, he could not, he muſt not utter; for it was Chriſt's Prerogative to have *ſeen* what he *ſpoke*, and to *ſpeak* what he had *ſeen.*

(2.) Their *Doings* were from Hell; *Ye do that which ye have ſeen with your Father.* Ye do by your own Works father yourſelves, for it is evident whom ye reſemble, and therefore eaſy to find out your Original. As a Child that is train'd up with his Father, learns his Father's Words and Faſhions, and grows like him by an affected Imitation, as well as by a natural Image; ſo theſe *Jews*, by their malicious Oppoſition to Chriſt and the Goſpel, made themſelves as like the Devil, as if they had induſtriouſly ſet him before them for their Pattern.

2. He takes off and anſwers their vain-glorious Boaſts of Relation to *Abraham*, and to *God*, as their Fathers, and ſhews the Vanity and Falſhood of their Pretenſions.

Firſt, They pleaded Relation to *Abraham*, and he reply'd to that Plea, *They ſaid*, Abraham *is our Father*, v. 39. In this they intended, (1.) To do Honour to themſelves, and to make themſelves look great. They had forgot the Mortification given them by that Acknowledgment preſcrib'd them, *Deut.* 26. 5. *A* Syrian *ready to periſh was my Father.* And the Charge exhibited againſt their degenerate Anceſtors (whoſe Steps they trod in, and not thoſe of the firſt Founder of the Family) *Thy Father was an* Amorite, *and thy Mother a* Hittite, *Ezek.* 16. 3. As it is common for thoſe Families that are ſinking and going to decay, to brag moſt of their Pedigree, ſo it is common for thoſe Churches that are corrupt and deprav'd, to value themſelves upon their Antiquity, and the Eminence of their firſt Planters; *Fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium.* (2.) They deſign'd to caſt an Odium upon Chriſt, as if he reflected upon the Patriarch *Abraham*, in ſpeaking of their Father, as one they had learn'd Evil from. See how they ſought an Occaſion to quarrel with him.

Now Chriſt overthrows this Plea, and diſcovers the Vanity of it, by a plain and cogent Argument; *Abraham*'s Children will do the Works of *Abraham*, but ye do not do *Abraham*'s Works, therefore ye are not *Abraham*'s Children.

1. The Propoſition is plain, *If ye were* Abraham'*s Children*, ſuch Children of *Abraham*, as could claim an Intereſt in the Covenant made with him and his Seed, which would indeed put an Honour upon you, then ye would *do the Works of* Abraham; for to thoſe only of *Abraham*'s Houſe, who *kept the Way of the Lord*, as *Abraham* did, would God *perform what he had ſpoken*, Gen. 18. 19. Thoſe only are reckon'd the Seed of *Abraham*, to whom the Promiſe belongs, that *tread in the Steps* of his Faith and Obedience, *Rom.* 4. 12. Tho' the *Jews* had their Genealogies, and kept them exact, yet they could not by them make out their Relation to *Abraham*, ſo as to take the Benefit of the old Entail, (*per Formam Doni*) unleſs they walk'd in the ſame Spirit. Good Womens Relation to *Sarah* is prov'd only by this, *whoſe Daughters ye are as long as ye do well*, and no longer, 1 *Pet.* 3. 6. *Note*, Thoſe who would approve themſelves *Abraham*'s Seed, muſt not only be of *Abraham*'s Faith, but do *Abraham*'s *Works*, Jam. 2. 21, 22. muſt come at God's Call, as he did, muſt follow God whereever he leads them, muſt reſign their deareſt Comforts to him, muſt be Strangers and Sojourners in this World, muſt keep up the Worſhip of God in their Families, and always walk before God in their Uprightneſs, for theſe were the Works of *Abraham.*

2. The Aſſumption is evident likewiſe; *But ye do not do* the Works of *Abraham*, for *ye ſeek to kill me, a Man that has told you the Truth, which I have heard of God; this did not* Abraham, *v.* 40.

(1.) He ſhews them what their Work was; their preſent Work, which they were now about; they *ſought to kill him*; and three things are intimated as an Aggravation of their Intention. (1.) They were ſo *unnatural* as to ſeek the Life of *a Man*, a Man like themſelves, Bone of their Bone, and Fleſh of their Fleſh, who had done them no harm, nor given them any Provocation. Ye *imagine Miſchief againſt a Man*, Pſal. 62. 3. (2.) They were ſo *ungrateful* as to ſeek the Life of one that had *told them the Truth*, had not only done them no Injury, but done them the greateſt Kindneſs that could be; had not only not impos'd upon them with a Lye, but had inſtructed them in the moſt neceſſary and important Truths; *was he therefore become their Enemy?* (3.) They were ſo *ungodly* as to ſeek the Life of one that told them the Truth, *which he had heard from God*, who was a Meſſenger ſent from God to them, ſo that their Attempt againſt him was *quaſi Deicidium*, an Act of Malice againſt God himſelf. This was their Work, and they perſiſted in it.

(2.) He ſhews them that this did not become the Children of *Abraham*, for *this did not Abraham*. 1. He did nothing like this. He was famous for his Humanity, witneſs his Reſcue of the Captives: and for his Piety, witneſs his Obedience to the heavenly Viſion in many Inſtances, and ſome tender ones. *Abraham* believed God, theſe were obſtinate in Unbelief: *Abraham* followed God, theſe fought againſt him; ſo that he would be *ignorant of them, and would not acknowledge them*, they were ſo unlike him, *Iſa.* 63. 16. ſee *Jer.* 22. 15, 16, 17. 2. He would not have done thus if he had liv'd now, or I had lived then. *Hoc* Abraham *non feciſſet*, ſo ſome read it. We ſhould thus reaſon ourſelves out of any way of Wickedneſs; would *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Jacob* have done ſo? We cannot expect to be *ever with them*, if we be *never like them*.

3. The Concluſion follows of courſe, *v.* 41. Whatever your Boaſts and Pretenſions be, you are not *Abraham*'s Children, but father yourſelves upon another Family, *v.* 41. There is *a Father whoſe Deeds you do*, whoſe Spirit ye are of, and whom ye reſemble. He doth not *yet* ſay plainly that he means the Devil, till they by their continued Cavils forc'd him ſo to explain himſelf; which teacheth us to treat even bad Men with Civility and Reſpect, and not to be forward to ſay that of them, or to them, which tho' *true*, ſounds *harſh*. He try'd whether they would ſuffer their own Conſciences to infer from what he ſaid, that they were the Devil's Children; and 'tis better hear it from them now we are call'd to *repent*, that is, to change our Father, and change our Family, by changing our Spirit and Way, than hear it from Chriſt in the great Day.

Secondly, So far were they from owning their unworthineſs of Relation to *Abraham*, that they plead Relation to God himſelf as their Father: We *be not born of Fornication*, we are not Baſtards, but legitimate Sons; *we have one Father, even God*.

1. Some underſtand this literally. They were not the Sons of the Bondwoman, as the *Iſhmaelites* were; nor begotten in Inceſt, as the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* were, *Deut.* 23. 3. nor were they a ſpurious Brood in *Abraham*'s Family, but *Hebrews* of the *Hebrews*; and being born in *lawful* Wedlock, they might call God Father, who inſtituted that honourable Eſtate in Innocency: For a legitimate Seed not tainted with Divorces, or the plurality of Wives, is called a *Seed of God*, Mal. 3. 15.

2. Others take it figuratively. They begin to be aware now, that Chriſt ſpoke of a *ſpiritual*, not a *carnal* Fatherhood; of the Father of their Religion, and ſo,

1. They deny themſelves to be a Generation of Idolaters; we *be not born of Fornication*, are not the Children of Idolatrous Parents, nor have been bred up in Idolatrous Worſhips. Idolatry is often ſpoken of as ſpiritual *Whoredom*, and Idolaters as *Children of Whoredoms*, Hoſ. 2. 4. Jer. 57. 3. Now if they mean that they were not the Poſterity of Idolaters, the Allegation was falſe, for no Nation was more addicted to Idolatry than the *Jews* before the Captivity: If they mean no more, but that they themſelves were not Idolaters, what then? A Man may be free from Idolatry, and yet periſh in another Iniquity, and be ſhut out of *Abraham*'s Covenant. *If thou commit no Idolatry* (apply it to this ſpiritual Fornication) yet if thou kill, thou art become a *Tranſgreſſor* of the Covenant. A Rebellious, Prodigal Son will be diſinherited, tho' he be not *born of Fornication*.

2. They boaſt themſelves to be true Worſhippers of the true God. We have not many Fathers, as the Heathens had, *Gods many, and Lords many*, and yet were without God; as *Filius Populi* has many Fathers, and yet none certain; no, *the Lord our God is one Lord, and one Father*, and therefore 'tis well with us. *Note*, Thoſe flatter themſelves, and put a damning Cheat upon their own Souls, who imagine that their profeſſing the true Religion, and worſhipping the true God will ſave them, tho' they worſhip not God in the Spirit and in Truth, nor are true to their Profeſſion.

Now our Saviour gives a full Anſwer to this fallacious Plea, *v.* 42, 43. and proves by Two Arguments that they had no Right to call God Father.

1. They did not love Chriſt: *If God were your Father, you would love me.* He had diſproved their Relation to *Abraham*, by their going about to kill him, *v.* 40. but here he diſproves their Relation to God, by their not loving and owning him; a Man may paſs for a *Child* of *Abraham*, if he do not appear an Enemy to Chriſt by groſs Sin; but he cannot approve himſelf a *Child of God*, unleſs he be a faithful Friend and Follower of Chriſt. *Note*, All that have God for their Father, have a true Love to Jeſus Chriſt, an Eſteem of his Perſon, a grateful Senſe of his Love, a ſincere Affection to his Cauſe and Kingdom, a Complacency in the Salvation wrought out by him, and in the Method and Terms of it, and a care to keep his Commandments, which is the ſureſt Evidence of our Love to him. We are here in a State of Probation, upon our Trial, how we will carry ourſelves towards our Maker, and accordingly it will be with us in the State of Retribution; God has taken various Methods to prove us, and this was one; he ſent his Son into the World with ſufficient Proofs of his Sonſhip and Miſſion, concluding that all that called him Father would *kiſs his Son*, and bid him Welcome, who was the Firſt-born among many Brethren; ſee 1 *John* 5. 1. By this our Adoption will be proved, or diſprov'd, did we love Chriſt or not: *If any Man do not*, he is ſo far from being a Child of God, that he is *Anathema*, accurſed, 1 *Cor.* 16. 22.

Now our Saviour proves, that if they were God's Children they would *love him*, for (ſaith he) I proceeded *forth and came from God*. They will love him, for,

(1.) He was the Son of God; *I proceeded forth from God*, ἐξῆλθον; this means his Divine 'Εξελευσις, or Original from the Father by the Communication of the Divine Eſſence, and alſo the Union of the Divine λογος to his human Nature, ſo Dr. *Whitby*. Now this could not but recommend him to the Affections of all that were *born of God*. Chriſt is called the *Beloved*, becauſe being the beloved of the Father, he is certainly the beloved of all the Saints, *Eph.* 1. 6.

(1.) He was *ſent of God*, came from him as an Ambaſſador to the World of Mankind. He did not *come of himſelf*, as the falſe Prophets, who had not either their *Miſſion*, or their *Meſſage*, from God, *Jer.* 23. 21. Obſerve the Emphaſis he lays upon this, *I came from God, neither came I myſelf, but he ſent me*; he had both his Credentials and his Inſtructions from God; he came to *gather together in one the Children of God*, Joh. 11. 52. to bring *many Sons to Glory*, Heb. 2. 10. And would not all God's Children embrace with both Arms a Meſſenger ſent from their Father on *ſuch* Errands? But theſe *Jews* made it appear they were nothing a-kin to God, by their want of Affection to Jeſus Chriſt.

2. They did not underſtand him. 'Twas a Sign they did not belong to God's Family, that they did not underſtand the Language and Dialect of the Family: *Ye do not underſtand my Speech*, v. 43. τὴν λαλιὰν τὴν ἡμην. Chriſt's Speech was Divine and heavenly, but intelligible enough to thoſe that were acquainted with the Voice of Chriſt in the Old Teſtament; thoſe that had made the Word of the Creator familiar to them, need no other Key to the Dialect of the Redeemer; and yet theſe *Jews* make ſtrange of the Doctrine of Chriſt, and find Knots in it, and I know not what ſtumbling Stones. Could a *Galilean* be known by his Speech? An *Ephraimite* by his *Sibboleth*? And would any have the Confidence to call God Father, to whom the Son of God was a *Barbarian*, even when he ſpoke the Will of God in the Words of the Spirit of God? *Note*, Thoſe who are not acquainted with the Divine Speech, have reaſon to fear that they are Strangers to the Divine Nature. Chriſt ſpoke the Words of God (*John* 3. 34.) in the Dialect of the Kingdom of God; and yet they who pretended to belong to the Kingdom, underſtood not the Idioms and Properties of it, but like Strangers, and rude ones too, ridicul'd it.

And the Reaſon why they did not underſtand Chriſt's Speech, made the Matter much worſe, even *becauſe ye cannot hear my Word*, i. e. ye cannot perſuade yourſelves to hear it attentively, impartially, and without Prejudice, as it ſhould be heard. The meaning of this *cannot*, is an obſtinate *will not*; as the *Jews* could not hear *Stephen*, Acts 7. 57. nor *Paul*, Acts 22. 22. *Note*, The rooted Antipathy of Mens corrupt Hearts to the Doctrine of Chriſt is the true Reaſon of their Ignorance of it, and their Errors and Miſtakes about it. They do not like it, nor love it, and therefore they will not underſtand it; like *Peter*, who pretended he *knew not what the Damſel ſaid*, (Mat. 26. 70.) when in truth he knew not what to ſay to it. *Ye cannot hear my Words*, for you have *ſtopped your Ears*, Pſal. 58. 4, 5. and God in a way of righteous Judgment has *made your Ears heavy*, Iſa. 6. 10.

3. Having thus diſproved their Relation, both to *Abraham* and to God, he comes next to tell them plainly whoſe Children they were; *ye are of your Father the Devil*, v. 44. If they be not God's Children, they are the Devil's, for God and *Satan* divide the World of Mankind; the Devil is therefore ſaid to *work in the Children of Diſobedience*, Eph. 2. 2. All wicked People are the Devil's Children, *Children of Belial*, 2 Cor. 6. 15. The Serpent's Seed, *Gen.* 3. 15. Children of the wicked one, *Mat.* 13. 38. They partake of his Nature, bear his Image, obey his Commands, and follow his Example. Idolaters *ſaid to a Stock, thou art my Father*, Jer. 2. 27.

This is a high Charge, and ſounds very harſh and horrid, that any of the Children of Men, eſpecially the Church's Children, ſhould be call'd Children of the Devil; and therefore our Saviour fully proves it,

1. By a general Argument, *The Luſts of your Father you will do*, θέλετε ποιεῖν. 1. You do the Devil's Luſts, the Luſts which he would have you to fulfil; you gratify and pleaſe him, and comply with his Temptations, and are *led Captives by him at his Will*. Nay, you do thoſe Luſts which the Devil himſelf fulfils. Fleſhly Luſts, and worldly Luſts, the Devil tempts Men to; but being a Spirit, he cannot fulfil them himſelf. The peculiar Luſts of the Devil, are *ſpiritual Wickedneſſes*, the Luſts of the intellectual Powers, and their corrupt Reaſons; Pride and Envy, and Wrath, and Malice; Enmity to that which is Good, and enticing others to that which is Evil; theſe are Luſts which the Devil fulfils, and thoſe who are under the Dominion of theſe Luſts, reſemble the Devil, as the Child doth the Parent. The more there is of Contemplation and Contrivance, and ſecret Complacency in Sin, the more it reſembles the *Luſts of the Devil*. 2. You *will do* the Devil's Luſts: The more there is of the *Will* in theſe Luſts, the more there is of the Devil in

them. When Sin is committed *of Choice*, and not by Surprize, with *Pleaſure*, and not with Reluctancy, when 'tis perſiſted in with a daring Preſumption, and a deſperate Reſolution, like theirs that ſaid, *We have loved Strangers, and after them we will go*; then the Sinner *will do* the Devil's Luſts. The Luſts of your Father you *delight to do*; ſo Dr. *Hammond*, they are rolled under the Tongue as a ſweet Morſel.

2. By two particular Inſtances, wherein they manifeſtly reſembled the Devil, *Murder* and *Lying*. The Devil is an Enemy to Life, becauſe God is the God of Life, and Life is the Happineſs of Man; and an Enemy to Truth, becauſe God is the God of Truth, and Truth is the Bond of human Society.

1. He was *a Murderer from the Beginning*, not from his own Beginning, for he was created an Angel of Light, and had a firſt Eſtate, which was pure and good, but from the Beginning of his Apoſtacy, which was ſoon after the Creation of Man, he was ἀνθρωπόκτονος, *Homicida*, a *Manſlayer*. 1. He was a *Hater of Man*, and ſo in Affection and Diſpoſition a Murderer of him. He has his Name, *Satan*, from *Sitnah*, Hatred. He maligned God's Image upon Man, envied his Happineſs, and earneſtly deſired his Ruin, was an avowed Enemy to the whole Race. (2.) He was Man's Tempter to *that* Sin which brought Death into the World, and ſo he was effectually the Murderer of all Mankind, which in *Adam* had but *one Neck*. He was a Murderer of Souls, *deceived* them into Sin, and by it *ſlew them*, Rom. 7. 11. poiſon'd Man with the forbidden Fruit, and to aggravate the Matter, made him his own Murderer. Thus he was not only *at* the Beginning, but *from* the Beginning, which intimates that thus he *has been* ever ſince; as he began, ſo he continues, the Murderer of Men by his Temptations. The great Tempter is the great Deſtroyer. The *Jews* called the Devil, *The Angel of Death*. 3. He was the firſt Wheel in the firſt Murder that ever was committed by *Cain*, who was of that wicked One, and ſlew his Brother, 1 *John* 3. 12. If the Devil had not been very ſtrong in *Cain*, he could not have done ſuch an unnatural thing, as to kill his own Brother. *Cain* killing his Brother by the Inſtigation of the Devil, the Devil is called the *Murderer*, which doth not ſpeak *Cain*'s perſonal Guilt the leſs, but the Devil's the more; whoſe Torments we have reaſon to think will be the greater, when the Time comes, for all that Wickedneſs which he has drawn Men into. See what reaſon we have to *ſtand* upon our Guard *againſt the Wiles of the Devil*, and never to hearken to him, for he is a Murderer, and certainly aims to do us a Miſchief, even when he *ſpeaks fair*; and to wonder that he, who is the Murderer of the Children of Men, ſhould yet be, by their own Conſent, ſo much their Maſter.

Now herein theſe *Jews* were Followers of him, and were Murderers like him; Murderers of Souls, which they led blindfold into the Ditch, and made the *Children of Hell*, ſworn Enemies to Chriſt, and now ready to be his Betrayers and Murderers, for the ſame reaſon that *Cain* killed *Abel*. Theſe *Jews* were that *Seed of the Serpent*, that were to *bruiſe the Heel* of the *Seed of the Woman*; now *ye ſeek to kill me*.

2. He was *a Lyar*. A Lye is oppoſed to Truth, 1 *John* 2. 21. and accordingly the Devil is here deſcribed to be,

1. An Enemy to Truth; and therefore to Chriſt.

(1.) He is a *Deſerter* from the Truth; he *abode not in the Truth*, did not continue in the Purity and Rectitude of his Nature, wherein he was created, but left his firſt State; when he degenerated from Goodneſs, he departed from Truth; for his Apoſtacy was founded in a Lye. The Angels were the *Hoſts of the Lord*, thoſe that fell, were not *true* to their Commander and Sovereign, they were not to be *truſted*, being charged with Folly and Defection, *Job* 4. 18. By the Truth here we may underſtand the revealed Will of God, concerning the Salvation of Man by Jeſus Chriſt, the Truth which Chriſt was now preaching, and which the *Jews* oppoſed; herein they did *like their Father the Devil*, who *ſeeing* the Honour put upon the human Nature, in the *firſt Adam*, and *foreſeeing* the much greater Honour intended it in the *ſecond Adam*, would not be reconciled to that Counſel of God, nor *ſtand in the Truth* concerning it, but from a Spirit of Pride and Envy, ſet himſelf to reſiſt it, and to thwart the Deſigns of it, and ſo did theſe *Jews* here, as his Children and Agents.

(2.) He is *deſtitute* of the Truth; *There is no Truth in him*. His Intereſt in the World is ſupported by Lyes and Falſhoods, and there is no Truth, nothing you can confide in, in him, nor in any thing he ſaith or doth. The Notions he propagates concerning Good and Evil, are falſe and erroneous; his Proofs are lying Wonders, his Temptations are all Cheats; he has great Knowledge of the Truth, but having no Affection to it, but on the contrary, being a ſworn Enemy to it, he is ſaid to have *no Truth in him*.

2. He is a Friend and Patron of Lying. *When he ſpeaketh a Lye, he ſpeaketh of his own*. Three Things are here ſaid of the Devil, with reference to the Sin of Lying.

1. That he is *a Lyar*; his Oracles were lying Oracles, his Prophets lying Prophets, and the Images in which he was worſhipped *Teachers of Lyes*; he tempted our firſt Parents with a downright Lye; all his Temptations are carry'd on by Lyes, calling *Evil Good*, and *Good Evil*, and promiſing Impunity in Sin; he knows them to be Lyes, and ſuggeſts them with an *Intention to deceive*, and ſo to *deſtroy*. When he now *contradicted* the Goſpel in the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, it was by Lyes; and when afterwards he *corrupted it* in the Man of Sin, it was by ſtrong Deluſions, and a great complicated Lye.

2. That when he *ſpeaketh a Lye*, he *ſpeaketh of his own*, ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων. It is the proper *Idiom* of his Language; of *his own*, not of God; his Creator never put it into him. When Men ſpeak a Lye, they borrow it from the Devil, Satan *fills their Hearts to lye*, Acts 5. 3. But when the Devil ſpeaks a Lye, the *Model* of it is of his own framing, the Motives to it from himſelf, which ſpeaks the deſperate Depth of Wickedneſs, into which thoſe Apoſtate Spirits are ſunk; as in their firſt Defection they had no Tempter, ſo their Sinfulneſs is ſtill *their own*.

3. That he is the *Father of it*, ἀυτȣ̃. (1.) He is the Father of every *Lye*; not only of the Lyes which he himſelf ſuggeſts, but of thoſe which others ſpeak; he is the Author and Founder of all Lyes; when Men ſpeak Lyes, they ſpeak from him, and as his Mouth, they come originally from him, and bear his Image. (2.) He is the Father of *every Lyar*; ſo it may be underſtood. God made Men with a Diſpoſition to Truth, 'tis congruous to Reaſon and Natural Light, to the Order of our Faculties, and the Laws of Society, that we ſhould ſpeak Truth; but the Devil, the Author of Sin, the Spirit that works in the Children of Diſobedience, hath ſo corrupted the Nature of Man, that the Wicked are ſaid to be *eſtranged from the Womb*, *ſpeaking Lyes*, Pſal. 58. 3. he hath taught them *with their Tongues* to *uſe Deceit*, Rom. 3. 13. He is the Father of Lyars, that begat them, that trained them up in the *Way of Lying*, whom they reſemble and obey, and with whom all *Lyars* ſhall have their Portion for ever. Chriſt having thus proved all Murderers, and all Lyars, to be the Devil's Children, he leaves it to the Conſciences of his Hearers to ſay, *Thou art the Man*.

But he comes, in the following Verſes, to aſſiſt them in the Application of it to themſelves; he doth not call them *Lyars*, but ſhews them that they were no Friends to Truth, and therein reſembled him, who *abode not in the Truth*, *becauſe there is no Truth in him*.

Two Things he chargeth upon them.

1. That they would not *believe the Word of Truth*, ver. 45. ὅτι τὴν ἀλήθειαν λεγω ȣ̓ πιϛέυετέ μοι. Two Ways it may be taken, (1.) Tho I tell you the Truth, yet you will not believe me (ὅτι) *that I do ſo*. Tho he gave abundant Proof of his Commiſſion from God, and his Affection to the Children of Men, yet they would not believe that he told them the Truth. Now was *Truth fallen in the Street*, and *could not enter*, Iſa. 59. 14, 15. The greateſt Truths with ſome gained not the leaſt Credit; for they *rebelled againſt the Light*, Job 24. 13. Or, (2.) *Becauſe I tell you the Truth*, (ſo we read it) therefore *ye believe me not*. They would not receive him, nor entertain him as a Prophet, becauſe he told them ſome *unpleaſing* Truths, which they did not care to hear of; told them the Truth, concerning themſelves and their own Caſe; ſhewed them their Faces in a Glaſs, that would not flatter them; therefore they would not believe a word he ſaid. Miſerable is the Caſe of thoſe, to whom the Light of Divine Truth is become a Torment.

Now to ſhew them the Unreaſonableneſs of their Infidelity, he condeſcends to put the Matter to this fair Iſſue, *v.* 46. He and they being contrary, either he was in an Error, or they were. Now take it either way.

1. If he were in an Error, why did not they convince him? The Falſhood of *pretending* Prophets was diſcover'd either by the *ill Tendency* of their Doctrines, *Deut.* 13. 2. or by the *ill Tenor* of their Converſation, *Ye ſhall know them by their Fruits*; but (ſaith Chriſt) *which of you*, you of the *Sanhedrin*, that take upon you to judge of Prophets, *which of you convinceth me of Sin?* They accuſed him of ſome of the worſt of Crimes, Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, Blaſphemy, Sabbath-breaking, Confederacy with Satan, and what not? But they were all malicious groundleſs Calumnies, and ſuch as every one that knew him, knew to be *utterly falſe*. When they had done their utmoſt by Trick and Artifice, Subornation and Perjury, to prove ſome Crime upon him, the very Judge that condemn'd him, own'd he *found no fault in him*.

The *Sin* he here challengeth them to convict him of, is, (1.) An *inconſiſtent* Doctrine. They had heard his Teſtimony, could they ſhew any thing in it abſurd, or unworthy to be believed; any Contradiction, either of himſelf, or of the Scriptures, or any Corruption of Truth, or Manners inſinuated by his Doctrine? *John* 18. 20. Or, (2.) An *incongruous* Converſation. Which of you can juſtly charge me with any thing in Word or Deed, unbecoming a Prophet? See the wonderful Condeſcenſion of our Lord Jeſus, that he demanded not Credit any further, than the allowed Motives of Credibility ſupport his Demands. See *Jer.* 2. 5, 33. *Mic.* 6. 3. Miniſters may from hence learn, (1.) To *walk ſo circumſpectly*, as that it may not be in the Power of their moſt ſtrict Obſervers to convince them of Sin, *that the Miniſtry be not blamed*. The only way not to be convicted of Sin, is not to ſin. (2.) To be willing to *admit a Scrutiny*, tho we are confident in many things that we are in the right, yet we ſhould be willing to have it try'd whether we be not in the wrong. See *Job* 6. 24.

2. If they were in an Error, why were not they convinced by him? *If I ſay the Truth, why do ye not believe me?* If you cannot convince me of Error, you muſt own that I *ſay the Truth*, and why do ye not then *give me Credit?* Why will ye not deal with

me upon Truſt? *Note,* If Men would but enquire into the Reaſons of their Infidelity, and examine why they do not believe that which yet they cannot gainſay, they would find themſelves reduced to ſuch Abſurdities, as they could not but be aſhamed of; for it will be found, that the Reaſon why we believe not in Jeſus Chriſt, is, becauſe we are not willing to part with our Sins, and deny ourſelves, and ſerve God faithfully; that we are not of the Chriſtian Religion, becauſe we would not indeed be of any; and Unbelief of our Redeemer reſolves itſelf into a downright Rebellion againſt our Creator.

2. Another thing charged upon them is, that they would not hear the Words of God, *v.* 47. which further ſhews how groundleſs their Claim of Relation to God was. Here's,

1. A Doctrine laid down. *He that is of God, heareth God's Words*; that is, (1.) He is *willing* and *ready* to hear them, is ſincerely deſirous to know what the Mind of God is, and chearfully embraceth whatever he knows to be ſo. God's Words have ſuch an Authority over, and ſuch an Agreeableneſs with all that are born of God, that they meet them, as the Child *Samuel* did, with *Speak, Lord, for thy Servant heareth.* Let the Word of the Lord come. (2.) He *apprehends* and *diſcerns* them; he ſo hears them, as to perceive the *Voice of God* in them, which the natural Man doth not, 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. He that is of God, is *ſoon aware* of the Diſcoveries he makes of himſelf, of the *Nearneſs of his Name, Pſal.* 75. 1. As they of the Family know the Maſter's Tread, and the Maſter's Knock, and *open to him immediately,* Luke 12. 36. As the Sheep know the Voice of their Shepherd from that of a Stranger, *John* 10. 35. *Cant.* 2. 8.

2. The Application of this Doctrine for the Conviction of theſe unbelieving *Jews, Ye therefore heard them not*; that is, ye heed not, ye underſtand not, ye believe not the Words of God, nor care to hear them, *becauſe ye are not of God.* Your being thus deaf and dead to the Words of God, is a plain Evidence that ye are *not of God.* 'Tis in his Word that God manifeſts himſelf, and is preſent among us, we are therefore reckoned to be well or ill affected to God, according as we are well or ill affected to his Word; ſee 2 *Cor.* 4. 4. 1 *John* 4. 6. Or, their not being of God was the Reaſon why they *did not* profitably *hear the Words of God,* which Chriſt ſpoke; therefore they did not underſtand and believe him, not becauſe the Things themſelves were obſcure, or wanted Evidence, but becauſe the Hearers were *not of God,* were not born again. If the Word of the Kingdom do not bring forth Fruit, the Blame is to be laid upon the Soil, not upon the Seed, as appears by the Parable of the Sower, *Mat.* 13. 3.

48 Then anſwered the Jews, and ſaid unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and haſt a devil? 49 Jeſus anſwered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do diſhonour me. 50 And [illegible]ek not mine own glory: there is one that ſeeketh and judgeth.

Here's, 1. The Malice of Hell breaking out in the baſe Language, which the unbelieving *Jews* gave to our Lord Jeſus. Hitherto they had cavilled at his Doctrine, and had made invidious Remarks upon that; but having ſhewed themſelves uneaſy, when he complained, *v.* 43, 47. that they would not hear him, now at length they fall to downright Railing, *v.* 48. They were not the common People, but as it ſhould ſeem, the *Scribes* and *Phariſees,* the topping Men, who, when they ſaw themſelves convicted of an obſtinate Infidelity, ſcornfully turned off the Conviction with this, *Say we not well, that thou art a* Samaritan, *and haſt a Devil?* See here, ſee it and wonder, ſee it and tremble.

1. What was the blaſphemous Character commonly given of our Lord Jeſus, among the wicked *Jews,* to which they refer.

(1.) That he was a *Samaritan,* i. e. that he was an Enemy to their Church and Nation, one that they hated, and could not endure. Thus they expoſed him to the Ill-Will of all the People, with whom you could not put a Man into a worſe Name, than to call him a *Samaritan.* If he had been a *Samaritan,* he had been puniſhable, by the *beating of the Rebels* (as they called it) for coming into the Temple. They had often called him a *Galilean,* a mean Man; but as if that were not enough, tho it contradicted the other, they will have him a *Samaritan,* an ill Man. The *Jews,* to this day, call the Chriſtians in Reproach, *Cuthæi, Samaritans. Note,* Great Endeavours have, in all Ages, been uſed to make good People odious, by putting them under black Characters, and it's eaſy to run that down with a Crowd and a Cry, which it once *put* into an ill Name. Perhaps, becauſe Chriſt juſtly inveighed againſt the Pride and Tyranny of the Prieſts and Elders, they hereby ſuggeſt that he aimed at the Ruin of their Church, in aiming at its Reformation, and was *falling away* to the *Samaritans.*

(2.) That *he had a Devil.* Either, (1.) That he was *in league with the Devil*; having reproached his Doctrine, as tending to *Samaritaniſm,* here they reflect upon his Miracles, as done in Combination with *Beelzebub.* Or rather, (2.) That he was poſſeſſed with a Devil, that he was a *melancholy* Man, whoſe Brain was *clouded,* or a *mad* Man, whoſe Brain was *heated,* and that which he ſaid was no more to be believed, than the extravagant Rambles of a diſtracted Man, or one in a *Delirium.* Thus the Divine Revelation of thoſe Things, which are above the Diſcovery of Reaſon, have been oft branded with the Charge of *Enthuſiaſm,* and the Prophet was called a *mad Fellow,* 2 Kings 9. 11. Hoſ. 9. 7. The Inſpiration of the Pagan Oracles and Prophets was indeed a Frenzy, and thoſe that had it, were for the Time beſide themſelves; but that which was truly *Divine,* was nothing ſo. *Wiſdom is juſtified of her Children,* as Wiſdom indeed.

2. How they undertook to juſtify this Character, and applied it to the preſent Occaſion, *Say we not well that thou art* ſo? One would think his excellent Diſcourſes ſhould have *altered* their Opinion of him, and have made them *recant*; but inſtead of that, their Hearts were more hardened, and their Prejudices confirmed. They value themſelves by their Enmity to Chriſt, as if they had never ſpoken *better,* than when they ſpoke the worſt they could of Jeſus Chriſt. Thoſe have arrived to the higheſt Pitch of Wickedneſs, who *avow* their Impiety, *repeat* what they ſhould *retract,* and *juſtify* themſelves in that, for which they ought to *condemn* themſelves. It is bad to ſay and do ill, but it is worſe to *ſtand to it.* I do *well to be angry.* When Chriſt ſpoke with ſo much Boldneſs againſt the Sins of the great Men, and thereby incenſed them againſt him, they who were ſenſible of no Intereſt but what is ſecular and ſenſual, concluded him *beſide himſelf,* for they think none but a mad Man will loſe his Preferment, and hazard his Life for his Religion and Conſcience.

2. Here's the Meekneſs and Mercifulneſs of Heaven, ſhining in Chriſt's Reply to this vile Calumny, *v.* 45, 50.

1. He denies their Charge againſt him, *I have not a Devil*; as *Paul, Acts* 26. 25. *I am not mad.* The Imputation is unjuſt, I am neither acted by a Devil, nor in compact with one; and this he evidenced, by what he did againſt the Devil's Kingdom. He takes no notice of their calling him a *Samaritan,* becauſe it was a Calumny that diſproved itſelf, 'twas a perſonal Reflection, and not worth taking notice of; but ſaying he had a Devil, reflected on his Commiſſion, and therefore he anſwered that. St. *Auguſtin* gives this Deſcant upon his not ſaying any thing to their calling him a *Samaritan,* that he was indeed that good *Samaritan* ſpoken of in the Parable, *Luke* 10. 35.

2. He aſſerts the Sincerity of his own Intentions; but *I honour my Father.* They ſuggeſted that he took undue Honours to himſelf, and derogated from the Honour due to God only; both which he *denies* here in ſaying, that he made it his Buſineſs to honour his Father, and him only. It alſo proves that he *had not a Devil,* for if he had, he would not honour God. *Note,* They who can truly ſay they make it their conſtant Care to honour God, are ſufficiently armed againſt the Cenſures and Reproaches of Men.

3. He complains of the Wrong they did him by their Calumnies; *Ye do diſhonour me.* By this it appears, that as Man, he had a tender Senſe of the Diſgrace and Indignity done him, Reproach was a Sword in his Bones, and yet he underwent it for our Salvation. It is the Will of God, that *all Men ſhould honour the Son,* yet there are many that *diſhonour him*; ſuch a Contradiction is there in the carnal Mind to the Will of God. Chriſt honoured his Father ſo as never Man *did,* and yet was himſelf diſhonoured ſo as never Man *was*; for tho God has promiſed that thoſe that honour him, he will honour, he never promiſed that Men ſhould honour him.

4. He clears himſelf from the Imputation of Vain-Glory, in ſaying this concerning himſelf, *v.* 50. See here,

(1.) His *Contempt* of worldly Honour, *I ſeek not mine own Glory,* he did not aim at that in what he had ſaid of himſelf, or againſt his Perſecutors; he did not court the Applauſe of Men, nor covet Preferment in the World, but induſtriouſly declined both. He did not *ſeek his own Glory,* diſtinct from his Father's, nor had any *ſeparate Intereſt* of his own. For Men to *ſearch their own Glory, is not Glory* indeed, *Prov.* 25. 27. but their Shame rather, to be ſo much *out in their Aim.* This comes in here as a Reaſon, why Chriſt made ſo light of their Reproaches; *You do diſhonour me,* but cannot diſturb me, ſhall not diſquiet me, for I *ſeek not mine own Glory. Note,* Thoſe that are dead to Mens Praiſe, can ſafely bear their Contempt.

(2.) His *Comfort* under worldly Diſhonour; *There is one that ſeeketh and judgeth.* In Two Things Chriſt made it appear he *ſought not his own Glory,* and here he tells us what ſatisfied him as to both. (1.) He did not *court* Mens Reſpects, but was indifferent to them; and in Reference to this he ſaith, *There is one that ſeeketh,* that will ſecure and advance my Intereſt in the Eſteem and Affections of the People, while I am in no Care about it. *Note,* God will *ſeek* their Honour, that do not ſeek *their own*; for before Honour is Humility. (2.) He did not *revenge* Mens Affronts, but was unconcerned at them; and in reference to this, he ſaith, *There is one that judgeth,* that will vindicate my Honour, and ſeverely reckon with thoſe that trample upon it; probably he refers here to the Judgments that were coming upon the Nation of the *Jews,* for the Indignities they did to the Lord Jeſus. See *Pſal.* 38. 13, 14, 15. *I heard not, for thou wilt hear.* If we undertake to judge for

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ourſelves, whatever Damage we ſuſtain, our Amends is in our own Hands; but if we be as we ought to be, humble Appellants and patient Expectants, we ſhall find to our Comfort, *there is one that judgeth.*

51 Verily, verily I ſay unto you, If a man keep my
ſaying, he ſhall never ſee death. 52 Then ſaid the
Jews unto him, Now we know that thou haſt a devil.
Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou ſayeſt,
If a man keep my ſaying, he ſhall never taſte of death.
53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham which is
dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makeſt thou
thy ſelf? 54 Jeſus anſwered, If I honour my ſelf,
my honour is nothing: it is my father that honoureth
me, of whom ye ſay, that he is your God. 55 Yet
ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I
ſhould ſay, I know him not, I ſhould be a lyar like
unto you: but I know him, and keep his ſaying.
56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day, and
he ſaw *it*, and was glad. 57 Then ſaid the Jews unto
him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and haſt thou
ſeen Abraham? 58 Jeſus ſaid unto them, Verily, verily
I ſay unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. 59
Then took they up ſtones to caſt at him: but Jeſus hid
himſelf, and went out of the temple, going through the
midſt of them, and ſo paſſed by.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, The Doctrine of the Immortality of Believers laid down, *v.* 51. 'Tis uſher'd in with the uſual ſolemn Preface, *Verily, verily I ſay unto you*, which commands both Attention and Aſſent; and this is it he ſaith, *If a Man keep my Sayings, he ſhall never ſee Death.* Where we have,

1. The *Character* of a Believer, he is one that *keeps the Sayings of the Lord Jeſus*, τὸν λόγον τὸν ἐμὸν, *my Word*; that *Word of mine* which I have deliver'd to you; this we muſt not only *receive*, but *keep*; not only *have*, but *hold.* We muſt keep it in Mind and Memory, keep it in Love and Affection, ſo keep it as in nothing to violate it, or go contrary to it. Keep it *without Spot*, 1 Tim. 6. 19. keep it as a Truſt committed to us; keep in it as our Way, keep to it as our Rule.

2. The *Privilege* of a Believer, *He ſhall by no means ſee Death for ever.* So 'tis in the Original. Not as if the Bodies of Believers were ſecur'd from the Stroke of Death; no, even the *Children of the moſt high* muſt *die like Men*, and the Followers of Chriſt have been more than other Men, in Deaths oft, and *killed all the Day long*; how then is this Promiſe made good, that they *ſhall not ſee Death? Anſ.* 1. The *Property* of Death is ſo alter'd *to them*, that they do not ſee it *as Death*, they do not ſee the Terror of Death, it is quite taken off; their Sight doth not *terminate* in death, as their's doth who *live by Senſe*; no, they look ſo clearly, ſo comfortably *through* Death, and *beyond* Death, and are ſo taken up with their State on t'other ſide Death, that they overlook Death, and *ſee it not.* 2. The Power of Death is ſo broken, as that tho' there's no Remedy but they muſt *ſee Death*, yet they ſhall not ſee Death *for ever*, ſhall not be always ſhut up under its Arreſts; the Day will come when *Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in Victory.* 3. They are perfectly delivered from *eternal Death*, ſhall not be *hurt of the ſecond Death.* That's the Death eſpecially meant here, that Death which is *for ever*, which is oppos'd to everlaſting Life, this they ſhall never ſee, for they ſhall *never come into Condemnation:* They ſhall have their everlaſting Lot, where there will be *no more Death*, where they *cannot die any more*, Luke 20. 36. Tho' now they cannot avoid ſeeing Death, and taſting it too, yet they ſhall ſhortly be there where it will be *ſeen no more for ever*, Exod. 14. 13.

Secondly, The *Jews* cavil at this Doctrine. Inſtead of laying hold on this precious Promiſe of Immortality, which the Nature of Man has an Ambition of; who is there that doth not love Life, and dread the Sight of Death? They lay hold on this Occaſion to reproach him that makes them ſo kind an Offer; *Now we know that thou haſt a Devil*, Abraham *is dead.* Obſerve here,

1. Their *Railing*; *Now we know that thou haſt a Devil*, that thou art a mad Man, thou raveſt, and ſayeſt thou knoweſt not what. See how theſe Swine trample under foot the precious Pearls of Goſpel Promiſes. If now at laſt they had Evidence to prove him *mad*, why did they ſay, *v.* 48. before they had that Proof, *thou haſt a Devil*? But this is the Method of Malice, firſt to *faſten* an invidious Charge, and then to *fiſh* for Evidence of it; *Now we know that thou haſt a Devil.* If he had not abundantly prov'd himſelf a *Teacher come from God*, his Promiſes of Immortality to his credulous Followers might juſtly have been ridicul'd, and Charity itſelf would have imputed them to a craz'd Fancy; but his Doctrine was evidently Divine, his Miracles confirm'd it, and the *Jews* Religion taught them to expect ſuch a Prophet, and to believe in him: for them therefore thus to reject him, was to abandon that Promiſe, to which their *twelve Tribes hoped to come*, Acts 26. 7.

2. Their *Reaſoning*, and the Colour they had to *run him down* thus. In ſhort, they look upon him as guilty of an inſufferable Piece of Arrogance, in making himſelf greater than *Abraham and the Prophets. Abraham is dead*, and *the Prophets*, they are dead too; very true, by the ſame Token that theſe *Jews* were the genuine Offſpring of thoſe that kill'd them. Now, 1. It is true that *Abraham* and the Prophets were great Men, great in the Favour of God, and great in the Eſteem of all good Men. 2. It is true that they *kept God's Sayings*, and were obedient to them; and yet, 3. It is true they *died*, they never pretended to have, much leſs to give Immortality, but every one in his own Order was *gather'd to his People.* 'Twas their Honour that they *died in Faith*, but *die they muſt.* Why ſhould a good Man be afraid to die, when *Abraham* is dead, and the Prophets dead, they have *track'd* the Way through that darkſome Valley, which ſhould reconcile us to Death, and help to take off the Terror of it. Now they think Chriſt talks madly, when he ſaith, *If a Man keep my Sayings, he ſhall never taſte Death. Taſting* Death means the ſame thing with *ſeeing* it; and well may Death be repreſented as grievous to *ſeveral* of the Senſes, which is the Deſtruction of them *all.*

Now their Arguing goes upon two Miſtakes.

1. They underſtood Chriſt of an Immortality in this World, and that was a Miſtake. In the Senſe that Chriſt ſpoke, it was not true that *Abraham and the Prophets* were *dead*, for God is ſtill the *God of Abraham*, and the *God of the holy Prophets*, Rev. 22. 6. Now God is not the God of the Dead, but of the Living, therefore *Abraham* and the Prophets are ſtill alive, and as Chriſt meant it, they had not *ſeen* nor *taſted* Death.

2. They thought none could be greater than *Abraham* and the Prophets, whereas they could not but know that the *Meſſiah* would be greater than *Abraham*, or any of the Prophets, who did vertuouſly, but he excell'd them all; nay, they borrowed their Greatneſs from him. It was the Honour of *Abraham*, that he was the Father of the Meſſiah, and the Honour of the Prophets, that they teſtified before-hand concerning him; ſo that he certainly obtain'd a far more excellent Name than they. Therefore inſtead of inferring from Chriſt's making himſelf greater than *Abraham*, that he had a *Devil*, they ſhould have inferr'd from his proving himſelf ſo, by doing the Works which neither *Abraham* nor the Prophets ever did, that he was the *Chriſt*; but their Eyes were blinded.

They ſcornfully ask'd, *Who makeſt thou thy ſelf?* as if he had been guilty of Pride and Vain-glory; whereas he was ſo far from making himſelf greater than he was, that he now drew a Veil over his own Glory, emptied himſelf, and made himſelf leſs than he was, and was the greateſt Example of Humility that ever was.

Thirdly, Chriſt's Reply to this Cavil; ſtill he vouchſafes to reaſon with them, that every Mouth may be ſtopt. No doubt he could have ſtruck them dumb or dead upon the Spot, but this was the *Day of his Patience.*

1. In his Anſwer he inſiſts not upon his own Teſtimony concerning himſelf, but waves it as not ſufficient or concluſive, *v.* 54. *If I honour myſelf, my Honour is nothing*, ἐὰν ἐγὼ δοξάζω. *If I glorify my ſelf. Note*, Self-honour is no Honour; and the Affectation of Glory is both the Forfeiture and the Defeaſance of it, it is *not Glory*, Prov. 25. 27. but ſo great a Reproach, that there is no Sin which Men are more induſtrious to hide than this; he that moſt affects Praiſe, yet would not be thought to do it. Honour of our own creating is a meer Chimera, has nothing in it, and therefore is *Vain-glory.* Self-Admirers are Self-*Deceivers.* Our Lord Jeſus was not one that *honoured himſelf*, as they repreſented him; he was *crowned* by him who is the Fountain of Honour, and glorified not himſelf to be made a High Prieſt, *Heb.* 5. 4, 5.

2. But he refers himſelf to *his* Father, God; and to *their* Father, *Abraham.*

1. To his Father, *God*; *It is my Father that honoureth me.* By this he means, (1.) That he *derived* from his Father all the Honour he now claim'd; he had commanded them to believe in him, to follow him, and to keep his Word; all which put an Honour upon him; but it was the Father that *laid Help* upon him, that *lodg'd* all *Fulneſs* in him, that ſanctified him, and ſeal'd him, and ſent him into the World to receive all the Honours due to the *Meſſiah*, and this juſtified him in all theſe Demands of Reſpect. (2.) That he *depended* upon his Father for all the Honour he further *look'd for*; he courted not the Applauſes of the Age, but deſpis'd them, for his Eye and Heart were upon the Glory which the Father had promis'd him, and *which he had with the Father before the World was.* He aimed at an Advancement, with which the Father was to *exalt him*, a *Name* he was to *give him*, Phil. 2. 8, 9. *Note*, Chriſt and all that are his, depend upon God for their Honour; and he that is ſure of Honour where he is known, cares not tho' he be ſlighted where he is in Diſguiſe.

Appealing thus often to his Father, and his Father's Teſtimony of him, which yet the *Jews* did not admit or give credit to, he here takes occaſion to ſhew,

1. The Reaſon of *their* Incredulity, notwithſtanding *this* Teſtimony, and that was their *Unacquaintedneſs* with God; *q. d.* But what ſhould I talk to you of my Father's honouring me,

when he is one you know nothing of. You *ſay of him that he is your God, yet you have not known him.* Where obſerve,

(1.) The Profeſſion they made of Relation to God; *Ye ſay he is your God*, the God you have choſen, and are in Covenant with; ye ſay ye are *Iſrael*, but all are not ſo indeed that are of *Iſrael*, Rom. 9. 6. *Note*, Many pretend to have an Intereſt in God, and ſay he is *theirs*, who yet have no juſt Cauſe to ſay ſo. They who call'd themſelves the *Temple of the Lord*, having *profaned the Excellency of* Jacob, did but truſt in lying Words. What will it avail us to ſay he is *our God*, if we be not in Sincerity *his People*, nor ſuch as he will own.

Chriſt mentions here their Profeſſion of Relation to God, as that which was an Aggravation of their Unbelief. All People will honour thoſe whom their God honours; but theſe *Jews*, who ſaid that the Lord was their God, yet ſtudy'd how to put the utmoſt Diſgrace upon one whom their God put Honour upon. *Note*, The Profeſſion we make of a Covenant Relation to God, and Intereſt in him, if it be not improved *by us*, will be improved *againſt us*.

(2.) Their Ignorance of him, and Eſtrangement from him, notwithſtanding this Profeſſion; *Yet ye have not known him.* 1. Ye *know him not at all.* Theſe Phariſees were ſo taken up with the Study of their Traditions concerning Things foreign and trifling, that they never minded the moſt needful and uſeful Knowledge; like the falſe Prophets of old, who *cauſed People to forget God's Name by their Dreams*, Jer. 23. 27. Or, 2. Ye *know him not aright*, but miſtake concerning him, and that's as bad as not knowing him at all, or worſe. Men may be able to diſpute ſubtilly concerning God, and yet may think him ſuch a one as themſelves, and *not know him.* Ye ſay he is *yours*, and 'tis natural to us to deſire to know *our own*, yet ye *know him not*. *Note*, There are many who *claim Kindred* to God, who yet have no Acquaintance with him. 'Tis only the Name of God which they have learn'd to talk of, and to hector with; but for the Nature of God, his Attributes and Perfections, and Relations to his Creatures, they know nothing of the Matter; we *ſpeak this to their Shame*, 1 Cor. 15. 34. Multitudes ſatisfy themſelves, but deceive themſelves, with a titular Relation to an *unknown God*.

This Chriſt chargeth upon the *Jews* here, (1.) To ſhew how vain and groundleſs their Pretenſions of Relation to God were. You ſay he is yours, but you give yourſelves the Lye, for 'tis plain you do not know him; and we reckon a Cheat is effectually convicted, if it be found that he is ignorant of the Perſons he pretends Alliance to. (2.) To ſhew the true Reaſon why they were not wrought upon by Chriſt's Doctrine and Miracles. They knew not God, and therefore perceived not the Image of God, nor the Voice of God in Chriſt. *Note*, The Reaſon why Men receive not the *Goſpel of Chriſt*, is becauſe they have not the *Knowledge of God*. Men therefore *ſubmit not to the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt*, becauſe they are *ignorant of God's Righteouſneſs*, Rom. 10. 3. They that know not God, and obey not the Goſpel of Chriſt, are put together, 2 *Theſ.* 1. 8.

2. He gives them the Reaſon of *his* Aſſurance, that his Father would *honour* him and *own him*. *But I know him*; and again, *I know him*; which ſpeaks, not only his *Acquaintance* with him, having lain in his Boſom, but his *Confidence* in him, to ſtand by him, and bear him out in his whole Undertaking; as was propheſied concerning him, *Iſa.* 50. 7, 8. *I know* that I ſhall not be aſhamed, for he is near that juſtifies; and as *Paul*, *I know whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. I know him to be faithful, and powerful, and heartily engaged in the Cauſe which I know to be his *own*. Obſerve,

1. How he *profeſſeth* his Knowledge of his Father with the greateſt Certainty, as one that was neither afraid, nor aſham'd to own it; *If I ſhould ſay I know him not, I ſhould be a Lyar like unto you.* He would not deny his Relation to God to humour the *Jews*, and to avoid their Reproaches, and prevent further Trouble; nor would he retract what he had ſaid, nor confeſs himſelf either deceived, or a Deceiver; if he ſhould, he would be found a falſe Witneſs againſt God and himſelf. *Note*, They who diſown their Religion, and Relation to God, as *Peter*, are Lyars as much as Hypocrites are, who pretend to know him when they do not. See 1 *Tim.* 6. 13, 14. Mr. *Clark* obſerves well upon this, That it is a great Sin to deny God's Grace in us.

2. How he *proves* his Knowledge of his Father; *I know him, and keep his Saying*, or *his Word*. Chriſt as Man was obedient to the Moral Law; and as Redeemer, to the Mediatorial Law; and in both he kept *his Father's Word*, and *his own Word* with the Father. Chriſt requires of us, *v.* 51. that we *keep his Sayings*; and he hath ſet before us a Copy of Obedience, a Copy without a Blot, he *kept his Father's Sayings*; well might he who *learned Obedience* teach it; ſee *Heb.* 5. 8, 9. Chriſt by this evidenceth that he knew the Father. *Note*, The beſt Proof of our Acquaintance with God, is our Obedience to him. Thoſe only know God aright that keep his Word; 'tis a rul'd Caſe, 1 *John* 2. 3. *Hereby we know that we know him*, (and do not only fancy it) *if we keep his Commandments.*

2. Chriſt refers them to *their* Father whom they boaſted ſo much of a Relation to, and that was *Abraham*; and this cloſeth the Diſcourſe.

1. Chriſt aſſerts *Abraham*'s Proſpect of him, and Reſpect to him, *v.* 56. *Your Father* Abraham *rejoiced to ſee my Day, and he ſaw it and was glad.* And by this he proves that he was not at all out of the way, when he *made himſelf greater than Abraham.*

Two Things he here ſpeaks of as Inſtances of that Patriarch's Reſpect to the promiſed Meſſiah.

1. The Ambition he had to *ſee his Day*, *he rejoiced*, ἠγαλλιάσατο, *he leap'd at it.* The Word, tho' it commonly ſignifies *Rejoicing*, yet here muſt ſignify rather a Tranſport of *Deſire*, than of *Joy*, for otherwiſe the latter part of the Verſe would be a Tautology, he *ſaw it and was glad*: He *reach'd out*, or *ſtretch'd himſelf forth*, that he might *ſee my Day*; as *Zachæus* that ran before and climb'd the Tree *to ſee Jeſus*. The Notices he had receiv'd of the *Meſſiah* to come, had rais'd in him an Expectation of ſomething *great*, which he earneſtly long'd to know more of. The dark *Intimation* of that which is *conſiderable*, puts Men upon *Enquiry*, and makes them earneſtly aſk who? And what? And where? And when? And how? And thus the Prophets of the Old Teſtament, having a general Idea of a Grace that ſhould *come*, *ſearch'd diligently*, 1 Pet. 1. 10. and *Abraham* was as induſtrious herein as any of them. God told him of a Land that he would give his Poſterity, and of the Wealth and Honour he deſigned them, *Gen.* 15. 14. but he never *leap'd* thus to ſee *that* Day, as he did to *ſee the Day* of the Son of Man. He could not look with ſo much Indifferency upon the *promiſed Seed*, as he did upon the promiſed Land; *in that* he was, but *to the other* he could not be contentedly a *Stranger*. *Note*, Thoſe who rightly know *any Thing* of Chriſt, cannot but be earneſtly deſirous to know *more* of him. Thoſe who diſcern the dawning of the Light of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, cannot but wiſh to ſee his riſing. The Myſtery of Redemption is that which *Angels deſire to look into*, much more ſhould we, that are more immediately concern'd in it. *Abraham* deſir'd to ſee Chriſt's Day, tho' it was at a great Diſtance, but this degenerate Seed of his diſcern'd not his Day, nor bid it welcome when it came. The appearing of Chriſt, which gracious Souls love, and long for; carnal Hearts dread and loath.

2. The Satisfaction he had in what he did ſee of it; *He ſaw it, and was glad.* Obſerve here,

1. How God gratified the pious Deſire of *Abraham*; he long'd to ſee Chriſt's Day, and he *ſaw it*. Tho' he ſaw it not ſo plainly, and fully, and diſtinctly as we now ſee it under the Goſpel, yet he ſaw ſomething of it, more *afterwards* than he did at firſt. *Note*, To him that *hath*, and to him that *aſks*, ſhall be *given*; to him that *uſeth* and improveth what he hath, and that *deſireth* and prayeth for more of the Knowledge of Chriſt, God will give more. But how did *Abraham* ſee Chriſt's Day? (1.) Some underſtand it of the Sight he had of it in the other World: The ſeparate Soul of *Abraham*, when the Vail of Fleſh was rent, ſaw the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God in Heaven. *Calvin* mentions this Senſe of it, and doth not much diſallow it. *Note*, The Longings of gracious Souls after Jeſus Chriſt will be fully ſatiſfied when they come to Heaven, and not till then. But, (2.) 'Tis more commonly underſtood of ſome Sight he had of *Chriſt's Day* in this World. They that *received not the Promiſes*, yet *ſaw them afar of*, Heb. 11. 13. *Balaam* ſaw Chriſt, but not *now*, not *nigh*. There is room to conjecture that *Abraham* had ſome Viſion of Chriſt and his Day for his own private Satiſfaction, which is not, nor muſt be recorded in his Story, like that of *Daniel*'s, which muſt be *ſhut up, and ſealed unto the Time of the End*, Dan. 12. 4. Chriſt knew what *Abraham* ſaw better than *Moſes* did. But there are divers things recorded, in which *Abraham* ſaw more of that which he longed to ſee, than he did when the Promiſe was firſt made to him. He ſaw in *Melchizedech* one *made like unto the Son of God*, and a Prieſt for ever; he ſaw an appearance of *Jehovah*, attended with two Angels in the Plains of *Mamre*. In the Prevalency of his Interceſſion for *Sodom*, he ſaw a Specimen of Chriſt's Interceſſion; in the caſting out of *Iſhmael*, and the Eſtabliſhment of the Covenant with *Iſaac*, he ſaw a Figure of the Goſpel-Day, which is Chriſt's Day; for theſe Things were an Allegory. In Offering *Iſaac*, and the Ram inſtead of *Iſaac*, he ſaw a double Type of the great Sacrifice; and his calling the Place *Jehovah jireh, it ſhall be ſeen*, intimates that he ſaw ſomething more in it than others did, which Time would produce: And in making his Servant *put his Hand under his Thigh*, when he ſwore, he had a regard to the *Meſſiah*.

2. How *Abraham* entertained theſe Diſcoveries of Chriſt's Day, and bid them welcome; *He ſaw and was glad.* He was glad of what he *ſaw* of God's Favour to himſelf, and glad of what he *foreſaw* of the Mercy God had in ſtore for the World. Perhaps this refers to *Abraham*'s laughing when God aſſured him of a Son by *Sarah*, Gen. 17. 16, 17. for that was not the Laughter of diſtruſt, as *Sarah*'s, but of Joy; in that Promiſe he ſaw Chriſt's Day, and it *fill'd him with Joy unſpeakable.* Thus he *embrac'd the* Promiſes. *Note*, A believing Sight of Chriſt and his Day, will put Gladneſs into the Heart. No Joy like the Joy of Faith; we are never acquainted with true Pleaſure till we are acquainted with Chriſt.

2. The *Jews* cavil at this, and reproach him for it, *v.* 57. *Thou art not yet Fifty years old, and haſt thou ſeen* Abraham? Here, 1. They ſuppoſe that if *Abraham* ſaw him and his Day,

he alſo had ſeen *Abraham*, which yet was not a neceſſary *Innuendo*, but this Turn of his Words would beſt ſerve to expoſe him; yet it was true that Chriſt had ſeen *Abraham*, and had talk'd with him as a Man talks with his Friend. 2. They ſuppoſe it a very abſurd Thing for him to pretend to have ſeen *Abraham*, who was *dead* ſo many Ages before he was born. The State of the Dead is an *inviſible* State; but here they run upon the old Miſtake, underſtanding that corporally which Chriſt ſpoke ſpiritually: Now this gave them occaſion to *deſpiſe his Youth*, and to upbraid him with it, as if he were *but of Yeſterday, and knew nothing*; *Thou art not yet Fifty Years old*: They might as well have ſaid, thou art not Forty; for he was now but Thirty-two or Thirty-three Years old. As to this, *Irenæus*, one of the firſt Fathers, with this Paſſage ſupports the Tradition, which he ſaith he had from ſome that had convers'd with St. *John*, that our Saviour liv'd to be Fifty Years old, which he contends for, *Adverſ. Hæreſ.* l. 2. c. 39, 40. See what little Credit is to be given to Tradition; and as to this here, the *Jews* ſpoke *at random*; ſome Year they would mention, and therefore pitch'd upon one that they thought he was far enough ſhort of; he did not look to be Forty, but they were ſure he could not be Fifty, much leſs co-temporary with *Abraham*. Old Age is reckon'd to begin at Fifty, *Num.* 4. 47. ſo that they mean no more, but thou art not to be reckon'd an old Man; many of us are much thy Seniors, and yet pretend not to have ſeen *Abraham*. Some think that his Countenance was ſo alter'd with Grief, and Watching, that together with the Gravity of his Aſpect, it made him look like a Man of Fifty Years old: *His Viſage was ſo marred*, Iſa. 52. 14.

3. Our Saviour gives an effectual Anſwer to this Cavil, by a ſolemn aſſerting of his own Seniority, even to *Abraham* himſelf, *ver.* 58. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you*; I do not only ſay it in private to my own Diſciples, who will be ſure to ſay as I ſay, but *to you* my Enemies and Perſecutors; I ſay it to your Faces, take it how you will, *Before* Abraham *was, I am*; πρὶν Ἀβραὰμ γενέσθαι ἐγὼ εἰμι, *Before* Abraham *was made or born I am.* The Change of the World is obſervable, and ſpeaks *Abraham* a Creature, and himſelf the Creator, well therefore might he make himſelf *greater* than *Abraham*; *before* Abraham *he was.* (1.) As God. *I am* is the Name of God, *Exod.* 3. 14. it ſpeaks his Self-Exiſtence; he doth not ſay *I was*, but *I am*, for he is the firſt and the laſt, immutably the ſame, *Rev.* 1. 8. thus he was not only before *Abraham*, but before *all Worlds*, Prov. 8. 23. John 1. 1. (2.) As Mediator. He was the appointed *Meſſiah* long before *Abraham*; the *Lamb ſlain from the Foundation of the World*, Rev. 13. 8. the Channel of Conveyance of Light, Life, and Love from God to Man. This ſuppoſeth his Divine Nature, that he is the ſame in himſelf from Eternity, *Heb.* 13. 8. and adds that he is the ſame to Man ever ſince the Fall; he was made of God, Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption to *Adam*, and *Abel*, and *Enoch*, and *Noah*, and *Shem*, and all the Patriarchs that liv'd and dy'd by Faith in him before *Abraham* was born. *Abraham* was the Root of the *Jewiſh* Nation, the Rock out of which they were hewn. If Chriſt was before *Abraham*, his Doctrine and Religion was no Novelty, but was in the Subſtance of it prior to Judaiſm, and ought to take Place of it.

4. This great World ended the Diſpute *abruptly*, and put a Period to it; they could bear to hear no more from him, and he needed to ſay no more to them, having witneſſed this good Confeſſion, which was ſufficient to ſupport all his Claims. One would think Chriſt's Diſcourſe, in which ſhone ſo much both of Grace and Glory, ſhould have captivated them all; but their inveterate Prejudice againſt the holy, ſpiritual Doctrine, and Law of Chriſt, which were ſo contrary to their Pride and Worldlineſs, baffled all the Methods of Conviction. Now was fulfill'd that Prophecy, *Mal.* 3. 1, 2. that when the Meſſenger of the Covenant ſhould *come to his Temple*, they *would not abide the Day of his coming*, becauſe he would be *like a Refiner's Fire.* Obſerve here,

1. How they were *enrag'd* at Chriſt for what he ſaid; *They took up Stones to caſt at him*, v. 59. Perhaps they look'd upon him as a Blaſphemer, and ſuch were indeed to be ſtoned, *Lev.* 24. 16. but they muſt firſt be legally try'd and convicted; farewel Juſtice and Order if every Man pretend to execute a Law at his Pleaſure: Beſides, they had ſaid but juſt now, that he was a diſtracted, crack'd-brain Man, and if ſo, it was againſt all Reaſon and Equity to puniſh him as a Malefactor for what he ſaid. *They took up Stones.* Dr. *Lightfoot* will tell you how they came to have Stones ſo ready in the Temple; they had Workmen at this Time repairing the Temple, or making ſome Additions, and the pieces of Stone which they hew'd off ſerved for this Purpoſe. See here the deſperate Power of Sin and Satan in and over the Children of Diſobediance. Who would think that ever there ſhould be ſuch a Wickedneſs as this in Men? Such an open and daring Rebellion againſt one that undeniably prov'd himſelf to be the Son of God: Thus every one has a *Stone* to *throw* at his Holy Religion, *Acts* 28. 22.

2. How he made his *Eſcape* out of their Hands.

1. He *Abſconded*; Jeſus *hid himſelf*, ἐκρύβη, He *was hid*, either by the Crowd of thoſe that wiſh'd well to him, to ſhelter him. He that ought to have been upon a Throne, high and lifted up, is content to be *loſt in a Crowd.* Or, perhaps, he conceal'd himſelf behind ſome of the Walls, or Pillers of the Temple; *In the ſecret of his Tabernacle he ſhall hide me*, Pſal. 27. 5. Or, by a Divine Power, caſting a Miſt before their Eyes, he made himſelf inviſible to them. *When the Wicked riſe a Man is hidden*, a wiſe and good Man, *Prov.* 28. 12, 18. Not that Chriſt was afraid, or aſhamed to ſtand by what he had ſaid, but his *Hour was not yet come*, and he would countenance the Flight of his Miniſters and People in Times of Perſecution, when they are call'd to it. The Lord hid *Jeremiah* and *Baruch*, Jer. 36. 26.

2. He *departed*; he *went out of the Temple*, going *through the midſt of them* undiſcovered, and *ſo paſs'd by.* This was not a cowardly inglorious Flight, nor ſuch as argued either *Guilt* or *Fear.* 'Twas foretold concerning him, that he ſhould not fail nor be diſcouraged, *Iſa.* 42. 4. But, 1. It was an Inſtance of his Power over his Enemies, and that they could do no more againſt him than he gave them leave to do; by which it appears, that when afterwards he was taken in their Pits, he *offered himſelf*, John 10. 18. They now thought they had him ſure, and yet he *paſſed the midſt* of them, either their Eyes blinded, or their Hands ty'd, and thus he left them to vex like a Lion *diſappointed of his Prey.* 2. 'Twas an Inſtance of his prudent Proviſion for his own Safety, when he knew his Work was not done, nor his Teſtimony finiſhed; thus he gave an Example to his own Rule, *When they perſecute you in one City, flee to another*; nay, if occaſion be, to a *Wilderneſs*; for ſo *Elijah* did, 1. *Kings* 14. 3, 4. and the Woman the Church, *Rev.* 12. 6. When they took up looſe Stones to throw at Chriſt, he could have commanded the fix'd Stones which did *cry out of the Wall* againſt them, to avenge his Cauſe, or the Earth to open and ſwallow them up; but he choſe to accomodate himſelf to the State he was in, to make the Example imitable by the Prudence of his Followers without a Miracle. 3. 'Twas the righteous deſerting of thoſe, that (worſe than the *Gadarens* who *prayed him to depart*) ſtoned him from among them. Chriſt will not long ſtay with thoſe that bid him be gone. Chriſt did again viſit the Temple after this, as one *loth to depart*; he *bid oft farewell*, but at laſt he abandon'd it for ever, and left it *deſolate.* Chriſt now *went through* the midſt of the *Jews*, and none of them courted his ſtay, or ſtir'd up themſelves to take hold on him, but were e'en content to let him go. *Note*, God never forſakes any till they have firſt provok'd him to withdraw, and will have none of him. *Calvin* obſerves, that theſe Chief Prieſts when they had driven Chriſt out of the Temple, valued themſelves by the Poſſeſſion they kept of it; but (ſaith he) thoſe deceive themſelves that are proud of a Church or Temple which Chriſt has forſaken; *longe falluntur cum Templum ſe habere putant Deo vacuum.* When Chriſt left them, 'tis ſaid he paſſed by, ſilently and unobſerv'd; παρῆγεν οὕτως, ſo that they were not aware of him. *Note*, Chriſt's Departures from a Church, or a particular Soul, are often *ſecret*, and not ſoon taken notice of. As *the Kingdom of God comes not*, ſo it goes not *with Obſervation.* See *Judg.* 16. 20. *Sampſon wiſt not that the Lord was departed from him.* Thus it was with theſe forſaken *Jews*, God left them, and they never miſs'd him.

CHAP. IX.

After Chriſt's Departure out of the Temple in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, and before this happened, which is recorded in this Chapter, he had been for ſome Time Abroad in the Country, 'tis ſuppoſed about Two or Three Months; in which interval of Time Dr. Lightfoot, *and other Harmoniſts place all the Paſſages that occur from* Luke 10. 17. *to* Luke 13. 17. *What is recorded,* John 7. *and* 8. *was at the Feaſt of Tabernacles in* September: *What is recorded in this and the following Chapter, was at the Feaſt of Dedication in* December, *ch.* 10. 22. *Mr.* Clark, *and others, place this immediately after the foregoing Chapter. In this Chapter we have,* (1.) *The miraculous Cure of a Man that was born blind,* v. 1—7. (2.) *The Diſcourſes which were occaſioned by it.* (1.) *A Diſcourſe of the Neighbours among themſelves, and with the Man,* v. 8—12. (2.) *Between the Phariſees and the Man,* v. 13—34. (3.) *Between Chriſt and the poor Man,* v. 35—38. (4.) *Between Chriſt and the Phariſees,* v. 39. *ad fin.*

AND as *Jeſus* paſs'd by, he ſaw a man which was blind from *his* birth. 2 And his diſciples ask'd him, ſaying, Maſter, who did ſin, this man, or his Parents, that he was born blind? 3 Jeſus anſwered, Neither hath this man ſinned, nor his parents: but that the Works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him. 4 I muſt work the works of him that ſent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no Man can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. 6 When he had thus ſpoken, he ſpat on the ground, and made clay of the ſpittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7 And ſaid unto him, Go waſh in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent.*)* He went his way therefore, and waſhed, and came ſeeing.

We have here Sight given to a poor Beggar that had been blind from his Birth. Obſerve,

Firſt, The Notice which our Lord Jeſus took of the pitious Caſe of this poor blind Man; *v.* 1. *As* Jeſus *paſſed by he ſaw a Man which was blind from his Birth.* The *firſt* Words ſeem to refer to the laſt of the foregoing Chapter, and countenance their Opinion, who in the Harmony place this Story immediately after that. There 'twas ſaid, παρῆγεν, *He paſſed by*, and here, without ſo much as repeating his Name, tho' our Tranſlators ſupply it) ϗ παράγων, and *as he paſſed by.* (1.) Tho' the *Jews* had ſo baſely *abuſed* him, and both by Word and Deed gave him the higheſt Provocation imaginable, yet he did not ſlip any Opportunity of *doing good* among them, not take up a Reſolution, as juſtly he might have done, never to have favour'd them with any good Offices. The Cure of this blind Man was a Kindneſs to *the Publick*, enabling him to work for his Living, who before was a Charge and Burthen to the Neighbourhood. 'Tis noble and generous, and Chriſt-like, to be willing to *ſerve the Publick*, even when we are ſlighted and diſobliged by it, or think our ſelves ſo. (2.) Tho' he was in his Flight from a threatning Danger, and eſcaping for his Life, yet he willingly halted, and ſtaid a while to ſhew Mercy to this poor Man. We make more haſte than good ſpeed, when we out-run Opportunities of doing good. (3.) When the Phariſees drove Chriſt from them, he went to this poor blind Beggar. Some of the Ancients make this a Figure of the bringing of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, who *ſat in Darkneſs*, when the *Jews* had rejected it, and driven it from them. (4.) Chriſt took this poor blind Man in his way, and cured him *in tranſitu*, as he *paſſed by.* Thus ſhould we take Occaſions of doing good, even as we *paſs by*, where-ever we are.

Now, 1. The Condition of this poor Man was very ſad; he was *blind*, and had been ſo *from his Birth.* If the Light is ſweet, how melancholy muſt it needs be for a Man, all his Days, to *eat in Darkneſs?* He that is *blind* has no *Enjoyment* of the Light, but he that is *born blind* has no Idea of it: Methinks ſuch a one would give a great deal to have his Curioſity ſatisfied with but one Day's Sight of Light, and Colours, Shapes, and Figures, tho' he were never to ſee them more. *Why is the Light* of Life *given to one that is in this Miſery*, that is deprived of the Light of the Sun; *whoſe Way is* thus *hid, and whom God hath* thus *hedg'd in?* Job 3. 20, 23. Let us bleſs God that it was not our Caſe. The Eye is one of the moſt curious Parts of the Body, its Structure exceeding nice and fine. In the Formation of Animals, 'tis ſaid to be the firſt Parts that appears diſtinctly diſcernable. What a Mercy it was that there was no Miſcarriage in the making of ours. Chriſt cured many that were blind by Diſeaſe or Accident, but here he cured one that was *born Blind.* (1.) That he might give an Inſtance of his Power to help in the moſt deſperate Caſes, and to relieve when none elſe can. (2.) That he might give a *Specimen* of the Work of his Grace upon the Souls of Sinners, which gives Sight to thoſe that were by Nature blind.

2. The Compaſſions of our Lord Jeſus towards him were very tender. He *ſaw him*, i. e. he took Cognizance of his Caſe, and look'd upon him with Concern. When God is about to work Deliverance, he is ſaid to ſee *the Affliction*; ſo Chriſt ſaw this poor Man. Others ſaw him, but not as he did. This poor Man could not *ſee* Chriſt, but Chriſt *ſaw him*, and anticipated both his Prayers and Expectations with a *ſurprizing* Cure. Chriſt is often found of thoſe that ſeek him not, nor ſee him, *Iſa.* 65. 1. And if we know or apprehend any Thing of Chriſt, 'tis becauſe we were firſt *known of him*, Gal. 4. 9. and *apprehended* by him, *Phil.* 3. 12.

Secondly, The Diſcourſe between Chriſt and his Diſciples concerning this Man. When he *departed out of the Temple*, they went along with him, for theſe were they that *continued with him in his Temptations*, and followed him whither ſoever he went; and they loſt nothing by their Adherence to him, but gain'd Experience abundantly. Obſerve,

1. The Queſtion which the Diſciples put to their Maſter upon this blind Man's Caſe, *v.* 2. When Chriſt looked upon him they had an Eye to him too; Chriſt's Compaſſions ſhould kindle ours. 'Tis probable Chriſt told them, that this poor Man was born blind, or they knew it by common Fame; but they did not move Chriſt to heal him, inſtead of that, they ſtarted a very odd Queſtion concerning him, *Rabbi, who ſinned, this Man or his Parents, that he was born blind?* Now this Queſtion of theirs was, 1. *Uncharitably cenſorious.* They take it for granted, that this extraordinary Calamity was the Puniſhment of ſome extraordinary, uncommon Wickedneſs; and this Man was a Sinner above all Men that dwelt at *Jeruſalem*, Luke 13. 14. For the *barbarous People* to infer *ſurely this Man is a Murtherer*, was not ſo ſtrange; but it was *inexcuſable* in them that knew the Scriptures, who had read that *all Things come alike to all*, and knew how it was adjudg'd in *Job*'s Caſe, that the greateſt Sufferers are not therefore to be look'd upon as the greateſt Sinners. The Grace of Repentance calls our own Afflictions *Puniſhments*, but the Grace of Charity calls the Afflictions of others *Trials*, unleſs the contrary is very evident. 2. 'Twas *unneceſſarily curious.* Concluding this Calamity to be inflicted for ſome very heinous Crime, they ask who were the Criminals, *this Man, or his Parents.* And what was this to them? Or what good would it do them to know it? We are apt to be more inquiſitive concerning other Peoples Sins than concerning our own; whereas, it is more our Concern to know wherefore God contends with us, than wherefore he contends with others; for to judge *our ſelves* is our *Duty*, but to judge *our Brother* is our *Sin.*

They enquire, (1.) Whether this Man was puniſhed thus for ſome Sin of his own, either committed, or foreſeen before his Birth. Some think the Diſciples were tainted with the *Pythagorean* Notion of the *Pre-exiſtence* of Souls, and their *Tranſmigration* from one Body to another. Was this Man's Soul condemn'd to the Dungeon of this blind Body, to puniſh it for ſome great Sin committed in another Body which it had before animated? The *Phariſees* ſeem to have had the ſame Opinion of his Caſe, when they ſaid, *thou waſt altogether born in Sin*, v. 34. as if all thoſe, and thoſe only were born in Sin, whom Nature had *ſtigmatized.* Or, (2.) Whether he was puniſhed for the Wickedneſs of his Parents, which God ſometimes *viſits upon the Children.* 'Tis a good Reaſon why Parents ſhould take heed of Sin, leſt their Children ſmart for them when they are gone. Let not us thus be cruel to our own, as the *Oſtrich in the Wilderneſs.* Perhaps the Diſciples asked this, not as believing that this was the Puniſhment of ſome actual Sin of his own, or his Parents; but Chriſt having intimated to another Patient that his Impotency was the Cauſe of his Sin, *John* 5. 14. Maſter, ſay they, whoſe Sin is the Cauſe of this Impotency? Being at a Loſs what Conſtruction to put upon this Providence, they deſire to be inform'd. The Equity of God's Diſpenſations is always *certain*, for *his Righteouſneſs is as the great Mountains*, but not always to be *accounted for*, for his Judgments are a *great Deep.*

2. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Queſtion. He was always *apt to Teach*, and to rectifie his Diſciples Miſtakes.

1. He gives the Reaſon of this poor Man's Blindneſs, *neither has this Man ſinned, nor his Parents*; but therefore he was born blind, and hath continued ſo to this Day, that now at laſt *the Works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him*, v. 3. Here Chriſt, who perfectly knew the ſecret Springs of the Divine Counſels, has told two Things concerning ſuch uncommon Calamities.

1. That they are not always inflicted as Puniſhments of Sin. The Sinfulneſs of the whole Race of Mankind doth indeed juſtifie God in all the Miſeries of humane Life; ſo that they who have the leaſt Share of them, muſt ſay, that God *is Kind*; and they who have the largeſt Share, muſt not ſay he is *Unjuſt*; but many are made much more *miſerable* than others in this Life, who are not at all more *ſinful.* Not but that this Man was a Sinner, and his Parents Sinners, but 'twas not any uncommon Guilt that God had an Eye to in inflicting this upon him. *Note*, We muſt take heed of judging any to be great Sinners, merely becauſe they are great Sufferers, leſt we be found, not only *perſecuting thoſe whom God has ſmitten*, Pſal. 69. 26. but *accuſing* thoſe whom he hath *juſtified*, and *condemning* thoſe for whom *Chriſt died*, which is daring and dangerous, *Rom.* 8. 33, 34.

2. That they are ſometimes intended purely *for the Glory of God*, and the *manifeſting of his Works.* God has a Sovereignty over all his Creatures, and a Propriety in them, and may make them ſerviceable to his Glory in ſuch a way as he thinks fit, in doing or ſuffering; and if God be glorified, either by us or in us, we were not made *in vain.*

This Man was *born blind*, and it was worth while for him to be ſo, and to continue thus long dark, *That the Works of God might be manifeſt in him.* That is, (1.) That the *Attributes of God* might be manifeſted in him. His Juſtice in making ſinful Man liable to ſuch grievous Calamities; his ordinary Power and Goodneſs in ſupporting a poor Man under ſuch a grievous and tedious Affliction; eſpecially that his extraordinary Power and Goodneſs might be manifeſted in curing him. *Note*, The Difficulties of Providence, otherwiſe unaccountable, may be reſolv'd into this, God intends in them to *ſhew himſelf*, to declare his Glory, to make himſelf to be taken notice of. Thoſe who regard him not in the *ordinary* Courſe of Things, are ſometimes alarm'd by Things *extraordinary.* How contentedly then may a good Man be a *Loſer in his Comforts*, while he is ſure that thereby God will be one way or other a *Gainer in his Glory.* (2.) That the Counſels of God concerning the Redeemer, might be manifeſted in him. He was *born blind*, that our Lord Jeſus might have the Honour of *curing him*, and might therein prove himſelf ſent of God to be the Light of the World. Thus the *Fall of Man* was permitted, and the *Blindneſs* that follow'd it, that the Works of God might be manifeſt in opening *the Eyes of the Blind.* 'Twas now a great while ſince this Man was born blind, and yet it never appear'd till now *why* he was ſo. *Note*, The Intentions of Providence commonly do not appear till a great while after the Event, perhaps *many Years* after. The Sentences in the Book of Providence are ſometimes *long*, which you muſt read a great way before you can apprehend the *Senſe of.*

2. He gives the Reaſon of his own Forwardneſs and Readineſs to help and heal him, *v.* 4, 5. It was not for Oſtentation, but in purſuance of his Undertaking; *I muſt work the Works of him that ſent me* (of which this is one) *while it is Day*, and working Time; *the Night cometh*, the Period of that Day, *when no Man*

can work. This is not only a Reaſon why Chriſt was conſtant in doing good to the Souls and Bodies of Men, but why particularly he did thus, tho' it was the Sabbath Day, on which Works of Neceſſity might be done, and he proves this to be a Work of Neceſſity.

1. It was his Father's Will, *I muſt work the Works of him that ſent me. Note,* (1.) The Father, when he ſent his Son into the World, gave him *Work to do*; he did not come into the World to take State, but to do Buſineſs; whom God ſends he *employs,* for he ſends none to be idle. (2.) The Works Chriſt had to do were the *Works of him that ſent him,* not only appointed *by him,* but done *for him*; he was a Worker together with God. (3.) He was pleaſed to lay himſelf under the ſtrongeſt Obligations to do the Buſineſs he was ſent about; *I muſt work.* He *engaged his Heart* in the Covenant of Redemption, to *draw near,* and *approach* to God as Mediator, *Jer.* 30. 21. Shall we be willing to be *looſe,* when Chriſt was willing to be *bound?* (4.) Chriſt having laid himſelf under Obligations to do his Work, laid out himſelf with the utmoſt Vigour and Induſtry in his Work. He *work'd the Works* he had to do; did ἠργάζετο τὰ ἔργα, made a Buſineſs of that which was his Buſineſs. 'Tis not enough to look at our Work, and talk over it, but we muſt work it.

2. Now was his Opportunity; I muſt work *while it is Day*; while the Time laſts, which is appointed to *work in,* and while the Light laſts, which is given to *work by*; Chriſt himſelf had *his Day.* (1.) All the Buſineſs of the *mediatorial Kingdom* was to be done within the Limits of Time, and in this World; for at the End of the World, when Time ſhall be no more, the *Kingdom ſhall be delivered up to God, even the Father,* and the *Myſtery of God finiſhed.* (2.) All the Work he had to do *in his own Perſon* here on Earth, was to be done *before his Death*; the Time of his living in this World, is *the Day* here ſpoken of. *Note,* The Time of our Life is our Day, in which it concerns us to do the *Work of the Day.* Day-time is the proper Seaſon for Work, *Pſal.* 104. 22, 23. during the Day of Life we muſt be buſy, not waſte *Day-time,* nor play by *Day-light*; 'twill be time enough to reſt when our Day is done, for it is *but a Day.*

3. The Period of his Opportunity was at hand, and therefore he would be buſy; *The Night comes, when no Man can work. Note,* The Conſideration of our Death approaching, ſhould quicken us to improve all Opportunities of Life, both for doing and getting good. *The Night comes,* it will come certainly, may come ſuddenly, is coming nearer and nearer. We cannot compute how nigh our Sun is, it may go down at Noon; nor can we promiſe our ſelves a Twilight, between the Day of Life, and the Day of Death. When the Night comes we *cannot work,* becauſe the Light afforded us to work by, is *extinguiſh'd*; the Grave is a Land of Darkneſs, and our Work cannot be done *in the Dark.* And beſides, our Time allotted us for our Work will then be *expired*; when our Maſter ty'd us to Duty, he ty'd us to Time too; when Night comes, *call the Labourers*; we muſt then *ſhew our Work,* and receive according to the Things done. In the World of Retribution we are no longer Probationers; 'tis too late to *bid,* when the Inch of Candle is *dropt.* Chriſt uſeth this as an Argument with himſelf, to be diligent, tho' he had no Oppoſition from within to ſtruggle with; much more need have we to work upon our Hearts theſe and the like Conſiderations to quicken us.

4. His Buſineſs in the World to enlighten it, *v.* 5. *As long as I am in the World,* and that will not be long, *I am the Light of the World.* He had ſaid this before, *Chap.* 8. 12. He is the *Sun of Righteouſneſs,* that has not only Light in his Wings for thoſe that can ſee; but *Healing in his Wings,* or *Beams,* for thoſe that are blind, and cannot ſee, therein far exceeding in Vertue that great Light which *rules by Day.* Chriſt would therefore cure this blind Man, the Repreſentative of a blind World, becauſe he came to be *the Light of the World,* not only to give *Light,* but to give *Sight.* Now this gives us, (1.) A great *Encouragement* to come to him, as a guiding, quickning, refreſhing Light. To whom ſhould we look but to him? Which way ſhould we turn our Eyes, but to the Light? We partake of the Sun's Light, and ſo we may of Chriſt's Grace without Money, and without Price. (2.) A good *Example* of Uſefulneſs in the World. What Chriſt ſaith of himſelf, he ſaith of his Diſciples, *Ye are Lights in the World,* and if ſo, *Let your Light ſhine.* What were Candles made for, but to burn?

Thirdly, The Manner of the Cure of the blind Man, *v.* 6, 7. The Circumſtances of the Miracle are ſingular, and no doubt ſignificant. *When he had thus ſpoken,* for the Inſtruction of his Diſciples, and the opening of their Underſtandings, then he addreſſed himſelf to the opening of the blind Man's Eyes. He did not refer it till he could do it either more privately for his greater Safety, or more publickly for his greater Honour, or till the Sabbath was paſt, when it would give leſs Offence; what Good we have Opportunity of doing, we ſhould do it quickly; he that will never do a good Work, till there's nothing to be objected againſt it, will leave many a good Work for ever undone, *Eccl.* 11. 4. In the Cure obſerve,

1. The Preparation of the Eye-ſalve. Chriſt *ſpit on the Ground, and made Clay of the Spittle.* He could have cured him with a Word, as he did others, but he choſe to do it this way, to ſhew that he is not *ty'd* to any *Method.* He made Clay of his own Spittle, becauſe there was no Water near; and he would teach us not to be nice or curious, but what we have at any time Occaſion to uſe, to be willing to take up with that which is *next hand,* if it will but be made to ſerve the Turn. Why ſhould we *go about* for that which may as well be had and done a *nearer way.* Chriſt's making uſe of his own Spittle, intimates that there is healing Vertue in every thing that belongs to Chriſt; Clay made of Chriſt's Spittle was much more precious than the *Balm* of *Gilead.*

2. The Application of it to the Place; *He anointed the Eyes of the blind Man with the Clay:* Or, as the Margin reads it, *He ſpread* (ἐπέχρισεν) he *daub'd the Clay upon the Eyes of the blind Man,* like a tender Phyſician, he did it himſelf with his own Hand, tho' the Patient was a Beggar. Now Chriſt did this, (1.) To magnify his Power in making a blind Man to ſee by that Method, which one would think more likely to make a ſeeing Man blind. Daubing Clay on the Eyes would *cloſe them up,* but never *open them. Note,* The Power of God often works by Contraries; and he makes Men feel their own Blindneſs, before he gives them Sight. (2.) To give an Intimation that it was his mighty Hand, the very ſame that at firſt made Man out of *the Clay,* for by him God *made the Worlds,* both the great World, and Man, the little World. Man was *formed out of the Clay,* and molded like the Clay, and here Chriſt uſed the ſame Materials to give Sight to the Body, that at firſt he uſed to give Being to it. (3.) To repreſent and typify the healing and opening the Eyes of the Mind, by the Grace of Jeſus Chriſt. The Deſign of the Goſpel is to *open Mens Eyes,* Acts 26. 18. Now the Eye-Salve that doth the Work is of Chriſt's preparing, 'tis made up, not as this, of his *Spittle,* but of his *Blood,* the Blood and Water that came out of his pierced Side; we muſt come to Chriſt for *the Eye-ſalve,* Rev. 3. 18. He only is able, and he only *appointed,* to make it up, *Luke* 4. 18. The Means uſed in this Work are very weak and unlikely, and are made effectual only by the Power of Chriſt; when a dark World was to be enlightened, and Nations of blind Souls to have their Eyes open'd, God choſe the *fooliſh things,* and *weak,* and *deſpiſed,* for the doing of it. And the Method Chriſt takes, is, firſt to make Men feel themſelves blind, as this poor Man did, when his Eyes were daubed with Clay, and then to give them Sight. *Paul* in his Converſion was *ſtruck blind* for three Days, and then *the Scales fell from his Eyes.* The way preſcribed for getting ſpiritual Wiſdom is, let a Man become a Fool, that he may be wiſe, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. We muſt be made uneaſy with our Blindneſs, as this Man here, and then healed.

3. The Directions given to the Patient, *v.* 7. His Phyſician ſaid to him, *Go, waſh in the Pool of* Siloam. Not that this *waſhing* was needful to effect the Cure; but, (1.) Chriſt would hereby try his Obedience; and whether he could with an implicit Faith obey the Orders of one he was ſo much a Stranger to. (2.) He would likewiſe try how he ſtood affected to the Tradition of the Elders, which taught, and perhaps had taught him (for many that are *blind* are *very knowing*) that it was not lawful to waſh the Eyes, no not with Spittle, medicinally, on the Sabbath-Day, much leſs to go to a Pool of Water to waſh them. (3.) He would hereby repreſent the Method of ſpiritual Healing, in which tho' the Effect is owing purely to his Power and Grace, yet there is Duty to be done by us. Go, ſearch the Scriptures, attend upon the Miniſtry, converſe with the Wiſe, this is like *waſhing in the Pool of* Siloam. Promiſed Graces muſt be expected in the way of inſtituted Ordinances. The Waters of Baptiſm were to them who had been trained up in Darkneſs, like the *Pool of* Siloam, in which they might not only waſh and be clean, but *waſh, and have their Eyes opened.* Hence they that were baptized, are ſaid to be φωτισθέντες, *enlightened*; and the Ancients called Baptiſm φωτισμὸς, *Illumination.*

Concerning the Pool of *Siloam,* obſerve, (1.) That it was ſupply'd with Water from Mount *Zion,* ſo that theſe were the *Waters of the Sanctuary,* Pſal. 46. 4. living Waters which were *healing,* Ezek. 47. 9. (2.) That the Waters of *Siloam* had of old ſignified the Throne and Kingdom of the *Houſe of* David, pointing at the *Meſſiah,* Iſa. 8. 6. and the *Jews* who *refus'd the Waters of* Siloah, Chriſt's Doctrine and Law, and rejoyced in the Tradition of the Elders. Chriſt would try this Man, whether he would cleave to the Waters of *Siloam* or no. (3.) The Evangeliſt takes notice of the Signification of the Name, 'tis being interpreted, *ſent*; Chriſt is often called the *Sent of God*; the Meſſenger of the Covenant, *Mal.* 3. 1. So that when Chriſt ſent him to the Pool of *Siloam,* he did in effect ſend him to himſelf, for Chriſt is *all in all,* to the healing of Souls. Chriſt as a Prophet directs us to himſelf as a Prieſt, *Go waſh in the Fountain opened,* a Fountain of Life, not a *Pool.*

4. The Patient's Obedience to theſe Directions; *He went his Way therefore*; probably led by ſome Friend or other; or perhaps he was ſo well acquainted with *Jeruſalem,* that he could find the Way himſelf. Nature oft ſupplies the Want of Sight with an uncommon Sagacity. And *he waſhed* his Eyes; probably the Diſciples, or ſome Stander by, inform'd him, that he who bid him do it, was that Jeſus whom he had heard ſo much of, elſe he would not have gone at his bidding, on that which look'd ſo like a Fool's Errand; in Confidence of Chriſt's Power, as well as in Obedience to his Command, he went and waſhed.

5. The Cure effected, *he came ſeeing*. There is more Glory, in this conciſe Narrative, *he went* and *waſhed*, and *came ſeeing*, than in *Cæſar*'s *Veni, vidi, vici*. When the Clay was *waſh'd off* from his Eyes, all the other Impediments were done away with it; ſo when the Pangs and Struggles of the new Birth are over, and the Pains and Terrors of Conviction paſt, the Bands of Sin fly off with them, and a glorious Light and Liberty ſucceed. See here an Inſtance, 1. Of the Power of Chriſt. What cannot he do, who could not only do *this*, but do it *thus*? With a Lump of Clay laid on either Eye, and waſh'd off again, he couch'd thoſe Cataracts immediately, which the moſt skilful Oculiſt, with the fineſt Inſtrument, and the moſt curious Hand, could not remove. No doubt this is *he that ſhould come*, for by him the Blind receive their Sight. 2. 'Tis an Inſtance of the Virtue of Faith and Obedience. This Man let Chriſt do what *he* pleas'd, and did what he appointed him to do, and ſo was cured. They that would be healed by Chriſt, muſt be ruled by him. He *came back* from the Pool to his Neighbours and Acquaintance, wondering, and wondered at, he came *ſeeing*. This repreſents the Benefit gracious Souls find in attending on Inſtituted Ordinances, according to Chriſt's Appointment; they have gone to the Pool of *Siloam weak*, and have came away *ſtrengthned*; have gone *doubting*, and came away *ſatisfied*; have gone *mourning*, and came away *rejoycing*; gone *trembling*, and come away *triumphing*; have gone *blind*, and come away *ſeeing*; come away ſinging, *Iſa.* 52. 8.

8 ¶ The neighbours therefore, and they which before
had ſeen him, that he was blind, ſaid, Is not
this he that ſat and begged? 9 Some ſaid, This is
he: others *ſaid*, He is like him: *but* he ſaid, I am *he*.
10 Therefore ſaid they unto him, How were thine
eyes opened? 11 He anſwered and ſaid, A man
that is called Jeſus, made clay and anointed mine
eyes, and ſaid unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam,
and waſh: and I went and waſhed, and I received
ſight. 12 Then ſaid they unto him, Where is he?
He ſaid, I know not.

Such a wonderful Event as the giving of Sight to a Man born Blind, could not but be the Talk of the Town, and many heeded it no more than they do other Town-talk, that is but nine Days Wonder; but here we are told what the Neighbours ſaid of it, for the Confirmation of the Matter of Fact. That which at firſt was not believ'd *without Scrutiny*, may afterwards be admitted *without Scruple*.

Two Things are debated in this Conference about it.

Firſt, Whether this were the ſame Man that had before been blind, *v.* 8. *The Neighbours*, that liv'd near the Place where he was born and bred, and knew that he had been blind, could not but be amazed when they ſaw that he had his Eye-ſight, had it on a ſudden, and perfectly; and they ſaid, *Is not this he that ſate and begged?* It ſeems this blind Man was a common Beggar, being diſabled to work for his Living; and ſo diſcharg'd from the Obligation of the Law, that if *any would not work, neither ſhould he eat*. When he could not *go about*, he *ſate*; if we cannot *work* for God, we muſt *ſit ſtill* quietly for him. When he could not labour, his Parents not being able to maintain him, he *begged*. *Note*, Thoſe who cannot otherwiſe ſubſiſt, muſt not, like the unjuſt Steward, be *aſhamed to beg*; let no Man be aſhamed of any Thing but Sin. There are ſome common Beggars that are Objects of Charity, that ſhou'd be diſtinguiſh'd; and we muſt not let the Bees ſtarve for the ſake of the Drones, or Waſps that are among them.

As to this Man, (1.) It was well ordered by Providence, that he on whom this Miracle was wrought, ſhould be a *common Beggar*, and ſo generally *known*, and remarkable; by which means the Truth of the Miracle was the better atteſted, and there were the more to witneſs againſt thoſe Infidel *Jews*, who would not believe *that he had been blind*, than if he had been maintain'd in his Father's Houſe. (2.) It was the greater Inſtance of Chriſt's Condeſcenſion, that he *ſeem'd* (as I may ſay) to take more Pains about the Cure of a common Beggar, than of others. When it was for the Advantage of his Miracles, that they ſhould be wrought on thoſe that were remarkable, he pitch'd upon thoſe that were made ſo by their Poverty and Miſery, not by their Dignity.

In anſwer to this Enquiry, (1.) Some ſaid, *This is he*, the very ſame Man; and theſe are Witneſſes to the Truth of the Miracle, for they had long known him ſtone-blind. (2.) Others who could not think it poſſible that a Man born blind ſhould thus on a ſudden receive his Sight, for that Reaſon, and no other, ſaid, *He is not he, but is like him*, and ſo by their Confeſſion, if it be he, 'tis a great Miracle that is wrought upon him. Hence we may take Occaſion to think, (1.) Of the Wiſdom and Power of Providence, in ordering ſuch a univerſal Variety of the Faces of Men and Women, ſo that no two are ſo like, but that they may be diſtinguiſh'd, which is neceſſary to Society and Commerce, and the Adminiſtration of Juſtice. And, (2.) Of the wonderful Change which the covenanting Grace of God makes upon ſome, who before were very wicked and vile, but are thereby ſo univerſally and viſibly altered, that one would not take them to be the ſame Perſons.

This Controverſy was ſoon decided by the Man himſelf, *he ſaid, I am he*, the very Man that ſo lately ſate and begged; I am he that was blind, and was an Object of the Charity of Men, but now ſee, and am a Monument of the Mercy and Grace of God. We do not find that the Neighbours appealed to him in this Matter, but he hearing the Debate, interpos'd, and put an end to it. 'Tis a Piece of Juſtice we owe to our Neighbours, to rectifie their Miſtakes, and ſet Things before them, as far as we are able, in a true Light. Applying it ſpiritually, it teacheth us, That thoſe who are ſo ſavingly enlighten'd by the Grace of God, ſhould be ready to own what they were before that bleſſed Change was wrought, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13, 14.

Secondly, How he came to have his Eyes open'd, *v.* 10, 11, 12. They will now turn aſide and *ſee this great Sight*, and enquire further concerning it. He did not *ſound a Trumpet* when he did theſe *Alms*, nor perform his Cures *upon a Stage*, and yet like a City upon a Hill, they could not be hid.

Two Things theſe Neighbours enquire after.

1. The *Manner* of the Cure, *How were thine Eyes opened?* The Works of the Lord being great, they ought to be *ſought out*, Pſal. 111. 2. 'Tis good to obſerve the Way and Method of God's Works, and they will appear the more wonderful. We may apply it ſpiritually; 'tis ſtrange that blind Eyes ſhould be opened, but more ſtrange when we conſider *how they are opened*; how weak the Means are that are uſed, and how ſtrong the Oppoſition that is conquered.

In anſwer to this he gives them a plain and full Account of the Matter, *v.* 11. *A Man that is called* Jeſus *made Clay*, —— *and I received Sight*. *Note*, Thoſe who have experienced ſpecial Inſtances of God's Power and Goodneſs in temporal or ſpiritual Things, ſhould be ready upon all Occaſions to communicate their Experiences for the Glory of God, and the Inſtruction and Encouragement of others. See *David*'s Collection of his Experiences, his own and others, *Pſal.* 34. 4, 5, 6. 'Tis a Debt we owe to our Benefactor, and to our Brethren. God's Favours are loſt *upon* us, when they are loſt *with us*, and go no further.

2. Concerning the Author of it, *v.* 12. *Where is he?* Some perhaps asked this Queſtion out of *Curioſity*; where is he that we may *ſee* him? A Man that did ſuch Cures as theſe might well be a *Shew*, which one would go a good way for the Sight of. Others, perhaps, ask'd out of *ill Will*, where is he, that we may *ſeize* him? There was a Proclamation out for the Diſcovering and Apprehending of him, *John* 11. 57. and the unthinking Crowd, in ſpite of all Reaſon and Equity, will have ill *Thoughts* of thoſe that are put into an *ill Name*. Some we hope ask'd this Queſtion out of *good Will*; where is he that we may be acquainted with him? Where is he that we may come to him, and ſhare in the Favours he is ſo free of?

In anſwer to this he could ſay nothing, *I know not*. As ſoon as Chriſt had ſent him to the Pool of *Siloam*, it ſhould ſeem he withdrew immediately, as he did *ch.* 5. 1. and did not ſtay till the Man return'd, as if he either *doubted* of the Effect, or *waited* for the Man's Thanks. Humble Souls take more Pleaſure in *doing good*, than in hearing of it again; 'twill be time enough to hear of it in the *Reſurrection of the Juſt*. The Man had never ſeen Jeſus, for by that Time he had gain'd his Sight he had loſt his Phyſician; and he asked, 'tis probable, *where is he?* None of all the new and ſurprizing Objects that preſented themſelves could be ſo grateful to him as one Sight of Chriſt, but as yet he knew no more of him, but that he was *called*, and rightly called *Jeſus*, a Saviour. Thus in the Work of Grace wrought upon the Soul we ſee the Change, but ſee *not the Hand* that makes it; for the Way of the Spirit is like that of the Wind, which thou heareſt the Sound of, but canſt not tell *whence it comes, or whither it goes*.

13 ¶ They brought to the Phariſees him that aforetime
was blind. 14 And it was the ſabbath day
when Jeſus made the clay, and opened his eyes.
15 Then again the Phariſees alſo asked him how he
had received his ſight? He ſaid unto them, He put
clay upon mine eyes, and I waſhed, and do ſee.
16 Therefore ſaid ſome of the Phariſees, this man is
not of God, becauſe he kept not the ſabbath-day.
Others ſaid, How can a man that is a ſinner do ſuch
miracles? and there was a diviſion among them.
17 They ſay unto the blind man again, What ſayeſt
thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?
He ſaid, He is a prophet. 18 But the Jews did not
believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and
received his ſight, until they called the parents of him
that had received his ſight. 19 And they asked them
ſaying, Is this your ſon, who ye ſay was born blind?
how then doth he now ſee? 20 His parents anſwered
them and ſaid, We know that this is our ſon, and
that he was born blind: 21 But by what means h
no

now ſeeth, we know not; or who hath opened his
eyes, we know not: he is of age, ask him, he ſhall
ſpeak for himſelf. 22 Theſe words ſpake his parents
becauſe they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed
already, that if any man did confeſs that he was
Chriſt, he ſhould be put out of the ſynagogue. 23
Therefore ſaid his parents, He is of age, ask him.
24 Then again called they the man that was blind,
and ſaid unto him, Give God the praiſe: we know
that this man is a ſinner. 25 He anſwered and ſaid,
Whether he be a ſinner *or no*, I know not: one thing
I know, that whereas I was blind, now I ſee. 26
Then ſaid they to him again, What did he to thee?
how opened he thine eyes? 27 He anſwered them,
I have told you already, and ye did not hear: where-
fore would ye hear *it* again? will ye alſo be his di-
ſciples? 28 Then they reviled him, and ſaid, Thou
art his diſciple; but we are Moſes diſciples. 29 We
know that God ſpake unto Moſes: as for this fellow,
we know not from whence he is. 30 The man an-
ſwered and ſaid unto them, Why, herein is a marvel-
lous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and
yet he hath opened mine eyes. 31 Now we know
that God heareth not ſinners: but if any man be a
worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he hear-
eth. 32 Since the world began was it not heard that
any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.
33 If this man were not of God, he could do no-
thing. 34 They anſwered and ſaid unto him, Thou
waſt altogether born in ſins, and doſt thou teach us?
And they caſt him out.

One would have expected that ſuch a Miracle as Chriſt wrought upon the blind Man, ſhould have ſettled his Reputation, and ſilenc'd and ſham'd all Oppoſition, but it had the contrary Effect; inſtead of being embraced as a Prophet for it, he is proſecuted as a Criminal.

Firſt, Here is the Information that was given in to the Phariſees concerning this Matter, *Ver.* 13. *They brought to the Phariſees him that aforetime was blind.* They brought him to the great *Sanhedrin*, which conſiſted chiefly of *Phariſees*, at leaſt the Phariſees in the *Sanhedrin* were moſt active againſt Chriſt.

1. Some think they that brought this Man to the Phariſees, did it with a *good Deſign*, to ſhew them that this *Jeſus* whom *they perſecuted* was not what they repreſented him, but really a great Man, and one that gave conſiderable Proofs of a Divine Miſſion. What hath convinced *us* of the Truth and Excellency of Religion, and hath removed our Prejudices againſt it, we ſhould be forward, as we have Opportunity, to offer to others for their *Conviction*.

2. It ſhould ſeem rather they did it with an *ill Deſign*, to *exaſperate* the Phariſees the more againſt Chriſt, and that needed not, for they were *bitter* enough of themſelves. They brought him with ſuch a Suggeſtion as that, *John* 11. 47, 48. *If ye let him thus alone, all Men will believe on him. Note*, Thoſe Rulers that are of a perſecuting Spirit, ſhall never want ill Inſtruments about them, that will blow the Coals, and make them worſe.

Secondly, The Ground which was pretended for this Information, and the Colour given to it. That which is good was never maligned but under the Imputation of ſomething *Evil*. And the Crime objected here, *v.* 14. was that, *It was the Sabbath Day when Jeſus made the Clay, and opened his Eyes.* The Prophanation of the Sabbath-Day is certainly an ill Thing, and gives a Man a very ill Character; but the Traditions of the *Jews* had made that to be a Violation of the Law of the Sabbath, which was far from being ſo. And many a Time this Matter was conteſted between Chriſt and the *Jews*, that it might be ſettled for the Benefit of the Church in all Ages. But it may be asked, Why would Chriſt not only work Miracles on the Sabbath-Day, but work them in ſuch a manner as he knew would give Offence to the *Jews*? When he had heal'd the impotent Man, why would he bid him carry his Bed? Could he not have cured this blind Man without making Clay? I anſwer, (1.) He would not ſeem to yield to the uſurped Power of the Scribes and Phariſees; their Government was illegal, their Impoſitions arbitrary, and their Zeal for the Rituals conſum'd the Subſtantials of Religion, and therefore Chriſt would not *give place* to them *by Subjection, no not for an Hour.* Chriſt was made under the Law of God, but not under *their* Law. 2. He did it that he might both by Word and Action expound the Law of the fourth Commandment, and vindicate it from their corrupt Gloſſes, and ſo teach us, both, That a weekly Sabbath is to be *perpetually* obſerv'd in the Church, one Day in ſeven; for what need was there to explain that Law, if it muſt be preſently abrogated? And that it is not to be ſo *ceremonially* obſerved by us, as it was by the *Jews*: Works of Neceſſity and Mercy are allow'd, and the Sabbath Reſt to be kept, not ſo much for its own ſake, as in order to the Sabbath Work. 3. Chriſt choſe to work his Cures on the Sabbath Day, to dignify and ſanctify the Day, and to intimate, that ſpiritual Cures ſhould be wrought moſtly on the Chriſtian Sabbath Day. How many blind Eyes have been open'd by the preaching of the Goſpel, that bleſſed Eye-ſalve, on the Lord's Day; how many impotent Souls cured that Day?

Thirdly, The Trial and Examination of this Matter by the *Phariſees*, v. 15. And here appears ſo much Paſſion and Prejudice, and ill Humour, and ſo little Reaſon, that the Diſcourſe is nothing but croſſing Queſtions. One would think when a Man in theſe Circumſtances was brought before them, they ſhould have been ſo taken up in admiring the Miracle, and congratulating the Happineſs of the poor Man, that they could not have been peeviſh with him: But their Enmity to Chriſt had diveſted them of all manner of Humanity, and Divinity too. Let us ſee how they teaz'd this Man.

1. They interrogated him concerning the *Cure it ſelf.*

(1.) They doubted whether he had indeed been *born blind*, and demanded Proof of that, which even the Perſecutors had acknowledged; *Ver.* 18. They *did not believe*, i. e. they would not, that he was *born blind.* Men that ſeek Occaſion to quarrel with the cleareſt Truths, may find it if they pleaſe; and they that reſolve to *hold faſt Deceit*, will never want a Handle to hold it by. This was not a prudent Caution, but a prejudiced Infidelity. However, it was a good way they took for the clearing of this; *they called the Parents of the Man that had received his Sight:* This they did in hopes to *diſprove* the Miracle. Theſe Parents were poor and timorous, and if they had ſaid they could not be ſure that this was their Son; and that it was only ſome Weakneſs or Dimneſs in his Sight that he had been born with, which if they had been able to get help for him, might have been cured long ſince; or had otherwiſe prevaricated for fear of the Court; the Phariſees had gained their Point, had robb'd Chriſt of the Honour of *this* Miracle, which would have leſſen'd the Reputation of all the reſt: But God ſo ordered and over-ruled this Counſel of theirs, that it turned to the more effectual Proof of the Miracle, and left them under a Neceſſity of being either convinced or confounded.

Now in this Part of the Examination we have,

1. The Queſtions that were put to them, *Ver.* 19. They *asked them* in an imperious threatning Way, *Is this your Son?* Dare you ſwear it? *Do you ſay he was born blind?* Are you ſure of it? Or did he but pretend to be ſo, to have an Excuſe for his begging? *How then doth he now ſee?* That's impoſſible, and therefore you had better unſay it. Thoſe who cannot bear the Light of Truth, do all they can to *eclipſe* it, and hinder the Diſcovery of it. Thus the *Managers of Evidence*, or Miſmanagers rather, lead Witneſſes out of the Way, and teach them how to conceal or diſguiſe the Truth, and ſo involve themſelves in a double Guilt, like that of *Jeroboam*, who ſinned, and made *Iſrael* to ſin.

2. Their Anſwers to theſe Interrogatories; in which,

1. They fully *atteſt* that which they could ſafely ſay in this Matter; *ſafely*, i. e. upon their own Knowledge, and *ſafely*, i. e. without running themſelves into a *Præmunire*; v. 20. *We know that this is our Son*, for they were daily converſant with him, and had ſuch a natural Affection to him as the *true Mother* had, 1 *Kings* 3. 26. which made them know it was *their own*; and we know that he was *born blind.* They had Reaſon to know it, by the ſame Token that it had coſt them many a ſad Thought, and many a careful, troubleſome Hour about him. How often had they looked upon him with Grief, and lamented their Child's Blindneſs, more than all the Burthens and Inconveniences of their Poverty; and wiſhed he had never been born, rather than be born to ſuch an uncomfortable Life. Thoſe who are aſham'd of their Children, or any of their Relations, becauſe of their bodily Infirmities, may take a Reproof from theſe Parents, who freely own'd, this is *our Son*, tho' he was *born blind*, and liv'd upon Alms.

2. They cautiouſly *decline* giving any Evidence concerning his Cure; partly becauſe they were not themſelves Eye-witneſſes of it, and could ſay nothing to it *of their own Knowledge*; and partly becauſe they found it was a *tender Point*, and would not bear to be meddled with. And therefore having owned that he was *their Son*, and was *born blind*, further theſe Deponents ſay not.

1. Obſerve how warily they expreſs themſelves, *v.* 21. *By what means he now ſees we know not*, or *who has opened his Eyes we know not*, otherwiſe than by *hearſay*; can give no Account, either *by what Means*, or *by whoſe Hand* it was done. See how the Wiſdom of this World teacheth Men to *trim* the Matter in *critical* Junctures. Chriſt was accuſed as *Sabbath-breaker*, and as an *Impoſtor*. Now theſe Parents of the blind Man, tho' they were not Eye-witneſſes of the Cure, yet were fully aſſured of it, and were bound in Gratitude to have born their Teſtimony to the Honour of the Lord Jeſus, who had done their Son ſo great a Kindneſs; but they had not Courage to do it, and then thought it might ſerve to atone for their not appearing in favour of him, that they ſaid nothing to his Prejudice; whereas in the Day of Trial, he that is not *apparently* for Chriſt, is juſtly look'd upon as *really* againſt him, *Luke* 11. 23. *Mark* 8. 38.

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That they might not be further urged in this Matter, they refer themſelves and the Court to him, *He is of Age, ask him, he ſhall ſpeak for himſelf.* This implies, that while Children are not of Age (while they are *Infants*, ſuch as cannot ſpeak) it is incumbent upon their Parents to *ſpeak for them*; ſpeak to God for them in Prayer, ſpeak to the Church for them in Baptiſm; but when they are of Age, 'tis fit they ſhould be asked whether they be willing to ſtand to that which their Parents did for them, and let them ſpeak for themſelves. This Man, tho' he was *born blind*, yet ſeems to have been of *quick Underſtanding* above many, which enabled him to ſpeak for himſelf, better than his Friends could ſpeak for him; thus God often by a kind Providence makes up in the Mind what is wanting in the Body, 1 *Cor.* 12. 23, 24. His Parents turning them over to him, was only to ſave themſelves from Trouble, and expoſe him; whereas they that had ſo great an Intereſt in his *Mercies*, had Reaſon to imbark with him in his *Hazards*, for the Honour of that Jeſus who had done ſo much for them.

2. See the Reaſon why they were ſo cautious, *v.* 22, 23. *Becauſe they feared the Jews.* 'Twas not becauſe they would put an Honour upon their Son, by making him his own Advocate, or becauſe they would have the Matter cleared by the *beſt Hand*, but becauſe they would ſhift Trouble off from themſelves, as moſt People are in Care to do, no matter on whom they *throw it.* Near is my Friend, and near is my Child, and perhaps near is my Religion, but nearer is *my ſelf. Proximus egomet mihi.* But Chriſtianity teacheth another Leſſon, 1 *Cor.* 10. 24. *Eſth.* 8. 6.

Here's, 1. The *late Law* which the Sanhedrin had made. It was *agreed*, and enacted by their Authority, That if any Man within their Juriſdiction did *confeſs* that Jeſus *was Chriſt, he ſhould be put out of the Synagogue.* Obſerve,

1. The *Crime* deſign'd to be puniſh'd, and ſo prevented by this Statute, and that was embracing Jeſus of *Nazareth* as the promiſed *Meſſiah*, and diſcovering this by an *overt Act*, which amounted to a confeſſing of him. They themſelves did expect a *Meſſiah*, but they could by no means bear to think that this Jeſus ſhould be *He*; nor admit the Queſtion whether he were or no, for two Reaſons. (1.) Becauſe his *Precepts* were all ſo contrary to their *traditional Laws.* The *ſpiritual* Worſhip he preſcrib'd overthrew their Formalities; nor did any Thing more effectually deſtroy their Singularity and narrow Spiritedneſs, than that univerſal Charity which he taught; Humility and Mortification, Repentance and Self-denial, were Leſſons new to them, and ſounded harſh and ſtrange in their Ears. (2.) Becauſe his *Promiſes* and *Appearances* were ſo contrary to their *traditional Hopes.* They expected a Meſſiah in outward Pomp and Splendor, that ſhould not only free the Nation from the *Roman* Yoke, but advance the Grandeur of the *Sanhedrin*, and make all the Members of it Princes and Peers: And now to hear of a Meſſiah, whoſe outward Circumſtances were all mean and poor; whoſe firſt Appearance, and principal Reſidence was in *Galilee*, a deſpiſed Province; who never made his Court to them, nor ſought their Favour; whoſe Followers were neither Sword-men, nor Gown-men, nor any Men of Honour, but contemptible Fiſhermen; who propos'd and promis'd no other Redemption but from Sin, no other Conſolation of *Iſrael* but what is *Spiritual* and *Divine*; and at the ſame Time bid his Followers expect the Croſs, and count upon Perſecution. This was ſuch a Reproach to all the Ideas they had formed, and filled the Minds of the People with ſuch a Blow to their Power and Intereſt, and ſuch a Diſappointment to all their Hopes, that they could never be reconcil'd to it, nor ſo much as give it a fair or patient Hearing, but right or wrong it muſt be *cruſh'd.*

2. The Penalty to be inflicted for this Crime. If any ſhould own himſelf a Diſciple of Jeſus, he ſhould be *deem'd* and *taken* as an Apoſtate from the Faith of the *Jewiſh* Church, and a Rebel and Traytor againſt the Government of it, and ſhould therefore be *put out of the Synagogue*, as one that had rendered himſelf unworthy of the Honours, and uncapable of the Privileges of their Church; he ſhould be excommunicated, and expelled the Commonwealth of *Iſrael.* Nor was this meerly an Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure, which a Man that made no Conſcience of their Authority might ſlight, but it was in effect an *Out-lawry*, which excluded a Man from civil Commerce, and depriv'd him of his Liberty and Property. *Note*, 1. Chriſt's Holy Religion from its firſt Riſe has been oppos'd, by penal Laws made againſt the Profeſſors of it; as if Mens Conſciences would otherwiſe *naturally* embrace it, this unnatural Force has been put upon them. 2. The Church's Artillery, when the Command of it has fallen into ill Hands, has often been turn'd againſt it ſelf, and *Eccleſiaſtical* Cenſures made to ſerve a carnal, ſecular Intereſt. 'Tis no new Thing to ſee thoſe caſt out of the Synagogue that were the greateſt Beauties and Bleſſings of it, and to hear thoſe that expell'd them, ſay, *The Lord be glorified*, Iſa. 66. 5.

Now of this Edict it is ſaid, (1.) That the *Jews* had *agreed* it, or *conſpir'd* it. Their Conſultation and Communion herein was a perfect Conſpiracy againſt the Crown and Dignity of the Redeemer; againſt the Lord and his Anointed. (2.) That they had *already* agreed it. Tho' he had been but a few Months in any publick Character among them, and one would think in ſo ſhort a Time could not have made them jealous of him, yet thus *early* were they aware of his growing Intereſt, and *already* agreed to do their utmoſt to ſuppreſs it. He had *lately* made his eſcape out of the Temple, and when they ſaw themſelves baffled in their Attempts to take him, they *preſently* took this Courſe, to make it *penal* for any Body to own him. Thus *unanimous*, and thus *expeditious* are the Enemies of the Church, and their Counſels; but he that *ſits in Heaven laughs at them*, and *has them in deriſion*, and ſo may we.

2. The Influence which this Law had upon the Parents of the blind Man. They declin'd ſaying any Thing of Chriſt, and ſhuffled it off to their Son, *becauſe they feared the Jews.* Chriſt had incurr'd the Frowns of the Government to do their Son a Kindneſs, but they would not incur them to do him any Honour. *Note, The Fear of Man brings a Snare*, Prov. 29. 25. and oft makes People deny and diſown Chriſt, and his Truths, and Ways, and act againſt their Conſciences. Well, the Parents have thus diſentangled themſelves, and are diſcharged from any further Attendance, let us now go on with the Examination of the *Man himſelf*; their Doubt whether he was *born blind* was put out of doubt *by them*, and therefore,

(2.) They enquired of *him* concerning the *Manner of the Cure*, and made their Remarks upon it, *v.* 15, 16.

1. The ſame Queſtion which his Neighbours had put to him, *now again the Phariſees ask'd him, how he had received his Sight?* This they enquir'd, not with any ſincere Deſire to *find out* the *Truth*, by tracing the Report to the Original, but with a Deſire to *find an Occaſion* againſt Chriſt; for if the Man ſhould relate the Matter fully, they would prove Chriſt a Sabbath-breaker; if he ſhould vary from his former Story, they would have ſome Colour to ſuſpect the whole to be a Colluſion.

2. The ſame Anſwer in effect which he had before given to his Neighbours, he here repeats to the *Phariſees*; *He put Clay upon mine Eyes, and I waſhed and do ſee.* He doth not here ſpeak of the *making* of the Clay, for indeed he had not *ſeen it* made: That Circumſtance was not eſſential, and might give the Phariſees moſt Occaſion againſt him, and therefore he waves it. In the former Account, he ſaid, *I waſh'd and received ſight*; but leſt they ſhould think 'twas only a Glimpſe for the preſent, which a heated Imagination might fancy it ſelf to have, he now ſaith, *I do ſee*: 'Tis a compleat and laſting Cure.

3. The Remarks made upon this Story were very different and occaſioned a Debate in the Court, *v.* 16.

1. Some took this Occaſion to cenſure and condemn Chriſt for what he had done. Some of the Phariſees ſaid, *This Man is not of God*, as he pretends, *becauſe he keepeth not the Sabbath Day.* 1. The Doctrine upon which this Cenſure is grounded, is very *true*; that thoſe *are not of God*; thoſe Pretenders to Prophecy not *ſent of God*; thoſe Pretenders to Saintſhip not *born of God*, who do not *keep the Sabbath Day.* They that are of God will *keep the Commandments of God*; and this is the Commandment, that we ſanctify the Sabbath: They that are of God *keep up Communion* with God, and delight to hear from him, and ſpeak to him; and therefore will obſerve the Sabbath, which is a Day appointed for Intercourſe with Heaven. The Sabbath is called a *Sign*; for the ſanctifying of it is a Sign of a ſanctified Heart; and the prophaning of it a Sign of a prophane Heart. But, 2. The Application of it to our Saviour is very *unjuſt*, for he did religiouſly obſerve the Sabbath Day, and never in any Inſtance violated it; never did otherwiſe than *well* on the Sabbath Day. He did not keep the Sabbath according to the Tradition of the Elders, and the ſuperſtitious Obſervances of the Phariſees, but he kept it according to the Command of God, and therefore no doubt he was of God, and his Miracles proved him to be *Lord* alſo *of the Sabbath Day. Note*, Much unrighteous and uncharitable judging is occaſioned by Mens making the Rules of Religion more ſtrict than God has made them, and adding their own Fancies to God's Appointments; as the *Jews* here, in the Caſe of Sabbath Sanctification. We our ſelves may forbear ſuch and ſuch Things on the Sabbath Day as we find a Diſtraction to us, and we do well, but we muſt not therefore tye up others to the ſame Strictneſs: Every Thing that we take for a Rule of Practice muſt not preſently be made a Rule of Judgment.

2. Others ſpoke in his Favour, and very pertinently urged, *How can a Man that is a Sinner do ſuch Miracles?* It ſeems, even in this *Council of the Ungodly*, there were ſome that were capable of a *free Thought*, and were Witneſſes for Chriſt even in the midſt of his Enemies. The Matter of Fact was plain, that this was a true Miracle; the more it was *ſearched into*, the more it was *cleared*; and this brought his former like Works to mind, and gave Occaſion to ſpeak magnificently of them, τοιαῦτα σημεῖα, ſo *great Signs*, ſo many, ſo evident. And the Inference from it is very natural; ſuch Things as theſe could never be done by *a Man that is a Sinner*, i. e. not by any meer Man, in his own Name, and by his own Power; or rather, not by one that is a Cheat, or an Impoſtor, and in that Senſe a Sinner; ſuch a one may indeed ſhow *ſome Signs and lying Wonders*; but not *ſuch Signs* and true Wonders as Chriſt wrought. How could a Man produce ſuch divine Credentials, if he had not a divine Commiſſion? Thus there was a *Diviſion among them*, a *Schiſm*, ſo the Word is; they claſh'd in their Opinion, a warm Debate aroſe, and the *Houſe divided* upon it. Thus God *defeats* the Counſels of his Enemies, by dividing them; and by ſuch Teſtimonies as theſe

given againſt the Malice of Perſecutors, and the Rubs they meet with, their Deſigns againſt the Church are ſometimes render'd ineffectual, and always inexcuſable.

2. After their Enquiry concerning the Cure, we muſt obſerve their Enquiry concerning the *Author* of it. And here obſerve,

1. What the Man ſaid of him in anſwer to their Enquiry. They aſk him, *v.* 17. *What ſayeſt thou of him, ſeeing that he has open'd thine Eyes*? What doſt thou think of his doing this? And what Idea haſt thou of him that did it? If he ſhould ſpeak *ſlightly* of Chriſt in anſwer to this, as he might be tempted to do to pleaſe them, now he was in their Hands, as his Parents had done; if he ſhould ſay, I know not what to make of him; he may be a Conjurer for ought I know, or ſome Mountebank, they would have triumphed in it: Nothing confirms Chriſt's Enemies in their Enmity to him, ſo much as the Slights put upon him by thoſe that have paſt for his Friends. But if he ſhould ſpeak *honourably* of him, they would proſecute him upon their new Law, which did not except, no not his own Patient; would make him an Example, and ſo deter others from applying themſelves to him for Cures, which tho' they came cheap from Chriſt, yet would make them pay dear for. Or perhaps, Chriſt's Friends propos'd to have the Man's own Sentiments concerning his Phyſician, and were willing to know, ſince he appear'd to be a *ſenſible* Man, what he thought of him. *Note*, Thoſe whoſe Eyes Chriſt has open'd, know beſt what to ſay of him, and have great Reaſon upon all Occaſions to *ſay well* of him. What think we of Chriſt?

To this Queſtion the poor Man makes a ſhort, plain, and direct Anſwer, *He is a Prophet*; he is one inſpired and ſent of God to preach and work Miracles, and delivers to the World a divine Meſſage. There had been no Prophets among the *Jews* of three hundred Years paſt, yet they did not conclude they ſhould have no more, for they knew he was yet to come who ſhould *ſeal up Viſion and Prophecy*, Dan. 9. 24. It ſhould ſeem this Man had not any Thoughts that he was the Meſſiah, the great Prophet, but one of the ſame Rank with the other Prophets: The Woman of *Samaria* concluded he was *a Prophet*, before ſhe had any Thought of his being the *Meſſiah*, John 4. 19. So this blind Man thought well of Chriſt according to the Light he had, tho' he did not think *well enough* of him; but being faithful in what he had already attained to, God revealed even *that* unto him. This poor blind Beggar had a clearer Judgment of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, and ſaw further into the Proofs of a divine Miſſion, than the *Maſters in Iſrael* that aſſum'd an Authority to judge of Prophets.

2. What they ſaid of him in reply to the Man's Teſtimony. Having in vain attempted to invalidate the Evidence of the Fact, and finding that indeed a *notable Miracle was wrought*, and they *could not deny it*; they renew their Attempt to banter it, and run it down, and do all they can to ſhake the good Opinion the Man had of him that opened his Eyes, and to convince him that he was an ill Man, *v.* 24. *Give God the Glory, we know that this Man is a Sinner.* Two Ways this is underſtood, either,

(1.) By way of *Advice*, to take heed of aſcribing the Praiſe of his Cure to a ſinful Man, but to give it all to God, to whom it was due; thus under Colour of Zeal for the Honour of God, they rob Chriſt of his Honour; as thoſe who do will not worſhip Chriſt as God, under Pretence of Zeal for this great Truth, that there is but one God to be worſhipped; whereas this is his declared Will, that all Men ſhould *honour the Son even as they honour the Father*; and in confeſſing that Chriſt is Lord, we *give Glory to God the Father.* When God makes uſe of Men that are Sinners as Inſtruments of Good to us, we muſt *give God the Glory*, for every Creature is that to us that he makes it to be, and yet there is a Gratitude owing to the Inſtruments. It was a good Word, *Give God the Praiſe*, but here was ill uſed; and there ſeems to be this further in it, this Man is *a Sinner*, an *ill Man*, and therefore give the Praiſe ſo much the more to God who could work by ſuch an Inſtrument.

(2.) Or by way of *Adjuration*, ſo ſome take it. We know (tho' thou doſt not, who haſt but lately come as it were into a new World) that this Man is *a Sinner*, i. e. a great Impoſtor that cheats the Country, this we are ſure of, therefore *give God Praiſe* (as *Joſhua* ſaid to *Achan*) by making an ingenuous Confeſſion of the Fraud, and Colluſion, which we are confident there is in this Matter; in God's Name, Man, tell the Truth. Thus is God's Name abus'd in Papal Inquiſitions, when by Oaths *ex Officio*, they extort Accuſations of themſelves from the *Innocent*, and of *others* from the *Ignorant*. See how baſely they ſpeak of the Lord Jeſus, *We know that this Man is a Sinner*, is a Man of Sin: In which we may obſerve, (1.) Their Inſolence and Pride. They would not have it thought when they aſked the Man what he thought of him, that they needed Information; nay, they *know very well* that he is a Sinner, and no Body can convince them of the contrary. He had challenged them to their Faces, *chap.* 8. 46. to *convince him of Sin*, and they had nothing to ſay; but now behind his Back they ſpeak to him as a Malefactor, convicted upon the notorious Evidence of the Fact. Thus falſe Accuſers make up in Confidence what's wanting in Proof. (2.) The Injury and Indignity hereby done to the Lord Jeſus. When he became Man, he not only took upon him the Form of a *Servant*, but of a *Sinner*, Rom. 8. 3. and paſt for a Sinner in common with the reſt of Mankind. Nay, he was repreſented as a Sinner of the firſt Magnitude, a Sinner above all Men; and being *made Sin for us*, he deſpiſed even *this* Shame.

3. The Debate that aroſe between the Phariſees and this poor Man concerning Chriſt: They ſay, *He is a Sinner*; he ſaith, *He is a Prophet.* As it is an Encouragement to thoſe who are concerned for the Cauſe of Chriſt, to hope that it ſhall never be loſt for want of Witneſſes, when they find a poor blind Beggar pick'd up from the Way-ſide, and made a Witneſs for Chriſt, to the Faces of his moſt impudent Enemies; ſo it is an Encouragement to thoſe who are called out to witneſs for Chriſt, to find with what Prudence and Courage this Man managed his Defence, according to the Promiſe, *It ſhall be given you in that ſame Hour what ye ſhall ſpeak.* Tho' he had never ſeen Jeſus, he had felt his Grace.

Now in the Parley between the Phariſees and this poor Man, we may obſerve three Steps.

Firſt, He ſticks to the certain Matter of Fact, which they endeavour to ſhake the Evidence of. That which is doubtful, is beſt reſolved into that which is plain, and therefore, 1. He adheres to that which to himſelf at leaſt, and to his own Satisfaction was paſt diſpute, *v.* 25. *Whether he be a Sinner or no I know not*; I will not now ſtand to diſpute, nor need I, the Matter is plain, and tho' I ſhould altogether hold my Peace, would ſpeak for it ſelf; or, as it might better be rendered, *If he be a Sinner, I know it not*, I ſee no Reaſon to ſay ſo, but the contrary, for this *one Thing I know*, and can be more ſure of than you can be of that which you are ſo confident of, *That, whereas I was blind, now I ſee*, and therefore muſt not only ſay, that he has been a good Friend to me, but that he is *a Prophet*; I am both able and bound to ſpeak well of him. Now here, (1.) He *tacitly reproves* their great Aſſurance of the ill Character they gave of the Bleſſed Jeſus. You ſay you *know* him to be a *Sinner*, I that know him as well as you do, cannot give him any ſuch Character. (2.) He *boldly relies* upon his own Experience of the Power and Goodneſs of the Holy Jeſus, and reſolves to abide by it. There's no diſputing againſt Experience, nor arguing a Man out of his Senſes; here's one that is properly an Eye-witneſs of the Power and Grace of Chriſt, tho' he had never ſeen him. *Note*, As Chriſt's Mercies are moſt valued by thoſe that have felt the want of them, that have been blind, and now ſee, ſo the moſt powerful and durable Affections to Chriſt are thoſe that ariſe from an experimental Knowledge of him, 1 *John* 1. 1. *Acts* 4. 2.

He doth not here give a nice Account of the Method of the Cure, nor pretend to deſcribe it *philoſophically*; but in ſhort, *Whereas I was blind, now I ſee.* Thus in the Work of Grace in the Soul, tho' we cannot tell when and how, by what Inſtruments, and by what Steps and Advances the bleſſed Change was wrought, yet we may take the Comfort of it, if we can ſay, through Grace, *Whereas I was blind, now I ſee.* I did live a carnal, wordly, ſenſual Life, but Thanks be to God it is now otherwiſe with me, *Eph.* 5. 8.

2. They endeavour to baffle and ſtifle the Evidence by a needleſs Repetition of their Enquiries into it. *Ver.* 26. *What did he to thee? How open'd he thine Eyes?* They aſked theſe Queſtions, (1.) Becauſe they wanted ſomething to ſay, and would rather ſpeak *impertinently*, than ſeem to be ſilenced, or run a-ground. Thus eager Diſputants that reſolve they will have the laſt Word by ſuch vain Repetitions, to avoid the Shame of being ſilenced, make themſelves accountable for many idle Words. (2.) Becauſe they hoped by putting the Man upon repeating his Evidence, to catch him *tripping* in it, or *wavering*, and then they would think they had gained a good Point.

Secondly, He *upbraids them* with their obſtinate Infidelity, and invincible Prejudices, and they *revile him* as a Diſciple of Jeſus, *v.* 27—29. where the Man is more bold with them, and they more ſharp upon him than before.

1. The Man boldly upbraids them with their willful and unreaſonable Oppoſition of the Evidence of this Miracle, *v.* 27. He would not gratify them with a Repetition of the Story, but bravely reply'd, *I have told you already, and ye did not hear, wherefore would you hear it again, will ye alſo be his Diſciples?* Some think he ſpoke *ſeriouſly*, and really expecting that they would be convinced. He has many Diſciples, I'll be one, will you alſo come in among them? Some zealous young Chriſtians ſee ſo much Reaſon for Religion, that they are ready to think every one ſhould preſently be of their Mind. But it rather ſeems to be ſpoken *ironically*, *will you be his Diſciples?* No, I know you abhor the Thoughts of it, why then ſhould you deſire to hear that which will either make you his Diſciples, or leave you inexcuſable if you be not? Thoſe that wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light, as theſe Phariſees here did, (1.) They *make themſelves contemptible* and baſe, as theſe here did, who were juſtly *expos'd* by this poor Man for denying the Concluſion, when they had nothing to object againſt either of the Premiſes. (2.) They forfeit all the Benefit of further Inſtructions and Means of Knowledge, and Conviction: They that have been told once and *would not hear*, why ſhould they be told it again? *Jer.* 51. 9. ſee *Mat.* 10. 14. (3.) They hereby *receive the Grace of God in vain.* This is implied in that, *Will ye be his Diſciples?* No, you reſolve you will not, why then would you hear it again,

only that you may be his Accuſers and Perſecutors? Thoſe who will not ſee Cauſe to imbrace Chriſt, and join with his Followers, yet one would think ſhould ſee Cauſe enough not to hate, and perſecute him and them.

2. For this they ſcorn and *revile him*, *v.* 28. when they could not reſiſt the Wiſdom and Spirit, by which he ſpoke, they broke out into a Paſſion, and ſcolded him, began to call Names, and give him ill Language. See what Chriſt's faithful Witneſſes muſt expect from the Adverſaries of his Truth and Cauſe; let them count upon *all manner of Evil* to be ſaid of them, *Mat.* 5. 11. 'Tis the Method commonly taken by unreaſonable Man, what is wanting in Truth and Reaſon, to make it out with Railing.

1. They taunted this Man for his Affection to Chriſt; they ſaid, *Thou art his Diſciple*, as if that were Reproach enough, and they could not ſay worſe of him. We ſcorn to be his Diſciples, and will leave that Preferment to thee, and ſuch Scoundrels as thou art. They do what they can to put Chriſt's Religion in an ill Name, and to repreſent the Profeſſion of it as a contemptible ſcandalous Character. They *reviled him*. The Vulgar reads it *Male dixerunt eum*, they *curſed him*; and what was their Curſe? It was this, *Be thou his Diſciple*; may ſuch a Curſe (ſaith St. *Auſtin* here) ever be on us and on our Children! If we take our Meaſures of Credit and Diſgrace from the Sentiment or Clamours rather of a blind deluded World, we ſhall *glory in our Shame*, and be *aſham'd of our Glory*. They had no Reaſon to call this Man a *Diſciple* of Chriſt, he had neither ſeen him or heard him preach, only he had ſpoken favourably of a Kindneſs he had done him, and this they could not bear.

2. They gloried in their Relation to *Moſes* as their Maſter; *We are* Moſes*'s Diſciples*, and do not either need or deſire any other Teacher. *Note*, 1. Carnal Profeſſors of Religion are very apt to truſt to, and be proud of the Dignities and Privileges of their Profeſſion, while they are Strangers to the Principles and Powers of their Religion. Theſe Phariſees had before boaſted of their good Parentage, *We are* Abraham*'s Seed*; here of their good Education, *We are* Moſes*'s Diſciples*; as if theſe would ſave them. 2. 'Tis ſad to ſee how much one Part of Religion is oppos'd, under Colour of Zeal for another Part; there was a perfect Harmony between Chriſt and *Moſes*; *Moſes* prepared for Chriſt, and Chriſt perfected *Moſes*, ſo that they might be Diſciples of *Moſes*, and become the Diſciples of Chriſt too; and yet they here put them in Oppoſition, nor could they have perſecuted Chriſt, but under the Umbrage of the abuſed Name of *Moſes*. Thus they, who gainſay the Doctrine of Free Grace, value themſelves as Promoters of Man's Duty, as we are *Moſes*'s Diſciples; while on the other hand, they that cancel the Obligation of the Law, value themſelves as the Aſſertors of Free Grace, and as if none were the *Diſciples* of *Jeſus* but they; whereas if we rightly underſtand the Matter, we ſhall ſee God's Grace and Man's Duty meet together, and kiſs and befriend each other.

3. They gave ſome ſort of Reaſon for their adhering to *Moſes* againſt Chriſt, *v.* 2. *We know that God ſpake unto* Moſes; *as for this Fellow, we know not whence he is.* But did they not know, that among other Things God ſpake unto *Moſes*, this was one, That they muſt expect *another Prophet*, and a further Revelation of the Mind of God; yet when our Lord Jeſus, purſuant to what God ſaid to *Moſes*, did appear, and gave ſufficient Proofs of his being *that Prophet*, under Pretence of ſticking to the old Religion, and the eſtabliſhed Church, they not only forfeited, but forſook their own Mercies. In this Argument of theirs obſerve,

1. How impertinently they alledge in Defence of their Enmity to Chriſt, that which none of his Followers ever deny'd, *We know that God ſpake unto* Moſes; and Thanks be to God we know it too, more plainly to *Moſes* than to any other of the Prophets; but what then? God ſpake to *Moſes*, and doth it therefore follow that Jeſus is an Impoſtor? *Moſes* was a Prophet, 'tis true, and might not Jeſus be a Prophet too? *Moſes* ſpake honourably of Jeſus, *John* 5. 46. and Jeſus ſpake honourably of *Moſes*, *Luke* 6. 29. they were both faithful in the ſame Houſe of God; *Moſes* as a Servant, Chriſt as a Son; therefore their pleading *Moſes*'s divine Warrant in Oppoſition to Chriſt's, was an Artifice to make unthinking People believe it was as certain that Jeſus was a falſe Prophet, as that *Moſes* was a true one; whereas they were both true.

2. How abſurdly they urge their *Ignorance* of Chriſt, as a Reaſon to juſtify their Contempt of him; *As for this Fellow.* Thus ſcornfully do they ſpeak of the Bleſſed *Jeſus*; as if they did not think it worth while to charge their Memories with a Name ſo inconſiderable; they expreſs themſelves with as much Diſdain of the Shepherd of *Iſrael*, as if he had not been worthy to be *ſet with the Dogs of their Flock*; as for *this Fellow*, this ſorry Fellow *we know not whence he is.* They look'd upon themſelves to have the Key of Knowledge, that none muſt preach without a Licenſe firſt had and obtain'd from them, under the Seal of their Court; they expected that all who ſet up for Teachers ſhould apply themſelves to them, and give them Satisfaction, which this *Jeſus* had never done, never ſo far owned their Power as to ask their Leave, and therefore they concluded him an Intruder, and one that came not in by the Door; *they knew not whence* or what *he was*, and therefore conclude him *a Sinner*; whereas thoſe we know little of, we ſhould judge charitably of; but proud and narrow Souls will think none good but themſelves, and thoſe that are in their Intereſt. It was not long ago, that the *Jews* had made the contrary to this, an Objection againſt Chriſt, *Chap.* 7. 27. *We know this Man whence he is, but when Chriſt comes, no Man know, whence he is.* Thus they could, with the greateſt Aſſurance, either affirm, or deny the ſame Thing, according as they ſaw it would ſerve their Turn. They *knew not whence he was*, and whoſe Fault was that? (1.) 'Tis certain *they ought to have enquired*; the Meſſiah was to appear about this Time, and it concern'd them to look about them, and examine every Indication; but theſe Prieſts like thoſe, *Jer.* 2. 5. *ſaid not, Where is this Lord?* (2.) 'Tis certain they *might have known* whence he was, might have known not only by ſearching the Regiſter, that he was born in *Bethlehem*; but by enquiring into his Doctrine, Miracles and Converſation, they might have known that he was ſent of God, and had better Orders, a better Commiſſion, and far better Inſtructions than any they could give him. See the Abſurdity of Infidelity, Men will not know the Doctrine of Chriſt, becauſe they are reſolved they will not believe it, and then pretend they do not believe it, becauſe they do not know it. Such Ignorance and Unbelief, which ſupport one another, aggravate one another.

Thirdly, He *reaſons with them* concerning this Matter, and they *excommunicate* him.

1. The poor Man finding that he had Reaſon on his Side, which they could not anſwer, grows more bold, and in Proſecution of his Argument, is very cloſe upon them.

(1.) He *admires* their obſtinate Infidelity, *v.* 30. not at all daunted by their Frowns, nor ſhaken by their Confidence; he bravely anſwered, why, *Herein is a marvellous Thing*, the ſtrangeſt Inſtance of wilful Ignorance that ever was heard of among Men that pretended to Senſe, *that you knew not from whence he is*, and yet he has open'd mine Eyes. Two Things he wonders at.

(1.) That they ſhould be *Strangers* to a Man ſo *famous.* He that could open the Eyes of the Blind, muſt certainly be a conſiderable Man, and worth taking Notice of; the *Phariſees* were inquiſitive Men, had a large Correſpondence and Acquaintance, thought themſelves the Eyes of the Church, and its Watchmen, and yet that they ſhould talk, as if they thought it below them to take Cognizance of ſuch a Man as this, and have Converſation with him, this is *a ſtrange thing indeed.* There are many who paſs for learned and knowing Men, that underſtand Buſineſs, and talk Senſe in other Things, that yet are ignorant to a Wonder of the Doctrine of Chriſt, that have no Concern, no not ſo much as a Curioſity to acquaint themſelves with that which the *Angels deſire to look into.*

(2.) That they ſhould queſtion the *Divine Miſſion* of one that had undoubtedly wrought a *Divine Miracle.* When they ſaid, *We know not whence he is*, they meant, we know not any Proof that his Doctrine and Miniſtry is from Heaven; now this is ſtrange (ſaith the poor Man) that the Miracle wrought upon me has not convinced you, and put the Matter out of doubt. That you whoſe Education and Studies give you Advantages above others of diſcerning the Things of God, that you ſhould thus ſhut your Eyes againſt the Light. 'Tis a *marvellous Work, and a Wonder, when the Wiſdom of the Wiſe thus periſheth*, Iſa. 29. 14. that they deny the *Truth* of that which they cannot gainſay the *Evidence* of. *Note*, 1. The Unbelief of thoſe who enjoy the Means of Knowledge and Conviction, is indeed a *marvellous Thing*, Mark 6. 6. 2. Thoſe who have themſelves experienc'd the Power and Grace of the Lord Jeſus, do eſpecially wonder at the Wilfulneſs of thoſe that reject him, and having ſuch good Thoughts of him themſelves, are amazed that others have not ſo too. Had Chriſt open'd the Eyes of theſe Phariſees, they would not have doubted his being a Prophet.

(2.) He argues ſtrongly againſt them, *v.* 31, 32, 33. They had determined concerning Jeſus, that he was not of God, *v.* 16. but was a *Sinner*, v. 24. In anſwer to which, the Man here proves not only that he was *not a Sinner*, v. 31. but that he was *of God*, *v.* 33. He argues here, (1.) With great *Knowledge.* Tho' he could not read a Letter on the Book, he was well acquainted with the Scripture, and the Things of God; had wanted the Senſe of *Seeing*, yet had well improved that of *Hearing*, by which *Faith cometh*; yet that would not have ſerv'd him, if he had not had an extraordinary Preſence of God with him, and ſpecial Aids of his Spirit upon this Occaſion. (2.) With great *Zeal* for the Honour of Chriſt, whom he could not endure to hear run down, and evil ſpoken of. (3.) With great *Boldneſs* and *Courage*, and Undauntedneſs, not terrified by the proudeſt of his Adverſaries. They that are ambitious of the Favours of God, muſt not be afraid of the Frowns of Men. “ See here (ſaith Dr. *Whitby*) a blind Man “ and unlearned, judging more rightly of divine Things, than the “ whole learned Council of the Phariſees. Whence we learn, that “ we are not always to be led by the Authority of Councils, “ Popes or Biſhops; and that it is not abſurd for Laymen ſome- “ times to vary from their Opinions; theſe Overſeers being “ ſometimes guilty of great Overſights.

Now the Man's Argument may be reduced into Form, ſomewhat like that of *David*, Pſal. 66. 18, 19. The Propoſition in *David*'s Argument is, *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, God will not hear me*; here it is to the ſame Purpoſe, *God heareth not Sinners*; the Aſſumption there is, *But verily God hath heard me*; here it is, Verily God hath heard Jeſus, he has been honoured with the doing of that which was never done before; the Concluſion there is to the Honour of God, *Bleſſed be God*; here to the Honour of the Lord Jeſus, He is *of God*.

1. He lays it down for *an undoubted Truth*, that *none but good Men* are the *Favourites* of Heaven, *v.* 31. *Now we know*, you know it as well as I, that *God heareth not Sinners*, but *if any Man be a Worſhipper of God, and doth his Will, him he heareth.* Here,

1. The Aſſertions rightly underſtood are true.

(1.) Be it ſpoken to the Terror of the Wicked, *God heareth not Sinners*, i. e. ſuch Sinners as the Phariſees meant, when they ſaid of Chriſt, *He is a Sinner*, one that under the Umbrage of God's Name advanced the Devil's Intereſt. This ſpeaks no Diſcouragement to repenting returning Sinners, but to thoſe that go on ſtill in their Treſpaſſes, that make their Prayers not only conſiſtent with, but ſubſervient to their Sins, as the Hypocrites do; God will not *hear* them; he will not own them, nor give an Anſwer of Peace to their Prayers.

(2.) Be it ſpoken to the Comfort of the Righteous, that *if any Man be a Worſhipper of God, and doth his Will, him he heareth.* Here's 1. The compleat Character of a good Man, he is one that *worſhips God, and doth his Will*, he is conſtant in his Devotions at ſet times, and regular in his Converſation at all times. He is one that makes it his Buſineſs to glorify his Creator, by the ſolemn Adorations of his Name, and a ſincere Obedience to his Will and Law; both muſt go together, 2. The unſpeakable Comfort of ſuch a Man, him *God hears*; hears his Complaints, and relieves him; hears his Appeals, and rights him; hears his Praiſes, and accepts them; hears his Prayers, and anſwers them, *Pſal.* 34. 15.

2. The Application of theſe Truths is very pertinent to prove that he, at whoſe Word ſuch a Divine Power was put forth, as cured one born blind, was not an ill Man; but having manifeſtly ſuch an Intereſt in the holy God, as that he *heard him always*, John 11. 41, 42. was certainly a holy one.

2. He magnifies the Miracles which Chriſt had wrought, to ſtrengthen the Argument the more, *v.* 32. *Since the World began, was it not heard, that any Man opened the Eyes of one that was born blind.* This is to ſhew either, (1.) That it was a *true* Miracle, and above the Power of Nature; it was never heard, that any Man, by the Uſe of natural Means, had cur'd one that was *born blind*; no doubt, both this Man and his Parents had been very inquiſitive into Caſes of this Nature, whether any ſuch had been help'd, and could hear of none, which enabled him to ſpeak this with the more Aſſurance. Or, (2.) That it was an *extraordinary* Miracle, and beyond the Precedents of former Miracles; neither *Moſes* nor any of the Prophets, tho' they did great Things, ever did ſuch Things as this; wherein Divine Power and Divine Goodneſs ſeem to ſtrive which ſhould out-ſhine. *Moſes* wrought miraculous Plagues, but Chriſt wrought miraculous Cures. *Note.* 1. The wonderous Works of the Lord Jeſus were ſuch, as the like had never been done before. 2. It becomes thoſe who have received Mercy from God, to magnify the Mercies they have received, and to ſpeak honourably of them; not that thereby Glory may redound to themſelves, and they may ſeem to be extraordinary Favourites of Heaven, but that God may have ſo much the more Glory.

3. He therefore concludes, *If this Man were not of God, he could do nothing*, i. e. nothing extraordinary, no ſuch Thing as *this*; and therefore no doubt he is *of God*, notwithſtanding his Non-conformity to your Traditions in the Buſineſs of the Sabbath Day. *Note*, What Chriſt did on Earth, ſufficiently demonſtrated what he was in Heaven; for if he had not been ſent of God he could not have wrought ſuch Miracles. 'Tis true, the Man of Sin comes with *lying Wonders*, but not with real Miracles. 'Tis likewiſe ſuppoſed, that a falſe Prophet might by Divine Permiſſion give a *Sign or a Wonder*, Deut. 13. 1, 2. yet the Caſe is ſo put, as that it would carry with it its own Confutation, for 'tis to enforce a Temptation to ſerve other Gods, which was to ſet God *againſt himſelf*. 'Tis true likewiſe that many wicked People have in Chriſt's Name done many wonderful Works, which doth not prove them that wrought them to be of God, but him in whoſe Name they were wrought. We may each of us know by this whether we are of God or no; *What do we?* What do we for God, for our Souls, in working out our Salvation; what do we more than others?

2. The Phariſees finding themſelves unable either to anſwer his Reaſonings, or to bear them, fell foul upon him, and with a great deal of Pride and Paſſion they broke off the Diſcourſe, *v.* 34. where we are told,

1. What they *ſaid*; having nothing to reply to his Argument they reflected upon his Perſon, *Thou waſt altogether born in Sin, and doſt thou teach us*; They take that *heniouſly*, which they had Reaſon to take *kindly*, and are cut to the Heart with Rage by that which ſhould have prick'd them to the Heart with Repentance.

Obſerve, 1. How they deſpiſed him, and what a ſevere Cenſure they paſt upon him? thou waſt not only *born in Sin*, as every Man is, but altogether ſo, wholly corrupt, and bearing about with thee in thy Body, as well as in thy Soul, the Marks of that Corruption; thou waſt one, whom Nature *ſtigmatiz'd.* Had he ſtill continued blind, it had been barbarous to upbraid him with it, and from thence to gather that he was more deeply tainted with Sin than other People; but moſt unjuſt to take notice of it, now the Cure had not only roll'd away the Reproach of his Blindneſs, but had *ſignalized* him as a Favourite of Heaven. Some take it thus, thou haſt been a *common Beggar*, and ſuch are too often *common Sinners*, and thou haſt no doubt been as bad as any of them; whereas by his Diſcourſe he had prov'd the contrary, and had evidenc'd a deep Tincture of Piety. But when proud imperious Phariſees reſolve to run a Man down, any Thing ſhall ſerve for a Pretence.

2. How they *diſdain* to learn of him, or to receive Inſtruction from him. *Doſt thou teach us?* A mighty Emphaſis muſt be laid here upon *thou*, and *us*. What? wilt thou, a ſilly ſorry Fellow, ignorant and illiterate, that haſt not ſeen the Light of the Sun a Day to an end, a Beggar by the Way ſide, of the very Dregs and Refuſe of the Town? wilt thou pretend to teach *us*, that are the Sages of the Law, and Grandees of the Church, that ſit in *Moſes's* Chair, and are Maſters in *Iſrael*? *Note*, Proud Men ſcorn to be taught, eſpecially by their Inferiors; whereas we ſhould never think our ſelves too old, or too wiſe, or too good to learn. Thoſe that have much Wealth, would have more, and why not thoſe that have much Knowledge? And thoſe are to be valued by whom we may improve in Learning. What a poor Excuſe was this for the Phariſees Infidelity, that it would be a Diſparagement to them to be inſtructed and informed, and convinced by ſuch a ſilly Fellow as this.

3. What they did; They *caſt him out*. Some underſtand it only of a rude and ſcornful Diſmiſſion of him from their Council-Board; they turn'd him out of the Room by the Head and Shoulders, and perhaps ordered their Servants to kick him; they thought it was time to ſend him far enough, that came ſo near their Conſciences: But it ſeems rather to be a judicial Act, they excommunicated him, 'tis likely with the higheſt Degree of Excommunication, they cut him off from being a Member of the Church of *Iſrael*. This poor Man (ſaith Dr. *Lightfoot*) was the firſt Confeſſor, as *John Baptiſt* was the firſt Martyr of the Chriſtian Church. There was a Law made, that if any confeſſed Jeſus to be the Chriſt, he ſhould be *caſt out of the Synagogue*, v. 22. But this Man had only ſaid of Jeſus that he was a Prophet, was *of God*, and yet they ſtretch the Law to bring him under the Laſh of it, as if he had confeſſed him to be the Chriſt. To be juſtly excommunicated and caſt out of a pure Church, *Clave non errante*, is a very dreadful Thing, for what is ſo bound on Earth, is bound in Heaven; but to be caſt out of a corrupt Church, which it is our Duty to go out of, and that unjuſtly, tho' caſt out with *Anathema*, and all the Bug-bear Ceremonies of Bell, Book and Candle, is what we have no reaſon at all to dread, or be aggriev'd at; *The Curſe cauſeleſs ſhall not come.* If they caſt Chriſt's Followers *out of their Synagogues* as he foretels, *John* 16. 2. there's no harm done when they are become *Synagogues of Satan*.

35 Jeſus heard that they had caſt him out; and when he had found him, he ſaid unto him, Doſt thou believe on the ſon of God? 36 He anſwered and ſaid, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? 37 And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou haſt both ſeen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. 38 And he ſaid, Lord, I believe. And he worſhipped him.

In theſe Verſes we may obſerve,

Firſt, The tender Care which our Lord Jeſus took of this poor Man, *v.* 35. *When Jeſus heard they had caſt him out*, for 'tis likely the Town rung of it, and every Body cry'd out Shame upon them for it, then he *found him*; which implies his *ſeeking* him, and looking after him, that he might encourage and comfort him. (1.) Becauſe he had to the beſt of his Knowledge ſpoken ſo very well, ſo bravely, ſo boldly, in Defence of the Lord Jeſus. *Note*, Jeſus Chriſt will be ſure to ſtand by his Witneſſes, and own thoſe that own him, and his Truth, and Ways. Earthly Princes neither do nor can take Cognizance of all that vindicate them and their Government, and Adminiſtration; but our Lord Jeſus knows and obſerves all the faithful Teſtimonies we bear to him at any time, and a Book of Remembrance is written, and it ſhall redound not only to our Credit hereafter, but our Comfort now. (2.) Becauſe the Phariſees had caſt him out, and abus'd him. Beſides the common Regard which the righteous Judge of the World has to thoſe who ſuffer wrongfully, *Pſal.* 103. 6. there is a particular Notice taken of thoſe that ſuffer in the Cauſe of Chriſt, and for the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience. Here was one poor Man ſuffering for Chriſt, and he took care that as his *Affliction abounded*, his *Conſolations* ſhould *much more abound*. *Note*, 1. Tho' Perſecutors may exclude good Men from their Communion, yet they cannot exclude them from Communion with Chriſt, nor put them out of the way of his Viſits. Happy they who have a Friend that Men cannot debar them from. 2. Jeſus Chriſt will graciouſly find and take up thoſe who for his Sake are unjuſtly rejected and caſt out by Men. He will be a hiding Place to his Out-caſts, and appear *to the Joy* of thoſe whom their Brethren *hated and caſt out*.

Secondly, The comfortable Converſe Chriſt had with him, wherein he brings him acquainted with the Conſolation of *Iſ-*

rael. He had well improv'd the Knowledge he had, and now Chriſt gives him further Inſtruction, for he that is faithful in a little ſhall be intruſted with more, *Mat.* 13, 12.

1. Our Lord Jeſus examines his Faith. Doſt thou *believe on the Son of God?* Doſt thou give Credit to the Promiſes of the Meſſiah? doſt thou expect his coming, and art thou ready to receive and embrace him when he is manifeſted to thee? This was that Faith of the Son of God which they lived by, who lived before his Manifeſtation. Obſerve, (1.) The Meſſiah is here called the *Son of God*, and ſo the *Jews* had learned to call him from the Prophecies, *Pſal.* 2. 7. and 89. 27. See *John* 1. 49. *Thou art the Son of God*, i. e. the true Meſſiah. They that expected the Temporal Kingdom of the Meſſiah, delighted rather in calling him the *Son of David*, which gave more Countenance to that Expectation, *Mat.* 22. 42. But Chriſt that he might give us an Idea of his Kingdom, as purely Spiritual and Divine, calls himſelf the *Son of God*, and rather *Son of Man* in general, than of *David* in particular. (2.) The Deſires and Expectations of the Meſſiah, which the old Teſtament Saints, had, guided by, and grounded upon the Promiſe, were graciouſly interpretated and accepted as their believing on *the Son of God*. This Faith Chriſt here enquires after, *Doſt thou believe?* *Note*, The great Thing which is now *required* of us, (1 *John* 3. 23.) and will ſhortly be enquired after concerning us, in our *believing on the Son of God*, and by this we muſt ſtand or fall for ever.

2. The poor Man ſolicitouſly enquires concerning the Meſſiah he was to believe in, profeſſing his Readineſs to embrace him, and cloſe with him, *v.* 36. *Who is he Lord that I might believe in him?* (1.) Some think he did know that *Jeſus*, who cured him, was the Son of God, but did not know which was Jeſus, and therefore ſuppoſing this that talk'd with him to be a Follower of Jeſus, deſired him to do him the Favour to direct him to him; not that he might ſatisfy his Curioſity with the Sight of him, but that he might the more firmly believe in him, and profeſs his Faith, and *know whom he had believed.* See *Cant.* 5, 6, 7. and 3, 2, 3. 'Tis Chriſt only that can direct us to himſelf. (2.) Others think he did know that this Perſon who talk'd with him was *Jeſus*, the ſame that cured him, whom he believed a great and good Man, and a Prophet, but did not yet know that he was or was to be the Son of God, and the true Meſſiah. Lord, I believe there is a Chriſt to come, thou who haſt given me Bodily Sight, tell me, O tell me who and where this Son of God is. Chriſt's Queſtion intimated that the Meſſiah was come, and was now among them, which he preſently takes the Hint of, and asks *Where is he Lord*? The Queſtion was rational and juſt, *Who is he Lord that I might believe on him*? For how could he believe in one of whom he had not heard? The Work of Miniſters is to tell us *Who the Son of God is*, that we may believe on him, *John* 20. 31.

3. Our Lord Jeſus graciouſly reveals himſelf to him as that Son of God on whom he muſt believe, *v.* 37. *Thou haſt both ſeen him and it is he that talketh with thee.* Thou needeſt not go far to find out the Son of God, *Behold the Word is nigh thee.* We do not find that Chriſt did thus expreſly, and in ſo many Words, reveal himſelf to any other, as to this Man here, and to the Woman of *Samaria*, *I that ſpeak unto thee am he*; he left others to find out by Arguments who he was, but to theſe weak and fooliſh things of the World he choſe to manifeſt himſelf, ſo as not to the *wiſe and prudent.*

Chriſt here deſcribes himſelf to this Man, by two Things which expreſs his great Favour to him.

(1.) *Thou haſt ſeen him*, and he was much indebted to the Lord Jeſus for opening his Eyes, that he might *ſee him.* Now he was made ſenſible more than ever, what an unſpeakable Mercy it was to be cured of his Blindneſs, that he might ſee the Son of God, a Sight which rejoiced his Heart more than that of the *Light of this World.* *Note*, The greateſt Comfort of bodily Eye-ſight is its Serviceableneſs to our Faith, and the Intereſt of our Souls. How contentedly might this Man have returned to his former Blindneſs, like old *Simon*, now his Eyes had *ſeen God's Salvation*? If we apply it to the opening of the Eyes of the Mind, it intimates that Spiritual Sight is given principally for this End, that we may ſeen Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. Can we ſay that by Faith we have ſee Chriſt, ſeen him in his Beauty and Glory, in his Ability and Willingneſs to ſave, ſo ſeen him, as to be ſatisfied *concerning him*, to be ſatisfied *in him*? let us give him the Praiſe that opened our Eyes.

(2.) It is *he that talketh with thee*, and he was indebted to Chriſt for condeſcending to do this. He was not only favoured with a Sight of Chriſt, but was admitted into Fellowſhip and Communion with him. Great Princes are willing to be ſeen by thoſe whom yet they will not vouchſafe to *talk with.* But Chriſt by his Word and Spirit talks with thoſe whoſe Deſires are towards him, and in talking with them, manifeſts himſelf to them, as he did to the two Diſciples, when he talk'd their Hearts warm, *Luke.* 24. 32. Obſerve, This poor Man was ſollicitouſly *enquiring* after the Saviour, when at the ſame time he *ſaw* him and was talking with him. *Note*, Jeſus Chriſt is oftentimes nearer the Souls that ſeek him, than they themſelves are aware of. Doubting Chriſtians are ſometimes ſaying, *Where is the Lord*? and fearing they are caſt out from his Sight, when at the ſame time 'tis he that *talketh with them*, and *puts Strength into them.*

4. The poor Man readily entertains this ſurprizing Revelation, and in a Tranſport of Joy and Wonder he ſaid, *Lord I believe, and he worſhipped him.*

(1.) He profeſſed his Faith in Chriſt, *Lord, I believe* thee to be the Son of God. He would not diſpute any Thing that he ſaid who had ſhewed ſuch Mercy to him, and wrought ſuch a Miracle for him, nor doubt of the Truth of a Doctrine, which was confirm'd by ſuch Signs. Believing with the Heart, he thus confeſſeth with the Mouth; and now the bruiſed Reed was become a Cedar.

(2.) He paid his Homage to him. He *worſhipped him*, not only gave him the civil Reſpects due to a great Man, and the Acknowledgments owing to a kind Benefactor, but herein gave him *Divine Honour*, and worſhipped him as the *Son of God* manifeſted in the Fleſh. none but God is to be worſhipped, ſo that in worſhipping Jeſus, he owned him to be God. *Note*, True Faith will ſhew it ſelf in a humble Adoration of the Lord Jeſus. They who believe in him, will ſee all the Reaſon in the World to worſhip him. We never read any more of this Man; but 'tis very likely, from henceforth he became a conſtant Follower of Chriſt.

39 And Jeſus ſaid, For Judgment I am come into
this world: that they which ſee not, might ſee;
and that they which ſee, might be made blind.
40 And *ſome* of the Phariſees which were with him,
heard theſe words, and ſaid unto him, Are we blind
alſo? 41 Jeſus ſaid unto them, If ye were blind,
ye ſhould have no ſin: but now ye ſay, We ſee;
therefore your ſin remaineth.

Chriſt having ſpoken Comfort to the poor Man that was *perſecuted*, here ſpeaks Conviction to his *Pereſcutors*, a Specimen of the Diſtributions of *Trouble* and *Reſt* at the great Day, 2 *Theſ.* 1. 6, 7. Probably this was not immediately after his Diſcourſe with the Man, but he took the next Opportunity that offered it ſelf to have a Saying to the Phariſees.

Firſt, Here's the Account Chriſt gives of his Deſign in coming into the World, *v.* 39. *For Judgment I am* come to order and adminiſter the great Affairs of the *Kingdom of God among Men*, and am inveſted with a *judicial* Power, in order thereunto, to be executed in Conformity to the *wiſe* Councels of God, and in purſuance of them. What Chriſt ſpoke, he ſpoke not as a Preacher in the Pulpit, but as a King upon the Throne, and a Judge upon the Bench. His Buſineſs into the World was *great*, he came to keep the Aſſizes, and general Goal-delivery; he came *for Judgment*, that is (1.) To preach a Doctrine and Law, which would try Men, and effectually *diſcover* and *diſtinguiſh* them, and would be compleatly fitted in all Reſpects to be the Rule of Government now, and of Judgemnt ſhortly. (2.) To put a *Difference* between Men, by revealing the Thoughts of many Hearts, and laying open Mens true Characters by this one Teſt, whether they were *well* or *ill* affected to him. (3.) To change the Face of Government in his Church, to aboliſh the *Jewiſh* Oeconomy, to take down that Fabrick, which tho' erected for the time by the Hand of God himſelf, yet by tract of time was antiquated, and by the incurable Corruption of the Managers of it, was become rotten and dangerous, and to erect a new Building by another Model, to inſtitute new Ordinances and Offices, to abrogate Judaiſm, and enact Chriſtianity, *for this Judgment he came into the World*, and it was a great Revolution.

This great Truth he explains by a Metaphor borrowed from the Miracle he had lately wrought, That *they which ſee not might ſee, and they which ſee might be made blind.* Such a Difference of Chriſt's coming is often ſpoken of; to ſome his Goſpel is a Savour of *Life unto Life*, to others of *Death unto Death.*

1. This is applicable to Nations, and People, that the Gentiles who had long been deſtitute of the Light of divine Revelation, might ſee it; and the *Jews* who had long enjoy'd it, might have the Things of their Peace hid from their Eyes, *Hoſ.* 1. 10. and 2. 23. The Gentiles ſee a great Light, while Blindneſs is *hapened unto* Iſrael, and their *Eyes* are *darkened.*

2. To particular Perſons. Chriſt came into the World, (1.) *Intentionally* and deſignedly to give *Sight* to them that were ſpiritually *Blind*, by his Word to *reveal the Object*, and by his Spirit to *heal the Organ*, that many precious Souls might be turn'd *from Darkneſs to Light.* He came *for Judgment* i. e. to ſet thoſe at Liberty from their dark Priſon, that were willing to be releas'd, *Iſa.* 61. 1. (2.) *Eventually* and in the Iſſue, *that thoſe which ſee might be made blind*; that thoſe who have a high Conceit of their own Wiſdom, and ſet that up in Contradiction to Divine Revelation, might be ſealed up in Ignorance and Infidelity. The Preaching of the Croſs was Fooliſhneſs, and an infatuating Thing to them, who by Wiſdom *knew not God.* Chriſt *came into the World for* this *Judgment*, to adminiſter the Affairs of a ſpiritual Kingdom ſeated in Mens Minds. Whereas in the *Jewiſh* Church, the Bleſſings and Judgments of God's Government were moſtly *temporal*, now the Method of Adminiſtration ſhould be changed; and as the good Subjects of his Kingdom ſhould be bleſſed with ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Things,

ſuch as ariſe from a due *Illumination* of the Mind, ſo the Rebels ſhould be puniſhed with ſpiritual Plagues, not War, Famine and Peſtilence as formerly, but ſuch as ariſe from a *judicial Infatuation*, Hardneſs of Heart, Terror of Conſcience, ſtrong Deluſions, vile Affections. In this way Chriſt will *judge between Cattle and Cattle*, Ezek. 39. 17.

Secondly, Here's the *Phariſees* Cavil at this. They were *with him*, not deſirous to learn any Good from him, but to form Evil againſt him, and they ſaid, *Are we blind alſo?* When Chriſt ſaid, that *they which ſee*, ſhould by his coming be made blind, they apprehended that he meant them, who were the *Seers* of the People, and valued themſelves by their *Inſight*, and *Foreſight*. Now ſay they, we know that the common People are blind, but *are we blind alſo?* What we, The Rabbins, the Doctors, the Learned in the Laws, the Graduates in the Schools, *are we blind too?* This is *Scandalum Magnatum*. *Note*, Many times thoſe that need Reproof moſt, and deſerve it beſt, tho' they have Wit enough to diſcern a *tacit* one, yet have not Grace enough to bear a *juſt one*. Theſe Phariſees took this Reproof for a Reproach, as thoſe Lawyers, *Luke* 11. 45. *Are we blind alſo?* Dareſt thou ſay that we are blind, whoſe Judgment every one has ſuch a Veneration for, values and vails too. *Note*, Nothing fortifies Mens corrupt Hearts more againſt the Convictions of the Word, nor more effectually repels them, than the good Opinion, eſpecially if it be a high Opinion, which others have of them; as if all that had gain'd Applauſe with Men, muſt needs obtain Acceptance with God, than which nothing more falſe and deceitful, God ſees not as Man ſees.

Thirdly, Here's Chriſt's Anſwer to this Cavil, which if it did not *convince* them, yet ſilenced them. If ye were *blind, ye ſhould have no Sin, but now ye ſay, We ſee, therefore your Sin remaineth*. They gloried in it that they were not blind as the common People, were not ſo credulous and manageable as they, but would *ſee with their own Eyes*, having Abilities as they thought ſufficient for their own Conduct, ſo that they needed not any body to lead them. This very Thing, which they gloried in, Chriſt here tells them was their Shame and Ruin. For,

1. If *ye were blind, ye ſhould have no Sin.* (1.) If you had been really ignorant, your Sin had not been ſo deeply aggravated, nor ſhould ye have had ſo much Sin to anſwer for, as now you have. If you were blind, as the poor Gentiles are, and many of your own poor Subjects, from whom you have taken the Key of Knowledge, you ſhould have had comparatively *no Sin*. The Times of Ignorance God *winked* at; invincible Ignorance, tho' it do not juſtify Sin, excuſeth it, and leſſens the Guilt. 'Twill be more tolerable with thoſe that periſh for lack of Viſion, than for thoſe who *rebel againſt the Light*. (2.) If you had been ſenſible of your own Blindneſs, if when you would ſee nothing elſe, you could have ſeen the need of one to lead you, you would ſoon have accepted Chriſt as your Guide, and then you would *have had no Sin*, you would have ſubmitted to an Evangelical Righteouſneſs, and have been put into a juſtified State. *Note*, Thoſe who are convinced of their Diſeaſe are in a fair way to be cured, for there is not a greater Hindrance to the Salvation of Souls, than Self-ſufficiency.

2. *But now ye ſay, We ſee*, now ye have Knowledge, and are inſtructed out of the Law, your Sin is highly aggravated; and now you have a Conceit of that Knowledge, and think you ſee your way better than any body can ſhew it you, *therefore your Sin remains*, your Caſe is deſperate, and your Diſeaſe incurable. As thoſe are moſt blind who *will not ſee*, ſo their Blindneſs is moſt dangerous who fancy they do ſee. No Patients are ſo hardly managed as thoſe in a Frenzy, who ſay they are *well*, and nothing ails them. The Sin of thoſe who are ſelf-conceited and ſelf-confident *remains*; for they reject the Goſpel of Grace, and therefore the *Guilt* of their Sin remains *unpardon'd*; and they forfeit the Spirit of Grace, and therefore the *Power* of their Sin remains *unbroken*. *Seeſt thou a Man wiſe in his own Conceit?* Heareſt thou the *Phariſees* ſay, *We ſee? There is more Hopes of a Fool*, of a Publican and a Harlot, *than of ſuch*.

CHAP. X.

In this Chapter we have, (1.) *Chriſt's Parabolical Diſcourſe concerning himſelf, as the Door of the Sheep, and the Shepherd of the Sheep,* v. 1.—18. (2.) *The various Sentiments of People upon it,* v. 19.—21. (3.) *The Diſpute Chriſt had with the* Jews *in the Temple, at the Feaſt of Dedication,* v. 22.—39. (4.) *His Departure into the Country thereupon,* v. 40.—42.

VErily, verily I ſay unto you, He that entreth not by the door into the ſheepfold, but climbeth up ſome other way, the ſame is a thief and a robber. 2 But he that entreth in by the door, is the ſhepherd of the ſheep. 3 To him the porter openeth; and the ſheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own ſheep by name, and leadeth them out. 4 And when he putteth forth his own ſheep, he goeth before them, and the ſheep follow him: for they know his voice. 5 And a ſtranger they will not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of ſtrangers. 6 This parab'e ſpake Jeſus unto them: but they underſtood not what things they were which he ſpake unto them. 7 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them again, Verily, verily I ſay unto you, I am the door of the ſheep. 8 All that ever came before me, are thieves and robbers: but the ſheep did not hear them. 9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he ſhall be ſaved, and ſhall go in and out, and find paſture. 10 The thief cometh not, but for to ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly. 11 I am the good ſhepherd: the good ſhepherd giveth his life for the ſheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the ſhepherd, whoſe own the ſheep are not, ſeeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the ſheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and ſcattereth the ſheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, becauſe he is an hireling, and careth not for the ſheep. 14 I am the good ſhepherd, and know my *ſheep*, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even ſo know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the ſheep. 16 And other ſheep I have which are not of this fold: them alſo I muſt bring, and they ſhall hear my voice; and there ſhall be one fold, *and* one ſhepherd. 17 Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again. 18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my ſelf: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again: This commandment have I received of my Father.

It is not certain whether this Diſcourſe was at the *Feaſt of Dedication* in the Winter, ſpoken of, *v.* 22. which may be taken as the Date, not only of what follows, but of what goes before; that which countenanceth this, is, that Chriſt in his Diſcourſe there carries on the Metaphor of the Sheep, *v.* 26, 27. from whence it ſeems that that Diſcourſe and this were at the ſame time; or whether this was a Continuation of his Parley with the Phariſees, in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter. The Phariſees ſupported themſelves in their Oppoſition to Chriſt with this Principle, That they were the *Paſtors of the Church*, and that Jeſus having no Commiſſion from them, was an Intruder, and an Impoſtor, and therefore the People were bound in Duty to ſtick to *them* againſt *him*. In Oppoſition to this, Chriſt here deſcribes who were the *falſe* Shepherds, and who the *true*, leaving them to infer what they were.

Firſt, Here is the Parable, or Similitude propos'd, *v.* 1.——5. 'tis borrow'd from the Cuſtom of the Country, in the Management of their Sheep. Similitudes us'd for the Illuſtration of divine Truths ſhould be taken from thoſe Things that are moſt familiar and common, that the Things of God be not clouded by that which ſhould clear them. The Preface to this Diſcourſe is ſolemn, *Verily, verily I ſay unto you. Amen, Amen*; this vehement Aſſeveration ſpeaks the Certainty and Weight of what he ſaid; we find *Amen* doubled in the Church's Praiſes, and Prayers, *Pſal.* 41. 13. and 72. 19. and 89. 52. If we would have our *Amens* accepted in Heaven, let Chriſt's *Amens* be prevailing on Earth; his repeated *Amens*.

In the Parable we have,

1. The Evidence of a Thief and a Robber, that comes to do Miſchief to the Flock, and Damage to the Owner, *v.* 1. He *enters not by the Door*, as having no lawful Cauſe of Entry, but *climbs up ſome other way*, at a Window, or ſome Breach in the Wall. How induſtrious are wicked People to do Miſchief? what Plots will they lay? what Pains will they take? what Hazards will they run in their wicked Purſuits? which ſhould ſhame us out of our Slothfulneſs and Cowardice in the Service of God.

2. The Character that diſtinguiſheth the *rightful Owner*, who has a Propriety in the Sheep, and a Care of them, he *enters in by the Door*, as one having Authority, *v.* 2. and he comes to do them ſome good Office or other, to *bind up that which is broken*, and *ſtrengthen that which is ſick*, Ezek. 34. 16. Sheep need Man's Care, and in return for it are ſerviceable to Man, 1 *Cor.* 9. 7. they cloath and feed thoſe by whom they are coated and fed.

3. The ready *Entrance* that the *Shepherd* finds, *v.* 3. *To him the Porter openeth.* Antiently they had their Sheep-folds within the outer Gates of their Houſes, for the greater Safety of their Flocks, ſo that none could come to them the right way, but ſuch as the Porter open'd to, or the Maſter of the Houſe gave the Keys to.

4. The Care he *takes*, and the Proviſion he *makes* for his Sheep. The *Sheep hear his Voice*, when he ſpeaks familiarly to them; when they came into the Fold, as Men now do to their Dogs and Horſes; and which is more, he *calls his own Sheep by Name*, ſo exact is the Notice he takes of them, the Account he keeps of them; and he leads them out from the Fold to the green Paſtures. And (*v.* 4, 5.) when *he turns them out* to graze, he doth not drive them, but (ſuch was the Cuſtom in thoſe Times) he goes before them, to prevent any Miſchief or Danger that might meet them, and they being us'd to it, *follow him*, and are ſafe.

5. The ſtrange Attendance of the Sheep upon the Shepherd, they *know his Voice*, ſo as to diſcern his Mind by it, and to diſtinguiſh it from that of a Stranger; for *the Ox knows his Owner*, Iſa. 1. 3. and *a Stranger will they not follow*, but, as ſuſpecting ſome ill Deſign, will flee from him, not *knowing his Voice*, but that it is not the Voice of their own Shepherd. This is the Parable; we have the Key to it, *Ezek.* 34. 31. *Ye my Flock are Men, and I am your God.*

Let us obſerve ſomething from the Parable it ſelf.

1. That good Men are fitly compar'd to Sheep. Men as Creatures, depending on their Creator, are call'd the *Sheep of his Paſture.* Good Men as new Creatures, have the good Qualities of Sheep, *harmleſs* and inoffenſive as Sheep; *meek* and quiet, without Noiſe; *patient* as Sheep under the Hand both of the Shearer and of the Butcher; *uſeful* and profitable, tame and tractable to the Shepherd, and *ſociable* one with another, and much us'd in Sacrifices.

2. The Church of God in the World is a *Sheep-fold*, into which the *Children of God* that were ſcattered Abroad are *gather'd together*, John 11. 52. and in which they are united, and incorporated, 'tis a good Fold, *Ezek.* 33. 14. See *Mic.* 2. 12. This Fold is well fortified, for God himſelf is as a *Wall of Fire* about it, *Zech.* 2. 5.

3. This Sheep-fold lies much expos'd to Thieves and Robbers; crafty Seducers that debauch and deceive, and cruel Perſecutors that deſtroy and devour, *grievous Wolves*, Acts 20. 29. Thieves that would *ſteal* Chriſt's Sheep from him, to ſacrifice 'em to Devils, or *ſteal* their Food from them that they might periſh for lack of it. *Wolves* in Sheep's Clothing, *Mat.* 7. 16.

4. The great Shepherd of the Sheep has a *wonderful Care* of the Flock, and of all that belong to it. God is the great Shepherd, *Pſal.* 23. 1. and 80. 1. He knows them that are his, calls them by Name, marks them for himſelf, leads them out to fat Paſtures, makes them both feed and reſt there; ſpeaks comfortably to them, guards them by his Providence, guides them by his Spirit and Word, and goes before them to *ſet them in the Way of his Steps.*

5. The under Shepherds who are entruſted to feed the Flock of God, ought to be careful and faithful in the diſcharge of that Truſt; Magiſtrates muſt defend them, and protect and advance all their ſecular Intereſt; Miniſters muſt ſerve them in their ſpiritual Intereſts, muſt *feed their Souls* with the Word of God, faithfully opened and applied, and with Goſpel Ordinances duly adminiſter'd, *taking the Overſight of them*; they muſt *enter by the Door* of a regular Ordination, and to ſuch *the Porter will open*: The Spirit of Chriſt will *ſet before them an open Door*, give them *Authority* in the Church, and *Aſſurance* in their own Boſoms. They muſt know the Members of their Flocks by Name, and watch over them; muſt lead them into the Paſtures of publick Ordinances, preſide among them, be their Mouth to God, and God's to them; and in their Converſation muſt be Examples to the Believers.

6. Thoſe who are truly the Sheep of Chriſt will be very obſervant of their Shepherd, and very cautious and ſhy of Strangers. (1.) They *follow their Shepherd*, for they *know his Voice*, having both a diſcerning Ear, and an obedient Heart. (2.) They *flee from a Stranger*, and dread following him, becauſe they know not his Voice. 'Tis dangerous following thoſe in whom we diſcern not the *Voice of Chriſt*, and who would draw us from *Faith in him* to *Fancies concerning him.* And they that have experienced the Power and Efficacy of Divine Truths upon their Souls, and have the Savour and Reliſh of them, have a ſtrange Sagacity to diſcover Satan's Wiles, and diſcern between *Good and Evil.*

Secondly, The *Jews* Ignorance of the Drift and Meaning of this Diſcourſe, *v.* 6. *Jeſus ſpoke this Parable* to them, this figurative, but wiſe, elegant, and inſtructive Diſcourſe, *but they underſtood not what the Things were which he ſpake unto them*; were not aware whom he meant by the *Thieves and Robbers*, and whom by the *good Shepherd.* It is the Sin and Shame of many who hear the Word of Chriſt that they do not underſtand it, and they do not becauſe they will not, and becauſe they will *miſunderſtand it.* They have no Acquaintance with, or Taſte of the Things themſelves, and therefore do not underſtand the Parables and Compariſons with which they are illuſtrated. The Phariſees had a great Conceit of their own Knowledge, and could not bear that it ſhould be queſtion'd, and yet they had not Senſe enough to *underſtand the Things that Jeſus ſpake of*; they were above their Capacity. Many Times the greateſt Pretenders to Knowledge are moſt ignorant in the Things of God.

Thirdly, Chriſt's Explication of this Parable, opening the Particulars of it fully. Whatever Difficulties there may be in the Sayings of the Lord Jeſus, we ſhall find him ready to explain himſelf, if we be but willing to underſtand him. We ſhall find one Scripture expounding another, and the *Bleſſed Spirit* Interpreter to the *Bleſſed Jeſus.*

Chriſt in the Parable had diſtinguiſh'd the Shepherd from the Robber, by this, that he *enters in by the Door.* Now in the Rendition of the Parable, he makes himſelf to be both *the Door* by which the Shepherd enters, and the Shepherd that enters in by the Door. Tho' it may be a Soleciſm in Rhetorick to make the ſame Perſon to be both the *Door* and the *Shepherd*, 'tis no Soleciſm in Divinity to make Chriſt to have his Authority from himſelf, as he has Life in himſelf; and *himſelf* to *enter by his own Blood*, as the Door, *into the holy Place.*

1. Chriſt is *the Door.* This he *ſaith to them* who pretended to *ſeek for Righteouſneſs*, but like the *Sodomites*, weary'd themſelves to *find the Door*, where it was not to be found: He ſaith it to the *Jews*, who would be thought God's only Sheep, and to the Phariſees, who would be thought their only Shepherds. *I am the Door* of the Sheep-fold; the Door of the Church. 1. He is as a *Door ſhut to keep out* Thieves and Robbers, and ſuch as are not fit to be admitted. The *ſhutting* of the *Door* is the *ſecuring* of the Houſe; and what greater Security has the Church of God than the Interpoſal of the Lord Jeſus, and his Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs betwixt it, and all its Enemies. 2. He is as a *Door open* for Paſſage and Communication. 1. By Chriſt as the Door, we have our firſt Admiſſion into the Flock of God, *John* 14. 6. 2. We go in and out in a religious Converſation, aſſiſted by him, accepted in him; walking up and down in his Name, *Zech.* 10. 12. 3. By him God comes to his Church, viſits it, and communicates himſelf to it. 4. By him as the Door the Sheep are laſt admitted into the heavenly Kingdoms, *Mat.* 25. 34. More particularly,

(1.) Chriſt is the Door of the Sheep-fold, ſo that none who come not in by him, are to be accounted *Paſtors*, but (according to the Rule laid down, *v.* 1.) *Thieves and Robbers*, tho' they pretend to be *Shepherds*, but *the Sheep did not hear them.* All thoſe that had the Character of Shepherds in *Iſrael*, whether Magiſtrates or Miniſters, that exercis'd their Office without any regard to the Meſſiah, or any other Expectations of him than what were ſuggeſted by their own carnal Intereſt.

Obſerve, 1. The Character given of them, they are *Thieves* and *Robbers*, v. 8. all that *went before him*, not in *Time*, many of them were faithful Shepherds, but all that *anticipated* his Commiſſion, and *went before* he ſent them, *Jer.* 23. 21. that aſſum'd a Precedency and Superiority above him, as the Antichriſt is ſaid to *exalt himſelf*, 2 Theſ. 2. 4. The Scribes and Phariſees, and Chief Prieſts, *all even as many as have come before me*, that have endeavour'd to foreſtall my Intereſt, and to prevent my gaining any Room in the Minds of People, by prepoſſeſſing them with Prejudices againſt me, they are *Thieves* and *Robbers*, and ſteal thoſe Hearts which they have no Title to, defrauding the right Owner of his Property. They condemn'd our Saviour as a Thief and a Robber, becauſe he did not come in *by them* as the Door, nor take out a Licenſe from them; but he ſhews that they ought to have receiv'd their Commiſſion from *him*, and to have been *admitted* by him, and to have *come after* him, which becauſe they did not, but ſtept *before him*, they were *Thieves* and *Robbers.* They would not come in as his Diſciples, and therefore were condemn'd as Uſurpers, and their pretended Commiſſions vacated and ſuperſeded. *Note*, Rivals with Chriſt are Robbers of his Church, however they pretend to be *Shepherds*, nay *Shepherds of Shepherds.*

2. The Care taken to preſerve the Sheep from them, *but the Sheep did not hear them.* Thoſe that had a true Savour in Piety, that were ſpiritual and heavenly, and ſincerely devoted to God and Godlineſs, could by no Means approve of the Traditions of the Elders, nor reliſh their Formalities. Chriſt's Diſciples, without any particular Inſtructions from their Maſter, made no Conſcience of eating with unwaſhen Hands, or plucking the Ears of Corn on the Sabbath Day; for nothing is more oppoſite to true Chriſtianity than Phariſaiſm is; nor any Thing more diſreliſhing to a Soul truly devout, than their hypocritical Devotions.

(2.) Chriſt is the *Door of the Sheep*, v. 9. *By me* (δι ἐμȣ̃, through me as the Door) *if any Man enter into the Sheep-fold* as one of the Fold, he *ſhall* be *ſaved*; ſhall not only be ſafe from Thieves and Robbers, but he ſhall be *happy*, he *ſhall go in and out.*

Here's, 1. Plain Directions given how to come into the Fold, we muſt come in *by Jeſus Chriſt* as the Door. By Faith in him as the great Mediator between God and Man, we come into Covenant and Communion with God. No entring into God's Church, but by coming into Chriſt's Church; nor are any look'd upon as Members of the Kingdom of God among Men, but thoſe that are willing to ſubmit to the Grace and Government of the Redeemer. We muſt now enter by the *Door of Faith*, Acts 14. 27. ſince the Door of *Innocency* is ſhut againſt us, and that *Paſs* become unpaſſable. *Gen.* 3. 24.

2. Precious Promiſes to thoſe who obſerve this Direction.

1. They *ſhall be ſaved* hereafter, that's the Privilege of *their Home*; theſe Sheep ſhall be *ſav'd* from being *diſtrained* and *im-*

pounded by Divine Juſtice for Treſpaſs done, Satisfaction being made for the Damage by their great Shepherd; *ſav'd* from being a Prey to the roaring Lion: They ſhall be *for ever happy*.

2. In the mean time they ſhall *go in and out, and find Paſture*; that's the Privilege of *their way*. They ſhall have their Converſation in the World by the Grace of Chriſt; ſhall be in his Fold as a Man at his own Houſe, where he has *free Ingreſs, Egreſs*, and *Regreſs*; true Believers are *at home* in Chriſt; when they *go out*, they are not *ſhut out* as Strangers, but have Liberty to come in again; when they *come in*, they are not *ſhut in* as Treſpaſſers, but have Liberty to go out. They *go out* to the Field in the Morning, they *come in* to the Fold at Night, and in both the Shepherd leads and keeps them, and they *find Paſture* in both; Graſs in the Field, Fodder in the Fold. In publick, in private, they have the Word of God to converſe with, by which their ſpiritual Life is ſupported and nouriſhed, and out of which their gracious Deſires are ſatisfied. They are repleniſhed with the Goodneſs of God's Houſe.

2. Chriſt is the *Shepherd*, v. 10, &c. He was propheſied of under the Old Teſtament as a *Shepherd*, Iſa. 40. 11. Ezek. 34. 23. and 37. 24. Zech. 13. 7. In the New Teſtament he is ſpoken of as the *great* Shepherd, *Heb.* 13. 20. the *chief Shepherd*, 1 Pet. 5. 4. the *Shepherd and Biſhop of our Souls*, 1 Pet. 2. 25. God our great Owner, the Sheep of whoſe Paſture we are by Creation, hath conſtituted his Son Jeſus to be our *Shepherd*; and here again and again he owns the Relation. He hath all that Care of his Church, and every Believer, that a good Shepherd has of his Flock; and expects all that Attendance and Obſervance from the Church and every Believer, which the Shepherds in thoſe Countries had from their Flocks.

1. Chriſt is a Shepherd, and not as the *Thief*, not as thoſe that *came not in by the Door.* Obſerve,

(1.) The *miſchievous* Deſign of the *Thief*, v. 10. *The Thief cometh not* with any good Intent, but to *ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy.* (1.) Thoſe whom they *ſteal*, whoſe Hearts and Affections they ſteal from Chriſt, and his Paſtures, they *kill and deſtroy* ſpiritually, for the *Hereſies* they *privily bring in* are *damnable.* Deceivers of Souls are Murtherers of Souls. They that *ſteal* away the Scripture by keeping it in an unknown Tongue, ſteal away the *Sacraments* by maiming them, and altering the Property of them, that ſteal away Chriſt's Ordinances, to put their own Inventions in the Room of them, they *kill* and *deſtroy*; Ignorance and Idolatry are deſtructive Things. (2.) Thoſe whom they cannot *ſteal*, whom they can neither *lead, drive*, nor *carry away* from the Flock of Chriſt, they aim by Perſecutions and Maſſacres to *kill and deſtroy* corporally. He that will not ſuffer himſelf to be robb'd, is in danger to be *ſlain.*

(2.) The *gracious* Deſign of the *Shepherd*; he is come,

(1.) To *give Life to the Sheep.* In Oppoſition to the Deſign of the Thief, which is to *kill and deſtroy*, which was the Deſign of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*; Chriſt ſaith, I am come among Men, 1. That *they might have Life.* He came to put Life *into the Flock*, the Church in general, which had ſeem'd rather like a *Valley* full of dry Bones, than like a Paſture cover'd over with Flocks; Chriſt came to vindicate divine Truths, to purify divine Ordinances, to redreſs Grievances, and revive dying Zeal, to *ſeek* them of his Flock that were *loſt*, to *bind up that which was broken*, Ezek. 34. 16. and this to his Church is *as Life from the Dead.* He came to *give Life* to particular Believers; Life is incluſive of *all Good*, and ſtands in Oppoſition to the Death threaten'd, *Gen.* 2. 17. That *we might have Life*, as a Criminal has when he is pardon'd, as a ſick Man when he is cur'd; a dead Man when he is *rais'd*; that we might be juſtified, ſanctified, and at laſt glorified. 2. That they might have it *more abundantly*, ϗ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν. As we read it, 'tis *comparative*, that they might have a Life *more abundant* than that which was loſt and forfeited by Sin; *more abundant* than that which was promis'd by the Law of *Moſes*, Length of Days in *Canaan*, more abundant than could have been expected, or than we are *able to ask or think.* But it may be conſtrued without a Note of Compariſon, *That they might have abundance*, or, might *have it abundantly.* Chriſt came to give Life and περισσόν τι ſomething *more*, ſomething *better*, Life *with Advantage.* That in Chriſt we might not only live, but live comfortably, live plentifully, live and rejoyce; Life in Abundance is *eternal Life*; Life without Death, or Fear of Death; Life, and *much more.*

2. To *give his Life for the Sheep*, and this that he might give Life to them, *v.* 11. *The good Shepherd giveth his Life for the Sheep.* (1.) It is the *Property* of every good Shepherd to *hazard* and *expoſe* his Life *for the Sheep.* *Jacob* did ſo, when he would go through ſuch a Fatigue to attend them, *Gen.* 31. 40. So did *David*, when he *ſlew the Lion and the Bear.* Such a Shepherd of Souls was St. *Paul*, who would gladly *ſpend, and be ſpent* for their Service, and *counted not* his *Life dear to him*, in Compariſon with their Salvation. But, (2.) It was the *Prerogative* of the great Shepherd to give his Life to purchaſe his Flock, *Acts* 20. 28. to ſatisfy for their Treſpaſs, and to ſhed his Blood to waſh and cleanſe them.

2. Chriſt is a good Shepherd, and not as a Hireling. There were many that were not Thieves, aiming to kill and deſtroy the Sheep, but paſs'd for Shepherds, yet were very careleſs in the Diſcharge of their Duty, and thro' their Neglect the Flock was greatly damag'd; *fooliſh Shepherds, idle Shepherds*, Zech. 11. 15, 17. In Oppoſition to theſe,

1. Chriſt here *calls himſelf* the *good Shepherd*, v. 11. and again, *v.* 13. ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς, *that Shepherd, that good Shepherd*, whom God promis'd. *Note*, Jeſus Chriſt is the beſt of Shepherds, the beſt in the World, to take the Overſight of Souls; none ſo skilful, ſo faithful, ſo tender as he, no ſuch Feeder and Leader, no ſuch Protector and Healer of Souls as he.

2. He *proves himſelf* ſo, in Oppoſition to all Hirelings, *v.* 12, 13, 14. Where obſerve,

1. The Careleſneſs of the unfaithful Shepherd deſcrib'd, *v.* 12, 13. He that is a *Hireling*, that is employ'd as a Servant, and is paid for his Pains, *whoſe own the Sheep are not*, who has neither Profit nor Loſs by them, he *ſees the Wolf coming*, or ſome other Danger threatning, and he *leaves the Sheep* to the Wolf, for in Truth he *careth not for them.* Here is plain Reference to that of the idle Shepherd, *Zech.* 11. 17.

Here's the Deſcription of *bad Shepherds*, Magiſtrates or Miniſters, both their bad Principles and bad Practices.

1. Their *bad Principles* the Root of their bad Practices. What makes thoſe that have the Charge of Souls, in trying Times, betray their Truſt, and in quiet Times not to mind it? What makes them falſe and trifling, and ſelf-ſeeking? It is becauſe they are *Hirelings*, and *care not for the Sheep.* That is, (1.) The *Wealth of the World* is the *Chief* of their *Good*; 'tis becauſe they are *Hirelings.* They undertook the Shepherds Office, as a Trade to live and grow rich by, not as an Opportunity of ſerving Chriſt, and doing good. 'Tis the Love of Money, and of their own Bellies, that carries them on in it. Not that thoſe are Hirelings, who while they *ſerve at the Altar live*, and live comfortably *upon the Altar*; the Labourer is worthy of his Meat, and a ſcandalous Maintenance will ſoon make a ſcandalous Miniſtry; but thoſe are *Hirelings* that love the *Wages* more than the *Work*, and *ſet their Hearts* upon that, as the *Hireling* is ſaid to do, *Deut.* 24. 15. See 1 *Sam.* 2. 29. *Iſa.* 56. 11. *Mic.* 3. 5, 11. (2.) The *Work* of their *Place* is the leaſt of their *Care*; they *value not the Sheep*, are unconcern'd in the Souls of others, their Buſineſs is to be their Brothers Lords, not their Brothers *Keepers* or *Helpers*; they *ſeek their own Things*, and not like *Timothy, naturally care for the State of Souls*; what can be expected, but that they will flee when *the Wolf comes*? He *careth not for the Sheep*, for he is one *whoſe own the Sheep are not*; in one Reſpect we may ſay of the beſt of the Under-ſhepherds, that the Sheep are *not their own*, they have not Dominion over them, or Property in them. *Feed my Sheep* and *my Lambs*, ſaith Chriſt. But in reſpect of Dearneſs and Affection they ſhould be *their own. Paul* look'd upon thoſe as *his own*, whom he call'd his *dearly beloved and longed for.* Thoſe who do not cordially eſpouſe the Church's Intereſts, and make them *their own*, will not long be faithful to them.

2. Their *bad Practices*, the Effect of theſe bad Principles, *v.* 12. See here, 1. How baſely the Hireling deſerts his Poſt, when he ſees *the Wolf coming*, tho then there is moſt need of him, he *leaves the Sheep and flees. Note*, Thoſe who mind their Safety more than their Duty, are an eaſy Prey to Satan's Temptations. 2. How fatal the Conſequences are; the Hireling fancy'd the Sheep might look to themſelves, but it doth not prove ſo, *the Wolf catcheth them*, and *ſcatters the Sheep*, and woful Havock is made of the Flock, which will all be charg'd upon the treacherous Shepherd. The Blood of periſhing Souls is requir'd at the Hand of the careleſs Watch-men.

2. See here the Grace and Tenderneſs of the good Shepherd, ſet over againſt the former, as it was in the Prophecy, *Ezek.* 34. 21, 22. *I am the good Shepherd.* It is Matter of Comfort to the Church and all her Friends, that however ſhe may be damag'd and endanger'd by the Treachery and Miſmanagement of her Under-officers, the Lord Jeſus is, and will be, as he ever has been, *the good Shepherd.*

Here are two great Inſtances of the Shepherd's Goodneſs.

Firſt, His *acquainting* himſelf with his Flock, with all that belong, or in any wiſe appertain to his Flock, which are of two ſorts, both known to him.

(1.) He is acquainted with all that *are now of his Flock*, v. 14, 15. as the good Shepherd, *v.* 3, 4. *I know my Sheep, and am known of mine. Note*, There's a mutual Acquaintance between Chriſt and true Believers; they know one another very well, and Knowledge notes Affection.

(1.) Chriſt *knows his Sheep.* He knows with a *diſtinguiſhing* Eye who are his *Sheep*, and who *are not*, he knows the *Sheep* under their many Infirmities, and the Goats under their moſt plauſible Diſguiſes. He knows with a *favourable* Eye thoſe that in Truth are his own Sheep; he takes Cognizance of their State, concerns himſelf for them, has a tender and affectionate Regard to them, and is continually mindful of them in the Interceſſion he ever lives to make within the Veil; and viſits them graciouſly by his Spirit, and has Communion with them. He *knows* them, i. e. he approves and accepts of them, as *Pſal.* 1. 6. and 37. 18. *Exod.* 33. 17.

(2.) He is *known of them.* He obſerves them with an Eye of Favour, and they obſerve him with an Eye of Faith. Chriſt's *knowing his Sheep*, is put before *their* knowing *him*; for he knew and lov'd us firſt, 1 *John* 4. 21. and it is not ſo much our *knowing him*, as our being *known of him*, that it is our Happineſs, *Gal.* 4. 8. yet 'tis the Character of Chriſt's Sheep, that *they know him.* Know him from all Pretenders and Intruders; they know his Mind, know his Voice, know by Experience the Power of his Death. Chriſt ſpeaks here, as if he gloried in being known by his Sheep, and thought their Reſpects an Honour to him.

Upon this Occaſion Chriſt mentions, *v.* 15. the mutual Acquaintance between his Father and him; *As the Father knows me, even ſo know I the Father.* Now this may be conſider'd, either, 1. As the *Ground* of that intimate Acquaintance and Relation, which is between Chriſt and Believers. The Covenant of Grace, which is the Bonds of that Relation, is founded in the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son, which we may be ſure ſtands firm; for the Father and the Son underſtood one another perfectly well in that Matter, and there could be no Miſtake, which might leave the Matter at any Uncertainty, or bring it into any Hazard. The Lord Jeſus *knows whom he hath choſen*, and is ſure of them, *John* 13. 18. And they alſo *know whom they have truſted*, and are ſure of him, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. and the Ground of both is the perfect Knowledge which the Father and Son had of one another's Mind, when *the Counſel of Peace was between them both.* Or, 2. As an apt Similitude illuſtrating the Intimacy that is between Chriſt and Believers; it may be connected with the foregoing Words, thus; *I know my Sheep, and am known of mine, even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father*; compare *John* 17. 21. (1.) As the Father knew the Son, and lov'd him and own'd him in his Sufferings, when he was led as a *Sheep* to the Slaughter, ſo Chriſt knows his Sheep, and has a watchful tender Eye upon them, will be with them when they are *left alone*, as he was *with him.* (2.) As the Son knew the Father, lov'd and obey'd him, and always did thoſe things that pleas'd him, and confided in him as his God, even when he ſeem'd to forſake him, ſo Believers know Chriſt with an obediential fiducial Regard.

2. He is acquainted with thoſe that are *hereafter to be of his Flock*, v. 16. *Other Sheep I have*, have a Right to, and an Intereſt in, *which are not of this Fold*, of the Jewiſh Church, *them alſo I muſt bring.* Obſerve,

(1.) The Eye that Chriſt had to the poor *Gentiles*; he had ſometimes intimated his ſpecial Concern for *the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael*, to them indeed his perſonal Miniſtry was confin'd, but, ſaith he, *I have other Sheep.* Thoſe who in Proceſs of time ſhould believe in Chriſt, and be brought into Obedience to him from among the Gentiles, are here call'd *Sheep*; and he is ſaid to have them, tho' as yet they were *uncalled*, and many of them *unborn*, becauſe they were choſe of God, and given to Chriſt in the Counſels of divine Love from Eternity. Chriſt has a Right to many a Soul, by Virtue of the Father's Donation, and his own Purchaſe, which he has not yet the Poſſeſſion of; thus he had *much People in Corinth*, when as yet it lay in Wickedneſs, *Acts* 18. 10. Thoſe other Sheep *I have*, ſaith Chriſt, I have them on my Heart, have them in my Eye, am as ſure to have them, as if I had them already. Now Chriſt ſpeaks of thoſe *other Sheep*, (1.) To take off the Contempt that was put upon him, as having *few Followers*, as having but a *little Flock*, and therefore if a *good* Shepherd, yet a *poor* Shepherd; but ſaith he, I have more Sheep than you ſee. (2.) To take down the Pride aud Vain-glory of the *Jews*, who thought the *Meſſiah* muſt gather all his Sheep from among them. No, ſaith Chriſt, I have others whom I will ſet with the Lambs of my Flock, tho' you diſdain to ſet them with the Dogs of your Flock.

(2.) The Purpoſes and Reſolves of his Grace concerning them; *them alſo I muſt bring*, bring home to God, bring into the Church, and in order to that, bring off from their vain Converſation, bring them back from their Wanderings, as that *loſt Sheep*, Luke 15. 5. But why *muſt* he bring them? What was the Neceſſity? (1.) The *Neceſſity of their Caſe* requir'd it; I *muſt* bring, or they muſt be left to wander endleſly, for like Sheep they will never come back of themſelves, and no other can or will bring them. (2.) The *Neceſſity of his own Engagements* required it; he muſt bring them, or he would not be faithful to his Truſt, and true to his Undertaking. They are *my own*, bought and paid for, and therefore I *muſt not* neglect them, or leave them to periſh. He *muſt* in Honour *bring* thoſe whom he was intruſted with.

(3.) The happy Effect and Conſequent of this, in two Things. (1.) They ſhall *hear my Voice.* Not only my Voice ſhall be heard *among them*; whereas they have not heard, and therefore could not believe, now the *Sound* of the Goſpel ſhall *go to the End of the Earth* but it ſhall be heard *by them*; I will ſpeak and give to them to hear. Faith comes by hearing, and our dilligent Obſervance of the Voice of Chriſt, is both a Means and an Evidence of our being brought to Chriſt, and to God by him. (2.) *There ſhall be one Fold and one Shepherd.* As there is one Shepherd, ſo there ſhall be one Fold. Both *Jews* and *Gentiles* upon their turning to the Faith of Chriſt, ſhall be incorporated in one Church, be joint and equal Sharers in the Privileges of it without Diſtinction. Being united to Chriſt, they ſhall unite in him; two Sticks ſhall become one in the Hand of the Lord. *Note*, One Shepherd makes one Fold; one Chriſt makes one Church. As the Church *is one* in its Conſtitution, ſubject to one Head, animated by one Spirit, and guided by one Rule, ſo the Members of it ought to be *one* in Love and Affection. *Eph.* 4. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Secondly, Chriſt's *offering up himſelf for his Sheep*, is another Proof of his being a *good Shepherd*, and in this he yet more *commended his Love*, v. 15, 17, 18.

1. He declares his Purpoſe of *dying for his Flock*, v. 15. *I lay down my Life for the Sheep.* He not only ventur'd his Life for them, in ſuch a Caſe, the Hope of *ſaving* it may ballance the Fear of *loſing* it; but he actually *depoſited* it, and ſubmitted to a Neceſſity of dying for our Redemption, τίθημι, *I put it* as a Pawn or Pledge; as Purchaſe-Money paid down. Sheep appointed for the ſlaughter, ready to be ſacrific'd, were ranſom'd with the Blood of the Shepherd. He laid down his Life, ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων, not only *for the good* of the Sheep, but *in their ſtead.* Thouſands of Sheep had been offer'd in Sacrifice for their Shepherds, as Sin-Offerings; but here by a ſurprizing Reverſe, the Shepherd is ſacrific'd for the Sheep. When *David*, the Shepherd of *Iſrael*, was himſelf guilty, and the deſtroying Angel drew his Sword againſt the Flock for his Sake, with good Reaſon did he plead, *Theſe Sheep, what Evil have they done, let thine Hand be againſt me*, 2 Sam. 24. 17. But the Son of *David* was ſinleſs and ſpotleſs, and his Sheep, what Evil have they not done? Yet he ſaith, *Let thine Hand be againſt me.* Chriſt here ſeems to refer to that Prophet, *Zech.* 13. 17. *Awake, O Sword againſt my Shepherd*, and tho' the ſmiting of the Shepherd be for the preſent the *ſcattering* of the Flock, 'tis in order to the gathering of them in.

2. He takes off the Offence of the Croſs, which to many is a Stone of Stumbling, by four Conſiderations.

1. That his *laying down his Life for the Sheep* was the Condition, the Performance of which entitl'd him to the Honours and Powers of his exalted State, *v.* 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my Life.* Upon theſe Terms I am as a Mediator, to expect my Father's Acceptance and Approbation, and the Glory deſign'd me, that I become a Sacrifice for the choſen Remnant. Not but as the Son of God, he was beloved of his Father from Eternity, but as *God-man*, as *Immanuel*, he was therefore beloved of the Father becauſe he undertook to *die for the Sheep*: therefore God's Soul delighted in him as his Elect, becauſe herein he was his *faithful Servant*, Iſa. 42. 1. therefore he ſaid, *This is my beloved Son.* What an Inſtance is this of God's Love to Man, that he loved his Son the more for loving us. See what a Value Chriſt puts upon his Father's Love, that to recommend himſelf to that, he would lay down his Life for the Sheep; Did he think God's Love Recompence ſufficient for all his Services and Sufferings, and ſhall we think it too little for ours, and court the Smiles of the World to make it up? *Therefore doth my Father love me*, i. e. me, and all that by Faith become one with me; me and the myſtical Body, *becauſe I lay down my Life.* Chriſt's Death was the Purchaſe of his Father's Love both to him and us.

2. That his laying down his Life was in order to his reſuming it. I lay down my Life, *that I may receive it again.* (1.) This was the Effect of his Father's Love, and the firſt Step of his Exaltation, the Fruit of that Love: Becauſe he was God's *holy One*, he muſt not *ſee Corruption*, Pſal. 16. 10. God lov'd him too well to leave him in the Grave. (2.) This he had in his Eye in *laying down* his Life, that he might have an Opportunity of declaring himſelf to be the Son of God with Power, by his Reſurrection, *Rom.* 1. 4. By a divine Stratagem (like that before *Ai*, *Joſh.* 8. 15.(he yielded to Death, as if he were ſmitten before it, that he might the more glorioufly conquer Death, and triumph over the Grave. He laid down a *vilified* Body, that he might reſume a *glorified* one, fit to aſcend to the World of Spirits; laid down a Life adapted to this World, but reſum'd one adapted to the other, like a Corn of Wheat, *John* 12. 24.

3. That he was perfectly voluntary in his Suffering and Death. *v.* 18. *No one* doth or can force my Life from me againſt my Will, but I freely *lay it down my ſelf*, I *deliver it* as my own Act and Deed, for *I have* (which no Man has) *Power to lay it down, and take it again.*

1. See here the *Power of Chriſt*, as the Lord of Life, particularly of his own Life, which he had *in himſelf.*

1. He had Power to *keep his Life* againſt all the World, ſo that it could not be wreſted from him without his own Conſent. Tho' Chriſt's Life ſeems to be taken by Storm, yet really it was ſurrender'd, otherwiſe it had been impregnable, and never taken. The Lord Jeſus did not fall into the Hands of his Perſecutors, becauſe he could not avoid it, but threw himſelf into their Hands, becauſe his Hour was come. *No Man taketh my Life from me.* This was ſuch a Challenge as was never given by the moſt daring Heroe.

2. He had Power to lay *down* his *Life.* (1.) He had *Ability* to do it. He could when he pleas'd ſlip the Knot of Union between Soul and Body, and without any Act of Violence done to himſelf, could diſengage them from each other; having voluntarily *taken up* a Body, he could voluntarily lay it down again; which appeared when he cried with a loud Voice, and gave up the Ghoſt. (2.) He had *Authority* to do it, ἐξουσίαν. Tho' we could find Inſtruments of Cruelty, wherewith to make an End of our own Lives, yet *id poſſumus quod jure poſſumus*; we are not at Liberty to do it; but Chriſt had a ſovereign Authority to diſpoſe of his own Life as he pleas'd, he was no Debtor, as we are either to Life or Death, but perfectly *ſui juris.*

3. He had Power to *take it again.* We have not, our Life once laid down, is *as Water ſpilt upon the Ground*; but Chriſt, when he laid down his Life, ſtill had it within Reach, within Call, and could reſume it again. Parting with it by a voluntary Conveyance, he might limit the Surrender at Pleaſure, and he did it with a Power of Revocation; which was neceſſary to preſerve the Intentions of the Surrender.

2. See here the *Grace* of Chriſt, ſince none could demand his Life of him by Law, or extort it by Force, he *laid it down of himſelf* for our Redemption. He offer'd himſelf to be the *Saviour. Lo I come*, and then the Neceſſity of our Caſe calling for it, he offer'd himſelf to be a *Sacrifice, Here am I, let thoſe go their way; by the which Will we are ſanctified*, Heb. 10. 10. He was both the Offerer and the Offering, ſo that *his laying down his Life* was his offering up himſelf.

4. That he did all this by the expreſs Order and Appointment of his Father, into which he ultimately reſolves the whole Affair. *This Commandment have I received of my Father*; not ſuch a Commandment as made what he did neceſſary, prior to his own Suſception and Undertaking; but this was *the Law of Mediation*,

which he was willing to have *written in his Heart*, ſo as to *delight* in doing the *Will of God* according to it, *Pſal.* 40. 8.

19 There was a diviſion therefore again among the Jews for theſe ſayings. 20 And many of them ſaid, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him? 21 Others ſaid, Theſe are not the Words of him that hath a devil: Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

We have here an Account of the Peoples different Sentiments concerning Chriſt, on Occaſion of the foregoing Diſcourſe; there was a *Diviſion*, a *Schiſm* among them, they differ'd in their Opinions, which threw them into Heats and Parties. Such a *Ferment* as this they had been in before, *chap.* 7. 43. and 9. 16. and where there has once been a Diviſion, a little thing will make *a Diviſion again*. Rents are ſooner *made*, than made up or mended. This Diviſion was occaſion'd by the Sayings of Chriſt, which one would think ſhould have rather united them all in him as their Centre, but they ſet them at Variance, as Chriſt foreſaw, *Luke* 12. 42. but it is better Men ſhould be *divided* about the Doctrine of Chriſt, than *united* in the Service of Sin, *Luke* 11. 21.

See what the Debate was in particular.

1. Some, upon this Occaſion, ſpoke ill of Chriſt and of his Sayings, either openly in the Face of the Aſſembly, for his Enemies were very impudent, or privately among themſelves; they ſaid, *He has a Devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?*

1. They reproach him as a *Demoniack*. The worſt of Characters is put upon the beſt of Men. He is a diſtracted Man, he raves, and is delirious, and no more to be heard, than the Rambles of a Man in Bedlam. Thus ſtill, if a Man preaches ſeriouſly, and preſſingly of another World, he ſhall be ſaid to talk like an *Enthuſiaſt*, and it's all imputed to Fancy, a heated Brain, and a crazed Imagination.

2. They ridicule his Hearers; *Why hear ye him?* why do you ſo far encourage him, as to take Notice of what he ſaith? *Note*, Satan ruins many, by putting them out of Conceit with the Word and Ordinances, and repreſenting it as a weak and ſilly thing to attend upon them. Men would not be thus laughed out of their neceſſary Food, and yet ſuffer themſelves thus to be laughed out of what is more neceſſary. They that hear Chriſt, and mix Faith with what they hear, will ſoon be able to give a good Account *why they hear him*.

2. Others ſtood up in Defence of him and his Diſcourſe, and tho' the Stream run ſtrong, dar'd to ſwim againſt it, and tho' perhaps they did not believe on him as the Meſſiah, yet they could not bear to hear him thus abuſ'd.

If they could ſay no more of him, this they would maintain, that he was a Man in his Wits, that he had not a Devil, that he was neither *ſenſeleſs* nor *graceleſs*. The abſurd, and moſt unreaſonable Reproaches, that have ſometimes been caſt upon Chriſt and his Goſpel, have excited thoſe to appear for him and it, who otherwiſe had no great Affection to either. Two Things they plead;

1. The Excellency of his Doctrine; *Theſe are not the Words of him that hath a Devil*; they are not idle Words; diſtracted Men do not uſe to talk at this rate. Theſe are not the Words of one that is either *violently poſſeſs'd* with a Devil, or *voluntarily in league* with the Devil. Chriſtianity, if it be not the true Religion, is certainly the greateſt Cheat that ever was put upon the World, and if ſo, it muſt be of the Devil, who is the Father of all Lies; but it is certain the Doctrine of Chriſt is no *Doctrine of Devils*, for 'tis level'd directly againſt the Devil's Kingdom, and Satan is too ſubtle to be divided againſt himſelf. So much of Holineſs there is in the Words of Chriſt, that we may conclude they are *not the Words of one that has a Devil*, and therefore are the Words of one that was ſent of God; are not from Hell, and therefore muſt be from Heaven.

2. The Power of his Miracles; *Can a Devil open the Eyes of the Blind*, i. e. a Man that has a Devil? Neither mad Men nor ill Men uſe to work Miracles. *Devils* are not ſuch Lords of the Power of Nature, as to be able to work ſuch Miracles; nor are they ſuch Friends to Mankind, as to be *willing* to work them if they were able. The Devil will ſooner put out Mens Eyes than open them. Therefore Jeſus *had not a Devil.*

22 And it was at Jeruſalem the feaſt of the dedication, and it was winter. 23 And Jeſus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. 24 Then came the Jews round about him, and ſaid unto him, How long doſt thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Chriſt, tell us plainly, 25 Jeſus anſwered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witneſs of me. 26. But ye believed not; becauſe ye are not of my ſheep, as I ſaid unto you. 27 My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 And I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand. 29 My Father, which gave *them* me, is greater than all: and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and *my* Father are one. 31 Then the Jews took up ſtones again to ſtone him, 32. Jeſus anſwered them, Many good works have I ſhewed you from my Father; for which of thoſe works do ye ſtone me? 33 The Jews anſwered him ſaying, For a good work we ſtone thee not; but for blaſphemy, and becauſe that thou, being a man, makeſt thy ſelf God. 34 Jeſus anſwered them, Is it not written in your law, I ſaid, ye are Gods? 35 If he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the ſcripture cannot be broken: 36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath ſanctified, and ſent into the world, Thou baſphemeſt, becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of God. 37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. 38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.

We have here another Rencounter between Chriſt and the *Jews* in the Temple, in which 'tis hard to ſay which is more ſtrange, the gracious Words that came out of his Mouth, or the ſpiteful ones that came out of theirs.

1. We have here the Time when this Conference was, it was *at the Feaſt of Dedication, and it was Winter*, a Feaſt that was annually obſerv'd by conſent, in remembrance of the Dedication of a new *Altar*, and the purging of the Temple, by *Judas Maccabæus*, after the Temple had been prophan'd, and the Altar defil'd; we have the Story of it at large, in the Hiſtory of the *Maccabees*, lib. 1. cap. 4. we have the Prophecy of it, *Dan.* 8. 13, 14. ſee more of the Feaſt. 2 *Mac.* 1. 18. The Return of their Liberty was to them as Life from the Dead, and in remembrance of it, they kept an annual Feaſt on the 25th Day of the Month *Ciſleu*, about the Beginning of *December*, and ſeven Days after. The celebrating of it was not confin'd to Jeruſalem, as that of the Divine Feaſts was, but every one obſerv'd it in his own Place, not as a *Holy Time*, 'tis only a Divine Inſtitution that can *ſanctify* a Day, but as a *good Time*, at the Days of *Purim*, Eſth. 9. 18. Chriſt forecaſted to be now at *Jeruſalem*, not in Honour of the Feaſt, which did not require his Attendance there, but that he might improve thoſe Eight Days of Vacation for good Purpoſes.

2. The Place where it was, *v.* 23. *Jeſus walked in the Temple, in* Solomon's *Porch*, ſo call'd, *Acts* 3. 11. not becauſe built by *Solomon*, but in the ſame Place with that which had born his Name in the firſt Temple, and the Name was kept up for the greater Reputation of it. Here Chriſt walk'd to obſerve the Proceedings of the great *Sanhedrin* that ſate here, *Pſal.* 82. 1. he *walk'd* ready to give Audience to any that ſhould apply themſelves to him, to offer them his Service. He walk'd, as it ſhould ſeem, for ſome Time *alone*, as one neglected; walk'd penſive in the Foreſight of the Ruin of the Temple. Thoſe that have any thing to ſay to Chriſt, may find him in the Temple, and walk with him there.

3. The Conference it ſelf, in which obſerve,

Firſt, A weighty Queſtion put to him by the *Jews*, *v.* 24. They *came round about him* to teaze him; he was waiting for an Opportunity to do them a *Kindneſs*, and they took the Opportunity to do him a *Miſchief:* Ill Will for good Will is no rare and uncommon Return. He could not enjoy himſelf, no not in the Temple, his Father's Houſe, without Diſturbance. They came about him as it were to lay Siege to him; *encompaſs'd him about like Bees.* They came *about him* as if they had a joynt and unanimous Deſire to be *ſatisfied*; came as one Man, pretending an *impartial*, and importunate Enquiry after Truth, but intending a general Aſſault upon our Lord Jeſus, and ſeem'd to ſpeak the Senſe of their Nation, as if they were the Mouth of all the *Jews*, *How long doſt thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Chriſt, tell us.*

1. They quarrel with him as if he had unfairly held them in ſuſpence hitherto. Τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν αἴρεις, *How long doſt thou ſteal away our Hearts?* Or, *take away our Souls?* So ſome read it; baſely intimating that what ſhare he had of the Peoples Love and Reſpect he did not come fairly by it, but by indirect Methods, as *Abſalom* ſtole the Hearts of the Men of *Iſrael*; and as Seducers deceive the *Hearts of the Simple*, and ſo *draw away Diſciples after them*, Rom. 16. 18. Acts 10. 30. But moſt Interpreters underſtand it as we do, *How long doſt thou keep us in Suſpence?* How long are we kept debating whether thou be the Chriſt or no, and not able to determine the Queſtion. Now, (1.) It was the Effect of their Infidelity, and powerful Prejudices, that after our Lord Jeſus had ſo fully prov'd himſelf to be the Chriſt, they were ſtill in doubt concerning it; this they willingly heſitated about, when they might eaſily have been ſatisfied. The Struggle was between their Convictions, which told them he was the Chriſt; and their Corruptions, which ſaid No, becauſe he was not ſuch a Chriſt as they expected. Thoſe who chuſe to be Scepticks, may if they pleaſe, hold the Ballance ſo, as that the moſt cogent Arguments may not weigh down the moſt trifling Objections, but the Scales may ſtill hang even. (2.) It was an Inſtance of their Impudence and Preſumption, that they laid the Blame of their doubting upon Chriſt himſelf, as if he *made them to* doubt by Inconſiſtency with himſelf, whereas in truth they made themſelves doubt by indulging their Prejudices. If Wiſdom's Sayings appear doubtful, the Fault is not in the Object, they are all *plain to him that underſtandeth*, but in the Eye. Chriſt would *make* us to *believe*; we make our ſelves to *doubt*.

2. They challenge him to give a direct and categorical Anſwer, whether he were the Meſſiah or no? *If thou be Chriſt*, as many

believe thou art, *tell us plainly*, not by Parables, as, I am *the Light of the World*, and *the good Shepherd*, &c. and the like, but *totidem verbis*, either that thou art the Chriſt, or as *John Baptiſt*, that thou art not, *John* 1. 20. Now this preſſing Query of theirs was *ſeemingly good*, they pretended to be deſirous to know the Truth, as if they were ready to embrace it; but it was *really bad*, and put with an ill Deſign; for if he ſhould tell them plainly that he was the *Chriſt*, there needed no more to make him obnoxious to the Jealouſie and Severity of the *Roman* Government. Every one knew the *Meſſiah* was to be a King, and therefore whoever pretended to be the Meſſiah would be proſecuted as a Traytor, which was the Thing they would have been at; for let them tell them never ſo plainly that he was the Chriſt, they would have this to ſay preſently, *Thou beareſt Witneſs of thy ſelf*, as they had, *John* 8. 13.

Secondly, Chriſt's Anſwer to this Queſtion; in which,

1. He juſtifies himſelf as not at all acceſſary to their Infidelity and Scepticiſm, referring them, (1.) To what he had ſaid, *I have told you.* He had told them that he was the Son of God, the Son of Man; that he had Life in himſelf, that he had *Authority to execute Judgment*, &c. And is not this the Chriſt then? Theſe Things he had told them, and they believed not, why then ſhould they be told them again meerly to gratify their Curioſity? *Ye believed not.* They pretended that they only doubted, but Chriſt tells them they did not *believe.* Scepticiſm in Religion is no better than downright Infidelity. It is not for us to *teach* God how he ſhould *teach us*, nor preſcribe to him how plainly he ſhould tell us his Mind, but be thankful for Divine Revelation as we have it, which if we do not believe, neither would we be perſwaded if it were never ſo much adapted to our Humour. (2.) He refers them to *his Works*, to the Example of his Life, which was not only perfectly pure, but highly beneficient, and of a piece with his Doctrine; and eſpecially to his Miracles, which he wrought for the Confirmation of his Doctrine. 'Twas certain no Man could do thoſe Miracles except God were with him, and God would not be with him to atteſt a Forgery.

2. He condemns them for their obſtinate Unbelief, notwithſtanding all the moſt plain and powerful Arguments us'd to convince them. Ye *believed not*; and again, *ye believed not.* You ſtill are what you always were, obſtinate in your Unbelief.

But the Reaſon he gives is very ſurprizing; *Ye believe not, becauſe ye are not of my Sheep:* You believe not in me, becauſe you belong not to me.

(1.) You are not *diſpos'd* to be my Followers; are not of a tractable, teachable Temper, have no Inclination to receive the Doctrine and Law of the Meſſiah; you will not herd your ſelves with my Sheep, will not come and ſee, come and hear my Voice. Rooted Antipathies to the Goſpel of Chriſt are the Bonds of Iniquity and Infidelity.

(2.) You are not *deſign'd* to be my Followers; you are not of *thoſe* that were given me by my Father to be brought to Grace and Glory. You are not of the Number of the Elect, and your Unbelief, if you perſiſt in it, will be a certain Evidence that you are not. *Note*, Thoſe to whom God never *gives* the Grace of *Faith*, were never deſign'd for Heaven and Happineſs. What *Solomon* ſaith, of Immorality is true of Infidelity, It is *a deep Ditch, and he that is abhorred of the Lord ſhall fall therein*, Prov. 22. 14. *Non eſſa electum, non eſt Cauſa Incredulitatis propriè dicta, ſed Cauſa per accidens: Fides autem eſt Donum Dei & effectus prædeſtinationis.* So *Janſenius* diſtinguiſheth well here.

3. He takes this Occaſion to deſcribe both the gracious Diſpoſition, and the happy State of thoſe that are *his Sheep*; for ſuch there are, tho' they be not.

1. To convince them that they were not his Sheep, he tells them what were the Characters of his Sheep.

(1.) They *hear his Voice*, v. 27. for they know it to be his, *v.* 4. and he has undertaken that they ſhall hear it, *v.* 16. They *diſcern* it, *It is the Voice of my Beloved*, Cant. 2. 8. They *delight* in it, are in their Element when they are ſitting at his Feet to hear his Word. They do according to it, and make his Word their Rule. Chriſt will not account thoſe Sheep that are deaf to his Calls, deaf to his Charms, *Pſal.* 58. 5.

(2.) They *follow him*, they ſubmit to his Conduct by a chearful Obedience to all his Commands, and a pleaſant Conformity to his Spirit and Pattern: The Word of Command hath always been, *Follow me.* We muſt eye him as our Leader and Captain, and *tread in his Steps*, and walk as he walked; follow the Preſcriptions of his Word, the Intimations of his Providence, and the Directions of his Spirit; *follow the Lamb*, the *Dux gregis*, *whitherſoever he goes.* In vain do we *hear his Voice*, if we do not *follow him.*

2. To convince them that it was their great *Unhappineſs* and Miſery *not to be* of Chriſt's Sheep, he here deſcribes the *bleſſed State and Caſe* of thoſe that *are*; which would likewiſe ſerve for the Support and Comfort of his poor deſpiſed Followers, and keep them from envying the Power and Grandeur of thoſe that were not of his Sheep.

1. Our Lord Jeſus *takes cognizance* of his Sheep, they *hear my Voice*, and I *know them*; he diſtinguiſheth them from others, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. hath a particular regard to every individual, *Pſal.* 34. 6. he knows their Wants and Deſires; knows their Souls in Adverſity, where to find them, and what to do for them. He knows others afar off, but knows them near at Hand.

2. He has provided a Happineſs for them, ſuited to them; *I give unto them Eternal Life*, v. 28. (1.) The Eſtate ſettled upon them is rich and valuable; 'tis Life, Eternal Life. Man has a *living Soul*, therefore the Happineſs provided is *Life*, ſuited to his Nature. Man has an *Immortal* Soul, therefore the Happineſs provided is *Eternal Life*, running parallel with his Duration. *Life Eternal* is the Felicity and chief Good of a *Soul Immortal.* (2.) The manner of Conveyance is *free*; *I give it* to them; *'tis* not *bargain'd* and *ſold* upon a valuable Conſideration, but *given* by the free Grace of Jeſus Chriſt. The Donor has Power to give it: He who is the Fountain of Life, and Father of Eternity, has authoriz'd Chriſt to give Eternal Life, *John* 17. 2. Not *I will* give it, but *I do* give it, 'tis a Gift *in preſent.* He *gives* the Aſſurance of it, the Pledge and Earneſt of it, the Firſt-fruits and Foretaſts of it. That *Spiritual* Life, which is *Eternal* Life begun, Heaven in the Seed, in the Bud, in the Embryo.

3. He hath undertaken for their Security and Preſervation to this Happineſs. 1. They ſhall be *ſav'd from Everlaſting Perdition. They ſhall by no Means periſh for ever*; ſo the Words are. As there is an Eternal Deſtruction, the Soul not *annihilated*, but *ruin'd*; it's Being continued, but its Comfort and Happineſs irrecoverably loſt: All Believers are *ſaved from this*, whatever Croſs they may come under, they ſhall not *come into Condemnation.* A Man is never undone till he's in Hell, and they ſhall not go down to that. Shepherds that have large Flocks, oft loſe ſome of the Sheep; and ſuffer them to periſh; but Chriſt has engaged that none of his Sheep ſhall periſh, not one. 2. They cannot be kept from their *Everlaſting Happineſs*; 'tis in reſerve, but he that gives it them will preſerve them to it.

1. His own Power is engag'd for them: *Neither ſhall any Man pluck them out of my Hand.* A mighty Conteſt is here ſuppoſed about theſe *Sheep.* The Shepherd is ſo careful of their Welfare, that he has them not only within his Fold, and under his Eye, but *in his Hand*, intereſted in his ſpecial Love, and taken under his ſpecial Protection; *all his Saints are in thy Hand*, Deut. 33. 3. yet their Enemies are ſo daring, that they attempt to pluck them out of his Hand; *his*, whoſe *own* they are, whoſe *Care* they are; but they cannot, they ſhall not do it. *Note*, Thoſe are ſafe who are in the Hands of the Lord Jeſus. The Saints are *preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus*; and their Salvation is not in their own keeping, but in the keeping of *a Mediator.* The Phariſees and Rulers did all they could to frighten the Diſciples of Chriſt from following him, reproving and threatening them, but Chriſt ſaith, they ſhould not prevail.

2. His Father's Power is likewiſe engaged for their Preſervation, *v.* 29. He appear'd now in Weakneſs, and leſt his Security ſhould therefore be thought *inſufficient*, he brings in his Father as a farther Security. Obſerve,

(1.) The Power of the Father. *My Father is greater than all*; greater than all the other *Friends* of the Church, all the other Shepherds, Magiſtrates, or Miniſters, and able to do that for them, which they cannot do. Thoſe Shepherds ſlumber and ſleep, and 'twill be eaſy to pluck the Sheep out of their Hands, but he keeps his Flock Day and Night. Greater than all the Enemies of the Church, all the Oppoſition given to her Intereſts, and able to ſecure his own againſt all their Inſults; he is *greater than all* the combined Force of Hell and Earth. He is greater in Wiſdom, than the old *Serpent*, tho' noted for Subtilty; greater in Strength than the great red Dragon, tho' his Name be *Legion*, and his Title *Principalities and Powers.* The Devil and his Angels have had many a Puſh, many a Pluck for the Maſtery, but have never yet *prevail'd*, Rev. 12. 7. *The Lord on High is mightier.*

2. The Intereſt of the Father in the Sheep, for the Sake of which this Power is engag'd for them; 'tis my Father *that gave them me*, and he is concern'd in Honour to uphold his Gift: They were given to the Son as a Truſt to be manag'd by him, and therefore God will ſtill look after them. All the Divine Power is engag'd for the Accompliſhment of all the Divine Counſels.

(3.) The Safety of the Saints inferr'd from theſe two. If this be ſo, then *none* (neither Man nor Devil) is *able to pluck them out of the Father's Hand*, not able to deprive them of the Grace they have, or to hinder them from the Glory that is deſign'd them; not able to put them out of God's Protection, nor get them into their own Power. Chriſt had himſelf experienc'd the Power of his Father *upholding* and *ſtrengthening* him, and therefore puts all his Followers into his Hand too. He that ſecured the Glory of the *Redeemer*, will ſecure the Glory of the *Redeemed.*

Further to corroborate the Security, that the Sheep of Chriſt may have ſtrong Conſolation, he aſſerts the Union of theſe Two Undertakers, *I and my Father are one*, and have joyntly and ſeverally undertaken for the Protection of the Saints, and their Perfection. This ſpeaks, not only the Harmony and Conſent, and good Underſtanding that was between the Father and the Son in the Work of Man's Redemption, every good Man is ſo far *one* with God, as to concur with him; therefore it muſt be meant of the *Oneneſs of the Nature* of Father and Son, that they are the ſame in Subſtance, and equal in Power and Glory.

The Fathers urged this, both againſt the *Sabellians*, to prove the Diſtinction, and Plurality of the Perſons, that the *Father* and the *Son* are Two; and againſt the *Arians*, to prove the Unity of the Nature, that theſe Two are *One.* If we ſhould altogether hold our Peace concerning the Senſe of the Words, even the Stones which the *Jews* took up to caſt at him, would ſpeak it out, for they underſtood him as hereby making himſelf God, *v.* 33. and he did not deny it. He proves that none could pluck them out of *his Hand*, becauſe they could not pluck them *out of the Father's Hand*; which had not been a concluſive Argument, if the Son had not had the ſame Almighty Power with the Father, and conſequently been one with him in Eſſence and Operation.

Thirdly, The Rage, the Out-rage of the *Jews* againſt him for this Diſcourſe, *the* Jews *took up Stones again*, v. 31. 'Tis not the Word that is us'd before, *chap.* 8. 59. but ἐβάστασαν λίθους, they *carry'd Stones*, great Stones, Stones that were a *Load*, ſuch as they us'd in ſtoning Malefactors; they *brought* them from ſome Place at a diſtance, as it were preparing Things for his Execution without any judicial Proceſs; as if he were convicted of Blaſphemy upon the notorious Evidence of the Fact, which needed no further Trial. The Abſurdity of this Inſult the *Jews* made upon Chriſt will appear, if we conſider, 1. That they had *imperiouſly*, not to ſay *impudently*, challenged him to tell them plainly whether he were the Chriſt or no, and yet now he not only ſaid it, but prov'd himſelf ſo, they condemn him for it as a Malefactor. If the Preachers of the Truth propoſe it *modeſtly*, they are branded as Cowards; if *boldly*, as inſolent; *but Wiſdom is juſtified of her Children.* 2. That when they had made the like Attempt before, it was in vain, *he eſcaped through the midſt of them*, chap. 5. 59. yet they repeat their baffled Attempt. Daring Sinners will throw Stones at Heaven, tho' they return upon their own Heads; and will ſtrengthen themſelves againſt the Almighty, tho' never any hardened themſelves againſt him and proſpered.

Fourthly, Chriſt's tender Expoſtulation with them upon occaſion of this Outrage, *v.* 32. *Jeſus anſwered* what they did, for we do not find that they ſaid *any Thing*, unleſs perhaps they ſtirr'd up the Crowd that yet had gathered about him to joyn with them, crying, *Stone him*, *Stone him*, as afterwards, *Crucifie him*, *Crucifie him.* When he could have anſwered them with Fire from Heaven, he mildly replied, *Many good Works have I ſhewed you from my Father, for which of thoſe Works, do you ſtone me?* Words ſo very tender, that one would think they ſhould have melted a Heart of Stone,

In dealing with his Enemies he ſtill argued from his *Works*, Men evidence what they *are* by what they *do.* His *good Works*, καλὰ ἔργα, excellent, eminent Works. *Opera eximia vel præclara*, it ſignifies both *great* Works, and *good Works.*

1. The Divine Power of his Works convicted them of the moſt obſtinate Infidelity. They were Works *from his Father*, ſo far above the reach and courſe of Nature, as to prove him that did them, *ſent of God*, and acting by Commiſſion from him. Theſe Works he *ſhewed* them, he did them openly before the People, and not in a Corner; his Works would bear the Teſt, and refer themſelves to the Teſtimony of the moſt inquiſitive and impartial Spectators. He did not ſhew his Works by Candle-light, as they that do them only for *ſhew*, but he ſhewed them at Noon-day before the World, *John* 18. 20. *See Pſal.* 111. 6. His Works ſo undeniably *demonſtrated*, that they were an unconteſtable *Demonſtration* of the Validity of his Commiſſion.

2. The Divine Grace of his Works convicted them of the moſt baſe Ingratitude. The Works he did among them were not only *Miracles* but *Mercies*; not only Works of Wonder to amaze them, but Works of Love and Kindneſs to do them good, and ſo make them good, and endear himſelf to them; He healed the Sick, cleanſed the Lepers, caſt out Devils, which were Favours, not only to the Perſons concern'd, but to the Publick; theſe he had repeated and multiplied; now, *for which of theſe do ye ſtone me*? Ye cannot ſay I have done you any Harm, or given you any juſt Provocation; if therfore you will pick a Quarrel with me, it muſt be for ſome good Work, ſome *good Turn* done you, tell me for which. *Note*, 1. The horrid Ingratitude that there is in our Sins againſt God and Jeſus Chriſt, is a great Aggravation of them, and makes them appear exceeding ſinful. See how God argues to this Purpoſe, *Deut.* 32. 6. *Jer.* 2. 5. *Mic.* 6. 3. 2. We muſt not think it ſtrange if we meet with thoſe who not only hate us without Cauſe, but are our Adverſaries for our Love, *Pſal.* 35. 12. and 41. 9. When he asks *for which of theſe do you ſtone me*, as he intimates the abundant Satisfaction he had in his own Innocency, which gives a Man Courage in a ſuffering Day, ſo he puts his Perſecutors upon conſidering what was the true Reaſon of their Enmity, and asking, as all thoſe ſhould do that creat Trouble to their Neighbour, *Why perſecute we him?* As *Job* adviſeth his Friends to do, *Job* 19. 28.

Fifthly, Their Vindication of the Attempt they made upon Chriſt, and the Cauſe upon which they grounded their Proſecutions, *v.* 33. What Sin will want Fig-leaves with which to cover it ſelf, when even the bloody Perſecutors of the Son of God could find ſomething to ſay for themſelves.

1. They would not be thought ſuch Enemies to their Country, as to perſecute him for a good Work; *for a good Work we ſtone thee not*: For indeed they would ſcarce allow any of his Works to be ſo. His curing the impotent Man, *John* 5. and the blind Man, *John* 9. were ſo far from being acknowledg'd good Services to the Town, and meritorious, that they were put upon the Score of his Crimes, becauſe done on the Sabbath Day. But if he had done any good Works, they would not own that they *ſtoned him for them*, tho' theſe were really the Things that did moſt exaſperate them, *chap.* 11. 47. thus tho' moſt abſurd, they could not be brought to own their Abſurdities.

2. They would be thought ſuch Friends to God and his Glory, as to proſecute him for *Blaſphemy, becauſe that thou being a Man, makeſt thy ſelf God.*

Here's, 1. A pretended Zeal for the *Law.* They ſeem mightily concern'd for the Honour of the Divine Majeſty, and to be ſeiz'd with a Religious Horror at that which they imagin'd to be a Reproach to it. A *Blaſphemer* was to be *ſton'd*, Lev. 24. 16. This Law they thought did not only juſtifie, but ſanctifie what they attempted, as *Acts* 26. 9. *Note*, The vileſt Practices are often varniſh'd with plauſible Pretences. As nothing is more *couragious* than a well inform'd Conſcience, ſo nothing more *outragious* than a miſtaken one. See *Iſa.* 66. 5. *John* 16. 2.

2. A *real* Enmity to the *Goſpel*, on which they could not put a greater Affront, than by repreſenting Chriſt as a Blaſphemer. 'Tis no new Thing for the worſt of Characters to be be put upon the beſt of Men, by thoſe that reſolve to give them the worſt of Treatment.

1. The Crime laid to his Charge is *Blaſphemy*, ſpeaking reproachfully, and deſpitefully of God. God himſelf is out of the Sinners reach, and not capable of receiving any real Injury; and therefore Enmity to God, ſpits its Venom at his Name, and ſo ſhew its Ill-will.

2. The Proof of the Crime, *Thou being a Man makeſt they ſelf God.* And as it is God's Glory that *he is God*, which we rob him of, when we make him altogether ſuch a one as our ſelves; ſo it is his Glory, that *beſides him there is no other*, which we rob him of, when we make our ſelves, or any Creature altogether like him.

Now, 1. Thus far they were in the right, that what Chriſt ſaid of himſelf amounted to this, That he was God, for he had ſaid that he was *one with the Father*, and that he would give *Eternal Life*; and Chriſt doth not deny it, which he would have done if it had been a miſtaken Inference from his Words.

But, 2. They were much miſtaken, when they look'd upon him as a *meer Man*, and that the Godhead he claim'd was a Uſurpation, and of his own making. They thought it abſurd and impious, that ſuch a one as he, who appeared in the Faſhion of a poor, mean, deſpicable Man, ſhould profeſs himſelf the Meſſiah, and entitle himſelf to the Honours confeſſedly due to the Son of God. *Note*, (1.) Thoſe who ſay that Jeſus is a *meer Man*, and only a *made God*, as the *Socinians* ſay, do in effect charge *him* with Blaſphemy, but do effectually *prove* it upon themſelves. (2.) He who being a Man, a ſinful Man, makes himſelf a God, as the Pope doth, who claims Divine Powers and Prerogatives, is no queſtion a *Blaſphemer*, and *that* Antichriſt.

Sixthly, Chriſt's Reply to their Accuſation of him (for ſo their Vindication of themſelves was) and his making good thoſe Claims which they imputed to him as blaſphemous, *v.* 34, *&c.* where he proves himſelf to be no Blaſphemer, by two Arguments.

(1.) By an Argumemt taken from *God's Word.* He appeals to what was *written in their Law*, i. e. in the Old Teſtament; whoever oppoſeth Chriſt, He is ſure to have the Scripture *on his Side.* It is written, *Pſal.* 82. 6. *I have ſaid ye are Gods.* 'Tis an Argument *à minore ad majus.* If they were Gods, much more am I. Obſerve,

(1.) How he explains the Text, *v.* 35. *He called them Gods to whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken.* The Word of God's *Commiſſion* came to *them*, appointing them to their Offices, as Judges, and therfore they are called *Gods*, Exod. 22. 28. To ſome the Word of God came immediately, as to *Moſes*; to others in the Way of an inſtituted Ordinance. Magiſtracy is a Divine Inſtitution; and Magiſtrates are God's Delegates, and therefore Scripture calleth them Gods; and we are ſure the Scripture *cannot be broken*, or broken in upon, or found fault with. Every Word of God is *right*, the very Stile and Language of Scripture is unexceptionable, and not to to be corrected, *Mat.* 5. 18.

(2.) How he applies it. Thus much in general is eaſily inferr'd, that they were very raſh and unreaſonable who condemn'd Chriſt as a Blaſphemer, only for calling himſelf the Son of God, when yet they themſelves call'd their Rulers ſo, and therein the Scripture warranted them. But the Argument goes further, *v.* 36. If Magiſtrates were called Gods, becauſe they were commiſſion'd to adminiſter Juſtice in the Nation, *Say ye of him whom the Father hath ſanctified, Thou blaſphemeſt?* We have here Two Things concerning the Lord Jeſus.

1. The *Honour* done him by the *Father*, which he juſtly *glories in*, he *ſactified him, and ſent him into the World.* Magiſtrates were call'd the Sons of *God*, tho' the Word of God only came to them, and the Spirit of Government came upon them by Meaſure, as upon *Saul*; but our Lord Jeſus was himſelf the *Word*, and had the *Spirit without Meaſure*; they were conſtituted for a particular Country, City, or Nation, but he was ſent *into the World*, veſted with a univerſal Authority as Lord of all; they were *ſent to*, as Perſons at a diſtance, he was *ſent forth* as having been from Eternity with God. The Father *ſanctified him*, i. e. deſign'd him, and ſet him apart to the Office of Mediator, and qualified, and fitted him for that Office: *Sanctifying* him is the ſame with *ſealing* him, *John* 6. 27. *Note*, Whom the Father *ſends* he *ſanctifies*, whom he deſigns for holy Purpoſes, he prepares with holy Principles and Diſpoſitions: The Holy God will reward, and therefore will employ none but ſuch as he finds, or makes Holy. The Father's *ſanctifying* and *ſending* him is here vouch'd as a ſufficient Warrant for his

calling himſelf the *Son of God*: for becauſe he was a *holy Thing* he was *call'd the Son of God*, Luke 1. 35. See *Rom.* 1. 4.

2. The *Diſhonour* done him by the *Jews*, which he juſtly complains of, that they impiouſly ſaid of him whom the Father had thus dignified, that he was a *Blaſphemer*, becauſe he call'd himſelf the *Son of God*. *Say ye of him* ſo and ſo? Dare you ſay ſo? Dare you thus ſet your Mouths againſt the Heavens? Have you Brow and Braſs enough to tell the God of Truth he lies? Or *to condemn him that is moſt Juſt*? Look me in the Face and ſay it if you can; what ſay ye of the Son of God that *he is a Blaſphemer*? If Devils had ſaid ſo of him, whom he came to condemn, it had not been ſo ſtrange, but that Men ſhould ſay ſo of him, whom he came to teach and ſave; *be aſtoniſh'd O Heavens at this*! See what is the Language of an obſtinate Unbelief, it doth in effect call the Holy Jeſus a *Blaſphemer*. 'Tis hard to ſay which is more to be admir'd, that Men who breath in God's Air ſhould yet ſpeak ſuch Things, or that Men who have ſpoken ſuch Things ſhould yet ſtill be ſuffer'd to breath in God's Air. The Wickedneſs of Man, and the Patience of God, as it were, contend which ſhall be moſt *wonderful*.

2. By an Argument taken from *his own Works*, v. 37, 38. In the former he only anſwer'd the Charge of Blaſphemy by an Argument *ad hominem*, but he here makes out his own Claims, and proves that he and the Father are one, *v.* 37, 38. *If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not.* Tho' he might juſtly have abandoned ſuch blaſphemous Wretches as incurable, yet he vouchſafes to reaſon with them.

Obſerve, 1. *From what* he argues, from his Works, which he had oft vouch'd as his Credentials, and the Proofs of his Miſſion. As he proved himſelf ſent of God by the *Divinity* of his Works, ſo we muſt prove our ſelves ally'd to Chriſt by the *Chriſtianity* of ours. (1.) The Argument is very cogent, for the Works he did was the *Works of his Father*, which the Father only could do, and which could not be done in the ordinary courſe of Nature, but only by the ſovereign, over-ruling Power of the God of Nature. *Opera Deo propia*, and *Opera Deo digna*: The Works of a Divine Power. He that can diſpence with the Laws of Nature, repeal, alter, and over-rule them at his Pleaſure, by his own Power, is certainly the Sovereign Prince who firſt inſtituted and enacted thoſe Laws. The Miracles which the Apoſtles wrought in his Name, and by his Power, and for the Confirmation of his Doctrine, corroborated this Argument, and continued the Evidence of it when he was gone. (2.) It is very fairly propoſed as can be deſired, and put to a ſhort Iſſue.

(1.) *If I do not the Works of my Father believe me not.* He doth not demand a blind and implicit Faith, nor an Aſſent to his Divine Miſſion further than he gave Proof of it. He did not wind himſelf into the Affections of People, or wheedle them by ſly Inſinuations, nor impoſe upon their Credulity by bold Aſſertions, but with the greateſt Fairneſs imaginable quitted all Demands of their Faith, further than he produc'd Warrants for theſe Demands. Chriſt is no hard Maſter, who expects to reap in Aſſents, where he has not ſown in Arguments. None ſhall periſh for the Disbelief of that which was not propos'd to them with ſufficent Motives of Credibility, infinite Wiſdom it ſelf being Judge.

(2.) But if I do *the Works of my Father*; *if I work* undeniable Miracles for the Confirmation of a holy Doctrine, *tho' you believe not me*, tho' you are ſo ſcrupulous as not to take my Word, yet *believe the Works*: Believe your own Eyes, your own Reaſon, the Thing ſpeaks it ſelf plain enough. As the inviſible Things of the Creator are clearly ſeen by Works of Creation and common Providence, *Rom.* 1. 20. ſo the inviſible Thing of the Redeemer were ſeen by his Miracles, and by all his Works both of Power and Mercy; ſo that they who were not convinc'd by theſe Works were *without Excuſe*.

2. *For what* he argues, *That ye may know and believe*, may believe it intelligently, and with an entire Satisfaction, that *the Father is in me, and I in him*, which is the ſame with what he had ſaid, *v.* 30. *I and my Father are one.* The Father was ſo in the Son, as that in him *dwelt all the Fulneſs of the Godhead*, and 'twas by a Divine Power that he wrought his Miracles; the Son was ſo in the Father, as that he was perfectly acquainted with the whole of his Mind, not by Communication, but by Conſciouſneſs, having lain in his Boſom. This we muſt *know*; not know and *explain*, for we cannot by ſearching find it out to Perfection, but know and *believe* it, acknowledging and adoring the Depth when we cannot find the Bottom.

39 Therefore they ſought again to take him: but he eſcaped out of their hand, 40 And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at firſt baptized; and there he abode. 41 And many reſorted unto him, and ſaid, John did no miracle; but all that John ſpake of this man, were true. 42 And many believed on him there.

We have the Iſſue of the Conference with the *Jews*. One would have thought it ſhould have convinc'd and melted them, but their Hearts were hardened. Here we are told,

1. How they *attack'd* him by *force*. Therefore *they ſought again to take him* v. 39. Therefore, (1.) becauſe he had fully anſwer'd their Charge of Blſaphemy, and wiped off that Imputation, ſo that they could not for Shame go on with their Attempt to *ſtone him*, therefore they contriv'd to *ſeize him*, and proſecute him as an Offender againſt the State. When they were conſtrain'd to drop their Attempt by a *popular Tumult*, they would try what they could do under colour of a *legal Proceſs*. See *Rev.* 12. 13. Or, (2.) Becauſe he perſevered in the ſame Teſtimony concerning himſelf, they perſiſted in their Malice againſt him. What he had ſaid before he did in effect *ſay again*, for the *faithful Witneſs* never *runs in* from what he has once ſaid; and therefore having the *ſame* Provocation, they expreſs the ſame Reſentments, and juſtifie their Attempt to ſtone him, by another Attempt to take him. Such is the Temper of a perſecuting Spirit, and ſuch its Politicks, *malè facta malè factis tegere ne perpluant.*

2. How he *avoided* them by *Flight*, not an inglorious Retreat, in which there was any Thing of *human* Infirmity, but a *glorious* Retirement in which there was much of a Divine Power. He *eſcaped out of their Hands*, not by the interpoſal of any Friend that help'd him, but by his own Wiſdom he *got clear* of them; either drew a Veil over himſelf, or caſt a Miſt before their Eyes, or ty'd the Hands of thoſe whoſe Hearts he did not turn. *Note*, No Weapon form'd againſt our Lord Jeſus ſhall proſper, *Pſal.* 2. 5. He *eſcaped*, not becauſe he was afraid to ſuffer, but becauſe *his Hour was not come*. And he who knew how to *deliver himſelf*, no doubt knows how to *deliver the Godly out of Temptation*, and to make *a Way for them to eſcape*.

3. How he diſpos'd of himſelf in his Retirement, he *went away again beyond* Jordan, *v.* 40. The Biſhop of our Souls came not to be fix'd in one See, but to go about from Place to Place doing good. This great Benfactor was never out of his Way, for where-ever he came, there was Work to be done. Tho' *Jeruſalem* was the Royal City, yet he made many a kind Viſit to the Country, not only his own Country *Galilee*, but to other Parts, even thoſe that lay moſt remote beyond *Jordan*. Now obſerve,

1. What *ſhelter* he found there. He went into a private Part of the Country, and *there he abode*, there he found ſome Reſt and Quietneſs, when in *Jeruſalem* he could find none. *Note*, Tho' Perſecutors may drive Chriſt and his Goſpel out of their own City or Country, they cannot drive him or it out of the World. Tho' *Jeruſalem* was not *gather'd*, nor would be, yet Chriſt was Glorious, and would be. Chriſt's going now beyond *Jordan*, was a Figure of the taking of the Kingdom of God from the *Jews*, and bringing it to the *Gentiles*. Chriſt and his Goſpel have often found better Entertainment among the plain Country People than among *the Wiſe, the Mighty, the Noble*, 1 Cor. 1. 26, 27.

2. What *Succeſs* he found there. He did not go thither, meerly for his own Security, but to do good there; and therefore he choſe to go thither where *John* at *firſt baptized*, John 1. 28. becauſe there could not but remain ſome Impreſſions of *John*'s Miniſtry and Baptiſm thereabouts, which would diſpoſe them to receive Chriſt and his Doctrine; for it was not Three Years ſince *John* was baptizing, and Chriſt was himſelf baptized here at *Bethabara*. Chriſt came hither now to ſee what Fruit there was of all the Pains *John Baptiſt* had taken among them, and what they retain'd of the Things they then heard and received. And the Event in ſome Meaſure anſwer'd Expectation; for we are told,

1. That they *flock'd* after him, *v.* 41. *Many reſorted to him.* The Return of the Means of Grace to a Place after they have been for ſome Time intermitted, commonly occaſions a great ſtirring of Affections. Some think Chriſt choſe to *abide* at *Bethabara*, the Houſe of *Paſſage*, where the Ferry-boats lay, by which they croſ'd the River *Jordan*, that the Confluence of People thither might give an Opportunity of teaching many who would come to hear him when it *lay in their* Way, that would ſcarce go a ſtep out of the Road for an Opportunity of attending on his Word.

2. That they *reaſon'd* in his Favours, and ſought Arguments to induce them to cloſe with him, as much as they at *Jeruſalem* ſought Objections againſt him. They ſaid very judiciouſly, *John did no Miracle, but all Things that* John *ſpake of this Man were true.* Two Things they conſidered, upon recollecting what they had ſeen and heard from *John*, and comparing it with Chriſt's Miniſtry.

(1.) That Chriſt far *exceeded John* Baptiſt's *Power*, for *John did no Miracle*, but Jeſus doth many; whence it is eaſy to infer, that Jeſus is greater than *John*. And if *John* were ſo great a Prophet, how great than is this Jeſus? Chriſt is beſt known and acknowledged by ſuch Compariſon with others, as ſets him ſuparlatively above others. Tho' *John* came in the Spirit and Power of *Elias*, yet he did not work Miracles as *Elias* did, leſt the Minds of People ſhould be made to heſitate between him and Jeſus; therefore the Honour of working Miracles was reſerv'd for *Jeſus*, as a Flower of his Crown, that there might be a *ſenſible* Demonſtration, and an *undeniable* one, that tho' he came after *John*, yet he was *preferr'd far before him*.

(2.) That Chriſt exactly *anſwer'd John Baptiſt*'s Teſtimony. *John* not only *did no Miracle* to *divert* People from Chriſt, but he ſaid a great deal to *direct* them to Chriſt, and to turn them over as Apprentices to him, and that came to their Minds *now*; all Things that *John ſaid of this Man were true*, that he ſhould be the *Lamb of God*; ſhould *baptize with the Holy Ghoſt and with Fire.* Great Things *John* had ſaid of him, which rais'd their Expectations; ſo that tho' they had not Zeal enough to carry them into *his* Country, to enquire after him, yet when he came into *theirs*, and brought his Goſpel to their Doors, they acknowledg'd him as great as *John* had ſaid he would be. When we get acquainted with Chriſt, and come to know him experimentally, we find all Things that the Scripture ſaith of him to be *true*; nay, and that the Reality exceeds the Report, 1 *Kings* 10. 6, 7. *John Baptiſt* was now dead and gone, and yet his Hearers *profited* by what they had heard *formerly*, and by comparing what they heard then with what they ſaw now, they gain'd a double Advantage: For, (1.) They were confirm'd in their Belief that *John was a Prophet*, who foretold ſuch Things, and ſpoke of the Eminency to which this Jeſus would arrive, tho' his Beginning was ſo ſmall. (2.) They were prepar'd to believe that *Jeſus was the Chriſt*, in whom they ſaw thoſe things accompliſh'd which *John* foretold. By this we ſee, that the Succeſs and Efficacy of the Word preach'd, is not confined to the Life of the Preacher, nor doth it expire with his Breath, but that which ſeem'd as *Water ſpilt upon the Ground*, may afterward be *gather'd up again*. See Zech. 1. 5, 6.

3. That many *believed on him* there. Believing that he who wrought ſuch Miracles, and in whom *John's* Predictions were fulfill'd, was, what he declar'd himſelf to be, the Son of God, they gave up themſelves to him as his Diſciples, *v.* 42. En Emphaſis is here to be laid, (1.) Upon the *Perſons* that believed on him, they were *many*. While they that receiv'd and embrac'd his Doctrine at *Jeruſalem* were but as the Grape-gleanings of the Vintage, they that believed on him in the Country beyond *Jordan* were a full Harveſt gathered into him. (2.) Upon the *Place* where this was, 'twas *there* where John had been preaching and baptizing, and had had great Succeſs, *there* many believed on the Lord Jeſus. Where the preaching of the Doctrine of Repentance has had Succeſs as deſired, there the preaching of the Doctrine of Reconciliation and Goſpel Grace is moſt likely to be proſperous. Where *John* has been acceptable, Jeſus will not be unacceptable. The *Jubilee* Trumpet ſounds ſweeteſt in the Ears of thoſe, who in the Day of Atonement have afflicted their Souls for Sin.

CHAP. XI.

In this Chapter we have the Hiſtory of that Illuſtrious Miracle which Chriſt wrought a little before his Death, the raiſing of Lazarus *to Life; which is recorded only by this Evangeliſt, for the other Three confine themſelves to what Chriſt did in* Galilee, *where he reſided moſt, and ſcarce ever carried their Hiſtory into* Jeruſalem *till the Paſſion Week; whereas* John's *Memoirs relate chiefly to what paſſed at* Jeruſalem; *this Paſſage threrefore was reſerv'd for his Pen. Some ſuggeſt, that when the other Evangeliſts wrote,* Lazarus *was* alive, *and it would not well agree, either with his Safety, or with his Humility, to have it recorded till now, when 'tis ſuppos'd he was dead. It is more largely recorded than any other of Chriſt's Miracles, not only becauſe there are many Circumſtances of it ſo very inſtructive, and the Miracle it ſelf ſo great a Proof of Chriſt's Miſſion, but becauſe 'twas an Earneſt of that which was to be the crowning Proof of all, Chriſt's own Reſurrection. Here's,* 1. *The Tidings ſent to our Lord Jeſus of the Sickneſs of* Lazarus, *and his Entertainment of thoſe Tidings,* v. 1—16. (2.) *The Viſit he made to* Lazarus's *Relations when he had heard of his Death, and their Entertainment of the Viſit,* v. 17.—32. (3.) *The Miracle wrought in raiſing of* Lazarus *from the dead,* v. 33——44. (4.) *The Effect wrought by this Miracle upon others,* v. 45—57.

NOW a certain man was ſick, *named* Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her ſiſter Martha. 2 (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whoſe brother Lazarus was ſick.) 3 Therefore his ſiſters ſent unto him, ſaying, Lord, behold, he whom thou loveſt, is ſick. 4 When Jeſus heard *that*, he ſaid, This ſickneſs is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. 5 Now Jeſus loved Martha, and her ſiſter, and Lazarus. 6. When he had heard therefore that he was ſick, he abode two days ſtill in the ſame place where he was. 7 Then after that, ſaith he to *his* diſciples, Let us go into Judea again. 8 *His* diſciples ſay unto him, Maſter, the Jews of late ſought to ſtone thee; and goeſt thou thither again? 9 Jeſus anſwered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he ſtumbleth not, becauſe he ſeeth the light of this world. 10 But if a man walk in the night, he ſtumbleth, becauſe there is no light in him. 11 Theſe things ſaid he: and after that, he ſaid unto them, Our friend Lazarus ſleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of ſleep. 12 Then ſaid his diſciples, Lord, if he ſleep, he ſhall do well. 13. Howbeit Jeſus ſpake of his death: but they thought that he had ſpoken of taking reſt in ſleep. 14 Then ſaid Jeſus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your ſakes, that I was not there (to the intent ye may believe) nevertheleſs, let us go unto him. 16 Then ſaid Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow diſciples, Let us alſo go, that we may die with him.

We have in theſe Verſes,

1. A particular Account of the Parties principally concerned in this Story, *v.* 1. 2. (1.) They lived at *Bethany*, a Village not far from *Jeruſalem*, where Chriſt uſually lodged when he came up to the Feaſts. 'Tis here call'd the *Town of* Mary *and* Martha, *i. e.* the Town where they dwelt, as *Bethſaida* is called the City of *Andrew* and *Peter*, *John* 1. 44. for I ſee no Reaſon to think, as ſome do, that *Martha* and *Mary* were Owners of the Town, and the reſt were *their* Tenants. (2.) Here was a Brother named *Lazarus*; his *Hebrew* Name probably was *Eleazar*, which being contracted, and a *Greek* Termination put to it, is made *Lazarus*. Perhaps in proſpect of this Hiſtory our Saviour made uſe of the name of *Lazarus* in that Parable wherein he deſigned to ſet forth the Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous in the Boſom of *Abraham* immediately after Death, *Luke* 16. 20. (3.) Here were Two Siſters, *Martha* and *Mary*, who ſeem to have been the Houſe-Keepers, and to have manag'd the Affairs of the Family, while perhaps *Lazarus* lived a retired Life, and gave himſelf to Study and Contemplation. Here was a decent, happy, well ordered Family, and a Family that Chriſt was very much converſant in, where yet there was neither Husband nor Wife, (for ought appears) but the Houſe kept by a Brother, and his Siſters dwelling together in Unity. (4.) One of the Siſters is particularly deſcribed to be *that* Mary *which anointed the Lord with Ointment*, v. 2. ſome think it was that Woman that we read of, *Luke* 7. 37, 38. who had been a *Sinner*, an *Ill Woman*. I rather think it refers to that anointing of Chriſt which this Evangeliſt relates, *chap.* 12. 3. for the Evangeliſts do never refer one to another, but *John* frequently refers in one Place of his Goſpel to another. Extraordinary Acts of Piety and Devotion, that come from an honeſt Principle of Love to Chriſt, will not only find Acceptance with him, but gain Reputation in the Church, *Mat.* 26. 13. This was ſhe *whoſe Brother* Lazarus *was ſick*; and the Sickneſs of thoſe we love is our Affliction. The more Friends we have, the more *frequently* we are thus afflicted by Sympathy; and the dearer they are, the more grievous it is. The multiplying of our Comforts, is but the multiplying of our Cares and Croſſes.

2. The Tidings that were ſent to our Lord Jeſus of the Sickneſs of *Lazarus*, v. 3. *His Siſters* knew where Jeſus was, a great Way off beyond *Jordan*, and they ſent a ſpecial Meſſenger to him to acquaint him with the Affliction of their Family. In which they manifeſt, (1.) The Affection and Concern they had for their Brother. Tho' 'tis likely his Eſtate would come to them after his Death, yet they earneſtly deſir'd his Life, as they ought to do: They ſhewed their Love to him now he was ſick, for a *Brother is born for Adverſity*, and ſo is a Siſter too. We muſt weep with our Friends when they weep, as well as rejoice with them when they rejoice. (2.) The Regard they had to the Lord Jeſus, whom they were willing to make acquainted with all their Concerns, and like *Jephtah*, to utter all their Words before him. Tho' God knows all our Wants, and Griefs, and Cares, he will know them from us, and is honoured by our laying them before him.

The Meſſage they ſent was very ſhort, not *petitioning*, much leſs *preſcribing* or *preſſing*, but barely relating the Caſe with the tender Inſinuation of a powerful Plea, *Lord, behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick.* They do not ſay, he whom *we* love, but whom *thou* loveſt. Our greateſt Encouragements in Prayer are fetched from God himſelf, and from his Grace. They do not ſay, Lord, behold he *who loveth thee*, but whom *thou loveſt*; for herein is Love, not that we *loved God*, but that he *loved us*: Our Love to him is not worth ſpeaking of, but his to us can never be enough ſpoken of. *Note*, 1. There are ſome of the Friends and Followers of the Lord Jeſus whom he hath a ſpecial Kindneſs for above others. Among the Twelve there was one *whom Jeſus* loved. 2. It is no new Thing for thoſe whom Chriſt loves to be ſick; all Things come alike to all; bodily Diſtempers correct the Corruptions, and try the Graces of God's People. 3. It is a great Comfort to us when we are ſick, to have thoſe about us that will pray for us. 4. We have great Encouragement in our Prayers for thoſe who are ſick, if we have ground to hope that they are ſuch as Chriſt loves; and we have reaſon to love and pray for thoſe whom we have reaſon to think Chriſt loves and cares for.

3. An Account how Chriſt entertained the Tidings brought him of the Illneſs of his Friend.

1. He prognoſticated the Event and Iſſue of the Sickneſs, and probably ſent it as a Meſſage to the Siſters of *Lazarus* by the Expreſs, to ſupport them while he delay'd to come to them. Two Things he prognoſticates.

1. This *Sickneſs is not unto Death*; it was mortal, prov'd *fatal*, and no doubt but *Lazarus* was truly dead for four Days. But, (1.) That was not the *Errand* upon which this Sickneſs was ſent; it came not as in a common Caſe to be a Summons to the Grave, but there was a further Intention in it. Had it been ſent on that Errand, his *riſing from the Dead would have defeated it.* (2.) That was not the final Effect of this Sickneſs. He *dy'd*, and yet it might be ſaid he did not *die*, for *factum non dicitur quod non perſeverat.*

Death is an everlaſting Farewel to this World, 'tis the Way whence we ſhall not return; and in this Senſe it was *not unto Death.* The Grave was not his *long Home*, his *Houſe of Eternity.* Thus Chriſt ſaid of the Maid, whom he purpoſed to reſtore to Life, *She is not dead.* The Sickneſs of good People, how threatning ſoever, is *not unto Death*, for it is not to *eternal* Death. The Body's Death to this World is the Soul's Birth into another World; when we or our Friends are ſick, we make it our principal Support, that there is Hopes of a Recovery, but in that we may be diſappointed, therefore it's our Wiſdom to build upon that in which we cannot be diſappointed; if they belong to Chriſt, let the worſt come to the worſt, they cannot be *hurt of the ſecond Death*, and then not much hurt of the firſt.

(2.) But *it is for the Glory of God*, that an Opportunity may be given for the manifeſting of God's glorious Power. The Afflictions of the Saints are deſign'd for the Glory of God, that he may have Opportunity of ſhewing them Favour; for the ſweeteſt Mercies, and the moſt affecting, are thoſe which are occaſion'd by Trouble. Let this reconcile us to the darkeſt Diſpenſations of Providence, they are all for the Glory of God, this Sickneſs, this Loſs, this Diſappointment, is ſo; and if God be glorified, we ought to be ſatisfied, *Lev.* 10. 3. 'Twas for the Glory of God, for it was *that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*, as it gave him Occaſion to work that glorious Miracle, the *raiſing him from the Dead.* As before the Man was *born blind*, that Chriſt might have the Honour of curing him, *John* 9. 3. So *Lazarus* muſt be ſick and die, that Chriſt may be glorified as the Lord of Life. Let this comfort thoſe whom Chriſt loves under all their Grievances, that the Deſign of them all is, that *the Son of God might be glorified thereby*, his Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs glorified in ſupporting and relieving them; ſee 2 *Cor.* 12. 9, 10.

2. He defer'd viſiting his Patient, *v.* 5. 6. They had pleaded, *Lord, it is he whom thou loveſt*, and the Plea is allowed, *v.* 5. *Jeſus loved* Martha *and her Siſter, and* Lazarus. Thus the Claims of Faith are ratified in the Court of Heaven; now one would think it ſhould follow, *when he heard therefore that he was ſick*, he made all the haſte that he could to him; if he lov'd them, now was a time to ſhew it by haſtening to *them*, for he knew they impatiently expected him. But he took the contrary way to ſhew his Love; 'tis not ſaid he lov'd them, and *yet* he lingered, but he lov'd them, and *therefore* he lingered; when he heard his Friend was ſick, inſtead of coming poſt to him, he abode *two Days ſtill in the ſame Place where he was.* (1.) He *loved them*, i. e. had a great Opinion of *Martha* and *Mary*, of their Wiſdom and Grace, of their Faith and Patience, above others of his Diſciples, and therefore he defer'd coming to them, that he might try them, that their Trial might at laſt *be found to Praiſe and Honour.* (2.) He *loved them*, i. e. he deſign'd to do ſomething great and extraordinary for them, to work ſuch a Miracle for their Relief, as he had not wrought for any of his Friends; and therefore he delay'd coming to them, that *Lazarus* might be *dead* and *bury'd* before he came. If Chriſt had come preſently, and cured the Sickneſs of *Lazarus*, he had done no more than he did for *many*; if he had rais'd him to Life when newly dead, no more than he had done for ſome; but deferring his Relief ſo long, he had an Opportunity of doing more for him than for *any.* *Note*, God hath gracious Intentions even in ſeeming Delays, *Iſa.* 54. 7, 8. and 49. 14. Chriſt's Friends at *Bethany* were not out of his Thoughts, tho' when he heard of their Diſtreſs, he made no haſte to them. When the Work of Deliverance, temporal or ſpiritual, publick or perſonal, ſtands at a Stay, it doth but ſtay the Time, and *every thing is beautiful in its Seaſon.*

4. The Diſcourſe he had with his Diſciples, when he was about to go viſit his Friends at *Bethany*, v. 7—10. And the Conference is ſo very free and familiar, as to make out what Chriſt ſaith, *I have called you Friends.*

Two Things he diſcourſes about, his own *Danger*, and *Lazarus*'s Death.

Firſt, His own *Danger* in going into *Judea*, v. 7—10.

1. Here's the Notice which Chriſt gave his Diſciples of his Purpoſe to go into *Judea* towards *Jeruſalem.* His Diſciples were the Men of his Counſel, and to them he ſaith, *v.* 7. *Let us go into* Judea *again*, tho' they there are unworthy of ſuch a Favour. Thus Chriſt repeats the Tenders of his Mercy to thoſe that have oft rejected them. Now this may be conſidered, (1.) As a Purpoſe of his Kindneſs to his Friends at *Bethany*, whoſe Affliction, and all the aggravating Circumſtances of it he knew very well, tho' no more Expreſſes was ſent to him; for he was preſent in Spirit, tho' abſent in Body. When he knew they were brought to the laſt Extremity, when the Brother and Siſters have given and taken a final Farewel; now, ſaith he, let us go to *Judea.* Chriſt will ariſe in Favour of his People, when *the time to favour them*, yea *the ſet time* is *come*, and the worſt time is commonly the ſet time. When *our Hope is loſt, we are cut off for our part*, then they ſhall *know that I am the Lord*, when *I have open'd the Grave*, Ezek. 37. 11, 13. In the Depths of Affliction, let this therefore keep us out of the Depths of Deſpair, that Man's *Extremity* is God's *Opportunity*, *Jehovah-jireh.* Or, (2.) As a Trial of the Courage of the Diſciples, whether they would venture to follow him thither, where they had ſo lately been frightened with an Attempt upon their Maſter's Life, which they look'd upon as an Attempt upon theirs too. To go to *Judea*, which was ſo lately made *too hot* for them, was a ſaying that *prov'd them.* But Chriſt did not ſay, *Go ye into* Judea, and I will ſtay and take Shelter here; no, *Let us go.* *Note*, Chriſt never brings his People into any Peril, but he accompanies them in it; and is with them, even then when they *walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.*

2. Their Objection againſt this Journey, *v.* 18. *Maſter, the* Jews *of late ſought to ſtone thee, and goeſt thou thither again?* Here, 1. They mind him of the Danger he had been in there not long ſince. Chriſt's Diſciples are apt to make a greater Matter of Sufferings than their Maſter doth, and to remember Injuries longer. He had put up the Affront, 'twas over and gone, and forgotten, but his Diſciples could not forget it, *of late*, νῦν, *Now*, as if it were this very Day, they *ſought to ſtone thee.* Tho' it was at leaſt two Months ago, the Remembrance of the Fright was freſh in their Minds. 2. They marvel he will *go thither again.* Wilt thou favour thoſe with thy Preſence, that have expell'd thee out of their Coaſts? Chriſt's Ways in paſſing by Offences are *above our Ways.* Wilt thou expoſe thy ſelf among a People that are ſo deſperately enraged againſt thee? *Goeſt thou thither again*, where thou haſt been ſo ill us'd? Here they ſhew'd great Care for their Maſter's Safety, as *Peter* did, when he ſaid, *Maſter, ſpare thy ſelf*; had Chriſt been minded to ſhift off ſuffering, he did not want Friends to perſwade him to it; but he had *opened his Mouth to the Lord*, and he would not, he could not go back. Yet while the Diſciples ſhew a Concern for his Safety, they diſcover at the ſame time, (1.) A Diſtruſt of his Power; as if he could not ſecure both himſelf and them now in *Judea*, as well as he had done formerly. Is his Arm waxen ſhort? When we are ſollicitous for the Intereſts of Chriſt's Church and Kingdom in the World, yet we muſt reſt ſatisfied in the Wiſdom and Power of the Lord Jeſus, who knows how to ſecure a Flock of Sheep in the midſt of a Herd of Wolves. (2.) A ſecret Fear of ſuffering themſelves, for they count upon that if he ſuffer. When our own private Intereſts happen to run in the ſame Channel with the Publick, we are apt to think our ſelves zealous for the Lord of Hoſts, when really we are only jealous for our own Wealth, Credit, Eaſe and Safety, and ſeek *our own Things*, under Colour and Umbrage of ſeeking the Things of Chriſt, we have therefore need nicely to diſtinguiſh upon our Principles.

3. Chriſt's Anſwer to this Objection, *v.* 9, 10. *Are there not twelve Hours in the Day?* The *Jews* divided every Day into twelve Hours, and made their Hours longer or ſhorter, according as the Days were, ſo that an Hour with them was a twelfth Part of the Time between Sun and Sun; ſo ſome. Or, they lying much more South than we, their Days were nearer twelve Hours long than ours. The Divine Providence has given us *Day-light* to work by, and lengthens it out to a competent Time; and reckoning the Year round, *every Country* has juſt as much *Day-light* as *Night*, and ſo much more as the *Twilights* amount to. Man's Life is a *Day*, this Day is divided into divers Ages, States, and Opportunities, as into Hours, ſhorter or longer, as God has appointed; the Conſideration of this ſhould make us not only *very buſy*, as to the *Work* of Life; if there were *twelve Hours in the Day*, each of them ought to be fill'd up with Duty, and none of *them* trifled away; but alſo *very eaſy* as to the Perils of Life; our Day ſhall be lengthen'd out till our Work be done, and our Teſtimony finiſh'd. This Chriſt applies to his Caſe, and ſhews why he muſt go to *Judea*, becauſe he had a *clear Call* to go. For the opening of this,

1. He ſhews the Comfort and Satisfaction which a Man has in his own Mind, while he keeps in the Way of his Duty, as it is in general preſcrib'd by the Word of God, and particularly determin'd by the Providence of God: *If any Man walk in the Day, he ſtumbles not*; that is, if a Man keep cloſe to his Duty, and mind that, and ſet the Will of God before him as his Rule, with an impartial Reſpect to all God's Commandments, he doth not *heſitate* in his own Mind, but *walking uprightly, walks ſurely*, and with a holy Confidence. As he that walks in the Day ſtumbles not, but goes on ſteddily and chearfully in his Way, *becauſe he ſees the Light of this World*, and by it ſees his Way before him; ſo a good Man, without any collateral Security, or ſiniſter Aims, relies upon the Word of God as his Rule, and regards the Glory of God as his End, *becauſe he ſees* thoſe two great Lights, and keeps his Eye upon them, he is furniſhed with a faithful Guide in all his Doubts, and a powerful Guard in all his Dangers, *Gal.* 6. 4. *Pſal.* 119. 6. Chriſt, where-ever he went, walk'd *in the Day*, and ſo ſhall we if we follow his Steps.

2. He ſhews the Pain and Peril a Man is in, who walks not according to this Rule, *v.* 10. *If a Man walk in the Night he ſtumbles.* If a Man walk in the Way of his Heart, and the Sight of his Eyes, and according to the Courſe of this World, if he conſult his own carnal Reaſonings more than the Will and Glory of God, he falls into Temptations and Snares, is liable to great Uneaſineſſes, and frightful Apprehenſions; trembles at the *ſhaking of a Leaf*, and *flees* when none *purſues*; while an upright Man *laughs at the ſhaking of a Spear*, and ſtands undaunted when ten thouſand invade. See *Pſal.* 33. 14, 15, 16. He ſtumbles, *becauſe there is no Light in him*; for Light *in us* is that to our Moral Actions, which light about us is to our natural Actions. He has not a good Principle within; he is not ſincere; his Eye is evil. Thus Chriſt not only juſtifies his Purpoſe of going into *Judea*, but encourageth his Diſciples to go along with him, and fear no Evil.

Secondly, The Death of *Lazarus* is here diſcourſed of between Chriſt and his Diſciples, *v.* 11, 16. Where we have,

1. The Notice Chriſt gave his Diſciples of the Death of *Lazarus*, and an Intimation that his Buſineſs into *Judea* was to look after him, *v.* 11. *After* he had prepared his Diſciples for this dangerous March into an Enemies Country, he then gives them,

1. Plain Intelligence of the Death of *Lazarus*, tho' he had received no Advice of it; *Our Friend* Lazarus *ſleepeth*. See here how Chriſt calls a Believer, and a Beliver's Death. 1. He calls a Believer his Friend; *Our Friend* Lazarus. *Note*, (1.) There is a Covenant of Friendſhip between Chriſt and Believers, and a friendly Affection and Communion purſuant to it, which our Lord Jeſus will own and not be aſhamed of. *His ſecret is with the Righteous.* (2.) Thoſe whom Chriſt is pleas'd to own as his Friends, all his Diſciples ſhould take for theirs. Chriſt ſpeaks of *Lazarus* as their common Friend: *Our Friend.* (3.) Death it ſelf doth not break the Bond of Friendſhip between Chriſt and a Believer. *Lazarus* is dead, and yet he is ſtill *our Friend.* 2. He calls the Death of a Believer a *Sleep*; *he ſleepeth.* 'Tis good to call Death by ſuch Names and Titles as will help to make it more *familiar* and leſs *formidable* to us. The Death of *Lazarus* was in a peculiar Senſe a *Sleep*, as that of *Jairus*'s Daughter, becauſe they were to be rais'd again *ſpeedily*; and ſince we are ſure to *riſe again at laſt*, why ſhould that make any great difference? And why ſhould not the believing Hope of that Reſurrection to Eternal Life make it upon this Matter as eaſy to us to put off the Body and die, as it is to put off our Cloaths and go ſleep? A good Chriſtian when he *dies* doth but *ſleep*: He *reſts* from the Labours of the Day paſt, and is refreſhing himſelf for the next Morning. Nay, herein *Death* has the Advantage of *Sleep*, that Sleep is only the *Parentheſis*, but Death is the *Period* of our Care and Toils. The Soul doth not ſleep but becomes more active; but the Body ſleeps without any Toſs, without any Terror; not diſtemper'd nor diſturb'd. The Grave to the Wicked is a Priſon, and its Grave-cloaths as the Shackle of a Criminal reſerv'd for Execution; but to the Godly it is a Bed, and all its Bands as the ſoft and downy Fetters of an eaſy quiet Sleep. Tho' the Body *corrupt*, 'twill riſe in the Morning as if it never had ſeen Corruption; 'tis but putting off our Cloaths to be mended and trim'd up for the Marriage Day, the Coronation Day, to which we muſt riſe. See *Iſa.* 57. 2. 1 *Theſ.* 4. 14. The *Greeks* call'd their Burying-places, *Dormitories*, κοιμητήρια.

2. Particular Intimations of his favourable Intentions concerning *Lazarus*; but I *go that I may awake him out of ſleep.* He could have done it, and yet have ſtay'd where he was; he that recover'd at a diſtance one *dying*, John 4. 50. cou'd have rais'd at a diſtance one *dead*; but he would put this Honour upon the Miracle to work it by the Grave-ſide, *I go to awake him.* As Sleep is a Reſemblance of Death, ſo a Man's awaking out of Sleep when he is called, eſpecially when he is called by his own Name, is an Emblem of the Reſurrection, *Job* 14. 14. *Then ſhalt thou call.* Chriſt had no ſooner ſaid, our Friend ſleeps, but preſently he adds, *I go that I may awake him.* When Chriſt tells his People at any Time how bad the Caſe is, he lets them know in the ſame Breath how eaſily, how quickly he can mend it. Chriſt's telling his Diſciples that this was his Buſineſs to *Judea*, might help to take off their Fear of going with him thither; he did not go upon a publick Errand to the Temple, but a private Viſit, which would not ſo much expoſe him and them; and beſides it was to do a Kindneſs to a Family they were all obliged to.

2. Their Miſtake of the Meaning of this Notice, and the Blunder they made about it, *v.* 12, 13. They ſaid, *Lord, if he ſleep he ſhall do well.* This ſpeaks,

(1.) *Some Concern* they had for their Friend *Lazarus*, they hoped he would recover, σωθήσεται He *ſhall be ſaved* from dying at this Time. Probably they had underſtood by the Meſſenger who brought News of his Illneſs, that one of the moſt threatning Symptoms he was under, was, that he was reſtleſs and could get no Sleep; and now they heard he ſlept, they concluded the Fever was gone off, and the worſt was paſt. Sleep is often Nature's Phyſick, and reviving to its weak and weary Powers. This is true of the Sleep of Death; if a good Chriſtian ſo *ſleep*, he ſhall do well, better than he did here.

(2.) Yet it ſpeaks a *greater Concern* for themſelves, for hereby they inſinuate that it was now needleſs for him to go to him, and expoſe himſelf and them. If he ſleep he will be quickly well, and we may ſtay where we are. Thus we are willing to hope that good Work which we are called to do will do it ſelf, or will be done by ſome other Hand, if there be Peril in the doing of it.

This Miſtake of theirs is here rectified, *v.* 13. *Jeſus ſpake of his Death.* See here, 1. How dull of Underſtanding Chriſt's Diſciples as yet were. Let us not therefore condemn all thoſe for Hereticks, who miſtake the Senſe of ſome of Chriſt's Sayings. 'Tis not good to aggravate our Brethren's Miſtakes, yet this was a *groſs* one; for it had eaſily been prevented, if they had remember'd how frequently Death is called a Sleep in the Old Teſtament. They ſhould have underſtood Chriſt when he ſpoke Scripture Language. Beſides it would ſound odd for their Maſter to undertake a Journey of Two or Three Days only to awake a Friend out of a natural Sleep, which any one elſe might awake him out of. What Chriſt undertakes to do, we may be ſure is ſomething great and uncommon, and a Work *worthy of himſelf.* 2. How carefully the Evangeliſt corrects this Error; *Jeſus ſpake of his Death.* Thoſe that ſpeak in an unknown Tongue, or uſe Similitudes, ſhould learn hence to *explain themſelves*, and pray that they may interpret to prevent Miſtakes.

3. The plain and expreſs Declaration which Jeſus made to them of the Death of *Lazarus*, and his Reſolution to go to *Bethany*, v. 14, 15.

(1.) He gives them Notice of the Death of *Lazarus*; what he had before ſaid *darkly* he now ſaith *plainly*, and without a Figure; *Lazarus is dead*, v. 14. Chriſt takes cognizance of the Death of his Saints, for 'tis *precious in* his Sight, *Pſal.* 116. 15. and is not pleaſed if we do not conſider it, and lay it to Heart. See what a compaſſionate Teacher Chriſt is, and how he condeſcends to thoſe that are out of the Way; and by his ſubſequent Sayings and Doings explains the Difficulties of what went before.

(2.) He gives them the Reaſon why he had delay'd ſo long to go and ſee him; *I am glad for your ſakes that I was not there.* If he had been there Time enough he would have healed his Diſeaſe, and prevented his Death, which would have been much for the Comfort of *Lazarus*'s Friends, but then his Diſciples would have ſeen no further Proof of his Power than what they had often ſeen, and conſequently their Faith had received no Improvement; but now he went and raiſed him from the Dead; as there were many brought to *believe on him* who before did not, *v.* 45. ſo there was much done towards perfecting of what was lacking *in the Faith* of thoſe that did, which Chriſt aim'd at, *to the Intent that yea may believe.*

(3.) He reſolves now to go to *Bethany*, and take his Diſciples along with him, *Let us go unto him.* Not let us go to his Siſters to comfort them, which is the utmoſt we can do, but let us go *to him*; for Chriſt can *ſhew Wonders to the dead.* Death, which will ſeparate us from all our other Friends, and cuts us off from correſpondence with them, yet cannot ſeparate us from the Love of Chriſt, nor put us out of the reach of his Calls; as he will maintain his *Covenant with Duſt*, ſo he can make Viſits to the Duſt. *Lazarus is dead*, but *let us go to him*; tho' perhaps thoſe who ſaid, if he ſleep, there's *no need* to go, were ready to ſay, if he be dead 'tis to *no purpoſe* to go.

4. *Thomas* exciting his Fellow Diſciples, chearfully to attend their Maſter's Motions. *v.* 16. *Thomas which was called* Didymus. *Thomas* in *Hebrew*, and *Didymus* in *Greek* ſignify a *Twin*; 'tis ſaid of *Rebekah*, Gen. 25. 24. that there were *Twins in her Womb*. The Word is *Thomim*; probably *Thomas* was a Twin; he ſaid *to his Fellow Diſciples*, who probably look'd with Fear and Concern upon one another; when Chriſt ſaid ſo poſitively, *Let us go to him*; he ſaid very couragiouſly, *Let us alſo go that we may die with him.* With him, That is,

1. With *Lazarus*, who was now dead; ſo ſome take it. *Lazarus* was a dear and loving Friend both to Chriſt and his Diſciples, and perhaps *Thomas* had a particular Intimacy with him. Now if he be dead, ſaith he, *Let us* e'en *go and die with him.* For, (1.) If we *ſurvive* we know not how to *live without him.* Probably *Lazarus* had done them many good Offices, ſheltered them, and provided for them, and been to them *inſtead of Eyes*; and now he was gone, they had *no Man like minded*, and therefore, ſaid he, we had as good die with him. Thus we are ſometimes ready to think our Lives bound up in the Lives of ſome that were dear to us; but God will teach us to live, and to live comfortably upon himſelf, when thoſe are gone whom we thought we could not have lived without. But that is not all. (2.) If we die we hope to be *happy with him.* Such a firm Belief he has of a Happineſs on t'other Side Death, and ſuch good Hope through Grace of their own and *Lazarus*'s Intereſt in it, that he is willing they ſhould all go and *die with him.* 'Tis better die and go along with our Chriſtian Friends to that World which is enrich'd by their Removal to it, than ſtay behind in a World that's impoveriſh'd by their Departure out of it. The more of our Friends are traſlated hence, the fewer Cords we have to bind us to this Earth, and the more to draw our Hearts Heaven-wards. How pleaſantly doth the good Man ſpeak of dying, as if 'twere but *undreſſing and going to Bed.*

2. Let us go and die *with our Maſter*, who is now expoſing himſelf to Death by venturing into *Judea*, and ſo I rather think it is meant. If he will *go into* danger, let us *alſo go* and take our Lot with him, according to the Command we receiv'd, *follow me.* *Thomas* knew ſo much of the Malice of the *Jews* againſt him, and the Counſels of God concerning him, which he had often told them of, that it was no foreign Suppoſition that he was now going to die. And now *Thomas* diſcovers, (1.) A gracious Readineſs to die with Chriſt himſelf, flowing from ſtrong Affections to him, tho' his Faith was weak, as appear'd afterwards, *chap.* 14. 5. and 20. 25. *Where thou dieſt I will die*, Ruth 1. 17. (2.) A zealous Deſire to help his Fellow Diſciples into the ſame frame, *Let us go*, one and all, and *die with him*; if they ſtone him, let them ſtone us; who would deſire to ſurvive ſuch a Maſter? Thus in difficult Times Chriſtians ſhould animate one another. We may each of us ſay, *Let us die with him.* *Note*, The Conſideration of the dying of the Lord Jeſus, ſhould make us willing to die whenever God calls for us.

17 Then when Jeſus came, he found that he had lien in the grave four days already. 18 (Now Bethany was nigh unto Jeruſalem, about fifteen furlongs off.) 19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their Brother. 20 Then Martha as ſoon as ſhe heard that Jeſus was coming, went and met him: but Mary ſat *ſtill* in the houſe. 21 Then ſaid Martha unto Jeſus, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my brother had not died. 22 But I know, that even now whatſoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give *it* thee. 23 Jeſus ſaith unto her, thy brother ſhall riſe again. 24 Martha ſaith unto him, I know that he ſhall riſe again in the reſurrection at the laſt day. 25 Jeſus ſaid unto her, I am the reſurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live; 26 And whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die. Believeſt thou this? 27 She ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God, which ſhould come into the world. 28 And when ſhe had ſo ſaid, ſhe went her way, and called Mary her Siſter ſecretly, ſaying the Maſter is come and calleth for thee. 29 As ſoon as ſhe heard *that*, ſhe aroſe quickly and came unto him. 30 Now Jeſus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him. 31 The Jews then which were with her in the houſe, and comforted her, when they ſaw Mary that ſhe roſe up haſtily, and went out, followed her, ſaying, She goeth unto the grave, to weep there. 32 Then when Mary was come where Jeſus was, and ſaw him, ſhe fell down at his feet, ſaying unto him, Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my Brother had not died.

The Matter being determined that Chriſt will go to *Judea*, and his Diſciples with him, they addreſs themſelves to their Journey; and in this Journey ſome Paſſages happen'd, which the other Evangeliſts record, as the healing of the blind Man at *Jericho*, and the Converſion of *Zacheus*. We muſt not reckon our ſelves out of our Way, while we are in the way of doing good; nor be ſo intent upon one good Office as to neglect another.

At length he comes near to *Bethany*, which is ſaid to be about *Fifteen Furlongs* off from *Jeruſalem*, about two meaſured Miles, *v.* 18. Notice is taken of this, that this Miracle was in effect wrought in *Jeruſalem*, and ſo was put to her ſcore. Chriſt's Miracles in *Galilee* were more *numerous*, but thoſe in or near *Jeruſalem* were more *illuſtrious*; there he healed one that had been diſeaſed *Thirty Eight Years*, another that had been blind *from his Birth*, and raiſed one that had been dead *four Days*. To *Bethany* Chriſt came, and obſerve,

Firſt, What Poſture he found his Friends there in. When he had been laſt with them, 'tis likely he left them well, in Health and Joy; but when we part from our Friends, (tho' Chriſt knew) we know not what Changes may be concerning us or them before we meet again.

1. He found his Friend *Lazarus* in the *Grave*, v. 17. When he came near the Town, probably by the burying Place belonging to the Town, he was told by the Neighbours, or ſome he met, that *Lazarus* had been *four Days buried*. Some think *Lazarus* died the ſame Day that the Meſſenger came to Jeſus with the Tidings of his Sickneſs, and ſo reckon two Days for his abode in the ſame Place, and two Days for his Journey. I rather think that *Lazarus* died at that very Inſtant that Jeſus ſaid, *Our Friend ſleepeth*, he is now newly fallen aſleep; and the Time between his Death and Burial (which among the *Jews* was but ſhort) with the four Days of his lying in the Grave were taken up in this Journey; for Chriſt travelled publickly, as appears by his paſſing thro' *Jericho*, and his abode at *Zacheus*'s Houſe took up ſome time. Promiſed Salvations tho' they always come ſurely, yet they often come ſlowly.

2. He found his Friends that ſurviv'd *in Grief*. *Martha* and *Mary* were almoſt ſwallowed up with Sorrow for the Death of their Brother, which is intimated, where it is ſaid, that *many of the* Jews *came to* Martha *and* Mary *to comfort them*. *Note*, 1. Ordinarily where Death is there are *Mourners*, eſpecially when thoſe that were agreeable and amiable to their Relations, and ſerviceable to their Generation, are taken away. The Houſe where Death is, is called *the Houſe of Mourning*, Eccl. 7. 2. When a Man goes to his long Home, the *Mourners go about the Streets*, Eccl. 12. 5. or rather ſit alone, and *keep ſilence*. Here was *Martha*'s Houſe a Houſe where the fear of God was, and on which his Bleſſing reſted, yet made a *Houſe of Mourning*. Grace will keep *Sorrow from the Heart*, John 14. 1. not *from the Houſe*. 2. Where there are *Mourners*, there ought to be Comforters. 'Tis a Duty we owe to thoſe that are in Sorrow, to mourn with them, and to comfort them; and our Mourning with them will be ſome Comfort to them. When we are under the preſent Impreſſions of Grief, we are apt to forget thoſe Things which would miniſter Comfort to us, and therefore have need of Rememberancers: 'Tis a Mercy to have ſuch when we are in Sorrow, and our Duty to be ſuch to them who are in Sorrow. The *Jewiſh* Doctors laid great Streſs upon this, obliging their Diſciples to make Conſcience of *comforting* the *Mourners* after the burial of the Dead. They comforted them *concerning their Brother*, i. e. by ſpeaking to them of him, not only of the good Name he left behind, but the happy State he was gone to. When godly Relations and Friends are taken from us, whatever occaſion we have to be afflicted concerning our ſelves, who are *left behind*, and *miſs them*, we have reaſon to be *comforted concerning them*, who are gone before us to a Happineſs where they have no miſs of us.

This Viſit which the *Jews* made to *Martha* and *Mary*, is an Evidence that they were Perſons of Diſtinction, and made a Figure; as alſo that they carried themſelves obligingly to all; ſo that tho' they were Followers of Chriſt, yet thoſe that had no reſpect for him, were civil to them. There was alſo a Providence in it, that ſo many *Jews*, *Jewiſh* Ladies 'tis probable, ſhould come together juſt at this Time to comfort the Mourners, that they might be unacceptionable Witneſſes of the Miracle; and ſee what miſerable Comforters they were in compariſon with Chriſt. Chriſt did not uſe to ſend for Witneſſes to his Miracles, and yet if none were by but Relations, it wou'd have been excepted againſt, therefore God's Counſel ſo order'd it, that theſe ſhould come together accidentally to bear their Teſtimony to it, that all Infidelity might ſtop her Mouth.

Secondly, What paſſed between him and his ſurviving Friends at this Interview. When Chriſt defers his Viſits for a time, they are thereby made the more acceptable, much the more welcome; ſo it was here; His Departures endear his Returns, and his Abſence teacheth us how to value his Preſence.

1. We have here the Interview between him and *Martha*; ſhe *went and met him*, v. 20.

1. It ſhould ſeem that *Martha* was earneſtly expecting Chriſt's Arrival, and enquiring for it: Either ſhe had ſent out Meſſengers to bring her Tidings of his firſt Approach, or ſhe had ſo often ask'd, *ſaw ye him whom my Soul loveth*? that the firſt who diſcover'd him ran to her with the welcome News. However it was, ſhe heard of his coming before he was come. She had waited long, and often ask'd, *Is he come?* And could hear no Tidings of him; but long look'd for came at laſt: At the End the Viſion will *ſpeak and not lie*.

2. *Martha*, when the good News was brought that Jeſus was coming, threw all aſide, and *went and met him*, in token of a moſt affectionate welcome. She wav'd all Ceremony and Compliment to the *Jews* who came to viſit her, and haſten to go *meet Jeſus*. *Note*, When God by his Grace or Providence is coming towards us in Ways of Mercy and Comfort, we ſhould go forth by Faith, Hope, and Prayer, to meet him. Some ſuggeſt that *Martha* went out of the Town to meet Jeſus, to let him know there were ſeveral *Jews* in the Houſe who were no Friends to him, that if he pleas'd he might keep out of the way of them.

3. When *Martha* went to meet Jeſus, *Mary ſat ſtill in the Houſe*. Some think ſhe did not hear the Tidings, being in her withdrawing Room, receving Viſits of Condolence, while *Martha* who was buſied in the Houſhold-Affairs, had early notice of it. Perhaps *Martha* would not tell her Siſter that Chriſt was coming, being ambitious of the Honour of receiving him firſt. *Sancta eſt prudentia clam fratribus clam parentibus ad Chriſtum ſeſe conferre.* Maldonat. in loc. Others think ſhe did hear that Chriſt was come but was ſo everwhelm'd with Sorrow, that ſhe did not care for ſtirring, chuſing rather to indulge her Sorrow, and to ſit poring upon her Affliction, and ſaying, *I do well to* mourn. Comparing this Story with that, *Luke* 10. 38, 39. we may obſerve the different Tempers of theſe two Siſters, and the Temptations and Advantages of each; *Martha*'s natural Temper was active and buſie, ſhe lov'd to be here and there, and at the End of every Thing; and this had been a Snare to her, when by it ſhe was not only careful, and cumber'd about many Things, but hindered from the Exerciſes of Devotion; but now in a Day of Affliction, this active Temper did her a Kindneſs, kept the Grief from her Heart, and made her forward to meet Chriſt, and ſo ſhe receiv'd Comfort from him the ſooner. On the other hand, *Mary*'s natural Temper was *Contemplative* and Reſerv'd; this had been formerly an Advantage to her, when it ſet her at Chriſt's Feet to hear his Word and enable her there to attend upon him without thoſe Diſtractions which *Martha* was cumbered with: But now in the Day of Affliction, that ſame Temper prov'd a Snare to her, and made her leſs able to grapple with her Grief, and diſpos'd her to Melancholly; but *Mary ſat ſtill in the Houſe*. See here how much it will be our Wiſdom carefully to watch againſt the Temptations and improve the Advantages of our natural Temper.

Here is fully related the Diſcourſe between Chriſt and *Martha*.

Firſt, *Martha*'s Addreſs to Chriſt, *v.* 21, 22.

1. She complains of Chriſt's long Abſence and Delay. She ſaid it, not only with Grief for the Death of her Brother, but ſome Reſentment of the ſeeming Unkindneſs of the Maſter; *Lord, if thou hadſt been here my Brother had not dy'd.* Here is, 1. Some Evidence of Faith. She believ'd Chriſt's *Power*, that tho' her Brother's

ther's Sickneſs was very grievous, yet he could have cur'd it, and ſo have prevented his Death; ſhe believ'd his *Pity*, that if he had but ſeen *Lazarus* in his extreme Illneſs, and his dear Relations all in Tears about him, he would have had Compaſſion, and prevented ſo ſad a Breach, for his Compaſſions fail not. But, 2. Here are ſad Inſtances of Unbelief. Her Faith was true, but weak as a bruiſed Reed, for ſhe limits the Power of Chriſt, in ſaying, *If thou hadſt been here*; whereas ſhe ought to have known that Chriſt could cure at a diſtance, and his gracious Operations are not limited to his bodily Preſence. She reflects likewiſe upon the Wiſdom and Kindneſs of Chriſt, that he did not haſten to them when they ſent for him, as if he had not *timed his Buſineſs* well, and now might have as good ſtaid away, and not have come at all as to come too late; and as for any Help now, ſhe can ſcarce entertain the Thought of it.

2. Yet ſhe corrects and comforts herſelf with the Thoughts of the prevailing Intereſt Chriſt had in Heaven, however ſhe blames herſelf for blaming her Maſter, and for ſuggeſting that he comes too late, for *I know that even now*, as deſperate as the Caſe is, *whatſoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.* Obſerve, 1. How *willing* her Hope was. Tho' ſhe has not Courage to ask of Jeſus that he ſhould raiſe him to Life again, there having been no Precedent as yet of any one rais'd to Life that had been ſo long dead, yet like a modeſt Petitioner, ſhe humbly recommends the Caſe to the wiſe and compaſſionate Conſideration of the Lord Jeſus. When we know not what in particular to ask or expect, let us in general refer our ſelves to God, let him do as ſeemeth him good. *Judicii tui eſt, non præſumptionis meæ.* Aug. in loc. When we know not what to pray for, it is our Comfort that the great Interceſſor knows what to ask for us, and is always heard. 2. How *weak* her Faith was. She ſhould have ſaid, Lord, thou canſt do whatſoever thou wilt, but ſhe only ſaith, thou canſt obtain whatever thou prayeſt for; ſhe had forgot that the Son has *Life in himſelf*, that he wrought Miracles by his own Power. Yet both theſe Conſiderations muſt be taken in for the Encouragement of our Faith and Hope, and neither excluded; the Dominion Chriſt has on Earth, and his Intereſt and Interceſſion in Heaven: He has in the one Hand the Golden Scepter, and in the other the Golden Cenſer; his Power always predominant, his Interceſſion always prevalent.

Secondly, The comfortable Word which Chriſt gave to *Martha*, in anſwer to her pathetical Addreſs, *v.* 23. *Jeſus ſaith unto her, Thy Brother ſhall riſe again. Martha* in her Complaint look'd back, reflecting with Regret, *that Chriſt was not there*, for then thinks ſhe, my Brother had been now alive; we are apt in ſuch Caſes to add to our own Trouble, by fancying what *might have been.* If ſuch a Method had been taken, ſuch a Phyſician employ'd, my Friend had not died, which is more than we know; but what good doth this do, when God's Will is done, and our Buſineſs is to ſubmit to it; but Chriſt directs *Martha*, and us in her, to look forwards, and to think what *ſhall be*, for that's a Certainty, and yields ſure Comfort, *Thy Brother ſhall riſe again.*

1. This was true of *Lazarus* in a Senſe peculiar to him; he was now preſently to be rais'd, but Chriſt ſpeaks of it in general as a Thing to be done, not which he himſelf would do, ſo humbly did our Lord Jeſus ſpeak of what he did. He alſo expreſſeth it *ambiguouſly*, leaving her uncertain at firſt, whether he would raiſe him preſently or not till the laſt Day, that he might try her Faith and Patience,

2. It is applicable to all the Saints, and their Reſurrection at the laſt Day. *Note*, It is a Matter of Comfort to us when we have buried our godly Friends and Relations, to think that they ſhall *riſe again.* As the Soul at Death is not *loſt* but *gone before*, ſo the Body is not *loſt* but *laid up.* Think we hear Chriſt ſaying, thy Parent, thy Child, thy Yoke-fellow, ſhall riſe again; *theſe dry Bones ſhall live.*

Thirdly, The Faith which *Martha* mixed with this Word, and the Unbelief mixed with this Faith, *v.* 24.

1. She accounted it a *faithful Saying*, that *he ſhall riſe again at the laſt Day.* Tho' the Doctrine of the Reſurrection was to have its full Proof from Chriſt's Reſurrection, yet as it was already reveal'd, ſhe firmly believ'd it, *Acts* 24. 15. (1.) That there ſhall be a *laſt Day*, with which all the Days of Time ſhall be number'd and finiſhed. (2.) That there ſhall be a *general* Reſurrection at that Day, when the Earth and Sea ſhall give up their Dead. (3.) There ſhall be a *particular* Reſurrection of each one; I know that I *ſhall* riſe again, and this and 'tother Relation that was dear to me. As Bone ſhall return to his Bone in that Day, ſo Friend to his Friend.

2. Yet ſhe ſeems to think this Saying not ſo well worthy of all Acceptation as it really was; *I know he ſhall riſe again at the laſt Day*, but what are we the better for that now? As if the Comforts of the Reſurrection to eternal Life were not worth ſpeaking of, or yielded no Satisfaction ſufficient to ballance her Affliction. See our Weakneſs and Folly, that we ſuffer preſent, ſenſible Things to make a deeper Impreſſion upon us, both of Grief and Joy, than thoſe Things which are the Objects of Faith. *I know that he ſhall riſe again at the laſt Day*; and is not that enough? She ſeems not to think it. Thus by our Diſcontent under preſent Croſſes, we greatly undervalue our future Hopes, and put a Slight upon them, as if not worth regarding.

Fourthly, The further Inſtruction and Encouragement which Jeſus Chriſt gave her; for he will not quench the ſmoaking Flax, not break the bruiſed Reed. He ſaid to her, *I am the Reſurrection and the Life*, v. 25. 26. Two Things Chriſt poſſeſſeth her with the Belief of, in reference to the preſent Diſtreſs, and they are the Things which our Faith ſhould faſten upon in the like Caſes.

1. The *Power of Chriſt*, his Sovereign Power, *I am the Reſurrection and the Life*, the Fountain of Life, and the Head and Author of the Reſurrection. *Martha* believ'd that at his Prayer God would *give* any Thing, but he would have her know that by his Word he could work any Thing. *Martha* believ'd a Reſurrection at the *laſt Day*, Chriſt tells her that he had that Power lodg'd in his own Hand, that the Dead were to *hear his Voice*, John 5. 25. whence it was eaſy to infer, that he could raiſe a World of Men that had been dead many Ages, could doubtleſs raiſe one Man that had been dead but *four Days. Note*, It is an unſpeakable Comfort to all good Chriſtians, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Reſurrection and the Life, and will be ſo to them. *Reſurrection* is a Return to Life, Chriſt is the Author of that Return, and of that Life to which it is a Return. We look for the *Reſurrection of the Dead*, and the *Life of the World to come*, and Chriſt is both the Author and Principle of both, and the Ground of our Hope of both.

2. The Promiſes of the New Covenant, which give us further Ground of Hope that *we ſhall live.* Obſerve,

1. *To whom* theſe Promiſes are made, to them that believe in Jeſus Chriſt, to them that *conſent* to, and *confide* in Jeſus Chriſt, as the only Mediator of Reconciliation, and Communion between God and Man; that receive the Record God has given in his Word concerning his Son, ſincerely comply with it, and anſwer all the great Intentions of it. The Condition of the latter Promiſe is thus expreſs'd, *Whoſoever liveth and believeth in me*; which may be underſtood, either, 1. Of *natural* Life, *whoſoever lives in this* World, whether he be *Jew* or *Gentile*, where-ever he lives, if he believes in Chriſt he ſhall live by him. Yet it limits the Time, whoever during *Life*, while he is here in this State of Probation, *believes in me*, ſhall be happy in me, but after Death 'twill be too late. Whoever *lives* and *believes*, i. e. lives by Faith, *Gal.* 2. 20. has a Faith that influences his Converſation. Or, 2. Of *ſpiritual* Life, he that *lives* and *believes*, is he that by Faith is born again to a heavenly and divine Life, to whom to *live is Chriſt*, that makes Chriſt the Life of his Soul.

2. What the Promiſes are, *v.* 25. *Tho' he die yet ſhall he live*; nay, *v.* 26. *He ſhall never die.* Man conſiſts of Body and Soul, and Proviſion is made for the Happineſs of both.

1. For the *Body* here is the Promiſe of a *bleſſed Reſurrection.* Tho' the Body be dead becauſe of Sin, there's no Remedy, but it will die, yet it *ſhall live again, tho' he were dead.* All the Difficulties that attend the State of the Dead are here over-look'd, and made nothing of. Tho' the Sentence of Death was juſt, tho' the Effects of Death be diſmal, tho' the Bands of Death be ſtrong, tho' he be dead and buried, dead and putrified; tho' the ſcatter'd Duſt be ſo mixt with common Duſt that no Art of Man can diſtinguiſh, much leſs ſeparate them, put the Caſe as ſtrongly as you will on that Side, yet we are ſure *he ſhall live* again; the Body ſhall be rais'd a glorious Body.

2. For the *Soul* here is the Promiſe of a *bleſſed Immortality.* He that *liveth* and *believeth*, who being united to Chriſt by Faith, lives ſpiritually by virtue of that Union, he ſhall *never die*: That ſpiritual Life ſhall never be extinguiſhed, but perfected in eternal Life. As the Soul being in its Nature *Spiritual*, is therefore *Immortal*; ſo if by Faith it live a *ſpiritual* Life, conſonant to its Nature, its Felicity ſhall be Immortal too. It ſhall *never die*, ſhall never be otherwiſe but eaſy and happy, and there is not any Intermiſſion or Interruption of its Life, as there is of the Life of the Body: The *Mortality* of the Body ſhall at length be *ſwallow'd* up *of Life*, but the Life of the Soul, the believing Soul, ſhall be immediately at Death ſwallowed up of Immortality. *He ſhall not die*, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, *for ever. Non morietur in æternum*, ſo *Cyprian* quotes it. The Body ſhall not be *for ever* dead in the Grave, it dies (like the two Witneſſes) but for a *Time, Times, and the dividing of Time*; and when Time ſhall be no more, and all the Diviſions of it ſhall be number'd and finiſh'd, a *Spirit of Life from God ſhall enter into it.* But that is not all, the Soul ſhall not die that Death which is *for ever*, ſhall *not die eternally. Bleſſed and holy*, that is, bleſſed and happy, is he that by Faith *has part in the firſt Reſurrection*, has part in Chriſt, who is that Reſurrection; for on ſuch the *ſecond Death*, which is a Death for ever, *ſhall have no Power.* See *John* 6. 40.

Chriſt asks her, *Believeſt thou this?* Canſt thou *aſſent* to it with Application? Canſt thou take my Word for it? *Note*, When we have read or heard the Word of Chriſt concerning the great Things of the other World, we ſhould ſeriouſly put it to our ſelves? *Do we believe this? This* Truth in particular, *this* which is attended with ſo many Difficulties, *this* which is ſuited to my Caſe? Doth my Belief of it realize it to me, and give my Soul an Aſſurance of it? So that I can ſay, not only *this* I believe, but *thus* I believe it. *Martha* was doting upon her Brother's being rais'd to live in this World; before Chriſt gave her Hopes of that he directed her Thoughts to another Life, another World; no matter for *that*, but *believeſt thou this* that I tell thee concerning the *future* State? The Croſſes and Comforts of this preſent Time would not make that Impreſſion upon us that they do, if we did but believe the Things of Eternity as we ought.

Fifthly,

Fiſthly, *Martha*'s unfeign'd Aſſent yielded to what Chriſt ſaid, *v.* 27. We have here *Martha*'s Creed, the good Confeſſion ſhe witneſſed, the ſame with that for which *Peter* was commended, *Mat.* 16. 16, 17 and it is the *Concluſion of the whole Matter.*

1. Here's the *Guide of her Faith*, and that is, the *Word of* Chriſt; without any Alteration, Exception, or Proviſo, ſhe takes it entire as Chriſt had ſaid it, *Yea, Lord*, whereby ſhe ſubſcribes to the Truth all and every Part of that which Chriſt had promis'd, in his own Senſe; *Even ſo.* Faith is an *Eccho* to Divine Revelation, returns the *ſame Words*, and reſolves to abide by *them, yea, Lord*; *As the Word did make it, ſo I believe and take it*, ſaid Queen *Elizabeth.*

2. The Ground of her Faith, and that is, the *Authority* of Chriſt; ſhe therefore believes *this*, becauſe ſhe believes that he who ſaith it is Chriſt. She has Recourſe to the Foundation, for the Support of the Superſtructure. *I believe*, πεπίϛευκα, *I have believed*, that thou art Chriſt, and therefore I *do belive* this. Obſerve here;

(1.) What ſhe believed and confeſſed concerning Jeſus; three Things all to the ſame Effect. (1.) That he was the *Chriſt*, or Meſſiah promis'd and expected, under this Name and Notion, the *Anointed One*, (2.) That he was the *Son of God*, ſo the Meſſiah was call'd, *Pſal.* 2. 7. not by Office only, but by Nature. (3.) That 'twas *he which ſhould come* into the World, the ὁ ἐρχόμενος, That Bleſſing of Bleſſings which the Church had for ſo many Ages waited for as *future*, ſhe embraced as *preſent*.

(2.) What ſhe inferr'd hence, and what ſhe alledg'd this for; if ſhe admits this, that Jeſus is the Chriſt, there is no Difficulty in believing that he is the Reſurrection and the Life, for if he be the Chriſt, then, (1.) He is the Fountain of *Light* and *Truth*, and we may take all his Sayings for faithful and divine, upon his own Word. If he be the Chriſt, he is that Prophet whom we are to hear *in all things.* (2.) He is the Fountain of *Life* and *Bleſſedneſs*, and we may therefore depend upon his Ability as well as upon his Veracity. How ſhall Bodies turn'd to Duſt, *live again?* How ſhall Souls clog'd and clouded as ours are, *live for ever?* We could not believe this, but that we believe him that undertakes it to be *the Son of God*, who has Life *in himſelf*, and has it for us.

2. We have here the Interview between Chriſt and *Mary*, the other Siſter. And there obſerve,

1. The Notice which *Martha* gave her of Chriſt's coming, *v.* 28. *When ſhe had ſo ſaid*, as one that needed to ſay no more, *ſhe went her way*, eaſy in her Mind, and *call'd* Mary *her Siſter.* (1.) *Martha* having receiv'd Inſtruction and Comfort from Chriſt her ſelf, call'd her Siſter to ſhare with her. Time was when *Martha* would have drawn *Mary* from Chriſt to come and help her in *much ſerving*, *Luke* 10. 40. But to make her amends for that, here ſhe is induſtrious to draw her to Chriſt. (2.) She call'd her *ſecretly*, and whiſper'd it in her Ear, becauſe there was a Company by, *Jews* that were no Friends to Chriſt. The Saints are call'd *into the Fellowſhip of Jeſus Chriſt*, by an Invitation that is ſecret and diſtinguiſhing, given to them, and not to others; they have Meat to eat, that the World knows not of, Joy that a Stranger doth not intermeddle with. (3.) She call'd her by Order from Chriſt, he bid her. *Go call her Siſter.* The Call that is *effectual*, whoever brings it, 'tis Chriſt that ſends it. *The Maſter is come, and calleth for thee.* (1.) She calls Chriſt *the Maſter*; Διδάσκαλος, a *Teaching Maſter*, by that Title he was commonly call'd and known among them. Mr. *George Herbert* took Pleaſure in calling Chriſt, *My Maſter.* (2.) She triumphs in his Arrival; the *Maſter is come.* He whom we have long wiſhed and waited for, *He is come, he is come*; this was the beſt Cordial in the preſent Diſtreſs; *Lazarus* is gone, and our Comfort in him *gone*, but the *Maſter is come*, who is better than the deareſt Friend, and has that in him which will a-abundantly make up all our Loſſes. He is come, who is our *Teacher*, who will teach us how to get Good by our Sorrow, *Pſal.* 94. 17. who will *teach*, and ſo comfort. (3.) She invites her Siſter to go meet him; he *calls for thee*, enquires what's become of thee, and would have thee ſent for. *Note*, When Chriſt our Maſter comes he *calls for us.* He comes in his Word and Ordinances, and calls us *to* them, calls us by them, calls us to himſelf. He calls for *thee* in particular, for thee *by Name*, Pſal. 27. 8. And if he call thee he will *cure* thee, he will *comfort* thee.

2. The Haſte which *Mary* made to Chriſt upon this Notice given her, *v.* 29. *As ſoon as ſhe heard* this good News, that the *Maſter was come*, ſhe *aroſe quickly*, and came to him. She little thought how near he was to her, for he is often nearer to them that mourn in *Sion*, than they are aware of; but when ſhe knew how near he was, ſhe ſtarts up, and in a Tranſport of Joy, runs to meet him; the leaſt Intimation of Chriſt's gracious Approaches is enough to a lively Faith, which ſtands ready to take the Hint, and anſwer the firſt Call. When Chriſt was come, (1.) She did not conſult the *Decorum* of her Mourning, but forgetting Ceremony, and the common Uſage in ſuch Caſes, ſhe runs through the Town to meet Chriſt. Let not nice Punctilio's of Decency and Honour deprive us at any time of Opportunities of converſing with Chriſt. (2.) She did not conſult her Neighbours the *Jews*, that were *with her comforting her*; ſhe left them all to come to him, and did not only aſk their Advice, but not ſo much as aſk their Leave, or beg their Pardon for her Rudeneſs.

We are told, *v.* 30. where ſhe found the Maſter; he was not yet come into *Bethany*, but was at the Towns-End, *in that Place where* Martha *met him*, See here, 1. Chriſt's Love to his Work; he ſtaid near the Place where the Grave was, that he might be ready to go to it; and would not go into the Town to *refreſh himſelf*, after the Fatigue of his Journey, till he had done the Work he came to do; nor would he go into the Town, leſt it ſhould look like Oſtentation, and a Deſign to levy a Crowd to be Spectators of the Miracle. 2. *Mary*'s Love to Chriſt; ſtill ſhe *loved much*: Tho' Chriſt had ſeem'd unkind in his Delays, yet ſhe can take nothing amiſs from him. Let us go thus to Chriſt *without the Camp*, Heb. 13.

3. The Miſconſtruction which the *Jews* that were with *Mary*, made of her going away ſo haſtily, *v.* 31. They ſaid, *She goes to the Grave to weep there.* *Martha* bore up better under this Affliction than *Mary* did, who was a Woman of a Tender and ſorrowful Spirit; ſuch was her natural Temper. Thoſe that are ſo, have need to watch againſt Melancholy, and ought to be pity'd and help'd. Thoſe *Comforters* found that their Formalities did her no Service, but that ſhe harden'd her ſelf in Sorrow, and therefore concluded, when ſhe went out, and turn'd that way, 'twas to *go to the Grave*, and *weep there.* See, 1. What often is the *Folly* and *Fault of Mourners*; they contrive how to aggravate their own Grief, and to make Ill *worſe.* We are apt in ſuch Caſes to take a ſtrange *Pleaſure* in our own *Pain*, and to ſay *we do well* to be Paſſionate in our Grief, *even unto* Death, apt to faſten upon thoſe things that aggravate the Affliction; and what Good doth it do us, when it is our Duty to reconcile our ſelves to the Will of God in it? What need Mourners go to the Grave to weep there, when they ſorrow not as thoſe that have no Hope? Affliction of it ſelf is grievous, why ſhould we make it more ſo? 2. What is the *Wiſdom* and *Duty* of Comforters, and that is to prevent as much as may be, in thoſe who grieve inordinately, the Revival of the Sorrow, and to divert it. Thoſe *Jews* that follow'd *Mary*, were thereby led to Chriſt, and became the Witneſſes of one of his moſt glorious Miracles. 'Tis good cleaving to Chriſt's Friends in their Sorrows, for thereby we may come to know him better.

4. *Mary*'s Addreſs to our Lord Jeſus, *v.* 32. ſhe came attended with her Train of Comforters, and *fell down at his Feet*, as one over-whelm'd with a paſſionate Sorrow, and ſaid with many Tears (as appears, *v.* 33.) *Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my Brother had not died*, as *Martha* ſaid before, for they had often ſaid it to one another. Now here,

1. Her Poſture is very humble and ſubmiſſive; *She fell down at his Feet*, which was more than *Martha* did, who had a greater Command of her Paſſions. She *fell down* as a ſinking Mourner, but fell down *at his Feet* as a humble Petitioner. This *Mary* had ſate *at Chriſt's Feet to hear his Word*, Luke 10. 39. and here we find her there on another Errand. *Note*, Thoſe that in a Day of Peace ſet themſelves at Chriſt's Feet to receive Inſtructions from him, may with Comfort and Confidence in a Day of Trouble caſt themſelves at his Feet, with Hope to find Favour with him. *She fell at his Feet*, as one ſubmitting to his *Will* in what was done, and referring her ſelf to his *good Will* in what was now to be done. When we are in Affliction, we muſt caſt our ſelves at Chriſt's Feet in a penitent Sorrow, and Self-abaſement for Sin, and a patient Reſignation of our ſelves to the Divine Conduct. *Mary*'s caſting *her ſelf at Chriſt's Feet*, was in token of the profound Reſpect and Veneration ſhe had for him. Thus they were wont to give Honour to their King's and Princes; but our Lord Jeſus not appearing in ſecular Glory as an Earthly Prince, they who by this Poſture of Adoration gave Honour to him, certainly look'd upon him as more than a Man, and intended hereby to give him Divine Honour. *Mary* hereby made Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith, as truly as *Martha* did, and in effect ſaid, *I believe that thou art the Chriſt*; *bowing the Knee* to Chriſt, and *confeſſing him with the Tongue*, are put together as Equivalent, *Rom.* 14. 11. *Phil.* 2. 11. This ſhe did in Preſence of *the Jews* that attended her, who tho' Friends to her and her Family, yet were bitter Enemies to Chriſt, yet in their Sight ſhe fell at Chriſt's Feet, as one that was neither *aſham'd* to own the Veneration ſhe had for Chriſt, nor *afraid* of diſobliging her Friends and Neighbours by it. Let them reſent it as they pleas'd, ſhe falls at his Feet, and if this be to be vile, will be yet more vile. See *Cant.* 8. 1. We ſerve a Maſter, whom we have no reaſon to be aſham'd of, and whoſe Acceptance of our Services is ſufficient to balance the Reproach of Men, and all their Revilings.

2. Her Addreſs is very pathetical, *Lord, if thou hadſt been here, my Brother had not died.* Chriſt's Delay was deſign'd for the beſt, and prov'd ſo, yet both the Siſters very indecently *caſt the ſame in his Teeth*, and in effect charge him with the Death of their Brother; this repeated Challenge he might juſtly have *reſented*; might have told them he had ſomething elſe to do, than to be at their Beck, and to attend them; he muſt come when his Buſineſs would permit him; but not a Word of this; he conſider'd the Circumſtances of their Affliction, and that Loſers think they may have leave to ſpeak; and therefore over-look'd the Rudeneſs of this Welcome, and gave us an Example of Mildneſs and Meekneſs in ſuch Caſes. *Mary* added no more, as *Martha* did, but it appears by what follows, that what ſhe fell ſhort in Words, ſhe made up in Tears; ſhe ſaid leſs than *Martha*, but wept more; and Tears of devout Affection have a Voice, a loud prevailing Voice in the Ears of Chriſt, no Rhetorick like that.

33 When Jeſus therefore ſaw her weeping, and the Jews alſo weeping which came with her, he groaned

in the ſpirit, and was troubled, 34 And ſaid, Where have ye laid him? They ſay unto him, Lord, come and ſee. 35 Jeſus wept. 36 Then ſaid the Jews, Behold how he loved him. 37 And ſome of them ſaid, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have cauſed that even this man ſhould not have died? 38 Jeſus therefore again groaning in himſelf, cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a Stone lay upon it. 39 Jeſus ſaid, Take ye away the Stone. Martha the ſiſter of him that was dead, ſaith unto him, Lord, by this time he ſtinketh: for he hath been *dead* four days. 40 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldeſt believe, thou ſhouldeſt ſee the glory of God? 41 Then they took away the ſtone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jeſus lift up *his* eyes, and ſaid, Father, I thank thee that thou haſt heard me. 42 And I knew that thou heareſt me always: but becauſe of the people which ſtand by, I ſaid *it*, that they may believe that thou haſt ſent me. 43 And when he thus had ſpoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. 44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave cloths: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jeſus ſaith unto them, Looſe him, and let him go.

Here we have,

Firſt, Chriſt's tender *Sympathy* with his afflicted Friends, and the Share he took to himſelf in their Sorrows, which appeared three Ways.

1. By the inward Groans and Troubles of his Spirit, *v.* 33. *Jeſus ſaw* Mary *weeping*, for the Loſs of a loving Brother, and the *Jews that came with her weeping*, for the Loſs of a good Neighbour and Friend, when he ſaw what a *Place of Weepers*, a *Bochim* this was, *he groaned in the Spirit, and was troubled.* See here,

(1.) The *Griefs of the Sons of Men* repreſented in the Tears of *Mary* and her Friends: What an Emblem was here of this World, this Vale of Tears. *Nature it ſelf teacheth us* to weep over our dear Relations, when they are removed by Death; Providence thereby calls to *weeping and mourning.* 'Tis likely *Lazarus*'s Eſtate devolved upon his Siſters, and was a conſiderable Addition to their Fortunes, and in ſuch a Caſe, People ſay now-a-days, tho' they cannot wiſh their Relations dead (that is, they do not ſay they do) yet if they were dead, they would not *wiſh them alive again*; but theſe Siſters, whatever they got by their Brother's Death, heartily wiſh'd him alive again. *Religion teacheth us* likewiſe to *weep with them that weep*, as theſe *Jews* here with *Mary*, conſidering that we our ſelves alſo *are in the Body.* They that truly love their Friends, will ſhare with them in their Joys and Griefs, for what is Friendſhip, but a Communication of Affections? *Job* 16. 5.

(2.) The *Grace of the Son of God*, and his Compaſſion towards thoſe that are in Miſery: In all their Afflictions he is afflicted, *Iſa.* 63. 9. *Judg.* 10. 16. When Chriſt ſaw them all in Tears, 1. He *groaned in the Spirit.* He ſuffer'd himſelf to be tempted, as we are, when we are diſturb'd by ſome great Affliction, *yet without Sin.* This was an Expreſſion, either, (1.) Of his Diſpleaſure at the inordinate Grief of thoſe about him, as *Mark* 5. 39. *Why make ye this ado, and weep?* What a Hurry is here? Doth this become thoſe that believe a God, a Heaven, and another World? Or, (2.) Of his Reſentment of the calamitous State of human Life, and the Power of Death, which fallen Man is ſubjected to; being now to make a vigorous Attack upon Death and the Grave, he thus ſtirred up himſelf to the Encounter, *put on the Garments of Vengence*, and *his Fury it upheld him*; and that he might the more reſolutely under take the Redreſs of our Grievances, and the Cure of our Griefs, he was pleas'd to make himſelf ſenſible of the Weight of them, and under the Burthen of them he now *groaned in Spirit.* Or, (3.) It was an Expreſſion of this kind Sympathy with his Friends that were in Sorrow. Here was the ſounding of the Bowels, and the Mercies which the afflicted Church ſo earneſtly ſollicites for, *Iſa.* 63. 15. Chriſt not only ſeem'd concern'd, but he *groaned in the Spirit*; he was inwardly and ſincerely affected with the Caſe; *David's* pretended Friends counterfeited Sympathy to diſguiſe their Enmity, *Pſal.* 41. 6. but we muſt learn of Chriſt to have our *Love* and Sympathy *without Diſſimulation.* Chriſt's was a deep and hearty Sigh. 2. He was *troubled.* He *troubled himſelf.* So the Phraſe is, very ſignificantly. He *had* all the Paſſions and Affections of the human Nature, for in all things he muſt be *like to his Brethren*; but he had a perfect Command of them, ſo that they were never *up*, but *when* and *as* they were called; he was never troubled, but when he *troubled himſelf*, as he ſaw Cauſe; he often *compos'd* himſelf to Trouble, but was never *diſcompos'd* or *diſorder'd* by it; he was voluntary both in his Paſſion, and in his Compaſſion; he had Power to lay down his Grief, and Power to take it again.

2. His Concern for them appear'd by his *kind Enquiry* after the poor Remains of his deceaſed Friend, *v.* 34. *Where have ye laid him?* He knew where he was laid, and yet asks, becauſe, 1. He would thus expreſs himſelf as *a Man*, even then when he was going to exert the Power of a God. Being found in faſhion as a Man, he accommodates himſelf to the Way and Manner of the Sons of Men; *Non neſcit, ſed quaſi neſcit*, ſaith *Auſtin* here. 2. He enquired where the Grave was, leſt if he had gone ſtrait to it of his own Knowledge, the unbelieving *Jews* ſhould thence have taken Occaſion to ſuſpect a Colluſion between him and *Lazarus*, and a Trick in the Caſe. Many Expoſitors obſerve this from *Chryſoſtom.* 3. He would thus divert the Grief of his mourning Friends, by raiſing their Expectations of ſomething great, *q. d.* I did not come hither with an Addreſs of Condolence, to mingle a few fruitleſs, inſignificant Tears with yours; no, I have other Work to do; come let us adjourn to the Grave, and go about our Buſineſs there. *Note*, A ſerious Addreſs to our Work, is the beſt Remedy againſt inordinate Grief. (4.) He would hereby intimate to us the ſpecial Care he takes of the Bodies of the Saints, while they lie in the Grave; he takes notice *where they are laid*, and will look after them; there is not only a Covenant with the Duſt, but a Guard upon it.

3. It appear'd *by his Tears.* Thoſe about him did not tell him where the Body was buried, but deſir'd him to *come and ſee*, and led him directly to the Grave; that his Eye might yet more affect his Heart with the Calamity: As he was going to the Grave, as if he had been following the Corps thither, *Jeſus wept*, *v.* 35. A very ſhort Verſe, but affords many uſeful Inſtructions. 1. That Jeſus Chriſt was really and truly Man, and partook with the Children, not only of *Fleſh and Blood*, but of a human Soul ſuſceptible of the Impreſſions of Joy and Grief, and other Affections. Chriſt gave this Proof of his Humanity, in both Senſes of the Word, that as a Man he could weep, and as a merciful Man he *would weep*, before he gave this Proof of his Divinity. 2. That he was a *Man of Sorrows*, and *acquainted with Grief*, as was foretold, *Iſa.* 53. 3. We never read that he laugh'd, but more than once we have him *in Tears.* Thus he ſhews not only that a mournful State will conſiſt with the Love of God, but that they who ſow the Spirit, muſt ſow in Tears. 3. Tears of Compaſſion well become Chriſtians, and make them moſt to reſemble Chriſt. 'Tis a Relief to thoſe who are in Sorrow to have their Friends ſympathize with them, eſpecially ſuch a Friend as the Lord Jeſus.

Different Conſtructions were put upon Chriſt's weeping.

1. Some made a kind and candid Interpretation of it, and what was very natural, *v.* 36. *Then ſaid the* Jews, *Behold how he loved him.* They ſeem to admire he ſhould have ſo ſtrong an Affection for one whom he was not related to, and whom he had not had any long Acquaintance with, for Chriſt ſpent moſt of his time in *Galilee*, a great Way from *Lazarus.* It becomes us according to this Example of Chriſt, to ſhew our Love to our Friends, both living and dying. We muſt ſorrow for our Brethren that ſleep in Jeſus, as thoſe that were full of Love, tho' not void of Hope; as the *devout Men* that buried *Stephen*, Acts 8. 2. Tho' our Tears profit not the Dead, they embalm their Memory. Theſe Tears were Indications of his particular Love to *Lazarus*, but he has given Proofs no leſs evident of his Love to all the Saints, in that he dy'd for them. When he only dropt a Tear over *Lazarus*, they ſaid, *See how he loved him*, much more Reaſon have we to ſay ſo, for whom he hath laid down his Life, *ſee how he loved us. Greater Love has no Man than this.*

2. Others made a peeviſh unfair Reflection upon it, as if theſe Tears ſpoke his Inability to help his Friend, *v.* 37. *Could not this Man, that opened the Eyes of the Blind*, have prevented the Death of *Lazarus.* Here it is ſlily inſinuated, 1. That the Death of *Lazarus* being (as it ſeem'd by his Tears) a great Grief to him, if he could have prevented it he would, and therefore becauſe he *did not*, they incline to think he *could not*, as when he was dying, they concluded he could not, becauſe he did not ſave himſelf, and *come down from the Croſs*; not conſidering that Divine Power is always directed in its Operations by Divine Wiſdom, not merely according to his Will, but according to the Counſel of his Will, wherein it becomes us to acquieſce. If Chriſt's Friends, whom he loves, die; if his Church, whom he loves, be perſecuted and afflicted, we muſt not impute it to any Defect, either in his Power or Love, but conclude, 'tis becauſe he ſees it for the beſt. 2. That therefore it might juſtly be queſtioned, whether he did indeed *open the Eyes of the Blind*, i. e. whether it was not a Sham. His not working this Miracle, they thought enough to invalidate the former; at laſt it ſhould ſeem he had a limited Power, and therefore not a divine one. Chriſt ſoon convinc'd theſe *Whiſperers*, by raiſing *Lazarus* from the Dead, which was the greater Work that he could have prevented his Death, but therefore did not, becauſe he would glorify himſelf the more.

Secondly, Chriſt's Approach to the Grave, and the Preparation that was made for working this Miracle.

1. Chriſt repeats his Groans, upon his coming near the Grave, *v.* 38. *again groaning in himſelf, he comes to the Grave*; he groaned, (1.) Being diſpleaſed at the Unbelief of thoſe, who ſpoke doubtingly of his Power, and blam'd him for not preventing the Death of *Lazarus*; he was *griev'd for the Hardneſs of their Hearts.* He never groan'd ſo much for his own Pains and Sufferings, as for the Sins and Follies of Men, particularly *Jeruſalem's*, Mat. 23. 37. (2.) Being affected with the freſh Lamentations, which 'tis likely the mourning Siſters made, when they came near the Grave, more paſſionately and pathetically than before; his tender Spirit was

ſenſibly touch'd with their Wailings. (3.) Some think he *groaned in Spirit*, becauſe to gratify the Deſires of his Friends, he was to bring *Lazarus* again into this ſinful troubleſome World, from that Reſt into which he was newly enter'd; it would be a Kindneſs to *Martha* and *Mary*, but it would be to him like thruſting one out to a ſtormy Sea again, that was newly got into a ſafe and quiet Harbour. If *Lazarus* had been let alone, Chriſt would quickly have gone to him into the other World; but being reſtored to Life, Chriſt quickly left him behind in this World. (4.) Chriſt groan'd as one that would affect himſelf with the calamitous State of the human Nature, as ſubject to Death, from which he was now about to redeem *Lazarus*. Thus he ſtir'd up himſelf to take hold on God in the Prayer he was to make, that he might *offer it up with ſtrong crying*, Heb. 5. 7. Miniſters when they are ſent by the preaching of the Goſpel to raiſe dead Souls, ſhould be much affected with the deplorable Condition of thoſe they preach to and pray for, and groan in themſelves to think of it.

2. The Grave is here deſcrib'd wherein *Lazarus* lay; *it was a Cave, and a Stone lay upon it.* The Graves of the common People, probably were dig'd as ours are; but Perſons of Diſtinction were, as with us, interr'd in Vaults, ſo *Lazarus* was, and ſuch was the Sepulchre where Chriſt was bury'd. Probably this Faſhion was kept up among the *Jews*, in Imitation of the Patriarchs, who bury'd their Dead in the Cave of *Machpelah*, Gen. 23. 19. This Care taken of the dead Bodies of their Friends, intimates their Expectation of their Reſurrection, they reckon'd the Solemnity of the Funeral ended, when the Stone was roll'd to the Grave, or as here, *laid upon it*, like that upon the Mouth of the Den, into which *Daniel* was caſt, *Dan.* 6. 17. that the *Purpoſe might not be chang'd*, intimating that the Dead are ſeparated from the Living, and gone the *Way whence they ſhall not return.* This Stone was probably a *Grave-ſtone*, with an Inſcription upon it, which the *Greeks* call'd *μνημεῖον*, a *Memorandum*, becauſe it is both a *Memorial* of the Dead, and a *Memento* to the Living, puting them in Remembrance of that which we are all concern'd to rememher. 'Tis call'd by the Latins, *Monumentum à monendo*, becauſe it gives Warning.

3. Orders are given to *remove the Stone*, v. 39. *Take ye away the Stone.* He would have this Stone removed, that all the Standers by might ſee the Body lie dead in the Sepulchre; and that way might be made for its coming out, and it might appear to be a true Body, and not a *Ghoſt* or *Spectre*. He would have ſome of the Servants to remove it, that they might be Witneſſes, by the Smell of the Putrefaction of the Body, and that therefore 'twas truly dead. 'Tis a good Step towards the raiſing of a Soul to ſpiritual Life, when the Stone is taken away, when Prejudices are remov'd and got over, and Way made for the Word to the Heart, that it may do its Works there, and ſay what it has to ſay.

4. An Objection made by *Martha* againſt the opening of the Grave, *Lord, by this time he ſtinketh*, or, *is become noiſome, for he has been dead four Days*, τεταρταῖος γὰρ ἐστι *quatriduanus eſt*; He is *four Days old* in the other World; a Citizen and Inhabitant of the Grave of four Days ſtanding. Probably *Martha* perceiv'd the Body to ſmell, as they were removing the Stone, and therſore cry'd out thus.

1. It is eaſy from hence to obſerve the Nature of Human Bodies. Four Days is but a little while, yet what a great Change will that make with the Body of Man, if it be but ſo long *without Food*, much more if ſo long *without Life*. Dead Bodies (ſaith Dr. *Hammond*) after a Revolution of the Humours, which is compleated in 72 Hours, naturally tend to Putrefaction; and the *Jews* ſay, that by the Fourth Day after Death, the Body is ſo alter'd, that one cannot be ſure 'tis ſuch a Perſon, ſo *Maimonides* in *Lightfoot*. Therefore Chriſt roſe the third Day, becauſe he was not to *ſee Corruption*.

2. It is not ſo eaſy to ſay, what was *Martha's* Deſign in ſaying this. 1. Some think ſhe ſaid it in a due Tenderneſs, and ſuch as Decency teaches to the dead Body; now it began to putrify, ſhe did not care it ſhould be thus publickly ſhewn and made a Spectacle of. 2. Others think ſhe ſaid it out of a Concern for Chriſt, leſt the Smell of the dead Body ſhould be *offenſive* to him. That which is very noiſome is compared to an open Sepulchre, *Pſal.* 5. 9. If there were any thing noiſome, ſhe would not have her Maſter near it; but he was none of thoſe tender and delicate ones, that cannot bear an ill Smell; if he had, he would not have viſited the World of Mankind, which Sin had made a perfect Dunghil altogether ſtinking, *Pſal* 14. 3. 3. It ſhould ſeem by Chriſt's Anſwer, that it was the Language of her Unbelief and Diſtruſt: Lord, it's too late now to attempt any Kindneſs to him, his Body begins to rot, and 'tis impoſſible this putrid Carcaſs ſhould *live*. She gives up his Caſe as helpleſs and hopleſs, there having been no Inſtances either of late or formerly, of any rais'd to Life after they had begun to ſee Corruption. When *our Bones are dried*, we are ready to ſay, *Our Hope is loſt*. Yet this diſtruſtful Word of hers ſerv'd to make the Miracle both the more evident and the more illuſtrious; by this it appeared he was truly dead, and not in a Trance; for tho' the Poſture of a dead Body might be counterfeited, the Smell could not. Her ſuggeſting that it *could not be done*, puts the more Honour upon him that *did it*.

5. The gentle Reproof Chriſt gave to *Martha*, for the Weakneſs of her Faith, *v.* 40. *Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldſt believe, thou ſhouldſt ſee the Glory of God.* This Word of his to her was not before recorded, 'tis probable he ſaid it to her, when ſhe had ſaid, *v.* 27. *Lord, I believe*; and 'tis enough that it is recorded here, where it is repeated. *Note*, 1. Our Lord Jeſus has given us all the Aſſurances imaginable, that a *ſincere Faith* ſhall at length be crowned with a *bleſſed Viſion*; if thou believe, *thou ſhalt ſee* God's glorious Appearances *for thee* in this World, and *to thee* in the other World. If we will take Chriſt's Word, and rely on his Power and Faithfulneſs, we ſhall *ſee the Glory of God*, and be happy in the *Sight*. 2. We have need to be often minded of theſe *ſure Mercies*, with which our Lord Jeſus hath encourag'd us. Chriſt doth not give a direct Anſwer to what *Martha* had ſaid, nor any particular Promiſe of what he would do, but orders her to keep hold of the general Aſſurances he had already given; *Only believe.* We are apt to forget what Chriſt hath ſpoken, and need him to put us in mind of it by his Spirit, *Said I not unto thee* ſo and ſo? And doſt thou think he will ever unſay it.

6. The opening of the Grave in Obedience to Chriſt's Order, notwithſtanding *Martha*'s Objection, *v.* 41. *Then they took away the Stone. Then* when *Martha* was ſatisfied, and had wav'd her Objection, *then* they proceeded. If we will ſee the Glory of God, we muſt let Chriſt take his own Way, and not preſcribe, but ſubſcribe to him. *They took away the Stone*, and that was all they could do, Chriſt only could *give Life*. What Man can do is, but to *prepare the Way of the Lord*, to fill the Vallies, and level the Hills, and as here to *take away the Stone*.

Thirdly, The Miracle it ſelf wrought. The Spectators invited by the rolling away of the Stone, gather'd about the Grave, not to commit *Duſt to Duſt*, *Earth to Earth*, but to receive Duſt from the Duſt, and Earth from Earth again, and their Expectations being rais'd, our Lord Jeſus addreſſes himſelf to his Work.

1. He applies himſelf to his *living Father in Heaven*, ſo he had called him, *John* 6. 57. and ſo eyes him not.

1. The Geſture he us'd was very ſignificant; *he lift up his Eyes*, an outward Expreſſion of the Elevation of his Mind; and to ſhew them who ſtood by, from whence he deriv'd his Power. And to ſet us an Example; this outward Sign is hereby recommended to our Practice, ſee *John* 17. 1. look how they will anſwer it who profanely ridicule it; but that which is eſpecially charg'd upon us hereby, is to *lift up our Hearts* to God in the Heavens; what is Prayer, but the Aſcent of the Soul to God, and the directing of its Affections and Motions Heaven-wards. He *lift up* his Eyes as looking *above*, and looking *beyond* the Grave where *Lazarus* lay, and *over-looking* all the Difficulties that aroſe from thence, that he might have his Eyes fix'd upon the Divine Omnipotence; to teach us to do as *Abraham*, who conſider'd not *his own Body, now dead, nor the deadneſs of* Sarah's *Womb*, never took thoſe into his Thoughts, and ſo gain'd ſuch a Degree of Faith, as not to *ſtagger at the Promiſe*, Rom. 4. 20.

2. His Addreſs to God was with great Aſſurance, and ſuch Confidence as became him. *Father, I thank thee, that thou haſt heard me.* He hath here taught us by his own Example: 1. In Prayer to call God *Father*, and to draw nigh unto him as Children to a Father, with a humble Reverence, yet with a holy Boldneſs. 2. In our *Prayers to praiſe him*, and when we come to beg for further Mercy, thankfully to acknowledge former Favours. Thankſgivings that ſpeaks *God's Glory*, not *our own*, like the Phariſees, *God I thank thee*, are decent Forms, into which to put our Supplications.

But our Saviour's Thankſgiving here was intended to expreſs the unſhaken Aſſurance he had of the effecting of this Miracle, which he had in his own Power to do in Concurrence with the Father. *Father, I thank thee*, that my Will and thine are in this Matter as always the ſame. *Elijah* and *Eliſha* rais'd the Dead as Servants, by *Intreaty*; but Chriſt as a Son by *Authority*, having Life in himſelf, and Power to quicken whom he would; and he ſpeaks of this as his own Act, *v.* 11. *I go that I may awake him*, yet he ſpeaks of it as if he had obtain'd by Prayer, for his Father *heard him*; probably he put up the Prayer for it when he *groaned in Spirit*, once and again, *v.* 33, 38. in a *mental* Prayer, with Groanings which could not be *uttered*. Now Chriſt ſpeaks of this Miracle as an Anſwer to Prayer. (1.) Becauſe he would thus *humble himſelf*; tho' he were a Son, yet *learned he this Obedience*, to *ask* and *receive*. His mediatorial Crown was granted him upon Requeſt, tho' 'tis *of Right*, Pſal. 2. 8. And *John* 17. 5. he prays for the Glory he had before the World, tho' having never forfeited it, he might have demanded it. (2.) Becauſe he was pleaſed thus to *honour Prayer*, making it the Key wherewith even he unlock'd the Treaſures of Divine Power and Grace. Thus he would teach us in Prayer by the lively Exerciſe of Faith, to *enter into the Holieſt*.

Now Chriſt being aſſured his Prayer was anſwered.

1. Profeſſeth his thankful Acceptance of this Anſwer, *I thank thee that thou haſt heard me.* Tho' the Miracle was not yet wrought, yet the Prayer was anſwered, and he triumphs before the Victory. No other can pretend to ſuch an Aſſurance as Chriſt had, yet we may by Faith in the Promiſe have a Proſpect in Mercy before it be actually given in, and may rejoice in that Proſpect, and give God Thanks for it. In *David*'s Devotions, the ſame Pſalm which he begins with Prayer for a Mercy, cloſes with Thankſgivings for it.

Note, 1. Mercies in Anſwer to Prayer, ought in a ſpecial manner to be acknowledg'd with Thankfulneſs. Beſides the Grant of the Mercy it ſelf, we are to value it as a great Favour to have our poor Prayers taken Notice of. 2. We ought to *meet* the firſt Appearances of the Return of Prayer with early Thankſgivings. As God *anſwers* us with Mercy, *even before we call*, and *hears while we are yet ſpeaking*, ſo we ſhould anſwer him with Praiſe, even before he grants, and give him Thanks while he is yet ſpeaking good Words and comfortable Words.

2. He profeſſeth his chearful Aſſurance of a ready Anſwer at any time, *v.* 47. *And I know that thou heareſt me always.* Let none think that this was ſome uncommon Favour granted him now, ſuch as he never had before, nor ſhould ever have again; no, he had the ſame divine Power going along with him in his whole Undertaking, and undertook nothing but what he knew to be agreeable to the Counſel of God's Will. I *gave Thanks* (ſaith he) for being heard in this, becauſe I am ſure to be heard in every thing. See here, 1. The mighty Intereſt our Lord Jeſus had in Heaven; the Father *heard him always*, he had *Acceſs* to the Father upon every Occaſion, and *Succeſs* with him in every Errand. And we may be ſure his Intereſt is not the leſs for his going to Heaven, which may encourage us to depend upon his Interceſſion, and put all our Petitions into his Hand, for we are ſure that him the Father *hears always*. 2. The Confidence he had of that Intereſt; *I knew it.* He did not in the leaſt heſitate or doubt concerning it; but had an entire Satiſfaction in his own Mind of the Father's Complacency in him, and Concurrence with him in every thing. We cannot have ſuch a particular Aſſurance as he had; but this we know, that *whatſoever we ask according to his Will, he heareth us*, 1 John 5. 14, 15.

But why ſhould Chriſt give this publick Intimation of his obtaining this Miracle by Prayer? He adds, 'Tis *becauſe of the People which ſtand by, that they may believe that thou haſt ſent me*; for *Prayer may preach.*

1. It was to *obviate* the Objections of his Enemies, and their Reflections. It was blaſphemouſly ſuggeſted by the *Phariſees*, and their Creatures, that he wrought his Miracles by Compact with the Devil: Now to evidence the contrary, he openly made his Addreſs to God, uſing *Prayers*, and not *Charms*, not *peeping and muttering*, as they did that us'd *familiar Spirits*, Iſa. 8. 19. but with elevated Eyes and Voice profeſſing his Communication with Heaven, and Dependance on Heaven.

2. It was to corroborate the Faith of thoſe that were well inclin'd to him, *that they might believe that thou haſt ſent me*, not to deſtroy Mens Lives, but to ſave them. *Moſes*, to ſhew that God *ſent him*, made the Earth open and ſwallow Men up, *Numb.* 16. 10. *Elijah*, to ſhew that God ſent him, made Fire come from Heaven, and devour Men, for the *Law* was a Diſpenſation of Terror and Death; but Chriſt proves his Miſſion by raiſing to Life one that was dead: Some give this Senſe. Had Chriſt declar'd his doing it freely by his own Power, ſome of his weak Diſciples, who as yet underſtood not his Divine Nature, would have thought he took too much upon him, and have been ſtumbled at it; theſe *Babes* could not bear that *ſtrong Meat*, therefore he chuſes to ſpeak of his Power as receiv'd and deriv'd; he ſpeaks ſelf-denyingly of himſelf, that he might ſpeak the more plainly to us. *Non ita reſpexit ad ſuam Dignitatem atque ad noſtram ſalutem.* Janſen.

2. He now applies himſelf to his *dead Friend* in *the Earth.* He *cried with a loud Voice*, Lazarus *come forth.* He could have rais'd *Lazarus* by a ſilent exerting of his Power and Will, and the undiſcernable Operations of the Spirit of Life, but he did it by a Call, a *loud* Call.

1. To be *ſignificant* of the Power then put forth for the raiſing of *Lazarus*; how he *created this new thing*, he *ſpake and it was done.* He cried aloud, to ſignify the Greatneſs of the Work, and of the Power employ'd in it; and to excite himſelf as it were to this Attack upon the Gates of Death, as Soldiers engage with a Shout. Speaking to *Lazarus*, it was proper to *cry with a loud Voice*: For, 1. The *Soul* of *Lazarus*, which was to be *called back*, was *at a Diſtance*, not hovering about the Grave, as the *Jews* fancy'd, but remov'd to *Hades*, the World of Spirits; now 'tis natural to *ſpeak loud*, when we call to thoſe *at a Diſtance.* 2. The *Body* of *Lazarus*, which was to be *called up* was *aſleep*, and we uſe to ſpeak *loud*, when we would awake any out of Sleep. He cried with a *loud Voice*, that the Scripture might be fulfill'd, *Iſa.* 45. 19. *I have not ſpoken in ſecret, in a dark Place of the Earth.*

2. To be *typical* of other Works of Wonder, and particularly other Reſurrections, which the Power of Chriſt was to effect. This loud Call was a Figure,

(1.) Of the Goſpel Call, by which dead Souls were to be brought out of the Grave of Sin, which Reſurrection Chriſt had formerly ſpoken of, *John* 5. 25. and of his Word as the Means of it, *John* 6. 63. and now he gives a *Specimen* of it. By his Word, he *ſaith to Souls*, *live*, yea, *he* ſaith to them *live*, *Ezek.* 16. 6. *Ariſe from the Dead*, Eph. 5. 14. The Spirit of Life from God enter'd into thoſe that had been dead and dry Bones, when *Ezekiel* propheſied *over them*, Ezek. 37. 10. They who infer from the Commands of the Word to *turn and live*, that Man has a Power of his own to convert and regenerate himſelf, might as well infer from this Call to *Lazarus*, that he had a Power to raiſe himſelf to Life.

(2.) Of the Sound of the Archangel's Trumpet at the laſt Day, with which they that ſleep in the Duſt ſhall be awaken'd, and ſummon'd before the great Tribunal; when Chriſt ſhall *deſcend with a Shout*, a *Call*, or *Command*, like this here, *Come forth.* See *Pſal.* 50. 4. *He ſhall call* both *to the Heavens* for their Souls, *and to the Earth* for their Bodies, *that he may judge his People.*

This *loud Call* here was but *ſhort*, yet *mighty through God*, to the battering down of the ſtrong Holds of the Grave.

1. He calls him by Name *Lazarus*, as we call thoſe by their Names, whom we would awake out of a faſt Sleep. God ſaid to *Moſes*, as a Mark of his Favour, *I know thee by Name.* The *naming* of him intimates that the ſame *individual* Perſon that dy'd ſhall riſe again at the laſt Day. He that *calls the Stars by their Names*, can diſtiguiſh by Name his Stars that are in the Duſt of the Earth, and will loſe none of them.

2. He calls him *out of the Grave*, ſpeaking to him as if he were already alive, and had nothing to do but to come out of his Grave. He doth not ſay unto him, *Live*, for he himſelf muſt give Life, but he ſaith to him, *Move*, for when by the Grace of Chriſt we live ſpiritually, we muſt ſtir up our ſelves to *move*; the Grave of Sin and this World is no Place for theſe whom Chriſt has quicken'd, and therefore they muſt *come forth.*

3. The Event was according to the Intention. *He that was dead came forth*, v. 44. Power went along with the Word of Chriſt to reunite the Soul and Body of *Lazarus*, and then he came forth. The Miracle is deſcrib'd not by its inviſible Springs to ſatisfy our Curioſity, but its viſible Effects to confirm our Faith. Do any ask where the Soul of *Lazarus* was, during the four Days of its Separation? We are not told, but we have reaſon to think it was in Paradiſe, *in Joy and Felicity*; but you'll ſay, was it not then really an Unkindneſs to it to return it into the Priſon of the Body? And if it were yet, being for the Honour of Chriſt, and the ſerving of the Intereſts of his Kingdom, it was no more an Injury to him than it was to St. *Paul* to continue in the Fleſh, when he knew that to depart to Chriſt was ſo much better. If any ask, whether *Lazarus*, after he was rais'd, could give any Account or Deſcription of his Soul's Removal out of the Body, or Return to it, or what he ſaw in the other World? I ſuppoſe both thoſe Changes were ſo unaccountable to himſelf, that he muſt ſay with *Paul*, *Whether in the Body, or out of the Body, I cannot tell*, and of what he ſaw and heard, that it was not lawful, or poſſible to expreſs it. In a World of Senſe we cannot frame to our ſelves, much leſs communicate to others, any adequate Ideas of the World of Spirits, and the Affairs of that World; let us not covet to be wiſe above what is written, and this is all that is written concerning the Reſurrection of *Lazarus*, That *he that was dead came forth.* And ſome have obſerv'd, that tho' we read of many that were rais'd from the Dead, who no doubt convers'd familiarly with Men afterwards, yet the Scripture has not recorded one Word ſpoken by any of them, except by our Lord Jeſus only.

This Miracle was wrought, 1. *Speedily*; nothing intervenes between the Command, *Come forth*; and the Effect, *He came forth. Dictum Factum*, let there be Life, and there was Life. Thus the Change in the Reſurrection will be *in a Moment*, *in the twinkling of an Eye*, 1 Cor. 15. 52. The Almighty Power that can do it, can do it in an Inſtant; *then ſhalt thou call, and I will anſwer*, will come at the Call, as *Lazarus*, Here am I. 2. *Perfectly*, He was ſo throughly reviv'd, that he got up out of his Grave, as ſtrongly as ever he got up out of his Bed; and return'd not only to Life, but Health. He was not rais'd to ſerve a preſent Turn, but to live as other Men. 3. With this additional Miracle (as ſome reckon it) that he came out of his Grave, tho' he was fetter'd with his *Grave Clothes*, with which he was *bound Hand and Foot*, and *his Face bound about with a Napkin*; for ſo the manner of the *Jews* was to bury; and he came forth in the ſame Dreſs wherein he was bury'd, that it might appear it was he himſelf, and not another, and that he was not only alive, but ſtrong, and able to walk, after a ſort, even in his Grave Clothes. The *binding of his Face with a Napkin*, prov'd that he had been really dead, for otherwiſe in leſs than ſo many Days Time, that would have ſmother'd him. And the Standers-by in unbinding him, would *handle him*, and *ſee him, that it was he himſelf*, and ſo be Witneſſes of the Miracle. Now ſee here, (1.) How little we carry away with us, when we leave the World, only a Winding Sheet and a Coffin; there's no Change of Rayment in the Grave, nothing but a ſingle Suit of Grave Clothes. (2.) What Condition we ſhall be in, in the Grave. What *Wiſdom* or *Device* can there be, where the Eyes are hoodwink'd; or what working, where the Hands and Feet are fetter'd? And ſo it will be in the Grave, whither we are going. *Lazarus* being *come forth*, hamper'd and embarraſs'd with his Grave Clothes, we may well imagine that thoſe about the Grave were exceedingly ſurpriz'd and frighten'd at it, we would be ſo, if we ſhould ſee a dead Body riſe; but Chriſt to make the thing familiar, ſets them to work, *looſe him*, ſlacken his Grave Clothes, that they may ſerve for Day Clothes till he comes to his Houſe, and then he will go himſelf ſo clad, without Guide or Supporter to his own Houſe. As in the old Teſtament, the Tranſlations of *Enoch* and *Elias* were ſenſible Demonſtrations of an inviſible and future State, the one about the Middle of the Patriarchal Age, the other of the Moſaical Oeconomy; ſo the Reſurrection of *Lazarus* was in the New Teſtament deſign'd for Confirmation of the Doctrine of the Reſurrection.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had ſeen the things which Jeſus did, believed on him. 46 But ſome of them went their ways to the Phariſees, and told them what things Jeſus had done. 47 ¶ Then gathered the chief Prieſts and the Phariſees a council, and ſaid, What do we? for this man doth many miracles. 48 If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans ſhall come and take away both our place and nation. 49 And one of them *named* Caiaphas, being the high prieſt that ſame year, ſaid unto them, Ye know nothing at all. 50 Nor conſider that it is expedient for us, that one man

ſhould die for the people, and that the whole nation
periſh not. 51 And this ſpake he not of himſelf:
but being high prieſt that year, he propheſied that
Jeſus ſhould die for that nation: 52 And not for that
nation only, but that alſo he ſhould gather together in
one, the children of God that were ſcattered abroad.
53 Then from that day forth they took counſel toge-
ther for to put him to death. 54 Jeſus therefore
walked no more openly among the Jews; but went
thence into a country near to the wilderneſs, into a
city called Ephraim, and there continued with his
diſciples. 55 ¶ And the Jews paſſover was nigh at hand:
and many went out of the country up to Jeruſalem
before the paſſover, to purifie themſelves. 56 Then
ſought they for Jeſus, and ſpake among themſelves,
as they ſtood in the temple, What think ye, that he
will not come to the feaſt? 57 Now both the chief
prieſts and the Phariſees had given a commandment,
that if any man knew where he were, he ſhould
ſhew *it*, that they might take him.

We have here an Account of the Conſequences of this glorious Miracle, which were as uſual; to ſome it was a ſavour of Life unto Life, to others of Death unto Death.

1. Some were *invited* by it, and induc'd to believe. Many of the *Jews*, when they *ſaw the Things that Jeſus did, believed on him*, and well they might, for it was an uncontestable Proof of his Divine Miſſion. They had often heard of his Miracles, and yet evaded the Conviction of them, by calling in queſtion the Matter of Fact; but now they had themſelves ſeen this done, their Unbelief was conquer'd, and they yielded at laſt: But *bleſſed are they who have not ſeen and yet have believed.* The more we ſee of Chriſt, the more cauſe we ſhall ſee to love him and confide in him. Theſe were ſome of thoſe *Jews* that *came to* Mary to comfort her. When we are doing good Offices to others, we put our ſelves in the way of receiving Favours from God, and have Opportunities of getting good when we are doing good.

2. Others were irritated by it, and harden'd in their Unbelief.

1. The *Informers* were ſo, *v.* 46. *Some of them* who were Eye-witneſſes of the Miracle, were ſo far from being convinc'd, that they *went to the Phariſees* whom they knew to be his implacable Enemies, and *told them what Things Jeſus had done*; not meerly as a Matter of News worthy their Notice, much leſs as an Inducement to them to think more favourably of Chriſt, but with a ſpiteful Deſign to excite thoſe who needed no Spur the more vigorouſly to proſecute him. Here's a ſtrange Inſtance, 1. Of a moſt *obſtinate Infidelity*, refuſing to yield to the moſt powerful Means of Conviction; and it is hard to imagine how they could evade the Force of this Evidence, but that the *God of this World* had *blinded their Minds*. 2. Of a moſt *inveterate Enmity*. If they would not be ſatisfy'd that he was to be believ'd in as the Chriſt, yet one would think they ſhould have been mollified, and perſwaded not to perſecute him; but if the Water be not ſufficient to quench the Fire, 'twill enflame it. They told *what Jeſus had done*, and told no more but what was true; but their Malice gave a Tincture of Diaboliſm to their Information equal to that of *Lying*; perverting what is true is as bad as forging what is falſe. *Doeg* is call'd a *falſe*, *lying*, and *deceitful Tongue*, Pſal. 120. 2, 3. and 52. 2, 3, 4. tho' what he ſaid was *true*.

2. The *Judges*, the Leaders, the *blind Leaders* of the People were no leſs *exaſperated* by the Report made to them, and here we are told what they did.

1. A ſpecial Council is call'd and held, *v.* 47. *Then gather'd the chief Prieſts and Phariſees a Counſel*, as was foretold, *Pſal.* 2. 2. *The Rulers take Counſel together againſt the Lord.* Conſults of the *Sanhedrin* were intended for the publick Good, but here under colour of that the greateſt Injury and Miſchief is done to the People. The Things that belong to the Nation's Peace were hid from the Eyes of thoſe that were intruſted with its Counſels. This Council was call'd, not only for joint Advice, but for mutual Irritation; that as Iron ſharpens Iron, and as Coals are to burning Coals, and Wood to Fire, ſo they might exaſperate and enflame one another with Enmity and Rage againſt Chriſt and his Doctrine.

2. The Caſe is propos'd, and ſhew'd to be weighty, and of mighty Conſequence.

1. The Matter to be debated, was, what Courſes they ſhould take with this *Jeſus* to ſtop the Growth of his Intereſt; they ſaid, *What do we? For this Man doth many Miracles.* The Information given about the raiſing of *Lazarus* was produc'd, and the *Men, Brethren and Fathers*, are call'd in to help as ſollicitouſly as if a formidable Enemy had been with an Army in the Bowels of their Country. (1.) They own the Truth of Chriſt's Miracles, and that he had wrought *many* of them; they are therefore Witneſſes againſt themſelves; for they acknowledg'd his Credentials, and yet deny'd his Commiſſion. (2.) They conſider what was to be *done*, and chide themſelves that they had not done ſomething ſooner effectually to cruſh him. They do not take it at all into their Conſideration, whether they ſhould not receive him, and own him as the Meſſiah, tho' they profeſs'd to expect him, and Jeſus gave pregnant Proofs of his being ſo; but they take it for granted he is an Enemy, and as ſuch is to be run down. *What do we?* Have we no Care to ſupport our Church? Is it nothing to us that a Doctrine ſo deſtructive to our Intereſt ſpreads thus? Shall we tamely yield up the Ground we have got in the Affections of the People? Shall we ſee our Authority brought into Contempt, and the Craft by which we get our living ruin'd, and not beſtir our ſelves? What have we been doing all this while? And what are we now thinking of? Shall we be always talking and bring nothing to paſs?

2. That which made this Matter weighty, was the Peril they apprehended their Church and Nation to be in from the *Romans*, v. 48. If we do not ſilence him, and take him off, *all Men will believe in him*; and this being the ſetting up of a new King, the *Romans* will take umbrage at it, *and will come* with an Army, and *take away our Place and Nation*, and therefore 'tis no Time to trifle. See what an Opinion they have,

1. Of their own *Power.* They ſpeak as if they thought Chriſt's Progreſs and Succeſs in his Work depended upon their Connivance, as if he could not go on to work Miracles, and make Diſciples, unleſs they *let him alone*, as if it were in their Power to conquer him who had conquer'd Death; or as if they could *fight againſt God* and proſper. But he that ſits in Heaven laughs at the fond Conceit which impotent Malice has of its own Omnipotence.

2. Of their own *Politicks.* They fancy themſelves to be Men of mighty Inſight, and Foreſight, and great Sagacity in their moral Prognoſtications.

1. They take on them to propheſie, that in a little Time, if he have liberty to go on, *all Men will believe on him*; hereby owning when it will ſerve their Purpoſe, that his Doctrine and Miracles had a very convincing Power in them, ſuch as could not be reſiſted, but that all Men would become his Proſelytes and Votaries; thus do they now make his Intereſt *formidable*, tho' to ſerve another Turn, theſe ſame Men ſtrove to make it *contemptible*, *John* 7. 48. *Have any of the Rulers believed on him?* This was the Thing they were afraid of, that Men would *believe on him*, and then all their Meaſures were broke. *Note*, The Succeſs of the Goſpel is the Dread of its Adverſaries; if Souls be ſav'd they are undone.

2. They foretel that if the Generality of the Nation be *drawn after him*, the Rage of the *Romans* will be *drawn upon them*. They *will come and take away our Place*; the Country in general, eſpecially *Jeruſalem*, or the Temple, the *holy Place*, and *their* Place; their Darling, their Idol. Or, their *Preferments* in the Temple, their *Places* of Power and Truſt.

Now it was true that the *Romans* had a very jealous Eye upon them, and knew they wanted nothing but Power and Opportunity to ſhake off their Yoke. It was likewiſe true, that if the *Romans* ſhould pour an Army in upon them, it would be very hard for them to make any head againſt it; yet here appear'd a Cowardice which one would not have found in the Prieſts of the Lord, if they had by their Wickedneſs forfeited their Intereſt in God, and all good Men. Had they kept their Integrity, they needed not have fear'd the *Romans*; but they ſpeak like a diſpirited People, as the Men of *Judah*, when they baſely ſaid to *Sampſon*, knoweſt thou not that the *Philiſtines* rule over us; *Judg.* 15. 11. When Men loſe their Piety, they loſe their Courage.

But, 1. It was falſe that there was any Danger of the *Romans* being irritated againſt their Nation by the Progreſs of Chriſt's Goſpel, for it was no way *hurtful to Kings or Provinces*, but highly beneficial. The *Romans* had no Jelouſie at all of his growing Intereſt, for he taught Men to give *Tribute* to *Caeſar*, and not to *reſiſt Evil*, but take up the Croſs. The *Roman* Governor, at his Trial, could *find no Fault* in him. There was more Danger of the *Romans* being incens'd againſt the *Jewiſh* Nation by the Prieſts, than by Chriſt. *Note*, Pretended Fears are oft the Colour of malicious Deſigns.

2. Had there really been ſome Danger of diſpleaſing the *Romans* by tolerating Chriſt's preaching, yet that would not juſtifie their hating and perſecuting a good Man. *Note*, 1. The Enemies of Chriſt and his Goſpel have often colour'd their Enmity with a ſeeming Care for the *publick Good*, and the *common Safety*, and in order to have branded his Prophets and Miniſters as Troublers of *Iſrael*, and Men that *turn the World upſide down.* 2. Carnal Policy commonly ſets up *Reaſons of State*, in Oppoſition to *Rules of Juſtice.* When Men are concern'd for their own Wealth and Safety more than for Truth and Duty, 'tis Wiſdom from beneath, which is *earthly*, *ſenſual*, and *deviliſh.* But ſee what was the Iſſue, they pretended to be afraid that their tolerating Chriſt's Goſpel would bring Deſolation upon them by the *Romans*, and therefore *right or wrong* ſet themſelves againſt it; but it prov'd that their perſecuting the Goſpel, brought upon them that which they fear'd, fill'd up the Meaſure of their Iniquity, and the *Romans* came and *took away their Place and Nation*, and their Place *knows them no more.* *Note*, That Calamity which we ſeek to eſcape by Sin, we take the moſt effectual Courſe to bring upon our own Heads; and they who think by oppoſing Chriſt's Kingdom to ſecure or advance their own ſecular Intereſt, will find *Jeruſalem* a more *burthenſome Stone* than they think it is, *Zech.* 12. 3. The *Fear of the Wicked it ſhall come upon them.*

3. *Caiaphas* makes a *malicious*, but myſtical Speech in the Council upon this Occaſion.

1. The *Malice* of it appears *evident* at firſt View, *v.* 49., 50. He being the *High Prieſt*, and ſo Preſident of the Council, took upon him to decide the Matter before it was debated; *you know nothing at all*, your heſitating betrays your Ignorance, for 'tis not a thing that will bear a Diſpute, 'tis ſoon determin'd, if you conſider that receiv'd Maxim, *That it is expedient for us that one Man ſhould die for the People.* Here,

1. The Counſellor was *Caiaphas*, who was *High Prieſt that ſame Year.* The High Prieſthood was by the Divine Appointment, ſettled upon the Heir Male of the Houſe of *Aaron*, for and during the Term of his natural Life, and then to his Heir Male; but in thoſe degenerate Times it was become, tho' not an annual Office, like a Conſulſhip, yet frequently chang'd, as they could make an Intereſt with the *Roman* Powers. Now it happen'd that *this Year Caiaphas* wore the Mitre.

2. The Drift of the Advice was ſhort in this, that ſome way or other muſt be found out to put Jeſus to Death. We have Reaſon to think that they ſtrongly ſuſpected him to be indeed the *Meſſiah*; but his Doctrine was ſo contrary to their darling Traditions and ſecular Intereſt, and his Deſign did ſo thwart their Notions of the Meſſiah's Kingdom, that they reſolve, be he who he will, he muſt be *put to Death. Caiaphas* doth not ſay, let him be ſilenc'd, impriſon'd, baniſh'd, tho that's ſufficient for the *Reſtraint* of one they thought dangerous; but *die he muſt. Note*, Thoſe that have ſet themſelves againſt Chriſtianity, have commonly diveſted themſelves of Humanity, and been infamous for Cruelty.

3. This is plauſibly inſinuated, with all the Subtlety as well as Malice of the old Serpent.

(1.) He ſuggeſts his own Sagacity, which we muſt ſuppoſe him as High Prieſt to excel in, tho' the *Urim* and *Thummim* was long ſince loſt. How ſcornfully doth he ſay, *you know nothing*, that are but common Prieſts; but you muſt give me leave to ſee further into things than you do. Thus 'tis common for thoſe in Authority to impoſe their corrupt Dictates by Virtue of that; and becauſe they *ſhould be* the wiſeſt and beſt, to expect that every Body ſhould believe they *are ſo.*

(2.) He takes it for granted, that the Caſe is plain, and paſt Diſpute, and thoſe are very ignorant that do not ſee it to be ſo. *Note*, Reaſon and Juſtice are often run down with a high Hand: *Truth is fallen in the Streets*, and when it's down, down with it; and *Equity cannot enter*, and when its out, out with it, *Iſa.* 59. 14.

(3.) He inſiſts upon a Maxim in Politicks, that the Welfare of Communities is to be prefer'd before that of particular Perſons. *It is expedient for us*, as Prieſts, whoſe All lies at Stake, that *one Man die for the People.* Thus far it holds true, that it is *expedient*, and more than ſo, 'tis truly *honourable*, for a Man to hazard his Life in the Service of his Country, *Phil.* 2. 17. 1 *John* 3. 16. but to put an innocent Man to Death, under colour of conſulting the publick Safety, is the Devil's Politicks. *Caiaphas* craftily inſinuates that the greateſt and beſt Man tho' *major ſingulis* is *minor univerſis*, and ought to think his Life well ſpent, nay, well loſt to ſave his Country from Ruin; but what's this to the murthering of one that was evidently a great Bleſſing, under Pretence of preventing an imaginary Miſchief to the Country? The Caſe ought to have been put thus: Was it expedient for them to bring upon themſelves and upon their Nation the Guilt of Blood, a Prophet's Blood, for the ſecuring of their Civil Intereſts from a Danger which they had no juſt reaſon to be afraid of? Was it expedient for them to drive God and their Glory from them, rather than venture the *Romans* Diſpleaſure, who could do them no harm, if they had God on their Side. *Note*, Carnal Policy, which ſteers only by ſecular Conſiderations, while it thinks to *ſave all* by Sin, *ruins all* at laſt.

2. The *Myſtery* that was in this Counſel of *Caiaphas*, doth not appear at firſt View, but the Evangeliſt leads us into it, *v.* 51. 52. *This ſpake he not of himſelf*, 'twas not only the Language of his own Enmity and Policy, but in theſe Words he propheſied, tho' he himſelf was not aware of it, *That Jeſus ſhould die for that Nation.* Here's a precious Comment upon a pernicious Text; the Counſel of curſed *Caiaphas* ſo conſtrued, as to fall in with the Counſels of the bleſſed God. Charity teaches us to put the moſt favourable Conſtructions upon Mens Words and Actions that they will bear; but Piety teaches us to make a good Improvement of them, even contrary to that which they were intended for. If wicked Men in what they *do* againſt us, *are God's Hand* to humble and reform us, why may they not in what they ſay againſt us be God's Mouth to inſtruct and convince us? But in this of *Caiaphas*, there was an extraordinary Direction of Heaven prompting him to ſay that which was capable of a very ſublime Senſe. As the Hearts of all Men are in God's Hand, ſo are their Tongues. They are deceiv'd, who ſay, *our Tongues are our own*, ſo that either we *may* ſay what we will, and are not accountable to God's Judgment, or we can ſay what we will, and are not reſtrainable by his Providence and Power. *Balaam* could not ſay what he would, when he came to curſe *Iſrael*, nor *Laban* when he purſued *Jacob.*

The Evangeliſt explains and enlarges upon *Caiaphas*'s Words.

1. He explains what he ſaid, and ſhews how it not only was, but was intended to be accommodated to an excellent Purpoſe. He did not *ſpeak it of himſelf*; as it was an Artifice to ſtir up the Council againſt Chriſt, he ſpoke it *of himſelf*, or of the Devil rather; but as it was an *Oracle*, declaring it the Purpoſe and Deſign of God, by the Death of Chriſt, to ſave God's ſpiritual *Iſrael* from Sin and Wrath, he did not ſpeak it *of himſelf*, for he knew nothing of the Matter, he *meant not ſo, neither did his Heart think ſo*, for nothing was in his Heart but to *deſtroy* and *cut off*, Iſa. 10. 7.

(1.) He *propheſied*, and thoſe that propheſied in their propheſying, did not *ſpeak of themſelves.* But is *Caiaphas* alſo among the Prophets? He is ſo, *pro hâc vice*, tho' an ill Man, and an implacable Enemy to Chriſt and his Goſpel. *Note*, 1. God can, and often doth make wicked Men Inſtruments to ſerve his own Purpoſes, even contrary to their own Intentions; for he has them not only *in a Chain* to reſtrain them from doing the Miſchief they would, but *in a Bridle* to lead them to do the Service they would not. 2. Words of Prophecy in the Mouth are no infallible Evidence of a Principle of Grace in the Heart. *Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy Name?* will be rejected as a frivolous Plea.

(2.) He propheſied, *being High Prieſt that Year*, not that his being High Prieſt did at all diſpoſe or qualify him to be a Prophet; we cannot ſuppoſe the Pontifical Mitre to have firſt inſpired with Prophecy the baſeſt Head that ever wore it; but, (1.) Being *High Prieſt*, and therefore of Note and Eminence in the Conclave, God was pleas'd to put this ſignificant Word into his Mouth, rather than into the Mouth of any other, that it might be the more obſerv'd, or the Non-obſervance of it the more aggravated.

The Apothegms of great Men have been thought worthy of ſpecial Regard; *A Divine Sentence is in the Lips of the King*; therefore this Divine Sentence was put into the Lips of the High Prieſt, that even out of his Mouth this word might be eſtabliſhed, that Chriſt died for the *Good of the Nation*, and not *for any Iniquity in his Hands.* He happened to be High Prieſt that Year which was fixed to be the *Year of the Redeemed*, when *Meſſiah* the Prince, *muſt be cut off, but not for himſelf*, Dan. 9. 26. and he muſt own it. (2.) Being High Prieſt *that Year*, that famous Year, in which there was to be ſuch a plentiful Effuſion of the Spirit, more than had ever been yet, according to the Prophecy, *Joel* 2. 28, 29. compared with *Acts* 2. 17. ſome Drops of the bleſſed Shower light upon *Caiaphas*, as the Crumbs (ſaith Dr. *Lightfoot*) of the Childrens Bread, which fall from the Table among the Dogs. This Year was the Year of the Expiration of the Levitical Prieſthood; and out of the Mouth of him, who was that Year High Prieſt, was extorted an implicit Reſignation of it to him, who ſhould not (as they had done for many Ages) offer Beaſts for that Nation, but offer himſelf, and ſo make an End of the *Sin-offering.* This Reſignation he made *unwittingly*, as *Iſrael* gave the Bleſſing to *Jacob.*

(3.) The Matter of his Prophecy was, *that Jeſus ſhould die for that Nation*, the very thing to which all the Prophets bare Witneſs, who *teſtified before-hand the Sufferings of Chriſt*, 1 Pet. 1. 11. That the Death of Chriſt muſt be the Life and Salvation of *Iſrael*; he meant by *that Nation*, thoſe that in it obſtinately adhered to *Judaiſm*; but God meant thoſe in it that would receive the Doctrine of Chriſt, and would become Followers of him, all Believers, the ſpiritual Seed of *Abraham.* The Death of Chriſt which *Caiaphas* was now projecting, prov'd the *Ruin* of that *Intereſt* in the Nation, which he intended it ſhould be the Security and Eſtabliſhment of, for it brought Wrath upon them to the uttermoſt; but it proved the Advancement of that Intereſt, which he hoped it would have been the Ruin of, for Chriſt being lifted up from the Earth, drew all Men unto him. 'Tis a great thing that is here propheſied; that Jeſus ſhould *die*, die for others, not only *for their Good*, but *in their Stead*; *die for that Nation*, for they had the firſt Offer made them of Salvation by his Death. If the whole Nation of the *Jews* had unanimouſly believ'd in Chriſt, and received his Goſpel, they had been not only ſaved eternally, but ſaved as a Nation from their Grievances. The Fountain was firſt *open'd to the Houſe of* David, *Zech.* 13. 1. He ſo died for *that Nation*, as that *the whole Nation ſhould not periſh*, but that *a Remnant ſhould be ſav'd*, Rom. 11. 5.

2. The Evangeliſt enlargeth upon this Word of *Caiaphas*, v. 52. not for that Nation only, how much ſoever it thought it ſelf the Darling of Heaven, but *that alſo he ſhould gather together in one the Children of God that were ſcattered abroad.* Obſerve here,

1. The *Perſons* Chriſt dy'd for, *not for the Nation* of the *Jews only*, 'twould have been comparitively but *a light Thing* for the Son of God to go through ſo vaſt an Undertaking, only to reſtore the *Preſerv'd of* Jacob, and *the Out-caſts of* Iſrael; no, He muſt be *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth*, Iſa. 49. 6. He muſt die for *the Children of God that were ſcatter'd abroad.* 1. Some underſtand it of the Children of God that were then *in Being*, ſcattered abroad in the Gentile World, *devout Men* of every Nation, *Acts* 2. 5. that *fear'd God*, Acts 10. 2. and worſhipped him, *Acts* 16. 4. Proſelytes of the Gate, who ſerv'd the God of *Abraham*, but ſubmitted not to the Ceremonial Law of *Moſes*; Perſons that had a Savour of natural Religion, but were *diſpers'd* in the Nations, had no ſolemn Aſſemblies of their own, nor any peculiar Profeſſion to unite in, or diſtinguiſh themſelves by. Now Chriſt dy'd to incorporate theſe in one great Society, to be denominated from him, and govern'd by him; and this was the ſetting up a Standard, to which all that had a Regard to God, and a Concern for their Souls, might have Recourſe, and under which they might liſt themſelves. 2. Others take in with theſe all that belong to the Election of Grace, who are called the Children of God, tho' not yet born, be-

cauſe they are *prediſtinated to the Adoption of Children*, Eph. 1. 5. Now theſe are *ſcatter'd abroad* in ſeveral *Places of the Earth*, out of all Kindreds and Tongues, *Rev.* 7. 9. And in ſeveral *Ages of the World*, to the End of Time; there are thoſe that *fear him throughout all Generations*, to all thoſe he had an Eye in the Atonement he made by his Blood; as he pray'd, ſo he dy'd, for *for all that ſhould believe on him*.

2. The Purpoſe and Intention of his Death concerning thoſe Perſons; he dy'd to *gather them in*, who wander'd; and to *gather them together in one* who were ſcatter'd; to *invite* them to him, that were at a Diſtance from him, and to unite them in him, that were at a Diſtance from each other, Chriſt's Dying is,

1. The great *Attractive* of our *Hearts*; for this End he is lifted up to draw Men to him. The Converſion of Souls is the gathering of them into Chriſt as their Ruler and Refuge, as the Doves to their Windows; and he died to effect this. By dying he purchaſed them to himſelf, and the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt for them; his Love in dying for us, is the great Load-ſtone of our Love.

2. The great *Centre of our Unity*. He gathers them together *in one*, Eph. 1. 10. They are one with him, one Body, one Spirit, and one with each other in him. All the Saints in all Places and Ages meet in Chriſt, as all the Members in the Head, and all the Branches in the Root. Chriſt by the *Merit* of his Death, recommended all the Saints *in one* to the Grace and Favour *of God*, Heb. 2. 11, 13. And by the Motive of his Death recommends them all ſeverally to the Love and Affection one of another, *John* 13. 34.

4. The Reſult of this Debate is a Reſolve of the Council to put Jeſus to Death, *v.* 53. *From that Day they took Counſel together to put him to Death.* They now underſtand one anothers Minds, and ſo each was fixt in his own, that Jeſus muſt die; and it ſhould ſeem a Committee was appointed to ſit, *de die in diem*, to conſider of it, and conſult about it, and to receive Propoſals for the effecting of it. *Note*, The Wickedneſs of the Wicked ripens by degrees, *Jam.* 1. 15. *Ezek.* 7. 10.

Two conſiderable Advances were now made in their accurſed Deſign againſt Chriſt. 1. What before they had thought of *ſeverally*, now they *jointly* concurr'd in, and ſo ſtrengthened the Hands one of another in this Wickedneſs, and proceeded with the greater Aſſurance. Ill Men confirm and encourage themſelves and one another in ill Practices, by *comparing Notes*; Men of *corrupt Minds* bleſs themſelves, when they find others of *the ſame Mind*: Then the Wickedneſs which before ſeem'd impracticable, appears not only poſſible but eaſy to be effected, *vis unita fortior.* 2. What before they wiſh'd done, but *wanted a Colour for*, now they are furniſh'd with a *plauſible Pretence* to juſtify themſelves in; which will ſerve, if not to take off *the Guilt*, that's the leaſt of their Care, yet to take off the *Odium*, and ſo ſatisfy, if not the *perſonal*, yet the *political* Conſcience, as ſome ſubtily diſtinguiſh. Many will go on very ſecurely in doing an ill Thing, as long as they have but ſomething to ſay in Excuſe for it. Now this Reſolution of theirs to put him to Death right or wrong, ſhews that all the Formality of a Trial, which they afterwards which they afterwards brought him upon, was but Shew and determined what to do.

5. Chriſt hereupon abſconded, knowing very well what was the Vote of their cloſe Cabal, *v.* 54.

1. He ſuſpended his publick Appearances, *he walked no more openly among the* Jews, *i. e.* among the Inhabitants of *Judea*, who were properly call'd *Jews*, eſpecially thoſe at *Jeruſalem*, ἐπιριεπατει. He did not *walk up and down* among them, did not go from Place to Place preaching and working Miracles with that Freedom and Openneſs that he had done, but while he ſtaid in *Judea*, he was there *incognito.* Thus the Chief Prieſts put the Light of *Iſrael under a Buſhel.*

2. He withdrew into an obſcure Part of the Country, ſo obſcure, that the Name of the Town he retir'd to, is ſcarce met with any where elſe. He went to a Country *near the Wilderneſs*, as if he were driven out from among Men, or rather wiſhing with *Jeremiah*, that he might have in the Wilderneſs *a Lodging-place of way-faring Men*, Jer. 9. 2. He enter'd into a City call'd *Ephraim*, ſome think *Ephratah*, i. e. *Bethlehem*, where he was born, and which border'd upon the Wilderneſs of *Judah*; others think, *Ephron*, or *Ephraim* mention'd, *2 Chron.* 13. 19. Thither *his Diſciples* went with him, neither would they leave him in Solitude, nor would he leave them in Danger. There he continued διέτριβε, there he *convers'd*, he knew how to improve this time of Retirement in private *Converſation*, when he had not Opportunity of preaching publickly. He *convers'd with his Diſciples*, which were his Family, when he was forc'd from the Temple, and his Διάτριβα, or Diſcourſes there, no doubt were very *edifying*, We muſt do the Good we can, when we cannot do the Good we would.

But why would Chriſt abſcond now; 'twas not becauſe he either fear'd the Power of his Enemies, or diſtruſted his own Power; he had many Ways to ſave himſelf, and was neither averſe to ſuffering, nor unprepar'd for it; but he retir'd, (1.) To put a Mark of his Diſpleaſure upon *Jeruſalem*, and the People of the *Jews*. They rejected him and his Goſpel, juſtly therefore did he remove himſelf and his Goſpel from them. The Prince of *Teachers* was now *removed into a Corner*, (Iſa. 30. 20.) and there was *no open Viſion* of him, and it was a ſad Preſage of that thick Darkneſs, which was ſhortly to come upon *Jeruſalem*, becauſe ſhe knew not the Day of her Viſitation. 2. To render the Cruelty of his Enemies againſt him the more inexcuſable. If that which was grievous to them, and thought dangerous to the Publick, was his *publick Appearances*, he would try whether their Anger would be turned away by his Retirement into Privacy; when *David* was fled to *Gath*, *Saul* was ſatisfied, and ſought no more for him, 1 *Sam.* 27. 4. But it was the *Life*, the precious *Life*, that theſe wicked Men hunted after. (3.) His Hour was *not yet come*, and therefore he declin'd Danger, and did it in a Way common to Men, both to warrant and encourage the Flight of his Servants in time of Perſecution, and to comfort thoſe who are forc'd from their Uſefulneſs, and bury'd alive in Privacy and Obſcurity; *The Diſciple is not better than his Lord.* (4.) His Retirement for a while was to make his Return into *Jeruſalem*, when his Hour was come, the more *remarkable* and *illuſtrious.* This louden'd the Acclamations of Joy, with which his Well-wiſhers welcom'd him at his next publick Appearance, when he rode triumphantly into the City.

6. The ſtrict Enquiry made for him during his Receſs, *v.* 55, 56, 57.

1. The Occaſion of it was the Approach of the Paſſover, at which they expected his Preſence according to the Cuſtom, *v.* 55. *The* Jews *Paſſover was nigh at hand*, a Feſtival which ſhone bright in their Calendar, and which there was great Expectation of for ſome time before; this was Chriſt's fourth and laſt Paſſover, ſince he enter'd upon his publick Miniſtry, and it might truly be ſaid, as 2 *Chron.* 35. 18. *There never was ſuch a Paſſover in* Iſrael, for in it *Chriſt our Paſſover was ſacrific'd for us.* Now the Paſſover being at hand, *many went out* of all Parts of *the Country to* Jeruſalem, *to purify themſelves.* This was either, (1.) A *neceſſary Purification* of thoſe who had contracted any Ceremonial Pollution; they came to be ſprinkled with the *Water of Purification*, and to perform the other Rites of Cleanſing according to the Law, for they might not eat the Paſſover in their Uncleanneſs, *Numb.* 9. 6. Thus before our Goſpel-Paſſover, we muſt renew our Repentance, and by Faith waſh in the Blood of Chriſt, and ſo *compaſs God's Altars.* Or, (2.) A *voluntary Purification*, or Self-ſequeſtration, by Faſting and Prayer, and other religious Exerciſes, which many that were more devout than their Neighbours, ſpent ſome time in before the Paſſoever, and choſe to do it at *Jeruſalem*, becauſe of the Advantage of the Temple-Service. Thus muſt we by ſolemn Preparation ſet Bounds about the Mount on which we expect to meet with God.

2. The Enquiry was very ſolicitous; *They ſaid, what think ye, that he will not come to the Feaſt*, v. 56.

1. Some think this was ſaid by thoſe that wiſh'd well to him, and expected his coming, that they might hear his Doctrine, and ſee his Miracles. They that came early out of the Country, that they might purify themſelves, were very deſirous to meet with Chriſt, and perhaps came up the ſooner with that Expectation, and therefore *as they ſtood in the Temple*, the Place of their Purification, they enquir'd what News of Chriſt? Could any Body give them Hopes of ſeeing him? If there were thoſe, and thoſe of the moſt devout People, and beſt affected to Religion, who ſhew'd this Reſpect to Chriſt, it was a *Check* to the Enmity of the Chief Prieſts, and a *Witneſs* againſt them.

2. It ſhould rather ſeem they were his Enemies that made this Enquiry after him, who wiſh'd for an Opportunity to lay Hands on him. They ſeeing the Town begin to fill with *devout* People out of the Country, wonder'd they did not find him among them; when they ſhould have been aſſiſting them that came to purify themſelves, according to the Duty of their Place, they were plotting againſt Chriſt. How miſerably degenerate was the Jewiſh Church, when the Prieſts of the Lord were become like the Prieſts of the Calves, a *Snare on* Mizpeh, *and a Net ſpread upon* Tabor, and were *profound to make Slaughter*, Hoſ. 5. 1. 2. When inſtead of keeping the Feaſt with unleavened Bread, they were themſelves ſower'd with Leaven of the worſt Malice. Their asking, *What think ye? Will he not come up to the Feaſt?* implies, (1.) an invidious Reflection upon Chriſt, as if he would omit his Attendance on the Feaſt of the Lord, for fear of expoſing himſelf. If others through Irreligion be abſent, they are not animadverted upon, but if Chriſt be abſent for his own Preſervation (for God will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice) 'tis turn'd to his Reproach, as it was to *David*'s, that his Seat was empty at the Feaſt, tho' *Saul* wanted him only, that he might have an Opportunity of nailing him to the Wall with his Javelin, 1 *Sam.* 20. 26, 27. 'Tis ſad to ſee holy Ordinances proſtituted to ſuch unholy Purpoſes. (2.) A fearful Apprehenſion they had of miſſing their Game; *Will he not come up to the Feaſt?* If he do not, our Meaſures are broke, and we are all undone; for there's no ſending a Purſuivant into the Country to fetch him up.

3. The Orders iſſued out by the Government for the apprehending of him were very ſtrict, *v.* 57. The great *Sanhedrin* iſſued out a Proclamation, ſtrictly charging and requiring, that if any Perſon in City or Country *knew where he was*, pretending that he was a Criminal, and had fled from Juſtice, they ſhould ſhew it, that he might be taken, probably promiſing a Reward to any that would diſcover him, and impoſing a Penalty on ſuch as harbour'd him. So that hereby he was repreſented to the People as an obnoxious dangerous Man, an Out-law, whom any one may have a Blow at. *Saul* iſſued out ſuch a Proclamation for apprehending of *David*, and *Ahab* of *Elijah*. See, (1.) How intent they were upon this Proſecution, and how indefatigably they labour'd in it, now at a time when if they had had any Senſe of Religion, and the Duty of their Function, they would have found themſelves ſomething elſe to do.

(2.) How willingly they were to involve others in the Guilt with them; if any Man were capable of betraying Chriſt, they would have him think himſelf bound to do it. Thus was the Intereſt they had in the People abus'd to the worſt Purpoſes. *Note*, It is an Aggravation of the Sins of wicked Rulers, that they commonly make thoſe that are under them, Inſtruments of their Unrighteouſneſs. But notwithſtanding this Proclamation, tho' doubtleſs many knew where he was, yet ſuch was his Intereſt in the Affections of ſome, and ſuch God's Hold of the Conſciences of others, that he continued undiſcover'd, for the *Lord hid him.*

CHAP. XII.

It was a melancholy Account which we had in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, of the Diſgrace done to our Lord Jeſus, when the Scribes and Phariſees proclaim'd him a Traytor to their Church, and put upon him all the Marks of Ignominy they could; but the Story of this Chapter ballanced that, by giving us an Account of the Honour done to the Redeemer, notwithſtanding all that Reproach thrown upon him. Thus the one was ſet over againſt the other. Let us ſee what Honours were heaped on the Head of the Lord Jeſus, even in the Depths of his Humiliation. (1.) Mary *did him Honour, by anointing his Feet at the Supper in* Bethany, *v.* 1.—11. (2.) *The* common People *did him Honour with their Acclamations of Joy, when he rode in Triumph to* Jeruſalem, *v.* 12—19. (3.) *The* Greeks *did him Honour, by enquiring after him with a longing Deſire to ſee him, v.* 20.—26. (4.) God the Father *did him Honour, by a Voice from Heaven, bearing Teſtimony to him, v.* 27.—36. (5.) *He had Honour done him by the Old Teſtament Prophets, who foretold the Infidelity of thoſe that heard the Report of him,* v. 37.—41. (6.) *He had Honour done him by ſome of the* chief Rulers, *whoſe Conſciences witneſſed for him, tho' they had not Courage to own it,* v. 42, 43. (7.) *He claimed Honour to himſelf, by aſſerting his Divine Miſſion, and the Account he gave of his Errand into the World,* ver. 44—50.

THEN Jeſus, ſix days before the paſſover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raiſed from the dead. 2 There they made him a ſupper, and Martha ſerved: but Lazarus was one of them that ſat at the table with him. 3 Then took Mary a pound of oyntment, of ſpikenard, very coſtly, and anointed the feet of Jeſus, and wiped his feet with her Hair: and the houſe was filled with the odour of the ointment. 4 Then ſaith one of his diſciples, Judas Iſcariot, Simon's ſon, which ſhould betray him, 5 Why was not this ointment ſold for three hundred Pence, and given to the poor? 6 This he ſaid, not that he cared for the poor; but becauſe he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. 7 Then ſaid Jeſus, Let her alone: againſt the day of my burying hath ſhe kept this. 8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always. 9. Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came, not for Jeſus ſake only, but that they might ſee Lazarus alſo, whom he had raiſed from the dead. 10. But the chief prieſts conſulted, that they might put Lazarus alſo to death; 11 Becauſe that by reaſon of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jeſus.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, The *kind Viſit* our Lord Jeſus made to his Friends at *Bethany*, v. 1. He came up out of the Country, *ſix Days before the Paſſover*, and took up at *Bethany*, a Town, that according to the Computation of our Metropolis, lay ſo near *Jeruſalem*, as to be within the Bills of Mortality. He lodged here with his Friend *Lazarus*, whom he had lately *rais'd from the Dead.* His coming to *Bethany* now may be conſider'd.

1. As a Preface to the Paſſover he intended to celebrate, to which Relation is had in the Date of the time, *Six Days before the Paſſover.* Devout Men ſet time apart before, to prepare themſelves for that Solemnity, and thus it became our Lord Jeſus to *fulfil all Righteouſneſs.* And thus he has ſet us an Example of ſolemn Self-ſequeſtration, before the Solemnities of the Goſpel Paſſover; let us hear the Voice crying, *Prepare ye the Way of the Lord.*

2. As a voluntary expoſing himſelf to the Fury of his Enemies; now his Hour was at hand, he came within their Reach, and freely offer'd himſelf to them, tho' he had ſhew'd them how eaſily he could evade all their Snares, *Note*, 1. Our Lord Jeſus was voluntarily in his Sufferings; his Life was not *forc'd* from him, but *reſign'd*; *Lo, I come.* As the Strength of his Perſecutors could not over-power him, ſo their Subtilty could not ſurprize him, but he dy'd, becauſe he would. 2. As there is a time when we are allow'd to ſhift for our own Preſervation, ſo there is a time we are call'd to jeopard our Lives in the Cauſe of God, as St. *Paul*, when he *went bound in the Spirit to* Jeruſalem.

3. As an Inſtance of his Kindneſs to his Friends at *Bethany*, whom he lov'd, and from whom he was ſhortly to be *taken away.* This was a Farewel-Viſit, he came to take Leave of them, and to leave with them Words of Comfort againſt the Day of Trial that was approaching. *Note*, tho' Chriſt depart for a time from his People, he will give them Intimations that he parts in Love, and not in Anger. *Bethany* is here deſcrib'd to be the Town, *where* Lazarus *was, whom he raiſed from the Dead.* That Miracle wrought here, put a new Honour upon the Place, and made it remarkable. Chriſt came hither to obſerve what Improvement was made of that Miracle; for where Chriſt works Wonders, and ſhews ſignal Favours, he looks after them to ſee whether the Intention of them be anſwer'd. Where he has ſown plentifully, he obſerves whether it comes up again.

Secondly, The *kind Entertainment* which his Friends there gave him; they *made him a Supper*, v. 2. a great Supper, a Feaſt. 'Tis query'd, whether this was the ſame with that which is recorded, *Mat.* 26. 6. &c. in the Houſe of *Simon*; moſt think they were; for the Subſtance of the Story, and many of the Circumſtances agree; but that comes in after what was ſaid *two Days* before the Paſſover, whereas this was done *ſix Days* before; nor is it likely that *Martha* ſhould ſerve in any Houſe but her own; and therefore I incline with Dr. *Lightfoot* to think them different; that that in *Matthew* was on the third Day of the Paſſover Week, but this here the ſeventh Day of the Week before, being the Jewiſh Sabbath, the Night before he rode in Triumph to *Jeruſalem*: That in the Houſe of *Simon*, this of *Lazarus*; theſe two being the moſt publick and ſolemn Entertainments given him in *Bethany*, *Mary* graced them *both*, with this Token of her Reſpect; and what ſhe *left* of her Ointment this firſt time, when ſhe ſpent but a *Pound* of it, *v.* 3. ſhe us'd that a ſecond time, when ſhe *pour'd it all out*, Mark 14. 3.

Let us ſee the Account of this Entertainment.

1. They *made him a Supper*; for with them ordinarily Supper was the beſt Meal. This they did in Token of their Reſpect and Gratitude, for a Feaſt is made for *Friendſhip*; and that they might have an Opportunity of free and pleaſant Converſation with him, for a Feaſt is made for *Fellowſhip.* Perhaps in Alluſion to this and the like Entertainments given to Chriſt in the Days of his Fleſh, it is that he promiſeth to ſuch as open the Door of their Hearts to him, that he will *ſup* with him, Rev. 3. 20.

2. *Martha ſerved*, ſhe her ſelf waited at Table, in Token of her great Reſpect to the Maſter; tho' a Perſon of ſome Quality, ſhe did not think it below her to *ſerve*, when Chriſt ſat at Meat; nor ſhould we think it a Diſhonour or Diſparagement to us to ſtoop to any Service whereby Chriſt may be honoured. Chriſt had formerly reproved *Martha* for being *troubled with much ſerving.* But ſhe did not therefore leave off ſerving, as ſome, who when they are reproved for one Extreme, peeviſhly run into another; no, ſtill ſhe *ſerved*; not as then at a Diſtance, but *within hearing* of Chriſt's gracious Words, reckoning thoſe happy, who, as the Queen of *Sheba* ſaid concerning *Solomon*'s Servants, ſtood continually before him to hear his Wiſdom; better be a *Waiter* at Chriſt's Table, than a *Gueſt* at a Table of a Prince.

3. *Lazarus* was *one of them that ſat at Meat.* It proved the Truth of his Reſurrection, as it did of Chriſt's, that there were thoſe who did *eat and drink with them*, Acts 10. 41. *Lazarus* did not retire into *a Wilderneſs* after his Reſurrection, as if when he had made a Viſit to the other World, he muſt ever after be a Hermite in this; no, he convers'd familiarly with People as others did. He *ſat at Meat*, as a Monument of the Miracle Chriſt had wrought. Thoſe whom Chriſt has *raiſed up* to a ſpiritual Life, are made to *ſit together with him.* See *Eph.* 2. 5, 6.

Thirdly, The particular Reſpect which *Mary* ſhewed him above the reſt, in anointing his Feet with Ointment, *v.* 3. She had a *Pound of Ointment of Spikenard, very coſtly*, which probably ſhe had by her for her own Uſe, but the Death and Reſurrection of her Brother had quite wean'd her from the Uſe of all ſuch things, and with this ſhe *anointed the Feet of Jeſus*, and as a farther Token of her Reverence for him, and Negligence of her ſelf, ſhe *wiped them with her Hair*, and this was taken Notice of by all that were preſent, for *the Houſe was filled with the Odour of the Ointment.* See *Prov.* 27. 16.

Doubtleſs ſhe intended this as a Token of her Love to Chriſt, who had given real Tokens of his Love to her and her Family, and thus ſhe ſtudies what ſhe ſhall render. Now by this her Love to Chriſt appears to have been,

1. A *generous* Love, ſo far from ſticking at neceſſary Charges in his Service, that ſhe is as ingenious to *create* an Occaſion of Expence in Religion, as moſt are to avoid it. If ſhe had any thing more valuable than other, that muſt be brought out for the Honour of Chriſt. *Note*, Thoſe who love Chriſt truly, love him ſo much better than this World, as to be willing to lay out the beſt they have for him.

2. A *condeſcending* Love. She not only beſtow'd her Ointment upon Chriſt, but pour'd it upon him with her own Hands, which ſhe might have order'd one of her Servants to have done; nay, ſhe did not as uſual anoint his Head with it, but *his Feet.* True Love, as it doth not ſtick at Charges, ſo it does not ſtick at Pains in honouring Chriſt. Conſidering what Chriſt has done, and ſuffer'd for us, we are very ungrateful, if we think any Service too hard to do, or to mean to ſtoop to, whereby he may *really* be glorified.

3. A *believing* Love; there was Faith working by this Love, Faith in *Jeſus*, as the *Meſſiah*, the *Chriſt*, i. e. the *Anointed*, that being both Prieſt and King, was anointed as *Aaron* and *David* were. *Note*, *God's Anointed* ſhould be *our Anointed*; has God pour'd on

him the Oyl of Gladneſs above his Fellows, let us pour on him the Ointment of our beſt Affections above all Competitors. By conſenting to Chriſt as *our* King, we muſt comply with God's Deſigns, appointing him *our Head* whom he has appointed, *Hoſ.* 1. 11.

The *filling of the Houſe* with the pleaſant *Odour* of the *Ointment*, may intimate to us, (1.) That thoſe who entertain Chriſt in their Hearts and Houſes, bring a ſweet Odour into them; Chriſt's Preſence brings with it an Ointment and *Perfume which rejoice the Heart.* (2.) Honours done to Chriſt are Comforts to all his Friends and Followers, they are to God and good Men an Offering of a *ſweet ſmelling Savour.*

Fourthly, Judas's diſlike of *Mary*'s Compliment, or Token of her Reſpect to Chriſt, *v.* 4, 5. where obſerve,

1. The Perſon that carp'd at it was *Judas, one of his Diſciples*; not one of their Nature but only one of their Number: 'Tis poſſible for the worſt of Men to lurk under the Diſguiſe of the beſt Profeſſion; and there are many who pretend to ſtand in Relation to Chriſt, that really have no Kindneſs for him. *Judas* an Apoſtle, a Preacher of the Goſpel, and yet one that diſcourag'd and check'd this Inſtance of pious Affection and Devotion. *Note*, 'Tis ſad to ſee the Life of Religion, and Holy Zeal *frown'd upon* and *diſcountenanc'd* by ſuch as are oblig'd by their Office to aſſiſt and encourage it. But this was he that ſhould *betray Chriſt. Note*, Coldneſs of Love to Chriſt, and a ſecret Contempt of ſerious Piety, when they appear in Profeſſors of Religion, are ſad Preſages of a final Apoſtacy. Hypocrites by leſſer Inſtances of Wordlineſs diſcover themſelves to be ready for a Cloſure, with greater Temptations.

2. The Pretence with which he diſcover'd his Diſlike, *v.* 5. *Why was not this Ointment*, ſince it was deſign'd for a pious Uſe, ſold for Three Hundred Pence, which is 8 *l.* 10 *s.* of our Money, and *given to the Poor*? Here's, (1.) A *foul Iniquity* gilded over with a ſpecious and plauſible Pretence, for *Satan* transforms himſelf into an Angel of Light. (2.) Here is *worldly Wiſdom* paſſing a Cenſure upon *pious Zeal*, as guilty of Imprudence and Miſmangement. Thoſe who value themſelves upon their *ſecular Policy*, and undervalue others for their *ſerious Piety*, have more in them of the Spirit of *Judas*, than they would be thought to have. (3.) Here's Charity to the Poor made a Colour for oppoſing a piece of Piety to Chriſt, and ſecretly made a Cloak for Covetouſneſs. Many excuſe themſelves from *laying out* in Charity, under Pretence of *laying up* for Charity; whereas if the Clouds be full of Rain, they will *empty themſelves. Judas* ask'd, *Why was it not given to the Poor*? To which its eaſie to anſwer, becauſe it was *better beſtow'd* upon the Lord Jeſus. *Note*, We muſt not conclude that thoſe do no acceptable piece of Service, who do not do it in our way, and juſt as we would have them; as if every Thing muſt be adjudg'd imprudent and unfit, which doth not take its Meaſures from us and our Sentiments. Proud Men think all *ill-adviſed* that do not *adviſe with them.*

3. The Detection and Diſcovery of *Judas*'s Hypocriſie herein, *v.* 6. Here's the Evangeliſt's Remark upon it, by the Direction of him *who ſearcheth the Heart.* This he ſaid, *not that he cared for the Poor*, as he pretended, but becauſe *he was a Thief*, and *had the Bag.*

1. It did not come from a *Principle of Charity: Not that he cared for the Poor.* He had no Compaſſion towards them, no Concern for them, what were the Poor to him, any further than he might ſerve his own Ends, by being Overſeer of the Poor. 1. Some warmly contend for the *Power* of the Church, others for its *Purity*, when perhaps it may be ſaid, not that they care for the Church; its all one to them whether its *true Intereſt* ſink or ſwim but under the Umbrage of this they are advancing themſelves. *Simon* and *Levi* pretended Zeal for Circumciſion, *not that they cared* for the Seal of the Covenant, any more than *Jehu* for the Lord of Hoſts, when he ſaid, *come ſee my Zeal.*

2. It did not come from a *Principle of Covetouſneſs.* The Truth of the Matter was, This Ointment being deſign'd for his Maſter, he wou'd rather have had it in Money, to be put in the common Stock which he was intruſted with, and then he knew what to do with it. Obſerve,

1. *Judas* was Treaſurer of Chriſt's Houſhold, whence ſome think he was call'd *Iſcariot*, the *Bag-bearer.*

(1.) See what *Eſtate* Jeſus and his Diſciples had to *live upon*, 'twas but *little*; they had neither Farms nor Merchandiſe, neither Barns nor Store-houſes, only a *Bag*; or ſome think, the Word ſignifies a *Box* or Coffer, wherein they kept juſt enough for their Subſiſtence, giving the Over-plus, if any were, to the Poor, this they carry'd about with them where-ever they went; *Omnia mea mecum porto.* This Bag was ſupply'd with the Contributions of good People, and the Maſter and Diſciples had all in *common*; let this leſſen our Eſteem of worldly Wealth, and deaden us to the punctilo's of State and Ceremony, and reconcile us to a mean and deſpicable Way of living, if that be our Lot; that it was our Maſter's Lot; for our Sakes he *became poor.*

(2.) See who was the *Steward* of the little they had, 'twas *Judas*, he was Purſe-bearer; 'twas his Office to *receive* and *pay*, and we do not find that he gave any account what Markets he made. He was appointed to this Office, either, 1. Becauſe he was the leaſt and loweſt of all the Diſciples; 'twas not *Peter* or *John* that was made Steward, tho' 'twas a Place of Truſt and Profit, but *Judas*, the meaneſt of them. *Note*, Secular Employments, as they are a Diverſion, ſo they are a Diminution to a Miniſter of the Goſpel, ſee 1 *Cor.* 6. 4. The prime Miniſter's of State in Chriſt's Kingdom refus'd to be concern'd in the Revenue, *Acts* 6. 2. 2. Becauſe he was *deſirous* of the Place. He loved in his Heart to be fingering Money, and therefore had the *Money-bag* committo him, either, 1. As a *Kindneſs*, to pleaſe him, and thereby obliged him to be true to his Maſter. Subjects are ſometimes diſaffected to the Government becauſe baulk'd in their Preferment; but *Judas* had no Cauſe to complain of that, the Bag he choſe, and the Bag he had. Or, 2. In *Judgment* upon him, to puniſh him for his ſecret Wickedneſs, that was put into his Hands, which would be a Snare and Trap to him. *Note*, Strong Inclinations to Sin within, are oftentimes juſtly puniſh'd with ſtrong Temptations to Sin without: We have little Reaſon to be *fond* of the Bag, or *proud* of it, for at the beſt we are but *Stewards* of it; and it was *Judas*, one of an ill Character, and born to be hang'd, (pardon the Expreſſion) that was *Steward of the Bag*; the *Proſperity of Fools deſtroys them.*

2. Being truſted with the Bag he was a *Thief*, i. e. he had a thieviſh Diſpoſition. The reigning Love of Money is *heart-Theft*, as much as Anger and Revenge is *heart-Murther.* Or, perhaps he had been really guilty of embezzling his Maſter's Stores, and converting that to his own Uſe which was given to the publick Stock. And ſome conjecture that he was now contriving to fill his Pockets, and then *run away* and leave his Maſter, having heard him ſpeak ſo much of Troubles approaching, which he could by no means reconcile himſelf to. *Note*, They to whom the Management and Diſpoſal of publick Money is committed, have need to be govern'd by ſteady Principles of Juſtice and Honeſty, that no Blot cleave to their Hands, for tho' ſome make a Jeſt of cheating the Government, or the Church, or the Country, if cheating be *theiving*, and Communities being more conſiderable than particular Perſons, if robbing them be the greater Sin, the Guilt of Theft and the Portion of Theives will be found no jeſting Matter. *Judas* that had betray'd his Truſt ſoon after betray'd his Maſter.

Fifthly, Chriſt's Juſtification of what *Mary* did, *v.* 7. 8. *Let her alone.* Hereby he intimated, (1.) His Acceptance of her Kindneſs. Tho' he was perfectly mortified to all the Delights of Senſe, yet as it was a Token of her good Will, he ſignified himſelf well-pleaſed with it. (2.) His Care that ſhe ſhould not be moleſted in it. *Pardon her*, ſo it may be read; excuſe her this once, if it be an Error, 'tis an Error of her Love. *Note*, Chriſt would not have them cenſur'd or diſcourag'd that ſincerely deſign to pleaſe him, tho' in their honeſt Endeavours there be not all the Diſcretion that may be, *Rom.* 14. 3. Tho' we would not do as they do, yet let *them alone.* For *Mary*'s Juſtification,

1. Chriſt puts a favourable Conſtruction upon what ſhe did, which they that condemn'd it were not aware of. *Againſt the Day of my burying ſhe has kept this.* Or, *ſhe hath reſerved this for the Day of my embalming*, ſo, Dr. *Hammond.* You do not grudge the Ointment us'd for the embalming your dead Friends, nor ſay that ſhould be ſold and given to the Poor. Now this anointing either was ſo *intended*, or at leaſt may be ſo *interpreted*, for the Day of my burying is now at Hand, and ſhe has anointed a Body that is already *as good as dead. Note*, (1.) Our Lord Jeſus thought much, and of his own Death and Burial, it would be good for us to do ſo too. (2.) Providence doth often *ſo* open a Door of Opportunity to good Chriſtians; and the Spirit of Grace doth ſo open their Hearts, as that the Expreſſions of their pious Zeal proves to be more *ſeaſonable*, and more *beautiful* than any foreſight of their own could make them. (3.) The Grace of Chriſt puts kind Comments upon the pious Words and Actions of good People, and not only makes the beſt of what is amiſs, but makes the moſt of what is good.

2. He gives a ſufficient Anſwer to *Judas*'s Objection, *v.* 8. (1.) 'Tis ſo ordered in the Kingdom of Providence that *the Poor we have always with us*, ſome or other that are proper Objects of Charity, *Deut.* 15. 11. ſuch there will be as long as there is in this lapſed State of Mankind ſo much Folly and ſo much Affliction. (2.) 'Tis ſo ordered in the Kingdom of Grace that the Church ſhould not always have the bodily Preſence of Jeſus Chriſt, *Me ye have not always*, but only now for a little Time. *Note*, We need Wiſdom when Two Duties come in Competition, to know which to give the Preference to, which muſt be determin'd by the Circumſtances. *Opportunities* are to be improv'd, and thoſe Opportunities firſt and moſt vigorouſly which are likely to be of the ſhorteſt Continuance, and which we ſeem moſt ſpeedily haſtning away. That good Duty which may be done *at any Time*, ought to give way to that which cannot be done but *juſt now*,

Sixthly, The publick Notice which was taken of our Lord Jeſus here at this Supper in *Bethany*, *v.* 9. *Much People of the* Jews *knew that he was there*, for he was the Talk of the Town, and *they came* flocking thither; the more becauſe he had lately abſconded, and now broke out as the Sun from behind a dark Cloud.

1. They came to *ſee Jeſus*, whoſe Name was very much greaten'd, and made conſiderable by the late Miracle he had wrought in raiſing *Lazarus.* They came not to *hear him*, but to gratify their Curioſity with a Sight of him here at *Bethany*, fearing he would not appear publickly as he us'd to do this Paſſover. They came, not to *ſeize him*, or inform againſt him, tho' the Government had proſecuted him to an *Out-lawry*, but to ſee him,

and ſhew him Reſpect. *Note,* There are ſome in whoſe Affections Chriſt will have an Intereſt in ſpite of all the Attempts of his Enemies to miſrepreſent him. It being known where Chriſt was, Multitudes came to him. *Note,* Where the King is, there is the Court; where Chriſt is, there will the *gathering of the People be,* Luke 17.

2. They came to ſee *Lazarus* and Chriſt together, which was a very inviting Sight. Some came, for the Confirmation of their Faith in Chriſt, to have the Story perhaps from *Lazarus*'s own Mouth. Others came only for the gratifying of their Curioſity, that they might ſay they had *ſeen a Man* who had been dead and buried, and yet liv'd again; ſo that *Lazarus* ſerv'd for a *Show* theſe Holidays, to thoſe who, like the *Athenians,* ſpent their Time in telling and hearing *new Things.* Perhaps ſome came to put curious Queſtions to *Lazarus* about the State of the Dead, to ask what News from the other World; we our ſelves have ſometimes ſaid, it may be, we would have gone a great Way for one Hour's Diſcourſe with *Lazarus*: But if any came on this Errand, 'tis probable *Lazarus* was ſilent, and gave them no account of his Voyage; however the Scripture is ſilent, and gives us no account of it; and we muſt not covet to be wiſe above what is written. But our Lord Jeſus was preſent, who was a much fitter Perſon for them to apply than *Lazarus*; for if we hear not *Moſes* and the Prophets, Chriſt and the Apoſtles; if we heed not what they tell us concerning another World, neither would we be perſwaded tho' *Lazarus* roſe from the dead. We have a more ſure Word of Prophecy.

Seventhly, The Indignation of the Chief Prieſts at the growing Intereſt of our Lord Jeſus, and their Plot to cruſh it, *v.* 10, 11. They *conſulted* (or *decreed*) *how they might put* Lazarus *alſo to death* becauſe that *by reaſon of him,* i. e. of what was done to him, not of any Thing he ſaid or did, *many of the* Jews *went away* and *believed in Jeſus.* Here obſerve,

1. How *vain* and *unſucceſsful* their Attempts againſt Chriſt had hitherto been. They had done all they could to *alienate* the People from him, and *exaſperate* them againſt him, and yet many of the *Jews,* their Neighbours, their Creatures, their Admirers were ſo overcome by the convincing Evidence of Chriſt's Miracles, that they *went away* from the Intereſt and Party of the Prieſts, went off from Obedience to their Tyranny, and *believed on Jeſus.* And it was by Reaſon of *Lazarus*; his Reſurrection put Life into their Faith, and convinced them that this Jeſus was undoubtedly the *Meſſiah,* and had Life in himſelf, and Power to give Life. This Miracle confirmed them in the Belief of his other Miracles which they had heard he wrought in *Galilee*; what was impoſſible to him that could raiſe the dead?

2. How *abſurd* and *unreaſonable* this Day's Vote was, that *Lazarus* muſt be put to death. This is an Inſtance of the moſt brutiſh Rage that could be, they were like *a wild Bull in a Net,* full of Fury, and laying about them without any Conſideration: 'Twas a Sign they neither *feared God* nor *regarded Man*; for,

1. If they had *feared God* they would not have done ſuch an Act of *defiance* to him. God will have *Lazarus* to live by *Miracle,* and they will have him to die by Malice. They cry, *Away with ſuch a Fellow,* 'tis not *fit he ſhould live,* when God had ſo lately ſent him back to the Earth, declaring it highly fit he ſhould live; what was this but *walking contrary to God?* They would put *Lazarus* to death, and challenge Almighty Power to raiſe him again, as if they could contend with God, and try Titles with the King of Kings? Who has the Keys of Death and the Grave, he or they? *O cæca Militia; Chriſtus qui ſuſcitare potuit mortuum, non poſſit occiſum?* Aug. in loc. *Lazarus* is ſingled out to be the Object of their ſpecial Hatred, becauſe God has diſtinguiſh'd him by the Tokens of his peculiar Love, as if they had made a League offenſive and defenſive with Death and Hell, and reſolved to be ſevere upon all Deſerters. One would think they ſhould rather have conſulted *how they might have* joyn'd in Friendſhip with *Lazarus* and his Family, and by their Mediations have reconciled themſelves to this Jeſus whom they had perſecuted; but the God of this World had *blinded their Minds.*

2. If they had *regarded Man,* they would not have done ſuch an Act of Injuſtice to *Lazarus,* an innocent Man, to whoſe Charge they could not pretend to lay any Crime. What Bands are ſtrong enough to hold thoſe, who can ſo eaſily break through the moſt ſacred Ties of common Juſtice, and violate the Maxims which even Nature it ſelf teacheth; but the ſupport of their own Tyranny and Superſtition were thought ſufficient, as in the Church of *Rome,* not only to juſtify, but to conſecrate, the greateſt Villanies, and make them *meritorious.*

12 ¶ On the next day, much people that were come to the feaſt, when they heard that Jeſus was coming to Jeruſalem, 13 Took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hoſanna, bleſſed *is* the King of Iſrael that cometh in the name of the Lord. 14 And Jeſus when he found a young aſs, ſat thereon; as it is written, 15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold thy King cometh, ſitting on an aſſes colt. 16 Theſe things underſtood not his diſciples at the firſt: but when Jeſus was glorified, than remembred they that theſe things were written of him, and *that* they had done theſe things unto him. 17 The people therefore that was with him, when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raiſed him from the dead, bear record. 18 For this cauſe the people alſo met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. 19 The Phariſees therefore ſaid among themſelves, perceive ye how you prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

This Story of Chriſt's riding in Triumph to *Jeruſalem* is recorded by all the Evangeliſts, as worthy of ſpecial Remark; and in it we may obſerve,

Firſt, The Reſpects that were paid to our Lord Jeſus by the common People, *v.* 12, 13. where we are told,

1. Who they were that paid him theſe Reſpects, *much People,* ὄχλος πολὺς, a great Crowd of thoſe that came up to the Feaſt; not the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem,* but the Country People that came from remote Parts to worſhip at the Feaſt; the *nearer* the Temple of the Lord, the *farther* from the Lord of the Temple. They were ſuch as *came up to the Feaſt.* (1.) Perhaps they had been Chriſt's Hearers in the Country, and great Admirers of him there, and therefore were forward to teſtify their Reſpects to him at *Jeruſalem,* where they knew he had many Enemies. *Note,* Thoſe that have a true Value and Veneration for Chriſt, will neither be aſham'd nor afraid to own him before Men in any Inſtance whereby they may do him Honour. (2.) Perhaps they were thoſe more *devout Jews* that came up to the Feaſt ſome time before to purify themſelves, that were more inclin'd to Religion than their Neighbours, and thoſe were they that were ſo forward to honour Chriſt. *Note,* The more Regard Men have to God and Religion in general, the better diſpos'd they will be to entertain Chriſt and *his* Religion, which is not *deſtructive* but *perfective* of all previous Diſcoveries and Inſtitutions. They were not the Rulers, or the Great Men that went out to meet Chriſt, but the Commonality; ſome would have call'd them a Mob, a Rabble; but Chriſt has choſen the weak and fooliſh Things, 1 *Cor.* 1. 27. and is honour'd more by the Multitude than by the Magnificence of his Followers, for he values Men by their Souls, not their Names and Titles of Honour.

2. On what Occaſion they did it, *they heard that Jeſus was coming to* Jeruſalem. They had enquired for him, *chap.* 11. 55, 56. *Will he not come up to the Feaſt?* And now they hear he is coming; for none that ſeek Chriſt ſeek in vain. Now when they heard he was *coming,* they beſtirr'd themſelves to give him an agreeable Reception. *Note,* Tidings of the Approach of Chriſt and his Kingdom, ſhould awaken us to conſider what is the Work of the Day, that it muſt be done in the Day. *Iſrael* may prepare to meet *their God,* Amos 4. 12. and the Virgins to *meet the Bridegroom.*

3. In what way they expreſs'd their Reſpects; they had not the Keys of the City to preſent to him, nor the Sword or Mace to carry before him, none of the City Muſick to compliment him with, but ſuch as they had they gave him; and even this deſpicable Crowd was a faint Reſemblance of that glorious Company which *John* ſaw, *before the Throne, and before the Lamb,* Rev. 7. 9, 10. Tho' theſe were not before the Throne, they were before *the Lamb,* the Paſcal Lamb, who now according to the uſual Ceremony, *four Days* before the Feaſt, was ſet apart to be ſacrificed for us. There 'tis ſaid of that celeſtial Choir,

1. That they had *Palms* in their Hands, and ſo had theſe *Branches of Palm-trees.* The *Palm-tree* has ever been an Emblem of Victory and Triumph; *Cicero* calls one that had won many Prizes, *Plurimarum Palmarum Homo.* Chriſt was now by his Death to conquer Principalities and Powers, and therefore 'twas fit he ſhould have the Victor's Palm born before him; tho' he was but girding on the Harneſs, yet he could boaſt as tho' he had put it off. But this was not all, the carrying of Palm-Branches was part of the Ceremony of the Feaſt of Tabernacles, *Lev.* 23. 40. *Neh.* 8. 15. and their uſing of this Expreſſion of Joy in the Welcome given to our Lord Jeſus, intimates, that all the Feaſts pointed at his Goſpel, and had the Accompliſhment in it, and that particularly that of the Feaſt of Tabernacles, *Zech.* 14. 16.

2. That they *cryed with a loud Voice, ſaying, Salvation to our God,* Rev. 7. 10. ſo did theſe here, they ſhouted before him as is uſual in popular Welcomes, *Hoſanna, Bleſſed is the King of* Iſrael *that comes in the Name of the Lord*; and *Hoſanna ſignifies Salvation.* 'Tis fetch'd from *Pſal.* 118. 25, 26. See how well acquainted theſe common People were with the Scripture, and how pertinently they apply'd it to the *Meſſiah.* High Thoughts of Chriſt will be beſt expreſs'd in Scripture Words. Now in their Acclamations,

1. They acknowledge our Lord Jeſus to be the King of *Iſrael,* that comes *in the Name of the Lord.* Tho' he went now in Poverty and Diſgrace, yet contrary to the Notions their Scribes had given them of the Meſſiah, they own him to be *a King*; which ſpeaks both his Dignity and Honour, which we muſt adore; and his Dominion and Power, which we muſt ſubmit to. They own him to be, 1. A rightful King, coming in *the Name of the Lord,* Pſal. 2. 6. ſent of God, not only as a *Prophet,* but as a *King.* 2. The promiſed and a long expected King, *Meſſiah* the Prince, for he is the *King of Iſrael.* According to the Light they had, they proclaimed him King of *Iſrael* in the Streets of *Jeruſalem*; and they themſelves being *Iſraelites,* hereby they avouch'd him for *their King.*

2. They heartily wiſh well to his Kingdom, that's the meaning of *Hoſanna*; let the King of *Iſrael* proſper, as when *Solomon* was crowned, they cry'd, *God ſave King* Solomon, 1 *Kings* 1. 38. In crying *Hoſanna* they prayed for Three Things. (1.) That his Kingdom might come in the Light and Knowledge of it, and in the Power and Efficacy of it. God ſpeed the Goſpel Plow. (2.) That it might *Conquer*, and be Victorious over all Oppoſition, *Rev.* 6. 2. (3.) That it might *continue*. *Hoſanna* is, *Let the King live for ever*; tho' his Kingdom may be diſturb'd, let it never be deſtroy'd, *Pſal.* 72. 17.

3. They bid him welcome into *Jeruſalem*; welcome as they might ſay, *welcome is he that cometh*; we are heartily glad to ſee him; *come in thou bleſſed of the Lord*: And well may we attend him with our Bleſſings, who meets us with his. This welcome is like that, *Pſal.* 24. 7, 9. *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates.* Thus we muſt every one of us bid Chriſt welcome into our Hearts, that is, we muſt *praiſe* him and be well *pleaſed* in him. As we ſhould be highly pleas'd with the Being and Attributes of God, and his Relations to us, ſo we ſhould be with the Perſon and Offices of the Lord Jeſus, and his Mediation between us and God. Faith ſaith, *Bleſſed is he that comes.*

Secondly, The Poſture Chriſt put himſelf into for the receiving of the Reſpects that were paid him; *v.* 14. *When he had found* or procur'd *a young Aſs*, he *ſat thereon*; 'twas but a poor ſort of Figure he made, he alone upon an Aſs, and a crowd of People about him ſhouting *Hoſanna*.

1. This was much *more of State* than he us'd to take, he us'd to travel on Foot, but now he was mounted. Tho' his Followers ſhould be willing to take up with mean Things, and not affect any Thing that looks like Grandeur, yet it is allowed them to uſe the Service of the inferior Creatures, according as God in his Providence gives particular Poſſeſſion of that, over which, by his Covenant with *Noah* and his Sons, he has given to Man a general Dominion.

2. Yet it was much *leſs of State* than the great Ones of the World uſe to take. If he would have made a publick Entry, according to the State of a Man of high Degree, he ſhould have rode in a Chariot like that of *Solomon*'s, Cant. 3. 9, 10. With *Pillars of Silver*, the *Bottom of Gold*, and the *Covering of Purple*; but if we judge according to the Faſhion of this World, to be introduc'd thus was rather a Diſpargement than any Honour to the King of *Iſrael*, for it ſeem'd as if he *would* look *great* and knew not *how*. His Kingdom was not of this World, and therefore came not with outward Pomp. He was now humbling himſelf; but in his exalted State *John* ſees him in a Viſion *on a white Horſe with a Bow and a Crown.*

Thirdly, The *fulfilling* of the *Scripture* in this, *As it is written, Fear not Daughter of Sion*, v. 15. This was quoted from *Zech.* 9. 9. To him bear all Prophets witneſs, and particularly to this concerning him.

1. It was foretold that *Sion*'s King ſhould come, ſhould come *thus ſitting on an Aſſes Colt*; even the minute Circumſtance was foretold, and Chriſt took Care it ſhould be punctually fulfilled. *Note*, 1. Chriſt is *Sion*'s King; the Holy Hill of *Sion* was of old deſtin'd to be the Metropolis or Royal City of the *Meſſiah*. 2. *Sion*'s King doth, and will look after her, and *come to her*; tho' for a ſhort Time he *retires*, in due Time he *returns*. 3. Tho' he comes but ſlowly, an Aſs is ſlow pac'd yet he comes ſurely, and with ſuch Expreſſions of Humility and Condecenſion, as greatly encourage the Addreſſes and Expectations of his Loyal Subjects. Humble Supplicants may reach to ſpeak with him. If this be a Diſcouragement to *Sion*, that her King appears in no greater State, or Strength, let her know, that tho' he comes to her riding on an Aſſes Colt, yet he goes forth againſt her Enemies riding *on the Heavens for her help*, Deut, 33. 26.

2. Daughter of *Sion* is therefore call'd upon to *behold her King*, to take Notice of him and his Approaches; behold and *wonder*, for he comes with *Obſervation*, tho' not with *outward Show*, Cant. 3. 11. *Fear not.* In the Prophecy, *Sion* is bid to *rejoice greatly*, and to *ſhout*, but here it is render'd, *Fear not*; unbelieving Fears are Enemies to ſpiritual Joys; if they be cur'd, if they be conquer'd, Joy will come of courſe; therefore Chriſt comes to his People to *ſilence* their Fears. If the Caſe be ſo that we cannot reach to the Exultations of *Joy*, yet we ſhould labour to get from under the Oppreſſions of Fear, *Rejoice greatly*, at leaſt *fear not*.

Fourthly, The Remark made by the Evangeliſt upon the Diſciples underſtanding of this, *v.* 16. *They underſtood not at firſt* why Chriſt did this, and how the Scripture is fulfill'd, but *when Jeſus was glorified*, and thereupon the Spirit pour'd out, then they remembered that *theſe Things were written of him* in the Old Teſtament, and that they and others had, in purſuance thereof, *done theſe Things to him*.

1. See here the *Imperfection* of the *Diſciples* now in their infant State, even they *underſtood not theſe Things at firſt*; did not conſider when they fetch'd him the Aſs, and ſet him thereon, that they were performing the Ceremony of the Inauguration of *Sion*'s King. Now obſerve, (1.) The Scripture is often fulfill'd by the Agency of thoſe who have not themſelves an Eye to the Scripture in what they do, *Iſa.* 45. 4. (2.) There are many excellent Things, both in the Word and Providence of God, which the Diſciples themſelves do not at firſt underſtand; not at their firſt Acquaintance with the Things of God, while they *ſee Men as Trees walking*; not at the firſt Propoſal of the Things to their View and Conſideration. That which afterwards is clear, at firſt was dark and doubtful. (3.) It well becomes the Diſciples of Chriſt, when they are grown up to Maturity in Knowledge, frequently to reflect upon the Follies and Weakneſſes of their firſt beginning, that free Grace may have the Glory of their Proficiency, and they may have Compaſſion on the Ignorant. *When I was a Child I ſpake as a Child.*

2. See here the *Improvement* of the Diſciples in their *adult* State. Tho' they had been Children, they were not always ſo, but went on to Perfection. Obſerve,

1. When they underſtood it; *when Jeſus was glorified*; For, 1. *'Till then* they did not rightly apprehend the *Nature* of his *Kingdom*, but expected it to appear in external Pomp and Power, and therefore knew not how to apply the Scriptures which ſpoke of it to ſo mean an Appearance. *Note*, The right underſtanding of the ſpiritual Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, of its Powers, Glories, and Victories, would prevent our miſinterpreting and miſapplying the Scriptures that ſpeak of it. 2. *Till then* the *Spirit* was not *pour'd out*, who was to lead them into all Truth. *Note*, The Diſciples of Chriſt are enabled to underſtand the Scriptures by the ſame Spirit that indited the Scriptures. The *Spirit of Revelation is to* all the Saints a *Spirit of Wiſdom*, Eph. 1. 17. 18.

2. How they underſtood it; they compar'd that Prophecy with the Event, and put them together, that they might mutually receive Light from each other, and ſo they came to underſtand both. *Then remember'd they that theſe Things were written of him* by the Prophets, conſonant to which they were done to him. *Note*, Such an admirable Harmony there is between the Word and Works of God, that the Remembrance of what is *written*, will enable us to underſtand what is *done*; and the Obſervation of what is done will help us to underſtand what is written. *As we have heard ſo have we ſeen.* The Scripture is every Day in the fulfilling.

Fifthly, The Reaſon which induced the People to pay this Reſpect to our Lord Jeſus, upon his coming into *Jeruſalem*, tho' the Government was ſo much ſet againſt him: It was becauſe of that illuſtrious Miracle he had lately wrought in raiſing *Lazarus*.

1. See here what *Account*, and what *Aſſurance* they had of this Miracle: No doubt the City rang of it, the Report of it was in all People's Mouths. But they who conſider'd it as a Proof of Chriſt's Miſſion, and a Ground of their Faith in him, that they might be well ſatisfied of the Matter of Fact, traced the Report, to thoſe who were Eye-Witneſſes of it, that they might *know the Certainty* of it by the utmoſt Evidence the Thing was capable of. *The People therefore that* ſtood by *when he called Lazarus* out of his Grave, being found out and examin'd, *bare Record*, v. 17. They unanimouſly aver'd the Thing to be true, beyond Diſpute or Contradiction, and were ready, if call'd to it, to depoſe it upon Oath, for ſo much is imply'd in the Word ἐμαρτύρει. *Note*, The Truth of Chriſt's Miracles was evidenced by uncontestable Proofs. 'Tis probable thoſe who had ſeen this Miracle, did not only aſſert it to thoſe that ask'd them, but publiſh'd it *unask'd*, that this might add to the Triumphs of this ſolemn Day, and Chriſt's coming in now from *Bethany*, where it was done, would put them in mind of it. *Note*, They who wiſh well to Chriſt's Kingdom, ſhould be forward to proclaim what they know that may redound to his Honour.

2. What Improvement they made of it, and what Influence it had upon them, *v.* 18. *For this Cauſe*, as much as any other, *the People met him*. (1.) Some out of Curioſity were deſirous to ſee one that had done ſuch a wonderful Work. Many a good Sermon he had preach'd in *Jeruſalem*, which drew not ſuch Crowds after him as this one Miracle did. But, (2.) Others, out of Conſcience ſtudy'd to do him Honour, as one ſent of God. This Miracle was reſerv'd for one of the laſt, that it might confirm thoſe which went before, and might gain him this Honour juſt before his Sufferings; Chriſt's Works were all not only *well done* (Mark 7. 37.) but *well timed*.

Sixthly, The Indignation of the Phariſees at all this; ſome of them probably *ſaw*, and they all ſoon *heard* of Chriſt's publick Entry. The Committee appointed to find out Expedients to cruſh him, thought they had gain'd their Point when he was retired into Privacy, and that he would ſoon be forgotten in *Jeruſalem*, but now *rage and fret* when they ſee they imagin'd but a *vain Thing*.

1. They own that *they had got no Ground* againſt him; 'twas plainly to be perceiv'd that they *prevail'd nothing*: They could not, with all their Inſinuations, alienate the People's Affections from him, nor with their Menaces, reſtrain them from ſhewing their Affection to him. *Note*, They who oppoſe Chriſt, and fight againſt his Kingdom, will be made to perceive that they prevail nothing. God will accompliſh his own Purpoſes in ſpight of them, and the little Efforts of their impotent Malice. Ye *prevail nothing*, οὐκ ὠφελεῖτε, *you profit nothing*. *Note*, There's nothing got by oppoſing Chriſt.

2. They own that he had got *Ground*: *The World is gone after him*; there's a vaſt Crowd attending him, a *world of People*; an Hyperbole common in moſt Languages. Yet here, like *Caiaphas*, e'er they were aware, they propheſied that *the World would go after him*; ſome of all Sorts, ſome from all Parts; *Nations* ſhall be *diſcipled*. But to what Intent was this ſaid? (1.) Thus they *expreſs* their own Vexation at the Growth of his Intereſt; their Envy makes them fret. If the *Horn of the Righteous be exalted with Ho-*

nour, the Wicked ſee it, and are grieved, Pſal. 112. 9, 10. conſidering how great theſe Phariſees were, and what abundance of Reſpect was paid them, one would think they needed not grudge Chriſt ſo *inconſiderable* a Piece of Honour as was now done him; but proud Men would monopolize Honour, and have none ſhare with them, like *Hamon*. (2.) Thus they excite themſelves and one another to a more vigorous carrying on of the War againſt Chriſt. As if they ſhould ſay, dallying and delaying thus will never do: We muſt take ſome other and more effectual Courſe, to put a Stop to this Infection; it's time to try our utmoſt Skill and Force before the Grievance grows paſt Redreſs. Thus the Enemies of Religion are made more reſolute and active by being baffled; and ſhall its Friends be diſhearten'd with every Diſappointment, who know its Cauſe is *righteous*, and will at laſt be *victorious*.

20 And there were certain Greeks among them, that came up to worſhip at the feaſt: 21 The ſame came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethſaida of Gallilee, and deſired him, ſaying, Sir, we would ſee Jeſus. 22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again, Andrew and Philip told Jeſus. 23 And Jeſus anſwered them, ſaying, The hour is come, that the Son of man ſhould be glorified. 24 Verily Verily I ſay unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. 25 He that loveth his life ſhall loſe it: and he that hateth his life in this world ſhall keep it unto life eternal. 26 If any man ſerve me, let him follow me; and wher I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervant be: if any man ſerve me, him will *my* Father honour.

Honour is here done to Chriſt by certain *Greeks* that enquir'd for him with Reſpect. We are not told what Day of Chriſt's laſt Week this was, probably not the ſame Day he rode into *Jeruſalem*, for that Day was taken up in publick Work, but a Day or two after.

Firſt, We were told who they were that did this Honour to our Lord Jeſus; *certain Greeks among* the People, who *came up to worſhip at the Feaſt*, v. 20. Some think they were *Jews of the Diſperſion*, ſome of the twelve Tribes that were ſcattered among the Gentiles, and were called *Greeks*, *Helleniſt Jews*; but others think they were *Gentiles*, thoſe whom they call'd *Proſelytes of the Gate*, ſuch as the *Eunuch*, and *Cornelius*. Pure natural Religion met with the beſt Aſſiſtance among the *Jews*, and therefore thoſe among the Gentiles, who were piouſly inclin'd, join'd with them in their ſolemn Meetings as far as was allow'd them. There were devout Worſhippers of the true God, even among them that were Strangers to the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*. It was in the latter Ages of the Jewiſh Church, that there was this flocking of the Gentiles to the Temple at *Jeruſalem*; a happy Preſage of the taking down of the Partition Wall between *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The forbidding of the Prieſts to accept of any Oblation or Sacrifice from a *Gentile* (which was done by *El.azar* the Son of *Ananias*, the High Prieſt) *Joſephus* ſaith, was one of thoſe Things that brought the *Romans* upon them, *De Bell. Jud. l.* 2. *c.* 30. Tho' theſe *Greeks*, if uncircumciſed were not admitted to eat the Paſſover, yet they came to *worſhip, at the Feaſt*. We muſt thankfully uſe the Privileges we have, tho' there may be others, from which we are ſhut out.

Secondly, What was the Honour they did him, they deſir'd to be acquainted with him, *v.* 21. Being come to worſhip at the Feaſt, they deſir'd to make the beſt uſe they could of their time, and therefore applied themſelves to *Philip*, deſiring that he would put them in a way to get ſome perſonal Converſe with the Lord Jeſus.

1. Having a Deſire to ſee Chriſt, they were induſtrious in the Uſe of proper Means. They did not conclude it impoſſible, becauſe he was ſo much crowded to get to ſpeak with him, nor reſt in bare Wiſhes, but reſolved to try what would be done. *Note*, They that would have the Knowledge of Chriſt muſt ſeek it.

2. They made their Application to *Philp*, one of his Diſciples. Some think they had Acquaintance with him formerly, and that they lived near *Bethſaida* in *Galilee* of the *Gentiles*; and then it teacheth us that we ſhould improve our Acquaintance with good People for our Encreaſe in the Knowledge of Chriſt. 'Tis good to know thoſe who know the Lord. But if the *Greeks* had been near *Galilee*, 'tis probable they would have attended Chriſt, there where he moſtly reſided; therefore I think they applied themſelves to him, only becauſe they ſaw him a cloſe Follower of Chriſt, and he was the firſt they could get to ſpeak with. 'Twas an Inſtance of the Veneration they had for Chriſt, that they made an Intereſt with one of his Diſciples, for an Opportunity to converſe with him; a Sign they look'd upon him as ſome great one, tho' he appear'd mean. Thoſe that would ſee Jeſus by Faith, now he is in Heaven, muſt apply themſelves to his Miniſters, whom he hath appointed for this Purpoſe, to guide poor Souls in their Enquiries after him. *Paul* muſt ſend for *Ananias*, and *Cornelius* for *Peter*. The bringing of theſe *Greeks* to the Knowledge of Chriſt by the Means of *Philip* ſignified the *Agency* of the Apoſtles, and the Uſe made of their Miniſtry in the Converſion of the Gentiles to the Faith, and the Diſcipling of the Nations.

3. Their Addreſs to *Philip* was in ſhort this, *Sir, we would ſee Jeſus*. They give him a Title of Reſpect, as one worthy of Honour, becauſe he was in Relation to Chriſt. Their Buſineſs is, they would *ſee Jeſus*; not only ſee his Face, that they might be able to ſay when they came home, they had ſeen one that was ſo much talk'd of, 'tis likely they had ſeen him when he appear'd publickly; but they would have ſome free Converſation with him, and be taught by him, which it was no eaſy thing to find him at leiſure, for his Hands were ſo full of publick Work. Now they were come to worſhip at the Feaſt they would *ſee Jeſus*. *Note*, In our Attendance upon holy Ordinances, and particularly the Goſpel-Paſſover, the great Deſire of our Souls ſhould be to *ſee Jeſus*; to have our Acquaintance with him encreaſed, our Dependance on him encouraged, our Conformity to him carry'd on; to ſee him as ours, to keep up Communion with him, and derive Communications of Grace from him; we miſs of our End in coming, if we do not *ſee Jeſus*.

4. Here's the Report which *Philip* made of this to his Maſter, *v.* 22. He tells *Andrew* who was of *Bethſaida* likewiſe, and was a *Senior Fellow* in the College of the Apoſtles, co-temporary with *Peter*, and conſults him what was to be done, whether he thought the Motion would be acceptable or no, becauſe Chriſt had ſometimes ſaid, *that he was not ſent but to the Houſe of* Iſrael. They agree it muſt be made; but then he would have *Andrew* go along with him, remembring the favourable Acceptance Chriſt had promiſed them in caſe *two of them* ſhould *agree, touching any thing they ſhould aſk*, Mat. 18. 19. *Note*, Chriſt's Miniſters ſhoud be helpful to one another, and concur in helping Souls to Chriſt. *Two are better than one*. It ſhould ſeem *Andrew* and *Philip* brought this Meſſage to Chriſt, when he was teaching in publick, for we read, *v.* 29. of the *People that ſtood by*; but he was ſeldom alone.

Thirdly, Chriſt's Acceptance of this Honour done him, ſiginified by what he ſaid to the People hereupon, *v.* 23. *&c.* where he foretells both the Honour which he himſelf ſhould have in being *follow'd*. v. 23. 24. and the Honour which they ſhould have that follow'd him, *v.* 25, 26. This was intended for the Direction and Encouragement of theſe *Greeks*, and all others that deſir'd Acquaintance with him,

1. He foreſees that plentiful Harveſt in the Converſion of the Gentiles, which this was as it were the firſt Fruits of, *v.* 23. Chriſt ſaid to thoſe two Diſciples, who ſpake a good Word for thoſe *Greeks*, but doubted whether they ſhould ſpeed or no; *The Hour is come, when the Son of Man ſhould be glorified*, by the Acceſſion of the *Gentiles* to the Church, and in order to that, he muſt be rejected of the *Jews*. Obſerve,

(1.) The End deſign'd hereby, and that is the *glorifying* of the Redeemer. And is it ſo? Do the *Gentiles* begin to enquire after me? doth the Morning-Star appear to them, and that bleſſed *Day-ſpring*, which knows its Place, and Time too, doth that begin to *take hold of the Ends of the Earth*? Then the Hour is come for the *glorifying of the Son of Man*. This was no *Surprize* to Chriſt, but a Paradox to thoſe about him. *Note*, 1. The Calling, the effectual Calling of the Gentiles into the Church of God, greatly redounded to the Glory of the Son of Man. The multiplying of the Redeemed, was the magnifying of the Redeemer. 2. There was a Time, a ſet Time, an Hour, a certain Hour, for the glorifying of the Son of Man, which did come at laſt, when the Days of his Humiliation were number'd and finiſh'd, and he ſpeaks of the Approach of it with Exultation and Triumph; *The Hour is come*.

(2.) The ſtrange *way* in which this End was to be attain'd, and that was by the Death of Chriſt, intimated in that Similitude, *v.* 24. *Verily Verily I ſay unto you*, you to whom I have ſpoken of my Death and Sufferings, that *except a Corn of Wheat* fall, not only *to*, but *into the Ground*, and *die*, and be buried and loſt, it *abideth alone*, and you never ſee any more of it; but *if it die* according to the Courſe of Nature, otherwiſe it would be a Miracle, it *bringeth forth much Fruit*; God giving to every Seed its own Body. Chriſt is this Corn of Wheat, the moſt valuable uſeful Grain. Now here is,

1. The Neceſſity of Chriſt's Humiliation intimated. He had never been the living quickning Head, and Root of the Church, if he had not deſcended from Heaven to this accurſed Earth, and aſcended from Earth to the accurſed Tree, and ſo accompliſh'd our Redemption. He muſt *pour out his Soul unto Death*, elſe he cannot *divide a Portion with the great*, Iſa. 53. 12. He ſhall have a Seed given him, but he muſt ſhed his Blood to *purchaſe* them and *purify* them, muſt *win* them, and *wear* them. It was neceſſary likewiſe, as a Qualification for that Glory, which he was to have by the Acceſſion of Multitudes to his Church; for if he had not by his Sufferings made Satisfaction for Sin, and ſo brought in an everlaſting Righteouſneſs, he had not been ſufficiently provided for the Entertainment of thoſe that ſhould come to him, and therefore muſt *abide alone*.

2. The Advantage of Chriſt's Humiliation illuſtrated: *He fell to the Ground*, in his Incarnation, ſeem'd to be bury'd alive in this Earth; ſo much was his Glory veil'd; but that was not all, *he dy'd*, this immortal Seed ſubmitted to the Laws of Mortality, he lay in the Grave like Seed under the Clods: But as the Seed comes up again green and freſh, and flouriſhing, and with great Encreaſe; ſo one *dying Chriſt* gathered to himſelf thouſands of *living Chriſtians*, and he became their Root. The Salvation of Souls hitherto, and henceforward to the End of Time, is all owing to the dying of this *Corn of Wheat*. Hereby the Father and Son are glorified, the Church repleniſh'd, the Myſtical Body kept up, and will at length be compleated, and when Time ſhall be no more, the Captain of our Salvation *bringing many Sons to Glory*, by the Virtue of his Death, and being ſo made perfect by Suffering, ſhall be celebrated for ever with the admiring Praiſes of Saints and Angels, *Heb.* 2. 10. 13.

2. He foretels and promiſes an abundant Recompence to them who ſhould cordially embrace him and his Goſpel, and Intereſt, and ſhould make it appear they do ſo by their Faithfulneſs in *ſuffering for him*, or *in ſerving of him*.

1. In *ſuffering for him*. Ver. 25. *He that loves his Life* better than Chriſt *ſhall loſe it*; but he that hates *his Life in this World*, and prefers the Favour of God, and an Intereſt in Chriſt before it, ſhall *keep it unto Life Eternal*. This Doctrine Chriſt much inſiſted on, it being the great Deſign of his Religion to wean us from this World, by ſetting before us another World.

1. See here the fatal Conſequence of an inordinate Love of Life; many a Man *hugs himſelf* to Death, and loſeth his Life by *over-loving* it. He that ſo loves his *animal* Life, as to indulge his Appetite, and make *Proviſion for the Fleſh to fulfil the Luſts thereof*, ſhall thereby ſhorten his Days; ſhall loſe the Life he is ſo fond of, and another infinitely better. He that is ſo much in love with the Life of the Body, and the Ornaments and Delights of it, as for fear of expoſing it or them, to deny Chriſt, he ſhall *loſe it*, i. e. loſe a *real* Happineſs in t'other World, while he thinks to ſecure an *imaginary* one in this. *Skin for Skin* a Man may give for his Life and make a good Bargin; but he that gives his Soul, his God, his Heaven for it, buys Life too dear, and is guilty of his Folly who ſold a *Birth-right* for a *Meſs of Pottage*.

2. See alſo the bleſſed Recompence of a holy Contempt of Life. He that ſo hates the Life of the Body as to venture that for the preſerving of the Life of his Soul, ſhall find both with unſpeakable advantage in Eternal Life. *Note*, (1.) It is requir'd of the Diſciples of Chriſt, that they hate *their Life in this World*; a Life in *this World* ſuppoſeth a Life in t'other World, and *this is hated* when it is lov'd leſs than *that*. Our *Life in this World* includes all the Enjoyments of our preſent State, Riches, Honours, Pleaſures, and long Life in the Poſſeſſion of them; theſe we muſt *hate*, i. e. *deſpiſe* them as vain and inſufficient to make us happy; dread the Temptations that are in them, and chearfully part with them, whenever they come in Competition with the Service of Chriſt, *Acts* 20. 24. and 21. 13. *Rev.* 12. 11. See here much of the *Power of Godlineſs*, that it conquers the ſtrongeſt natural Affections, and much of the *Myſtery of Godlineſs*, that it is the greateſt Wiſdom, and yet makes Men hate their own Lives. (2.) Thoſe who in love to Chriſt hate their own Lives in this World, ſhall be abundantly recompenced in the Reſurection of the Juſt. *He that hateth his Life ſhall keep it*, i. e. he puts it into the Hands of one that will *keep it to Life Eternal*, and reſtore it with as great an Improvement as the heavenly Life can make of the earthly One.

3. In *ſerving of him*. Ver. 26. *If any Man* profeſs to *ſerve me*, let him *follow me*, as a Servant doth his Maſter, and *where I am*, ἐκεῖ ϗ ὁ διάκονος ὁ ἐμὸς ἔςαι, there *let my Servant be*, ſo ſome read it as part of the Duty, there let him be to attend upon me; we read it as part of the Promiſe, *There ſhall he be* in Happineſs with me: And leſt this ſhould ſeem a ſmall Matter, he adds, *If any ſerve me him will my Father honour*, and that's enough, more than enough. The *Greeks* deſired to ſee Jeſus, *v.* 21. but Chriſt lets them know, 'twas not enough to ſee him, they muſt *ſerve him*. He did not come into the World to be a *Show* for us to gaze at, but a King to be rul'd by. And he ſaith this for the Encouragement of thoſe who enquir'd after him to become his Servants. In taking Servants 'tis uſual to fix both the *Work* and the *Wages*; Chriſt doth both here.

1. Here's the *Work* which Chriſt expects from his Servants, and it is very eaſy and reaſonable, and ſuch as becomes them.

(1.) Let them attend their Maſter's Motions; *If any Man ſerve me, let him follow me*. Chriſtians muſt *follow* Chriſt, follow his Methods and Preſcriptions, do the thing that he ſaith, follow his Example and Pattern, *walk as he alſo walked*; follow his Conduct by his Providence and Spirit; We muſt go whither he leads us, and in the Way he leads us; muſt follow the Lamb whitherſover he goes before us. If any Man *ſerve me*, i. e. if he put himſelf into that Relation to me, let him apply himſelf to the Buſineſs of my Service, and be always ready at my Call. Or if any Man do indeed *ſerve me*, let him make an open and publick Profeſſion of his Relation to me by following me, as the Servant owns his Maſter by following him in the Streets.

(2.) Let them attend their Maſter's, Repoſe; *Where I am there let my Servant be*, to wait upon me. Chriſt is where his Church is, in the Aſſemblies of his Saints, where his Ordinances are adminiſtred, and *there let his Servants be*, to preſent themſelves before him, and receive Inſtructions from him. Or, where *I am to be* in Heaven, whither I am now going, there let the Thoughts and Affections of my Servants be, there let their Converſation be, *where Chriſt ſitteth*, Col. 3. 1, 2.

2. Here's the *Wages* which Chriſt promiſeth to his Servants, and it is very Rich and Noble.

1. They ſhall be happy with him; *Where I am there ſhall alſo my Servant be*. To be *with him* when he was here in Poverty and Diſgrace would ſeem but poor Preferment, and therfore doubtleſs he means to be with him in *Paradiſe*, ſitting with him *at his Table* above on his Throne there; 'tis the Happineſs of Heaven to be with Chriſt there, *John* 17. 24. Chriſt ſpeaks of Heaven's Happineſs as if he were already in it, where *I am*; becauſe he was ſure of it, and near to it, and it was ſtill *upon his Heart*, and *in his Eye*. And the ſame Joy and Glory which he thought Recompence enough for all his Services and Sufferings, is propos'd to his Servants as the Recompence of theirs. They that *follow him* in the Way, ſhall be *with him in the End*.

2. They ſhall be *honoured* by his *Father*; he will make them amends for all their Pains and Loſs, by conferring an Honour upon them, ſuch as becomes a great God to give, but far beyond what ſuch worthleſs Worms of the Earth could expect to receive. The Rewarder is *God himſelf*, who takes the Services done to the Lord Jeſus as done to himſelf. The Reward is *Honour*, true laſting Honour, the higheſt Honour; 'tis the Honour that comes from God. 'Tis ſaid, *Prov.* 27. 18. *He that waits on his Maſter* (*humbly and diligently*) *ſhall be honoured*. Thoſe that wait on Chriſt God will put honour upon ſuch as will be taken notice of another Day, tho' now under a Veil. They that ſerve Chriſt muſt humble themſelves, and are commonly vilified by the World, in recompence of both which they ſhall be exalted in due Time. Thus far Chriſt's Diſcourſe has reference to thoſe *Greeks*, who deſired to *ſee him*, encouraging them to ſerve him; what became of thoſe *Greeks* we are not told, but are willing to hope that they who thus ask'd the Way to Heaven with their Faces thitherward, found it and walk'd in it.

27 Now is my Soul troubled; and what ſhall I ſay? Father ſave me from this hour; but for this cauſe came I unto this hour. 28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *ſaying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorifie *it* again. 29 The people therefore that ſtood by, and heard *it*, ſaid that it thundred: others, ſaid, An angel ſpake to him. 30 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid, This voice came not becauſe of me but for your ſakes. 31 Now is the judgement of this world: now ſhall the prince of this world be caſt out. 32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. 33 (This he ſaid, ſignifying what Death he ſhould die.) 34 The people anſwered him, We have heard out of the law, that Chriſt abideth for ever: and how ſayeſt thou, The Son of man muſt be lift up? who is this Son of man? 35 Then Jeſus ſaid unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light, leſt darkneſs come upon you: for he that walketh in darkneſs, knoweth not whither he goeth. 36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. Theſe things ſpake Jeſus, and departed and did hide himſelf from them.

Honour is here done to Chriſt by his Father in a Voice from Heaven, occaſion'd by the following Part of his Diſcourſe, and which gave occaſion to a further Conference with the People. In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Chriſt's Addreſs to his Father upon occaſion of the Trouble which ſeiz'd his Spirit at this Time, *v.* 27 *Now is my Soul troubled*. A ſtrange Word to come from Chriſt's Mouth, and at this Time ſurprizing, for it cometh in the midſt of diverſe pleaſing Proſpects, in which one would think he ſhould have ſaid, now is my Soul *pleaſed*. *Note*, Trouble of Soul ſometimes follows after great Enlargements of Spirit. In this World of mixture and change we muſt expect Damps upon our Joy, and the higheſt Degree of Comfort to be the next Degree to Trouble: When *Paul* had been in the *third Heavens* he had a *Thorn in the Fleſh*. Obſerve,

1. Chriſt's Dread of his approaching Sufferings; *Now is my Soul troubled*. Now the black and diſmal Scene began, now were the firſt Throws of the Travel of his Soul, now his Agony began, his Soul *began to be exceeding ſorrowful*. *Note*, 1. The *Sin of our Soul* was the *Trouble of Chriſt's Soul*, when he undertook to redeem and ſave us, and to make *his* Soul an Offering for our Sin. 2. The Trouble of *his* Soul was deſigned to eaſe the Trouble of our Souls; for after this, he ſaid to his Diſciples, *chap.* 14. 1. *Let not your Hearts be troubled*; what need yours be troubled and mine too? Our Lord Jeſus went on cheerfully in his Work, in proſpect of the Joy ſet before him, and yet ſubmitted to a *trouble of Soul*. Holy Mourning is conſiſtent with ſpiritual Joy, and the way to eternal Joy. Chriſt was *now* troubled, *now* in Sorrow, *now* in Fear, now for a Seaſon, but it would not be ſo *always*, it would not be ſo *long*. The ſame is the Comfort of Chriſtians in their Troubles: They are but *for a Moment*, and will be turn'd into Joy.

2. The Strait he ſeems to be in hereupon, intimated in thoſe Words, *And what ſhall I ſay*? This doth not ſpeak him *conſulting* with any other, as if he needed Advice, but *conſidering* with himſelf what was fit to be ſaid now. When our Souls are troubled, we muſt take heed of ſpeaking unadviſedly, but debate with our ſelves what we ſhall ſay. Chriſt ſpeaks like one at *a loſs*, as if what he ſhould chuſe he wot not. There was a Struggle between the *Work* he had taken upon him, which required Sufferings, and the *Nature* he had taken upon him which dreaded them; between theſe Two he here pauſeth, with *what ſhall I ſay*? He look'd and there was *none to help*, which put him to a ſtand. *Calvin* obſerves this as a great Inſtance of Chriſt's Humiliation, that he ſhould ſpeak thus like one at a plunge. *Quo ſe magis exanimavit gloriæ*

Dominus, eo luculentius habemus erga nos amoris ſpecimen. Thus he was *in all Points tempted like as we are*, to encourage us when we know not what to do to have our Eyes to him.

3. His Prayer to God in this Strait; *Father ſave me from this Hour*, ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης, *out of this Hour*; praying not ſo much that it might not come, as that he might be brought through it. *Save me from this Hour*; this was the Language of innocent Nature, and its Reſentments pour'd forth in Prayer. *Note*, It is the Duty and Intereſt of *troubled Souls*, to have recourſe to God by faithful and fervent Prayer, and in Prayer to eye him as a Father. Chriſt was voluntary in his Sufferings, and yet pray'd to be ſav'd from them. *Note*, Prayer againſt a Trouble may very well conſiſt with Patience under it, and Submiſſion to the Will of God in it. Obſerve, He calls his Suffering *this Hour*, meaning the expected Events of the *Time now at hand*; hereby he intimates, that the Time of his Suffering was, (1.) A *ſet* Time, ſet to an Hour, and he knew it. It was ſaid twice before that his Hour was not yet come, but it was now ſo near that he might ſay it was come. (2.) A *ſhort* Time; an Hour is ſoon over, ſo were Chriſt's Sufferings, he could ſee through them to the *Joy ſet before him*.

4. His Acquieſcence in his Father's Will notwithſtanding. He preſently corrects himſelf, and as it were recalls what he had ſaid, *But for this Cauſe came I to this Hour*. Innocent Nature got the *firſt Word*, but Divine Wiſdom and Love got the laſt. *Note*, They who would proceed regularly muſt go upon *ſecond Thoughts*. The Complainant *ſpeaks firſt*, but if we would judge righteouſly we muſt *hear 'tother ſide*. The ſecond Thought he check'd himſelf, which was, *for this Cauſe came I to this Hour*; he doth not *ſilence* himſelf with this, that he *could not* avoid it, there was no Remedy; but *ſatisfies* himſelf with this, that he *would not* avoid, for it was purſuant to his own voluntary Engagement, and was to be the Crown of his whole Undertaking; ſhould he now fly off, it would fruſtrate all that had been done hitherto. Reference is here had to the Divine Counſels concerning his Sufferings, by virtue of which, thus it behoveth him to ſubmit and ſuffer. *Note*, This ſhould reconcile us to the darkeſt Hours of our Lives, that were all along deſign'd for them. See 1 *Theſ.* 3. 3.

5. His Regard to his Father's Honour herein. Upon the withdrawing of his former Petition, he preſents another, which he will abide by, *Father glorify thy Name*; to the ſame Purpoſe with, *Father thy Will be done*, for God's Will is for his own Glory: This ſpeaks more than barely a *Submiſſion* to the Will of God, 'tis a *Conſecration of his Sufferings* to the Glory of God. 'Twas a Mediatorial Word, and was ſpoken by him as our Surety, who had undertaken to ſatisfy Divine Juſtice for our Sin. The Wrong which by Sin we have done to God, is *in his Glory*, his declarative Glory; for in nothing elſe are we capable of doing him Injury. We were never able to make him Satisfaction for this Wrong done him, nor any Creature for us; nothing therefore remain'd, but that God ſhould get him Honour upon us in our utter Ruin. Here therefore our Lord Jeſus *interpos'd*, undertook to ſatisfy God's injur'd Honour, and he did it by his *Humiliation*; he deny'd himſelf in, and diveſted himſelf of, the Honours due to the Son of God incarnate, and ſubmitted to the greateſt Reproach. Now here he *makes a Tender* of this Satisfaction as an *Equivalent*, *Father glorify thy Name*; let thy Juſtice be honour'd upon the *Sacrifice*, not upon the *Sinner*; let the Debt be levy'd upon me, I am ſolvent, the Principal is not; thus he *reſtored that which he took not away*.

Secondly, The Father's *Anſwer* to this Addreſs, for he *heard him always*, and doth ſtill. Obſerve,

1. How this Anſwer was given, *by a Voice from Heaven*. The *Jews* ſpeak much of a *Bath-kôl*, the Daughter of a Voice, as one of thoſe *divers manners* by which God in Time paſt ſpake to the Prophets; but we do not find any Inſtance of his ſpeaking thus to any but to our Lord Jeſus; 'twas an Honour reſerv'd for him; *Mat.* 3. 17. and 17. 5. and here probably this audible Voice was introduc'd by ſome viſible Appearance, either of *Light* or *Darkneſs*, for both have been us'd as Vehicles of the Divine Glory.

2. What the Anſwer was, 'twas an expreſs Return to that Petition, *Father glorify thy Name*, *I have glorified it* already, and *I will glorify it yet again*. When we pray as we are taught, *Our Father, hallowed be thy Name*, this is a Comfort to us, that it is an *anſwered* Prayer; anſwered to Chriſt here, and in him to all true Believers. (1.) The Name of God *had been* glorified in the *Life of Chriſt*, in his Doctrine and Miracles, and all the Examples he gave of Holineſs and Goodneſs. (2.) It *ſhould be further* glorified in the Death and Sufferings of Chriſt; his Wiſdom and Power, his Juſtice and Holineſs, his Truth and Goodneſs were greatly glorified; the Demands of a broken Law were fully anſwered, the Affront done to God's Government ſatisfied for, and God accepted the Satisfaction, and declar'd himſelf well pleas'd. What God *has done* for the glorifying of his own Name, is an Encouragement to us to expect what he will yet further do. He that has ſecured the Intereſts of his own Glory, will ſtill.

Thirdly, The Opinion of the Standers-by concerning this Voice, *v.* 29. We may hope there were ſome among them whoſe Minds were ſo well prepared to receive a Divine Revelation, that they underſtood what was ſaid, and they bare Record of it. But Notice is here taken of the perverſe Suggeſtion of the Multitude; ſome of them ſaid *it thundered*, others who took Notice that there was plainly an articulate, intelligible Voice, ſaid, for certain *an Angel ſpake to him*. Now this ſhews, 1. That it was a *real Thing*, even in the Judgment of thoſe that were not at all well affected to him. 2. That they were loth to admit ſo plain a Proof of Chriſt's Divine Miſſion. They would rather ſay, it was this, or that, or any Thing, than that God ſpoke to him in Anſwer to his Prayer; and yet if it *thundered* with *articulate* Sounds (as *Rev.* 10. 3, 4.) was not that God's Voice; or, if *Angels* ſpoke to him, are not they God's Meſſengers? But thus *God ſpeaks once, yea twice, and Man perceives it not*.

Fourthly, The Account which our Saviour himſelf gives of this Voice.

1. Why it was ſent; *v.* 30. It came *not becauſe of me*, not meerly for my Encouragement and Satisfaction, then it might have been whiſper'd in his Ear privately, but *for your Sakes*. (1.) That all you who heard it may *believe that the Father hath ſent me*. What is ſaid from Heaven, concerning our Lord Jeſus, and the glorifying of the Father in him, is ſaid *for our* Sakes, that we might be brought to ſubmit to him, and reſt upon him. (2.) That you my Diſciples, who are to follow me in Sufferings, may therein be comforted with the ſame Comforts that carry me on. Let this encourage them to part with Life it ſelf for his Sake, if they were called to it, that it ſhould redound to the Honour of God. *Note*, The Promiſes and Supports granted to our Lord Jeſus in his Sufferings were intended *for our Sakes*. *For our Sakes* he *ſanctified himſelf*, and *comforted himſelf*.

2. What was the Meaning of it. He that lay in the Father's Boſom knew his Voice, and what was the Meaning of it: And Two Things God intended when he ſaid that he would *glorify his own Name*.

1. That by the Death of Chriſt *Satan ſhould be conquer'd*. v. 31. *Now is the Judgment*. He ſpeaks with a Divine Exaltation and Triumh. Now the Year of my Redeemed is come, and the Time prefix'd for the breaking of the Serpent's Head, and giving a total Rent to the Powers of Darkneſs; *Now* for that glorious Atchievement; *now, now*, that great Work is to be done which has been ſo long *thought* of in the Divine Counſels, ſo long talk'd of in the written Word, which has been ſo much the Hope of Saints, and the Dread of Devils, The Matter of the Triumph is,

(1.) That *now is the Judgment of the World*; κρίσις, take it as a phyſical Term, now is the *Criſis* of this World. The ſick and diſeaſed World is now upon the turning Point, this is the critical Day upon which the trembling Scale will turn for *Life or Death* to all Mankind; all that are not recovered by this will be left helpleſs and hopeleſs. Or rather, 'tis a Law Term, as we take it; now Judgment is enter'd in order to the taking out of Execution againſt the Prince of this World. *Note*, The Death of Chriſt was the *Judgment of this World*. (1.) It is a Judgment of *Diſcovery* and *Diſtinction*; *Judicium Diſcretionis*, ſo *Auſtin*. Now is the Trial of this World, for Men ſhall have their Character according as the Croſs of Chriſt is to them; to ſome it is *Fooliſhneſs* and a *ſtumbling Block*, to others 'tis the *Wiſdom* and Power of God; of which there was a Figure in the two Thieves that were *crucify'd with him*. By this Men are judg'd what they think of the Death of Chriſt. (2.) It is a Judgment of *Favour* and *Abſolution* to the choſen ones that are in the World. Chriſt upon the Croſs interpos'd between a righteous God and a guilty World as a Sacrifice for Sin, and a Surety for Sinners, ſo that when he was *judg'd*, and *Iniquity laid upon him*, and he was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, it was as it were the *Judgment of this World*, for an everlaſting Righteouſneſs was thereby brought in, not for *Jews* only, but the whole World, 1 *John* 2. 1, 2. *Dan.* 9. 24. (3.) It is a Judgment of Condemnation given againſt the Powers of Darkneſs; ſee *John* 16. 11. Judgment is put for Vindication and Deliverance, the aſſerting of an invaded Right. At the Death of Chriſt there was a famous Trial between Chriſt and Satan, the Serpent and the *promiſed Seed*; the Trial was for the World, and the Lordſhip of it; the Devil having long born Sway among the Children of Men, *Time out of Mind*, now pleads Preſcription, grounding his Claim alſo upon the *Forfeiture* incurr'd by Sin: We find him willing to have come to a Compoſition, *Luke* 4. 6, 7. he would have given the Kingdoms of this World to Chriſt, provided he would hold them *by, from, and under him*; But Chriſt would *try it out* with him; by dying he takes off the Forfeiture to Divine Juſtice, and then fairly *diſputes* the Title, and *recovers* it in the Court of Heaven: Satan's Dominion is declar'd to be a Uſurpation, and the World adjudg'd to the Lord Jeſus as his Right, *Pſal.* 2. 6, 8. The Judgment of this World is, that it belongs to Chriſt, and not to Satan: *To Chriſt* therefore let us all *atturn Tenants*.

2. That *now is the Prince of this World caſt out*.

1. It is the Devil, that is here call'd the *Prince of this World*, becauſe he rules over the Men of the World by the Things of the World; he is the *Ruler of the Darkneſs of this World*, i. e. of this *dark* World, of thoſe in it that *walk in Darkneſs*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. Eph. 6. 12.

2. He is ſaid to be *caſt out*, to be *now* caſt out; for whatever had been done hitherto towards the weakning of the Devil's Kingdom, was done in the Virtue of a Chriſt to come, and therefore is ſaid to be done *now*. Chriſt *reconciling* the World to God by the Merit of his Death, broke the *Power of Death*, and caſt out Satan as a *Deſtroyer*; Chriſt *reducing* the World to God by the Doctrine of his Croſs, broke the *Power of Sin*, and caſt out Satan as a *Deceiver*. The bruiſing of his Heel, was the breaking of the Serpent's Head, *Gen.* 3. 15. When his Oracles were ſilenced, his

Temples forſaken, his Idols famiſh'd, and the Kingdoms of the World become Chriſt's Kingdoms, then was the *Prince of the World caſt out*, as appears by comparing this with *John*'s Viſion, *Rev.* 12. 8. 9, 10, 11. where it is ſaid to be done by the *Blood of the Lamb.* Chriſt's frequent caſting Devils out of the Bodies of People, was an Indication of the great Deſign of his whole Undertaking. Obſerve, with what Aſſurance Chriſt here ſpeaks of the Victory over *Satan*; 'tis as good as done, and even when he yields to Death he triumphs over it.

2. That by the Death of Chriſt, *Souls ſhould be* converted, and that would be the caſting out of *Satan.* Ver. 32. *If I be lifted up from the Earth, I will draw all Men unto me.* Where obſerve two Things.

1. The great Deſign of our Lord Jeſus, which was to *draw all Men to him*; not the *Jews* only, who had been long in Profeſſion a People, *near to God*, but the *Gentiles* alſo, who had been *afar off*; for he was to be the *Deſire of all Nations*, Hag. 2. 7. and to him muſt the *gathering of the People be.* That which his Enemies dreaded, was, that the World would go after him, and he would draw them to him notwithſtanding their Oppoſition. Obſerve here, how Chriſt himſelf is all in all in the Converſion of a Soul. (1.) It is Chriſt that *draws*; *I will draw.* 'Tis ſometimes aſcrib'd to the Father, *John* 6. 44. but here to the *Son*, who is the *Arm of the Lord.* He doth not *drive* by Force, but draw with the Cords of a Man, *Hoſ.* 11. 4. *Jer.* 31. 3. Draws as the Loadſtone, the Soul is *made willing*, but it is in a *Day of Power.* (2.) It is *in Chriſt* that we are drawn, I will draw them *to me* as the *Centre of their Unity.* The Soul that was at a Diſtance from Chriſt, is brought into an Acquaintance with him; that was ſhy and diſtruſtful of him, is brought to love him and truſt him; drawn up to his Terms, into his Arms. Chriſt was now going to Heaven, and he would draw Mens Hearts to him thither.

2. The ſtrange Method he took to accompliſh his Deſign, by *being lifted up the from Earth.* What he meant by that, to prevent Miſtake, we are told, *v.* 33. *This he ſpake, ſignifying by what Death he ſhould die*, viz. the Death of the Croſs, tho' they had deſigh'd and attempted to *ſtone him to Death.* He that was crucified, was firſt nail'd to the Croſs, and then lifted up upon it. He was *lifted up* as a Spectacle to the World; *lifted up* between *Heaven* and *Earth* as unworthy of either; yet the World here us'd ſignified an *honourable* Advancement, ἐὰν ὑψωθῶ, *If I be exalted*; he reckon'd his Sufferings his Honour. Whatever Death we die, if we die in Chriſt, we ſhall be *lifted up* out of this Dungeon, this Den of Lions, into the Regions of Light and Love. We ſhould learn of our Maſter to ſpeak of dying with a holy Pleaſantneſs, and to ſay, we ſhall then be lifted up.

Now Chriſt's drawing *all Men to him*, follow'd his being *lifted up from the Earth.* 1. It follow'd *after* it *in Time.* The great Increaſe of the Church was after the Death of Chriſt; while Chriſt liv'd we read of Thouſands at a Sermon miraculouſly fed, but 'twas after his Death that we read of Thouſands at a Sermon added to the Church which *ſhould be ſaved. Iſrael* began to multiply in *Egypt* after the Death of *Joſeph.* 2. It follow'd upon it as a bleſſed Conſequence of it. *Note*, There is a powerful Virtue and Efficacy in the Death of Chriſt to draw Souls to him. The Croſs of Chriſt, tho' to ſome it is a *ſtumbling Stone*, to others it is a *Load-ſtone.* Some make it an Alluſion to the drawing of Fiſh into a Net; the lifting up of Chriſt was as the ſpreading of the Net, *Mat.* 13. 47, 48. Or to the ſetting up of a Standard, which draws Soldiers together; or rather, it refers to the *lifting up* of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderneſs, which drew all thoſe to it that were ſtung with fiery Serpents: As ſoon as ever it was known that 'twas lifted up, and there was healing Virtue in it. O! what flocking was there to it; ſo there was to Chriſt when Salvation through him was preach'd to all Nations; ſee *John* 3. 14, 15. Perhaps it has ſome Reference to the Poſture in which Chriſt was crucified, with his Arms *ſtretched out*, to invite all to him, and embrace all that come. They that put Chriſt to that ignominious Death, thought thereby to drive all Men from him; but the Devil was out-ſhot in his own Bow: *Out of the Eater came forth Meat.*

Fifthly, The People's Exception againſt what he ſaid, and their Cavil at it, *v.* 34. Tho' they had heard the Voice from Heaven, and the gracious Words that proceeded out of his Mouth, yet they object, and pick Quarrels with him. Chriſt had call'd himſelf the *Son of Man*, *v.* 23. which they knew to be one of the Titles of the *Meſſiah*, Dan, 7. 13. He had alſo ſaid, that *the Son of Man muſt be lifted up*, which they underſtood of his dying, and probably he explain'd himſelf ſo; and ſome think repeated what he ſaid to *Nicodemus*, John 3. 14. *So muſt the Son of Man be lifted up.* Now againſt this,

1. They alledge thoſe Scriptures of the Old Teſtament, which ſpeak of the Perpetuity of the *Meſſiah*, that he ſhould be ſo far from being cut off in the midſt of his Days, that he ſhould be a *Prieſt for ever*, Pſal. 110. 4. and a King *for ever*, Pſal. 89. 29, *&c.* that he ſhould have length of Days *for ever and ever*, and his Years *as many Generations*, Pſal. 20. 4. and 61. 6. from all this they inferr'd that the *Meſſiah* ſhould not die: Thus great Knowledge in the Letter of the Scripture, if the Heart be unſanctified, is capable of being abus'd to ſerve the Cauſe of Infidelity, and to fight againſt Chriſtianity with its own Weapons. Their Perverſeneſs in oppoſing this to what Jeſus had ſaid, will appear, if we conſider, (1.) That when they vouch'd the Scripture to prove that the *Meſſiah abideth for ever*, they took no Notice of thoſe Texts which ſpeak of the Meſſiah's Death and Sufferings; they had heard out of the Law that *Meſſiah abideth for ever*, and had they never heard out of the Law that *Meſſiah ſhall be cut off*? Dan. 5. 26. and that he ſhall *pour out his Soul unto Death*, Iſa. 53. 12. and particularly that his *Hands and Feet* ſhould be *pierced*; why then do they make ſo ſtrange of the *lifting up of the Son of Man*? *Note*, we often run into great Miſtakes, and then defend them with Scripture Arguments, by putting thoſe Things aſunder which God in his Word has put together; and oppoſing one Truth under Pretence of ſupporting another. We have heard out of the Goſpel that which exalts free Grace; we have heard alſo that which enjoyns Duty; and we muſt cordially embrace both, and not ſeparate them, or ſet them at variance. (2.) That when they oppos'd what Chriſt ſaid concerning the Sufferings of the Son of Man, they took no Notice of what he had ſaid concerning his Glory and Exaltation. They had heard out of the Law that *Chriſt abideth for ever*, and had they not heard our Lord Jeſus ſay that he ſhould be *glorified*; that he ſhould bring forth much Fruit, and draw all Men to him; had he not juſt now promis'd immortal Honours to his Followers, which ſuppos'd his abiding for ever, but this they overlook. Thus unfair Diſputants oppoſe ſome Parts of the Opinion of an Adverſary, which if they would but take entire; they could not but ſubſcribe to; and in the Doctrine of Chriſt there are Paradoxes, which to Men of corrupt Minds are Stones of ſtumbling; as Chriſt *Crucified*, and yet *Glorified*; *lifted up from the* Earth, and yet *drawing all Men.*

2. They aſk hereupon, *Who is this Son of Man?* This they aſk'd, not with a Deſire to be inſtructed, but tauntingly, and inſultingly, as if now they had baffled him, and run him down. Thou ſayeſt, *The Son of Man muſt die*; we have prov'd the Meſſiah muſt not, and where is then thy Meſſiah-ſhip? This Son of Man as thou calleſt thy ſelf, cannot be the Meſſiah; thou muſt therefore think of ſomething elſe to pretend to. Now that which prejudic'd them againſt Chriſt, was his Meanneſs and Poverty; they would rather have no Chriſt than a *ſuffering* one.

Sixthly, What Chriſt ſaid *to* this Exception, or rather what he ſaid *upon* it. The Objection was a perfect Cavil, they might if they pleas'd anſwer it themſelves. Man *dies*, and yet is *immortal*, and *abideth* for ever, ſo the *Son of Man*; therefore inſtead of anſwering theſe Fools according to their Folly, he gives them a ſerious Caution to take heed of trifling away the Day of their Opportunities in ſuch vain and fruitleſs Cavils as theſe, *Ver.* 35. 36. *Yet a little while*, and but a little while *is the Light with you*, therefore be wiſe for your ſelves, and *walk while ye have the Light.*

In general we may obſerve here, (1.) The Concern Chriſt has for the Souls of Men, and his Deſire of their Welfare. With what Tenderneſs doth he here admoniſh thoſe to look well to themſelves who were contriving ill againſt him. Even when he *endured the Contradiction* of Sinners, he *endeavour'd their Converſion.* See *Prov.* 29. 10. (2.) The Method he takes with thoſe Objectors; *with Meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppos'd themſelves*, 2 Tim. 2. 25. Were but Men's Conſciences awaken'd with a due Concern about their everlaſting State, and did they conſider how little Time they have to *ſpend*, and none to *ſpare*, they would not waſte precious Thoughts and Time in trifling Cavils.

Particularly we have here,

1. The *Privilege* and *Advantage* they enjoy'd in having Chriſt and his *Goſpel* among them, with the Shortneſs and Uncertainty of their Enjoyment of it; *Yet a little while is the Light with you.* Chriſt is this Light; and ſome of the Ancients ſuggeſt, that in calling himſelf the *Light*, he gives a tacit Anſwer to their Objection. His dying upon the Croſs was as conſiſtent with his *abiding for ever*, as the Setting of the Sun every Night is with his Perpetuity: The Duration of Chriſt's Kingdom is compar'd to that of the *Sun* and *Moon*, Pſal. 72. 17. and 89. 36, 37. The Ordinances of Heaven are unchangeably fix'd, and yet the Sun and Moon *ſet* and are *eclips'd*; ſo Chriſt, the Sun of Righteouſneeſs, abides for ever, and yet was eclips'd by his Sufferings, and was but a little while within our Horizon. Now, (1.) The *Jews* at this Time had the *Light with them*, they had Chriſt's bodily Preſence, heard his Preaching, ſaw his Miracles. The Scripture is to us a Light ſhining in a dark Place. (2.) It was to be but a *little while* with them; Chriſt would ſhortly leave them, their viſible Church State would ſoon after be diſſolv'd, and the Kingdom of God taken from them, and *Blindneſs* and *Hardneſs* would happen unto *Iſrael. Note*, It is good for us all to conſider what a little while we are to have the Light with us. Time is ſhort, and perhaps Opportunity not ſo long. The Candleſtick *may be remov'd*; however, we muſt *be remov'd* ſhortly. Yet a little while is the Light of Life with us; yet a little while is the Light of the Goſpel with us, the Day of Grace, the Means of Grace, the Spirit of Grace, yet a very little while.

2. The Warning given them to make the beſt of theſe Advantages while they enjoy'd them, becauſe of the Danger they were in of loſing them. *Walk while ye have Light*, as Travellers who make the beſt of their Way *forward*, that they may not be benighted in their Journey, becauſe travelling in the Night is uncomfortable and unſafe. Come, ſay they, let us mend our Pace and get forward while we have Day-light. Thus wiſe ſhould we be for our Souls, who are journeying towards Eternity. *Note*, (1.) It's

our Buſineſs to walk, to preſs forwards towards Heaven, and to get nearer it by being made fitter for it. Our Life is but a *Day*, and we have a *Day's Journey* to go. (2.) The beſt Time of walking is while we have Light. The Day is the proper Seaſon for Work, as the Night is for Reſt. The proper Time for getting Grace is when we have the Word of Grace preached to us, and the Spirit of Grace ſtriving with us, and therefore *then* is the Time to be buſy. (3.) We are highly concern'd thus to improve our Opportunities, for fear leſt our Day be finiſh'd before we have finiſh'd our Days Work, and Days Journey: *Leſt Darkneſs come upon you*, leſt you loſe your Opportunities, and can neither recover them, nor diſpatch the Buſineſs you have to do without them. Then *Darkneſs comes*, i. e. ſuch an utter Incapacity to make ſure the great Salvation, as renders the State of the careleſs Sinner quite deplorable; ſo that if his Work be undone then, 'tis like to be undone for ever.

3. The ſad Condition of thoſe who have ſinn'd away the Goſpel, and are come to the Period of their Day of Grace. *They walk in Darkneſs*, and know neither *where* they go, nor *whither* they go; neither the *Way* they are walking *in*, nor the *End* they are walking *towards*. He that is deſtitute of the Light of the Goſpel, and is not acquainted with its Diſcoveries and Directions, he *wanders endleſly* in Miſtakes and Errors, and a thouſand crooked Paths, and is not aware of it. Set aſide the Inſtructions of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and we know little of the Difference between Good and Evil: He is *going to Deſtruction*, and knows not his Danger, for he is either *ſleeping* or *dancing* at the Pit's Brink.

4. The great Duty and Intereſt of every one of us inferred from all this, *v.* 36. *While ye have Light believe in the Light.* The *Jews* had now Chriſt's Preſence with them, let them improve it; afterwards they had the *firſt Offers* of the Goſpel made to them by the Apoſtles where-ever they came: Now this is an Admonition to them not to out-ſtand their Market, but to accept the Offer when it was made them: The ſame Chriſt ſaith to us all who enjoy the Goſpel. *Note*, 1. It is the Duty of every one of us to *believe in the* Goſpel *Light*, to receive it as a Divine Light, to ſubſcribe to the Truths it diſcovers, for it is a Light to *our Eyes*; and to follow its Conduct, for 'tis a Light to *our Feet*. Chriſt is the Light, and we muſt *believe in him* as he is reveal'd to us, as a *true* Light that will not deceive us; a *ſure* Light that will not miſguide us. 2. We are concern'd to do this while we have Light; to lay hold on Chriſt *while we have* the Goſpel to ſhew us the Way to him, and direct us in that Way. 3. They that believe in the Light *ſhall be the Children of Light*, they ſhall be own'd as *Chriſtians*, who are call'd *Children of Light*, Luke 16. 8. Eph. 5. 8. and of the Day, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 5. They that have God for their Father, are Children of Light, for God is Light; that are born from above, and Heirs of Heaven, and Children of Light, for Heaven is Light.

Seventhly, Chriſt's retiring from them hereupon; *Theſe Things ſpake Jeſus*, and ſaid no more at this Time, but left this to their Conſideration, and *departed, and did hide himſelf from them.* And this he did, 1. For their Conviction and Awakening: If they will not regard what he hath ſaid, he will have nothing more to ſay to them. They are joyn'd to their Infidelity, as *Ephraim* to Idols; *let them alone. Note*, Chriſt juſtly removes the Means of Grace from thoſe that quarrel with them, and *hides his Face* from *a froward Generation*, Deut. 32. 21. (2.) For his own Preſervation. He hid himſelf from their Rage and Fury, retreating, 'tis probable, to *Bethany*, where he lodg'd. By this it appears that what he ſaid irritated and exaſperated them, and they were made worſe by that which ſhould have made them better.

37 But though he had done ſo many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: 38 That the ſaying of Eſaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he ſpake; Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? 39 Therefore they could not believe, becauſe that Eſaias, ſaid again, 40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardned their heart; that they ſhould not ſee with *their* eyes, nor underſtand with *their* heart, and be converted, and I ſhould heal them. 41 Theſe things ſaid Eſaias, when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him.

We have here the Honour done to our Lord Jeſus by the Old Teſtament Prophets, who foretold, and lamented the Infidelity of the many that believed not on him. It was indeed a Diſhonour and Grief to Chriſt, that his Doctrine met with ſo little Acceptance, and ſo much Oppoſition; but this takes off the Wonder and Reproach, makes the Offence of it to ceaſe, and made it no Diſappointment to Chriſt, that herein the Scriptures were fulfill'd. Two Things are here ſaid concerning this untractable People, and both were foretold by the Evangelical Prophet *Iſaiah*, that they *did not* believe, and that they *could not* believe.

Firſt, They *did not* believe, *v.* 37. *Tho' he had done ſo many Miracles before them*, which one would think ſhould have convinc'd them, yet they believed not, but oppos'd him. Obſerve,

1. The *Plenty* of the Means of Conviction which Chriſt afforded them; he *did Miracles*, ſo *many* Miracles, τοσαῦτα σημεῖα, it ſignifies both ſo *many*, and ſo *great*. It refers to all the Miracles he had wrought formerly, nay, the *Blind* and *Lame* now came to him into the Temple, and he healed them, *Mat.* 21. 14. His Miracles were the great Proof of his Miſſion, and on the Evidence of them he rely'd. Two Things concerning them he here inſiſts upon: (1.) The *Number* of them, they were *many*; *various*, and of divers Kinds; *numerous*, and oft repeated, and every new Miracle confirm'd the Reality of all that went before. The Multitude of his Miracles was not only a Proof of his unexhauſted Power, but gave the greater Opportunity to examine them; and if there had been a Cheat in them, 'twas morally impoſſible, but that in ſome or other of them 'twould have been diſcover'd; and being all *Miracles of Mercy*, the more there were, the more Good was done. (2.) The *Notoriety* of them. He wrought theſe Miracles *before them*, not at a Diſtance, not in a Corner, but before many Witneſſes, appealing to their own Eyes.

2. The *Inefficacy* of theſe Means, *yet they believed not on him.* They could not gainſay the Premiſes, and yet would not grant the Concluſion, *Note*, The moſt plentiful and powerful Means of Conviction will not of themſelves work Faith in the depraved prejudic'd Hearts of Men: Theſe *ſaw* and yet *believed not.*

3. The fulfilling of the Scripture in this. *Ver.* 38. That the Saying of *Eſaias* might be *fulfill'd.* Not that theſe Infidel *Jews* deſign'd the fulfilling of the Scripture, they rather fancy'd thoſe Scriptures which ſpeak of the Church's beſt Sons to be fulfilled in themſelves, but the Event exactly anſwer'd the Prediction, *ſo that* (*ut* for *ita ut*) this Saying of *Eſaias* was fulfill'd. The more improbable any Event is, the more doth a Divine foreſight appear in the Prediction of it. One could not have imagined that the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, ſupported with ſuch pregnant Proofs, ſhould have met with ſo much Oppoſition among the *Jews*, and therefore their Unbelief is call'd a *marvellous Work, and a Wonder*, Iſa. 29. 9, 14. Chriſt himſelf *marvell'd at it*, but it was what *Iſaiah* foretold, *Iſa.* 53. 1. and now it is accompliſh'd. Obſerve, (1.) The Goſpel is here call'd *their Report. Who has believ'd*, τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν, our *Hearing*, which we have heard *from God*, and which you have heard *from us*; *our* Report is the Report that we bring, like the *Report* of a Matter of Fact; or the *Report* of a ſolemn Reſolution in the Senate. 2. 'Tis foretold that few comparatively of thoſe to whom this Report is brought, will be perſwaded to give Credit to it: Many hear it, but few heed it, and embrace it. *Who hath believed it?* Here and there one, but none to ſpeak of; not the Wiſe, not the Noble; 'tis to them but a *Report* which wants Confirmation. (3.) 'Tis ſpoken of as a Thing to be greatly lamented, that ſo few believe the Report of the Goſpel. *Lord* is here prefix'd from the Seventy, but is not in the *Hebrew*, and it intimates a ſorrowful Account brought to God by the Meſſengers, of the cold Entertainment which they and their Report had; as *the Servant came and ſhewed his Lord all theſe Things*, Luke 14. 21. (4.) The Reaſon why Men believe not the Report of the Goſpel, is becauſe *the Arm of the Lord* is not *revealed* to them, *i. e.* becauſe they do not acquaint themſelves with, and ſubmit themſelves to, the Grace of God; they do not experimentally know the Virtue and Fellowſhip of Chriſt's Death and Reſurrection, in which the Arm of the Lord is *revealed*: They ſaw Chriſt's Miracles, but did not ſee the *Arm of the Lord revealed* in them.

Secondly, They *could not* believe, and therefore they could not, *becauſe* Eſaias *ſaid, he hath blinded their Eyes.* This is a hard Saying, who can explain it? We are ſure God is infinitely juſt and merciful, and therefore cannot think there is in any, ſuch an Impotency to Good, reſulting from the Counſels of God, as lays them under a fatal Neceſſity of being Evil; God damns none by meer Sovereignty; yet it is ſaid, they could not believe. St. *Auſtin* coming in Courſe to the Expoſition of theſe Words, expreſſeth himſelf with a holy Fear of entring upon an Enquiry into this Myſtery: *Juſta ſunt judicia ejus, ſed occulta.* (1.) They *could not* believe, that is, they *would not*; they were obſtinately reſolved in their Infidelity; thus *Chryſoſtom* and *Auſtin* incline to underſtand it; and the former gives divers Inſtances of Scripture of the putting of an Impotency to ſignify the invincible Refuſal of the Will, as *Gen.* 37. 4. *They could not ſpeak peaceably to him.* And *John* 7. 7. This is a *moral* Impotency, like that of one that is accuſtom'd to do Evil, *Jer.* 13. 23. But, (2.) They could not becauſe *Eſaias* had ſaid, *He hath blinded their Eyes.* Here the Difficulty increaſeth; 'tis certain God is not the Author of Sin, and yet,

1. There is a righteous Hand of God ſometimes to be acknowledg'd in the Blindneſs and Obſtinacy of thoſe who perſiſt in Impenitency and Unbelief, by which they are juſtly puniſh'd for their former Reſiſtance of the Divine Light, and Rebellion againſt the Divine Law. If God with-hold *abuſed* Grace, and give Men over to *indulged* Luſts; if he permit the *evil Spirit* to do his Work on them that reſiſted the *good Spirit*; and if in his Providence he lay *ſtumbling Blocks* in Sinners Way which confirm their Prejudices, then he *blinds their Eyes*, and *hardens their Hearts*, and theſe are *ſpiritual Judgments*, like the giving up of idolatrous *Gentiles* to *vile Affections*, and degenerate Chriſtians to *ſtrong Deluſions.*

Obſerve the Method of Converſion implied here, and the Steps taken in it. (1.) Sinners are brought to *ſee with their Eyes* to diſcern the Reality of Divine Things, and to have ſome Knowledge of them. (2.) To *underſtand with their Heart*, to apply theſe Things to themſelves; not only to aſſent or approve, but to conſent and accept. (3.) To be *converted*, and effectually turn'd from

Sin to Chriſt, from the World and the Fleſh to God, as their Felicity and Portion. (4.) Then God will *heal* them, will juſtify and ſanctify them; will *pardon* their Sins, which are as *bleeding Wounds*; and mortify their Corruptions, which are as *lurking Diſeaſes*. Now when God denies his Grace, nothing of this is done; the Alienation of the Mind from, and its Averſion to, God and the Divine Life, grows into a rooted and invincible Antipathy, and ſo the Caſe becomes deſperate.

2. This judicial Blindneſs and Hardneſs is in the Word of God threaten'd againſt thoſe who wilfully perſiſt in Wickedneſs, and was particularly foretold concerning the Jewiſh Church and Nation. Known unto God are all *his* Works, and all *ours* too; Chriſt knew before who would betray him, and ſpoke of it, *John* 6. 70. This is a Confirmation of the Truth of Scripture Prophecies, and thus even the Unbelief of the *Jews* may help to *ſtrengthen our Faith.* 'Tis alſo intended for Caution to particular Perſons, to *beware leſt that come upon them, which was ſpoken of in the Prophets*, Acts 13. 40.

3. What God has foretold will certainly come to paſs, and ſo by a neceſſary Conſequence, in order of arguing, it might be ſaid, that therefore they *could not believe*, becauſe God, by the Prophets, had foretold they would not; for ſuch is the Knowledge of God, that he cannot be *deceiv'd* in what he *foreſees*; and ſuch his Truth, that he cannot *deceive* in what he *foretels*; ſo that the Scripture cannot be broken. Yet be it obſerv'd, that the Prophecy did not name particular Perſons; ſo that it might not be ſaid therefore, ſuch a one and ſuch a one could not believe, becauſe *Eſaias* had ſaid ſo and ſo; but it pointed at the Body of the Jewiſh Nation, which would perſiſt in their Infidelity, till their Cities were waſted without Inhabitants, as it follows, *Iſa.* 6. 11, 12. yet ſtill reſerving a Remnant, *v.* 13. *in it ſhall be a Tenth*; which Reſerve was ſufficient to keep a Door of Hope open to particular Perſons, for each one might ſay, why may not I be of that Remnant?

Laſtly, The Evangeliſt having quoted the Prophecy, ſhews, *v.* 41. that it was intended to look further than the Prophet's own Days, and that its principal Reference was to the Days of the *Meſſiah*; *Theſe Things ſaid* Eſaias, *when he ſaw his Glory, and ſpake of him.*

1. We read in the Prophecy, that this was ſaid to *Eſaias*, Iſa. 6. 8. But here we are told it was ſaid *by him* to the Purpoſe. For nothing was ſaid *by him* as a Prophet, which was not firſt ſaid *to him*; nor any thing ſaid *to him* which was not afterwards ſaid *by him*, to thoſe to whom he was ſent. See *Iſa.* 21. 10.

2. The Viſion which the Prophet there had of the *Glory of God*, is here ſaid to be his *ſeeing the Glory* of Jeſus Chriſt; he *ſaw his Glory*. Jeſus Chriſt therefore is equal in Power and Glory with the Father, and his Praiſes equally celebrated. Chriſt had a Glory before *the Foundation of the World*, and *Eſaias* ſaw this.

3. It is ſaid that the Prophet there *ſpake of him*. It ſeems to have been ſpoken of the Prophet himſelf, for to him the Commiſſion and Inſtructions were there given; and yet it is here ſaid to be *ſpoken of Chriſt*, for as all the Prophets *teſtified* of him, ſo they all *typified* him. This they ſpake of him, that as to many, his Coming would be not only *fruitleſs* but *fatal*, a Saviour of Death unto Death. It might be objected againſt his Doctrine, if it was *from Heaven*, why did not the *Jews* believe it; but this is an Anſwer to it; it was not for want of Evidence, but becauſe their *Heart* was *made fat*, and their *Ears heavy*. It was ſpoken of Chriſt, that he ſhould be glorified in the Ruin of an unbelieving Multitude, as well as in the Salvation of a diſtinguiſh'd Remnant.

42 ¶ Nevertheleſs, among the chief rulers alſo many believed on him; but becauſe of the Phariſees they did not confeſs *him*, leſt they ſhould be put out of the Synagogue. 43 For they loved the praiſe of men, more than the praiſe of God.

Some Honour was done to Chriſt by theſe Rulers, for they *believed on him*, were convinc'd that he was ſent of God, and received his Doctrine as divine; but they did not do him *Honour enough*, for they had not Courage to own their Faith in him. Many profeſs'd more Kindneſs for Chriſt than really they had; theſe had more Kindneſs for him, than they were willing to profeſs.

See here what a Struggle was in theſe Rulers between their *Convictions* and their *Corruptions*.

1. See the *Power of the World* in the *Convictions* that many of them were under, who did not wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light. They *believed on him* as *Nicodemus*, received him as a Teacher come from God. *Note*, The Truth of the Goſpel hath, perhaps, a better Intereſt in the Conſciences of Men than we are aware of. Many cannot but approve of that in their Hearts, which yet outwardly they are ſhy of. Perhaps theſe chief Rulers were *true* Believers, tho' very weak, and their Faith like ſmoaking Flax. *Note*, It may be there are more good People than we think there are. *Elijah* thought he was left alone, when God had ſeven thouſand faithful Worſhippers in *Iſrael*. Some are really better than they ſeem to be. Their Faults are known, but their Repentance is not; a Man's Goodneſs may be conceal'd by a *culpable*, yet pardonable Weakneſs, which he himſelf *truly* repents of. The *Kingdom of God comes not* in all with a like *Obſervation*; nor have all they that are good, the Faculty of ſhewing it as ſome have.

2. See the *Power of the World* in the ſmothering of theſe Convictions. They believed in Chriſt, but becauſe of the *Phariſees*, who had it in their Power to do them a Diſkindneſs, they durſt not confeſs him for fear of being excommunicated. Obſerve here,

1. Wherein they *failed*, and were *defective*; they did not *confeſs* Chriſt. *Note*, There is Cauſe to queſtion the Sincerity of that Faith which is either afraid or aſham'd to ſhew it ſelf; for thoſe who believe with the Heart, ought to *confeſs with the Mouth*, Rom. 10. 8.

2. What they *fear'd*; being *put out of the Synagogue*, which they thought would be a *Diſgrace* and *Damage* to them; as if it would do them any harm to be expell'd a Synagogue, that had made it ſelf a Synagogue of Satan, and from which God was departing.

3. What was at the Bottom of this Fear; they lov'd *the Praiſe of Men*, choſe it as a more valuable Good, and purſued it as a more *deſireable End*, than the *Praiſe of God*; which was an implicite Idolatry, like that, *Rom.* 1. 25. of *worſhipping and ſerving the Creature more than the Creator.* They ſet theſe two in the Scale one againſt the other, and having weigh'd them, they proceeded accordingly: (1.) They ſet the *Praiſe of Men* in one Scale, and conſider'd how good it was to *give Praiſe to Men*, and to pay a Deference to the Opinion of the Phariſees; and to *receive Praiſe from Men*, to be commended by the chief Prieſts, and applauded by the People as *good Sons of the Church*, the Jewiſh Church. And they would not confeſs Chriſt, leſt they ſhould thereby *derogate* from the Reputation of the *Phariſees*, and *forfeit* their own, and baulk their own Preferment. And beſides, the Followers of Chriſt were put into an *ill Name*, and were look'd upon with Contempt, which they who had been us'd to honour could not bear. Yet perhaps if they had known *one another*'s Minds, they would have had *more Courage*; but each one thought, if he ſhould declare himſelf in favour of Chriſt, he ſhould *ſtand alone*, and have no Body to back him; whereas if any one had had Reſolution to *break the Ice*, he would have had more *Seconds* than he thought of. (2.) They put the *Praiſe of God* in the other Scale; they were ſenſible, that by *confeſſing Chriſt*, they ſhould both *give Praiſe to God*, and *have Praiſe from God*; that he would be pleas'd with them, and ſay, Well done: But, (3.) They gave the Preference to the Praiſe of Men, and that turn'd the Scale; Senſe prevail'd above Faith, and repreſented it more deſireable to ſtand right in the Opinion of the *Phariſees*, than to be accepted of God. *Note*, Love of the Praiſe of Men is a very great Prejudice to the Power and Practice of Religion and Godlineſs. Many come ſhort of the Glory of God, by having a Regard to the Applauſe of Men, and a Value for that. *Love of the Praiſe of Men*, as a *By-end* in that which is *good*, will make a Man an *Hypocrite*, when Religion is in Faſhion, and Credit is to be *got by it*; and as a baſe Principle in that which is evil, 'twill make a Man an *Apoſtate*, when Religion is in Diſgrace, and Credit is to be *loſt for it*, as here. See *Rom.* 2. 29.

44 ¶ Jeſus cried and ſaid, He that believeth on me,
believeth not on me, but on him that ſent me. 45
And he that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me. 46
I am come a light into the world, that whatſoever
believeth on me, ſhould not abide in darkneſs. 47
And if any man hear my words and believe not, I
judge him not: for I came not to judge the world,
but to ſave the world. 48 He that rejecteth me, and
receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him:
the word that I have ſpoken, the ſame ſhall judge him
in the laſt day. 49 For I have not ſpoken of my
ſelf; but the Father which ſent me, he gave me a
commandment what I ſhould ſay, and what I ſhould
ſpeak. 50 And I know that his commandment is
life everlaſting: whatſoever I ſpeak therefore, even
as the Father ſaid unto me, ſo I ſpeak.

We have here the Honour Chriſt not *aſſumed*, but *aſſerted* to himſelf, in the Account he gave of his Miſſion and his Errand into the World. Probably this Diſcourſe was not at the ſame time with that before, for then *he departed*, v. 36. but ſome time after, when he made another publick Appearance; and as this Evangeliſt records it, 'twas Chriſt's *farewel Sermon* to the *Jews*, and his laſt publick Diſcourſe; all that follows was *private* with his Diſciples. Now obſerve how our Lord Jeſus deliver'd this parting Word; he *cried and ſaid*, *Doth not Wiſdom cry?* Prov. 8. 1. cry *without*, Prov. 1. 20. The raiſing of his Voice, and crying, intimates, (1.) His *Boldneſs* in ſpeaking; tho' they had not Courage openly to profeſs Faith in his Doctrine, he had Courage openly to publiſh it; if they were aſham'd of it, he was not, but ſet his Face as a Flint, *Iſa.* 50. 7. (2.) His *Earneſtneſs* in ſpeaking; he cried as one that was ſerious and importunate, and in good Earneſt in what he ſaid, and was willing to impart to them, not only the Goſpel of God, but *even his own Soul.* 3. It notes his Deſire, that all might take Notice of it. This being the laſt Time of the Publication of his Goſpel by himſelf in his Perſon, he makes Proclamation, whoever will hear me, let them come now.

Now what is this Concluſion of the whole Matter; this cloſing Summary of all Chriſt's Diſcourſes? 'Tis much like that of *Moſes*, Deut. 30. 15. *See I have ſet before you Life and Death.* So Chriſt here takes leave of the Temple, with a ſolemn Declaration of three Things.

Firſt, The *Privileges* and *Dignities* which they have that *believe*; this gives great Encouragement to us to believe in Chriſt, and to profeſs that Faith: 'Tis a thing of that Nature, that we need not be either ſhy of doing it, or ſhy of owning it: For,

1. By believing in Chriſt, we are brought into an *honourable Acquaintance with God.* v. 44. 45. *He that believeth on me,* and ſo *ſeeth me, believes on him that ſent me,* and ſo *ſees him.* He that believes on Chriſt, (1.) He doth not believe in a *meer Man,* ſuch a one as he ſeem'd to be, and was generally taken to be; but he believeth in one that is the *Son of God,* and equal in Power and Glory with the Father. Or rather, (2.) His Faith doth not *terminate* in Chriſt, but through him 'tis *carry'd out* to the Father that ſent him; to whom as our End, we come by Chriſt as our Way. The Doctrine of Chriſt is believed and received as the Truth of God: The Reſt of a believing Soul is in God through Chriſt as Mediator; for its Reſignation to Chriſt, is in order to its being preſented to God. Chriſtianity is made up, not of Philoſophy or Politicks, but pure Divinity.

This is illuſtrated, *v.* 45. He that *ſees me, ſees him that ſent me;* which is the ſame with *believing* in him, for Faith is the Eye of the Soul; in getting Acquaintance with Chriſt, we come to the Knowledge of God. For, (1.) God makes himſelf known in the Face of Chriſt, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. who is the expreſs Image of his Perſon, *Heb.* 1. 3. (2.) All that have a believing Sight of Chriſt, are led by him to the Knowledge of God, whom Chriſt has revealed to us by his Word and Spirit. Chriſt as God was the Image of his Father's Perſon; but Chriſt as *Mediator* was his Father's *Repreſentative* in his Relation to Man; the Divine Light, Law and Love, being communicated to us in and through him; ſo that in ſeeing him, we may read; in eying him as our Saviour, Prince, and Lord, in the Right of Redemption, we ſee, and eye the Father as our Owner, Ruler, Benefactor, in the Right of Creation, for God is pleas'd to deal with fallen Man by Proxy.

2. We are hereby brought into a *comfortable Enjoyment of our ſelves,* v. 46. *I am come a Light into the World,* that *whoſoever believes in me,* Jew, or Gentile, *ſhould not abide in Darkneſs.* Obſerve,

1. The Character of Chriſt; *I am come a Light into the World,* to be a Light to it. It implies that he had a Being, and a Being as Light, before he came into the World, as the Sun *is* before it *riſes;* the Prophets and Apoſtles were *made Lights to the World,* but it was Chriſt only that came a Light into this World, having before been a glorious Light in the upper World, *John* 3. 19.

2. The Comfort of Chriſtians, they *do not abide in Darkneſs.* (1.) They do not continue in that dark Condition in which they were by Nature; they are *light in the Lord.* They were without any true Comfort or Joy, or Hope, but do not *continue* in that Condition: Light is ſown for them. (2.) What Darkneſs of Affliction, Diſquietment or Fear, they may afterwards be in, Proviſion is made that they may not abide long in that Darkneſs. (3.) They are deliver'd from that Darkneſs which is perpetual, and which *abideth for ever,* that utter Darkneſs, where is not the leaſt Gleam of Light, or Hope of it.

Secondly, The *Peril* and *Danger* they are in that *believe not,* which gives fair Warning to take heed of perſiſting in Unbelief, *v.* 47, 48. *If any Man hear my Words, and believe not, I judge him not,* not I only, or not now, leſt I ſhould be look'd upon as unfair in being Judge in my own Cauſe; yet let not Infidelity think therefore to go unpuniſhed, *tho' I judge him not, there's one that judgeth him.*

So that we have here the Doom of Unbelief. Obſerve,

1. Who they are whoſe Unbelief is here condemn'd: Theirs who *hear Chriſt's Words,* and yet *believe them not.* Thoſe ſhall not be condemn'd for their Infidelity, that never had or could have the Goſpel; every Man ſhall be judg'd according to the Diſpenſation of Light he was under, *they that have ſinned without Law, ſhall be judged without Law.* But thoſe that have heard, or might have heard, and would not, lie open to this Doom.

2. What is the *conſtructive* Malignity of their Unbelief, not receiving Chriſt's Word, it is interpreted, *v.* 48. a *rejecting* of Chriſt, ὁ ἀθετῶν με. It notes a Rejection with Scorn and Contempt. Where the Banner of the Goſpel is diſplay'd, no Neutrality is admitted; every Man is either a Subject or an Enemy.

3. The wonderful Patience and Forbearance of our Lord Jeſus exercis'd towards thoſe who ſlighted him when he was come here upon Earth; *I judge him not,* not now. *Note,* Chriſt was not quick or haſty, to take Advantage againſt thoſe who refus'd the firſt Offers of his Grace, but continu'd waiting to be gracious. He did not ſtrike thoſe *dumb* or *dead* who contradicted him, never made Interceſſion againſt *Iſrael,* as *Elias* did; tho' he had Authority to judge, he ſuſpended the Execution of it, becauſe he had Work of another Nature to do *firſt,* and that was to *ſave the World.* (1.) To ſave effectually thoſe that were given him, before he came to *judge* the degenerate Body of Mankind. (2.) To offer Salvation to all the World, and thus for to ſave them, that 'tis their own Fault if they be not ſaved. He was to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf. Now the executing of the Power of a Judge was not congruous with that Undertaking, *Acts* 8. 33. *In his Humiliation his Judgment was taken away;* 'twas ſuſpended for a Time.

4. The certain and unavoidable Judgment of Unbelievers at the great Day, the Day of the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God: Unbelief will certainly be a damning Sin. Some think when Chriſt ſaith, *I judge no Man,* he means they are *condemn'd already;* there needs no Proceſs, they are *ſelf-judg'd;* no Execution, they are *ſelf-ruin'd;* Judgment goes againſt them of courſe, *Heb.* 2. 3. Chriſt needs not appear *againſt* them as their Accuſer, they are miſerable if he do not appear *for* them as their Advocate; however he tells them plainly when and where they will be reckon'd with.

1. There is *one that judgeth them.* Nothing more dreadful than abuſed Patience, and Grace trampled on; tho' for a while *Mercy rejoyceth againſt Judgment,* yet there will be *Judgment without Mercy.*

2. Their final Judgment is reſerv'd to the *laſt Day;* to that Day of Judgment Chriſt here binds over all Unbelievers, to anſwer then for all the Contempts they have put upon him. Divine Juſtice has *appointed a Day,* and adjourns the Sentence to that Day, as *Mat.* 26. 64.

3. The *Word of Chriſt* will judge them then; *The Words that I have ſpoken,* how light ſoever you have made of them, *the ſame ſhall judge* the Unbeliever *in the laſt Day;* as the Apoſtles, the Preachers of Chriſt's Word, are ſaid to *judge,* Luke 22. 30. Chriſt's Word will judge Unbelievers two Ways. (1.) As the *Evidence* of their *Crime,* they will *convict* them. Every Word Chriſt ſpoke, every Sermon, every Argument, every kind Offer will be produced as a Teſtimony againſt thoſe who ſlighted all he ſaid. (2.) As the *Rule* of their *Doom,* they will *condemn* them; they ſhall be judg'd according to the Tenor of that Covenant which Chriſt procured and publiſhed. That Word of Chriſt, *He that believes not ſhall be damn'd,* will judge all Unbelievers to eternal Ruin; and are *many ſuch like Words.*

Thirdly, A *ſolemn Declaration* of the *Authority* Chriſt had to *demand* our *Faith,* and require us to receive his Doctrine upon Pain of Damnation, *v.* 49, 50. Where obſerve,

1. The Commiſſion which our Lord Jeſus received from the Father, to deliver his Doctrine to the World, *v.* 49. *I have not ſpoken of my ſelf,* as a mere Man, much leſs a common man: *But the Father gave me a Commandment what I ſhould ſay.* This is the ſame with what he had ſaid, *John* 7. 17. *My Doctrine is,* (1.) *Not mine,* for *I have not ſpoken of my ſelf.* Chriſt as *Son of Man,* did not ſpeak that which was of human Contrivance or Compoſure; as *Son of God,* he did not *act ſeparately,* or by himſelf alone, but what he ſaid was the Reſult of the Counſels of Peace; as Mediator, his coming into the World was voluntary, and *with his full Conſent,* but not *arbitrary,* and of *his own Head.* But, (2.) It was he that *ſent him,* God the Father gave him, (1.) His *Commiſſion;* God ſent him as his Agent and Plenipotentiary, to concert Matters between him and Man, to ſet a Treaty of Peace on foot, and to ſettle the Articles. 2. His *Inſtructions,* here call'd a *Commandment,* for they were like thoſe given an Embaſſador, directing him not only what he *may* ſay, but what he *muſt* ſay. The Meſſenger of the Covenant was intruſted with an Errand which he muſt deliver. *Note,* Our Lord Jeſus *learned Obedience* himſelf, before he taught it us, tho' he were a Son. *The Lord God commanded* the firſt *Adam,* and he by *his Diſobedience* ruin'd us; he *commanded the* ſecond *Adam,* and he by his Obedience ſaved us. God commanded him *what he ſhould ſay, and what he ſhould ſpeak,* two Words ſignifying the ſame thing, to note that every Word was divine. The old Teſtament Prophets ſometimes ſpoke *of themſelves,* but Chriſt ſpoke by the Spirit at *all times.* Some make this Diſtinction; he was directed *what he ſhould ſay* in his Set-Sermons, and what he ſhould *ſpeak* in his familiar Diſcourſes. Others this; he was directed what he ſhould *ſay* in his preaching now, and what he ſhould *ſpeak* in his judging at the laſt Day, for he had Commiſſions and Inſtructions for both.

2. The Scope, Deſign, and Tendency of that Commiſſion *v.* 50. *I know that his Commandment is Life everlaſting.* The Commiſſion given to Chriſt had a Reference to the everlaſting State of the Children of Men, and was in order to their everlaſting Life and Happineſs in that State. The Inſtructions given to Chriſt as a *Prophet,* were to *reveal eternal Life,* 1 John 5. 10. The Power given to Chriſt as a King, was to *give eternal Life,* John 17. 2. Thus the Command given him was *Life everlaſting.* This Chriſt ſaith, he *knew; I know* it is ſo, which intimates how chearfully, and with what Aſſurance Chriſt purſued his Undertaking, knowing very well that he *went* upon a good Errand, and that which would bring forth Fruit unto *Life eternal.* It intimates likewiſe how juſtly they will periſh, who reject Chriſt and his Word; thoſe who diſobey Chriſt, deſpiſe *everlaſting Life,* and renounce it; ſo that not only *Chriſt's Words* will judge them, but even *their own; ſo ſhall their Doom be,* themſelves have decided it, and who can except againſt it.

3. Chriſt's exact Obſervance of the Commiſſion and Inſtructions given him, and his ſteddy acting in Purſuance of them. *Whatſoever I ſpeak,* 'tis *as the Father ſaid unto me.* Chriſt was *intimately* acquainted with the *Counſels of God,* and was faithful in diſcovering ſo much of them to the Children of Men, as 'twas agreed ſhould be diſcover'd, and *kept back nothing that was profitable.* As the *faithful Witneſs delivereth Souls,* ſo did he, and ſpoke the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth. Now, (1.) This is a great Encouragement to Faith; the Sayings of Chriſt rightly underſtood, are what we may venture our Souls upon. (2.) 'Tis a great Example of Obedience. Chriſt ſaid he was bidden, and ſo muſt we; communicated what the Father had ſaid to him, and ſo muſt we. See *Acts* 4. 20. In the midſt of all the Reſpects paid him, this is the Honour he values himſelf upon, that what the Father had ſaid to him, that he ſpoke, and in the Manner as he was directed, ſo he ſpoke. This was his Glory, that, *as a Son,* he was faithful to him that appointed him; and by an unfeigned Belief of every Word of Chriſt, and an entire Subjection of Soul to it, we muſt *give him the Glory due to his Name.*

CHAP. XIII.

Our Saviour having finiſh'd his publick Diſcourſes, in which he endur'd the Contradiction of Sinners: *He now applies himſelf to a private Converſation with his Friends, in which he* deſign'd the Conſolation of Saints. *Henceforward we have an Account of what paſſed between him and his Diſciples, who were to be intruſted with the Affairs of his Houſhold, when he was gone into a far Country; the neceſſary Inſtructions and Comforts he furniſh'd them with; his Hour being at hand, he applies himſelf to* ſet his Houſe in Order. *In this Chapter,* (1.) *He waſheth his Diſciples Feet,* v. 1—17. (2.) *He foretels who ſhould betray him,* v. 18——30. (3.) *He inſtructs them in the great Doctrine of his own Death, and the great Duty of Brotherly Love,* v. 31——35. (4.) *He foretells* Peter's *denying of him,* v. 36——38.

NOW before the feaſt of the paſſover, when Jeſus knew that his hour was come, that he ſhould depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. 2 And ſupper being ended, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iſcariot, Simon's *ſon*, to betray him) 3 Jeſus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God: 4 He riſeth from ſupper, and laid aſide his garments, and took a towel and girded himſelf. 5 After that, he poureth water into a baſon, and began to waſh the diſciples feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded. 6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, doſt thou waſh my feet? 7 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, What I do thou knoweſt not now; but thou ſhalt know hereafter. 8 Peter ſaith unto him, Thou ſhalt never waſh my feet. Jeſus anſwered him, If I waſh thee not, thou haſt no part with me. 9 Simon Peter ſaith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but alſo *my* hands and *my* head. 10 Jeſus ſaith to him, He that is waſhed, needeth not, ſave to waſh *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. 11 For he knew who ſhould betray him; therefore ſaid he, Ye are not all clean. 12 So after he had waſhed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was ſet down again, he ſaid unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? 13 Ye call me Maſter, and Lord; and ye ſay well; for *ſo* I am. 14 If I then *your* Lord and Maſter, have waſhed your feet, ye alſo ought to waſh one anothers feet. 15 For I have given you an Example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you. 16 Verily verily I ſay unto you, The ſervant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is ſent, greater than he that ſent him. 17 If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.

It has generally been taken for granted, that Chriſt's waſhing his Diſciples Feet, and the Diſcourſe that follow'd it, was the ſame Night *in which he was betray'd*, and at the ſame ſitting, wherein he eat the Paſſover, and inſtituted the Lord's Supper. But whether before the Solemnity began, or after it was all over, or between the eating of the Paſſover, and the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, they are not agreed. This Evangeliſt making it his Buſineſs to gather up thoſe Paſſages which the other had omitted, induſtriouſly omits thoſe which the other had recorded; which occaſions ſome Difficulty in putting them together. And if it were then, we ſuppoſe that *Judas went out*, v. 30. to get his Men ready, that were to apprehend the Lord Jeſus in the Garden. But Dr. *Lightfoot* is clearly of Opinion, that this was done and ſaid, even all that is recorded to the End of *chap.* 14. not at the *Paſſover Supper*, for it is here ſaid, *v.* 1. to be *before the Feaſt of the Paſſover*; but at the Supper in *Bethany*, two Days before the Paſſover, of which we read, *Mat.* 26, 2, 6. at which *Mary* the ſecond Time anointed Chriſt's Head with the Remainder of the Box of Ointment. Or, it might be at ſome other Supper the Night before the Paſſover, not as that was in the Houſe of *Simon the Leper*, but in his own Lodgings, where he had none but his Diſciples about him, and could be more free with them.

In theſe Verſes we have the Story of Chriſt's *waſhing his Diſciples Feet*; 'twas an Action of a ſingular Nature; no Miracle, but a Miracle of Humility. *Mary* had now newly *anointed his Head*, now leſt his Acceptance of that, ſhould look like taking State, he preſently balanceth it with this Act of Abaſement; but why would Chriſt do this? If the Diſciples Feet needed waſhing, they could do it themſelves; a wiſe Man will not do a thing that looks *odd*, and *unuſual*, but for very good Cauſes and Conſiderations. We are ſure it was not in a Humour or a Frolick that this was done; no, the Tranſaction was very ſolemn, and carried on with a deal of Seriouſneſs; and four Reaſons are here intimated why Chriſt did this. (1.) That he might teſtify his Love to his Diſciples, *v.* 1, 2. (2.) That he might give an Inſtance of his own voluntary Humility and Condeſcention, *v.* 3, 4, 5. (3.) That he might ſignify to them ſpiritual waſhing, which is referr'd to in his Diſcourſe with *Peter*, v. 6——11. (4.) That he might ſet them an Example, *v.* 12—17. And the opening of theſe four Reaſons for it, will take in the Expoſition of the whole Story.

Firſt, Chriſt waſh'd his Diſciples Feet, *that he might give a Proof of that great Love wherewith he loved them: Loved them to the end*, v. 1, 2.

1. It is here laid down as an undoubted Truth, that our Lord Jeſus *having loved his own which were in the World, loved them to the end*, v. 1.

(1.) This is true of the Diſciples that were his immediate Followers, in particular the *Twelve*. Theſe were *his own in the World*, his Family, his School, his Boſom Friends. Children he had none to call his own, but he *adopted them*, and took them as *his own*. He had thoſe that were *his own in 'tother* World, but he left them for a Time to look after his own in this World. Theſe he *loved*, he call'd them into Fellowſhip with himſelf, converſe familiarly with them, was always tender of them, and of their Comfort and Reputation. He allow'd them to be very free with him, and bore with their Infirmities. He lov'd them to *the end*, continued his Love to them as long as he liv'd, and after his Reſurrection; he never took away his loving Kindneſs: Tho' there were ſome Perſons of Quality that eſpous'd his Cauſe, he did not lay aſide his old Friends to make Room for new Ones, but ſtill ſtuck to his poor Fiſhermen. They were weak and defective in Knowledge and Grace, dull and forgetful, and yet tho' he *reprov'd* them often, he never ceas'd to *love*, and *take care* of them.

(2.) 'Tis true of all Believers, for theſe Twelve Patriarchs were the Repreſentatives of all the Tribes of God's ſpiritual *Iſrael*. *Note*, 1. Our Lord Jeſus hath a People in the World that are *his own*; his own, for they were given him by the Father, he has purchas'd them, and paid dear for them, and he hath ſet them apart for himſelf; *his own*, for they have devoted themſelves to him as a peculiar People. *His own*. Where *his own* were ſpoken of that *received him not*, 'tis τὰ ἴδια, *his own Things*, as a Man's Cattle are his own, which yet he may when he pleaſeth alter the Property of. But here 'tis τȣ̀ς ἰδίȣς, his own Perſons, as a Man's Wife and Children are his own, to whom he ſtands in a conſtant Relation. 2. Chriſt has a dear Love for *his own* that are in the World. He did love them with a Love of good Will when he gave himſelf for their Redemption. He doth love them with a Love of Complacency, when he admits them into Communion with himſelf. Tho' they are *in this World*, a World of Darkneſs and Diſtance of Sin and Corruption, yet he *loves them*. He was now going to *his own in Heaven*, the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect there, but he ſeems moſt concern'd for *his own Earth*, becauſe they moſt needed his Care: The ſickly Child is moſt indulg'd. 3. Thoſe whom Chriſt loves he loves *to the end*; he is conſtant in his Love to his People; he *reſts in his Love*. He loves with an *everlaſting Love*, Jer. 31. 3. from everlaſting in the Counſels of it, to everlaſting in the Conſequences of it. Nothing can ſeparate a Believer *from the Love of Chriſt*; he loves his own, εἰς τέλος, *unto Perfection*, for he will perfect what concerns them, will bring them to that World where *Love is perfect*.

2. Chriſt manifeſted his Love to them by *waſhing* their Feet, as that good Woman (*Luke* 7. 42.) ſhewed her Love to Chriſt by *waſhing his Feet*, and *wiping* them. Thus he would ſhew that as his Love to them was *conſtant*, ſo it was *condeſcending*, and that in Proſecution of the Deſigns of it he was willing to humble *himſelf*; and that the Glories of his exalted State, which he was now entring upon, ſhould be no Obſtruction at all to *the Favour he bare to his choſen*: And thus he would confirm the Promiſe he had made to all the Saints, that he would *make them ſit down to Meat, and would come forth and ſerve them*, Luke 12. 37. would put Honour upon them as great and ſurprizing as for a Lord to *ſerve* his *Servants*. The Diſciples had juſt now betray'd the Weakneſs of their Love to him, in grudging the Ointment that was poured upon his Head, *Mat.* 26. 28. yet he preſently gives this Proof of his Love to them. Our Infirmities are Foils to Chriſt's Kindneſſes, and ſet them off.

3. He choſe this Time to do it, a little before his laſt Paſſover, for two Reaſons.

1. Becauſe now *he knew that his Hour was come*, which he had long expected, *when he ſhould depart out of this World to the Father.* Obſerve here,

(1.) The *Change* that was to paſs over our Lord Jeſus, he muſt *depart*. This began at his Death, but was compleated at his Aſcenſion. As Chriſt himſelf, ſo all Believers, by Virtue of their Union with him, when they depart out of the World, are abſent from the Body, *go to the Father*, are preſent with the Lord. 'Tis a Departure *out of the World*, this unkind, injurious World, this faithleſs, treacherous World; this World of Labour, Toil, and Temptation; this Vale of Tears; and 'tis going *to the Father*, to the Viſion of the Father of Spirits, and the Fruition of him as ours.

(2.) The Time of this Change, *his Hour was come*. 'Tis ſometimes call'd his Enemies Hour, *Luke* 22. 53. the Honour of their

Triumph; ſometimes *his Hour*, the Hour of his Triumph; the Hour he had in his Eye all along. The Time of his Sufferings was fix'd to an Hour, and the Continuance of them but for an Hour.

(3.) His Foreſight of it; *He knew that his Hour was come*, he knew from the Beginning that it *would come*, and when, but now knew that it *was come*. We know not when our Hour will come, and therefore what we have to do in habitual Preparation for it, ought never to be undone; but when we know by the Harbingers that *our Hour is come*, we muſt vigorouſly apply our ſelves to an actual Preparation as our Maſter did, 2 *Pet.* 3. 14.

Now it was in the immediate Foreſight of his Departure that he *waſh'd his Diſciples Feet*; that as his own Head was anointed juſt now *againſt the Day of his Burial*, ſo their Feet might be *waſh'd* againſt the Day of their Conſecration, by the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt Fifty Days after, as the Prieſts were *waſh'd*, Lev. 8. 6. When we ſee *our Day approaching*, we ſhould do what good we can to thoſe we leave behind.

2. Becauſe the *Devil had now put it into the Head of* Judas *to betray him*, v. 2. Theſe Words in a Parentheſis may be conſider'd,

1. As tracing *Judas*'s Treaſon to its *Original*; 'twas a Sin of ſuch a Nature that it evidently bore the Devil's Image and Superſcription. What Ways of acceſs the Devil has to Men's Hearts, and by what Methods he darts in his Suggeſtions, and mingles them undiſcern'd with thoſe Thoughts which are the Natives of the Heart, we cannot tell? But there are ſome Sins in their own Nature ſo exceeding ſinful, and to which there is ſo little Temptation from the World and the Fleſh, that 'tis plain Satan laid the Egg of them in a Heart diſpos'd to be the Neſt to hatch them in: For *Judas* to betray ſuch a Maſter ſo cheaply, and upon no Provocation, was ſuch downright Enmity to God, as could not be forg'd but by Satan himſelf, who thereby thought to ruin the Redeemer's Kingdom, but it prov'd the Ruin of his own.

2. As intimating a Reaſon why Chriſt now waſh'd his Diſciples Feet. 1. *Judas* being now reſolv'd to betray him, the Time of his Departure could not be far off; if this Matter be determin'd, 'tis eaſy to infer with St. *Paul*, *I am now ready to be offer'd. Note*, The more malicious we perceive our Enemies to be againſt us, the more induſtrious we ſhould be to prepare for the worſt that may come. 2. *Judas* being now got into the Snare, and the Devil aiming at *Peter*, and the reſt of them, (*Luke* 22. 31.) Chriſt would fortifie his own againſt him. If the Wolf have ſeiz'd one of the Flock, it's Time for the Shepherd to look well to the reſt. Antidotes muſt be ſtirring when the Infection is begun. Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves, that the Diſciples had learned of *Judas* to murmur at the anointing of Chriſt, (compare *John* 12. 4. with *Mark* 26. 8.) Now leſt they that had learn'd that of him ſhould learn worſe, he fortifies them by a Leſſon of Humility againſt his moſt dangerous Aſſaults. 3. *Judas*, who was now plotting to betray him, was *one of the Twelve*. Now Chriſt would hereby ſhew he did not deſign to caſt them all off for the Faults of one. Tho' one of their College had a Devil, and was a Traytor, yet they ſhould fare never the worſe for that. Chriſt loves his Church, tho' there are Hypocrites in it, and had ſtill a Kindneſs for his Diſciples, tho' there was a *Judas* among them, and he *knew it*.

Secondly, Chriſt waſh'd his Diſciples Feet, that he might give an Inſtance of his own wonderful Humility, and ſhew how lowly and condeſcending he was, and let all the World know how low he could ſtoop in love to his own. This is intimated, *v.* 3, 4, 5. *Jeſus knowing*, and now actually conſidering, and perhaps diſcourſing of his Honours as Mediator, and telling his Friends that *the Father had given all Things into his Hand*, &c. he *riſeth from Supper*, and to the great Surprize of the Company, who wonder'd what he was going to do, *waſh'd his Diſciples Feet*.

1. Here's the *rightful Advancement* of the Lord Jeſus. Glorious Things are here ſaid of Chriſt as Mediator.

(1.) *The Father had given all Things into his Hands*; had given him a Propriety in all, and a Power over all, as Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth, in purſuance of the great Deſigns of his Undertaking; ſee *Mat.* 11. 27. The *Accommodation* and *Arbitration* of all Matters in variance between God and Man was committed into his Hands, as the great Umpire and Referee; and the *Adminiſtration* of the Kingdom of God among Men, in all the Branches of it, was committed to him; ſo that all Acts, both of Government and Judgment were to paſs through his Hands; he *is Heir of all Things*.

(2.) *He came from God*; this implies that he was in the beginning with God, and had a Being and Glory, not only before he was born into this World, but before the World it ſelf was born; and when he came into the World he came as God's Ambaſſador, with a Commiſſion from him. He came *from God* as the *Son of God*, and the *Sent of God*. The Old Teſtament Prophets were raiſed up, and employ'd *for God*, but Chriſt came directly from him.

(3.) He *went to God*, to be glorified with him, with the ſame Glory which he had with God from Eternity. That which comes *from God ſhall go to God*; they that are born *from* Heaven, are bound *for* Heaven. As Chriſt came *from* God to be an Agent for *him* on Earth, ſo he went to God to be an Agent for *us* in Heaven; and it is a Comfort to us to think how welcome he was there; he was brought near to the Ancient of Days, *Dan.* 7. 13. And 'twas ſaid to him, *ſit thou at my Right Hand*, Pſal. 110. 1.

(4.) He *knew* all this; was not like a Prince in the Cradle, that knows nothing of the Honour he is born to, or like *Moſes*, who wiſt not *that his Face ſhone*; no, he had a full View of all the Honours of his exalted State, and yet ſtoop'd thus low. But how doth this come in here?

1. As an *Inducement* to him now quickly to leave what Leſſons and Legacies he had to leave to his Diſciples, becauſe his Hour was now come when he muſt take his Leave of them, and be exalted above that familiar Converſe which he now had with them, *v.* 1.

2. It may come in as that which *ſupported him* under his Sufferings, and carried him chearfully through this ſharp Encounter. *Judas* was now betraying him, and he knew it, and knew what would be the Conſequence of it, yet knowing alſo *that he came from God, and went to God*, he did not draw back, but went on chearfully.

3. It ſeems to come in as a *Foil to his Condeſcenſion*, to make it the more admirable. The Reaſons of Divine Grace are ſometimes repreſented in Scripture as ſtrange and ſurprizing, as *Iſa.* 57. 17, 18. *Hoſ.* 2. 13, 14. ſo here that's given as an Inducement to Chriſt to *ſtoop*, which ſhould rather have been a Reaſon for his *taking State*, for God's Thoughts are not as ours. Compare with this, thoſe Paſſages which preface the moſt ſignal Inſtances of condeſcending Grace, with the Diſplays of Divine Glory, as *Pſal.* 68. 4, 5. *Iſa.* 57. 15. and 67. 1, 2.

2. Here's the *voluntary Abaſement* of our Lord Jeſus notwithſtanding this. *Jeſus knowing* his own Glory as *God*, and his own Authority and Power as Mediator, one would think it ſhould follow, *He riſeth from Supper*, lays aſide his ordinary Garments, calls for Robes, bids them keep their Diſtance, and do him Homage; no, quite contrary, when he conſidered this, he gave the greateſt Inſtance of Humility. *Note*, (1.) A well grounded Aſſurance of Heaven and Happineſs, inſtead of puffing a Man with Pride will make and keep them very humble. (2.) Thoſe that would be found conformable to Chriſt, and Partakers of his Spirit, muſt ſtudy to keep their Minds low in the midſt of the greateſt Advancements. Now that which Chriſt humbled himſelf to, was to *waſh his Diſciples Feet*.

1. The *Action it ſelf* was *mean* and *ſervile*, and that which Servants of the loweſt Rank were employ'd in. *Let thine Handmaid* (ſaid *Abigail*) *be a Servant to waſh the Feet of the Servants of my Lord*; let me be in the meaneſt Employments, 1 *Sam.* 25. 41. If he had waſh'd their *Hands* or *Faces* it had been great Condeſcenſion: *Eliſha* pour'd Water upon the Hands of *Elijah*, 2 Kings 3. 11. but for Chriſt to ſtoop to ſuch a piece of Drudgery as this, we may well be amazed at it. Thus he would teach us to think nothing below us, wherein we may be ſerviceable to God's Glory, and the good of our Brethren.

2. The *Condeſcenſion* was ſo much the *greater*, that he did this for *his own Diſciples*, who *in themſelves* were of a low and deſpicable Condition, not curious about their Bodies; their Feet 'tis likely, ſeldom waſh'd, and therefore very dirty. In *Relation to him*, they were his Scholars, his Servants, and ſuch as ſhould have *waſh'd his Feet*, whoſe Dependance was upon him, and their Expectations from him. Many of great Spirits otherwiſe will do a mean thing to curry Favour with their Superiours, they riſe by ſtooping, and climb by cringing; but for Chriſt to do this to *his Diſciples*, could be no Act of Policy or Complaiſance, but pure Humility.

3. *He roſe from Supper to do it*. Tho' we tranſlate it, *v.* 2. *Supper being ended*; it might be better read, there being a *Supper made*, or he *being at Supper*, for he ſat down again, *v.* 12. and we find, him dipping a Sop, v. 26. ſo that he did it *in the midſt* of his Meal, and thereby taught us, (1.) Not to reckon it a Diſturbance, or any juſt Cauſe of Uneaſineſs to be call'd from our Meal to do God or our Brother any real Service, eſteeming the Diſcharge of our Duty *more than our neceſſary Food*, John 4. 34. Chriſt would not leave his *Preaching* to oblige his neareſt Relations, *Mark* 3. 33. but would leave his *Supper* to ſhew his Love to his Diſciples. (2.) Not to be *over nice* about our Meat. 'Twould have turn'd many a ſqueamiſh Stomach to waſh dirty Feet at Supper time; but Chriſt did it, not that we might learn to be *rude* and *ſlovenly*, Cleanlineſs and Godlineſs will do well together; but to teach us, not to be *curious*, not to indulge, but mortifie the Delicacy of the Appetite, giving good Manners their *due Place* and no more.

4. He put himſelf into the *Garb of a Servant* to do it; he *laid aſide* his looſe and upper *Garments*, that he might apply himſelf to this Service the more expediently. We muſt addreſs our ſelves to Duty as thoſe that are reſolv'd *not to take State*, but to *take Pains*; we muſt *diveſt* our ſelves of every Thing that would either feed our Pride, or hang in our Way, and hinder us in what we have to do; muſt *gird up the Loins of our Mind*, as thoſe that in earneſt buckle to Buſineſs.

5. He did it with all the *humble Ceremony* that could be, went through all the Parts of the Service diſtinctly, and balk'd none of them; he did as if he had been *uſed* thus to ſerve; did it himſelf alone, and had none to miniſter to him in it. He *girded himſelf with the Towel*, as Servants throw a Napkin on their Arm, or put an Apron before them; he *pour'd Water into the Baſon* out of the Water-pots that ſtood by, *John* 2. 6. and then *waſh'd their Feet*; and to compleat the Service, *wiped them*. Some think he did not waſh the Feet of them all, but only Four or Five of them, that

being thought ſufficient to anſwer the End; but I ſee nothing to countenance this Conjecture, for in other Places where he did make a difference, 'tis taken Notice of; and is waſhing the Feet of them *all* without Exception, teacheth us a Catholick, and extenſive Charity to all Chriſt's Diſciples, even the leaſt.

6. Nothing appears to the contrary, but that he waſh'd the Feet of *Judas* among the reſt, for he was preſent, *v.* 26. 'Tis the Character of a *Widow indeed*, that ſhe had *waſh'd the Saints Feet*, 1 Tim. 5. 10. and there is ſome comfort in that, but the bleſſed Jeſus here waſhed the Feet of a Sinner, the worſt of Sinners; the worſt to him, that was at this Time contriving to betray him.

Many Interpreters make Chriſt's waſhing his Diſciples Feet a Repreſentation of *his whole Undertaking*. He knew that he was equal with God, and all Things were his, and yet he aroſe from his Table in Glory, laid aſide his Robes of Light, girded himſelf with our Nature, took upon him the Form of a Servant, *came not to be miniſtred to, but to miniſter*; poured out his Blood, poured out his Soul unto Death, and thereby prepared a Laver to waſh us from our Sins, *Rev.* 1. 5.

Thirdly, Chriſt waſh'd his Diſciples Feet that he might *ſignifie* to them *ſpiritual waſhing*, and the cleanſing of the Soul from the Pollutions of Sin. This is plainly intimated in his Diſcourſe with *Peter* upon it, *v.* 6—11. In which we may obſerve,

1. The Surprize *Peter* was in when he ſaw his Maſter go about this mean Service. *Ver.* 6. *Then comes he to* Simon Peter, with his Towel and Baſon, and bid him put out his Feet to be waſhed. *Chryſoſtom* conjectures that he waſhed the Feet of *Judas* firſt, who readily admitted it, and was pleaſed to ſee his Maſter ſo diſparage himſelf. 'Tis moſt probable when he *went about* this Service (which is all that is meant by his *beginning* to waſh, *v.* 5.) he took *Peter* firſt; and the reſt would not have ſuffer'd it, if they had not firſt heard it explained in what paſt between Chriſt and *Peter*.

Whether Chriſt came firſt to *Peter* or no, when he did come to him, *Peter* ſtartled at the Propoſal, *Lord* (ſaith he) *doſt thou waſh my Feet*? Here's an Emphaſis to be laid upon the Perſons, *thou* and *me*; and the placing of the Words is obſervable, σύ μου, what, thou mine? *Tu mihi lavas pedes? Quid eſt tu? Quid eſt mihi? Cogitanda ſunt potius quam dicenda*, Aug. in loc. What *Thou*? Our Lord and Maſter, whom we know, and believe to be the Son of God, and Saviour and Ruler of the World, do this for *me*, a worthleſs Worm of the Earth, a *ſinful Man, O Lord*. Shall thoſe Hands waſh my Feet, which with a Touch have cleanſed Lepers, given Sight to the Blind, and raiſed the Dead? So *Theophylact*, and from him Dr. *Taylor*. Very willingly would *Peter* have taken the Baſon and Towel, and waſhed his Maſter's Feet, and been proud of the Honour, *Luke* 17. 7, 8. This had been natural and regular, for *my Maſter* to waſh my Feet, is ſuch a Soleciſm as never was; ſuch a Paradox as I cannot underſtand: *Is this the Manner of Men*? *Note*, Chriſt's Condeſcenſions, eſpecially his Condeſcenſion *to us*, wherein we find our ſelves taken Notice of by his Grace, are juſtly the Matter of our Admiration, *John* 14. 27. *Who am I, Lord God? And what is my Father's Houſe?*

2. The immediate Satisfaction Chriſt gave to this Queſtion of Surprize, which was at the leaſt ſufficient to ſilence his Objections, *v.* 7. *What I do thou knoweſt not now, but ſhalt know hereafter.* Here are two Reaſons why *Peter* muſt ſubmit to what Chriſt was doing.

(1.) Becauſe he was at preſent *in the dark* concerning it, and ought not to oppoſe what he did not underſtand, but acquieſce in the Will and Wiſdom of one who could give a good Reaſon for all he ſaid and did. Chriſt will teach *Peter* an *implicite Obedience*; what I do, *thou knoweſt not now*, and therefore art no competent Judge of it, but muſt believe it's well done, becauſe I do it. *Note*, Conſciouſneſs to our ſelves of the Darkneſs we labour under, and our Inability to judge of what God doth, ſhould make us ſparing and modeſt in our Cenſures of his Proceeding; ſee *Heb*. 11. 8.

(2.) Becauſe there was ſomething conſiderable in it, which he ſhould hereafter know the Meaning of, *Thou ſhalt know hereafter*, what need thou haſt of being waſh'd, when thou ſhalt be guilty of the henious Sin of denying me: So ſome. Thou ſhalt know, when in the Diſcharge of the Office of an Apoſtle, thou wilt be employ'd in waſhing off from thoſe under thy Charge, the Sins and Defilements of their earthly Affections. So Dr. *Hammond*. *Note*, 1. Our Lord Jeſus doth many things, which even his own Diſciples do not for the preſent know the Meaning of, but they *ſhall know afterwards*; what he did, when he became Man for us, and what he did when he became a Worm, and no Man for us; what he did, when he liv'd our Life, and what he did when he laid it down, could not be underſtood till afterward, and then it appear'd that *it behoved him*, Heb. 2. 17. Subſequent Providences explain preceeding ones; and we ſee afterwards, what was the kind Tendency of Events that ſeem'd moſt croſs: And the Way which we thought was *about*, prov'd the *right Way*. 2. Chriſt's waſhing his Diſciples Feet, had a Significancy in it, which they themſelves did not underſtand till afterwards: When Chriſt explain'd it to be a Specimen of the Laver of Regeneration, and till the Spirit was poured out upon them from on high. We muſt let Chriſt take his own Way, both in Ordinances and Providences, and we ſhall find in the Iſſue it was the *beſt Way*.

3. *Peter*'s peremptory Refuſal, notwithſtanding this, to let Chriſt waſh his Feet, *v.* 8. *Thou ſhalt by no Means waſh my Feet; no, never.* So 'tis in the Original. 'Tis the Language of a fix'd Reſolution.

Now, 1. Here was a *Shew of Humility*, and Modeſty; *Peter* herein ſeem'd to have, and no doubt he really had, a great Reſpect for his Maſter, as he had, *Luke* 5. 8. Thus many are beguil'd of their Reward in a *voluntary Humility*, Col. 2. 18, 23. Such a Self-denial as Chriſt neither appoints, nor accepts: For, 2. Under this Shew of Humility there was a *real Contradiction* to the Will of the Lord Jeſus. *I will waſh thy Feet*, ſaith Chriſt; but thou never ſhalt ſaith *Peter*, 'tis not a fitting thing, ſo making himſelf *wiſer than Chriſt*. 'Tis not Humility, but Infidelity, to put away the Offers of the Goſpel, as if too rich to be made us, or too good News to be true.

4. Chriſt's *inſiſting upon his Offer*, and a good Reaſon given to *Peter*, why he ſhould accept it; *If I Waſh thee not, thou haſt no Part with me.* Which may be taken,

(1.) As a ſevere Caution againſt Diſobedience. If *I waſh thee not*, i. e. if thou continue refractory, and wilt not comply with thy Maſter's Will in ſo ſmall a Matter, thou ſhalt not be owned as one of my Diſciples, but be juſtly diſcarded and caſhiered for not obſerving Orders. Thus ſeveral of the Antients underſtand it; if *Peter* will make himſelf wiſer than his Maſter, and *diſpute* the Commands he ought to *obey*, he doth in effect renounce his Allegiance, and ſay as they did, *What Portion have we in* David; in the Son of *David*, and ſo ſhall his Doom be; he ſhall have no Part in him. Let him uſe no more Manners than doth him good, for *to obey, is better than ſacrifice*. 1 *Sam*. 15. 22. Or,

(2.) As a Declaration of the Neceſſity of ſpiritual waſhing; and ſo I think 'tis to be underſtood. *If I waſh not* thy Soul from the Pollution of Sin, *thou haſt no Part with me*, no Intereſt in me, no Communion with me, no Benefit by me. *Note*, All thoſe, and thoſe only that are ſpiritually waſhed by Chriſt, have a Part in Chriſt. (1.) To have a Part *in Chriſt*, or *with Chriſt*, has all the Happineſs of a Chriſtian bound up in it, to be *Partakers of Chriſt*, Heb. 3. 14. to ſhare in thoſe ineſtimable Privileges which reſult from a Union with him and Relation to him. 'Tis that *good Part*, the having of which is the *one Thing needful*. 2. 'Tis neceſſary to our having a Part in Chriſt, that he *waſh us*. All thoſe whom Chriſt owns and ſaves, he *juſtifies* and *ſanctifies*, and both are included in his waſhing them. We cannot partake of his Glory, if we partake not of his Merit and Righteouſneſs, and of his Spirit and Grace.

5. *Peter*'s more than *Submiſſion*, his earneſt *Requeſt* to be waſhed by Chriſt, *v.* 9. If this be the Meaning of it, *Lord waſh not my Feet only, but alſo my Hands and my Head.* How ſoon is *Peter*'s Mind changed, when the Miſtake of his Underſtanding was rectified, the corrupt Reſolution of his Will was ſoon alter'd. Let us therefore not peremptory in any Reſolve (but only in our Reſolve to follow Chriſt) becauſe we may ſoon ſee Cauſe to retract it; but cautious in taking up a Purpoſe we will be tenacious of. Obſerve,

(1.) How ready *Peter* is to recede from what he had ſaid, Lord, what a Fool was I to ſpeak ſuch a haſty Word! Now the waſhing of him appear'd to be an Act of Chriſt's Authority and Grace, he admits it; but diſlik'd it, when it ſeem'd only an Act of Humiliation. *Note*, (1.) Good Men when they ſee their Error, will not be loth to recant it. (2.) Sooner or later Chriſt will bring all to be of his Mind.

(2.) How importunate he is for the purifying Grace of the Lord Jeſus, and the univerſal Influence of it, even upon *his Hands and Head*. *Note*, A Divorce from Chriſt, and an Excluſion from having a *Part in him*, is the moſt *formidable* Evil in the Eyes of all that are enlighten'd, for the fear of which they will be perſwaded to any thing. And for Fear of this, we ſhould be earneſt with God in Prayer, that he will waſh us; will juſtify and ſanctifie us. Lord, that I may not be *cut off from thee*, make me *fit for thee* by the waſhing of Regeneration. *Lord, waſh* not my *Feet only*, from the groſs Pollutions that cleave to them, but alſo *my hands and my Head*, from the leſſer Spots which they have contracted, and the undiſcerned Filth which proceeds by Perſpiration from the Body it ſelf. *Note*, Thoſe who truly deſire to be ſanctified, deſire to be *ſanctified throughout*, and to have the whole Man, with all its Parts and Power, purified, 1 *Theſ*. 5. 23.

6. Chriſt's further Explication of this Sign, as it repreſented ſpiritual waſhing.

1. With Reference to his Diſciples that were faithful to him *v.* 10. *He that is waſhed* all over in the Bath (as was frequently practiſed in thoſe Countries) when he returns to his Houſe, *needeth not ſave to waſh his Feet*, his Hands and Head having been waſh'd, and he having only dirty'd his Feet in walking home. *Peter* had gone from one Extreme to th'other; at firſt he would not let Chriſt *waſh his Feet*; and now he overlooks what Chriſt had done for him in his Baptiſm, and what was ſignify'd thereby, and cries out to have his Hands and Head waſh'd; now Chriſt directs him into the Meaning; he muſt have his *Feet waſhed*, but not his *Hands and Head*.

(1.) See here what is the Comfort and Privilege of ſuch as are in a juſtified State, they are *waſhed* by Chriſt, and are *clean every whit*, i. e. they are graciouſly accepted of God, as if they were ſo; and tho' they offend, yet they need not upon their Repentance to be again put into a juſtified State, for then ſhould they often be baptized. The Evidence of a juſtified State may be clouded, and the Comfort of it ſuſpended, when yet the Charter of it is not vacated or taken away. Tho' we have Occaſion to repent daily, God's Gifts and Callings are without Repentance. The Heart may be *ſwept* and *garniſh'd*, and yet ſtill remain the Devil's Palace, but if it be *waſh'd*, it belongs to Chriſt, and he will not loſe it.

(2.) See what ought to be the daily Care of thoſe, who through Grace are in a juſtified State, and that is to *waſh their Feet.* To cleanſe themſelves from the Guilt they contract daily, through Infirmity and Inadvertency, by the renew'd Exerciſe of Repentance, with a believing Application of the Vertue of Chriſt's Blood. We muſt alſo waſh our Feet by conſtant *Watchfulneſs* againſt every thing that is defiling, for we muſt *cleanſe our Way*, and cleanſe our Feet, *by taking heed thereto*, Pſal. 119. 9. The Prieſts when they were conſecrated, were *waſhed with Water*; and tho' they did not need afterwards to be ſo waſhed all over, yet whenever they went in to miniſter, they muſt waſh their Feet and Hands at the Laver, on Pain of Death, *Exod.* 30. 19, 20. The Proviſion made for our Cleanſing, ſhould not make us *preſumptuous*, but the more *cautious*; *I have waſhed my Feet, how ſhall I defile them?* From Yeſterday's Pardon, we ſhould fetch an Argument againſt this Day's Temptation.

2. With Reflection upon *Judas*; *and ye are clean, but not all*, v. 10, 11. He pronounceth his Diſciples *clean*, clean *through the Word he had ſpoken to them*, John 15. 3. He waſhed them himſelf, and then ſaid, *Ye are clean*; but he excepts *Judas*; *not all*; they were all baptized, even *Judas*, yet not all clean; many have the Sign that have not the Thing ſignified. *Note*, (1.) Even among thoſe who are called Diſciples of Chriſt, and profeſs Relation to him, there are ſome who *are not clean*, Prov. 30. 12. (2.) The Lord knows them that are his, and them that are not, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. The Eye of Chriſt can ſeparate between the precious and the vile, the *Clean* and the *Unclean*. (3.) When thoſe that have called themſelves Diſciples, afterwards prove Traytors, their Apoſtacy at laſt is a certain Evidence of their Hypocriſy all along. (4.) Chriſt ſees it neceſſary to let his Diſciples know that *they are not all clean*; that we may all be jealous over our ſelves, *Is it I? Lord, is it I*, that am among the Clean, yet not clean? And that when Hypocrites are diſcover'd, it may be no Surprize or Stumbling to us.

Fourthly, Chriſt waſhed his Diſciples Feet, to ſet before us an Example: This Explication he gave of what he had done, when he had done it, *v.* 12—17.

1. Obſerve with what Solemnity he gave an Account of the Meaning of what he had done, *v.* 12. *After he had waſhed their Feet*, he ſaid, *Know ye what I have done?*

(1.) He adjourn'd the Explication till he had finiſh'd the Tranſaction. (1.) To try their Submiſſion and implicite Obedience. What he did, they ſhould not know till after; that they might learn to acquieſce in his Will when they could not give a Reaſon for it. (2.) Becauſe it was proper to finiſh the Riddle before he unriddled it. Thus as to his whole Undertaking when his Sufferings were finiſhed, he had reſum'd the Garments of his exalted State, and was ready to ſit down again, then he *open'd the Underſtandings of his Diſciples*, and poured out his Spirit, *Luke* 24. 46.

(2.) Before he explain'd it, he ask'd them if they could conſtrue it; *Know ye what I have done to you.* He put this Queſtion to them, not only to make them ſenſible of their Ignorance, and the Need they had to be inſtructed, (as *Zech.* 4. 5, 13, *Knoweſt thou not what theſe be? and I ſaid, No, my Lord*) but to raiſe their Deſires and Expectations of Inſtruction. *I would have you know*, and if you'll give Attention, I'll tell you. *Note*, 'Tis the Will of Chriſt that *Sacramental Signs* ſhould be *explain'd*, and that his People ſhould be acquainted with the *Meaning* of them; otherwiſe tho' never ſo ſignificant, to them who know not the Thing ſignified, they are inſignificant. Hence they are directed to ask, *What mean ye by this Service!* Exod. 12. 26.

2. Obſerve what he grounds that which he had to ſay upon, *v.* 13. *You call me Maſter and Lord*, you give me thoſe Titles, in ſpeaking *of me*, in ſpeaking *to me*, and *you ſay well*, for *ſo I am*; you are in the Relation of Scholars to me, and I do the Part of a Maſter to you. *Note*, 1. Jeſus Chriſt is our *Maſter* and *Lord*; he that is our Redeemer and Saviour, is in order to that, our Lord and Maſter. He is our *Maſter*, διδάσκαλος, our Teacher and Inſtructer, in all neceſſary Truths and Rules, as a Prophet revealing to us the Will of God. He is our *Lord*, κύριος, our Ruler and Owner, that has Authority over us, and Propriety in us. 2. It becomes the Diſciples of Chriſt to call him *Maſter* and *Lord*, not in Compliment, but in Reality; not by Conſtraint, but with Delight. Devout Mr. *Herbert*, when he mentioned the Name of *Chriſt*, us'd to add, *My Maſter*; and thus expreſſeth himſelf concerning it in one of his Poems; *How ſweetly doth my Maſter ſound, Maſter! As Ambergreaſe leaves a rich Scent unto the Taſter, ſo doth theſe Words a ſweet Content*; and *Oriential Fragrancy, My Maſter.* 3. Or calling Chriſt Maſter and Lord, is an Obligation upon us to receive and obſerve the Inſtructions he gives us. Chriſt would thus pre-engage their Obedience to a Command that was diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood. If Chriſt be our Maſter and Lord, be ſo by our own Conſent, and we have oft called him ſo, we are bound in Honour and Honeſty to be obſervant of him.

3. Obſerve the Leſſon which Chriſt hereby taught, *you alſo ought to waſh one anothers Feet*, v. 14.

1. Some have underſtood this *literally*, and have thought theſe Words amount to the Inſtitution of a ſtanding Ordinance in the Church; that Chriſtians ſhould in a ſolemn religious Manner, *waſh one anothers Feet*; in Token of our condeſcending Love to one another. St. *Ambroſe* took it ſo, and practis'd it in the Church of *Milan.* St. *Auſtin* ſaith, that thoſe Chriſtians who did not do it with their Hands, yet (he hoped) did it with their Hearts, in Humility; but he ſaith it is much better to do it with the Hands alſo when there is Occaſion, as 1 *Tim.* 5. 10. what Chriſt has done, Chriſtians ſhould not diſdain to do. *Calvin* ſaith, that the Pope in the annual obſerving of this Ceremony on *Thurſday* in the Paſſion Week, is rather Chriſt's Ape than his Follower, for the Duty enjoined in Conformity to Chriſt was *mutual*; waſh *one anothers Feet.* And *Janſenius* ſaith, 'Tis done, *Frigide, & diſſimiliter.*

2. But doubtleſs 'tis to be underſtood *figuratively*; 'tis an inſtructive Sign, but not Sacramental, as the Euchariſt. This was a Parable to the Eye; and three Things our Maſter hereby deſigned to teach us.

(1.) An *humble Condeſcenſion*; we muſt learn of our Maſter to be *lowly in Heart*, Mat. 11. 29. and walk with all Lowlineſs; we muſt think meanful of our ſelves, and reſpectfully of our Brethren, and nothing below us but Sin; we muſt ſay of that which ſeems mean, but has a Tendency to the Glory of God and our Brethrens Good, as *David*, 2 Sam. 6. 22. *If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile.* Chriſt had often taught his Diſciples Humility, and they had forgot the Leſſon; but now he teaches them in ſuch a way as ſure they could never forget.

(2.) A *Condeſcention to be ſerviceable.* To waſh one another's Feet, is to ſtoop to the meaneſt Offices of Love, for the real Good and Benefit of one another, as bleſſed *Paul*, who, tho' *free from all*, made himſelf *Servant of all*; and bleſſed Jeſus, who *came not to be miniſter'd unto, but to miniſter.* We muſt not grudge to take *Care* and *Pains*, and to *ſpend time*, and to diminiſh our ſelves for the Good of others, that we are not under any particular Obligations to, even to our Inferiors, and ſuch as are not in a Capacity of making us any Requital. *Waſhing the Feet* after Travel, contributed both to the *Decency* of the Perſon, and to his *Eaſe*, ſo that to waſh one another's Feet, is to conſult both the *Credit* and the *Comfort* one of another; to do what we can, both to advance our Brethrens Reputation, and to make their Minds eaſy. See 1 *Cor.* 10. 24. *Heb.* 6. 10. The Duty is *mutual*, we muſt both *accept* Help from our Brethren, and *afford* Help to our Brethren.

(3.) A *Serviceableneſs* to the Sanctification one of another. *Ye ought to waſh one anothers Feet*, from the Pollutions of Sin. *Auſtin* takes it in this Senſe, and many others. We cannot *ſatisfy* for one anothers Sins, that's peculiar to Chriſt, but we may help to *purify* one another from Sin. We muſt in the firſt place *waſh our ſelves*, this Charity muſt *begin at home*, Mat. 6. 5. but it muſt not end there, we muſt ſorrow for the Failings and Follies of our Brethren, much more their groſs Pollutions, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. muſt waſh our Brethren's polluted Feet in Tears. We muſt faithfully reprove them, and do what we can to bring them to Repentance, *Gal.* 6. 1. and we muſt admoniſh them to prevent their falling into the Mire; this is waſhing their Feet.

(4.) Here's the ratifying and enforcing of this Command from the Example of what Chriſt has now done. *If I your Lord and Maſter have* done it to you, you ought to *do it to one another.* He ſhews the Cogency of this Argument in two things.

1. I am *your Maſter*, and you are *my Diſciples*, and therefore you ought to *learn of me*, v. 15. for in this as in other things, *I have given you an Example*, that *you ſhould do to* others, *as I have done* to you. Obſerve,

(1.) What a good Teacher Chriſt is. He teacheth by Example as well as Doctrine, and for that End came into this World and dwelt among us, that he might ſet us a Copy of all thoſe Graces and Duties which his holy Religion teacheth; and it is a Copy without one falſe Stroke. Hereby he made his own Laws more intelligible and practicable, and our Obedience to them more eaſy, pleaſant and honourable. Chriſt is a Commander, like *Gideon*, who ſaid to his Soldiers, *Look on me, and do likewiſe.* Judges 7. 17. like *Abimelech*, who ſaid, *What ye have ſeen me do, make haſte and do as I have done*, Judges 9. 48. And like *Caſar*, who called his Soldiers not *Milites*, but *Commilitones*, *Fellow-Soldiers*, and whoſe uſual Word was, not *Ite illuc*, but *venite huc*; not *Go*, but *Come.*

(2.) What good Scholars we muſt be; we muſt *do as he hath done*; for therefore he gave us a Copy that we would write after it, that we might be as he was in this World, *John* 4 17. and walk *as he walked*, 1 John 2. 6. Chriſt's Example herein is to be followed by *Miniſters* in particular, in whom the Graces of Humility and holy Love ſhould eſpecially appear, and by the Exerciſe thereof, they effectually ſerve the Intereſt of their Maſter, and the Ends of their Miniſtry. When Chriſt ſent his Apoſtles abroad as his Agents, it was with this Charge, that they ſhould not take State upon them, nor carry things with a high Hand, but *become all things to all Men*, 2 Cor. 4. 5. What I have done to your dirty Feet, that do ye to the polluted Souls of Sinners; *waſh them.* Some who ſuppoſe this to be done at the Paſſover Supper, think it intimates a Rule in admitting Communicants to the Lord's Supper, to ſee that they be firſt waſh'd and cleans'd by Reformation, and a blameleſs Converſation, and then take them in to *compaſs God's Altar. But all*

Chriſtians likewiſe are here taught to *condeſcend* to each other in Love, and to do it as Chriſt did it, unask'd, unpaid; we muſt not be *mercenary* in the Services of Love, nor do them with Reluctancy.

2. I am *your Maſter*, and you are my Diſciples, and therefore *you cannot think it below you* to do that, how mean ſoever it may ſeem, which *you have ſeen me do*, for *v.* 16. *The Servant is not greater than his Lord*, *neither he that is ſent*, tho' ſent with all the Pomp and Power of an Embaſſador, yet is he *not greater than him that ſent him*. Chriſt had urg'd this, *Mat.* 10. 24, 25. as a Reaſon why they ſhould not think it ſtrange if they ſuffer'd as he did; here he urgeth it as a Reaſon why they ſhould not think much to humble themſelves as he did. What he did not think a Diſparagement to *him*, they muſt not think a Diſparagement to *them*. Perhaps the Diſciples inwardly diſguſted this Precept of waſhing one anothers Feet, as inconſiſtent with that Dignity they expected ſhortly to be preferred to; to obviate ſuch Thoughts, Chriſt minds them of their Place as *his Servants*; they were not better Men than their Maſter, and what was conſiſtent with his Dignity, was much more conſiſtent with theirs. If he were humble or condeſcending, it ill became them to be proud and aſſuming. *Note*, We muſt take good Heed to our ſelves, leſt Chriſt's gracious Condeſcentions to us, and Advancements of us, through the Corruption of Nature, occaſion us to think of any high Thoughts of our ſelves, or low Thoughts of him. We need to be put in mind of this, that we are not *greater than our Lord*. 2. Whatever our Maſter is pleas'd to condeſcend to in *favour to us*, we ſhould much more condeſcend to *in Conformity to him*. Chriſt by humbling himſelf, has dignified Humility, and put an Honour upon it, and oblig'd his Followers to think nothing below them but Sin. We commonly ſay to thoſe who diſdain to do ſuch or ſuch a thing, *as good as you have done it*, and been never the worſe *thought of*; and true indeed it is, if our Maſter has done it. When we ſee our Maſter *ſerving*, we cannot but ſee how ill it becomes us to be *domineering*.

Laſtly, Our Saviour cloſes this Part of his Diſcourſe with an Intimation of the Neceſſity of their Obedience to theſe Inſtructions, *If ye know theſe things*; or, ſeeing ye know them, *Happy are ye, if ye do them*. Moſt People think, happy are they that *riſe*, and *rule*. Waſhing one anothers Feet, will never get Eſtates and Preferments, but Chriſt ſaith, for all that, happy are they that *ſtoop*, and *obey*, *If ye know theſe things*. That may be underſtood either as ſpeaking *doubtfully*, whether they know them or no; ſo ſtrong was their Conceit of a temporal Kingdom, that it was a Queſtion whether they could entertain the Notion of a Duty ſo contrary to that Conceit; or, as *taking it for granted*, that they did know theſe things; ſince they had ſuch excellent Precepts given them, recommended by ſuch an excellent Pattern, 'twill be neceſſary to the compleating of their Happineſs, that they practiſe accordingly.

1. This is applicable to the *Commands of Chriſt in general*. *Note*, Tho' it is a great Advantage to know our Duty, yet we ſhall come ſhort of Happineſs, if we do not do our Duty. Knowing is in order to doing; that Knowledge therefore is vain and fruitleſs, which is not reduced to Practice; nay, it will aggravate the Sin and Ruin, *Luke* 12. 47, 48. *James* 4. *ult.* 'Tis knowing and doing that will demonſtrate us of *Chriſt's Kingdom*, and wiſe Builders. See *Pſal.* 103. 17, 18.

2. 'Tis to be applied eſpecially to this Command of Humility, and Serviceableneſs. Nothing is better known, or more readily acknowledged than this, that we ſhould be *humble*, and therefore tho' many will own themſelves to be *paſſionate* and *intemperate*; few will own themſelves to be *proud*, for 'tis as *inexcuſable* a Sin, and as *hateful* as any other; and yet how little is to be ſeen of true Humility, and that mutual Subjection and Condeſcention, which the Law of Chriſt inſiſts ſo much upon. Moſt *know theſe things* ſo well as to expect that *others* ſhould do accordingly to them, yield to them, and ſerve them, but not ſo well as to do ſo *themſelves*.

18 I ſpeak not of you all; I know whom I have choſen: but that the ſcripture might he fulfilled. He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel againſt me. 19 Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to paſs, ye may believe that I am *he*. 20 Verily verily I ſay unto you, he that receiveth whomſoever I ſend, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me. 21 When Jeſus had thus ſaid, he was troubled in ſpirit, and teſtified and ſaid, Verily verily I ſay unto you, that one of you ſhall betray me. 22 Then the diſciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he ſpake. 23 Now there was leaning on Jeſus boſom, one of his diſciples whom Jeſus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore beckened to him, that he ſhould ask who it ſhould be of whom he ſpake. 25 He then lying on Jeſus breaſt, ſaith unto him, Lord, who is it? 26 Jeſus anſwered, He it is to whom I ſhall give a ſop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the ſop, he gave it to Judas Iſcariot, *the ſon* of Simon. 27 And afer the ſop, Satan entred into him. Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, That thou doeſt, do quickly. 28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he ſpake this unto him. 29 For ſome *of them* thought, becauſe Judas had the bag, that Jeſus had ſaid unto him, Buy *thoſe things* that we have need of againſt the feaſt: or that he ſhould give ſomething to the poor. 30 He then having received the ſop, went Immediately out: and it was night.

We have here the Diſcovery of *Judas*'s Plot to betray his Maſter; Chriſt knew it from the Beginning; but now firſt he diſcover'd it to his Diſciples, who did not *expect* Chriſt ſhould be betray'd, tho' he had often told them ſo, much leſs did they ſuſpect that one of them ſhould do it. Now here,

Firſt, Chriſt gives them a general Intimation of it, *v.* 8. *I ſpeak not of you all*, I cannot expect you will all do theſe things, for *I know* whom I have *choſen*, and *whom I have paſſed* by; but the Scripture will be fulfilled, *Pſal.* 41. 9. *He that eateth Bread with me, hath lift up his Heel againſt me.* He doth not yet ſpeak out of the Crime, or the Criminal, but raiſeth their Expectations of a further Diſcovery.

1. He intimates to them, that they *were not all right*. He had ſaid, *v.* 10. *Ye are clean, but not all.* So here, *I ſpeak not of you all*. *Note*, What is ſaid of the Excellencies of Chriſt's Diſciples, cannot be ſaid of all that are called ſo: The Word of Chriſt is a diſtinguiſhing Word, which ſeparates *between Cattle and Cattle*, and will diſtinguiſh thouſands into Hell, who flatter'd themſelves with Hopes that they were going into Heaven. *I ſpeak not of you all*; you my Diſciples and Followers. *Note*, There is a Mixture of bad with good in the beſt Societies; a *Judas* among the Apoſtles; 'twill be ſo till we come to the bleſs'd Society, into which ſhall enter nothing unclean or diſguis'd.

2. That he himſelf knew who were right, and who were not, *I know whom I have choſen*, who the few are that are choſen among the many that are called with the Common Call. *Note*, 1. They that are choſen, Chriſt himſelf had the chuſing of them; he nominated the Perſons he undertook for. 2. They that are choſen, are known to Chriſt, for he never forgets any, whom he has once had in his Thoughts of Love, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19.

3. That in the Treachery of him that prov'd falſe to him, the Scripture was fulfilled, which takes off very much both the Surprize and Offence of the Thing. Chriſt took one into his Family, who he foreſaw to be a Traytor, and did not by effectual Grace prevent his being ſo, *that the ſcripture might be fulfilled*. Let it not therefore be a ſtumbling Block to any; for tho' it do not at all leſſen *Judas*'s Offence, it may leſſen our Offence at it. The Scripture referr'd to is, *David*'s Complaint of the Treachery of ſome of his Enemies; the Jewiſh Expoſitors generally underſtand it of *Achitophel*, and ours from them; and *Grotius* thinks it intimates, that the Death of *Judas* would be like that of *Achitophel*. But becauſe that Pſalm ſpeaks of *David*'s Sickneſs, which we read nothing of at the time of *Achitophel*'s deſerting him, it may better be underſtood of ſome other Friend of his that proved falſe to him. This our Saviour applies to *Judas*.

1. *Judas* as an Apoſtle, was admitted to the higheſt Privilege; he did *eat Bread with Chriſt*. He was familiar with him, and favour'd by him, was one of his Family, one of thoſe with whom he was intimately converſaut. *David* ſaith of his treacherous Friend, he did eat *of my Bread*, but Chriſt being *poor*, had no Bread he could properly call *his own*, he ſaith he did *eat Bread with me*; ſuch as he had by the Kindneſs of his Friends, that *miniſter'd to him*, his Diſciples had their Share of *Judas* among the reſt. Where-ever he went, *Judas* was welcome with him, did not dine among Servants, but ſat at Table with his Maſter, eat of the ſame Diſh, drank of the ſame Cup, and in all Reſpects far'd as he far'd. He eat miraculous Bread with him, when the Loaves were multiplied, eat the Paſſover with him. *Note*, All that *eat Bread* with Chriſt, are not his Diſciples indeed. See 1 *Cor.* 10. 5.

2. *Judas* as an Apoſtate was guilty of the baſeſt Treachery; he *lift up the Heel* againſt Chriſt. (1.) He *forſook* him, turn'd his Back upon him, *went* out from the Society of his Diſciples, *v.* 30. (2.) He *deſpiſed him*, ſhook off the Duſt of his Feet againſt him, in contempt of him and his Goſpel. Nay, (3.) He became an Enemy to him; ſpurn'd at him, as Wreſtlers do at their Adverſaries, whom they would overthrow. *Note*, It is no new thing for thoſe that were Chriſt's *ſeeming Friends*, to prove his *real Enemies*: They who pretend to magnify him, magnify themſelves againſt him. They eat not only the Bread of his Charity, but the Bread of his Covenant, yet rebel againſt him, and thereby prove themſelves guilty, not only of the baſeſt Ingratitude, but the baſeſt Treachery and Perfidiouſneſs.

Secondly, He gives them a Reaſon why he told them beforehand of the Treachery of *Judas*, *v.* 19. *Now I tell you before it come*, before *Judas* has begun to put his wicked Plot in Execution, that when it is come to paſs, you may, inſtead of ſtumbling at it, be confirmed in your *Belief*, that *I am he*; he that ſhould come.

1. By this clear and certain Foreſight of Things to come which in this, as in other Inſtances, he gave unconteſtable Proof of, he proved himſelf to be the true God, before whom all Things are naked and open. Chriſt foretold that *Judas* would *betray* him, when there was no Ground to ſuſpect ſuch a thing, and ſo prov'd

himſelf the eternal *Word*, which is a diſcerner of the Thoughts and *Intents of the Heart.* The Prophecies of the New Teſtament concerning the Apoſtacy of the latter Times, which we have, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 1 *Tim.* 4. and in the *Apocalypſe*, being evidently *accompliſh'd*, 'tis a Proof that thoſe Writings were divinely inſpir'd, and confirms our Faith in the whole Canon of Scripture.

2. By his Application of the Types and Prophecies of the Old Teſtament to himſelf, he proved himſelf to be the true *Meſſiah*, to whom *all the Prophets bare Witneſs.* Thus *it was written*, and *thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer*, and he ſuffer'd juſt as it was written, *Luke* 24. 25, 26. *John* 8. 28.

Thirdly, He gives a Word of *Encouragment* to his *Apoſtles*, and all his *Miniſters*; whom he employ'd in his Service, *v.* 20. *He that receiveth whomſoever I ſend, receiveth me.* The Purport of theſe Words is the ſame with what we have in other Scriptures, but 'tis not eaſy to make out their Coherence here. (1.) Chriſt had told his Diſciples they muſt humble and abaſe themſelves. Now ſaith he, tho' there may be thoſe that will deſpiſe you for your Condeſcenſion, yet there will be thoſe that will do you Honour, and ſhall be honoured for ſo doing. They who know themſelves *dignified* by Chriſt's Commiſſion, may be content to be *vilified* in the World's Opinion. (2.) 'Tis intended to ſilence the Scruples of thoſe, who becauſe there was a Traytor among the Apoſtles, would be ſhy of rceiving any of them; for if one of them was falſe to his Maſter, whom would any of them be true to? *En une diſce omnes*; they are all alike. No, as Chriſt will think never the worſe of them for *Judas*'s Crime, ſo he will ſtand by them and own them, and will raiſe up ſuch as ſhall receive them. They that had received *Judas* when he was a Preacher, and perhaps were converted and edify'd by his Preaching, were never the worſe, nor ſhould reflect upon it with any Regret, tho' he afterwards prov'd a Traytor; for he was one *whom Chriſt ſent.* We cannot know what Men *are*, much leſs what they *will be*, but thoſe who appear to be *ſent of Chriſt*, we muſt *receive*, till the contrary appear. Tho ſome by entertaining Strangers have entertain'd Robbers unawares, yet we muſt ſtill be hoſpitable, for thereby ſome have entertain'd Angels. The Abuſes put upon our Charity, tho' order'd with never ſo much Diſcretion, will neither juſtify our uncharitableneſs, nor loſe us the Reward of our Charity.

1. We are here encouraged to receive Miniſters as *ſent of Chriſt.* He that *receiveth whomſoever I ſend*, tho' weak and poor, and ſubject to like Paſſions as others, for as the Law, ſo the Goſpel, *makes Men Prieſts that have Infirmity*, yet if he deliver my Meſſage, and be regularly called and appointed to do ſo, and as an Officer give himſelf to the Word and Prayer; he that entertains him ſhall be own'd as a Friend of mine; Chriſt was now leaving the World, but he would leave an Order of Men to be his Agents' to deliver his Word, and thoſe who receive *that* in the Light and Love of it, receive *him*; to believe the Doctrine of Chriſt, and obey his Law, and accept the Salvation offer'd upon the Terms propoſed; this is receiving thoſe whom Chriſt ſends, and it is *receiving Chriſt Jeſus our Lord*, himſelf.

2. We are encouraged to receive Chriſt as ſent from God: *He that* thus *receiveth me*, that receiveth Chriſt in his Miniſters, receiveth the *Father* alſo, for they come upon *his* Errand likewiſe, *baptizing* in the Name of *the Father*, as well as of *the Son.* Or, in general, *He that receiveth me* as his Prince and Saviour, receiveth *him that ſent me*, as his Portion and Felicity. Chriſt was ſent of God, and in embracing his Religion, we embrace the *only true* Religion.

Fourthly, Chriſt more particularly notifies to them the Plot which one of their Number was now hatching againſt him, *v.* 21 *When Jeſus had thus ſaid*, in general, to prepare them for a more particular Diſcovery, he was *troubled in Spirit*, and ſhew'd it by ſome Geſture or Sign, and *he teſtified* he ſolemnly declared it (*cum animo teſtandi*) *One of you ſhall betray me*; one of you mine Apoſtles, and conſtant Followers. None indeed could be ſaid to *betray* him, but thoſe he repos'd a confidence in, and were the Witneſſes of his Retirements. This did not determine *Judas* to the Sin by any *fatal* Neceſſity, for tho the Event did follow *according to* the Prediction, yet not from the Prediction. Chriſt is not the Author of Sin; yet as to this henious Sin of *Judas*,

1. Chriſt *foreſaw* it; for even that which is ſecret and future, and hid from the Eyes of all living, is naked and open before the Eyes of Chriſt. He knows what is *in Men* better than they do themſelves, 2 *Kings* 8. 12. and therefore ſees what will be done by them. *I know that thou wouldſt deal very treacherouſly*, Iſa. 48. 8.

2. He *foretold* it, not only for the ſake of the reſt of the Diſciples, but for the ſake of *Judas* himſelf, that he might take Warning, and recover himſelf out of the Snare of the Devil. Traytors proceed not in their Plots, when they find they are diſcovered; ſurely *Judas*, when he finds that his Maſter *knows* his Deſign, will retreat in time; if not, 'twill aggravate his Condemnation.

3. He ſpoke of it with a *manifeſt Concern*; he was *troubled in Spirit* when he mentioned it. He had often ſpoken of his own Sufferings and Death, without any ſuch Trouble of Spirit as he here diſcovered when he ſpoke of the Ingratitude and Treachery of *Judas.* This touch'd him in a tender part. *Note*, The Falls and Miſcarriages of the Diſciples of Chriſt, are a great Trouble of Spirit to their Maſter; the Sins of Chriſtians are the Grief of Chriſt. What? *One of you betray me*? You that have receiv'd from me ſuch diſtinguiſhing Favours, you that I had reaſon to think would be firm to me, that have profeſs'd ſuch a Reſpect for me, what Iniquity have you found in me, that one of you ſhould betray me? This went to his Heart, as the undutifulneſs of Children grieves thoſe who have *nouriſh'd and brought them up*, Iſa. 1. 2. See *Pſal.* 95. 10. *Iſa.* 63. 10.

Fifthly, The Diſciples quickly *take the Alarm*; they knew their Maſter would neither deceive them, nor jeſt with them, and therefore *look'd one upon another*, with a manifeſt Concern, *doubting of whom he ſpake.*

1. By looking *one upon another* they *diſcover'd* the *Trouble* they were in upon this Notice given them; it ſtruck ſuch a Horror upon them, that they knew not well which way to look, or what to ſay. They ſaw their Maſter *troubled*; and therefore they were troubled. This was at a Feaſt where they were cheerfully entertain'd; but hence we muſt be taught to rejoice with Trembling, and as tho' we rejoyced not. When *David* wept for his Son's Rebellion, all his Followers wept with him, 2 *Sam.* 15. 30. So Chriſt's Diſciples here. *Note*, That which grieves Chriſt is, and ſhould be a Grief to all that are his; particularly the ſcandalous Miſcarriage of thoſe that are called by his Name; *Who is offended and I burn not*?

2. Hereby they endeavour'd to *diſcover* the Traytor; they look'd wiſtly in one anothers Faces, to ſee whom *bluſh'd*, or by ſome Diſorder in the Countenance, manifeſted Guilt in the Heart upon this Notice. But while thoſe were Faithful had their Conſciences ſo clear, that they could *lift up their Faces without Spot*, he that was falſe, had his Conſcience ſo ſear'd, that he was not aſhamed, neither could he bluſh, and ſo no Diſcovery could be made this way. Chriſt thus *perplex'd* his Diſciples for a time, and put them into Confuſion, that he might *humble them, and prove them*, might excite in them a Jealouſy of themſelves, and an Indignation at the Baſeneſs of *Judas.* 'Tis good for us ſometimes to be put to a Gaze, to be put to a Pauſe.

Sixthly, The Diſciples were ſolicitous to get their Maſter to explain himſelf, and to tell them particularly whom he meant, for nothing but that can put them out of their preſent Pain, for each of them thought they had as much Reaſon to ſuſpect themſelves as any of their Brethren; now,

1. Of all the Diſciples, *John* was *moſt fit to ask*, becauſe he was the Favourite, and ſate next his Maſter, *v.* 23. *There was leaning on Jeſus's Boſom one of his Diſciples whom Jeſus loved.* It appears that this was *John*, by comparing *Chap.* 2. 20, 21.

Obſerve, (1.) The particular Kindneſs which Jeſus had for him, he was known by his Periphraſis, that he was *the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved.* He loved them all, *v.* 1. but *John* was particularly dear to him. His Name ſignifies *gracious. Daniel* who was honour'd with the *Revelations* of the Old Teſtamen, as *John* of the New, was *a Man greatly beloved*, Dan. 9. 23. *Note*, Among the Diſciples of Chriſt, ſome are dearer to him than others.

(2.) His Place and Poſture at this time. He was *leaning on Jeſus's Boſom.* Some ſay it was the Faſhion in thoſe Countries to ſit at Meat a in leaning Poſture, ſo that the ſecond lay in the Boſom of the firſt, and ſo on; which doth not ſeem probable to me, for in ſuch a Poſture as that they could neither eat nor drink conveniently; but whether that were ſo or no, *John now leaned on his Boſom*, and ſeems to be an extraordinary Expreſſion of Endearment us'd at this time. *Note*, There are ſome of Chriſt's Diſciples whom he lays in his Boſom, who have more free and intimate Communion with him than others. The Father loved the Son, and laid him *in his Boſom*, John 1. 18. and Believers are in like manner one with Chriſt, *John* 17. 21. This Honour all the Saints ſhall have ſhortly in the Boſom of *Abraham.* They who lay themſelves at *Chriſt's Feet*, he will lay them in *his Boſom.*

(3.) Yet he conceals his Name, becauſe he himſelf was the Penman of the Story; he puts this inſtead of his Name, to ſhew that he was *pleas'd with it*; 'tis his Title of Honour, that he was *the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved*; as in *David*'s and *Solomon*'s Court, there was one who was the *King's Friend*; yet he doth not put his Name down, to ſhew that he was not *proud of it*, nor would ſeem to boaſt of it. *Paul* in a like Caſe ſaith, I *know a Man in Chriſt.*

2. Of all the Diſciples *Peter* was moſt *forward* to know, *v.* 24. *Peter* ſitting at ſome diſtance *beckon'd* to *John*, by ſome Sign or other to ask. *Peter* was generally the *leading* Man, moſt apt to put himſelf forth; and where Mens natural Tempers lead them to be thus bold in anſwering and asking, if it be kept under the Laws of Humility and Wiſdom, it makes Men very ſerviceable; God gives his Gift variouſly; but that the forward Men in the Church may not think too well of themſelves, nor the *modeſt* be diſcourag'd, it muſt be noted that it was not *Peter*, but *John* that was the *beloved Diſciple. Peter* was deſirous to know, not only that he might be ſure it was *not he*, but that knowing who it was, they might *withdraw* from him, and *guard* againſt him, and if poſſible, *prevent* his Deſign. 'Twere a deſirable Thing we would think to know who in the Church would deceive us; yet let this ſuffice, Chriſt knows tho' we do not. The Reaſon why *Peter* did not ask himſelf, was, becauſe *John* had a much fairer Opportunity, by the Advantage of his Seat at Table, to whiſper the Queſtion into the Ear of Chriſt, and to receive a like private Anſwer. 'Tis good to improve our Intereſt in thoſe that are near to Chriſt, and to engage their Prayers for us. Do we know any that we have Reaſon to think lie in Chriſt's Boſom, let us beg of them to ſpeak a good Word for us.

3. The Queſtion was aſk'd accordingly, *v.* 25. *He then laying at the Breaſt of Jeſus*, and ſo having the Convenience of whiſpering with him, *ſaith unto him, Lord who is it?* Now here *John* ſhews,

1. A *Regard* to his Fellow-Diſciple, and to the Motion he made. Tho' *Peter* had not the Honour he had at this Time, yet he did not therefore diſdain to take the Hint, and Intimation, he gave him. *Note*, They who lye *in Chriſt's Boſom* may often learn, from thoſe who *lie at his Feet*, ſomething that will be profitable for them, and be minded of that which they did not of themſelves think of. *John* was willing to gratify *Peter* herein, having ſo fair an Opportunity for it. As every one hath received the Gift ſo let him miniſter the ſame for a common Good, *Rom.* 12. 6.

2. A *Reverence* of his Maſter. Tho' he whiſpered that in Chriſt's Ear, yet he called him *Lord*; the Familiarity he was admitted to did not at all leſſen his Reſpect for his Maſter. It becomes us to uſe a Reverence in Expreſſion, and to obſerve a *Decorum*, even in our ſecret Devotions, which no Eye is a Witneſs to, as well as in Publick Aſſemblies. The more intimate Communion gracious Souls have with Chriſt, the more ſenſible they are of Worthineſs, and their own Unworthineſs, as *Gen.* 18. 27.

3. Chriſt gave a *ſpeedy Anſwer* to this Queſtion, but whiſpering it in *John's* Ear, for it appears, *v.* 29. that the reſt were ſtill ignorant of the Matter; *He it is to whom I ſhall give a Sop*, ψωμίον, a *Morſel*, a *Cruſt, when I have dipped it* in the Sauce. And when he *had dipped the Sop*, *John* ſtrictly obſerving his Motions, he *gave it to* Judas; and *Judas* took it ready enough, not ſuſpecting the Deſign of it, but glad of a ſavory Bit to make up his Mouth with.

1. Chriſt notified the Traytor by a *Sign*. He could have told *John* by Name who he was; the Adverſary and Enemy is that wicked *Judas*, he is the Traytor, and none but he; but thus he would exerciſe the Obſervation of *John*, and intimate what need his Miniſters have of a Spirit of diſcerning; for the falſe Brethren we are to ſtand upon our Guard againſt, are not made known to us *by Words*, but *by Signs*; they are to be known to us by *the Fruits*, by *their Spirits*; which requires great Diligence and Care to form a right Judgment upon them.

2. That Sign was a *Sop*, which Chriſt *gave him*; a very proper Sign, becauſe it was the fulfilling of the Scripture, *v.* 18. that the Traytor ſhould be one that *eat Bread with him*, that was at this Time a Fellow-Commoner with him. It had likewiſe a Significancy in it, and teacheth us, (1.) That Chriſt ſometimes gives *Sops* to Traytors; worldly Riches, Honours and Pleaſures, are *Sops* (if I may ſo ſpeak) which Providence ſometimes gives into the Hands of *wicked Men*. *Judas* perhaps thought himſelf a Favourite becauſe he had the Sop, like *Benjamin* at *Joſeph's* Table, a Meſs by himſelf; thus the Proſperity of Fools, like a ſtupifying Sop, helps *to deſtroy them*. (2.) That we muſt not be *outragious* againſt thoſe whom we know to be very *malicious* againſt us. Chriſt carv'd to *Judas* as kindly as to any at the Table, tho' he knew he was then plotting his Death. *If thine Enemy hunger, feed him*; that is, to do as Chriſt doth.

Seventhly, *Judas* himſelf, inſtead of being *convinc'd* hereby of his Wickedneſs, was the more *confirm'd* in it; and the Warning given him was to him a Savour of Death unto Death; for it follows.

1. The Devil hereupon *took Poſſeſſion of* him; *Ver.* 27. *After the Sop Satan entered into him*; not to make him melancholy, or drive him diſtracted, which was the Effect of his poſſeſſing ſome; not to hurry him into the Fire, or into the Water; happy had it been for him if that had been the worſt of it, or if with the Swine he had been choaked in the Sea; but *Satan* entered into him, to poſſeſs him with a prevailing Prejudice againſt Chriſt and his Doctrine, and a Contempt of him, as one whoſe Life was of ſmall Value; to excite in him a covetous deſire of the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs, and a Reſolution to ſtick at nothing for the obtaining of them. But,

1. Was not Satan in him before? How then is it ſaid, that now *Satan entered into him*? *Judas* was all along a *Devil*, John 6. 70. a Son of Perdition; but now Satan gain'd a more full Poſſeſſion of him, had a *more abundant Entrance* into him. His Purpoſe to betray his Maſter was now ripen'd into a fix'd Reſolution; now he return'd with ſeven other Spirits more wicked than himſelf, *Luke* 11. 25. *Note*, 1. Tho' the Devil is in every wicked Man that doth his Works, *Eph.* 2. 2. yet ſometimes he enters more manifeſtly and more powerfully than at other Times, when he puts them upon ſome enormous Wickedneſs, which Humanity and natural Conſcience ſtartle at. 2. Betrayers of Chriſt have much of the Devil in them. Chriſt ſpeaks of the Sin of *Judas* as greater than that of any of his Perſecutors.

2. How came Satan to enter into him *after the Sop*; Perhaps he was preſently aware that it was the Diſcovery of him, and it made him *deſperate* in his Reſolutions. Many are made worſe by the Gifts of Chriſts Bounty, and are confirm'd in their Impenitency by that which ſhould have led them to Repentance: The *Coals of Fire heap'd upon their Heads*, inſtead of *melting* them, *harden* them.

2. Chriſt hereupon diſmiſs'd him, and deliver'd him up to his own Hearts Luſts; *Then ſaid Jeſus unto him, what thou doſt, do quickly*. This is not to be underſtood, as either adviſing him to his Wickedneſs, or warranting him in it; but either, 1. As *abandoning* him to the Conduct and Power of *Satan*. Chriſt knew that *Satan* was entered into him, and had peaceable Poſſeſſion, and now he gives him up as hopeleſs. The various Methods Chriſt had us'd for his Conviction were ineffectual, and therefore what thou doſt, thou wilt do *quickly*; if thou art reſolved to ruin thy ſelf, go on, and take what comes. *Note*, When the evil Spirit is willingly admitted, the good Spirit juſtly withdraws. Or, 2. As challenging him to do his worſt; thou art plotting againſt me, put thy Plot in Execution and welcome, the ſooner the better, I do not fear thee, I'm ready for thee. *Note*, Our Lord Jeſus was very forward to ſuffer and die for us, and was impatient of delay in the perfecting of his Undertaking. Chriſt ſpeaks of *Judas's* betraying him as a Thing he was now doing, tho' he was only purpoſing it. Thoſe who are contriving and deſigning Miſchief, are in God's Account doing Miſchief.

3. They that were at Table underſtood not what he meant, becauſe they did not hear what he whiſper'd to *John*. Ver. 28, 29. *No Man at Table*, either the Diſciples or any other of the Gueſts, except *John*, knew *for what Intent* he ſpake this to him.

1. They did not ſuſpect that Chriſt ſaid it to *Judas* as a *Traytor*, becauſe it did not enter into their Heads that *Judas* was ſuch a one, or would prove ſo. *Note*, It is an *excuſable Dulneſs* in the Diſciples of Chriſt, not to be *quick-ſighted* in their Cenſure. Moſt are ready enough to ſay, when they hear harſh Things ſpoken in general, now *ſuch a one* is meant, and now *ſuch a one*; but Chriſt's Diſciples were ſo well taught to *love one another*, that they could not eaſily learn to ſuſpect one another. *Charity thinks no Evil*.

2. They therefore took it as granted, that he ſaid it to him as a *Truſtee*, or *Treaſurer* of the Houſhold, giving him Orders for the laying out of ſome Money. And their Surmiſes in this Caſe *diſcover* to us for what Uſes and Purpoſes our Lord Jeſus commonly directed Payments to be made out of that little Stock he had; and ſo teach us how to honour the Lord with our Subſtance. They concluded ſomething was to be laid out, either,

(1.) In Works of *Piety*, *Buy thoſe Things that we have need of againſt the Feaſt*, tho' he *borrow'd* a Room to eat the Paſſover in, yet he *bought in* Proviſion for it. That is to be reckon'd well beſtow'd, which is laid out upon *thoſe Things we have need of* for the maintenance of God's Ordinances among us; and we have the leſs Reaſon to grudge that Expence now, becauſe our Goſpel Worſhip is nothing ſo chargeable as the Legal Worſhip was.

(2.) Or in Works of Charity, *that he ſhould give ſomething to the Poor*. By this it appears, (1.) That our Lord Jeſus, tho' he lived upon Alms himſelf, (*Luke* 8. 3.) yet gave Alms to the Poor; a little out of a little. Tho' he might very well be excuſed, not only becauſe he was poor himſelf, but becauſe he did ſo much good otherways, curing ſo many *gratis*, yet to ſet us an Example, he gave for the *Relief of the Poor* out of that which he had for the *Subſiſtance of his Family*. See *Eph.* 4 28. (2.) That the Time of a Religious Feaſt was thought a proper Time for Works of Charity. When he celebrated the Paſſover he order'd ſomething for the Poor: When we experience God's Bounty to us, that ſhould make us bountiful to the Poor.

3. *Judas* hereupon ſets himſelf vigorouſly to purſue his Deſign againſt him. He *went away*. Notice is taken,

1. Of his ſpeedy Departure; *he went out preſently* and quitted the Houſe. (1.) For fear of being more plainly diſcover'd to the Company, which if he were, he expected they would all fall upon him and be the Death of him, or at leaſt of his Project. (2.) He went out as one weary of Chriſt's Company, and ſick of the Society of his Apoſtles: Chriſt needed not to expel him, he expelled himſelf. *Note*, Withdrawing from the Communion of the Faithful, is commonly the firſt *Overt-Act* of a Backſlider, and the beginning of an Apoſtacy. (3.) He *went out* to proſecute his Deſign, to look for thoſe with whom be was to make his Bargain, and to ſettle the Agreement with them. Now *Satan* had got into him, he hurry'd him on with precipitation, leſt he ſhould ſee his Error and repent of it.

2. Of the Time of his Departue, *It was Night*.

1. Tho' it was *Night*, an unſeaſonable Time for Buſineſs, yet *Satan* having *entered* into him, he made no Difficulty of the Coldneſs and Darkneſs of the Night, This ſhould ſhame us out of our Slothfulneſs and Cowardice in the Service of Chriſt, that the Devil's Servants are ſo earneſt and venturous in his Service.

2. Becauſe *it was Night*, and that gave him Advantage of Privicy and Concealment. He was not willing to be *ſeen* treating with the Chief Prieſts, and therefore choſe the dark Night, as the fitteſt Time for ſuch Works of Darkneſs. They whoſe Deeds are Evil, love Darkneſs rather than Light; ſee *Job* 24. 13. &c.

31 ¶ Therefore when he was gone out, Jeſus ſaid,
Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified
in him. 32 If God be glorified in him, God ſhall alſo
glorifie him in himſelf, and ſhall ſtraitway glorifie
him. 33 Little children, yet a little while I am with
you. Ye ſhall ſeek me: and as I ſaid unto the Jews,
Whither I go ye cannot come; ſo now I ſay unto
you. 34 A new commandment I give unto you,
That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye
alſo love one another. 35 By this ſhall all men know
that ye are my diſciples, if ye have love one to another.

¶ This and what follows, to the end of Chap. 14. was Chriſt's Table-Talk with his Diſciples. When Supper was done *Judas* went out; but what did the Maſter and his Diſciples do, whom he left ſitting at Table? They applied themſelves to profitable Diſcourſe, to teach us, as much as we can, to make Converſation with our Friends at Table ſerviceable to Religion. Chriſt begins this Diſcourſe, and the more forward we are humbly to promote that Communication which is good, and to the Uſe of edifying, the more like we are to Jeſus Chriſt. Thoſe eſpecially that by their Place, Reputation and Gifts, *Command the Company* to whom *Men give ear*, ought to uſe the Intereſt they have in other Reſpects, as an Opportunity of doing them good

Now our Lord Jeſus diſcourſeth with them, (and probably diſcourſeth much more largely than is here recorded,)

Firſt, Concerning the great Myſtery of his own *Death* and *Sufferings*, which they were as yet ſo much in the dark about, that they could not perſwade themſelves to expect the Thing it ſelf, much leſs did they underſtand the meaning of it, and therefore Chriſt gives them ſuch Inſtructions concerning it as made the Offence of the Croſs to ceaſe. Chriſt did not begin this Diſcourſe till *Judas* was gone out, for he was a falſe Brother: The Preſence of wicked People is often a hinderance to good Diſcourſe. When *Judas was gone out*, Chriſt ſaid, *Now is the Son of Man Glorified*; now *Judas* is diſcovered and diſcarded, that was a Spot in their Love-feaſt, and a ſcandal to their Family, *now is the Son of Man glorified. Note*, Chriſt is glorified by the purifying of Chriſtian Societies: Corruptions in his Church are a Reproach to him; the purging out of thoſe Corruptions rolls away the Reproach. Or rather, now *Judas* was gone to ſet the Wheels a going, in order to his being put to Death, and the Thing was likely to be effected ſhortly, *Now is the Son of Man glorified*, meaning, *now he is crucified.*

1. Here is ſomething which Chriſt inſtructs them in concerning his Sufferings that was very *comforting*. Three Things,

(1.) That he ſhould himſelf be *glorified in them.* Now the *Son of Man* is to be expos'd to the greateſt Ignominy and Diſgrace, to be diſpitefully us'd to the laſt degree, and diſhonour'd both by the Cowardice of his Friends, and the Inſolence of his Enemies; yet *now he is glorified.*

For, 1. Now he is to obtain a *glorious Victory* over Satan and all the Powers of Darkneſs, to ſpoil them and triumph over them. He is now *girding on the Harneſs*, to take the Field againſt thoſe Adverſaries of God and Man, with as great an Aſſurance as if he had *put it off.*

2. Now he is to work out a *glorious Deliverance* for his People; by his Death to reconcile them to God, and bring in an everlaſting Righteouſneſs and Happineſs for them; to ſhed that Blood which is to be an inexhauſtible Fountain of Joys and Bleſſings to all Believers.

3. Now he is to give a *glorious Example* of Self-denial and Patience under the Croſs, Courage and Contempt of the World, Zeal for the Glory of God, and Love to the Souls of Men, as will make him to be for ever *Admir'd* and *had in Honour.* Chriſt had been glorified in many Miracles he had wrought, and yet he ſpeaks of his being glorified *now* in his Sufferings, as if that were more than all his other Glories in his humbled State.

(2.) That God the Father ſhould be *glorified in them.* The Sufferings of Chriſt were, (1.) The *Satisfaction of God's Juſtice*, and ſo God was glorified in them. Reparation was thereby made with great Advantage for the wrong done him in his Honour by the Sin of Man: The Ends of the Law were abundantly anſwer'd, and the Glory of his Government effectually aſſerted and maintained. (2.) They were the Manifeſtation of his Holineſs and Mercy. The Attributes of God ſhine bright in Redemption and Providence, but much more in the Work of Creation; ſee 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. 2. *Cor.* 4. 6. God is *Love*, and herein he hath commended his Love.

(3.) That he ſhould himſelf be greatly *glorified after them*, in Conſideration of God's being greatly glorified by them, *v.* 32. Obſerve how he enlarges upon it.

1. He is ſure that *God will glorifie him*; and thoſe whom God *glorifies* are glorious indeed. Hell and Earth ſet themſelves to *vilifie* Chriſt, but God reſolved to glorifie him, and he did it. He glorified him in his Sufferings by the amazing Signs and Wonders, both in Heaven and Earth which attended them, and extorted even from his Crucifiers in Acknowledgement that he was the *Son of God.* But eſpecially after his Sufferings he *glorified him*, when he ſet him *at his own Right Hand*, gave him a *Name above every Name.*

2. That he will glorifie him *in himſelf*, *ἐν ἑαυτῷ.* Either, (1.) In *Chriſt himſelf*: He will glorifie him in his own Perſon, and not only in his Kingdom among Men. This ſuppoſeth his ſpeedy Reſurrection. A common Perſon may be honoured after his Death in his Memory or Poſterity, but Chriſt was honour'd in *himſelf.* Or, (2.) In God himſelf. God will glorifie him *with himſelf*, as 'tis explain'd, *John* 17. 5. *He ſhall ſit down with the Father upon his Throne*, Rev. 3. 21. This is true Glory.

3. That he will glorifie him *ſtraightway.* He look'd upon the Joy and Glory ſet before him, not only as *great*, but as *near*; and his Sorrows and Sufferings ſhort, and ſoon over. Good Services done to earthly Princes often remain long unrewarded, but Chriſt had his Preferments preſently. 'Twas but Forty Hours (or not ſo much) from his Death to his Reſurrection, and Forty Days from thence to his Aſcenſion, ſo that it might well be ſaid he was *ſtraightway glorified*, Pſal 15. 10.

4. All this in Conſideration of God's being glorified in and by his Sufferings. *Seeing God is glorified in him*, and receives Honour from his Sufferings, God ſhall in like manner glorifie him in himſelf, and give Honour to him. *Note*, 1. In the Exaltation of Chriſt there was *Regard* had *to* his Humiliation, and a *Reward* given *for* it. *Becauſe he humbled himſelf therefore God highly exalted him.* If the Father be ſo great a Gainer in *his* Glory by the Death of Chriſt, we may be ſure the Son ſhall be no Loſer in *his*. See the Covenant between them, *Iſa.* 53. 12. 2. Thoſe who mind the *Buſineſs* of *glorifying God*, no doubt ſhall have the *Happineſs* of being *glorified with him.*

2. Here is ſomething that Chriſt inſtructs them in concerning his Sufferings, which was *awakening*, for as yet they were ſlow of Heart to underſtand it. *Ver.* 32. *Little Children, yet a little while I am with you*, &c.

Two Things Chriſt here ſuggeſts to quicken his Diſciples to improve their preſent Opportunities. Two ſerious Words,

1. That his *ſtay in this World*, to be with them here, they would find to be very ſhort. *Little Children.* This Compellation doth not ſpeak ſo much their *Weakneſs*, as his *Tenderneſs* and Compaſſion; he ſpeaks to them with the affection of a Father now he is about to leave them, and leave Bleſſings with them. Know this then, that *yet a little while I am with you.* Whether we underſtand it of the Time betwixt his Death, or betwixt his Aſcenſion, it comes much to one; he had but a little Time to ſpend with them, and therefore,

(1.) Let them *improve* the Advantage they now had. If they had any good Queſtion to aſk, if they would have any Advice Inſtruction, or Comfort, let them *ſpeak quickly*, for *yet a little while I am with you.* We muſt make the beſt of the Helps we have for our Souls while we have them, becauſe we ſhall not have them long; they will be taken from us, or we from them.

(2.) Let them *not dote upon* his bodily Preſence, as if their Happineſs and Comfort was bound up in that; no, they muſt think of living without it; not be always little Children, but go alone without their Nurſes. Ways and Means are appointed but *for a little while*, and are not to be reſted in, but preſs'd through to our Reſt, which they have a reference to.

2. That their *following him* to the *other World* to be with him there, they would find *to be very difficult.* What he had ſaid to the *Jews*, chap. 7. 34. he ſaith to his Diſciples; for they have need to be quickened by the ſame Conſiderations that are propounded for the convincing and awakening of Sinners. Chriſt tells them here, (1.) That when he was gone they would find a miſs of him. *Ye ſhall ſeek me*, i. e. ye ſhall wiſh ye had me again with you. We are often taught the worth of Mercies by the want of them. Tho' the Preſence of the Comforter yielded them real and effectual Relief in Straits and Difficulties; yet it was not ſuch a ſenſible Satiſfaction as his bodily Preſence would have been to thoſe who had been us'd to that. But obſerve, Chriſt ſaid to the *Jews*, ye ſhall ſeek me and *not find me*; but to the Diſciples he only ſaith, *Ye ſhall ſeek me*, intimating, that tho' they ſhould not find his bodily Preſence, no more than the *Jews*, yet they ſhould find that which was *tantamount*, and ſhould not ſeek in vain. When they ſought his Body in the Sepulcher, tho' they did not find it, yet they ſought to good Purpoſe. 2. That whither he went they *could not come*, which ſuggeſts to them *high Thoughts* of him, who was going to an inviſible, inacceſſible World, to dwell in that Light which none *can approach unto*; and alſo *low Thoughts* of themſelves, and ſerious Thoughts of their future State: Chriſt tells them they *could not* follow him, as *Joſhua* told the People they *could not* ſerve the Lord, only to quicken them to ſo much the more Diligence and Care. They could not *follow him* to his *Croſs*. for they had not Courage and Reſolution; it appear'd they could not, when they all forſook him and fled. Nor could they follow him to *his Crown*, for they had not a Sufficiency of their own, nor was their Work and Warfare yet *finiſh'd.*

Secondly, He diſcourſeth with them concerning the great Duty of brotherly Love. *Ver.* 34, 35. *Ye ſhall love one another. Judas* was now *gone out*, and had prov'd himſelf a falſe Brother; but they muſt not therefore harbour ſuch Jealouſies and Suſpicions one of another, as would be the Bane of Love; tho' there was one *Judas* among them, yet they were not all *Judas*'s. Now the Enmity of the *Jews* againſt Chriſt and his Followers was ſwelling to the height, and they muſt expect ſuch Treatment as their Maſter had, it concern'd them, by Brotherly Love, to ſtrengthen one another's Hands.

Three Arguments for mutual Love are here urg'd.

1. The *Command of their Maſter.* Ver. 34. *A new Commandment I give unto you.* He not only *commends* it as amiable and pleaſant; not only counſels it as excellent and profitable, but *Commands* it, and makes it one of the fundamental Laws of his Kingdom; it goes a-breaſt with the Command of believing in Chriſt, 1 *John* 3 23. 1. *Pet.* 1. 23. It is the Command of our *Ruler*, who has right to give Law to us; 'tis the Command of our *Redeemer*, who gives us this Law in order to the *curing* of our ſpiritual Diſeaſes, and the preparing for us to our eternal Bliſs. It is a *new Commandment*; that is, (1.) It is a *renewed* Command ment; 'twas a Commandment *from the Beginning*, 1 John 2. 7. as old as the Law of Nature; 'twas the ſecond great Commandment of the Law of *Moſes*, yet becauſe it is alſo one of the great Commandments of the New Teſtament of Chriſt, the new Lawgiver, 'tis call'd a *New* Commandment; 'tis like an old Book in a new Edition corrected

and enlarg'd. This Commandment had been ſo corrupted by the Traditions of the *Jewiſh* Church, that when Chriſt *revives* it, and ſets it in a true Light, it might well be called a *new Commandment.* Laws of Revenge and Retaliation were ſo much in vogue, and Self-love had ſo much the aſcendant, that the Law of brotherly Love was forgotten as obſolete, and out of Date; ſo that as it came from Chriſt new, it was *new* to the People. (2.) It is an *excellent* Command, as a *new Song* is an excellent Song that has an uncommon Gratefulneſs in it. (3.) It is an everlaſting Command; ſo ſtrangely new as to be always ſo; as the *new Covenant* which ſhall never decay, *Heb.* 8. 13. it ſhall be new to Eternity, when Faith and Hope are antiquated. (4.) As Chriſt gives it, it is *new.* Before it was, thou ſhalt love *thy Neighbour*; now it is, ye ſhall love *one another*; 'tis preſs'd in a more winning way, when 'tis thus preſs'd as *mutual* Duty owing to one another.

2. The *Example of their Saviour*, is another Argument for brotherly Love. *As I have loved you.* This is it that makes a *new Commandment*; that this Rule and Reaſon of Love, *as I have loved you*, is perfectly new, and ſuch as had been hid from Ages and Generations. Underſtanding this, 1. Of all the Inſtances of Chriſt's Love to his Diſciples, which they had already experienced during the Time he went in and out among them. He ſpoke kindly to them, concern'd himſelf heartily for them, and for their Welfare; inſtructed, counſell'd, and comforted them; pray'd with them and for them; vindicated them when they were accus'd, took their Part when they were run down, and publickly own'd them to be dearer to him than his *Mother, or Siſter, or Brother*: He reproved them for what was amiſs, and yet compaſſionately bore with their Failings, excus'd them made the beſt of them, and paſt by many an Overſight. Thus he *had* loved them, and juſt now waſhes their Feet; and thus they *muſt* love one another, and love *to the End.* Or, 2. It may be underſtood of the ſpecial Inſtance of Love to all his Diſciples he was now about to give, in laying down his Life for them. *Greater love hath no Man than this*, John 15. 13. As he thus loved us all, juſtly may he expect that we ſhould be loving to one another. Not that we are capable of doing any Thing of the *ſame Nature* for each other, *Pſal.* 49. 7. but we muſt love one another in ſome reſpects after the *ſame manner*; we muſt ſet this before us as our Copy, and take Directions from it. Our Love to one another muſt be free and ready, laborious and expenſive, conſtant and perſevering; it muſt be love *to the Souls* one of another. We muſt alſo love one another, from *this Motive*, and upon this Conſideration, *becauſe* Chriſt has loved us. See *Rom.* 15. 1, 2. *Eph.* 5. 2, 25. *Phil.* 3. 1.————5.

3. The *Reputation of their Profeſſion.* Ver. 35. *By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have Love one to another.* Obſerve, we muſt *have Love*; not only *ſhew* Love, but *have* it in the Root and Habit of it; and *have it* when there is not any preſent Occaſion to ſhew it; have it *ready.* Hereby it will appear that you are indeed my Followers, by following me in this. *Note*, Brotherly Love is the Badge of Chriſt's Diſciples. By this *he* knows them, by this they may know themſelves, 1 *John* 2. 14. and by this *others* may know them. This is the Livery of his Family, the diſtinguiſhing Character of his Diſciples; this is he would have them *noted for*, as that wherein they *excell'd* all others, their loving one another. This was it that their Maſter was famous for; all that ever heard of him have heard of his Love, his great Love; and therefore if you ſee any People more than ordinary *loving* one to another, ſay, certainly theſe are the Followers of Chriſt, they have been *with Jeſus.*

Now by this it appears, (1.) That the Heart of Chriſt was very much upon it, that his Diſciples ſhould *love one another*; in this they muſt be *ſingular*; whereas the Way of the World is to be *every one for himſelf*; they ſhould be hearty for one another. He doth not ſay, *By this ſhall all Men know* that you are my Diſciples, if ye *work Miracles*, for a Worker of Miracles is but a Cypher without Charity, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1, 2. But if *ye love one another* from Principle of Self-denial, and Gratitude to Chriſt, this Chriſt would have to be the *Proprium* of his Religion, the principal Note of the true Church. (2.) That it is the true Honour of Chriſt's Diſciples to excel in brotherly Love: Nothing will be more effectual than this to recommend them to the Eſteem and Reſpects of others. See what powerful Attractive it was, *Acts* 2. 46. 47. *Tertulian* ſpeaks of it as the Glory of the Primitive Church, that the Chriſtians were known by their *Lovingneſs* to one another. Their Adverſaries took notice of it, and ſaid, *See how theſe Chriſtians love one another.* Apol. cap. 39. (3.) That if the Followers of Chriſt do not love one another, they not only caſt an unjuſt Reproach upon their Profeſſion, but give juſt Cauſe to ſuſpect their own Sincerity. *O Jeſus! Are theſe thy Chriſtians?* Theſe paſſionate, malicious, ſpiteful, ill-natur'd People; *Is this thy Son's Coat*? When our Brethren ſtand in Need of Help from us, and we have an Opportunity of being *ſerviceable to them*, when they differ in Opinion and Practice from us, or are any way Rivals with, or provoking to us, and ſo we have an Occaſion to condeſcend and forgive; in ſuch Caſes as this it will be known whether we have this Badge of Chriſt's Diſciples.

36 Simon Peter ſaid unto him, Lord Whither goeſt thou? Jeſus anſwered him, Whither I go, thou canſt not follow me now; but thou ſhalt follow me afterwards. 37 Peter ſaid unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy ſake. 38 Jeſus anſwered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my ſake? Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, the cock ſhall not crow, till thou haſt denied me thrice.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Peter's Curioſity, and the *Check* given to that.

1. *Peter's* Queſtion was bold and blunt, *Ver.* 36. *Lord whither goeſt thou*? Referring to what Chriſt had ſaid, *v.* 33. *Whither I go ye cannot come.* The Practical Inſtructions Chriſt had given them concerning brotherly Love, he overlooks, and asks no Queſtions upon them, but faſtens upon that concerning which Chriſt purpoſely kept them in the dark. *Note*, It is a common Fault among us, to be more inquiſitive concerning Things ſecret, which belong to God only, than concerning Things *reveal'd, which belong to us and our Children*; more deſirous to have our *Curioſity* gratified than our *Conſciences* directed; to know what's done in Heaven, than what we may do to get thither. 'Tis eaſie to obſerve it in the Converſe of Chriſtians, how ſoon a Diſcourſe of that which is plain and edifying is *dropt*, and no more *ſaid to it*, the Subject is *exhauſted*, while a Matter of doubtful Diſputation runs into an endleſs ſtrife of Words.

2. Chriſt's Anſwer was inſtructive: He did not gratify him with any particular Account of the World he was going to, nor ever foretold his Glories and Joys ſo diſtinctly as he did his Sufferings; but ſaid what he had ſaid before, *v.* 33. let that ſuffice, *Thou canſt not follow me now, but ſhalt follow me hereafter.*

1. We may underſtand it of his following him *to the Croſs.* Thou haſt not yet ſtrength enough of Faith and Reſolution to drink of my Cup; and it appear'd ſo by his Cowardice when Chriſt was ſuffering. For this Reaſon, when Chriſt was ſeized, he provided for the ſafety of his Diſciples, *Let theſe go their Way*, becauſe they could not *follow him now.* Chriſt conſiders the Frame of his Diſciples, and will not cut out from them that Work and Hardſhip which they are not as yet fit for; the *Day* ſhall be as the *Strength* is. *Peter*, tho' deſign'd for Martyrdom, cannot follow Chriſt now, not being come to his full growth, but he *ſhall follow* him *hereafter*, he ſhall be crucified at laſt like his Maſter. Let him not think, that becauſe he eſcapes Suffering now, he ſhall never ſuffer: From our *miſſing* the Croſs once, we muſt not infer that we ſhall never *meet* it; we may be referred for greater Trials than we have yet known.

2. We may underſtand it of his following him *to the Crown.* Chriſt was now going to his Glory, and *Peter* was very deſirous to go with him; no, ſaith Chriſt, *Thou canſt not follow me now*, thou art not yet ripe for Heaven, nor haſt thou finiſh'd thy Work on Earth. The *Fore-runner* muſt *firſt enter* to *prepare a Place* for thee, but *thou ſhalt follow me afterwards*, after thou haſt fought the good Fight, and at the Time appointed. *Note*, Believers muſt not expect to be glorified as ſoon as they are effectually call'd, for there is a Wilderneſs between the Red Sea and *Canaan.*

Secondly, Peter's Confidence, and the Check given to that.

1. *Peter* makes a *daring Proteſtation* of his *Conſtancy.* He is not content to be left behind, but asks, *Lord, Why cannot I follow thee now*? Doſt thou queſtion my Sincerity and Reſolution, I promiſe thee, if there be Occaſion, *I will lay down my Life for thy ſake.* Some think *Peter* had a Conceit, as the *Jews* had in the like Caſe, *Chap.* 7. 35. that Chriſt was deſigning a Journey, or Voyage into ſome remote Country, and he declar'd his Reſolution to go along with him where-ever he went; but having heard his Maſter ſo often ſpeak of his own Sufferings, ſurely he could not underſtand him any otherwiſe but of his going away by Death, and he reſolves as *Thomas* did, he will *go and die with him*; and better *die with him*, than *live without him.* See here, (1.) What an affectionate Love *Peter* had to our Lord Jeſus; *I will lay down my Life for thy ſake*, and I can do no more. I believe *Peter* ſpoke as he thought, and tho' he was *inconſiderate*, he was not *inſincere* in this Reſolution. *Note*, Chriſt ſhould be dearer to us than our own Lives, which therefore when we are call'd to it we ſhould be willing to lay down for his ſake, *Acts* 20. 24. (2.) How ill he took it to have it queſtioned, intimated in the Expoſtulation, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee now*, doſt thou ſuſpect my Fidelity to thee? 1 *Sam.* 29. 8. *Note*, 'Tis with regret that true Love hears its own Sincerity arraign'd, as *John* 21. 17. Chriſt had indeed ſaid, that one of them was a Devil, but he was diſcover'd and gone out, and therefore *Peter* thinks he may ſpeak with the more Aſſurance of his own Sincerity, Lord, I am reſolved I'll never leave thee and therefore *why cannot I follow thee?* We are apt to think we can do any Thing, and take it amiſs to be told, that this and the other we cannot do, whereas without Chriſt we can *do nothing.*

2. Chriſt gives him a *ſurprizing Prediction* of his *Inconſtancy*, v. 38. Jeſus Chriſt knows us better than we know our ſelves, and has many ways of diſcovering thoſe to themſelves whom he loves, and will hide Pride from.

1. He upbraids *Peter* with his Confidence. *Wilt thou lay down thy Life for my ſake*? Methinks he ſeems to have ſaid this with a Smile. *Peter*, thy Promiſes are too large, too laviſh to be relied on; thou doſt not conſider with what Reluctancy and Struggle a Life is *laid down*, and what a hard Task it is to *die*; not ſo ſoon done as ſaid. Chriſt hereby puts *Peter* upon ſecond Thoughts, not that he might retract his Reſolution, or recede from it, but that he might inſert into it that neceſſary Proviſo, Lord, *thy Grace*

enabling me, I will lay down my Life for thy Sake. Wilt thou undertake to die for me? What *thou* that trembleſt to walk upon the Water to me; What *thou* that, when Sufferings were ſpoken of, cried'ſt out, *Be it far from thee, Lord*! 'Twas an eaſy thing to leave thy Boats and Nets to follow me, but not ſo eaſy to lay down thy Life. His Maſter himſelf ſtruggled when it came to that, and *the Diſciple is not greater than his Lord. Note*, It is good for us to *ſhame our ſelves* out of our *preſumptious* Confidence in our ſelves. Shall a bruiſed Reed be ſet up for a Pillar? or a ſickly Child undertake to be a Champion? What a Fool am I to talk ſo big?

2. He plainly foretels his Cowardiſe in the Critical Hour. To ſtop the Mouth of his boaſting, leſt *Peter* ſhould ſay it again, *yea*, Maſter, *that I will*, Chriſt ſolemnly aſſerts it with, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, The Cock ſhall not crow, till thou haſt denied me thrice*. He doth not ſay as afterwards, *this Night*, for it ſeems to have been *two Nights* before the Paſſover; but ſhortly thou wilt have deny'd me thrice, within the Space of one Night; nay within ſo ſhort Space, as between the firſt and laſt crowing of the Cock; *The Cock ſhall not crow*, i. e. ſhall not have crow'd his crowing out till thou haſt again and again deny'd me, and that for fear of ſuffering. The crowing of the Cock is mention'd, (1.) To intimate that the Trial in which he would miſcarry thus, ſhould be in the Night, which was an improbable Circumſtance, but Chriſt's foretelling it, was an Inſtance of his infallible Foreſight. (2.) Becauſe the crowing of the Cock was to be the Occaſion of his Repentance, which of it ſelf would not have been, if Chriſt had not put this into the Prediction. Chriſt not only foreſaw that *Judas* would betray him, tho' he only in Heart deſign'd it; but he foreſaw that *Peter* would deny him, tho' he did not deſign it, but the contrary. He knows not only the *Wickedneſs* of Sinners, but the *Weakneſs* of Saints.

Chriſt told *Peter*, (1.) That he would *deny* him, would renounce and abjure him: Thou wilt not only not follow me ſtill, but be aſhamed to own that ever thou didſt follow me. (2.) That he would do this not once only by a haſty Slip of his Tongue, but after he had paus'd, would repeat a ſecond and a third time; and it prov'd too true. We commonly give it as a Reaſon, why the Prophecies of Scripture are expreſs'd darkly and figuratively, becauſe if they did *plainly* deſcribe the Event, the accompliſhment would thereby either be defeated, or neceſſitated by a Fatality inconſiſtent with human Liberty; and yet this plain and expreſs Prophecy of *Peter*'s denying Chriſt did neither; nor did in the leaſt make Chriſt acceſſary to *Peter*'s Sin. But we may well imagine what a Mortification it was to *Peter*'s Confidence of his own Courage, to be told this, and to be told it in ſuch a Manner as that he durſt not contradict it, elſe he would have ſaid as *Hazael, What! is thy Servant a Dog?* This could not but fill him with Confuſion. *Note*, The moſt *ſecure* are commonly the leaſt *ſafe*; and thoſe moſt ſhamefully betray their own Weakneſs, that moſt confidently preſume upon their own Strength, 1 *Cor.* 10. 12.

CHAP. XIV.

This Chapter is a Continuation of Chriſt's Diſcourſe with his Diſciples after Supper; when he had convicted and diſcarded Judas, *he ſet himſelf to* comfort *the reſt, who were full of Sorrow upon what he had ſaid of leaving them, and a great many* good Words, *and comfortable Words he here ſpeaks to them. The Diſcourſe is interlocutory; as* Peter *in the foregoing Chapter, ſo* Thomas, *and* Philip *and* Jude *in this, interpos'd their Thoughts upon what he ſaid according to the Liberty he was pleas'd to allow them.* Free Conferences *are as inſtructive as* ſolemn Speeches, *and more ſo. The general Scope of this Chapter is in the firſt Verſe; 'tis deſign'd to keep Trouble from their Hearts; now in Order to that, they muſt believe: And let them conſider,* (1.) *Heaven as their everlaſting Reſt,* v. 2, 3. (2.) *Chriſt himſelf as their Way,* v. 4——11. (3.) *The great Power they ſhall be clothed with by the Prevalency of their Prayers,* v. 12——14. (4.) *The Coming of another Comforter,* v. 15——17. (5.) *The Fellowſhip and Communion that ſhould be between him and them after his Departure,* v. 18—24. (6.) *The Inſtructions which the Holy Ghoſt ſhould give them,* v. 25. 26. (7.) *The Peace Chriſt bequeath'd to them,* v. 27. (8.) *Chriſt's own Chearfulneſs in his Departure,* v. 28. ——31. *And this which he ſaid to them, is deſign'd for the Comfort of all his faithful Followers.*

LET not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe alſo in me. 2 In my Father's houſe are many manſions; if *it were* not *ſo*, I would have told you: I go to prepare a Place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto my ſelf, that where I am, *there* ye may be alſo.

In theſe Verſes we have.

Firſt, A general Caution which Chriſt gives to his Diſciples, againſt *Trouble of Heart*, v. 1. *Let not your Hearts be troubled.* They now began to be troubled, were entring into this Temptation. Now here ſee,

1. How Chriſt took Notice of it. Perhaps it was *legible* in their Looks; 'twas ſaid, *chap.* 13. 22. *they look'd one upon another* with Anxiety and Concern, and Chriſt look'd upon them all, and obſerv'd it; however it was *intelligible* to the Lord Jeſus, who is accquainted with all our ſecret undiſcover'd Sorrows, with the Wound that bleeds inwardly; he knows not only how we are *afflicted*, but how we ſtand *affected* under our Afflictions, and how near they lie to our Hearts; He takes Cognizance of all the Trouble which his People are at any Time in danger of being over-whelm'd with; he *knows our Souls in Adverſity*.

Many Things concur'd to trouble the Diſciples now,

1. Chriſt had newly told them of the Unkindneſſes he ſhould receive from ſome of them, and this troubled them all; *Peter*, no doubt, look'd very *ſorrowful* upon what Chriſt ſaid to him, and all the reſt were ſorry for him, and for themſelves too, not knowing whoſe Turn it ſhould be to be told next of ſome ill Thing or other they ſhould do. As to this Chriſt comforts them; tho' a Godly Jealouſy over our ſelves, is of great Uſe to keep us humble and watchful, yet it muſt not prevail to the diſquieting of our Spirits, and the damping of our Holy Joy.

2. He had newly told them of his own Departure from them; that he ſhould not only go away, but go away in a Cloud of Sufferings. They muſt ſhortly hear him loaded with Reproaches, and thoſe will be *as a Sword in their Bones*; muſt ſee him barbarouſly abus'd and put to Death, and this alſo will be a Sword piercing *through their own Souls*, for they had loved him, and choſen him, and left all to follow him. When we now look upon *Chriſt pierc'd*, we cannot but *mourn and be in Bitterneſs*, tho' we ſee the glorious Iſſue and Fruit of it, much more grievous muſt the Sight be to them who could then look no further.

If Chriſt depart from them, (1.) They will think themſelves ſhamefully *diſappointed*; for they look'd that this had been he that ſhould have delivered *Iſrael*, and ſhould have ſet up his Kingdom in ſecular Power and Glory, and in Expectation of that, had loſt all to follow him. Now if he leave the World in the ſame Circumſtances of Meanneſs and Poverty in which he had liv'd, and worſe, they are quite defeated. (2.) They will think themſelves ſadly *deſerted and* expos'd. They knew by Experience what little Preſence of Mind they had in difficult Emergences, that they could count upon nothing but being ruin'd and run down if they part with their Maſter. Now in reference to all theſe, *Let not your Hearts be troubled.* Here are three Words, upon any of which the Emphaſis may ſignificantly be laid,

(1.) Upon the Word *troubled*, μὴ ταρασσέσθω; be not ſo troubled as to be put into a Hurry and Confuſion, *like the troubled Sea when it cannot reſt*. He doth not ſay, Let not your Hearts be *ſenſible* of the Griefs, or *ſad* becauſe of them, but be not ruffled and diſcompos'd. Be not *caſt down* and *diſquieted*, Pſal. 42. 5.

(2.) Upon the Word *Heart*; tho' the Nation and City be troubled, tho' your little Family and Flock be troubled, yet *let not your Heart be troubled.* Keep Poſſeſſion of your own Souls, when you can keep Poſſeſſion of nothing elſe. The Heart is the main Fort, whatever you do, *keep* Trouble from that, keep that with *all Diligence*. The Spirit muſt *ſuſtain the Infirmity*, therefore ſee that that be not *wounded*.

(3.) Upon the Word *your*; you that are my Diſciples and Followers, my redeemed, choſen, ſanctified ones; however others are overwhelm'd with the Sorrows of this preſent time, be not *you* ſo, for you know better Things; let *the Sinners in* Zion tremble, but let the *Sons of* Zion *be joyful in their King*. Herein Chriſt's Diſciples ſhould do *more than others*, ſhould keep their Minds quiet, when every thing elſe is unquiet.

2. The Remedy he preſcribes againſt this Trouble of Mind, which he ſaw ready to prevail over them; in general, *Believe*, πιστεύετε. (1.) Some read it in both Parts imperatively, *Believe in God*, and his Perfections and Providence, *Believe alſo in me*, and my Mediation. Build with Confidence upon the great acknowledg'd Principles of *Natural Religion*; that there is a God, that he is moſt holy, wiſe, powerful and good; that he is the Governour of the World, and has the Sovereign Diſpoſal of all Events; and comfort your ſelves likewiſe with the peculiar Doctrines of that holy Religion which I have taught you. But, (2.) We read the former as an Acknowledgment, that they did *believe in God*, for which he commends them; but if you would effectually provide againſt a ſtormy Day, *Believe alſo in me.*; through Chriſt we are brought into Covenant with God, and became intereſted in his Favour and Promiſe, which otherwiſe as Sinners we muſt deſpair of, and the Remembrance of God would have been our Trouble; but by believing in Chriſt as the Mediator between God and Man, our Belief *in God* becomes comfortable; and this is the Will of God, that all Men ſhould *honour the Son as they honour the Father*, by believing *in the Son*, as they believe *in the Father*; anp thoſe that rightly believe in God will believe in Jeſus Chriſt, whom he has made known to them. And believing in God, through Jeſus Chriſt, is an excellent Means of keeping Trouble from the Heart. The Joys of Faith are the beſt Remedies againſt the Griefs of Senſe, 'tis a Remedy with a *Promiſe* annex'd to it; *The Juſt ſhall live by Faith*; a Remedy with a *probatum eſt* annex'd to it, *I had fainted unleſs I had believed.*

Secondly, Here is a particular Direction to act Faith upon the Promiſe of eternal Life, *v.* 2, 3. He had directed them to truſt *God*, and to truſt *him*; but what muſt they truſt God and Chriſt for? Truſt them for Happineſs *to come*, when *this Body*, and *this World* ſhall be *no more*; and a Happineſs *to laſt* as long as the *immortal Soul*, and the *Eternal World* ſhall laſt. Now this is propos'd as a Sovereign Cordial under all the Troubles of this preſent Time, to which there is that in the Happineſs of Heaven which is admirably adapted and accommodated. All the Saints have encourag'd themſelves with this in their greateſt Extremities, *That Heaven would make amends for all.*

Let us ſee how this is ſuggeſted here:

1. Believe and conſider that really there is ſuch a Happineſs, *In my Father's Houſe there are many Manſions, if it were not ſo I would have told you.*

(1.) See under what Notion the Happineſs of Heaven is here repreſented; as Manſions, many Manſions in Chriſt's Father's Houſe. 1. Heaven is a *Houſe*, not a Tent nor Tabernacle; 'tis a Houſe not made with Hands, *Eternal in the Heavens.* (2.) It is a *Father's Houſe*; my Father's Houſe; and his Father is *our* Father, to whom he was now aſcending, ſo that in the Right of their elder Brother, all true Believers ſhall be welcome to that Happineſs as to *their Home.* 'Tis his Houſe who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, dwells in Light and inhabits Eternity. 3. There are *Manſions* there. That is, (1.) *Diſtinct* Dwellings, an Appartment for each, perhaps there is an Alluſion to the Prieſts Chambers that were about the Temple. In Heaven there are Accommodations for *particular* Saints; tho' all ſhall be ſwallow'd up in God, yet our Individuation ſhall not be loſt there; every *Iſraelite* had his Lot in *Canaan*, and every Elder *a Seat*, Rev. 4. 4. (2.) *Durable* Dwellings. *Μοναὶ*, from *μένω*, *Maneo*, abiding Places. The Houſe it ſelf is laſting, our Eſtate in it is not for a Term of Years, but a Perpetuity. Here we are as in an Inn, in Heaven we ſhall gain a Settlement. The Diſciples had quitted their Houſes to attend Chriſt, who had not where to lay his Head, but the Manſions in Heaven will make them amends. 4. There are *many Manſions*, for there are *many Sons* to be *brought to Glory*, and he exactly knows their Number; nor will be ſtraiten'd for Room by the coming of more Company than he expects. He had told *Peter* that he ſhould follow him, *chap.* 13. 36. but let not the reſt be diſcourag'd; in Heaven there are Manſions for them *all*. *Rehoboth*, Gen. 26. 22.

(2.) See what Aſſurance we have of the Reality of the Happineſs it ſelf, and the Sincerity of the Propoſal of it to us; *If it were not ſo, I would have told you.* If you had *deceived your ſelves* when you quitted your Livelihoods, and ventured your Lives for me in proſpect of a Happineſs, future and unſeen, I would ſoon have *undeceived you.* The Aſſurance is built, (1.) upon the Veracity of his Word. 'Tis implied, if there were not ſuch a Happineſs valuable and attainable, I would not have told you that there was. (2.) Upon the Sincerity of his Affection to them. As he is *true*, and would not impoſe upon them himſelf, ſo he is *kind*, and would not ſuffer them to be impos'd upon. If either there were no ſuch Manſions, or none deſign'd for them, who had left all to follow him, he would have given them timely notice of the Miſtake, that they might have made an honourable Retreat to the World again, and have made the beſt Hand they could of it. *Note*, Chriſt's good Will to us is a great Encouragement to our Hope in him. He loves us too well, and means us too well, to diſappoint the Expectations of his own raiſing; or to leave thoſe to be of all Men moſt miſerable, who have been of him moſt obſervant.

2. Believe and conſider, that the Deſign of Chriſt's going away was to *prepare a Place* in Heaven *for* his Diſciples. You are griev'd to think of my going away, whereas I go on your Errand, *as the Forerunner I am to enter for you.* He went to *prepare a Place* for us; that is, 1. To take *Poſſeſſion* for us, as our Advocate or Attorney, and ſo to ſecure our Title as indefeaſible. Livery of Seiſin was given to Chriſt for the Uſe and Behoof of all that ſhould believe on him. 2. To *make Proviſion* for us as our Friend and Father. The Happineſs of Heaven, tho' prepar'd *before the Foundation* of the World, yet muſt be further fitted up for Man in his fallen State. It conſiſting much in the Preſence of Chriſt there, it was therefore neceſſary he ſhould *go before*, to enter into that Glory which his Diſciples were to ſhare in. Heaven would be an *unready* Place for a Chriſtian if Chriſt were not there. He went to prepare a *Table* for them, to prepare *Thrones* for them, *Luke* 22. 30. Thus he deſign'd to ſpeak the fitneſs of Heaven's Happineſs for the Saints, for whom it is prepared.

3. Believe and conſider, That therefore he would certainly come again in due Time, to fetch them to that Bleſſed Place which he was now going to poſſeſs for himſelf, and prepare for them. *Ver.* 3. *If I go and prepare a Place* for you, if that be the Errand of my Journey, you may be ſure when every Thing is ready *I will* come *again and receive you to my ſelf*, ſo that you ſhall follow me hereafter, *That where I am there ye may be alſo.* Now theſe are comfortable Words indeed.

1. That Jeſus Chriſt will *come again*, *ἔρχομαι*, *I do come*; intimating the Certainty of it, that he will come, and that he *is* daily *coming*. We ſay we are *coming*, when we are buſie in preparing for our coming, and ſo he is. All he doth has a Reference and Tendency to his ſecond coming. *Note*, The Belief of Chriſt's ſecond coming, which he has given us the Aſſurance of, is an excellent Preſervative againſt Trouble of Heart. *Phil.* 4. 5. *James* 5. 8.

2. That he will come again to receive all his faithful Followers to himſelf. He ſends for them *privately* at Death, and gathers them one by one; but they are to make their *publick Entry* in ſolemn State all together at the laſt Day, and then Chriſt himſelf will come to receive them, to *conduct* them out of the abundance of his *Grace* and to *welcome* them out of the Abundance of his *Love*: He will hereby teſtifie the utmoſt Reſpects and Endearments imaginable. The coming of Chriſt is in order to our *gathering together unto him*, 2. Theſ. 2. 1.

3. That *where he is, there they ſhall be alſo.* This ſpeaks the ſame that many other Scriptures ſpeak, That the Quinteſſence of Heaven's Happineſs is *being with Chriſt there*, John 17. 24. Phil. 1. 23. 1 Theſ. 4. 17. Chriſt ſpeaks of his being there *as* now preſent, that *where I am*; where I am to be *ſhortly*, where I am to be *eternally*; there ye ſhall be *ſhortly*, there ye ſhall be *eternally*. Not only *there* in the ſame *Place*, but there in the ſame State: Not only Spectators of his Glory, as the Three Diſciples on the Mount, but Sharers in it.

4. That this may be inferred from his *going to prepare a Place* for us, for his Preparations ſhall not be in vain; he will not *build* and *furniſh* Lodgings and let them *ſtand empty*. He will be the Finiſher of that which he is the Author of. If he have prepared the Place for us, he will prepare us for it, and in due Time put us in Poſſeſſion of it. As the Reſurrection of Chriſt is the Aſſurance of our Reſurrection, ſo his Aſcenſion, Victory, and Glory, is an Aſſurance of ours.

4 And whither I go, ye know, and the way ye
know. 5 Thomas ſaith unto him, Lord, we know
not whither thou goeſt, and how can we know the
way? 6 Jeſus ſaith unto him, I am the way, the
truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father,
but by me. 7 If ye had known me, ye ſhould have
known my Father alſo: and from henceforth ye
know him, and have ſeen him. 8 Philip ſaith unto
him, Lord ſhew us the Father, and it ſufficeth us.
9 Jeſus ſaith unto him, Have I been ſo long time with
you, and yet haſt thou not known me, Philip? he
that hath ſeen me hath ſeen the Father; and how
ſayeſt thou *then*, Shew us the Father? 10 Believeſt
thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in
me? the words that I ſpeak unto you, I ſpeak not
of my ſelf: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he
doth the works. 11 Believe me that I *am* in the
Father, and the Father in me: or elſe believe me
for the very works ſake.

Chriſt having ſet the Happineſs of Heaven before them as the End, here ſhews them himſelf as the Way to it; and tells them they were better acquainted both with the End they were to *aim at*, and with the Way they were to *walk in*, than they thought they were. *Ye know*, i. e. 1. Ye *may* know. 'Tis none of the *ſecret* Things which belong not to you, but one of the *Things revealed.* You need not *aſcend into Heaven*, or go down *into the Deep*, for the Word is *nigh you*, Rom. 10. 6, 8. level to you. 2. Ye *do* know. Ye know that which is the *Home*, and which is the *Way*, tho' perhaps not *as* the Home, and *as* the Way. You have been told it, and cannot but know if you would recollect and conſider it. *Note* Jeſus Chriſt is willing to make the beſt of his Peoples Knowledge, tho' they are weak and defective in it. He knows the Good that is in them better than they do themſelves, and is certain they have that Knowledge and Faith, and Love, which they themſelves are not *ſenſible* of, or not *certain* of.

This Word of Chriſt gave Occaſion to two of his Diſciples to addreſs themſelves to him, and he anſwers them both.

Firſt, *Thomas* enquir'd concerning *the Way*, v. 5. without any Apology for contradicting his Maſter, he ſaid, Lord, *we know not whither thou goeſt*, to what Place, or what State, and *how can we know the way in which* we muſt follow thee? We can neither gueſs at it, nor enquire it out, but muſt ſtill be at a loſs. Chriſt's Teſtimony concerning their Knowledge made them more ſenſible of their Ignorance, and more inquiſitive after further Light. *Thomas* here ſhews more Modeſty than *Peter*, who thought he could follow *Chriſt* now. *Peter* was the more ſollicitous to know *whither Chriſt went*. *Thomas* here, tho he complains that he did not know that, yet ſeems moſt ſollicitous to know *the way*. Now, 1. His Confeſſion of his Ignorance was commendable enough. If good Men be in the dark, and know but in *part*, yet they are willing to own their Defects. But, 2. The Cauſe of his Ignorance was culpable. They *knew not whither* Chriſt went, becauſe they dreamed of a Temporal Kingdom in external Pomp and Power, and doted upon that, notwithſtanding what he had ſaid again and again to the contrary. Hence it was that when Chriſt ſpoke of going away, and their following him, their Fancy run upon his going to ſome remarkable City or other, *Bethlem* or *Nazareth*, or *Capernaum*, or ſome of the Cities of the *Gentiles*, as *David* to *Hebron*, there to be anointed King, and to reſtore the Kingdom to *Iſrael*; and which way this Place lay, where theſe Caſtles in the Air were to be built, Eaſt, Weſt, North, or South they could not tell, and therefore *knew not the way.* Thus ſtill we think our ſelves more in the dark than we need to be concerning the future State of the Church, becauſe we expect its Worldly Proſperity, whereas 'tis ſpiritual Advancement that the promiſe points at. Had *Thomas* underſtood as he might have done, that Chriſt was going to the inviſible World, the World of Spirits, to which ſpiritual Things only have a reference, he would not have ſaid, *Lord, we do not know the way.*

Now to this Complaint of their Ignorance, which included a Deſire to be taught, Chriſt gives a full Anſwer. *Ver.* 6, 7. *Thomas* had enquir'd, both *whither he went* and *what was the Way*, and Chriſt anſwers both thoſe Enquiries, and makes good what he had ſaid, that they would have needed no Anſwer if they had underſtood themſelves aright; for they knew *him*, and he was the *Way*; they knew the *Father*, and he was the End; and therefore *whither I go ye know, and the Way ye know.* Believe in God as the *End*, and in me *as the Way*, v. 1. and you do all you ſhould do.

1. He ſpeaks of himſelf as *the Way.* Ver. 6. Doſt *thou not know the Way? I am the Way*, and I only, for *no Man comes to the Father but by me.* Great Things Chriſt here ſaith of himſelf, ſhewing us,

(1.) The *Nature* of his Mediation; he is the *Way, the Truth, and the Life.*

Let us conſider theſe firſt *diſtinctly.*

1. Chriſt is *the Way*, the *Highway* ſpoken of, *Iſa.* 35. 8. Chriſt was *his own* Way, for by his own Blood he enter'd into the Holy Place, *Heb.* 9. 12. And he is *our Way*, for we enter by him. By his Doctrine and Example he teacheth us our Duty; by his Merit and Interceſſion he procures us our Happineſs, and ſo he is the Way. In him God and Man meet and are brought together. We could not get to the Tree of Life in the Way of Innocency, but Chriſt is another Way to it. By Chriſt, as the Way, an Intercourſe is ſettled, and kept up between Heaven and Earth. The Angels of God aſcend and deſcend; our Prayers go to God, and his Bleſſings come to us by him; This is the Way that leads to Reſt, the good old Way. The Diſciples followed him, and Chriſt tells them they follow'd the Road, and while they continu'd following him, they would never be out of their Way.

2. He is *the Truth.* (1.) As Truth is oppos'd to *Figure* and *Shadow*, Chriſt is the Subſtance of all the Old Teſtament Types, which are therefore ſaid to be Figures of the True, *Heb.* 9. 24. Chriſt is the *true* Manna, *John* 6. 32. the *true* Tabernacle, *Heb.* 8. 2. (2.) As Truth is oppos'd to *Falſhood* and *Error.* The Doctrine of Chriſt is true Doctrine; when we enquire for Truth, we need learn no more, but the Truth as it is *in Jeſus.* (3.) As Truth is oppos'd to *Fallacy* and *Deceit.* He is true to all that truſt in him, as true as Truth it ſelf, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20.

3. He is the *Life*, for we are alive unto God, only in and through Jeſus Chriſt, *Rom.* 6. 11. Chriſt formed in us, is that to our Souls, which our Souls are to our Bodies. Chriſt is the Reſurrection and the Life.

Let us alſo conſider theſe jointly, and with Reference to each other. Chriſt is the *Way; the Truth, and the Life*, that is. 1. He is the Beginning, the Middle, and the End. In him we muſt ſet out, go on, and finiſh. As the Truth he is the Guide of our Way, as the Life he is the end of it. 2. He is the *true* and *living* Way, *Heb.* 10. 20. There is Truth and Life *in it*, as well as at the End of it. 3. He is the *true Way* to *Life*; the only true Way; other Ways may ſeem right, but the End of them is the Way of Death.

(2.) The Neceſſity of his Mediation; *No Man cometh to the Father, but by me.* Fallen Man muſt come to God as a Judge, but cannot come to him as a Father, otherwiſe than by Chriſt as *Mediator.* We cannot perform the *Duty* of coming to God by Repentance, and the Acts of Worſhip, without the Spirit and Grace of Chriſt; not obtain the *Happineſs* of coming to God as our Father, without his Merit and Righteouſneſs. He is the High Prieſt of our Profeſſion; our *Advocate.*

2. He ſpeaks of his Father as the End, *Ver.* 7. *If ye had known me aright, ye ſhould*, or would have *known my Father alſo*; and *from henceforth* by the Glory you have ſeen in me, and the Doctrine ye have heard from me, *ye know him, and have ſeen him.* Here's,

1. A tacit Rebuke to them for their Dulneſs and Careleſsneſs in acquainting themſelves with Jeſus Chriſt, tho' they had been his conſtant Followers and Aſſociates. *If ye had known me.*——They know him, and yet did not know him ſo well as they might, and ſhould have known him. They know him to be the Chriſt, but did not follow on to know God in him. Chriſt had ſaid to the *Jews*, cap. 8. 19. *If ye had known me, you would have known my Father alſo*; and here the ſame to his Diſciples; for it is hard to ſay which is more ſtrange, the wilful Ignorance of thoſe that are Enemies to the Light, or the Defects and Miſtakes of the Children of Light, that have had ſuch Opportunities of Knowledge. If they had known Chriſt aright, they would have known that his Kingdom is *ſpiritual*, and not of this *World*; that he came down *from Heaven*, and therefore muſt return *to Heaven*, and then they would have known his Father alſo, would have known whither he deſigned to go, when he ſaid I go *to the Father*; to a Glory in the other World, not in *this.* If we knew *Chriſtianity* better, we ſhould better know *natural Religion.*

2. A favourable Intimation that he was well ſatisfied concerning their Sincerity, notwithſtanding the Weakneſs of their Underſtanding, *and from henceforth*, from my giving you this Hint, which will ſerve as a Key to all the Inſtructions I have given you hitherto, let me tell you, *ye know him, and have ſeen him*, inaſmuch as ye know *me*, and have ſeen *me*, for in the Face of Chriſt we ſee the Glory of God, as we ſee a Father in his Son that reſembles him. Chriſt tells his Diſciples they were not ſo ignorant as they ſeem'd to be; for tho' little *Children*, yet they had *known the Father*, 1 John 2. 13. *Note*, Many of the Diſciples of Chriſt have more Knowledge, and more Grace than they think they have; and Chriſt takes Notice of, and is well pleaſed with that Good in them which they themſelves are not aware of; for they that know God, do not preſently know that they know him, 1 *John* 2, 3.

Secondly, Philip enquired concerning the Father, *v.* 8. and Chriſt anſwer'd him, *v.* 9, 10, 11. Where obſerve,

1. *Philip*'s Requeſt for ſome extraordinary Diſcovery of the Father. He was not forward to ſpeak as ſome others of them were, and yet from an earneſt Deſire of further Light, he cries out, *ſhew us the Father. Philip* liſten'd to what Chriſt ſaid to *Thomas*, and faſten'd upon the laſt Words, *ye have ſeen him.* Nay, ſaith *Philip*, That's it we want, that's it we would have, *ſhew us the Father and it ſufficeth us.*

1. This ſuppoſeth an earneſt Deſire of Acquaintance with God as a Father. The Petition is, *ſhew us the Father*; give us to know him in that Relation to us: And this he begs not for himſelf only. but for the reſt of the Diſciples. The Plea is, *it ſufficeth us.* He not only profeſſeth it himſelf, but will paſs his Word for his Fellow-Diſciples; grant us but one Sight of the Father, and we have enough. *Janſenius* ſaith, tho' *Philip* did not mean it, yet the Holy Ghoſt by his Mouth deſigned here to teach us, That the Satisfaction and Happineſs of a Soul conſiſts in the Viſion and Fruition of God, *Pſal.* 16. 1. and 17. 5. In the Knowledge of God the Underſtanding reſts, and is at the Top of its Ambition; in the Knowledge of God as *our Father* the Soul is ſatisfied. A Sight of the Father is a Heaven upon Earth, fills us with Joy unſpeakable.

2. As *Philip* ſpeaks it here, it intimates, that he was not ſatisfied with ſuch a Diſcovery of the Father as Chriſt thought fit to give them, but he would preſcribe to him, and preſs upon him ſomething further, and no leſs than ſome viſible Appearance of the Glory of God, like that to *Moſes*, Exod. 33. 22. And to the Elders of *Iſrael*, Exod. 24. 10, 11. Let us *ſee the Father* with our bodily Eyes, as we ſee thee, and *it ſufficeth us*; we will trouble thee with no more Queſtions, *Whither thou goeſt?* and ſo it diſcovers not only the Weakneſs of his Faith, but his Ignorance of the Goſpel Way of manifeſting the Father, which is *ſpiritual*, and not *ſenſible.* Such a Sight of God he thinks would *ſuffice* them, and yet thoſe who did thus *ſee* him, were not *ſufficed*, but ſoon *corrupted themſelves*, and made *a graven Image.* Chriſt's Inſtitutions have provided better for the Confirmation of our Faith than our own Inventions would.

2. Chriſt's Reply referring him to the Diſcoveries already made of the Father, *v.* 9, 10, 11.

1. He refers him to what he had *ſeen*, v. 9. He upbraids him with his Ignorance, and Inadvertency; *Have I been* ſo long *Time with you*? now above three Years intimately converſant with you, and yet, *haſt thou not known me* Philip? Now, he that has ſeen me, hath ſeen the Father, and how ſayeſt thou then, *ſhew us the Father*? Wilt thou ask for that which thou haſt already. Now here,

(1.) He *reproves* him for two Things.

1. For not improving his Acquaintance with Chriſt as he might have done, to a clear and diſtinct Knowledge of him. *Haſt thou not known me* Philip? Whom thou haſt follow'd ſo long, and converſ'd with ſo much. *Philip*, the firſt Day he came to him, declar'd that he knew him to be the *Meſſiah*, John 1. 45. and yet to this Day did not *know the Father in* him. Many that have good Knowledge in the Scripture and Divine Things, fall ſhort of the Attainments juſtly expected from them, for want of *compounding* the Ideas they have, and *going on to Perfection.* Many know Chriſt, who yet do not know what they might know of him, nor ſee what they ſhould ſee in him.

That which aggravated *Philip*'s Dulneſs was, that he had had ſo long an Opportunity of Improvemement; *I have been* ſo long *Time with thee. Note*, The longer we enjoy the Means of Knowledge and Grace, the more inexcuſable we are if we be found defective in Grace and Knowledge. Chriſt expects our Proficiency ſhould be in ſome Meaſure according to our ſtanding, and that we ſhould not be always Babes. Let us thus reaſon with our ſelves, have I been ſo long a Hearer of Sermons, a Student in the Scripture, a Scholar in the School of Chriſt, and yet ſo weak in the Knowledge of Chriſt, and ſo unskilful in the Word of Righteouſneſs.

2. He reproves him for his Infirmity in the Prayer made, *ſhew us the Father. Note*, Herein appears much of the Weakneſs of Chriſt's Diſciples, that they *know not what to pray for as they ought*, Rom. 8. 26. but often *ask amiſs*, James 4. 3. for that which either is not promis'd, or is already beſtow'd in the Senſe of the Promiſe, as here.

(2.) He inſtructs him, and gives him a Maxim, which not only in general magnifies Chriſt, and leads us to the Knowledge of God in him, but juſtifies what Chriſt had ſaid, *v.* 7. *Ye know the Father*, and have *ſeen him*, and anſwers what *Philip* had ask'd, *ſhew us the Father*; why, ſaith Chriſt, the Difficulty is ſoon over, for *he that hath ſeen me hath ſeen the Father.* (1.) All that ſaw Chriſt in the Fleſh might have ſeen the Father in him, if Satan had not *blinded their Minds*, and kept them from a Sight of Chriſt as the *Image of God*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. (2.) All that ſaw Chriſt by Faith did ſee the Father in him, tho' they were not ſuddenly aware that they did ſo. In the Light of Chriſt's Doctrine they ſaw God as the Father of Lights; in the Miracles they ſaw God as the God of Power, the Finger of God. The Holineſs of God ſhone in the ſpotleſs Purity of Chriſt's Life; and his Grace in all the Acts of Grace he did.

2. He refers him to what he had Reaſon to believe. *Ver.* 10, 11. *Believeſt thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me,* and therefore in ſeeing me thou haſt *ſeen the Father.* Haſt thou not believed this? If not, take my Word for it, and *believe* it now.

1. See here what it is which we are to believe, *That I am in the Father, and the Father in me*; that is, as he had ſaid, *Chap.* 10. 30. *I and my Father are one.* He ſpeaks of the Father and himſelf as Two Perſons, and yet ſo One as never any Two were, or can be. In knowing Chriſt as *God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, and as being of one Subſtance with the Father, by whom all things were made.* We know the Father, and in ſeeing him thus we ſee the Father. In Chriſt we behold more of the Glory of God than *Moſes* did at Mount *Horeb.*

2. See here what Inducements we have to believe this; and they are Two. We muſt believe it,

1. For his *Words ſake. The Words that I ſpeak to you, I ſpeak not of my ſelf*; See *John* 7. 16. *My Doctrine is not mine.* What he ſaid, ſeem'd to them careleſs, as the *Word of Man,* ſpeaking his own Thoughts at his own Pleaſure; but really it was the Wiſdom of God that indicted it, and the Will of God that enforc'd it. He ſpake not of *himſelf only,* but the Mind of God according to the Eternal Counſels.

2. For his *Works ſake. The Father that dwelleth in me he doth them,* and therefore *believe me* for *their Sakes.* Obſerve, 1. The Father is ſaid to *dwell in him*; ὁ ἐν ἐμοὶ μένων, He *abideth in me* by the inſeparable Union of the Divine and Human Nature. Never had God ſuch a Temple to dwell in on Earth, as the Body of the Lord Jeſus, *John* 2. 21. Here was the true *Shechinah,* of which that in the Tabernacle was but a Type. The Fulneſs of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily, *Col.* 2. 9. The Father ſo dwells in Chriſt, as that in him he may be *found,* as a Man where he dwells. *Seek ye the Lord,* ſeek him in Chriſt, and *he will be found,* for in him he dwells. 2. He *doth the Works.* Many Works of Power, and Works of Mercy Chriſt did, and the Father did them in him; and the Work of Redemption in general was God's *own Work.* 3. We are bound to believe this, *for the very Works Sake.* As we are to believe the Being and Perfections of God, for the Sake of the Works of Creation, which declare his Glory, ſo we are to believe the Revelation of God to Man in Jeſus Chriſt, for the Sake of the Works of the Redeemer; thoſe mighty Works, which by ſhewing forth themſelves (*Mat.* 14. 2.) ſhew forth him, and God in him. *Note,* Chriſt's Miracles are Proofs of his Divine Miſſion, not only for the Conviction of Infidels, but for the Confirmation of the Faith of his own Diſciples, *John* 2. 11. and 5. 36. and 10. 37.

12 Verily verily I ſay unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do, ſhall he do alſo, and greater works than theſe ſhall he do, becauſe I go unto my Father. 13 And whatſoever ye ſhall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye ſhall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

The Diſciples, as they were full of *Grief* to think of parting with *their Maſter,* ſo they were full of *Care* what would become of *themſelves* when he was gone; while he was with them he was a Support to them, kept them *in Countenance,* kept them *in Heart*; but if he leave them, they will be *as Sheep having no Shepherd,* an eaſy Prey to thoſe who ſought to run them down. Now to ſilence theſe Fears, Chriſt here aſſures them that they ſhould be cloathed with Powers ſufficient to bear them out. As Chriſt had all Power, they in his Name ſhould have great Power both *in Heaven* and *in Earth.*

1. Great Power *on Earth,* Ver. 12. *He that believeth on me,* (as I know you do) *the Works that I do ſhall he do alſo.* This doth not weaken the Argument, Chriſt had taken from his Works to prove himſelf one with the Father, that others ſhould do as great Works, but rather ſtrengthens it, for the Miracles which the Apoſtles wrought, were wrought in his Name, and *by Faith in him*; and this magnifies his Power more than any Thing, that he not only wrought Miracles himſelf, but gave Power to others to do ſo too. Two Things he aſſures them of.

1. That they ſhould be enabled to do ſuch Works as he had done, and that they ſhould have a more ample Power for the doing of them, than they had when he firſt ſent them forth, *Mat.* 10. 8. Did Chriſt *heal the Sick, cleanſe the Lepers, raiſe the Dead?* So ſhould they. Did he convince and convert Sinners, and draw Multitudes to him? So ſhould they. Tho' he ſhould depart, the Work ſhould not *ceaſe,* nor fall to the Ground; but ſhould be carried on as vigorouſly and ſucceſsfully as ever, and 'tis ſtill in the doing.

(2.) That they ſhould do greater Works than theſe.

1. In the *Kingdom of Nature.* They ſhould work *greater Miracles.* No Miracle is *little,* but ſome to our Apprehenſion ſeem greater than others. Chriſt had heal'd with the Hem of his Garment, but *Peter* with his Shadow, *Acts* 5. 15. *Paul* by the Handkerchief that had touch'd him, *Acts* 19. 12. Chriſt wrought Miracles for two or three Years in one Country, but his Followers wrought Miracles in his Name for many Ages in divers Countries. Ye ſhall *do greater,* if there were Occaſion for the Glory of God. The Prayer of Faith, if at any Time it had been neceſſary, ſhould have *removed Mountains.*

2. In the *Kingdom of Grace.* They ſhould obtain greater Victories by the Goſpel than had been obtained while Chriſt was upon Earth, and the Truth is, the captivating of ſo great a Part of the World to Chriſt under ſuch outward Diſadvantages, was the Miracle of all. I think this refers eſpecially to the Gift of Tongues, which was the immediate Effect of the pouring out of the Spirit; which was a conſtant Miracle upon the Mind, in which Words are fram'd, and which was made to ſerve ſo glorious an Intention, as that of ſpreading the Goſpel to all Nations in their own Language. This was a greater *Sign to them which believed not* (1 Cor. 14. 22.) and more powerful for their Conviction than any other Miracle whatſoever.

The Reaſon Chriſt gives for this is, *becauſe I go unto my Father.* 1. *Becauſe I go* it will be requiſite *you ſhould have* ſuch a Power, leſt the Work ſuffer Damage by my Abſence. 2. *Becauſe I go* to the Father I ſhall be in a Capacity to furniſh you with ſuch a Power, for I go to the Father to *ſend the Comforter,* from whom *you ſhall receive Power,* Acts 1. 8. The wonderful Works which they did in Chriſt's Name, were Part of the Glories of his exalted State, when he *aſcended on high,* Eph. 4. 8.

2. *Great Power* in Heaven; *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask that will I do,* v. 13, 14. As *Iſrael,* that was a Prince with God. Therefore you ſhall do ſuch mighty Works, becauſe you have ſuch an Intereſt in me, and I in my Father. Obſerve,

1. In what way they were to keep up Communion with him, and fetch in Power from him when he was gone to the Father; by Prayer. When dear Friends are to be mov'd at a Diſtance from each other, they provide for the *ſettling of a Correſpondency*; thus when Chriſt was going to his Father, he tells his Diſciples how they might *write to him* upon every Occaſion, and ſend it by a ſafe and ready Way of Conveyance, without Danger of *miſcarrying* or *lying by the Way.* Let me hear from you by Prayer, the Prayer of Faith, and you ſhall hear from me by the Spirit. This was the old Way of Intercourſe with Heaven, ever ſince *Men began to call upon the Name of the Lord*; but Chriſt by his Death has laid it more open, and 'tis ſtill open to us. Here's,

(1.) *Humility* preſcrib'd. *Ye ſhall ask.* Tho' they had quitted all for Chriſt, they could demand nothing of him as a Debt, but muſt ask it as an Alms, muſt be humble Supplicants, beg or ſtarve, beg or periſh.

(2.) *Liberty* allow'd. Ask *any Thing,* any Thing that is good and proper for you, any Thing, provided you know what you ask, you may ask for Aſſiſtance in your Work; for a Mouth and Wiſdom; for Preſervation out of the Hand of your Enemies; for Power to work Miracles when there is Occaſion; for the Succeſs of the Miniſtry in the Converſion of Souls; ask to be informed, directed, vindicated: Occaſions vary; but they ſhall be welcome to the Throne of Grace upon every Occaſion.

2. In what Name they were to preſent their Petitions, *Ask in my Name.* To ask in Chriſt's Name, is, (1.) To plead his Merit and Interceſſion, and depend upon that Plea. The Old Teſtament Saints had an Eye to this when they pray'd *for the Lord's ſake,* Dan. 9. 17. and *for the ſake of the Anointed,* Pſal. 84. 9. but Chriſt's Mediation is brought to a clearer Light by the Goſpel, and ſo we are enabled more expreſly to *ask in his Name.* When Chriſt dictated the Lord's Prayer, this was not inſerted, becauſe they did not ſo fully underſtand this Matter as they ſhould afterwards, when the Spirit was pour'd out. If we ask *in our own Name,* we cannot expect to ſpeed, for being Strangers we have *no Name* in Heaven, being Sinners we have an *ill Name* there; but Chriſt's is a good Name, well known in Heaven, and very precious. (2.) 'tis to aim at his Glory and Honour in our Prayers, and to ſeek that as our higheſt End in all our Prayers.

3. What Succeſs they ſhould have in their Prayers; whan you ask, *that will I do,* v. 13. And again, *v.* 14. *I will do it.* You may be ſure I will: Not only it ſhall be done, I'll ſee it done, or give Orders for the doing of it, but *I will do it*; for he has not only the Intereſt of an Interceſſor, but the Power of a Sovereign Prince, who *ſits at the right Hand of God,* the Hand of Action, and *has the doing* of all in the Kingdom of God. By Faith in his Name we may have what we will for the asking.

4. For what Reaſon their Prayers ſhou'd ſpeed ſo well; *That the Father may be glorified in the Son.* That is, (1.) This they ought to aim at, and have their Eye upon in asking. In this all our Deſires and Prayers ſhould meet as in their Centre; to this they muſt all be directed, that God in Chriſt may be honour'd, *by* our Services, and *in* our Salvation. *Hallowed be thy Name,* is an *anſwered* Prayer, and is put firſt, becauſe if the Heart be ſincere in that, it doth in a manner *Conſecrate* all the other Petitions. (2.) This Chriſt will aim at in granting, and for the ſake of this will do what they ask, that hereby the *Glory of the Father in the Son* might be manifeſted. The Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs of God were magnified in the Redeemer, when by a Power derived from him, and exerted in his Name, and for his Service, his Apoſtles and Miniſters were enabled to do ſuch great Things, both in the Proofs of their Doctrine, and in the Succeſs of it.

15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16
And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you ano-
ther Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;
17 Even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot
receive, becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth
him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and
ſhall be in you.

Chriſt not only propoſeth ſuch Things to them as were the Matter of their Comfort, but here promiſeth to ſend the Spirit, whoſe Office it ſhould be to be their *Comforter,* to *impreſs* thoſe Things upon them.

1. He premiſeth to this a *Memorandum* of Duty, *Ver.* 15. *If ye love me keep my Commandments.* Keeping the Commandments of Chriſt is here put for the Practice of Godlineſs in general, and for the faithful and diligent Diſcharge of their Office as Apoſtles in particular. Now obſerve, (1.) When Chriſt is comforting them, he bids them *keep his Commandments*; for we muſt not expect Comfort but in the Way of Duty. The ſame Word (παρακαλεῖν) ſignifies both to exhort and to comfort. (2.) When they were in Care what they ſhould do now their Maſter was leaving them, and what would become of them now, he bids them *keep his Commandments,* and then nothing could *come amiſs* to them. In difficult Times our Care concerning the Events of the Day ſhould be ſwallow'd up in a Care concerning the Duty of the Day. (3.) When they were ſhewing their Love to Chriſt by their grieving to think of his Departure, and the Sorrow which filled their Hearts, upon the Foreſight of that, he bids them, if they would ſhew their Love to him, do it not by thoſe weak and feminine Paſſions, but by their conſcientious Care to perform their Truſt, and by a univerſal Obedience to his Commands; that's better than Sacrifice, better than Tears. *Loveſt thou me? Feed my Lambs.* (4.) When Chriſt has given them precious Promiſes of the Anſwer of their Prayers, and the coming of the Comforter, he laid down this as a Limitation of the Promiſes, provided you keep my Commandments from a Principle of Love to me. Chriſt will not be an *Advocate* for any but thoſe that will be ruled and adviſed by him as their Counſel. Follow the Conduct of the Spirit, and you ſhall have the Comfort of the Spirit.

2. He promiſeth this great and unſpeakable Bleſſing to them, *v.* 16, 17.

Firſt, It is promiſed that they ſhall have *another Comforter.* This is the great New Teſtament Promiſe, *Acts* 1. 4. as that of the Meſſiah was of the Old Teſtament; a Promiſe *adapted* to the preſent Diſtreſs of the Diſciples, who were in *Sorrow,* and needed a *Comforter.* Obſerve here,

1. The Bleſſing promiſed: ἄλλον παράκλητον. The Word is us'd only here in theſe Diſcourſes of Chriſt's, and 1 *John* 2. 1. where we tranſlate it an *Advocate.* The *Rhemiſts,* and Dr. *Hammond,* are for retaining the *Greek* Word, *Paraclete*; we read, *Acts* 9. 31. of the παρακλήσει τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, the *Comforter,* the Holy Ghoſt, including his whole Office as a Paraclete.

(1.) You ſhall have another *Advocate.* The Office of the Spirit was to be *Chriſt's Advocate* with them, and others to plead his Cauſe, and take Care of his Concerns on Earth; to be *Vicarius Chriſti,* as one of the Ancients calls him; and to be *their Advocate,* with their Oppoſers. When Chriſt was with them he ſpoke for them as there was Occaſion, but now he is leaving them they ſhall not be run down, the *Spirit of the Father* ſhall ſpeak in them, *Mat.* 10. 19, 20. And the Cauſe cannot miſcarry that is pleaded by ſuch an Advocate.

(2.) You ſhall have another *Maſter* or *Teacher,* another *Exhorter.* While they had Chriſt with them he excited and exhorted them to their Duty, but now he is going, he leaves one with them that ſhall do this as effectually, tho' ſilently. *Janſenius* thinks the moſt proper Word to render it by, is a *Patron,* one that ſhall both inſtruct and protect you.

(3.) Another *Comforter.* Chriſt was expected as the Conſolation of *Iſrael.* One of the Names of the Meſſiah among the *Jews,* was *Menahem,* the *Comforter.* The *Targum* calls the Days of the *Meſſiah,* the Years of Conſolation. Chriſt comforted his Diſciples when he was with them, and now he was leaving them in their greateſt Need, he promiſeth them *another.*

2. The Giver of this Bleſſing, *the Father* ſhall give him, *my Father* and *your Father*; it includes both. The ſame that gave the Son to be our Saviour, will give his Spirit to be our Comforter, purſuant to the ſame Deſign. The Son is ſaid to ſend the Comforter, *Chap.* 15. 26. but the Father is the prime Agent.

3. How this Bleſſing is procur'd, by the *Interceſſion* of the Lord Jeſus; *I will pray the Father.* He ſaid, *v.* 14. *I will do it*; here he ſaith, *I will pray for it,* to ſhew not only that he is both God and Man, but that he is both King and Prieſt. As *Prieſt* he is ordained for Men to *make Interceſſion,* as *King* he is authoriz'd by the Father to *execute Judgment.* When Chriſt ſaith, *I will pray the Father,* it doth not ſuppoſe that the Father is unwilling, or muſt be importun'd to it, but only that the Gift of the Spirit is a Fruit of Chriſt's Mediation, purchas'd by his Merit, and taken out by his Interceſſion.

4. The Continuance of this Bleſſing, *That he may abide with you for ever.* That is, 1. *With you,* as long as you live: You ſhall never know the Want of a Comforter, not lament his Departure, as you are now lamenting mine. *Note,* It ſhould ſupport us under the Loſs of thoſe Comforts which were deſigned us for a Time, that they are everlaſting Conſolations provided for us. 'Twas not expedient Chriſt ſhould be with them *for ever,* for they who were deſign'd for publick Service muſt not always live a College Life, they muſt diſperſe, and therefore a Comforter that would be with them *all,* in all Places alike, whereſoever diſperſed, and howſoever diſtreſſed, was alone fit to be with them for ever. (2.) With *your Succeſſors,* when you are gone, to the end of Time; your Succeſſors in Chriſtianity, in the Miniſtry. 3. If we take for ever in its utmoſt Extent, the Promiſe will be accompliſh'd in thoſe Conſolations of God, which will be the eternal Joy of all the Saints; *Pleaſures for evermore.*

Secondly, This Comforter is the *Spirit of Truth, whom ye know,* v. 16, 17. They might think it impoſſible to have a Comforter equivalent to him who is the *Son of God*; yea, ſaith Chriſt, you ſhall have the Spirit of God, who is equal in Power and Glory with the Son.

1. The Comforter promiſed is *the Spirit*; one who ſhould do his Work in a *ſpiritual* Way and Manner, inwardly and inviſibly, by working on Mens Spirits.

2. He is the *Spirit of Truth.* He will be *true* to you, and to his Undertaking for you, which he will perform to the utmoſt. He will *teach you the Truth,* will enlighten your Minds with the Knowledge of it, will ſtrengthen and confirm your *Belief* of it, and will increaſe your *Love* to it. The *Gentiles,* by their Idolatries, and the *Jews,* by their Traditions, were led into groſs Errors and Miſtakes; but the Spirit of Truth ſhall not only *lead you into all Truth,* but others by your Miniſtry. Chriſt is the Truth, and he is the Spirit of Chriſt, the Spirit that he was anointed with.

3. He is one whom *the World cannot receive,*—but *ye know him. Therefore he abideth with you.*

1. The Diſciples of Chriſt are here diſtinguiſhed from the World, for they are choſen and called out of the World that lies in Wickedneſs; they are the Children and Heirs of *another* World, not of *this.*

2. It is Miſery of thoſe that are invincibly devoted to the World, that they *cannot receive* the Spirit of Truth. The Spirit *of the World* and *of God,* are ſpoken of as directly contrary the one to the other, 1 Cor. 2. 12. for where the Spirit of the World has the Aſcendant. the Spirit of God is excluded. Even the *Princes of this World.* tho' as Princes they had Advantages of Knowledge, yet as Princes of this World they labour'd under invincible Prejudices, ſo that they knew not the *Things of the Spirit of God,* 1 Cor. 2. 8.

3. Therefore Men *cannot receive the Spirit of Truth,* becauſe they *ſee him not, neither know him.* The Comforts of the Spirit are *fooliſhneſs to them,* as much as ever the Croſs of Chriſt was, and the great Things of the Goſpel, like thoſe of the Law, counted as a ſtrange Thing. Theſe are Judgments far above, out of their Sight. Speak to the Children of this World of the Operations of the Spirit, and you are as a *Barbarian* to them.

4. The beſt Knowledge of the Spirit of Truth, is that which is got by Experience: *Ye know him, for he dwelleth with you.* Chriſt had dwelt with them, and by their Acquaintance with *him,* they could not but know *the Spirit of Truth.* They had themſelves been indued with the Spirit in ſome Meaſure. What enabled them to leave all to follow Chriſt, and to continue with him in his Temptations? What enabled them to preach the Goſpel, and work Miracles, but the *Spirit dwelling in them?* The Experiences of the Saints are the Explications of the Promiſes; Paradoxes to others are Axioms to them.

5. They that have an experimental Acquaintance with the Spirit have a comfortable Aſſurance of his Countenance. He *dwelleth with you,* and *ſhall be in you,* for the bleſſed Spirit doth not uſe to ſhift his Lodging. They that know him, know how to value him, invite him, and bid him welcome, and therefore he ſhall be in *them,* as the Light in the Air, as the Sap in the Tree, as the Soul in the Body. Their Communion with him ſhall be *intimate,* and their Union with him *inſeparable.*

6. The Gift of the Holy Ghoſt is a *peculiar* Gift, beſtow'd upon the Diſciples of Chriſt in a diſtinguiſhing Way; them, and not the World. It is to them hidden *Manna,* and the *white Stone.* No Comforts comparable to thoſe which make *no Shew,* make *no Noiſe.* This is the Favour God bears to his Choſen; 'tis the *Heritage of thoſe that fear his Name.*

18 I will not leave you comfortleſs; I will come to
you. 19 Yet a little while, and the world ſeeth me
no more: but ye ſee me: becauſe I live, ye ſhall
live alſo. 20 At that day you ſhall know that I *am* in
my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 He that
hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is
that loveth me: and he that loveth me, ſhall be loved
of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifeſt
my ſelf to him. 22 Judas ſaith unto him, not Iſcariot,
Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf unto us,
and not unto the world? 23 Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and
my Father will love him, and we will come unto him,

and make our abode with him. 24 He that loveth me not, keepeth not my ſayings: and the Word which you hear is not mine, but the fathers which ſent me.

When Friends are parting, 'tis a common requeſt they make to each other, pray let us hear from you as oft as you can; this Chriſt engaged to his Diſciples, that *out of Sight*, they ſhould not be *out of Mind*.

Firſt, He promiſeth that he would continue his care of them, *v.* 18. *I will not leave you Orphans*, or *Fatherleſs*, for tho' I leave you, yet I leave you this Comfort, *I will come to you*. His Departure from them was it that griev'd them; but it was not ſo bad as they apprehended, for 'twas neither *total* nor *final*.

1. Not *total*; tho' I leave you without my bodily preſence, yet I do not leave you without *Comfort*. Tho' Children, and left *little*, yet they had receiv'd the Adoption of Sons, and his Father would be *their* Father, with whom thoſe who otherwiſe would be fatherleſs, find Mercy. *Note*, The Caſe of true Believers though ſometimes it may be *ſorrowful*, yet it is never *comfortleſs*, becauſe they are never Orphans; for God is their Father, who is an *everlaſting Father*.

2. Not *final*; *I will come to you*, ἔρχομαι, *I do come*; that is (1.) I will come *ſpeedily* to you at my Reſurrection, I will not be long away, but will be with you again in a little time. He had often ſaid, *The Third Day, I will riſe again*. (2.) I will be coming *daily* to you in my Spirit; in the Tokens of his Love, and Viſits of his Grace, he is ſtill coming. (3.) I will come *certainly* at the End of Time, ſurely I will come quickly to introduce you into the Joy of your Lord. *Note*, The Conſideration of Chriſt's coming to us ſaves us from being comfortleſs in his Removals from us; for if he depart *for a ſeaſon*, 'tis *that way we may receive him for ever*. Let this moderate our Grief, *the Lord is at hand*.

Secondly, He promiſeth that they ſhould continue their Acquaintance with him, and Intereſt in him. *v.* 19, 20. *Yet a little while and the World ſees me no more*, i. e. now I am no more in the World; after his Death, *the World ſaw him no more*, for tho' he roſe to Life, he never *ſhew'd himſelf to all the People*, Acts 10. 48. The malignant World thought they had ſeen enough of him, and cry'd, Away with him, crucify him; and ſo ſhall their Doom be; they ſhall ſee him no more. Thoſe only that ſee Chriſt with an Eye of Faith, ſhall ſee him *for ever*; the World ſees him no more, till his ſecond Coming; but his Diſciples have Communion with him in his Abſence.

1. *Ye ſee me*, and ſhall continue to ſee me, when the World ſees me no more. They ſaw him with their bodily Eyes after his Reſurrection, for he ſhew'd himſelf to them *by many infallible Proofs*, Acts 1. 3. and then were the Diſciples glad when they *ſaw the Lord*. They ſaw him with an Eye of Faith after his Aſcenſion, ſitting at God's Right Hand; and as Lord of all; ſaw that in him, which the World ſaw not.

2. *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo*. That which griev'd them was, that their Maſter was *dying*, and they counted upon nothing elſe but to *die with him*. No, ſaith Chriſt, (1.) *I live*: this the great God glories in, *I live*, ſaith the Lord, and Chriſt ſaith the ſame; not only *I ſhall live*, as he ſaith of them, but I do live; for he has *Life in himſelf*, and *lives for evermore*. We are not comfortleſs, while *we know that our Redeemer lives*. (2.) Therefore *ye ſhall live alſo*. *Note*, The Life of Chriſtians is bound up in the Life of Chriſt; as *ſure* and as *long* as he lives, they that by Faith are united to him ſhall live alſo; they ſhall live *ſpiritually*, a Divine Life in Communion with God, this Life is hid with Chriſt; if the Head and Root live, the Members and Branches live alſo. They ſhall *live eternally*; their Bodies ſhall riſe in the Virtue of Chriſt's Reſurrection; it will be well with him in the World to come, it cannot but be well with all that are his, *Iſa.* 26. 19.

3. Ye ſhall have the Aſſurance of this, *v.* 20. *At that Day*, when I am glorified, when the Spirit is pour'd out, *ye ſhall know* more clearly and certainly than ye do now; that *I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you*.

1. Theſe glorious Myſteries will be fully known in *Heaven*. *At that Day*, when I ſhall receive you to my ſelf, you ſhall know *perfectly* that which now you ſee through a Glaſs *darkly*. Now it appears not what we *ſhall be*, but then it will appear what we *were*.

2. They were more fully known after the pouring out of the Spirit upon the Apoſtles; at that Day Divine Light ſhould *ſhine*, and their Eyes ſhould ſee more *clearly*, their Knowledge ſhould greatly advance and encreaſe then, would become more extenſive, and more diſtinct, and like the blind Man's at the ſecond Touch of Chriſt's Hand, who at firſt only *ſaw Men as Trees walking*.

3. They are known by all that receive the Spirit of Truth, to their abundant Satisfaction, for in the Knowledge of this is founded their Fellowſhip with the Father, and *his Son, Jeſus Chriſt*. They know, (1.) That *Chriſt is in the Father*, is one with the Father, by their Experience of what he has wrought *for them*, and *in them*; they find what an admirable Conſent and Harmony there is between Chriſtianity and Natural Religion, that that is grafted into this, and ſo they know that Chriſt is *in the Father*. (2.) That Chriſt is *in them*; experienced Chriſtians know by the Spirit, that Chriſt abides in them, 1 *John* 3. 24. (3.) That they are in *Chriſt*, for the Relation is *mutual*, and equally *near* on both Sides, Chriſt in them, and they in Chriſt, which ſpeaks an *intimate* and *inſeparable* Union; in the Vertue of which it is, that becauſe he *lives*, they *ſhall live alſo*. *Note*, 1. Union with Chriſt is the Life of Believers, and their Relation to him, and to God through him is their Felicity. 2. The Knowledge of this Union is their unſpeakable Joy and Satisfaction, they were now *in Chriſt*, and he *in them*, but he ſpeaks of it as a further Act of Grace that they ſhould *know it*, and have the Comfort of it. An Intereſt in Chriſt, and the Knowledge of it, are ſometimes ſeparated.

Thirdly, He promiſeth that he would *love them*, and manifeſt himſelf to them, *v.* 21—24. Where obſerve,

1. Who they are whom Chriſt will look upon, and accept, as Lovers of him; thoſe that *have his Commandments*, and *keep them*. By this Chriſt ſhews that the kind things he here ſaid to his Diſciples, were intended not for thoſe only that were *now* his *Followers*, but for all that ſhould *believe in him through their Word*. Here's,

(1.) The *Duty* of thoſe that claim the *Dignity* of being Diſciples, *having* Chriſt's Commandments we muſt *keep* them; as Chriſtians in Name and Profeſſion we *have* Chriſt's Commandments, we have them ſounding in our Ears, written before our Eyes, we have the Knowledge of them; but this is not enough, would we approve our ſelves Chriſtians indeed, we muſt *keep them*. Having them in our Heads, we muſt keep them in our Hearts and Lives.

(2.) The *Dignity* of thoſe that do the *Duty* of Diſciples. They are look'd upon by Chriſt to be ſuch as *love him*. Not thoſe that have the greateſt Wit, and know how to talk for him, or the greateſt Eſtate, to lay out for him, but thoſe that *keep his Commandments*. *Note*, The ſureſt Evidence of our Love to Chriſt, is Obedience to the Laws of Chriſt. Such is the Love of a Subject to his Sovereign, a dutiful, reſpectful, obediential Love, a Conformity to his Will, and Satisfaction in his Wiſdom.

2. What Returns he will make to them for their Love; rich Returns; there's no Love loſt upon Chriſt.

1. They ſhall have the Father's Love. *He that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father*. We could not love God, if he did not firſt, out of his *good Will* to us, give us his Grace to love him; but there is a Love of *Complacency* promis'd to thoſe that do love God, *Prov.* 8. 17. He loves them, and lets them know that he loves them, ſmiles upon them, and embraceth them. God ſo loves the Son, as to love all thoſe that love him.

2. They ſhall have Chriſt's Love. *And I will love him*, as God-man, as Mediator; God will love him as a Father, and I will love him as a Brother, an elder Brother. The Creator will love him, and be the Felicity of his Being; the Redeemer will love him, and be the Protector of his Well-being. In the Nature of God, nothing ſhines more bright than this, that *God is Love*. And in the Undertaking of Chriſt, nothing appears more glorious than this, that he *loved us*. Now both theſe Loves are the Crown and Comfort, the *Grace* and *Glory*, which ſhall be to all them that *love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in Sincerity*. Chriſt was now leaving his Diſciples, but promiſeth to continue his *Love to them*; for he not only *retains* a Kindneſs for Believers, *tho' abſent*, but is doing them Kindneſs *whilſt abſent*, for he bears them on his Heart, and ever lives interceeding for them.

3. They ſhall have the Comfort of that Love. *I will manifeſt my ſelf to him*. Some underſtand it of Chriſt's ſhewing himſelf alive to his Diſciples after his Reſurrection, but it being promis'd to all that *love him*, and *keep his Commandments*, it muſt be conſtrued ſo as to extend to them; there is a ſpiritual Manifeſtation of Chriſt and his Love made to all Believers; when he *enlightens* their Minds to know his Love, and the Dimenſions of it, *Eph.* 3. 18, 19. *enlivens* their Graces, and draws them into Exerciſe, and thus enlargeth their Comforts in himſelf. When he clears up the Evidences of their Intereſt in him, and *gives them* Tokens of his Love, Experience of his Tenderneſs, and Earneſts of his Kingdom and Glory, then he manifeſts himſelf to them; and Chriſt is manifeſted to none but thoſe to whom he is pleas'd to manifeſt himſelf.

Now upon Occaſion of Chriſt's making this Promiſe.

Firſt, One of the Diſciples expreſſeth his Wonder and Surprize at it, *v.* 22. Obſerve,

1. Who it was that ſaid this. *Judas, not Iſcariot*. *Judah*, or *Judas*, was a famous Name; the moſt famous Tribe in *Iſrael*, was that of *Judah*; two of Chriſt's Diſciples were of that Name, one of them was the *Traytor*, the other was the Brother of *James*, Luke 6. 16. one of thoſe that were a-kin to Chriſt, *Mat.* 13. 55. He is called *Lebbeus* and *Thaddeus*, was the Penman of the laſt of the Epiſtles, which in our Tranſlation for Diſtinction ſake, we call, The Epiſtle of *Jude*: This was he that ſpoke here. Obſerve, (1.) There was a very *good Man*, and a very *ill Man*, call'd by the ſame Name; for Names commend us not unto God, nor do they make Men worſe, *Judas* the *Apoſtle* was never the *worſe*, nor *Judas* the *Apoſtate* ever the *better*, for being *Name-ſakes*. But, (2.) The Evangeliſt carefully diſtinguiſheth between them, when he ſpeaks of this pious *Judas*, he adds, not *Iſcariot*. Take heed of miſtaking; let us not confound the *precious* and the *vile*.

2. What he ſaid, *Lord*, how is it: Which ſpeaks either, (1.) The *Weakneſs* of his Underſtanding. So ſome take it. He expected the Temporal Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, that it ſhould appear in external Pomp and Power, ſuch as all the World would wonder after: How then, thinks he, ſhould it be confin'd *to us only*? τί γέγονεν, what's the Matter now, that thou wilt not ſhew thy ſelf openly as is expected, that *the Gentiles may come to thy Light*, and *Kings to the Brightneſs of thy Riſing*? *Note*, We create Difficulties

to our ſelves, by miſtaking the Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom, as if it were of *this World.* Or, (2.) As ſpeaking the *Strength* of his Affections, and the humble and thankful Senſe he had of Chriſt's diſtinguiſhing Favours to them. *Lord how is it*; He is amaz'd at the Condeſcenſions of Divine Grace, as *David* 2 Sam. 7. 18. what is there in us to deſerve ſo great a Favour? *Note*, 1. Chriſt's manifeſting of himſelf to his Diſciples, is done in a diſtinguiſhing way; to them, and *not unto the World*, that *ſits in Darkneſs*; to the *baſe*, and not to the *mighty* and *noble*; the *Babes* and not to the *Wiſe* and *Prudent.* Diſtinguiſhing Favours are very obliging; conſidering who are paſſed by, and who are pitch'd upon. 2. It is juſtly *marvellous in our Eyes*; for it is unaccountable, and muſt be reſolv'd into free and ſovereign Grace; *Even ſo, Father becauſe it ſeemed good unto thee.*

Secondly, Chriſt in anſwer hereunto, explains and confirms what he had ſaid, *v.* 23. 24. He overlooks what Infirmity there was in what *Judas* ſpoke, and goes on with his Comforts.

1. He further explains the *Condition* of the Promiſe, which was loving him, and keeping his Commandments. And as to this he ſhews what an inſeparable Connexion there is between Love and Obedience; Love is the Root, Obedience the Fruit.

(1.) Where a ſincere Love to Chriſt is in the Heart, there will be Obedience; *If a Man love me* indeed, that Love will be ſuch a commanding conſtraining Principle in him, that no queſtion he will *keep my Words.* Where there is true Love to Chriſt, there is a Value for his Favour, a Veneration for his Authority, and an entire Surrender of the whole Man to his Conduct and Government. Where Love is, Duty follows of courſe, and is eaſy and natural, and flows from a Principle of Gratitude.

(2.) On the other hand, where there is no true Love to Chriſt, there will be no Care to obey him; *He that loveth me not, keepeth not my Sayings*, v. 24. This comes in here as a *Diſcovery* of thoſe that *do not Love Chriſt*; whatever they pretend, certainly thoſe do not *love him*, that believe not his Truths and obey not his Laws; to whom Chriſt's Sayings are but as *idle Tales*, which he *heeds not*, or *hard Sayings*, which he *likes* not. 'Tis alſo a *Reaſon* why Chriſt will not manifeſt himſelf to *the World* that doth not *love him*, becauſe they put this Affront upon him, not to *keep his Sayings*; why ſhould Chriſt be *familiar* with them, that will be *ſtrange* to him?

2. He further explains the Promiſe, *v.* 23. If a *Man does thus love me*, I will *manifeſt my ſelf* to him.

(1.) My *Father will love him*; this he had ſaid before, *v.* 21. and here repeats it for the *confirming* of our Faith; becauſe it is hard to imagine that the great God ſhould make thoſe the Objects of his Love, that had made themſelves Veſſels of his Wrath. *Jude* wonder'd that Chriſt ſhould manifeſt himſelf to them; but this anſwers it, if my Father love you, why ſhould not I be free with you?

(2.) We will *come unto him*, and *make our abode with him.* This explains the meaning of Chriſt's manifeſting himſelf to him, and magnifies the Favour. (1.) Not only *I will*, but *we will*, I and the Father, who in this are one; ſee *v.* 9. The Light and Love of God is communicated to Man in the Light and Love of the Redeemer; ſo that where-ever Chriſt is *form'd*, the Image of God is *ſtamp'd.* (2.) Not only I will *ſhew my ſelf* to him at a diſtance, but we will *come to him*, to be *near* him, to be *with* him; ſuch are the powerful Influences of Divine Graces and Comforts upon the Souls of thoſe that love Chriſt in Sincerity, (3.) Not only I will give him a tranſient View of me, or make him a ſhort and running Viſit, but we will *take up our Abode with him*; which notes *Complacency* in him, and *Conſtancy* to him. God will not only love obedient Believers, but he will take a Pleaſure in loving them, will reſt in Love to them, *Zeph.* 3. 17. He will be with them as at his home.

3. He gives a good Reaſon both to bind us to obſerve the Condition, and encourage us to depend upon the Promiſe, *v.* 24. *The Word which you hear is not mine*, but *his that ſent me.* To this Purpoſe he had often ſaid, *John* 7. 16. and 8. 28. and 12. 44. And here it comes in very pertinently; 1. The Streſs of *Duty* is laid upon the *Precept of Chriſt* as our *Rule*; and juſtly, for that Word of Chriſt which we are to keep, is the *Father's Word*, and his Will the *Father's Will.* 2. The Streſs of our *Comfort* is laid upon the *Promiſe of Chriſt.* But foraſmuch as in Dependance upon that Promiſe, we muſt *deny our ſelves*, and *take up our Croſs*, and quit all, it concerns us to enquire whether the Security be ſufficient for us to *venture* our All *upon*, and this ſatisfies us it is; that the Promiſe is not Chriſt's bare Word, but the Father's which ſent him; which therefore we may rely on.

25 Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, being *yet* preſent with you. 26 But the Comforter, *which is* the holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my name, he ſhall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you. 27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the World giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Two things Chriſt here comforts his Diſciples with.

Firſt, That they ſhould be under the *Tuition of his Spirit*, v. 25, 26. Where we may obſerve,

1. The Reflection Chriſt would have them make upon the Inſtructions he had given them; *Theſe Things have I ſpoken unto you*, referring to all the good Leſſons he had taught them, ſince they enter'd themſelves into his School; *being yet preſent with you.* This intimates, (1.) That what he had *ſaid* he did not *retract*, or *unſay*, but *ratify* it and *ſtand to it.* What he had ſpoken, he had ſpoken and would abide by it. (2.) that he had improv'd the Opportunity of his bodily Preſence with them to the utmoſt; as long as I have been yet preſent with them, you know I have loſt no time. *Note*, When our Teachers are about to be removed from us, we ſhould call to mind what they have ſpoken, *being yet preſent with us.*

2. The Encouragement given them to expect another *Teacher*, and that Chriſt would find out a way of ſpeaking to them, after his Departure from them, *v.* 26. He had told them before, that the Father would give them *this other Comforter*, v. 16. And here he returns to ſpeak of it again; for as the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* had been, ſo the Promiſe of the Spirit was now the Conſolation of *Iſrael.* Two Things he here tells them further concerning the ſending of the Holy Ghoſt.

1. *On whoſe Account* he ſhould be ſent, the Father will ſend him *in my Name*; i. e. for *my ſake*, at my ſpecial Inſtance and Requeſt; or, as my Agent and Repreſentative. He came in his Father's Name as his *Embaſſador*; the Spirit comes in his Name as Reſident in his Abſence to carry on his Undertaking, and to ripen things for his ſecond Coming. Hence he is call'd the Spirit of Chriſt, for he pleads *his* Cauſe and doth *his* Work.

2. *On what Errand* he ſhould be ſent; two things he ſhall do.

1. He ſhall *teach you all Things*; as a Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation. Chriſt was a Teacher to his Diſciples; if he leave them now they have made ſo little Proficiency, what will become of them? Why, the Spirit ſhall teach them, ſhall be their ſtanding Tutor. He ſhall teach them *all things* neceſſary for them, either to learn themſelves, or to teach others. For they that would teach the things of God, muſt firſt themſelves be *taught of God*; this is the Spirits Work. See *Iſa.* 59. 21.

2. *He ſhall bring all things to your Remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.* Many a good Leſſon Chriſt had taught them, which they had forgot, and which would be to ſeek when they had Occaſion for it; many things they did not retain the Remembrance of, becauſe they did not rightly underſtand the meaning of; the Spirit ſhall not teach them a new Goſpel, but bring to their Minds that which they had been taught, by leading them into the underſtanding of it. The Apoſtles were all of them to *preach*, and ſome of them to *write* the things that Jeſus did and taught, to tranſmit them to diſtant Nations and future Ages; now if they had been left to themſelves herein, ſome needful Things might have been *forgotten*, others *miſrepreſented*, through the Treachery of their Memories, therefore the Spirit is promis'd to enable them truly to relate and record what Chriſt *ſaid unto them.* And to all the Saints the Spirit of Grace is given to be a Remembrancer, and to him by Faith and Prayer we ſhould commit the keeping of what we hear and know

Secondly, That they ſhould be under the Influence of his Peace, *v.* 27. *Peace I leave with you.* When Chriſt was about to leave the World, he *made his Will*; his Soul he committed to his Father, his Body he bequeathed to *Joſeph* to be decently interr'd; his Cloaths fell to the Soldiers, his Mother he left to the Care of *John*; but what ſhould he leave to his poor Diſciples, that had left all for him? Silver and Gold he had none, but he left them that which was infinitely better, *His Peace*; I *leave you*, but I leave *my Peace* with you. I not only give you a Title to it, but put you in Poſſeſſion of it. He did not part in Anger, but *in Love*; for this was his Farewel, *Peace I leave with you*, as a dying Father leaves Portions to his Children; and this is a *worthy Portion.* Obſerve,

1. The *Legacy* that is here bequeathed; *Peace, my Peace. Peace* is put for *all Good*, and Chriſt has left us all the needful Good, all that's really and truly Good, all the purchaſed promiſed Good. *Peace* is put for Reconciliation and Love; the Peace bequeath'd is Peace with God, Peace with one another; Peace *in our own Boſoms*, that ſeems to be eſpecially meant; a Tranquility of Mind ariſing from a Senſe of our Juſtification before God. 'Tis the Counterpart of our Pardons, and the Compoſure of our Minds. This Chriſt calls *his* Peace, for he is himſelf our Peace, *Eph.* 2. 14 'Tis the Peace he *purchas'd* for us, and preach'd to us, and which the Angels congratulated at his Birth, *Luke* 2. 14.

2. to whom this Legacy is bequeath'd; to *you*, my Diſciples and Followers, that will be expos'd to Trouble, and have need of Peace; to you that are the Sons of Peace, and are qualified to receive it. This Legacy was left to *them* as the Repreſentatives of the Church, to them and their Succeſſors, to them and all true Chriſtians in all Ages.

3. In what manner it is left; not *as the World giveth, give I unto you.* That is, (1.) I do not compliment with you, with *Peace be unto you*; no, it is not a mere Formality, but a real Bleſſing. (2.) The Peace I give is of ſuch a Nature, as that the Smiles of the World cannot give it, nor the Favours of the World take it away. Or, (3.) The Gifts I give *to you*, are not ſuch as *this World* gives to its Children and Votaries, that it is kind to. The World's Gifts concern only the Body and Time; Chriſt's Gifts enrich the Soul for Eternity; the World gives lying Vanities, and that which will cheat us, Chriſt gives ſubſtantial Bleſſings, which will never fail us. The World gives and takes, Chriſt gives a good Part that ſhall *never be taken away.* (4.) The *Peace* which Chriſt gives is infinitely more valuable than that which the World gives.

The Worlds Peace begins in Ignorance, conſiſts with Sin, and ends in endleſs Troubles; Chriſt's Peace begins in Grace, conſiſts with no allow'd Sin, and ends at length in everlaſting Peace. As is the Difference between a killing Lethargy and a reviving refreſhing Sleep, ſuch is the Difference between Chriſts Peace and the World's.

4. What Uſe they ſhould make of it; *Let not their Heart be troubled*, for any Evils paſt or preſent, *neither let it be afraid* of any Evil to come. *Note*, They that are intereſted in the Covenant of Grace, and entitled to the Peace which Chriſt gives, ought not to yield to over-whelming Griefs and Fears. This comes in here as the Concluſion of the whole Matter; he had ſaid, *v.* 1. *Let not your Heart be troubled, and* here he repeats it as that which he had now given ſufficient Reaſon for.

28 Ye have heard how I ſaid unto you, I go away, and come *again* unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you before it come to paſs, that when it is come to paſs, ye might believe. 30 Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even ſo I do: Ariſe, let us go hence.

Chriſt here gives his Diſciples another Reaſon, why their Hearts ſhould not be troubled for his going away; and that is, becauſe *his* Heart was not. And here he tells them what it was that enabled him to endure the Croſs, and deſpiſe the Shame, that they might *look who him*, and *run with Patience*. He Comforted himſelf,

Firſt, That tho he went away, he ſhould *come again*, *ye have heard how I have ſaid*, and now I ſay it again, *I go away, and come again*. *Note*, What we have heard of the Doctrine of Chriſt, eſpecially concerning his ſecond Coming, we have need to be told again and again. When we are under the Power of any Tranſport of Paſſion, Grief, or Fear, or Care, we forget that Chriſt will come again. See *Phil.* 4. 5. Chriſt encouraged himſelf with this in his Sufferings and Death, that he ſhould *come again*, and the ſame ſhould comfort us in our Departure at Death; we *go away* to *come again*; the Leave we take of our Friends at a parting, is only a good Night, not that final Farewel. See 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 13, 14.

Secondly, That he *went to his Father*. *If ye loved me*, as by your Sorrow you ſay you do, *ye ſhould rejoice* inſtead of mourning, *becauſe* tho' I leave you, yet I ſaid, I *go unto the Father*, not only mine, but yours, which will be my Advancement and your Advantage, for *my Father is greater than I.* Obſerve here,

1. It is matter of Joy to Chriſt's Diſciples, that he is gone *to the Father* to take Poſſeſſion for Orphans, and make Interceſſion for Tranſgreſſors. His Departure had a bright Side as well as a dark Side. Therefore he ſent this Meſſage after his Reſurrection, *John* 20. 17. I aſcend *to my Father and your Father*; as moſt comfortable.

2. The Reaſon of this is, becauſe *the Father is greater than he*; which if it be a proper Proof of that for which it is alledg'd, as no doubt it is, muſt be underſtood thus, That his State with his Father would be much more excellent and glorious than his preſent State; his returning to his Father (ſo Dr. *Hammond*) would be the advancing of him to a much higher Condition, than that which he was now in. Or thus, his going to the Father himſelf, and bringing all his Followers to him there, was the ultimate End of his Undertaking, and therefore *greater* than the Means. Thus Chriſt raiſeth the Thoughts and Expectations of his Diſciples to ſomething greater than that, which now they thought all their Happineſs bound up in. The Kingdom of the Father, wherein he ſhall be all in all, will be greater than the Mediatorial Kingdom.

3. The Diſciples of Chriſt ſhould ſhew that they *love him*, by their rejoicing in the Glories of his Exaltation, rather than by lamenting his Sorrows of his Humilation, and rejoycing that he is gone to his Father, where he *would be*, and where we ſhall be ſhortly with him. Many that love Chriſt, let their Love run out in a wrong Channel; they think if they love him, they muſt be continually *in pain* becauſe of him, whereas they that love him, ſhould *dwell at Eaſe* in him, ſhould *rejoice in Jeſus Chriſt*.

Thirdly, That his going away, compared with the Prophecies which went before of it, would be a Means of confirming the Faith of his Diſciples, *v.* 29. *I have told you before it come to paſs*, that I muſt die, and riſe again, and aſcend to the Father, and ſend the Comforter, *that when it is come to paſs, ye might believe*. See his Reaſon, *Chap.* 13. 19. and 16. 4. Chriſt told his Diſciples of this Death, tho' he knew it would both *puzzle* them, and *grieve* them, becauſe it would afterwards redound to the Confirmation of their Faith, in two things.

1. That he who foretold thoſe things had a Divine Preſcience, and knew before-hand what a Day would bring forth. When St. *Paul* was going to *Jeruſalem*, he *knew not the Things that did abide him there*, but Chriſt did.

2. That the Things foretold were according to the divine Purpoſe and Deſignation, not ſudden Reſolves, but the Counterparts of an eternal Council. Let them therefore not be troubled at that which would be for the Confirmation of their Faith, and ſo would redound to their real Benefit; for the *Trial of our Faith is* very *precious*, tho' it coſt us preſent *Heavineſs, through manifold Temptations*, 1 Pet. 1. 6.

Fourthly, That he was ſure of a Victory over Satan, with whom he knew he was to have a ſtruggle in his Departure, *v.* 30. *Henceforth I will not talk much with you*, having not much to ſay, but what may be adjourn'd to the pouring out of the Spirit. He had a great deal of good Talk with them after this, *Chap.* 15. and 16. but in Compariſon with what he had ſaid, it was not *much*. His Time was now ſhort, and he therefore ſpoke largely to them now, becauſe the Opportunity will ſoon be over. *Note*, We ſhould always endeavour to *talk to the Purpoſe*, becauſe perhaps we may not have time to talk *much*. We know not how ſoon our Breath will be ſtop'd, and therefore ſhould be always breathing ſomething that is *good*. When we come to be ſick, and die, perhaps we may not be capable to talk much to thoſe about us, and therefore what good Counſel we have to give them, let us give it when we are in Health.

One Reaſon why he would not talk much with them was, becauſe he had now other Work to apply himſelf to; *the Prince of this World comes*; he call'd the Devil the *Prince of this World*. *Chap.* 12. 31. The Diſciples dream'd of their Maſter being the Prince of this World, and they *worldly Princes* under him; but Chriſt tells them, that the *Prince of this World* was his *Enemy*, and ſo were the *Princes of this World*, that were acted and rul'd by him, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. But *he has nothing in me*. Obſerve here,

1. The Proſpect Chriſt had of an approaching Conflict, not only with Men, but with the Power of Darkneſs. The Devil had ſet upon him with his Temptations, *Mat.* 4. had offered him the Kingdoms of this World, if he would hold them as Tributary to him; with an Eye to which, Chriſt calls him in diſdain, The *Prince of this World*; then the Devil departed from him *for a ſeaſon*, but now ſaith Chriſt, I ſee him rallying again, preparing to make a furious Onſet, and ſo to gain that by Terrors which he could not gain by Allurements; to frighten from his Undertaking, when he could not tice him from it. *Note*, The Foreſight of a Temptation gives us great Advantage in our Reſiſtance of it; for being *forewarn'd*, we ſhould be *fore-armed*. While we are here, we may ſee *Satan* continually coming againſt us, and ought therefore to be always upon our Guard.

2. The Aſſurance he had of good Succeſs in the Conflict; *He had nothing in me*, ȣ̓κ ἔχει ȣ̓δὲν *He has nothing at all*. (1.) There we *no Guilt* in Chriſt to give Authority to the *Prince of this World* in his *Terrors*. The Devil is ſaid to have the *Power of Death*, Heb. 2. 14. the *Jews* called him the *Angel of Death*, as an Executioner, now Chriſt having done no Evil, he had no legal Power againſt him, and therefore tho' he prevail'd to *Crucifie* him, he could not prevail to *terrify* him; tho he hurried him to Death, yet not to Deſpair. When Satan *comes* to *diſquiet* us, he has ſomething *in us* to perplex us with, for we have all ſinn'd; but when he would diſturb Chriſt, he found *no Occaſion againſt him*. (2.) There was no *Corruption* in Chriſt to give *Advantage* to the *Prince of this World* in his *Temptations*. He could not cruſh his Undertaking, by drawing him to Sin, becauſe there was nothing ſinful in him, nothing irregular for his Temptations to faſten upon; no Tinder for him to ſtrike Fire into; ſuch was the ſpotleſs Purity of his Nature, that he was above the *Poſſibility of ſinning*. The more Satan's Intereſt in us is cruſh'd and decays, the more comfortably may we expect Sufferings and Death.

Fifthly, That his Departure was in Compliance with, and Obedience to his Father. Satan could not force his Life from him, and yet he would die, *that the World may know that I love the Father*, v. 31. We may take this,

1. As confirming what he had often ſaid, that his Undertaking as Mediator, was a Demonſtration to the World, (1.) Of his *Compliance* with the *Father*; hereby it appear'd that he *lov'd the Father*. As it was an Evidence of his Love to Man, that he dy'd for his Salvation, ſo it was of his Love to God that he dy'd for his Glory, and the accompliſhing of his Purpoſes. Let the World know, that between the Father and the Son there is *no Love loſt*. As *the Father loved the Son*, and gave all Things into his Hands, ſo the Son loved the Father, and gave his Spirit into his Hand. (2.) Of his *Obedience* to his Father; *As the Father gave me Commandment, even ſo I did* the Thing commanded, in the manner commanded. *Note*, The beſt Evidence of our Love to the Father, is our doing as he hath given us Commandment. As Chriſt loved the Father and obey'd him, even to the Death, ſo we muſt love Chriſt and obey him. Chriſt's Eye to the Father's Commandment, obliging him to ſuffer and die, bore him up with Chearfulneſs, and overcome the Reluctancies of Nature; this took off the Offence of the Croſs, that what he did was by Order from the Father; the Command of God is ſufficent to *bear us out* in that which is moſt *diſputed* by others; and therefore ſhould be ſufficient to *bear us up* in that which is moſt *difficult* to our ſelves. This is *the Will of him that* made me, that *ſent me*.

2. As concluding what he had now ſaid, having brought it to this, here he leaves it; *That the World may know that I love the Father*, you ſhall ſee how cheerfully I can meet the appointed *Croſs*;

Ariſe, let us go hence to the Garden, ſo ſome; or to *Jeruſalem*. When we talk of Trouble at a Diſtance, it is eaſy to ſay, Lord, I will *follow thee whitherſoever thou goeſt*; but when it comes to the Pinch, when an unavoidable Croſs lies in the Way of Duty, then to ſay, *Ariſe let us go* meet it, inſtead of going out of our way to miſs it, this lets the World know that we *love the Father*. If this Diſcourſe was at the Cloſe of the Paſſover Supper, it ſhould ſeem after theſe Words he roſe from Table, and retir'd into the with-drawing Room, where he might the more freely carry on the Diſcourſe with his Diſciples in the following Chapters, and pray with them. Dr. *Goodwin*'s Remark upon this, is; That Chriſt mentioning the great Motive of his Sufferings, his Father's Commandment, was in all haſt to go forth to ſuffer and die, was afraid of ſlipping the time of *Judas*'s meeting him; *Ariſe*, ſaith he, *let us go hence*; but he looks upon the Glaſs, as it were, ſees it not quite out, and therefore ſits down again and preaches another Sermon.

Now, 1. In theſe Words he gives his Diſciples an *Encouragement* to follow him. He doth not ſay, *I muſt go*, but *let us go*. He calls them out to no hardſhips, but what he himſelf goes before them in, as their Leader. They had promiſed they would not deſert him, come; ſaith he, Let us go then, let us ſee how you'll make the Words good.

2. He gives them an *Example*, teaching them at all times, eſpecially in ſuffering Times, to ſet looſe to all Things here below, and often to think and ſpeak of leaving them. Tho' we ſit eaſy, and in the midſt of the Delights of an agreeable Converſation, yet we muſt not think of being here always, *Ariſe, let us go hence*. If it were at the Cloſe of the Paſchal and Euchariſtical Supper, it teacheth us, that the Solemnities of our Communion with God are not to be conſtant in this World. When we ſit down under Chriſt's ſhaddow with Delight, and ſay, It is good to be here, yet we muſt think of riſing and going hence, going down from the Mount.

CHAP. XV.

'Tis generally agreed, that Chriſt's Diſcourſe in this and the next Chapter, was at the Cloſe of his laſt Supper, the Night in which he was betray'd; and it is a continued Diſcourſe, not interrupted as that in the foregoing Chapter was, and what he chuſeth to diſcourſe of, is very pertinent to the preſent ſad Occaſion *of a Farewell Sermon. Now he was about to leave them,* (1.) *They would be tempted to* leave him, *and return to* Moſes *again, and therefore he tells them how neceſſary it was that they ſhould by* Faith adhere *to him and abide in him.* (2.) *They would be tempted to* grow ſtrange *one to another, and therefore he preſſeth it upon them to* love one another, *and keep up that Communion when he was gone, which had hitherto been their Comfort.* (3.) *They would be tempted to ſhrink from their Apoſtleſhip, when they met with Hardſhips, and therefore he prepares them to bear the Shock of the World's ill Will. There are four Words, to which his Diſcourſe in this Chapter may be reduced.* (1.) *Fruit*, v. 1——8. (2.) *Love*, v. 9——17. (3.) *Hatred*, v. 18——25. (4.) *The Comforter*, v. 26. 27.

I Am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. 2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit. 3 Now ye are clean through the Word which I have ſpoken unto you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of it ſelf, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and caſt *them* into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye ſhall ask what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, ſo ſhall ye be my diſciples.

Here Chriſt diſcourſeth concerning the *Fruit*, the Fruits of the Spirit, which his Diſciples were to *bring forth*, under the Similitude of *a Vine*. Obſerve here,

Firſt, The Doctrine of this Similitude; what Notion we ought to have of it.

1. That Jeſus Chriſt is the *Vine*, the *true Vine*. 'Tis an Inſtance of the Humanity of Chriſt, that he is pleas'd to ſpeak of himſelf, under low and humble Compariſons. He that is the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and the bright and Morning Star, compares himſelf to a Vine. The Church which is *Chriſt myſtical*, is a Vine, *Pſal.* 80. 8. So is Chriſt, who is the *Church Seminal*; Chriſt and his Church are thus ſet forth.

(1.) He is *the Vine*, *Planted* as the Vineyard, and not a ſpontaneous Product planted *in the Earth*; for he is the *Word made Fleſh*. The Vine has an unſightly unpromiſing Outſide, and Chriſt had no *Form*, nor *Comlineſs*, Iſa. 53. 2. The Vine is a *ſpreading* Plant, and Chriſt will be known *Salvation* to the Ends of the Earth. 9. 13. So doth the Fruit of Chriſt's Mediation, 'tis *better than Gold*, Prov. 8. 19.

(2.) He is the *true* Vine, as *Truth* is oppoſed to Preſence and Counterfeit; he is *really* a *fruitful* Plant, a Plant of Renown. He is not like that wild Vine, which deceived thoſe who gathered of it, 2 *Kings* 4. 39. but a *true Vine*. Unfruitful Trees are ſaid to lye. *Heb.* 3. 13. but Chriſt is a Vine that will not deceive. Whatever Excellency there is in any Creature ſerviceable to Man, 'tis but a Shadow of that Grace, which is in Chriſt for his Peoples Good. He is that true Vine, tipified by *Judah*'s Wine, which enrich'd him with the Blood of the Grape, *Gen.* 49. 11. by *Joſeph*'s Vine, the Branches of which *run over the Wall*, Gen. 49. 22. by *Iſrael*'s Vine, under which he *dwelt ſafely*, 1 *Kings* 4. 25.

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2. That Believers are Branches of this Vine; which ſuppoſeth that Chriſt is the *Root* of the Vine. The Root is *unſeen*, and our Life is *hid* with Chriſt; the Root *bears* the Tree, *Rome* 11. 18. diffuſeth Sap to it, and is all in all to it Flouriſhing and Fruitfulneſs; and in Chriſt is all Supports and Supplies. The Branches of the Vine are many, ſome on the one Side of the Houſe or Wall, others on t'other Side, yet meeting in the Root, are all but one Vine; thus all good Chriſtians, tho' in Place and Opinion, diſtant from each other, yet meet in Chriſt the Centre of their Unity. Believers, like the Branches of the Vine, are weak, and inſufficient to ſtand of themſelves, but as they are born up. See *Ezek.* 15. 2.

3. That the *Father* is the *Husbandman*, Γεωργὸς, the *Landworker*; tho the Earth is the Lord's, it yields him no Fruit, unleſs he *work* it. God has not only a Propriety in, but a Care of the Vine and all the Branches. He hath planted and water'd, and gives the Encreaſe; for *we are God's Husbandry*, 1 Cor. 3. 9. See *Iſa.* 5. 1, 2. and 27. 2, 3. He had an Eye upon Chriſt the Root, and upheld him; and made him to flouriſh *out of a Dry Ground*: He has an Eye upon all the Branches, and prunes them, he watches over them, that nothing hurt them. Never was any Husbandman ſo wiſe, ſo watchful about his Vineyard, as God is about his Church, which therefore muſt needs proſper.

Secondly, The Duty taught us by his Similitude, which is to bring forth Furit, and in order to that, to abide in Chriſt.

1. We muſt be *fruitful*. From a Vine we look for *Grapes*, Iſa. 5. 2. And from a *Chriſtian* we look for *Chriſtianity*, that's the Fruit, a Chriſtian Temper and Diſpoſition, a Chriſtian Life and Converſation, Chriſtian Devotions, and Chriſtian Deſigns. We muſt honour God, and do good, and exemplify the Purity and Power of the Religion we profeſs, and this is *bearing Fruit*. The Diſciples here muſt be fruitful as Chriſtians, in all *Fruits of Righteouſneſs*, and as Apoſtles in *diffuſing the Savour of that Knowledge*. To perſuade them to this, he urgeth.

(1.) The *Doom of the Unfaithful*, v. 2. They were *taken away* (1.) It is here intimated that there are many who paſs for *Branches in Chriſt*, who yet do not *bear Fruit*. Were they really *united* to Chriſt by Faith, they would bear Fruit, but being only ty'd to him by the Thread of an outward Profeſſion, tho' they *ſeem* to be Branches, yet will ſoon *be ſeen* to be *dry ones*: *unfruitful* Profeſſors are *unfaithful* Profeſſors; Profeſſors, and no more. It might be read, *Every Branch that beareth not Fruit in me*, and it comes much to one; for they that do not bear Fruit *in Chriſt*, and in his Spirit and Grace, are as if they bore no Fruit at all, *Hoſ.* 10 1. (2.) It is here threatened that they ſhall be *taken away*, in Juſtice to them and in Kindneſs to the reſt of the Branches. *From him that has not* real Union with Chriſt, and Fruit produc'd thereby, *ſhall be taken away*, even that which he *ſeem'd to have*, Luke 8. 18. Some thinks this refers primarily to *Judas*.

(2.) The *Promiſe* made to the *Fruitful*, he *purgeth them, that they may bring forth more Fruit. Note*, 1. Further Fruitfulneſs is the bleſſed Reward of former Fruitfulneſs. The firſt Bleſſing was, *Be Fruitful*, and 'tis ſtill a great Bleſſing. 2. Even fruitful Branches, in order to their further Fruitfulneſs, have need of *purging*, or *pruning*, καθαίρει, he taketh away that which is ſuperfluous and luxuriant, which hinders its Growth and Fruitfulneſs. The beſt have that in them, which is *peccant, aliquid amputandum*. Some Notions, Paſſions or Humours, that want to be purg'd away, which Chriſt hath promiſ'd to do by his Word and Spirit, and Providence, and theſe ſhall be *taken off* by degrees in the proper Seaſon. 3. The purging of Fruitful Branches, in order to their greater Fruitfulneſs, is the Care and Work of the great Husbandman for his own Glory.

(3.) The Benefit which Believers have by the Doctrine of Chriſt, the Power of which they ſhould labour to exemplify in a fruitful Converſation, *v.* 7. *Now ye are clean.*

1. Their Society was *clean*, now *Judas* was expell'd by that Word of Chriſt, *What thou doſt, do quickly*, and till they were got clear of him, *they were not all clean*. The Word of Chriſt is a diſtinguiſhing Word, and ſeparates between the precious and the vile; it will purify the Church of the Firſt born in the great *dividing Day*.

2. They were each of them clean, i. e. *ſanctified* by the Truth of Chriſt, *John* 17. 17. That Faith by which they received the Word of Chriſt, *purified their Hearts*, Acts 15. 19. The Spirit of Grace by the Word refin'd them from the Droſs of the World and

the Fleſh; and purg'd out of them the *Leaven* of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, from which, when they ſaw their inveterate Rage and Enmity againſt their Maſter, they were now pretty well cleanſed. Apply it to all Believers. The Word of Chriſt is *ſpoken to them*; there is a cleanſing Vertue in that Word, as it works Grace, and works out Corruption; it cleanſeth as Fire cleanſeth the Gold from its Droſs, and as Phyſick cleanſeth the Body from its Diſeaſe: And we then evidence that *we are cleanſed* by the Word, when we *bring forth Fruit* unto Holineſs. Perhaps here is an alluſion to the Law concerning Vineyards in *Canaan*, the Fruit of them was as *unclean*, and *uncircumciſed* the three firſt Years after it was planted, and the fourth Year 'twas to be *Holineſs of Praiſe* unto the Lord, and then it was *clean*, Lev. 19. 23, 24. The Diſciples had now been *three Years* under Chriſt's Inſtruction, and, *now ye are clean*.

(4.) The Glory that will redound to God by our Fruitfulneſs, with the Comfort and Honour that will come to our ſelves by it. *Ver.* 8. If we *bear much Fruit*.

1. Herein *our Father will be glorified*. The Fruitfulneſs of the Apoſtles, *as ſuch*, in the diligent diſcharge of *their* Office, would be to the *Glory of God*, in the Converſion of Souls, and the Offering of them up to him, *Rom.* 15. 9. The Fruitfulneſs of all Chriſtians in a lower and narrower Sphere, is to the Glory of God. By the eminent good Works of Chriſtians, many are brought *to glorify our Father which is in Heaven*.

2. *So ſhall we be Chriſt's Diſciples indeed*; approving our ſelves ſo, and making it to appear that we are really what we call our ſelves. So ſhall we both *evidence* our Diſcipleſhip, and *adorn* it, and be to our Maſter for a Name and a Praiſe, and a Glory; that is, *Diſciples indeed*, Jer 13. 11. ſo ſhall we be *own'd* by our Maſter in the great Day, and have the Reward of Diſciples, a ſhare in the *Joy of our Lord*. And the *more Fruit* we bring forth, the more we abound in that which is good, the more he is *glorified*.

2. In order to our Fruitfulneſs we muſt *abide in Chriſt*; muſt keep up our Union with him by Faith, and do all we do in Religion in the Virtue of that Union.

Here's, 1. The Duty enjoyn'd. *Ver.* 4. *Abide in me, and I in you*. *Note*, It is the great Concern of all Chriſt's Diſciples conſtantly to keep up a Dependance upon Chriſt, and Communion with him; habitually to *adhere* to him, and actually to *derive* from him. Thoſe that are come *to Chriſt* muſt abide *in him*, *abide in me* by Faith, and I *in you* by my Spirit. *Abide in me*, and then fear not but I will abide in you, for the Communion between Chriſt and Believers never fails on this Side. We muſt abide in Chriſt's Word, by a Regard to it, and it in us as a Light to our Feet. We muſt abide in Chriſt's Merit as our Righteouſneſs and Plea, and it in us as our Support and Comfort. The *Knot* of the Branch *abides* in the Vine, and the *Sap* of the Vine *abides* in the Branch, and ſo there is a conſtant Communication between them.

2. The Neceſſity of our abiding in Chriſt in order to our Fruitfulneſs. *Ver.* 4, 5. Ye cannot *bring forth Fruit* except ye *abide in me*, but if he do, ye *bring* forth *much Fruit*; for in ſhort, *without me*, or ſeparate from me, *ye can do nothing*. So neceſſary is it to our Comfort and Happineſs that we be fruitful, that the beſt Argument to engage us to abide in Chriſt, is, that otherwiſe we cannot be fruitful.

(1.) Abiding in Chriſt is in order to our *doing much good*. He that is conſtant in the Exerciſe of Faith in Chriſt, and Love to him, that lives upon his Promiſes, and is led by his Spirit, he *bringeth forth much Fruit*; he is very ſerviceable to God's Glory, and his own Account in the great Day. *Note*, Union with Chriſt is a noble Principle, productive of all Good. A Life of Faith in the Son of God is incomparably the moſt excellent Life a Man can live in this World; 'tis regular and even, pure and heavenly, 'tis uſeful and comfortable, and all that anſwers the end of Life.

(2.) 'Tis neceſſary to our doing *any Good*. 'Tis not only a means of cultivating and increaſing what good there is already in us, but it is the Root and Spring of all Good. *Without me ye can do nothing*, not only no *great* Thing, heal the Sick, or raiſe the Dead, but *nothing*. *Note*, We have as *neceſſary*, and *conſtant* a Dependance upon the *Grace of the Mediator* for all the *ſpiritual* and *divine* Life, as we have upon the *Providence of the Creator* for all the Actions of the *natural Life*; for as to both, 'tis in the Divine Power that we *Live, and Move, and have our Being*. Abſtract from the Merit of Chriſt we can do nothing towards our Juſtification, and from the Spirit of Chriſt nothing towards our Sanctification. Without Chriſt *we can do nothing* aright, nothing that will be Fruit pleaſing to God, or profitable to our ſelves, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. We depend upon Chriſt, not only as the Vine upon the Wall for *Support*, but as the Branch on the Root for *Sap*.

3. The fatal Conſequences of forſaking Chriſt. *Ver.* 6. *If any Man abide not in me*, he is *caſt forth as a Branch*. This is a Deſcription of the fearful State of Hypocrites, that *are not in Chriſt*, and of Apoſtates that abide not in Chriſt.

1. They are *caſt forth* as dry and wither'd Branches, which are pluck'd off becauſe they cumber the Tree. 'Tis juſt they ſhould have no Benefit by Chriſt, who think they have no need of him, and that they who reject him ſhould be rejected by him; thoſe that *abide* not in Chriſt ſhall be *abandon'd* by him: They are left to themſelves to fall into a ſcandalous Sin, and then are juſtly caſt out of the Communion of the Faithful.

2. They are *wither'd* as a Branch broken off from the Tree. They that *abide not in Chriſt*, tho' they may flouriſh a while in a *plauſible*, at leaſt a *paſſable* Profeſſion, yet in a little Time they wither and come to nothing. Their Parts and Gifts wither, their Zeal and Devotion wither, their Credit and Reputation wither, their Hopes and Comforts wither, *Job* 8. 11, 12, 13. *Note*, They that bear no Fruit, after a while will bear no Leaves. *How ſoon is that Fig-tree withered away* which Chriſt has *curſed*.

3. *Men gather them*. Satan's Agents and Emiſſaries pick them up, and make an eaſy Prey of them. They that fall off from Chriſt, preſently fall in with Sinners; and the Sheep that wander from Chriſt's Fold, the Devil ſtands ready to ſeize them for himſelf, When the Spirit of the Lord was departed from *Saul*, an evil Spirit poſſeſſed him.

4. They *caſt them into the Fire*, i. e. they are caſt into the Fire; and they who ſeduce them, and draw them to Sin, do in effect caſt them there, for they make them *Children of Hell*. Fire is the fitteſt Place for wither'd Branches, for they are good for nothing elſe, *Ezek.* 15. 2.

5. They *are burn'd*, that follows of courſe; but it is here added very emphatically, and makes the threatning very terrible; they will not be conſum'd in a Moment like Thorns under a Pot, *Eccl.* 7. 6. but καίεται, they are *burning for ever* in a Fire which not only cannot be quench'd, but will never *ſpend it ſelf*. This comes of quitting Chriſt, this the end of the barren Trees. Apoſtates are *twice dead*, Jude 12. and when it is ſaid they are *caſt into the Fire and are burn'd*, it ſpeaks as if they were *twice damn'd*. Some apply Men's *gathering* them to the Miniſtry of the Angels in the great Day, when they ſhall gather out of Chriſt's Kingdom all Things that offend, and ſhall *bundle the Tares for the Fire*.

4. The bleſſed Privilege which they have that abide in Chriſt; *Ver* 7. *If my Words abide in you, ye ſhall ask what ye will* of my Father in my Name, and *it ſhall be done*.

See here, 1. How our *Union with Chriſt* is maintain'd, *by the Word*. *If ye abide in me*: He had ſaid before, and *I in you*; here he explains himſelf, *and my Words abide in you*, for it is in the *Word*, that Chriſt is ſet up before us, and offer'd to us, *Rom.* 10 6, 7, 8. 'tis in the Word that we receive and embrace him; and ſo where the Word of Chriſt *dwells richly*, there Chriſt dwells. If the Word be our conſtant Guide and Monitor, if it be in us as *at home*, then we abide in Chriſt, and he in us.

2. How our *Communion with Chriſt* is maintain'd, *by Prayer*; ye ſhall *ask what ye will*, and *it ſhall be done unto you*. And what can we deſire more, than to have what we will for the as king? *Note*, They that abide in Chriſt as their Hearts Delight, ſhall have through Chriſt their Hearts Deſire. If we have Chriſt, we ſhall want nothing that is good for us. Two Things are imply'd in this Promiſe. (1.) That if we abide in Chriſt, and his Word in us, we will not *ask any Thing* but what is proper to be *done for us*. The *Promiſe* abiding in us lye ready to be turn'd into *Prayers*, and the Prayers ſo regulated cannot but ſpeed. (2.) That if we abide in Chriſt and his Word, we ſhall have ſuch an Intereſt in God's Favour, and Chriſt's Mediation, that we ſhall have an Anſwer of Peace to all our Prayers.

9 As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Fathers commandments, and abide in his love. 11 Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full. 12 This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. 14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not ſervants; for the ſervant knoweth not what his lord doth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. 16 Ye have not choſen me, but I have choſen you, and ordained you, that you ſhould go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit ſhould remain: that whatſoever ye ſhall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you. 17 Theſe things I command you, that ye love one another.

Chriſt who is *Love* it ſelf, is here diſcourſing concerning *Love*; a fourfold Love.

Firſt, Concerning *the Father's Love to him*. And concerning this he here tells us,

1. That the Father did love him, *v.* 9. *As the Father hath loved me*. He loved him as Mediator; *This is my beloved Son*. He was the *Son of his Love*. He loved him, and gave all Things into his Hand, and yet ſo loved the World as to deliver him up for us all. When Chriſt was entering upon *his* Sufferings, he comforted himſelf with this, that his Father *loved him*. Thoſe whom God loves as a Father, may deſpiſe the Hatred of all the World.

2. That he *abode in his Father's Love*, v. 11. He continually lov'd his Father, and was beloved of him. Even then, when he was made *Sin*, and a *Curſe* for us, and it *pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him*

yet he abode in his Father's Love, ſee *Pſal.* 89. 33. Becauſe he continu'd to love his Father, he went chearfully thro' his Sufferings, and therefore his Father continu'd to love him.

3. That therefore *he abode* in his Father's *Love*, becauſe he *kept* his Father's *Law*. *I have kept my Father's Commandments* as Mediator, and ſo *abide in his Love.* Hereby he ſhew'd that he continu'd to love his Father, that he *went on*, and *went through* with his Undertaking, and therefore the Father continu'd to love him. His Soul *delighted in him*, becauſe he *did not fail, nor was diſcouraged*, Iſa. 42. 1, 4. We having broken the Law of Creation, and thereby thrown our ſelves out of the Love of God, Chriſt ſatisfy'd for us by obeying the Law of Redemption, and ſo he abode in his Love, and reſtor'd us to it.

Secondly, Concerning *his own Love* to his Diſciples. Tho' he *leaves* them he *loves them*; and obſerve here,

1. The *Pattern* of this Love. *As the Father has loved me, ſo have I loved you.* A ſtrange Expreſſion of the condeſcending Grace of Chriſt; as the Father lov'd him, who was moſt worthy, he lov'd them who were moſt unworthy. The Father lov'd him as his Son, and he loves them as his Children. The Father *gave all things into his Hand:* ſo with himſelf he *freely giveth us all Things.* The Father *loved him* as Mediator, as Head of the Church, and the great *Truſtee* of Divine *Grace* and *Favour*, which he had not for himſelf only, but for the Benefit of thoſe for whom he was *intruſted*; and (ſaith he) I have been a *faithful* Truſtee. As the Father has *committed* his Love to me, ſo I *tranſmit* it to you. Therefore the Father was *well pleas'd* with him, that he might be well pleas'd with us *in him*; and loved him, that in him as *beloved*, he might *make us accepted*, Eph. 1. 6.

2. The *Proofs* and *Products* of this Love; which are Four.

1. Chriſt *lov'd* his Diſciples, for he *laid down his Life* for them, *v.* 13. *Greater* Proof of *Love hath no Man* to ſhew *than this*, to *lay down his Life for his Friend.* And this is the Love wherewith Chriſt hath loved us, he is our Ἀντίψυχος, Bail for us, Body for Body, Life for Life, tho' he knew our Inſolvency, and foreſaw how dear the Engagement would coſt him. Obſerve here,

(1.) The *Extent* of the Love of the *Children of Men* to one another; the higheſt Proof of it, is, *laying down one's Life* for a Friend to ſave his Life; and perhaps there have been ſome ſuch Heroick Atchievements of Love, more than *plucking out one's own Eyes*, Gal. 4. 15. If *all that a Man has he will give for his Life*, he that gives that for his Friend gives all, and can give no more; this may ſometimes be our Duty, 1 *John* 3. 16. *Paul* was ambitious of the Honour, *Phil.* 2. 17. and *for a good Man, ſome will even dare to die*, Rom. 5. 7, 'Tis Love in the higheſt Degree, which is *ſtrong as Death.*

(2.) The *Excellency* of the Love of *Chriſt* beyond all other Love; he has not only equall'd, but exceeded the moſt illuſtrious Lovers. Others have *laid down* their Lives, content they ſhould be taken from them, but Chriſt *gave up his*; was not merely paſſive, but made it his own Act and Deed. The Life which others have laid down, has been but of *equal Value* with the Life for which it was laid down, and perhaps *leſs valuable*; but Chriſt is infinitely more worth, *than ten thouſand of us.* Others have thus laid down their Lives for their Friends, but Chriſt laid down his for us *when we were Enemies*, Rom. 5. 8. *Pluſquam ferrea aut lapideo corda eſſe oportet, quæ non emolliet tam incomparabilis Divini Amoris ſuavitas.* Calvin.

2. Chriſt lov'd his Diſciples, for he took them into a Covenant of Friendſhip with himſelf, *v.* 14, 15. If ye approve your ſelves by your Obedience my *Diſciples indeed, ye are my Friends*, and ſhall be treated as *Friends. Note*, The *Followers* of Chriſt are the *Friends* of Chriſt, and he is graciouſly pleas'd to call and count them ſo. They that do the *Duty of his Servants*, are admitted and advanc'd to the Dignity of his Friends; *David* had *one* Servant in *his Court*, and *Solomon* one in his, that was in a particular manner the *King's Friend*, 2 Sam. 15. 37. 1 Kings 4. 5. But this Honour have all Chriſt's Servants. We may in ſome particular Inſtances befriend a Stranger, but we eſpouſe *all* the Intereſts of *a Friend*, and concern our ſelves in *all* his Cares; thus Chriſt takes Believers to be his Friends, he viſits them, and converſeth with them as his Friends, bears with them, and makes the beſt of them, is *afflicted in their Afflictions*, and *takes Pleaſure in their Proſperity.* He pleads for them in Heaven, and takes Care of all their Intereſts there. Have Friends but *one Soul?* he that is join'd to the Lord is *one Spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. Tho' they often ſhew themſelves *unfriendly*, he is a Friend that *loves at all times.*

Obſerve how *endearingly* this is expreſs'd here, (1.) He will not *call them Servants*, tho' they *call'd him Maſter, and Lord.* They that would be like Chriſt in Humility, muſt not take a Pride in inſiſting upon all Occaſions on their Authority, and Superiority, but remember that their Servants are their Fellow-Servants. But, (2.) He will call them his Friends; he will not only love them, but will let them know it, for in his Tongue is the Law of Kindneſs. After his Reſurrection, he ſeems to ſpeak with more affectionate Tenderneſs of, and to, his Diſciples than before; *Go to my Brethren*, John 20. 17. *Children have ye any Meat?* John 21. 5. But obſerve, tho' Chriſt call'd them *his Friends*, they call'd themſelves *his Servants*; *Peter a Servant* of Chriſt, 2 *Peter* 1. 1. and ſo *James*, chap. 1. 1. The more Honour Chriſt puts upon us, the more Honour we ſhould ſtudy to do him; tho' higher in *his* Eyes, the lower in *our own.*

3. Chriſt loved his Diſciples, for he was very *free* in *communicating* his Mind to them, *v.* 15. *Henceforth*, you ſhall not be kept ſo much in the dark as you have been, like *Servants*, that are only told their preſent Work, but when the Spirit is pour'd out, you ſhall know your Maſter's Deſigns, as *Friends. All Things that I have heard of my Father, I have declared unto you.* As to the ſecret Will of God, there are many things which we muſt be content not to know; but as to the reveal'd Will of God, Jeſus Chriſt has faithfully *handed* to us what he *receiv'd* of the Father, *John* 1. 18. *Mat.* 11. 27. The great Things relating to Man's Redemption, Chriſt declared to his Diſciples, that they might declare them to others; they were the Men of his Counſel, *Mat.* 13. 11.

4. Chriſt loved his Diſciples, for he *choſe* and *ordained* them to be the prime Inſtruments of his Glory and Honour in the World, *v.* 16. *I have choſen you*, and *ordain'd you.* His Love to them appear'd,

1. In their *Election*; their Election to the Apoſtleſhip, *John* 6. 70. *I have choſen you twelve.* It did not begin on their ſide, *ye have not choſen me*, but I firſt *choſe you.* Why were they admitted to ſuch Intimacy with him, employ'd in ſuch an Embaſſy for him, and endued with ſuch Power from on high? 'Twas not owing to their Wiſdom and Goodneſs in chuſing him for their Maſter, but to his Favour and Grace in chuſing them for his Diſciples. 'Tis fit Chriſt ſhould have the chuſing of his own Miniſters, ſtill he doth it by his Providence and Spirit. Tho' Miniſters make that holy Calling their own Choice, Chriſt's Choice is prior to theirs, and directs and determines it. Of all that are choſen to Grace and Glory, it may be ſaid, they have *not choſen* Chriſt, but he has *choſen them*, Deut. 7. 7, 8.

2. In their *Ordination. I have ordained you*, ἔθηκα ὑμᾶς, I have *put you* into the Miniſtry, 1 *Tim.* 1. 12. *put you* into Commiſſion. By this it appear'd he took them for his Friends, that he crown'd their Heads with ſuch an Honour, and fill'd their Hands with ſuch a Truſt. 'Twas a mighty Confidence he *repos'd* in them, when he made them his Embaſſadors to negotiate the Affairs of his Kingdom in this lower World, and the prime Miniſters of State in the Adminiſtration of it.

The Treaſure of the Goſpel was committed to them.

(1.) That it might be *propagated*; that you *ſhould go*, ἵνα ὑμεῖς πάγητε, that you ſhould go as *under* a Yoke or Burthen, for the Miniſtry is a Work, and you that go about it, muſt reſolve to *undergo* a great deal. *That you may go* from Place to Place all the World over, and *bring forth Fruit.* They were ordain'd not to *ſit ſtill*, but to *go about*, to be diligent in their Work, and to ſtay out themſelves unweariedly in doing good. They were ordain'd not to beat the Air, but to be *inſtrumental* in God's Hand, for the bringing of the Nations into Obedience to Chriſt, *Rom.* 1. 13. *Note*, Thoſe whom Chriſt ordains, ſhould, and ſhall be fruitful; ſhould labour, and ſhall not labour in vain.

(2.) That it might be *perpetuated*; that *the Fruit ſhould remain*, i. e. that the good Effect of the Labours may continue in the World *from Generation to Generation*, to the End of Time. The Church of Chriſt was not to be a ſhort liv'd thing, as many of the Sects of the Philoſophers, that were a nine Days Wonder; it did not *come up in a Night*, nor ſhould it *periſh in a Night*, but be as the Days of Heaven. The Sermons and Writings of the Apoſtles are tranſmitted down to us, and we at this Day are built upon that Foundation, ever ſince the Chriſtian Church was firſt founded by the Miniſtry of the Apoſtles and ſeventy Diſciples, as one Generation of Miniſters and Chriſtians have paſs'd away, ſtill another has come. By Vertue of that great Charter, *Mat.* 28. 19. Chriſt has a Church in the World; which as our Lawyers ſay of Bodies corporate, doth *not die*, but lives in a Succeſſion, and thus *their Fruit remains* to this Day, and ſhall do while the Earth remains.

Laſtly, His love to them appear'd in the Intereſt they had at the Throne of Grace; *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask of the Father in my Name, he will give it you.* Probably this refers in the firſt Place to the Power of working Miracles, which the Apoſtles were cloth'd with, which was to be drawn out by Prayer. Whatever Gifts are neceſſary to the Furtherance of your Labours, whatever Help from Heaven you have Occaſion for at any time, 'tis but *ask* and *have.* Three Things are here hinted to us for our Encouragement in Prayer, and very encouraging they are. (1.) That we have a God to go to, who is *a Father*; Chriſt here calls him *the Father*, both mine and yours; and the Spirit in the Word and in the Heart teacheth us to cry, *Abba Father.* (2.) That we come in a *good Name.* Whatever Errand we come upon to the Throne of Grace, according to God's Will, we may with a humble Boldneſs mention Chriſt's Name in it, and plead that we are related to him, and he is concern'd for us. (3.) That an Anſwer of Peace is promis'd us. What you come for ſhall be given you. This great Promiſe made to that great Duty, keeps up a comfortable and gainful Intercourſe between Heaven and Earth.

Thirdly, Concerning the Diſciples Love to Chriſt enjoyn'd, in Conſideration of the great Love wherewith he had loved them, Three Things he exhorts them to.

1. To *continue in his Love*, v. 9. continue in your Love to me, and in mine to you. Both may be taken in. We muſt place our Happineſs in the Continuance of Chriſt's Love to us, and make it our Buſineſs to give continued Proofs of our Love to Chriſt, that nothing may *tempt us* to withdraw from *him*, or *provoke him* to withdraw from *us. Note*, All that love Chriſt ſhould continue in their Love to him; that is, be *always* loving him, and taking all Occaſions to ſhew it; and love him to the End. The Diſciples were to go out upon Service for Chriſt, in which they would meet with many Troubles; but ſaith Chriſt, *Continue in my*

Love. Keep up your Love to me, and then all the Troubles you meet with will be eaſy: Love made ſeven Years hard Service eaſy to *Jacob.* Let not the Troubles you meet with for Chriſt's Sake, *quench* your Love to Chriſt, but *quicken* it rather.

2. To let his Joy *remain* in them, and *fill them*, v. 11. This he deſign'd in thoſe Precepts and Promiſes given them,

(1.) That *his Joy might remain in them.* The Words are ſo plac'd in the Original, as that they may be read, either,

1. That *my Joy in you may remain.* If they bring forth much Fruit, and continue in his Love, he will continue to *rejoyce in them*, as he had done. *Note*, fruitful and faithful Diſciples are the Joy of the Lord Jeſus; he *reſts in his Love* to them, *Zeph.* 3. 17. As there is a Tranſport of Joy in Heaven in the Converſion of Sinners, ſo there is a remaining Joy in the Perſeverance of Saints.

2. Or, that *my Joy*, i. e. your Joy in me *may remain.* It is the Will of Chriſt that his Diſciples ſhould conſtantly and continually rejoyce in him, *Phil.* 4. 4. The Joy of the Hypocrite is but for a Moment, but the Joy of thoſe who abide in Chriſt's Love is a *continual Feaſt.* The Word of the Lord enduring for ever, the Joys that *flow* from it, and are *founded* on it, do ſo too.

(2.) That *their Joy might be full.* Not only that you might be full of Joy, but that your Joy in me and in my Love may riſe higher and higher, till it come to Perfection, when you *enter into the Joy of your Lord.* *Note*, 1. They, and they only, that have Chriſt's Joy remaining in them, have their *Joy full*; worldly Joys are empty, ſoon ſurfeit, but never ſatisfy, 'tis only Wiſdom's Joy that will fill the Soul, *Pſal.* 36. 8. 2. The Deſign of Chriſt in his Word is to *fill the Joy* of his People; ſee 1 *John* 1. 4. This and t'other he hath ſaid that our Joy might be fuller and fuller, and perfect at laſt.

3. To evidence their Love to him, by *keeping his Commandments*, v. 10. *If ye keep my Commandments, ye ſhall abide in my Love.* That will be an Evidence of the Fidelity and Conſtancy of your Love to me, and then you may be ſure of the Continuance of my Love to you. Obſerve here, (1.) The Promiſe, ye ſhall *abide in my Love*, as in a *dwelling* Place *at home* in Chriſt's Love; as in a *reſting* Place, at Eaſe in Chriſt's Love; as in a ſtrong Hold, ſafe in it: you ſhall *abide in my Love*, i. e. you ſhall have Grace and Strength to perſevere in loving me. If the ſame Hand that firſt ſhed abroad the Love of Chriſt in our Hearts did not keep us in that Love, we ſhould not long abide in it, but through the Love of the World ſhould go *out of Love* with Chriſt himſelf. (2.) The Condition of the Promiſe; *If ye keep my Commandments*; the Diſciples were to keep Chriſt's Commandments; not only by a conſtant Conformity to them themſelves, but by a faithful Delivery of them to others; they were to keep them as Truſtees, in whoſe Hands that great *Depoſitum* was lodg'd, for they were to *teach* all *things that Chriſt had commanded*, Mat. 28. 20. *This Commandment* they muſt *keep without Spot*, 1 Tim. 6. 14. and thus they muſt ſhew that they *abide in his Love.*

To induce them to keep his Commandments, he urgeth,

(1.) His own Example; *As I have kept my Father's Commandments*, and *abide in his Love.* Chriſt ſubmitted to the Law of Mediation, and ſo preſerv'd the Honour and Comfort of it, to teach us to ſubmit to the Laws of the Mediator, for we cannot otherwiſe preſerve the Honour and Comfort of our Relation to him.

(2.) The Neceſſity of it to their Intereſt in him, *v.* 14. *Ye are my Friends, if you do whatſoever I command you*, and not otherwiſe. *Note*, 1. Theſe only will be accounted Chriſt's faithful Friends, that approve themſelves his obedient Servants, for they that will not have him to reign over them, ſhall be treated as his Enemies; *Idem velle & idem nolle ea demum vera eſt amicitia.* Saluſt. 2. It is univerſal Obedience to Chriſt, that is the only acceptable Obedience; to obey him in *every thing* that he commands us, not *excepting*, much leſs *excepting againſt* any Command.

Fourthly, Concerning the *Diſciples Love one to another*, enjoin'd as an Evidence of their Love to Chriſt, and a grateful Return for his Love to them. We muſt keep his Commandments, and this is his Commandment, that we *love one another*, v. 12. and again, *v.* 17. No one Duty of Religion is more frequently inculcated, or more pathetically urg'd upon us by our Lord Jeſus, than that of *mutual Love*, and for good Reaſon.

1. It is here recommended by Chriſt's *Pattern*, v. 12. *As I have loved you.* Chriſt's Love to us ſhould direct and engage our Love to each other; in that *Manner*, and from that *Motive*, we ſhould love one another, *as* and *becauſe* Chriſt has loved us. He here inſtances in ſome of the Expreſſions of his Love to them, he call'd them Friends, communicated his Mind to them, was ready to give them what they ask'd, *Go ye and do likewiſe.*

2. It is requir'd by his *Precept.* He interpoſeth his Authority, has made it one of the Statute Laws of his Kingdom. Obſerve how differently 'tis expreſs'd in theſe two Verſes, and both very emphatical.

1. *This is my Commandment*, v. 12. as if this were the moſt neceſſary of all the Commandments. As under the Law the Prohibition of Idolatry was the Commandment more inſiſted on than any other, foreſeeing the People's Addictedneſs to that Sin, ſo Chriſt foreſeeing the Addictedneſs of the Chriſtian Church to Uncharitableneſs, has laid moſt Streſs upon this Precept.

2. *Theſe Things I command you*, v. 17. He ſpeaks as if he were about to give them many things in Charge, and yet names this only, *that ye love one another*; not only becauſe this includes *many* Duties, but becauſe it will have a good Influence upon *all.*

18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it *hated* you. 19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but becauſe ye are not of the world, but I have choſen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. 20 Remember the word that I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater than the lord. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you: if they have kept my ſaying, they will keep yours alſo. 21 But all theſe things will they do unto you for my names ſake, becauſe they know not him that ſent me. 22 If I had not come, and ſpoken unto them, they had not had ſin: but now they have no cloke for their ſin. 23 He that hateth me, hateth my Father alſo. 24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had ſin: but now they have both ſeen, and hated both me and my Father. 25 But *this cometh to paſs*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, they hated me without a cauſe.

Here Chriſt diſcourſeth concerning *Hatred*, which is the Character and Genius of the Devil's Kingdom, as Love is of the Kingdom of Chriſt. Obſerve here,

1. Who they are in whom this Hatred is found, in *the World*; the Children of this World, as diſtinguiſh'd from the Children of God; that are in the Intereſts of the God of this World, whoſe Image they bear, and whoſe Power they are ſubject to. All thoſe, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that would not come into the Church of Chriſt, which he *audibly* call'd, and *viſibly* ſeparates from this evil World. The Calling of theſe *the World* ſpeaks (1.) Their *Number*, there were a World of People that oppos'd Chriſt and Chriſtianity, Lord, how were they increaſed that troubled the Son of *David*? I fear if we ſhould put it to the Vote, between Chriſt and Satan, Satan would *out-poll* us quite. (2.) It ſpeaks their Confederacy and Combination; theſe numerous Hoſts are *embody'd*, and are as one, *Pſal.* 83. 7. *Jews* and *Gentiles* that could agree in nothing elſe, agreed to perſecute Chriſt's Miniſters. (3.) It ſpeaks their Spirit and Diſpoſition; they are *Men of the World*, Pſal. 17. 13, 14. wholly devoted to this World, and the Things of it, and never thinking of another World. The People of God, tho' they are taught to hate the *Sins* of Sinners, yet not their *Perſons*, but to love and do good to all Men. A malicious, ſpiteful, envious Spirit, is not the Spirit of Chriſt, but of the World.

2. Who they are againſt whom this Hatred is levell'd; againſt the Diſciples of Chriſt, againſt Chriſt himſelf, and againſt the Father.

Firſt, The World hates the *Diſciples of Chriſt.* The World *hateth you*, v. 19. and he ſpeaks of it as that which they muſt expect and count upon, *v.* 18. as 1 *John* 3. 13. Obſerve how this comes in here, (1.) Chriſt had expreſs'd the great Kindneſs he had for them as Friends, but leſt they ſhould be puffed up with this, there was given them as there was to *Paul*, a *Thorn in the Fleſh*, that is, as 'tis explain'd there, Reproaches and Perſecutions for Chriſt's Sake, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7. 10. (2.) He had appointed them their Work, but tells them what Hardſhips they ſhould meet with in it, that it might not be a Surprize to them, and that they might prepare accordingly. (3.) He had charg'd them to *love one another*, and need enough they had to love one another, for the World would hate them; to be kind to one another, for they would have a great deal of Unkindneſs and ill Will from thoſe that were without. Keep Peace among your ſelves, and that will fortify you againſt the World's Quarrels with you. They that are in the midſt of Enemies, are concern'd to hold together. See,

1. The World's *Enmity* againſt the Followers of Chriſt; it *hateth them.* *Note*, Whom Chriſt bleſſeth, the World curſeth. The Favourites and Heirs of Heaven have never been the Darlings of this World, ſince the old Enmity was put between the Seed of the Woman and of the Serpent. Why did *Cain* hate *Abel*, but *becauſe his Works were righteous?* *Eſau* hated *Jacob*, becauſe of *the Bleſſing*; *Joſeph*'s Brethren hated him, becauſe his Father *lov'd him*; *Saul* hated *David*, becauſe *the Lord was with him.* *Ahab* hated *Micajah*, becauſe of his Propheſies; ſuch are the cauſeleſs Cauſes of the World's Hatred.

2. The *Fruits* of that Enmity. Two of which we have here, *v.* 20. (1.) They will *perſecute you*, becauſe they *hate you*, for Hatred is a reſtleſs Paſſion. It is the common Lot of thoſe who will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, to *ſuffer Perſecution*, 2 Tim. 3. 12. Chriſt foreſaw what ill Uſage his Embaſſadors would meet with in the World, and yet for the Sake of thoſe few, that, by their Miniſtry, were to be call'd out of the World, he ſent them forth as Sheep in the midſt of Wolves. (2.) Another Fruit of their Enmity is implied, that they would reject their Doctrine, when Chriſt ſaith, *If they have kept my Saying, they will keep yours*, he means they will keep yours, and regard yours no more than they have regarded and kept mine. *Note*, The Preachers of the Goſpel cannot but take the deſpiſing of their Meſſage to be the greateſt Injury that can be done to themſelves; as it was a great Affront

to *Jeremiah*, to ſay, *Let us not give heed to any of his Words*, Jer. 18. 18.

3. The Cauſes of that Enmity. The World will hate them,

1. Becauſe they do not belong to it, *v.* 19. *If you were of the World*, of its Spirit, and in its Intereſts, if you were carnal and worldly, *the World would love you* as its own; but becauſe you are called out of the World, *it hates you*, and ever will. *Note*, (1.) We are not to wonder if thoſe that are devoted to the World are careſs'd by it, as its Friends; moſt Men *bleſs the covetous.* Pſal. 10. 3. and 42. 18. (2.) Nor are we to wonder, if thoſe that are deliver'd from the World are maligned by it as its Enemies; when *Iſrael* is reſcued out of *Egypt*, the *Egyptians* will purſue them. Obſerve, The Reaſon why Chriſt's Diſciples are not of the World, is not becauſe they have by their own Wiſdom and Virtue diſtinguiſh'd themſelves from the World, but becauſe Chriſt hath choſen them out of it to ſet them apart for himſelf; and this is the Reaſon why the World *hates them*; for, 1. The *Glory*, which by Vertue of this Choice they are *deſign'd for*, ſets them *above* the World, and ſo makes them the Objects of its Envy. The Saints ſhall judge the World, and the Upright have *Dominion*, and therefore they are hated. 2. The *Grace*, which by Vertue of this Choice they are endued with, ſets them *againſt* the World; they ſwim *againſt* the Stream of the World, and are not conformed to it; they *witneſs* againſt it, and are not *conformed* to it. This would ſupport them under all the Calamities, which the World's Hatred would bring upon them, that *therefore* they were hated, becauſe they were the Choice and choſen Ones of the Lord Jeſus, and were not of the World. Now, (1.) This was no *juſt Cauſe* for the World's *Hatred* of them; if we do any thing to make our ſelves *hateful*, we have Reaſon to lament it, but if Men hate us for that for which they ſhould love and value us, we have Reaſon to *pity* them, but no Reaſon to perplex our ſelves. Nay, (2.) This was *juſt Cauſe* for their own *Joy*. He that is hated becauſe he is *rich* and *proſpers*, cares not who has the Vexation of it, while he has the Satisfaction of it; *Populus me ſibilat, at mihi plaudo ipſe domi* Timon in Hor. Much more may they hug themſelves whom the World hates, but Chriſt loves.

1. Another Cauſe of the World's hating you will be, becauſe they do belong to Chriſt, *v.* 21. *for my Name's ſake.* Here's the Core of the Controverſy; whatever is pretended, this is the Ground of the Quarrel, they hate Chriſt's Diſciples, becauſe they *bear his Name*, and *bear up his Name* in the World. *Note*, 1. It is the Character of Chriſt's Diſciples, that they ſtand for his Name. The Name into which they were *baptiz'd*, is that which they will live and die by. 2. It has commonly been the Lot of thoſe that appear for Chriſt's Name to ſuffer for ſo doing; to ſuffer *many things*, and *hard things*, *all theſe things.* It is Matter of Comfort to the greateſt Sufferers, if they ſuffer *for Chriſt's Name ſake.* If ye be reproach'd for the Name of Chriſt, *happy are ye*, 1 Pet. 4. 14. happy indeed, conſidering not only the *Honour* that is *imprinted* upon thoſe Sufferings, *Acts* 4. 41. but the *Comfort* that is *infus'd* into them; and eſpecially the Crown of Glory which thoſe Sufferings lead to. If we *ſuffer with Chriſt*, and for Chriſt, *we ſhall reign with him.*

3. After all 'tis the World's *Ignorance* that is the true Cauſe of its Enmity to the Diſciples of Chriſt, *v.* 19. *Becauſe they know not him that ſent me.* (1.) They know not God. If Men had but a due Acquaintance with the very firſt Principles of Natural Religion, and did but know God, tho' they *would not* embrace Chriſtianity, yet they could not hate and perſecute it. Thoſe have no Knowledge who eat up God's People, *Pſal.* 14. 4. (2.) They know not God, as *he that ſent* our Lord Jeſus, and authoriz'd him to be the great Mediator of the Peace. We do not rightly know God, if we do not know him *in Chriſt*; and they who perſecute thoſe whom he ſends, make it to appear they know not that he was ſent of God. See 1 Cor. 2. 8.

Secondly, The World hates Chriſt himſelf. And this is ſpoken of here for two Ends.

1. To *mitigate* the Trouble of his Followers ariſing from the World's Hatred, and to make it leſs ſtrange, and the leſs grievous, *v.* 18. *Ye know that it hated me before you*, πρῶτον ὑμῶν. We read is as ſignifying Priority of Time; he begun in the bitter Cup of Suffering, and then left us to pledge him; but it may be read as ſpeaking his Superiority over them; *ye know* that it hated me *your Firſt*, i. e. your Chief and Captain, your Leader and Commander. 1. If Chriſt, who excell'd in Goodneſs, and was perfectly *innocent*, and univerſally *benificent*, was hated, can we expect that any Vertue or Merit of ours ſhould ſcreen us from Malice? 2. If our Maſter, the Founder of our Religion, met with ſo much Oppoſition in the *planting* of it, his Servants and Followers can look for no other in *propagating* and *profeſſing* it.

For this he refers them, *v.* 20. to his own Words, at their Admiſſion into Diſcipleſhip, *Remember the Word that I ſaid unto you.* It would help us to underſtand Chriſt's later Sayings, to compare them with his former Sayings. Nor would any thing contribute more to the making of us eaſy, than *remembring the Words* of Chriſt, which will expound his Providence, Now in this Word there is,

1. A plain Truth; *The Servant is no greater than the Lord.* This he had ſaid to them, *Mat.* 10. 24. Chriſt is our Lord, and therefore we muſt diligently *attend* all his Motions, and patiently *acquieſce* in all his Diſpoſals, for the Servant is *inferior* to his Lord. The *plaineſt* Truths are ſometimes the *ſtrongeſt* Arguments for the *hardeſt* Duties; *Elihu* anſwers a Multitude of *Job*'s Murmurings, with this one ſelf-evident Truth, *That God is greater than Man*, Job 33. 12. So here,

2. A proper Inference drawn from it, *If they have perſecuted me*, as you have ſeen, and are likely to ſee much more, *they will alſo perſecute you*; you may expect it, and count upon it, for, (1.) You will do *the ſame* that I have done to *provoke* them, you will reprove them for their Sins, and call them to Repentance, and give them ſtrict Rules of holy Living, which they will not bear. (2.) You cannot do *more* than I have done to *oblige* them; after ſo great an Inſtance, let none wonder if they *ſuffer ill*, for *doing well.* He adds, *If they have kept my Saying, they will keep yours alſo*; as there have been a few, and but a few, that have been wrought upon by my preaching, ſo there will be by yours a few, and but a few. Some give another Senſe of this, making ἐτήρησαν, to be put for παρετήρησαν; if they have *lain in wait* for my Sayings, with a Deſign to enſnare me, they will in like manner lie in wait to entangle you in your Talk.

2. It ſerves to *aggravate* the Wickedneſs of this unbelieving World, and to diſcover its exceeding Sinfulneſs; to hate and perſecute the Apoſtles was bad enough, but in them to hate and perſecute Chriſt himſelf, was much worſe. The World is generally in an ill Name in Scripture, and nothing can put it into a worſe Name than this, that it *hated* Jeſus Chriſt. There is a *World* of People that are Haters of Chriſt.

Two Things he inſiſts upon to aggravate the Wickedneſs of thoſe that hated him.

1. That there was the *greateſt Reaſon* imaginable why they ſhould *love him*; Mens good *Word* and good Works uſe to recommend them: Now as to Chriſt,

(1.) His *Words* were ſuch as merited their Love, *v.* 22. *If I had not ſpoken unto them*, to court their Love, *they had not had Sin*, their Oppoſition had not amounted to a Hatred of me; their Sin had been comparatively *no Sin.* But now I have ſaid ſo much to them to recommend my ſelf to their beſt Affection, they have no *Pretence*, no *Excuſe* for their Sin. Obſerve here,

1. The Advantage which they have that enjoy the Goſpel; Chriſt in it *comes*, and *ſpeaks to them*; he ſpoke in Perſon to the Men of that Generation, and is ſtill ſpeaking to us by our Bibles and Miniſters, and as one that has the moſt unqueſtionable Authority over us, and Affection for us. Every Word of his is pure, carries with it a commanding Majeſty, and yet a condeſcending Tenderneſs, able, one would think, to charm the deafeſt Adder.

2. The Excuſe which they have that enjoy not the Goſpel; *If I had not ſpoken to them*, if they had never heard of Chriſt and Salvation by him, *they had not had Sin.* (1.) Not this *kind of Sin.* They had not been chargeable with a Contempt of Chriſt, if he had not come and made a tender of his Grace to them. As *Sin is not imputed where there is no Law*, ſo Unbelief is not imputed where there is no Goſpel; and where it is imputed, it is thus far the only damning Sin, that being a Sin againſt the Remedy, other Sins would not damn, if the Guilt of *them* were not bound on with *this.* (2.) Not ſuch a *Degree of Sin.* If they had not had the Goſpel among them, their other Sins had not been ſo bad; for the *Times of Ignorance God winked at*, Luke 12. 47, 48.

3. The aggravated Guilt which they lie under, to whom Chriſt has *come and ſpoke in vain*, whom he has call'd and invited in vain, with whom he has reaſon'd and pleaded in vain; they *have no Cloak for their Sin*, they are altogether inexcuſable, and in the Judgment Day will be *ſpeechleſs*, and will not have a Word to ſay for themſelves. *Note*, The clearer and fuller the Diſcoveries are, which are made us of the Grace and Truth of Jeſus Chriſt, the more is ſaid to us that is convincing and endearing, the greater is our Sin if we do not *love him* and *believe in him.* The Word of Chriſt ſtrips Sin of its *Cloak*, that it may *appear Sin.*

(2.) His *Works* were ſuch as merited their Love, as well as his *Words*, v. 24. *If I had not done among them*, in their Country, and before their Eyes, ſuch Works as *no other Man ever did*, they *had not had Sin*; their Unbelief and Enmity had been excuſable, and they might have had ſome Colour to ſay, that his Word was not to be credited, if not otherwiſe confirm'd; but he produc'd ſatisfactory Proofs of his Divine Miſſion, *Works which no other Man did. Note*, 1. As the *Creator* demonſtrates his *Power* and *Godhead* by his Works, *Rom.* 1. 20. ſo doth the *Redeemer.* His Miracles, his Mercies, Works of Wonder, and Works of Grace, prove him ſent of God, and ſent on a *kind* Errand. 2. Chriſt's Works were ſuch as *no Man ever did.* No common Perſon that had not a Commiſſion from Heaven, and God with him, could work Miracles *John* 3. 2. And no Prophet ever wrought ſuch Miracles, ſo many, ſo illuſtrious; *Moſes* and *Elias* wrought Miracles as Servants, by a derived Power; but Chriſt as a Son by his own Power. This was it that amaz'd the People, that *with Authority* he remanded Diſeaſes and Devils, *Mar.* 1. 27. they own'd they never ſaw the like, *Mar.* 2. 17. They were all *good Works*, Works of *Mercy*; and this ſeems eſpecially intended here, for he is upbraiding them with this, that they *hated* him. One that was ſo *univerſally uſeful*, more than ever any Man was, one would think ſhould have been *univerſally belov'd*, and yet even he is hated. 3. The Works of Chriſt enhance the Guilt of Sinners Infidelity and Enmity to him, to the laſt Degree of Wickedneſs and Abſurdity. If *they* had only *heard* his Words, and not *ſeen* his Works; if *we* had only his Sermons upon Record, and not his Miracles, Unbelief might have pleaded want of Proof; but now it has no Excuſe. Nay, the rejecting of Chriſt both by *them* and *us*, has in it the Sin not only of obſtinate Unbelief, but of baſe Ingratitude. *They* ſaw Chriſt to be moſt amiable and ſtudious to do them a Kindneſs, yet they hated him, and ſtudy'd to do him Miſchief. And *we* ſee in his Word that great Love wherewith he loved us, and yet are not wrought upon by it.

2. That there was no Reaſon at all why they ſhould hate him. Some that one Time will ſay and do that which is recommending, yet at another Time will ſay and do that which is provoking and diſobliging; but our Lord Jeſus not only did much to merit Mens Eſteem and good Will, but never did any thing juſtly to incur their Diſpleaſure; this he pleads by quoting a Scripture for it, *v.* 25. *This comes to paſs*, this unreaſonable Hatred of me, and of my Diſciples for my Sake, *that the Word might be fulfill'd which is written in their Law*, (i. e. in the Old Teſtament, which is a Law, and was receiv'd by them as a Law;) *they hated me without a Cauſe*; this *David* ſpeaks of himſelf as a Type of Chriſt, *Pſal.* 35. 19. and 69. 4. *Note*, 1. They that hate Chriſt, hate him without any juſt Cauſe: Enmity to Chriſt is unreaſonable Enmity. We think thoſe deſerve to be hated that are haughty and froward, but Chriſt is meek and lowly, compaſſionate and tender; thoſe alſo that under Colour of Complaiſance are malicious, envious and revengeful, but Chriſt devoted himſelf to the Service of thoſe that *us'd him*, nay, and of thoſe that *abus'd him*; toil'd for others Eaſe, and impoveriſhed himſelf to enrich us. Thoſe we think *hateful* that are *hurtful to Kings and Provinces*, and Diſturbers of the publick Peace; but Chriſt, on the contrary, was the greateſt Bleſſing imaginable to his Country, and yet was *hated.* He *teſtified* indeed that *their Works were evil*, with a Deſign to make them good, but to hate him for that Cauſe, was to hate him without a Cauſe. 2. Herein the Scripture was fulfill'd, and the Antitype anſwer'd the Type. *Saul* and his Courtiers hated *David* without Cauſe, for he had been ſerviceable to him with his Harp, and with his Sword; *Abſalom* and his Party hated him, tho' to him he had been an indulgent Father, and to them a great Benefactor. Thus was the Son of *David* hated, and hunted moſt unjuſtly. They that hated Chriſt, did not deſign therein to fulfil the Scripture, but God in permitting it had that in his Eye; and it confirms our Faith in Chriſt as the *Meſſiah*, that even this was foretold concerning him, and being foretold, was accompliſh'd in him: And we muſt not think it ſtrange or hard, if it have a further Accompliſhment in us. We are apt to juſtify our Complaints of Injuries done us, with this, that they are *cauſeleſs*; whereas the more they are ſo, the more likely they are to the Sufferings of Chriſt, and may be the more eaſily born.

Thirdly, In Chriſt the World hates *God himſelf*; this is twice ſaid here, *v.* 23. *He that hateth me*, tho' he thinks his Hatred goes no further, yet really he *hates my Father alſo.* And again, *v.* 24. They have *ſeen and hated both me and my Father. Note*, 1. There are thoſe that *hate God*, notwithſtanding the Beauty of his Nature, and the Bounty of his Providence; they are enrag'd at his Juſtice, as the Devils that believe it and tremble, are vex'd at his Dominion, and would gladly *break his Bands aſunder.* They who cannot bring themſelves to deny that there *is* a God, and yet wiſh there were none, they ſee and hate him. 2. *Hatred of Chriſt*, will be conſtru'd and adjudg'd *Hatred of God*, for he is in his Perſon his Father's expreſs Image, and in his Office his great Agent and Ambaſſador. God will have all Men to honour the Son, as they honour the Father, and therefore what Entertainment the Son has, that the Father has. Hence it is eaſy to infer, That thoſe who are Enemies to the *Chriſtian Religion*, however they may cry up *Natural Religion*, are really Enemies to *all Religion.* Deiſts are in effect Atheiſts; and they that ridicule the Light of the Goſpel, would if they could, *extinguiſh* even natural Light, and ſhake off all Obligations of *Conſcience* and the *Fear of God.* Let an unbelieving malignant World know that their Enmity to the *Goſpel of* Chriſt, will be look'd upon in the great Day as an Enmity to the *bleſſed God himſelf*; and let all that ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake, according to the Will of God, take comfort from this; if God himſelf be hated *in them*, and ſtruck *at through them*, they need not be either *aſham'd* of their Cauſe, or *afraid* of the Iſſue.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtifie of me. 27 And ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs, becauſe ye have been with me from the beginning.

Chriſt having ſpoken of the great Oppoſition which his Goſpel was likely to meet with in the World, and the Hardſhips that would be put upon the Preachers of it, leſt any ſhould fear that *they* and *it* would be *run down* by that violent Torrent, he here intimates to all thoſe that were well Wiſhers to his Cauſe and Intereſt, what effectual Proviſion was made for the ſupporting it, both by the *principal* Teſtimony of the Spirit, *v.* 26. and the *ſubordinate* Teſtimony of the Apoſtles, *v.* 27. and Teſtimonies are the proper Supports of Truth.

Firſt, It is here promis'd that the bleſſed Spirit ſhall maintain the Cauſe of Chriſt in the World, notwithſtanding the Oppoſition it ſhould meet with. Chriſt, when he was reviled, *committed his injur'd Cauſe* to his Father, and did not loſe by his Silence, for the Comforter came, plead it powerfully, and carried it triumphantly. *When the Comforter*, or Advocate, *is come*, *which proceedeth from the Father*, and *whom I will ſend* to ſupply the Want of my bodily Preſence, he ſhall teſtify of me againſt thoſe that hate me *without Cauſe.*

We have more in this Verſe concerning the Holy Ghoſt, than in any one Verſe beſide in the Bible; and being baptiz'd into his Name, we are concern'd to acquaint our ſelves with him, as far as he is reveal'd.

1. Here's an Account of him in *his Eſſence* or *Subſiſtence* rather. He is *the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father.* Here, (1.) He is ſpoken of as a *diſtinct* Perſon; not a Quality or Property, but a Perſon under the proper Name of a *Spirit*, and proper Title of the *Spirit of Truth*, a Title fitly given him where he is brought in *teſtifying.* (2.) As a *Divine* Perſon that *proceedeth from the Father*, by out-goings that were of old *from everlaſting.* The *Spirit* or *Breath* of Man, call'd the *Breath of Life*, proceedeth from the Man, and by it *modified* he delivers his Mind, by it invigorated he ſometimes *exerts* his Strength to *blow out* what he would extinguiſh, and *blow up* what he would excite: Thus the Bleſſed Spirit is the Emulation of *Divine Light*, and the Energy of *Divine Power.* The Rays of the Sun, by which it diſpenſeth and diffuſeth its Light, Heat, and Influence, *proceed* from the Sun, and yet are one with it. The *Nicene* Creed ſaith, the Spirit *proceedeth from the Father and the Son*, for he is call'd the *Spirit of the Son*, Gal. 4. 6. And the Son is here ſaid to *ſend him.* The *Greek* Church chuſe rather to ſay, *From the Father by the Son.*

2. In *his Miſſion.* (1.) He *will come* in a more plentiful Effuſion of his Gifts, Graces, and Powers, than had ever yet been. Chriſt had been long the ὁ ἐρχόμενος, *He that ſhould come*; now the Bleſſed Spirit is ſo. (2.) *I will ſend him to you from the Father.* He had ſaid, *chap.* 14. 16. *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall ſend you the Comforter*; that ſpeaks the Spirit to be the Fruit of the *Interceſſion* Chriſt makes within the Vail; here he ſaith, *I will ſend him*, that ſpeaks him to be the Fruit of his *Dominion* within the Vail. The Spirit was ſent, (1.) *By Chriſt* as Mediator, now *aſcended on high* to give *Gifts unto Men*, and all Power being given to him. (1.) From *the Father.* Not only from Heaven, my Father's Houſe; the Spirit was given in a *Sound from Heaven*, Acts 2. 2. but according to my Father's Will and Appointment, and with his concurring Power and Authority. (3.) To the Apoſtles, to inſtruct them in their *Preaching*, enable them for *Working*, and carry them through their *Sufferings.* He was given to them and their Succeſſors, both in Chriſtianity and in the Miniſtry; to them and their *Seed*, and their *Seeds Seed*, according to that Promiſe, *Iſa.* 59. 21.

2. In his *Office* and *Operations*; which are two.

1. One implied in the Title given to him, he is the *Comforter*, or *Advocate.* An *Advocate* for Chriſt to maintain his Cauſe againſt the World's Infidelity; a *Comforter* to the Saints againſt the World's Hatred.

2. Another expreſs'd, *He ſhall teſtifie of me.* He is not only an Advocate but a Witneſs for Jeſus Chriſt; he is one of the *Three* that *bear Record in Heaven*, and the firſt of the Three that *bear Witneſs on Earth*, 1 John 5. 7. He inſtructed the Apoſtles, and enable them to work Miracles; he indited the Scriptures, which are the ſtanding Witneſſes that *teſtifie of Chriſt*, John 5. 39. The Power of the Miniſtry is deriv'd from the Spirit, for he *qualifies* Miniſters; and the Power of Chriſtianity too, for he *ſanctifies* Chriſtians, and in both teſtifies of Chriſt.

Secondly, It is here promis'd that the Apoſtles alſo, by the Spirit's Aſſiſtance, ſhould have the Honour of being Chriſt's Witneſſes, *v.* 27. *And ye ſhall alſo bear Witneſs* of me, being competent Witneſſes, for *ye have been with* me from the Beginning of my Miniſtry. Obſerve here,

1. That the Apoſtles were *appointed* to be *Witneſſes for Chriſt* in the World. When he had ſaid the *Spirit ſhall teſtifie*, he adds, and you alſo ſhall *bear Witneſs. Note*, The Spirit's working is not to ſuperſede, but to engage and encourage ours. Tho' the Spirit teſtify, Miniſters alſo muſt bear their Teſtimony, and People attend to it; for the Spirit of Grace witneſſeth and worketh by the Means of Grace. The Apoſtles were the firſt Witneſſes that were call'd in the famous Trial between Chriſt and the Prince of this World, which iſſued in the Ejectment of the Intruder. This ſpeaks. (1.) The *Work* cut out from them; they were to atteſt the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth concerning Chriſt, for the recovering of his juſt Right, and the maintaining of his Crown and Dignity. Tho Chriſt's Diſciples fled when they ſhould have been Witneſſes for him upon his Tryals before the High Prieſt and *Pilate*, yet after the Spirit was pour'd out upon them, they appear'd courageous in Vindication of the Cauſe of Chriſt againſt the Accuſations it was loaded with. The Truth of the Chriſtian Religion was to be proved very much by the Evidence of Matter of Fact, eſpecially Chriſt's Reſurrection, of which the Apoſtles were in a particular manner choſen *Witneſſes*, Acts 10 41. and they bore their Teſtimony accordingly, *Acts* 3. 15. and 5. 32. Chriſt's Miniſters are his Witneſſes. (2.) The *Honour* put upon them hereby, that they ſhould be *Workers together with God.* The *Spirit ſhall teſtify of me*, and you alſo under the Conduct of the Spirit, and in concurrence with the Spirit (who will preſerve you from miſtaking in that which you relate on your own Knowledge, and will inform you of that which you cannot know but by Revelation) *ſhall bear Witneſs.* This might encourage them againſt the hatred and contempt of the World, that Chriſt had *honour'd* them, and would *own* them.

2. That they were qualified to be ſo; *Ye have heard of me from the Beginning.* They not only heard his publick Sermons, but had conſtant private Converſe with him. He *went about* doing good

and while others ſaw his wonderful and merciful Works that he did in their own Town and Country only, they that *went about* with him were Witneſſes of them all. They had likewiſe Opportunity of obſerving the unſpotted Purity of his Converſation, and could witneſs for him that they never ſaw in him, or heard from him any Thing that had the leaſt Tincture of *human Frailty.* *Note,* 1. We have great Reaſon to receive the Records which the Apoſtles gave of Chriſt, for they did not ſpeak by hearſay, but what they had the greateſt Aſſurance of imaginable, 2 *Pet.* 1. 16. 1 *John* 1. 1, 3. 2. Thoſe are beſt able to bear Witneſs for Chriſt, that have themſelves been *with him,* by Faith, Hope, and Love, and by living a Life of Communion with God in him. Miniſters muſt firſt *learn* Chriſt, and then *preach* him. Thoſe ſpeak *beſt* of the Things of God that ſpeak *experimentally.* 'Tis particularly a great Advantage to have been acquainted with Chriſt *from the beginning,* to underſtand all Things from the *very firſt,* Luke 1. 3. To have been with him from the beginning of our Days. An *early* Acquaintance, and *conſtant* Converſe with the Goſpel of Chriſt, will make a Man like a good Houſholder.

CHAP. XVI.

Among other glorious Things God hath ſpoken of himſelf, this is one, I wound, *and* I heal, *Deut.* 32. 39. *Chriſt's Diſcourſe in this Chapter, which continues and concludes his farewel Sermon to his Diſciples doth ſo.* 1. *Here are* wounding *Words in the Notice he gives them of the Troubles that were before them,* v. 1—6. 2. *Here are* healing *Words in the Comforts he adminiſters to them for their Support under thoſe Troubles, which are five,* (1.) *That he would ſend them the Comforter,* v. 7—15. (2.) *That he would viſit them again at his Reſurrection,* v. 16—22. (3.) *That he would ſecure to them an Anſwer of Peace to all their Prayers,* v. 23—27. (4.) *That he was now but returning to his Father,* v. 28—32. (5.) *That whatever Troubles they might meet with in this World, by virtue of his Victory over it, they ſhould be ſure of Peace in him,* v. 33.

THESE things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended. 2. They ſhall put you out of the ſynagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice. 3. And theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me. 4 But theſe things I have told you, that when the time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And theſe things I ſaid not unto you at the beginning, becauſe I was with you. 5 But now I go my way to him that ſent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goeſt thou? 6 But becauſe I have ſaid theſe things unto you, ſorrow hath filled your heart.

Chriſt dealt faithfully with his Diſciples, when he ſent them forth on his Errands, for he *told them the worſt* of it, that they might ſit down and count the Coſt. He had bid them in the Chapter before, to expect the World's *hatred*; now here in theſe Verſes,

Firſt, He gives them a Reaſon why he alarmed them thus with the Expectation of Trouble; *Theſe Things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended,* or *ſcandalized,* v. 1.

1. The Diſciples of Chriſt are apt to be *offended at the Croſs*; and the Offence of the Croſs is a dangerous Temptation even to good Men, either to turn back from the Ways of God, or turn aſide out of them, or drive on heavily in them; to quiet either their Integrity or their Comfort: 'Tis not for nothing that a ſuffering Time is called *an Hour of Temptation.*

2. Our Lord Jeſus, by giving us Notice of Trouble, deſigned to take off the *Terror* of it, that it might not be a *ſurprize* to us. Of all the Adverſaries of our Peace in this World of Troubles, none inſult us more violently, nor put our Troops more into Diſorder, than *Diſappointment* doth; but we can eaſily *welcome* a Gueſt we expect, and being fore-warned are fore-armed. *Præmoniti, præmuniti.*

Secondly, He foretels particularly what they ſhould ſuffer, *v.* 2. *They* that have Power to do it, ſhall *put you out of their Synagogues*; and that's not the worſt, *they ſhall kill you.* *Ecce duo Gladii,* behold *two Swords* drawn againſt the Followers of the Lord Jeſus.

1. The Sword of *Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure*; this is drawn againſt them by the *Jews,* for they were the only Pretenders to Church-Power. They ſhall *caſt you out of their Synagogues,* ἀποσυναγώγους ποιήσουσιν ὑμᾶς, they ſhall make you *Excommunicates.* 1. They ſhall caſt you out of the particular Synagogues ye were Members of. At firſt they *ſcourged* them in their Synagogues as Contemners of the Law, *Mat.* 10. 17. and at length caſt them out as *incorrigible.* 2. They ſhall caſt you out of the Congregation of *Iſrael* in general, the national Church of the *Jews*; ſhall debar you from the Privileges of that, put you into the Condition of an Out-law, *qui caput gerit lupinum*; they will look upon you as *Samaritans,* as heathen Men and Publicans. *Interdico tibi aquâ & igne.* And were it not for the Penalties, Forfeitures, and Incapacities incurred hereby, it would be no Injury to be thus driven out of a Houſe infected and falling. *Note,* It has often been the Lot of Chriſt's Diſciples to be unjuſtly Excommunicated. Many a good Truth has been branded with an *Anathema,* and many a Child of God *delivered to Satan.*

2. The Sword of *Civil Power.* The Time cometh, *The Hour is come,* now Things are likely to be worſe with you than hitherto they have been; when you are expelled as Hereticks, they will *kill you, and think* they do God Service, and others will think ſo too.

1. You ſhall find them *really Cruel,* they will *kill you.* Chriſt's Sheep have been accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter; the twelve Apoſtles (we are told) were all put to Death, except *John.* Chriſt had ſaid, *ch.* 15. 27. ye ſhall *bear Witneſs,* μαρτυρήσετε, ye ſhall be *Martyrs,* ſhall ſeal the Truth with their Blood, their Hearts-Blood.

2. You will find them, *ſeemingly Conſcientious*; they will think they do *God Service*; they will *ſeem* λατρείαν προσφέρειν, to *offer* a good *Sacrifice* to God; as thoſe that caſt out God's Servants of old, and ſaid, *Let the Lord be glorified,* Iſa. 66. 5. *Note,* 1. It is poſſible for thoſe that are real Enemies to God's Service, to pretend a mighty Zeal for it. The Devil's Work has many a Time been done in God's Livery, and one of the moſt miſchievous Enemies Chriſtianity ever had ſits *in the Temple of God.* Nay, 2. 'Tis common to patronize an Enmity to Religion with a Colour of Duty to God, and Service to his Church. God's People have ſuffered the greateſt Hardſhips from *conſcientious Perſecutors*; *Paul* verily thought he *ought to do* what he did *againſt the Name of Jeſus*: This doth not at all leſſen the Sin of the Perſecutors, for Villanies will never be conſecrated by entitling God to them, but it doth greaten the Sufferings of the Perſecuted to die under the Character of being Enemies to God; but there will be Reſurrection of Names as well as of Bodies at the great Day.

Thirdly, He gives them the true Reaſon of the World's Enmity and Rage againſt them. *Ver.* 3. *Theſe Things will they do unto you,* not becauſe you have done them any Harm, but *becauſe they have not known the Father, or me.* Let this comfort you, that none will be your Enemies but the worſt of Men. *Note,* (1.) Many that pretend to know God, are wretchedly ignorant of him. They that pretend to *do him Service,* thought they *knew* him, but it was a wrong Notion they had of him. *Iſrael* tranſgreſſed the Covenant, and yet cried, *My God, we know thee,* Hoſ. 8. 1, 2. (2.) They that are ignorant of Chriſt, cannot have any right Knowledge of God. In vain do Men pretend to know God and Religion, while they ſlight Chriſt and Chriſtianity. (3.) Thoſe are very *ignorant* indeed of God and Chriſt, that think it an *acceptable* Piece of Service to *perſecute* good People. They that know Chriſt, know that he *came not into the World to deſtroy Mens Lives, but to ſave them*; that he rules by the Power of Truth and Love, not of Fire and Sword. Never was ſuch a perſecuting Church, as that which makes *Ignorance the Mother of Devotion.*

Fourthly, He tells them why he gave them Notice of this *now,* and why not *ſooner.*

1. Why he told them of it *now, v.* 4. not to diſcourage them, or add to their preſent Sorrow; nor did he tell them of their Danger, that they might contrive how to avoid it, but that, when *the Time ſhall come,* (and you may be ſure it will come) you may *remember that I told you.* *Note,* When ſuffering Times come, 'twill be of uſe to us to remember what Chriſt has told us of Sufferings. (1.) That our Belief of Chriſt's Foreſight and Faithfulneſs may be confirmed: And, (2.) That the Trouble may be the leſs grievous, for we were told of it before, and we took up our Profeſſion in Expectation of it, ſo that it ought not to be a Surprize to us, nor looked upon as a wrong to us, As Chriſt in *his* Sufferings, ſo his Followers in *theirs,* ſhould have an Eye to the *fulfilling of the Scripture.*

2. Why he did not tell them of it ſooner. *I ſpake not this to you from the beginning,* when you and I came to be firſt acquainted, becauſe *I was with you.* (1.) While he was with them he *bore the Shock* of the World's Malice, and ſtood *in the Front* of the Battle; againſt *him* the Powers of Darkneſs levelled all their Force, not againſt *ſmall or great,* but only againſt the *King of Iſrael,* and therefore he did not need then to ſay ſo much to them of Suffering, becauſe it did not fall much to their Share; but we do find that from the Beginning he bid them prepare for Sufferings, and therefore, (2.) It ſeems rather to be meant of the Promiſe of *another Comforter.* This he had ſaid little of them *at the Beginning,* becauſe he was himſelf *with them* to inſtruct, guide and comfort them, and then they needed not the Promiſe of the Spirit's extraordinary Preſence. The Children of the Bride-chamber would not have ſo much need of a Comforter till the Bridegroom ſhould be *taken away.*

Fifthly, He expreſſeth a very affectionate Concern for the preſent Sadneſs of his Diſciples, upon Occaſion of what he had ſaid to them, *v.* 5, 6. *Now* I am to be no longer with you, but *go my way to him that ſent me,* to repoſe there after this Fatigue, and *none of you asketh me* with any Courage, *Whether goeſt thou?* But inſtead of enquiring after that which would comfort you, you pore upon that which looks melancholy, and *Sorrow has filled your Heart,* (1.) He had told them, that he was about to leave them, *now I go my way.* He was not *driven away* by Force, but voluntarily departed; his Life was not extorted *from him,* but depoſited *by him.* He went to him that ſent him, to give an Account of his Negotiation. Thus when *we* depart *out* of this World, we go to him that ſee in his Word that great Love wherewith he loved us, and yet are not wrought upon by it.

2. That there was no Reaſon at all why they ſhould hate him. Some that one Time will ſay and do that which is recommending, yet at another Time will ſay and do that which is provoking and diſobliging; but our Lord Jeſus not only did much to merit Mens Eſteem and good Will, but never did any thing juſtly to incur their Diſpleaſure; this he pleads by quoting a Scripture for it, *v.* 25. *This comes to paſs*, this unreaſonable Hatred of me, and of my Diſciples for my Sake, *that the Word might be fulfill'd which is written in their Law*, (i. e. in the Old Teſtament, which is a Law, and was receiv'd by them as a Law;) *they hated me without a Cauſe*; this *David* ſpeaks of himſelf as a Type of Chriſt, *Pſal.* 35. 19. and 69. 4. *Note*, 1. They that hate Chriſt, hate him without any juſt Cauſe: Enmity to Chriſt is unreaſonable Enmity. We think thoſe deſerve to be hated that are haughty and froward, but Chriſt is meek and lowly, compaſſionate and tender; thoſe alſo that under Colour of Complaiſance are malicious, envious and revengeful, but Chriſt devoted himſelf to the Service of thoſe that *us'd him*, nay, and of thoſe that *abus'd him*; toil'd for others Eaſe, and impoveriſhed himſelf to enrich us. Thoſe we think *hateful* that are *hurtful to Kings and Provinces*, and Diſturbers of the publick Peace; but Chriſt, on the contrary, was the greateſt Bleſſing imaginable to his Country, and yet was *hated*. He *teſtified* indeed that *their Works were evil*, with a Deſign to make them good, but to hate him for that Cauſe, was to hate him without a Cauſe. 2. Herein the Scripture was fulfill'd, and the Antitype anſwer'd the Type. *Saul* and his Courtiers hated *David* without Cauſe, for he had been ſerviceable to him with his Harp, and with his Sword; *Abſalom* and his Party hated him, tho' to him he had been an indulgent Father, and to them a great Benefactor. Thus was the Son of *David* hated, and hunted moſt unjuſtly. They that hated Chriſt, did not deſign therein to fulfil the Scripture, but God in permitting it had that in his Eye; and it confirms our Faith in Chriſt as the *Meſſiah*, that even this was foretold concerning him, and being foretold, was accompliſh'd in him: And we muſt not think it ſtrange or hard, if it have a further Accompliſhment in us. We are apt to juſtify our Complaints of Injuries done us, with this, that they are *cauſeleſs*; whereas the more they are ſo, the more likely they are to the Sufferings of Chriſt, and may be the more eaſily born.

Thirdly, In Chriſt the World hates *God himſelf*; this is twice ſaid here, *v.* 23. *He that hateth me*, tho' he thinks his Hatred goes no further, yet really he *hates my Father alſo*. And again, *v.* 24. They have *ſeen and hated both me and my Father*. *Note*, 1. There are thoſe that *hate God*, notwithſtanding the Beauty of his Nature, and the Bounty of his Providence; they are enrag'd at his Juſtice, as the Devils that believe it and tremble, are vex'd at his Dominion, and would gladly *break his Bands aſunder*. They who cannot bring themſelves to deny that there *is* a God, and yet wiſh there were none, they ſee and hate him. 2. *Hatred of Chriſt*, will be conſtru'd and adjudg'd *Hatred of God*, for he is in his Perſon his Father's expreſs Image, and in his Office his great Agent and Ambaſſador. God will have all Men to honour the Son, as they honour the Father, and therefore what Entertainment the Son has, that the Father has. Hence it is eaſy to infer, That thoſe who are Enemies to the *Chriſtian Religion*, however they may cry up *Natural Religion*, are really Enemies to *all Religion*. Deiſts are in effect Atheiſts; and they that ridicule the Light of the Goſpel, would if they could, *extinguiſh* even natural Light, and ſhake off all Obligations of *Conſcience* and the *Fear of God*. Let an unbelieving malignant World know that their Enmity to the *Goſpel of* Chriſt, will be look'd upon in the great Day as an Enmity to the *bleſſed God himſelf*; and let all that ſuffer for Righteouſneſs ſake, according to the Will of God, take comfort from this; if God himſelf be hated *in them*, and ſtruck at *through them*, they need not be either *aſham'd* of their Cauſe, or *afraid* of the Iſſue.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtifie of me. 27 And ye alſo ſhall bear witneſs, becauſe ye have been with me from the beginning.

Chriſt having ſpoken of the great Oppoſition which his Goſpel was likely to meet with in the World, and the Hardſhips that would be put upon the Preachers of it, leſt any ſhould fear that *they* and *it* would be *run down* by that violent Torrent, he here intimates to all thoſe that were well Wiſhers to his Cauſe and Intereſt, what effectual Proviſion was made for the ſupporting it, both by the *principal* Teſtimony of the Spirit, *v.* 26. and the *ſubordinate* Teſtimony of the Apoſtles, *v.* 27. and Teſtimonies are the proper Supports of Truth.

Firſt, It is here promis'd that the bleſſed Spirit ſhall maintain the Cauſe of Chriſt in the World, notwithſtanding the Oppoſition it ſhould meet with. Chriſt, when he was reviled, *committed his injur'd Cauſe* to his Father, and did not loſe by his Silence, for the Comforter came, plead it powerfully, and carried it triumphantly. *When the Comforter*, or Advocate, *is come, which proceedeth from the Father*, and *whom I will ſend* to ſupply the Want of my bodily Preſence, he ſhall teſtify of me againſt thoſe that hate me *without Cauſe*.

We have more in this Verſe concerning the Holy Ghoſt, than in any one Verſe beſide in the Bible; and being baptiz'd into his Name, we are concern'd to acquaint our ſelves with him, as far as he is reveal'd.

1. Here's an Account of him in *his Eſſence* or *Subſiſtence* rather. He is *the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father*. Here, (1.) He is ſpoken of as a *diſtinct* Perſon; not a Quality or Property, but a Perſon under the proper Name of a *Spirit*, and proper Title of the *Spirit of Truth*, a Title fitly given him where he is brought in *teſtifying*. (2.) As a *Divine* Perſon that *proceedeth from the Father*, by out-goings that were of old *from everlaſting*. The *Spirit* or *Breath* of Man, call'd the *Breath of Life*, proceedeth from the Man, and by it *modified* he delivers his Mind, by it invigorated he ſometimes *exerts* his Strength to *blow out* what he would extinguiſh, and *blow up* what he would excite: Thus the Bleſſed Spirit is the Emulation of *Divine Light*, and the Energy of *Divine Power*. The Rays of the Sun, by which it diſpenſeth and diffuſeth its Light, Heat, and Influence, *proceed* from the Sun, and yet are one with it. The *Nicene* Creed ſaith, the Spirit *proceedeth from the Father and the Son*, for he is call'd the *Spirit of the Son*, Gal. 4. 6. And the Son is here ſaid to *ſend him*. The *Greek* Church chuſe rather to ſay, *From the Father by the Son*.

2. In *his Miſſion*. (1.) He *will come* in a more plentiful Effuſion of his Gifts, Graces, and Powers, than had ever yet been. Chriſt had been long the ὁ ἐρχόμενος, *He that ſhould come*; now the Bleſſed Spirit is ſo. (2.) *I will ſend him to you from the Father*. He had ſaid, *chap.* 14. 16. *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall ſend you the Comforter*; that ſpeaks the Spirit to be the Fruit of the *Interceſſion* Chriſt makes within the Vail; here he ſaith, *I will ſend him*, that ſpeaks him to be the Fruit of his *Dominion* within the Vail. The Spirit was ſent, (1.) *By Chriſt* as Mediator, now *aſcended on high* to give *Gifts unto Men*, and all Power being given to him. (1.) From *the Father*. Not only from Heaven, my Father's Houſe; the Spirit was given in a *Sound from Heaven*, Acts 2. 2. but according to my Father's Will and Appointment, and with his concurring Power and Authority. (3.) To the Apoſtles, to inſtruct them in their *Preaching*, enable them for *Working*, and carry them through their *Sufferings*. He was given to them and their Succeſſors, both in Chriſtianity and in the Miniſtry; to them and their *Seed*, and their *Seeds Seed*, according to that Promiſe, *Iſa.* 59. 21.

2. In his *Office* and *Operations*; which are two.

1. One implied in the Title given to him, he is the *Comforter*, or *Advocate*. An *Advocate* for Chriſt to maintain his Cauſe againſt the World's Infidelity; a *Comforter* to the Saints againſt the World's Hatred.

2. Another expreſs'd, *He ſhall teſtifie of me*. He is not only an Advocate but a Witneſs for Jeſus Chriſt; he is one of the *Three* that *bear Record in Heaven*, and the firſt of the Three that *bear Witneſs on Earth*, 1 John 5. 7. He inſtructed the Apoſtles, and enable them to work Miracles; he indited the Scriptures, which are the ſtanding Witneſſes that *teſtifie of Chriſt*, John 5. 39. The Power of the Miniſtry is deriv'd from the Spirit, for he *qualifies* Miniſters; and the Power of Chriſtianity too, for he *ſanctifies* Chriſtians, and in both teſtifies of Chriſt.

Secondly, It is here promis'd that the Apoſtles alſo, by the Spirit's Aſſiſtance, ſhould have the Honour of being Chriſt's Witneſſes, *v.* 27. *And ye ſhall alſo bear Witneſs* of me, being competent Witneſſes, for *ye have been with* me from the Beginning of my Miniſtry. Obſerve here,

1. That the Apoſtles were *appointed* to be *Witneſſes for Chriſt* in the World. When he had ſaid the *Spirit ſhall teſtifie*, he adds, and you alſo ſhall *bear Witneſs*. *Note*, The Spirit's working is not to ſuperſede, but to engage and encourage ours. Tho' the Spirit teſtify, Miniſters alſo muſt bear their Teſtimony, and People attend to it; for the Spirit of Grace witneſſeth and worketh by the Means of Grace. The Apoſtles were the firſt Witneſſes that were call'd in the famous Trial between Chriſt and the Prince of this World, which iſſued in the Ejectment of the Intruder. This ſpeaks. (1.) The *Work* cut out from them; they were to atteſt the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth concerning Chriſt, for the recovering of his juſt Right, and the maintaining of his Crown and Dignity. Tho Chriſt's Diſciples fled when they ſhould have been Witneſſes for him upon his Tryals before the High Prieſt and *Pilate*, yet after the Spirit was pour'd out upon them, they appear'd couragious in Vindication of the Cauſe of Chriſt againſt the Accuſations it was loaded with. The Truth of the Chriſtian Religion was to be proved very much by the Evidence of Matter of Fact, eſpecially Chriſt's Reſurrection, of which the Apoſtles were in a particular manner choſen *Witneſſes*, Acts 10 41. and they bore their Teſtimony accordingly, *Acts* 3. 15. and 5. 32. Chriſt's Miniſters are his Witneſſes. (2.) The *Honour* put upon them hereby, that they ſhould be *Workers together with God*. The *Spirit ſhall teſtify of me*, and you alſo under the Conduct of the Spirit, and in concurrence with the Spirit (who will preſerve you from miſtaking in that which you relate on your own Knowledge, and will inform you of that which you cannot know but by Revelation) *ſhall bear Witneſs*. This might encourage them againſt the hatred and contempt of the World, that Chriſt had *honour'd* them, and would *own* them.

2. That they were qualified to be ſo; *Ye have heard of me from the Beginning*. They not only heard his publick Sermons, but had conſtant private Converſe with him. He *went about* doing good

and while others ſaw his wonderful and merciful Works that he did in their own Town and Country only, they that *went about* with him were Witneſſes of them all. They had likewiſe Opportunity of obſerving the unſpotted Purity of his Converſation, and could witneſs for him that they never ſaw in him, or heard from him any Thing that had the leaſt Tincture of *human Frailty. Note,* 1. We have great Reaſon to receive the Records which the Apoſtles gave of Chriſt, for they did not ſpeak by hearſay, but what they had the greateſt Aſſurance of imaginable, 2 *Pet.* 1. 16. 1 *John* 1. 1, 3. 2. Thoſe are beſt able to bear Witneſs for Chriſt, that have themſelves been *with him*, by Faith, Hope, and Love, and by living a Life of Communion with God in him. Miniſters muſt firſt *learn* Chriſt, and then *preach* him. Thoſe ſpeak *beſt* of the Things of God that ſpeak *experimentally*. 'Tis particularly a great Advantage to have been acquainted with Chriſt *from the beginning*, to underſtand all Things from the *very firſt*, Luke 1. 3. To have been with him from the beginning of our Days. An *early* Acquaintance, and *conſtant* Converſe with the Goſpel of Chriſt, will make a Man like a good Houſholder.

CHAP. XVI.

Among other glorious Things God hath ſpoken of himſelf, this is one, I wound, *and* I heal, *Deut.* 32. 39. *Chriſt's Diſcourſe in this Chapter, which continues and concludes his farewel Sermon to his Diſciples doth ſo.* 1. *Here are* wounding *Words in the Notice he gives them of the Troubles that were before them,* v. 1—6. 2. *Here are* healing *Words in the Comforts he adminiſters to them for their Support under thoſe Troubles, which are five,* (1.) *That he would ſend them the Comforter,* v. 7—15. (2.) *That he would viſit them again at his Reſurrection,* v. 16—22. (3.) *That he would ſecure to them an Anſwer of Peace to all their Prayers,* v. 23—27. (4.) *That he was now but returning to his Father,* v. 28—32. (5.) *That whatever Troubles they might meet with in this World, by virtue of his Victory over it, they ſhould be ſure of Peace in him,* v. 33.

THESE things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended. 2. They ſhall put you out of the ſynagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whoſoever killeth you, will think that he doth God ſervice. 3. And theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor me. 4 But theſe things I have told you, that when the time ſhall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And theſe things I ſaid not unto you at the beginning, becauſe I was with you. 5 But now I go my way to him that ſent me, and none of you asketh me, Whither goeſt thou? 6 But becauſe I have ſaid theſe things unto you, ſorrow hath filled your heart.

Chriſt dealt faithfully with his Diſciples, when he ſent them forth on his Errands, for he *told them the worſt* of it, that they might ſit down and count the Coſt. He had bid them in the Chapter before, to expect the World's *hatred*; now here in theſe Verſes,

Firſt, He gives them a Reaſon why he alarmed them thus with the Expectation of Trouble; *Theſe Things have I ſpoken unto you, that ye ſhould not be offended*, or *ſcandalized*, v. 1.

1. The Diſciples of Chriſt are apt to be *offended at the Croſs*; and the Offence of the Croſs is a dangerous Temptation even to good Men, either to turn back from the Ways of God, or turn aſide out of them, or drive on heavily in them; to quiet either their Integrity or their Comfort: 'Tis not for nothing that a ſuffering Time is called *an Hour of Temptation.*

2. Our Lord Jeſus, by giving us Notice of Trouble, deſigned to take off the *Terror* of it, that it might not be a *ſurprize* to us. Of all the Adverſaries of our Peace in this World of Troubles, none inſult us more violently, nor put our Troops more into Diſorder, than *Diſappointment* doth; but we can eaſily *welcome* a Gueſt we expect, and being fore-warned are fore-armed. *Præmoniti, præmuniti.*

Secondly, He foretels particularly what they ſhould ſuffer, *v.* 2. *They* that have Power to do it, ſhall *put you out of their Synagogues*; and that's not the worſt, *they ſhall kill you. Ecce duo Gladii*, behold *two Swords* drawn againſt the Followers of the Lord Jeſus.

1. The Sword of *Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure*; this is drawn againſt them by the *Jews*, for they were the only Pretenders to Church-Power. They ſhall *caſt you out of their Synagogues*, ἀποσυναγώγους ποιήσουσιν ὑμᾶς, they ſhall make you *Excommunicates.* 1. They ſhall caſt you out of the particular Synagogues ye were Members of. At firſt they *ſcourged* them in their Synagogues as Contemners of the Law, *Mat.* 10. 17. and at length caſt them out as *incorrigible.* 2. They ſhall caſt you out of the Congregation of *Iſrael* in general, the national Church of the *Jews*; ſhall debar you from the Privileges of that, put you into the Condition of an Out-law, *qui caput gerit lupinum*; they will look upon you as *Samaritans*, as heathen Men and Publicans. *Interdico tibi aquâ & igne.* And were it not for the Penalties, Forfeitures, and Incapacities incurred hereby, it would be no Injury to be thus driven out of a Houſe infected and falling. *Note,* It has often been the Lot of Chriſt's Diſciples to be unjuſtly Excommunicated. Many a good Truth has been branded with an *Anathema*, and many a Child of God *delivered to Satan.*

2. The Sword of *Civil Power.* The Time cometh, *The Hour is come*, now Things are likely to be worſe with you than hitherto they have been; when you are expelled as Hereticks, they will *kill you, and think* they do God Service, and others will think ſo too.

1. You ſhall find them *really Cruel*, they will *kill you.* Chriſt's Sheep have been accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter; the twelve Apoſtles (we are told) were all put to Death, except *John.* Chriſt had ſaid, *ch.* 15. 27. ye ſhall *bear Witneſs*, μαρτυρεῖτε, ye ſhall be *Martyrs*, ſhall ſeal the Truth with their Blood, their Hearts-Blood.

2. You will find them, *ſeemingly Conſcientious*; they will think they do *God Service*; they will *ſeem* λατρείαν προσφέρειν, to *offer* a good *Sacrifice* to God; as thoſe that caſt out God's Servants of old, and ſaid, *Let the Lord be glorified*, Iſa. 66. 5. *Note,* 1. It is poſſible for thoſe that are real Enemies to God's Service, to pretend a mighty Zeal for it. The Devil's Work has many a Time been done in God's Livery, and one of the moſt miſchievous Enemies Chriſtianity ever had ſits *in the Temple of God.* Nay, 2. 'Tis common to patronize an Enmity to Religion with a Colour of Duty to God, and Service to his Church. God's People have ſuffered the greateſt Hardſhips from *conſcientious Perſecutors*; *Paul* verily thought he *ought to do* what he did *againſt the Name of Jeſus*: This doth not at all leſſen the Sin of the Perſecutors, for Villanies will never be conſecrated by entitling God to them, but it doth greaten the Sufferings of the Perſecuted to die under the Character of being Enemies to God; but there will be Reſurrection of Names as well as of Bodies at the great Day.

Thirdly, He gives them the true Reaſon of the World's Enmity and Rage againſt them. *Ver.* 3. *Theſe Things will they do unto you*, not becauſe you have done them any Harm, but *becauſe they have not known the Father, or me.* Let this comfort you, that none will be your Enemies but the worſt of Men. *Note,* (1.) Many that pretend to know God, are wretchedly ignorant of him. They that pretend to *do him Service*, thought they *knew* him, but it was a wrong Notion they had of him. *Iſrael* tranſgreſſed the Covenant, and yet cried, *My God, we know thee*, Hoſ. 8. 1, 2. (2.) They that are ignorant of Chriſt, cannot have any right Knowledge of God. In vain do Men pretend to know God and Religion, while they ſlight Chriſt and Chriſtianity. (3.) Thoſe are very *ignorant* indeed of God and Chriſt, that think it an *acceptable* Piece of Service to *perſecute* good People. They that know Chriſt, know that he *came not into the World to deſtroy Mens Lives, but to ſave them*; that he rules by the Power of Truth and Love, not of Fire and Sword. Never was ſuch a perſecuting Church, as that which makes *Ignorance the Mother of Devotion.*

Fourthly, He tells them why he gave them Notice of this *now*, and why not *ſooner.*

1. Why he told them of it *now*, *v.* 4. not to diſcourage them, or add to their preſent Sorrow; nor did he tell them of their Danger, that they might contrive how to avoid it, but that, when *the Time ſhall come*, (and you may be ſure it will come) you may *remember that I told you. Note,* When ſuffering Times come, 'twill be of uſe to us to remember what Chriſt has told us of Sufferings. (1.) That our Belief of Chriſt's Foreſight and Faithfulneſs may be confirmed: And, (2.) That the Trouble may be the leſs grievous, for we were told of it before, and we took up our Profeſſion in Expectation of it, ſo that it ought not to be a Surprize to us, nor looked upon as a wrong to us, As Chriſt in *his* Sufferings, ſo his Followers in *theirs*, ſhould have an Eye to the *fulfilling of the Scripture.*

2. Why he did not tell them of it ſooner. *I ſpake not this to you from the beginning*, when you and I came to be firſt acquainted, becauſe *I was with you.* (1.) While he was with them he *bore the Shock* of the World's Malice, and ſtood *in the Front* of the Battle; againſt *him* the Powers of Darkneſs levelled all their Force, not againſt *ſmall or great*, but only againſt the *King of Iſrael*, and therefore he did not need then to ſay ſo much to them of Suffering, becauſe it did not fall much to their Share; but we do find that from the Beginning he bid them prepare for Sufferings, and therefore, (2.) It ſeems rather to be meant of the Promiſe of *another Comforter.* This he had ſaid little of them *at the Beginning*, becauſe he was himſelf *with them* to inſtruct, guide and comfort them, and then they needed not the Promiſe of the Spirit's extraordinary Preſence. The Children of the Bride-chamber would not have ſo much need of a Comforter till the Bridegroom ſhould be *taken away.*

Fifthly, He expreſſeth a very affectionate Concern for the preſent Sadneſs of his Diſciples, upon Occaſion of what he had ſaid to them, *v.* 5, 6. *Now* I am to be no longer with you, but *go my way to him that ſent me*, to repoſe there after this Fatigue, and *none of you asketh me* with any Courage, *Whether goeſt thou?* But inſtead of enquiring after that which would comfort you, you pore upon that which looks melancholy, and *Sorrow has filled your Heart*, (1.) He had told them, that he was about to leave them, *now I go my way.* He was not *driven away* by Force, but voluntarily departed; his Life was not extorted *from him*, but depoſited *by him.* He went to him that ſent him, to give an Account of his Negotiation. Thus when *we* depart *out* of this World, we go to him that ſent us *into it*, which ſhould make us all ſollicitous to live to good Purpoſes, rememb'ring we have a Commiſſion to execute, which muſt be *returned* at a certain Day. (2.) He had told them what hard Things they muſt ſuffer when he was gone, and that they muſt not expect ſuch an eaſy, quiet Life, as they had had. Now if theſe were the Legacies he had to leave to them who had left all for him, they would be tempted to think they had made a ſorry Bargain of it, and were for the preſent in a Conſternation about it, in which their Maſter ſympathizeth with them, and blames them.

1. That they were careleſs of the Means of Comfort, and did not ſtir up themſelves to ſeek it, *none of you ask me, whither goeſt thou? Peter* had ſtarted that Queſtion, *chap.* 13. 36. and *Thomas* had ſeconded it. *chap.* 14. 5. but they did not purſue it, they did not *take* the Anſwer, were in the Dark concerning it, and did not enquire further, nor ſeek for fuller Satisfaction; did not continue ſeeking, continue knocking. See what a *compaſſionate* Teacher Chriſt is, and how *condeſcending* to the Weak and Ignorant; many a Teacher will not endure that the Learner ſhould ask the ſame Queſtion *twice*, if he cannot take a Thing quickly, let him go without it: But our Lord Jeſus knows how to deal with Babes, that muſt be taught with *Precept upon Precept.* If the Diſciples here would have *puſhed* on that Enquiry, they would have found that his going away was for his *Advancement*, and therefore his *Departure from them* ſhould not inordinately trouble them, for why ſhould they be againſt his Preferment? And for their *Advantage*, and therefore *their* Suffering for him ſhould not inordinately trouble them, for a Sight of Jeſus at the right Hand of God would be an effectual Support to them, as it was to *Stephen*, *Note*, A humble believing Enquiry into the Deſign, and Tendency of the darkeſt Diſpenſations of Providence would help to reconcile us to them, and to grieve the leſs, and fear the leſs becauſe of them; 'twill ſilence us to ask whence they come, but will abundantly ſatisfy us to ask *whither they go?* For we know they *work for good*, Rom. 8. 28.

2. That they were too intent, and pored too much upon the Occaſions of their Grief; Sorrow has *filled their Heart.* Chriſt had ſaid enough to fill them with Joy, *chap.* 15. 11. but by looking at that only which made againſt them, and over-looking that which made for them, they were ſo full of *Sorrow*, that there was no Room left for *Joy*. *Note*, It is the common Fault and Folly of *melancholy* Chriſtians to dwell only upon the *dark Side* of the Cloud, to meditate nothing but Terror, and turn a deaf Ear to the *Voice of Joy and Gladneſs.* That which *filled* the Diſciples Hearts *with Sorrow*, and hinder'd the Operations of the Cordials Chriſt adminiſter'd, was too great an Affection to this *preſent Life.* They were big with Hopes of their Maſter's external Kingdom and Glory, and that they ſhould ſhine and reign with him; and now inſtead of that, to hear of nothing but *Bonds and Afflictions*, this filled them with Sorrow. Nothing is a greater Prejudice to our Joy in God, than the Love of the World, and the *Sorrow of the World* the Conſequence of it.

7 Nevertheleſs, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment. 9 Of ſin, becauſe they believe not in me; 10 Of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more; 11 Of judgment, becauſe the prince of this world is judged. 12 I have yet many things to ſay unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit, when the ſpirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf; but whatſoever he ſhall hear, *that* ſhall he ſpeak: and he will ſhew you things to come. 14 He ſhall glorifie me: for he ſhall receive of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath, are mine: therefore ſaid I, that he ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.

As it was uſual with the Old Teſtament Prophets to comfort the Church in its Calamities with the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, *Iſa.* 9. 6. *Mic.* 5. 5. *Zech.* 3. 8. ſo the Meſſiah being come, the Promiſe of the Spirit was the great Cordial, and is ſtill.

Three Things we have here concerning the Comforter's coming.

Firſt, That *Chriſt's Departure* was abſolutely neceſſary to the *Comforter's coming*, v. 7. The Diſciples were ſo loth to believe this, that Chriſt ſaw cauſe to aſſert it with a more than ordinary Solemnity. *I tell you the Truth.* We may be confident of the *Truth* of every Thing that Chriſt has told us; he hath no Deſign to impoſe upon us. Now to make them eaſy, he here tells them.

1. In general, *It was expedient for them he ſhould go away.* This was ſtrange Doctrine, but if it was true, it was comfortable enough, and ſhewed them how abſurd their Sorrow was. 'Tis expedient, not only *for me*, but for *you* alſo that *I go away*; though they do not ſee it, and are loth to believe it, ſo it is. *Note*, 1. Thoſe Things oft ſeem *grievous* to us that are really *expedient* for us; and particularly our *going away* when we have finiſhed our Courſe. 2. Our Lord Jeſus is always for that which is moſt *expedient for us*, whether we think ſo or no. He deals not with us according to the Folly of our own Choices, but graciouſly *over-rules them*, and gives us the Phyſick we are loth to *take*, becauſe he knows it is *good for us*.

2. It was therefore expedient, becauſe it was in order to the ſending of the Spirit. Now obſerve,

1. That Chriſt's going was in order to the Comforter's coming.

(1.) This is expreſſed *negatively*, *If I go not away the Comforter will not come.* And why not? 1. So it was ſettled in the Divine Counſels concerning this Affair, and the Meaſures muſt not be altered; *ſhall the Earth be forſaken for them?* He that gives freely, may recal one Gift before he beſtows another, while we would fondly hold all. 2. 'Tis congruous enough that the *Ambaſſador* Extraordinary ſhould be *recalled* before the *Envoy* come that is conſtantly to *reſide*. 3. The ſending of the Spirit was to be the Fruit of Chriſt's Purchaſe, and that Purchaſe was to be made by his Death, which was his *going away*. 4. It was to be in Anſwer to his Interceſſion within the Veil; ſee *Chap.* 14. 16. Thus muſt this Gift be both paid for, and prayed for, by our Lord Jeſus, that we might learn to put the greater Value upon it. 5. The great Argument the Spirit was to uſe in convincing the World, muſt be Chriſt's Aſcenſion into Heaven, and his welcome there; ſee *v.* 10. and *chap.* 7. 39. 6. The Diſciples muſt be weaned from his bodily Preſence, which they were too apt to dote upon, before they were duly prepared to receive the ſpiritual Aids and Comforts of a new Diſpenſation.

(2.) It is expreſſed *poſitively*, *If I depart I will ſend him to you*, q. d. Truſt me to provide effectually that you ſhall be no Loſers by my Departure. The glorified Redeemer is not unmindful of his Church on Earth, nor will ever leave it without its *neceſſary* Supports. Tho' he *departs*, he ſends the Comforter, nay, he departs on purpoſe *to ſend him*. Thus ſtill, tho' one Generation of Miniſters and Chriſtians *departs*, another is *raiſed up* in their Room, for Chriſt will maintain his own Cauſe.

2. That the Preſence of Chriſt's Spirit in his Church is ſo much better, and more deſireable than his *bodily Preſence*; that it was really expedient for us he ſhould go away to *ſend the Comforter.* His corporal Preſence could be but in one Place, at one Time, but his Spirit is *every where*, in all Places, at all Times; where-ever *two or three are gathered in his Name.* Chriſt's bodily Preſence draws Mens Eyes, his Spirit draws their Hearts; that was the Letter which *kills*, his *Spirit* gives *Life*.

Secondly, That the coming of the Spirit was abſolutely neceſſary to the carrying on of Chriſt's Intereſt on Earth, *Ver.* 8. And *when he is come*, ἐλθὼν ἐκεῖνος. He that is *ſent* is willing of himſelf to *come*, and at his firſt coming he will do this; he will *reprove*, or as the Margin reads it, he will *convince* the World by your Miniſtry concerning *Sin*, *Righteouſneſs*, and *Judgment*.

1. See here what the Office of the Spirit is, and on what Errand he is ſent. (1.) To *Reprove.* The Spirit by the Word and Conſcience is a Reprover; Miniſters are Reprovers by Office, and by them the Spirit reproves. (2.) To *Convince.* 'Tis a Law-Term, and ſpeaks the Office of the Judge in ſumming up the Evidence, and ſetting a Matter that has been long canvaſs'd in a clear and true Light. He ſhall *convince*, i. e. he ſhall *put to ſilence* the Adverſaries of Chriſt and his Cauſe, by *diſcovering* and *demonſtrating* the Falſhood and Fallacy of that which they have maintained, and the Truth and Certainty of that which they have oppoſed. *Note*, Convincing Work is the Spirit's Work, he can do it effectually, and none but he; Man may *open the Clauſe*, but 'tis the Spirit only that can *open the Heart.* The Spirit is called the *Comforter*, v. 7. and here it is ſaid, *he ſhall convince*; one would think that were cold Comfort, but it is the Method the Spirit takes, firſt to *convince*, and then to *comfort*; firſt to lay open the Wound, and then apply healing Medicines. Or, taking Conviction more generally for a *Demonſtration* of what is *right*, it intimates that the Spirit's Comforts are *ſolid*, and grounded upon Truth.

2. See who they are whom he is to Reprove and Convince, *the World*, both *Jew* and *Gentile*. (1.) He ſhall give the World the moſt powerful Means of Conviction, for the Apoſtles ſhall go into all the World, backed by the Spirit, to preach the Goſpel, fully proved. (2.) He ſhall ſufficiently provide for the taking off, and ſilencing of the Objections and Prejudices of the World againſt the Goſpel. Many an Infidel was *convinced of all*, and *judged of all*, 1 Cor. 14. 24. (3.) He ſhall effectually and ſavingly convince many *in the World*, ſome in every Age, in every Place, in order to their Converſion to the Faith of Chriſt. Now this was an Encouragement to the Diſciples in Reference to the Difficulties they were likely to meet with. 1. That they ſhould ſee *Good done*; Satan's Kingdom fall like Lightning, which would be their Joy as it was his. Even this *malignant* World the Spirit ſhall work upon, and the Conviction of Sinners is the Comfort of faithful Miniſters. 2. That this would be the Fruit of *their* Services and Sufferings; theſe ſhould contribute very much to this good Work.

3. See what the Spirit ſhall convince the World of.

1. *Of Sin*, v. 9. *Becauſe they believe not on me.*

(1.) The Spirit is ſent to *convince* Sinners of Sin; not barely to tell them of it, in Conviction there is more than that, 'tis to *prove* it upon them, and force them to own it, as they, *John* 8. 9. that were *convicted of their own Conſciences*; make them to *know their Abominations.* The Spirit convinceth of the Fact of Sin, that we have done ſo and ſo; of the *Fault* of Sin that we have done ill in doing ſo; of the *Folly* of Sin, that we have acted againſt right Reaſon and our true Intereſt; of the *Filth* of Sin, that by it we are become odious to God; of the *Fountain* of Sin, the corrupt Nature; and *laſtly*, of the *Fruit* of Sin, that the *End* thereof is *Death.* The Spirit *demonſtrates* the Pravity and Degeneracy of the whole World; that all the World is guilty before God.

(2.) The Spirit in Convictions faſtens eſpecially upon the Sin of *Unbelief*; their not believing in Chriſt.

1. As the great *Reigning* Sin. There was, and is, a World of People, that believe not in Jeſus Chriſt; and they are not ſenſible that it is their *Sin*; natural Conſcience tells them, that Murder and Theft are Sins; but 'tis a ſupernatural Work of the Spirit to convince them that it is *a Sin* to ſuſpend their Belief of the Goſpel, and to reject the Salvation offered by it. Natural Religion, after it has given us its *beſt* Diſcoveries and Directions, *lays* and *leaves* us under this *further* Obligation, That *whatever Divine Revelation* ſhall be made to us *at any time*, with ſufficient Evidence to prove it Divine, we *accept* it, and *ſubmit* to it: which *Law* they *tranſgreſs*, who when *God ſpeaketh to us by his Son*, *refuſe him that ſpeaketh*; and therefore it is *Sin.*

2. As the great *Ruining* Sin. Every Sin is ſo in its own Nature, no Sin is ſo to them that believe in Chriſt, ſo that it is Unbelief that damns Sinners; 'tis becauſe of that, that they *cannot enter into Reſt*, that they cannot eſcape the Wrath of God; 'tis a Sin againſt the Remedy.

3. As that which is *at the Bottom of all Sin*; ſo *Calvin* takes it; the Spirit ſhall convince the World, that the true Reaſon why Sin reigns among them is, becauſe they are not by Faith united to Chriſt; *Ne putemus vel guttam unam rectitudinis ſine Chriſto nobis ineſſe.* Calv.

2. Of *Righteouſneſs*, *becauſe I go to my Father, and ye ſee me no more*, v. 10. We may underſtand this,

1. Of Chriſt's *Perſonal* Righteouſneſs. He ſhall convince the World that Jeſus of *Nazareth* was *Chriſt the Righteous*, 1 John 2. 1. as the Centurion owned, *Luke* 23. 47. *Certainly this was a righteous Man.* His Enemies put him under the worſt of Characters, and Multitudes were not, or would not be convinced but that he was an *ill Man*, which ſtrengthened their Prejudices againſt his Doctrine; but he is *juſtified by the Spirit*, 1 Tim. 3. 6. He is proved to be a *righteous Man*, and not a *Deceiver*: and then the Point is in effect gained, for he is either the great Redeemer, or a great Cheat, but a Cheat we are ſure he is not.

Now by what *Medium* or Argument will the Spirit convince Men of the Sincerity of our Lord Jeſus? Why, (1.) Their *ſeeing him no more*, will contribute ſomething towards the Removal of their Prejudices; they ſhall ſee him no more in the *Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh*, in the *Form of a Servant*, which made them ſlight him. *Moſes* was more reſpected after his Removal than before. But, (2.) His *going to the Father* would be a full Conviction of it. The *coming of the Spirit* according to the Promiſe, was a Proof of Chriſt's Exaltation to God's Right Hand, *Acts* 2. 36, 37. And that was a Demonſtration of his Righteouſneſs, for the holy God would never ſet a Deceiver at his Right Hand.

(2.) Of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs *communicated* to us for our Juſtification and Salvation, that everlaſting Righteouſneſs, which *Meſſiah* was to bring in, *Dan.* 9. 24. Now,

(1.) The Spirit ſhall *convince* Men *of this Righteouſneſs*; having by Convictions of *Sin* ſhewed them their *need* of a Righteouſneſs, leſt that drive them to Deſpair, he will ſhew them *where it is to be had*, and how they may upon their believing be acquitted from Guilt, and accepted as righteous in God's Sight. 'Twas hard to convince thoſe of *this* Righteouſneſs, that *went about to eſtabliſh their own*, Rom. 10. 3. but the Spirit will do it.

(2.) Chriſt's Aſcenſion is the great Argument proper to convince Men of this Righteouſneſs. *I go to the Father*, and as an Evidence of my Welcome with him, *You ſhall ſee me no more*; if Chriſt had left any Part of his Undertaking unfiniſhed, he had been ſent back again; but now we are ſure he is at the *Right Hand of God*, we are ſure of being juſtified through him.

3. Of *Judgment*, *becauſe the Prince of this World is judged*, v. 10. Obſerve here,

1. The Devil, the *Prince of this World* was *judged*, was diſcovered to be a great Deceiver and Deſtroyer; and as ſuch, Judgment was entered againſt him, and Execution in Part done. He was *caſt out* of the *Gentile* World, when his Oracles were ſilenced, and his Altars deſerted; *caſt out* of the Bodies of many in Chriſt's Name, which miraculous Power continued long in the Church; he was *caſt out* of the Souls of People by the Grace of God working with the Goſpel of Chriſt; he *fell as Lightning from Heaven.*

2. This is a good Argument wherewith the Spirit convinceth the World *of Judgment*; that is, 1. Of inherent Holineſs and Sanctification, *Mat.* 12. 18. By the Judgment of the Prince of this World, it appears that Chriſt is ſtronger than Satan, and can diſarm and diſpoſſeſs him, and ſet up his Throne upon the Ruins of his. 2. Of a new and better Diſpenſation of Things. He ſhall ſhew that Chriſt's Errand into the World was to *ſet things to right* in it, and to introduce *Times of Reformation*, and *Regeneration*; and he proves it by this, that the Prince of this World, the great *Maſter of Miſ-rule is judged*, and expelled. All will be well when his Power is broken, who made all the Miſchief. 3. Of the Power and Dominion of the Lord Jeſus. He ſhall convince the World that *all Judgment* is *committed* to him, and that he is *Lord of all*; which is evidently this, that he has *judged the Prince of this World.* has broken the Serpent's Head, *deſtroyed* him *that had the Power of Death*, and *ſpoiled Principalities*; if Satan be thus ſubdued by Chriſt, we may be ſure no other Power can ſtand before him. 4. Of the final Day of *Judgment*; all the obſtinate Enemies of Chriſt's Goſpel and Kingdom, ſhall certainly be reckoned with at laſt, for the Devil their Ring-leader is *judged.*

Thirdly, That the coming of the Spirit would be of *unſpeakable Advantage* to the Diſciples themſelves; the Spirit has Work to do, not only on the Enemies of Chriſt to *convince* and *humble* them, but upon his Servants and Agents, to inſtruct and comfort them, and therefore 'twas expedient for them that he ſhould go away.

1. He intimates to them the *tender Senſe* he had of their *preſent Weakneſs*, v. 12. *I have yet many things to ſay unto you*, not which *ſhould* have been ſaid, but which he *could* and *would* have ſaid; but *ye cannot bear them now.* See what a Teacher Chriſt is, (1.) None like him for *Copiouſneſs*; when he hath ſaid *much*, he hath ſtill *many things more* to ſay. Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge are hid in him; we are not ſtraitened in him, if we be not ſtraitened in our ſelves. (2.) None like him for *Compaſſion.* He would have told them more of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, particularly of the Rejection of the *Jews*, and the calling of the *Gentiles*, but they could not bear it, it would have confounded and ſtumbled them, rather than have given them any Satisfaction. When after his Reſurrection they ſpoke to him of *reſtoring the Kingdom* to *Iſrael*, he referred them to the *Coming* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, by which they ſhould *receive Power* to bear thoſe Diſcoveries, which were ſo contrary to the Notions they had received, that they could not bear them now.

2. He aſſures them of ſufficient Aſſiſtances by the pouring out of the Spirit. They were now conſcious to themſelves of great *Dulneſs* and many *Miſtakes*, and what ſhall they do now their Maſter is leaving them; but *when he the Spirit of Truth is come*, you'll be eaſy, and all will be well; well indeed, for he ſhall undertake to *guide* the Apoſtles, and *glorify* Chriſt.

1. To *guide the Apoſtles.* He will take care,

(1.) That they do not *miſs their Way*; he will *guide you*, as the Camp of *Iſrael* was guided through the Wilderneſs by the Pillar of Cloud and Fire. The Spirit guided their Tongues in ſpeaking, and their Pens in writing, to ſecure them from Miſtakes. The Spirit is given to be our Guide, *Rom.* 8. 14. not only to ſhew us the Way, but to go along with us by his continued Aids and Inſtances.

(2.) That they do not *come ſhort of their End.* He will *guide them into all Truth*, as the skilful Pilot guides the Ship into the Port 'tis bound for. To be *led into* a Truth, is more than barely to *know* it; 'tis to be intimately and experimentally acquainted with it; to be piouſly and ſtrongly affected with it; not only to have the Notion of it in our Heads, but the Reliſh and Savour, and Power of it in our Hearts; it notes a gradual Diſcovery of Truth, ſhining more and more; ſhall lead you by thoſe Truths that are plain and eaſy to thoſe that are more difficult.

But now *into all Truth?* The Meaning is,

1. Into the *whole Truth*, relating to their Embaſſy; whatever was needful or uſeful for them to know, in order to the due Diſcharge of their Office they ſhould be fully inſtructed in. What Truths they were to teach others, the Spirit would teach them, would give them the Underſtanding of, and enable them both to *explain* and to *defend.*

2. Into *nothing but the Truth*; all that he ſhall guide you into ſhall be *Truth*, 1 John 2. 27. the *anointing is Truth.*

In the following Words he proves both theſe:

1. The Spirit ſhall teach *nothing but the Truth*, for he ſhall not ſpeak of himſelf any Doctrine diſtinct from mine, but whatſoever he ſhall hear, and knows to be the Mind of the Father, that, and that only ſhall he ſpeak. This intimates, (1.) That the Teſtimony of the Spirit in the Word and by the Apoſtles, is what we may rely upon. The Spirit knows and *ſearches all things, even the deep things of God*, and the Apoſtles received that Spirit, 1 *Cor.* 2. 10, 11. ſo that we may venture our Souls upon the Spirit's Word. (2.) That the Teſtimony of the Spirit always concurs with the Word of Chriſt, for he *doth not ſpeak of himſelf*, has no ſeparate Intereſt or Intention of his own, but as in Eſſence, ſo in Records, he is one with the Father and the Son, 1 *John* 5. 7. Mens Word and Spirit often diſagree, but the eternal Word and the eternal Spirit never do.

2. He ſhall teach you *all Truth*, and keep back nothing that is profitable for you, for he will *ſhew you things to come.* The Spirit was in the Apoſtles a Spirit of Prophecy; 'twas foretold he ſhould be ſo, *Joel* 2. 28. and he was ſo; the Spirit ſhewed them things to come, as *Acts* 11. 28. and 20. 23. and 21. 11. The Spirit ſpake of the Apoſtacy of the *later Times*, 1 Tim. 4. 1. *John*, when he was *in the Spirit*, had *things to come*, ſhewed him *in Viſion.* Now this was a great Satisfaction to their own Minds, and of uſe to them in their Conduct, and was alſo a great Confirmation of their Miſſion. *Janſenius* has a pious Note upon this, we ſhould not grudge that the Spirit doth not *now* ſhew us things to come in *this World*, as he did to the Apoſtles; let it ſuffice, that the Spirit in the Word hath ſhewed us things to come in the *other World*, which are our chief Concern.

2. The Spirit undertook to *glorify Chriſt*, *v.* 14. 15.

1. Even the ſending of the Spirit was the *glorifying of Chriſt:* God the Father glorified him in Heaven, and the Spirit glorified him on Earth. 'Twas the Honour of the Redeemer that the Spirit was both ſent *in his Name*, and ſent on *his Errand*, to carry on and perfect his Undertaking. All the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, all the Preaching, and all the Writing of the Apoſtles under the Influence of the Spirit, Tongues, and Miracles, were to glorify Chriſt.

2. The Spirit *glorified Chriſt* by leading his Followers into the Truth as it is in Jeſus, *Eph.* 4. 21. He aſſures them,

1. That the Spirit ſhould communicate *the Things of Chriſt* to them; he ſhall *receive of mine and ſhall ſhew it unto you.* As in Eſſence he proceedeth from the Son, ſo in Influence and Operation he derives from him. He ſhall take, ἐκ τοῦ ἐμοῦ, of *that which is mine:* All that the Spirit *ſhews* us, that is, applies to us for our Inſtruction and Comfort, all he gives us for our Strength and Quickening, and all he ſecures and ſeals to us, did all belong to Chriſt, and was had and received from him. All was his, for he *bought it*, and paid dear for it, and therefore he had Reaſon to call it *his own*; *his*, for he firſt received it; it was given him as the Head of the Church, to be derived from him to all his Members. The Spirit came not to erect a new Kingdom, but to advance and eſtabliſh the ſame Kingdom that Chriſt had erected, to maintain the ſame Intereſt, and purſue the ſame Deſign. Thoſe therefore who pretend to the Spirit, and yet *vilify* Chriſt, give themſelves the Lie, for he came to *glorify* Chriſt.

2. That herein the *Things of God* ſhould be communicated to us. Leſt any ſhould think that the receiving of *his* would not make them much the richer, he adds, *all Things that the Father has are mine.* As God, all that Self-exiſtent Light, and Self-ſufficient Happineſs which the Father has, he has; as Mediator, all Things are delivered to him of the Father, *Mat.* 11. 27. all that Grace and Truth which God deſigned to ſhew to us, he lodged it in the Hands of the Lord Jeſus, *Col.* 1. 19. *Spiritual Bleſſings in heavenly Things* are given by the Father to the Son for us, and the Son intruſts the Spirit to convey them to us. Some apply it to that which goes juſt before, he ſhall *ſhew you Things to come*; and ſo 'tis explained by *Rev.* 1. 1. God gave it *to Chriſt*, and he ſignified it to *John*, who wrote *what the Spirit ſaid*, Rev. 1. 1.

16 A little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me; becauſe I go to the Father. 17 Then ſaid *ſome* of his diſciples among themſelves, What is this that he ſaith unto us, A little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me: And again, a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me: and, Becauſe I go to the Father? 18 They ſaid therefore, What is this that he ſaith, A little while? we cannot tell what he ſaith. 19 Now Jeſus knew that they were deſirous to aſk him, and ſaid unto them, Do ye enquire among your ſelves of that I ſaid, A little while, and ye ſhall not ſee me: and again, a little while, and ye ſhall ſee me? 20 Verily verily I ſay unto you, that ye ſhall weep and lament, but the world ſhall rejoyce; and ye ſhall be ſorrowful, but your ſorrow ſhall be turned into joy. 21 A woman when ſhe is in travail, hath ſorrow, becauſe her hour is come; but as ſoon as ſhe is delivered of the child, ſhe remembereth no more the anguiſh, for joy that a Man is born into the world. 22 And ye now therefore have ſorrow: but I will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoyce, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Our Lord Jeſus for the Comfort of his ſorrowful Diſciples, here promiſeth that he would *viſit them again.*

Firſt, Obſerve the Intimation he gave them of this Comfort, he deſigned them, *v.* 16. Here he tells them,

1. That they ſhould now ſhortly *loſe the Sight of him*; A *little while*, and ye that have ſeen me ſo long, and ſtill deſire to ſee me, *ſhall not ſee me*, and therefore if they had any good Queſtion to aſk him, they muſt aſk quickly, for he was now taking his Leave of them. *Note*, It is good to conſider how near to a Period our Seaſons of Grace are, that we may be quickened to improve them while they are continued. Now our Eyes ſee our Teachers, ſee the Days of the Son of Man, but perhaps yet a little while and we *ſhall not ſee them.* They loſt the Sight of Chriſt; (1.) At his *Death*; when he withdrew from this World, and never after ſhewed himſelf openly in it. The moſt that Death doth to our Chriſtian Friends, is to take them out of our Sight, not out of Being, not out of Bliſs, not out of all Relation to us; only *out of Sight*, and then not *out of* Mind. (2.) At his *Aſcenſion*; when he withdrew from them, who after his Reſurrection had for ſome Time converſed with him, out of their Sight a Cloud received him, and tho' they looked up ſtedfaſtly after him, they *ſaw him no more*, Acts 1. 9, 10. 2 Kings 2. 12. ſee 2 Cor. 5. 16.

2. That yet they ſhould ſpeedily *recover the Sight of him*; *Again a little while and ye ſhall ſee me*, and therefore you ought not to ſorrow as thoſe that had no Hope. His Farewel was not a final Farewel. They ſhould ſee him again; (1.) At his Reſurrection ſoon after his Death, when he ſhewed himſelf alive by many infallible Proofs, and this in a very little while, not forty Hours; ſee *Hoſ.* 6. 2. (2.) By the pouring out of the Spirit ſoon after his Aſcenſion, which ſcattered the Miſts of Ignorance, and Miſtakes, they were almoſt loſt in; and gave them a much clearer Inſight into the Myſteries of Chriſt's Goſpel than they had yet had. The Spirit's coming was Chriſt's Viſit to his Diſciples, not a *tranſient*, but a *permanent* one, and ſuch a Viſit as abundantly retrieved the Sight of *him.* (3.) At his ſecond coming. They *ſaw him again* as they removed one by one to him at Death, and they ſhall *all ſee him* together at the end of Time, when he ſhall *come in* the Clouds, *and every Eye ſhall ſee him.* It might truly be ſaid of this, 'twas but *a little while* and they ſhould ſee him, for what are the Days of Time, to the Days of Eternity? 2 *Pet.* 3. 8, 9.

The Reaſon given, is, *Becauſe I go to the Father*, and therefore, (1.) I muſt *leave you for a Time*, becauſe my Buſineſs calls me to the upper World, and you muſt be content to want me, for really *my* Buſineſs is *yours.* (2.) Therefore you ſhall *ſee me again* ſhortly, for the Father will not detain me to your Prejudice. If I go upon your Errand, you ſhall ſee me again as ſoon as my Buſineſs is done, as ſoon as is convenient. It ſhould ſeem, all this refers rather to his going away at Death, and return at his Reſurrection, than his going away at his Aſcenſion, and his return at the end of Time; for it was *his Death* that was their Grief, not his Aſcenſion, *Luke* 24. 52. And betwixt his Death and Reſurrection it was indeed a *little while.* And, it may be read, not *yet a little while*, it is not ἔτι μικρὸν, as it is, *John* 12. 35. but μικρὸν, *for a little while ye ſhall not ſee me*, viz. the three Days of his lying in the Grave; and again, *for a little while and ye ſhall ſee me*, viz. the Forty Days between his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion. Thus we may ſay of our Miniſters and Chriſtian Friends, *yet a little while and ye ſhall not ſee them*, either they muſt leave us or we leave them, but 'tis certain we muſt part *ſhortly*, and yet not part *for ever:* 'Tis but a good Night to them whom we hope to ſee with Joy in the Morning.

Secondly, The Perplexity of the Diſciples upon the Intimation given them, they were at a Loſs what to make of it, *v.* 17, 18. *ſome of them* ſaid ſoftly among themſelves, either ſome of the weakeſt that were leaſt able, or ſome of the moſt inquiſitive that were moſt deſirous to underſtand him, *What is this that he ſaith to us?* Though Chriſt had oft ſpoken to this purpoſe before, yet ſtill they were in the dark; tho' Precept be upon Precept, 'tis in vain, unleſs God give the Underſtanding. Now ſee here,

1. The Diſciples *Weakneſs*, in that they could not underſtand ſo plain a Saying which Chriſt had already given them a Key to, having told them ſo often in plain Terms that he ſhould be killed, and the Third Day riſe again; yet ſay they, *We cannot tell what he ſaith.* For, (1.) Sorrow had *filled their Hearts*, and made them unapt to receive the Impreſſions of Comfort. The darkneſs of Ignorance, and the Darkneſs of Melancholy commonly increaſe and thicken one another; Miſtakes cauſes Griefs, and then Griefs confirm Miſtakes. (2.) The Notion of Chriſt's ſecular Kingdom was ſo deeply rooted in them, that they could make no Senſe at all of thoſe Sayings of his which they knew not how to reconcile with that Notion. When we think the Scripture muſt be made to agree with the *falſe Ideas* we have imbibed, no wonder we complain of its Difficulty; but when our Reaſonings are captivated to Revelation, the Matter becomes eaſy. (3.) It ſhould ſeem, that which puzzled them, was, *the little while.* If he muſt go at laſt, yet they could not conceive how he ſhould leave them quickly, when his ſtay hitherto had been ſo ſhort, and ſo little Work comparatively done. Thus 'tis hard for us to repreſent to our ſelves that Change as near, which yet we know will come *certainly*, and may come *ſuddenly.* When we are told, *yet a little while*, and we muſt go hence, yet a little while, and we muſt give up our Account, we know not how to digeſt it, for we always took the *Viſion* to be *for a great while to come*, Ezek. 12. 27.

2. Their *Willingneſs* to be inſtructed. When they were at a Loſs about the meaning of Chriſt's Words, they conferred together upon it, and asked Help of one another. By mutual Converſe about Divine Things, we both *borrow* others Lights, and improve our own. Obſerve how *exactly* they *repeat* Chriſt's Words. Tho' we cannot fully ſolve every Difficulty we meet with in Scripture, yet we muſt not therefore throw it by, but revolve what we cannot explain, and wait *till God ſhall reveal even this unto us.*

Thirdly, The further Explication of what Chriſt had ſaid.

1. See here *why* Chriſt explained it, *v.* 19. becauſe he knew they were *deſirous* to aſk him, and *deſigned* it. *Note*, The Knots we cannot untye, we muſt bring to him, who alone can give an Underſtanding. Chriſt knew they were *deſirous to aſk him*, but were baſhful and aſhamed to aſk. *Note*, Chriſt takes Cognizance of pious Deſires, tho' they be not as yet offered up; the Groanings that cannot be uttered, and even prevents them with the Bleſſings of his Goodneſs. Chriſt inſtructed thoſe who he knew were deſirous to aſk him, tho' they did not aſk. *Before we call he anſwers.*

Another Reaſon why Chriſt explained it, was, becauſe he obſerved them canvaſſing this Matter among themſelves; *Do ye enquire this among your ſelves?* Well, I'll make it eaſy to you. This intimates to us who they are that Chriſt will teach, (1.) The *Humble*, that confeſs their Ignorance, for ſo much their Enquiry implied. (2.) The *Diligent*, that uſe the Means they have.

Do ye enquire? You ſhall be taught. *To him that hath ſhall be given.*

2. See here *how* he explain'd it, not by a nice and critical deſcant upon the Words, but by bringing the Thing more cloſely to them. He had told them of *not ſeeing* him, and *ſeeing* him, and they did not apprehend that, and therefore he explains it by their *ſorrowing* and *rejoycing*, becauſe we commonly meaſure Things according as they affect us. *Ver.* 20. Ye ſhall *weep and lament* for my departure, but the World ſhall rejoyce in it; and *ye ſhall be ſorrowful* while I am abſent, but upon my return to you, your Sorrow will be *turn'd into Joy.* But he ſaith nothing of the *little while*, becauſe he ſaw that perplex'd them more than any Thing; and 'tis no matter for our knowing the *Times*, and the *Seaſons. Note* Believers have Joy or Sorrow, according as they have, or have not a Sight of Chriſt, and the Tokens of his Preſence with them.

What Chriſt ſaith here, and *v.* 21. 22. of their Sorrow and Joy,

1. Is primarily to be underſtood of the preſent State and Circumſtances of the Diſciples; and ſo we have,

(1.) Their Grief foretold; ye ſhall *weep* and *lament*, and *ye ſhall be ſorrowful.* The Sufferings of Chriſt could not but be the Sorrow of his Diſciples; they wept *for him* becauſe they loved him; the Pain of our Friend is a Pain to our ſelves; when they wept, 'twas for Sorrow, *Luke* 22. 45. they wept *for themſelves*, and their own loſs, and the ſad Apprehenſions they had what would become of them when he was gone. It could not but be a Grief to loſe *him for whom* they had left their all, and *from whom* they expected ſo much. Chriſt has given Notice to his Diſciples before-hand to expect Sorrow, that they may treaſure up Comforts accordingly.

(2.) The World's Rejoycing at the ſame Time;——*But the World ſhall rejoyce.* That which is the Grief of Saints is the Joy of Sinners. (1.) They that are Strangers to Chriſt will *continue* in their carnal Mirth and not at all Intereſt themſelves in their Sorrows. 'Tis *nothing to them that paſs by*, Lam. 1. 12. Nay, (2.) They that are Enemies to Chriſt will *therefore* rejoyce, becauſe they hope they have conquer'd him, and ruined his Intereſt. When the Chief Prieſts had Chriſt upon the Croſs, we may ſuppoſe they *made merry over him*, as they that dwell on Earth over the *ſlain Witneſſes.* Rev. 11. 10. Let it be no ſurprize to us if we ſee others triumphing when we are *trembling for the Ark.*

(3.) The return of Joy to them in due Time; *But your Sorrow ſhall be turned into Joy.* As the Joy of the Hypocrite, ſo the Sorrow of the true Chriſtian is but for *a Moment.* The Diſciples were *glad when they ſaw the Lord.* His Reſurrection was Life from the Dead to them; and their Sorrow for Chriſt's Sufferings was turn'd into Joy of ſuch a Nature as could not be dampt and imbittered by any Suffering of *their own.* They were *ſorrowful*, and yet always *rejoycing*, 2 Cor. 6. 10. had *ſorrowful* Lives, and yet *joyful* Hearts.

2. 'Tis applicable to all the faithful Followers of the Lamb, and deſcribes the common Caſe of Chriſtians.

1. Their Condition and Diſpoſition are both *mournful*; Sorrows are their Lot, and Seriouſneſs is their Temper: They that are acquainted with Chriſt, muſt, as he was, be *acquainted with Grief:* They *weep* and *lament* for that which others make light of, their own Sins, and the Sins of thoſe about them. They mourn *with* Sufferers that mourn, and mourn *for* Sinners that mourn not for themſelves.

2. The World at the ſame Time goes away with all the Mirth; they *laugh now* and ſpend their Days ſo jovially, that one would think they neither *knew* Sorrow, nor *feared* it. Carnal Mirth and Pleaſures are ſurely none of the beſt Things, for then the worſt Men would not have ſo large a ſhare of them, and the Favourites of Heaven be ſure Strangers to them.

3. *Spiritual Mourning* will ſhortly be turned into *Eternal Rejoycing.* Gladneſs is ſown for the upright in Heart that *ſow in Tears*, and without doubt they ſhall ſhortly reap in Joy. Their Sorrow will not only be *followed* with Joy, but *turn'd* into it, for the moſt precious Comforts take riſe from pious Griefs.

This he illuſtrates by a Similitude taken from a *Woman in travail*, to whoſe Sorrows he compares thoſe of his Diſciples, for their Encouragement; for it is the will of Chriſt that his People ſhould be a *comforted* People.

1. Here's the Similitude or Parable it ſelf, *v.* 21. *A Woman*, we know when *ſhe is in Travail hath ſorrow*, ſhe is in exquiſite pain, *becauſe her Hour is come*, the Hour which Nature and Providence have fixed, which ſhe hath expected, and cannot eſcape; but *as ſoon as ſhe is delivered of the Child*, provided ſhe be ſafely delivered, and the Child be, tho a *Jabez*, (1 Chron. 4. 9.) yet not a *Benoni*, Gen. 35. 18. then *ſhe remembers no more the Anguiſh*, her Groans and Complaints are all over; and the after Pains are eaſier born for *Joy that a Man is born into the World*, ἄνθρωπος one of the human Race, a Child, be it Son or Daughter, for the Word ſpeaks either. Obſerve,

(1.) The Fruit of the Curſe in the *Sorrow* and pain of a Woman in Travail, according to the Sentence, *Gen* 3. 16. *In Sorrow ſhalt thou bring forth.* Theſe Pains are *extreme*, the greateſt Griefs and Pains are compared to them, *Pſal.* 48.6. *Iſa.* 13. 8. and 21. 3. *Jer.* 4. 31. and 6. 24. and they are inevitable, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 3. See what this World is, all its Roſes are ſurrounded with Thorns; all the Children of Men are upon this account *fooliſh Children*, that they are the *heavineſs of her that bore them* from the very firſt. This comes of Sin.

(2.) The Fruit of the Bleſſing in the *Joy*, that is for *a Child born into the World.* If God had not preſerved the Bleſſing in force after the Fall, *Be fruitful and multiply*, Parents could never have looked upon their Children with any Comfort, but what is the Fruit of a Bleſſing is Matter of Joy. The Birth of a living Child, is, (1.) The *Parents Joy*; it *makes them very glad*, Jer. 20. 15. Tho' Children are certain Cares, uncertain Comforts, and oft prove the greateſt Croſſes, yet 'tis natural to us to rejoyce at their Birth. Could we be ſure that our Children like *John*, ſhould be *fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt*, we might indeed like his Parents have *Joy and Gladneſs* in their Birth, *Luke* 1. 14. 15. But when we conſider, not only that they are *born in ſin*, but as it is here expreſſed, they are born *into the World*, a World of Snares, and a Vale of Tears, we ſhall ſee Reaſon to rejoyce *with trembling*, leſt it ſhould prove better for them they had *never been born.*

(3.) 'Tis ſuch Joy as makes the anguiſh not to be *remembered*, or remembered *as Waters that paſs away*, Job, 11. 16. *Hoc olim meminiſſe juvabit*, Gen. 41. 51. Now this is very proper to ſet forth, (1.) The Sorrows of Chriſt's Diſciples in this World, they are like travailing Pains, *ſure* and *ſharp*, but not to laſt long, and in order to a joyful Product; they are in pain to be delivered, as the Church is deſcrib'd, *Rev.* 12. 2. and the whole Creation *Rom.* 8. 24. And, (2.) Their Joys after theſe Sorrows, which will *wipe away all Tears*, for the former Things are *paſſed away*, Rev. 21. 4. when they are born into that bleſſed World, and reap the Fruit of all their Services and Sorrows, the Toil and Anguiſh of this World will be no more remembered, as Chriſt's were not, when he *ſaw of the Travail of his Soul* abundantly to his Satisfaction, *Iſa.* 53. 11.

2. The Reddition of the Similitude, *v.* 22. Ye now *have Sorrow*, and are likely to have more. *But I will ſee you again*, and you me and then all will be well.

1. Here again he tells them of *their Sorrow*; ye now *therefore* have Sorrow; therefore becauſe I am leaving you, as is intimated in the Antitheſis, *I will ſee you again. Note*, Chriſt's withdrawings are juſt Cauſe of Grief to his Diſciples: If he *hide his Face*, they cannot but be troubled. When the Sun ſets the Sun Flower will hang the Head. And Chriſt takes notice of thoſe Griefs, has a *Bottle* for the Tears, and a *Book* for the Sighs of all gracious Mourners.

2. He more largely than before aſſures them of a return of Joy, *Pſal.* 30. 5. 11. He himſelf went through his own Griefs, and bore ours *for the Joy that was ſet before him*; and he would have us encourage our ſelves with the ſame Proſpect. Three Things recommend the Joy.

1. The *Cauſe* of it. *I will ſee you again*; I will make you a kind and friendly Viſit to enquire after you, and miniſter Comfort to you. *Note*, 1. Chriſt will graciouſly return to thoſe that wait for him, tho' for a ſmall Moment he has ſeemed to forſake them, *Iſa.* 54. 7. Men when they are preferred will ſcarce look upon their Inferiors, but the exalted Jeſus will viſit his Diſciples: They ſhall not only ſee him in his Glory, but he will ſee them in their Meanneſs. 2. Chriſt's returns are returns of Joy to all his Diſciples. When clouded Evidences are clear'd up, interrupted Communion reviv'd, *Then is the Mouth fill'd with laughter.*

2. The *Cordialneſs* of it, *Your Hearts ſhall rejoyce.* Divine Conſolations put gladneſs *into the Heart.* Joy in the Heart is *ſolid*, and not flaſhy, *ſecret*, and that which a Stranger doth not intermeddle with: 'Tis *ſweet*, and gives a good Man Satisfaction in himſelf; 'tis *ſure*, and not eaſily broken in upon. Chriſt's Diſciples ſhould *heartily* rejoyce in his Returns, ſincerely and greatly.

3. The *Continuance* of it, *Your Joy no Man taketh from you.* Men will attempt to take their Joy from them, they would if they could, but they ſhall not prevail. Some underſtand it of the *Eternal* Joy of them that are *glorified*; they that are entered into the Joy of the Lord ſhall *go no more out.* Our Joys on Earth we are liable to be robbed of by a Thouſand Accidents, but heavenly Joys are everlaſting. But I rather underſtand it of the *ſpiritual* Joys of thoſe that are *ſanctified*, particularly the Apoſtles Joy in their Apoſtleſhip: *Thanks be to God*, ſaith *Paul*, in the Name of the reſt, who *always cauſeth us to Triumph*, 2 Cor. 2. 14. A malicious World would have taken it from them; if Bonds and Baniſhments, Tortures and Deaths would have taken it from them, they had loſt it; but when they took every Thing elſe from them, they could not take this, *As ſorrowful, yet always rejoycing.* They could not rob them of their Joy, becauſe they could not ſeparate them from the love of Chriſt, could not rob them of their God, nor of their Treaſure in Heaven.

23 And in that day ye ſhall ask me nothing: Verily verily I ſay unto you, Whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you. 24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask and ye ſhall receive, that your joy may be full. Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you in proverbs: the time cometh, when I ſhall no more ſpeak unto you in proverbs, but I ſhall ſhew you plainly of the Father. 26 At that day ye ſhall ask in my name: and I ſay not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27 For the Father

himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

An Anſwer to their asking is here promiſed for their further Comfort. Now there are Two Ways of asking; asking by way of *Enquiry*, that's the asking of the *Ignorant*; and asking by way of *Requeſt*, and that's the asking of the *Indigent*: Chriſt here ſpeaks of both;

Firſt, By way of *Enquiry*, they ſhould *not need to ask*, v. 23. *In that Day ye ſhall ask me nothing*; ȣ̓κ ἐρωτήσετε ȣ̓δὲν, *Ye ſhall ask no Queſtions.* You ſhall have ſuch a clear Knowledge of Goſpel Myſteries by the opening of your Underſtandings, that you ſhall not need to *enquire*; as *Heb*, 8. 11. *They ſhall not teach*; you ſhall have more Knowledge on a ſudden than hitherto ye have had by diligent Attendance. They had asked ſome ignorant Queſtions, as *John* 9. 2. ſome ambitious Queſtions, as *Mat.* 18. 1. ſome diſtruſtful ones, as *Mat* 19. 27. ſome impertinent ones, as *John* 21. 21. ſome curious ones, as *Acts* 1. 6. but after the Spirit was poured out, nothing of all this. In the the Story of the Apoſtles Acts we ſeldom find them asking Queſtions, as *David*, Shall I do this? Or ſhall I go thither? For they were conſtantly under a Divine Conduct. In that weighty Caſe of preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, *Peter* went, *nothing Doubting*, Acts 10. 20. *Asking Queſtions* ſuppoſeth us *at a loſs*, or at leaſt at a *ſtand*, and the beſt of us have need to *ask Queſtions*; but we ſhould aim at ſuch a full *Aſſurance of Underſtanding*, as that we may not *heſitate*, but be conſtantly led in a plain Path both of Truth and Duty.

Now for this he gives a Reaſon, *v.* 25. which plainly refers to this Promiſe, that they ſhould not need to ask Queſtions. *Theſe Things have I ſpoken unto you in Proverbs*, in ſuch a Way as you have not thought ſo plain and intelligible as you could have wiſh'd, but the Time cometh when I ſhall *ſhew you plainly*, as plainly as you can deſire *of the Father*, ſo that you ſhall not need to ask Queſtions.

1. The great Thing Chriſt would lead them into was the Knowledge of God: *I will ſhew you the Father*, and bring you acquainted with him. This is that which Chriſt deſigns to *give*, and which all true Chriſtians deſire to *have*. When Chriſt would ſpeak the greateſt Favour intended for his Diſciples, he tells them he would *ſhew them plainly the Father*; for what is the Happineſs of Heaven, but immediately, and everlaſtingly to *ſee God*? To know God as *as the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, is the greateſt *Myſtery* for the *Underſtanding* to pleaſe it ſelf with the Contemplation of: And to know him as *our Father*, is the greateſt Happineſs for the Will and Affections to pleaſe themſelves with the Choice and Enjoyment of.

2. Of this he had hitherto ſpoken to them in *Proverbs*, which are *wiſe* Sayings, and *inſtructive*, but figurative, and reſting in Generals. Chriſt had ſpoken many Things very plainly to them, and expounded his Parables privately to his Diſciples. But, (1.) *Conſidering* their dulneſs and unaptneſs to receive what he ſaid to them, he might be ſaid to ſpeak *in Proverbs*; what he ſaid to them was as a *Book ſealed*, Iſa. 29. 11. (2.) *Comparing* the Diſcoveries he had made to them, in what he had ſpoken to their Ears with what he would make to them when he would put his Spirit into their Hearts. All hitherto had been but *Proverbs*: 'Twould be a pleaſing ſurprize to themſelves, and they would think themſelves in a new World when they would reflect upon all their former Notions as confuſed and ænigmatical, compared with their preſent clear, and diſtinct Knowledge of Divine Things. The Miniſtration of the *Letter* was nothing to that of the *Spirit*, 2. Cor. 3. 8, 11. (3.) *Confining* it to what he had ſaid of the *Father*, and the Counſels of the Father, what he had ſaid was very dark, compared with what was ſhortly to be *revealed*, Col. 2. 2.

3. He would ſpeak to them *plainly*, παῤῥησίᾳ, *with freedom*, of the *Father*. When the Spirit was poured out, the Apoſtles attained to a much greater Knowledge of Divine Things than they had before, as appears by the *utterance the Spirit gave them*, Acts 2. 4. Theſe Things which they had a very *confuſed Idea* of before they were led into the *Myſtery* of; and what the Spirit *ſhewed* them, Chriſt is here ſaid to *ſhew* them, for as the Father ſpeaks by the Son, ſo the Son by the Spirit. But this promiſe will have its full Accompliſhment in Heaven, where we ſhall ſee the Father *as he is*, *Face to Face*, not as we do now, *through a Glaſs darkly*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. which is Matter of Comfort to us under the Cloud of preſent Darkneſs, by reaſon of which we cannot *order our Speech*, but often *diſorder* it. While we are here we have many Queſtions to ask concerning the inviſible God, and the inviſible World, but in that Day we ſhall ſee all Things clearly, and *ask no more Queſtions*.

Secondly, He promiſeth that by way of *Requeſt*. they ſhould *ask nothing in vain*. 'Tis taken for granted that all Chriſt's Diſciples give themſelves to Prayer: He had taught them by his Precept and Pattern to be much in Prayer; that muſt be their Support and Comfort when he had left them; their Inſtruction, Direction, Strength and Succeſs muſt be fetch'd in by Prayer.

Now, 1. Here is an *expreſs Promiſe* of a Grant, *v.* 23. The *Preface* to this Promiſe is ſuch as makes it *inviolably ſure*, and leaves no room to queſtion it; *Verily, verily, I ſay unto you*, I pawn my Veracity upon it; The *Promiſe* it ſelf is *incomparably* Rich, and Sweet; the golden Scepter is here held out to us, with this Word, *What is thy Petition, and it ſhall be granted*? For he ſaith, *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask the Father in my Name he will give it you.* We had it before, *Chap.* 14. 13. What would we more? The Promiſe is as expreſs as we can deſire.

(1.) We are here taught how to *ſeek*; we muſt *ask the Father in Chriſt's Name*; we muſt have an Eye to God as a Father, and come as Children to him; and to Chriſt as Mediator, and come as Clients. *Asking of the Father* includes a Senſe of ſpiritual Wants, and a deſire of ſpiritual Bleſſings, with a Conviction that they are to be had from God only: As alſo a Humility of Addreſs to him, with a believing Confidence in him, as a Father able and ready to help us. Asking in *Chriſt's Name* includes an Acknowledgment of our own Unworthineſs to receive any Favour from God, and a complacency in the Method God has taken of keeping up a Correſpondency with us by his Son, and an intire Dependance upon Chriſt as *the Lord our Righteouſneſs*.

(2.) We are here told how we ſhall *ſpeed*; *He will give it you.* What more can we wiſh for, than to have what we *want*, nay, to have what we *will*, in Conformity to God's Will, for the asking. He *will give it you*, from whom *proceedeth every good and perfect Gift*. What Chriſt purchaſed by the Merit of his Death, he needed not for himſelf, but *intended* it for, and *conſign'd* it to his faithful Followers; and having given a valuable Conſideration for it, which was accepted in full, by this Promiſe he draws a Bill as it were upon the Treaſury in Heaven, which we are to preſent by Prayer, and *in his Name* to ask for that which is purchaſed and promiſed, according to the true intent of the New Covenant. Chriſt had promiſed them great Illumination by the Spirit, but they muſt pray for it, and did ſo, *Acts* 1. 14. God will for this be *enquired of*. He had promiſed them Perfection hereafter, but what ſhall they do in the mean Time? They muſt continue *praying*. Perfect Fruition is reſerved for the Land of our Reſt; *Asking* and *Receiving* is the Comfort of the Land of our Pilgrimage.

2. Here is an Invitation to them to petition. 'Tis thought ſufficient if Great Men permit Addreſſes, but Chriſt calls upon us to petition, *v.* 24.

1. He looks back upon their Practice hitherto, *Hitherto have ye ask'd nothing in my Name*. That refers either, (1.) To the *Matter of* their Prayers. Ye have asked nothing comparatively, nothing to what you might have ask'd, and will ask when the Spirit is poured out. See what a generous Benefactor our Lord Jeſus is above all Benefactors; he *gives liberally*, and is ſo far from upbraiding us with the frequency and largeneſs of his Gifts, that he rather upbraids us with the ſeldomneſs and ſtraitneſs of our Requeſts: *You have asked nothing* in compariſon of what you want, and what I have to give, and have promiſed to give. We are bid to *open our Mouths wide*. Or, (2.) To the Name in which they prayed. They prayed many a Prayer, but never ſo expreſly in the Name of Chriſt as now he was directing them to do; for he had not as yet offered that great Sacrifice, in the Virtue of which our Prayers were to be accepted, nor entered upon his Interceſſion for us, the Incenſe whereof was to perfume all our Devotions, and ſo enable us to pray in his Name. Hitherto they had caſt out Devils and healed Diſeaſes in the Name of Chriſt, as a King and Prophet, but they could not as yet diſtinctly pray *in his Name* as a Prieſt.

2. He looks forwards to their Practice for the future. *Ask and ye ſhall receive, that your Joy may be full.* Here, (1.) he directs them to *ask* for all that which they needed, and had promiſed. (2.) He aſſures them that they ſhall *receive*. What we ask from a Principle of Grace, God will graciouſly give: *Ye ſhall receive it.* There's ſomething more in that than in the Promiſe, that he will *give* it. He will not only give it, but give you to receive it, give you the Comfort and Benefit of it, *a Heart to eat of it*, Eccl. 6. 2. (3.) That hereby *their Joy ſhall be full.* Which ſpeaks, (1.) The Bleſſed Effect of the *Prayer of Faith*, it helps to fill up the *Joy of Faith*. Would we have our Joy full, as full as it is capable of being in this World, we muſt be *much in Prayer*. When we are bid to *Rejoyice evermore*, it follows immediately, *Pray without ceaſing*. See how high we are to aim in Prayer, not at Peace but at Joy, *a fullneſs of Joy*. Or, (2.) The bleſſed Effects of the *Anſwer of Peace*. Ask and ye ſhall receive that which will *fill your Joy*. Chriſt's Gifts through Chriſt fill the Treaſures of the Soul, they fill its Joys, *Prov.* 8. 21. Ask for the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt and ye ſhall receive it; and where as other Knowledge *increaſeth Sorrow*, Eccl. 1. 1. the Knowledge he gives will *increaſe*, will fill *your Joy*.

3. Here are the Grounds upon which they might hope to ſpeed, *v.* 26, 27. which are ſumm'd up in ſhort by the Apoſtle, 1 *John* 2. 1. *We have an Advocate with the Father.*

1. We have an *Advocate*, and as to that Chriſt ſaw cauſe at preſent not to inſiſt upon it, only to make the following Encouragement ſhine brighter. *I ſay not unto you that I will pray the Father for you.* Suppoſe I ſhould not tell you that I will intercede for you, ſhould not undertake to ſollicite every particular Cauſe you have depending there, yet it may be a general Ground of Comfort that I have ſettled a Coreſpondence between you and God; have erected a Throne of Grace, and conſecrated for you *a new and living Way into the holieſt*. He ſpeaks as if they needed not any further Favours, when he had prevailed for the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt to *make Interceſſion within them*, as a Spirit of Adoption, crying *Abba, Father*; as if they had no further need of him to pray for them now, but we ſhall find he doth *more for us* than he *ſaith he will*. Men's Performances often come ſhort of their Promiſes, but Chriſt's go beyond them.

2. We have to do with *a Father*, which is ſo great an Encouragement, that it doth in a manner ſuperſede the other. *For the Father himſelf loveth you*, φιλεῖ ὑμᾶς, He is a Friend to you, and you cannot be better befriended. *Note*, The Diſciples of Chriſt are the beloved of God himſelf. Chriſt not only turned away God's Wrath from us, and brought us into the Covenant of Peace and Reconciliation, but purchaſed his Favour for us, and brought us into a Covenant of Friendſhip. Obſerve what an Emphaſis is laid upon *this*, *the Father himſelf loveth you*; who is perfectly happy in the Enjoyment of himſelf, whoſe *Self-love* is both his infinite Rectitude, and his infinite Bleſſedneſs, yet he is pleaſed to *love you*. The Father *himſelf*, whoſe Favour you have forfeited, and whoſe Wrath you have incurr'd, and with whom you need an Advocate, he *himſelf* now *loves you*.

Obſerve, 1. Why the Father loved the Diſciples of Chriſt, *Becauſe ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God*, i. e. becauſe ye are my Diſciples indeed; not as if the Love began on *their* Side, but when by his Grace he has wrought in us a Love to him, he is well-pleaſed with the Work of his own Hands. See here, (1.) What is the Character of Chriſt's Diſciples; they love him becauſe they *believe he came out from God*, is the only begotten of the Father, and his High Commiſſioner to the World. *Note*, Faith in Chriſt works by Love to him, *Gal.* 5. 6. If we believe him to be the *Son of God*, we cannot but love him as infinitely lovely in himſelf; and if we believe him to be *our Saviour*, we cannot but love him as the moſt kind to us. Obſerve with what reſpect Chriſt is pleaſed to ſpeak of his Diſciples Love to him, and how kindly he took it; he ſpeaks of it as that which recommended them to his Father's Favour. Ye have *loved me*, and *believed* in me when the World has hated and rejected me; and you ſhall be diſtinguiſhed who have thus diſtinguiſhed your ſelves. (2.) See what Advantage Chriſt's faithful Diſciples have, the Father *loves them*, and that becauſe they love Chriſt; ſo well pleaſed is he in him, that he is well pleaſed with all his Friends.

2. What Encouragement this gave them in Prayer. They need not fear ſpeeding when they came to one that loved them, and wiſh'd them well. (1.) This cautions us againſt hard Thoughts of God. When we were taught in Prayer to plead Chriſt's Merit and Interceſſion, 'tis not as if all the Kindneſs were in Chriſt only, and in God nothing but Wrath and Fury; no, the Matter is not ſo, the Father's Love and good Will appointed Chriſt to be the Mediator; ſo that we owe Chriſt's *Merit* to God's Mercy in giving him for us. (2.) Let it *cheriſh* and confirm in us good *Thoughts* of God. Believers that love Chriſt ought to know that God loves them, and therefore to come boldly to him as Children to a loving Father.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World: again, I leave the World, and go to the Father. 29 His diſciples ſaid unto him, Lo, now ſpeakeſt thou plainly, and ſpeakeſt no proverb. 30 Now are we ſure that thou knoweſt all things, and needeſt not that any man ſhould ask thee: by this we believe that thou cameſt forth from God. 31 Jeſus anſwered them, Do ye now believe? 32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye ſhall be ſcattered every man to his own, and ſhall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, becauſe the Father is with me. 33 Theſe things I have ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the World ye ſhall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the World.

Two Things Chriſt here comforts his Diſciples with:

Firſt, With an Aſſurance that, tho' he was leaving the World, he was returning to his Father, from whom he came forth, *v.* 28--32. Where we have,

1. A plain Declaration of Chriſt's Miſſion from the Father, and his return to him, *v.* 28. *I am come forth from the Father, and am come*, as you ſee, *into the World: Again, I leave the World*, as you will ſee ſhortly, and *go to the Father*. This is the Concluſion of the whole Matter: There was nothing he had more inculcated upon them, than theſe Two Things, whence he came, and whither he went; the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the *Myſtery of Godlineſs*, 1 Tim. 3. 16. That the Redeemer in his Entrance was *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*, and in his Exit was *received up into Glory*. Theſe Two great Truths are here, (1.) *Contracted*, and put into a few Words. Brief Summaries of Chriſtian Doctrine are of great uſe to young Beginners. The Principles of the Oracles of God brought into a little Compaſs in Creeds and Catechiſms, have like the Beams of the Sun *contracted* in a Burning-Glaſs, convey'd Divine Light and Heat with a wonderful Power. Such we have, *Job* 28. 28. *Eccl.* 12, 13. 1. *Tim.* 1. 15. *Tit.* 2. 11, 12. 1 *John* 5. 11. much in a little. (2.) *Compared* and ſet the one over againſt the other. There is an admirable Harmony in Divine Truths; they do both corroborate and illuſtrate one another; Chriſt's coming and his going to do ſo; Chriſt had commended his Diſciples for believing that he *came forth from God*, v. 27. and from thence infers the neceſſity and equity of his returning to God again, which therefore ſhould not ſeem to them either ſtrange or ſad. *Note*, The due improvement of what we know and own would help us into the underſtanding of that which ſeems difficult and doubtful.

If we ask concerning the Redeemer, *whence he came*, and *whither he went*, we are here told,

1. That he *came forth from the Father*, who ſanctified and ſeal'd him; and he came into this World, this lower World, this World of Mankind, among whom by his Incarnation he was pleaſed to incorporate himſelf: Here his Buſineſs lay, and hither he came to attend it. He left his Home for this ſtrange Country; his Palace for this Cottage; wonderful Condeſcenſion!

2. That when he had done his Work on Earth, he left the World, and went back to his Father at his Aſcenſion. He was not forced away, but made it his own Act and Deed to *leave this World*, to return to it no more till he comes to put an End to it; yet ſtill he is ſpiritually preſent with his Church, and will be to the End.

3. The Diſciples Satisfaction in this Declaration, *v.* 29, 30. *Lo now ſpeakeſt thou plainly*. It ſhould ſeem this one Word of Chriſt did them more good than all the reſt, though he had ſaid many Things likely enough to faſten upon them. The Spirit as the Wind, blows when and where, and by what Word he pleaſeth; perhaps a Word that has been *ſpoken once, yea twice*, and not *perceived*, yet being often repeated takes hold at laſt.

Two Things they improved in by this Saying.

1. In Knowledge: *Lo, now ſpeakeſt thou plainly*. When they were in the dark concerning what he ſaid, they did not ſay, Lo, now ſpeakeſt thou *obſcurely*, and blaming *him*; but now they apprehend his meaning, they give him Glory for condeſcending to their Capacity, *Lo, now ſpeakeſt thou plainly*. Divine Truths are then moſt likely to do good when they are ſpoken *plainly*, 1 Cor. 2. 4. Obſerve how they triumphed, as the Mathematician did with his εὕρηκα, εὕρηκα, when he had lit upon a Demonſtration he had long been in queſt of, *I have found it, I have found it*. *Note*, When Chriſt is pleaſed to ſpeak plainly to our Souls, and to bring us with open Face to behold the Glory, we have Reaſon to rejoyce in it.

2. In Faith: *Now are we ſure*. Obſerve,

1. What was the *Matter* of their Faith, *We believe that thou cameſt forth from God*. He had ſaid, *v.* 27. that they did believe this, Lord (ſay they) we do believe it, and we have cauſe to believe it, and we know that we believe it, and have the Comfort of it.

2. What was the *Motive of their* Faith? His *Omniſcience*. This proved him a Teacher come from God, and more than a Prophet, that he *knew all Things*, which they were convinced of by this, that he reſolved thoſe Doubts which were hid in their Hearts, and anſwered the Scruples they had not confeſs'd. *Note*, Theſe know Chriſt beſt that know him by Experience; that can ſay of his Power, it *works in me*; of his Love, that he *loved me*. And this proves Chriſt not only to have a Divine Miſſion, but to be a Divine Perſon; that he is a diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart, therefore the eſſential Eternal Word, *Heb.* 4 12, 13. He has made all the Churches to know that he ſearcheth the Reins and the Heart, *Rev* 2. 23. This confirmed the Faith of the Diſciples here, as it made the firſt Impreſſion upon the Woman of *Samaria*, that Chriſt *told her all Things that ever ſhe did*, John 4. 29. and upon *Nathanael*, that Chriſt *ſaw him under the Fig-tree*, John 1. 49.

Theſe Words, *And needeſt not that any Man ſhould ask thee*, may ſpeak either, (1.) Chriſt's *aptneſs* to Teach. He prevents us with his Inſtructions, and is communicative of the *Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge* that are hid in him, and needs not to be importun'd. Or (2.) His *Ability* to teach. Thou needeſt not, as other Teachers, to have the Learner's Doubts told thee, for thou knoweſt without being told what they ſtumble at. The beſt of Teachers can only anſwer what is *ſpoken*, but Chriſt can anſwer what is *Thought*, what we *are afraid to ask*, as the Diſciples were, *Mark.* 9. 32. Thus he *can have Compaſſion*, Heb. 5. 2.

3. The gentle Rebuke Chriſt gave the Diſciples for their Confidence, that they now underſtood him, *v.* 31, 32. obſerving how they triumphed in their Attainments, he ſaid, *Do ye now believe?* Do ye now look upon your ſelves as advanced and confirmed Diſciples? Do ye now think you ſhall make no more Blunders? alas, ye know not your own Weakneſs; you will very ſhortly *be ſcattered every Man to his own*, &c. Here we have,

1. A Queſtion deſigned to put them upon Conſideration, *Do ye now believe?* (1.) If *now*, why not *ſooner?* Have ye not heard the ſame Things many a Time before? They who after many Inſtructions and Invitations, are at laſt perſwaded to believe, have reaſon to be aſhamed that they ſtood it out ſo long. (2.) If *now*, why not *ever?* When an Hour of Temptation comes, where will your Faith be then? As far as there is Inconſtancy in our Faith, there is cauſe to queſtion the Sincerity of it, and to ask, Do we indeed believe?

2. Prediction of their Fall; that how confident ſoever they were now of their own ſtability, in a little Time they would all deſert him; which was fulfilled that very Night, when upon his being ſeized by a Party of the Guards, *All his Diſciples forſook him and fled*, Mat. 26. 56. They were ſcattered, (1.) From *one another*, they ſhifted every one for his own Safety, without any Care or Concern for each other. Troubleous Times are Times of ſcattering to Chriſtian Societies; in the cloudy and dark Day, the Flock

of Chriſt is diſperſed, *Ezek.* 39. 12. ſo Chriſt as a Society is not *viſible.* (2.) Scattered *from him; ye ſhall leave me alone.* They ſhould have been Witneſſes for him upon his Trial, ſhould have miniſtered to him in his Sufferings; if they could have given him no *Comfort*, they might have done him ſome *Credit*; but they were aſhamed of his Chain, and afraid of ſharing with him in his Sufferings, and *left him alone. Note*, Many a good Cauſe when it is *diſtreſſed* by its Enemies, is *deſerted* by its Friends. The Diſciples had *continued with Chriſt* in his other *Temptations*, and yet turned their Back upon him now; thoſe that are *tried*, do not always prove *truſty*. If we at any time find our Friends unkind to us, let us remember that Chriſt's were ſo to him.

When they left him alone, they were ſcattered *every Man to his own*; not to their own Poſſeſſions or Habitations, thoſe were in *Galilee*, but to their own Friends and Acquaintance in *Jeruſalem*; every one went *his own way*, where he fancied he ſhould be moſt ſafe. Every Man to ſecure *his own*, i. e. himſelf and his own Life. *Note*, Thoſe will not dare to ſuffer for their Religion that *ſeek their own Things*, more than the *Things of Chriſt*, and that look upon the Things of this World as their τὰ ἴδια, *their own* Propriety, and in which their Happineſs is bound up. Now obſerve here,

(1.) Chriſt knew before, that his Diſciples would thus deſert him in the critical Moment, and yet he was ſtill tender of them, and in nothing *unkind*. We are ready to ſay of ſome, if we could have foreſeen their Ingratitude, we would not have been ſo prodigal of our Favours to them; Chriſt did foreſee theirs, and yet was kind to them.

(2.) He told them of it to be a Rebuke to their Exultation, in their preſent Attainments. *Do ye now believe?* Be not high-minded, but fear; for you will find your Faith ſo ſorely ſhaken, as to make it queſtionable whether it be ſincere or no in a little time. *Note*, Even then when we are taking the Comfort of our Graces, it is good to be minded of our Danger from our Corruptions. When our Faith is ſtrong, our Love flaming, and Evidences clear, yet we cannot infer from thence, that *to Morrow ſhall be as this Day.* Even then when we have moſt Reaſon to think we ſtand, yet we have Reaſon enough to take heed leſt we fall.

(3.) He ſpoke of it as a thing very near. *The Hour was* already *come* in a manner, when they would be as ſhy of him, as ever they had been fond of him. *Note*, A little Time may produce great Changes, both concerning us, and in us.

3. An Aſſurance of his own Comfort notwithſtanding; *yet I am not alone.* He would not be thought to complain of their deſerting him, as if it were any real Damage to him, for in their Abſence he ſhould be ſure of his Father's Preſence, which was *inſtar omnium*, the *Father is with me.* We may conſider this,

1. As a Privilege peculiar to the Lord Jeſus; the Father was ſo with him in his Sufferings as he never was with any, for ſtill he was *in the Boſom of the Father.* The Divine Nature did not deſert the human Nature, but ſupported it, and put an invincible Comfort, and an ineſtimable Value into his Sufferings, The Father had engaged to be with him in his whole Undertaking, *Pſal.* 89. 21, &c. and to preſerve him, *Iſa.* 49. 8. and this emboldened him, *Iſa.* 50. 7. then when he complained of his Father's forſaking him, yet he called him my God, and preſently after, was ſo well aſſured of his favourable Preſence with him, as to commit his Spirit into his Hand. This he had comforted himſelf with all along, *John* 8. 29. *He that ſent me is with me, the Father hath not left me alone*, and eſpecially now at laſt. This aſſiſts our Faith in the Acceptableneſs of Chriſt's Satisfaction; no doubt the Father was well pleaſed in him, for he went along with him in his Undertaking from firſt to laſt.

2. As a Privilege common to all Believers, by Virtue of their Union with Chriſt, when they *are alone*, they are *not alone*, but *the Father is with them.* (1.) When Solitude is *their Choice*, when they are alone as *Iſaac* in the Field, *Nathaniel* under the Fig-tree, *Peter* upon the Houſe-top, meditating and praying; the Father is with them. They that converſe with God in Solitude, are never leſs alone than when alone. A good God and a good Heart, are good Company at any Time. 2. When Solitude is *their Affliction*, their Enemies lay them alone, and their Friends leave them ſo, their Company like *Job's*, is *made deſolate*, yet they are not ſo much alone as they are thought to be, the Father is with them, as he was with *Joſeph* in his Bonds, and with *John* in his Baniſhment. In their greateſt Trouble, they are as one *whom his Father pities*, as *one whom his Mother comforts.* And while we have God's favourable Preſence with us, we are happy, and ought to be eaſy, tho' all the World forſake us. *Non Deo tribuimus juſtum honorem; niſi ſolus ipſe nobis ſufficiat.* Calvin.

Secondly, He comforts them with a Promiſe of Peace in him, by Virtue of his Victory over the World, whatever Troubles they might meet with in it, *v.* 33. *Theſe Things I have ſpoken, that in me ye might have Peace*, and if ye have it not in me, ye will not have it at all, *for in the World ye ſhall have Tribulation*, you muſt expect no other, and yet may chear up your ſelves, for I have *overcome the World.* Obſerve,

1. The *End* Chriſt aim'd at in preaching this Farewel Sermon to his Diſciples; *That in him they might have Peace.* He did not hereby intend to give them a full View of that Doctrine which they were ſhortly to be made Maſters of, by the pouring out of the Spirit, but only to ſatisfy them for the preſent, that his Departure from them was really for the beſt. Or we may take it more generally, Chriſt had ſaid all this to them, that by enjoying him they might have the beſt Enjoyment of themſelves. *Note*, 1. It is the Will of Chriſt, that his Diſciples ſhould have *Peace within*, whatever their Troubles may be without. 2. Peace in Chriſt is the only true Peace, and in him alone Believers have it, for *this Man ſhall be the Peace*, Mic. 5. 5. *Through him* we have Peace with God, and ſo in him we have Peace in our own Minds. 3. The Word of Chriſt aims at this, *that in him we have Peace.* Peace is the *Fruit of the Lips*, of his Lips, *Iſa.* 57. 19.

2. The *Entertainment* they were like to meet with in the World. You ſhall not have outward Peace, never expect it; tho' they were ſent to proclaim *Peace on Earth*, and *good Will towards Men*, they muſt expect Trouble on Earth, and ill Will from Men. *Note*, It has been the Lot of Chriſt's Diſciples to have more or leſs Tribulation in this World. Men perſecute them becauſe they are ſo good, and God corrects them becauſe they are no better. Men deſign to cut them off from the Earth, and God deſigns by Affliction to make them meet for Heaven, and ſo between both *they ſhall have Tribulation.*

3. The Encouragement Chriſt gives them, with reference hereunto; *be of good Cheer*, Θαρσεῖτε, not only be of good *Comfort*, but be of good *Courage*; have a good Heart on it, all ſhall be well. *Note*, In the midſt of the Tribulations of this World, it is the Duty and Intereſt of Chriſt's Diſciples to be of good chear, to keep up their Delight in God whatever is *preſſing*, and their Hope in God whatever is *threatning*; as *ſorrowful* indeed in compliance with the Temper of the Climate, and yet *alway rejoycing*, always chearful, 2 *Cor.* 6. 10 even *in Tribulation*, Rom. 5. 3.

4. The Ground of that Encouragement. *I have overcome the World.* Chriſt's Victory is a Chriſtian's Triumph. Chriſt overcame the *Prince of this World*, diſarm'd him, and caſt him out; and ſtill treads Satan under our Feet. He overcame the *Children of this World*, by the Converſion of many to the Faith and Obedience of his Goſpel, making them the Children of his Kingdom. When he ſends his Diſciples to preach the Goſpel to all the World, *Be of good cheer*, ſaith he, *I have overcome the World*, as far as I have gone, and *ſo ſhall you*; though you have Tribulation in the World, yet you ſhall gain your Point, and captivate the World, *Rev.* 6. 2. He overcame *the Wicked of the World*, for many a time he put his Enemies to Silence, to Shame, and be you of good chear, for the Spirit will enable you to do ſo too. He overcame the *evil Things of the World*, by *ſubmitting* to them; he endured the Croſs, deſpiſing it, and the ſhame of it; and the *good things* of it, by being wholly dead to them; its Honours had no Beauty in his Eye, its Pleaſures no Charms. Never was there ſuch a Conqueror of the World as Chriſt was; and we ought to be encourag'd by it: (1.) Becauſe Chriſt has overcome the World *before us*; ſo that we may look upon it as a conquered Enemy, that has many a time been baffled. Nay, (2.) he has conquered it *for us*, as the Captain of our Salvation, we are intereſted in his Victory; by his Croſs the World is *crucified* to *us*, which ſpeaks it compleatly conquered, and put into our Poſſeſſion; all is yours even *the World*, Chriſt having overcome the World, Believers have nothing to do but to purſue their Victory, and *divide the Spoil*; and this we do *by Faith*, 1 John 5. 4. *We are more than Conquerors through him that loved us.*

CHAP. XVII.

This Chapter is a Prayer, it is the Lord's Prayer, the Lord Chriſt's Prayer. There was one Lord's Prayer which he taught us to pray, and did not pray himſelf, for he needed not to pray for the Forgiveneſs of Sin; but this was properly and peculiarly his, *and ſuited him only as Mediator, and is a Sampler of his Interceſſion, and yet is of uſe to us both for Inſtruction* and *Encouragement in Prayer. Obſerve,* (1.) *The Circumſtances of the Prayer* v. 1. (2.) *The Prayer it ſelf.* (1.) *He prays for himſelf*, v. 1—5. (2.) *He prays for thoſe that are his. And there ſee,* (1.) *The general Pleas with which he introduceth his Petitions for them*, v. 6—10. (2.) *The particular Petitions he puts up for them,* (1.) *That they might be* kept *v.* 11—16. (2) *That they might be ſanctified,* v. 17—19. (3.) *That they might be united,* v. 11, *and* v. 20—23. (4.) *That they might be* glorified. *v.* 24—26.

THeſe words ſpake Jeſus; and lift up his eyes to heaven, and ſaid, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son alſo may glorify thee. 2. As thou haſt given him Power over all fleſh, that he ſhould give eternal life to as many as thou haſt given him. 3 And this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent. 4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorifie thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Here's 1. The Circumſtances of this Prayer, *v.* 1. Many a ſolemn Prayer Chriſt made in the Days of his Fleſh, ſometimes he continued all Night in Prayer. But none of his Prayers are recorded ſo full as this. Obſerve,

1. The Time when he prayed this Prayer; when he had *ſpoken theſe Words*, had given the foregoing Farewel to his Diſciples, he prayed this Prayer in their Hearing; ſo that,

(1.) It was a Prayer *after Sermon*; when he had ſpoken from God to them, he turned to ſpeak to God for them. *Note*, Thoſe we *preach to*, we muſt *pray for*. He that uſes to Prophecy upon the dry Bones, was alſo to Pray, *Come, O Breath*, and *breath* upon them. And the Word *preached* ſhould be *prayed over*, for God *gives the Encreaſe*.

(2) It was a Prayer *after Sacrament*; after Chriſt and his Diſciples had eaten the Paſſover, and the Lord's Supper together, and he had given them a ſuitable Exhortation, he cloſ'd the Solemnity with this Prayer; that God would preſerve the good Impreſſions of the Ordinances upon them.

(3.) It was a *Family* Prayer. Chriſt's Diſciples were his Family; and to ſet a good Example before Maſters of Families, he not only as a Son of *Abraham taught his Houſhold*, Gen. 18. 19. but as a Son of *David bleſs'd his Houſhold*, 2 Sam. 6. 20. prayed for them, and with them.

(4.) It was a *Parting* Prayer; when we and our Family are parting, 'tis good to part with Prayer, *Acts* 20. 36. Chriſt was parting by Death, and that Parting ſhould be ſanctified and ſweetened by Prayer. Dying *Jacob* bleſſed the twelve Patriarchs, dying *Moſes* the twelve Tribes, and ſo here, dying Jeſus the twelve Apoſtles.

(5.) It was a Prayer that was a *Preface to his Sacrifice* he was now about to offer on Earth, ſpecifying the Favours and Bleſſings deſigned to be purchaſed by the Merits of his Death, for thoſe that were his, like a *Deed leading the Uſes of a Fine*, and directing to what Intents and Purpoſes it ſhall be levy'd. Chriſt prayed then, as a Prieſt now offering Sacrifice, in the Vertue of which, all Prayers were to be made.

(6.) It was a Prayer that was a *Specimen* of his Interceſſion, which he ever lives to make for us within the Vail. Not that in his exalted State he addreſſeth himſelf to his Father by way of humble Petition, as when he was on Earth. No, his Interceſſion in Heaven is a preſenting of his Merit to his Father, with a ſuing out of the Benefit of it for all his choſen ones.

2. The outward Expreſſion of fervent Deſire which he uſed in his Prayer, he *lift up his Eyes to Heaven*, as before, *John* 11. 41. not that Chriſt needed thus to engage his own Intention, but he was pleas'd thus to ſanctify this Geſture to thoſe that uſe it, and juſtify it againſt thoſe that ridicule it. 'Tis ſignificant of the lifting up of the Soul to God in Prayer, *Pſal.* 25. 1. *Surſum Corda* was antiently uſed as a Call to Prayer, *Up with your Hearts*; up to Heaven; thither we muſt direct our Deſires in Prayer, and thence we muſt expect to receive the good Things we pray for.

2. The firſt part of the Prayer it ſelf, in which Chriſt prays for himſelf. Obſerve here,

1. He Prays to God as a *Father. He lift up his Eyes*, and ſaid, *Father. Note*, As a Prayer is to be made to God only, ſo it is our Duty in Prayer to eye him as a Father, and to call him our Father. All that have the Spirit of Adoption, are taught to cry *Abba Father*, Rom. 8. 15. Gal. 4. 6. If God be our Father, we have Liberty of Acceſs to him, Ground of Confidence in him, and great Expectations from him. Chriſt calls him here, *Holy Father*, v. 11. and *Righteous Father*, v. 25. For it will be of great Uſe to us in Prayer, both for our Direction and Encouragement to call God, as we hope to find him.

2. He pray'd for himſelf firſt; tho' Chriſt as God was *prayed to*, Chriſt as Man *prayed*; thus *it became him to fullfil all Righteouſneſs*. 'Twas ſaid to him, as 'tis ſaid to us, *Ask, and I will give thee*, Pſal. 2. 8. What he had purchaſed, he muſt *ask for*, and ſhall we expect to have what we never *merited*, but have a thouſand times forfeited, unleſs we pray for it? This puts an Honour upon Prayer, that it was the Meſſenger Chriſt ſent on *his* Errands, the way in which even *he* correſponded with Heaven. It likewiſe gives great Encouragement to praying People, and Cauſe to hope that even the *Prayer of the Deſtitute* ſhall not be *deſpiſed*; Time was, when he that is Advocate for us, had a Cauſe of his own to ſollicite, a great Cauſe, on the Succeſs of which depended all his Honour as Mediator, and this he was to ſollicite in the ſame Method that is preſcribed to us, *by Prayer and Supplications*, Heb. 5. 7. ſo that he *knows the Heart of a Petitioner*, Exod, 23. 9. he knows the way. Now obſerve,

1. Chriſt began with Prayer *for himſelf*, and afterward prayed for his Diſciples; this Charity muſt *begin at Home*, tho' it muſt not *end there*. We muſt love and pray for our Neighbour as our ſelves, and therefore muſt in a right manner love and pray for our ſelves. Firſt;

1. He was much ſhorter in his Prayer for himſelf, than in his Prayer for his Diſciples. Our Prayers for the Church muſt not be crouded into a Corner of our Prayers; in making *Supplications for all Saints*, we have room enough to enlarge, and ſhould not ſtraiten our ſelves,

Now here are two Petitions which Chriſt puts up for himſelf, and they two are one, that he might be *glorified*. But this one Petition, *Glorify thou me*, is twice put up, becauſe it has a double Reference. (1.) To the Proſecutors of his Undertaking further, *Glorify me, that I may glorify thee*, in doing what is agreed upon, to be yet done, *v.* 1, 2, 3. And, (2.) To the Performance of his Undertaking hitherto, *Glorify, me for I have glorified thee.* I have done my part, and now, Lord, do thine, *v.* 4, 5.

Firſt, Chriſt here prays to be *glorified*, in order to his *glorifying God*, v. 1. *Glorify thy Son*, according to thy Promiſe, *that thy Son may Glorify thee*, according to his Undertaking. Here Obſerve,

1. What he prays for, that he might be glorified in this World. *The Hour is come*, when all the Powers of Darkneſs will continue to *vilify* thy Son, now, Father, glorify him. The Father *glorified the Son* upon Earth, (1.) Even in his Sufferings, by the Signs and Wonders which attended them. When they that came to take him were Thunder-ſtruck with a Word, when *Judas* confeſs'd him Innocent, and ſealed that Confeſſion with his own guilty Blood; when the Judge's Wife, *aſleep*, and the Judge himſelf, awake, pronounced him righteous; when the Sun was darkened, and the Vail of the Temple rent, then the Father not only *juſtified*, but *glorified* the Sor. Nay, (2.) even by his Sufferings; when he was crucified, he was magnified, he was glorified, *John* 13. 31. 'Twas in his Croſs that he conquered Satan and Death; his Thorns were a Crown, and *Pilate* in the Inſcription over his Head, wrote more than he thought. But, (3.) Much more after his Sufferings; the Father glorified the Son when he *raiſed him from the Dead*, ſhewed him openly to choſen Witneſſes, and poured out the Spirit to ſupport and plead his Cauſe, and ſet up his Kingdom among Men, then he *glorified him*. This he here prays for, and inſiſts upon.

2. What he pleads to enforce this Requeſt.

1. He pleads *Relation*; glorify *thy Son*; thy Son as God, as Mediator. 'Tis in Conſideration of this, that the *Heathen*, are *given him for his Inheritance, for thou art my Son*, Pſal. 2. 7, 8. The Devil had tempted him to renounce his Sonſhip, with an Offer of the Kingdoms of this World, but he rejected it with Diſdain, and depended upon his Father for his Preferment, and here applies himſelf to him for it. *Note*, They that have received the Adoption of Sons, may in Faith pray for the Inheritance of Sons, if ſanctified, then glorified; *Father, glorify they Son.*

2. He pleads the *Time, the Hour is come*; the Seaſon prefixed to an Hour. The Hour of Chriſt's Paſſion was determin'd, in the Counſel of God. He had often ſaid his Hour was not yet come; but now it *was come*, and he knew it. *Man knows not his Time*, Eccl. 9. 12. but the Son of Man did. He calls it *this Hour*, John 12. 27. and here *the* Hour, compare *Mark* 14. 35. *John* 16 21. for the Hour of the Redeemer's Death, which was alſo the Hour, of the Redeemer's Birth, was the moſt ſignal and remarkable Hour, and without doubt, the moſt *critical* that ever was, ſince the Clock of Time was firſt ſet a going. Never was there ſuch an Hour as that, nor, did ever any Hour challenge ſuch Expectations of it before, nor ſuch Reflections upon it after.

(1.) The *Hour is come*, in the midſt of which I need *to be own'd*; now is the *Hour*, when this grand Affair is come to a *Criſis*, after many a Skirmiſh, the *deciſive* Battle between Heaven and Hell is now to be fought, and that great Cauſe, in which God's Honour and Man's Happineſs are together embark'd, muſt now be either won or loſt for ever. The two Champions, *David* and *Goliah*, *Michael* and the Dragon, are now entering the Liſts, the Trumpet ſounds for an Engagement, that will be irretrievably *fatal* either to the one, or to the other; now *glorify thy Son*; now give him Victory over Principalities and Powers; now let the bruiſing of his Heel be the breaking of the Serpents Head. Now let thy Son be ſo *upheld* as not to *fail* or be *diſcouraged.* When *Joſhua* went forth conquering, and to conquer, 'tis ſaid, the Lord *magnified* Joſhua, ſo he *glorified his Son*, when he made the Croſs his triumphant Chariot.

(2.) *The Hour is come*, in the *Cloſe* of which I expect to be *crown'd.* The Hour is come, when I am to be glorified, and ſet at thy Right Hand, betwixt him and that Glory there interven'd a bloody Scene of Suffering, but being ſhort, he ſpeaks as if he made little of it; the *Hour is come* that *I muſt be glorified*, and he did not expect it till then. Good Chriſtians in a trying Hour, particularly a dying Hour, may thus plead, now the Hour is come, ſtand by me, appear for me, now or never. Now the earthly Tabernacle is to be diſſolv'd, the Hour is come that I ſhould be glorified, 2 *Cor* 5. 1.

3. He pleads the Father's own Intereſt and Concern herein, *that thy Son alſo may glorify thee*; for he had conſecrated his whole Undertaking to his Father's Honour. He deſired to be carried triumphantly *through* his Sufferings *to* his Glory, that he might *glorify the Father* two ways, (1.) By the *Death of the Croſs*, which he was now to ſuffer; *Father Glorify thy Name*, expreſſed the great Intention of his Sufferings, which was to retrieve his Father's injured Honour among Men, and by his Satisfaction to *come up to the* Glory of God, which Man by his Sin *came ſhort of*. Father own me in my Sufferings, that I may Honour thee by them. (2.) By the *Doctrine of the Croſs*, which was now ſhortly to be publiſh'd to the World, by which God's Kingdom was to be re-eſtabliſhed among Men. He prays that his Father would ſo *grace* his Sufferings, and crown them, as not only to take off the Offence of the Croſs, but to make it to them that are ſaved, the *Wiſdom of God, and the Power of God.* If God had not glorified Chriſt crucified, by raiſing him from the Dead, his whole Undertaking had been cruſhed; therefore *glorify me, that I may glorify thee.*

Now hereby he hath taught us, (1.) What to *eye* and *aim at* in our Prayers, in all our Deſigns and Deſires, and that is the *Honour of God.* It being our chief End to *glorify God*, other things muſt be ſought and attended to, in Subordination, and Subſerviency to the Lord, do this and t'other for thy Servant, that thy Servant may *glorify* thee. Give me Health, *that I may glorify* thee with my Body; Succeſs, that I may glorify thee with my Eſtate, *&c. Hallowed be thy Name* muſt be our firſt Petition, which muſt fix our End in all our other Petitions, 1 *Pet.* 4. 11. (2.) He hath taught us what to *expect* and *hope* for. If we ſincerely ſet our ſelves to glorify our Father, he will not be wanting to do that for us which is requiſite to put us into a Capacity of glorifying him, to give us the *Grace* he knows ſufficient, and the *Opportunity* he ſees convenient. But if we ſecretly *honour our ſelves* more than him, 'tis juſt with him to leave us in the Hand of our own Counſels, and then inſtead of honouring our ſelves, we ſhall ſhame our ſelves.

4. He pleads his *Commiſſion*, v. 2, 3. he deſires to glorify his Father in conformity to, and in purſuance of, the Commiſſion given him. *Glorify thy Son as thou haſt given him Power*, glorify him in the Execution of the Powers thou haſt given him, ſo 'tis connected with the Petition; or, *That thy Son may glorify thee* according to the Power given him, ſo 'tis connected with the Plea. Now ſee here the *Power* of the Mediator.

1. The *Original* of his Power. *Thou haſt given him Power*; he has it from God, to whom all Power belongs. Man in his fallen State, muſt in order to his Recovery, be taken under a *new* Model of Government, which could not be *erected* but by a *ſpecial Commiſſion*, under the Broad Seal of Heaven, directed to the Undertaker of that glorious Work, and conſtituting him ſole Arbitrator of the grand Difference that *was*, and ſole Guarantee of the grand Alliance that *was to be* between God and Man; ſo as to this Office, he *received* his Power, which was to be executed in a way diſtinct from his Power and Government as Creator. *Note*, The Churches King is no Uſurper, as the Prince of this World is; Chriſt's Right to Rule is unconteſtable.

2. The *Extent* of his Power. *He has Power over all Fleſh*.

(1.) Over *all Mankind*. He has Power in and over the World of Spirits, the Powers of the upper and unſeen World are ſubject to him, 1 *Pet.* 3. 22. but being now mediating between *God* and *Man*, he here pleads his Power over *all Fleſh*. They were Men whom he was to ſubdue and ſave, out of that Race he had a Remnant given him, and therefore all that Rank of Beings was put under his Feet.

(2.) Over Mankind conſidered as *corrupt* and *fallen*, for ſo he is called *Fleſh*, Gen. 6. 3. If he had not in this Senſe been *Fleſh*, he had not needed a Redeemer. Over this ſinful Race the Lord Jeſus has all Power; and all Judgment concerning them is committed to him; Power to bind or looſe, acquit or condemn; *Power on Earth to forgive Sins*, or not. Chriſt as a Mediator has the Government of the whole World put into his Hand; he is *King of Nations*, has Power even over thoſe that *know him not*, nor *obey his Goſpel*; whom he doth not rule he over-rules, *Pſal.* 22. 28. and 72. 8. *Mat.* 28. 18. *John* 5. 35.

3. The grand Intention and Deſign of this Power, *that he ſhould give Eternal Life* to as many as thou *haſt given him*. Here's the Myſtery of our Salvation laid open.

(1.) Here is the Father *making over* the Elect to the Redeemer, and giving them to him as his Charge and Truſt, and the Crown and Recompence of his Undertaking. He has a *Sovereign* Power over all the *fallen Race*, but a *peculiar Intereſt* in the choſen Remnant; all things were put *under his Feet*, but they were deliver'd *into his Hand*.

(2.) Here is the Son *undertaking* to ſecure the Happineſs of thoſe that were given him; that he ſhould *give Eternal Life* to them. See how great the Authority of the Redeemer is; he hath Lives and Crowns to give, eternal Lives that never die, immortal Crowns that never fade: Now, *Conſider how great* the Lord Jeſus is, who hath ſuch Perferments in his Gift. And how *gracious* he is in giving eternal Life to thoſe whom he undertakes to ſave. (1.) He *ſanctifies* them in this World, gives them the ſpiritual Life, which is *eternal Life* in the Bud and Embrio, *John* 4. 14. Grace in the Soul is Heaven in that Soul. (2.) he will *glorify* them in the other World, their Happineſs ſhall be compleated in the Viſion and Fruition of God. And this only is mention'd, becauſe it *ſuppoſeth* all the other Parts of his Undertaking, teaching them, ſatisfying for them, ſanctifying them, and preparing them for that *eternal Life*; and indeed all the other were *in order* to this. We are *called to his Kingdom and Glory*; and begotten to the Inheritance; what's laſt in Execution was firſt in Intention, and that is *eternal Life*.

(3.) Here is the Subſerviency of the Redeemer's univerſal Dominion to this. He hath *Power over all Fleſh*, on purpoſe that he might give eternal Life to the ſelect Number. *Note*, Chriſt's Dominion over the Children of Men, is in order to the Salvation of the Children of God. All things are *for their ſakes*, 2 Cor. 4. 15. All Chriſt's Laws, Ordinances and Promiſes, which are given to all, are deſign'd effectually to convey Spiritual Life and ſecure eternal Life to all that were given to Chriſt; he is *Head over all things to the Church*. The Adminiſtration of the Kingdoms of Providence and Grace, are put into the ſame Hand, that all things may be made for good to the Called.

4. Here's a further Explication of this grand Deſign; *v.* 3. *This is Life eternal*, which I am impower'd, and have undertaken to give, this is the Nature of it, and this the way leading to it, *to know thee the only true God*, and all the Diſcoveries and Principles of natural Religion, and *Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*, as Mediator, and the Doctrines and Laws of that holy Religion, which he inſtituted for the Recovery of Man out of his lapſed State. Here is,

1. The great End which the Chriſtian Religion ſets before us, and that is *Eternal Life*; the Happineſs of an immortal Soul in the Viſion and Fruition of an eternal God. This he was to reveal to all, and ſecure to all that were given him. By the Goſpel, Life and Immortality are *brought to Light*, are brought *to Hand*, a Life which tranſcends this as much in Excellency as it doth in Duration.

2. The ſure way of attaining this bleſſed End, which is by the right Knowledge of God and Jeſus Chriſt; this is *Life eternal to know thee*, which may be taken two ways, (1.) Life eternal lies in the Knowledge of God and Jeſus Chriſt; the preſent *Principle* of this Life is the *believing* Knowledge of God and Chriſt. The future Perfection of that Life will be the intuitive Knowledge of God and Chriſt. They that are brought into Union with Chriſt, and live a Life of Communion with God in Chriſt, know in ſome meaſure by Experience, what *Eternal Life* is, and will ſay, If this be Heaven, Heaven is ſweet, ſee *Pſal.* 17. 15. (2.) The Knowledge of God and Chriſt leads to *Life eternal*. This is the way in which Chriſt gives eternal Life, by the *Knowledge of him that hath called us*, 2 Pet. 1. 3. and this is the way in which we come to receive it.

The Chriſtian Religion ſhews us the way to Heaven,

1. By directing us to God as the Author and Felicity of our Being; for Chriſt died to bring us to God, to know him as our Creator, and to love him, obey him, ſubmit to him, and truſt in him as our Owner, Ruler and Benefactor, to devote our ſelves to him as our Sovereign Lord, depend upon him as our chief Good, and to direct all to his Praiſe as our higheſt End; *this is Life eternal*. God is here called *the only true God*, to diſtinguiſh him from the falſe Gods of the *Heathen*, which were Counterfeits and Pretenders, not from the Perſon of the *Son*, of whom it is expreſly ſaid, that he is the *true God* and *Eternal Life*, 1 John 5. 20. and who in this Text is propos'd as the Object of the ſame Religious Regard with the Father. 'Tis certain there is but one only living and true God and the God we adore is *He*. He is the true God, and not a mere *Name* or Notion; the *only* true God, and all that ever ſet up as Rivals with him, are Vanity and a Lie; the Service of him is the only true Religion.

2. By directing us to Jeſus Chriſt as the Mediator between God and Man, *Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent*. If Man had continu'd Innocent, the Knowledge of the only true God would have been Life eternal to him; but now he is fallen, there muſt be ſomething more; now we are under Guilt, to *know* God, is to know him as a righteous Judge, whoſe Curſe we are under, and nothing more *killing* than to know this, we are therefore concern'd to know Chriſt as our Redeemer, by whom alone we can now have Acceſs to God; 'tis *Life eternal to believe in Chriſt*, and this he has undertaken to give to as many as were given him; ſee *John* 6. 39, 40. They that are acquainted with God and Chriſt, are already in the Suburbs of Life eternal.

Secondly, Chriſt here prays to be *glorified*, in Conſideration of his having *glorified* the Father hitherto, *v.* 4, 5. The Meaning of the former Petition was, *Glorify me* in this World; the Meaning of the latter is, *Glorify me* in the other World. *I have glorified thee on the Earth*; and now *glorify thou me*.

Obſerve here,

1. With what *Comfort* Chriſt *reflects* on the Life he had *lived on Earth*. I have *glorified thee, and finiſhed my Work*, 'tis as good as finiſhed, he doth not complain of the Poverty and Diſgrace he had lived in, what a weary Life he had upon Earth, as ever any Man of Sorrows had; he overlooks this, and pleaſeth himſelf in reviewing the Service he had done his Father, and the Progreſs he had made in his Undertaking. And this is here recorded,

(1.) For the *Honour of Chriſt*; that his Life upon Earth did in all Reſpects fully anſwer the End of his coming into the World. *Note*, 1. Our Lord Jeſus had Work given him to do by him that *ſent him*; he came not into the World to live at Eaſe, but to go about doing good, and to *fulfil all Righteouſneſs*. His Father gave him his Work, his Work *in the Vineyard*; both *appointed* him to it, and *aſſiſted* him in it. 2. The Work that was given him to do he *finiſh'd*. Tho' he had not as yet gone through the laſt part of his Undertaking, yet he was ſo near being *made perfect through Sufferings*, that he might ſay he had finiſhed it; 'twas as good as done, he was giving it its finiſhing Stroke, ἐτελείωσα. The Word ſignifies his performing every part of his Undertaking in the moſt compleat and perfect manner. 3. Herein he glorified his Father. He pleaſed him, he praiſed him; 'tis the Glory of God that his Work is perfect, and the ſame is the Glory of the Redeemer, what he is the Author of, he will be the Finiſher of. 'Twas a ſtrange way for the *Son to glorify the Father*, by abuſing himſelf, that look'd more likely to diſparage him, yet it was contriv'd that ſo he ſhould glorify him. I have glorified thee *on Earth*. i. e. in ſuch a way as Men on Earth could bear the Manifeſtation of thy Glory.

(2.) 'Tis recorded *for Example to all*, that we may follow his Example. (1.) We muſt make it our *Buſineſs* to do the Work God has appointed us to do, according as our Capacity, and the Sphere of our Activity is; we muſt each of us do all the good we can in this World. (2.) We muſt *aim at the Glory of God* in all.

We muſt glorify him on *the Earth*, which he has *given unto the Children of Men*, demanding only this Quit-rent; *on the Earth*, where we are in a State of Probation and Preparation for Eternity. (3.) We muſt perſevere herein to the End of our Days; we muſt not ſit down till we have *finiſhed* our Work, and *accompliſh'd as a Hireling our Day*.

(3.) 'Tis recorded for *Encouragement* to all thoſe that *reſt upon him*. If he have *finiſhed the Work that was given him to do*, then he is a compleat Saviour, and did not do his Work by the Halves. And he that finiſhed his Work *for us*, will finiſh it *in us* to the Day of Chriſt.

2. See with what *Confidence* he expects the *Joy ſet before him*, v. 5. *Now, O Father, glorify thou me.* 'Tis what he depends upon, and cannot be deny'd him.

1. See here what he pray'd for, *Glorify thou me*, as before, *v.* 1. All Repetitions in Prayer, are not to be counted vain Repetitions. Chriſt pray'd, ſaying *the ſame Words*, *Mat.* 26. 44. and yet pray'd *more earneſtly*. What his Father had promis'd him, and he was aſſur'd of, yet he muſt pray for; Promiſes are not deſign'd to *ſuperſede* Prayers, but to be the *Guide* of our Deſires, and the *Ground* of our Hopes. Chriſt being glorified, includes all the Honours, Powers, and Joys of his exalted State. See how 'tis deſcrib'd:

(1.) 'Tis a Glory *with God*, not only glorify my Name on Earth, but glorify me *with thine own ſelf*. 'Twas Paradiſe, 'twas Heaven to be with his Father, as *Prov.* 8. 30. *Dan.* 7. 13. *Heb.* 8. 1. *Note*, The brighteſt Glories of the exalted Redeemer were to be diſplay'd within the Veil, where the Father manifeſts *his* Glory. The Praiſes of the upper are offer'd up to *him that ſits upon the Throne*, and to the *Lamb* in *Conjunction*, Rev. 5. 13. and the Prayers of the lower World draw out Grace and Peace from God our Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *in Conjunction*, and thus the Father has glorified him with himſelf.

(2.) 'Tis the *Glory he had with God before the World was*. By this it appears, 1. That Jeſus Chriſt as God, had a Being *before the World was*, co-eternal with the Father; our Religion acquaints us with one that was *before all Things*, and *by whom all Things conſiſt*. 2. That his Glory with the Father is from Everlaſting, as well as his Exiſtence with the Father; for he was from Eternity, the *Brightneſs of his Father's Glory*, Heb. 1. 3. As God's making the World only *declar'd* his Glory, but made no real Additions to it, ſo Chriſt undertook the Work of Redemption, not becauſe *he needed* Glory, for he had glory with the Father before the World, but becauſe *we needed* Glory. 3. That Jeſus Chriſt in his State of Humiliation, *diveſted himſelf* of this Glory, and drew a Veil over it; tho' he was ſtill God, yet he was God manifeſted in the Fleſh, not in his Glory. He laid down this Glory for a Time as a Pawn or Pledge, that he would go through with his Undertaking according to the Appointment of his Father. 4. That in his exalted State he reſum'd this Glory, and clad himſelf again with his former Robes of Light. Having perform'd his Undertaking, he did, as it were, *repoſcere pignus*, take up his Pawn by this Demand, *Glorify thou me.* He prays that even his human Nature might be advanc'd to the higheſt Honour it was capable of; his Body a glorious Body; and that the Glory of the Godhead might now be manifeſted in the Perſon of the Mediator, *Immanuel*, God-man. He doth not pray to be glorify'd with the Princes and great Men of the Earth; no, he that knew *both Worlds*, and might chuſe which he would have his Preferment in, choſe it in the Glory of the other World, as far exceeding all the Glory of this. He had deſpis'd the *Kingdoms of this World*, and the *Glory* of them, when Satan offer'd them to him, and therefore might the more boldly claim the Glories of the other World. *Let the ſame mind be in us*; Lord, give the Glories of this World to whom thou wilt give them, but let me have my Portion of Glory in the World to come. 'Tis no matter, tho' I be *vilified* with Men, but Father, *Glorify thou me with thine own ſelf*.

2. See here what he pleaded; *I have glorified thee*; and now in Conſideration thereof, *glorify thou me*. For (1.) There was an *Equity* in it, and an admirable Becomingneſs, that *if God were glorified in him, he ſhould glorify him in himſelf*, as he had obſerved, *John* 13. 32. Such an infinite Value there was in what Chriſt did to glorify his Father, that he properly merited all the Glories of his exalted State. If the Father were a Gainer in his Glory by the Son's Humiliation, 'twas fit the Son ſhould be no Loſer by it, at long run, in his Glory.

(2.) 'Twas according to the Covenant between them, that if the Son would *make his Soul an Offering for Sin*, he ſhould *divide the Spoil with the Strong*, Iſa. 53. 10, 11. and the *Kingdom* ſhould be *his*; and this he had an Eye to, and depended upon, in his Sufferings, 'twas for the Joy ſet before him that he endured the Croſs. And now in his exalted State, he ſtill expects the compleating of his Exaltation, becauſe he perfected his Undertaking, *Heb.* 10. 13.

(3.) 'Twas the moſt proper Evidence of his Father's accepting and approving the Work he had finiſh'd; by the glorifying of Chriſt we are *ſatisfy'd* that God was ſatisfy'd, and therein a real Demonſtration was given, that his Father was well pleas'd in him as his beloved Son.

(4.) Thus we muſt be taught, that thoſe, and thoſe only, who glorify God on Earth, and perſevere in the Work God hath given them to do, ſhall be glorified with the Father, when they muſt be no more in this World. Not that we can merit that Glory as Chriſt did; but our glorifying God is requir'd as an Evidence of our Intereſt in Chriſt, through whom eternal Life is God's *Free-Gift*.

6 I have manifeſted thy name unto the men which thou gaveſt me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me; and they have kept thy word. 7 Now they have known that all things whatſoever thou haſt given me, are of thee. 8 For I have given unto them the words which thou gaveſt me; and they have received them, and have known ſurely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me. 9 I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou haſt given me, for they are thine. 10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.

Chriſt having pray'd for himſelf, comes next to pray for thoſe that are his, and he knew them *by Name*, tho' he did not here name them. Now obſerve here.

1. Whom he *did not* pray for, *v.* 9. *I pray not for the World. Note*, There's a World of People that Jeſus Chriſt did not pray for. It is not meant of the World of Mankind in general, he prays for that here, *v.* 21. *That the World may believe that thou haſt ſent me.* Nor is it meant of the *Gentiles* in Diſtinction from the *Jews*; but the *World* is here oppos'd to the *Elect*, who are given to Chriſt out of the World. Take the World for a Heap of unwinnow'd Corn in the Floor, and God loves it, Chriſt prays for it, and dies for it, for a *Bleſſing is in it*; but the Lord perfectly knowing *them that are his*, he eyes particularly them that were given him out of the World, extracts them; and then take the World for the remaining Heap of rejected worthleſs Chaff, and Chriſt neither prays for it, nor dies for it, but abandons it, and the Wind *drives it away*. Theſe are called *the World*, becauſe they are govern'd by the Spirit of this World, and have their Portion in it; for theſe Chriſt *doth not pray*; not but there are ſome Things which he intercedes with God for, on their Behalf, as the Dreſſer for the Reprieve of the barren Tree; but he doth not pray for them *in this Prayer*; they have no Part or Lot in the Bleſſings *here* pray'd for. He doth not ſay, *I pray againſt the World*, as *Elias* made Interceſſion againſt *Iſrael*, but *I pray not* for them. *I paſs them by*, and leave them to themſelves. They are *not written* in the Lamb's Book of Life, and therefore not in the Breaſt-Plate of the great High Prieſt. And miſerable is the Condition of ſuch, as of thoſe whom the Prophet was *forbidden to pray for*, and more ſo, *Jer.* 7. 16. We that know not who are choſen, and who are paſt by, muſt *pray for all Men*, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 4. While there's Life there's Hope, and room for Prayer. See 1 *Sam.* 12. 23.

2. Whom he did pray for; not for Angels, but for the Children of Men. (1.) He prays for thoſe that were *given him*, meaning primarily the Diſciples that had attended him in the Regeneration; but it is, doubtleſs to be extended further to all that come under the ſame Character, who *receive* and *believe* the Words of Chriſt, *v.* 6. 8. (2.) He prays for all that ſhould believe on him, *v.* 20. And 'tis not only the Petitions that *follow*, but thoſe alſo which went before, that muſt be conſtrued to extend to all Believers, to every Place, and every Age; for he has a Concern for them all, and calls *things that are not, as tho' they were*.

3. What Encouragement he had to pray for them, and what the general Pleas with which he introduceth his Petitions for them, and recommends them to his Father's Favour. They are *five*:

Firſt, The *Charge* he had receiv'd *concerning them. Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me*, v. 6. And again, *v.* 7. thou haſt *given them me*, and they are *of thee*; and again, *v.* 9. *them which thou haſt given me.* Father, thoſe I am now praying for, are ſuch as thou haſt intruſted me with, and what I have to ſay for them is in purſuance of the Charge I have received concerning them. Now,

1. This is meant primarily of the Diſciples that *then were*, who were given to Chriſt as his *Pupils* to be educated by him while he was on Earth, and his *Agents* to be *employ'd* for him when he went to Heaven. They were given him to be the Learners of his Doctrine, the Witneſſes of his Life and Miracles, and the Monuments of his Grace and Favour, in order to their being the Publiſhers of his Goſpel, and the Planters of his Church. When they left all to follow him; this was the ſecret Spring of that ſtrange Reſolution; they were *given to him*, elſe they had not given themſelves to him. *Note*, The Apoſtleſhip and Miniſtry, which is *Chriſt's Gift to the Church*, was firſt *the Father's Gift to Jeſus Chriſt*. As under the Law the *Levites* were given to *Aaron*, Num. 3. 9. So he the great High Prieſt of our Profeſſion, the Father gave the Apoſtles firſt, and Miniſters in every Age, to *keep his Charge, and the Charge of the whole Congregation, and to do the Service of the Tabernacle*; ſee *Eph.* 4. 8, 11. *Pſal.* 68. 18. Chriſt received this Gift for Men, that he might give it to Men. As this puts an Honour upon the Miniſtry of the Goſpel, and *magnifies that Office*, which is ſo much *vilified*; ſo it lays a mighty Obligation upon the Miniſters of the Goſpel, to devote themſelves entirely to Chriſt's Service, as being *given to him*.

2. But it is deſign'd to extend to all the Elect, for they are elſewhere ſaid to be *given to Chriſt*, Joh. 6. 37, 39. and he often laid a Streſs upon this, that thoſe he was to ſave, were given to him as his Charge, to his Care they were committed, from his Hand they were expected, and concerning them, he received Commandments. He here ſhews,

1. That the Father had *Authority* to give them; *Thine they were.* He did not give that which was none of his own, but covenanted that he had a good Title. The Elect that the Father gave to Chriſt were *his own*, Three Ways. (1.) They were *Creatures*, and their Lives and Beings were *derived* from him. When they were given to Chriſt to be Veſſels of Honour, they were in his Hand as Clay in the Hand of the Potter, to be diſpoſed of as God's Wiſdom ſaw moſt for God's Glory. (2.) They were *Criminals*, and their Lives and Beings were *forfeited* to him. 'Twas a Remnant of *fallen* Mankind that was given to Chriſt to be redeemed, that might have been made Sacrifices to Juſtice then, when they were pitch'd upon to be the Monuments of Mercy; might juſtly have been *delivered to the Tormentors* when they were delivered to the Saviour. (3.) They were *Choſen*, and their Lives and Beings were *deſigned* for him; they were ſet apart *for God*, and were conſigned to Chriſt as his Agent. This he inſiſts upon again, *v.* 7. *All Things whatſoever thou haſt given me are of thee*; which tho' it may take in all that appertained to his Office as Mediator, yet ſeems eſpecially to be meant of *thoſe* that were given him. They are *of thee*; their Being is *of* thee as the *God of Nature*; their well Being is of thee as the *God of Grace*; they are all *of thee*, and therefore Father I bring them *all to thee*, that they may be all *for thee.*

2. That he did accordingly give them to the Son. *Thou gaveſt them me*, as Sheep to the Shepherd to be kept; a Patient to the Phyſician to be cured; Children to a Tutor to be educated; thus he will deliver up his Charge, *Heb.* 2. 13. *The Children thou haſt given me.* They were delivered to Chriſt, (1.) That the *Election of Grace* might not be *fruſtrated*, that not one, no not of the *little ones* might periſh. That great Concern muſt be lodged in ſome one good Hand, able to give ſufficient Security, *That the Purpoſe of God according to Election might ſtand.* (2.) That the *Undertaking of* Chriſt might not be *fruitleſs.* They were given to him as *his Seed*, in whom he ſhould *ſee of the Travail of his Soul, and be ſatisfied*, Iſa. 53. 10. 11. and might not *ſpend his Strength*, and ſhed his Blood *for nought, and in vain*, Iſa. 49. 4. We may plead as Chriſt doth, Lord, *keep* my Graces, *keep* my Comforts, for *thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me.*

Secondly, The *Care* he had *taken* of them to teach them, *v.* 6. *I have manifeſted thy Name to them.*——And *v.* 8. *I have given unto them the Words which thou gaveſt me.* Obſerve here,

1. The great Deſign of Chriſt's Doctrine, which was to *manifeſt God's Name*, to *declare him*, John 1. 18. To inſtruct the Ignorant, and rectify the Miſtakes of a dark and fooliſh World concerning God, that he might be better loved and worſhipped.

2. His faithful Diſcharge of this Undertaking, *I have done it.* And his Fidelity appears, (1.) In the *Truth* of his Doctrine. It agreed exactly with the Inſtructions he received from his Father: He gave not only the Things, but the very *Words that were given him.* Miniſters in *wording* their Meſſage, muſt have an Eye to the *Words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth.* (2.) In the Tendency of his Doctrine, which was to *manifeſt God's Name.* He did not ſeek himſelf, but in all he did and ſaid, aimed to magnify his Father. *Note*, 1. It is Chriſt's Prerogative to *manifeſt God's Name* to the Souls of the Children of Men. *No Man knows the Father but he to whom the Son will reveal him*, Mat. 11. 27. He only hath Acquaintance with the Father, and ſo is able to *open the Truth*; and he only hath Acceſs to the Spirits of Men, and ſo is able to *open the Underſtanding.* Miniſters may *publiſh the Name of the Lord*, as *Moſes*, Deut. 32. 3. but Chriſt can only *manifeſt* that Name. By the Word of Chriſt God is revealed *to us*, by the Spirit of Chriſt God is revealed *in us.* Miniſters may ſpeak the Words of God to us, but Chriſt can *give us* his Words, can put them *in us*, as Food, as Treaſure. 2. Sooner or later Chriſt will manifeſt God's Name to all that were given him, and will give them *his Word*, to be the Seed of their new Birth, the Support of their ſpiritual Life, and the Earneſt of their everlaſting Bliſs.

Thirdly, The good Effect of the Care he had taken of them, and the Pains he had taken with them, *v.* 6. *They have kept thy Word.* Ver. 7. *They have known that all Things are of thee.* Ver. 8. *They have received thy Words*, and embraced them, have given their Aſſent and Conſent to them, and have *known ſurely that I came out from thee*, and *have believed that thou didſt ſend me.* Obſerve here,

1. What Succeſs the Doctrine of Chriſt had among thoſe that were given him, in ſeveral Particulars.

(1.) They have *received* the Words which I *gave them* as the Ground receives the Seed, and the Earth drinks in the Rain. They *attended* to the Words of Chriſt, *apprehended* in ſome Meaſure the meaning of them, and were affected with them; they received the Impreſſion of them, 'twas to them an *engrafted* Word.

(2.) They *have kept thy Word*, have continued in it; they have conformed to it. Chriſt's Commandment is then only *kept*, when it is *obey'd.* They that were to teach others the Commands of Chriſt, ought to be themſelves obſervant of them: 'Twas requiſite they ſhould *keep* what was *committed* to them, for 'twas to be tranſmitted by them to every Place, for every Age.

(3.) They have *underſtood* the Word, and have been ſenſible on what Ground they went in receiving and keeping of it. They have been aware that thou art the Original Author of that Holy Religion which I am come to inſtitute; That *all Things whatſoever thou haſt given me are of thee.* All Chriſt's Offices and Powers, all the Gifts of the Spirit, all his Graces and Comforts which God gave without Meaſure to him, were all *from God*; contrived by his Wiſdom, appointed by his Will, and deſigned by his Grace for his own Glory in Man's Salvation. *Note*, It is a great Satisfaction to us in our Reliance upon Chriſt, that He, and all He is, and has, all he ſaid and did, all he is doing, and will do, is *of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 30. We may therefore venture our Souls upon Chriſt's Mediation, for it has a good Bottom. If the Righteouſneſs be of God's appointing, we ſhall be *juſtified*; If the Grace be of his diſpenſing, we ſhall be *ſanctify'd.*

(4.) They have ſet their Seal to it. They have *known* ſurely that I came out from God, *v.* 8. See here,

1. What it is to *believe*, it is to *know ſurely*, know that *it is ſo of a Truth.* The Diſciples were very weak and defective in Knowledge, yet Chriſt, who knew them better than they knew themſelves, paſſeth his Word for them that they did believe. *Note*, We may know *ſurely* that which we neither do nor can know *fully*; may know the Certainty of the Things which are *not ſeen*, tho' we cannot particularly deſcribe the Nature of them. We *walk by Faith*, which knows *ſurely*, *not* yet by *Sight*, which knows *clearly.*

2. What it is *we are* to believe, That *Jeſus Chriſt came out from God*, as he is the Son of God; in his Perſon the Image of the Inviſible God; and that *God did ſend him*; that in his Undertaking he is the Ambaſſador of the Eternal King: So that the Chriſtian Religion ſtands upon the ſame Foot, and is of equal Authority with Natural Religion; and therefore all the Doctrines of Chriſt are to be *received* as Divine Truths, all his Commands *obeyed* as Divine Laws, and all his Promiſes depended upon as Divine Securities.

2. How Jeſus Chriſt ſpeaks of this here. He enlarges upon it,

1. As *pleaſed with it* himſelf. Tho' the many Inſtances of his Diſciples Dulneſs and Weakneſs had grieved him, yet their conſtant Adherence to him, their gradual Improvements, and their great Attainments at laſt were his Joy. Chriſt is a Maſter that delights in the Proficiency of his Scholars. He accepts the Sincerity of their Faith, and graciouſly paſſeth by the Infirmity of it. See how willing he is to *make the beſt* of us, and to *ſay the beſt* of us, thereby encouraging our Faith in him, and teaching us Charity to one another.

2. As *pleading it* with his Father. He is praying for thoſe that were given him, and he pleads that they had given themſelves to him. *Note*, The due Improvement of Grace received, is a good Plea according to the Tenor of the New Covenant for further Grace; for ſo runs the Promiſe, *to him that hath ſhall be given.* They that *keep Chriſt's Word*, and *believe on him*, let Chriſt alone to *commend* them, and which is more, to *recommend* them to his Father.

Fourthly, He pleads the Father's own Intereſt in them, *v.* 9. *I pray for them, for they are thine*; and this by Virtue of a joynt and mutual Intereſt, which he and the Father have in what pertain'd to each, *all mine are thine, and thine are mine.* Betwixt the Father and Son there can be no Diſpute (as there is among the Children of Men) about *Meum* and *Tuum*, for the matter was ſettled from Eternity; *all mine are thine, and thine are mine.* Here is,

1. The *Plea* particularly urg'd for his Diſciples; *they are thine.* The conſigning of the Elect to Chriſt was ſo far from making them leſs the Fathers, that it was in Order to the making them the more ſo. *Note*, 1. All that receive Chriſt's Word, and believe in him, are taken into Covenant-Relation to the Father, and are look'd upon as his; Chriſt preſent *them* to him, and they through Chriſt preſents themſelves to him. Chriſt has redeemed us not to himſelf only, but to *God* by his Blood, *Rev.* 5. 9, 10. they are *Firſt Fruits unto God*, Rev. 14. 4. 2. This is a good Plea in Prayer, Chriſt here pleads it, *they are thine*; we may plead it for our ſelves, *I am thine, ſave me*; and for others, as *Moſes*, Exod. 32. 11. *They are thy People.* They are thine, wilt thou not *provide for thine own*? Wilt thou not ſecure *them*, that they may not be run down by the Devil and the world? Wilt thou not ſecure thine Intereſt in them, that they may not depart from thee? They are thine, own them as thine.

2. The *Foundation* on which this Plea is grounded, *All mine are thine, and thine are mine.* This ſpeaks the Father and Son to be. (1.) One in *Eſſence.* Every Creature muſt ſay to God, *All mine are thine*, but none can ſay to him, *All thine are mine*, but he that is the ſame in Subſtance with him, and equal in Power and Glory. (2.) One in Intereſt; no ſeparate or divided Intereſts between them.

1. What the Father has, as *Creator*, is delivered over to the *Son*, to be uſed and diſpos'd of in Subſerviency to his great Undertaking. All things are delivered to him, *Mat* 11. 27. the Grant ſo general that nothing was excepted but he that did *put all Things under him.*

2. What the Son hath as *Redeemer* is deſign'd for the *Father*, and his Kingdom ſhall ſhortly be deliver'd up to him. All the Benefits of Redemption purchaſed by the Son are intended for the Father's Praiſe, and in his Glory all the Lines of his Undertaking centre: *All mine are thine.* The Son owns none for his that are not devoted for the Service of the Father; nor will any Thing be accepted as a piece of Service to the Chriſtian Religion, which claſhes with the Dictates and Laws of Natural Religion. In a *limited* Senſe, every true Believer *may* ſay, *all thine are mine.* If God be ours in Covenant, all he is, and has, is ſo far ours, as that it ſhall be engaged for our Good; and in an *unlimited* Senſe, every true Believer *doth ſay*, Lord *All mine are thine*; all laid at his

Feet to be ſerviceable to him. And then what we have may be comfortably committed to God's Care and Bleſſing, when 'tis chearfully ſubmitted to his Government and Diſpoſe; Lord, take Care of what I have, for 'tis *all thine*.

Fifthly, He pleads his own Concern in them. *I am glorified in them*, δεδόξασμαι.

1. *I have been* glorified in them; what little Honour Chriſt had in this World, was among his Diſciples. He had been glorified by their Attendance on him, and Obedience to him; their preaching and working Miracles in his Name, and therefore *I pray for them*. *Note*, Thoſe ſhall have an Intereſt in Chriſt's Interceſſion in and by whom he is glorified.

2. I am *to be glorified* in them when I am gone to Heaven, they are to bear up my Name. The Apoſtles preach'd and wrought Miracles *in Chriſt's Name*, the Spirit in them *glorified Chriſt*, John 16. 14. I am *glorified in them*; and therefore, 1. I *concern* my ſelf for them. What little Intereſt Chriſt has in this degenerate World, lies in his Church, and therefore it and all its Affairs lie near his Heart within the Veil. 2. Therefore I *commit* them to the Father, who has engaged to *glorify the Son*, and upon that Account will have a gracious Eye to thoſe in whom he is glorified. That in which God and Chriſt are glorified, may with humble Confidence be committed to God's ſpecial Care.

11 And now I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own Name thoſe whom thou haſt given me, that they may be one as we *are*. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: thoſe that thou gaveſt me I have kept, and none of them is loſt, but the ſon of perdition: that the ſcripture might be fulfilled. 13 And now I come to thee, and theſe things I ſpeak in the world that they might have my joy fulfilled in themſelves. 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, becauſe they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. 15 I pray not that thou ſhouldeſt take them out of the world, but that thou ſhouldeſt keep them from the evil. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

After the *general* Pleas with which Chriſt recommended his Diſciples to his Father's Care, follow the *particular* Petitions he puts up for them. And, (1.) They all relate to ſpiritual Bleſſings in heavenly things. He doth not pray that they might be rich and great in the World, that they might raiſe Eſtates, and get Preferments, but that they might be kept from Sin, and furniſhed for their Duty, and brought ſafe to Heaven. *Note*, The *Proſperity of the Soul* is the *beſt Proſperity*, for what relates to that, Chriſt came to purchaſe and beſtow; and ſo teacheth us to ſeek in the firſt Place both for *others* and for *our ſelves*. (2.) They are ſuch Bleſſings as were ſuited to their preſent State and Caſe, and the Exigences and Occaſions of that. *Note*, Chriſt's Interceſſion is always *pertinent*. Our Advocate with the Father is acquainted with all the Particulars of our Wants and Burthens, our Dangers and Difficulties, and knows how to accommodate his Interceſſion to each, as to *Peter*'s Peril, which he himſelf was not aware of, *Luke* 22. 32. *I have pray'd for thee.* (3.) He is large and full in the Petitions, *orders them* before his Father, and *fills his Mouth with Arguments*, to teach us Fervency and Importunity in Prayer; to be large in Prayer, and dwell upon our Errands at the Throne of Grace, wreſtling as *Jacob*, I *will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me.*

Now the firſt thing Chriſt prays for for his Diſciples, is their *Preſervation*, in theſe Verſes; in Order to which he commits them all to his Father's Cuſtody. *Keeping* ſuppoſes *Danger*, and their Danger aroſe from *the World*, the World wherein they were, the Evil of this he begs they might be *kept from*. Now obſerve.

Firſt, The Requeſt it ſelf; *Keep them from the World.* There were two Ways of their being delivered from the World.

1. By *taking them out of it*, and he doth not pray that they might be ſo delivered. *I pray not that thou ſhouldſt take them out of the World*; that is.

(1.) I pray not that they may ſpeedily be removed by Death. If the World will be vexatious to them, the readieſt Way to ſecure them, would be to haſten them out of it to a better World, that will give them better Treatment; ſend Chariots and Horſes of Fire for them to fetch them to Heaven; *Job*, *Elijah*, *Jonah*, *Moſes*, when that occurred which fretted them, pray'd that they *might be taken out of the World*; but Chriſt would not pray ſo for his Diſciples, for two Reaſons, (1.) Becauſe he came to *conquer*, not to *countenance* thoſe intemperate Heats and Paſſions which make Men *impatient* of Life, and *importunate* for Death. 'Tis his Will that we ſhould take up our Croſs, and not out-run it. 2. Becauſe he had Work for them to do in the World; the World, tho' ſick of them, *Acts* 22. 22. and therefore not worthy of them, *Heb.* 11. 38. yet could *ill ſpare* them. In pity therefore to this dark World, Chriſt would not have theſe Lights removed out of it, but continued in it, eſpecially for the Sake of thoſe in the World, that were to *believe in him through their Word.* Let not them be taken out of the World when their Maſter is; they muſt each in their own Order die Martyrs, but not till they have finiſhed their Teſtimony. *Note*, (1.) The taking of good People out of the World, is a thing by no means to be deſired, but dreaded rather, and laid to Heart, *Iſa.* 57. 1. (2.) Tho' Chriſt loves his Diſciples, he doth not preſently ſend for them to Heaven, as ſoon as they are effectually called, but leaves them for ſome time in this World, that they may do good, and glorify God upon Earth, and be ripened for Heaven. Many good People are *ſpared to live*, becauſe they can ill be ſpared to die.

(2.) I pray not that they may be totally freed and exempted from the Troubles of this World, and taken out of the Toil and Terror of it into ſome Place of Eaſe and Safety, there to live undiſturbed; that is not the Preſervation I deſire for them. *Non ut omni moleſtiâ liberati otium & delicias colant, ſed ut inter media pericula ſalvi tamen maneant Dei auxilio*; ſo *Calvin*. Not that they may be kept from all Conflict with the World, but that they may not be overcome by it. Not that as *Jeremiah* wiſhed they might *leave their People, and go from them*, Jer. 9. 2. but that like *Ezekiel*, their *Faces* may be *ſtrong againſt the Faces* of wicked Men, *Ezek.* 3. 8. 'Tis more the Honour of a Chriſtian Soldier by Faith to *overcome* the World, than by a monaſtical Vow to *retreat from* it; and more for the Honour of Chriſt to ſerve him in a *City*, than to ſerve him in a Cell.

2. Another way is by keeping them from the Corruption that is in the World; and thus he prays they may be kept, *v.* 11, 15. Here are three Branches of this Petition.

1. *Holy Father, keep thoſe whom thou haſt given me.* Chriſt was now leaving them, but let not them think that their Defence was departed from them, no, he doth here in their Hearing commit them to the Cuſtody of *his* Father, and *their* Father. *Note*, It is the unſpeakable Comfort of all Believers, that Chriſt himſelf has committed them to the Care of God himſelf. Thoſe cannot but be ſafe whom the Almighty God keeps, and he cannot but keep thoſe whom the Son of his Love commits to him: in the Vertue of which we may by Faith *commit the keeping of our Souls to God*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. 2 Tim. 1. 12. (1.) He here puts them under the *Divine Protection*, that they might not be *run down* by the Malice of their Enemies; that they and all their Concerns might be the particular Care of the Divine Providence. Keep their *Lives* till they have done their Work; keep their *Comforts*, and let not them be broken in upon by the Hardſhips they meet with; keep up their Intereſt in the World, and let not that ſink. To this Prayer is owing the wonderful Preſervation of the Goſpel Miniſtry, and Goſpel Church in the World unto this Day; if God had not graciouſly kept both, and kept up both, they had been extinguiſhed and loſt long ago. (2.) He puts them under the *Divine Tuition*, that they might not themſelves run away from their Duty, or be led aſide by the Treachery of their own Hearts. *Keep them* in their Integrity, keep them Diſciples, keep them cloſe to their Duty. We need God's Power, not only to put us into a State of Grace, but to keep us in it. See *John* 10. 28, 29. 1 *Pet.* 1. 5.

The Titles he gives to him he prays *to*, and them he prays for, enforce the Petition.

(1.) He ſpeaks to God as a *holy Father*. In committing our ſelves and others to the Divine Care, we may take Encouragement, (1.) From the Attribute of his *Holineſs*, for that's engaged for the Preſervation of his holy ones; he hath *ſworn by his Holineſs*, Pſal. 89. 35. If he be a holy God, and hate Sin, he will make thoſe that are his, *holy*, and *keep* them from Sin, who hate it too, and dread it as the great Evil. (2.) From this Relation of a *Father*, wherein he ſtands to us through Chriſt. If he be a *Father*, he will *take* Care of his own Children, will teach them, and keep them; who elſe ſhould?

(2.) He ſpeaks of them as thoſe whom the Father *had given him*. What we receive as our Father's Gifts, we may comfortably remit to our Father's Care. Father keep the Graces and Comforts thou haſt given me; the Children thou haſt given me; the Miniſtry *I have received.*

2. Keep them *through thine own Name.* That is,

1. Keep them *for thy Name's ſake*; ſo ſome. *Thy Name* and Honour is concerned in their Preſervation as well as *mine*, for both will ſuffer by it, if they either *revolt* or *ſink*. The Old Teſtament Saints often pleaded for *thy Name's ſake*; and thoſe may with Comfort plead it, that are indeed more concerned for the Honour of God's Name, than for any Intereſt of their own.

2. Keep them *in thy Name*; ſo others, the Original is ſo, ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι, keep them in the Knowledge and Fear of thy Name; keep them in the *Profeſſion* and *Service* of thy Name, whatever it coſt them. Keep them in the Intereſt of thy Name, and let them ever be faithful to that; keep them in thy Truths, in thine Ordinances, in the way of thy Commandments.

3. Keep them *by* or *through thy Name*; ſo others. Keep them by thine own Power, in thine own Hand; keep them thy ſelf, undertake for them. Let them be thine own immediate Care. Keep them by thoſe Means of Preſervation, which thou haſt thy ſelf appointed, and by which thou haſt made thy ſelf known. Keep them by thy Word and Ordinances; let *thy Name* be their ſtrong Tower; thy Tabernacle their Pavilion.

3. *Keep them from the Evil*; or out of the Evil; he had taught them to pray daily, *Deliver us from Evil*, and this would encourage them to pray that,

1. Keep them from the *evil one*, the Devil and all his Inſtruments; that *wicked one* and all his Children. Keep them from Satan as a Tempter, that either he may not have leave to *ſift them*, or that their Faith may not fail. Keep them from him as a Deſtroyer, that he may not drive them to Deſpair.

2. Keep them from the *evil Thing*, that is Sin, from every thing that looks like it, or leads to it. Keep them that they *do no Evil*, 2 Cor. 13. 7. Sin is that Evil, which above any other we ſhould dread and deprecate.

3. Keep them from the Evil of the World, and of their Tribulation in it, ſo that it may have no Sting in it, no Malignity; not that they might be kept from Affliction, but kept *through* it, that the Property of their Affliction might be ſo alter'd, as that there might be no Evil in them, nothing to do them any harm.

Secondly, The *Reaſons*, with which he enforceth theſe Requeſts for their Preſervation, which are five.

1. He pleads that *hitherto* he *had kept them*, v. 12. *While I was with them in the World, I have kept them in thy Name*, in the true Faith of the Goſpel, and the Service of God; thoſe that thou gaveſt me for my conſtant Attendants *I have kept*, they are all ſafe, and none of them miſſing, none of them revolted, or ruin'd, but *the Son of Perdition*; he is loſt, that the Scripture might be fulfill'd Obſerve,

1. Chriſt's faithful Diſcharge of his Undertaking concerning his Diſciples, *While he was with them he kept them*, and his Care concerning them was not in vain. He *kept* them *in God's Name*, preſerv'd them from falling into any dangerous Errors or Sins; from ſtriking in with the *Phariſees*, who would have *compaſs'd Sea and Land to make Proſelytes* of them; he kept them from deſerting him, and returning to that little All they had left for him; he had them ſtill under his Eye and Care; when he ſent them to preach, *went not his Heart with them*? Many that follow'd him a while, took Offence at ſomething or other, and went off; but he kept the twelve, that they alſo ſhould not go away. He kept them from falling into the Hands of perſecuting Enemies that ſought their Lives; kept them when he ſurrendered himſelf, *chap.* 18. 9. *while he was with them*, he kept them in a *viſible* manner, by Inſtructions ſtill *ſounding in their Ears*, Miracles ſtill *done before their Eyes*; when he was gone from them, they muſt be kept in a more *ſpiritual* manner. *Senſible* Comforts and Supports are ſometimes given, and ſometimes with-held; but when they are withdrawn, yet they are not left comfortleſs.

What Chriſt here ſaith of his immediate Followers, is true of all the Saints, *while they are* here *in this World*, Chriſt keeps them *in God's Name*; 'tis implied, (1.) That they are *weak*, and cannot keep themſelves; their own *Hands* are not *ſufficient for them*. (2.) That they are in God's Account *valuable*, and worth the keeping; precious in his Sight, and honourable; his Treaſure, his Jewels. (3.) That their *Salvation* is deſign'd, for to that it is that they are *kept*, 1 Pet. 1. 4. As the wicked are reſerv'd for the Day of Evil, ſo the righteous are preſerved for the Day of Bliſs. (4.) That they are the Charge of the Lord Jeſus, for as his Charge he keeps them, and expos'd himſelf like the *good Shepherd*, for the Preſervation of the Sheep.

2. The comfortable Account he gives of his Undertaking. *None of them is loſt*. *Note*, Jeſus Chriſt will certainly *keep* all that were *given him*, ſo as that none of them ſhall be totally and finally loſt; they may think themſelves *loſt*, and may be *near loſt*, in imminent Peril, but 'tis the Father's Will he ſhould *loſe none*, and none he *will loſe*, John 6. 39. ſo it will appear when they come all together, and none of them ſhall be wanting.

3. A Brand put upon *Judas*, as none of thoſe whom he had undertaken to keep. He was among thoſe that were given to Chriſt, but not of them. He ſpeaks of *Judas* as already loſt, for he had abandon'd the Society of his Maſter, and his Fellow Diſciples, and abandon'd himſelf to the Devil's Conduct, and in a little time would *go to his own Place*; where he is as good as loſt.

But the Apoſtacy and Ruin of *Judas* was no Reproach at all to his Maſter, or his Family; for,

1. He was the *Son of Perdition*, and therefore none of thoſe that were given to Chriſt to be kept. He deſerv'd Perdition, and God left him to throw himſelf headlong into it. He was the *Son of the Deſtroyer*, as *Cain*, who was *of that wicked one*. That great Enemy whom the Lord *will conſume*, is call'd a *Son of Perdition*, becauſe he is a *Man of Sin*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 3. 'Tis an awful Conſideration that one of the Apoſtles prov'd a *Son of Perdition*. No Man's Place or Name in the Church; no Man's Privileges or Opportunities of getting Grace; no Man's Profeſſion or external Performances will ſecure him from Ruin, if his Heart be not right with God; nor are any more likely to prove *Sons, of Perdition*, at laſt after a plauſible Courſe of Profeſſion, than thoſe that like *Judas*, love the Bag. But Chriſt's diſtinguiſhing *Judas* from thoſe that were given him (for εἰ μὴ is *adverſative*, not *exceptive*) intimates, that the Truth and true Religion ought not to ſuffer for the Treachery of thoſe that are falſe to it. 1 *John* 2. 19.

2. The Scripture was fulfill'd; the Sin of *Judas* was foreſeen in God's Counſel, and foretold in his Word, and the Event would certainly *follow after* the Prediction as a *Conſequent*, tho' it cannot be ſaid neceſſarily to *follow from it* as an Effect. See *Pſal.* 41. 9. and 69 25 and 109. 8. One would be amaz'd at the Treachery of Apoſtates, were we not *told it before*.

2. He pleads, that he was now under a *Neceſſity* of *leaving them* and could no *longer* watch over them in the way that he had *hitherto* done it, *v.* 11. Keep them now, that I may not loſe the Labour I beſtowed upon them while I was with them. Keep them *that they may be one* with us, *as we are* with each other. We ſhall have Occaſion to ſpeak of that, *v.* 21. But ſee here,

1. With what Pleaſure he ſpeaks of his own Departure. He expreſſeth himſelf concerning it, with an Air of Triumph and Exultation, with Reference both to the World he *left*, and the World he *remov'd to*.

(1.) *Now I am no more in the World.* Now Farewell to this provoking troubleſome World, I have had enough of it, and now the welcome hour is at hand, when I ſhall be *no more in it*. Now I have finiſh'd the Work I had to do in it, I have done with it, nothing remains now, but to haſten out of it as faſt as I can, *Note*, It ſhould be a Pleaſure to thoſe that have their Home in t'other World, to think of being *no more in this World*; for when we have done what we have to do in this World, and are made meet for *that*; what is there here that ſhould court our Stay; When we receive a Sentence of Death within our ſelves, with what a holy Triumph ſhould we ſay, *Now I am no more in this World*, this dark deceitful World, this poor empty World, this tempting defiling World, no more vex'd with its Thorns and Briars, no more endanger'd by its Nets and Snares; now I ſhall wander no more in this howling Wilderneſs, be toſt no more on this ſtormy Sea, *now I am no more in this World*, but can chearfully quit it, and give it a final Farewel.

(2.) *Now I come to thee.* To get clear of the World, is but the one half of the Comfort of a dying Chriſt, of a dying Chriſtian, the far better half is to think of *going to the Father*, to ſit down in the immediate uninterrupted and everlaſting Enjoyment of him. *Note*, They who love God cannot but be pleas'd to think of coming to him, tho' it be thro' the Valley of the Shadow of Death. When we go to be *abſent from the Body*, 'tis to be *preſent with the Lord*, like Children fetch'd home from School to their Father's Houſe. Now come I to thee whom I have choſen and ſerv'd, and whom my Soul thirſteth after; to thee the Fountain of Light and Life, the Crown and Centre of Bliſs and Joy; now my Longings ſhall be ſatisfied, my Hopes accompliſh'd, my Happineſs compleated, for *now come I to thee*.

2. With what a tender Concern he ſpeaks of thoſe whom he left behind; *But theſe are in the World.* I have found what an evil World it is, what will become of theſe dear little ones, that muſt ſtay in it? *Holy Father keep them*, they'll want *my* Preſence, let them have *thine*. They have now more need than ever to be kept, for I am ſending them out further into the World than they have yet ventur'd; they muſt *launch forth into the Deep*, and have Buſineſs to do in theſe great Waters, and will be loſt if thou do not keep them. Obſerve here,

(1.) That when our Lord Jeſus was going to the Father, he carry'd with him a tender Concern for *his own which are in the World*, and continued to compaſſionate them. He bears their Names upon his Breaſt-plate, nay upon his Heart, and has *graven them* with the Nails of his Croſs *upon the Palms of his Hands*; and when *he* is out of their Sight, they are not out of his, much leſs out of his Mind. We ſhould have ſuch a Pity for thoſe that are launching out into the World, when we are got almoſt through it; and for thoſe that are *left behind* in it, when we are *leaving* it.

(2.) That when Chriſt would expreſs the utmoſt Need his Diſciples had of Divine Preſervation, he only ſaith, *They are in the World*; that ſpeaks Danger enough to thoſe who are bound for Heaven, whom a flattering World would divert and ſeduce, and a malignant World would hate and perſecute.

3. He pleads what *Satisfaction* it would be to *them* to know themſelves *ſafe*, and what a *Satisfaction* it would be to him to ſee them *eaſy*, *I ſpeak this that they might have my Joy fulfiled in themſelves*, v. 13. Obſerve,

1. Chriſt earneſtly deſired the *Fulneſs of the Joy* of his Diſciples, for 'tis his Will that they ſhould rejoyice evermore. He was leaving them in Tears and Troubles, and yet took effectual Care to *fulfil their Joy*. When they thought their Joy in him was brought to an end, then was it advanced nearer to Perfection, than ever it had been, and they were fuller of it. We are here taught (1.) To *found our Joy in Chriſt*, 'tis *my Joy*, Joy of my giving, or rather, Joy that I am the Matter of. Chriſt is a Chriſtian's Joy, his chief Joy. Joy in the World is withering with it, Joy in Chriſt is everlaſting like him. (2.) To *build up our Joy with Diligence*; for 'tis the Duty as well as Privilege of all true Believers; no Part of the Chriſtian Life is preſs'd upon us more earneſtly, *Phil.* 3. 1. and 4. 4. (3.) To *aim at the Perfection* of this Joy, that we may have it fulfilled in us, for this Chriſt would have.

2. In order hereunto he did thus ſolemnly commit them to his Father's Care and Keeping, and took them for Witneſſes that he did ſo. *Theſe Things I ſpeak in the World*, while I am yet with them *in the World*; his Interceſſion in Heaven for their Preſervation would have been as effectual in it ſelf, but ſaying this *in the World*, would be a greater Satisfaction and Encouragement to them, and would enable them to *rejoice in Tribulation*. *Note*, 1. Chriſt has not only *treaſured up* Comforts for his People, in providing for their future Welfare, but has *given out* Comforts to them, and ſaid that which will be for their preſent Satisfaction. He here

condeſcended in the Preſence of his Diſciples, to publiſh his laſt Will and Teſtament, and (which many a Teſtator is ſhy of) lets them know what Legacies he had left them, and how well they were ſecur'd, that they might have *ſtrong Conſolation.* 2. Chriſt's *Interceſſion* for us is enough to *fulfil our Joy in him*; nothing more effectual to ſilence all our Fears and Miſtruſts, and to furniſh us with *ſtrong Conſolation*, than this, that he always appears in the Preſence of God for us; therefore the Apoſtle puts *a Tea rather* upon this, *Rom.* 8. 34. And ſee *Heb.* 7. 25.

4. He pleads the ill Uſage they were likely to meet with in the World for his ſake, *v.* 14. *I have given them thy Word*, to be publiſh'd to the World, and they have receiv'd it, have believ'd it themſelves, and accepted the Truſt of tranſmiting it to the World, and therefore *the World hath hated them*, as alſo becauſe they are *not of the World*, no more than I.

Here we have,

1. The World's Enmity to Chriſt's Followers; while Chriſt was with them, tho' as yet they had given but little Oppoſition to the World, yet it hates them, much more would it do ſo, when by their more extenſive preaching of the Goſpel, they would *turn the World upſide down.* Father, ſtand their Friend, ſaith Chriſt, for they are likely to have many Enemies; let them have thy Love, for the World's Hatred is entail'd upon them. In the midſt of thoſe fiery Darts, let them be *compaſs'd with thy Favour as with a Shield*, 'tis God's Honour to take Part with the weaker Side, and to help the Helpleſs. *Lord, be merciful to them*, for *Men would ſwallow them up.*

2. The Reaſons of that Enmity which ſtrengthen the Plea.

1. 'Tis imply'd, that one Reaſon is, becauſe *they had received the Word of God*, as it was ſent them by the Hand of Chriſt, when the greateſt Part of the World, *rejected* it, and ſet themſelves againſt them, who were the Preachers and Profeſſors of it. *Note*, They that receive Chriſt's *good Will*, and *good Word*, muſt expect the World's *ill Will* and *ill Word.* Goſpel Miniſters have been in a particular manner *hated* by the World, becauſe they call Men out of the World, and ſeparate them from it, and teach them not to conform to it, and ſo condemn the World. *Father, keep them*, for it is for thy Sake that they are expoſed; they are Sufferers for thee. Thus the *Pſalmiſt* pleads, *For thy Sake have I born Reproach*, Pſal. 69. 7. *Note*, Thoſe that keep the Word of Chriſt's Patience, are entituled to a ſpecial Protection in the Hour of Temptation, *Rev.* 3. 10. that Cauſe which makes a Martyr, may well make a joyful Sufferer.

2. Another Reaſon is more expreſs; the World hates them, becauſe they *are not of the World.* They to whom the Word of Chriſt comes in Power, are *not of the World*, for it has this Effect upon all that receive it in the Love of it, that it *weans them from* the Wealth of the World, and *turns them againſt* the Wickedneſs of the World, and therefore the World bears them a Grudge.

5. He pleads their Conformity to himſelf in a holy Non-conformity to the World. *v.* 16. Father, keep them, for they are of my Spirit and Mind, *they are not of the World, even as I am not of the World.* They may in Faith commit themſelves to God's Cuſtody; (1.) Who are, *as Chriſt was in this World*, and tread in his Steps. God will love thoſe that are like Chriſt. (2.) Who do not engage themſelves in the World's Intereſt, nor devote themſelves to its Service. Obſerve,

1. That Jeſus Chriſt was *not of this World*; he never had been of it, and leaſt of all, now he was upon the Point of leaving it. This ſpeaks, (1.) His *State*, he was none of the World's Favourites or Darlings, none of its Princes or Grandees, worldly Poſſeſſions he had none, nor where to lay his Head; nor worldly Power, he was no Judge or Divider.) (2.) His *Spirit*; he was perfectly dead to the World, the Prince of this World had *nothing in him*; the Things of this World were nothing to *him*; not Honour, for he *made himſelf of no Reputation*; not Riches, for *for our Sakes he became poor*; not Pleaſures, for he *acquainted himſelf with Grief.* See *John* 8. 23.

2. That therefore true Chriſtians *are not of this World.* The Spirit of Chriſt in them is oppoſite to the Spirit of the World. (1.) It is their Lot to be *deſpiſed by the World*; they are not in Favour with the World, no more than their Maſter before them was. (2.) It is their Privilege to be *delivered from the World*; as *Abraham* out of the Land of his Nativity. (3.) It is their Duty and Character to be *dead to the World.* Their moſt *pleaſing Converſe* is, and ſhould be with another World, and their prevailing Concern about the Buſineſs of that World, not of this. Chriſt's Diſciples were weak, and had many Infirmities, yet this he could ſay for them, they were *not of the World*, not of *the Earth*, and therefore he recommends them to the Care of Heaven.

17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. 18 As thou haſt ſent me into the world, even ſo have I alſo ſent them into the world. 19 And for their ſakes I ſanctify my ſelf, that they alſo might be ſanctified through the truth.

The next Thing he pray'd for them is, that they might be *ſanctified*; not only kept from *Evil*, but made *Good.*

Firſt, Here's the Petition, *v.* 7. *Sanctify them through thy Truth*, i. e. through thy Word, for *thy Word is Truth*, 'tis true, 'tis Truth it ſelf. He deſires they may be ſanctified, both as Chriſtians and as Miniſters.

(1.) As Chriſtians. Father, *make them Holy*, and that will be their Preſervation, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 23. Obſerve here,

1. The Grace deſir'd; *Sanctification.* The Diſciples were ſanctified, for they were *not of the World*, yet he prays, Father, *ſanctify* them, that is, (1.) *Confirm* the Work of Sanctification in them, ſtrengthen their Faith, enflame their good Affections, rivet their good Reſolutions. (2.) *Carry on* that good Work in them, and continue it; let the *Light ſhine more and more.* (3.) *Compleat* it, crown it with the Perfection of Holineſs; ſanctify them throughout, and to the End. *Note*, (1.) It is the Prayer of Chriſt for all that are his, that they may be ſanctified; becauſe he cannot for Shame own them as his, either here or hereafter; either employ them in his Work, or preſent them to his Father, if they be not ſanctified. (2.) Thoſe that through Grace are ſanctified, have need to be ſanctified more and more. Even Diſciples muſt pray for ſanctifying Grace, for if he that was the Author of the good Work be not the Finiſher of it, we are undone. Not to go forward is to go backward; *He that is holy, muſt be holy ſtill*, more holy ſtill, preſſing forwards, ſoaring upwards, as thoſe *that have not attained.* (3.) It is God that *ſanctifies*, as well as God that juſtifies, 2 *Cor.* 5. 5. (4.) It is an Encouragement to us in our Prayers for ſanctifying Grace, that it is what Chriſt intercedes for, for us.

2. The Means of conferring this Grace, *Through thy Truth, thy Word is Truth.* Not that the holy One of *Iſrael* is hereby limited to Means, but in the *Counſels of Peace*, among other Things, it was ſettled and agreed, 1. That all *needful Truth* ſhould be compriz'd and ſumm'd up in the *Word of God.* Divine Revelation, as it now ſtands in the written Word, is not only pure Truth, without Mixture, but *entire Truth* without Deficiency. 2. That this *Word of Truth* ſhould be the outward and ordinary Means of our Sanctification; not of it ſelf, for then it would always *ſanctify*, but as the Inſtrument which the Spirit commonly uſeth in beginning and carrying on that good Work; 'tis the Seed of the new Birth, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. and the Food of the new Life, 1 *Pet.* 2. 1, 2.

(2.) As Miniſters, *ſanctify them*, i. e. ſet them apart for thy ſelf and Service; let their Call to the Apoſtleſhip be ratified in Heaven. Prophets were ſaid to be ſanctified, *Jer.* 1. 5. Prieſts and Levites were ſo. *Sanctify them.* i. e. 1. Qualify them for the Office, with Chriſtian Graces, and Miniſterial Gifts, to make them able Miniſters of the New Teſtament. 2. Separate them to the Office, *Rom.* 1. 1. I have called them, they have conſented, Father, ſay *Amen* to it. 3. Own them in the Office; let thy Hand go along with them; *ſanctify them by*, or in *thy Truth*, as Truth is oppos'd to Figure and Shadow; ſanctify them *really*, not *ritually* and ceremonially, as the Levitical Prieſts were, by Anointing and Sacrifice. *Sanctify them* to thy Truth, the Word of thy Truth, to be the Preachers of thy Truth to the World; as the Prieſts were ſanctified to *ſerve at the Altar*, ſo let them be to *Preach the Goſpel*, 1 Cor. 9. 13, 14. *Note*, 1. Jeſus Chriſt intercedes for his Miniſters with a particular Concern, and recommends to his Father's Grace thoſe Stars he carries in his Right Hand. 2. The great Thing to be ask'd of God, for Goſpel Miniſters, is, that they may be *ſanctified*, effectually ſeparated from the World, and entirely devoted to God, and experimentally acquainted with the Influence of that Word upon their own Hearts, which they preach to others. Let them have the *Urim* and *Thummim*, *Light* and *Integrity.*

Secondly, We have here two Pleas or Arguments to enforce this Petition for the Diſciples *Sanctification.*

1. The *Miſſion* they had *from him*, *v.* 18. *As thou haſt ſent me into the World* to be thine Embaſſador to the Children of Men, *ſo* now I am recalled, *have I ſent them into the World*, as my Delegates. Now here,

(1.) Chriſt ſpeaks with great *Aſſurance* of his own Miſſion, *Thou haſt ſent me into the World.* The great Author of the Chriſtian Religion had his Commiſſions and Inſtructions from him, who is the Original and Object of all Religion. He was ſent of God, to ſay what he ſaid, and to do what he did, and be what he is to thoſe that believe on him; which was *his* Comfort in his Undertaking, and may be ours abundantly, in our Dependance upon him; his *Record* was *on high*, from thence his Miſſion was,

(2.) He ſpeaks with great *Satisfaction* of the Commiſſion he had given his Diſciples. *So have I ſent them*, on the ſame Errand, and to carry on the ſame Deſign; to preach the ſame Doctrine that he had preached, and to confirm it with the ſame Proofs, with a Charge likewiſe to *commit to* other *faithful* Men, that which was committed to them. He gave them *their* Commiſſion, *John* 20. 21. with a Reverence to his own, and it magnifies their Office, that it comes from Chriſt, and that there is ſome Affinity between the Commiſſion given to the Miniſters of Reconciliation, and that given to the Mediator; he is call'd an *Apoſtle*, Heb. 3. 1. a *Miniſter*, Rom. 15. 8. a *Meſſenger*, Mal. 3. 1. only they are ſent as *Servants*, he as a *Son.*

Now this comes in here as a Reaſon, (1.) Why Chriſt was *concern'd* ſo much for them, and laid their Caſe ſo near his Heart, becauſe he had himſelf put them into a difficult Office, which requir'd great Abilities for the due Diſcharge of it. *Note*, Whom Chriſt *ſends* he will *ſtand by*, and intereſt himſelf in thoſe that are employ'd for him; what he calls us out to, he will fit us out for, and bear us out in. (2.) Why he committed them *to his Father*, becauſe he was concern'd in the Cauſe; *their* Miſſion being in Proſecution of *his*, and as it were, an *Aſſignment out of it.* Chriſt *received Gifts for Men*, Pſal. 68. 18. and then gave them to Men, *Eph.* 4. 8. and therefore *prays in Aid* of his Father to *warrant* and *uphold* thoſe Gifts, and confirm his Grant of them. The Father *ſanctified him* when he *ſent him into the World*, Chap. 10. 36. Now they being ſent as he was, let them alſo be ſanctified.

2. The *Merit* he had *for them* is another Thing here pleaded, *v.* 19. *For their Sakes I ſanctify my ſelf.* Here's,

1. Chriſt's *Deſignation* of himſelf to the Work and Office of Mediator. *I ſanctify my ſelf*, i. e. he entirely devoted himſelf to the Undertaking, and all the Parts of it, eſpecially that which he was now going about, the *Offering up of himſelf without Spot unto God, by the Eternal Spirit.* He, as the Prieſt and Altar, *ſanctified himſelf* as the Sacrifice. When he ſaid, Father, *glorify thy Name*; and Father, *Thy Will be done*; and Father, *I commit my Spirit into thy Hands*; he pay'd down the Satisfaction he had engag'd to make, and ſo *ſanctify'd himſelf.* This he pleads with his Father, for his Interceſſion is made in the Virtue of his Satisfaction. *By his own Blood he enter'd into the Holy Place*, Heb. 9. 12. As the High Prieſt on the Day of Atonement, *ſprinkled the Blood* of the Sacrifice at the ſame time that he *burnt Incenſe* within the Vail, *Lev.* 16. 12, 14.

2. Chriſt's *Deſign of* Kindneſs to his Diſciples herein. 'Tis *for their Sakes*, that *they may be ſanctified*, that is, that they may be *Martyrs*, ſo ſome. I ſacrifice my ſelf, that they may be ſacrificed to the Glory of God and the Churches Good. *Paul* ſpeaks of his being *offer'd*, 2 Tim. 4. 6. Phil. 2. 17. Whatever there is in the *Death of the Saints*, that is *precious in the Sight of the Lord*, 'tis owing to the Death of our Lord Jeſus. But I rather take it more generally, that they may be *Saints* and *Miniſters* duly *qualified* and *accepted* of God.

1. The *Office of the Miniſtry* is the Purchaſe of Chriſt's Blood, and one of the Bleſſed Fruits of his Satisfaction, and owes its Virtue and Value to Chriſt's Merit. The Prieſts under the Law were conſecrated with the Blood of Bulls and Goats, but Goſpel-Miniſters with the Blood of Jeſus.

2. The real Holineſs of all good *Chriſtians*, is the Fruit of Chriſt's Death, by which the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt was purchaſed; He *gave himſelf for the Church*, to *ſanctify* it, *Eph.* 5. 26. And he that deſign'd the End, deſign'd alſo the Means, that they might be ſanctified *by the Truth*, the Truth which Chriſt came into the World to *bear Witneſs* to, and dy'd to confirm. The Word of Truth receives its ſanctifying Virtue and Power from the Death of Chriſt. Some read it, that they may be ſanctified *in Truth*, i. e. truly; for as God muſt be *ſerv'd*, ſo in order to that we muſt be ſanctified *in the Spirit, and in the Truth.* And this Chriſt has prayed for, for all that are his, for *this is his Will, even their Sanctification*, which encourages them to pray for it,

20 Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word: 21 That they all may be one, as thou Father *art* in me, and I in thee: that they alſo may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me. 22 And the glory which thou gaveſt me, I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one. 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me.

Next to their *Purity*, he prays for their *Unity*, for their Wiſdom from above, is firſt *pure*, then *peaceable*; and *Amity* is then *aimable* indeed, when 'tis like the Ointment on *Aaron*'s holy Head, and the Dew on *Sion*'s holy Hill. Obſerve,

Firſt, Who are *included* in this Prayer, *v.* 20. *not theſe only*, not theſe only that are now my Diſciples, the Eleven, the Seventy, with others, Men and Women, that followed him when he was here on Earth; but *for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their Word*, either preached by them in their own Day, or written by them for the Generation to come; I pray *for them all*, that they all may be one in their Intereſt in this Prayer, and may all receive Benefit by it. *Note* here,

1. Thoſe, and thoſe only are intereſted in the Mediation of Chriſt, that *do*, or *ſhall* believe in him. This is that by which they are *deſcrib'd*, and it comprehends all the Character and Duty of a *Chriſtian.* They that liv'd then, *ſaw and believed*; but they in after Ages *have not ſeen*, and yet *have believed.*

2. 'Tis *through the Word* that Souls are brought to believe on Chriſt, and 'tis for this End that Chriſt appointed the Scriptures to be written, and a ſtanding Miniſtry to continue in the Church, while the Church ſtands, that is, while the World ſtands, for the raiſing up of a Seed.

3. It is certainly and infallibly *known to Chriſt* who *ſhall believe on him.* He doth not here pray at a venture, upon a Contingency depending on the *treacherous* Will of Man, which pretends to be *free*, but by reaſon of Sin is in *Bondage* with *its Children*; no, Chriſt knew very well *whom he prayed for*, the Matter was *reduc'd to a Certainty* by the Divine Preſcience and Purpoſe; he knew who were given him, who being ordain'd to Eternal Life, were *enter'd in the Lamb's Book*, and ſhould undoubtedly *believe*, Acts 13. 48.

4. Jeſus Chriſt intercedes not only for great and eminent Believers, but for the meaneſt and weakeſt; not for *theſe only*, that are to be employed in the higheſt Poſts of Truſt and Honour in his Kingdom, but for *all*, even thoſe that in the Eye of the World are inconſiderable. As the Divine Providence extends it ſelf to the *meaneſt Creature*, ſo doth the Divine Grace to the *meaneſt Chriſtian.* The good Shepherd has an Eye even *to the Poor of the Flock*,

5. Jeſus Chriſt in his Mediation had an *actual* Regard to thoſe of the choſen Remnant that were yet *unborn*, the People that *ſhould be created*, Pſal. 22. 31. the *other Sheep* which he *muſt yet bring.* Before they are formed *in the Womb he knows them*, Jer. 1 5. and Prayers are filed in Heaven for them beforehand, by him who *declareth the End from the Beginning*, and *calleth Things that are not as tho' they were.*

Secondly, What is *intended* in this Prayer, *v.* 21. *That they all may be one.* The ſame before, *v.* 11. *That they may be one as we are.* And again, *v.* 22. The Heart of Chriſt was much upon this. Some think that *Oneneſs* prayed for, *v.* 11. hath ſpecial Reference to the Diſciples as Miniſters and Apoſtles, that they might be one in their Teſtimony to Chriſt; and the Harmony of the Evangeliſts, and Concurrence of the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel is owing to this Prayer. Let them be not only of *one Heart*, but *one Mouth*, ſpeaking the *ſame Thing.* The Unity of Goſpel Miniſters is both the Beauty and Strength of the Goſpel Intereſt.

But 'tis certain, the Oneneſs pray'd for, *v.* 21. reſpects *all Believers.* 'Tis the Prayer of Chriſt for all that are his, and we may be ſure it is an anſwer'd Prayer. *That they all may be one*, one in us, v. 21. one *as we are one*, v. 22. made *perfect in one*, v. 23. It includes Three Things:

1. That they might all be *incorporated in one Body.* Father, look upon them as *One*, and ratify by that great Charter by which they are embody'd as *one* Church. Tho' they live in *diſtant Places*, from one End of Heaven to the other, and in *ſeveral Ages*, from the beginning to the cloſe of the Time, and ſo cannot have any perſonal Acquaintance or Correſpondence with each other, yet let them be united in me their common Head. As Chriſt dy'd, ſo he pray'd to *gather them all in one*, John 11. 53. Eph. 1. 10.

2. That they might all be *animated by one Spirit.* This is plainly implied in that, *That they may be one in us.* Union with the Father and Son is obtain'd and kept up only by the Holy Ghoſt. *He that is joyned to the Lord in one Spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. Let them all be ſtamp'd with the ſame Image and Superſcription, and influenced by the ſame Power.

3. That they might all be *knit together* in the Bond of Love and Charity, all of one Heart. That they *all may be one.* 1. In Judgment and Setiment, not in *every little Thing*, 'tis neither *poſſible* nor *needful*, but in the great Things of God, and in them by the Virtue of this Prayer they are all agreed; that God's Favour is better than Life; that Sin is the worſt of Evils, Chriſt the beſt of Friends; that there is another Life after this; and the like. 2. In Diſpoſition and Inclination. All that are ſanctified have the ſame Divine Nature and Image; they have all a new Heart, and it is *one Heart.* 3. They are all one in their Deſigns and Aims. Every true Chriſtian, *as far as he is ſo*, eyes the Glory of God as his *higheſt End*, and the Glory of Heaven as his *chief Good.* 4. They are all one in their Deſires and Prayers, tho' they differ in Words, and the manner of Expreſſions, yet having all received the ſame *Spirit of Adoption*, and obſerving the ſame Rule, they pray for the ſame Things in effect. 5. All one *in Love and Affection.* Every true Chriſtian, has that in him which inclines him to love all true Chriſtians, as ſuch. That which Chriſt here prays for, is that *Communion of Saints* which we profeſs to believe; the Fellowſhip which all Believers have with God, and their intimate Union with all the Saints in Heaven and Earth, 1 *John* 1. 3. But this Prayer of Chriſt will not have its compleat Anſwer till all the Saints come to Heaven, for then, and not till then, they ſhall be *perfect in one*, v. 23. Eph. 4. 13.

Thirdly, What is *intimated* by way of *Plea* or *Argument*, to enforce this Petition; Three Things,

1. The Oneneſs that is between the Father and the Son, which is mention'd again and again, *v.* 11, 21, 22, 23.

1. It is taken for granted, that the Father and Son are *one*, one in Nature and Eſſence, equal in Power and Glory, one in mutual Endearments: The *Father loveth the Son*, and the Son always pleaſed the Father. They are one in Deſign, and one in Operation. The Intimacy of this Oneneſs is expreſs'd in theſe Words, *Thou in me, and I in thee.* This he often mentions for his Support under his preſent Sufferings, when his Enemies were ready to fall upon him, and his Friends to fall off from him, yet he was *in the Father*, and the Father *in him.*

2. This is inſiſted on in Chriſt's Prayer for his Diſciples Oneneſs.

1. As the *Pattern* of that Oneneſs, ſhewing how he deſir'd they might be *One.* Believers are One in ſome Meaſure as God and Chriſt are One: For, (1.) The Union of Believers is a ſtrict and cloſe Union; they are united by a Divine Nature, by the Power of Divine Grace in purſuance of the Divine Counſels. (2.) It is a holy Union, in the holy Spirit, for holy Ends; not a Body Politick for any ſecular Purpoſe. (3.) It is, and will be at laſt a compleat Union. Father and Son have the ſame Attributes, Properties, and Perfections, ſo have Believers now, as far as they are ſanctified, and when Grace ſhall be perfected in Glory, they will be exactly conſonant to each other, all changed into the ſame Image.

2. As the Centre of that Oneneſs; that they may be *one in us*, all meeting here. There is *one God*, and *one Mediator*, and herein Believers are *one*, that they all agree to depend upon the Favour of this one God as their Felicity, and the Merit of this one Mediator as their Righteouſneſs. That's a Conſpiracy, not a Union, which

doth not centre in *God as the End*, and *Chriſt as the Way*. All that are truely united to God and Chriſt, who *are one*, will ſoon be *united one to another*.

3. As a Plea for that Oneneſs. The Creator and Redeemer are one in Intereſt and Deſign; but to what Purpoſe are they ſo, if all Believers were not one Body with Chriſt, and did not *jointly* receive Grace for Grace *from him*, as he had received it *for them*. Chriſt's Deſign was to reduce revolted Mankind to God; Father, ſaith he, let all that believe be one, that in *one Body* they may be *reconciled*, *Eph.* 2. 15, 16. which ſpeaks of the uniting of *Jews* and *Gentiles* in the Church; that great Myſtery, that the *Gentiles* ſhould be *Fellow-Heirs, and of the ſame Body*, Eph. 3. 6. to which I think this Prayer of Chriſt principally refers, it being one great Thing he aim'd at in his dying; and I wonder none of the Expoſitors I have met with do ſo apply it. Father, let the *Gentiles* that believe be incorporated with the believing *Jews*, and *make of twain one new Man*.

Thoſe Words, *I in them, and thou in me*, ſhew what that Union is which is ſo neceſſary, not only to the Beauty, but to the very Being of his Church. (1.) *Union with Chriſt, I in them*. Chriſt dwelling in the Hearts of Believers, is the Life and Soul of the New Man. (2.) *Union with God* through him. *Thou in me*, ſo as by me to be *in them*. (3.) *Union with each other*, reſulting from thoſe, that they hereby may be *made perfect in one*. We are compleat in him.

(2.) The Deſign of Chriſt in all his Communications of Light and Grace to them. *Ver.* 22. *The Glory which thou gaveſt me*, as the Truſtee or Channel of Conveyance, *I have* accordingly *given them*, to this Intent, that they *may be one as we are one*; ſo that thoſe Gifts will be in vain if they be not one. Now theſe *Gifts* are either,

1. Thoſe that were conferr'd upon the Apoſtles, and firſt Planters of the Church. The Glory of being God's Ambaſſadors to the World; the Glory of working Miracles; the Glory of gathering a Church out of the World, and erecting the Throne of God's Kingdom among Men; this Glory was given to Chriſt, and ſome of the Honour he put upon them, when he ſent them to *Diſciple all Nations*.

Or, 2. Thoſe that are given in common to all Believers. The Glory of being in Covenant with the Father, and accepted of him; of being laid in his Boſom, and deſigned for a Place at his right Hand, was the Glory which the Father gave to the *Redeemer*, and he hath confirmed it to the *Redeemed*. (1.) This Honour he ſaith he hath given them, becauſe he hath intended it for them, ſettled it upon them, and ſecured it to them, upon their believing Chriſt's Promiſes are real Gifts. (2.) This was *given him* to *give them*; 'twas convey'd to him in *Truſt* for them, and he was faithful to him that appointed him. (3.) He gave it them that they *might be one*. 1. To *entitle* them to the *Privilege* of *Unity*, that by Virtue of their common Relation to *one God the Father*, and *one Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, they might be truly denominated One. The Gift of the *Spirit*, that great *Glory* which the Father gave to the Son, by him to be given to all Believers, makes them *one*, for he worketh *all in all*, 1 *Cor.* 12. 4. *&c.* 2. To *engage* them to the *Duty of Unity*. That in Conſideration of their Agreement and Communion in one Creed, and one Covenant, one Spirit, and one Bible; in conſideration of what they *have* in *one God*, and *one Chriſt*, and of what they *hope for* in one Heaven, they may be of one Mind, and one Mouth. Worldly Glory ſets Men at Varience, for if ſome be advanced, others are eclipſed, and therefore, while the Diſciples dreamed of a *Temporal Kingdom*, they were ever and anon quarrelling, but ſpiritual Honours being conferred alike upon all Chriſt's Subjects, they being all *made to our God Kings and Prieſts*, there is no Occaſion for Conteſt or Emulation. The more Chriſtians are taken up with the Glory Chriſt has given them, the leſs deſirous they will be of *Vain-glory*, and conſequently the leſs diſpoſed to quarrel.

(3.) He pleads the happy Influence their Oneneſs would have upon others, and the Furtherance 'twould give to the publick Good. This is twice urged, *v.* 21. *That the World may believe that thou haſt ſent me*. And again, *v.* 23. *That the World may know it*, for without *Knowledge* there can be no true *Faith*. Believers muſt *know* what they believe, and why and wherefore they believe it: They who believe *at a venture*, venture *too far*. Now Chriſt here ſhews,

1. His Good Will to the *World* of Mankind in general. Herein he is of his Father's Mind, as we are ſure he is in every Thing; that he would have all Men to be ſaved, and to *come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 4. 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. Therefore 'tis his Will that all Means poſſible ſhould be uſed, and no Stone left unturned for the Conviction and Converſion of the World. We know not who are choſen, but we muſt in our Places do our utmoſt to further Men's Salvation, and take heed of doing any Thing to hinder it.

2. The good Fruit of the Churches Oneneſs, 'twill be an Evidence of the Truth of Chriſtianity, and a Means of bringing many to embrace it.

1. In General, 'twill recommend Chriſtianity to the World, and to the good Opinion of thoſe that are without.

(1.) The *Embodying* of Chriſtians in *one Society* by the *Goſpel Charter*, will greatly promote Chriſtianity when the World ſhall ſee ſo many of thoſe that were *its Children*, calledout of *its Family*, diſtinguiſhed from others, and changed from what they themſelves ſometimes *were*; when they ſhall ſee this Society raiſed by the Fooliſhneſs of Preaching, and kept up by Miracles of Divine Providence and Grace; and how admirably well it is modell'd and conſtituted, they will be ready to ſay, *We will go with you*, for *we ſee that God is with you*.

(2.) The *Uniting* of Chriſtians in *Love* and *Charity* is the Beauty of their Profeſſion, and invites others to joyn with them, as the Love that was among thoſe Primo-primitive Chriſtians, *Acts* 2. 42, 43. and 4. 32, 33. When Chriſtianity, inſtead of cauſing Quarrels about it ſelf, makes all other Strifes to ceaſe; when it cools the fiery, ſmooths the rugged, and diſpoſeth Men to be kind and loving, courteous and beneficent to all Men; ſtudious to preſerve and promote Peace in all Relations and Societies; this will recommend it to all that have any Thing either of *natural Religion* or *natural Affection* in them.

2. In Particular, 'twill beget in Men good Thoughts.

1. Of Chriſt. They will know and believe that *thou haſt ſent me*. By this it will appear that Chriſt was ſent of God, and that his Doctrine was Divine, in that his Religion prevails to joyn ſo many of different Capacities, Tempers and Intereſts in other Things, in one Body by Faith, with one Heart by Love: Certainly he was ſent by the God of Power, who faſhioneth Mens Hearts alike, and the God of Love and Peace, when the Worſhippers of God are one, he is one, and his Name one.

2. Of Chriſtians. They will know *that thou haſt loved them as thou haſt loved me*. Here is, 1. The Privilege of Believers, the Father himſelf loveth them with a Love reſembling his Love to his Son, for they are loved *in him* with an everlaſting Love. 2. The Evidence of their Intereſt in this Privilege, and that is, their being One. By this it will appear that God loves us, if we *love one another with a pure Heart*, for where-ever the Love of God is ſhed abroad in the Heart, 'twill change it into the ſame Image. See how much good it would do the World to know better how dear to God all good Chriſtians are. The *Jews* had a Saying, "*If the* "*World did but know the Worth of good Men, they would hedge them* "*about with Pearls.*" Thoſe that have ſo much of God's Love ſhould have more of ours.

24 Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me: for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the World. 25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee, and theſe have known that thou haſt ſent me. 26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare *it*: that the love, wherewith thou haſt loved me, may be in them and I in them.

Here's, *Firſt*, A Petition for the *glorifying* all thoſe that were given to Chriſt, *v.* 24. not only theſe Apoſtles, but all Believers. *Father, I will that they may be with me*. Obſerve,

1. The Connexion of this Requeſt with thoſe foregoing. He had prayed that God would *preſerve*, *ſanctify*, and *unite* them, and now he prays that he would *crown* all his Gifts with their Glorification. In this Method we muſt pray, firſt for *Grace*, and then for *Glory*, *Pſal.* 84. 11. for in this Method God gives. Far be it from the only wiſe God to come under the Imputation either of that *fooliſh Builder* that *without a Foundation built upon the Sand*, as he would if he ſhould glorify any whom he hath not firſt ſanctified; or of that fooliſh Builder who *began to build, and was not able to finiſh*, as he would if he ſhould ſanctify any, and not glorify them.

2. The Manner of the Requeſt, *Father I will*. Here as before, he addreſſeth himſelf to God as a *Father*, and therein we muſt do likewiſe; but when he ſaith θέλω, *I will*, he ſpeakes a Language peculiar to himſelf, and ſuch as doth not become ordinary Petitioners, but very well *became him* who *paid for* what he *pray'd for*.

(1.) It ſpeaks the Authority of his Interceſſion in general; his Word was with Power in Heaven as well as on Earth. He entring with his own Blood into the Holy Place, his Interceſſion there has an uncontroulable Efficacy. He intercedes as King, for he is a Prieſt upon his Throne, like *Melchizedeck*, a *King-Prieſt*.

(2.) It ſpeaks his particular Authority in this Matter; he had a Power to *give Eternal Life*, *v.* 2. and purſuant to that Power he ſaith, *Father I will*. Tho' now he took upon him the Form of a Servant, yet that Power being to be moſt illuſtriouſly exerted when he ſhall come the ſecond Time in the Glory of a Judge, to ſay, *Come ye Bleſſed*, having that in his Eye, he might well ſay, *Father, I will*.

3. The Requeſt it ſelf; that all the Elect might come to be with him in Heaven at laſt, to ſee his Glory and to ſhare in it. Now obſerve here,

1. Under *what Notion* we are to hope for Heaven. Wherein doth that Happineſs conſiſt. Three Things make Heaven.

1. It is to be *where Chriſt is*; *where I am*. In the Paradice, whither Chriſt's Soul went at Death; in the Third Heavens, where his Soul and Body went at his Aſcenſion. —*Where I am*, am to be *ſhortly*, am to be *eternally*. In this World we are but *in tranſitu*, there we truly *are* where we are to be *for ever*; ſo Chriſt reckoned, and ſo muſt we.

2. It is to be *with him* where he is; this is no Tautology, but intimates that we ſhall not only be in the ſame happy Place where Chriſt is, but that the Happineſs of the Place will conſiſt in *his Preſence*, that's the Fulneſs of its Joy. The very Heaven of Heaven is to be with Chriſt, there in Company with him, and Communion with him, *Phil.* 1. 21.

3. 'Tis to *behold his Glory* which the Father has given him. Obſerve,

1. The Glory of the Redeemer is the Brightneſs of Heaven: That Glory before which Angels cover their Faces, was *his* Glory, *John* 12. 1. The *Lamb* is the *Light* of the New *Jeruſalem*, *Rev.* 21. 23. Chriſt will come in the Glory of his Father, for he is the *Brightneſs of his Glory.* God ſhews his Glory there, as he doth his Grace here through Chriſt. The Father *has given me* this Glory, tho' he was as yet in his low Eſtate, but it was very *ſure* and very *near.*

2. The Felicity of the Redeemed conſiſts very much in the *beholding* of that Glory; they will have the immediate View of his glorious Perſon; *I ſhall ſee God in my Fleſh*, Job 19. 26, 27. They will have a clear Inſight into his glorious Undertaking, as it will be then accompliſh'd; they will ſee into thoſe Springs of Love from whence flow all the Streams of Grace; they ſhall have an appropriating Sight of Chriſt's Glory, *Uxor fulget radiis mariti*; and an *aſſimilating* Sight, they ſhall be changed into the *ſame Image from Glory to Glory.*

3. Upon what *Ground* we are hope to for Heaven, no other but purely the Mediation and Interceſſion of Chriſt, becauſe he hath ſaid, *Father, I will.* Our Sanctification is our *Evidence*; for he that hath this Hope in him, purifies himſelf; but it is the Will of Chriſt, that is our Title, by the which Will we are ſanctified, *Heb.* 10. 10. Chriſt ſpeaks here as if he did not count his own Happineſs compleat, unleſs he had his Elect to ſhare with him in it; for 'tis the *bringing of many Sons to Glory* that *makes the Captain of our Salvation perfect*, Heb. 2. 10.

4. The Argument to back this Requeſt. For thou *lovedſt me before the Foundation of the World.* This is a Reaſon, (1.) Why he expected this Glory himſelf, thou wilt *give it me*, for thou *lovedſt me.* The Honour and Power given to the Son as Mediator was founded in the Father's Love to him, *John* 5. 20. *The Father loves the Son*, is infinitely well pleaſed in his Undertaking, and therefore has *given all Things into his Hand.* And the Matter being concerted in the divine Counſels from Eternity, he is ſaid to love him as Mediator *before the Foundation of the World.* Or, (2.) Why he expected that thoſe who were given him ſhould be with him to ſhare in his Glory. Thou lovedſt me, and them in me, and can'ſt deny me nothing I ask for them.

Secondly, The Concluſion of the Prayer, which is deſigned to enforce all the Petitions for the Diſciples, eſpecially the laſt, that they may be glorified.

Two Things he inſiſts upon, and pleads.

1. The Reſpect he had to his Father, *v.* 25. Obſerve,

1. The Title he gives to God, *O righteous Father.* When he prayed they might be ſanctified, he calls him *holy Father*; when he prays they might be *glorified*, he calls him *righteous* Father; for 'tis a *Crown of Righteouſneſs* which the *righteous Judge ſhall give.* God's Righteouſneſs was engag'd for the giving out of all that Good which the Father had *promiſed*, and the Son had *purchaſed.*

2. The Character he gives of the World that lay in Wickedneſs. *The World has not known thee.* *Note*, Ignorance of God over-ſpreads the World of Mankind; this is the Darkneſs they ſit in. Now this is urged here, (1.) To ſhew that theſe Diſciples needed the Aids of ſpecial Grace, both becauſe of the *Neceſſity* of their Work, they were to bring a World that knew not God to the Knowledge of him; and alſo becauſe of the *Difficulty* of their Work, they muſt bring Light to thoſe that rebelled againſt the Light, therefore keep them. (2.) To ſhew that they are qualified for further *peculiar* Favours, for they had that Knowledge of God which the World had not.

3. The *Plea* he inſiſts upon *for himſelf*, but *I have known thee.* Chriſt knew the Father ſo as no one elſe ever did; knew upon what Grounds he went in his Undertaking, knew his Father's Mind in every Thing, and therefore in this Prayer came to him with Confidence, as we do to one we know. Chriſt is here ſuing out Bleſſings for thoſe that were his; purſuing this Petition, when he had ſaid, *The World has not known thee*; one would expect it ſhould follow, *but they have known thee*; no, their Knowledge was not to be bragg'd of: *But I have known thee*, which intimates, that there is nothing in us to recommend us to God's Favour, but all our Intereſt in him, and Intercourſe with him, reſults from, and depends upon Chriſt's Intereſt and Intercourſe. We are unworthy, but he is worthy.

4. The Plea he inſiſts upon for his Diſciples; and *thoſe have known that thou haſt ſent me.* And,

1. Hereby they are *diſtinguiſhed* from the unbelieving World. When Multitudes to whom Chriſt was ſent, and his Grace offer'd, would not *believe that God* had ſent him, theſe knew it, and believed it, and were not aſhamed to own it. *Note*, To know and believe in Jeſus Chriſt, in the midſt of a World that perſiſts in Ignorance and Infidelity is highly pleaſing to God, and ſhall certainly be crowned with diſtinguiſhing Glory: Singular Faith qualifies for ſingular Favours.

2. Hereby they are intereſted in the Mediation of Chriſt, and partake of the Benefit of his Acquaintance with the Father. *I have known thee* immediately and perfectly, and thoſe, tho' they have not *ſo* known thee, nor were capable of knowing thee *ſo*, yet they have known that *thou haſt ſent me*, have known that which was requir'd of them to know, have known the Creator in the Redeemer. Knowing Chriſt as *ſent of God* they have in him known the Father, and are introduced to an Acquaintance with him; therefore, Father, look after them *for my ſake.*

2. The Reſpect he had to his Diſciples, *v.* 26. I have led them into the *Knowledge of thee*, and *will do it*, yet more and more, with this great and kind Intention, *That the Love wherewith thou haſt loved me may be in them, and I in them.* Obſerve here,

1. What Chriſt had done for them, *I have declared unto them thy Name.* 1. This he *had done* for thoſe that were his immediate Followers. All the Time that he went in and out among them, he made it his Buſineſs to *declare his Father's Name* to them, and to beget in them a Veneration for it. The Tendency of all his Sermons and Miracles was to advance his Father's Honour, and to ſpread the Knowledge of him, *John* 1. 18. 2. This he *hath done* for all that believe on him, for they had not been brought to believe, if Chriſt had not made known to them his Father's Name. *Note*, 1. We are indebted to Chriſt for all the Knowledge we have of the Father's Name; he declares it, and he opens the Underſtanding to receive that Revelation. 2. Thoſe whom Chriſt recommends to the *Favour of God*, he firſt leads into an *Acquaintance with God.*

2. What he intended to do yet further for them, *I will declare it.* To the Diſciples he deſigned to give further Inſtructions after his Reſurrection, *Acts* 1. 3. and to bring them into a much more intimate Acquaintance with divine Things, by the pouring out of the Spirit after his Aſcenſion; and to all Believers, into whoſe Hearts he hath ſhined, he ſhines more and more. Where Chriſt *has* declared his Father's Name, he *will* declare it, for *to him that hath ſhall be given*, and they that know God, both *need* and *deſire* to know more of him. This is fitly pleaded for them, Father own and *favour them*, for they will own and *honour thee.*

3. What he aimed at in all this, not to fill their Heads with curious Speculations, and furniſh them with ſomething to talk of among the Learned, but to ſecure and advance their real Happineſs in two Things.

1. *Communion with God.* Therefore I have given them the Knowledge of thy Name, of all that whereby thou haſt made thy ſelf known, that *thy Love*, even that *wherewith thou haſt loved me, may be* not only towards them *but in them.* That is, 1. Let them have the *Fruits* of that Love for their *Sanctification*; let the Spirit of Love, with which thou haſt filled me, be in them. Chriſt declares his Father's Name to Believers, that with that *divine Light* darted into their Minds, a *divine Love* may be ſhed abroad in their Hearts; to be in them a commanding, conſtraining Principle of Holineſs; that they may partake of a *divine Nature.* When God's Love *to us* comes to be *in us*, 'tis like the Virtue which the Load-ſtone gives the Needle, inclining it to move towards the Pole; it draws out the Soul towards God in pious and devout Affections, which are as the *Spirits* of the *divine Life* in the Soul. 2. Let them have the *Taſt* and *Reliſh* of that Love for their Conſolation; let them not only be *intereſted* in the Love of God, by having God's Name declared to them, but by a further Declaration of it, let them have the Comfort of that Intereſt; may not only know God, but *know that they know him*, 1 John 2. 3. 'Tis the Love of God thus *ſhed abroad in the Heart* that fills it with Joy, *Rom.* 5. 3, 5. This God has provided for, that we may not only be ſatisfied *with* his loving Kindneſs, but ſatisfied *of* it; and ſo may live a Life of Complacency in God, and Communion with him; this we muſt *pray for*, this we muſt *preſs after*; if we have it, we muſt *thank Chriſt* for it, if we want it we may *thank our ſelves.*

2. *Union with Chriſt* in order hereunto, *and I in them.* There's no getting into the Love of God but through Chriſt, nor can we keep our ſelves in that Love but by *abiding* in Chriſt; that is, having him to *abide in us*; nor can we have the Senſe and Apprehenſion of that Love but by our Experience of the indwelling of Chriſt, that is, the Spirit of Chriſt in our Hearts: 'Tis Chriſt *in us* that is the only *Hope of Glory* that will not *make us aſhamed*, *Col.* 1. 27. All our Communion with God, the Reception of his Love to us, and our Return of Love to him again, paſſeth through the Hands of the Lord Jeſus, and the Comfort of both is owing purely to him. Chriſt had ſaid but a little before, *I in them*, *v.* 23. and here 'tis repeated again (tho' the Senſe was compleat without it) and the Prayer cloſed with it, to ſhew how much the Heart of Chriſt was ſet upon it; all his Petitions centre in this, and with this *the Prayers of Jeſus the Son of* David *are ended, I in them*; let me have this, and I deſire no more; 'tis the Glory of the Redeemer to dwell in the Redeemed; *'tis his Reſt for ever*, and he has deſir'd it. Let us therefore make ſure our Union with Chriſt, and then take the Comfort of his Interceſſion: This Prayer had an End, but that he ever lives to make.

CHAP. XVIII.

Hitherto this Evangeliſt has recorded little of the Hiſtory of Chriſt, only ſo far as was requiſite to introduce his Diſcourſes; but now the Time drew nigh that Jeſus muſt die, he is very particular in relating the Circumſtances of his Sufferings, and ſome which the other had

had omitted, eſpecially his Sayings. So far were his Followers from being aſhamed of his Croſs, or endeavouring to conceal it, that this was it which both by Word and Writing they were moſt induſtrious to proclaim, and gloried in it. This Chapter relates, (1.) *How Chriſt was arreſted in the Garden, and ſurrendered himſelf a Priſoner,* v. 1——12. (2.) *How he was abuſed in the High Prieſt's Court, and how* Peter *in the mean Time deny'd him,* v. 13——27. (3.) *How he was Proſecuted before* Pilate, *and examined by him, and put in Election with* Barabbas *for the Favour of the People, and loſt it,* v. 28. 40.

WHEN Jeſus had ſpoken theſe words, he went forth with his diſciples over the brook Kedron, where was a garden into the which he entered, and his diſciples. 2 And Judas alſo which betrayed him, knew the Place: for Jeſus oft times reſorted thither with his diſciples. 3. Judas then having received a band *of men*, and officers from the chief prieſts and Phariſees, cometh thither with lanthorns and torches, and weapons. 4 Jeſus therefore knowing all things that ſhould come upon him, went forth and ſaid unto them, Whom ſeek ye? 5 They anſwered him, Jeſus of Nazareth. Jeſus ſaith unto them I *am he*. And Judas alſo who betrayed him, ſtood with them. 6 Aſſoon then as he had ſaid unto them, I am *he*, they went backward and fell to the ground. 7 Then asked he them again, Whom ſeek ye? And they ſaid Jeſus of Nazareth. 8 Jeſus anſwered, I have told you that I am *he*. If therefore ye ſeek me, let theſe go their way: 9 That the ſaying might be fulfilled which he ſpake, Of them which thou gaveſt me, have I loſt none. 10 Then Simon Peter having a ſword, drew it, and ſmote the High Prieſts ſervant, and cut off his right ear. The ſervants Name was Malchus. 11 Then ſaid Jeſus unto Peter put up thy ſword into the ſheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink it? 12 Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews, took Jeſus, and bound him.

The Hour was now come that the Captain of our Salvation, who was to be made perfect by Sufferings, ſhould engage the Enemy. We have here his entrance upon the Encounter. The Day of Recompence is in his Heart, and the Year of his Redeemed is come, and *his own Arm works the Salvation*, for he has no Second. Let us turn aſide now and ſee this great Sight.

Firſt, Our Lord Jeſus, like a bold Champion, takes the Field firſt, v. 1, 2. When he had *ſpoken the Words*, preach'd the Sermon, pray'd his Prayer, and ſo finiſh'd his Teſtimony, he would loſe no Time, but went forth immediately out of the Houſe, out of the City by Moon-light, for the Paſſover was obſerved at the Full Moon, *with his Diſciples*, the Eleven, (for *Judas* was otherwiſe employ'd) and *he went over the Brook* Kedron, which runs between *Jeruſalem*, and the Mount of *Olives*; where was a *Garden*, not of his own, but ſome Friends who allowed him the Liberty of it. Obſerve,

1. That our Lord Jeſus entered upon his Sufferings when *he had ſpoken theſe Words*, as *Mat.* 26. 1. *When he had finiſh'd theſe Sayings.* Here 'tis intimated,

(1.) That our Lord Jeſus *took his Work before him.* The Office of the Prieſt was to teach and pray, and offer Sacrifice. Chriſt after teaching and praying applies himſelf to make Atonement. Chriſt had ſaid all he had to ſay as a *Prophet*, and now he addreſſeth himſelf to the diſcharge of his Office as a *Prieſt*, to make his Soul an Offering for Sin, and when he had gone through *that*, he entered up his *kingly Office*.

(2.) That having by his Sermon prepared *his Diſciples* for this Hour of Trial; and by his Prayer prepared *himſelf for it*, he then couragiouſly *went out to meet it.* When he had put on his Armour, he enter'd the Liſts, and not till then. Let thoſe that ſuffer according to the Will of God, in a good Cauſe, with a good Conſcience, and having a clear Call to it, comfort themſelves with this, that Chriſt will not engage thoſe that are his in any Conflict, but he will firſt do that for them which is neceſſary to prepare them for it; and if we receive Chriſt's Inſtructions and Comforts, and be intereſted in his Interceſſion, we may with an unſhaken Reſolution venture through the greateſt Hardſhips in the way of Duty.

2. That he *went forth with his Diſciples. Judas* knew what Houſe he was in, in the City, and he could have ſtay'd and met his Sufferings there. But,

1. He would do *as he was wont to do*, and not alter his method, either to *meet* the Croſs, or to *miſs* it, when his Hour was come. 'Twas his Cuſtom when he was at *Jeruſalem*, after he had ſpent the Day in publick Work, to retire at Night to the Mount of *Olives*, there his Quarters were, in the skirts of the City, for they would not make room for him in the Palaces, in the Heart of the Town. This being his Cuſtom he would not be out of his method by the foreſight of, his Sufferings, but as *Daniel*, did then juſt *as he did aforetime*, Dan. 6. 10.

2. He was as unwilling there ſhould be an uproar among the People, as his Enemies were, for it was not his way to *ſtrive or cry.* If he had been ſeized in the City, and a Tumult raiſed thereby, Miſchief might have been done, and a deal of Blood ſhed, and therefore he *withdrew. Note*, When we find our ſelves involved in trouble, we ſhould be afraid of involving others with us. 'Tis no diſgrace for the Followers of Chriſt to *fall tamely.* They who aim at Honour from Men, value themſelves upon a Reſolution to *ſell their Lives* as *dear* as they can; but they who know their Blood is *precious* to Chriſt, and not a drop of it ſhall be ſhed but upon a valuable Conſideration, need not ſtand upon ſuch Terms.

3. He would ſet us an Example in the *beginning* of his Paſſion, as he did at the end of it, of Retirement from the World. Let us *go forth to him without the Camp, bearing his Reproach.* Heb. 13. 13. We muſt lay aſide, and leave behind the Crowds and Cares, and Comforts of Cities, even holy Cities, if we would chearfully take up our Croſs, and keep up our Communion with God therein.

3. That he *went over the Brook* Kedron; he muſt go over that to go to the Mount of *Olives*; but the notice taken of it, intimates that there were ſomething in it ſignificant; and it points, 1. At *Davids* Prophecy concerning the Meſſiah, *Pſal.* 110. 7. that he ſhall *drink of the Brook in the Way*; the Brook of Suffering in the way to his Glory, and our Salvation, ſignified by the Brook *Kedron; the black Brook*, ſo called either from the darkneſs of the Valley it run through, or the Colour of the Water, tainted with the dirt of the City; ſuch a Brook Chriſt drank of when it lay in the way of our Redemption, and *therefore ſhall he lift up the Head*, his own and ours. 2. At *David*'s Pattern as a Type of the *Meſſiah.* In his flight from *Abſalom*, particular notice is taken of his *paſſing over the Brook* Kedron, and *going up the Aſcent of Mount* Olivet, weeping, and all that were with him in Tears too, 2 *Sam.* 15. 23, 30. The Son of *David* being driven out by the rebellious *Jews*, who would not have him to Reign over them; and *Judas*, like *Achitophel*, being in Plot againſt him, paſſed over this Brook in Meanneſs and Humiliation attended by a Company of true Mourners. The godly Kings of *Judah* had burnt and deſtroy'd the Idols they found at the Brook *Kidron*; *Aſa*, 2 Chron. 15. 16. *Hezekiah*, 2 Chron. 30. 14. *Joſiah*, 2. Kings 23. 4. 6. Into that Brook the abominable Things were caſt. Chriſt being now made Sin for us, that he might aboliſh it, and take it away, began his Paſſion by the ſame Brook. Mount *Olivet*, where Chriſt began his Sufferings, lay on the Eaſt-ſide of *Jeruſalem*; Mount *Calvery*, where he finiſhed them, on the Weſt, for in them he had an Eye to ſuch as ſhould come *from the Eaſt and the Weſt.*

4. That he entered *into a Garden.* This Circumſtance is taken notice of only by this Evangeliſt, that Chriſt's Sufferings began in *a Garden.* In the Garden of *Eden* Sin began, there the Curſe was pronounced, there the Redeemer was promiſed, and therefore in a *Garden* that promiſed Seed entered the Liſts with the old Serpent. Chriſt was buried alſo in *a Garden.* (1.) Let us when we walk in our Gardens, take occaſion from thence to meditate on Chriſt's Sufferings in *a Garden*, to which we owe all the Pleaſure we have in our Gardens, for by them the Curſe upon the Ground for Man's ſake was removed. (2.) When we are in the midſt of our Poſſeſſions and Enjoyments, we muſt keep up an Expectation of Troubles, for our Gardens of Delight are in *a Vale of Tears.*

5. That he had his *Diſciples with him.* (1.) Becauſe he uſed to take them with him when he retired for Prayer. (2.) They muſt be Witneſſes of his Sufferings, and his Patience under them, that they might with the more Aſſurance and Affection preach them to the World, *Luke* 24. 48. and be prepared to ſuffer themſelves. (3.) He would take them into the Danger to ſhew them their Weakneſs, notwithſtanding the promiſes they had made of Fidelity. Chriſt ſometimes brings his People into Difficulties, that he may magnify himſelf in their Deliverance.

6. That *Judas* the Traytor *knew the Place*, knew it to be the Place of his uſual Retirement, and by ſome Word Chriſt had dropt probably knew that he intended to be there *that Night*, for want of a better Cloſet. A ſolitary Garden is a *proper Place*, for Meditation and Prayer; and after a Paſſover a proper Time to *retire* for private Devotion, that he may pray over the Impreſſions made, and the Vows renewed, and clench the Nail.

Mention is made of *Judas's knowing the Place*,

1. To *aggravate the Sin of Judas*, that he would betray his Maſter notwithſtanding the intimate Acquaintance he had with him; nay, and that he would *make uſe* of his *Familiarity* with Chriſt, as giving him an *Opportunity* of betraying him; a generous Mind would have ſcorned to do ſo baſe a Thing. Thus hath Chriſt's holy Religion been wounded in the *Houſe of its Friends*, ſo as it could not have been wounded any where elſe. Many an Apoſtate could not have been ſo *prophane* as he is, if he had not been a *Profeſſor*, could not have *ridiculed* Scriptures and Ordinances, if he had not *known* them.

2. To *magnify the Love of Chriſt*, that though he knew where the Traytor would ſeek him, thither he went to be found of him, now he knew that *his Hour was come.* Thus he ſhewed himſelf willing to ſuffer and die for us. What he did was not by conſtraint, but by conſent; though as a Mean he ſaid, *Let this Cup paſs*

away, as Mediator he ſaid, *Lo I come*; I come with a good Will. It was late in the Night, we may ſuppoſe it Eight or Nine a Clock when Chriſt *went out to* the Garden, for it was not only his Meat and Drink, but his *Reſt* and *Sleep* to do the Will of him that ſent him. When others were going to Bed, he was going to pray, going to ſuffer.

Secondly, The Captain of our Salvation having taken the Field, the Enemy preſently *comes upon the ſpot*, and *attacks* him. *Ver.* 3. *Judas* with his Men *comes thither*, commiſſion'd by the *Chief Prieſts*, eſpecially thoſe among them that were Phariſees, who were the moſt bitter Enemies to Chriſt. This Evangeliſt paſſeth over Chriſt's Agony, becauſe the other Three had fully related it, and preſently introduceth *Judas* and his Company that came to ſeize him. Obſerve,

1. The Perſons employ'd in this Action, a Band of Men, and Officers from the Chief Prieſts with *Judas*.

(1.) Here's a *Multitude* engaged againſt Chriſt, a *Band of Men*; σπεῖρα, *Cohors*, a Regiment, a *Roman* Band; which ſome think was Five Hundred Men, others a Thouſand. Chriſt's Friends were few, his Enemies many. Let us therefore, not follow a Multitude to do Evil, nor fear a Multitude deſigning Evil to us, if God be for us.

(2.) Here's a *mixt* Multitude. The *Band of Men* were *Gentiles*, *Roman* Soldiers, a Detachment out of the Guards, that were poſted in the Tower of *Antonia* to be a Curb upon the City. The *Officers* of the Chief Prieſts, ὑπηρέται, either their domeſtick Servants, or the Officers of their Courts were *Jews*; theſe had an Enmity to each other, but were united againſt Chriſt, who came to *reconcile both to God in one Body*.

(3.) 'Tis a *commiſſioned* Multitude, not a popular Tumult; no, they have *received* Orders from the *Chief Prieſts*, upon whoſe Suggeſtion to the Governour that this Jeſus was a *dangerous* Man, 'tis likely they had a Warrant from him too to take him up, for they feared the People. See what Enemies Chriſt and his Goſpel have had, and are likely to have, numerous and potent, and therefore formidable. Eccleſiaſtical and Civil Powers combined againſt them, *Pſal.* 2. 1, 2. Chriſt ſaid it would be ſo, *Mat.* 10. 18. and found it ſo.

(4.) All under the *Conduct* of *Judas*. He received this *Band of Men*, 'tis likely he deſired it, telling them how neceſſary it was to ſend a good Force, and being as *ambitious* of the Honour of *commanding in* Chief in this Expedition, as he was *covetous* of the *Wages* of this *Unrighteouſneſs*. He thought himſelf bravely *preferred* from coming *in the rear* of the contemptible Twelve, to be plac'd *in the Head* of theſe formidable Hundreds; he never *made ſuch a Figure* before, and promiſed himſelf perhaps that this ſhould not be the laſt Time, but he ſhould be rewarded with a Captain's Commiſſion, or better, if he ſucceeded well in this Enterprize.

2. The Preparation they had made for an Attack; they came with *Lanthorns* and *Torches*, and *Weapons*.

(1.) If he ſhould *abſcond*, tho' they had Moon-light, they would have Occaſion for their *Lights*. But they might have ſpared theſe; the ſecond *Adam* was not driven as the firſt was, to hide himſelf either for fear or ſhame among the Trees of the Garden. 'Twas folly to light a Candle to ſeek the Sun by.

(2.) If he ſhould *reſiſt*, they would have Occaſion for their *Arms*. The *Weapons of his Warfare* were Spiritual, and at thoſe Weapons he had often beaten them, and put them to ſilence, and therefore they have now recourſe to other Weapons, *Swords* and *Staves*.

Thirdly, Our Lord Jeſus *glorioùſly repulſed* the *firſt* Onſet of the Enemy, *v.* 4, 5, 6. Where obſerve,

(1.) How he *received them* with all the *Mildneſs* imaginable towards *them*, and all the *Calmneſs* imaginable *in himſelf*.

(1.) He met them with a very ſoft and mild *Queſtion*, *v.* 4 *Knowing all Things that ſhould come upon him*, and therefore not at all ſurprized with this Alarm, with a wonderful Intrepidity and Preſence of Mind, undiſturb'd and undaunted, he *went forth* to meet them, and, as if he had been unconcerned, ſoftly asked, *Whom ſeek ye*? What's the Matter? What means this buſtle at this time of Night. See here, 1. Chriſt's *foreſight* of his Sufferings. He *knew all* thoſe *Things* that *ſhould come upon him*, for he had obliged himſelf to ſuffer them; unleſs we had Strength, as Chriſt had, to bear the Diſcovery, we ſhould not covet to *know what ſhall come upon us*; 'twould but anticipate our Pain; *Sufficient unto the Day is the Evil thereof*. Yet it will do us good to expect Sufferings in general, ſo as that when they come, we may ſay, 'tis but what we *look'd for*; the Coſt we *ſet down* and *counted upon*. 2. Chriſt's *forwardneſs* to his Sufferings, he did not *out-run* them, but *went out* to meet them, and reach'd forth his Hand to take the bitter Cup. When the People would have forc'd him to a Crown, and offered to make him a King in *Galilee*, he withdrew, and hid himſelf, *John* 6. 15. but when they came to force him to a Croſs he offered himſelf, for he came to this World to *ſuffer*, and went to t'other World to *reign*. This will not warrant us needleſly to expoſe our ſelves to Trouble, for we know not when our Hour is come; but when we are called to Suffering, when we have no way to avoid it but by Sin; and when it comes to that, let none of theſe Things *move* us, for they cannot *hurt* us.

2. He met them with a very calm and mild Anſwer, when they told him whom they were in queſt of, *Ver.* 5. They ſaid, *Jeſus of Nazareth*, and he ſaid, *I am he*.

1. It ſhould ſeem their *Eyes* were held that they could not *know him*. 'Tis highly probable, that many of the *Roman* Band, however the Officers of the Temple had often ſeen him, at leaſt to ſatisfy their Curioſity; however, *Judas* to be ſure knew him well enough, and yet none of them could pretend to ſay, *Thou art the Man* we ſeek. Thus he ſhewed them the Folly of bringing Lights to ſee for him, for he could make them not to know him, when they ſaw him; and hath ſhewed us how eaſily he can *infatuate* the Counſels of his Enemies, and make them *loſe themſelves* when they are *ſeeking Miſchief*.

2. In their Enquiries for him they called him *Jeſus of Nazareth*, which was the only Title they knew him by, and probably he was ſo called in their Warrant: 'Twas a Name of Reproach given him to darken the Evidence of his being the *Meſſiah*. By this it appears they *knew him not*, whence he was, for if they had known ſurely they would not have perſecuted him.

3. He fairly anſwers them, *I am he*. He did not improve the Advantage he had againſt them by their Blindneſs, as *Eliſha* did againſt the *Syrians*, telling them, *This is not the way, neither is this the City*; but improves it as an Opportunity of ſhewing his Willingneſs to ſuffer. Tho' they called him *Jeſus of Nazareth*, he anſwered to the Name, for he deſpiſed the Reproach; he might have ſaid *I am not he*, for he was Jeſus of *Bethelem*, but he would by no means allow Equivocations. He has hereby taught us to *own* him, what ever it coſt us; not to be aſhamed of him or his Words, but even in difficult Times to *confeſs Chriſt crucified, and manfully to fight under his Banner*. *I am he*, Ἐγώ εἰμι, *I am he*, is the glorious Name of the bleſſed God, *Exod.* 3. 14. and the Honour of that Name is juſtly challenged by the bleſſed Jeſus.

4. Particular Notice is taken in a Parantheſis, that *Judas ſtood with them*. He that uſed to *ſtand* with them that followed Chriſt, now ſtood with thoſe that fought againſt him. This deſcribes an Apoſtate; he is one that changes Sides, he herds himſelf with thoſe with whom his Heart always was, and with whom he ſhall have his Lot in the Judgment Day. This is mentioned, (1.) To ſhew the *Impudence* of *Judas*. One would wonder where he got the Confidence with which he now faced his Maſter, and *was not aſhamed, neither could he Bluſh*; Satan in his Heart gave him a Whore's Forehead. (2.) To ſhew that *Judas* was particularly aim'd at in the Power which went along with that Word, *I am He*, to foil the Aggreſſors; was an Arrow level'd at the Traytor's Conſcience, and pierc'd him to the quick; for Chriſt's Coming, and his *Voice*, will be of all Sinners moſt *terrible* to Apoſtates and *Betrayers* of him.

2. See how he terrified them, and obliged them to retire, *v.* 6. They *went backward*, and like Men Thunder-ſtruck, *fell to the Ground*. It ſhould ſeem they did not fall *forwards*, as humbling themſelves before him and yielding to him; but *backwards*, as ſtanding it out to the utmoſt: Thus Chriſt was declared to be more than a Man, even then, when he was trampled upon as a *Worm*, and no *Man*. This Word, *I am He*, had revived his Diſciples, and raiſed them up, *Mat.* 14. 27. but the ſame Word ſtrikes his Enemies down. Hereby he ſhewed plainly,

1. What he *could have done* with them; when he ſtruck them *down* he could have ſtruck them *dead*; when he ſpoke them *to the Ground*, he could have ſpoke them *to Hell*, and have ſent them, like *Korah's* Company, the *next way* thither; but he would not do ſo. (1.) Becauſe the Hour of his Suffering was come, and he would not put it by, only ſhew that his Life was not forced from him, but he *laid it down of himſelf*, as he had ſaid. (2.) Becauſe he would give an Inſtance of his Patience and Forbearance with the worſt of Men, and his compaſſionate Love to his very Enemies. In ſtriking them down, and no more, he gave them both a Call to repent, and Space to repent, but their Hearts were hardened and all was in vain.

2. What he will do at laſt with all his implacable Enemies that will not repent to give him Glory, they ſhall *flee*, they ſhall *fall* before him. Now the Scripture was accompliſhed, *Pſal.* 21. 12. *Thou ſhalt make them turn their Back*, and *Pſal.* 20. 8. and it will be accompliſh'd more and more with the Breath of his Mouth *he ſhall thee Wicked*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 8. Rev. 19. 21. *Quid judicaturus faciet qui judicandus hoc facit?* Aug.

Fourthly, Having given his Enemies a Repulſe, he gives his Friends a Protection, and that by his Word too, *v.* 7, 8, 9. where we may obſerve,

1. How he *continued* to *expoſe* him ſelf to their Rage. *v.* 7. They did not lie long where they fell, but by Divine Permiſſion, *got up again*; 'tis only in the other World that God's Judgments are everlaſting. When they were *down*, one would have thought Chriſt ſhould have made his Eſcape; when they were *up again* one would have thought they ſhould have let fall their Purſuit, but we ſtill find, (1.) They are as *eager* as ever to *ſeize* him. 'Tis in ſome confuſion and diſorder that they recover themſelves; cannot imagine what ail'd them that they could not keep their Ground, but will impute it to any Thing rather than Chriſt's Power. *Note*, There are Hearts ſo very hard in Sin, that nothing will work upon them to reduce and reclaim them. (2.) He is as *willing* as ever to be *ſeized*. When they were fallen before him he did not inſult over them, but ſeeing them at a loſs, ask'd them the ſame Queſtion, *Whom ſeek ye*? And they gave him the ſame Anſwer, *Jeſus of Nazareth*. In his repeating the Queſtion, he ſeems to come yet cloſer to their Conſciences, do you not know whom ye ſeek? Are you not aware that you are in an Error, and do not meddle with your Match? Have you had not enough of it, but will you try t'other ſtruggle? *Did ever any harden his Heart againſt*

againſt God, and proſper? In their repeating the ſame Anſwer, they ſhewed an Obſtinacy in their wicked Way; they ſtill call him *Jeſus* of *Nazareth*, with as much Diſdain as ever, and *Judas* as unrelenting as any of them. Let us therefore fear, leſt by a few bold Steps at firſt in a ſinful Way, our *Hearts* be *hardened*.

2. How he *contriv'd to ſecure* his Diſciples from their *Rage*. He improv'd this Advantage againſt them for the Protection of his Followers, when he ſhews his *Courage* with Reference to himſelf, I have told you that *I am he*; he ſhews his Care for his Diſciples, *Let theſe go their Way*. He ſpeaks this as a *Command* to them, rather than a *Contract* with them, for they lay at his Mercy, not he at *theirs*. He chargeth them therefore as one having Authority; *Let theſe go their Way*; 'tis at your Peril if you meddle with them. This aggravated the Sin of the Diſciples in forſaking him, and particularly *Peter's*, in denying him, that Chriſt had given them this Paſs or Warrant of Protection, and yet they had not Faith and Courage enough to rely upon that, but betook themſelves to ſuch baſe and ſorry Shifts for their Security. When Chriſt ſaid, *Let theſe go their Way*, he intended,

(1.) To manifeſt his affectionate Concern for his Diſciples; when he *expos'd* himſelf he *excus'd* them, becauſe they were not as yet fit to ſuffer, their Faith was weak, and their Spirits low, and it would have been as much as their Souls, and the Lives of their Souls were worth to bring them into Sufferings now. *New Wine* muſt not be put into *old Bottles*. And beſides, they had other Work to do; they muſt go their way, for they are to go into all the World to preach the Goſpel; *Deſtroy not them*, for a *Bleſſing is in them*. Now herein, (1.) Chriſt gives us a *great Encouragement* to follow him; for tho he has allotted us Sufferings, yet he conſiders our Frame, will wiſely *time* the Croſs, and proportion it to our Strength, and will deliver the godly out of Temptation, either from it or through it. (2.) He gives us a good *Example* of Love to our Brethren, and Concern to their Welfare. We muſt not conſult our own Eaſe and Safety only, but others as well as our own, and in ſome Caſes more than our own. There is a generous and heroick Love, which will enoble us to *lay down our Lives for the Brethren*, 1 John 3. 16.

(2.) He intended to give a Specimen of his Undertaking as Mediator. When he offer'd himſelf to ſuffer and die, 'twas that we might *eſcape*. He was our ἀντίψυχος, a Sufferer in our ſtead; when he ſaid, *Lo, I come*, he ſaid alſo, *Let theſe go their way*; like the Ram offer'd inſtead of *Iſaac*.

2. Now herein he *confirmed* the Word which he had ſpoken *a little before*, chap. 17. 12. *Of them which thou gaveſt me, I have loſt none*. Chriſt by *fulfilling* that Word in this Particular, gave an Aſſurance that it ſhould be *accompliſhed* in the *full Extent* of it, not only for them that were now with him, but for all that ſhould believe on him through their Word. Tho' Chriſt's keeping of them, was meant eſpecially of the Preſervation of their Souls from Sin and Apoſtacy, yet it is here applied to the Preſervation of their natural Lives, and very fitly, for even the Body was a Part of Chriſt's Charge and Care; he is *to raiſe it up at the laſt Day*, and therefore to *preſerve* that as well as the *Spirit* and *Soul*, 1 *Theſ*. 5. 23. 2 Tim. 4. 17, 18. Chriſt will preſerve the natural Life for the Service to which 'tis deſign'd; 'tis given him to be us'd for him, and he *will not loſe the Service of it*, but will be magnified in it whether by Life or Death; it ſhall be held in Life as long as any Uſe is to be made of it, Chriſt's Witneſſes ſhall not die till they have given in their Evidence. But that's not all, this Preſervation of the Diſciples was in the Tendency of it a *ſpiritual Preſervation*. They were now ſo weak in Faith and Reſolution, that in all Probability, if they had been called out to ſuffer at this time, they would have ſhamed themſelves and their Maſter, and ſome of them, at leaſt the weaker of them, would have been loſt; and therefore that he might *loſe none*, he would not *expoſe them*. The Safety and Preſervation of the Saints is owing not only to the Divine Grace in proportioning the *Strength* to the *Trial*, but to the Divine Providence in proportioning the *Trial* to the *Strength*.

Fifthly, Having provided for the Safety of his Diſciples, he rebukes the Raſhneſs of one of them, and *repreſſeth* the Violence of his *Followers*, as he had *repuls'd* the Violence of his *Perſecutors*, v. 10, 11. where we have,

1. *Peter*'s Raſhneſs. He had a *Sword*; 'tis not likely he wore one conſtantly as a Gentleman, but they had two Swords among them all, *Luke* 22. 28. and *Peter* was intruſted with one, and he *drew it*, for now, if ever, he thought it was time to uſe it, and *he ſmote one of the High Prieſt's Servants*, who it's likely was one of the forwardeſt, and aiming, its likely, to cleave him down the Head, miſſed his Blow, and only *cut off his right Ear*. The Servant's Name, for the greater Certainty of the Narrative is recorded, 'twas *Malchus* or *Malluch*, Neh. 10. 4.

(1.) We muſt here acknowledge *Peter's good Will*; he had an honeſt Zeal for his Maſter, tho' now *miſguided*. He had lately promis'd to venture his Life for him, and would now make his Words good. Probably it exaſperated *Peter* to ſee *Judas* at the Head of this Gang; his Baſeneſs excited *Peter*'s Boldneſs, and I wonder when he did draw his Sword, he did not aim at his Head.

(2.) Yet we muſt acknowledge *Peter's ill Conduct*; and tho' his good Intention did *excuſe*, yet it would not *juſtify* him. (1.) He had no Warrant from his Maſter for what he did, Chriſt's Soldiers muſt wait the *Word of Command*, and not out-run it, and before they expoſe themſelves to Sufferings, muſt ſee to it not only that their *Cauſe* be *good*, but their *Call clear*. (2.) He tranſgreſſed the Duty of his Place, and *rſieſted* the *Powers that were*, which Chriſt had never countenanced, but forbidden, *Matth*. 5. 39. *That ye reſiſt not Evil*. (3.) He oppos'd his Maſter's Suffering, and notwithſtanding the Rebuke he had for it once, is ready to repeat, *Maſter, ſpare thy ſelf*; Suffering be far *from thee*; tho' Chriſt had told him he *muſt* and *would* ſuffer, and that his Hour was now come; thus while he ſeem'd to fight for Chriſt, he fought againſt him. (4.) He *broke* the Capitulation his Maſter had lately made with the Enemy; when he ſaid, *Let theſe go their way*, he not only *intended* for their Safety, but in effect *paſſed his Word* for their *good Behaviour*, that they ſhould *go away* peaceably; this *Peter* heard, and yet would not be *bound by*. As we may be guilty of a ſinful Cowardiſe when we are called to *appear*, ſo we may be of a ſinful Forwardneſs, when we are called to *retire*. (5.) He fooliſhly expos'd himſelf and his Fellow-Diſciples to the Fury of this enraged Multitude; if he had cut off *Malchus*'s Head when he cut off his Ear, we may ſuppoſe, the Soldiers would have fallen upon all the Diſciples, and hew'd them to pieces, and would have repreſented Chriſt as no better than *Barabbas*. Thus many have been guilty of *Self-deſtruction* in their Zeal for *Self-preſervation*. (6.) *Peter* play'd the Coward ſo ſoon after this denying his Maſter, that we have Reaſon to think he would not have done this, but that he ſaw his Maſter *beat them down to the Ground*, and then he could deal with them, but when he ſaw him ſurrender himſelf notwithſtanding, Courage fail'd him then; whereas the true Chriſtian Hero will appear in the Cauſe of Chriſt, not only when it is prevailing, but when it ſeems declining; will be on the right Side, tho' it be not the riſing Side.

(3.) We muſt acknowledge God's over-ruling Providence, in directing the Stroke, ſo that it ſhould do no more Execution, but only *cut off his Ear*; which was rather *marking* him than *maiming* him. As alſo in giving Chriſt an Opportunity to manifeſt his Power and Goodneſs in healing the Hurt, *Luke* 22. 51. Thus what was in danger of turning to Chriſt's Reproach, prov'd an Occaſion of that which redounded much to his Honour, even among his Adverſaries.

2. The Rebuke his Maſter gave him, *v*. 11. *Put up thy Sword into the Sheath*, or Scabbard; it is a gentle Reproof, becauſe it was his Zeal that carry'd him beyond the Bounds of Diſcretion; he did not aggravate the Matter, only bid him *do ſo no more*. Many think when they are in Grief and Diſtreſs, 'twill excuſe them, if they be hot and haſty with thoſe about them; but Chriſt has here ſet us an Example of *Meekneſs* in *Sufferings*. *Peter* muſt put up his Sword for it was the Sword *of the Spirit* that was to be committed to him; *Weapons of Warfare, not carnal*, yet *mighty*. When Chriſt with a Word *fell'd* the Aggreſſors, he ſhew'd *Peter* how he ſhould be arm'd with a *Word, quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two edged Sword*; and with that, not long after this, he laid *Ananias* and *Saphira* dead at his Feet.

3. The Reaſon for this Rebuke. *The Cup which my Father has given me, ſhall I not drink it? Matthew* relates another Reaſon Chriſt gave for this Rebuke, but *John* preſerves this which he had omitted; in which Chriſt gives us,

1. A *full Proof* of his own *Submiſſion* to his Father's Will; of all that was amiſs in what *Peter* did, he ſeems to reſent nothing ſo much as that would have hindered his Sufferings now his *Hour was come*; What? (*Peter*) wilt thou ſtep between the *Cup* and the *Lip*? *Get thee hence, Satan*. If Chriſt be determin'd to ſuffer and die, 'tis Preſumption for *Peter* in Word or Deed to oppoſe it. *Shall I not drink it?* The manner of Expreſſion ſpeaks a ſettled Reſolution, and that he would not entertain a Thought to the contrary. He was willing to drink of *this Cup*, tho' it was a bitter Cup, an Infuſion of the *Wormwood* and the *Gall*; the Cup of Trembling, a bloody Cup, the *Dregs of the Cup of the Lord's Wrath*, Iſai. 51. 22. yet he drank it, that he might put into our Hands the Cup of Salvation, the Cup of Conſolation, the Cup of Bleſſing; and therefore he is willing to drink it, becauſe *his Father put it into his Hand*. If his Father will have it ſo, it is for the beſt, and *be it ſo*.

2. A *fair Pattern* to us of *Submiſſion* to God's Will in every thing that concerns us. We muſt *pledge* Chriſt in the *Cup* that he *drank of*, Mat. 20. 23. and muſt *argue* our ſelves into a Compliance. (1.) 'Tis but a *Cup*; a ſmall Matter comparatively, be it what it will. 'Tis not a Sea, a Red Sea, a Dead Sea, for it is not Hell; 'tis light, and but a Moment. (2.) 'Tis a Cup that is *given us*; Sufferings are *Gifts*. (3.) 'Tis given us by a Father; who has a Father's Authority, and doth us no Wrong; a Father's Affection, and means us no Hurt.

Sixthly, Having *entirely* reconcil'd himſelf to the Diſpenſation, he *calmly* ſurrender'd and yielded himſelf a Priſoner, not becauſe he *could not* have made his Eſcape, but becauſe he would not. One would have thought the Cure of *Malchus*'s Ear ſhould have made them relent, but nothing would win upon them. *Maladictus furor, quom nec majeſtas miraculi nec pietas beneficii confringere potuit*. Anſelm. Obſerve here,

1. How they *ſeiz'd* him. They *took Jeſus*. Only *ſome few* of them could lay hands on him, but 'tis charg'd upon them *all*, for they were all aiding and abetting; in Treaſon there are no Acceſſaries; all are Principals. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, *Bulls have compaſſed me*, Pſal. 22. 12. *compaſſed me like Bees*, Pſal. 111. 12. *The Breath of our Noſtrils is taken in their Pit*, Lam. 4. 20. They

had ſo often been fruſtrated in their Attempts to ſeize him, that now they had got him into their Hands, we may ſuppoſe they flew upon him with ſo much the more Violence.

2. How they *ſecur'd* him; they *bound* him. This Particular of his Sufferings is taken Notice of only by this Evangeliſt, that as ſoon as ever he was taken he was bound, *pinion'd, hand-cuff'd*; Tradition ſaith, they bound him with ſuch Cruelty, that the Blood ſtarted out at his Fingers ends. And that having bound his Hands behind him, they clapt an Iron Chain about his Neck, and with that dragged him along. See *Gerhard, Harm.* cap. 5.

2. This ſpeaks the Spite of the Perſecutors. They bound him, (1.) That they might *torment* him, and put him to Pain, as they bound *Sampſon* to afflict him. (2.) That they might diſgrace him and put him to *Shame.* Slaves were bound, ſo was Chriſt, tho' Free-born. (3.) That they might prevent his Eſcape, *Judas* having bidden them *hold him faſt.* See their Folly! that they ſhould think to fetter that Power which had but juſt now proved it ſelf Omnipotent! (4.) They bound him, as one *already condemn'd*, for they were reſolved to proſecute him to the Death, and that he ſhould *die as a Fool dieth*, i. e. as a Malefactor, with his *Hands bound*, 2 Sam. 3. 33, 34. Chriſt had bound the Conſciences of his Perſecutors, with the Power of his Word, which *gall'd* them, and to be revenged on him, they laid theſe Bonds on him.

2. Chriſt's being *bound* was very *ſignificant*; in this as in other things there was a Myſtery. (1.) Before they bound him, he had *bound* himſelf by his own Undertaking, to the Work and Office of Mediator; he was already bound to the Horns of the Altar with the Cords of his own Love to Man, and Duty to his Father, elſe their Cords would not have held him. (2.) We were bound *with the Cords of our Iniquities*, Prov. 5. 22. with the *Yoke of our Tranſgreſſions*, Lam. 1. 14. *Guilt* is a Bond on the Soul, by which we are *bound over* to the Judgment of God; *Corruption* is a Bond on the Soul, by which we are *bound under* the Power of Satan. Chriſt being made Sin for us, to free us from thoſe Bonds, himſelf ſubmitted to be bound for us, elſe we had been bound Hand and Foot, and reſerved in *Chains of Darkneſs.* To his Bonds we owe our Liberty, his Confinement was our Enlargement; thus the Son *maketh us free.* (3.) The Types and Prophecies of the Old Teſtament were herein accompliſhed; *Iſaac* was bound that he might be ſacrificed; *Joſeph* was bound, and the *Irons entred into his Soul*, in order to his being brought from Priſon to reign, *Pſal.* 105. 18. *Sampſon* was bound, in order to his ſlaying more of the *Philiſtines* at his Death, than he had done in his Life. And the *Meſſiah* was propheſied of as a *Priſoner*, Iſaiah 53. 8. (4.) Chriſt was bound, that he might bind us to Duty and Obedience. His Bonds *for* us, are Bonds *upon* us, by which we are for ever *obliged to love him*, and *ſerve him.* *Paul's* Salutation to his Friends, is Chriſt's to us all, *Remember my Bonds*, (Col. 4. 14.) remember them as *bound* with him *from* all Sin, and to all Duty. (5.) Chriſt's Bonds for us were deſign'd to make our Bonds for him eaſy to us, if at any time we be ſo called out to ſuffer for him, to *ſanctify* and *ſweeten* them, and put Honour upon them; theſe enabled *Paul* and *Silas* to ſing in the Stocks, and *Ignatius* to call his Bonds for Chriſt, *Spiritual Pearls. Epiſt. ad Epheſ.*

14 And led him away to Annas firſt (for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high prieſt that ſame year.) 14 Now Caiaphas was he which gave counſel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one Man ſhould die for the People. 15 And Simon Peter followed Jeſus, and *ſo did* another diſciple. That diſciple was known unto the high prieſt, and went in with Jeſus into the palace of the high prieſt. 16 But Peter ſtood at the door without. Then went out that other diſciple which was known unto the high prieſt. and ſpake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter. 17 Then ſaith the damſel, that kept the door, unto Peter, Art not thou alſo *one* of this man's diſciples? He ſaith, I am not. 18 And the ſervants and officers ſtood there, who had made a fire of coals, (for it was cold) and they warmed themſelves: and Peter ſtood with them, and warmed himſelf. 19 The high prieſt then asked Jeſus of his diſciples, and of his doctrine. 20 Jeſus anſwered him, I ſpake openly to the world; I ever taught in the ſynagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always reſort, and in ſecret have I ſaid nothing. 21 Why asketh thou me, ask them which heard me, what I have ſaid unto them: behold, they know what I ſaid. 22 And when he had thus ſpoken, one of the officers which ſtood by, ſtruck Jeſus with the palm of his hand, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou the high prieſt ſo? 23 Jeſus anſwered him, If I have ſpoken evil, bear witneſs of the evil: but if well, why ſmiteſt thou me? 24 ¶ (Now Annas had ſent him bound unto Caiaphas the high prieſt.) 25 And Simon Peter ſtood and warmed himſelf: They ſaid therefore unto him, Art not thou alſo one of his diſciples? He denied it, and ſaid, I am not. 26 One of the ſervants of the high prieſt (being his kinſman whoſe ear Peter cut off) ſaith, Did I not ſee thee in the garden with him? 27 Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew.

We have here an Account of Chriſt's *Arraignment* before the High Prieſt, and ſome Paſſages that occurred therein, which were omitted by the other Evangeliſts; and *Peter's* denying of him, which the other Evangeliſt had given the Story of entire by it ſelf, is interwoven with the other Paſſages. The Crime laid to his Charge, having relation to Religion, the Judges of the Spiritual Court took it to fall directly under their Cognizance; both *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſeiz'd him, and ſo both *Jews* and *Gentiles* try'd and condemn'd him, for he dy'd for the Sins of both. Let us go over the Story in Order.

Firſt, Having *ſeiz'd* him, they *led him away* to *Annas* firſt, before they brought him to the Court that was ſet, expecting him in the Houſe of *Caiaphas*, v. 1.

1. They *led him away*, led him in Triumph, as a Trophy of their Victory; led him *as a Lamb to the Slaughter*, and they led him through the *Sheep-gate* ſpoken of, *Neh.* 3. 1. for through that they went from the Mount of *Olives* into *Jeruſalem.* They hurried him away with Violence, as if he had been the worſt and vileſt of Malefactors. We had been *led away of our own* impetuous *Luſts*, and *led Captive by Satan at his Will*, and that we might be reſcued, Chriſt was led away, led Captive by Satan's Agents and Inſtruments.

2. They led him away to their Maſters that ſent them; it was now about Mid-night, and one would think they ſhould have *put him in Ward*, Lev. 24. 12. ſhould have led him to ſome *Priſon*, till it was a proper time to *call a Court*; but he is hurried away immediately, not to the Juſtices of Peace to be *committed*, but to the Judges to be *condemned*; ſo extremely violent was the Proſecution, partly becauſe they fear'd a Reſcue, which they would thus not only leave no Time for, but give a Terror to; partly, becauſe they greedily thirſted after Chriſt's Blood, as *the Eagle that haſteth to the Prey.*

3. They led him to *Annas* firſt; Probably his Houſe lay in the Way, and was convenient for them to call at and refreſh themſelves, and, as ſome think, to be paid for their Service. I ſuppoſe *Annas* was old and infirm, and could not be preſent in Council with the reſt, at that time of Night, and yet earneſtly deſir'd to *ſee the Prey*: To gratify him therefore with the Aſſurance of their Succeſs, that the old Man might ſleep the better, and to receive his Bleſſing for it, they produce their Priſoner before him. 'Tis ſad to ſee them that are old and ſickly, when they cannot *commit* Sin as formerly, *taking Pleaſure* in them that do. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks *Annas* was not preſent, becauſe he was to attend early that Morning in the Temple, to examine the Sacrifices which were that Day to be offer'd, whether they were *without Blemiſh*; if ſo, there was a Significancy in it, that Chriſt the great Sacrifice was preſented to him, and ſent away bound, as approved and ready for the Altar.

4. This *Annas* was Father-in-law to *Caiaphas* the *High Prieſt*; his Kindred by Marriage between them, comes in as a Reaſon, either why *Caiaphas* order'd that this piece of Reſpect ſhould be done to *Annas*, to favour him with the firſt Sight of the Priſoner; or, why *Annas* was willing to countenance *Caiaphas* in a Matter his Heart was ſo much upon. *Note*, Acquaintance and Alliance with wicked People is a great Confirmation to many in their wicked Ways.

Secondly, *Annas* did not long detain them, being as willing as any of them to have the Proſecution puſh'd on, and therefore ſent him bound to *Caiaphas* to his Houſe, which was appointed for the Rendezvous of the *Sanhedrim* upon this Occaſion; or to the uſual Place in the Temple, where the High Prieſt kept his Court; this is mention'd, *v.* 24. but our Tranſlators intimate in the Margin, that it ſhould come in here, and accordingly read it there, *Annas had ſent him.* Obſerve here.

1. The Power of *Caiaphas*, intimated, *v*, 13. He was *High Prieſt that ſame Year.* The High Prieſt's Commiſſion was *during Life*; but there were now ſuch frequent Changes by the Simonial Artifices of aſpiring Men with the Government, that it was become almoſt an Annual Office, a Preſage of its final Period approaching; while they were undermining one another, God was over-turning them all that he might come, whoſe Right it was. *Caiaphas* was High Prieſt that ſame Year, when *Meſſiah* was to be *cut off.* Which intimates, (1.) That when an *ill Thing* was to be done by a High Prieſt, according to the Fore-knowledge of God, Providence ſo order'd it, that an *ill Man* ſhould be in the Chair to do it. (2.) That when God would make it to appear what Corruption there was in the Heart of a *bad Man*, he put him into a Place of Power, where he had Temptation and Opportunity to exert it. 'Twas the Ruin of *Caiaphas* that he was High Prieſt *that Year*, and ſo became a Ring-leader in the putting of Chriſt to Death. Many a Man's Advancement has loſt him his Reputation, and he had not been *diſhonoured* if he had not been *preferred.*

2. The Malice of *Caiaphas*, which is intimated, *v.* 14. by the repeating of what he had ſaid ſome time before, That right or wrong, guilty or innocent, *it was expedient that one Man ſhould die for the People*, which refers to the Story, *John* 11. 50. This comes

in here to ſhew, (1.) What an *ill Man* he was; this was that *Caiaphas* that govern'd himſelf and the Church by Rules of Policy, in Definace of the Rules of Equity. (2.) What *ill Uſage* Chriſt was likely to meet with in his Court, when his Caſe was adjudg'd before it was heard, and they were already reſolv'd what to do with him; *He muſt die*; ſo that his Tryal was a Jeſt. Thus the Enemies of Chriſt's Goſpel are reſolv'd, true or falſe, to run it down. (3.) 'Tis a Teſtimony to the Innocency of our Lord Jeſus, from the Mouth of one of his worſt Enemies, who own'd that he fell a Sacrifice to the publick Good, and that it was not *juſt* he ſhould die, but *expedient* only.

3. The Concurrence of *Annas* in the Proſecution of Chriſt. He made himſelf a Partaker in Guilt, (1.) With the *Captain* and *Officers*, that without Law or Mercy had *bound* him, for he approv'd it by continuing him bound, when he ſhould have looſed him, he not being convicted of any Crime, nor having attempted an Eſcape. If we do not what we can to undo what others have ill done, we are Acceſſaries, *ex poſt facto*. 'Twas more excuſable in the rude Soldiers to bind him, than in *Annas*, that ſhould know better things, to continue him bound. (1.) With the Chief Prieſt and Council that condemn'd him and proſecuted him to Death. This *Annas* was not preſent with them, yet thus he wiſh'd them good *Speed*, and became a *Partaker of their evil Deeds*.

Thirdly, In the Houſe of *Caiaphas*, *Simon Peter* began to deny his Maſter, *v.* 15——18.

1. It was with much ado, that *Peter* got into the Hall, where the Court was ſet, an Account of which we have *v.* 15, 16. where we may obſerve.

(1.) *Peter*'s Kindneſs to Chriſt, which (tho' it prov'd no Kindneſs) appear'd in two things. (1.) That he *followed Jeſus* when he was *led away*; tho' at firſt he fled with the reſt, yet afterwards he *took Heart* a little, and *followed* at ſome Diſtance; calling to mind the Promiſes he had made to adhere to him whatever it coſt him. They that had follow'd Chriſt in the midſt of his Honours, and ſhared with him in thoſe Honours, when the People cry'd *Hoſanna* to him, ought to have followed him now in the midſt of his Reproaches, and to have ſhared with him in thoſe. They that truly love and value Chriſt, will follow him *all Weathers*, and all *Ways*. (2.) When he could not *get* in where Jeſus was in the midſt of his Enemies, he *ſtood at the Door without*, willing to be as near him as he could, and waiting for an Opportunity to get nearer. Thus when we meet with Oppoſition in following Chriſt, we muſt ſhew our *good Will*. But yet this Kindneſs of *Peter*'s was no Kindneſs, becauſe he had not Strength and Courage enough to *perſevere* in it, and ſo it was proved, he did but run himſelf into a Snare; and even his following Chriſt, conſidering all things, was to be blam'd; becauſe Chriſt who knew him better than he knew himſelf, had expreſly told him, *Chap.* 13. 36. *Whither I go, thou canſt not follow me now*; and had told him again and again he would deny him; and he had lately had Experience of his own Weakneſs in forſaking him. *Note*, we muſt take heed of tempting God, by running upon Difficulties beyond our Strength, and ventering too far in a way of ſuffering. If our Call be clear to expoſe our ſelves, we may hope that God will *enable* us to *honour him*; but if it be not, we may fear that God will *leave* us to *ſhame our ſelves*.

(2.) The *other Diſciple's Kindneſs* to *Peter*, which yet as it prov'd, was *no Kindneſs* neither, St. *John* ſeveral times in this Goſpel ſpeaking of himſelf as *another Diſciple*, many Interpreters have been led by that to fancy that this *other Diſciple* here was *John*; and many Conjectures they have how he ſhould come to be known to the high Prieſt; *Propter generis nobilitatem*, ſaith, *Jerom*, *Epitaph. Marcel.* as if he were a better Gentleman born than his Brother *James*, when they were both the Sons of *Zebedee* the Fiſherman; ſome will tell you he had ſold an Eſtate to the High Prieſt; others that he ſupply'd his Family with Fiſh, which are very improbable. But I ſee no Reaſon to think that this *other Diſciple* was *John*, or one of the Twelve; other Sheep Chriſt had which were not of the fold, and this might be as the *Syriac* reads it, *unus ex Diſcipulis aliis*, one of thoſe other *Diſciples* that believed in Chriſt, but reſided at *Jeruſalem*, and kept their Places there; perhaps *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, or *Nicodemus*, *known* to the High Prieſt, but not known to him to be Diſciples of Chriſt. *Note*, As there are many who *ſeem* Diſciples and are *not ſo*; ſo there are many that are Diſciples and *ſeem not ſo*. There are good People *hid in Courts*, even *Nero's*, as well *as hid in Crowds*. We muſt not conclude a Man to be no Friend to Chriſt, merely becauſe he has Acquaintance and Converſation with thoſe that were his known Enemies.

Now, 1. This *other Diſciple*, who ever he was, ſhew'd a Reſpect to *Peter* in introducing him, not only to gratify his Curioſity and Affection, but to give him an Opportunity of being ſerviceable to his Maſter upon his Tryal, if there were Occaſion. Thoſe that have a *real Kindneſs* for Chriſt and his Ways, tho' their Temper may be *reſerved*, and their Circumſtances lead them to be *cautious* and *retir'd*; yet if their Faith be ſincere when they are Call'd to it, they will diſcover which way their Inclinations lies, by being ready to do a *profeſs'd* Diſciple a good Turn. *Peter* perhaps had formerly introduc'd this Diſciple into Converſation with Chriſt, and now he requites his Kindneſs, and is not aſham'd to own him, tho' it ſhould ſeem he look'd but *ſneakingly*.

But this Kindneſs prov'd no Kindneſs, nay a great Diskindneſs; by letting him into the High Prieſt's Hall, he let him into Temptation, and the Conſequence was ill. *Note*, The Courteſies of our Friends often prove a Snare to us, through a miſguided Affection.

2. *Peter* being got in, was immediately *aſſaulted* with the Temtation, and *foil'd* by it, *v.* 17. Obſerve here, (1.) How *ſlightly* the *Attack* was. 'Twas but a *ſilly Maid*, of ſo ſmall Account, that ſhe was only ſet to keep the Door, that *challenged* him, and ſhe only asked him careleſly, *Art not thou one of this Man's Diſciples*? probably ſuſpecting it was by his ſheepiſh Look, and coming in *timorouſly*. We ſhould many a time better maintain a good Cauſe, if we had a *good Heart on it*, and could put a *good Face on it*. *Peter* had ſome Reaſon to take the Alarm if *Malchus* had ſet upon him, and had ſaid, this is he that cut off my Ear, and I'll have his Head for it; but when a Maid only ask'd him, *Art not thou one of them*? He might without danger have anſwered, and *What if I am*? Suppoſe the Servants had ridiculed him, and inſulted over him upon it; thoſe can bear *but little for Chriſt* that cannot *bear that*; that's but running *with the Footman*.

(2.) How *ſpeedy* the *Surrender* was; without taking time to recollect himſelf, he ſuddenly anſwered, *I am not*. If he had the Boldneſs of the Lion, he would have ſaid, 'tis my Honour that I am ſo; if he had had the Wiſdom of the Serpent, he would have kept Silence at this time, for it was *an evil time*. But all his Care being for his own Safety, he thought he could not ſecure that but by a peremtory Denial, *I am not*; he not only denies it, but even *diſdains* it, and *ſcorns her Words*.

3. Yet he goes further into the Temptation, *v.* 18. *And the Servants and Officers ſtood there, and* Peter *with them*.

1. See how the Servants made much of themſelves; the Night being cold, they made a Fire in the Hall, not for *their Maſters*; they were ſo eager in proſecuting Chriſt, that they forgot Cold; but for themſelves, to refreſh themſelves. They cared not what became of Chriſt, and all their Care was to ſit and warm themſelves, *Amos.* 6. 6.

2. See how *Peter* herded himſelf with them, and made one among them. *He ſate and warmed himſelf*.

1. It was a *Fault bad enough*, that he did not attend his Maſter, and appear for him at the upper end of the Hall, where he was now *under Examination*. He might have been a *Witneſs for him*, and have confronted the falſe Witneſſes that ſwore againſt him, if his Maſter had call'd him; however he might have been a *Witneſs to him*, might have taken exact Notice of what paſt, that he might relate it to the other Diſciples, who could none of them get in to hear the Tryal; he might have learn'd by his Maſter's Example how to carry himſelf, when it ſhould came to his Turn to ſuffer thus; yet neither his Conſcience nor his Curioſity could bring him into the Court, but he ſits by, as if like *Gallio* he cared for none of theſe things. And yet at the ſame time we have Reaſon to think his Heart was as full of Grief and Concern as it could hold, but he had not the Courage to own it. Lord, *Lead us not into Temptation*.

2. It was much worſe, that he join'd himſelf with thoſe that were his Maſter's Enemies; *He ſtood with them and warmed himſelf*; that was a poor Excuſe for joining with them. A little thing will draw thoſe into bad Company, that will be drawn to it by the Love of a good Fire. If *Peter*'s Zeal for his Maſter had not *frozen*, but had continued in the Heat it ſeem'd to be of but a few Hours before, he had not had Occaſion to warm himſelf now. *Peter* was much to be blamed.

1. Becauſe he *aſſociated himſelf* with theſe wicked Men, and kept Company with them. Doubtleſs they were diverting themſelves with this Night's Expedition, ſcoffing at Chriſt, at what he had ſaid, at what he had done, and triumphing in their Victory over him; and what ſort of Entertainment would this give to *Peter*? If he ſaid as they ſaid, or by ſilence gave Conſent, he involved himſelf in Sin; if not, he expoſed himſelf to Danger. If *Peter* had not ſo much Courage as to appear publickly for his Maſter, yet he might have had ſo much Devotion as to to retire into a Corner, and weep in Secret for his Maſter's Sufferings and his own Sin in forſaking him; if he could not have done *good*, he might have kept out of the way of doing hurt. 'Tis better to *abſcond* than appear to *no* Purpoſe, or *ill* Purpoſe.

2. Becauſe he deſired to be thought *one of them*, that he might not be ſuſpected to be a Diſciple of Chriſt, Is this *Peter*? What a Contradiction is this to the Prayer of every good Man. *Gather not my Soul with Sinners. Saul among the Prophets* is not ſo abſurd as *David* among the *Philiſtines*. They that *deprecate* the Lot of the *Scornful* hereafter, ſhould *dread* the Seat of the *Scornful* now. It's ill *warming* our ſelves with thoſe with whom we are in Danger of *burning* our ſelves, *Pſal.* 141. 4.

Fourthly, *Peter*, Chriſt's Friend, having begun to *deny him*, the high Prieſt his Enemy begins to accuſe him, or rather urges him to accuſe himſelf, *v.* 19, 20, 21. It ſhould ſeem the firſt Attempt was to prove him a Seducer and a Teacher of falſe Doctrine, which this Evangeliſt relates, and when they failed in the Proof of that, then they charged him with Blaſphemy, which is related by the other Evangeliſts, and therefore omited here. Obſerve,

1. The *Articles* or *Heads* upon which Chriſt was *examined*, *v.* 19. concerning his *Diſciples and his Doctrine*. Obſerve,

(1.) The *Irregularity* of the Proceſs; 'twas againſt all Law and Equity; they *ſeize* him as a Criminal, and now he is their Priſoner, they have nothing to *lay to his Charge*; no Libel, no Proſecutor; but the Judge muſt himſelf be the Proſecutor, and the Priſoner himſelf the Witneſs, and againſt all Reaſon and Juſtice is put on to be his own Accuſer.

(2.) The *Intention. The High Prieſt then*, οὖν, *Therefore*, which ſeems to refer to *v.* 14. becauſe he had reſolv'd that Chriſt muſt be ſacrificed to their private Malice, under Colour of the publick Good, *therefore* he examined him upon thoſe Interrogatories, which would touch his Life. He examined him,

1. Concerning his *Diſciples*, that he might charge him with *Sedition*, and repreſent him as dangerous to the *Roman* Government, as well as to the *Jewiſh* Church. He ask'd him who were his Diſciples? What Number they were? Of what Country? What were their Names and Characters? Inſinuating that his Scholars were deſigned for Soldiers, and would in time become a formidable Body. Some think his Queſtion concerning *his Diſciples* was, What was now become of them all, where were they? And why did they not appear? upbraiding him with their Cowardiſe in deſerting him; thus adding to the Affliction of it. There was ſomething *ſignificant* in this, that Chriſt's calling and owning his Diſciples was the firſt thing laid to his Charge, for it was *for their ſakes that he ſanctified himſelf* and ſuffered.

2 Concerning *his* Doctrine, that they might charge him with *Hereſy*, and bring him under the Penalty of the Law againſt *falſe Prophets*, Deut. 13. 9, 10. This was a Matter properly *conuſable in* that Court, *Deut.* 17. 12. therefore a Prophet could not periſh but at *Jeruſalem*, where that Court ſat. They could not prove any falſe Doctrine upon him; but they hoped to *extort* ſomething from him, which they might *diſtort* to his Prejudice, and to make him *an Offender for ſome Word or other*, Iſa. 29. 21. They ſaid nothing to him concerning his Miracles, by which he had done ſo much Good, and proved his Doctrine beyond Contradiction, becauſe of theſe they were ſure they could take no hold. Thus the Adverſaries of Chriſt, while they are induſtriouſly quarreling with his Truth, wilfully ſhut their Eyes againſt the Evidences of it, and take no notice of them.

3. The Appeal Chriſt made in Anſwer to theſe Interrogatories, 1. As to *his Diſciples* he ſaid nothing; becauſe it was an impertinent Queſtion; if his Doctrine was ſound and good, his having Diſciples to whom to communicate it, was no more than what was practiſed and allowed by their own Doctors. If *Caiphas* in asking him concerning his Diſciples, deſigned to enſnare them, and bring *them* into Trouble, 'twas Kindneſs to them that he ſaid nothing of them, for he had ſaid. *Let theſe go their Way.* If he meant to upbraid him with their Cowardiſe, no wonder he ſaid nothing, for *pudet hæc opprobria nobis, & dici potuiſſe & non potuiſſe refelli*; he would ſay nothing to condemn them, and could ſay nothing to juſtify them.

2. As to *his Doctrine* he ſaid nothing *in particularl*, but in general referred himſelf to thoſe that heard him, being not only made manifeſt to God, but made manifeſt alſo in their Conſciences, *v.* 20, 21.

1. He tacitly charges his Judges with illegal Proceedings; he doth not indeed ſpeak Evil of the Rulers of the People, nor ſay now to theſe Princes, ye are Wicked; but he appeals to the ſettled Rules of their own Court, whether they dealt fairly by him? *Do ye indeed judge righteouſly*? Pſal. 58. 1. So here, *Why ask ye me*? Which implies two Abſurdities in Judgment, (1.) Why ask ye me *now* concerning my Doctrine, when you have already condemned it? They had made an Order of Court for the excommunicating of all that owned him, *chap.* 9. 22. had iſſued out a Proclamation for the apprehending of him, and now they come to ask what his Doctrine is? Thus was he condemned, as his Doctrine and Cauſe commonly are, *unheard.* (2.) Why ask ye *me*? Muſt I accuſe my ſelf, when you have no Evidence againſt me?

2. He inſiſts upon his fair and open Dealing with them in the Publication of his Doctrine, and juſtifies himſelf with that. The Crime which the *Sanhedrim* by the Law was to enquire after, was the *clandeſtine* ſpreading of dangerous Doctrines, *enticing ſecretly*, Deut. 13. 6. As to this therefore Chriſt clears himſelf very fully.

1. As to the manner of his Preaching, he ſpake *openly*, παῤῥησίᾳ, with freedom and Plainneſs of Speech; he did not deliver things ambiguouſly, as *Apollo* did his Oracles; thoſe that would undermine the Truth and ſpread corrupt Notions, do it by ſly inſinuations, putting Queries, ſtarting Difficulties, and aſſerting nothing; but Chriſt explain'd himſelf fully with, *Verily, Verily, I ſay unto you*; his Reproofs were free and bold, and his Teſtimonies expreſs againſt the Corruptions of the Age.

2. As to the Perſons he preach'd to; *he ſpake to the World*, i. e. to all that had Ears to hear, and were willing to hear him. High or Low, Learned or Unlearned, *Jew* or *Gentile*, Friend or Foe; his Doctrine feared not the Cenſure of a *mixt Multitude*; nor did he grudge the Knowledge of it to any, as the Maſters of ſome rare Invention commonly do, but freely communicated it, as the Sun doth his Beams.

3. As to the Places he preached in; when he was in the Country, he preached ordinarily in the *Synagogues*, the Places of meeting for Worſhip, and on the Sabbath-day, the Time of Meeting; when he came up to *Jeruſalem*, he preach'd the ſame Doctrine in the Temple at the Time of the ſolemn Feaſts; when the *Jews* from all Parts aſſembled there; tho' he often preached in private Houſes, and on Mountains, and by the Sea-ſide, to ſhew that his Word and Worſhip were not to be confin'd to *Temples* and *Synagogues*, yet what he preach'd in private, was the very ſame with what he deliver'd publickly. *Note*, The Doctrine of Chriſt purely and plainly preached, need not be aſhamed to appear in the moſt numerous Aſſembly, for it carries its own Strength and Beauty along with it: What Chriſt's faithful Miniſters ſay, they would be willing all the World ſhould hear, Wiſdom cries in the Places of Concourſe, *Prov.* 1. 21. and 8. 3. and 9. 3.

4. As to the Doctrine it ſelf; he *ſaid nothing in ſecret* contrary to what he ſaid in publick, but only by way of Repetition and Explication. *In ſecret have I ſaid nothing*; as if he had been either *ſuſpicious* of the Truth of it, or conſcious of any ill Deſign in it. He ſought no *Corners*, for he feared no *Colours*, nor ſaid any thing that he need be aſhamed of; what he did ſpeak in private to his Diſciples, he ordered them to proclaim on the Houſe-tops, *Matth.* 10. 27. God ſaith of himſelf, *Iſaiah* 45. 29. *I have not ſpoken in ſecret*; his Commandment is not hidden, *Deut.* 30. 11. And the Righteouſneſs of Faith ſpeaks in like manner, *Rom.* 10. 5. *Veritas nihil metuit niſi abſcondi.* Tertul.

3. He *appeals* to thoſe that had heard him, and deſires they might be *examined* what Doctrine he had preach'd, and whether it had that dangerous Tendency that was *ſurmized. Ask them that heard me, what I ſaid unto them*; ſome of them may be in Court, or may be ſent for out of their Beds; he means not his Friends and Followers, who might be preſumed to ſpeak in his Favour; but ask any impartial Hearer; ask *your own Officers*; ſome think he pointed to them, when he ſaid, Behold they know what I ſaid, referring to the Report which they had made of his preaching, *Chap.* 7. 49. *Never Man ſpake like this Man.* Nay, you may ask ſome upon the Bench, for 'tis probable ſome of them had heard him, and been put to Silence by him. *Note*, The Doctrine of Chriſt may ſafely appeal to all that knows it, and has ſo much Right and Reaſon on its ſide, that they who will judge impartially cannot but be witneſs to it.

Fifthly, While the Judges were *examining* him, the Servants that ſtood by were *abuſing* him, *v*, 22, 23.

1. 'Twas a baſe Affront which one of the Officers gave him; tho' he *ſpoke* with ſo much Calmneſs andconvincing Evidence, this inſolent Fellow *ſtruck him with the Palm of his Hand*, probably on the ſide of his Head or Face, ſaying, *Anſwereſt thou the High Prieſt ſo*? as if he behaved himſelf rudely to the Court.

1. He *ſtruck him* ἔδωκε ῥάπισμα, he *gave him a Blow.* Some think it ſignifies a Blow with a Rod, or Wand, from ῥάβδος, or with the Staff, which was the Badge of his Office. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, *Iſaiah* 50. 6. I gave my Cheeks, εἰς ῥαπίσματα; ſo the LXX. to *Blows*, the Word here us'd. And *Mic.* 5. 1. *They ſhall ſmite the Judge of* Iſrael *with a rod upon the Cheek*; and the Type anſwered, *Job* 16. 10. *They have ſmitten me on the Cheek reproachfully.* 'Twas *unjuſt* to ſtrike one that neither ſaid nor did amiſs; 'twas *inſolent* for a mean Servant to ſtrike one that was confeſſedly a Perſon of Account; 'twas *cowardly* to ſtrike one that had his Hands ty'd, and *barbarous* to ſtrike a Priſoner at the Bar. Here was a Breach of the Peace in the Face of the Court, and yet the Judges countenanced it. Confuſion of Face was our due; but Chriſt here took it to himſelf; upon me be the Curſe, the Shame.

2. He *checked* him in a haughty imperious manner, *Anſwereſt thou the High Prieſt ſo*? As if the bleſſed Jeſus were not *good enough* to ſpeak to his Maſter, or not wiſe enough to know how to ſpeak to him, but like a rude and ignorant Priſoner, muſt be controlled by the Jaylor, and taught how to behave himſelf.

Some of the Antients ſuggeſt that this Officer was *Malchus*, who owed to Chriſt the healing of his Ear, and the ſaving of his Head, and yet made him this ill Return. But however it was, 'twas done to pleaſe the High Prieſt, and to curry Favour with him; for what he ſaid, ſpeaks a Jealouſy for the Dignity of the High Prieſt. Wicked Rulers will not want wicked Servants, who will *help forward the Affliction* of thoſe whom their Maſters perſecute. There was a Succeſſor of this High Prieſt that commanded the By-ſtanders to ſmite *Paul* thus *on the Mouth*, Acts 23. 2. Some think this Officer took himſelf affronted by Chriſt's Appeal to thoſe about him concerning his Doctrine, as if he would have vouched him to be a *Witneſs*, and perhaps he was one of thoſe Officers that had ſpoken honourably of him, *John* 7. 47. and leſt he ſhould now be thought a ſecret Friend to him, he thus appears a bitter Enemy.

2. Chriſt bore this Affront with wonderful Meekneſs and Patience, *v.* 23. *If I have ſpoken Evil*, in what I have now ſaid, *bear Witneſs of the Evil.* Obſerve it to the Court, and let them judge of it, who are the proper Judges; but if *well*, and as it did become me, *why ſmiteſt thou me*? Chriſt could have anſwered him with a *Miracle of Wrath*, could have ſtruck him dumb or dead, or have withered the Hand that was lifted up againſt him. But this was the Day of his Patience and Suffering; and he anſwered him with the *Meekneſs of Wiſdom*, to teach us not to avenge our ſelves; not to render Railing for Railing, but with the *Innocency of the Dove*, to bear Injuries, even then when with the *Wiſdom of the Serpent*, as our Saviour, we ſhew the Injuſtice of them, and appeal to the Magiſtrate concerning them. Chriſt did not here *turn the other Cheek*, by which it appears that that Rule, *Matth.* 5. 39. is not to be underſtood literally; a Man may poſſibly *turn the other Cheek*, and yet have his Heart full of Malice; but comparing

ring Chriſt's Precept with his Pattern, we learn, (1.) That in ſuch Caſes we muſt not be our own Avengers, nor Judges in our own Caſe; we muſt rather receive than give the Second Blow, which makes the Quarrel; we are allowed to defend our ſelves, but not to avenge our ſelves, the Magiſtrate (if it be neceſſary for the preſerving of the publick Peace, and the reſtraining and terrifying of Evil-doers) is to be the *Avenger*, Rom. 13. 4. (2.) Our Reſentment of Injuries done us muſt always be *rational*, and never *paſſionate*; ſuch Chriſt's here was; *when he ſuffered* he reaſoned, but *threatened not*. He fairly expoſtulated with him that did him the Injury, and ſo may we. (3.) When we are called out to Suffering, we muſt *accommodate our ſelves* to the Inconveniencies of a ſuffering State, with Patience, and, by one Indignity done us, be *prepared* to receive another, and to make the beſt of it.

Sixthly, While the Servants were thus abuſing him, *Peter* was proceeding to deny him, *v.* 25. 26, 27. 'Tis a ſad Story, and none of the leaſt of Chriſt's Sufferings.

1. He *repeated the Sin* the *Second* Time, *v.* 25. While he was warming himſelf with the Servants, as one of them, they asked him, *Art not thou one of his Diſciples?* What doſt thou here among us? He perhaps hearing that Chriſt was examined *about his Diſciples*, and fearing he ſhould be *ſeized*, or at leaſt *ſmitten* as his Maſter was if he ſhould own it, flatly denied it, and ſaid, *I am not*.

(1.) It was his great *Folly*, to thruſt himſelf into the Temptation, by continuing in the Company of thoſe that were unſuitable for him, and that he had nothing to do with. He ſtayed to *warm himſelf*; but they that *warm themſelves* with Evil-doers, grow cold towards good People, and good Things; and they that are fond of the Devil's *Fire-ſide*, are in danger of the Devil's Fire. *Peter* might have ſtood by his Maſter at the Bar, and have *warmed himſelf* better than here, at the Fire of his Maſter's Love, which *many Waters could not quench*, Cant. 8. 6, 7. He might there have *warmed himſelf* with Zeal for his Maſter, and Indignation at his Perſecutors; but he choſe rather to warm with them than to warm againſt them. But *how could one* (one Diſciple) *be warm alone?* Eccl. 4. 11.

(2.) It was his great unhappineſs that he was again aſſaulted by the Temptation; and no other could be expected, for this was a Place, this an Hour of Temptation. When the Judge asked Chriſt about *his Diſciples*, probably the Servant took the hint, and challenged *Peter* for one of them, Anſwer to thy Name. See here, (1.) The ſubtilty of the Temper in running down one whom he ſaw *falling*, and muſtering a *greater Force* againſt him; not a Maid now, but all the Servants. *Note*, Yielding to one Temptation invites another, and perhaps a ſtronger; Satan redoubles his Attacks when we give *Ground*. (2.) The Danger of bad Company. We commonly ſtudy to *approve our ſelves* to thoſe with whom we chuſe to *aſſociate our ſelves*; *their* good Word we value our ſelves by, and covet to ſtand right in *their Opinion*. As we chuſe our *People* we chuſe our *Praiſe*, and govern our ſelves accordingly; and are therefore concerned to make the *firſt Choice* well, and not to *mingle our ſelves* with thoſe whom we cannot *pleaſe* without *diſpleaſing* God.

(3.) It was his great Weakneſs, nay, it was his great Wickedneſs to yield to the Temptation, and to ſay, *I am not* one of his Diſciples, as one *aſhamed* of that which was his Honour, and *afraid* of Suffering for it, which would have been yet more his Honour. See how *the Fear of Man brings a Snare*. When Chriſt was admir'd and careſs'd, and treated with Reſpect, *Peter* pleaſed himſelf, and perhaps *prided* himſelf in this, that he was a Diſciple of Chriſt, and ſo put in for a ſhare in the Honours done his Maſter; but thus many who ſeem fond of the Reputation of Religion when it is in Faſhion, are aſham'd of the Reproach of it; but we muſt take it *for better and worſe*.

2. He *repeated* the Sin the *third Time*, v. 26, 27. Here he was attacked by one of the Servants, that by the ſame Token was Kinſman to *Malchus*, and when he hears *Peter* deny himſelf to be a Diſciple of Chriſt, gives him the Lie with great Aſſurance, *Did not I ſee thee in the Garden with him?* Witneſs my Kinſman's Ear; *Peter* then denied it again, as if he knew nothing of Chriſt, nothing of the Garden, nothing at all of this Matter.

1. This third Aſſault of the Temptation was more cloſe than the former; before his Relation to Chriſt was only *ſuſpected*, here 'tis *proved* upon him by one that ſaw him with Jeſus, and ſaw him draw his Sword in his Defence, *Note*, They who by Sin think to help themſelves out of Trouble, do but *entangle* and *embarraſs* themſelves the more. *Dare to be brave*, for Truth will out. *A Bird of the Air* may perhaps tell the Matter which we ſeek to conceal with a Lie. Notice is taken of this Servant's being a-kin to *Malchus*, becauſe that Circumſtance would make it the more a Terror to *Peter*; now, thinks he, I am gone, my Buſineſs is done, there needs no other Witneſs or Proſecutor. We ſhould not, if we can help it, make any Man in particular our Enemy, becauſe the Time may come when either he, or ſome of his Relations may have us at their Mercy. He that may need *a Friend*, ſhould not *make a Foe*. But obſerve, though here was ſufficient Evidence againſt *Peter*, and ſufficient Provocation given by his Denial to have proſecuted him, yet he eſcapes, has no harm done him, nor attempted to be done. *Note*, We are often drawn into Sin by groundleſs, cauſeleſs Fears, which there is no occaſion for, and which a ſmall Degree of Wiſdom and Reſolution would make nothing of.

2. His yielding to it was no leſs baſe than the former. *He denied again*. See here, (1.) the Nature of Sin in general, the Heart is hardened by the deceitfulneſs of it, *Heb.* 3. 13. 'Twas a ſtrange degree of effrontery that *Peter* was arrived to on a ſudden, that he could with ſuch Aſſurance ſtand in a Lie againſt to clear a diſproof; but the beginning of Sin is as the *letting forth of Water*, when once the Fence is broke; Men eaſily go from bad to worſe. (2.) Of the Sin of Lying in particular; it is a fruitful Sin, and upon that Account exceeding ſinful; one Lie needs another to ſupport it, and that another. 'Tis a Rule in the Devil's Politicks, *male facta male factis tegere, ne perplaant*.

3. The Hint given him for the awakening of his Conſcience was ſeaſonable and happy, *immediately the Cock crew*; and this is all that is here ſaid of his Repentance, it being recorded by the other Evangeliſts. This brought him to himſelf, by bringing to his Mind the Words of Chriſt. See here, (1.) The Care Chriſt had of thoſe that are his, notwithſtanding their Follies; tho' they fall, they are not utterly *caſt down*, not utterly *caſt off*. (2.) The Advantage of having faithful Remembrancers near us, that though they cannot tell us more than we know already, yet may mind us of that which we know but have forgotten. The Crowing of the Cock to others was an accidental Thing, and had no ſignificancy, but to *Peter* it was the Voice of God, and had a bleſſed Tendency to awaken his Conſcience, by putting him in Mind of the Word of Chriſt.

28 Then led they Jeſus from Caiaphas, unto the hall of judgment: and it was early, and they themſelves went not into the judgment-hall, leſt they ſhould de defiled: but that they might eat the paſſover. 29 Pilate then went out to them, and ſaid, What accuſation bring you againſt this man? 30 They anſwered, and ſaid unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee. 31 Then ſaid Pilate unto them, Take ye him and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore ſaid unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death: 32 That the ſaying of Jeſus might be fulfilled, which he ſpake, ſignifying what death he ſhould die. 33 Then Pilate entred into the judgment-hall again, and called Jeſus, and ſaid unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jeſus anſwered him, Sayeſt thou this thing of thy ſelf, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate anſwered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation, and the chief prieſts have delivered thee unto me: What haſt thou done? 36 Jeſus anſwered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my ſervants fight that I ſhould not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore ſaid unto him, Art thou a king then? Jeſus anſwered, Thou ſayeſt that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cauſe came I into the world, that I ſhould bear witneſs unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate ſaith unto him, What is truth? And when he had ſaid this, he went out again unto the Jews, and ſaith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. 39 But ye have a cuſtom, that I ſhould releaſe unto you one at the paſſover: will ye therefore that I releaſe unto you the king of the Jews? 40 Then cried they all again, ſaying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

We have here an Account of Chriſt's Arraignment before *Pilate*, the *Roman* Governour, in the *Prætorium*, (a Latin Word made *Greek*) the *Prætor*'s Houſe or *Hall of Judgment*; thither they hurry'd him to get him *condemn'd* in the *Roman* Court, and executed by the *Roman* Power. Being reſolved on his Death they took this Courſe, (1) That he might be put to Death the more *legally*, and *regularly*, according to the preſent Conſtitution of their Government, ſince they became a Province of the Empire; not ſtoned in a popular Tumult, as *Stephen*, but put to Death with the preſent Formalities of Juſtice. Thus he was treated as a Malefactor, being made Sin for us. (2.) That he might be put to Death the more *ſafely*. If they could engage the *Roman* Government in the Matter, which the People ſtood in awe of, there would be little danger of an Uproar. (3.) That he might be put to Death with *more Reproach to himſelf*. The Death of the Croſs, which the *Romans* commonly uſed, being of all other, the moſt ignominious, they were deſirous by it to put an *indelible* Mark of Infamy upon him, and ſo to ſink his Reputation for ever. This therefore they harped upon, *Crucifie him*. (4.) That he might be put to Death with *leſs Reproach* to them. 'Twas an invidious Thing to put one to Death that had done ſo much good in the World, and therefore they were willing to throw the Odium upon the *Roman* Government, to make that the leſs acceptable to the People, and ſave themſelves from the Reproach. Thus many are more afraid of the Scandal of an ill thing, than of the Sin of it. See *Acts* 5. 28.

Two Things are here obſerved concerning the Proſecution.

(1.) Their Policy and Induſtry in the Proſecution, *it was early.* Some think about Two or Three in the Morning, others about Five or Six, when moſt People were in their Beds, and ſo there would be the leſs Danger of Oppoſition from the People that were *for Chriſt*, while at the ſame Time they had their Agents about to call thoſe together whom they could influence to cry out *againſt him*. See how much their Heart was upon it, and how violent they were in the Proſecution; now they had him in their Hands, they would loſe no Time till they had him upon the Croſs, but deny'd themſelves their natural Reſt to puſh on this Matter. See *Mic.* 2. 1.

(2.) Their Superſtition and vile Hopocriſie. The Chief Prieſts and Elders, tho' they came along with the Priſoner, that the Thing might be done effectually, yet they *went not into the Judgment-Hall*, becauſe it was the Houſe of an uncircumciſed *Gentile*, *leſt they ſhould be defiled*, but kept out of Doors, *that they might eat the Paſſover*; not the *Paſchal Lamb*, that was eaten the Night before, but the *Paſſover-Feaſt*, upon the Sacrifices which were offer'd on the Fifteenth Day; to *Chagigah*, as they call'd it, the *Paſſover Bullocks*, ſpoken of *Deut.* 16. 2. 2 *Chron.* 30. 24. and 35. 8, 9. Theſe they were to eat of, and therefore would not go into the Court for fear of touching a *Gentile*, and thereby contracting not a legal, but only a traditional Pollution. This they ſcrupled, but made no ſcruple of breaking through all the Laws of Equity to perſecute Chriſt to the Death. *They ſtrain'd at a Gnat, and ſwallow'd a Camel.*

Let us now ſee what paſs'd at the Judgment-Hall. Here is,

Firſt, *Pilate*'s Conference with the Proſecutors; they are called firſt, and heard what they had to ſay againſt the Priſoner, as was very fit, *v.* 29—32.

1. The Judge *calls for* the Indictment. Becauſe they would not come into the Hall, he *went out to them* into the Court before the Houſe, to talk with them. Looking upon *Pilate* as a Magiſtrate, that we may give every one his due, here are three Things commendable in him.

(1.) His diligent and cloſe Application to Buſineſs. If it had been upon a good Occaſion it had been very well that he was willing to be *call'd up* early to the Judgment Seat. Men in publick Truſt muſt not love their eaſe.

(2.) His Condeſcenſion to the Honour of the People, and receding from the Honour of his Place to gratifie their ſcruples. He might have ſaid, if they be ſo nice as not to come in to me, let them go home as they came; by the ſame Rule as we might ſay, if the Complainant ſcruple to put off his Hat to the Magiſtrate, let not his Complaint be heard; but *Pilate* inſiſts not upon it, bears with them, and goes out to them; for when it is for good, we ſhould become all Things to all Men.

(3.) His Adherence to the Rule of Juſtice in demanding the *Accuſation*, ſuſpecting the Proſecution to be malicious. *What Accuſation bring you againſt this Man?* What's the Crime you charge him with, and what Proof have you of it? 'Twas a Law of Nature, before *Valerius Publicola* made it a *Roman* Law. *Ne quis indicta Cauſa condemnetur.* See *Acts* 25. 16, 27. 'Tis unreaſonable to commit a Man, without alledging ſome Cauſe in the Warrant, and much more to arraign a Man when there's no Bill of Indictment found againſt him.

2. The Proſecutors *demand* Judgment againſt him, upon a general ſurmiſe that he was a Criminal, not alledging, much leſs proving any thing in particular worthy of Death or of Bonds. *Ver.* 30. *If he were not a Malefactor*, or *Evil-doer*, *we would not have delivered him to thee* to be condemn'd. This ſpeaks them,

(1.) Very *rude* and *uncivil* to *Pilate*, a parcel of *ill-natur'd* Men, that affected to *deſpiſe Dominion*. When *Pilate* was ſo complaiſant to them, as to come *out* to treat with them, yet they were to the higheſt degree *out of Humour* with him. He put the moſt reaſonable Queſtion to them that could be; but if it had been the moſt *abſurd*, they could not have anſwered with more diſdain.

(2.) Very *ſpiteful* and *malicious* towards our Lord Jeſus; right or wrong they will have him to be a *Malefactor*, and treated as one. We are to *preſume* a Man *Innocent* till he is *proved Guilty*; but they will preſume him Guilty, who could prove himſelf Innocent. They cannot ſay he is a Traytor, a Murtherer, a Felon, a Breaker of the Peace, but an *Evil-doer*. He an *Evil-doer* who went about doing good? Let thoſe be called whom he had cur'd, and fed, and taught; whom he had reſcu'd from Devils, and rais'd from Death, and let them be asked whether he were an *Evil-doer* or no? *Note*, It is no new Thing for the beſt of Benefactors to be branded and run down as the worſt of Malefactors.

(3.) Very *proud*, and *conceited* of themſelves, and their own Judgment and Juſtice, as if their delivering a Man up, under the general Character of a Malefactor, were ſufficient for the Civil Magiſtrate to ground a judicial Sentence upon, than which, What could be more haughty?

3. The Judge *remanded* him to their own Court. *Ver.* 31. *Take ye him, and judge him according to your own Law*, and do not trouble me with him. Now,

1. Some think *Pilate* herein *complimented* them, acknowledging the remains of their Power, and allowing them to exert it. Corporal Puniſhment they might inflict, as *ſcourging in their Synagogues*, but whether *Capital*, or no, is uncertain; but ſaith *Pilate*, go as far as your Law will allow, and if you go further it ſhall be conniv'd at. This he ſaid, willing to do the *Jews* a Pleaſure, but unwilling to do them the Service they required.

2. Others think, he *banter'd* them, and upbraided them with their Preſent State of Weakneſs and Subjection. They would be the ſole Judges of the Guilt; pray, ſaith *Pilate*, if you will be ſo, go on as you have begun; you have found him Guilty by your own Law, condemn him, if you dare, by your own Law, to carry on the Humour. Nothing is more abſurd, nor more deſerves to be expos'd, than for thoſe to pretend to *dictate*, and boaſt of their Wiſdom, who are weak and underlings, and whoſe Lot it is to be dictated to. Some think *Pilate* here reflects upon the Law of *Moſes*, as if that allowed them to do that which the *Roman* Law would by no means allow, the judging of a Man unheard of: It may be *your Law* will ſuffer ſuch a Thing, but *ours* will not. Thus through their Corruptions the *Law of God* was blaſphemed, and ſo is *his Goſpel* too.

4. They *diſown'd* any Authority as *Judges*, and (ſince it muſt be ſo) are content to be the Proſecutors. They now grow leſs inſolent and more ſubmiſſive, and own, *It is not lawful for us to put any Man to Death*, whatever *leſs* Puniſhment we may inflict, and this is a Malefactor whom we would have the Blood of.

1. Some think they had loſt their Power to give Judgment in Matters of Life and Death, only by their own careleſſneſs, and cowardly yielding to the darling Iniquities of the Age, ſo Dr. *Lightfoot*, ὀκ ἔξεστι, it is not *in our Power* to paſs Sentence of Death upon any, if we do, we ſhall have the Mob about our Ears preſently.

2. Others think their Power was taken from them by the *Romans*, becauſe they had not us'd it well, or becauſe it was thought too great a Truſt to be lodg'd in the Hands of a *conquered*, and yet an *unſubdued* People. Their acknowledgment of this they deſign'd for a Compliment to *Pilate*, and to atone for their rudeneſs, *v.* 30. but it amounts to a full Evidence that the *Scepter was departed from* Judah, and therefore now the *Meſſiah* was to come, *Gen.* 49. 10. If the *Jews* have no Power to put any Man to Death, where is the Scepter? Yet they ask not where is the *Shiloh*?

3. However, there was a Providence in it, that either they ſhould have no Power to put any Man to Death, or ſhould decline the Exerciſe but upon this occaſion, That *the Saying of Jeſus might be fulfilled which he ſpake, ſignifying what Death he ſhould die*, v. 32. Obſerve,

1. In general, That even they who deſign'd the *defeating* of Chriſt's *Sayings*, beyond their Intention, were made ſerviceable to the *fulfilling* of them by an over-ruling Hand of God. No *Word of Chriſt* ſhall *fall to the ground*; he can never either deceive, or be deceived: Even the Chief Prieſts, while they perſecuted him as a Deceiver, had their Spirits ſo directed as to help to prove him true, when we would think by taking other Meaſures they might have defeated his Predictions. *Howbeit they mean not ſo*, Iſa. 10. 7.

2. Thoſe Sayings of Chriſt in particular were fulfilled, which he had ſpoken *concerning his own Death*. Two Sayings of Chriſt concerning his Death fulfilled by the *Jews* declining to judge him according to their Law. (1.) He had ſaid that he ſhould be *delivered to the Gentiles*, and that *they* ſhould put him to Death, *Mat.* 20. 19. *Mar.* 10. 33. *Luke* 18. 32. and hereby that Saying was fulfilled. (2.) He had ſaid that he ſhould be *crucified*, Mat. 20. 19. & 26. 2. *lifted up*, *John* 3. 14 & 12. 32. Now if they had judged him by their Law, he had been *ſtoned*. Burning, Strangling, and Beheading were in ſome caſes uſed among the *Jews*, but never *Crucifying*. 'Twas therefore neceſſary Chriſt ſhould be put to Death by the *Romans*, that being *hanged upon a Tree*, he might be made a *Curſe for us*, Gal. 3. 13. and his *Hands* and *Feet* might be *pierced*. As the *Roman* Power had brought him to be born at *Bethlehem*, ſo now to die upon a Croſs, and both according to the Scriptures. It is likewiſe *determined* concerning us, though not diſcovered to us, *what Death we ſhall die*, which ſhould free us from all diſquieting Cares about that Matter; Lord, *what* and *when*, and *how* thou haſt appointed.

Secondly, Here's *Pilate*'s Conference with the Priſoner, *v.* 33, &c. where we have,

1. The Priſoner ſet to the Bar; *Pilate*, after he had conferred with the chief Prieſts at his Door, entered into the Hall, and *called* for *Jeſus* to be brought in. He would not examine him in the Crowd, where he might be diſturbed by the Noiſe, but ordered him to be brought *into the Hall*, for he made no Difficulty of going in among the *Gentiles*. We by Sin were become liable to the Judgment of God, and were to be brought before his Bar, therefore Chriſt being made Sin, and a Curſe for us, was arraigned as a Criminal. *Pilate* entered into Judgment with him, that God might not enter into Judgment with us.

2. His Examination. The other Evangeliſts tell us that his Accuſers had laid it to his Charge, that *he perverted the Nation, forbidding to give Tribute to* Cæſar, and upon this he is examined.

1. Here's a Queſtion put to him with a deſign to enſnare him, and to find out ſomething upon which to ground an Accuſation. *Art thou the King of the Jews?* ὁ βασιλεὺς, *that* King of the *Jews* that has been ſo much *talked of*, and ſo long *expected*. *Meſſiah* the Prince; art thou he? *i. e.* doſt thou pretend to be he? Doſt thou call thy ſelf; and wouldſt thou be thought ſo? For he was far

from imagining that really he was ſo, and making a Queſtion of that. Some think *Pilate* ask'd this with an Air of Scorn and Contempt; What art thou a King, that makeſt ſo mean a Figure? Art thou the King of the *Jews*, by whom thou art thus hated and perſecuted? Art thou King *de jure*, while the Emperor is only King *de facto?* Since it could not be proved he ever ſaid it, he would conſtrain him to ſay it *now*, that he might proceed upon his own Confeſſion.

2. Chriſt anſwers this Queſtion with another, not for Evaſion, but as an Intimation to *Pilate*, to conſider what he did, and upon what Grounds he went, *v.* 34. *Sayeſt thou this thing of thy ſelf*, from a Suſpicion ariſing in thy own Breaſt, or *did others tell it thee of me*, and doſt thou ask it only to oblige them?

(1.) It is plain thou haſt no Reaſon to *ſay that of thy ſelf*. *Pilate* was obliged by his Office to take Care of the Intereſts of the *Roman* Government, but he could not ſay that that was in any Danger, or ſuffered any Damage by any thing our Lord Jeſus had ever ſaid or done. He never appeared in worldly Pomp, never aſſumed any ſecular Power, never acted as a Judge or Divider, never were any traiterous Principles or Practices objected to him, nor any thing that might give the leaſt Umbrage of Suſpicion.

(2.) If others *tell it thee of me*, to incenſe thee againſt me, thou oughteſt to conſider who they are, and upon what Principles they go; and whether they who repreſented him as an Enemy to *Cæſar*, were not really ſuch themſelves, and therefore uſed this only as a Pretence to cover their Malice; which, if ſo, ought to be well weighed by a Judge that would do Juſtice. Nay, if *Pilate* had been as inquiſitive as he ought to have been in this Matter, he would have found that the true Reaſon why the chief Prieſts were outragious againſt Jeſus, was, becauſe he *did not ſet up a temporal Kingdom*, in Oppoſition to the *Roman* Power; if he would have done that, and would have wrought Miracles to bring them out of the *Roman* Bondage, as *Moſes* did to bring them out of the *Egyptian*, they would have been ſo far from ſiding with the *Romans* againſt him, that they would have made him their King, and have fought under him againſt the *Romans*; but he not anſwering this Expectation of theirs, they charged that upon him, which they were themſelves moſt notoriouſly guilty of, Diſaffection to, and Deſign againſt the preſent Government; and was ſuch an Information as this fit to be countenanced?

3. *Pilate* reſents Chriſt's Anſwer, and takes it very heinouſly, *v.* 35. This is a direct Anſwer to Chriſt's Queſtion, *v.* 34.

(1.) Chriſt had asked him, *Whether he ſpoke of himſelf?* No, ſaith he, *Am I a Jew?* that thou ſuſpecteſt me to be in the Plot againſt thee? I know nothing of the *Meſſiah*, nor deſire to know, and therefore intereſt not my ſelf in the Diſpute who is the *Meſſiah*, and who not, 'tis all alike to me. Obſerve with what Diſdain *Pilate* asks, *Am I a Jew?* The *Jews* were upon many Accounts an honourable People, but having *corrupted the Covenant* of their God, he *made them contemptible and baſe before all the People, Mal.* 2. 8, 9. So that a Man of Senſe and Honour reckoned it a Scandal to be counted a *Jew*. Thus good Names often ſuffer for the ſake of the ill Men that wear them. 'Tis ſaid, that when a *Turk* is ſuſpected of Diſhoneſty, he ſhould ask, What? do you take me for a Chriſtian?

(2.) Chriſt had asked him, whether others told him; yes, ſaith he, and thoſe *thine own People*, that one would think ſhould be biaſs'd in favour of thee; and *the Prieſts*, whoſe Teſtimony, *in verbum ſacerdotis*, ought to be regarded; and therefore I have nothing to do but to proceed upon their Information. Thus Chriſt in his Religion ſtill ſuffers by thoſe that are of his *own Nation*, even the *Prieſts* that profeſs Relation to him, but do not live up to their Profeſſion.

(3.) Chriſt had declined anſwering that Queſtion, *Art thou the King of the* Jews? And therefore *Pilate* put another Queſtion to him, more general, *What haſt thou done?* What Provocation haſt thou given to thy own Nation, and particularly the Prieſts, to be ſo violent againſt thee? Surely there cannot be all this *Smoke* but there is ſome *Fire*, what is it?

4. Chriſt in his next Reply gives a more full and direct Anſwer to *Pilate*'s former Queſtion, *Art thou a King?* explaining in what Senſe he was a King, but not ſuch a King as was any ways dangerous to the *Roman* Government; not a ſecular King, for his Intereſt was not ſupported by ſecular Methods, *v.* 36. Obſerve,

1. An Account of the *Nature* and *Conſtitution* of Chriſt's Kingdom. It is *not of this World*; 'tis expreſſed *negatively*, what it is not, to teſtify the preſent Miſtakes concerning it; but the *poſitive* is implied; it is the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and belongs to another World. He is a King, and has a Kingdom, but not of this World. (1.) Its *Riſe* is not from this World. The Kingdoms of Men ariſe out of *the Sea*, and the *Earth*, Dan. 7. 3. Rev. 13. 1, 11. But the holy City *comes down from God out of Heaven, Rev.* 21. 2. His Kingdom is not by Succeſſion, Election, or Conqueſt, but by the immediate and ſpecial Deſignation of the Divine Will and Counſel. (2.) Its Nature is not *worldly*, 'tis a Kingdom *within Men, Luke* 17. 21. ſet up in their Hearts and Conſciences, *Rom.* 14. 17. Its Riches Spiritual, Powers Spiritual, and *all its Glory within*. The Miniſters of State in Chriſt's Kingdom have not the *Spirit of the World*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 12. (3.) Its *Guards* and *Supports* are not Worldly, its Weapons *ſpiritual*, it *needed* not, nor *uſed* ſecular Force to maintain and advance it, nor was it carried on in a way hurtful to *Kings* or *Provinces*, it did not in the leaſt interfere with the Prerogatives of Princes, or the Property of their Subjects. It tended not to alter any National Eſtabliſhment in ſecular things, not oppoſed any Kingdom but that of Sin and Saton. (4.) Its *Tendency* and *Deſign* is not worldly. Chriſt aimed not, nor would allow his Diſciples to aim at the Pomp and Power of the great Men of the Earth. (5.) Its *Subjects*, tho' they are in the *World*, yet are not *of the World*; they are called and choſen out of the World, are born from and bound for another World, they are neither the World's Pupils nor its Darlings, neither governed by its Wiſdom, nor enriched with its Wealth.

2. An Evidence of the ſpiritual Nature of Chriſt's Kingdom produced. If he had deſigned an Oppoſition to the Government, he would have fought them at their own Weapons, and would have repelled Force with Force of the ſame Nature; but he did not take this Courſe. *If my Kingdom were of this World, then would my Servants fight, that I ſhould not be delivered to the* Jews, and my Kindom be ruined by them. But, (1.) His Followers did not *offer* to fight, there was no Uproar, no Attempt to reſcue him, tho' the Town was now full of *Galileans*, his Friends and Country-men, and they generally *armed*; but the peaceable Behaviour of his Diſciples on this Occaſion was enough to *put to Silence the Ignorance of fooliſh Men*. (2.) He did not *order* them to fight, nay, he *forbad* them, which was an Evidence both that he did not *depend* upon *worldly Aids*, for he could have ſummoned Legions of Angels into his Service, which ſhewed that his Kingdom was from above; as alſo that he did not *dread worldly Oppoſition*, for he was very willing to be *delivered to the Jews*, as knowing that that which would have been the Deſtruction of any worldly Kingdom, would be the Advancement and Eſtabliſhment of *his*; juſtly therefore doth he conclude, *Now* you may ſee *my Kingdom is not from hence*; in the World, but not of it.

5. In Anſwer to *Pilate*'s further Query, ye replies yet more directly, *v.* 37. where we have,

1. *Pilate*'s plain Queſtion, *Art thou a King then?* Thou ſpeakeſt of a Kingdom thou haſt, art thou then in any Senſe a King? And what Colour haſt thou for ſuch a Claim? Explain thy ſelf.

2. The *good Confeſſion* which our Lord Jeſus witneſſed before *Pontius Pilate*, in Anſwer to this, 1 *Tim.* 6. 13. *Thou ſayeſt that I am a King*, i. e. 'Tis as thou ſayeſt, I am a King; for *I came to bear Witneſs of the Truth*.

1. He grants himſelf to be *a King*, tho' not in the Senſe that *Pilate* meant it. The *Meſſiah* was expected under the Character of a King, *Meſſiah the Prince*, and therefore having owned to *Caiaphas* that he was the *Chriſt*, he would not diſown to *Pilate* that he was *a King*, leſt he ſhould ſeem inconſiſtent with himſelf. *Note*, Tho' Chriſt took upon him the Form of a Servant, yet even then he juſtly claimed the Honour and Authority of a King.

2. He explains himſelf, and ſhews how he is a King, as he came to *bear Witneſs of the Truth*; he rules in the Minds of Men by the Power of *Truth*. If he had meant himſelf a temporal Prince, he would have ſaid, *For this End was I born, and for this Cauſe came I into the World*. to rule the Nations, to conquer Kings, and take Poſſeſſion of Kingdoms; no, he came to be a *Witneſs*, a Witneſs for the God that made the World, and againſt Sin that ruins the World, and by this Word of his Teſtimony he ſets up, and keeps up his Kingdom. 'Twas foretold that he ſhould be a *Witneſs to the People*, and as ſuch a *Leader* and *Commander to the People*, Iſa. 55. 4. Chriſt's Kingdom was not of this World, in which *Truth faileth*, Iſa. 59. 15. *Qui neſcit diſſimulare, neſcit regnare*; but of that World in which Truth reigns eternally. Chriſt's Errand into the World, and his Buſineſs in the World, was to *bear Witneſs to the Truth*. (1.) To *reveal* it, to diſcover to the World that which otherwiſe could not have been known concerning God, and his Will, and good Will to Men, *John* 1. 18 & 17. *ult.* (2.) To *confirm* it, *Rom.* 15. 8, By his Miracles he *bare Witneſs to the Truth* of Religion, the Truth of Divine Revelation, and of God's Perfections and Providence, and the Truth of his Promiſe and Covenant, that all Men through him might believe. Now by doing this he *is a King*, and ſets up a Kingdom.

1. The Foundation and Power, the Spirit and Genius of Chriſt's Kingdom is Truth, Divine Truth; when he ſaid, *I am the Truth*, he ſaid in Effect, I *am a King*; he *conquers* by the convincing Evidence of Truth, he *rules* by the commanding Power of Truth, and *in this Majeſty rides proſperouſly, becauſe of Truth, Pſal.* 45. 4. 'Tis *with his Truth* that he ſhall *judge the People*, Pſal. 96. 13. 'Tis the Sceptre of his Kingdom; he *draws with the Cords of a Man*, i. e. with *Truth* revealed to us, and received by us in the Love of it, and thus he *brings Thoughts into Obedience*. He came a *Light into the World*, and rules as *the Sun by Day*.

2. The Subjects of this Kingdom are thoſe that *are of the Truth*.

All that by the Grace of God are reſcued from under the Power of the Father of Lies, and are diſpoſed to receive the Truth, and ſubmit to the Power and Influence of it, will *hear Chriſt's Voice*, i. e. will become his Subjects, and will bear Faith and true Allegiance to him. Every one that has any real Senſe of true Religion, will entertain the Chriſtian Religion, and they belong to his Kingdom; by the *Power* of Truth he makes them *willing*, *Pſal.* 110. 3. All that are in Love with Truth will *hear* the Voice of Chriſt, for greater, better, ſurer, ſweeter Truths can no where be found than are found in Chriſt, by whom *Grace and Truth* came; ſo that by hearing Chriſt's Voice, we know that we *are of the Truth*, 1 *John* 3. 19.

6. *Pilate* hereupon puts a good Queſtion to him, but doth not ſtay for an Anſwer, *v.* 38. He ſaid, *What is Truth?* and immediately *went out again.*

1. It is certain this was a good Queſtion, and could not be put to one that was better able to anſwer it. Truth is that *Pearl of great Price* which the human Underſtanding has a deſire to, and is in queſt of, for it cannot reſt but in that which is, or at leaſt is apprehended to be Truth. When we ſearch the Scriptures, and attend the Miniſtry of the Word, it muſt be with this Enquiry, *What is Truth?* And with this Prayer, *Lead me in thy Truth*; into *all Truth.* But many put this Queſtion, that have not Patience and Conſtancy enough to perſevere in their ſearch after Truth, or not Humility and Sincerity enough to receive it when they have found it, 2 *Tim.* 3. 7. Thus many deal with their own Conſciences, they aſk them thoſe needful Queſtions, What am I? What have I done? But will not take Time for an Anſwer.

2. It is uncertain with what Deſign *Pilate* aſked this Queſtion.

1. Perhaps he ſpoke it as *a Learner,* as one that began to think well of Chriſt, and to look upon him with ſome Reſpect, and deſired to be informed what new Notions he advanced, and what Improvements he pretended to in Religion and Learning. But while he deſired to *hear ſome new Truth* from him, as *Herod* to ſee ſome Miracle, the Clamour and Outrage of the Prieſts Mob at his Gate obliged him abruptly to let fall the Diſcourſe.

2. Some think he ſpeaks it as *a Judge,* enquiring further into the Cauſe now brought before him; let me into this Myſtery, and prithee tell me *what the Truth* of it is, the true State of this Matter.

3. Others think he ſpeaks it as a *Scoffer,* in a jeering way. Thou talkeſt of Truth, canſt thou tell what Truth is, or give me a Definition of it. Thus he *makes a jeſt* of the everlaſting Goſpel, that great Truth which the Chief Prieſts hated and perſecuted, and which Chriſt was now witneſſing to, and ſuffering for; and like Men of *no* Religion, who take a Pleaſure in bantering all Religions, he ridicules both Sides. And therefore Chriſt made him no Reply, *Anſwer not a Fool according to his Folly*; *caſt not Pearls before Swine.* But tho' Chriſt would not tell *Pilate* what is Truth, he has told his Diſciples, and by them has told us, *John* 14. 6.

Thirdly, The Reſult of both theſe Conferences with the Proſecutors and the Priſoner, *v.* 38, 39, 40. In two Things:

1. The Judge appeared his Friend, and favourable to him; for

(1.) He publickly *declared him innocent*; *v.* 38. upon the whole Matter *I find in him no fault at all.* He ſuppoſeth there might be ſome Controverſy in Religion between him and them, wherein he was as likely to be in the right as they, but nothing Criminal appears againſt him. This ſolemn Declaration of Chriſt's Innocency, was, (1.) For the Juſtification and Honour of the Lord Jeſus. By this it appears, that tho' he was treated as the worſt of Malefactors, he had never merited ſuch Treatment. (2.) For the explaining of the Deſign and Intention of his Death. That he did not die *for any Sin of his own,* even in the Judgment of the Judge himſelf, and therefore he dy'd as a Sacrifice *for our Sins,* and that even in the Judgment of the Proſecutors themſelves, that *one Man ſhould die for the People,* John 11. 50. This is he that *did no Violence, neither was any Deceit in his Mouth,* Iſa. 53. 9. Who was to be *cut off but not for himſelf,* Dan. 9 26. (3.) For the aggravating of the Sin of the *Jews* that proſecuted him with ſo much Violence. If a Priſoner have had a fair Trial, and has been acquitted by thoſe that are proper Judges of the Crime, eſpecially if there be no Cauſe to ſuſpect them partial in his Favour, he muſt be believed *Innocent,* and his Accuſers are bound to *acquieſce.* But our Lord Jeſus, tho' brought in *not Guilty,* is ſtill run down as a Malefactor, and his Blood thirſted for.

(2.) He propoſed an Expedient for his Diſcharge; *v.* 39. *You have a Cuſtom,* that I ſhould *releaſe you a Priſoner at the Paſſover,* ſhall it be this King of the *Jews?* He propoſed this, not to the Chief Prieſts, he knew they would never agree to it, but to the Multitude; 'twas an *Appeal to the People,* as appears, *Mat.* 27. 15. Probably he had heard how this Jeſus had been attended but t'other Day with the *Hoſanna*'s of the common People, he therefore looked upon him to be the Darling of the Multitude, and the Envy only of the Rulers, and therefore he made no doubt but they would demand the Releaſe of Jeſus, and that would ſtop the Mouth of the Proſecutors, and all would be well.

1. He allows their Cuſtom, for which perhaps they had had a long Preſcription, in Honour of a Paſſover, which was a Memorial of their Releaſe. But it was adding to God's Words, as if he had not inſtituted enough for the due Commemoration of that Deliverance; and tho' an Act of Mercy might be Injuſtice to the Publick, *Prov.* 17. 15.

2. He offers to releaſe Jeſus to them according to the Cuſtom. If *Pilate* had had the Honeſty and Courage that became a Judge, he ſhould not have named an innocent Perſon to be Competitior with a notorious Criminal for this Favour; if he *found no Fault in him,* he was *bound* in Conſcience to diſcharge him. But he was willing to *trim* the Matter, and pleaſe all Sides, and was governed more by worldly Wiſdom than by the Rules of Equity.

2. The People appeared his Enemies, and implacable againſt him, *Ver.* 40. They *cried all again* and again, *Not this Man*; let not him be releaſed, but *Barabbas.* Obſerve,

1. How fierce and outragious they were. *Pilate* propoſed the Thing to them *calmly,* as worthy their mature Conſideration, but they reſolved it *in a Heat,* and gave in their Reſolution with Clamour and Noiſe, and in the utmoſt Confuſion. *Note,* The Enemies of Chriſt's Holy Religion *cry it down,* and ſo hope to *run it down,* Witneſs the Out-cry at *Epheſus, Acts* 19. 34. But thoſe who think the worſe of Things or Perſons, merely for their being thus exclaimed againſt, have a very ſmall ſhare of Conſtancy and Conſideration. Nay, There is Cauſe to ſuſpect a Deficiency of Reaſon and Juſtice on that ſide which calls in the Aſſiſtance of popular Tumult.

2. How fooliſh and abſurd they were, intimated in the ſhort Account here given of the other Candidate. Now *Barabbas was a Robber*; and therefore, 1. A Breaker of the Law of God; and yet he ſhall be ſpared, rather than one who reproved the Pride, Avarice, and Tyranny of the Prieſts and Elders. Tho' *Barabbas* be a Robber, he will not rob them of *Moſes*'s Seat, nor of their Traditions, and then no Matter. 2. He is an Enemy to the publick Safety, and perſonal Property. The Clamour of the Town uſes to be againſt Robbers, *Job* 30. 5. *Men cried after them as after a Thief,* yet here 'tis for one: Thus they do who prefer their Sins before Chriſt. Sin is a Robber, every baſe Luſt is a Robber, and yet fooliſhly choſen rather than Chriſt, who would truly enrich us.

CHAP. XIX.

Tho' in the Hiſtory hitherto this Evangeliſt ſeems induſtriouſly to have declined the recording of ſuch Paſſages as had been related by the other Evangeliſts, yet when he comes to the Sufferings *and* Death *of Chriſt, inſtead of paſſing them over as one* aſhamed of his *Maſter's* Chain *and Croſs, and looking upon them as the Blemiſhes of his Story, there he repeats what had been before related, with conſiderable Enlargements, as one that deſired to know nothing but Chriſt and him crucified*; *to* glory in nothing ſave in the Croſs of Chriſt. *In the Story of this Chapter we have,* (1.) *The Remainder of Chriſt's Trial before* Pilate, *which was tumultuous and confuſed,* v. 1—15. (2.) *Sentence given, and Execution done upon it,* v. 16—18. (3.) *The Title over his Head,* v. 19—22. (4.) *The parting of his Garment,* v. 23, 24. (5.) *The Care he took of his Mother,* v. 25—27. (6.) *The giving him Vinegar to drink,* v. 28, 29. (7.) *His dying Word,* v. 30. (8.) *The Piercing of his Side,* v. 31—37. (9.) *The Burial of his Body,* v. 38—42. *O! that in meditating on theſe Things, we may experimentally know the Power of Chriſt's Death, and the Fellowſhip of his Sufferings.*

THEN Pilate therefore took Jeſus and ſcourged *him.* 2 And the ſoldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe. 3 And ſaid, Hail king of the Jews: and they ſmote him with their hands. 4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and ſaid unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. 5 Then came Jeſus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* ſaid unto them, Behold the man. 6 When the chief prieſts therefore and officers ſaw him, they cried out, ſaying, Crucifie *him,* crucifie *him.* Pilate ſaith unto them, Take ye him, and crucifie *him*: for I find no fault in him. 7 The Jews anſwered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the ſon of God. 8 When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he was the more afraid; 9 And went again into the judgment-hall, and ſaith unto Jeſus, Whence art thou? but Jeſus gave him no anſwer. 10 Then ſaith Pilate unto him, Speakeſt thou not unto me? knoweſt thou not, that I have power to crucifie thee, and have power to releaſe thee? 11 Jeſus anſwered, Thou couldeſt have no power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee, hath the greater ſin. 12 And from thenceforth Pilate ſought to releaſe him: but the Jews cried out, ſaying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Ceſars friend: whoſoever maketh himſelf a king, ſpeaketh againſt Ceſar. 13 When Pilate therefore heard that ſaying, he brought Jeſus forth, and ſat down in the judgment-ſeat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 And it was the preparation of the paſſover, and about the ſixth hour: and he ſaith unto the Jews, Behold your king. 15 But they cried out, Away with *him,* away with *him,* crucifie him. Pilate ſaith unto them, Shall I crucifie your king? The chief prieſts anſwered, We have no king but Ceſar.

Here is a further Account of the *unfair* Trial which they gave to our Lord Jeſus. The Proſecutors carrying it on with great Confuſion among the People, and the Judge with great Confuſion in his own Breaſt; between both, the Narrative is ſuch as is not eaſily reduced to a Method, we muſt therefore take the Parts of it as they lie.

Firſt, The Judge *abuſeth* the Priſoner, tho' he declares him Innocent, and hopes therewith to pacifie the Proſecutors; wherein his Intention, if indeed it were good, will by no means *juſtifie* his Proceedings, which were probably *unjuſt*.

1. He ordeted him to be whipt as as a Criminal. *Ver*. 1. *Pilate* ſeeing the People ſo outragious, and being diſappointed in his Project of releaſing him upon the People's Choice, *took Jeſus and ſcourged him*, i. e. appointed the Lictors that attended him to do it. *Bede* is of Opinion, that *Pilate* ſcourged Jeſus himſelf with his own Hands, becauſe it is ſaid, he *took him*, and ſcourged him, that it might be done favourably. *Matthew* and *Mark* mention his ſcourging after his Condemnation, but here it appears to have been before. St. *Luke* ſpeaks of *Pilate*'s offering to *chaſtiſe him and let him go*, which muſt be before Sentence. This *ſcourging* of him was deſigned only to *pacifie* the *Jews*, and in it *Pilate* put a Compliment upon them, that he would *take their* Word againſt his own Sentiments *ſo far*. The *Roman* Scourgings were ordinarily very *ſevere*, not limited, as among the *Jews*, to Forty Stripes, yet this Pain and Shame Chriſt ſubmitted to for our ſakes.

(1.) That the Scriptures might be fulfilled, which ſpake of his being *ſtricken*, *ſmitten*, and *afflicted*, and the *Chaſtiſement of our Peace* being upon *him*, Iſa. 53. 4. Of his *giving his Back to the ſmiters*, Iſa. 50. 6. Of the *Plowers plowing upon his Back*, Pſal. 129. 3. He himſelf likewiſe had foretold it, *Mat*. 20. 19. *Mark* 10. 34. *Luke* 18. 32.

(2.) That *by his Stripes we might be healed*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. We deſerved to have been chaſtiſed with Whips and Scorpions, and to be *beaten with many Stripes*; having known our Lord's Will and not done it; but Chriſt underwent the Stripes for us, bearing *the Rod of his Father's Wrath*, Lam. 3. 1. *Pilate*'s Deſign in ſcourging him, was, that he might not be *condemn'd*, which did not take effect, but intimated what was God's Deſign, that his being *ſcourged* might prevent our being condemn'd; we having Fellowſhip in his Sufferings, and that did take effect. The Phyſician ſcourged, and ſo the Patient healed.

(3.) That Stripes for his ſake might be ſanctified, and made eaſy to his Followers; and they might, as they did, rejoyce in that Shame, *Acts* 5. 40. and 16. 22. As *Paul* did, who was *in Stripes above meaſure*, 2 Cor. 11. 23. Chriſt's Stripes take out the Sting of theirs, and alter the Property of them. We are *chaſtened of the Lord* that we may not be *condemn'd with the World*, 1 Cor. 11. 32.

2. He turned him over to his Soldiers to be *ridiculed* and made ſport with as a Fool, *Ver*. 2, 3. *The Soldiers* that were the Governor's Life-guard, *put a Crown of Thorns upon his Head*; ſuch a Crown fitteſt for ſuch a King. They *put on him a purple Robe*; ſome old Thread-bare Coat of that Colour, which they thought good enough to be the Badge of his Royalty, and they complimented him, with, *Hail, King of the Jews*; like People, like King; and then *ſmote him with their Hands*.

(1.) See here the *baſeneſs* and *injuſtice* of *Pilate*, that he would ſuffer one whom he believed an *innocent* Perſon, and if ſo, an *excellent* Perſon, to be thus abuſed, and trampled on by his own Servants. They who are under the Arreſt of the Law, ought to be under the Protection of it; and their being ſecured is to be their Security. But *Pilate* did this, (1.) To oblige his Soldiers *merry Humour*, and perhaps *his own* too, notwithſtanding the Gravity one might have expected in a Judge. *Herod*, as well as his *Men of War*, had juſt before done the ſame, *Luke* 23. 11. 'Twas as good as a *Stage-Play* to them, now it was a *Feſtival* Time; as the *Philiſtines* made ſport with *Sampſon*. (2.) To *oblige* the *Jews malicious Humour*, and to gratifie them, who deſired that all poſſible Diſgrace might be done to Chriſt, and the utmoſt Indignities put upon him.

(2.) See here the *rudeneſs* and *inſolence* of the Soldiers; how perfectly loſt they were to all Juſtice and Humanity, who could thus triumph over a Man in Miſery, and one that had been in Reputation for Wiſdom and Honour, and never did any Thing to forfeit it. But thus hath Chriſt's Holy Religion been baſely miſrepreſented; dreſſed up by ill Men at their Pleaſure, and expoſed to Contempt and Ridicule, as Chriſt was here. (1.) They cloath him with a *Mock-robe*, as if it were a *ſham*, and a *jeſt*, and nothing but the Product of a heated Fancy, and a crazy Imagination. And as Chriſt is here repreſented a King *in conceit* only, ſo is his Religion as a Concern *in conceit* only, and God and the Soul, Sin and Duty, Heaven and Hell are with them all *Chimeras*. (2.) They crown it with *Thorns*, as if it were a *perfect Penance*, and the greateſt Pain and Hardſhip in the World; as if to ſubmit to the Conduct of God and Conſcience were to thruſt one's Head into a Thicket of Thorns, but this is an unjuſt Imputation; *Thorns and Snares are in the Way of the Froward*, but Roſes and Laurels in Religion's Ways.

(3.) See here the wonderful Condeſcenſion of our Lord Jeſus in his Sufferings for us. Great and generous Minds can bear any Thing better than *Ignominy*; the Toil, and Pain, any Loſs rather than *Reproach*; yet this the Great and Holy Jeſus ſubmitted to for us. See and admire, (1.) The *invincible Patience of a Sufferer* leaving us an Example of Contentment and Courage, evenneſs, and eaſineſs of Spirit under the greateſt Hardſhips we may meet with in the way of Duty. (2.) The *invincible Love and Kindneſs of a Saviour*, who not only chearfully, and reſolutely went through all this, but voluntarily undertook it for us, and for our Salvation. Herein he commended his Love, that he would not only die for us, but die *as a Fool dies*. (1.) He *endured the Pain*; not the Pangs of Death only, tho' in the Death of the Croſs thoſe were moſt *exquiſite*; but as if thoſe were too little, he ſubmitted to thoſe previous Pains. Shall we complain of a *Thorn in the Fleſh*, and of being *buffeted* by Affliction, becauſe we need it to hide Pride from us, when Chriſt *humbled himſelf* to bear thoſe *Thorns in the Head*, and thoſe *buffetings* to ſave and teach us, 2 *Cor*. 12. 7. (2.) He *deſpiſed the Shame*, the Shame of a Fool's Coat, and the mock Reſpects paid him with, *Hail, King of the Jews*. If we be at any Time *ridiculed* for Well-doing, let us not be aſhamed, but glorifie God, for thus we are partakers of Chriſt's Sufferings. He that bore theſe *ſham Honours*, was recompenced with *real Honours*, and ſo ſhall we, if we patiently *ſuffer ſhame* for him.

Secondly, *Pilate* having thus abuſed the Priſoner, preſents him to the Proſecutors, in hopes they would now be ſatisfied and drop the Proſecution, *v*. 4, 5. Here he propoſes two Things to their Conſideration:

1. That he had not found any Thing in him which made him obnoxious to the *Roman* Government, *v*. 4. *I find no Fault in him*: οὐδεμίαν αἰτίαν εὑρίσκω, *I do not find the leaſt Fault, or Cauſe of Accuſation*: Upon further Enquiry he repeats the Declaration he had made, *Chap*. 18. 38. Hereby he *condemn'd himſelf*; if he *found no fault in him*, why did he ſcourge him? Why did he ſuffer him to be abuſed? None ought to *ſuffer ill* but thoſe that *do ill*; yet thus many banter and abuſe Religion, who yet, if they be ſerious, cannot but own they *find no fault in it*. If he *found no fault in him*, Why did he bring him out to his Proſecutors, and not immediately releaſe him, as he ought to do? If *Pilate* would have conſulted his own Conſcience only, he had neither *ſcourged* Chriſt, nor *crucified* him, but thinking to *trim* the Matter, to pleaſe the People by *ſcourging* Chriſt, and ſave his Conſcience by *not crucifying* him, behold he doth *both*; whereas, if he had at firſt reſolved to *crucifie* him, he needed not have ſcourged him. 'Tis common for thoſe who think to keep themſelves from greater Sins, by venturing upon leſſer Sins, to run into both.

2. That he had done that to him which would make him the leſs dangerous to them and to their Government, *v*. 5. He brought him out to them *wearing the Crown of Thorns*, his Head and Face all blood, and ſaid, *behold the Man* whom you are ſo jealous of, intimating, that tho' his having been ſo popular might have given them ſome cauſe to fear that his Intereſt in the Country would leſſen *theirs*, yet that he had taken an effectual courſe to prevent it, by treating him as a Slave, and expoſing him to Contempt, after which he ſuppoſed the People would never look upon him with any Reſpect, nor could he ever retrieve his Reputation again. Little did *Pilate* think with what Veneration even theſe Sufferings of Chriſt would in after Ages be commemorated by the beſt and greateſt of Men, who would glory in *that Croſs*, and *thoſe Stripes* which he thought would have been to him and his Followers a perpetual and indelible Reproach.

1. Obſerve here how our Lord Jeſus *ſhews himſelf* dreſs'd up in all the Marks of Ignominy. He *came forth* willing to be made a *Spectacle*, and to be *hooted at*, as no doubt he was, when he *came forth* in this Garb, knowing that he was ſet for a *Sign that ſhould be ſpoken againſt*, Luke 2. 34. Did he go forth thus bearing *our* Reproach, let us go forth to him *bearing his Reproach*, Heb. 13. 13.

2. How *Pilate* ſhews him, *Pilate unto unto them*, *behold the Man*. *He* ſaith unto them, ſo the Original is; and the immediate Antecedent being *Jeſus*, I ſee no inconvenience in ſuppoſing theſe to be Chriſt's own Words; He ſaid, *behold the Man* you are ſo exaſperated againſt: But ſome of the *Greek* Copies, and the generality of the Tranſlators ſupply it as we do, *Pilate* ſaith unto them, with a deſign to qualifie them, *Behold the Man*; not ſo much to move their Pity, *behold* a Man worthy your Compaſſion, as to ſilence their Jealouſies, behold a Man not worthy your ſuſpicion; a Man from whom you can henceforth fear no danger; his Crown is *prophaned and caſt to the Ground*, and now all Mankind will make a jeſt of him.

The Word however is very affecting, *Behold the Man*. It is good for every one of us with an Eye of Faith to behold the Man Chriſt Jeſus in his Sufferings. *Behold this King with the Crown wherewith his Mother crowned him*; and the Crown of Thorns, *Cant*. 3, 11. Behold him, and be ſuitably affected with the Sight. Behold him, and mourn becauſe of him; behold him and love him; be ſtill *looking unto Jeſus*.

Thirdly, The Proſecutors inſtead of being *pacified* were but the more *exaſperated*, v. 6, 7.

1. Obſerve here their *Clamour* and *Outrage*. The *Chief Prieſts* who headed the Mob, *cried out* with Fury and Indignation, and *their Officers* or Servants, who muſt ſay as they ſaid, joined with them in crying, *Crucifie him, crucifie him*. The common People perhaps would have acquieſced in *Pilate*'s Declaration of his Innocency, but their *Leaders*, the Prieſts, *cauſed them to err*. Now by this it appears that their Malice againſt Chriſt was, (1.) *Unreaſonable and moſt abſurd*, in that they offer not to make good their

Charge againſt him, or to object againſt the Judgment of *Pilate* concerning him; but tho' he be Innocent he muſt be crucified. (2.) 'Twas *inſatiable* and very *cruel.* Neither the Extremity of his Scourging, and his Patience under it, nor the tender Expoſtulations of the Judge, could mollifie them in the leaſt; no, nor could the Jeſt into which *Pilate* had turn'd the Cauſe put them into a pleaſant Humour. (3.) 'Twas *violent* and *exceeding reſolute*; they will have it their own way, and hazard the Governor's Favour, the Peace of the City, and their own Safety, rather than abate of the utmoſt of their Demands. Were they ſo violent in running down our Lord Jeſus, and in crying, *Crucifie him, crucifie him?* And ſhall not we be vigorous and zealous in advancing his Name, and in crying, *Crown him, crown him?* Did their Hatred of him ſharpen their Endeavours againſt him? and ſhall not our Love to him quicken our Endeavours for him and his Kingdom.

2. The Check *Pilate* gave to their Fury, ſtill inſiſting upon the Priſoner's Innocency. *Take ye him and crucifie him*, if he muſt be crucified; this is ſpoken ironically, he knew they could not, they *durſt not* crucifie him; but 'tis as if ſhe ſhould ſay, you ſhall not make me a drudge to your Malice: I cannot with a ſafe Conſcience crucifie him. A good Reſolve if he could but have ſtuck to it. He *found no fault in him*, and therefore ſhould not have continued to parley with the Proſecutors: They that would be *ſafe from Sin* ſhould be *deaf to Temptation.* Nay, he ſhould have ſecured the Priſoner from their Inſults: What was he armed with Power for but to protect the injured? The Guards of Governors ought to be the Guards of Juſtice. But *Pilate* had not Courage enough to ſtick to his Conſcience; and his Cowardice betrayed him into a Snare.

3. The further Colour which the Proſecutors gave to their Demand, *v.* 7. *We have a Law, and by our Law*, if it were but in our Power to execute it, *he ought to die, becauſe he made himſelf the Son of God.* Now here obſerve,

(1.) They *make their boaſt of the Law*, even then, when *through breaking the Law they diſhonoured God*, as is charged upon the *Jews*, Rom. 2. 23. They had indeed an excellent Law, far exceeding the Statutes and Judgments of other Nations; but in vain did they boaſt of their Law, when they abuſed it to ſuch ill Purpoſes.

(2.) They diſcover a reſtleſs and inveterate Malice againſt our Lord Jeſus. When they could not incenſe *Pilate* againſt him by alledging that he pretended himſelf a King, they urge this, that he pretended himſelf a God. Thus they turn every ſtone to take him off.

(3.) They *pervert the Law*, and make that the Inſtrument of their Malice. Some think they refer to a late Law made particularly againſt Chriſt, as if being a Law it muſt be executed right or wrong; whereas there is a Woe to them that *decree the unrighteous Decrees*, and that *write the grievouſneſs which they have preſcribed*, Iſa. 10. 1. See *Mic.* 6. 16. But it ſhould rather ſeem they refer to the Law of *Moſes*, and if ſo, (1.) It was true that Blaſphemers, Idolaters and falſe Prophets were to be put to Death by that Law. Whoever falſly pretended to be the Son of God was guilty of Blaſphemy, *Lev.* 24. 16. But then, (2.) It was falſe that he pretended to be the Son of God, for he really was ſo; and they ought to have inquired into the Proofs he produced of his being ſo. If he ſaid he was *the Son of God*, and the ſcope and tendency of his Doctrine was not to draw People from God, but to bring them to him, and he confirmed his Miſſion and Doctrine by Miracles, as undoubtedly he did beyond Contradiction, by their Law they ought to *hearken to him*, Deut. 18. 18, 19. and if they did not, they were to be *cut off.* That which was his Honour, and might have been their Happineſs, if they had not ſtood in their own Light, they impute to him as a Crime for which he *ought to die*; yet if he ought to *die* by their Law, he ought not to be *crucified*, for that was no Death inflicted by their Law.

Fourthly, The Judge brings the Priſoner again to his Trial upon this new Suggeſtion. Obſerve,

1. The concern *Pilate* was in when he heard this alledged, *Ver.* 8. When he heard that his Priſoner pretended not to *Royalty* only, but to *Deity*, he was *the more afraid:* This embarraſs'd him more than ever, and made the caſe more difficult both Ways; for, (1.) There was the more danger of offending the People if he ſhould *acquit* him, for he knew how jealous that People were for the Unity of the Godhead, and what an averſion they now had to other Gods; and therefore, tho' he might hope to pacifie their Rage againſt a *pretended King*, he could never reconcile them to a *pretended God*, If this be at the bottom of the Tumult, thinks *Pilate*, it will not be turned off with a Jeſt. (2.) There was the more danger of offending his own Conſcience if he ſhould *condemn* him. Is he one (thinks *Pilate*) that makes himſelf *the Son of God*, and what if it ſhould prove that he is ſo? What will become of me then? Even natural Conſcience makes Men afraid of being found *fighting againſt God.* The Heathen had ſome fabulous Traditions of incarnate Deities appearing ſometimes in mean Circumſtances, and *treated ill* by ſome that *paid dear* for their ſo doing. *Pilate* fears leſt he ſhould thus run himſelf into a *Premunire.*

2. His further Examination of our Lord Jeſus thereupon, *v.* 9. That he might give the Proſecutors all the *fair play* they could deſire, he reſumed the Debate, went into the Judgment-Hall, and asked Chriſt, *Whence art thou?* Obſerve,

1. The Place he choſe for this Examination, he *went into the Judgment-Hall*, for privacy, that he might be out of the Noiſe and Clamour of the Crowd, and might examine the Thing the more cloſely. They that would find out the Truth as it is in Jeſus, muſt get out of the noiſe of Prejudice, and retire as it were into the Judgment-Hall, to converſe with Chriſt alone.

2. The Queſtion he put to him, *Whence art thou?* Art thou *from Men* or *from Heaven? From beneath* or *from above?* He had before asked directly, *Art thou a King?* But doth not here directly ask, *Art thou the Son of God?* Leſt he ſhould ſeem to meddle with Divine Things too boldly. But in general, *Whence art thou?* Where waſt thou? And in what World hadſt thou a Being before thy coming into this World.

3. The *Silence* of our Lord Jeſus when he was examined upon this Head, but *Jeſus gave him no Anſwer.* This was not a ſullen Silence in Contempt of the Court, nor was it becauſe he knew not what to ſay. But,

(1.) It was a *patient* Silence, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *As a Sheep before the Shearers is Dumb, ſo he opened not his Mouth*, Iſa. 53. 7. This Silence loudly ſpake his Submiſſion to his Father's Will in his preſent Sufferings, which he thus accommodated himſelf to, and compoſed himſelf to bear. He was *ſilent* becauſe he would ſay nothing to hinder his Sufferings. If Chriſt had avowed himſelf a God, as plainly as he avowed himſelf a King, 'tis likely he would not have *condemned him*, for he was *afraid*, at the mention of it by the Proſecutors; and the *Romans*, tho' they triumphed over the *Kings of the Nations* they conquered, yet ſtood in awe of *their Gods.* See 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. *If they had known him* to be the *Lord of Glory* they would *not have crucified him*, and how then muſt we have been ſaved?

(2.) It was a *prudent* Silence. When the Chief Prieſts asked him, *Art thou the Son of the Bleſſed?* he anſwered, *I am*, for he knew they went upon the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament which ſpeak of the *Meſſiah*; but when *Pilate* asked him, he knew he did not underſtand his own Queſtion, having no Notion of the *Meſſiah*, and of his being the *Son of God*, and therefore to what purpoſe ſhould he reply to him whoſe Head was filled with the Pagan Theology, to which he would have turned his Anſwer.

4. The haughty Check which *Pilate* gave him for his Silence, *v.* 10. *Speakeſt thou not unto me?* Doſt thou put ſuch an Affront upon me as to ſtand mute? What, *knoweſt thou not*, that as Preſident of the Province, I *have Power*, if I think fit, *to crucifie thee*; and have *Power*, if I think fit, to *releaſe thee.* Obſerve here,

(1.) How *Pilate* magnifies himſelf, and boaſts of his own Authority; as not inferior to that of *Nebuchadnezzar*, of whom it is ſaid, that *whom he would he ſlew*, and *whom he would he kept alive*, Dan. 5. 19. Men in Power are apt to be puffed up with their Power, and the more abſolute and arbitrary it is, the more it gratifies their Pride, and humours that. But he magnifies his Power to an exorbitant Degree, when he boaſts that he had Power to *crucifie* one whom he had declared Innocent, for no Prince or Potentate has Authority to do wrong. *Id poſſumus quod jure poſſumus.*

(2.) How he tramples upon our bleſſed Saviour, *Speakeſt thou not unto me—?* He reflects upon him, (1.) As if he were *undutiful* and diſreſpectful to thoſe in Authority, not ſpeaking when he was ſpoken to. (2.) As if he were *ungrateful* to one that had been tender of him; ſpeakeſt thou not to *me* who have laboured thy Releaſe? (3.) As if he were *unwiſe* for himſelf; Wilt thou not ſpeak to clear thy ſelf to one that is willing to clear thee? If Chriſt had indeed ſought to ſave his Life, now had been his Time to have ſpoken; but that which he had to do was to lay down his Life.

5. Chriſt's pertinent Anſwer to this Check, *v.* 11. Where,

1. He boldly *rebukes* his Arrogance, and rectifies his Miſtake. As big as thou lookeſt and talkeſt, *thou couldſt have no Power at all againſt me*; no Power to ſcourge, no Power to crucifie, *except it were given thee from above.* Tho' Chriſt did not think fit to anſwer him when he was *impertinent*, then *anſwer not a Fool according to his Folly, leſt thou alſo be like him*; yet he did think fit to anſwer him when he was *imperious*, then *anſwer a Fool according to his Folly, leſt he be wiſe in his own conceit*, Prov. 26. 4, 5. When *Pilate* uſed his Power, Chriſt ſilently ſubmitted to it, but when he grew proud of it, he made him *know himſelf.* All the Power thou haſt, is given thee *from above*; which may be taken two Ways.

(1.) As minding him, that his Power *in general* as a Magiſtrate was a *limited* Power, and he could do no more than God would ſuffer him to do. God is the Fountain of Power; and the *Powers that be*, as they are *ordained* by him, and *derived* from him, ſo they are *ſubject* to him: They ought to go no further that his Law directs them; they *can* go no further than his Providence permits them. They are *God's Hand*, and his *Sword*, Pſal. 17. 13. Tho' *the Ax* may *boaſt it ſelf againſt him that heweth therewith*, yet ſtill it is but a Tool, *Iſa.* 10. 5. 15. Let the proud Oppreſſors know, that there is *a Higher than they*, to whom they are accountable, *Eccl.* 5. 8. And let this ſilence the Murmurings of the oppreſſed, *It is the Lord.* God had bid *Shimei* curſe *David*; and let it comfort them, that their Perſecutors can do more than God will let them. See *Iſa.* 51. 12, 13.

(2.) As in informigg him that his Power againſt *him* in particular, and all the Efforts of that Power, were *by the determinate Counſel and Fore-knowledge of God*, Acts 2. 23. *Pilate* never fancy'd himſelf to *look ſo great* as now, when he ſate in Judgment upon ſuch a Priſoner as this, who was look'd upon by many as the *Son* *of God* and King of *Iſrael*, and had the Fate of ſo *great a Man* at his Diſpoſe; but Chriſt lets him know that he was herein but an *Inſtrument* in God's Hand, and could do nothing againſt him, but by the Appointment of Heaven, *Acts* 4. 27, 28.

.2 He mildly excuſeth and extenuateth his Sin, in Compariſon with the Sin of the Ring-leaders. *Therefore he that delivered me unto thee* lies under greater Guilt; for thou as a Magiſtrate haſt *Power from above*, and art in thy Place, thy Sin is leſs than theirs, who, from Envy and Malice, urge thee to abuſe thy Power.

1. It is plainly intimated, that what *Pilate* did was *Sin*, a great Sin, and the Force which the *Jews* put upon him, and which he put upon himſelf in it, would not juſtify him. Chriſt hereby intended a Hint for the awakening of his Conſcience, and the Encreaſe of that Fear he was now under. Others Guilt will not acquit us, nor will it avail in the great Day to ſay, others were *worſe than we*, for we are not to be judged by Compariſon, but muſt *bear our own Burthen*.

2. Yet theirs that delivered him up to *Pilate* was the greater Sin; by this it appears that all Sins are not *equal*, but ſome more heinous than others; ſome comparatively as Gnats, others as Camels; ſome as Motes in the Eye, others as Beams; ſome as Pence, others as Pounds. *He that delivered Chriſt to Pilate* was either,

1. The People of the *Jews*, who cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him*; they had ſeen Chriſt's Miracles which *Pilate* had not; to them the *Meſſiah* was *firſt ſent*, they were his own, and to them who were now enſlaved, a Redeemer ſhould have been *moſt welcome*, and therefore it was much worſe in them to appear againſt him than in *Pilate*.

2. Or rather he means *Caiaphas* in particular, who was at the Head of the Conſpiracy againſt Chriſt, and firſt adviſed his Death, *Chap*. 11. 49. The Sin of *Caiaphas* was abundantly greater than the Sin of *Pilate*. *Caiaphas* proſecuted Chriſt from pure Enmity to him and his Doctrine, deliberately, and of Malice perpenſe; *Pilate* condemned him purely for fear of the People, and it was a haſty Reſolution which he had not time to *cool upon*.

3. Some think Chriſt means *Judas*, for tho' he did not immediately deliver him into the Hands of *Pilate*, yet he betrayed him to thoſe that did. The Sin of *Judas* was upon many Accounts greater than the Sin of *Pilate*. *Pilate* was a Stranger to Chriſt, *Judas* was his Friend and Follower. *Pilate* found no fault in him, but *Judas* knew a deal of good by him. *Pilate* tho' *biaſs'd* was not brib'd, but *Judas* took a *Reward againſt the Innocent*; the Sin of *Judas* was a leading Sin, and let in all that followed. He was a *Guide to them that took Jeſus*. So great was the Sin of *Judas*, that *Vengeance ſuffered him not to live*; but when Chriſt ſaid this, or ſoon after, he was *gone to his own Place*.

Fifthly, *Pilate ſtruggles* with the *Jews* to deliver Jeſus out of their Hands, but *in vain*. We hear no more after this of any thing that paſſed between *Pilate* and the Priſoner, what remains lay between him and the Proſecutors.

1. *Pilate* ſeems more zealous than before to get *Jeſus* diſcharg'd, *v*. 12. *from thenceforth*, from this Time, and for this Reaſon, becauſe Chriſt had given him that Anſwer, *v*. 11. which tho' it had a Rebuke in it, yet he took it kindly; and tho' Chriſt found fault with him, he ſtill continued to find no fault in Chriſt, but *ſought to releaſe him*, deſired it, endeavoured it; *he ſought to releaſe him*, he contrived how to do it handſomely and ſafely, and ſo as not to diſoblige the Prieſts. It never doth well, when our Reſolutions to do our Duty are ſwallow'd up in Projects how to do it plauſibly and conveniently. If *Pilate*'s Policy had not prevailed above his Juſtice, he would not have been long ſeeking to releaſe him, but would have done it; *Fiat Juſtitia ruat Cœlum*.

2. The *Jews* were more *furious than ever*, and more violent to get Jeſus crucified. Still they carry on their Deſign with Noiſe and Clamour as before; ſo now they *cried out*. They would have it thought that the Commonalty was againſt him, and therefore laboured to get him cry'd down by a Multitude, and 'tis no hard Matter to *pack* a Mob; whereas if a fair Poll had been granted, I doubt not but it would have been carry'd by a great Majority for the releaſing of him. A few mad Men may *out-ſhout* many wiſe Men, and then fancy themſelves to ſpeak the Senſe (when 'tis but the Nonſenſe) of a Nation, or of all Mankind, but it is not ſo eaſy a thing to *change the Senſe* of the People, as it is to miſrepreſent it, and to change *their Cry*. Now Chriſt was in the Hands of his Enemies, his Friends were ſhy, and ſilent, and diſappear'd, and thoſe that were againſt him were forward to ſhew themſelves ſo, and this gave the chief Prieſts an Opportunity to repreſent it as the concurring Vote of all the *Jews*, that he ſhould be crucified. In this Outcry they endeavour two Things,

(1.) To *blacken* the *Priſoner* as an *Enemy* to *Cæſar*. He had refuſed the Kingdoms of this World, and the Glory of them, had declared his Kingdom not to be of this World, and yet they will have it that he *ſpeaks againſt Cæſar*, ἀντιλέγει, he *oppoſeth Cæſar*, invades his Dignity and Sovereignty. It has always been the Artifice of the Enemies of Religion, to repreſent it as hurtful to Kings and Provinces, when it would be highly beneficial to both.

(2.) To *frighten* the *Judge*, as *no Friend* to *Cæſar*, if he *let this Man go* unpuniſhed, and let him go on. Thou art not *Cæſar*'s Friend, and therefore falſe to thy Truſt, and the Duty of thy Place, and obnoxious to the Emperor's Diſpleaſure, and liable to be turned out. They intimate a Threatning, that they would inform againſt him, and get him diſplaced; and here they touched him in a ſenſible and very tender part. But of all People thoſe *Jews* ſhould not have pretended a Concern for *Cæſar*, who were themſelves ſo ill affected to him and his Government. They ſhould not talk of being Friends to *Cæſar*, who were themſelves ſuch back Friends to him; yet thus a *pretended Zeal* for that which is *good* often ſerves to cover a *real* Malice againſt that which is *better*.

3. When other Expedients had been try'd in vain, *Pilate* ſlightly endeavoured to banter them out of their Fury, and yet in doing that betrayed himſelf to them, and yielded to the rapid Stream, *v*. 13, 14, 15. And he had ſtood it out a great while, and ſeemed now as if he would have made a vigorous Reſiſtance upon that Attack, *v*. 12. he baſely ſurrender'd. Obſerve here,

1. What it was that ſhock'd *Pilate*, *v*. 13. *When he heard that Saying*, that he could not be true to *Cæſar*'s Honour, nor ſure of *Cæſar*'s Favour, if he did not put Jeſus to Death, then he thought it was time to look about him. All they had ſaid to prove Chriſt a Malefactor, and that therefore it was *Pilate*'s Duty to condemn him, did not move him, but he ſtill kept to his Conviction of Chriſt's Innocency; but when they urged that it was his Intereſt to condemn him, then he began to yield. *Note*, They that bind up their Happineſs in the Favour of Men, make themſelves an eaſy Prey to the Temptations of Satan.

2. What Preparation was made for a definitive Sentence upon this Matter. *Pilate brought Jeſus forth*, and he himſelf in great State took the Chair; we may ſuppoſe that he called for his Robes, that he might look big, and then he *ſate down in the Judgment-Seat*. He was condemned with all the Ceremony that could be, (1.) To bring us off at God's Bar, and that all Believers through Chriſt being judged here, might be acquitted in the Court of Heaven. (2.) To take off the Terror of pompous Trials, which his Followers would be brought to for his ſake. *Paul* might the better ſtand at *Cæſar*'s Judgment Seat, when his Maſter had ſtood there before him.

Notice is here taken of the Place and Time.

1. The Place where Chriſt was condemned; in a *Place called the Pavement, but in* Hebrew, *Gabbatha*, probably the Place where he uſed to ſit to try *Cauſes* or *Criminals*. Some make *Gabbatha* to ſignify an *encloſed Place*, fenced againſt the Inſults of the People, whom therefore he did the leſs need to fear; others an *elevated Place*, raiſed that all might ſee him.

2. The Time, *v*. 14. 'Twas the *Preparation of the Paſſover*, and *about the ſixth Hour*. Obſerve,

(1.) The Day; 'twas the Preparation of the Paſſover, *i. e.* for the Paſſover Sabbath, and the Solemnities of that, and the reſt of the Days of the Feaſt of unleavened Bread. This is plain from *Luke* 23. 45. *It was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew on*. So that this Preparation was for the Sabbath. *Note*, Before the Paſſover there ought to be Preparation. This is mentioned as an Aggravation of their Sin in perſecuting Chriſt with ſo much Malice and Fury; that 'twas when they ſhould have been purging out the old leaven, to get ready for the Paſſover, but the better the Day the worſe the Deed.

(2.) The Hour; it was *about the ſixth Hour*. Some ancient *Greek* and *Latin* Manuſcripts read it about the *third Hour*, which agrees with *Mark* 15. 25. And it appears by *Mat*. 27. 45. that he was upon the Croſs before the ſixth Hour. But it ſhould ſeem to come in here not as a preciſe Determination of the Time, but as an additional Aggravation of the Sin of his Proſecutors, that they were puſhing on the Proſecution, not only on a ſolemn Day, the *Day of the Preparation*, but from the *third* to the *ſixth Hour*, which was, as we call it, *Church-time*, on that Day they were employed in this Wickedneſs, ſo that for this Day, tho' they were Prieſts, they dropt the *Temple-Service*, for they did not leave Chriſt till the ſixth Hour, when the Darkneſs began, which frighted them away. Some think that the ſixth Hour with this Evangeliſt is according to the *Roman* Reckoning and ours, *Six of the Clock* in the *Morning*, anſwering to the *Jews* firſt Hour of the Day; this is very probable, that Chriſt's Trial before *Pilate* was at the height about ſix in the Morning, which was then a little after Sun-riſing.

3. The Rencounter *Pilate* had with the *Jews*, both Prieſts and People, before he proceeded to give Judgment, endeavouring in vain to ſtem the Tide of their Rage.

1. He ſaith unto the *Jews*, *Behold your King*. This is a Reproof to them for the Abſurdity and Malice of their *innuendo*, that this Jeſus made himſelf a King; *Behold your King*, i. e. him whom you accuſe as a Pretender to the Crown. Is this a Man likely to be dangerous to the Government? I am ſatisfied he is not, and you may be ſo too, and let him alone. Some think he hereby upbraids them with their ſecret Diſaffection to *Cæſar*; you would have this Man to be your King, if he would but have headed a Rebellion againſt *Cæſar*. But *Pilate*, tho' he was far from meaning ſo, ſeems as if he were the Voice of God to them. Chriſt now crowned with Thorns here is as a King at his Coronation, offered to the People, *Behold your King*, the King which God hath ſet upon his holy Hill of *Zion*, but they inſtead of entring into it with Acclamation of joyful Conſent, proteſt againſt him, they will not have a King of God's chuſing.

2. They *cried out* with the greateſt Indignation, *Away with him, away with him*, which ſpeaks Diſdain as well as Malike, ἆρον, ἆρον, *Take him*, he is none of ours; we diſown him for our *Kinſman*, much more for our *King*; we have not only no *Veneration* for

him, but no *Compaſſion*; away with him out of our Sight; for ſo it was written of him, he is one *whom the Nation abhors*, Iſa. 49. 7. and they *hid as it were their Faces from him*, Iſa. 53. 2, 3. *Away with him from the Earth*, Acts 22. 22. This ſhews, 1. How we deſerved to have been treated at God's Tribunal; we were by Sin become *odious to God's Holineſs*, which cried, *Away with them, away with them*, for God is *of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity*; we were alſo become *obnoxious* to God's Juſtice, which cried againſt us, *Crucify them, crucify them*, let the Sentence of the Law be executed. Had not Chriſt interpoſed, and been thus *rejected of Man*, we had been for ever *rejected of God*. 2. It ſhews how we ought to treat our Sins; we are often in Scripture ſaid to *crucify* Sin, in Conformity to Chriſt's Death; now they that crucified Chriſt did it with *Deteſtation*. With a pious Indignation we ſhould *run down Sin in us*, as they with an impious Indignation run him down who was *made Sin for us*. The true Penitent *caſts away* from him his Tranſgreſſions, *Away with them, away with them*, Iſa. 2. 20, & 30. 22. *Crucify them, crucify them*; 'tis not fit they ſhould live in my Soul, *Hoſ.* 14. 8.

3. *Pilate* willing to have Jeſus releaſed, and yet that it ſhould be their doing, asks them, *Shall I crucify your King?* In ſaying this, he deſigned either, (1.) To *ſtop their Mouths*, by ſhewing them how abſurd it was for them to reject one who offered himſelf to them to be their King, at a time when they needed one more than ever. Have they no Senſe of Slavery? No Deſire of Liberty? No Value for a Deliverer? Tho' he ſaw no Cauſe to fear him, they might ſee Cauſe to hope for ſomething from him; ſince cruſhed and ſinking Intereſts are ready to catch at any thing. Or, (2.) To *ſtop the Mouth* of his own *Conſcience*; if this *Jeſus* be a King, (thinks *Pilate*) he is only *King of the Jews*, and therefore I have nothing to do but to make a fair Tender of him to them; if they refuſe him, and will have their King crucified, what's that to me? He banter'd them for their Folly, in expecting a *Meſſiah*, and yet running down one that bid ſo fair to be he.

4. The chief Prieſts, that they might effectually renounce Chriſt, and engage *Pilate* to crucify him, but otherwiſe ſore againſt their Will, cried out, *We have no King but* Cæſar. This they knew would pleaſe *Pilate*, and ſo they hoped to carry their Point, tho' at the ſame time they hated *Cæſar* and his Government. But obſerve here, (1.) What a plain Indication this is, that the Time for the Meſſiah to appear, even the ſet Time was now come; for if the *Jews have no King* but *Cæſar*, then is the *Sceptre departed from* Judah, *and the Law-giver from between his Feet*, which ſhould never be till *Shiloh* come to ſet up a ſpiritual Kingdom. And, (2.) What a righteous thing it was with God to bring upon them that Ruin by the *Romans*, which followed not long after. (1.) They adhere to *Cæſar*, and to *Cæſar* they ſhall go. God ſoon gave them enough of their *Cæſars*, and according to *Jotham*'s Parable, ſince the Trees chuſe the *Bramble* for their King, rather than the *Vine* and the *Olive*, an evil Spirit is ſent between them, for they could not do it *truly* and *ſincerely*, Jud. 9. 12, 19. from hence forward they were *Rebels* to the *Cæſars*, and the *Cæſars Tyrants* to them, and it ended in the Overthrow of their Place and Nation. 'Tis juſt with God to make that a Scourge and Plague to us, which we prefer before Chriſt. (2.) They would have *no other King* but *Cæſar*, and never have they had any other to this Day, but have now *abode many Days without a King, and without a Prince*, Hoſ. 3. 4. without any of their own, but the Kings of the Nations have ruled over them; ſince they will have no King but *Cæſar*, ſo ſhall their Doom be, themſelves have decided it.

16 Then deliver'd he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jeſus and led him away. 17 And he bearing his croſs, went forth into a place called *the place* of a ſcull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha: 18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either ſide one, and Jeſus in the midſt.

We have here Sentence of Death paſt upon our Lord Jeſus, and Execution done preſently. A mighty Struggle *Pilate* had had within him between his Convictions and his Corruptions, but at length his Convictions yielded, and his Corruptions prevailed; the Fear of Man having a greater Power over him than the Fear of God.

Firſt, *Pilate gave Judgment* againſt Chriſt, and ſigned the Warrant for his Execution, *v.* 16. We may ſee here,

1. How *Pilate* ſinned againſt his Conſcience, he had again and again pronounced him *innocent*, and yet at laſt condemned him as guilty. *Pilate*, ſince he came to be Governour, had in many Inſtances diſobliged and exaſperated the *Jewiſh* Nation, for he was a Man of a haughty implacable Spirit, and extremely wedded to his Humour. He had ſeized upon the *Corban*, and ſpent it upon a Water-work; he had brought in Shields ſtamped with *Cæſar*'s Image, which was very provoking to the *Jews*; he had ſacrificed the Lives of many to his Reſolutions herein; fearing therefore he ſhould be complained of for thoſe and other Inſolences, he was willing to gratify the *Jews*. Now this makes the Matter much worſe. If he had been of an eaſy, ſoft, and pliable Diſpoſition, his yielding to ſo ſtrong a Stream, had been the more excuſable; but for a Man that was ſo wilful in other things, and of ſo fierce a Reſolution, to be overcome in a thing of this Nature, ſhews him an ill Man indeed, that could better bear the wronging of his Conſcience, than the croſſing of his Humour.

2. How he endeavoured to transfer the Guilt upon the *Jews*. He *delivered him* not to his own Officers (as uſual) but to the Proſecutors, the chief Prieſts and Elders, ſo excuſing the Wrong to his own Conſcience with this, that it was but a *permiſſive* Condemnation, and that he did not put Chriſt to Death, but only connive at thoſe that did it.

3. How Chriſt was made *Sin for us*. We deſerved to have been condemned, but Chriſt was condemned for us, that to us there might be *no Condemnation*. God was now entring into Judgment with his Son, that he might not enter into Judgment with his Servants.

Secondly, Judgment was no ſooner given, but with all poſſible Expedition, the Proſecutors, having gained their Point, reſolved to loſe no Time, (1.) Leſt *Pilate* ſhould change his Mind, and order a Reprieve; thoſe are Enemies to our Souls, the worſt of Enemies, that hurry us to Sin, and then leave us no room to undo what we have done amiſs. (2.) Leſt there ſhould be *an Uproar among People*; and there ſhould have been a greater Number againſt, than they had with ſo much Artifice got to be for them.

'Twere well if we would be thus expeditious in that which is good, and not ſtay for more Difficulties.

1. *They* immediately hurried away the Priſoner. The *chief Prieſts* greedily flew upon the Prey which they had been long waiting for, now 'tis drawn into their Net. Or *they*, i. e. the Soldiers who were to attend the Execution, they took him and led him away, not to the Place from whence he came, and thence to the Place of Execution, as is uſual with us, but directly to the Place of Execution. Both the Prieſts and the Soldiers joined in *leading him away*. Now was the *Son of Man delivered into the Hands of Men*, wicked and unreaſonable Men. By the Law of *Moſes* (and in Appeals by our Law) the Proſecutors were to be the Executioners, *Deut.* 17. 7. And the Prieſts here were proud of the Office. His being *led away* doth not ſuppoſe him to have made any Oppoſition, but the Scripture muſt be fulfill'd, he was *led as a Sheep to the Slaughter*, Acts 8. 32. we deſerved to have been *led forth with the Workers of Iniquity* as Criminals to Execution, *Pſal.* 125. 5. But he was *led forth* for us that we might eſcape.

2. To add to his Miſery, they obliged him as long as he was able to carry his Croſs, *v.* 17. according to the Cuſtom among the *Romans*; hence *Furcifer* was among them a Name of Reproach. Their Croſſes did not ſtand up conſtantly, as our *Gibbets* do in the Places of Execution; becauſe the Malefactor was nailed to the Croſs as it lay along upon the Ground, and then it was lifted up and faſtened in the Earth, and removed when the Execution was over, and commonly buried with the Body, ſo that every one that was crucified had a *Croſs of his own*. Now Chriſt's carrying his Croſs may be conſidered, (1.) As a part of his Sufferings, he endured the Croſs literally. 'Twas a long and thick Piece of Timber, that was neceſſary for ſuch a Uſe, and ſome think it was neithe ſeaſon'd nor hewn. The bleſſed Body of the Lord Jeſus was tender, and unaccuſtomed to ſuch Burthens; it had now lately been harraſſed and tired out. His Shoulders ſore with the Stripes they had given him; every Jog of the Croſs would renew his Smart, and be apt to ſtrike the Thorns he was crowned with into his Head; yet all this he patiently underwent, and it was but the *Beginning of Sorrows*. (2.) As anſwering the Type which went before him; *Iſaac*, when he was to be offered, carry'd the Wood on which he was to be bound, and with which he was to be burned. (3.) As very ſignificant of his Undertaking, the Father having *laid upon him the Iniquity of us all*, Iſa. 53. 6. and he being to *take away Sin*, by *bearing it in his own Body upon the Tree*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. He had ſaid in Effect, *on me be the Curſe*, for he was made a Curſe for us, and therefore on him was the Croſs. (4.) As very inſtructive to us. Our Maſter hereby taught all his Diſciples to take up their Croſs and follow him. Whatever Croſs he calls us out to bear at any time, we muſt remember he bore the Croſs firſt, and by bearing it *for us*, bears it *off from us* in a great meaſure, for thus he hath made *his Yoke eaſy, and his Burthen light*. He bore that End of the Croſs that had the Curſe upon it, that was the heavy End, and thence all that are his are enabled to call their *Afflictions* for him light, and *but for a Moment*.

3. They brought him to the Place of Execution; he *went forth*, not dragg'd againſt his Will, but voluntary in his Sufferings. He *went forth* out of the City, for he was *crucified without the Gate*, *Heb.* 13. 12. And to put the greater Infamy upon his Sufferings, he was brought to the common Place of Execution, as one in all Points *number'd among the Tranſgreſſors*; a Place called *Golgotha*, the *Place of a Skull*, where they threw dead Mens Skulls and Bones, or where the Heads of beheaded Malefactors were left; a Place *ceremonially unclean*, there Chriſt ſuffered, becauſe he was *made Sin for us*, that he might *purge our Conſciences from dead Works*, and the Pollution of them. If one would take notice of the Traditions of the Elders, there are two which are mentioned by many of the ancient Writers concerning this Place. (1.) That *Adam* was bury'd here, and that this was the Place of *his Skull*, and they obſerve that there where Death triumphed over the firſt *Adam*, there the ſecond *Adam* triumphed over him. *Gerhard* quotes for this Tradition, *Origen, Cyprian, Epiphanius, Auſtin, Jerom* and others. (2.) That this was that Mountain in the Land of *Moriah*, on which *Abraham* offer'd up *Iſaac*, and the Ram was a Ranſom for *Iſaac*.

4. There they *crucified* him, and the other Malefactors with him; *v.* 18. *There they crucified him.* Obſerve, 1. What Death Chriſt died; the Death of the Croſs, a bloody, painful, ſhameful Death, a curſed Death. He was *nailed* to the Croſs, as a Sacrifice *bound* to the Altar, as a Saviour *fix'd* for his Undertaking; his Ear nail'd to God's Door-Poſt to ſerve him for ever. He was lifted up as the Brazen Serpent hung between Heaven and Earth, becauſe we were unworthy of either, and abandon'd by both. His Hands ſtretched out to invite and embrace us; he hung upon the Tree ſome Hours dying *gradually* in the full Uſe of Reaſon and Speech, that he might actually reſign himſelf a Sacrifice. 2. In what Company he died; *two other with him.* Probably thoſe had not been executed at that time, but at the Requeſt of the Chief Prieſts to add to the Diſgrace of our Lord Jeſus; which might be the Reaſon why one of them reviled him, becauſe their Death was haſten'd for his ſake. Had they taken two of his Diſciples, and crucified them with him, it had been an Honour to him; but if ſuch as they had been *Partakers with him* in Suffering, 'twould have look'd as if they had been *Undertakers with him in Satisfaction*: Therefore it was order'd that his Fellow-ſufferers ſhould be the worſt of Sinners, that he might *bear our Reproach*, and that the Merit might appear to be his only. This expoſed him much to be the People's Contempt and Hatred, who are apt to judge of Perſons by the Lump, and are not curious in diſtinguiſhing, and would conclude him not only a *Malefactor* becauſe he was yoak'd with Malefactors, but the worſt of the Three, becauſe put in the midſt. But thus the Scripture was fulfilled, *He was number'd among the Tranſgreſſors.* He did not die at the Altar among the Sacrifices, nor mingle his Blood with that of Bulls and Goats; but he dy'd among the Criminals, and mingled his Blood with theirs who were ſacrificed to publick Juſtice.

And now let us pauſe a while, and with an Eye of Faith look upon Jeſus; Was ever Sorrow like unto his Sorrow? See him who was cloathed with Glory ſtript of it all, and cloathed with Shame; him who was the *Praiſe of Angels*, made a *Reproach of Men*; who had been with eternal Delight and Joy in the Boſom of his Father, now in the Extremities of Pain and Agony. See him bleeding, ſee him ſtruggling, ſee him dying, ſee him and love him, love him and live to him, and ſtudy what we ſhall render.

19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the croſs. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jeſus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, *and* Greek, *and* Latin. 21 Then ſaid the chief prieſts of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The king of the Jews; but that he ſaid, I am king of the Jews. 22 Pilate anſwered, What I have written, I have written. 23 Then the ſouldiers, when they had crucified Jeſus, took his garments (and made four parts, to every ſouldier a part) and alſo *his* coat: now the coat was without ſeam; woven from the top throughout. 24 They ſaid therefore among themſelves, Let us not rent it, but caſt lots for it, whoſe it ſhall be: that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, which ſaith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my veſture they did caſt lots. Theſe things therefore the ſouldiers did. 25 Now there ſtood by the croſs of Jeſus, his mother, and his mothers ſiſter, Mary *the wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jeſus therefore ſaw his mother; and the diſciple ſtanding by, whom he loved, he ſaith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy ſon. 27 Then ſaith he to the diſciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that diſciple took her unto his own *home.* 28 After this, Jeſus knowing that all things were now accompliſhed, that the ſcripture might be fulfilled, ſaith, I thirſt. 29 Now there was ſet a veſſel full of vinegar: and they filled a ſpunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyſſop, and put it to his mouth. 30 When Jeſus therefore had received the vinegar, he ſaid, It is finiſhed: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghoſt.

Here are ſome remarkable Circumſtances of Chriſt's dying more fully related than before, which they will take ſpecial Notice of who covet to know Chriſt, and him crucified.

Firſt, The *Title* ſet up over his Head. Obſerve,

1. The *Inſcription* it ſelf which *Pilate* wrote, and order'd to be fix'd to the Top of the Croſs, declaring the Cauſe for which he was crucify'd, *v.* 19. *Matthew* called it, αἰτία, the *Accuſation*; *Mark* and *Luke* called it, ἐπιγραφὴ, the *Inſcription*; *John* calls it by the proper *Latin* Name, τίτλος, the *Title*: And it was this, *Jeſus of* Nazareth, *the King of the Jews.* *Pilate* intended this for his Reproach, that he being *Jeſus* of *Nazareth* ſhould pretend to be King of the *Jews*, and ſet up in Competition with *Cæſar*, to whom *Pilate* would thus recommend himſelf, as very jealous for his Honour and Intereſt, when he would treat but a *Titular* King, a King in Metaphor, as the worſt of Malefactors; but God over-ruled this matter. (1.) That it might be a further Teſtimony to the Innocency of our Lord Jeſus; for here was an Accuſation, which as it was worded contained no Crime. If this be *that*, if this be *all* they have to lay to his Charge, ſurely he has done nothing worthy of Death or of Bonds. (2.) That it might ſhew forth his Dignity and Honour. This is *Jeſus* a Saviour, Ναζωραῖος, the *Bleſſed Nazarite*, ſanctified to God; this is the *King of the Jews*, *Meſſiah the Prince*, the *Sceptre* that *ſhould riſe out of* Iſrael, as *Balaam* had foretold; *dying* for the good of his People, as *Caiaphas* had foretold: Thus all theſe three ill Men witneſſed to Chriſt, tho they *meant not ſo.*

2. The Notice taken of this Inſcription, *v.* 20. *Many of the Jews read it*, not only thoſe of *Jeruſalem*, but thoſe out of the Country, and from other Countries, Strangers and Proſelytes that came up to worſhip at the Feaſt: Multitudes read it, and it occaſioned a great Variety of Reflections and Speculations, as Men ſtood affected. Chriſt himſelf was ſet for a *Sign*, a *Title.*

Here are two Reaſons why the Title was ſo much read.

(1.) Becauſe the Place where Jeſus was crucified, tho' without the Gate, yet was *nigh the City*; which intimates, that if it had been of any great Diſtance off they would not have been led, no not by their Curioſity to go ſee it, and read it. 'Tis an Advantage to have the Means of knowing Chriſt brought to our Doors.

(2.) Becauſe it was written in *Hebrew*, and *Greek*, and *Latin*, which made it legible by all, they all underſtand one or other of theſe Languages, and none more careful to bring up their Children to *read* than the *Jews* generally were. It likewiſe made it the more *conſiderable*; every one would be curious to enquire what it was which was ſo induſtriouſly publiſhed in the three moſt known Languages. In the *Hebrew*, the Oracles of God were recorded; In *Greek*, the Learning of the Philoſophers; And, in *Latin*, the Laws of the Empire: In each of theſe Chriſt is proclaimed King, in whom are hid all the Treaſures of *Revelation*, *Wiſdom*, and *Power.* God ſo ordering it that this ſhould be written in the three then moſt known Tongues, 'twas intimated thereby, that Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be a *Saviour to all Nations*, and not to the *Jews* only; and alſo that every Nation ſhould hear *in their own Tongue the wonderful Works* of the Redeemer. *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin*, were the vulgar Languages at that time in this Part of the World; ſo that this is ſo far from intimating (as the Papiſts would have it) that the Scripture is ſtill to be retained in theſe three Languages, that on the contrary it teaches us that the Knowledge of Chriſt ought to be diffuſed throughout every Nation *in their own Tongue*, as the *proper Vehicle of it*, that People may converſe as freely with the Scriptures, as they do with their Neighbours.

3. The Offence which the Proſecutors took at it, *v.* 21. They would not have it written, *The King of the Jews*; but that he ſaid of himſelf, *I am the King of the Jews.* Here they ſhew themſelves, (1.) Very *ſpiteful* and *malicious* againſt Chriſt. 'Twas not enough to have *him* crucified, but they muſt have his *Name* crucified too, to juſtify themſelves in giving him ſuch ill Treatment; they thought themſelves concerned to give him an ill Character, and to repreſent him as an Uſurper of Honours and Powers that he was not intitled to. (2.) Fooliſhly *jealous* of the Honour of their Nation, tho' they were a conquer'd and enſlaved People; yet they ſtood ſo much upon the punctilio of their Reputation, that they ſcorned to have it ſaid, That this was their King. (3.) They ſhew themſelves very impertinent and troubleſome to *Pilate*; they could not but be ſenſible that they had forced him againſt his Mind to *condemn* Chriſt; and yet in ſuch a trivial Thing as this they continue to teaze him: And it was ſo much the worſe, in that tho' they had charged him with pretending to be the *King of the Jews*, yet they had not proved it, nor had he ever ſaid ſo.

4. The Judge's Reſolution to adhere to it. *What I have written I have written*, and will not alter it to humour them.

1. Hereby an Affront was put upon the chief Prieſts who would ſtill be *dictating.* It ſeems by *Pilate*'s manner of ſpeaking, that he was *uneaſy* in himſelf for yielding to them, and vex'd at them for forcing him to it; and therefore he was reſolved to be *croſs* with them. And by this Inſcription inſinuates, (1.) That notwithſtanding their Pretences, they were not ſincere in their Affections to *Cæſar* and his Government; they were willing enough to have a *King of the Jews*, if they could have one to their mind. (2.) That ſuch a King as this, ſo mean and deſpicable, was *good enough* to be the King of the *Jews*; and this would be the Fate of all that ſhould dare to oppoſe the *Roman* Power. (3.) That they had been very unjuſt and unreaſonable in proſecuting this Jeſus, when there was *no Fault to be found in him*,

2. Hereby Honour was done to the Lord Jeſus. *Pilate* ſtuck to it with Reſolution, that *he was King of the Jews*; what he had *written* was what God had firſt *written*, and therefore he could not alter: For thus it was written, That *Meſſias the Prince ſhall be cut off*, Dan. 9. 26. This therefore is the true *Cauſe* of his Death. He dies, becauſe the King of *Iſrael* muſt die, muſt *thus* die. When the *Jews* reject Chriſt, and will not have him for their King, *Pilate* a *Gentile*, ſticks to it that he is a King; which was an Earneſt of what came to paſs ſoon after, when the *Gentiles* ſubmitted to the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, which the unbelieving *Jews* had rebelled againſt.

Secondly, The dividing of his Garments among the Executioners, *v.* 23, 24. Four Soldiers were employed, who when they had *crucified Jeſus*, had nailed him to the Croſs, and lifted it up and him upon it, and nothing more was to be done but to wait his expiring through the Extremity of Pain, as with us when the Priſoner is *turned off*; then they went to make a Dividend of his Clothes, each claiming an equal Share; and ſo they *made four Parts*, as near of the ſame Value as they could, to every Soldier a Part: But his *Coat*, or upper Garment, whether Cloak or Gown, being a pretty Piece of Curioſity, without Seam, *woven from the Top throughout*, they agreed to *caſt Lots* for that. Here obſerve,

1. The Shame they put upon our Lord Jeſus in *ſtripping* him of his Garments before they crucified him. The Shame of Nakedneſs came in with Sin. He therefore who was made Sin for us bare that Shame, to roll away our Reproach. He was ſtripp'd that we might be cloathed with white Raiment, *Rev.* 3. 18. and that when we are *uncloathed* we may not be *found naked*.

2. The Wages with which theſe Soldiers paid themſelves for crucifying Chriſt. They were willing to do it for his old Cloaths. Nothing is to be done ſo *ill*, but there will be found Men ill enough to do it for a Trifle. Probably they hoped to make more than ordinary Advantage of his Cloaths, having heard of Cures wrought by the Touch of the Hem of his Garment; or expecting that his Admirers would give any Money for them.

3. The Sport they made about his *ſeamleſs Coat*, we read not of any thing about him valuable or remarkable but that, and that not for the *Richneſs*, but only the *Variety* of it, for it was *woven from the Top throughout*; no Curioſity therefore in the Shape, but an affected Plainneſs. Tradition ſaith his Mother wove it him, and adds this further, that it was made for him when he was a Child; and like the *Iſraelites* Cloaths in the Wilderneſs *waxed not old*: But that's a groundleſs Fancy. The Souldiers thought it pity to *rent it*, for then 'twould unravel, and a piece of it would be good for nothing; they would therefore *caſt Lots for it*. While Chriſt was in his dying Agonies, they were merrily *dividing his Spoils*.

The preſerving of Chriſt's *Seamleſs Coat* is commonly alluded to, to ſhew the Care all Chriſtians ought to take that they rend not the Church of Chriſt with Strifes and Diviſions; yet ſome have obſerved, that the Reaſon why the Soldiers would not rend Chriſt's Coat, was not out of any Reſpect to Chriſt, but becauſe each of them hoped to have it entire for themſelves: And ſo many cry out againſt Schiſm only that they may engroſs all the Wealth and Power to themſelves. Thoſe who oppoſed *Luther*'s Separation from the Church of *Rome*, urged much the *Tunica inconſutilis*, the *Seamleſs Coat*; and ſome of them laid ſo much ſtreſs upon it, that they were called the *Inconſutiliſtæ*.

4. The fulfilling of the Scripture in this. *David* in Spirit foretold this very Circumſtance of Chriſt's Sufferings in that Paſſion. *Pſ.* 22. The Event ſo exactly anſwering the Prediction, proves, (1.) That the Scriptures is the Word of God which foretold contingent Events concerning Chriſt ſo long before, and they came to paſs according to the Prediction. (2.) That *Jeſus* is the true *Meſſias*; for in him all the old Teſtament Prophecies concerning the *Meſſias* had and have their full Accompliſhments. *Theſe Things therefore the Soldiers did.*

Thirdly, The Care that he took of his poor Mother.

1. His Mother attends him to his Death, *v.* 25. Theſe *ſtood by the Croſs* as near as they could get, *his Mother*, and ſome of his Relations and Friends with her. At firſt they ſtood near, as 'tis ſaid here; but 'tis probable afterwards the Soldiers forced them to *ſtand afar off*, as it is ſaid in *Matthew and Mark*, or they themſelves removed out of the Ground.

(1.) See here the tender Affection of this pious Woman to our Lord Jeſus in his Sufferings: When all his Diſciples, except *John*, had forſaken him, they continued their Attendance on him. Thus the *Feeble* were as *David*, *Zech.* 12. 8. they were not deterred by the Fury of the Enemy, or the Horror of the Sight. They would not reſcue him, or relieve him, yet they attended him to ſhew their good Will. It is an impious and blaſphemous Conſtruction which ſome of the Popiſh Writers put upon the Virgin *Mary* ſtanding by the Croſs, that thereby *ſhe* contributed to the Satisfaction he made for Sin no leſs than *he did*, and to become a *Joint-Mediatrix* and *Coadjutrix* in our Salvation.

(2.) We muſt eaſily ſuppoſe what an Affliction it was to thoſe poor Women to ſee him thus abuſed, eſpecially to the Bleſſed Virgin. Now was fulfilled *Simeon*'s Word, *a Sword ſhall pierce through thine own Soul*, Luke 2. 35. His Torments were her Tortures; ſhe was upon the Rack while he was upon the Croſs, and her Heart bled with his Wounds, and the Reproaches wherewith they reproached him fell on them that attended him.

(3.) We may juſtly admire the Power of Divine Grace in ſupporting theſe Women, eſpecially the Virgin *Mary*, under this heavy Trial. We do not find his Mother wringing her Hands, or tearing her Hair, or rending her Cloaths, or making an Out-cry; but with a wonderful Compoſure *ſtanding by the Croſs*, and her Friends with her. Surely ſhe and they were ſtrengthen'd by a Divine Power to this Degree of Patience: And ſurely the Virgin *Mary* had a fuller Expectation of his Reſurrection than the reſt had, which ſupported her thus. We know not what we can bear till we are try'd, and then we know who has ſaid, *My Grace is ſufficient for thee.*

2. He tenderly provides for his Mother at his Death. 'Tis probable *Joſeph* her Husband was long ſince dead, and that her Son Jeſus had ſupported her, and her Relation to him had been her Maintenance. And now he was dying, what would become of her? He *ſaw her ſtanding by*, and knew her Cares and Griefs; and he ſaw *John* ſtanding not far off, and ſo he ſettled a new Relation between his beloved Mother, and his beloved Diſciple: For he ſaid to her, *Woman, behold thy Son*, for whom henceforward thou muſt have a motherly Affection; and to him, *behold thy Mother*, to whom thou muſt pay a filial Duty; And ſo, *from that Hour*, that Hour never to be forgotten, *that Diſciple took her to his own Home.* See here,

1. The *Care Chriſt took* of his *dear Mother*. He was not ſo much taken up with a Senſe of his Sufferings as to forget his Friends: All whoſe Concerns he bore upon his Heart. His Mother perhaps was ſo taken up with his Sufferings, that ſhe thought not what would *become* of her; but he admitted that Thought. Silver and Gold he had none to leave, no Eſtate, real or perſonal, his Cloaths the Soldiers had ſeiz'd, and we hear no more of *the Bag*, ſince *Judas* that had carry'd it, hanged himſelf. He had therefore no other way to provide for his Mother but by his Intereſt in a Friend, which he doth here.

(1.) He calls her *Woman*, not Mother, not out of any Diſreſpect to her, but becauſe *Mother* would have been a cutting Word to her that was already wounded to the Heart with Grief: Like *Iſaac* ſaying to *Abraham*, *My Father*. He ſpeaks as one that was now no more in this World, but was already dead to thoſe in it that were deareſt to him. His ſpeaking in this ſeemingly ſlight manner to his Mother as he had done formerly, was deſigned to obviate and give check to the undue Honours which he foreſaw would be given her in the *Romiſh* Church, as if ſhe were a *Joint-Purchaſer* with him in the Honours of the Redeemer.

(2.) He directs her to look upon *John* as her Son; *Behold him as thy Son* who ſtands there by thee, and be as a Mother to him. See here, (1.) An Inſtance of Divine Goodneſs to be obſerved for our Encouragement. Sometimes when God removes one Comfort from us, he raiſeth up another for us, perhaps there where we looked not for it. We read of *Children* which the Church ſhall have after ſhe has loſt the other, *Iſa.* 49. 21. Let none therefore reckon all gone with one Ciſtern dried up; for from the ſame Fountain another may be filled. (2.) An Inſtance of filial Duty to be obſerved for our Imitation. Chriſt has here taught Children to the utmoſt of their Power to provide for the Comfort of their aged Parents. When *David* was in Diſtreſs he took care of his Parents, and found out a Shelter for them, 1 *Sam.* 22. 3. So *the Son of David* here. Children at their Death, according to their Ability, ſhould provide for their Parents if they ſurvive them, and need their Kindneſs.

2. The *Confidence* he *repoſed* in the *beloved Diſciple*. 'Tis to him he ſaith, *Behold thy Mother*; *i. e.* I recommend her to thy Care, be thou as a *Son* to her, to *guide* her, *Iſa.* 51. 18. and not to forſake her when ſhe is old, *Prov.* 23. 22. Now, 1. This was an Honour put upon *John*, and a Teſtimony both to his Prudence, and to his Fidelity. If he who knows all things had not known that *John* loved him, he would not have made him his *Mother's Guardian*. It is a great Honour to be employed for Chriſt, and to be truſted with any of his Intereſt in the World. But, 2. It would be a Care and ſome Charge to *John*; but he chearfully accepted it, and *took her to his own Home*, not objecting the Trouble or Expence, or his Obligations to his own Family, or the Ill-will he might contract by it. *Note*, Thoſe that truly love Chriſt, and are loved of him, will be glad of an Opportunity to do any Service to him or his. *Nicephoras*'s *Eccl. Hiſt. l.* 2. *c.* 3. ſaith, That the Virgin *Mary* lived with *John* at *Jeruſalem* eleven Years, and then died. Others, that ſhe lived to remove with him to *Epheſus*.

Fourthly, The fulfilling of the Scripture in the giving of him Vinegar to drink, *v.* 28, 29. Obſerve,

(1.) How much Reſpect Chriſt ſhewed to the Scripture, *v.* 28. *Knowing that all things* hitherto *were accompliſhed*, that the Scripture might be fulfilled which ſpake of his drinking in his Sufferings, he ſaith, *I thirſt*; that is, he called for Drink.

1. It was not at all ſtrange that he was *thirſty*. We find him thirſty in a Journey, *John* 4. 6, 7. and now thirſty when he was juſt at his *Journey's End*. Well might he thirſt, after all the Toil and Hurry which he had undergone; and being now in the Agonies of Death, ready to expire purely by the Loſs of Blood, and Extremity of Pain. The Torments of Hell are repreſented by a violent Thirſt in the Complaint of the rich Man that begg'd for a *Drop of Water* to cool his Tongue. To hat everlaſting Thirſt we had been condemned, had not Chriſt ſuffered for us.

2. But the Reaſon of his complaining of it is ſomewhat ſurprizing; 'tis the only Word he ſpoke that looked like Complaint of his outward Sufferings. When they ſcourged him, and crowned him with Thorns, he did not cry, O my Head, or my Back; but now he cried, *I thirſt*. For, (1.) He would thus expreſs the *Travail of his Soul*, Iſa. 53. 11. He thirſted after the Glorifying of God, and the Accompliſhment of the Work of our Redemption, and the happy Iſſue of his Undertaking. (2.) He would thus take care to ſee the Scripture fulfilled. Hitherto all had been accompliſhed, and he *knew* it; for this was the Thing he had carefully obſerved all along. And now he called to mind one Thing more which this was the proper Seaſon for the Performance of. By this it appears, he was the *Meſſiah*, in that not only the Scripture was punctually *fulfilled in him*, but it was ſtrictly *eyed by him*. But this it appears, that God was with him of a Truth; that in all he did he went exactly according to the Word of God, taking care not to deſtroy, but to fulfill the Law and the Prophets.

Now, 1. The Scripture has foretold his Thirſt, and therefore he himſelf related it, becauſe it could not otherwiſe be known, ſaying, *I thirſt*; 'twas foretold, that *his Tongue ſhould cleave to his Jaws*, Pſal. 22. 15. *Sampſon*, an eminent Type of Chriſt, when he was laying the *Philiſtines* Heaps upon Heaps, was himſelf *ſore a-thirſt*, Judg. 15. 18. ſo was Chriſt when he was upon the Croſs, *ſpoiling Principalities and Powers*.

2. The Scripture had foretold, that *in his Thirſt* he ſhould have *Vinegar given him to drink*, Pſal. 69. 21. They had given him Vinegar to drink before they crucified him, *Mat.* 27. 34. But the Prophecy was not exactly fulfilled in that, becauſe that was not *in his Thirſt*, therefore now he ſaid, *I thirſt*, and called for it again, then he *would not drink*, but now he *received it*. Chriſt would rather court an Affront, than ſee any Prophecy unfulfilled. This ſhould ſatisfy us under all our Trials, that the Will of God is done, and the Word of God accompliſhed.

(2.) See how little Reſpect his Perſecutors ſhewed to him, *v.* 20. *There was ſet a Veſſel full of Vinegar*, probably according to the Cuſtom at all Executions of this Nature; or as others think, it was now ſet deſignedly for an Abuſe to Chriſt inſtead of the Cup of Wine, which they uſed to give to them that were *ready to periſh*. With that they *filled a Spunge*, for they would not allow him a Cup, and they *put it upon a Hyſſop*, an Hyſſop-Stalk, and with that heav'd it to his Mouth, ὑσσώπῳ περιθέντες, they *ſhuck it round with Hyſſop*, ſo it may be taken; or as others, they mingled it with Hyſſop-water, and this they gave him *to drink*, when he was thirſty; a *Drop of Water* would have cooled his Tongue better than a Draught of Vinegar, yet this he ſubmitted to for us; he had taken the ſour Grapes, and thus his Teeth were ſet on edge; we had forfeited all Comforts and Refreſhments, and therefore they were withheld from him; when Heaven denied him a *Beam of Light*, Earth denied him a *Drop of Water*, and put Vinegar in the room of it.

Fifthly, The dying Word wherewith he breath'd out his Soul, *v.* 30. *When he had received the Vinegar*, as much of it as he thought fit, *he ſaid, It is finiſhed*, and with that, *bowed his Head, and gave up the Ghoſt*. Obſerve,

1. What he ſaid, and we may ſuppoſe him to ſay it with Triumph and Exultation, τετελέσαι, *It is finiſhed*, a comprehenſive Word, and a comfortable one.

(1.) *It is finiſhed*; that is, the Malice and Enmity of his Perſecutors had now done its worſt; *when he had received* that laſt Indignity in *the Vinegar* they gave him, he ſaid, This is *the laſt*, I am now going out of their Reach, where *the Wicked ceaſe from troubling*.

(2.) *It is finiſhed*, i. e. The Counſel and Commandment of his Father concerning his Sufferings was now fulfilled; 'twas a *determinate Counſel*, and he took Care to ſee every *Iota* and Tittle of it exactly anſwered, *Acts* 2. 23. He had ſaid when he enter'd upon his Sufferings, *Father, thy Will be done*, and now he ſaith with Pleaſure, *It is done*. 'Twas his *Meat and Drink to finiſh his Work*, John 4. 34. and the Meat and Drink refreſhed him, when they gave him Gall and Vinegar.

(3.) *It is finiſhed*, i. e. all the Types and Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, which pointed at the Sufferings of the Meſſiah were accompliſhed and anſwered. He ſpeaks as if now they had given him the *Vinegar*, he could not *bethink himſelf* of any Word in the Old Teſtament that was to be fulfilled betwixt him and his Death, but it had its Accompliſhment, *e. g.* His being ſold for 30 Pieces of Silver; his Hands and Feet pierced, his Garments divided, *&c.* And now this is done, *It is finiſhed*.

(4.) *It is finiſhed*, i. e. The *Ceremonial Law* is aboliſhed, and a Period put to the Obligation of it. The Subſtance is now come, and all the Shadows are done away. Juſt now the *Veil is rent*, the Wall of Partition is taken down, even the *Law of Commandments* contained in Ordinances, *Epheſ.* 2. 14, 15. The *Moſaick* Oeconomy is diſſolved to make way for a better Hope.

(5.) *It is finiſhed*, i. e. Sin is finiſhed, and an End made of Tranſgreſſion, by the *bringing in of an everlaſting Righteouſneſs*. It ſeems to refer to *Dan.* 9. 24. The *Lamb of God* was ſacrificed to *take away the Sin of the World*, and it is done, *Heb.* 9. 26.

(6.) *It is finiſhed*, i. e. His *Sufferings* were now finiſhed, both thoſe of his Soul and thoſe of his Body; the Storm is over, the worſt is paſt; all his Pains and Agonies are at an end, and he is juſt going to Paradiſe, entring upon the Joy ſet before him. Let all that ſuffer for Chriſt, and with Chriſt, comfort themſelves with this, that yet a little while, and they alſo ſhall ſay, *It is finiſhed*.

(7.) *It is finiſhed*, i. e. his Life was now finiſhed, he was juſt ready to breathe his laſt, and *now he is no more in this World*, John 17. 11. This is like that of bleſſed *Paul*, 2 Tim. 4. 7. *I have finiſhed my Courſe*, my Race is run, my Glaſs is out, *Mene, mene, number'd* and *finiſhed*. This we muſt all come to ſhortly.

(8.) *It is finiſhed*, i. e. The Work of Man's Redemption and Salvation is now compleated, at leaſt the hardeſt part of the Undertaking is over. A *full* Satisfaction is made to the Juſtice of God; a fatal Blow given to the Power of Satan; a Fountain of Grace opened that ſhall ever flow; a Fountain of Peace and Happineſs laid that ſhall never fail. Chriſt had now gone through with his Work, and finiſhed it, *John* 17. 4. For *as for God his Work is perfect, when I begin* (ſaith he) *I will alſo make an End*. And as in the Purchaſe, ſo in the Application of the Redemption, *he that has begun a good Work will perform it*; the Myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed.

2. What he did, he *bowed his Head and gave up the Ghoſt*. He was voluntary in dying; for he was not only the Sacrifice, but the Prieſt and the Offerer, and the *Animus Offerenti* was all in all in the Sacrifice: Chriſt ſhew'd his Will in his Sufferings, *by the which Will we are ſanctified*.

1. He *gave up the Ghoſt*. His Life was not *forcibly extorted* from him, but *freely reſigned*. He had ſaid, *Father, into thy Hands I commit my Spirit*; thereby expreſſing the Intention of this Act. I give up my ſelf as a Ranſom for many; and accordingly he did *give up* his Spirit, paid down the Price of Pardon and Life at his Father's Hands: *Father, glorify thy Name*.

2. He *bowed his Head*. They that were crucified, in dying ſtretched up their Heads to gaſp for Breath, and did not drop their Heads till they had breathed their laſt; but Chriſt, to ſhew himſelf active in dying, bowed his Head firſt, compoſing himſelf as it were to fall aſleep. God had *laid upon him the Iniquity of us all*, putting them upon the Head of this Great Sacrifice; and ſome think by this bowing of his Head, he would intimate his Senſe of the Weight upon him: See *Pſal.* 38. 4. & 40. 12. The bowing of his Head ſhews his Submiſſion to his *Father's Will*, and his *Obedience to Death*. He accommodated himſelf to his dying Work as *Jacob*, who gathered up his Feet to the Bed, and then *yielded up the Ghoſt*.

31 The Jews therefore, becauſe it was the preparation, that the bodies ſhould not remain upon the croſs on the ſabbath-day, (for that ſabbath-day was an high-day) beſought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. 32 Then came the ſoldiers and brake the legs of the firſt, and of the other which was crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jeſus, and ſaw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. 34 But one of the ſoldiers with a ſpear pierced his ſide, and forthwith came there out blood and water. 35 And he that ſaw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he ſaith true, that ye might believe. 36 For theſe things were done that the ſcripture ſhould be fulfilled, A bone of him ſhall not be broken. 37 And again another ſcripture ſaith, They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced.

This Paſſage concerning the *piercing of Chriſt's Side* after his Death, is recorded only by this Evangeliſt.

Firſt, Obſerve the *Superſtition of the Jews* which occaſioned it, *v.* 31. *Becauſe it was the Preparation for the Sabbath, and that Sabbath-day*, becauſe it fell in the Paſſover-Week, *was a High-day*, that they might ſhew a Veneration for the Sabbath, would not have the dead Bodies *to remain* on the Croſſes *on the Sabbath-day*, but beſought *Pilate* that their *Legs* might be *broke*, which would be a certain but cruel Diſpatch, and that then they might be buried out of ſight.

Note here, 1. The Eſteem they would be thought to have for the approaching Sabbath, becauſe it was one of the Days of unleavened Bread, and (ſome reckon) the Day of the Offering of the Firſt-Fruits. Every Sabbath-Day is a Holy Day, and a Good Day; but this was a High Day, μεγάλη ἡμέρα, a *Great Day*. Paſſover-Sabbaths are High Days, Sacrament Days, Supper Days, Communion Days are High Days, and there ought to be more than ordinary Preparation for them; that theſe may be High Days indeed to us, as the *Days of Heaven*.

2. The Reproach which they reckoned it would be to that Day, if the dead Bodies ſhould be left hanging upon the Croſs. Dead Bodies were not to be left any time, *Deut.* 21. 23. yet in this Caſe the *Jews* would have left the *Roman* Cuſtom to take place, had it not been an extraordinary Day, and many Strangers from all Parts being then at *Jeruſalem* it would have been an Offence to them. Nor could they well bear the Sight of Chriſt's crucified Body; for unleſs their Conſciences were quite ſear'd when the Heat of their Rage was a little over, they would upbraid them.

3. Their Petition to *Pilate*, that their Bodies now as good as dead might be *diſpatched*; not by ſtrangling or beheading them, which would have been a compaſſionate haſtening them out of their Miſery, like the *Coup de Grace* (as the *French* call it) to them that are broke upon the Wheel, the Stroke of Mercy, but by the *breaking of their Legs*, which would carry them off in the more exquiſite Pain. *Note*, (1.) The *tender Mercies of the wicked are cruel*. (2.) The pretended Sanctity of Hypocrites is abominable. Theſe *Jews* would be thought to bear a great Regard to the Sabbath, and yet had no Regard to Juſtice and Righteouſneſs; they made no Conſcience of bringing an innocent and excellent Perſon to the Croſs, and yet ſcrupled letting a dead Body hang upon the Croſs.

Secondly, The *Diſpatch* of the two Thieves that were crucified with him, *v.* 32. *Pilate* was ſtill gratifying the *Jews*, and gave Orders as they deſired. And the Soldiers *came* hardned againſt all Impreſſions of Piety, and *broke the Legs* of the two Thieves, which no doubt extorted from them hideous Outcries, and made them die according to the bloody Diſpoſition of *Nero*, ſo as to *feel themſelves die*. One of theſe Thieves was a Penitent, and had received from Chriſt an Aſſurance that he ſhould ſhortly be with him in Paradiſe, and yet died in the ſame Pain and Miſery that the other Thief did, for all Things come alike to all. Many go to Heaven that have *Bands in their Death,* and die in *the Bitterneſs of their Soul.* The Extremity of dying Agonies, is no Obſtruction to the living Comforts that wait for holy Souls on t'other ſide Death. Chriſt died, and went to Paradiſe, but appointed a Guard to convey him thither. This is the Order of going to Heaven, *Chriſt the Firſt-Fruits,* and Fore-runner, *afterwards they that are Chriſt's.*

Thirdly, The Trial that was made whether Chriſt was dead or no, and the putting of it out of doubt.

1. They ſuppoſed him to be dead, and therefore *did not break his Legs, v.* 33. Obſerve here, 1. That Jeſus died in leſs Time than Peſons crucified ordinarily did. The Structure of his Body perhaps being extraordinary fine and tender, was the ſooner broke by Pain; or rather, it was to ſhew that he laid down his Life of himſelf, and could die when he pleaſed, tho' his Hands were nailed. Tho' he yielded to Death, yet he was not conquer'd. 2. That his Enemies were ſatisfied he was really dead. The *Jews* who ſtood by to ſee the Execution effectually done, would not have balked this piece of Cruelty if they had not been ſure he was got out of the Reach of it. 3. Whatever Devices are in Men's Hearts, the Counſel of the Lord ſhall ſtand. 'Twas fully deſigned to break his Legs, but God's Counſel being otherwiſe, ſee how it was prevented.

2. Becauſe they would be ſure he was dead, they made ſuch an Experiment as would put it paſt Diſpute; *One of the Soldiers, with a Spear pierced his Side,* aiming at his Heart, *and forthwith came there out Blood and Water, v.* 34.

1. The Soldiers hereby deſigned to *decide* the Queſtion whether he was dead or no, and by this honourable Wound in his Side, to *ſuperſede* the ignominious Method of Diſpatch they took with the other two. Tradition ſaith, this Soldier's Name was *Longinus,* and that having ſome Diſtemper in his Eyes, he was immediately cured of it by ſome Drops of Blood that flowed out of Chriſt's Side lighting on them. Significant enough, if we had any good Authority for the Story.

2. But God had a further Deſign herein; which was,

1. To give *an Evidence of the Truth of his Death,* in order to the Proof of his Reſurrection. If he was only in a Trance or Swoon, his Reſurrection was a ſham, but by this Experiment he was certainly dead, for this Spear broke up the very Fountains of Life, and according to all the Law, and Courſe of Nature, 'twas impoſſible a Human Body ſhould ſurvive ſuch a Wound as this in the Vitals, and ſuch an Evacuation thence.

2. To give an *Illuſtration of the Deſign of his Death.* There was much of Myſtery in it, and its being ſo ſolemnly atteſted, *v.* 35. intimates, there was ſomething miraculous in it, that the *Blood* and *Water* ſhould come out diſtinct and ſeparate from the ſame Wound; however, that was very ſignificant. This ſame Apoſtle refers to it as a very conſiderable Thing, 1 *John* 5. 6, 8.

1. The *opening of his Side* was ſignificant. When we would proteſt our Sincerity, we wiſh there were a Window in our Hearts, that the Thoughts and Intentions of them might be viſible to all. Thro' this Window opened in Chriſt's Side, you may look into his Heart and ſee Love flaming there, Love *ſtrong as Death.* See our own Names written there. Some make it an Alluſion to the opening of *Adam*'s Side in Innocency: When Chriſt, the ſecond *Adam* was fallen into a deep Sleep upon the Croſs, then was his Side opened, and out of it was his Church taken which he eſpouſed to himſelf; ſee *Eph.* 5. 30, 32. Our devout Poet, Mr. *George Herbert,* in his Poem called *the Bag,* very affectingly brings in our Saviour, when his Side was pierced, thus ſpeaking to his Diſciples;

If ye have any Thing to ſend, or write,
(I have no Bag, but here is room)
Unto my Father's Hands, and Sight
(Believe me) it ſhall ſafely come.
That I ſhall mind what you impart,
Look, you may put it very near my Heart,
Or if hereafter any of my Friends,
Will uſe me in this Kind, the Door
Shall ſtill be open; what he ſends
I will preſent, and ſomewhat more,
Not to his Hurt. Sighs will convey
Any Thing to me. Heark, Deſpair away.

2. The *Blood* and *Water* that flowed out of it were ſignificant.

1. They ſignified the two great Benefits which all Believers partake of through Chriſt, *Juſtification* and *Sanctification.* Blood for Remiſſion, Water for Regeneration; Blood for Atonement, Water for Purification. Blood and Water were uſed very much under the Law. Guilt contracted muſt be expiated by Blood; Stains contracted muſt be done away by the Water of Purification. Theſe Two muſt always go together, *Ye are ſanctified, ye are juſtified,* 1 Cor. 6. 11. Chriſt has joined them together, and we muſt not think to put them aſunder. They both flow from the pierced Side of our Redeemer. To Chriſt crucified we owe both Merit for our Juſtification, and Spirit, and Grace for our Sanctification; and we have as much need of the latter as of the former, 1 *Cor.* 1. 30.

2. They ſignified the two great Ordinances of Baptiſm and the Lord's Supper, by which thoſe Benefits are repreſented, ſealed, and applied to Believers, they both owe their Inſtitution and Efficacy to Chriſt. 'Tis not the Water in the Font that will be to us the Waſhing of Regeneration, but the Water out of the Side of Chriſt; not the Blood of the Grape that will pacify the Conſcience, and refreſh the Soul, but the Blood out of the Side of Chriſt. Now was the *Rock ſmitten,* 1 Cor. 10. 4. Now was the *Fountain opened,* Zech. 13. 1. Now were the *Wells of Salvation digg'd,* Iſa. 12. 3. Here's the *River,* the Streams *whereof make glad the City of our God.*

Fourthly, The Atteſtation of the Truth of this by an Eye-witneſs, *v.* 35. the Evangeliſt himſelf. Obſerve,

1. What a *competent Witneſs* he was of the Matters of Fact. (1.) What he *bare Record* of he *ſaw*; he had it not by Hear-ſay, nor was it only his own Conjecture, but he was an *Eye-witneſs* of it; 'tis what we have *ſeen* and *looked upon,* 1 *John* 1. 1. 2 *Pet.* 1. 16. and had *perfect Underſtanding of,* Luke 1. 3. (2) What he ſaw he *faithfully bare Record of.* As a faithful Witneſs he told not only the Truth, but the whole Truth; and did not only atteſt it by Word of Mouth, but left it upon Record in Writing, *in perpetuam rei memoriam.* (3.) His *Record* is undoubtedly *true*; for he wrote not only from his own perſonal Knowledge and Obſervation, but from the Dictates of the Spirit of Truth, that leads into all Truth. (4) He had himſelf a full Aſſurance of the Truth of what he wrote, and did not perſwade others to believe that which he did not believe himſelf; *He knows that he ſaith true.* (5.) He therefore witneſſed theſe Things *that we might believe.* He did not record them merely for his own Satisfaction, or the private uſe of his Friends, but made them publick to the World; not to pleaſe the Curious, or entertain the Ingenious, but to draw Men to believe the Goſpel, in Order to their eternal Welfare.

2. What *Care* he ſhewed in this particular Inſtance. That we may be well aſſured, both of the Truth of Chriſt's Death, he ſaw his Heart's Blood, his Life's Blood let out; and alſo of the Benefits that flow to us from his Death, ſignified by the Blood and Water which came out of his Side. Let this ſilence the Fears of weak Chriſtians, and encourage their Hopes, Iniquity ſhall not be their Ruin, for there came both Water and Blood out of Chriſt's pierced Side, both to *juſtify* and *ſanctify* them; and if you aſk, how can we be ſure of this, you may be ſure, for *he that ſaw it bare Record.*

Fifthly, The Accompliſhment of the Scripture in all this, *v.* 36. *That the Scripture ſhould be fulfilled,* and ſo both the Honour of the Old Teſtament may be preſerved, and the Truth of the New Teſtament confirmed. Here are two Inſtances of it together:

1. The Scripture was fulfilled in the *preſerving* of his Legs from being *broke.* Therein that Word was fulfilled, *A Bone of him ſhall not be broken.*

(1.) There was a Promiſe of this made indeed to all the *Righteous,* but principally pointing at Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous. *Pſal.* 34. 20. *He keepeth all his Bones, not one of them is broken.* And *David* in Spirit ſaith, *All my Bones ſhall ſay, Lord, who is like unto thee,* Pſal. 35. 10.

(2.) There was a Type of this in the *Paſchal Lamb,* which ſeems to be eſpecially referred to here, *Exod.* 12. 46. *Neither ſhall ye break a Bone thereof*; and 'tis repeated, *Num.* 9. 12. *Ye ſhall not break any Bone of it*; for which Law the Will of the Law-maker is the Reaſon, but the Antitype muſt anſwer the Type. Chriſt our Paſſover is *ſacrificed for us,* 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. He is the *Lamb of God,* John 1. 29. and as the true Paſſover his Bones were kept unbroken. This *Commandment* was *given concerning his Bones* when dead, as of *Joſeph*'s, Heb. 11. 22.

(3.) There was a Significancy in it; the Strength of the Body is in the Bones; the *Hebrew* Word for the *Bones* ſignifies the *Strength*; and therefore not a Bone of Chriſt muſt be broken, to ſhew, that tho' he be *crucified in Weakneſs,* his *Strength to ſave* is not at all *broken.* Sin breaks our Bones, it broke *David*'s, *Pſal.* 51. 8. but it did not break his Bones; he *ſtood firm* under the Burthen; *mighty to ſave.*

2. The Scripture was fulfilled in the *piercing of his Side, v.* 37. *They ſhall look on him whom they have pierced,* ſo it is written, *Zech.* 12. 10. And there the ſame that pours out the Spirit of Grace, and can be no leſs than the God of the holy Prophets, ſaith, *They ſhall* look upon *me,* which is here applied to Chriſt, *they ſhall look* upon *him.* 1. It is here implied that the Meſſiah ſhall be *pierced*; and here it had a more full Accompliſhment than in the piercing of his *Hands and Feet.* He was pierced by the Houſe of *David,* and the *Inhabitants of Jeruſalem,* wounded in the *Houſe of his Friends,* as it follows, *Zech.* 13. 6. 2. It is promiſed, that when the Spirit is poured out they ſhall *look on him and mourn.* This was in part fulfilled when many of thoſe that were his Betrayers and Murtherers were prick'd to the Heart, and brought to believe in him; it will be further fulfilled in Mercy, when all *Iſrael* ſhould be *ſaved,* and in Wrath, when they who perſiſted in their Infidelity ſhall *ſee him* whom they have *pierced,* and *wail becauſe of him,* Rev. 1. 7. But it is applicable to us all; we have all been guilty of *piercing the Lord Jeſus,* and are all concerned with ſuitable Affections to look on him.

38 And after this, Joſeph of Arimathea (being a diſciple of Jeſus, but ſecretly for fear of the Jews) beſought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jeſus: and Pilate gave him leave; he came therefore and took the body of Jeſus. 39 And there came alſo Nicodemus (which at the firſt came to Jeſus by night) and brought a mixture of myrrhe, and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. 40 Then took they the body of Jeſus, and wound it in linen clothes, with the ſpices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new ſepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. 42 There laid they Jeſus therefore, becauſe of the Jews preparation *day*, for the ſepulchre was nigh at hand.

We have here an Account of the Burial of the bleſſed Body of our Lord Jeſus. The ſolemn Funerals of *great Men* uſe to be looked at with Curioſity; the mournful Funerals of *dear Friends* uſe to be *attended* with Concern. Come, come ſee an extraordinary Funeral, never was the like; come and ſee a Burial that conquered the Grave, and buried it; a Burial that beautified the Grave, and ſoftened it for all Believers. Let us turn aſide now, and ſee this great Sight. Here is,

Firſt, The Body begged, *v.* 38. This was done by the Intereſt of *Joſeph* of *Ramah*, or *Arimathea*, of whom no mention is made in all the New Teſtament Story, but only in the Narrative which each of the Evangeliſts give us of Chriſt's Burial, wherein he was chiefly concerned. Obſerve,

1. The Character of this *Joſeph*. He was a Diſciple of Chriſt *incognito*, a better Friend to Chriſt than he would willingly be known to be. 'Twas his Humour that he was a *Diſciple of Chriſt*; and ſome ſuch there are, that are themſelves *great Men*, and unavoidably linked with *ill Men*; but 'twas his Weakneſs that he was ſo *ſecretly*, when he ſhould have confeſſed Chriſt before Men, yea, though he had loſt his Preferment by it. Diſciples ſhould openly own themſelves, yet Chriſt may have many that are his Diſciples *ſincerely*, tho' *ſecretly*; better *ſecretly* than not at all, eſpecially, if, like *Joſeph* here, they grow *ſtronger* and *ſtronger*. Some who in leſſer Trials have been Timorous, yet in greater have been bery Couragious; ſo *Joſeph* here. He concealed his Affection to Chriſt *for fear of the Jews*, leſt they ſhould put him out of the *Synagogue*, at leaſt out of the *Sanhedrim*, which was all they could do. To *Pilate* the Governour he *went boldly*, and yet *feared the Jews*. The impotent Malice of thoſe that can but cenſure and revile, and clamour, is ſometimes more formidable even to wiſe and good Men than one would think.

2. The Part he bore in this Affair. He having by his Place acceſs to *Pilate*, deſired leave of him to diſpoſe of the Body. His Mother and dear Relations have neither Spirit nor Intereſt to attempt ſuch a Thing. His Diſciples were gone; if no Body appear, the *Jews*, or Soldiers would bury him with the Thieves; therefore God raiſed up this Gentleman to interpoſe in it, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, and the decorum owing to his approaching Reſurrection maintained. *Note*, When God has Work to do, he can find out ſuch as are proper to do it, and ſpirit them for it. Obſerve it as an Inſtance of the Humiliation of Chriſt, that his dead Body lay at the Mercy of a Heathen Judge, and muſt be begged before it could be buried. And alſo, That *Joſeph* would not take the Body of Chriſt till he had asked, and obtained leave of the Governour; for in thoſe Things wherein the Power of the Magiſtrate is concerned, we muſt ever pay a deference to that Power, and peaceably ſubmit to it.

Secondly, The embalming prepared, *v.* 39. This was done by *Nicodemus*, another Perſon of Quality, and in a publick Poſt. He brought a *mixture of Myrrh and Aloes*, which ſome think *bitter* Ingredients to preſerve the Body; other *fragant* ones to perfume it. Here's,

1. The Character of *Nicodemus*, which is much the ſame with that of *Joſeph*; he was a ſecret Friend to Chriſt, tho' not his conſtant Follower. He at *firſt came to Jeſus by Night*, but now owned him publickly, as before, *John* 7. 51. That Grace which at firſt is like a bruiſed Reed, may afterwards become like a ſtrong Cedar; and the trembling Lambs *bold as a Lion*. See *Rom.* 14. 4. It is a wonder that *Joſeph* and *Nicodemus*, Men of ſuch Intereſt, did not appear ſooner; and ſollicite *Pilate* not to condemn Chriſt, eſpecially, ſeeing him ſo loath to it. Begging his Life would have been a nobler Piece of Service than begging his Body; but Chriſt would have none of his Friends to endeavour to prevent his Death when his Hour was come. While his Perſecutors were forwarding the Accompliſhments of the Scriptures, his Followers muſt not obſtruct it.

2. The Kindneſs of *Nicodemus*, which was conſiderable, tho' of a different Nature. *Joſeph* ſerved Chriſt with his Intereſt, *Nicodemus* with his Purſe. Probably they agreed it between them, that while one was procuring the Grant, the other ſhould be preparing the Spices; and that for Expedition, becauſe they were ſtraitened in Time.

But why did they make this ado about Chriſt's dead Body?

1. Some think we may ſee in it the *weakneſs of their Faith* A firm Belief of the Reſurrection of Chriſt the Third Day, would have ſaved them this Care and Coſt, and have been more acceptable than all Spices. Thoſe Bodies indeed to whom the Grave is a *long Home* need to be clad accordingly; but what need of ſuch Furniture of the Grave for one, that like a way-faring Man, did but turn aſide into it to *tarry for a Night, or two.*

2. However, we may plainly ſee in it the *ſtrength of their Love.* Hereby they ſhewed the value they had for his Perſon and Doctrine, and that it was not leſſened by the *Reproach of the Croſs.* They that had been ſo induſtrious to prophane his Crown, and lay his Honour in the Duſt, may already ſee that they imagine a vain Thing; for as God had done him Honour in his Sufferings, ſo did Men too, even *great Men.* They ſhewed not only the *charitable Reſpects* of committing his Body to the Earth, but the *honourable Reſpects* ſhewed to *great Men.* This they might do, and yet believe and look for his Reſurrection; nay, this they might do in the belief and expectation of it. Since God deſigned Honour for this Body, they would put Honour upon it. However, we muſt do our Duty according as the *preſent* Day and Opportunity is, and leave it to God to fulfil his Promiſes in his own Way and Time.

Thirdly, The Body got ready, *v.* 40. They *took it* into ſome Houſe adjoining, and having waſhed it from Blood and Duſt, *wound it in linen Clothes* very decently, with the Spices melted down, 'tis likely, into an Ointment, as *the manner of the* Jews *is to bury*, or to *embalm*, ſo Dr. *Hammond*, as we *ſear* dead Bodies.

1. Here was Care taken of Chriſt's Body, 'twas *wound in linen Clothes.* Among other cloathing that belongs to us, Chriſt put on even the *Grave Clothes*, to make them eaſy to us, and to enable us to call them our *Wedding Clothes.* They wound the Body *with the Spices*, for *all his Garments*, his Grave-clothes not excepted, *ſmell of Myrrh and Aloes*; the Spices here mentioned out of the *Ivory Palaces*, Pſal. 45. 8. and an Ivory Palace, the Sepulchre hewn out of a Rock, was to Chriſt. *Dead Bodies* and *Graves* uſe to be noiſome and offenſive; hence Sin is compared to a *Body of Death*, and an *open Sepulchre*; but Chriſt's Sacrifice being to God as a ſweet ſmelling Savour, hath taken away our Pollution. No *Ointment* or *Perfume* can *rejoyce the Heart*, ſo as the Grave of our Redeemer doth, where there is Faith to perceive the fragrant Odours of it.

2. In Conformity to this Example, we ought to have regard to the dead Bodies of Chriſtians; not to *enſhrine* and *adore* their Reliques, no not thoſe of the moſt eminent Saints and Martyrs; nothing like that was done to the dead Body of Chriſt himſelf; but carefully depoſit the Duſt in the Duſt, as thoſe who believe dead Bodies of the Saints are ſtill united to Chriſt, and deſigned for Glory and Immortality at the laſt Day. The Reſurrection of the Saints will be in the Virtue of Chriſt's Reſurrection, and therefore in burying them we ſhould have an Eye to Chriſt's Burial, for he being dead thus ſpeaketh. *Thy dead Man* ſhall live, Iſa. 26. 19. In burying our dead it is not neceſſary that in all Circumſtances we imitate the Burial of Chriſt, as if we muſt be buried in Linen, and in a Garden, and be embalmed as he was; but he being buried after *the manner of the Jews*, it teacheth us, that in Things of this Nature we ſhould conform to the Uſages of the Country where we live, except in thoſe that are Superſtitious.

Fourthly, The *Grave* pitched upon, in a Garden which belonged to *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, very near the Place where he was crucified. There was a *Sepulchre*, or *Vault* prepared for the firſt Occaſion, but not yet uſed. Obſerve.

1. That Chriſt was buried *without the City*, for thus the Manner of the *Jews* was to bury, not in their Cities, much leſs in their Synagogues, which ſome have thought better than our Way of burying, yet there was then a peculiar Reaſon for it, which doth not hold now, becauſe the Tomb of a Grave contracted a Ceremonial Pollution; but now the Reſurrection of Chriſt has altered the Property of the Grave, and done away its Pollution for all Believers, we need not keep at ſuch a diſtance from it; nor is it uncapable of a good Improvement, to have the *Congregation of the dead* in the Church-yard, encompaſſing the *Congregation of the living* in the Church, ſince they alſo are dying, and in *the midſt of Life we are in Death.* Thoſe that would (not ſuperſtitiouſly but) by Faith *viſit* the *holy Sepulchre*, muſt *go forth* out of the noiſe of this World.

2. That Chriſt was buried *in a Garden.* Obſerve,

(1.) That *Joſeph* had his Sepulchre in a Garden; ſo he contrived it, that it might be a Memorandum, (1.) To himſelf while living; when he was taking the Pleaſure of his Garden, and reaping the Products of it, let him think of dying, and be quickned to prepare for it. The Garden is a proper Place for Meditation, and a Sepulchre there may furniſh us with a proper Subject for Meditation, and ſuch a one as we are loth to admit in the midſt of our Pleaſure. (2.) To his Heirs and Succeſſors when he was gone. 'Tis good to acquaint our ſelves with the *Place of our Fathers Sepulchres*; and perhaps we might make our own leſs formidable, if we made theirs more familiar.

(2.) That in a Sepulchre in a Garden Chriſt's Body was laid. In the Garden of *Eden* Death and the Grave firſt received their Power, and now in a Garden they are conquered, diſarmed, and triumphed over. In a Garden Chriſt began his Paſſion, and from a Garden he would riſe and begin his Exaltation. Chriſt fell to the Ground *as a Corn of Wheat*, John 12. 24. and therefore was ſown in a Garden among the Seeds, for *his Dew is as the Dew of*

Herbs, Iſa. 26. 19. He is the *Fountain of Gardens*, Cant. 4. 15.

3. That he was buried in a *new Sepulchre*. This was ſo ordered, (1.) For the Honour of Chriſt; He was not a common Perſon, and therefore muſt not mix with common Duſt. He that was born from a Virgin Womb, muſt riſe from a Virgin Tomb. (2.) For the confirming of the Truth of his Reſurrection; that it might not be ſuggeſted that it was not he but ſome other that roſe, now when many Bodies of Saints ariſe; or, that he roſe by the Power of ſome other, as the Man that was raiſed by the Touch of *Eliſha*'s Bones, and not by his own Power. He that has *made all Things new*, has *new made* the Grave for us.

Fifthly, The Funeral ſolemnized, *Ver.* 42. *There laid they Jeſus*, that is, the *dead Body* of Jeſus. Some think the calling of that *Jeſus* intimates the inſeparable Union between the Divine and Human Nature. Even this *dead Body* was *Jeſus*, a Saviour, for his Death is our Life; Jeſus is ſtill *the ſame*, Heb. 13. 8. There they laid him, becauſe 'twas the Preparation Day.

1. Obſerve here the deference which the *Jews* paid to the *Sabbath*, and to the Day of Preparation. Before the Paſſover Sabbath they had a ſolemn Day of Preparation. This Day had been *ill kept* by the Chief Prieſts, who called themſelves the Church, but was well kept by the Diſciples of Chriſt, who were branded as dangerous to the Church; and 'tis often ſo. (1.) They would not put off the Funeral till the Sabbath Day, becauſe the Sabbath is to be a Day of holy Reſt and Joy, with which the Buſineſs and Sorrow of a Funeral do not well agree. (2.) They would not drive it too late on the Day of Preparation for the Sabbath. What is to be done the Evening before the Sabbath, ſhould be ſo contrived, as that it may neither *intrench* upon Sabbath-time, nor *indiſpoſe* us for Sabbath-work.

2. Obſerve the Convenience they took of an adjoining Sepulchre; the Sepulchre they made uſe of was *nigh at hand*. Perhaps if they had had Time they would have carried him to *Bethany*, and buried him among his Friends there. And I am ſure he had more right to have been buried in the Chief of the Sepulchres of the Sons of *David*, than any of the Kings of *Judah* had; but it was ſo ordered, that he ſhould be laid in a Sepulchre nigh at hand. (1.) Becauſe he was to lye there but a while, as in an Inn, and therefore he took the firſt that offered it ſelf. (2.) Becauſe this was a *new Sepulchre*. They that prepared it, little thought who ſhould hanſel it; but the Wiſdom of God has *Reaches* infinitely beyond ours, and makes what uſe he pleaſeth of us and all we have. (3.) We are hereby taught not to be over curious in the Place of our Burial. Where the *Tree falls* why ſhould it not *lye?* For Chriſt was buried in the Sepulchre that was *next at hand*. 'Twas Faith in the Promiſe of *Canaan*, that directed the Patriarchs deſire to be carried thither for a burying Place; but now that Promiſe is ſuperſeded by a better, that Care is over.

Thus without Pomp or Solemnity is the Body of Jeſus laid in the cold and ſilent Grave. Here lies our Surety under Arreſt for our Debts, ſo that if he be releaſed, his Diſcharge will be ours. Here is the Sun of Righteouſneſs *ſet* for a while to *riſe again* in greater Glory, and ſet no more. Here lies a ſeeming Captive to Death, but a real Conqueror over Death; for here lies Death it ſelf ſlain, and the Grave conquered. *Thanks be to God who giveth us the Victory.*

CHAP. XX.

The Evangeliſt, tho' he began not his Goſpel as the reſt did, yet concludes it as they did, with the Hiſtory of Chriſt's Reſurrection; *not of the Thing it ſelf, for none of them deſcribe* how he roſe, *but of the Proofs and Evidences of it, which demonſtrated that he* was riſen. *The Proofs of Chriſt's Reſurrection which we have in this Chapter, are* 1. *Such as occurred immediately at the Sepulchre.* (1.) *The Sepulchre found empty, and the Grave Clothes in good Order*, v. 1—10. (2.) *Two Angels appearing to* Mary Magdalen *at the Sepulchre*, v. 11—13. (3.) *Chriſt himſelf appearing to her*, v. 14—18. 2. *Such as occurred afterwards at the Meetings of the Apoſtles.* (1.) *At one, the ſame Day at Evening that Chriſt roſe, when* Thomas *was abſent*, v. 19—25. *At another, that Day Seven-night, when* Thomas *was with them*, v. 26—31. *And what is related here is moſtly what was omitted by the other Evangeliſts.*

THE firſt *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalen early when it was yet dark, unto the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the ſtone taken away from the ſepulchre. 2 Then ſhe runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other diſciple whom Jeſus loved, and ſaith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the ſepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. 3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other diſciple, and came to the ſepulchre. 4 So they ran both together: and the other diſciple did out-run Peter, and came firſt to the ſepulchre. 5 And he ſtooping down, *and looking in*, ſaw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. 6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the ſepulchre, and ſeeth the linen clothes lye; 7 And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by it ſelf. 8 Then went in alſo that other diſciple which came firſt to the ſepulchre, and he ſaw, and believed. 9 For as yet they knew not the ſcripture, that he muſt riſe again from the dead. 10 Then the diſciples went away again unto their own home.

There was no one Thing which the Apoſtles were more concerned to produce *ſubſtantial* Proof of, than the *Reſurrection* of their Maſter. (1.) Becauſe this was it which he himſelf had appealed to as the laſt and moſt cogent Proof of his being the *Meſſiah*. They that would not believe other Signs, were referred to this Sign of the Prophet *Jonas*. And therefore the Enemies were moſt ſollicitous to ſtifle the Notice of *this*, becauſe it was put to this Iſſue; and if he be riſen, they are not only Murtherers, but Murtherers of the Meſſiah. (2.) Becauſe this was that, upon which the Performance of his Undertaking for our Redemption and Salvation did depend. If he give his Life for a Ranſom, and do not *reſume* it, it doth not appear that his giving of it was accepted as a Satisfaction. If he be impriſoned for our Debt, and *lye by it*, we are undone, 1 *Cor.* 15. 17. (3.) Becauſe he never ſhewed himſelf alive after his Reſurrection to *all the People*, Acts 10. 40, 41. We would have ſaid, let his *ignominious* Death be *private*, and his *glorious* Reſurrection *publick*. But God's Thoughts are not as ours; and he ordered that his Death ſhould be publick, before the Sun, by the ſame Token that he bluſhed and hid his Face upon it. But the Demonſtrations of his Reſurrection ſhould be reſerved as a Favour for his particular Friends, and by them be publiſhed to the World, that they might be bleſſed who have not ſeen and yet have believed. The Method of Proof is ſuch as gives abundant Satisfaction to thoſe who are piouſly diſpoſed to receive the Doctrine and Law of Chriſt, and yet leaves room for thoſe to object who are willingly ignorant and obſtinate in their Unbelief. And this is a *fair Trial*, ſuited to the Caſe of thoſe who are *Probationers*.

In theſe Verſes we have the firſt ſtep towards the Proof of Chriſt's Reſurrection, which is, that the Sepulchre was found empty. *He is not here*, and if ſo, they muſt tell us where he is, or we conclude him *riſen*.

Firſt, *Mary Magdalen* coming to the Sepulchre finds the *Stone taken away*. This Evangeliſt doth not mention the other Women that went with *Mary Magdalen*, but her only, becauſe ſhe was the moſt active and forward in this Viſit to the Sepulchre, and in her appeared the moſt Affection: And, (1.) It was an Affection kindled by a good Cauſe, in conſideration of the great Things Chriſt had done for her. Much was forgiven her, therefore ſhe loved much. (2.) She had ſhewed her Affection to him while he lived, attended his Doctrine, miniſtered to him of her Subſtance, *Luke* 8. 2, 3. It doth not appear ſhe had any Buſineſs now at *Jeruſalem*, but to wait upon him, for the Women were not bound to go up to the Feaſt, and probably ſhe and others now followed him the cloſer, as *Eliſha* did *Elijah*, now they know their *Maſter* ſhould ſhortly be *taken from their Head*, 2 Kings 2. 1, 2. (3.) The continued Inſtances of her Reſpect to him, at, and after his Death, prove the *ſincerity* of her Love. *Note*, Love to Chriſt, if it be *cordial*, will be *conſtant*. Her Love to Chriſt was *ſtrong as Death*, the Death of the Croſs, for it ſtood by that; *cruel as the Grave*, for it made a Viſit to that, and was not deterred by its Terrors.

1. She *came to the Sepulchre* to waſh the dead Body with her Tears, for ſhe *went to the Grave to weep there*, and to *anoint it with the Ointment* ſhe had prepared. The Grave is a Houſe that People do not care for making Viſits to. They that are *free among the dead* are *ſeparated from the living*; and it muſt be an extraordinary Affection to the Perſon which will *endear* his Grave to us. 'Tis eſpecially frightful to the weak and timorous Sex. Could ſhe that had not *Strength* enough to *roll away the Stone*, pretend to ſuch a *Preſence* of Mind as to *enter the Grave*. The *Jews* Religion forbad them to meddle any more than needs muſt with Graves and dead Bodies. In viſiting Chriſt's Sepulchre ſhe expoſed her ſelf, and perhaps the Diſciples, to the ſuſpicion of a Deſign to *ſteal him away*; and what real Service could ſhe do him by it? But her Love anſwers theſe, and a Thouſand ſuch Objections. *Note*, 1. We muſt ſtudy to do Honour to Chriſt in thoſe Things wherein yet we cannot be profitable to him. 2. Love to Chriſt will take off the Terror of Death and the Grave. If we cannot come to Chriſt but through that darkſome Valley, even in that, if we love him, we will *fear no Evil*.

(2.) She came *as ſoon as ſhe could*; for ſhe came,

(1.) Upon the *firſt Day of the Week*, as ſoon as ever the *Sabbath was gone*, longing not to *ſell Corn*, and to *ſet forth Wheat*, as *Amos* 8. 5. but to be at the Sepulchre. They that love Chriſt, will take the firſt Opportunity of teſtifying their Reſpects to him. This was the firſt Chriſtian Sabbath, and ſhe begins it accordingly, with Enquiries after Chriſt. She had ſpent the Day before in commemorating the Work of Creation, and therefore *reſted*; but now ſhe is upon ſearch into the Work of Redemption, and therefore makes a Viſit to Chriſt and him crucified.

(2.) She came *early, while it was yet dark*; ſo early did ſhe ſet out. *Note*, Thoſe who would ſeek Chriſt ſo as to find him, muſt ſeek him early, i. e. (1.) Seek him *ſollicitouſly*, with ſuch a Care as even breaks the Sleep; be up early for fear of miſſing him. (2.) Seek him *induſtriouſly*; we muſt deny our ſelves and our own Repoſe in Purſuit of Chriſt. (3.) Seek him *betimes*, early in our Days, early every Day, *My Voice ſhalt thou hear in the Morning*; that Day is in a fair way to be well ended that is thus begun. They that diligently enquire after Chriſt *while it is yet dark*, ſhall have ſuch Light given them concerning him, as ſhall ſhine *more and more*.

3. She found *the Stone taken away*, which ſhe had *ſeen rolled to the Door of the Sepulchre*. Now this was,

1. A Surprize to her; for ſhe little expected it. Chriſt crucified is the Fountain of Life, his Grave one of the Wells of Salvation, if we come to it in Faith, tho' to a carnal Heart it be a Spring ſhut up, we ſhall find the *Stone rolled away*, as *Gen.* 29. 10. and free Acceſs to the Comforts of it. Surprizing Comforts are the frequent Encouragements of early Seekers.

2. 'Twas the Beginning of a glorious Diſcovery, the Lord was riſen, though ſhe did not at firſt apprehend it ſo. *Note*, 1. They that are moſt conſtant in their Adherence to Chriſt, and moſt diligent in their Enquiries after him, have commonly the *firſt* and *ſweeteſt* Notices of the Divine Grace. *Mary Magdalen* that followed Chriſt *to the laſt* in his Humiliation, met him with *the firſt* in his Exaltation. 2. God ordinarily reveals himſelf in his Comforts to us *by Degrees*; to raiſe our Expectations, and quicken our Enquiries.

Secondly, Finding the Stone taken away, ſhe haſtens back to *Peter* and *John*, who probably lodged together at that End of the Town, not far off, and acquaints them with it; *They have taken the Lord out of the Sepulchre*, envying him the Honour of ſuch a decent Burying-Place, and *we know not where they have laid him*, nor where to find him, that we may pay him the Remainder of our laſt Reſpects. Obſerve here,

1. What a Notion *Mary* had of the Thing as it now appeared; ſhe found *the Stone* gone; looked into the Grave and ſaw it empty. Now one would expect that the firſt Thought that offered it ſelf ſhould have been, *Surely the Lord is riſen*, for whenever he had told them that he ſhould be crucified, which ſhe had now lately ſeen accompliſhed, he ſtill ſubjoined in the ſame Breath, that *the third Day he ſhould riſe again*. Could ſhe feel the great Earthquake that happened as ſhe was coming to the Sepulchre, or getting ready to come, and now ſee the Grave empty, and yet have no Thought of the Reſurrection enter into her Mind; what no Conjecture, no Suſpicion of it? So it ſeems by the odd Conſtruction ſhe puts upon the removing of the Stone, which was very far fetched. *Note*, When we come to reflect upon our own Conduct in a *cloudy and dark Day*, we ſhall ſtand amazed at our Dulneſs and Forgetfulneſs, that we could miſs of ſuch Thoughts, as afterwards appear obvious, and how they could be ſo far out of the way, when we had Occaſion for them. She ſuggeſted, *They have taken away the Lord*; either the chief Prieſts have taken him away, to put him in a worſe Place; or *Joſeph* and *Nicodemus* have upon ſecond Thoughts taken him away, to avoid the ill Will of the *Jews*. Whatever was her Suſpicion, it ſeems it was a great Vexation and Diſturbance to her, that the Body was gone, whereas if ſhe had underſtood it rightly, nothing could be more happy. *Note*, Weak Believers often make that the Matter of their Complaint, which is really juſt Ground of Hope, and Matter of Joy. We cry out that this and t'other Creature-Comfort is *taken away*, and we know not how to *retrieve* it, when indeed the Removal of our temporal Comforts which we lament, is in order to the Reſurrection of our ſpiritual Comforts, which we ſhould rejoyce in too.

2. What a Narrative ſhe made of it to *Peter* and *John*. She did not ſtand poring upon the Grief her ſelf, but acquaints her Friends with it. *Note*, The Communication of Sorrows is one good Improvement of the Communion of Saints. Obſerve, *Peter*, though he had denied his Maſter, had not deſerted his Maſter's Friends; by this appears the Sincerity of his Repentance, that he aſſociated with the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved. And the Diſciples keeping up their Intimacy with him as formerly, notwithſtanding his Fall, teacheth us to *reſtore thoſe with a Spirit of Meekneſs that have been faulty*. If God has received them upon their Repentance, why ſhould not we.

Thirdly, *Peter* and *John* go with all Speed to the Sepulchre to ſatisfy themſelves of the Truth of what was told them, and to ſee if they could make any further Diſcoveries, *v.* 3. 4. Some think the other Diſciples were with *Petee* and *John*, when the News came; for they *told theſe things to the Eleven*, Luke 24. 9. Others think *Mary Magdalen* told her Story only to *Peter* and *John*, and the other Women told theirs to the other Diſciples; yet none of them went to the Sepulchre but *Peter* and *John*, who were two of the firſt three of Chriſt's Diſciples, often diſtinguiſhed from the reſt by ſpecial Favours. *Note*, It is well when thoſe that are more *honoured* than others, with the Privileges of Diſciples, are more active than others in the Duty of Diſciples, more willing to take Pains and run Hazards in a good Work.

1. See here what uſe we ſhould make of others Experiences and Obſervations. When *Mary* told them what ſhe had ſeen, they would not in this Senſe *take her Word*, but would go *ſee with their own Eyes*. Do others tell us of the Comfort and Benefit of Ordinances? Let us be engaged thereby to make Trial of them. Come and ſee how good it is to draw near to God.

2. See how ready we ſhould be to ſhare with our Friends in their Cares and Fears. *Peter* and *John* haſten to the Sepulchre, that they might be able to give *Mary* a ſatisfactory Anſwer to her Jealouſies. We ſhould not grudge any Pains we take, for the ſuccouring and comforting of the weak and timorous Followers of Chriſt.

3. See what haſte we ſhould make in a good Work, and when we are going on a good Errand. *Peter* and *John* conſulted neither their Eaſe nor their Gravity, but *ran* to the Sepulchre. That they might ſhew the Strength of their Zeal and Affection, and might loſe no time. If we are in the way of God's Commandments, we ſhould *run that way*.

4. See what a good Thing it is to have good Company in a good Work. Perhaps neither of theſe Diſciples would have ventured to the Sepulchre alone, but being both together, they made no Difficulty of it. See *Ecclef.* 4. 9.

5. See what a laudable Emulation it is among Diſciples, to ſtrive which ſhall *excel*, which ſhall *exceed* in that which is good. It was no Breach of ill Manners for *John*, tho' the younger, to outrun *Peter*, and get before him. We muſt do *our beſt*, and neither envy thoſe that can *do better*, nor deſpiſe thoſe that *do as they* can, tho' they *come behind*.

1. He that *got foremoſt* in this Race was the *Diſciple whom Jeſus loved* in a ſpecial manner, and who therefore in a ſpecial manner loved Jeſus. *Note*, Senſe of Chriſt's Love to us, kindling Love in us to him again, will make us to *excel in Virtue*. The Love of Chriſt will conſtrain us more than any thing to *abound* in Duty.

2. He that was *caſt behind* was *Peter*, who had denied his Maſter, and was in Sorrow and Shame for it, and this clogged him as a Weight; Senſe of Guilt cramps us, and hinders our Enlargements in the Service of God. When Conſcience is offended, we loſe Ground.

Fourthly, *Peter* and *John* being come to the Sepulchre, proſecute the Enquiry, yet improve little in the Diſcovery.

1. *John* went no further than *Mary Magdalen* had done.

(1.) He had the *Curioſity* to look into the Sepulchre, and ſaw it was empty. He *ſtooped down* and *looked in*. Thoſe that would find the Knowledge of Chriſt muſt *ſtoop down* and *look in*, muſt with a humble Heart veil to the Authority of Divine Revelation; and muſt *look wiſtly*.

(2.) Yet he had not Courage to go into the Sepulchre. The warmeſt Affections are not always accompanied with the boldeſt Reſolutions; many are ſwift to run Religion's Race, that are not ſtout to fight her Battles.

2. *Peter*, tho' he came laſt, went in firſt, and made a more exact Diſcovery than *John* had, *v.* 6. 7. Tho' *John* out-ran him, he did not therefore turn back, or ſtand ſtill, but *made after* as faſt as he *could*, and while *John* was with a deal of Caution *looking in*; he came, and with a deal of Courage *went into the Sepulchre*.

(1.) Obſerve here the *Boldneſs of* Peter, and how God diſpenſeth his Gifts variouſly, *John* could out-run *Peter*, but *Peter* could out-dare *John*. 'Tis ſeldom true of the ſame Perſons what *David* ſaid poetically of *Saul* and *Jonathan*, that they were *ſwifter than Eagles*, and yet *ſtronger than Lions*, 2 Sam. 1. 23. Some Diſciples are *quick*, and they are uſeful to *quicken* them that are *ſlow*; others are *bold*, and they are uſeful to *hearten* them that are *timorous*; Diverſity of Gifts but one Spirit.

Peter's venturing into the Sepulchre may teach us, (1.) That thoſe who in good Earneſt ſeek after Chriſt, muſt not frighten themſelves with Bugbears and fooliſh Fancies; there's a Lion in the Way, a Ghoſt in the Grave. (2.) That good Chriſtians need not be afraid of the Grave, ſince Chriſt has lain in it, for to them there is nothing in it frightful; 'tis not the Pit of Deſtruction, nor the Worm in it *never dying Worms*. Let us therefore not indulge, but conquer the Fear we are apt to conceive upon the Sight of a dead Body, or being alone among the Graves, and ſince we muſt be *dead* and in the Grave ſhortly, let us make Death and the Grave *familiar* to us, as our near Kindred, *Job* 17. 14. (3.) We muſt be willing to go through the Grave to Chriſt; that way he went to his Glory, and ſo muſt we. If we cannot ſee God's Face and live, better die than never ſee it. See *Job* 19. 25, &c.

(2.) Obſerve the Poſture he found things in, in the Sepulchre.

1. Chriſt had left his *Grave-Clothes* behind him there; what Clothes he appeared in to his Diſciples we are not told, but he never appeared in his Grave Clothes as Ghoſts are ſuppoſed to do; no, he had laid them aſide, becauſe he roſe to *die no more*; Death was to have no more Dominion over him, *Rom.* 5. 9. *Lazarus* came out with his Grave-Clothes on, for he was to us riſen again; but Chriſt riſing to an immortal Life, came out free from thoſe Encumbrances. 2. Becauſe he was going to be clothed with the Robes of Glory, therefore he lays aſide theſe Rags; in the heavenly Paradiſe there will be no more occaſion for Clothes, than there was in the earthly. The aſcending Prophet dropt his Mantle. 3. When we riſe from the Death of Sin to the Life of Righteouſneſs, we muſt leave our Grave-Clothes behind us, muſt *put off* all our Corruptions. 4. Chriſt left thoſe in the Grave as it were for our Uſe; if the Grave be a *Bed* to the Saints, thus he hath *ſheeted* that Bed, and made it ready for them; and the *Napkin* by it ſelf is of uſe for the mourning Survivers, to *wipe away their Tears*.

2. The Grave-Clothes were found in very good Order, which ſerves for an Evidence, that his Body was not *ſtollen away while Men ſlept*. Robbers of Tombs have been known to take away the

Clothes and leave the Body; but none ever took away the Body, and left the Clothes, eſpecially when it was *fine Linen*, and *new*, Mark 15. 46. Any one would rather chuſe to carry a dead Body in its Clothes naked. Or, if they that were ſuppoſed to have ſtollen it, would have left the Grave Clothes behind, yet it cannot be ſuppoſed they ſhould find Leiſure to *fold up the Linen*.

(3.) See how *Peter*'s Boldneſs encouraged *John*; now he took Heart and ventured in, *v.* 8. and *he ſaw and believed*, not barely believed what *Mary* ſaid, that the Body was gone; no Thanks to him to believe what he ſaw, but he began to *believe* that Jeſus was riſen to Life again, though his Faith as yet was weak and wavering.

1. *John* followed *Peter* in venturing. It ſhould ſeem he durſt not have gone into the Sepulchre, if *Peter* had not gone in firſt. *Note*, It is good to be emboldened in a good Work by the Boldneſs of others. The Dread of Difficulty and Danger will be taken off, by obſerving the Reſolution and Courage of others. Perhaps *John*'s Quickneſs had made *Peter* run *faſter*, and now *Peter*'s Boldneſs makes *John* venture further than otherwiſe either the one or the other would have done; tho' *Peter* had lately fallen under the Diſgrace of being a *Deſerter*, and *John* had been advanced to the Honour of a *Confident*, Chriſt having committed his Mother to him; yet *John* not only aſſociated with *Peter*, but thought it no Diſparagement to follow him.

2. Yet it ſhould ſeem that *John* got the Start of *Peter* in *believing*. *Peter* ſaw and wondered, *Luke* 24. 12. but *John* ſaw and *believed*. A Mind diſpoſed to Contemplation, may perhaps ſooner receive the Evidence of Divine Truth, than a Mind diſpoſed to Action.

But what was the Reaſon they were ſo ſlow of Heart to believe? The Evangeliſt tells us, *v.* 9. as yet they *knew not the Scripture*, *i. e.* they did not conſider, and apply, and duly improve what they knew of the Scripture, that he muſt *riſe again* from the Dead. The Old Teſtament ſpoke of the Reſurrection of the Meſſiah; they believe him to be the *Meſſiah*, he himſelf had often told them that according to the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament he ſhould riſe again; but they had not a Preſence of Mind ſufficient by theſe to explain the preſent Amuſements. Obſerve here,

1. How *unapt* the Diſciples themſelves were *at firſt* to believe the Reſurrection of Chriſt, which confirms the Teſtimony they afterwards gave with ſo much *Aſſurance* concerning it; for by their Backwardneſs to believe it, it appears they were not credulous concerning it, nor of thoſe ſimple ones that believe every Word. If they had had any Deſign to advance their own Intereſt by it, they would greedily have catched at the firſt Spark of its Evidence, would have raiſed and ſupported one another's Expectations of it, and have prepared the Minds of thoſe that followed them to receive the Notices of; but we find on the contrary, their Hopes were proſtrated, 'twas to them as a ſtrange thing, and one of the furtheſt things in their Thoughts. *Peter* and *John* were ſo ſhy of believing it at firſt, that nothing leſs than the moſt convincing Proof the thing was capable of, could bring them to teſtify it afterwards with ſo much Aſſurance. Hereby it appears they were not only *honeſt* Men, who would not deceive others, but *cautious* Men, who would not themſelves be impoſed upon.

2. What was the *Reaſon* of their *Slowneſs to believe*; becauſe as yet they *knew not the Scripture*. This ſeems to be the Evangeliſt's Acknowledgment of his own Fault among the reſt; he doth not ſay, for as yet Jeſus had not appeared to them, had not ſhewed them his Hands and his Side, but as yet had not *opened their Underſtandings to underſtand the Scriptures*, Luke 24. 44, 45. for that's the *moſt ſure Word of Prophecy*.

(4.) *Peter* and *John* purſued their Enquiry no further, but deſiſted, hovering between Faith and Unbelief, *v.* 10. *The Diſciples went away* nor much the wiſer *to their own Home*, *πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς*, to their own Friends and Companions, the reſt of the Diſciples to their own Lodgings, for Homes they had none at *Jeruſalem*. They went away,

1. For fear of being taken up upon Suſpicion of a Deſign to ſteal away the Body, or of being charged with it now it was gone; inſtead of improving their Faith, their Care is to ſecure themſelves, ſhift for their own Safety. In difficult dangerous times, it is hard even for good Men to go on in their Work with the Reſolution that becomes them.

2. Becauſe they were at a loſs, and knew not what to do next, nor what to make of what they had ſeen, and therefore not having Courage to ſtay at the Grave, they reſolve to go Home, and wait till God ſhall *reveal even this unto them*; which is an Inſtance of their Weakneſs as yet.

3. 'Tis probable the reſt of the Diſciples were together, and to them they returned to *make Report* of what they had diſcovered, and to *conſult* with them what was to be done, and probably now they appointed their Meeting in the Evening, when Chriſt came to them.

It is obſervable, That before *Peter* and *John* came to the Sepulchre, an *Angel* had *appeared* there, rolled away the Stone, frighted the Guard, and comforted the Woman; as ſoon as they were gone from the Sepulchre, *Mary Magdalen* here ſees two Angels in the Sepulchre, *v.* 12. and yet *Peter* and *John* came to the Sepulchre, and go into it, and ſee none; what ſhall we make of this? Where were the Angels when *Peter* and *John* were at the Sepulchre, who appeared there before and after? (1.) Angels appear and diſappear *at Pleaſure*, according to the Orders and Inſtructions given them. They *may be*, and *are* really where they are not *viſibly*, nay it ſhould ſeem may be *viſible* to one, and not to another at the ſame time, 2 *Kings* 9, 17. *Numb.* 22. 23. How they make themſelves viſible, then inviſible, and then viſible again, 'tis Preſumption for us to enquire, but that they do ſo is plain from this Story. (2.) This Favour was ſhewed to thoſe who were early and conſtant in their Enquiries after Chriſt, and was the Reward of them that came firſt and ſtaid laſt, but denied to them that made a tranſient Viſit. (3.) The Apoſtles were not to receive their Inſtructions from the Angels, but from the Spirit of Grace. See *Heb.* 2. 5.

11 But Mary ſtood without at the ſepulchre, weeping: and as yet ſhe wept, ſhe ſtooped down, *and looked* into the ſepulchre, 12 And ſeeth two angels in white, ſitting the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jeſus had layen: 13 And they ſay unto her, Woman, why weepeſt thou? She ſaith unto them, becauſe they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. 14 And when ſhe had thus ſaid, ſhe turned her ſelf back, and ſaw Jeſus ſtanding, and knew not that it was Jeſus. 15 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Woman, why weepeſt thou? whom ſeekeſt thou? ſhe ſuppoſing him to be the gardener, ſaith unto him, Sir, if thou have born him hence, tell me where thou haſt laid him, and I will take him away. 16 Jeſus ſaid unto her, Mary. She turned her ſelf, and ſaith unto him, Rabboni, which is to ſay, Maſter. 17 Jeſus ſaith unto her, Touch me not: for I am not yet aſcended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my Father and your Father, and *to* my God and your God. 18 Mary Magdalen came and told the diſciples, that ſhe had ſeen the Lord, and that he had ſpoken theſe things unto her.

St. *Mark* tells us, that Chriſt appeared firſt to *Mary Magdalen Mark* 16. 9. that Appearance is here largely related; and we may obſerve,

Firſt, The *Conſtancy* and *Fervency* of *Mary Magdalen*'s Affection to the Lord Jeſus, *v.* 11.

1. She *ſtaid at the Sepulchre*, when *Peter* and *John* were gone, becauſe there her Maſter *had laid*, and there ſhe was likelieſt to hear ſome Tidings of him. *Note*, 1. Where there is a *true Love* to Chriſt, there will be a *conſtant Adherence* to him, and a Reſolution with Purpoſe of Heart to cleave to him. This good Woman, though ſhe has loſt him, yet rather than ſeem to deſert him, will *abide by his Grave* for his ſake, and *continue in his Love*, even then when ſhe wants the Comfort of it. (2.) Where there is a true Deſire of Acquaintance with Chriſt, there will be a conſtant Attendance on the Means of Knowledge. See *Hoſ.* 6. 2, 3. *the third Day he will raiſe us up*; and then ſhall we know the meaning of that Reſurrection, if we follow on to know, as *Mary here*.

2. She ſtaid there *weeping*, and theſe Tears loudly ſpake her Affection to her Maſter. They that have loſt Chriſt have Cauſe to weep; ſhe wept at the Remembrance of his bitter Sufferings; wept for his Death, and the Loſs which ſhe and her Friends and the Country ſuſtained by it; *wept* to think of returning home without him; *wept* becauſe ſhe did not now find his Body. They that ſee Chriſt, muſt *ſeek him ſorrowing*, Luke 2. 48. muſt *weep* not for him, but for themſelves.

3. *As ſhe went, ſhe looked into the Sepulchre*, that her Eye might affect her Heart. When we are in Search of ſomething we have loſt, we look again and again in the Place where we laſt left it, and expected to have found it; ſhe will look *yet ſeven times*, not knowing but that at length ſhe might ſee ſome Encouragement. *Note*, 1. Weeping muſt not hinder ſeeking. Though ſhe *wept*, ſhe *ſtooped down* and *looked in*. 2. Thoſe are likely to *ſeek and find*, that ſeek with Affection; that ſeek *in Tears*.

Secondly, The Viſion ſhe had of *two Angels* in the Sepulchre, *v.* 12. Obſerve here,

1. The Deſcription of the Perſons ſhe ſaw, They were *two Angels in white*, *ſitting* probably on ſome Benches or Ledges hewn out in the Rock, one at *the Head*, and t'other at *the Feet* of the Grave, Where we have,

(1.) Their *Nature*; they were *Angels*, Meſſengers from Heaven, ſent on Purpoſe on this great Occaſion, (1.) To *honour the Son*, and to grace the Solemnity of his Reſurrection. Now the *Son of God* was again to be *brought into the World*, the Angels have a Charge to attend him, as they did at his Birth, *Heb.* 1. 6. (2.) To *comfort the Saints*; to ſpeak good Words to them that were in Sorrow, and by giving them notice that the Lord was riſen to prepare them for the Sight of him.

(2.) Their *Number*; *Two*, not a *Multitude of the heavenly Hoſt* to *ſing Praiſe*, only *two* to *bear Witneſs*; for out of the Mouth of two Witneſſes this Word would be eſtabliſhed.

(3.) Their *Array*. They were *in white*, noting, (1.) Their *Purity* and *Holineſs*; the beſt of Men *ſtanding before the Angels*, and compared with them, are *cloathed in filthy Garments*, Zech. 3. 3. but Angels are ſpotleſs and Glorified Saints, when they come to be as the Angels, ſhall *walk with Chriſt in white*. (2.) Their Glory, and glorying upon this Occaſion. The *White* in which they appeared, repreſented the Brightneſs of that State into which Chriſt was now riſen.

(4.) Their *Poſture* and *Place*. They *ſate* as it were repoſing themſelves in Chriſt's Grave, for Angels, tho' they needed not a Reſtoration, were oblig'd to Chriſt for their Eſtabliſhment. Theſe Angels went into the Grave, to teach us not to be afraid of it, nor to think that our reſting in it a while, will be any Prejudice to our Immortality; no, Matters are ſo ordered, that the Grave is not much *out of our way to* Heaven. It intimates likewiſe that Angels are to be employed about the Saints, not only at their Death, to carry their Souls into *Abraham*'s Boſom, but at the great Day, to *raiſe their Bodies*, Mat. 24. 31. Theſe Angelick Guards (and Angels are called Watchers, *Dan.* 4. 23.) keeping Poſſeſſion of the Sepulchre, when they had frighted away the Guards which the Enmies had ſet, repreſents Chriſt's Victory over the Powers of Darkneſs, routing and defeating them. Thus *Michael* and his Angels are more than Conquerors. Their ſitting to face one another, one at his Bed's-head, the other at the Beds-feet, notes their Care of the entire Body of Chriſt, his Myſtical as well as his Natural Body, from Head to Foot; it may alſo mind us of the two *Cherubims*, plac'd on eat either End of the Mercy-Seat, looking one at another, *Exod.* 25. 18. Chriſt crucified was the great Propitiatory, at the Head and Feet of which were theſe *two Cherubims*, not with flaming Swords to keep us from, but welcome Meſſengers to *direct* us to the way of Life.

2. Their compaſſionate Enquiry into the Cauſe of *Mary Magdalen*'s Grief, *v.* 13. *Woman why weepeſt thou*? This Queſtion was, 1. A Rebuke to her weeping; *why weepeſt thou*, when thou haſt Cauſe to rejoyce? Many of the *Floods* of our Tears would *dry away* before ſuch a Search as this into the *Fountain* of them. *Why art thou caſt down*? 2. It was deſign'd to ſhew how much Angels are concern'd at the Griefs of the Saints, having a Charge to miniſter to them for their Comfort. Chriſtians ſhould thus ſympathize with one another. 3. 'Twas only to make an Occaſion of informing her of that which would turn her Mourning into Rejoycing, would *put off her Sackcloth, and gird her with Gladneſs*.

3. The melancholy Account ſhe gives them of her preſent Diſtreſs. *Becauſe they have taken away* the bleſſed Body I came to embalm, *and I know not where they have laid it*. The ſame Story ſhe had told, *v.* 2. In it we may ſee,

(1.) The *Weakneſs of her Faith*. If ſhe had had Faith as *a Grain of Muſtard-ſeed*, this *Mountain* would have been *removed*; but we oft perplex our ſelves needleſly with *imaginary* Difficulties, which Faith would diſcover to us as *real* Advantages. Many good People complain of the Clouds and Darkneſs they are under, which are the neceſſary Methods of Grace for the humbling of their Souls, the mortifying of their Sin, and the endearing of Chriſt to them.

(2.) The *Strength of his Love*. They that have a true Affection for Chriſt cannot but be in great Affliction, when they have loſt either the comfortable Tokens of his Love in their Souls, or the comfortable Opportunities of converſing with him and doing him Honour in his Ordinances. *Mary Magdalen* is not diverted from her Enquiries by the Surprize of the Viſion, nor ſatisfied with the Honour of it; but ſtill ſhe harps upon the ſame String; *They have taken away my Lord A Sight of Angels*, and *their* Smiles, will not ſuffice without the *Sight of Chriſt*, and God's Smiles *in him*. Nay the Sight of Angels is but an Opportunity of purſuing her Enquiries after Chriſt. All Creatures, the moſt excellent, the moſt dear, ſhould be uſed as Means, and but as Means to bring us into Acquaintance with God in Chriſt. The Angels ask'd her, *Why weepeſt thou*? Why, ſaith ſhe, I have Cauſe enough to weep, for *they have taken away my Lord*, and like *Micah*, *What have I more*? Do you ask *why I weep*? *My beloved has withdrawn himſelf, and is gone*. *Note*, None *knows* but they that have *experienced* the Sorrows of a *deſerted* Soul, that *has had* comfortable Evidences of the Love of God in Chriſt and Hopes of Heaven, but has now loſt them, and walks in Darkneſs; ſuch a *wounded Spirit, who can bear*?

Thirdly, Chriſt's Appearing to her, while ſhe was talking with the Angels, and telling them her Caſe, before they had given her any Anſwer, Chriſt ſteps in himſelf to ſatisfy her Enquiries, for God now ſpeaketh to us *by his Son*; none but he himſelf can direct us *to himſelf*. *Mary* would fain know where the Lord is, and behold he is at her right Hand. *Note*. 1. Thoſe that will be content with *nothing ſhort* of a Sight of Chriſt ſhall be put off with *nothing leſs*. He never ſaid to the Soul that ſought him, *Seek in vain*. Is it Chriſt thou wouldſt have? Chriſt thou ſhalt have. 2. Chriſt in manifeſting himſelf to thoſe that ſeek him, often outdoes their Expectations. *Mary* longs to ſee the Dead Body of Chriſt, and complains of he Loſs of that, and behold *ſhe ſees him alive*, Thus the doth for his praying People more than they are able to ask or think.

In this Appearance of Chriſt to *Mary*. Obſerve,

1. How he did at firſt *conceal himſelf* from her.

1. He ſtood as a *common Perſon*, and ſhe looked upon him accordingly, *v.* 14. She ſtood expecting an Anſwer to her Complaint from the Angels; and either ſeeing the Shadow, or hearing the Tread of ſome Perſon behind her, ſhe *turned her ſelf back*, from talking with the Angels, and *ſees Jeſus himſelf ſtanding*, the very Perſon ſhe was looking for, and yet ſhe *knew not that it was Jeſus*, Note, 1. *The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken Heart*, Pſal. 34. 18. nearer than they are aware. They that ſeek Chriſt, tho' they do not ſee him, yet may be ſure he is not far from them. 2. Thoſe that diligently ſeek the Lord will *turn every way* in their Enquiry after him. *Mary turn'd her ſelf back* in Hopes of ſome Diſcoveries. Several of the Ancients ſuggeſt, that *Mary* was directed to *look behind her* by the Angel's riſing up, and doing his obeyſance to the Lord Jeſus, whom they ſaw before *Mary* did; and that ſhe looked back to ſee who it was they paid ſuch a profound Reverence to. But if ſo, it is not likely ſhe would have taken him for the Gardiner; rather therefore 'twas her earneſt Deſire in ſeeking that made her *turn every way*. 3. Chriſt is often near his People, and they are not aware of him. She *knew not that it was Jeſus*; not that he appeared in any other Likeneſs, but either it was a careleſs tranſient look ſhe caſt upon him, and her Eyes being full of Care, ſhe could not ſo well diſtinguiſh, or they were *holden that ſhe ſhould not know him*, as thoſe of the two Diſciples, *Luke*, 14. 16.

2. He asked her a common Queſtion, and ſhe anſwered him accordingly, *v.* 15.

1. The Queſtion he ask'd her was natural enough, and what any one would have asked her; *Woman why weepeſt thou? Whom ſeekeſt thou?* What Buſineſs haſt thou here in the Garden ſo early? And what's all this noiſe and ado for? Perhaps it was ſpoken with ſome roughneſs, as *Joſeph* ſpake to his Brethren when he made himſelf ſtrange, before he made himſelf known to them. It ſhould ſeem this was the firſt Word Chriſt ſpoke after his Reſurrection; *Why weepeſt thou*? I am riſen. The Reſurrection of Chriſt has enough in it to allay all our Sorrows, to check the Streams, and dry up the Fountains of our Tears. Obſerve here, Chriſt takes Cognizance, (1.) Of his Peoples *Griefs*; and enquires, *Why they weep*? He *bottles* their Tears, and records them in *his Book*. (2.) of his Peopels *Cares*; and enquires, Whom they ſeek, and what they would have? When he knows they are ſeeking him, yet he will know it from them; they muſt tell him whom they ſeek.

2. The Reply ſhe made him is natural enough; ſhe doth not give him a direct Anſwer, but as if ſhe ſhould ſay, Why do you banter me, and upbraid me with my Tears? You know why I weep, and whom I ſeek; and therefore *ſuppoſing him to be the Gardiner*, the Perſon employ'd by *Joſeph* to dreſs and keep his Garden, who ſhe thought was come thither thus early to his Work; ſhe ſaid, *Sir, if thou haſt carried him home*, pray tell me where thou *haſt laid him*, and *I will take him away*. See here,

1. The *Error* of her *Underſtanding*; ſhe ſuppoſed our Lord Jeſus to be the *Gardiner*, perhaps, becauſe he asked, What Authority ſhe had to *do there*? *Note*, Troubled Spirits in a cloudy and dark Day are apt to miſrepreſent Chriſt to themſelves, and to put wrong Conſtructions upon the Methods of his Providence and Grace.

2. The *Truth* of her *Affection*. See how her Heart was upon it to find Chriſt; ſhe puts the Queſtion to every one ſhe meets, like the careful Spouſe, *Saw ye him whom my Soul loveth*? She ſpeaks a Gardiner fair, and calls him *Sir*, in hopes to gain ſome Intelligence from him concerning *her beloved*. When ſhe ſpeaks of Chriſt, ſhe doth not name him; but if thou have born *him* hence, taking it for granted that this Gardiner was full of Thoughts concerning this *Jeſus* as well as ſhe, and therefore could not but know whom ſhe meant. Another Evidence of the Strength of her Affection was, that wherever he was laid ſhe would undertake to *remove him*. Such a Body, with ſuch a Weight of Spices about it, was much more than ſhe could pretend to carry; But true Love thinks it can *do more than it can*, and makes nothing of Difficulties. She ſuppoſed this *Gardiner* grudged that the Body of one that was *ignominiouſly* crucified ſhould have the Honour to be laid in his Maſter's new Tomb, and that therefore he had removed it to ſome ſorry Place, which he thought fitter for it. Yet *Mary* doth not threaten him to go tell his Maſter, and get him turned out of his Place for it; but undertakes to find out ſome other Sepulchre to which he might be welcome. Chriſt needs not ſtay where he is thought a Burthen.

2. How Chriſt at length *made him ſelf known to* her, and by a *pleaſing Surprize* gave her infallible Aſſurances of his Reſurrection. *Joſeph* at length ſaid to his Brethren, *I am Joſeph*. So Chriſt here to *Mary Magdalen*, now he is entered upon his exalted State.

Obſerve, 1. How Chriſt diſcovered himſelf to this good Woman that was ſeeking him in Tears, *v.* 17. *Jeſus ſaith unto her*, Mary. 'Twas ſaid with an Emphaſis, and that Air of Kindneſs and Freedom with which he was wont to ſpeak to her. Now he *changed his Voice*, and ſpake like himſelf; not like the Gardiner. Chriſt's way of making himſelf known to his People is by *his Word*, his Word applied to their Souls; ſpeaking to them in particular. When thoſe whom God *knew by Name* in the Counſels of his Love, (*Exod.* 33. 12.) *he calls by Name* in the Efficacy of his Grace, then he *reveals his Son in them*, as in *Paul*, *Gal.* 1. 16. when Chriſt called to him by Name, *Saul, Saul*. Chriſt's Sheep *know his Voice*, *John* 10. 4. This one Word, *Mary*, was like that to the Diſciples in the Storm, *It is I*. Then the Word of Chriſt doth us good when we put our own Names into the Precepts and Promiſes; in this Chriſt calls *to me*, and ſpeaks *to me*.

2. How readily ſhe received this Diſcovery when Chriſt ſaid, *Mary*, Doſt thou not know me; Art thou and I grown ſuch Strangers? She was preſently aware who it was, as the Spouſe, *Cant.* 2. 8. *It is the Voice of my Beloved.* She turn'd herſelf and ſaid, *Rabboni, my Maſter.* It might properly be read with an Interrogation, *Rabboni*? Is it my Maſter? Nay but is it indeed? Obſerve,

(1.) The Title of reſpect ſhe gives him. *My Maſter*; Διδασκαλ, *a teaching Maſter.* The *Jews* called their Doctors *Rabbies*, *Great Men.* Their Criticks tell us, That *Rabbon* was with them a more honourable Title than *Rabbi*; and therefore *Mary* chuſeth that, and adds a Note of Appropriation, *My Great Maſter.* *Note*, Notwithſtanding the Freedom of Communion Chriſt is pleaſed to admit us to with himſelf, we muſt remember that he is our *Maſter*, and to be approach'd with a *godly Fear*.

(2.) With what Livlineſs of Affection ſhe gives this Title to Chriſt. She *turned herſelf* from the Angels whom ſhe had in her Eye, to look unto Jeſus: We muſt take off our Regards from all Creatures, even the *brighteſt* and *beſt* to fix them upon Chriſt, from whom nothing muſt divert us, and with whom nothing muſt interfere: When ſhe thought it had been the Gardiner, ſhe looked another way when ſhe ſpoke to him; but now ſhe knew the Voice of Chriſt, ſhe *turned herſelf.* The Soul that hears Chriſt's Voice, and is turned to him, calls him with Joy and Triumph, *My Maſter.* See with what Pleaſure thoſe who love Chriſt ſpeak of his Authority over them, *My Maſter, My Great Maſter.*

3. The farther Inſtructions that Chriſt gave her, *v.* 17. *Touch me not*; but go carry the News to the Diſciples.

1. He diverts her from the Expectation of Familiar Society and Converſation with him at this time. *Touch me not, for I am not yet aſcended. Mary* was ſo tranſported with the Sight of her dear *Maſter*, that ſhe forgot her ſelf, and that State of Glory into which he was now entering, and was ready to expreſs her Joy by affectionate Embraces of him; which Chriſt here forbids at this time.

(1.) *Touch me not* thus at all, for *I am to aſcend to Heaven.* He bid the Diſciples *touch him* for the Confirmation of their Faith: He allowed the Woman *to take hold of his Feet*, and worſhip him, *Mat.* 28. 9. But *Mary* ſuppoſing that he was riſen as *Lazarus* was, to live amongſt them conſtantly, and converſe with them freely as he had done, upon that Preſumption was about to take hold of his Hand with her uſual Freedom: This Miſtake Chriſt rectified, ſhe muſt *believe* him and *adore* him, as exalted; but muſt not expect to be familiar with him as formerly. See 2 *Cor.* 5. 16. He forbids her to dote upon his bodily Preſence, to ſet her Heart on that, or expect the Continuance of that, and leads her to that *Spiritual* Converſe and Communion which ſhe ſhould have with him after he was aſcended to his Father; for the greateſt Joy of his Reſurrection was that it was a Step toward his Aſcenſion. *Mary* thought now her Maſter was riſen he would preſently ſet up a *Temporal* Kingdom, ſuch as they had long promiſed themſelves: No, ſaith Chriſt, *Touch me not* with any ſuch Thought, think not to lay hold on me ſo as to detain me here; for tho' I am not yet aſcended, go to my Brethren, and tell them, *I am to aſcend.* As before his Death, ſo now after his Reſurrection he ſtill harps upon this, That he was *going away*, was *no more in the World*; and therefore they muſt *look higher* than his bodily Preſence, and look further than the preſent State of Things.

(2.) *Touch me not*, i. e. Do not ſtay to touch me now, ſtay not now to make any further *Enquiries*, or give any further Expreſſions of Joy, for *I am not yet aſcended*; I ſhall not preſently depart, it may as well be done *another time*, the beſt Service thou canſt do now is to carry the Tidings to the Diſciples; loſe no time therefore, but go away with all ſpeed. *Note*, Publick Service ought to be preferred before private Satisfaction. 'Tis *more bleſſed to give than to receive. Jacob* muſt let an Angel go when the Day breaks, and it's time for him to look after his Family. *Mary* muſt not ſtay to talk with her Maſter, but muſt carry his Meſſage; for it was a Day of good Tidings which ſhe muſt not engroſs the Comfort of, but hand it to others. See that Story, 2 *Kings* 7. 9.

2. He directs her what Meſſage to carry to his Diſciples. But *go to my Brethren*, and tell them, not only that *I am riſen*, ſhe could have told them that of herſelf, for ſhe had ſeen him, but that *I aſcend.* Obſerve.

(1.) To whom this Meſſage is ſent. *Go to my Brethren* with it; for he is not aſhamed to call them ſo, (1.) Tho' he was now entering upon his Glory, and was declared to be the Son of God with greater Power than ever; yet he owns his Diſciples *as his Brethren*, and expreſſeth himſelf with more tender Affection to them than before. He had called them *Friends*; but never *Brethren* till now. Though Chriſt be *high*, yet he is not *haughty*: Notwithſtanding his *Elevation*, he diſdains not to own his *poor Relations.* (2.) Tho his Diſciples had lately carried themſelves very diſingenuouſly towards him; he had never ſeen them together ſince they all *forſook him and fled*, when he was apprehended. Juſtly might he now have ſent them an angry Meſſage, Go to yonder treacherous Deſerters, and *tell them*, I'll never truſt them more, or have any thing more to do with them: No, he forgiveth, he forgets, and doth not upbraid.

(2.) By whom it is ſent? by *Mary Magdalen, out of whom* had been *caſt ſeven Devils*, yet now thus favoured. This was her Reward for her Conſtancy in adhering to Chriſt, and enquiring after him; and a *tacit Rebuke* to the Apoſtles who had not been ſo *cloſe* as ſhe was in attending on the *dying Jeſus*; nor ſo early as ſhe was in meeting the riſing Jeſus; ſhe becomes an Apoſtle to the Apoſtles.

(3.) What the Meſſage it ſelf is, *I aſcend to my Father.* Two full Breaſts of Conſolation here are in theſe Words.

1. *Our joint Relation to God*, reſulting from our *Union with Chriſt*, is an unſpeakable Comfort. Speaking of that inexhauſtible Spring of Light, Life, and Bliſs, he ſaith, He *is my Father and your Father, my God and your God.* This is very expreſſive of that near Relation that is between Chriſt and Believers, *He that ſanctifieth, and they that are Sanctified are both one*; for they agree in one, *Heb.* 2. 11. Here is ſuch an *Advancement* of Chriſtians, and ſuch a *Condeſcenſion* of Chriſt, as brings them very near together: So admirably well is the Matter contrived in order to their Union.

(1.) 'Tis the great *Dignity* of Believers that the *Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* is in him *their Father.* A vaſt difference indeed there is between the reſpective Foundations of the Relation. He is Chriſt's Father by eternal Generation, ours by a gracious Adoption; yet even that warrants us to call him as Chriſt did, *Abba Father.* This gives a Reaſon why Chriſt called them *Brethren*, becauſe *his* Father was *their* Father. Chriſt was now aſcending to appear as an *Advocate with the Father*, with *his* Father; and therefore we may hope he will prevail for *any thing* with our Father, and therefore we may hope he will prevail *for us.*

(2.) 'Tis the great *Condeſcenſion* of Chriſt that he is pleaſed to own the Believers God, for *his God*; *my God and your God*; *mine* that he may be yours; the God of the *Redeemer* to ſupport him, *Pſal.* 89. 26. that he might be the God of the *Redeemed* to ſave them. The Summary of the New Covenant is that God will be *to us a God*; and therefore Chriſt being the Surety and the Head of the Covenant, who is *primarily* dealt with, and Believers only *through him*, as his ſpiritual Seed, this Covenant Relation faſtens firſt upon *him*, God becomes *his God*, and ſo *ours*; we partaking of a *Divine Nature*, Chriſt's Father is our Father; and he partaking of the *Humane Nature*, our God is his God.

2. Chriſt's *Aſcenſion* into *Heaven*, in further Proſecution of *his Undertaking* for us, is likewiſe an unſpeakable Comfort; Tell them I muſt ſhortly *aſcend*: That's the next Step I am to take. Now this was intended to be,

1. A Word of *Caution* to *theſe* Diſciples not to expect the Continuance of his Bodily Preſence on Earth, nor the ſetting up of his Temporal Kingdom among Men, which they dreamt of; no, Tell them I am not *riſen* to ſtay with them, but to go on their Errand to Heaven: Thus they who are raiſed to a ſpiritual Life in Conformity to Chriſt's Reſurrection, muſt reckon that they riſe to *aſcend.* They are *quickened with Chriſt* that they may *ſit with him in Heavenly Places* Eph. 2. 5, 6. Let them not think that this Earth is to be their Home and Reſt; no, being born *from* Heaven, they are bound *for* Heaven. Their Eye and Aim muſt be upon another World, and this ever upon their Hearts, I *aſcend*; therefore muſt I ſeek things above.

2. A Word of *Comfort* to *them*, and to all that ſhall believe in him through their Word. He was then *aſcending*, he is now aſcending to *his Father* and *our Father.* This was his *Advancement*, he aſcended to receive thoſe Honours and Powers which were to be the Recompence of his Humiliation; he ſaith it with triumph, That they who love him may rejoyce. This is our *Advantage*; for he aſcended as a Conqueror leading Captivity Captive for us, *Pſal.* 68. 18. He aſcended as our Forerunner, to prepare a Place for us, and to be ready to receive us. This Meſſage was like that which *Joſeph*'s Brethren brought to *Jacob* concerning him *Gen.* 45. 26. Joſeph *is yet alive*; and not only ſo, *vivit imo & in ſenatum venit, he is Governour over all the Land of* Egypt: *All Power is his.*

Some make theſe Words, *I aſcend to my God and your God*, to include a Promiſe of our Reſurrection in the Virtue of Chriſt's Reſurrection; for Chriſt had proved the Reſurrection of the Dead from theſe Words, *I am the God of* Abraham, *Mat.* 22. 32. So that Chriſt here inſinuates, As he is *my God*, and hath therefore raiſed me; ſo he is *your God*, and will therefore raiſe you, and be *your God*, Rev. 21. 3. *Becauſe I live you ſhall live alſo*: I now aſcend to honour *my God*, and you ſhall aſcend to him as *your God.*

Laſtly, Here is *Mary Magdalen*'s faithful Report of what ſhe had *ſeen* and *heard*, to the Diſciples, *v.* 18. *She came and told the Diſciples*, whom ſhe found together, *that ſhe had ſeen the Lord. Peter* and *John* had left her ſeeking him carefully with Tears, and would not ſtay to *ſeek him with her*; and now ſhe comes to tell them, That ſhe had found him, and to rectify the Miſtake ſhe had led them into by enquiring after the *dead Body*, for now ſhe found it was a *living Body*, and a *glorified one*: So that ſhe found what ſhe ſought, and what was infinitely better, ſhe had Joy in her Sight of the Maſter her ſelf, and was willing to *communicate* of her Joy, for ſhe knew it would be *good News* to them. When God *comforts* us, 'tis with this Deſign, that we may *comfort others.*

And as ſhe told them what ſhe had ſeen, ſo alſo what ſhe had heard; ſhe had ſeen the Lord alive by the ſame Token, and a good Token it was, That *he had ſpoken theſe Things unto her*, as a Meſſage to be delivered to them; and ſhe delivered it faithfully. They that are acquainted with the Word of Chriſt themſelves, ſhould communicate their Knowledge for the Good of others, and not grudge that others ſhould know as much as they do.

19 Then the ſame day at evening, being the firſt *day* of the week when the doors were ſhut, where the diſciples were aſſembled for fear of the Jews, came Jeſus and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaith unto

them, Peace *be* unto you. 20 And when he had ſo ſaid, he ſhewed unto them *his* hands and his ſide. Then were the diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord. 21 Then ſaid Jeſus to them again, Peace *be* unto you : as *my* Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you. 22 And when he had ſaid this, he breathed on *them*, and ſaith unto them, Receive ye the holy Ghoſt. 23 Whoſe ſoever ſins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; *and* whoſe ſoever *ſins* ye retain, they are retained. 24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jeſus came. 25 The other diſciples therefore ſaid unto him, We have ſeen the Lord. But he ſaid unto them, Except I ſhall ſee in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thruſt my hand into his ſide, I will not believe.

The *infallible Proofs* of Chriſt's Reſurrection, were his *ſhewing himſelf alive*, Acts 1. 3. In theſe Verſes we have an Account of his firſt Appearance to the College of the Diſciples on the ſame Day he roſe. He had ſent them the Tidings of his Reſurrection by truſty and credible Meſſengers, but to ſhew his Love *to them*, and confirm their Faith in him, he *came himſelf*, and gave them all the Aſſurances they could deſire of the Truth of it, that they might not have it by *Hear-ſay* only, and at *ſecond Hand*, but might themſelves be *Eye-witneſſes* of his being alive, becauſe they muſt *atteſt* it to the World, and *build the Church* upon that Teſtimony. Now obſerve here,

Firſt, *When* and *where* this Appearance was, *v.* 19. It was *the ſame Day* that he roſe, being the *firſt Day of the Week*, the Day after the *Jewiſh* Sabbath, at a private Meeting of the Diſciples ; *ten of them*, and ſome more of their Friends with them, *Luke* 24. 33.

There are three *ſecondary* Ordinances (as I may call them) inſtituted by our Lord Jeſus, to continue in his Church, for the Support of it, and for the due Adminiſtration of the *principal* Ordinances, the *Words*, *Sacraments* and *Prayer* ; theſe are, the *Lord's-day*, *Solemn Aſſemblies*, and a *Standing Miniſtry*; the Mind of Chriſt concerning each of theſe is plainly intimated to us in theſe Verſes; and of the *two firſt* here in the Circumſtances of this Appearance, the other, *v.* 21. Chriſt's Kingdom was to be ſet up among Men, immediately upon his Reſurrection, and accordingly we find the very Day he roſe, tho' but a *Day of ſmall Things*, yet graced with thoſe Solemnities, which ſhould help to keep up a Face of Religion, throughout all the Ages of the Church.

1. Here's a *Chriſtian* Sabbath *obſerved* by the Diſciples, and *owned* by our Lord Jeſus. The Viſit Chriſt made to his Diſciples, was on the *firſt Day of the Week*. And the firſt Day of the Week is (I think) the only Day of the Week, or Month, or Year, that is ever mentioned *by Number* in all the New Teſtament ; and that is ſeveral times ſpoken of as a Day religiouſly obſerved. Tho' it was ſaid here expreſly, *v.* 1. that Chriſt roſe the firſt Day of the Week, and it might have been ſufficient to ſay here, *v.* 19. he appeared the *ſame Day at Evening*, yet to put an Honour upon the Day it is repeated, being *the firſt Day of the Week*. Not that the Apoſtles deſigned to put Honour upon the Day, they were yet in doubt concerning the Occaſion of it ; but God deſigned to put Honour upon it, by ordering it, that they ſhould be all together to receive Chriſt's firſt Viſit on that Day. Thus in effect he bleſſed and ſanctified that Day, becauſe in it the Redeemer reſted.

2. Here's a *Chriſtian Aſſembly* ſolemnized by the Diſciples, and that alſo *owned* by the Lord Jeſus. Probably the Diſciples met here for ſome religious Exerciſe, to pray together; or perhaps they met to compare Notes, and conſider whether they had ſufficient Evidence of their Maſter's Reſurrection, and to conſult what was now to be done ; whether they ſhould keep together or ſcatter. They met to know one another's Minds, ſtrengthen one another's Hands, and concert proper Meaſures to be taken in the preſent critical Juncture.

This Meeting was *private*, becauſe they durſt not appear publickly, eſpecially not in a Body. They met in *a Houſe* ; but they kept the *Doors ſhut*, that they might not be ſeen together, and that none might come among them, but ſuch as they knew ; for they *feared the Jews*, who would proſecute the Diſciples as Criminals, that they might ſeem to believe the Lye they would deceive the World with, that they *came by Night and ſtole him away*. *Note*, 1. The Diſciples of Chriſt, even in difficult Times, muſt not *forſake the aſſembling themſelves together*, *Heb.* 10. 25. Thoſe *Sheep of the Flock were ſcattered* in the Storm, but Sheep are ſociable, and will come together again. It is no new Thing for the Aſſemblies of Chriſt's Diſciples to be driven into Corners, and forced into *the Wilderneſs*, Rev. 12. 14. Prov. 28. 12. God's People have been often obliged to *enter into their Chambers*, and *ſhut their Doors*, as here, for fear of the *Jews*. Perſecution is *allotted* them, and Retirement from Perſecution is *allowed* them, and then where ſhall we look for them but in *Dens and Caves in the Earth*. It is a real Grief, but no real Reproach to Chriſt's Diſciples, thus to *abſcond*.

Secondly, What was *ſaid* and *done* in this Viſit Chriſt made to his Diſciples, and this Interview between them.

1. When they were *aſſembled*, Jeſus came *among them* in his own Likeneſs ; yet drawing a Veil over the Brightneſs of his Body, now begun to be glorified, elſe 'twould have dazled their Eyes, as in his Transfiguration. Chriſt came among them, to give them a Specimen of the Performance of his Promiſe, that where *two or three are gathered together in his Name, he will be in the midſt of them.*

2. He came, tho' the *Doors were ſhut*. This doth not at all weaken the Evidence of his having a real *human Body* after his Reſurrection ; tho' the Doors were ſhut, he knew how to open them without any Noiſe, and come in ſo as that they might not hear him, as formerly he had walked on the Water, and yet had a true Body. It is a Comfort to Chriſt's Diſciples, when their ſolemn Aſſemblies are reduced to Privacy, that no Doors can ſhut out Chriſt's Preſence from them.

We have five Things in this Appearance of Chriſt.

1. His *kind* and *familiar Salutation* of his Diſciples. He ſaid, *Peace be unto you.* This was not a *Word of Courſe*, tho' commonly uſed ſo, at the meeting of Friends, but a *ſolemn uncommon* Benediction, conferring upon them all the bleſſed Fruits and Effects of his Death and Reſurrection. The Phraſe was vulgar, but the Senſe was now *peculiar*, *Peace be unto you*, is as much as all Good be to you ; all Peace always by all Means. Chriſt had left them *his Peace* for their Legacy, *Chap.* 14. 27. By the Death of the Teſtator the Teſtament was become of Force, and he was now riſen from the Dead to *prove the Will*, and to be himſelf the *Executor* of it. Accordingly he here makes prompt Payment of the Legacy ; *Peace be unto you.* His ſpeaking Peace makes Peace, *creates the Fruit of the Lips Peace* ; Peace with God, Peace in your own Conſciences, Peace with one another : All this Peace be *with you* ; not Peace with the World : But Peace *in Chriſt*. His ſudden appearing in the midſt of them when they were full of Doubts concerning him, full of Fears concerning themſelves, could not but put them into ſome Diſorder and Conſternation, the Noiſe of which Waves he ſtills with this Word, *Peace be unto you.*

2. His *clear* and *undeniable Manifeſtation* of himſelf to them, *v.* 20. And here obſerve,

(1.) The *Method* he took to convince them of the Truth of his Reſurrection. They now ſaw him *alive*, whom Multitudes had ſeen *dead* two or three Days before : Now the only Doubt was, whether this that they *ſaw alive* was the ſame individual Body which had been ſeen dead ; and none could deſire a further Proof that it was ſo, than the Scars or Marks of the Wounds in the Body. Now,

(1.) The *Marks* of the *Wounds*, and very *deep Marks* ; that without any Pain or Soreneſs remained in the Body of the Lord Jeſus, even *after his Reſurrection*, that they might be Demonſtrations of the Truth of it. Conquerors glory in the Marks of their Wounds. Chriſt's Wounds were to *ſpeak on Earth*, that it was he himſelf ; and therefore he *roſe* with them. They were to *ſpeak in Heaven* in the Interceſſion he muſt ever live to make ; and therefore he *aſcended* with them, and appeared in the midſt of the Throne *a Lamb as it had been ſlain*, and bleeding afreſh, *Rev.* 5. 6. Nay, it ſhould ſeem he will come again with his Scars, that they may *look on him whom they pierced.*

(2.) Theſe Marks he *ſhewed* to his Diſciples for their Conviction. They had not only the Satisfaction of ſeeing him look with the ſame Countenance, and hearing him ſpeak with the ſame Voice they had been ſo long accuſtomed to, *ſic oculos, ſic ille manus, ſic ora ferebat* ; but the further Evidence of thoſe peculiar Marks. He *opened his Hands* to them, that they might ſee the Marks of the Wounds on them. He *opened his Breaſt*, as the Nurſe hers to the Child, to ſhew them the Wound there. *Note*, The exalted Redeemer will ever ſhew himſelf *open handed*, and *open hearted* to all his faithful Friends and Followers. When Chriſt manifeſts his Love to Believers by the Comforts of his Spirit, aſſures them, that becauſe *he lives*, they ſhall *live alſo* ; then he ſhews them his *Hands* and his *Side*.

(2.) The Impreſſion it made upon them, and the Good it did them.

(1.) They were convinc'd that they *ſaw the Lord* ; ſo was their Faith confirm'd. At firſt they thought they ſaw an *Apparition* only, a *Phantaſm* ; but now they knew it was the *Lord* himſelf. Thus many true Believers, who, while they were weak, fear'd their Comforts were but *imaginary* ; afterwards, find them through Grace, real and ſubſtantial. They aſk not, *Is it the Lord?* But are aſſured, *It is he.*

(2.) *Then* they were glad. That which ſtrengthened their Faith, raiſed their Joy ; *believing they rejoyce.* The Evangeliſt ſeems to write it with ſomething of Tranſport and Triumph ; *Then*, then, *were the Diſciples glad when they ſaw the Lord.* If it revived the Spirit of *Jacob*, to hear that *Joſeph is yet alive* ; how would it revive the Hearts of thoſe Diſciples to hear that *Jeſus is again alive?* 'Tis *Life from the Dead* to them. Now that Word of Chriſt was fulfilled, *John* 16. 22. *I will ſee you again, and your Heart ſhall rejoyce.* This wiped away all Tears from their Eyes. *Note*, A Sight of Chriſt will glad the Heart of a Diſciple at any Time. The more we *ſee* of Chriſt, the more we ſhall *rejoyce* in him; and our *Joy* will never be perfect till we come there where we ſhall *ſee him as he is*,

3. The *honourable* and *ample* Commiſſion he gave them to be his Agents in the planting of his Church, *v.* 21. Here's,

1. The *Preface to their Commiſſion*, which was the ſolemn Repetition of the Salutation before ; *Peace be unto you.* This was in-

tended, either, 1. To *raiſe their Attention* to the Commiſſion he was about to give them. The former Salutation was to *ſtill* the Tumult of their *Fear*, that they might *calmly* attend to the Proofs of his Reſurrection; this was to *reduce* the Tranſport of their *Joy*, that they might *ſedately* hear what he had further to ſay to them. Or, 2. To *encourage them to accept of the Commiſſion he was giving them.* Tho' 'twould involve them in a great deal of Trouble, yet he deſigned their Honour and Comfort in it, and in the Iſſue it would be *Peace to them. Gideon* received his Commiſſion with this Word, *Peace be unto thee, Judg.* 6. 22, 23. Chriſt is *our Peace*; if he be *with us*, Peace is *to us.* Chriſt was now ſending the Diſciples to publiſh *Peace* to the World, *Iſa.* 52. 7. and Chriſt here not only confers it upon them for their own Satisfaction, but commits it to them as a Truſt to be by them tranſmitted to all the *Sons of Peace*, Luke 10. 5. 6.

2. The *Commiſſion it ſelf*, which ſounds very great, *As my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you.*

1. It is eaſy to underſtand how *Chriſt ſent them*; he appointed them to go on with his Work upon Earth, and to lay out themſelves for the ſpreading of his Goſpel, and the ſetting up of his Kingdom among Men. He *ſent them* authorized with a Divine Warrant, armed with a Divine Power; ſent them as Ambaſſadors to treat of Peace, and as Heralds to Proclaim it; ſent them as Servants to bid to the Marriage. Hence they were called *Apoſtles*, Men *ſent.*

2. But how Chriſt ſent them. *As the Father ſent him*, is not ſo eaſily underſtood. Certainly their Commiſſions and Powers were infinitely *inferiour* to his. But,

1. Their Work was of the ſame Kind with his, and they were to go on where he left off. They were not ſent to be *Prieſts* and *Kings* like him, but only *Prophets.* As he was ſent to *bear Witneſs to the Truth*, ſo were they; not to be Mediators of the Reconciliation, but only Preachers and Publiſhers of it. Was he ſent, *not to be miniſtred to, but to miniſter*; not to *do his own Will*, but the *Will of him that ſent him*; not to *deſtroy the Law and the Prophets*, but to *fill them up*, ſo were they. As the Father ſent him to the *loſt Sheep of the Houſe of Iſrael*, ſo he ſent them *into all the World.*

2. He had a *Power* to *ſend them* equal to that which the Father had to *ſend him.* Here the Force of the Compariſon ſeems to lye. By the ſame Authority the Father ſent me, do I ſend you. This proves the Godhead of Chriſt; the Commiſſions he gave were of equal Authority with thoſe which the Father gave, and as valid and effectual to all Intents and Purpoſes; equal with thoſe he gave to the Old Teſtament Prophets in Viſions. The Commiſſions of *Peter* and *John* by the plain Word of Chriſt, are as good as thoſe of *Iſaiah* and *Ezekiel* by the *Lord ſitting on his Throne*; nay, equal with that which was given to the Mediator himſelf for his Work. Had an he unconteſtible Authority, and an irreſiſtible Ability for his Work, ſo had they for theirs. Or thus, *As the Father hath ſent me*, is as it were the *Recital* of his Power, by Virtue of the Authority given him as *Mediator*, he gave Authority to them as his Miniſters, to act for him, and in his Name, with the Children of Men; ſo that they who *received them*, or *rejected* them, *received* or *rejected* him, and him that ſent him, *John* 13. 20.

4. The *Qualification of them, for the Diſcharge of the Truſt repoſed in them* by their Commiſſion. *Ver.* 22. He *breathed on them*, and ſaid, *Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt.* Obſerve,

1. The *Sign* he *uſed* to *aſſure* them of, and *affect* them with, this Gift he was now about to beſtow upon them, he *breathed on them*; not only to ſhew them by this Breath of Life that he himſelf was *really alive*, but to ſignify to them that ſpiritual Life and Power which they ſhould receive from him for all the Services that lay before them. Probably he breathed upon them all *together*, not upon each ſeverally, and tho' *Thomas* was not with them, yet the Spirit of the Lord knew where to find him as he did *Eldad* and *Medad*, *Num.* 11. 26. Chriſt here ſeems to refer to the Creation of Man at firſt, by the breathing of the Breath of Life into him, *Gen.* 2. 7. and to intimate that he himſelf was the Author of that Work; and that the ſpiritual Life and Strength of Miniſters and Chriſtians is delivered from him, and depends upon him as much as the natural Life of *Adam* and his *Seed*. As the *Breath of the Almighty* gave Life to Man, and began the Old World, ſo the Breath of the mighty Saviour gave Life to his Miniſters, and began a new World, *Job*, 33. 4. Now this intimates to us, 1. That the Spirit is the *Breath of Chriſt proceeding* from the Son. The Spirit in the Old Teſtament is compared to *Breath, Ezek.* 37. 9. *Come O Breath*, but the New Teſtament tells us it is Chriſt's *Breath.* The *Breath of God* is put for the *Power of his Wrath*, Iſa. 11. 4. and 30. 33. But the *Breath of Chriſt* ſignifies the *Power of his Grace*; the breathing of Threatnings is changed into the Breathings of Love by the Mediation of Chriſt. Our Words are uttered by our Breath, ſo the Word of Chriſt is *Spirit* and Life. The Word comes from the Spirit, and the Spirit comes along with the Word. 2. That the Spirit is the *Gift of Chriſt.* The Apoſtles communicated the Holy Ghoſt by the *laying on of Hands*, thoſe Hands being firſt *lifted up* in Prayer for they could only *beg* this Bleſſing, and carry it as *Meſſengers*; but Chriſt conferred the Holy Ghoſt by *breathing*, for he is the Author of the Gift, and from him it comes *Orignally. Moſes* could not give *his Spirit*, God did it, *Num.* 11. 17. but Chriſt did it *himſelf.*

2. The *ſolemn Grant* he made ſignified by this Sign, *receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*, in part now, as an Earneſt of what you ſhall further receive *not many Days hence.* They now received more of the Holy Ghoſt than they had yet receiv'd. Thus Spiritual Bleſſings are given *gradually*; to him that has ſhall be given. Now *Jeſus* began to be glorified, more of the Spirit began to be given; ſee *John* 7. 39. Let us ſee what is contain'd in this Grant.

1. Chriſt hereby gives them *Aſſurance* of the *Spirit's Aid* in their *future* Work; in the Execution of the Commiſſion now given them. *I ſend you*, and you ſhall have the Spirit to go along with you. Now the *Spirit of the Lord reſted upon them*, to qualify them for all the Services that lay before them: Whom Chriſt *employs*, he will *clothe* with his Spirit, and furniſh with all *needful Powers.*

2. He hereby gives them *Experience* of the Spirit's Influences in their *preſent* Caſe. He had ſhewed them his *Hands and his Side*, to convince them of the Truth of his Reſurrection; but the plaineſt Evidences will not of themſelves work Faith, Witneſs the Infidelity of the Soldiers, who were the only Eye-Witneſſes of the Reſurrection. Therefore *receive ye the Holy Ghoſt* to work Faith in you, and to open your Underſtandings. They were now in Danger of the *Jews*, therefore receive ye the Holy Ghoſt to work Courage in you. What Chriſt ſaid to them, he ſaith to all true Believers, *receive ye the Holy Ghoſt*, Eph. 1. 13. What Chriſt gives we muſt receive, muſt ſubmit our ſelves, and our whole Souls to the quickening, ſanctifying Influences of the Bleſſed Spirit; receiving his *Motions* and *comply* with them; receive his *Powers* and make uſe of them; and they who thus obey this Word as a Precept, ſhall have the Benefit of it as a Promiſe, they ſhall receive the Holy Ghoſt as a Guide of their Way, and the Earneſt of their Inheritance.

5. *One particular Breath of the Power given them by their Commiſſion*, inſtanced in v. 23. *Whoſoever Sins ye* remit in the due Execution of the Powers you are entruſted with, they are remitted to them, and they may take the Comfort of it. And *whoſoever Sins ye retain*, i. e. pronounce unpardoned, and the Guilt of them bound on, *they are retained*, and the Sinner may be ſure of it to his Sorrow. Now this follows upon their *receiving the Holy Ghoſt*, for if they had not an extraordinary Spirit of diſcerning, they had not been fit to be intruſted with ſuch an Authority; for in the ſtricteſt Senſe, this is a *ſpecial Commiſſion* to the Apoſtles themſelves, and the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, who would *diſtinguiſh* who were in the *gall of Bitterneſs and Bond of Iniquity*, and who were not. By virtue of this Power *Peter* ſtruck *Ananias* and *Saphira* dead, and *Paul* ſtruck *Elymas* blind. Yet it muſt be underſtood as a *general Charter* to the Church and her Miniſters, not ſecuring an Infallibility of Judgment to any Man, or Company of Men in the World, but encouraging the faithful Stewards of the Myſteries of God to *ſtand* to the Goſpel they were ſent to preach, for God himſelf would ſtand to it. The Apoſtles in Preaching Remiſſion muſt begin at *Jeruſalem*, tho ſhe had lately brought upon her ſelf the Guilt of Chriſt's Blood, yet you may declare their Sins remitted upon Goſpel Terms, and *Peter* did ſo, *Acts* 2. 38. and 3. 19. Chriſt being riſen for our Juſtification, ſends his Goſpel Heralds to proclaim the Jubilee begun, the Act of Indemnity now paſt; and by this Rule Men ſhall be judged, *John* 12. 48. *Rom.* 2. 16. *Jam.* 2. 12. God will never alter this Rule of Judgment, nor vary from it; whom the Goſpel acquits ſhall be acquitted, and whom that condemns ſhall be condemned; which puts a mighty Honour upon the Miniſtry, and ſhould put a mighty Courage into Miniſters.

Two Ways the Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt *remit* and *retain* Sin, and both as having Authority. 1. By a *ſound Doctrine.* They are commiſſioned to tell the World that Salvation is to be had upon Goſpel Terms, and no other, and they will find God will ſay *Amen* to it, ſo ſhall their Doom be. 2. By a *ſtrict Diſcipline*, applying the general Rule of the Goſpel to particular Perſons. Whom you admit into Communion with you, according to the Rules of the Goſpel, God will admit into Communion with himſelf; and whom you caſt out of Communion as impenitent and obſtinate in *ſcandalous* and *infectious* Sins, ſhall be bound over to the righteous Judgment of God.

Thirdly, The Incredulity of *Thomas*, when the report of this was made to him, which introduc'd Chriſt's ſecond Appearance.

1. Here's *Thomas*'s Abſence from this Meeting, *v.* 24. He is ſaid to be *one of the Twelve*, one of the College of the Apoſtles, who tho' now Eleven, had been Twelve, and were to be ſo again. They were but *Eleven*, and one of them was miſſing; Chriſt's Diſciples will never be all together till the general Aſſembly at the great Day. Perhaps it was *Thomas's* unhappineſs that he was abſent; either he was not well, or had not notice; or perhaps it was his *Sin* and *Folly*; either he was diverted by Buſineſs or Company, which he preferred before this Opportunity; or he durſt not come for *fear of the Jews*; and he called that his Prudence and Caution which was his Cowardice. However by his Abſence he *miſſed* the Satisfaction of ſeeing his Maſter riſen, and of ſharing with the Diſciples in their Joy upon this Occaſion. *Note.* Thoſe know not what they loſe, who careleſly abſent themſelves from the ſtated ſolemn Aſſemblies of Chriſtians.

2. The Account which the other Diſciples gave him of the Viſit their Maſter had made them, *v*, 25. next Time they ſaw him, they *ſaid unto him* with Joy enough, *We have ſeen the Lord*; and no doubt they had related to him all that paſt, particularly the Satisfaction he had given them, by *ſhewing them his Hands and his Side.* It ſeems, tho' *Thomas* was *then* from them, he was not *long*

from them; abſenters for a Time muſt not be condemned as Apoſtates for ever: *Thomas* is not *Judas*.

Obſerve with what an Exultation and Triumph they ſpeak it, *We have ſeen the Lord*, the moſt comfortable Sight we ever ſaw. This they ſaid to *Thomas*, (1.) To *upbraid* him with his Abſence. We have ſeen the Lord, but *thou* haſt not, Or rather, (2.) To *inform* him. *We have ſeen the Lord*, and we wiſh thou hadſt been here to ſee him too, for thou wouldſt have ſeen enough to ſatisfy thee. *Note*, The Diſciples of Chriſt ſhould endeavour to *build up one another in their moſt Holy Faith*, both by *repeating* what they have *heard* to thoſe that were abſent, that they may hear it at a *ſecond Hand*; as alſo by *communicating* what they have *experienc'd*. They that by Faith have ſeen *the Lord*, and taſted that he is gracious, ſhould tell others what God has done for their Souls; only let *boaſting* be *excluded*.

3. The Objections *Thomas* raiſed againſt the Evidence to juſtify himſelf, in his lothneſs to admit it. Tell me not that you have *ſeen the Lord* alive, you are too credulous, ſome Body has made Fools of you; for my part, *except I ſhall*, not only *ſee in his Hands the print of the Nails*, but put my Finger into it, and *thruſt my Hand* into the Wound *in his Side*, I am reſolved *I will not believe*. Some by comparing this with what he ſaid, *John* 11. 16. and 14. 5. conjecture him to be a Man of a rough moroſe Temper, apt to ſpeak peeviſhly; for all good People are not alike happy in their Temper; however, there was certainly much amiſs in this here.

1. He had either not heeded, or not duly regarded what Chriſt had ſo often ſaid, and that too according to the Old Teſtament that he would *riſe again the third Day*; ſo that he ought to have ſaid, *He is riſen*, tho' he had not ſeen him, nor ſpoke with any that had.

2. He did not pay a juſt *Deference* to the Teſtimony of his Fellow-Diſciples, who were Men of Wiſdom and Integrity, and ought to be *credited*. He knew them to be honeſt Men; they all Ten of them *concurred* in the Teſtimony with great Aſſurance and yet he cannot be perſwaded himſelf to ſay that their *Record is true*. Chriſt had choſen them to be his Witneſſes of this very Thing to *all Nations*, and yet *Thomas*, one of their own Fraternity, will not allow them to be *competent* Witneſſes, nor truſt them farther than he can ſee them. But it was not their Veracity that he queſtion'd but their Prudence; he feared they were too *credulous*.

3. He tempted Chriſt, and *limited the Holy One of Iſrael*, when he would be convinced by his own Method, or not at all. He could not be ſure that the Print of the Nails which the Apoſtles told him they had ſeen, would admit the *putting of his Finger* into them, or the Wound in his Side the *thruſting in of his Hand*; nor was it fit to deal ſo roughly with a living Body; yet *Thomas* ties up his Faith to *this* Evidence; either he will be *humoured*, and have his Fancy *gratified*, or he will not believe; ſee *Mat* 16. 1. and 27. 42.

4. The open avowing of this in the Preſence of the Diſciples, was an Offence and Diſcouragement to them. 'Twas not only a Sin but a Scandal. As one Coward makes many, ſo doth one Unbeliever, one Sceptick, *making his Brethrens Heart to faint like his Heart*, Deut. 20. 9. Had he only thought this Evil, and then laid his Hand upon his Mouth to ſuppreſs it, his *Error* had *remained with himſelf*, but his *proclaming* his Infidelity, and that ſo *peremtorily*, might be of ill Conſequence to the reſt, who w ere as yet but *weak* and *wavering*.

26 And after eight days, again his diſciples were
within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jeſus, the
doors being ſhut, and ſtood in the midſt, and ſaid Peace
be unto you. 27 Then ſaith he to Thomas, Reach hither
thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither
thy hand, and thruſt it into my ſide; and be not
faithleſs, but believing. 28 And Thomas anſwered,
and ſaid unto him, My Lord and my God. 29 Jeſus
ſaith unto him, Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen me,
thou haſt believed: bleſſed are *they* that have not ſeen,
and *yet* have believed. 30 And many other ſigns truly
did Jeſus in the preſence of his diſciples, which are
not written in this book. 31 But theſe are written, that
ye might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God,
and that believing ye might have life through his name.

We have here an Account of another Appearance of Chriſt to his Diſciples after his Reſurrection, when *Thomas* was now with them. And concerning this we may obſerve,

Firſt, When it was that Chriſt repeated this Viſit to his Diſciples *after eight Days*; that Day ſeven-night after he roſe, which muſt therefore be, as that was, *the firſt Day of the Week*.

1. He *deferred* his next Appearance for *ſome Time*, to ſhew his Diſciples that he was not riſen to ſuch a Life as he had formerly lived, to converſe *conſtantly* with them, but was as one that belonged to *another World*, and viſited this, only as Angels do, now and then, when there was occaſion. Where Chriſt was during theſe Eight Days, and the reſt of the Time of his Abode on Earth, is Folly to enquire, and Preſumption to determine. Where ever he was, no doubt *Angels miniſtered unto him*. In the beginning of his Miniſtry he had been Forty Days unſeen, tempted by the evil Spirit, *Mat* 4. 1, 2. And now in the beginning of his Glory he was Forty Days, for the moſt part unſeen, attended by good Spirits.

2. He deferred it ſo long as *Seven Days*. And why ſo?

1. That he might *put a Rebuke* upon *Thomas* for his Incredulity, he had neglected the former Meeting of the Diſciples; and to teach him to prize thoſe Seaſons of Grace better for the future, he cannot have ſuch another Opportunity of ſeveral Days. He that ſlips one Tide, muſt ſtay a good while for another. A very *melancholy* Week we have reaſon to think *Thomas* had of it, drooping and in *ſuſpence*, while the other Diſciples were *full of Joy*; and it was long of himſelf, and his own Folly.

2. That he might try the Faith and Patience of the reſt of the Diſciples. They had gained a great Point when they were ſatisfied that they had *ſeen the Lord*, *Then were the Diſciples glad*; but he would try whether they could *keep the Ground they had got*, when they ſaw no more of him for ſome Days. And thus he would *gradually* wean them from his bodily Preſence, which they had *doted* and *depended* too much upon.

3. That he might *put an Honour* upon the *firſt Day of the Week*, and give a plain Intimation of his Will, that it ſhould be obſerved in his Church as the Chriſtian Sabbath, *i. e.* the weekly Day of *holy Reſt*, and *holy Convocations*. That One Day in Seven ſhould be religiouſly obſerved, was an Appointment from the beginning, as old as Innocency; and that in the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, the *firſt Day of the Week* ſhould be that ſolemn Day, this was *Indication enough* that Chriſt on that Day once and again met his Diſciples in a religious Aſſembly; and 'tis highly probable, in his former Appearance to them, he appointed them that Day ſeven-night to be together again, and promiſed to meet them; and alſo, that he appeared to them every firſt Day of the Week, beſides other Times, during the Forty Days: And the religious Obſervance of that Day has been from hence tranſmitted down to us through every Age of the Church. This therefore is *the Day which the Lord has made*.

Secondly, Where and how Chriſt made them this Viſit, 'twas at *Jeruſalem*, for the *Doors* were *ſhut* now, as before, *for fear of the Jews*. There they ſtayed to keep the Feaſt of unleavened Bread Seven Days, which expired the Day before this, yet they would not ſet out on their Journey to *Galilee* on the firſt Day of the Week, becauſe it was the Chriſtian Sabbath, but ſtay'd till the Day after. Now obſerve,

1. That *Thomas* was *with them*; tho' he had withdrawn himſelf once, yet not a ſecond Time. When we have loſt *one* Opportunity, we ſhould give the more earneſt heed to lay hold on the next, that we may recover our Loſſes. 'Tis a good Sign if ſuch a Loſs *whet* our Deſires, and a bad Sign if it *cool* them. And the Diſciples admitted him among them, and did not inſiſt upon his believing the Reſurrection of Chriſt as they did, becauſe as yet it was but darkly revealed; they did not receive him to doubtful Diſputation, but bid him welcome to *come and ſee*. But obſerve Chriſt did not appear to *Thomas* for his Satisfaction till he found him in Society with the reſt of the Diſciples, becauſe he would countenance the meetings of Chriſtians and Miniſters, for there will he be in the *midſt of them*. And beſides he would have all the Diſciples witneſſes of the Rebuke he gave to *Thomas*, and yet withal, of the tender Care he had of him.

2. That Chriſt *came* in amongſt them, and *ſtood in the midſt*, and they all knew him, for he ſhewed himſelf now, juſt as he had ſhew'd himſelf before, *v.* 19. ſtill the ſame, and no changing. See the Condeſcenſion of our Lord Jeſus. The Gates of Heaven were ready to be opened to him, and there he might have been *in the midſt* of the Adorations of a World of Angels, yet for the Benefit of his Church he *lingered* on Earth, and viſited the little private Meeting of his poor Diſciples, and is *in the midſt* of them.

3. He ſaluted them all in a friendly Manner, as he had done before, he ſaid, *Peace be unto you*. This was no vain Repetition, but ſignificant of the abundant, and aſſured Peace which Chriſt gives, and of the continuance of his Bleſſings upon his People, for they *fail not*, but are *new every Morning*, new every Meeting.

Thirdly, What paſt between Chriſt and *Thomas* at this Meeting; and that only is recorded, tho' we may ſuppoſe he ſaid a deal to the reſt of them. Here is,

1. Chriſt's *gracious Condeſcenſion* to *Thomas*, *v.* 27. He ſingled him out from the reſt, and applied himſelf particularly to him. *Reach hither thy Finger*, and ſince thou wilt have it ſo, *behold my Hands*, and ſatisfy thy Curioſity to the utmoſt about the *print of the Nails*; *Reach hither thy Hand*, and if nothing leſs will convince thee, *thruſt it into my Side*. Here we have,

(1.) An implicit Rebuke of *Thomas*'s Incredulity, in the plain reference which is here had to what *Thomas* had ſaid, anſwering it *Word for Word*, for he had heard it tho' unſeen; and one would think his telling him of it ſhould *put him to the bluſh*. *Note*, There is not an unbelieving Word in our Tongues, no nor Thought in our Minds at any Time, but it is known to the Lord Jeſus, *Pſal.* 78. 21.

(2.) An expreſs Condeſcenſion to his Weakneſs, which appears in Two Things. (1.) That he ſuffers his *Wiſdom* to be *preſcribed to*, Great Spirits will not be dictated to by their Inferiors, eſpecially in their Acts of Grace, yet Chriſt is pleaſed here to accommodate himſelf even to *Thomas*'s Fancy, in a needleſs Thing, rather than break with him, and leave him, in his Unbelief. He will not *break the bruiſed Reed*, but *as a good Shepherd gathers that which was driven away*, Ezek. 34. 16. We ought thus to *bear the Infirmities of the Weak*, Rom. 15. 1, 2. (2.) He ſuffers his *Wounds* to be *raked into*; allows *Thomas* even to *thruſt his Hand into his Side*, if then at laſt he would believe. Thus for the Confirmation of our Faith he hath inſtituted an Ordinance on purpoſe to *keep his Death in remembrance*, though it was an ignominious, ſhameful Death, and one would think ſhould rather have been forgotten, and no more ſaid of it; yet becauſe it was ſuch an Evidence of *his Love*, as would be an Encouragement to our Faith, he appoints the Memorial of *it* to be celebrated. And in that Ordinance wherein we ſhew the Lord's Death, we are called, as it were, to put our Finger *into the print of the Nails: Reach hither thy Hand* to him, who reacheth forth his helping, inviting, giving Hand to thee.

'Tis an affecting Word with which Chriſt cloſeth up what he had to ſay to *Thomas*. *Be not faithleſs but believing*; μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος, *Do not thou become an Unbeliever*; as if he ſhould have been ſealed up under Unbelief, had he not yielded now. This Warning is given to us all, *Be not faithleſs*; for if we are *faithleſs* we are Chriſtleſs and Graceleſs, Hopleſs, and Joyleſs; let us therefore ſay, *Lord I believe, help thou mine Unbelief.*

2. *Thomas*'s believing Conſent to Jeſus Chriſt. He is now aſhamed of Incredulity, and cries out, *My Lord and my God*, *v.* 28. We are not told whether he did put his Finger into the print of the Nails; it ſhould ſeem he did it not, for Chriſt ſaith, *v.* 29. *Thou haſt ſeen and believed*, Seeing ſufficed. And now Faith comes off a Conqueror, after a ſtruggle of Unbelief.

1. *Thomas* is now fully ſatisfied of the Truth of Chriſt's Reſurrection; that the ſame Jeſus that was crucified is now alive, and this is he. His *ſlowneſs* and *backwardneſs* to believe, may help to ſtrengthen our Faith; for hereby it appears that the Witneſſes of Chriſt's Reſurrection, who atteſted it to the World, and pawned their Lives upon it, were not eaſy, *credulous* Men, but *cautious* enough, and that ſuſpended their Belief of it till they ſaw the utmoſt Evidence of it they could deſire. Thus out of the Eater came forth Meat.

2. He therefore believed him to be *Lord* and *God*, and we are to believe him ſo. 1. We muſt believe his *Deity*, that he is *God*; not a Man made God, but God made Man, as this Evangeliſt had laid down this Theſis at firſt, *Chap.* 1. 1. The Author and Head of our Holy Religion has the Wiſdom, Power, Sovereignty, and Unchangeableneſs of *God*, which was neceſſary, becauſe he was to be not only the *Founder* of it, but the *Foundation* of it for its conſtant Support, and the Fountain of Life for its Supply. 2. His *Mediation*, that he is *Lord*, the *One* Lord, 1 *Cor.* 8. 5. 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. He is ſufficiently authoriz'd as Plenepotentiary to ſettle the great Concerns that lye between God and Man; to take up the Controverſy which would inevitably have been our Ruin, and to eſtabliſh the Correſpondence that was neceſſary to our Happineſs; ſee *Acts* 2. 36. *Rom.* 14. 9.

3. He conſented to him as *his* Lord and *his* God. In Faith there muſt be the conſent of the Will to *Goſpel Terms*, as well as the Aſſent of the Underſtanding to *Goſpel Truths*. We muſt accept of Chriſt to be that to us which the Father had appointed him. *My Lord*, refers to *Adonai*, my Fountain and Stay. *My God* to *Elohim*, my Prince and Judge. God having conſtituted him the Umpire and Referee, we muſt approve the Choice, and intirely refer our ſelves to him. This is the vital Act of Faith, he is mine, *Cant.* 2. 16.

4. He made an open Profeſſion of this, before thoſe that had been the Witneſſes of his unbelieving Doubts. He ſaith it to Chriſt, and to compleat the Senſe we muſt read it, *Thou art* my Lord and my God; or, ſpeaking to his Brethren, *This is* my Lord and my God. Do we accept of Chriſt as our *Lord God*, we muſt go to him, and tell him ſo, as *David*, Pſal. 16. 2. Deliver the Surrender to him as *our Act and Deed*. Tell others ſo as thoſe that triumph in our Relation to Chriſt, *This is my Beloved*. *Thomas* ſpeaks with an ardency of Affection, as one that took hold of Chriſt with all his might, *My Lord* and *my God*.

3. The Judgment of Chriſt upon the whole, *v.* 29. *Thomas, becauſe thou haſt ſeen me thou haſt believed*, and 'tis well thou art brought to it at laſt upon any Terms; *But bleſſed are they that have not ſeen and yet have believed*. Here,

1. Chriſt owns *Thomas* a Believer. Sound and ſincere Believers, tho' they be *ſlow* and *weak*, ſhall be graciouſly accepted of the Lord Jeſus. They who have long ſtood it out, if at laſt they yield, ſhall find him ready to forgive. No ſooner did *Thomas* conſent to Chriſt, but Chriſt gives him the comfort of it, and lets him *know that he believes*.

2. He upbraids him with his former Incredulity. He might well be aſhamed to think, (1.) That he had been ſo *backward* to *believe*, and came ſo ſlowly to his own Comforts. They that in ſincerity have cloſed with Chriſt, ſee a great deal of reaſon to lament it that they did not do it ſooner. (2.) That it was not without *much ado* that he was brought to believe *at laſt*. If thou hadſt not *ſeen me* alive thou wouldſt not have believed; but if no Evidence muſt be admitted but that of our own Senſes, and we muſt believe nothing but what we our ſelves are Eye-witneſſes of, farewel all Commerce and Converſation. If this muſt be the only Method of Proof, how muſt the World be converted to the Faith of Chriſt? He is therefore juſtly blamed for laying ſo much ſtreſs upon *this*.

3. He commends the Faith of thoſe who believe upon eaſier Terms. *Thomas* as a Believer was truely *bleſſed*, but rather *bleſſed are they that have not ſeen*. 'Tis not meant of not ſeeing the *Objects of Faith*, for thoſe are inviſible, *Heb.* 11. 1. 2 *Cor.* 4. 18. but the *Motives of Faith*; Chriſt's Miracles, and eſpecially his Reſurrection; Bleſſed are they that ſee not theſe, and yet believe in Chriſt. This may look either *backward* upon the Old Teſtament Saints who had not ſeen the Things which they ſaw, and yet believed the Promiſe made unto the Fathers, and lived by that Faith. Or *forward* upon them which ſhould afterwards believe; the *Gentiles* who had never ſeen Chriſt in the Fleſh, as the *Jews* had. This Faith is more laudable and praiſe-worthy than theirs who ſaw and believed; for, 1. It evidenceth a *better Temper of Mind* in thoſe that do believe. Not to *ſee* and yet to *believe* argues greater Induſtry in ſearching after Truth, and greater Ingenuity of Mind in embracing it. He that believes upon that Sight, hath his Reſiſtance conquered by a ſort of violence, but he that believes without that, like the *Bereans*, is *more Noble*.

2. It is a greater Inſtance of the Power of Divine Grace. The leſs ſenſible the Evidence is, the more doth the work of Faith appear to be *the Lord's Doing*: *Peter* is *bleſſed* in his Faith becauſe Fleſh and Blood has not revealed it to him, *Mat.* 16. 17. *Fleſh* and *Blood* contribute more to their Faith than *ſee* and *believe*, than to theirs who *ſee not* and yet believe. Dr. *Lightfoot* quotes a Saying of one of the *Rabbins*, "That one Proſelyte is more acceptable to God than all "the Thouſands of *Iſrael* that ſtood before Mount *Sinai*, for they ſaw "and received the Law, but a Proſelyte ſees not, and yet receives it.

Fourthly, The Remark which the *Evangeliſt* makes upon his *Narative*, like an *Hiſtorian* drawing towards a *Concluſion*, *v.* 30, 31. And here,

1. He aſſures us that many other things occurr'd which were all worthy to be recorded, but are *not written in the Book*: *Many Signs*. Some refer this to all the Signs that Jeſus did during his whole Life. All the wonderous Words he ſpoke, and all the wonderous Works he did; but it ſeems rather to be confined to the Signs he did after his Reſurrection, for theſe were in *the preſence of the Diſciples* only, which are here ſpoken of, *Acts*, 10. 41. Divers of his Appearences are not recorded, as appears, 1 *Cor.* 15. 5, 7. ſee *Acts* 1. 3. Now,

1. We may here improve this *general* Atteſtation, that there were *other Signs*, many other, for the Confirmation of our Faith; and being added to the particular Narratives, very much ſtrengthens the Evidence. They that recorded the Reſurrection of Chriſt were not put to *fiſh* for Evidence, to take up ſuch ſhort and ſcanty Proofs as they could find, and make out the reſt with Conjecture; No, they had Evidence *enough and to ſpare*, and more *Witneſſes* to produce than they had occaſion for. The *Diſciples*, in whoſe *Preſence* theſe other *Signs* were done, were to be Preachers of Chriſt's *Reſurrection* to others, and therefore it was requiſite they ſhould have proofs of it, *ex abundanti*, that they might have a ſtrong *Conſolation* who ventured *Life and all* upon it.

2. We need not ask why they were not all written, or why not *more* than theſe, or *other* than theſe, for it is enough for us that ſo it ſeemed good to the Holy Spirit, by whoſe Inſpiration this was given. Had this Hiſtory been a mere *Human* Compoſure, it had been ſwelled with a multitude of Depoſitions and Affidavits, to prove the conteſted Truth of Chriſt's Reſurrection, and long Arguments drawn up for the Demonſtration of it; but being a *Divine* Hiſtory, the Penmen writ with *a noble Security*, relating what amounted to a *competant* Proof, ſufficient to *convince* thoſe that were willing to be taught, and to *condemn* thoſe that were obſtinate in their Unbelief; and if this ſatisfy not, more would not. Men produce all they have to ſay, that they may *gain Credit*, but God doth not, for he can give *Faith*. Had this Hiſtory been written for the Entertainment of the *Curious*, it would have been more *Copious*, for every Circumſtance would have brightened, and embeliſhed the Story; but it was written to bring Men to believe, and enough is ſaid to *anſwer* that Intention, whether Men will *hear*, or whether they will *forbear*.

2. He Inſtructs us in the Deſign of recording what we do find here *v.* 31. Theſe Accounts are given in this and the following Chapter, *that ye might believe* upon theſe Evidences, that you might believe that Jeſus is the Chriſt the Son of God, declared with Power to be ſo by his Reſurrection.

1. Here's the *Deſign* of thoſe that *wrote the Goſpel*. Some write Books for their Diverſion, and publiſh them for their Profit or Applauſe; others to oblige the *Athenian* Humour; others to inſtruct the World in Arts and Sciences for their ſecular Advantage; but the Evangeliſts wrote without any view of temporal Benefit to themſelves or others, but to bring Men to Chriſt and Heaven, and in order to that to perſwade Men to *believe*; and for this they took the moſt fitting Methods, they brought to the World a *Divine Revelation*, ſupported with its *due Evidences*.

2. The *Duty* of thoſe that read and hear the Goſpel: 'Tis their Duty to *believe*, to embrace the Doctrine of Chriſt, and that Record given concerning him, 1 *John* 5. 11.

1. We are here told what the great Goſpel Truth is which we are to believe, that *Jeſus is that Chriſt*, that *Son of God*. (1.) That he is *the Chriſt*; the Perſon that under the Title of the *Meſſiah* was promis'd to, and expected by the O. T. Saints; and that according to the ſignification of the Name is *annointed* of God to be a Prince and Saviour. (2.) That he is the *Son of God*; not only as *Mediator*, for then he had not been greater than *Moſes* who was both a Prophet, Interceſſor, and Lawgiver, but antecedent to his being the Mediator, for if he had not been a Divine Perſon, endued with the Power of a God, and entitl'd to the Glory of a God, he had not been qualified for the Undertaking, not fit either to do the Redeemer's *Work*, or to *wear* the Redeemer's *Crown*.

2. What the great Goſpel Bleſſedneſs is which we are to hope for, *That believing we ſhall have Life thro' his Name*. This is, 1. To *direct* our Faith; it muſt have an Eye to the *Life*, the Crown of Life, the Tree of Life ſet before us. *Life thro' Chriſt's Name*; the Life propos'd in the Covenant which is made with us in Chriſt, is what we muſt propoſe to our ſelves as the Fulneſs of our Joy, and the abundant Recompence of all our Services and Sufferings. 2. To *encourage* our Faith, and *invite* us to believe. Upon the Proſpect of ſome great Advantage Men will venture far, and greater Advantage there cannot be than that which is offer'd by the *Words of this Life*, as the Goſpel is called, *Acts* 5. 20. it includes both Spiritual Life in Conformity to God and Communion with him, and Eternal Life in the Viſion and Fruition of him. Both are *through Chriſt's Name*, by his Merit and Power, and both indefeaſibly ſure to all Believers.

CHAP. XXI.

The Evangeliſt ſeemed to have concluded his Hiſtory with the foregoing Chapter; but as St. Paul *ſometimes in his Epiſtles, new Matter occurring, he begins again. He had ſaid, That there were* many other Signs *which* Jeſus *did for the Proof of his Reſurrection. And in this Chapter he inſtanceth in one of thoſe many, which was Chriſt's Appearance to* ſome *of his Diſciples at the Sea of* Tiberias, *in which we have an Account,* (1.) *How he diſcovered himſelf to them as they were Fiſhing, filled their Net, and then very familiarly came and dined with them upon what they had caught, v.* 1. ——14. (2.) *What Diſcourſe he had with* Peter *after Dinner,* (1.) *Concerning himſelf, v.* 15.—20. (2.) *Concerning* John, *v.* 21——23. (3.) *The ſolemn Concluſion of this Goſpel, v.* 24, 25. *'Tis ſtrange any ſhould ſuppoſe that this Chapter was added by ſome other Hand, when it is expreſly ſaid, v.* 24. *That the* Diſciple whom Jeſus loved, is he which teſtifieth theſe Things.

AFter theſe things Jeſus ſhewed himſelf again to the diſciples at the ſea of Tiberias; and on this wiſe ſhewed he *himſelf*: 2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *ſons* of Zebedee, and two other of his diſciples. 3 Simon Peter ſaith unto them, I go a fiſhing. They ſay unto him, We alſo go with thee. They went forth and entred into a ſhip immediately, and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning was now come, Jeſus ſtood on the ſhore: but the diſciples knew not that it was Jeſus. 5 Then Jeſus ſaith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They anſwered him, No. 6 And he ſaid unto them, Caſt the net on the right ſide of the ſhip, and ye ſhall find. They caſt therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fiſhes. 7 Therefore that diſciple whom Jeſus loved, ſaith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fiſhers coat *unto him*, (for he was naked) and did caſt himſelf into the ſea. 8 And the other diſciples came in a little ſhip (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fiſhes. 9. As ſoon then as they were come to land, they ſaw a fire of coals there, and fiſh laid thereon, and bread. 10 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Bring of the fiſh, which ye have now caught. 11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fiſhes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were ſo many, yet was not the net broken. 12 Jeſus ſaith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the diſciples durſt ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jeſus then cometh and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fiſh likewiſe. 14 This is now the third time that Jeſus ſhewed himſelf to his diſciples, after that he was riſen from the dead.

We have here an Account of Chriſt's Appearance to his Diſciples at the Sea of *Tiberias.* Now,

1. Let us compare this Appearance with thoſe that *went before.* In thoſe Chriſt ſhewed himſelf to his Diſciples when they were met in a ſolemn Aſſembly (it ſhould ſeem for Religious Worſhip) upon a Lord's Day, and when they were altogether, perhaps, expecting his appearing; but in this he ſhewed himſelf to ſome of them occaſionally, upon a Week-day, when they were fiſhing, and little thought of it. Chriſt has many Ways of making himſelf known to his People, uſually in his Ordinances; but ſometimes by his Spirit he viſits them when they are employ'd in common Buſineſs, as the *Shepherds,* who were *keeping their Flock by Night,* Luke 2. 8. even *here alſo,* Gen. 16. 13.

2. Let us compare it with that which *followed* at the Mountain in *Galilee,* where Chriſt had appointed them to meet him, *Matt.* 28. 16. Thitherward they moved as ſoon as the Days of unleavened Bread were over, and diſpoſed of themſelves as they thought fit, till the Time fixed for this Interview, or general Rendezvouz. Now this Appearance was while they were *waiting* for that, that they might not be weary of waiting. Chriſt is often *better* than his Word, but never *worſe*; often *prevents* and outdoes the believing Expectations of his People, but never *diſappoints* them.

As to the Particulars of the Story we may obſerve,

Firſt. Who they were to whom Chriſt now ſhew'd himſelf, *v.* 2. not to all the *Twelve,* but to *Seven* of them only. *Nathaniel* is mentioned as one of them whom we have not met with ſince, *John* 1. but ſome think he was the ſame with *Bartholomew,* one of the Twelve. The two not named are ſuppoſed to be *Philip* of *Bethſaida,* and *Andrew* of *Capernaum.* Obſerve here,

1. It is good for the Diſciples of Chriſt to be *much together*; not only in ſolemn, religious Aſſemblies, but in common Converſation, and about common Buſineſs. Good Chriſtians ſhould by this Means both *teſtify* and *increaſe* their Affection to, and Delight in each other, and edify one another both by Diſcourſe and Example. 2. Chriſt choſe to manifeſt himſelf to them when they were *together*; not only to countenance Chriſtian Society, but that they might be joint Witneſſes of the *ſame* Matter of Fact, and ſo might corroborate one another's Teſtimony. Here were *Seven* together to *atteſt* this; on which Occaſion ſome obſerve, that the *Roman* Law required Seven Witneſſes to a Teſtament.

3. *Thomas* was one of them, and is named next to *Peter,* as if he now kept cloſer to the Meetings of the Apoſtles than ever. 'Tis well if Loſſes by our Neglects make us more careful afterwards not to *ſlip Opportunities.*

Secondly, How they were *employed,* v. 3. Obſerve,

1. Their *Agreement to go a Fiſhing.* They know not well what to do with themſelves: For my part, ſaith *Peter,* I'll *go a Fiſhing*; we'll *go with thee* then, ſaith they, for we will *keep together.* Tho' commonly two of a Trade cannot agree, yet they could. Some think they *did amiſs* in returning to their Boats and Nets, which they had left; but then Chriſt would not have countenanced them in it with a Viſit. It was rather commendable in them; for they did it, (1.) To *redeem Time,* and not be idle. They were not yet appointed to preach the Reſurrection of Chriſt. Their Commiſſion was in the *drawing,* but not perfected. The Hour for entring upon Action was not come: 'Tis likely their Maſter had directed them to ſay nothing of his Reſurrection till after his Aſcenſion, nay, not till after the pouring out of the Spirit, and then they were to begin at *Jeruſalem.* Now in the mean time, rather than do nothing, they would *go a Fiſhing*; not for Recreation, but for Buſineſs.

'Tis an Inſtance of their *Humility,* tho' they were advanced to be ſent of Chriſt as he was of the Father, yet they did not take State upon them, but remember'd *the Rock out of which they were hewn.* 'Tis an Inſtance likewiſe of their *Induſtry,* and ſpeaks them good Husbands of their Time. While they were *waiting,* they would not be *idling.* Thoſe who would give an Account of their Time with Joy, ſhould contrive to fill up the Vacancies of it, to gather up the Fragments of it, (2.) That they might help to maintain themſelves, and not be buthenſome to any. While their Maſter was *with them,* thoſe that miniſtred to him were kind to *them*; but now the *Bridegroom* was *taken from them,* they muſt *faſt* in thoſe Days; and therefore their own Hands, as *Paul's,* muſt *miniſter to their Neceſſities*; and for that Reaſon Chriſt asked them, *Have ye any Meat?* This teacheth us with *Quietneſs* to *work,* and *eat our own Bread.*

2. Their *Diſappointment* in their *Fiſhing.* That Night they caught nothing, tho 'tis likely they *toiled all Night,* as Luke 5. 5. See the Vanity of this World; the Hand of the Diligent often returns empty. Even good Men may come ſhort of deſired Succeſs in their honeſt Undertakings. We may be in the Way of our Duty, and yet not proſper. Providence ſo ordered it, that of all Night they ſhould *catch nothing,* that the miraculous Draughts of Fiſhes in the Morning might be the more *wonderful,* and the more *acceptable.* In thoſe Diſappointments which to us are very grievous, God has often Deſigns that are very gracious. Man has indeed a *Dominion over the Fiſh of the Sea,* but they are not always at his Beck; God only knows the *Paths of the Sea,* and commands that which *paſſeth through them.*

Thirdly, After *what manner* Chriſt made himſelf known to them. 'Tis ſaid, *v.* 1. He *ſhewed himſelf.* His Body, tho' a true and real Body, yet was raiſed, as ours will be, a *ſpiritual* Body, and ſo was viſible only when he himſelf was pleaſed to make it ſo; or rather, came and removed ſo quickly, that it was *here* or *there* inconſtant *in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye.*

Four Things are obſervable in the Appearance of Chriſt to them.

1. He ſhewed himſelf to them *ſeaſonably.* Ver. 4. *When the Morning was now come,* after a fruitleſs Night's Toil, Jeſus *ſtood on the Shore.* Chriſt's Time of making himſelf known to his People, is when they are moſt *at a Loſs.* When they think they have *loſt themſelves,* he will let them know they have not *loſt him.* Weeping may endure for a Night; but *Joy comes,* if Chriſt comes, *in the Morning.* Chriſt appeared to them not *walking upon the Water,* becauſe being riſen from the Dead, he was not to be with them as he had been; but *ſtanding upon the Shore,* becauſe now they were to *make towards him.* Some of the Ancients put this Significancy upon it, That Chriſt having finiſhed *his* Work, was got through a ſtormy Sea, a Sea of Blood, to a ſafe and quiet Shore, where he ſtood in Triumph; but the Diſciples having *their* Work before them were yet at *Sea* in Toil and Peril. 'Tis Comfort to us when our Paſſage is rough and ſtormy, that our Maſter is at *Shore,* and we are haſtening to him.

2. He ſhewed himſelf to them *gradually.* The Diſciples, tho' they had been intimately acquainted with him, *knew not* preſently *that it was Jeſus.* Little expecting to ſee him there; and not looking intently upon him, they took him for ſome common Perſon waiting

the Arrival of their Boat to buy their Fiſh. *Note*, Chriſt is often *nearer* us than we *think he is*, and ſo we ſhall find afterwards to our Comfort.

3. He ſhew'd himſelf to them *by an Inſtance of his Pity*, *v.* 5. He called to them, *Children*, παιδία *Lads*, *Have ye any Meat*? Have ye caught any Fiſh? Here, (1.) The *compellation* is very *familiar*; he ſpeaketh unto them as unto his Sons, with the Care and Tenderneſs of a Father, *Children*. Tho' he was now enter'd upon his exalted State, he ſpoke to his Diſciples with as much Kindneſs and Affection as ever. They were not Children in Age, but they were *his* Children; the Children which God had given him. (2.) The Queſtion is very kind; *Have ye any Meat?* He asks, as a tender Father concerning his Children, whether they be provided with that which is fit for them? That if they be not, he may take Care for their Supply. *Note, the Lord is for the Body*, 1 Cor. 6. 13. Chriſt takes Cognizance of the *temporal* Wants of his People, and has promiſed them not only *Grace ſufficient*, but Food convenient. *Verily they ſhall be fed*, Pſal. 37. 3. Chriſt looks into the Cottages of the Poor, and asks, *Children*, *Have ye any Meat?* Thereby inviting them to open their Caſe before him, and by the Prayer of Faith to *make their Requeſts known* to him, and then let them *be careful for nothing*, for Chriſt takes Care of *them*; takes Care *for them*. Chriſt has herein ſet us an Example of *compaſſionate Concern* for our Brethren; there are many poor Houſholders *diſabled* for Labour, or *diſappointed* in it that are reduced to Straits, whom the Rich ſhould enquire after thus, Have ye any Meat? For the moſt *neceſſitous* are commonly the leaſt *clamorous*.

To this Queſtion the Diſciples give a ſhort Anſwer, and ſome think with an Air of Diſcontent and Peeviſhneſs. They ſaid, *No.* Not giving him any ſuch friendly and reſpectful Title as he had given them: So ſhort do the beſt come in their Returns of Love to the Lord Jeſus. Chriſt put the Queſtion to them, not becauſe he did not know their Wants; but he would know them *from them*. They that would have Supplies from Chriſt, muſt own themſelves *empty* and *needy*.

4. He ſhewed himſelf to them by an *Inſtance of his Power*; and this perfected the Diſcovery. *Ver.* 6. He ordered them to *caſt the Net on the right Side of the Ship*, the contrary Side to what they had been caſting it on, and then they, who were going home empty handed, were enriched with a great Draught of Fiſhes. Here we have,

1. The Orders Chriſt gave them and the Promiſe annexed to thoſe Orders. *Caſt the Net* there in ſuch a Place, and *you ſhall find*. He from whom nothing is hid, no not the *Inhabitants under the Waters*, (*Job* 26. 5.) knew on what Side of the Ship the Shoal of Fiſhes was, and to that Side he *directs* them. *Note*, Divine Providence extends it ſelf to things moſt *minute* and *contingent*, and they are happy that know how to take Hints from thence in the Conduct of their Affairs, and acknowledge it in all their Ways.

2. Their Obedience to theſe Orders, and the good Succeſs of that. As yet *they knew not that it was Jeſus*, however they were willing to be adviſed by any body, and did not bid this *ſuppoſed* Stranger mind *his own* Buſineſs, and not meddle with *theirs*, but took his Counſel; and in being thus *obſervant* of *Strangers*, they were *obedient to their Maſter unawares*. And it ſped wonderful well; now they had a Draught that paid them for all their Pains. *Note*, Thoſe that are humble, diligent, and patient, tho' their Labours may be *croſſed*, they ſhall be *crowned*; they ſometimes live to ſee their Affairs take a happy Turn after many Struggles, and fruitleſs Attempts. There's nothing loſt by obſerving Chriſt's Orders. Thoſe are likely to ſpeed well that follow the Rule of the Word, the Conduct of the Spirit, and the Intimations of Providence; for that's *caſting the Net on the right Side of the Ship*.

Now the Draught of Fiſhes may be conſidered.

1. As a *Miracle* in it ſelf: And ſo it was deſigned, to prove that Jeſus Chriſt was *raiſed in Power*, tho' *ſown in Weakneſs*; and that all things were *put under his Feet*, the *Fiſhes of the Sea* not excepted. Chriſt manifeſts himſelf to his People by doing that for them which none elſe can do, and things which *they looked not for*.

2. As a *Mercy* to them; for the *ſeaſonable* and *abundant* Supply of their Neceſſities. When their Ingenuity and Induſtry failed them, the Power of Chriſt came in *opportunely* for their Relief; for he would take Care that they who had left all for him, ſhould not want any good thing. When we are moſt at a loſs, *Jehovah Jireh.*

3. As the *Memorial* of a former Mercy, with which Chriſt had formerly recompenced *Peter* for the Loan of his Boat, *Luke* 5. 4, &c. This Miracle nearly reſembled that, and could not but put *Peter* in mind of *that*, which helped him to improve *this*; for both that and this affected him much, as meeting him in his own Element, in his own Employment. Latter Favours are deſigned to bring to mind former Favours, that eaten Bread may not be forgotten.

4. As a *Myſtery*, and very ſignificant of that Work to which Chriſt was now with an enlarged Commiſſion ſending them forth. The Prophets had been fiſhing for Souls, and caught nothing, or very little; but the Apoſtles that let down the Net at Chriſt's Word had wonderful Succeſs, *Many more the Children of the Deſolate*, Gal. 4. 27. They themſelves, in Purſuance of their former Miſſion, when they were firſt made *Fiſhers of Men*, had had ſmall Succeſs in Compariſon with what they ſhould now have. When ſoon after this three thouſand were converted in one Day, then the Net was *caſt on the right Side of the Ship*. It is an Encouragement to Chriſt's Miniſters to continue their Diligence in their Work: One happy Draught at length may be ſufficient to repay many years Toil at the Goſpel Net.

Fourthly, How the Diſciples received this Diſcovery which Chriſt made of himſelf, *v.* 7, 8. Where we find,

1. That *John* was the moſt *intelligent* and quick-ſighted Diſciple. He whom Jeſus loved was the firſt that ſaid, *It was the Lord*; for thoſe whom Chriſt loves he will in a ſpecial Manner manifeſt himſelf to: His Secret is with his Favourites. *John* had adhered more cloſely to his Maſter in his Sufferings than any of them; and therefore he has a clearer Eye, and a more diſcerning Judgment than any of them, in Recompence for his Conſtancy. When *John* was himſelf aware that *it was the Lord*, he communicated his Knowledge to thoſe with him; for this *Diſpenſation of the Spirit is given to every one to profit withal*. They that know Chriſt themſelves ſhould endeavour to bring others acquainted with him, we need not *engroſs* him; there's enough in him for us all. *John* tells *Peter* particularly his Thoughts that *it was the Lord*; knowing he would be glad to ſee him above any of them. Tho' *Peter* had denied his Maſter; yet having repented, and being taken into the Communion of the Diſciples again, they were as free and familiar with him as ever.

2. That *Peter* was the moſt *zealous* and warm-*hearted* Diſciple; for as ſoon as he heard *it was the Lord*, for which he took *John's* Word, the Ship could not hold him, nor could he ſtay the bringing of it to Shore, but into the Sea he throws himſelf preſently that he might come firſt to Chriſt.

(1.) He ſhewed his reſpect to Chriſt by *girding his Fiſher's Coat* about him, that he might appear before his Maſter in the beſt Cloaths he had, and not rudely ruſh into his Preſence ſtript as he was to his Waſtecoat and Drawers becauſe the Work he was about was toilſome, and he was reſolved to *take Pains* in it. Perhaps this Fiſher's Coat was made of Leather, or Oil Cloth, and would keep out wet; and he *girt it to him* that he might make the beſt of his Way through the Water to Chriſt, as he us'd to do after his Nets, when he was intent upon his Fiſhing.

(2.) He ſhewed the Strength of his Affection to Chriſt, and his earneſt Deſire to be with him, by caſting himſelf into the Sea; and either wading or ſwimming to Shore to come to him. When he walked upon the Water to Chriſt, *Mat.* 14. 28. 29. 'twas ſaid, *He came down out of the Ship deliberately*; but here it is ſaid, *He caſt himſelf into the Sea* with Precipitation, ſink or ſwim, he would ſhew his Good-will, and Aim to be with Jeſus. If Chriſt ſuffer me (thinks he) to drown and come ſhort of him, 'tis but what I deſerve for denying him. *Peter* had had much forgiven, and made it appear he loved much by his willingneſs to run Hazards, and undergo Hardſhips to come to him. They that have *been with Jeſus*, will be willing to ſwim through a ſtormy Sea, a Sea of Blood to *come to him*. And it is a *laudable* Contention among Chriſt's Diſciples to ſtrive who ſhall be firſt with him.

3. That the *reſt of the Diſciples* were *careful* and *honeſt hearted*. Tho' they were not in ſuch a tranſport of Zeal as to throw themſelves into the Sea like *Peter*, yet they haſtened in the Boat to the Shore, and made the *beſt of their Way*, *v.* 8. The other Diſciples, and *John* with them, who had firſt diſcovered that it was Chriſt, came, *ſlowly*, yet they came to Chriſt. Now here we may obſerve,

(1.) How variouſly God diſpenſeth his Gifts. Some *excel*, as *Peter* and *John* were very eminent in Gifts and Graces, and are thereby diſtinguiſh'd from their Brethren; others are but *ordinary* Diſciples that mind their Duty, and are Faithful to him, but do nothing to make themſelves *remarkable*: And yet both the one and the other, the *Eminent* and the *Obſcure*, ſhall ſit down together with Chriſt in Glory; nay, and perhaps, *the laſt ſhall be firſt*. Of thoſe that do *excel*, ſome like *John* are eminently *contemplative*, have great Gifts of Knowledge, and ſerve the Church with that, others like *Peter*, eminently *active* and *couragious*, are *ſtrong* and do *Exploits*, and are thus very ſerviceable to their Generation. Some are uſeful as the Churches Eyes; others as the Churches Hands; and all for the Good of the Body.

(2.) What a great deal of Difference there may be between ſome good People and others in the Way of their honouring Chriſt; and yet both *accepted* of him. Some ſerve Chriſt more in *Acts of Devotion*, and extraordinary Expreſſions of a religious Zeal, and they *do well*, to the Lord they do it; *Peter* ought not to be cenſured for caſting himſelf into the Sea, but commended for his Zeal, and the Strength of his Affection; and ſo muſt they be that in love to Chriſt quit the World with *Mary* to ſit at his Feet. But others ſerve Chriſt more in the *Affairs of the World*, they continue in that Ship, drag the Net, and bring the Fiſh to Shore, as the other Diſciples here, and ſuch ought not to be cenſured as Worldly; for they in their Place are as truely ſerving Chriſt as the other, even in *ſerving* Tables. If all the Diſciples had done as *Peter* did, What had become of their Fiſh and their Nets? And yet if *Peter* had done as they did, we had wanted the Inſtance of holy Zeal. Chriſt was well pleaſed with *both*, and ſo muſt we.

(3.) That there are ſeveral ways of bringing Chriſt's Diſciples to Shore to him from off the Sea of this World. Some are brought to him by a *violent Death*, as the Martyrs, that threw themſelves into the Sea in their Zeal for Chriſt; others are brought to him by a Natural *Death*, dragging the Net, which is leſs terrible: But both meet at length on the ſafe and quiet Shore with Chriſt.

Fifthly, What Entertainment the Lord Jeſus gave them when they came aſhore.

1. He had Proviſion ready for them. When they came to Land, wet and cold, weary and hungry, they found a *good Fire* there, to warm 'em, and dry 'em, and *Fiſh* and *Bread*; competent Proviſion for a good Meal.

(1.) We need not be curious in enquiring whence this Fire, and Fiſh, and Bread came, no more than whence the Meat came which the Ravens brought *Elijah*. He that could multiply the Loaves and Fiſhes that were, could make *new ones* if he pleaſed, or turn Stones into Bread, or ſend his Angels to fetch it where he knew 'twas to be had. 'Tis uncertain whether this Proviſion was made in the open Air, or in ſome Fiſher's Cabin, or Hut upon the Shore. Here was nothing ſtately or delicate; we ſhould be content with mean Things, for Chriſt was.

2. We may be comforted in this Inſtance of Chriſt's Care of his Diſciples; he has wherewith to *ſupply all their Needs*, and *knows what Things we have need of*. He kindly provided for thoſe Fiſhermen, when they came weary from their Work, for verily *they ſhall be fed* who *truſt in the Lord*, and *do good*. 'Tis encouraging to Chriſt's Miniſters, whom he hath made *Fiſhers of Men*, that they may depend upon him who *employs* them to *provide* for them; and if they ſhould miſs of Encouragement in this World, ſhould be reduced as *Paul* was, to *Hunger* and *Thirſt*, and *Faſtings often*, let them content themſelves with what they have here, they have better Things in Reſerve, and ſhall *eat and drink with Chriſt at* his Table, in his Kingdom, *Luke* 22. 30. A while ago the Diſciples had entertained Chriſt with a *broiled Fiſh*, Luke 24. 42. and now, as a Friend, he return'd their Kindneſs, and entertain'd them with one; nay, in the Draught of Fiſhes he repay'd them more than an *Hundred-fold*.

2. He *called for ſome of that which* they had *caught*, and they produced it, *v.* 10, 11. Obſerve here,

(1.) The Command Chriſt gave them to bring their Draught of Fiſh to Shore. Bring of the Fiſh hither which you have now caught, and let us have ſome of them; not as if he needed it, and could not make up a Dinner for them without it; but, (1.) He would have them *eat the Labour of their Hands*, Pſal. 128. 2. what is got by God's Bleſſing on our own Induſtry, and honeſt Labour, if withal *God gave us Power to eat of it*, and *enjoy Good in our Labour*, hath a peculiar Sweetneſs in it. 'Tis ſaid of the *ſloathful man*, that he *roaſteth not that which he took in Hunting*; cannot find in his Heart to *dreſs* what he has been at the Pains to *take*, Prov. 12. 27. But Chriſt would hereby teach us to *uſe what we have*. (2.) He would have them *taſte* the Gifts of his miraculous Bounty, that they might be Witneſſes both of his Power and of his Goodneſs. The Benefits Chriſt beſtows upon us are not to be *buried* and *laid up*, but to be uſed and laid out. (3.) He would give a *Specimen* of the ſpiritual Entertainment he has for all Believers, which in this reſpect is moſt free and familiar, that he *ſups with them*, and *they with him*. Their Graces are pleaſing *to him*, and his Comforts are ſo to them. What he *works in them* he *accepts* from them. (4.) Miniſters that are Fiſhers of Men, muſt bring all they catch to their Maſter, for on him their Succeſs depends.

(2.) Their Obedience to this Command, *v.* 11. It was ſaid, *v.* 6. they were *not able to draw the Net* to ſhore, for the Multitude of Fiſhes, *i. e.* they found it difficult, it was more than they could well do; but he that bid them bring it to ſhore, *made it eaſie*. Thus the Fiſhers of Men, when they have incloſed Souls in the Goſpel Net, *cannot bring them to ſhore*, cannot carry on, and compleat the good Work begun, without the continued Influence of the Divine Grace. If he that helped us to *catch* them, when without his Help we ſhould have *caught nothing*, do not help us to keep them, and draw them to *land*, by building them up in their moſt Holy Faith, we ſhall loſe them at laſt, 1 *Cor.* 3. 7.

Obſerve, 1. Who it was that was moſt *active* in landing the Fiſh, 'twas *Peter*, who, as in the former Inſtance, *v.* 7. he had ſhewed a more zealous Affection to his Maſter's Perſon than any of them, ſo in this ſhewed a more ready Obedience to his Maſter's Commands. But all that are *faithful* are not a-like *forward*.

2. The Number of the Fiſhes that were caught. They had the Curioſity to count them, and perhaps it was in order to the making of a Dividend; They were in all a Hundred and Fifty Three, and all *great Fiſhes*. Theſe were many more than they needed for their preſent Supply, but they might ſell them, and the Money would ſerve to bear their Charges back to *Jeruſalem*, whither they were ſhortly to return.

3. A further Inſtance of Chriſt's Care of them, to increaſe both the *Miracle* and the *Mercy*; *for all there were ſo many*, and great Fiſhes too, *yet was not the Net broken*; ſo that they loſt none of their Fiſh, nor damaged their Net. 'Twas ſaid, *Luke* 5. 6. their *Net brake*. Perhaps this was a *borrowed* Net, for they had long ſince *left* their own; and if ſo, Chriſt would teach us to take care of what he have *borrowed*, as much as if it were *our own*. 'Twas well their Net did not *break*, for they had not now the leiſure they had to *mend their Nets*. The Net of the Goſpel has incloſed Multitudes; Three Thouſand in one Day, and yet *is not broken*; 'tis ſtill as mighty as ever to bring Souls to God.

3. He *invited them to Dinner*. Obſerving them to keep their Diſtance, and that they were afraid to aſk him, *Who art thou*? becauſe they knew it was their Lord, he called to them very familiarly, *Come and dine*.

(1.) See here how *free* Chriſt was with his Diſciples, he treated them as Friends; he did not ſay, Come and wait, come and attend me, but *come and Dine*: Not go dine by *your ſelves*, as Servants are appointed to do, but come and dine *with me*. This kind Invitation may be alluded to, to illuſtrate, (1.) The Call Chriſt gives his Diſciples into *Communion* with him in *Grace here*. All Things are now ready, *Come and Dine*. Chriſt is a *Feaſt*, come dine *upon him*; his Fleſh is Meat indeed, his Blood Drink indeed: Chriſt is a *Friend*, come dine *with him*, he will *bid you welcome*, Cant. 5. 1. (2.) The Call he *will* give them into the Fruition of him in Glory hereafter. *Come ye bleſſed of my Father*; come and *ſit down* with *Abraham*, and *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*. Chriſt has wherewithal to dine all his Friends and Followers; *there is Room* and Proviſion enough for them all.

(2.) See how *Reverent* the Diſciples were *before Chriſt*, they were ſomewhat *ſhy* of uſing the Freedom he invited them to; and by his *courting* them to their Meat, it ſhould ſeem they ſtood *pauſing*. Being to *eat with a Ruler*, ſuch a Ruler, *they conſider diligently what is before them*: None of them *durſt aſk him who art thou*? Either, (1.) Becauſe they would not be ſo *bold with him*. Tho' perhaps he appeared now in ſomething of a Diſguiſe at firſt, as to the Two Diſciples when their *Eyes were holden* that they ſhould not know him, yet they had very good Reaſon to think it was he, and could be no other. (2.) Becauſe they would not ſo far betray *their own Folly*. When he had given them this Inſtance of his Power and Goodneſs, they muſt be ſtupid indeed if they queſtioned whether it was he or no. When God in his Providence hath given us *ſenſible* Proofs of his Care for *our Bodies*, and hath given us in his Grace *manifeſt* Proofs of his good Will to *our Souls*, and good Work upon them, we ſhould be aſhamed of our Diſtruſts, and not dare to queſtion that which he has left us no room to queſtion. Groundleſs Doubts muſt be *ſtifled*, and not *ſtarted*.

4. He *carved* to them, as the Maſter of the Feaſt, *v.* 13. obſerving them to be ſtill ſhy and timorous, he *comes and takes Bread* himſelf, and *giveth them*, ſome to each of them, and *Fiſh likewiſe*. No doubt he craved a Bleſſing, and gave Thanks, as *Luke* 24. 30. but it being his known and conſtant Practice, it did not need to be mentioned.

(1.) The Entertainment here was but *ordinary*, 'twas but a *Fiſh-dinner*, but coarſly dreſſed; here was nothing pompous, nothing curious; plentiful indeed, but plain and homely. Hunger is the beſt Sawce. Chriſt, tho' entered upon his exalted State, ſhewed himſelf alive by *eating*, not ſhewed himſelf a Prince by *feaſting*. Thoſe that could not content themſelves with Bread and Fiſh unleſs they have Sawce and Wine, would ſcarce have found in their Hearts to dine with Chriſt himſelf here.

(2.) Chriſt himſelf *began*. Though perhaps having a *glorified* Body, he *needed* not to eat, yet he would ſhew that he had a *true* Body which was capable of eating. The Apoſtles produced this as one Proof of his Reſurrection, that they had *eaten and drunk with him*, Acts 10. 41.

(3.) He gave the Meat about to all his Gueſts. He not only provided it for them, and invited them to it, but he himſelf *divided it* among them, and put it into their Hands; thus to him we owe the *Application*, as well as the Purchaſe of the *Benefits of Redemption*. He giveth us Power to eat of them.

The Evangeliſt leaves them at Dinner, and makes this Remark, *v.* 14. That *this is now the third Time that Jeſus ſhewed himſelf alive* to his Diſciples, or the greater Part of them: This is the *third Day*, ſo ſome. On the Day he roſe he appeared five times. The *ſecond Day* was that Day *ſeven-night*; and this was the *Third*. Or, this was his third Appearance to any conſiderable Number of his Diſciples together; though he had appeared to *Mary*, to the Women, to the *two* Diſciples, to *Cephas*, yet he had but *twice* before this appeared to any Company of them together. This is taken Notice of, (1.) For the confirming the Truth of his Reſurrection. The Viſion was *doubled*, was *trebled*, for the Thing was certain. They who believed not the firſt Sign, ſhould be brought to believe the *Voice of the latter Signs*. (2.) As an Inſtance of Chriſt's continued Kindneſs to his Diſciples; once and again, and a third Time he viſited them. It's good to *keep Account* of Chriſt's gracious Viſits, for he *keeps Account* of them, and they will be remembered againſt us, if we walk unworthily of them, as they were againſt *Solomon*, when he was minded that the Lord God of *Iſrael* had *appeared unto him twice*. This is now the *third*; have we made a due Improvement of the firſt and ſecond? See 1 *Cor.* 12. 14. This is the third, perhaps it may be the laſt.

15 So when they had dined, Jeſus ſaith to Simon Peter, Simon, *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me more than theſe? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He ſaith to him again the ſecond time, Simon, *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me? He ſaith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knoweſt that I love thee. He ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep. 17 He ſaith unto him the third time, Simon, *ſon* of Jonas, loveſt thou me? Peter was grieved, becauſe he ſaid unto him the third time, Loveſt thou me? And he ſaith unto him, Lord, thou knoweſt all things; thou knoweſt that I love thee. Je-

ſus ſaith unto him, Feed my ſheep. 18 Verily verily I ſay unto thee, When thou waſt young, thou girdeſt thy ſelf, and walkeſt whither thou wouldeſt: but when thou ſhalt be old, thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldeſt not. 19. This ſpake he ſignifying by what death he ſhould glorify God. And when he had ſpoken this, he ſaith unto him, Follow me.

We have here Chriſt's Diſcourſe with *Peter* after Dinner, ſo much of it as relates to himſelf. In which,

Firſt, He examines his Love to him, and gives him a Charge concerning his Flock, *v*, 15, 16, 17. Obſerve,

1. When Chriſt enter'd into this Diſcourſe with *Peter*, 'twas *after they had dined*; they had all eaten, and were filled, and 'tis likely were entertained with ſuch *edifying* Diſcourſe, as our Lord Jeſus uſed to make his *Table-talk*. Chriſt foreſaw, that what he had to ſay *to Peter* would give him ſome Uneaſineſs, and therefore would not ſay it till they had dined, becauſe he would not ſpoil his Dinner. *Peter* was *conſcious* to himſelf, that he had incurred his Maſter's Diſpleaſure, and could expect no other but to be *upbraided* with his Treachery and Ingratitude; *was this thy Kindneſs to thy Friend*? Did not I tell thee what a Coward thou wouldſt prove? Nay, he might juſtly expect to be ſtruck out of the Roll of the Diſciples, and to be *expelled* the Sacred College. Twice, if not thrice, he had ſeen his Maſter ſince his Reſurrection, and he ſaid not a Word to him of it. We may ſuppoſe *Peter* full of Doubts, upon what Terms he ſtood with his Maſter; ſometimes hoping the beſt, becauſe he had received Favours from him in common with the reſt, yet not without ſome Fears, leſt the *Chiding* would come at laſt that would *pay for all*. But now at length his Maſter put him out of his Pain, ſaid what he had to ſay to him, and confirmed him in his Place as an Apoſtle. He did not tell him of his Fault *haſtily*, but *deferred it* for ſome time; did not tell him of it *unſeaſonably* to diſturb the Company at Dinner; but when they had *dined together*, in token of Reconciliation, then diſcourſed he with him about it, not as with a Criminal, but as with a Friend. *Peter* had reproached himſelf for it, and therefore Chriſt did not reproach him for it; nor tell him of it *directly*, but only by a *tacit Intimation*; and being ſatisfied in his ſincerity, the Offence was not only *forgiven* but *forgotten*, and Chriſt let him know that he was as dear to him as ever. Herein he has given us an encouraging Inſtance of his Tenderneſs towards Penitents, and has taught us in like manner to reſtore ſuch as are fallen with a *Spirit of Meekneſs*.

2. What was the Diſcourſe it ſelf. Here was the ſame Queſtion three times *asked*, the ſame *Anſwer* three times made, and the ſame Reply three times given, with very little Variation, and yet no vain Repetition. 'Twas repeated by our Saviour in the ſpeaking of it, the more to affect *Peter*, and the other Diſciples that were preſent? 'tis repeated by the Evangeliſt in the writing of it, that were to affect us, and all that read it.

1. *Three Times* Chriſt *asks Peter* whether he *loves him* or no? The firſt time the Queſtion is, *Simon* Son of *Jonas loveſt thou me more than theſe*? Obſerve,

1. How he *calls him*; Simon *Son of* Jonas. He ſpeaks to him *by Name*, the more to affect him, as *Luke* 22. 31. *Simon, Simon*. He doth not call him *Cephas* or *Peter*, the Name he had given him for he had loſt the Credit of his Strength and Stability, which thoſe Names ſignified, but his original Name *Simon*. Yet he gives him no hard Language, doth not call him out of his Name, tho' he deſerved it; but as he had called him when he pronounced him *Bleſſed, Simon Bar jona*, Mat. 16. 17. He calls him Son of *Jonas* (or *John* or *Johanan*) to mind him of his Extraction, how mean it was, and unworthy the Honour to which he was advanced.

2. How he *catechizeth* him. *Loveſt thou me more than theſe*?

1. *Loveſt thou me*? If we would try whether we are Chriſt's Diſciples indeed, this muſt be the Enquiry, *Do we love him*? But there was a ſpecial Reaſon why Chriſt put it now to *Peter*.

(1.) His *Fall* had *given Occaſion* to *doubt of his Love*. *Peter*, I have Cauſe to ſuſpect thy Love; for if thou hadſt loved me, thou wouldeſt not have been aſhamed and afraid to own me in my Sufferings. *How canſt thou ſay thou loveſt me when thy Heart was not with me*? *Note*, We muſt not reckon it an affront to have our Sincerity *queſtion'd*, when we our ſelves have done that which makes it *queſtionable*; after a ſhaking Fall we muſt take heed of ſettling too ſoon, leſt we ſettle upon a wrong Bottom. The Queſtion is affecting; he doth not ask, Doſt thou fear me? Doſt thou honour me? Doſt thou admire me? But, doſt thou love me? Give but Proofs of that, and the Affront ſhall be paſt by, and no more ſaid of it. *Peter* had profeſſed himſelf a Penitent, Witneſs his Tears, and his Return to the Society of the Diſciples; he was now upon his Probation as a Penitent; but the Queſtion is not, *Simon*, how much haſt thou wept? How oft haſt thou faſted and afflicted thy Soul? But, *doſt thou love me*? That's it which will make the other Expreſſions of Repentance acceptable. The great Thing Chriſt eyes in Penitents, is their eying him in their Repentance. *Much is forgiven her*, not becauſe ſhe wept much, but becauſe *ſhe loved much*.

(2.) His *Function* would give Occaſion for the *Exerciſe* of his Love. Before Chriſt would commit his Sheep to his Care, he asked him, *Loveſt thou me*. Chriſt hath ſuch a tender Regard to his Flock, that he will not truſt it with any but thoſe that love him, and therefore will love all that are his for his ſake. Thoſe that do not truly love Chriſt, will never truly love the Souls of Men, nor will *naturally care for their State* as they ſhould; nor will that Miniſter love his Work, that doth not love his Maſter. Nothing but the Love of Chriſt will *conſtrain* Miniſters to go chearfully through the Difficulties and Diſcouragements they meet with in their Work, 2 *Cor*. 5. 13, 14. But this Love will make their Work *eaſy*, and them *in good Earneſt* in it.

2. Loveſt thou me *more than theſe*? πλεῖον τούτων.

1. *Loveſt thou me more than* thou loveſt *theſe*? More than thou loveſt *theſe Perſons*? Doſt thou love me better than *James* or *John*, thy intimate Friends, or *Andrew* thy own Brother and Companion? Thoſe do not love Chriſt aright, that do not love him better than the beſt Friend they have in the World, and make it to appear, whenever they ſtand in Compariſon, or in Competition. Or, more than thou loveſt *theſe Things*; theſe Boats and Nets; more than all the Pleaſure of Fiſhing, which ſome make a Recreation of; more than the Gain of Fiſhing, which others make a Calling of. Thoſe only love Chriſt indeed, that love him better than all the Delights of Senſe, and all the Profits of this World. *Loveſt thou me* more than thou loveſt theſe Occupations thou art now employ'd in; if ſo, leave them to employ thy ſelf wholly in feeding my Flock. So Dr. *Whitby*.

2. *Loveſt thou me more than theſe* love me? more than any of the reſt of the Diſciples love me? And then 'tis either to upbraid him with his vain glorious Boaſt; Tho' *all Men ſhould deny thee*, yet will not I. Art thou ſtill of the ſame Mind? Or, to intimate to him, that he had now more Reaſon to love him than any of them had, for more had been forgiven to him than to any of them, as much as his Sin in denying Chriſt, was greater than theirs in forſaking him. *Tell me therefore which of them will love him moſt*? Luke 7. 41. *Note*, We ſhould all ſtudy to excel in our Love to Chriſt. 'Tis no Breach of the Peace to *ſtrive* which ſhall love Chriſt beſt; nor any Breach of good Manners to go before others in this Love.

The ſecond and third time that Chriſt puts this Queſtion, (1.) He left out *more than theſe*; becauſe *Peter* in his Anſwer modeſtly left it out, not willing to compare himſelf with his Brethren, much leſs to prefer himſelf before them. Tho' we cannot ſay we love Chriſt *more than others* do, yet we ſhall be accepted if we can ſay, we love him *indeed*. (2.) In the laſt he altered the Word, as 'tis in the Original. In the two firſt Enquiries, the Original Word is Αγαπᾷς με; *Doſt thou retain a Kindneſs* for me? In Anſwer to which, *Peter* uſeth another Word more emphatical, Φιλῶ σε, *I love thee dearly*. And the laſt Time Chriſt uſeth that Word; and doſt thou indeed love me dearly?

2. *Three Times*, *Peter* returneth the ſame Anſwer to Chriſt, *Yea, Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee*. Obſerve,

(1.) *Peter* doth not pretend to love Chriſt more than the reſt of the Diſciples did; he is now aſhamed of that raſh Word of his, *Tho' all Men deny thee, yet will not I*, and he had Reaſon to be aſhamed of it. *Note*, Tho' we muſt aim to be better than others, yet we muſt in Lowlineſs of Mind eſteem others better than our ſelves; for we know more Evil by our ſelves, than we do by any of our Brethren.

(2.) Yet he profeſſeth again and again, that he *loved Chriſt*; yea, Lord, ſurely I love thee, I were unworthy to live if I did not. He had a high Eſteem and Value for him, a grateful Senſe of his Kindneſs, and was entirely devoted to his Honour and Intereſt; his Deſire was towards him, as one he was undone without, and his Delight in him as one he ſhould be unſpeakably happy in. This amounts to a Profeſſion of Repentance for his Sin, for it grieves us to have affronted one we love; and to a Promiſe of Adherence to him for the future, Lord, *I love thee*, and will never *leave thee*. Chriſt pray'd that his *Faith might not fail*, Luke 22. 32. and becauſe his Faith did not fail, his Love did not; for Faith will work by Love. *Peter* had forfeited his Claim of Relation to Chriſt. He was now to be re-admitted upon his Repentance; Chriſt puts his Trial upon this Iſſue, *Doſt thou love me*? And *Peter* joins Iſſue upon it, *Lord, I love thee*. *Note*, Thoſe who can truly ſay, through Grace, that they love Jeſus Chriſt, may take the Comfort of their Intereſt in him, notwithſtanding their daily Infirmities.

(3.) He appeals to Chriſt himſelf for the Proof of it, *Thou knoweſt that I love thee*. And the third Time yet more emphatically, *Thou knoweſt all Things, thou knoweſt that I love thee*. He doth not vouch his Fellow Diſciples to witneſs for him, they might be deceived in him: nor doth he think his own Word might be taken, the Credit of that was crack'd already, but he calls Chriſt himſelf to witneſs. 1. Peter was ſure that Chriſt *knew all Things*, and particularly that he *knew* the Heart, and was a Diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of that, *John* 16. 30. 2. *Peter* was ſatisfied of this, that Chriſt who knew all Things, knew the Sincerity of his Love to him, and would be ready to atteſt it in his Favour. 'Tis a Terror to an Hypocrite, to think that Chriſt *knows all Things*; for the Divine Omniſcience will be a Witneſs *againſt him*. But 'tis a Comfort to a ſincere Chriſtian, that he has that to appeal to; *My Witneſs is in Heaven, my Record is on high*. Chriſt knows us better than we know our ſelves. Tho' we know not our own Uprightneſs, he doth.

(4.) He was *grieved*, when Chriſt asked him the third time, *Loveſt thou me?* v. 17. (1.) Becauſe it *put him in mind* of his threefold Denial of Chriſt, and was plainly deſigned to do ſo; and *when he thought thereon, he wept.* Every Remembrance of *paſt* Sins, even *pardoned* Sins, renews the Sorrow of a true Penitent. *Thou ſhalt be aſhamed when I am pacified toward thee.* (2.) Becauſe it *put him in fear*, leſt his Maſter foreſaw ſome further Miſcarriage of his, which would be as great a Contradiction to his Profeſſion of Love to him as the former was. Surely thinks *Peter*, my Maſter would not thus put me upon the Rack, if he did not ſee ſome Cauſe for it. What would become of me, If I ſhould be again tempted. Godly Sorrow works *Carefulneſs* and *Fear*, 2 Cor. 7. 11.

3. *Three times* Chriſt committed the Care of his Flock to *Peter*. *Feed my Lambs. Feed my Sheep. Feed my Sheep.*

1. Thoſe whom Chriſt committed to *Peter's* Care were his *Lambs* and his *Sheep*. The Church of Chriſt is his Flock, which he hath purchaſed with his own Blood, *Acts* 20. 28. And he is the *chief Shepherd* of it. In this Flock ſome are *Lambs*, young and tender, and weak; others are Sheep, grown to ſome Strength and Maturity. The Shepherd here takes Care of both, and of the Lambs firſt, for upon all Occaſions he ſhewed a particular Tenderneſs for them; the Lambs he *gathers in his Arms*, and *carries in his Boſom*, Iſa. 40. 11.

2. The Charge he gives him concerning them, is to *feed* them. The Word uſed. v. 15. 17. is Βόσκε which ſtrictly ſignifies to *give them Food*; but the Word uſed v. 16. is ποίμαινε which ſignifies more largely to do all the *Office of a Shepherd* to them. Feed the *Lambs* with that which is proper for *them*, and the *Sheep* likewiſe with *Food convenient*. The *loſt Sheep* of the Houſe of *Iſrael*, ſeek and feed them, and the other Sheep alſo which are not of this Fold. *Note*, It is the Duty of all Chriſt's Miniſters to feed his Lambs and Sheep. *Feed them*, i. e. teach them, for the Doctrine of the Goſpel is Spiritual Food. *Feed them*, i. e. lead them to the green Paſtures, preſiding in their religious Aſſembles, and miniſtring all the Ordinances to them; *Feed them* by perſonal Application to their reſpective State and Caſe, not only *lay meat* before them, but feed them with it that are wilful, and will not; or weak and cannot feed themſelves. When Chriſt aſcended on high, he *gave Paſtors*; left his Flock with them that loved him, and would take Care of them for his ſake.

3. But why did he give this Charge particularly to *Peter?* Ask the Advocates for the Popes Supremacy, and they will tell you, That Chriſt hereby deſigned to give to *Peter*, and therefore to his *Succeſſors*, and therefore to the Biſhops of *Rome*, an abſolute Dominion and Headſhip over the whole Chriſtian Church; as if a Charge to *ſerve* the Sheep gave a Power to lord it over all the Shepherds; whereas 'tis plain *Peter* himſelf never claimed ſuch a Power, nor did the other Diſciples ever own it in him. This Charge given to *Peter* to preach the Goſpel, is by a ſtrange Fetch made to ſupport the Uſurpation of his pretended Succeſſors, that *fleece the Sheep*, and inſtead of feeding them, feed upon them. But the particular Application to *Peter* here was deſigned, (1.) To *reſtore him to the Apoſtleſhip*, now he repented of his Abjuration of it, and to renew his Commiſſion, both for his own Satisfaction, and for the Satisfaction of his Brethren. A Commiſſion given to one convicted of a Crime, is ſuppoſed to amount to a Pardon; no doubt this Commiſſion given to *Peter* was an Evidence that Chriſt was reconciled to him, elſe he would never have repoſed ſuch a Confidence in him. Of ſome that have deceived us, we ſay, tho' we *forgive* them, we will never *truſt* them; yet Chriſt, when he *forgave Peter*, truſted him with the moſt valuable Treaſure he had on Earth. (2.) 'Twas deſigned to *quicken him to a diligent Diſcharge of his Office*, as an Apoſtle. *Peter* was a Man of a bold and zealous Spirit, always forward to ſpeak and act, and leſt he ſhould be tempted to take upon him the directing of the Shepherds, he is charged to *feed the Sheep*, as he himſelf charges all the *Presbyters* to do, and not to *lord it over God's Heritage*, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. If he will be *doing*, let him *do this*, and pretend no further. (3.) What Chriſt ſaid to him, he ſaid to all his Diſciples; he charged them all not only to be *Fiſhers of Men*, tho' that was ſaid to *Peter*, Luke 5. 10. by the Converſion of of Sinners, but *Feeders of the Flock*, by the Edification of Saints.

Secondly, Chriſt having thus appointed *Peter* his *doing Work*, next cuts out to him his ſuffering Work. Having confirmed to him the Honour of an Apoſtle, he now tells him of further Preferment deſigned him, the Honour of a Martyr. Obſerve.

1. How his Martyrdom is foretold, v. 17. *Thou ſhalt ſtretch forth thy Hand*, being compelled to it, and *another ſhall gird thee* as a Priſoner that is pinioned, *and carry thee whither* naturally *thou wouldſt not.*

(1.) He prefaceth this Notice he gives to *Peter* of his Sufferings, with a ſolemn Aſſeveration, *Verily, verily I ſay unto thee.* 'Twas not ſpoken of as a thing probable, which perhaps might happen, but a thing *certain*; *I ſay to thee.* Others perhaps will ſay to thee, as thou didſt to me, *This ſhall not be unto thee*; but I ſay it ſhall. As Chriſt forſaw all his own Sufferings, ſo he foreſaw the Sufferings of all his Followers; and foretold them, though not in particular as to *Peter*, yet in general, that they muſt *take up their Croſs*. Having charged him to *feed his Sheep*, he bids him not to expect Eaſe and Honour in it, but Trouble and Perſecution, and to *ſuffer ill* for *doing well.*

(2.) He foretels particularly that he ſhould die a *violent Death*, by the Hands of an Executioner. The *ſtretching out his Hand*, ſome think points at the manner of his Death by crucifying; and the Tradition of the Ancients, if we may rely on that, informs us that *Peter* was crucified at *Rome*, under *Nero*, *A. D.* 68. or as others ſay, 79. Others think it points at the Bonds and Impriſonments, which thoſe are hampered with that are ſentenced to Death. The Pomp and Solemnity of an Execution, adds much to the Terror of Death, and to an Eye of Senſe, makes it look doubly formidable. Death in theſe horrid Shapes has oft been the Lot of Chriſt's faithful one's, who yet have *overcome it by the Blood of the Lamb.* This Prediction, though pointing chiefly at his Death, yet was to have its Accompliſhment in his *precious* Sufferings. It began to be fulfilled preſently, when he was impriſoned, *Acts* 4. 3. and 5. 18. and 12. 4. No more is implied here in his being carried *whither he would not*, but that it was a *violent Death* he ſhould be carried to; ſuch a Death as even innocent Nature could not think of without Dread, nor approach without ſome Reluctancy. He that puts on the Chriſtian, doth not put off the Man; Chriſt himſelf prayed againſt the bitter Cup. A natural Averſion to Pain and Death is well reconcilable with a holy Submiſſion to the Will of God in both. Bleſſed *Paul*, tho' longing to be *unloaded*, yet owns he cannot deſire to be *uncloathed*, 2 Cor. 5. 4.

(3.) He compares this with his former Liberty. Time was when thou kneweſt not any of theſe Hardſhips, thou *girdeſt thy ſelf, and walkeſt whether thou wouldſt.* Where Trouble comes, we are apt to aggravate it with this, that it *has been* otherwiſe; and to fret the more at the *Grievances* of Reſtraint, Sickneſs, and Poverty, becauſe we have known the *Sweets* of Liberty, Health, and Plenty, *Job* 29. 2. *Pſal.* 42. 4. But we may turn it the other way, and reaſon thus with our ſelves, how many Years of Proſperity have I enjoyed more than I deſerved, and improved, and *having received Good, ſhall not I receive Evil alſo.* See here,

1. What a Change may poſſibly be made with us, as to our Condition in this World. They that have girded themſelves with Strength and Honour, and indulged themſelves in the greateſt *Liberties*, perhaps *Looſes*, may be reduced to ſuch Circumſtances as are the *Reverſe* of all this; ſee 1 *Sam.* 2. 5.

2. What a Change *is preſently* made with thoſe that leave all to follow Chriſt, they muſt no longer *gird themſelves*, but *he* muſt gird them, and muſt no longer walk whither *they will*, but whither *he will.*

3. What a Change *will certainly* be made with us, if we ſhould live to be old. They that when they were young had Strength of Body, and Vigour of Mind, and could eaſily go through Buſineſs and Hardſhip, and take the Pleaſures they had a Mind to; when they ſhall be old, will find their Strength gone, like *Sampſon*, when his Hair was cut, and could not *ſhake himſelf as at other times.*

Chriſt tells *Peter* he ſhould ſuffer thus in his old *Age.* (1.) Tho' he ſhould be *old*, and in a Courſe of Nature not likely to live long; yet his Enemies would haſten him out of the World violently, then when he was about to retire out of it peaceably; and would put out his Candle when 'twas almoſt burned down to the Socket. See 2 *Chron.* 36. 17. (2.) God would ſhelter him from the Rage of his Enemies, till he ſhould come to be old; that he might be made the fitter for Sufferings, and the Church might the longer enjoy his Service.

2. The Explication of this Prediction, v. 19. *This ſpake* he to *Peter, ſignifying by what Death he ſhould glorify God*, when he had finiſhed his Courſe. Obſerve.

(1.) That it is not only *appointed to all once to die*; but it is appointed to each *what Death they ſhould die*, whether natural or violent, ſlow or ſudden, eaſy or painful; when *Paul* ſpeaks of ſo *great a Death*, he intimates that there are *Degrees of Death.* There's one way into the World, but many ways out, and God has determined which way we ſhould go.

(2.) That it is the great Concern of every good Man, whatever Death he die, to *glorify God* in it; for what is our chief End but this? To *die to the Lord*, at the World of the Lord. When we die *patiently*, ſubmitting to the Will of God; die *chearfully*, rejoycing in hope of the Glory of God; and die *uſefully*, witneſſing to the Truth and Goodneſs of Religion, and encouraging others, we glorify God in dying. And this is the earneſt Expectation and Hope of all good Chriſtians, as it was *Paul*'s that Chriſt may be magnified in them living and dying, *Phil.* 1. 20.

(3.) That the Death of the Martyrs was in aſpecial manner for the *glorifying of God.* The Truths of God, which they died in the Defence of, are hereby confirmed. The Grace of God, which carried them with ſo much Conſtancy through their Sufferings, is hereby *magnified*; and the Conſolations of God which have abounded towards them in their Sufferings, and his Promiſes the Springs of their Conſolations, have hereby been recommended to the Faith and Joy of all the Saints. The Blood of the Martyrs has been the ſeed of the Church, and the Converſion and Eſtabliſhment of thouſands. *Precious* therefore *in the ſight of the Lord* is *the Death of his Saints*, and that which *honours him*, and thoſe that thereby at ſuch an Expence honour him, he will honour.

3. The Word of Command he gives him hereupon; *When he had ſpoken thus*, obſerving *Peter* perhaps to look blank upon it, he ſaith unto him, *Follow me.* Probably he roſe from the Place where he had ſitten at Dinner, walked off a little, and bid *Peter* attend

him. This Word, *Follow me*, was, (1.) A further Confirmation of his Reſtoration to his Maſter's Favour, and to his Apoſtleſhip; for *Follow me*, was the firſt Call. (2.) 'Twas an Explication of the *Prediction* of his Sufferings; which perhaps *Peter* at firſt did not fully underſtand till Chriſt gave him that Key to it, *Follow me.* Expect to be treated as I have been, and to tread the ſame bloody Path that I have trod before thee: For the Diſciple is not greater than his Lord. (3.) 'Twas to excite him to, and encourage him in Faithfulneſs and Diligence in his Work as an Apoſtle. He had bid him feed his Sheep, and let him ſet his Maſter before him as an Example of Paſtoral Care: Do as I have done. Let the Under-Shepherds ſtudy to imitate the Chief-Shepherd. They had *followed Chriſt* while he was here upon Earth, and now he was leaving them he ſtill preaches the ſame Duty to them, tho' to be performed in *another way*, *Follow me*; ſtill they muſt follow the Rules he had given them, and the Example he had ſet them. And what greater Encouragement could they have than this both in *Services* and in *Sufferings.* (1.) That *herein* they *did* follow him, and it was their *preſent* Honour; who would be aſhamed to follow ſuch a Leader? (2.) That *hereafter* they *ſhould* follow him, and that would be their *future* Happineſs; and ſo 'tis a Repetition of the Promiſe Chriſt had given *Peter*, John 13. 36. *Thou ſhalt follow me afterwards.* They that faithfully follow Chriſt *in Grace*, ſhall certainly follow him *to Glory.*

20 Then Peter turning about, ſeeth the diſciple whom Jeſus loved, following; which alſo leaned on his breaſt at ſupper, and ſaid, Lord which is he that betrayeth thee? 21 Peter ſeeing him, ſaid to Jeſus, Lord, and what ſhall this man do? 22 Jeſus ſaith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? Follow thou me. 23 Then went this ſaying abroad among the brethren, that that diſciple ſhould not die: yet Jeſus ſaith not unto him, He ſhall not die: but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? 24 This is the diſciple which teſtifieth of theſe things, and wrote theſe things: and we know that his teſtimony is true. 25 And there are alſo many other things which Jeſus did, the which if they ſhould be written every one, I ſuppoſe that even the world it ſelf could not contain the books that ſhould be written. Amen.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, The Conference Chriſt had with *Peter* concerning *John*, the beloved Diſciple. In which we have,

1. The *Eye Peter* caſt upon him, *v.* 20. *Peter* in Obedience to his Maſter's Orders followed him, and *turning about*, pleaſed with the Honours his Maſter now did him, he ſees *the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved* following likewiſe. Obſerve here,

(1.) How *John* is deſcribed: He doth not *name* himſelf, as thinking his own Name not worthy to be preſerved in theſe Records; but gives ſuch a Deſcription of himſelf as ſufficiently informs us who he meant, and withal gives us a Reaſon why he followed Chriſt ſo cloſe. He was *the Diſciple whom Jeſus loved*, whom he had a particular Kindneſs for above the reſt; and therefore you cannot blame him for coveting to be as much as poſſible within hearing of Chriſt's gracious Words. During theſe few precious Minutes he favoured his Diſciples with his Converſation. and it is probable, mention is here made of *John*'s having *leaned on Jeſus's Breaſt*, and his *enquiring concerning the Traitor*; which he did at the Inſtigation of *Peter*, *John* 13. 24. as a Reaſon why *Peter* made the following Enquiry concerning him, to repay him for the former Kindneſs. Then *John* was in the Favourite's Place, lying in Chriſt's Boſom, and he improved the Opportunity to oblige *Peter.* And now *Peter* was in the Favourite's Place, called to take a Walk with Chriſt, he thought himſelf bound in Gratitude to put ſuch a Queſtion for *John* as he thought would oblige him, we all being deſirous to know things to come, *Note*, As we have Intereſt at the Throne of Grace, we ſhould improve it for the Benefit one of another. They that help us by their Prayers at one time, ſhould be helped by us with ours at another time. This is the communion of Saints.

2. What he did: He alſo *followed* Jeſus; which ſhews how well he *loved his Company*: *Where* he was, *there* alſo would this *Servant* of his *be.* When Chriſt called *Peter* to follow him, it looked as if he deſigned to have ſome *private talk* with him; but ſuch an Affection *John* had to his Maſter, that he would rather do a thing that ſeem'd *rude*, than loſe the Benefit of any of Chriſt's Diſcourſe. What Chriſt ſaid to *Peter* he took as ſaid to *himſelf*; for that Word of Command, *Follow me*, was given to all the Diſciples. However he deſired to have Fellowſhip with thoſe that had Fellowſhip with Chriſt, and to *accompany* thoſe that *attended* him. The bringing of *one* to follow Chriſt, ſhould engage others. Draw *me*, and *we will run after thee*, Cant. 1. 4.

(3.) The Notice *Peter* took of it: He *turning about ſeeth him.* This may be looked upon either, (1.) As a *culpable Diverſion* from following his Maſter: He ſhould have been wholly intent upon that and have waited to hear what Chriſt had further to ſay to him, and then was he looking about him to ſee who followed. *Note*, The beſt Men find it hard to *attend upon the Lord without Diſtraction*; hard to keep their Minds ſo cloſely fixed as they ſhould be, in following Chriſt, and a needleſs and unſeaſonable Regard to our Brethren often diverts us from Communion with God: Or, (2.) As a *laudable Concern* for his Fellow-Diſciples. He was not ſo elevated with the Honour his Maſter did him in *ſingling* him out from the reſt, as to deny a kind Look to one that *followed.* Acts of Love to our Brethren muſt go along with Actings of Faith in Chriſt.

2. The *Enquiry Peter* made concerning him, *v.* 21. *Lord*, and *what ſhall this Man do*? Thou haſt told me my Work, to *feed the Sheep*; and my Lot, to be *carried whither I would not*: What ſhall be *his* Work, and his Lot? Now this may be taken as the Language.

1. Of *Concern* for *John*, and Kindneſs to him; Lord, thou ſheweſt me a great deal of Favour. Here comes thy beloved Diſciple, who never forfeited thy Favour as I have done. He expects to be taken notice of; Haſt thou nothing to ſay to him? Wilt thou not tell him how he muſt be *employed*, and how he muſt be honoured?

2. Or of *Uneaſineſs* at what Chriſt had ſaid to him concerning his Sufferings; Lord, muſt I alone be *carried whither I would not*? Muſt I be marked out to be run down? And muſt this Man have no Share of the Croſs? 'Tis hard to reconcile our ſelves to diſtinguiſhing Sufferings, and the Troubles in which we think we *ſtand alone.*

3. Or of *Curioſity*, and a fond Deſire of knowing Things to come, concerning others as well as himſelf. It ſeems by Chriſt's Anſwer there was ſomething amiſs in the Queſtion; when Chriſt had given him the *Charge* of ſuch a *Treaſure*, and the Notice of ſuch a Trial, it had well become him to have ſaid, *Lord*, and *what ſhall I* do then to approve my ſelf faithful to ſuch a Truſt, in ſuch a Trial? *Lord, increaſe my Faith.* As my Day is, let my Strength be. But inſtead of this,

(1.) He ſeems more concerned for *another*, than for himſelf. So apt are we to be buſy in other Mens Matters, but negligent in the Concerns of our own Souls; quick-ſighted abroad, but dim ſighted at home; judging others, and prognoſticating what they will do, when we have enough to do to *prove our own Work*, and *underſtand our own Way.*

(2.) He ſeems more concerned about *Event*, than about *Duty.* *John* was younger than *Peter*, and in a Courſe of Nature likely to ſurvive him; Lord, ſaith he, what Times ſhall he be reſerved for? Whereas, if God by his Grace enable us to perſevere to the End, and finiſh well, and get ſafe to Heaven, we need not aſk, What ſhall be the Lot of thoſe that ſhall come after us? *It is well if Peace and Truth be in my Days?* Scripture Predictions muſt be eyed for the directing of our Conſciences, not the ſatisfying of our Curioſity.

3. Chriſt's Reply to this Enquiry, *v.* 22. *If I will that he tarry till I come*, and do not ſuffer as thou muſt; *What is that to thee*? Mind thou thy own Duty, thy preſent Duty, *Follow thou me.*

1. There ſeems to be here an Intimation of Chriſt's Purpoſe concerning *John*, in two Things:

(1.) That he ſhould *not* die a *violent Death* like *Peter*: but ſhould tarry till Chriſt himſelf *came* by a *natural* Death to fetch him to himſelf. The moſt credible of the ancient Hiſtorians tell us, That *John* was the only one of all the Twelve that did not actually die a Martyr. He was oft in Jeopardy, in Bonds and Baniſhments; but at length died in his Bed in a good old Age. *Note*, At Death Chriſt *comes to us*, to call us to Account; and it concerns us to be ready for his coming. 2. Tho' Chriſt calls out *ſome* of his Diſciples to reſiſt unto Blood, yet not all. Tho' the Crown of Martyrdom is bright and glorious, yet the *beloved Diſciple* comes ſhort of it.

(2.) That he ſhould not die till after *Chriſt's coming* to deſtroy *Jeruſalem*: So ſome underſtand his tarrying till Chriſt comes. All the other Apoſtles died before that Deſtruction; but *John* ſurvived it many Years. God wiſely ſo ordered it, that one of the Apoſtles ſhould live ſo long to cloſe up the Canon of the *New Teſtament*; which *John* did ſolemnly, *Rev.* 22. 18. And to obviate the Deſign of the Enemy that ſowed *Tares* even before the Servants *fell aſleep.* *John* lived to confront *Ebion* and *Cerinthus*, and other Hereticks, who roſe betimes, *ſpeaking perverſe things.*

2. Others think 'tis only a Rebuke to *Peter*'s Curioſity; and that his tarrying till Chriſt's ſecond coming, is only the Suppoſition of an Abſurdity: Wherefore asketh thou after that which is Foreign and Secret? Suppoſe I ſhould deſign that *John* ſhould never die. What doth that concern thee? 'Tis nothing to thee when, or where, or how *John* muſt die. I have told thee how thou muſt die for thy part; 'tis enough for thee to know that, *Follow thou me.* *Note*, It is the Will of Chriſt that his Diſciples ſhould mind their own preſent Duty, and not to be curious in their Enquiries about future Events, either concerning themſelves or others. 1. There are many things we are apt to be ſollicitous about that are *nothing to us.* Other Peoples *Characters* are *nothing to us*; 'tis out of our Line to judge them; *Rom.* 14. 4. *Whatſoever they are*, ſaith *Paul*, *it makes no matter to me.* Other Peoples Affairs are *nothing to us* to intermeddle in; we muſt *quietly work, and mind* our own Buſineſs. Many nice and curious Queſtions are put by the *Scribes* and *Diſputers of this world* concerning the Counſels of God, and the State of the inviſible World, concerning which we may ſay, *What is that to us*? What do you think will become of ſuch and ſuch; is a common Queſtion, which may eaſily be anſwered with another; *What is that to me?* To his own Maſter he ſtands or falls. What is it to us to *know the Times and the Seaſons?* Secret things belong not to us. 2. The great thing that is *all in all to us* is *Duty*,

and not *Event*; for his Duty is ours, Events are God's: *Our own* Duty, and not another's; for every one ſhall bear his own Burthen: *Our preſent* Duty, and not the Duty of the *Time to come*; for ſufficient to the Day ſhall be the Directions thereof: A *Good Man's Steps are ordered by the Lord*, Pſal. 37. 23. he is guided Step by Step. Now all our Duty is ſumm'd up in this one, of *following Chriſt*; we muſt attend his Motions, and accommodate our ſelves to them, *follow him* to do him Honour as the Servant his Maſter; we muſt walk in the Way in which he walked, and aim to be where he is. And if we will cloſely attend to the Duty of following Chriſt, we ſhall find neither Heart nor Time to meddle with that which doth not belong to us.

4. The Miſtake which aroſe from this Saying of Chriſt, That *that Diſciple ſhould not die*, but abide with the Church to the End of Time; together with the ſuppreſſing of this Motion by a Repetition of Chriſt's Words, *v.* 23. Obſerve here,

1. The *eaſy Riſe* of a Miſtake in the Church by miſconſtruing the Sayings of Chriſt, and turning a Suppoſition into a Poſition. Becauſe *John* muſt not die a Martyr, they conclude he muſt not *die at all*.

1. They were inclined to *expect* it, becauſe they could not chuſe but *deſire it*. *Quod volumus facile credimus*. For *John* to abide in the Fleſh when the reſt were gone, and to continue in the World till Chriſt's ſecond coming, they think will be a great Bleſſing to the Church, which in every Age might have Recourſe to him as an Oracle; when they muſt loſe Chriſt's Bodily Preſence, they hope they ſhall have that of his beloved Diſciple: As if *that* muſt ſupply the Want of *his*; forgetting that the bleſſed Spirit the Comforter was to do that. *Note*, We are apt to dote too much on Men and Means, Inſtruments and external Helps, and to think we are happy if we may but *have them always with us*; whereas God will change his Workmen, and yet carry on his Work, that the *Excellency of his Power may be of God, and not of Men*. There is no need of *immortal* Miniſters to be the Guides of the Church, while it is under the Conduct of an eternal Spirit.

2. Perhaps they were *confirmed* in their Expectations when they now found that *John* ſurvived all the reſt of the Apoſtles; becauſe he lived *long*, they were ready to think he ſhould live *always*: Whereas *that which waxeth old* is *ready to vaniſh away*. Heb. 8. *ult.* However it took Riſe from a Saying of Chriſt's miſunderſtood, and then made a Saying of the Church. Hence learn, (1.) The Uncertainty of *human Tradition*, and the Folly of *building* our Faith upon it. Here was a Tradition, an Apoſtolical Tradition, a *Saying* that *went abroad among the Brethren*; 'twas early, 'twas common, 'twas publick, and yet 'twas *falſe*. How little then are thoſe unwritten Traditions to be relied upon, which the Council of *Trent* hath decreed to be received with a *Veneration and pious Affection equal to that which is owing to the Holy Scripture*. Here was a traditional Expoſition of Scripture, no new *Saying* of Chriſt's advanced; but only a Conſtruction put by *the Brethren* upon what he did really ſay, and yet it was a *Miſconſtruction*. Let the Scripture be its own Interpreter, and *explain it ſelf*, as it is in a great Meaſure its own Evidence, and proves it ſelf, for it is light.

(2.) The Aptneſs of Men to *miſinterpret* the Sayings of Chriſt. The groſſeſt Errors have ſometimes ſhrouded themſelves under the Umbrage of unconteſtable Truths; and the Scriptures themſelves have been wreſted by the unlearned and unſtable. We muſt not think it ſtrange if we hear the Sayings of Chriſt miſinterpreted, vouched to patronize the Errors of Antichriſt; and the impudent Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, for Inſtance, pretending to build upon that bleſſed Word of Chriſt. *This is my Body.*

2. The *eaſy rectifying* of ſuch Miſtakes by adhering to the Word of Chriſt, and abiding by that. So the Evangeliſt here corrects and controls that Saying among the Brethren, by repeating the very Words of Chriſt. He did not ſay, That that Diſciple ſhould not die, Let us not ſay ſo then; but he ſaid, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* He ſaid ſo, and no more. *Add thou not unto his Words*. Let the Words of Chriſt ſpeak for themſelves, and let no Senſe be put upon them but what is genuine and natural; and in that let us agree. *Note*, The beſt End of Mens Controverſies, would be to keep to the expreſs Words of Scripture, and ſpeak as well as think according to that Word, *Iſa.* 8. 20. Scripture Language is the ſafeſt and moſt proper Vehicle of Scripture Truth, The *Words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 13. As the Scripture it ſelf duly attended to, *is the beſt Weapon* wherewith to wound all dangerous Errors, and therefore Deiſts, Socinians, Papiſts, and Enthuſiaſts, do all they can to derogate from the Authority of the Scripture; ſo the Scripture it ſelf humbly ſubſcribed to, is the beſt *Weapon Salve* to heal the Wounds that are made by different Modes of Expreſſion concerning the ſame Truths. Thoſe that cannot agree in the ſame *Logicks* and *Metaphyſicks*, and the Propriety of the ſame Terms of Art, and the Application of them, yet may agree in the ſame Scripture Terms, and then may agree to love one another.

Secondly, We have here the *Concluſion of this Goſpel*, and with it of the Evangelical Story, *v.* 24. 25. This Evangeliſt ends not ſo abruptly as the other three did, but with a ſort of *Cadency*.

1. It concludes with an Account of the *Author* or *Penman* of it, connected by a decent Tranſition to that which went before, *v.* 24. *This is the Diſciple which teſtifieth of theſe Things* to the preſent Age, and wrote theſe Things for the Benefit of Poſterity, even this ſame that *Peter* and his *Maſter* had that Conference about in the foregoing Verſes; *John* the Apoſtle.

(1.) Obſerve here, that thoſe who wrote the Hiſtory of Chriſt were not aſhamed to put their Names to it. *John* here doth in effect ſubſcribe his Name. As we are ſure who was the Author of the firſt Five Books of the Old Teſtament, which were the Foundation of that Revelation; ſo we are ſure who were the Penmen of the *Four Goſpels*, and the *Acts*, that *Pentateuch* of the New Teſtament. The Record of Chriſt's Life and Death is not the Report of *We know not who*, but was drawn up by Men of known Integrity, who were ready not only to depoſe it upon Oath, but which was more, to *ſeal it with their Blood*.

(2.) Thoſe that wrote the Hiſtory of Chriſt, wrote *upon their own Knowledge*, not by Hear-ſay, but what they themſelves were Eye and Ear-witneſſes of. The Pen-man of this Hiſtory was a *Diſciple*, *a beloved* Diſciple, one that had leaned on Chriſt's Breaſt, had himſelf heard his Sermons and Conferences, had ſeen his Miracles, and the Proofs of his Reſurrection. *This is he which teſtifies* what he was well aſſured of.

(3.) Thoſe that wrote the Hiſtory of Chriſt, as they *teſtified* what they had *ſeen*, ſo they *wrote* what they had firſt *teſtified*. It was publiſhed by Word of Mouth with the greateſt Aſſurance, before it was committed to Writing. They teſtified it in the *Pulpit*, teſtified it at the *Bar*, ſolemnly *averred it*, ſtedfaſtly *avowed it*, not as Travellers give Account of their Travels, to entertain the Company, but as Witneſſes upon *Oath* give Account of what they know in a Matter of Conſequence, with the utmoſt Caution and exactneſs, to found a Verdict upon. What they wrote they wrote as an *Affidavit*, which they would *abide by*. Their *Writings* are ſtanding Teſtimonies to the World of the *Truth* of Chriſt's *Doctrine*, and will be Teſtimonies either for us or againſt us, according as we do or do not receive it.

(4.) It was graciouſly appointed for the Support and Benefit of the Church, that the Hiſtory of Chriſt ſhould be *put into Writing*, that it might with the greater *Fulneſs* and *Certainty* ſpread to every *Place* and laſt through every *Age*.

2. It concludes with an *Atteſtation of the Truth*, of what had been here *related*. *We know that his Teſtimony is true.* This may be taken either,

(1.) As ſpeaking the common Senſe of Mankind in Matters of this Nature, which is, that the Teſtimony of one who is an Eyewitneſs, is of unſpotted Reputation, ſolemnly depoſeth what he had ſeen, and puts it into Writing for the greater Certainty, is an *unexceptionable Evidence*. *We know*, i. e. All the World knows that the *Teſtimony* of ſuch a one is *valid*, and the common Faith of Mankind requires us to *give Credit* to it, unleſs we can diſprove it; and in other Caſes *Verdict* and *Judgment* is given upon ſuch Teſtimonies. The Truth of the Goſpel comes confirm'd by all the Evidence we can rationally deſire or expect in a thing of that Nature. The Matter of Fact, that Jeſus did preach ſuch Doctrines, and work ſuch Miracles, and riſe from the Dead, is prov'd beyond Contradiction, by ſuch Evidence as is always admitted in other Caſes; and therefore to the Satisfaction of all that are impartial; and then let the Doctrine recomend it ſelf, and let the Miracles prove it to be of God. Or,

(2.) As ſpeaking the Satisfaction of the Churches *at that Time*, concerning the Truth of what is here related. Some take it for the Subſcription of the Church of *Epheſus*; others of the *Angels* or *Miniſters* of the Churches of *Aſia* to this Narrative. Not as if an inſpired Writing, needed any Atteſtation from Men, or could from thence receive any Addition to its Credibility; but hereby they *recommended* it to the Notice of the Churches, as an *inſpired Writing*, and declared the Satisfaction they received by it. Or,

(3.) As ſpeaking the Evangeliſt's own Aſſurance of the Truth of what he wrote, like that, *John* 19. 35. *He knows that he ſaith true.* He ſpeaks of himſelf in the plural Number, *we know* not for *Majeſty* ſake, but for *Modeſty* ſake, as 1 *John*. 1. 1. *That which we have ſeen*; and 2 *Peter* 1. 16. *Note*, The Evangeliſts themſelves were entirely ſatisfied of the Truth of what they have teſtified, and tranſmitted to us. They do not require us to *believe* what they did not believe themſelves; *no*, they *knew their Teſtimony* was *true*, for they ventured both this Life and t'other upon it; threw away *this* Life, and depended upon another, on the Credit of what they ſpoke and wrote.

3. It concludes with an *& cætera*; with a Reference to *many other things*, very memorable, ſaid and done by our Lord Jeſus, which were well known by many then living, but not thought fit to be recorded for Poſterity, *v.* 25. There were many Things very remarkable and improvable, which if they ſhould be written at large, with the ſeveral Circumſtances of them, even the World it ſelf *i. e.* all the Libraries in it could not contain the Books that might be written. Thus he concludes like an Orator, as *Paul*, Heb. 11. 32. *What ſhall I more ſay? For the Time would fail me*.

If it be aſked why the Goſpels are not larger, why they did not make the New Teſtament Hiſtory as copious and as long as the Old; it may be anſwered,

1. It was not becauſe *they had exhauſted their Subject*, and had nothing more to write that was worth writing; no, there were many of Chriſt's Sayings and Doings not recorded by any of the Evangeliſts, which yet were worthy to be written in Letters of Gold. For, (1.) Every thing that Chriſt ſaid and did was worth our Notice, and capable of being improved. He never ſpoke an *idle Word*, nor did an *idle thing*; nay, he never ſpoke or did any

thing *mean* or *little*, or *trifling*, which is more than can be ſaid of the wiſeſt or beſt of Men. (2.) His Miracles were many, very many, of many Kinds, and the ſame oft repeated, as Occaſion offered. Tho' one *true Miracle* might perhaps ſuffice to prove a Divine Commiſſion, yet the Repetition of the Miracles upon a great Variety of Perſons, in a great Variety of Caſes, and before a great Variety of Witneſſes, helped very much to prove them true Miracles. Every new Miracle rendered the Report of the former the more *credible*; and the Multitude of them render the whole Report unconteſtable. (3.) The Evangeliſts upon ſeveral Occaſions give general Accounts of Chriſt's Preaching and Miracles, incluſive of many particulars, as *Mat.* 4. 23, 24. & 9. 35. & 11. 1. & 14. 14, 15. & 18. 30. & 19. 2. and many the like. When we ſpeak of Chriſt, we have a *copious* Subject before us, the Reality exceeds the Report, and after all, *the one half is not told us.* St. *Paul* quotes one of Chriſt's Sayings, which is not recorded by any of the Evangeliſts, *Acts* 20 35. and doubtleſs there were many more. All his Sayings were Apophthegems.

2. But it was for theſe three Reaſons:

1. Becauſe *it was not needful to write more.* This is implied here; there were *many other things* which *were not written*, becauſe there was no Occaſion for writing them. What is written, is a ſufficient Revelation of the Doctrine of Chriſt and the Proof of it, and the reſt was but to the ſame Purpoſe. They that from hence argue againſt the Sufficiency of the Scripture, as the Rule of our Faith and Practiſe, and for the Neceſſity of unwritten Traditions ought to ſhew what there is in the Traditions they pretend to *Perfective* of the written Word, we are ſure there is that which is *contrary* to it, and therefore reject them. By theſe therefore *let us be admoniſhed, for of writing many Books there is no End*, Eccl. 12. 12. If we do not believe and improve what is written, neither would we if there had been much more.

2. *It was not poſſible to write all.* 'Twas poſſible for the Spirit to indite all, but *morally impoſſible* for the Pen-men to pen all. *The World would not contain the Books.* 'Tis an Hyperbole common enough and juſtifiable, when no more is intended but this, that it would fill a vaſt and incredible Number of Volumes. 'Twould be ſuch a large and *over-grown* Hiſtory as never was; ſuch as would juſtle out all other Writings, and leave us no room for them. What Volumes would be filled with Chriſt's Prayers, had we the Record of all thoſe he made, when he *continued all Night in Prayer to God*, without any vain Repetitions. Much more if all his Sermons and Conferences were particularly related, his Miracles, his Cures, all his Labours, all his Sufferings; 'twould have been an *endleſs thing.*

2. It *was not adviſeable to write much*; for *the World* in a moral Senſe *could not contain the Books that ſhould be written.* Chriſt ſaid not what he might have ſaid to his Diſciples, *becauſe they were not able to bear it*; and for the ſame Reaſon the Evangeliſts wrote not what they might have written. *The World could not contain* χωρῆσαι, 'Tis the Word that's us'd, *John* 8. 37. My Word *has no Place* in you; they would have been ſo many, that they would have *found no Room.* All Peoples Time would have been ſpent in *reading*, and other Duties would thereby have been crowded out. Much is *over-looked* of what *is writen*, much forgotten, and much made the Matter of doubtful Diſputation, much more if there had been ſuch a World of Books of equal Authority and Neceſſity as the whole Hiſtory would have ſwelled to; eſpecially ſince it was requiſite that what was written ſhould be *meditated upon*, and *expounded*, which God wiſely thought fit to leave Room for. Parents and Miniſters in giving Inſtruction, muſt conſider the Capacities of them they teach, and like *Jacob*, muſt take heed of *over-driving.* Let us be thankful for the Books that are written, and not prize them the leſs for their Plainneſs and Brevity, but diligently improve what God has thought fit to reveal, and long to be there, where our Capacities ſhall be ſo *elevated* and *enlarged*, that there will be no Danger of their being *over-loaded.*

The Evangeliſt concluding with *Amen*, thereby ſets to his Seal, and let us ſet to *ours*; an *Amen of Faith* ſubſcribing to the Goſpel that it is true, all true; and an *Amen* of Satisfaction in what is written, as able to make us wiſe to Salvation. *Amen*; So be it.

AN

AN EXPOSITION OF THE ACTS of the APOSTLES, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

We have with an abundant Satisfaction ſeen the Foundations of our Holy Religion laid in the Hiſtory of our Bleſſed Saviour, its Great Author, which was related *and* left *upon Record by* Four *ſeveral inſpired Writers, who all agree in this Sacred Truth, and the unconteſtable Proofs of it, That* JESUS is the CHRIST, the Son of the living GOD; upon this Rock the *Chriſtian* Church is built; *And how it began to be built upon this Rock comes next to be related in this Book which we have now before us. And of this we have the Teſtimony only of* one Witneſs; *for the Matters of Fact concerning* CHRIST, *were much more neceſſary to be fully related and atteſted than thoſe concerning the Apoſtles. Had infinite Wiſdom ſeen fit, we might have had as many Books of the Acts of the Apoſtles as we have Goſpels, nay, as we might have had Goſpels; but for fear of* overburthening *the* World, John 21. 25. *We have ſufficient to anſwer the End, if we will but make uſe of it.*

The Hiſtory of this Book, (which was alſo received as a Part of the Sacred Canon) may be conſidered,

I. *As* looking back *to the preceeding* Goſpels, *giving Light to them, and greatly aſſiſting our Faith in them. The Promiſes there* made *we here find* made good; *particularly the Great Promiſe of the* Deſcent of the HOLY GHOST, *and his wonderful Operations, both* on *the Apoſtles, whom here in a few Days we find quite other Men than what the Goſpels left them; no longer* weak headed, *and* weak hearted, *but able to* ſay *that which then they were not able to* bear, (John 16. 12.) *and bold as Lions to face thoſe Hardſhips, which then as Lambs they trembled at the Thought of; And alſo* with *the Apoſtles making the Word mighty to the* pulling down of Satan's ſtrong Holds, *which had been before comparatively preached in vain. The Commiſſion* there *granted to the Apoſtles we* here *find* executed, *and the* Powers *there lodged in them* exerted *in Miracles wrought, on the Bodies of People, Miracles of Mercy, reſtoring ſick Bodies to Health; and dead Bodies to Life; Miracles of Judgment; ſtriking Rebels blind or dead; and much greater Miracles wrought on the Minds of People, in conferring Spiritual Gifts upon them, both of Underſtanding and Utterance; and this in purſuance of* CHRIST's *Purpoſes, and in Performance of his Promiſes, which we had in the Goſpels. The Proofs of* CHRIST's *Reſurrection, which the Goſpels* cloſed with, *are here abundantly* corroborated, *not only by the conſtant and undaunted Teſtimony of thoſe that converſed with him after he roſe, who had all* Deſerted *him, and one of them* denied *him, and would not otherwiſe have been* rallied again *but by his Reſurrection, but muſt have been irretrievably diſperſed; and yet by that were enabled to own him more reſolutely than ever in Defiance of Bonds and Deaths; but by the working of the Spirit with that Teſtimony for the Converſion of Multitudes to the Faith of* CHRIST, *according to the Word of* CHRIST, *that his Reſurrection, the Sign of the Prophet* Jonas, *which was reſerved to the* laſt, *ſhould be the moſt* convincing *Proof of his Divine Miſſion.* CHRIST *had told his Diſciples they ſhould be his Witneſſes, and this Book brings them in witneſſing for Him; That they ſhould be* Fiſhers of Men, *and here we have them incloſing Multitudes in the Goſpel Net; That they ſhould be the* Lights of the World, *and here we have the World enlightened by them; but that* Day-ſpring *from on high, which we there diſcerned the firſt appearing of, we here find ſhining more and more. The* Corn of Wheat *which there fell to the Ground, here ſprings up and bears* much Fruit; *The* Grain of Muſtard-Seed *there, is here a* great Tree; *And the* Kingdom of Heaven *which was then* at hand, *is here ſet up.* CHRIST's *Predictions of the virulent Perſecution which the Preachers of his Goſpel ſhould be afflicted with (though one could not have imagined that a Doctrine ſo well worthy of all Acceptation, ſhould meet with ſo ſo much Oppoſition) we here find abundantly fulfilled, and alſo the Aſſurances he gave them of extraordinary Supports and Comforts under their Sufferings. Thus as the* latter Part *of the Hiſtory of the Old Teſtament* verifies *the Promiſes made to the Fathers in the* former Part, *as appears by that famous and ſolemn Acknowledgment of* Solomon's, *which runs like a Receipt in full,* 1 Kings 8. 56. There has not failed one Word of all his good Promiſes which he promiſed by the Hand of *Moſes* his Servant. *So this latter Part of the Hiſtory of the New Teſtament exactly anſwers to the Word of* CHRIST *in the former Part of it: And thus they mutually* confirm *and* illuſtrate *each other.*

II. *As* looking forwards *to the following* Epiſtles, *which are an Explication of the Goſpels, which open the Myſtery of* CHRIST's *Death and Reſurrection, the Hiſtory whereof we had in the Goſpels. This Book introduceth* them, *and is a Key to them, as the Hiſtory of* David *is to* David's *Pſalms. We are Members of the Chriſtian Church, that* Tabernacle of GOD among Men, *and it is our Honour and Privilege that we are ſo. Now this Book gives us an Account of the Framing and Rearing of that Tabernacle. The Four Goſpels ſhewed us how the Foundation of that Houſe was laid; This ſhews us how the Superſtructure began to be raiſed.* (1.) *Among the* Jews *and* Samaritans, *which we have an Account of in the former Part of this Book.* (2.) *Among the* Gentiles, *which we have an Account of in the latter Part. From thence and downward to our own Day, we find the Chriſtian Church ſubſiſting in a viſible Profeſſion of Faith in* CHRIST, *as the Son of* GOD *and Saviour of the World, made by his baptized Diſciples, incorporated into religious Societies, ſtatedly meeting in religious Aſſemblies, attending on the Apoſtles Doctrine, and joyning in Prayers and Breaking of Bread, under the Conduct and Precedency of Men that gave themſelves to Prayer and the Miniſtry of the Word, and in a Spiritual Communion with all in every Place that do likewiſe. Such a Body as this there is now in* *the World, which we belong to, and to our great Satisfaction and Honour, in this Book we find the Riſe and Original of it, vaſtly different from the Jewiſh Church, and erected upon its Ruins; but undeniably appearing to be of* GOD, *and not of Man; with what Confidence and Comfort may we proceed in, and adhere to our Chriſtian Profeſſion, as far as we find it agrees with this* Pattern in the Mount; *to which we ought religiouſly to* conform *and* confine *our ſelves.*

Two Things more are to be obſerved concerning this Book: (1.) *The* Penman *of it; 'twas written by* Luke, *who wrote the third of the four Goſpels, which bears his Name; and who (as the learned Dr.* Whitby *ſhews) was, very probably, one of the* ſeventy *Diſciples, whoſe Commiſſion* (Luke 10. 1, &c.) *was little inferior to that of the twelve Apoſtles.* This Luke *was very much a Companion of* Paul's, *in his Services and Sufferings.* Only *Luke* is with me, 2 Tim. 4. 11. *We may know by his Style in the latter Part of this Book, when and where he was with him, for then he writes,* We *did ſo and ſo, as* Chap. 16. 10. 20. 6. *and from thenceforward to the End of the Book. He was with* Paul *in his dangerous Voyage to* Rome, *when he was carried thither a Priſoner, was with him when from his Priſon there he wrote his Epiſtles to the* Coloſſians *and* Philemon, *in both which he is named. And it ſhould ſeem that* St. Luke *wrote this Hiſtory when he was with* St. Paul *at* Rome, *during his Impriſonment there, and was aſſiſtant to him, for the Hiſtory concludes with* St. Paul's *preaching there in his* own hired Houſe. (2.) *The Title of it;* The Acts of the Apoſtles; Of the Holy Apoſtles, *ſo the Greek Copies generally read it, and ſo they are called,* Rev. 18. 20. Rejoyce over her ye Holy Apoſtles. *One Copy inſcribes it,* The Acts of the Apoſtles by *Luke* the Evangeliſt. (1.) *It is the Hiſtory of* the Apoſtles, *yet here is in it the Hiſtory of* Stephen, Barnabas, *and ſome other Apoſtolical Men, who tho'* not of the Twelve, *yet were endued with the ſame Spirit, and employed in the ſame Work. And of thoſe that were Apoſtles, 'tis the Hiſtory of* Peter *and* Paul *only that is here recorded, (and* Paul *was now of the Twelve)* Peter *the Apoſtle of the Circumciſion, and* Paul *the Apoſtle of the* Gentiles, Gal. 2. 7. *But this ſufficeth as a Specimen of what the reſt did in other Places, purſuant to their Commiſſion, for they were none of them idle. And as we are to think what is related in the Goſpels concerning* CHRIST ſufficient, *becauſe infinite Wiſdom thought ſo, the ſame we are to think here concerning what is related of the Apoſtles, and their Labours; for what more is told us from Tradition of the Labours and Sufferings of the Apoſtles, and the Churches they planted, is altogether doubtful and uncertain, and what, I think, we cannot build upon with any Satisfaction at all; this is* Gold, Silver, *and* precious Stones, *built upon the* Foundation; *That's* Wood, Hay, *and* Stubble. (2.) *It is called their* Acts *or* Doings, Geſta Apoſtolorum. *So ſome,* πράξεις, *their* Practices *of the Leſſons their Maſters had taught them. The Apoſtles were* Active *Men; and tho' the Wonders they did were by* the Word, *yet they are fitly called their* Acts; *They ſpake, or rather the Spirit by them* ſpake, and it was done. *The Hiſtory is filled with their* Sermons, *and their* Sufferings, *yet ſo much did they Labour in their* Preachings, *and ſo voluntarily did they expoſe themſelves to* Sufferings; *and ſuch were their Atchievements by* both, *that they may very well be called their* ACTS.

CHAP. I.

The inſpired Hiſtorian begins his Narrative of the Acts of the Apoſtles, (1.) *with a Reference to, and a brief Recapitulation of his* Goſpel, *or Hiſtory of the Life of Chriſt, inſcribing this, as he had done that, to his Friend* Theophilus, *v.* 1, 2. (2.) *With a Summary of the Proofs of Chriſt's Reſurrection, and his Conference with his Diſciples, and the Inſtructions he gave them during the forty Days of his Continuance on Earth, v.* 2—5. (3.) *With a particular Narrative of Chriſt's Aſcenſion into Heaven, his Diſciples Diſcourſe with him before he aſcended, and the Angels Diſcourſe with them after he was aſcended, v.* 6—11. (4.) *With a general Idea of the Embryo of the Chriſtian Church, and its State, from Chriſt's Aſcenſion to the pouring out of the Spirit, v.* 12—14. (5.) *With a particular Account of the filling up of the Vacancy that was made in the ſacred College, by the Death of* Judas, *by the electing of* Matthias *in his Room.*

THE former Treatiſe have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jeſus began both to do and teach, 2 Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the holy Ghoſt had given commandments unto the apoſtles, whom he had choſen. 3 To whom alſo he ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſſion, by many infallible proofs, being ſeen of them forty days, and ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: 4 And being aſſembled together with them, commanded them that they ſhould not depart from Jeruſalem, but wait for the promiſe of the Father, which, *ſaith he*, you have heard of me. 5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye ſhall be baptized with the holy Ghoſt, not many days hence.

In theſe Verſes,

Firſt, Theophilus is put in mind, and we in him, of St. *Luke*'s Goſpel, which it will be of uſe for us to caſt an Eye upon before we enter upon the Study of this Book, that we may ſee not only how this begins there where that breaks off, but that *as in Water Face anſwers to Face*, ſo do the *Acts of the Apoſtles* to the Acts of their Maſter, the Acts of his Grace.

1. His *Patron* to whom he *dedicates* this Book (I ſhould rather ſay his *Pupil*, for he deſigns in dedicating it to him, to inſtruct and direct him, and not to crave his Countenance or Protection) is *Theophilus*, *v.* 1. In the *Epiſtle Dedicatory* before his Goſpel, he had called him *moſt excellent Theophilus*, here he calls him no more but *O Theophilus*; not that he had loſt his *Excellency*, or that it was diminiſhed, and become leſs illuſtrious, but either he had now quitted his Place, whatever it was, for the ſake of which that Title was given him; or, he was now grown into Years, and deſpiſed ſuch Titles of Reſpect more than he had done; or, *Luke* was grown more intimate with him, and therefore could addreſs to him with the more Freedom. It was uſual with the Ancients, both Chriſtian and Heathen Writers, thus to inſcribe their Writings to ſome particular Perſon: But the directing ſome of the Books of the Scripture ſo, is an Intimation to each of us to receive them, as if directed to us in *particular*, to us *by Name*, for whatſoever Things were written before Time, were *written for our learning*.

2. His Goſpel is here called the *former Treatiſe which he had made*, which he had an Eye to in writing this, intending this for a Continuation and Confirmation of that, τ̃ πρῶτον λόγον. *The former Word.* What is *written* of the Goſpel, is the *Word* as truly as what was ſpoken, nay, we now know no *unwritten* Word that we are to give Credit to, but as it agrees with that which is *written*. He *made* the *former Treatiſe*, and now is divinely inſpired to make *this*; for Chriſt's Scholars muſt *go on towards Perfection*, *Heb.* 6. 1. And therefore their Guides muſt help them on, muſt *ſtill teach the People Knowledge*, Eccl. 12. 9. and not think that their *former Labour*, tho' never ſo good, will excuſe them from *further Labours*; but they ſhould rather be quickened and encouraged by them, as *Luke* here, who becauſe he had laid the Foundation in a former Treatiſe, will build upon it in this. Let not this therefore drive out that; let not new Sermons and new Books make us forget old ones, but put us in mind of them, and help us to improve them.

3. The Contents of his Goſpel was, *That, all that which* Jeſus, *began both to do and teach*; and the ſame is the Subject of the Writings of the other three Evangeliſts. *Obſerve*, (1.) Chriſt both *did* and *taught*. The *Doctrine* he *taught* was confirmed by the miraculous Works he *did*, which proved him a *Teacher come from God*, Joh. 3. 2. And the *Duties he taught* were *copied out* in the holy gracious Works he *did*, for he hath *left us an Example*, and that ſuch as proves him a *Teacher come from God* too, for by their Fruits ye ſhall know them. Thoſe are the beſt Miniſters that both *do* and *teach*, whoſe Lives are a conſtant Sermon. (2.) He *began* both to do and teach; he laid the Foundation of all that was to be taught and done in the Chriſtian Church: His Apoſtles were to *carry on* and *continue* what he *began*, and to *do* and *teach* the ſame Things. Chriſt ſet them in, and then left them to go on, but ſent his Spirit to impower them both to *do* and *teach*. It is a Comfort to thoſe who are endeavouring to carry on the Work of the Goſpel, that Chriſt himſelf began it. The great Salvation *at firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord*, Heb. 2. 3. (3.) The four Evangeliſts, and *Luke* particularly, have handed down to us *all that* Jeſus *began both to do and to teach*; not all the Particulars; the World

could not have contain'd them ; but all the Heads, *Samplars* of all ; ſo many and in ſuch Variety, as that by them you may judge of the reſt. We have the *Beginnings* of his Doctrine, *Matth.* iv. 17. and the *Beginnings* of his Miracles, *Jon.* ii. 11. *Luke* had *ſpoken*, had treated of all Chriſt's *Sayings* and *Doings*, had given us a *general* Idea of them, tho' he had nor recorded each in particular.

4. The Period of the *Evangelical* Story is fix'd to *the Day in which he was taken up*, v. 2. Then it was that he left this World, and his bodily Preſence was *no more in it* ; St. *Mark*'s Goſpel concludes with *the Lord*'s *being received up into Heaven*, Mark xvi. 19. and ſo doth St. *Luke*'s, Luke xxiv. 51. Chriſt continu'd *doing* and *teaching* to the laſt, till he was *taken* up to the other Work he had to do within the Vail.

Secondly, The Truth of Chriſt's *Reſurrection* is maintain'd and evidenc'd, *v.* 3. That Part of what was related in the *former Treatiſe* was ſo *material*, that it was neceſſary to be upon all Occaſions repeated. The great Evidence of his Reſurrection was, That *he ſhewed himſelf alive to his Apoſtles* ; being *alive*, he *ſhewed himſelf* ſo, and he was *ſeen of them* : They were honeſt Men, and one may depend upon their Teſtimony : But the Queſtion is, Whether they were not impos'd upon, as many a well-meaning Man is ? No ; they were not. For,

1. The *Proofs* were *infallible*, τεκμήρια *plain Indications*, both that he was *alive* ; He walk'd, and talk'd with them, He eat and drank with them ; and that it was he himſelf and not another, for he ſhew'd them again and again the Marks of the Wounds in his Hands and Feet and Side ; which was the utmoſt Proof of the Thing was *capable* of, or *requir'd*.

2. They were *many*, and oft repeated ; He was *ſeen by them Forty Days*, not conſtantly reſiding with them, but frequently appearing to them, and bringing them by degrees to be fully ſatisfy'd concerning it, ſo that all their Sorrow for his Departure was done away by it. Chriſt's ſtaying upon Earth ſo long after He was enter'd upon His State of Exaltation and Glory, to confirm the Faith of his Diſciples, and comfort their Hearts, was ſuch an Inſtance of Condeſcenſion and Compaſſion to Believers, as may fully aſſure us, that we have a *High Prieſt that is touch'd with the feeling of our Infirmities*.

Thirdly, A general Hint given of the Inſtructions He furniſh'd his Diſciples with, now he was about to leave them : And they ſince He *breathed on them*, and *open'd their Underſtandings*, were better able to *receive* them.

(1.) He inſtructed them concerning the Work they were to do. *He gave Commandments to the Apoſtles whom he had choſen* : *Note*, Chriſt's Choice is always attended with his Charge. Thoſe whom he elected into the Apoſtleſhip, expected he ſhould give them *Preferments*, but inſtead of that he *gave them Commandments*. When He took his Journey, and *gave Authority to his Servants*, turns *to every one his Work*, *Mark* xiii. 34. He gave them Commandments *through the Holy Ghoſt*, which He was Himſelf fill'd with as Mediator, and which he had breath'd into them. In giving them the *Holy Ghoſt*, he gave them *His Commandments*, for the Comforter will be a Commander ; and his Office was to bring to their Remembrance what Chriſt had ſaid ; He charg'd thoſe *that were Apoſtles by the Holy Ghoſt*, ſo the Words, are placed ; It was their receiving the Holy Ghoſt that ſeal'd their Commiſſion, *Joh.* xx. 22. He was not *taken up* till *after* he had given them their Charge, and ſo finiſh'd his Work.

(2.) He inſtructed them concerning the Doctrine they were to preach. He *ſpoke to them of the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD* ; He had givin them a general Idea of that Kingdom, and the certain Time it ſhould be ſet up in the World, in His Parable, *Mar.* xiii. But here He let them more into the *Nature* of it ; as a Kingdom of Grace in this World, and of Glory in the other, and open'd to them that *Covenant* which is the great Charter by which it is *incorporated*. Now this was intended (1) To prepare them to receive the Holy Ghoſt, and to go through that which they were deſign'd for. He tells them in ſecrets, what they muſt tell the World ; and they ſhall find that the Spirit of Truth when he comes will ſay the ſame. (2) To be one of the Proofs of Chriſt's Reſurection ; ſo it comes in her, the Diſciples to whom He ſhew'd himſelf alive knew that it was He, not only by what He *ſhew'd* them, but by what He *ſaid to them*. None but he could ſpeak thus clearly, thus fully of *the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD*. He did not entertain them with Diſcourſes of Politicks, or the Kingdoms of Men, of Philoſophy, or the Kingdom of Nature, but pure Divinity, and the Kingdom of Grace ; the Things which moſt nearly concern'd them, and thoſe to whom they were ſent.

Fourthly, A particular Aſſurance given them, that they ſhould now ſhortly receive the Holy Ghoſt, with Orders given them, to expect it, *v.* 4, 5. He *being aſſembled together with them*, probably in the Interview at the Mountain in *Galilee*, which He had appointed before his death ; for there is mention of their *coming together* again, *v.* 6. to attend his Aſcenſion. Tho' He had now order'd them to *Galilee*, yet they muſt not think to continue there, no they muſt return to *Jeruſalem*, and not depart thence. Obſerve,

1. The Command He gives them to *wait* ; this was to raiſe their Expectations of ſomething great ; and ſomething very great they had Reaſon to expect from their exalted Redeemer. (1.) They muſt wait till the *Time appointed*, which is now *not many Days hence*. They that by Faith hope promiſed Mercies will come, muſt with Patience wait till they do come, according to the Time, the ſet Time. And when the Time *draws near*, as now it did, we muſt as *Daniel*, look earneſtly for it, *Dan.* ix. 3. (2.) They muſt wait in the *Place appointed* ; in *Jeruſalem*, for there the Spirit muſt be firſt poured out, becauſe Chriſt was to be as *King upon the holy Hill of Zion* ; and becauſe the *Word of the Lord* muſt *go forth from Jeruſalem* ; That muſt be the Mother-Church. There Chriſt was put to ſhame, and therefore there He will have this *Honour done Him* ; and this *Favour* done to *Jeruſalem*, to teach us to forgive our Enemies and Perſecutors. The Apoſtles were more expos'd to Danger at *Jeruſalem* than they would have been in *Galilee* ; but we may chearfully truſt GOD with our Safety when we keep in the Way of our Duty : The Apoſtles were now to put on a publick Character, and therefore muſt venture in a publick Station, *Jeruſalem* was the fitteſt Candleſtick for thoſe Lights to be ſet up in.

2. The Aſſurance he gives them, that they ſhall not wait in vain ; the Bleſſing deſign'd them ſhall come, and they ſhall find it was worth waiting for ; *you ſhall be baptiz'd with the Holy Ghoſt*. That is, 1. The Holy Ghoſt ſhall be *poured out* upon you more plentifully than ever. They had already been *Breath'd upon* with the Holy Ghoſt, *John* xx. 22. and they had found the Benefit of it, but now they ſhall have larger Meaſures, of His Gifts, Graces, and Comforts, and be *baptiz'd* with them ; where there ſeems to be an Alluſion to thoſe *Old Teſtament* Promiſes of the *pouring out* of the Spirit, *Joel* ii. 28. *Iſa.* xliv. 3. xxxii. 15. 2. Ye ſhall be *cleanſed* and *purified*, by the Holy Ghoſt, as the Prieſts were baptiz'd and waſh'd with Water, when they were conſecrated to their Sacred Function ; they had the *Sign*, you ſhall have the Thing *ſignified* You ſhall be *ſanctified by the Truth*, as the Spirit ſhall lead you more and more into it, and your *Conſciences purg'd* by the Witneſs of the Spirit, that you may *ſerve the living GOD* in the Apoſtleſhip. 3. Ye ſhall hereby be more effectually than ever *engaged* to your Maſter, and to his Conduct, as *Iſrael* was *baptiz'd unto Moſes in the Cloud and in the Seas* ; you ſhall be ty'd ſo faſt to Chriſt, that you ſhall never for fear of any Sufferings forſake Him again, as once you did.

Now this Gift of the Holy Ghoſt he ſpeaks of, 1. As the *Promiſe of the Father which they had heard of him*, and might therefore depend upon.

(1.) The Spirit was *given by Promiſe*, and it was at this Time, the *great Promiſe* as that of the *Meſſiah* was before, *Luke* i. 72. and that of *Eternal Life* is now, 1 *Joh.* ii. 25. Temporal good Things are given by *Providence*, but the Spirit and Spiritual Bleſſings are given *by Promiſe*. *Gal.* iii. 28. The Spirit of GOD is not given as the *Spirit of Men*, is given us, and form'd within us by a courſe of Nature, *Zech.* xii. 1. but by the *Word of GOD*. (1.) That the Gift may be the more *valuable*, Chriſt's thought the Promiſe of the Spirit a Legacy worth leaving to His Church. (2.) That it may be the more *ſure*, and that the Heirs of Promiſe may be confident of the Immutability of God's Counſel herein. (3.) That it may be *of Grace*, peculiar Grace, and may be receiv'd *by Faith*, laying hold on the Promiſe and depending upon it. As Chriſt, ſo the Spirit is receiv'd by Faith.

(2.) 'Twas the Promiſe *of the Father*, of *Chriſt*'s Father ; Chriſt as Mediator had an Eye to GOD as his *Father*, Fathering his Deſign, and owning it all along. Of *our* Father, who if he give us the Adoption of Sons, will certainly give us the *Spirit of Adoption*, *Gal.* iv. 5. He will give the Spirit as the *Father of Light*, as the *Father of Spirits*, and as the *Father of Mercies*, 'tis the *Promiſe of the Father*.

(3.) This Promiſe of the Father they had *heard from Chriſt* many a time, eſpecially in the Farewell Sermon he preach'd to them a little before He dy'd, wherein He aſſur'd them again and again, that the *Comforter* ſhould *come*. This confirms the Promiſe of GOD, and encourageth us to depend upon it, that we have *heard it from Jeſus Chriſt* ; for in Him *all the Promiſes of GOD are Yea and Amen*. You have heard it *from me*, and I'll make it good.

2. As the *Prediction* of *John Baptiſt* ; for ſo far back Chriſt here directs them to *look*, *v.* 5. you have not only *heard it from me*, but you had it from *John* ; when he turn'd you over to me, he ſaid, *Mat.* iii. 11. *I indeed Baptize you with Water*, but he *that comes after me ſhall Baptize with the Holy Ghoſt*. 'Tis a great Honour Chriſt now doth to *John* not only to *quote* his Words, but to make this great Gift of the Spirit now at Hand to be the Accompliſhment of them. Thus he *confirmeth the Word of his Servants*, *his Meſſengers*, *Iſa.* xliv. 26. But Chriſt can do more than any of his Miniſters. 'Tis an Honour to them to be employ'd in diſpenſing the *Means of Grace*, but it is his Prerogative to give the Spirit of Grace, He ſhall *Baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt* ; ſhall teach you by his Spirit, and give his Spirit to *make Interceſſion* in you, which is more than the beſt Miniſters preaching with us.

Now this Gift of the Holy Ghoſt thus *promiſed*, thus *propheſy'd* of, thus *waited* for, is that which we find the Apoſtles receiv'd in the next Chapter, for in that *this* Promiſe had its full Accompliſhment ; that was it that ſhould come, and we look for no other ; for it is here promiſed to be given *not many Days hence* : He doth not tell them *how many*, becauſe they muſt keep *every Day* in a Frame fit to receive it ; other Scriptures ſpeak of the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt to ordinary Believers ; this ſpeaks of that particular Power which by the Holy Ghoſt the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, and

Planters of the Church were endued with, enabling them infallibly to *relate* to that Age, and *record* to Poſterity the Doctrine of Chriſt, and the Proofs of it; ſo that by vertue of this Promiſe and the Performance of it, we receive the *New Teſtament* as of Divine Inſpiration, and venture our Souls upon it.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, ſaying Lord, wilt thou at this time reſtore again the kingdom to Iſrael? 7 And he ſaid unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the ſeaſons which the Father hath put in his own power. 8 But yet ſhall receive power, after that the holy Ghoſt is come upon you: and ye ſhall be witneſſes unto me, both in Jeruſalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermoſt part of the earth. 9 And when he had ſpoken theſe things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a Cloud received him out of their ſight. 10 And while they looked ſtedfaſtly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two Men ſtood by them in white Apparel; 11 Which alſo ſaid, Ye men of Galilee, why ſtand ye gazing up into heaven? this ſame Jeſus, which is taken up from you into heaven, ſhall ſo come, in like manner as ye have ſeen him go into heaven.

In *Jeruſalem* Chriſt by his Angel had appointed His Diſciples to meet him in *Galilee*; *there* He appointed them to meet him in *Jeruſalem* again ſuch a Day: Thus he would try their Obedience, and it was found ready and chearful; they *came together*, as he appointed them to be the Witneſſes of his Aſcenſion, which here we have an Account of. Obſerve,

Firſt, the Queſtion they ask'd him at this Interview. They *came together* to him, as thoſe that had *conſulted* one another about it, and *concurr'd* in the Queſtion *Nemine Contradicente*, they came in a Body, and put it to him as the Senſe of the Houſe, Lord, *wilt thou at this time reſtore again the Kingdom to Iſrael?* Two ways this may be taken.

1. Sure thou wilt *not at all reſtore it* to the preſent Rulers of *Iſrael*, the Chief Prieſts and the Elders that put thee to Death, and to compaſs that Deſign, tamely gave up the Kingdom to *Cæſar*, and own'd themſelves his Subjects. What! Shall thoſe that hate and preſecute Thee and us, be truſted with Power, *That be far from Thee*. Or rather,

2. Sure thou wilt now reſtore it to the *Jewiſh* Nation, as far as it will ſubmit to Thee as their King. Now two things were amiſs in this Queſtion.

1. Their Expectation of the Thing it ſelf: They thought Chriſt would *reſtore the Kingdom to Iſrael*, i. e. that he would make the Nation of the *Jews* as great and conſiderable among the Nations, as it was in the Days of *David* and *Solomon*, of *Aſa* and *Jehoſhaphat*, that as *Shiloh* he would reſtore the *Scepter to Judah*, and the *Lawgiver*; where as Chriſt came to ſet up *his own* Kingdom, and that a Kingdom of *Heaven*, not to reſtore *the Kingdom to Iſrael*, an *Earthly* Kingdom. See how apt even good Men are to place the Happineſs of the Church too much in external Pomp and Power, as if *Iſrael* were not glorious unleſs the Kingdom were reſtor'd to it, nor Chriſt's Diſciples honour'd unleſs they were Peers of the Realm, whereas we are bid to expect the Croſs in this World, and to wait for the Kingdom in the other World. See how apt we are to *retain* what we have imbib'd, and how hard it is to get over the Prejudices of Education. The Diſciples having ſuck'd in this Notion with their Milk, that the Meſſiah was to be a Temporal Prince, they were long before they could be brought to have any Idea of his Kingdom as Spiritual. See alſo how Naturally we are *bias'd* in Favour of our own People; They thought GOD would have no Kingdom in the World unleſs it were reſtor'd to *Iſrael*, whereas the Kingdoms of this World were to become his, in whom he would be glorified, whether *Iſrael* ſink or ſwim. See alſo how apt we are to miſunderſtand Scripture, and to underſtand that literally which is ſpoken figuratively, and to expound Scriptures by our Schemes, whereas we ought to form our Schemes by the Scriptures; but when the Spirit ſhall be poured out from on high, our Miſtakes will be rectified, as the Apoſtles ſoon after were.

2. Their Enquiry concerning the Time of it. *Lord, wilt* thou do it *at this Time*? Now thou haſt *called us together*, is it for this Purpoſe; that proper Meaſures may be *concerted* for the reſtoring of the Kingdom to *Iſrael*; ſure there cannot be a more favourable Juncture than this. Now herein they miſs'd it, (1.) That they were *Inquiſitive* into that which their Maſter had never directed or encourag'd them to enquire into. (2.) That they were *impatient* for the ſetting up of that Kingdom in which they promiſed themſelves ſo great a Share, and would *anticipate* the Divine Counſels; Chriſt had told them they ſhould *ſit on Thrones*, *Luke* xxii. 30. and now nothing will ſerve them but they muſt be in the Throne preſently, and cannot ſtay the Time, whereas he that *believeth doth not make haſte*, but is ſatisfied that *GOD's time is the beſt time*.

Secondly, The Check which Chriſt gave to this Queſtion, like that which he had little before given to *Peter*'s Enquiry concerning *John*, *what is that to thee?* v. 7. *It is not for you to know the Times and Seaſons*. He doth not contradict their Expectation that the Kingdom would be reſtor'd to *Iſrael*, becauſe that Miſtake would ſoon be rectify'd by the pouring out of the Spirit, after which they never had any more Thought of the Temporal Kingdom; and alſo becauſe there is a Senſe of the Expectation which is true, the ſetting up of the Goſpel Kingdom in the World, and their Miſtake of the Promiſe ſhall not make it of none effect; but he checks their Enquiry after *the Time*.

1. The Knowledge of this is not *allow'd* to them; *It is not for you to know*, and therefore 'tis not for you to *ask*. (1.) Chriſt is now parting from them, and parts in Love, and yet he gives them this Rebuke; which is intended for a Caution to his Church in all Ages, to take heed of ſplitting upon the Rock, which was fatal to our firſt Parents, an inordinate Deſire of forbidden Knowledge, and *intruding into Things which we have not ſeen*, becauſe GOD has not *ſhewn*. *Neſcire velle quæ Magiſter maximus docere non vult, erudita inſcitia eſt.* 'Tis Folly to covet to be wiſe above what is written, and Wiſdom to be content to be no wiſer. (2.) Chriſt had given his Diſciples a great deal of Knowledge above others, *to you* it is given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of GOD, and had promiſed them his Spirit to teach them more; now leſt they ſhould be puff'd up with the Abundance of the Revelations, he here lets them underſtand, that there were ſome Things which *it was not for them to know*. We ſhall ſee how little Reaſon we have to be proud of our Knowledge, when we conſider how many Things we are ignorant of. (3.) Chriſt had given his Diſciples Inſtructions ſufficient for the Diſcharge of their Duty, both before his Death, and ſince his Reſurrection, and this Knowledge he will have them to be ſatisfied in; for it is enough for a Chriſtian in whom *vain Curioſity* is a corrupt Humour, to be mortify'd and not gratify'd. (4.) Chriſt had himſelf told his Diſciples the *things* pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD, and had promiſed that the Spirit ſhould *ſhew them Things to come* concerning it, *John* xvi. 13. He had likewiſe given them *Signs of the Times*, which it was their Duty to obſerve, and a Sin to overlook, *Mat.* xxiv. 33. xvi. 3. But they muſt not expect or deſire to know either all the Particulars of future Events or the exact Times of them. 'Tis good for us to be kept in the Dark, and left at Uncertainty concerning the *Times and Moments* (as Dr. *Hammond* reads it) of future Events concerning the Church, as well as concerning our ſelves, concerning all the Periods of Time, and the final Period of it, as well as concerning the Period of our own Time. *Prudens futuri temporis exitum Caliginoſa nocte premit Deus, Hor.* As to the Times and Seaſons of *the Year*, we know in general, there will be Summer and Winter *counterchang'd*, but we know not particularly which Day will be fair, or which foul, either in Summer or in Winter; ſo as to our Affairs in this World, when 'tis a Summer time of Proſperity, that we may not be ſecure, we are told there will come a Winter time of Trouble. And in that Winter that we may not deſpond and deſpair, we are aſſur'd Summer will return; but what this or that particular *Day will bring forth* we cannot tell, but muſt accommodate our ſelves to it whatever it is, and make the beſt of it.

2. The Knowledge of it is reſerv'd to GOD as his Prerogative, 'tis what *the Father hath put in his own Power*; 'tis hid with him. None but He *can* reveal the Times and Seaſons to come; *known unto God are all his Works*, but not to us, *Acts* xv. 18. 'Tis in his Power, and in his only, to *declare the End from the Beginning*, and by this He proves himſelf to be GOD, *Iſa* xlvi. 10. And tho' he did think fit ſometimes to let the *Old Teſtament* Prophets know the *Times and Seaſon*, as of the *Iſraelites* Bondage in *Egypt* Four hundred Years, and in *Babylon* Seventy Years; yet He has not thought fit to let *you know* the Times and Seaſons, no not juſt how long it ſhall be before *Jeruſalem* be deſtroy'd, tho' you be ſo well aſſur'd of the Thing it ſelf. He hath not ſaid, He will not yet give you to know ſomething more than you do of *the Times and Seaſons*; He did do ſo afterwards to his Servant *John*, but he has *put it in is own Power* to do it or not, as he thinks fit. And what is in that *New Teſtament* Prophecy diſcover'd concerning *the Times and Seaſons*, is ſo dark and hard to be underſtood, that when we come to apply it, it concerns us to remember this Word, That it is not for us to be *poſitive* in determining *the Times and Seaſons*. *Buxtorf* mentions a Saying of the Rabbins concerning the Coming of the Meſſiah, *Rumpatur ſpiritus eoram qui ſupputant tempora*,

Thirdly, He cuts them out their Work, and with an Authority aſſures 'em of an Ability to go on with it, and of Succeſs in it. *It is not for you to know the Times and the Seaſons*, that will do you no good; but know this, *v.* 8. that *you ſhall receive* a ſpiritual Power by the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon you, and ſhall not receive it in vain, for ye *ſhall be Witneſſes unto me*, and my Glory and your Teſtimony ſhall not be in vain, for it ſhall be receiv'd here in *Jeruſalem*, in the Country about, and all the World over, *v.* 8. If Chriſt make us ſerviceable to his Honour in *our own* Day and Generation, let that be enough for us, and let not us perplex our ſelves about *Times and Seaſons* to come. Chriſt here tells them,

1. That their Work ſhould be honourable and glorious. *You ſhall be Witneſs unto Me*. (1.) They ſhall proclaim him King, and publiſh thoſe Truths to the World by which his Kingdom ſhould be ſet up, and he would rule. They muſt openly and ſolemnly preach his Goſpel to the World. (2.) They ſhall prove this, ſhall confirm their Teſtimony, not as Witneſſes do, with an Oath; but with the

Divine Seal of Miracles, and ſuper-natural Gifts. Ye ſhall be *Martyrs* to me, or *my Martyrs*, as ſome Copies read it; for they atteſted the Truth of the Goſpel with their Sufferings even *unto Death.*

1. That their Power for this Work ſhould be ſufficient. They had not Strength of their own for it, not Wiſdom or Courage enough, they were naturally of the *weak and fooliſh Things of this World*, they durſt not appear as Witneſſes for Chriſt upon his Tryal, neither as yet were they able; *But ye ſhall receive the* Power *of the Holy Ghoſt coming upon you*, (ſo it may be read) ſhall be animated and acted by a better Spirit than your own; you ſhall have Power to preach the Goſpel, and to prove it out of the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, which, when they were fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt, they did to Admiration, *Acts*. xviii. 28. and to confirm it both by Miracles, and by their Sufferings.

Note, Chriſt's Witneſſes ſhall *receive Power* for that Work to which he calls them. Whom he employs in his Service, he will qualify them for it, and bear them out in it.

3. That their Influence ſhould be great and very extenſive. You ſhall be Witneſſes for Chriſt, and ſhall carry his Cauſe, (1.) In *Jeruſalem*, there you muſt begin, and many there will receive your Teſtimony; and they that do not, will be left inexcuſable. (2) Your Light ſhall from thence ſhine throughout *all Judea*, where before we have labour'd in vain. (3) Thence you ſhall proceed to *Samaria*, tho' at your firſt Miſſion you were forbidden to preach in any of the Cities of the *Samaritans*. (4) Your Uſefulneſs ſhall reach to the *uttermoſt Part of the Earth*, and you ſhall be Bleſſings to the whole World.

Fourthly, Having left theſe Inſtructions with them, he *leaves* them. *v.* 9. *when he had ſpoken theſe Things*, and had ſaid all that he had to ſay, he *bleſſed them*; ſo we were told, *Luke* xxiv, 50. and *while they beheld* him, and had their Eye fix'd upon him, receiving his Bleſſing, *he was* gradually *taken up*, and *a Cloud recived him out of their ſight*. We have here Chriſt's *aſcending on high*. Not fetch'd away as *Elijah* was, with a *Chariot of Fire, and Horſes of Fire*, but *riſing to Heaven*, as he roſe from the Grave, purely by his own Power; his Body being now as the Bodies of the Saints will be at the Reſurrection, a *Spiritual* Body, and rais'd in *Power* and *Incorruption*. *Obſerve*,

1. He began his Aſcenſion *in the ſight* of his *Diſciples*, even *while they beheld*; They did not ſee him *come up* out of the Grave becauſe they might ſee him after he *was riſen*, which would be Satisfaction enough; but they ſaw him *go up* towards Heaven, and had actually their Eye upon him, with ſo much Care and Intention of Mind, that they could not be deceiv'd. 'Tis probable, that he did not fly ſwiftly up, but mov'd upwards fair and ſoftly, for the further Satisfaction of his Diſciples.

2. He finiſh'd it *out of their ſight*, in a *Cloud*; either a *thick* Cloud, for GOD ſaid, He would *dwell in the thick Darkneſs*; or a *bright Cloud*, to ſignify the Splendor of his Glorious Body: 'Twas a *bright Cloud* that *overſhadowed him* in his Transfiguration, and moſt probably this was ſo; *Mat*. xvii. 5. This *Cloud received him*, 'tis probable, when he was gone about as far from the Earth as the Clouds generally are; yet it was not ſuch a *ſpreading* Cloud as we commonly ſee, but ſuch as juſt ſerv'd to *incloſe* him: Now he *made the Clouds his Chariot*, Pſal. civ. 3. God had often come down in a Cloud, now He went up in one. Dr. *Hammond* thinks, That the *Clouds receiving* him here, was the *Angels receiving* him; for the Appearence of *Angels* is ordinarily deſcrib'd by *a Cloud*; comparing *Exod.* xxv. 22. with *Leu.* xvi. 2. By the *Clouds* there is a Sort of a Communication kept up between the upper and lower World, in them the Vapors are *ſent up* from the Earth, and the Dews *ſent down* from Heaven; fitly therefore doth He aſcend in a Cloud, who is the Mediator between GOD and Man, by whom GOD's Mercies come down upon us, and our Prayers come up to him. This was the laſt that was ſeen of him, the Eyes of a great many Witneſſes follow'd him into *the Cloud*, and if we would know what came of him then, we may find, *Dan.* vii. 14. That *One like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought* him in the Clouds as he came *near before him.*

Fifthly, The Diſciples when he was *gone out of their ſight*, yet ſtill continu'd *looking up ſteadfaſtly to Heaven*, v. 10. and this longer than it was fit they ſhould; and, Why ſo?

1. Prehaps they hop'd that Chriſt would preſently came back to them again, to *reſtore the Kingdom* to Iſreal, and were loth to believe they ſhould now part with him for good and all, ſo much did they ſtill dote upon his Bodily Preſence, tho' he had told them, 'twas *expedient for them, that he ſhould go away*. Or, they look after him as doubting whether he might not be *drop'd*, as the Sons of the Prophets thought concerning *Elijah*, 2 *Kings* ii. 16. and ſo they might have him again.

2. Perhaps, they expected to ſee ſome Change in the viſible Heavens now upon Chriſt's Aſcenſion, that either the *Sun* ſhould be *aſham'd*, or the *Moon confounded*, Iſa. xxiv. 6. as being out-ſhone by his Luſtre: Or rather, that they ſhould ſhew ſome Sign of Joy and Triumph. Or perhaps, they promis'd themſelves a Sight of Glory of the inviſible Heavens, upon their opening to receive him Chriſt had told them, that *hereafter they ſhould ſee Heaven open'd*, Joh. i. 51. and why ſhould not they expect it now?

Sixthly, Two Angels appear'd to them, and deliver'd them a ſeaſonable Meſſage from GOD; There was a World of Angels ready to receive our Redeemer now he made his publick Entry into the *Jeruſalem* above; we may ſuppoſe theſe Two loth to be abſent then; yet to ſhew how much Chriſt had at Heart the Concerns of his Church on Earth, he ſent Two of thoſe that came to meet him, back to his Diſciples, who appear as *Two Men* in *White Apparel*, bright and gliſtering, for they know, according to the Duty of their Place, that they are really ſerving Chriſt when they are Miniſtring to his Servants on Earth. Now ye are told what they ſaid to them.

1. To check their Curioſity. *Ye Men of* Galilee, *Why ſtand ye gazing up into Heaven*? He calls them *Men of* Galilee, to put them in mind of *the Rock out of which they were hewn.* Chriſt had put a great Honour upon them in making them his Ambaſſadors; but they muſt remember, that they are *Men*, earthen Veſſels, and Men of *Galilee*, illiterate Men, look'd upon with diſdain. Now ſay they, *Why ſtand ye here*, like *Galileans*, rude and unpoliſh'd Men, *gazing up into Heaven?* What would you ſee? you have ſeen all that you were call'd together to ſee, and why do ye look any further? Why ſtand ye *gazing*? as Men frighten'd and perplex'd, as Men aſtoniſh'd and at their Wits-end. Chriſt's Diſciples ſhould never ſtand *at a gaze*, becauſe they have a ſure Rule to go by, and a ſure Foundation to build upon.

2. To confirm their Faith concerning Chriſt's ſecond Coming. Their Maſter had often told them of that, and the Angels are ſent at this Time ſeaſonably to put them in mind of it. *This ſame* Jeſus *which is taken up from you into Heaven*, and whom you are looking thus long after, wiſhing you had him with you again, is not gone for ever, for there is a Day appointed in which he will *come in like manner* thence *as ye have ſeen him go* thither, and you muſt not expect him back till that appointed Day. 1. *This ſame* Jeſus, ſhall *come again* in his own Perſon, cloth'd with this glorious Body; *this ſame* Jeſus, that came once to *put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himſelf*, will *appear the ſecond time without Sin*, Heb. ix. 26, 28. that came once in Diſgrace to be judg'd, will come again in Glory to judge. The ſame *Jeſus* that his given you your Charge, will come again to call you to an Account, how you have perform'd your Truſt. *He, and not another*, Job. xix. 27, 2. He ſhall come *in like manner*. He is gone away *in a Cloud*, and attended with *Angels*; and *Behold, he comes in the Clouds*, and with him an *innumerable Company of Angels*. He is *gone up with a Shout*, and *with the ſound of a Trumpet*, Pſal. xlvii. 5. and he will *deſcend from Heaven with a Shout*, and *with the Trump of God*, 1 Theſ. iv. 16. You have now loſt the Sight of him in the Clouds, and in the Air, and *whither he is gone, you cannot follow him now*; but ſhall then, when you ſhall be *caught up in the Clouds, to met the Lord in the Air*. When we ſtand gazing and *trifling*, the Conſideration of our Maſter's ſecond Coming, ſhould quicken and awaken us. And when we ſtand gazing and *trembling*, the Conſideration of it ſhould comfort and encourage us.

12 Then returned they unto Jeruſalem, from the Mount called Olivet, which is from Jeruſalem a ſabbath-days journey. 13 And when they were come in, they went up into an upper-room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew Philip, and Thomas, Bortholomew, and Matthew, James *the ſon* of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James. 14 Theſe all continued with one accord in prayer and ſupplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jeſus, and with his brethren.

We are here told,

1. From whence Chriſt aſcended; from the *Mount of Olives*, v. 12. from that Part of it where the Town of *Bethany* ſtood, *Luke* xxiv. 50. There he began his Sufferings, *Luke* xxii. 39. and therefore there he roll'd away the Reproach of them by his glorious Aſcenſion, and thus ſhew'd, that his Paſſion and his Aſcenſion had the ſame Reference and Tendency. Thus would he enter upon his Kingdom in the ſight of *Jeruſalem*, and of thoſe undutiful, ungrateful Citizens of his that would *not have him to reign over them* 'Twas propheſy'd of him, *Zech.* xiv. 4. That his Feet *ſhall ſtand upon the Mount of* Olives *which is before* Jeruſalem, ſhall ſtand laſt there; and preſently it follows, The *Mount of* Olives *ſhall cleave in two*, From the Mount of *Olives*, he aſcended who is the *Good Olive-tree*, whence we receive the Unction, *Zech.* iv. 12. *Rom.* xi. 24. This Mount is here ſaid to be *near Jeruſalem, a Sabbath-Day*'s *Journey from it*; *i. e.* a little Way, no further than devout People us'd to walk out on a Sabbath Evening after the Publick Worſhip was over for Meditation; ſome reckon it a Thouſand Paces, others Two Thouſand Cubits; ſome Seven Furlongs, others Eight, *Bethany* indeed was Fifteen Furlongs from *Jeruſalem, John* xi. 18. But that Part of the Mount of Olives which was next to *Jeruſalem*, from whence Chriſt began to ride in Triumph, was but Seven or Eight Furlongs off. The *Chaldee* Paraphraſt on *Ruth* i. ſaith, *We are Commanded to keep the Sabbaths and the Holy Days, ſo as not to go above Two Thouſand Cubits*, which they build upon. *Joſh.* iii. 4. where in their March through *Jordan* the Space between them and the Ark was to be *Two Thouſand Cubits*, God had not then thus limited them, but they limited themſelves, and thus far it is a Rule to us, not to Journey on the Sabbath any more then in order to the Sabbath Work; and as far as is neceſſary to that we are not only allow'd but enjoyn'd, 2 *King*. iv. 23.

2. Whither the Diſciples return'd. They *came to Jeruſalem*, according to their Maſter's Appointment, tho' there they were in the midſt of Enemies; But it ſhould ſeem that tho' immediately after Chriſt's Reſurrection they were watch'd, and were *in the fear of the Jews*, yet after it was known, that they were gone into *Galilee*, no notice was taken of their Return to *Jeruſalem*, nor any further Search made for them. GOD can find out hiding Places for his People in the midſt of their Enemies, and ſo influence *Saul* that he ſhall not *ſeek for David any more*. At *Jeruſalem* they went up *into an upper Room and there abode*; not that they all lodg'd and dieted together in one Room, but there they aſſembled every Day, and ſpent time together in Religious Exerciſes, in expectation of the Deſcent of the Spirit. Divers Conjectures the Learned have about this *Upper Room*. Some think it was one of the upper Rooms in the Temple; But it cannot be thought that the Chief Prieſts who had the ſetting and letting of thoſe Rooms, would ſuffer Chriſt's Diſciples conſtantly to reſide in any of them. It was ſaid indeed by the ſame Hiſtorian, that they were *continually in the Temple, Luke* xxiv. 53. but that was in the Courts of the Temple, at the Hours of Prayer, where they could not be hinder'd from attaining; But it ſhould ſeem this *Upper Room* was in a *private Houſe*. Mr. *Gregory* of *Oxford* is of the ſame Mind, and quotes a *Syriac Scholiaſt* opon this Place who ſaith, That it was the ſame Upper Room in which they had eaten the Paſſover; And tho' that was called ἀνώγεον this ὑπερῷον both may ſignify the ſame. Whether (ſaith he) it was in the Houſe of St. *John* the *Evangliſt*, as *Euodius* deliver'd, or that of *Mary* the Mother of *John Mark*, as others have collected, cannot be certain. *Notes, Chap.* 3.

3. Who the Diſciples were that kept together. The Eleven Apoſtles are here Nam'd, *v.* 13. So is *Mary* the *Mother of our Lord, v.* 14. and it is the iaſt Time that ever any mention is made of her in the Scriptures. There were others that are here ſaid to be the *Brethren* of our Lord, His Kinſmen according to the Fleſh; and to make up the Hundred and Twenty ſpoken of *v.* 15. we may ſuppoſe that all or moſt of the Seventy Diſciples were with them, that were Aſſociates with the Apoſtles, and were employ'd as Evangeliſts.

4. How they ſpent their Time; They *all continu'd with one accord in Prayer and Suppplication*. Obſerve.

1. They *Pray'd* and *made Supplication*. All GOD's People are Praying People, and *give themſelves to Prayer*. It was now a Time of Trouble and Danger with the Diſciples of Chriſt, they were as Sheep in the midſt of Wolves; and is any afflicted let him Pray, that will ſilence Cares and Fears. They had now Work before them, great Work, and before they enter'd upon it, they were *inſtant in Prayer* to GOD for his Preſence with them in it. Before they were firſt ſent forth Chriſt ſpent time in Prayer for them, and now they in Prayer for themſelves. They were *waiting* for the Deſcent of the Spirit upon them, and therefore abounded thus in Prayer; The Spirit deſcended upon our Saviour when He was *Praying, Luke* iii. 21. thoſe are in the beſt Frame to receive Spiritual Bleſſings that are in a Praying Frame. Chriſt had *promis'd* now ſhortly to *ſend the Holy Ghoſt*, now that Promiſe was not to ſuperſede Prayer; but to quicken and encourage it; GOD will be *enquired of* for *promiſed* Mercies, and the nearer the Performance ſeems to be, the more earneſt we ſhould be in Prayer for it.

2. They *continu'd in Prayer*, ſpent much time in it more than ordinary, pray'd frequently, and were long in Prayer; They never miſs'd an Hour of Prayer. They reſolv'd to perſevere herein till the Holy Ghoſt came according to the Promiſe, to pray and not faint. 'Twas ſaid *Luke* xxiv. 53. they were *Praiſing and Bleſſing GOD*, here that they continu'd in *Prayer* and *Supplication*; for as Praiſe for the Promiſe, is a decent way or begging for the Performance, and Praiſe for former Mercy, of begging further Mercy; ſo in ſeeking to GOD we give him the Glory of that Mercy and Grace which we have found in Him.

3. They did this *with one accord*; That intimates that they were together in Holy Love, and there was no Quarrel or Diſcord among them, and thoſe who ſo keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, are beſt prepared to receive the Comforts of the Holy Ghoſt. It alſo ſpeaks their worthy Concurrence in the Supplications that were made; tho' but one ſpoke, they all Pray'd. And if when *two agree to ask* it ſhall be *done for them*, much more when *many* agree in the ſame Petition. See *Mat.* xviii. 19.

15 And in thoſe days Peter ſtood up in the midſt of the Diſciples, and ſaid, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty) 16 Men *and* brethren, This ſcripture muſt needs have been fulfilled, which the holy Ghoſt by the mouth of David ſpake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jeſus. 17 For he was numbred with us, and had obtained part of this miniſtry. 18 Now this Man purchaſed a Field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burſt aſunder in the midſt, and all his bowels guſhed out. 19 And it was know unto all the dwellers at Jeruſalem, inſomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to ſay, The field of Blood. 20 For it is written in the book of pſalms, Let his habitation be deſolate, and let no man dwell therein: and, His biſhoprick let another take. 21 Wherefore of theſe men which have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among us, 22 Beginning from the baptiſm of John, unto that ſame day, that he was taken up from us, muſt one be ordained to be a witneſs with us of his reſurrection. 23 And they appointed two, Joſeph called Barſabas, who was ſirnamed Juſtus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed, and ſaid, Thou Lord, which knoweſt the hearts of all men, ſhew whether of theſe two thou haſt choſen. 25 That he may take part of this miniſtry and apoſtleſhip, from which Judas by tranſgreſſion fell, that he might go to his own place. 26 And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbred with the eleven apoſtles.

The Sin of *Judas* was not only his Shame and Ruin, but it made a Gap in the College of the Apoſtles. They were ordain'd *Twelve* with an Eye to the *Twelve Tribes* of *Iſreal*, deſcended from the Twelve Patriarchs, they were the *Twelve Stars* that make up the Church's Crown, *Rev.* xii. 1. and for them *Twelve Thornes* were deſign'd, *Mat.* xix. 28. Now being Twelve when they were Learners, if they were but Eleven when they were to be Teachers, it would occaſion every One to enquire what was become of the *Twelfth*; and ſo revive the remembrance of the Scandal of their Society; And therefore care was taken before the Deſcent of the Spirit to fill up the Vacancy, which now we have an Account of the doing of; Our Lord Jeſus probably having given Directions about it, among other Things which He ſpoke *pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD*, Obſerve,

Firſt, The Perſons concern'd in this Affair.

1. The *Houſe* conſiſted of about a *Hundred and Twenty*. Theſe were *the Number of the Names*, i. e. the Perſons, ſome think the *Men only*, diſtinguiſh'd from the Women. Dr. *Lightfoot* reckons that the Eleven Apoſtles, the Seventy Diſciples and about Thirty Nine more all of Chriſt's own Kindred, Country and Concourſe made up this One Hundred and Twenty, and that theſe were a ſort of Synod, or Congregation of Miniſters, a ſtanding Presbytery, *Acts* iv. 24. to whom *none of the reſt durſt joyn themſelves, Chap.* v. 13. and they continu'd together till the Perſecution at *Stephen*'s Death diſpers'd them all but Apoſtles, *Chap.* viii. 1. But he thinks that beſides theſe there were many Hundreds in *Jeruſalem*, if not Thouſands at this Time that *Believed*, and we have indeed read of many that *believed on him there*, but durſt not confeſs Him, and therefore I cannot think as he doth, that they were now form'd into diſtinct Congregations for the Preaching of the Word, and other Acts of Worſhip, nor that there was any thing of that till after the Pouring out of the Spirit, and the Converſions in the following Chapter. Here was the beginning of the Chriſtian Church; this Hundred and Twenty was the *Grain of Muſtard Seed* that grew, into a Tree, the Leaven that leavened the whole Lump.

2. The *Speaker* was *Peter*, who had been and ſtill was the moſt forward Man; and therefore notice is taken of his Forwardneſs and Zeal to ſhew that he had perfectly recover'd the Ground he loſt by his denying his Maſter; And *Peter* being deſign'd to be the Apoſtle of the Circumciſion, while the Sacred Story ſtays among the *Jews* he is ſtill brought in, as afterwards when it comes to ſpeak of the *Gentiles* it keeps to the Story of *Paul*.

Secondly, The Propoſal which *Peter* made for the Choice of another Apoſtle. He *ſtood up in the midſt of the Diſciples, v.* 15. He did not *ſit down* as one that *gave Laws*, or had any Supremacy over the reſt, but *ſtood up* as one that had only a *Motion to make* in which he paid a Deference to his Brethren, ſtanding up when he ſpoke to them. Now in this Speech we may obſerve,

1. The Account he gives of the Vacancy made by the Death of *Judas*, in which he is very particular, and as became one that Chriſt had breath'd upon, takes notice of the fulfilling of the Scriptures in it. Here is,

(1.) The Power to which *Judas* had been *advanc'd, v.* 17. *he was numbred with us, and obtain'd part of this Miniſtry* which he are inveſted in. *Note*, Many are number'd with the Saints in this World. that will not be found among them in the Day of Separation between the precious and the vile. What will it avail us to be added to the number of Chriſtians if we partake not of the Spirit and *Nature* of Chriſtian's, *Judas*'s having *obtain'd part of this Miniſtry* was but an Aggravation of his Sin and Ruin, as it will be of theirs who *propheſied in Chriſt's Name*, and yet were *workers of Iniquity*.

(2.) The Sin of *Judas* notwithſtanding his Advancement to this Honour; he was *Guide to them that took Jeſus*, not only inform'd Chriſt's Perſecutors where they might find Him, which they might have done effectually, tho' he had kept out of ſight: But he had the Impudence to appear openly at the Head of the Party that ſeiz'd Him. He went before them to the Place, and as if he had been proud of the Honour, gave the Word of Command, *That ſame is He, hold Him faſt*. *Note*, Ring-leaders in Sin are the worſt of Sinners; eſpecially if thoſe that by their Office ſhould have been Guides to the Friends of Chriſt, are Guides to His Enemies.

(3.) The Ruin of *Judas* by this Sin; perceiving the Chief Prieſts to ſeek the Life of Chriſt and His Diſciples, he thought to ſave his by going over to them, and not only ſo but to get an Eſtate under them, of which his Wages for his Service he hop'd would be but an Earneſt; But ſee what came of it.

1. He loſt his Money ſhamefully enough; *v.* 18. he *Purchas'd a Field* with the Thirty Pieces of Silver, which were the *Reward of his Iniquity*. He did not purchaſe the Field, but the Wages of his Unrighteouſneſs did; and it is very elegantly expreſs'd, thus in deriſion of his Projects to enrich himſelf by this Bargain, he thought to have *purchas'd a Field* for himſelf, as *Gehazi* did with what he got from *Naaman* by a Lye, ſee 2 *King*. v. 26. but it prov'd the Purchaſe of a Field to Bury Strangers in; And what the better he was for that? or any of his? It was to him an Unrighteous *Mammon*, it deceiv'd him; And the Reward of his Iniquity was the *Stumbling-block of his Iniquity*.

2. He loſt his Life more ſhamefully. We were told *Mat*. xxvii. 5. that he *went away* in deſpair, and was *ſuffocated*, ſo the Word ſignifies there and no more; here it is added (as latter Hiſtorians add to thoſe who went before) that being *Strangled* or *Choak'd* with Grief and Horror, he *fell Headlong*, fell *on his Face*, ſo Dr. *Hammond*, and partly with the ſwelling of his own Breaſt, and partly with the Violence of the Fall, he *burſt aſunder in the midſt*, ſo that *all his Bowels tumbled out*. If when the Devil was caſt out of a Child he *tore him*, *threw him down*, and *rent him*, and almoſt kill'd him, as we find *Mark* ix. 36. *Luke* ix. 42. no Wonder if when he had full Poſſeſſion of *Judas* he threw him Headlong, and burſt him. The *ſuffocating* of him which *Matthew* relates would make him ſwell till he burſt, which *Peter* relates. He burſt aſunder *with a great noiſe*, ſo Dr. *Edwards* which was heard by the Neighbours, and ſo, as it follows, it came *to be known*, *v.* 19. *his Bowels guſhed out*. *Luke* writes like a Phyſician, underſtanding all the Entrails of the middle and lower Ventricle. Bowelling is Part of the Puniſhment of Traytors. Juſtly do thoſe *Bowels guſh out*, that were ſhut up againſt the Lord Jeſus. And perhaps Chriſt had an Eye to the Fate of *Judas*, when he ſaid of the wicked Servant that he would *Cut him in ſunder*, *Mat*. xxiv. 51.

(4.) The publick Notice that was taken of this: *It was known to all the Dwellers in Jeruſalem*, (it was as it were) put into the News-papers, and was all the Talk of the Town, as a remarkable Judgment of GOD upon him that betray'd his Maſter, *v.* 19. It was not only diſcours'd of among the Diſciples, but it was in every Bodies Mouth, and no Body diſputed the Truth of the Fact. *It was known*, i. e. it was know to be true, unconteſtably ſo; Now one would think this ſhould have awaken'd thoſe to Repentance that had had *any Hand* in the Death of Chriſt, when they ſaw him that had the *firſt Hand* thus made an Example: But their Hearts were *harden*'d, and theſe of them that were to be *ſoften'd*, it muſt be done by the Word, and the Spirit working with it.

Here is one Proof of the Notoriety of the Thing mention'd, That the Field which was purchas'd with *Judas*'s Money was call'd *Aceldama*, the *Field of Blood*, becauſe it was bought with *the Price of Blood*, which perpetuated the Infamy not only of him that *ſold* that Innocent precious Blood, but of them that *bought* it too. Look how they will anſwer it when GOD ſhall make Inquiſition for Blood.

5. The Fulfilling of the Scriptures in this, which had ſpoken ſo plainly of this, that *it muſt needs be fulfilled*, *v.* 16. let none be ſurpriz'd or ſtumbled at it, that this ſhould be the Exit of one of the Twelve, for *David* had foretold not only his Sin, which Chriſt had taken notice of, *John* xii. 18. from *Pſam*. xii. 9. He that *eateth Bread with me* hath *lift up the Heel againſt me*, But had alſo foretold,

1. His Puniſhment, *Pſal*. lxix. 25. *Let his Habitation be deſolate*, That Pſalm refers to the Meſſiah, mention was made but two or three Verſes before of their giving him *Gall* and *Vinegar*, and therefore the following Predictions of the Deſtruction of *David*'s Enemies muſt be apply'd to the Enemies of Chriſt, and particularly to *Judas*. Perhaps he had ſome *Habitation* of his own at *Jeruſalem*, which upon this every Body was afraid to live in, and ſo it became *deſolate*. This Prediction ſignifies the ſame with that of *Bildad* concerning the wicked Man, that his *Confidence ſhall be rooted out of his Tabarnacle and ſhall bring him to the King of Terrors, It ſhall dwell in his Tabernacle becauſe it is none of his, Brimſtone ſhall be ſcatter'd upon his Habitation*. *Job*. xviii. 14. 15.

2. The Subſtitution of another in his room. *His Biſhoprick*, or his *Office* for ſo the Word ſignifies in general, *ſhall another take*, which is quoted from *Pſal*. cix. 8. With this Quotation *Peter* very aptly introduceth the following Propoſal. *Note*, We are not to think the worſe of any Office that GOD has inſtituted, whether Magiſtracy or Miniſtry either for the *Wickedneſs* of any that are in that Office, or for the ignominious Puniſhment of that Wickedneſs; Nor will GOD ſuffer any Purpoſe of His to be fruſtrated, any Commiſſion of His to be vacated, or any Work of His to be undone, for the Miſcarriages of them that are intruſted therewith; *The unbelief of Man ſhall not make the Promiſe of GOD of none effect*. *Judas* is hang'd, but his Biſhoprick is not loſt. 'Tis ſaid of *his Habitation*, that *no Man ſhall dwell therein*, there he ſhall have no *Heir*, but it is not ſaid ſo of his *Biſhoprick*, there he ſhall not want a *Succeſſor*; 'tis with the Officers of the Church as with the Members of it, if the *natural Branches* be *broken off*, others ſhall be *grafted in*, *Rom*. xi. 17. Chriſt Cauſe ſhall never be loſt for want of witneſſes.

2. The Motion he makes for the Choice of another Apoſtle *v.* 21. 22. where obſerve,

1. How the Perſon muſt be qualified that muſt fill up the Vacancy; it muſt be one of *theſe Men*, theſe Seventy Diſciples *that have companied with us*, that have conſtantly attended us *all the Time that the Lord Jeſus went in and out among us*, preaching and working Miracles for Three Years and a Half, *Beginning from the Baptiſm of John*, which the Goſpel of Chriſt commenced from, *unto that ſame Day that he was taken up from us*. Thoſe that have been diligent and faithful, and conſtant in the Diſcharge of the Duty of a lower Station, are fitteſt to be preferr'd to a higher; that have been faithful in a little, ſhall be entruſted with more. And none ſhould be Employ'd as Miniſters of Chriſt, Preachers of his Goſpel, and Rulers in his Church, but thoſe that are well acquainted with his Doctrine and Doings from firſt to laſt. None ſhall be an Apoſtle but one that has *compained* with the Apoſtles, and that continually; nor that has *viſited* them now and then, but been intimately converſant with them.

2 To what Work he is call'd that muſt fill up the Vacancy; he muſt be a *Witneſs with us of his Reſurrection*. But this it appears that others of the Diſciples were with the Eleven when Chriſt appear'd to them, elſe they could not have been *Witneſſes with them*, as competent Witneſſes as they of his Reſurrection. The great Thing which the Apoſtles were to atteſt to the World was *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, for that was the great Proof of his being the *Meſſiah*, and the Foundation of our Hope in Him. See what the Apoſtles were *ordain'd to*, not to a ſecular Dignity and Dominion, but to *preach Chriſt*, and the *Power of his Reſurrection*.

Thirdly, The Nomination of the Perſon that was to ſucceed *Judas* in his Office as an Apoſtle.

1. Two, who were known to have been Chriſt's conſtant Attendants, and Men of great Integrity, were ſet up as Candidates for the Place, *v.* 23. *They appointed two*, not the *Eleven*, they did not take upon them to determine who ſhould be put up, but the *Hundred and Twenty*, for to them *Peter* ſpoke and not to the Eleven. The two they Nominated were *Joſeph* and *Matthias*, of neither of whom we do read elſewhere, except this *Joſeph* be the ſame with that *Jeſus* which is called *Juſtus*, whom *Paul* ſpeaks of, *Col*. iv. 11. and who is ſaid to be *of the Circumciſion*, a Native *Jew* as this was; and who was a *Fellow-worker with Paul unto the Kingdom of God and a Comfort* to him; And then it is obſervable, that tho' he came ſhort of being an Apoſtle, he did not therefore quit the Miniſtry, but was very uſeful in a lower Station; for, *Are all Apoſtles? Are all Prophets?* ſome think this *Joſeph* is he that is called *Joſes*, *Mark* vi. 3. the *Brother of James the Leſs*. *Mark* xv. 40. and was call'd *Joſes the Juſt*, as *he* was called *James the Juſt*. Some confound this with that *Joſes* mention'd *Acts* iv. 36. But that was of *Cyprus*, this of *Galilee*: and it ſhould ſeem to diſtinguſh them, that was call'd *Barnabas* a *Son of Conſolation*. This *Barſabas* a *Son of the Oath*. Theſe two were both of them ſuch worthy Men, and ſo well qualified for the Office, that they could not tell which of them was fitteſt, but all agreed it muſt be one of them two. They did not propoſe themſelves, nor *ſtrive* for the Place, but humbly ſat ſtill and were *appointed* to it.

2. They apply'd themſelves to GOD by Prayer for Direction, not which of the Seventy, for none of the reſt could ſtand in Competion with theſe in the Opinion of all preſent, but *which of theſe two?* *v.* 24. 25.

1. They appeal to GOD as the Searcher of Hearts *Thou Lord which knoweſt the Hearts of all Men*, which we do not, and better than they know their own. Obſerve, when an Apoſtle was to be choſen, he muſt be choſen by his Heart, and the Temper and Diſpoſition of that. Yet Jeſus who knew all Mens Hearts, for Wiſe and Holy Ends choſe *Judas* to be one of the Twelve. It is Comfortable to us in our Prayers for the Welfare of the Church, and its Miniſters, that the GOD we pray to *know the Hearts of all Men*, and hath them not only under his Eye, but in his Hand and turns them which way ſoever He will; can make them fit for his Purpoſe, if He do not find them ſo by giving them *another Spirit*.

2. They deſire to know, *Which of theſe God hath choſen*; Lord *ſhew us* that, and we are ſatisfy'd. 'Tis fit GOD ſhould chooſe his own his Servants: and ſo far as He any way by the Diſpoſals of his Providence, or the Gifts of his Spirits, ſhews *whom he hath choſen*, or what He hath choſen for us, we ouhgt to comply with him.

3. They are ready to receive him as a Brother, whom GOD hath choſen; for they are not contriving to have ſo much the more Dignity themſelves, by keeping out another, but deſire to have One to *take part of this Miniſtry, and Apoſtleſhip*, to joyn with us in the Work, and ſhare with us in the Honour, *from which* Judas *by Tranſgreſſion fell*, threw himſelf, by deſerting and betraying his Maſter, *from the Place* of an Apoſtle, which he was unworthy of, that he might go *to his own Place*, the Place of a Traitor, the fitteſt place for him, not only the Gibbet, but to Hell; that was his own

Place. *Note*, Thoſe that betray Chriſt, as they *fall from* the Dignity of Relation to him, ſo they *fall into all* Miſery. 'Tis ſaid of *Balaam*, Numb. xxiv. 14, 15. That he *went to his own Place*, that is, ſays one of the Rabbins, *he went to Hell*. Dr. *Whitby* quotes *Ignatius* ſaying, There is appointed to every Man ἴδιος τόπος a *proper Place*, which ſpeaks the ſame with that of GOD's rendering to every Man according to his Works. And our Saviour has ſaid, that *Judas's own Place* would be ſuch as that *it had been better for him that he had never been born*, Matth. xxvi. 24. his Miſery ſuch, as to be worſe than not being. *Judas* had been an *Hypocrite*, and Hell is the *proper Place* of ſuch; other Sinners, as Inmates, have their Portion with them, *Matth.* xxiv. 51.

4. The Doubt was determin'd by Lot. *v.* 26. which is an Appeal to GOD, and lawful to be us'd for the determining Matters not otherwiſe determinable, provided it be done in a ſolemn religious Manner, and with Prayer, the Prayer of Faith; for *the Lot is caſt into the Lap, but the whole Diſpoſal thereof is of the Lord*, Prov. xvi. 33. *Matthias* was not ordain'd by the Impoſition of Hands, as Presbyters were, for he was choſen by Lot, which was the Act of GOD; and therefore as he muſt be baptized, ſo he muſt be ordain'd by the Holy Ghoſt, as they all were not many Days after. Thus the Number of the Apoſtles was made up, as afterwards when *James* another of the Twelve was martyr'd, *Paul* was made on Apoſtle.

CHAP. II.

Between the Promiſe of the Meſſiah's Coming, (even the lateſt of thoſe Promiſes) and his Coming, many Ages interven'd; but between the Promiſe of the Spirit, and his coming, there were but a few Days; and during thoſe Days, the Apoſtles tho' they had receiv'd Orders to preach the Goſpel to every Creature, and to begin at Jeruſalem; *yet lay perfectly Wind-bound,* incognito, *and not offering to preach: But in this Chapter the* North-wind *and the* South-wind *awake, and then they* awake, *and we have them in the Pulpit preſently. Here is* (1.) *The Decent of the Spirit upon the Apoſtles and thoſe that were with them, on the Day of* Pentecoſt, v. 1—4 (2.) *The various Speculations which this occaſion'd among the People that were now met in* Jeruſalem *from all Parts,* v. 5—13. (3.) *The Sermon which* Peter *preach'd to them hereupon, wherein he ſhews, That this Pouring out of the Spirit, was the Accompliſhment of an* Old Teſtament *Promiſe,* v. 14—21. *That it was a Confirmation of Chriſt's being the Meſſiah, which was already prov'd by his Reſurrection,* v. 21—32. *And that it was a Fruit and Evidence of his Aſcenſion into Heaven,* v. 33—36. (4.) *The good Effect of this Sermon in the Converſion of many to the Faith of Chriſt, and their Addition to the Church,* v. 37—41. (5.) *The eminent Piety and Charity of thoſe Primitive Chriſtians, and the manifeſt Tokens of GOD's Preſence with them, and Power in them,* v. 43—47.

AND when the day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

We have here an Account of the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon the Diſciples of Chriſt. *Obſerve*,

Firſt, When and where this was done, which is particularly noted for the greater Certainty of the Thing.

1. It was *when the Day of Pentecoſt was fully come*. Where there ſeems to be a Reference to the Manner of the Expreſſion in the Inſtitution of this Feaſt, where it is ſaid, *Lev.* xxiii. 13. Ye ſhall count unto you *Seven Sabbaths compleat*, from the Day of the Offering of the Firſt-fruits, which was the next Day but one after the Paſſover, the Sixteenth Day of the month *Abib*, which was the Day that Chriſt roſe. This Day was *fully come*, *i. e.* The Night preceding, with a Part of the Day, was fully paſt.

(1.) The Holy Ghoſt came down at the Time of *a ſolemn Feaſt*, becauſe there was then a great Concourſe of People to *Jeruſalem* from all Parts of the Country; and of Proſelytes from other Countries, which would make it the more publick, and the Fame of it to be ſpread the ſooner and further, which would contribute much to the propogating of the Goſpel into all Nations. Thus now, as before at the Paſſover, the Jewiſh Feaſts ſerv'd to *toll the Bell* for Goſpel Services and Entertainments.

(2.) This Feaſt of *Pentecoſt* was kept in Remembrance of the giving of the Law upon Mount *Sinia*, from whence the incorporating of the Jewiſh Church was to be dated, which Dr. *Lightfoot* reckons to be juſt One thouſand four hundred and forty-ſeven Years before this. Fitly, therefore, is the Holy Ghoſt given at that Feaſt, in *Fire* and in *Tongues*, for the Promulgation of the Evangelical Law, not as that, to one Nation, but to *every Creature*.

(3.) This Feaſt of *Pentecoſt* happen'd on the *firſt Day of the Week*, which was an additional Honour put on that Day, and a Confirmation of it to be the Chriſtian Sabbath, *the Day which the Lord hath made*, to be a ſtanding Memorial in his Church of theſe two great Bleſſings, the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and the Pouring out of the Spirit, both on that Day of the Week. This ſerves not only to juſtify us in obſerving that Day under the Style and Title of *the Lord's Day*; but to direct us in the ſanctifying of it to give GOD Praiſe particularly for thoſe two great Bleſſings; every Lord's Day in the Year, I think, there ſhould be a full and particular Notice taken in our Prayers and Praiſes of theſe Two, as there is by ſome Churches of the One, once a Year, upon *Eaſter-Day*, and of the Other, once a Year, upon *Whitſunday*; O that we may do it with ſuitable Affections!

2. It was when they were *all with one accord in one Place*. What Place it was, we are not told particularly, whether in the Temple, where they attended at publick Times, *Luke* xxiv. 53. or, whether in their own Upper-Room, where they met at other Times. But it was at *Jeruſalem*, becauſe it had been the Place which God choſe to put his Name there, and the Prophecy was, That *from thence* the Word of the LORD ſhould *go forth* to all Nations, *Iſa.* ii. 3. And it was now the Place of the general Rendezvous of all devout People; there GOD had promis'd to meet and bleſs them, here therefore He meets them with this Bleſſing of Bleſſings. Tho' *Jeruſalem* had done the utmoſt Diſhonour imaginable to Chriſt, yet he did this Honour to *Jeruſalem*, to teach us not to fall out with Places, nor conceive Prejudice againſt them; for GOD has his Remnant in all Places, He had ſo in *Jeruſalem*.

Here they were in *one Place*, and they were not as yet ſo many but that one Place, and no large one, would hold them all. And here they were *with one accord*. We cannot forget how often while their Maſter was with them there were *ſtrifes among them which ſhould be greateſt*; but now all theſe Strifes were at an End, we hear no more of them; what they had receiv'd already of the Holy Ghoſt when Chriſt *breathed* on them, had in a good meaſure rectify'd the Miſtakes upon which thoſe Conteſts were grounded, and had diſpos'd them to holy Love. They had pray'd more together of late than uſual, *ch.* i. 14. and that made them love one another better. By his Grace he thus prepar'd them for the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt; for that bleſſed Dove comes not where there is Noiſe and Clamour but moves upon the Face of the ſtill Waters, not the rugged ones. Would we have the *Spirit pour'd out upon us from on high*, let us be all *of one accord*, and notwithſtanding Variety of Sentiments and Intereſts, as no doubt there was among thoſe Diſciples, let us agree to love to another; for where *Brethren dwell together in Unity*, there it is that *the Lord commands his Bleſſing*.

Secondly, How, and in what manner the Holy Ghoſt came upon them. We often read in the *Old Teſtament* of GOD's coming down in *a Cloud*; as when He took Poſſeſſion of the Tabernacle firſt, and afterwards of the Temple, which intimates the Darkneſs of that Diſpenſation. And Chriſt *went up* to Heaven *in a Cloud*, to intimate how much we are kept in the dark concerning the Upper World: But the Holy Ghoſt did not decend *in a Cloud*; for he was to diſpel and ſcatter the Clouds that overſpread Mens Minds, and to bring Light into the World.

1. Here's an *audible Summons* given them to awaken their Expectations of ſomething great *v.* 1. It is here ſaid, (1.) That it came *ſuddenly*, did not riſe gradually as common Winds do, but was at the height immediately. It came ſooner than they expected, and *ſtartled* even them that were now together *waiting*, and probably employ'd in ſome Religious Exerciſes. (2.) It was a *Sound from Heaven*, like a Thunder-clap, Rev. vi. 1. GOD is ſaid to *bring the Winds out of his Treaſuries*, Pſ. xxxv. 7. And *to gather into his Hands* Prov. xxx. 4. From Him this ſound came, like the Voice of One crying, *Prepare ye the Way of the Lord*. (3.) It was the Sound of a *Wind*, for the *Way of the Spirit*, is like that of *the Wind*, Joh. iii. 8. thou *heareſt the ſound thereof, but can'ſt not tell whence it comes, or whither it goes*. When the Spirit of Life is to enter into the dry Bones, the Prophet is bid to *propheſy unto the Wind, Come from the Four Wind, O Breath*, *Ezek.* xxxvii. 9 And tho' it was not *in the Wind* that the LORD came to *Elijah*, yet that prepar'd him to receive his Diſcovery of himſelf in the *ſtill ſmall Voice*, 1 Kin. xix. 11, 12. *God's Way is in the Whirlwind and the Storm*, Nah. i. 3. And out of the Whirlwind he ſpoke to *Job*. (4.) 'Twas a *ruſhing mighty Wind*; 'twas ſtrong and violent, and came not only with a great *Noiſe*, but with a great *Force*, as if it would bear down all before it: This was to ſignify the powerful Influences and Operations of the Spirit of GOD upon the Minds of Men, and thereby upon the World, that they ſhould be mighty through GOD *to the caſting down of Imaginations*. (5.) It fill'd not only the *Room*, but *all the Houſe where they were ſitting*. Probably, it *alarm'd* the whole City, but to ſhew that it was ſupernatural, preſently fix'd upon that particular Houſe, as ſome think the Wind that was ſent to arreſt *Jonah*, affected only the Ship that he was in, *Jon.* i. 4. And as the Wiſe Mens Star ſtood *over the Houſe* where the Child was: And this would direct the People who obſerv'd it, whither to go to enquire the Meaning of it. This Wind *filling the Houſe*, would ſtrike an Awe upon the Diſciples, and help to put them into a very ſerious, reverent, and compoſed Frame, for the receiving of the Holy Ghoſt. Thus the Convictions of the Spirit, make way for his Comforts: And the rohug Blaſts of that bleſſed Wind prepare the Soul for its ſoft and gentle Gales.

2. Here's a *viſible Sign* of the Gift they were to receive. They ſaw *cloven Tongues, like as of Fire*, v. 3. and *it ſate* ἐκάθισε not they ſat, thoſe *cloven Tongues*, but *He, i. e.* the *Spirit* ſignify'd thereby, *reſted* upon each of them, as he is ſaid to reſt upon the Prophets of Old. Or, as Dr. *Hammond* deſcribes it, "There was "an Appearance of ſomething like flaming Fire lighting on every "One of them, which divided aſunder, and ſo form'd the reſemblance of Tongues, with that Part of them that was next their "Heads divided or cloven." The Flame of a Candle is ſomewhat like a Tongue: And there is a Meteor, which Naturaliſts call *Ignis Lambens*, not a devouring Fire; ſuch was this. *Obſerve*,

1. There was an outward ſenſible Sign, for the Confirming of the Faith of the Diſciples themſelves, and for the Convincing of others. Thus the Prophets of Old had frequently their firſt Miſſion confirm'd by Signs, that all *Iſreal* might know them to be eſtabliſh'd Prophets.

2. The Sign given was *Fire* that *John Baptiſt*'s Saying concerning Chriſt might be fulfill'd, *He ſhall baptize you with the Holy Ghoſt and with Fire*; with the Holy Ghoſt, *as* with Fire. They were now in the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt* celebrating the Memorial of the giving of the Law upon Mount *Sinai*, and as that was given in Fire, and therefore is call'd a *Fiery Law*, ſo is the Goſpel. *Ezekiel*'s Miſſion was confirm'd by a Viſion of *burning Coals of Fire*. ch. xiii. and *Iſaiah*'s by a *Coal of Fire* touching *his Lips*, ch. vi. 7. The Spirit like Fire melts the Heart, ſeparates and burns up the Droſs, and kindles pious and devout Affections in the Soul, in which, as in the Fire upon the Altar, the Spiritual Sacrifices are offer'd up. This is that Fire which Chriſt came to ſend upon the Earth, *Luke* xii. 49.

3. This Fire appear'd in *cloven Tongues*. The Operations of the Spirit were many, that of ſpeaking with divers Tongues was one, and was ſingled out to be the firſt Indication of the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, and to that this Sign had a Reference. (1.) They were Tongues, for from the Spirit we have the Word of GOD, and by him Chriſt would *Speak* to the World; and he gave the Spirit to the Diſciples, not only to endue them with Knowledge, but to endue them with a Power to publiſh and proclaim to the World what they knew; for the *Diſpenſation of the Spirit, is given to every Man to profit withal*. (2.) Theſe Tongues were *cloven*, to ſignify that GOD would hereby *divide* unto all Nations the Knowledge of his Grace, as He is ſaid to have *divided* to them by his Providence the Light of the Heavenly Bodies, *Deut.* iv. 19. The *Tongues* were *divided*, and yet they ſtill continued all *of one accord*; for there may be a ſincere Unity of Affections, where yet there is a Diverſity of Expreſſion. Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves, That the *dividing of Tongues* at *Babel*, was the *caſting* off of the Heathen; for when they had loſt the Language in which alone GOD was ſpoken of and preach'd, they utterly loſt the Knowledge of GOD and Religion, and fell into Idolatry. But now after above Two Thouſand Years, GOD by another Dividing of Tongues, reſtores the Knowledge of Himſelf to the Nations.

4. This Fire *ſate upon them* for ſome Time, to ſhew the conſtant Reſidence of the Holy Ghoſt with them. The Prophetick Gifts of Old were conferr'd *ſparingly*, and but at *ſome Times*, but the Diſciples of Chriſt had the Gifts of the Spirit *always* with them; tho' the Sign, we may ſuppoſe, preſently diſappear'd. Whether theſe Flames of Fire paſs'd from one to another, or whether there were as many Flames as there were Perſons, is not certain: But they muſt be ſtrong and bright Flames, that would be viſible in the *Day-light*, as it now was, for the Day was *fully come*.

Thirdly, What was the immediate Effect of this. 1. *They were all fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt*, more plentifully and powerfully than they were before. They were fill'd with the *Graces* of the Spirit, and were more than ever under his ſanctifying Influences: were now holy, and heavenly, and ſpiritual; more wean'd from this World, and better acquainted with the other. They were more fill'd with the *Comforts* of the Spirit, rejoyc'd more than ever in the Love of Chriſt, and the Hope of Heaven, and in it all their Griefs and Fears were ſwallow'd up. They were alſo, for the Proof of this, fill'd with the *Gifts* of the Holy Ghoſt, which is eſpecially meant here: They were endu'd with miraculous Powers, for the Furtherance of the Goſpel. It ſeems evident to me, That not the Twelve Apoſtles only, but all the Hundred and twenty Diſciples, were *filled with the Holy Ghoſt* alike at this Time: All the Seventy Diſciples who were Apoſtolical Men, and imploy'd in the ſame Work, and all the reſt too that were to preach the Goſpel; for it is ſaid expreſly, *Eph.* iv. 8, 11. *That when Chriſt aſcended on high*, (which refers to this here, *v.* 33.) *he gave Gifts unto Men*, not only *ſome Apoſtles*, ſuch were the Twelve; but *ſome Prophets* and *ſome Evangeliſts*, ſuch were many of the Seventy Diſciples, Itinerant Preachers, and ſome *Paſtors and Teachers* ſettled in particular Churches, as we may ſuppoſe ſome of theſe afterwards were. The *All* here, muſt refer to the *All* that were together, *Chap.* i. 15. *v.* 1.

2. *They began to ſpeak with other Tongues*, beſides their Native Language, tho' they had never learned any other: They ſpake not Matters of common Converſation, but the Word of GOD, and the Praiſes of his Name, *as the Spirit gave them Utterance*, or gave them to ſpeak ἀποφθέγγεσθαι to ſpeak *Apothegms*, ſubſtantial and weighty Sayings, worthy to be had in Remembrance. 'Tis probable, it was not only One that was enabled to ſpeak one Language, and Another another, as it was with the ſeveral Families that were diſpers'd from *Babel*; but every One was enabled to ſpeak divers Languages, as he ſhould have Occaſion to uſe them: And we may ſuppoſe, that they not only underſtood themſelves, but underſtood one another too, which the Builders of *Babel* did not, *Gen.* xi. 7. They did not ſpeak here and there a Word of another Tongue, or ſtammer out ſome broken Sentences; but ſpoke it as readily, properly, and elegantly, as if it had been their Mother-Tongue; for what ever was produc'd by Miracle, was the beſt of the Kind. They ſpake not from any previous Thought or Meditation, but *as the Spirit gave them utterance*, He furniſh'd them with the Matter as well as the Language, Now this was (1.) A very *great* Miracle, 'twas a Miracle upon the Mind, (and ſo had moſt of the Nature of a Goſpel Miracle) for in the Mind Words are fram'd. They had not only never learn'd *theſe* Languages, but had never learn'd *any* foreign Tongue, which might have facilitated theſe; nay, for ought appears, they had never ſo much as heard theſe Languages ſpoken, or had any Idea of them. They were neither Scholars nor Travellers, nor had had any Opportunity of learning Languages either by Books or Converſation. *Peter* indeed was forward enough to ſpeak in his own Tongue, but the reſt of 'em were no Spokeſmen, nor were they quick of Apprehenſion; yet now not only the *Heart of the Raſh underſtands Knowledge*, but the *Tongue of the Stammerers is ready to ſpeak elegantly*, *Iſa.* xxxii. 4. When *Moſes* complain'd, *I am ſlow of Speech*; God ſaid, *I will be with thy Mouth*, and *Aaron* ſhall be *thy Spokeſman*. But He did more for theſe Meſſengers of his, He that made Man's Mouth, new-made theirs. (2.) A very proper, needful, and ſerviceable Miracle; The Language the Diſciples ſpoke was *Syriack*, a Dialect of the *Hebrew*; ſo that it was neceſſary they ſhould be endu'd with the Gift, both for the Underſtanding of the Original *Hebrew* of the *Old Teſtament*, in which it was written, and of the Original *Greek* of the *New Teſtament*, in which it was to be written. But that was not all, they were commiſſion'd to preach the Goſpel to *every Creature*, to diſciple *all Nations*. But here's an Inſuperable Difficulty at the Threſhold; How ſhall they maſter the ſeveral Languages ſo as to ſpeak intelligible to all the Nations, 'twill be the Work of a Man's Life to learn their Languages. And therefore, to prove that Chriſt could give *Authority* to preach to the Nations, he gives *Ability* to preach to them in their own Language. And it ſhould ſeem, that this was the Accompliſhment of that Promiſe which Chriſt made to his Diſciples, *Joh.* xiv. 12. *Greater Works than theſe ſhall ye do*: For this may well be reckon'd, all Things conſider'd, a greater Work than the miraculous Cures Chriſt wrought; Chriſt himſelf did not ſpeak with other Tongues, nor did he enable his Diſciples to do it while he was with them: but it was the firſt Effect of the *Pouring out of the Spirit* upon them. And Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* thinks it probable, That if the Converſion of Infidels to Chriſtianity, were now ſincerely and vigorouſly attempted by Men of honeſt Minds, GOD would extraordinarly countenance ſuch an Attempt with all fitting Aſſiſtance, as He did the firſt Publication of the Goſpel.

5 And there were dwelling at Jeruſalem, Jews, devout Men, out of every nation under heaven. 6 Now when this was noiſed abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, becauſe that every Man heard them ſpeak in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, ſaying, one to another, Behold, are not all theſe which ſpeak, Galileans? 8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? 9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Meſopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Aſia, 10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and ſtrangers of Rome, Jews and proſelytes, 11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them ſpeak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, ſaying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 Others mocking ſaid, Theſe men are full of new wine.

We have here an Account of the publick Notice that was taken of this extraordinary Gift, with which the Diſciples were all on a ſudden endued. Obſerve,

Firſt, The great Concourſe of People that there was now at *Jeruſalem*; it ſhould ſeem more than uſually was at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*. *There were dwelling* or abiding *at Jeruſalem, Jews*, that were *devout Men*, diſpos'd to Religion, and that had the Fear of GOD before their Eyes, ſo the Word properly ſignifies, ſome of them *Proſelytes of Righteouſneſs*, that were circumciſed, and admitted Members of the *Jewiſh* Church, others only *Proſelytes of the Gate*, that forſook Idolatry, and gave up themſelves to the Worſhip of the True GOD, but not to the Ceremonial Law; ſome of thoſe there were at *Jeruſalem* now, *out of every Nation under Heaven* whither the *Jews* were diſpers'd, or, from whence Proſelytes were come. The Expreſſion is Hyperbolical, noting, that there were ſome from moſt of the then known Parts of the World; as much as ever *Tyre* was, or *London* is the Rendezvouz of Trading People from all Parts, of *Jeruſalem* at that Time was of *Religious* People from all Parts. Now

1. We may here ſee what were ſome of thoſe Countries whence thoſe Strangers came, *v.* 9, 10, 11. ſome from the *Eaſtern* Countries, as the *Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and Dwellers in Meſopotamia,* the Poſterity of *Shem*; from thence we come in order to *Judea,* which ought to be mention'd, becauſe tho' the Language of them in *Judea* was the ſame with that which the Diſciples ſpoke, yet, before, they ſpoke it with the North-Country Tone and Dialect, *Thou art a Galilean, and thy Speech bewrays thee,* but now they ſpoke it as fine as the Inhabitants of *Judea* themſelves did: Next come the Inhabitants of *Cappadocia, Pontus,* and that Country about *Propontis,* which was particularly call'd *Aſia,* and theſe were the Countries in which thoſe *Strangers* were *ſcatter'd,* to whom St. *Peter* writes, 1 *Pet.* i. 1. Next come the Dwellers in *Phrygia,* and *Pamphylia,* which lay *Weſtward,* the Poſterity of *Japhet,* as were alſo the Strangers of *Rome*; There were ſome alſo that dwelt in the *Southern* Parts of *Egypt,* in the Parts of *Libya,* about *Cyrene.* There were alſo ſome from the Iſland of *Crete,* and ſome from the Deſarts of *Arabia*; But they were all either *Jews* originally, diſpers'd into thoſe Countries, or *Proſelytes* to the Jewiſh Religion, but Natives of thoſe Countres. Dr. *Whitby* obſerves, that the Jewiſh Writors about this Time as *Philo* and *Joſephus* ſpeak of the *Jews* as *dwelling every where through the whole Earth*; And that *there is not a People upon Earth among whom ſome Jew do not inhabit,*

2. We may enquire, what brought all thoſe *Jews* and *Proſelytes* together to *Jeruſalem at this Time*; not to make a tranſient Viſit thither to the Feaſt of Pentecoſt, for they are ſaid to *dwell* there; they took Lodgings there, becauſe there was at this Time a general Expectation of the Appearing of the *Meſſiah*; for *Daniel*'s Weeks were juſt now expir'd, the Scepter was departed from *Judah,* it was then generally thought that *the Kingdom of G O D ſhould immediately appear, Luke* xv. 11. This brought thoſe who were moſt Zealous and Devout to *Jeruſalem,* to ſojourn there, that they might have an early Share in the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, and the Bleſſings of that Kingdom.

Secondly, The Amazement which theſe Strangers were ſeiz'd with when they heard the Diſciples ſpeak to them in their own Tongues. It ſhould ſeem the Diſciples ſpoke in various Languages before the People of thoſe Languages came to them; for it is intimated *v.* 6. that the ſpreading of the Report of this *abroad* was it that *brought the Multitude together,* eſpecially thoſe of different Countries, who ſeem to have been more affected with this Work of Wonder than the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem* themſelves.

1. They obſerve that the Speakers are all *Galileans,* that know no other but their Mother Tongue, *v.* 7. they are *deſpicable* Men, from whom nothing learned or polite is to be expected. G O D choſe the *weak* and *fooliſh* Things of the World to confound the *Wiſe* and *Mighty.* Chriſt was thought to be a *Galilean,* and His Diſciples really were ſo; unlearned and ignorant Men.

2. They acknowledg'd that they ſpoke intelligibly, and readily, their own Language, which they were the moſt competent Judges of, ſo right and exact, that none of their own Countrymen could ſpeak it better. *We hear every Man in our own Tongue wherein we were born, v.* 8. i. e. we hear one or other of them ſpeak our Native Language. The *Parthians* hear one of them ſpeak their Language, the *Medes* hear another of them ſpeak theirs; and ſo of the reſt, *v.* 11. *We do hear them ſpeak in our Tongue the wonderful Work of G O D.* Their reſpective Languages were not only unknown at *Jeruſalem,* but probably deſpis'd and undervalu'd, and therefore it was not only a Surprize, but a pleaſing Surprize to them to hear the Language of their own Country ſpoken, as it naturally is to thoſe that are Strangers in a ſtrange Land.

(1.) The Things they heard the Apoſtles Diſcourſe of were the *wonderful Works of G O D,* μεγαλεῖα τῦ Θεῦ *Magnalia Dei,* The great Things of G O D. 'Tis likely the Apoſtles ſpoke of Chriſt and Redemption by him, and the Grace of the Goſpel, and theſe are indeed the *Great Things of G O D,* and which will be for ever *Marvellous in our Eyes.*

(2.) They heard them both *praiſe* GOD for theſe great Things, and *inſtruct* the People concerning theſe Things *in their own Tongue,* according as they perceiv'd the Language of their Hearers, or thoſe that enquir'd of them to be. Now tho' perhaps by Dwelling ſome Time at *Jeruſalem,* they were got to be ſo much Maſters of the Jewiſh Language as that they could have underſtood the Meaning of the Diſciples if they had ſpoken that Language, yet (1.) This was more *ſtrange,* and help'd to convince their *Judgment,* that this Doctrine was of G O D, for *Tongues were for a Sign* to them that believed not, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 22. (2.) It was more *Kind* and help'd to engage their *Affections,* as it was a plain Indication of the Favour intended to the *Gentiles,* and that the Knowledge and Worſhip of G O D ſhould no longer be confin'd to the *Jews,* but the Partition Wall ſhould be broken down. And this is to us a plain Intimation of the Mind and Will of G O D, that the Sacred Records of G O D's wonderful Works ſhould be preſerved by all Nations *in their own Tongues.* That the Scriptures ſhould be read, and publick Worſhip perform'd in the vulgar Languages of the Nations.

3. They wonder at it, and look upon it as an aſtoniſhing Thing, *v.* 12. *They were all amaz'd,* They were in an Extaſy, ſo the Word is; And they were *in Doubt* what the Meaning of it was, and whether it was to introduce the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah,* which they were big with the Expectation of; They ask'd themſelves, and one another τί ἂν θέλοι τῦτο εἶναι, *quid hoc ſibi vult*? What *is the Tendency of this*? Surely it is to dignify and ſo to diſtinguiſh theſe Men as Meſſengers from Heaven, and therefore like *Moſes* at the Buſh, they will *turn aſide and ſee this great Sight.*

Thirdly, The Scorn which ſome made of it, who were Natives of *Judea* and *Jeruſalem,* probably the *Scribes* and *Phariſees,* and *Chief Prieſts,* who always reſiſted the Holy Ghoſt, They ſaid, *theſe Men are full of new Wind,* or *ſweet Wine.* They have drunk too much this Feſtival time; *v.* 13, Not that they were ſo abſurd as to think that Wine in the Head would enable Men to ſpeak Languages which they never learn'd, but theſe being Native *Jews* knew not as the others did, that theſe were really the Languages of other Nations, and therefore took what they ſaid to be Gibberiſh and Nonſenſe, ſuch as Drunkards, thoſe *Fools in Iſrael* ſometimes talk. As when they *reſolv'd* not to believe the *Finger of the Spirit* in Chriſt's Miracles, they turn'd it off with this, he caſteth out Devils by Compact with the Prince of the Devils; ſo when they *reſolv'd* not to believe the *Voice of the Spirit* in the Apoſtles preaching, they turn'd it off with this, Theſe Men are full of new wine. And if they call'd the Maſter of the Houſe a *Wine-bibber,* no Marvel if they ſo call them of his Houſhold.

14 But Peter ſtanding up with the eleven, lift up his voice, and ſaid unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jeruſalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: 15 For theſe are not drunken, as ye ſuppoſe, ſeeing it is but the third hour of the day. 16. But this is that which was ſpoken by the prophet Joel, 17 And it ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days. (ſaith God) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all fleſh: and your ſons and your daughters ſhall propheſie, and your young men ſhall ſee viſions, and your old men ſhall dream dreams: 18 And on my Servants, and on my handmaidens I will pour out in thoſe days of my Spirit, and they ſhall propheſie: 19 And I will ſhew wonders in heaven above, and ſigns in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of ſmoke. 20 The ſun ſhall be turned into darkneſs, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. 21 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* whoſoever ſhall call on the name of the Lord ſhall be ſaved. 22 Ye Men of Iſrael, hear theſe words; Jeſus of Nazareth a man approved of God, among you, by miracles and wonders and ſigns, which God did by him in the midſt of you, as ye your ſelves alſo know: 23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain. 24 Whom God hath raiſed up, having looſed the pains of death: becauſe it was not poſſible that he ſhould be holden of it. 25 For David ſpeaketh concerning him, I foreſaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I ſhould not be moved. 26 Therefore did my heart rejoyce, and my tongue was glad; moreover alſo, my fleſh ſhall reſt in hope. 27 Becauſe thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy One to ſee corruption. 28 Thou haſt made known to me the ways of life; thou ſhalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 29 Men *and* brethren, let me freely ſpeak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his ſepulchre is with us unto this day: 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had ſworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his oyns, according to the fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt, to ſit on his throne: 31 He ſeeing this before, ſpake of the reſurrection of Chriſt, that his ſoul was not left in hell, neither his fleſh did ſee corruption. 32 This Jeſus hath God raiſed up, whereof we all are witneſſes. 33 Therefore being

by the right hand of God exalted, and have received of the Father the promiſe of the holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear. 24 For David is not aſcended into the heavens: but he ſaith himſelf, The LORD ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footſtool. 36 Therefore let all the Houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly, that God hath made that ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt.

We have here the *Firſt Fruits* of the Spirit in the Sermon which *Peter* preached immediately, directed not to thoſe of other Nations in a ſtrange Language, we are not told what Anſwer he gave to thoſe that were amaz'd and ſaid *what meaneth this?* but to the *Jews* in the vulgar Language, even to them that *mocked*, for he begins with the notice of that, *v.* 15. and addreſſeth his Diſcourſe, *v.* 14. to the *Men of Judea*, and *Inhabitants of Jeruſalem*, But we have reaſon enough to think that the other Diſciples continued to ſpeak to thoſe who underſtood them, and therefore flock'd about them, in the Langnages of their reſpective Countries, the *wonderful works of GOD*. And it was not by *Peter*'s Preaching only, but that of all or moſt of the reſt of the Hundred and Twenty, that the *Three Thouſand Souls* were that Day converted and *added to the Church*; But *Peter*'s Sermon only is recorded to be an Evidence for him that he was throughly recover'd from his Fall, and throughly reſtor'd to the Divine Favour; he that had *ſneakingly* deny'd Chriſt, now as *courageouſly* confeſſeth Him. Obſerve,

1. His Introduction or Preface, wherein he craves the Attention of the Auditory, or demands it rather. *Peter ſtood up*, *v.* 14. (to ſhew that he was not drunk) with *the Eleven*, who concurr'd with him in what he ſaid, and probably in their Turns ſpoke likewiſe to the ſame purpoſe; They that were of *greateſt Authority* ſtood up to ſpeak to the *Scoffing Jews*, and to confront thoſe who contradicted and blaſphem'd, but left the Seventy Diſciples to ſpeak to the willing Proſelytes from other Nations, who were not ſo prejudiced, in their own Language. Thus among Chriſt's Miniſters ſome of greater Gifts are called out to inſtruct thoſe *that oppoſe themſelves* to *take hold of Sword and Spear*; others of meaner abilities are employ'd in inſtructing thoſe that *reſign themſelves*, and to be Vine-dreſſers and Husbandmen. *Peter lift up his Voice*, as one that was both well aſſur'd of, and much affected with what he ſaid; and was neither afraid, nor aſham'd to own it. He apply'd himſelf to the *Men of Judea*, Ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι the *Men* that were *Jews*, ſo it ſhould be read. And you eſpecially *that dwell at Jeruſalem*, who were acceſſary to the Death of Jeſus, *Be this known unto you*, which you did not know before, one which you are concerned to know now, and to *hearked to my Words*, who would draw you to Chriſt, and not to the Words of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* that would draw you from Him. My Maſter is gone whoſe Words you have often heard in vain, but ſhall hear no more as you have done, but he ſpeaks to you by us, *Hearken* now *to our Words*.

2. His Anſwer to their blaſphemous Calumny, *v.* 15. *Theſe Men are not drunken as you ſuppoſe*. Theſe Diſciples of Chriſt that now ſpeak with other Tongues they ſpeak good Senſe, and know what they ſay, and ſo do theſe they ſpeak to, who are led by their Diſcourſes into the Knowledge of the *wonderful Works of GOD*. You cannot think they are drunk, for it is *but the Third Hour of the Day*, Nine of the Clock in the Morning. And before that Time, on the Sabbaths and ſolemn Feaſts the *Jews* did not uſe to eat or drink; Nay, ordinarily *they that are drunk are drunk in the Night*; and not in the Morning; Thoſe are beſotted Drunkards indeed, that *when they are awake* preſently *ſeek it yet again*, Prov. xxiii. 35.

3. His Account of the miraculous Effuſion of the Spirit, which is deſigned to awaken them all to embrace the Faith of Chriſt, and to joyn themſelves to His Church. Two things he reſolves it into; That it was the Fulfilling of the Scripture, and the Fruit of Chriſt's Reſurrection and Aſſenſion, and conſequently the Proof of both.

Firſt, That it was the Accompliſhment of the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, which related to the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, and therefore an Evidence that that Kingdom is come, and the other Predictions of it are fulfilled. He inſtanceth in one, that of the Prophet *Joel*, *Chap.* ii. 28. It is obſervable, that tho' *Peter* was filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and ſpake with Tongues as the Spirit gave him Utterance, yet he did not ſet aſide the Scriptures, nor think himſelf above them; Nay, much of his Diſcourſe is Quotations out of the *Old Teſtament* to which he appeals, and with which he proves what he ſaith: Chriſt's Scholars never learn above their Bible; and the Spirit is given not to ſuperſede the Scriptures, but to enable us to underſtand and improve the Scriptures. Obſerve,

1. The Text it ſelf that *Peter* quotes, *v.* 17—21. It refers to *the laſt Days*, i. e. the Times of the Goſpel, which are therefore called the *laſt Days*, becauſe the Diſpenſation of GOD's Kingdom among Men which the Goſpel ſets up is the laſt Diſpenſation of Divine Grace; and we are to look for no other, but the Continuation of that to the End of Time. Or, in *the laſt Days*, i. e. a great while after the ceaſing of Prophecy in the *Old Teſtament* Church. Or in the Days immediately preceding the Deſtruction of the Jewiſh Nation, in the laſt Days of that People, juſt before that *great and notable Day of the Lord*, ſpoken of *v.* 20. it was propheſied of and promiſed, and therefore you ought to expect it, and not to be *ſurpriz'd* at it, to *deſire* it and bid it welcome, and not to *diſpute* it; as not worth taking notice of. The Apoſtle quotes the whole Paragraph, for its good to take Scripture intire; now it was foretold,

(1.) That there ſhould be a more plentiful and extenſive Effuſion of the Spirit of Grace from on high, than had been ever yet. The Prophets of the *Old Teſtament* had been filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and it was ſaid of the People of *Iſrael* that GOD *gave them his good Spirit to inſtruct them*, *Neh.* ix. 20. But now the Spirit ſhall be poured out not only upon the *Jews*, but *upon all Fleſh*, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, tho' yet *Peter* himſelf did not underſtand it ſo, as appears, *Acts*, xi. 17. or upon *all Fleſh* i. e. upon ſome of all Ranks and Conditions of Men. The Jewiſh Doctors taught that the Spirit came only upon *wiſe* and *rich* Men, and ſuch as were of the Seed of *Iſrael* but GOD will not tye Himſelf to their Rules.

2. That the Spirit ſhould be in them a *Spirit of Prophecy*; by the Spirit they ſhould be enabled to foretell things to come, and to preach the Goſpel to every Creature. This Power ſhall be given without Diſtinction of *Sex*; not only your *Sons*, but your *Daughters* ſhall prophecy: Without Diſtinction of Age; both your *Young Men* and your *Old Men* ſhall *ſee Viſions*, and *dream Dreams*, and in them receive Divine Revelations, to be communicated to the Church: and without Diſtinction of outward Condition; even the *Servants* and *Hand-maids* ſhall receive of the Spirit, and ſhall propheſie, *v.* 18. or in general, *Men* and *Women* whom GOD calls his Servants and his Hand-maids. In the Beginning of the Age of Prophecy in the *Old Teſtament* there were *Schools of the Prophets*, and before that the Spirit of Prophecy came upon the Elders of *Iſrael* that were appointed to the Government. But now the Spirit ſhall be poured out upon Perſons of *inferior* Rank, and ſuch as were not brought up in the Schools of the Prophets, for the Kingdom of the Meſſiah is to be purely Spiritual. The mention of the *Daughters*, *v.* 17. and the *Hand-maidens*, *v.* 18. would make one think that *the Women* which were taken notice of *chap.* i. 14. received the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt as well as the Men. *Philip* the Evangeliſt had *Four Daughters who did propheſie*, *Chap.* xxi. 9. And therefore St. *Paul* finding Abundance of the Gifts both of Tongues and Prophecy in the Church of *Corinth*, ſaw it needful to prohibit Womens Uſe of thoſe Gifts in publick, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 26, 34.

3. That one great Thing which they ſhou'd propheſie of, ſhould be the Judgments that were coming upon the Jewiſh Nation, for this was the chief Thing that Chriſt Himſelf had foretold, *Matth.* xxiv. at his Entrance into *Jeruſalem*, *Luke* xix. 41. and when he was going to dye, *Luke*, xxiii. 29. And theſe Judgments were to be brought upon them to puniſh them for their Contempt of the Goſpel, and their Oppoſition to it, tho' it came to them thus proved. They that would not ſubmit to the Power of GOD's Grace in this wonderful Effuſion of his Spirit, ſhould fall and lie under the pourings out of the Vials of his Wrath; They ſhall *break* that will not *bend*.

1. The Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* which was about Forty Years after Chriſt's Death is here call'd that *great and notable Day of the Lord*, becauſe it put a final Period to the Moſaick Oeconomy; the Levitical Prieſthood, and the Ceremonial Law were thereby for ever aboliſhed and done away. The Deſolation it ſelf was ſuch as was never brought upon any Place or Nation either before or ſince. 'Twas *the Day of the Lord*, for it was the Day of his Vengeance upon that People for crucifying Chriſt, and perſecuting his Miniſters, it was the *Year of Recompence for that Controverſy*; yea, and for all the Blood of the Saints and Martyrs, *from the Blood of righteous* Abel, *Matth.* xxiv. 35. It was a little *Day of Judgment*. 'Twas a *notable Day*; in *Joel* 'tis call'd a *terrible Day*; for ſo it was to Men on Earth; but here ἐπιφανῆ (after the LXX ſhews) a *glorious*, *illuſtrious* Day, for ſo it was to Chriſt in Heaven, 'twas the *Epiphany*, his *Appearing*, ſo he himſelf ſpoke of it, *Mat.* xxiv. 30. The Deſtruction of the *Jews*, was the Deliverance of the *Chriſtians*, that were hated and perſecuted by them, and therefore that Day was often ſpoken of by the Prophets of that Time, for the Incouragement of ſuffering Chriſtians, that the *Lord was at hand*, the *Coming of the Lord drew nigh*; *the Judge ſtood before the Door*, Jam. v. 8, 9.

2. The terrible Preſages of that Deſtruction, are here foretold; There ſhall be *Wonders in Heaven above*, the *Sun turned into Darkneſs, and the Moon into Blood*; *and Signs* too *in the earth beneath, Blood and Fire*. *Joſephus*, in his Preface to his Hiſtory of the *Wars of the Jews*, ſpeaks of the Signs and Prodigies that preceded them, terrible Thunders, Lightning and Earthquakes; there was a fiery Commet that hung over the City, for a Year, and a flaming Sword was ſeen pointing down upon it; a Light ſhone upon the Temple and the Altar at Midnight, as if it had been Noon-Day. Dr. *Lightfoot* gives another Senſe of theſe Preſages; The *Blood* of the Son of GOD, the *Fire* of the Holy Ghoſt now

appearing, the *Vapor* of the Smoke in which Chriſt aſcended; the *Sun darken'd*, and the *Moon made Blood* at the Time of Chriſt's Paſſion, were all loud Warnings given to that Unbelieving People to prepare for the Judgments coming upon them. Or, it may be apply'd, and very fitly, to the previous Judgments themſelves by which that Deſolation was brought on. The *Blood*, points at the Wars of the *Jews* with the Neighbour Nations, with the *Samaritans*, *Syrians*, and *Greeks*, in which Abundance of Blood was ſhed; as there was alſo in their Civil Wars, and the Struggles of the *Seditions* as they call'd them, which were very bloody; here was no Peace to him that went out, or to him that came in. The *Fire* and *Vapor of Smoke* here foretold literally came to paſs in the burning of their Cities and Towns, and Synagogues, and Temple at laſt. And this turning of the *Sun into Darkneſs*, and *Moon into Blood*, ſpeaks the Deſolution of their Government, Civil and Sacred, and the extinguiſhing of all their Lights.

3. The ſignal Preſervation of the LORD's People is here promis'd, *v.* 21. *Whoſoever ſhall call upon the Name of the Lord* Jeſus (which is the Deſcription of a true Chriſtian, 1 *Cor.* i. 2.) *ſhall be Saved*, ſhall eſcape that Judgment; which ſhall be a Type and Earneſt of everlaſting Salvation. In the Deſtructon of *Jeruſalem* by the *Chaldeans*, there was a Remnant ſeal'd to be hid in the Day of the LORD's Anger, and in the Deſtruction by the *Romans*, not one Chriſtian periſh'd. They that diſtinguiſh themſelves by ſingular Piety, ſhall be diſtinguiſh'd by ſpecial Preſervation. And obſerve, The ſav'd Remnant are deſcrib'd by this, that they are a *Praying* People; they *call on the Name of the Lord*. Which intimates, that they are not ſav'd by any Merit or Righteouſneſs of their own, but purely by the Favour of GOD, which muſt be ſu'd out by Prayer. 'Tis the *Name of the Lord* which they call upon, that is their *ſtrong Tow-*

2. The Application of this Prophecy to the preſent Event, *v.* 16. *This is that which was ſpoken by the Prophet* Joel; it is the Accompliſhment of that, it is the full Accompliſhment of it: This is that Effuſion of the Spirit upon all Fleſh, which ſhould come, and we are to look for no other, no more than we are to look for another *Meſſiah*; For as our *Meſſiah* ever lives in Heaven reigning and interceeding for his Church on Earth; ſo this Spirit of Grace, the Advocate or Comforter, that was given now according to the Promiſe; will, according to the ſame Promiſe, continue with the Church on Earth to the End, and will work all its Works in it, and for it, and every Member of it, Ordinary and Extraordinary, by the Means of the Scriptures and Miniſtry.

Secondly, That it was the Gift of Chriſt, and the Product and Proof of his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion. From this Gift of the Holy Ghoſt he takes Occaſion to preach unto them *Jeſus*: And this Part of his Sermon he introduceth with another ſolemn Preface, *v.* 22. *Ye Men of* Iſrael, *hear theſe Words*. 'Tis a Mercy that ye are within hearing of them, and it is your Duty to give heed to them: Words concerning Chriſt, ſhould be acceptable Words to the *Men of* Iſrael. Here is,

1. An *Abſtract* of the Hiſtory of the Life of Chriſt, *v.* 22. He calls him *Jeſus of Nazareth*, becauſe by that Name he was generally known, but which was ſufficient to roll away that Reproach, he was *a Man approv'd of God among you*; cenſur'd and condemn'd by Men, but *approv'd* of GOD; GOD teſtify'd his *Approbation* of his Doctrine, by the Power He gave him to work Miracles: A Man *mark'd out* by GOD, ſo Dr. *Hammond* reads it; *ſignaliz'd* and made *remarkable among you* that now hear me; he was ſent to *you*, ſet up a glorious Light in *your* Land, you yourſelves are Witneſſes, how he became famous by *Miracles*, *Wonders* and *Signs*, Works above the Power of Nature, out of its ordinary Courſe, and contrary to it, *which God did by him*; that is, Which he did by that Divine Power, with which he was cloath'd; and in which God plainly went along with him; for *no Man could do ſuch Works unleſs God were with him*. See what a Streſs *Peter* lays upon Chriſt's Miracles. (1.) The Matter of Fact was not to be deny'd; for they were done *in the midſt of you*; in the midſt of your Country, your City, your ſolemn Aſſemblies, *as ye yourſelves alſo know*. You have been Eye-Witneſſes of his Miracles, I appeal to yourſelves, whether you have any thing to object againſt them, or can offer any thing to diſprove them. (2.) The Inference from them cannot be diſputed; the Reaſoning is as ſtrong as the Evidence; If he did thoſe Miracles, certainly GOD *approv'd him*, declar'd him to be, what He declar'd himſelf to be, the Son of GOD, and the Saviour of the World; for the GOD of Truth, would never ſet his Seal to a Lye.

2. An *Account* of his Death and Sufferings; which they were Witneſſes of alſo, but a few Weeks ago. And this was the greateſt Miracle of all, That a Man *approv'd* of GOD, ſhould thus ſeem to be abandon'd of *him*, and a Man thus approv'd *among the People*, and *in the midſt* of them, ſhould be thus abandon'd by them too: But both theſe Myſteries are here explain'd *v.* 23. and his Death conſider'd.

(1.) As *God's Act*; and in *Him* it was an Act of wonderful Grace, and Wiſdom. He *deliver'd* him to Death; not only *permitted* him to be put to Death, but *gave him up*, *devoted* him; this is explain'd, *Rom.* viii. 32. He *deliver'd him up* for us all: And yet he was *approv'd of God*, and there was nothing in this that ſignify'd the *diſapproving* of him; for it was done *by the determinate Counſel and Fore-knowledge of God*, in infinite Wiſdom, and for Holy Ends, which Chriſt himſelf concurr'd in, and in the means leading to them. Thus Divine Juſtice muſt be ſatisfy'd, Sinners ſav'd, GOD and Man brought together again, and Chriſt himſelf Glorify'd. It was not only according to the *Will of God*, but according to the *Counſel of his Will*, that he ſuffer'd and dy'd; according to an Eternal Counſel, which could not be alter'd. This reconcil'd him to the Croſs; Father, *Thy Will be done*; And, Father, *Glorify thy Name*; Let thy Purpoſe take Effect, and let the great End of it be attain'd.

(2.) As the *Peoples Act*; And in them it was an Act of prodigious Sin and Folly; it was fighting againſt GOD, to perſecute One whom He *approv'd* as the Darling of Heaven; and fighting againſt their own Mercies, to perſecute One that was the greateſt Bleſſing of this Earth: And neither GOD's deſigning it from Eternity, nor his bringing Good out of it to Eternity, would in the leaſt excuſe their Sin; for it was their voluntary Act and Deed, from a Principle morally Evil; and therefore they were *wicked Hands*, with which *you have crucify'd and ſlain* him. 'Tis probable, ſome of thoſe were here preſent who had cry'd, *Crucify him, Crucify him*, or had been otherwiſe aiding and abetting in the Murder, and *Peter* knew it: However, it was juſtly look'd upon as a National Act, becauſe done both by the *Vote* of the *Great Council*, and by the *Voice* of the *great Croud*. 'Tis a Rule, *Refertur ad univerſos quod publice ſit per majorem partem.* He charges it particularly on them as Parts of the Nation on which it would be viſited, the more effectually to bring them to Faith and Repentance, becauſe that was the only Way to diſtinguiſh themſelves from the Guilty, and diſcharge themſelves from the Guilt.

3. An *Atteſtation* of his Reſurrection, which effectually wip'd away the Reproach of his Death, *v.* 24. *Whom God raiſed up*, the ſame that deliver'd him *to Death*, deliver'd him *from Death*, and thereby gave a higher Approbation of him, than He had done by any other of the Signs and Wonders, wrought by him, or by all put together; This therefore he inſiſts moſt largely upon.

1. He deſcribes his Reſurrection. GOD *looſeth the Bands of Death, becauſe it was impoſſible that he ſhould be holden of it.* ὠδῖνας, The *Sorrows* of Death, the Word is us'd for *Travailing-pains*; and ſome think, it ſignifies the *Trouble* and *Agony* of his Soul, in which it was *exceeding Sorrowful*, even *to the Death*, from theſe Pains and Sorrows of Soul, this *Travail of Soul*, the Father looſed him, when at his Death he ſaid, *It is finiſhed*. Thus Dr. *Goodwin* underſtands it; Thoſe Terrors which made *Heman*'s Soul *lie like the Slain*. Pſal. lxxxix. 15. theſe had hold of Chriſt; but he was too ſtrong for them, and broke through them; this was the Reſurrection of *his Soul*, (And it is a great thing to bring a Soul out of the Depts of Spiritual Agonies) this was, *not leaving his Soul in Hell*; as that which follows, that *he ſhould not ſee Corruption*, ſpeaks of the *Reſurrection of the Body*; and both together make up the great Reſurrection. Dr. *Lightfoot* gives another Senſe of this; Having *diſſolv'd the Pains of Death* in reference to all that believe in him, God rais'd up Chriſt, and by his Reſurrection broke all the Power of Death, and deſtroy'd its Pangs upon his own People: He hath *aboliſh'd Death*, has alter'd the Property of it; and becauſe *it was not poſſible that he ſhould* be long holden of it, it is not poſſible that they ſhould be for ever holden. But muſt refer this to the Reſurrection of Chriſt's Body. And Death (ſaith Mr. *Baxter*) as a Separation between Soul and Body, is by Privation a *penal* State, tho' not dolorous by poſitive Evil. But Dr. *Hammond* ſhews, That the *Septuagint* and from them the Apoſtle here uſeth the Word for *Cords* and *Bands*, as *Pſ.* xviii. 4. to which the Metaphor of *looſing*, and being *held*, beſt agree. Chriſt was Impriſon'd for our Debt, was thrown into the Bands of Death, but Divine Juſtice being ſatisfy'd, it was not *poſſible* he ſhould be detain'd there, either by *Right* or by *Force*; for he had *Life in himſelf*, and in his own Power, and had conquer'd the Prince of Death.

2. He atteſts the Truth of his Reſurrection, *v.* 32. GOD hath *rais'd him up*, whereof *all we are Witneſſes*, we Apoſtles and other our Companions, that were intimately acquainted with him before his Death, were intimately converſant with him after his Reſurrection, did eat and drink with him. They receiv'd Power by the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, on purpoſe that they might be skilful, faithful, and courageous Witneſſes of this thing, notwithſtanding their being charg'd by his Enemies as having ſtollen him away.

3. He ſhew'd it to be the fulfilling of the Scripture, and becauſe the Scripture hath ſaid that he muſt riſe again before he ſaw Corruption, therefore it was impoſſible that he ſhould be *holden* by Death and the Grave, *for David* ſpeaks of his being rais'd; ſo it comes in *v.* 25. The Scripture he refers to, is that of *David Pſ.* xvi, 8, 9, 10, 11. which tho' in part applicable to *David* as a Saint, yet refers chiefly to Jeſus Chriſt, of whom *David* was a Type. Here is,

1. The Text quoted at large, *v.* 25, 26, 27, 28. for it was all fulfilled in him; and ſhews us,

(1.) The conſtant Regard that our Lord Jeſus had to his Father in his whole Undertaking, *I fore-ſaw the Lord before me continually.* He ſet before him his Father's Glory as his End in all, *fore-ſaw* that his Sufferings would redound abundantly to the Honour of GOD, and would iſſue in *his own Joy*; theſe were *ſet before him*, and theſe he had an Eye to in all he did and ſuffer'd, and with the Proſpect of theſe he was born up, and carried on, *Joh.* xiii. 31, 32.— xvii. 4, 5.

(2.) The Aſſurance he had of his Father's Preſence and Power going along with him, *He is on my right Hand*, the Hand of Action, ſtrengthening, guiding, and upholding that, *that I ſhould not be moved*, or driven off from my Undertaking, notwithſtanding the Hardſhips I muſt undergo; this was an Article of the Covenant of Redemption, *Pſ.* lxxxix. 21. With him *my Hand ſhall be eſtabliſhed, my Arm alſo ſhall ſtrengthen him.* And therefore he is confident the Work ſhall not miſcarry in his Hand. If GOD be at our Right Hand, we *ſhall not be mov'd*,

(3.) The Chearfulneſs with which our Lord Jeſus went on in his Work, notwithſtanding the Sorrows he was to paſs through. Being ſatisfy'd that *I ſhall not be* mov'd, but the good Pleaſure of the LORD ſhall proſper in my Hand, *therefore doth my Heart rejoyce, and my Tongue is glad*; and the Thought of my Sorrow is as nothing to me. *Note*, It was a conſtant Pleaſure to our Lord Jeſus to look to *the End* of his Work, and to be ſure that the Iſſue would be Glorious; ſo well-pleas'd was he with his undertaking, that it does his Heart good to think how the Iſſue would anſwer the Deſign: He *rejoyc'd in Spirit*, Luk. x. 21. *My Tongue was glad.* In the *Pſalm*, it is, *my Glory rejoyceth*; which intimates that our Tongue is our Glory, the Faculty of Speaking is an Honour to us, and never more ſo than when it is imploy'd in praiſing GOD, Chriſt's *Tongue was glad*, for when he was juſt entring upon his Sufferings, in the Cloſe of his Laſt Supper he *ſang an Hymn.*

(4.) The pleaſing Proſpect he had of the happy Iſſue of his Death and Sufferings; this was it that carry'd him not only with Courage, but with Chearfulneſs through them; He was putting off the Body, but my *Fleſh ſhall reſt*, the Grave ſhall be to the Body while it lies there a Bed of Repoſe, and *Hope* ſhall give it a ſweet Repoſe; it ſhall *reſt in Hope*, ὅτι, *That thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*; what follows is the Matter of his Hope, or Aſſurance rather.

1. That the Soul ſhall not continue in a State of Separation from the Body; for beſides, that that is ſome Uneaſineſs to a Human Soul made for its Body, it would be the Continuance of Death's Triumph over him, who was in truth a Conqueror over Death. *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell*, in *Hades*, in the *inviſible* State, ſo *Hades* properly ſignifies: But tho' thou ſuffer it for a time to *remove* thither, and to *remain* there, yet thou wilt *remand* it; thou wilt not leave it there as thou doſt the Souls of other Men.

2. That the Body ſhall lie but a little while in the Grave; Thou wilt *not ſuffer thy Holy One to ſee Corruption*; the Body ſhall not continue dead ſo long, as that it ſhould *begin* to putrify or become noiſome; and therefore it muſt return to Life on, or before, the third Day after its Death. Chriſt was GOD's *Holy One*, ſanctify'd and ſet apart to his Service in the Work of Redemption: He muſt *die*, for he muſt be conſecrated by his own Blood; but he muſt not *ſee Corruption*, for his Death was to be unto GOD *a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour.* And this was *typify'd* by the Law concerning the Sacrifices, that no Part of the Fleſh of the Sacrifices which was to be *eaten*, ſhould be kept till the *third Day*, for fear it ſhould ſee Corruption and begin to putrify, *Lev.* vii. 15—18.

3. That his Death and Sufferings ſhould be not to him only, but to all his, an Inlet to a bleſſed Immortality. *Thou haſt made known to me the Ways of Life*, and by me made them known to the World, and laid them open. When the Father *gave to the Son to have Life in himſelf*, a Power to *lay down his Life* and *to take it again*, then He ſhew'd him *the Ways of Life* both to and fro: The *Gates of Death* were *open'd to him*, and the *Doors of the ſhadow of Death* (Job xxxviii. 17.) to paſs and repaſs thro' them as his Occaſions led him for Man's Redemption.

4. That all his Sorrows and Sufferings ſhould end in perfect and perpetual Felicity: *Thou ſhalt make me full of Joy with thy Countenance.* The Reward ſet before him, was *Joy*; a *Fulneſs* of Joy, and that in *God's countenance*, in the Countenance he gave to his Undertaking, and to all thoſe, for his ſake, that ſhould believe in him. The Smiles with which the Father receiv'd him, when at his Aſcenſion he was brought *to the Ancient of Days*, fill'd him with *Joy unſpeakable*: And that's the *Joy of our Lord*, into which all his ſhall enter, and in which they ſhall be for ever happy.

2. The Comment upon this Text, eſpecially ſo much of it as relates to the Ruſurrection of Chriſt: He addreſſes himſelf to them with a Title of Reſpect, *Men and Brethren*, v. 29. You are *Men*, and therefore ſhould be rul'd with Reaſon; you are *Brethren*, and therefore ſhould take kindly what is ſaid to you by One that being nearly related to you is heartily concern'd for you, and wiſheth you well; Now, *give me leave freely to ſpeak to you concerning the Patriarch* David, and let it be no Offence to you if I tell you. That *David* cannot be underſtood here as ſpeaking of *himſelf*, but of the *Chriſt to come. David* is here call'd a *Patriarch*, becauſe he was the *Father* of the *Royal Family*, and a Man of great Note and Eminency in his Generation, and whoſe Name and Memory was juſtly very *precious*. Now when we read that *Pſalm* of his, we muſt conſider,

1. That he could not ſay that of *himſelf*, for he *dy'd*, and was *bury'd*, and his *Sepulcher remain'd* in *Jeruſalem*, till now when *Peter* ſpoke this; and his Bones and Aſhes in it; no Body ever pretended that he had riſen, and therefore he could never ſay of himſelf, that he ſhould not *ſee Corruption*; for it was plain he did ſee Corruption. St. *Paul* urgeth this, *Acts.* xiii 35, 36, 37. Tho' he was a Man after GOD's own Heart, yet he *went the Way of all the Earth*, as he ſaith himſelf, 1 *Kings.* ii. 2. both in Death and Burial.

2. Therefore certainly he ſpoke it as a *Prophet*, with an Eye to the *Meſſiah*, whoſe *Sufferings* the Prophets teſtify'd before-hand, and with them the *Glory* that *ſhould follow*; ſo did *David* in that *Pſalm*, as *Peter* here plainly ſhews.

1. *David* knew that the *Meſſiah* ſhould deſend *from his Loins* v. 30. That GOD had *Sworn to him* that *of the Fruit of his Lions according to the Fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit on his Throne.* He promis'd him a Son, the *Throne of whoſe Kingdom ſhould be eſtabliſh'd for ever* 2 *Sam.* vii. 12. And it is ſaid, *Pſal.* cxxxii. 11. GOD *Swore it in Truth unto David.* When our Lord Jeſus was born, 'twas promis'd that *the Lord* GOD would *give him the Throne of his Father David*, *Luke* i. 32. And all *Iſrael* knew that the Meſſiah was to be the *Son of David*, that is, that *according to the Fleſh* he ſhould be ſo, by his Human Nature; for otherwiſe according to the Spirit, and by his Divine Nature he was to be *David's Lord*, not his *Son.* GOD having *ſworn* to *David* that the *Meſſiah* promis'd to his Fathers ſhould be his *Son* and *Succeſſor*, the Fruit of his Loins, and Heir to his Throne, he kept this in view in Penning his Pſalms.

2. Chriſt being the *Fruit of his Loins*, and conſequently in his *Loins* when he penn'd that Pſalm, (as *Levi* is ſaid to be in *Abraham's* Loins when he paid *Tythes* to *Melchizech*) if what he ſaith as in his own Perſon, be not applicable to himſelf, as 'tis plain that it is not, we muſt conclude it points to that Son of his, that was then in his Loins, in whom his Family and Kingdom were to have their Perfection and Perpetuity. And therefore when he ſaith that his Soul ſhould not be left in its ſeparate State, nor his Fleſh ſee Corruption, without doubt he muſt be underſtood to ſpeak of the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, *v.* 31. And as Chriſt *Dy'd*, ſo he *Roſe again* according to the Scriptures; And that he did ſo *we are Witneſſes.*

4. Here is a Touch upon his Aſcenſion too. As *David* did not *riſe from the Dead*, ſo neither did he *aſcend into the Heavens* bodily as Chriſt did, *v.* 34. And further to prove that when he ſpoke of the Reſurrection he meant it of Chriſt, he obſerves that when in another Pſalm he ſpeaks of the next Step of his Exaltation, he plainly ſhews that he ſpoke of another Perſon, and ſuch another as was *his Lord*, *Pſal.* cx. 1. *The Lord, ſaid unto my Lord*, when he had raiſed him from the Dead, *Sit thou on my Right Hand*, in the higheſt Dignity and Dominion there, Be thou intruſted with the Adminiſtration of the Kingdom both of Providence and Grace, *Sit there* as King *until I make thy Foes* either thy Friends or *thy Footſtool*, *v.* 35. Chriſt roſe from the Grave to riſe Higher, and therefore it muſt be of his Reſurrection that David ſpoke, and not his own, in the 16*th* Pſalm, for there was no Occaſion for him to Riſe out of his Grave who was not to *Aſcend to Heaven.*

We now come to the Application of this Diſcourſe concerning the Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of Chriſt.

1. This explains the Meaning of the preſent wonderful Effuſion of the Spirit in thoſe extraordinary Gifts. Some of the People had ask'd, *v.* 12. *what meaneth this?* I'll tell you the Meaning of it ſaith *Peter*, This *Jeſus* being *Exalted to the Right Hand of GOD*, ſo ſome read it, to Sit there, Exalted *by the Right Hand of GOD*, ſo we read it, by his Power and Authority, it comes all to one, And *having receiv'd of the Father* to whom he is aſcended, *the Promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt*, he hath given what he receiv'd (*Pſal.* lxviii. 18.) and hath *ſhed forth this for you now ſee and hear*; for the Holy Ghoſt was to be given when *Jeſus* was *Glorified*, and not before *John* vii. 39. you *ſee* and *hear* us ſpeak with Tongues that we never learn'd; probably there was an obſervable Change in the Air of their Countenances, which they *ſaw*, as well as *heard* the Change of their Voice and Language; now this is from the Holy Ghoſt, whoſe Coming is an Evidence that *Jeſus* is Exalted, and he has *receiv'd this Gift* from the Father, to *confer it* upon the Church, which plainly ſpeaks him to be the Mediator; or middle Perſon between GOD and the Church. The Gift of the Holy Ghoſt was (1.) A Performance of Divine *Promiſes* already made; here it is called the *Promiſes of the Holy Ghoſt*, many exceeding great and precious Promiſes the Divine Power has given us, but this is *the Promiſes*, by way of Eminency, as that of the Meſſiah *had been*, and this is *the Promiſe* that includes all the reſt; Hence GOD's giving the *Holy Spirit to them that ask'd him*, *Luke* xi. 13. is his giving them all *good Things*, *Matth.* vii. 11. Chriſt receiv'd the Promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, i. e. the promis'd Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, and has given it to us; for all the Promiſes are *Yea and Amen* in him. (2.) 'Twas a *Pledge* of all Divine *Favours* further intended; what you *now* ſee and hear is but an Erneſt of greater Things.

2. This proves what you are all bound to Believe, *That Chriſt Jeſus is the true Meſſiah and Saviour of the World*; This he cloſeth his Sermon with, as the Concluſion of the whole Matter, the *Quod erat demonſtrandum, v.* 36. *Therefore let all the Houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly*, That this Truth has now receiv'd its full Confirmation, and we our full Commiſſion to publiſh it, That *God has made that ſame Jeſus whom ye have Crucify'd both Lord and Chriſt*. They were charg'd to *tell no Man* that he was *Jeſus* the Chriſt till after his Reſurrection, *Matt.* xvi. 20—xvii. 9. But now it muſt be proclaim'd on the Huoſe-tops, to *all the Houſe of Iſrael*, He that has Ears to hear let him hear it; It is not *propos'd* as probable but *depos'd* as certain, let them *know it aſſuredly*, and know that it is their Duty to receive it as a Faithful Saying, (1.) That GOD has *Glorified* Him whom they have *crucified*. This aggravates their Wickedneſs that they *Crucify'd*, one whom GOD deſigned to *Glorify*, and put him to Death as a Deceiver, who had given ſuch pregnant Proofs of his Divine Miſſion. And it magnifies the Wiſdom and Power of GOD, that *tho'* they *Crucify'd* him, and thought thereby to have put him under an indelible Mark of Infamy, *yet* GOD had *Glorify'd* him, and the Indignities they had done him ſerv'd as a Foil to his Luſtre. (2.) That he has Glorify'd him to that Degree, as to make him *both Lord and Chriſt*; Theſe ſignify the ſame; he is *Lord* of all, and he is not a Uſurper, but is *Chriſt Anointed* to be ſo. He is *one Lord* to the *Gentiles*, whom had had *Lords many*, and to the *Jews* he is *Meſſiah*, which includes all his Offices. He is the *King Meſſiah*, as the *Chaldee* Paraphraſt calls him; or as the Angel to *Daniel*, *Meſſiah the Prince*, *Dan.* ix. 25. This is the great Truth of the Goſpel, which we are to believe, That *that ſame Jeſus*, the very ſame that was crucified at *Jeruſalem* is he to whom we owe Allegiance, and from whom we are to expect Protection as *Lord* and *Chriſt*.

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and ſaid unto Peter, and to the reſt of the apoſtles, Men *and* brethren, what ſhall we do? 38 Then Peter ſaid unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, for the remiſſion of ſins, and ye ſhall receive the gift of the holy Ghoſt. 39 For the promiſe is unto you, and your children, and to all that are far off, even as many as the Lord our God ſhall call. 40 And with many other words did he teſtifie and exhort, ſaying, Save your ſelves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly receiv'd his word, were baptized: and the ſame day there were added *unto them* about three thouſand ſouls.

We have ſeen the wonderful Effect of the Pouring out of the Spirit in its Influence upon the *Preachers* of the Goſpel; *Peter* in all his Life never ſpoke at that rate that he had done now, with ſuch Fulneſs Perſpicuity and Power, we are now to ſee another bleſſed Fruit of the Pouring out of the Spirit in it's Influence upon the *Hearers* of the Goſpel; from the firſt Delivery of that Divine Meſſage, it appear'd that there was a Divine Power going along with it, and it was mighty through GOD to do Wonders, Thouſands were immediately brought by it *to the Obedience of Faith*, 'Twas the *Rod of God*'s *Strength* ſent out of *Zion*, *Pſal.* cx. 2, 3. We have here the *Firſt Fruits* of that vaſt Harveſt of Souls which by it were gather'd into Jeſus Chriſt. Come and ſee in theſe Verſes the Exalted Redeemer, riding forth in theſe Chariots of Salvation *conquering and to conquer*, Rev. vi. 2.

In theſe Verſes we find the Word of GOD the Means of beginning and carrying on a good Work of Grace in the Hearts of many, the Spirit of the Lord working by it. Let us ſee the Method of it.

Firſt, They are ſtartled and convinc'd, and put upon a ſerious Enquiry *v.* 37. *when they heard*, or *having heard*, having patiently heard *Peter* out, and not given him the Interruption they had been us'd to give to Chriſt in his Diſcourſes, (this was one good Point gain'd, that they were become attentive to the Word) they were *pricked to the Heart*, or, in the Heart, and under a deep Concern and Perplexity, apply'd themſelves to the Preachers with this Queſtion, *What ſhall we do*? It was very ſtrange that ſuch Impreſſions ſhould be made upon ſuch hard Hearts all of a ſudden. They were *Jews* bred up in the Opinion of the Sufficiency of their Religion to ſave them, had lately ſeen this Jeſus crucified in Weakneſs and Diſgrace, and were told by their Rulers that he was a Deceiver; *Peter* had charg'd them with having a Hand, a *wicked Hand* in his Death, which was likely to have exaſperated them againſt him, yet *when they heard* this plain Scriptural Sermon they were much affected with it.

1. It put them *in Pain*; they were *pricked in their Hearts*. We read of thoſe that were *cut to the Heart* with Indignation at the Preacher, *Acts* vii. 54. but theſe were *pricked to the Heart* with Indignation at themſelves for having been acceſſary to the Death of Chriſt, *Peter* charging it upon them awaken'd their Conſciences, touch'd them to the quick, and the Reflection they now made upon it was as a *Sword in their Bones*, it pierced as they had pierced Chriſt. *Note*, Sinners when their Eyes are open'd cannot but be *prick'd to the Heart* for Sin, cannot but experience an *inward Uneaſineſs*; this is having the *Heart rent*, *Joel* ii. 13. a broken and contrite Heart, *Pſal.* li. 17. Thoſe that are truly ſorry for their Sins, and aſham'd of them, and afraid of the Conſequences of them are *prick'd to the Heart*. A Prick in the Heart is *Mortal*, and under thoſe Commotions (ſaith *Paul*) I dy'd, *Rom.* vii. 9. All my good Opinion of my ſelf, and Confidence in my ſelf fail'd me.

2. It put them *upon Enquiry*. Out of the Abundance of the Heart thus prick'd, the Mouth ſpoke. *Obſerve.*

1. To whom they addreſs'd themſelves; to *Peter and to the reſt of the Apoſtles*, ſome to one, and ſome to another, to them they open'd their Caſe; by them they had been convinc'd, and therefore by them they expect to be counſel'd and comforted. They do not *appeal from them* to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* to juſtify them againſt the Apoſtles Charge, but *apply to them*, as owning the Charge and referring the Caſe to them. They call them *Men* and *Brethren*, as *Peter* had call'd them *v.* 29. 'tis a Style of Friendſhip and Love, rather than a Title of Honour, you are *Men*, look upon us with Humanity, you are *Brethren*, look upon us with brotherly Love. *Note*, Miniſters are ſpiritual Phyſicians, they ſhould be adviſ'd with by thoſe whoſe Conſciences are *wounded*; And it is good for People to be free and familiar with thoſe Miniſters, as *Men*, and their *Brethren*, who deal for their Souls as for their own.

2. What the Addreſs is: *What ſhall we do*?

1. They ſpeak as Men *at a Plunge*, that did not know what to do; in a perfect Surprize: *Is that Jeſus*, whom *we* have crucify'd, both *Lord and Chriſt*! Then what become of us, who crucify'd him? we are all undone! *Note*, No way of being happy, but by ſeeing ourſelves miſerable. When we find ourſelves in Danger of being *loſt for ever*, there's Hopes of our being made *for ever*; and not till then.

2. They ſpeak as Men *at a Point*, that were reſolv'd to do any Thing they ſhall be directed to, preſently; they are not for taking Time to conſider, or adjourning the Proſecution of their Convictions to a more convenient Seaſon, but deſire now to be told what they muſt do to eſcape the Miſery they were liable to *Note*, Thoſe that are convinc'd of Sin, would gladly know the Way to Peace and Pardon, *Acts* ix. 6—xvi. 30.

Secondly, *Peter* and the Apoſtles direct them in ſhort what they muſt do, and what in ſo doing they might expect, *v.* 38, 39. Sinners convinc'd, muſt be encourag'd; and that which is *broken* muſt be *bound up*, *Ezek.* xxxiv. 16. they muſt be told, That tho' their Caſe is *ſad*, it is not *deſperate*, there is Hope for them.

1. He here ſhews them the Courſe they muſt take:

(1.) *Repent*, that's a Plank after Shipwreck: Let the Senſe of this horrid Guilt which you have brought upon yourſelves by putting Chriſt to Death, awaken you to a penitent Reflection upon all your other Sins, as the Demand of ſome one great Debt brings to light all the Debts of a poor Bankrupt, and to bitter Remorſe and Sorrow for them. This was the ſame Duty that *John the Baptiſt* and Chriſt had preach'd, and now the Spirit is pour'd out 'tis ſtill inſiſted on; *Repent, repent*; Change your Mind, change your Way; admit an After-thought.

(2.) *Be baptiz'd every one of you in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt*, *i. e.* Firmly believe the Doctrine of Chriſt, and ſubmit to his Grace and Government; and make an open ſolemn Profeſſion of this, and come under an Engagement to abide by it, by ſubmitting to the Ordinance of Baptiſm; be proſelyted to Chriſt and to hi holy Religion, and renounce your Infidelity. They muſt be baptized *in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt*. They did believe in the *Father* and the *Holy Ghoſt* ſpeaking by the Prophets; but they muſt alſo believe in the Name of *Jeſus*, that he is the *Chriſt*, the *Meſſias* promis'd to the Fathers; Take *Jeſus* for your King, and by Baptiſm ſwear Allegiance to him; take him for your Prophet, and *hear him*; take him for *your Prieſt*, to make Atonement for you; which ſeems peculiarly intended here; for they muſt be baptiz'd *in his Name* for the *Remiſſion of Sins* upon the Score of Righteouſneſs.

(3.) This is preſs'd upon each particular Perſon, *Every one of you*; even thoſe of you that have been the *greateſt Sinners*, if they repent and believe, are welcome to be baptiz'd; and thoſe that think they have been the *greateſt Saints*, yet have need to repent, and believe, and be baptiz'd. There is Grace enough in Chriſt for every one of you, be ye never ſo many, and Grace ſuited to the Caſe of *every One*. *Iſrael* of Old was baptiz'd unto *Moſes* in the Camp, the whole Body of the *Iſraelites* together, when they paſs'd *through the Cloud*, and *the Sea*, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. for the Covenant of Peculiarity was National; but now *every One of you* diſtinctly muſt be baptiz'd *in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, and tranſact for himſelf in this great Affair. See *Col.* i. 28.

2. He gives them Encouragement to take that Courſe:

1. It ſhall be for *the Remiſſion of Sins*, Repent of your Sin, and it ſhall not be your Ruin; be baptiz'd into the Faith of Chriſt, and in Truth you ſhall be *juſtified*, which you could never be by the Law of *Moſes*. Aim at this, and depend upon Chriſt for it, and this you ſhall have. As the Cup in the Lord's Supper is the *New Teſtament* in the *Blood of Chriſt* for the Remiſſion of Sins, ſo Baptiſm is in the Name of Chriſt, for the Remiſſion of Sins. Be Waſh'd, and you ſhall be Waſh'd.

2. You ſhall *receive the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt*, as well as We; for it is deſign'd for a general Bleſſing, ſome of you ſhall receive theſe external Gifts, and each of you, if you be ſincere in your Faith and Repentance, ſhall *receive* His internal Graces and Comforts, ſhall be *Seal'd with the Holy Spirit of Promiſe. Note*, All that receive the Remiſſion of Sins, receive *the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt*: All that are juſtified are ſanctified.

3. Your Children ſhall ſtill have, as they have had, an Intereſt in the Covenant, and a Title to the External Seal of it. Come over to Chriſt to receive thoſe ineſtimable Benefits, for the *Promiſe* of the Remiſſion of Sins, and the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt is *to you and to your Children*, *v.* 39. 'Twas very expreſs, *Iſa.* xliv. 3. *I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed.* And *Iſa.* lix. 21. *My Spirit and my Word ſhall not depart from thy Seed, and thy Seeds Seed.* When GOD took *Abraham* into Covenant he ſaid, *I will be a God to thee, and to thy Seed*, Gen. xvii. 7. and accordingly every *Iſraelite* had his Son circumciſed at Eight Days old; Now it is proper for an *Iſraelite*, when he is by Baptiſm to come into a New Diſpenſation of this Covenant, to ask, What muſt be done with my Children? Muſt they be thrown out, or taken in with me? Taken in (ſaith *Peter*) by all means, for *the Promiſe*, that great Promiſe of GOD's being to you a GOD, is as much to you and to your Children now as ever it was.

4. Tho' the Promiſe is ſtill *extended* to your Children as it has been, yet it is not as it had been *confin'd* to you and them, but the Benefit of it is *deſign'd* for *all that are afar off*, we may add, *and their Children*, for the Bleſſing of *Abraham* comes upon the *Gentiles*, through Jeſus Chriſt, *Gal.* iii, 14. The *Promiſe* had long pertain'd to the *Iſraelites*, Rom. ix. 4. but now it is ſent to *thoſe that are afar off*, the remoteſt Nations of the *Gentiles*, and *every one* of them too, *all* that are afar off. To this *General* the following *Limitation* muſt refer even *as many of them*, as many particular Perſons in each Nation as *the Lord our God ſhall call* effectually into the Fellowſhip of Jeſus Chriſt. *Note*, GOD can make his Call to reach thoſe that are never ſo far off, and none come but whom he calls.

Thirdly, Theſe Directions are follow'd with a needful Caution, *v.* 40. *with many other Words* to the ſame Purpoſe, *did he teſtify* Goſpel Truths, *and exhort* to Goſpel Duties, now the Word began to work he follow'd it; he had ſaid much in a little, *v*, 38, 39. and that which one would think included all, and yet he had more to ſay. When we have heard thoſe Words which have done our Souls good, we cannot but wiſh to hear *more*, to hear *many more* ſuch Words. Among other Things he ſaid, (and it ſhould ſeem inculcated it) *Save your ſelves from this untoward Generation. Be ye free* from them. The unbelieving *Jews* were an *untoward* Generation, perverſe and obſtinate, they walk'd contrary to GOD and Man. 1 *Theſ.* ii. 15. wedded to Sin and mark'd for Ruin; now as to them,

1. Give diligence to ſave your ſelves from *the Ruin*, that you may not be *involv'd* in that, and may *eſcape all thoſe Things*, as the Chriſtians did, *Repent and be baptized*; and when you ſhall not be Sharers with them in Deſtruction, whom you have been Sharers with in Sin. *O gather not my Soul with Sinners.*

2. In order to this, continue not with them in their Sin, perſiſt not with them in Infidelity. *Save your ſelves*, that is, ſeparate your ſelves, diſtinguiſh your ſelves from this *untoward Generation. Be not Rebellious like this Rebellious Houſe*; partake not with them in their Sins, that you ſhare not with them in their Plagues. *Note*, to ſeparate our ſelves from wicked People, is the only Way to ſave our ſelves from them; tho' we thereby expoſe our ſelves to their Rage and Enmity, we really *ſave our ſelves* from them; for if we conſider whither they are haſtning, we ſhall ſee its better to have the Trouble of ſwimming againſt their Stream, than the danger of being carried down their Stream. Thoſe that repent of their Sins, and give up themſelves to Jeſus Chriſt, muſt evidence their Sincerity; by breaking off all intimate Society with wicked People. *Depart from me ye evil doers*; the Reſolution of one that determines to *keep the Commandment, of his God. Pſam.* cxix. 115. we muſt *ſave our ſelves* from them, which notes avoiding them with *dread* and Holy *fear*, as we would ſave our ſelves from an Enemy that ſeeks to deſtroy us or from a Houſe infected with the Plague.

Forthly, Here it the happy Succeſs and Iſſue of this, *v.* 41. The Spirit wrought with the Word and wrought Wonders by it. Theſe ſame Perſons that had many of them been Eye-witneſſes of the Death of Chriſt, and the Prodigies that attended it, and were not wrought upon by them, yet were wrought upon by the Preaching of the Word, for that's it, that is the *Power of God unto Salvation.*

1. They *received* the Word; and then only the Word doth us good when we do *receive* it, embrace it, and bid it welcome. They *admitted* the Conviction of it, and *accepted* the Offers of it.

2. They *gladly* received it. *Herod heard* the Word *gladly*, but theſe gladly *receive* it, were not only glad that they had it to receive, but glad that by the Grace of God they were enabled to receive it, tho' it would be a humbling changing Word to them, and would expoſe them to the Enmity of their Countrymen.

3. They were *baptized*; Believing with the Heart, they made Confeſſion with the Mouth, and enroll'd themſelves among the Diſciples of Chriſt, by that Sacred Rite and Ceremony which He had inſtituted. And tho' *Peter* had ſaid, be Baptiz'd in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, becauſe the Doctrine of Chriſt was the preſent Truth, yet we have Reaſon to think that in Baptizing them, the whole From Chriſt preſcrib'd was us'd *In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghoſt. Note*, Thoſe that receive the Chriſtian Covenant ought to receive the Chriſtian Baptiſm.

4. Hereby were added to the Diſciples to the Number of about *Three Thouſand Souls that ſame Day.* All thoſe that had receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt had their Tongues at Work to *preach*, and their Hands at Work to *baptize*, for it was Time to be buſy, when ſuch a Harveſt was to be gather'd in. The Converſion of theſe Three Thouſand, with theſe Words, was a *greater Work* then the feeding of Four or Five Thouſand with a few Loaves. Now *Iſrael* began to *multiply* after the Death of our *Joſeph.* They are ſaid to be *Three Thouſand Souls*, which Word is generally us'd for Perſons when *Woman and Children* are included with *Men*, as *Gen.* xliv. 21. *Give me the Souls.* Gen. xlvi. 27. 70. *Souls*, which intimates that thoſe that were here baptiz'd, were not ſo many *Men*, but ſo many Heads of Families, as with their Children and Servants baptiz'd might make up *Three Thouſand Souls.* Theſe were *added to them. Note*, They who are joyned to Chriſt are added to the Diſciples of Chriſt, and joyn with them: When we take GOD for our GOD, we muſt take his People to be our People.

42 And they continued ſtedfaſtly in the apoſtles doctrine, and fellowſhip, and in breaking of bread, and and in prayers. 43 And fear came upon every Soul: and many wonders and ſigns were done by the apoſtles. 44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common, 45 And ſold their poſſeſſions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. 46 And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from houſe to houſe, did eat their meat with gladneſs and ſingleneſs of heart, 47 Praiſing God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved.

We often ſpeak of the Primitive Church, and appeal to it, and to the Hiſtory of it; in theſe Verſes we have the Hiſtory of the *truly Primitive Church*, of the *firſt Days* of it, its State of Infancy indeed, but, like that, the State of its greateſt *Innocence.*

Firſt, They kept cloſe to Holy Ordinances, and abounded in all Inſtances of Piety and Devotion, for Chriſtianity admitted in the Power of it will diſpoſe the Soul to Communion with GOD in all thoſe Ways wherein he has appointed us to meet him, and promis'd to meet us.

1. They were diligent and conſtant in their Attendance upon the *preaching of the Word.* They *continu'd in the Apoſtles Doctrine*, and never diſown'd or deſerted it, or as it may be read, They *continu'd conſtant to the Apoſtles Teaching*, or *Inſtruction.* By *Baptiſm* they were diſcipled to be taught, and they were willing to be taught. *Note*, Thoſe who have given up their Names to Chriſt muſt make Conſcience of hearing his Word; for thereby we give Honour to *Him*, and build up our ſelves in our moſt Holy Faith.

2. They kept up the *Communion of Saints*: They continu'd *in Fellowſhip*, *v.* 42. and *continued daily with one accord in the Temple*, *v.* 46. They not only had a mutual Affection to each other, but a great deal of mutual Converſation with each other; they were much together. When they withdrew from *the untoward* Generation, they did not turn Hermites, but were very intimate with one another, and took all Occaſions to *meet*; wherever you ſaw *one* Diſciple, you ſhould ſee *more*, like *Birds of a Father*: See how *theſe Chriſtians love one another.* They were concern'd for one another, ſympathiz'd with one another, and heartily eſpous'd one another's Intereſt's. They had *Fellowſhip* with one another in religious Worſhip; they met *in the Temple*; there was their Rendezvouz; for Joynt-fellowſhip with GOD, is the beſt Fellowſhip we can have with one another, 1 *Joh.* i. 3. *Obſerve*, (1.) They were *daily* in the Temple, not only on the Days of the Sabbaths, and ſolemn Feaſts, but on other Days every Day. Worſhipping GOD is to be our *daily* Work, and where there is Opportunity, the oftner it is done publickly, the better. GOD loves the Gates of *Zion*, and ſo muſt we. (2.) They were *with one accord*; Not only no Diſcord or Strif, but a great deal of holy Love among them; and they heartily joyn'd in their publick Services. Tho' they met with the *Jews* in the Courts of the Temple, yet the Chriſtians kept together by themſelves, and were unanimous in their ſeparate Devotions.

3. They frequently joyn'd in the Ordinance of the Lord's-Supper; They continu'd *in breaking of Bread*, in celebrating that Memorial of their Maſter's Death, as thoſe that were not aſham'd to own their Relation to and their Dependance upon Chriſt, and him crucify'd. They could not forget the Death of Chriſt, yet they kept up this Memorial of it, and made it their conſtant Practice, becauſe it was an Inſtitution of Chriſt's to be tranſmitted to the ſucceeding Ages of the Church. They broke Bread *from Houſe to Houſe*; κατ' οἶκον, *Houſe by Houſe*, they did not

think fit to celebrate the *Euchariſt* in the Temple, for that was *peculiar* to the Chriſtian Inſtitutes, and therefore they adminiſtred that Ordinance in *private Houſes*, chooſing ſuch Houſes of the converted Chriſtians as were convenient, to which the Neighbours reſorted; and they went from one another of theſe little Synagogues or Domeſtick Chappels, Houſes that had Churches in them, and there celebrated the *Euchariſt*, with thoſe that uſually met there to worſhip GOD.

4. They continued *in Prayers*. *After* the Spirit was pour'd out, as well as *before* while they were waiting for him, they continued inſtant in Prayer; for Prayer will never be ſuperſeded till it comes to be ſwallow'd up in everlaſting Praiſe. *Breaking of Bread*, comes in between the *Word* and *Prayer*, for it has a Reference to both, and is a Help to both. The Lord's-Supper is a Sermon to the Eye, and a Confirmation of GOD's Word to us; and it is an Encouragement to our Prayers, and a ſolemn Expreſſion of the Aſcent of our Souls to GOD.

5. They abounded in *Thankſgiving*; Were continually *praiſing GOD*, v. 47. That ſhould have a Part in every Prayer, and not be crouded into a Corner. They that have receiv'd the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, will be much in Praiſe.

Secondly, They were loving one to another, and very kind; Their Charity was as eminent as their Piety, and their joyning together in Holy Ordinances knit their Hearts to each other, and very much endear'd them to one another.

1. They had frequent Meetings for Chriſtian Converſe, *v.* 44. *All that believed were together*; Not all thoſe Thouſands in one Place: That was impracticable; But, as Dr. *Lightfoot* explains it, they kept together in ſeveral Companies, or Congregations, according as their Languages, Nations or other References brought them, and kept them together. And this joyning together, becauſe it was a-part from thoſe that believed not, and becauſe it was in the ſame Profeſſion and Practice of the Duties of Religion, they are ſaid to be together, ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ, They aſſociated together, and ſo both expreſs'd and increas'd their mutual Love.

2. They had *all Things common*; Perhaps, they had common Tables, as the *Spartans* of Old, for Familiarity, Temperence, and freedom of Converſation; they *eat together*, that they who had much might have the leſs, and ſo be kept from the Temptations of Abundance; and they who had little might have the more, and ſo be kept from the Temptations of Want and Poverty. Or, there was ſuch a Concern for one another, and ſuch a Readineſs to help one another as there was Occaſion, that it might be ſaid, they had *all Things common*, according to the Law of Friendſhip; One wanted not what Another had; for he might have it for the aſking.

3. They were very *chearful*, and very *generous* in the Uſe of what they had, Beſides the Religion that was in their ſacred Feaſts, their *breaking Bread from Houſe to Houſe*, a great deal of it appear'd in their common Meals; they did *eat their Meat with Gladneſs and Singleneſs of Heart*. They brought the Comforts of *GOD's Table* along with them to *their own*, which had two good Effects upon them: (1.) It made them very *pleaſant*, and enlarg'd their Hearts in holy *Joy*; they did eat their Bread with Joy, and *drank their Wine with a merry Heart*, as knowing that *God now accepted their Works*. None have ſuch Cauſe to be chearful as good Chriſtians have; 'tis pity but that they ſhould always have Hearts to be ſo. (2.) It made them very *liberal* to their poor Brethren, and enlarg'd their Hearts in Charity. They did *eat their Meat with with ſingleneſs of Heart*, ἐν ἀφελότητι καρδίας with *Liberality* of Heart; (ſo ſome) They did not eat their Morſels alone, but bid the Poor welcome to their Tables, not grudgingly, but with all the hearty Freedom imaginable. *Note*, It becomes Chriſtians to be open hearted, and open-handed, and in every good Work to ſow plentifully, as thoſe on whom GOD hath ſow'd plentifully, and that hope to reap ſo.

4. They raiſ'd a Fund for Charity, *v.* 45. They *ſold their Poſſeſſions and Goods*, ſome ſold their Lands and Houſes, others their Stocks and the Furniture of their Houſes and *parted* the Money to their Brethren, *as every Man had need*. This was not to deſtroy *Property*, (as Mr. *Baxter* ſaith) but *Selfiſhneſs*. Herein probably they had an Eye to the Command which Chriſt gave to the rich Man, as a Teſt of his Sincerity, *Sell that thou haſt, and give to the Poor*. Not that this was intended for and Example to be a conſtant binding Rule, as if all Chriſtians, in all Places and Ages, were bound to ſell their Eſtates, and give away the Money in Charity: for St. *Paul*'s Epiſtles after this, often ſpeak of the Diſtinction of Rich and Poor, and Chriſt hath ſaid, that *the Poor we have always with us*, and ſhall have, and the Rich muſt be always doing them good out of the Rents Iſſues and Profits of their Eſtates, which they diſable themſelves to do, if they ſell them and gave them away all at once. But here the Caſe was extraordinary. (1.) They were under no Obligation of a Divine Command to do this, as appears by what *Peter* ſaid to *Ananias*, chap. v. 4. *Was it not in thine own Power*? But it was a very commendable Inſtance of their Raiſedneſs above the World, their Contempt of it, their Aſſurance of another World, their Love to their Brethren, their Compaſſion to the Poor, and their great Zeal for the Encouraging of Chriſtianity, and the Nurſing of it in its Infancy. The Apoſtles left all to follow Chriſt, and were to give themſelves wholly to the Word and Prayer, and ſomething muſt be done for their Maintenance; ſo that this extraordinary Liberality, was like that of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs towards the Building of the Tabernacle, which needed to be reſtrain'd, *Exod.* xxxvi. 5, 6. Our Rule is, To give according as GOD hath bleſſed us; yet in ſuch an extraordinary Caſe as this, thoſe are to be praiſed who give *beyond their Power*, 2 *Cor.* viii. 3. (2.) They were *Jews* that did this, and they who believ'd Chriſt muſt believe that the Jewiſh Nation ſhould ſhortly be deſtroy'd, and an End put to the Poſſeſſion of Eſtates and Goods in it, and in the Belief of that they ſold them for the preſent Service of Chriſt and his Church.

Thirdly, GOD own'd them, and gave them ſignal Tokens of his Preſence with them, *v.* 43. *many Wonders and Signs were done by the Apoſtles* of diverſe Sorts, which confirm'd their Doctrine, and unconteſtably prov'd that it was from GOD. They that could work Miracles, could have maintain'd themſelves and the Poor that were among them miraculouſly, as Chriſt fed Thouſands with a little Food; but it was as much for the Glory of GOD that it ſhould be done by a Miracle of Grace, inclining People to ſell their Eſtates to do it, as if it had been done by a Miracle in Nature.

But the Lord's giving them Power to work Miracles was not all he did for them, He *added to the Church daily*. The Word in their Mouths *did wonders*, and GOD bleſs'd their Endeavours for the Increaſe of the Number of Believers. *Note*, It is GOD's Work to add Souls to the Church; And it is a great Comfort both to Miniſters and Chriſtians to ſee it.

Fourthly, The People were influenc'd by it; they that were without, the Standers by, that were Spectators.

1. They *fear'd them*, and had Veneration for them, *v.* 43. *Fear came upon every Soul*, *i.e.* upon very many, who ſaw the *Wonders* and *Signs* done by the Apoſtles, and were afraid leſt their not being reſpected as they ſhould be, would bring Deſolation upon their Nation. The Common People ſtood in awe of them, as *Herod* fear'd *John*: Tho' they had nothing of external Pomp, to command external Reſpect, as the *Scribes long Robes* gain'd them the *Greetings in the Market-places*, yet they had Abundance *Spiritual* in them that was truly honourable, which poſſeſs'd Men with an *inward* Reverence for them. Fear came upon *every Soul*; the *Souls* of People were ſtrangely influen'd by their *awful* Preaching and Living.

2. They *favour'd them*; Tho' we have Reaſon to think, there were thoſe that deſpis'd them and hated them; we are ſure the *Phariſees* and Chief Prieſts did; yet far the greater Part of the Common People had a Kindneſs for them; they *had favour with all the People*. Chriſt was ſo violently run upon, and run down by a *pack'd Mobb*, which cry'd, *Crucify him, crucify him*; that one would think his Doctrine and Followers were never likely to have an Intereſt in the Common People any more. And yet here we find them *in favour with them all*; by which it appears that their Proſecuting Chriſt, was a Sort or a Force put upon them by the Artifices of the Prieſts; now they return'd to their Wits, to their right Mind. *Note*, Undiſſembled Piety and Charity, will command Reſpect; and Chearfulneſs in ſerving GOD, will recommend Religion to thoſe that are without. Some read it, *They had Charity to all the People*; χάριν ἔχοντες πρὸς ὅλον τ̃ λαὸν they did not confine their Charity to thoſe of their own Community but it was *Catholick* and *Extenſive*; and this recommended them very much.

3. They *fell over* to them; Some or other were *daily* coming in, tho' not ſo many as the firſt Day; and they were ſuch as *ſhould be ſaved*. *Note*, Thoſe that GOD has deſign'd for Eternal Salvation, ſhall one Time or other be effectually brought to Chriſt; and thoſe that are brought to Chriſt, are *added to the Church* in a Holy Covenant by Baptiſm, and in a Holy Communion by other Ordinances.

CHAP. III.

In this Chapter we have a Miracle *and a* Sermon: *The Miracle wrought to make way for the Sermon, and to confirm the Doctrine that was to be preach'd, and to make way for it into Minds of the People, and then the Sermon to explain the Miracle, and to ſow the Ground which by it was* broken up. (1.) *The Miracle, was the Healing of a Man that was lame from his Birth, with a Word ſpeaking,* v. 1—8. *And the Impreſſion which this made upon the People,* v. 9—11. (2.) *The Scope of the Sermon which was preach'd hereupon, was to bring People to Chriſt, to repent of their Sin in crucifying him,* v. 12—19. *And to believe in him now he was glorified, and to comply with the Father's Deſign in glorifying him,* v. 20—26. *The former Part of the Diſcourſe opens the Wound, the latter applies the Remedy.*

NOW Peter and John went up together into the temple, at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth *hour*. 2. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entred into the temple. 3 Who ſeeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked an alms. 4 And Peter faſtening his eyes upon him, with John, ſaid, Look on us. 5. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive ſomething of them. 6 Then Peter ſaid, Silver and Gold have I none; but ſuch as I have give I thee: In the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, riſe up and walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and lift *him* up; and immediately his feet and ancle-bones received ſtrength. 8 And he leaping up, ſtood, and walked, and entred with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praiſing God. 9 And all the people ſaw him walking and praiſing God. 10. And they knew that it was he that ſate for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. 11 And as the lame man which was healed, held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondring.

We are told in general, *chap.* ii. 43. That *many Signs and Wonders were done by the Apoſtles*, which are not written in this Book; but here we have one given us for an Inſtance. As they wrought Miracles not upon every Body, as every Body had Occaſion for them, but as the Holy Spirit gave Direction, ſo as to anſwer the End of their Commiſſion; ſo all the Miracles they did work, are not *written in this Book*; but ſuch only are recorded as the Holy Ghoſt thought fit to anſwer the End of this ſacred Hiſtory.

Firſt, The Perſons by whoſe Miniſtry this Miracle was wrought, were *Peter* and *John*, Two principal Men among the Apoſtles; they were ſo in Chriſt's Time, one Speaker of the Houſe for the moſt part, the other Favourite of the Maſter; and they continue ſo; when, upon the Converſion of Thouſands, the Church was divided into ſeveral Societies, perhaps *Peter* and *John* preſided in that which *Luke* aſſociated with, and therefore he is more particular in recording what they ſaid and did, as afterwards what *Paul* ſaid and did, when he attended him: Both the one and the other being deſigned for a Specimen of what the other Apoſtles did.

Peter and *John* had each of them a Brother among the Twelve, with which they were coupled when they were ſent out; yet now they ſeem to be knit together more cloſely than either of them to his Brother; for the Bond of Friendſhip is ſometimes ſtronger than that of Relation; there is a *Friend* that *ſticks cloſer than a Brother*. *Peter* and *John* ſeem to have had a peculiar Intimacy after Chriſt's Reſurrection more than before, *Joh.* xx. 2. The Reaſon of which, (if I may have Liberty to conjecture) might be this; That *John*, a Diſciple made up of Love, was more compaſſionate to *Peter* upon his Fall and Repentance, and more tender of him in his *bitter Weeping* for his Sin, than any other of the Apoſtles were, and more ſollicitous to reſtore him with the *Spirit of Meekneſs*; which made him very dear to *Peter* ever after: And it was a good Evidence of *Peter's* Acceptance with God upon his Repentance, that Chriſt's Favourite was made his Boſom Friend: *David* pray'd after his Fall, *Let them that fear thee turn unto me*, Pſal. cxix. 79.

Secondly, The Time and Place are here ſet down:

1. It was in *the Temple*, whither *Peter* and *John* went up *together*; becauſe it was the Place of Concourſe, there were the Shoals of Fiſh, among whom the Net of the Goſpel was to be *caſt*, eſpecially during the Days of the *Pentecoſt*, within the compaſs of which we may ſuppoſe this to have happen'd. *Note*, 'Tis good to go up to the Temple, to attend on publick Ordinances; and it is comfortable to go up *together* to the Temple, *I was glad when they ſaid unto me, Let us go* — The beſt Society is Society in worſhipping of GOD.

2. It was *at the Hour of Prayer*, one of the Hours of publick Worſhip, commonly appointed and obſerv'd among the *Jews*; *Time* and *Place* are two neceſſary Circumſtances of every Action, which muſt be determin'd by Conſent, as is moſt convenient for Edification with Reference to publick Worſhip; There muſt be a *Houſe of Prayer*, and an *Hour of Prayer*; the *ninth Hour*, that is, Three a Clock in the Afternoon was one of the Hours of Prayer among the *Jews*: Nine in the Morning, and Twelve at Noon, were the other two. See *Pſal.* lv. 17. *Dan.* vi. 10. It is of Uſe for private Chriſtians ſo far to have their Hours of Prayer, as may ſerve, tho' not to *bind* yet to *mind* Conſcience; Every thing is *beautiful in its Seaſon*.

Thirdly, The Patient is here deſcrib'd, on whom this miraculous Cure was wrought, *v.* 2. He was a poor lame Beggar, at the Temple-Gate.

1. He was a *Cripple*, not by Accident ſo, but born ſo; He was *lame from his Mother's Womb*, as it ſhould ſeem by a paralytick Diſtemper, which weaken'd his Limbs; for it is ſaid in the Deſcription of his Cure, *v.* 7. That *his Feet and Ancle-bones receiv'd ſtrength*. Some ſuch piteous Caſes now and then there are, which we ought to be affected with, and look upon with Compaſſion; and which are deſign'd to ſhew us what we all are by Nature ſpiritually; *without ſtrength*, lame from our Birth, unable to *work* or *walk* in GOD's Service.

2. He was a *Beggar*; being unable to Work for his Living, he muſt live upon Alms; ſuch are *God's Poor*: He was *laid daily* by his Friends at *one of the Gates of the Temple*, a miſerable Spectacle, unable to do any thing elſe for himſelf but to *ask Alms of them that enter'd into the Temple*, or came out. There was a *Concourſe*, and a Concourſe of devout good People, from whom Charity might be expected, and a Concourſe of ſuch People when it might be hoped they were in the *beſt frame*, and there he was *laid*. Thoſe that need and cannot work, muſt not be aſham'd to *beg*. And he would not have been laid there, and laid *daily* there if he had not been us'd to meet with Supplies, daily Supplies there. *Note*, Our *Prayers* and our *Alms* ſhould go together; *Cornelius*'s did *Acts* x. 4. Objects of Charity ſhould be in a particular manner welcome to us when we go up to the Temple to pray; 'tis pity that common Beggars at Church-doors ſhould any of them be of ſuch a Character as to diſcourage Charity; but they ought not always to be over-look'd, ſome there are ſurely that merit Regard; and better feed Ten Drones, yea, and ſome Waſps, than let One Bee ſtarve. The *Gate of the Temple* at which he was laid, is here nam'd, it was call'd *Beautiful*, for the extraordinary Splendour and Magnificence of it. Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves, that this was the Gate that led out of the Court of the *Gentiles* into that of the *Jews*, and ſuppoſes that the Cripple would beg only of the *Jews*, as diſdaining to ask any Thing of the *Gentiles*. But Dr. *Whitby* takes it to be at the firſt Entrance into the Temple, and beautify'd ſo ſumptuouſly as became the Frontiſpiece of that Place where the Divine Majeſty vouchſafed to dwell; and it was no diminution to the Beauty of this Gate, that a poor Man lay there *begging*.

3. He beg'd of *Peter* and *John*, v. 3. beg'd *an Alms*, that was the utmoſt he expected from them, who had the Reputation of being caritable Men, and who, tho' they had not *much*, yet did Good with what they had. It was not many Weeks ago that the *Blind and the Lame* came to Chriſt in the Temple, and were heal'd there, *Matth.* xxi. 14. And why might not he have ask'd more than an Alms, if he new that *Peter* and *John* were Chriſt's Meſſengers, and preach'd and wrought Miracles in his Name. But he had that done for him which he look'd not for; *ask'd an Alms* and had a Cure.

Fourthly, We have here the Method of the Cure:

1. His *Expectations* were *rais'd*. *Peter* inſtead of turning his Eyes *from him*, as many do from Objects of Charity, turn'd his Eyes *to him*, nay, he *faſten'd his Eyes upon him*, that his Eye might affect his Heart with Compaſſion towards him, *v.* 4. *John* did ſo too, for they were both guided by one and the ſame Spirit, and concur'd in this Miracle, they ſaid *Look on us*. Our Eye muſt be ever towards the LORD, the Eye of our Mind, and in token of that the Eye of the Body may properly be fix'd on thoſe whom He employs as the Miniſters of his Grace. This Man needed not be bidden twice to *look on* the Apoſtles; for he juſtly thought this gave him Cauſe to *expect* that he ſhould *receive ſomething from them*, and therefore he *gave heed to them*, v. 5. *Note*, We muſt come to GOD both to attend on his Word, and to apply ourſelves to him in Prayer, with Hearts fix'd, and Expectations rais'd. Look up to Heaven, and expect to receive Benefit by that which GOD ſpeaks from thence, and an Anſwer of Peace to the Prayers ſent up thither. *I will direct my Prayer unto Thee and will look up*.

2. His Expectations *of an Alms* were *balk'd*; *Peter ſaid, Silver and Gold have I none*, and therefore none to give thee; yet he intimates that if he had any, he would give him an Alms, not *Braſs*, but Silver or Gold. *Note*, It is not often that Chriſt's Friends and Favourites have abundance of the Wealth of this World, the Apoſtles were very poor, had but juſt enough for themſelves, and no overplus; *Peter* and *John* had Abundance of Money laid at their Feet, but that was appropriated to the Maintenance of the Poor of the Church, and they would not convert any of it to their own Uſe, nor diſpoſe of it otherwiſe than according to the Intention of the Donors. Publick Truſts ought to be ſtrictly and faithfully obſerv'd. 2. Many that are well inclin'd to Works of Charity, yet are not in a Capacity of doing any thing conſiderable, while others that have wherewithal to do much, have not a Heart to do any thing.

3. His Expectations, notwithſtanding, were quite *out done*; *Peter* had no Money to give him; But (1.) *He had* that which was *better*, ſuch an Intereſt in Heaven, ſuch a Power from Heaven, as to be able to cure his Diſeaſe. *Note*, Thoſe who are poor in the World, may yet be rich, very rich in ſpiritual Gifts, Graces, and Comforts; certainly there is that we are capable of which is infinitely better than *Silver* and *Gold*; the *Merchandiſe* and *Gain* of it *better*, Job. xxviii. 12, *&c.* Prov. iii. 14, *&c.* (2.) He *gave him* that which was better, the Cure of his Diſeaſe, which he would gladly have given a great deal of *Silver and Gold for*, if he had had it, and it could have been ſo obtain'd. This would enable him to work for his Living, ſo that he ſhould not need to beg any more, nay, he ſhould *have*

to give to them that needed, and it *is more bleſſed to give than to receive.* A miraculous Cure would be a greater Inſtance of God's Favour, and would put a greater Honour upon him, than Thouſands of Gold and Silver could. *Obſerve,* When *Peter* had no *Silver* and *Gold* to give, yet, (ſaid he) *ſuch as I have give I thee. Note,* Thoſe may and ought to be otherwiſe *charitable* and *helpful* to the Poor, that have not wherewithal to *give* in Charity; they that have not *Silver* and *Gold,* have their Limbs and Senſes, and with theſe may be ſerviceable to the Blind and Lame, and Sick, which if they be not as there is Occaſion, neither would they give to them if they had *Silver* and *Gold. As every one has receiv'd the Gift, ſo let him miniſter* it.

Let us now ſee how the Cure was wrought:

1. Chriſt *ſent his Word, and healed him,* Pſ. cvii. 20. for Healing Grace is given by the Word of Chriſt; that's the Vehicle of the Healing Virtue deriv'd from Chriſt. Chriſt ſpoke Cures by himſelf, the Apoſtles ſpake them *in his Name. Peter* bids a lame Man *riſe up and walk*; which would have been a Banter upon him, if he had not premis'd *in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth*; I ſay it by *Warrant* from him, and it ſhall be done by *Power* from him, and all the Glory and Praiſe of it ſhall be aſcrib'd to him. He calls Chriſt *Jeſus of Nazareth,* which was a Name of Reproach, to intimate, that the Indignities done him on Earth, ſerv'd but as a Foil to his Glories now he was in Heaven. Give him what Name you will, call him if you will in Scorn *Jeſus of Nazareth,* in *that* Name, you ſhall ſee Wonders done; for becauſe he *humbled himſelf,* thus highly was he exalted. He bids the Cripple *riſe up and walk*; which doth not prove that he had Power in himſelf to do it, but proves, if he attempt to *riſe and walk,* and in a Senſe of his own Impotency, *depend upon* a Divine Power to enable him to do it, he ſhall be *enabled*; and by *riſing* and *walking,* he muſt evidence that that Power has wrought upon him; and then let him take the Comfort, and let GOD have the Praiſe. Thus it is in the Healing of our Souls, that are ſpiritually impotent.

2. Peter *lent his hand and helped him,* v. 7. *He took him by the Righ Hand* in the ſame Name in which he had ſpoken to him to *Ariſe and walk,* and *lift him up.* Not that this could contribute any thing to his Cure, but it was a *Sign,* plainly intimating the Help he ſhould receive from GOD if he *exerted himſelf,* as he was bidden. When GOD *by his Word* commands us to *riſe,* and *walk* in the Way of his Commandments; if we mix Faith with that Word, and lay our Souls under the Power of it, He will give his Spirit to *take us by the Hand* and *lift us up.* If we ſet ourſelves to do what we can. GOD has promis'd his Grace to enable us to do what we cannot: And by that Promiſe we *partake of a new Nature*; and that Grace ſhall not be in vain; it was not here; *his Feet and Ancle Bones receiv'd Strength*; which they had not done, if he had not attempted to riſe, and been help'd up; he doth his Part, and *Peter* doth his, and yet it is Chriſt that doth all: 'tis He that *puts Strength into him.* As the Bread multiply'd in the Breaking, and the Water was turn'd into Wine in the Pouring out, ſo Strength was given to the Cripple's Feet in his ſtirring them, and uſing them.

Fifthly, Here's the Impreſſion which this Cure made upon the Patient himſelf, which we may beſt conceive of, if we put our Soul into his Soul's ſtead.

1. He *leap'd up,* in Obedience to the Command, *Ariſe,* He found in himſelf ſuch a Degree of Strength in his *Feet* and *Anclebones,* that he did not *ſteal up* fair and ſoftly, with Fear and Trembling, as weak People do when they begin to recover Strength; but he *ſtarted up* as One refreſh'd with Sleep, boldly, and with great Agility, and as one that queſtion'd not his own Strength. The Incomes of Strength were *ſudden,* and he no leſs *ſudden* in ſhewing them. He *leap'd,* as One glad to quit the Bed or Pad of Straw on which he had lain lo long *lame.*

2. He *ſtood* and *walk'd*; he *ſtood* without either leaning or trembling, ſtood ſtraight up, and *walked* without a ſtaff, he trod *ſtrongly,* and mov'd *ſteddily*; and this was to manifeſt the Cure, and that it was a thorough Cure. *Note,* Thoſe who have had Experience of the working of Divine Grace upon them, ſhould *evidence* what they have *experienc'd.* Has GOD put Strength *into us,* let us *ſtand* before him in the Exerciſes of Devotion, let us *walk* before him, in all the Inſtances of a religious Converſation. Let us *ſtand up* reſolutely for Him, and *walk* chearfully with Him and both in Strength deriv'd and receiv'd from Him.

3. He *Held Peter and John,* v. 11. We need not ask, why he held them? I believe he ſcarce knew himſelf; but it was in a Tranſport of Joy that he embrac'd them as the beſt Benefactors he ever met with, and hung upon them to a Degree of Rudeneſs; he would not let them go forward, but would have them ſtay with him while he publiſh'd to all about him, what GOD had done for him by them. Thus he teſtify'd his affection to them, he held them, and would not let them go. Some ſuggeſt, that he clung to them for fear leaſt if they ſhould leave him, his Lameneſs ſhould return. Thoſe whom GOD hath heal'd, love them whom he made Inſtruments of their Healing, and ſee the Need of their further Help.

4. He *enter'd with them into the Temple.* His ſtrong Affection to them *held them,* but it ſhould not hold them ſo faſt as to keep *them* out of the Temple whither they were going to preach Chriſt. We ſhould never ſuffer our ſelves to be diverted by the moſt affectionate Kindneſſes of our Friends, from going in the Way of our Duty. But if they will not *ſtay with him,* he is reſolv'd to *go with them,* and the rather, becauſe they are going *into the Temple,* whence he had been ſo long kept by his Weakneſs and his Begging. The impotent Man whom Chriſt cured, was preſently *found in the Temple,* Joh. v. 14. He *went into the Temple,* not only to offer up his Praiſes and Thankſgivings to God, but to hear more from the Apoſtles of that *Jeſus* in whoſe Name he had been heal'd. Thoſe that have experienc'd the Power of Chriſt, ſhould earneſtly deſire to grow in their Acquaintance with Chriſt.

5. He was there *walking, and leaping, and praiſing God. Note,* The Strength GOD has given us both in Mind and Body, ſhould be made uſe of to his Praiſe, and we ſhould ſtudy how to honour him with it: Thoſe that are heal'd *in his Name,* muſt *walk up and down in his Name,* and in his Strength, *Zech.* x. 12. This Man as ſoon as he could leap, leap'd for Joy in GOD, and prais'd him. Here was that Scripture fulfill'd, *Iſa.* xxxv. 6. *Then ſhall the lame Man leap as a Hart.* Now this man was newly cured he was in this Exceſs of Joy and Thankfulneſs: All *true* Converts *walk* and praiſe GOD; but perhaps *young Converts leap* more in his Praiſes.

Sixthly, How *the People* that were Eye-witneſſes of this Miracle were influenc'd by it, we are next told,

1. They were intirely ſatisfy'd in the Truth of the Miracle, and had nothing to object againſt it. They knew it *was he* that *ſate begging at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple,* v. 10. He had ſitten there ſo long, that they all knew him; and for that Reaſon he was choſen to be the Veſſel of this Mercy: Now they were not ſo perverſe as to make any Doubt whether he was the ſame Man, as the *Phariſees* had queſtion'd concerning the Blind Man that Chriſt cured, *John* iv. 11. They now ſaw him *walking and praiſing God,* v. 9. and perhaps took notice of a change in his Mind; for he was now as loud in praiſing GOD, as he had us'd to be in begging Relief. The beſt Evidence that it was a compleat Cure was, that he prais'd GOD for it. Mercies are then perfected when they are ſanctify'd.

2. They admir'd at it; they were *fill'd with Wonder and Amazement,* v. 10. *Greatly wonder'd,* v. 11. They were in an *Extaſy,* There ſeems to be this Effect of the Pouring out of the Spirit, that the People, at leaſt thoſe in *Jeruſalem,* were much more affected with the Miracles the Apoſtles wrought, than they had been with thoſe of the ſame Kind that had been wrought by Chriſt himſelf, and this was in Order to the Miracles anſwering their End.

3. They gather'd about *Peter* and *John*; *All the People ran together unto them in Solomon's Porch.* Some only to gratify their Curioſity with the Sight of Men that had ſuch Power; others with a Deſire to hear them preach, concluding, that their Doctrine muſt needs be of Divine Original, which thus had a Divine Ratification. They flock'd to Them in *Solomon's Porch,* a Part of the Court of the *Gentiles,* where *Solomon* had built the outer Porch of the Temple. Or, it was ſome Cloyſters or Piazzas which *Herod* had erected upon the ſame Foundation which *Solomon* had built that ſtately Porch upon, that bore his Name; *Herod* being ambitious herein to be a ſecond *Solomon.* Here the People met to ſee this great Sight.

12. And when Peter ſaw it, he anſwered unto the people, Ye men of Iſrael, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye ſo earneſtly on us, as though by our own power and holineſs we had made this man to walk? 13 The God of Abraham and of Iſaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified his Son Jeſus; whom ye deliver'd up, and denied him in the preſence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go. 14 But ye denied the holy one, and the juſt, and deſired a murderer to be granted unto you. 15 And killed the prince of life, whom God hath raiſed from the dead; whereof we are witneſſes. 16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man ſtrong, whom ye ſee and know: yea, the faith which is by him, hath given him this perfect ſoundneſs in the preſence of you all. 17 And now brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did *it,* as *did* alſo your rulers. 18 But thoſe things which God before had ſhewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer; he hath ſo fulfilled. 19 Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out, when the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord. 20 And he ſhall ſend Jeſus Chriſt, which before was preached unto you: 21 Whom

the heavens muſt receive, until the times of the reſtitution of all things, which God hath ſpoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets ſince the world began. 22 For Moſes truly ſaid unto the fathers, A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him ſhall ye hear in all things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you. 23. And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* every ſoul which will not hear that prophet, ſhall be deſtroyed from among the people. 24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and thoſe that follow after, as many as have ſpoken, have likewiſe foretold of theſe days. 25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, ſaying unto Abraham, And in thy ſeed ſhall all the kindreds of the earth be bleſſed. 26 Unto you firſt, God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

We have here the Sermon which *Peter* preach'd after he had cur'd the lame Man. *When* Peter *ſaw* it. (1.) *When he ſaw* the People got together in a Croud, he took that Opportunity to preach Chriſt to them, eſpecially the Temple being the Place of their Concourſe, and *Solomon's Porch* there, let them come and hear a more excellent Wiſdom than *Solomon*'s, for behold a *greater than* Solomon *is here* preach'd. (2.) *When he ſaw* the People affected with the Miracle, and fill'd with Admiration, then he ſow'd the Goſpel Seed in the Ground, which was thus broken up and prepar'd to receive it. (3.) *When he ſaw* the People ready to adore him and *John*, he ſtept in immediately and diverted their Reſpects from them, that they might be deredted to Chriſt only; to this he *anſwer'd* preſently, as *Paul* and *Barnabas* at *Lyſtra*, ſee *ch.* xiv. 14. 15.

Firſt, He humbly diſclaims the Honour of the Miracle, as not due to them, who were only the Miniſters of Chriſt, or Inſtruments in his Hand for the doing of it. The Doctrines they preach'd were not of their own Invention, nor were the Seals of it their own, but his whoſe the Doctrines were. He addreſſeth himſelf to them as Men of *Iſrael*, Men to whom pertain'd not only the *Law and the Promiſes*, but the Goſpel and the Performances, and who were nearly intereſted in the preſent Diſpenſation. Two Things he ask's them,

1. Why they were ſo *ſurpriz'd* at the Miracles it ſelf? *why marvel ye at this*? 'Twas indeed marvellous, and they juſtly wonder'd at it, but it was no more than what Chriſt had done many a Time, and they had not duly regarded it, or been affected with it. 'Twas but a little before that Chriſt had rais'd *Lazarus* from the Dead, and why ſhould this then ſeem ſo ſtrange? *Note*, Stupid People think that ſtrange now which might have been familiar to them, if it had not been their own Fault. Chriſt had lately riſen from the Dead Himſelf? Why did they not marvel at that? Why were they not convinc'd by that?

2. Why they gave ſo much of the Praiſe of it to them, that were only the Inſtruments of it; *Why look ye ſo earneſtly on us?* (1.) It was certain, they had made this *Man to walk*, by which it appear'd that the Apoſtles not only were ſent of GOD, but were ſent to be Bleſſings to the World, Benefactors to Mankind, and were ſent to heal ſick and diſtemper'd Souls, that were ſpiritually lame and impotent, to ſet broken Bones, and make them rejoyce. (2.) Yet they did not do it by any *Power* or *Holineſs* of their own; 'twas not done by any *Might* of their own, any Skill they had in Phyſick, or Surgery, or any Virtue in their Word; the Power they did it by was wholly deriv'd from Chriſt; Nor it was it done by any *Merit* of their own: The Power which Chriſt gave them to do it they had not *deſerv'd*, 'twas not by their own *Holineſs*, for as they were *weak Things*, ſo they were fooliſh Things that Chriſt choſe to employ; *Peter* was *a ſinful Man*. What Holineſs had *Judas*, yet he wrought Miracles in Chriſt's Name? What Holineſs any of them had, it was wrought *in* them, and they could not pretend to merit by it. (3.) It was the Peoples fault that they attributed it to their Power and Holineſs, and accordingly look'd at them. *Note*, The Inſtruments of GOD's Favour to us, tho' they muſt be reſpected yet muſt not be idoliz'd; we muſt take heed of reckoning that to be done by the Inſtrument, which God is the Author of. (4.) It was the Praiſe of *Peter* and *John* that they would not take the Honour of this Miracle to themſelves, but carefully tranſmitted it to Chriſt. Uſeful Men muſt ſee to it that they be very humble. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name give Glory.* Every Crown muſt be caſt at the Feet of Chriſt; *not I, but the Grace of God with me.*

Secondly, He preacheth *Chriſt* to them, that was his Buſineſs, that he might lead them into Obedience to Chriſt.

1. He preacheth *Chriſt* as the true *Meſſiah*, promis'd to the Fathers, *v.* 13. for (1.) He is *Jeſus the Son of God*; Tho' they had lately condemn'd Chriſt as a Blaſphemer, for ſaying he was the Son of GOD, yet *Peter* avows it, He is *His Son Jeſus*, to him dear as a Son, to us, *Jeſus* a Saviour. (2.) GOD hath *glorified* him in raiſing him up to be King, Prieſt and Prophet of his Church; he glorified him *in his Life*, and *in his Death*, as well as in his Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion. (3.) He has glorified him as *the God of our Fathers*, whom he names with reſpect, for they were great *Names* with the *Men* of *Iſrael*, and juſtly, the *God of Abraham, of Iſaac and of Jacob*; GOD ſent him into the World purſuant to the Promiſes made to thoſe Patriarchs, that *in their Seed the Families of the Earth ſhould be bleſs'd*, and the Covenant made with them that GOD would be *a God to them and their Seed*. The Apoſtles call the Patriarchs their *Fathers*, and GOD, the GOD of thoſe Patriarchs from whom the *Jews* were deſcended, to intimate to them that they had no evil Deſign upon the Jewiſh Nation, that they ſhould look upon them with a jealous Eye, but had a value and Concern for it, and were hereby well-wiſhers to it, and the Goſpel they preach'd was the Revelation of the Mind and Will of the GOD of *Abraham*. See *Acts* xxvi. 7, 22. *Luke* i. 72, 73.

2. He chargeth them flat and plain with the Murther of this Jeſus, as he had done before. (1.) *You deliver'd Him* up to your Chief Prieſts and Elders, the repreſentative Body of the Nation, and you of the common People were influenc'd by them, to clamour againſt him, as if he had been a publick Grievance (2.) You deny'd *him*, and you diſown'd him, would not have him then to be your King, could not look upon him as the *Meſſiah*, becauſe he came not in external Pomp and Power; *you deny'd him in the preſence of* Pilate, renounc'd all the Expectations of your Church in the Preſence of the Roman Governour, who juſtly laugh'd at you for it; you deny'd him *againſt the Face of* Pilate, ſo Dr. *Hammond*, in Defiance of his Reaſonings with you. *Pilate* had *determin'd to let Him go*, but the People oppos'd it, and overrul'd him. You were worſe than *Pilate*, for he would have releas'd Him, if you had let him follow his own Judgment. You *deny'd the Holy One, and the Juſt* who had approv'd himſelf ſo, and all the Malice of his Perſecutors could not *diſprove* it. The *Holineſs* and *Juſtice* of the Lord Jeſus, which is ſomething more than his Innocency, was a great Aggravation of the Sin of thoſe that put him to Death. (3.) *You deſir'd a murtherer* to be releas'd and Chriſt crucified; as if *Barabbas* had deſerv'd better at your Hands than the Lord Jeſus; than which a greater Affront could not be put upon him. (4.) You *kill'd the Prince of Life*. Obſerve the Antitheſis, you prefer'd a *Murtherer*, a Deſtroyer of Life; and deſtroy'd the *Saviour*, the Author of Life. *You kill'd* Him who was ſent to be to you *the Prince of Life*, and ſo not only *forſook*, but rebelled againſt *your own Mercies*. You did an *ungrateful* Thing in taking away *his Life* who would have been *your Life*. You did a *fooliſh* Thing, to think you could conquer the *Prince of Life*, who has Life in himſelf, and wou'd ſoon *reſume* the Life he *reſign'd*.

3. He atteſts his Reſurrection as before, *ch.* ii. 32. you thought the Prince of Life might be depriv'd of his Life as any other Prince might be depriv'd of his Dignity and Dominion, but you found your ſelves miſtaken, for *God raiſed him from the Dead*. So that in putting him to Death you fought againſt GOD, and were baffled. GOD *raiſed him from the Dead*, and thereby ratify'd his Demands, and Confirm'd his Doctrine, and roll'd away all the Reproach of His Sufferings: And for the Truth of his Reſurrection we are all Witneſſes.

4. He aſcribes the Cure of this impotent Man to the Power of Chriſt. *v.* 16. *His Name through Faith in his Name*, in that Diſcovery which he hath made of himſelf, *has made this Man ſtrong*. He repeats it again, *The Faith which is by him hath given him this ſoundneſs*. Here, (1.) He appeals to themſelves concerning the Truth of the Miracle; The Man on whom it was wrought is one whom *ye ſee*, and *know*, and *have known*; He was not acquainted with *Peter* and *John* before, ſo that there was no Room to ſuſpect a Compact between them, but you know him to be a Cripple from a Child. The Miracles was wrought publickly, *in the preſence of you all*, not in a Corner, but in the Gate of the Temple, you ſee in what Manner is was done, ſo as that there could be no Juggle in it; you had Liberty to examine it immediately, and may yet. The Cure is compleat, 'tis a *perfect ſoundneſs*, you ſee the Man *walks* and *leaps*, as one that has no Remainder either of Weakneſs or Pain.

(2.) He acquaints them with the Power by which it was wrought. (1.) It is done by the *Name* of Chriſt, not meerly by naming it as a Spell or Charm, but it is done by us Profeſſors and Preachers of *His Name*, by virtue of a Commiſſion, and Inſtruction we have received from him, and a Power which he has inveſted us with., That Name which Chriſt has above every Name, His Authority, His Command has done it, as Writs run *in the King's Name* tho' 'tis an inferiour Officer that executes them. (2.) The Power of Chriſt is fetch'd in *through Faith in his Name*, a Confidence in Him, a Dependance on him, a believing Application to Him, and Expectation from Him, even *that Faith which is δι' αὐτȣ̃ be him*, which is of *His* Working, 'tis not of our ſelves, 'tis the Gift of Chriſt: And it is *for his Sake*, that He may have the Glory of it, for He is both the Author and Finiſher of our Faith. Dr. *Lightfoot* ſuggeſts, that Faith is twice nam'd in this Verſe, becauſe of the Apoſtles Faith in *doing* this Miracle, and the Cripple's Faith in *receiving* it; But I ſuppoſe it relates chiefly, if not only, to the former. They that wrought this Miracle by Faith derived Power from Chriſt to work it and therefore return'd all the Glory to Him. By this true and juſt Account of the Miracle, *Peter* both *confirm'd* the great *Goſpel Truth* they were to preach to the World, That Jeſus Chriſt is the Fountain of all Power and Grace, and the great Healer and Saviour; And *recommended* the great *Goſpel Duty* of Faith in Him, as the only Way of receiving Benefit by him; It explains likewiſe the great Goſpel Myſtery of our Salvation by Chriſt. 'Tis *His Name* that *juſtifies us*; that glorious Name of His, *The Lord our Righteouſneſs*, but we in particular are juſtified by that Name *through Faith* in it applying it to our ſelves. Thus doth *Peter* preach unto them *Jeſus* and *Him crucified*, as a faithful Friend of the Bridegroom, to whoſe Service and Honour he devoted all his Intereſt.

Thirdly, He encourageth them to hope that tho' they had been guilty of putting Chriſt to Death, yet they might find Mercy; He doth all he can to convince them, yet is careful not to drive them to Deſpair. The Guilt was very great, but

1. He mollifies their Crime by a candid Imputation of it to their *Ignorance*. Perhaps he perceiv'd by the Countenance of his Hearers, that they were ſtruck with an exceeding Horror, when he told them that they had killed the Prince of Life, and were ready either to *ſink down* or to *fly off*, and therefore he ſaw it needful to mitigate the Rigour of the Charge by calling them *Brethren*; and well might he call them ſo, for he had been himſelf a *Brother* with them in this Inquity; He had *deny'd the Holy One and the Juſt*, and ſwore he did not know Him; he did it by *Surprize*, and for your Parts I know, that *through Ignorance ye did it, as did alſo your Rulers*, v. 17. This was the Language of *Peter's* Charity, and teacheth us to make the beſt of thoſe whom we deſire to make better. *Peter* had ſearch'd the Wound to the Bottom, and now he begins to think of healing it up, in order to which 'tis neceſſary to beget in them a good Opinion of their Phyſician, and could any Thing be more winning than this? And that which bears him out in it, is that he has the Example of his Maſter's Praying for his Crucifiers, and pleading in their behalf, that they *knew not what they did*. And it is ſaid of the Rulers, that *if they had known*, they *would not have crucify'd the Lord of Glory*, ſee 1 *Cor.* ii. 8. Perhaps ſome of the Rulers, and of the People did therein rebell againſt the Light, and the Convictions of their own Conſciences, and did it through Malice: But the Generality went down the Stream, and did it *through Ignorance*; as *Paul* perſecuted the Church, *ignorantly and in unbelief*, 1 *Tim.* i. 13.

2. He mollifies the Effect of their Crime, the Death of the *Prince of Life*; this ſounds very dreadful, But it was according to the Scriptures, *v.* 18. the Predictions of which, tho' they did not neceſſitate their Sin, yet did neceſſitate his Sufferings; ſo he himſelf ſaith, *Thus it is written*, and *thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer*. You *did it through Ignorance* may be taken in this Senſe, you fulfilled the Scripture and did *not know it*; *God* by our Hands *hath fulfilled what he ſhew'd by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer*, that was his Deſign, in delivering him up to you, but you had Views of you own, and were altogether *ignorant* of that Deſign, you *meant not* ſo, neither did your Heart think ſo: GOD was fulfilling the Scripture when you were Gratifying your own Paſſions, *Obſerve*, it was not only *determin'd* in the ſecret Counſel of GOD, but *declar'd* to the World many Ages before, *by the Mouth* and Pen *of the Prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer* in order to the Accompliſhment of his Undertaking; And it was GOD himſelf that *ſhow'd it* by them, who will ſee that his Words be made good; what he *ſhew'd* he *fulfill'd*, he *ſo* fulfilled, ſo as he had ſhew'd punctually, and exactly without any Variation; Now tho' this is no Extenuation at all of their Sin in hating and perſecuting Chriſt to the Death, that ſtill appears exceeding ſinful; yet it was an Encouragement to them to repent and hope for Mercy upon their Repentance; not only becauſe in general GOD's gracious Deſigns were carried on by it; (and thus it agrees with the Encouragement *Joſeph* gave to his Brethren, when they thought their Offence againſt him almoſt unpardonable, *Fear not* ſaith he, *you thought evil againſt me*, but *God meant it unto good*, Gen. l. 15, 20.) but becauſe in particular the Death and Sufferings of Chriſt were for the Remiſſion of Sins, and the Ground of that Diſplay of Mercy he now encourag'd them to hope for.

Fouthly, He exhorts them all to *turn Chriſtians*, and aſſures them it would be unſpeakably for their Advantage to do ſo; 'Twould be the Making of them for ever. This is the Application of his Sermon.

1. He tells them what they muſt *believe*.

1. They muſt believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the *Promiſed Seed*, That Seed in which GOD had told *Abraham*, that *all the Kindreds of the Earth ſhould be bleſs'd*, v. 25. This refers to that Promiſe made to *Abraham*, Gen. xii. 3. which Promiſe was long ere it was fulfill'd, but now at length had its Accompliſhment, in this Jeſus who was of the Seed of *Abraham* according to the Fleſh, and in him *all the Families of the Earth are bleſſed*, and not the Families of *Iſrael* only; *All* have *ſome* Benefits by him, and *ſome* have *all* Benefits

2. They muſt believe that Jeſus Chriſt is a *Prophet*, that *Prophet like unto* Moſes which God had promis'd to *raiſe up to them from among their Bretbern*, v. 22. This refers to that Promiſe *Deut.* xviii. 18. Chriſt is a *Prophet*, for by him GOD ſpeaks unto us; in Him all Divine Revelation centers, and by him it is handed to us; He is a *Prophet like unto* Moſes; a Favourite of Heaven, more intimately acquainted with the Divine Counſel, and more familiarly convers'd with than any other Prophets. He was a Deliverer of his People out of Bondage, and their Guide through the Wilderneſs like *Moſes*, a Prince, and a Lawgiver like *Moſes*; The Builder of the True Tabernacle, as *Moſes* was of the Typical One; *Moſes* was Faithful as a Servant, Chriſt as a Son: *Moſes* was murmur'd againſt by *Iſrael*, defy'd by *Pharaoh*, yet GOD own'd him, and ratified his Commiſſion. *Moſes* was a Pattern of Meekneſs and Patience, ſo is Chriſt. *Moſes* dy'd by the Word of the Lord, ſo did Chriſt. There was no Prophet like unto *Moſes*, Num. xii. 6, 7. *Deut.* xxxiv. 12. but a greater than *Moſes* is here where Chriſt is. He is a Prophet of GOD's *raiſing up*, for He took not this Honour of himſelf, but was *called of God* to it. He was raiſed up *unto Iſrael* in the firſt Place, He executed this Office in his own Perſon, among them only, they had the firſt Offer of Divine Grace made to them. And therefore he was rais'd up from *among them*, of them as concerning the Fleſh Chriſt came, which as it was a great Honour done to them, ſo it was both an Obligation upon them, and an Encouragement to them to embrace him. If he come to his own, one would think they ſhould receive him. The *Old Teſtament* Church was bleſs'd with *many Prophets*, with Schools of Prophets, for many Ages with a conſtant Succeſſion of Prophets, (which is here taken notice of, from *Samuel and thoſe that follow after*, v. 24. for from him the prophetick *Æra* did commence) but thoſe Servants being abus'd, laſt of all GOD ſent them his Son, who had been in his Boſom.

3. They muſt believe that *Times of refreſhing will come from the preſence of the Lord*, v. 19. and that they will be the *Times of the reſtitution of all Things*, v. 21. There is a future State; another Life after this; Thoſe Times will come *from the Preſence of the Lord*; from his glorious Appearance at that Day, his coming at the End of Time. The Abſence of the Lord occaſions many of the Securities of Sinners, and the Diſtruſts of Saints, but his *Preſence* is haſtning on, which will for ever *ſilence* both; *Behold, the Judge ſtandeth before the Door. The Preſence of the Lord* will introduce (1.) The *Reſtitution of all Things*, *v.* 21. The new Heavens, and the new Earth, which will be the Product of the Diſſolution of all Things, *Rom.* xxi. 1. the Renovation of the whole Creation, which is that which it grieves after, as its preſent Burthern under Sin of Man is that which it groans under. Some underſtand this of a State on this ſide the End of Time; but its rather to be underſtood of that *End of all Things* which GOD hath *ſpoken of by the Mouth of all his Holy Prophets ſince the World began*; for this is that which *Enoch* the Seventh from *Adam* propheſy'd of, *Jude* xiv. and the temporal Judgments which the other Prophets foretold were typical of that which the Apoſtle calls the Eternal Judgment. This is more clearly and plainly reveal'd in the *New Teſtament* than it had been before, and all that receive the Goſpel have an Expectation of it. (2.) With this will come the *Times of refreſhing*, v. 19. of Conſolation to the Lord's People, like a cool Shade to thoſe that have *born the Burthern and Heat of the Day*; All Chriſtians look for a *Reſt that remains for the People* of God after the Travels and Toyls of their preſent State, and with the Proſpect of that they are born up under their preſent Sufferings, and carried on in their preſent Services. The Refreſhing that then comes *from the preſence of the Lord* will continue eternally *in* the Preſence of the Lord.

2. He tells them what they muſt *do*.

1. They muſt *repent*, muſt bethink themſelves of what they have done amiſs, muſt return to their right Mind, *admit* a ſecond Thought, and *ſubmit* to the Convictions of it; they muſt begin a-new. *Peter* who had himſelf *deny'd Chriſt*, repented, and he would have them to do ſo too.

2. They muſt be *converted*, muſt face about and direct both their Faces and Steps the contrary Way to what they had been; they muſt *return to the Lord their God* from whom they had revolted. It is not enough to *repent* of Sin, but we muſt be *converted* from it, and not return to it again. They muſt not only exchange the Profeſſion of *Judaiſm* for that of Chriſtianity, but the Power and Dominion of a carnal worldly ſenſual Mind, for that of Holy, Heavenly, and Divine Principles and Affections.

3. They muſt *hear Chriſt* the *great Prophet*; Him *ſhall ye hear in all Things whatſoever he ſhall ſay unto you*. Attend his Dictates, receive his Doctrine, ſubmit to his Government. *Hear Him* with a Divine Faith, as Prophets ſhould be heard that come with a Divine Commiſſion. *Him ſhall ye hear*, and to him you ſhall ſubſcribe with an implicit Faith and Obedience. *Hear Him* in all Things, let his Laws govern all your Actions, and his Counſels determine all your Submiſſions. Whenever he has a Mouth to ſpeak, you muſt have an Ear to hear. Whatever he ſaith to us tho' never ſo diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood, bid it Welcome; ſpeak, Lord, for thy Servant hears.

And a good Reaſon is here given why we ſhould be obſervant of, and obedient to the Word of Chriſt, for it is at our Peril if we turn a deaf Ear to his Call, and a ſtiff Neck to his Yoke; *v.* 23. *every Soul which will not hear that Prophet*, and be directed by what he ſaith, ſhall be *deſtroy'd from among the People*. The

Deſtruction of the City and Nation, by War and Famine were threaten'd for ſlighting the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament*, but the Deſtruction of *the Soul*, a Spiritual and Eternal Deſtruction is threaten'd for ſlighting Chriſt this great Prophet. They that will not be adviſ'd by the *Saviour*, can expect no other but to fall into the Hands of the Deſtroyer.

3. He tells them what they might expect.

1. That they ſhould have the Pardon of their Sins; This is always ſpoken of as the great Privilege of all thoſe that Embrace the Goſpel. *v.* 19. *Repent and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out.* This implies (1) That the Remiſſion of Sin is the *blotting of it out*, as a Cloud is blotted out by the Beams of the Sun, *Iſa.* xliv. 22. as a Debt is croſs'd and blotted out when it is remitted. It intimates that when GOD forgives Sin he remembers it no more againſt the Sinner; 'tis forgotten as that which is blotted out. All the *bitter Things* written againſt the Sinner (*Job.* xiii. 26.) are wip'd out as it were with a Spunge; 'tis the Cancelling of a Bond, the Vacating of a Judgment. (2.) We cannot expect that our Sins ſhould be pardon'd, unleſs we repent of them, and turn from them to GOD. Tho' Chriſt has dy'd to purchaſe the Remiſſion of Sin, yet that we may have the Benefit of that Purchaſe in the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, we muſt *repent and be converted*: If no Repentance, no Remiſſion. (3.) Hopes of the Pardon of Sin and Repentance ſhould be a powerful Inducement to us to repent. *Repent that your Sins may be blotted out*: And that Repentance is Evangelical which flows from an Apprehenſion of the Mercy of GOD in Chriſt, and the Hopes of Pardon; This was the firſt and great Argument, *Repent for the Kngdom of Heaven is at hand.* (4.) The moſt comfortable Fruit of the Forgiveneſs of our Sins will be *when the times of refreſhing ſhall come*; If our Sins be forgiven us we have now Reaſon to be of *good Chear*, but the Comfort will be compleat, when the *Pardon* ſhall be *allow'd* in open Court, and our Juſtification publiſh'd before Angels and Men; when *whom he juſtified, them he glorifies*, Rom. viii. 30. As *now we are the Sons of God.* (1 *John* iii. 2.) ſo, *now* we have our Sins blotted out, but it *doth not yet appear* what are the bleſſed Fruits of it, till *the Times of refreſhing ſhall come.* During theſe times of Toil and Conflicts, Doubts and Fears within, Troubles and Dangers without, we cannot have that full Satisfaction *of* our Pardon, and *in* it, that we ſhall have when the refreſhing Times come, which ſhall *wipe away all Tears.*

2. That they ſhould have the Comfort of Chriſt's Coming, *v.* 20, 21. *He ſhall ſend Jeſus Chriſt*, the ſame Jeſus, the very ſame *which before was preached unto you*; for you muſt not expect another Diſpenſation, another Goſpel, but the Continuance and Completion of this, muſt not expect another Prophet like unto Jeſus, as *Moſes* bid you expect another like unto him, for tho' *the Heavens muſt receive him till the times of the reſtitution of all things*, yet if you repent and be converted you ſhall find no Want of Him; ſome way or other he ſhall be ſeen to you.

1. We muſt not expect Chriſt's *Perſonal Preſence* with us in this World; for the Heavens which receiv'd him out of the Sight of the Diſciples muſt retain him till the End of Time. To that Seat of the Bleſſed His Bodily Preſence is confin'd, and will be to the End of Time, *the Accompliſhment of all things*; ſo it may be read. And therefore thoſe *diſhonour* him, and *deceive* themſelves, who dream of his *corporal Preſence* in the Eucharist. 'Tis agreeable to a State of Tryal and Probation that the Glorified Redeemer ſhould be *out of Sight* becauſe we muſt live by that Faith in him which is the Evidence of Things not ſeen, becauſe He muſt be *Believ'd on* in the World, he muſt be *receiv'd up into Glory.* Dr. *Hammond* reads it, *who muſt receive the Heavens*, *i. e.* who muſt receive the Glory and Power of the upper World, he *muſt reign till all be made ſubject to him*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 25. *Pſal.* lxxv. 2.

2. Yet it is promiſ'd that he ſhall be ſent to all that *repent* and are *converted*, v. 20. *He ſhall ſend Jeſus Chriſt* who was *preached to you* by his Diſciples both before and ſince his Reſurrection and is, and will be all in all to them. (1.) You ſhall have his *ſpiritual Preſence*; He that is ſent into the World ſhall be ſent *to you*, you ſhall have the Comfort of His being *ſent*; he ſhall be ſent among you in his Goſpel, which ſhall be his Tabernacle, his Chariot of War.

(2.) He ſhall ſend Jeſus Chriſt to deſtroy *Jeruſalem* and the Nation of unbelieving *Jews*, that are Enemies to Chriſt and Chriſtianity, and to deliver his Miniſters and People from them, and give them a quiet Profeſſion of the Goſpel, and that ſhall be a *Time of refreſhing*, which you ſhall ſhare in. *Then had the Churches reſt.* So Dr. *Hammond.* (3.) The Sending of Chriſt to judge the World at the End of Time will be a Bleſſing to you, you ſhall then *lift up your Heads with Joy, knowing that your Redemption draws nigh.* It ſeems to refer to this, for till then the Heavens muſt *receive Him. v.* 21. As GOD's Counſels from Eternity, ſo his Predictions from the Beginning of Time, had a Reference to the Tranſactions of the laſt Day, when the *Myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed, as he had declar'd to his Servants the Prophets*, Rev. x. 7. The Inſtitution of all Things in the Church, had an Eye to the *Reſtitution of all things* at the End of Time.

4. He tells them what Ground they had to expect theſe Things, if they were converted to Chriſt. Tho' they had deny'd him, and put him to Death, yet they might hope to find Favour through him upon the Account of their being *Iſraelites*; For,

1. As *Iſraelites*, they had the *Monopoly* of the Grace of the *Old Teſtament*, they were above any other of GOD's Favourite Nation, and the Favours GOD beſtow'd upon them were ſuch as had a Reference to the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom. *Ye are the Children of the Prophets and of the Covenant.* A double Privilege.

(1.) They were *the Children*, that is, the Diſciples *of the Prophets*, as Children at *School*; not *Sons of the Prophets* in the Senſe that we read of ſuch in the *Old Teſtament* from *Samuel* and downwards who were, or are train'd up to be endu'd with the Spirit of Prophecy; But you are of that People, from among whom Prophets were raiſ'd up, and to whom Prophets were ſent; it is ſpoken of as a great Favour to *Iſrael*, that *God raiſ'd up of their Sons for Prophets*, Amos ii. 11. All the inſpir'd Writers both of the *Old* and *New Teſtament* were of the Seed of *Abraham*; And it was their Honour and Advantage, that unto them *were committed the oracles of God*, Rom. iii. 2. Their Government was conſtituted by *Prophecy*, that is, by *Divine Revelation*, and by it their Affairs were for many Ages very much manag'd, See *Hoſ.* xii. 13. *By a Prophet the Lord brought* Iſrael *out of* Egypt, *and by a Prophet was he preſerv'd.* Thoſe of the latter Ages of the Church, when Prophecy was ceas'd, yet might be fitly call'd the *Children of the Prophets*, becauſe they *heard*, tho' they did *not know the Voices of the Prophets which were read* in their Synagogues *every Sabbath-Day*, Acts xiii. 27. Now this ſhould quicken them to embrace Chriſt, and they might hope to be accepted of Him; for their own Prophets had foretold that *this Grace* ſhould be brought unto them at the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* i. 13. and therefore ought not to be neglected by them, nor ſhould be deny'd to them. Thoſe that are bleſſed with Prophets and Prophecy, as all are that have the Scriptures, are concern'd, not to *receive the Grace of God therein in vain*; we may apply it particularly to Miniſters Children, who if they plead that effectually with themſelves, as an Inducement to be faithful and forward in Religion, may comfortably plead it with GOD, and hope that the *Children of God's Servants ſhall continue.*

(2.) They were *the Children*, that is, the Heirs *of the covenant which God made with our Fathers*, as *Children* in the *Family.* God's Covenant was made with *Abraham* and his *Seed*, and they were *that Seed*, with whom the Covenant was made and on whom the Bleſſings of the Covenant were entail'd; The Promiſe of the *Meſſiah* was made to you, and therefore if you forſake not your own *Mercies*, and do not by an obſtinate Infidelity put a Bar in your own Door, you may hope it ſhall be made good to you. That Promiſe here mention'd as the principal Article of the Covenant, *In thy Seed ſhall all the Kindreds of the Earth be bleſſed*, tho' referring principally to Chriſt, *Gal.* iii. 16. yet may include the Church alſo, which is *his Body*, all Believers that are the Spiritual Seed of *Abraham*, all the *Kindreds of the Earth* were *bleſſed* in having a Church for Chriſt among them; and thoſe that were the Seed of *Abraham* according to the Fleſh, ſtood faireſt for this Privilege; If *all the Kindreds of the Earth* were to be bleſſed in Chriſt, much more that Kindred, his Kinſmen *according to the Fleſh.*

2. As *Iſraelites* they had the *firſt Offer* of the Grace of the *New-Teſtament.* Becauſe they were the Children of the Prophets, and the Covenant, therefore to them the Redeemer was firſt ſent, which was an Encouragement to them to hope, that if they did *repent and were converted*, he ſhould be yet further ſent for *their* Comfort, *v.* 20. *he ſhall* ſend Jeſus Chriſt; for to you firſt *he hath* ſent him, *v.* 26. *unto you firſt*, you *Jews*, tho' not to you only, *God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus*, appointed and authoriz'd him to be a Prince and a Saviour, and in Confirmation of that raiſed him from the Dead, *ſent him to bleſs you*, to make a Tender of his Bleſſing to you, eſpecially that great Bleſſing of *turning every one of you from his Iniquities*, and therefore it concerns you to receive this bleſſing, and turn from your Iniquities, and you may be encourag'd to hope that you ſhall.

1. We are here told whence Chriſt had his Miſſion; *God raiſed up his Son Jeſus and ſent him.* God *raiſ'd* him up when he conſtituted him a Prophet, own'd him by a Voice from Heaven, and fill'd him with his Spirit without Meaſure, and then *ſent Him*; for to that end he *raiſed him up*, that he might be his Commiſſioner to treat of Peace. He *ſent* him to *bear Witneſs* of the Truth, *ſent* him to ſeek and ſave loſt Souls, *ſent* him againſt his Enemies to conquer them: Some refer the *Raiſing of him up* to the Reſurrection, which was the firſt ſtep towards his Exaltation; That was as it were the *renewing* of his Commiſſion; and tho' having *raiſed him up* he ſeemed preſently to take him from us, yet he did really *ſend* him afreſh to us, in his *Goſpel* and *Spirit.*

2. To whom he was ſent; *unto You firſt*: You of the Seed of *Abraham*, you that are the *Children of the Prophets* and *of the Covenant*, to you is the Tender made of Goſpel Grace. The perſonal Miniſtry of Chriſt, as that of the Prophets was confin'd to the *Jews*, *He was not* then *ſent but to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of* Iſrael, and forbid the Diſciples he then ſent forth to go any further; After his Reſurrection he was to be preached indeed to all Nations, but they muſt *begin at* Jeruſalem, *Luke* xxiv. 47. And when they went to other Nations they *firſt* preached to the *Jews* they found therein. They were the firſt born, and as ſuch had the firſt Privilege of the Offer; ſo far were they from being excluded for their putting of Chriſt to Death, that when he is riſen

he is firſt ſent to them, and they are primarily intended to have Benefit by his Death.

3. On what Errand he was ſent; He is ſent to you *firſt to bleſs you*, that's His primary Errand, not to condemn you as you deſerve, but to *juſtify* you, if you will accept of the Juſtification offer'd you in the Way wherein it is offer'd; But he that ſends him *firſt* to bleſs you, if you refuſe and reject that Bleſſing, will ſend him to *curſe you with a Curſe*, Mal. iv. 6. *Note*, 1. Chriſt's Errand into the World was to *bleſs us*, to bring a Bleſſing with him, for the *Sun of Righteouſneſs roſe with Healing under his Wings*: And when he left the World, he left a Bleſſing behind him, for he was *parted from the Diſciples as he bleſſed them*, Luke xxiv. 51. He ſent his Spirit to be the great Bleſſing, the Bleſſing of Bleſſings, *Iſa.* xlvi. 3. 'Tis by Chriſt that GOD ſends Bleſſings to us, and through Him only we can expect to receive them. 2. The great Bleſſing wherewith Chriſt came to bleſs us was the *turning of us away from our Iniquities*; the ſaving of us *from our Sins*, Mat. i. 21. to turn us from Sin, that we may be qualified to receive all other Bleſſings; Sin is that which naturally we *cleave to*, the Deſign of Divine Grace is to *turn us from it*, nay to turn us *againſt* it, that we may not only forſake it, but hate it; The Goſpel has a direct Tendency to it, not only as it requires us, or every one of us to turn from our Iniquities, but as it promiſeth us Grace to enable us to do ſo. Therefore do *your* Part, *repent and be converted* becauſe Chriſt is ready to do *His*, in turning you from your Iniquities, and ſo bleſſing you.

CHAP. IV.

In going over the two laſt Chapters, where we met with ſo many good Things that the Apoſtles did; I wonder'd what was become of the Scribes *and* Phariſees, *and chief Prieſts, that they did not appear to contradict and oppoſe them, as they had us'd to treat Chriſt himſelf; ſure they were ſo confounded at firſt with the Pouring out of the Spirit, that they were for a Time ſtruck dumb: But I find we have not loſt them; their Forces rally again, and here we have an Encounter between them and the Apoſtles, for from the Beginning the Goſpel met with Oppoſition. Here (1.)* Peter *and* John *are* taken up *upon a Warrant from the Prieſts, and* committed *to Jail,* v. 1—4. *(2.) They are examin'd by a Committee of the Great* Sanhedrin, *v.* 5—7. *(3.) They bravely* avow *what they have done, and preach Chriſt to their Perſecutors,* v. 8—12. *(4.) Their Perſecutors being unable to anſwer them, enjoin them Silence, threaten them if they go on to preach the Goſpel, and ſo diſmiſs them,* v. 13—22. *(5.) They apply themſelves to GOD by Prayer for the further Operations of that Grace which they had already experienc'd,* v. 32—30. *(6.) GOD owns them both outwardly and inwardly, by manifeſt Tokens of his Preſence with them,* v. 31—33. *(7.) The Believers had their Hearts knit together in Holy Love, and enlarg'd their Charity to the Poor, and the Church flouriſh'd more than ever. To the Glory of Chriſt,* v. 33, 34—37.

AND as they ſpake unto the people, the prieſts and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them; 2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jeſus the reſurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now even-tide. 4 Howbeit, many of them which heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was about five thouſand.

We have here the Intereſts of the Kingdom of Heaven ſucceſfully carry'd on, and the Powers of Darkneſs appearing againſt them to put a Stop to them. Let Chriſt's Servants be never ſo reſolute, Satan's Agents will be ſpiteful; and therefore let Satan's Agents be never ſo ſpiteful, Chriſt's Servants ought to be reſolute.

Firſt, The Apoſtles *Peter* and *John* went on in their Work, and did not labour in vain. The Spirit enabled the Miniſters to do their Part, and the People theirs.

1. The Preachers faithfully deliver'd the Doctrine of Chriſt; *They ſpake unto the People*, to all that were within Hearing, *v.* 1. What they ſaid concern'd them all, and they ſpoke it openly and publickly. They *taught the People*, ſtill taught the People Knowledge; taught thoſe that as yet did not believe, for their Conviction and Converſion; and taught thoſe that did believe, for their Comfort and Eſtabliſhment: They *preached through* Jeſus *the Reſurrection from the Dead*. This Doctrine of the *Reſurrection of the Dead*, (1.) was verify'd in *Jeſus*; this they proved, that *Jeſus Chriſt* was riſen from the Dead, was *the firſt*, the Chief that ſhould riſe from the Dead, *Acts* xxvi. 23. They preach'd the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, as their Warrant for what they did Or, (2.) 'Tis ſecur'd by him to all Believers. The *Reſurrection of the Dead*, includes all the Happineſs of the future State, this they preach'd *through Jeſus Chriſt* attainable through him, (*Phil.* iii. 10, 11.) and through him only. They meddled not with Matters of State, but kept to their Buſineſs, and preach'd to People *Heaven* as their *End*, and *Chriſt* as their *Way*. See *Acts* xvii. 18.

2. The Hearers chearfully receive it, *v.* 4. *Many of them which heard the Word believed:* Not all, perhaps not the moſt, yet many, to the Number of about *Five Thouſand*, over and above the *Three Thouſand*, we read of before. See how the Goſpel got Ground, and it was the Effect of the Pouring out of the Spirit. Tho' the Preachers were perſecuted, the Word prevail'd; for ſometimes the Church's ſuffering Days, have been her growing Days, the Days of her Infancy were ſo.

Secondly, The Chief Prieſts and their Party, now made Head againſt them, and did what they could to cruſh them; their Hands were ty'd a while, but their Hearts were not in the leaſt chang'd. Now here *Obſerve*,

1. Who they were that appear'd againſt the Apoſtles; they were *the Prieſts*; you may be ſure in the firſt Place, they were always ſworn Enemies to Chriſt and his Goſpel; they were as jealous for their *Prieſthood*, as *Cæſar* for his *Monarchy*, and would not bear One they thought their Rival now when he *was preach'd* as a Prieſt, as much as when he *did preach* as a Prophet. With them joyn'd the *Captain of the Temple*, who 'tis ſuppos'd was a *Roman* Officer, Governour of the Garriſon that was plac'd in the Tower of *Antonia*, for the Guard of the Temple: So that ſtill here were both *Jews* and *Gentiles* confederate againſt Chriſt. The *Sadducees* alſo were zealous againſt them, who deny'd the Being of Spirits and the future State. “One would wonder (ſaith “Mr. *Baxter*) what ſhould make ſuch Brutiſts as the *Sadducees* “were to be ſuch furious Silencers and Perſecutors; if there's “no Life to come, what harm can other Mens Hopes of it do “them? But in deprav'd Souls all Faculties are vitiated: A “blind Mind has a malignant Heart and a cruel Hand to this “Day”

2. How they ſtood effected to the Apoſtles Preaching; they *were grieved that they taught the People*, v. 2. It griev'd them both that the Goſpel Doctrine was preach'd, was ſo preach'd ſo publickly, ſo boldly, and that the People were ſo ready to here it. They thought when they had put Chriſt to ſuch an ignominious Death, his Diſciples would ever after be aſham'd and afraid to own him, and the People would have invincible Prejudices againſt his Doctrine; and now it vex'd them to ſee themſelves diſappointed, and that his Goſpel gets Ground, inſtead of loſing it. *The wicked ſhall ſee it and be grieved*; Pſal. cxii. *ult.* They were griev'd at that which they ſhould have rejoyc'd in, at that which Angels rejoyce in. Miſerable is their Caſe to whom the *Glory* of Chriſt's Kingdom is *a Grief*; for ſince the *Glory* of that Kingdom is *everlaſting* it follows of Courſe, that their *Grief* will be everlaſting too. It griev'd them that the Apoſtles *preach'd through* Jeſus *the Reſurrection from the Dead*. The *Sadducees*, were *griev'd* that the *Reſurrection from the Dead*, was preach'd; for they oppos'd that Doctrine, and could not bear to hear of a future State, to hear it ſo well atteſted: The *Chief Prieſts* were *grieved* that they preach'd the Reſurrection of the Dead through *Jeſus*, that he ſhould have the Honour of it; and tho' they profeſs'd to believe *the Reſurrection of the Dead*, againſt the *Sadducees*, yet they would rather give up that important Article, than have it *preach'd* and *prov'd* to be *through* Jeſus.

3. How far they proceeded againſt the Apoſtles, *v.* 3. *They laid Hands on them* (that is, their Servants and Officers did at their Command) and *put them in Hold*, committed them to the Cuſtody of the proper Officer *unto the next Day*; they could not examine them now, for it was *Even-tide*, and yet would defer it no longer than till next Day. See how GOD trains up his Servants to Sufferings by Degrees, and by leſſer Trials prepares them for a greater; now they reſiſt unto *Bonds* only, but afterwards to *Blood*.

5 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and ſcribes, 6 And Ananias the high prieſt, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high prieſt, were gathered together at Jeruſalem. 7 And when they had ſet them in the midſt, they asked, By what power, or by what name have ye done this? 8 Then Peter filled with the holy Ghoſt, ſaid unto them Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Iſrael, 9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; 10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Iſrael, that by the name of Jeſus Chriſt of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raiſed from the Dead, even by him doth this man ſtand here before you whole. 11 This is the ſtone that was ſet at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there ſalvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.

13 Now when they ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John, and perceiv'd that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jeſus. 14 And beholding the man which was healed ſtanding with them, they could ſay nothing againſt it.

We have here the Trial of *Peter* and *John* before the Judges of the Eccleſiaſtical Court for preaching a Sermon concerning *Jeſus Chriſt*, and working a Miracle in his Name. This is charg'd upon them as a Crime, which was the beſt Service they could do to GOD or Men.

1. Here's the *Court ſet*; An extraordinary Court: It ſhould ſeem was call'd on purpoſe upon this Occaſion. *Obſerve*,

1. The *Time* when the Court ſate, *v.* 5, *On the morrow*, not in *the Night*, as when Chriſt was to be try'd before them, for they ſeem not to have been ſo hot upon this Proſecution as they were upon that; 'twas well if they began to relent: But they adjourned it to *the Morrow* and no longer, for they were impatient to get them ſilenc'd, and would loſe no time.

2. The *Place* where, *in Jeruſalem*, v. 6. there it was that he told his Diſciples they muſt expect to Suffer hard Things, as he had done before them in that Place. This ſeems to come in here as an Aggravation of their Sin, that *in Jeruſalem* where there were ſo many that *looked for Redemption* before it came, yet there were more that would not look upon it when it did come. How is that faithful *City become a Harlot*. See *Matth.* xxiii. 37. 'Twas in the Foreſight of *Jeruſalem*'s, ſtanding in her own Light, that Chriſt beheld the City and wept over it.

3. The Judges of the Court. (1.) Their general Character, they were *Rulers*, *Elders*, and *Scribes*, v. 5. The *Scribes* were Men of Learning who came to diſpute with the Apoſtles, and hoped to confute them: The *Rulers* and Elders, were Men in Power, who if they could not *anſwer* them, thought they could find ſome Cauſe or other to *ſilence* them. If the Goſpel of Chriſt had not been of GOD it could not have made its Way, for it had both the Learning and Power of the World againſt it both the Colleges of the *Scribes*, and Courts of the Elders. (2.) The Names of ſome of them who were moſt conſiderable. Here were *Annas* and *Caiaphas*, Ring-leaders in this Perſecution, *Annas* the Preſident of the *Sanhedrin*, and *Caiaphas*, the High-prieſt (tho' *Annas* is here call'd ſo,) and *Father of the Houſe of Judgment.* It ſhould ſeem that *Annas* and *Caiaphas* executed the High-Prieſt's Office alternately Year for Year; They two were moſt active againſt Chriſt, then *Caiaphas* was High-Prieſt, now *Annas* was; However, they were both equally malignant againſt Chriſt and his Goſpel. *John* is ſuppoſed to be the Son of *Annas*; And *Alexander*, is mentioned by *Joſephus*, as a Man that made a Figure at that Time. There were others likewiſe that were *of the Kindred of the High-Prieſt*, that having Dependance on him, and Expectations from him, would be ſure to ſay as he ſaid, and vote with him againſt the Apoſtles. Great Relations and not good have been a ſnare to many.

Secondly, The Priſoners are arraign'd, *v.* 7.

1. They are brought to the Bar, they *ſet them in the midſt*, for the Sanhedrin ſate *in a Circle*, and they who had any Thing to do in the Court ſtood or ſate in the midſt of them, *Luke* ii. 46. ſo Dr. *Lightfoot*, thus the Scripture was fulfilled, *The Aſſembly of the Wicked has incloſed me*, Pſal. xxii. 16. *They Compaſſed me about like Bees*, Pſal. cxviii. 12. They were ſeated on every Side.

2. The Queſtion they ask'd them was, *By what Power or by what Name have ye done this?* By what Authority do ye theſe Things? The ſame Queſtion that they had ask'd their Maſter; *Matth.* xxi. 23. who commiſſion'd you to preach ſuch a Doctrine as this, and empower'd you to work ſuch a Miracle as this? You have no Warrant or Licenſe from us, and therefore are accountable to us whence you have your Warrant. Some think this Queſtion was grounded upon a fond Conceit that the very Naming of ſuch Names might do Wonders, as *Acts* xix. 13. The *Jewiſh Exorciſts* made uſe of the Name of *Jeſus*, Now they would know what Name they made uſe of in their Cure, and conſequently what Name they ſet themſelves to advance in their Preaching. They knew very well that they preach'd *Jeſus*, and the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Healing of the Sick, *through Jeſus*, v. 2. yet they ask them to teaze them, and try if they could get any Thing out of them that look'd criminal.

Thirdly, The Plea they put in, the Deſign of which was not ſo much to clear and ſecure themſelves, as to advance the Name and Honour of their Maſter, who had told them that their being brought before Governours and Kings would give them an Opportunity of preaching the Goſpel to thoſe who otherwiſe they could not have had Acceſs to, and it ſhould be *a Teſtimony againſt them.* Mark. xiii. 9. *Obſerve*,

1. By whom this Plea was *drawn up*, 'twas dictated by the *Holy Ghoſt*, who fitted *Peter* more than before, for this Occaſion. The Apoſtles with a holy Negligence of their own Preſervation, ſet themſelves to preach Chriſt, as he had directed them to do in ſuch a Caſe, and then Chriſt made good to them his Promiſe, that the Holy Ghoſt ſhould *give them in that ſame Hour what they ſhould ſpeak.* Chriſt's faithful Advocates ſhall never want Inſtructions, *Mark* xiii. 11.

2. To whom it was *given in*, *Peter* who is ſtill the chief Speaker addreſſeth himſelf to the Judges of the Court, as the *Rulers of the People and Elders of* Iſrael, for the Wickedneſs of thoſe in Power doth not diveſt them of their Power, but the Conſideration of the Power they are intruſted with, ſhould prevail to diveſt them of their Wickedneſs. You are *Rulers* and *Elders*, and ſhould know more than others of the Signs of the Times, and not oppoſe that which you are bound by the Duty of your Place to embrace and advance, that is the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*; you are *Rulers* and *Elders* of *Iſrael*, GOD's People, and if you miſlead them, and cauſe them to err, you'l have a great deal to anſwer for.

3. What the Plea is; It is a ſolemn Declaration,

1. That what they did *was in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt*, which was a direct Anſwer to the Queſtion the Court ask'd them, *v.* 9, 10. *If we this Day be Examin'd*, be call'd *to an Account* as Criminals ſo the Word ſignifies, for *a good Deed* (as any one will own it to be) done *to the impotent Man*, if this be the Ground of the Commitment, this the Matter of the Indictment, if we are put to the Queſtion, *by what means*, or by whom *he is made whole*; we have an Anſwer ready, and 'tis the ſame we gave to the People, *Chap.* iii. 16. we will repeat it to you, as that which we will ſtand by, *Be it known to you all* who pretend to be ignorant of this Matter, and not to you only, but *to all the People of* Iſrael, for they are all concern'd to know it, *that by the Name of Jeſus Chriſt*, that precious powerful prevailing Name, that Name above every Name, even *by him* whom you in contempt called Jeſus of *Nazareth*, whom *you crucified*, both Rulers and People, and whom *God hath raiſed from the Dead*, and advanc'd to the higheſt Dignity and Dominion, even by him *doth this Man ſtand here before you whole*; A Monument of the Power of the Lord Jeſus. Here, (1) He *juſtifies* what he and his Collegue had done in curing the lame Man: 'twas a *good Deed*; 'twas a Kindneſs to the Man that had begg'd but could not work for his Living; a Kindneſs to the Temple, and to them that went in to Worſhip, who were now freed from the Noiſe and Clamour of that common Begger. Now if we be recon'd with for this *good Deed* we have no reaſon to be aſham'd, 1 *Pet.* ii. 20. *chap.* iv. 14. 16. Let them be aſham'd, who bring us into trouble for it. *Note*, It is no new thing for good Men to *ſuffer ill* for *doing well. Bene agere & male pati vere Chriſtianum eſt.*

(2.) He transfers all the Praiſe and Glory of that *good Deed* to *Jeſus Chriſt.* 'Tis *by Him* and not by any Power of ours that this Man is cur'd; he ſeek not to raiſe an Intereſt for themſelves, or to recommend themſelves by it to the good Opinion of the Court, but let the Lord alone be exalted no matter what comes of us.

(3.) He charges it upon the Judges themſelves that they had been the Murtherers of this Jeſus: 'tis he *whom ye crucified*, look how you will anſwer it; In order to the bringing of them to *believe in Chriſt*, (for he aims at no leſs than that) he endeavours to convince them of Sin, of that Sin which one would think of all other was moſt likely to *ſtartle* Conſcience, their putting Chriſt to Death. Let them take it how they will *Peter* will balk no Occaſion to tell them of it.

(4.) He atteſts the Reſurrection of Chriſt as the ſtrongeſt Teſtimony to him, and againſt his Perſecutors, *they crucified Him*, but GOD *raiſed Him from the Dead*, they took away his Life, but GOD gave it him again, and your further Oppoſition to his Intereſt will ſpeed no better. He tells them GOD *raiſed him from the Dead*, and they could not for ſhame anſwer him with that fooliſh Suggeſtion that they palm'd upon the people, that *His Diſciples came by Night and ſtole him away.*

(5.) He preaches this to all the By-ſtanders, to be by them repeated to all their Neighbours, and commands all manner of Perſons, from the higheſt to the loweſt to take notice of it at their Peril; *Be it known to you all*, that are here preſent, and it ſhall be *made known* to *all the People of* Iſrael, where-ever they are diſperſed, in ſpite of all your Endeavours to ſtifle and ſuppreſs the Notice of it; As *the Lord GOD of Gods* knows, ſo *Iſrael ſhall know*, all *Iſrael* ſhall know that Wonders are wrought in the Name of *Jeſus*, not by repeating it as a Charm, but believing in it as a Divine Revelation of Grace and good Will to Men.

2. That the Name of this *Jeſus*, by the Authority of which they acted is that Name alone *by which* Men *can be ſav'd.* He paſſeth from this particular Inſtance to ſhew, That it is not a particular Sect, a Party that is deſign'd to be ſet up by the Doctrine they preach'd, and the Miracle they wrought, which People might either joyn with, or keep off from at their pleaſure, as it was with the Sects of the Philoſophers, and thoſe among the *Jews*; but it is a ſacred and divine Inſtitution that is hereby ratify'd and confirm'd, and which all People are highly concern'd to ſubmit to, and come into the Meaſures of. It is not an *indifferent* Thing, but of an *abſolute Neceſſity* that People *believe* in this Name, and *call* upon it.

1. We are obliged to it in *Duty to God*, and in Compliance with his Deſigns. *v.* 11. *This is the Stone which was ſet at nought of you Builders*, you that are the *Rulers of the People, and the Elders of*

Iſrael, that ſhould be the Builders of the Church, that pretend to be ſo; for the Church is *God's Building*: Here was a Stone offer'd you to be put in the chief Place of the Building, to be the main Pillar on which the Fabrick might entirely reſt, but you *ſet it at nought*, rejected it, would not make uſe of it, but threw it by as good for nothing but to make Stepping-ſtone, but this Stone is *now become the Head of the Corner*; GOD has *rais'd up* this *Jeſus* whom you rejected, and by ſetting him at his right Hand, has made him both the *Corner-ſtone*, and the *Head-ſtone*, the Center of Unity, and the Fountain of Power. Probably, St. *Peter* here choſe to make uſe of this Quotation, becauſe Chriſt had himſelf made uſe of it, in anſwer to the Demand of the Chief Prieſts and the Elders concerning his Authority, not long before this, *Matth.* xxi. 43. Scripture is a try'd Weapon in our ſpiritual Conflicts, let us therefore ſtick to it.

2. We are oblig'd to it for our own Intereſt: We are undone if we do not take Shelter in this Name, and make it our Refuge and ſtrong Tower; for we cannot be ſaved but by *Jeſus Chriſt*, and if we are not eternally ſaved, we are eternally undone, *v.* 12. *Neither is there Salvation in any other.* As there is no other Name by which diſeas'd Bodies can be cur'd, ſo there is no other by which ſinful Souls can be ſaved, “ By him, and him only, by receiving “ and embracing his Doctrine, Salvation muſt *now be hoped for by* “ *All*: For there is no other Religion in the World, no, not that “ deliver'd by *Moſes*, by which Salvation can be had for thoſe “ that do not now come in to this, at the Preaching of it”. So Dr. *Hammond*. *Obſerve* here, (1) Our *Salvation* is our chief Concern and that which ought to lie neareſt our Hearts; our Reſcue from Wrath and the Curſe, and our Reſtoration to GOD's Favour and Bleſſing. (2) Our Salvation is not in our ſelves, nor can be obtain'd by any Merit or Strength of our own; we can deſtroy our ſelves, but we cannot ſave our ſelves. (3) There are *among Men* many Names that pretend to be *ſaving* Names, but really are not ſo; many Inſtitutions in Religion that pretend to ſettle a Reconciliation and Correſpondence between GOD and Man, but cannot do it. (4) It is only by Chriſt, and his Name that thoſe Favours can be expected from GOD which are neceſſary to our Salvation, and that our Services can be accepted with GOD. This is the Honour of Chriſt's *Name*, that it is the *only Name whereby we muſt be ſav'd*; the only Name we have to plead in all our Addreſſes to GOD. This Name is *given*. GOD has appointed it, and it is an ineſtimable Benefit freely conferr'd upon us. 'Tis given *under Heaven*; Chriſt has not only a great Name *in Heaven*, but a great Name *under Heaven*; for he has all Power both in the upper and in the lower World: 'Tis given *among Men* who need Salvation, Men who are ready to periſh. We muſt be ſav'd *by his Name*, that Name of his, *The Lord our Righteouſneſs*; and we cannot be ſaved by any other. How far thoſe who have not the Knowledge of *Chriſt*, nor any actual Faith in him, yet live up to the Light they have, may find Favour with GOD, it is not our Buſineſs to determine: But this we know, that whatever Saving Favour ſuch may receive it is upon the Account of *Chriſt*, and for his Sake only; ſo that ſtill *there is not Salvation in any other*, *I have ſirnamed thee, tho' thou haſt not known me*, Iſa. xlv. 4.

Fourthly, The Stand that the Court was put to in the Perſecution, by this Plea, *v.* 13, 14. Now was fulfill'd that Promiſe *Chriſt* made, That he would give them *a Mouth and Wiſdom*, ſuch as *all their Adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay or reſiſt.*

1. They could not deny the Cure of the lame Man, to be both a *good Deed*, and a *Miracle*; He was there *ſtanding* with *Peter* and *John*, ready to atteſt the Cure if there was Occaſion, and they had *nothing to ſay againſt it*. v. 14. either to *diſprove* it or to *diſparage* it: It was well it was *not on the Sabbath-day*, elſe they would have had that to ſay againſt it.

2. They could not with all their Pomp and Power *face down Peter* and *John*; this was a Miracle not inferiour to the Cure of the lame Man, conſidering both what cruel bloody Enemies theſe Prieſts had been to the Name of Chriſt, enough to make any one *tremble* that appear'd for him; and conſidering what cowardly faint-hearted Advocates thoſe Diſciples had lately been for him; *Peter* particularly, who deny'd him for Fear of a ſilly Maid; yet now they ſee *the Boldneſs of* Peter *and* John, *v.* 13. Probably, there was ſomething extraordinary and very ſurprizing in their Looks, they appeared not only *undaunted* by the Rulers, but *daring* and *daunting* to them: they had ſomething majeſtick in their Foreheads, ſparkling in their Eyes, and commanding, if not terrifying in their Voice. They *ſet their Faces like a Flint*, as the Prophet *Iſa.* i. 7. *Ezek.* iii. 8. The Courage of Chriſt's faithful Confeſſors, has often been the Confuſion of their cruel Perſecutors. Now,

1. We are here told what increas'd their Wonder; They *perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant Men:* They enquir'd either of themſelves or others, and found that they were of mean Extraction, born in *Galilee*, that they were bred Fiſhermen and had no learned Education, had never been at any Univerſity, were not brought up at the Feet of any of the Rabbins, had never been converſant in Courts, Camps, or Colleges; nay, perhaps talk to them at this Time upon any Point in Natural Philoſophy, Mathematicks or Politicks, and you'll find they know nothing of the Matter; and yet ſpeak to them of the *Meſſiah* and his Kingdom, and they ſpeak with ſo much Clearneſs, Evidence and Aſſurance, ſo pertinently, and ſo fluently, and are ſo ready in the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament* relating to it, that the learnedeſt Judge upon the Bench is not able to anſwer them, or to enter the Liſts with them. They were *ignorant Men*, Ἰδιῶται *private Men*, Men that had not any publick Character or Employment; and therefore they wonder'd they ſhould have ſuch high Pretentions. They were *Idiots*, ſo the Word ſignfiies; they look'd upon them with as much Contempt as if they had been *meer Naturals*, and expected no more from them, which made them wonder to ſee what *Freedom* they took.

2. We are told what made their Wonder in a great meaſure to ceaſe they *took Knowledge of them that they had been with* Jeſus: they themſelves, 'tis probable, had ſeen them with him in the Temple, and now recollected that they had ſeen them, or ſome of their Servants, or thoſe about them, inform'd them of it, for they wou'd not be thought themſelves to have taken Notice of ſuch inferiour People: But when they underſtood *that they had been with* Jeſus, had been converſant with him, attendant on him, and train'd up under him, they knew what to impute their Boldneſs to; nay, their Boldneſs in divine Things was enough to ſhew with whom they had had their Education. *Note*, Thoſe that *have been with* Jeſus, in Converſe and Communion with him, have been attending on his Word, praying in his Name, and celebrating the Memorials of his Death and Reſurrection, ſhould carry themſelves in every thing as that thoſe who converſe with them may *take Knowledge of them that they have been with* Jeſus. And that makes them ſo holy and heavenly, and ſpiritual, and chearful; that has rais'd them ſo much above this World, and fill'd them with another. One may know that they have been in the Mount by the ſhining of their Faces.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aſide out of the council, they conferred among themſelves, 16 Saying, What ſhall we do to theſe men? for that indeed a notable miracle has been done by them, *is* manifeſt to all them that dwell in Jeruſalem, and we cannot deny *it*. 17 But that it ſpread no farther among the people, let us ſtraitly threaten them that they ſpeak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and commanded them not to ſpeak at all, nor teach in the name of Jeſus. 12 But Peter and John anſwered and ſaid unto them, Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. 20 For we cannot but ſpeak the things which we have ſeen and heard. 21 So when they had further threatned them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might puniſh them, becauſe of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done. 22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was ſhewed.

We have here the Iſſue of the Trial of *Peter* and *John* before the *Council*; They came off now with flying Colours, becauſe they muſt be train'd up to ſufferings by Degrees; and by leſſer Trials be prepared for greater; they now but *run with the Foot-men*, hereafter we ſhall have them *contending with Horſes*, Jer. xii. 5.

Firſt, Here's the Conſultation and Reſolution of the Court about this Matter, and their Proceeding thereupon.

1. The Priſoners were order'd to withdraw, *v.* 15. They *commanded them to go aſide out of the Council*; willing enough to get clear of them, they ſpoke ſo home to their Conſciences, and not willing they ſhould hear the Acknowledgments that were extorted from them: But tho' they might not hear them, we have them here upon Record. The Deſigns of Chriſt's Enemies are carry'd on in *cloſe Cabals*, and they dig deep, as if they would hide their Counſels from the LORD.

2. A Debate aroſe upon this Matter: *they conferr'd among themſelves*; every one is deſired to ſpeak his Mind freely, and to give Advice upon this important Affair. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, That the Rulers would *take Counſel together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Anointed*, Pſal. ii. 2. the Queſtion propos'd was, *What ſhall we do to theſe Men?* v. 16. if they would have yielded to the convincing commanding Power of Truth, it had been eaſy to ſay what they ſhould do to theſe Men: They ſhould have plac'd them at the Head of their Council, and receiv'd their Doctrine, and been baptiz'd by them in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and joyn'd in Fellowſhip with them: But when Men will not be perſwaded to do what they ſhould do, it is no Marvel they are ever and anon at a loſs what to do. The Truths of Chriſt, if Men would but entertain them as they ſhould, would give them no Manner of Trouble or Uneaſineſs, but if they *hold them* or impriſon them *in Unrighteouſneſs*, Rom. i. 18. they will find them *a burthenſome Stone* that they will not know what do with, *Zech.* xii. 4.

3. They came at laſt to a Reſolution, in two Things.

1. That it was not ſafe to puniſh the Apoſtles for what they had done; very willingly they would have done it, but they had not Courage to do it, becauſe the People eſpoſed their Cauſe, and cry'd up the Miracle; and they ſtood now in as much Awe of them as they had done formerly, when they durſt not lay Hands on Chriſt *for fear of the People*. By which it appears that the Out cry of the Mob againſt our Saviour, was a forc'd or manag'd Thing, the Stream ſoon return'd to its former Channel. Now they *could not find how they might puniſh* Peter *and* John, what Colour they might have for it, *becauſe of the People*. They knew it would be an *unrighteous thing* to puniſh them, and therefore ſhould have been reſtrain'd from it by the Fear of GOD; but they conſider'd it only as a *dangerous* thing, and therefore were held in from it only by the Fear of the *People*. For,

(1.) The People were convinc'd of the Truth of the Miracle; It was a *notable Miracle*, γνωστὸν σημεῖον a *known* Miracle; it was known that they did it in Chriſt's Name, and that Chriſt himſelf had often done the like before; this was a known Inſtance of the Power of Chriſt, and Proof of his Doctrine, that it was a great Miracle, and wrought for the Confirmation of the Doctrine they preach'd, (for it was a *Sign*) was *manifeſt to all that dwelt in* Jeruſalem, it was an Opinion univerſally received, and the Miracle being wrought at the Gate of the Temple, univerſal Notice was taken of it; and they themſelves, with all the Craft and all the Front they had, *could not deny it* to be a true Miracle; every Body would have hooted at them if they had. They could eaſily deny it to their own Conſciences but not to the World. The Proofs of the Goſpel were *undeniable*.

(2.) They went further, and were not only convin'd of the Truth of the Miracle, but all Men *glorify'd God for that which was done*; even thoſe that were not perſuaded by it to believe in Chriſt, yet were ſo affected with it as a Mercy to a poor Man, and an Honour to their Country, that they could not but give Praiſe to GOD for it: even Natural Religion taught them to do that, And if the Prieſts had puniſh'd *Peter* and *John* for that for which all Men glorify'd God, they would have loſt all their Intereſt in the People, and been abandon'd as Enemies both to GOD and Man. Thus therefore their Wrath ſhall be made to *praiſe God*, and the *Remainder thereof* ſhall be *reſtrain'd*.

2. They yet reſolve, That it is neceſſary to *ſilence* them for the future, *v.* 17, 18. They could not prove that they had ſaid or done any Thing amiſs, and yet they muſt no more ſay or do what they have done. All their Care is, that the Doctrine of Chriſt *ſpread no further among the People*; as if that healing Inſtitution were a Plague begun, the Contagion of which muſt be ſtop'd. See how the Malice of Hell fights againſt the Counſels of Heaven; GOD will have the Knowledge of Chriſt to ſpread *all the World over*, but the chief Prieſts would have it ſpread *no further* which he *that ſits in Heaven laughs at*.

Now to prevent the further ſpreading of this Doctrine;

1. They charge the Apoſtles never to preach it any more: *Be it enacted by* their *Authority*, (which they think every *Iſraelite* is bound in Conſcience to ſubmit to) That *no Man ſpeak at all or teach in the Name of* Jeſus, *v.* 18. We do not find that they give them any Reaſon why the Doctrine of Chriſt muſt be ſuppreſs'd; they cannot ſay, 'tis either falſe or dangerous, or of any ill Tendency, and are aſham'd to own the true Reaſon, that it teſtifies againſt their Hypocriſy and Wickedneſs, and ſhocks their Tyranny: But *ſtat pro ratione voluntas*, We ſtraitly charge and command you, not only that you do not preach this Doctrine publickly, but that ye *ſpeak henceforth to no Man*, not to any particular Perſon privately, *in this Name*. v. 17. There is not a greater Service done to the Devil's Kingdom than the Silencing of Faithful Miniſters, and the putting them under a Buſhel that are the Lights of the World.

2. They *threaten* them if they do, *ſtraitly* threaten them; it is at their Peril. This Court will reckon it ſelf highly affronted if they do, and they ſhall fall under its Diſpleaſure. Chriſt had not only charg'd them to preach the Goſpel to every Creature, but had *promis'd* to bear them out in it, and reward them for it. Now theſe Prieſts not only forbid them to preach the Goſpel, but *threaten* to puniſh it as a heinous Crime; but thoſe who know how to put a *juſt Value* upon Chriſt's Promiſes, know how to put a *juſt Contempt* upon the World's Threatnings, tho' they be *Threatnings of Slaughter* that it *breaths* out, *Acts*. ix. 1.

Secondly, Here's the couragious Reſolution of the Priſoners to go on in their Work, notwithſtanding the Reſolutions of this Court, and their Declaration of this Reſolution, *v.* 19, 20. *Peter* and *John* needed not *confer together* to know one another's Minds, for they were both acted by one and the ſame Spirit, but agree preſently in the ſame Sentiments, and joyntly put in the Anſwer, *Whether it be right in the Sight of God*, to whom both you and we are accountable, *to hearken unto you more than unto God*, we appeal to your ſelves, *judge ye*; *For we cannot* forbear ſpeaking to every Body *the Things which we have ſeen and heard*, and are our ſelves full of, and are charg'd to publiſh. The *Prudence of the Serpent* would have directed them to be ſilent, and tho' they could not with a good Conſcience promiſe that they would not preach the Goſpel any more, yet they needed not tell them that they would: But the *Boldneſs of the Lion* directed them thus to ſet both the Authority and the Malignity of their Perſecutors at Defiance. They do in Effect tell them, They are reſolv'd to go on in Preaching, and juſtify themſelves in it with two Things.

1. The *Command of GOD*; You charge us not to preach the Goſpel, he hath charg'd us to preach it, has committed it to us as a Truſt, requiring us upon our Allegiance faithfully to diſpenſe it; Now whom muſt we obey; GOD or you? There they appeal to one of the *Communes Notitiæ*, to a ſettled and acknowledg'd Maxim in the Law of Nature, that if Men's Commands and GOD's interfere GOD's Commands muſt take place. It is a Rule in the *Common Law* of *England*, that if any Statute be made contrary to the Law of GOD, it is null and void. Nothing can be more abſurd than to hearken unto weak and failible Men that are Fellow-Creatures and Fellow-Subjects, more than unto a GOD that is infinitely Wiſe and Holy, our Creator and Sovereign LORD, and the Judge to whom we are all accountable. The Caſe is ſo plain, ſo uncontroverted and ſelf-evident, that we will venture to leave it to your ſelves to judge of it, tho' you are byaſs'd and prejudic'd. Can you think it *right in the ſight of God* to break a Divine Command in Obedience to a Human Injunction. That is right indeed, which is *right in the ſight of God*; for his Judgment we are ſure, is according to Truth, and therefore by that we ought to govern our ſelves.

2. The *Convictions of their own Conſciences*; Tho' they had not had ſuch an expreſs Command from Heaven to preach the Doctrine of Chriſt, yet *could not but ſpeak*, and ſpeak publickly thoſe Things *which they had ſeen and heard*. Like *Elihu* they were *full of this Matter*, and the *Spirit within them conſtrained them*, they muſt *ſpeak* that they might be *refreſh'd*, Job xxxii. 18, 20. (1.) They felt the *Influence* of it upon themſelves, what a bleſſed Change it hath wrought upon them, has brought them into a new World, and therefore they cannot but ſpeak of it: And thoſe ſpake the Doctrine of Chriſt beſt, that have felt the Power of it, and taſted the Sweetneſs of it, and have themſelves been deeply affected with it; 'tis as a *Fire in their Bones*, Jer. xx. 19. (2.) They know the *Importance* of it to others; they look with Concern upon periſhing Souls, and know they cannot eſcape eternal Ruin but by Jeſus Chriſt, and therefore will be faithful to them in giving them Warning and ſhewing them the right Way. They are Things *which we have ſeen and heard* and therefore are fully aſſur'd of our ſelves; and Things which we *only* have ſeen and heard; and therefore, if we do not publiſh them, who will? Who can? *Knowing the* Favour, as well as the *Terror of the Lord*, *we perſuade Men*; *for the Love of Chriſt*, and the Love of Souls *conſtrained us*, 2 Cor. v. 11, 14.

Thirdly, There's the Diſcharge of the Priſoners, *v.* 21. *They further threatned them*, and thought they frighten'd them, and then *let them go*. There were many whom they terrify'd into an Obedience to their unrighteous Decrees, they knew how to keep Men in Awe with their Excommunications, *Joh*. ix. 22. and thought they could have the ſame Influence upon the Apoſtles that they had upon other Men; but they were deceiv'd, for they had been with *Jeſus*. They *threatned* them, and that was all they did now; when they had done that, they *let them go*.

1. Becauſe they durſt not *contradict* the People, who *glorified God for that which was done*, and would have been ready (at leaſt they thought ſo) to pull them out of their Seats if they had puniſh'd the Apoſtles for doing it. As *Rulers* by the Ordinance of GOD are made a *Terror* and *Reſtraint* to *wicked People*; ſo *People* are ſometimes by the Providence of GOD made a *Terror* and *Reſtraint* to *wicked Rulers*.

2. Becauſe they could not *contradict* the Miracle, *For*, *v.* 22. *the Man was about Forty Years old on whom this Miracle of healing was ſhewed*. And therefore, (1.) The Miracle was ſo much the greater; he having been lame *from his Mother's Womb*, chap. iii. 2. The older he grew the more *inveterate* the Diſeaſe was, and the more hardly cured. If thoſe that are grown into Years, and have been long accuſtom'd to Evil, yet are cur'd of their ſpiritual Impotency to Good, and thereby of their evil Cuſtoms, the Power of Divine Grace is therein ſo much the more magnify'd. (2.) The Truth of it was ſo much the better atteſted; for *the Man being above Forty Years old*, he was able, like the blind Man whom Chriſt heal'd, when he was ask'd, to *ſpeak for himſelf*, John ix. 21.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief prieſts and elders had ſaid unto them. 24 And when they heard that, they lift up their voice to God with one accord, and ſaid, Lord, thou art God which haſt made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all that in them is: 25 Who by the mouth of thy ſervant David haſt ſaid, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 26 The kings of the earth ſtood up, and the rulers were gather'd together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Chriſt. 27 For of a truth againſt thy holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Iſrael were gather'd together, 28 For to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel

determined before to be done. 29 And now Lord, behold their threatnings: and grant unto thy ſervants, that with all boldneſs they may ſpeak thy word, 30 By ſtretching forth thine hand to heal: and that ſigns may be done by the name of thy holy child Jeſus. 31 And when they had prayed, the place was ſhaken where they were aſſembled together; and they were all filled with the holy Ghoſt, and they ſpake the word of God with boldneſs.

We hear no more at preſent of the chief Prieſts, what they did when they had diſmiſs'd *Peter* and *John*, but are to attend thoſe *two Witneſſes*. And here we have,

Firſt, Their Return to their Brethren, the Apoſtles and Miniſters, and perhaps ſome private Chriſtians. *Ver.* 23. *Being let go, they went to their own Company*, who perhaps were at this Time met together in pain for them, and praying for them; as *Acts* xii. 12. As ſoon as ever they were at Liberty they went to their old Friends, and return'd to their Church Fellowſhip.

1. Tho' GOD had highly honour'd them, in calling them out to be his Witneſſes, and enabling them to acquit themſelves ſo well, yet they were not puffed up with the Honour done them, nor thought themſelves thereby exalted above their Brethren, but *went to their own Company*. No Advancement in Gifts or Uſefulneſs, ſhould make us think ourſelves above either the Duties or the Privileges of the Communion of Saints.

2. Tho' their Enemies had ſeverely threaten'd them, and endeavour'd to break their Knot, and frighten them from the Work they were joyntly engag'd in; yet they *went to their own Company*, and fear'd not the Wrath of their Rulers. They might have had Comfort, if being *let go*, they had retir'd to their Cloſets, and ſpent ſome Time in Devotion there: But they were Men in a publick Station, and muſt ſeek not ſo much their own perſonal Satisfaction, as the Publick Good. And Chriſt's Followers do beſt in Company, provided it be in *their own Company*.

Secondly, The Account they gave them of what had paſs'd; They *reported all that the chief Prieſts and Elders had ſaid unto them*, adding, no doubt, what they were enabled by the Grace of GOD to reply to them, and how their Tryal iſſu'd. They related it to them,

1. That they might know what to expect both from Men, and from GOD in the Progreſs of their Work; from Men they might expect every Thing that was terrifying, but from GOD every Thing that was encouraging; Men would do their utmoſt to *run them down*, but GOD would take effectual Care to *bear them up*. Thus the *Brethren in the Lord would wax confident through their Bonds*, and their Experiences, as *Phil.* i. 14.

2. That they might have it recorded in the Hiſtory of the Church for the Benefit of Poſterity particularly for the Confirmation of our Faith touching the Reſurrection of Chriſt. The Silence of an Adverſary, in ſome Caſes, is next door to the Conſent and Teſtimony of an Adverſary. Theſe Apoſtles told the chief Prieſts to their Faces, That GOD had *raiſed up* Jeſus *from the Dead*, and tho' they were a Body of them together, they had not the Confidence to deny it; but in the ſillieſt and moſt ſneaking Manner imaginable, bid the Apoſtles not tell any Body of it.

3. That they might now joyn with them in Prayers and Praiſes; and by ſuch a Conſort as this, God would be the more glorify'd, and the Church the more edify'd. We ſhould therefore communicate to our Brethern the Providences of GOD that are concerning us, and our Experience of his Preſence with us, that they may aſſiſt us in our Acknowledgment of GOD therein.

Thirdly, Their Addreſs to GOD upon this Occaſion; *When they heard* of the impotent Malice of the Prieſts, and the potent Courage of the Sufferers, they call'd their Company together, and went to Prayer; *They left up their Voice to God with one accord*, v. 24. Not that it can be ſuppos'd, that they all ſaid the ſame Words at the ſame time, tho' it was poſſible they might, being all inſpir'd by one and the ſame Spirit, but One in the Name of the reſt *lift up his Voice to God*, and the reſt joyn'd with him, ὁμοθυμαδὸν. with *one Mind*, ſo the Word ſignifies, their Hearts went along with him, and ſo tho' but One ſpoke, they all pray'd; One *lift up his Voice*, and in concurrence with him they all *lift up their Hearts*, which was in effect lifting up their Voice to GOD; for Thoughts are Words to GOD. *Moſes cry'd unto God*, when we find not a Word he ſaid.

Now in this ſolemn Addreſs to GOD, we have

1. Their Adoration of GOD as the Creator of the World, *v.* 24. With *one Mind*, and ſo in effect with *one Mouth* they *glorify'd God*, (Rom. xv. 6.) They *ſaid, O Lord, thou art God*, GOD alone: Δέσποτα Thou art our Maſter and Soveraign Ruler, (ſo the Word ſignifies) art *GOD*; GOD and not Man; GOD and not the Work of Mens Hands; the Creator of All, and not the Creature of Mens Fancies. Thou art the GOD *which haſt made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea*, the upper and lower World, and all the Creatures that are in both. Thus we Chriſtians diſtinguiſh ourſelves from the Heathen, that while they worſhip Gods which they have made, we are worſhipping the GOD that made us and all the World: And it is very proper to begin our Prayer, as well as our Creed, with the Acknowledgment of *This*, that GOD is the *Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and of all Things viſible and inviſible*. Tho' the Apoſtles were at this Time full of the Myſtery of the World's Redemption, yet they do not forget or over-look the Hiſtory of the World's Creation; for the Chriſtian Religion was intended to confirm and improve, not to eclipſe or juſtle out the Truths and Dictates of Natural Religion. It is a great Encouragement to GOD's Servants, both in Doing work, and Suffering-work, that they ſerve the GOD that made all Things, and therefore has the Diſpoſal of their Times, and all Events concerning them, and is able to ſtrengthen them under all their Difficulties. And if we give Him the Glory of this, we may take the Comfort of it.

2. Their Reconciling themſelves to the preſent Diſpenſations of Providence by reflecting upon thoſe Scriptures in the *Old Teſtament* which foretold that the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* would meet with ſuch Oppoſition as this at the firſt ſetting of it up in the World, *v.* 25, 26. GOD that *made Heaven and Earth*, cannot meet with any Oppoſition to his Deſigns, ſince none dare diſpute or conteſt with Him: Yea, thus it was written, *Thus He ſpake by the Mouth*, thus He wrote by the Pen, *of his Servant David*, who appears by this was the Pen-man of the ſecond *Pſalm*, [illegible] therefore moſt probably of the firſt, and other *Pſalms* that are not aſcrib'd to any other, tho' they have not his Name in the Title. Let it not therefore be a Surprize to them, or any Diſcouragement to any in embracing their Doctrine, for the Scripture muſt be fulfill'd. It was foretold, *Pſal.* ii. 1, 2. (1.) That the *Heathen* would *rage* at Chriſt and his Kingdom, and be angry at the Attempts to ſet it up, becauſe that would be the pulling down of the Gods of the Heathen, and giving Check to the Wickedneſs of the Heathen. (2.) That *the People* would *imagine* all the *Things* that could be againſt it, to ſilence the Teachers of it, to diſcountenance the Subjects of it, and to cruſh all the Intereſts of it: And if they prove *vain Things* in the iſſue, that's no thanks to them who *imagin'd* them. (3.) That the *Kings of the Earth* particularly would *ſtand up* in Oppoſition to the Kingdom of Chriſt, as if they were jealous, (tho' there's no Occaſion for their being ſo) that it would interfere with their Powers, and intrench upon their Perogatives. The *Kings of the Earth* that are moſt favour'd and honour'd by Divine Providence, and ſhould do moſt *for GOD*, are Strangers and Enemies to divine Grace and do moſt *againſt GOD*. (4.) That the *Rulers* would *gather together* to conſult and decree *againſt the Lord*, and *againſt his Chriſt*, againſt both Natural and Revealed Religion. What is done againſt Chriſt, GOD takes as done againſt Himſelf. Chriſtianity was not only deſtitute of the Advantage of the Countenance and Support of Kings and Rulers, it had neither their Power nor their Purſes, but it was oppos'd and fought againſt by them, and they combin'd to run it down, and yet it made its Way.

3. Their Repreſentation of the preſent Accompliſhment of thoſe Predictions in the Enmity and Malice of the Rulers againſt Chriſt. What was fore-told, we ſee fulfill'd, *v.* 27, 28. 'Tis *of a Truth*, 'tis certainly ſo, 'tis too plain to be deny'd, and in it appears *the Truth* of the Prediction, that *Herod* and *Pilate* the two *Roman* Governors, with the *Gentiles*, the *Roman* Souldiers under their Command, and with the *People of Iſrael* the Rulers of the *Jews* and the Mob, that is under their Influence, were *gathered together* in a Confederacy *againſt the holy Child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed*. Some Copies add another Circumſtance, ἐν τῇ πόλει σου ταύτῃ *in this holy City*, where above any Place He ſhould have been welcom'd. But herein they do *that which thy Hand and thy Council determined before to be done*. See here (1.) The *Wiſe* and *Holy Deſigns* GOD had concerning Chriſt. He is here call'd the *Child Jeſus*, as he was call'd *Luke* ii. 27, 43. in his Infancy, to intimate, that even in his exalted State He is not aſham'd of his Condeſcenſions for us and that He continues meek and lowly in Heart: In the Height of his Glory He is the *Lamb of God*, and the *Child Jeſus*. But He is the *Holy Child Jeſus*, ſo He was call'd, *Luke* i. 35. *that Holy Thing*. And *thy* Holy Child, the Word ſignifies both a *Son*, and a *Servant* παῖδά σου He was the *Son of God*; and yet in the Work of Redemption He acted as his Fathers *Servant*, *Iſa.* xlii. 1. *My Servant whom I uphold*. 'Twas he whom GOD *anointed*, both qualify'd for the undertaking, and call'd to it; and thence He was call'd the LORD's *Chriſt*, v. 26. And this come in as a Reaſon why they ſet themſelves with ſo much Rage and Violence againſt him, becauſe GOD had *anointed him*; and they were reſolv'd not to reſign, much leſs to ſubmit to him. *David* was envy'd by *Saul*, becauſe he was the Lord's Anointed. And the *Philiſtines* came up to ſeek *David* when they heard he was anointed, 2 *Sam.* v. 17. Now the GOD that anointed Chriſt *determin'd* what ſhould be *done to him* purſuant to that Anointing; He was anointed to be a Saviour, and therefore 'twas *determin'd* he ſhould be a *Sacrifice*, to make Atonement for Sin; He muſt dye therefore, he muſt be ſlain, yet not by his own Hands, therefore GOD wiſely *determin'd* before by what Hands it ſhould be done, it muſt be by the Hands of thoſe who will treat Him as a Criminal and Malefactor, and therefore it cannot be done by the Hands either of Angels or good Men; He muſt therefore be *deliver'd into the Hands of Sinners*, as *Job* was, *chap.* xvi. 11. And as *David* was deliver'd to *Shimei* to be *made a Curſe*, 2 Sam.

xvi. 11. *the Lord has bidden him, God's Hand and his Counſel determin'd it*, His *Will*, and his *Wiſdom*, GOD's *Hand* which properly notes his *executive Power*, yet is here put for his Purpoſe and Decree, becauſe with him *ſaying* and *doing* are not two Things as they are with us. His *Hand* and his *Counſel* always agree, for *whatſoever the Lord pleas'd that did he.* Dr. *Hammond* makes this Phraſe of GOD's *Hand* determining it to be on Alluſion to the High Prieſt's *caſting Lots* upon the *two Goats* on the *Day of Atonement*, Lev. xvi. 8. in which he lift up the Hand that he happened to have the *Lot for the Lord in*, and that Goat on which it fell was immediately ſacrific'd: And the Diſpoſal of this Lot was from the Lord, *Prov.* xvi. 33. Thus GOD's Hand determin'd what ſhould be done, that Chriſt ſhould be the Sacrifice ſlain. Or, (if I may offer a Conjecture) when GOD's *Hand* is here ſaid to *determine*, it may not be meant of GOD's *Acting Hand*, but his *Writing* Hand, as *Job* xiii. 26. *Thou writeſt bitter Things againſt us*; and GOD's Decree is ſaid to be that *which is Written in the Scriptures of Truth*, Dan. x. 31. and *in the Volume of the Book* it was *written of Chriſt*, Pſal. xl. 7. And it was *God's Hand* that wrote it, His *Hand* according to his Counſel. The Commiſſion was *given* under his *Hand.* (2.) The *wicked* and *unholy* Inſtruments that were employ'd in the executing of this Deſign, tho' they *meant not ſo, neither did their Heart think ſo. Herod* and *Pilate*, *Gentiles* and *Jews*, who had been at Variance with each other, united againſt Chriſt. And God's *ſerving his own Purpoſes* by what they did was no Excuſe at all for their Malice and Wickedneſs in the doing of it, any more than God's making the Blood of the Martyrs the Seed of the Church extenuated the Guilt of their Bloody Perſecutors. Sin is not the leſs Evil for God's bringing Good out of it, but He is by that the more glorify'd, and will be ſo, when the Myſtery of God ſhall be finiſh'd.

4. Their Petition with reference to their Caſe at this Time. The Enemies *were* gather'd together againſt Chriſt, and then no Wonder they were ſo againſt his Minſters, *The Diſciple is not better than his Maſter*, nor muſt expect better Treatment, But being thus inſulted they pray,

1. That GOD would take Cognizance of the Malice of their Enemies. *Now Lord behold their Threatnings*, v. 29. Behold them as thou art ſaid to behold them in the Pſalm before quoted, *Pſal.* ii. 4. when they *thought* to break his Bands aſunder, and caſt away his Cords from them, He that *ſits in Heaven laughs at them, and has them in deriſion*; And then *the Virgin the Daughter of Zion may deſpiſe* the impotent Menaces even of the *great King*, the King of *Aſſyria*, *Iſa.* xxxvii. 22. And *now* Lord; *τα νυν*, Theſe's an Emphaſis upon the *Now*, to intimate that then is GOD's Time to appear for his People, when the Power of their Enemies is moſt daring and threatning. They do not *dictate* to GOD what he ſhall do, but *refer* themſelves to him, like *Hezekiah*, Iſa. xxxvii. 17. *Open thy Eyes O Lord and ſee*; Thou knoweſt what they ſay, *Thou beholdeſt miſchief and ſpite*, Pſal. x. 14. to Thee we appeal, *Behold their Threatnings*, and either tye their Hand, or turn their Hearts; make their Wrath as far as it is let looſe to *praiſe Thee*, and *the Remainder thereof do thou reſtrain*, Pſal. lxxvi. 10. It is a Comfort to us, that if we are unjuſtly threaten'd, and bear it patiently, we may make ourſelves eaſy by ſpreading the Caſe before the Lord, and leaving it with him.

2. That GOD by his Grace would keep up their Spirits, and animate them to go on chearfully in their Work. *Grant unto thy Servants that with all boldneſs they may ſpeak thy Word*, tho' the Prieſts and Rulers have enjoyn'd them Silence. *Note*, In threatning Times our Care ſhould be not ſo much that Troubles may be prevented, as that we may be enabled to go on with Chearfulneſs and Reſolution in our Work and Duty, whatever Troubles we may meet with. Their Prayer is not, Lord, behold their Threatnings and frighten them, and ſtop their Mouths, and fill their Faces with Shame; but behold their Threatnings, and animate us, open our Mouths, and fill our Hearts with Courage. They do not pray, Lord give us a fair Opportunity to retire from our Work, now it is become dangerous, but Lord give us Grace to go on in our Work, and not to be *afraid of the Face of Man.* Obſerve, (1.) Thoſe that are ſent on God's Errands, ought to deliver their Meſſage with Boldneſs, with all Boldneſs, with all *Liberty of Speech*, not ſhunning to *declare the whole Counſel of God*, whoever is offended; not doubting of what they ſay, or of being born out in ſaying it. (2.) GOD is to be ſought unto for an Ability to ſpeak his Word *with Boldneſs*, and thoſe that *deſire* divine Aids and Encouragements may *depend* upon them, and ought to go forth, and go on in the Strength of the Lord God. (3.) The Threatnings of our Enemies, that are deſign'd to weaken our Hands, and drive us off from our Work, ſhould rather ſtir us up to ſo much the more Courage and Reſolation in our Work. Are they *daring* that fight againſt Chriſt? for Sham, let not us be *ſneaking* that are for Him.

3. That GOD would ſtill give them Power to work Miracles for the Confirmation of the Doctrine they preached, which by the Cure of the lame Man they found to contribute very much to their Succeſs, and would contribute abundantly to their further Progreſs. Lord, *Grant us boldneſs by ſtretching forth thine Hand to heal. Note*, Nothing emboldens faithful Miniſters more in their Work than the Tokens of GOD's Preſence with them, and a Divine Power going along with them. They pray, (1.) That GOD would *ſtretch forth his hand to heal*, both the Bodies and Souls of Men, elſe in vain do they ſtretch forth their Hands; either in Preaching, (*Iſa.* lxv. 2.) or in Curing, *Acts* vii. 7. (2.) That *Signs and Wonders might be done by the Name of the holy Child Jeſus*, which would be *convincing* to the People, and *confounding* to the Enemies. Chriſt had promiſed them a Power to *work Miracles*, for the Proof of their Commiſſion, *Mark* xvi. 17, 18. Yet they muſt pray for it; and though they had it muſt, pray for the Continuance of it. Chriſt himſelf muſt *ask and it ſhall be given him.* Obſerve, 'tis the Honour of Chriſt that they aim at in this Requeſt, that the Wonder might be done *by the Name of Jeſus*, the *Holy Child* Jeſus, and his Name ſhall have all the Glory.

Fourthly, The gracious Anſwer GOD gave to this Addreſs; not in *Word*, but in *Power*.

1. GOD gave them a Sign of the Acceptance of their Prayers v. 31. *When they had Pray'd*, perhaps many of them pray'd ſucceſſively, one by one, according to the Rule, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 31. And when they had concluded the Work of the Day, *The Place was ſhaken where they aſſembled together*, there was a *ſtrong mighty Wind*, ſuch as that when the Spirit was poured out upon them, *chap.* ii. 1. *which ſhook the Houſe*, which was now their Houſe of Prayer. This ſhaking of the Place was deſigned to ſtrike an Awe upon them, and to awaken and raiſe their Expectations, and to give them a ſenſible Token that GOD was with them of a Truth. And perhaps it was to put them in Mind of that Prophecy, *Hag.* ii. 7. *I will ſhake all Nations, and will fill this Houſe with Glory.* This was to ſhew them what Reaſon they had to fear GOD more, and then they would fear Man leſs. He that ſhook this Place could make the Hearts of thoſe who threatened his Servants thus to tremble, for he *cuts off the Spirit of Princes, and is terrible to the Kings of the Earth.* The Place was ſhaken that their Faith might be eſtabliſhed and unſhaken.

2. GOD gave them greater Degrees of his Spirit, which was the Thing they prayed for; Their Prayer without doubt was *accepted*, for it was anſwered, *They were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt* more than ever, by which they were not only *encourag'd*, but *enabled* to *ſpeak the Word of God with boldneſs*, and not to be afraid of the proud and haughty Looks of Men. The Holy Ghoſt taught them not only *what* to ſpeak, but *how* to ſpeak. Thoſe that were endued *habitually* with the Powers of the Holy Ghoſt, yet had Occaſion for freſh Supplies of the Spirit according as the various Occurrences of their Service were. They were filled with the Holy Ghoſt at the Bar, *v.* 2. and now *filled with the Holy Ghoſt* in the Pulpit, which teaches us to live in an *actual* Dependance upon the Grace of GOD according as the Duty of every Day require. We need to be *anointed with freſh Oyl* upon every freſh Occaſion. As in the Providence of GOD, ſo in the Grace of GOD we not only in general *live, and have our Being*; but *move* in every particular Actions, *Acts* xvii. 28. we have here an Inſtance of the Performance of that Promiſe, that GOD *will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Luke xi. 13. for 'twas in Anſwer to Prayer that they were *filled with the Holy Ghoſt*, And an Example of the Improvement of that Gift, which is requir'd of all on whom it is beſtow'd; have it and uſe it, uſe it and have more of it: when they were filled with the Holy Ghoſt, they *ſpoke the Word with all boldneſs*, for the *Miniſtration of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal.* Talents muſt be traded with, not buried. When they find *the Lord God help them* by his Spirit, they know they ſhall *not be Confounded*, Iſa. l. 7.

32 And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and of one ſoul: neither ſaid any *of them*, that ought of the things which he poſſeſſed, was his own, but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apoſtles witneſs of the reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were poſſeſſors of lands or houſes, ſold them, and brought the prices of the things that were ſold, 35 And laid *them* down at the apoſtles feet: and diſtribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joſes, who by the Apoſtles was ſirnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The ſon of conſolation) a Levite, *and* of the Country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, ſold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apoſtles feet.

1. We have a *general* Idea given us in theſe Verſes, and it is a very *beautiful* one of the Spirit and State of this truly Primitive Church. 'tis *Conſpectus Sæculi*, a View of that Age of Infancy and Innocence.

Firſt, The Diſciples *loved one another dearly*; Behold how good and how pleaſant it was to ſee how the *Multitude of them that believ'd were of one Heart and of one Soul*, v. 32. and there was no ſuch Thing as Diſcord or Diviſion among them. *Obſerve here*,

1. There were *Multitudes that believed*, even in *Jeruſalem* where the malignant Influence of the Chief Prieſts was moſt ſtrong. There were Three Thouſand converted on one Day, and Five Thouſand on another, and beſides thoſe *that are added to the Church daily*: And no doubt they were all *baptiz'd*, and made

Profeſſion of the Faith, for the ſame Spirit that endued the Apoſtles with Courage to preach the Faith of Chriſt, endued them with Courage to confeſs it. *Note*, The Increaſe of the Church is the Glory of it and the *Multitude* of them that believe, more than their Quality. Now the Church ſhines and her Light is come when Souls thus *fly like a Cloud* into her Boſom, and *like Doves to their Windows*, Iſa. lx. 1, 8.

2. They were all *of one Heart and of one Soul.* Tho' there were *many*, very many, of different Ages, Tempers, and Conditions in the World, who perhaps before they believed were perfect Strangers to one another, and yet when they met in Chriſt they were as intimately acquainted as if they had known one another many Years; Perhaps they had been of different Sects among the *Jews* before their Converſion, or had had Diſcords upon Civil Accounts: But now thoſe were all forgotten and laid aſide, and they were unanimous in the Faith of Chriſt, and being all joyn'd to the Lord, they were joyn'd to one another in holy Love. This was the bleſſed Fruit of Chriſt's dying precept, to his Diſciples, to *love one another*, and his dying Prayer for them *that they all might be one*. We have Reaſon to think they divided themſelves into ſeveral Congregations, or Worſhipping Aſſemblies according as their Dwellings were, under their reſpective Miniſters. And yet that occaſion'd no Jealouſy or Uneaſineſs for they were all *of one Heart and one Soul* notwithſtanding, and lov'd thoſe of other Congregations as truly as thoſe of their own. Thus it was then, and we may not deſpair of ſeeing it ſo again, when the *Spirit* ſhall be *poured out upon us from on high.*

Secondly, The Miniſters went on in their Work with great Vigour and Succeſs. *v.* 33. *with great Power gave the Apoſtles witneſs of the Reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus.* The Doctrine they preached was the *Reſurrection of Chriſt.* A Matter of Fact which ſerv'd not only for the Confirmation of the Truth of Chriſt's Holy Religion, but being duly explain'd and illuſtrated with the proper Inferances from it ſerv'd for a Summary of all the Duties, Privileges, and Comforts of Chriſtians. The Reſurrection of Chriſt rightly underſtood, and improv'd, will let us into the great Myſteries of Religion.

By the *great Power* wherewith the Apoſtles atteſted the Reſurrection may be meant.

1. The great Vigour and Spirit, and Courage, with which they publiſhed and avowed this Doctrine; they do it not ſoftly and diffidently, but with Livelineſs and Reſolution, as thoſe that were themſelves abundantly ſatisfy'd of the Truth of it, and earneſtly deſired that others ſhould be ſo too. Or,

2. The Miracles which they wrought to confirm their Doctrine; with Works of great Power, they gave witneſs to the Reſurrection of Chriſt, God himſelf in them bearing Witneſs too.

Thirdly, The Beauty of the Lord our God ſhone upon them and all their Performances. *Great Grace was upon them all*, not only all the Apoſtles, but all the Believers, χάρις μεγάλη Grace that had ſomething *great* in it, magnificent, and very extraordinary, was *upon them all.*

1. Chriſt poured out Abundance of Grace upon them, ſuch as qualified them for great Services, by enduing them with great Power; it came *upon them* from on high; from above.

2. There were evident Fruits of this Grace in all they ſaid and did, ſuch as put an Honour upon them, and recommended them to the Favour of GOD, as being in his Sight of great Price.

3. Some think it includes the Favour they were in with the People. Every one ſaw a Beauty and Excellency in them, and reſpected them.

Fourthly, They were very liberal to the Poor, and dead to this World. This was as great an Evidence of the Grace of GOD in them as any other, and recommended them as much to the Eſteem of the People.

1. They inſiſted not upon *Property*, which even Children ſeem to have a Senſe of, and a Jealouſy for, and which Worldly People triumph in; as *Laban*, Gen. xxxi. 43. *All that thou ſeeſt is mine*; and *Nabal*, 1 Sam. xxv. 11. *my Bread and my Water*, Theſe Believers were ſo taken up with the Hopes of an Inheritance in t'other World, that this was nothing to them; *No Man ſaid that ought of the Things which he poſſeſs'd was his own*, v. 32. They did not take away *Property*, but they were *indifferent* to it. They did not call what they had, *their own*, in a way of Pride and vain Glory, boaſting of it, or truſting in it; They did not call it *their own*, becauſe they had in Affection forſaken all for Chriſt, and were continually expecting to be ſtript of all for their Adherence to him. They did not ſay, that ought was *their own*, for we can call nothing our own but Sin, what we have in the World is more GOD's than our own, we have it from Him, muſt uſe it for Him, and are accountable for it to Him. No Man ſaid what he had was *his own*, ἴδιον his *peculiar*, for he was *ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate*, and deſired not to eat his Morſel alone, but what he had to ſpare from himſelf and Family, his poor Neighbours were welcome to. They that had Eſtates were not ſollicitous to *lay up*, but very willing to *lay out*, and would ſtraiten themſelves to help their Brethren. No Marvel they were of *one Heart and Soul*, when they ſate ſo looſe to the Wealth of this World, for *Meum* and *Tuum* are the great Makebates. Men's holding *their own*, and graſping at more than their own are the Riſe of *Wars* and *Fightings.*

2. They abounded in Charity, ſo that in effect *they had all Things common*; for *v.* 34. There was *not any among them that lacked*, but Care was taken for their Supply. Thoſe that had been maintained upon the publick Charity, when they turn'd Chriſtians, probably were excluded, and therefore it was fit the Church ſhould take Care of them. As there were many *Poor* that *receiv'd the Goſpel*, ſo there were ſome Rich that were able to maintain them, and the Grace of GOD made them willing. Therefore thoſe that *gather much* have *nothing over*, becauſe what they have over they have for them who *gather little*, that they may have *no Lack*, 2 Cor. viii. 14, 15. The Goſpel hath laid all Things common, not ſo that the Poor are allowed to *rob the Rich*, but ſo as that the Rich are appointed to *relieve the Poor.*

3. They did many of them ſell their Eſtates to raiſe a Fund for Charity; *As many as had poſſeſſions of Lands or Houſes ſold them*, v. 34. Dr. *Lightfoot* computes that this was the Year of *Jubilee* in the Jewiſh Nation, the 50th Year (the Twenty Eighth ſince they ſettled in *Canaan* 1400 Years ago) ſo that what was ſold that Year being not to return till the next *Jubilee*, Lands then took a good Price, And ſo the ſale of thoſe Lands would raiſe the more Money.

Now, 1. We are here told what they did with the Money that was ſo raiſed; they laid it *at the Apoſtles Feet*, *i. e.* they left it to them to be diſpos'd of as they thought fit; probably they had their Support from it; from whence elſe could they have it? *Obſerve*, The Apoſtles would have it laid *at their Feet* in Token of their holy Contempt of the Wealth of the World; They thought it fitter it ſhould be *laid at their Feet* then lodged in their Hands, or in their Boſoms. Being laid there it was not hoared up, but *diſtribution was made* by proper Perſons, *unto every Man according as he had need* great Care ought to be taken in the Diſtribution of publick Charity; (1.) That it be given to ſuch as *have need*, that are not able to procure a competent Maintenance for themſelves, through Age, Infancy, Sickneſs, or bodily Diſability, or Incapacity of Mind, Want either of Ingenuity or Activity, croſs Providences, Loſſes, Oppreſſions, a numerous Charge; Thoſe that upon any of theſe Accounts or any other have real need, and have not Relations of their own to help them, but above all thoſe that are reduc'd to Want for well doing, and for the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, ought to be taken Care of, and provided for, and with a prudent application of what is given ſo as may be moſt for their Benefit. (2.) That it be given to *every Man* for whom it is intended *according as he had need*, without Partiality or *Reſpect of Perſons*; 'Tis a Rule in diſpenſing Charity as well as adminiſtrating Juſtice *ut parium par ſit ratio*, that thoſe who are equally needing and equally deſerving, ſhould be equally helped, and that the Charity ſhould be ſuited and adapted to the Neceſſity; *as the Word is.*

2. Here is one particular Perſon inſtanced in that was remarkable, for this generous Charity; it was *Barnabas*, afterwards *Paul's* Collegue. *Obſerve*,

1. The Account here given concerning him, *v.* 36. his Name was *Joſes*: He was of the Tribe of *Levi*, for there were *Levites* among the *Jews of the Diſperſion*, who 'tis probable preſided in their Synagogue Worſhip, and according to the Duty of that Tribe taught them *the good Knowledge of the Lord.* He was *born in* Cyprus, a great Way off from *Jeruſalem*, his Parents tho' *Jews*, having a Settlement there. Notice is taken of the Apoſtle's changing his Name, after he aſſociated with them; 'tis probable he was one of the Seventy Diſciples, and as he increaſed in Gifts and Graces, grew eminent, and was reſpected by the Apoſtles, who in token of their Value for him, gave him a Name, *Barnabas*; The *Son of Prophecy*, ſo it properly ſignifies, he being endued with extrordinary Gifts of Prophecy; But the Helleniſt *Jews* (ſaith *Grotius*) called *Praying* παράκλησις, and therefore by that Word it is render'd here a *Son of Exhortation*, ſo ſome, one that had an excellent Faculty of Healing, and Perſuading; we have an Inſtance of it, *Acts* xi. 22, 24. A *Son of Conſolation*, ſo we read it; One that did himſelf walk very much in the *Comforts of the Ghoſt*, a chearful Chriſtian, and this enlarg'd his Heart in Charity to the Poor, or, One that was eminent for *comforting* the Lord's People, and ſpeaking Peace to wounded troubled Conſciences, he had an admirable Felicity that Way. There were two among the Apoſtles that were called *Boanerges*, *Sons of Thunder*, Mar. iii. 17. But here was a *Son of Conſolation* with them; each had their ſeveral Gift, neither muſt cenſure the other, but both eaſe one another, let the one ſearch the Wound, and then let the other heal it and bind it up.

2. Here's an Account of his Charity, and great Generoſity to the publick Fund; his is particularly taken notice of, becauſe of the Eminency of his Services afterwards in the Church of GOD, eſpecially in carrying the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*; which that it might not appear to come from any ill Will to his own Nation, we have here his Benevolence to the *Jewiſh* Converts; or perhaps this is mention'd becauſe it was a leading Card, and an Example to others; he *having Land*, whether in *Cyprus* where he was born, or in *Judea* where he now lived, or elſewhere is not certain, but he *ſold it*, not to buy elſewhere to Advantage, but as a *Levite* indeed, who knew he had the *Lord God of* Iſrael *for his Inheritance*, he deſpis'd earthly Inheritances, would be cumber'd no more with them, but *brought the Money and laid it at the Apoſtle's Feet*, to be given in Charity. Thus as One that was

deſign'd to be a Preacher of the Goſpel, he diſentangled himſelf from the Affairs of this Life. And he loſt nothing upon the Ballance of the Account, by laying the Purchaſe of Money at the Apoſtles Feet, when he himſelf was in effect *numbred among the Apoſtles*, by that Word of the Holy Ghoſt, *Separate me* Barnabas *and* Saul, *for the Work whereunto I have call'd them*, Acts xiii. 2. Thus for the Reſpect he ſhew'd to the Apoſtles, *as Apoſtles*, he had *an Apoſtle's Reward.*

CHAP. V.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *The Sin and Puniſhment of* Ananias *and* Sapphira, *who for lying to the Holy Ghoſt were ſtruck Dead at the Word of* Peter, *v.* 1—11. (2.) *The flouriſhing State of the Church in the Power that went along with the Preaching of the Goſpel.* v. 12—16. (3.) *The Impriſonment of the Apoſtles, and their miraculous Diſcharge out of Priſon, with freſh Orders to go on to preach the Goſpel, which they did to the great Vexation of their Perſecutors* v. 17—26. (4.) *Their Arraignment before the great* Sanhedrin, *and their Juſtification of themſelves in what they did,* v. 27—33. (5.) Gamaliels *Counſel concerning them, that they ſhould not perſecute them, but let them alone and ſee what would come of it, and their Concurrence for the preſent with this Advice, in the Diſmiſſion of the Apoſtles with no more but a Scourging,* v. 34—40. (6.) *The Apoſtles chearful Progreſs in their Work, notwithſtanding the Prohibition laid upon them, and the Indignity done them,* v. 41, 42.

BUT a certain man, named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, ſold a poſſeſſion, 2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife alſo being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apoſtles feet. 3. But Peter ſaid, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghoſt, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? 4 Whilſt it remained, was it not in thine own? and after it was ſold, was it not in thine own power? why haſt thou conceiv'd this thing in thine heart? thou haſt not lied unto Men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing theſe words, fell down and gave up the Ghoſt: and great fear came on all them that heard theſe things. 6 And the young Men aroſe, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*. 7 And it was about the ſpace of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in, 8 And Peter anſwered unto her, Tell me whether ye ſold the Land for ſo much. And ſhe ſaid, Yea, for ſo much. 9 Then Peter ſaid unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together, to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and ſhall carry thee out. 10 Then ſhe fell down ſtraitway at his feet, and yielded up the Ghoſt: and the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard theſe things.

The Chapter begins with a melancholy, *But*, which puts a Stop to the pleaſant and agreeable Proſpect of Things which we had in the foregoing Chapters; as every Man, ſo every Church in its beſt State has its *But*, (1.) The Diſciples were very holy and heavenly, and ſeem'd to be all exceeding good; *But* it prov'd there were Hypocrites among them, whoſe Hearts were not right in the Sight of GOD, who when they were baptiz'd and took upon them the Form of Godlineſs, deny'd the Power of Godlineſs, and ſtopt ſhort of that. There is a Mixture of Bad with Good in the beſt Societies on this ſide Heaven; Tares will grow among the Wheat until the Harveſt. (2.) It was the Praiſe of the Diſciples that they came up to that Perfection which Chriſt recommended to the Rich young Man, they ſold what they had and gave to the Poor, *But* even that prov'd a Cloak and Cover of Hypocriſy, which was thought the greateſt Proof and Evidence of Sincerity. (3.) The Signs and Wonders which the Apoſtles wrought were hitherto Miracles of Mercy, *But* now comes in a Miracle of Judgment; And here's an Inſtance of Severity, following the Inſtances of Goodneſs that God may be both lov'd and fear'd. *Obſerve here*,

Firſt, The Sin of *Ananias* and *Sapphira* his Wife. 'Tis good to ſee Husband and Wife joyning together in that which is Good, but to be confederate in Evil, is to be like *Adam and Eve* when they agreed to eat the forbidden Fruit, and were *one* in their Diſobedience.

Now their Sin was,

1. That they were *ambitious* of being thought eminent Diſciples, and of the firſt Rank, when really they were not true Diſciples; would paſs for ſome of the moſt fruitful Trees in Chriſt's Vineyard, when really the *Root of the Matter* was not *found in them.* They *ſold a Poſſeſſion*, and *brought the Money*, as *Barnabas* did, to the *Apoſtles Feet*, that they might not ſeem to be behind the very chief of the Believers, but might be applauded and cry'd up, and ſtand ſo much the fairer for Preferment in the Church; which perhaps they thought would ſhortly ſhine in ſecular Pomp and Grandeur. *Note*, 'Tis poſſible Hypocrites may *deny themſelves* in one Thing, but then it is to *ſerve themſelves* in another; may forgo their ſecular Advantage in one Inſtance with a Proſpect of finding their Account in ſomething elſe. *Ananias* and *Sapphira* would take upon them a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and make *a fair Shew in the Fleſh* with it, and ſo would mock GOD and deceive others, when they knew they could not *go through* with the Chriſtian Profeſſion. It was commendable, and ſo far 'twas right in that Rich young Man, that he would not pretend to follow Chriſt when if it ſhould come to a Pinch, he knew he could not come up to his Terms, but he *went away ſorrowful*; *Ananias* and *Sapphira* pretended they could come up to the Terms that they might have the Credit of being Diſciples, when really they could not, and ſo were a Diſcredit to Diſcipleſhip. *Note*, It is often of fatal Conſequence, for People to go a greater Length in Profeſſion than their inward Principle will admit of.

2. That they were *covetous* of the Wealth of the World and *diſtruſtful* of GOD and his Providence. They *Sold the Land*, and perhaps then in a Pang of Zeal deſign'd no other but to dedicate the Whole of the Purchaſe Money to pious Uſes, and made a Vow, or at leaſt conceiv'd a full Purpoſe to do ſo; But when the Money was receiv'd, their Heart fail'd them, that they *kept back part of the price*, v. 2. becauſe they lov'd the Money, and thought it was too much to part with at once, and to truſt in the Apoſtles Hands; and becauſe they knew not but they might want it themſelves, and tho' now *all Things were common*, yet it would not be ſo long, and what ſhould they do in a Time of Need, if they ſhould leave themſelves Nothing to take to. They could not take GOD's Word that they ſhould be provided for, but throught they would play a wiſer Part than the reſt had done, and lay up for a rainy Day. Thus they thought to ſerve both *God* and *Mammon*, *God* by bringing Part of the Money to the Apoſtles Feet, and *Mammon* by keeping the other Part in their own Pocket; as if there were not an All ſufficiency in GOD to make up *the Whole* to them, except they retain'd ſome in their own Hands by way of *Caution Money*. Their Hearts were *divided*, ſo were they *found Faulty*, Hoſ. x. 2. They *halted* between too; if they had been *through pac'd* Worldlings they would not have *ſold their Poſſeſſion*, and if they had been *through-pac'd* Chriſtians they would not have detain'd *Part of the Price.*

3. That they thought to deceive the Apoſtles, and make them believe they brought the whole Purchaſe-Money, when really it was but a Part. They came with as good an Aſſurance, and as great a Show of Piety and Devotion as any of them, and *laid the Money at the Apoſtles Feet*, as if it were their All. They diſſembled with GOD and his Spirit, with Chriſt and his Church and Miniſters; And this was their Sin.

Secondly, The indictment of *Ananias*, which prov'd both his *Condemnation* and *Execution* for this Sin. When he brought the Money, and expected to be commended and encour'd as others were, *Peter* took him to Task about it. He without any Enquiry, or Examination of Witneſſes concerning it, charges him peremptorily with the Crime, and aggravates it, and lays load upon him for it, ſhewing it him in its own Colour, *v.* 3, 4. The Spirit of GOD in *Peter*, not only *diſcover'd* the *Fact* without any Information, when perhaps no one in the World knew it but the Man and his Wife themſelves, but likewiſe *diſcern'd* the *Principle* of reigning Infidelity in the Heart of *Ananias*, which was at the Bottom of it, and therefore proceeded againſt him ſo ſuddenly. Had it been a Sin of Infirmity, through the Surprize of a Temptation, *Peter* would have taken *Ananias* aſide, and have bid him go home and fetch the reſt of the Money, and repent of his Folly in attempting to put this Cheat upon them: But he knew that his *Heart* was *fully ſet in him to do this Evil*, and therefore allow'd him not Space to repent him. He here ſhew'd him,

1. The Original of his Sin. *Satan fill'd his Heart*, he not only *ſuggeſted* it to him, and *put it into his Head*, but he hurry'd him on with a Reſolution to do it. Whatever is contrary to the *good Spirit*, proceeds from the *evil Spirit*; And thoſe Hearts are *fill'd* by *Satan*, in which Worldlineſs reigns, and has the Aſcendant. Some think *Ananias* was one of thoſe that had *receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt*, and was fill'd with his Gifts, but having provok'd the Spirit to withdraw from him, now *Satan* fill'd his Heart: As when the Spirit of the Lord departed from *Saul*, an *evil Spirit, from God troubled him.* Satan is a *Lying Spirit*, he was ſo in the Mouth of *Ahab*'s Prophets, and ſo he was in the Mouth of *Ananias*, and by that made it appear that he *fill'd his Heart.*

2. The Sin it ſelf, *He ly'd to the Holy Ghoſt*; A Sin of ſuch an heinous Nature that he could not have been guilty of it, if Satan had not *fill'd his Heart*. The Phraſe which we render *lying to the Holy Ghoſt*, is ψεύσασθαί σε τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον which ſome read, to *bely the Holy Ghoſt*; which may be taken two Ways: (1.) That he *bely'd the Holy Ghoſt* in *himſelf*; ſo Dr. *Lightfoot* takes it, and ſuppoſeth, that *Ananias* was not an ordinary Believer, but a Mininſter, and One that had *receiv'd the Gift of the*

Holy Ghoſt with the Hundred and Twenty (for Mention is made of him immediately after *Barnabas*) yet he durſt thus by *diſſembling*, bely and ſhame that Gift. Or thus; They who had ſold their Eſtates and laid the Money at the Apoſtles Feet, did it by the ſpecial Impulſe of the Holy Ghoſt, enabling them to do an Act ſo very great and generous, and *Ananias* pretended, that he was *mov'd by the Holy Ghoſt* to do what he did, as others were, whereas it appear'd by his Baſeneſs that he was not under the Influence of the Good Spirit at all; for had it been *his Work*, it would have been perfect. (2.) That he *bely'd the Holy Ghoſt* in the *Apoſtles*, to whom he brought the Money; he miſrepreſented the Spirit they were acted by, either by a *Suſpicion* that they would not faithfully *diſtribute* what they were intruſted with, which was a baſe Suggeſtion, as if they were falſe to the Truſt repos'd in them; Or, by an *Aſſurance* that they could not *diſcover* the Fraud. He *bely'd* the Holy Ghoſt, when by what he did he would have it *thought*, that thoſe who are endu'd with the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt might as eaſily be impos'd upon as other Men, like *Gehazi*, whom his Maſter convicted of his Error by that Word, *Went not mine Heart with thee?* 2 Kings v. 26. It is charg'd upon the Houſe of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, when like *Ananias* here, they *dealt very treacherouſly*, that they *bely'd the Lord, ſaying, It is not He*. Jer. v. 11, 12. Thus *Ananias* thought the Apoſtles were *altogether ſuch as himſelf*; and this was belying the *Holy Ghoſt* in them, as if He were not in them a *Diſcerner of Spirits*; whereas they had *all* the Gifts of the Spirit in them, which to others were *divided ſeverally*. See 1 *Cor.* xii. 8, 10. They that pretend to an Inſpiration of the Spirit in impoſing upon the Church their own Fancies either in Opinion or Practice, that ſay, They are mov'd from above, when they are carry'd on by their Pride, Covetouſneſs, or Affectation of Dominion, *bely the Holy Ghoſt*.

But we read it, to *lye unto the Holy Ghoſt*; which Reading is countenanc'd by *v.* 4. *Thou haſt not ly'd unto Men, but unto God.* (1.) *Ananias* told a lye, a deliberate Lye, and with a Purpoſe to deceive; he told *Peter*, he had ſold a *Poſſeſſion*, Houſe or Lands, and this was the *Purchaſe Money*. Perhaps, he expreſs'd himſelf in Words thas were capable of a double Meaning, us'd ſome Equivocations about it, which he thought might palliate the Matter a little, and ſave him from the Guilt of a downright Lye; or perhaps, he ſaid nothing; but it was *all one*, he did as the reſt did who brought the *whole Price*, and would be thought to do ſo, and expected the Praiſe they had that did ſo, and the ſame Privilege and Acceſs to the Common-Stock as they had; and therefore it was an implicite Proteſtation that he brought the whole Price, as they did. And this was a Lye; for he *kept back Part*. *Note*, Many are brought to groſs Lying by reigning Pride, and Affectation of the Applauſe of Men; particularly in Works of *Charity to the Poor*. That therefore we may not be found *boaſting of a falſe Gift* given *to* us, or given *by* us, *Prov.* xxv. 14. we muſt not *boaſt* even of a *true* Gift; which is the Meaning of our Saviour's Caution in Works of Charity, *Let not thy left Hand know what thy right Hand doth.* Thoſe that *brag* of Good-works they never *did*, or *promiſe* Good-works they never *do*, or make the Good-works they do, more or better than really they are, come under the Guit of *Ananias*'s Lye; which it concerns us all to dread the Thought of. (2.) He told this Lye to the *Holy Ghoſt*. 'Twas not ſo much to the Apoſtles, as to the Holy Ghoſt in them, that the Money was brought, and that was ſaid, which was ſaid, *v.* 4. *Thou haſt not ly'd unto Men*, not to Men only, not to Men chiefly, tho' the Apoſtles be but Men, *but thou ly'd unto God.* From hence it is juſtly infer'd, that the *Holy Ghoſt* is GOD; for he that lyeth to the *Holy Ghoſt* lyeth to *GOD*. “They that ly'd “ to the Apoſtles, *acted* and *acting* by the Spirit of GOD, are “ ſaid to lye to GOD, becauſe the Apoſtles acted by the Power “ and Authority of GOD: From whence it follows, (as Dr. “ *Whitby* well obſerves) That the Power and Authority of the “ Spirit, muſt be the Power and Authority of GOD.” And as he further argues, “*Ananias* is ſaid to *lye to God*, becauſe he ly'd “ to *that Spirit* in the Apoſtles which enabled them to diſcern “ the Secrets of Mens Hearts and Actions, which being the “ Property of GOD alone, he that lyes to him muſt therefore “ lye to GOD, becauſe he lies to One who has the incommunicable Property of GOD, and conſequently to Divine Eſſence.”

3. The Aggravations of the Sin, *v.* 4. *Whilſt it remain'd was it not thine own? And after it was ſold, was it not in thine own power?* which may be underſtood two ways; 1. Thou waſt under no *Temptation* to keep back Part of the Price; Before it was ſold it was *thy own*, and not *mortgaged*, nor *encumbred*, or any way *engag'd* for Debt. And when it was ſold it was *in thy own Power* to diſpoſe of the Money at thy Pleaſure, ſo that thou mighteſt as well have brought the Whole as a Part. Thou hadſt no Debts to pay, perhaps no Children to provide for, ſo that thou waſt not under the Influence of any particular Inducement to *keep back part of the price*. Thou waſt a Tranſgreſſor without a Cauſe. *Or*, 2. Thou waſt under no *Neceſſity* of ſelling thy Land at all, or bringing any of the Money to the Apoſtles Feet: Thou mighteſt have kept the Money if thou hadſt pleas'd and the Land too, and never have pretended to this Piece of Perfection. This Rule of Charity, the Apoſtle gives, that People be not *preſs'd*, and that it be not *urg'd* as *of neceſſity*, becauſe *God loves a chearful Giver*, 2 Cor. ix. 7. and *Philemon* muſt do a good Work, *not as it were of neceſſity, but willingly*, *Philem.* 14. As it is better not to vow than to vow and not to pay, ſo better had it been for him not to have ſold his Land at all, than thus to *keep back Part of the Price*, not to have pretended to do the good Work, than thus to do it by the halves. *When it was Sold* it was in thine own Power, but it was not ſo when it was *vow'd*, thou hadſt then open'd thy Mouth to the Lord, and could'ſt not go back. Thus in giving our Hearts to GOD, we are not admitted to *divide* them: Satan like the Mother, whoſe own the Child was not would take up with a Half but GOD will have *all* or *none*.

4. All this Guilt thus aggravated is charg'd upon him: *Why, haſt thou conceiv'd this Thing in thine Heart?* Obſerve, Tho' Satan *filled his Heart* to do it, yet he is ſaid to have *conceived it in his own Heart*, which ſhews that we cannot extenuate our Sins by laying the Fault of them upon the Devil; he atempts, but he cannot *force*, 'tis of *our own Luſts* that we are *drawn away and entic'd*. The ill Thing whatever it is that is ſaid or done, the Sinner has conceiv'd it in his own Heart, and therefore *if thou ſcorneſt, thou alone ſhall bear it*. The Cloſe of the Charge is very high, but very juſt; *Thou haſt not lied unto Men but unto God*; What Emphaſis both the Prophet lay upon that of *Ahaz*, not *wearying Men only*, but *wearying my God alſo*, Iſa. vii. 13. and *Moſes* upon that of *Iſrael*, your *Murmurings are not againſt us, but againſt the Lord*, Exod. xvi. 8. ſo here thou mighteſt have impos'd upon us, who are Men like thy ſelf, but *Be not deceiv'd God is not mocked*; If we think to put a Cheat upon GOD, we ſhall prove in the End to have put a fatal Cheat upon our own Souls.

Thirdly, The Death and Bruial of *Ananias*; v. 5, 6.

1. He dy'd upon the Spot. *Ananias hearing theſe Words* was *ſpeechleſs* in the ſame Senſe that he was, who was charge'd with intruding into the Wedding Feaſt without a Wedding Garment he had nothing to ſay for himſelf; But that was not all, he was ſtruck *ſpeechleſs* with a Witneſs, for he was ſtruck Dead; *he fell down and gave up the Ghoſt*. It doth not appear whether *Peter* deſign'd and expected that this would follow upon what he ſaid to him, 'tis likely he did, for to *Sapphira* his Wife *Peter* particularly ſpoke Death, *v.* 9. ſome think an Angel ſtruck him, that he Dy'd, as *Herod*, Acts xii. 23. or his own Conſcience ſmote him with ſuch Horrour and Amazement at the Senſe of his Guilt, that he ſunk and dy'd away under the Load of it; And perhaps when he was convicted of Lying to the Holy Ghoſt, he remembred the Unpardonableneſs of the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, which ſtruck him like a Dagger to the Heart. See the Power of the Word of GOD, in the Mouth of the Apoſtles. As it was to ſome a Savour of Life unto Life, ſo it was to others a Savour of Death unto Death. As there are thoſe whom the Goſpel *juſtifies* ſo there are thoſe whom it *condemns*.

This Puniſhment of *Ananias* may ſeem *ſevere*, but we are ſure it was *juſt*; (1.) It was deſign'd to *maintain* the Honour of the *Holy Ghoſt*, as now lately pour'd out upon the Apoſtles, in order to the ſetting up of the Goſpel Kingdom. 'Twas a great Affront which *Ananias* put upon the Holy Ghoſt, as if he could be impos'd upon, and it had a direct Tendency to invalidate the Apoſtles Teſtimony; for if they could not by the Spirit diſcover this Fraud, How could they by this Spirit diſcover the deep Things of GOD, which they were to reveal to the Children of Men? It was therefore neceſſary the Credit of the Apoſtles Gifts and Powers ſhould be ſupported tho' it was at this Expence. (2.) It was deſign'd to *deter* others from the *like* Preſumptions, now at the Beginning of this Diſpenſation. *Simon Magus* afterwards was not thus puniſh'd, nor *Elymas*, but *Ananias* was made an Example now *at firſt*, that with the *ſenſible Proofs* given what a comfortable Thing it is to *receive* the Spirit, there might be alſo *ſenſible Proofs* given what a *dangerous* Thing it is to *reſiſt* the Spirit, and *do deſpiſe* to him. How ſeverely was the *worſhipping of the Golden Calf* puniſh'd, and the *gathering of Sticks on the Sabbath-Day*, when the Law, of the *Second* and *Fourth* Commandments were now *newly* given! ſo was the Offering of ſtrange Fire by *Nadab* and *Abihu*, and the Mutiny of *Korah* and his Company, when the Fire from Heaven was now *newly* given, and the Authority of *Moſes* and *Aaron* now *newly* eſtabliſh'd.

The doing of this by the Miniſtry of *Peter*, who himſelf with a Lye deny'd his Maſter but a while ago, intimates that it was not the Reſentment of a Wrong done to himſelf, for then he who had himſelf been faulty, would have had Charity for them that offended, and he who himſelf had repented, and been forgiven, would have forgiven this Affront, and endeavour'd to bring this Offender to Repentance; But it was the Act of the *Spirit of God* in *Peter*, to him the *Indignity* was done, and by him the *Puniſhment* was *inflicted*.

2. He was *buryed* preſently; for that was the Manner of the *Jews*. v. 5. *The young Men*, that 'tis probable were appointed to that Office in the Church of burying the Dead, as among the *Romans* the *Libitinarii* and *Pollinctores*; Or, the *young Men* that attended the Apoſtles, and waited on them, they *wound up* the dead Body in Grave-clothes, *carryed it out* of the City, and *buryed* it decently, though he dyed in Sin, and by an immediate Stroke of Divine Vengeance.

Fourthly, The Reckoning with *Sapphira*, the Wife of *Ananias* who perhaps was firſt in the Tranſgreſſion, and tempted her Husband to eat this forbidden Fruit. She *came in* to the Place, where the Apoſtles were, which as it ſhould ſeem was *Solomon's*

Porch, for there we find them, *v.* 12. a Part of the Temple where Chriſt us'd to walk, *Joh.* x. 23. She *came in about Three Hours after*, expecting to ſhare in the Thanks of the Houſe for her coming in and conſenting to the Sale of the Land, of which perhaps ſhe was entitled to her Dower, or Thirds; for *ſhe knew not what was done*: 'Twas ſtrange, no Body ran to tell her of the ſudden Death of her Husband, that ſhe might keep away: Perhaps they did, and ſhe was not at home; and ſo when ſhe came to preſent her ſelf before the Apoſtles as a Benefactor to the Fund, ſhe met with a Breach inſtead of a Bleſſing.

1. She was found guilty of *ſharing* with her Husband in *his Sin*, by a Queſtion that *Peter* ask'd her, *v.* 8. *Tell me whether ye ſold the Land for ſo much*? naming the Sum which *Ananias* had brought and laid at the Apoſtles Feet, was that all you receiv'd for the Sale of the Land, and had you no more for it? No, ſaith ſhe, we had no more, but that was every Farthing we received. *Ananias* and his Wife agreed to tell the ſame Story, and the Bargain being private, and by Conſent kept to themſelves, no Body cou'd diſprove them, and therefore they thought they might ſafely *ſtand in the Lie*, and ſhould gain Credit to it. 'Tis ſad, to ſee thoſe Relations who ſhould quicken one another to that which is Good, harden one another in that which is Evil.

2. Sentence is paſt upon her, that ſhe ſhould partake in her Husband's Doom, *v.* 9.

(1.) Her Sin is open'd; *How is it ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?* Before he paſſeth Sentence, he makes her to know her Abominations, and ſhews her the Evil of her Sin.

(1.) That they *tempted the Spirit of the Lord*; As *Iſrael* tempted GOD in the Deſart, when they ſaid, *Is the Lord among us? Or is He not?* after they had ſeen ſo many miraculous Proofs of his Power, and not only his Preſence but his Preſidency, when they ſaid, *Can God furniſh a Table?* ſo here, Can the Spirit in the Apoſtles diſcover this Fraud? Can they diſcern that this is but a *Part of the Price*, when we tell them *it is the Whole? Can he judge through this dark Cloud?* Job xxii. 13. They ſaw they had the Gift of Tongues, but had they the Gift of *diſcerning Spirits?* Thoſe that preſume upon Security and Impunity in Sin, tempt the Spirit of GOD, they tempt GOD as if He were altogether ſuch an One as themſelves.

(2.) That they *agreed together* to do it; making the Bond of their Relation to each other, which by the Divine Inſtitution is a ſacred Tie, to become a Bond of Iniquity. 'Tis hard to ſay which is worſe between Yoke-fellows and other Relations, a Diſcord in Good, or Concord in Evil. It ſeems to intimate their *agreeing together* to do it was a further *tempting of the Spirit*, as if when they had engag'd to keep one another's Counſel in this Matter, even the Spirit of the LORD himſelf could not diſcover them. Thus they *digg'd deep to hide their Council from the Lord*; but were made to know *it's in vain*. *How is it* that ye are thus infatuated? What ſtange Stupidity has ſeiz'd you, that you would venture to make Trial of that which is paſt diſpute? How is it that *you* who are baptiz'd Chriſtians, do not underſtand your ſelves better? How durſt you run ſo great a Riſque?

(3.) Her Doom is read; *Behold the Feet of them which have bury'd thy Husband are at the Door*, perhaps he heard them coming he knew that they could not be long; and they ſhall *carry thee out*. As *Adam* and *Eve* who agreed to eat the forbidden Fruit, were turn'd together out of Paradice, ſo *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, who agreed to *tempt the Spirit of the Lord*, were together *chas'd out of the World*.

3. The Sentence *executed it ſelf*; There needed no Executioner, a *killing* Power went along with *Peter's* Word, as ſometimes as *healing* Power did; for the GOD in whoſe Name he ſpoke, *kills and makes alive*; and *out of his Mouth* (and *Peter* was now *his Mouth*) *both Evil and Good proceed*, v. 10. *Then fell ſhe down ſtraightway at his Feet*. Some Sinners GOD makes quick Work with, while others he bears long with; for which Difference doubtleſs there are good Reaſons; but he is not *accountable* to us for them. She heard not till now that her Husband was dead, the Notice of which, with the Diſcovery of her Sin, and the Sentence of Death paſſed upon her, ſtruck her as a Thunderbolt, and took her away *as with a Whirlwind*. And many Inſtances there are of ſudden Deaths, which are not to be look'd upon as the Puniſhment of ſome groſs Sin like this here; we muſt not think that all who *dye ſuddenly* are Sinners above others; perhaps 'tis in Favour to them, that they have *quick Paſſage*, however, 'tis Forewarning to all to be *always ready*: But here 'tis plain it was in Judgment. Some put the Queſtion concerning the eternal State of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, and incline to think that the *Deſtruction of the Fleſh*, was that *the Spirit might be ſav'd in the Day of the Lord* Jeſus: And I ſhould go in with that charitable Opinion, if there had been any Space given them to repent, as there was to that inceſtuous *Corinthian*: But ſecret Things belong not to us. 'Tis ſaid, She fell down *at* Peter's *Feet*; there where ſhe ſhould have laid the whole Price, and did not, ſhe was herſelf laid, as it were to make up the Deficiency The *young Men* that had the Care of Funerals, coming in, *found her Dead*, and 'tis not ſaid, they *wound her up*, as they did *Ananias*, but they *carry'd her out* as ſhe was, and *bury'd her by her Husband*; and probably, an Inſcription was ſet over their Graves, intimating that they were joynt Monuments of Divine Wrath againſt thoſe that lye to the *Holy Ghoſt*. Some ask, Whether the Apoſtles kept the Money which they did bring, and concerning which they Lied. I am apt to think they did; they had not the Superſtition of thoſe who ſaid, *It is not lawful for us to put it into the Treaſury*; For, *unto the Pure, all things are pure*. What they brought was not polluted to them that they brought it to; but what they kept back, was polluted to them that kept it back. Uſe was made of the Cenſers of *Korah*'s Mutineers.

Fifthly, The Impreſſion that this made upon the People; Notice is taken of this in the Midſt of the Story, *v.* 5. *Great Fear came upon all that heard theſe Things*; that *heard* what *Peter* ſaid, and ſaw what followed; Or, upon all that heard the Story of it; for no doubt, it was all the Talk of the City. And again, *v.* 11. *Great Fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard theſe Things.*

1. They that had joyn'd themſelves *to the Church* were hereby ſtruck with an Awe of GOD, and of his Judgments, and with a greater Veneration of this Diſpenſation of the Spirit they were now under. It was not a Damp or Check to their holy Joy, but taught them to be ſerious in it, and to rejoyce with Trembling. All that laid their Money at the Apoſtles Feet after this, were *afraid* of keeping back any *Part of the Price*.

2. All that heard it were put into a Conſternation by it, and were ready to ſay, *Who is able to ſtand before this Holy Lord God*, and his Spirit in the Apoſtles? as 1 *Sam.* vi. 20.

12 And by the hands of the apoſtles were many ſigns and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the reſt durſt no man joyn himſelf to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added unto the Lord, multitudes both of men and women) 15 Inſomuch that they brought forth the ſick into the ſtreets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the leaſt, the ſhadow of Peter paſſing by, might overſhadow ſome of them. 16 There came alſo a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jeruſalem, bringing ſick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean ſpirits: and they were healed every one.

We have here an Account of the Progreſs of the Goſpel, notwithſtanding this terrible Judgment inflicted upon Two Hypocrites.

1. Here's a general Account of the Miracles which the Apoſtles wrought, *v.* 12. *By the Hand, of the Apoſtles were many Signs and Wonders wrought among the People*; many Miracles of Mercy, for one of Judgment. Now the Goſpel Power return'd to its proper Channel, which is that of Mercy and Grace. GOD had come out of his Place to puniſh, but now returns to his Place, to his Mercy-ſeat again. The Miracles they wrought prov'd their Divine Miſſion; they were not a few but many, of diverſe Kinds, and oft repeated; they were *Signs* and *Wonders* ſuch *Wonders* as were confeſſedly *Signs* of a Divine Preſence and Power; they were not done in a Corner, but *among the People*, who were at Liberty to enquire into them, and if there had been any Fraud or Colluſion in them would have diſcover'd it.

1. We are here told what are the Effects of theſe Miracles which the Apoſtles wrought.

Firſt, The Church was hereby kept together, and confirm'd in their Adherence both to the Apoſtles, and to one another. *They* of the Church *were all with one accord in* Solomon's *Porch*.

1. They *met* in the Temple, in the open Place that was call'd *Solomon's Porch*. 'Twas ſtrange the Rulers of the Temple ſuffer'd them to keep their Meeting there: But GOD inclin'd their Hearts to *tolerate* them there a While, for the more convenient Spreading of the Goſpel; and they who *permitted* Buyers and Sellers, could not for ſhame *prohibit* ſuch Preachers and Healers there. They all met in publick Worſhip; ſo early is the Inſtitution of Religious Aſſemblies obſerv'd in the Church, which muſt by no Means be forſaken or let fall, for in them a Profeſſion of Religion is kept up.

2. They were there *with one Accord*, unanimous in their Doctrine, Worſhip and Diſcipline; And there was no Diſcontent or Murmuring about the Death of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, as there was againſt *Moſes* and *Aaron*, about the Death of *Korah* and his Company, *ye have killed the People of the Lord*, Numb. xvi. 41. The Separation of Hypocrites by diſtinguiſhing Judgments ſhould make the Sincere cleave ſo much the cloſer to each other, and to the Goſpel Miniſtry.

Secondly, It gain'd the *Apoſtles* very *great Reſpect*, who were the prime Miniſters of State in Chriſt's Kingdom.

1. The other Miniſters kept their Diſtance; *of the reſt* of their Company *durſt no Man joyn himſelf to them*, as their Equal, or an Aſſociate with them; Tho' others of them were endued with the Holy Ghoſt and *ſpoke with Tongues*, yet none of them at this Time did ſuch *Signs* and *Wonders* as the Apoſtles did; And therefore they acknowledg'd their Superiority, and in every Thing yielded to them.

2. All *the People magnified them,* and had them in great Veneration; ſpoke of them with Reſpect, and repreſented them as the Favourites of Heaven, and unſpeakable Bleſſings to this Earth. Tho' the chief Prieſts vilify'd them, and did all they could to make them contemptible, that did not hinder the People from *Magnifying* them, who ſaw the Thing in a true Light. *Obſerve,* The Apoſtles were far from *Magnifying themſelves,* they tranſmitted the Glory of all they did very carefully and faithfully to Chriſt, and yet the People *magnify'd them,* for they that humbled themſelves ſhall be exalted, and thoſe honour'd that honour GOD only.

Thirdly, The Church encreas'd in Number, *v.* 14. *Believers were the more added to the Lord,* and no doubt joyn'd themſelves to the Church, when they ſaw that GOD was in it of a Truth even *Multitudes both of Men and Women.* They were ſo far from being deter'd by the Example that was made of *Ananias* and *Sapphira,* that they were rather *invited* by it into a Society that kept ſuch a ſtrict Diſcipline. *Obſerve,*

1. *Believers* are *added to the Lord Jeſus,* joyned to him, and ſo joyned to his myſtical Body, from which nothing can ſeparate us and cut us off, but that which ſeparates us and cuts us off from Chriſt. Many have been brought to *the Lord,* and *yet there is Room* for others to be *added to him,* added to the Number of thoſe that are united to him; and *Additions* will ſtill be in the making till the Myſtery of GOD ſhall be finiſh'd, and the Number of the Elect accompliſh'd.

2. Notice is taken of the Converſion of *Women* as well as *Men*; more Notice than generally was in the Jewiſh Church, in which they neither receiv'd the Sign of Circumciſion, nor were oblig'd to attend the ſolemn Feaſts; And the *Court of Women* was one of the *outer Courts* of the Temple. But as among thoſe that follow'd Chriſt, while he was upon Earth, ſo among thoſe that believ'd on him after he went to Heaven, great Notice was taken of the good Women.

Fourthly, The Apoſtles had Abundance of *Patients,* and gain'd Abundance of Reputation both to them and their Doctrine, by the Cure of them all *v.* 15, 16. ſo many *Signs* and *Wonders* were *Wrought by the Apoſtles,* that all Manner of People put in for the Benefit of them, both in City and Country, and had it.

1. In the City; They *brought forth their Sick into the Streets,* for 'tis probable the Prieſts would not ſuffer them to bring 'em into the Temple to *Solomon*'s Porch, and the Apoſtles had not Leiſure to come to the Houſes of them all. And they *laid them on Beds and Couches,* becauſe they were ſo weak that they could neither go nor ſtand, *that at the leaſt the ſhadow of* Peter *paſſing by might overſhadow ſome of them,* tho' it could not reach them all; And it ſhould ſeem it had the deſired Effect, as the Woman's Touch of the Hem of Chriſt's Garment had; and in this among other Things that Word of Chriſt was fulfilled, *greater Works than theſe ſhall ye do.* GOD expreſſes his Care of his People by His being their *Shade on the right Hand*; And the benign Influences of Chriſt as a King, are compar'd to the *ſhadow of a great Rock. Peter* comes between them and the Sun and ſo heals them, cuts them off from a Dependance upon Creature-ſufficiency as inſufficient, that they may expect Help only from that Spirit of Grace with whom he was fill'd. And if ſuch Miracles were wrought by *Peter*'s Shadow, we have Reaſon to think they were ſo by the other Apoſtles, as by the *Handkerchiefs from* Paul's *Body* Acts xix. 12. no doubt both being with an actual Intention in the Minds of the Apoſtles thus to heal; ſo that it is abſurd hence to infer a healing Virtue in the Relicks of Saints that are dead and gone, we read not of any cur'd by the Relicks of Chriſt Himſelf, after he was gone, as certainly we ſhould if there had been any ſuch Thing.

2. In the Country Towns; Multitudes came to *Jeruſalem* from *the Cities round about, bringing ſick Folks* that were afflicted in Body, and *them that were vexed with unclean Spirits,* that were troubled in Mind, and they were *healed every one,* diſtemper'd Bodies and diſtemper'd Minds were ſet to rights. Thus Opportunity was given to the Apoſtles, both to convince Peoples Judgments by theſe Miracles, of the heavenly Original of the Doctrine they preach'd; and alſo to engage Peoples Affections both to them and it, by giving them a Specimen of its beneficial Tendency to the Welfare of this lower World.

17 Then the high prieſt roſe up, and all they that were with him, (which is the ſect of the ſadduces,) and were filled with indignation. 18 And laid their hands on the apoſtles, and put them in the common priſon, 19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the priſon-doors, and brought them forth, and ſaid, 20 Go, ſtand and ſpeak in the temple to the people, all the words of this life. 21 And when they heard *that,* they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high prieſt came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the ſenate of the children of Iſrael, and ſent to the priſon to have them brought. 22 But when the Officers came, and found them not in the priſon, they returned, and told, 23 Saying, The priſon truly found we ſhut with all ſafety, and the keepers ſtanding without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24 Now when the high prieſt, and the captain of the temple, and the chief prieſts heard theſe things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25 Then came one and told them, ſaying, Behold, the men whom ye put in priſon, are ſtanding in the temple, and teaching the people.

Never did any good Work go on with any Hope of Succeſs, but it met with Oppoſition; They that are bent to do Miſchief cannot be reconcil'd to them who make it their Buſineſs to do Good. Satan the Deſtroyer of Mankind, ever was, and will be an Adverſary to thoſe who are the Benefactors of Mankind; and it would have been ſtrange if the Apoſtles had gone on thus teaching and healing, and had had no Check. In theſe Verſes we have the Malice of Hell, and the Grace of Heaven ſtruggling about them; the one to drive them off from this good Work, the other to animate them in it.

Firſt, The Prieſts were *inrag'd* at them, and clapt them up in Priſon, *v.* 17, 18. *Obſerve,*

1. Who their Enemies and Perſecutors were. The *High Prieſt* was the Ring-leader, *Annas* or *Caiaphas,* who ſaw their Wealth and Dignity, their Power and Tyranny, that is, their *All* at Stake, and inevitably loſt if the Spiritual and Heavenly Doctrine of Chriſt get Ground and prevail among the People. Thoſe that were moſt forward to joyn with the High-prieſt herein, were the *Sect of the Sadduces,* who had a particular Enmity to the Goſpel of Chriſt, becauſe it confirm'd and eſtabliſh'd the Doctrine of the inviſible World, the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Future State, which they deny'd. It is not ſtrange if Men of *no Religion* be bigotted in their Oppoſition to True and Pure Religion.

2. How they were affected towards them; ill affected, and exaſperated to the laſt Degree, when they heard and ſaw what flocking there was to the Apoſtles, and how conſiderable they were become, they *roſe up* in a Paſſion, as Men that could no longer bear it, and were reſolv'd to make Head againſt it, being *filled with Indignation* at the Apoſtles for preaching the Doctrine of Chriſt, and curing Sick; and at the People for hearing them and bringing the Sick to them to be cured; and at themſelves and their own Party, for ſuffering this Matter to go ſo far, and not knocking it o'the Head at firſt. Thus are the Enemies of Chriſt and his Goſpel a Torment to themſelves. *Envy ſlays the ſilly One.*

3. How they proceeded againſt them, *v.* 18. *They laid their hands,* perhaps their own Hands, ſo low did their Malice make them ſtoop, or rather, the Hands of their Officers, and *put them in the common Priſon,* among the worſt of Malefactors. Hereby they deſign'd (1.) To *put a Reſtraint* upon them; tho' they could not lay any thing criminal to their Charge, worthy of Death or of Bonds, yet while they had them in Priſon, they kept them from going on in their Work, and that they reckon'd a good Point gain'd. Thus early were the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt in Bonds. (2.) To *put a Terror* upon them, and ſo to drive them off from their Work; The laſt Time they had them before them they had only threaten'd them, *chap.* iv. 21. but now finding that did not do, they impriſon'd them, to make them afraid of them. (3.) To put a *Diſgrace upon them,* and therefore they choſe to clap them up in the *Common Priſon,* that being thus *vilify'd,* the People might not as they had done *magnify them.* Satan hath carry'd on his Deſign againſt the Goſpel very much, by making the Preachers and Profeſſors of it deſpicable.

Secondly, GOD ſent his Angel to *releaſe* them out of Priſon, and to *renew their Commiſſion* to preach the Goſpel; The Powers of Darkneſs fight againſt them, but the Father of Lights fights for them, and ſends an Angel of Light to plead their Cauſe: The Lord will never deſert *His* Witneſſes, *His* Advocates, but will certainly ſtand by them, and bear them out.

1. The Apoſtles are *diſcharg'd* legally diſcharg'd from their Impriſonment, *v.* 19. *The Angel of the Lord by Night* in ſpite of all the Locks and Bars that were upon them, *open'd the Priſon Doors,* and in ſpite of all the Vigilance and Reſolution of the Keepers that *ſtood without before the Doors, brought forth* the Priſoners, (See *v.* 12.) gave them Authority to go out, without Crime, and led them through all Oppoſition. This Deliverance is not ſo particularly related, as that of *Peter,* ch. xiii. 7, *&c.* but the Miracle here, was the very ſame with that there. *Note,* There's no Priſon ſo dark, ſo ſtrong, but GOD can both viſit his People in it, and if he pleaſeth, fetch them out of it, This Diſcharge of the Apoſtles out of Priſon by an Angel, was a reſemblance of Chriſt's Reſurrection and his Diſcharge out of the Priſon of the Grave, and would help to confirm the Apoſtles Preaching of it.

2. They are *charg'd,* and legally charg'd to go on with their Work, ſo as thereby to be diſcharg'd from the Prohibition which the High Prieſt laid them under; the Angel bid them, *Go, ſtand, and ſpeak in the Temple to the People all the Words of this Life,* v. 20. When they were miraculouſly ſet at Liberty, they muſt not think it was that they might ſave their Lives by making their Eſcape out of the Hands of their Enemies. No; 'twas

that they might go on with their Work, with ſo much the more Boldneſs. Recoveries from Sickneſs, Releaſes out of Trouble, are granted us, and are to be look'd upon by us as granted, not that we may enjoy the Comforts of our Life, but that GOD may be honour'd with the Services of our Life. *Let my Soul live, and it ſhall praiſe thee*, Pſal. cxix. 175. *Bring my Soul out of Priſon*, as the Apoſtles here, *that I may praiſe thy Name*, Pſ. cxlii. 7. See *Iſa.* xxxviii. 22.

Now in this Charge given them, *Obſerve*, (1.) Where they muſt preach; *Speak in the Temple*. One wou'd think, tho' they might not quit their Work, yet it had been Prudence to go on with it in a more private Place, where it would give leſs Offence to the Prieſts than *in the Temple*, and ſo would the leſs expoſe them. No; *Speak in the Temple*, for that the Place of Concourſe, that's your Father's Houſe, and is not to be as yet quite *left deſolate*. Is it not for the Preachers of Chriſt's Goſpel to retire into Corners as long as they can have any Opportunity of Preaching in the great Congregation. (2.) To whom they muſt preach; *Speak to the People*. Not to the Princes and Rulers, for they will not hearken; but to the People who are willing and deſirous to be taught, and whoſe Souls are as precious to Chriſt, and ought to be ſo to you, as the Souls of the Greateſt. Speak *to the People*, to all in general, for all are concern'd. (3.) How they muſt preach; *Go, ſtand, and ſpeak*: Which intimates, not only that they muſt ſpeak publickly, *ſtand up* and ſpeak, that all may hear; but they muſt ſpeak boldly and reſolutely, *ſtand, and ſpeak*; that is, ſpeak it as thoſe that reſolve to ſtand to it, to live and dye by it. (4.) What they muſt ſpeak; *All the Words of this Life*. *This* Life which you have been ſpeaking of among your ſelves; referring perhaps, to the Conferences concerning Heaven which they had among themſelves for their own and one another's Encouragement in Priſon; Go, and preach the ſame in the World, that others may be comforted with the ſame Comforts with which you your ſelves are comforted of GOD. Or, of *this* Life which the *Sadducees* deny, and therefore perſecute you; preach *that*, tho' you know that's it they have Indignation at. Or, of *this* Life emphatically; *this* heavenly, divine Life, in Compariſon with which, the preſent earthly Life doth not deſerve the Name. Or, *theſe Words of Life*, the very ſame you have preach'd, theſe Words which the Holy Ghoſt puts into your Mouth. *Note*, The Words of the Goſpel, are the Words of Life: quickening Words; they are *Spirit*, and they are *Life*. *Words whereby we may be ſav'd*; that's the ſame with this here, *Acts* xi. 24. The Goſpel is the Word of *this* Life, for it ſecures to us the Privileges of our Way, as well as thoſe of our Home; and the Promiſes of the Life that now is, as well as that to come. And yet even the Spiritual and Eternal Life are brought ſo much to Light in the Goſpel, that they may be call'd *this Life*; for the Word is nigh thee. *Note*, The Goſpel is concerning Matters of *Life and Death*, and Miniſters muſt preach it and hear it accordingly. They muſt ſpeak *All* the Words of this Life, and not conceal any for fear of offending, or in hope of ingratiating themſelves with their Rulers, Chriſt's Witneſſes are ſworn to ſpeak *the whole Truth*.

Thirdly, They went on with their Work, *v.* 21. *When they heard that*, when they heard that it was the Will of GOD they ſhould continue to preach in the Temple, they *return'd* to *Solomon's Porch* there, *v.* 21. (1.) It was a great Satisfaction to them to have theſe freſh Orders. Perhaps they began to queſtion whether if they had their Liberty, they ſhould preach as publickly *in the Temple* as they had done, becauſe they had been bid, when they were *perſecuted in one City, to flee to another*. But now the Angel order'd them to go preach *in the Temple*; their Way was plain, and they ventur'd without any Difficulty, *enter'd into the Temple*, and fear'd not the Face of Man. *Note*, If we may but be ſatiſfy'd concerning our Duty, our Buſineſs is to keep cloſe to that, and then we may chearfully truſt GOD with our Safety.

(2.) They ſet themſelves preſently to execute them without Diſpute or Delay. They *enter'd into the Temple early in the Morning*, as ſoon as the Gates were open'd, and People began to come together there, and *taught* them the Goſpel of the Kingdom; and did not at all fear what Man cou'd do unto them. The Caſe here was extraordinary, the whole Treaſure of the Goſpel is lodg'd in their Hands; if they be ſilent now, the Springs are ſhut up, and the whole Work falls to the Ground, and is made to ceaſe; which is not the Caſe of ordinary Miniſters, who therefore are not by this Example bound to throw themſelves into the Mouth of Danger; and yet when GOD gives Opportunity of doing Good, tho' we be under the Reſtrain and Terror of Human Powers, we ſhould venture far, rather than let go ſuch an Opportunity.

Fourthly, The High Prieſt and his Party, went on with their Proſecution, *v.* 21. They ſuppoſing they had the Apoſtles ſure enough, *call'd the Council, together*, a great and extraordinary Council, for they ſummon'd *all the Senate of the Children of Iſrael*. See here,

1. How they were prepar'd, and how big with Expectation to cruſh the Goſpel of Chriſt and the Preachers of it, for they rais'd the whole *Poſſe*. The laſt Time they had the Apoſtles in Cuſtody, they conven'd them only before a Committee of thoſe that were *of the Kindred of the High Prieſt*, who were oblig'd to act cautiouſly, but now that they might proceed further and with more Aſſurance, they call'd together πᾶσαν τὴν γερουσίαν *all the Elderſhip*, that is, ſaith Dr. *Lightfoot*, all the Three Courts or Benches of Judges in *Jeruſalem*, not only the great *Sanhedrin* conſiſting of Seventy Elders, but the other Two Judicatories that were erected one in the outer Court Gate of the Temple, the other in the inner or Beautiful Gate, conſiſting of Twenty three Judges each. So that if their were a full Appearance, here were One hundred and ſixteen Judges: Thus GOD order'd it, that the Confuſion of the Enemies might be more publick, and the Apoſtles Teſtimony againſt them, and that thoſe might hear the Goſpel who would not hear it otherwiſe than from the Bar: Howbeit, the High Prieſt *meant not ſo, neither did his Heart think ſo*; *but it was in his Heart* to rally all his Forces againſt the Apoſtles, and by a univerſal Conſent to cut them all off at once.

2. How they were *balk'd*, and had their Faces fill'd with Shame; *He that ſits in Heaven laughs at them*, and ſo may we too, to ſee how gravely the Court it ſet; and we may ſuppoſe the High Prieſt makes a ſolemn Speech to them, ſetting forth the Occaſion of their coming together; That a very dangerous Faction was now lately rais'd in *Jeruſalem*, by the Preaching of the Doctrine of *Jeſus*, which it was needful for the Preſervation of their Church, (which never was in ſuch Danger as now) ſpeedily and effectually to ſuppreſs; That it was now in the Power of their Hands to do it, for he had the Ring-leaders of the Faction now in the Common-Priſon, to be proceeded againſt, if they would but agree to it, with the utmoſt Severity. An Officer is in order hereunto diſpatch'd immediately to fetch the Priſoners to the Bar: But ſee how they are baffled;

1. The Officer come and tell them, That they are *not to be found in the Priſon*, *v.* 22, 23. The laſt Time they were forthcoming when they were call'd for, *ch.* iv. 7. But now they were gone; and the Report which the Officers make is, *The Priſon doors truly found we ſhut with all ſafety*, nothing had been done to weaken them; *the Keepers* had not been wanting to their Duty we found them *ſtanding without before the Doors*, and knowing nothing to the contrary, but that the Priſoners were all ſafe: but when we went in *we found no Man* therein, *i. e.* none of the Men we were ſent to fetch: But it is likely the *common* Priſoners they found there. Which Way the Angel fetch'd them out, whether by ſome Back-way or opening the Door, and faſtening it cloſe again, the Keepers all the while aſleep, we are not told; however it was, they were gone. The LORD knows, tho' we do not, how to deliver the Godly out of Temptation, and how to *looſe* thoſe that are *in Bonds* for his Name's ſake, and He will do it, as here, when He has Occaſion for them.

Now think how *blank* the Court look'd when the Officers made this Return upon their Order, *v.* 14. *When the High Prieſt, and the Captain of the Temple*, and the *Chief Prieſts heard thoſe Things*; they were all at a plunge, and look'd one upon another, *doubting what this thing ſhould be*. They were *extremely perplex'd*, were *at their Wits-end*, having never been ſo diſappointed in all their Lives of a Thing they were ſo ſure of. It occaſion'd *various Speculations*; ſome ſuggeſting that they were conjur'd out of the Priſon, and made their Eſcape by Magick Arts; Others, That the Keepers had play'd Tricks with them, not knowing how many Friends theſe Priſoners had that were ſo much the Darlings of the People. Some fear'd that having made ſuch a wonderful Eſcape, they would be the more follow'd; Others, That tho' perhaps they had frighten'd them from *Jeruſalem*, they ſhould hear of them again in ſome Part or other of the Country, where they would do yet more Miſchief, and it would be yet more out of their Power to ſtop the ſpreading of the Infection; and now they begin to fear, that inſtead of curing the Ill, they have made it worſe. *Note*, Thoſe often diſtreſs and embaraſs *themſelves* that think to diſtreſs and embaraſs *the Cauſe of Chriſt*.

2. Their *Doubt* is in part *determin'd*; and yet their Vexation is increas'd by another Meſſenger, who brings them Word, That their *Priſoners* are preaching *in the Temple*, *v.* 25. *Behold, the Men whom ye put in Priſon*, and ſent for to your Bar, *are now* hard by you here, *ſtanding in the Temple*, under your Noſe and in Defiance of you, *teaching the People*. Priſoners that have broke Priſon uſe to *abſcond*, for fear of being *re-taken*: But theſe Priſoners that here made their Eſcape, dare to ſhew their Faces even there where their Perſecutors have the greateſt Influence. Now this confounded them more than any Thing. *Common* Malefactors may have Art enough to break Priſon, but they are *uncommen* Ones that have Courage enough to *avow* it when they have done.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: (for they feared the people, leſt they ſhould have been ſtoned) 27 And when they had brought them, they ſet *them* before the council: and the high prieſt asked them, 28 Saying, Did not we ſtraitly command you, that you ſhould not teach in this name? and behold ye have filled Jeruſalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. 29 Then Peter and the *other* apoſtles anſwered and ſaid, We ought to

obey God rather than man. 30 The God of our fathers raiſed up Jeſus, whom ye ſlew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a prince and a ſaviour, for to give repentance unto Iſrael, and forgiveneſs of ſins. 32 And we are his Witneſſes of theſe things; and *ſo is* alſo the holy Ghoſt, whom God hath given to them that obey him. 33 When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counſel to ſlay them. 34 Then ſtood there up one in the council a Phariſee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apoſtles forth a little ſpace. 35 And ſaid unto them, Ye men of Iſrael, take heed to yourſelves, what ye intend to do as touching theſe men. 36 For before theſe days roſe up Theudas boaſting himſelf to be ſomebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joyned themſelves: who was ſlain, and all, as many as obeyed him were ſcattered, and brought to nought. 37 After this man roſe up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he alſo periſhed, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were diſperſed. 38 And now I ſay unto you, Refrain from theſe men, and let them alone: for if this counſel, or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; leſt haply ye be found even to fight againſt God. 40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apoſtles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they ſhould not ſpeak in the name of Jeſus, and let them go. 41 And they depart from the preſence of the council, rejoycing that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every houſe, they ceaſed not to teach and preach Jeſus Chriſt.

We are not told what it was that the Apoſtels preach'd to the People; no doubt it was according to the Direction of the Angel, *the Words of this Life*; but what paſs'd between them and the Council, we have here an Account of; for in their Sufferings there appear'd more of a Divine Power and Energy, than even in their Preaching. Now here we have,

Firſt, The ſeizing of the Apoſtes a ſecond Time. We may think, if GOD deſign'd *this*, why were they reſcu'd from their *firſt* Impriſonment? But *that* was deſign'd to humble the Pride and check the Fury of their Perſecutors; and now He would ſhew that they were diſcharg'd; not becauſe they fear'd a Tryal, for they were ready to ſurrender themſelves, and make their Appearance before the greateſt of their Enemies.

1. They brought them *without Violence*, with all the Reſpect and Tenderneſs that could be; did not pull them out of the Pulpit, not bind them, or drag them along, but ſpoke them fair. And One would think they had Reaſon to do ſo in reverence to the Temple, that holy Place, and for fear of the Apoſtles, leſt they ſhould ſtrike them as they did *Ananias*, or call for Fire from Heaven upon them as *Elias* did; but all that reſtrain'd their Violence, was, their *fear of the People*, who had ſuch a Veneration for the Apoſtles that they would *ſtone them*, if they offer'd them any Abuſe.

2. Yet they brought them to thoſe who they knew were *violent* againſt 'em, and were reſolv'd to take violent Courſes with them, *v.* 27. They *brought them to ſet them before the Council*, as Delinquents, Thus the Powers that ſhould have been a Terror to Evil Works, and Workers, became ſo to the Good.

Secondly, Their Examination; Being brought before this auguſt Aſſembly, the High-Prieſt, as the Mouth of the Court, told them what it was they had to lay to their Charge, *v.* 28.

1. That they had *diſobey'd the Commands of Authority*, and would not ſubmit to the Injunctions, and Prohibitions given them, *v.* 28, *Did not we* by virtue of our Authority, ſtraitly charge and command you upon Pain of our higheſt Diſpleaſure, *that they ſhould not teach in this Name?* but you have diſobey'd our Commands, and go on to preach not only without our Licenſe, but againſt our expreſs Order. Thus they who make void, the Commandments of GOD, commonly are very ſtrict in binding on their own Commandments, and inſiſting upon their own Power. *Did not we command you?* Yes, they did; but did not *Peter* at the ſame Time tell them, that GOD's Authority was ſuperiour to theirs, and his Commands muſt take place of theirs! And they had forgot that.

2. That they *ſpread falſe Doctrine*, among the People, or at leaſt a *ſingular* Doctrine, and which was not allow'd by the Jewiſh Church, nor agreed with what was deliver'd from *Moſes*'s Chair. *Ye have fill'd* Jeruſalem *with your Doctrine*, and thereby have diſturb'd the publick Peace, and drawn People from the publick Eſtabliſhment. Some take this for a haughty *ſcornful* Word, this ſilly ſenſeleſs Doctrine of yours, that is not worth taking notice of, you have made ſuch a Noiſe with, that even *Jeruſalem*, the Great and Holy City, is become *full of it*, and it's all the Talk of the Town. They are angry that Men whom they look'd upon as *deſpicable*, ſhould make themſelves thus *conſiderable*.

3 That they had a *malicious Deſign againſt the Government*, and aim'd to ſtir up the People againſt it, by repreſenting it as wicked and tyrannical, and that had made it ſelf juſtly odious both to GOD and Man; *Ye intend to bring this Man's Blood*, the Guilty of it before GOD, the Shame of it before Men, *upon us*. Thus they charge them not only with Contumacy, and Contempt of the Court, but with Sedition and Faction, and a Plot to ſet not only the People againſt them, for having perſecuted even to Death, not only ſo Innocent but ſo *Good* and *Great* a Man as this *Jeſus*, but the *Romans* too, for having drawn them into it. See here how thoſe that with a great deal of Preſumption will do an ill Thing, yet cannot bear to hear of it afterwards, or to have it charg'd upon them. When they were in the Heat of the Perſecution, they could cry daringly enough, *His Blood be upon us, and upon our Children*, Let us bear the Blame for ever: But now they have Time for a cooler Thought, they take it as a heinous Affront to have his Blood laid at their Door. Thus are they convicted and condemned by their own Conſciences, and dread lying under that Guilt which they were not afraid to involve themſelves in.

Thirdly, Their *Anſwer to the Charge* exhibited againſt them; *Peter and the other Apoſtles* all ſpake to the ſame Purpoſe; whether *ſeverally* examin'd, or anſwering *joyntly*, they ſpake as one and the ſame Spirit gave them Utterance, depending upon the Promiſe, their Maſter had made them, That when they were brought before *Councils*, it ſhould be *given them in that ſame Hour what they ſhould ſpeak*, and Courage to ſpeak it.

1. They *juſtify themſelves* in their *Diſobedience* to the Commands of the *Great Sanhedrin*, as great as it was *v.* 29. *We ought to obey GOD rather than Men*. They do not plead the Power they had to work Miracles, that ſpoke ſufficiently for them, and therefore they humbly decline mentioning it themſelves, but they appeal to a Maxim univerſally own'd, and which even natural Conſcience ſubſcribes to, and which comes home to their Caſe; GOD had commanded them to teach in the Name of Chriſt, and therefore they ought to do it, tho' the Chief Prieſts forbad them. Thoſe Rulers ſet up in Oppoſition to GOD, and have a great deal to anſwer for, who puniſh Men for Diſobedience to them, in that which was their Duty to GOD.

2. They *juſtify themſelves* in doing what they could to *fill Jeruſalem* with the Doctrine of Chriſt, tho' in *Preaching* Him *up*, they did indeed reflect upon thoſe that maliciouſly *run* Him *down*; and if they thereby bring his Blood upon them, they may thank themſelves, It is charg'd upon them as a Crime that they preach'd Chriſt and his Goſpel; Now, ſay they, we will tell you who this Chriſt is, and what his Goſpel is, and then do you judge whether we ought not to preach it; nay, and we ſhall take this Opportunity to preach it to *you, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear*.

1. The Chief Prieſts are told to their Faces the *Indignities* they did to this *Jeſus*; *Ye ſlew him, and hang'd him on a Tree*, you cannot deny it. The Apoſtles, inſtead of making an Excuſe, or begging their Pardon for bringing the Guilt of this Man's Blood upon them, repeat the Charge, and ſtand to it: 'Twas *you* that ſlew him; 'twas your Act and Deed. *Note*, Peoples being unwilling to hear of their Faults, is no good Reaſon why they ſhould not be faithfully told of them. 'Tis a common Excuſe made for not reproving Sin, That the *Times will not bear it*. But they whoſe Office it is to reprove, muſt not be aw'd by that; the Times muſt bear it, and ſhall bear it; *Cry aloud, and ſpare not*; Cry aloud, and fear not.

2. They are told alſo what *Honours* GOD put upon this *Jeſus*, and then let them judge who was in the Right, the Perſecutors of his Doctrine, or the Preachers of it. He calls GOD the *God of our Fathers*, not only *ours* but *yours*, to ſhew that in preaching Chriſt they did not preach a *new God*, nor entice People to come and *worſhip other Gods*; nor did they ſet up an Inſtitution contrary to that of *Moſes* and the *Prophets*. But they adher'd to the *God of the* Jewiſh *Fathers*, and that Name of Chriſt which they preach'd, anſwer'd the Promiſes made to the Fathers, and the Covenant GOD enter'd into with them, and the Types and Figures of the Law he gave them. The GOD of *Abraham Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, is the *God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; ſee what Honour he did him.

1. He *raiſed him up*; *i. e.* he qualify'd him for, and call'd him to his great Undertaking. It ſeems to refer to the Promiſe GOD made by *Moſes*, *A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you.* GOD *raiſed him up* out of Obſcurity, and made him great. Or, it may be meant of his *raiſing him up* from the Grave; you *put Him to Death*, but GOD has *reſtor'd him to Life*, ſo that GOD and you are manifeſtly conteſting about this Jeſus, and which muſt we ſide with.

2. He *exalted him with his Right Hand.* ὕψωσε hath *lifted him up.* You loaded him with *Diſgrace*, but GOD has crown'd him with *Honour*, and ought we not to honour Him whom GOD honours? GOD has *exalted him*, τῆ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ, *with His Right Hand*, i. e. by his Power put forth, Chriſt is ſaid to *live by the Power of God.* Or, *to* his Right Hand, to ſit there, to reſt there, to rule there, He has inveſted them with the higheſt Dignity, and intruſted him with the higheſt Authority, And therefore we muſt teach in his Name, for GOD has *given him a Name above every Name.*

3. He hath appointed him to be *a Prince and a Saviour*, and therefore we ought to preach in His Name, and to publiſh the Laws of his Government, as He is a *Prince*, and the Offers of his Grace as He is a Saviour. *Obſerve*, There is no having Chriſt to be our *Saviour*, unleſs we be willing to take him for our *Prince*: We cannot expect to be *redeem'd* and *heal'd* by Him, unleſs we give up our ſelves to be rul'd by Him. The *Judges* of Old were *Saviours*; Chriſt's *Ruling* is in Order to His *Saving*, and Faith takes an *intire* Chriſt, that came not to ſave us *in* our Sins, but to ſave us *from* our Sins.

4. He is appointed as a *Prince* and a *Saviour*, to *give Repentance to* Iſrael *and Remiſſion of Sins*, Therefore they muſt preach in His Name to the People of *Iſrael*, for his Favours were deſign'd premarily and principally for *them*, and none that truly lov'd their Country could be againſt that. Why ſhould the Rulers and Elders of *Iſrael* oppoſe One, who came with no leſs a Bleſſing to *Iſrael* than *Repentance* and *Pardon*. Had He been exalted to give Deliverance to *Iſrael* from the *Roman* Yoke, and Dominion over the Neighbouring Nations, the chief Prieſts would have welcom'd Him with all their Hearts. But Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins are Bleſſings they neither *value* nor ſee their *Need of*, and therefore they can by no Means admit His Doctrine. *Obſerve here*, (1.) *Repentance* and *Remiſſion* go together, where-ever Repentance is wrought, Remiſſion is without fail granted, and the Favour given to all thoſe to whom is given the Qualification for it. And on the other Hand, no Remiſſion without Repentance; None are freed from the Guilt and Puniſhment of Sin, but thoſe that are freed from the Power and Dominion of Sin; that are turn'd from it, and turn'd againſt it. (2.) It is *Jeſus Chriſt* that *gives*, and is *authoriz'd* to give both *Repentance* and *Remiſſion.* Whatſoever is requir'd in the Goſpel Covenant is promis'd; Are we appointed to *repent*, Chriſt is appointed to *give Repentance*; by his Spirit working with the Word, to awaken the Conſcience, to work Contrition for Sin, and an effectual Change in the Heart and Life. The new Heart in his Work, and the broken Spirit a Sacrifice of his providing; And when he has given *Repentance*, if he ſhould not give *Remiſſion*, he would *forſake the Work of his Hands.* See how neceſſary it is that we repent, and that we apply our-ſelves to Chriſt by Faith for his Grace to work Repentance in us.

5. All this is well atteſted, (1.) By the *Apoſtles themſelves*; They are ready to teſtify upon Oath if requir'd, that they *ſaw Him* alive after his Reſurrection, and *ſaw Him* aſcend into Heaven; and alſo that they experienc'd the Power of His Grace upon their Hearts, raiſing them up to that which was far above their Natural Capacities. *We are his Witneſſes*, appointed by him to publiſh this to the World, and if we ſhould be ſilent, as you would have us, we ſhould betray a Truſt, and be falſe to it. When a Cauſe is in Trying Witneſſes of all Men ought not to be *ſilenc'd*, for the Iſſue of the Cauſe depends on their Teſtimony. (2.) By *the Spirit of God.* We are Witneſſes, competent Ones, and whoſe Teſtimony is ſufficient before any Human Judicature; But that is not all, *The Holy Ghoſt is Witneſſes*, a Witneſs from Heaven, for *God hath given* his Gifts and Graces *to them that obey Chriſt.* Therefore we muſt preach in this Name becauſe for this End the Holy Ghoſt is given us, whoſe Operations we cannot ſtifle.

Note, The giving of the Holy Ghoſt to obedient Believers, no only to bring them to the *Obedience of Faith*, but to make them eminently uſeful therein is a very ſtrong Proof of the Truth of Chriſtianity. GOD gave the Holy Ghoſt by *His Son*, and *in His Name*, John xiv. 26. and in Anſwer to his Prayer, John xiv. 16. nay, it was Chriſt that ſent from the Father, John xv. 26. xvi. 7. and this proves the Glory to which the Father has exalted him. The great Work of the Spirit being not only to *juſtify Chriſt*, (1 *Tim.* iii. 16) but to *glorify* him, and all his Gifts having a direct Tendency to exalt his Name proves that his Doctrine is Divine, elſe it would not be carry'd on thus by a Doctrine Power. And (*Laſtly*) The *giving of the Holy Ghoſt* to them that *obey Chriſt*, both for their *Aſſiſtance* in their Obedience, and as a preſent *Recompence* for their Obedience, is a plain Evidence that it is the Will of GOD that Chriſt ſhould be *obey'd*; and then judge whether we ought to obey *you* in Oppoſition to *him.*

Fourthly, The Impreſſion which the Apoſtles Defence of themſelves made upon the Court; 'Twas contrary to what one would have expected from Men that pretended to Reaſon, Learning, and Sanctity; ſure ſuch fair Reaſoning could not but clear the Priſoners, and convert the Judges; No, inſtead of yielding to it, they rag'd againſt it, and were fill'd,

1. With Indignation at what the Apoſtles ſaid; They were *cut to the Hearts*, angry to ſee their own Sin-ſet in Order before them; *ſtark mad* to find that the Goſpel of Chriſt had ſo much to ſay for it ſelf, and Conſequently was likely to get Ground. When a Sermon was preach'd to the People to this purpoſe, they were *pricked to the Heart*, in Remorſe and Godly Sorrow, *Acts* ii. 37. Theſe here were *cut to the Heart* with Rage and Indignation. Thus the ſame Goſpel is to ſome a Savour of *Life unto Life*, to others of *Death unto Death.* The Enemies of the Goſpel not only deprive themſelves of it's Comforts, but fill themſelves with Terrors, and are their own Tormentors,

2. With Malice againſt the Apoſtles themſelves; ſince they ſee they cannot ſtop their Mouths, any other way but by ſtopping their Breath, they *take Counſel to ſlay them*, hoping that ſo they ſhould *cauſe the Work to ceaſe.* While the Apoſtles went on in the Service of Chriſt with a holy Security and Serenity of Mind, perfectly compos'd, and in a ſweet Enjoyment of themſelves, their Perſecutors went on in their Oppoſition to Chriſt, with a conſtant Perplexity and Perturbation of Mind, and Vexation of themſelves.

Fifthly, The grave Advice which *Gamaliel* a topping Man in the Council gave upon this Occaſion, the Scope of which was to moderate the Fury of theſe Bigots, and check the Violence of the Proſecution. This *Gamaliel* is here ſaid to be a *Phariſee* by his Profeſſion and Sect, and by Office, a *Doctor of the Law*, one that ſtudy'd the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, read Lectures upon the Sacred Authors, and train'd up Pupils in the Knowledge of them; *Paul* was brought up at his Feet; *Acts* xxii. 3. and Tradition ſaith, that ſo were *Stephen* and *Barnabas.* Some ſay he was the Son of that *Simeon* that took up Chriſt in his Arms when he was preſented in the Temple; and Grandſon of the famous *Hillel.* He is here ſaid to be *in Reputation among all the People*, for his Wiſdom and Conduct, it appearing by this Paſſage that he was a *moderate* Man, and not apt to go in with furious Meaſures. Men of Temper and Charity are juſtly had in Reputation, for checking the Incendiaries that otherwiſe would ſet the World on Fire. Now *Obſerve here*,

1. The neceſſary Caution he gives to the Council, with reference to the Caſe before them; *He commanded to put the Apoſtles forth a little while*, that he might ſpeak the more freely, and be the more freely anſwer'd: 'Twas fit the Priſoners ſhould withdraw when their Cauſe was to be debated; And then put the Houſe in Mind of the Importance of this Matter, which in their Heart they were not capable of conſidering as they ought. *Ye Men of* Iſrael, ſaith he, *Take heed to yourſelves*, conſider what you do, Or *intend to do as touching theſe Men*, v. 35. It is not a common Caſe, and therefore ſhould not be haſtily determin'd. He calls them Men of *Iſrael*, to enſore this Caution: You are *Men*, that ſhould be govern'd by *Reaſon*, Be not then as the Horſe and the Mule that have no underſtanding; you are Men of *Iſrael*, that ſhould be govern'd by *Revelation*, Be not then as Strangers and Heathens, that have no regard to GOD and his Word. *Take heed to yourſelves*, now you are angry at theſe Men, leſt you *meddle to your own hurt.* *Note*, The Perſecutors of GOD's People had beſt *look to themſelves*, leſt they fall into the Pit which they dig. We have need to be cautious whom we give Trouble to, leſt we be found making the Hearts of the Righteous ſad.

2. The Caſes he cites, to pave the Way to his Opinion two Inſtances he gives of factious ſeditious Men, ſuch as they would have the Apoſtles thought to be, whoſe Attempts came to nothing of themſelves, from whence he infers, that if theſe Men were indeed ſuch as they repreſented them, their Cauſe would ſink with its own Weight, and Providence would infatuate and defeat them, and then they needed not perſecute them.

(1.) There was one *Theudas*, that made a mighty Noiſe for a While, as one ſent of GOD, *boaſting himſelf to be ſome-body, ſome great One*, ſo the Word is, either a Teacher or a Prince with a divine Commiſſion, to effect ſome great Revolution either in the Church or in the State; And he obſerves here, *v.* 36. concerning him, (1.) How far he prevail'd; *a Number of Men*, about 400 in all, joyn'd themſelves to him, that knew not what to do with themſelves, or hoped to mend themſelves; And they ſeem'd then a formidable Body. (2.) How ſoon his Pretenſions were all daſh'd; for when *he was ſlain*, probably in War, there needed no more ado, *all as many as obey'd him were ſcatter'd*, and melted away like Snow before the Sun. Now compare that Caſe with this, you have ſlain Jeſus the Ring-leader of this Faction, you have taken him off: Now if he was, as you ſay he was, an Impoſtor and Pretender, his Death, like that of *Theudas*, will be the Death of his Cauſe, and the final Diſperſion of his Followers, From what has been we may infer what will be in a like Caſe; The *ſmiting of the Shepherd* will be the *Scattering of the Sheep*; And if the GOD of Peace had not *brought again from the Dead that great Shepherd*, Diſperſion of the Sheep at his Death, had been total and final.

(2.) The Caſe was the ſame with *Judas* of *Galilee*, *v.* 37. *Obſerve*, (1.) The Attempt he made. 'Tis ſaid to be *after this*; which ſome read *beſides this*, or let me mention *after this*, ſuppoſing that *Judas*'s Inſurrection was long in Time before that of *Theudas*; for it was *in the Time of the Taxation*, viz. that as our Saviours Birth, *Luke* ii. 1. and that of *Theudas*, they would make the ſame with that of one *Theudas*, whom *Joſephus* ſpeak of, that mutiny'd in the Time of *Cuſpius Fadus*; But that was in the Days of *Claudius Cæſar*, ſome Years after *Gamaliel* ſpoke this, and therefore could not be the ſame. It is not eaſy to determine particularly when theſe Events happen'd, nor whether this *Taxing* were the ſame with that at our Saviour's Birth, or one of a later Date. Some think this *Judas* of *Galilee* was the ſame with *Judas Gaulonites*, whom *Joſephus* ſpeaks of, others not. 'Tis probable they were Caſes that lately happened, and were freſh in Memory; This *Judas drew away much People after him*, who gave Credit to his Pretenſions. But (2.) Here's the Defeat of his Attempt, and that without any Interpoſal of the great *Sanhedrin*, or any Decree of theirs againſt him, it did not need, *he alſo periſh'd, and all even as many as obey'd him*, or were *perſuaded* by him were *diſpers'd*. Many have fooliſhly thrown away their Lives, and brought others into the ſame Snares, by a Jealouſy for their Liberties, *in the Days of the Taxing*, who had better have been content, when Providence had ſo determin'd, to *ſerve the King of* Babylon.

3. His Opinion upon the whole Matter.

1. That they ſhould not perſecute the Apoſtles, *v.* 38. *Now I ſay unto you,* τὰ νῦν *For the preſent*, as the matter now ſtands, my Advice is, *Refrain from theſe Men*; neither puniſh them for what they have done, nor reſtrain them for the future. Connive at them, let them take their Courſe; *let not our Hand be upon them*. 'Tis uncertain whether he ſpoke this out of Policy, for fear of Offending either the People or the *Romans*, and making further Miſchief: The Apoſtles did not attempt any Thing by outward Force, the Weapons of their Welfare were not carnal, and therefore why ſhould any outward Force be us'd againſt them? Or, whether he was under ſome preſent Convictions, at leaſt of the Probability of the Truth of the Chriſtian Doctrine, and thought it deſerv'd better Treatment, at leaſt a fair Tryal; Or, whether it was only the Language of a mild quiet Spirit, that was againſt Perſecution for Conſcience ſake; Or, whether GOD put this Word into his Mouth, beyond his own Intention, for the Deliverance of the Apoſtles at this Time; We are ſure there was an over-ruling Providence in it, that the Servants of Chriſt might not only come off, but come off *honourably*.

2. That they ſhould refer this Matter to Providence: Wait the Iſſue, and ſee what it will come to. *If it be of Men, 'twill come to nought* of itſelf, *If of God it will ſtand*, in ſpite of all your Powers and Policies. That which is apparently wicked and immoral muſt be ſuppreſs'd, elſe the Magiſtrate bears the Sword in vain; But that which has a Show of Good, and 'tis doubtful whether it be *of God* or *Men*, 'tis beſt to *let it alone*, and let it take its Fate, not to uſe any external Force for the ſuppreſſing of it. Chriſt rules by the Power of Truth, not of the Sword.

What Chriſt ask'd concerning *John's* Baptiſm, was it of Heaven or of Men; was a Queſtion proper to be ask'd concerning the Apoſtles Doctrine and Baptiſm, which follow'd Chriſt, as *John Baptiſt*'s went before him: Now they having own'd concerning the former, that they *could not tell* whether it was *from Heaven* or *of Men*, ought not to be too confident concerning the latter; But take it which way you will, 'tis a Reaſon why they ſhould not be perſecuted.

1. If this *Council*, and this *Work*, this forming of a Society, and incorporating it in the Name of Jeſus, be *of Men*, it will come to nothing. If it be the *Counſel* and *Work* of fooliſh crack-brained Men, that know not what they do, let them alone a While, and they will run themſelves out of Breath, and their *Folly will be manifeſt before all Men*; and they will make themſelves *ridiculous*. If it be the Counſel and Work of politick deſigning Men, who under Colour of Religion are ſetting up a ſecular Intereſt, let them alone a While, and they will throw off the Maſk, and their *Knavery will be manifeſt to all Men*, and they will make themſelves *odious*; And Providence will never countenance it; 'twill come to nothing in a little Time; And if ſo, your Perſecuting and Oppoſing it, is very *needleſs*; There's no Occaſion for giving your ſelves ſo much Trouble, and bringing ſuch an Odium upon your ſelves, to kill that which if you give it a little Time will dye of itſelf. The *unneceſſary* Uſe of Power is an Abuſe of it. But

2. If it ſhould prove (and as wiſe Men as you have been miſtaken) that *this Counſel* and *this Work* is *of God*, that theſe Preachers have their Commiſſions and Inſtructions from Him, that they are as truly His Meſſengers to the World as the *Old Teſtament* Prophets were, Then what do you think of *Perſecuting* them? of this Attempt of yours, *v.* 33. to *ſlay them?* you muſt conclude it to be (1.) A *fruitleſs* Attempt againſt *them*. *If it be of God you cannot overthrow it*; For there is no Wiſdom, nor Counſel againſt the Lord; He that ſits in Heaven *laugh's at you*. It may be the Comfort of all that are ſincerely on GOD's Side, that have a ſingle Eye to his Will as their Rule, and his Glory as their End, but whatſoever is of GOD cannot be *overthrown* totally and finally, tho' it may be very vigorouſly *oppos'd*; It may be *run upon*, but cannot be *run down*. (2.) A *dangerous* Attempt to *themſelves*, Pray let it alone, *leaſt haply ye be found even to Fight againſt God*, and I need not tell you who will come off by the worſe in that Conteſt. *Woe unto him that ſtrives with his Maker*, for he will not only be overcome as an impotent Enemy, but ſeverely reckon'd with as a Rebel, and Traytor againſt his rightful Prince. They that hate and abuſe GOD's faithful People, that reſtrain and ſilence his faithful Miniſters *fight againſt God*, for he takes what is done againſt them as done againſt Himſelf; whoſo *touches them*, touches the *Apple of his Eye*.

Well; this was the Advice of *Gamaliel*, we wiſh it were duly conſider'd by thoſe that perſecute for Conſcience ſake; for it was a *good Thought*, and natural enough, tho' we are uncertain what the Man was. The Tradition of the Jewiſh Writers is, that for all this, he liv'd and dy'd an inveterate Enemy to Chriſt and his Goſpel; and tho' (now at leaſt) he was not for Perſecuting the Followers of Chriſt, yet he was the Man who compos'd that Prayer which the *Jews* uſe to this Day, for the extirpating of Chriſtians and Chriſtianity. On the contrary, the Tradition of the *Papiſts* is that he turn'd Chriſtian, and became an eminent Patron of Chriſtianity, and a Follower of *Paul* who when Time was, had *ſate at his Feet*. If that had been ſo, 'tis very probable we ſhould have heard of him ſomewhere in the *Acts* or *Epiſtles*.

Sixthly, The Determination of the Council upon the whole Matter, *v.* 40.

1. Thus far they *agreed* with *Gamaliel*, that they let fall the Deſign of putting the Apoſtles *to Death*. They ſay a great deal of Reaſon in what *Gamaliel* ſaid, and for the preſent it gave ſome check to their Fury, and a *remainder of their Wrath* was *reſtrain'd* by it.

2. Yet they could not forbear giving ſome Vent to their Rage (ſo outragious was it) contrary to the Convictions of their Judgments and Conſciences; for tho' they were adviſ'd to *let them alone*, ye (1.) They *beat* them, ſcourg'd them as Malefactors, ſtript them, and whipt them, as they us'd to do in the *Synagogues*, and Notice is taken, *v.* 41. of the *Ignominy* of it; Thus they thought to make them aſham'd of Preaching, and the People aſham'd of hearing them; As *Pilate* ſcourg'd our Saviour to expoſe Him, when yet he declar'd he found no Fault in Him. (2.) They *commanded them* that they *ſhould not ſpeak* any more *in the Name of Jeſus*; that if they could find no other Fault with their Preaching, they might have this Ground to reproach it, That it was *againſt Law*, and not only without the Permiſſion, but againſt the expreſs Order of their Superiours.

Seventhly, The wonderful Courage and Conſtancy of the Apoſtles in the Midſt of all theſe Injuries and Indignities done them. When they were diſmiſs'd *they departed from the Council*, and we do not find one Word they ſaid by Way of Reflection upon the Court, and the unjuſt Treatment given them; *when they were reviled, they reviled not again*, and *when they ſuffer'd they threaten'd not*, but committed their Cauſe to Him, to whom *Gamaliel* had refer'd it, even to a *God who judgeth righteouſly*; All their Buſineſs was to preſerve the Poſſeſſion of their own Souls, and to make full Proof of their Miniſtry, notwithſtanding the Oppoſition given them; And both theſe they did to Admiration.

1. They *bore* their *Sufferings* with an *invincible Chearfulneſs*, *v.* 41. when they *went out*, perhaps with the Marks of the Laſhes given them on their Arms and Hands appearing, hiſs'd at by the Servants and Rabble it may be, or publick Notice given of the Infamous Puniſhment they had undergone, inſtead of being aſham'd of Chriſt, and their Relation to him, they *rejoyced that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for His Name*. They were Men, and Men in Reputation, that had never done any Thing to make themſelves vile, and therefore could not but have a Senſe of the *Shame* they *ſuffer'd*, which it ſhould ſeem was more grievous to them than the *Smart*, as it uſeth to be to *ingenuous* Minds; But they conſider'd that it was *for the Name of Chriſt* that they were thus abus'd, becauſe they belong'd to Him, and ſerv'd his Intereſt, and their Sufferings ſhould be made to contribute to the further Advancement of His Name, And therefore (1.) They reckon'd it an *Honour*; look'd upon it that *they were counted worthy to ſuffer Shame*, Καταξιώθησαν ἀτιμασθῆναι *that they were honour'd to be diſhonour'd* for Chriſt. Reproach for Chriſt is true Preferment; as it makes us comformable to his Pattern, and ſerviceable to his Intereſt. (2.) They rejoyc'd in it, remembring what their Maſter had ſaid to them at their firſt ſetting out, *Matth.* v. 11, 12. *When Men ſhall revile you, and perſecute you, Rejoyce and be exceeding Glad*; They rejoyc'd not only though they ſuffer'd Shame, their Troubles did not diminiſh their Joy, but *that* they ſuffer'd Shame, their Troubles encreas'd their Joy, and added to it. If we *ſuffer ill* for *doing well*, provided we ſuffer it *well* and as we ſhould, we ought to rejoyce in that Grace which enabled us to do.

2. They *went* on in their *Work* with *indefatigable Diligence* *v.* 42. They were puniſh'd for Preaching, and were commanded not to preach, and yet they *ceaſed not to teach and preach*; they omitted no Opportunity, nor abated any thing of their Zeal or Forwardneſs. *Obſerve*, (1.) When they preach'd; *daily*; not only on Sabbath-Days, or on Lord's-Days, but *every Day*; as duly as the Day came, without intermitting any Day, as their Maſter did, *Luke* xix. 47. *Matth.* xxvi. 55. not fearing that they ſhould either kill themſelves, or cloy their Hearers. (2.) Where they preach'd; both publickly *in the Temple*, and privately *in every Houſe*; in promiſcuous Aſſemblies, to which all reſorted, and in the ſelect Aſſemblies of Chriſtians for ſpecial Ordinances.

They did not think that either one would excuſe them from the other, for the Word muſt be preach'd *in ſeaſon* and *out of ſeaſon*. Tho' in the Temple they were more expos'd, and under the Eye of their Enemies; yet did they not confine themſelves to their little Oratories in their own Houſes, but ventured into the Poſt of Danger: And tho' they had the Liberty of the Temple, a conſecrated Place, yet they made no Difficulty of preaching in Houſes, in *every Houſe*, even the pooreſt Cottage. They viſited the Families of thoſe that were under their Charge, and gave particular Inſtructions to them, according as their Caſe, requir'd; even to the Children and Servants. (3.) What was the Subject Matter of their Preaching; They preach'd *Jeſus Chriſt*, they preach'd concerning him; that was not all, they *preach'd him up*, they *propos'd him*, to thoſe that heard them, to be their Prince and Saviour. They did not preach themſelves, but Chriſt, as faithful Friends to the Bridegroom, making it their Buſineſs to advance his Intereſt. This was the Preaching that gave moſt Offence to the Prieſts; they were willing they ſhould preach any Thing but Chriſt; but they would not alter their Subject to pleaſe them. It ought to be the conſtant Buſineſs of Goſpel Miniſters to *preach Chriſt*; Chriſt, and him crucify'd: Chriſt, and him glorify'd; nothing beſide this, but what is reducible to it.

CHAP. VI.

In this Chapter we have (1.) *The Diſcontent that was among the Diſciples about the Diſtribution of the publick Charity*, v. 1. (2.) *The Election and Ordination of Seven Men who ſhould take Care of that Matter, and eaſe the Apoſtles of the Burthen*, v. 2—6. (3.) *The Increaſe of the Church, by the Addition of many to it*, v. 7. (4.) *A particular Account of* Stephen, *one of the Seven.* (1.) *His great Activity for Chriſt*, v. 8. (2.) *The Oppoſition he met with from the Enemies of Chriſtianity, and his Diſputes with them*, v. 9, 10. (3.) *The convening of him before the Great* Sanhedrin, *and the Crimes laid to his Charge*, v. 11—14. (4.) *GOD's owning him upon his Tryal*, v. 15.

AND in thoſe days, when the number of the
diſciples was multiplied, there aroſe a mur-
muring of the Grecians againſt the Hebrews, becauſe
their widows were neglected in the daily miniſtra-
tion. 2 Then the Twelve called the multitude of
the Diſciples unto them, and ſaid, It is not reaſon
that we ſhould leave the word of God, and ſerve
tables. 3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among
you ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the holy
Ghoſt, and wiſdom, whom we may appoint over
this buſineſs, 4 But we will give ourſelves conti-
nually to prayer, and to the miniſtry of the word.
5 And the ſaying pleaſed the whole multitude: and
they choſe Stephen, a man full of faith and of the
holy Ghoſt, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor,
and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas a proſelyte
of Antioch. 6 Whom they ſet before the apoſtles:
and when they had prayed, they laid *their* hands
on them. 7 And the word of God increaſed; and
the number of the diſciples multiplied in Jeruſalem
greatly; and a great company of the prieſts were
obedient to the faith.

Having ſeen the Church's Struggles with its Enemies, and triumph'd with her in her Victories, we now come to take a View of the Adminiſtration of its Affairs at Home: And here we have,

Firſt, An unhappy Diſagreement among ſome of the Church-Members, which might have been of ill Conſequence; but was prudently accommodated and taken up in Time, *v.* 1. *When the number of the Diſciples* (for ſo Chriſtians were firſt call'd, Learners of Chriſt) *was multiply'd* to many Thouſands in *Jeruſalem then aroſe a Murmuring.*

1. It doth our Hearts good to find *that the Number of the Diſciples is multiply'd*, as no doubt it vex'd the Prieſts and *Sadduces* to the Heart to ſee it. The Oppoſition that the Preaching of the Goſpel met with, inſtead of checking its Progreſs, contributed to the Succeſs of it; and this Infant Chriſtian Church, like the Infant Jewiſh Church in *Egypt*, the more it was *afflicted*, the more it *multiply'd.* The Preachers were beaten, threatn'd, abus'd, and yet the People receiv'd their Doctrine, invited no doubt thereto by their wonderful Patience and Chearfulneſs under their Trial, which convinc'd Men, that they were born up and carry'd on by a better Spirit than their own.

2. Yet it caſts a Damp upon us to find that the multiplying of the Diſciples proves an Occaſion of Diſcord. Hitherto, they were all *with one accord*; this had been oft taken notice of to their Honour: But now they were *multiply'd*, they began to *murmur*; as in the Old World, when *Men began to multiply*, they *corrupted themſelves. Thou haſt multiply'd the Nation, and not increas'd their Joy*, Iſa. xi. 7. When *Abraham* and *Lot* encreas'd their Families, there was a Strife between their Herdmen: ſo it was here, there aroſe a *Murmuring*, not an open falling-out, but a ſecret Heart-burning.

(1.) The Complainants were the *Grecians* or *Helleniſts*, *againſt the Hebrews*. The *Jews* that were ſcatter'd in *Greece* and other Parts, who ordinarily ſpoke the *Greek* Tongue, and read the *Old Teſtament* in the *Greek* Verſion, and not the Original *Hebrew*, many of which being at *Jeruſalem* at the Feaſt, embrac'd the faith of Chriſt, and were added to the Church, and ſo continu'd there; theſe complain'd againſt the *Hebrews*, the Native *Jews*, that us'd the Original *Hebrew* of the *Old Teſtament.* Some of each of theſe became Chriſtians; and it ſeems their joint embracing of the Faith of Chriſt, did not prevail as it ought to have done to extinguiſh the little Jealouſies they had had one of another before their Converſion; but they retain'd ſomewhat of that old Leaven, not underſtanding, or not remembring, *that in Chriſt Jeſus there is neither* Greek *nor* Jew, no Diſtinction of *Hebrew* and *Helleniſt*, but all are alike welcome to Chriſt, and ſhould be for his Sake dear to one another.

(2.) The Complaint of theſe *Grecians* was, That *their Widows were neglected in their daily Miniſtration*, i. e. In the Diſtribution of the publick Charity, and the *Hebrew* Widows had more Care taken of them. *Obſerve*, The firſt Contention in the Chriſtian Church was about a *Money matter:* But 'tis Pity that the little Things of this World ſhould be *Make-bates* among thoſe that profeſs to be taken up with the great Things of another World. A great deal of Money was gather'd for the Relief of the Poor; but as uſeth to be in ſuch Caſes, it was impoſſible to pleaſe every Body in the laying of it out. The Apoſtles at whoſe Feet it was laid, did their beſt to diſpoſe of it ſo as to anſwer the Intentions of the Donors, and no doubt, deſign'd to do it with the utmoſt Impartiality, and were far from reſpecting the *Hebrews* more than the *Grecians*; and yet here they are complain'd *to*, and implicitely complain'd *of*, that the *Grecian Widows were neglected*, tho' they were as *real* Objects of Charity, yet they had not *ſo much* allow'd them, or not to *ſo many*, or not *ſo duly paid* them, as the *Hebrews.* Now (1.) Perhaps this Complaint was groundleſs and unjuſt, and there was no Cauſe for it. But thoſe who upon any Account lye under Diſadvantages, (as the *Grecian Jews* did in compariſon with them that were *Hebrews of the Hebrews*) are apt to be jealous that they are ſlighted, when really they are not ſo. And 'tis the common Fault of poor People, that inſtead of being thankful for what is given them, they are querulous and clamorous, and finding Fault that more is not given them, or that more is given to others than to them. And there is *Envy* and *Coveteouſneſs*, thoſe Roots of Bitterneſs, to be found among the Poor, as well as among the Rich, notwithſtanding the humbling Providences they are under, and ſhould accommodate themſelves to. But (2.) we will ſuppoſe, there might be ſome Occaſion for their Complaint. (1.) Some ſuggeſt, That tho' their other Poor were well provided for, yet their *Widows* were *neglected*; becauſe the Managers govern'd themſelves by an ancient Rule which the *Hebrews* obſerv'd, That *a Widow was to be maintain'd by her Husband's Children.* See 1 *Tim.* v. 4. But (2.) I take it, that the *Widows* are here put for *all the Poor*, becauſe many of them that were in the Church-Book, and receiv'd Alms, were *Widows*, who were well provided for by the Induſtry of their Husbands while they lived, but were reduc'd to Straits when they were gone. As thoſe that have the Adminiſtration of *publick Juſtice*, ought in a particular manner to protect *Widows* from Injury, *Iſa.* i. 17. *Luke* xviii. 3. ſo thoſe that have the Adminiſtration of *publick Charity*, ought in a particular manner to *provide* for *Widows* what is neceſſary, See 1 *Tim.* v. 3. And *Obſerve*, the *Widows* here, and the other Poor, had a *daily* Miniſtration: Perhaps they *wanted Forecaſt*, and could not ſave for hereafter, and therefore the Managers of the Fund in Kindneſs to them, gave them *Day by Day*, their *daily Bread*; they lived from Hand to Mouth. Now it ſeems the *Grecian* Widows were comparatively *neglected*; perhaps thoſe that diſpos'd of the Money, conſider'd that there was more brought into the Fund by the rich *Hebrews*, than was by the rich *Grecians*, who had not Eſtates to ſell as the *Hebrews* had; and therefore the poor *Grecians* ſhould have leſs out of the Fund; This, tho' there was ſome tolerable Reaſon for it, they thought hard, and unfair. *Note*, In the beſt order'd Church in the World, there will be ſomething amiſs, ſome Male-adminiſtration, or other, ſome Grievances or at leaſt ſome Complaints; they are the beſt that have the leaſt and feweſt.

Secondly, The happy Accomodation of this Matter, and the Expedient pitch'd upon for the taking away of the Cauſe of this *Murmuring*. The Apoſtles had hitherto the directing of the Matter, Applications were made to them, and Appeals in Caſe of Grievances; they were oblig'd to employ Perſons under them, who did not take all the Care they might have taken, nor were ſo well fortify'd as they ſhould have been againſt Temptations to Partiality: And therefore ſome Perſons muſt be choſen to manage this Matter, who have more Leiſure to attend it than the Apoſtles had, and were better qualify'd for the Truſt, than thoſe whom the Apoſtles employ'd were. Now *Obſerve*,

1. How the Method was propos'd by the Apoſtles; They *call'd the Multitude of the Diſciples unto them*; the Heads of the Congregations of Chriſtians in *Jeruſalem*, the principal leading Men. The *Twelve* themſelves would not determine any Thing without *them*; for in Multitude of Counſellors there is Safety; And in an Affair of this Nature, they might be beſt able to adviſe who were more converſant in the Affairs of this Life than the Apoſtles were.

(1.) The Apoſtles urge that they could by no means admit ſo great a Diverſion as this would be from their great Work; *v.* 2. *It is not reaſonable* that *we ſhould leave the Word of God, and ſerve Tables.* Receiving and Paying Money was ſerving *Tables*, too like the Table of the Money-Changers in the Temple; This was *foreign* to the Buſineſs which the Apoſtles were called to, They were to preach the *Word of God*, and tho' they had not ſuch Occaſion to ſtudy for what they preach'd as we have, it being given in that ſame Hour what they ſhould ſpeak, yet they thought that was Work enough for a *whole Man*, and to employ all their Thoughts, and Cares, and Time, though *one Man* of them was more than *Ten* of us, than *Ten Thouſand.* If they *ſerve Tables*, they muſt in ſome meaſure *leave the Word of God*, they could not attend their preaching Work ſo cloſely as they ought. *Pectora noſtra duas non admittentia Curas.* Tho' this *ſerving Tables* was for pious Uſes, and ſerving the Charity of rich Chriſtians, and the Neceſſity of poor Chriſtians, and in both ſerving Chriſt, yet the Apoſtles would not take ſo much Time from their Preaching as this would require. They will no more be *drawn* from their Preaching by the *Money laid at their Feet*, than they will be *drawn* from it by the *Stripes laid on their Backs.* While the Number of the Diſciples was few, the Apoſtles might manage this Matter without making it any conſiderable Avocation from their main Buſineſs: But now their Number was encreas'd they could not do it. *It is not Reaſon*, *ὐκ ἀρεϛὸν ἐϛι*, It is not *fit* or *commendable* that we ſhould neglect the Buſineſs of feeding Souls with the Bread of Life, to attend the Buſineſs of relieving the Bodies of the Poor. *Note*, Preaching the Goſpel is the beſt Work, and the moſt proper and needful that a Miniſter can be employ'd in; and that which he muſt *give himſelf wholly to*, 1 *Tim.* iv. 15. which that he may do, he muſt not entangle himſelf in the Affairs of this Life, 2 *Tim.* ii. 4. no not *in the outward Buſineſs of the Houſe of God*, Neh. xi. 16.

(2.) They therefore deſire that *Seven Men* might be choſen well qualify'd for the Purpoſe, whoſe Buſineſs it ſhould be to *ſerve Tables*, *διακονεῖν τραπέζαις*, to be *Deacons* to the *Tables*, *v.* 3. The Buſineſs muſt be minded, muſt be *better* minded than it *had been*, and than the Apoſtles could mind it, And therefore proper Perſons muſt be choſen, who tho' they might be occaſionally employ'd in the Word and Prayer, yet were not ſo devoted intirely to it as the Apoſtles were. And theſe muſt take Care of the Church's Stock, muſt review, and pay, and keep Accounts; muſt *buy thoſe Things which they had Need of againſt the Feaſt*, John xiii. 29. and attend to all thoſe Things which are neceſſary, *in ordine ad ſpiritualia*, in order to Spiritual Exerciſes, that every Thing might be *decently and in good Order*, and no Perſon or Thing *neglected.* Now,

1. The Perſons muſt be duly qualify'd. The People are to chooſe, and the Apoſtles to ordain, but the People have no Authority to chooſe, nor the Apoſtles, to ordain Men utterly unfit for the Office, *Look out Seven Men*, ſo many they thought might ſuffice for the preſent, more might be added afterwards if there were Occaſion. Theſe muſt be (1.) of *honeſt Report*, Men free from Scandal, that were looked upon by their Neighbours as Men of Intergrity, and faithful Men, well *atteſted to*, as Men that might be *truſted*; not under a Blemiſh for any Vice, but on the contrary, well ſpoken of for every Thing that's virtuous and Praiſe-worthy, *μαρτυρουμένους*, Men that can produce *good Teſtimonials* concerning their Converſation. *Note*, Thoſe that are employ'd in any Office of the Church, ought to be Men of *honeſt Report*, of a *blameleſs*, nay of a *beautiful* Character, which is requiſite not only to the Credit of their Office, but to the due Diſcharge of it. (2.) They muſt be *full of the Holy Ghoſt*, muſt be fill'd with thoſe Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghoſt which were neceſſary to the right Management of this Truſt; They muſt not only be *honeſt* Men, but they muſt be Men of *Parts*, and Men of *Courage*; ſuch as were to be made Judges in *Iſrael*, Exod. xviii. 21. *able Men, fearing God, Men of Truth, and hating Coveteouſneſs*, and hereby appearing to be *full of the Holy Ghoſt.* (3.) They muſt be *full of Wiſdom.* 'Twas not enough that they were honeſt good Men, but they muſt be diſcreet, judicious Men, that could not be impos'd on, and would order Things for the beſt, and with Conſideration. *Full of the Holy Ghoſt and Wiſdom*, *i. e.* of the Holy Ghoſt as a Spirit of Wiſdom. We find the *Word of Wiſdom given by the Spirit*, as diſtinct from the *Word of Knowledge*, by the ſame Spirit, 1 *Cor.* xii. 8. They muſt be full of *Wiſdom* who are intruſted with Publick Money, that it may be diſpos'd of not only with *Fidelity*, but with *Frugality.*

2. The People muſt nominate the Perſons; *Look ye out among you ſeven Men*, conſider among yourſelves who are the fitteſt for ſuch a Truſt, and whom you can with the moſt Satisfaction confide in. They might be preſum'd to know better, or at leaſt, were fitter to enquire what Character Men had, than the Apoſtles; and therefore they are entruſted with the Choice.

3. The Apoſtles will ordain them to the Service, will give them their *Charge*, that they may know what they have to do, and make Conſcience of doing it; and give them their *Authority*, that the Perſons concern'd may know whom they are to apply to, and ſubmit to in Affairs of that Nature; Men *whom we may appoint.* In many Editions of our *Engliſh* Bibles, there has been an Error of the Preſs here, for they have read it, whom *ye* may appoint, as if the Power were in the People, whereas 'twas certainly in the Apoſtles, whom *we* may appoint *over this Buſineſs* to take Care of it, and to ſee that there be neither *Waſte* nor *Want.*

(3.) The Apoſtles engage to addict themſelves wholly to their Work as Miniſters, and the more cloſely, if they can but get fairly quit of this troubleſome Office, *v.* 4. *We will give ourſelves continually to Prayer, and to the Miniſtry of the Word.* See here (1.) What are the two great Goſpel Ordinances, the *Word* and *Prayer*; by theſe Two, Communion between GOD and his People is kept up and maintain'd: By the *Word* he ſpeaks to them, and by *Prayer* they ſpeak to Him; and theſe have a mutual Reference to each other. By theſe Two the Kingdom of Chriſt muſt be advanc'd, and Additions made to it; we muſt propheſy upon the dry Bones, and then pray for a Spirit of Life from GOD to enter into them. By the *Word* and *Prayer*, other Ordinances are ſanctified to us, and Sacraments have their Efficacy. (2.) What is the great Buſineſs of Goſpel Miniſters? To *give themſelves continually to Prayer, and to the Miniſtry of the Word*; they muſt ſtill be either fitting and furniſhing themſelves for thoſe Services, or employing themſelves in them, either publickly or privately; in the ſtated Times, or out of them. They muſt be GOD's Mouth to the People in the *Miniſtry of the Word*, and the Peoples Mouth to GOD in *Prayer.* In order to the Conviction and Converſion of Sinners, and the Edification and Conſolation of Saints, we muſt not only *offer up our Prayers* for them, but we muſt *miniſter the Word to them*, ſeconding our Prayers with our Endeavours, in the uſe of appointed Means; nor muſt we only *miniſter the Word* to them, but we muſt *pray* for them, that it may be effectual; for GOD's Grace can do all without our Preaching, but our Preaching can do nothing without GOD's Grace. The Apoſtles were endued with extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, Tongues and Miracles, and yet that which they gave themſelves continually to, was *Preaching* and *Praying*, by which they might edify the Church. And thoſe Miniſters, without doubt, are the Succeſſors of the Apoſtles, (not in the *Plenitude of the Apoſtolical Power*, thoſe are daring Uſurpers who pretend to that, but in the beſt and moſt excellent of the Apoſtolical Work) who *give themſelves continually to Prayer, and to the Miniſtry of the Word*; and ſuch Chriſt will always be with even *to the End of the World.*

2. How this Propoſal was agreed to, and preſently put in Execution by the Diſciples; 'twas not *impos'd* upon them by an abſolute Power, tho' they might have been *bold in Chriſt* to do that, (*Philem.* 8.) but *propos'd*, as that which was *highly convenient*, and then the Saying *pleas'd the whole Multitude*, v. 5. It *pleas'd them* to ſee the Apoſtles ſo willing to diſcharge themſelves from intermeddling in ſecular Affairs, and to tranſmit them to others; it *pleas'd them* to hear that they would *give themſelves to the Word and Prayer*; and therefore they neither diſputed the Matter, nor deferr'd the Execution of it.

1. They pitch'd upon the Perſons; 'tis not likely they all caſt their Eye upon the ſame Men, every One had his Friend, whom he thought well of. But the major Vote fell upon the Perſons here nam'd, and the reſt, both of the Candidates and Electors, acquieſced, and made no Diſturbance, as the Members of Societies in ſuch Caſes ought to do. *An Apoſtle*, who was an extraordinary Officer, was choſen by *Lot*, which is more immediately the *Act of God*: But the Overſeers of the Poor were choſe by the Suffrage of the People; in which yet a Regard is to be had to the Providence of GOD, who has all Mens Hearts and Tongues in his Hand.

We have a Liſt of the Perſons choſen; ſome think they were ſuch as were before of the Seventy Diſciples; but that is not likely; for they were ordained by Chriſt himſelf long ſince to preach the Goſpel, and there was no more Reaſon that they ſhould *leave the Word of God to ſerve Tables* than that the Apoſtles ſhould; It is therefore more probable that they were of thoſe that were converted ſince the pouring out of the Spirit; for it was promis'd to all that would be baptiz'd, that they ſhould *receive the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt*, and the Gift according to that Promiſe is that *Fulneſs of the Holy Ghoſt*, which was requir'd in thoſe that were to be choſen to this Service. We may further conjecture concerning theſe Seven. (1.) That they were ſuch as had ſold their Eſtates, and brought the Money into the common Stock; for *cæteris paribus* theſe were fitteſt to be intruſted with the Diſtribution of it, which had been moſt generous in the Contribution to it. (2.) That theſe Seven were all of the *Grecians* or *Helleniſt Jews*, for they have all *Greek* Names. And this would be moſt likely to *ſilence* the *Murmurings* of the *Grecians* (which occaſion'd this Inſtitution) to have the Truſt lodg'd in thoſe that were Foreigners like themſelves, who would be ſure not to neglect them: *Nicolas* 'tis plain was one of *them*, for he was a *Proſelyte of* Antioch, and ſome think the Manner of Expreſſion intimates that they were all Proſelytes of *Jeruſalem*, as he was of *Antioch*.

The firſt nam'd is *Stephen*, the Glory of the *Septem-viri*, a Man *full of Faith and of the Holy Ghoſt*, he had a ſtrong Faith in the Doctrine of Chriſt, and was *full* of it above moſt, full of Fidelity, full of Courage; ſo ſome, for he was *full of the Holy Ghoſt*, of his Gifts and Graces; he was an extraordinary Man, and excelled in every Thing that was good; his Name ſignifies *A Crown*. *Philip* is put next, becauſe he having uſed *this Office of a Deacon well*, thereby *obtain'd a good Degree*, and was afterwards ordain'd to the Office of *an Evangeliſt*, a Companion and Aſſiſtant to the Apoſtles; for ſo he is expreſly call'd *Acts* xxi. 8. compare *Eph.* iv. 11. And his preaching and baptizing, which we read of, *Acts* viii. 12, was certainly not as a *Deacon*, for 'tis plain that Office was *ſerving Tables* in Oppoſition to the *Miniſtry of the Word*, but as an *Evangeliſt*; And when he was preferr'd to that Office, we have Reaſon to think he quitted his Office as incompatible with that. And as for *Stephen* nothing we find done by him proves him to be a *Preacher of the Goſpel*, for he only *diſputes in the Schools*, and *pleads* for his Life at the Bar, *v.* 9. and *chap.* vii. 2.

The laſt nam'd is *Nicolas*, who ſome ſay, afterwards degenerated, (as the *Judas* among theſe Seven) and was the Founder of the Sect of the *Nicolaitans*, which we read of *Rev.* ii. 6, 15. and which Chriſt there ſaith once and again was a Thing he hated. But ſome of the Ancients clear him from that Charge, and tell us, that tho' that vile impure Sect denominated themſelves from him, yet it was unjuſtly, and becauſe he only inſiſted much upon it, that they *that had Wives ſhould be as tho' they had none*; thence *they* wickedly inferr'd, that they that had *Wives* ſhould have them *in Common*, which therefore *Tertullian*, when he ſpeaks of the Community of Goods, particularly excepts, *Omnia indiſcreta apud nos, præter uxores*. Apol. c. 39.

2. The Apoſtles appointed them to this Work of *ſerving Tables* for the preſent, *v.* 6. The People preſented them to the Apoſtles, who approv'd their Choice; and *ordain'd* them. (1.) They *pray'd* with them, and for them, that GOD would give them more and more of the *Holy Ghoſt*, and of *Wiſdom*, that he would qualify them for the Service to which they were call'd, and own them in it, and make them thereby a Bleſſing to the Church, and particularly to the *Poor of the Flock*. All that are employ'd in the Service of the Church, ought to be committed to the Conduct of the Divine Grace by the Prayers of the Church. (2.) They *laid their Hands on them*, *i. e.* they Bleſſed them in the Name of the Lord; for laying on Hands was uſed in Bleſſing; ſo *Jacob* bleſſed both the Sons of *Joſeph*; And without Controverſy, *the leſs is bleſſed of the greater*, Heb. vii. 7. The Deacons are bleſſed by the Apoſtles; and the Overſeers of the Poor by the Paſtors of the Congregation. Having by Prayer implor'd a Bleſſing upon them, they did by the *laying on of Hands*, aſſure them, that the Bleſſing was conferr'd in anſwer to the Prayer; And this was giving them Authority to execute that Office, and laying an Obligation upon the People to be obſervant of them therein.

Thirdly, The Advancement of the Church hereupon; when Things were thus put into good Order in the Church, Grievances were redreſs'd, and Diſcontents ſilenc'd, then Religion got Ground, *v.* 7.

1. The *Word of God increas'd*, Now the Apoſtles reſolv'd to ſtick more cloſely than ever to their *Preaching*: It ſpread the Goſpel further, and brought it Home with the more Power. Miniſters diſentangling themſelves from ſecular Employments, and addicting themſelves intirely, and vigorouſly to their Work, will contribute very much, as a Means, to the Succeſs of the Goſpel. The *Word of God* is ſaid to *encreaſe*, as the Seed ſown *encreaſeth*, when it comes up again thirty, ſixty, a hundred Fold.

2. Chriſtians grow numerous; *The Number of the Diſciples multiply'd in* Jeruſalem *greatly*; when Chriſt was upon Earth His Miniſtry had leaſt Succeſs in *Jeruſalem*, yet now that City affords moſt Converts. GOD has his Remnant even in the worſt of Places.

3. *A great Company of the Prieſts were obedient to the Faith*; Then is the Word and Grace of GOD greatly magnify'd, when thoſe are wrought upon by it that were leaſt likely, as the Prieſts here, who either had oppos'd it, or at leaſt were link'd in with thoſe that had. The Prieſts whoſe Preferments aroſe from the Law of *Moſes*, yet were willing to let them go for the Goſpel of Chriſt; And it ſhould ſeem they came in, *in a Body*, many of them *agreed together* for the keeping up of one another's Credit, and the ſtrengthening of one another's Hands, to join at once in giving up their Names to Chriſt, πολὺς ὄχλος, *A great Croud of Prieſts* were, by the Grace of GOD, help'd over their Prejudices, and *were obedient to the Faith*, ſo their Converſion is deſcrib'd. (1.) They embrac'd the Doctrine of the Goſpel; their Underſtandings were captivated to the Power of the Truths of Chriſt, and every oppoſing objecting Thought, *brought into Obedience* to Him. 2 *Cor.* x. 4, 5. The Goſpel is ſaid to be *made known for the Obedience of Faith*, Rom. xvi. 26. Faith is an Act of *Obedience*, for this is *GOD's Commandment that we believe*, 1 John iii. 23. (2.) They evidenc'd the Sincerity of their believing the Goſpel of Chriſt by a chearful compliance with all the Rules and Precepts of the Goſpel. The Deſign of the Goſpel is to refine and reform our Hearts and Lives; It's Faith gives Law to us, and we muſt be *obedient* to it.

8 And Stephen full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the People. 9 Then there aroſe certain of the ſynagogue, which is called *the ſynagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, of them of Cilicia, and of Aſia, diſputing with Stephen. And they were not able to reſiſt the wiſdom and the ſpirit by which he ſpake. 11 Then they ſuborned men which ſaid, We have heard him ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt Moſes, and *againſt* God. 12 And they ſtirred up the people, and the elders, and the ſcribes, and came upon *him*, and caught him, and brought *him* to the council. 13 And ſet up falſe witneſſes which ſaid, This man ceaſeth not to ſpeak blaſphemous words againſt this holy place, and the law. 14 For we have heard him ſay, that this Jeſus of Nazareth ſhall deſtroy this place, and ſhall change the cuſtoms which Moſes delivered us. 15 And all that ſat in the council, looking ſtedfaſtly on him, ſaw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

Stephen no doubt was diligent and faithful in the Diſcharge of his Office as a Diſtributor of the Church's Charity, and laid out himſelf to put that Affair in a good Method, and did it to univerſal Satisfaction; And tho' it appears here that he was a Man of uncommon Gifts, and fitted for a higher Station, yet being called to that Office he did not think it below him to do the Duty of it. And being faithful in a little, he was ſoon intruſted with more; And tho' we do not find him propagating the Goſpel by preaching and baptizing, yet we find him here call'd out to very honourable Services, and own'd in them.

Firſt, He *prov'd* the *Truth* of the Goſpel, by *working Miracles* in Chriſt's Name, *v.* 8.

1. He was *full of Faith and Power*, *i. e.* of a *ſtrong Faith*, by which he was *enabled* to do great Things. They that are full of Faith, are full of Power, becauſe by Faith the Power of God is engag'd for us. His Faith did ſo *fill* him, that it left no room for Unbelief, and made Room for the Influences of Divine Grace, ſo that, as the Prophet ſpeaks, he was *full of Power by the Spirit of the Lord of Hoſts*, Mich. iii. 8. By Faith we are *empty'd* of ſelf, and ſo are *filled* with Chriſt, who is the *Wiſdom of God*, and the *Power of God*.

2. Being ſo, *he did great Wonders and Miracles among the People*, openly, and in the ſight of all, for Chriſt's Miracles feared not the ſtricteſt Scrutiny. It is not ſtrange that *Stephen*, tho' he was not a *Preacher* by Office, yet did theſe great Wonders; for we find that theſe were diſtinct Gifts of the Spirit, and divided ſeverally, for *to one was Given the working of Miracles, and to another Prophecy*, 1 *Cor.* xii. 10, 11. And *thoſe Signs follow'd* not only them that *preach'd*, but them that *believ'd*, *Mark* xvi. 17.

Secondly He *pleaded the Cauſe* of Chriſtianity againſt thoſe that oppos'd it and argued againſt it, *v.* 9, 10. he ſerv'd the Intereſt of Religion as a Diſputant, in the high Places of the Field, while others were ſerving them as Vinedreſſers and Husbandmen.

1. We are here told who were his Opponents, *v.* 9. They were *Jews*, but *Helleniſt Jews*, *Jews* of the Diſperſion, who ſeem to have been more zealous for their Religion than the Native *Jews*; 'Twas with Difficulty that they retain'd the Practice and Profeſſion of it in the Country, where they liv'd, where they were *as ſpeckled Birds*, and not without great Expence and Toil that they kept up their Attendance at *Jeruſalem*, and this made them more active Sticklers for *Judaiſm*, than they were whoſe Profeſſion of their Religion was cheap and eaſy. They were of the *Synagogue which is call'd the Synagogue of the* Libertines; the *Romans* call'd thoſe *Liberti* or *Libertini*, that either being Foreigners, were naturaliz'd; or being Slaves by Birth, were manumis'd or made Freemen. Some think theſe *Libertines* were ſuch of the *Jews*, as had obtain'd the *Roman* Freedom, as *Paul* had, *Acts* xv. 37. And it is probable, he was the moſt forward Man of this Synagogue of the *Libertines* in diſputing with *Stephen*, and engag'd others in the Diſpute; for we find him buſy in the Stoning of *Stephen*, and conſenting to his Death. There were others that belong'd to the Synagogue of the *Cyreneans* and *Alexandrians*, of which Synagogue the Jewiſh Writers ſpeak; and others that belong'd to their Synagogue, who *were of* Cilicia *and* Aſia; and if *Paul* as a Freeman of *Rome* did not belong to the Synagogue of the *Libertines*, he belong'd to this as a Native of *Tarſus*, a City of *Cilicia*; 'tis probable, he might be a Member of both. The *Jews* that were born in other Countries, and had Concerns in them, had frequent Occaſion not only to reſort to, but to reſide in *Jeruſalem*. And each Nation had its Synagogue, as in *London* there are *French*, and *Dutch*, and *Daniſh* Churches: And thoſe Synagogues were the Schools to which the *Jews* of thoſe Nations ſent

their Youth to be educated in the Jewiſh Learning. Now thoſe that were Tutors and Profeſſors in theſe *Synagogues*, ſeeing the Goſpel grow, and the Rulers conniving at the Growth of it, and fearing what would be the Conſequence of it to the Jewiſh Religion, which they were jealous for, being confident of the Goodneſs of their Cauſe, and their own Sufficiency to manage it, would undertake to run down Chriſtianity by Force of Argument; and it was a fair and rational Way of dealing with it, and what Religion is always ready to admit. *Produce your Cauſe, ſaith the LORD, bring forth your ſtrong* Reaſons, Iſa. xli. 21. But why did they diſpute with *Stephen?* And why not with the Apoſtles themſelves? (1.) Some think becauſe they deſpis'd the Apoſtles as *unlearned and ignorant Men*, whom they thought it below them to engage with; but *Stephen* was bred a Scholar, and they thought it their Honour to meddle with their Match. (2.) Others think 'twas becauſe they ſtood in Awe of the Apoſtles, and could not be ſo free and familiar with them as they could be with *Stephen*, who was in an inferiour Office. (3.) Perhaps they having given a publick Challenge, *Stephen* was choſe and appointed by the Diſciples to be their Champion; for it *was not meet* that the Apoſtles *ſhould leave the* Preaching of the *Word of God* to engage in Controverſy. *Stephen* that was only a *Deacon* in the Church, and a very ſharp young Man, and of bright Parts, and better qualify'd to deal with wrangling Diſputants than the Apoſtles themſelves, is appointed to this Service. (4.) Some Hiſtorians ſay, that *Stephen* had been bred up at the feet of *Gamaliel*, and *Saul*, and the reſt of 'em ſet upon him as a Deſerter, and with a particular Fury made him their Mark. 'Tis probable, they diſputed with *Stephen* becauſe he was zealous to argue with them, and convince them. And this was the Service which GOD had call'd him to.

2. We are here told how he carry'd the Point in his Diſpute, *v.* 10. *They were not able to reſiſt the Wiſdom and the Spirit by which he ſpake.* They could not either ſupport their own Arguments, or anſwer his. He prov'd by ſuch irreſiſtable Arguments that Jeſus is the Chriſt, and deliver'd himſelf with ſo much Clearneſs and Fulneſs, that they had nothing to object againſt what he ſaid; tho' they were not *convinc'd*, yet they were *confounded.* 'Tis not ſaid, they were not able to *reſiſt him*, but they were not able to reſiſt the *Wiſdom and the Spirit by which he ſpake, i. e.* that Spirit of Wiſdom which ſpake by him: Now was fulfilled that Promiſe, *I will give you a Mouth and Wiſdom which all your Adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay or reſiſt.* Luke xxi. 15. They thought they had only *diſputed* with *Stephen*, and could make their Part good with him; but they were diſputing with the Spirit of GOD in him, for whom they were an unequal Match.

Thirdly, At length he *ſeal'd it with his Blood*; ſo we ſhall find he did in the next Chapter, here we have ſome Steps taken by his Enemies towards it. When they could not anſwer his Arguments as a Diſputant, they proſecuted him as a Criminal, and *ſuborn'd Witneſſes* againſt him to ſwear Blaſphemy upon him, " On ſuch Terms (ſaith Mr. *Baxter* here) doth we diſpute with " malignant Men, and it is next to a Miracle of Providence, " that no greater Number of religious Perſons have been murther'd in the World, by the Way of Perjury and Pretence of " Law, when ſo many Thouſands hate them who make no " Conſcience of Falſe Oaths." They *ſuborn'd Men, i. e.* Inſtructed them what to ſay, and then hir'd them to ſwear it. They were the more inrag'd againſt him, becauſe he had prov'd them to be in the Wrong, and ſhew'd 'em the right Way; for which they ought to have given him their beſt Thanks; *Was he therefore become their Enemy becauſe he told them the Truth*, and prov'd it to be ſo? Now let us *Obſerve* here,

1. How with all poſſible Art and Induſtry they incenc'd both the *Government* and the *Mob* againſt him, that if they could not prevail by the one, they might by the other, *v.* 12. *They ſtirred up the People againſt him*, that if the *Sanhedrin* ſhould ſtill think *fit*, according to *Gamaliel*'s Advice, to let him alone, yet they might run him down by a popular Rage and Tumult; they alſo find means to ſtir up the *Elders* and the *Scribes* againſt him, that if the People ſhould countenance and protect him, they might prevail by Authority. Thus they doubted not but to gain their Point, when they had two Strings to their Bow.

2. How they got him to the Bar: They *came upon him*, when he little thought of it, *and caught him and brought him to the Council*, They came upon him in a Body, and flew upon him as a Lion upon his Prey; ſo the Word ſignifies. By their rude and violent Treatment of him, they would repreſent him both to the People and to the Government as a dangerous Man, that would either flee from Juſtice if he were not watch'd, or fight with it if he were not put under a Force. Having caught him, they *brought* him triumphantly *into the Council*, and as it ſhould ſeem, ſo haſtily that he had none of his Friends with him. They had found when they brought many together, they embolden'd one another, and ſtrengthen'd one another's Hands; and therefore they'll try how to deal with them ſingly.

3. How they were prepar'd with Evidence ready to produce againſt him; They were reſolv'd they would not be run a-ground as they were when they brought our Saviour upon his Trial, and then were to ſeek for Witneſſes. Theſe were got ready before-hand, and were inſtructeed to make Oath, That they had *heard him ſpeak blaſphemous Words againſt* Moſes, *and againſt* God, *v.* 11. againſt this *Holy Place and the Law*, v. 13. for they heard him ſay, *what* Jeſus *would do to their Place and their Cuſtoms*, v. 14. 'Tis probable, he had ſaid ſomething to that Purpoſe; and yet they who ſwore it againſt him, are call'd *falſe Witneſſes*, becauſe tho' there was ſomething of Truth in their Teſtimony, yet they put a wrong and malicious Conſtruction upon what he had ſaid, and perverted it. *Obſerve*,

1. What was the general Charge exhibited againſt him, That he *ſpoke blaſphemous Words*; and to aggravate the Matter, he *ceaſeth not to ſpeak blaſpemous Words*; 'tis his common Talk, his Diſcourſe in all Companies, whereſoever he comes; he makes it his Buſineſs to inſtill his Notions into all he Converſeth with. It intimates likewiſe ſomething of Contumacy and contempt of Admonition; he hath been warn'd againſt it, and yet ceaſeth not to talk at this Rate. *Blaſphemy* is juſtly reckon'd a heinous Crime, to ſpeak contemptibly and reproachfully of GOD our Maker, and therefore *Stephen's* Perſecutors would be thought to have a mighty Concern upon them for the Honour of GOD's Name, and to do this in a Jealouſy for that: As it was with the Confeſſors and Martyrs of the *Old Teſtament*, ſo it was with thoſe of the *New*, Their *Brethren* that *hateth them* and *caſt them out* ſaid, *Let the Lord be glorify'd*; and pretended they *did him Service in it.*

He is ſaid to have ſpoken blaſphemous Words *againſt* Moſes, and *againſt GOD*: Thus far they were right, that they who *blaſpheme* Moſes, if they mean the Writings of *Moſes*, which were given by Inſpiration of GOD, blaſpheme GOD himſelf. They that ſpeak reproachfully of the Scriptures, and ridicule them, reflect upon GOD himſelf, and do Deſpite to him. His great Intention is to *magnify the Law and make it honourable*; thoſe therefore that vilify the Law and make it *contemptible* blaſpheme his Name; for he has *magnify'd his Word above all his Name.*

But, Did *Stephen* blaſpeme *Moſes?* by no Means, he was far from it. Chriſt, and the Preachers of his Goſpel, never ſaid any Thing that look'd like blaſpheming *Moſes*, they always quoted his Writings with Reſpect, appeal'd to them, and *ſaid no other Things* but what *Moſes* ſaid ſhould come; very unjuſtly therefore is *Stephen* indicted for Blaſpheming *Moſes*. But,

2. Let us ſee how this Charge is ſupported and made out; Why truly when the Thing was to be proved, all they can charge him with is, That *he hath ſpoken Blaſphemous Words againſt this Holy Place, and the Law*; and this muſt be deem'd and taken as Blaſphemy againſt *Moſes*, and againſt *GOD* himſelf. Thus doth the Charge dwindle when it comes to the Evidence. (1.) He is charg'd with Blaſpheming this *Holy Place*. Some underſtand that of the City of *Jeruſalem*, which was the *Holy City*, and which they had a mighty Jealouſy for: But 'tis rather meant of the *Temple*, that *Holy* Houſe. Chriſt was condemn'd as a Blaſphemer for Words which were thought to reflect upon the Temple, which they ſeem'd concern'd for the Honour of, then when they by their Wickedneſs had Prophan'd it. (2.) He is charg'd with Blaſpheming *the Law*; of which they *made their Boaſt*, and in which they put their Truſt, then when through *breaking of the Law* they diſhonour'd GOD, *Rom.* iii. 23.

Well, But how can they make this out? Why, here the Charge dwindles again; for all they can accuſe him of is, That *they had* themſelves *heard him ſay*, (But how it came in, or what Explication he gave of it, they think not themſelves bound to give Account) That this *Jeſus of Nazareth*, who was ſo much talk'd of, *ſhall deſtroy this Place, and change the Cuſtoms which* Moſes *deliver'd us.* He could not be charg'd with having ſaid any Thing to the Diſparagement either of the *Temple* or of the *Law*. The Prieſts had themſelves profan'd the Temple, by making it not only a *Houſe of Merchandize*, but a *Den of Thieves*; yet they would be thought zealous for the Honour of it, againſt One that had never ſaid any Thing amiſs of it, but had attended it more as a *Houſe of Prayer*, according to the true Intention of it, than they had. Nor had he ever reproach'd the Law as they had.

But (1.) He had ſaid, That *Jeſus of Nazareth ſhall deſtroy this Place*; deſtroy the Temple, deſtroy *Jeruſalem*. 'Tis likely he might ſay ſo; And what Blaſphemy is it againſt the Holy Place, to ſay, that it ſhould not be perpetual any more than *Shiloh* was? And that the Juſt and Holy GOD would not continue the Privileges of his Sanctuary to thoſe that abus'd them? Had not the Prophets given the ſame Warning to their Fathers of the Deſtruction of that Holy Place by *Chaldeans*, Nay, when the Temple was firſt built, had not GOD himſelf given the ſame Warning? *This Houſe which is High, ſhall be an Aſtoniſhment*, 1 Chron. vii. 21. And is he a Blaſphemer then who tells them, That *Jeſus of Nazareth*, if they continue their Oppoſition to him, will bring a juſt Deſtruction upon their Place and Nation, and they may thank themſelves. Thoſe wickedly abuſe their Profeſſion of Religion, who under Colour of that, call the Reproofs given them for their diſagreeable Converſations, *blaſphemous* Reflections up their Religion.

2. He had ſaid, That *this Jeſus ſhall change the Cuſtoms which* Moſes *deliver'd us.* And it was expected, that in the Days of the *Meſſiah* they ſhould be chang'd, and that the Shadows ſhould be

done away when the Subſtance was come; yet this was no eſſential Change of the Law, but the Perfecting of it; Chriſt came not to *deſtroy*, but to fulfill the Law; and if he *chang'd* ſome *Cuſtoms* that *Moſes* deliver'd, it was to introduce and eſtabliſh thoſe that were much better. And if the Jewiſh Church had not obſtinately refus'd to come in to this New Eſtabliſhment, and adher'd to the Ceremonial Law, for ought I know, *their Place* had not been deſtroy'd; ſo that for putting them into a *certain Way* to prevent their Deſtruction, and for giving them *certain Notice* of their Deſtruction, if they did not take that Way, he is accus'd as a *Blaſphemer*.

Laſtly, We are here told how GOD own'd him when he was brought before the Council, and made it to appear, that he ſtood by him, *v.* 15. *All that ſate in the Council*, the Prieſts, Scribes, and Elders, *looking ſtedfaſtly on him*, being a Stranger and One they had not yet had before them, they *ſaw his Face as it had been the Face of an Angel*. 'Tis uſual for Judges to obſerve the Countenance of the Priſoner, which ſometimes is an Indication either of Guilt or Innocence: Now *Stephen* appear'd at the Bar with the Countenance *as of an Angel*.

1. Perhaps it intimates no more, than that he had an extraordinary pleaſant, chearful Countenance, and there was not in it the leaſt Sign either of Fear for himſelf, or Anger at his Perſecutors, he look'd as if he were never better pleas'd in his Life than he was now, when he was call'd out to bear his Teſtimony to the Goſpel of Chriſt thus publickly, and ſtood fair for the Crown of Martyrdom. Such an undiſturb'd Serenity, ſuch an undaunted Courage, and ſuch an unaccountable Mixture of Mildneſs and Majeſty there was in his Countenance, that every One ſaid, he look'd like an Angel; enough ſure to convince the *Sadduces* that *there are Angels*, when they ſaw before their Eyes an Incarnate Angel.

2. It ſhould rather ſeem that there was a miraculous Splendour and Brightneſs upon his Countenance, like that of our Saviour, when he was transfigur'd; or at leaſt that of *Moſes*, when he came down from the Mount; GOD deſigning thereby to put Honour upon his faithful Witneſs, and Confuſion upon his Perſecutors and Judges, whoſe Sin would be highly aggravated, and would be indeed a Rebellion againſt the Light, if notwithſtanding this, they proceeded againſt him. Whether he himſelf wiſt that the Skin of his Face ſhone or no, we are not told; but *all that ſate in the Council ſaw it*, and probably took notice of it to one another, and an errant ſhame 'twas that when they ſaw it, and could not but ſee by it, that he was own'd of God, they did not call him from ſtanding at the Bar, to ſit in the chief Seat upon the Bench. *Wiſdom* and *Holineſs* make a Man's *Face to ſhine*, and yet theſe will not ſecure Men from the greateſt Indignities; and no Wonder, when the ſhining of *Stephen*'s Face would not be his Protection; tho' it had been eaſy to prove, that if he had been guilty of putting any Diſhonour upon *Moſes*, GOD would not thus have put *Moſes*'s Honour upon him.

CHAP. VII

When our Lord Jeſus *call'd his Apoſtles out to be employ'd in Services and Sufferrings for him, he told them, that yet the* laſt *ſhould be* firſt, *and the* firſt laſt; *which was remarkably fulfill'd in St.* Stephen *and St.* Paul, *who were both of them late Converts, in Compariſon of the Apoſtles, and yet got the Start of them, both in Services and Sufferings; for GOD in conferring Honours and Favours, often croſſeth Hands: In this Chapter we have the* Martyrdom *of* Stephen, *the firſt Martyr of the Chriſtian Church, who* led the Van *in that* Noble Army. *And therefore his Sufferings and Death are more largely related than of any other, for Direction and Encouragement to all thoſe who are called out to* reſiſt unto Blood, *as he did. Here's* (1.) *His Defence of himſelf before the Council, in Anſwer to the Matters and Things he ſtood charg'd with, the Scope of which is to ſhew, that it was no Blaſphemy againſt GOD, nor any Injury at all to the Glory of his Name, to ſay, that the Temple ſhould be deſtroy'd, and the Cuſtoms of the Ceremonial Law chang'd. And* (1.) *He ſhews this by going over the Hiſtory of the* Old Teſtament, *and obſerving, that GOD never intended to confine his Favours to* that *Place*, or that *Ceremonial Law; and that they had no Reaſon to expect He ſhould, for the People of the* Jews *had always been a provoking People, and had forfeited the Privileges of their Peculiarity: Nay, that that Holy Place, and that Law, were but Figures of Good Things to come, and it was no Diſparagement at all to them to ſay, that they muſt give place to better things,* v. 1—50. *And then* (2.) *He applies this to them that proſecuted him, and ſate in Judgment upon him, ſharply Reproving them for their Wickedneſs, by which they had brought upon themſelves the Ruin of their Place and Nation, and then could not bear to hear of it,* v. 51—53. (3.) *The putting of him to Death by Stoning of him, and his patient, chearful, pious Submiſſion to it,* v. 54—60.

THEN ſaid the high prieſt, Are theſe things ſo? 2 And he ſaid, Men, brethren and fathers, hearken, The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Meſopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, 3 And ſaid unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I ſhall ſhew thee. 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land wherein ye now dwell. 5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no not *ſo much as* to ſet his foot on: yet he promiſed that he would give it to him for a poſſeſſion, and to his ſeed after him, when *as yet* he had no child. 6 And God ſpake on this wiſe, that his ſeed ſhould ſojourn in a ſtrange land, and that they ſhould bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years. 7 And the nation to whom they ſhall be in bondage, will I judge, ſaid God: and after that ſhall they come forth, and ſerve me in this place. 8 And he gave him the covenant of circumciſion: and ſo *Abraham* begat Iſaac, and circumciſed him the eighth day: and Iſaac *begat* Jacob, and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs: 9 And the patriarchs moved with envy, ſold Joſeph into Egypt: but God was with him, 10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wiſdom in the ſight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governour of Egypt, and all his houſe. 11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction; and our fathers found no ſuſtenance. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was Corn in Egypt, he ſent out our fathers firſt. 13 And at the ſecond *time* Joſeph was made known to his brethren; and Joſeph's kindred was made known unto Pharoah. 14 Then ſent Joſeph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threeſcore and fifteen Souls. 15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he and our fathers, 16 And were carried over into Sichem, and laid in the Sepulchre that Abraham bought for a ſum of money of the ſons of Emmor *the father* of Sichem.

Stephen is now at the Bar before the Great Council of the Nation, indicted for *Blaſphemy*; what the Witneſſes ſwore againſt him, we had an Account of in the foregoing Chapter, That he ſpoke blaſphemous Words againſt *Moſes* and *GOD*; for he ſpoke againſt this *Holy Place*, and *the Law*. Now here,

1. The High-prieſt calls upon him to anſwer for himſelf, *v.* 1. He was Preſident, and as ſuch, the Mouth of the Court, and therefore he ſaith, You, the Priſoner at the Bar, you hear what is ſworn againſt you, what do you ſay to it? *Are theſe Things ſo?* Have you ever ſpoken any Words to this Purpoſe? If you have, will you recant them, or will you ſtand to them? *Guilty* or *Not Guilty?* This carry'd a Shew of Fairneſs, and yet ſeems to have been ſpoken with an Air of Haughtineſs; and thus far he ſeems to have prejudg'd the Cauſe, that if it were ſo, that he had ſpoken ſuch and ſuch Words, he ſhall certainly be adjudg'd a Blaſphemer, whatever he may offer in Juſtification or Explanation of them.

2. He begins his Defence, and it is *long*, but it ſhould ſeem by his breaking off abrubtly, juſt when he came to the main Point, *v.* 50. that it would have been *much longer*, if his Enemies would have given him Leave to ſay *all* he had to ſay. In general we may *Obſerve*.

1. That in this Diſcourſe he appears to be a Man ready and mighty in the Scriptures, and thereby thoroughly furniſh'd for every good Word and Work. He can relate Scripture Stories, and ſuch as were very pertinent to his Purpoſe, off-hand, without looking in his Bible. He was *fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt*, not ſo much to reveal to him New Things, or open to him the ſecret Counſels and Decrees of GOD concerning the Jewiſh Nation, with them to convict theſe Gainſayers; No, but to bring to his Remembrance the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, and to teach him how to make Uſe of *them* for their Conviction. They that are full of the Holy Ghoſt, will be full of the Scripture, as *Stephen* was.

2. That he quotes the Scriptures according to the *Septuagint Tranſlation*, by which it appears he was one of the *Helleniſt Jews*, who us'd that Verſion in their Synagogues: And his following that, occaſions divers Variations from the *Hebrew* Original in this Diſcourſe, which the Judges of the Court did not correct becauſe they knew how he was led into them; nor is it any Derogation to the Authority of that Spirit by which he ſpoke, for the Variations are not material. We have a Maxim, *Apices juris non ſunt jura.*

Theſe Verſes carry on this his Compendium of Church Hiſtory to the End of the Book of *Geneſis*. Obſerve,

1. His Preface; *Men, Brethren and Fathers, hearken.* He gives them, tho' not flattering Titles, yet civil and reſpectful Ones, ſignifies his Expectation of fair Treatment with them; from *Men*, he hopes to be treated with *Humanity*, and that *Brethren* and *Fathers* will uſe him in a fatherly brotherly Way. They are ready to look upon him as an Apoſtate from the Jewiſh Church, and an Enemy to them. But to make Way for their Conviction to the Contrary, he addreſſeth himſelf to them as *Men, Brethren and Fathers*, reſolving to look on himſelf as One of them, tho' they would not ſo look on him. He craves their Attention; *Hearken*; Tho' he was about to tell them what they already knew, yet he begs of them *to hearken* to it, becauſe tho' they knew it all, yet they would not without a very cloſe Application of Mind, know how to apply it to the Caſe before them.

2. His Entrance upon the Diſcourſe; Which (however it may ſeem to thoſe that read it careleſly) is far from being a long Ramble only to amuſe the Hearers, and give them a Diverſion by telling them an old Story. No; it is all pertinent, and *ad rem*, to ſhew them, that God had not his Heart ſo much upon that *Holy Place* and *the Law*, as they had; but as he had a Church in the World many Ages before that Holy Place was founded, and the Ceremonial Law given, ſo he would have, when they ſhould both have had their Period.

Firſt, He begins with the *Call* of *Abraham* out of *Ur of the Chaldees*, by which he was ſet apart for GOD to be the Truſtee of the Promiſe, and the Father of the *Old Teſtament* Church. This we had an Account of *Gen.* xii. 1, *&c.* And it is referr'd to, *Neh.* ix. 7, 8. His native Country, was idolatrous Country, 'twas *Meſopotamia*, v. 2. the Land of the *Chaldeans*, v. 4. thence GOD brought him at two Removes, not too far at once, dealing tenderly with him, He firſt brought him out of the Land of the *Chaldeans* to *Charran* or *Harun*, a Place in the Mid-way between that and *Canaan*, Gen. xi. 31. and from thence Five Years after, when his Father was Dead, *He* remov'd him into the Land of *Canaan, wherein ye now dwell.* It ſhould ſeem, the firſt Time that GOD ſpoke to *Abraham*, He appear'd in ſome viſible Diſplay of the Divine Preſence, as the *GOD of Glory*, v. 3. to *ſettle* a *Correſpondence* with him; and then afterwards He kept up that Correſpondence, and ſpoke to him from Time to Time as there was Occaſion, without repeating his viſible *Appearances* as the *GOD of Glory*.

From this Call of *Abraham*, we may *Obſerve*, (1.) That in all our Ways we muſt acknowledge GOD, and attend the Conduct of his Providence, as of the Pillar of Cloud and Fire. It is not ſaid, *Abraham remov'd*, but GOD *remov'd him* into *this Land wherein ye now dwell*, and he did but follow his Leader. (2.) Thoſe whom GOD takes into Covenant with himſelf, He diſtinguiſheth from the Children of this World; they are affectually call'd out of the State, out of the Land of their Nativity; they muſt ſit looſe to the World, and live above it, and every Thing in it, even that in it which is moſt dear to them, and muſt truſt GOD to make it up to them in another and better Country; that is, the Heavenly, which he will ſhew them. GOD's Choſen muſt follow Him with an implicit Faith and Obedience.

But let us ſee what this is to *Stephen*'s Caſe.

1. They had charg'd him as a Blaſphemer of GOD, and an Apoſtate from the Church; therefore he ſhews that he is a Son of *Abraham*, and values himſelf upon his being able to ſay, *Our Father Abraham*, and that he is a faithful Worſhipper of the God of *Abraham*, whom therefore he here calls the *God of Glory*. He alſo ſhews, that he owns Divine Revelation, and that particularly by which the Jewiſh Church was founded and incorporated.

2. They were proud of their being circumcis'd; and therefore he ſhews, that *Abraham* was taken under GOD's Conduct, and into Communion with him, before he was *circumcis'd*, for that was not till *v.* 8. With this Argument *Paul* proves, That *Abraham* was juſtify'd by Faith, becauſe he was juſtify'd when he was in *Uncircumciſion*; and ſo here.

3. They had a mighty Jealouſy for this *Holy Place*; which may be meant of the whole Land of *Canaan*; for it was call'd the *Holy Land, Immanuel*'s *Land*; and the Deſtruction of the *Holy Houſe*, inferr'd that of the *Holy Land*. Now, ſaith *Stephen*, you need not be ſo proud of it; for (1.) You came *originally* out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, where *your Fathers ſerv'd other Gods*, Joſh. xxiv. 2. and you were not the firſt Planters of this Country. *Look* therefore *unto the Rock whence ye were hewn, and the Hole of the Pit out of which ye were dig'd*; that is, as it follows there; *Look unto* Abraham *your Father*, for *I call'd him alone*, Iſa. li. 1, 2. think of the Meanneſs of your Beginnings, and how you are intirely indebted to Divine Grace, and then you'll ſee Boaſting to be for ever excluded. 'Twas GOD that *rais'd up the righteous Man from the Duſt, and call'd him to his Foot*, Iſa. xli. 2. But if his Seed degenerate, let them know, GOD can deſtroy this Holy Place, and raiſe up to himſelf another People, for he is not a Debtor to them. (2.) GOD appear'd in his Glory to *Abraham* a great Way of in *Meſopotamia*, before he came near *Canaan*, nay, before he *dwelt in Charran*; ſo that you muſt not think GOD's Viſits are ty'd to this Land: No, He that brought the *Seed* of the Church from a Country ſo far *Eaſt*, can if he pleaſeth carry the Fruit of it to another Country as far *Weſt*. (3.) GOD made no haſte to bring him into this Land, but let him linger ſome Years by the Way; which ſhews that GOD has not his Heart ſo much upon this Land, as you have, neither is *his* Honour, nor the Happineſs of *his People*, bound up in it: 'Tis therefore neither Blaſphemy nor Treaſon, to ſay, it ſhall be *deſtroy'd*.

Secondly, The *unſettled* State of *Abraham* and his *Seed* for many Ages after he was call'd out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*. God did indeed promiſe that he would *give it him for a Poſſeſſion*, and *to his Seed after him*, v. 5. But 1. As yet *he had no Child*, nor any by *Sarah* for many Years after. 2. He himſelf was but a Stranger and Sojourner in that Land, and GOD *gave him no Inheritance in it, not ſo much as to ſet his Foot on*; but there he was as in *a ſtrange Country*, where he was always upon the Remove, and could call nothing his own. 3. His Poſterity did not come to the Poſſeſſion of it of a long time; *After Four hundred Years* they ſhall come *and ſerve me in this Place*, and not till then, *v.* 7. Nay, 4. They muſt undergo a great deal of Hardſhip and Difficulty before they ſhall be put into the Poſſeſſion of that Land, they ſhall be *brought into Bondage*, and *ill treated* in a *ſtrange Land*: And this, not as the Puniſhment of any particular Sin, as their Wandering in the Wilderneſs was, for we never find any ſuch Account given of their Bondage in *Egypt*: but ſo GOD had appointed, and it muſt be. And *at the End of Four hundred Years*, reckoning from the Birth of *Iſaac, that Nation to whom they ſhall be in Bondage, will I judge, ſaid GOD.* Now this teacheth us, (1.) That *known unto GOD are all his Works before hand.* When *Abraham* had neither *Inheritance* nor *Heir*, yet he was told he ſhould have *both*, the one a *Land of Promiſe*, and the other a *Child of Promiſe*; and therefore both had, and receiv'd by Faith. 2. That GOD's Promiſes, tho' they are ſlow, yet they are ſure in the Operation of them, they will be fulfill'd in the Seaſon of them, tho' perhaps not ſo ſoon as we expect. (3.) That tho' the People of GOD may be in Diſtreſs and Trouble for a Time, yet GOD will at length both reſcue them, and reckon with thoſe that do oppreſs them; for, *Verily there is a GOD that judgeth in the Earth.*

But let us ſee how this ſerves *Stephen*'s Purpoſe.

1. The Jewiſh Nation which they were ſo jealous for the Honour of, was very *inconſiderable* in its Beginnings; As their common Father *Abraham* was fetch'd out of *Obſcurity* in *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, ſo their Tribes, and the Heads of them were fetch'd out of *Servitude* in *Egypt*, when they were the *feweſt of all People*, Deut. vii. 7. And what needs ſo much a-do, as if their Ruin when they bring it upon themſelves by Sin, muſt be the Ruin of the World, and of all GOD's Intereſt in it? No; He that brought them out of *Egypt*, can bring them into it again, as He threaten'd, *Deut.* xxviii. 68. and yet be no Loſer, while He can *out of Stones* raiſe up Children unto *Abraham*.

2. The ſlow Steps by which the Promiſe made to *Abraham* advanc'd towards the Performance, and the many ſeeming Contradictions here taken notice of, plainly ſhews that it had a ſpiritual Meaning, and that the Land principally intended to be convey'd and ſecured by it, was the *better Country, that is the Heavenly*; as the Apoſtle ſhews from this very Argument, that the Patriarchs *ſojourn'd in the Land of Promiſe, as in a ſtrange Country*; thence inferring that *they look'd for a City that had Foundations*, Heb. xi. 9, 10. It was therefore no Blaſphemy to ſay, that *Jeſus ſhall deſtroy this Place*, when at the ſame time we ſay, that he ſhall lead us to the Heavenly *Canaan*, and put us in Poſſeſſion of that, of which the earthly *Canaan* was but a Type and Figure.

Thirdly, The Building up of the Family of *Abraham*, with the Entail of Divine Grace upon it, and the Diſpoſals of Divine Providence concerning it, which take up the reſt of the Book of *Geneſis*.

1. GOD engag'd to be a God to *Abraham* and to his Seed; and in Token of that, appointed that he and his Male-ſeed ſhould be *circumcis'd*, Gen. xvii. 9. He *gave him the Covenant of Circumciſion*, i. e. That Covenant which Circumciſion was the Seal of; And accordingly, when *Abraham* had a Son born he *Circumcis'd him the* 8th *Day*, *v.* 8. by which he was both oblig'd by the Divine Law, and intereſted in the Divine Promiſe, for Circumciſion had Reference to both, being a Seal of the Covenant both on GOD's Part, I will be to thee *a God all ſufficient*, and on Man's Part, *walk before me, and be thou perfect.* And then when effectual Care was thus taken for the ſecuring of *Abraham*'s Seed, to be a *Seed to ſerve the Lord*, they began to multiply; *Iſaac begat Jacob*, and *Jacob* the *Twelve Patriarchs*, or Roots of the reſpective Tribes.

2. *Joſeph* the Darling and Bleſſing of his Father's Houſe was abus'd by his Brethren, they *envy'd him* becauſe of his Dreams, and *ſold him into* Egypt; Thus early did the Children of *Iſrael* begin to grudge thoſe among them that were Eminent and outſhone others, of which their Enmity to Chriſt, who like *Joſeph* was a *Nazarite among his Brethren* was a great Inſtance.

3. GOD own'd *Joſeph* in his Troubles, and was *with him* Gen. xxxiv. 2, 21. by the Influence of his Spirit, both on his Mind, giving him Comfort, and on the Minds of thoſe he was concern'd with, giving him Favour in their Eyes. And thus at length he *deliver'd him out of his Afflictions*, and *Pharaoh* made him the Second Man in the Kingdom, *Pſal.* cv. 20, 21, 22. And thus he not only arriv'd to great Preferment among the *Egyptians*, but became the *Shepherd and Stone of* Iſrael, *Gen.* xliv. 24.

4. *Jacob* was compell'd to go down into *Egypt*, by a Famine which forc'd him out of *Canaan*, a *Dearth* which was a *great Affliction* to that degree, that *our Fathers found no ſuſtenance* in *Canaan*, v. 9. That *fruitful Land* was *turn'd into Barrenneſs*: But hearing that there was *Corn in Egypt*, treaſur'd up by the Wiſdom of his own Son, he *ſent out our Fathers firſt* to fetch Corn, *v.* 12. And the *ſecond Time* that they went, *Joſeph* who at firſt made himſelf ſtrange to them, made himſelf known to them; And it was notify'd to *Pharoah* that they were *Joſeph's* Kindred, and had a Dependance upon him, *v.* 13. whereupon with *Pharoah*'s leave, *Joſeph ſent for his Father Jacob to him* into *Egypt*, with *all his Kindred* and *Family*, to the number of ſeventy five Souls, to be ſubſiſted there, *v.* 14. In *Geneſis* they are ſaid to be Seventy Souls, *Gen.* xlvi. 27. But the Septuagint there make them ſeventy five, and *Stephen* or *Luke* follow that Verſion as *Luke* iii. 36. where *Cainan* is inſerted, that is not in the *Hebrew* Text, but in the Septuagint. Some by excluding *Joſeph* and his Sons, who were in *Egypt* before, which reduceth the Number to Sixty Four, and adding the Sons of the Eleven Patriarchs make the Number Seventy Five.

5. *Jacob* and his Sons dy'd in *Egypt*, *v.* 16. But were carry'd over to be buried in *Canaan*, v. 17. A very conſiderable Difficulty occurs here; 'Tis ſaid *they were carry'd over into* Sychem, whereas *Jacob* was bury'd not in *Sychem*, but near *Hebron*, in the Cave of *Macpelah* where *Abraham* and *Iſaac* were buried, *Gen.* l. 13. *Joſeph*'s Bones indeed were bury'd in *Sychem*, *Joſh.* xxiv. 32. and it ſeems by this (tho' it is not mention'd in the Story) that the Bones of all the other Patriarchs were carry'd with his, each of them giving the ſame Commandment concerning them that he had done; And of them this muſt be underſtood not of *Jacob* himſelf. But then that Sepulchre in *Sychem* was bought by *Jacob*, Gen, xxxiii. 19. and by that it is deſcrib'd, *Joſh.* xxiv. 32. How then is it here ſaid to be bought by *Abraham?* Dr. *Whitby*'s Solution of this is very ſufficient; he ſupplies it thus: *Jacob went down into* Egypt *and dy'd, he and our Fathers*; And (*our Fathers*) *were carry'd over into* Sychem; *And he* i. e. *Jacob was* laid *in the Sepulchre that* Abraham *bought for a Sum of Money*. Gen. xxiii. (Or, *they* were laid there, *i. e. Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*) *And they*, *viz.* the other Patriarchs were *bury'd in the Sepulchre bought of the Sons of* Emmor *the Father of* Sychem.

Let us now ſee what this is to *Stephen*'s Purpoſe.

1. He ſtill minds them of the *mean Beginning* of the Jewiſh Nation, as a Check to their priding of themſelves in the Glories of that Nation; And that it was by a Miracle of Mercy, that they were rais'd up out of Nothing to what they were from ſo ſmall a Number to be ſo great a Nation; But if they anſwer not the Intention of their being ſo rais'd, they can expect no other but to be deſtroy'd. The Prophets frequently put them in Mind of the bringing of them out of *Egypt*, as an Aggravation of their Contempt of the Law of GOD, and here it is urg'd upon them as an Aggravation of their Contempt of the Goſpel of Chriſt.

2. He minds them likewiſe of the Wickedneſs of thoſe that were the Patriarchs of their Tribes, in envying their Brother *Joſeph*, and ſelling him into *Egypt*; and the ſame Spirit was ſtill working in them towards Chriſt and his Miniſters.

3. Their Holy Land they doted ſo much upon, their Fathers were long kept out of the Poſſeſſion of and met with *Dearth* and *great Affliction* in it; And therefore let them not think it ſtrange if after it has been ſo long polluted with Sin, it be at length deſtroy'd.

4. The Faith of the Patriarchs in deſiring to be buried in the Land of *Canaan*, plainly ſhew'd that they had an Eye to the Heavenly Country, which it was the Deſign of this Jeſus to lead them to.

17 But when the time of the promiſe drew nigh, which God had ſworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, 18 Till another king aroſe, which knew not Joſeph. 19 The ſame dealt ſubtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, ſo that they caſt out their young children, to the end they might not live. 20 In which time Moſes was born, and was exceeding fair, and nouriſhed up in his fathers houſe three months. 21 And when he was caſt out, Pharoahs daughter took him up, and nouriſhed him for her own ſon. 22 And Moſes was learned in all the wiſdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. 23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to viſit his brethren, the children of Iſrael. 24 And ſeeing one *of them* ſuffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppreſſed, and ſmote the Egyptian: 25 For he ſuppoſed his brethren would have underſtood, how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they underſtood not. 26 And the next day he ſhewed himſelf unto them as they ſtrove, and would have ſet them at one again, ſaying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong to one another? 27 But he that did his neighbour wrong, thruſt him away, ſaying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Wilt thou kill me as thou didſt the Egyptian yeſterday? 29 Then fled Moſes at this ſaying, and was a ſtranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two ſons.

Stephen here goes on to relate.

Firſt, The wonderful Encreaſe of the People of *Iſrael* in *Egypt*; 'Twas by a Wonder of Providence, that in a little Time they advanc'd from a Family into a Nation.

1. It was *when the time of the Promiſe drew nigh*; the Time when they were to be form'd into a People. During the firſt two hundred and fifteen Years after the Promiſe made to *Abraham*, the Children of the Covenant were encreaſed but to Seventy, But in the latter two hundred and fifteen Years they encreaſed to ſix hundred thouſand fighting Men; The Motion of Providence is ſometimes quickeſt, when it comes neareſt the Centre. Let not us be diſcourag'd at the Slowneſs of the Proceedings towards the Accompliſhment of GOD's Promiſes, GOD knows how to redeem the Time that ſeems to have been loſt. And when the Year of the Redeemed is at Hand, can do a double Work in a ſingle Day.

2. It was in *Egypt* where they were *oppreſs'd* and *rul'd with rigour*; When their Lives were made ſo bitter to them, that one would think they ſhould have wiſh'd to be written Childleſs, yet they marry'd in Faith, that GOD in due Time would viſit them; And GOD bleſſed them who thus honour'd Him, ſaying, *Be fruitful and multiply.* Suffering Times have oft been growing Times with the Church.

Secondly, The extream Hardſhips which they underwent there, *v.* 18, 19. When the *Egyptians* obſerv'd them to encreaſe *in Number*, they encreas'd their Burthens; in which *Stephen* obſerves three Things.

1. Their baſe Ingratitude; They were oppreſs'd by *another King that knew not* Joſeph, *i. e.* did not conſider the good Service that *Joſeph* had done to that Nation, for if he had, he would not have made ſo ill a Requital to his Relations and Family. Thoſe that injure good People are very ungrateful, for they are the Bleſſings of the Age and Place they live in.

2 Their helliſh Craft and Policy; *They dealt ſubtilly with our Kindred. Come on*, ſaid they, *let us deal wiſely*, thinking thereby to ſecure themſelves, but it prov'd dealing *fooliſhly* for they did but treaſure up Wrath by it. Thoſe are in a great Miſtake, who think they deal ſubtilly for themſelves, when they deal deceitfully, or unmercifully with their Brethren.

3. Their barbarous and inhuman Cruelty; That they might effectually extirpate them, they *caſt out their young Children to the End they might not live.* The killing of their infant Seed, ſeem'd a very likely way to cruſh an Infant Nation.

Now *Stephen* ſeems to obſerve this to them, not only that they might further ſee how mean their Beginnings were, fitly repreſented (perhaps with an Eye to the Expoſing of the young Children in *Egypt*) by the forlorn State of a helpleſs out-caſt Infant, *Ezeck.* xvi. 4. And how much they were indebted to GOD for His Care of them, which they had forfeited and made themſelves unworthy of, But alſo that they might conſider that what they were now doing againſt the Chriſtian Church in its Infancy was as *impious* and *unjuſt*, and would be in the Iſſue as *fruitleſs* and *ineffectual*, as that was which the *Egyptians* did againſt the *Jewiſh* Church in its Infancy. You think you *deal ſubtilly* in your *evil entreating* us, and in perſecuting young Converts you do as they did in *caſting out the young Children*, but you'l find its to no Purpoſe; in ſpite of your Malice, Chriſt's Diſciples will *increaſe and multiply*.

Thirdly, The raiſing up of *Moſes* to be their Deliverer *Stephen* was charg'd with having ſpoken *blaſphemous Words* againſt *Moſes*, in Anſwer to which Charge he here ſpeaks very honourably of Him.

1. *Moſes* was born when the Perſecution of *Iſrael* was at the hotteſt, eſpecially in that moſt cruel Inſtance of it, the Murthering of the new born Children. *At that Time Moſes was born*, *v.* 20. and was himſelf in Danger as ſoon as he came into the World, (as our Saviour alſo was at *Bethlehem*) of falling a Sacrifice to that Bloody Edict. GOD is preparing for his Peoples Deliverance, then when their Day is darkeſt, and their Diſtreſs deepeſt.

2. He was *exceeding fair*; His Face began to *ſhine* as ſoon as he was born, as a happy Preſage of the Honour GOD deſign'd to put upon him. He was *ἀστεῖος τῷ Θεῷ fair towards God.* He was Sanctify'd *from the Womb*, and that made him beautiful in GOD's Eyes, for it is the Beauty *of Holineſs* that is in GOD's Sight of great Price.

3. He was wonderfully preſerved in his Infancy.

Firſt, By the Care of his tender Parents, who *nouriſhed him three Months* in their own Houſe, as long as they durſt; And then by a favourable Providence that threw him into the Arms of *Pharaoh*'s Daughter, who *took him up*, and *nouriſhed him for her* *own Son*, v. 21. for thoſe whom GOD deſigns to make ſpecial Uſe of, he will take ſpecial Care of. And did he thus protect the Child *Moſes*, much more will he ſecure the Intereſts of *His Holy Child Jeſus* (as he is call'd *chap.* iv. 27.) from the Enemies that are *gather'd together* againſt him.

4. He became a great Scholar, *v.* 22. *He was learned in all the Wiſdom of the Egyptians*, who were then fam'd for all Manner of polite Literature, particularly Philoſophy, Aſtronomy, and (which perhaps help'd to lead them to Idolatry) Hieroglyphicks, *Moſes* having his Education at Court had Opportunity of improving himſelf by the beſt Books, Tutors, and Converſation, in all the Arts and Sciences, and had a Genius for them. Only we have Reaſon to think that he had not ſo far forgotten the GOD of his Fathers, as to acquaint himſelf with the unlawful Studies and Practices of the *Magicians* of *Egypt*, any further than was neceſſary to the confuting of them.

5. He became a prime Miniſter of State in *Egypt*, that ſeems to be meant by his being *mighty in Words and Deeds*. Tho' he had not a ready Way of expreſſing himſelf, but ſtammer'd, yet he ſpoke admirable good Senſe, and every Thing he ſaid commanded Aſſent, and carry'd its own Evidence of Force of Reaſoning along with it. And in Buſineſs none went on with ſuch Courage and Conduct, and Succeſs. Thus was he prepar'd by human Helps for theſe Services, which after all he could not be *throughly furniſh'd* for without Divine Illumination. Now by all this *Stephen* will make it appear, that notwithſtanding the malicious Inſinuations of his Perſecutors he had as high and honourable Thoughts of *Moſes* as they had.

Fourthly, The *Attempts* which *Moſes* made to deliver *Iſrael*, which they *kick'd at*, and would not cloſe in with. This *Stephen* inſiſts much upon, and it ſerves for *a Key* to this Story, *Exod.* ii. 11—15. As doth alſo that other Conſtruction which is put upon it by the Apoſtle, *Heb.* xi. 24, 25, 26. *There* it is repreſented as an Act of holy Self-Denial, *here* as a deſign'd Preludium to, or Entrance upon the publick Service he was to be call'd out to, *v.* 23. *When he was full forty Years Old*, in the Prime of his Time for Preferment in the Court of *Egypt*, it *came into his Heart* (for GOD put it there) to *viſit his Brethren the Children of* Iſrael, and to ſee which way he might do them any Service; and he ſhew'd himſelf as a publick Perſon, with a publick Character.

1. As *Iſrael*'s Saviour. This he gave a Specimen of, in *avenging* an oppreſs'd *Iſraelite*, and killing the *Egyptian* that abus'd him, *v.* 24. *ſeeing one of* his Brethren *ſuffer wrong*, he was mov'd with Compaſſion towards the Sufferer, and a juſt Indignation at the wrong Doer, as Men in publick Stations ſhould be, and he *aveng'd him*, that was *oppreſs'd*, and ſmote the *Egyptian*, which if he had been only a *private Perſon*, he could not lawfully have done; but he knew that his Commiſſion from Heaven would bear him out. And he *ſuppos'd that his Brethren* (who could not but have ſome Knowledge of the Promiſe made to *Abraham*, that the *Nation* that ſhould oppreſs them *God would judge*) *would have underſtood that God by his Hand would deliver them*; for he could not have had either Preſence of Mind, or Strength of Body to do what he did, if he had not been cloathed with ſuch a divine Power as evidenc'd a divine Authority. If they had but underſtood the *Signs of the Times*, they might have taken this for the Drawing of the Day of their Deliverance; But they *underſtood not*, they did not take this as it was deſign'd, for the ſetting up of a Standard, and ſounding of a Trumpet to proclaim *Moſes* their Deliverer.

2. As *Iſrael*'s Judge; This he gave a Specimen of, the very next Day, in offering to accommodate Matters between two contending *Hebrews*, wherein he plainly aſſum'd a publick Character, *v.* 26. *he ſhew'd himſelf to them as they ſtrove*, and putting on an Air of Majeſty and Authority, *he would have ſet them at one again*, and as their Prince have determin'd the Controverſy between them, ſaying, *Sirs ye are Brethren*, by Birth and Profeſſion of Religion, *why do ye wrong to one another*, for he obſerv'd that (as in moſt Strifes) there was *a Fault on both Sides*; and therefore in order to Peace and Friendſhip, there muſt be a mutual Remiſſion and Condeſcention. When *Moſes* was to be *Iſrael*'s Deliverer out of *Egypt*, he ſlew the *Egyptians*, and ſo deliver'd *Iſrael* out of their Hands; But when he was to be *Iſrael*'s Judge, and Law-giver, he rul'd them with the Golden Sceptre, not the Iron Rod, he did not kill and ſlay them when they ſtrove, but gave them excellent Laws and Statutes, and determin'd upon their Complaints and Appeals made to him, *Exod.* xviii. 16.

But the contending *Iſraelite* that was moſt in the Wrong *thruſts him away*, *v.* 27. would not bear the Reproof, tho' a juſt and gentle one, but was ready to fly in his Face, with *who made thee a Ruler and a Judge over us?* Proud and litigious Spirits are impatient of Check and Controul. Rather would theſe *Iſraelites* have their Bodies rul'd with Rigour by their Task-Maſters, than be deliver'd and have their Minds rul'd with Reaſon by their Deliverer. The wrong Doer was ſo enrag'd at the Reproof given him, that he upbraided *Moſes* with the Service he had done to their Nation in killing the *Egyptian*, which, if they had pleas'd, would have been the Earneſt of further and greater Service. *Wilt thou Kill me as thou didſt the* Egyptian *Yeſterday?* v. 28. charging that upon him as his Crime, and threatening to accuſe him for it, which was the hanging out of the Flag of Defiance to the *Egyptians*, and the Banner of Love and Deliverance to *Iſrael*. Hereupon *Moſes* fled *into the Land of* Midian, and made no more Attempt to deliver *Iſrael*, till forty Years after. He ſettled as a Stranger in *Midian*, Marry'd and had *two Sons* by *Jethro's* Daughter, *v.* 29.

Now let us ſee how this ſerves *Stephen*'s Purpoſe.

1. They charg'd him with blaſpheming *Moſes*, in Anſwer to which he retorts upon them the Indignities which their Fathers did to *Moſes* which they ought to be aſham'd of, and humbled for, inſtead of picking Quarrels thus under Pretence of Zeal for the Honour of *Moſes* with one that had as great a Veneration for him as any of them had.

2. They perſecuted him for Diſputing in Defence of Chriſt and his Goſpel, in oppoſition to which they ſet up *Moſes* and his Law, But (ſaith he) you had beſt take heed (1.) leaſt you hereby *do as your Fathers did*, refuſe and reject one whom GOD has rais'd up to be to you a Prince and a Saviour; you may *underſtand*, if you will not wilfully ſhut your Eyes againſt the Light, that GOD will *by this Jeſus deliver you* out of a worſe Slavery than that in *Egypt*, take heed then of *thruſting him away*, but receive him as a *Ruler and a Judge over you*. (2.) leſt you hereby *fare as your Fathers far'd*, who for this were juſtly left to dye in their Slavary, for the Deliverance came not till Forty Years after; This will come of it; you put away the Goſpel from you, and it will be ſent to the *Gentiles*; you will not have Chriſt, and you ſhall not have him, ſo ſhall your Doom be, *Matth.* xxiii. 38, 39.

30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared unto him in the wilderneſs of mount Sina, an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a buſh. 31 When Moſes ſaw *it*, he wondred at the ſight; and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him, 32 *Saying I am* the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moſes trembled, and durſt not behold. 33 Then ſaid the Lord to him, Put off thy ſhoes from thy feet, for the place where thou ſtandeſt is holy ground. 34 I have ſeen, I have ſeen the afflictions of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will ſend thee into Egypt. 35 This Moſes whom they refuſed, ſaying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the ſame did God ſend to *be* a ruler, and a deliverer, by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the buſh. 36 He brought them out, after that he had ſhewed wonders and ſigns in the land of Egypt, and in the Red ſea, and in the wilderneſs forty years. 37 This is that Moſes which ſaid unto the Children of Iſrael, A prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your Brethren like unto me: him ſhall ye hear. 38 This is he that was in the church in the wilderneſs, with the angel which ſpake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us. 39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thruſt *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt. 40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us Gods to go before us: for *as* for this Moſes, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. 41 And they made a calf in thoſe days, and offered ſacrifice unto the idol, and rejoyced in the works of their own hands.

Stephen here proceeds in his Story of *Moſes*; and let any One judge, Whether theſe be the Words of one that was a Blaſphemer of *Moſes?* No, nothing could be ſpoken more honourable of him. Here's

Firſt, The *Viſion* which he ſaw of the Glory of God, at the Buſh, *v.* 30. *When Forty Years were expir'd*, during all which Time *Moſes* was bury'd alive in *Madian*, and was now grown old, and One would think paſt Service, that it might appear that all his Performances were Products of a Divine Power and Promiſe, as it appear'd that *Iſaac* was a Child of Promiſe, by his being born of Parents ſtricken in Years, now at eighty Years Old he enters upon that Poſt of Honour to which he was born, in Recompence for his Self-Denial at Forty Years old. *Obſerve*,

1. *Where* GOD appear'd to him; *In the Wilderneſs of Mount Sinai*, v. 30. And when he appear'd to him *there*, that was *Holy Ground*, v. 33. which *Stephen* takes Notice of as a Check to thoſe who prided themſelves in the Temple, that *Holy Place*, as if there were no Communion to be had with GOD but there; whereas GOD met *Moſes*, and manifeſted Himſelf to him in a remote, obſcure Place, in the *Wilderneſs of Sinai*. They deceive

themſelves, if they think GOD is ty'd to Places, He can bring his People into a *Wilderneſs*, and there ſpeak comfortably to them.

2. *How* he appear'd to him; *In a Flame of Fire*, for our GOD is a *conſuming Fire*; and yet the Buſh in which this Fire was, tho' combuſtible Matter was not conſum'd; which as it repreſented the State of *Iſrael* in *Egypt*, where tho' they were in the Fire of Affliction, yet they were not conſum'd; ſo perhaps may be look'd upon as a Type of Chriſt's Incarnation, and the Union between the Divine and Human Nature; *GOD manifeſted in the Fleſh*, was as the *Flame of Fire* manifeſted *in the Buſh*.

3. How *Moſes* was affected with this; (1.) He *wonder'd at the Sight*. v. 31. It was a *Phænomenon* which all his *Egyptian* Learning could not furniſh him with the Solution of. He had the Curioſity at firſt to pry into it, *I will turn aſide now, and ſee this great Sight*; but the nearer he drew the more he was ſtruck with Amazement. And (2.) He *trembled and durſt not behold*, durſt not look wiſtly upon it; for he was ſoon aware that it was not a fiery Meteor, but *the Angel of the Lord*; and no other but the Angel of the Covenant, of the Son of GOD himſelf: This ſet him on *trembling*. *Stephen* was accus'd for Blaſpheming *Moſes* and *GOD*, chap. vi. 11. as if *Moſes* had been a little GOD; but by this it appears he was a *Man ſubject to like Paſſions as we are*; and particularly that of *Fear*, upon any appearance of the Divine Majeſty and Glory.

Secondly, The *Declaration* which he heard of the Covenant of God, *v.* 32. *The Voice of the Lord came to him*; for Faith comes by Hearing: And this was it, *I am the God of thy Fathers*, the *God of* Abraham, *the God of* Iſaac, *and the God of* Jacob. And therefore, (1.) I am the ſame that I was. The Covenant God made with *Abraham* ſome Ages ago, was, *I will be to thee a GOD*, a God All-ſufficient. Now, ſaith GOD, that Covenant is ſtill in full Force; it is not cancell'd or forgotten, but I am as I was, the GOD of *Abraham*, and now I will make it appear ſo; for all the Favours, all the Honours GOD put upon *Iſrael*, were founded upon this Covenant with *Abraham*, and flow'd from it. 2. I will be the ſame that I am. For if the Death of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, cannot break the Covenant Relation between GOD and them, (as by this it appears it could not) then Nothing elſe can. And then *He will be a God*.

1. To their *Souls*, which are now ſeparated from their Bodies. Our Saviour by this, proves the *Future State*, Matth. xxii. 31. *Abraham* is dead, and yet GOD is ſtill his GOD therefore *Abraham* is ſtill alive. GOD never did that for him in *this World*, which would anſwer the *true Intent*, and *full Extent* of that Promiſe, that He would be the *God of Abraham*; and therefore it muſt be done for him in *the other World*. Now this is that Life and Immorality, which are *brought to light by the Goſpel*, for the full Conviction of the *Sadducees*, who deny'd it. Thoſe therefore who ſtood up in Defence of the Goſpel, and endeavour'd to propagate that, were ſo far from Blaſpheming *Moſes*, that they did the greateſt Honour imaginable to *Moſes* and that glorious Diſcovery which GOD made of himſelf to him at the buſh.

2. To their *Seed*; GOD in declaring Himſelf, thus *the God of their Fathers*, intimated His Kindneſs to their Seed, that they ſhould be *lov'd for the Father's ſakes*, Rom. xi. 28. Deut. vii. 8. Now the Preachers of the Goſpel preach'd up this Covenant, the *Promiſe made of God unto the Fathers*; *unto which Promiſe* thoſe of the *twelve Tribes* that did continue *ſerving God, hoped to come*, *Acts* xxvi. 6. 7. And ſhall they under Colour of ſupporting *the Holy Place and the Law*, oppoſe the Covenant which was made with *Abraham* and his Seed, his ſpiritual Seed, before the *Law* was *given*, and long before the *Holy Place* was *built*, ſince GOD's Glory muſt be for ever advanc'd and our Glorying for ever enlenc'd, GOD will have our Salvation to be *by Promiſe*, and not *by the Law*; the *Jews* therefore who preſecuted the Chriſtians under Pretence that they blaſphem'd *the Law*, did themſelves blaſpheme *the Promiſe*, and forſook all *their own Mercies* that were contain'd in it.

Thirdly, The Commiſſion which GOD gave him to deliver *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*. The *Jews* ſet up *Moſes* in Competition with Chriſt, and accus'd *Stephen* as a Blaſphemer, becauſe he did not do ſo too: But *Stephen* here ſhews that *Moſes* was an eminent Type of Chriſt, as he was *Iſrael*'s Deliverer; when GOD had declar'd himſelf the *God* of *Abraham*, he proceeded.

1. To order *Moſes* into a reverent Poſture; *Put off thy Shoes from thy Feet*. Enter not upon ſacred Things with low, and cold, and common Thoughts. *Keep thy Foot*, Eccleſ. v. 1. be not haſty and raſh in thy Approaches to GOD. Tread ſoftly.

2. To order *Moſes* into a very eminent Service; When he is ready to receive *Commands*, he ſhall have *Commiſſion*. He is commiſſion'd to demand Leave from *Pharaoh* for *Iſrael* to go out of his Land, and to enforce that Demand, *v.* 34. *Obſerve* (1) The Notice GOD took both of their Sufferings, and of their Senſe of their Sufferings. *I have ſeen, I have ſeen their Affliction, and have heard their Groaning*. GOD has a compaſſionate Regard to the Troubles of his Church, and the Groans of his preſecuted People, and their Deliverance takes Riſe from his Pity. (2.) The Determination He fix'd to redeem them by the Hand of *Moſes*; *I am come down to deliver them*. It ſhould ſeem, tho' GOD is preſent in all Places, yet He uſeth that Expreſſion here of *coming down to deliver them*, becauſe that Deliverance was typical of what Chriſt did, when *for us Men and for our Salvation he came down from Heaven*; He that aſcended, firſt deſcended, *Moſes* is the Man that muſt be employ'd; *Come and I will ſend thee into Egypt*; and if GOD ſend him, He will own him, and give him Succeſs.

Fourthly, His acting in Purſuance of this Commiſſion, wherein he was a Figure of the *Meſſiah*. And *Stephen* takes Notice here again of the Slights they had put upon him, the Affronts they had given him, and their Refuſal to have him to reign over them, as tending very much to magnify his Agency in their Deliverance

1. GOD put *Honour* upon *him*, whom they put *Contempt* upon, *v.* 25. *This* Moſes *whom they refus'd* whoſe kind Offers, and good Offices they rejected with Scorn, ſaying, *Who made thee a Ruler and a Judge?* Thou takeſt too much upon thee, thou Son of *Levi*, Numb. xvi. 3. That ſame *Moſes did God ſend to be a Ruler, and a Deliverer, by the Hands of the Angel which appear'd to him in the Buſh*; It may be underſtood, either that GOD ſent to him by the Hand of the Angel; Or, that by the Hand of the Angel going along with him, he became a Compleat Deliverer. Now by this Example, *Stephen* would intimate to the Council, That *this* Jeſus *whom they* now *refus'd* as their Fathers did *Moſes*, ſaying, Who made thee a Prophet and a King? Who gave thee this Authority? even this ſame has GOD advanc'd to be a *Prince and a Saviour, a Ruler and a Deliverer*; as the Apoſtles had told them a while ago *chap.* v. 30. That *the Stone which the Baliders refus'd, was become the Head Stone in the Corner*, ch. iv. 11.

2. GOD ſhew'd *Favour* to them by *him*, and *he* was very forward to ſerve *them*, tho' they had *thruſt him away*. GOD might juſtly have refus'd them his Service, and he might juſtly have declin'd it; but 'tis all forgotten; they are not ſo much as upbraided with it, *v.* 36. *He brought them out*, notwithſtanding, *after that he had ſhewed Wonders and Signs in the Land of* Egypt; which were afterwards continu'd for the compleating their Deliverance, according as the Caſe call'd for it, *in the red Sea* and *in the Wilderneſs Forty Years*. So far is he from *blaſpheming* Moſes, that he admires him as a glorious Inſtrument in the Hand of GOD for the Forming of the *Old Teſtament* Church: But it doth not at all derogate from his juſt Honour, to ſay, That he was but an Inſtrument; and that he is *out ſhone* by this *Jeſus*; whom he encourageth theſe *Jews yet* to cloſe with, and to come into his Intereſt, not fearing but that then they ſhould be receiv'd into his Favour, and receive Benefit by him, as the People of *Iſrael* were deliver'd by *Moſes*, tho' they had once refus'd him.

Fifthly, His Prophecy of Chriſt and his Grace. *v.* 37. He not only was a Type of Chriſt, many were ſo that perhaps had not an actual Fore-ſight of his Day, but *Moſes* ſpoke of him. *v.* 37. *This is that* Moſes, *which ſaid unto the Children of* Iſrael, *A Prophet ſhall the Lord your God raiſe up unto you of your Brethren*. This is ſpoken of as one of the greateſt Honours GOD put upon him; nay, as that which exceeded all the reſt, That by him he gave Notice to the Children of *Iſrael* of the Great Prophet that ſhould come into the World, rais'd their Expectation of him, and oblig'd them to receive him. When his bringing of them out of *Egypt* is ſpoken of, 'tis with an Emphaſis of Honour, *This is that* Moſes, *Exod.* i. 26. and ſo it is here, *This is that* Moſes. Now, this is very full to *Stephen*'s Purpoſe; in aſſerting, that *Jeſus* ſhould *change the Cuſtoms* of the Ceremonial Law, he was ſo far from blaſpheming *Moſes*, that really he did him the greateſt Honour imaginable, by ſhewing how the Prophecy of *Moſes* was accompliſh'd, which was ſo clear, that as Chriſt told them himſelf, *If they had believ'd* Moſes, *they would have believ'd him*, John v. 46.

1. *Moſes* in GOD's Name told them, That in the fulneſs of Time they ſhould have a Prophet rais'd up *among them*, One of their own Nation, that ſhould be *like unto him*, xviii. 15, 18. a *Ruler* and a *Deliverer*, a *Judge* and a *Law-giver*, like him, who ſhould therefore have Authority to *change the Cuſtoms* that he had *deliver'd* and to *bring in a better Hope*, as the Mediator of a *better Teſtament*.

2. He charg'd them to *hear that Prophet*, to receive his Dictates, to admit the Change He would make in the Cuſtoms, and to ſubmit to him in every thing: And this would be the greateſt Honour you can do to *Moſes*, and to his Law, who ſaid, *Hear ye him*; and came to be a Witneſs to the Repetition of this Charge by a Voice from Heaven, as the Transfiguration of Chriſt, and by his Silence he gave Conſent to it, *Mat.* xvii. 5.

Sixthly, The Eminent Services which *Moſes* continu'd to do to the People of *Iſrael*, after he had been inſtrumental to bring them out of *Egypt*, v. 38. And herein alſo he was a Type of Chriſt, who yet ſo far exceeds him, that it is no Blaſphemy to ſay, He has Authority to *change the Cuſtoms* that *Moſes* deliver'd. It was the Honour of *Moſes*.

1. That *he was in the Church in the Wilderneſs*; He preſided in all the Affairs of it for Forty Years; was *King* in Jeſhurun. *Deut.* xxxiii. 5. The Camp of *Iſrael*, is here call'd the *Church in the Wilderneſs*; for it was a ſacred Society, incorporated by a Divine Charter, under a Divine Government, and bleſs'd with Divine Revelation; The *Church in the Wilderneſs*, was a *Church*, tho' it was not yet perfectly form'd, as it was to be when they came to *Canaan*, but *every Man did that which was right in his own Eyes*, Deut. xii. 8, 9. 'Twas the Honour of *Moſes*, that he was *in that Church*, and many a Time it had been deſtroy'd if

Moſes had not been in it to intercede for it. But Chriſt is the Preſident and Guide of a more excellent and glorious Church than *that in the Wilderneſs* was, and is more *in it*, as the Life and Soul of it, than *Moſes* could be *in that*.

2. That he was *with the Angel that ſpoke to him in the Mount* Sinai, *and with our Fathers*, was with him in the holy Mount twice Forty Days, with the Angel of the Covenant, *Michael* our Prince. *Moſes* was immediately converſant with GOD; but never lay in his Boſom, as Chriſt did from Eternity. Or, theſe Words may be taken thus; *Moſes was in the Church in the Wilderneſs*, but it was *with the Angel that ſpake to him in Mount* Sinai, that is, at the burning Buſh; for that was ſaid to be at *Mount Sinai*, v. 30. that Angel *went before* him, and was Guide to him, elſe he could not have been a Guide to *Iſrael*, of this GOD ſpeaks, *Exod.* xxiii. 20. *I ſend an Angel before thee*, and *Exod.* xxxiii. 2. and ſee *Numb.* xx. 16. He was *in the Church with the Angel*, without whom he could have done no Service to the Church; but Chriſt is himſelf *that Angel*, which *was with the Church in the Wilderneſs*, and therefore has an Authority above *Moſes*.

3. That he *received the lively Oracles* to *give* unto them; Not only the Ten Commandments, but the other Inſtructions which *the LORD ſpake unto* Moſes, *ſaying, Speak them to the Children of Iſrael*. (1.) The Words of GOD are *Oracles*, certain and infallible, and of unqueſtionable Authority and Obligation; they are to be conſulted as Oracles, and by them all Controverſies muſt be determin'd. (2.) They are *lively* Oracles, for they are the Oracles of the *Living GOD*; not of the dumb and dead Idols of the Heathens. The Word that GOD ſpeaks, is *Spirit and Life*; not that the Law of *Moſes* could give Life, but it ſhew'd the Way to Life, *If thou will enter into Life, keep the Commandments*. (3.) *Moſes receiv'd* them from GOD, and deliver'd Nothing as an *Oracle* to the People, but what he had firſt *receiv'd* from GOD. (4.) The *lively Oracles* which he *receiv'd* from GOD, he faithfully *gave* to the People to be *obſerv'd* and *preſerv'd*. 'Twas the principal Privilege of the *Jews*, That to them were *committed the Oracles of GOD*. And it was by the Hand of *Moſes* that they were committed: As *Moſes* gave them not that *Bread*; ſo neither did he give them that *Law from Heaven*, Joh. vi. 32. but God gave it them; and He that gave them thoſe *Cuſtoms* by his Servant *Moſes* might, no doubt, when He pleas'd *change* the Cuſtoms by his Son *Jeſus*, who has receiv'd more Lively Oracles to give unto us, than *Moſes* did.

Seventhly, The Contempt that was after this, and notwithſtanding this, put upon him by the People; They that charg'd *Stephen* with ſpeaking againſt *Moſes*, would do well to anſwer what their own Anceſtors had done, and they tread in their Steps.

1. They *would not obey him*, but *thruſt him from them*, v. 35. they murmur'd at him, mutiny'd againſt him, refus'd to obey his Orders, and ſometimes were ready to ſtone him; *Moſes* did indeed give them an excellent Law, but by this it appear'd that *it could not make the Comers thereunto perfect*. Heb. x. i. for *in their Hearts they turned back again into* Egypt, and prefer'd their Garlick and Onions there, before the *Manna* they had under the Conduct of *Moſes* or the Milk and Honey they hoped for in *Canaan*. *Obſerve*, Their ſecret Diſaffection to *Moſes*, and Inclination to *Egyptianiſm* (if I may ſo call it) it was in Effect *turning back* to *Egypt*, 'twas doing it *in Heart*, many that pretend to be going forwards towards *Canaan* by keeping up a Shew and Profeſſion of Religion, yet at the ſame Time are in their Hearts *turning back to Egypt*, like *Lot's* Wife to *Sodom*, and will be dealt with as Deſerters, for 'tis *the Heart* that GOD looks at. Now if the *Cuſtoms* that *Moſes deliver'd* to them could not prevail to change them, wonder not that Chriſt comes to *change the Cuſtoms*, and to introduce a more *ſpiritual* Way of Worſhip.

2. They made a golden Calf inſtead of him, which beſides the Affront that was thereby done to GOD, was a great Indignity to *Moſes*; for it was upon this Conſideration that they made the Calf, Becauſe as for this *Moſes* who *brought us out of the Land of* Egypt, *we wot not what is become of him*, therefore make us *Gods of Gold*; as if a Calf were ſufficient to ſupply the Want of *Moſes*, and as capable of going before them into the promis'd Land. So *they made a Calf* in thoſe Days when the Law was given them, and *offer'd Sacrifices unto the Idol, and rejoyced in the Work of their own Hands*; ſo proud were they of their new God, that when they had ſitten down to *eat and drink*, they *roſe up to play*. By all this it appears, there was a great deal which *the Law could not do*, in what it was *weak through the Fleſh*; it was therefore neceſſary that this Law ſhould be perfected by a better Hand, and he was no Blaſphemer againſt *Moſes*, who had ſaid Chriſt had done it.

42 Then God turned, and gave them up to worſhip the hoſt of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye houſe of Iſrael, have ye offered to me ſlain beaſts, and ſacrifices, by the ſpace of forty years in the wilderneſs? 43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the ſtar of your God Remphan, figures which ye made, to worſhip them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. 44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witneſs in the Wilderneſs, as he had appointed, ſpeaking unto Moſes, that he ſhould make it according to the faſhion that he had ſeen. 45 Which alſo our fathers that came after, brought in with Jeſus into the poſſeſſion of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David. 46 Who found favour before God, and deſired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. 47 But Solomon built him an houſe. 48 Howbeit, the moſt high dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as ſaith the prophet, 49 Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footſtool: what houſe will ye build me? ſaith the Lord: or what *is* the place of my reſt? 50 Hath not my hand made all theſe thing?

Two Things we have in theſe Verſes.

Firſt, *Stephen* upbraids them with the Idolatry of their Fathers, which GOD gave them up to as a Puniſhment for their early forſaking Him in worſhipping the golden Calf: And this was the ſaddeſt Puniſhment of all for that Sin, as it was of the Idolatry of the Gentile World, that God *gave them up to a Reprobate Senſe*. When *Iſrael* was joyn'd to Idols, joyn'd to the Golden Calf, and not long after to *Baal-peor*, God ſaid, *Let them alone*; let them go on, v. 43. *Then GOD turn'd, and gave them up to worſhip the Hoſt of Heaven*. He particularly caution'd them no to do it, at their Peril, and gave them Reaſons why they ſhould not; but when they were bent upon it, He *gave them up to their own Hearts Luſt*, withdrew his Reſtraining Grace, and then they *walk'd in their own Counſels*, and were ſo ſcandalouſly mad upon their Idols, as never any People were. Compare *Deut.* iv. 9. with *Jer.* viii. 2.

For this he quotes a Paſſage out of *Amos* v. 25. for it would be leſs invidious to tell them their own from an *Old Teſtament* Prophet, who upbraids them,

1. For not ſacrificing to their own GOD in the Wilderneſs, v. 42. *Have ye offer'd to me ſlain Beaſts and Sacrifices by the Space of Forty Years in the Wilderneſs?* No; during all that Time it was *intermitted*, they did not ſo much as keep the Paſſover after the ſecond Year: It was GOD's Condeſcenſion to them, that He did not inſiſt upon it during their unſettled State; but then let them conſider, how ill they requited him in offering Sacrifices to Idols, when GOD diſpens'd with their Offering to Him. This is alſo a Check to their Zeal for the Cuſtoms that *Moſes* deliver'd to them, and their Fear of having them chang'd by *this Jeſus*, that immediately after they were deliver'd, they were for forty Years together *diſus'd* as needleſs Things.

2. For Sacrificing to other Gods, after they came to *Canaan*, v. 43. *ye took up the Tabernacle of* Moloch, *Moloch* was the Idol of the Children of *Ammon*, to which they barbarouſly offer'd their own Children in Sacrifice, which they could not do without great Terrour and grief to themſelves and their Families, yet this unnatural Idolatry they arriv'd to, when *GOD gave them up to worſhip the Hoſt of Heaven*. See 2 *Chron.* xxviii. 3. It was ſurely the ſtrongeſt Deluſion that ever People were given up to, and the greateſt Inſtance of the Power of *Satan* in the Children of Diſobedience, and therefore 'tis here ſpoken of emphatically, *Yea, you took up the Tabernacle of* Moloch, you ſubmitted even to that; And to the Worſhip *of the Star of your God* Remphan; ſome think it ſignifies the *Moon*, as *Moloch* doth the *Sun*. Others take it for *Saturn*, for that Planet is call'd *Remphan* in the *Syriack* and *Perſian* Languages. The Septuagint puts it for *Chiun*, as being a Name more commonly known. They had *Images* repreſenting the *Star* like the *Silver Shrines* for *Diana*, here call'd the *Figures which they made to worſhip*. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks they had Figures repreſenting the whole ſtarry Firmament, with all the Conſtellations, and the Planets, and theſe are call'd *Remphan*, *The high Repreſentation*, like the *Cæleſtial Globe*; a poor Thing to make an Idol of, and yet better than a Golden Calf.

Now for this it is threaten'd, *I will carry you away beyond* Babylon. In *Amos* it is beyond *Damaſcus*, meaning to *Babylon*, the Land of the North. But *Stephen* changes it, with an Eye to the Captivity of the Ten Tribes who were carry'd away beyond *Babylon* by the River of *Gozan*, *and in the Cities of the* Medes, 2 *Kin.* xvii. 6. Let it not therefore ſeem ſtange to them, to hear of the Deſtruction of this Place, for they had heard of it many a Time from the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament*, who were not therefore accus'd as Blaſphemers by any but the wicked Rulers; 'Twas obſerv'd in the Debate on *Jeremiah's* Caſe, that *Micha* was not call'd to an Account, tho' he propheſy'd ſaying, *Zion ſhall be plough'd as a Field*, Jer. xxvi 18, 19.

Secondly, He gives an Anſwer particularly to the Charge exhibited againſt him relating to the *Temple*, that he *ſpoke Blaſphemous Words againſt that Holy Place*, v. 44—50. he was accus'd for ſaying that *Jeſus would deſtroy this Holy Place*. And what if I did ſay ſo, ſaith *Stephen*, The Glory of the Holy GOD is not bound up in the Glory of this Holy Place, but that may be preſerv'd untouch'd, tho' *this* be laid in the Duſt; For,

1. 'Twas not till our Fathers *came into the Wilderneſs* in their Way to *Canaan*, that they had any fix'd Place of Worſhip, and yet the Patriarchs many Ages before worſhipped GOD acceptably, at the Alters they had adjoining to their own Tents, in the open Air, *ſub dio*; and he that was worſhipped without any holy Place, in the firſt and beſt and pureſt Ages of the *Old Teſtament* Church, may, and will be ſo when *this Holy* Place is deſtroy'd without any Diminution to his Glory.

2. The holy Place was at firſt but a *Tabernacle* mean and moveable, and ſpeaking it ſelf to be ſhort liv'd, and not deſign'd to continue always. Why might not *this* holy Place, tho' built of *Stones*, be *decently* brought to its End, and gave Place to its Betters, as well as *that* tho' fram'd of Curtains. As it was no Diſhonour but an Honour to GOD, that the *Tabernacle* gave Way to the *Temple*, ſo it is now that the *material* Temple gives way to the *Spiritual* one, and ſo it will be when at laſt the *Spiritual* Temple ſhall give way to the *Eternal One*.

3. That Tabernacle was a *Tabernacle of Witneſs*, or of *Teſtimony* a *Figure for the Time then preſent*, Heb. ix. 9. a Figure of good Things to come, of the *true Tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not Men*, Heb. viii. 2. This was the Glory both of the Tabernacle and Temple, that they were erected for a *Teſtimony* of that *Temple of God* which in the latter Days ſhould be *opened in Heaven*, Rev. xi. 19. and of Chriſt's *Tabernacling it* on Earth (as the Word is, *Joh.* i. 14) and of the *Temple of his Body*,

4. That Tabernacle was fram'd juſt *as GOD appointed*, and according to the *Faſhion* which *Moſes ſaw in the Mount*; which plainly intimates, that it had Reference to good Things to come; its Riſe being *Heavenly*, its Meaning and *Tendency* was ſo. And therefore it was no Dimunition at all to its Glory, to ſay, That *this Temple made with Hands ſhould be deſtory'd*, in order to the building of *another made without Hands*; which was Chriſt's Crime, *Mark* xiv. 58. and *Stephen*'s.

5. That *Tabernacle* was pitch'd firſt *in the Wilderneſs*; It was not a Native of this Land of yours, to which you think it muſt for ever be confin'd, but was *brought* in the next Age, by *our Fathers that came after* thoſe who firſt erected it, *into the Poſſeſſion of the Gentiles*, into the Land of *Canaan*, which had long been in the Poſſeſſion of the devoted Nations, *whom GOD drove out before the Face of our Fathers*. And why may not GOD ſet up his *ſpiritual* Temple, as He had done the *material* Tabernacle, in thoſe Countries that were now the *Poſſeſſion of the Gentiles?* That Tabernacle was brought in by thoſe who came with *Jeſus*, i. e. *Joſhua*. And I think for Diſtinction ſake, and to prevent Miſtakes, it ought to be ſo read, both here and *Heb.* iv. 8. yet in naming *Joſhua* here, which in *Greek* is *Jeſus*, there may be a tacit Intimation, that as the *Old Teſtament Joſhua* brought in that *typical* Tabernacle, ſo the *New Teſtament Joſhua* ſhould bring in the *true* Tabernacle *into the Poſſeſſion of the Gentiles*.

6. That Tabernacle continu'd for many Ages, even *to the Days of* David, above four hundred Years before there was any Thought of building a *Temple*, v. 45. *David found favour before God*, did indeed deſire this further Favour to have Leave to build GOD a Houſe, to be a conſtant ſettled *Tabernacle* or dwelling Place for the *Shechinah*, or the Tokens of the Preſence of the GOD of *Jacob*, v. 46. Thoſe who have *found favour with God*, ſhould ſhew themſelves forward to advance the Intereſts of his Kingdom among Men.

7. GOD had his Heart ſo little upon a *Temple*, or ſuch a Holy Place as they were ſo jealous for, that when *David* deſir'd to build one, he was forbidden to do it, GOD was in no Haſte for One, as He told *David*, 2 Sam. vii. 7. and therefore it was not he, but his Son *Solomon* ſome Years after that *built him a Houſe*. *David* had all that ſweet Communion with GOD in publick Worſhip which we read of in his *Pſalms*, before there was any Temple built.

8. GOD often declared that Temples, made with Hands were not his Delight, nor could add any Thing to the Perfection of his Reſt and Joy. *Solomon* when he dedicated the Temple, acknowledg'd that GOD *dwelleth not in Temples made with Hands*; He has not need of them, is not benefitted by them, cannot be confin'd to them: The *whole World* is *His* Temple, in which he is every where preſent, and fills it with his Glory, and what occaſion has He for a Temple then to manifeſt himſelf in? Indeed the pretended Deities of the Heathen needed *Temples made with Hands*, for they were *Gods made with Hands*, v. 41. and had no other Place to manifeſt themſelves in but in their own Temples; But the one only true and living GOD needs no Temple, for *the Heaven is his Throne* in which he reſts, and *the Earth is his Footſtool*, over which he rules, *v.* 49, 50. And therefore *What Houſe will ye build me* comparable to this which I have already? Or, *What is the Place of my Reſt*? What need I a Houſe either to repoſe my ſelf in, or to ſhew my ſelf? *Hath not my Hand made all theſe Things?* and ſhew his *Eternal Power and Godhead*, Rom. i. 24. they ſhew themſelves ſo to all Mankind, that *they are without Excuſe* who worſhip other Gods. And as the World is thus GOD's Temple wherein he is manifeſted, ſo it is GOD's Temple in which he will be worſhipped. As *the Earth is full of His Glory*, and is therefore His Temple, *Iſa.* vi. 3. ſo the Earth is or ſhall be *full of his Praiſe*, Hab. ii. 3. and *all the Ends of the Earth ſhall fear Him*, Pſal. lxvii. 7. and upon that Account this *His Temple*: It was therefore no Reflection at all upon this holy Place, however they might take it, to ſay that Jeſus ſhall *deſtroy this Temple*, and ſet up another into which all Nations ſhall be admitted, *Acts* xv. 16, 17. And it would not ſeem ſtrange to them, who conſider'd that Scripture which *Stephen* here quotes, *Iſa.* lxvi. 1, 2, 3. which as it ſpoke GOD's *comparative* Contempt of the external Part of his Service, ſo it plainly foretold the Rejection of the unbelieving *Jews*, and the Welcome of the *Gentiles* into the Church that were of a *contrite Spirit*.

51 Ye ſtiff-necked, and uncircumciſed in heart and ears, ye do always reſiſt the holy Ghoſt: as your father *did*, ſo *do* ye. 52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers perſecuted? and they have ſlain them, which ſhewed before of the coming of the juſt one, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: 53 Who have received the law by the diſpoſition of Angels, and have not kept *it*.

Stephen was going on in his Diſcourſe (as it ſhould ſeem by the Thread of it) to ſhew that as the *Temple*, ſo the *Temple Service* muſt *come to an End*, and it would be the Glory of both to give Way to that Worſhip of the Father *in Spirit and in Truth*, which was to be eſtabliſh'd in the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, ſtript of the pompous Ceremonies of the Old Law; and ſo was going to apply all this which he had ſaid more cloſely to his preſent Purpoſe; But he perceiv'd they could not bear it; They could patiently hear the Hiſtory of the *Old Teſtament* told, 'twas a Piece of Learning which they themſelves dealt much in, but if *Stephen* go about to tell them that their Power and Tyranny muſt come down, and that the Church muſt be govern'd by a Spirit of Holineſs and Love, and Heavenly-mindedneſs, they will not ſo much as give him the Hearing. 'Tis probable he perceiv'd this, and that they were going to ſilence him; And therefore he breaks off abruptly in the Midſt of his Diſcourſe, and by that Spirit of Wiſdom, Courage, and Power wherewith he was fill'd, he ſharply rebuked his Perſecutors, and gave them their own; for if they will not admit the Teſtimony of the Goſpel *to them*, it ſhall become a Teſtimony *againſt them*.

Firſt, They, like their Fathers, were *ſtubborn* and *wilful*, and would not be wrought upon by the various Methods GOD took to *reclaim* and *reform* them, *they were like* their Fathers, *inflexible* both to the Word of GOD and to his Providences.

1. They were *ſtiff-necked, v.* 51.) and would not ſubmit their Necks to the ſweet and eaſy Yoke of GOD's Government, nor draw in it, but were like *a Bullock unaccuſtomed to the Yoke*: Or, they would not bow their Heads, no not to GOD Himſelf, would not do Obeiſance to him, would not humble themſelves before Him; The *ſtiff Neck* is the ſame with the *hard Heart*, obſtinate and contumacious, and that will not yield, the general Character of the Jewiſh Nation, *Exod.* xxxii. 9. in xxxiii. 3. 5, xxxiv. 9. *Deut.* ix. 6, 13. xxxi. 27. *Ezek* ii. 4.

2. They were *uncircumciſed in Heart and Ears*; Their *Hearts* and *Ears* were not devoted and given up to GOD, as the Body of the People were in Profeſſion by the Sign of *Circumciſion*; In Name and Show you are circumciſed Jews, but in *Heart* and *Ears* you are ſtill *uncircumciſed* Heathens, and pay no more Deference to the Authority of your GOD than they do, *Jer.* ix. 26. you are under the Power of unmortify'd Luſts and Corruptions which *ſtop your Ears* to the Voice of GOD, and *harden your Hearts* to that which is both moſt *commanding* and moſt *affecting*. They had not that *Circumciſion made without Hands, in putting off the Body of the Sins of the Fleſh*, Col. ii. 11.

Secondly, They like their Fathers were not only not *influenc'd by* the Methods GOD took to reform them, but they were *enrag'd* and *incens'd* againſt them, *ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt*.

1. They *reſiſted* the Holy Ghoſt *ſpeaking* to them by the Prophets, whom they oppoſed and contradicted, hated and ridicul'd; This ſeems eſpecially meant here, by the following Explication, *which of the Prophets have not your Fathers perſecuted?* In perſecuting and ſilencing them that ſpake by the Inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, they *reſiſted the Holy Ghoſt*. Their Fathers reſiſted the Holy Ghoſt in the Prophets that GOD rais'd up to them, and ſo did they in Chriſt's Apoſtles and Miniſters, who ſpake by the ſame Spirit, and had greater Meaſures of his Gifts than the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament* had, and yet were more reſiſted.

2. They *reſiſted* the Holy Ghoſt *ſtriving* with them by their own Conſciences, and would not comply with the Convictions and Dictates of them. *God's Spirit ſtrove* with them as with the Old World, but in vain they *reſiſted* him, took Part with their Corruptions againſt their Convictions, and rebell'd againſt the Light. There is that in our ſinful Hearts that *always reſiſts the Holy Ghoſt*, a *Fleſh* that *Luſts againſt the Spirit*, and wars againſt his Motions; But in the Hearts of GOD's Elect, when the Fulneſs of Time comes, this Reſiſtance is overcome and overpower'd, and after a Struggle the Throne of Chriſt is ſet up in the Soul, and every Thought that had *exalted it ſelf* againſt it, is *brought into Captivity* to it; 2 *Cor.* x. 3, 5. That Grace therefore which effects this Change might more fitly be call'd *Victorious* Grace than *Irreſiſtible*.

Thirdly, They like their Fathers *perſecuted* and *ſlew* thoſe whom GOD ſent unto them to call them to Duty, and make them Offers of Mercy.

1. Their Fathers had been the cruel and conſtant Perſecutors of the *Old Teſtament* Prophets, *v.* 57. *Which of the Prophets have not your Fathers perſecuted?* more or leſs, one Time or other they had a Blow at them all. Even thoſe that liv'd in the beſt Reigns, when the Princes did not perſecute them, yet there was a malignant Party in the Nation that mock'd at them, and abus'd them, and moſt of them were at laſt either by Colour of Law, or popular Fury put to Death; and that which aggravated the Sin of perſecuting the Prophets was, that the Buſineſs of the Prophets they were ſo ſpiteful at, was to *ſhew before of the coming of the juſt One*; to give Notice of GOD's kind Intentions towards that People, to ſend the Meſſiah among them in the Fulneſs of Time. They that were the Meſſengers of ſuch glad Tydings ſhould have been courted and careſs'd, and have had the Preferments of the beſt of Benefactors, but inſtead of that had the Treatment of the worſt of Malefactors.

2. They had been the *Betrayers and Murtherers* of the *juſt One* himſelf, as *Peter* had told them, *Acts*. iii. 24. v. 30. They had hir'd *Judas* to betray him, and had in a manner forc'd *Pilate* to condemn him, and therefore 'tis charg'd upon them, that they were *His Betrayers and Murtherers*. Thus they were the genuine Seed of thoſe who ſlew them that *foretold his coming*, which by ſlaying Him, they ſhew'd they would have done if they had liv'd then, And thus as our Saviour had told them, they brought upon themſelves the Guilt of the Blood of *all the Prophets*. Which of the Prophets would they have ſhew'd any Reſpect to, that had no Regard to the Son of GOD himſelf.

Fourthly, They like their Fathers put Contempt upon Divine Revelation, and would not be guided and govern'd by it; and this was the Aggravation of their Sin, that GOD had given, as to their Fathers his Law, ſo to them his Goſpel in vain.

1. Their Fathers *received the Law*, and *have not kept it*, v. 53. GOD wrote to them the *great Things of His Law*, after he had firſt ſpoken them to them, and yet they were *counted by them as a ſtrange* or foreign Thing, which they were no way concern'd in. The Law is ſaid to be *receiv'd by the Diſpoſition of Angels*, becauſe Angels were employ'd in the Solemnity of giving the Law; in the Thundrings and Lightnings, and the Sound of the Trumpet. 'Tis ſaid to be *ordain'd by Angels*, Gal. iii. 19. And GOD is ſaid to come *with Ten Thouſand* of his Saints to give the Law, *Deut*. xxxiii. 2. And it was a *Word ſpoken by Angels*, Heb. ii. 2. This put an Honour both upon the Law, and the Law-giver, and ſhould encreaſe our Veneration for both. But they that thus receiv'd the Law, yet *kept it not*, but by making the Golden Calf broke it immediately in a capital Inſtance.

2. They receiv'd the Goſpel now, not by the *Diſpoſition of Angels*, but of the *Holy Ghoſt*, not with the *Sound of a Trumpet*, but which was more ſtrange, in the *Gift of Tongues*, and yet they did not embrace it. They would not yield to the plaineſt Demonſtrations, no more than their Fathers before them did, for they were reſolv'd not to comply with GOD, either in his Law or in his Goſpel.

We have Reaſon to think *Stephen* had a great deal more to ſay, and would have ſaid it if they would have ſuffer'd him, but they were wicked and unreaſonable Men, with whom he had to do, that could no more *bear* Reaſon than they could *ſpeak* it.

54 When they heard theſe things, they were cut
to the heart, and they gnaſhed on him with *their*
teeth. 55 But he being full of the holy Ghoſt, look-
ed up ſtedfaſtly into heaven, and ſaw the glory of
God, and Jeſus ſtanding on the right hand of God.
56 And ſaid, Behold, I ſee the heavens opened, and
the Son of man ſtanding on the right hand of God.
57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and ſtop-
ped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord.
58 And caſt *him* out of the city, and ſtoned *him*: and
the witneſs laid down their clothes at a young mans
feet, whoſe name was Saul. 59 And they ſtoned
Stephen, calling upon God, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus
receive my ſpirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and
cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this ſin to their
charge. And when he had ſaid this, he fell aſleep.

We have here the Death of the firſt Martyr of the Chriſtian Church, and there is in this Story a lively Inſtance of the Outrage and Fury of the Perſecutors, ſuch as we may expect to meet with if we are call'd out to ſuffer for Chriſt; and of the Courage and Comfort of the perſecuted that are thus call'd out. Here's Hell in its Fire and Darkneſs, and Heaven in its Light and Brightneſs; and theſe here ſerve as Foils to ſet off each other. It is not here ſaid, that the Votes of the Council were taken upon his Caſe, and that by the Majority, he was found guilty, and then condemn'd, and order'd to be ſton'd to Death, according to the Law, as a Blaſphemer; but it is likely ſo it was, and that it was not by the Violence of the People without Order of the Council that he was put to Death; for here is the uſual Ceremony of regular Executions, he was *caſt out of the City*, and the *Hands of the Witneſſes were firſt upon him*.

Let us obſerve here the wonderful Diſcompoſure of the Spirits of his Enemies and Perſecutors, and the wonderful Compoſure of his Spirit.

Firſt, See the *Strength of Corruption* in the Perſecutors of *Stephen*; Malice in Perfection, Hell it ſelf broken looſe, and Men become incarnate Devils! The Serpen's Seed ſpitting their Venom.

1. *When they heard theſe Things, they were cut to the Heart*, v. 54. διεπρίοντο, the ſame Word that is us'd, *Heb*. xi. 37. and tranſlated, *they were ſawn aſunder*. They were put to as much Torture in their Minds, as ever the Martyrs were put to in their Bodies. They were fill'd with Indignation at the unanſwerable Arguments that *Stephen* urg'd for their Conviction, and that they could find Nothing to ſay againſt them. They were not prick'd to the Heart with Sorrow, as thoſe were *Acts* ii. 37. but *cut to the Heart* with Rage and Fury, as they themſelves were, *ch*. v. 33. *Stephen* rebuk'd them *ſharply*, as *Paul* expreſſes it, *Tit*. i. 13. ἀποτόμως, *cuttingly*, for they were *cut to the Heart*, by the Reproof. *Note*, Rejecters of the Goſpel, and Oppoſers of it, are really Tormentors to themſelves. Enmity to GOD is a Heart-cutting Thing; Faith and Love are Heart-healing. When they heard how he that *look'd like an Angel*, before he began his Diſcourſe, talk'd like an Angel, like a Meſſenger from Heaven, before he had done it, they were *like a wild Bull in a Net, full of the Fury of the Lord*, Iſa. li. 20. deſparing to run down a Cauſe ſo bravely pleaded, and yet reſolv'd not to yeild to it.

2. They *gnaſh'd upon him with their Teeth*; This ſpeaks (1.) great *Malice and Rage* againſt *him*; *Job* complain'd of his Enemy, that he *gnaſh'd upon him with his Teeth*, Job xvi. 9. The Language of this was, O *that we had of his Fleſh to eat!* Job. xxxi. 31. They *grinn'd at him*, as Dogs at thoſe they are enrag'd at; and therefore *Paul* cautioning againſt thoſe of the Circumciſion, ſaith, *Beware of Dogs*, Phili. iii 2. Enmity at the Saints, turns Men into brute Beaſts. (3.) Great *Vexation* within themſelves; They fretted to ſee in him ſuch manifeſt Tokens of a Divine Power and Preſence, and it vex'd them to the Heart. The *Wicked ſhall ſee it, and be griev'd*, he ſhall *gnaſh with his Teeth and melt away*, Pſ. cxii. 10. Gnaſhing of the Teeth is often us'd to expreſs the Horrour and Torments of the Damn'd. Thoſe that have the *Malice of Hell*, cannot but have with it ſome of the *Pains of Hell*.

3. They *cry'd out with a loud Voice*, v. 50. To irritate and excite one another, and to drown the Noiſe of the Clamours of their own and one anothers Conſciences; when he ſaid, he *ſaw Heaven open'd*, they *cry'd with a loud Voice*, that he might not be heard to ſpeak. *Note*, It is very common for a righteous Cauſe, particularly the righteous Cauſe of Chriſt's Religion, to be endeavour'd to be run down by Noiſe and Clamour; what is wanting in Reaſon, is made up in Tumult, and *the Cry of him that ruleth among Fools*, while *the Words of the Wiſe are heard in quiet*. They *cry'd with a loud Voice*, as Soldiers when they are going to engage in Battle, muſtering up all their Spirit and Vigour for this deſperate Encounter.

4. They *ſtopped their Ears*, that they might not hear their own Noiſineſs, Or, perhaps under pretence, that they could not bear to hear his Blaſphemies. As *Caiphas* rent *his Clothes* when Chriſt ſaid, *Hereafter ye ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in Glory*, Mat. xxvi. 64. 65. So theſe here, *ſtop'd their Ears* when *Stephen* ſaid, *I now ſee the Son of Man ſtanding in Glory*; both pretending, that what was ſpoken was not to be heard with Patience. Their *ſtopping their Ears*, was (1.) A manifeſt Speciment of their wilful Obſtinacy; they were reſolv'd they would not hear what had a Tendency to convince them, which was it that the Prophets often complain'd of; They were *like the deaf Adder*, that will not *hear the Voice of the Charmer*. Pſal. lviii. 4, 5.

2. It was a fatal Omen of that judical Hardneſs to which GOD would give them up. They *ſtopped their Ears*, and then GOD in a Way of righteous Judgment ſtop'd them. That was the Work that was now in doing with the Unbelieving *Jews*, *Make the Heart of this People fat, and their Ears heavy*; thus was *Stephen*'s Character of them anſwer'd, *Ye uncircumcis'd in Heart and Ears*.

5. They *ran upon him with one accord*; The People and the Elders of the People, Judges, Proſecutors, Witneſſes and Spectators, they all flew upon him, as Beaſts upon their Prey: See how *violent* they were, and in what Haſte, they *ran upon him with one accord*, One and all, hoping thereby to terrify him, and put him into Confuſion; envying him his Compoſure and Comfort in Soul, with which he wonderfully enjoy'd himſelf in the Midſt of this Hurry, they did all they could to ruffle him.

6. They *caſt him out of the City, and ſtoned him*; as if he were not worthy to live in *Jeruſalem*; nay, not worthy to live in this World; pretending herein to execute the Law of *Moſes*, Lev. xxiv. 16. *He that blaſphemeth the Name of the LORD, ſhall ſurely be put to Death, all the Congregation ſhall certainly ſtone him.* And thus they had put Chriſt to Death, when this ſame Court had found him guilty of Blaſphemy, but that for his greater Igno-

miny they were deſirous he ſhould be crucify'd, and God over-rul'd it for the fulfilling of the Scripture. The Fury with which they manag'd the Execution, is intimated in that, they *caſt him out of the City*, as if they could not bear the Sight of him; they treated him as an *Anathema*, as the Off-ſcouring of all Things. The Witneſſes againſt him, were the Leaders in the Execution, according to the Law. *Deut.* xvii. 7. *The Hands of the Witneſſes ſhall be firſt upon him to put him to Death*; and particularly in the Caſe of Blaſphemy, *Lev.* xxiv. 14. *Deut.* xiii. 9. Thus they were to confirm their Teſtimony. Now the Stoning of a Man being a laborious Piece of Work, the Witneſſes put off their upper Garments that they might not hang in their Way, and they *laid them down at a young Man's Feet whoſe name was Saul*; now a pleas'd Spectator of this Tragedy; 'tis the firſt Time we find Mention of his Name, we ſhall know it and love it better when we find it chang'd to *Paul*, and him chang'd from a Perſecutor into a Preacher. This little Inſtance of his Agency in *Stephen's* Death, he afterwards reflected upon with Regret, *Acts* xxii. 20. *I kept the Raiment of them that ſlew him.*

Secondly, See the *Strength of Grace* in *Stephen*, and the wonderful Inſtances of GOD's Favour to him, and working in him. As his Perſecutors were full of Satan, ſo was he *full of the Holy Ghoſt*, fuller than ordinary *anointed with freſh Oil* for the Combat, that *as the Day*, ſo might *the Strength* be. Upon this Account they are bleſſed who are *perſecuted for Righteouſneſs Sake*, that *the Spirit of God and of Glory reſts upon them*, 2 Pet. iv. 14. When he was choſen to publick Service he was deſcrib'd to be a Man *full of the Holy Ghoſt*, ch. vi. 5. and now he is call'd out to Martyrdom he has ſtill the ſame Character. *Note*, They that are full of the Holy Ghoſt are fit for any thing, either to do for Chriſt, or ſuffer for him. And thoſe whom GOD calls out to hard Services for his Name, He will qualify them for thoſe Services, and carry them comfortably through them, by *filling them with the Holy Ghoſt*; that as their Afflictions for Chriſt do abound, their Conſultation in him may yet more abound, and then *none of theſe Things move them.*

Now here we have a remarkable Communion between this bleſſed Martyr and the Bleſſed *Jeſus* in this critical Moment. When the Followers of Chriſt are for his Sake *kill'd all the Day long, and accounted as Sheep for the Slaughter*, Doth that ſeparate them from the Love of Chriſt? Doth He love them the leſs? Do they love Him the leſs? No, by no Means; and ſo it appears by this Story: In which we may *Obſerve*,

1. Chriſt's gracious Manifeſtation of himſelf to *Stephen*, both for his Comfort, and for his Honour in the midſt of his Sufferings; when they were *cut to the Heart*, and *gnaſh'd upon him with their Teeth*, ready to eat him up, then he had a View of the Glory of Chriſt, ſufficient to *fill him with Joy unſpeakable*; which was intended not only for his Encouragement, but for the Support and Comfort of all GOD's ſuffering Servants in all Ages.

1. He *being full of the Holy Ghoſt, look'd up ſtedfaſtly into Heaven*, *v.* 55. (1.) Thus he *look'd above* the Power and Fury of his Perſecutors, and did as it were *deſpiſe them, and laugh them to ſcorn*, as the *Daughter of* Zion, *Iſa.* xxxvii. 22. They had their Eyes fix'd upon him full of Malice ard Cruelty, but he *look'd up to Heaven*, and never minded them; was ſo taken up with the eternal Life, *now in proſpect*, that he ſeem'd to have no manner of Concern for the natural Life, *now at ſtake*. Inſtead of *looking about* him to ſee either which Way he was in Danger, or which Way he might make his Eſcape, he *looks up to Heaven*; for thence only comes his Help, and thitherwards his Way is ſtill open; tho' they compaſs him about on every Side, they cannot interrupt his intercourſe with Heaven. *Note*, A believing Regard to GOD and the upper World, will be of great Uſe to us to ſet us above the Fear of Man; for as far as we are under the Influence of that, we *forget the Lord our Maker*, Iſa. li. 13. (2.) Thus he directed his Sufferings to the Glory of GOD, to the Honour of Chriſt, and did as it were appeal to Heaven concerning them *Lord for thy Sake* I ſuffer this; and expreſs his earneſt Expectation that Chriſt ſhould be *magnify'd in his Body*. Now he was ready to be offer'd, he *looks ſtedfaſtly* to Heaven, as One willing to offer himſelf. (3.) Thus he lifted up his Soul with his Eyes to GOD in the Heavens in pious Ejaculations, calling upon GOD for Wiſdom and Grace to carry him through this Trial in a right Manner. GOD has promis'd that He will be with his Servants whom He calls out to ſuffer for him; but He will *for this be ſought unto*. He is *nigh unto them*, but 'tis *in that which they call upon him for. Is any afflicted, let him pray.* (4.) Thus he breathed after the heavenly Country to which he ſaw the Fury of his Perſecutors would preſenly ſend him. 'Tis good for dying Saints to *look up ſtedfaſtly to Heaven*; yonder's the Place whither Death will carry my better Part, and then *O Death where is thy Sting?* (5.) Thus he made it to appear that he was *full of the Holy Ghoſt*; for wherever the Spirit of Grace dwells, and works, and reigns, He directs the Eye of the Soul upward. Thoſe that are *full of the Holy Ghoſt* will *look up ſtedfaſtly to Heaven*, for there the Heart is. (6.) Thus he put himſelf into a Poſture to receive the following Manifeſtation of the Divine Glory and Grace. If we expect to hear from Heaven, we muſt look up ſtedfaſtly to Heaven.

2. He *ſaw the Glory of GOD*, v. 55. for he ſaw in order to that, the *Heavens open'd*, v. 52. Some think his Eyes were ſtrengthen'd and the Sight of them ſo rais'd above his natural Pitch, by a ſupernatural Power, that he ſaw into the *third Heaven*, tho' at ſo vaſt a Diſtance, as *Moſes*'s Sight was enlarg'd to ſee the whole Land of *Canaan*. Others think, 'was a Repreſentation of the Glory of GOD ſet before his Eyes, as before *Iſaiah* and *Ezekiel*, Heaven did as it were come down to him, as *Rev.* xxi. 2. The *Heavens* were *open'd* to give him a View of the Happineſs he was going to, that he might in Proſpect of that go chearfully thro' Death, ſo great a Death. Would we by Faith *look up ſtedfaſtly* we might *ſee the Heavens open'd* by the Mediation of Chriſt, the Vail being rent, and a *new and living Way laid open for us into the Holieſt*: The *Heaven is open'd* for the ſettling of a Correſpondence between God and Men, that his Favours and Bleſſings may come down to us, and our Prayers and Praiſes may go up to him. We may alſo ſee the *Glory of GOD*, as far as he has reveal'd it in Word; and the Sight of this will carry us through all the Terrors of Sufferings and Death.

3. He *ſaw Jeſus ſtanding on the right Hand of God*, v. 55. *the Son of Man*, ſo it is, *v.* 56. *Jeſus* being *the Son of Man*, having taken our Nature with him to Heaven, and being there *clothed with a Body*, might be ſeen with bodily Eyes, and ſo *Stephen* ſaw him. When the *Old Teſtament* Prophets *ſaw the Glory of GOD*, it was attended with Angels. The *Schechinah* or Divine Preſence in *Iſaiah*'s Viſion was attended with *Seraphim*; in *Ezekiel*'s Viſion with *Cherubim*; both ſignifying the Angels, the Miniſters of GOD's Providence: But here no mention is made of the *Angels*, tho' they ſurround the *Throne* and the *Lamb*; and inſtead of them *Stephen* ſees *Jeſus* at the right Hand of GOD, the great Mediator of GOD's Grace, from whom more Glory redounds to GOD than from all the Miniſtrations of the Holy Angels; The Glory of GOD ſhines brighteſt in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt: for there ſhines the Glory of his Grace, which is the moſt illuſtrious Inſtance of his Glory. GOD appears more Glorious with Jeſus ſtanding at his right Hand, than with Millions of Angels about him. Now, (1.) Here is a proof of the Exaltation of Chriſt to the Father's right Hand; the Apoſtles ſaw him *aſcend*, but they did not ſee him ſit down, *a Cloud receiv'd him out of their ſight*. We are told that he ſate down on the right Hand of GOD, but was he ever ſeen there? Yes: *Stephen* ſaw him there, and was abundantly ſatisfy'd with the Sight. He ſaw *Jeſus* at the *right Hand of GOD*, noting both his tranſcendent Dignity, and his Sovereign Dominion: his uncontroulable Ability, and his univerſal Agency; whatever GOD's right hand either gives to us, or receives from us, or doth concerning us, 'tis *by him*, for he is his *right Hand*. (2.) He is uſually ſaid to *ſit* there; but *Stephen* ſees him *ſtanding* there as One more than ordinarily concern'd at preſent for his ſuffering Servant; He *ſtood* up as a Judge to plead his Cauſe againſt his Perſecutors, he is *rais'd up out of his holy Habitation*, Zech. ii. 13. *Comes out of Place to puniſh*, Iſa. xxvi. 21. He ſtands ready to receive him and crown him, and in the mean Time to give him a Proſpect of the *Joy ſet before him*. (3.) This was intended for the Encouragement of *Stephen*, he ſees Chriſt is for him, and then no Matter who is againſt him. When our Lord Jeſus was in his Agony an *Angel* appear'd to him ſtrengthning him, but *Stephen* had Chriſt himſelf appearing to him. *Note*, Nothing ſo comfortable to dying Saints, nor ſo animating to ſuffering Saints, as to ſee Jeſus at the right Hand of GOD; and bleſſed be GOD, by Faith we may ſee him there.

4. He told thoſe about him what he ſaw, *v.* 56. *Behold I ſee the Heavens open'd*; That which was a Cordial to him, ought to have been a Conviction to them, and a Caution to them to take heed of proceeding againſt One whom Heaven thus ſmil'd upon; and therefore what he *ſaw* he *declar'd*, let them make what Uſe they pleas'd of it. If ſome were exaſperated by it, others perhaps might be wrought upon to conſider this Jeſus whom they perſecuted, and to believe in him.

2. His pious addreſſes to Jeſus Chriſt; the Manifeſtation of GOD's Glory to him, did not ſet him *above* praying, but rather ſet him *upon* it. They *ſtoned* Stephen *calling upon God*, *v.* 59. Tho' he *call'd upon God*, and by that ſhew'd himſelf to be a true-born *Iſraelite*, yet they proceeded to ſtone him, not conſidering how dangerous it is to fight againſt thoſe that have an Intereſt in Heaven. Tho' they *ſtoned* him, yet he *call'd* upon *God*; nay, *therefore* he call'd upon him. *Note*, It is the Comfort of thoſe who are unjuſtly hated and perſecuted by Men, that they have a GOD to go to, a GOD All-ſufficient to call upon. Men *ſtop their Ears*, as they did here, *v.* 57. but GOD doth not. *Stephen* was now *caſt out* of the City, but he was not caſt out from *his God*. He was now taking his Leave of the World, and therefore *calls upon GOD*, for we muſt do that *as long as we live*. *Note*, It is good to dye praying; then we need Help; Strength we never had, to do a Work we never did, add how much we fetch in that Help and Strength, but by Prayer.

Two ſhort Prayers *Stephen* offer'd up to GOD in his dying Moments, and in them as 'twere breath'd out his Soul.

1. Here's a Prayer for himſelf; *Lord Jeſus, receive my Spirit.* Thus Chriſt had himſelf reſign'd his Spirit immediately into the Hand of the Father: we are here taught to reſign ours into the Hands of Chriſt as Mediator, by him to be recommended to

the Father. *Stephen* ſaw *Jeſus* ſtanding *at the Father's right Hand*, and he thus calls to him, Bleſſed Jeſus, do that for me now, which thou ſtandeſt there to do for all thine, Receive my departing Spirit into thy Hand. *Obſerve*,

(1.) The Soul is the Man, and our great Concern living and diyng, muſt be about our Souls, *Stephen's* Body was to be miſerably broke and ſhatter'd, and overwhelm'd with a Shower of Stones, the earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle violenly beaten down and abus'd; but however it goes with that, Lord, ſaith he, let my *Spirit* be *ſafe*; Let it go well with my poor Soul. Thus *while we live*, our Care ſhould be, that tho' the Body be ſtarv'd or ſtripp'd, the Soul may be fed and cloath'd, tho' the Body lies in Pain, the Soul may dwell at Eaſe. And *when we dye*, that tho' the Body be thrown by as a diſpis'd broken Veſſel, and a Veſſel in which there is no Pleaſure, yet the Soul may be preſented a Veſſel of Honour; That GOD may be the Strength of the Heart, and its Portion, tho' the Fleſh fail.

(2.) Our Lord Jeſus is God, to whom we are to ſeek, and in whom we are to confide, and comfort ourſelves living and dying. *Stephen* here prays to Chriſt, and ſo muſt we; for it is the Will of GOD that all Men ſhould thus *honour the Son*, even as they *honour the Father*. 'Tis Chriſt we are to commit our ſelves to, who alone is able to *keep what we commit to him* againſt that Day. 'Tis neceſſary we have an Eye to Chriſt when we come to dye; for there's no venturing into another World but under his Conduct; no living Comforts in dying Moments, but what are fetch'd from him.

(3.) Chriſt's *receiving our Spirits* at Death, is the great Thing we are to be careful about, and to comfort our ſelves with. We ought to be *in Care* about this while we live, that Chriſt may receive our Spirits when we dye; For if he reject and diſown them, whither will they betake themſelves? How can they eſcape being a Prey to a roaring Lion? To him therefore we muſt commit them daily to be rul'd and ſanctify'd, and made meet for Heaven, and then, and not otherwiſe he will receive them And if this has been our Care while we live, it may be our Comfort when we come to dye, that we ſhall be receiv'd into everlaſting Habitations.

2. Here's a Prayer for his Perſecutors, *v.* 60.

1. The Circumſtances of this Prayer are obſervable, for it ſeems to have been offer'd up with ſomething more of Solmnity than the former. (1.) He *kneel'd down*; which was an Expreſſion of his Humility in Prayer. (2.) He *cry'd with a loud Voice*; which was an Expreſſion of his Importunity. But why ſhould he thus ſhew more Humility and Importunity in this Requſt than in the former? Why, there was none could doubt of his being in good earneſt in his Prayers for himſelf, and therefore there he needed not to uſe ſuch outward Expreſſions of it; but in his Prayer for his Enemies, becauſe that is ſo much againſt the Grain of corrupt Nature, 'twas requiſite he ſhould give Proofs of his being in earneſt.

2. The Prayer it ſelf; *Lord, lay not this Sin to their charge*; therein he follow'd the Example of his dying Maſter who pray'd thus for his Perſecutors, *Father forgive them*; and ſet an Example to all following Sufferers in the Cauſe of Chriſt, thus to *pray for thoſe that perſecute them*, Prayer may preach: this did ſo to thoſe who ſton'd *Stephen*: and therefore he kneel'd down that they might take Notice he was going to pray, and *cry'd with a loud Voice*, that they might take Notice of what he ſaid, and might learn. (1.) That what they did was a *Sin*, a great Sin. which if Divine Mercy and Grace did not prevent, would be *laid to their Charge*, to their everlaſting Confuſion. (2.) That notwithſtanding their Malice and Fury againſt him, he was in Charity with them and was ſo far from deſiring that GOD would avenge his Death upon them, that it was his hearty Prayer to God, that it might not in any Degree be laid to their Charge. A ſad Reckoning there would be for it, if they did not repent, it would certainly be laid to their Charge; but he for his Part, did not *deſire the woful Day*. Let them take notice of this, and when their Thoughts were cool, ſurely they would not eaſily forgive themſelves putting him to Death, who could ſo eaſily forgive them. *The Blood-thirſty hate the Upright, but the Juſt ſeek his Soul*, Prov. xxix. 10. (3.) That tho' the Sin was very heinous yet they muſt not deſpair of the Pardon of it upon their Repentance. If they would lay it to their Hearts, GOD would not *lay it to their charge*. "Do you think (ſaith St. *Auſtin*) that " *Paul* heard *Stephen* pray this Prayer? 'Tis likely he did (ſaith " he and ridicul'd it then; (*audivit ſubſannans, ſed irriſit*) but " afterwards he had the Benefit of it, and far'd the better for it."

3. His expiring with this; *When he had ſaid this, he fell aſleep*: Or, *as he was ſaying this*, the Blow came that was mortal. *Note*, Death is but a Sleep to good People; not the Sleep of the Soul. *Stephen* had given that up into Chriſt's Hand, but the Sleep of the Body; 'tis its Reſt from all its Griefs and Toils, 'tis perfect Eaſe and indolence. *Stephen* dy'd, as much in a Hurry as ever any Man did, and yet when he dy'd, he *fell aſleep*; he apply'd himſelf to his Dying-work with as much Compoſure of Mind, as if he had been going to ſleep; 'twas but cloſing his Eyes and dying. *Obſerve*, He fell aſleep when he was praying for his Perſecutors; 'tis expreſs'd as if he thought he could not dye in Peace till he had done that. It contributes very much to our dying comfortably, to dye in charity with all Men; we are then *found of Chriſt in Peace*; Let not *the Sun of* Life *go down upon our Wrath*. He *fell aſleep*; the vulgar *Latin* adds, *in the Lord*; in the embraces of his Love. If he thus ſleep, *he ſhall do well*; he ſhall awake again in the Morning of the Reſurrection,

CHAP. VIII.

In this Chapter we have an Account of the Perſecutions *of the Chriſtians, and the* propagating *of Chriſtianity thereby* 'Twas *ſtrange, but very true, that the Diſciples of Chriſt the more they were afflicted. the more they multiply'd.* (1.) *Here's the Church* ſuffering, *upon the Occaſion of the putting* Stephen *to Death a very ſharp Storm aroſe which forc'd many from* Jeruſalem *v.* 1—3. (2.) *Here's the Church* ſpreading *by the* Miniſtry *of* Philip *and Others that were diſpers'd upon that Occaſion. We have here,* (1.) *The Goſpel* brought *to* Samaria, *preach'd there,* v. 4, 5. *Embrac'd there,* v. 6—8 *even by* Smion Magus, *v.* 9—13. *The Gift if the Holy Ghoſt conferr'd upon ſome of the Believing* Samaritans *by the Impoſition of the Hands, of* Peter *and* John, *v.* 14—17. *And the ſevere Rebuke given by* Peter *to* Simon Magus *forbbing Money for a Power he beſtow that Gift,* v. 18—25. (2.) *The Goſpel* ſent *to* Ethiopia, *by the Eunuch, a Perſon of Quality of that Country*, *He is returning home in his Chariot from* Jeruſalem, *v.* 26—28. Philip *is ſent to him, and in his Chariot preaches Chriſt to him,* v. 29, —35. *baptizeth him upon his Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith,* v. 36—38. *And then leaves him,* v. 39, 40. *Thus in different Ways and Methods, the Goſpel was diſpers'd among the Nations, and one Way or other,* Have they not all heard?

AND Saul was conſenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great perſecution againſt the church which was at Jeruſalem: and they were all ſcattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apoſtles. 2. And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him, 3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church entring into every houſe, and haling men and women, committed them to priſon.

In theſe Verſes we have

Firſt, Something more concerning *Stephen*, and his Death; how People ſtood affected to it; variouſly, as generally in ſuch Caſes, according to Men's different Sentiments of Things. Chriſt had told his Diſciples when he was parting with them, *Joh.* xvi. 20. *Ye ſhall weep and lament, but the World ſhall rejoyce.* Accordingly here is,

1. *Stephen*'s Death *rejoyc'd in by one*; by many, no doubt, but by One in particular, and that was *Saul*, who was afterwards call'd *Paul*; he was *conſenting to his Death*, συνευδοκῶν he *conſented to it with Delight*; ſo the Word ſignifies; he was pleas'd with it, he fed his Eyes with this bloody Spectacle, in hopes it would put a Stop to the Growth of Chriſtianity. We have Reaſon to think, that *Paul* order'd *Luke* to inſert this for Shame to himſelf, and Glory to Free-Grace. Thus he owns himſelf guilty of the Blood of *Stephen*, and aggravates it with this that he did not do it with Regret and Reluctancy but with Delight and a full Satisfaction, like thoſe who not only *do ſuch Things*, but *have pleaſure in them that do them.*

2. *Stephen*'s, Death bewail'd by others, *v.* 2. *Devout Men*, which ſome underſtand of thoſe that were properly ſo call'd *Proſelytes*, One of whom *Stephen* himſelf propably was: Or, it may be taken more largely, ſome of the Church that were more *devout* and zealous than the reſt, went and gather'd up the poor cruſh'd and broken Remains, to which they gave a decent Interment: probably in the *Field of Blood*, which was bought ſome Time ago to bury Strangers in. They *bury'd him* ſolemnly, and *made great Lamentation over him*; Tho' his Death was of great Advantage to himſelf, and great Service to the Church, yet they *bewail'd* it as a general Loſs, ſo well qualify'd was he for the Service, and ſo likely to be uſeful both as a *Deacon* and as a *Diſputant*. 'Tis an ill Symptom if when ſuch Men are *taken away* it is not *laid to Heart*. Thoſe devout Men paid theſe their laſt Reſpects to *Stephen*, (1.) To ſhew that they were not aſham'd of the Cauſe for which he ſuffer'd, nor aſham'd of the Wrath of thoſe that were Enemies to it, for tho' they now triumph, the Cauſe is a righteous Cauſe, and will be at laſt a victorious One. (2.) To ſhew the great Value and Eſteem they had for this faithful Servant of Jeſus Chriſt, this *firſt Martyr* for the Goſpel, whoſe Memory ſhall always be precious to them, notwithſtanding the Ignominy of his Death. They ſtudy to do Honour to him whom GOD put Honour upon. (3.) To teſtify their Belief and Hope of the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Life of the World to come,

Secondly, An account of this Perſecution of the Church, which begins upon the Martyrdom of *Stephen*. When the Fury of the *Jews* ran with ſuch Voilence, and to ſuch a Height againſt *Stephen* it could not quickly either *ſtop* itſelf or *ſpend* itſelf. The *Bloody* are often in Scripture call'd *Blood-thirſty*; for when they have taſted Blood they thirſt for more. One would have thought *Stephen's* dying Prayers, and dying Comforts ſhould have overcome them, and melted them into a better Opinion of Chriſtians and Chriſtianity. But it ſeems it did not; The Perſecution goes on; for (1.) They were more *exaſperated* when they ſaw they could prevail nothing, as if they hoped to be too hard for GOD himſelf, they reſolve to follow their Blow; And perhaps becauſe they were none of them ſtruck Dead upon the Place for Stoning *Stephen*, their Hearts were the more fully ſet in them to do Evil. (2.) Perhaps the Diſciples were the more *embolden'd* to diſpute againſt them as *Stephen* did, ſeeing how triumphantly he finiſh'd his Courſe, which would provoke them ſo much the more. *Obſerve*,

1. Againſt whom this Perſecution was rais'd; it was *againſt the Church in* Jeruſalem, which is no ſooner *planted*, but it is *perſecuted*; as Chriſt often *intimated*, that *Tribulation* and *Perſecution* would ariſe *becauſe of the Word*. And Chriſt had particularly foretold that *Jeruſalem* would ſoon be made too hot for his Followers, for that City had been famous for Killing the Prophets, and Stoning them that were ſent to it, *Matth.* xxiii. 37. It ſhould ſeem that in this Perſecution many were put to Death, for *Paul* owns that at this Time he perſecuted this Way *unto the Death*, Acts xxii. 4. And *chap.* xxvi. 10. that *when they were put to Death he gave his Voice againſt them.*

2. Who was an active Man in it; None ſo zealous, ſo buſy as *Saul*, a young *Phariſee*, v. 3. *As for* Saul (who had been twice mention'd before, and now again for a notorious Perſecutor) *he made Havock of the Church*; he did all he could to lay it waſte and ruin it; he cared not what Miſchief he did to the Diſciples of Chriſt, nor knew when to take up. He aim'd at no leſs than the cutting off of the Goſpel *Iſrael*, that the *Name of it ſhould be no more in Remembrance*, Pſal. lxxxiii. 4. he was the fitteſt Tool the chief Prieſts could find out to ſerve the Purpoſes; He was Informer-general againſt the Diſciples, A Meſſenger of the great Council to be employ'd in ſearching for Meetings, and ſeizing all that were ſuſpected to favour that Way. *Saul* was bred a Scholar, a Gentleman, and yet did not think it below him to be employ'd in the dirtieſt Work of that Kind. (1.) He *enter'd into every Houſe*, making no Difficulty of breaking open Doors Night or Day, and having a Force attending him for that Purpoſe. He enter'd into *every Houſe* where they us'd to keep their Meetings, Or *every Houſe* that had any Chriſtians in it, or was thought to have. No Man could be ſecure in his own Houſe, tho' it is his Caſtle. (2.) He *hal'd* with the utmoſt Contempt and Cruelty both *Men and Women*, drag'd them along the Streets, without any Regard to the Tenderneſs of the weaker Sex.. He ſtooped ſo low as to take Cognizance of the meaneſt that were leavened with the Goſpel, ſo extreamly bigotted was he. (3.) He *committed them to Priſon*, in order to their being try'd and put to Death, unleſs they would renounce Chriſt; And ſome we find were compell'd by him *to blaſpheme*, Acts xxvi. 11.

3. What was the Effect of this Perſecution?

They were *all ſcattered abroad*, v. 1. not all the Believers, but all the Preachers; who were principally ſtruck at, and againſt whom Warrants were iſſued out to take them up. They remembring our Maſter's Rule, *when they perſecute you in one City, flee to another*, diſpers'd themſelves by Agreement *throughout the Regions of Judea*, and of *Samaria*; not ſo much for Fear of Sufferings, for *Judea* and *Samaria* were not far off from *Jeruſalem*, but that, if they made a publick Appearance there as they determined to do, their Perſecutors Power would ſoon reach them there; But becauſe they look'd upon this as an Intimation of Providence to them to ſcatter; Their Work was pretty well done in *Jeruſalem*, and now it was Time to think of the Neceſſities of other Places, for their Maſter had told them that they muſt be *his Witneſſes in* Jeruſalem *firſt*, and then *in all* Judea *and in* Samaria, and then *to the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth*, Acts i. 8. and that Method they obſerve. Tho' Perſecution may not drive us off from our Work, yet it may ſend us, as a Hint of Providence to work elſewhere.

The Preachers were all ſcatter'd *except the Apoſtles*, who probably were directed by the Spirit to continue at *Jeruſalem* yet for ſome Time, they being by the ſpecial Providence of GOD *ſcreen'd* from the Storm, and by the ſpecial Grace of GOD enabled to *face* the Storm. They *tarried at* Jeruſalem, that they might be ready to go where their Aſſiſtance was moſt needed by the other Preachers that were ſent to break the Ice; As Chriſt order'd his Diſciples to go to thoſe Places *where he himſelf deſign'd to come*, Luke x. 1. The Apoſtles continued longer together at *Jeruſalem* than one would have thought, conſidering the Command and Commiſſion given them, to *go into all the World*, and to *Diſciple all Nations*; ſee *Acts* xv. 6. *Gal.* i. 17. But what was done by the Evangeliſts whom they ſent forth, was reckoned as done by them.

4 Therefore they that were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the word. 5 Then Philip went down to the City of Samaria, and preached Chriſt unto them. 6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto thoſe things which Philip ſpake, hearing, and ſeeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean ſpirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many that were poſſeſſed *with them*: and many taken with palſies, and that were lame, were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city. 9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which before-time in the ſame city uſed ſorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himſelf was ſome great one. 10 To whom they all gave heed from the leaſt to the greateſt, ſaying, This man is the great power of God. 11 And to him they had regard, becauſe that of long time he had bewitched them with ſorceries. 12 But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the Name of Jeſus Chriſt, they were baptized both men and women. 13 Then Simon himſelf believed alſo: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondred, beholding the miracles and ſigns which were done.

Samſon's Riddle is here again unriddl'd, *Out of the Eater comes forth Meat, and out of the Strong Sweetneſs*. The Perſecution that was deſign'd to extirpate the Church, was by the over-ruling Providence of GOD made an Occaſion of the Enlargement of it. Chriſt had ſaid, *I am come to ſend Fire on the Earth*. And they thought by ſcattering thoſe who were kindled with that Fire to have put it out, but inſtead of that they did but help to ſpread it.

1. Here's a general Account of what was done by them all; *v.* 4. *They went every where preaching the Word.* They did not go to *hide themſelves* for Fear of Suffering, no nor to *ſhew themſelves* as proud of their Sufferings; but they went up and down to ſcatter the Knowledge of Chriſt in every Place where they were ſcattered. They went *every where*, into the *Way of the* Gentiles, and the *Cities of the* Samaritans, which before they were forbidden to *go into*, Acts x. 5. They did not keep together in a Body, tho' that might have been a Strength to them, but they ſcatter'd into all Parts; not to take their Eaſe but to find out Work; They went *Evangelizing the Word*, preaching the Word of the Goſpel, that was it which fill'd them, and which they endeavour'd to fill the Country with, thoſe of them that were preaching, in their Preaching, and others in their common Converſe. They were now in a Country where they were *no Strangers*, for Chriſt and his Diſciples had convers'd much in the *Regions* of *Judea*; ſo that they had a Foundation laid there for them to build upon; And it would be requiſite to let the People there know what that Doctrine which Jeſus had preached there ſome time ago was come to, and that it was not left and forgotten, as perhaps they were made to believe.

2. A particular Account of what was done by *Philip*; we ſhall hear of the Progreſs and Succeſs of others of them afterwards, *ch.* ix. 19. But here muſt attend the Motions of *Philip*, not *Philip* the Apoſtle, but *Philip* the *Deacon*, who was choſen and ordain'd to *ſerve Tables*, but having *us'd the Office of a Deacon well*, *he purchas'd to himſelf a good Degree*, and *great boldneſs in the Faith*, 1 *Tim.* iii. 13. *Stephen* was advanc'd to the Degree of a Martyr, *Philip* to the Degree of an Evangeliſt, which when he entered upon, being oblig'd by it to *give himſelf to the Word and Prayer*, he was no doubt diſcharg'd from the Office of a Deacon, for how could he *ſerve Tables* at *Jeruſalem*, which by that Office he was oblig'd to do, when he was preaching in *Samaria?* And 'tis probable two others were choſen in the Room of *Stephen* and *Philip*. Now *Obſerve*,

Firſt, What *wonderful Succeſs Philip* had in his Preaching, and what Reception he met with.

1. The Place he choſe was the *City of* Samaria; The head City of *Samaria*, the Metropolis of that Country, which ſtood there where the City of *Samaria* had formerly ſtood, which we read of the Building of, 1 *Kings* xvi. 24. now call'd *Sebaſte*. Some think it was the ſame with *Sychem* or *Sychar*, that City of *Samaria* where Chriſt was, *Joh.* iv. 6. Many of that City then *believ'd in Chriſt*, tho' he did no Miracle among them, *v.* 39, 41. and now *Philip* three Years after carries on the Work then begun. The *Jews* would have no Dealings with the *Samaritans*; but Chriſt ſent his Goſpel to ſlay all Enmities, and particularly that between the *Jews* and the *Samaritans*, by making them One in his Church.

2. The Doctrine he preach'd was *Chriſt*; for he determined know Nothing elſe: He *preached Chriſt to them*, he *proclaimed Chriſt* to them, ſo the Word ſignifies: as King when he comes to the Crown is proclaim'd throughout his Dominions. The *Samaritans* had an Expectation of the *Meſſiah*'s Coming, as appears by *Joh.* iv. 25. now *Philip* tells them, He is come; and that the *Samaritans* are welcome to Him. Miniſters Buſineſs is to *preach Chriſt*, Chriſt, and him crucify'd; Chriſt, and him glorify'd.

3. The Proofs he produc'd for the Confirmation of his Doctrine, were *Miracles*, v. 6. To convince that he had his Commiſſion from Heaven, and therefore not only they might venture upon what he ſaid, but they were bound to yield to it, he ſhews them this Broad Seal of Heaven annex'd to it, which

the GOD of Truth would never put to a Lye: The Miracles were undeniable, they *heard and ſaw the Miracles which he did*; they *heard* the commanding Words he ſpoke, and *ſaw* the amazing Effect of them immediately; that he ſpake, and it was done. And the Nature of the Miracles was ſuch as ſuited the Intention of his Commiſſion, and gave Light and Luſtre to it.

(1.) He was ſent to *break the Power of Satan*; and in Token of that, *unclean Spirits*, being charg'd in the Name of the Lord Jeſus to remove, *came out of many that were poſſeſs'd with them*, v. 7. As far as the Goſpel prevails, *Satan* is forc'd to quit his Hold of Men, and his Intereſt in them, and then thoſe are reſtor'd to themſelves, and to their right Mind again, who while he kept Poſſeſſion, were diſtracted. Wherever the Goſpel gains the Admiſſion and Submiſſion it ought to have, *evil Spirits* are diſlodg'd, and particularly *unclean Spirits*, all Inclinations to the Luſts of the Fleſh, which war againſt the Soul; for GOD has called us from *Uncleanneſs* to *Holineſs*, 1 Theſ. iv. 7. This was ſignify'd by the caſting of theſe *unclean Spirits* out of the Bodies of People, who, 'tis here ſaid, came out *crying with a loud Voice*, which ſignifies that they came out with great Reluctancy, and ſore againſt their Wills, but were forc'd to acknowledge themſelves overcome by a ſuperiour Power, *Mark* i. 26. iii. 11. ix. 26.

(2.) He was ſent to *heal the Minds of Men*, to cure a Diſtemper'd World, and to put it in a good State of Health; and in Token of that, *many that were taken with Palſies, and that were lame, were heal'd.* Thoſe Diſtempers are inſtanced in, that were moſt difficult to be cur'd by a Courſe of Nature, that the miraculous Cure might be the more illuſtrious; and thoſe that were moſt expreſſive of the Diſeaſe of Sin, and that moral Impotency which the Souls of Men labour under as to the Service of GOD. The Grace of GOD in the Goſpel, is deſign'd for the healing of thoſe that are ſpiritually lame and paralytick, and cannot *help themſelves*, Rom. v. 6.

4. The Acceptance which *Philip*'s Doctrine thus prov'd met with in *Samaria*, v. 6. *The People with one Accord gave heed to thoſe Things which* Philip *ſpake*; induc'd thereto by the Miracles which ſerv'd at firſt to gain Attention, and ſo by Degrees to gain Aſſent. There then begins to be ſome Hopes of People, when they begin to take Notice of what is ſaid to them concerning the Things of their Souls and Eternity; when they begin to *give heed* to the Word of GOD, as thoſe that are well-pleas'd to hear it, deſirous to underſtand and remember, and that look upon themſelves as concern'd in it. The *Common People* gave heed to *Philip* οἱ ὄχλοι a *Multitude* of them, not here and there One, but *with one accord*; they were all of a Mind, that the Doctrine of the Goſpel was fit to be enquir'd into, and an impartial Hearing given to it.

5. The Satisfaction they had in attending on, and attending to *Philip*'s Preaching, and the Succeſs it had with many of them, *v.* 8. *There was great Joy in that City*; for *v.* 12. They *believ'd* Philip, *and were baptiz'd* into the Faith of Chriſt; the Generality of them, *both Men and Women.* *Obſerve*, (1.) *Philip* preach'd the *Things concerning the Kingdom of GOD*, the Conſtitution of that Kingdom, the Laws and Ordinances of it, the Liberties and Privileges of it, and the Obligations we are all under to be the Loyal Subjects of that Kingdom; and he preach'd *the Name of Jeſus Chriſt* as King of that Kingdom, his Name, which is *above every Name*; he preach'd it up in its commanding Power and Influence, all that by which he had made himſelf known. (2.) The People not only *gave heed* to what he ſaid, but at length *believ'd it*; were fully convinc'd that it was of GOD, and not of Men, and gave up themſelves to the Conduct and Government of it. As to *this Mountain* on which they had hitherto worſhipped GOD, and plac'd a great deal of Religion in it, they were now as much *wean*'d from it, as ever they had been *wedded* to it, and become the *true Worſhippers*, who *worſhip the Father in Spirit, and in Truth*, and in the Name of Chriſt, the true Temple, *Joh.* iv. 20, 23. (3.) *When they believ'd*, without Scruple (tho' they were *Samaritans*) and without Delay *they were baptized*, openly profeſs'd the Chriſtian Faith, promis'd to adhere to it, and then by waſhing them with Water, were ſolemnly admitted into the Communion of the Chriſtian Church, and own'd as Brethren by the Diſciples. *Men* only were capable of being admitted into the Jewiſh Church by Circumciſion: But to ſhew that in *Jeſus Chriſt* there is *neither Male nor Female*, Gal. iii. 28. but both are alike welcome to him, the initiating Ordinance is ſuch as Women are capable of; for they are *number'd* with GOD's Spiritual *Iſrael*, tho' not with *Iſrael* according to the Fleſh, *Numb.* i. 2. And from hence it is eaſily gathered, that Women are to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, tho' it doth not appear that there were any amongſt thoſe to whom it was firſt adminiſter'd. (4.) This occaſion'd *great Joy*; Each One rejoyc'd for himſelf, as he in the Parable who found the Treaſure hid in the Field; and they all rejoyc'd for the Benefit hereby brought to their City, and that it came *without Oppoſition*, which it would ſcarce have done if *Samaria* had been within the Juriſdiction of the Chief Prieſts. *Note*, The bringing of the Goſpel to any Place is juſt Matter of *Joy*, of *great Joy* for that Place. Hence the ſpreading of the Goſpel in the World is often propheſy'd of in the *Old Teſtament* as the diffuſing of *Joy* among the Nations, *Pſ.* lxvii. 4. *Let the Nations be glad, and ſing for Joy*, 1 Theſ. i. 6. The Goſpel of Chriſt doth not make Men melancholy, but fills them *with Joy*, if it be received as it ſhould be; for it is *glad Tydings of great Joy to all People*, Luk. ii. 10.

Secondly, What there was in particular at this City of *Samaria*, that made the Succeſs of the Goſpel there more than ordinary wonderful.

1. That *Simon Magus* had been buſy there, and had gained a great Intereſt among the People, and *yet* they *believed* the Things that *Philip* ſpoke. To unlearn that which is bad proves many Times a harder Task, than to learn that which is good. Theſe *Samaritans*, tho' they were not Idolaters as the Gentiles, nor prejudiced againſt the Goſpel by Traditions received from their Fathers, yet they had of late been drawn to follow *Simon* a *Conjurer*, (for ſo *Magus* ſignifies) that made a mighty Noiſe among them, and had ſtrangely bewitched them.

We are here told,

(1.) How ſtrong the Deluſion of *Satan* was, by which they were brought into the Intereſts of this great *Deceiver*; He had been for ſome Time, nay, for a *long time*, in *this City uſing Sorcery*; perhaps, he came thither by the Inſtigation of the Devil, ſoon after our Saviour had been there, to undo what he had been doing there; for it was always *Satan*'s Way, to cruſh a good Work in its Bud and Infancy, 1 *Cor.* xi. 3. 1 *Theſſ.* iii. 5. Now

1. *Simon aſſum'd* to himſelf that which was conſiderable; He *gave out that himſelf was ſome Great One*; and would have all People to believe ſo, and to pay him Reſpect accordingly, and then as to every Thing elſe, they might do as they pleas'd; he had no Deſign to reform their Lives, or improve their Worſhip and Devotion, only to make them believe that he was τὶς μέγας, ſome *Divine Perſon* or other. *Juſtin Martyr* ſaith, he would be worſhipped as, πρῶτον Θεὸν, the *Chief God.* He gave out himſelf to be the *Son of GOD*, the *Meſſiah*; ſo ſome think. Or, to be an *Angel* or a *Prophet*; perhaps he was uncertain within himſelf what Title of Honour to pretend to; but he would be thought *ſome great One.* Pride and Ambition, and an Affectation of Grandeur, has always been the Principle of abundance of Miſchief both to the World, and to the Church.

2. The People *aſcrib'd* to him what he pleas'd; (1.) They all *gave heed to him, from the leaſt to the greateſt*; both Young and Old, both Poor and Rich, both Governours and Governed, *to him they had Regard*, v. 10, 11. and perhaps the more, becauſe the Time fixed for the Coming of the *Meſſiah* was now expir'd, which had raiſed a general Expectation of the Appearing of ſome *Great One* about this Time. Probably, he was a Native of their Country, and therefore they embraced him the more chearfully, that by giving Honour to him they might reflect it upon themſelves. (2.) They ſaid of him, *This Man is the great Power of God*; *The Power of God, That Great Power*; ſo it might be read. That Power which made the World. See how ignorant inconſiderate People miſtake that which is done by the Power of *Satan*, as if it were done by the Power of *GOD.* Thus in the Gentile World, Devils paſs for Deities; and in the Antichriſtian Kingdom, all the World wonders after a Beaſt to whom the Dragon gives his Power, and who *opens his Mouth in Blaſphemy againſt GOD*, Rev. xiii. 2, 5. (3.) They were brought to it by his Sorceries; *he bewitched the People of* Samaria, *v.* 9. *Bewitched them with Sorceries*, v. 11. that is, Either (1.) By his Magick Arts he *bewitched the Minds of the People*, at leaſt ſome of them, who drew in others; *Satan* by GOD's Permiſſion filled their Hearts to follow *Simon.* *O fooliſh* Galatians, ſaith *Paul*, *who hath bewitched you*, Gal. iii. 1. Theſe People are ſaid to be *bewitched* by *Simon*, becauſe they were ſo ſtrangely infatuated to *believe a Lye.* Or, (2.) By his Magick Arts he did *many Signs and lying Wonders*, which ſeemed to be Miracles, but were really not ſo; like thoſe of the Magicians of *Egypt*, and thoſe of the *Man of Sin*, 2 Theſſ. ii. 9. When they knew no better, they were influenced by his Sorceries; but when they were acquainted with *Philip*'s real Miracles, they ſaw plainly that the one was real, and the other a Sham, and there was as much Difference as between *Aaron*'s Rod and thoſe of the *Magicians.* *What is the Chaff to the Wheat*, Jer. xxiii. 28.

Thus, notwithſtanding the Influence *Simon Magus* had had upon them, and the Lothneſs there generally is in People to own themſelves in an Error, and to retract it, yet when they ſaw the Difference between *Simon* and *Philip*, they quitted *Simon*, gave heed no longer to him, but to *Philip.* And thus you ſee,

(2.) How ſtrong the Power of Divine Grace is, by which they were brought to Chriſt, who is Truth itſelf; and was (as I may ſay) the Great *Undeceiver.* By that Grace working with the Word, they that had been led Captive by *Satan*, were brought into Obedience to Chriſt. Where *Satan* as a *ſtrong Man arm'd kept Poſſeſſion* of the Palace, and thought himſelf ſafe, Chriſt as a *ſtronger than he* diſpoſſeſs'd him, and divided the Spoil; led Captivity captive, and made thoſe the Trophies of his Victory whom the Devil had triumph'd over. Let us not deſpair of the Worſt, when even thoſe whom *Simon Magus* had bewitch'd were brought to believe.

2. Here's another Thing yet more wonderful, that *Simon Magus* himſelf became a Convert to the Faith of Chriſt, in Shew and Profeſſion for a Time. *Is* Saul *alſo among the Prophets?* Yes,

v. 13. *Simon himſelf believed alſo*; he was convinc'd that *Philip* preach'd a true Doctrine, becauſe he ſaw it confirm'd by real Miracles, which he was the better able to judge of, becauſe he was conſcious to himſelf of the Trick of his own pretended ones. (1.) The preſent Conviction went ſo far, that *he was baptiz'd*, was admitted as other Believers were into the Church by Baptiſm; and we have no Reaſon to think that *Philip* did amiſs in baptizing him; no, nor in baptizing him quickly. Tho' he had been a very wicked Man, a Sorcerer, a Pretender to Divine Honours, yet upon his Solemn Profeſſion of Repentance for his Sin, and Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, he was *baptiz'd*. For as great Wickedneſs before Converſion keeps not true Penitents from the Benefit of GOD's Grace, ſo neither ſhould it keep profeſſing Ones from Church Fellowſhip. Prodigals when they return, muſt be joyfully welcom'd home, tho' we cannot be ſure but that they will play the Prodigal again. Nay, tho' he was now but an Hypocrite, and really in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and Bond of Iniquity all this while, and would ſoon have been found to be ſo, if he had been try'd a while, yet *Philip* baptiz'd him; for 'tis GOD's Prerogative to know the Heart, the Church and its Miniſters muſt go by a Judgment of Charity, as far as there is Room for it. 'Tis a Maxim in the Law, *Donec contrarium patet, ſemper præſumitur meliori parti*; We muſt hope the beſt as long as we can. And it is a Maxim in the Diſcipline of the Church, *De ſecretis non judicat Eccleſia*; The Secrets of the Heart GOD only judgeth. (2.) The preſent Conviction laſted ſo long, that *he continued with* Philip; tho' afterwards he apoſtatiz'd from Chriſtianity, yet not quickly. He courted *Philip*'s Accquaintance, and now he that had *given out himſelf to be ſome Great One*, is content to ſit at the Feet of a Preacher of the Goſpel. Even bad Men, very bad, may ſometimes be in a good Frame, very good; and they whoſe Hearts ſtill *go after their Covetouſneſs*, may poſſibly not only come before GOD as his People come, but continue with them. (3.) The preſent Conviction was wrought and kept up by the Miracles; *He wonder'd* to ſee himſelf ſo far outdone in *Signs and Miracles*. Many *wonder* at the Proofs of Divine Truths, that never experience the Power of them.

14 Now when the apoſtles which were at Jeruſalem, heard that Samaria had receiv'd the word of God, they ſent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Ghoſt. 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus.) 17 Then laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the holy Ghoſt. 18 And when Simon ſaw that through laying on of the apoſtles hands, the holy Ghoſt was given, he offered them money, 19 Saying, Give me alſo this power, that on whomſoever I lay hands, he may receive the holy Ghoſt. 20 But Peter ſaid unto him, Thy money periſh with thee, becauſe thou haſt thought that the gift of God may be purchaſed with money. 21 Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the ſight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedneſs, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. 23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of iniquity. 24 Then anſwered Simon and ſaid, pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of theſe things which ye have ſpoken come upon me. 25 And when they had teſtified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jeruſalem, and preached the goſpel in many villages of the Samaritans.

GOD had wonderfully own'd *Philip* in his Work as an *Evangeliſt* at *Samaria*; but he could do no more than an *Evangeliſt*, there were ſome peculiar Powers reſerv'd to the Apoſtles for the keeping up of the Dignity of their Office. And here we have an Account of what was done by two of them there, *Peter* and *John*. The *Twelve* kept together at *Jeruſalem*, v. 1. and thither theſe good Tydings were brought them, That *Samaria had receiv'd the Word of GOD*, v. 14. that a great Harveſt of Souls was gather'd, and was likely to be gather'd in to Chriſt there. The Word of GOD was not only *preached to them*, but *received by them*, they bid it welcome, admitted the Light of it, and ſubmitted to the Power of it. When they heard it, *they ſent unto them* Peter *and* John. If *Peter* had been, as ſome ſay he was, the *Prince of the Apoſtles*, he would have *ſent* ſome of them, or if he had ſeen Cauſe, would have gone himſelf of his own accord; but he was ſo far from that, that he ſubmitted to an Order of the Houſe, and as a Servant to the Body, went whither they ſent him. Two Apoſtles were ſent, the two moſt eminent to *Samaria*. (1.) To encourage *Philip*, to aſſiſt him, and ſtrengthen his Hands: Miniſters in a higher Station, and that excel in Gifts and Graces, ſhould contrive how they may be helpful to thoſe in a lower Sphere, and contribute to their Comfort and Uſefulneſs. (2.) To carry on the good Work that was begun among the People, and with thoſe heavenly Graces that had enrich'd them to confer upon them ſpiritual Gifts. Now *Obſerve*,

Firſt, How they *advanced* and *improved* thoſe of them that were *ſincere*; It is ſaid, *v.* 16. That the Holy Ghoſt was as yet *fallen upon none of them*, in thoſe extraordinary Powers which were conveyed by the Deſcent of the Spirit upon *the Day of Pentecoſt*; they were none of them endued with the *Gift of Tongues*, which ſeems then to have been the moſt uſual immediate Effect of the Pouring out of the Spirit; See *chap.* x. 45, 46. which was both an eminent *Sign* to them which believed not, and of excellent Service to them that did. This, and other ſuch Gifts they had not, only *they were baptized in the Name of the Lord* Jeſus, and ſo *engag'd* to him, and *intereſted* in him, which was neceſſary to Salvation, and in that they had Joy and Satisfaction, *v.* 8. tho' they could not ſpeak with Tongues. They that are indeed given up to Chriſt, and have experienced the ſanctifying Influences and Operations of the Spirit of Grace, have great Reaſon to be thankful, and no Reaſon to complain, tho' they have not thoſe Gifts that are for Ornament, and would make them *bright*.

But 'tis intended that they ſhall go on to the Perfection of the preſent Diſpenſation, for the greater Honour of the Goſpel: We have Reaſon to think that *Philip* had receiv'd theſe Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt himſelf, but not a Power to confer them; the Apoſtles muſt come to do that: And they did it, not upon all that were *baptized*, but upon *ſome of them*, (and it ſhould ſeem) ſuch as were deſign'd for ſome Office in the Church, or at leaſt to be eminent active Members of it; and upon ſome of them one Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, and upon others another, See 1 *Cor.* xii. 4, 8. xiv. 26.

Now in order to this,

1. The Apoſtles *pray'd for them*, v. 15. The Spirit is given not to ourſelves only, *Luke* xi. 13. but to others alſo in anſwer to Prayer. *I will put my Spirit within you*, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. But I will for this be *enquired of*, v. 37. We may take Encouragement from this Example, in praying to GOD to give the renewing Graces of the Holy Ghoſt to them, whoſe Spiritual Welfare we are concerned for; for our Children, for our Friends, for our Miniſters, we ſhould pray, and pray earneſtly, that they may receive the Holy Ghoſt; for that includes all Bleſſings.

2. They *laid their Hands upon them*; to ſignify that their Prayers were anſwered, and that the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt was conferr'd upon them; for upon the Uſe of this Sign, *They received the Holy Ghoſt*, and *ſpake with Tongues*. The Laying on of Hands was anciently uſed in *Bleſſing*, by thoſe who bleſs'd with Authority. Thus the Apoſtles bleſs'd theſe new Converts, *ordain'd* ſome to be Miniſters and *confirm'd* others in their Chriſtianity. We cannot now, nor can any thus give the Holy Ghoſt by the *Laying on of Hands*; but this may intimate to us, that thoſe whom we *pray for*, we ſhould *uſe our Endeavours with*.

Secondly, How they diſcovered and diſcarded him that was an Hypocrite among them, and that was *Simon Magus*; for they knew how to ſeparate between the *Precious and the Vile*. Now *Obſerve here*,

1. The wicked Propoſal that *Simon* made, by which his Hypocriſy was diſcover'd, *v.* 18, 19. *When he ſaw that through laying on of the Apoſtles Hands the Holy Ghoſt was given*, which ſhould have confirmed his Faith in the Doctrine of Chriſt, and increas'd his Veneration for the Apoſtles, it gave him a Notion of Chriſtianity, as no other but an exalted Piece of Sorcery, in which he thought himſelf capable of being equal to the Apoſtles, and therefore *offer'd them Money, ſaying, Give me alſo this Power*. He doth not deſire them to *Lay their Hands on him*, that he might receive the Holy Ghoſt himſelf, for he did not foreſee that any Thing was to be got by that, but that they would convey to him a Power to beſtow the Gift upon others. He was ambitious to have the Honour of an Apoſtle, but not at all ſollicitous to have the Spirit and Diſpoſition of a Chriſtian; He was more deſirous to gain Honour to himſelf, than to do Good to others. Now in making this Motion. (1.) He put a great Affront upon the Apoſtles, as if they were Mercenary Men, would do any Thing for Money, and lov'd it as well as he did; whereas they had left what they had for Chriſt, ſo far were they from aiming to make it more. (2.) He put a great Affront upon Chriſtianity, as if the Miracles that were wrought for the Proof of it were done by Magick Arts, only of a different Nature from what he himſelf had practis'd formerly. (3.) He ſhew'd that like *Balaam*, he aim'd at the *Rewards of Divination*; for he would not have *bid Money* for this Power if he had not hoped to get Money by it. (4.) He ſhew'd that he had a very high Conceit of himſelf, and that he had never his Heart truly humbled; Such a Wretch as he had been before his Baptiſm, ſhould have ask'd like the *Prodigal*, to be made as one of the *hired Servants*; but as ſoon as he is admitted into the Family, no leſs a Place will ſerve him than to be one of the Stewards of the Houſhold, and to be intruſted with a Power which *Philip* himſelf had not: but the Apoſtles only.

2. The juſt Rejection of his Propoſal, and the cutting Reproof *Peter* gave him for it, *v.* 20, 21, 22, 23.

1. *Peter* ſhews his Crime, *v.* 20. *thou haſt thought that the Gift of God may be purchaſed with Money.* And thus, (1.) He had *overvalued* the Wealth of this World as if it were an equivalent for any Thing, and as if becauſe, as *Solomon* ſaith, It *anſwers all Things* relating to the Life that now is, it would anſwer all Things relating to the other Life, and would purchaſe the Pardon of Sin, the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, and Eternal Life. (2.) He had *undervalued* the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, and put it upon a Level with the Common Gifts of Nature and Providence. He thought the Power of an Apoſtle might as well be had for a good Fee as the Advice of a Phyſician or a Lawyer, which was the greateſt Deſpite that could be done to the *Spirit of Grace.* All the Buying and Selling of Pardons and Indulgences in the Church of *Rome* is the Product of this ſame wicked Thought, that the *Gift of God may be purchaſed with Money,* when the Offer of Divine Grace ſo expreſly runs *without Money* and *without Price.*

2. He ſhews him his Character, which is inferr'd from his Crime. From every Thing that a Man ſaith or doth amiſs, we cannot infer that he is an Hypocrite, in the Profeſſion he makes of Religion; But this of *Simon*'s was ſuch a *fundamental Errour,* as could by no Means conſiſt with a State of Grace; his bidding Money (and that got by Sorcery too) was an unconteſtable Evidence that he was yet under the Power of a worldly and carnal Mind, and was yet *that Natural* Man which *receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them.* And therefore *Peter* tells them plainly. (1.) That *his Heart was not right in the Sight of God,* v. 21. Tho' thou profeſſeſt to *believe,* and art *baptiz'd,* yet thou art not ſincere; We are as our Hearts are, If they be not *right,* we are *wrong*; And they are open in the *Sight of God,* who knows them, judgeth them, and judgeth of us by them. That our Hearts are, which they are in the *Sight of God,* who cannot be deceiv'd, and if they be not *right in the Sight,* whatever our Pretenſions be, our Religion is vain, and will ſtand us in no ſtead. Our great Concern is to approve ourſelves to Him in our Integrity, for otherwiſe we cheat ourſelves into our own Ruin. Some refer this particularly to the Propoſal he made; What he ask'd is deny'd him, becauſe his Heart is *not right in the Sight of God* in asking it; he doth not aim at the Glory of GOD, or the Honour of Chriſt in it, but to make a Hand of it for himſelf; he *asks and has not, becauſe he asks amiſs, that he may conſume it upon his Luſts,* and be ſtill thought *ſome great one.* (2.) That he is *in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and in the Bond of Iniquity*; I perceive that thou art ſo; *v.* 33. This is plain Dealing, and plain Dealing is beſt, when we are Dealing about Souls and Eternity. *Simon* had got a great Name, among the People, and of late a good Name too among GOD's People, and yet *Peter* here gives him a black Character. *Note,* 'Tis poſſible for a Man to continue under the Power of Sin, and yet to put on a Form of Godlineſs. *I perceive it* ſaith *Peter.* 'Twas not ſo much by the Spirit of Diſcerning with which *Peter* was endued that he perceiv'd this, as by *Simon*'s Diſcovery of it in the Propoſal he made. *Note,* The Diſguiſes of Hypocrites many Times are ſoon ſeen through; The Nature of the Wolf ſhews it ſelf, notwithſtanding the Cover of the Sheeps Cloathing. Now the Character here given of *Simon* is really the Character of all wicked People. 1. They are *in the Gall of Bitterneſs.* Odious to God as that which is bitter as Gall is to us, Sin is an abominable Thing which the Lord hates, and Sinners are by it made abominable to him; They are *vicious in their own* Nature; In-dwelling Sin is a *Root of Bitterneſs* that *bears Gall and Wormwood,* Deut. xxix. 18. The Faculties corrupted, and the Mind embitter'd againſt all Good, *Heb.* xii. 15. It ſpeaks likewiſe the *pernicious Conſequences* of Sin; the End is *bitter as Wormwood.* 2. They are *in the Bond of Iniquity*; Bound over to the Judgment of God by the Guilt of Sin, and bound under the Dominion of *Satan* by the Power of Sin; led Captive by him at his Will, and it is a *ſore Bondage,* like that in *Egypt,* making the Life *bitter.*

3. He reads him his Doom in two Things.

1. He ſhall *ſink* with his *Worldly Wealth,* which he *overvalued*; *Thy Money periſh with Thee.* (1.) Hereby *Peter* rejects his Offer with the utmoſt Diſdain and Indignation; Doſt thou think thou canſt bribe us to betray our Truſt, and to put the Power we are intruſted with into ſuch unworthy Hands? *away with thee and thy Money too,* we will have nothing to do with either; *Get thee behind me Satan.* When we are tempted with Money to do an evil Thing, we ſhould ſee what a *periſhing* Thing Money is, and ſcorn to be byaſs'd with it; 'Tis the Character of the upright Man, that he *ſhakes his Hands from holding,* from touching of Bribes, *Iſa.* xxxiii. xv. (2.) He warns him of his Danger of utter Deſtruction if he continu'd in this Mind; *Thy Money* will periſh, and thou wilt loſe it, and all that thou canſt purchaſe with it; As *Meats for the Belly,* and the *Belly for Meats,* 1 Cor. vi. 13. ſo Goods for Money, and Money for Goods, *but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them,* they periſh in the uſing; But that's not the worſt of it, *thou wilt periſh with it,* and it with thee, and it will be an Aggravation of thy Ruin, and a heavy Load upon thy periſhing Soul, that thou hadſt Money which might have been laid at the Apoſtles Feet as a Charity, and would have been accepted, but was thruſt into their Hands as a Bribe, and was rejected. *Son remember this.*

(2.) He ſhall *come ſhort* of the *Spiritual Bleſſings* which he *undervalued*; *v.* 21. *Thou haſt neither Part nor Lot in this Matter*; Thou haſt nothing to do with the Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, thou doſt not underſtand them, thou art excluded from them, haſt put a Bar in thine own Door; Thou canſt not receive the Holy Ghoſt thy ſelf, nor Power to confer the Holy Ghoſt upon others, for *thy Heart is not right in the ſight of God* if thou thinkeſt that Chriſtianity is a Trade to live by in this World, and therefore thou haſt no Part or Lot in the Eternal Life in the other World which the Goſpel offers. *Note,* 1. There are many who profeſs the Chriſtian Religion, and yet have *no Part or Lot in the Matter,* no *Part* in Chriſt, *John* xiii. 8. no *Lot in the* Heavenly *Canaan.* 2. They are thoſe whoſe Hearts are *not right in the ſight of God,* are not animated by a right Spirit, nor guided by a right Rule, nor directed to the right End.

4. He gives him good Counſel notwithſtanding, *v.* 22. Tho' he was angry with him, yet he did not *abandon* him; And tho' he would have him ſee his Caſe to be very bad, yet he would not have him think it deſperate, *yet now there is Hope in Iſrael. Obſerve.*

(1.) What is it that he adviſeth him to? He muſt do his firſt Works. (2.) He muſt *repent*; muſt ſee his Error, and retract it, muſt change his Mind and Way; muſt be humbled and aſham'd for what he has done, his Repentance muſt be particular, Repent of *this,* own thy ſelf Guilty in *this,* and be ſorry for it. He muſt lay load upon himſelf for it, muſt not extenuate it by calling it a Miſtake, or miſguided Zeal, but muſt aggravate it by calling it Wickedneſs, his Wickedneſs, the Fruit of his own Corruption. Thoſe that have ſaid and done amiſs, muſt as far as they can unſay it, and undo it again by Repentance. (2.) He muſt *pray* to GOD, muſt pray that GOD would give him Repentance, and Pardon upon Repentance. Penitents muſt *pray,* which implies a Deſire towards GOD, and a Confidence in Chriſt. *Simon Magus,* as great a Man as he thinks himſelf, ſhall not be courted into the Apoſtles Communion, how much ſoever ſome would think it a Reputation to them, upon any other Terms than thoſe upon which other Sinners are admitted, Repentance and Prayer.

(2.) What Encouragement he gives him to do this, *if perhaps the Thought of thy Heart,* this wicked thought of thine *may be forgiven thee. Note,* 1. There may be a great deal of Wickedneſs in the Thought of the Heart, its falſe Notions and corrupt Affections, and wicked Projects, which muſt be repented of, or we are undone. 2. The *Thought of the Heart* tho' never ſo *wicked,* yet ſhall be forgiven upon our Repentance, and not laid to our Charge. When *Peter* here puts a *perhaps* upon it, the Doubt is of the Sincerity of his Repentance, not of his Pardon, if his Repentance be ſincere. *If Indeed the Thought of thy Heart may be forgiven,* ſo it may be read. Or, it intimates, that the Greatneſs of his Sin might juſtly make the Pardon doubtful, tho' the Promiſe of the Goſpel had put the Matter out of Doubt, in caſe he did truly repent. Like that, *Sam.* iii. 29. *if ſo be there may be hope.*

3. *Simon*'s Requeſt to them to pray for him, *v.* 24. He was ſtartled and put into Confuſion by that which *Peter* ſaid; finding that reſented thus, which he thought would have been embrac'd with both Arms; And he cries out, *Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of the Things which ye have ſpoken come upon me.* Here was (1.) ſomething well; That he was affected with the Reproof given him, and terrify'd by the Character given of him, enough to make the ſtouteſt Heart to Tremble. And that being ſo, he begg'd the Prayers of the Apoſtles for him, wiſhing to have an Intereſt in them, who, he believ'd had a good Intereſt in Heaven. (2.) Something *wanting*; he begg'd of them to pray for him, he did not pray for himſelf as he ought to have done. And in deſiring them to pray for him his Concern is more that the Judgments he had made himſelf liable to, might be prevented than that his Corruptions might be mortify'd, and his Heart by Divine Grace be made right in the Sight of GOD. Like *Pharaoh,* who would have *Moſes* intreat the Lord for him, *that he would take away this* Death only, not that he would take away this *Sin,* this *Hardneſs of Heart,* Exod. viii. 8. x. 17. Some think *Peter* had denounc'd ſome particular Judgments againſt him, as againſt *Ananias,* as *Sapphira,* which upon this Submiſſion of his at the Apoſtles, Interceſſion were prevented. Or, from what is related he might infer, that ſome Token of GOD's Wrath would fall upon him, which he thus dreaded and deprecated.

Laſtly, Here is the *Return* of the Apoſtles to *Jeruſalem,* when they had finiſh'd the Buſineſs they came about, for as yet they were not to diſperſe. But tho' they came hither to do that Work which was peculiar to them as Apoſtles, yet Opportunity offering it ſelf, they apply'd themſelves to that which was Common to all Goſpel Miniſters. (1.) There in the City of *Samaria* they were Preachers; They *teſtify'd the Word of the Lord,* ſolemnly atteſted the Truth of the Goſpel, and confirm'd what the other Miniſters preach'd. They did not pretend to bring them any thing new, tho' they were Apoſtles, but bore their Teſtimony to the *Word of the Lord* as they had receiv'd it. (2.) In their Road home they were *Itenerant Preachers*; As thou paſt through many Villages of the *Samaritans* they *preach'd the Goſpel*: Tho' the Congregations there were nothing ſo conſiderable as in the Cities, either for Number or Figure, yet their Souls were as precious, and the Apoſtles did not think it below them to preach the Goſpel to them. GOD has a Regard to the Inhabitants of His Villages in *Iſrael*, *Jud.* v. 11. and ſo ſhould we.

26 And the Angel of the Lord ſpake unto Philip, ſaying, Ariſe and go toward the ſouth, unto the way that goeth down from Jeruſalem unto Gaza, which is deſert. 27 And he aroſe and went: and behold a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch, of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopian, who had the Charge of all her treaſure, and had come to Jeruſalem for to worſhip, 28 Was returning, and ſitting in his chariot, read Eſaias the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit ſaid unto Philip, Go near and joyn thy ſelf to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Eſaias, and ſaid, Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt? 31 And he ſaid, How can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me? and he deſired Philip that he would come up and ſit with him. 32 The place of the Scripture which he read, was this, He was led as a ſheep to the ſlaughter, and like a lamb dumb before his ſhearer, ſo opened he not his mouth: 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away; and who ſhall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34 And the eunuch anſwered Philip, and ſaid, I pray thee, of whom ſpeaketh the prophet this? of himſelf, or of ſome other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the ſame ſcripture, and preached unto him Jeſus. 36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch ſaid, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Phillip ſaid, if thou believeſt with all thine heart, thou mayeſt. And he anſwered and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to ſtand ſtill: and they went down both into the water both Philip and the Eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch ſaw him no more: and he went on his way rejoycing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus; and paſſing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Ceſarea.

We have here the Story of the Converſion of an *Ethiopian Eunuch* to the Faith of Chriſt. By whom we have Reaſon to think the Knowledge of Chriſt was ſent into that Country where he liv'd, and that Scripture fulfill'd, *Ethiopia ſhall ſoon ſtretch out her Hands*, one of the firſt of the Nations unto GOD, *Pſal.* lxviii. 30.

Firſt, *Philip* the Evangeliſt is directed into the Road where he would meet with this *Ethiopian*, *v.* 26. when the Churches in *Samaria* were ſettled and his Miniſters appointed them, the Apoſtles went back to *Jeruſalem*, but *Philip* ſtays expecting to be employ'd in breaking up freſh Ground in the Country; And here we have,

1. Direction given him by an Angel (probably in a Dream or Viſion of the Night) what Courſe to *ſteer*. *Ariſe and go towards the South.* The Angels were not employ'd to preach the Goſpel, they were often employed in carrying Meſſages to Miniſters for Advice and Encouragement, as *chap.* v. 19. We cannot now expect ſuch Guides in our Way, but doubtleſs there is a ſpecial Providence of GOD converſant about the Removes and Settlements of Miniſters; and one Way or other he will direct thoſe who ſincerely deſire to follow him, into that Way in which he will own them, he will *guide them with his Eye*. He muſt go *ſouthward*, to the Way that leads *from* Jeruſalem *to* Gaza, through the *Deſart* or *Wilderneſs* of *Judea*. *Philip* would never have thought of going thither, into a Deſert, into a common Road through the Deſert, ſmall Probability of finding Work there, yet thither he is ſent, according to our Saviour's Parable, foretelling the Call of the *Gentiles*, *Go ye into the High-ways, and the Hedges*, *Matth.* xxii. 9. ſometimes GOD opens a Door of Opportunity to his Miniſters in Places very unlikely.

2. His Obedience to this Direction, *v.* 27. *He aroſe and went* without objecting, or ſo much as asking what Buſineſs have I there? Or what Likelyhood of doing Good there? he went out not knowing whither he went, or whom he was to meet.

Secondly, An Account is given of this *Eunuch*, *v.* 27. who, and what he was on whom this diſtinguiſhing Favour was beſtow'd.

1. He was a Foreigner; *A Man of Ethiopia.* There were Two *Ethiopias*; one in *Arabia*, but that lay *Eaſt* from *Canaan*: It ſhould ſeem this way of *Ethiopia* in *Africk*, which lay *South*, beyond *Egypt*; a great way from *Jeruſalem*; for in Chriſt they that were afar off were *made nigh*, according to the Promiſe, that the *Ends of the Earth* ſhould *ſee the great Salvation*. The *Ethiopians* were look'd upon as the meaneſt and moſt deſpicable of the Nations, Black-Moors, as if Nature had ſtigmatiz'd them, yet the Goſpel is ſent to them, and Divine Grace *looketh upon them, tho' they are black, tho' the Sun has look'd upon them.*

2. He was a Perſon of Quality, A great Man in his own Country. A *Eunuch*, not in Body, but in Office, Lord Chamberlain, or Steward of the Houſhould. And either by the Dignity of his Place, or by his perſonal Character which commanded Reſpect, he was *of great Authority*, and bore a mighty Sway *under* Candace *Queen of the* Ethiopians, who probably was Succeſſor to the Queen of *Sheba*, who is call'd the *Queen of the* South; That Country being govern'd by *Queens* to whom *Candace* was a common Name as *Pharaoh* to the Kings of *Egypt*. He had the *Charge of all her Treaſure*, ſo great a Truſt did ſhe repoſe in him. *Not many Mighty, not many Noble are call'd*, but ſome are.

3. He was a Proſelyte to the Jewiſh Religion, for he *came to* Jeruſalem *for to worſhip.* Some think he was a *Proſelyte of Righteouſneſs*, that was circumciſed and kept the Feaſts; others that he was only a *Proſelyte of the Gate*, a *Gentile*, but that had renounc'd Idolatry, and worſhipped the GOD of *Iſrael* occaſionally in the Court of the Gentiles. But if ſo, then *Peter* was not the firſt that preach'd the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, as he ſaith he was. Some think there were Remains of the Knowledge of the True GOD in this Country, ever ſince the Queen of *Sheba*'s Time; and probably the Anceſtor of this *Eunuch* was one of her Attendants, who tranſmitted to his Poſterity what he learn'd at *Jeruſalem*.

Thirdly, *Philip* and the *Eunuch* are brought together into a cloſe Converſation; and now *Philip* ſhall know the Meaning of his being ſent *into a Deſert*, for there he meets with a *Chariot* that ſhall ſerve for a *Synagogue*, and *one Man*, the Converſion of whom ſhall be in Effect for ought he knows, the Converſion of *a whole Nation*.

1. *Philip* is order'd to fall in Company with this Traveller that's going Home from *Jeruſalem* towards *Gaza*, thinking he has done all the Buſineſs of his Journey, when the great Buſineſs which the over-ruling Providence of GOD deſign'd in it, was yet undone. He had been at *Jeruſalem*, where the Apoſtles were preaching the Chriſtian Faith, and Multitudes profeſſing it, and yet *there* he had taken no Notice of it, and made no Enquiries after it, nay, it ſhould ſeem had ſlighted it, and turn'd his back upon it, yet the Grace of GOD purſues him, overtakes him in the Deſart, and there overcomes him. Thus GOD is often *found of thoſe that ſought him not*, Iſa. lxv. 1. *Philip* has this Order, not by an Angel as before but by the *Spirit* whiſpering it in his Ear; *v.* 29. *Go near and joyn thy ſelf to this Chariot*; Go ſo near that the Gentleman may take Notice of thee. We ſhould ſtudy to do Good to thoſe we light in Company with upon the Road: Thus the Lips of the Righteous may feed many. We ſhould not be ſo ſhy of all Strangers as ſome affect to be Thoſe we know nothing elſe, we know this of, that they have *Souls*.

2. He finds him *reading in his Bible*, as he ſate in his Chariot, *v.* 28. He ran to him and *heard him read*, he read up, for the Benefit of thoſe that were with him, *v.* 30. He not only reliev'd the Tediousneſs of the Journey, but redeem'd Time by Reading, not Philoſophy, Hiſtory, or Politicks, much leſs a Romance or a Play, but the Scriptures; the *Book of* Eſaias; That Book Chriſt read in, *Luke* iv. 17. And the Eunuch here, which ſhould recommend it particularly to our reading. Perhaps the Eunuch was now reading over again thoſe Portions of Scripture which he had heard read and expounded at *Jeruſalem*, that he might recollect what he heard. *Note*, 1. It is the Duty of every one of us to converſe much with the Holy Scriptures. 2. Perſons of Quality ſhould abound more than others in the Exerciſes of Piety, becauſe their Example will influence many, and they have their Time more at Command. 3. 'Tis Wiſdom for Men of Buſineſs to redeem Time for Holy Duties; Time is precious, and it is the beſt Husbandry in the World to gather up the Fragments of Time that none be loſt; to fill up every Minute with ſomething that will turn to good Account. 4. When we are returning from publick Worſhip, we ſhould uſe Means in private for the keeping up of the good Affections there kindled, and the preſerving of the good Impreſſions there made, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 18. 5. Thoſe that are diligent in ſearching the Scriptures, are in a fair Way to improve in Knowledge; for *to him that hath ſhall be given.*

3. He puts a fair Queſtion to him, *Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt?* Not by Way of Reproach, but with Deſign to offer him

his Service. *Note*, What we read and hear of the Word of God it highly concerns us to *underſtand*; eſpecially what we read and here concerning Chriſt; and therefore we ſhould often ask ourſelves, Whether we underſtand it or no? *Have ye underſtood all theſe Things*? Matth. xiii. 51. And have ye underſtood them aright? We cannot profit by the Scriptures unleſs we do in ſome meaſure underſtand them, 1 *Cor*. xi. 16, 17. And bleſſed be GOD, what is neceſſary to Salvation, is eaſy to be underſtood.

4. He in a Senſe of his Need of Aſſiſtance, deſires *Philip*'s Company, *v*. 31. *How can I* underſtand, ſaith he, *except ſome one guide me?* therefore pray come up and ſit with me. 1. He ſpeaks as one that had very low Thoughts of himſelf and his own Capacity and Attainments. He was ſo far from taking it as an Affront, to be ask'd, whether he underſtood what he read? tho' *Philip* was a Stranger, on foot, prabably look'd mean, (which many a leſs Man would have done, and have call'd him an impertinent Fellow, and bid him go about his Buſineſs, What was it to him? that he takes the Queſtion kindly; makes a very modeſt Reply, *How can I*? We have Reaſon to think he was an intelligent Man, and as well acquainted with the Meaning of Scripture as moſt were, and yet modeſtly confeſſeth his Weakneſs. *Note*, Thoſe that would learn, muſt ſee their need to be taught. The Phophet muſt firſt own that he *knows not what theſe be*, and then the Angel will tell him, *Zech*. iv. 13. 2. He ſpeaks as One very deſirous to be taught, to have *ſome One to guide him* *Obſerve*, He read the Scripture, tho' there were many Things in it which he did not underſtand; Tho' there be many Things in the Scriptures which are *dark and hard to be underſtood*, nay, which are often miſunderſtood, yet we muſt not therefore throw them by; but ſtudy them for the Sake of thoſe Things that are eaſy, which is the likelieſt Way to come by Degrees to the underſtanding oft hoſe Things that are difficult; for Knowledge and Grace grow gradually. 3. He invited *Philip* to *come up and ſit with him*; not as *Jehu* took *Jonadab* into his Chariot, to *Come ſee his Zeal for the Lord of Hoſts*, 2 *Kings* x. 16. but rather, Come, ſee my Ignorance; and inſtruct me. He will gladly do *Philip* the Honout to take into the Coach with him, if *Philip* will do him the Favour to expound a Portion of Scripture to him. *Note*, In order to our right underſtanding of the Scripture, 'tis requiſite we ſhould have *ſome One to guide us*; ſome good Books, and ſome good Men, but above all, the Spirit of Grace to *lead us into all Truth*.

Fourthly, The Portion of Scripture which the Eunuch recited, with ſome Hints of *Philip's* Diſcourſe upon it; The Preachers of the Goſpel had a very good Handle to take hold of thoſe by, that were converſant with the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, and receiv'd them, eſpecially when they found them actually engag'd in the Study of them, as the Eunuch was here.

1. The Chapter he was reading was the 53d of *Iſaiah*, two Verſes of which are here quoted, *v*. 32, 33. Part of the 7th and 8th Verſes; they are ſet down according to the *Septuagint* Verſion, which in ſome Things differs from the Original *Hebrew*. *Grotius* thinks the *Eunuch* read it in the *Hebrew*, but *Luke* takes the *Septuagint* Tranſlation, as readier to the Language in which he wrote; and he ſuppoſeth that the Eunuch had learn'd from the many *Jews* that were in *Ethiopia* both their Religion and Language. But conſidering that the *Septuagint* Verſion was made in *Egypt*, which was the next Country adjoyning to *Ethiopia*, and lay betwixt them and *Jeruſalem*, I rather think that Tranſlation was moſt familiar to him. It appears by *Iſaiah* xx. 4. that there was much Communication between thoſe two Nations *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*. The greateſt Variation from the *Hebrew* is, that what in the Orignal is, *He was taken from Priſon, and from Judgment*, hurry'd with the utmoſt Violence and Precipitation from one Judgment-ſeat to another; Or, *From Force and from Judgment he was taken away*, i. e. It was from the *Fury* of the People and their continual Clamours, and the *Judgment* of *Pilate* thereupon, that he was *taken away*; is here read, *In his Humiliation his Judgment was taken away*; He appear'd ſo mean and deſpicable in their Eye that they deny'd him common Juſtice, and againſt all the Rules of Equity, which every Man is entitled to the Benefit of, they declar'd him Innocent, and yet condemn'd him to dye; nothing criminal can be prov'd upon him, but he is down, and down with him. Thus *in his Humiliation his Judgment was taken away*; ſo, the Senſe is much the ſame with that of the *Hebrew*.

So that theſe Verſes foretold concerning the *Meſſiah*,

1. That he ſhould *dye*; Should be *led to the Slaughter*, as *Sheep* that were *offered* in Sacrifice. That *his Life* ſhould be *taken from among Men*, taken *from the Earth*. With what little Reaſon then was the Death of Chriſt a Stumbling-block to the Unbelieving *Jews*, when it was ſo plainly foretold by their own Prophets? and was ſo neceſſary to the Accompliſhment of his Undertaking? Then is the Offence of the Croſs ceaſed.

2. That he ſhould *dye wrongfully*; Should dye by Violence, ſhould be hurry'd out of his Life, and *his Judment ſhall be taken way*; no Juſtice done him; for he muſt be *cut of*, but *not for himſelf*.

3. That he ſhould *die patiently*, like *a Lamb dumb before the Shearer*; nay, and before the Butcher too, ſo *He opened not his Mouth*; Never was ſuch an Example of Patient as our Lord Jeſus was in his Sufferings; when he was accus'd, when he was abus'd he was ſilent, reviled not again, threaten'd not.

4. That yet he ſhould *live for ever*, to Ages which cannot be number'd; for ſo I underſtand thoſe Words, *Who ſhall declare his Generation?* The *Hebrew* Word properly ſignifies, *The Duration of One Life* (Eccleſ. i. 4.) Now who can conceive or expreſs how long he ſhall continue notwithſtanding this; *for his Life is* only *taken from the Earth*: in Heaven he ſhall live to endleſs and innumerable Ages, as it follows in *Iſa*. liii. 10. *He ſhall prolong his Days*.

2. The Eunuch's Queſtion upon this is, *Of whom ſpeaketh the Prophet this?* v. 34. He doth not deſire *Philip* to give him ſome critical Remarks upon the Words and Phraſes, and the Idioms of the Language, but to acquaint him with the general Scope and Deſign of the Prophecy, to furniſh him with a Key, in the Uſe of which he might, by comparing one Thing with another, be let into the Meaning of the particular Paſſages. Prophecies had uſually in them ſomething of Obſcurity, till they were explain'd by the Accompliſhment of them, as this now was. 'Tis a material Queſtion he asks, and a very ſenſible one; Doth the Prophet ſpeak this *of himſelf?* in Expectation of being us'd, being *miſus'd*, as the other Prophets were? Or, doth he ſpeak it *of ſome other Man*, in his own Age, or in ſome Age to come. 'Tho the Modern *Jews* will not allow it to be ſpoken of the *Meſſiah*, yet their ancient Doctors did ſo interpret it; and perhaps the Eunuch knew it, and did, partly underſtand it ſo himſelf, only he propos'd this Queſtion to draw on Diſcourſe with *Philip*; for the Way to improve in Learning, is to conſult the learned; As *they muſt enquire the Law at the Mouth of the Prieſts*, Mal. ii. 7. ſo they muſt *enquire the Goſpel*, eſpecially that Part of the Treaſure which is hid in the Field of the *Old Teſtament*, *at the Mouth of the Miniſters of Chriſt*. The Way to receive good Inſtructions, is to ask good Queſtions.

3. *Philip* takes this fair Occaſion given him, to open to him the great Myſtery of the Goſpel concerning *Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucify'd*. He *began at this Scripture*, took that for his Text (as Chriſt did another Paſſage of the ſame Prophecy, *Luke* iv. 21.) and *preached unto him Jeſus*, v. 34. That's all the Account given us of *Philip*'s Sermon, becauſe it was the ſame in Effect with *Peter*'s Sermons, which we have had before. The Buſineſs of Goſpel Miniſters, is to preach *Jeſus*, and that's the Preaching that's likely to do Good. 'Tis probable, *Philip* had now Occaſion for his *Gift of Tongues*, that he might preach Chriſt to this *Ethiopian* in the Language of his own Country. And here we have an Inſtance of ſpeaking of the Things of GOD, and ſpeaking of them to good Purpoſe, not only as we *ſit in the Houſe*, but *as we walk by the Way*, according to that Rule, *Deut*. vi. 7.

Fifthly, The Eunuch is *baptis'd* in the Name of Chriſt, *v*. 36, 37, 38. It is probable, the Eunuch had heard at *Jeruſalem* of the Doctrine of Chriſt, ſo that it was not altogether new to him; But if he had, what could that do towards this ſpeedy Conqueſt that was made of his Heart for Chriſt? It was a powerful working of the Spirit with, and by *Philip's* Preaching, that gain'd the Point. Now here we have

1. The modeſt Propoſal which the Eunuch made of himſelf to Baptiſm, *v*. 36. *As they went on their Way* diſcourſing of Chriſt, the Eunuch asking more Queſtions, and *Philip* anſwering them to his Satisfaction, they *came unto a certain Water*, a Well, River, or Pond, the Sight of which made the Eunuch thing of being baptiz'd. Thus GOD by Hints of Providence which ſeem caſual, ſometimes puts People in Mind of their Duty, which otherwiſe perhaps they would not have thought of. The Eunuch knew not how little a While *Philip* might be with him, nor where he might afterwards enquire for him; he could not expect his travelling with him to his next Stage, and therefore if *Philip* think fit, he will take the preſent Convenience which offers it ſelf of being baptiz'd, *See here is Water*, which perhaps we may not meet a great While again, *What doth hinder me to be baptiz'd?* Canſt thou ſhew any Cauſe why I ſhould not be admitted a Diſciple and Follower of Chriſt by Baptiſm. *Obſerve*, 1. He doth not *demand* Baptiſm, doth not ſay, Here is Water, and here I am reſolv'd I will be baptis'd; for if *Philip* have any Thing to offer to the contrary, he is willing to wave it for the preſent. If he think him not fit to be baptiz'd, or if there be any Thing in the Inſtitution of the Ordinance which will not admit ſuch a ſpeedy Adminiſtration of it, he will not inſiſt upon it. The moſt forward Zeal muſt ſubmit to Order and Rule. But, (2.) He doth *deſire* it, and unleſs *Philip* can ſhew Cauſe why not, he deſires it *now*, and is not willing to *defer* it. *Note*, In the ſolemn Dedicating and Devoting of our ſelves to GOD, 'tis good to *make haſte and not to delay*; for the *preſent* Time, is the *beſt Time* Pſ. cxix. 63. They who have receiv'd the *Thing ſignify'd* by Baptiſm, ſhould not put off receiving *the Sign*. The Eunuch fear'd leſt the good Affections now working in him ſhould cool and abate, and therefore was willing preſently to bind his Soul with the baptiſmal Bonds unto the LORD, that he might bring the Matter to an Iſſue.

2. The fair Declaration which *Philip* made him of the Terms upon which he might have the Privilege of Baptiſm, *v*. 37. *If thou believeſt with all thine Heart, thou may'ſt*, i. e. If thou believeſt this Doctrine which I have preach'd to thee concerning him, and ſet to thy Seal that it is true. He muſt believe *with all his Heart*, for *with the Heart Man believeth*, not with the *Head* only, by an Aſſent to Goſpel Truths, in the Underſtanding;

but with the *Heart* by a Conſent of the Will to Goſpel Terms. If thou do indeed believe *with all thy Heart*, thou art by that united to Chriſt, and if thou give Proofs and Evidences that thou doſt ſo, thou may'ſt by Baptiſm be *joyn'd to the Church*.

The *Confeſſion of Faith* which the Eunuch made in order to his being baptiz'd; 'Tis very *ſhort*, but 'tis comprehenſive, and much to the Purpoſe, and what was ſufficient, *I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of GOD*. He was before a Worſhipper of the True GOD, ſo that all he had to do now, was to *receive Chriſt Jeſus the LORD*. (1.) He believes that Jeſus is *the Chriſt*, the true Meſſiah promiſ'd, the *Anointed One*. (2.) That Chriſt is *Jeſus*, a *Saviour*, the alone Saviour of his People from their Sins. And (3.) That this *Jeſus Chriſt* is *the Son of GOD*, that he has a Divine Nature, as the Son is of the ſame Nature with the Father; and that being the Son of GOD, he is the *Heir of all Things*. This is the principal peculiar Doctrine of Chriſtianity, and whoſoever believes this with all their Heart, and confeſs it, they and their Seed are to be *baptiz'd*.

4. The Baptizing of him hereupon; The Eunuch order'd his Coachman to ſtop, *commanded the Chariot to ſtand ſtill*, 'twas the beſt Baiting place he ever met with in any of his Journies; *They went down both into the Water*, for they had no convenient Veſſels with them being upon a Journey, wherewith to take up Water, and muſt therefore *go down into it*; not that they ſtript off their Clothes, and went naked into the Water, but going bare-foot according to the Cuſtom, they went perhaps up to the Ancles or Mid-leg into the Water, and *Philip* ſprinkled Water upon him, according to the Prophecy which this Eunuch had probably but juſt now read, (for it was but a few Verſes before thoſe which *Philip* found him upon) and was very oppoſite to his Caſe *Iſa.* lii. 15. *So ſhall he ſprinkle many Nations*, Kings and Great Men *ſhall ſhut their Mouths at him*, ſhall ſubmit to him, and acquieſce in him, *for that which had not* before *been told them ſhall they ſee, and that which they had not heard ſhall they conſider. Obſerve*, Tho' *Philip* had very lately been deceiv'd in *Simon Magus*, and had admitted him to Baptiſm tho' he afterwards appear'd to be no true Convert, yet he did not therefore ſcruple to baptize the *Eunuch* upon his Profeſſion of Faith immediately, without putting him upon a longer Trial than uſual. If ſome Hypocrites croud into the Church that afterwards prove a Grief and Scandal to us, yet we muſt not therefore make the Door of Admiſſion any ſtraiter than Chriſt has made it; they ſhall anſwer for their Apoſtacy, and not we.

Sixthly, *Philip* and the *Eunuch* are *parted* preſently; and this is as ſurprizing as the other Parts of the Story. One would have expected that the Eunuch ſhould either have ſtaid with *Philip*, or have taken him along with him into his own Country, and there being ſo many Miniſters in theſe Parts he might be ſpar'd, and it would be worth While: but GOD order'd otherwiſe; as ſoon as they were *come up out of the Water*, before the Eunuch went into his Chariot again, *the Spirit of the LORD caught away Philip*. v. 39. and did not give him Time to make an Exhortation to the Eunuch, as uſual after Baptiſm, which 'tis probable the One *intended*, and the Other *expected*; but his ſudden Departure was ſufficient to make up the Want of that Exhortation, for it ſeems to have been miraculous, and that he was *caught up* in the Air in the *Eunuch*'s Sight, and ſo carry'd out of his Sight; and the working of this Miracle upon *Philip*, was a Confirmation of his Doctrine, as much as the working of a Miracle *by him* would have been. He was *caught away*, and the *Eunuch ſaw him no more*; but having loſt his Miniſter return'd to the Uſe of his Bible again. Now here we are told,

1. How the Eunuch was diſpos'd; He *went on his Way rejoycing*. He purſu'd his Journey, Buſineſs call'd him Home, and he muſt haſten to it; for it was no Way inconſiſtent with his Chriſtianity, which places no Sanctity or Perfection in Mens being Hermits or Recluſes, but is a Religion which Men may, and ought to carry about with them into the Affairs of this Life. But he went on *rejoycing*; ſo far was he from reflecting upon this ſudden Reſolution, and Change, or Advancement rather, in his Religion, with any Regret, that his ſecond Thoughts confirm'd him abundantly in it, and he went on *rejoycing with Joy unſpeakable and full of Glory*; he was never better pleas'd in all his Life. (1.) He rejoyc'd that he himſelf was joyn'd to Chriſt, and had an Intereſt in him. And (2.) That he had theſe good Tydings to bring to his Country-men, and a Proſpect of bringing them alſo, by Virtue of his Intereſt among them, into Fellowſhip with Chriſt; for he return'd not only a Chriſtian but a Miniſter. And ſome Copies read this Verſe thus; *And when they were come up out of the Water, the Holy Spirit fell upon the Eunuch*; (without the Ceremony of the Apoſtle's Impoſition of Hands) *but the Angel of the LORD caught away Philip*.

2. How *Philip* was diſpos'd of *v.* 40. *He was found at* Azotus, or *Aſhdod*, formerly a City of the *Philiſtines*, there the Angel or Spirit of the LORD drop'd him, which was above Thirty Miles from *Gaza*, whither the Eunuch was going; and where Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks he took Ship, and went *by Sea* into his own Country. But *Philip* wherever he was would not be idle, *Paſſing through he preach in all the Cities* till he came to *Cæſarea*, and there he ſettled, and for ought appears, had his principal Reſidence ever after; for at *Cæſarea* we find him in a Houſe of his own, *Acts*. xx. 8. He that had been faithful in Working for Chriſt as an Itinerant, at length gains a Settlement.

CHAP. IX.

In this Chapter we have, 1. *The famous Story of St.* Paul's *Converſion from being an outragious Perſecutor of the Goſpel of Chriſt, to be an illuſtrious Profeſſor and Preacher of it.* (1.) *How he was firſt awaken'd and wrought upon by an Appearance of Chriſt himſelf to him as he was going upon an Errand of Perſecution to* Damaſcus; *and what Condition he was in while he lay under the Power of thoſe Convictions and Terrors*, v. 1—9. (2.) *How he was baptiz'd by* Ananias, *by immediate Directions from Heaven*, v. 10, 19. (3.) *How he immediately commenc'd Doctor, and preach'd the Faith of Chriſt, and prov'd what he preach'd*, v. 20—22. (4.) *How he was perſecuted, and narrowly eſcap'd with his Life*, v. 23—25. (5.) *How he was admitted among the Brethren at* Jeruſalem, *how he preach'd and was perſecuted there*, v. 16—30. (6.) *The Reſt and Quietneſs which the Churches enjoy'd for ſome Time after this*, v. 31, 2. *The Cure wrought by* Peter *on* Æneas, *who had long been laid up of a Palſy*, v. 32—35. 3. *The raiſing of* Tabitha *from Death to Life, at the Prayer of* Peter, *v.* 36—43.

AND Saul yet breathing out threatnings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of the Lord, went unto the high prieſt, 2 And deſired of him letters to Damaſcus to the ſynagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jeruſalem. 3 And as he journeyed he came near Damaſcus: and ſuddenly there ſhined round about him a light from heaven, 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice, ſaying unto him, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? 5 And he ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord ſaid, I am Jeſus, whom thou perſecuted: *It is* hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks. 6 And he trembling and aſtoniſhed, ſaid, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord ſaid unto him, Ariſe, and go into the city, and it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do. 7 And the men which journeyed with him, ſtood ſpeechleſs, hearing a voice, but ſeeing no man. 8 And Saul aroſe from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he ſaw no man, but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damaſcus. 9 And he was three days without ſight, and neither did eat nor drink.

We found Mention made of *Saul* twice or thrice in the Story of *Stephen*, for the ſacred Penman even long'd to come to his Story; and now we are come to it, not quite taking Leave of *Peter*, but from hence-forward being moſtly taken up with *Paul* the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, as *Peter* was of the *Circumciſſion*. His Name in *Hebrew* was *Saul*, *deſir'd*, tho' as remarkably little in Stature, as his Name-ſake King *Saul* was tall and ſtately; One of the Ancients call him *Homo tricubitalis*, but four Foot and a half in Height; his *Roman* Name which he went by among the Citizens of *Rome*, was *Paul*, *Little*. He was born in *Tarſus*, a City of *Cilicia*, a Free City of the *Romans*, and himſelf a Freeman of that City. His Father and Mother were both Native *Jews*, therefore he calls himſelf a *Hebrew of the Hebrews*; he was of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, which adher'd to *Judah*. His Education was in the Schools of *Tarſus* firſt, which was a little *Athens* for Learning; there he acquainted himſelf with the Philoſophy and Poetry of the *Greeks*. Thence he was ſent to the Univerſity at *Jeruſalem*, to ſtudy Divinity and the Jewiſh Law; his Tutor was *Gamaliel* an eminent *Phariſee*; he had extraordinary natural Parts, and improv'd mightily in Learning; he had likewiſe a Handy-craft Trade, was bred to Tent-making; which was common with thoſe among the *Jews* that were bred Scholars (as Dr. *Lightfoot* ſaith) for the Earning of their Maintenance. and the Avoiding of Idleneſs.

This is the young Man on whom the Grace of GOD wrought this mighty Change here recorded, about a Year after the Aſcenſion of Chriſt, or little more. We are here told,

Firſt, How *bad* he was, how *very bad*, before his Converſion; *juſt before*, he was an inveterate Enemy to Chriſtianity, did his utmoſt to root it out, by perſecuting all that embrac'd it. In other Reſpects he was well enough, as *touching the Righteouſneſs which is of the Law, blameleſs*, a Man of no ill Morals, but a *Blaſphemer* of Chriſt, a Perſecutor of Chriſtians, and *injurous* to both, 1 *Tim.* xiii. And ſo ill inform'd was his Conſcience, that he thought he ought to do what he did againſt the Name of Chriſts *Acts* xxvi. 9. and that he *did God Service* in it, as was fortold, *John* xvi. 2. Here we have,

1. His general Enmity and Rage againſt the Chriſtian Religion, *v.* 1. He *yet breath'd out Threatnings and Slaughter againſt the Diſciples of the Lord*. The Perſons perſecuted, were the *Diſciples of the Lord*, becauſe they were ſo; under that Character he

hated and perſecuted them; the Matter of the Perſecution was *Threatnings and Slaughter*. There is Perſecution in *Threatning*, as *Acts* iv. 17, 21. it terrifies the Spirit, and breaks that: And tho' we ſay, *Threaten'd Folks Live long*; yet thoſe whom *Saul* threaten'd, if he prevail'd not thereby to frighten them from Chriſt, he ſlew them; he *perſecuted them to Death*, Acts xxii. 4. His *breathing out Threatning and Slaughter*, intimates that it was natural to him, and his conſtant Buſineſs, he even breath'd in this, as in his Element; he breath'd it out with Heat and Vehemence, his very Breath, like that of ſome venomous Creatures, was peſtilential, he breath'd Death to the Chriſtians wherever he came; he *puffed at them* in his Pride, *Pſ.* xii. 5. ſpit his Venom at them in his Rage. *Saul yet* breathing thus; it intimates, 1. That he *ſtill* perſiſted in it; not ſatisfy'd with the Blood of thoſe he had ſlain, ſtill he cries, *Give, Give.* 2. That he ſhall *ſhortly* be of another Mind; as *yet* he breathes out *Threatnings and Slaughter*, but he has not long to live ſuch a life as this, that Breath will be ſtop'd ſhortly.

2. His particular Deſign upon the Chriſtians, at *Damaſcus*: Thither was the Goſpel now lately carry'd by thoſe that fled from the Perſecution at *Stephen*'s Death, and thought to be ſafe and quiet there, and were conniv'd at by thoſe in Power there: But *Saul* cannot be *eaſy* if he knows a Chriſtian is *quiet*; and therefore hearing that the Chriſtians in *Damaſcus* were ſo, he reſolves to give them Diſturbance. In order to this, he applies himſelf to the *High-Prieſt* for a Commiſſion, *v.* 1. to go to *Damaſcus*, *v.* 2. The High-Prieſt needed not to be ſtirr'd up to perſecute the Chriſtians, he was forward enough of himſelf to do it; But it ſeems the young Perſecutor drove more furiouſly than the old One. Leaders in Sin are the worſt of Sinners: And the *Proſelytes* which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* make, often prove ſeven Times more the Children of Hell than themſelves. He ſaith, *Acts* xxii. 5. that this Commiſſion was had from the *Whole Eſtate of the Elders*. And proud enough this furious Bigot was, to have a Commiſſion to him directed, with the Seal of the Great *Sanhedrin* affix'd to it.

Now the Commiſſion was to impower him to enquire among the *Synagogues* or Congregations of the *Jews* that were at *Damaſcus*, Whether there were any that belong'd to them that inclin'd to favour this new Sect or Hereſy, that believ'd in Chriſt? and if he found any ſuch, whether Men or Women, to bring them up Priſoners to *Jeruſalem*, to be proceeded againſt according to Law by the Great Council there. *Obſerve*, (1.) The Chriſtians are here ſaid to be *thoſe of this Way*; thoſe of *the Way*; ſo 'tis in the Original, Perhaps the Chriſtians ſometimes call'd themſelves ſo, from Chriſt *The Way*; Or becauſe they look'd on themſelves as but in the Way, and not as yet at home. Or, the Enemies thus repreſented it as *a Way by himſelf*, a *By-way*, a Party, a Faction. (2.) The High-Prieſt and *Sanhedrin* claim'd a Power over the *Jews* in all Countries, and had a Deference paid to their Authorty in Matters of Religion by all their Synagogues, even thoſe that were not of the Juriſdiction of the Civil Goverment of the Jewiſh Nation. And ſuch a Sovereignty the *Roman* Pontiff now claims, as the *Jewiſh* Pontiff then did, tho' he has not ſo much to ſhew for it. (3.) By this Commiſſion all that worſhipp'd GOD in *the Way that they call'd Hereſy*, tho' agreeing exactly with the Original Inſtitutes, even of the Jewiſh Church, whether they were *Men or Woman*, were to be proſecuted. Even the weaker Sex, who in a Caſe of this Nature, might deſerve Excuſe, or at leaſt Compaſſion, ſhall find neither with *Saul* no more than they do with the Popiſh Perſecutors. (4.) He was order'd to *bring them all bound* to *Jeruſalem*, as Criminals of the firſt Magnitude; which, as it would be the more likely to *terrify* them, ſo it would be to *magnify* Saul, as having the Command of the Forces that were to carry them up, and Opportunity of breathing out *Threatnings and Slaughter*. Thus was *Saul* employ'd when the Grace of GOD wrought that great Change in him. Let not us then deſpair of renewing Grace for the Converſion of the *greateſt Sinners*, nor let ſuch deſpair of the pardoning Mercy of GOD for the *greateſt Sin*; for *Paul* himſelf obtain'd Mercy, that he might be a Monument, 1 *Tim.* i. 13.

Secondly, How ſuddenly and ſtrangely a bleſſed Change was wrought in him, not in the Uſe of any ordinary Means, but by Miracles. The Converſion of *Paul*, is one of the *Wonders of the Church*. Here in,

(1.) The Place and Time of it; *As he journeyed he came near to Damaſcus*; and there Chriſt met with him.

1. He was *in the Way*, travelling upon his Journey, not in the Temple, or the Synagogue, or in the Meeting of Chriſtians, but *by the Way*, The Work of Converſion is not ty'd to the Church, tho' ordinarily publick Adminiſtrations are made Uſe of. Some are reclaim'd in Slumberings on the Bed, *Job* xxxiii. 15, 16, 17. And ſometimes in travelling upon the Road alone. Thoughts are as free, and there is as good an Opportunity of communing with our own Hearts, as upon the Bed; and there the Spirit may ſet with us; for that *Wind blows where is liſteth*. Some obſerve that *Saul* was ſpoken to abroad in the open Air, that there might be no Suſpicion of Impoſture, or a Trick put upon him in it.

He was *near Damaſcus*, almoſt at his Journey's End, ready to enter the City, the chief City, of *Syria*. Some obſerve, that he who was to be the Apoſtle of the Gentiles, was converted to the Faith of Chriſt in a Gentile Country. *Damaſcus* had been famous for perſecuting GOD's People formerly, they *threſhed* in Gilead *with threſhing Inſtruments of Iron*, Amos i. 3. and now it was likely to be ſo again.

2. He was in a *wicked Way*; purſuing his Deſign againſt the Chriſtians at *Damaſcus*, and pleaſing himſelf with the Thought that he ſhould devour this new-born Child of Chriſtianity there. *Note*, Sometimes the Grace of GOD works upon Sinners when they are at the worſt, and hotly engag'd in the moſt deſperate ſinful Purſuits; which is much for the Glory both of GOD's Pity, and of his Power.

4. The cruel Edict and Decree he had with him, *drew near to be put in Execution*: And now it was happily prevented. Which may be conſider'd, (1.) As a great Kindneſs to the poor Saints at *Damaſcus*, who had Notice of his coming, as appears by what *Ananias* ſaid, *v.* 13. 14. and were apprehenſive of their Danger from him, and trembled as poor Lambs at the Approach of a ravening Wolf; *Saul*'s Converſion was their Security for the preſent. Chriſt has many Ways of *delivering the Godly out of Temptation*, and ſometimes doth it by a Change wrought in their Perſecutors, either *reſtraining* their wrathful Spirits, *Pſ.* lxxvi. 10. and mollifying them for a Time, as the *Old Teſtament Saul*, who relented towards *David* more than once, 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 16. xxvi. 21. Or, *renewing* their Spirits, and fixing upon them durable Impreſſions, as upon the *New Teſtament Saul* here. (2.) It was alſo a very great Mercy to *Saul* himſelf to be hinder'd from executing his wicked Deſign, in which if he had now proceeded perhaps it had been the filling up of the Meaſure of his Iniquity. *Note*, It is to be valu'd as a ſignal Token of the Divine Favour, if GOD either by the inward Operations of his Grace, or the outward Occurrences of his Providence prevent us from proſecuting and executing a ſinful Purpoſe, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 32.

(2.) The Appearance of Chriſt to him in his Glory: Here it is only ſaid, That there *ſhined round about him a Light from Heaven*: But it appears by what follows, *v.* 17. that the *Lord Jeſus* was in this Light, and *appear'd to him by the Way*. He *ſaw that Juſt One*, Acts xxii. 14. and ſee *Acts* xxvi. 13. whether he ſaw him at a Diſtance as *Stephen* ſaw him, in the Heavens, or nearer in the Air, is not certain. It is not inconſiſtent with what is ſaid of the Heavens receiving Chriſt till the End of Time, *Acts* iii. 21. to ſuppoſe that he did upon ſuch an extraordinary Occaſion as this make a perſonal Viſit, but a very ſhort one, to this lower World; 'Twas neceſſary to *Paul*'s being an Apoſtle, that he ſhould have *ſeen the Lord*, and ſo he did, 1 *Cor.* ix. 1. xv. 8.

1. This Light ſhined upon him *ſuddenly*, ἐξαίφνης, when *Paul* never thought of any ſuch Thing, and without any previous Warning. Chriſt's Manifeſtations of himſelf to poor Souls, are many Times ſudden and very ſurprizing, and He *prevents them with the Bleſſing of his Goodneſs*. This the Diſciples that Chriſt *call'd* to himſelf *found*. Or, *ever I was aware*, Cant. vi. 12.

2. 'Twas a Light *from Heaven*, the Fountain of Light, from the GOD of Heaven, the Father of Lights. 'Twas a Light *above the brightneſs of the Sun*, Acts xxvi. 13. for it was viſible *at Mid-Day*, and outſhone the Sun in his Meridian Strength and Luſtre, *Iſa.* xxiv. 23.

3. It ſhone *round about him*, not in his Face only, but on every ſide him; let him turn which way he will, he finds himſelf ſurrounded with the Diſcoveries of it. And this was deſign'd not only to ſtartle him, and awaken his Attention, for well may he expect to *hear*, when he is thus made to ſee ſomething very extraordinary; But to ſignify the enlightning of his Underſtanding with the Knowledge of Chriſt. The Devil comes to the Soul in Darkneſs, by it he gets and keeps Poſſeſſion of it. But Chriſt comes to the Soul in Light, for he is himſelf the *Light of the World*, bright and glorious in himſelf, beneficial and gracious to us as Light. The firſt Thing in this new Creation, as in that of the World, is *Light*, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Hence all Chriſtians are ſaid to be the Children *of the Light* and *of the Day*, *Eph.* v. 5.

(3.) The *Arreſting* of *Saul*, and his *Attachment*, he *fell to the Earth*, *v.* 4. ſome think he was *on Foot*, and this Light which perhaps was accompained with a Thunder Clap, ſo terrify'd him that he could not keep his Feet, but fell upon his Face, uſually a Poſture of Adoration, but here of Aſtoniſhment. 'Tis probable that he was *mounted*, as *Balaam*, when he went to *curſe Iſrael*, and perhaps better mounted than he; for *Saul* was now in a publick Poſt, was in haſte, and the Journey was long, ſo that 'tis not likely he ſhould travel on Foot. The *ſudden Light* would frighten the Beaſt he rode on, and make it throw him: And it was GOD's good Providence that his Body got no Hurt by the Fall, but Angels had a particular Charge concerning him to *keep all his Bones*, ſo that *not one of them was broken*. It appears *Acts* xxvi. 14. that all that were with him *fell to the Earth* as well as he. But the Deſign was upon *him*.

1. As the *Effect* of Chriſt's *Appearing to him*, and of the Light which ſhone round about him. *Note*, Chriſt's Manifeſtation of himſelf to poor Souls, are humbling, they lay them very low, in mean Thoughts of themſelves, and an humble Submiſſion to the Will of GOD. Now *mind Eye ſees thee*, ſaith *Job*, *I abhor my ſelf*. *I ſaw the Lord*, ſaith *Iſaiah*, *ſitting upon a Throne*, And I ſaid, *Woe is me for I am undone*.

2. As a *Step* toward his *intended Advancement*. He is deſign'd not only to be a Chriſtian, but to be a Miniſter, and Apoſtle, a great Apoſtle, and therefore he muſt thus be caſt down. *Note*,

Thoſe whom Chriſt deſigns for the greateſt Honours, are commonly firſt laid low. Thoſe that are deſign'd to excell in Knowledge and Grace, are commonly laid low firſt, in a Senſe of their own Ignorance and Sinfulneſs. Thoſe whom GOD will employ, and firſt ſtruck with a Senſe of their Unworthineſs to be employ'd.

(4.) The *Arraigning* of *Saul.* Being by the Fall taken into Cuſtody, and as it were ſet to the Bar, he *heard a Voice ſaying to him,* (and it was diſtinguiſhing to him only, for tho' they that were with him heard a Sound, *v.* 7. yet they knew not the *Words, Chap.* xxii. 9.) *Saul, Saul, Why perſecuteſt thou me? Obſerve here,*

1. *Saul* not only *ſaw a Light* from Heaven, but *heard a Voice* from Heaven; Where-ever the Glory of GOD was ſeen, the Word of GOD was heard, as *Exod.* xx. 18. and to *Moſes, Num.* vii. 6. and to the Prophets; GOD's Manifeſtations of himſelf were never dumb Shews, for he *magnifies his Word above all his Name,* and what was *ſeen* was always deſign'd to make Way for what was *ſaid. Saul heard a Voice. Note,* Faith comes by hearing; hence the *Spirit* is ſaid to be *receiv'd by the hearing of Faith,* Gal. iii. 2. The Voice he heard was the Voice of Chriſt: when he *ſaw that juſt One,* he *heard the Voice of his Mouth,* Acts xxii. 14. *Note,* Then the Word we hear is likely to profit us when we hear it as the *Voice of Chriſt,* 1 Theſ. ii. 13 *It is the Voice of my Beloved*; No Voice but his can reach the Heart. *Seeing* and *Hearing* are the two *learning* Senſes, Chriſt here by both thoſe Doors enter'd into *Saul*'s Heart.

2. What he heard was very awakening.

1. He was call'd by his Name, and that doubled, *Saul, Saul,* ſome think in calling him *Saul,* he Hints at that great Perſecuter of *David,* whoſe Name he bore. He was indeed a ſecond *Saul,* and ſuch an Enemy to the Son of *David,* as he was to *David.* Calling him by his Name intimates the particular Regard that Chriſt had to him, *I have ſirnamed thee tho' thou haſt not known me.* Iſa. xlv. 4. ſee *Exod.* xxxiii. 12. His calling him by Name, brought the Conviction home to his Conſcience, and put it paſt Diſpute *to whom the Voice ſpoke this. Note,* what GOD ſpeaks in general is then likely to do us good when we apply it to ourſelves, and inſert our own Names into the Precepts and Promiſes which are expreſs'd generally; as if GOD ſpoke to us by Name, and when he ſaith *Ho every one,* he had ſaid *Ho ſuch a one*; *Samuel, Samuel, Saul, Saul.*

The doubling of it *Saul, Saul,* intimates (1.) The deep Sleep that *Saul* was in, he needed to be call'd again and again, as *Jer.* xxii. 29. *O Earth, Earth, Earth.* (2.) The tender Concern that the Bleſſed Jeſus had for him, and for his Recovery; He ſpeaks as one in earneſt, 'tis like *Martha, Martha,* Luke, x. 41. or *Simon, Simon,* Duke xxii. 31. or O *Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem,* Matth. xxii. 37. He ſpeaks to him as to one in imminent Danger, at the Pit's brink, and juſt ready to droy in; *Saul, Saul,* doſt thou know whither thou art going, and what thou art doing.

2. The Charge exhibited againſt him is, *Why perſecuteſt thou me?* Obſerve here, 1. Before *Saul* is made a Saint, he is made to ſee himſelf a Sinner, a great Sinner, a Sinner againſt Chriſt. Now he was made to ſee that Evil by himſelf which he never ſaw before, *Sin reviv'd* and *he dy'd. Note.* A humbling Conviction of Sin is the firſt Step towards a ſaving Converſion from Sin. 2. He is convinc'd of one *particular* Sin, which he was moſt notoriouſly guilty of, and had juſtify'd himſelf in, and thereby Way is made for his Conviction of all the reſt. 3. The Sin he is convic'd of is *Perſecution, Why perſecuteſt thou me.* 'Tis a very affectionate Expoſtulation, enough to melt a Heart of Stone. *Obſerve* 1. The *Perſon ſinning*; 'tis *thou*; thou that art not one of the ignorant, rude, unthinking Croud, that will run down any Thing that they hear put into an ill Name, but thou haſt had a liberal, learned Education, haſt good Parts and Accompliſhments, haſt the knowledge of the Scriptures, which if duly conſider'd, would ſhew thee the Folly of it. 'Tis worſe in thee than in another. 2. The *Perſon ſinn'd againſt*; 'Tis *Me,* who never did thee any Harm, who came from Heaven to Earth to do thee Good; who was not long ſince crucify'd for thee, and was not that enough, but muſt I afreſh be crucify'd by thee? 3. The Kind and Continuance of the Sin. 'Twas *Perſecution,* and he was at *this Time* engag'd in it: not only thou *haſt perſecuted,* but thou *perſecuteſt,* thou perſiſteſt in it. He was not at this Time haling any to Priſon, killing them. But that was the Errand he came upon to *Damaſcus*; he was now projecting it, and pleaſing himſelf with the Thought of it. *Note,* They that are deſigning Miſchief, are in GOD's Account doing Miſchief. 4. The Queſtion put to him upon it, *Why* doſt thou do it. (1.) 'Tis *complaining* Language; Why dealeſt thou thus unjuſtly, thus unkindly with my Diſciples. Chriſt never complain'd ſo much of thoſe who perſecuted him in his own Perſon, as He did here of thoſe who perſecuted him in his Followers. He complains of it as it was *Saul*'s Sin, Why art thou ſuch an Enemy to thy Self, to thy GOD. *Note,* The Sins of Sinners are a very grievous Burthen to the Lord Jeſus. He is grieved for them, *Mark* iii. 5. he is *preſſed under them.* Amos ii. 12. (2.) 'Tis *convincing* Language; *Why* doſt thou thus? canſt thou give any good Reaſon for it? *Note,* 'Tis good for us often to ask ourſelves *Why* we do ſo and ſo? that we may diſcern what an unreaſonable Thing Sin is. And of all Sins none ſo *unreaſonable,* ſo *unaccountable,* as the Sin of perſecuting the Diſciples of Chriſt, eſpecially when it is diſcover'd to be, as certainly it is, perſecuting Chriſt. Thoſe have *no Knowledge* who *eat up God's People,* Pſal. xiv. 4. *Why perſecuteſt thou me?* he thought he was only perſecuting a Company of poor, weak, ſilly People, that were an Offence and Eye-ſore to the *Phariſees,* little imagining that it was one in Heaven that he was all this while inſulting; for ſurely if he had known *he would not have perſecuted the Lord of Glory. Note,* Thoſe who perſecute the Saints, perſecute Chriſt himſelf, and he takes what's done againſt them, as done againſt himſelf, and accordingly will be the Judgment in the great Day, *Matth.* xxv. 45.

(5.) *Saul*'s Queſtion upon his Indictment, and the Reply to it, *v.* 5.

1. He makes Enquiry concerning Chriſt. *Who art thou Lord?* he give no direct Anſwer to the Charge prefer'd againſt him, being convicted by his own Conſcience, and ſelf-condemn'd. If GOD contend with us for our Sins, we are not able to anſwer for one of a Thouſand, eſpecially ſuch a one as the Sin of Perſecution. Convictions of Sin when they are ſet home with Power upon the Conſcience, will ſilence all Excuſes, and ſelf Juſtifications. *Tho' I were Righteous yet would I not anſwer.* But he deſires to know who is his Judge; The Compellation is reſpectful. *Lord*; he who had been a Blaſphemer of Chriſt's Name, now ſpeaks to Him as his Lord. The Queſtion is proper, *Who art thou?* This implies his preſent Unacquaintedneſs with Chriſt, he *knew not his Voice* as his own Sheep do; But he deſires to be acquainted with him; he is convinc'd by this *Light* which encloſeth him, that 'tis one *from Heaven* that ſpeaks to him, and he has a Veneration for every Thing that appears to him to come from Heaven, and therefore, *Lord who art thou?* What is thy Name? *Jud.* xiii. 17. *Gen.* xxxii. 29. *Note,* There is then ſome Hopes of People when they begin to enquire after Jeſus Chriſt.

2. He has an Anſwer immediately, in which we have,

1. Chriſt's gracious Revelation of himſelf to him. He is always ready to anſwer the ſerious Enquiries of thoſe who covet an Acquaintance with him. *I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt.* The Name of *Jeſus* was not unknown to him, his Heart had riſen at it many a Time, and gladly would he bury it in Oblivion, he knew it was the Name that he perſecuted, but little did he think to hear it from Heaven, or from the Midſt of ſuch a Glory as now ſhone round about him. *Note,* Chriſt brings Souls into Fellowſhip with himſelf, by manifeſting himſelf to them. He ſaid (1.) *I am Jeſus,* a Saviour. *I am Jeſus of* Nazareth, ſo it is *Acts* xxii. 8. *Saul* us'd to call him ſo when he blaſphem'd him; I am that very *Jeſus* whom thou uſedſt to call in Scorn Jeſus of *Nazareth.* And he would ſhew that now he is in Glory, he is not aſham'd of his Humiliation. (2.) I am that Jeſus *whom thou perſecuteſt,* and therefore it is at thy Peril if thou perſiſt in this wicked Courſe. There is nothing more effectual to awaken and humble the Soul, than to ſee Sin to be *againſt Chriſt,* an Affront to him, and a contradiction to his Deſigns.

2. His gentle Reproof of him. *It is hard for thee to kick againſt the Pricks,* or *Goads*; to ſpurn at the Spur. It is *hard, i. e.* it is in itſelf an abſure and evil Thing, and will be of fatal Conſequence to him that doth it. Thoſe kick at the Goad that ſtifle and ſmother the Convictions of Conſcience, that rebel againſt GOD's Truths, and Laws, that quarrel with his Providences, and that perſecute and oppoſe his Miniſters, becauſe they reprove them, and their Words are *as Goads and as Nails.* They that revolt more and more when they are ſtricken by the Word or Rod of GOD, that are enrag'd at Reproofs and fly in the Face of their Reprovers, they *kick againſt the pricks,* and will have a deal to anſwer for.

(6.) His Surrender of himſelf to the Lord Jeſus at length, *v.* 6. *See here,*

1. The Frame and Temper he was in, when Chriſt had been dealing with him. (1.) He *trembled* as one in a great Fright. *Note,* Strong Convictions ſet home by the bleſſed Spirit, will make an awaken'd Soul to tremble. How can thoſe chuſe but tremble, that are made to ſee the Eternal GOD provok'd againſt them, the whole Creation at War with them, and their own Souls upon the Brink of Ruin. (2.) He was *aſtoniſh'd,* was fill'd with Amazement, as one brought into a new World, that knew not where he was. *Note,* The convincing converting Work of Chriſt is *aſtoniſhing* to the awaken'd Soul, and fills it with Admiration. What is this that GOD has done with me? And what will he do?

2. His Addreſs to Jeſus Chriſt when he was in this Frame, *Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?* which may be taken, (1.) As a ſerious Requeſt for Chriſt's Teachings. Lord I ſee I have hitherto been out of the Way, Thou that haſt ſhewed me my Error ſet me to rights; Thou that haſt diſcovered Sin to me, diſcover to me the Way to Pardon and Peace; 'tis like that, *Men and Brethren, What muſt we do? Note,* A ſerious Deſire to be inſtructed by Chriſt in the Way of Salvation, is an Evidence of a good Work begun in the Soul. Or, (2.) As a ſincere Reſignation of himſelf to the Conduct and Government of the Lord Jeſus. This was the firſt Word that Grace ſpoke in *Paul,* and with this began a Spiritual Life, Lord Jeſus, *What wilt thou have me to do?* Did not he know what he had to do? Had he not his Commiſſion in his Pocket, and what had he to do but to execute

it; No, he had done enough of this Work already, and reſolves now to change his Maſter, and employ himſelf better; Now it is not, What will the High Prieſt and the Elders have me to do; What will my own wicked Appetites and Paſſions have me to do? But *What wilt Thou have me to do?* The great Change in Converſion is wrought upon *the Will*, and conſiſts in the Reſignation or that to the Will of Chriſt.

3. The general Direction Chriſt gave him in Anſwer to this. *Ariſe, go into the City of Damaſcus*, which thou art now near to, *and it ſhall be told thee what thou muſt do.* 'Tis Encouragement enough to have further Inſtruction promis'd him, But (1.) He muſt not have it yet; it ſhall be told him ſhortly what he muſt do, but for the preſent he muſt pauſe upon what has been ſaid to him, and improve that. Let him conſider a While what he *has done* in perſecuting Chriſt, and be deeply humbled for that, and then he ſhall be told what he has further to do. (2.) He muſt not have it *in this Way*, by a Voice from Heaven, for it is plain he cannot bear it, he *trembles* and is *aſtoniſh'd*; He ſhall be told therefore what he muſt do by a Man like himſelf, whoſe *Terror* ſhall not *make him afraid*, nor *his Hand* be *heavy upon him*; which *Iſrael* deſir'd at Mount *Sinai*. Or it is an Intimation that Chriſt wou'd take ſome other Time to manifeſt himſelf further to him, when he was more compos'd, and this Fright pretty well over. Chriſt manifeſts himſelf to his People by Degrees; And both what he doth, and would have them to do, tho' they know not now, they *ſhall know hereafter.*

(7.) How far his Fellow-Travellers were affected with this, and what Impreſſion it made upon them; They *fell to the Earth* as he did, but *roſe* without being bidden, which he did not, but lay ſtill till it was ſaid to him *Ariſe*, for he lay under a heavier Load than any of them did. But when they were up,

1. They *ſtood Speechleſs*, as Men in Confuſion, and that was all, *v.* 7. They were going on the ſame wicked Errand that *Paul* was, and perhaps to the beſt of their Power were as ſpiteful as he, yet we do not find that any of them were converted, tho' they ſaw the Light, and were ſtruck down, and ſtruct dumb by it. No external Means will of themſelves work a Change in the Soul, without the Spirit and Grace of GOD, which diſtinguiſheth between ſome and others; Among theſe that journey'd together, *one is taken*, and *the other left*. They ſtood *ſpeechleſs*; None of them ſaid, *Who art thou Lord?* or *What wilt thou have me to do?* as *Paul* did; but none of GOD's Children are born dumb.

2. They *heard a Voice*, but *ſaw no Man*; they heard *Paul* ſpeak, but ſaw not him to whom he ſpoke, nor heard diſtinctly what was ſaid to him; which reconciles it with what is ſaid of this Matter, *chap.* xxii. 9. where it is ſaid they *ſaw the Light* and were afraid, which they might do, and yet *ſee no Man* in the Light, as *Paul* did; And that they *heard not the Voice of him that ſpake to* Paul ſo as to underſtand what he ſaid, tho' they did hear a confuſed Noiſe. Thus they who came hither to be the Inſtruments of *Paul*'s Rage againſt the Church, ſerve for Witneſſes of the Power of GOD over him.

(8.) What Condition *Saul* was in after this, *v.* 8, 9.

1. He *aroſe from the Earth* when Chriſt bid him, but probably not without Help, the Viſion had made him ſo faintly and weak, I will not ſay like *Belſhazzar*, when the Joynts of his Loyns were looſed, and his Knees ſmote one againſt another; but like *Daniel*, when upon the Sight of Viſion *no Strength remained in them*, Dan. x. 16, 17.

2. When *his Eyes were open'd* he found that his Sight was gone, and he *ſaw no Man*, none of the Men that were with him, and began now to be buſy about him. 'Twas not ſo much this glaring Light that by dazling his Eyes had dim'd them, *Nimium ſenſibile Lædit ſenſum*; for then thoſe with him would have loſt their Sight too, But it was a Sight of Chriſt whom the reſt ſaw not that had this Effect upon him. Thus a believing Sight of the Glory of GOD in the Face of Chriſt dazles the Eyes to all Things here below. Chriſt in order to the further Diſcovery of himſelf and his Goſpel to *Paul*, took him off from the Sight of other Things, which he muſt look off, that he may *look unto Jeſus*, and to him only.

3. They *led him by the Hand into* Damaſcus; Whether to a publick Houſe, or to ſome Friend's Houſe is not certain, But thus he who thought to have led the Diſciples of Chriſt Priſoners and Captives to *Jeruſalem*, was himſelf led a Priſoner and a Captive to Chriſt into *Damaſcus*. He was thus taught what Need he had of the Grace of Chriſt to lead his Soul, being naturally blind, and apt to miſtake, into all Truth.

4. He lay *without Sight*, and without Food, neither did eat nor drink for *Three Days*, v. 9. I do not think as ſome do, that now he had his Rapture into the third Heavens which he ſpeaks of 2 *Cor.* xii. ſo far from that, that we have Reaſon to think he was all this Time rather *in that Belly of Hell*, ſuffering GOD's Terrors for his Sins, which were now ſet in Order before him. He was *in the dark* concerning his own ſpiritual State; and was ſo wounded in Spirit for Sin, that he could reliſh neither Meat nor Drink.

10 ¶ And there was a certain diſciple at Damaſcus, named Ananias, and to him ſaid the Lord in a viſion, Ananias, And he ſaid, Behold, I *am hear* Lord. 11 And the Lord *ſaid* unto him, Ariſe, and go into the ſtreet, which is called Straight. and enquire in the houſe of Judas, for *one* called Saul of Tarſus: for behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath ſeen in a viſion, a man, named Ananias, coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his ſight. 13 Then Ananias anſwered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man how much evil he hath done to thy ſaints at Jeruſalem, 14 And here he hath authority from the chief prieſts, to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord ſaid unto him, Go thy way: for he is a choſen veſſel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Iſrael. 16 For I will ſhew him how great Things he muſt ſuffer for my names ſake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entred into the houſe, and putting his hands on him, ſaid, brother Saul, the Lord (*even* Jeſus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou cameſt) hath ſent me, that thou mighteſt receive thy ſight, and be filled with the holy Ghoſt. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been ſcales, and he received ſight forthwith, and aroſe and was baptized. 19 And when he had received meat, he was ſtrengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the diſciples which were at Damaſcus. 20 And ſtraightway he preached Chriſt in the ſynagogues, that he is the ſon of God. 21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and ſaid, Is not this he that deſtroyed them which called on this name in Jeruſalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief prieſts? 22 But Saul increaſed the more in ſtrength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damaſcus, proving that this is very Chriſt.

As for GOD His Work is perfect; If he begin he will make an End; A good Work was begun in *Saul*, when he was brought to Chriſt's Feet in that Word, *Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?* And never did Chriſt leave any that were brought to that. Tho' *Saul* was ſadly *mortify'd* when he lay three Days blind, yet he was not *abandon'd*, Chriſt here takes Care of the *Work of his own Hands*; He that hath torn will heal, that hath ſmitten will bind up, that has convinc'd will comfort.

Firſt, *Ananias* is here order'd to go and look after him, to heal and help him, for he that cauſeth Grief will have Compaſſion.

1. The Perſon employ'd is *Ananias*, a *certain Diſciple at* Damaſcus, not lately driven thither from *Jeruſalem*, but a Native of *Damaſcus*, for it is ſaid, *Acts* xxii. 12. that he had *a good report of all the* Jews *which dwelt there*, as *a Devout Man according to the Law*, he had lately embrac'd the Goſpel, and given up his Name to Chriſt, and as it ſhould ſeem officiated as a Miniſter, at leaſt *pro hac vice*, tho' it doth not appear he was apoſtolically ordain'd. But why were not ſome of the Apoſtles from *Jeruſalem* ſent for upon this great Occaſion, or *Philip* the Evangeliſt who had lately baptiz'd the *Eunuch*, and might have been fetch'd hither by the Spirit in a little Time? ſurely becauſe Chriſt would employ Variety of Hands in eminent Services, that the Honours might not be monopoliz'd or engroſs'd by a few. And would put Work into the Hands, and thereby put Honour upon the Heads of thoſe that were mean and obſcure, to encourge them; And would direct us to make Uſe of the Miniſters that are where our Lot is caſt, if they have obtain'd Mercy to be faithful, tho' they are not of the moſt eminent.

2. The Direction given him is to go and enquire at ſuch a Houſe, probably an Inn, for one *Saul* of *Tarſus*. Chriſt in a Viſion call'd to *Ananias* by Name, *v.* 10. 'Tis likely it was not the firſt Time that he *heard the Words of God*, and *ſeen the Viſions of the Almighty*, for without Terror or Confuſion he readily anſwers, *Behold, I am here Lord*, ready to go where-ever thou ſendeſt me, and do whatever thou biddeſt me. *Go then*, ſaith Chriſt, *into the Street which is called* Straight, *and enquire in the Houſe of* Judas, where Strangers us'd to lodge, *for one called* Saul *of* Tarſus. *Note*, Chriſt very well knows where to find out thoſe that are his in their Diſtreſſes. When their Relations it may be know not what's become of them, they have a Friend in Heaven that knowns in what Street, in what Houſe, nay, and which is more, in what Frame they are; *He knows their Souls in Adverſity.*

3. Two Reaſons are given him, why he muſt go and enquire for this Stranger, and offer him his Service.

1. Becauſe *he prays*, and his coming to him muſt anſwer his Prayer. This is a Reaſon (1.) Why *Ananias* needed not to be afraid of him, as we find he was, *v.* 13, 14. There's no Queſtion, ſaith Chriſt, but he is a true Convert, for *behold he prays*. *Behold*, notes the *Certainty* of it, aſſure thy ſelf it is ſo, Go, and ſee elſe. Chriſt was ſo pleas'd to find *Paul* praying, that he

muſt have others to take Notice of it, *Rejoyce with me, for I have found the Sheep which I have loſt.* It notes alſo the *Strangeneſs* of it; Behold, and *wonder*, that he who but 'tother Day *breath'd* nothing but *Threatnings and Slaughter*, now breaths nothing but Prayer. But was it ſuch a ſtrange Thing for *Saul* to pray? Was he not a *Phariſee*, and have we not Reaſon to think he did as the reſt of them did, make long Prayers in the Synagogues and the Corners of the Streets? Yes; but now he began to pray after another Manner than he had done: Then he *ſaid his Prayers*, now he *pray'd* them. *Note*, Regenerating Grace evermore ſets People on praying. You may as ſoon find a living Man without Breath, as a living Chriſtian without Prayer. If breathleſs, lifeleſs; and ſo if prayerleſs, graceleſs. (2.) As a Reaſon why *Ananias* muſt go to him with all Speed; 'Tis no Time to linger, for *behold he prays.* If the Child cry, the tender Nurſe haſtens to it with the Breaſt. *Saul* here, like *Ephraim*, is *bemoaning himſelf*, reproaching himſelf, *as a Bullock unaccuſtom'd to the Yoke*, and *kicking againſt the Goad.* O! go to him quickly, and tell him, He is a *dear Son*, a *pleaſant Child*, and *ſince I ſpake againſt him*, for perſecuting me, I do *earneſtly remember him ſtill*, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20. *Obſerve*, (1.) What Condition *Saul* was now in; He was under Conviction of Sin, trembling and aſtoniſh'd. The ſetting of Sin in Order before us, ſhould drive us to Prayer. He was under a bodily Affliction, blind and ſick; and, *Is any afflicted? Let him pray.* Chriſt had promiſed him, That it ſhould be further *told him what he ſhould do*, *v.* 6. and he prays that One may be ſent to him to inſtruct him: *Note*, What GOD has promis'd we muſt pray for; He will *for this be enquired of*, and particularly for divine Inſtruction.

2. Becauſe he hath ſeen in a Viſion ſuch a Man coming to him, to reſtore him to his Sight, and *Ananias*'s coming to him muſt *anſwer* his Dream, for it was of GOD, *v.* 12. He hath *ſeen in a Viſion a Man named* Ananias, and juſt ſuch a Man as thou art, *coming in* ſeaſonably for his Relief, and *putting his Hand on him that he might receive his Sight.* Now this Viſion *Paul* had, may be conſider'd, (1.) As an immediate Anſwer to his Prayer, and the keeping up of that Communion with GOD which he had entred into by Prayer. He had in Prayer ſpread the Miſery of his own Caſe before GOD, and GOD preſently manifeſts himſelf, and the kind Intentions of his Grace to him; And it is very encouraging to know GOD's *Thoughts to us ward.* (2.) As deſign'd to raiſe his Expectations, and to make *Ananias*'s Coming more welcome to him. He would readily receive him as a Meſſenger from GOD, when he was told before hand in Viſion that One of that Name would come to him. See what a great Thing it is to bring a ſpiritual Phyſician and his Patient together, here's two Viſions in order to it; when GOD in his Providence doth it without Viſions, brings a Meſſenger to the afflicted Soul, an Interpreter One among a Thouſand to ſhew unto Man his Uprightneſs, it muſt be acknowledg'd with Thankfulneſs to his Praiſe.

Secondly, *Ananias* objects againſt going to him, and the Lord anſwers the Objection. See how condeſcendingly the Lord admits his Servant to reaſon with him.

1. *Ananias* pleads, that this *Saul* was a notorious Perſecutor of the Diſciples of Chriſt, *v.* 13, 14. (1.) He had been ſo at *Jeruſalem*, *Lord, I have heard by many of this Man*, what a malicious Enemy he is to the Goſpel of Chriſt. All thoſe that were ſcatter'd upon the late Perſecution, many of whom are come to *Damaſcus*, tell, *how much Evil he hath done to thy Saints at* Jeruſalem, that he was the moſt virulent violent Perſecutor of all the reſt, and a Ring-leader in the Miſchief; what *Havock he has made of the Church.* There was no Man they were more afraid of, no not the High Prieſt himſelf, than of *Saul*, Nay, (2.) His Errand to *Damaſcus* at this Time, is to perſecute us Chriſtians, *here he has Authority from the chief Prieſts, to bind all that call on thy Name*, to treat the Worſhippers of Chriſt as the worſt of Criminals. Now why doth *Ananias* object this? Not, therefore I do not owe him ſo much Service; why ſhould I do him a Kindneſs, who has done, and deſign'd us ſo much Unkindneſs, No, Chriſt has taught us another Leſſon, to render Good for Evil, and pray for our Perſecutors. But if he be ſuch a Perſecutor of Chriſtians, (1.) Will it be ſafe for *Ananias* to go to him? Will not he throw himſelf like a Lamb into the Mouth of the Lion? And if he thus bring himſelf into Trouble he will be blam'd for his Indiſcretion. (2.) Will it be to any purpoſe to go to him, can ſuch a hard Heart ever be ſoften'd, or ſuch an *Ethiopian* ever change his Skin.

2. Chriſt over-rules the Objection, *v.* 16, 17. Do not tell me how bad he has been, I know it very well, but *go thy Way* with all Speed, and give him all the Help thou canſt, for he is a *choſen Veſſel*, or *Inſtrument unto me.* I deſign to put a Confidence in him, and then thou needſt not fear him. He was a *Veſſel* in which the Goſpel Treaſure ſhould be lodg'd, in order to the Conveyance of it to many; an *Earthen Veſſel*, 2 *Cor.* iv. 7. but a *choſen Veſſel.* The Veſſels GOD uſeth, he himſelf chooſeth; and it is fit he ſhould himſelf have the chooſing of the Inſtruments he employs, *Joh.* xv. 16. *Ye have not choſen me, but I have choſen you.* He is a *Veſſel of honour*, and muſt not be neglected in his preſent forlorn Condition, or thrown away as a deſpiſed broken Veſſel, or a Veſſel in which there is no Pleaſure. He is deſign'd, 1. For eminent *Services.* He is to *bear my Name before the* Gentiles, is to be the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, and to *carry* the Goſpel to Heathen Nations. Chriſt's Name is the Standard to which Souls muſt be *gather'd*, and under which they muſt be *liſted*, and *Saul* muſt be a Standard-bearer, he muſt *bear Chriſt's Name*, i. e. muſt bear Witneſs to it *before Kings*, King *Agrippa*, and *Cæſar* himſelf; Nay, he muſt *bear* it *before the Children of* Iſrael, tho' there were ſo many Hands already at Work about them. 2. For eminent *Sufferings*, v. 16. *I will ſhew him how great Things he muſt ſuffer for my Names ſake.* He that has been a Perſecutor, ſhall be himſelf perſecuted. Chriſt's *ſhewing* him this intimates either his bringing him to theſe Tryals, as *Pſal.* lx. 3. *thou haſt ſhewed thy People hard Things*, Or his giving him Notice of them beforehand, that they might be no Surprize to him. *Note*, Thoſe that *bear Chriſt's Name*, muſt expect to *bear the Croſs*, for his Name; And thoſe that *do moſt* for Chriſt, are often call'd out to *ſuffer moſt* for him. *Saul* muſt *ſuffer great Things.* This one would think was cold Comfort for a young Convert, But it is but like telling a Soldier of a bold and brave Spirit, when he is liſted, that he ſhall take the Field and enter upon Action ſhortly; *Saul*'s Sufferings for Chriſt ſhall redound ſo much to the Honour of Chriſt and the Service of the Church, ſhall be ſo balanc'd with ſpiritual Comforts, and recompens'd with eternal Glories, that it is Diſcouragement to him to be told *how great Things he muſt ſuffer for Chriſt's Names ſake.*

Thirdly, *Ananias* preſently goes on Chriſt's Errand to *Saul*, and with good Effect. He had ſtarted an Objection againſt going to him, but when an Anſwer was given to it he drop'd it, and did not inſiſt upon it. When Difficulties are remov'd, what have we to do but to go on with our Work, and not hang upon an Objection.

1. *Ananias* deliver'd his Meſſage to *Saul*, *v.* 17. Probably he found him in Bed, and apply'd to him as a Patient. (1.) He *put his Hands on him*; 'Twas promis'd as one of the Signs that ſhould follow them that believe, That they ſhould *lay Hands on the Sick, and they ſhould recover*, *Mar.* xvi. 18. and it was for that Intent that he *put his Hands on him. Saul* came to lay violent Hands upon the Diſciples at *Damaſcus*, but here a Diſciple lays a helping healing Hand upon him; *The Blood thirſty hate the upright, but the juſt ſeek his Soul.* (2.) He call'd him *Brother*, becauſe he was made a Partaker of the Grace of GOD, tho' not yet *baptiz'd.* And his Readineſs to own him as a *Brother*, intimated to him GOD's Readineſs to own him as a *Son*, tho' he had been a *Blaſphemer* of GOD, and a Perſecutor of his Children. (3.) He produceth his Commiſſion from the ſame Hand, that had *laid hold on him* by the Way, and now had him in Cuſtody. That ſame *Jeſus that appear'd unto thee in the Way as thou cameſt*, and *convinc'd* thee of thy Sin in perſecuting him, has now *ſent me* to thee to *comfort* thee. *Una eademque manus vulnus opemque tulit.* His Light ſtruck the blind, but he hath ſent me to thee *that thou mighteſt receive thy Sight*, for the Deſign was not to blind thine Eyes, but to dazzle them, that thou mighteſt ſee Things by another Light. He that then put *Clay upon thine Eyes* hath ſent me to *waſh* them that they may be cur'd. *Ananias* might deliver his Meſſage to *Saul* very appoſitely in the Prophet's Words, *Hoſ.* vi. 1, 2. *Come and turn to the Lord, for he will turn and he will heal thee, he hath ſmitten, and he will bind thee up*; Now *after Two Days he will revive thee, and the Third Day he will raiſe thee up, and thou ſhalt live in his Sight.* Corroſives ſhall be no more apply'd but Lenitives. (4.) He aſſures him that he ſhall not only have his Sight reſtor'd, but be *fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt.* He muſt himſelf be an Apoſtle, and muſt in nothing come behind the chief of the Apoſtles, and therefore muſt receive the Holy Ghoſt immediately, and not as others did by the Interpoſition of the Apoſtles; and *Ananias*'s putting his Hands upon him before he was baptiz'd, was not for the conferring of the Holy Ghoſt.

2. *Ananias* ſaw the good Iſſue of his Miſſion.

1. In Chriſt's Favour to *Saul*; At the Word of *Ananias*, *Saul* was diſcharg'd from his Confinement, by the reſtoring of his Sight; for Chriſt's Commiſſion to *open the Priſon to them that were bound*, (Iſa. lxi. 1.) is explain'd by the *giving of Sight to the blind*, *Luke* iv. 18. and *Iſa.* xlii. 7. Chriſt's Commiſſion is *to open the blind Eyes, and to bring out the Priſoners from the Priſon.* Saul is deliver'd from the Spirit of Bondage by his *receiving Sight*, v. 18. which was ſignified by the *falling of Scales from his Eyes*; And this *immediately*, and *forthwith*; the Cure was ſudden, to ſhew that 'twas miraculous. This ſignify'd the recovering of him, (1.) From the Darkneſs of his unconverted State; when he perſecuted the Church of GOD, and walk'd in the Spirit and Way of the *Phariſees* he was *blind*, he ſaw not the Meaning either of the Law or of the Goſpel, *Rom.* vii. 9. Chriſt often told the *Phariſees* they were *blind*, and could not make them ſenſible of it, they ſaid, *We ſee*, *John* ix. 41. *Saul* is ſav'd from his Phariſaical Blindneſs by being made ſenſible of it. *Note*, Converting Grace opens the Eyes of the Soul, and makes the *Scales* to fall from them. *Acts* xxiv. 18. *To open Mens Eyes, and turn them from Darkneſs to Light*; This was it that *Saul* was ſent among the *Gentiles* to do by the Preaching of the Goſpel, and therefore muſt firſt experience it in himſelf. (2.) From the Darkneſs of his preſent Terrors under the Apprehenſion of Guilt upon his Conſcience, and the Wrath of GOD againſt him: This fill'd him with Confuſion; during thoſe three Days he ſat in Darkneſs, like *Jonah* for Three Days in the Belly of Hell; But now the *Scales fell from his Eyes*, the

Cloud was ſcatter'd, and the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* roſe upon his Soul with *healing under his Wings*.

2. In *Saul*'s Subjection to Chriſt, he *was baptiz'd*, and thereby ſubmitted himſelf to the Government of Chriſt, and caſt himſelf upon the Grace of Chriſt. Thus he was enter'd into Chriſt's School, hir'd into his Family, liſted under his Banner, and joyn'd himſelf to him for better, for worſe. The Point it was gain'd, 'tis ſettled, *Saul* is now a Diſciple of Chriſt, not only ceaſeth to oppoſe him, but devotes himſelf entirely to his Service and Honour.

Fourthly, The good Work that was begun in *Saul*, is carry'd on wonderfully; This *new-born* Chriſtian, tho' he ſeem'd as One *born out of due Time*, yet preſently comes to Maturity.

1. He receiv'd his bodily Strength, *v.* 19. He had continu'd Three Days faſting, which with the mighty Weight that was all that Time upon his Spirits, had made him very weak; but *when he had receiv'd Meat, he was ſtrengthen'd*, *v.* 19. The Lord is for the Body, and therefore Care muſt be taken of that to keep it in good plight, that it may be fit to ſerve the Soul in GOD's Service, and that Chriſt may be magnify'd in it, *Phil.* i. 20.

2. He aſſociated with the Diſciples that were at *Damaſcus*, fell in with 'em, convers'd with them, went to their Meetings, and joyned in Communion with them. He had lately breath'd out Threatnings and Slaughter againſt them; but now breaths Love and Affection to them. Now *the Wolf dwells with the Lamb*, and *the Leopard lies down with the Kid*, Iſa. xi. 6. *Note*, Thoſe that take GOD for their God, takes his People for their People. *Saul* aſſociated with the Diſciples, becauſe now he ſaw an Amiableneſs and Excellency in them, becauſe he lov'd them, and found that he improv'd in Knowledge and Grace by converſing with them, and thus he made Profeſſion of his Chriſtian Faith, and openly declar'd himſelf a Diſciple of Chriſt, by herding with thoſe that were his Diſciples.

3. He *preach'd Chriſt in the Synagogues*, v. 20. To this he had an extraordinary Call, and for it an extraordinary Qualification, GOD having immediately *reveal'd his Son* to him, and *in him, that he might preach* him, *Gal.* i. 15, 16. He was ſo full of Chriſt himſelf, that the *Spirit within him conſtrain'd him* to preach him to others, and like *Elihu*, to *ſpeak that he might be refreſhed*, Job xxxii. 18. *Obſerve*, 1. Where he preach'd, *in the Synagogues of the* Jews; for they were to have the firſt offer made them. The Synagogues were their *Places* of *Concourſe*, there he met with them together; and there they us'd to preach againſt Chriſt, and to *puniſh* his Diſciples; by the ſame Token that *Paul* himſelf had *puniſh'd them oft in every Synagogue*, Acts xxvi. 11. and therefore there he would *face* the Enemies of Chriſt, where they were moſt *daring*; and openly profeſs Chriſtianity, there where he had moſt oppos'd it. 2. What he preach'd; He *preach'd Chriſt*, When he begun to be a Preacher, he fix'd that for his Principle, which he ſtuck to ever after, *We preach not our ſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*; Nothing but Chriſt, and him crucify'd. He preach'd concerning Chriſt, *That he is the Son of GOD*, His Beloved Son, in whom He is well-pleaſed, and with us in him, and not otherwiſe. 3. How People were affected with it, *v.* 21. *All that heard him were amaz'd*, and ſaid, *Is not this he that deſtroy'd them which call'd on this Name in* Jeruſalem? and now doth he call on this Name himſelf, and perſuade others to call upon it, and ſtrengthen the Hands of thoſe that do. *Quantum mutatus ab illo! Is* Saul *alſo among the Prophets?* Nay, Did he not *come hither for that Intent*, to ſeize all the Chriſtians he could find, *and bring them bound to the Chief Prieſts?* Yes, he did; who would have thought then, that he ſhould preach Chriſt as he doth? Doubtleſs this was look'd upon by many as a great Confirmation of the Truth of Chriſtianity, that one who had been ſuch a notorious Perſecutor of it, came on a ſudden to be ſuch an intelligent, ſtrenuous and capacious Preacher of it. This Miracle upon the *Mind* of ſuch a Man out-ſhone the Miracles upon Mens *Bodies*; and giving a Man ſuch *another Heart*, was more than giving Men to ſpeak with *other Tongues*.

4. He *confuted* and *confounded* thoſe that oppos'd the Doctrine of Chriſt, *v.* 22. He not only ſignaliz'd himſelf in the Pulpit, but in the Schools, and ſhew'd himſelf ſupernaturally enabled not only to *preach the Truth*, but to *maintain* and *defend* it when he had preach'd it. (1.) He *increas'd in Strength*; He became more intimately acquainted with the Goſpel of Chriſt, and his pious Affections grew more ſtrong, he grew more bold and daring, and reſolute in the Defence of the Goſpel; he *increas'd the more* for the Reflections that were caſt upon him, *v.* 21. in which his new Friends upbraided him as having been a *Perſecutor*, and his old Friends upbraided him as being now a *Turn-coat*; but *Saul* inſtead of being diſcourag'd by the various Remarks made upon his Converſion, was thereby ſo much the more embolden'd finding he had enough at hand wherewith to anſwer the worſt they could ſay of him. 2. He ran down his Antagoniſts, and *confounded the* Jews *which dwelt at* Damaſcus; he *ſilenc'd* them, and *ſhamed* them; anſwered their Objections to the Satisfaction of all indifferent Perſons, and preſs'd them with Arguments which they could make no Reply to. In all his Diſcourſes with the *Jews*, he was ſtill *proving* that *this* Jeſus is *very Chriſt*, is *thee Chriſt*, the Anointed of GOD, the true Meſſiah promis'd to the Fathers. He was *proving* it, συμβιβάζων; affirming it, and confirming it; *Teaching* with *Perſuaſion*. And we have Reaſon to think he was inſtrumental to convert many to the Faith of Chriſt, and to build up the Church at *Damaſcus*, which he came thither to make Havock of. Thus *out of the eater came forth Meat, and out of the ſtrong Sweetneſs*.

23 ¶ And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counſel to kill him. 24 But their laying await was known of Saul: and they watched the gates day and night to kill him. 25 Then the diſciples took him by night, and let *him* down by the wall in a basket. 26 And when Saul was come to Jeruſalem, he aſſayed to join himſelf to the diſciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a diſciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the apoſtles, and declared unto them how he had ſeen the Lord in the way, and that he had ſpoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damaſcus in the name of Jeſus. 28 And he was with them coming in, and going out at Jeruſalem. 29 And he ſpake boldly in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and diſputed againſt the Grecians: but they went about to ſlay him. 30 *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Ceſarea, and ſent him forth to Tarſus. 31 Then had the churches reſt throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, were multiplied.

Luke here makes no Mention of *Paul*'s Journey into *Arabia*, which he tells us himſelf was immediately after his Converſion, *Gal.* i. 16, 17. As ſoon as GOD had *reveal'd his Son in him, that he might preach him*, he *went not up to* Jeruſalem, to receive Inſtructions from the Apoſtles, as any other Convert would have done that was deſign'd for the Miniſtry, but he went to *Arabia*, where there was new Ground to break up, and where he would have Opportunity of *teaching*, but not of *learning*. Thence he return'd to *Damaſcus*, and there Three Years after his Converſion, this happen'd which is here recorded.

Firſt, He met with Difficulties at *Damaſcus*, and had a narrow Scape of being kill'd there. *Obſerve*,

1. What his Danger was, *v.* 23. *The* Jews *took Council to kill him* being more enrag'd at him than at any other of the Preachers of the Goſpel; not only becauſe he was more lively and zealous in his Preaching than any of them, and more ſucceſsful, but becauſe he had been ſuch a remarkable Deſerter, and his being a Chriſtian, was a Teſtimony againſt them. 'Tis ſaid, *v.* 24. The *Jews watched the Gates Day and Night to kill him*; they incens'd the Governour againſt him as a dangerous Man, who therefore *kept the City with a guard to apprehend him* at his going out or coming in, 2 *Cor.* xi. 32. Now Chriſt, ſhew'd *Paul* what *great Things he muſt ſuffer for his Name*, *v.* 16. when here is preſently the Government in Arms againſt him, which was a *great Thing*, and, as all his other Sufferings, afterwards help'd to make him *conſiderable*, *Saul* was no ſooner a Chriſtian, but a Preacher; no ſooner a Preacher, but a Sufferer; ſo quick did he riſe to the Top of his Preferment. *Note*, Where GOD gives great Grace, He commonly exerciſes it with great Trials.

2. How he was deliver'd; (1.) The deſign againſt him was diſcover'd. Their *lying in wait*, *was known of* Saul by ſome Intelligence, whether from Heaven, or from Men, we are not told. (2.) The Diſciples contriv'd to help him away, hid him 'tis likely by Day, and in the Night, the Gates being watched that he could not get away thro' them, they *let him down by the Wall in a Basket*, as he himſelf relates it, 2 *Cor.* xi. 33. ſo he *eſcap'd out of their Hands*. This Story as it ſhews us, That *when we enter into the Way of God*, *we muſt look for Temptation*, and prepare accordingly; ſo it ſhews us, That *the Lord knows how to deliver the Godly out of Temptation*, and will, *with the Temptation, alſo make a Way to eſcape*, that we may not be by it detered or driven from the Way of GOD.

Secondly, He met with Difficulties at *Jeruſalem*, the firſt Time he went thither, *v.* 26. He *came to* Jeruſalem. This is thought to be that Journey to *Jeruſalem*, which he himſelf ſpeaks of, *Gal.* i. 18. *After three Years, I went up to* Jeruſalem (ſaith he) *to ſee* Peter, *and abode with him Fifteen Days*. But I rather incline to think, that this was a Journey before that, becauſe his *coming in* and *going out*, his *preaching* and *diſputing*, v. 28, 29. ſeems to be more than would conſiſt with his Fifteen Days ſtay, for that was no more, and to require a longer Time. And, beſides, now he came a Stranger, but then he came ἱστορῆσαι Πέτρον to confer with *Peter* as One he was intimate with. However, it might poſſibly be the ſame. Now *Obſerve*.

1. How *ſhy* his Friends were of him, *v.* 26. *When he came to Jeruſalem* he did not go to the Chief Prieſts and the *Phariſees*, he had taken his Leave of them long ſince, but *he aſſay'd to joyn himſelf to the Diſciples*. Wherever he came he own'd himſelf, One of that deſpis'd, perſecuted People, and aſſociated with them; they were now in his Eyes, the *Excellent Ones of the Earth*

in whom was all his Delight. He deſir'd to be acquainted with them, and to be admitted into Communion with them. But they look'd ſtrange upon him, ſhut the Door againſt him, and would not go about any of their religious Exerciſes if he were by; for they were *afraid of him.* Now might *Paul* be tempted to think himſelf in an ill Caſe, when the *Jews* had abandon'd and perſecuted him, and the Chriſtians would not receive and entertain him. Thus doth he fall into *divers Temptations,* and needs the *Armour of Righteouſneſs,* as we all do, both *on the Right Hand and on the left,* that we may not be diſcourag'd either by the *unjuſt* Treatment of our Enemies, or the unkind Treatment of our Friends.

(1.) See what was the *Cauſe* of their Jealouſy of him; *They believ'd not that he was a Diſciple*; but that he only pretended to be ſo, and came among them as a Spy, or an Informer. They knew what a bitter Perſecutor he had been, with what Fury he went to *Damaſcus* ſome time ago, had heard nothing of him ſince, and therefore thought he was but a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing. The Diſciples of Chriſt had need to be cautious whom they admit into Communion with them; *Believe not every Spirit.* There is need of the Wiſdom of the Serpent to keep the Mean between the Extremes of Suſpicion on the one Hand, and Credulity on the other; yet methinks it is ſafer to err on the charitable ſide, becauſe it is an adjudg'd Caſe, That 'tis better Tares ſhould be found among the Wheat, than that the Wheat ſhould any of it be rooted up, and thrown out of the Field.

(2.) See how it was remov'd, *v.* 27. *Barnabas took him to the Apoſtles* themſelves, who were not ſo ſcrupulous as the inferiour *Diſciples,* to whom he firſt *aſſay'd to joyn himſelf,* and he declar'd to them, (1.) What Chriſt had done for him, had *ſhew'd himſelf to him* in the Way, and *ſpoken to him,* and what he ſaid. (3.) What he had ſince done for Chriſt; Had *preach'd boldly at Damaſcus in the Name of Jeſus.* How *Barnabas* come to know this more than the reſt of them; we are not told, whether he had himſelf been at *Damaſcus,* or had had Letters from thence, or diſcours'd with ſome of that City, by which he came to the Knowledge of this; or whether he had formerly been acquainted with *Paul* in the *Grecian* Synagogues, or at the Feet of *Gamaliel,* and had ſuch an Account of his Converſion from himſelf, as he ſaw Cauſe enough to give Credit to; ſo it was, that being ſatisfy'd himſelf, he gave Satisfaction to the Apoſtles concerning him, he having brought no Teſtimonials from the Diſciples at *Damaſcus,* thinking he *needed not,* as ſome others, *Epiſtles of Commendation,* 2 Cor. iii. 1. *Note,* The introducing of a young Convert into the Communion of the Faithful, is a very good Work, and which as we have Opportunity, we ſhould be ready to.

2. How *ſharp* his Enemies were upon him.

1. He was admitted into the Communion of the Diſciples, which was no little Provocation to his Enemies; It vex'd the unbelieving *Jews* to ſee *Saul* a Trophy of Chriſt's Victory, and a Captive to his Grace, who had been ſuch a Champion for their Cauſe, to ſee him *coming in, and going out with the Apoſtles, v.* 28. and to hear them *glorying* in him, or rather *glorifying God* in him.

2. He appear'd vigorous in the Cauſe of Chriſt; and this was yet more provoking to them, *v.* 29. *He ſpake boldly in the Name of the Lord Jeſus.* *Note,* Thoſe that ſpeak for Chriſt, have Reaſon to ſpeak boldly; for they have a good Cauſe, and ſpeak for One who will at laſt ſpeak for *himſelf* and *them* too. The *Grecians* and *Helleniſt Jews* were moſt offended at him, becauſe he had been one of them; and they drew him into a *Diſpute,* in which no doubt he was too hard for them, as he had been for the *Jews* at *Damaſcus.* One of the Martyrs ſaid, tho' ſhe could not *diſpute for Chriſt,* ſhe could *dye for Chriſt*; but *Paul* could do both. Now the Lord Jeſus *divided the Spoils* of the *ſtrong Man arm'd* in *Saul.* For that ſame natural Quickneſs and Fervour of Spirit which while he was in Ignorance and Unbelief made him a furious bigotted Perſecutor of the Faith, made him a moſt zealous couragious Defender of the Faith.

3. This brought him into Peril of his Life, with which he narrowly eſcap'd; The *Grecians* when they found they could not deal with him in Diſputation, contriv'd to ſilence him another Way; they *went about to ſlay him,* as they did *Stephen,* when they could not *reſiſt the Spirit by which he ſpake,* Acts vi. 10. That's a bad cauſe, that has Recourſe to Perſecution for its laſt Argument. But Notice was given of this Conſpiracy too, and effectual Care taken to ſecure this young Champion, *v.* 30. *When the Brethren knew* what was deſign'd againſt him, they *brought him down to Cæſarea.* They remember'd how the putting of *Stephen* to Death upon his diſputing with the *Grecians,* had been the Beginning of a ſore Perſecution; and therefore were afraid of having ſuch a Vein open'd again, and haſten'd *Paul* out of the Way. He that flies, may fight again; he that fled from *Jeruſalem,* might do Service at *Tarſus,* the Place of his Nativity; and thither they deſired him by all Means to go, in hopes he might go on in his Work with more Safety than at *Jeruſalem.* Yet it was alſo by Direction from Heaven that he left *Jeruſalem* at this Time; as he tells us himſelf, *Acts* xxii. 17, 18. That *Chriſt* now appear'd to him, and order'd him to *go quickly out of* Jeruſalem, for he muſt be ſent to the *Gentiles, v.* 21. Thoſe by whom GOD has Work to do, ſhall be protected from all the Deſigns of their Enemies againſt them till it is done. *Chriſt's Witneſſes* cannot be *ſlain* till they have *finiſh'd their Teſtimony.*

Thirdly, The Churches had now a comfortable Gleam of Liberty and Peace, *v.* 31. *Then had the Churches Reſt.* *Then* when *Saul* was converted, ſo ſome; when that Perſecutor was taken off, thoſe were *quiet* whom he us'd to *irritate*; and then thoſe were *quiet* whom he us'd to *moleſt.* Or, *Then,* when he was gone from *Jeruſalem,* the Fury of the *Grecian Jews* was a little abated, and they were the more willing to bear with the other Preachers, now *Saul* was gone out of the Way. *Obſerve,*

1. The *Churches had Reſt*; After a Storm comes a Calm. Tho' we are always to expect troubleſome Times, yet we may expect that they ſhall not laſt always. This was a Breathing time allow'd them to prepare them for the next Encounter. The Churches that were already planted, were moſtly in *Judea, Galilee* and *Samaria,* within the Limits of the Holy Land. There were the firſt Chriſtian Churches, where *Chriſt* had himſelf laid the Foundation.

2. They made a good Uſe of this lucid Interval; Inſtead of growing ſecure and wanton in the Day of their Proſperity, they abounded more in their Duty, and made a good Uſe of their Tranquility. (1.) They *were edify'd,* were *built up in their moſt holy Faith*; The more free and conſtant Enjoyment they had of the Means of Knowledge and Grace, the more they increas'd in Knowledge and Grace. (2.) They *walk'd in the Fear of the Lord*; Were more exemplary themſelves for a holy heavenly Converſation. They liv'd ſo, as that all who convers'd with them might ſay, Surely the Fear of GOD reigns in thoſe People. (3.) They walk'd *in the Comfort of the Holy Ghoſt*: They were not only faithful, but chearful in Religion; they *ſtuck* to the Ways of the Lord, and *ſang* in thoſe *Ways.* The *Comfort of the Holy Ghoſt* was their *Conſolation,* and that which they made their *chief Joy.* They had Recourſe to the *Comfort of the Holy Ghoſt.* Thoſe are moſt likely to walk chearfully that walk circumſpectly.

3. GOD bleſs'd it to them for their Increaſe in Number; *They were multiply'd.* Sometimes the Church *multiplies* the more for its being afflicted, as *Iſrael* in *Egypt*; yet if it were always ſo, the Saints of the moſt High would be worn out; at other Times its *Reſt* contributes to its *Growth,* as it enlargeth the Opportunity of Miniſters, and invites thoſe in that at firſt are afraid of ſuffering. Or, then when they *walk'd in the Fear of God,* and *his Comforts,* then they were *multiply'd.* Thus they that will not be won by the Word, may be won by the Converſation of Profeſſors.

32 ¶ And it came to paſs, as Peter paſſed throughout all *quarters,* he came down alſo to the ſaints which dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Eneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was ſick of the palſie. 34 And Peter ſaid unto him, Eneas, Jeſus Chriſt maketh thee whole: ariſe, and make thy bed. And he aroſe immediately. 35 And all that dwelt at Lydda, and Saron, ſaw him, and turned to the Lord.

Here we have

Firſt, The Viſit *Peter* made to the Churches that were newly planted by the diſpers'd Preachers, *v.* 32.

1. He paſs'd *through all Quarters*; As an Apoſtle, he was not to be the reſident Paſtor of any one Church, but the itinerent Viſitor of many Churches; to confirm the Doctrine of inferiour Preachers, to confer the Holy Ghoſt on them that believ'd, and to ordain Miniſters. He paſs'd, *διὰ πάντων among them all* who pertained to the Churches of *Judea, Galilee,* and *Samaria,* mention'd in the foregoing Chapter. He was like his Maſter, always upon the Remove, and *went about doing Good*; But ſtill his Head quarters were at *Jeruſalem,* for there we ſhall find him impriſon'd, *chap.* xii.

2. He came to the *Saints* at Lydda; This ſeems to be the ſame with *Lod,* a City in the Tribe of *Benjamin* mention'd, 1 *Chr.* viii. 12. *Ezr.* ii. 33. The Chriſtians are call'd *Saints,* not only ſome particular eminent Ones, as St. *Peter* and St. *Paul,* but every ſincere Profeſſor of the Faith of *Chriſt.* Theſe are the *Saints of the Earth,* Pſal. xvi. 3.

Secondly, The Cure *Peter* wrought on *Eneas,* a Man that had been Bed-rid Eight Years, *v.* 33.

1. His Caſe was very *deplorable*; he was *ſick of the Palſy,* a dumb Palſy, perhaps a dead Palſy, the Diſeaſe was extream, for he *kept his Bed*; 'twas inveterate, for he kept his Bed *eight Years*; And we may ſuppoſe both he himſelf, and all about him deſpair'd of Relief for him, and concluded upon no other but that he muſt ſtill keep his Bed till he remov'd to his Grave. *Chriſt* choſe ſuch Patients as thoſe, whoſe Diſeaſes were incurable in a Courſe of Nature, to ſhew how deſperate the Caſe of fallen Mankind was when he undertook their Cure. When we were *without Strength,* as this poor Man, he ſent his Word to heal us.

2. His *Cure* was very *admirable,* v. 34. (1.) *Peter* intereſted *Chriſt* in his Caſe, and engag'd him for his Relief; *Eneas, Jeſus Chriſt maketh thee whole.* *Peter* doth not pretend to do it ſelf

by any Power of his own, but *declares* it to be *Chriſt*'s Act and Deed, and *directs* him to look up to *Chriſt* for Help, and aſſures him of an immediate Cure; not he *will* make thee, but he doth make thee whole; and a *perfect* Cure, not he makes thee *eaſy*, but he makes thee *whole*: He doth expreſs himſelf by Way of Prayer to *Chriſt* that he would make him whole, but as one having Authority from *Chriſt*, and that knew his Mind he declares him *made whole*. (2.) He order'd him to beſtir himſelf, to exert himſelf, *Ariſe and make thy Bed*, that all may ſee thou art throughly cur'd. Let none ſay that becauſe it is *Chriſt* that by the Power of his Grace works all our Works in us, therefore we have no Work, no Duty to do; for tho' *Jeſus Chriſt makes thee whole*, yet thou muſt *ariſe*, and make uſe of the Power he gives thee. Ariſe and *make thy Bed*, for another Uſe than it has been, to be a Bed of Reſt to thee, no longer a Bed of Sickneſs. (3.) Power went along with this Word, he *aroſe immediately*, and no doubt very willingly *made his own Bed*.

Thirdly, The good Influence this had upon many, *v.* 35. *All that dwelt at* Lydda *and* Saron *ſaw him and turn'd to the Lord.* We can ſcarce think that every individual Perſon in thoſe Countries took Cognizance of the Miracle, and was wrought upon by it, but many, the Generallity of the People in the Town of *Lydda*, and in the Country of *Saron* or *Sharon*, a fruitful Plain or Valley, of which it was foretold *Sharon ſhall be a Fold of Flocks*, Iſa. lxv. 10.

1. They all *made Enquiry* into the *Truth* of the *Miracle*, did not overlook it, but *ſaw him* that was healed, and ſaw that it was a miraculous Cure that was wrought upon him, by the Power of Chriſt, and in his Name, and with a Deſign to confirm and ratify that Doctrine of Chriſt which was now preach'd to the World.

2. They all ſubmitted to the convincing Proof and Evidence there was in this of the Divine Original of the Chriſtian Doctrine and *turn'd to the Lord*; to the Lord Jeſus; they turn'd from Judaiſm to Chriſtianity; they embrac'd the Doctrine of Chriſt, and ſubmitted to his Ordinances; and turn'd themſelves over to him to be rul'd, and taught, and ſav'd by him.

36 ¶ Now there was at Joppa a certain diſciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works, and alms-deeds which ſhe did. 37 And it came to paſs in thoſe days, that ſhe was ſick, and died: whom when they had waſhed, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38 And foraſmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the diſciples had heard that Peter was there, they ſent unto him two men, deſiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them. 39 Then Peter aroſe, and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows ſtood by him, weeping and ſhewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while ſhe was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down and prayed, and turning *him* to the body, ſaid Tabitha, ariſe. And ſhe opened her eyes: and when ſhe ſaw Peter, ſhe ſat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and lift her up: and when he had called the ſaints and widows, preſented her alive. 42 And it was known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43 And it came to paſs, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

Here we have a greater Miracle wrought by *Peter*, for the confirming of the Goſpel, and which exceeded the former; the raiſing of *Tabitha* to Life, when ſhe had been for ſome Time dead. Here is,

Firſt, The Life and Death, and Character of *Tabitha*, on whom this Miracle was wrought, *v.* 36, 37.

1. She liv'd at *Joppa*, a Sea-port Town in the Tribe of *Dan*, where *Jonah* took Shippin to go to *Tarſhiſh*, now call'd *Japho*.

2. Her Name was *Tabitha*, a Hebrew Name, the Greek for which is *Dorcas*, both ſignifying a *Doe*, or *Hind*, or *Deer*, a pleaſant Creature; *Nephthali* is compar'd to a *Hind or Deer*, a pleaſant Creature; *Nephthali* is compar'd to a *Hind let looſe*, *giving goodly Words*. And the Wife to the kind and tender Husband, is as the *loving Hind*, and as the *pleaſant Roe*, Prov. v. 19.

3. She was a *Diſciple*, one that had embrac'd the Faith of *Chriſt* and was baptiz'd; And not only ſo, but was eminent above many for Works of *Charity*; ſhe ſhew'd her Faith by her Works, her *good Works*, which ſhe was *full of*, that is, which ſhe abounded in; her Head was *full of*, Cares and Contrivances which way ſhe ſhould do Good. She *deviſed liberal Things*, Iſa. xxxii. 8. her Hands *were full of* good Employment, ſhe made a Buſineſs of doing Good, was never idle, having learn'd to *maintain good Works*, Tit. ii. 14. to keep up a conſtant Courſe and Method of them. She was *full of good Works*, as a Tree that's full of Fruit. Many are full of *good Words* that are empty and barren in good Works, but *Tabitha* was a great Doer, no great Talker; *non magna loquimur ſed vivimus*. Among other good Works, ſhe was remarkable for her *Alms-deeds which ſhe did*, not only her Works of *Piety*, which are good Works and the Fruits of Faith, but Works of Charity and Beneficence, flowing from Love to our Neighbour, and a holy Contempt of this World. *Obſerve*, She is prais'd not only for the *Alms* which ſhe *gave*, but for the *Alms-deeds* which ſhe *did*. Thoſe that have not Eſtates wherewith to *give* in *Charity*, may yet be able to *do* in *Charity*, *working with their Hands*, or walking with their Feet, for the Benefit of the Poor. And they who will not do a charitable *Deed* whatever they may pretend, if they were Rich would not beſtow a charitable *Gift*. She was full of *Alms-deeds*, ὧν ἐποίει *which ſhe made*; there's an Emphaſis upon her *doing them*, becauſe what her Hand found to do of this Kind ſhe did *with all her Might*, and perſever'd in. They were *Alms-deeds* not which ſhe purpos'd and deſign'd, and ſaid ſhe would do, but which ſhe did: not which ſhe began to do, but which ſhe *did*, which ſhe went through with; which ſhe *perform'd the doing of*; 2 *Cor.* viii. 11. ix. 7. This is the Life and Character of a *certain Diſciple*, and ſhould agree to all the Diſciples of Chriſt; for if thus *we bear much Fruit then are we his Diſciples indeed*, Joh. xv. 8.

4. She was remov'd in the midſt of her Uſefulneſs, *v.* 37. *in thoſe days ſhe fell ſick and dy'd.* It is promis'd to thoſe who *conſider the Poor*, not that they ſhall *never be ſick*, but that the Lord will *ſtrengthen them* upon *the Bed of Languiſhing*, at leaſt with Strength in their Soul, and ſo will *make all the Bed in their Sickneſs*, will make it eaſy, *Pſal.* xli. 1, 3. They cannot hope that they ſhall *never dye*, *merciful Men are taken away*, and merciful Women too, witneſs *Tabitha*, but they may hope that they ſhall *find Mercy of the Lord in that Day*, 2 Tim. i. 18.

5. Her Friends and thoſe about her did not preſently bury her as uſual, becauſe they were in Hopes *Peter* would come and raiſe her to Life again, but they *waſh'd* the Body according to the Cuſtom, which they ſay was with warm Water, which if there were any Life remaining in the Body would recover it; ſo that this was done to ſhew that ſhe was really and truly dead; They try'd all the uſual Methods to bring her to Life and could not. *Conclamatum eſt*. They *laid her out* in her Grave-Cloaths *in an upper Chamber*. Which Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks was probably the publick Meeting-Room for the Believers of that Town; and they laid the Body there, that *Peter* if he would come might raiſe her to Life the more ſolemnly in that Place.

Secondly, The Requeſt which her Chriſtian Friends ſent to *Peter* to come to them with all Speed, not to attend the Funeral, but if it might be to *prevent* it, *v.* 38. *Lydda* where *Peter* now was, was nigh to *Joppa*, and the *Diſciples* at *Joppa* had heard that *Peter* was there, and that he had rais'd *Eneas* from a Bed of Languiſhing, and therefore *ſent to him two Men* to make the Meſſage the more ſolemn and reſpectful, *deſiring him that he would not delay to come to them*, not telling him the Occaſion, leſt he ſhould modeſtly decline coming upon ſo great an Errand, as to raiſe the Dead; If they can but get him to them, they will leave it to him. Their Friend was dead, and it was too late to ſend for a Phyſician, but not too late to ſend for *Peter*. *Poſt mortem medicus*, is an Abſurdity, but not *Poſt mortem Apoſtolus*.

Thirdly, The Poſture in which he found the ſurviving, when he came to them, *v.* 40. *Peter aroſe and went with them*, *v.* 39. Tho' they did not tell him what they wanted him for, yet he was willing to go along with them, believing it was upon ſome good Account or other that he was ſent for. Let not faithful Miniſters grudge to be at every Body's Beck, as far as they have Ability, when the great Apoſtle *made himſelf the Servant of all*, 1 *Cor.* ix. 19. He found the Corpſe laid in the Upper-chamber, and attended by *Widows*; probably, ſuch as were in the Communion of the Church, poor Widows; there they were.

1. *Commending* the Deceas'd; A good Work, when there was that in them which was truly *commendable*, and *recommendable* to Imitation, and it is done modeſtly and ſoberly, and without Flattery of the Survivors, or any ſiniſter Intention, but purely for the Glory of GOD, and the exciting of others to that which is virtuous and praiſe-worthy. The Commendation of *Tabitha*, was like her own Virtues, not *in Word*, but in *Deed*: Here were no Encomiums of her in Orations, or Poems incrib'd to her Memory; but *the Widows ſhew'd the Coats and Garments which ſhe made* for them and beſtow'd upon them, *while ſhe was with them*. It was the Comfort of *Job* while he liv'd, that *the Loins of the Poor bleſs'd him*, becauſe they were *warm'd with the Fleece of his Sheep*, Job. xxxi. 20. And here it was the Credit of *Tabitha* when ſhe was dead, that the Backs of the Widows prais'd her for the Garments which ſhe made them. And thoſe are certainly *beſt prais'd*, whoſe *own Works praiſe them in the Gates*, whether others Words do or no. And it is much more honourable to cloath a Company of crazy Widows with needful Cloathing, for Night and Day, who will pray for their Benefactors when they do not ſee them, than to cloath a Company of lazy Footmen with rich Liveries, who perhaps behind their Backs will curſe them that clothe them, *Eccleſ.* vii. 21. and 'tis what all that are Wiſe and Good will take a greater Pleaſure in; for Goodneſs is true Greatneſs, and will paſs better in the Account ſhortly. *Obſerve*, (1.) Into what Channel *Tabitha* turn'd much of her Charity,

doubtleſs there were other Inſtances of her Alms-deeds which ſhe did, but this was now produc'd: She did as it ſhould ſeem (with her own Hands) *make Coats and Garments* for poor Widows, who perhaps with their our Labour could make a ſhift to get their Bread, but could not earn enough to buy Clothes. And this is an excellent Piece of Charity, *If thou ſeeſt the Naked, that thou cover him*, Iſa. lviii. 7. and not think it enough to ſay, *Be ye warmed*, Jam. ii. 15, 2. (16.) What a grateful Senſe the Poor had of her Kindneſs; *They ſhew'd the Coats*, nor aſham'd to own that they were indebted to her for the Cloaths on their Backs. Thoſe are horribly ungrateful indeed that have *Kindneſs ſhewn* them, and will not make at leaſt an Acknowledgment of it by *ſhewing* the *Kindneſs* that is done 'em, as theſe Widows here did. They that receive Alms are not oblig'd ſo induſtriouſly to conceal it, as thoſe are who give Alms. When the Poor reflect upon the rich as uncharitable, and unmerciful, they ought to reflect upon themſelves, and conſider whether they are not unthankful and ungrateful. Their ſhewing their *Coats* and *Garments* which *Dorcas* made, tended to the Praiſe not only of her *Charity*, but of her *Induſtry*, according to the Character of the virtuous Woman, that ſhe *layeth her Hands to the Spindle*, or at leaſt to the *Needle*, and then *ſtretcheth out her Hand to the Poor*, and *reacheth forth her Hands to the Needy*, of what ſhe has work'd; and when GOD and the Poor have thus had their Due, *ſhe makes herſelf Coverings of Tapeſtry*, and *her own Cloathing as Silk and Purple*, Prov. xxxi. 19, 20, 21, 22.

2. They were here *lamenting* the Loſs of her; The *Widows* ſtood by *Peter weeping*. When the *Merciful* are taken away, it ſhould be *laid to Heart*, eſpecially by thoſe to whom they have been in a particular Manner merciful. They needed not to *weep for her*, ſhe was taken from the Evil to come; ſhe *reſts from her Labours*, and *her Works follow her*, beſides thoſe ſhe leaves behind her; but they weep for themſelves and for their Children, who will ſoon find the Want of ſuch a good Woman, that had not left her Fellow. *Obſerve*, They take Notice of what good *Dorcas* did *while ſhe was with them*; but now ſhe is *gone from them*, and that's the Grief. Thoſe that are charitable will find that the *Poor they have always with them*, but 'tis well if thoſe that are poor find that the *Charitable they have always with them*. We muſt make a good Uſe of the Lights that *yet a little while are with us*, becauſe they will not be always *with us*, will not be *long with us*. And when they are gone, we ſhall think what they did when they were with us. It ſhould ſeem the Widows wept before *Peter* as an Inducement to him, if he could do any thing, to *have Compaſſion on them, and help them*, and reſtore One to them that us'd to have Compaſſion on them. When charitable People are dead, there's no praying them to Life again; but when they are ſick, that Piece of Gratitude is owing them to pray for their Recovery, that if it be the Will of GOD, thoſe may be ſpar'd to live, who can ill be ſpar'd to dye.

Fourthly, The Manner how ſhe was rais'd to Life.

1. *Privately*, She was laid in the Upper room, where they us'd to have their publick Meetings, and it ſhould ſeem there was great Crouding about the dead Body, in Expectation what would be done; but *Peter* put them all forth, all the weeping Widows, all but ſome few Relations of the Family, or perhaps the Heads of the Church, to joyn with him in Prayer; as Chriſt did, *Mat.* ix. 25. Thus *Peter* declin'd every thing that look'd like Vainglory and Oſtentation; they came to *ſee*, but he did not come to *be ſeen*. He put them all forth, that he might with the more Freedom pour out his Soul before GOD in Prayer upon this Occaſion, and not be diſturb'd with their noiſy and clamorous Lamentations.

2. By *Prayer*; in his healing *Eneas* there was an implicit Prayer, but in this greater Work, he addreſs'd himſelf to GOD by ſolemn Prayer, as *Chriſt* when he rais'd *Lazarus*; but *Chriſt*'s Prayer was with the Authority of a Son, who *quickens whom he will*: *Peter*'s with the Submiſſion of a Servant, who is under Direction, and therefore he *kneel'd down and pray'd*.

3. By *the Word*, a quickening Word, a Word which is Spirit and Life; He *turn'd to the Body*, which intimates, that when he pray'd, he *turn'd from it*; Leſt the Sight of it ſhould diſcourage his Faith, he look'd another Way, to teach us, like *Abraham, againſt Hope, to believe in Hope*, and overlook the Difficulties that lie in the Way, *not conſidering the Body as now dead*, leſt we ſhould *ſtagger at the Promiſe*, Rom. iv. 19, 20. But when he had pray'd, he *turn'd to the Body*, and ſpake in his Maſter's Name, and according to his Example, *Tabitha, ariſe*; Return to Life again. Power went along with this Word, and ſhe came to Life, opened her Eyes which Death had clos'd. Thus in the raiſing of dead Souls of Spiritual Life, the firſt Sign of Life, is the opening of the Eyes of the Mind, *Acts* xxi. 18. When ſhe *ſaw* Peter, ſhe *ſate up*, to ſhew that ſhe was really and truly alive. And, *v.* 41. He *gave her his Hand and lift her up*; not as if ſhe labour'd under any remaining Weakneſs; but thus he would as it were welcome her to Life again, and give her the right Hand of Fellowſhip among the Living, from whom ſhe had been cut off. And Laſtly, He *call'd the Saints and Widows*, who were all in Sorrow for her Death, and *preſented her alive* to them, to their great Comfort; particularly of the *Widows*, who were all in Sorrow for her Death, and *preſented her alive* to them, to their great Comfort; particularly of the *Widows*, who laid her Death much to Heart, *v.* 41. to them he *preſented her*, as *Elijah*, 1 Kin. xvii. 23. and *Eliſha*, 2 Kin. iv. 36. and *Chriſt*, Luke vii. 15. preſented the dead Sons alive to their Mothers. And the greateſt Joy and Satisfaction is expreſs'd by *Life from the Dead*.

Fifthly, The good Effect of this Miracle.

1. *Many* were by it convinc'd of the Truth of the Goſpel, that it was from Heaven, and not of Men, and *believ'd in the Lord* *v.* 42. The Thing was *known throughout all* Joppa; it would be in every Body's Mouth quickly, and it being a Town of Seafaring Men, the Notice of it would be the ſooner carry'd from thence to other Countries; and tho' ſome never minded it, many were wrought upon by it. This was the End of Miracles, to confirm a Divine Revelation.

2. *Peter* was hereby induc'd to continue ſome time in this City, *v.* 43. Finding that a Door of Opportunity was open'd for him there, he tarry'd there *many Days*, till he was ſent thence, and ſent for from thence upon Buſineſs to another Place. He *tarry'd not* in the Houſe of *Tabitha*, tho' ſhe was *rich*, leſt he ſhould ſeem to ſeek his own Glory; but he took up his Lodging with one *Simon* a *Tanner*, an ordinary Tradeſman, which is an Inſtance of his Condeſcention and Humility. And hereby he has taught us, not to *mind high Things*, but to *condeſcend to them of low Eſtate*, Rom. xiii. 16. And tho' *Peter* might ſeem to be bury'd in Obſcurity here in the Houſe of a poor Tanner by the Sea-ſide; yet hence GOD fetch'd him to a noble Piece of Service, in the next Chapter; for *thoſe that humble themſelves ſhall be exalted.*

CHAP. X.

'Tis a Turn very new and remarkable, which the Story of this Chapter gives to the Acts of the Apoſtles; Hitherto both at Jeruſalem *and every where elſe where the Miniſters of Chriſt came, they preach'd the Goſpel only to the* Jews, *or thoſe* Greeks *that were circumcis'd and proſelyted to the* Jews *Religion; But now, Lo, we turn to the* Gentiles; *and to them the* Door of Faith *is here* open'd: *Good News indeed to us* Sinners of the Gentiles. *The Apoſtle* Peter *is the Man that is firſt employ'd to admit uncircumcis'd* Gentiles *into the Chriſtian Church; and* Cornelius, *a* Roman Centurion, *or Colonel, is the firſt that with his Family and Friends are ſo admitted, Now here we are told,* (1.) *How* Cornelius *was directed by a Viſion to ſend for* Peter, *and did ſend for him acordingly,* v. 1—8. (2.) *How* Peter *was directed by a Viſion to go to* Cornelius, *tho' he was a* Gentile, *without making any Scruple of it; and did go accordingly,* v. 9—23. (3.) *The happy Interview between* Peter *preach'd in the Houſe of* Cornelius *to him and to his Friends,* v. 34—43. (5.) *The Baptizing of* Cornelius *and his Friends with the Holy Ghoſt firſt, and then with Water,* v. 44—48.

THERE was a certain man in Ceſaria, called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*. 2 A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his Houſe, which gave much alms to the people, and pray'd to God always. 3 He ſaw in a viſion evidently, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in to him, and ſaying unto him, Cornelius. 4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and ſaid, What is it, Lord? And he ſaid unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. 5 And now ſend men to Joppa and call for one Simon, whoſe ſirname is Peter: 6 He lodged with one Simon a tanner, whoſe houſe is by the ſea ſide; he ſhall tell thee what thou oughteſt to do. 7 And when the angel, which ſpaken to Cornelius, was departed, he called two of his houſhold ſervants, and a devout ſouldier of them that waited on him continually; 8 And when he had declared all *theſe* things unto them, he ſent them to Joppa.

The bringing of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, and the bringing of them who had been *Strangers* and *Foreigners* to be *Fellow Citizens* with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of GOD, was ſuch a Myſtery to the Apoſtles themſelves, and ſuch a Surprize, *Eph.* iii. 3, 6. that it concerns us carefully to obſerve all the Circumſtances of the Beginning of this great Work, this Part of the *Myſtery of Godlineſs*, Chriſt *preach'd to the Gentiles, and believed on in the World*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. It is not unlikely, that ſome Gentiles might before now ſtep into a *Synagogue* of the *Jews*, and hear the Goſpel preach'd, but the Goſpel was never yet *deſignedly* preach'd to the Gentiles, nor any of them baptiz'd; *Cornelius* was the firſt. And here we have.

Firſt, An Account given us of this *Cornelius*, who and what he was that was the Firſt-born of the Gentiles to Chriſt; We are here told, that he was a great Man, and a good Man; two Characters that ſeldom meet, but here they did; and where they do meet they put a Luſter upon each other; Goodneſs makes

Greatneſs truly valuable, and Greatneſs makes Goodneſs much more ſerviceable.

1. *Cornelius* was an Officer of the Army, *v.* 1. He was at preſent quartered in *Caſarea*, a ſtrong City, lately re-edify'd and fortify'd by *Herod the Great*, and call'd *Cæſarea* in Honour of *Auguſtus Cæſar*. It lay upon the Sea-ſhore, very convenient for the keeping up of a Correſpondence between *Rome* and its Conqueſts in thoſe Parts. The *Roman* Governour or Proconſul, ordinarily reſided here, *Acts* xxiii. 23, 24. xxiv. 6. Here there was a *Band*, or *Cohort*, or *Regiment* of the *Roman* Army, which probably was the Governor's Life-Guard, and is here call'd the *Italian Band*, becauſe that they might be the more ſure of their Fidelity, they were all native *Romans* or *Italians*; *Cornelius* had a Command in this Part of the Army. His Name *Cornelius*, was much us'd among the *Romans*, among ſome of the moſt Antient and Noble Families. He was an Officer of conſiderable Rank and Figure, a *Centurion*. We read of one in our Saviour's Time of that Rank whom he gave a great Commendation of, *Matth.* viii. 10. When a Gentile muſt be pitch'd upon to receive the Goſpel firſt, 'tis not a Gentile Philoſopher, much leſs a Gentile Prieſt, who are *bigotted* to their Notions and Worſhips, and *prejudic'd* againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt; but a *Gentile Soldier*, who is a Man of more *free Thought*, and he that truly is ſo, when the Chriſtian Doctrine is fairly ſet before him, cannot but receive it, and bid it welcome. Fiſhermen, unlearned and ignorant Men, were the firſt of the Jewiſh Converts, but not ſo of the Gentiles; for the World ſhall know that the Goſpel has that in it which may recommend it to Men of polite Learning and a liberal Education, as we have Reaſon to think this *Centurion* was. Let not Soldiers and Officers of the Army plead that their Employment frees them from the Reſtraints which ſome others are under, and giving them an opportunity of living more at large, may excuſe them if they be not religious; for here was an Officer of the Army that embrac'd Chriſtianity and yet was neither turn'd out of his Place, nor turn'd himſelf out. And, laſtly, it was a Mortification to the *Jews*, that not only the Gentiles were taken into the Church, but the firſt that was taken in, was an Officer of the *Roman* Army, which was to them the *Abomination* of *Deſolation*.

2. He was, according to the Meaſure of the Light he had, a *religious* Man; 'Tis a very good Character that is given of him, *v.* 2. He was no *Idolater*, no Worſhipper of Falſe Gods, or Images, nor allow'd himſelf in any of thoſe Immoralities which the greater Part of the Gentile World were given up to, to puniſh them for their Idolatry. (1.) He was poſſeſs'd with a Principle of Regard to the True and Living GOD; He was *a devout Man, and one that feared GOD*; he believ'd in one GOD, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and had a Reverence of his Glory, and Authority, and a dread of offending him by Sin; and tho' he was a Soldier, it was no Diminution to the Credit of his Valour to tremble before GOD. (2.) He kept up Religion in his Family; He *fear'd GOD with all his Houſe*. He would not admit any Idolaters under his Roof; but took Care that not himſelf only, but all his, ſhould ſerve the LORD. Every good Man will do what he can that thoſe about him may be good too. (3.) He was a very charitable Man; He *gave much Alms to the People*; the People of the *Jews*, notwithſtanding the Singularities of their Religion. Tho' he was a Gentile he was willing to contribute to the Relief of one that was a real Object of Charity, without asking, What Religion he was of? (4.) He was much in Prayer; He *pray'd to GOD always*. He kept up ſtated Times for Prayer, and was conſtant to them. *Note*, Wherever the Fear of GOD rules in the Heart, it will appear both in Works of Charity and of Piety, and neither will excuſe us from the Other.

Secondly, The Orders given him from Heaven by the Miniſtry of an Angel, to ſend for *Peter* to come to him; which he would never have done, if he had not been thus directed to do it. *Obſerve*,

1. How, and in what Way, theſe Orders were given him; He had *a Viſion*, in which an *Angel* deliver'd them to him, 'twas about the *ninth Hour of the Day*; at three of the Clock in the Afternoon, which is with us an Hour of Buſineſs and Converſation; but then, becauſe it was in the Temple, the Time of the Offering of the Evening-Sacrifice, it was made by devout People, an *Hour of Prayer*, to intimate, that all our Prayers are to be offer'd up in the Virtue of the Great Sacrifice. *Cornelius* was now at Prayer, ſo he tells us himſelf, *v.* 30. Now here we are told, (1.) That an Angel of GOD *came in to him*, By the Brightneſs of his Countenance, and the manner of his coming in, he knew him to be ſomething more than a Man, and therefore nothing leſs than an Angel, an Expreſs from Heaven. (2.) That he *ſaw him evidently*, with his bodily Eyes, not in a *Dream* preſented to his Imagination; but in a *Viſion*, preſented to his Sight, for his greater Satisfaction; it carry'd its own Evidence along with it. (3.) That he call'd him by his Name, *Cornelius*, to intimate the particular Notice GOD took of him. (4.) That this put *Cornelius* for the preſent into ſome Confuſion, *v.* 4. *When he look'd on him, he was afraid*; The wiſeſt and beſt Men have been ſtruck with Fear upon the Appearance of any extraordinary Meſſenger from Heaven; and juſtly, for ſinful Man knows he has no Reaſon to expect any good Tydings from thence. And therefore *Cornelius* cries, *What is it Lord?* What is the Matter? This he ſpeaks as one afraid of ſomething amiſs, and long'd to be eas'd of that Fear, by knowing the Truth: Or, as one deſirous to know the Mind of GOD, and ready to comply with it, as *Joſhua*, *What ſaith my Lord unto his Servant?* And *Samuel*, *Speak, for thy Servant heareth*.

2. What the Meſſage was, that was deliver'd him.

1. He is aſſur'd, that GOD accepts of him in walking according to the Light he had, *v.* 4. *Thy Prayers and thine Alms are come up for a Memorial before GOD*. Obſerve, *Prayers* and *Alms* muſt go together. We muſt follow our *Prayers with Alms*; for the *Faſt* that *GOD hath choſen*, is to *draw out the Soul to the Hungry*, Iſa, lviii. 6, 7. 'Tis not enough to pray that what we have may be ſanctify'd to us, but we muſt *give Alms of ſuch Things as we have*; and then behold, *all Things are clean to us*, Luke xi. 41. And we muſt follow our *Alms* with our *Prayers*, that GOD would graciouſly accept them, and that they may be bleſſed to thoſe to whom they are given. *Cornelius* pray'd, and *gave Alms*, not as the *Phariſees*, to be ſeen of Men, but in Sincerity as unto GOD; and he is here told, That they were *come up for a Memorial before GOD*; they were upon Record in Heaven, in the *Book of Remembrance* that is written there for all that *fear GOD*, and ſhall be remembred to his Advantage; thy Prayers ſhall be *anſwer'd*, and thine Alms *recompenc'd*. The Sacrifices under the Law, are ſaid to be for a *Memorial*, See *Lev.* ii. 9, 16. *v.* 12. vi. 15. And Prayers and Alms are our Spiritual Offerings, which GOD is pleas'd to take Cognizance of, and have Regard to. The Divine Revelation communicated to the *Jews*, as far as the Gentiles were concern'd in it, not only as it directed and improv'd the Light and Law of Nature, but as it promis'd a *Meſſiah* to come, *Cornelius* believ'd and ſubmitted to; what he did, he did in that Faith, and was accepted of GOD in it; for the Gentiles to whom the *Law of Moſes* came, were not oblig'd to become *Circumciſed Jews*, as thoſe to whom the *Goſpel of Chriſt* comes, are to become *Baptiz'd Chriſtians*.

2. He is appointed to enquire after a further Diſcovery of Divine Grace, now lately made to the World, *v.* 5, 6. He muſt *ſend* forthwith *to Joppa*, and enquire for one *Simon Peter*, he *lodgeth at the Houſe of one* Simon *a Tanner*; his Houſe is *by the Sea-ſide*, and if he be ſent for, he will come; and when he comes, *he ſhall tell thee what thou oughteſt to do*, in anſwer to thy Queſtion, *What is it Lord?* Now here are two Things very ſurprizing, and well worthy our Conſideration.

(1.) *Cornelius* prays and gives Alms, in the Fear of GOD; is Religious himſelf, and keeps up Religion in his Family; and all this ſo as to be accepted of GOD in it, and yet there is ſomething further that *he ought to do*; he ought to embrace the Chriſtian Religion, now GOD has eſtabliſhed it among Men. Not, he may do it if he pleaſes, it will be an Improvement and Entertainment to him; but he *muſt* do it, 'tis indiſpenſably neceſſary to his Acceptance with GOD for the future, tho' he has been accepted in his Services hitherto. He that believ'd the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, muſt now believe the Performance of that Promiſe. Now God had given a further *Record concerning his Son*, than what had been given in the *Old Teſtament* Prophecies, He requires that we receive that when it is brought to us: And now neither our *Prayers* nor our *Alms*, *come up for a Memorial before* GOD unleſs we believe in Jeſus Chriſt; for 'tis that *further* which we *ought to do. This is his Commandment, That we believe*. Prayers and Alms are accepted from thoſe that believe that *the Lord is God* and have not Opportunity of knowing more. But from thoſe to whom it is preach'd, That *Jeſus is Chriſt*, 'tis neceſſary to the Acceptance of their Perſons, Prayers and Alms, that they believe That, and reſt upon him alone for Acceptance.

(2.) *Cornelius* has now an Angel from Heaven talking to him, and yet he muſt not receive the Goſpel of Chriſt from this Angel, nor be told by him what he ought to do, but all that the Angel has to ſay is, Send for *Peter*, and he ſhall *tell thee*. As the former Obſervation puts a mighty Honour upon the Goſpel ſo doth this upon the Goſpel Miniſtry; 'twas not to the higheſt of Angels, but to them who were leſs than the leaſt of all Saints, that this Grace was given to *preach among the* Gentiles *the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt*, Eph. iii. 8. that the Excellency of the Power might be of GOD, and the Dignity of an Inſtitution of *Chriſt* ſupported; for *unto the Angels hath he not put in Subjection the World to come*, Heb. ii. 5. but to the *Son of Man* as the Sovereign, and the *Sons of Men* as his Agents and Miniſters of State, whoſe *Terror* ſhall *not make us afraid*, nor *their Hand be heavy upon us*, as this Angel now was to *Cornelius*. And as it was an Honour to the Apoſtle that he muſt preach that which an Angel might not, ſo it was a further Honour that an Angel was diſpatch'd on Purpoſe from Heaven to order him to be ſent for. To bring a faithful Miniſter and a willing People together is a Work worthy of an Angel, and what therefore the greateſt of Men ſhould be glad to be employ'd in.

Thirdly, His immediate Obedience to theſe Orders, *v.* 7, 8. He ſent with all Speed to *Joppa* to fetch *Peter* to him. Had he himſelf only been concern'd, he would have gone to *Joppa* to him. But he had a Family, and *Kinſmen*, and *Friends*, *v.* 24. a little Congregation of them that could not go with him to *Joppa*, and therefore he ſends for *Peter*. *Obſerve*.

1. *When* he ſent; As ſoon as ever the *Angel which ſpoke unto him was departed.* Without Diſpute or Delay, he was obedient to the Heavenly Viſion. He perceiv'd by what the Angel ſaid, he was to have ſome further Work preſcrib'd him, and he long'd to have it told him. He *made haſte,* and *delayed not* to do this Commandment. In any Affair wherein our Souls are concern'd, 'tis good for us not to *loſe Time.*

2. Whom he ſent. *Two of his Houſhold Servants,* who all feared GOD, and a *devout Soldier,* one of them that *waited on him continually. Obſerve,* a *Devout Centurion,* had *devout Soldiers*; A little Devotion commonly goes a great Way with Soldiers, But there would be more of it in the Soldiers, if there were but more of it in the Commanders. Officers in an Army that have ſuch a great Power over the Soldiers, as we find the *Centurion* had, *Matth.* viii. 9. have a great Opportunity of promoting Religion, at leaſt of reſtraining Vice and Profaneneſs in thoſe under their Command, if they would but improve it. *Obſerve,* when this *Centurion* was to chooſe ſome of his Soldiers to attend his Perſon and to be always about him, he pitch'd upon ſuch of them as were *Devout,* they ſhall be prefer'd and countenanc'd, to encourage others to be ſo; he went by *David*'s Rule, *Pſal.* ci. 6. *Mine Eye ſhall be upon the Faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me.*

3. What Inſtructions he gave them, *v.* 8. *he declar'd all theſe Things unto them,* told them of the Viſion he had, and the Orders given him to ſend for *Peter,* becauſe *Peter*'s coming was a Thing in which they were concern'd, for they had Souls to ſave as well as he. Therefore he doth not only tell them where to find *Peter,* which he might have thought it enough to do, the *Servant knows not what his Lord doth*; but he tells them on what Errand he was to come, that they might importune him.

9 ¶ On the morrow as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the houſe top to pray, about the ſixth hour. 10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance. 11 And ſaw heaven opened, and a certain veſſel deſcending unto him, as it had been a great ſheet, knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: 12 Wherein were all manner of four footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him, Riſe, Peter, kill and eat. 14 But Peter ſaid, Not ſo Lord: for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. 15 And the voice *ſpeak* unto him again the ſecond time, What God hath cleanſed, *that* call not thou common. 16 This was done thrice: and the veſſel was received up again into heaven. 17 Now while Peter doubted in himſelf what this viſion which he had ſeen ſhould mean; behold, the men, which were ſent from Cornelius, had made enquiry for Simons houſe, and ſtood before the gate. 18 And called, and asked whether Simon which was ſirnamed Peter, were lodged there.

Cornelius had receiv'd poſitive Orders from Heaven to ſend for *Peter,* whom otherwiſe he had not heard of, or at leaſt not heeded; But here is another Difficulty that lyes in the Way of bringing them together. The Queſtion is, Whether *Peter* will come to *Cornelius* when he is ſent for? not as if he thinks it below him to come at a Beck, or as if he is afraid to preach his Doctrine to a polite Man as *Cornelius* was; But it ſticks at a Point of Conſcience; *Cornelius* is a very worthy Man, and has many good Qualities, But he is a *Gentile,* he is not circumciſed: And becauſe GOD in his Law had forbidden his People to aſſociate with idolatrous Nations, they would not keep Company with any but thoſe of their own Religion, tho' they were never ſo deſerving; and carried the Matter ſo far, that they made even the involuntary Touch of a *Gentile* to contract a ceremonial Pollution, *Joh.* xviii. 28. *Peter* had not got over this ſtingy bigotted Notion of his Countrymen, and therefore will be ſhy of coming to *Cornelius.* Now to remove this Difficulty he has a Viſion here, to prepare him to receive the Meſſage ſent him by *Cornelius,* as *Ananias* had to prepare him to go to *Paul.* The Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament* had ſpoken plainly of the bringing in of the *Gentiles* into the Church, *Chriſt* had given him plain intimations of it, when he order'd them to *teach all Nations,* and yet even *Peter* himſelf that knew ſo much of his Maſter's Mind cannot underſtand it, till it was here *reveal'd* by Viſion, *that the* Gentiles *ſhould be Fellow-Heirs,* Eph. iii. 6. Now here *Obſerve,*

Firſt, The Circumſtances of this Viſion.

1. It was when the Meſſengers ſent from *Cornelius were now near the City.* v. 9. *Peter* know nothing of their Approach, and they knew nothing of his Praying, but He that knew both him and them was preparing Things for the Interview, and facilitating the End of their Negotiation. To all GOD's Purpoſes *there is a Time,* a proper Time. And he is pleas'd often to bring Things to the Minds of his Miniſters which they had not thought of juſt then when they have Occaſion to uſe them.

2. It was when *Peter went up upon the Houſe top to Pray,* about Noon. (1.) *Peter* was much in Prayer, much in ſecret Prayer, tho' he had a great deal of publick Work upon his Hands. (2.) He pray'd *about the Sixth Hour,* according to *David*'s Example, who not only *Morning* and *Evening,* but *at Noon* addreſs'd himſelf to GOD by *Prayer,* Pſal. lv. 17. From Morning to Night we would think to be too long to be without Meat, yet who thinks 'tis too long to be without Prayer. (3.) He pray'd *upon the Houſe top*; Thither he retir'd for Privacy, where he could neither hear nor be heard, and ſo might avoid both Diſtraction and Oſtentation. There upon the Roof of the Houſe he had a full View of the Heavens, which might aſſiſt his pious Adoration of the GOD he *pray'd to,* and there he had alſo a full View of the City and Country which might aſſiſt his pious Compaſſion of the People he had *pray'd for.* (4.) He had this Viſion immediately after he had *pray'd,* as an Anſwer to his Prayer for the ſpreading of the Goſpel; And becauſe the Aſcent of the Heart the GOD in Prayer is an excellent Preparative to receive the Diſcoveries of the Divine Grace and Favour.

3. It was when he became *very hungry,* and was waiting for his Dinner, *v.* 10. probably he had not *eaten* before, that Day, tho' doubtleſs he had *pray'd* before; And now he *would have eaten,* ἤθελε γεύσασθαι, *he would have taſted,* which intimates his great Moderation and Temperance in eating; when he was *very hungry,* yet he would be content with a little, with a Taſte, and would not *fly upon the Spoil.* Now this Hunger was a proper inlet to the Viſion about Meats, as Chriſt's Hunger in the Wilderneſs was to Satan's Temptations to *turn Stones into Bread.*

Secondly, The Viſion itſelf, which was not ſo plain as that to *Cornelius,* but more figurative and enigmatical, to make the deeper Impreſſion.

1. He *fell into a Trance,* or *Extaſy,* not of Terror, but of Contemplation, with which he was ſo intirely ſwallow'd up as not only not to be regardful, but not to be ſenſible of external Things; He quite loſt himſelf to this World, and ſo had his Mind intirely free for Converſe with Divine Things, as *Adam* in Innocency, when the deep Sleep fell upon him. The more *clear* we get of the World, the more *near* we get to Heaven, whether *Peter* was now *in the Body* or *out of the Body,* he could not himſelf tell, much leſs can we, 2 *Cor.* xii. 2, 3. ſee *Gen.* xv. 12. *Acts* xxii. 17.

2. He ſaw *Heaven open'd*; that he might be ſure his Authority to go to *Cornelius was indeed from Heaven*; That it was a Divine Light which alter'd his Sentiments, and a Divine Power that gave him his Commiſſion. The Opening of the Heavens ſignify'd the Opening of a Myſtery that had been hid, *Rom.* xvi. 20.

3. He ſaw a *great Sheet full of all manner of Living Creatures,* which *deſcended from Heaven,* and was *let down to him,* to *the Earth, i. e.* to the Roof of the Houſe where he now was. Here were not only *Beaſts of the Earth,* but Fowls of the Air, which might have flown away, laid at his Feet; and not only tame Beaſts, but wild. Here were no *Fiſhes of the Sea,* becauſe there were none of them in particular unclean, but whatever had Fins and Scales were allow'd to be eaten. Some make this *Sheet* thus fill'd to repreſent the Church of Chriſt. It comes down from Heaven, from Heaven *open'd,* not only to ſend it *down, Rev.* xxi. 2. but to receive Souls ſent *up* from it; 'Tis *Knit at the Four Corners,* to *receive* thoſe from all Parts of the World that are willing to be added to it; and to *retain* and keep thoſe ſafe that are taken in to it, that they may not fall out; And in this we find ſome of all Countries, Nations and Language, without any Diſtinction of *Greek* or *Jew,* or any Diſadvantage put upon *Barbarian,* or *Scythian,* Col. iii. 2. The Net of the Goſpel incloſeth all both *bad* and *good,* thoſe that before were *clean,* and *unclean.* Or it may be apply'd to the Bounty of the Divine Providence, which antecedently to the Prohibitions of the Ceremonial Law had given to Man a Liberty to uſe all the Creatures, to which by the cancelling of that Law we are now reſtor'd. By this Viſion we are taught to ſee all the Benefit and Service we have from the inferiour Creatures coming down to us from Heaven, 'Tis the Gift of GOD who made them, made them fit for us, and then gave to Man a Right to them, and Dominion over them. Lord, what is Man that he ſhould be thus magnify'd, *Pſal.* viii. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. How would it double our Comfort in the Creatures, and our Obligations to ſerve GOD in the Uſe of them, to ſee them thus *let down to us out of Heaven.*

4. *Peter* was order'd by a Voice from Heaven to make Uſe of this Plenty and Variety which GOD had ſent him. *v.* 13. *Riſe,* Peter, *kill and eat,* without putting any Difference between clean and unclean, take which thou haſt moſt Mind to. The Diſtinction of Meats which the Law made was intended to put a Difference between *Jew* and *Gentiles,* that it might be difficult to them to dine and ſup with a *Gentile,* becauſe they would have that ſet before them which they were not allow'd to eat; And now the taking off of that Prohibition was a plain Allowance to converſe with the *Gentiles,* and to be free and familiar with them, now they might *fare as they far'd,* and therefore might *eat with them,* and be Fellow-Commoners with them.

5. *Peter* ſtuck to his Principles, and would by no Means hearken to the Motion, tho' he was Hungry, *v.* 14. *Not ſo Lord.* Tho' Hunger will break through Stone Walls, *God's Laws* ſhould be to us a ſtronger Fence than Stone-Walls, and not ſo eaſily broken through. And he will adhere to *God's Laws*, tho' he had a Countermand by a *Voice from Heaven*, not knowing at firſt but that *Kill and Eat* was a Command of Tryal whether he would adhere to the *more ſure Word* the Written Law, and if ſo his Anſwer had been very good, *Not ſo Lord*; Temptations to *eat forbidden Fruit* muſt not be parleyed with, but peremptorily rejected; we muſt ſtartle at the Thought of it, *Not ſo Lord.* The Reaſon he gives is, *For I have never eaten any Thing that is common or unclean*; Hitherto I have kept my Integrity in this Matter, and will ſtill keep it. If GOD by his Grace has preſerv'd us from groſs Sin unto this Day, we ſhould uſe that as an Argument with our ſelves, to abſtain from all Appearance of Evil. So ſtrict were the pious *Jews* in this Matter that the ſeven Brethren, thoſe *Glorious Martyrs* under *Antiochus*, choſe rather to be tortur'd to Death in the moſt cruel Manner that ever was than to *eat Swines Fleſh*, becauſe it was forbidden by the Law; No Wonder then that *Peter* ſaith it with ſo much Pleaſure, that his Conſcience could witneſs for him, that he had never gratify'd his Appetite with any forbidden Food.

6. GOD by a *Second Voice* from Heaven proclaim'd the *Repeal* of the Law in this Caſe, *v.* 15. *What God hath cleans'd, that call not thou common.* He that *made* the Law might *alter* it when he pleas'd, and reduce the Matter to its *firſt State*, GOD had for Reaſons ſuited to the *Old Teſtament* Diſpenſation, reſtrain'd the *Jews* from Eating ſuch and ſuch Meats, which while that Diſpenſation laſted they were obblig'd in Conſcience to ſubmit to; But he has now for Reaſons ſuited to the *New Teſtament* Diſpenſation, taken off that Reſtraint, and ſet the Matter at large, has *cleans'd* that which was before *polluted* to us, and we ought to make Uſe of, and *ſtand faſt in the Liberty wherewith Chriſt has made us Free*, and not *call that common* or *unclean* which GOD has now declared *clean. Note*, We ought to welcome it as a great Mercy, that by the Goſpel of *Chriſt* we are freed from the Diſtinction of Meats, which was made by the Law of *Moſes*, and that now *every Creature of God is good and nothing to be refus'd*; not ſo much becauſe hereby we gain the uſe of Swines Fleſh, Hares, Rabbets, and other pleaſant and wholeſome Food for our Bodies, But chiefly becauſe Conſcience is hereby freed from a Yoke in Things of this Nature, that we might ſerve GOD *without Fear.* Tho' the Goſpel has made Duties which were not ſo by the Law of Nature, yet it has not like the Law of *Moſes* made Sins that were not ſo. Thoſe who command to abſtain from ſome Kinds of Meats, at ſome Times of the Year, and place Religion in it, call that *common which God hath cleans'd*, and in that Error more than in any Truth are the Succeſſors of *Peter.*

7. This was *done thrice*, v. 16. The Sheet was drawn up a little Way, and let down again the ſecond Time, and ſo the third Time, with the ſame Call to him to *Kill and Eat*, and the ſame Reaſon, that *what God hath cleanſed* we muſt not *call common*; But whether *Peter*'s Refuſal was repeated the ſecond and third Time is not certain; ſure it was not, when his Objection had the firſt time receiv'd ſuch a ſatisfactory Anſwer. The Doubling of *Pharaoh*'s Dream, and ſo the Trebling of *Peter*'s Viſion was to ſhew that the Thing was *certain*, and engage him to take ſo much the more Notice of it. The Inſtructions given us in the Things of GOD whether by the Ear in the Preaching of the Word, or by the Eye in Sacraments, need to be oft repeated; Precept muſt be upon Precept, and Line upon Line. But at laſt *the Veſſel was receiv'd up into Heaven.* Thoſe who make this Veſſel to repreſent the Church including both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, as this did both clean and unclean Creatures, make this very aptly to ſignify the Admiſſion of the believing *Gentiles* into the Church, and *into Heaven* too, into the *Jeruſalem above*; Chriſt has *open'd the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers*, and there we ſhall find, beſides thoſe that are ſealed out of all the Tribes of *Iſrael*, an *innumerable Company out of every Nation.* Rev. vii. 9. but they are ſuch as *God has cleans'd.*

Thirdly, The Providence which very opportunely explain'd this Viſion, and gave *Peter* to underſtand the Intention of it, *v.* 17, 18.

1. What Chriſt did, *Peter* knew not *juſt then*, (John xiii. 7.) *He doubted within himſelf what this Viſion which he had ſeen ſhould mean.* He had no Reaſon to doubt the Truth of it, that it was a *Heavenly Viſion*, all his Doubt was concerning the Meaning of it *Note*, Chriſt reveals himſelf to his People *by degrees*, and not all at once; and leaves them to *doubt* a while, to ruminate upon a Thing, and debate it too and fro in their own Minds before he clears it up to them.

2. Yet he was made to *know preſently*; for the Men which were ſent from *Cornelius* were juſt now come to the Houſe, and were at the Gate enquiring whether *Peter* lodg'd there, and by their Errand it will appear what was the Meaning of this Viſion. *Note*, GOD knows what Services are before us, and therefore how to prepare us; And we then better know the Meaning of what he has taught us, when we find what Occaſion we have to make Uſe of it.

19 ¶ While Peter thought on the viſion, the ſpirit ſaid unto him, Behold, three men ſeek thee. 20 Ariſe therefore and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have ſent them. 21 Then Peter went down to the men which were ſent unto him for Cornelius; and ſaid, Behold, I am he whom ye ſeek: what *is* the cauſe wherefore ye are come? 22 And they ſaid, Cornelius the centurion, a juſt man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel, to ſend for the unto his houſe, and to hear words of thee. 23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them.* And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And the morrow after they entred into Ceſarea: and Cornelius waited for them, and had, called together his kinſmen and near friends. 25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worſhipped him. 26 But Peter took him up, ſaying, Stand up, I my ſelf alſo am a man. 27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. 28 And he ſaid unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew, to keep company, or come unto one of another nation: but God had ſhewed me, that I ſhould not call any man common or unclean. 29 Therefore came I unto you without gainſaying, aſſoon as I was ſent for: I ask therefore, for what intent ye have ſent for me. 30 And Cornelius ſaid, Four days ago I was faſting until this hour, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my houſe, and behold, a man ſtood before me in bright cloathing, 31 And ſaid, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the ſight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon whoſe ſirname is Peter; he is lodged in the houſe of *one* Simon a tanner, by the ſea-ſide; who when he cometh, ſhall ſpeak unto thee. 33 Immediately therefore I ſent to thee; and thou haſt well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here preſent before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

We have here the Meeting between *Peter* the Apoſtle, and *Cornelius* the Centurion. Tho' *Paul* was deſign'd to be the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, and to gather in the *Harveſt* among them, and *Peter* to be the *Apoſtle of the Circumciſion*, yet it is order'd that *Peter* ſhall break the Ice, and reap the *firſt Fruits* of the *Gentiles*, that the believing *Jews* who retain'd too much of the Old Leaven of Ill-will to the *Gentiles* might be the better reconcil'd to their Admiſſion into the Church, when they were firſt brought in by their own Apoſtle, which *Peter* urgeth againſt thoſe that would have impos'd Circumciſion upon the *Gentile* Converts, *Acts* xv. 7. *Ye know that God made Choice among us that the* Gentiles *by my Mouth ſhould hear the Word of the Goſpel.* Now here

Firſt, *Peter* is directed by *the Spirit*, to go along with *Cornelius*'s Meſſengers, *v.* 19, 20. And this is the Expſiotion of the Viſion; Now the Riddle is unriddl'd, *while* Peter *thought on the Viſion.* He was *muſing* upon it, and then it was open'd to him. *Note*, Thoſe that would be taught the Things of GOD, muſt *think on thoſe things*; that would underſtand the Scripture, muſt meditate in them Day and Night. He was *at a Loſs* about it, and then had it explain'd; which encourages us when we know not what to do, to have our Eyes up unto GOD for Direction. *Obſerve*,

1. Whence he had the Direction; The *Spirit ſaid to him* what he ſhould do. 'Twas not ſpoken *to him* by an Angel, but ſpoken *in him* by the *Spirit* ſecretly whiſpering it *in his Ear*, as it were, as GOD ſpoke to *Samuel*, 1 Sam. ix. 15. or impreſſing it powerfully upon his Mind, ſo that he knew it to be a divine *Afflatus*, or Inſpiration, according to the Promiſe, *Job* xvi. 13.

2. What the Direction was. (2.) He is told, before any of the Servants could come up to tell him, That there are *Three Men* below want to *ſpeak with him, v.* 19. And he muſt ariſe from his Muſings, leave off thinking of the Viſion, and *go down to Them. v.* 20. Thoſe that are ſearching into the Meaning of the *Words of God*, and the *Viſions of the Almighty*, ſhould not be always poring, no, nor alwaws praying; but ſhould ſometimes look abroad, look about them and they may meet with that which will be of Uſe to them in their Enquires; for the Scripture is in the fulfilling every Day. (2.) He is order'd to *go along* with the Meſſengers to *Cornelius*, tho' he was a Gentile, *doubting nothing.* He muſt not only go, but go chearfully, without

out Reluctancy or Hæſitation, or any Scruple concerning the Lawfulneſs of it; not doubting whether he *might go*; No, nor whether he *ought to go*; for it was his Duty. *Go with them, for I have ſent them*; and I will bear thee out in going along with them, however thou may'ſt be cenſur'd for it. *Note*, When we ſee our Call clear to any Service, we ſhould not ſuffer ourſelves to be perplex'd with Doubts and Scruples concerning it, ariſing from former Prejudices or Prepoſſeſſions, or a Fear of Mens Cenſure. Let every Man be fully *perſuaded in his own Mind*, and *prove his own Work*.

Secondly, He receives both them and their Meſſage; He *went down* to them, *v.* 21. So far was he from going out of the Way, or refuſing to be ſpoken with, as One that was ſhy of them; or making them tarry, as One that took State upon him, that he went to them himſelf; told them, he was the Perſon they were enquiring for. And,

1. He favourably *receives their Meſſage*, with Abundance of Openneſs and Condeſcenſion he asks, What their Buſineſs is? What they have to ſay to him, *What is the Cauſe wherefore ye are come?* And they tell him their Errand, *v.* 22. *Cornelius*, an Officer of the *Roman* Army, a very honeſt Gentleman, and One that has more Religion than moſt of his Neighbours, that *fears God above many*, (Neh. vii. 2.) who tho' he is not a *Jew* himſelf, has carry'd it ſo well, that he is *of good Report among all the People of the* Jews, they will all give him a good Word, for a Conſcientious, ſober, charitable Man; ſo that it will be no Diſcredit to thee to be ſeen in his Company, he was *warn'd from God*, ἐχρηματίσθη he *had an Oracle from God*, ſent him *by an Angel* (and the lively Oracles of the Law of *Moſes*, were given by the Diſpoſition of Angels) by which he was order'd to *ſend for thee to his Houſe*, (where he is expecting thee, and ready to bid thee welcome) and to *hear Words of thee*: They know not what Words, but they are ſuch as he may hear from thee, and not from any One elſe ſo well; *Faith comes by Hearing*. When *Peter* repeats this, he tells us more fully, they are *Words whereby thou and all thy Houſe ſhall be ſaved*, chap. xi. 14. Come to him, for an Angel bid him ſend for thee; Come to him, for he is ready to hear and receive thoſe *ſaving Words* thou haſt to bring him.

2. He kindly entertain'd the Meſſengers, *v.* 23. He *call'd them in, and lodg'd them*. He did not bid them go and refreſh and repoſe themſelves in an Inn at their own Charge, but was himſelf at the Charge of entertaining them in his own Quarters. What was a *getting ready* for him, *v.* 10. They ſhould be welcome to ſhare in; he little thought what Company he ſhould have when he beſpoke his Dinner, but GOD foreſaw it. *Note*, It becomes Chriſtians and Miniſters to be hoſpitable, and ready, according as their Ability is, and there is Occaſion for it, to *entertain Strangers*. *Peter* lodg'd them tho' they were Gentiles, to ſhew how readily he comply'd with the Deſign of the Viſion in *eating with Gentiles*; for he immediately took them to eat with him. Tho' they were two of them *Servants*, and the other a *common Soldier*, yet *Peter* thought it not below him to take them into his Houſe. Probably, he did it that he might have ſome Talk with them about *Cornelius* and his Family; for the Apoſtles tho' they had Inſtructions from the Spirit, yet made Uſe of other Informations, as they had Occaſion for them.

Thirdly, He went with them to *Cornelius*, whom he found ready to receive and entertain him.

1. *Peter* when he went with them, was accompany'd by *certain Brethren from* Joppa, where he now was, *v.* 23. *Six* of them went along with him, as we find, *chap.* xi. 12. Either *Peter* deſir'd their Company, that they might be Witneſſes of his proceeding *cautiouſly* with Reference to the Gentiles; and of the good Ground on which he went, and therefore he voucheth them, *chap.* xi. 12. Or, they offer'd their Service to attend him, and deſir'd they might have the Honour and Happineſs of being his Fellow-Travellers. This was one Way in which the Primitive Chriſtians very much ſhew'd their Reſpect to their Miniſters, they accompany'd them in their Journies, to keep them in Countenance, to be their Guard, and as there was Occaſion, to miniſter to them; with a further Proſpect not only of doing them Service, but of being edify'd by their Converſe. 'Tis Pity thoſe who have Skill and Will to do Good to others by their Diſcourſe, ſhould want an Opportunity for it by travelling alone.

2. *Cornelius* when he was ready to receive him, had got ſome Friends together of *Cæſarea*; It ſeems it was above a Day's Journey, near two, from *Joppa* to *Cæſarea*; for 'twas the Day after they ſet out that they *enter'd* into *Cæſarea*, *v.* 24. and the Afternoon of that Day, *v.* 30. 'Tis likely they travelled *on foot*, the Apoſtles generally did ſo. Now when they came into the Houſe of *Cornelius*, *Peter* found (1.) That he was *expected*, and that was an Encouragement to him. *Cornelius waited for them*, and ſuch a Gueſt was worth waiting for; nor can I blame him if he waited with ſome Impatience, longing to know what that mighty Thing was which an Angel bid him expect to hear from *Peter*. (2.) That he was expected by *many*, and that was a further Encouragement to him. As *Peter* brought ſome with him to partake of the ſpiritual Gift he had now to diſpenſe; ſo *Cornelius* had call'd together not only his own Family, but his *Kinſmen and near Friends* to partake with him of the heavenly Inſtructions he expected from *Peter*, which would give *Peter* a larger Opportunity of doing Good. *Note*, We ſhould not covet to *eat our ſpiritual Morſels alone*, Job xxxi. 17. It ought to be both given and taken as a Piece of Kindneſs and Reſpect to our Kindred and Friends to invite them to joyn with us in religious Exerciſes; to go with us to hear a good Sermon. What *Cornelius ought to do* he thought his Kinſmen and Friends *ought to do* too; and therefore let them come hear it at the firſt Hand, that it may be no Surprize to them to ſee him change upon it.

Fourthly, Here's the firſt Interview between *Peter* and *Cornelius*: In which we have,

1. The *profound* and indeed *undue* Reſpect and Honour which *Cornelius* paid to *Peter*; *v.* 25. He *met him* as he was *coming in*, and inſtead of taking him in his Arms and embracing him as a Friend, which would have been very acceptable to *Peter*, he *fell down at his Feet and worſhipped him*. Some think, as a Prince and a great Man, according to the Uſage of the Eaſtern Countries. Others think, as an Incarnate Deity, or as if he took him to be the *Meſſiah* himſelf. His worſhipping *a Man*, was indeed *culpaple*, but conſidering his preſent Ignorance, it was *excuſable*, *commendable*; and that was a great Veneration for divine and heavenly Things: No Wonder if till he was better inform'd, he took him to be the *Meſſiah*, and therefore *worſhipped* him whom he was order'd to ſend for by an Angel from Heaven: But the worſhipping of his pretended Succeſſor, who is not only a *Man*, but a *ſinful Man*, the *Man of Sin* himſelf, is altogether inexcuſable, and ſuch an Abſurdity, as would be *incredible*, if we were not told before, that all the World would *worſhip the Beaſt*, Rev. xiii. 4.

2. *Peter*'s modeſt, and indeed juſt and pious Refuſal of this Honour that was done him, *v.* 26. *He took him up* into his Arms with his own Hands, (tho' Time was, when he little thought he ſhould ever either receive ſo much Reſpect from, or ſhew ſo much Affection to an uncircumcis'd Gentile) ſaying, *Stand up, I myſelf alſo am a Man*, and therefore not to be worſhipped thus. The good Angels of the Churches, are like the good Angels of Heaven, cannot bear to have the leaſt of that Honour ſhewn to them, which is due to GOD only, *See thou do it not*, ſaith the Angel to *John*, Rev. xix. 10. xx. 9. And in like manner, the Apoſtle to *Cornelius*. How careful was *Paul* that no Man ſhould *think of him* above what he *ſaw in him*, 2 Cor. xii. 6. Chriſt's faithful Servants could better bear to be *vilify'd*, than to be *edify'd*. *Peter* did not entertain a Surmiſe that his great Reſpect for him, tho' exceſſive might contribute to the Succeſs of his Preaching, and therefore if he will be deceiv'd, let him be deceiv'd; No, let him know that *Peter* is a Man, that the Treaſure is in *earthen Veſſels*, that he may value Treaſure for its own ſake.

Fifthly, The Account which *Peter* and *Cornelius* give to each other, and to the Company, of the Hand of Heaven in bringing them together. *As he talk'd with him*, συνομιλῶν αὐτῷ, *he went in*, *v.* 27. *Peter* went in *talking familiarly* with *Cornelius*, endeavouring by the Freedom of his Converſe with him to take off ſomething of that Dread which he ſeem'd to have of him; and when he came in, he *found many that were come together*, more than he expected; which added *Solemnity* as well as *Opportunity* of doing Good, to this Service. Now

1. *Peter* declares the Direction GOD gave to him to come to thoſe Gentiles, *v.* 21, 29. They knew it had never been allow'd by the *Jews*, but always look'd upon as an *unlawful Thing*, ἀθέμιτον an Abomination *for a Man that is a* Jew, a Native *Jew*, as I am, to *keep Company, or come unto One of another Nation*, a Stranger, an uncircumcis'd Gentile. It was not made ſo by the Law of GOD, but by the Decree of their Wiſe Men, which they look'd upon to be no leſs obliging. They did not forbid them to converſe or traffick with Gentiles in the Street, or Shop, or upon the Exchange, but to *eat with them*. Even in *Joſeph*'s Time, the *Egyptians* and *Hebrews* could not *eat together*, Gen. xliii. 32. The three Children would not *defile themſelves with the King's Meat*, Dan. i. 8. They might not come into the Houſe of a Gentile, for they look'd upon it to be ceremoniell polluted. Thus ſcornfully did the *Jews* look upon the *Gentiles*, who were not behind-hand with them in Contempt, as appears by many Paſſages in the *Latin* Poets. But now, ſaith *Peter*, *God hath ſhew'd me*, by a Viſion, *that I ſhou'd not call any Man common or unclean*, nor refuſe to converſe with any Man for the ſake of his Country. *Peter* that had taught his new Converts to *ſave themſelves* from the *untoward Generation* of wicked Men, (*chap.* ii. 40.) is now himſelf taught to joyn himſelf with the towardly Generation of devout Gentiles: *Ceremonial* Characters were aboliſh'd, that more Regard might be had to *Moral* ones. *Peter* thought it neceſſary to let them know how he came to change his Mind in this Matter, and that it was by a Divine Revelation, leſt he ſhould be upbraided with it as having *uſed Lightneſs*.

GOD having thus taken down the Partition-Wall,

(1.) He aſſures them of his Readineſs to do them all the good Offices he could, that when he kept at a Diſtance, it was not out of any perſonal Diſguſt to them, but only becauſe he wanted Leave from Heaven, which now he had receiv'd, he was at their Service; *Therefore came I unto you, without gainſaying, as ſoon as I was ſent for*, ready to preach the ſame Goſpel to you that I have preach'd to the *Jews*. The Diſciples of Chriſt could not but have ſome Notion of the Preaching of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, but they imagin'd it muſt be only to thoſe Gentiles that were firſt proſelyted to the Jewiſh Religion; which Miſtake *Peter* acknowledges was now rectify'd.

(2.) He enquires wherein he might be ſerviceable to them; I *aſk therefore for what Intent ye have ſent for me?* What do you expect from me, or what Buſineſs have you with me? *Note*, Thoſe that deſire the Help of GOD's Miniſters ought to look well to it that they propoſe right Ends to themſelves in it, and do it with a *good Intent*.

2. *Cornelius* declares the Direction GOD gave to him to ſend for *Peter*; and that it was purely in Obedience to thoſe Directions that he had ſent for him. Then we are right in our Aims in ſending for and attending on a *Goſpel Miniſtry*, when we do it with a Regard to the Divine Appointment *inſtituting* that Ordinance and *requiring* us to make Uſe of it. Now

1. *Cornelius* gives an Account of the Angels Appearing to him, and ordering him to ſend for *Peter*; not as *glorying* in it, but as that which *warrented* his Expectation of a Meſſage from Heaven by *Peter*.

(1.) He tells how this Viſion found him employ'd, *v.* 30. *Four Days ago I was faſting until this Hour*, this Hour of the Day that it is now, when *Peter* came, about the Middle of the Afternoon. By this it appears that *Religious Faſting* in order to the greater Seriouſneſs and Solemnity of Praying was us'd by devout People that were not *Jews*; the King of *Nineveh proclaim'd a Faſt*, Jon. iii. 5. Some give theſe Words another Senſe, *From Four Days ago I have been faſting until this Hour*, as if he had eaten no *Meat*, or at leaſt no *Meal*, from that Time to this. But it comes in as an Introduction to the Story of the Viſion; and therefore the former muſt be the Meaning. He was *at the ninth Hour praying in his Houſe*; not in the Synagogue, but at home: I will that Men *pray* wherever they *dwell*. His Praying *in his Houſe*, intimates that it was not a ſecret Prayer in his Cloſet, but in a more publick Room of his Houſe, with his Family about him. And perhaps after Prayer he retir'd, and had this Viſion. *Obſerve*, At the *ninth Hour of the Day*, Three of the Clock in the Afternoon moſt People were Travelling or trading, working in the Fields, viſiting their Friends, taking their Pleaſure, or taking a Nap after Dinner; yet then *Cornelius* was at his Devotions; which ſhews how much he made Religion his Buſineſs; and then it was that he had this Meſſage from Heaven Thoſe that would hear comfortably from GOD, muſt be much in ſpeaking to him.

(2.) He deſcribes the Meſſenger that brought him this Meſſage from Heaven; There *ſtood a Man before me in bright Cloathing*; ſuch as Chriſt's when he was transfigur'd, and that of the two Angels who appear'd at Chriſt's Reſurrection, *Luke* xxiv. 4. and at his Aſcenſion, *Acts* i. 10. ſhewing their Relation to the *World of Light*.

(3.) He repeats the Meſſage that was ſent him, *v.* 31, 32. juſt as we had it, *v.* 4, 5, 6. only here it is ſaid, *Thy Prayer is heard*. We are not told what his Prayer was, but if this Meſſage was an Anſwer to it, and it ſhould ſeem it was, we may ſuppoſe, that finding the Deficiency of Natural Light, and that it left him at a Loſs how to obtain the Pardon of his Sin, and the Favour of GOD, he pray'd that GOD would make ſome further Diſcoveries of himſelf to him, and of the Way of Salvation. Well, ſaith the Angel, ſend for *Peter*, and he ſhall give thee ſuch a Diſcovery.

2. He declares his own and his Friends Readineſs to receive the Meſſage he had to deliver, *v.* 33. *Immediately therefore I ſent to thee*, as I was directed, *and thou haſt well done that thou haſt come* to us, tho' we are Gentiles. *Note*, Faithful Miniſters do well to come to People that are willing and deſirous to receive Inſtruction from them; to come when they are ſent for; 'tis as good a Deed as they can do.

Well, *Peter* is come to do his Part; But will they do theirs? Yes: Thou art here prepar'd to *ſpeak*, and we are here prepar'd to *hear*, 1 Sam. iii. 9, 10. *Obſerve*,

1. Their religious Attendance upon the Word; *We are all here preſent before GOD*, we are here in a religious Manner, are here as Worſhippers; they thus compoſe themſelves into a ſerious awful Frame of Spirit. *Therefore* becauſe thou art come to us by ſuch a Warrant, on ſuch an Errand, becauſe we have ſuch a Price in our Hand as we never had before, and perhaps may never have again, we are ready *now* at this Time of Worſhip *here* in this Place of Worſhip, tho' it was in a *private Houſe*. We are *preſent* πάρεσμεν, we are at the Buſineſs, and are ready to come at a Call. If we would have GOD's *ſpecial Preſence* at an Ordinance, we muſt be there with a *ſpecial Preſence*, an *Ordinance Preſence: Here I am.* We are *all* preſent, *All* that were invited. We and all that belong to us, we and *all that is within us*; the *whole of the Man* muſt be preſent; not the Body here, and the Heart with the Fools Eyes in the Ends of the Earth. But that which makes it indeed a religious Attendance, is, we are *preſent before God*. In holy Ordinances we *preſent our ſelves unto the Lord*; and we muſt be as *before Him*, as thoſe that ſee his Eye upon us.

2. The *Intention* of this Attendance; We are preſent *to hear all Things that are commanded thee of God*, and given thee in Charge to be deliver'd to us. *Obſerve*, (1.) *Peter* was there to preach *all Things that were commanded him of God*; for as he had an ample Commiſſion to preach the Goſpel, ſo he had full Inſtructions what to preach. (2.) They were ready to hear, not whatever he pleas'd to ſay, but what he was *commanded of God* to ſay. The Truths of Chriſt were not *communicated* to the Apoſtles, to be publiſh'd or ſtifled, as they thought fit; but *intruſted* with them to be publiſh'd to the World. We are ready to *hear all*, to come at the Beginning of the Service, and ſtay to the End, and be attentive all the While, elſe how can we *hear all*. We are deſirous to *hear all* that thou art commiſſion'd to preach, tho' it be never ſo diſpleaſing to Fleſh and Blood, and never ſo contrary to our former Notions, or preſent ſecular Intereſts. We are ready to *hear all*, and therefore let nothing be *kept back* that is *profitable for us*.

34 ¶ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and ſaid, Of a truth I perceive that God is no reſpecter of perſons: 35 But in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him. 36 The word which God ſent unto the children of Iſrael, preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt (he is Lord of all) 37 That word (*I ſay*) you know, which was publiſhed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptiſm which John preached; 38 How God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the holy Ghoſt, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil: for God was with him. 39 And we are witneſſes of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jeruſalem; whom they ſlew and hanged on a tree: 40 Him God raiſed up the third day, and ſhewed him openly, 41 Not to all the People, but unto witneſſes, choſen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he roſe from the dead. 42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to teſtifie that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the judge of quick and dead. 43 To him give all the prophets witneſs, that through his name whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.

We have here *Peter*'s Sermon, preach'd to *Cornelius* and his Friends; that is An Abſtract or Summary of it; for we have Reaſon to think, that he did *with many other Words teſtify and exhort* to this Purpoſe. 'Tis intimated, that he deliver'd himſelf with a great deal of Solemnity and Gravity but with Freedom and Copiouſneſs, in that Phraſe, that *he open'd his Mouth* and *ſpoke*, *v.* 34. O ye *Corinthians our Mouth is open to you*, ſaith *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* vi. 11. You ſhall find us *communicative*, if we but find you *inquiſitive*. Hitherto the Mouths of the Apoſtles had been *ſhut* to the uncircumcis'd Gentiles, they had nothing to ſay to them; now GOD gave unto them, as He did to *Ezekiel*, the *Opening of the Mouth*.

This excellent Sermon of *Peter*'s, is admirably ſuited to the Circumſtances of thoſe to whom he preach'd it; for it was a new Sermon.

Firſt, Becauſe they were *Gentiles* to whom he *preach'd*, he ſhews, That notwithſtanding that, they were *intereſted* in the *Goſpel* of Chriſt which he had to preach, and *intitled* to the Benefit of it upon an equal Foot with the *Jews*; 'Twas neceſſary this ſhould be clear'd, or elſe with what Comfort could either he *preach* or they *hear*? He therefore lays down this as an undoubted Principle, That *God is no Reſpecter of Perſons*, doth not *know Favour* in Judgment, as the *Hebrew* Phraſe is, Which Magiſtrates are forbidden to do, *Deut.* i. 17, xvi. 19. *Prov.* xxi. 13. and are blam'd for doing, *Pſal.* lxxxii. 2. And it is often ſaid of GOD, that He *doth not reſpect Perſons*, Deut. x. 17. 2 Chron. xix. 7. Job xxxiv. 19. Rom. ii. 11. Col. iii. 25. 1 Pet. i. 17. He doth not give Judgment in Favour of a Man, for the ſake of any external Advantage foreign to the Merits of the Cauſe; GOD never perverts Judgment upon perſonal Regards and Conſiderations, nor countenanceth an ill Man in an ill Thing for the ſake of his Beauty or Stature, his Country, Parentage, Relations, Wealth or Honour in the World; GOD as a Benefactor gives Favours arbitrarily and by Sovereignty, *Deut.* vii. 7, 8. ix. 5, 6. *Matth.* xx. 10. But He doth not as a Judge, ſo give Sentence. But *in every Nation*, and under every Denomination, *he that fears God, and works Righteouſneſs, is accepted of Him*, *v.* 3.

The Caſe is plainly thus:

1. GOD never *did*, nor ever *will* juſtify and ſave a *wicked Jew*, that liv'd and dy'd impenitent, tho' he was of the Seed of *Abraham*, and a *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, and had all the Honour and Advantages that attended *Circumciſion*. He doth and will render *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh upon every Soul of Man that doth evil*, and *of the* Jew *firſt*; whoſe Privileges and Profeſſions, inſtead of ſcreening him from the Judgment of GOD, will but aggravate his Guilt and Condemnation. See *Rom.* ii. 3, 8, 9, 17. Tho' GOD has favour'd the *Jews* above other Nations with the Dignities of viſible Church-Memberſhip;

ſhip; yet He will not therefore accept of any particular Perſons of that Dignity, if they allow themſelves in Immoralities contradictor to their Profeſſion, and particularly in Perſecution, which was now more than any other, the *National* Sin of the *Jews*.

2. He never *did*, nor ever will *reject* or *refuſe* an *honeſt Gentile*, who tho' he has not the Privileges and Advantages that the *Jews* have, yet like *Cornelius*, *fears GOD*, and worſhips him, and *works Righteouſneſs*, i. e. Is juſt and charitable towards all Men: who lives up to the Light he has both in a ſincere Devotion, and in a regular Converſation, whatever *Nation* he is of, tho' never ſo far remote from Kindred to the Seed of *Abraham*, tho' never ſo deſpicable, nay, tho' in never ſo ill a Name, that ſhall be no Prejudice to him; GOD judgeth of Men by their *Hearts*, not by their *Country* or *Parentage*. And wherever He finds an *upright Man*, He will be found an *Upright God*, Pſal. xviii. 25. Obſerve, *Fearing God*, and *working Righteouſneſs*, muſt go together, for as *Righteouſneſs towards Men*, is a Branch of true Religion, ſo *Religion towards God*, is a Branch of univerſal Righteouſneſs. *Godlineſs* and *Honeſty* muſt go together, and neither will excuſe for the Want of other. But where theſe are predominant, no Doubt is to be made of Acceptance with GOD, Not that any Man ſince the Fall can obtain the Favour of GOD, otherwiſe than through the Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, and by the Grace of GOD in him: But thoſe that have not the Knowledge of him, and cannot have an explicite Regard to him, may yet receive Grace from GOD, for his Sake, to fear GOD, and to work Righteouſneſs. And wherever GOD gives Grace to do ſo, as He did to *Cornelius*, He will through Chriſt *accept the Work of his own Hands*.

Now (1.) This was always a *Truth*, before *Peter perceiv'd* it; That GOD reſpecteth no Man's Perſon. 'Twas the fix'd Rule of Judgment from the Beginning, *if thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted?* and *if not well, Sin*, and the Puniſhment of it, *lies at the Door*, Gen. iv. 7. GOD will not ask in the Great Day, What Country Men were of? but, What they were; what they did? and, How they ſtood affected towards Him, and towards their Neighbours? And if Mens Perſonal Character receiv'd neither Advantage nor Diſadvantage from the great Difference that was between *Jews* and *Gentile*, much leſs from any leſſer Difference of Sentiments and Practices that may happen to be among Chriſtians themſelves, as thoſe about *Meats* and *Days* Rom. xiv. 'Tis certain, the *Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink*, but *Righteouſneſs and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, and he that in theſe Things ſerveth Chriſt, is *accepted of God*, and ought to be *approved of Men*; For dare we reject thoſe whom GOD doth not;

(2.) Yet now it was made *more clear* than it had been? This great Truth had been darken'd by the Covenant of Peculiarity made with *Iſrael*, and the Badges of Diſtinction put upon them. The Ceremonial Law was a Wall of Partition between them and other Nation; in it 'twas true, that GOD favour'd that Nation, *Rom.* iii. 1, 2. ix. 4. And from thence particular Perſons among them were ready to infer, that they were ſure of GOD's Acceptance, tho' they liv'd as they liſt; and that no Gentile could poſſibly be accepted of GOD; GOD had ſaid a great deal by the Prophets to prevent and rectify this Miſtake; but now at length He doth it effectually, by aboliſhing the Covenant of Peculiarity, and repealing the Ceremonial Law; and ſo ſetting the Matter at large, and both *Jew* and *Gentile* upon the ſame Level before God; and *Peter* is here made to *perceive* it by comparing the Viſion which he had, with that which *Cornelius* had. Now *in Chriſt Jeſus*, 'tis plain, neither Circumciſion availeth any thing, nor Uncircumciſion, *Gal.* v. 6. *Col.* iii. 11.

Secondly, Becauſe they were Gentiles inhabiting a Place within the Confines of the Land of *Iſrael*, he refers them to what they themſelves could not but know concerning the Life and Doctrine, the Preaching and Miracles, the Death and Sufferings of our Lord *Jeſus*; for theſe were Things, the Report of which ſpread into every Corner of the Nation, *v.* 36, *&c.* It facilitates the Work of Miniſters when they deal with ſuch as have ſome Knowledge of the Things of GOD, to which they may appeal, and on which they may build.

1. They knew in General, *the Word*, that is, the Goſpel *which God ſent to the Children* of Iſrael. *That Word, I ſay, ye know*, *v.* 37. Tho' the Gentiles were not admitted to *hear it*, Chriſt and his Diſciples were *not ſent but to the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of* Iſrael, yet they could not but *hear of it*; 'twas all the Talk both of City and Country. We are often told in the Goſpels, how the *Fame of Chriſt* went into *all Parts* of *Canaan*, when he was on Earth, as afterwards the Fame of his Goſpel went *into all Parts of the World*, Rom. x. 18. *That Word*, that divine Word, that Word of Power and Grace, you know. (1.) What the Purport of this Word was; GOD by it *publiſh'd the good Tydings of Peace by Jeſus Chriſt*; ſo it ſhould be read, ἐυαγγελιζόμενος εἰρήνην. 'Tis GOD himſelf that proclaims Peace, who juſtly might have proclaim'd War? He lets the World of Mankind know, that He is willing to be at Peace with them through Jeſus Chriſt, in him He was reconciling the World to Himſelf. (2.) To whom *it was ſent*; To *the Children of* Iſrael in the firſt Place: the prime Offer is made to them. This all their Neighbours heard of, and were ready to envy them thoſe Advantages of the Goſpel, more than they ever envy'd them thoſe of their Law. *Then ſaid they among the Heathen, The LORD hath done great Things for them*, Pſal. cxxvi. 3.

2. They knew the ſeveral Matters of Fact, relating to this Word of the Goſpel, ſent to *Iſrael*.

1. They knew the *Baptiſm* of Repentance *which* John *preached* by Way of Introduction to it, and in which the Goſpel firſt began, *Mark* i. 1. They knew what an Extraordinary Man *John* was and what a direct Tendency his Preaching had to prepare the Way of the LORD; they knew what great flocking there was to his Baptiſm, what an Intereſt he had, and what he did.

2. They knew that immediatly after *John*'s Baptiſm, the *Goſpel of Chriſt*, that Word of Peace, was *publiſh'd throughout all Judea*, and that it took Riſe from *Galilee*. The twelve Apoſtles, and ſeventy Diſciples, and our Maſter himſelf, publiſhed theſe glad Tydings in all Parts of the Land. So that we may ſuppoſe there was not a Town or Village in all the Land of *Canaan*, but had the Goſpel preach'd in it.

3. They knew that *Jeſus of Nazareth*, when he was here upon Earth, *went about doing Good*; They knew what a Benefactor he was to that Nation, both to the Souls and Bodies of Men; how he made it his Buſineſs to *do Good* to all, and never did Hurt to any. He was not idle, but ſtill *doing*; not ſelfiſh, but doing *Good*; did not confine himſelf to one Place, nor wait till People came to him to ſeek his Help, but he went to them, *went about* from Place to Place, and wherever he came he was *doing Good*. Hereby he ſhew'd that he was ſent of GOD, who *is good*, and *doth Good*, and therefore doth Good, becauſe He is Good. And who hereby *left not himſelf without witneſs*, to the World, *in that He did Good*. Acts xiv. 17. And in this he hath ſet us an Example of indefatigable Induſtry in ſerving GOD and our Generation; for therefore we came into the World that we may do all the Good we can in it; and therein, like Chriſt, we muſt *always abide* and *abound*.

4. They knew more particularly that he *healed all that were oppreſſed of the Devil*, and help'd them from under his oppreſſing Power. By this it appear'd not only that he was *ſent of GOD*, as 'twas a Kindneſs to Men; but that he was ſent to *deſtroy the Works of the Devil*; for thus he obtain'd many a Victory over him.

5. They knew that the *Jews* put him to Death; they *ſlew* him by *hanging him on a Tree*. When *Peter* preach'd to the *Jews*, he ſaid, *whom ye ſlew*; but now he preach'd to the *Gentiles*, 'tis whom *they ſlew*; they to whom he had done, and deſign'd ſo much Good.

All this they *knew*; but leſt they ſhould think it was only a Report, and was magnify'd as Reports uſe to be more than the Truth; *Peter* for himſelf and the reſt of the Apoſtles atteſts it, *v.* 39. *We are Witneſſes*, Eye-witneſſes of *all Things which he did*; and Ear-witneſſes of the Doctrine which he preach'd, *both in the Land of the* Jews, and in *Jeruſalem*, in City and Country.

3. They did now, or might know by all this, that he had a Commiſſion from Heaven to preach and act as he did. This he ſtill harps upon in his Diſcourſe, and takes all Occaſions to hint it to them. Let them know,

1. That this Jeſus is *Lord of all*; It comes in a Parentheſis, but is the principal Propoſition intended to be prov'd, That *Jeſus Chriſt* by whom Peace is made between GOD and Man, *be it Lord of all*; not only as *God over all bleſſed for evermore*, but as Mediator, *all Power both in Heaven and in Earth* is put into his Hand, and all Judgment committed to him. He is Lord of Angels, they are all his humble Servants: He is Lord of the Powers of Darkneſs, for he hath triumph'd over them. He is *King of Nations*, has a Power over all Fleſh; He is *King of Saints*, all the Children of GOD are his Scholars, his Subjects, his Soldiers.

2. That *GOD anointed him with the Holy Ghoſt and with Power*: He was both *authoriz'd* and *enabled* to do what he did by a Divine Anointing; from whence he was call'd *Chriſt*, the *Meſſiah* the *Anointed* One. The *Holy Ghoſt deſcended upon him* at his Baptiſm, and he was *full of Power* both in Preaching and working Miracles, which was the Seal of a Divine Miſſion.

3. That *GOD was with him*, *v*: 38. His Works were *wrought In GOD*; GOD not only *ſent him*, but was *preſent with him* all along, own'd him, ſtood by him and carry'd him on in all his Services and Sufferings. *Note*, Thoſe whom GOD anoints He will accompany; will himſelf be with thoſe to whom He has given his Spirit.

Thirdly, Becauſe they had heard no more for certain concerning this Jeſus, *Peter* declares to them his *Reſurrection from the Dead*, and the Proofs of it, that they might not think when he was ſlain there was an End of him.

Probably they had heard at *Cæſarea* ſome Talk of his being *riſen from the Dead*; but the Talk of it was ſoon ſilenc'd by that vile Suggeſtion of the *Jews*, That *his Diſciples came by Night, and ſtole him away*. And therefore *Peter* inſiſts upon this as the main Support of that Word which *preacheth Peace by Jeſus Chriſt*.

1. The Power by which he roſe is uncontestably Divine, *v.* 40. *Him God rais'd up the third Day*; Which not only *diſprov'd* all the Calumnies and Accuſations he was laid under by Men; but effectually *prov'd* GOD's Acceptance of the Satisfaction he made for the Sin of Man by the Blood of his Croſs He did not break Priſon, but had a legal Diſcharge: *God rais'd him up*.

2. The

3. The Proofs of his Reſurrection were unconteſtably clear; For GOD *ſhewed him openly. He gave him to made manifeſt ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν ἐμφανῆ γενέσθαι*, to be viſible, evidently ſo; ſo he *appears*, as that it appears beyond Contradiction to be He and not another. 'Twas ſuch a *ſhewing* of him, as amounted to a *Demonſtration* of the Truth of his Reſurrection. He ſhew'd him not *publickly* indeed, 'twas not *open* in that Senſe, but *evidently Not to all the People*, who had been the Witneſſes of his Death; by reſiſting all the Evidences he had given them of his divine Miſſion in his Miracles, they had forfeited the Favour of being Eye-witneſſes of this great Proof of it; they who immediately forg'd and promoted that Lye of his being ſtollen away, were juſtly *given up to ſtrong Deluſions* to believe it, and not ſuffer'd to be undeceiv'd by his being ſhewn to all the People; and ſo much the greater ſhall be the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe who *have not ſeen, and yet have believed. Nec ille ſe in vulgus edixit, ne impii Errore liberarentur*; *ut & fides non præmio mediocri deſtinato difficultate conſtaret*. Tert. Apol. cap. xi. But tho' all the People did not ſee him, there were enow ſaw him to atteſt the Truth of his Reſurrection; The Teſtator's declaring his Laſt Will and Teſtament needs not to be *before all the People*, 'tis enough that it be done before a competent Number of Credible Witneſſes; ſo the Reſurrection of Chriſt was prov'd before ſufficient Witneſſes. (1.) They were not ſo *by Chance*, but they were *choſen before of GOD* to be *Witneſſes* of it; and in order to that, had their Education under the Lord Jeſus, and intimate Converſe with him, that having known him ſo intimately before, they might the better be aſſur'd it was he. (2.) They had not a ſudden and tranſient View of him, but a great deal of free Converſation with him, they did *eat and drink with him after he roſe from the Dead*: This implies that they ſaw him *eat and drank*, witneſs their dining with him at the Sea of *Tiberias*; and the two Diſciples ſupping with him at *Emmaus*; and this prov'd that he had a true and real Body. But this was not all, they ſaw him without any Terror or Conſternation, which might have render'd them incompetent Witneſſes, for they ſaw him ſo frequently, and he convers'd with them ſo familiarly, that *they did eat and drink with him*. 'Tis brought as a Proof of the clear View which the Nobles of *Iſrael*, had of the Glory of GOD, *Exod.* xxiv. 11. That *they ſaw God, and did eat and drink.*

Fourthly, He concludes with an Inference from all this, That therefore, that which they all ought to do, was to *believe* in this Jeſus. He was ſent to tell *Cornelius* what he *muſt do*, and this is it; His Praying and his giving Alms was very well, but one one thing he lack'd. He muſt *believe in Chriſt*. Obſerve,

1. Why he muſt *believe* in him; Faith has Reference to a *Teſtimony*, and the Chriſtian Faith is *built upon the Foundation of Apoſtles and Prophets*, 'tis built upon the Teſtimony given by them.

(1.) By the *Apoſtles*; *Peter* as Fore-man ſpeaks for the reſt, That GOD *commanded them* and gave them in Charge to *preach to the People, and to teſtify* concerning Chriſt, ſo that their Teſtimony was not only credible, but authentick, and what we may venture upon. Their Teſtimony, is GOD's Teſtimony; and they are his Witneſſes to the World; they do not only ſay it as Matter of News, but teſtify it as Matter of Record, by which Men muſt be judg'd.

(2.) By the *Prophets* of the *Old Teſtament*; whoſe Teſtimony before-hand, not only concerning his Sufferings, but concerning the Deſign and Intention of them, doth very much corroborate the Apoſtles Teſtimony concerning them, *v.* 43. *To him gave all the Prophets witneſs*, &c. We have Reaſon to think, *Cornelius* and his Friends were no Strangers to the Writings of the Prophets. Out of the Mouth of theſe two Clouds of Witneſſes ſo exactly agreeing *this Word is eſtabliſh'd.*

2. What they muſt believe concerning him.

1. That we are all accountable to Chriſt as our Judge; This the Apoſtles were commanded to teſtify to the World, That this Jeſus is *ordain'd of GOD to be the Judge of the Quick and Dead* *v.* 42. He is impower'd to preſcribe the Terms of Salvation, that Rule by which we muſt be judg'd; to give Laws both to *Quick and Dead*, both to *Jew* and *Gentile*; and he is appointed to determine the everlaſting Condition of all the Children of Men at the Great Day; of thoſe that ſhall be found *alive*, and of thoſe that ſhall be rais'd from the *Dead*. He hath aſſur'd us of this, in that He hath *rais'd him from the Dead*, Acts xvii. 31. ſo that it is the great Concern of every One of us in the Belief of this to ſeek his Favour, and to make him our Friend.

2. That if we believe in him, we ſhall all be juſtify'd by him as our Righteouſneſs, *v.* 43. The Prophets when they ſpoke of the Death of Chriſt, did witneſs this, *That through his Name*, for his Sake, and upon the Account of his Merit, *whoſoever believeth in him*, Jew or Gentile, *ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins.* That's the great Thing we need, without which we are undone, and which the convinc'd Conſcience is moſt inquiſitive after, which the carnal *Jews* promis'd themſelves from their Ceremonial Sacrifices and Purifications; yea, and the Heathen too from their Atonements; but all in vain, 'tis to be had only *through the Name* of Chriſt, and only by thoſe that *believe in his Name*, and they that do ſo may be aſſur'd of it; their Sins ſhall be pardon'd, and there ſhall be no Condemnation to them. And the Remiſſion of Sins, lays a Foundation for all other Favours and Bleſſings, by taking that out of the Way that hinders them. If Sin be pardon'd, all is well; and ſhall end everlaſtingly well.

44 ¶ While Peter yet ſpake theſe words, the holy Ghoſt fell on all them which heard the word. 45 And they of the circumciſion which believed were aſtoniſhed, as many as came with Peter, becauſe that on the Gentiles alſo was poured out the gift of the holy Ghoſt: 46 For they heard them ſpeak with tongues, and magnifie God. Then anſwered Peter, 47 Can any man forbid water that theſe ſhould not be baptized, which have received the holy Ghoſt as well as we? 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

We have here the Iſſue and Effect of *Peter*'s Sermon to *Cornelius* and his Friends. He did not labour in vain among them, but they were all brought home to Chriſt. Here we have

Firſt, GOD's owning *Peter's* Word, by conferring the Holy Ghoſt upon the Hearts of it, and immediately upon the hearing of it, *v.* 44. *While* Peter *was yet ſpeaking theſe Words*, and perhaps deſign'd to ſay more, he was happily ſuperſeded by viſible Indication that *the Holy Ghoſt*, even in his miraculous Gifts and Powers, *fell on all them which heard the Word*, even as he did on the Apoſtles at firſt; ſo *Peter* ſaith, *chap.* xi. 15. Therefore ſome think it was with a *ruſhing mighty Wind*, and *in cloven Tongues*, as that was. *Obſerve.*

1. *When* the Holy Ghoſt fell upon them: *While Peter* was *Preaching*. Thus GOD *bore Witneſs* to what he ſaid, and accompany'd it with a Divine Power. Thus were the *Signs of an Apoſtle wrought among them*, 2 Cor. xii. 12. Tho' *Peter* could not give the Holy Ghoſt, yet the Holy Ghoſt being given along with the Word of *Peter*; by that it appear'd he was ſent of GOD. The Holy Ghoſt fell upon others after they were baptized, for their Confirmation; but upon theſe Gentiles *before* they were *baptiz'd*, as *Abraham* was juſtify'd by Faith being yet *in Uncircumciſion*, to ſhew that GOD is not ty'd to a Method, nor confines himſelf to external Signs. The Holy Ghoſt fell upon thoſe that were neither *circumcis'd* nor *baptiz'd* for *it is the Spirit that quickneth, the Fleſh profiteth nothing.*

2. How it appear'd that the Holy Ghoſt was fallen upon them, *v.* 46. *They ſpake with Tongues* which they never learned, perhaps the *Hebrew*, the holy Tongue; as the Preachers were enabled to ſpeak the Vulgar Tongues, that they might communicate the Doctrine of Chriſt to the Hearers, ſo probably the Hearers were immediately taught the ſacred Tongue, that they might examine the Proofs which the Preachers produc'd out of the *Old Teſtament* in the Original. Or, their being enabled to *ſpeak with Tongues* intimated that they were all deſign'd for Miniſters, and by this firſt Deſcent of the Spirit upon them, were qualify'd to preach the Goſpel to others, which they did but now receive themſelves. But *Obſerve*, When they ſpake with Tongues they *magnify'd GOD*, they ſpake of Chriſt and the Benifits of Redemption, which *Peter* had been Preaching of, to the *Glory of God*. Thus did they on whom the Holy Ghoſt firſt deſcended, *ch.* ii. 11. *Note*, Whatever Gift we are endu'd with, we ought to Honour GOD with it, and particularly the Gift of Speaking, and all the Improvements of it.

3. What Impreſſion it made upon the Believing *Jews* that were preſent, *v.* 45. *They of the Circumciſion which believ'd, were aſtoniſh'd*; thoſe ſix that came along with *Peter*; it ſurpriz'd them exceedingly, and perhaps gave them ſome Uneaſineſs, becauſe that *upon the Gentiles alſo was pour'd out the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt*, which they thought had been appropiated to their own Nation. Had they underſtood the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, which pointed at this, it would not have been ſuch an Aſtoniſhment to them; but by our miſtaken Notions of Things we create Difficulties to our ſelves in the Methods of Divine Providence and Grace.

Secondly, *Peter*'s owning GOD's Work in *Baptizing* thoſe on whom the Holy Ghoſt fell. *Obſerve*,

1. Tho' they had *receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt*, yet it was requiſite they ſhould be *baptiz'd*; Tho' GOD is not ty'd to inſtituted Ordinances, we are; and no extraordinary Gifts ſet us *above* them, but rather oblige us ſo much the more to conform to them. Some in our Days would have argu'd, Theſe are *baptiz'd with the Holy Ghoſt*, and therefore what need have they to be *baptiz'd with Water*, 'tis below them. No; 'tis not below them, while Water-Baptiſm is an Ordinance of Chriſt, and the Door of Admiſſion into the viſible Church, and a Seal of the New Covenant.

2. Tho' they were *Gentiles*, yet having *receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt* they might be admitted to Baptiſm, *v.* 47. *Can any Man*, tho' never ſo rigid a *Jew*, *forbid Water that theſe ſhould not be baptiz'd, who have receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt as well as we?* The Argument is concluſive; Can we deny the *Sign* to thoſe who have receiv'd the Thing ſignify'd? Are not thoſe on whom GOD has beſtow'd the Grace of the Covenant, plainly entitled to the Seals of the

Covenant? Surely they that have *receiv'd the Spirit as well as we*, ought to receive *Baptiſm* as well as we; for it becomes us to follow GOD's Indications, and to take thoſe into Communion with us, whom he hath taken into Communion with Himſelf? GOD hath promiſ'd to *pour his Spirit* upon the *Seed of the faithful*, upon their *Off-ſpring*, and who then can forbid Water that they ſhould not be baptiz'd who have *receiv'd the Promiſe* of the *Holy Ghoſt* as well as *we*. Now it appears why the Spirit was given them before they were baptiz'd, becauſe otherwiſe *Peter* could not have perſuaded himſelf to baptize them, no more than to have preach'd to them, if he had not been order'd to do it by a Viſion; at leaſt, could not have avoided the Cenſure of *thoſe of the Circumciſion that believ'd*. Thus is there one unuſual Step of Divine Grace taken after another, to bring the Gentiles into the Church. How well is it for us that the Grace of a Good GOD is ſo much more extenſive, than the Charity even of ſome good Men.

3. *Peter* did not baptize them himſelf, but *commanded them to be baptiz'd*, *v.* 40. 'Tis likely ſome of the Brethren who came with them, did it by his Order, and that he declin'd it for the ſame Reaſon that *Paul* did, leſt thoſe that were baptiz'd by him, ſhould think the better of themſelves for it; or he ſhould ſeem to *have baptiz'd in his own Name*, 1 Cor. i. 17. The Apoſtles receiv'd the Commiſſion to *Go and diſciple all Nations by Baptiſm*: But it was Prayer and the Miniſtry of the Word, that they were to give themſelves to. And *Paul* ſaith, that he was ſent not to *baptize*, but to *preach*; which was the more noble and excellent Work. The Buſineſs of *Baptizing* was therefore ordinarily devolv'd upon the inferiour Miniſters, who acting by the Apoſtles Orders, they might be ſaid to do it. *Qui per alterum facit per ſeipſum facere dicitur.*

Laſtly, Their owning both *Peter*'s Word, and GOD's Work in their Deſire of further Advantage by *Peter*'s Miniſtry; *They pray'd him to tarry certain Days.* They could not preſs him to reſide conſtantly among them, they knew he had Work to do in other Places, and that for the preſent he was expected at *Jeruſalem*; yet they were not willing he ſhould go away immediately, but earneſtly beg'd he would ſtay for ſome Time among them, that they might be further inſtructed by him in the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD. *Note*, 1. Thoſe who have ſome Acquaintance with Chriſt, cannot but covet more. 2. Even thoſe that have *receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt*, yet muſt ſee their Need of the Miniſtry of the Word.

CHAP. XI.

In this Chapter we have (1.) Peter's *neceſſary Vindication of what he did in receiving* Cornelius *and his Friends into the Church, from the Cenſure he lay under for it, among the Brethren and their Acquieſcence in it*, v. 1—18. (2.) *The good Succeſs of the Goſpel at* Antioch, *and the Parts adjacent*, v. 19—21. (3.) *The Carrying on of the Good Work that was begun at* Antioch, *by the Miniſtry of* Barnabas *firſt, and afterwards of* Paul *in Conjunction with him, and the laſting Name of* Chriſtian *firſt given to the Diſciples there*, v. 22—26. (4.) *A Prediction of an approaching Famine, and the Contribution that was made among the Gentile Converts for the Relief of the Poor Saints in* Judea *upon that Occaſion*, v. 27—30.

AND the apoſtles and brethren that were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles had alſo received the word of God. 2 And when Peter was come up to Jeruſalem, they that were of the circumciſion contended with him, 3 Saying, Thou wenteſt in to men uncircumciſed, and didſt eat with them. 4 But Peter rehearſed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, ſaying, 5 I was in the City of Joppa praying; and in a trance I ſaw a viſion, A certain veſſel deſcend, as it had been a great ſheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me. 6 Upon the which when I had faſtened mine eyes, I conſidered, and ſaw four-footed beaſts of the earth, and wild beaſts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 7 And I heard a voice ſaying unto me, Ariſe, Peter, ſlay and eat. 8 But I ſaid, Not ſo, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entred into my mouth. 9 But the voice anſwered me again from heaven, What God hath cleanſed, *that* call not thou common. 10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the houſe where I was, ſent from Ceſarea unto me. 12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover, theſe ſix brethren accompanied me, and we enter'd into the man's houſe: 13 And he ſhewed us how he had ſeen an angel in his houſe, which ſtood and ſaid unto him, ſend men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whoſe ſirname is Peter: 14 Who ſhall tell thee words, wherby thou and all thy houſe ſhall be ſaved. 15 And as I began to ſpeak, the holy Ghoſt fell on them, as on us at the beginning. 16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he ſaid, John indeed baptized with water; but ye ſhall be baptized with the holy Ghoſt. 17 Foraſmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, what was I, that I could withſtand God? 18 When they heard theſe things they held their peace, and glorified God, ſaying, Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

The Preaching of the Goſpel to *Cornelius*, was a Thing which we poor *Sinners of the Gentiles* have Reaſon to reflect upon with a great deal of Joy and Thankfulneſs; for it was the Bringing of Light to us who *ſate in Darkneſs*. Now it being ſo great a Surprize to the *Believing*, as well as the *Unbelieving Jews*, its worth while to enquire, *How it took*; and what Comments were made upon it? And here we find

Firſt, That *Intelligence* was preſently *brought* of it to the Church in *Jeruſalem*, and thereabouts; for *Cæſarea* was not ſo far from *Jeruſalem*, but they might preſently hear of it. Some for Good will, and ſome for Ill-will, would ſpread the Report of it; ſo that before he was himſelf return'd to *Jeruſalem*, *the Apoſtles* and the *Brethren* there, and in *Judea*, *heard that the Gentiles alſo had received the Word of God*, that is, the *Goſpel of Chriſt*, which is not only a Word of GOD, but the Word of GOD; for it is the Summary and Center of all Divine Revelations. They *receiv'd Chriſt*; for *his Name is call'd, The Word of God*, Rev. xix. 13. Not only that the *Jews* who were diſpers'd into the Gentile Countries, and the Gentiles that were proſelyted to the Jewiſh Religion, but that *the Gentiles alſo* themſelves, with whom it had hitherto been thought unlawful to hold common Converſation, were taken into Church-Communion, that they had *receiv'd the Word of God*. That is,

1. That the Word of GOD was *preach'd to them*; which was a greater *Honour put upon them* than they expected. Yet I wonder this ſhould ſeem ſtrange to thoſe who were themſelves commiſſion'd to *preach the Goſpel to every Creature*. But thus often are the Prejudices of Pride and Bigotry held faſt againſt the cleareſt Diſcoveries of Divine Truth.

2. That it was *entertain'd* and *ſubmitted* to *by them*, which was a better *Work wrought upon them* than they expected. 'Tis likely they had got a Notion, That if the Goſpel were preach'd to the Gentiles, it would be to no Purpoſe, becauſe the Proofs of the Goſpel were fetch'd ſo much out of the *Old Teſtament*, which the Gentiles did not receive; they look'd upon them as not inclin'd to Religion, nor likely to receive the Impreſſions of it; and therefore were ſurpriz'd to hear that they had *receiv'd the Word of the LORD*. *Note*, We are too apt to deſpair of doing Good to thoſe, who yet when they are try'd, prove very tractable.

Secondly, That *Offence* was taken at it by the Believing *Jews*, *v.* 2, 3. *When* Peter *was* himſelf *come up to* Jeruſalem, *they that were of the Circumciſion*, thoſe Jewiſh Converts that ſtill retain'd a Veneration for Circumciſion, *contended with him*, they charg'd it upon him as a Crime, that he *went into Men uncircumcis'd*, and did *eat with them*, and hereby they think he hath *ſtain'd*, if not forfeited the Honour of his Apoſtleſhip, and ought to come under the Cenſure of the Church; ſo far were they from looking upon him as Infallible, or as the Supreme Head of the Church; that all were accountable to, and he to none. See here,

1. How much it is the Bane and Damage of the Church to *monopolize* it, and to exclude thoſe from it, and from the Benefit of the Means of Grace, that are not in every Thing as we are. There are narrow Souls that are for *engroſſing* the *Riches of the Church*, as there are that would *engroſs* the Riches of the World, and would be *placed alone in the midſt of the Earth*. Theſe Men were of *Jonah*'s Mind, who in a Jealouſy for his People, was angry that the *Ninevites receiv'd the Word of God*, and juſtify'd himſelf in it.

2. That Chriſt's Miniſters muſt not think it ſtrange if they be cenſur'd and quarrel'd with, not only by their profeſs'd Enemies; but by their profeſſing Friends, and not only for their Follies and Infirmities, but for their good Actions, ſeaſonably and well done; but if we have prov'd our own Work, we may have *rejoycing in our ſelves*, as *Peter* had, whatever Reflections we may have from our Brethren. Thoſe that are *zealous* and *couragious* in the Service of Chriſt, muſt expect to be cenſur'd by

thoſe that under Pretence of being *cautious*, are cold and indifferent. Thoſe that are of Catholick, generous Charitable Principles muſt expect to be cenſur'd by ſuch as are conceited and ſtrait lac'd, that ſay, *Stand by thy ſelf, I am holier than thou.*

Thirdly, *Peter* gave ſuch a full and fair Account of the Matter of Fact as was ſufficient, without any further Argument or Apology, both to *juſtify him*, and to *ſatisfy* them, *v.* 4. *He rehears'd the Matter from the Beginning*, and *laid it before them in order*, and then could appeal to themſelves, whether he had done amiſs; for it appear'd all along GOD's own Work, and not his.

1. He takes it for granted, that if they had righly underſtood how the Matter was, they would not have *contended with him*, but rather have concurr'd with him, and commended him. And it is a good Reaſon why we ſhould be moderate in our Cenſures, and ſparing of them, becauſe if we rightly underſtood, that which we are ſo forward to *run down*, perhaps we ſhould ſee Cauſe to *run in* with it. When we ſee others do that which looks ſuſpicions, inſtead of *contending with them*, we ſhould *enquire* of them, what Ground they went upon; and if we have not an Opportunity to do that, ſhould our ſelves put the beſt Conſtruction upon it that it will bear; and *judge nothing before the Time.*

2. He is very *willing* to *ſtand right* in their Opinion, and takes Pains to give them Satisfaction; doth not inſiſt upon his being the chief of the Apoſtles, for he was far from the Thought of that Supremacy which his pretended Succeſſors claim. Nor did he think it enough to tell them, He was ſatisfy'd himſelf in the Grounds he went upon, and then what need they trouble themſelves about it; but is ready to *give a Reaſon of the Hope that is in him* concerning the Gentiles, and why he had receded from his former Sentiments, which were the ſame with theirs. 'Tis a Debt we owe both to our ſelves and to our Brethren to ſet thoſe Actions of ours in a true Light, which at firſt lookt ill, and gave Offence; that we may remove Stumbling-blocks out of our Brethrens Way.

Let us now ſee what *Peter* pleads in his own Defence:

1. That he was inſtructed by a Viſion no longer to keep up the Diſtinctions which were made by the Ceremonial Law; He relates the Viſion, *v.* 5, 6. as we had it before, *chap.* x. 9, &c. The Sheet which was there ſaid to be let down *to the Earth*, he here ſaith came *even to him*, which Circumſtance intimates, that it was particularly deſign'd for Inſtruction *to him*. We ſhould thus ſee all GOD's Diſcoveries of Himſelf which He has made to the Children of Men, coming *even to us*; applying them by Faith to ourſelves. Another Circumſtance here added is, that when the Sheet *came to him*, he *faſtened his Eyes upon it*, and *conſider'd* it *v.* 6. If we would be led into the Knowledge of divine Things we muſt fix our Minds upon them, and *conſider* them, He tells them what Orders he had to eat of all Sorts of Meat without Diſtinction, *asking no Queſtions for Conſcience Sake, v.* 7. 'Twas not till after the Flood, as it ſhould ſeem, that Man was allow'd to eat Fleſh at all, *Gen.* ix. 3. That Allowance was afterwards limited by the Ceremonial Law; but now the Reſtrictions were taken off, and the Matter ſet at large again. 'Twas not the Deſign of Chriſt to abridge us in the Uſe of our Creature-Comforts by any other Law but that of Sobriety, and Temperance, and preferring the Meat that endures to eternal, Life, before that which periſheth.

He pleads, That he was as averſe to the Thoughts of converſing with Gentiles, or *eating of their Dainties*, as they could be, and therefore refus'd the Liberty given him, *Not ſo, Lord*; *for nothing common or unclean has at any Time enter'd into my Mouth, v.* 8. But he was told from Heaven, That the Caſe was now alter'd, that *God had cleans'd* thoſe Perſons and Things which were before polluted, and therefore he muſt no longer call them *common*, nor look upon them as unfit to be meddled with by the *peculiar* People, *v.* 9. So that he was not to be blam'd for changing his *Thoughts*, when GOD had chang'd the *Thing*. In Things of this Nature, we muſt act according to our *preſent* Light; yet muſt not be ſo wedded to our Opinion concerning them, as to be prejudic'd againſt further Diſcoveries, when the Matter may either be otherwiſe, or appear otherwiſe; and GOD may *reveal even this unto us*, Phil. iii. 15.

And that they might be ſure he was not deceiv'd in it, he tells them, it was done *three Times, v.* 10. the ſame Command given, to *kill and eat*, and the ſame Reaſon, becauſe that which GOD hath *cleans'd*, is not to be *call'd common*, repeated a ſecond and third Time. And further to confirm him, that it was a divine Viſion, the Things he ſaw did not vaniſh away into the Air, but *were drawn up again into Heaven*, whence they were let down.

2. That he was particularly directed by *the Spirit* to go along with the Meſſengers that *Cornelius* ſent. And that it might appear that Viſion was deſign'd to ſatisfy him in that Matter, he obſerves to them, the Time when the Meſſengers came, immediately after he had that Viſion; yet leſt that ſhould not be ſufficient to clear his Way, the Spirit bid him *go with the Men* that were then ſent from *Cæſarea* to him, *nothing doubting, v.* 11. 12. tho' they were Gentiles he went to, and went with, yet he muſt *make no Scruple* of going along with them.

3. That he took ſome of his Brethren along with him, who were *of the Circumciſion*, that they might be ſatisfy'd as well as he; and theſe he had brought up from *Joppa*, to witneſs for him with what Caution he proceeded, fore-ſeeing the Offence that would be taken at it. He did not act ſeparately, but with Advice, not raſhly, but upon due Deliberation.

(4.) That *Cornelius* had a Viſion too, by which he was directed to ſend for *Peter, v.* 13. *He ſhew'd us how he had ſeen an Angel in his Houſe*, that bid him *ſend to* Joppa for one *Simon* whoſe Sirname is *Peter*. See how good it is for thoſe that have Communion with GOD, and keep up a Correſpondence with Heaven, to *compare Notes*, and communicate their Experiences to each other; for hereby they may ſtrengthen one another's Faith: *Peter* is the more confirm'd in the Truth of his Viſion by *Cornelius*'s, and *Cornelius* by *Peter*'s. Here is ſomething added in what the Angel ſaid to *Cornelius*; before it was, ſend for *Peter*, and *he ſhall ſpeak to thee, he ſhall tell thee what thou oughteſt to do.* chap. x. 6, 32. But here it is, *He ſhall tell thee Words whereby thou and thy Houſe ſhall be ſaved, v.* 13. and therefore 'tis of vaſt Concern to thee and will be of unſpeakable Advantage to ſend for him. *Note*, 1. The Words of the Goſpel, are Words whereby we may be *ſaved*, eternally ſaved; not merely by *hearing* them and *reading* them, but by *believing* and *obeying* them. They ſet the Salvation before us, and ſhew us what it is, they open the Way of Salvation to us, and if we follow the Method preſcrib'd us by them, we ſhall be certainly ſaved from Wrath and the Curſe, and be for ever happy. 2. They that embrace the Goſpel of Chriſt, will have Salvation brought by it to their Families. *Thou and all thy Houſe ſhall be ſaved*; Thou and thy Children ſhall be taken into Covenant, and have the Means of Salvation; thy Houſe ſhall be as welcome to the Benefit of the Salvation upon their Believing, as thou thy ſelf, even the meaneſt Servant thou haſt. *This Day is Salvation come to this Houſe*, Luke xix. 9. Hitherto *Salvation was of the* Jews. *Joh.* 4. 12. But now Salvation it brought to the Gentiles as much as ever it was with *the Jews*; the Promiſes, Privileges and Means of it convey'd to all Nations, as amply and fully to all Intents and Purpoſes, as ever it had been appropriated to the Jewiſh Nation.

5. That which put the Matter paſt all Diſpute, was, the *Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt* upon the Gentile Hearers; this compleated the Evidence that it was the Will of GOD that he ſhould take the Gentiles into Communion.

1. The Fact was plain and undeniable, *v.* 15. *As I began to ſpeak*, (and perhaps he felt ſome ſecret Reluctancy in his own Breaſt, doubting whether he was in the right to preach to the Uncircumcis'd) preſently *the Holy Ghoſt fell on them*, in as viſible Signs, *as on us at the Beginning*, in which there could be no Fallacy. Thus GOD atteſted what was done, and declar'd his Approbation of it; That Preaching is certainly right with which the Holy Ghoſt is given: The Apoſtle ſuppoſeth that, when he thus argues with the *Galatians, Receiv'd ye the Spirit by the Works of the Law; or by the Hearing of Faith?* Gal. iii. 2.

2. *Peter* was hereby put in Mind of a Saying of his Maſter's when he was leaving them, *chap.* i. 5. *John baptiz'd with Water, but ye ſhall be baptiz'd with the Holy Ghoſt, v.* 16. Which plainly intimated, (1.) That the Holy Ghoſt was the Gift of Chriſt, and the Product and Performance of *his Promiſe*, that great Promiſe which he left with them when he went to Heaven. It was therefore without Doubt *from him* that this Gift came; and the filling of them with the Holy Ghoſt, was his *Act and Deed*. As it was promis'd by his Mouth, ſo it was perform'd by his Hand, and was a Token of his Favour. (2.) That the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, was a Kind of *Baptiſm*. They that receiv'd it were *Baptiz'd* with it in a more excellent Manner, than any of thoſe that even the *Baptiſt* himſelf baptiz'd *with Water*.

3. Comparing that Promiſe, ſo worded, with this Gift juſt now *conferr'd*, when the Queſtion was ſtarted, Whether theſe Perſons ſhould be baptiz'd or no? he concluded, that the Queſtion was determin'd by Chriſt himſelf, *v.* 17. *For as much then as God; gave them the like Gift as He did to us*; gave it to us as *believing in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and to them upon their Believing in him, *What was I that I could withſtand God?* Could I refuſe to baptize them with Water, whom God had baptiz'd with the Holy Ghoſt? Could I deny the Sign to thoſe on whom He had conferr'd the Thing ſignify'd? *But as for me, who was I? What? able to forbid God?* Did it become me to controul the Divine Will? or to oppoſe the Counſels of Heaven? *Note*, Thoſe that hinder the Converſion of Souls, *withſtand God*; and thoſe take too much upon them, who contrive how to exclude thoſe from their Communion, whom GOD has taken into Communion with himſelf.

Fourthly, This Account which *Peter* gave of the Matter, ſatisfy'd them; and all was well. Thus when the two Tribes and a half gave an Account to *Phineas* and the Princes of *Iſrael* of the true *Intent and Meaning* of their building them an *Altar* on the Banks of *Jordan*, the Controverſy was drop'd, and *it pleas'd them* that it was ſo, *Joſh.* xxii. 30. Some People when they have faſten'd a Cenſure upon a Perſon, will ſtick to it, tho' afterwards it appear never ſo plainly to be unjuſt and groundleſs. 'Twas not ſo here; for theſe Brethren tho' they were of the Circumciſion, and their Byaſs went the other Way, yet when they heard this,

1. They *let fall their* Cenſures; *they held their peace*, and ſaid no more againſt what *Peter* had done; they laid their Hand up-

on their Mouth, becauſe now they perceiv'd that GOD did it. Now they who prided themſelves in their Dignities as *Jews*, began to ſee that GOD was *ſtaining* that Pride, by letting in the Gentiles to ſhare and ſhare-like with them: And now that Prophecy is fulfill'd, *Thou ſhalt no more be haughty becauſe of my holy Mountain*, Zeph. iii. 11.

2. They turn'd them into *Praiſes*; they not only held their Peace from quarelling with *Peter*, but open'd their Mouths to *glorify God*, for what He had done by and with *Peter*'s Miniſtry; were thankful that their Miſtake was rectify'd, and that GOD had ſhew'd more Mercy to the Poor Gentiles than they were inclin'd to ſhew them, ſaying, *Then hath God alſo to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life!* Hath granted them not only the Means of Repentance, in opening a Door of Entrance for his Miniſters among them; but the Grace of Repentance, in having given them his *Holy Spirit*, who wherever he comes to be a Comforter, firſt *convinceth*; and gives a Sight of Sin firſt, and Sorrow for it; and then a Sight of Chriſt, and Joy in him. *Nb.* Repentance if it be true, is *unto Life*; it is to *ſpiritual Life*; all that truly repent of their Sins evidence it by living a new Life, a holy, heavenly, and divine Life. Thoſe that by Repentance die unto Sin, from thence forward live unto GOD; and then, and not till then we begin to live indeed; and it ſhall be to *Eternal Life*. All true Penitents ſhall *live*, i. e. They ſhall be reſtor'd to the Favour of GOD, which is *Life*, which is *better than Life*; they ſhall be *comforted* with the Aſſurance of the Pardon of their Sins, and ſhall have the Earneſts of Eternal Life, and at length the Fruition of it. (2.) Repentance is GOD's Gift; 'Tis not only his *Free-Grace* that accepts it, but his *mighty Grace* that works it in us; that *takes away the Heart of Stone*, and *gives a Heart of Fleſh: The Sacrifice of God, is a broken Spirit*; 'tis He that provides himſelf that Lamb. (3.) Wherever GOD deſigns to give Life, He *gives Repentance*; for that is a neceſſary Preparative for the Comforts of a ſeal'd Pardon, and a ſettled Peace in this World, and for the ſeeing and enjoying of GOD in the other World, (4.) It is a great Comfort to us that GOD hath exalted his Son Jeſus, not only to *give Repentance to* Iſrael, *and the Remiſſion of Sins*. Acts v. 13. but to the Gentiles *alſo*.

19 ¶ Now they which were ſcattered abroad, upon the perſecution that aroſe about Stephen, travelled as far as Phœnice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only. 20 And ſome of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, ſpake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jeſus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord 22 ¶ Then tidings of theſe things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jeruſalem: and they ſent forth Barnabas, that he ſhould go as far as Antioch. 23 Who when he came, and had ſeen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpoſe of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. 24 For he was a good man, and full of the holy Ghoſt, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarſus, to ſeek Saul. 26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to paſs, that a whole year they aſſembled themſelves with the church and taught much people; and the diſciples were called Chriſtians firſt in Antioch.

We have here an Account of the Planting and Watering of a Church at *Antioch*, the chief City of *Syria*, reckon'd afterwards the third moſt conſiderable City of the Empire, only *Rome* and *Alaxandria* being prefer'd before it, next to whoſe Patriarch, that of *Antioch* took Place. It ſtood where *Hamath* or *Riblah* did, which we read of in the *Old Teſtament*. 'Tis ſuggeſted, that *Luke* the Penman of this Hiſtory was of *Antioch*, and *Theophilus*, to whom he dedicates ti; which might be the Reaſon why he takes more particular Notice of the Succeſs of the Goſpel at *Antioch*; as alſo becauſe there it was that *Paul* began to be famous, the Story of whom he is haſtening towards.

Now concerning the Church at *Antioch*, Obſerve,

Firſt, That the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel there, were ſuch as were diſpers'd from *Jeruſalem* by Perſecution, that Perſecution which aroſe *five* or *ſix* Years ago (as ſome compute) at the Time of *Stephen*'s Death, v. 19. *They travell'd as far as* Phœnice, and other Places, *Preaching the Word*. Therefore GOD ſuffer'd them to be *perſecuted*, that thereby they might be *diſpers'd* in the World, ſown as *Seed* to GOD, in order to their bringing forth much Fruit. Thus what was intended for the Hurt of the Church, was made to work for its Good; as *Jacob*'s Curſe of the Tribe of *Levi*, *I will divide them in* Jacob, *and ſcatter them in* Iſrael, was turn'd into a Bleſſing. The Enemies deſign'd to ſcatter and loſe them, Chriſt deſign'd to ſcatter and uſe them. Thus the Wrath of Man is made to praiſe GOD. *Obſerve*,

1. Thoſe that *fled from Perſecution*, yet did not *flee from their Work*, Tho' for the Time they declin'd Suffering, yet they did not decline Service; nay, they threw themſelves into a larger Field of Opportunity than before. Thoſe that perſecuted the Preachers of the Goſpel, hop'd thereby to prevent their carrying it to the Gentile World; but it prov'd that they did but haſten it the ſooner: *Howbeit, they meant not ſo, neither did their Heart think ſo*. They that were perſecuted in one City, fled to another, but they carry'd their Religion along with them, not only that they might take the Comfort of it *themſelves*, but that they might communicate it *to others*; thus ſhewing, that when they got out of the Way, it was not becauſe they were afraid of Suffering, but becauſe they were willing to reſerve themſelves for further Service.

2. They *preſs'd forward* in their Work, finding that the *good Pleaſure of the Lord proſper'd in their Hands*. When they had preach'd ſucceſsfully in *Judea*, *Samaria* and *Galilee*, they got out of the borders of the Land of *Canaan*, and *travell'd* into *Phœnicia*, into the Iſland of *Cyphrus*, and into *Syria*. Tho' the further they *travell'd*, the more they expos'd themſelves; yet they *travell'd* on; *Plus ultra*, was their Motto, *further ſtill*; grudging no Pains, and dreading no Perils in carrying on ſo good a Work, and ſerving ſo good a Maſter.

3. They *preach'd the Word to none but to the* Jews *only*, who were diſpers'd in all thoſe Parts, and had Synagogues of their own, in which they met with them by themſelves, and preach'd to them. They did not yet underſtand that the *Gentiles* were to be *Fellow-heirs*, and of the ſame Body; but left the *Gentiles* either to turn *Jews*, and ſo come into the Church, or elſe remain as they were.

4. They particularly apply'd themſelves to the *Helleniſt Jews*, here call'd the *Grecians*, that were at *Antioch*. Many of the Preachers were Natives of *Judea* and *Jeruſalem*; but ſome of them were by Birth of *Cypurs* and *Cyrene*, as *Barnabas* himſelf, *chap.* iv. 36. and *Simon*, Mark xv. 21. but had their Education in *Jeruſalem*; and theſe being themſelves *Grecian Jews*, had a particular Concern for thoſe of their own Denomination and Diſtinction, and apply'd themſelves cloſely to them at *Antioch*. Dr. *Lightfoot* ſaith, they were there call'd *Helleniſts* or *Grecians*, becauſe they were *Jews* of the Corporation, or Enfranchiſement of the City; for *Antioch* was a *Syrogrecian* City. To them they *preach'd the Lord Jeſus*. That was the conſtant Subject of their Preaching; What elſe ſhould the Miniſters of Chriſt preach, but *Chriſt?* Chriſt, and him crucify'd; Chriſt, and him glorify'd.

5. They had wonderful Succeſs in their Preaching, *viz.* (1.) Their Preaching was accompany'd with a divine Power; *The Hand of the LORD was with them*. Which ſome underſtand of the Power they were endu'd with to *work Miracles*, for the confirming of their Doctrine; in theſe the LORD was *working with them*, that He *confirm'd the Word with Signs following*, Mark xvi. 20. in theſe GOD *bare them Witneſs*, Heb. ii. 4. But I rather underſtand it of the Power of divine Grace working on the Hearts of the Hearers, and opening them, as *Lydia*'s Heart was open'd, becauſe many ſaw the Miracles that were not converted, but when by the Spirit the Underſtanding was enlighten'd, and the Will bow'd to the Goſpel of Chriſt, that was a *Day of Power*, in which *Voluntiers* were liſted under the Banner of the Lord Jeſus, *Pſal.* xi. 3. *The Hand of the LORD was with them* to bring that home to the Hearts and Conſciences of Men, which they could but ſpeak to the outward Ear. Then the *Word of the Lord* gains its End, when the *Hand of the Lord* goes along with it to write it in their Heart. Then the people are brought to *believe the Report* of the Goſpel, when with it the *Arm of the Lord is reveal'd*, *Iſa.* liii. 1. when GOD *teacheth with a ſtrong Hand*, Iſa. viii. 11. Theſe were not Apoſtles, but ordinary Miniſters, yet they had the *Hand of the Lord with them*, and did Wonders.

2. Abundance of Good was done; *A great Number believ'd, and turn'd unto the Lord*, many more than could have been expected, conſidering the outward Diſadvantages they labour'd under; ſome of all Sorts of People were wrought upon, and brought into Obedience to Chriſt. *Obſerve*, What the Change was, (1.) They *believ'd*; They were convinc'd of the Truth of the Goſpel, and ſubſcrib'd to the Record GOD had given in it concerning his Son. (2.) The Effect and Evidence of this was, that they *turn'd unto the Lord*; They could not be ſaid to turn from the Service of Idols, for they were *Jews*, Worſhippers of the True GOD only; but they turn'd from a Confidence in the Righteouſneſs of the Law, to rely only upon the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt; the Righteouſneſs which is *by faith*. They turn'd from a looſe, careleſs, carnal Way of Living, to live a holy, heavenly, ſpiritual and divine Life; They turn'd from worſhipping GOD in Shew and Ceremony, to worſhip Him *in the Spirit and in Truth*. They *turn'd to the Lord*; Jeſus, and he became *All in All* with them. This was the Work of Converſion wrought upon them; and it muſt be wrought upon every One of us. 'Twas the Fruit of their Faith; All that ſincerely *believe*, will *turn to the Lord*; for whatever we profeſs, or pretend we do not really *believe* the Goſpel, if we do not cordially embrace Chriſt offer'd to us in the Goſpel.

Secondly, The good Work thus *begun* at *Antioch*, was *carry'd on* to a great Perfection; and this Church thus *founded*, grew to be a *flouriſhing* One, by the Miniſtry of *Barnabas* and *Saul*, who built upon the Foundation which the other Preachers had laid, and *enter'd into their Labours*, Joh. iv. 37, 38.

1. The Church at *Jeruſalem* ſent *Barnabas* thither to nurſe this new born Church, and to ſtrengthen the Hands both of Preachers and People, and put a Reputation upon the Cauſe of Chriſt there.

(1.) They heard the good News that the Goſpel was receiv'd at *Antioch, v.* 22. The Apoſtles there were inquiſitive how the Work went on in the Countries about; and 'tis likely kept up a Correſpondence with all Parts where Preachers were, ſo that *Tydings of theſe Things* of the great Numbers that were converted at *Antioch*, ſoon *came to the Ears of the Church that was in* Jeruſalem. Thoſe that are in the moſt emminent Stations in the Church, ought to concern themſelves for thoſe in a lower Sphere.

(2.) They diſpatch'd *Barnabas* to them with all Speed; they deſir'd him to go and aſſiſt, and encourage theſe hopeful Beginnings. They *ſent him forth* as an Envoy from them, and a Repreſentative of their whole Body, to congratulate them upon the Succeſs of the Goſpel among them, as Matter of Rejoycing both to *Preachers* and *Hearers*, and with *both* they rejoyced. He muſt go *as far* as *Antioch*. 'Twas a great Way, But *as far* as it was he was willing to undertake the Journey for a publick Service. 'Tis probable *Barnabas* had a particular Genius for Work of this Kind, was active and converſable, and lov'd to be in Motion, delighted in doing Good abroad, as much as others in doing Good at home, was as much of *Zebulon*'s Spirit who rejoyc'd *in his going out*, as others are of *Iſſachar*'s, who rejoyc'd *in his Tent*, And his Talent lying this Way, he was fitteſt to be employ'd in this Work. GOD gives various Gifts for various Services.

(3.) *Barnabas* was wonderfully pleas'd to find that the Goſpel got Ground, and that ſome of his Countrymen, Men of *Cyprus*, *v.* 20. (of which Country he was, *ch.* iv. 26.) were Inſtrumental in it, *v.* 23. *when he came, and had ſeen the Grace of God*, the Tokens of GOD's *good Will* to the People of *Antioch*, and the Evidences of his *good Work* among them *he was glad*. He took Time to make his Obſervations, and both in their publick Worſhip, in their common Converſation, and in their Families he ſaw the *Grace of God* among them; where the Grace of GOD is it will be *ſeen*, as the *Tree* is *known by its Fruits*; and where it is ſeen, it ought to be own'd; what we ſee which is good in any we muſt call it *God's Grace* in them, and give that Grace the Glory of it; And we ought ourſelves to take the Comfort of it, and make it the Matter of our *rejoycing*, We muſt be *glad to ſee* the *Grace of God* in others, and the more when we ſee it there where we did not expect it.

(4.) He did what he could to fix them; and to *confirm* them in the Faith, who were *converted* to the Faith. He *exhorted* them, παρεκάλει 'Tis the ſame Word with that by which the Name of *Barnabas* is interpreted, *chap.* iv. 36. υἱὸς παρακλήσεως A *Son of Exhortation*; His Talent lay that Way, and he traded with it; Let him that *Exhorteth* attend to *Exhortation*. Rom. xii. 8. Or, being a Son of *Conſolation*, for ſo we render the Word, he *comforted*, or *encourag'd* them *with purpoſe of Heart to cleave to the Lord*. The more he rejoyc'd in the Beginning of the good Work among them, the more earneſt he was with them to proceed according to theſe good Beginnings. Thoſe we have *Comfort* in we ſhould *exhort*. *Barnabas* was *glad* for what he ſaw of the Grace of GOD among them, and therefore was the more earneſt with them to *perſevere*. (1.) To *cleave to the Lord*. *Note*, Thoſe that have *turned to the Lord* are concern'd to *cleave unto the Lord*, not to fall off from following him, not to flag and tire in following him. To *cleave to the Lord* Jeſus, is to live a Life of Dependance upon him, and Devotedneſs to him; not only to *hold him faſt*, but to *hold faſt by him*, to be *ſtrong in the Lord*, and in the *Power of his Might*. (2.) To cleave to him with *Purpoſe of Heart*, with an intelligent, firm, and deliberate Reſolution, *founded* upon good Grounds, and *fix'd* upon that Foundation, *Pſal.* cviii. 1. 'Tis to bind our Souls with a Bond to be the LORD's, and to ſay, as *Ruth*, Intreat me not to leave him, or to return from following after him.

5. Herein he gave a Proof of his good Character, *v.* 24. *He was a good Man, and full of the Holy Ghoſt, and of Faith*, and approv'd himſelf ſo upon this Occaſion. (1.) He ſhew'd himſelf to be a Man of a very ſweet, affable, courteous Diſpoſition, that had himſelf, and could teach others, the Art of Obliging. *He was* not only a *righteous Man*, but a *good Man*, a good-temper'd Man. Miniſters that are ſo, recommend themſelves and their Doctrine very much to the good Opinion of thoſe that are without. He was a *good Man*, i. e. a charitable Man; ſo he had approv'd himſelf, when he ſold an Eſtate, and gave the Money to the Poor, *chap.* iv. 36. (2.) By this it appear'd that he was richly endu'd with the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit. The Goodneſs of his natural Diſpoſition, would not have qualify'd him for this Service, if he had not been *full of the Holy Ghoſt*, and ſo *full of Power, by the Spirit of the LORD*. (3.) He was full of *Faith*, full of the Chriſtian Faith himſelf, and therefore deſirous to propogate it among others; *Full* of the Grace of Faith, and full of the Fruits of that Faith that works by Love. He was *ſound in the Faith*, and therefore preſs'd them to be ſo.

(6.) He was inſtrumental to do Good, by bringing in thoſe that were without, as well as by building up thoſe that were within; *Much People were added to the Lord*, and thereby added to the *Church*; many were *turn'd to the Lord* before, yet more are to be *turn'd*; 'Tis *done as thou haſt commanded, and yet there is Room*.

2. *Barnabas* went to fetch *Saul* to joyn with him in the Work of the Goſpel at *Antioch*. The laſt News we heard of him was, That when his Life was ſought at *Jeruſalem*, he was ſent away to *Tarſus*, the City where he was born, and it ſhould ſeem he continu'd there ever ſince, doing Good no doubt. But now *Barnabas* takes a Journey on purpoſe to *Tarſus*, to ſee what was become of him, to tell him what a Door of Opportunity was open'd at *Antioch*, and to deſire him to come and ſpend ſome Time with him there, *v.* 25, 26. And here alſo it appears, that *Barnabas* was a *good* Sort of a *Man* in two Things.

1. That he would take ſo much Pains to bring an active uſeful Man out of Obſcurity; 'Twas he that introduc'd *Saul* to the Diſciples at *Jeruſalem*, when they were ſhy of him; and 'twas he that brought him out of the Corner into which he was driven, into a more publick Station. It is a very good Work to fetch a Candle from under a Buſhel, and to ſet it on a Candleſtick.

2. That he would bring in *Saul* at *Antioch*, who being a *chief Speaker* (ch. xiv. 12.) and probably a more *popular Preacher* would be likely to *eclipſe* him there, by *out-ſhining* him; But *Barnabas* is very willing to be ſo when it is for the publick Service. If GOD by his Grace enables us to do what Good we can, according to the Ability we have, we ought to rejoyce if others that have alſo larger Capacities, have larger Opportunities, and do more Good than we can do. *Barnabas* brought *Saul* to *Antioch*, tho' it might be the leſſening of himſelf, to teach us to ſeek the Things of Chriſt more than our own Things.

Now here we are further told.

1. What *Service* was now *done* to the Church at *Antioch*. *Paul* and *Barnabas* continued there a whole Year, preſiding in their religious Aſſemblies, and preaching the Goſpel, *v.* 26. *Obſerve*, (1.) The Church frequently *aſſembled*. The Religious Aſſemblies of Chriſtians are appointed by Chriſt for his Honour, and the Comfort and Benefit of his Diſciples. GOD's People of Old frequently came together, *at the Door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation*, Places of Meeting are now multiply'd, But they muſt *come together*, tho' it be with Difficulty and Peril. (2.) Miniſters were the Maſters of thoſe Aſſemblies, and held thoſe *Courts* in Chriſt's Name, to which all that *hold by, from, and under him*, owe *Suit* and *Service*. (3.) *Teaching the People* is one Part of the Work of Miniſters, when they preſide in religious Aſſemblies. They are not only to be the Peoples Mouth to GOD in Prayer and Praiſe, but GOD's Mouth to the People in opening the Scriptures, and teaching out of them the good Knowledge of the Lord. (4.) It is a great Encouragement to Miniſters when they have Opportunity of teaching *much People*, of caſting the Net of the Goſpel, where there's a large Shole of Fiſh, in Hopes that the more may be incloſ'd. Preaching is not only for the Conviction and Converſion of thoſe that are without, but for the Inſtruction and Edification of thoſe that are within. A *conſtituted* Church muſt have its *Teachers*.

2. What *Honour* was now put upon the Church at *Antioch*; There *the Diſciples were firſt called Chriſtians*. 'Tis likely they call'd themſelves ſo, incorporated themſelves by that Title; whether by ſome ſolemn Act of the Church or Miniſters, or whether this Name inſenſibly obtain'd there by its begin frequently us'd in their Praying and Preaching we are not told; but it ſhould ſeem that two ſuch great Men as *Paul* and *Barnabas* continuing there ſo long, being exceedingly follow'd, and meeting with no Oppoſition, Chriſtian Aſſemblies made a greater Figure there than any where, and became more conſiderable, which was the Reaſon of their being call'd Chriſtians firſt there; which if there were to be a *Mother Church* to rule over all other Churches would give *Antioch* a better Title to the Honour, than *Rome* can pretend to. Hitherto they who gave up their Names to Chriſt were call'd *Diſciples, Learners, Scholars*, train'd up *under him*, in order to their being employ'd *by him*. But from hence forward they were call'd *Chriſtians*. (1.) Thus the reproachful Names which their Enemies had hitherto branded them with, would perhaps be wip'd away, and diſuſed. They call'd them *Nazarenes, Acts.* xxiv. 5. The Men of *that Way*, that *By way*, which had *no Name*, and thus they prejudic'd People againſt them, to remove which Prejudices they gave themſelves a Name which their Enemies could not but ſay was proper enough. (2.) Thus they who before their Converſion had been *diſtinguiſh'd* by the Names of *Jew* and *Gentiles* might after their Converſion be call'd by one and the ſame Name, which would help them to forget their former dividing Names, and prevent their bringing their former Marks of Diſtinction, and with them the Seeds of Contention into the Church. Let not one ſay *I was a Jew*, nor the other, *I was a Gentile*, when both the one and the other muſt now ſay, *I am a Chriſtian*. (3.) Thus they ſtudy'd to do Honour to their Maſter, and ſhew'd that they were not aſham'd to own their Relation to him, but glory'd in it; as the Scholars of *Plato* call'd themſelves *Platoniſts*, and ſo the Scholars of other great Men. They took their Denomi-

nation not from the Name of his Perſon *Jeſus*, but of his Office *Chriſt*; *Anointed*; ſo putting their *Creed* into their *Name*, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, and they are willing all the World ſhould know, That this is the Truth they will live and dye by. Their Enemies will turn this Name to their Reproach, and impute it to them as their Crime, but they will glory in it; *If this be to be vile, I will yet be more vile.* (4.) Thus they own'd their *Dependance* upon *Chriſt*, and their *Receivings* from him; not only that they believ'd in him who is the Anointed, but that through him they themſelves had the *Anointing*, 1 *Joh.* ii. 20, 27. And GOD is ſaid to have *Anointed us in Chriſt*, 2 *Cor.* i. 21. (5.) Thus they laid upon themſelves, and all that ſhould ever profeſs that Name a ſtrong and laſting Obligation to ſubmit to the Laws of Chriſt, to follow the Example of Chriſt, and to devote themſelves entirely to the Honour of *Chriſt*, to be to him for a Name and a Praiſe. Are we Chriſtians? then we ought to think, and ſpeak, and act in every Thing as becomes Chriſtians, and to do Nothing to the Reproach of that worthy Name by which we are call'd; that that may not be ſaid to us, which *Alexander* ſaid to a Soldier of his own Name that was noted for a Coward, *Aut nomen aut mores muta*; either change thy Name, or mend thy Manners. And as we muſt look upon ourſelves as Chriſtians, and carry ourſelves accordingly, ſo we muſt look upon others as Chriſtians, and carry ourſelves *towards* them accordingly. A *Chriſtian* tho' not in every Thing of our Mind ſhould be lov'd and reſpected for his Sake, whoſe Name he bears, *becauſe he belongs to Chriſt*. (6.) Thus the Scripture was fulfilled, for ſo it was written, *Iſa.* lxii. 2. concerning the Goſpel Church, *thou ſhalt be call'd by a new Name, which the Mouth of the Lord ſhall Name.* And *Iſa.* lxv. 16. 'tis ſaid to the corrupt and degenerate Church of the *Jews*, *The Lord God ſhall ſlay thee, and call his Servants by another Name.*

27 ¶ And in theſe days came prophets from Jeruſalem unto Antioch. 28 And there ſtood up one of them named Agabus, and ſignified by the ſpirit, that there ſhould be great dearth throughout all the world which came to paſs in the days of Claudius Ceſar. 29 Then the diſciples, every man according to his ability, determined to ſend relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea. 30 Which alſo they did, and ſent it to the elders, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

When our Lord Jeſus *Aſcended on high*, he gave Gifts unto Men, not only *Apoſtles* and *Evangeliſts*, but *Prophets*, who were enabled by the Spirit to *foreſee* and *foretell* Things to come, which not only ſerv'd for a Confirmation of the Truth of Chriſtianity, for all that theſe Prophets foretold came to paſs, which prov'd that they were ſent of GOD *Deut.* xviii. 22. *Jer.* xxviii. 9. but it was alſo of great Uſe to the Church, and ſerv'd very much for it's Conduct. Now here we have,

Firſt, A Viſit which ſome of thoſe Prophets made to *Antioch* v. 27. *In theſe Days*, during that Year that *Barnabas* and *Saul* liv'd at *Antioch*, there came *Prophets from* Jeruſalem *to* Antioch; we are not told how many, nor is it certain whether theſe were any of thoſe Prophets that we afterwards find in the Church at *Antioch*, ch. xiii. 1.

1. They came *from Jeruſalem*, probably becauſe they were not now ſo much regarded there as they had been; They ſaw their Work in a manner done there, and therefore thought it Time to be gone. *Jeruſalem* had been infamous for *killing the Prophets*, and abuſing them, and therefore is now juſtly depriv'd of theſe *Prophets*.

2. They came to *Antioch*, becauſe they heard of the flouriſhing State of that Church, and there they hoped they might be of ſome Service. Thus ſhould every One *as he hath receiv'd the Gift, miniſter the ſame.* *Barnabas* came to exhort them, and they having receiv'd the Exhortation well, now have *Prophets* ſent them, to *ſhew them Things to come*, as Chriſt had promis'd, *Joh.* xvi. 13. They that are faithful in their little, ſhall be entruſted with more. The beſt underſtanding of Scripture Predictions, is to be got in the Way of Obedience to Scripture Inſtructions.

Secondly, A particular Prediction of a Famine approaching, delivered by one of theſe Prophets, his Name *Agabus*; we read of him again propheſying *Paul*'s Impriſonment, *chap.* xxi. 10. Here he *ſtood up*, probably in one of their publick Aſſemblies, and propheſy'd *v.* 28. Obſerve,

1. Whence he had his Prophecy; what he ſaid was not of himſelf, nor a Fancy of his own, nor an Aſtronomical Prediction, or a Conjecture upon the preſent Workings of ſecond Cauſes, but he *ſignified it by the Spirit*, the Spirit of Prophecy, that there ſhould be a *Famine*; as *Joſeph* by the *Spirit* enabling him, underſtood *Pharoah*'s Dreams, foretold the Famine in *Egypt*, and *Elijah* the Famine in *Iſrael*, in *Ahab*'s Time. Thus God *revealed his Secrets to his Servants the Prophets.*

2. What the Prophecy was. *Firſt*, *There ſhould be great Dearth throughout all the World*, by unſeaſonable Weather: That Corn ſhould be ſcarce and dear, ſo that many of the Poor ſhould periſh for Want of Bread. This ſhould be not in one particular Country, but *through all the World*, i. e. all the *Roman* Empire, which they in their Pride, like *Alexander* before them, called *the World*. Chriſt had foretold in general, that there ſhould be *Famines*, Mat. xxiv. 7. Mark xiii. 8. Luke xx. 11. but *Agabus* foretells one very remarkable Famine now at Hand.

3. The Accompliſhment of it: *It came to paſs in the Days of* Claudius Cæſar; it began in the ſecond Year of his Reign, and continued to the Fourth, if not longer; ſeveral of the *Roman* Hiſtorians make mention of it, as doth alſo *Joſephus*. GOD ſent them the Bread of Life, and they rejected it, loath'd the Plenty of that Manna, and therefore God juſtly broke the Staff of Bread and puniſhed them with Famine, and herein he was Righteous. They were barren and did not bring forth to GOD, and therefore GOD made the Earth barren to them.

Thirdly, The good Uſe they made of this Prediction: When they were told of a Famine at Hand, they did not do as the *Egyptians*, hoard up Corn for themſelves, but as became *Chriſtians*, laid by their Charity to relieve others, which is the beſt Preparative for Sufferings and Want ourſelves. 'Tis promiſed to thoſe that *conſider the Poor*, that GOD will *preſerve them* and *keep them alive*, and they ſhall be *bleſſed upon the Earth*, Pſal. xli. 1, 2. And thoſe who *ſhew Mercy and give to the Poor*, *ſhall not be aſham'd in the evil Time*, but *in the Days of Famine they ſhall be ſatisfy'd*, Pſal. xxxvii. 19, 21. The beſt Proviſion we can lay up againſt a dear Time is to lay up an Intereſt in thoſe Promiſes, by *doing good and communicating*, Luke xii. 33. Many give it for a Reaſon why they ſhould be ſparing, but the Scripture gives it as a Reaſon why we ſhould be liberal, *to ſeven, and alſo to eight*, becauſe *we know not what Evil ſhall be upon the Earth*, Eccl. xi. 2. *Obſerve*,

1. What they *determin'd*; That every Man according to his Ability, ſhould *ſend Relief to the Bretbren that dwelt in* Judea, *v.* 29. (1.) The Perſons that were recommended to them as Objects of Charity, were *the Brethren that dwelt in* Judea. Tho' we muſt as we have Opportunity, *do good to all Men*, yet we muſt have a ſpecial regard *to the Houſhold of Faith*, Gal. vi. 10. No Poor muſt be neglected, but GOD's Poor moſt particularly regarded. The Care which every particular Church ought to take of their own Poor, we were taught by the early Inſtance of that in the Church at *Jeruſalem*, where the *Miniſtration* was ſo conſtant, that *none lacked*, Acts iv. 34. But the *Communion of Saints* in that Inſtance, is here extended further, and Proviſion is made by the Church at *Antioch*, for the relief of the Poor in *Judea*, whom they call *their Brethren*. It ſeems it was the Cuſtom of the *Jews* of the Diſperſion, to ſend Money to thoſe *Jews* which dwelt in *Judea*, for the relief of the Poor that were among them, and to make Collections for that Purpoſe. *Tully* ſpeaks of ſuch a Thing in his time, *Orat pro Flacco*: Which ſuppoſeth there were many Poor in *Judea*, more than in other Countries, ſo that the Rich among them were not able to bear the Charge of keeping them from Starving; either becauſe their Land was grown barren, tho' it had been a fruitful Land, *for the Iniquity of them that dwelt therein*: Or, becauſe they had no Traffick with other Nations. Now we may ſuppoſe, that the greateſt Part of thoſe who turn'd Chriſtians in that Country were the *Poor*, Mat. xi. 1. the *Poor* are *Evangeliz'd*; And alſo that when the Poor turn'd Chriſtians, they were put out of the Poors Book, and cut off from their Shares in the Publick Charity, and it were eaſy to foreſee that if there came a Famine, it would go very hard with them; and if any of them ſhould periſh for Want, it would be a great Reproach to the Chriſtian Profeſſion, and therefore this early Care was taken, upon Notice of this Famine coming, to ſend them a Stock beforehand, leaſt if it ſhould be deferr'd till the Famine came, it ſhould be too late. (2.) The Argreement that was among the Diſciples about it: That *every Man ſhould* contribute *according to his Ability* to this good Work. The *Jews* abroad in other Countries, grew rich by Trade, and many of the rich *Jews* became Chriſtians, whoſe *Abundance* ought to be a *Supply* to the Want of their poor Brethren, that were at a great Diſtance; for the Caſe of ſuch ought to be conſider'd, and not only theirs that live among us. Charitable People are *Traders* with what God has given them; and the Merchants find their Account in ſending Effects to Countries that lie very remote and ſo ſhould we in giving Alms to thoſe *afar off* that need them, which therefore we ſhould be forward to do when we are call'd to it. *Every Man* determined to ſend ſomething, more or leſs, *according to his Ability*; what he could ſpare from the Support of himſelf and his Family, and according as GOD had proſpered him. What may be ſaid to be *according to his Ability*, we muſt judge for ourſelves, but muſt be careful that we *judge righteous Judgments*.

2. What they *did*, they *did* as they *determined*, v. 30. *Which alſo they did.* They not only talk'd of it, but they *did it*. Many a good Motion of that Kind is made and commended, but is not proſecuted, and ſo comes to nothing: But this was purſued, the Collection was made, and was ſo conſiderable, that they thought it worth while to *ſend* Barnabas *and* Saul *to* Jeruſalem, to carry it to *the Elders* there, though they would want their labours in the mean time at *Antioch*. They ſent it, (1.) To the *Elders*, the *Preſbyters*, the *Miniſters* or *Paſtors* of the Churches in *Judea*, to be by them *diſtributed*, according to the neceſſity of the receivers, as it had been *contributed* according to the Ability of the Givers. (2.) It was ſent by *Barnabas* and *Saul*, who, perhaps wanted an Occaſion to go to *Jeruſalem*, and therefore were willing to take

this, *Joſephus* tells us, that at this Time, King *Irates* ſent his Charity to the chief Men of *Jeruſalem*, for the Poor of that Countrey: And *Helena* Queen of the *Adiabeni*, being now at *Jeruſalem*, and hearing of many that died of Famine there, and in the Country about, ſent for Proviſions from *Cyprus* and *Alexandria* and diſtributed them among the People. So ſaith Dr. *Lightfoot*, who alſo computes by the Date of *Paul*'s Rapture, fourteen Years before he wrote the Second Epiſtle to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. xii. 1, 2. That it was in this Journey of his to *Jeruſalem*, with theſe *Alms and Offerings*, that he had his Trance in the Temple, which he ſpeaks of *Acts* xxii. 17. and in that Trance was rapt up into the third Heaven; and then it was that Chriſt told him, he would ſend him *from thence unto the Gentiles*, which accordingly he did, as ſoon as ever he came back to *Antioch*. It is no Diſparagement in an extraordinary Caſe, for Miniſters of the Goſpel, to be Meſſengers of the Churches Charity; though to undertake the conſtant Care of that Matter, would ordinarily be too great a Diverſion from more needful Work, to thoſe who have given themſelves to *Prayer*, and the Miniſtry of the Word.

CHAP. XII.

In this Chapter we have the Story (1.) *Of the Martyrdom of* James *the Apoſtle, and the Impriſonment of* Peter, *by* Herod Agrippa, *who now reigned as King in* Judea, *v.* 1, 4. (2.) *The miraculous Deliverance of* Peter *out of Priſon by the Miniſtry of an Angel, in Anſwer to the Prayers of the Church for him,* v. 5, 19. (3.) *The Cutting off of* Herod *in the Height of his Pride, by the Stroak of an Angel, the Miniſter of GOD's Juſtice,* v. 20, 23. *And this was done while* Barnabas *and* Saul *were at* Jeruſalem, *upon the Errand that the Church of* Antioch *ſent them on to carry their Charity; and therefore in the Cloſe, we have an Account of their Return to* Antioch, *v.* 24, 25.

NOW about that time, Herod the king ſtretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the ſword. 3 And becauſe he ſaw it pleaſed the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter alſo. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) 4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in priſon, and delivered him to four quaternions of ſouldiers, to keep him, intending after Eaſter to bring him forth to the people.

Ever ſince the Converſion of *Paul*, we have heard no more of the Agency of the Prieſts in Perſecuting the Sains at *Jeruſalem*; perhaps that wonderful Change wrought upon him, and the Diſappointment it gave to their Deſign upon the Chriſtians at *Damaſcus*, had ſomewhat mollified them, and brought them under the Check of *Gamaliel's* Advice to *let thoſe Men alone*, and ſee what would be the Iſſue. But here the Storm ariſeth from another Point; the Civil Power, not now as uſual (for ought appears) ſtirr'd up by the Eccleſiaſticks, acts by it ſelf in the Perſecution. But *Herod* tho' originally of an *Edomite* Family, yet ſeems to have been a Proſelyte to the *Jewiſh* Religion: For *Joſephus* ſaith, he was zealous for the *Moſaick* Rites, a Bigot for the Ceremonies: He not only (as *Herod Antipas* was) Tetrarch of *Galilee*, but had alſo the Government of *Judea* committed to him by *Claudius* the Emperor, and reſided moſt at *Jeruſalem*, where he was at this Time.

Three Things we are here told he did.

Firſt, He *ſtretched forth his Hands to vex certain of the Church*, v. 1. His ſtretching forth his Hands to it, intimates, that his Hands had been *ty'd up*, by the Reſtraints which perhaps, his own Conſcience held him under in this Matter, but now he broke through them, and *ſtretch'd forth his Hands* deliberately, and of Malice pre penſe. *Herod laid Hands upon ſome of the Church to afflict them*: So ſome read it. He employ'd his Offices to ſeize them, and take them into Cuſtody, in order to their being proſecuted. See how he advances gradually.

1. He began with ſome of the *Members* of the Church, certain of them that were of leſs Note and Figure; play'd firſt at *ſmall Game*, but afterwards flew at the Apoſtles themſelves. His Spite was at the Church; And thoſe he gave Trouble to, it was not upon any other Account, but becauſe they *belong'd to the Church*, and ſo belong'd to Chriſt.

2. He began with *vexing* them only, or *afflicting* them, impriſoning them, fining them, ſpoiling their Houſes and Goods, and other Ways moleſting them. But afterwards he proceeded to greater Inſtances of Cruelty. Chriſt's ſuffering Servants are thus train'd up by leſſer Troubles, for greater, that Tribulation may work Patience, and Patience Experience.

Secondly, He *kill'd* James *the Brother of* John *with the Sword*, v. 2. We are here to conſider,

1. Who the Martyr was; 'Twas *James the Brother* of *John*, ſo call'd to diſtinguiſh him from the other *James*, the Brother of *Joſes*. This was call'd *Jacobus major*, that *minor*. This that was here crown'd with Martyrdom was one of the firſt three of Chriſt's Diſciples, One of thoſe that were the Witneſſes of his Transfiguration and Agony, whereby he was prepar'd for Martyrdom. He was One of thoſe whom Chriſt call'd *Boanarges*, *Sons of Thunder*, and perhaps by his powerful, awakening Preaching, he had provok'd *Herod*, or thoſe about him, as *John Baptiſt* did the other *Herod*, and that was the Occaſion of his coming into this Trouble. He was one of thoſe Sons of *Zebedee* whom Chriſt told, that they ſhould *drink of the Cup that he was to drink of*, and *be baptized with the Baptiſm that he was to be baptized with*, *Matth.* xx. 23. And now thoſe Words of Chriſt were made good in him; but it was in order to his ſitting at Chriſt's right Hand; for *if we ſuffer with him, we ſhall reign with him*. He was one of the Twelve who were commiſſion'd to *diſciple all Nations*, and to take him off now, before he was remov'd from *Jeruſalem*, was like *Cain*'s killing *Abel* then, when the World was to be peopled; and one Man was then more than many at another Time. To kill an Apoſtle now, was killing he knew not how many. But why would GOD permit it? If the Blood of his Saints, much more the Blood of Apoſtles, is precious in his Eyes, and therefore we may be ſure is not ſhed but upon a valuable Conſideration. Perhaps GOD intended hereby to awaken the reſt of the Apoſtels to diſperſe themſelves among the Nations, and not to neſtle any longer at *Jeruſalem*. Or it was to ſhew that tho' the Apoſtles were appointed to plant the Goſpel in the World, yet if they were taken off, GOD could do his Work without them, and would do it. This Apoſtle dy'd a Martyr, to ſhew the reſt of them what they muſt expect, that they might prepare accordingly. The Tradition that they have in the Romiſh Church, That this *James* had been before this in *Spain*, and had planted the Goſpel there, is altogether groundleſs, nor is there any Certainty of it, or good Authority for it.

2. What the Kind of his Death was; he was *ſlain with the Sword*, i. e. His Head was cut off with a Sword which was look'd upon by the *Romans* to be a more diſgraceful Way of being beheaded than with an Axe; ſo *Lorinus*. *Beheading* was not ordinarily us'd among the *Jews*: But when Kings gave verbal Orders for private and ſudden Executions, this Manner of Death was us'd as moſt expeditious, and 'tis probable, this *Herod* kill'd *James*, as the other *Herod* kill'd *John Baptiſt*, privately in the Priſon. It is ſtrange, that we have not a more full an particular Account of the Martyrdom of this great Apoſtle, as we had of *Stephen*. But even this ſhort Mention of the Thing is ſufficient to let us know, that the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel were ſo well aſſur'd of the Truth of it, that they ſeal'd it with their Blood, and thereby have encourag'd us, if at any Time we are call'd to it to *reſiſt unto Blood* too. The *Old Teſtament* Martyrs were *ſlain with the Sword*, Heb. xi. 37. And Chriſt came not to ſend Peace, but a *Sword*, Matt. x. 34. in Preparation for which we muſt arm our ſelves with the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD, and then we need not fear what the Sword of Men can do unto us.

Thirdly, He impriſon'd *Peter*, whom he had heard moſt of, as making the greateſt Figure among the Apoſtles, and whom therefore he would be proud of the Honour of taking off. *Obſerve* here.

1. When he had beheaded *John*, he *proceeded further*, he *added*, to *take* Peter *alſo*. *Note*, Blood to the Blood-thirſty, doth but make them more ſo; and the Way of Perſecution as of other Sins, is down Hill, when Men are in it they cannot eaſily ſtop themſelves; when they are *in* they find they muſt *on*, *Male facta male factis tegere ne perpluant*. They that take one bold Step in a ſinful Way, give Satan Advantage againſt them to tempt them to take another, and provoke GDD to leave them to themſelves, to go from bad to worſe. 'Tis therefore our Wiſdom to take heed of the Beginning of Sin.

2. He did this *becauſe he ſaw it pleas'd the* Jews. *Obſerve*, The *Jews* made themſelves guilty of the Blood of *James*, by ſhewing themſelves well pleas'd with it afterwards, tho' they had not excited *Herod* to it. There are Acceſſaries *ex poſt facto*, and they will be reckon'd with as *Perſecutors*, that take Pleaſure in others Perſecuting, that delight to ſee good Men ill us'd, and cry *Aha*, ſo would we have it; or at leaſt, ſecretly approve of it. For bloody Perſecutors when they perceive themſelves *applauded*, for that which every One ought to cry *Shame* upon them for, are encourag'd to go on, and have their Hands ſtrengthen'd, and their Hearts harden'd, and the Checks of their own Conſciences ſmother'd; nay, it is as ſtrong a Temptation to them to do the like, as it was here to *Herod*, *becauſe he ſaw it pleas'd the* Jews. Tho' he had no Reaſon to fear diſpleaſing them if he did not, as *Pilate* condemn'd Chriſt; yet he hop'd to pleaſe them by doing it, and ſo to make an Intereſt among them, and make Amends for diſpleaſing them in ſomething elſe. *Note*, Thoſe make themſelves an eaſy Prey to Satan, that make it their Buſineſs to pleaſe Men.

3. Notice is taken of the Time when *Herod* laid hold on *Peter*; *Then were the Days of unleavened Bread*. 'Twas at the *Feaſt* of the *Paſſover*, when their celebrating the Memorial of their typical Deliverance, ſhould have led them to the Acceptance of their ſpiritual Deliverance; inſtead of that they under Pretence of Zeal for the Law, were moſt violently fighting againſt it; and *in the Days of unleavened Bread*, were moſt ſower'd and embit-

ter'd with the old Leaven of Malice and Wickedneſs. At the *Paſſoever*, when the *Jews* came from all Parts to *Jeruſalem* to keep the Feaſt, they irritated one another againſt the Chriſtians and Chriſtianity, and were then more violent than at other Times.

4. Here's an Account of *Peter*'s Impriſonment, *v.* 4. when he had laid Hands on him, and it's likely examin'd him, he *put him in Priſon*, into the inner Priſon; ſome ſay into the ſame Priſon into which he and the other Apoſtles were caſt ſome Years before, and were then reſcu'd out of it by an Angel, *chap.* v. 18. He was deliver'd to *four Quarternions of Soldiers*, i. e. to ſixteen, who were to be a Guard upon him, four at a Time, that he ſhould not make his Eſcape, or be reſcu'd by his Friends. Thus they thought they had him faſt.

5. *Herod*'s Deſign was *after* Eaſter *to bring him forth unto the People*: (1.) He would make a Spectacle of him; Probably he had put *James* to Death privately, which the People had complain'd of, not becauſe it was an unjuſt Thing to put a Man to Death without giving him a publick Hearing, but becauſe it depriv'd them of the Satisfaction of ſeeing him executed: And therefore *Herod* now he knows their Minds, will gratify them with the Sight of *Peter* in Bonds, of *Peter* upon the Block, that they may feed their Eyes with ſuch a pleaſing Spectacle. And very ambitious ſure he was to *pleaſe* the People, who was willing *thus* to pleaſe them. (2.) He would do this *after Eaſter*; μετὰ τὸ πάσχα *after the Paſſover*; certainly ſo it ought to be read; for it is the ſame Word that is always ſo render'd; and to inſinuate the introducing of a Goſpel Feaſt, inſtead of the *Paſſover*, when we have nothing in the *New Teſtament* of ſuch a Thing, is to mingle Judaiſm with our Chriſtianity. *Herod* would not condemn him till the Paſſover was over; ſome think, for fear leſt he ſhould have ſuch an Intereſt among the People, as that they ſhould demand the Releaſe of him according to the Cuſtom of the Feaſt. Or, After the Hurry of the Feaſt was over, and the Town was empty, he would entertain them with *Peter*'s publick Tryal and Execution. Thus was the Plot laid, and both *Herod* and the People long to have the Feaſt over, that they may gratify themſelves with this barbarous Entertainment.

5 Peter therefore was kept in priſon; but prayer was made without ceaſing of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the ſame night Peter was ſleeping between two ſouldiers, bound with two chains; and the keepers before the door kept the priſon. 7 And behold, the Angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light ſhined in the priſon: and he ſmote Peter on the ſide, and raiſed him up, ſaying, Ariſe up quickly, And his chains fell off from *his* hands. 8 And the angel ſaid unto him, Gird thy ſelf, and bind on thy ſandals: And ſo he did. And he ſaith unto him, Caſt thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out, and followed him, and wiſt not that it was true which was done by the angel: but thought he ſaw a viſion. 10 When they were paſt the firſt and the ſecond ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city, which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and paſſed on through one ſtreet, and forthwith the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himſelf, he ſaid, Now I know of a ſurety, that the Lord hath ſent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews. 12 And when he had conſidered *the thing*, he came to the Houſe of Mary, the mother of John, whoſe ſirname was Mark, where many were gathered together, praying. 13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damſel came to hearken, named Rhoda. 14 And when ſhe knew Peter's voice, ſhe opened not the gate for gladneſs, but ran in, and told how Peter ſtood before the Gate. 15 And they ſaid unto her, Thou art mad. But ſhe conſtantly affirmed that it was even ſo. Then ſaid they, It is his angel. 16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and ſaw him, they were aſtoniſhed. 17 But he beckening unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the priſon. And he ſaid, Go ſhew theſe things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place. 18 Now as ſoon as it was day, there was no ſmall ſtir among the ſouldiers what was become of Peter. And when Herod had ſought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* ſhould be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Ceſarea, and *there* abode.

We have here an Account of *Peter*'s Deliverance out of Priſon, by which the Deſign of *Herod* againſt him was defeated, and his Life reſerv'd for further Service, and a Stop given to this bloody Torrent. Now

Firſt, One Thing that magnify'd his Deliverance was, That it was a ſignal Anſwer to Prayer, *v.* 5. *Peter was kept in Priſon*, with a great deal of Care, ſo that it was altogether impoſſible either by force or by Stealth to get him out; *But Prayer was made without ceaſing of the Church unto GOD for him*; for Prayers and Tears are the Church's Arms, therewith ſhe fights not only againſt her Enemies, but for her Friends; and to thoſe Means they have recourſe..

1. The Delay of *Peter*'s Trial gave them Time for Prayer. 'Tis probable *James* was hurry'd off ſo ſuddenly and ſo privately that they had not Time to pray for him. GOD ſo ordering it that they ſhould not have ſpace to Pray, when He deſign'd they ſhould not have the Thing they pray'd for; *James* muſt be offer'd upon the Sacrifice and Service of their Faith; and therefore Prayer for him is reſtrain'd and prevented; but *Peter* muſt be continu'd to them, and therefore Prayer for him is ſtir'd up, and Time is given them for it, by *Herod*'s putting of the Proſecution; *Howbeit he meant not ſo, neither did his Heart think ſo.*

2. They were very particular in their Prayers *for him*, That it would pleaſe God, ſome Way or other to defeat *Herod*'s Purpoſe, and to ſnatch the Lamb out of the Jaws of the Lion. The Death of *James* alarm'd them to a greater Fervency in their Prayers for *Peter*; for if they be broken thus with *Breach upon Breach*, they fear that the Enemy will *make a full End*. *Stephen* is not, and *James* is not, and will they take *Peter* alſo; *all theſe Things are againſt them*; this will be *Sorrow upon Sorrow*, Phil. ii. 27. *Note*, Tho' the Death and Sufferings of Chriſt's Miniſters may be made greatly to ſerve the Intereſts of Chriſt's Kingdom; yet it is the Duty and concern of the Church, earneſtly to pray for their Life, Liberty, and Tranquility; and ſometimes Providence orders it, that they are brought into imminent Danger to ſtir up Prayer for them.

3. Prayer was made *without ceaſing*; It was, προσευχὴ ἐκτενὴς, *fervent Prayer*; 'tis the Word that is us'd concerning Chriſt's Praying in his Agony *more earneſtly*. It is the *fervent Prayer* of the *righteous Man* that is *effectual* and *availeth much*. Some think, it notes the Conſtancy and Continuance of their Prayers; ſo we take it: They pray'd *without ceaſing*; 'twas an *extended* Prayer. They pray'd for his Releaſe in their publick Aſſemblies, private ones perhaps for fear of the *Jews*; then they went home, and pray'd for it in their Families, then retir'd into their Cloſets, and pray'd for it there; ſo they pray'd without ceaſing. Or, firſt one Knot of them, and then another, and then a third kept a Day of Prayer, or rather a Night of Prayer for, *v.* 12. *Note* Times of publick Diſtreſs and Danger, ſhould be *Praying Times* with the Church. We muſt *pray always*; but then eſpecially.

Secondly, Another Thing that magnify'd his Deliverance was, That when *the King's Commandment and Decree drew near to be put in Execution*, then his Deliverance was wrought, as *Eſth.* ix. 2. Let us obſerve when his Deliverance came.

1. It was the *very Night* before *Herod* deſign'd to *bring him forth* which made it to be ſo much the greater Conſolation to his Friends, and Confuſion to his Enemies. 'Tis likely ſome that had an Intereſt in *Herod* or thoſe about him, had been improving it to get a Diſcharge for *Peter*, but in vain; *Herod* reſolves he ſhall dye; and now they deſpair of prevailing that Way, for to Morrow is the Day ſet for the *bringing him forth*, and 'tis likely they will make as quick Work with him, as with his Maſter: And now GOD open'd a Door of Eſcape for him. *Note*, GOD's Time to help, is when Things are brought to the laſt Extremity, when there is none ſhut up or left, *Deut.* xxxii. 36. and for that Reaſon it has been ſaid, *The worſe, the better.* When *Iſaac* is bound upon the Altar, and the Knife in the Hand, and the Hand ſtretch'd out to ſlay him, then *Jehovah jireh*, *The LORD will provide.*

2. It was when he was faſt *bound* with *two Chains between two Soldiers*; ſo that if he offer to ſtir he wakes them; and beſides this, tho' the Priſon Doors no doubt were lock'd and bolted, yet to make ſure Work, the *Keepers before the Door, kept the Priſon*, that no One might ſo much as *attempt* to reſcue him. Never could the Art of Man do more to ſecure a Priſoner, *Herod* no doubt ſaid as *Pilate*, Matth. xxvii. 65. *Make it as ſure as you can.* When Men will think to be too hard for GOD, GOD will make it appear, that He is too hard for them.

3. It was when he was *ſleeping between the Soldiers*; faſt aſleep. (1.) Not *terrify'd* with his *Danger*, tho' it was very *imminent*; and there was no viſible Way for his Eſcape. There was but a Step between him and Death, and yet he could *lay him down in Peace and ſleep*, ſleep in the Midſt his Enemies, *ſleep* when it may be they were awake; having a good Cauſe that he ſuffer'd for, and a good Conſcience that he ſuffer'd with, and being aſ-

ſur'd that GOD would iſſue his Tryal that Way that ſhould be moſt for his Glory; having committed his Cauſe to him that *judgeth righteouſly*, his Soul *dwells at Eaſe*; and even in Priſon between two Soldiers, GOD *gives him Sleep*, as he doth *to his Beloved*, (2.) Not *expecting* his *Deliverance*. He did not keep awake looking to the right Hand or to the left for Relief, but lay *a-ſleep*, and was perfectly *ſurpriz'd* with his Deliverance. Thus the Church, *Pſal.* cxxvi. 1. *We were like that dream.*

Thirdly, It alſo magnify'd his Deliverance very much, that an *Angel* was ſent from Heaven on Purpoſe to reſcue him; which made his Eſcape both *practicable* and *warrantable*. This Angel brought him a legal Diſcharge, and enabled him to make Uſe of it.

1. The *Angel of the LORD came upon him*, ἐπέστη, *ſtood over him*; He ſeem'd as One abandon'd by Man, yet not forgotten of his GOD; The *LORD thinketh upon him.* Gates and Guards keep all his Friends from him, but cannot keep the Angels of GOD from him. And *they inviſibly encamp round about them that fear* GOD, to *deliver* them, *Pſal.* xxxiv. 7. and therefore they need not fear tho' *an Hoſt* of Enemies *encamp againſt them.* Pſal. xxii. 3. Wherever the People of GOD are, and however ſurrounded, they have a Way open Heaven-ward, nor can any Thing intercept their Intercourſe with GOD.

2. A *Light ſhined in the Priſon*, tho' it was a dark Place, and in the Night, *Peter* ſhall ſee his Way clear. Some obſerve, that we do not find in the *Old Teſtament*, that were Angels appear'd the *Light ſhone* round about them; for that was a dark Diſpenſation, and the Glory of Angels was then veil'd; but in the *New Teſtament*, when Mention is made of the Appearing of Angels, Notice is taken of the *Light* that they appear'd in; for it is by the Goſpel that the upper World is *brought to light*. The Soldiers to whom *Peter* was chain'd, were either ſtruck into a deep Sleep, for the preſent, as *Saul* and his Soldiers were when *David* carry'd off his Spear and Cruſe of Water; or, if they were awake, the Appearance of the Angel made them to *ſhake*, and to become *as dead Men*, as it was with the Guard ſet on Chriſt's Sepulchre.

3. The Angel awak'd *Peter* by giving him *a Blow on his Side*, a gentle Touch, enough to rouze him out of his Sleep, tho' ſo faſt a Sleep, that the Light that ſhone upon him did not wake him. When good People ſlumber in a Time of Danger, and are not awak'd by the Light of the Word, and the Diſcoveries it gives them, let them expect to be *ſmitten on the Side* by ſome ſharp Affliction; better be *rais'd up* ſo, than left a-ſleep. The Language of this Stroke was, *Ariſe up quickly*; not as if the Angel fear'd coming ſhort by his Delay; but *Peter* muſt not be indulg'd in it. When *David* hears the *Sound of the going on the Top of the Mulberry Trees*, then he muſt *riſe up quickly* and *beſtir himſelf*.

4. *His Chains fell from off his Hands*; It ſeems they had *Handcuffed* him, to make him ſure, but GOD *looſed his Bands*; and if they fall off from his Hands, 'tis as well as if he had the Strength of *Sampſon* to break them like Threads of Tow. Tradition makes a mighty Rout about theſe Chains, and tells a formal Story, that one of the Soldiers kept them for a ſacred Relique, and they were long after preſented to *Eudoxia* the Empreſs, and I know not what Miracles are ſaid to be wrought by them; and the Romiſh Church keeps a Feaſt on the firſt of *Auguſt* yearly in Remembrance of *Peter*'s Chains *Feſtum vinculorum Petri*, whereas this was at the Paſſover. Surely they are thus fond of *Peter*'s Chains, in hopes with them to enſlave the World.

5. He was order'd to dreſs himſelf preſently, and follow the Angel, and he did ſo, *v.* 8, 9. When *Peter* was awake, he knew not what to do, but as the Angel directed him. (1.) He muſt *gird himſelf*; for thoſe that ſlept in their Cloaths ungirt themſelves, ſo that they had nothing to do when they got up, but to faſten their Girdles. (2.) He muſt *bind on his Sandals*, that he might be fit to walk. Thoſe whoſe Bonds are looſ'd by the Power of divine Grace, muſt have *their Feet ſhod with the Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace.* (3.) He muſt *caſt his Garments about him*, and come away as he was, and *follow* the Angel, and he might go with a great deal of Courage and Chearfulneſs, who had a Meſſenger from Heaven for his Guide and Guard; he *went out* and *follow'd him.* Thoſe who are deliver'd out of a ſpiritual Impriſonment, muſt follow their Deliverer, as *Iſrael* when they went out of the Houſe of Bondage did; they went out, not knowing whither they went, but whom they follow'd.

Now it's ſaid, when *Peter* went out after the Angel, *He wiſt not that it was true which was done by the Angel*, that it was really Matter of Fact, but *thought he ſaw a Viſion*; and if he did, it was not the firſt that he had ſeen: But by this it appears that a heavenly *Viſion* was ſo plain, and carry'd ſo much of its own Evidence along with it, that it was hard to diſtinguiſh between what was done in Fact, and what was done in Viſion. *When the Lord brought back the Captivity of his People, we were like them that dream*, Pſal. cxxvi. 1. *Peter* was ſo, he thought the News was too *good* to be *true*.

6. He was led ſafe by the Angel out of Danger, *v.* 10. Guards were kept at one Paſs, and at another which they were to make their Way through when they were out of the Priſon, and they did ſo without any Oppoſition; nay, for ought appears without any Diſcovery; either their Eyes were cloſ'd, or their Hands were ty'd, or their Hearts fail'd them; ſo it was, that the Angel and *Peter* ſafely *paſs the firſt and ſecond Ward.* Thoſe Watchmen repreſented the Watchmen of the Jewiſh Church, on whom GOD had *pour'd out a Spirit of Slumber, Eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and Ears that they ſhould not hear*, Rom. xi. 8. His *Watchmen are blind, ſleeping, lying down, and loving to ſlumber.* But ſtill there's an *Iron gate* after all, that will ſtop them, and if the Guards can but recover themſelves, there they may recover their Priſoners, as *Pharaoh* hop'd to re-take *Iſrael* at the *Red-Sea*; however, up to that Gate they march, and like the *Red-Sea* before *Iſrael*, it *opens to them*; they did not ſo much as put a Hand to it, but it open'd *of its own accord*, by an inviſible Power; and thus was fulfilled in the Letter, what was figuratively promis'd to *Cyrus*, Iſa. xliv. 1. *I will open before him the two leav'd Gates, will break in Pieces the Gates of Braſs, and cut in ſunder the Bars of Iron.* And probably the Iron Gate ſhut again of it ſelf, that none of the Guards might purſue *Peter. Note*, When GOD will work Salvation for his People, no Difficulties in their Way are inſuperable: but even *Gates* of Iron are made to open of their own Accord. This *Iron Gate led into the City* out of the Caſtle or Tower; whether within the Gates of the City or without, is not certain, ſo that when they were through this, they were got into the Street.

This Deliverance of *Peter*, repreſents to us our Redemption by Chriſt, which is often ſpoken of as the *ſetting of Priſoners free*, not only the proclaiming of Liberty to the Captives, but the *bringing of* them *out of the Priſon-houſe.* The Application of the Redemption in the Converſion of Souls, is the *ſending forth of the Priſoners, by the Blood of the Covenant, out of the Pit where is no Water*, Zech. ix. 11. The Grace of GOD, like this Angel of the LORD, brings Light firſt into the Priſon, by the Opening of the Underſtanding, ſmites the ſleeping Sinner on the Side, by the Awakening of the Conſcience; cauſeth the Chains to fall off from the Hands, by the renewing of the Will; and then gives the Word of Command, *Gird thy ſelf, and follow me.* Difficulties are to be paſs'd through, and the Oppoſition of *Satan* and his Inſtruments, a *firſt* and *ſecond Ward*, an *untoward Generation*, from which we are concern'd to *ſave our ſelves*; and ſhall be ſav'd by the Grace of GOD, if we put our ſelves under the Divine Conduct. And at length the Iron-Gate ſhall be open'd to us to enter into the *New Jeruſalem*, where we ſhall be perfectly freed from all the Marks of our Captivity, and brought into the *glorious Liberty of the Children of GOD.*

7. When this was done, *the Angel departed from him*, and left him to himſelf; He was out of Danger from his Enemies, and needed no *Guard*; he knew where he was, and how to find out his Friends, and needed no *Guide*, and therefore his heavenly Guard and Guide bids him farewell. *Note*, Miracles are not to be expected, when ordinary Means are to be us'd. When *Peter* has now no more Wards to paſs, or Iron Gates to get through, he needs only the ordinary inviſible Miniſtration of the Angels who encamp round about them that fear GOD, and deliver them.

Fourthly, Having ſeen how his Deliverance was *magnify'd*, we are next to ſee how it was *manifeſted* both to himſelf and others, and how being made *great* it was made known. We are here told,

1. How *Peter* came to *himſelf*, and ſo came himſelf to the *Knowledge of it*, *v.* 11. So many ſtrange and ſurprizing Things coming together upon a Man juſt wak'd out of Sleep, put him for the preſent into ſome Confuſion; ſo that he knew not where he was, nor what he did, nor whether it was Fancy or Fact; but at length *Peter came to himſelf*, was thoroughly awake, and found that it was not a Dream, but a real Thing; *Now I know of a ſurety*, now I know, ἀληθῶς *truly*, now I know that it is Truth, and not an *Illuſion of the Fancy.* Now I am well ſatisfy'd concerning it, *That the Lord* Jeſus *hath ſent his Angel*, for Angels are ſubject to him, and go on his Errands, and by him *hath delivered* me *out of the Hands of* Herod, who thought he had me faſt, and ſo hath diſappointed *all the Expectation of the People of the* Jews, who doubted not but to ſee *Peter* cut off the next Day, and hoped it was the one Neck of Chriſtianity, in which it would all be ſtruck off at one Blow. For which Reaſon it was a Cauſe of great *Expectation*, among not only the common People, but the great People *of the* Jews. *Peter* when he recollected himſelf, *perceived of a Truth* what great Things GOD had done for him, which at firſt he could not believe for Joy. Thus Souls who are deliver'd out of a ſpiritual Bondage, are not at firſt aware what GOD has wrought in them, many have the Truth of Grace that want the Evidence of it: They are queſtioning, Whether there be indeed this Change wrought in them, or whether they have not been all this While in a Dream? But when the Comforter comes, whom the Father will ſend ſooner or later, he will let them know of a Surety what a bleſſed Change is wrought in them, and what a happy State they are brought into.

2. How *Peter* came to his *Friends*, and brought the Knowledge of it *to them*; Here's a particular Account of this, and 'tis very entertaining.

1. He *conſidered the Thing*, *v.* 12. conſider'd how imminent his Danger was, how great his Deliverance; and now, What has he to do, what Improvement muſt he make of this Deliverance; What muſt he do next? GOD's Providence leaves Room for the Uſe of our Prudence; and what He has begun tho' He has undertaken to perform and perfect it, yet He expects we ſhould *conſider the Thing.*

2. He went directly to a Friend's Houſe, which 'tis likely near to the Place where he was; 'twas the Houſe of *Mary*, a Siſter of *Barnabas*, and Mother of *John Mark*, whoſe Houſe it ſhould ſeem was frequently made Uſe of for the private Meeting of the Diſciples, either becauſe it was large, and would hold many, or becauſe it lay obſcure, or becauſe ſhe was more forward than others were to open her Doors to them; and no doubt it was like the Houſe of *Obed-edom*, bleſſed for the Ark's Sake. A Church in the Houſe makes it a *little Sanctuary*.

3. There he found *many* that were *gather'd together praying*, at the dead Time of the Night, praying for *Peter*, who was the next Day to come upon his Tryal, That God would find out ſome Way or other for his Deliverance. *Obſerve*, (1.) They continu'd in Prayer, in Token of their Importunity; They did not think it enough *once* to have preſented his Caſe to GOD, but they did it again and again: Thus *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint*. As long as we are kept waiting for a Mercy, we muſt continue praying for it. (2.) It ſhould ſeem that now when the Affair came near a *Criſis*, and the very next Day was fix'd for the Determining of it, they were more fervent in Prayer than before; and it was a good Sign that GOD intended to deliver *Peter*, when He thus ſtirr'd up a Spirit of Prayer for his Deliverance, for he never *ſaid to the Seed of* Jacob, *ſeek ye my face in vain*. (3.) They *gather'd together* for Prayer on this Occaſion; Tho' that would make them obnoxious to the Government if they were diſcover'd, yet they know what an Encouragement Chriſt gave to joynt Prayer, *Matth.* xviii. 19, 23. And it was always the Practice of God's praying People, to unite their Forces in Prayer, as *Eſth* iv. 16. 2 *Chron.* xx. 4. (4.) They were *many* that were got together for this Work, as many perhaps as the Room would hold; and firſt One pray'd, and then Another of thoſe who gave themſelves to the *Word and Prayer*, the reſt joyning with them; Or, if they had not Miniſters among them, no doubt but there many private Chriſtians that knew how to pray and to pray pertinently, and to continue long in Prayer, when the Affections of thoſe who joyn'd were ſo ſtirred as to keep Peace with them upon ſuch an Occaſion. This was in the Night when others were aſleep, which was an Inſtance both of their *Prudence* and of their *Zeal*. *Note*, It is good for Chriſtians to have *private Meetings* for Prayer, eſpecially in Times of Diſtreſs, and not to let fall or forſake ſuch Aſſemblies. (5.) *Peter* came to them when they were thus employ'd; which was an immediate preſent Anſwer to their Prayer: 'Twas as if GOD ſhould ſay, You are Praying that *Peter* may be reſtor'd to you; now here he is. *While they are yet ſpeaking, I will hear*, Iſa. lxv. 24. Thus the Angel was ſent with an Anſwer of Peace to *Daniel's* Prayer, *While he was Praying*, Dan. ix. 20. *Aſk, and it ſhall be given*.

4. He *knock'd at the Gate*, and had much ado to get them to let him in, *v.* 13, 14, 15, 16. *Peter knocked at the Door of the Gate*, deſigning by it to awaken them out of their Sleep, and for ought appears, not knowing that he diſturb'd them in their Devotions. Yet if his Friends were permitted to ſpeak with him in private in the Priſon, 'tis poſſible he might know of this Appointment, and this was it which he recollected and conſider'd when he determin'd to go to that Houſe, where he knew he ſhould find many of his Friends together. Now when he knock'd there, (1.) A *Damſel came to hearken*; not to open the Door till ſhe knew who was there, a Friend or a Foe; and what their Buſineſs was, fearing Informers. Whether this Damſel was one of the Family, or one of the Church; whether a Servant, or a Daughter, doth not appear; it ſhould ſeem by her being nam'd, that ſhe was of Note among the Chriſtians, and more zealouſly affected to the better Part than moſt of her Age. (2.) She *knew* Peter's *Voice*, having often heard him pray and preach, and diſcourſe, with a great deal of Pleaſure. But inſtead of letting him in immediately out of the Cold, *She open'd not the Gate for Gladneſs*. Thus ſometimes in a Tranſport of Affection to our Friends, we do that which is unkind. In an Extacy of Joy, ſhe forgets her ſelf, and *open'd not the Gate*. (3.) She *ran in*, and probably went up to an upper Room where they were together, and told them that *Peter* was certainly at the Gate, tho' ſhe had not Courage enough to open the Gate, for fear ſhe ſhould be deceiv'd, and it ſhould be the Enemy. But when ſhe ſpoke of *Peter*'s being there, they ſaid, *Thou art Mad*; 'tis impoſſible it ſhould be he, for he's in Priſon. Sometimes that which we moſt earneſtly wiſh for, we are moſt backward to believe, becauſe we are afraid of impoſing upon our ſelves, as the Diſciples, who when Chriſt was riſen, *believed not for Joy*. However, ſhe ſtood to it that it was he. Then ſaid they, *It is his Angel*, *v.* 15. (1.) It is a *Meſſenger from him*, that makes uſe of his Name; ſo ſome take it. ἄγγελος often ſignifies no more but a Meſſenger. 'Tis us'd of *John*'s Meſſengers, *Luke* vii. 24, 27. of Chriſt's *Luke* ix. 32. When the Damſel was confident it was *Peter*, becauſe ſhe knew his Voice, they thought it was becauſe he that ſtood at the Door had call'd himſelf *Peter*, and therefore offer this Solution of the Difficulty; 'Tis One that comes with an Errand from him, and thou miſtook'ſt, as if it had been he himſelf. Dr. *Hammond* thinks this the eaſieſt Way of Underſtanding it. (2.) It is his *Guardian Angel*, or ſome other Angel that hath aſſum'd his Shape and Voice, and ſtands at the Gate in his Reſemblance; ſome think, That they ſuppos'd his Angel to appear as a Preſage of his Death approaching; and this agrees with a Notion which the Vulgar have, That ſometimes before Perſons have dy'd *their Ward has been ſeen*, i. e. ſome Spirit exactly in their Likeneſs for Countenance and Dreſs, when they themſelves have been at the ſame Time in ſome other Place; they call it their *Ward*. i. e. their Angel that is their *Guard*. If ſo, they concluded this an ill Omen, that their Prayers were deny'd, and that the Language of the Apparition was, Let it ſuffice you, *Peter* muſt dye, ſay no more of that Matter. And if we underſtand it ſo, it only proves, That they had then ſuch an Opinion of a Man's *Ward* being ſeen a little before his Death, but doth not prove that there is ſuch a Thing. Others think, they took this to be an Angel from Heaven ſent to bring them a grant to their Prayers. But why ſhould they imagine that Angel to aſſume the Voice and Shape of *Peter*, when we find not any Thing like it in the Apperance of Angels. Perhaps they did herein ſpeak the Language of the *Jews*, who had a fond Conceit, That every good Man hath a particular Tutelar Angel that *has the Charge* of him, and ſometimes *perſonates* him. The Heathen call'd it a *Good Genius* that attended a Man; but ſince no other Scripture ſpeaks of ſuch a Thing, this alone is too weak to bear the Weight of ſuch a Doctrine. We are ſure that the Angels are *Miniſtring Spirits* for the Good of *the Heirs of Salvation*, that they have a *Charge concerning them*, and *pitch their Tents round*, about them; and we need not be ſollicitous that every particular Saint ſhould have his *Guardian Angel*, when we are aſſured he has a *Guard of Angels*.

5. At length they let him in, *v.* 16. *He continued knocking* tho' they delay'd to open to him, and at laſt they admitted him, The *Iron-Gate* which oppos'd his Enlargement, open'd of it ſelf without ſo much as Knocking at it; but the Door of his Friend's Houſe that was to welcome him, doth not open of its own accord, but muſt be knock'd at, long knock'd at. Leſt *Peter* ſhould be puffed up by the Honours which the Angel did him, he meets with this Mortification, by a ſeeming Slight which his Friends put upon him. But *when they ſaw him, they were aſtoniſhed*, were filled with Wonder and Joy in him, as much as they were but juſt now with Sorrow and Fear concerning him. It was both *ſurprizing* and *pleaſing* to them in the higheſt Degree.

6. *Peter* gave 'em an Account of his Deliverance; When he came to the Company that were gathered together with ſo much Zeal to pray for him, they gather'd about him with no leſs Zeal to congratulate his Deliverance, and herein they were ſo *noiſy*, that when *Peter* himſelf begg'd them to conſider what Peril he was yet in, if they ſhould be *over-heard*, he could not make them hear him, but was forc'd to *becken to them with the Hand to hold their peace*, and had much ado thereby to command Silence while *he declared unto them how the Lord* Jeſus *had* by an Angel *brought him out of Priſon* and it is very likely having found them *praying* for his Deliverance, he did not part with them till he and they had together ſolemnly given Thanks to GOD for his Enlargement; or if could not ſtay to do it, 'tis likely they ſtaid together to do it; for what is *won by Prayer*, muſt be *worn with Praiſe*; and GOD muſt always have *the Glory* of that which we have the *Comfort* of When *David* declares *what GOD had done for his Soul*, he bleſſeth GOD, who had not turn'd away his Prayer, *Pſal.* lxvi. 16, 20.

7. *Peter* ſent the Account to others of his Friends; *Go, ſhew theſe Things to* James, *and to the Brethren* with him; who perhaps were met together in another Place at the ſame Time, upon the ſame Errand to the Throne of Grace, which is one Way of keeping up the Communion of Saints, and wreſtling with GOD in Prayer, acting *in Concert* though at a Diſtance; like *Eſther* and *Mordecai*. He would have *James* and his Company to know of his Deliverance, not only that they might be *eas'd of their Pain*, and deliver'd from their Fears concerning *Peter*, but that they might *return Thanks* to GOD with him, and for him. *Obſerve*, Though *Herod* had ſlain one *James* with the Sword, yet here was another *James*, and that in *Jeruſalem* too, that ſtood up in his Room to preſide among *the Brethren* there; for when GOD has Work to do, He will never want Inſtruments to do it with.

8. *Peter* had nothing more to do for the preſent, but to ſhift for his own Safety, which he did accordingly. He *departed and went into another Place* more *obſcure*, and therefore more *ſecure*. He knew the Town very well, and knew where to find a Place that would be a Shelter to him. *Note*, Even the Chriſtian Law of *Self-Denial* and *Suffering for Chriſt*, has not abrogated and repeal'd the Natural Law of *Self-preſervation*, and *Care for our own Safety*, as far as GOD gives an Opportunity of providing for it by lawful Means.

Fifthly, Having ſeen the Triumph of *Peter*'s Friends in his Deliverance: Let us next obſerve the *Confuſion* of his Enemies thereupon, which, was ſo much the greater becauſe Peoples Expectation was ſo much rais'd of the putting of him to Death.

1. The Guards were in the utmoſt Conſternation upon it, for they knew how highly penal it was to them to let a Priſoner eſcape that they had Charge of, *v.* 18. *As ſoon as it was Day*, and they found their Priſoner gone, there was *no ſmall Stir*, or *Strife*, as ſome read it, *among the Soldiers what was become of Peter*; He is gone, and no Body knows how, or which Way. They thought themſelves as ſure as could be of him but laſt

Night yet now the Bird is flown, and they can hear no Tale or Tydings of him. This ſet them together by the Ears; One ſaith, It was long of you. The Other, Nay, but it was long of you; having no other Way to clear themſelves, but by Accuſing one another. With us, if but a Priſoner for Debt eſcape, the Sheriff muſt anſwer for the Debt. Thus have the Perſecutors of the Goſpel of Chriſt, been often fill'd with Vexation to ſee its Cauſe conquering, notwithſtanding the Oppoſition they have given to it.

2. Houſes were ſearch'd in vain for the reſcu'd Priſoner, *v.* 19. *Herod ſought for him, and found him not.* Who can find whom GOD hath hid *Baruch* and *Jeremiah* are ſafe, tho' *ſearched for*: becauſe *the LORD has hid them*, Jer. xxxvi. 26. In times of publick Danger, all Believers have GOD for *their Hiding Place*; which is ſuch a *Secret*, that there the *ignorant* World cannot *find them*; ſuch a *Strength*, that the *impotent* World cannot *reach them.*

3. The Keepers were reckon'd with for a permiſſive Eſcape; *Herod examin'd the Keepers*, and finding that they could give no ſatisfactory Account, how *Peter* got away, *he commanded that they ſhould be put to Death*, according to the *Roman* Law, and that, 1 *Kings* xx. 39. *If by any Means he be miſſing, then ſhall thy Life go for his Life*, 'Tis probable, theſe Keepers had been more ſevere with *Peter*, than they needed to be, as the Jaylor, *Acts* xvi. and had been abuſive to him, and to others, that had been his Priſoners upon the like Account, and now juſtly are they put to Death, for that which was not their Fault, and by him too that had ſet them to Work to *vex the Church*. When the Wicked are thus ſnar'd in the Work of their own Hands, the LORD is known by the Judgments which He executeth. Or if they had not thus made themſelves obnoxious to the Juſtice of GOD, and it be thought hard that innocent Men ſhould ſuffer thus for that which was purely the Act of GOD, we may eaſily admit the Conjectures of ſome, That tho' they were *commanded to be put to Death*, to pleaſe the *Jews*, who were ſadly diſappointed by *Peter*'s Eſcape, yet they were not executed; but *Herod*'s Death immediately after prevented it.

4. *Herod* himſelf retir'd upon it; *He went down from* Judea *to* Cæſarea, *and there abode.* He was vex'd to the Heart, as a Lion diſappointed of his Prey; and the more becauſe he had ſo much rais'd the *Expectation of the People of the* Jews, concerning *Peter*, had told them how he would very ſhortly gratify them with the Sight of *Peter*'s Head in a Charger, which would oblige them as much as *John Baptiſt*'s did *Herodias*; It made him aſham'd to be rob'd of this Boaſting, and to ſee himſelf, notwithſtanding his Confidence, diſabled to make his Words good. This is ſuch a Mortification to his proud Spirit, that he cannot bear to ſtay in *Judea*, but away he goes to *Ceſarea*, at the End of the third Year of his Reign over all *Judea*, Antiq. xix. 7. and ſaith, he came thither to ſolemnize the Plays that were kept there, by a vaſt Concourſe of the Nobility and Gentry of the Kingdom, for the Health of *Cæſar*, and in Honour of him.

20 ¶ And Herod was highly diſpleaſed with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and having made Blaſtus the kings chamberlain their frieud, deſired peace, becauſe their country was nouriſhed by the kings *country*. 21 And upon a ſet day, Herod arayed in royal apparel, ſat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. 22 And the people gave a ſhout, *ſaying*, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. 23 And immediately the angel of the Lord ſmote him, becauſe he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghoſt. 24 ¶ But the word of God grew and multiplied. 25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jeruſalem, when they had fulfilled their Miniſtry, and took with them John whoſe ſirname was Mark.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, The Death of *Herod*: GOD reckon'd with him, not only for putting *James* to Death, but for his Deſign and Endeavour to put *Peter* to Death; for Sinners will be call'd to an Account, not only for the Wickedneſs of their Deeds, but for the *Wickedneſs of their Endeavours*, Pſal. xxviii. 4. For the Miſchief they have done, and the Miſchief they would have done. It was but a little While that *Herod* liv'd after this; Some Sinners GOD makes quick Work with. *Obſerve*,

1. How the *Meaſure* of his *Iniquity* was *fill'd up*; It was *Pride* that did it; that's it that commonly *goes* more immediately *before Deſtruction*, and a *haughty Spirit before a Fall. Nebuchadnezzar* had been a very bloody Man, and a great Perſecutor; but the *Word* that was in the *King's Mouth* when the Judgment of GOD fell upon him, was a *proud Word, Is not this great* Babylon *that I have built?* Dan. iv. 30, 31. It is the Glory of GOD to *look on every One that is proud, and bring him low*, Job xl. 12. The Inſtance of it here is very remarkable, and ſhews how GOD *reſiſts the Proud.*

(1.) The Men of *Tyre* and *Sidon* had it ſeems offended *Herod*: Thoſe Cities were now under the *Roman* Yoke, and ſome Miſdemeanors they had been guilty of, which *Herod* highly reſented, and was reſolved they ſhould feel his Reſentments. Some very ſmall Matter would ſerve ſuch a proud imperious Man as *Herod* was for a provocation, where he was minded to pick a Quarrel. He was *highly diſpleas'd* with this People, and they muſt be made to know that his Wrath was as the *Roaring of a Lion*, as *Meſſengers of Death.*

(2.) The Offenders *truckled*, being convinc'd, if not that they had done amiſs, yet that it was in vain to contend with ſuch a potent Adverſary, that, Right or Wrong, would be too hard for them; they ſubmitted, and were willing upon any Terms to *make Peace with him. Obſerve*, (1.) The Reaſon why they were deſirous to have the Matter accommodated; *becauſe their Country was nouriſh'd by the King's Country Tyre* and *Sydon* were Trading Cities, and had little Land belonging to them, but were always ſupply'd with Corn from the Land of *Canaan*, Judah *and* Iſrael *traded in their Markets Wheat, and Honey, and Oyl*, Ezek. xxvii. 17. Now if *Herod* ſhould make a Law to prohibit the Exportation of Corn to *Tyre* and *Sidon*, (which they knew not but a Man ſo revengeful as he might ſoon do, not caring how many were famiſhed by it) their Country would be undone; ſo that it was their Intereſt to keep in with him. And it is not then our Wiſdom to *make our Peace* with GOD, and humble our ſelves before Him, who have a much more conſtant and neceſſary Dependence upon Him, than one County can have upon another; for in *Him we live, and move, and have our Being?* (2.) The Method they took to prevent a Rupture; *They made* Blaſtus *the King's Chamberlain their Friend*; 'tis very likely with Bribes, and good Preſents; that's uſually the Way for Men to make Courtiers their Friends. And 'tis the hard Fate of Princes that they muſt have not only their Affairs, but their Affections too, govern'd by ſuch mercenary Tools: Ye ſuch Men as *Herod*, that will not be govern'd by Reaſon, had better be ſo govern'd than by Pride and Paſſion. *Blaſtus* had *Herod*'s Ear, and has the Art of mollifying his Reſentments; and a Time is fix'd for the Ambaſſadors of *Tyre* and *Sidon* to come and make a publick Submiſſion to beg his Majeſty's Pardon, throw themſelves upon his Clemency, and promiſe never again to offend in the like Kind: And that which will thus *feed his Pride*,, ſhall ſerve to *cool his Paſſion.*

(3.) *Herod* appear'd in all the Pomp and Grandeur he had; He was *array'd in his Royal Apparel*, *v.* 21. and *ſate upon his Throne. Joſephus* gives an Account of this ſplendid Appearance which *Herod* made upon this Occaſion, *Antiq.* xix. 7. He ſaith, That *Herod* at this Time wore a Robe of Cloth of Silver, ſo richly woven, and fram'd with ſuch Art, that when the Sun ſhone it reflected the Light with ſuch a Luſtre as dazzled the Eyes of the Spectators, and ſtruck an Awe upon them. Fooliſh People value Men by their outward Appearance; and no better are they who value themſelves by the Eſteem of ſuch, who court it and recommend themſelves to it, as *Herod* did, who thought to make to the Want of a *Royal Heart*, with his *Royal Apparel*; and *ſate upon his Throne*, as if that gave him a Privilege to trample upon all about him as *his Footſtool.*

(4.) He *made a Speech* to the Men of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, a fine *Oration*, in which probably after he had aggravated their Fault, and commended their Submiſſion, he concluded with an Aſſurance that he would paſs by their Offence, and receive them into his Favour again, proud enough that he had it in his Power, *whom he would to keep alive*, as well as *whom he would to ſlay*; and probably kept them in ſuſpence what their Doom ſhould be, till he made this Oration to them with the more pleaſing Surprize.

(5.) The People *applauded* him; *The People* that had a Dependance upon him, and had Benefit by his Favour, they *gave a Shout*, and this was it they ſhouted, *It is the Voice of a God, and not of a Man*, *v.* 22. GOD is *Great* and *Good*, and they thought ſuch was *Herod*'s *Greatneſs* in his Apparel and Throne, and ſuch his *Goodneſs* in forgiving them, that he was worthy to be call'd no leſs than a God; and perhaps his Speech was deliver'd with ſuch an Air of Majeſty, and a Mixture of Clemency with it, as affected the Auditors thus. Or, it may be, it was not from any real Impreſſion made upon their Minds, or any *high* or *good* Thoughts they had indeed conceiv'd of him, but how meanly ſoever they thought of him, they were reſolv'd thus to curry Favour with him, and ſtrengthen the new-made Peace between him and them. Thus great Men are made an eaſy Prey to Flatterers, if they lend an Ear to them, and encourage them. *Grotius* here obſerves that tho' Magiſtrates are call'd Gods, *Pſ.* lxxxii. 1. yet Kings or Monarchs, that is ſingle Perſons, are not, leſt Countenance ſhould thereby be given to the Gentiles, who gave divine Honours to their Kings alive and dead, as here; but they are a College of Senators, or a Bench of Judges that are call'd Gods; *In Collegio toto Senatorum non idem erat periculi, itaque eos non autem Reges invenimus dictos Elohim.* Thoſe that live by Senſe *vilify God*, as if he were altogether *ſuch a One as themſelves*; and *deify Men* as if they were GODS; having *their Perſons in Admiration, becauſe of Advantage*. This is not only a great Affront to GOD, giving that Glory to others, which is due to Him alone, but a great Injury to thoſe who are thus flatter'd, as it makes them forget themſelves, and ſo puffs them up with Pride as that they are in the utmoſt Danger poſſible of falling into the Condemnation of the Devil.

(6.) Theſe undue Praiſes he took to himſelf, pleas'd himſelf with them, and prided himſelf in them; and that was *his Sin.* We do not find that he had given any private Orders to his Confidents to begin ſuch a Shout, or to put thoſe Words into the Mouths of the People, or that he return'd them Thanks for the Complement, and undertook to *anſwer* their Opinion of him: But his Fault was, that he *ſaid nothing*, did not rebuke their Flattery, nor diſown the Title they had given him, nor *give GOD the Glory*, *v.* 23. But he took it to himſelf, was very willing it ſhould terminate in himſelf, and that he ſhould be thought *a God*, and have divine Honours paid him. *Si populus vult decipi decipiatur.* And it was worſe in him who was a *Jew*, and profeſs'd to believe One GOD only, than it was in the Heathen Emperors, who had Gods many, and Lords many.

2. *Obſerve*, How his Iniquity was puniſh'd; *Immediately*, *v.* 23. *the Angel of the LORD ſmote him*, by the Order of Chriſt, (for to him all Judgment is committed) *becauſe he gave not GOD the Glory*; (for GOD is jealous for his own Honour, and will be glorify'd upon thoſe whom He is not glorify'd by) and *he was eaten of Worms*, above-Ground, *and gave up the Ghoſt.* Now he was reckon'd with for vexing the Church of Chriſt, killing *James*, and impriſoning of *Peter*, and all the other Miſchiefs he had done. Obſerve in the Deſtruction of *Herod*,

1. It was *no leſs than an Angel* that was the *Agent*; *The Angel of the LORD*, that Angel that was order'd and commiſſion'd to do it, or that Angel that us'd to be employ'd in Works of this Nature, the Deſtroying Angel: Or, *The Angel*, i. e. that Angel that deliver'd *Peter* in the former Part of the Chapter, that Angel ſmote *Herod.* For thoſe miniſtring Spirits are the Miniſters either of Divine Juſtice, or of Divine Mercy, as GOD is pleas'd to employ them. The Angel *ſmote him* with a ſore Diſeaſe juſt at that Inſtant when he was ſtrutting at the Applauſes of the People, and adoring his own Shadow. Thus the King of *Tyre* ſaid in his Pride, *I am a God, and ſit in the Seet of God*, and *ſet his Heart as the Heart of God*; but he ſhall be *a Man, and no God*, a weak mortal Man, *in the Hand of him that ſlayeth him*, Ezek. xxviii. 2. 9. ſo *Herod* here. Potent Princes muſt know, not only that GOD is Omnipotent, but that Angels too are greater in Power and Might than they. The Angel *ſmote him, becauſe he gave not the Glory to GOD*; Angels are jealous for GOD's Honour, and as ſoon as ever they have Commiſſion, are ready to *ſmite* thoſe that uſurp his Prerogatives, and rob GOD of his Honour.

2. It was *no more than a Worm* that was the *Inſtrument* of *Herod*'s Deſtruction; He was *eaten of Worms*, γινόμενος σκωληκόβρωτος, *He became Worm-eaten*, ſo it muſt be read; rotten he was, and he became like a Piece of rotten Wood. The Body in the Grave is deſtroy'd by Worms; but *Herod*'s Body putrify'd while he was yet alive, and bred the Worms which began to feed upon it betimes; ſo *Antiochus*, that great Perſecutor dy'd. See here, (1.) What *vile Bodies* thoſe are which we carry about *with us*, they carry about *with them* the Seeds of their own Diſſolution, by which they will ſoon be deſtroy'd whenever GOD doth but ſpeak the Word. Surprizing Diſcoveries have of late been made by Microſcopes of the Multitude of Worms that there are in Human Bodies, and how much they contribute to the Diſeaſes of them; which is a good Reaſon why we ſhould not be proud of our Bodies, or of any of their Accompliſhment; and why we ſhould not pamper our Bodies, for that's but feeding the Worms, and feeding them for the Worms. (2.) See what weak and contemptible Creatures GOD can make the Inſtruments of his Juſtice, when He pleaſeth. *Pharaoh* is plagu'd with *Lice* and *Flies*, *Ephraim* conſum'd as with a *Moth*, and *Herod* eaten of *Worms.* (3.) See how GOD delights not only to bring down proud Men, but to bring them down in ſuch a Way as is moſt mortifying, and pours moſt Contempt upon them. *Herod* is not only deſtroy'd, but deſtroy'd *by Worms*, that the Pride of his Glory may be effectually ſtain'd.

This Story of the Death of *Herod*, is particularly related by *Joſephus*, a *Jew*, Antiq. lib. xix. cap. vii. thus; "That *Herod* "came down to *Cæſarea*, to celebrate a Feſtival in Honour of "*Cæſar*; that the ſecond Day of the Feſtival, he went in the "Morning to the Theatre, cloathed with that ſplendid Robe "mention'd before; That his Flatterers ſaluted him as a God, "beg'd that he would be propitious to them; That hitherto "they had reverenc'd him as a Man, but now they would con"feſs to be in him ſomething more excellent than a mortal Na"ture. That he did not refuſe or correct the impious Flat"tery; (ſo the Hiſtorian expreſſeth it) but preſently after look"ing up he ſaw an Owl perch'd over his Head, and was at the "ſame Inſtant ſeiz'd with a moſt violent Pain in his Bowels and "Gripes in his Belly, which were exquiſite from the very firſt "that he turn'd his Eyes upon his Friends, and ſaid to this "Purpoſe; Now I whom you call'd *a God*, and therefore im"mortal, muſt be prov'd *a Man*, and mortal. That his Torture "continu'd without Intermiſſion, or the leaſt Abatement, and "then he dy'd in the 54th Year of his Age, when he had been "King ſeven Years.

Secondly, The Progreſs of the Goſpel after this:

1. The *Word of God grew and multiply'd*; As Seed ſown, which comes up with a great Increaſe, thirty, ſixty, a hundred-fold; wherever the Goſpel was preach'd Multitudes embrac'd it, and were added to the Church by it, *v.* 24. After the Death of *James*, the *Word of God grew?* for the Church, the more it was afflicted, the more it multiply'd; like *Iſrael* in *Egypt.* The Courage and Comfort of the Martyrs, and GOD's owning them, did more to invite them to Chriſtianity, than their Sufferings did to deter them from it. After the Death of *Herod*, the Word of GOD got Ground; When ſuch a Perſecutor was taken off by a dreadful Judgment, many were thereby convinc'd that the Cauſe of Chriſtianity, was doubtleſs the Cauſe of Chriſt; and therefore embrac'd it.

2. *Barnabas* and *Saul* return'd to *Antioch* as ſoon as they had diſpatch'd the Buſineſs they were ſent upon; *When they had fulfill'd their Miniſtry*, had paid in their Money to the proper Perſons, and taken Care about the due Diſtribution of it to thoſe for whom it was collected, they *return'd from* Jeruſalem. tho' they had a great many Friends there, yet at preſent their Work lay at *Antioch*; and where our buſineſs is, there we ſhould be; and no longer from it than is requiſite. When a Miniſter is call'd *Abroad*, upon any Service, when he has fulfill'd that Miniſtry, he ought to remember that he has Work to do *at Home*, which wants him there, and call's him thither. *Barnabas* and *Saul* when they went to *Antioch, took with them* John, *whoſe Sirname was* Mark, at whoſe Mother's Houſe they had that Meeting for prayer, which we read of, *v.* 12. ſhe was Siſter to *Barnabus*; it's probable, *Barnabas* lodg'd there, and perhaps *Paul* with him, while they were at *Jeruſalem*, and that was it that occaſion'd the Meeting there at that time; for wherever *Paul* was, he would have ſome good work a doing, and their Intimacy in that Family while they were at *Jeruſalem*, occaſion'd their taking a Son of that Family with them, when they retun'd, to be train'd up under 'em, and imploy'd by them in the Service of the Goſpel. Educating Young Men for the Miniſtry and entring them into it, is a very good Work for Elder Miniſters to take Care of, and of good Service to the riſing Generation.

CHAP. XIII.

We have not yet met with any Thing concerning the Spreading of the Goſpel to the Gentiles, *which bears any Proportion to the Largeneſs of that Commiſſion*, Go, and diſciple all Nations. *The Door was open'd in the Baptizing of* Cornelius *and his Friends; but ſince then, we had the Goſpel preach'd to the* Jews *only*, chap. xi. 19. *It ſhould ſeem as if the Light which began to ſhine upon the Gentile World had withdrawn it ſelf. But here in this Chapter, that Work, that Great Good Work, is reviv'd in the Midſt of the Years; and tho' the* Jews *ſhall ſtill have the firſt Offer of the Goſpel made to them, yet upon their Refuſal, the* Gentiles *ſhall have their Share of the Offer of it. Here's* (1.) *The ſolemn Ordination of* Barnabas *and* Saul, *by Divine Direction, to the Miniſtry, to the great Work of ſpreading the Goſpel among the Nations about; and 'tis probable, other Apoſtles or Apoſtolical Men diſpers'd themſelves by Order from Chriſt, upon the ſame Errand*, v. 1—3. (2.) *Their Preaching the Goſpel in* Cyprus, *and the Oppoſition they met with there from* Elymas *the Sorcerer*, v. 4—13. (3.) *The Heads of a Sermon which* Paul *preach to the* Jews *at* Antioch *in* Piſidia, *in their Synagogue, which is given us as a Specimen of what they uſually preached to the* Jews, *and the Method they took with them*, v. 14—41. (4.) *The Preaching of the Goſpel to the* Gentiles *at their Requeſt, and upon the* Jews *Refuſal of it, wherein the Apoſtles juſtify'd themſelves againſt the Diſpleaſure which the* Jews *conceiv'd at it, and GOD own'd them*, v. 42—49. (5.) *The Trouble which the Infidel-Jews gave the Apoſtles, which oblig'd them to remove to another Place*, v. 50—52. *ſo that the Deſign of this Chapter is to ſhew how cautiouſly, how gradually, and with what good Reaſon the Apoſtle carried the Goſpel into the* Gentile *World, and admitted the* Gentiles *into the Church, which was ſo great an Offence to the* Jews, *and which* Paul *is ſo induſtrious to juſtify in his Epiſtles.*

NOW there were in the church that was at Antioch, certain prophets and teachers, as Barnabas and Simeon that was called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they miniſtred to the Lord, and faſted, the holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had faſted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they ſent *them* away.

We have here a Divine Warrant and Commiſſion to *Barnabas* and *Saul*, to go and preach the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, and their Ordination to that Service by the Impoſition of Hands with Faſting and Prayer.

Firſt, Here's an Account of the preſent State of the Church at *Antioch*, which was planted, *chap.* xi. 2.

1. How *well furniſhed* it was with *good Miniſters?* There were there *certain Prophets and Teachers.* v. 1. Men that were eminent for Gifts, Graces, and uſefulneſs Chriſt when he *Aſcended* on

high, gave *ſome Prophets*, and ſome *Teachers*, Eph. iv. 11. theſe were both. *Agabus* ſeems to have been a Prophet, and not a Teacher, and there were many who were *Teachers* that were not *Prophets*, but thoſe were at Times divinely inſpir'd, and had Inſtructions immediately from Heaven upon ſpecial Occaſions, which gave them the Title of *Prophets*; and withal they were *ſtated Teachers* of the Church in their Religious Aſſemblies, expounded the Scriptures, and open'd the Doctrine of Chriſt with ſuitable Applications. Theſe were the *Prophets*, and *Scribes*, or Teachers which Chriſt promiſed to ſend, *Matth.* xxiii. 34. ſuch as were every Way qualify'd for the Service of the Chriſtian Church. *Antioch* was a great City, and the Chriſtians there were many, ſo that they could not all meet in one Place, it was therefore requiſite they ſhould have many Teachers, to preſide in their reſpective Aſſemblies, and to deliver GOD's Mind to them. *Barnabas* is firſt nam'd, probably becauſe he was the eldeſt, and *Saul* laſt, probably becauſe he was the youngeſt, but afterwards the laſt became firſt, and *Saul* more eminent in the Church.

Three others are mention'd. (1.) *Simon*, or *Simon*, that for Diſtinction Sake was called *Niger*; *Simon* the *Black*, from the Colour of his Hair, like him that with us was ſir-named *The black Prince*. (2.) *Lucius* of *Cyrene*, who ſome think (and Dr. *Lightfoot* inclines to it) was the ſame with this *Luke* that wrote the *Acts*; originally a *Cyrenean*, and educated in the *Cyrenean* College, or Synagogue at *Jeruſalem*, and there firſt receiving the Goſpel. (3.) *Menaen*, a Perſon of ſome Quality, as it ſhould ſeem, for he was *brought up with* Herod *the Tetrarch*, either nurs'd of the ſame Milk, or bred at the ſame School, or, Pupil to the ſame Tutor, or rather, one that was his conſtant Collegue, and Companion, that in every Part of his Education was his Comrade and Intimate, which gave him a fair Proſpect of Preferment at Court, and yet for Chriſt's Sake he quitted all the Hopes of it. Like *Moſes*, who *when he was come to Years refuſed to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter*. Had he joyn'd in with *Herod*, with whom he was brought up, he might have had *Blaſtus*'s Place, and have been his Chamberlain, but it is better to be Fellow-Sufferer with a Saint, than Fellow Perſecutor with a Tetrarch.

2. How *well employ'd* they were, *v.* 2. *They miniſtred to the Lord and faſted*. *Obſerve*, (1.) Diligent faithful *Teachers* do truly *miniſter unto the Lord*. They that inſtruct Chriſtians *ſerve Chriſt*, they really do him Honours, and carry on the Intereſt of his Kingdom. They that *miniſter to the Church* in Praying and Preaching (both which are included here,) *miniſter unto the Lord*, for they are the Churches Servants *for Chriſt's Sake*, to Him they muſt have an Eye in their Miniſtrations, and from Him they ſhall have their Recompence. (2.) *Miniſtring to the Lord* in one way or other, ought to be the ſtated Buſineſs of *Churches* and their *Teachers*; To this Work Time ought to be ſet a part, nay, it is ſet apart, and *in* this Work we ought to ſpend ſome Part of every Day. What we have to do as Chriſtians and Miniſters but to *ſerve the Lord Chriſt*, Col. iii. 24. Rom. xiv. 18. (3.) Religious *Faſting* is of Uſe in our *Miniſtring to the Lord*, both as a Sign of our Humiliation, and a Means of our Mortification. Tho' it was not much practic'd by the Diſciples of Chriſt, *while the Bridegroom was with them*, as it was by the Diſciples of *John*, and of the *Phariſees*, yet after the Bridegroom was taken away they abounded in it, as thoſe that had well learn'd to *deny themſelves*, and to *endure Hardneſs*.

Secondly, The Orders given by *the Holy Ghoſt* for the *ſetting apart* of *Barnabas* and *Saul*, while they were engag'd in publick Exerciſes, the Miniſters of the ſeveral Congregations in the City joying in one ſolemn Faſt, or Day of Prayer, the *Holy Ghoſt ſaid*, either by a Voice from Heaven, or by a ſtrong Impulſe on the Minds of thoſe of them that were *Prophets*, *Separate me* Barnabas *and* Saul *for the Work whereunto I have called them*. He doth not ſpecify the Work, but refers to a former Call, which they themſelves knew the Meaning of, whether others did or no; As for *Saul* he was particularly told that he muſt *bear Chriſt*'s *Name to the* Gentiles, *Acts* ix. 15. that *he muſt be ſent to the* Gentiles, Acts xxii. 20. the Matter was ſettled between them at *Jeruſalem*, before this, that as *Peter*, *James* and *John* laid out themſelves among them of the Circumciſion, ſo *Paul* and *Barnabas* ſhould *go to the Heathen*, Gal. ii. 7, 8, 9. *Barnabas* its likely knew himſelf deſign'd for that Service as well as *Paul*. Yet they would not thruſt themſelves into this Harveſt, tho' it appear'd *plenteous*, till they receiv'd their Orders from the Lord of the Harveſt, *Thruſt in thy Sickle, for the Harveſt is ripe*, Rev. xiv. 15. The Orders were, *Separate me* Barnabas *and* Saul. *Obſerve here*,

1. Chriſt by his Spirit has the Nomination of his Miniſters, for it is by the Spirit of Chriſt that they are both qualified in ſome Meaſure for his Service, inclin'd to it, and taken off from other Cares inconſiſtent with it. There are ſome whom the Holy Ghoſt hath *ſeparated* for the Service of Chriſt, hath diſtinguiſh'd from others as Men that are *offer'd*, and that *willingly offer themſelves* to the Temple-Service, and concerning them Directions are given to thoſe who are competent Judges of the *Sufficiency of the Abilities*, and the *Sincerity of the Inclination*, ſeparate them.

2. Chriſt's Miniſters are ſeparated *to him*, and *to the Holy Ghoſt*, ſeparate them *to me*; They are to be employ'd in Chriſt's Work, and under the Spirit's Conduct, to the Glory of GOD the Father.

3. All that are ſeparated to Chriſt as his Miniſters, are *ſeparated to work*; Chriſt keeps no Servants to be idle; *If any Man deſires the Office of a Biſhop, he deſires a good Work*, that's it which he is ſeparated to, to *labour in the Word and Doctrine*. They are ſeparated to *take Pains*, and not to *take State*.

4. The Work of Chriſt's Miniſters to which they are to be *ſeparated* is Work that is *already ſettled*; and that which all Chriſt's Miniſters hitherto have been called to, and which they themſelves have firſt been by an external Call directed to, and have choſen.

Thirdly, Their *Ordination*, purſuant to theſe *Orders*, not to the Miniſtry in general, *Barnabas* and *Saul* had both of them been Miniſters long before this, but to a particular Service in the Miniſtry, which had ſomething peculiar in it, and which requir'd a freſh Commiſſion; which Commiſſion GOD ſaw fit at this Time to tranſmit by the Hands of theſe *Prophets* and *Teachers*, for the giving of this Direction to the Church. That *Teachers* ſhould ordain *Teachers* (for Prophets we are not now any longer to expect) and that thoſe who have the diſpenſing of the Oracles of Chriſt committed to them, ſhould for the Benefit of Poſterity, *commit the ſame to faithful Men which ſhall be able alſo to teach others*, 2 Tim. ii. ſo here, *Simeon* and *Lucius*, and *Manaen* faithful Teachers at this Time in the Church of *Antioch*, when they had *faſted* and *prayed*, laid *their Hands on* Barnabas *and* Saul, *and ſent them away*, *v.* 3. according to the Directions receiv'd. *Obſerve*,

1. They joyn'd *Faſting* with their *Prayers*, as they did in other their Miniſtrations, *v.* 3. Chriſt has taught us this by his abſtaining *from Sleep* (a Night Faſt, if I may ſo call it,) the Night before he ſent forth his Apoſtles, that he might *ſpend it in Prayer*.

3. They *laid their Hands on them*. Hereby (1.) They gave them their *Manumiſſion*, Diſmiſſion, or Diſcharge from the preſent Service they were engag'd in, in the Church of *Antioch*, acknowledging not only that they went off fairly and with Conſent, but honourably and with a good Report. (2.) They implor'd a Bleſſing upon them in their preſent Undertaking; begg'd that GOD would be with them, and give them Succeſs; and in order to this, that they might be filled with the Holy Ghoſt in their Work. This very Thing is explain'd, *chap.* xiv. 26. where it is ſaid concerning *Paul* and *Barnabas*, that from *Antioch* they had been *recommended to the Grace of God for the Work which they fulfilled*. As it was an Inſtance of the Humility of *Barnabas* and *Saul*, that they ſubmitted to the Impoſition of the Hands of thoſe that were their Equals, or rather their Inferiors, ſo it was of the good Diſpoſition of the other Teachers, that they did not envy *Barnabas* and *Saul* the Honour to which they were prefer'd, but chearfully committed it to them, with hearty Prayers for them. And they *ſent them away* with all Expedition, out of a Concern for thoſe Countries where they were to break up *fallow Ground*.

4 ¶ So they being ſent forth by the holy Ghoſt, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they ſailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the ſynagogues of the Jews: and they had alſo John to *their* miniſter. 6 And when they had gone through the iſle unto Paphos, they found a certain ſorcerer, a falſe prophet, a Jew whoſe name *was* Barjeſus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and *Saul*, and deſired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the ſorcerer (for ſo is his name by interpretation) withſtood them, ſeeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul (who alſo *is called* Paul) filled with the holy Ghoſt, ſet his eyes on him, 10 And ſaid, O full of all ſubtilty and all miſchief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteouſneſs, wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now behold the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou ſhalt be blind, not ſeeing the ſun for a ſeaſon. And immediately there fell on him a miſt and a darkneſs, and he went about ſeeking ſome to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy, when he ſaw what was done, believed, being aſtoniſhed at the doctrine of the Lord. 13 Now when Paul and his company looſed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them, returned to Jeruſalem.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, A general Account of the coming of *Barnabas* and *Saul* to the famous Iſland of *Cyprus*, and perhaps thitherward they ſteer'd their Courſe, becauſe *Barnabas* was a Native of that Country, *chap.* iv. 36. and he was willing they ſhould have the Firſt-fruits of his Labours purſuant to his new Commiſſion. *Obſerve,*

1. Their being *ſent forth by the Holy Ghoſt* was the great Thing that encourag'd them in this Undertaking, *v.* 4. If the Holy Ghoſt ſend them forth he will go along with them, ſtrengthen them, carry them on in their Work, and give them Succeſs, and then they fear no Colours, but can chearfully venture upon a ſtormy Sea from *Antioch*, which was now to them a quiet Harbour.

2. They came to *Seleucia*, the Sea-port Town oppoſite to *Cyprus*, from thence croſs'd the Sea to *Cyprus*, and in that Iſland, the firſt City they came to was *Salamis*, a City on the *Eaſt-ſide* of the Iſland, *v.* 5. And when they had ſown good Seed there, thence they went onward *through the Iſle*, *v.* 6. till they came to *Paphos*, which lay on the weſtern Coaſt.

3. They *preached the Word of God* where-ever they came, *in the Synagogues of the* Jews; ſo far were they from excluding them that they gave them the Preference, and ſo left thoſe among them who believ'd not inexcuſeable, they *would have gather'd them*, but they would not. They did not *Act clandeſtinely*, nor preach the Meſſiah to others unknown to them, but laid their Doctrine open to theCenſure of the Rulers of their Synagogues, who might, if they had any Thing to ſay, object againſt it. Nor would they have *acted ſeparately*, but in Concert with them, if they had not driven them out from them, and from their Synagogues.

4. They had *John* to their *Miniſter*; not their Servant in common Things, but their Aſſiſtant in the Things of GOD; either to *prepare their Way* in Places where they deſign'd to come, or to carry *on their Work* in Places where they had begun it, or to converſe familiarly with thoſe to whom they preached publickly, and explain Things to them, and ſuch a one might be many Ways of Uſe to them, eſpecially in a ſtrange Country.

Secondly, A particular Account of their Rencounter with *Elymas* the *Sorcerer*, whom they met with at *Paphos*, where the Governour reſided. A Place famous for a Temple built to *Venus* there, thence called *Paphia Venus*; and therefore there was more than ordinary Need that the *Son of God* ſhould be *manifeſted* to *deſtroy the Work of the Devil.*

1. There the *Deputy* a *Gentile, Sergius Paulus* by Name, encourag'd the Apoſtles, and was willing to hear their Meſſage. He was *Governor of the Countrey*, under the *Roman* Emperor, *Proconſul*, or *Proprietor*, ſuch a one as we would call Lord Lieutenant of the Iſland, He had the Character of *a prudent Man* an intelligent conſiderate Man, that was rul'd by Reaſon, not Paſſin or Prejudice; which appear'd by this, that having a Character of *Barnabas* and *Saul* he ſent for them, and *deſir'd to hear the Word of God*. *Note*, That which we hear has a Tendency to lead us to GOD, 'tis *Prudence* to deſire to hear more of it. Theſe are wiſe People, however they may be rank'd among the fooliſh of this World, who are inquiſitive after the Mind and Will of GOD. Tho' he was a *great Man*, and a Man in Authority, and the Preachers of the Goſpel were Men that made no Figure, yet if they have a Meſſage from GOD, let him know what it is, and if it appear to be ſo, he is ready to receive it.

2. There *Elymas* a *Jew*, a *Sorcerer* oppos'd them, and did all he could to obſtruct their Progreſs. This juſtified the Apoſtles in turning to the *Gentiles*, that this *Jew* was ſo malignant againſt them.

1. This *Elymas* was a Pretender to the Gift of Prophecy, a *Sorcerer, a falſe Prophet*; one that would be taken for a *Divine*, becauſe he was skill'd in the Arts of *Divination*, was a Conjurer, and took on him to tell People their Fortune, and to diſcover Things loſt, and probably was in League with the Devil for that Purpoſe. His Name was *Bar-Jeſus, the Son of* Joſhua, It ſignifies *the Son of Salvation*, But the *Syriac* calls him *Bar-Shoma, The Son of Pride*; *Filius inflationis*.

2. He was hanging on at Court, was *with the Deputy of the Country*; it doth not appear that the Deputy called for him, as he did for *Barnabas* and *Saul*, but he thruſt himſelf upon him, aiming no doubt to make a Hand of him, and get Money by him.

3. He made it his Buſineſs to withſtand *Barnabas* and *Saul*, as the Magicians of *Egypt* in *Pharaoh's* Court withſtood *Moſes* and *Aaron*, 2 Tim. iii. 8. He ſet up himſelf to be a Meſſenger from Heaven, and deny'd that they were, And thus he ſought to *turn away the Deputy from the Faith*, v. 8. to keep him from receiving the Goſpel, which he ſaw him inclin'd to do. *Note*, Satan is in a ſpecial Manner buſy with great Men, and Men in Power to keep them from being religious, becauſe he knows their Example whether Good or Bad will have an Influence upon many. And thoſe who are any way Inſtrumental to prejudice People againſt the Truths and Ways of Chriſt are doing the Devil's Work.

4. *Saul* (who is here the firſt Time called *Paul*, and never after *Saul*) fell upon him for this with a Holy Indignation. *Saul, who is alſo called* Paul, v. 9. *Saul* was his Name as he was a *Hebrew*, and of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, *Paul* was his Name as he was a Citizen of *Rome*; Hitherto we have had him moſtly converſant among the *Jews*, and therefore called by his Jewiſh Name; But now when he is ſent forth among the *Gentiles*, he is called by his *Roman* Name, to put ſomewhat of a Reputation upon him in the Roman Cities; *Paulus* being a very common Name among them. But ſome think he was never called *Paul* till now, that he was inſtrumental in the Converſion of *Sergius Paulus* to the Faith of Chriſt, and that he took that Name (*Paulus*) as a Memorial of that Victory obtain'd by the Goſpel of Chriſt, as among the *Romans* he that had conquer'd a Country took his Denomination from it, as *Germanicus, Britannicus, Africanus*; Or rather *Sergius Paulus* himſelf gave him the Name *Paulus* in Token of his Favour and Reſpect to him, as *Veſpaſian* gave him his Name *Flavius*, to *Joſephus* the *Jew*. Now of *Paul* 'tis ſaid,

1. That he was *filled with the Holy Ghoſt* upon this Occaſion; filled with a *holy Zeal* againſt a profeſs'd Enemy of Chriſt, which was one of the *Grace* of the Holy Ghoſt, a *Spirit of burning*; fill'd with a Power to denounce the Wrath of GOD againſt him, which was one of the *Gifts* of the Holy Ghoſt, a Spirit of Judgment. He felt a more than ordinary Fervour in his Mind, as the Prophet did when he was *full of Power by the Spirit of the Lord*; Mic. iii. 8. and another Prophet when his *Face was made harder than Flint*, Ezek. iii. 9. and another when his *Mouth* was made *like a ſharp Sword*, Iſa. xlix. 2. What *Paul* ſaid did not come from any perſonal Reſentment, but from the ſtrong Impreſſions which the Holy Ghoſt made upon his Spirit.

2. He *ſet his Eyes upon him* to face him down, and to ſhew a Holy Boldneſs in Oppoſition to his wicked Impudence. He *ſet his Eyes upon him* as an Indication that the Eye of the Heart ſearching GOD was upon him, and ſaw through and through him; nay, that the *Face of the Lord was againſt him*, Pſal. xxxiv. 16. He fix'd his Eyes upon him, to ſee if he could diſcern in his Countenance any Marks of Remorſe for what he had done, which if he could have diſcern'd the leaſt Sign of, it had prevented the enſuing Doom.

3. He gave him his *true Character*, not in Paſſion, but by *the Holy Ghoſt*, who knows Men better than they know themſelves, *v.* 1. He deſcribes him to be.

1. And *Agent for Hell*; and ſuch there have been upon this Earth (the Seat of the War between the Seed of the Woman and of the Serpent) ever ſince *Cain* who *was of that wicked One*, an incarnate Devil ſlew his Brother for no other Reaſon, but becauſe *his own Works were evil, and his Brothers righteous*. This *Elymas* tho' call'd *Bar-Jeſus*, a Son of Jeſus, was really a *Child of the Devil*, bore his Image, did his Luſts, and ſerv'd his Intereſt, *John* viii. 44. In Two Things he reſembled the Devil; as a *Child* doth his *Father*. (1.) In *Craft*; *The Serpent was more ſubtle than any Beaſt of the Field*, Gen. iii. 1. and *Elymas* tho' *void of all Wiſdom*, yet was *full of Subtilty*, expert in all the Arts of deceiving Men and impoſing upon them. (2.) In *Malice*; he was *full of all Miſchiefs*; a ſpiteful ill-condition'd Man, and a ſworn implacable Enemy to GOD and Goodneſs. *Note*, a Fulneſs of *Subtilty* and *Miſchief* together make a Man indeed a *Child of the Devil*.

(2.) An *Adverſary to Heaven*; If he be *a Child of the Devil* it follows of courſe that he is an *Enemy to all Righteouſneſs*, for the Devil is ſo. *Note*, Thoſe that are Enemies to the Doctrine of Chriſt, are *Enemies to all Righteouſneſs*, for in it all *Righteouſneſs* is ſumm'd up and fulfill'd.

4. He charg'd upon him his preſent Crime, and expoſtulated with him upon it, *wilt thou not ceaſe to pervert the right Ways of the Lord? i. e.* to miſrepreſent them, to put falſe Colours upon them, and ſo to diſcourage People from entring into them, and walking in them. *Note*, 1. The Ways of the Lord are *right*, they are all ſo, they are perfectly ſo. *The Ways of the Lord Jeſus* are *right*, the only right Ways to Heaven and Happineſs, 2. There are thoſe who *pervent* theſe *right Ways*, who not only *wander* out of theſe *Ways* themſelves, as *Elihu's* Penitent, who owns, *I have perverted that which was right, and it profited me not*, But miſlead others, and ſuggeſt to them unjuſt Prejudices againſt theſe Ways, as if the Doctrine of Chriſt were uncertain and precarious, the Laws of Chriſt unreaſonable and impracticable, and the Service of Chriſt unpleaſant and unprofitable, which is an unjuſt perverting of the *right Ways of the Lord*, and making them to ſeem *crooked Ways*. 3. Thoſe that *pervert the right Ways of the Lord*, are commonly ſo harden'd in it, that tho' the Equity of thoſe Ways be ſet before them by the moſt powerful and commanding Evidence, yet they *will not ceaſe to do it*; *etſi ſuaſeris non perſuaſeris*, They will have it their own Way, *have loved Strangers and after them they will go*.

5. He *denounc'd* the Judgment of GOD upon him, in a preſent *Blindneſs*, v. 11. *And now behold the Hand of the Lord is upon thee*, a righteous Hand, GOD is now about to lay Hands on thee and make thee his Priſoner, for thou art taken in Arms againſt him; *thou ſhalt be blind not ſeeing the Sun for a Seaſon*. This was deſign'd both for the *Proof* of his *Crime*, as it was a Miracle wrought to confirm the right Ways of the Lord, and conſequently to ſhew the Wickedneſs of him who would not ceaſe to pervert them; As alſo for the *Puniſhment* of his Crime; 'Twas a *ſuitable* Puniſhment; he *ſhut his Eyes*, the Eyes of his Minds, againſt the Light of the Goſpel, and therefore juſtly were the Eyes of his Body ſhut againſt the Light of the Sun. He ſought to *blind* the Deputy as an Agent for the God of this World, who *blindeth the Mind of them that believe not, leaſt the Light of the Goſpel ſhould ſhine unto them*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. and therefore is himſelf ſtruck blind. Yet it was a *moderate* Puniſhment, he was only *ſtruck blind* when he might moſt juſtly have be *ſtruck dead*; And that it was only *for a Seaſon*; If he will repent and give Glory to GOD by making Confeſſion, his Sight ſhall be reſtor'd; nay, it ſhould ſeem tho' he do not, yet his Sight ſhall be

reſtor'd, to try if he will *be led to Repentance*, either by the Judgments of GOD, or by his Mercies.

6. This Judgment was immediately executed. *There fell on him a Miſt and a Darkneſs*, as on the *Sodomites*, when they perſecuted *Lot*, and on the *Syrians*, when they perſecuted *Eliſha*. This *Silenc'd* him preſently, fill'd him with Confuſion, and was an effectual Confutation of all he ſaid againſt the Doctrine of Chriſt. Let not him any more pretend to be a *Guide* to the Deputy's Conſcience who is himſelf *ſtruck blind*. It was alſo an *Earneſt* to him of a *much ſorer* Puniſhment if he repent not, for he is one of thoſe *wandering Stars, to whom is reſerved the Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever*, Jude xiii. *Elymas* did himſelf proclaim the Truth of the Miracle, when *he went about ſeeking ſome to lead him by the Hand*; and where now is all his Skill in Sorcery, upon which he had ſo much valu'd himſelf, when he can neither find his Way himſelf, nor find a Friend that will be ſo kind as to lead him.

3. Notwithſtanding all the Endeavours of *Elymas*, to *turn away the Deputy from the Faith*, he was brought to *believe*, and this Miracle wrought upon the Magician himſelf (like the Boils of *Egypt*, which were *upon the Magicians* ſo that they *could not ſtand before* Moſes, *Exod.* ix. 11.) contributed to it; The Deputy was a very ſenſible Man, and obſerv'd ſomething uncommon, and which ſpoke its divine Original.

(1.) In *Paul's* Preaching; He was *aſtoniſh'd at the Doctrine of the Lord*, the Lord Chriſt, the Doctrine that is *from him*, the Diſcoveries he has made of the Father, the Doctrine that is *concerning him*, his Perſon, Natures, Offices, Undertaking. *Note*, The Doctrine of Chriſt has a great deal in it that is *aſtoniſhing*, and the more we know of it, the more Reaſon we ſhall ſee to wonder and ſtand amaz'd at it.

(2.) In this Miracle; when he ſaw what was done, and how much *Paul*'s Power tranſcended that of the Magician, and how plainly *Elymas* was baffled and confounded he *believed*. It is not ſaid that he was *baptized*, and ſo made a compleat Convert, but it is probable he was, *Paul* would not do his Buſineſs by the halves; *As for God His Work is perfect*: when he became a Chriſtian he neither laid down his Government nor was turn'd out of it, but we may ſuppoſe as a Chriſtian Magiſtrate by his Influence help'd very much to propagate Chriſtianity in that Iſland. The Tradition of the *Romiſh* Church, which has taken Care to find Biſhopricks for all the eminent Converts we read of in the *Acts*, has made this *Sergius Paulus*, Biſhop of *Narbon* in *France*, left there by *Paul* in his Journey to *Spain*.

Thirdly. Their Departure from the Iſland of *Cyprus*. 'Tis probably they did a great deal more there than is here recorded, where an Account is given only of that which was extraordinary, the Converſion of the Deputy. When they had done what they had to do.

1. They quitted the Country and went to *Perga*. Thoſe that went were *Paul and his Company*, which 'tis probable was increas'd in *Cyprus*, many being deſirous to accompany him. Ἀναχθέντες οἱ περὶ τὸν Παῦλον. *They that were about* Paul *looſed from* Paphos, which ſuppoſeth that *he went* too, but ſuch an Affection had his new Friends for him that they were always about him, and by their good Will would be never from him.

2. Then *John Mark* quitted them, and return'd to *Jeruſalem* without the Conſent of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, either he did not like the Work, and wanted to go ſee his Mother. It was his Fault, and we ſhall hear of it again.

¶ 14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Piſidia, and went into the ſynagogue on the ſabbath-day, and ſat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the ſynagogue ſent unto them, ſaying, Ye men *and* brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, ſay on. 16 Then Paul ſtood up, and beckening with *his* hand ſaid, Men of Iſrael, and ye that fear God, give audience. 17 The God of this people of Iſrael choſe our fathers, and exalted the people, when they dwelt as ſtrangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it. 18 And about the time of fourty years ſuffered he their manners in the wilderneſs. 19 And when he had deſtroyed ſeven nations in the land of Canaan, he divided their land to them by lot. 20 And after that, he gave *unto them* judges, about the ſpace of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. 21 And afterward they deſired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the ſon of Cis a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the ſpace of fourty years. 22 And when he had removed him, he raiſed up unto them David to be their king? to whom alſo he gave teſtimony, and ſaid, I have found David the ſon of Jeſſe, a man after mine own heart, which ſhall fulfill all my will. 23 Of this mans ſeed hath God, according to his promiſe, raiſed unto Iſrael a Saviour Jeſus: 24 When John had firſt preached before his coming, the baptiſm of repantance to all the people of Iſrael. 25 And as John fulfilled his courſe, he ſaid, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But behold there cometh one after me, whoſe ſhoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to looſe. 26 Men *and* brethren, children of the ſtock of Abraham, and whoſoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent. 27 For they that dwell at Jeruſalem, and their rulers, becauſe they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every ſabbath-day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*. 28 And though they found no cauſe of death *in him*, yet deſired they Pilate that he ſhould be ſlain. 29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a ſepulchre. 30 But God raiſed him from the dead: 31 And he was ſeen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jeruſalem, who are his witneſſes unto the people. 32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promiſe which was made unto the fathers, 33 God hath fulfilled the ſame unto us their children, in that he hath raiſed up Jeſus again; as it is alſo written in the ſecond pſalm, Thou art my ſon, this day have I begotten thee. 34 And as concerning that he raiſed him up from the dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he ſaid on this wiſe, I will give you the ſure mercies of David. 35 Wherefore he ſaith alſo in another *Pſalm*, Thou ſhalt not ſuffer thine holy one to ſee corruption. 36 For David after he had ſerved his own generation by the will of God, fell on ſleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and ſaw corruption. 37 But he whom God raiſed again, ſaw no corruption. 38 ¶ Be it known unto you, therefore men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of ſins: 39 And by him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes. 40 Beware therefore, leſt that come upon you which is ſpoken of in the prophets, 41 Behold ye deſpiſers and wonder, and periſh: for I work a work in your days, a work which you ſhall in no wiſe believe, though a man declare it unto you.

Perga in *Pamphylia* was a noted Place, eſpecially for a Temple there erected to the Goddeſs *Diana*; yet nothing at all is related of what *Paul* and *Barnabas* did there, only thither they came, *v.* 13 and thence they departed, *v.* 14. But the Hiſtory of the Apoſtles Travels, as that of Chriſt's paſſeth by many Things worthy to have been recorded; becauſe if all ſhould have been written, the World could not have contain'd the Books.

But the next Place we find them in, is another *Antioch*, ſaid to be in *Piſidia*, to diſtinguiſh it from that *Antioch* in *Syria*, from whence they were *ſent out*. *Piſidia* was a Province of the *Leſſer Aſia*, bordering upon *Phamphylia*; this *Antioch* 'tis likely was the Metropolis of it; Abundance of *Jews* liv'd there, and to them the Goſpel was to be firſt preach'd; and *Paul*'s Sermon to them, is what we have in theſe Verſes; which 'tis likely is the Subſtance of what was preach'd by the Apoſtles generally to the *Jews* in all Places; for in Dealing with them, the proper Way was to ſhew them how the *New Teſtament*, which they would have them to receive, exactly agreed with the *Old Teſtament*, which they not only *receiv'd*, but were *zealous for*.

We have here

Firſt, The Appearance which *Paul* and *Barnabas* made in a religious Aſſembly of the *Jews* at *Antioch*, *v.* 14. Tho' they had lately ſo good Succeſs with a *Roman* Deputy; yet when they came to *Antioch*, they did not enquire for the chief Magiſtrate, or make their Court to him, but they apply'd themſelves to the *Jews*, which is a further Proof of their good Affection to them, and their Deſire of their Welfare.

1. They obſerv'd *their Time* of Worſhip, *on the Sabbath-Day*, the Jewiſh Sabbath. The firſt Day of the Week, they obſerv'd among themſelves as a Chriſtian Sabbath; but if they will meet the *Jews*, it muſt be on the Seventh-day Sabbath; which therefore upon ſuch Occaſions, they did as yet ſometimes obſerve. For tho' it was by the Death of Chriſt, that the Ceremonial Law dy'd, yet it was in the Ruins of *Jeruſalem*, that it was to be

bury'd; and therefore tho' the Morality of the fourth Commandment was entirely transform'd to the Chriſtian Sabbath, yet it was not incongruous to joyn with the *Jews* in their Sabbath-ſanctification.

2. They met them in *their Place* of Worſhip; in the *Synagogue*. *Note*, Sabbath days ſhould be kept holy in Solemn Aſſemblies; They are inſtituted chiefly for publick Worſhip; The Sabbath-day is a *Holy Convocation*; and for that Reaſon no ſervile Work muſt be done therein. *Paul* and *Barnabas* were Strangers; but whereever we come, we muſt enquire out GOD's faithful Worſhippers, and joyn with them, (as theſe Apoſtles here did) as thoſe that deſire to keep up a Communion with all Saints. Tho' they were Strangers, yet they were admitted into the Synagogue, and *to ſit down there*. Care ſhould be taken in Places of publick Worſhip, that Strangers be accommodated, even the pooreſt; for thoſe we know nothing elſe of, we know this, that they have precious Souls, which our Charity binds us to be concern'd for.

Secondly, The Invitation given them to preach.

1. The uſual Service of the Synagogue was perform'd, *v.* 15. The *Law and the Prophets were read*; a Portion of each, the Leſſons for the Day. *Note*, When we come together to worſhip GOD, we muſt do it not only by Prayer and Praiſe, but by the Reading and Hearing of the Word of GOD; hereby we *give Him the Glory due to his Name*, as our Lord and Law-giver.

2. When that was done, they were asked by the Rulers of the Synagogue to give them a Sermon, *v.* 17. they ſent a Meſſenger to them, with this reſpectful Meſſage, *Men and Brethren, if ye have any Word of Exhortation for the People, ſay on.* 'Tis probable the Rulers of the Synagogue had met with them, and been in private Converſation with them before, and if they had not an Affection to the Goſpel, yet had at leaſt the Curioſity to hear *Paul* preach; and therefore not only gave him Permiſſion, but beg'd the Favour of him, that he would ſpeak a *Word of Exhortation* to the People. *Note*, 1. The bare Reading of the Scriptures in the publick Aſſemblies is not ſufficient, but they ſhould be *expounded* and the People *exhorted* out of them: This is ſpreading the Net, and aſſiſting People in doing that which is neceſſary to the making of the Word profitable to them, and that is the Applying of it to themſelves. 2. Thoſe that preſide and have Power in publick Aſſemblies, ſhould provide for a Word of Exhortation to the People whenever they come together. 3. Sometimes a Word of Exhortation from a ſtrange Miniſter, may be of great Uſe to the People: provided he be well approv'd. 'Tis likely *Paul* did often preach in the Synagogue when he was not thus invited to it by the Rulers of the Synagogues; for he often preach'd with much Contention, 1 *Theſſ.* ii. 2. But *theſe were more noble*, more generous than the Rulers of the Synagogue commonly were.

Thirdly, The Sermon *Paul* preach'd in the Synagogue of the *Jews* at the Invitation of the Rulers of the Synagogue. He gladly embrac'd the Opportunity given him to preach Chriſt to his Country-men the *Jews*; did not object to them that he was a Stranger, and that it was none of his Buſineſs, nor object to himſelf that he may get Ill-will by Preaching Chriſt among the *Jews*; but *ſtood up*, as One prepar'd and determin'd to ſpeak, and *becken'd with his Hand*, to excite and prepare them to hear; He *wav'd his Hand* as an Orator, not only deſiring Silence and Attention, but endeavouring to move Affection, and to ſhew himſelf in earneſt. Perhaps upon the moving of them to give an Exhortation to the People, there were thoſe in the Synagogue that were ready to mutiny againſt the Rulers, and oppos'd the Toleration of *Paul*'s Preaching, and that occaſion'd ſome Tumult and Commotion, which *Paul* endeavour'd to quiet by that decent Motion of his Hand. As alſo by his modeſt Deſire of a patient impartial Hearing, *Men of Iſrael*, that are *Jews* by Birth, and *ye that fear GOD*, that are proſelyted to the Jewiſh Religion, *give audience*; Let me beg your attention a little, for I have ſomething to ſay to you which concern your everlaſting Peace, " and would not ſay it in vain.

Now this excellent Sermon is recorded to ſhew, that thoſe who preach'd the Goſpel to the Gentiles, did it not till they had firſt us'd their utmoſt Endeavours with the *Jews* to perſuade them to come in and take the Benefit of it; and that they had no Prejudice at all againſt the Jewiſh Nation, nor any Deſire that they ſhould periſh, but rather that they ſhould turn and live. Every Thing is touch'd in this Sermon that might be proper either to convince the Judgment, or inſinuate into the Affections of the *Jews* to prevail with them to receive and embrace Chriſt, as the promis'd *Meſſiah*.

1. He owns them to be GOD's *Favourite People*, whom he had taken into ſpecial Relation to himſelf, and for whom He had done great Things. Probably, the *Jews of the Diſperſion* that liv'd in other Countries being more in Danger of mingling with the Nations, were more jealous of their Peculiarity, than thoſe that liv'd in their own Land were; and therefore *Paul* is here very careful to take Notice of it to their Honour.

(1.) That the GOD of the whole Earth was in a particular Manner the *God of this People* Iſrael, a GOD in Covenant with them, and that had given them a Revelation of his Mind and Will, ſuch as He had not given to any other Nation or People; ſo that hereby they were *diſtinguiſh'd* from, and *dignify'd* above all their Neighbours, having peculiar Precepts to be *govern'd by* and peculiar Promiſes to *depend upon*.

(2.) That he had *choſen their Fathers*, to be his Friends, *Abraham* was call'd the *Friend of God*; to be his Prophets by whom He would reveal his Mind to his Church, and to be the Truſtees, of his Covenant with the Church: He puts them in Mind of this, to let them know that the Reaſon why God favour'd them, tho' undeſerving and ill-deſerving, was, becauſe he would adhere to the *Choice* He had made of *their Fathers*, Deut. vii. 7, 8. They were *beloved* purely *for the Fathers ſake*, Rom. xi. 28.

(3.) That he had *exalted that People*, and put a great deal of Honour upon them, had *advanc'd* them into a People, and rais'd them from nothing, then when they *dwelt as Strangers in the Land of* Egypt, and had nothing in them to recommend them to the Divine Favour, They ought to remember this, and to infer from hence, that GOD was no *Debtor to them*; for it was *ex mero motu*, and not upon a *valuable Conſideration*, that they had the Grant of the Divine Favour, and therefore it was revocable at Pleaſure, and GOD did them no Wrong if he at length pluck'd up the Hedge of their Peculiarity; But they were *Debtors to him*, and oblig'd to receive ſuch further Diſcoveries as He ſhould make of his Will, and to admit ſuch further Additions as he ſhould make to his Church.

(4.) That He had *with a high Hand brought them out of* Egypt, where they were not only Strangers, but Captives; had deliver'd them at the Expence of a great many Miracles, both of Mercy to them, and Judgment on their Oppreſſors, *Signs and Wonders*, Deut. iv. 34. And at the Expence of a great many Lives, all the Firſt-born of *Egypt*, *Pharaoh* and all his Hoſt, in the *Red Sea*; I gave *Egypt for thy Ranſom, gave Man for thee*, Iſa. xliii. 3, 4.

(5.) That *he had ſuffer'd their Manners forty Years in the Wilderneſs*, *v*, 18. Ἐτροποφόρησεν Some think it ſhould be read Ἐτροφοφόρησεν, He *educated them*, becauſe that's the Word the *Septuagint* uſe concerning the Fatherly Care GOD took of that People, *Deut.* i. 31. Both may be included; for (1.) GOD made a great deal of Proviſion for them for forty Years in the Wilderneſs, Miracles were their daily Bread, and kept them from ſtarving; they *lack'd not any Thing*. (2.) He exercis'd a great deal of *Patience* with them; they were a provoking, murmuring, unbelieving People, and yet He bore with them, did not deal with them as they deſerv'd, but ſuffer'd his Anger many a Time to be tur'd away by the Prayer and Interceſſion of *Moſes*. So many Years as we have each of us liv'd in this World, we muſt own that GOD has thus been as a tender Father to us, has ſupply'd our Wants, has *fed us all our Life long unto this Day*, has been indulgent to us, a *God of Pardons*, as he was to *Iſrael*, Neh. ix. 27. and not extreme to mark what we have done amiſs; we have *try'd* his Patience, yet not *tired* it. Let not the *Jews* inſiſt too much upon the Privileges of their Peculiarity, for they had forfeited them a thouſand Times.

(6.) That he had put them in Poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*, *v.* 19. *When he had deſtroy'd ſeven Nations in the Land of Canaan*, that were doom'd to be rooted out to make Room for them, He *divided their Land to them by Lot*, and put them in Poſſeſſion of it. This was a ſingle Favour of GOD to them, and he owns that hereby a great Honour was put upon them, which he would not in the leaſt derogate from.

(7.) That He had rais'd up Men ſpirited from Heaven to deliver them out of the Hands of thoſe that invaded their Rights, and oppreſs'd them after their Settlement in *Canaan*, *v.* 20, 21. (1.) He *gave them Judges*; Men qualify'd for publick Service, and by an immediate impulſe upon their Spirits call'd to it, *pro re nata*, as the Occaſion required. Tho' they were a provoking People, and were never in Servitude, but their Sin brought them to it, yet upon their Petition a Deliverer was rais'd up. The Criticius find ſome Difficulty in computing theſe Four Hundred and fifty Years: From the Deliverance out of *Egypt* to *David*'s Expulſion of the *Jebuſites* from the ſtrong Hold of *Zion*, which compleated the caſting out of the Heathen Nations, was Four hundred and fifty Years: and moſt of that Time they were under Judges. Others thus; The Government of the Judges from the Death of *Joſhua* to the Death of *Eli*, was juſt three hundred thirty-nine Years, but it is ſaid to be [ὡς] *as it were* four hundred and fifty Years, becauſe the Years of their Servitude to the ſeveral Nations that oppreſs'd, tho' really they were included in the Years of the Judges, yet are mention'd in the Hiſtory as if they had been diſtinct from them. Now theſe all put together, make one hundred and eleven Years, and thoſe added to the three hundred thirty nine, make them four hundred and fifty; *as* ſo many, tho' not *really* ſo many. (2.) He govern'd them by *a Prophet*, *Samuel*, a Man divinely inſpired to preſide in their Affairs. (3.) He afterwards at their Requeſt, ſet a *King* over them, *v.* 21. *Saul the Son of Kiſh*; *Samuel*'s Government, and his laſted *forty Years*; which was a kind of Tranſition from the Theocracy to the Kingly Government. (4.) At laſt He made *David* their King, *v.* 22. When GOD had remov'd *Saul* for his Male adminiſtration, He rais'd *up unto them* David *to be their King*, and made a Covenant of Royalty with him, and with his Seed. Then when he had *remov'd* one King, He did not leave them as Sheep without a Shepherd; but ſoon *rais'd up* another; rais'd him up from a mean and a low Eſtate, *raiſ'd him up on high*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. He quotes the Teſtimony GOD gave concerning him; (1.) That his *Choice* was Divine, *I have found* David, *Pſ.* lxxxix. 20. God himſelf pitch'd upon him; Finding, implies *ſeeking*, as if GOD had ranſack'd all the Families of *Iſrael* to find a Man fit for his Purpoſe, and this was he. (2.) That his Character was Divine, *A Man after my own Heart*; ſuch an One as I would have, One on whom the Image of GOD is ſtamp'd, and therefore One in whom GOD is well-pleas'd, and whom he doth approve. This Character was given of him before he was firſt anointed, 1 *Sam.* xiii. 14. *The LORD hath ſought him out a Man after his own Heart*, ſuch an One as He would have. (3.) That his *Conduct* was divine, and under a divine Direction; *He ſhall fulfil all my Will*. He ſhall deſire and endeavour to do the Will of GOD, and ſhall be enabled to do it, and employ'd in the doing of it, and go *through* with it.

Now all this ſeems to ſhew not only the ſpecial Favour of GOD to the People of *Iſrael*, which the Apoſtle is very willing to *oblige them* with the Acknowledgment of, but the further Favours of another Nature which he deſign'd them, and which were now by the Preaching of the Goſpel offer'd to them. Their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and ſettlement in *Canaan* were Types and Figures of good Things to come; The Changes of their Government ſhew'd that it made nothing perfect, and therefore muſt give Way to the Spiritual Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, which was now in the ſetting up, and which if they would admit it, and ſubmit to it, would be *the Glory of their People* Iſrael; and therefore they needed not conceive any Jealouſy at all of the Preaching of the Goſpel, as if it tended in the leaſt to damage the true Excellencies of the *Jewiſh* Church.

2. He gives them a full Account of *our Lord Jeſus*, paſſing from *David* to the *Son of David*, and ſhews that this Jeſus is his promiſed Seed, v. 23. *of this Man's Seed*, from that Root of *Jeſſe*, from that *Man after God's own Heart hath God according to his Promiſe raiſed unto* Iſrael *a Saviour*, *Jeſus*, who carries *Salvation* in his Name. How welcome ſhould the Preaching of the Goſpel of Chriſt be to the *Jews*, and how ſhould they embrace it as well worthy of all Acceptation when it brought them the Tydings. (1.) Of a *Saviour*; to deliver them out of the Hands of their Enemies, as the Judges of old who were therefore called *Saviours*, but this a Saviour to do that for them which, it appears by the Hiſtory, thoſe could not do, to ſave them *from their Sins*, their worſt Enemies. (2.) A Saviour of GOD's *raiſing up*, that has his Commiſſion from Heaven. (3.) Rais'd up to be a Saviour *unto Iſrael*, to them in the firſt Place he was ſent to bleſs them; ſo far was the Goſpel from deſigning the Rejection of *Iſrael*, that it deſign'd the *gathering of them*. (4.) Rais'd up *of the Seed of* David, that ancient Royal Family, which the People of *Iſrael* glory'd ſo much in, and which at this Time to the great Diſgrace of the whole Nation was buried in Obſcurity. It ought to be a great Satisfaction to them that GOD had *rais'd up* this *Horn of Salvation* for them *in the Houſe of his Servant* David, *Luke* i. 29. (5.) Rais'd up *according to his Promiſe*, the Promiſe to *David*, Pſal. cxxxii. 11. the Promiſe to the *Old Teſtament* Church in the later Times of it, *I will raiſe unto* David *a Righteous Branch*, Jer. xxiii. 5. This Promiſe, was it to which the *Twelve Tribes hoped to come*, Acts xxvi. 7. why then ſhould they entertain it ſo coldly now, it was brought to them?

Now concerning this Jeſus he tells them,

1. That *John* the *Baptiſt* was his Harbinger and Fore-runner; That great Man, whom all acknowledg'd to be a Prophet. Let them not ſay that the Meſſiah's coming was a Surprize upon them and that might excuſe them if they took Time to conſider whether they ſhould entertain him or no; for they had ſufficient Warning by *John*; who *preached before his Coming*, v. 24. Two Things he did:

1. He *made Way* for his *Entrance*, by Preaching the *Baptiſm of Repentance*, not to a few ſelect Diſciples, but *to all the People of* Iſrael; He ſhew'd them their Sins, warn'd them of the Wrath to come, called them to Repentance, and to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, and bound thoſe to this who were willing to be bound, by the ſolemn Rite or Sign of Baptiſm, and by this he *made ready a People prepar'd for the Lord Jeſus*, to whom his Grace would be acceptable when they were thus brought to know themſelves.

(2.) He *gave Notice* of his *Approach*, v. 25. *As he fulfilled his Courſe*, when he was going on vigorouſly in his Work, and had had wonderful Succeſs in it, and an eſtabliſh'd Intereſt, now ſaith he, to thoſe that attended his Miniſtry, *Whom think ye that I am?* What Notions have ye of me? What Expectation from me? You may be thinking that I am the *Meſſiah* whom you expect, but you are miſtaken, *I am not he*; ſee *John* i. 20. But he is at the Door; *Behold there cometh one* immediately *after me* who will ſo far exceed me upon all Accounts, that I am *not worthy* to be employ'd in the meaneſt Office about him, no not to help him on and off with his Shoes; *whoſe Shoes of his Feet I am not worthy to unlooſe*; and you may gueſs who that muſt be.

2. That the Rulers and People of the *Jews*, who ſhould have welcom'd him, and been his willing, forward, faithful Subjects were his *Perſecutors*, and *Murtherers*. When the Apoſtles preach Chriſt as the *Saviour*, they are ſo far from concealing his ignominious Death, and drawing a Vail over it, that they always preach Chriſt *crucify'd*, yea, (and tho' that added much to the Reproach of his Sufferings) crucify'd by his own People, by *them that dwelt in* Jeruſalem the Holy City, the Royal City, and *their Rulers*, *v.* 27.

(1.) Their Sin was, that *tho' they found no Cauſe of Death in him* could not *prove* him, no nor had any Colour to *ſuſpect* him guilty of any Crime, the Judge himſelf that try'd him, when he had heard all they could ſay againſt Him, declar'd he *found no Fault* in him, yet they *deſir'd* Pilate *that he might be ſlain*, v. 28. and preſented their Addreſs againſt Chriſt with ſuch Fury and Out-rage, that they compell'd *Pilate* to crucify him, not only contrary to his *Inclination*, but contrary to his *Conſcience*; they *condemn'd* him to ſo *great a Death*, tho' they could not *convict* him of the *leaſt Sin*. *Paul* cannot charge this upon his Hearers, as *Peter* did, *chap.* ii. 23. *you have with wicked Hands crucify'd and ſlain him*; for theſe tho' *Jews* were far enough off, but he chargeth it upon the *Jews* at *Jeruſalem*, and the *Rulers*, to ſhew what little Reaſon thoſe *Jews* of the Diſperſion had to be ſo jealous for the Honour of their Nation as they were, when it had brought upon it ſelf ſuch a Load and Stain of Guilt as this, and how juſtly they might have been cut off from all Benefit by the *Meſſiah*, who had thus abus'd him, and yet they were not, but notwithſtanding all this, the Preaching of this Goſpel ſhall begin at *Jeruſalem*.

(2.) The Reaſon of this was, becauſe *they knew him not*, *v.* 17. They knew not who he was, nor what Errand he came into the World upon; for *if they had known, they would not have crucify'd the Lord of Glory*; Chriſt own'd this in Extenuation of their Crime, *They know not what they do*; and ſo did *Peter*, *I wot, that through Ignorance ye did this*, Acts iii. 17. 'Twas alſo becauſe they *knew not the Voice of the Prophets*, tho' they heard them *read every Sabbath-Day*; they did not underſtand nor conſider that it was foretold, That the *Meſſiah* ſhould ſuffer, or elſe they would never have been the Inſtruments of his Suffering. *Note*, Many that *read the Prophets*, yet do not *know the Voice* of the Prophets, do not underſtand the meaning of the Scriptures; have the Sound of the Goſpel in their Ears, but not the Senſe of 'em in their Heads or Savour of them in their Hearts. And therefore Men do not know Chriſt, nor know how to carry it towards him, becauſe they do not know the Voice of the Prophets, who *teſtify'd before-hand concerning Chriſt*.

(3.) GOD over-rul'd them for the Accompliſhment of the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament; *Becauſe they knew not the Voice of the Prophets*, which warn'd them not to touch GOD's Anointed, *they fulfill'd them in condemning him*; for ſo it was written, That *Meſſiah the Prince ſhall be cut off, but not for himſelf*. *Note*, It is poſſible that Men may be fulfilling Scripture Prophecies, even when they are breaking Scripture Precepts; particularly in the Perſecution of the Church, as in the Perſecution of Chriſt. And this juſtifies the Reaſon which is ſometimes given for the Obſcurity of Scripture Prophecies, That if they were too plain and obvious, the Accompliſhment of them would thereby be prevented; ſo *Paul* ſaith here, *Becauſe they knew not the Voice of the Prophets*, therefore *they have fulfill'd them*; which implies, that if they had underſtood them, they would not have *fulfill'd* them.

(4.) All that was foretold concerning the Sufferings of the *Meſſiah* was fulfill'd in Chriſt, *v.* 29. *When they had fulfill'd all* the reſt *that was written of him*, even to the giving of him Vinegar to drink in his Thirſt; then they fulfill'd what was foretold concerning his being bury'd, they *took him down from the Tree and laid him in a Sepulchre*; This is taken Notice of here, as that which made his Reſurrection the more illuſtrious. Chriſt was ſeparated from this World, as thoſe that are bury'd have nothing more to do with this World, nor this World with them. And therefore our compleat Separation from Sin is repreſented by our being *bury'd with Chriſt*. And a good Chriſtian will be willing to be bury'd alive with Chriſt. They laid him in a Sepulchre, and thought they had him faſt.

3. That he roſe again from the Dead, and ſaw no Corruption; This was the great Truth that was to be preach'd; for it is the main Pillar by which the whole Fabrick of the Goſpel is ſupported, and therefore he inſiſts largely upon this, and ſhews,

(1.) That he roſe *by Conſent*; When he was impriſon'd in the Grave for our Debt, he did not break Priſon, but had a fair and legal Diſcharge from the Arreſt he was under, *v.* 30. *GOD rais'd him from the Dead*; ſent an Angel on Purpoſe to roll away the Stone from the Priſon-Door, return'd him the Spirit which at his Death he had committed into the Hands of his Father, and quicken'd him by the Holy Ghoſt. His Enemies *laid him in a Sepulchre*, with Deſign he ſhould always lie there; but GOD ſaid, No; and it was ſoon ſeen *whoſe Word ſhould ſtand*, *His or theirs*.

(2.) That there was *ſufficient Proof* of his being *riſen*, *v.* 31. *He was ſeen many Days*, in divers Places, upon divers Occaſions, by them that were moſt intimately acquainted with him, for they *came up with him from* Galilee *to* Jeruſalem, were his conſtant Attendants, and *they are his Witneſſes unto the People*; were appointed to be ſo, have atteſted the Thing many a Time, and are ready to atteſt it, tho' they were to dye for the ſame. *Paul* ſaith nothing of his own ſeeing him, which he mentions, 1 *Cor.* xv. 8. becauſe it was in a Viſion, which was more convincing to himſelf than it could be when produc'd to others.

(3.)

(3.) That the Reſurrection of Chriſt, was the Performance of the Promiſe made to the Patriarchs; It was not only *true* News, but *good* News, in declaring this, we *declare unto you glad Tydings*, *v.* 32, 32. which ſhould be in a particular Manner acceptable to *you Jews*; ſo far are we from deſigning to put any Slur upon you, or do you any Wrong, that the Doctrine we preach, if you receive it aright, and underſtand it, brings you the greateſt Honour and Satisfaction imaginable; for it is in the Reſurrection of Chriſt, that the *Promiſe* which was *made to your Fathers is fulfill'd to you.* He acknowledges it to be the Dignity of the Jewiſh Nation, that *to them pertained the Promiſes*, *Rom.* ix. 4. that they were the *Heirs* of the Promiſe, as they were the *Children* of the Patriarchs to whom the Promiſes were firſt made: The great Promiſe of the *Old Teſtament*, was that of the *Meſſiah, in whom all the Families of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed*, and not the Family of *Abraham* only; Tho' it was to be the peculiar Honour of *that* Family that He ſhould be rais'd up *of it*, yet it was to be the common Benefit of all Families, that He ſhould be rais'd up *to them*. *Note* 1. GOD hath *rais'd up Jeſus*, advanc'd him, and exalted him; *rais'd* him *again*, ſo we read it, meaning *from the Dead*. We may take in both Senſes. GOD *rais'd up Jeſus* to be a *Prophet* at his Baptiſm; to be a *Prieſt* to make Atonement at his Death; and to be a *King* to rule over all at his Aſcenſion; and His *raiſing him up from the Dead*, was the Confirmation and Ratification of all theſe Commiſſions, and prov'd him *rais'd of GOD* to theſe Offices. 2. This is the *Fulfilling of the Promiſes* made *to the Fathers*, the Promiſe of ſending the *Meſſiah*, and of all thoſe Benefits and Bleſſings which were to be had with him, and by him; This is he that ſhould come, and in him you have all that *GOD promis'd* in the *Meſſiah*, tho' not all that *you promis'd your ſelves*. *Paul* puts himſelf into the Number of the *Jews*, to whom the Promiſe was fulfill'd, *to us their Children*: Now if they who preach'd the Goſpel brought them *theſe glad Tydings*, inſtead of looking upon them as Enemies to their Nation, they ought to *careſs* them as their beſt Friends, and embrace their Doctrine with both Arms; for if they valu'd the Promiſe ſo much, and themſelves by it, much more the Performance. And the Preaching of the Goſpel to the Gentiles, which was the great Thing that the *Jews* found themſelves aggriev'd at, was ſo far from infringing the Promiſe made to them, that the Promiſe it ſelf, that *all the Families of the Earth* ſhould be bleſſed in the *Meſſiah*, could not otherwiſe be accompliſh'd.

(4.) That the Reſurrection of Chriſt, was the great Proof of his being the *Son of God*; and confirms what was *written in the 2d Pſalm*, (thus ancient was the Order in which the *Pſalms* are now plac'd) *v.* 7. *Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee*; That the Reſurrection of Chriſt from the Dead, was deſign'd to evidence and evince this, is plain from that of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* i. 4. *He was declar'd to be the Son of God with Power by the Reſurrection from the Dead.* When he was firſt *rais'd up* out of Obſcurity, GOD declar'd concerning him by a Voice from Heaven, *This is my beloved Son*, Matth. iii. 17. which has a plain Reference to that in the ſecond *Pſalm*, *Thou art my Son*; Abundance of Truth there is couch'd in thoſe Words, That this Jeſus was begotten of the Father before all Worlds; was the Brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, as, as the Son is of the Father's; that he was the λόγος the *Eternal Thought* of the *Eternal Mind*; that he was conceiv'd by the Power of the Holy Ghoſt, in the Womb of the Virgin; for upon that Account alſo, *that Holy Thing was called the Son of GOD*, Luke i. 35. That he was GOD's Agent in creating and governing the World, and in redeeming it and reconciling it to Himſelf, and *faithful as a Son in his own Houſe*; and as ſuch was *Heir of all Things.* Now all this which was declar'd at Chriſt's Baptiſm, and again at his Transfiguration, was undeniably prov'd by his Reſurrection. The Decree which was ſo long before declar'd, was then confirm'd; and the Reaſon why it was impoſſible he ſhould be held by the Bands of Death was, becauſe he was the *Son of God*, and conſepuently had *Life in himſelf*, which he could not lay down, but with a Deſign to reſume it. When his eternal Generation is ſpoken of, tis not improper to ſay, *This Day* have I begotten thee, for *from everlaſting to everlaſting*, is with God as 'twere one and the ſame eternal Day. Yet it may alſo be accommodated to his Reſurrection, in a ſubordinate Senſe, *This Day have I* made it to appear that I have *begotten thee*: And *this Day I have begotten* all that are given to thee; for it is ſaid, 1 *Pet.* i. 3. That *the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, as our GOD and Father, *hath begotten us again to a lively Hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the Dead.*

5. That his being rais'd the *third Day*, ſo as not to *ſee Corruption*, and to a heavenly Life, ſo as *no more to return to Corruption*, *i. e.* to the State of the Dead, as others did who were rais'd to Life, doth further confirm his being the *Meſſiah* promis'd.

1. He roſe *to dye no more*; ſo 'tis expreſs'd, *Rom.* vi. 9. *As concerning that He rais'd him up from the Dead, now no more to return to Corruption*, i. e. to the Grave which is call'd *Corruption*, Joh. xvii. 14. *Lazarus* came out of the Grave with his Grave-clothes on, becauſe he was to uſe them again; but Chriſt having no more Occaſion for them, left them behind. Now this was the fulfilling of that Scripture, *Iſa.* lv. 3. *I will give you the ſure Mercies of* David, τὰ ὅσια Δαβὶδ τὰ πιστά, *The holy Things of* David, *the faithful Things*; for in the Promiſe made to *David*, and in him to Chriſt, great Streſs is laid upon the *Faithfulneſs* of GOD, *Pſal.* lxxxix. 1, 2, 5, 24, 33. And upon the Oath GOD had ſworn *by his Holineſs*, *v.* 35. Now this makes them *ſure Mercies* indeed, that he who is intruſted with the diſpenſing of them, is riſen *to dye no more*; ſo that he ever lives to ſee his own Will executed, and the Bleſſings he hath purchas'd for us, given out to us. As if Chriſt had dy'd, and had not *riſen again*, ſo if he had riſen to *dye again*, we had come ſhort of the *ſure Mercies*, or at leaſt, could not have been ſure of them.

2. He roſe ſo ſoon after he was dead, that his Body did not *ſee Corruption*; for 'tis not till the third Day, that the Body begins to change. Now this was promis'd to *David*, 'twas one of *the ſure Mercies of* David; for it was ſaid to him in *Pſalm* xvi. 10. *Neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy One to ſee Corruption*, *v.* 35. GOD had promis'd to *David* That he would raiſe up the *Meſſiah* of his Seed, who ſhould therefore be a Man, but ſhould not like other Men ſee Corruption. This Promiſe could have its Accompliſhment in *David*, but look'd forward to Chriſt.

1. It could not be accompliſh'd in *David* himſelf, *v.* 36. for *David after he had ſerv'd his own Generation by the Will of God* who rais'd him up to be what he was, *fell aſleep, and was laid to his Fathers, and ſaw Corruption.* Here we have a ſhort Account of the Life, Death and Burial of the Patriarch *David*, and his Continuance under the Power of Death. (1.) His Life; *He ſerv'd his own Generation by the Will of God*, before he ſlept the Sleep of Death. *David* was a uſeful good Man; he did Good in the World, *by the Will of God*, he made GOD's Precepts his Rule; He *ſerv'd his own Generation*, ſo as therein to ſerve GOD, he ſo *ſerv'd* and *pleas'd Men (as whatever the King did, pleas'd the People,)* 2 Sam. iii. 36. as ſtill to keep himſelf the faithful Servant of GOD. See *Gal.* i. 10. He ſerv'd the *Good of Men*; but did not ſerve the *Will of Man.* Or, by the Will of GOD's Providence ſo ordering it, qualifying him for, and calling him to a publick Station, he *ſerv'd his own Generation*; for every Creature is that to us, that GOD makes it to be. *David* was a great Bleſſing to the Age wherein he liv'd, he was the *Servant* of his *Generation*; Many are the Curſe, and Plague, and Burthen of their Generation. Even thoſe that are in a lower and narrower Sphere yet muſt look upon it, that therefore they live to *ſerve their Generation*, (and thoſe that will do Good in the World, muſt make themſelves *Servants of all*, 1 *Cor.* ix. 19.) We were not born for our ſelves, but are Members of Communities, to which we muſt ſtudy to be ſerviceable. Yet here's the Difference between *David* and *Chriſt*, That *David* was to ſerve only *his own Generation*, that Generation in which he liv'd, and therefore when he had done what he had to do, and written what he had to write, he dy'd, and continu'd in the Grave; but Chriſt (not by his Writings or Words upon Record only as *David*, but by his perſonal Agency) was to ſerve *all Generations*, muſt ever live to reign over the Houſe of *Jacob*, not as *David* for forty Years, but for all Ages, *as long as the Sun and Moon endure*, Pſal. lxxxix. 29. His Throne muſt be as the Days of Heaven, and all Generations muſt be *bleſſed in him*, Pſal. lxxii. 17. (2.) His Death; He *fell a ſleep.* Death is a Sleep, a quiet Reſt to thoſe that while they liv'd labour'd in the Service of GOD and their Generation. *Obſerve*, He did not *fall aſleep* till he had *ſerv'd his Generation*, till he had done the Work for which GOD rais'd him up. GOD's Servants have their Work aſſign'd them, and when they have *accompliſh'd as a Hireling their Day*, then, and not till then, they are call'd to Reſt. GOD's Witneſſes never dye till they have finiſh'd their Teſtimony; and then *the Sleep*, the Death *of the labouring Man will be ſweet.* *David* was not permitted to build the Temple, and therefore when he had made Preparation for it, which was the *Service* he was deſign'd to, he fell aſleep, and left the Work to *Solomon.* (3.) His Burial; He was *laid to his Fathers.* Tho' he was bury'd *in the City of* David, 1 *Kin.* ii. 10. and not in the Sepulchre of *Jeſſe* his Father at *Bethelem*, yet he might be ſaid to be *laid to his Fathers*; for the Grave in general, is the *Habitation of our Fathers*, of thoſe that are gone before us, *Pſal.* xlix. 19. (4.) His Continuance in the Grave; He *ſaw Corruption.* We are ſure he did not riſe again; this St. *Peter* inſiſts upon, when he freely ſpeaks of the Patriach *David*, Acts ii. 29. *He is both dead and bury'd, and his Sepuchre is with us unto this Day*, i. e. He ſaw Corruption, and therefore that Promiſe could not have its Accompliſhment in him, *q. e. d.* But,

2. It was accompliſh'd in the Lord Jeſus, *v.* 37. *He whom God rais'd again, ſaw no Corruption*; for it was in him that the *ſure Mercies* were to be reſerv'd for us. He roſe the *third Day*, and therefore did not ſee Corruption then; and he roſe to *dye no more*, and therefore never did. Of him therefore the Promiſe muſt be underſtood, and no other.

3. Having given them this Account of the Lord Jeſus, he comes to make Application of it.

1. In the Midſt of his Diſcourſe to engage their Attention, he had told his Hearers, that they were concern'd in all this, *v.* 26. *To you is the Word of this Salvation ſent*; to you firſt. If you by your Unbelief make it a Word of Rejection to you, you may thank your ſelves; but it is ſent to you for a *Word of Salvation*; if it be not ſo, 'tis your own Fault. Let them not

peeviſhly argue, that becauſe it was ſent to the Gentiles, who had no Communion with them, therefore it was not ſent to them; for to them it was ſent in the firſt Place. *To you Men* this is ſent, and not to the Angels that ſin'd. To you living Men, and not to the Congregation of the Dead and Damn'd, whoſe Day of Grace is over. He therefore ſpeaks to them with Tenderneſs and Reſpect, you are *Men and Brethren*; and ſo we are to look upon all thoſe that ſtand fair with us for the Great Salvation, as having the Word of Salvation ſent to them. Thoſe to whom he doth by Warrant from Heaven here bring the *Word of Salvation*, are (1.) The *Native Jews*, *Hebrew* of the *Hebrews*, as *Paul* himſelf was. *Children of the Stock of* Abraham, tho' a *degenerate* Race, yet to you is this Word of Salvation ſent; nay, it is *therefore* ſent to you to ſave you from your Sins. 'Tis an Advantage to be of a *good Stock*; for tho' Salvation does not always follow the Children of godly Parents, yet the *Word of Salvation* doth; *Abraham will command his Children and Houſhold after him.* (2.) The *Proſelytes*; The Gentiles that by Birth were in ſome Degree brought over to the *Jews* Religion; *Whoſoever among you that feareth God.* You that have a Senſe of natural Religion, and have ſubjected your ſelves to the Laws of That, and taken hold of the Comforts of That *to you is the Word of this Salvation ſent*, you need the further Diſcoveries and Directions of revealed Religion, are prepar'd for them, and will bid them welcome, and therefore ſhall certainly be welcome to take the Benefit of them.

2. In the Cloſe of his Diſcourſe, he *applies* what he had ſaid concerning Chriſt to his Hearers. He had told them a long Story concerning this Jeſus, now they would be ready to ask, What's all this to us? And he tells them plainly, it is to them.

1. It will be their *unſpeakable Advantage* if they *embrac'd Jeſus Chriſt*, and believe this *Word of Salvation*, it will relieve them there where their greateſt Danger lies, and that is from the Guilt of their Sins. *Be it known unto you therefore, Men and Brethren*, we are warranted to proclam it to you, and you are call'd to take Notice of it. He did not ſtand up to preach *before them*, but to preach *to them*, and not without Hopes of prevaling with them; for they are *Men*, reaſonable Creatures, and capable of being argu'd with; they are *Brethren*, ſpoken to, and dealt with by Men like themſelves; not only of the ſame Nature, but of the ſame Nation. 'Tis proper for the Preachers of the Goſpel to call their Hearers *Brethren*; as ſpeaking familiarly to them and with an affectionate Concern for their Welfare, and as being equally intereſted with them in the Goſpel they preach. Let all that hear the Goſpel of Chriſt know theſe two Things.

(1.) That it is an *Act of Indemnity* granted by the King of Kings to the Children of Men, who ſtand attainted at his Bar of Treaſon againſt his Crown and Dignity; and it is for, and in Conſideration of the Mediation of Chriſt between GOD and Man, that this *Act of Grace* is paſs'd and proclaim'd *v.* 35. *Through this Man*, who dy'd and roſe again, *is preach'd unto you the Forgiveneſs of Sins.* We are to tell you in GOD's Name, That your Sins, tho' many and great, may be forgiven, and how 'tis come about that they may be ſo, without any Injury to GOD's Honour; and how you may obtain the Forgiveneſs of your Sins. We are to preach Repentance for the Remiſſion of Sins. and divine Grace giving both *Repentance* and *Remiſſion of Sins.* The Remiſſion of Sins, is, *through this Man*, by his Merit it was purchas'd, in his Name it is offer'd, and by his Authority it is beſtow'd; and therefore you are concern'd to be acquainted with him, and intereſted in him. We preach to you *the Forgiveneſs of Sins*; that's the *Salvation* we bring you, *the Word* of GOD and therefore you ought to bid us welcome, and look upon us as your Friends, and Meſſengers of good Tydings.

2. That it does that for us which the Law of *Moſes* could not do. The *Jews* were jealous for the Law, and becauſe it preſcrib'd expiatory and pacificatory Sacrifices, and a great Variety of Purifications, fancy'd they might be juſtify'd by it before GOD: No, ſaith *Paul*, be it known to you, that it is by Chriſt only, that *they who believe in him*, and none but they only, are *juſtify'd from all Things*, from all the Guilt and Stain of Sin, *from which ye could not be juſtify'd by the Law of* Moſes, *v.* 39. therefore they ought to entertain and embrace the Goſpel, and not to adhere to the Law in Oppoſition to it, becauſe the Goſpel is *perfective*, not *deſtructive* of the Law. *Note*, (1.) The great Concern of Sinners is, to be *juſtify'd* by the Law of *Moſes?* not by his *Moral Law*, for we have all broke it, and are tranſgreſſing it daily, ſo that inſtead of Juſtifying us, it condems us? not his *Remedial Law*, for it was not poſſible that the *Blood of Bulls and Goats ſhould take away Sin?* ſhould ſatisfy GOD's offended Juſtice, or pacify the Sinners wounded Conſcience. 'Twas but a ritual and typical Inſtitution. See *Heb.*. ix. 4. x. 1, 4. (4.) By Jeſus Chriſt we obtain a compleat Juſtification; for by him a compleat Atonement was made for Sin. We are juſtify'd, not only by him as our *Judge*, but by him as our *Righteouſneſs*, *The Lord our Righteouſneſs.* (5.) All that *believe in Chriſt*, that rely upon him, and give up themſelves to be rul'd by him, are juſtify'd by him; and none but they. (6.) What the Law *could not do* for us *in that it was weak*, that the Goſpel of Chriſt doth, and therefore it was Folly out of a Jealouſy *for* the Law of *Moſes* and the Honour of that, to conceive Jealouſy of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the Deſigns of that.

2. It is at their *utmoſt Peril* if they *reject* the Goſpel of Chriſt, and turn their Backs upon the Offer now made them, *v.* 40, 41. *Beware therefore*; you have a fair Invitation given you, look to yourſelves, leſt you either neglect or oppoſe it. *Note*, Thoſe to whom the Goſpel is preach, muſt ſee themſelves upon their Trial, and good Behaviour, and are concern'd to *beware*, leſt they be found Refuſers of the Grace offer'd. Beware, leſt you not only come ſhort of the Bleſſings and Benefits ſpoken of in the Prophets, as coming upon thoſe that believe, but fall under the Doom ſpoken of in the Prophets, as coming upon thoſe that perſiſt in Unbelief; *Leſt that come upon you which is ſpoken of. Note*, The *Threatnings* are *Warnings*; what we are told will come upon impenitent Sinners, is deſign'd to awaken us to beware leſt it do come upon us. Now the Prophecy referr'd to, we have *Hab.* i. 5. Where the Deſtruction of the Jewiſh Nation by the *Chaldeans* is foretold as an incredible, unparallel'd Deſtruction, and that is here apply'd to the Deſtruction that was coming upon that Nation, by the *Romans*, for their rejecting the Goſpel of Chriſt. The Apoſtle follows the *Septuagint* Tranſlation, which reads *Behold ye Deſpiſers*; for, Behold ye *among the Heathen*, becauſe it made the Text more appoſite to his Purpoſe.

1. Take heed leſt the Guilt *come upon you*, which was *ſpoken of the Prophets*, the Guilt of *deſpiſing* the Goſpel, and the Tenders of it, and deſpiſing the Gentiles that were advanc'd to partake of it. *Beware*, leſt it be ſaid to you, *Behold ye Deſpiſers. Note*, It is the Ruin of many, that they *deſpiſe* Religion, they look upon it as a Thing below them, and are not willing to ſtoop to it.

2. Take heed, leſt the Judgment *come upon you* which was *ſpoken of in the Prophets*; that you ſhall *wonder* and *periſh*, i. e. wonderfully periſh; your Perdition ſhall be amazing to yourſelves, and all about you. They that will not wonder and be ſaved, ſhall *wonder* and *periſh*. They that enjoy'd the Privileges of the Church, and flatter'd themſelves with a Conceit that thoſe would ſave them, will *wonder* when they find their vain Preſumption over-rul'd, and that their Privileges do but make their Condemnation the more intolerable. Let the unbelieving *Jews* expect that GOD will *work a Work in their Days, which you ſhall in no wiſe believe, tho' a Man declare it unto you.* This may be underſtood as a Prediction, Either (1.) Of their *Sin*, that they ſhould be *incredulous*. That that great *Work if GOD*, the Redemption of the World by Chriſt, tho' it ſhould be in the moſt ſolemn Manner *declared unto them*, yet they would *in no wiſe believe it*, Iſa. liii. *Who hath believed our Report?* Tho' it was of God's working, to whom Nothing is impoſſible; and of his declaring, who cannot lye, yet they would not give Credit to it. They that had the Honour and Advantage to have this Work wrought *in their Days*, yet had not the Grace to believe it. Or, (2.) Of their *Deſtruction*; The diſſolving of the Jewiſh Polity, the taking of the Kingdom of GOD from them, and giving it to the Gentiles, the Deſtruction of their holy Houſe and City, and the Diſperſion of their People, was a *Work* which One would not have *believed* ſhould ever have been done, conſidering how much they had been the Favourites of Heaven. The Calamities that were brought upon them, were ſuch as were never before brought upon any People, *Matth.* xxiv. 21 'Twas ſaid of their Deſtruction by the *Chaldeans*, and 'twas true of their laſt Deſtruction, *All the Inhabitants of the World would not have believed that the Enemy ſhould have enter'd into the Gates of* Jeruſalem as they did, *Lam.* iv. 12. Thus is there a *ſtrange Puniſhment to the Workers of Iniquity*; eſpecially to the Deſpiſers of Chriſt, *Job* xxxi. 3.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the ſyna-
gogue the Gentiles beſought that theſe words might
be preached to them the next ſabbath. 43 Now
when the congregation was broken up, many of the
Jews and religious proſelytes followed Paul and Bar-
nabas, who ſpeaking to them, perſwaded them to
continue in the grace of God 44 ¶ And the next
ſabbath-day came almoſt the whole city together, to
hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews ſaw
the multitudes they were filled with envy, and
ſpake againſt thoſe things which were ſpoken by
Paul, contradicting and blaſpheming. 46 Then Paul
and Barnabas waxed bold, and ſaid It was neceſſa-
ry that the word of God ſhould firſt have been
ſpoken to you, but ſeeing ye put it from you, and
judge your ſelves unworthy of everlaſting life, lo,
we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For ſo hath the Lord
commanded us, *ſaying* I have ſet thee to be a light of
the Gentiles, that thou ſhouldeſt be for ſalvation un-
to the ends of the earth. 48 And when the Gentiles
heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of
the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life

be

believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was publiſhed throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews ſtirred up the devout and Honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raiſed perſecution againſt Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coaſts: 51 But they ſhook off the duſt of their feet againſt them, and came unto Iconium. 52 And the diſciples were filled with joy, and with the holy Ghoſt.

The Deſign of this Story being to vindicate the Apoſtles, eſpecially *Paul*, (as he doth himſelf at large, *Rom.* xi.) from the Reflections of the *Jews* upon him for Preaching the Goſpel to the Gentiles, it is here obſerv'd that he proceeded therein with all the Caution imaginable, and upon due Conſideration, which here there is an Inſtance of.

Firſt, There were ſome of the *Jews* that were ſo incens'd againſt the Preaching of the Goſpel, not to the Gentiles but to *them*, that they would not bear to hear it, but *went out of the Synagogue*, while *Paul* was preaching, *v.* 42. in Contempt of him and his Doctrine, and to the Diſturbance of the Congregation. 'Tis likely they whiſper'd among themſelves, exciting one another to it, and did it by Conſent. Now this ſpoke,

1. An *open* Infidelity; as plain a Profeſſion of Unbelief, a coming to hear the Goſpel is of Faith. They thus *publickly* avow'd their Contempt of Chriſt and of his Doctrine and Law, were not aſham'd, neither could they bluſh; and they thus endeavour'd to beget Prejudices in the Minds of others againſt the Goſpel, they went out to draw others to *follow their pernicious Ways.*

2. An *obſtinate* Infidelity; They went out of the Synagogue, not only to ſhew that they *did not* believe the Goſpel, but becauſe they were reſolv'd they *would not*, and therefore got out of the Hearing of thoſe Things that had a Tendency to convince them. They *ſtop'd their Ears*, like the deaf Adder. Juſtly therefore was the Goſpel taken from them, when they firſt took themſelves from it; and turn'd themſelves out of the Church, before they were turn'd out of it: For 'tis certainly true, G O D never leaves any, till they firſt leave Him.

Secondly, The Gentiles were as *willing to hear* the Goſpel, as thoſe rude and ill-condition'd *Jews* were to get out of the Hearing of it; *They beſought that theſe Words*, or Words to this Effect, *might be preached to them the next Sabbath*; in *the Week between*, ſo ſome take it; on the ſecond and fifth Day of the Week, which in ſome Synagogues were their Lecture-Days. But it appears, *v.* 44. that it was the *next Sabbath-Day* that they came together. They beg'd.

1. That the ſame *Offer* might be made to them, that was made to the *Jews*; *Paul* in this Sermon had brought the *Word of Salvation* to the *Jews* and *Proſelytes*, but had taken no Notice of the *Gentiles*; and therefore they beg'd, that Forgiveneſs of Sins through Chriſt, might be preach'd *to them*, as it was to the *Jews*. The *Jews Leavings*, nay, *Loathings*, were there *Longings*. This juſtifies *Paul* in his Preaching to them, that he was *invited* to it, as *Peter* was ſent for to *Cornelius*. Who could refuſe to break the Bread of Life to thoſe who beg'd ſo hard for it, and to give that to the Poor at the Door, which the Children at the Table, threw under their Feet.

2. That the ſame *Inſtructions* might be given to them; They had heard the Doctrine of Chriſt, but did not underſtand it at the firſt Hearing, nor could they remember all that they had heard, and therefore they beg'd it might be preach'd to them again. *Note*, It is good to have the Word of Chriſt repeatd to us. What we *have heard*, we ſhould deſire to *hear again*, that it may take deep Root in us, and the Nail that is driven may be clench'd and be as a *Nail in a ſure Place*. To hear *the ſame Things* ſhould not be *grievous*, becauſe it is *ſafe*, Phil. iii. 1. It aggravates the ill Diſpoſition of the *Jews*, that the *Gentiles* deſir'd to hear that *often*, which they were not willing to hear *once*; and commends the good Diſpoſition of the *Gentiles*, that they did not follow the ill Example which the *Jews* ſet them.

Thirdly, There were *ſome*, nay, there were *many* both of *Jews* and *Proſelytes* that were wrought upon by the Preaching of the Goſpel; They who aggravated the Matter of the *Jews* Rejection by the Preaching of the Goſpel, cry'd out, as is uſual in ſuch Caſes, They have *caſt away*, and *caſt off*, all the People of GOD. Nay, ſaith *Paul*, that's not ſo; for Adundance of the *Jews* have embrac'd Chriſt, and are taken in, himſelf for one, *Rom.* xi. 1, 5. So it was here, *many of the* Jews *and religious Proſelytes followed* Paul *and* Barnabas, and receiv'd further Inſtructions and Encouragement from them.

1. They *ſubmitted* to the Grace of GOD, and were *admitted* to the Benefit and Comfort of it; That's implyed in their being exhorted to *continue in it*. They *followed* Paul *and* Barnabas, *i. e.* they became their Diſciples, or rather the Diſciples of Chriſt, whoſe Agents they were. Thoſe that joyn themſelves to Chriſt, will joyn themſelves to his Miniſters, and *follow* them. And *Paul* and *Barnabas*, tho' they were ſent to the *Gentiles*, yet bid the *Jews* welcome to them, that were willing to come under their Inſtructions; ſuch hearty Well-wiſhers were they to all the *Jews*; and their Friends, if they pleas'd.

2. They were exhorted and encourag'd to perſevere herein; *Paul* and *Barnabas ſpeaking to them* with all the Freedom and Friendſhip imaginable, *perſuaded them to continue in the Grace of GOD*; to hold faſt that which they had reciev'd; to continue in their Belief of the Goſpel of Grace, to continue in their Dependance upon the Spirit of Grace, and attendance upon the Means of Grace, And the Grace of G O D ſhall not be wanting to thoſe who thus continue in it.

Fourthly, There was a chearful Attendance upon the Preaching of the Goſpel the *next Sabbath Day*, *v.* 44. *Almoſt the whole City*, the Generality of which were Gentiles, *came together to hear the Word of God.*

1. It is probable *Paul* and *Barnabas* were not idle in the *Week-Days*; but took all opportunities *in the Week between* (as ſome think the Gentiles deſired) to bring them accquainted with Chriſt, and to raiſe their Expectations from him. They did a great deal of Service to the Goſpel in private Diſcourſe, and converſation, as well as in their publick Sermons. Wiſdom cry'd in the chief places of Concourſe, and the Opening of the Gates as well as in the Synagogues, *Prov*, i. 20, 21.

2. This brought a vaſt Concourſe of People to the *Synagogue* on the *Sabbath-day*; Some came out of Curioſity, the thing being new; others, longing to ſee what the *Jews* would do upon the ſecond Tender of the Goſpel to them; and many who had heard ſomething of *the word of God*, came to hear more; and to hear it, *not as the Word of Men* but as *the Word of God*, by which we muſt be rul'd and judg'd. Now this juſtify'd *Paul* in Preaching to the Gentiles, That he met with the moſt encouraging Auditories among them. There the *Fields* were *white to the Harveſt*, and therefore, Why ſhould he not there put in his Sickle?

Fifthly, The *Jews* were enrag'd at this; and not only would not receive the Goſpel themſelves, but were fill'd with Indignation at them that crouded after it, *v.* 45. *When the* Jews *ſaw the Multitudes*, and conſider'd what an Encouragement it was to *Paul* to go on in his Work, when he ſaw People thus flying like Doves to their Windows, and what Probability there was that among theſe Multitudes, ſome would be without doubt wrought upon, and 'tis likely the greater Part, to embrace Chriſt, this *fill'd them with Envy.*

1. They *grudg'd* the Intereſt the Apoſtles *had* in the People; were vex'd to ſee the Synagogue ſo full when they were to preach. This was the ſame Spirit that work'd in the *Phariſees* toward Chriſt, they were cut to the Heart when they ſaw *the whole World go after him.* When the Kingdom of Heaven was open'd; they not only would not go in themſelves, but were angry with them that did.

2. They *oppos'd* the Doctrine the Apoſtles *preach'd*; *They ſpoke againſt thoſe Things that were ſpoken by* Paul; cavill'd at them; ſtarted Objections againſt them, finding ſome Fault or other with every Thing he ſaid, *contradicting, and blaſpheming*, ἀντίλεγον ἀντιλέγοντες, *Contradicting they contradicted.* They did it with the utmoſt Spite and Rage imaginable; They perſiſted in their Contradictions, and nothing would ſilence them. They contradicted for Contradiction ſake, and deny'd that which was moſt evident. And when they could find no Colour of Objection, they broke out into ill Language againſt Chriſt and his Goſpel, *blaſpheming* him and it. From the Language of the *Carnal Men* that receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of GOD, and therefore contradicts them, they proceed to the Language of *incarnate Devils*, and *blaſpheme* them. Commonly thoſe who begin with *Contradicting*, end with *Blaſpheming.*

Sixthly, The Apoſtles hereupon ſolemnly and openly declare themſelves diſcharg'd from their Obligation to the *Jews*, and at Liberty to bring the *Word of Salvation* to the *Gentiles*, even by the implicit Conſent of the *Jews* themſelves. Never let the *Jews* lay the Fault of the carrying of the Kingdom of GOD to the *Gentiles* upon the Apoſtles, for that Complaint of their's is for ever ſilenc'd by their own Act and Deed, for what they did here is for ever an *Eſtoppel* to it. *Tender and Refuſal* (we ſay) *is good Payment in Law.* The *Jews* had the Refuſal of the Goſpel, and did refuſe it, and therefore ought not to ſay any Thing againſt the *Gentiles* having it. In declaring this 'tis ſaid, *v.* 46. *Paul and Barnabas waxed bold*, more bold than they had been, while they were ſhy of looking favourably upon the *Gentiles* for fear of giving Offence to the *Jews*, and laying a Stumbling-block in their Way. *Note*, There is a *Time* for the Preachers of the Goſpel, to ſhew as much of the Boldneſs of the Lyon, as of the Wiſdom of the Serpent, and the Harmleſſneſs of the Dove. When the Adverſaries of Chriſt's Cauſe begin to be *daring*, it is not for its Advocates to be *ſneaking.* While there is any Hopes of working upon thoſe that oppoſe themſelves, they muſt be *inſtructed with meekneſs*, 2 *Tim.* ii. 25. But when that Method has long been tryed in vain, we muſt *wax bold*; and tell them what will come of their Oppoſition. The Impudence of the Enemies of the Goſpel inſtead of *frighting*, ſhould rather *embolden* the Friends of it's Cauſe, for they are ſure they have a good Cauſe, and they know whom they have truſted to bear them out.

Now *Paul* and *Barnabas* having made them a fair Offer of Goſpel Grace, here give them fair Notice of their bringing it to the *Gentiles, if by any Means* (as *Paul* ſaith) Rom. xi. 19. *they might provoke them to Emulation.*

1. They own that the *Jews* were entitled to the firſt Offer. *It was neceſſary that the Word of God ſhould firſt have been ſpoken to you*, to whom the Promiſe was made; to you *of the loſt Sheep of the Houſe of* Iſrael, whom Chriſt reckoned Himſelf firſt ſent to. And his Charge to the Preachers of his Goſpel to *begin* at *Jeruſalem*, Luke xxiv. 47. was an implicit Direction to all that went into other Countries to *begin* with the *Jews*, to whom *pertained the giving of the Law*, and therefore the Preaching of the Goſpel. *Let the Children firſt be ſerved*, Mark vii. 27.

2. They charge them with the Refuſal of it. *Ye put it from you*; you will not accept of it, nay, you will not ſo much as hear the Offer of it, but take it as an Affront to you. If Men *put* the Goſpel *from them*, GOD juſtly *takes* it from them; why ſhould *Manna* be given to them that *loath* it, and call it *light Bread?* Or the Priviledges of the Goſpel forced on them that put them away, and ſay *we have no Part in David.* Herein you *judge yourſelves unworthy of Everlaſting Life.* In one Senſe we muſt all judge ourſelves unworthy of Everlaſting Life, for there is nothing in us, or done by us, by which we can pretend to merit it, and we muſt be made ſenſible of this, But, here the Meaning is, you *diſcover* or *make it to appear* that you are *not meet* for Eternal Life; you throw away all your Claims, and Hopes, and give up your Pretenſions to it; ſince you will not take it *from His Hands*, into whoſe Hand the Father has given it, [illegible] you do in effect paſs this *Judgment* upon yourſelves, and *out of your own Mouth* you ſhall be *judged*, you will not have it *by Chriſt*, by whom alone it is to be had, and ſo ſhall your Doom be, you ſhall not have it all.

3. Upon this they ground their preaching the Goſpel to the *uncircumciſed*, ſince you will not accept Eternal Life as it is offered, our Way is plain, *lo, we turn to the* Gentiles. If one will not, another will. If thoſe that were firſt invited to the Wedding-Feaſt will not come, we muſt invite out of the *High ways and Hedges* thoſe that will, for the *Wedding muſt be furniſhed with Gueſts*. If he that is next of Kin will not do the Kinſman's Part, he muſt not complain that another will, *Ruth* iv. 4.

4. They juſtify themſelves in this by a divine Warrant, *v.* 47. *For ſo hath the Lord commanded us*, The Lord Jeſus gave us Directions to witneſs to him in *Jeruſalem*, and *Judea* firſt, and after that *to the utmoſt Part of the Earth*, to preach the Goſpel to *every Creature*, to *diſciple all Nations*, And this is according to what was foretold in the *Old Teſtament*, when the Meſſiah in the Proſpect of the *Jews* Infidelity was ready to ſay, *I have labour'd in vain*, he was told to his Satisfaction, that tho' *Iſrael was not gather'd*, yet *he ſhould be glorious*; That his Blood ſhould not be ſhed in vain, nor his Purchaſe made in vain, nor his Doctrine preached in vain, nor his Spirit ſent in vain, for *I have ſet thee*, not only raiſed thee up, but eſtabliſh'd thee to be *a Light of the* Gentiles, not only a *ſhining* Light for a Time, but *a ſtanding* Light, *ſet* for a Light; *that thou ſhouldſt be for Salvation unto the Ends of the Earth.* *Note*, 1. Chriſt is not only the Saviour, but the *Salvation*, is Himſelf our Righteouſneſs, and Life, and Strength. 2. Where-ever Chriſt is deſign'd to be *Salvation*, He is *ſet up*, to be a *Light*; He enlighten's the Underſtanding and ſo ſaves the Soul. 3. He is, and is to be *Light* and *Salvation* to the *Gentiles* to the *Ends of the Earth.* Thoſe of any Nation ſhould be welcome to Him, ſome of every Nation have *heard* of him, *Rom.* x. 18. and *all Nations* ſhall at length become *His Kingdoms.* This prophecy has had it's Accompliſhment in Part, in the ſetting up of the Kingdom of Chriſt in this Iſland of ours, which lies as it were in the *Ends of the Earth*, a Corner of the World, and ſhall be accompliſh'd more and more, when the Time comes for the *bringing in of the Fulneſs of the* Gentiles.

Seventhly, The *Gentiles* chearfully *embrac'd* that which the *Jews* ſcornfully rejected, *v.* 48, 49. Never was Land loſt for want of Heirs; *Through the Fall* of the *Jews*, *Salvation* is *come to the* Gentiles; The *caſting off of them* was the *reconciling of the World*, and the *diminiſhing of them the Riches of the* Gentiles, ſo the Apoſtle ſhews at large, *Rom.* xi. 11, 12, 15. The *Jews* the natural Branches were *broken off*, and the *Gentiles* that were *Branches of the Wild Olive* were thereupon *grafted in*, *v.* 17, 19. Now here we are told how the *Gentiles* welcom'd this happy Turn in their Favours.

1. They took the *Comfort* of it; *when they heard this they were glad.* 'Twas good News to them that they might have Admiſſion into *Covenant* and *Communion* with GOD, by a clearer and nearer, and better *Way* than ſubmitting to the Ceremonial Law, and being *proſelyted* to the Jewiſh Religion; That the *Partition Wall* was taken down, and *they* were as welcome to the Benefits of the *Meſſiah's* Kingdom as the *Jews* themſelves, and might ſhare in their *Promiſe*, without coming under their *Yoke*. This was indeed *glad Tydings* of *great Joy* to *all People.* *Note*, Our being put into a Poſſibility of Salvation, and a Capacity for it, ought to be the Matter of our Rejoycing; when the Gentiles did but hear that the Offers of Grace ſhould be made them, the Word of Grace preached to them, and the Means of Grace afforded them, *they were glad*; Now there is ſome Hopes for us, many grieve under Doubts whether they *have* an Intereſt in Chriſt or no, when they ſhould be rejoycing that they *may have* an Intereſt in him; The golden Scepter is held out to them, and they are invited to come touch the Top of it.

2. They gave GOD the *Praiſe* of it. They *glorify'd the Word of the Lord*; That is *Chriſt*, ſo ſome; the Eſſential Word; They conceiv'd a mighty Veneration for him, and expreſs'd the high Thoughts they had of him. Or rather *the Goſpel*; the more they knew of it the more they admir'd it. O! what a Light, what a Power, what a Treaſure, doth this Goſpel bring along with it! How excellent are its Truths, its Precepts, its Promiſes, how far tranſcending all other Inſtitutions; how plainly Divine and Heavenly is its Original! Thus they *glorify'd the Word of the Lord*, and that's it which he has himſelf *magnify'd above all his Name*, *Pſal.* xiii. 8. 2. and will *magnify* and *make honourable*, Iſa. xlii. 21. They *glorify'd the Word of the Lord*, (1.) Becauſe now the Knowledge of it was *diffus'd*, and not confin'd to the *Jews* only. *Note*, It is the Glory of the Word of the Lord that the *further* it *ſpreads*, the *brighter* it *ſhines*; which ſhews it to be not like the Light of a Candle, but like that of the Sun when he *goes forth in his Strength.* (2.) Becauſe now the Knowledge of it was brought to *them*; *Note*, Thoſe ſpeak beſt of the Honour of the Word of the Lord that ſpeak *experimentally*, that have themſelves been captivated by the Power, and comforted with the Sweetneſs of it.

3. Many of them became not only Profeſſors of the Chriſtian Faith, but ſincerely obedient to the Faith, *as many as were ordain'd to Eternal Life believ'd, i. e.* GOD by his Spirit wrought true Faith in them for whom he had in his Counſels *from everlaſting* deſign'd a Happineſs *to everlaſting.* (1.) Thoſe *believ'd* to whom GOD gave Grace to *believe*, whom by a *ſecret*, but *mighty* Operation he brought into Subjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt, and made willing *in the Day of his Power.* Thoſe came to Chriſt whom the Father drew, and to whom the Spirit made the *Goſpel-call* effectual. 'Tis call'd *the Faith of the Operation of God*, *Col.* ii. 12. and is ſaid to be wrought by the ſame Power that *raiſed up Chriſt*, Eph. i. 19, 20. (2.) God gave this Grace to believe to all thoſe among them who were *ordain'd to Eternal Life*, for whom he had *predeſtinated*, them he alſo called, *Rom.* viii. 30. Or, *as many as were diſpoſed to Eternal Life*, as many as had a Concern about their Eternal State, and aim'd to make ſure *Eternal Life*, believ'd in Chriſt in whom GOD hath treaſur'd up that Life, 1 *John* v. 11. and who is the only Way to it; And it was the Grace of GOD that wrought it in them; Thus all thoſe Captives and thoſe only took the Benefit of *Cyrus's* Proclamation, *whoſe Spirit God had raiſed to go up to build the Houſe of the Lord which is in* Jeruſalem, *Ezr.* i. 5. Thoſe will be brought to believe in Chriſt, that by his Grace are *well diſpos'd* to Eternal Life, and make that their Aim.

4. When they believed, they did what they could to ſpread the Knowledge of Chriſt, and His Goſpel among their Neighbours, *v.* 49. *And the Word of the Lord was publiſhed throughout all the Region*; when it was receiv'd with ſo much Satisfaction in the chief City, it ſoon ſpread itſelf into all Parts of the Country. Thoſe new Converts were themſelves ready no communicate to others that which they were ſo full of themſelves. *The Lord gave the Word*, and then *great was the Company of them that publiſh'd it*, Pſal. lxviii. 11. Thoſe that have got Acquaintance with Chriſt themſelves, will do what they can to bring others acquainted with him. Thoſe in great and rich Cities that have receiv'd the Goſpel, ſhould not think to engroſs it, as if like Learning and Philoſophy, it were only to be the Entertainment of the more polite and elevated Part of Mankind; but ſhould do what they can to get it *publiſh'd* in the Country among the ordinary Sort of People, the Poor and Unlearned, who have Souls to ſave as well as they.

Eighthly, *Paul* and *Barnabas* having ſow'd the Seeds of a Chriſtian Church there, quitted the Place, and went to do the like elſewhere. We read not any Thing of their working Miracles here, to confirm their Doctrine, and to convince People of the Truth of it; for tho' God then did ordinarily make Uſe of that Method of Conviction, yet He could when He pleas'd, do his Work without it; and begetting Faith by the immediate Influence of his Spirit, was itſelf the greateſt Miracle, to thoſe in whom 'twas wrought; yet 'tis probable they did work Miracles, for we find they did in the next Place they came to, *ch.* xiv. 3. Now here we are told.

1. How the unbelieving *Jews expell'd* the Apoſtles out of that Country. They firſt turn'd their Back upon them, and then lift up the Heel againſt them, *v.* 50. *They rais'd Perſecution againſt* Paul *and* Barnabas; excited the Mob to perſecute them in their Way, by inſulting their Perſons as they went along the Streets; excited the Magiſtrates to perſecute them in their Way, by impriſoning and puniſhing them, when they could not reſiſt the Wiſdom and Spirit wherewith they ſpoke, they have Recourſe to theſe brutiſh Methods, the laſt Refuge of an obſtinate Infidelity. Satan and his Agents are moſt exaſperated againſt the Preachers of the Goſpel, when they ſee them go on ſucceſsfully, and therefore then will be ſure to *raiſe Perſecution* againſt them. Thus it has been the common Lot of the beſt Men in the World to ſuffer ill for doing well; to be *perſecuted*, inſtead of being *prefer'd* for the good Services they have done to Mankind. *Obſerve*,

(1.) What Method they took to give them Trouble; They ſtir'd up *the devout and honourable Women* againſt them. The *Jews* could not make any conſiderable Intereſt themſelves, but they apply'd themſelves to ſome Ladies of Quality in the City, that were well affected to the Jewiſh Religion, and were Proſelytes of the Gate, therefore call'd *devout* Women: Theſe, according to the Genius of their Sex, were zealous in their Way, and bigotted, and it was eaſy by falſe Stories and Miſrepreſentations, to *incenſe them* againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt, as if it had been *deſtructive* of all Religion, which really it is *perfective of.* It is good to ſee *honourable* Woman *devout*, and well-affected to religious Worſhip: the leſs they have to do in the World, the more they ſhould do for their Souls, and the more time they ſhould ſpend in communion with GOD. But 'tis ſad, when under Colour of *Devotion* to GOD, they conceive an *Enmity* to Chriſt as thoſe here did. What! *Woman* Perſecutors! Can they forget the Tenderneſs and Compaſſion of their Sex? What! *Honourable* Woman Can they thus ſtain their Honour, and diſgrace themſelves, and do ſo mean a thing? But which is ſtrangeſt of all, *devout Women*! will they kill Chriſt's Servants, and think therein they *do GOD Service*? Let thoſe therefore that have Zeal, ſee that it be *according to Knowledge.* By theſe *devout and honourable Women*, they ſtirr'd up likewiſe the *chief Men of the City*, the Magiſtrates and the Rulers, who had Power in their Hands, and ſet them againſt the Apoſtles? who had ſo little Conſideration as to ſuffer themſelves be made the Tools of this ill-natur'd Party, who neither would go into the Kingdom of Heaven themſelves nor ſuffer thoſe that were entring to go in.

(3) How far they carry'd it, So far that *they expell'd them out of their Coaſts*, they baniſh'd them, order'd them to be carry'd (as we ſay) from Conſtable to Conſtable, till they were forc'd out of their Juriſdiction. So that it was not by Fear, but downright Violence, that they were driven out. This was one Method which the over-ruling Providence of GOD took, to keep the firſt planters of the Church from ſtaying too long at a Place, as *Matth.* x. 23. *When they perſecute you in one City, flee to another* that thus you may the ſooner *go over the Cities of Iſrael.* This was likewiſe a Method GOD took to make thoſe that were *well-diſpos'd*, the more *warmly affected* towards the Apoſtles? for it is natural to us to *pity* thoſe that are *perſecuted*, and to think the better of thoſe that ſuffer, when we know they ſuffer unjuſtly, and to be more ready to help them. The *Expelling* of the Apoſtles *out of their Coaſts*, made People inquiſitive what Evil they had done? and perhaps rais'd them more Friends than conniving at them in their Coaſts, would have done.

2. How the Apoſtles *abandon'd* and *rejected* the unbelieving *Jews*, *v.* 51. *They ſhook off the Duſt of their Feet againſt them?* when they went out of the City they uſed this Ceremony, in the Sight of them that ſate in the Gate; or when they went out of the Borders of their Country, in the Sight of them that were to ſee the Country rid of them. Hereby, 1. They declar'd, that they would have no more to do with them; would take nothing that was theirs; for they ſought not *theirs* but *them*; Duſt they are, and let them keep their Duſt to themſelves, it ſhall not cleave to them. 2. They expreſs'd their Deteſtation of their *Infidelity*, and that tho' they were *Jews* by Birth, yet having *rejected* the Goſpel of Chriſt, they were in their Eyes no better than *Heathen* and *Profane.* As *Jews* and *Gentiles* if they believe, are equally *acceptable* to GOD and good Men; ſo if they do not, they are equally *abominable.* 3. Thus they *ſet them at Defiance*, and expreſs'd their Contempt of them, and their Malice, which they look'd upon as impotent, 'Twas as much as to ſay, Do your worſt, we do not fear you; we know whom we ſerve, and whom we have truſted. 4. Thus they left a Teſtimony behind them, that they had a fair Offer made them of the Grace of the Goſpel, which ſhall be prov'd againſt them in the Day of Judgment: This Duſt will prove that the Preachers of the Goſpel had been among them, but were expell'd by them. Thus Chriſt had order'd them to do, and for this Reaſon, *Matth.* x. 14. *Luke* ix. 5. When they left *them*, they came to *Iconium*, not ſo much for *Safety*, as for *Work.*

3. What Frame he left the New Converts in at *Antioch*, *v.* 52. *The Diſciples* when they ſaw with what Courage and Chearfulneſs *Paul* and *Barnabas* not only bore the Indignities that were done them, but went on with their Work notwithſtanding, they were in like manner ſpirited. (1.) They were very *chearful*; One would have expected, that when *Paul* and *Barnabas* were expell'd out of their Coaſts, and perhaps forbidden to return upon Pain of Death, the Diſciples ſhould have been full of Grief, and full of Fear, looking for no other but that if the Planters of Chriſtianity go, the Plantation would ſoon come to nothing: Or, that it would be their turn next to be baniſh'd the Country, and to them it would be more grievous for it was their own. No; they were *fill'd with Joy* in Chriſt, had ſuch a ſatisfactory Aſſurance of Chriſt's carrying on and perfecting his own Work in them, and among them, and that either He would ſcreen them from Trouble, or bear them up under it, that all their Fears were ſwallow'd up in their believing Joys. (2.) They were very *courageous*; Wonderfully animated with a holy Reſolution to cleave to Chriſt, whatever Difficulties they met with; that ſeems eſpecially to be meant, by their being *fill'd with the Holy Ghoſt*; for that's us'd of *Peter*'s Boldneſs, *chap.* iv. 8. and *Stephen*'s, *chap.* vii. 55. and *Paul*'s, *chap.* xiii. 9. The more we reliſh the Comforts and Encouragements we meet with in the Power of Godlineſs, and the fuller our Hearts are of them, the better prepar'd we are to face the Difficulties we meet with in the Profeſſion of Godlineſs.

CHAP. XIV.

We have in this Chapter a further Account of the Progreſs of the Goſpel, by the Miniſtry of Paul *and* Barnabas, *among the* Gentiles; *It goes on conquering and to conquer; yet meeting with Oppoſition as before among the unbelieving* Jews. *Here's* (1.) *Their ſucceſsful Preaching of the Goſpel for ſome Time at* Iconium, *and their being driven thence by the Violence of their Perſecutors both* Jews *and* Gentiles, *and forc'd into the neighbouring Countries*, v. 1—7. (2.) *Their Healing of a lame Man at* Lyſtra, *and the mighty Veneration which the People conceiv'd of them thereupon, which they had much ado to keep from running into an Extream*, v. 8—18. (3.) *The Out-rage of the People againſt* Paul *at the Inſtigation of the* Jews; *the Effect of which was, that they ſton'd him, as they thought, to Death; but he was wonderfully reſtor'd to Life again*, v. 19, 20. (4.) *The Viſit which* Paul *and* Barnabas *made to the Churches which they had planted, to confirm them, and put them into order*, v. 21—23. (5.) *Their Return to* Antioch, *from whence they were ſent forth, the good they did by the Way, and the Report they made to the Church of* Antioch *of their Expedition, and, if I may ſo ſay, of the Campaign they had made*, v. 24—28.

AND it came to paſs in Iconium, that they went both together into the ſynagogue of the Jews, and ſo ſpake, that a great multitude both of the Jews, and alſo of the Greeks, believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews ſtirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected againſt the brethren. 3 Long time therefore abode they ſpeaking boldly in the Lord, which gave teſtimony unto the word of his grace, and granted ſigns and wonders to be done by their hands, 4 But the multitude of the City was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apoſtles. 5 And when there was an aſſault made both of the Gentiles, and alſo of the Jews with their rulers, to uſe *them* deſpitefully, and to ſtone them, 6 They were ware of *it*, and fled unto Lyſtra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7 And there they preached the goſpel.

In theſe Verſes we have

Firſt, The Preaching of the Goſpel in *Iconium*, whither the Apoſtles were forc'd to retire from *Antioch.* As the Blood of the Martyrs has been the Seed of the Church, ſo the Baniſhment of the Confeſſors has help'd to ſcatter that Seed. *Obſerve*,

(1.) How they made the firſt Offer of the Goſpel to the *Jews*, in their Synagogues; Thither they went, not only as to a Place of Meeting, but as to a Place of meeting *with them*, to whom wherever they came they were to apply themſelves, in the firſt Place. Tho' the *Jews* at *Antioch* had us'd them barbarouſly, yet they did not therefore decline Preaching the Goſpel to the *Jews* at *Iconium*, who perhaps might be better diſpos'd. Let not thoſe of any Denomination be condemn'd in the groſs, nor ſome ſuffer for others Faults; but let us do Good to thoſe who have done Evil to us. 'Tho' the *Blood-thirſty hate the Upright*, yet *the Juſt ſeek their Soul*, Prov. xxix. 10. ſeek the Salvation of it.

2. How the Apoſtles concur'd herein; Notice is taken of this, that they *went both together into the Synagogue*, to teſtify their Unanimity, and mutual Affection, that People might ſay, See how they love one another, and might think the better of Chriſtianity; and that they might ſtrengthen one another's Hands, and confirm one another's Teſtimony, and *out of the Mouth of two Witneſſes every Word might be eſtabliſh'd.* They did not go One one Day and Another another; or One go at the Beginning, and the Other ſome Time after; but they went in *both together.*

Secondly, The Succeſs of their Preaching there; *They ſo ſpake, that a great Multitude*, ſome Hundreds perhaps, if not Thouſands, both of the *Jews, and alſo of the Greeks*, that is, the Gentiles, *believ'd. Obſerve here*,

1. That the Goſpel was now preach'd to *Jews* and *Gentiles together*, and thoſe of each Denomination that *believed* came *together* into the Church. In the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter 'twas preach'd firſt to the *Jews*, and ſome of them believ'd; then to the *Gentiles*, and ſome of them believ'd; but here they are *put together*, being *put upon the ſame level.* The *Jews* have not ſo loſt their Preference as to be *thrown behind*, only the *Gentiles are* brought to ſtand upon *even Terms* with them; *both are reconciled to God in one Body*, Eph. ii. 16. and both together admitted into the Church without Diſtinction.

2. There ſeems to have been ſomething remarkable in the Manner of the Apoſtles Preaching here, which contributed to their Succeſs; They *ſo ſpake*, that a great Multitude believ'd; ſo plainly, ſo convincingly, with ſuch an *Evidence and Demon-*

ſtration of the Spirit, and with ſuch Power; They *ſo ſpake*, ſo warmly, ſo affectionately, and with ſuch a manifeſt Concern for the Souls of Men; They *ſo ſpake*, as that One might perceive they were not only convinc'd, but fill'd with the Things they ſpake of; and that what they ſpake came from the Heart, and therefore was likely to reach to the Heart; They *ſo ſpake*, ſo earneſtly and ſeriouſly, ſo boldly and couragiouſly, that they who heard them could not but ſay, *GOD was with them of a Truth.* Yet the Succeſs was not to be attributed to the Manner of their Preaching, but to the Spirit of GOD, who make Uſe of that Means.

Thirdly, The Oppoſition that their Preaching met with there, and the Trouble that was created them; Leſt they ſhould be *puffed up* with the *Multitude* of their Converts, there was given them *this Thorn in the Fleſh*.

1. *Unbelieving Jews* were the firſt Spring of their Trouble, here as elſewhere, *v.* 2. They *ſtirr'd up the Gentiles.* The Influence which the Goſpel had upon many of the *Gentiles*, and their embracing of it, as it provok'd ſome of the *Jews* to a *holy* Jealouſy, and ſtirr'd them up to receive the Goſpel too, *Rom.* xi. 14. ſo good Examples, which to ſome are a Savour of Life unto Life, to others are a *Savour of Death unto Death.* See 1 *Theſſ.* ii. 15, 16.

2. *Diſaffected Gentiles* irritated by the unbelieving *Jews*, were likely to be the Inſtruments of their Trouble; The *Jews* by falſe Suggeſtions which they were continually buzzing in the Ears of the Gentiles, *made their Minds evilly affected againſt the Brethren*, whom of themſelves they were inclin'd to think favourably of. They not only took occaſion in all Companies, as it came in their Way, but made it their Buſineſs to go purpoſely to ſuch as they had any Acquaintance with, and ſaid all that their Wit or Malice could invent, to beget in them not only a *mean* but an *ill* Opinion of Chriſtanity, telling them how deſtructive it would certainly be to their Pagan Theology and Worſhip; and for their Parts they would rather be *Gentiles* than *Chriſtans*: Thus they *ſower'd* and *embitter'd* their Spirits, againſt both the *Converters* and the *converted.* The old Serpent did by their poyſonous Tongues infuſe his Venom againſt the Seed of the Woman into the Minds of theſe Gentiles, and this was a *Root of Bitterneſs in them bearing Gall and Wormwood.* Thoſe that are *ill-affected* towards *good People*, 'tis no Wonder if they wiſh ill to them, ſpeak ill of them, and contrive ill againſt them; 'tis all owing to *Ill-will.* ἐκάκωσαν, They *moleſted* and *vex'd* the Minds of the Gentiles; ſo ſome of the Criticks take it; they were continually teazing them, with their Impertinent Sollicitations. The Tools of Perſecutors have a Dog's Life, *ſet on* continually.

Fourthly, Their Continuance in their Work there, notwithſtanding this Oppoſition, and GOD's owning them in it, *v.* 3. We have here

1. The *Apoſtles working for Chriſt*, faithfully and diligently, according to the Truſt committed to them; becauſe the *Minds* of the *Gentiles* were *evil-affected* againſt them, One would think that *therefore* they ſhould have withdrawn, and *haſten'd* out of the Way; or, if they had preach'd, ſhould have preach'd *cautiouſly* for Fear of giving farther Provocation to thoſe who were already enough enrag'd. No? on the contrary, *therefore* they *abode there a long Time, ſpeaking boldly in the Lord.* The more they perceiv'd the Spite and Rancour of the Town againſt the new Converts, the more they were animated to go on in their Work; and the more needful they ſaw it to *continue* among them, to *confirm* them in the Faith, and to *comfort* them. They *ſpake boldly*, and were not afraid of giving Offence to the *unbelieving Jews*; What GOD ſaid to the Prophet with Reference to the unbelieving *Jews* in his Day, was now made good to the Apoſtles, *I have made thy Face ſtrong againſt their Faces*, Ezek. iii. 7, 8, 9. But obſerve what it was that animated them, they *ſpake boldly in the Lord*, in his Strength, and truſting in him to bear them out, not depending upon any Thing in themſelves. They were *ſtrong in the Lord*, and *in the Power of his Might.*

2. *Chriſt working with the Apoſtles*, according to his Promiſe, *Lo, I am with you always*; When they went on in his Name and Strength, He fail'd not to *give Teſtimony to the Word of his Grace. Note*, 1. The Goſpel is a *Word of Grace*, the Aſſurance of GOD's Good-will to us, and the Means of his good Work in us; 'Tis the *Word of Chriſt's Grace*, for 'tis in him alone that we find Favour with GOD. 2. Chriſt himſelf has *atteſted* this Word of Grace, who is the *Amen*, the faithful Witneſs; he hath aſſur'd us, that it is the Word of GOD, and that we may venture our Souls upon it. As it was ſaid in general concerning the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, that they had *the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word by Signs following*, Mark xvi. 20. ſo it is ſaid particularly concerning the Apoſtles here, that the LORD confirm'd their Teſtimony in *granting Signs and Wonders to be done by their Hands*, in the Miracles they wrought in the Kingdom of Nature, as well as the Wonders done by their Word, in the greater Miracles wrought on Mens Minds by the Power of Divine Grace. The LORD was with them while they were with Him, and abundance of Good was done.

Fifthly, The Diviſion which this occaſion'd in the City, *v.* 4. *The Multitude of the City was divided* into two Parties, and both active and vigorous; among the Rulers and Perſons of Rank, and among the common People, there were *ſome that held with the* unbelieving *Jews*, and others that *held with the Apoſtles*; *Barnabas* is here reckon'd an *Apoſtle*, tho' none of the Twelve, nor call'd in that extraordinary Manner that *Paul* was, becauſe ſet a-part by ſpecial Deſignation of the Holy Ghoſt to the Service of the Gentiles. It ſeems this Buſineſs of the Preaching of the Goſpel was ſo univerſally taken Notice of with Concern, that every Perſon, even of the *Multitude* of the City, was either *for it*, or *againſt it*, none ſtood neuter. Either *for us*, or *for our Adverſaries*; for GOD or *Baal*; for Chriſt or *Beelzebub.*

1. We may here *ſee the Meaning* of Chriſt's *Prediction*, That he came not to *ſend Peace upon Earth, but rather Diviſion*, *Luke* xii. 51, 52, 53. If all would have *given in* unanimouſly into *his* Meaſures, there had been univerſal Concord, and could Men have agreed in that, there would have been no dangerous Diſcord or Diſagreement in other Things; but diſagreeing here, the Breach was wide as the Sea. Yet the Apoſtles muſt not be blam'd for coming to *Iconium*, becauſe before they came the City was united, but now it was divided, for 'tis better that Part of the City go to Heaven, than all to Hell.

2. We may here *take the Meaſures of our Expectations*; Let us not think it ſtrange if the Preaching of the Goſpel occaſion Diviſions, nor be offended at it. 'Tis better to be reproached and Perſecuted as *Dividers* for Swimming againſt the Stream, than yield our ſelves to be carry'd down the Stream that leads to Deſtruction. Let us *hold with the Apoſtles*, and not fear them that *hold with the* Jews.

Sixthly, The Attempt made upon the Apoſtles by their Enemies; Their Evil Affection againſt them broke out at length in violent Out-rages, *v.* 5. *Obſerve*,

1. Who the Plotters were; *both the* Gentiles *and the* Jews *with their Rulers.* The *Gentiles* and *Jews* were at Enmity with one another, and yet united againſt Chriſtians, like *Herod* and *Pilate*, Sadducees and Phariſees againſt Chriſt, and like *Gebal* and *Ammon*, and *Amalek* of old againſt *Iſrael.* If the Churches Enemies can thus unite for its Deſtruction, ſhall not its Friends, laying aſide all perſonal Feuds unite for its Preſervation.

2. What the Plot was; Having now got the Rulers on their Side, they doubted not but to carry their Point, and their Deſign was to *uſe* the Apoſtles *deſpitefully*, to expoſe them to *Diſgrace*, and then to *ſtone them*, to put them to Death; and thus they hop'd to ſink their Cauſe, they aim'd to take away both their Reputation and their Life, and that was all they had to loſe which they could take from them, for they had neither Lands nor Goods.

Seventhly, The Deliverance of the Apoſtles out of the Hands of thoſe wicked and unreaſonable Men, *v.* 6, 7. They got away upon Notice given them of the Deſign againſt them, or the Beginning of the Attempt upon them, which they were ſoon aware of, and they made an honourable Retreat, (for it was not an inglorious Flight) to *Lyſtra* and *Derbe*; And there,

1. They found *Safety*; Their Perſecutors in *Iconium* were for the preſent ſatisfy'd that they were thruſt out of their Borders, and purſu'd them no further. GOD hath Shelters for his People in a Storm; nay, He is and will be Himſelf their *Hiding-place.*

2. They found *Work*, and that was it they went for; When the Door of Opportunity was ſhut againſt 'em at *Iconium*, it was open'd at *Lyſtra* and *Derbe*; to thoſe Cities they went, and *there* and in *the Region that lieth round about*, they *preach'd the Goſpel.* In Times of Perſecution Miniſters may ſee Cauſe to quit the Spot, when yet they do not quit the Work.

8 And there ſat a certain man at Lyſtra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mothers womb, who never had walked. 9 The ſame heard Paul ſpeak: who ſtedfaſtly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. 11 And when the people ſaw what Paul had done, they lift up their voices, ſaying in the ſpeech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, becauſe he was the chief ſpeaker. 13 Then the prieſt of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done ſacrifice with the people. 14 *Which* when the apoſtles, Barnabas and Paul heard *of*, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, 15 And ſaying, Sirs, why do ye theſe things? We alſo are men of like paſſions with you, and preach unto you, that you ſhould turn from theſe vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the ſea and all things that are therein. 16 Who in times paſt ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways. 17 Neverthele ſs he left not himſelf without witneſs, in that he did good, and

gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and gladneſs. 18 And with theſe ſayings ſcarce reſtrained they the people, that they had not done ſacrifice unto them.

Firſt, A miraculous Cure wrought by *Paul* at *Lyſtra*, upon a *Cripple*, that had been lame from his Birth, ſuch an One as was miraculouſly cur'd by *Peter* and *John*, Acts iii. 2. That introduc'd the Goſpel among the *Jews*, this among the *Gentiles*; both that and this, were deſign'd to repreſent the Impotency of all the Children of Men in ſpiritual Things, they are lame from their Birth, till the Grace of GOD puts Strength into them; for it was when we were yet *without Strength*, that Chriſt *dy'd for the Ungodly*, Rom. v. 6. *Obſerve* here,

1. The deplorable Caſe of the poor Cripple, *v.* 8. He was *impotent in his Feet*, *diſabled*, ſo the Word is, to that Degree that it was *impoſſible* he ſhould ſet his Foot to the Ground, to lay any Streſs upon it: It was well known that he had been ſo *from his Mother's Womb*, and that he *never had walked*, or could *ſtand up*. We ſhould take Occaſion from hence, to thank GOD for the Uſe of our Limbs. And thoſe who are depriv'd of it may obſerve, that their Caſe is not ſingular.

2. The Expectation that was rais'd in him of a Cure, *v.* 9. He *heard* Paul *preach*, and 'tis likely was much affected with what he heard, believ'd the Meſſage was from Heaven, and that the Meſſengers having their Commiſſion thence, had a divine Power going along with them, and were therefore able to cure him of his Lameneſs. This *Paul* was aware of, by the Spirit of Diſcerning that he had, and perhaps the Shew of his Countenance did in Part witneſs for him; *Paul perceiv'd that he had Faith to be heal'd*; deſir'd it, hoped for it, had ſuch a Thing in his Thoughts; which it doth not appear that the lame Man *Peter* heal'd had, for he expected no more than an *Alms*: There was not found ſuch *great Faith* in *Iſrael*, as was among the *Gentiles*, Matth. viii. 10.

3. The Cure wrought; *Paul perceiving that he had Faith to be healed*, brought the Word and *healed him*, Pſal. cvii. 20. *Note*, GOD will not diſappoint the Deſires that are of his own kindling, nor the Hopes of his own raiſing. *Paul* ſpake to him with *a loud Voice*, either becauſe he was at ſome Diſtance, or to ſhew that the true Miracles wrought by the Power of Chriſt, were far unlike the *lying Wonders* wrought by Deceivers, that *peeped, and muttered, and whiſpered*, Iſa. viii. 19. GOD ſaith, *I have not ſpoken in ſecret, in a dark Place of the Earth*, Iſa. xlv. 19. *Paul* ſpoke to him *with a loud Voice*, that the People about might take Notice, and have their Expectations rais'd of the Effect. It doth not appear that this *Cripple* was a *Beggar*, 'tis ſaid, *v.* 8. that he *ſate*, not that he ſate *begging*. But we may imagine how melancholly it was to him to ſee other People walking about him, and himſelf diſabled; and therefore how welcome *Paul*'s Word was to him, *Stand upright on thy Feet*; Help thy ſelf, and GOD ſhall help thee. Try whether thou haſt Strength, and thou ſhalt find that thou haſt. Some Copies read it, *I ſay unto thee, in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſtand upright on thy Foot.* 'Tis certain that's imply'd, and very probably was expreſs'd by *Paul*, and Power went along with this Word; for preſently *he leaped and walked*; leap'd up from the Place where he ſate, and not only *ſtood upright*, but to ſhew that he was *perfectly* cured, and that *immediately*, he *walk'd* to and fro before them all. Herein the Scripture was fulfill'd, That when the *Wilderneſs* of the Gentile World is made *to bloſſom as the Roſe, then ſhall the Lame Man leap as a Hart*, Iſa. xxxv. 1, 6. Thoſe that by the Grace of GOD are cured of their ſpiritual Lameneſs, muſt ſhew it by *leaping*, with a holy Exultation, and *walking* in a holy Converſation.

Secondly, The Impreſſion which this Cure made upon the People, They were amaz'd at it, had never ſeen or heard the like, and fell into an Extacy of Wonder. *Paul* and *Barnabas* were Strangers, Exiles, Refugees in their Country; every Thing concurr'd to make them mean and deſpicable, yet the working of this one Miracle was enough to make them in the Eyes of this People truly great and honourable; tho' the Multitude of Chriſt's Miracles could not ſcreen him from the utmoſt Contempt among the *Jews*. We find here,

1. The *People* take them for Gods, *v.* 11. *They lift up their Voices* with an Air of Triumph, ſaying in their own Language, (for it was the common People that ſaid it) *in the Speech of Lycaonia*, which was a Dialect of the *Greeks*, *The Gods are come down to us in the Likeneſs of Men*. They imagin'd they were drop'd down to them out of the Clouds, and that they were ſome Divine Powers; no leſs than *Gods*, tho' *in the Likeneſs of Men*. This Notion of the Thing agreed well enough with the Pagan Theology, and the fabulous Account they had of the Viſits which their Gods made to this lower World; and proud enough they were to think that they ſhould have a Viſit made to them. They carry'd this Notion ſo far here, that they pretended to tell which of their Gods they were, according to the *Ideas* their *Poets* had given them of the Gods, *v.* 12. They call'd *Barnabas*, *Jupiter*; for if they will have him to be a God, 'tis as eaſy to make him the *Prince of their Gods* as not. 'Tis likely he was the Senior, and the more portly comely Man, that had ſomething of Majeſty in his Countenance: And *Paul* they call'd *Mercury*, who was the *Meſſenger of the Gods*, that was ſent on their Errands: for *Paul*, tho' he had not the Preſence that *Barnabas* had, was the *chief Speaker*, and had a greater Command of Language, and perhaps appear'd to have ſomething *Mercurial* in his Temper and Genius. *Jupiter* us'd to take *Mercury* along with him, (they ſaid) and if he make a Viſit to their City, they will ſuppoſe he doth ſo now.

2. The *Prieſt* thereupon prepares to do Sacrifices to them, *v.* 13. The Temple of *Jupiter* was it ſeems before the Gate of *their City*, as its Protector and Guardian; and the Prieſt of that Idol and Temple hearing the People cry out thus, took the Hint preſently, and thought it was Time for him to beſtir himſelf to do his Duty. Many a coſtly Sacrifice he had offer'd to the Image of *Jupiter*, but if *Jupiter* be among them himſelf *in propria perſona*, it concerns him to do him the utmoſt Honours imaginable, and the People are ready to joyn with him in it. See how eaſily vain Minds are carry'd away with a popular Out-cry! If the Croud gives a Shout, *Here's Jupiter*; the Prieſt of *Jupiter* takes the firſt Hint, and offers his Service preſently. When Chriſt the *Son of GOD* came down and appear'd in the Likeneſs of Men, and did many, very many Miracles, yet they were ſo far from doing Sacrifice to him, that they made him a Sacrifice to their Pride and Malice; He *was in the World, and the World knew him not*; He *came to his own, and his own receiv'd him not*; But *Paul* and *Barnabas* upon the working of one Miracle, are deify'd preſently. The ſame Power of the God of this World which prejudiceth the carnal Mind againſt Truth, makes Errors and Miſtakes to find eaſy Admiſſion, and both Ways his Turn is ſerv'd. They brought *Oxen* to be ſacrific'd to them, and *Garlands* with which to crown the Sacrifices: Theſe *Garlands* were made up of *Flowers* and *Ribbonds*; and they *gilded* the Horns of the Oxen they ſacrific'd.

So Beaſts for Sacrifice do feed,
Firſt to be crown'd, and then to bleed.

Victimæ ad ſupplicium ſaginantur, Hoſtiæ ad pænam coronantur. So *Octavius* in *Minutius Felix.*

Thirdly, *Paul* and *Barnabas* *proteſt* againſt this undue Reſpect paid them, and with much ado *prevent it*. Many of the Heathen Emperors, call'd themſelves *Gods*, and took a Pride in having divine Honours paid them: But Chriſt's Miniſters, tho' *real* Benefactors to Mankind, while they only pretended to be ſo, refus'd thoſe Honours when they were tender'd: Whoſe Succeſſor therefore he is who ſits in *the Temple of GOD*, and ſhews that he *is God*, (2 Cor. ii. 4.) and who is ador'd as *our Lord God*, the Pope, it is eaſy to ſay. *Obſerve*,

1. The holy Indignation which *Paul* and *Barnabas* conceiv'd at this. When they *heard this*, they *rent their Clothes*; we do not find that they rent their Clothes when the People *viliſy'd* them and ſpake of ſtoning them, they could bear that without Diſturbance; but when they *deiſy'd* them, and ſpake of worſhipping them, they could not bear it; but *rent their Clothes*, as being more concern'd for GOD's Honour than their own,

2. The Pains they took to prevent it. They did not connive at it, nor ſay, If People will be deceiv'd, let them be deceiv'd, much leſs ſuggeſt to themſelves and one another, that it might contribute both to the *Safety* of their *Perſons*, and the *Succeſs* of their *Miniſtry*, if they *ſuffered* the People to continue in this Miſtake, and ſo they might make a *good Hand* of an *Ill Thing*: No, God's Truth needs not the Service of Man's Lye, Chriſt had put Honour enough upon them in making them Apoſtles, they needed not aſſume either the Honour of *Princes*, or the Honour of *Gods*; They appeared with much more magnificent Titles when they were called the *Embaſſadors of Chriſt*, and the *Stewards of the Myſteries of God*, than when they were called *Jupiter* and *Mercury*.

Let us ſee how they prevented it.

1. They *ran in among the People*, as ſoon as they heard of it, and would not ſo much as ſtay a While to ſee what the People would do. Their *running in* like Servants *among the People* ſhew'd that they were far from looking upon themſelves as Gods, or taking State upon them; They did not ſtand ſtill expecting Honours to be done them, but plainly declin'd them by thruſting themſelves into the *Croud*. They *ran in* as Men in earneſt with as much Concern as *Aaron* ran in between the Living and the Dead when the Plague was begun.

2. They *reaſoned* with them, *crying out*, that all might hear, Sirs, *Why do ye theſe Things*? Why do ye go about to make Gods of us? 'Tis the moſt abſurd Thing you can do, for,

1. Out *Nature* will not *admit* it, *we alſo are Men of like Paſſions with yours*, ὁμοιοπαθεῖς, 'tis the ſame Word that is us'd concerning *Elias*, *Jam.* v. 17. where we render it, *ſubject to like Paſſions as we are*. We are *Men*, and therefore you wrong *your ſelves* if you expect that from us which is to be had in GOD only; and you wrong *God* if you give that Honour to us, or to any other Man which is to be given to GOD only. We not only have ſuch *Bodies* as you ſee, but are of *like Paſſions* with you, have *Hearts faſhion'd alike* as other Men, *Pſal.* xxxiii. 15. for *as in Water Face anſwers to Face, ſo doth the Heart of Man to Man*,

Prov. xxvii. 19. we are Naturally ſubject to the ſame Infirmities of the Human Nature, and liable to the ſame Calamities of the Human Life; not only *Men* but ſinful Men, and ſuffering Men, and therefore will not be *deify'd.*

2. Our *Doctrine* is directly *againſt* it. Muſt we be added to the Number of your Gods, whoſe Buſineſs it is to aboliſh the Gods you have, we *preach unto you that ye ſhould turn from theſe Vanities unto the Living God.* If we ſhould ſuffer this we ſhould *confirm* you *in* that which it is our Buſineſs to *convert* you *from.* And ſo they take this Occaſion to ſhew them how juſt and neceſſary it was that they ſhould *turn to God from Idols,* 1 *Theſ.* i. 9. When they preached to the *Jews,* who hated Idolatry, they had nothing to do but to preach the Grace of GOD in Chriſt, and needed not, as the Prophets in dealing with their Fathers, to preach againſt Idolatry: But when they had to do with the *Gentiles,* they muſt rectify their Miſtakes in natural Religion, and bring them off from the groſs Corruptions of that.

See here what they *preached to the Gentiles.*

1. That the Gods which they and their Fathers worſhipped, and all the Ceremonies of their worſhip of them were *Vanities,* idle Things, unreaſonable, unprofitable, which no *rational Account* could be given of, nor any *real Advantage* gain'd from. Idols are often call'd *Vanities* in the *Old Teſtament,* Deut. xxxii. 21. 1 Kin. xvi. 13. Jer. xiv. 22. *An Idol is nothing in the World,* 1 Cor. viii. 4. 'tis not at all what it is pretended to be, 'tis a Cheat, 'tis a Counterfeit, it deceives thoſe that truſt to it, and expect Relief from it. Therefore *turn from theſe Vanities,* turn from them with Abhorrence and Deteſtation, as *Ephraim* did, *Hoſ.* xiv. 8. *What have I to do any more with Idols?* I'll never again be thus impos'd upon.

2. That the GOD whom they would have them *turn to* is the *Living God*; they had hitherto worſhipped *dead Images,* that were utterly unable to help them, *Iſa.* xliv. 9. Or, (as they now attempted) *dying Men,* that would ſoon be diſabled to help them; But now they are perſuaded to worſhip a *Living God,* who hath Life in Himſelf, and Life for us, and lives for evermore.

3. That this GOD is the *Creator of the World,* the Fountain of all Being and Power; He *made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all Things therein,* even thoſe Things which you worſhip as Gods, ſo that he is the GOD of your Gods; you worſhip Gods, which you made, the Creatures of your own Fancy, and the Work of your own Hands, we call you to worſhip the GOD that made you and all the World: Worſhip the True GOD, and cheat not yourſelves with Pretenders; Worſhip the Soveraign Lord of all, and diſparage not your ſelves in bowing down to his Creatures and Subjects.

4. That the World ow'd it to his Patience, that he had not deſtroy'd them long ere this for their Idolatry, *v.* 16. *in Times paſt,* for many Ages, unto this Day, he *ſuffer'd all Nations to walk in their own Ways.* Theſe Idolaters that were called from the Service of other Gods might think, Had they not ſerv'd theſe Gods hitherto, and their Fathers before them Time out of Mind? And, Why may they not as will go on to ſerve them ſtill? No, your ſerving of them was a Tryal of God's Patience, and it was a Miracle of Mercy that you were not cut off for it. But tho' he did not deſtroy you for it while you were in Ignorance and knew no better, *Acts* xvii. 30. yet now he hath ſent his Goſpel into the World, and by it has made a clear Diſcovery of Himſelf, and His Will to all Nations, and not to the *Jews* only; if yet you continue in your Idolatry, he will not bear with you as he has done. All the *Nations* that had not the Benefit of Divine Revelation, that is, All but the *Jews,* he *ſuffer'd to walk in their own Ways,* for they had nothing to check them or controul them, but *their own* Conſciences, *their own* Thoughts, *Rom.* ii. 15. no Scriptures, no Prophets, and then they were the more excuſable if they miſtook their Way; But now GOD hath ſent a Revelation into the World which is to be publiſh'd to all Nations, the Caſe is alter'd. We may underſtand it as a Judgment upon all Nations, that GOD *ſuffer'd them to walk in their own Ways,* gave them up to *their own Hearts Luſts.* But now the Time is come when the *Vail of the Covering ſpread over all Nations ſhould be taken off,* Iſa. xxv. 7. and now you will no longer be excus'd in theſe *Vanities,* but muſt turn from them. *Note,* 1. GOD's Patience with us hitherto ſhould *lead us to Repentance,* and not encourage us to *preſume* upon the Continuance of it, while we continue to provoke Him. (2.) Our having done ill while we were in Ignorance, will not bear us out in doing ill when we are better taught.

5. That even then when they were not under the Direction and Correction of the *Word of God,* yet they might have known, and ſhould have known to do better by the *Works of God, v.* 17. Tho' the Gentiles had not the *Statutes* and *Judgments* that the *Jews* had to witneſs for GOD againſt all Pretenders, no Tables of *Teſtimony,* or Tabernacle of *Teſtimony,* yet He *left not Himſelf without Witneſs.* Beſides the Witneſs of GOD within them, the Dictates of *natural Conſcience,* they had Witneſſes for GOD round about them, the Bounty of *Common Providence.* Their having no Scriptures did in Part excuſe them, and therefore GOD did not deſtroy them for their Idolatry, as He did the Jewiſh Nation; but that did not wholly excuſe them, but that nowithſtanding that they were highly criminal, and deeply guilty before GOD; for there were other Witneſſes for GOD, ſufficient to inform them, that He, and He only, is to be worſhipped; and that to Him they ow'd all their Services, from whom they receiv'd all their Comforts, and therefore were guilty of the higheſt Injuſtice and Ingratitude imaginable in alienating them from Him. GOD having not *left Himſelf without Witneſs,* has not left us *without a Guide*; and ſo has left us *without Excuſe*; for whatever is a Witneſs *for GOD,* is a Witneſs *againſt us,* if we give that Glory to any other, which is due to Him only.

(1.) The *Bounties* of common Providence *witneſs* to us that *there is a God,* for they are all diſpens'd wiſely, and with Deſign. The *Rain* and *fruitful Seaſons* could not come *by Chance,* Nor *are there any of the Vanities of the Heathen that can give Rain,* neither can *the Heavens* of themſelves *give Showers,* Jer. xiv. 22. All the Powers of Nature witneſs to us a ſoveraign Power in the God of Nature, from whom they are *deriv'd,* and on whom they *depend.* 'Tis not the *Heaven* that *gives us Rain,* but GOD that *gives us Rain from Heaven*; He is the *Father of the Rain,* Job xxxviii. 28.

(2.) The *Benefit* we have by theſe *Bounties* witneſs to us that we ought to make our Acknowledgments not to the Creatures who are made ſerviceable to us, but to the Creator who makes them ſo. He *left not himſelf without witneſs in that he did good.* GOD ſeems to reckon the Inſtances of his *Goodneſs,* to be more pregnant cogent Proofs of his Title to our Homage and Adoration than the Evidences of his Greatneſs, for his *Goodneſs* is his *Glory*; *The Earth is full of his Goodneſs*; His *Tender Mercies are over all his works,* And therefore *they praiſe* him. *Pſal.* cxlv. 9. 10. GOD *doth us good* in preſerving to us his *Air* to *breath in,* his *Ground* to *go upon,* the *Light* of his Sun to *ſee by*; But becauſe the moſt *ſenſible* Inſtance of the Goodneſs of Providence to each of us in particular is that of the daily Proviſion made by it of *Meat* and *Drink* for us, the Apoſtle chooſeth to inſiſt upon that; and ſhews how GOD *doth us good.* (1.) In *preparing* it for us, and that by a long Train of Cauſes which depend upon him as the firſt Cauſe; the *Heavens bear the Earth, the Earth bears the Corn and Wine, and Oyl, and they bear Jezreel, Hoſ.* ii. 21, 22. He doth us Good in giving us *Rain from Heaven.* Rain for *us* to drink, for if there were no Rain, there would be no Springs of Water, and we ſhould ſoon dye for Thirſt; Rain for *our Land* to *drink,* for our *Meat* as well as Drink we have from *the Rain,* in giving us *that* he *gives us fruitful Seaſons*; If the *Heavens be* as *Braſs,* the *Earth* will ſoon be as *Iron,* Lev. xxvi. 4. That's the *River of God,* which greatly *enricheth the Earth,* and by it *God prepares us Corn,* Pſal. lxv. 9, 10, 11. Of all the common Operations of Providence the Heathen choſe to form their Notion of the ſupreme GOD by that which ſpeaks *Terror,* and is proper to *ſtrike an Awe* of him upon us, and that was the Thunder; and therefore they call'd *Jupiter* the *Thunderer,* and repreſented him with a *Thunderbolt* in his Hand. And it appears by *Pſal.* xxix. 3. that ought not to be overlook'd; But the Apoſtle here to engage us to worſhip God, ſets before us his Beneficence, that we may have good Thoughts of him in every Thing wherein we have to do with him; may love him and delight in him, as one that *doth Good,* doth Good to us, doth Good *to all,* in giving *Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seaſons,* and if at any Time *Rain* be *withheld,* or the Seaſons unfruitful, we may thank our ſelves, 'tis our Sin that *turns away* theſe *good Things from us,* which were coming to us, and ſtops the Current of GOD's Favours. (2.) In *giving us the Comforts* of it; 'Tis he that *fills our Hearts with Food and Gladneſs.* GOD is *rich in Mercy to all,* Rom. x. 12. he *gives us richly all Things to enjoy,* 1 Tim. vi. 17. is not only a Benefactor but a bountiful one; not only gives us the Things we need but gives us to *enjoy* them, *Eccl.* ii. 24. He *fills our Hearts with Food, i. e.* He gives us Food to our Hearts Content, or according to our Heart's Deſire; not meerly for Neceſſity, but Plenty, Dainty, and Variety. Even thoſe Nations that had loſt the Knowledge of him, and worſhipped other Gods, yet he *filled their Houſes,* filled their Mouths, *filled their Bellies* (*Job* xxii. 18. *Pſal.* xvii. 14.) with good Things: The *Gentiles* that *liv'd without God in the* World yet *liv'd upon God*; which *Chriſt* urgeth as a Reaſon why we ſhould *do good to thoſe that hate us,* Matth. v. 44, 45. Thoſe Heathens had their Hearts *filled with Food,* that was their Felicity and Satisfaction, they deſired no more; But theſe Things will not *fill the Soul,* Ezek. vii. 19. nor will thoſe that know how to value their own Souls be ſatisfy'd with them. But the Apoſtles put themſelves in as Sharers in the Divine Beneficence; we muſt all own that GOD *fills our Hearts with Food and Gladneſs,* not only *Food* that we may live, but *Gladneſs* that we may live chearfully; to Him we owe it that we do not *all our Days eat in Sorrow. Note,* We muſt thank GOD not only for our Food, but for our *Gladneſs*; That he gives us *Leave* to be chearful, *Cauſe* to be chearful, and *Hearts* to be chearful. And if our Hearts be *filled with Food and Gladneſs,* they ought to be filled with Love and Thankfulneſs, and enlarg'd in Duty and Obedience, *Deut.* viii. 10. xxviii. 47.

Laſtly, The Succeſs of this Prohibition which the Apoſtles gave to the People, *v.* 18. By *thoſe Sayings* with much ado, they *reſtrain'd the People* from *doing Sacrifice* to them, ſo ſtrongly were Idolaters ſet upon their Idolatry; 'Twas not enough for the Apoſtles to refuſe to be deify'd, that would be conſtrued only a Pang of Modeſty; but they reſent it, they ſhew them the Evil of it, and all little enough, for they *ſcarce reſtaind* them from it; and ſome of them were ready to blame the Prieſt that he did not go on with his Buſineſs, notwithſtanding: We may ſee here what gave Riſe to the Pagan Idolatry, 'twas terminating thoſe Regards in the Inſtruments of our Comfort which ſhould have paſſed through them to the Author; *Paul* and *Barnabas* have cur'd a Cripple, and therefore they *deiſy* them, inſtead of *glorifying* GOD for giving them ſuch Power? which ſhould make us very cautious that we do not either give that Honour to another, or take it to ourſelves which is due to God only.

19 ¶ And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium; who perſwaded the people, and having ſtoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, ſuppoſing he had been dead. 20. Howbeit, as the diſciples ſtood round about him, he roſe up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 And when they had preached the goſpel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lyſtra, and *to* Iconium, and Antioch, 22 Confirming the ſouls of the diſciples, *and* exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we muſt through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. 23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with faſting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. 24 And after they had paſſed throughout Piſidia, they came to Pamphylia. 25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia: 26 And thence ſailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God, for the work which they fulfilled. 27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearſed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. 28 And there they abode long time with the diſciples.

We have here a further Account of the Services and Sufferings of *Paul* and *Barnabas*.

Firſt, How *Paul* was ſton'd, and left for dead, but miraculouſly came to himſelf again, *v.* 19, 20. They fell upon *Paul* rather than *Barnabas*, becauſe *Paul* being the chief Speaker, gall'd and vex'd them more than *Barnabas* did. *Now obſerve here*,

1. How the People were incens'd againſt *Paul*; not by any Injury they pretended he had done againſt them, if they took it for an Affront that he would not let them miſ-place divne Honours upon him, when they conſider'd themſelves they would eaſily *forgive* him *that Wrong*. But *there came certain* Jews *from* Antioch, hearing 'tis likely, and vext to hear what Reſpect was ſhew'd to *Paul* and *Barnabas* at *Lyſtra*, and they incens'd the People againſt them, as factious, ſeditious, dangerous Perſons, not fit to be harbour'd. See how reſtleſs the Rage of the *Jews* was againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt; They could not bear that it ſhould have Footing any where.

2. To what Degree they were incens'd by theſe barbarous *Jews*; they irritated them to that Degree, that the Mob roſe and *ſtoned Paul*, not by a judicial Sentence, but in a popular Tumult; they threw Stones at him with which they knocked him down, and then *drew him out of the City*, as on not fit to live in it, or *drew him out* upon a Sledge or in a Cart to bury him *ſuppoſing he had been dead*. So ſtrong is the Bent of the corrupt and carnal Heart to that which is evil, even in contrary Extreams, that as it is with great Difficulty that Men are *reſtrain'd* from Evil on *one Side*, ſo it is with great Eaſe that they are *perſuaded* to Evil on the *other Side*. See how fickle and mutable the Minds or carnal worldly People are, that do not know and conſider Things: Thoſe that but t'other Day would have treated the Apoſtles as more then Men, now treat them as worſe than Brutes, as the worſt of Men, as the worſt of Malefactors. To Day *Hoſanna*, and to Morrow *crucify*; To Day ſacrific'd to, to Morrow ſacrificed; As we have an Inſtance of a Change the other Way, *Acts* xxviii. *This Man is a Murtherer*, v. 4. no doubt *he is a God*, v. 6. popular Breath turns like the Wind. If *Paul* would have been *Mercury*, he might have been *enthron'd*, nay, he might have been *enſhrin'd*, But if he will be a faithful Miniſter of Chriſt he ſhall be *ſtoned*, and *thrown out of the City*; Thus they who eaſily ſubmit to ſtrong Deluſions, hate to receive the Truth in the Love of it.

3. How he was *deliver'd* by the Power of GOD. When he was drawn out of the City, *the Diſciples ſtood round about him*, v. 20. It ſeems there were ſome here at *Lyſtra* that became *Diſciples*, that found the Mean between *deifying* the Apoſtles, and *rejecting* them; and even theſe new Converts had Courage to own *Paul*, when he was thus run down, tho' they had Reaſon enough to fear that the ſame that ſtoned him, would ſtone them for owning him. They *ſtood round about him*, as a Guard to him againſt the further outrage of the People; ſtood about him to ſee whether he were alive or dead; And all of a ſudden he *roſe up*; Tho' he was not dead yet he was all cruſh'd and bruis'd no doubt, and fainted away, he was in a *Deliquium*, ſo that it was not without a Miracle that he came ſo ſoon to himſelf, and was ſo well as to be able to go into the City. *Note*, GOD's faithful Servants tho' they may be brought within a Step of Death, and may be look'd upon as dead both by Friends and Enemies, ſhall not dye as long as he has Work for them to do. They are *caſt down but not deſtroy'd*, 2 Cor. iv. 9.

Secondly, How they went on with their Work notwithſtanding the Oppoſition they met with, all the Stones they threw at *Paul* will not beat him off from his Work. They drew him *out of the City*, v. 19. but as one that ſet them at Defiance, he *came into the City* again, to ſhew that he did not fear them, *None even of theſe Things move him*. However their being perſecuted here is a known Indication to them to ſeek for Opportunities of Uſefulneſs elſewhere, and therefore for the preſent they quit *Lyſtra*.

And 1. They went to break up and ſow freſh Ground at *Derbe*; thither the next Day *Paul* and *Barnabas departed*; A City not far off, there they *preached the Goſpel*, there they *taught many*, v. 21. And it ſhould ſeem that *Timothy* was of that City, and was one of the Diſciples that now attended *Paul*, had met him at *Antioch*, and accompanied him in all this Circuit, for with reference to this Story, *Paul* tells him how *fully he had known the Afflictions he endur'd* at *Antioch, Iconium* and *Lyſtra*, 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. Nothing is recorded that happen'd at *Derbe*.

2. They return'd and went over their Work again, *watering* what they had *ſown*; having ſtay'd as long as they thought fit at *Derbe*, they came back to *Lyſtra*, to *Iconium*, and *Antioch*, the Cities where they had preached, *v.* 21. Now as we have had a very inſtructive Account of the Methods they took in laying the Foundation, and Beginning the good Work, ſo here we have the like of their Building upon that Foundation, and carrying on that good Work. Let us ſee what they did.

(1.) They *confirm'd the Souls of the Diſciples, i. e.* they inculcated that upon them which was proper to confirm them, *v.* 22. young Converts are apt to waver, and a little Thing ſhocks them their old Acquaintance beg they will not leave them, thoſe that they look upon to be wiſer than they, ſet before them the Abſurdity, Indecency, and Danger of a Change, they are allur'd by Proſpect of Preferment to ſtick to the Traditions of their Fathers, they are frighten'd with the Danger of ſwimming againſt the Stream. All this tempts them to think of making a Retreat in Time; But the Apoſtles come and tell them that *this is the true Grace of God wherein they ſtand*, and therefore they muſt ſtand to it, that there's no danger like that of loſing Part in Chriſt, no Advantage like that of keeping their Hold of him; that whatever their Tryals may be they ſhall have Strength from Chriſt to paſs through them; And whatever their Loſſes may be they ſhall be abundantly recompens'd. And this *confirms the Souls of the Diſciples*, it fortifies their pious Reſolutions in the Strength of Chriſt, to ſtick to Chriſt whatever it coſt them. *Note*, 1. Thoſe that are *converted* need to be *confirm'd*, that are *planted* need to be *rooted*. Miniſters Work is to *eſtabliſh* Saints, as well as to *awaken* Sinners. *Non minor eſt virtus quam quærere parta tueri*. Thoſe that were inſtructed in the Truth, muſt know the certainty of the Things in which they have been inſtructed; And thoſe that are reſolv'd muſt be fix'd in their Reſolutions. 2. True Confirmation is Confirmation of *the Soul*; 'tis not binding *the Body* by ſevere Penalties on Apoſtates, but binding *the Soul*; the beſt Miniſters can do that, only by preſſing thoſe Things which are proper to bind the Soul, 'tis the Grace of GOD, and nothing leſs that can effectually *confirm the Souls of the Diſciples*, and prevent their Apoſtacy.

(2.) They *exhorted them to continue in the Faith*; Or (as it may be read) they *encourag'd them*. They told them it was both their Duty and Intereſt to perſevere; to *abide* in the Belief of Chriſt's being the Son of GOD, and the Saviour of the World. *Note*, Thoſe that are in the Faith are concern'd to *continue in the Faith*, notwithſtanding all the Temptations they may be under to deſert it, from the Smiles and Frowns of this World. And it is requiſite they ſhould often be *exhorted* to do ſo. They that are continually ſurrounded with Temptations to Apoſtacy have need to be continually attended with preſſing Exhortations to Perſeverance.

(3.) That which they inſiſted moſt upon was, That *we muſt through much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God*. Not only *they* muſt, but *we* muſt; it muſt be counted upon that all that will go to Heaven muſt expect Tribulation and Perſecution in their Way thither. But is this the Way to *Confirm the Souls of the Diſciples*, and to engage them to *continue in the Faith*? One would think it ſhould rather ſhock them, and make them weary. No, As the Matter is fairly ſtated and taken entire, it will help to *confirm* them, and fix them for Chriſt. It is true they will meet with *Tribulation*, with *much* Tribulation, That's the worſt of it: But then. (1.) It is ſo *appointed*, they *muſt* undergo it, there's no Remedy, the Matter is already fix'd, and cannot be alter'd; He that has the *ſoveraign Diſpoſal* of us, has determin'd it to be our Lot, that *all* that *will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer Perſecution*; And he that has the *ſoveraign Command* over us, has determin'd this to be our Duty, that all that will be Chriſt's Diſciples muſt *take up their Croſs*, ſo that when we gave up our Names to Jeſus Chriſt, 'twas what we agreed to, when we *ſate down*, and *accounted the Coſt*, if we reckon'd right 'twas what we *counted upon*, ſo that if *Tribulation and Perſecution aroſe becauſe of the Word*, 'tis but what we had Notice of before, it muſt be ſo, *He performeth the Thing that is appointed for us*. The Matter is fix'd unalterably, and *ſhall the Rock be* for us *remov'd out of its Place*. (2.) It is the Lot of the *Leaders* in Chriſt's Army as well as of the *Soldiers*. It is not only *you* but *we*, that (if it be thought a *Hardſhip*) are ſubject to it, therefore as *your own* Sufferings muſt not be a Stumbling to you, ſo neither muſt *ours*, ſee 1 *Theſ.* iii. 3. *Let none be moved by our Afflictions, for yourſelves know that we are appointed thereunto.* As Chriſt did not put the Apoſtles upon any harder Service than what he underwent before them, ſo neither did the Apoſtels put the ordinary Chriſtians. (3.) it is true we muſt count upon *much Tribulation*, but this is encouraging that we ſhall get *through it*? we ſhall not be loſt and periſh *in it*. It is a *Red Sea*, But the Lord has open'd a Way *through it*, for the *Redeemed of the Lord to paſs over*. We muſt *go down* to Trouble but we ſhall come up again. (4.) We ſhall not only get *through* it, but get through it *into the Kingdom of God*; And the Joy and Glory of the End will make abundant Amends for all the Difficulties and Hardſhips we may meet with in the Way. 'Tis true we *muſt* go *by the Croſs*, But it is as true that if we keep in the Way, and do not turn aſide or turn back, we ſhall *go to the Crown*, and the believing Proſpect of that will make the Tribulation eaſy and pleaſant.

(4.) They *ordain'd them Elders*, or Presbyters, *in every Church*. Now at this ſecond Viſit they ſettled them in ſome Order, form'd them into religious Societies under the Conduct of a ſettled Miniſtry, and ſettled that Diſtinction between them that are *taught in the Word*, and *them that teach*. (1.) Every Church had its Governours, or Preſidents, whoſe Office it was to pray with the Members of the Church, and to preach to them in their ſolemn Aſſemblies, to adminiſter all Goſpel Ordinances to them and to take the Overſight of them, to inſtruct the Ignorant, warn the Unruly, comfort the Feeble-minded, and to convince Gainſayers. 'Tis requiſite that every particular Church ſhould have One or more ſuch to preſide in it. (2.) Thoſe Governors were then *Elders*, that had in their Qualification the Wiſdom and Gravity of *Seniors*, and had in their Commiſſion the Authority and Command of *Seniors*: Not to make *new Laws*; that's the Prerogative of the *Prince*, the great Law-giver, (The Government of the Church is an abſolute Monarchy, and the legiſlative Power intirely in Chriſt) but to ſee to the Obſervation and Execution of the Laws Chriſt has made; And ſo far they are to be obey'd and ſubmitted to. (3.) Theſe *Elders* were *ordain'd*. Thoſe that knew the Perſons that were propos'd, or propos'd themſelves (whether the Apoſtles or the People put them up) Their Qualifications were judg'd of by the Apoſtles, as moſt fit to judge, and they themſelves having *devoted themſelves*, were ſolemnly *ſet apart* to the Work of the Miniſtry, and *bound* to it. (4.) Theſe *Elders* were ordain'd to *them*, to the *Diſciples*, to their *Service*, for their *Good*. Thoſe that are in the Faith have need to be built up in it, and have need of the *Elders* Help therein, the *Paſtors* and *Teachers*, who are to *edify* the *Body of Chriſt*.

5. *By Prayer* joyn'd with *Faſting* they *commended them to the Lord*, to the Lord Jeſus, *on whom they believed*. *Note*, 1. When Perſons are brought to *believe* and that ſincerely, yet Miniſters Care concerning them is not then over; there is Need of watching over them ſtill, inſtructing and admoniſhing them ſtill, there is ſtill that *lacking in their Faith*, which needs to be *perfected*. 2. The Miniſters that take moſt Care of them that believe muſt after all *commend them to the Lord*, and put them under the Protection and Conduct of his Grace, *Lord keep them through thine own Name*. To his Cuſtody they muſt commit themſelves, and their Miniſters muſt commit them. 3. 'Tis by *Prayer* that they muſt be *commended to the Lord*; Chriſt in his Prayer. *Joh.* xvii. commended his Diſciples to his Father, *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me, Father keep them.* 4. 'Tis a great Encouragement to us in commending the Diſciples to the Lord, that we can ſay, 'tis he *in whom they believ'd*, we commit *them* to him who have committed *themſelves* to him, and who know they have *believed in one who is able to keep what they* and we have *committed to him againſt* that Day, 2 *Tim.* i. 12. 5. 'Tis good to join *Faſting* with *Prayer*, in Token of our Humiliation for Sin, and in order to the adding of Vigour to our Prayers. 6. When we are parting with our Friends, the beſt Farewell is to *commend them to the Lord*, and to leave them with him.

2. They went on preaching the Goſpel in other Places, where they had been, but as it ſhould ſeem had not made ſo many Converts as that now at their Return they could form them into Churches; Therefore thither they came to purſue and carry on Converſion Work. From *Antioch* they *paſſed throughout* Piſidia, the Province in which that *Antioch* ſtood, thence they came into the Province of *Pamphylia*, the Head City of which was *Perga*, where they had been before, *chap* xiii. 13. and came thither again to *preach the Word*, v. 25. making a ſecond Offer, to ſee if they were now better diſpos'd than they were before, to receive the Goſpel. What Succeſs they had there we are not told, but that from thence they *went down* to *Attalia*, a City of *Pamphylia*, on the Sea-Coaſt. They ſtay'd not long at a Place, but where ever they came endeavour'd to lay a Foundation, which might afterwards be built upon, and to ſow the Seeds which would in Time produce a great Increaſe. Now Chriſt's Parables were explain'd, in which he reſembled the Kingdom of Heaven to a *little Leaven*, which in Time *leavened the whole Lump*; to a *Grain of Muſtard Seed*, which tho' very inconſiderable at firſt, grew to *a great Tree*; And to the *Seed* which a *Man ſow'd in his Ground*, and it *ſprung up he knew not how*.

Thirdly, How they at length came back to *Antioch*, in *Syria*, from whence they were ſent forth upon this Expedition. From *Attalia* they came by Sea to *Antioch*, v. 26. And we are here told,

1. Why they came thither; becauſe *from thence they had been recommended to the Grace of God*, and ſuch a Value did they put upon a ſolemn *Recommendation to the Grace of God*, tho' they had themſelves a great Intereſt in Heaven, that they never thought they could ſhew reſpect enough to thoſe who had ſo recommended them. They having recommended them to the Grace *of God*, for the Work *which they fulfill'd*, now they had *fulfill'd* it, they thought they ow'd them an Account of it that they might help them by their *Praiſes*, as they had done by their *Prayers*.

2. What Account they gave them of their Negotiation, *v.* 27. They *gather'd the Church together*; 'Tis probable the Chriſtians at *Antioch* were more, than ordinarily met or could meet in one Place, but on this Occaſion they call'd together the *leading Men* of them; As the Heads of the Tribes are often call'd the Congregation of *Iſrael*, ſo the Miniſters and principal Members of the Church at *Antioch* are called the Church; Or perhaps as many of the People as the Place would hold came together on that occaſion: Or, ſome met one Time, or in one Place, and others at another. But when they had them together they gave them an Account of Two Things.

(1.) Of the Tokens they had had of the Divine Preſence with them in their Labours. *They rehearſed all that God had done with them.* They did not tell what they had done, that would have ſavour'd of Vain-Glory, but of what *God hath done with them*, and by them. *Note*, The Praiſe of all that little Good we do at any Time muſt be aſcrib'd to GOD; for, it is He that not only *worketh in us* both to will and to do, but then worketh *with us*, to make what we do ſucceſsful. GOD's Grace can do any Thing without Miniſters Preaching, but Miniſters Preaching, even *Paul*'s can do nothing without GOD's Grace, and the Operations of that Grace muſt be acknowledg'd in the Efficacy of the Word.

(2.) Of the Fruit of their Labours among the Heathen; They told how *God had open'd the Door of Faith unto the* Gentiles, had not only order'd them to be invited to the Goſpel Feaſt, but had inclin'd the Hearts of many of them to accept the Invitation. *Note*, 1. There's no Entring into the Kingdom of Chriſt but by *the Door of Faith*; we muſt firmly believe in Chriſt or we have no Part in Him. 2. 'Tis GOD *that opens the Door of Faith*, that opens to us the Truths we are to believe, opens our Hearts to receive them, and makes this a *wide Door*, and an *effectual* into the Church of Chriſt.

3. We have Reaſon to be thankful that GOD has *open'd the Door of Faith to the Gentiles*, hath both ſent them his Goſpel, which is *made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith*, Rom. xvi. 26. And hath alſo given them Hearts to entertain the Goſpel. Thus the Goſpel was ſpread, and it ſhin'd more and more, and none was able to ſhut this Door which GOD had open'd; not all the Powers of Hell and Earth.

3. How they diſpos'd of themſelves for the preſent; *There they abode long Time with the Diſciples*, v. 28. longer than perhaps at firſt they intended; not becauſe they *fear'd the Enemies*, but becauſe they *lov'd their Friends*, and were loth to part from them.

CHAP. XV.

Hitherto we have with a great deal of Pleaſure attended the Apoſtles in their glorious Travels for the Propogating of the Goſpel in foreign Parts; *have ſeen the Bounds of the Church enlarged, by the Acceſſion both of* Jews *and* Gentiles *to it; and* Thanks *be to* that GOD who always caus'd them to triumph! *We left them in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter repoſing themſelves at* Antioch, *and edifying the Church there with the* Rehearſal *of their* Experiences, *and 'tis Pity they ſhould ever be* otherwiſe employ'd; *but in this Chapter we find other Work, nothing ſo pleaſant, cut out for them: The Chriſtians and Miniſters are* engag'd in Controverſy, *and they that ſhould have been more buſy'd it enlarging the Dominions of the Church, have as much as they can do to compoſe the Diviſions of it; when they ſhould have been making War upon the Devil's Kingdom, they have much ado to keep the Peace in Chriſt's Kingdom. Yet that Occurrence and the Record of it, is of great Uſe to the Church, both for warning to us to expect ſuch unhappy Diſcords among Chriſtians, and Direction to us what Method to take for the Accommodating of them.* Here's (1.) *A Controverſy rais'd at* Antioch *by the judaizing Teachers, who would have the believing* Gentiles *brought under the Yoke of Circumciſion and the Ceremonial Law.* v. 1, 2. (2.) *A Conſultation had with the Church at* Jeruſalem *about this Matter, and the ſending of Delegates thither for that Purpoſe, which occaſion'd the ſtarting of the ſome Queſtion there,* v. 2—5. (2.) *An Account of* *what paſs'd in the* Synod *that was conven'd upon this Occaſion,* v. 6. *What* Peter *ſaid,* v. 7---11. *What* Paul *and* Barnabas *diſcours'd of,* v. 12. *And* Laſtly, *What* James *propos'd for the ſettling of this Matter,* v. 13---21. (4.) *The Reſult of this Debate, and the Circular Letter that was written to the Gentile Converts, directing them how to govern themſelves with Reſpect to the* Jews, v. 22---29. (5.) *The delivering of this Determination to the Church at* Antioch, *and the Satisfaction it gave them,* v. 30---35. (6.) *A ſecond Expedition deſign'd by* Paul *and* Barnabas *to preach to the* Gentiles, *in which they quarrell'd about their Aſſiſtant, and parted upon it, One ſteering one Courſe, and the Other another,* v. 36---41.

AND certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, *and ſaid*, Except ye be circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, ye cannot be ſaved. 2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no ſmall diſſenſion and diſputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, ſhould go up to Jeruſalem unto the Apoſtles and Elders about this queſtion. 3 And being brought on their way by the Church, they paſſed through Phenice, and Samaria, declaring the converſion of the Gentiles: and they cauſed great joy unto all the brethren. 4 And when they were come to Jeruſalem, they were received of the Church, and *of* the Apoſtles and Elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. 5 But there roſe up certain of the ſect of the Phariſees which believed, ſaying, That it was needful to circumciſe them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moſes.

When Things go on very ſmoothly and pleaſantly in a State, or in a Church, yet 'tis Folly to be ſecure, and to think the *Mountain ſtands ſtrong*, and cannot be *moved*; ſome Uneaſineſs or other will ariſe which is not foreſeen, cannot be prevented, but muſt be prepar'd for. If ever there was a Heaven upon Earth, ſure it was in the Church at *Antioch* at this Time, when there were ſo many excellent Miniſters there, and bleſſed *Paul* among them, building up that Church in their moſt holy Faith: But here we have their Peace diſturb'd, and Differences ariſing. Here's

Firſt, A *New Doctrine* ſtarted among them, which occaſion'd this Diviſion, *obliging* the Gentile Converts to ſubmit to *Circumciſion* and the *Ceremonial Law*, v. 1. Many that had been Proſelytes to the Jewiſh Religion became Chriſtians, and they would have ſuch as were proſelyted to the Chriſtian Religion, to become *Jews*.

1. The Perſons that urg'd this, were *certain Men which came down from* Judea; ſome think, ſuch as had been of the *Phariſees*, v. 5. or perhaps of thoſe *Prieſts* which were *obedient to the Faith*, *chap.* vi. 7. They came from *Judea*, pretending perhaps to be ſent by the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem*, at leaſt, to be countenanc'd by them. Having a Deſign to ſpread their Notions, they came to *Antioch*, becauſe that was the head Quarters of thoſe that preach'd to the Gentiles, and the Rendezvouz of the Gentile Converts; and if they could but make an Intereſt there, this Leaven would ſoon be diffus'd to all the Churches of the Gentiles. They inſinuated themſelves into an Acquaintance with *the Brethren*, pretending to be very glad that they had embrac'd the Chriſtian Faith, and congratulated their Converſion; but tell them, *yet one Thing they lack*; they muſt be *circumcis'd*. *Note*, Thoſe that are ever ſo *well taught*, have need to ſtand upon their Guard, that they be not *untaught* again, or *ill-taught*.

2. The Poſition they laid down: The Theſis they gave was this, That except the Gentiles who turn'd Chriſtian were *circumcis'd after the Manner of* Moſes, and thereby oblig'd themſelves to all the Obſervances of the Ceremonial Law, *they could not be ſaved*. As to this:

1. Many of the *Jews* who embrac'd the Faith of Chriſt, yet continu'd very *zealous for the Law*, Acts xxi. 20. They knew it was from God, and its *Authority* was ſacred; valu'd it for its *Antiquity*, had been bred up in the Obſervance of it, and its probable had been often devoutly affected in their Attendance on thoſe Obſervances; they therefore kept them up after they were by Baptiſm admitted into the Chriſtian Church; kept up the Diſtinctions of Meats, and uſed the Ceremonial Purifyings from Ceremonial Pollutions, attended the Temple Service, and celebrated the Feaſts of the *Jews*. Herein they were conniv'd at, becauſe the Prejudices of Education are not to be got over all at once, and in a few Years the Miſtake would be ſufficiently rectify'd by the Deſtruction of the Temple, and the total Diſſolution of the Jewiſh Church; by which the Obſervation of the Moſaick Ritual, would become impracticable. But this did not ſuffice them, that they were herein indulg'd themſelves, they muſt have the Gentile Converts *brought under* the ſame Obligations which they *continu'd under*. *Note*, There is a ſtrange Proneneſs in us to make our own Opinion and Practice, a Rule and a Law to every Body elſe; to judge of all about us by our Standard, and to conclude, that becauſe we *do well*, all *do wrong*, that do not do *juſt as we do*.

2. Thoſe *Jews* who believ'd that Chriſt was the *Meſſiah*, as they could not get clear of their Affection to the Law, ſo they could not get clear of the Notions they had of the *Meſſiah*, that he ſhould ſet up a temporal Kingdom in favour of the Jewiſh Nation, ſhould make that illuſtrious and victorious; it was a Diſappointment to them that there was as yet nothing done towards this in the Way they expected: But now they hear that the Doctrine of Chriſt is receiv'd among the *Gentiles*, and his Kingdom begins to be ſet up in the Midſt of them, if they can but perſwade thoſe that embrace Chriſt, to embrace the Law of *Moſes* too, they hope their Point will be gain'd, the Jewiſh Nation will be made as conſiderable as they can wiſh, tho' in another Way; and therefore by all means let the Brethren be preſs'd to be *circumcis'd* and *keep the Law*; and then with our *Religion*, our *Dominion* will be extended, and we ſhall in a little Time be able to ſhake off the *Roman* Yoke; and not only ſo, but to put it on the Necks of our Neighbours, and ſo ſhall have ſuch a Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* as we promis'd ourſelves. *Note*, Thoſe who have wrong Notions of the Kingdom of Chriſt, it is no Wonder if they take wrong Meaſures for the Advancement of it, and ſuch as really tend to the Deſtruction of it, as theſe here do.

3. The Controverſy about the Circumciſing of the Gentile Proſelytes had been on Foot among the *Jews* long before this. This is obſerv'd by Dr. *Whitby* out of *Joſephus*, Antiq. l. xx. c. ii. That when *Izates* the Son of *Helen*, Queen of *Adiabene*, embrac'd the *Jews* Religion, *Ananias* declar'd he might do it *without Circumciſion*: But *Eleazer* maintain'd, That it was a great Impiety to remain uncircumcis'd. And when two eminent *Gentiles* fled to *Joſephus* (as he relates in the Hiſtory of his own Life) the *Zealots* among the *Jews* were urgent for their Circumciſion; but *Joſephus* diſſuaded them from inſiſting upon it. Such has been the Difference in all Ages between Bigottry and Moderation.

4. It is obſervable, what a mighty Streſs they laid upon it: They do not only ſay, *You ought* to be *circumcis'd after the Manner of* Moſes, and it will be good Service to the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, if you be; and will beſt accommodate Matters between you and the Jewiſh Converts, and we ſhall take it very kindly if you will, and ſhall converſe the more familiarly with you; but *except you be circumcis'd you cannot be ſav'd*. If you be not herein of our Mind and Way, you'll *never go to Heaven*, and therefore of courſe *muſt go to Hell*. *Note*, It is common for proud Impoſers to enforce their own Inventions under Pain of Damnation, and tell People, unleſs they believe juſt as they would have them believe, and do juſt as they would have them do, they *cannot be ſav'd*, 'tis impoſſible they ſhould; not only their Caſe is hazardous, but it is deſperate. Thus the *Jews* tell the Brethren, That except they be of *their* Church, and come in to their Communion, and conform to the Ceremonies of their Worſhip, tho' otherwiſe good Men and Believers in Chriſt, yet they *cannot be ſav'd*; Salvation itſelf cannot ſave them. None are in Chriſt, but they that are within their Pale. We ought to ſee ourſelves well warranted by the Word of God before we ſay, Except you do ſo and ſo, *ye cannot be ſav'd*.

Secondly, The Oppoſition which *Paul* and *Barnabas* gave to this *ſchiſmatical* Notion, which engroſs'd Salvation to the *Jews*, now Chriſt had open'd the Door of Salvation to the *Gentiles*, v. 2. *They had no ſmall Diſſenſion and Diſputation with them.* They would by no Means yield to this Doctrine; but *appear'd* and *argu'd* publickly againſt it.

1. As *faithful Servants of Chriſt*, they would not ſee *his Truths betray'd*; They knew that Chriſt came to free us from the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law, and to take down that Wall of Partition between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and unite them both in himſelf, and therefore cannot bear to hear of *Circumciſing* the Gentile Converts, when their Inſtructions were only to *baptize* them. The *Jews* would *unite* with the *Gentiles*, that is, they would have them to conform in every Thing to their Rites, and then, and not till then, they will look upon them as their Brethren; and no Thanks to them. But this not being the Way in which Chriſt deſign'd to unite them, 'tis not to be admitted.

2. As *Spiritual Fathers* to the Gentile Converts, they would not ſee their *Liberties encroach'd upon*; They had told them, That *if they believe in Chriſt Jeſus*, they ſhould be *ſav'd*; and now to be told, that this was not enough to ſave them, except they were circumcis'd and kept the Law of *Moſes*; this was ſuch a Diſcouragement to them at ſetting-out, and would be ſuch a Stumbling-block in their Way, as might almoſt tempt them to think of returning into *Egypt* again; and therefore they ſet themſelves againſt it.

Thirdly, The Expedient pitch'd upon for the Preventing of the Miſchief of this dangerous Notion, and the Silencing of thoſe that vented it, and the Quieting of the Minds of the People, with Reference to it. They *determin'd* that *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and ſome others of their Number, ſhould *go to* Jeruſalem *to the Apoſtles and Elders, concerning this Doubt*. Not that the Church at *Antioch* had any Doubt concerning it, they knew the Liberty wherewith Chriſt had made them free: But they ſent the Caſe to *Jeruſalem*.

1. Becauſe thoſe who taught this Doctrine came from *Jeruſalem*, and pretended to have Directions from the Apoſtles there, to urge Circumciſion upon the Gentile Converts; it was therefore very proper to ſend to *Jeruſalem* about it, to know if they had any ſuch Direction from the Church there. And it was ſoon found to be *all wrong*, which yet pretended to be of Apoſtolical Right. It was true that theſe *went out from them*, *v.* 24, but they never went with any ſuch Orders from them.

2. Becauſe thoſe who were taught this Doctrine, would be the better confirm'd in their Oppoſition to it, and in the leſs Danger of being ſhock'd and diſturb'd by it, if they were ſure that *the Apoſtles and Elders at* Jeruſalem (which was that Chriſtian Church, that of all others retain'd the moſt Affection to the Law of *Moſes*) were againſt it; and if they could but have that under their Hands, it would be the likelieſt Means to ſilence and ſhame theſe Incendiaries, who had pretended to have it from them.

3. Becauſe the Apoſtles at *Jeruſalem* were fitteſt to be conſulted in a Point yet not fully ſettled: And being moſt eminent for *an infallible Spirit*, peculiar to them as Apoſtles, their Deciſion would be likely to end the Controverſy. And it is the Subtilty and Malice of the great Enemy of the Church's Peace, (as appears by *Paul's* frequent Complaints of theſe *Judaizing Teachers*, theſe *Falſe Apoſtles*, theſe *Deceitful Workers*, theſe Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt) that it had not that Effect.

Fourthly, Their Journey to *Jeruſalem* upon this Errand, *v.* 3. Where we find,

1. That they were honour'd at parting; *They were brought on their Way by the Church*; which was then much us'd as a Token of Reſpect to uſeful Men, and is directed to be done *after a godly Sort*, 3 John 6. Thus *the Church* ſhew'd their Favour to them who witneſs'd againſt the Encroachments on the Liberties of the Gentile Converts, and ſtood up for them.

2. That they did Good as they went along: They were Men that would not loſe Time, and therefore viſited the Churches *by the Way*; they paſs'd thro' *Phœnice* and *Samaria*, and as they went *declar'd the Converſion of the Gentiles*, and what wonderful Succeſs the Goſpel had had among them; which *cauſed great Joy to all the Brethren*. *Note*, The Progreſs of the Goſpel is, and ought to be, a Matter of great Joy. *All the Brethren*, the *faithful* Brethren in Chriſt's Family rejoyce when more are born into the Family; for the Family will be never the poorer for the Multitude of its Children. In Chriſt and Heaven there is Portion enough, and Inheritance enough for them all.

Fifthly, Their hearty Welcome at *Jeruſalem*, *v.* 9.

1. The good Entertainment their Friends gave them; They were *receiv'd of the Church, and of the Apoſtles and Elders*, were embrac'd as *Brethren*, and had Audience as *Meſſengers* of the Church at *Antioch*, they receive them with all poſſible Expreſſions of Love and Friendſhip.

2. The good Entertainment they gave their Friends: They *declar'd all Things that GOD had done with them*; gave them an Account of the Succeſs of their Miniſtry among the Gentiles; not what *they had done*, but what God had *done with them*; what he had, by his Grace *in them* enabled them *to do*; and what he had, by his Grace *in their Hearers*, enabled them to *receive*. As they *went* they had *planted*, as they *came back* they had *water'd*; but in both they were ready to own it was God that *gave the Increaſe*. *Note*, It is a great Honour to be employ'd for God, to be Workers for him; for thoſe that are ſo, have him a Worker with them, and he muſt have all the Glory.

Sixthly, The Oppoſition they met with from the ſame Party at *Jeruſalem*, *v.* 5. When *Barnabas* and *Paul* gave an Account of the Multitude of the Gentiles, and of the great Harveſt of Souls gather'd in to Chriſt there, and all about them congratulated them upon it; *there roſe up certain of the Sect of the Phariſees*, who receiv'd the Tydings very coldly, and tho' *they believ'd in Chriſt*, yet were not ſatisfy'd in the Admiſſion of thoſe Converts, but thought it was needful to *circumciſe them*. *Obſerve here*,

1. That thoſe who have been moſt *prejudic'd* againſt the Goſpel, yet have been *captivated* by it; ſo mighty has it been thro' God to the pulling down of Strong-holds. When Chriſt was here upon Earth, few or none of the *Rulers* and of the *Phariſees believ'd on him*, but now there are thoſe of the *Sect of the* Phariſees *which believ'd*, and many of them, we hope, in Sincerity.

2. That it is very hard for Men ſuddenly to get clear of their Prejudices: Thoſe that had been *Phariſees*, even after they became Chriſtians retain'd ſome of the old Leaven: All did not ſo, witneſs *Paul*, but ſome did; and had ſuch a Zeal for the Ceremonial Law, and ſuch a Diſlike of the Gentiles, that they could not admit the Gentiles into Communion with them, unleſs they would be *circumcis'd*, and thereby engage themſelves to *keep the Law of* Moſes. This was in their Opinion *needful*; and for their Parts, they would not converſe with them unleſs they ſubmitted to it.

6 ¶ And the Apoſtles and Elders came together for to conſider of this matter. 7 And when there had been much diſputing, Peter roſe up and ſaid unto them; Men *and* Brethren, ye know how that a good while ago, God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth ſhould hear the word of the goſpel, and believe. 8 And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witneſs, giving them the holy Ghoſt, even as *he did* unto us: 9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith, 10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the diſciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, we ſhall be ſaved even as they. 12 ¶ Then all the multitude kept ſilence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. 13 ¶ And after they had held their peace, James anſwered, ſaying, Men *and* Brethren, hearken unto me. 14 Simeon hath declared how God at the firſt did viſit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. 15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is writen, 16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruines thereof, and I will ſet it up: 17 That the reſidue of men might ſeek after the Lord, and all the the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, ſaith the Lord, who doth all theſe things. 18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world. 19 Wherefore my ſentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: 20 But that we write unto them, that they abſtain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things ſtrangled, and *from* Blood. 21 For Moſes of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the ſynagogues every ſabbath-day.

We have here a *Council call'd*, not by *Writ*, but by *Conſent*, on this Occaſion, *v.* 6. *The Apoſtles* and *Presbyters came together*, to *conſider of this Matter*. They did not give their Judgment *ſeparately*, but *came together* to do it, that they might hear one another's Senſe in this Matter; for in the Multitude of Counſellors there is Safety and Satisfaction. They did not give their Judgment *raſhly*, but *conſider'd* of this Matter: Tho' they were clear concerning it in their Minds, yet they would take Time to *conſider* of it, and to hear what was to be ſaid by the adverſe Party. Nor did the *Apoſtles* give their Judgment concerning it without the *Elders*, the inferiour Miniſters to whom they thus condeſcended, and on whom they thus put an Honour. Thoſe that are moſt eminent in Gifts and Graces, and are in the moſt exalted Stations in the Church, ought to ſhew Reſpect to their Juniors, and Inferiors, for tho' *Days ſhould ſpeak*, yet *there is a Spirit in Man*, *Job* xxxii. 7, 8. Here is a Direction to the Paſtors of the Churches when Difficulties ariſe to *come together* in ſolemn Meetings, for mutual Advice and Encouragment, that they may know one another's Mind, and ſtrengthen one another's Hands, and may act in Concert.

Now here we have,

Firſt, *Peter's* Speech in this Synod. He did not in the leaſt pretend to any Primacy or Headſhip in this Synod, He was not Maſter of this Aſſembly, not ſo much as Chair-man, or Moderator, *pro hac vice*; for we do not find that either he *ſpoke firſt* to open the Synod, there having been *much diſputing* before he *roſe up*; or that he *ſpoke laſt*, to ſum up the Cauſe, and collect the Suffrages; but he was a faithful, prudent, zealous Member of this Aſſembly; and offer'd that which was very much to the Purpoſe, and which would come better from him than from another, becauſe he had himſelf been the firſt that preach'd the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*. *There had been much diſputing*, *Pro* and *Con* upon this Queſtion, and Liberty of Speech allow'd, as ought to be in ſuch Caſes. Thoſe *of the Sect of the Phariſees* were ſome of them preſent, and allow'd to ſay what they could in Defence of thoſe of their Opinion at *Antioch*; which probably was anſwer'd by ſome of the Elders. Such Queſtions ought to be fairly *diſputed* before they are *decided*; when both Sides had been heard, *Peter* roſe up, and addreſs'd himſelf to the Aſſembly, *Men and Brethren*, as did *James* afterwards, *v.* 13. And here,

1. He put them in Mind of the Call and Commiſſion he had ſome Time ago to preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*; he wonder'd there ſhould be any Difficulty made of a Matter already ſettled. Ye know that ἀπ' ἀρχαίων ἡμερῶν from the *Beginning* of the Days of the Goſpel, many Years ago, *God made choice among us* Apoſtles, of one to preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, and I was the Perſon choſen, *that the* Gentiles *by my Mouth* ſhould *hear the Word and believe*, v. 7. *you know* I was queſtioned about it, and cleared myſelf to univerſal Satisfaction, every Body rejoyc'd

that *God had granted to the* Gentiles *Repentance unto Life*, and no Body ſaid a Word of *Circumciſing* them, nor was there any Thought of ſuch a Thing, ſee *Acts*, xi. 18. Why ſhould the *Gentiles* who hear the Word of the Goſpel by *Paul*'s Mouth be compelled to ſubmit to Circumciſion any more than thoſe that heard it *by my Mouth*? Or, why ſhould the Terms of their Admiſſion now be made harder than they were then?

2. He puts them in mind how remarkably God own'd *him* in preaching to the *Gentiles*, and gave Teſtimony to their Sincerity in embracing the Chriſtian Faith, *v.* 8. *God who knows the Hearts*, and therefore is able to judge infallibly of Men, he *bore them witneſs*, that they were His indeed, by *giving them the Holy Ghoſt*, not only the Graces and Comforts, but the extraordinary miraculous Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, *even as he did unto us* Apoſtles, ſee *chap.* xi. 13, 16, 17. *Note*, 1. The Lord *knows them that are his*, for he *knows Mens Hearts*; and we are as our Hearts are. 2. Thoſe to whom God gives the Holy Ghoſt, he thereby *bears witneſs* to, that they are *his*: Here we are ſaid to be *ſealed* with that Holy Spirit of Promiſe; mark'd for God.

God had *bid* the *Gentiles welcome* to the Priviledge of Communion with him, without requiring them to be circumcis'd, and to keep the Law, and therefore ſhall not we admit them into Communion with us, but upon thoſe Terms? *v.* 9. *God has put no difference between us and them*, they tho' *Gentiles*, are as welcome to the Grace of Chriſt, and the Throne of Grace as we *Jews* are, why then ſhould we ſet them at a Diſtance, as if we were *holier than they*, Iſa. lxv. 5. *Note*, We ought not to make any other Conditions of our Brethrens Acceptance with us, but ſuch as God has made the Conditions of their Acceptance with him. *Rom.* xiv. 3. Now the *Gentiles* were fitted for Communion with God, in having *their Hearts purify'd by Faith*, and that Faith God's own Work in them, and therefore why ſhould we think them unfit for Communion with us, unleſs they will ſubmit to the ceremonial Purifying enjoyn'd by the Law in us. *Note*, 1. By *Faith* the Heart is *purify'd*; we are not only *juſtify'd*, and Conſcience *purify'd*, but the Work of Sanctification is begun and carry'd on. 2. Thoſe that have their *Hearts purify'd by Faith* therein are made ſo nearly to reſemble one another, that whatever other *Difference* there may be *between them*, no Account is to be made of it; for the Faith of all the Saints is *alike precious* and has like precious Effects, 2 *Pet.* i. 1. and they that by it are *united to Chriſt* are ſo to look upon themſelves as joyn'd to one another, as that all Diſtinctions, even that between *Jew* and *Gentile* are merg'd and ſwallow'd up in it.

3. He ſharply reproves theſe Teachers, (ſome of whom 'tis likely were preſent) who went about to bring the *Gentiles* under the Obligation of the Law of *Moſes*, v. 10. The Thing is ſo plain that he cannot forbear ſpeaking of it with ſome Warmth. *Now therefore* ſince God has own'd them for His, *Why tempt ye God to put a Yoke upon the Neck of the Diſciples*, of the believing *Gentiles* and their Children; for Circumciſion was a Yoke upon their Infant-Seed who are here reckon'd among the *Diſciples*; a Yoke *which neither our Fathers, nor we were able to bear*. Here he ſhews that in this Attempt (1.) They offer'd a very *great Affront to God*; you *tempt* him, by calling that in Queſtion which he hath already ſettled and determin'd by no leſs an Indication than that of the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, you do in effect aſk, Did he know what he did? Or was he in earneſt in it? Or, will he abide by his own Act? Will you try whether God who deſign'd the Ceremonial Law for the People of the *Jews* only, will now in its laſt Ages, bring the *Gentiles* too under the Obligation of it to gratify you? Thoſe *tempt God* who *preſcribe* to him, and ſay People *cannot be ſav'd* but upon ſuch and ſuch Terms, which God never appointed, as if *the God of Salvation* muſt come into their Meaſures. (2.) They offer'd a very *great Wrong to the Diſciples*. Chriſt came to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and they go about to enſlave thoſe whom he has made free, (ſee *Neh.* v. 8.) The Ceremonial Law was a *heavy Yoke*, They and *their Fathers* found it difficult to be born, ſo numerous, ſo various, ſo pompous were the Inſtitutions of it. The *Diſtinction of Meats* was a *heavy Yoke* not only as it render'd Converſation leſs pleaſant, but as it embarraſs'd Conſcience with endleſs Scruples. The Adoe that was made about even the unavoidable Touch of a *Grave* or a *dead Body*, the Pollution contracted by it, was a *heavy Burthen*. This Yoke Chriſt came to eaſe us of, and called thoſe that were *weary* and *heavy laden* under it, to come and *take his Yoke* upon them, his *eaſy* Yoke; Now for theſe Teachers to go about to *lay that Yoke* upon the Neck of the *Gentiles*, which he came to free even the *Jews* from, was the greateſt Injury imaginable to them.

4. Whereas the *Jewiſh Teachers* had urg'd that *Circumciſion* was neceſſary *to Salvation*, Peter ſhews 'twas ſo far from being ſo, that both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were to be *ſaved* purely *through the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and no other Way, *v.* 11. *we believe to be ſaved through that Grace* only, πιστεύομεν σωθῆναι we hope to be ſaved, or *we believe unto Salvation in the ſame manner as they*, καθ' ὃν τρόπον κἀκεῖνοι. We that are circumcis'd *believe* to Salvation, and ſo do they that are uncircumcis'd, and as our Circumciſion will be no Advantage to *us*, ſo their Uncircumciſion will be no Diſadvantage to *them*, for we muſt depend upon the *Grace of Chriſt* for Salvation, and muſt apply that Grace by *Faith* as well as *they*. There is not one Way of Salvation for the *Jews*, and another for the *Gentiles*; *neither Circumciſion avails any Thing nor Uncircumciſion*, that's neither here nor there, but *Faith which works by Love*, *Gal.* v. 6. Why ſhould we burthen them with the Law of *Moſes* as neceſſary to *their* Salvation, when 'tis not *that* but the Goſpel of Chriſt that is neceſſary both to *our* Salvation and *theirs*.

Secondly, An Account of what *Barnabas* and *Paul* ſaid in this Synod; which did not need to be related, for they only gave in a Narrative of what was recorded in the forgoing Chapters, *what Miracles and Wonders God had wrought among the* Gentiles *by them*, v. 12. This they had given in to the Church at *Antioch*, *chap.* xiv. 27. to their Brethren *by the Way*, chap. xv. 3. and now again to the *Synod*. And it was very proper to be given in here. That which was contended for was, That the *Gentiles* ought to ſubmit to the Law of *Moſes*. Now in Oppoſition to this, *Paul* and *Barnabas* undertake to ſhew, by a plain Relation of Matters of Fact, that God *own'd* the Preaching of the *pure Goſpel* to them without the Law, and therefore to preſs the Law upon them now was to undo what God had done. *Obſerve*,

1. What *Account* they *gave*; they *declar'd* or *open'd* in Order, and with all the magnifying and affecting Circumſtances, what glorious Miracles, what *Signs* and *Wonders God had wrought among the* Gentiles *by them*. What *Confirmation* he had given to their Preaching, by *Miracles* wrought in the *Kingdom of Nature*; And what *Succeſs* he had given to it by *Miracles* wrought in the *Kingdom of Grace*. Thus God had honour'd theſe Apoſtles whom the Jewiſh Teachers *condemn'd*, and had thus honour'd the *Gentiles* whom they *contemn'd*. What needed they any other Advocate, when God himſelf pleaded their Cauſe? The Converſion of the *Gentiles* was itſelf a *Wonder*, all Things conſider'd no leſs than a Miracle: Now if they received the Holy Ghoſt by *the hearing of Faith* why ſhould they be embarraſs'd with the *Works of the Law*. See *Gal.* iii. 2.

2. What *Attention* was given *to them*; All *the Multitude* (who tho' they had not Votes yet came together to hear what was ſaid) *kept ſilence and gave Audience to* Paul *and* Barnabas; it ſhould ſeem they took more Notice of their Narrative than they did of all the Arguments that were offer'd. As in natural Philoſophy and Medicine, nothing ſo ſatisfactory as *Experiments*; and in Law nothing ſo ſatisfactory as *Caſes adjudg'd*; ſo in the Things of God the beſt Explication of the *Word of Grace* is the Accounts given of the Operations of the *Spirit of Grace*. Theſe the Multitude will with *Silence* give *Audience* to. They that fear God will moſt readily hear them that can tell them, *what God has done for their Souls*, or by their Means, *Pſal.* lxvi. 16.

Thirdly, The Speech which *James* made to the Synod; he did not *interrupt Paul* and *Barnabas*, tho' 'tis likely he had before heard their Narrative, but let them go on with it, for the Edification of the Company, and that they might have it from the firſt and beſt Hand; but *after they had held their Peace*: Then *James* ſtood up, *Ye may all propheſy, one by one*, 1 Cor. xiv. 31. God is the God of Order. He let *Paul* and *Barnabas* ſay what they had to ſay, and then he made the Application of it; The hearing of Variety of Miniſters may be of Uſe, when one Truth doth not *drive out*, but *clench* another.

1. He addreſſeth himſelf reſpectfully to thoſe preſent. *Men and Brethren hearken unto me*; ye are *Men*, and therefore 'tis to be hoped will hear *Reaſon*, you are *my Brethren*, and therefore will hear me with Candour. We are all *Brethren*, and equally concern'd in this Cauſe, that nothing be done to the Diſhonour of Chriſt, and the Uneaſineſe of Chriſtians.

2. He refers himſelf to what *Peter* had ſaid concerning the Converſion of the *Gentiles*, *v.* 14. *Simeon* (*i. e. Simon Peter*) hath *declar'd* and open'd the Matter to you, how *God at the firſt did viſit the* Gentiles *in* Cornelius and his Friends, who were the *firſt Fruits* of the *Gentiles*; how when the Goſpel began firſt to ſpread, preſently the *Gentiles* were *invited* to come and take the Benefit of it. And *James* obſerves here. (1.) That the *Grace of God* was the *Riſe* of it; 'Twas God that *viſited the* Gentiles; and it was a kind Viſit: Had they been left to themſelves they would never have *viſited him*, but the Acquaintance began on his Part. He not only *viſited* and *redeemed his People*, but viſited and redeemed thoſe that were *Lo ammi*, not a People. (2.) That the *Glory of God* was the *End* of it. It was to *take out of them a People for his Name*, who ſhould *glorify him*, and in whom he would be *glorify'd*: As of old he took the *Jews*, ſo now the *Gentiles* to be to him *for a Name, and for a Praiſe, and for a Glory*, Jer. xiii. 11. Let all the *People of God* remember, that therefore they are thus *dignify'd* in God, that God may be glorify'd in them.

3. He confirms this with a Quotation out of the *Old Teſtament*. He could not prove the Calling of the *Gentiles* by a Viſion as *Peter* could, or by Miracles wrought by his Hand as *Paul* and *Barnabas* could; but he would prove that it was foretold in the *Old Teſtament*, and therefore it muſt be fulfill'd, *v.* 15. *To this agree the Words of the Prophets*; moſt of the *Old Teſtament* Prophets ſpoke more or leſs of the Calling in of the *Gentiles*, even *Moſes* himſelf, *Rom.* x. 19. 'Twas the general Expectation of the pious *Jews*, that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be *a Light to lighten the* Gentiles, *Luke* ii. 32. But *James* waves the more illuſtrious Prophecies of this, and pitches upon one that ſeem'd more obſcure: It is written, *Amos* ix. 11, 12. where is foretold,

(1.) The *Setting up* of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, *v.* 16. *I will raiſe up the Tabernacle of* David *that is fallen.* The Covenant was made with *David* and his Seed, but the Houſe and Family of *David* is here call'd his *Tabernacle*, becauſe *David* in his beginning was a Shepherd, and *dwelt in Tents*, and his *Houſe* that had been as a ſtately Palace, was become a mean and deſpicable *Tabernacle*, reduc'd in a manner to its ſmall Beginning, This Tabernacle was *ruin'd* and *fallen down.* There had not been for many Ages a King of the Houſe of *David.* The *Sceptre* was *departed from* Judah; the Royal Family was ſunk, and bury'd in Obſcurity, and as it ſhould ſeem not enquired after: But God will *return and will build it again*, raiſe it out of its Ruins, a *Phœnix* out of its Aſhes; and this was now lately fulfill'd when our Lord Jeſus was rais'd out of that Family, had *the Throne of his Father* David *given him*, with a Promiſe that *he ſhould Reign over the Houſe of* Jacob *for ever*, Luke i. 32. And when the Tabernacle of *David* was thus re-built in Chriſt, all the reſt of it was not many Years after wholly *extirpated* and *cut off*, as was alſo the Nation of the Jewes itſelf, and all their Genealogies loſt. The Church of Chriſt may be call'd the *Tabernacle* of *David*, This may ſometimes be brought very low, and may ſeem to be in Ruins, but it ſhall be *built again*, it's withering Intereſts ſhall revive; 'tis *caſt down but not deſtroy'd*, even dry Bones are made to live.

(2.) The Bringing in of the *Gentiles* as the Effect and Conſequent of this, *v.* 17. *That the Reſidue of Men might ſeek after the Lord*; Not the *Jews* only, who thought they had the Monopoly of the Tabernacle of *David*, but the *Reſidue of Men*, ſuch as had hitherto been left out of the Pale of the viſible Church; they muſt now upon this Re-edifying of the Tabernacle of *David*, be brought to *ſeek after the Lord*, and to enquire how they may obtain his Favour, when *David*'s Tabernacle is ſet up, they *ſhall ſeek the Lord* their God, and *David* their King, *Hoſ.* iii. 1. *Jer.* xxx. 9. Then *Iſrael* ſhall *poſſeſs the Remnant of* Edom, ſo 'tis in the *Hebrew*; for the *Jews* called all the *Gentiles Edomites*, and therefore the *Septuagint* there leaves out the particular Mention of *Edom*, and read it juſt as it is here, *that the Reſidue of Men might ſeek* (St. *James* here adds *after the Lord*) and all the *Gentiles* or *Heathen, upon whom my Name is called.* The *Jews* were for many Ages ſo peculiarly favour'd, that *the Reſidue of Men* ſeem'd neglected; but now God will have an Eye to'em, and *hisName ſhall be called upon the* Gentiles: His Name ſhall be declar'd and publiſh'd among them, and they ſhall be brought both to *know* His Name, and to *call upon* it; they ſhall call themſelves the People of God, and he ſhall call them ſo, and thus by Conſent of both Parties, *His Name is called upon them.* This Promiſe we may depend upon the fufilling of in its Seaſon, and now it begins to be fulfilled, for it is added, *ſaith the Lord who doth this*; who doth *all theſe Things*, ſo the Seventy there, and the Apoſtle here; he *ſaith* it who *doth* it, who therefore *ſaid* it, becauſe he was determin'd to *do* it, and who therefore *doth* it, becauſe he hath *ſaid* it; for tho' with us *ſaying* and *doing* are *two Things*, they are not ſo with God. The Uniting of *Jews* and *Gentiles* in one Body, and all theſe Things that were done in order to it, which was here foretold, were (1.) what God *did*; This was the Lord's *doing*, whatever Inſtruments were employ'd in it. And (2.) 'Twas what God *delighted* in, and was well pleas'd with, for he is the *God of the* Gentiles as well as of the *Jews*, and it is his Honour to be *Rich in Mercy to all that call upon him.*

4. He reſolves it into the Purpoſe and Counſel of God, *v.* 18. *Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning of the World.* He not only *foretold* the Calling of the *Gentiles* many Ages ago by the Prophets, and therefore it ought not to be a *Surprize* or *Stumbling-block* to us, but he *fore-ſaw*, and *fore-ordain'd* it in his Eternal Counſels, which are unqueſtionably *wiſe*, and unalterably *firm.* 'Tis an excellent Maxim here laid down concerning *all God's Works*, both of Providence and Grace, in the natural and ſpiritual Kingdom, that they were all *known unto him*, *from the Beginning of the World*, from the Time he firſt began to work, which ſuppoſeth his knowing them, as other Scriptures ſpeak, *from before the Foundation of the World*, and therefore from all Eternity. *Note*, Whatever God *doth* he did before *deſign* and *determine* to do, for he works *all*, not only according to his Will, but *according to the Council of his Will.* He not only *doth* whatever he *determin'd*, Pſal. cxxxv. 6. which is more than we can do, our Purpoſes are frequently broken off, and our Meaſures broken: But he *determin'd* whatever he *doth*, whatever he may ſay to *prove us*, *He himſelf knoweth what he will do*; for it is ſaid, *Eph.* vi. 6. We know not *our Works* before-hand, but muſt do *as Occaſion ſhall ſerve*, 1. Sam. x. 7. What we ſhall do in ſuch or ſuch a Caſe, we cannnot tell, till it comes to the ſetting to: But *known unto God are all his Works.* In *the Volume of his Book* (call'd the *Scriptures of Truth*, Dan. x. 21.) they are all *written* in Order without any Razure or Interlining, *Pſ.* xl. 7. And all God's Works will in the Day of Review be found to agree exactly with his Counſels, without the leaſt Error or Variation. We are poor ſhort-ſighted Creatures, the wiſeſt Men can ſee but a little Way before them; and not at all with any Certainty; but this is our Comfort, That whatever Uncertainty we are at, there is an infallible Certainty in the Divine Preſcience, *Known unto God are all his Works.*

5. He gives his Advice what was to be done in the preſent Caſe, as the Matter now ſtood with Reference to the *Gentiles*, *v.* 19. *My Sentence is*, ἐγὼ κρίνω, I give it as my Opinion, or Judgement; not as having Authority *over* the reſt, but as being an Adviſer *with* them. Now his Advice is,

1. That Circumciſion and the Obſervation of the Ceremonial Law be by no Means impos'd upon the Gentile Converts, no, not ſo much as recommended or mention'd to them: There are many *from among the Gentiles* that are *turn'd to God*, in Chriſt, and we hope there will be many more. Now I am clearly for uſing them with all poſſible Tenderneſs, and putting no Manner of Hardſhip or Diſcouragement upon them, μὴ παρενοχλεῖν, not to give them any Moleſtation or Diſturbance, or ſuggeſt any Thing to them that may be diſquieting, or raiſe Scruples in their Minds, or perplex them. *Note*, Great Care muſt be taken not to *diſcourage* or *diſquiet* young Converts, with *Matters of doubtful Diſputation*: Let the Eſſentials of Religion, which an awaken'd Conſcience will readily receive, be firſt impreſs'd deeply upon them, and thoſe will ſatisfy them, and make them eaſy: And let not Thing foreign and circumſtantial be urg'd upon them, which will but *trouble* them: The *Kingdom of God*, which they are to be train'd up in, is not *Meat and Drink*, either the Oppoſition, or the Impoſition of indifferent Things, which will but *trouble them*, but *it is Righteouſneſs, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, which we are ſure will *trouble* no Body.

2. That yet it would do well that in ſome Things which gave moſt Offence to the *Jews*, the *Gentiles* ſhould comply with them; becauſe they muſt not humour them ſo far as to be circumcis'd and keep the whole Law, it doth not therefore follow, that they muſt act in a continual Contradiction to them, and ſtudy how to provoke them. It will *pleaſe* the *Jews*, (and if a little Thing will *oblige* them, better do ſo than croſs them) if the Gentile Converts abſtain,

(1.) From *Pollutions of Idols*, and from *Fornication*, which are two *bad Things*, and always to be abſtain'd from, (becauſe in theſe Things the *Jews* were jealous of the Gentile Converts leſt they ſhould tranſgreſs) would very much *gratify* the *Jews.* Not but that the Apoſtles, both in Preaching and Writing to the *Gentiles* that embrac'd Chriſtianity, were careful to warn againſt, (1.) *Pollutions of Idols*; That they ſhould have no manner of Fellowſhip with Idolaters in their idolatrous Worſhips, and particularly not in the Feaſts they held upon their Sacrifices. See 1 *Cor.* x. 14, &c. 2 *Cor.* vi. 14, &c. (2.) *Fornication*, and all Manner of *Uncleanneſs.* How large, how preſſing is St. *Paul* in his Cautions againſt this Sin, 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 15. *Eph.* v. 3, &c. But the *Jews*, who were willing to think the worſt of thoſe they did not like, ſuggeſted that theſe were Things which the Gentiles even after Converſion *allow'd themſelves in*, and the Apoſtles of the Gentiles *conniv'd at* it. Now to obviate this Suggeſtion, and to leave no Room for this Calumny, St. *James* adviſeth, that beſides the private Admonitions which were given them by their Miniſters, they ſhould be publickly warn'd to *abſtain from pollutions of Idols* and from *Fornication*; that herein they ſhould be very *circumſpect*, and ſhould avoid *all Appearances* of thoſe two Evils, which would be in ſo particular a Manner offenſive to the *Jews.*

(2.) From *Things ſtrangled*, and *from Blood*; which tho' not evil in themſelves, as the other two, nor deſign'd to be *always* abſtain'd from, as thoſe were; yet they had been forbidden by the Precepts of *Morals*, Gen. ix. 4. before the giving of the Law of *Moſes.* And the *Jews* had a great Diſlike to them, and to all thoſe that took a Liberty to uſe them; and therefore to avoid giving Offence, let the Gentile Converts abridge themſelves of their Liberty herein, 1 *Cor.* viii. 9, 13. Thus we muſt become *all Things to all Men.*

6. He gives a Reaſon for his Advice, That great Reſpect ought to be ſhew'd to the *Jews*, for they have been ſo long accuſtom'd to the ſolemn Injunctions of the Ceremonial Law, that they muſt be born with, if they cannot preſently come off from them, *v.* 21. For *Moſes hath of old them that preach him in every City*, his Writings (a conſiderable Part of which is the Ceremonial Law) *being read*, in the Synagogues *every Sabbath-Day.* You cannot blame them if they have a great Veneration for the Law of *Moſes*; for beſides that they are very ſure *God ſpake by* Moſes; (1.) *Moſes* is continually *preach'd* to them, and they are call'd upon to *Remember the Law of* Moſes, *Mal.* iv. 1. *Note*, Even that Word of God which is *written* to us, ſhould alſo be *preach'd*; thoſe that have the Scriptures, yet have need of Miniſters to help them to underſtand and apply the Scriptures. 2. His Writings are *read* in a ſolemn religious Manner, in *their Synagogues*, and on the *Sabbath-Day*, in the Place, and at the Time of their Meetings for the Worſhip of God; ſo that from their Childhood they have been train'd up in a Regard to the Law of *Moſes*, the Obſervance of it is a Part of their Religion. 3. This has been done *in every City*, wherever there are any *Jews*; ſo that none of them can be ignorant what Streſs that Law laid upon theſe Things. And therefore though the Goſpel hath ſet us free from theſe Things, yet they cannot be blam'd, if they are loth to part with them, and cannot *of a ſudden* be perſuaded to look upon thoſe Things as *needleſs* and *indifferent*, which they and their Fathers before them had been ſo long taught, and taught of God too

to place Religion in. And therefore we muſt *give them Time*, muſt meet them *Half-way*, they muſt be born with a While, and brought on *gradually*, and we muſt comply with them as far as we can without betraying our Goſpel Liberty. Thus doth this Apoſtle ſhew the Spirit of a *Moderator*, that is, a Spirit of *Moderation*, being careful to *give no Offence* either to *Jew* or *Gentile*, and contriving as much as may be to pleaſe both Sides, and provoke neither. *Note*, We are not to think it ſtrange, if People be wedded to Cuſtoms which they have had tranſmitted to them from their Fathers, and which they have been educated in an Opinion of as *ſacred*; and therefore Allowances muſt be made in ſuch Caſes, and not Rigour us'd.

22 Then pleaſed it the apoſtles and elders, with the whole church, to ſend choſen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas ſirnamed Barſabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And wrote letters by them after this manner, The apoſtles, and elders, and brethren ſend greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia. 24 Foraſmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, ſubverting your ſouls, ſaying, *Ye muſt* be circumciſed, and keep the law; to whom we gave no *ſuch* commandment: 25 It ſeemed good unto us, being aſſembled with one accord, to ſend choſen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul; 26 Men that have hazarded their lives, for the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 27 We have ſent therefore Judas and Silas, who ſhall alſo tell *you* the ſame things by mouth. 28 For it ſeemed good to the holy Ghoſt, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden then theſe neceſſary things; 29 That ye abſtain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things ſtrangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep your ſelves, ye ſhall do well, Fare ye well. 30 So when they were diſmiſſed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epiſtle. 31 *Which* when they had read, they rejoyced for the conſolation. 32 And Judas and Silas being prophets alſo themſelves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed *them*. 33 And after they had tarried *there* a ſpace, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apoſtles. 34 Notwithſtanding it pleaſed Silas to abide there ſtill. 35 Paul alſo and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others alſo.

We have here the Reſult of the Conſultation that was had at *Jeruſalem* about the Impoſing of the Ceremonial Law upon the *Gentiles*. Much more 'tis likely was ſaid about it than is here recorded; but at length it was brought to a Head, and the Advice which *James* gave was univerſally approved of, and agreed to, *nemine contradicente*; and Letters were accordingly ſent by Meſſengers of their own to the Gentile Converts, acquainting them with their Sentiments in this Matter; which would be a great Confirmation to them againſt the falſe Teachers. Now *Obſerve here*,

Firſt, The Choice of the Delegates that were to be ſent with *Paul* and *Barnabas* on this Errand: Not as if they had any Suſpicion of the Fidelity of theſe Great Men, and could not truſt them with their Letters; Or, as if they thought thoſe to whom they ſent 'em, would ſuſpect 'em to have alter'd any Thing in their Letter; No, their *Charity thought no ſuch evil* concerning Men of ſuch try'd Integrity. But,

1. They thought fit to ſend Men *of their own Company to* Antioch *with* Paul *and* Barnabas, *v.* 22. This was agreed to by *the Apoſtles and Elders, with the whole Church*, who 'tis likely undertook to bear their Charges, 1 *Cor.* ix. 7. They ſent theſe Meſſengers, (1.) To ſhew their Reſpect to the Church at *Antioch*, as a Siſter Church, tho' a younger Siſter, and that they look'd upon it as upon the ſame Level with them; as alſo that they were deſirous further to know their State. (2.) To encourage *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and to make their Journey Home the more pleaſant (for 'tis likely they travell'd on Foot) by ſending ſuch excellent Men to bear them Company; *Amicus pro vehiculo.* (3.) To put a Reputation upon the Letters they carry'd, that it might appear a *ſolemn Embaſſy*, and ſo much the more Regard might be had to the Meſſage, which was likely to meet with Oppoſition from ſome. (4.) To keep up the *Communion of Saints*, and cultivate an Acquaintance between Churches and Miniſters that were at a Diſtance from each other, and to ſhew that though they were *Many*, yet they were *One*.

2. Thoſe they ſent were not inferior Perſons, who might ſerve to carry the Letters, and atteſt the Receipt of them from the Apoſtles; but they were *choſen Men*, and *chief Men among the Brethren*, and qualify them to be the *Meſſengers of the Churches*. They are here nam'd *Judas*, who was call'd *Barſabas*, probably the Brother of that *Joſeph* who was call'd *Barſabas*, that was a Candidate for the Apoſtleſhip, *chap.* i. 23. The Character which theſe Men had in the Church at *Jeruſalem*, would have ſome Influence upon them that *came from* Judea, as thoſe falſe Teachers did, and engage them to pay the more Deference to the Meſſage that was ſent by them.

Secondly, The drawing up of the Letters, *Circular Letters* that were to be ſent to the Churches, to notify the Senſe of the *Synod* in this Matter.

1. Here's a very condeſcending obliging Preamble to this Decree, *v.* 23. Here's nothing in it haughty or aſſuming; But (1.) That which ſpeaks the *Humility* of the *Apoſtles*, that they joyn the *Elders* and *Brethren* in Commiſſion with them; The *Miniſters*, the *ordinary Chriſtians*, whom they had adviſ'd with in this Caſe, as they us'd to do in other Caſes. Tho' never Men were ſo *qualify'd* as they were for a monarchical Power and Conduct in the Church, nor had ſuch a *Commiſſion* as they had, yet their Decrees run not, We the *Apoſtles*, Chriſt's Vicars upon Earth, and Paſtors of all the Paſtors of all the Churches, (as the Pope ſtyles himſelf) and *ſole* Judges in all Matters of Faith; but the *Apoſtles* and *Elders*, and *Brethren*, agree in their Orders. Herein they remember'd the Inſtructions their Maſter gave them, *Mat.* xxiii. 8, *Be not ye call'd Rabbi; for all ye are Brethren.* 2. That which ſpeaks their *Reſpects* to the Churches they wrote to: They ſend to them *Greeting*, wiſh them Health and Happineſs, and Joy, and call them *Brethren of the Gentiles*; thereby owning their Admiſſion into the Church, and giving them the *right Hand of Fellowſhip*, you are our *Brethren*, tho' *Gentiles*, for we meet in Chriſt, the *Firſt-born among many Brethren*, in GOD our common Father. Now the *Gentiles* are *Fellow-Heirs*, and *of the ſame Body*, they are to be countenanc'd, and encourag'd, and call'd *Brethren*.

2. Here's a juſt and ſevere Rebuke to the judaizing Teachers *v.* 23. We *have heard that certain which went out from us, have troubled you with Words*; and we are very much concern'd to hear it. Now this is to let them know, That thoſe who preach'd this Doctrine were *falſe Teachers*, both as they produc'd a *falſe Commiſſion*, and as they taught a *falſe Doctrine*.

(1.) They did a great deal of *wrong* to the *Apoſtles* and Miniſters at *Jeruſalem*, in *pretending* that they had Inſtructions from *them*, to *impoſe* the Ceremonial Law upon the *Gentiles*, when there was no Colour for ſuch a Pretenſion. They *went out from us* indeed, they were ſuch as belong'd to our Church, which, when they had a Mind to travel, we gave them perhaps a Teſtimonial of; but as for their urging the Law of *Moſes* upon you, we *gave them no ſuch Commandment*, nor had we ever thought of ſuch a Thing, nor given them the leaſt Occaſion to uſe our Names in it: It is no new Thing for Apoſtolical Authority, to be *pleaded* in Defence of thoſe Doctrines and Practices, which yet the Apoſtles gave neither *Command* nor *Encouragement* for.

(2.) They did a great deal of wrong to the Gentile Converts, in ſaying, Ye muſt be *circumcis'd*, and muſt *keep the Law*. (1.) It *perplex'd* them: They have *troubled you with Words*; have occaſion'd Diſturbance and Diſquietment to you; you depended upon thoſe who told you, If you *believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *you ſhall be ſaved*; and now you are ſtartled by thoſe that tell you, you muſt keep the Law of *Moſes*, or you cannot he ſaved; by which you ſee yourſelves drawn into a Snare. They *trouble* you with *Words*; Words aud nothing elſe; very Words; *Sound*, but no *Subſtance*. How has the Church been *troubled with Words*, by the Pride of Men that lov'd to hear themſelves talk. (2.) It *endanger'd* them: They *ſubverted their Souls*, put them into Diſorder, and pull'd down that which had been built up. They took them off from purſuing pure Chriſtianity, and minding the Buſineſs of that, by filling their Heads with the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and the Law of *Moſes*, which were *nothing to the Purpoſe*.

3. Here's an honourable Teſtimony given of the Meſſengers by whom theſe Letters were ſent.

1. Of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, whom theſe judaizing Teachers had *oppos'd* and *cenſur'd*, as having done their Work *by the Halves*, becauſe they had brought the Gentile Converts to Chriſtianity only, and not to Judaiſm. Let them ſay what they will of theſe Men, (1.) They are Men that are *dear to us*; they are *our beloved Barnabas* and *Paul*, Men whom we have a Value for, a Kindneſs for, a Concern for. Sometimes 'tis good for thoſe that are of Eminency to expreſs their Eſteem, not only for the deſpiſed *Truth* of Chriſt, but for the deſpiſed *Preachers* and Defenders of that Truth, to encourage them, and weaken the Hands of their Oppoſers. (2.) They are Men that have *ſignaliz'd themſelves* in the Service of Chriſt, and therefore have deſerv'd well of all the Churches; they are Men that have *hazarded their Lives for the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *v.* 26. and therefore are worthy of double Honour, and cannot be ſuſpected of having ſought

any ſecular Advantage to themſelves; for they have ventur'd their All for Chriſt, have engag'd in the moſt *dangerous* Services, as good *Soldiers* of Chriſt, and not only in *laborious* Services. 'Tis not likely that ſuch *faithful Confeſſors* ſhould be *unfaithful Preachers.* They that urg'd Circumciſion, did it to *avoid Perſecution.* Gal. vi. 12, 13. They that oppos'd it, knew they thereby expos'd themſelves to Perſecution: And which of theſe were moſt likely to be in the Right?

2. Of *Judas* and *Silas*; They are *choſen Men*, *v.* 25. And they are Men that have heard our Debates, and are perfectly appriz'd of the Matter, and will *tell you the ſame Things by Mouth*, *v.* 27. What is of Uſe to us, 'tis good to have both in Writing, and by Word of Mouth; that we may have the Advantage both of *Reading* and of *Hearing* it. The Apoſtles refer themſelves to the Bearers for a further Account of their Judgement and their Reaſons; and the Bearers will refer themſelves to their Letters for the Certainty of the Determination.

4. Here's the Direction given, what to require from the Gentile Converts. Where *Obſerve*,

1. The *Matter* of the Injunction, which is according to the Advice given by St. *James*, That to avoid giving Offence to the *Jews*, (1.) They ſhould never eat any Thing that they knew had been *offer'd in Sacrifice to an Idol*; but look upon it as (tho' *clean in itſelf*, yet) thereby *polluted to them.* This Prohibition was afterwards in Part taken off; for they were allow'd to eat what ever was ſold in the Shambles, or ſet before them at their Friend's Table, tho' it had been *offered to Idols*, except when there was danger of *giving Offence* by it; that is, of giving Occaſion either to a *weak Chriſtian*, to think the worſe of our Chriſtianity, or to a *wicked Heathen* to think the better of his Idolatry; and in thoſe Caſes 'tis good to *forbear*, 1 Cor. x. 25, *&c.* This to us is an antiquated Caſe. (2.) That they ſhould not *eat Blood*, or *drink* it; but avoid every Thing that look'd *cruel* and *barbarous* in that Ceremony which had been of ſo long ſtanding. (3.) That they ſhould not eat any Thing that was *ſtrangled*, or dy'd of itſelf, or had not the Blood let out. (4.) That they ſhould be very ſtrict in Cenſuring thoſe that were guilty of *Fornication*; or marrying within the Degrees prohibited by the Levitical Law; which ſome think is principally intended here. See 1 *Cor.* v. 1. Dr. *Hammond* ſtates this Matter thus; The *judaizing Teachers* would have the Gentile Converts to ſubmit to all that thoſe ſubmitted to, whom they call'd the *Proſelytes of Righteouſneſs*, to be circumcis'd, and keep the Law: But the Apoſtles requir'd no more of them, than what was requir'd of the *Proſelytes of the Gate*, which was, to obſerve the ſeven Precepts of the Sons of *Noah*, which he thinks are here referr'd to. But the only Ground of this Decree being in Complaiſance to the rigid *Jews* that had embrac'd the Chriſtian Faith, and except in that one Caſe of *Scandal*, all Meats being pronounc'd free and indifferent to all Chriſtians, as ſoon as the Reaſon of the Decree ceas'd, which at furtheſt was after the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, the Obligation of it ceas'd likewiſe. Theſe Things were in a particular Manner offenſive to the *Jews*, and therefore do not diſoblige them herein for the preſent, in a little Time the *Jews* will incorporate with the *Gentiles*, and then the Danger's over.

2. The *Manner* how it is worded.

1. They expreſs themſelves with *ſomething of Authority*, that what they wrote might be receiv'd with Reſpect, and Deference paid to it: *It ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to us*, i. e. to us under the Conduct of the Holy Ghoſt, and by Direction from him. Not only the Apoſtles, but others were endu'd with ſpiritual Gifts extraordinary, and knew more of the Mind of God, than any, ſince thoſe Gifts ceas'd, can pretend to; their Infallibility gave an unconteſtable Authority to their Decrees; and they would not order any Thing, becauſe it *ſeemed good to them*, but that they knew it firſt *ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt.* Or, it refers to what the *Holy Ghoſt* had determin'd in this Matter formerly: When the Holy Ghoſt deſcending upon the Apoſtles, he endu'd them with the *Gift of Tongues*, in order to their Preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*, which was a plain Indication of God's Purpoſe to call them in. When the Holy Ghoſt deſcended upon *Cornelius* and his Friends upon *Peter*'s Preaching, 'twas plain Chriſt deſign'd the taking down of the Jewiſh Pale, within which they fancy'd the Spirit had been inclos'd.

2. They expreſs themſelves with *Abundance of Tenderneſs*, and Fatherly Concern.

1. They are afraid of *burthening* them; We will lay upon you *no greater Burthen*; ſo far were they from delighting to impoſe upon them, that they dreaded nothing ſo much as impoſing *too far* upon them; ſo as to diſcourage them at their ſetting-out.

2. They impoſe upon them no other, but *neceſſary Things*; The Avoiding of *Fornication* is neceſſary to all Chriſtians, at all Times; The Avoiding of Things *ſtrangled*, and of *Blood*, and of Things *offer'd to Idols*, is neceſſary at this Time, for the keeping up of a good Underſtanding between you and the *Jews*, and the preventing of Offence; and as long as it continues neceſſary for that End, and no longer, it is enjoyn'd. *Note*, Church Rulers ſhould impoſe only *neceſſary Things*; Things that Chriſt has made Duty, and have a real Tendency to the Edification of the Church, and as theſe here, to the Uniting of good Chriſtians. If they impoſe Things only to ſhew their own Authority, and to try Peoples Obedience, they forget that they have not Authority to make New Laws, but only to ſee that the Laws of Chriſt be duly executed, and to enforce the Obſervation of them.

3. They enforce their Order with a Commendation of thoſe that ſhall comply with it, rather than with the Condemnation of thoſe that ſhall tranſgreſs it; They do not conclude, *From which if you do not keep yourſelves ye ſhall be an Anathema*, ye ſhall be caſt out of the Church, and accurſed, according to the Style of after Councils, and particularly that of *Trent*; but, *from which, if you keep yourſelves*, as we do not queſtion, but ye will, *ye ſhall do well.* It will be for the Glory of God, the Furtherance of the Goſpel, the Strengthening of the Hands of your Brethren, and your own Credit and Comfort. 'Tis all Sweetneſs, and Love, and Good-humour, ſuch as became the Followers of him, who when he call'd us to take his Yoke upon us, aſſur'd us, we ſhould find him *meek and lowly in Heart.* The Difference of the Style of the true Apoſtles from that of the falſe, is very obſervable; They were for *impoſing* the Ceremonial Law, were *poſitive* and *imperious*, Except ye keep it, *ye cannot be ſaved*, *v.* 1. you are excommunicated *ipſo facto*, and deliver'd to *Satan*: The Apoſtles of Chriſt that only recommend *neceſſary Things*, are mild and gentle, *From which if you keep yourſelves, ye ſhall do well*, and as becomes you; *Fare ye well.* We are hearty Well-wiſhers to your Honour and Peace.

Thirdly, The Delivering of the Letters, and how the Meſſengers diſpos'd of themſelves.

1. When they were *diſmiſs'd*, had had their *Audience of Leave* of the Apoſtles; ('tis probable they were diſmiſs'd with Prayer and a ſolemn Bleſſing in the Name of the Lord, and with Inſtructions and Encouragements in their Work;) They then *came to* Antioch; They ſtay'd no longer at *Jeruſalem*, than till their Buſineſs was done, and then came back; and perhaps were met at their Return, by them that *brought them on their Way* at their ſetting-out; for thoſe that have taken Pains in publick Service ought to be countenanc'd and encourag'd.

2. As ſoon as they came to *Antioch*, they *gather'd the Multitude together, and deliver'd the Epiſtle* to them, *v.* 30, 31. that they might all know what it was that was forbidden them, and might *obſerve* theſe Orders, which would be no Difficulty for them to do, moſt of 'em having been, before their Converſion to Chriſt, *Proſelytes of the Gate*, who had laid themſelves under theſe Reſtrictions already: But this was not all, 'twas that they might know that *no more than this* was forbidden them; That it was no longer a Sin to eat Swines Fleſh, no longer a Pollution to touch a Grave or dead Body.

3. The People were wonderfully pleas'd with the Orders that came from *Jeruſalem*, *v.* 31. *They rejoyc'd for the Conſolation*: And a great Conſolation it was to the Multitude, (1.) That they were confirm'd in their Freedom from the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law, and were not burthen'd with that, as thoſe upſtart Teachers would have had them to be. It was a Comfort to them to hear the *Carnal Ordinances* were no longer *impos'd* on 'em, which *perplex'd* the Conſcience, but could not *purify* or *pacify* it. (2.) That thoſe who *troubled their Minds* with an Attempt to force Circumciſion upon them, were hereby for the preſent ſilenc'd, and put to Confuſion, the Fraud of their Pretenſions to an Apoſtolical Warrant being now diſcover'd. (3.) That the Gentiles were hereby encourag'd to receive the Goſpel, and thoſe that had receiv'd it, to adhere to it. (4.) That the Peace of the Church was hereby reſtor'd, and that remov'd which threaten'd a Diviſion. All this was *Conſolation*, which they *rejoyced in*, and bleſſed God for.

4. They got the *ſtrange Miniſters* that came from *Jeruſalem* to give them each a Sermon, and more, *v.* 32. *Judas* and *Silas*, *being Prophets alſo themſelves*, endu'd with the Holy Ghoſt, and call'd to the Work, and being likewiſe entruſted by the Apoſtles to deliver ſome Things relating to this Matter by Word of Mouth, they *exhorted the Brethren with many Words*, and *confirmed them.* Even they that had the conſtant Preaching of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, yet were glad of the Help of *Judas* and *Silas*; The Diverſity of the Gifts of Miniſters, is of Uſe to the Church. *Obſerve*, What is the Work of Miniſters with thoſe that are in Chriſt; (1.) To *confirm* them, by bringing them to ſee more Reaſon both for their Faith in Chriſt, and their Obedience to him; To confirm their Choice of Chriſt, and their Reſolutions for Chriſt. (2.) To *exhort* them to Perſeverance, and to the particular Duties requir'd of them; To quicken them to that which is good, and *direct* them in it. They *comforted* the Brethren; ſo it may be render'd, and that would contribute to the *comfirming* of them; for the Joy of the Lord will be *our Strength.* They exhorted them with *many Words*, they us'd a very great Copiouſneſs and Variety of Expreſſion; one Word would affect One, and another Another; and therefore, tho' what they had to ſay might have been ſum'd up in a few Words, yet it was for the Edification of the Church, that they us'd *many Words*, διὰ λόγου πολλοῦ, *with much Speech*, much Reaſoning; *Precept muſt be upon Precept.*

5. The Diſmiſſion of the *Jeruſalem Miniſters*, *v.* 33. When they had *ſpent ſome Time among them*, ſo it might be read, ποιήσαντες χρόνον, having *made ſome Stay*, and having made it, to good Purpoſe, not having *trifled away Time*, but having *fill'd it*

up, they were *let go in Peace* from the *Brethren* at *Antioch*, to the *Apoſtles* at *Jeruſalem*, with all poſſible Expreſſions of Kindneſs and Reſpect; they thank'd them for their Coming and Pains, and the good Service they had done, wiſh'd them their Health, and a good Journey Home; and committed them to the Cuſtody of the *Peace of GOD*.

6. The Continuance of *Silas*, notwithſtanding, together with *Paul* and *Barnabas* at *Antioch*. (1.) *Silas* when it came to the ſetting to, would not go back with *Judas* to *Jeruſalem*; but let him go Home himſelf, and choſe rather to *abide ſtill* at *Antioch*, *v.* 34. And we have no Reaſon at all to *blame him for it*, tho' we know not the Reaſon that *mov'd him to it*. I am apt to think the Congregations at *Antioch* were both more *large*, and more *lively*, than thoſe at *Jeruſalem*, and that tempted him to ſtay there, and he *did well*. So did *Judas*, who notwithſtanding this, returned to his Poſt of Service at *Jeruſalem*. (2.) *Paul* and *Barnabas*, tho' their Work lay chiefly among the *Gentiles*, yet *continued* for ſome Time *in Antioch*, being pleas'd with the Society of the Miniſters and People there, which it ſhould ſeem by divers Paſſages, was more than ordinarily inviting. They continu'd there, not to take their Pleaſure, but *Teaching and Preaching the Word of GOD*. *Antioch* being the chief City of *Syria*, 'tis likely there was a great Reſort of *Gentiles* thither from all Parts, upon one Account or other, as there was of *Jews* to *Jeruſalem*; ſo that in Preaching there, they did in Effect preach to *many Nations*; for they preach'd to thoſe who would carry the Report of what they preach'd to *many Nations*, and thereby prepare 'em for the Apoſtles coming *in Perſon* to preach to them: And thus they were not idle at *Antioch*, but were ſerving their main Intention. (3.) There were *many others alſo* there, labouring at the ſame Oar. The Multitude of Workmen in Chriſt's Vineyard doth not give us a *Writ of Eaſe*. Even there where there are many others labouring in the Word and Doctrine, yet there may be Opportunity for us; Others Zeal and Uſefulneſs ſhould excite us, not lay us aſleep.

36 ¶ And ſome days after, Paul ſaid unto Barnabas, Let us go again, and viſit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and ſee* how they do. 37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whoſe ſirname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was ſo ſharp between them, that they departed aſunder one from the other: and ſo Barnabas took Mark, and ſailed unto Cyprus; 40 And Paul choſe Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

We have ſeen one *unhappy Difference* among the Brethren, that was of a publick Nature, brought to a good Iſſue; but here we have a *private Quarrel* between two Miniſters, no leſs Men than *Paul* and *Barnabas*, not compromis'd indeed, yet ending well.

Firſt, Here's a good Motion *Paul* made to *Barnabas* to go and *review* their Work among the *Gentiles*, and *renew* it; to take a Circuit among the Churches they had planted, and ſee what Progreſs the Goſpel made among them. *Antioch* was now a ſafe and quiet Harbour for them, they had there no Adverſary or evil Occurrent. But *Paul* remember'd, they only put in there to *refit* and *refreſh* themſelves, and therefore begins now to think of *putting to Sea* again; and having been in Winter-quarters long enough, he is for *taking the Field again*, and *making another Campaign* in a vigorous Proſecution of this Holy War againſt Satan's Kingdom. *Paul* remembers that the Work appointed him, was *afar off among the Gentiles*, and therefore he is here meditating a ſecond Expedition among them to do the ſame Work, tho' to encounter the ſame Difficulties. And this *ſome Days after*, for his *active* Spirit could not bear to be long out of Work; no, nor his bold and daring Spirit to be long out of Danger. *Obſerve*,

1. To whom he makes this Motion; To *Barnabas*, his old Friend and Fellow-labourer; he invites his Company and Help in this Work. We have need one of another, and may be many Ways ſerviceable one to another; and therefore ſhould be forward both to borrow and lend Aſſiſtance, *Two* are better than *One*. Every Soldier has his Comrade.

2. For whom the Viſit is deſign'd: Let us not preſently begin new Work, or break up new Ground; but let us take a View of the Fields we have ſown; *Come, and let us get up early, to the Vineyards, let us ſee if the Vine flouriſh*, Cant. vii. 12. *Let us go again and viſit our Brethren in every City where we have preach'd the Word of the LORD*. *Obſerve*, He calls all the Chriſtians *Brethren*, and not Miniſters only; for, *Have we not all one Father?* He has a Concern for them in *every City*, even there where the Brethren were feweſt and pooreſt, and moſt perſecuted and deſpis'd; yet let us viſit them. Wherever we have *preach'd the Word of the LORD*, let us go and water the Seed ſown. *Note*, Thoſe that have preach'd the Goſpel, ſhould viſit thoſe to whom they have preach'd it. As we muſt look after our *Praying*, and hear what Anſwer GOD gives to that; ſo we muſt look after our *Preaching*, and ſee what Succeſs that has. Faithful Miniſters cannot but have a particular tender Concern for thoſe to whom they have preach'd the Goſpel, that they may not beſtow upon them *Labour in vain*. See 1 *Theſſ.* iii. 5, 6.

3. What was intended in this Viſit: Let us *ſee how they do*, *πῶς ἔχουσι*, how it is *with them*. 'Twas not merely a Complement that he deſign'd, nor did he take ſuch a Journey with a bare *How do you?* No; he would *viſit* them, that he might acquaint himſelf with their Caſe, and impart unto them ſuch *ſpiritual Gifts*, as were ſuited to it; as the Phyſician viſits his recovering Patient, that he may preſcribe what is proper for the perfecting of his Cure, and the preventing of a Relapſe. Let us ſee *how they do*, i. e. (1.) What *Spirit* they are *of*, how they ſtand affected, and how they behave themſelves: 'Tis probable, they frequently heard from 'em, but let us *go ſee them*; Let us go ſee whether they *hold faſt* what we preach'd to them, and *live up* to it; that we may endeavour to *reduce* them if we find them *wandering*, to *confirm* them if we find them *wavering*, and to *comfort* them if we find them *ſteddy*. (2.) What *State* they are *in*; Whether the Churches have Reſt and Liberty; Or, whether they are not in Trouble or Diſtreſs, that we may *rejoyce with them*, if they rejoyce, and *caution* them againſt *Security*; and may *weep* with them, if they *weep*, and *comfort* them under the Croſs, and may know the better how to *pray for them*.

Secondly, The *Diſagreement* between *Paul* and *Barnabas* about an Aſſiſtant: It was convenient to have a young Man with them that ſhould attend on them, and miniſter to them, and be a Witneſs of their *Doctrine*, *manner of Life*, *and Patience*, and that ſhould be fitted and train'd up for *further* Service, by being occaſionally employ'd in the *preſent* Service. Now

1. *Barnabas* would have his Nephew *John*, whoſe Sir-name was *Mark*, to go along with them, *v.* 37. he determin'd to take him, becauſe he was his Relation, and 'tis likely was brought up under him, and he had a Kindneſs for him, and was ſollicitous for his Welfare. We ſhould ſuſpect our ſelves of Partiality, and guard againſt it, in preferring our Relations.

2. *Paul* oppos'd it, *v.* 38. *He thought not good to take him with them*, *οὐκ ἠξίου*, He did not think him *worthy* of the Honour, nor *fit* for the Service, who had *departed from them*, clandeſtinely, as it ſhould ſeem, without their *Knowledge*, or wilfully without their *Conſent*, from *Pamphylia*, chap. xiii. 13. and *went not with them to the Work*, either becauſe he was *lazy*, and would not *take the Pains* that muſt be taken; or cowardly, and would not *run the Hazard*. He runs his Colours juſt as they were going to engage. 'Tis probable he promis'd very fair now, That he would not do ſo again: But *Paul* thought it was not fit he ſhould be thus *honour'd*, who had forfeited his *Reputation*; nor thus *employ'd*, who had betray'd his *Truſt*; at leaſt, not till he had been longer try'd. If a Man deceive me *once*, 'tis *his Fault*; but if *twice*, 'tis *my own*, for truſting him. *Solomon* ſaith, That *Confidence in an unfaithful Man in Time of Trouble, is like a broken Tooth, and a Foot out of joint*, which will hardly be us'd again, *Prov.* xxv. 19.

Thirdly, The Iſſue of this Diſagreement: It came to ſuch a Height, that they parted upon it. The *Contention*, the Paroxyſm, ſo the Word is, the *Fit of Paſſion* which this threw them both into, was ſo *ſharp*, that they *departed aſunder one from the other*; *Barnabas* was peremptory, that he would not go with *Paul* unleſs they took *John Mark* with them; *Paul* was as peremptory, that he would not go if *John* did go with them: Neither would yield, and therefore there is no Remedy, but they muſt *part*. Now here is that which is very humbling, and juſt Matter of Lamentation, and yet very inſtructive. For we ſee,

1. That the *beſt of Men*, are but *Men*, *ſubject to like Paſſions* as we are; as theſe two good Men had expreſly own'd concerning themſelves, *chap.* xiv. 15. and now it appear'd too true. I doubt there was (as uſually there is in ſuch Contentions) a *Fault on both Sides*: Perhaps *Paul* was too ſevere upon the young Man, and did not allow his Fault the Extenuation it was capable of, did not conſider what a uſeful Woman his Mother was in *Jeruſalem*, chap. xii. 12. nor make the Allowances he might have made to *Barnabas*'s natural Affection: But it was *Barnabas*'s Fault that he took that into Conſideration, in a Caſe wherein the Intereſt of Chriſt's Kingdom was concern'd, and indulg'd it too much. And they were certainly both in Fault to be *ſo hot*, as to let the Contention be *ſharp*, 'tis to be fear'd they gave one another ſome hard Words: As alſo to be *ſo ſtiff*, as each to ſtick ſo reſolutely to his Opinion, and neither to yield. 'Twas pity they did not refer the Matter to a third Perſon; or that ſome Friend did not interpoſe, to prevent its coming to an open Rupture. Is there never a wiſe Man among them to interpoſe his good Offices, and to accommodate the Matter, and to put them in Mind of the *Canaanite* and the *Perizite* that were *now in the Land*; and that not only *Jews* and Heathens, but the falſe Brethren among themſelves, would warm their Hands at the Flames of this Contention between *Paul* and *Barnabas*. We muſt own it was their Infirmity, and is recorded for our Admonition; not that we muſt make uſe of it to excuſe our own intemperate Heats and Paſſions, or to rebate the Edge of our Sorrow and Shame for them; we muſt not ſay, What! if I was in a Paſſion; were not *Paul* and *Barnabas* ſo? No; but it muſt

check our Cenſures of others, and moderate them. If good Men are ſoon put into a Paſſion, we muſt make the beſt of it; it was the Infirmity once of two of the beſt Men that ever the World had! Repentance teaches us to be ſevere in Reflections upon ourſelves; but Charity teaches us to be candid in our Reflections upon others. 'Tis only Chriſt's Example, that is a Copy without a blot.

2. That we are not to *think it ſtrange*, if there be *Differences* among *wiſe and good Men*: We are told before that ſuch *Offences will come*, and here's an Inſtance of it. Even they that are united to one and the ſame Jeſus, and ſanctify'd by one and the ſame Spirit, yet have different Apprehenſions, different Opinions, different Views, and different Sentiments in Point of Prudence. It will be ſo, while we are in this State of Darkneſs and Imperfection; we ſhall never be all of a Mind till we come to Heaven, where Light and Love are perfect. That's *Charity* which *never fails*.

3. That theſe *Differences* often prevail ſo far, as to occaſion *Separations*. *Paul* and *Barnabas* that were not ſeparated by the *Perſecutions* of the *unbelieving Jews*, nor the *Impoſitions* of the *believing Jews*, yet were *ſeperated* by an unhappy Diſagreement between themſelves. O the Miſchief that even the poor and weak *Remainders* of Pride and Paſſion, that are found even in good Men, do in the World, do in the Church, no Wonder the Conſequences are ſo fatal where they *reign*.

Fourthly, The *Good* that was brought out of this *Evil*. Meat out of the Eater, and Sweetneſs out of the Strong. 'Twas ſtrange that even the *Sufferings* of the *Apoſtles* (as *Phil.* i. 12.) but much more ſtrange, that even the *Quarrels* of the Apoſtles ſhould tend to the *Furtherance of the Goſpel of Chriſt*; yet ſo it prov'd here. God would not permit ſuch Things to be, if he knew not how to make them ſerve his own Purpoſes.

1. *More Places* are hereby *viſited*. *Barnabas* went one Way, he *ſail'd* to *Cyprus*, *v.* 39. that famous Iſland where they began their Work, *chap.* xiii. 4. and which was *his own Country*, chap. iv. 36. *Paul* went another Way, into *Cilicia*, which was *his own Country*, Acts xx. 39. Each ſeem to be influenc'd by their Affection to their Native Soil, as uſual (*Neſcio quâ natale ſolum dulcedine cunctos Ducit*--) and yet God ſerv'd his own Purpoſes by it, for the diffuſing of Goſpel Light.

2. *More Hands* are hereby *employ'd* in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*: For (1.) *John Mark* that had been an *unfaithful* Hand, is not rejected, but is again made uſe of againſt *Paul*'s Mind, and for ought we know proves a very *uſeful* and *ſucceſsful* Hand; tho' many think it was not the ſame, with that *Mark* that wrote the Goſpel, and founded the Church at *Alexandria*, that was he whom *Peter* calls *his Son*, 1 Pet. v. 14. (2.) *Silas* that was a *new* Hand, and never yet employ'd in that Work, nor deſign'd to be, but to return to the Service of the Church in *Jeruſalem*, had not God changed his Mind, *v.* 33, 34. he is *brought in*, and engag'd in this noble Work.

We may further obſerve,

1. That the Church at *Antioch* ſeem'd to countenance *Paul* in what he did: *Barnabas* ſail'd with his Nephew to *Cyprus*, and no Notice was taken of him, nor a *Benè diſceſſit* given him. *Note*, Thoſe that in their Service of the Church are ſway'd by *private* Affections and Regards, forfeit *publick* Hononrs and Reſpects. But when *Paul departed*, he was *recommended by the Brethren to the Grace of God*. They thought he was in the right in refuſing to make uſe of *John Mark*, and could not but blame *Barnabas* for inſiſting upon it, tho' he was One who had *deſerv'd well* of the Church, *ch.* xi. 22. before they knew *Paul*. And therefore they pray'd publickly for *Paul*, and for the Succeſs of his Miniſtry, encourag'd him to go on in his Work; and tho' they could do nothing themſelves to further him, they *transfer'd* the Matter to the *Grace of God*, leaving it to that Grace, both to work *upon* him, and to work *with* him. *Note*, Thoſe are happy *at all Times*, and eſpecially in Times of Diſagreement and Contention, who are enabled ſo to carry themſelves as not to forfeit their Intereſt in the Love and Prayers of good People.

2. That yet *Paul* afterwards ſeem'd to have had, tho' not upon *ſecond Thoughts*, yet upon *farther Trial*, a better Opinion of *John Mark* than now he had; for he writes to *Timothy*, 2 Tim. iv. 11. *Take* Mark *and bring him with thee, for he is profitable to me for the Miniſtry*. And writes to the *Coloſſians* concerning *Marcus* Siſter's Son to *Barnabas* that *if he came to them*, they ſhould *receive him*, bid him welcome, and employ him, *Col.* iv. 10. Which teacheth us, (1.) That even thoſe whom we *juſtly* condemn, yet we ſhould do it *moderately*, and with a great deal of Temper, becauſe we know not but afterwards we may ſee Cauſe to think better of them, and both to make uſe of them, and make Friendſhip with them; and we ſhould ſo regulate our Reſentments, as that if it ſhould prove ſo, we may not afterwards be aſham'd of them. (2.) That even thoſe whom we *have* juſtly condemn'd, if afterwards they prove more faithful, we ſhould chearfully receive, forgive and forget, and put a Confidence in, and as there is Occaſion, give a good Word to.

3. That *Paul* tho' he wanted his old Friend and Companion in the Kingdom and Patience of Jeſus Chriſt, yet went on chearfully in his Work, *v.* 41. *He went through* Syria *and* Cilicia, Countries which lay next to *Antioch*, *confirming the Churches*. Tho' we change our Collegues, we do not change our principal Preſidents. And *obſerve*, Miniſters are well employ'd and ought to think themſelves ſo, and be ſatisfy'd when they are made uſe of in confirming thoſe that believe, as well as in converting thoſe that believe not.

CHAP. XVI.

It is ſome Rebuke to Barnabas *that after he left* Paul, *we hear no more of him, of what he did or ſuffer'd for Chriſt. But* Paul *as he was* recommended by the Brethren to the Grace of God, *ſo his Services for Chriſt after this are largely recorded, we are to attend him in this Chapter from Place to Place, wherever he came doing Good, either watering or planting, beginning new Work, or improving what was done. Here's* (1.) *The Beginning of his Acquaintance with* Timothy, *and taking him to be his Aſſiſtant*, v. 1--3. (2.) *The Viſit he made to the Churches for their Eſtabliſhment*, v. 4, 5. (3.) *His Call to* Macedonia, (*after a Reſtraint he had been under from going to ſome other Places*) *and his coming to* Philippi, *the chief City of* Macedonia, *with his Entertainment there*, v. 6---13. (4.) *The Converſion of* Lydia *there*, v. 14, 15. (5.) *The Caſting of an evil Spirit out of a Damſel*, v. 16---18. (6.) *The Accuſing and Abuſing of* Paul *and* Silas *for it, their Impriſonment, and the Indignities done them*, v. 19.---24. (7.) *The miraculous Converſion of the Jaylor to the Faith of Chriſt*, v. 25---34. (8.) *The honourable Diſcharge of* Paul *and* Silas *by the Magiſtrates*, v, 35--40.

THEN came he to Derbe and Lyſtra: and behold,
a certain diſciple was there named Timotheus,
the ſon of a certain woman, which was a
Jeweſs, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek:
2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that
were at Lyſtra and Iconium. 3 Him would Paul
have to go forth with him, and took and circumciſed
him, becauſe of the Jews which were in thoſe quarters:
for they knew all that his Father was a Greek.
4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered
them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained
of the apoſtles and elders which were at Jeruſalem.
5 And ſo were the churches eſtabliſhed in the faith,
and increaſed in number daily.

Paul was a *ſpiritual Father*, and as ſuch an one we have him here adopting *Timothy*, and taking Care of the Education of many others, who had been begotten to Chriſt by his Miniſtry; and in all he appears to have been a wiſe and tender Father.

Firſt, Here's his taking of *Timothy* into his Acquaintance, and under his Tuition. One Thing deſign'd in the Book of the *Acts* is to help us to underſtand *Paul*'s Epiſtles, Two of which are directed to *Timothy*; it was therefore neceſſary that in the Hiſtory of *Paul* we ſhould have ſome Account concerning him. And we are here accordingly told,

1. That he was *a Diſciple*, One that belonged to Chriſt, and was *baptiz'd*, probably in his Infancy, when his Mother became a *Believer*, as *Lydia*'s Houſehold was baptiz'd upon her *believing*, *v.* 15. He that was a Diſciple of Chriſt, *Paul* took to be his Diſciple, that he might further train him up in the Knowledge and Faith of Chriſt, he took him to be brought up for Chriſt.

2. That his Mother was a *Jeweſs* originally, but *believ'd* in Chriſt, her Name was *Eunice*, his Grandmother's Name was *Lois*, *Pauls* ſpeaks of them both with great Reſpect, as Women of eminent Vertue and Piety, and commends them eſpecially for their *unfeigned Faith*, 2 Tim. i. 3. There ſincere embracing of, and adhering to the Doctrine of Chriſt.

3. That his Father was a *Greek*, a *Gentile*. The Marriage of a Jewiſh Woman to a Gentile Husband, (tho' ſome would make a Difference) was prohibited as much as the Marriage of a Jewiſh Man to a Gentile Wife, *Deut.* vii. 3. Thou ſhalt no more *give thy Daughter to his Son*, than *take his Daughter to thy Son*; yet that ſeems to have been limited to the Nations that liv'd among them in *Canaan*, whom they were moſt in Danger of Infection from. Now becauſe his *Father* was a *Greek*, he was not *circumcis'd*; for the Entail of the Covenant and the Seal of it, as of other Entails in that Nation, went by the Father, not by the Mother; ſo that his *Father* being *no Jew*, he was not *oblig'd* to Circumciſion, nor *entituled* to it, unleſs when he grew up he did himſelf deſire it. But *obſerve*, Tho' his Mother could not prevail to have him circumcis'd in his Infancy, becauſe his Father was of another Mind and Way, yet ſhe *educated* him in the Fear of God; that tho' he wanted the *Sign* of the Covenant, he might not want the *Thing ſignify'd*.

4. That he had gain'd a very good Character among the Chriſtians; He was *well reported of by the Brethren* that were at *Lyſtra* and *Iconium*: He had not only an unblemiſh'd Reputation, and was free from Scandal, but he had a bright Reputation, and great Encomiums were given of him, as an extraordinary young Man, and One from whom great Things were expected. Not

only thoſe in the Place where he was born, but thoſe in the neighbouring Cities, admir'd him, and ſpoke honourably of him. He had a Name for good Things with good People.

5. That *Paul* would have him to *go forth with him*, to accompany him, to give Attendance on him, and receive Inſtruction from him, and to join with him in the Work of the Goſpel; to preach for him when there was Occaſion, and to be left behind in Places where he had planted Churches. *Paul* took a great Love to him, not only becauſe he was an ingenious young Man, and One of great Parts, but becauſe he was a ſerious young Man, and One of devout Affections; for *Paul* was always *mindful of his Tears*, 2 Tim. i. 4.

6. That *Paul* took him and *circumcis'd him*, or order'd it to be done; This was ſtrange! Had not *Paul* oppos'd thoſe with all his Might that were for impoſing Circumciſion upon the Gentile Converts? Had he not at this Time the Decrees of the Council at *Jeruſalem* with him, which witneſs'd againſt it? He had, and yet circumcis'd *Timothy*, not as thoſe Teachers deſign'd in impoſing Circumciſion to oblige him to keep the Ceremonial Law, but only to render his Converſation and Miniſtry paſſable, and if it might be acceptable among the *Jews* that abounded *in thoſe Quarters*. He knew *Timothy* was a Man likely to do a great deal of Good with them, being admirably qualify'd for the Miniſtry, if they were not invincibly prejudic'd againſt him; and therefore that they might not ſhun him as One unclean, becauſe uncircumcis'd, he took him and *circumcis'd him*. Thus *to the* Jews, he became *as a* Jew, that he might *gain the Jews*, and *all Things to all Men, that he might gain ſome*. He was againſt thoſe who made Circumciſion neceſſary to *Salvation*, but himſelf us'd it when it was conducive to *Edification*; nor was he *rigid* in *oppoſing* it as they were in *impoſing* it. Thus tho' he went not in this Inſtance according to the *Letter* of the Decree, he went according to the *Spirit* of it, which was a Spirit of Tenderneſs towards the *Jews*, and Willingneſs to bring them off gradually from their Prejudices. *Paul* made no Difficulty of taking him to be his Companion, tho' he was *uncircumcis'd*; but the *Jews* would not *hear him* if he were, and therefore *Paul* will *humour* them herein. 'Tis probable that it was at this Time that *Paul* laid his Hands on *Timothy*, for the conferring of the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt upon him, 2 *Tim*. i. 6.

Secondly, Here's his *Confirming* of the Churches which he had planted, *v*. 4, 5. He *went thro' the Cities* where he had *preach'd the Word of the LORD*, as he intended, *chap*. xv. 36. to enquire into their State. And we are told,

1. That they deliver'd them Copies of the Decrees of the *Jeruſalem Synod*, to be a Direction to them in the Government of themſelves, and that they might have wherewith to anſwer the judaizing Teachers, and to juſtify themſelves in adhering to the *Liberty with which Chriſt had made them free*. All the Churches were concern'd in that Decree, and therefore it was requiſite they ſhould all have it well-atteſted. Tho' *Paul* had for a particular Reaſon circumcis'd *Timothy*, yet he would not have that drawn into a Precedent; and therefore *delivered the Decrees* of the Churches to be religiouſly obſerv'd; for they muſt abide by the Rule, and not be drawn from it by a particular Example.

2. That this was of very good Service to them.

1. The Churches were hereby *eſtabliſhed in the Faith*, *v*. 5. They were confirm'd particularly in their Opinion againſt the impoſing of the Ceremonial Law upon the *Gentiles*: The great Aſſurance and Heat wherewith the judaizing Teachers preſs'd the Neceſſity of Circumciſion, and the plauſible Arguments they produc'd for it, had *ſhock'd* them, ſo that they began to waver concerning it. But when they ſaw the Teſtimony, not only of the Apoſtles and Elders, but of the Holy Ghoſt in them, againſt it, they were eſtabliſh'd, and did no longer waver about it. *Note*, Teſtimonies to Truth, tho' they may not prevail to convince thoſe that oppoſe it, yet may be of very good Uſe to eſtabliſh thoſe that are in Doubt concerning it, and to fix them. Nay, the Deſign of this Decree being to *ſet aſide* the *Ceremonial Law*, and the *carnal Ordinances* of that, they were by it *eſtabiſh'd* in the Chriſtian Faith in *general*, and were the more firmly aſſur'd that it was *of GOD*, becauſe it ſet up a *ſpiritual* Way of ſerving GOD, as more *ſuited* to the Nature both of *GOD* and *Man*; and beſides, that Spirit of Tenderneſs and Condeſcenſion which appear'd in theſe Letters, plainly ſhew'd, that the *Apoſtles* and *Elders* were herein under the Conduct of him who is *Love* itſelf.

2. They *increas'd in Numbers daily*: The impoſing of the Yoke of the Ceremonial Law upon their Converts, was enough to frighten People from them. If they had been diſpos'd to turn *Jews*, they could have done that long ſince, before the Apoſtles came among them; but if they cannot be intereſted in the Chriſtian Privileges, without ſubmitting to the *Jews* Yoke, they'll be as they are. But if they find there is no Danger of their being ſo *enſlav'd*, they are ready to embrace Chriſtianity, and join themſelves to the Church. And thus the Church *increas'd in Numbers daily*; not a Day paſs'd but ſome or other gave up their Names to Chriſt. And it is a Joy to thoſe who heartily wiſh well to the Honour of Chriſt, and the Welfare of the Church, and the Souls of Men, to ſee ſuch an *Increaſe*.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the holy Ghoſt to preach the word in Aſia. 7 After they were come to Myſia, they aſſayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit ſuffered them not. 8 And they paſſed by Myſia, came down to Troas. 9 And a viſion appeared to Paul in the night: There ſtood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, ſaying, come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And after he had ſeen the viſion, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, aſſuredly gathering, that the Lord had called us to preach the goſpel unto them. 11 Therefore looſing from Troas, we came with a ſtraight courſe to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis: 12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. 13 And on the ſabbath we went out of the city by a riverſide, where prayer was wont to be made; and we ſat down, and ſpake unto the women which reſorted *thither*. 14 ¶ And a certain woman named Lydia, a ſeller of purple of the city of Thyatira, which worſhipped God, heard *us*: whoſe heart the Lord opened, that ſhe attended unto the things which were ſpoken of Paul. 15 And when ſhe was baptized, and her houſhold, ſhe beſought *us*, ſaying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my houſe and abide *there*. And ſhe conſtrained us.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, *Paul*'s Motions *up and down* to do Good.

1. He and *Silas* his Collegue *went thro'out* Phrygia, and the Region of *Galatia*, where it ſhould ſeem the Goſpel was already planted; but whether by *Paul's* Hand or no, is not mention'd; 'tis likely it was, for in his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, he ſpeaks of his *Preaching the Goſpel to them at the firſt*, and how very acceptable he was among them, *Gal*. iv. 13.—15. And it appears by that Epiſtle, that the judaizing Teachers had then done a great deal of Miſchief to theſe Churches of *Galatia*, and had prejudic'd them againſt *Paul*, and drawn them from the Goſpel of Chriſt, for which he there ſeverely reproves them. But probably that a was great while after this.

2. They were *forbidden* at this Time to preach the Goſpel in *Aſia*, that Country properly ſo call'd, either becauſe it did not need, for other Hands were at work there; or becauſe they were not yet prepar'd to receive it, as they were afterwards, *ch*. xix. 10. When *all they that dwelt in* Aſia *heard the Word of the Lord*. Or, as Dr. *Lightfoot* ſuggeſts, becauſe at this Time Chriſt would employ *Paul* in a Piece of *new Work*, which was to preach the Goſpel to a *Roman* Colony at *Philippi*, for hitherto the *Gentiles* he had preach'd to were *Greeks*. The *Romans* were more particularly hated by the *Jews* than other *Gentiles*, their Armies were the *Abomination of Deſolation*, and therefore there is this, among other Things, extraordinary in his Call thither, that he is forbidden to preach the Goſpel in *Aſia*, and other Places, in order to his Preaching it there; which is an Intimation, that the Light of the Goſpel would in after-Times be directed more *Weſtward* than *Eaſtward*. It was the *Holy Ghoſt* that *forbad them*, either by ſecret Whiſpers in the Minds of both of them, which when they come to compare Notes, they found to be the *ſame*, and to come from the *ſame Spirit*; Or, by ſome *Prophets* who ſpake to them from the Spirit. The Removes of Miniſters, and the Diſpenſing of the Means of Grace by them, is in a particular Manner under a divine Conduct and Direction. We find an *Old Teſtament* Miniſter forbidden to preach at all, *Ezek*. iii. 26. *Thou ſhalt be dumb*. But theſe *New Teſtament* Miniſters, are only forbidden to preach *in one Place*, while they are directed to another where there's more need.

3. They would have gone into *Bithynia*, but were not *permitted*, the *Spirit ſuffer'd them not*, *v*. 7. They came to *Myſia*, and as it ſhould ſeem, preach'd the Goſpel there; for tho' it was a very mean contemptible Country, even to a Proverb; *Myſorum ultimus*, in *Cicero*, is a moſt deſpicable Man; yet the Apoſtles diſdain'd not to viſit it, owning themſelves Debtors both *to the wiſe and to the unwiſe*, Rom. i. 14. In *Bithynia* was the City of *Nice*, where the firſt General Council was held againſt the *Arians*; into theſe Countries *Peter* ſent his Epiſtle, 1 *Pet*. i. 1. And there were flouriſhing Churches here; for tho' they had not the Goſpel ſent them *now*, they had it in their Turn, not long after. *Obſerve*, Tho' their Judgment and Inclination was to *go into Bithynia*, yet they having then extraordinary Ways of knowing the Mind of GOD, were over-rul'd by them contrary to their own Mind. We muſt now follow Providence, and ſubmit to the Conduct of that Pillar of Cloud and Fire; and what we *aſſay* to do, if that *ſuffer us not*, we ought to acquieſce, and believe it for the beſt. *The Spirit of Jeſus* ſuffer'd them not; ſo many an-

cient Copies read it. The *Servants of the Lord Jeſus* ought to be always under the Check and Conduct of the *Spirit of the Lord Jeſus*, by whom he governs Mens Minds.

4. They *paſſed by Myſia* or *paſſed through it*, ſo ſome; ſowing good Seed, we may ſuppoſe, as they went along; and they came down to *Troas*; the City of *Troy*, (ſo much talk'd of) or the Country thereabout that took it's Denomination from it. Here a Church was planted; for here we find one in being, *Acts* xx. 6, 7. and probably planted at this time, and in a little Time. It ſhould ſeem, that at *Troas Luke* fell in with *Paul*, and joyn'd himſelf to his Company, for from henceforward, for the moſt part when he ſpeaks of *Paul*'s Journies, he puts himſelf into the Number of his Retinue, *we* went, *v.* 10.

Secondly, *Paul*'s particular Call to *Macedonia*, that is to *Philippi* the chief City, inhabited moſtly by *Romans*, as appears, *v.* 21. Here we have,

1. The Viſion *Paul* had, *v.* 9. *Paul* had many Viſions, ſometimes to *encourage*, ſometimes, as here, to *direct* him in his Work. An Angel appeared to him to intimate to him, that it was the Will of Chriſt he ſhould go to *Macedonia*. Let him not be diſcourag'd by the Embargo laid upon him once and again, by which his Deſigns were croſs'd; for tho' he ſhall not go where he has a Mind to go, he ſhall go where God has Work for him to do. Now *Obſerve*,

(1.) The Perſon *Paul* ſaw. There *ſtood* by him *a Man of Macedonia*, that by his Habit or Dialect ſeem'd to *Paul*, who knew it to be a Man of that Country; or told him he *was ſo*. The Angel, ſome think, aſſum'd the Shape of ſuch a Man; Or, as others think, impreſs'd upon *Paul*'s Fancy, between Sleep and Wake, the Image of ſuch a Man: He dream'd he ſaw ſuch an One. Chriſt would have *Paul* directed to *Macedonia*, not as the Apoſtles were at other Times, by a Meſſenger from *Heaven*, to *ſend* him hither, but by a Meſſenger from *thence* to *call* him thither, becauſe *in that Way* he would afterwards *ordinarily* direct the Motions of his Miniſters, by inclining the hearts of thoſe who *need* them, to *invite* them. *Paul* ſhall be call'd to *Macedonia* by a *Man of Macedonia*, and by him ſpeaking in the Name of the reſt. Some make this *Man* to be the Tutelar Angel of *Macedonia*; ſuppoſing Angels to have charge of particular Places, as well as Perſons, and that ſo much is intimated, *Dan.* x. 20. where we read of the *Prince of* Perſia, *and* Grecia, that ſeem to have been *Angels*. But there is no Certainty of that. There was preſented either to *Paul*'s Eyes or to his Mind, a *Man of Macedonia*. The Angel muſt not preach the Goſpel himſelf to the *Macedonians*, but muſt bring *Paul* to them. Nor muſt he by the Authority of an Angel *order* him to *go*, but in the Perſon of *a Macedonian court* him to *come*. *A Man of Macedonia*, not a Magiſtrate of the Country, much leſs a *Prieſt*, *Paul* did not uſe to receive Invitations from ſuch; but an *ordinary* Inhabitant of the Country, a plain Man, that carry'd in his Countenance Marks of Probity and Seriouſneſs, that did not come to banter *Paul*, or trifle with him, but in good Earneſt, and with all Earneſtneſs, to importune his Aſſiſtance.

2. The Invitation given him: This honeſt *Macedonian prayed him*, *ſaying*, *Come over into* Macedonia *and help us*; i. e. Come and preach the Goſpel to us, Let us have the Benefit of thy Labours. (1.) *Thou haſt help'd many*, we have heard of thoſe in this and the other Country that thou haſt been very uſeful to; And why may not we put in for a Share? O come and *help us*. The Benefits others have receiv'd from the Goſpel, ſhould quicken our Enquiries, our further Enquiries after it. (2.) It is *thy Buſineſs*, and it is thy *Delight* to *help* poor Souls: Thou art a Phyſician for the Sick, that art to be ready at the Call of every Patient: O come and help *us*. (3.) We have *need of thy Help*, as much as any People; we in *Macedonia* are as ignorant and as careleſs in Religion, as any People in the World are; are as idolatrous and as vicious as any, and as ingenious and induſtrious to ruin ourſelves as any; and therefore, O come, come with all ſpeed among us: *If thou canſt do any Thing, have compaſſion on us, and help us.* (4.) Thoſe few among us that have any Senſe of Things, and any Concern for their own Souls, and the Souls of Others, have done what can be done by the Help of natural Light: I have done my Part for One, we have carry'd the Matter as far as it will go, to perſuade our Neighbours to Fear and Worſhip God, but we can do little good among them: O *come, come thou over and help us.* The Goſpel thou preacheſt, hath Arguments and Powers beyond thoſe we have been yet furniſh'd with. (5.) Do not only help us with thy Prayers here, that will not do; thou muſt *come over* and help us. *Note*, People have great need of Help for their Souls, and 'tis their Duty to look out for it, and invite thoſe among them that can help them.

2. The Interpretation made of the Viſion, *v.* 10. They *gathered aſſuredly from thence*, that *the Lord hath call'd them to preach the Goſpel*, there, and they were ready to go wherever God directed. *Note*, We may ſometimes infer a Call of God from a Call of Man. If a Man of *Macedonia* ſay, *Come and help us*; from thence *Paul* gathers aſſuredly, that God ſaith, *Go and help them.* Miniſters may go on with a great deal of Chearfulneſs and Courage in their Work, when they perceive Chriſt calling them not only to preach the Goſpel, but to preach it at this Time, in this Place, to this People.

Thirdly, *Paul*'s Voyage to *Macedonia*, hereupon: He was not *diſobedient to the heavenly Viſion*, but follow'd this divine Conduct much more chearfully, and with more Satisfaction than he would have follow'd any Contrivance or Inclination of his own.

1. Thitherward he *turn'd his Thoughts:* Now he knows the Mind of God in this Matter, he is determin'd, for this was all he wanted; now he thinks no more of *Aſia* or *Bithynia*, but *immediately, we endeavour'd to go into* Macedonia. *Paul* only had the *Viſion*, but he communicated it to his Companions, and they all upon the Credit of that reſolv'd for *Macedonia*. As *Paul* will follow Chriſt, ſo all his will follow *him*, or rather follow Chriſt *with him*. They are getting Things in Readineſs for this Expedition *immediately*, without Delay. *Note*, God's Calls muſt be comply'd with preſently; as our Obedience muſt not be *diſputed*, ſo it muſt not be *deferr'd*; do it *to Day*, leſt thy Heart be *harden'd*. *Obſerve*, They could not *immediately* go into *Macedonia*; but they immediately *endeavour'd* to go. If we cannot be ſo quick as we ſhould be in our Performances, yet we may be in our Endeavours, and that ſhall be accepted.

2. Thitherward he *ſteer'd his Courſe:* They ſet Sail by the firſt Shipping, and with the firſt fair Wind from *Troas*; for they may be ſure they have done what they have to do there, when God calls them to another Place. They *came with a ſtreight Courſe*, i. e. a proſperous Voyage to *Samothracia*, the *next Day they came to* Neapolis, a City in the Confines of *Thrace* and *Macedonia*; and at laſt they landed at *Philippi*, a City ſo call'd from *Philip* King of *Macedon*, the Father of *Alexander the Great*; 'tis ſaid *v.* 17. to be (1.) The *Chief City of that Part of* Macedonia: Or, as ſome read it, the *firſt City*, the firſt they come to when they came from *Troas*; ſo that like an Army that lands in a Country, which they deſign to make themſelves Maſters of, they begin with the Reduction of the firſt Place they come to; ſo did *Paul* and his Aſſiſtants, they begun with the *chief City*, becauſe if the Goſpel were receiv'd there, it would the eaſier ſpread from thence all the Country over. (2.) It was a *Colony:* The *Romans* not only had a Garriſon, but the Inhabitants of the City were *Romans*, the Magiſtrates at leaſt, and the governing Part. There was the greateſt Numbers and Variety of People, and therefore the moſt Likelihood of doing Good.

Fourthly, The cold Entertainment which *Paul* and his Companions met with at *Philippi*. One would have expected that having ſuch a particular Call from God thither, they ſhould have had a joyful Welcome there, as *Peter* had with *Cornelius* when the Angel ſent him thither; whereas the Man of *Macedonia* that begg'd *Paul* to come thither with all ſpeed, why did he not ſtir up his Countrymen, ſome of them at leaſt, to go meet him, why was he not introduc'd with Solemnity, and the Keys of the City put into his Hand? Here's nothing like that, for

1. 'Tis a good while before any Notice at all is taken of him, *we were in that City abiding certain Days*, probably at a publick Houſe, and at their own Charge, for they had no Friend to invite them ſo much as to a Meal's Meat, till *Lydia* welcom'd them. They had made *all the Haſte* they could thither, but now they are there, are almoſt tempted to think they might as good have ſtay'd where they were. But ſo it was order'd for their Tryal, whether they could bear the Pains of *Silence* and *Lying by*, when that was their Lot: Thoſe eminent uſeful Men are not fit to live in this World that know not how to be *ſlighted* and *overlook'd*. Let not Miniſters think it ſtrange if they be firſt ſtrongly invited to a Place, and yet look'd ſhily upon when they come.

2. When they have an Opportunity of Preaching it is an obſcure Place, and to a mean and ſmall Auditory, *v.* 13. There was no Synagogue of the *Jews* there, for ought appears, to be a Door of Enterance to them, and they never went to the Idol-Temples of the *Gentiles*, to preach to the Auditors there. But here upon Enquiry they found out a little Meeting of good Women, that were *Proſelytes of the Gate*, and they will be thankful to them if they will give them a Sermon. The Place of this Meeting is *out of the City*, there is was conniv'd at, but would not be ſuffer'd any where within the Walls. It was a Place *where Prayer was wont to be made*, προσευχὴ where an *Oratory* or Houſe of Prayer was, ſo ſome; a Chapel, or leſſer Synogogue. But I rather take it as we read it, where Prayer was appointed or accuſtom'd to be. They that worſhipped the true God and would not worſhip Idols, met there to *pray together*, and according to the Deſcription of the moſt ancient and univerſal Devotion, to *call upon the Name of the Lord*. They each of them pray'd a-part every Day, that was always the Practice of them that *worſhipped God*. But beſides that, they *came together* on the *Sabbath-Day:* Tho' they were but a few, diſcountenanc'd by the Town; tho' their Meeting at ſome Diſtance; tho' for ought appears none but Women; yet a *ſolemn Aſſembly* the Worſhippers of God muſt have, if by any Means it be poſſible on the *Sabbath-Day:* And when we cannot do as we would, we muſt do as we can; if we have not Synagogues, we muſt be thankful for more *private* Places, and reſort to them; *not forſaking the Aſſembling of our ſelves together*, according as our Opportunities are. This Place is ſaid to be by *a River-ſide*, which perhaps was choſen, as befriending Contemplation: Idolaters are ſaid to take their Lot *among the ſmooth Stones of the Stream*, Iſa. lvii. 6. But theſe Proſelytes had in their Eye perhaps the Example of thoſe

Prophets who had their Viſions, one by the River of *Chebar*, *Ezek.* i. 1. another *by the great River* Hiddekel, *Dan.* x. 4. Thither *Paul* and *Silas* and *Luke* went and *ſat down* to *inſtruct* the Congregation that they might the better *pray* with them; *they ſpake unto the Women which reſorted thither*, encourag'd them in practiſing according to the Light they had, and led them on further to the Knowledge of Chriſt.

Fifthly, The Converſion of *Lydia*, who probably was the firſt that was wrought upon there to believe in Chriſt, tho' not the laſt. In this Story of the *Acts*, we have not only the Converſion of *Places* recorded, but of many particular Perſons, for ſuch is the Worth of Souls, that the reducing of *one* to God is a great Matter; nor have we only the Converſions that were done by Miracle as *Paul*'s, but ſome that were done by the ordinary Methods of Grace, as *Lydia*'s here. *Obſerve*,

1. Who this Convert was, that there is ſuch particular Notice taken of; four Things are recorded of her.

(1.) Her Name, *Lydia*: 'Tis an Honour to her to have her Name recorded here in the Book of GOD, ſo that where-ever the Scriptures are read, there ſhall this be told concerning her. *Note*, The Names of the Saints are precious with GOD, and ſhould be ſo with us, we cannot have our Names recorded in the Bible. But if GOD open our Hearts, we ſhall find them written in the Book of Life, and that's better, *Phil.* iv. 3. and more to be *rejoy'd in*, Luke x. 20.

(2.) Her Calling; She was a *Seller of Purple*, either of Purple Dye, or of Purple Cloth or Silk. *Obſerve*, (1.) She had a *Calling*, an honeſt Calling, which the Hiſtorian takes Notice of to her Praiſe; ſhe was none of thoſe Women that the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, 1 *Tim.* v. 13. who *learn to be idle, and not only idle.* (2.) It was a *mean* Calling, ſhe was a *Seller of Purple*, not a *Wearer* of Purple, few ſuch are call'd: The Notice taken of this here is an Intimation to thoſe who are employ'd in honeſt Callings, if they be honeſt in the Management of them not to be aſham'd of 'em. (3.) Tho' ſhe had a Calling to mind, yet ſhe was a *Worſhipper of God*, and found Time to improve Advantages for her Soul. The Buſineſs of our particular Callings may be made to conſiſt very well with the Buſineſs of Religion, and therefore it will not excuſe us from religious Exerciſes alone and in our Families, or in ſolemn Aſſemblies to ſay, we have Shops to look after and a Trade to mind, for have we not alſo a GOD to ſerve, and a Soul to look after? Religion doth not call us from our Buſineſs in the World, but directs us in it. Every Thing in its Time and Place.

(3.) The Place ſhe was of; *of the City of Thyatira*, which was a great Way from *Philippi*: There ſhe was born and bred, but either marry'd to *Philippi*, or brought by her Trade to ſettle there. The Providence of GOD as it always *appoints*, ſo it often removes the *Bounds of our Habitation*; and ſometimes makes the Change of our outward Condition, or Place of our Abode wonderfully ſubſervient to the Deſigns of his Grace concerning our Salvation. Providence brings *Lydia* to *Philippi*, to be under *Paul*'s Miniſtry, and there where ſhe met with it ſhe made a good Uſe of it; ſo ſhould we improve Opportunities.

(4.) Her *Religion*; before the Lord open'd her Heart.

1. She *worſhipped God* according to the Knowledge ſhe had, ſhe was one of the *devout Women*: Sometimes the Grace of GOD wrought upon thoſe who before their Converſion were very wicked and vile, *Publicans* and *Harlots*; *ſuch were ſome of you*, 1 Cor. vi. 11. but ſometimes it faſten'd upon thoſe that were of a good Character, that had ſome Good in them, as the *Eunuch*, *Cornelius*, and *Lydia* here. *Note*, It is not enough to be Worſhippers of GOD, but we muſt be Believers in Jeſus Chriſt; for there is no coming to GOD as a Father, but by him as Mediator. But thoſe who *worſhipped God* according to the Light, they had ſtood fair for the Diſcoveries of Chriſt and his Grace to them, for *to him that has ſhall be given*: And to them Chriſt would be welcome; for they that know what it is to worſhip GOD, ſee their need of Chriſt, and know what Uſe to make of his Mediation.

2. She *heard us*. Here where *Prayer was made*, when there was an Opportunity the *Word* was *preached*; for hearing the Word of GOD is a Part of Religious Worſhip, and how can we expect GOD ſhould hear our Prayers if we will not hearken to his Word. They that *worſhipped God* according to the Light they had, look'd out for further Light. We muſt *improve* the Day of ſmall Things, but muſt not *reſt in it*.

3. What the Work was that was wrought upon her, *whoſe Heart the Lord open'd. Obſerve here*,

(1.) The Author of this Work, it was *the Lord*, the Lord Chriſt to whom this Judgment is committed; the Spirit of the Lord who is the Sanctifier. *Note*, Converſion-Work is GOD's Work; 'Tis he that *works in us both to will and to do*; not as if we had nothing to do; but of our ſelves without GOD's Grace we can do nothing; not as if GOD were in the leaſt chargeable with the Ruin of them that periſh, but the Salvation of them that are muſt ſaved be wholly aſcrib'd to him.

(2.) The Seat of this Work. 'Tis *in* the Heart that the Change is made, 'tis *to* the Heart that this bleſſed Turn is given. 'Twas the Heart of *Lydia* that was wrought upon. Converſion-Work is Heart-Work; 'tis a renewing of the Heart, the inward Man; the Spirit of the Mind.

(3.) The Nature of the Work; ſhe had not only her Heart touch'd, but her Heart open'd. An unconverted Soul is *ſhut up* and fortify'd againſt Chriſt, *ſtraitly ſhut up* as *Jericho* againſt *Joſhua*, *Joſh.* vi. 1. Chriſt in dealing with the Soul, *knocks* at the Door that is ſhut againſt him, *Rev.* iii. 20. And when a Sinner is effectually perſuaded to embrace Chriſt, then the *Heart* is *open'd*, for *the King of Glory to come in*. The Underſtanding is open'd to receive the Divine Light, the Will open'd to receive the Divine Law, and the Affections open'd to receive the Divine Love. And when the Heart is thus open'd to Chriſt, the Ear is open'd to his Word, the Lips open'd in Prayer, the Hand open'd in Charity, and the Steps enlarg'd in all Manner of Goſpel Obedience.

3. What were the Effects of this Work on the Heart?

1. She took great Notice of the Word of GOD. Her Heart was ſo *open'd* that *ſhe attended unto the Things that were ſpoken of* Paul; ſhe not only gave *Attendance* on *Paul*'s Preaching, but gave *Attention* to it. She *apply'd to herſelf* (ſo ſome read it) *the Things that were ſpoken of* Paul; and then only the Word doth us good, and makes an abiding Impreſſion upon us when we *apply it to ourſelves*. Now this was an Evidence, the *opening of her Heart*, and was the Fruit of it; wherever the Heart is open'd by the Grace of GOD, it will appear by a diligent *Attendance on*, and *Attention* to the Word of GOD; both for Chriſt's ſake whoſe Word it is, and for our own ſakes who are ſo nearly Intereſted in it.

2. She gave up her Name to Jeſus Chriſt, and took upon her the Profeſſion of his Holy Religion: She *was baptized*, and by that ſolemn Rite was admitted a Member of the Church of Chriſt. And with *her Houſehold* alſo was baptized, thoſe of them that were Infants, *in her Right*; for if the Root be holy, ſo are the Branches, and thoſe that were grown up, *by her Influence*, and Authoty. She and her Houſehold were *baptized* by the ſame Rule that *Abraham* and his Houſehold were *circumcis'd*, becauſe the Seal of the Covenant belongs to the Covenanters and their Seed.

3. She was very kind to the Miniſters, and very deſirous to be further inſtructed by them in the Things pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD. *She beſought us ſaying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the LORD*, if you take me to be a ſincere Chriſtian, manifeſt your Confidence in me by this, *Come into my houſe and abide there.* Thus ſhe deſir'd an Opportunity (1.) To *teſtify her Gratitude* to them, who had been the Inſtruments of divine Grace in this bleſſed Change that was wrought upon her. When her *Heart* was *open* to Chriſt, her *Houſe* was open to *his Miniſtess* for his Sake, and they were welcome to the beſt Entertainment ſhe had, which ſhe did not think too good for thoſe of whoſe ſpiritual Things ſhe had reap'd ſo plentifully. Nay, they are not only welcome to her, but ſhe is extreamly *preſſing* and *importunate* with them, ſhe *conſtrain'd us*, which intimates that *Paul* was very *backward* and *unwilling* to go, becauſe he was afraid of being burthenſome to the Families of the young Converts, and would ſtudy to *make the Goſpel of Chriſt without charge*, 1 Cor. ix. 18. *Acts* xx. 34. That thoſe that were without might have no Occaſion given them to reproach the Preachers of the Goſpel as deſigning, ſelf ſeeking Men; and that thoſe that were within might have no Occaſion to complain of the Expences of their Religion. But *Lydia* would have no *Nay*, ſhe will not believe that they take her to be a ſincere Chriſtian, unleſs they will oblige her herein; like *Abraham* inviting the Angels, *Gen.* xviii. 3. *If now I have found favour in thy Sight, paſs not away from thy Servant.* (2.) She deſir'd an Opportunity of receiving further Inſtruction. If ſhe might but have them for a While in her Family ſhe might *hear them daily*, Prov. viii. 34. and not only on *Sabbath-Days* at the Meeting; in her own Houſe ſhe might not only *hear them*, but *ask them Queſtions*, and ſhe might have them to pray with her daily, and to *bleſs her Houſehold*. Thoſe that know *ſomething* of Chriſt, cannot but deſire to know *more*, and ſeek Opportunities of increaſing their Acquaintance with his Goſpel.

16 ¶ And it come to paſs as we went to prayer,
a certain Damſel, poſſeſſed with a Spirit of divination
met us, which brought her maſters much gain by
ſooth-ſaying: 17 The ſame followed Paul, and us,
and cried, ſaying, Theſe men are the ſervants of the
moſt high God, which ſhew unto us the way of Sal-
vation. 18 And this did ſhe many days. But Paul
being grieved, turned and ſaid to the Spirit, I com-
mand thee in the name of Jeſus Chriſt to come out of
her. And he came out the ſame hour. 19 ¶ And
when her maſters ſaw that the hope of their gain was
gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew *them* in-
to the market-place, unto the rulers; 20 And
brought them to the magiſtrates, ſaying, Theſe men
being Jews do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 And
teach cuſtoms which are not lawful for us to receive,
neither to obſerve, being Romans. 22 And the multi-
tude roſe up together againſt them: and the magiſtrates
rent off their cloaths, and commanded to beat *them*
23 And when they had laid many ſtripes upon
them; they caſt *them* into priſon, charging the jaylor

to keep them ſafely. 24 Who having received ſuch a charge, thruſt them into the inner priſon, and made their feet faſt in the ſtocks.

Paul and his Companions, tho' they were for ſome Time bury'd in Obſcurity at *Philippi*, yet now begin to *be taken Notice of*.

Firſt, A *Damſel* that had a *Spirit of Divination* made them to be *taken Notice of*, by proclaiming them to be the *Servants of God*. *Obſerve*,

1. The Account that is given of this Damſel: She was *Pythoniſſa*, poſſeſſed with ſuch a *Spirit of Divination*, as that Damſel was by whom the Oracles of *Apollo* at *Delphos* were deliver'd; ſhe was acted by an *evil Spirit*, that dictated ambiguous Anſwers to thoſe who conſulted her, which ſerv'd to gratify their vain Deſire of knowing Things to come; but oft deceiv'd them. In thoſe Times of Ignorance, Infidelity and Idolatry, the Devil by the Divine Permiſſion, thus *led Men captive at his Will*; and he could not have gain'd ſuch *Adoration from them* as he had, if he had not pretended to *give Oracles to them*; for by both his Uſurpation is maintain'd as the *God of this World*. This *Damſel brought her Maſters much gain by Sooth-ſaying*; many came to conſult this Witch for the Diſcovery of Robberies, the finding of Things loſt, and eſpecially, to be told their Fortune; and none came but with *the Rewards of Divination in their Hands*, according to the Quality of the Perſon, and the Importance of the Caſe. Probably there were many that were thus kept for *Fortune-tellers*, but it ſhould ſeem this was more in Repute than any of them; for while others brought *ſome* Gain, this brought *much* Gain to her Maſters, being conſulted more than any other.

2. The Teſtimony which this Damſel gave to *Paul* and his Companions: She *met them* in the Street as they were going to *Prayer*, to the *Houſe of Prayer*, or rather to the *Work of Prayer* there, *v.* 16. They went thither publickly; every Body knew whither they were going, and what they were going to do. If what ſhe did was likely to be any *Diſtraction* to them, or a Hindrance in their Work, it is obſerveable how ſubtle Satan is, that great Tempter, to *give us Diverſion* then when we are going about any religious Exerciſes, to *ruffle* us, and to put us out of Temper, then when we need to be moſt *compos'd*. When ſhe met with them ſhe *follow'd them*, crying, *Theſe Men* how *contemptible* ſoever they *look*, and are *look'd upon*, are great Men, for they are *the Servants of the moſt high GOD*, and Men that ſhould be very welcome to us, for *they ſhew unto us the Way of Salvation*, both the Salvation that will be our Happineſs, and the Way to it that will be our Holineſs.

Now 1. This Witneſs is true; 'tis a comprehenſive Encomium of the faithful Preachers of the Goſpel, and makes *their Feet beautiful*, Rom. x. 15. Tho' they are Men *ſubject to like Paſſions*, as we are, and *earthen Veſſels*, yet (1.) They are the *Servants of the moſt high God*; They attend on him, are employ'd by him, and are devoted to his Honour as Servants; They come to us on his Errands, the Meſſage they bring is from him, and they ſerve the Purpoſes and Intereſts of his Kingdom. The Gods we *Gentiles* worſhip are *inferior* Beings, therefore not Gods, but *they* belong to the *Supreme Numen*, to the *moſt high God*, who is over all Men, over all Gods; who made us all, and to whom we are all accountable. They are *his Servants*, and therefore it is our Duty to reſpect them, and hearken to them for their Maſter's ſake, and it is at our peril if we affront them. (2.) They *ſhew unto us the Way of Salvation*. Even the Heathen had ſome Notion of the miſerable deplorable State of Mankind, and their Need of *Salvation*, and it is what they made ſome Enquiries after. Now, ſaith ſhe, theſe are the Men that ſhew us what we have in vain ſought for in our ſuperſtitious profitleſs Applications to our Prieſts and Oracles. *Note*, God has in the Goſpel of his Son plainly *ſhew'd* us *the Way of Salvation*; has told us what we muſt do that we may be deliver'd from the Miſery to which by Sin we have expos'd our ſelves.

But 2. How came this Teſtimony from the Mouth of one that had a *Spirit of Divination*. Is Satan divided againſt himſelf? Will he *cry up* thoſe whoſe Buſineſs it is to *pull* him *down*? We may take it either,

1. As *extorted from* this Spirit of Divination for the Honour of the Goſpel, by the Power of God; as the Devil was forc'd to ſay of Chriſt, *Mark* i. 24. *I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of GOD*. The Truth is ſometimes magnify'd by the Confeſſion of its Adverſaries, in which they are *Witneſſes againſt themſelves*. Chriſt would have this Teſtimony of the *Damſel* to riſe up in Judgment againſt thoſe at *Philippi*, who ſlighted and perſecuted the Apoſtles: Tho' the Goſpel needed no ſuch Teſtimony, yet it ſhall ſerve to add to their Condemnation, that the Damſel whom they look'd upon as an Oracle in other Things, proclaim'd the Apoſtles *God's Servants*. Or,

2. As *deſign'd by* the evil Spirit, that ſubtle Serpent, to the Diſhonour of the Goſpel; ſome think ſhe deſign'd hereby to gain Credit to herſelf and her Prophecies, and ſo to increaſe her Maſters Profit, by pretending to be in the Intereſt of the Apoſtles, who ſhe thought had a growing Reputation, or to ſpeak *Paul* fair not to part between her and her *Familiar*. Others think, *Satan* who can transform himſelf into *an Angel of Light*, and can ſay any Thing to ſerve a Turn, deſign'd hereby to diſgrace the

this Time, in this Place, to this People.

Apoſtles, as if theſe *Divines* were of the ſame Fraternity with their *Diviners*, becauſe they were witneſſed to by them; and then the People had as good ſtick to thoſe they had been us'd to. Thoſe that were moſt likely to receive the Apoſtles Doctrine, were ſuch as were prejudic'd againſt theſe *Spirits of Divination*, and therefore would by this Teſtimony be prejudic'd againſt the Goſpel; and as for theſe who regarded theſe Diviners, the Devil thought himſelf ſure of them.

Secondly, Chriſt made them to be *taken Notice of*, by giving them Power to *caſt the Devil* out of this *Damſel*. She continued *many Days* clamouring thus, *v.* 15. and it ſhould ſeem *Paul* took no Notice of her, not knowing but it might be order'd of God, for the Service of his Cauſe, that ſhe ſhould thus witneſs concerning his Miniſters: But finding perhaps that it did them a Prejudice rather than any Service, he ſoon ſilenc'd her, by *caſting the Devil* out of her.

1. He was *grieved*; It troubled him to ſee the Damſel made an Inſtrument of Satan to deceive People, and to ſee the People impos'd upon by her Divinations. It was a Diſturbance to him to hear a *Sacred Truth* ſo *prophan'd*, and *good Words* come out of ſuch an ill Mouth, with ſuch an ill Deſign. Perhaps they were ſpoken in an ironical bantering Way, as *ridiculing* the Apoſtles Pretenſions, and *mocking* them, as when Chriſt's Perſecutors complemented him with, *Hail, King of the* Jews: And then juſtly might *Paul* be griev'd, as any good Man's Heart would be, to hear any good Truth of God baul'd out in the Streets in a canting jeering Way.

2. He *commanded* the *evil Spirit* to *come out of her*. He *turn'd* with a Holy Indignation, angry both at the Flatteries, and at the Reproaches of the unclean Spirit: And ſaid, *I command thee in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt to come out of her*. And by this he will ſhew that thoſe Men *are the Servants of the Living God*, and are able to prove themſelves ſo without her Teſtimony; her Silence ſhall demonſtrate it more than her Speaking could do: Thus *Paul* ſhews the *Way of Salvation* indeed, that it is by breaking the Power of *Satan*, and *chaining him up* that he may not *deceive* the World, *Rev.* xx. 3. And that this Salvation is to be obtain'd *in the Name of Jeſus Chriſt* only, as *in his Name* the Devil was now caſt out, and by no other. It was a great Bleſſing to the Country when Chriſt by a Word caſt the Devil out of theſe in whom he *frighten'd* People, and *moleſted* them, ſo that *no Man might paſs by that Way*, Matth. viii. 28. But it was a much greater Kindneſs to the Country, when *Paul* now in Chriſt's Name caſt the Devil out of One who deceiv'd People, and impoſed upon their Credulity. Power went along with the Word of Chriſt, which Satan could not ſtand before, but was forc'd to quit his Hold, and in this Caſe it was a Strong-hold, he *came out the ſame Hour*.

Thirdly, The Maſters of the *Damſel* that was diſpoſſeſs'd made them to be *taken Notice of*, by bringing them before the Magiſtrates for doing it, and laying it to their Charge as their Crime. And the Preachers of the Goſpel would never have had an Opportunity of ſpeaking to the Magiſtrates, if they had not been brought before them as *Evil-doers*. *Obſerve here*,

1. That which provok'd them was, That now the Damſel was reſtor'd to herſelf, *her Maſters ſaw that the Hope of their Gain was gone*, *v.* 19. See here what Evil the *Love of Money* is the *Root of*: If the Preaching of the Goſpel ruin the Craft of the Silverſmiths, *Acts*. xix. 24. much more the Craft of the Sooth-ſayers, and therefore here's a mighty Outcry rais'd when Satan's Power to deceive is broken. And therefore the Prieſts hated the Goſpel, becauſe it turn'd Men from the *blind* Service of *dumb* Idols, and ſo the *Hope of their Gains was gone*. The Power of Chriſt which appear'd in diſpoſſeſſing the Woman, and the great Kindneſs done to her in delivering her out of Satan's Hand, made no Impreſſion upon them when they apprehended that they ſhould *loſe Money* by it.

2. The Courſe they took with them, was to incenſe the Higher Powers againſt them, as Men fit to be puniſhed: They *caught them* as they went along, and with the utmoſt Fury and Violence drag'd them into *the Market-place*, where publick Juſtice was adminiſtred. (1.) They brought them to *the Rulers*, their *Juſtices of Peace*, to do by them as Men taken into the Hands of the Law, the *Duumviri*. (2.) From them they hurry'd them to *the Magiſtrates*, the *Prætors*, or Governors of the City, τοῖς στρατηγοῖς the *Officers of the Army*, ſo the Word ſignifies. But 'tis taken in general for the Judges, or chief Rulers; to them they brought their Complaint.

3. The Charge they exhibit againſt them, is, That they were the *Troublers of the Land*, *v.* 24. They take it for granted, That they were *Jews*, a Nation at this Time as much an *Abomination* to the *Romans* as they had long ago been to the *Egyptians*. Piteous was the Caſe of the Apoſtles when it was turn'd to their Reproach that they were *Jews*; and yet the *Jews* were their moſt violent Perſecutors. (1.) The general Charge againſt them, is, That they *troubled the City*, ſow'd Diſcord, and diſturb'd the publick Peace, and occaſion'd Riots and Tumults; than which nothing could be more falſe and unjuſt, as was *Ahab*'s Character of *Elijah*, 1 Kings xviii. 17. *Art thou he that troubleth* Iſrael? If they *troubled the City*, it was but like the Angel's troubling the Water of *Betheſda*'s Pool, in order to Healing; *ſhaking* in or-

der to a happy *Settlement*. Thus they that *rouze* the Sluggards, are exclaim'd againſt for troubling them. (2.) Their Proof of the Charge is, Their *teaching Cuſtoms* not proper to be admitted by a *Roman* Colony, *v.* 21. The *Romans* were always very *jealous* of *Innovations* in Religion; Right or Wrong, they would ſtick to that, how vain ſoever, which they had *receiv'd by Tradition from their Fathers.* No foreign or upſtart Deity muſt be allow'd of without the Approbation of the Senate; The *Gods of their Country*, muſt be *their Gods*, true or falſe. 'Twas one of the Laws of the twelve Tables; *Hath a Nation chang'd their Gods?* This incens'd them againſt the Apoſtles, that they taught a Religion deſtructive of Polytheiſm and Idolatry, and Preach'd to them to *turn from thoſe Vanities*. This the *Romans* could not bear; if this grow upon us, in a little While we ſhall loſe our Religion.

Fourthly, The Magiſtrates by their Proceedings againſt them, made them to be taken Notice of:

1. By Countenancing the *Perſecution*, they rais'd the Mob upon them, *v.* 22. *The Multitude roſe up together againſt them*, and were ready to pull them to Pieces. It has been the Artifice of *Satan*, to make God's Miniſters and People odious to the Commonalty, by repreſenting them as dangerous Men, and aiming at the Deſtruction of the Conſtitution, and the *changing of the Cuſtoms*, when really there has been no ground for ſuch an Imputation.

2. By going on to an *Execution*, they further repreſented them as the vileſt of Malefactors; *they rent off their Cloaths* with Rage and Fury, not having Patience till they were taken off in order to their being *ſcourg'd*: This the Apoſtle refers to when he ſpeaks of their being *ſhamefully entreated* at *Philippi*, 1 Theſ. ii. 2. They commanded that they ſhould be *whip'd* as *Vagabonds* by the *Lictors* and *Beadles*, who attended the *Prætors*, and carry'd Rods with them for that purpoſe; this was one of thoſe *three Times* that *Paul* was *beaten with Rods*, according to the *Roman* Uſage, which was not under the compaſſionate Limitation of the Number of Stripes not to exceed forty, which was provided by the Jewiſh Law. It is here ſaid, That they laid *many Stripes upon them*, *v.* 23. without counting how many, becauſe they *ſeem'd vile unto them*, Deut. xxv. 3.

Now one would think this might have ſatiated their Cruelty, if they muſt be whip'd, ſure they muſt be diſcharg'd; no, they are *impriſon'd*, and 'tis probable their preſent purpoſe was to try them for their Lives, and put them to Death, elſe why ſhould there be ſuch care taken to prevent their Eſcape.

1. The *Judges* made their *Commitment* very *ſtrict*: They *charg'd the Jaylor to keep them ſafely*, and have a very watchful Eye upon them, as if they were dangerous Men, that either would venture to break Priſon themſelves, or were in Confederacy with thoſe that would attempt to reſcue them. Thus they endeavour'd to render them odious, that they might juſtify themſelves in the baſe Uſage they had given them.

The *Jaylor* made their *Confinement* very *ſevere*, *v.* 25. *Having receiv'd ſuch a Charge*, though he might have kept them ſafely enough in the outer Priſon, yet he *thruſt them into the inner Priſon*. He was ſenſible that the *Magiſtrates* had a great Indignation againſt theſe Men, and were inclin'd to be ſevere with them, and therefore he thought to ingratiate himſelf with them, by exerting his Power likewiſe againſt them, to the uttermoſt. When Magiſtrates are *cruel*, it is no Wonder that the Officers under them are ſo too. He put them into the *inner Priſon* the *Dungeon*, into which none was uſually put but condemn'd Malefactors; dark at Noon-day, damp and cold, dirty, 'tis likely, and ſtinking, like that into which *Jeremiah* was let down, *Jer.* xxxviii. 6. And as if that were not enough, he *made their Feet faſt in the Stocks*. Perhaps having heard a Report of the Eſcape of the Preachers of the Goſpel out of Priſon when the Doors were faſt bar'd, *Acts*, v. 19. xii. 9. he thought he would be wiſer than other Jaylors had been, and therefore would effectually ſecure them by faſtning them *in the Stocks*. And they were not the firſt of God's Meſſengers that had their Feet in the Stocks, *Jeremiah* was ſo treated and publickly too, in the high gate of *Benjamin*, Jer. xx. 2. *Joſeph* had his Feet *hurt with Fetters*, Pſal. cv. 18. O what hard Uſage has God's Servants met with, as in the former Days, ſo in the latter Times, witneſs the Books of Martyrs, Martyrs in Queen *Mary*'s Time.

25 ¶ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and
ſang praiſes unto God: and the priſoners heard them.
26 And ſuddenly there was a great Earthquake, ſo
that the foundations of the priſon were ſhaken: and
immediately all the doors were opened, and every
one's bands were looſed. 27 And the keeper
of the priſon awaking out of his ſleep, and ſeeing
the priſon-doors open, he drew out his ſword, and
would have killed himſelf, ſuppoſing that the priſoners
had been fled. 28 But Paul cried with a loud
voice, ſaying, do thy ſelf no harm; for we are all
here. 29 Then he called for a light, and ſprang in,
and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and
Silas: 30 And brought them out, and ſaid, Sirs,
what muſt I do to be ſaved? 31 And they ſaid,
Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be
ſaved, and thy houſe. 32 And they ſpake unto him
the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his
houſe. 33 And he took them the ſame hour of the
night, and waſhed *their* ſtripes; and was baptiz'd, he
and all his ſtraitway. 34 And when he had brought
them into his houſe, he ſet meat before them, and
rejoyced, believing in God with all his houſe.

We have here the Deſigns of the Perſecutors of *Paul* and *Silas* baffled and broken.

Firſt, The *Perſecutors* deſign'd to *diſhearten* and *diſcourage* the *Preaching* of the Goſpel, and to make them ſick of the Cauſe, and weary of their Work; but here we find them both *hearty* and *hearten'd*.

1. They were themſelves *hearty*, wonderful hearty, never were poor Priſoners ſo truly chearful, nor ſo far from laying their hard Uſage to Heart. Let us conſider what their Caſe was: The *Prætors* among the *Romans* had *Rods* carry'd before them, and *Axes* bound upon them; the *Faſces* and *Secures*. Now they had *felt* the ſmart of the Rods, the *Plowers* had *plowed upon their Backs*, and *made long their Furrows*; the many Stripes they had laid on them were very ſore, and One might have expected to hear them complaining of them, of the Rawneſs and Soreneſs of their Backs and Shoulders; yet this was not all, they had Reaſon to fear the *Axes* next. Their Maſter was firſt *ſcourg'd*, and then *crucify'd*, and they might expect the ſame. In the mean Time, they were in the *inner Priſon*, their *Feet in the Stocks* (which ſome think) not only *held* them, but *hurt* them; and yet *at Midnight*, when they ſhould have been trying if poſſible to get a little Reſt, *they prayed, and ſang Praiſes to* God. (1.) They *prayed together*; pray'd to God to ſupport them, and comfort them in their Afflictions, to viſit them as he did *Joſeph* in the Priſon, and to be with them; pray'd that their Conſolations in Chriſt might abound as their Afflictions for him did; pray'd that even their Bonds and Stripes, might turn to the Furtherance of the Goſpel; pray'd for their Perſecutors, that God would forgive them, and turn their Hearts. This was not an *Hour of Prayer*, but *at Midnight*; it was not a *Houſe of Prayer*, but in a *Dungeon*; yet it was ſeaſonable to pray, and the Prayer was acceptable. As *in the Dark* ſo *out of the Depths*, we may *cry unto God*: No Place, no Time amiſs for Prayer, if the Heart be lifted up to God. They that are Companions in Suffering, ſhould joyn in Prayer; *Is any afflicted, let him pray.* No Trouble, how grievous ſoever, ſhould indiſpoſe us for Prayer. (2.) They *ſang praiſes to God*: They *praiſed God*; for we muſt *in every Thing give Thanks*. We never want Matter for Praiſe, if we do not want a Heart: And what ſhould put the Heart of a Child of God out of Tune for that Duty, if a Dungeon and a Pair of Stocks will not do it. They praiſed God that they were *counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his Name*; that they were ſo wonderfully ſupported and born up under their Sufferings, and felt divine Conſolations ſo ſweet, ſo ſtrong in their Souls. Nay, they not only *praiſed God*, but they *ſang praiſes* to him, in ſome *Pſalm* or *Hymn*, or *ſpiritual Song*, either one of *David*'s, or ſome modern Compoſure, or one of their own, as the Spirit gave them Utterance. As our Rule is, That the *Afflicted* ſhould *pray* and therefore being in Affliction they pray'd; ſo our Rule is That the *merry* ſhould *ſing Pſalms*, (Jam. v. 13.) and therefore being *merry* in their Affliction, merry *after a godly Sort*, they *ſung Pſalms*. This proves, that *ſinging of Pſalms* is a *Goſpel Ordinance*, and ought to be uſed by all good Chriſtians; and that it is inſtituted not only for the *expreſſing* of their *Joys* in a Day of *Triumph*, but for the *balancing* and *relieving* of their *Sorrows* in a Day of *Trouble*. It was *at Midnight* that they *ſang Pſalms*, according to the Example of the Sweet Pſalmiſt of *Iſrael*, Pſal. cxix. 62. *At Midnight will I riſe to give Thanks unto thee.* Notice is here taken of one Circumſtance, That *the Priſoners heard them*. If they did not hear them *pray*, yet they heard them *ſing Praiſes*. (1.) It intimates how *hearty* they were in ſinging Praiſes to God: They ſung ſo *loud*, that tho' they were *in the Dungeon*, yet they were heard all the Priſon over: Nay, ſo loud, that they wak'd the Priſoners; for we may ſuppoſe, being *at Midnight* they were *all aſleep*. We ſhould ſing Pſalms *with all our Heart*. The *Saints* are call'd upon to *ſing aloud upon their Beds*, Pſal. cxliv. 5. But Goſpel-Grace carries the Matter further, and gives us an Example of thoſe that *ſang aloud* in the Priſon, in the Stocks. (2.) Tho' they knew the *Priſoners* would *hear them*, yet they *ſang aloud*, as thoſe that were not *aſham'd of their Maſter*, or of his Service. Shall thoſe that would ſing Pſalms in their Families, plead in Excuſe for their Omiſſion of the Duty, That they are afraid their Neighbours ſhould hear them; when thoſe that ſing prophane Songs, *roar them out*, and care not who hears them. (3.) The Priſoners were made to hear the *Priſon-Songs* of *Paul* and *Silas*, that they might be prepar'd for the miraculous Favour ſhew'd to 'em all for the ſake of *Paul* and *Silas*, when the Priſon-doors were *thrown open*. By this extraordinary

Comfort which they were *filled with*, it was publiſh'd that he whom they preach'd was the *Conſolation of Iſrael*. Let the Priſoners that mean to oppoſe him, hear and *tremble* before him: Let thoſe that are faithful to him, hear and *triumph*, and take of the Comfort that is ſpoken to the *Priſoners of Hope*, Zech. ix. 12.

2. God *hearten'd* them wonderfully by his ſignal Appearances for them, *v.* 26. (1.) There was immediately a *great Earthquake*; How far it extended we are not told, but it was ſuch a violent Shock in this Place, that the very *Foundations of the Priſon* were *ſhaken*. While the Priſoners were *hearkening* to the Midnight Devotions of *Paul* and *Silas*, and perhaps laughing at 'em, and making a Jeſt of them, this Earthquake would ſtrike a *Terror* upon 'em, and convince 'em, that thoſe Men were the Favourites of Heaven, and ſuch as God own'd. We had the *Houſe of Prayer* ſhaken in Anſwer to Prayer, and as a Token of God's Acceptance of it, *chap.* iv. 31. and hear the Priſon ſhaken. The *LORD* was in theſe *Earthquakes* to ſhew his Rentſentment of the Indignities done to his Servants, and to teſtify to thoſe whoſe Confidence is in the Earth, the Weakneſs and Inſtability of that which they confide in, and to teach his People, That *tho' the Earth be remov'd*, yet they need not *fear*. (2.) The *Priſon-Doors* were thrown *open*, and the Priſoners Fetters were knock'd off, *every Man's bands were looſed*. Perhaps the Priſoners when they hear'd *Paul* and *Silas* pray and ſing Pſalms, admir'd them, and ſpake honourably of them, and ſaid what the Damſel had ſaid of them; Surely, *theſe Men are the Servants of the Living God*, and to recompence them for, and confirm them in their good Opinion of them, they ſhare in the Miracle and have their Bands looſed; as afterwards God gave to *Paul*, all *thoſe that were in the Ship with him*, chap. xxvii. 24. ſo now he gave him all thoſe that were in the Priſon with him. God hereby ſignify'd to thoſe Priſoners, (as *Grotius* obſerves) that the Apoſtles in Preaching the Goſpel were *publick Bleſſings* to Mankind as they *proclaim'd Liberty* to the Captives, and the *opening of the Priſon-Doors to them that were bound*, Iſa. lxi. 1. *Et per eos ſolvi animorum vincula.*

Secondly, The *Perſecutors* deſign'd to *ſtop the Progreſs of the Goſpel*, that no more might embrace it; thus they hoped to ruin the *Meeting by the River-ſide*, that no more *Hearts* ſhould be *open'd* there; but here we find Converts made in the Priſon, that Houſe turn'd into a Meeting, the Trophies of the Goſpel's Victories erected there, and the *Jaylor*, their own Servant, become a Servant of Chriſt. 'Tis probable, ſome of the *Priſoners*, if not all, were converted. Surely the Miracle wrought on their Bodies, in *looſing their Bands*, was wrought on their Souls too. See *Job* xxxvi. 8, 9, 13. *Pſal.* cvii. 14, 15. But it is only the Converſion of the *Jaylor* that is recorded.

1. He is *afraid* he ſhall *loſe his Life*, and *Paul* makes him *eaſy* as to *that Care*, *v.* 27, 28.

(1.) He *awoke out of his Sleep*: 'Tis likely the Shock of the Earthquake wak'd him, and the Opening of the Priſon-Doors, and the Priſoners Expreſſions of Joy and Amazement, when in the Dark they found their Bands looſed, and call'd to tell one another what they felt. This was enough to wake the Jaylor, whoſe Place requir'd that he ſhould not be hard to wake. This waking of him out of his Sleep, ſignifyed the awaking of his Conſcience out of his ſpiritual Slumber: The Call of the Goſpel is, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt*, Eph. v. 14. Like that, *Jonah* i. 6.

(2.) He *ſaw the Priſon-Doors open*, and ſuppos'd, as well he might, that *the Priſoners were fled*, and then, What would become of him? He knew the *Roman* Law in that Caſe, and it was executed not long ago upon the Keepers, out of whoſe Hands *Peter* eſcap'd, *chap.* xii. 19. 'Twas according to that of the Prophet, 1 *Kings* xx. 39, 42. *Keep this Man, if he be miſſing, thy Life ſhall go for his Life.* The *Roman* Lawyers after this, in their Readings upon the Law *De Cuſtodia reorum*, which appoints, That the Keeper ſhould undergo the ſame Puniſhment that ſhould be inflicted on the Priſoner, if he let him eſcape, take Care to except an *Eſcape by Miracle*.

(3.) In his Fright he *drew his Sword*, and was going to *kill himſelf*, to prevent a more terrible Death, an expected one, a pompous, ignominious Death, which he knew he was liable to for letting his Priſoners eſcape, and not looking better to them; and the extraordinary ſtrict Charge which the Magiſtrates gave him concerning *Paul* and *Silas*, made him conclude, they would be very ſevere upon him if they were gone. The Philoſophers generally allow'd *Self-murder*; *Seneca* preſcribes it as the laſt Remedy which thoſe that are in Diſtreſs may have Recourſe to. The *Stoicks*, notwithſtanding their pretended Conqueſt of the Paſſions, yielded thus far to them. And the *Epicureans*, who indulg'd the Pleaſures of Senſe, to avoid its Pains, choſe rather to put an End to it. This *Jaylor* thought there was no Harm in anticipating his own Death. But Chriſtianity by this proves it ſelf to be *of GOD*, that it keeps us to the Law of our Creation, revives, enforces and eſtabliſhes that; obliges us to be juſt to our own Lives, and teacheth us chearfully to reſign them to our Graces, but couragiouſly to hold them out againſt our Corruptions.

(4.) *Paul* ſtop'd him from his Proceeding againſt himſelf, *v.* 28. He *cry'd with a loud Voice*, not only to make him *hear* but to make him *heed*, ſaying, *Do not practice any Evil to thy ſelf, Do thy ſelf no harm.* All the Cautions of the Word of God againſt Sin and all Appearances of it, and Approaches to it, have this Tendency, *Do thy ſelf no harm*: Man, Woman, do not wrong thy ſelf, nor ruin thy ſelf. Hurt not thy ſelf, and then none elſe can hurt thee. Do not Sin, for nothing but that can hurt thee. Even as to *the Body*, we are caution'd againſt thoſe Sins which *do harm* to that, and are taught not to *hate our own Fleſh*, but to *nouriſh* and *cheriſh* it. The Jaylor need not fear being call'd to an Account for the Eſcape of his Priſoners, for they *are all here*. 'Twas ſtrange that ſome of them did not *ſlip away* when the *Priſon-Doors were open'd*, and they were *looſed from their Bands*: But their Amazement held them faſt, and being ſenſible it was by the Prayers of *Paul* and *Silas* that they were *looſed*, they would not ſtir unleſs *they* ſtir'd; and God ſhew'd his Power in binding their Spirit, as much as in looſing their Feet.

2. He is *afraid* he ſhall *loſe his Soul*, and *Paul* makes him *eaſy as to that Care* too. One concern leads him to the other, and a much greater: And being hinder'd from haſtening himſelf out of this World, he begins to think if he had purſu'd his Intention, whither Death would have brought him, and what would have become of him on t'other ſide Death: A very proper Thought for ſuch as have been ſnatch'd as a *Brand out of the Fire*, when there was *but a Step between them and Death*. And perhaps the Heinouſneſs of the Sin he was running into, help'd to alarm him.

1. Whatever was the Cauſe, he was put into a *mighty Conſternation*; the Spirit of God that was ſent to *convince* in order to his being a *Comforter*, ſtruck a Terror upon him, and ſtartled him. Whether he took care to ſhut the *Priſon-Doors* again, we are not told; perhaps he forgot that, as the Woman of *Samaria*, when Chriſt had impreſs'd Convictions on her Conſcience, *left her Water-pot*, and forgot her Errand to the Well; for he *call'd for a Light* with all ſpeed, and *ſprang in* to the inner Priſon, and *came trembling* to *Paul* and *Silas*. Thoſe that have Sin ſet in order before them, and are made to know their Abominations, cannot but tremble at the Apprehenſion of their Miſery and Danger. This Jaylor when he was thus made to tremble, could not apply himſelf to a more proper Perſon than to *Paul*, for it had once been his own Caſe; He had once been a Perſecutor of good Men, as this Jaylor was; had *caſt them into Priſon*, as he *kept them*; and when like him, he was made ſenſible of it, he *trembled and was aſtoniſhed*; and therefore was able to ſpeak the more feelingly to the Jaylor.

2. In this Conſternation, he apply'd himſelf to *Paul* and *Silas* for Relief. *Obſerve*,

(1.) How *reverent* and *reſpectful* his Addreſs to them is: He *call'd for a Light*, becauſe they were in the Dark, and that they might ſee what a Fright he was in. He *fell down before them*, as One amaz'd at the Badneſs of his own Condition, and ready to ſink under the Load of his Terror becauſe of it; He *fell down before them*, as One that had upon his Spirit an Awe of them, and of the Image of God upon them, and of their Commiſſion from God. 'Tis likely he had heard what the Damſel ſaid of them, That they were *the Servants of the Living GOD*, which *ſhew'd to them the Way of Salvation*, and as ſuch he thus expreſs'd his Veneration for them. He *fell down* before them to *beg their pardon*, as a *Penitent*, for the Indignities he had done them; and to beg their Advice as a Supplicant, what he ſhould do. He gave them a Title of Reſpect, *Sirs*, κύριοι Lords, Maſters: It was but now, Rogues and Villains, and he was *their* Maſter; but now, *Sirs*, *Lords*, and they are *his Maſters*. Converting Grace changes Peoples Language *of* and *to* good People, and good Miniſters. And to thoſe who are throughly convinc'd of Sin, the very *Feet* of thoſe are *beautiful* that bring Tydings of Chriſt, yea, tho' they are diſgracefully faſten'd in the Stocks.

(2.) How *ſerious* his Enquiry is; *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* (1.) His *Salvation* is now his great Concert, and lies neareſt his Heart, which before was the furtheſt Thing in his Thoughts. Not, What ſhall I do to be preferr'd, to be rich and great in the World, but, *What ſhall I do to be ſaved?* (2.) He doth not enquire concerning others, What they muſt do? but concerning himſelf, *What muſt I do?* 'Tis his own precious Soul that he is in Care about, let others do as they pleaſe, tell me, What I muſt do, what courſe muſt I take? (3.) He is convinc'd that ſomething muſt be done, and done *by him* too, in order to his Salvation; that it is not a Thing of Courſe, a Thing that will do itſelf; but a Thing about which we muſt ſtrive, wreſtle, and take Pains. He asks not, What may be *done for me?* but, *what ſhall I do?* That being now in *Fear and Trembling*, I may *work out my Salvation*, as *Paul* ſpeaks in his Epiſtle to the Church at *Philippi*, of which this *Jaylor* was, perhaps with reſpect to *his* trembling Enquiry here; intimating, that he muſt not only *ask after* his *Salvation*, as he had done; but *work out his Salvation* with a holy Trembling, *Phil.* ii. 12. (4.) He is willing to do *any Thing*; Tell me what muſt I do, and I am here ready to do it. Sirs, put me into any Way, if it be but the right Way, and a ſure Way, tho' narrow and thorny, and up Hill; yet I will walk in it. *Note*, Thoſe who are throughly convinc'd of Sin, and truly concern'd about their Salvation, will *ſurrender upon Diſcretion* to Jeſus Chriſt, will give him a Blank to write what he pleaſed, will be glad to have Chriſt upon his own Terms, Chriſt upon any Terms. (5.) He is *inquiſitive*, what he ſhould do; is *deſirous* to know what he ſhould do, and *asks* thoſe that were likely to tell him. *If ye will enquire, enquire ye*, Iſa. xxii. 11.

They that ſet their Faces *Sion-ward*, muſt *ask the Way* thither, *Jer.* l. 5. We cannot know it ourſelves, but God has made it known to us by his Word, has appointed his Miniſters to aſſiſt us in conſulting the Scriptures; and has promis'd to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him to be their Guide in the Way of Salvation. (6.) He *brought them out* to put this Queſtion to them, that their Anſwer might not be *by Dureſs* or *Compulſion*, but they might *preſcribe* to him, tho' he was their Keeper, with the ſame Liberty as they did to others. *He brings them out* of the Dungeon, in hopes they would *bring them out* of a much worſe.

3. They very readily directed him what he muſt do, *v.* 31. They were always ready to anſwer ſuch Enquiries; tho' they are *cold*, and *ſore*, and *ſleepy*, they do not adjourn this Cauſe to a more convenient Time and Place, do not bid him come to them the next Sabbath at their Meeting-place by the River-ſide, and they will tell him, but they ſtrike while the Iron is hot, take him now when he is in a good Mind, leſt the Conviction ſhould wear off; now God begins to Work, it's Time for them to ſet in as *Workers together with GOD*. They do not upbraid him with his rude and ill Carriage towards them, and his going beyond his Warrant; all this is forgiven, and forgotten, and they are as glad to ſhew him the Way to Heaven, as the beſt Friend they have. They did not *triumph* over him tho' he *trembled*; they gave him the ſame Direction they did to others, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*. One would think they ſhould have ſaid, *Repent* of thy Abuſing us in the firſt Place: No, that's *over-look'd* and eaſily *paſs'd by*, if he will but believe in Chriſt. This is an Example to Miniſters to encourage Penitents, to meet thoſe that are coming to Chriſt, and take them by the Hand; not to be hard upon any for Unkindneſſes done to them; but to ſeek Chriſt's Honour more than their own. Here's the Sum of the whole Goſpel, the Covenant of Grace in a few Words, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy Houſe.* Here's,

(1.) The Happineſs promis'd; *Thou ſhalt be ſaved*; not only reſcu'd from Eternal Ruin, but brought to Eternal Life and Bleſſedneſs. *Thou*, tho' a *poor Man*, an Under-Jaylor, or Turnkey, mean and of low Condition in the World, yet that ſhall be no Bar to thy Salvation. *Thou*, tho' a *great Sinner*, tho' a *Perſecutor*, yet thy heinous Tranſgreſſions ſhall be all forgiven thro' the Merits of Chriſt; and thy hard embitter'd Heart, ſhall be ſoften'd and ſweeten'd by the Grace of Chriſt; and thus thou ſhalt neither dye for *thy Crime*, nor dye of *thy Diſeaſe*.

(2.) The Condition requir'd; *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* We muſt admit the Record that God hath given in his Goſpel concerning his Son, and *aſſent* to it as *faithful*, and well *worthy of all Acceptation*. We muſt *approve* the Method God has taken of Reconciling the World to himſelf by a Mediator; and accept of Chriſt as he is offer'd to us, and give up ourſelves to be rul'd, and taught, and ſaved by him. This is the only Way, and a ſure Way to Salvation. No other Way of Salvation but *by Chriſt*, and no other Way of *our* being ſaved by Chriſt but *by believing* in him; and no Danger of coming ſhort, if we take this Way; for it is the Way that God has appointed, and he is faithful that has promis'd: 'Tis the Goſpel that is to be preach'd to every Creature, *He that believes ſhall be ſaved.*

(3.) The Extent of this to his Family; *Thou ſhalt be ſaved, and thy Houſe*, i. e. God will be in Chriſt a God to thee and to thy Seed, as he was to *Abraham*. *Believe*, and Salvation ſhall *come to thy Houſe*, as *Luke* xix. 9. Thoſe of *thy Houſe* that are Infants, ſhall be admitted into the viſible Church with thee, and thereby put into a fair Way for Salvation: Thoſe that are grown up ſhall have the *Means of Salvation* brought to them; and be they never ſo many, let them believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and they ſhall be ſaved; they are all welcome to Chriſt upon the ſame Terms.

4. They proceeded to inſtruct him and his Family in the Doctrine of Chriſt, *v.* 32. They *ſpake unto him the Word of the Lord.* He was, for ought appears, an utter Sranger to Chriſt, and therefore 'tis requiſite he ſhould be told who this *Jeſus* is, that he may *believe in him*, John ix. 36. And the Subſtance of the Matter lying in a little Compaſs, they ſoon told him enough to make his being baptiz'd a *reaſonable Service.* Chriſt's Miniſters ſhould have the Word of the Lord ſo ready to them, and ſo richly dwelling in them, as to be able to give Inſtructions *off-hand*, to any that deſire to hear and receive it, for their Direction in the Way of Salvation. They ſpake the Word not only *to him*, but to *all that were in his Houſe.* Maſters of Families ſhould take Care that all under their Charge partake of the Means of Knowledge and Grace, and that the *Word of the LORD be ſpoken to them*; for the Souls of the pooreſt Servants, are as precions as thoſe of their Maſters, and are bought with the ſame Price.

5. The *Jaylor* and his *Family* were immediately *baptiz'd*, and thereby took upon them the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, *ſubmitted* to its Laws, and were *admitted* to its Privileges, upon their declaring ſolemnly as the Eunuch did; that they believ'd that *Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of GOD*; he was *baptiz'd, he and all his ſtraightway*. Neither he nor any of his Family deſir'd Time to conſider, whether they ſhould come into Baptiſmal Bonds or no; nor did *Paul* and *Silas* deſire Time to try their Sincerity, and to conſider whether they ſhould baptize them or no. But the Spirit of Grace work'd ſuch a ſtrong Faith in them, all on a ſudden, as ſuperceded further Debate, and *Paul* and *Silas* knew by the Spirit, that it was a Work of God that was wrought in them, ſo that there was no Occaſion for Demur. This therefore will not juſtify ſuch Precipitation in ordinary Caſes.

6. The Jaylor was hereupon very reſpectful to *Paul* and *Silas*, as One that knew not how to make amends for the *Injury* he had *done to them*, much leſs for the *Kindneſs* he had receiv'd *from them*; he took *them the ſame Hour of the Night*, would not let 'em lie a Minute longer in the inner Priſon: But (1.) He *waſhed their Stripes* to cool them, and abate the Smart of them; to clean them from the Blood which the Stripes had fetch'd, 'tis probable he bath'd them with ſome healing Liquor; as the good *Samaritan* help'd the wounded Man by pouring in *Oyl* and *Wine*. (2.) He *brought them into his Houſe*, bid them welcome to the beſt Room he had, and prepar'd his beſt Bed for them. Now nothing was thought good enough for them, as before nothing bad enough. (3.) He *ſet Meat before them*, ſuch as his Houſe would afford, and they were welcome to it; by which he expreſs'd the Welcome which his Soul gave to the Goſpel. They had *ſpoken to him the Word of the Lord*, had broken the Bread of Life to him and his Family, and he having reap'd ſo plentifully of *their ſpiritual Things*, he thought it was but reaſonable that they ſhould reap of *his carnal Things*, 1 Cor. ix. 11. What have we *Houſes* and *Tables* for, but as we have Opportunity to ſerve God and his People with them?

7. The *Voice of Rejoycing* with that of *Salvation* was heard in the Jaylor's Houſe: Never was ſuch a truly *merry Night* kept there before, *He rejoyc'd, believing in GOD with all his Houſe*: There was none in his Houſe that refus'd to be baptiz'd, and ſo made a Jar in the Harmony; but they were unanimous in embracing the Goſpel, which added much to the Joy. Or, it may be read, *He believing in GOD, rejoyced all the Houſe over*; πανοικὶ; he went to every Apartment expreſſing his Joy. *Obſerve*, (1.) His Believing *in Chriſt*, is call'd Believing *in GOD*; which intimates that *Chriſt is GOD*, and that the Deſign of the Goſpel is ſo far from being to draw us *from* GOD, ſaying, *Go ſerve other GODS*, Deut. xiii. 2. that it has a direct Tendency to *bring us to GOD*. (2.) His Faith produc'd *Joy*; they that by Faith have given up themſelves to God in Chriſt as theirs, have a great deal of Reaſon to *rejoyce*: The *Eunuch* when he was converted, *went on his Way rejoycing*; and here the Jaylor *rejoyced*. The Converſion of the Nations is ſpoken of in the *Old Teſtament* as their *Rojoycing*, Pſal. lxvii. 4. xcvi. 11. For *believing, we rejoyce with Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory*. Believing in Chriſt, is Rejoycing in Chriſt. (3.) He ſignify'd his Joy to all about him: Out of the Abundance of the Joy in his Heart, his Mouth ſpake of the Glory of God, and their Encouragement who believed in God too. Thoſe who have themſelves taſted the Comforts of Religion, ſhould do what they can to bring others to the Taſte of them. One chearful Chriſtian ſhould make many.

35 And when it was day, the magiſtrates ſent the Sergeants, ſaying, Let thoſe men go. 36 And the keeper of the priſon told this ſaying to Paul, The magiſtrates have ſent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. 37 But Paul ſaid unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have caſt us into priſon; and now do they thruſt us out privily? nay verily, but let them come themſelves and fetch us out. 38 And the ſergeants told theſe words unto the magiſtrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans. 39 And they came and beſought them, and brought *them* out and deſired *them* to depart out of the city. 40 And they went out of the priſon, and entered into *the houſe of* Lydia: and when they had ſeen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, Orders ſent for the Diſcharge of *Paul* and *Silas* out of Priſon, *v.* 35, 36.

1. The Magiſtrates that had ſo baſely abus'd them the Day before, gave the Orders; and their doing it ſo early, *as ſoon as it was Day*, intimates that either they were ſenſible the terrible Earthquake they felt at Midnight was intended to plead the Cauſe of their Priſoners, or their Conſciences had ſmitten them for what they had done, and made them very uneaſy; while the Perſecuted were ſinging in the Stocks, the *Perſecutors* were full of Toſſings to and fro upon their Bed, thro' Anguiſh of Mind, complaining more of the Laſhes of their Conſciences, than the Priſoners did of the Laſhes on their Backs; and more *in haſte* to give them a Diſcharge, than they were to Petition for one. Now God made his Servants to be *pity'd of them that had carry'd them Captives*, Pſal. cv. 46. The Magiſtrates ſent *Serjeants*, ῥαβδούχους *Thoſe that had the Rods*, the Vergers, the Tipſtaves, the Beadles, thoſe that had been employ'd in beating them, that they might go and ask them Forgiveneſs. The Order was, *Let thoſe Men go.* 'Tis probable they deſign'd further Miſchief to them, but God turn'd their Hearts, and as he made their *Wrath* hitherto to *praiſe him*, ſo the *Remainder thereof he did reſtrain.* Pſal. lxxvi. 10.

2. The Jaylor brought them the News, *v.* 36. *The Magiſtrates have ſent to let you go.* Some think the Jaylor had betimes tranſmitted an Account to the Magiſtrates of what had paſs'd in his Houſe that Night, and ſo had obtain'd this Order for the Diſcharge of his Priſoners. *Now therefore depart.* Not that he was deſirous to part with his *Gueſts*, but as his *Priſoners:* They ſhall ſtill be welcome to his Houſe, but is glad they are at Liberty from his Stocks. God could by his Grace as eaſily have converted the *Magiſtrates* as the *Jaylor*, and have brought them to Faith and Baptiſm, but God hath *choſen the Poor of this World*, Jam. ii. 5.

Secondly, *Paul*'s inſiſting upon the *Breach of Priviledge*, which the Magiſtrates had been guilty of, *v.* 37. *Paul* ſaid to the Serjeants, *They have beaten us openly*, *uncondemned*, *being* Romans, *and have caſt us into Priſon*, againſt all Law and Juſtice, and *now do they thruſt us out privily?* and think to make us amends with that, for the Injury done us? *Nay, verily, but let them come themſelves and fetch us out*, and own that they have done us wrong. 'Tis probable the Magiſtrates had ſome Intimation that they were *Romans*, and were made ſenſible that their Fury had carry'd them further than the Law could bear them out; and that was the Reaſon they gave Orders for their Diſcharge. *Now obſerve*,

1. *Paul* did not plead this *before* he was *beaten*, tho' 'tis probable it might have prevented it, leſt he ſhould ſeem to be afraid of ſuffering for the Truth which he had Preach'd. *Tully* in one of his Orations againſt *Verres*, tells of one *Ganius*, that was order'd by *Verres*, to be beaten in *Sicily*, that all the while he was under the Laſh he cry'd out nothing, but *Civis Romanus ſum, I am a Citizen of* Rome; *Paul* did not do ſo; he had nobler Things than that to comfort himſelf with in his Affliction.

2. He did plead it *after*, to put an Honour upon his Sufferings, and upon the Cauſe he ſuffer'd for, to let the World know that the Preachers of the Goſpel were not ſuch deſpicable Men as they were commonly look'd upon to be, and that they merited better Treatment. He did it likewiſe to mollify the Magiſtrates towards the Chriſtians at *Philippi*, and to gain better Treatment for them, and beget in the People a better Opinion of the Chriſtian Religion; when they ſaw that *Paul* had a fair Advantage againſt their Magiſtrates, might have brought his Action againſt them, and had them call'd to an Account for what they had done, and yet did not take the Advantage, which was very much to the Honour of *that worthy Name by which he was call'd*. Now here,

(1.) *Paul* lets them know *how many Ways* they had run themſelves into a *Premunire*, and that he had Law enough to know it. (1.) They had *beaten them* that were *Romans*; ſome think *Silas* was a Roman Citizen as well as *Paul*; others that doth not neceſſarily follow, *Paul* was a *Citizen*, and *Silas* was his Companion. Now both the *Lex Porcia*, and the *Lex Sempronia* did expreſly forbid *liberum corpus Romani Civis, virgis aut aliis verberibus cædi.* Roman Hiſtorians give Inſtances of Cities that had their Charters taken from them for Indignites done to Roman Citizens; we ſhall afterwards find *Paul* making uſe of this Plea, *chap.* xxii. 25, 26. To tell them that they had beaten them that were the Meſſengers of Chriſt, and the Favourites of Heaven, would have had no Influence upon them; but to tell them they have abus'd Roman Citizens will put them into a Fright; ſo common is it for People to be more afraid of *Cæſar*'s Wrath than of *Chriſt*'s. He that affronts a *Roman*, a Gentleman, a Nobleman, tho' ignorantly, and thro' Miſtake, thinks himſelf concern'd to cry *Peccavi* and make his Submiſſion: But he that perſecutes a Chriſtian becauſe he belongs to Chriſt, ſtands to it, and thinks he may do it ſecurely, tho' God hath ſaid *he that toucheth them toucheth the Apple of his Eye*, and Chriſt has warn'd us of the Danger of *offending his little Ones*. (2.) They had beaten them *uncondemned*; *indictâ causâ*, had not allow'd them a fair Hearing, had not *calmly* examin'd what was *ſaid againſt them*, much leſs enquir'd what they had to *ſay for themſelves*. 'Tis a univerſal Rule of Juſtice *Causâ cognitâ poſſunt multi abſolvi, incognitâ nemo condemnari poteſt.* Chriſt's Servants could not have been abus'd as they have been, if they and their Cauſe might but have had an impartial Tryal. (3.) It was an Aggravation of this that they had done it *openly*, which as it was ſo much the greater Diſgrace to the Sufferers, ſo it was the bolder Defiance to Juſtice and the Law. (4.) They had *caſt them into Priſon*, without ſhewing any Cauſe of their Commitment, and in an arbitrary Manner by a verbal Order. (5.) They now *thruſt them out privily:* They had not indeed the Impudence to ſtand by what they had done, but yet had not the Honeſty to own themſelves in a Fault.

(2.) He inſiſts upon it that they ſhould make them an Acknowledgment of their Error, and give them a publick Diſcharge, to make that the more *honourable*, as they had done them a publick Diſgrace, which made that the more *diſgraceful*. *Let them come themſelves and fetch us out*, and give a Teſtimony to our Innocency, and that we have done nothing worthy of Stripes or of Bonds. 'Twas not a Point of *Honour* that *Paul* ſtood thus ſtiffly upon, but a Point of *Juſtice*, and not to himſelf ſo much as to his Cauſe: Let them come and ſtop the Clamours of the People, by confeſſing that we are not *the Troublers of the City*.

Thirdly, The Magiſtrates Submiſſion, and the Reverſing of the Judgement given againſt *Paul* and *Silas*, v. 38, 39.

1. The Magiſtrates were *frighten'd* when they were told (tho' it may be they knew it before) that *Paul* was a *Roman*. They *feared* when they heard it, leſt ſome of his Friends ſhould inform the Government what they had done, and they ſhould fare the worſe for it. The Proceedings of Perſecutors have often been *illegal*, even by the Laws of Nations, and often *inhuman* againſt the Laws of Nature, but always ſinful and againſt God's Law.

2. They came and *beſought them* not to take the Advantage of the Law againſt them, but he overlooks the Illegality of what they had done, and ſays no more of it; they *brought them out* of the Priſon, owning that they were wrongfully put into it, and deſir'd them that they would peaceably and quietly *depart out of the City*. Thus *Pharoah* and his Servants that had ſet God and *Moſes* at Defiance, came to *Moſes* and *bow'd down themſelves to him ſaying, Get thee out*, Exod. xi. 8. God can make the Enemies of his People *aſham'd of their Envy*, and Enmity to them, *Iſa.* xxvi. 11. *Jeruſalem* is ſometimes made a *burthenſome Stone* to them that heave at it, which they would gladly get clear of, *Zech.* xii. 3. Yet if the *Repentance* of theſe Magiſtrates had been *ſincere*, they would have *deſir'd them* not to *depart out of their City*, as the *Gadarens* deſir'd to be rid of Chriſt, but would have courted their Stay, and begg'd of them to continue in their City, to ſhew them the Way of Salvation. But many are convinc'd that Chriſtianity is not to be perſecuted, who yet are not convinc'd that it ought to be embrac'd, or at leaſt are not perſuaded to embrace it. They are compell'd to do Honour to Chriſt and his Servants, *to worſhip before their Feet, and to know that he has loved them*, Rev. iii. 9. and yet do not go ſo far as to have Benefit by Chriſt, or come in for a Share in his Love.

Fourthly, The Departure of *Paul* and *Silas* from *Philippi*, v. 40. They *went out of the Priſon* when they were legally Diſcharg'd, and not till then, tho' they were illegally Committed. And then,

1. They took Leave of their Friends: They *went to the Houſe of* Lydia, where probably the Diſciples had met to pray for them, and there they *ſaw the Brethren*, or, viſited them at their reſpective Habitations; which was ſoon done, they were ſo few, and they *comforted them*, by telling them (ſaith an ancient *Greek* Commentary) what God had done for them, and how he had own'd them in the Priſon. They encourag'd them to keep cloſe to Chriſt, and hold faſt the Profeſſion of their Faith, whatever Difficulties they might meet with, aſſuring them that all would then end well, everlaſtingly well: Young Converts ſhould have a great deal ſaid to them to comfort them, for the *Joy of the Lord will* be very much *their Strength*.

2. They quitted the Town; they *departed*. I wonder they ſhould do ſo; for now they had had ſuch an honourable Diſcharge from their Impriſonment, ſure they might have gone on at leaſt for ſome Time in their Work without Danger; but I ſuppoſe they went away upon that Principle of their Maſter's, *Mark*, i. 38. *Let us go into the next Towns that I may preach there alſo, for therefore came I forth.* *Paul* and *Silas* had an extraordinary Call to *Philippi*, and yet when they were come there they ſee little of the Fruit of their Labours, and are ſoon driven thence: But yet they did not come in vain; tho' the Beginnings here were *ſmall*, the *latter End greatly encreas'd*. Now they laid the Foundation of a Church at *Philippi* which became very eminent; had its *Biſhops* and *Deacons*, and People that were more generous to *Paul* than any other Church, as appears by his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*, chap. i. 1. iv. 15. Let not Miniſters be diſcourag'd, tho' they ſee not the Fruit of their Labours *preſently:* The Seed ſown ſeems to be loſt under the Clods, but it ſhall come up again in a plentiful Harveſt in due Time.

CHAP. XVII.

We have here a further Account of the Travels of Paul, *and his Services and Sufferings for Chriſt. He was not like a Candle upon a Table, that gives Light only to one Room, but like the Sun that goes its Circuit to give Light to many. He was call'd into* Macedonia, *a large Kingdom*, chap. xvi. 9. *He began with* Philippi, *becauſe it was the firſt* City *he came too: But he muſt not confine himſelf to that. We have him here* (1.) *Preaching and Perſecuted at* Theſſalonica, *another City of* Macedonia, *v.* 1--9. (2.) *Preaching at* Berea, *where he met with an encouraging Auditory, but was driven thence alſo by Perſecution*, v. 10--15. (3.) *Diſputing at* Athens, *the famous Univerſity of* Greece, *v.* 16—21: *and the Account he gave of* Natural Religion, *for the Conviction of thoſe that were addicted to* Polytheiſm, *and* Idolatry, *and to lead them to the* Chriſtian Religion, *v.* 22--31. *together with the Succeſs of this Sermon*, v. 32—34.

NOW when they had paſſed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, they came to Theſſalonica, where was a ſynagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three ſabbath-days reaſoned with them out of the Scriptures, 3 Opening and alledging that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered, and riſen again from the dead: and that this

Jeſus whom I preach unto you is Chriſt. 4 And ſome of them believed, and conſorted with Paul and Silas: and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. 5 ¶ But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baſer ſort, and gathered a company, and ſet all the city on an uprore, and aſſaulted the houſe of Jaſon, and ſought to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they drew Jaſon, and certain brethren, unto the rulers of the city, crying, Theſe that have turned the world upſide down, are come hither alſo; 7 Whom Jaſon hath received: and theſe all do contrary to the decrees of Ceſar, ſaying, that there is another king, *one* Jeſus. 8 And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city, when they heard theſe things. 9 And when they had taken ſecurity of Jaſon, and of the other, they let them go.

Paul's two Epiſtles to the *Theſſalonians*, the two firſt he wrote by Inſpiration, give ſuch a ſhining Character of that Church, that we cannot but be glad here in the Hiſtory to meet with an Account of the firſt Founding of the Church there.

Firſt, Here is *Paul*'s Coming to *Theſſalonica*, which was the chief City of this Country, call'd at this Day *Salonichi*, in the Turks Dominions. *Obſerve*,

1. *Paul* went on with his Work, notwithſtanding the ill Uſage he had met with at *Philippi*; He did not *fail*, *nor was diſcourag'd*. He takes Notice of this in his firſt Epiſtle to the Church here, 1 *Theſ*. ii. 2. *After we were* ſhamefully intreated at *Philippi*, yet *we were bold in our God to ſpeak unto you the Goſpel of God*. The Oppoſition and Perſecution that he met with, made him the more reſolute. None of theſe Things mov'd him; He could never have held out, and held on as he did, if he had not been animated by a Spirit of Power from on high.

2. He did but *paſs through* Amphipolis, and *Apollonia*, the former a City near *Philippi*, the latter near *Theſſalonica*: Doubtleſs he was under Divine Direction, and was told by the Spirit, who, as the Wind, blows where he liſteth, what Places he ſhould *paſs thro'* and what he ſhould *reſt in*. Apollonia was a City of *Illyricum*, which ſome think illuſtrates that of *Paul*, that he had preached the Goſpel from *Jeruſalem*, and *round about unto* Illyricum, *Rom.* xv. 9. *i. e.* to the Borders of *Illyricum*, where he now was: And we may ſuppoſe tho' he be ſaid only to *paſs through* theſe Cities, yet that he ſtay'd ſo long in them as to publiſh the Goſpel there, and to prepare the Way for the Entrance of other Miniſters among them, whom he would afterwards ſend.

Secondly, His Preaching to the *Jews firſt*, in their Synagogue at *Theſſalonica*. He found a *Synagogue of the* Jews there, *v.* 1. which intimates that one Reaſon why he *paſſed through* thoſe other Cities mention'd, and did not continue long in them was, becauſe there were no Synagogues in them. But finding one in *Theſſalonica*, by it he made his Entry.

1. It was always *his Manner* to *begin* with the *Jews*; to make them the *firſt* Offer of the Goſpel, and not to *turn to the* Gentiles till they had refus'd it, that their Mouths might be ſtop'd from clamouring againſt him becauſe he preach'd to the *Gentiles*; for if they *received* the Goſpel, they ſhould chearfully embrace the new Converts; if they *refus'd* it, they might thank themſelves if the Apoſtles carry'd it to thoſe that would bid it welcome. That Command of *beginning at* Jeruſalem was juſtly conſtrued as a Direction where-ever they came to *begin with the* Jews.

2. He met them in *their Synagogue* on the *Sabbath-Day*, in their *Place* and at their *Time* of Meeting, and thus he would pay Reſpect to both. *Sabbaths and ſolemn Aſſemblies* are always very precious to thoſe to whom Chriſt is precious, *Pſal.* lxxxiv. 10. 'Tis good being in the Houſe of the Lord, on this Day. This was Chriſt's *Manner*, and *Paul*'s Manner, and has been the Manner of all the Saints, the *good old Way*, which they have *walked in*.

3. He *reaſoned* with them *out of the Scriptures*; They agreed with him to receive the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, ſo far they were of a Mind; but they *received the Scripture*, and therefore thought they had Reaſon to *reject* Chriſt. *Paul* received the Scripture, and therefore ſaw great Reaſon to embrace Chriſt. 'Twas therefore requiſite in order to their Conviction that he ſhould by Reaſoning with them, the Spirit ſetting in with him, convince them that *his* Inferences from Scripture were *right*, and *theirs* were *wrong*. *Note*, The Preaching of the Goſpel ſhould be both *ſcriptural* Preaching, and *rational*; ſuch *Paul*'s was, for he *reaſoned out of the Scriptures*; we muſt take the Scriptures for our Foundation, our Oracle, and Touchſtone, and then reaſon *out of them*, and *upon* them, and againſt thoſe who, tho' they pretend Zeal for the Scriptures, as the *Jews* did, yet wreſt them to their own Deſtruction. Reaſon muſt not be ſet up in Competition with the Scripture, but it muſt be made Uſe of in explaining and applying the Scripture.

4. He continu'd to do this *Three Sabbath-Days* ſucceſſively. If he could not convince them the firſt Sabbath, he would try the *ſecond* and the *third*; for *Precept muſt be upon Precept, and Line upon Line*. God waits for Sinners Converſion, and ſo muſt his Miniſters: All the Labourers come not into the Vineyard at the firſt Hour, nor at the firſt Call, nor are wrought upon ſo ſuddenly as the Jaylor.

5. The Drift and Scope of his Preaching, and Arguing was to prove that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*; This was that which he *open'd* and *alledg'd*, v. 3. He firſt *explain'd* his Theſis, and *open'd* the Terms, and then *alledg'd* it and *laid it down*, as that which he would *abide by*, and which he ſummon'd them in God's Name to *ſubſcribe to*. *Paul* had an admirable Method of Diſcourſe, and ſhew'd that he was himſelf both well *appriz'd* of the Doctrine he preach'd, and thoroughly underſtood it, and that he was fully *aſſur'd* of the Truth of it; and therefore he *open'd* it like one that *knew* it, and *alledg'd* it like one that *believ'd* it. He ſhew'd them,

1. That it was neceſſary the Meſſiah ſhould *Suffer* and *Dye*, and *Riſe again*, that the *Old Teſtament* Prophecies concerning the *Meſſiah* made it neceſſary he ſhould. The great Objection which the *Jews* made againſt Jeſus being the *Meſſiah*, was his Ignominious Death and Sufferings: The *Croſs of Chriſt* was *to the* Jews *a Stumbling-block*; becauſe it did by no means agree with the Idea they had fram'd of the *Meſſiah*; But *Paul* here *alledgeth* and makes it out undeniably, not only that it was *poſſible* he might be the *Meſſiah*, tho' he ſuffer'd, but that being the *Meſſiah* it was *neceſſary he ſhould ſuffer*: He could not otherwiſe be *made perfect* but *by Sufferings*; for if he had not *dy'd*, he could not have *riſen again from the Dead*. This was it which Chriſt himſelf inſiſted upon, *Luke* xxvi. 26. *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffer'd theſe Things, and to enter into Glory?* And again, *v.* 46. *Thus it is written*, and therefore *thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the Dead*. He *muſt needs have ſuffered for us*, becauſe he could not otherwiſe purchaſe our Redemption for us, and he *muſt needs have riſen again*, becauſe he could not otherwiſe apply the Redemption to us.

2. That *Jeſus* is the *Meſſiah*: *This Jeſus whom I preach unto you*, and call upon you to believe in, *is Chriſt*, is *the* Chriſt, is the *Anointed* of the Lord, is he that ſhould come, and you are to look for no other; for God has both by his *Word* and by his *Works*, (the two Ways of his Speaking to the Children of Men) by the Scriptures and by Miracles, and the *Gift of the Spirit* to make both effectual, born Witneſs to him. *Note*, 1. Goſpel Miniſters ſhould *preach* Jeſus; that muſt be their principal Subject; their Buſineſs is to bring People acquainted with him. 2. That which we are to preach concerning Jeſus is that *he is Chriſt*, and therefore we may hope to be ſaved by him, and are bound to be rul'd by him.

Thirdly, The *Succeſs* of his Preaching there, *v.* 4.

1. *Some* of the *Jews believ'd*, notwithſtanding their rooted Prejudices againſt Chriſt and his Goſpel, and they *conſorted with* Paul *and* Silas; They not only *aſſociated* with them as Friends and Companions, but they *gave up themſelves* to their Conduct, as their ſpiritual Guides; they put themſelves into their Poſſeſſion as an Inheritance into the Poſſeſſion of the right Owner, ſo the Word ſignifies: They firſt *gave themſelves to the* LORD, and then to them *by the Will of GOD*, 2 Cor. viii. 5. They *clave* to *Paul* and *Silas*, and attended them wherever they went. *Note*, They that believe Jeſus Chriſt, come into Communion with his faithful Miniſters, and *conſort* with them.

2. Many *more of the devout* Greeks, and of the *chief Women* embraced the Goſpel. Theſe were *Proſelytes* of the *Gate*; the *Godly among the* Gentiles, ſo the *Jews* call'd them; ſuch, as tho' they did not ſubmit to the Law of *Moſes*, yet renounc'd Idolatry and Immorality, worſhipped the True God only, and did no Man any Wrong. Theſe were the οἱ σεβόμενοι Ἕλληνες, The *worſhipping* Gentiles; as in *America* they call thoſe of the Natives that are converted to the Faith of Chriſt, the *Praying Indians*; theſe were admitted to join with the *Jews* in their Synagogue-worſhip. Of theſe *a great Multitude believ'd*, more of them than of the *thorough pac'd* Jews, that were wedded to the Ceremonial Law. And *not a few* of the *chief Women* of the City, that were *devout* and had a Senſe of Religion, embrac'd Chriſtianity. Particular Notice is taken of this for an Example to the Ladies, the *chief Women*, and an Encouragement to them to employ themſelves in the Exerciſes of *Devotion*, and to ſubmit themſelves to the commanding Power of Chriſt's Holy Religion, in all the Inſtances of it; for this intimates how acceptable it will be to God, what an Honour to Chriſt, and what great Influence it may have upon many, beſides the Advantages of it to their own Souls.

No Mention is here made of their Preaching the Goſpel to the *Gentile-Idolaters* at *Theſſalonica*, and yet it is certain they did; and that great Numbers were converted; nay, it ſhould ſeem that of the Gentile Converts that Church was chiefly compos'd, tho' Notice is not taken of them here; for *Paul* writes to the Chriſtians there, as having *turn'd to GOD from Idols*, 1 Theſſ. i. 9. and that at the *firſt Entering in* of the Apoſtles among them.

Fourthly, The Trouble that was given to *Paul* and *Silas* at *Theſſalonica*: Wherever they *preach'd*, they were ſure to be *perſecuted*; Bonds and Afflictions did abide them in every City. *Obſerve*,

1. Who were the *Authors* of their Trouble; The *Jews which believed not*, that were *moved with Envy*, *v.* 5. The *Jews* were in

all Places the moſt inveterate Enemies to the Chriſtians, eſpecially to thoſe *Jews* that turn'd Chriſtians, whom they had a particular Spleen againſt, as *Deſerters*. Now ſee what that *Diviſion* was which Chriſt came to *ſend upon Earth*; *ſome* of the *Jews believ'd* the Goſpel, and *pity'd* and *pray'd for* thoſe that did *not*; while thoſe that did not *envy'd* and *hated* thoſe that *did*. St. *Paul* in his Epiſtle to this Church takes Notice of the Rage and Enmity of the *Jews* againſt the Preachers of the Goſpel, as their *Meaſure-filling* Sin, 1 *Theſſ*. ii. 15, 16.

2. Who were the *Inſtruments* of the Trouble: The *Jews* made uſe of *certain lewd Perſons of the baſer Sort*, whom they pick'd up and got together, and who muſt undertake to give the Senſe of the City againſt the Apoſtles. All wiſe and ſober People look'd upon them with Reſpect, and valu'd them, and none would appear againſt them, but ſuch as were the Scum of the City, a Parcel of vile Scoundrels, that were given to all Manner of Wickedneſs. *Tertullian* pleads this with thoſe that oppos'd Chriſtianity, That the Enemies of it were generally the worſt of Men; *Tales ſemper nobis inſecutores, injuſti, impii, turpes quos & ipſi damnare conſueſtis*, Apol. c. v. 'Tis the Honour of Religion, that thoſe who hate it are generally the *lewd Fellows of the baſer Sort*, that are loſt to all Senſe of Juſtice and Virtue.

3. In what Method they proceeded againſt them.

1. They *ſet the City in an Uproar*; Made a Noiſe to put People in a Fright, and then every Body ran to ſee what the Matter was: They began a Riot, and then the Mob was up preſently. See who are the Troublers of *Iſrael*, not the faithful Preachers of the Goſpel, but the Enemies of it. See how the Devil carries on his Deſigns, he ſets *Cities* in an Uproar, ſets *Souls* in an Uproar, and then fiſheth in *troubled Waters*.

2. They *aſſaulted the Houſe of* Jaſon, where the Apoſtles lodg'd, with a Deſign *to bring them out to the People*, whom they had incens'd and enrag'd againſt them, and by whom they hoped to ſee them pull'd to Pieces. The *Proceedings* here were altogether *illegal*: If *Jaſon*'s Houſe muſt be ſearch'd, it ought to be done by the proper Officers, and not without a Warrant. A *Man's Houſe* (the Law ſaith) is *his Caſtle*, and for them in a tumultuous Manner to aſſault a Man's Houſe to put him and his Family in Fear, was but to ſhew what Outrages Men are carry'd to by a *Spirit of Perſecution*. If Men have offended, Magiſtrates are appointed to enquire into the Offence, and to judge of it; but to make the Rabble Judges and Executioners too, as theſe here deſign'd to do, was to make *Truth fall in the Streets*, to ſet *Servants on Horſeback*, and *Princes to walk as Servants on the Earth*; to depoſe Equity, and enthrone Fury.

3. When they could not get the *Apoſtles* in their Hands, whom they would have puniſh'd as Vagabonds, and incens'd the People againſt as *Strangers* that came to *ſpy out the Land*, and *devour its Strength*, and eat the Bread out of their Mouths; then they fall upon an honeſt Citizen of *their own*, who entertain'd the Apoſtles in his Houſe, his Name *Jaſon*, a converted *Jew*, and *drew him out* with ſome other of *the Brethren* to the *Rulers of the City*. The Apoſtles were adviſ'd to *withdraw*, for they were more obnoxious, *Currenti cede furori*. But their Friends were willing to expoſe themſelves, being better able to weather this Storm. *For a good Man*, for ſuch good Men as the Apoſtles were, *ſome would even dare to dye*.

4. They accus'd them to the Rulers, and repreſented them as dangerous Perſons not fit to be tolerated: The Crime charg'd upon *Jaſon* is, *receiving* and harbouring the Apoſtles, *v.* 7. countenancing them, and promoting their Intereſt: And what was the Apoſtles Crime, that it ſhould be no leſs than Miſpriſion of Treaſon to give them Lodging? Two very black Characters are here given them, enough to make them *odious* to the People, and *obnoxious* to the Magiſtrates, if they had been juſt.

(1.) That they were *Enemies to the publick Peace*, and threw every Thing into Diſorder wherever they came; *Thoſe that have turn'd the World upſide-down, are come hither alſo*. In one Senſe it is true, that wherever the Goſpel comes in its Power to any Place, to any Soul, it works ſuch a Change there, gives ſuch a wide Change to the Stream, ſo directly contrary to what it was, that it may be ſaid to *turn the World upſide-down* in that Place, in that Soul: The Love of the World is rooted out of the Heart; and the Way of the World contradicted in the Life; ſo that the *World* is *turn'd upſide-down there*. But in the Senſe in which they meant it, 'tis utterly falſe: They would have it thought, that the Preachers of the Goſpel were Incendiaries, and Miſchief-makers wherever they came; that they ſow'd Diſcord among Relations, ſet Neighbours together by the Ears, obſtructed Commerce, and inverted all Order and Regularity. Becauſe they perſuaded People to turn from Vice to Vertue; from Idols to the Living and True God; from Malice and Envy to Love and Peace; they are charg'd with *turning the World upſide-down*, when it was only the Kingdom of the Devil in the World that they thus overturn'd. Their Enemies *ſet the City in an Uproar*, and then laid the Blame upon them; as *Nero* ſet *Rome* on Fire, and then charg'd it upon the Chriſtians. If Chriſt's faithful Miniſters, even thoſe that are moſt *quiet in the Land*, be thus invidiouſly miſrepreſented, and miſcall'd, let them not think it ſtrange, or be exaſperated by it, we are not better than *Paul* and *Silas*, who were thus abus'd. The Accuſers cry out, they are *come hither alſo*; They have been doing all the Miſchief they could in other Places, and now they have brought the Infection hither; 'tis therefore Time for us to beſtir ourſelves, and make Head againſt them.

(2.) That they were *Enemies to the eſtabliſh'd Government*, and diſaffected to that, and their Principles and Practices were deſtructive to Monarchy, and inconſiſtent with the Conſtitution of the State, *v.* 7. They all *do contrary to the Decrees of* Cæſar; not to any particular Decree, for there was as yet no Law of the Empire againſt Chriſtianity; but contrary to *Cæſar*'s Power in general to *make Decrees*; for they ſay, *there is another King one Jeſus*; not only a *King of the* Jews, as our Saviour was himſelf charg'd before *Pilate*, but *Lord of all*; ſo *Peter* call'd him in the firſt Sermon he preach'd to the *Gentiles*, Acts x. 36. 'Tis true, the *Roman* Government, both while it was a Common-wealth, and after it came into the *Cæſars* Hands, was very jealous of any Governour under their Dominions, taking upon him the Title *of King*, and there was an expreſs Law againſt it: But Chriſt's *Kingdom was not of this World*. His Followers ſaid indeed, That *Jeſus is a King*, but not an *earthly* King, not a Rival with *Cæſar*, nor his Ordinances interfering with the *Decrees* of *Cæſar*, but who had made it a Law of his Kingdom, to render unto *Cæſar* the Things that are *Cæſar*'s. There was nothing in the Doctrine of Chriſt that tended to the dethroning of Princes, or the depriving 'em of any of their Prerogatives; and they knew it very well, and it was againſt their Conſcience that they laid this to their Charge. And of all People, it ill became the *Jews* to do it, who hated *Cæſar* and his Government, and ſought the Ruin of him and it, and who expected a *Meſſiah* that ſhould be a Temporal Prince, and over-turn the Thrones of Kingdoms, and were therefore oppoſing our Lord Jeſus, becauſe he did not appear under that Character. Thus they have been moſt ſpiteful in repreſenting God's faithful People as Enemies to *Cæſar*, and *hurtful to King's and Princes*, who have been themſelves ſetting up *Imperium in Imperio*, a Power not only in Competition with *Cæſar*'s, but Superior to it, that of the Papal Supremacy.

4. The great Uneaſineſs which this gave to the City, *v.* 8. *They troubled the People, and the Rulers of the City, when they heard theſe Things*. They had no ill Opinion of the Apoſtles or their Doctrine, could not apprehend any Danger to the State from them, and therefore were willing to connive at them: But if they be repreſented to them by the Perſecutors as Enemies to *Cæſar*, they will be oblig'd to take Cognizance of them, and to ſuppreſs them, for fear of the Government, and this troubled them. *Claudius*, the *preſent* Emperor, is repreſented by *Suetonius* as a Man very *jealous* of the leaſt Commotion, and *timorous* to the laſt Degree, which oblig'd the Rulers under him to be watchful againſt every Thing that look'd *dangerous*, or gave the leaſt Cauſe of Suſpicion; and therefore it troubled them to be brought under a Neceſſity of diſturbing good Men.

5. The Iſſue of this troubleſome Affair; The Magiſtrates had no Mind to perſecute the Chriſtians: Care was taken to ſecure the Apoſtles, they abſconded, and fled, and kept out of their Hands; ſo that Nothing was to be done, but to diſcharge *Jaſon* and his Friends upon Bail, *v.* 9. The Magiſtrates here were not ſo eaſily incens'd againſt the Apoſtles, as the Magiſtrates at *Philippi* were, but were more conſiderate, and of better Temper; ſo they *took Security of* Jaſon, *and the other*, bound them to their good Behaviour; and perhaps they gave Bond for *Paul* and *Silas* that they ſhould be forth-coming when they were call'd for, if any Thing ſhould afterwards appear againſt them.

Among the Perſecutors of Chriſtianity, as there have been Inſtances of the Madneſs and Rage of Brutes, ſo there have been likewiſe of the Prudence and Temper of Men; Moderation has been a Virtue.

10 ¶ And the brethren immediately ſent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither*, went into the ſynagogue of the Jews. 11 Theſe were more noble then thoſe in Theſſalonica, in that they received the word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe Things were ſo. 12 Therefore many of them believed: alſo of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few. 13 But when the Jews of Theſſolonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither alſo, and ſtirred up the people. 14 And then immediately the brethren ſent away Paul, to go as it were to the ſea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there ſtill. 15 And they that conducted Paul, brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus, for to come to him with all ſpeed, they departed.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, *Paul* and *Silas* removing to *Berea*, and employ'd in Preaching the Goſpel there, *v.* 10. They had gone ſo far at *Theſſalonica*, that the Foundations of the Church were laid, and others were rais'd up to carry on the Work that was begun, whom the Rulers and People were not ſo much prejudic'd againſt, as they were againſt *Paul* and *Silas*; and therefore when the Storm roſe they withdrew, taking that as an Indication to them that they muſt quit that Place for the preſent. That Command of Chriſt to his Diſciples, *When they perſecute you in one City, flee to another*; intends their Flight to be not ſo much for their own *Safety*, flee to another to *hide* there, as for the *carrying on of their Work*; flee to another to *Preach* there, as appears by the Reaſon given, For *you ſhall not have gone over the Cities of* Iſrael, *till the Son of Man be come*, Matth. x. 23. Thus *out of the Eater, came forth Meat*, and the Devil was *out-ſhot* in his Bow; he thought by perſecuting the Apoſtles, to *ſtop* the Progreſs of the Goſpel; but it was ſo over-rul'd, as to be made to further it. See here,

1. The Care that the *Brethren* took of *Paul* and *Silas*, when they perceiv'd how the Plot was laid againſt them; They *immediately ſent them away by Night*, incognito, *to* Berea. This could be no Surprize to the young Converts, for *when we were with you* (ſaith *Paul* to them, 1 *Theſſ.* iii. 9.) when we came firſt among you, *we told you that we ſhould ſuffer Tribulation, even as it came to paſs, and ye know*. It ſhould ſeem that *Paul* and *Silas* would willingly have ſtaid and fac'd the Storm, if the *Brethren* would have let them; but they would rather want their Help, than expoſe their Lives; which it ſhould ſeem were dearer to their Friends, than to themſelves. They *ſent them away by Night*, under the Covert of that, as if they had been Evil-doers.

2. The Conſtancy of *Paul* and *Silas* in their Work: Tho' they fled from *Theſſalonica*, they did not flee from the Service of Chriſt; when they came to *Berea*, they *went into the Synagogue of the* Jews, and made their publick Appearance there. Tho' the *Jews* at *Theſſalonica* had been their ſpiteful Enemies, and for ought they knew the *Jews* at *Berea* would be ſo too, yet they did not therefore decline paying their Reſpects to the *Jews*, either in revenge for the Injuries they had received, or for fear of what they might receive. If others will not do their Duty to us, yet we ought to do ours to them.

Secondly, The good Character of the *Jews* in *Berea*, *v.* 11. *Theſe were nobler than thoſe in* Theſſalonica: The *Jews* in the Synagogue in *Berea*, were better diſpos'd to receive the Goſpel than the *Jews* in the Synagogue at *Theſſalonica*; they were not ſo bigotted and prejudic'd againſt it, not ſo peeviſh and ill-natur'd, they were *more noble*, εὐγενέςεροι, *better bred*, i. e. (1.) They had a *freerer Thought*, and lay more open to Conviction, were willing to hear Reaſon, and admit the Force of it, and to ſubſcribe to that which appear'd to them to be Truth, tho' it was contrary to their former Sentiments; this was *more noble*. (2.) They had a *better Temper*; were not ſo ſour and moroſe, and ill-condition'd towards all that were not of their Mind: As they were ready to come into a *Unity* with thoſe that, by the Power of Truth, they were brought to *concur with*, ſo they continu'd in *Charity* with thoſe they ſaw Cauſe to *differ from*. This was *more noble*, They neither *prejudg'd* the Cauſe, nor were *moved with Envy* at the Managers of it, as the *Jews* at *Theſſalonica* were, but very *generouſly* gave both it and them a *fair Hearing*, without Paſſion or Partiality. For,

1. They *received the Word with all Readineſs of Mind*; They were very willing to hear it, preſently apprehended the Meaning of it, and did not ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light. They *attended to the Things that were ſpoken of* Paul, as *Lydia* did, and were very well pleas'd to hear them: They did not pick Quarrels with the Word, nor find Fault, nor ſeek Occaſion againſt the Preachers of it; but bid it welcome, and put a candid Conſtruction upon every Thing that was ſaid; herein they were *more noble* than the *Jews* in *Theſſalonica*; but walk'd in *the ſame Spirit*, and in *the ſame Steps* with the *Gentiles* there, of whom it is ſaid, That they *received the Word with Joy of the Holy Ghoſt*, and turn'd to GOD from Idols, 1 *Theſſ.* i. 5, 9. This was true *Nobility*. The *Jews* glory'd much in their being *Abraham*'s Seed, thought themſelves well-born, and that they could not be *better born*. But they are here told who among them were the moſt *noble*, and the *beſt-bred* Men, thoſe that were moſt diſpos'd to receive the Goſpel, and the high and conceited Thoughts in them, captivated and brought into Obedience to Chriſt. Theſe were the moſt Noble, (if I may ſo ſay) the moſt Gentlemen-like Men. *Nobilitas ſola eſt atque unica virtus*, Virtue and Piety, is true Nobility, true Honour: And without that, (*Stemmata quid proſunt?*) what are Pedigrees and pompous Titles worth?

2. They *ſearched the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe Things were ſo*: Their *Readineſs of Mind* to receive the Word was not ſuch, as that they took Things upon Truſt, ſwallow'd them upon an implicit Faith; No, but ſince *Paul* reaſon'd *out of the Scriptures*, and referr'd 'em to the *Old Teſtament*, for the Proof of what he ſaid; they had Recourſe to their Bibles, turn'd to the Places he referr'd them to, read the Context, conſider'd the Scope and Drift of them, compar'd them with other Places of Scripture, examin'd, whether *Paul*'s Inferences from them were natural and genuine, and his Arguments upon them cogent, and determin'd accordingly. *Obſerve*, (1.) The Doctrine of Chriſt doth not fear a Scrutiny: We that are Advocates for his Cauſe, deſire no more but that People will not ſay, Theſe Things are *not ſo*; till they have firſt without Prejudice and Partiality examin'd, *Whether they be ſo*, or no? (2.) The *New Teſtament* is to be examin'd by the *Old*. The *Jews* receiv'd the *Old Teſtament*; and thoſe that did ſo, if they conſider'd Things aright could not but ſee Cauſe ſufficient to receive the *New*, becauſe in it they ſee all the Prophecies and Promiſes of the *Old*, fully and exactly accompliſh'd. (3.) Thoſe that read and receive the Scriptures muſt *Search* them, *Joh*, v. 39. muſt Study them, and take Pains in conſidering them, both that they may find out *the Truth* contain'd in them, and may not *miſtake* the Senſe of them, and ſo *run into* Error, or *remain* in it, and that they may find out the *whole Truth* contain'd in them, and may not reſt in a *ſuperficial* Knowledge, in the *outward Court* of the Scriptures, but may have an *intimate* Acquaintance with the Mind of GOD reveal'd in them. (4.) *Searching the Scriptures*, muſt be our *daily* Work: They that heard the Word in the Synagogue on the *Sabbath-Day*, did not think that enough, but were *ſearching it* every Day in the Week, that they might improve what they *had heard* the Sabbath *before*, and prepare for what they *were to hear* the Sabbath *after*. (5.) Thoſe are *truly Noble*, and in a fair Way to be *more and more ſo*, that make the Scriptures their Oracle and Touch-ſtone, and conſult them accordingly. Thoſe that righly Study the Scripture and Meditate therein Day and Night, have their Minds *fill'd* with *noble* Thoughts, *fix'd* to *noble* Principles, and *form'd* for *noble* Aims and Deſigns, *Theſe are more noble*.

Thirdly, The good Effect of the Preaching of the Goſpel at *Berea*; It had the deſir'd Succeſs; the Peoples Hearts being prepar'd, a great deal of Work was done ſuddenly, *v.* 12.

1. Of the *Jews* there were *many* that believ'd: At *Theſſalonica* there were only *ſome of them* that believ'd, *v.* 4. But at *Berea*, where they heard with unprejudic'd Minds, *many believ'd*; many more *Jews* than at *Theſſalonica*. *Note*, GOD gives Grace to thoſe whom he firſt inclines to make a diligent Uſe of the Means of Grace, and particularly to *ſearch the Scriptures*.

2. Of the *Greeks* likewiſe, The *Gentiles*, many believ'd, both of the *honourable Women*, the Ladies of Quality, and *of Men not a few*, Men of the firſt Rank, as ſhould ſeem by their being mention'd with the honourable Women. The *Wives* firſt embrac'd the Goſpel, and then they perſuaded their *Husbands* to embrace it: For *what knoweſt thou, O Wife, but thou ſhalt ſave the Husband?* 1 Cor. vii. 16.

Fourthly, The Perſecution that was rais'd againſt *Paul* and *Silas* at *Berea*, which forc'd *Paul* thence.

1. The *Jews* at *Theſſalonica* were the Miſchief-makers at *Berea*: They had Notice that *the Word of GOD was Preached at* Berea, for Envy and Jealouſy brings quick Intelligence, and likewiſe that the *Jews* there were not ſo inveterately ſet againſt it as they were; they *came thither alſo*, to turn the World upſide down there, and they *ſtirred up the People*, and incens'd them againſt the Preachers of the Goſpel; as if they had ſuch a Commiſſion from the Prince of Darkneſs to go from Place to Place to oppoſe the Goſpel, as the Apoſtles had to go from Place to Place to Preach it. Thus we read before, that the *Jews* at *Antioch* came to *Iconium* on purpoſe to incenſe the People againſt the Apoſtles, *chap.* xiv. 19. See how reſtleſs *Satan*'s Agents are in their Oppoſition to the Glory of Chriſt, and the Salvation of the Souls of Men: This is an Inſtance of the Enmity that is in the Serpent's Seed, againſt the Seed of the Woman, and we muſt not think it ſtrange, if Perſecutors at home extend their Rage to ſtir up Perſecution abroad.

2. This occaſion'd *Paul*'s Remove to *Athens*: By ſeeking to *extinguiſh* this Divine Fire which Chriſt had already kindled, they did but *ſpread it* the *further*, and the *faſter*. So long *Paul* ſtay'd at *Berea*, and ſuch Succeſs he had there, that there were *Brethren* there, and ſenſible active Men too, which appear'd by the Care they took of *Paul*, *v.* 14. They were aware of the Coming of the perſecuting *Jews* from *Theſſalonica*, and that they were buſy irritating the People againſt *Paul*, and fearing what it would come to, they loſt no Time, but *immediately ſent* Paul *away*, whom they were moſt perjudic'd and enrag'd againſt, hoping that that would pacify them, while they retain'd *Silas* and *Timothy* there ſtill, who, now *Paul* had broke the Ice, might be ſufficient to carry on the Work without expoſing him. They ſent *Paul* to go *even to the Sea*, ſo ſome; to go *as it were to the Sea*, ſo we read it, ὡς ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, He went out from *Berea*, in that Road which went *to the Sea*, that the *Jews* if they enquir'd after him, might think he was gone far enough, but he went *by Land to Athens*, in which there was no culpable Diſſimulation at all. They that *conducted* Paul, (as his Guide and Guard, he being both a Stranger in the Country, and One that had many Enemies) *brought him to* Athens. The Spirit of GOD influencing his Spirit, directed him to that famous City; famous of old for its Power and Dominion, when the *Athenian* Commonwealth cop'd with the *Spartan*; famous afterwards for Learning. It was the Rendezvous of Scholars; thoſe that wanted Learning went thither to *get it*, becauſe thoſe that *had* Learning went thither to *ſhew it*. 'Twas a great Univerſity much reſorted to from all Parts, and therefore for the better diffuſing of Goſpel-Light *Paul* is ſent thither, and is not aſham'd or afraid to ſhew his Face among the Philoſophers there, and there to Preach Chriſt crucify'd, tho' he knew it would be as much *Fooliſhneſs to the* Greeks, as it was *to the* Jews *a Stumbling-block*.

3. He order'd *Silas* and *Timothy* to come to him to *Athens*, when he found there was a Proſpect of doing Good there: Or, Becauſe there being none there that he knew, he was Solitary and Melancholy without them. Yet it ſhould ſeem that as much haſte as he was in for them he order'd *Timothy* to go about

by *Theſſalonica*, to bring him an Account of the Affairs of that Church; for he ſaith, 1 *Theſ.* iii. 1, 2. *We thought good to be left at* Athens *alone, and ſent* Timotheus *to eſtabliſh you.*

16 ¶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his Spirit was ſtirred in him, when he ſaw the city wholly given to idolatry. 17 Therefore diſputed he in the ſynagogue with the Jews, and with the devout perſons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. 18 Then certain philoſophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountred him; and ſome ſaid, What will this babler ſay? other ſome, He ſeemeth to be a ſetter forth of ſtrange gods: becauſe he preached unto them Jeſus, and the reſurrection. 19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, ſaying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou ſpeakeſt, is? 20 For thou bringeſt certain ſtrange things unto our ears: we would know therefore what theſe things mean. 21 (For all the Athenians and ſtrangers which were there, ſpent their time in nothing elſe, but either to tell or to hear ſome new thing.)

A Scholar that has Acquaintance, and is in love with the Learning of the Ancients, would think he ſhould have been very happy if he were where *Paul* now was, at *Athens* in the Midſt of the various Sects of Philoſophers, and would have had a great many curious Queſtions to aſk them, for the explicating of the Remains we have of the *Athenian* Learning: But *Paul*, tho' bred a Scholar, and an ingenious active Man, doth not make that any of his Buſineſs at *Athens*, he hath other Work to mind; 'tis not the Improving himſelf in their *Philoſophy* that he aims at, he has learn'd to call it a *vain* Thing and is above it, *Col.* ii. 8. His Buſineſs is in God's Name to correct their Diſorders in Religion, and to turn them from the Service of Idols, and of Satan in them, to the Service of the True and Living God in Chriſt.

Firſt, Here is the Impreſſion which the abominable Ignorance and Superſtition of the *Athenians* made upon *Paul's* Spirit, *v.* 16. *Obſerve*,

1. The Account here given of that City; It was *wholly given to Idolatry*. This agrees with the Account which the Heathen Writers give of it; that there were more Idols in *Athens* than there were in all *Greece* beſide put together; and that they had twice as many ſacred Feaſts as others had. Whatever ſtrange God's were recommended to them they admitted them, and allow'd them a Temple and an Altar, ſo that they had almoſt as many Gods as Men; *facilius poſſis Deum quàm hominem invenire.* And this City after the Empire became Chriſtian, continued incurably addicted to Idolatry, and all the pious Edicts of the Chriſtian Emperors could not root it out; till by the Irruption of the *Goths* that City was in a particular Manner laid waſte, that there are now ſcarce any Remains of it. It was obſervable that there where human Learning moſt flouriſh'd, Idolatry moſt abounded, and the moſt abſurd and ridiculous Idolatry, which confirms that of the Apoſtles, that when they *profeſs'd themſelves to be Wiſe* they *became Fools*, Rom. i. 22. and in the Buſineſs of Religion were of all other the moſt *vain in their Imagination*. *The World by Wiſdom knew not God*, 1 Cor. i. 21. They might have *reaſoned* againſt *Polytheiſm*, and *Idolatry*, but it ſeems the greateſt Pretenders to Reaſon, were the greateſt Slaves to Idols, ſo neceſſary was it to the re-eſtabliſhing even of Natural Religion, that there ſhould be a Divine Revelation, and that centring in Chriſt.

2. The Diſturbance which the Sight of this gave to *Paul*; *Paul* was not willing to appear publickly, till *Silas* and *Timothy* came to him, that *out of the Mouth of Two or Three Witneſſes the Word might be eſtabliſh'd*: But in the mean Time *his Spirit was ſtirred within him*. He was fill'd with Concern for the Glory of God, which he ſaw given to Idols, and with Compaſſion to the Souls of Men, which he ſaw thus enſlav'd to Satan, and led captive by him at his Will. He *beheld theſe Tranſgreſſors* and was *griev'd*; and *Horror took hold of him*. He had a Holy Indignation at the Heathen Prieſts, that led the People ſuch an endleſs Trace of Idolatry; and at their Philoſophers that knew better Things, and yet never ſaid a Word againſt it, but themſelves went down the Stream.

Secondly, The *Teſtimony* that he bore againſt their Idolatry, and his Endeavours to bring them to the Knowledge of the Truth. He did not (as *Witſius* obſerves) in the Heat of his Zeal break into the Temples, pull down their Images, demoliſh their Altars, or fly in the Faces of their Prieſts; nor did he run about the Streets crying you are all the Bond-ſlaves of the Devil, tho' it was too true; but he obſerv'd a Decorum, and kept himſelf within due Bounds, doing that only which became a prudent Man.

1. He went to the *Synagogue of the* Jews, who tho' Enemies to *Chriſtianity*, were free from *Idolatry*, and join'd with them in that among them which was *Good*, and took the Opportunity given him there of *diſputing* for Chriſt, *v.* 17. He *diſcours'd* with the *Jews*, reaſon'd fairly with them, and put it to them, what Reaſon they could give, why, ſince they expected the Meſſiah, they would not receive *Jeſus*. There he met with the *devout Perſons*, that had forſaken the *Idol Temples*, but reſted in the *Jews Synagogue*, and he talk'd with theſe to lead them on to the *Chriſtian Church*; to which the *Jews* Synagogue was but as *a Porch*.

2. He enter'd into Converſation with all that came in his Way about Matters of Religion. *In the Market*, ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ, in the Exchange or Place of Commerce, he diſputed *daily* as he had Occaſion with them *that met with him*; or, that he happen'd into Company with, that were *Heathens* and never came to the *Jews* Synagogue. The zealous Advocates for the Cauſe of Chriſt, will be ready to plead it in all Companies as occaſion offers. The Miniſters of Chriſt muſt not think it enough to ſpeak a good Word for Chriſt once a Week, but ſhould be daily ſpeaking honourably of him *to ſuch as meet with them*.

Thirdly, The *Enquiries* which ſome of the Philoſophers made concerning *Paul's* Doctrine. *Obſerve*,

1. Who they were that *encounter'd* him, and enter'd into Diſcourſe with him, and oppos'd him; he diſputed with all that *met him*, in the Places of *Concourſe*, or rather of *Diſcourſe*; moſt took no Notice of him, ſlighted him, and never minded a Word he ſaid, but there were ſome of the Philoſophers that thought him worth making Remarks upon, and they were thoſe whoſe Principles were moſt directly contrary to Chriſtianity.

(1.) The *Epicureans*; who *thought God altogether ſuch a One as themſelves*, an idle unactive Being, that minded nothing, nor put any Difference between Good and Evil: They would not own either that God made the World, or that he governs it, nor that Man needs to make any Conſcience of what he ſaith or doth, having no Puniſhment to fear, or Rewards to hope for; all which looſe Atheiſtical Notions Chriſtianity is level'd againſt. The *Epicureans* indulg'd themſelves in all the Pleaſures of Senſe, and placed their Happineſs in them, in what Chriſt has taught in the firſt Place to *deny ourſelves*.

(2.) The *Stoicks*; who *thought themſelves altogether as good as God*, and indulg'd themſelves as much in the Pride of Life as the *Epicureans* did in the Luſts of *the Fleſh*, and of *the Eye*. They made their vertuous Men to be no Way inferiour to God himſelf, nay to be ſuperior. *Eſſe aliquid quo Sapiens antecedat Deum*; ſo *Seneca*, to which Chriſtianity is directly oppoſite, as it teacheth us to deny ourſelves, and abaſe ourſelves, and to come off from all Confidence in ourſelves, that Chriſt may be *All in All*.

2. What their different Sentiments were of him; ſuch there were, as there were of Chriſt, *v.* 18.

(1.) Some call'd him a *Babler*, and thought he ſpoke *without any Deſign*, whatever came uppermoſt; as Men of craz'd Imaginations do. *What will this Babler ſay?* ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος, This *Scatterer of Words*, that goes about *throwing* here one idle Word or Story, and there another, without any Intendment or Signification. Or, This *Picker up of Seeds*; ſome of the Criticks tell us it is us'd for a little ſort of Bird, that's worth nothing at all, either for the Spit or for the Cage, that picks up the Seeds that lye uncovered, either in the Field or by the Water-ſide, and hops here and there for that Purpoſe; *avicula parva quæ ſemina in triviis diſperſa colligere ſolet*: Such a pitiful contemptible Animal they took *Paul* to be; or ſuppos'd, he went from Place to Place venting his Notions to get Money, a Penny here, and another there, as that Bird picks up here and there a Grain. They look'd upon him as an idle Fellow, and regarded him, as we ſay, no more than a Ballad-ſinger.

(2.) Others call'd him, *a ſetter forth of ſtrange Gods*, and thought he ſpoke *with deſign* to make himſelf conſiderable by that Means. And if he had *ſtrange Gods* to ſet forth he could not bring them to a better Market than to *Athens*. He did not as many did directly *ſet forth new Gods*, nor avowedly, but they thought he *ſeemed* to do ſo, *becauſe he preached unto them Jeſus and the Reſurrection*; from his firſt Coming among them he ever and anon harp'd upon theſe two Strings, which are indeed the principal Doctrines of Chriſtianity, *Chriſt*, and a *future State*; Chriſt our *Way*, and Heaven our *End*; and tho' he did not call theſe *Gods*, yet they thought he meant to make them ſo, τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν Ἀνάστασιν, *Jeſus* they took for a *new God*, and *Anaſtaſis*, the *Reſurrection* for a *new Goddeſs*: Thus they loſt the Benefit of the *Chriſtian Doctrine* by dreſſing it up in a *Pagan Dialect*, as if believing in *Jeſus*, and looking for the *Reſurrection*, were the Worſhipping of new *Dæmons*.

3. The Propoſal they made to give him a free, full, fair, and publick Hearing, *v.* 19, 20. They had heard ſome broken pieces of his Doctrine, and are willing to have a more perfect Knowledge of it.

(1.) They look upon it as *ſtrange* and *ſurprizing*, and very different from the Philoſophy that had for many Ages been taught and profeſs'd at *Athens*. 'Tis a *new Doctrine* which we do not underſtand the Drift and Deſign of. Thou *bringeſt certain ſtrange Things to our Ears*, which we never heard of before, and know not what to make of now. By this it ſhould ſeem that among all the Learned Books they had, they either had not, or heeded not the Books of *Moſes* and *the Prophets*, elſe the Doctrine of Chriſt would not have been ſo perfectly *new* and *ſtrange* to them. There was but one Book in the World given by Divine Inſpiration, and that was the only Book they were Strangers too; which if they would have given a due Regard to, would in its very firſt Page have determin'd that great Controverſy among them about the Origin of the Univerſe.

(2.) They deſire to know more of it, only becauſe it was *new* and *ſtrange*, *May we know what this new Doctrine is?* Or is it (like the Myſteries of the Gods) to be kept as a *profound Secret?* If it may be, we would gladly *know*, and deſire thee to tell us *what theſe Things mean*, that we may be able to paſs a Judgement upon them. This was a fair Propoſal; 'twas fit they ſhould know what this Doctrine was before they embrac'd it; and they were ſo fair as not to condemn it, till they had had ſome Account of it.

(3.) The Place they brought him to in order to this publick Declaration of his Doctrine; 'Twas to *Areopagus*, the ſame Word that is tranſlated, *v.* 22. *Mars-hill:* 'Twas the *Town-Houſe*, or *Guild-Hall* of their City, where the Magiſtrates met upon publick Buſineſs, and the Courts of Juſtice were kept; and it was as the *Theatre* in the Univerſity, or the *Schools*, where Learned Men met to communicate their Notions. The Court of Juſtice which ſate here was famous for its Equity, which drew Appeals to it from all Parts, If any deny'd a God he was liable to the Cenſure of this Court; *Diagoras* was by them put to Death as a Contemner of the Gods. Nor might any *new God* be admitted without their Approbation; hither they brought *Paul* to be try'd, not as a *Criminal*, but as a *Candidate*.

(4.) The general Character of the People of that City given upon this Occaſion, *v.* 21. *All the Athenians*, that is Natives of the Place, and the *Strangers* which ſojourn'd *there* for their Improvement, *ſpent their Time in nothing elſe but either to tell or to hear ſome new Thing*; which comes in as the Reaſon why they were enquiſitive concerning *Paul*'s Doctrine, not becauſe it was *good*, but becauſe it was *new*. 'Tis a very ſorry Character which is here given of the People, yet many tranſcribe it. (1.) They were all for *Converſation*; St. *Paul* exhorts his Pupil to *give Attendance* to *Reading* and *Meditation*, 1 *Tim.* iv. 13, 14. but theſe People deſpis'd thoſe old-faſhion'd Ways of getting Knowledge, and preferr'd that of *telling* and *hearing*: It is true that good Company is of great Uſe to a Man, and will poliſh One that has laid a good Foundation in Study, but that Knowledge will be very flaſhy and ſuperficial which is got by Converſation only. (2.) They affected *Novelty*; they were for *telling* and *hearing* ſome *new Thing*. They were for new Schemes, and new Notions in Philoſophy; new Forms and Plans of Government in Politicks; and in Religion, for *new Gods that came newly up*, Deut. xxxii. 17. new Dæmons, new faſhion'd Images, and Altars, 2 *Kin.* xvi. 10. They were given to change. *Demoſthenes* an Orator of their own had charg'd this upon them long before in one of his *Philippicks*, that their common Queſtion in the Markets, or where-ever they met was, εἴ τι λέγεται νεώτερον, *If there was any News?* (3.) They meddled in *other Peoples Buſineſs*, and were inquiſitive concerning that, and never minded *their own*. *Tatlers* are always *Buſy-bodies*, 1 Tim. v. 13. (4.) They *ſpent their Time in nothing elſe*, and a very uncomfortable Account they muſt needs have to make of their Time who thus *ſpend* it: *Time* is precious, and we are concern'd to be good Huſbands of it, becauſe Eternity depends upon it, and it is haſtening apace into Eternity; but abundance of it is waſted in unprofitable Converſe. To *tell* and *hear* the new Occurrences of Providence concerning the Publick, in our own or other Nations, and concerning our Neighbours, and Friends, is of good Uſe now and then; But to *ſet up* for News-mongers, and to *ſpend our Time in nothing elſe* is to loſe that which is very precious, for the Gain of that which is worth little.

22 ¶ Then Paul ſtood in the midſt of Mars-hill, and ſaid, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too ſuperſtitious. 23 For as I paſſed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inſcription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD, Whom therefore ye ignorantly worſhip, him declare I unto you. 24 God that made the World, and all things therein, ſeeing that he is the Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands: 25 Neither is worſhipped with mens hands, as though he needed any thing, ſeeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 And hath made of one blood, all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation: 27 That they would ſeek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: 28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain alſo of your own poets have ſaid, for we are alſo his off-ſpring. 29 Foraſmuch then as we are the off-ſpring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or ſilver, or ſtone graven by art and man's device. 30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now he commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by *that* man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.

We have here St. *Paul*'s Sermon at *Athens*; divers Sermons we have had which the Apoſtles Preached to the *Jews*, or ſuch *Gentiles* as had an *Acquaintance* with, and *Veneration* for the *Old Teſtament*, and were Worſhippers of the True and Living God; and all they had to do with them, was to *open* and *alledge* that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*: But here we have a Sermon to Heathens that worſhipped falſe Gods, and were *without* the True *God in the World*, and to them the Scope of their Diſcourſe was quite different from what is was to the other. In the former Caſe their Buſineſs was to lead their Hearers by Prophecies and Miracles to the Knowledge of the Redeemer, and Faith in him; In the latter 'twas to lead them by the Common Works of Providence to the Knowledge of the Creator and Worſhip of him. One Diſcourſe of this Kind we had before to the rude Idolators of *Lyſtra* that deify'd the Apoſtles, *chap.* xiv. 15. This here is to the more polite and refined Idolaters at *Athens*, and an admirable Diſcourſe it is, and every Way ſuited to the Auditory, and the Deſign he had upon them.

Firſt, He lays down this as the Scope of his Diſcourſe. That he aim'd to bring them to the Knowledge of the *One only Living and True GOD*, as the ſole and proper Object of their Adoration: He is here oblig'd to lay the Foundation, and to inſtruct them in the firſt Principle of all Religion, That there is a *GOD*, and that *GOD* is but *One*. When he Preach'd againſt the God's they worſhipped, he had no Deſign to draw them to *Atheiſm*, but to the Service of the True *Deity*. *Socrates*, who had expos'd the Pagan Idolatry, was Indicted in this very Court, and Condemn'd, not only *becauſe he did not eſteem thoſe to be GODS, whom the City eſteem'd to be ſo*, but *becauſe he introduc'd new Dæmons*; and this was the Charge againſt *Paul*: Now he tacitly owns the former Part of the Charge, but guards againſt the latter by declaring, That he doth not *introduce* any *new GODS*, but *reduce* them to the Knowledge of *One* GOD, the *Ancient of Days*. Now,

1. He ſhews them, That they *needed* to be inſtructed herein; for they had loſt the Knowledge of the True God, that *made them*, in the Worſhip of Falſe Gods that *they made*; *Deos qui rogat ille facit: I perceive, that in all Things ye are too ſuperſtitious*. The Crime he charged upon them is, Giving that Glory to others, which is due to God only; that they fear'd and *worſhipped Dæmons* Spirits, that they ſuppos'd, inhabited the Images to which they directed their Worſhip. It's Time for you to be told, That there is but *One GOD*, who are *multiplying Deities*, above any of your Neighbours, and mingle your Idolatries with all your Affairs; *You are in all Things too ſuperſtitious*, δεισιδαιμονεστέρους, you *eaſily* admit every Thing that comes under Shew of Religion, but 'tis that which *corrupts* it more and more; I bring you that which will reform it. Their Neighbours praiſed them for this as a *pious* People; but *Paul* condemns them for it. Yet it is obſervable how he *mollifies* the Charge, doth not aggravate it to provoke them. He uſeth a Word which among them was taken in a good Senſe, *You are every Way more than ordinary Religious*; ſo ſome read it. You are very *devout* in your Way: Or, if it be taken in an Ill Senſe, 'tis mitigated, you are, *as it were* (ὡς) more *ſuperſtitious than* you need be; and he ſaith no more than what he himſelf *perceived*, θεωρῶ, I ſee it, I obſerve it. They charg'd *Paul* with ſetting forth *new Dæmons*; nay, ſaith he, you have *Dæmons* enow already, I'll not add to the Number of them.

2. He ſhews them that they *themſelves* had given a *fair Occaſion* for the declaring of this *One true GOD* to them, by ſetting up an Altar, *to the Unknown GOD*; which intimated an Acknowledgement, that there was a God which was yet to them an *Unknown God*: And 'tis ſad to think that at *Athens* a Place which was ſuppoſed to have the Monopoly of Wiſdom, the *True GOD* was an *unknown GOD*, the only God that was *unknown*. Now you ought to bid *Paul* welcome, for *this* is the God whom he comes to *make known* to you, the God whom you implicitly complain that you are Ignorant of. There where we are ſenſible we are defective and come ſhort, juſt there the Goſpel takes us up, and carries us on. Various Conjectures the Learned have concerning this Altar dedicated, *To the unkown God*.

1. Some think the Meaning is, *To the God* whoſe Honour it is to be *unknown*, and that they intended the *God of the* Jews, whoſe Name is *Ineffable*, and whoſe Nature is *Unſearchable*: 'Tis probable they had heard from the *Jews*, and from the Writings of the *Old Taſtament*, of the God of *Iſrael*, who had prov'd himſelf to be *above all Gods*; but was a God *hiding himſelf*, Iſa. xlv. 15. The Heathen call'd the *Jews* God, *Deus Incertus*, *Incertum Moſis Numen*; and the God *without Name*. Now this God, ſaith *Paul*, this God, who cannot by ſearching be found out to Perfection, I now *declare unto you*.

2. Others think, the Meaning is, *To the God* whom it is our Unhappineſs *not to know*; which intimates, that they would think it their Happineſs to know him. Some tell us, that upon Occaſion of a Plague that rag'd at *Athens*, when they had ſacrific'd to all their Gods one after another, for the Staying of the Plague they were adviſ'd to let ſome Sheep go where they pleas'd,

and where they lay down, to build an Altar, τῷ προσήκοντι Θεῷ, To the *Proper* God, or the God to whom that Affair of ſtaying the Peſtlience did belong; and becauſe they knew not how to call him, they inſcrib'd it, *To the Unknown God.* Others from ſome of the beſt Hiſtorians of *Athens*, tells us, They had many Altars inſcrib'd, *To the Gods of* Aſia, Europe *and* Africa, *to the Unknown God.* And ſome of the neighbouring Countries uſed to ſwear *by the God that was Unknown at* Athens. So *Lucian*.

Now obſerve how modeſtly *Paul* mentions this; That he might not be thought a Spy, or One that had intruded himſelf more than became a Stranger into the Knowledge of their Myſteries, he tells them that he obſerv'd it, *as he paſſed by, and ſaw their Devotions*, or their *ſacred Things*; It was publick, and he could not forbear ſeeing it, and it was proper enough to make his Remarks upon the Religion of the Place. And obſerve how prudently and ingeniouſly he takes Riſe from this to bring in his Diſcourſe of the true God. (1.) He tells them, That the God he preach'd to them, was One that they did *already worſhip*; and therefore he was not a Setter-forth of *new* or *ſtrange* God's; as you have a Dependance upon him, ſo he has had ſome Kind of Homage from you. (2.) He was One whom they *ignorantly* worſhipped, which was a *Reproach* to them, who were famous all the World over for their *Knowledge*. Now, ſaith he, I come to take away that Reproach, that you may worſhip him *Underſtandingly*, whom now you worſhip *Ignorantly*; and it cannot but be acceptable to have your *blind Devotion*, turn'd into a *reaſonable Service*; that you may not *worſhip ye know not what*.

Secondly, He confirms this Doctrine of One Living and True God by his Works of *Creation* and *Providence*: The God whom *I declare unto you* to be the ſole Object of your Devotion, and call you to the Worſhip of, is the God that made the World and governs it; and by the viſible Proofs of theſe, you may be led to this *inviſible* Being, and be convinc'd of *his Eternal Power and Godhead*. The *Gentiles* in general, and the *Athenians* particularly in their Devotions, were govern'd not by their *Philoſophers*, who many of them ſpoke clearly and excellently well of One Supream *Numen*, and of his Infinite Perfections, and univerſal Agency and Dominion; witneſs the Writings of *Plato*, and long after of *Cicero*; but by their *Poets*, and their idle Fictions, *Homer*'s Works were the Bible of the Pagan Theology, or Dæmonology rather, not *Plato*'s: And the Philoſophers tamely ſubmitted to this, reſted in their Speculations, diſputed 'em among themſelves, and taught them their Scholars, but never made the Uſe they ought to have made of them in Oppoſition to Idolatry, ſo little Certainty were they at concerning them, and ſo little Impreſſion did they make upon them; nay, they ran in themſelves into the Superſtition of their Country, and thought they ought to do ſo; *Damus ad communem Errorem.*

Now *Paul* here ſets himſelf in the firſt Place to reform the Philoſophy of the *Athenians*, he corrects the Miſtakes of that, and to give them right Notions of the One only Living and True God; and then to carry the Matter further than they ever attempted, for the reforming of their Worſhip, and the bringing them off from their Polytheiſm and Idolatry. *Obſerve*, What glorious Things *Paul* here ſaith of that God whom he ſerv'd, and would have them to ſerve.

1. He is the *GOD that made the World and all Things therein*, the Father Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and Earth. This was admitted by many of the Philoſophers: But thoſe of *Ariſtotle*'s School deny'd it; and maintain'd, That the World was *from Eternity*, and every Thing always was what now it is. Thoſe of the School of *Epicurus* fancy'd, That the World was made by a fortuitous Concourſe of Atoms, which having been in a perpetual Motion, at length accidentally jump'd into this Frame: Againſt both of theſe, *Paul* here maintains, That God by the Operation of an infinite Power, according to the Contrivance of an infinite Wiſdom, in the Beginning of Time, *made the World and all Things therein*; the Riſe of which was owing, not as they fancy'd to an Eternal *Matter*, but to an Eternal *Mind*.

2. He is therefore *Lord of Heaven and Earth*, i. e. He is the rightful Owner, Proprietor, and Poſſeſſor of all the Beings, Powers and Riches of the upper and lower World, Material and Immaterial, Viſible and Inviſible. This follows from his making of *Heaven and Earth*: If he *created All*, without doubt he has the *diſpoſing of All*; and where he gives Being, has an indiſputable Right to give Law.

3. He is in a particular Manner the Creator of Men, of all Men, *v.* 26. *He made of one Blood all Nations of Men*: He made the firſt Man, he makes every Man, is the Former of every Man's Body, and the Father of every Man's Spirit: He has made the *Nations of all Men*; not only of *Men* in the Nations, but *as Nations* in their *Political* Capacity, he is their Founder, and diſpos'd them into Communities for their mutual Preſervation and Benefit. He made them all *of one Blood*, of one and the ſame Nature, he *faſhioneth their Hearts alike*; deſcended from one and the ſame common Anceſtor, in *Adam* they are all a-kin, ſo they are in *Noah*, that hereby they might be engag'd in mutual Affection and Aſſiſtance, as Fellow-Creatures and Brethren: *Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us?* Mal. ii. 10. He hath made them *for to dwell on all the Face of the Earth*, which as a bountiful Benefactor he has *given* with all its Fulneſs *to the Children of Men*. He made them not to live in one Place, but to be diſperſs'd *over all the Earth*; one Nation therefore ought not to look with Contempt upon another, as the *Greeks* did upon all other Nations; for thoſe on all the Face of the Earth are of *the ſame Blood*. The *Athenians* boaſted, that they ſprang out of their own Earth, were *Aborigenes*, and nothing a-kin by Blood to any other Nation, which proud Conceit of themſelves the Apoſtle here takes down.

4. That he is the Great Benefactor of the whole Creation, *v.* 25. He *giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all Things*; He not only breath'd into the firſt Man the *Breath of Life*, but ſtill breathes it into every Man: He *gave us theſe Souls*; he *form'd the Spirit of Man within him*: He not only *gave* us our Life and Breath, when he brought us into Being, but he is continually *giving* it us: His Providence is a continued Creation; he *holds our Souls in Life*. Every Moment *our Breath goes forth*, but he graciouſly gives it us again the next Moment. 'Tis not only *his Air* that we *breath in*, but it is *in his Hand* that *our Breath is*, Dan. v. 23. He *gives to all* the Children of Men their *Life* and *Breath*; for as the meaneſt of the Children of Men live upon him, and receive from him; ſo the greateſt, the wiſeſt Philoſophers and mightieſt Potentates cannot live without him. He gives to *All*, not only to all the Children of Men, but to the inferiour Creatures, to all Animals, every Thing *wherein is the Breath of Life*, Gen. vii. 17. They have their Life and Breath from him. And where he gives *Life and Breath*, he gives *all Things*; all other Things needful for the Support of Life: *Earth is full of his Goodneſs*; Pſal. civ. 24, 27.

5. That he is the Sovereign Diſpoſer of all the Affairs of the Children of Men, according to the Counſel of his Will, *v.* 26. He hath *determin'd the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation*. See here, (1.) The *Sovereignty* of God's Diſpoſal concerning us; he hath *determin'd* every Event, ὁρίσας, the Matter is fix'd. The Diſpoſals of Providence are *unconteſtable*, and muſt not be diſputed; *unchangeable* and cannot be alter'd. (2.) The *Wiſdom* of his Diſpoſals; he hath *determin'd* what was *before appointed*. The Determinations of the Eternal Mind, are not ſudden Reſolves, but the Counter-parts of an Eternal Counſel, the Copies of Divine Decrees. He *performeth the Thing that is appointed by me*, Job xxiii. 14. Whatever *comes forth from God*, was before all Worlds *hid in God*. (3.) The Things about which his Providence is converſant; theſe are *Time* and *Place*: The Times and Places of our living in this World, are determin'd and appointed by the God that made us. (1.) He has *determin'd the Times* that are concerning us; Times to us ſeem changeable, but God has fix'd them. Our *Times are in his Hand*, to lengthen, or ſhorten, embitter or ſweeten, as he pleaſeth: He has *appointed* and *determin'd* the Time of our *coming* into the World, and the Time of our *Continuance* in the World, our *Time to be born*, and our *Time to dye*, (Eccleſ. iii. 1.) and all that little that lies between them, the *Time* of our *Concernments* in this World, whether they be *proſperous* Times, or *Calamitous* Times, 'tis he that hath determin'd them: And on him we muſt depend, with reference to the Times that are yet before us. (2.) He has alſo determin'd and appointed the *Bounds of our Habitation*. He that appointed the Earth to be a Habitation for the Children of Men, has appointed to the Children of Men a Diſtinction of Habitations upon the Earth, has inſtituted ſuch a Thing as *Property*, to which he has ſet Bounds to keep us from treſpaſſing one upon another. The particular Habitations in which our Lot is caſt, the Place of our Nativity, and of our Settlement, are of God's determining and appointing, which is a Reaſon why we ſhould accommodate ourſelves to the Habitations we are in, and make the beſt of that which is.

6. That *he is not far from every one of us*, v. 27. He is every where preſent, not only is *at our right Hand*, but hath *poſſeſs'd our Reins*, Pſal. cxxxix. 43. hath his Eye upon us at all Times, and knows us better than we know ourſelves. Idolaters made Images of God, that they might have him with them in thoſe Images, which the Apoſtle here ſhews the Abſurdity of; for he is an Infinite Spirit that is *not far from any of us*, and never the nearer, but in one Senſe the further off from us for our pretending to *realize* or *preſentiate* him to our ſelves by any Image. He is *nigh unto us* both to receive the Homage we render him, and to give the Mercies we ask of him, wherever we are, tho' near no Altar, Image, or Temple. The *Lord of all as he is rich*, Rom. x. 12. ſo *he is nigh* (Deut. iv. 7.) *to all that call upon him*. He that wills us to *pray every where*, aſſures us, that he is no-where *far from us*. Whatever Country, Nation or Profeſſion we are of, whatever our Rank and Condition in the World is, be we in a Palace or in a Cottage, in a Croud, or in a Corner, in a City, or in a Deſart, in the Depths of the Sea, or afar off upon the Sea, this is certain, God is not *far off from every one of us*.

7. That *in him we live, and move, and have our Being*, v. 28. We have a neceſſary and conſtant Dependance upon his Providence, as the Streams have upon the Spring, and the Beams upon the Sun. (1.) *In him we live*, i. e. The Continuance of our Lives is owing to him, and the conſtant Influence of his Providence; *He is our Life, and the Length of our Days*. 'Tis not only owing to his Patience and Pity that our *forfeited* Lives are not *cut off*, but 'tis owing to his Power and Goodneſs, and Fatherly Care, that our frail Lives are *prolong'd*. There needs not a poſitive Act of his Wrath to deſtroy us, if he ſuſpend the poſitive Acts of his Goodneſs we die of our ſelves. (2.) In him we

move; 'Tis by the *uninterrupted* Concourſe of his Providence that our Souls *move themſelves* in their Out-goings, and Operations, that our Thoughts *run too and fro* about a thouſand Subjects, and our Affections *run-out* towards their proper Objects. 'Tis likewiſe by him that our Souls move our Bodies; we cannot ſtir a Hand, or a Foot, or a Tongue, but by him, who as he is the *firſt Cauſe*, ſo is the firſt Mover. (3.) In him we *have our Being*; Not only from him we had it at firſt, but in him we have it ſtill: To his continu'd Care and Goodneſs we owe it, not only that we have *a Being*, and are not ſunk into Non-entity, but that we have *our* Being, have *this* Being, were, and ſtill are, of ſuch a noble Rank of Beings, capable of knowing and enjoying God, and are not thruſt into the *Meanneſs* of Brutes, or the *Miſery* of Devils.

8. That upon the whole Matter, we are *GOD's Off-ſpring*, He is *our Father that begat us*, Deut. xxxii. 6, 18. And he hath *nouriſhed and brought us up as Children*, Iſa. i. 2. The Confeſſion of an Adverſary in ſuch a Caſe, is always look'd upon to be of Uſe as *Argumentum ad hominem*, and therefore the Apoſtle here quotes a Saying of one of the *Greek* Poets, *Aratus*, a Native of *Cilicia*, *Paul*'s Countryman, in his *Phœnomena*. In the Beginning of his Book, ſpeaking of the Heathen *Jupiter*, that is, in the Poetical Dialect, the ſupream God, he ſaith this of him, τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμὲν, *For we are alſo his Off-ſpring*. And he might have quoted other *Poets* to the Purpoſe of what he was ſpeaking, that *in God we live, and move, Spiritus intus alit, totamque infuſa por artus Mens agitat molem*; So *Virgil Æneid* 6. *Eſt Deus in nobis, agitante caleſcimus illo*; So *Ovid Faſtor*. 6. *Jupiter eſt quodcunque vides quocunque moveris*; So *Lucan*. lib. II. But he chuſes this of *Aratus*, as having much in a little. By this it appears, not only that *Paul* was himſelf a Scholar, but that Human Learning is both ornamental and ſerviceable to a Goſpel-Miniſter, eſpecially for the convincing of thoſe that are without; for it enables them to beat them at their one Weapons, and to cut off *Goliah*'s Head with his own Sword. How can the Adverſaries of Truth be beaten out of their Strong-holds by thoſe that do not know them. It may likewiſe ſhame God's profeſſing People who forget their Relation to God, and walk contrary to it, that a Heathen Poet could ſay of God, *we are his Off-ſpring*, form'd by him, form'd for him, more the Care of his Providence, than ever any Children were the Care of their Parents, and therefore are oblig'd to obey his Commands, and acquieſce in his Diſpoſals, and to be unto him for a Name and a Praiſe, ſince *in him*, and upon him *we live*, we ought to live to him; ſince *in him we move*, we ought to move towards him; and ſince *in him we have our Being*, and from him we receive all the Supports and Comforts of our Being, we ought to conſecrate our Being to him, and to apply ourſelves to him for a new-Being, a better-Being, an eternal well-Being.

Thirdly, From all theſe great Truths concerning God he infers the Abſurdity of their Idoltray, as the Prophets of old had done. If this be ſo,

1. Then God cannot be repreſented by an Image: If we *are the Off-ſpring of God*, as we are Spirits in Fleſh, then certainly he who is the *Father of our Spirits*, (and they are the principal Part of us, and that Part of us by which we are denominated God's Off-ſpring) then he is himſelf a *Spirit*, and *we ought* not to think, that *the Godhead is like unto Gold, or Silver, or Stone graven by Art and Man's Device*, *v.* 29. We wrong God, and put an Affront upon him, if we think ſo. God *honour'd* Man in making his Soul after his Likeneſs, but Man *diſhonours* God, if he makes him after the Likeneſs of his Body. The *Godhead* is Spiritual, Infinite, Immaterial, and Incomprehenſible, and therefore 'tis a very falſe and unjuſt Conception which an Image gives us of God, be the *Matter* never ſo *rich*, *Gold or Silver*, be the *Shape* never ſo curious, and be it never ſo well *graven by Art and Man's Device*, its Countenance, Poſture or Dreſs never ſo ſignificant, 'tis a *Teacher of Lies*.

2. Then he *dwells not in Temples made with Hands*, v. 24. He is not invited to any Temple Men can build for him, nor confin'd to any. A Temple *brings* him never the nearer *to us*, nor *keeps* him ever the longer *among us*: A Temple is convenient for us to come together in to worſhip God; but God needs not any Place of Reſt or Reſidence, or the Magnificence and Splendour of any Structure to add to the Glory of his Appearance. A pious upright Heart, a *Temple not made with Hands*, but by the Spirit of God, is that which he dwells in, and delights to dwell in. See 1 *King*. viii. 27. *Iſa*. lxvi. 1, 2.

3. Then he is not *worſhipped*, θεραπεύεται, He is not *ſerved* or *miniſtered unto with Mens Hands as tho' he needed any Thing*, *v.* 25. He that made All, and maintains All, cannot be benefited by any of our Services, nor needs them. If we *receive* and *derive* All from him, he is *All-ſufficient*, and therefore cannot but be *Self-ſufficient*, or *Independent*. What Need can God have *of* our Services, or what Benefit can he have *by* them, when he has all Perfections in himſelf, and we have Nothing that is good, but what we have from him? The Philoſophers indeed, were ſenſible of this Truth, That God has no Need of us or our Services; but the Vulgar Heathen built Temples, and offer'd Sacrifices to their Gods with an Opinion, that they needed Houſes and Food. See *Job* xxxv. 5, 6, 7, 8. *Pſal*. l. 8, &c.

4. Then it concerns us all to enquire after God, *v.* 27. *That they ſhould ſeek the LORD*, i. e. Fear and Worſhip him in a right Manner. Therefore God has kept the Children of Men in a conſtant Dependance upon him for Life, and all the Comforts of Life, that he might keep them under conſtant Obligations to him: We have plain Indications of God's Preſence among us, his Preſidency over us, the Care of his Providence concerning us, and its Bounty to us, that we might be put upon enquiring, *Where is GOD our Maker, who giveth Songs in the Night; who teacheth us more than the Beaſts of the Earth, and maketh us wiſer than the Fowls of Heaven?* Job xxxv. 10, 11. Nothing, one would think, ſhould be more powerful with us to convince us that there is a God, and to engage us to ſeek *his Honour* and Glory in our Services, and to ſeek *our Happineſs* in his Favour and Love, than the Conſideration of our own Nature, eſpecially the noble Powers and Faculties of our own Souls: If we reflect upon theſe, and contemplate theſe, we may perceive both our Relation and Obligation to a God above us. Yet ſo dark is this Diſcovery in Compariſon with that by Divine Revelation, and ſo *unapt* are we to receive it, that they who have no other, could but *haply feel after God*, and *find him*. (1.) 'Twas very *uncertain*, whether they would by this ſearching *find out God*; 'Tis but a Peradventure, *if haply* they might. (2.) If they did find out ſomething of God, yet it was but ſome confus'd Notions of him, they did but *feel after* him, as Men in the Dark, or blind Men, who lay hold on a Thing that comes in their Way, but know not whether it be that which they are in Queſt of or no. 'Tis a very confus'd Notion which this Poet of theirs has of the Relation between God and Man, and very general, That *we are his Off-ſpring*; as was alſo that of their Philoſophers: *Pythagoras* ſaid, Θεῖον γένος ἐςὶ βροτοῖς, Men have a Sort of divine Nature. And *Heraclitus* (*apud Lucian.*) being ask'd, *What Men were?* anſwer'd, They were, Θεοὶ θνητοὶ, *mortal Gods*. And, What the Gods were? anſwer'd, They were, ἀθάνατοι ἄνθρωποι, *immortal Men*. And *Pindar* ſaith, *Nem. Ode* 6. Ἓν ἀνδρῶν γένος, ἓν θεῶν γένος, God and Man are near a-kin; 'tis true, that by the Knowledge of ourſelves, we may be led to the Knowledge of God, but it is a very confus'd Knowledge. This is but *Feeling after him*. We have therefore Reaſon to be thankful, that by the Goſpel of Chriſt, we have Notices given us of God much clearer than we could have by the Light of Nature; we do not now *feel after him*, but *with open Face behold as in a Glaſs the Glory of GOD*.

Fourthly, He proceeds to call them all to repent of their Idolatries, and to turn from them, *v.* 30, 31. This is the practical Part of *Paul*'s Sermon before the Univerſity: Having declar'd GOD to them, *v.* 23. from thence he probably preſſed upon them *Repentance towards GOD*; and would have taught them alſo *Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, if they would have had Patience to hear him. Having ſhew'd them the Abſurdity of their Worſhipping other Gods; he perſuades them to go on no longer in that fooliſh Way of Worſhip, but to return from it to the Living and True God. *Obſerve*,

1. The Carriage of God towards the Gentile World before the Goſpel came among them; *The Times of this Ignorance GOD wink'd at*. (1.) They were Times of great *Ignorance*; Human Learning flouriſhed more than ever in the Gentile World juſt before Chriſt's-Time; but in the Things of God they were groſely Ignorant. Thoſe are Ignorant indeed, who either know not God, or *worſhip him Ignorantly*: Idolatry was owing to Ignorance. (2.) Theſe Times of Ignorance *GOD wink'd at*. Underſtand it (1.) As an Act of divine Juſtice; God *deſpis'd* or *neglected* theſe *Times of Ignorance*, and did not ſend them his Goſpel, as now he doth. It was very provoking to him to ſee his Glory thus given to another; and he *deteſted* and *hated* theſe Times. So ſome take it. Or rather, (2.) As an Act of divine Patience and Forbearance; He *wink'd* at theſe Times: He did not *reſtrain* them from theſe Idolatries, by ſending Prophets to them, as he did to *Iſrael*: He did not puniſh them in their Idolatries, as he did *Iſrael*; but gave them the Gifts of his Providence, *Acts* xiv. 16. *Theſe Things thou haſt done, and I kept ſilence*, Pſal. l. 21. He did not give them ſuch Calls and Motives to Repentance, as he doth now; He *let them alone*, becauſe they did not improve the Light they had, but were willingly Ignorant; He did not ſend them greater Lights: Or, He was not quick and ſevere with them, but was *long-ſuffering* towards them, becauſe they did it *Ignorantly*, 1 Tim. i. 13.

2. The Charge God gave to the Gentile World by the Goſpel, which he now ſent among them: He *now commandeth all Man every where to repent*; to change their Mind, and change their Way; to be aſham'd of their Folly, and to act more wiſely; to *break off* the Worſhip of Idols, and *bind themſelves* to the Worſhip of the True God. Nay, 'tis to turn with Sorrow and Shame from every Sin, and with Chearfulneſs and Reſolution to every Duty. (1.) This is God's *Command*; It had been a great Favour if he had only told us, That there was Room left for Repentance, and we might be admitted to it; but he goes further, he interpoſeth his own Authority for our Good, and has made that our Duty which is our Privilege. (2.) 'Tis his Command to *all Men every where*; To *Men*, and not to Angels that Need it not; to Men, and not to Devils, that are excluded the Benefit of it. To *all Men* in all *Places*; all Men have made Work for Repentance, and have Cauſe enough to repent, and all Men

are invited to *repent*, and ſhall have the Benefit of it. The Apoſtles are commiſſion'd to preach this *every-where*. The Prophets were ſent to command the *Jews* to *repent*; but the Apoſtles were ſent to preach *Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins* to *all Nations*. (3.) *Now* in Goſpel-Times it is more earneſtly commanded, becauſe more *encourag'd* than it had been formerly; now the Way of Remiſſion is more open'd than it had been, and the Promiſe more fully confirm'd; and therefore now He expects we ſhould all repent. *Now repent*; now *at length*, now *in Time*, repent; for you have too long gone on in Sin: Now *in Time* repent, for 'twill be too late ſhortly.

3. The great Reaſon to enforce this Command, taken from the Judgement to come; God commands us to repent, *becauſe He hath appointed a Day in the which He will judge the World in Righteouſneſs*, v. 31. and has now under the Goſpel made a clearer Diſcovery of a State of Retribution in the other World, than ever before. *Obſerve*,

1. The GOD that *made* the World, will *judge* it; that gave the Children of Men their Being and Faculties, will call them to an Account what Uſe they have made of them; and recompence them accordingly. Whether the Body ſerv'd the Soul in ſerving God; or the Soul was a Drudge to the Body in making Proviſion for the Fleſh? and *every Man ſhall receive according to the Things done in the Body*, 1 Cor. v. 10. The God that now *governs* the World, will *judge* it, will reward the faithful Friends of his Government, and puniſh the Rebels.

2. There is *a Day appointed* for this general Review of all that Men have done in Time, and a final Determination of their State for Eternity. The Day is *fix'd* in the Counſel of God, and cannot be *alter'd*; but it is *hid* there, and cannot be known. A *Day* of *Deciſion*, a *Day* of *Recompence*; a Day that will put a final Period to all the Days of Time.

3. The World will be judg'd in *Righteouſneſs*; for God is not *unrighteous*, who *taketh Vengeance*, *far be it from Him that He ſhould do Iniquity*. His Knowledge of all Mens Characters and Actions is infallibly *true*, and therefore his Sentence upon them unconteſtably *juſt*: And as there will be no Appeal from it, ſo there will be no Exception againſt it.

4. God will judge the World *by that Man whom He hath ordain'd*, who can be no other but the *Lord Jeſus*, to whom all *Judgement is committed*. By *him* God *made* the World, by *him* He redeem'd it, by *him* He *governs* it, and by *him* He will *judge it*.

5. God's Raiſing Chriſt from the Dead is the great Proof of his being appointed and ordain'd the Judge of Quick and Dead: His doing him *that* Honour, evidenc'd his deſigning him *this* Honour. His Raiſing him from the Dead, was the Beginning of his Exaltation; his Judging the World, will be the Perfection of it; and He that begins will make an End. God hath *given Aſſurance unto all Men*, ſufficient Ground for their Faith to build upon, both that there is a Judgement to come, and that Chriſt will be their Judge; the Matter is not left doubtful, but is of unqueſtionable Certainty. Let all his Enemies be aſſur'd of it, and tremble before him; let all his Friends be aſſur'd of it, and triumph in Him.

6. The Conſideration of the *Judgement to come*, and of the great Hand Chriſt will have in that Judgement, ſhould engage us all to repent of our Sins, and turn from them to God: This is the only Way to make the Judge our Friend in that Day, which will be a terrible Day to all that live and dye impenitent, but true Penitents will then *lift up their Heads with Joy, knowing that their Redemption draws nigh*.

32 ¶ And when they heard of the reſurrection of the dead, ſome mocked: and others ſaid, We will hear thee again of this matter. 33 So Paul departed from among them. 34 Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionyſius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

We have here a ſhort Account of the Iſſue of *Paul*'s Preaching at *Athens*.

Firſt, Few were the better; the Goſpel had as little Succeſs at *Athens* as any where; for the Pride of the Philoſophers there, as of the *Phariſees* at *Jeruſalem*, prejudic'd them againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt.

1. Some ridicul'd *Paul* and his *Preaching*; they heard him patiently, till he came to ſpeak of the *Reſurrection of the Dead*, v. 32. and then ſome of them began to *hiſs* him, they *mock'd*. What he had ſaid before was ſomewhat like what they had ſometimes heard in their own *Schools*; and ſome Notion they had of a Reſurrection, as it ſignifies a *future State*; but if he ſpeak of a *Reſurrection of the Dead*, tho' it be of the Reſurrection of Chriſt himſelf, 'tis altogether incredible to them, and they cannot bear ſo much as to hear of it, as being contrary to a Principle of their Philoſophy, *A Privatione ad habitum non datur regreſſus*. They had deify'd their Heroes after their Death; but they never thought of their being rais'd from the Dead, and therefore they could by no Means reconcile themſelves to this Doctrine of Chriſt's being *rais'd from the Dead*; How can this be? This great Doctrine which is the *Saints Joy*, is *their Jeſt*; when it was but mention'd to them, they *mock'd*, and made a laughing Matter of it. We are not to think it ſtrange, if ſacred Truths of the greateſt Certainty and Importance, are made the Scorn of profane Wits.

2. Others were willing to take Time to conſider of it; They ſay, *We will hear thee again of this Matter*. They would not at preſent *comply* with what *Paul* ſaid, or *oppoſe* it; but *we will hear thee again of this Matter* of the *Reſurrection from the Dead*. It ſhould ſeem they over-look'd that which was plain and uncontroverted, and ſhifted off the Application and the Improvement of that, by ſtarting Objections againſt that which was diſputable and would admit a Debate. Thus many loſe the Benefit of the Practical Doctrine of Chriſtianity, by wading beyond their Depth into Controverſy; or rather, by objecting againſt that which hath ſome Difficulty in it; whereas, if any Man were diſpos'd and determin'd to *do the Will of God*, as far as it is diſcover'd to him, he ſhould *know of the Doctrine* of Chriſt, that it is of *GOD, and not of Man*, Joh. vii. 17. Thoſe that would not yield to the preſent Convictions of the Word, thought to get clear of them, as *Felix* did, by putting them off to another Opportunity; they will hear of it again ſome Time or other, but they know not when; and thus the Devil cozens them of *all their Time*, by cozening them of the *preſent Time*.

3. *Paul* thereupon left them for the preſent to conſider of it, v. 33. *He departed from among them*, as ſeeing little Likelihood of doing any Good with them at this Time; but 'tis likely, with a Promiſe to thoſe that were willing to hear him again, that he would meet them whenever they pleas'd.

Secondly, Yet there were ſome that were wrought upon, v. 34. If ſome would not, others would.

1. There were *certain Men* that *clave to him, and believ'd*; when he departed from among them, they would not part with him ſo; where-ever he went they would follow him, with a Reſolution to adhere to the Doctrine he preach'd, which they *believed*.

2. Two are particularly nam'd; One was an eminent Man; *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*; One of that high Court, or great Council that ſat at *Areopagus*, or *Mars-Hill*; a Judge, a Senator, one of thoſe before whom *Paul* was ſummoned to appear; his Judge becomes his Convert. The Account which the Antients give of this *Dionyſius* is, That he was bred at *Athens*, had ſtudy'd Aſtrology in *Egypt*, where he took Notice of the miraculous Eclipſe at our Saviour's Paſſion; that returning to *Athens* he became a Senator; diſputed with *Paul*, and was by him converted from his Error and Idolatry; and being by him throughly inſtructed, was made the firſt Biſhop of *Athens*. So *Euſebius*, l. 3. c. 4. l. 4. c. 22. The *Woman named Damaris* was (as ſome think) the Wife of *Dionyſius*; but rather, ſome other Perſon of Quality. And tho' there was not ſo great a Harveſt gather'd in at *Athens*, as there was at ſome other Places; yet theſe few being wrought upon there, *Paul* had no Reaſon to ſay, *he had labour'd in vain*.

CHAP. XVIII.

In this Chapter we have (1.) Paul*'s Coming to* Corinth, *his private Converſe with* Aquila *and* Priſcilla, *and his publick Reaſonings with the* Jews, *from whom, when they rejected him, he turn'd to the* Gentiles, *v.* 1—6. (2.) *The great Succeſs of his Miniſtry there, and the Encouragement Chriſt gave him in a Viſion, to continue his Labours there, in hopes of further Succeſs*, v. 7—11. (3.) *The Moleſtation which after ſome Time he met with there from the* Jews, *which he got pretty well through by the Coldneſs of* Gallio *the Roman Governour in the Cauſe*, v. 12—17 (4.) *The Progreſs* Paul *made thro' many Countries, after he had continued long at* Corinth, *for the Edifying and Watering of the Churches which he had founded and planted, in which Circuit he made a ſhort Viſit to* Jeruſalem, *v.* 18—23. (5). *An Account of* Apollos*'s Improvement in Knowledge, and his Uſefulneſs in the Church*, v. 24—28.

AFter theſe things, Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth; 2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priſcilla (becauſe that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) and came unto them. And becauſe he was of the ſame craft, he abode with them, and wrought (for by their occupation they were tent-makers.) 4 And he reaſoned in the ſynagogue every ſabbath, and perſwaded the Jews, and the Greeks. 5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was preſſed in ſpirit and teſtified to the Jews that Jeſus was Chriſt. 6 And when they oppoſed themſelves, and blaſphemed, he ſhook *his* raiment, and ſaid unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I *am* clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

We do not find that *Paul* was much perſecuted at *Athens*, nor that he was driven from thence by any Ill-Uſage, as he was from thoſe Places where the *Jews* had or could make any Intereſt; but his Reception at *Athens* being cold, and little Proſpect of doing Good there, he *departed* from *Athens*, leaving the Care of thoſe there who believed, with *Dionyſius*; and from thence he came to *Corinth*, where he was now inſtrumental in Planting a Church that became upon many Accounts conſiderable. *Corinth* was the chief City of *Achaia*, now a Province of the Empire, a rich and ſplendid City, *non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum*; the Country thereabouts at this Day is called the *Morea*. Now here we have,

Firſt, *Paul* working for his Living, *v.* 2, 3.

1. Tho' he was bred a *Scholar*, yet he was Maſter of a *Handicraft Trade*. He was a *Tent-maker*, an Upholſterer; he made Tents for the Uſe of *Soldiers* and *Shepherds*, of Cloth or Stuff, or (as ſome ſay, Tents were then generally made) of Leather, or Skins as the outer covering of the Tabernacle. Hence to live in Tents, was to live *ſub pellibus*. Dr. *Lightfoot* ſhews, that it was the Cuſtom of the *Jews* to bring up their Children to ſome Trade. yea, tho' they gave them Learning or Eſtates: *Rabbi Judah* ſaith, He *that teacheth not his Son a Trade, is as if he taught him to be a Thief*. And another ſaith, he that hath a Trade in his Hand is as a Vineyard that is fenc'd. An honeſt Trade by which a Man may get his Bread, is not to be look'd upon by any with Contempt; *Paul* tho' a *Pharaſee*, and bred up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, yet having in his Youth learned to *make Tents*, he did not by diſuſe loſe the Art.

2. Tho' he was entitled to a Maintenance from the Churches he had planted, and from the People he preach'd to, yet he work'd at his Calling to get Bread; which is more to his Praiſe, who did not *ask* for Supplies, than to theirs who did not ſupply him *unask'd*, knowing what Straits he was reduc'd to. See how *humble Paul* was, and wonder that ſo great a Man could ſtoop ſo low; but he had learn'd Condeſcenſion of his Maſter, who came not to be miniſtred to, but to miniſter. See how *induſtrious* he was, and how willing to *take Pains*: He that had ſo much more excellent Work to do *with his Mind*, yet when there was Occaſion, did not think it below him to work *with his Hands*. Even thoſe that are *redeemed from the Curſe of the Law*, yet are not exempted from that Sentence; *In the Sweat of thy Face thou ſhalt eat Bread*. See how careful *Paul* was to recommend his Miniſtry, and to prevent Prejudices againſt it, even the moſt unjuſt and unreaſonable; He therefore maintain'd himſelf with his own Labour, that he might not make the Goſpel of Chriſt burthenſome, 2 *Cor.* xi. 7. &c. 2 *Theſſ.* iii. 8, 9.

3. Tho' we may ſuppoſe he was Maſter of his Trade, yet he did not diſdain to work *Journey Work*; *he wrought with* Aquila, *and* Priſcilla; who were of that Calling; ſo that he got no more but Day-wages; a bare Subſiſtence. Poor Tradeſman muſt be thankful if their Callings bring them in a Maintenance for themſelves and their Families, tho' they cannot do as the rich Merchants, that raiſe Eſtates by their Callings.

4. Tho' he was himſelf a great Apoſtle, yet he choſe to work with *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, becauſe he found them to be very intelligent in the Things of God, as appears afterwards, *v.* 26. and he owns that they had been his *Helpers in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. xvi. 3. This is an Example to thoſe who are going to Service, to ſeek for thoſe Services in which they may have the beſt Help for their Souls. Chuſe to work with thoſe that are likely to be *our Helpers in Chriſt Jeſus*. 'Tis good to be in Company, and to have Converſation with thoſe that will further us in the Knowledge of Chriſt, and put to ourſelves under the Influence of ſuch as are reſolv'd, that they *will ſerve the Lord*.

Concerning this *Aquila* we are here told (1.) That he was a *Jew*, but born in *Pontus*, *v.* 2. Many of the *Jews of the Diſperſion* were ſeated in that Country, as appears, 1 *Pet.* i. 1. (2.) That he was lately come from *Italy* to *Corinth*; it ſeems he often chang'd his Habitation; this is not the World we can promiſe ourſelves a Settlement in. (3.) That the Reaſon of his leaving *Italy* was, becauſe, by a late Edict of the Emperor *Claudius Cæſar*, all *Jews* were *baniſh'd* from *Rome*; for the *Jews* were generally diſguſted, and every Occaſion was taken to put hardſhip and Diſgrace upon them; God's Heritage was a *ſpeckled Bird, the Birds round about were againſt her*, Jer. xii. 9. *Aquila* tho' a Chriſtian, was baniſh'd becauſe he had been a *Jew*; and the *Gentiles* had ſuch confuſed Notions of the Thing, that they could not diſtinguiſh between a *Jew* and a *Chriſtian*. *Suetonius* in the Life of *Claudius*, ſpeaks of this Decree in the Ninth Year of his Reign, and ſaith, The Reaſon was, becauſe the *Jews* were a turbulent People, *aſſiduo tumultuantes*; and that it was *impulſore Chriſto*, upon the Account of *Chriſt*: Some zealous *for him*, others bitter *againſt him*, which occaſion'd great Heats, ſuch as gave Umbrage to the Government, and provok'd the Emperor, who was a timorous, jealous Man, to order them all to be gone. If *Jews* perſecute Chriſtians, it is not ſtrange, if Heathens perſecute them both.

Secondly, We have here *Paul* preaching to the *Jews*, and dealing with them, to bring them to the Faith of Chriſt; both the Native *Jews and the* Greeks, *i.e.* Thoſe that were more or leſs proſelyted to the *Jewiſh* Religion, and frequented their Meetings.

1. He *reaſoned with them in the Synagogue* publickly *every Sabbath*: See in what Way the Apoſtles propagated the Goſpel; not by Force and Violence, by Fire and Sword, not by demanding an implicit Conſent, but by their fair Arguing; they drew *with the Cords of a Man*; gave a Reaſon for what they ſaid, and gave a Liberty to object againſt it, having ſatisfactory Anſwers ready. God invites us to *come* and *reaſon with him*, Iſa. i. 8. and challenges Sinners to *produce their Cauſe*, and *bring forth their ſtrong Reaſons*, Iſa. xlii. 21. *Paul* was a *Rational* as well as *Scriptural* Preacher.

2. He *perſwaded them*, ἔπειθε. It notes (1.) The *Urgency* of his Preaching; he did not only diſpute Argumentatively with them, but he follow'd his Arguments with affectionate Perſwaſions, begging of them for God's Sake, for their own Souls Sake, for their Childrens Sake, not to refuſe the Offer of Salvation made them. Or, (2.) The *good Effect* of his Preaching; he *perſwaded* them, *i. e.* he prevail'd with them; ſo ſome underſtand it. *In ſententium ſuum adducebat.* Some of them were convinced by his Reaſonings, and yielded to Chriſt.

3. He was yet more earneſt in this Matter, when his Fellow-Labourers, his Seconds, came up with him, *v.* 5. *When* Silas *and* Timothy *were come from* Macedonia, and had brought him good Tidings from the Churches there, and were ready to aſſiſt him here, and ſtrengthen'd his Hands; then *Paul was* more than before *preſs'd in Spirit*, which made him more than ever *preſſing* in his Preaching. He was griev'd for the Obſtinacy and Infidelity of his Country-Men the *Jews*; was more intent than ever upon their Converſion, and the *Love of Chriſt conſtrain'd him* to it, 2 *Cor.* v. 14. 'tis the Word that is us'd here, it *preſs'd him in Spirit* to it: And being thus preſs'd, he *teſtify'd to the* Jews with all poſſible Solemnity and Seriouſneſs, as that which he was perfectly well aſſur'd of himſelf, and atteſted to them as a *faithful Saying*, and *worthy of all Acceptation*; that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, the *Meſſiah* promis'd to the Fathers, and expected by them.

Thirdly, We have him here abandoning the unbelieving *Jews*, and turning from them to the *Gentiles*, as he had done in other Places, *v.* 6.

1. Many of the *Jews*, and indeed moſt of them *perſiſted in* their *Contradiction* to the Goſpel of Chriſt, and would not yield to the ſtrongeſt Reaſonings, or the moſt winning Perſuaſions; they *oppos'd themſelves* and *blaſphem'd*; they *ſet themſelves in Battle array*, (ſo the Word ſignifies) againſt the Goſpel, they joyn'd Hand in Hand to ſtop the Progreſs of it. They reſolv'd they would not believe it themſelves, and would do all they could to keep others from believing it. They could not argue againſt it; but what was wanting in Reaſon, they made up in ill Language: They *blaſphemed*, ſpoke reproachfully of Chriſt, and in him of God himſelf, as *Rev.* xiii. 6, 6. To juſtify their Infidelity, they broke out into down-right Blaſphemy.

2. *Paul* hereupon declar'd himſelf *diſcharg'd* from them, and left them to periſh in their Unbelief. He that was *preſs'd in Spirit* to *teſtify to them*, *v.* 5. when they oppos'd that Teſtimony, and perſiſted in their Oppoſition, was *preſs'd in Spirit* to teſtify *againſt them*, *v.* 6. and his Zeal *herein* alſo he ſhew'd by a Sign; he *ſhook his Raiment*, ſhaking off the Duſt of it, as before they *ſhook off the Duſt of their Feet*, Chap. xiii. 51. for a Teſtimony againſt them; thus he clear'd himſelf from them, but threaten'd the Judgments of God againſt them; as *Pilate*, by waſhing his Hands ſignify'd the devolving of the Guilt of Chriſt's Blood from himſelf upon the *Jews*; ſo *Paul* by *ſhaking his Raiment* ſignify'd what he ſaid (if poſſible) to affect them with it. (1.) He had done his Part, and *was clean* from the Blood of their Souls; he had like a Faithful Watchman given them Warning, and thereby had *deliver'd his Soul*, tho' he could not prevail to deliver theirs; he had try'd all Methods to work upon them, but all in vain, ſo that if they periſh in their Unbelief, their Blood is not to be required at his Hands: Here, and *Chap.* xx. 26. he plainly refers to *Ezek.* xxxiii. 8, 9. It is very comfortable to a Miniſter to have the Teſtimony of his Conſcience for him, that he has faithfully diſcharged his Truſt by warning Sinners. (2.) They would certainly periſh if they perſiſted in their Unbelief, and the Blame would lie *wholly* upon themſelves; your *Blood be upon your own Heads*, you will be your own Deſtroyers, your Nation will be ruin'd in this World, and particular Perſons will be ruin'd in the other World, and *you alone ſhall bear it*. If any Thing would frighten them at laſt into a Compliance with the Goſpel, ſure this would.

3. Having *given them over*, yet he doth not *give over* his Work; tho' *Iſrael* be not gathered, Chriſt and his Goſpel ſhall be glorious, *from henceforth I will go unto the* Gentiles; and the *Jews* cannot complain, for they had the *firſt* Offer, and a *fair* one, made to them. The Gueſts that were firſt invited will not come, and the Proviſion muſt not be loſt, Gueſts muſt be had therefore *from the High-ways, and the Hedges*. We *would have gather'd* the *Jews*, Matth. xxiii. 37. would have *heal'd them*, Jer. ii. 9. and they *would not*; but Chriſt muſt not be a Head without a Body, not a Foundation without a Building, and therefore if they *will not*, we muſt try whether *others will*. Thus the *Fall* and *Diminiſhing of the* Jews was the Riches of the *Gentiles*; and Paul ſaid this to their Faces, not only becauſe it was what he could juſtify, but to *provoke them to* Jealouſy, *Rom.* xi. 12, 14.

7 ¶ And he departed thence, and entred into a certain man's houſe, named Juſtus, one that worſhipped God, whoſe houſe joyned hard to the ſynagogue. 8 And Criſpus the chief ruler of the

ſynagogue, believed on the Lord with all his houſe: and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized. 9 Then ſpake the Lord to Paul in the night by a viſion, Be not afraid, but ſpeak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man ſhall ſet on thee, to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he continued *there* a year and ſix months, teaching the word of God among them.

Here we are told,

Firſt, That *Paul* chang'd his Quarters: Chriſt directed his Diſciples when he ſent them forth, not to *go from Houſe to Houſe*, Luke x. 7. but there might be Occaſion to *do it*, as *Paul* did here. He *departed* out of the Synagogue, being driven out by the Perverſneſs of the unbelieving *Jews*, and he *entred into a certain Man's* Houſe named *Juſtus*, *v.* 7. It ſhould ſeem he went to this Man's Houſe, not to *lodge*, for he continued with *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, but to *preach*: When the *Jews* would not let him go on *peaceably* with his Work in their Meeting, this honeſt Man open'd his Doors to him, and told him, he ſhould be welcome to preach there, and *Paul* accepted the Motion; and it was not the firſt Time that God's Ark had taken up its Lodging in a private Houſe. When *Paul* could not have Liberty to preach in the Synagogue, he preached *in a Houſe*, without any Diſparagement to his Doctrine. But obſerve the Account of this Man and his Houſe.

1. The Man was next Door to a *Jew*: He was One that *worſhipped God*, he was not an Idolater, tho' he was a *Gentile*, but was a *Worſhipper* of the God of *Iſrael*, and him only, as *Cornelius*: That *Paul* might give the leſs Offence to the *Jews*, tho' he had abandon'd them he ſet up his Meeting in that Man's Houſe. Even then when he was under a Neceſſity of breaking off from them to *turn to the* Gentiles, yet he would ſtudy to oblige them.

2. The *Houſe* was next Door to *the Synagogue*, it *joyned cloſe to it*; which ſome perhaps might interpret as done *with Deſign* to draw People from the Synagogue to the Meeting; but I rather think 'twas done *in Charity*, to ſhew that he would come as near them as he could, and was ready to return to them if they were but willing to receive his Meſſage, and would not *contradict* and *blaſpheme* as they had done.

Secondly, That *Paul* ſaw the good *Fruit of his Labours* preſently, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

1. *Criſpus* a *Jew*, an eminent One, the *chief Ruler of the Synagogue*, *believed on the Lord* Jeſus *with all his Houſe*, *v.* 8. It was for the Honour of the Goſpel, that there were ſome Rulers and Perſons of the firſt Rank both in Church and State that embrac'd it. This would leave the *Jews* inexcuſable, that the *Ruler of their Synagogue* who may be ſuppos'd to have excell'd the reſt in Knowledge of the Scriptures, and Zeal for their Religion, believ'd the Goſpel, and yet they oppos'd and blaſphem'd it. Not only he, but *his Houſe* believed, and probably were baptiz'd with him by *Paul*, 1 Cor. i. 14.

2. *Many of the* Corinthians who were *Gentiles*, (and ſome of them Perſons of an ill Character, as appears, 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. *ſuch were ſome of you*) *hearing, believed, and were baptiz'd*: Firſt they *heard*, for *Faith comes by hearing*: Some perhaps, came to hear *Paul* under ſome Convictions of Conſcience, that the Way they were in was not right; but 'tis probable the moſt came only for Curioſity, becauſe it was a *new* Doctrine that was preach'd; but hearing *they believed*, by the Power of God working upon them; and *believing* they were *baptized*, and ſo fix'd for Chriſt, took upon them the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, and became entitled to the Privileges of Chriſtians.

Thirdly, That *Paul* was encourag'd by a Viſion to go on with his Work at *Corinth*, *v.* 9. *The Lord* Jeſus *ſpoke to* Paul *in the Night by a Viſion*; When he was muſing on his Work, *communing with his own Heart upon his Bed*, and conſidering, whether he ſhould continue here or no; what Method he ſhould take here, and what Probability there was of doing Good, then Chriſt appear'd very ſeaſonably to him, and *in the Multitude of his Thoughts within him*, delighted his Soul with divine Conſolations.

1. He renew'd his Commiſſion and Charge to preach the Goſpel; *Be not afraid* of the *Jews*, tho' they are very outragious, and perhaps the more enrag'd by the Converſion of the chief Ruler of their Synagogue; Be not afraid of the Magiſtrates of the City, for they have *no Power againſt thee but what is given them from above*. 'Tis the Cauſe of Heaven thou art pleading, do it *boldly*: *Be not afraid of their Words, nor diſmay'd at their Looks*; but *ſpeak and hold not thy Peace*; let ſlip no Opportunity of ſpeaking to them, *cry aloud, ſpare not*: Do not hold thy Peace *from* ſpeaking for fear of them, nor hold thy Peace *in* ſpeaking (if I may ſo ſay,) do not ſpeak ſhily and with Caution, but plainly, and fully, and with Courage; ſpeak out, uſe all the *Liberty of Spirit* that becomes an Ambaſſador for Chriſt.

2. He aſſur'd him of his Preſence with him, which was ſufficient to animate him, and put Life and Spirit into him; *Be not afraid, for I am with thee*, to protect thee, and bear thee out, and to deliver thee from all thy Fears, *Speak, and hold not thy Peace*; *for I am with thee*, to own what thou ſay'ſt, to work with thee, and to confirm the Word by Signs following. The ſame Promiſe that ratify'd the general Commiſſion, *Matth.* xxviii. 19, 29. *Lo I am with you always*, is here repeated. They that have Chriſt with them, need not to *fear*, and ought not to *ſhrink*.

3. He gave him a Warrant of Protection to ſave him harmleſs; *No Man ſhall ſet on thee, to hurt thee*; Thou ſhalt be delivered out of the Hands of wicked and unreaſonable Men, and ſhalt not be *driven hence* as thou waſt from other Places by Perſecution. He doth not promiſe, that *no Man ſhall ſet on him*; for the next News we hear, is, that he is *ſet upon* and *brought to the Judgement-Seat*, *v.* 12. but *no Man ſhall ſet on thee, to hurt thee*, the *Remainder of their Wrath* ſhall be *reſtrain'd*: Thou ſhall not be beaten and impriſon'd here as thou waſt at *Philippi*. *Paul* met with coarſer Treatment at firſt than he did afterwards, and was now *comforted*, *according to the Time wherein he had been afflicted*. Tryals ſhall not laſt always, *Pſal.* lxvi. 10, 11, 12. Or, we may take it more generally, *No Man ſhall ſet on thee*, τοῦ κακῶσαί σε, *to do evil* to thee; whatever Trouble they may give thee, there is no real Evil in it. They may *kill thee*, but they cannot *hurt* thee; for *I am with thee*, Pſal. xxiii. 4. Iſa. lxi. 10.

4. He gave him a Proſpect of Succeſs; *For I have much People in this City*; therefore no Man ſhall prevail to obſtruct thy Work, therefore I will be with thee, to own thy Work, and therefore do thou go on vigorouſly and chearfully in it; for there are *many in this City*, that are to be effectually called by thy Miniſtry, in whom thou ſhalt *ſee of the Travel of thy Soul*. λαὸς ἐστί μοι πολὺς, There is *to me a great People here*; The Lord knows them that *are his*, yea, and them that *ſhall be his*; for it is by *his* Work upon them that they become *his*, and *known unto him are all his Works*. *I have them*, tho' they yet know me not; tho' yet they are led Captive by Satan at his Will; for the Father has given them me, to be a Seed to ſerve me; *I have them* written in the Book of Life, I have their Names down, and of all that were given me I will loſe none; *I have them*, for I am ſure to have them; *whom he did predeſtinate, them he called*. *In this City*, tho' it be a very prophane wicked City, full of Impurity, and the more ſo for a Temple of *Venus* there, to which there was a great Reſort; yet in this Heap that ſeems to be all Chaff, there is Wheat; in this Ore that ſeems to be all Droſs, there is Gold. Let us not deſpair concerning any Place, when even in *Corinth*, Chriſt had *much People*.

Fourthly, That upon this Encouragement he made a long Stay there, *v.* 11. He *continued* at *Corinth*, a *Year and Six Months*, not to take his Eaſe but to follow his Work, *teaching the Word of God among them*; and it being a City flock'd to from all Parts, he had Opportunity there of Preaching the Goſpel to Strangers, and ſending Notice of it thence to other Countries. He ſtay'd ſo long,

1. For the *Bringing in* of thoſe that were *without*: Chriſt had *much People* there, and by the Power of his Grace he could have had them all converted in one Month or Week, as at the firſt Preaching of the Goſpel, when Thouſands were incloſ'd at one Caſt of the Net; but God works variouſly. The People Chriſt has at *Corinth* muſt be called in by Degrees, ſome by one Sermon, others by another, *we ſee not yet all Things put under Chriſt*. Let Chriſt's Miniſters go on in their Duty, tho' their Work be not done *all at once*; nay, tho' it be done but *a little at a Time*.

2. For the *building up* of thoſe that were *within*: Thoſe that are converted have ſtill need to be *taught the Word of God*; and particular Need at *Corinth* to be taught it by *Paul* himſelf; for no ſooner was the *good Seed ſown* in that *Field*, but *the Enemy came and ſowed Tares*, the *falſe Apoſtles*, thoſe *deceitful Workers*, whom *Paul* in his Epiſtle to the *Corinthians* complains ſo much of. When the Hands of *Jewiſh* Perſecutors were ty'd, who were profeſs'd Enemies to the Goſpel, *Paul* had a more vexatious Trouble created him, and the Church more miſchievous Damage done it by the Tongue of judaizing Preachers, who under Colour of the Chriſtian Name, undermin'd the very Foundations of Chriſtianity. Soon after *Paul* came to *Corinth*, it's ſuppos'd he wrote the *firſt Epiſtle* to the *Theſſalonians*, which in order of Time was the firſt of all the Epiſtles he wrote by Divine Inſpiration; and the ſecond Epiſtle to the ſame Church was written not long after. Miniſters may be ſerving Chriſt, and promoting the great Ends of their Miniſtry, by writing good Letters, as well as by preaching good Sermons.

12 ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made inſurrection with one accord againſt Paul, and brought him to the judgement-ſeat, 13 Saying, This fellow perſuadeth men to worſhip God contrary to the Law. 14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio ſaid unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong, or wicked lewdneſs, O ye Jews, reaſon would that I ſhould bear with you: 15 But if it be a queſtion of words and names, and of your law, look ye *to it*; for I will be no judge of ſuch matters. 16 And he drave them from the judgement-ſeat. 17 Then all the Greeks took Soſthenes, the chief ruler of the ſynagogue, and beat him before the

judgement-ſeat: and Gallio cared for none of thoſe things.

We have here an Account of ſome Diſturbance given to *Paul* and his Friends at *Corinth*; but no great harm done, nor much hindrance given to the Work of Chriſt there.

Firſt, *Paul* is *accus'd* by the *Jews* before the *Roman* Governor, *v.* 12, 13. The *Governor* was Gallio, *Deputy* of *Achaia*, *i. e. Proconſul*; for *Achaia* was a Conſular Province of the Empire. This *Gallio* was eldeſt Brother to the famous *Seneca*; in his Youth he was call'd *Novatus*, but took the Name of *Gallio* upon his being adopted into the Family of *Julius Gallio*; he is deſcrib'd by *Seneca* his Brother, to be a Man of great Ingenuity, and great Probity, and a Man of wonderful good Temper; he was call'd *Dulcis* Gallio, for his ſweet Diſpoſition, and is ſaid to have been univerſally belov'd. *Now obſerve*,

1. How rudely *Paul* is apprehended and brought before *Gallio*; the Jews *made Inſurrection with one accord againſt* Paul. They were the Ring-leaders of all the Miſchief againſt *Paul*, and they enter'd into a Confederacy to do him a Miſchief; they were *unanimous* in it, they came upon him *with one accord*; Hand *joyned in Hand* to *do* this Wickedneſs; they did it with Violence and Fury, they made an Inſurrection to the Diſturbance of the Publick Peace, and hurry'd *Paul* away to the *Judgement-Seat*, and for ought appears, allow'd him no Time to prepare for his Tryal.

2. How falſely *Paul* is accus'd before *Gallio*, v. 13. *This Fellow perſwades Men to worſhip GOD contrary to the Law.* They could not charge him with perſwading Men not to worſhip God at all, or to worſhip other God's, (*Deut.* xiii. 2.) but only to worſhip God in a way *contrary to the Law*: The *Romans* allow'd the *Jews* in their Provinces the Obſervation of their own Law, and what then? Muſt they therefore be proſecuted as Criminals, who worſhip God in any other Way? Doth their Tolleration include a Power of Impoſition? But the Charge was unjuſt, for their own Law had in it a Promiſe of a Prophet whom God would raiſe up to them, and *him they ſhould hear*; now Paul perſwaded them to believe in this Prophet, who was come, and to *hear him*, which was according to the Law; for he came not to *deſtroy the Law*, but to *fulfil it*. The Law relating to the Temple Service, thoſe *Jews* at *Corinth* could not obſerve, becauſe of their Diſtance from *Jeruſalem*, and there was no part of their Synagogue-Worſhip which *Paul* contradicted. Thus when People are taught to worſhip God *in* Chriſt, and to worſhip him *in the Spirit*, they are ready to quarrel, as if they were taught to worſhip him *contrary to the Law*; whereas this is indeed perfective *of the Law*.

Secondly. *Gallio* upon the firſt hearing, or rather without any hearing at all, *diſmiſſeth* the Cauſe, and will not take any Cognizance of it, *v.* 14, 15. *Paul* was going about to make his Defence, and to ſhew that he did not *teach Men to worſhip God contrary to Law*; but the Judge being reſolved not to paſs any Sentence upon this Cauſe, he would not give himſelf the Trouble of examining it. *Obſerve*,

1. He ſhews himſelf very ready to do the part of a Judge in any matter that it was proper for him to take Cognizance of; he ſaid to the *Jews* that were the Proſecutors, *If it were a matter of Wrong, or wicked Lewdneſs*; if you could charge the Priſoner with Theft or Fraud, with Murder or Rapine, or any Act of Immorality, I ſhould think my ſelf bound to *bear with you* in your Complaints, tho' they were clamorous and noiſy; for the rudneſs of the Petitioners was no good Reaſon, if their Cauſe was juſt, why they ſhould not have Juſtice done them: It is the Duty of Magiſtrates to right the Injured, and to animadvert upon the Injurious; and if the Complaint be not made with all the Decorum that might be, yet they ſhould *bear it out*, But,

2. He will by no means allow them to make a Complaint to him of a Thing that was not within his Juriſdiction, *v.* 15, *If it be a Queſtion of Words and Names, and of your Law, look ye to it*; end it among your ſelves as you can, but *I will be no Judge of ſuch matters*; you ſhall neither burthen my Patience with the hearing of it, nor burthen my Conſcience with giving Judgement upon it; and therefore when they were urgent and preſſing to be heard, he *drave them from the Judgement Seat*, v. 16. and ordered another Cauſe to be called.

Now, (1.) Here was ſomething well in *Gallio*'s Conduct, and Praiſe worthy, that he would not pretend to judge of Things he did not underſtand; that he left the *Jews* to themſelves in Matters relating to their own Religion; but yet would not let them, under pretence of that, run down *Paul* and abuſe him, or at leaſt would not himſelf be the Tool of their Malice, to give Judgement againſt him. He look'd upon the matter to be not within his Juriſdiction, and therefore would not meddle in it.

But (2) It was certainly ill to ſpeak ſo ſlightly of a *Law* and *Religion*, which he might have known to be of God, and which he ought to have acquainted himſelf with. In what Way God is to be worſhiped? Whether Jeſus be the Meſſiah; Whether the Goſpel be a Divine Revelation; Were not *Queſtions* of *Words and Names*, as he ſcornfully and profanely call'd them; they are Queſtions of vaſt Importance, and which, if he had underſtood himſelf aright, he would have ſeen himſelf nearly concern'd in. He ſpeaks as if he boaſted of the Ignorance of their Scriptures, and took a Pride in it, as if it were below him to take notice of the Law of God, or make any enquiries concerning it.

Thirdly, The Abuſe done to *Soſthenes*, and *Gallio*'s unconcernedneſs in it, *v.* 17.

1. The Parties put a great Contempt upon the *Court*, when they *took* Soſthenes *and beat him before the Judgement Seat*. Many Conjectures there are concerning this Matter, becauſe 'tis uncertain who this *Soſthenes* was, and who the *Greeks* were that abus'd him. It ſeems moſt probable that *Soſthenes* was a Chriſtian, and *Paul*'s particular Friend, that appear'd for him on this Occaſion, and probably had *taken Care* of his Safety, and *convey'd him away* when *Gallio* diſmiſs'd the Cauſe; ſo that when they could not light on *Paul*, they fell foul on him who protected him. 'Tis certain, there was one *Soſthenes* that was a Friend of *Paul's*, and well known at *Corinth*; 'tis likely he was a Miniſter, for *Paul* calls him *his Brother*, and joyns him with himſelf, in his firſt Epiſtle to the Church at *Corinth*, 1 Cor. i. 1. as he doth *Timothy* in the Second, and 'tis probable this was he; he is ſaid to be a *Ruler of the Synagogue*, either Joynt-Ruler with *Criſpus*, v. 8. or Ruler of one Synagogue as *Criſpus* was of anothev. And as for the *Greeks* that abus'd him, 'tis probable they were either *Helleniſt* Jews, or *Jewiſh Greeks*, thoſe that *joyn'd* with the *Jews* in oppoſing the Goſpel, *v.* 4. 6. And the Native *Jews* put them on to do it, thinking it would in them be leſs offenſive. They were ſo enrag'd againſt *Paul*, that they beat *Soſthenes*, and ſo enrag'd againſt *Gallio*, becauſe he would not countenance the Proſecution, that they beat him *before the Judgement Seat*, whereby they did in effect tell him, that they car'd not for him; if he would not be *their Executioner*, they would be *their own Judges*.

2. The *Court* put no leſs a Contempt upon the Cauſe and the Perſons too, *but* Gallio *cared for none of theſe Things*. If by this be meant that he cared not for the *Affronts of ill Men*, it was commendable, while he ſteadily adher'd to the Laws and Rules of Equity, he might deſpiſe their Contempts; but if it be meant, as I think it is, that he concern'd not himſelf for the *Abuſes done to good Men*, it carries his Indifferency too far, and gives us but an ill Character of him. Here is *Wickedneſs* done *in the Place of Judgement*, which *Solomon* complains of, *Eccl.* iii. 16. and nothing done to diſcountenance and ſuppreſs it. *Gallio* as a Judge, ought to have protected *Soſthenes*, and reſtrain'd and puniſh'd the *Greeks* that aſſaulted him; for a Man to be mobb'd in the Street or in the Market, perhaps may not be eaſily help'd, but to be ſo in his Court, the Judgement Seat, the Court ſitting and not concern'd at it, is an Evidence that *Truth is fallen in the Street, and cannot enter*; for *he that departeth from Evil maketh himſelf a Priy*, Iſa. lix. 14. Thoſe that ſee and hear of the Sufferings of God's People, and have no Sympathy with them, or Concern for them, do not pity and pray for them; it being all one to them whether the Intereſts of Religion ſink or ſwim; are of the Spirit of *Gallio* here, who when a good Man was abus'd before his Face, *cared for none of theſe Things*; like them that were *at eaſe in Sion*, and *were not grieved for the Affliction of* Joſeph, *Amos* vi. 6. like the *King* and *Haman*, that *ſate down to drink when the City* Shuſhan *was perplex'd*, Eſt. iii. 15.

18 ¶ And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the Brethren, and ſailed thence into Syria, and with him Priſcilla and Aquila: having ſhorn *his* Head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. 19. And he came to Epheſus, and left them there: but he himſelf enter'd into the ſynagogue and reaſoned with the Jews. 20 When they deſired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he conſented not: 21 But bade them farewel, ſaying, I muſt by all means keep this feaſt that cometh in Jeruſalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he ſailed from Epheſus. 22 And when he had landed at Ceſarea, and gone up and ſaluted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23 And after he had ſpent ſome time *there*, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order ſtrengthning all the diſciples.

We have here *Paul* in Motion, as we have had him at *Corinth* for ſome Time at Reſt; but in both buſy, very buſy in the Service of Chriſt; if he ſat ſtill, if he went about, ſtill it was *to do Good*. Here's

Firſt, *Paul*'s Departure from *Corinth*, v. 18.

1. He did not go away till ſome Time after the Trouble he met with there. From other Places he had departed when the Storm roſe, but not from *Corinth*; becauſe, there it was no ſooner riſen, but it fell again. Some tell us, that *Gallio* did privately Countenance *Paul*, and took him into his Favour, and that this occaſion'd a Correſpondence between *Paul* and *Seneca Gallio*'s Brother, which ſome of the Ancients ſpeak of. *After this he tarried there yet a good while*, ſome think beyond the Year and half, mention'd, *v.* 11. while he found he labour'd not in vain, he continu'd labouring.

2. When he went he *took leave of the Brethren* ſolemnly, and with much Affection, with ſuitable Comforts and Counſels, and

Prayers at parting, commanding what was good, reproving what was otherwiſe, and giving them neceſſary Cautions againſt the Wiles of the falſe Apoſtles ; and his Farewel Sermon would leave Impreſſions upon them.

3. He took with him *Priſcilla* and *Aquila*, becauſe they had a mind to accompany him ; for they ſeemed diſpos'd to removes, and not inclined to ſtay long in a Place ; a Diſpoſition which may come from a good Principle, and have good Effects, and therefore ought not to be *condemn'd in others*, tho' it ought to be *ſuſpected in our ſelves*. There was a mighty Friendſhip contracted between them and *Paul*, and therefore when he went, they beg'd to go along with him.

4. At *Cenchrea*, which was hard by *Corinth*, the Port where thoſe that went to Sea from *Corinth* took Ship, either *Paul* or *Aquila*, (for the Original doth not determine which) had his *Head ſhav'd*, to diſcharge himſelf from the Vow of a *Nazarite*, *having ſhorn his Head at* Cenchrea ; *far he had a Vow*. Thoſe that liv'd in *Judea* were in ſuch a caſe bound to do it at the Temple, but thoſe who liv'd in other Countries might do it in other Places. The *Nazarite*'s Head was to be ſhav'd, when either his Conſecration was accidentally *polluted*, in which Caſe he muſt begin again : Or, *When the Days of his Separation were fulfill'd*, Num. vi. 9, 13, 18. which we ſuppoſe was the Caſe here ; ſome throw it upon *Aquila*, who as a *Jew*, v. 2. had retain'd perhaps more of his Judaiſm than was convenient ; but I ſee no harm in admitting it concerning *Paul*, for concerning him we muſt admit the ſame Thing, *Chap.* xxi. 24, 26. not only in compliance for a Time with the *Jews*, to whom he *became as a* Jew, 1 *Cor.* ix. 20. that he might *win upon them*, but becauſe the *Vow of the* Nazarites tho' *Ceremonial*, and as ſuch ready *to vaniſh away*, yet had a great deal of *Moral* and very *Pious* Significancy, and therefore was fit to *die the laſt* of all the Jewiſh Ceremonies : The *Nazarites* are joyned with the *Prophets*, Amos ii. 11. and were very much the Glory of *Iſrael*, Lam. iv. 7, and therefore it is not ſtrange, if *Paul* bound himſelf for ſome Time with the Vow of a *Nazarite*, from *Wine* and *Strong-drink*, and from being *trim'd*, to recommend himſelf to the *Jews* ; and from this he now *diſcharg'd himſelf*.

Secondly, *Paul*'s calling at *Epheſus*, which was the Metropolis of the Leſſer *Aſia*, and a Sea-port.

1. There he left *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* ; not only becauſe they would be but *burthenſome* to him in his Journey, but becauſe they might be *ſerviceable* to the Intereſts of the Goſpel at *Epheſus* : *Paul* intended ſhortly to ſettle there for ſome Time, and left *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* there in the mean Time, for the ſame End as Chriſt ſent his Diſciples before to every Place where he himſelf would come, to *prepare his Way*. *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* might by private Converſation, being very intelligent, judicious Chriſtians, diſpoſe the Minds of many to give *Paul*, when he ſhould come among them, a favourable Reception, and to underſtand his Preaching ; therefore he calls them his *Helpers in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. xvi. 3.

2. There he preach'd to the *Jews* in their *Synagogue* ; tho' he did but *call there* in his Journey, yet he would not go without giving them a Sermon. He *enter'd into the Synagogue*, not as a Hearer, but as a Preacher ; for there he *reaſon'd with the* Jews. Tho' he had abandon'd the *Jews* at *Corinth*, who *oppos'd themſelves, and blaſphem'd*, yet he did not for their Sakes decline the Synagogues of the *Jews* in other Places, but ſtill made the firſt offer of the Goſpel to them. We muſt not condemn a whole Body or Denomination of Men, for the Sake of ſome that carry themſelves ill.

3. The *Jews* at *Epheſus* were ſo far from driving *Paul* away, that they *courted his ſtay* with them, *v.* 20. They *deſir'd him to tarry longer with them*, to inſtruct them in the Goſpel of Chriſt. *Theſe were more nolle*, and better *bred*, than thoſe *Jews* at *Corinth* and other Places ; and it was a Sign that God had not quite caſt away his People, but had a *Remnant among them*.

4. *Paul* would not ſtay with them now ; he *conſented not* ; but *bad them farewell* : He had further to go ; he *muſt by all means keep this Feaſt at* Jeruſalem ; not that he thought himſelf bound in Duty to do it, he knew the Laws of the Feaſts were no longer binding ; but he had Buſineſs at *Jeruſalem* (whatever it was) which would be beſt done at the Time of the Feaſt, when there was a general Rendezvous of all the *Jews* from all Parts. Which of the Feaſts it was we are not told ; probably it was the Paſſover, which was the moſt eminent.

5. He intimated his Purpoſe after this Journey, to come and ſpend ſome Time at *Epheſus* ; by their kind Invitation, being encourag'd to hope that he ſhould do Good among them. 'Tis good to have Opportunities *in reſerve* ; when one good Work is over, to have another to apply our ſelves to. *I will return again to you* ; but he inſerts that neceſſary Proviſo, *If GOD will*. Our Times are in God's Hand ; we purpoſe, but He diſpoſeth ; and therefore we muſt make all our Promiſes with ſubmiſſion to the Will of God ; *If the LORD will, we ſhall live, and do this or that*. I will return again to you, if *the Spirit* ſuffer me, *Chap.* xvi. 7. That was included in *Paul*'s Caſe ; not only if Providence permit, but if God do not otherwiſe direct my Motions.

Thirdly, *Paul*'s Viſit to *Jeruſalem* ; a ſhort Viſit it was but it ſerv'd as a Token of Reſpect to that truly Mother-Church.

1. He came *by Sea* to the Port that lay next to *Jeruſalem* ; he *ſail'd from* Epheſus, *v.* 21. and *landed at* Cæſarea, *v.* 22. He choſe to go by Sea for Expedition, and for Safety ; and that he might *ſee the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep*. *Joppa* had been the Port for *Jeruſalem* ; but *Herod* having improved *Cæſarea*, and the Port at *Joppa* being dangerous, that was generally made uſe of.

2. He *went up and ſaluted the Church* ; by which, I think is plainly meant the Church at *Jeruſalem*, which is emphatically call'd *the Church*, becauſe there the Chriſtian Church began, *Acts* xv. 4. *Paul* thought it requiſite to ſhew himſelf among them, that they might not think his Succeſs among the *Gentiles* had made him think himſelf either *above them*, or *eſtranged from them* ; Or, that the Honour God had put upon him, made him unmindful of the Honour he ow'd to them. His going to *ſalute the Church at Jeruſalem*, intimates (1.) That it was a very *friendly* Viſit that he made them ; in pure Kindneſs, to enquire into their State, and to teſtify his hearty Good-will to them, *Note*, The increaſe of our new Friends, ſhould not make us to forget our old ones ; but it ſhould be a Pleaſure to good Men and good Miniſters, to revive former Acquaintance. The Miniſters at *Jeruſalem* were conſtant *Reſidents* ; *Paul* was a conſtant *Itinerant* ; but he took Care to keep up a good Correſpondence with them, that they might *rejoyce* with him *in his going out*, and he might *rejoyce* with them *in their Tents*, and they might both congratulate and wiſh well to one another's Comfort and Succeſs. (2.) That it was but a *ſhort* Viſit ; He went up and *ſaluted them*, perhaps with the *holy-Kiſs*, and made no ſtay among them. It was deſign'd but for a *tranſient Interview*, and yet *Paul* undertook this Journey for that. This is not the World we are to be together in ; God's People are the *Salt of the Earth*, diſpers'd and ſcatter'd, yet it is good to ſee one another ſometimes, if it be but to ſee one another ; that we may confirm mutual Love, may the better keep up our ſpiritual Communion with one another at a Diſtance ; and may long the more for that heavenly *Jeruſalem*, in which we hope to be *together for ever*.

Fourthly, His Return through thoſe Countries where he had formerly preach'd the Goſpel.

1. He went and *ſpent ſome Time* in *Antioch*, among his old Friends there, from whence he was firſt ſent out to preach among the *Gentiles*, Chap. xiii. 1. He *went down to* Antioch, to refreſh himſelf with the Sight and Converſation af the Miniſters there. And a very good Refreſhment it is to a faithful Miniſter, to have for a while the Society of his Brethren ; for *as Iron ſharpeneth Iron, ſo doth a Man the Countenance of his Friend*. *Paul*'s coming to *Antioch*, would bring to remembrance the former Days, which would furniſh him with matter for freſh Thankſgiving.

2. Thence he *went over the Country of* Galacia, *and* Phrygia *in order* ; where he had preach'd the Goſpel, and planted Churches ; which tho' very briefly mention'd, *Chap.* xvi. 6. yet was a glorious Work, as appears by *Gal.* iv. 14, 15. where *Paul* ſpeaks of his Pteaching of the Goſpel to the *Galatians* at the firſt, and their *receiving him as an Angel of GOD*. Theſe Country Churches (for ſo they wete, (*Gal.* i. 2.) and we read not of any City in *Galatia*, where a Church was) *Paul* viſited *in order* as they lay, watering what he had been inſtrumental to plant, and *ſtrengthning all the Diſciples*. His very coming among them, and owning them, was a great *ſtrengthning* to *them* and their Miniſters. *Paul*'s Countenancing of them, was encouraging to them : But that was not all ; he preach'd that to them which *ſtrengthen'd* them ; which confirm'd their Faith *in Chriſt*, and their Reſolutions *for Chriſt*, and their pious Affections to him. Diſciples need to be *ſtrengthen'd*, for they are compaſs'd about with Infirmity ; Miniſters muſt do what they can to ſtrengthen them, to ſtrengthen them *all*, by directing them to Chriſt, and bringing them to live upon him, whoſe Strength is perfected in their Weakneſs, and who is himſelf their *Strength and Song*.

24 ¶ And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the ſcriptures, came to Epheſus. 25 This man was inſtructed in the way of the Lord ; and being fervent in the ſpirit, he ſpake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptiſm of John. 26 And he began to ſpeak boldly in the ſynagogue. Whom when Aquila and Priſcilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27 And when he was diſpoſed to paſs into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the diſciples to receive him : who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace. 28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publickly, ſhewing by the ſcriptures, that Jeſus was Chriſt.

The Sacred Hiſtory leaves *Paul* upon his Travels, and goes here to meet *Apollos* at *Epheſus*, and to give us ſome Account of him ; which was neceſſary to our underſtanding ſome Paſſages in *Paul*'s Epiſtles.

Firſt, Here is an Account of his Character, when he came to *Epheſus*.

1. He was a *Jew*, born at *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, but of *Jewiſh* Parents, for there were Abundance of *Jews* in that City; ſince the Diſperſion of the People, it was foretold, *Deut.* xxviii. 68. *The Lord ſhall bring them into* Egypt *again*. His Name was not *Apollo*, the Name of one of the Heathen Gods, but *Apollos*; ſome think, the ſame with *Apollos*, Rom. xvi. 10.

2. He was a Man of excellent good Parts, and well fitted for publick Service. He *was an eloquent Man*, and *mighty in the Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament*, which he was as a *Jew* brought up in the Knowledge of. (1.) He had a great command of Language; he was *an eloquent Man*; he was, ἀνὴρ λόγιος, *a prudent Man*, ſo ſome; a *learned Man*, ſo others; *Hiſtoriarium peritus*, a good Hiſtorian; which is an excellent Qualification for the Miniſtry; he was one that could *ſpeak well*, ſo it properly ſignifies; he was *an Oracle of Man*; he was famous for ſpeaking pertinently and cloſely, fully and fluently upon any Subject. (2.) He had a great command of Scripture Language, and that was the Eloquence he was remarkable for. He *came to* Epheſus, *being mighty in the Scriptures*, ſo the Words are plac'd: Having an excellent Faculty of Expounding Scriptures, he came to *Epheſus*, which was a publick Place, to trade with that Talent for the Honour of GOD, and the Good of many. He was not only *ready in the Scriptures*, able to quote Texts off-hand, and repeat them, and tell you where to find them; many of the carnal *Jews* were ſo, who are therefore ſaid to have the *Form of Knowledge*, and the *Letter* of the Law. But he was *mighty in the Scriptures*; he underſtood the Senſe and Meaning of them, he knew how to make uſe of them, and to apply them; how to reaſon out of the Scriptures, and to reaſon ſtrongly. A convincing, commanding, confirming Power, went along with all his Expoſitions and Applications of the Scripture. 'Tis likely, he had given Proof of his Knowledge of the Scriptures, and his Abilities in them, in many Synagogues of the *Jews*.

3. He was *inſtructed in the way of the Lord*, i. e. he had ſome Acquaintance with the Doctrine of Chriſt; had got ſome general Notions of the Goſpel, and the Principles of Chriſtianity, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, and that Prophet that ſhould *come into the World*. The firſt Notice of this, would be readily embrac'd by one that was ſo *mighty in the Scripture*, as *Apollos* was, and therefore underſtood the *Signs of the Times*. He was *inſtructed*, κατηχημένος, he was *Catechiz'd*, ſo the Word is, either by his Parents or Miniſters; he was taught ſomething of Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him. Thoſe that are to teach others, muſt firſt be themſelves taught *the Word of the Lord*; not only to talk of it, but to walk in it. 'Tis not enough to have our Tongues turn'd to the *Word of the Lord*, but we muſt have our Feet directed into the *way of the Lord*.

4. Yet he *knew only the Baptiſm of* John; he was inſtructed in the Goſpel of Chriſt, as far as *John*'s Miniſtry would carry him, and no further: He knew the *preparing* of the *Way of the Lord*, by that Voice crying in the Wilderneſs, rather than the Way of the LORD itſelf. We cannot but think, he had heard of Chriſt's Death and Reſurection, but was not let into the Myſtery of them; had not had Opportunity of converſing with any of the Apoſtles ſince the Pouring out of the Spirit. Or, he had himſelf been baptiz'd, only with the Baptiſm of *John*, but was not *baptiz'd with the Holy Ghoſt*, as the Diſciples were at the Day of *Pentecoſt*.

Secondly, Here's the *Imployment* and *Improvement* of his Gifts at *Epheſus*: He came thither ſeeking opportunities of doing, and getting Good, and found both.

1. He there *made* a very *good Uſe* of his Gifts *in Publick*. He came probably recommended to the Synagogue of the *Jews*, as a fit Man to be a Teacher there; and according to the Light he had, and the meaſure of the Gift given to him, he was willing to be employ'd, *v.* 25. Being *fervent in the Spirit*, *he ſpake and taught diligently the Things of the Lord*: Tho' he had not the miraculous Gift of the Spirit, as the Apoſtles had, he made Uſe of the Gifts he had; for the Diſpenſation of the Spirit, whatever the Meaſure of it is, *is given to every Man to profit withall*; and our Saviour by a Parable deſign'd to teach his Miniſters, that tho' they had but one Talent, they muſt not bury that.

We have ſeen how *Apollos* was qualify'd with a good Head, and a good Tongue; he was au *Eloquent Man*, and *mighty in the Scriptures*; he had a good Stock of uſeful Knowledge, and had an excellent Faculty of communicating it. Let us now ſee what he had further to recommend him as a Preacher, and his Example is recommended to the Imitation of all Preachers.

(1.) He was a *lively affectionate Preacher*; as he had a good Head, ſo he had a good Heart; he was *fervent in Spirit*; he had in him a great deal of Divine *Fire*, as well as Divine *Light*; was *burning*, as well as *ſhining*. He was full of Zeal for the Glory of GOD, and the Salvation of precious Souls: and this appear'd both in his *Forwardneſs* to preach, when he was call'd to it by the Rulers of the Synagogue, and his *Fervency* in Preaching; he preach'd as one in earneſt, and that had his Heart in his Work. What a happy Compoſition was here! Many are *fervent in Spirit*, but are *weak* in *Knowledge*, in Scripture Knowledge, and far to ſeek for proper Words, and full of improper ones. And on the other hand, many are *eloquent* enough, and *mighty in the Scriptures*, and learned and judicious, but they have no Life or Fervency. Here was a *compleat Man of God*, thoroughly *furniſh'd* for his Work, that was both *eloquent* and *fervent*; full both of Divine Knowledge, and of Divine Affections.

(2.) He was an *induſtrious*, *laborious* Preacher; *he ſpake and taught diligontly*; he *took Pains* in his Preaching; what he deliver'd was *elaborate*, and he did not offer that to GOD or to the Synagogue, that either *coſt nothing*, or coſt *him* nothing. He firſt work'd it upon his own Heart, and then *labour'd* to impreſs it on thoſe he preach'd it to. He *taught diligently*, ἀκριβῶς, *accurately*, *exactly*. Every Thing he ſaid, was *well weigh'd*.

(3.) He was an *Evangelical* Preacher; tho' he knew only the Baptiſm of *John*, yet that was the *Beginning of the Goſpel of Chriſt*; and to that he kept cloſe; for he taught the *Things of the Lord*; of the Lord Chriſt, that tended to *make Way* for him, and to *ſet* him *up*: The Things pertaining to the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, was the Subject he choſe to inſiſt upon; not the Things of the Ceremonial Law, tho' thoſe would be pleaſing to his *Jewiſh* Auditors: Not the Things of the Gentile Philoſophy, tho' he could have diſcours'd very well on theſe Things; but the *Things of the Lord*:

(4.) He was a *couragious* Preacher; *he began to ſpeak boldly in the Synagogue*, as one that having put a Confidence in GOD did not fear the Face of Man; he ſpoke as one that knew the *Truth* of what he had ſaid, and had no doubt of it, and knew the *Worth* of what he ſaid, and was not afraid to ſuffer for it. *In the Synagogue*, where the *Jews* not only were *preſent*, but had *Power*, there he preach'd the Things of GOD, which he knew they were prejudic'd againſt.

2. He there made a good *Increaſe* of his Gifts in *private*, not ſo much in Study, as in Converſation with *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*. If *Paul*, or ſome other Apoſtle or Evangeliſt had been at *Epheſus*, they would have inſtructed him; but for want of better Help, *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* that were Tent-makers, *Expounded to him the Way of GOD more perfectly*. Obſerve,

1. *Aquila* and *Priſcilla heard him* preach *in the Synagogue*. Tho' in Knowledge he was much inferiour to them, yet having excellent Gifts for publick Service, they encourag'd his Miniſtry by a diligent and conſtant Attendance upon it. Thus young Miniſters that are hopeful, ſhould be countenanc'd by grown Chriſtians, for it becomes them to *fulfill all Righteouſneſs*.

2. Finding him defective in his Knowledge of Chriſtianity, they *took him to them*, to lodge in the ſame Houſe with them, and *expounded to him the Way of God*, the Way of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt *more perfectly*. They did not take Occaſion from what they obſerv'd of his Deficiency, either to *deſpiſe* him themſelves, or to *diſparage* him to others; did not call him a young raw Preacher, not fit to come into a Pulpit, but conſidered the Diſadvantages he had labour'd under, as knowing no more but the Baptiſm of *John*; and having themſelves got great Knowledge in the Truths of the Goſpel, by their long and intimate Converſation with *Paul*, they communicated what they knew to him, and gave him a clear diſtinct and methodical Account of thoſe Things, which before he had but confus'd Notion of. (1.) See here an Inſtance of that which Chriſt has promis'd; That *to him that hath, ſhall be given*, that has and uſes what he has, ſhall have more. He that diligently traded with the Talent he had, doubled it quickly. (2.) See an Inſtance of truly Chriſtian Charity in *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*; they did good according to their Ability. *Aquila*, tho' a Man of great Knowledge, yet did not undertake to *ſpeak in the Synagogue*, becauſe he had not ſuch Gifts for publick Work as *Apollos* had; but he furniſh'd *Apollos* with Matter, and then left him to cloath it with acceptable Words. Inſtructing young Chriſtians, and young Miniſters privately in Converſation, who mean well, and perform well as far as they go, is a Piece of very good Service, both to them and to the Church. (3.) See an Inſtance of great Humility in *Apollos*: He was a very bright young Man, of great Parts and Learning, newly come from the Univerſity, a popular Preacher, and mightily cry'd up and follow'd; and yet finding that *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* were judicious ſerious Chriſtians, that could ſpeak *intelligently* and *experimentally* of the Things of GOD, tho' they were but *Mechanicks*, poor Tent-makers, he was glad to receive Inſtruction from them, to be ſhew'd by them his Defects and Mſtakes, and to have his Miſtakes rectify'd by them; and his Deficiencies made up. Young Scholars may gain a great deal by Converſe with old Chriſtians, as young Students in the Law may by old Practiſers. *Apollos*, tho' he was *inſtructed in the Way of the Lord*, did not reſt in the Knowledge he had attained, nor thought he underſtood Chriſtianity as well as any Man; which proud conceited young Men are apt to do, but was willing to have it *expounded to him* more perfectly. They that know *much*, ſhould covet to know *more*, and what they know, to know it *better*, preſſing forwards towards Perfection. (4.) Here's an Inſtance of a good Woman, tho' not *permitted* to *ſpeak in the Church*, or in the Synagogue, yet doing Good with the Knowledge GOD had given her in private Converſe. *Paul* will have the *Aged Women* to be *Teachers of good Things*, 1 Tit. ii. 3, 4.

Thirdly, Here is his *Preferment* to the Service of the Church of *Corinth*; which was a larger Sphere of Uſefulneſs than *Epheſus* at preſent was. *Paul* had ſet the Wheels a going in *Ackaia*, and particularly at *Corinth*, the Country Town, many were ſtir'd up by his Preaching to *receive* the Goſpel, and they needed to be *confirm'd*; and many were likewiſe irritated to *oppoſe* the Goſpel, and they needed to be *confuted*; *Paul* was gone, was called away to other Work, and now there was a fair Occaſion in this Vacancy for *Apollos* to *ſet in*, who was fitted rather to *water* than to *plant*; to *build up* thoſe that were within, than to *bring in* thoſe that were without. Now here we have,

1. His *Call* to this Service; not by a Viſion, as *Paul* was called to *Macedonia*, no nor ſo much as by the Invitation of thoſe he was to go to, But (1.) He himſelf inclin'd to go; he was *diſpos'd to paſs into* Achaia; having heard of the State of the Churches there, he had a Mind to try what Good he could do among them; tho' there were thoſe there, who were eminent for Spiritual Gifts, yet *Apollos* thought there might be ſome Work for him, and God diſpos'd his Mind that way. (2.) His Friends encourag'd him to go, and approv'd of his Purpoſe, and he being a perfect Stranger there, they gave him a Teſtimonial, or Letters of Recommendation; *exhorting the Diſciples in Achaia to entertain* him, and *employ* him. In this Way, among others, the Communion of Churches is kept up, by the recommending of Members and Miniſters to each other; that as *Apollos* here are diſpoſed to *remove.* Tho' they at *Epheſus* had a great Loſs of his Labours, they did not grudge them in *Achaia* the Benefit of them; but on the contrary, us'd their Intereſt in them to introduce him; for the Churches of Chriſt, tho' they are many, yet they are one.

2. His *Succeſs* in this Service, which both Ways anſwer'd his Intention and Expectation. For,

1. *Believers* were greatly *edify'd*, and they that had received the Goſpel were very much *confirm'd.* He *helped them much which had believed through Grace. Note*, 1. They that believe in Chriſt, 'tis *through Grace* that they believe; 'tis not of themſelves, it is God's *Gift to them*, it is his *Work in them.* 2. Thoſe who thro' Grace do *believe*, yet ſtill have need of *Help*, as long as they are here in this World; there are remainders of Unbelief, and ſome thing *lacking in their Faith*, to be *perfected*, and the Work of Faith to be *fulfill'd.* 3. Faithful Miniſters are capable of being many Ways helpful to thoſe who through Grace do believe, and it is their Buſineſs to *help* them, to help them *much*; and when a Divine Power goes along with them, they will be helpful to them.

2. *Unbelievers* were greatly *mortify'd*; their Objections were fully anſwer'd, the Folly and Sophiſtry of their Arguments was diſcover'd, ſo that they had nothing to ſay in Defence of the Oppoſition they made to the Goſpel; their Mouths were ſtop'd, and their Faces fill'd with ſhame, *v.* 28. *He mightily convinc'd the* Jews, *and that publickly*, before the People. He did it εὐτόνως *earneſtly*, and with a great deal of vehemence; he took Pains to do it; his Heart was upon it as one that was truly deſirous both to *ſerve the Cauſe of Chriſt*, and to *ſave the Souls of Men.* He did it *effectually*, and to univerſal Satisfaction; he did it *levi negotio.* The Caſe was ſo plain, and the Arguments ſo ſtrong on Chriſt's ſide, that it was an eaſy Matter to baffle all that the *Jews* could ſay againſt it; tho' they were ſo fierce, yet their Cauſe was ſo weak, that he *made nothing* of their Oppoſition. Now that which he aim'd to convince them of, was, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, that he is the *Meſſiah* promis'd to the Fathers, who ſhould come, and they were to look for no other: If the *Jews* were but convinc'd of this, that *Jeſus* is *Chriſt*, even their own Law would teach them to *hear him. Note*, The Buſineſs of Miniſters is to preach Chriſt; we *preach not our ſelves*, but *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.* The Way he took to convince them, was, *by the Scriptures:* Thence he fetch'd his Arguments, for the *Jews* owned the Scriptures to be of Divine Authority, and it was eaſy for him who was *mighty in the Scriptures*, from them to ſhew, that Jeſus is the Chriſt. *Note*, Miniſters muſt be able not only to preach the Truth, but to prove it, and defend it, and to convince Gainſayers, with Meekneſs, and yet with Power *inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves.* And this is real Service to the Church.

CHAP. XIX.

We left Paul *in his Circuit, viſiting the Churches*, Chap. xviii. 23. *but we have not forgot, nor has he the Promiſe he made to his Friends at* Epheſus, *to return to them, and make ſome Stay there; now this Chapter ſhews us his Performance of that Promiſe; his Coming to* Epheſus, *and his Continuance there two Years; we are here told*, (1.) *How he* labour'd *there in the Word and Doctrine; how he taught ſome weak Believers that had gone no farther than* John's *Baptiſm*, v. 1—7. *how he taught three Months in the Synagogue of the* Jews, *v.* 8. *And when he was driven thence, how he taught the* Gentiles *a long Time in a publick School*, v. 9, 10. *And how he confirm'd his Doctrine by Miracles*, v. 11, 12. (2.) *What was the* Fruit *of his* Labour, *particularly among the Conjurers, the worſt of Sinners; ſome were* confounded *that did but make uſe of his Name*, v. 13—17. *But others were* converted *that receiv'd and embrac'd his Doctrine*, v. 18—20. (3.) *What Projects he had of further Uſefulneſs*, v. 21, 22. *And what Trouble at length he met with at* Epheſus, *from the Silver Smiths, which forc'd him thence to purſue the Meaſures he had laid: How a Mob was* rais'd *by* Demetrius *to cry up* Diana, *v*, 23—34. *And how it was ſuppreſs'd and diſpers'd by the Town Clerk*, v. 35—41.

AND it came to paſs, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having paſſed through the upper coaſts, came to Epheſus: and finding certain diſciples, 2 He ſaid unto them, Have ye received the holy Ghoſt ſince ye believed? And they ſaid unto him, We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any holy Ghoſt. 3 And he ſaid unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they ſaid, Unto John's baptiſm. 4 Then ſaid Paul, John verily baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, That they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is, on Jeſus Chriſt. 5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus. 6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghoſt came on them; and they ſpake with Tongues, and propheſied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

Epheſus was a City of great Note in *Aſia*, famous for a Temple built there to *Diana*, which was one of the Wonders of the World; thither *Paul* came to preach the Goſpel, while *Apollos was at* Corinth, *v.* 1. While he was watering there, *Paul* was planting here; and grudg'd not that *Apollos* enter'd into his Labours, and was building upon his Foundation; but rejoyc'd in it, and went on in a new Work, that was cut out for him at *Epheſus*, with the more chearfulneſs and ſatisfaction, becauſe he knew that ſuch an able Miniſter of the *New Teſtament* as *Apollos* was, was now at *Corinth* carrying on the good Work there; tho' there were thoſe that made him the Head of a Party againſt *Paul*, 1 Cor. i. 12. yet *Paul* had no Jealouſy of him, nor any way diſlik'd the Affection the People had for him. *Paul* having gone through the Country of *Galatia* and *Phrygia*, paſt *through the upper Coaſts*, Pontus *and* Bithynia, that lay *North*; at length came to *Epheſus*, where he had left *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, and there found them.

At his firſt Coming he met with ſome *Diſciples* there, who profeſs'd *Faith* in Chriſt as the true *Meſſiah*, but were as yet in the firſt and loweſt Form in the School of Chriſt, under his Uſher, *John the Baptiſt*; they were in Number *about Twelve*, v. 7. They were much of the ſtanding that *Apollos* was of, when he came to *Epheſus*, for he *knew only the Baptiſm of* John, *Chap.* xviii. 25. but either they had not Opportunity of being acquainted with *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, or had not been ſo long in *Epheſus*, or were not willing to receive Inſtruction as *Apollos* was, otherwiſe they might have had the Way of God *expounded to them more perfectly*, as *Apollos* had. *Obſerve here*,

Firſt, How *Paul* catechiz'd them; he was told probably by *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, that they were *Believers*, that they did own Chriſt, and had given up their Names to him. Now *Paul* hereupon takes them under Examination.

1. They did believe in the *Son of GOD*; But *Paul* enquires whether they had *receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt?* whether they believ'd *in the Spirit*, whoſe Operations on the Minds of Men, for Conviction, Converſion and Comfort, were reveal'd ſome Time after the Doctrine of Jeſus his being the Chriſt; whether they had been *acquainted with*, and had *admitted* this Revelation? That was not all; extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were confer'd upon the Apoſtles and other Diſciples, preſently after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, which was frequently repeated upon Occaſion: Had they participated of theſe Gifts? *Have ye receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt, ſince ye believed?* Have you had that *Seal* of the Truth of Chriſt's Doctrine in your ſelves? We are not now to expect any ſuch extraordinary Gifts as they had then. The Canon of the *New Teſtament* being long ſince compleated and ratify'd, we depend upon that as the moſt ſure Word of Prophecy: But there are *Graces* of the Spirit given to all Believers, which are an *Earneſt* to 'em, 2 *Cor.* i. 22. v. 9. *Eph.* i. 13. Now it concerns us all who profeſs the Chriſtian Faith, ſeriouſly to enquire, Whether we have *received the Holy Ghoſt*, or not? The Holy Ghoſt is promis'd to all Believers, to all Petitioners, *Luke* xi. 13. But many are deceived in this Matter, that think they have *receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt*, when really they *have not.* As there are Pretenders to the *Gifts* of the Holy Ghoſt, ſo there are to his *Graces* and *Comforts*; we ſhould therefore ſtrictly examine ourſelves; *Have we received the Holy Ghoſt, ſince we believ'd?* The Tree will be known by its Fruits; Do we bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit? Are we led by the Spirit? Do we walk in the Spirit? Are we under the Government of the Spirit?

2. They own'd their own Ignorance in this matter; *whether there be a Holy Ghoſt*, is more than we know; that there is a Promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, we know from the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, and that that Promiſe will be fulfill'd in its Seaſon, we doubt not; but ſo much have we been out of the way of Intelligence in this Matter, that *we have not ſo much as heard* whether the Holy Ghoſt be indeed yet given as a Spirit of Prophecy. They knew (as Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves) that according to the Tradition of their Nation, after the Death of *Eſra*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah* and *Malachy*, the *Holy Ghoſt departed from* Iſrael, *and went up*; and they profeſs'd they had never heard of his Return. They ſpake *as if* they expected it, and wonder'd they did not hear

of it, and were ready to welcome the Notice of it. The Goſpel-Light, like that of the Morning, *ſhone more and more*, gradually; not only *clearer* and *clearer* in the Diſcovery of Truths not before heard of, but *further* and *further*, in the Diſcovery of them to Perſons that had not before hear'd of them.

3. *Paul* enquir'd how they came to be baptiz'd, if they knew nothing of the Holy Ghoſt? for if they were baptiz'd by any of Chriſt's Miniſters, they were inſtructed concerning the *Holy Ghoſt*, and were *baptiz'd in his Name*. Know ye not that Jeſus being glorify'd, conſequently the Holy Ghoſt is given; *unto what then were ye baptiz'd?* This is ſtrange and unaccountable; What! baptiz'd, and yet know nothing of the Holy Ghoſt? Surely, your Baptiſm was a Nullity, if you know nothing of the Holy Ghoſt; for it is the Receiving of the Holy Ghoſt that is ſignified and ſealed by that *waſhing of Regeneration*. Ignorance of the Holy Ghoſt, is as inconſiſtent with a ſincere Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, as Ignorance of Chriſt is. And applying it to ourſelves, it intimates, That thoſe are baptiz'd *to no purpoſe*, and have receiv'd the Grace of God therein in vain, that do not receive and ſubmit to the Holy Ghoſt. 'Tis alſo an Enquiry we ſhould often make, not only, *To whoſe Honour we were born*, but, *into whoſe Honour we were baptiz'd*; that we may ſtudy to anſwer the Ends both of our Birth and of our Baptiſm. Let us often conſider, *Unto what we were baptiz'd*, that we may live up to our Baptiſm.

4. They own, That they were baptiz'd *unto* John'*s Baptiſm*, εἰς τὸ Ἰωάννου βάπτισμα, that is, (as I take it) they were baptized in the Name of *John*; not by *John* himſelf, he was far enough from any ſuch Thought, but by ſome weak well-meaning Diſciple of his, that ignorantly kept up his Name, as the Head of a Party, retaining the Spirit and Notion of thoſe Diſciples of his, that were jealous of the Growth of Chriſt's Intereſt, and complain'd to him of it, *Joh.* iii. 26. Some one or more of theſe, that found themſelves much edify'd by *John*'s Baptiſm of *Repentance for the Remiſſion of Sin*; not thinking that the *Kingdom of Heaven*, which he ſpoke of as at Hand, was ſo very near as it prov'd, ran away with that Notion, reſted in what they had, and thought they could not do better than to perſuade others to do ſo too; and ſo, *ignorantly*, in a blind Zeal for *John*'s Doctrine, they baptiz'd here and there One in *John*'s Name, or as it is here expreſs'd *unto* John'*s Baptiſm*, looking no further themſelves, nor directing thoſe they baptiz'd any further.

5. *Paul* explains to them the true Intent and Meaning of *John's* Baptiſm, as principally referring to Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo rectifies the Miſtake of thoſe who had baptiz'd them into the Baptiſm of *John*, and had not directed them to look any further, but to reſt in that. They that had been left in Ignorance or led into Error by any Infelicities of their Education, ſhould not therefore be deſpis'd or rejected by thoſe who are more *Knowing* and *Orthodox*; but ſhould compaſſionately be inſtructed, and *better taught*, as thoſe here were by *Paul*. (1.) He owns that *John*'s Baptiſm was a very good Thing as far as it went; *John verily baptiz'd with the Baptiſm of Repentance*. By his Baptiſm he oblig'd People to be ſorry for their Sins, and to confeſs them and turn from them; and to bring any to this, is a great Point gain'd. But (2.) he ſhews them, That *John*'s Baptiſm had a further Reference, and he never deſign'd that thoſe he baptiz'd ſhould reſt there, but told them, *That they ſhould believe on him who ſhould come after him, that is, on Chriſt Jeſus*; that his Baptiſm of Repentance was deſign'd only to *prepare the Way of the Lord*, and to diſpoſe them to receive and entertain Chriſt, whom he left them big with Expectations of; nay, whom he directed them to, *Behold the Lamb of GOD*. *John* was a great and good Man; but he was only the Harbinger; Chriſt is the Prince; his Baptiſm was the Porch which you were to paſs through, not the Houſe you were to reſt in; and therefore 'twas *all wrong* for you to be baptiz'd into the Baptiſm of *John*.

6. When they were thus ſhow'd the Error they were led into, they thankfully accepted the Diſcovery, and *were baptiz'd in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, *v.* 5. As for *Apollos*, of whom it was ſaid, *chap.* xviii. 25. That he *knew the Baptiſm of* John, that he rightly underſtood the Meaning of it, when he was baptiz'd with it, tho' he knew that *only*; yet when he *underſtood the Way of GOD more perfectly*, he was not again *baptiz'd*, no more than Chriſt's firſt Diſciples that had been baptiz'd with *John's Baptiſm*, and knew it referr'd to the *Meſſiah* at the Door, and with an Eye to that ſubmitted to it, were baptiz'd again: But *theſe here*, who receiv'd it only with an Eye to *John*, and look'd no further, as if he were their Saviour; it was ſuch a *Fundamental* Error, as was *fatal* to it, as it would have been for any *to be baptiz'd in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, and were ſo. Not by *Paul* himſelf (as we have Reaſon to think) but by ſome of thoſe who attended him. It doth not therefore follow hence, that there was not an Agreement between *John*'s Baptiſm, and Chriſt's, or that they were not for Subſtance the ſame; much leſs doth it follow that thoſe who have been once baptiz'd *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt* (which is the appointed Form of Chriſt's Baptiſm) may be again baptiz'd in the ſame Name; for thoſe that were here baptiz'd *in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, had never been ſo baptiz'd before.

4. *Secondly*, How *Paul* conferr'd the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, *v.* 6.

1. *Paul* ſolemnly *pray'd to God*, to give them thoſe Gifts, ſignify'd by his *laying his Hands on them*, which was a Geſture us'd in *Bleſſing*, by the Patriarchs, eſpecially in conveying the great Truſt of the *Promiſe*, as *Gen.* xlviii. 15. The *Spirit* being the great Promiſe of the *New Teſtament*, the Apoſtles convey'd it by the *Impoſition of Hands*: The Lord bleſs thee with that Bleſſing, that Bleſſing of Bleſſings, *Iſa.* xliv. 3.

2. God *granted* the Thing he pray'd for; *The Holy Ghoſt came upon them* in a ſurprizing, over-powering Manner, and *they ſpake with Tongues and propheſy'd*, as the Apoſtles did, and the firſt *Gentile* Converts, *Acts* x. 44. This was intended to *introduce* the Goſpel at *Epheſus*, and to awaken in the Minds of Men an Expectation of ſome great Things from it: And ſome think, it was further deſign'd to qualify theſe Twelve Men for the Work of the Miniſtry, and that theſe Twelve were the Elders of *Epheſus*, to whom *Paul* committed the Care and Conduct of that Church. They had the Spirit of Prophecy, that they might *underſtand* the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God themſelves, and the *Gift of Tongues*, that they might *preach* them to *every Nation and Language*. O! What a wonderful Change was here made on a ſudden with theſe Men; they that but juſt now *had not ſo much as heard that there was a Holy Ghoſt*, now are themſelves *filled* with the Holy Ghoſt; for the Spirit like *the Wind*, *blows where* and when, *he liſteth*.

8 And he went into the ſynagogue, and ſpake boldly for the ſpace of three months, diſputing and perſuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardned, and believed not, but ſpake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and ſeparated the diſciples, diſputing daily in the ſchool of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the ſpace of two years; ſo that all they which dwelt in Aſia, heard the word of the Lord Jeſus, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought ſpecial miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the ſick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diſeaſes departed from them, and the evil ſpirits went out of them.

Paul is here buſy at *Epheſus* to do Good.

Firſt, He begins as uſual in the *Jews Synagogue*, and makes the firſt Offer of the Goſpel to them, that he might gather in the *loſt Sheep of the Houſe of* Iſrael, who were now *ſcatter'd upon the Mountains*. Obſerve,

1. *Where* he preach'd to them; in their *Synagogue*, v. 8. as Chriſt us'd to do. He went and joyn'd with them in their Synagogue-Worſhip, to take off their Prejudices againſt him, and to ingratiate himſelf with them, while there was any Hope of winning upon them. Thus he would bear his Teſtimony to publick Worſhip on Sabbath-Days where there were no Chriſtian Aſſemblies yet form'd, he frequented the Jewiſh Aſſemblies, while the Jews were not as yet wholly caſt off. *Paul* went into the *Synagogue*, becauſe there he had them *together*, and had them, it might be hoped, *in a good Frame*.

2. *What* he preach'd to them; *The Things concerning the Kingdom of God*, among Men the great Things which concern'd God's Dominion over all Men, and Favour to them, and Mens Subjection to God, and Happineſs in God. He ſhew'd them our Obligations to God, and Intereſt in him as our Creator, by which the Kingdom of God was ſet up, the Violation of thoſe Obligations, and the Forfeiture of that Intereſt by Sin, by which the Kingdom of God was pull'd down, and the renewing of thoſe Obligations upon us, and the reſtoring of us to that Intereſt again by the Redeemer, whereby the *Kingdom of God* was again ſet up. Or, more particularly the Things *concerning the Kingdom of the* Meſſiah, which the *Jews* were in Expectation of, and promis'd themſelves great Matters from: He open'd the Scriptures which ſpake concerning this; gave them a right Notion of this Kingdom, and ſhew'd them their Miſtakes about it.

3. *How* he preach'd to them; (1.) He preach'd *Argumentatively*; he *diſputed*; gave Reaſons, Scripture Reaſons for what he preach'd, and anſwer'd Objections, for the convincing of Mens Judgements and Conſciences, that they might not only *believe*, but might *ſee Cauſe to* believe. He preach'd διαλεγόμενος *Dialogue-wiſe*; he put Queſtions to them and receiv'd their Anſwers; gave them cauſe to put Queſtions to him, and anſwer'd them. (2.) He preach'd *Affectionately*; he *perſuaded*; he us'd not only *logical* Arguments, to enforce what he ſaid upon their Underſtandings, but *Rhetorical* Motives to impreſs: what he ſaid concerning the Kingdom of God, were Things *concerning themſelves*, which they were nearly concern'd in, and therefore ought to *concern themſelves in*, 1 Cor. v. 11. *we perſuade Men*. *Paul* was a *moving* Preacher, and was Maſter of the Art of Perſuaſion, (3.) He preach'd *Undauntedly*, and with a holy Reſolution; he *ſpake boldly*, as one that had not the leaſt *Doubt* of the Things he *ſpoke of*, nor the leaſt *Diſtruſt* of him he *ſpoke from*, nor the leaſt *Dread* of them he *ſpoke to*.

Prayers at parting, commanding what was good, reproving what was otherwiſe, and giving them neceſſary Cautions againſt the Wiles of the falſe Apoſtles; and his Farewel Sermon would leave Impreſſions upon them.

3. He took with him *Priſcilla* and *Aquila*, becauſe they had a mind to accompany him; for they ſeemed diſpos'd to removes, and not inclined to ſtay long in a Place; a Diſpoſition which may come from a good Principle, and have good Effects, and therefore ought not to be *condemn'd in others*, tho' it ought to be *ſuſpected in our ſelves.* There was a mighty Friendſhip contracted between them and *Paul*, and therefore when he went, they beg'd to go along with him.

4. At *Cenchrea*, which was hard by *Corinth*, the Port where thoſe that went to Sea from *Corinth* took Ship, either *Paul* or *Aquila*, (for the Original doth not determine which) had his *Head ſhav'd*, to diſcharge himſelf from the Vow of a *Nazarite*, *having ſhorn his Head at* Cenchrea; *far he had a Vow.* Thoſe that liv'd in *Judea* were in ſuch a caſe bound to do it at the Temple, but thoſe who liv'd in other Countries might do it in other Places. The *Nazarite*'s Head was to be ſhav'd, when either his Conſecration was accidentally *polluted*, in which Caſe he muſt begin again: Or, *When the Days of his Separation were fulfill'd*, Num. vi. 9, 13, 18. which we ſuppoſe was the Caſe here; ſome throw it upon *Aquila*, who as a *Jew*, v. 2. had retain'd perhaps more of his Judaiſm than was convenient; but I ſee no harm in admitting it concerning *Paul*, for concerning him we muſt admit the ſame Thing, *Chap.* xxi. 24, 26. not only in compliance for a Time with the *Jews*, to whom he *became as a* Jew, 1 *Cor.* ix. 20. that he might *win upon them*, but becauſe the *Vow of the* Nazarites tho' *Ceremonial*, and as ſuch ready *to vaniſh away*, yet had a great deal of *Moral* and very *Pious* Significancy, and therefore was fit to *die the laſt* of all the Jewiſh Ceremonies: The *Nazarites* are joyned with the *Prophets*, Amos ii. 11. and were very much the Glory of *Iſrael*, Lam. iv. 7, and therefore it is not ſtrange, if *Paul* bound himſelf for ſome Time with the Vow of a *Nazarite*, from *Wine* and *Strong-drink*, and from being *trim'd*, to recommend himſelf to the *Jews*; and from this he now *diſcharg'd himſelf.*

Secondly, *Paul*'s calling at *Epheſus*, which was the Metropolis of the Leſſer *Aſia*, and a Sea-port.

1. There he left *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*; not only becauſe they would be but *burthenſome* to him in his Journey, but becauſe they might be *ſerviceable* to the Intereſts of the Goſpel at *Epheſus*: *Paul* intended ſhortly to ſettle there for ſome Time, and left *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* there in the mean Time, for the ſame End as Chriſt ſent his Diſciples before to every Place where he himſelf would come, to *prepare his Way.* *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* might by private Converſation, being very intelligent, judicious Chriſtians, diſpoſe the Minds of many to give *Paul*, when he ſhould come among them, a favourable Reception, and to underſtand his Preaching; therefore he calls them his *Helpers in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. xvi. 3.

2. There he preach'd to the *Jews* in their *Synagogue*; tho' he did but *call there* in his Journey, yet he would not go without giving them a Sermon. He *enter'd into the Synagogue*, not as a Hearer, but as a Preacher; for there he *reaſon'd with the* Jews. Tho' he had abandon'd the *Jews* at *Corinth*, who *oppos'd themſelves, and blaſphem'd*, yet he did not for their Sakes decline the Synagogues of the *Jews* in other Places, but ſtill made the firſt offer of the Goſpel to them. We muſt not condemn a whole Body or Denomination of Men, for the Sake of ſome that carry themſelves ill.

3. The *Jews* at *Epheſus* were ſo far from driving *Paul* away, that they *courted his ſtay* with them, *v.* 20. They *deſir'd him to tarry longer with them*, to inſtruct them in the Goſpel of Chriſt. *Theſe were more noble*, and better *bred*, than thoſe *Jews* at *Corinth* and other Places; and it was a Sign that God had not quite caſt away his People, but had a *Remnant among them.*

4. *Paul* would not ſtay with them now; he *conſented not*; but *bad them farewell*: He had further to go; he *muſt by all means keep this Feaſt at* Jeruſalem; not that he thought himſelf bound in Duty to do it, he knew the Laws of the Feaſts were no longer binding; but he had Buſineſs at *Jeruſalem* (whatever it was) which would be beſt done at the Time of the Feaſt, when there was a general Rendezvous of all the *Jews* from all Parts. Which of the Feaſts it was we are not told; probably it was the Paſſover, which was the moſt eminent.

5. He intimated his Purpoſe after this Journey, to come and ſpend ſome Time at *Epheſus*; by their kind Invitation, being encourag'd to hope that he ſhould do Good among them. 'Tis good to have Opportunities *in reſerve*; when one good Work is over, to have another to apply our ſelves to. *I will return again to you*; but he inſerts that neceſſary Proviſo, *If GOD will.* Our Times are in God's Hand; we purpoſe, but He diſpoſeth; and therefore we muſt make all our Promiſes with ſubmiſſion to the Will of God; *If the LORD will, we ſhall live, and do this or that.* I will return again to you, if *the Spirit* ſuffer me, *Chap.* xvi. 7. That was included in *Paul's* Caſe; not only if Providence permit, but if God do not otherwiſe direct my Motions.

Thirdly, *Paul's* Viſit to *Jeruſalem*; a ſhort Viſit it was but it ſerv'd as a Token of Reſpect to that truly Mother-Church.

1. He came *by Sea* to the Port that lay next to *Jeruſalem*; he *ſail'd from* Epheſus, *v.* 21. and *landed at* Cæſarea, *v.* 22. He choſe to go by Sea for Expedition, and for Safety; and that he might *ſee the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep.* *Joppa* had been the Port for *Jeruſalem*; but *Herod* having improved *Cæſarea*, and the Port at *Joppa* being dangerous, that was generally made uſe of.

2. He *went up and ſaluted the Church*; by which, I think is plainly meant the Church at *Jeruſalem*, which is emphatically call'd *the Church*, becauſe there the Chriſtian Church began, *Acts* xv. 4. *Paul* thought it requiſite to ſhew himſelf among them, that they might not think his Succeſs among the *Gentiles* had made him think himſelf either *above them*, or *eſtranged from them*; Or, that the Honour God had put upon him, made him unmindful of the Honour he ow'd to them. His going to *ſalute the Church at Jeruſalem*, intimates (1.) That it was a very *friendly* Viſit that he made them; in pure Kindneſs, to enquire into their State, and to teſtify his hearty Good-will to them, *Note*, The increaſe of our new Friends, ſhould not make us to forget our old ones; but it ſhould be a Pleaſure to good Men and good Miniſters, to revive former Acquaintance. The Miniſters at *Jeruſalem* were conſtant *Reſidents*; *Paul* was a conſtant *Itinerant*; but he took Care to keep up a good Correſpondence with them, that they might *rejoyce* with him *in his going out*, and he might *rejoyce* with them *in their Tents*, and they might both congratulate and wiſh well to one another's Comfort and Succeſs. (2.) That it was but a *ſhort* Viſit; He went up and *ſaluted them*, perhaps with the *holy-Kiſs*, and made no ſtay among them. It was deſign'd but for a *tranſient Interview*, and yet *Paul* undertook this Journey for that. This is not the World we are to be together in; God's People are the *Salt of the Earth*, diſpers'd and ſcatter'd, yet it is good to ſee one another ſometimes, if it be but to ſee one another; that we may confirm mutual Love, may the better keep up our ſpiritual Communion with one another at a Diſtance; and may long the more for that heavenly *Jeruſalem*, in which we hope to be *together for ever.*

Fourthly, His Return through thoſe Countries where he had formerly preach'd the Goſpel.

1. He went and *ſpent ſome Time* in *Antioch*, among his old Friends there, from whence he was firſt ſent out to preach among the *Gentiles*, Chap. xiii. 1. He *went down to* Antioch, to refreſh himſelf with the Sight and Converſation af the Miniſters there. And a very good Refreſhment it is to a faithful Miniſter, to have for a while the Society of his Brethren; for *as Iron ſharpeneth Iron, ſo doth a Man the Countenance of his Friend.* *Paul*'s coming to *Antioch*, would bring to remembrance the former Days, which would furniſh him with matter for freſh Thankſgiving.

2. Thence he *went over the Country of* Galacia, *and* Phrygia *in order*; where he had preach'd the Goſpel, and planted Churches; which tho' very briefly mention'd, *Chap.* xvi. 6. yet was a glorious Work, as appears by *Gal.* iv. 14, 15. where *Paul* ſpeaks of his Pteaching of the Goſpel to the *Galatians* at the firſt, and their *receiving him as an Angel of GOD.* Theſe Country Churches (for ſo they wete, (*Gal.* i. 2.) and we read not of any City in *Galatia*, where a Church was) *Paul* viſited *in order* as they lay, watering what he had been inſtrumental to plant, and *ſtrengthning all the Diſciples.* His very coming among them, and owning them, was a great *ſtrengthning* to *them* and their Miniſters. *Paul*'s Countenancing of them, was encouraging to them: But that was not all; he preach'd that to them which *ſtrengthen'd* them; which confirm'd their Faith *in Chriſt*, and their Reſolutions *for Chriſt*, and their pious Affections to him. Diſciples need to be *ſtrengthen'd*, for they are compaſs'd about with Infirmity; Miniſters muſt do what they can to ſtrengthen them, to ſtrengthen them *all*, by directing them to Chriſt, and bringing them to live upon him, whoſe Strength is perfected in their Weakneſs, and who is himſelf their *Strength and Song.*

24 ¶ And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the ſcriptures, came to Epheſus. 25 This man was inſtructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the ſpirit, he ſpake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptiſm of John. 26 And he began to ſpeak boldly in the ſynagogue. Whom when Aquila and Priſcilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. 27 And when he was diſpoſed to paſs into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the diſciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace. 28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that* publickly, ſhewing by the ſcriptures, that Jeſus was Chriſt.

The Sacred Hiſtory leaves *Paul* upon his Travels, and goes here to meet *Apollos* at *Epheſus*, and to give us ſome Account of him; which was neceſſary to our underſtanding ſome Paſſages in *Paul*'s Epiſtles.

Firſt, Here is an Account of his Character, when he came to *Epheſus*.

1. He was a *Jew*, born at *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, but of *Jewiſh* Parents, for there were Abundance of *Jews* in that City; ſince the Diſperſion of the People, it was foretold, *Deut.* xxviii. 68. *The Lord ſhall bring them into* Egypt *again*. His Name was not *Apollo*, the Name of one of the Heathen Gods, but *Apollos*; ſome think, the ſame with *Apollos*, Rom. xvi. 10.

2. He was a Man of excellent good Parts, and well fitted for publick Service. He *was an eloquent Man*, and *mighty in the Scriptures* of the *Old Teſtament*, which he was as a *Jew* brought up in the Knowledge of. (1.) He had a great command of Language; he was *an eloquent Man*; he was, ἀνὴρ λόγιος, *a prudent Man*, ſo ſome; a *learned Man*, ſo others; *Hiſtoriarium peritus*, a good Hiſtorian; which is an excellent Qualification for the Miniſtry; he was one that could *ſpeak well*, ſo it properly ſignifies; he was *an Oracle of Man*; he was famous for ſpeaking pertinently and cloſely, fully and fluently upon any Subject. (2.) He had a great command of Scripture Language, and that was the Eloquence he was remarkable for. He *came to* Epheſus, *being mighty in the Scriptures*, ſo the Words are plac'd: Having an excellent Faculty of Expounding Scriptures, he came to *Epheſus*, which was a publick Place, to trade with that Talent for the Honour of GOD, and the Good of many. He was not only *ready in the Scriptures*, able to quote Texts off-hand, and repeat them, and tell you where to find them; many of the carnal *Jews* were ſo, who are therefore ſaid to have the *Form of Knowledge*, and the *Letter* of the Law. But he was *mighty in the Scriptures*; he underſtood the Senſe and Meaning of them, he knew how to make uſe of them, and to apply them; how to reaſon out of the Scriptures, and to reaſon ſtrongly. A convincing, commanding, confirming Power, went along with all his Expoſitions and Applications of the Scripture. 'Tis likely, he had given Proof of his Knowledge of the Scriptures, and his Abilities in them, in many Synagogues of the *Jews*.

3. He was *inſtructed in the way of the Lord*, i. e. he had ſome Acquaintance with the Doctrine of Chriſt; had got ſome general Notions of the Goſpel, and the Principles of Chriſtianity, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, and that Prophet that ſhould *come into the World*. The firſt Notice of this, would be readily embrac'd by one that was ſo *mighty in the Scripture*, as *Apollos* was, and therefore underſtood the *Signs of the Times*. He was *inſtructed*, κατηχημένος, he was *Catechiz'd*, ſo the Word is, either by his Parents or Miniſters; he was taught ſomething of Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him. Thoſe that are to teach others, muſt firſt be themſelves taught *the Word of the Lord*; not only to talk of it, but to walk in it. 'Tis not enough to have our Tongues turn'd to the *Word of the Lord*, but we muſt have our Feet directed into the *way of the Lord*.

4. Yet he *knew only the Baptiſm of* John; he was inſtructed in the Goſpel of Chriſt, as far as *John*'s Miniſtry would carry him, and no further: He knew the *preparing* of the *Way of the Lord*, by that Voice crying in the Wilderneſs, rather than the Way of the LORD itſelf. We cannot but think, he had heard of Chriſt's Death and Reſurection, but was not let into the Myſtery of them; had not had Opportunity of converſing with any of the Apoſtles ſince the Pouring out of the Spirit. Or, he had himſelf been baptiz'd, only with the Baptiſm of *John*, but was not *baptiz'd with the Holy Ghoſt*, as the Diſciples were at the Day of *Pentecoſt*.

Secondly, Here's the *Imployment* and *Improvement* of his Gifts at *Epheſus*: He came thither ſeeking opportunities of doing, and getting Good, and found both.

1. He there *made* a very *good Uſe* of his Gifts *in Publick*. He came probably recommended to the Synagogue of the *Jews*, as a fit Man to be a Teacher there; and according to the Light he had, and the meaſure of the Gift given to him, he was willing to be employ'd, *v.* 25. Being *fervent in the Spirit, he ſpake and taught diligently the Things of the Lord*: Tho' he had not the miraculous Gift of the Spirit, as the Apoſtles had, he made Uſe of the Gifts he had; for the Diſpenſation of the Spirit, whatever the Meaſure of it, is, *is given to every Man to profit withall*; and our Saviour by a Parable deſign'd to teach his Miniſters, that tho' they had but one Talent, they muſt not bury that.

We have ſeen how *Apollos* was qualify'd with a good Head, and a good Tongue; he was an *Eloquent Man*, and *mighty in the Scriptures*; he had a good Stock of uſeful Knowledge, and had an excellent Faculty of communicating it. Let us now ſee what he had further to recommend him as a Preacher, and his Example is recommended to the Imitation of all Preachers.

(1.) He was a *lively affectionate Preacher*; as he had a good Head, ſo he had a good Heart; he was *fervent in Spirit*; he had in him a great deal of Divine *Fire*, as well as Divine *Light*; was *burning*, as well as *ſhining*. He was full of Zeal for the Glory of GOD, and the Salvation of precious Souls: and this appear'd both in his *Forwardneſs* to preach, when he was call'd to it by the Rulers of the Synagogue, and his *Fervency* in Preaching; he preach'd as one in earneſt, and that had his Heart in his Work. What a happy Compoſition was here! Many are *fervent in Spirit*, but are *weak* in *Knowledge*, in Scripture Knowledge, and far to ſeek for proper Words, and full of improper ones. And on the other hand, many are *eloquent* enough, and *mighty in the Scriptures*, and learned and judicious, but they have no Life or Fervency. Here was a *compleat Man of God*, thoroughly *furniſh'd* for his Work, that was both *eloquent* and *fervent*; full both of Divine Knowledge, and of Divine Affections.

(2.) He was an *induſtrious, laborious* Preacher; *he ſpake and taught diligontly*; he *took Pains* in his Preaching; what he deliver'd was *elaborate*, and he did not offer that to GOD or to the Synagogue, that either *coſt nothing*, or coſt *him* nothing. He firſt work'd it upon his own Heart, and then *labour'd* to impreſs it on thoſe he preach'd it to. He *taught diligently*, ἀκριβῶς, *accurately, exactly*. Every Thing he ſaid, was *well weigh'd*.

(3.) He was an *Evangelical* Preacher; tho' he knew only the Baptiſm of *John*, yet that was the *Beginning of the Goſpel of Chriſt*; and to that he kept cloſe; for he taught the *Things of the Lord*; of the Lord Chriſt, that tended to *make Way* for him, and to *ſet* him *up*: The Things pertaining to the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, was the Subject he choſe to inſiſt upon; not the Things of the Ceremonial Law, tho' thoſe would be pleaſing to his *Jewiſh* Auditors: Not the Things of the Gentile Philoſophy, tho' he could have diſcours'd very well on theſe Things; but the *Things of the Lord*:

(4.) He was a *couragious* Preacher; *he began to ſpeak boldly in the Synagogue*, as one that having put a Confidence in GOD did not fear the Face of Man; he ſpoke as one that knew the *Truth* of what he had ſaid, and had no doubt of it, and knew the *Worth* of what he ſaid, and was not afraid to ſuffer for it. *In the Synagogue*, where the *Jews* not only were *preſent*, but had *Power*, there he preach'd the Things of GOD, which he knew they were prejudic'd againſt.

2. He there made a good *Increaſe* of his Gifts in *private*, not ſo much in Study, as in Converſation with *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*. If *Paul*, or ſome other Apoſtle or Evangeliſt had been at *Epheſus*, they would have inſtructed him; but for want of better Help, *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* that were Tent-makers, *Expounded to him the Way of GOD more perfectly*. Obſerve,

1. *Aquila* and *Priſcilla heard him* preach *in the Synagogue*. Tho' in Knowledge he was much inferiour to them, yet having excellent Gifts for publick Service, they encourag'd his Miniſtry by a diligent and conſtant Attendance upon it. Thus young Miniſters that are hopeful, ſhould be countenanc'd by grown Chriſtians, for it becomes them to *fulfill all Righteouſneſs*.

2. Finding him defective in his Knowledge of Chriſtianity, they *took him to them*, to lodge in the ſame Houſe with them, and *expounded to him the Way of God*, the Way of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt *more perfectly*. They did not take Occaſion from what they obſerv'd of his Deficiency, either to *deſpiſe* him themſelves, or to *diſparage* him to others; did not call him a young raw Preacher, not fit to come into a Pulpit, but conſidered the Diſadvantages he had labour'd under, as knowing no more but the Baptiſm of *John*; and having themſelves got great Knowledge in the Truths of the Goſpel, by their long and intimate Converſation with *Paul*, they communicated what they knew to him, and gave him a clear diſtinct and methodical Account of thoſe Things, which before he had but confus'd Notion of. (1.) See here an Inſtance of that which Chriſt has promis'd; That *to him that hath, ſhall be given*, that has and uſes what he has, ſhall have more. He that diligently traded with the Talent he had, doubled it quickly. (2.) See an Inſtance of truly Chriſtian Charity in *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*; they did good according to their Ability. *Aquila*, tho' a Man of great Knowledge, yet did not undertake to *ſpeak in the Synagogue*, becauſe he had not ſuch Gifts for publick Work as *Apollos* had; but he furniſh'd *Apollos* with Matter, and then left him to cloath it with acceptable Words. Inſtructing young Chriſtians, and young Miniſters privately in Converſation, who mean well, and perform well as far as they go, is a Piece of very good Service, both to them and to the Church. (3.) See an Inſtance of great Humility in *Apollos*: He was a very bright young Man, of great Parts and Learning, newly come from the Univerſity, a popular Preacher, and mightily cry'd up and follow'd; and yet finding that *Aquila* and *Priſcilla* were judicious ſerious Chriſtians, that could ſpeak *intelligently* and *experimentally* of the Things of GOD, tho' they were but *Mechanicks*, poor Tent-makers, he was glad to receive Inſtruction from them, to be ſhew'd by them his Defects and Miſtakes, and to have his Miſtakes rectify'd by them, and his Deficiencies made up. Young Scholars may gain a great deal by Converſe with old Chriſtians, as young Students in the Law may by old Practiſers. *Apollos*, tho' he was *inſtructed in the Way of the Lord*, did not reſt in the Knowledge he had attained, nor thought he underſtood Chriſtianity as well as any Man, which proud conceited young Men are apt to do, but was willing to have it *expounded to him* more perfectly. They that know *much*, ſhould covet to know *more*, and what they know, to know it *better*, preſſing forwards towards Perfection. (4.) Here's an Inſtance of a good Woman, tho' not *permitted* to *ſpeak in the Church*, or in the Synagogue, yet doing Good with the Knowledge GOD had given her in private Converſe. *Paul* will have the *Aged Women* to be *Teachers of good Things*, 1 Tit. ii. 3, 4.

Thirdly, Here is his *Preferment* to the Service of the Church of *Corinth*; which was a larger Sphere of Uſefulneſs than *Epheſus* at preſent was. *Paul* had ſet the Wheels a going in *Achaia*, and particularly at *Corinth*, the Country Town, many were ſtir'd up by his Preaching to *receive* the Goſpel, and they needed to be *confirm'd*; and many were likewiſe irritated to *oppoſe* the Goſpel, and they needed to be *confuted*; *Paul* was gone, was called away to other Work, and now there was a fair Occaſion in this Vacancy for *Apollos* to *ſet in*, who was fitted rather to *water* than to *plant*; to *build up* thoſe that were within, than to *bring in* thoſe that were without. Now here we have,

1. His *Call* to this Service; not by a Viſion, as *Paul* was called to *Macedonia*, no nor ſo much as by the Invitation of thoſe he was to go to, But (1.) He himſelf inclin'd to go; he was *diſpos'd to paſs into* Achaia; having heard of the State of the Churches there, he had a Mind to try what Good he could do among them; tho' there were thoſe there, who were eminent for Spiritual Gifts, yet *Apollos* thought there might be ſome Work for him, and GOD diſpos'd his Mind that way. (2.) His Friends encourag'd him to go, and approv'd of his Purpoſe, and he being a perfect Stranger there, they gave him a Teſtimonial, or Letters of Recommendation; *exhorting the Diſciples* in *Achaia* to *entertain* him, and *employ* him. In this Way, among others, the Communion of Churches is kept up, by the recommending of Members and Miniſters to each other; that as *Apollos* here are diſpoſed to *remove*. Tho' they at *Epheſus* had a great Loſs of his Labours, they did not grudge them in *Achaia* the Benefit of them; but on the contrary, us'd their Intereſt in them to introduce him; for the Churches of Chriſt, tho' they are many, yet they are one.

2. His *Succeſs* in this Service, which both Ways anſwer'd his Intention and Expectation. For,

1. *Believers* were greatly *edify'd*, and they that had received the Goſpel were very much *confirm'd*. He *helped them much which had believed through Grace*. *Note*, 1. They that believe in Chriſt, 'tis *through Grace* that they believe; 'tis not of themſelves, it is GOD's *Gift to them*, it is his *Work in them*. 2. Thoſe who thro' Grace do *believe*, yet ſtill have need of *Help*, as long as they are here in this World; there are remainders of Unbelief, and ſome thing *lacking in their Faith*, to be *perfected*, and the Work of Faith to be *fulfill'd*. 3. Faithful Miniſters are capable of being many Ways helpful to thoſe who through Grace do believe, and it is their Buſineſs to *help* them, to help them *much*; and when a Divine Power goes along with them, they will be helpful to them.

2. *Unbelievers* were greatly *mortify'd*; their Objections were fully anſwer'd, the Folly and Sophiſtry of their Arguments was diſcover'd, ſo that they had nothing to ſay in Defence of the Oppoſition they made to the Goſpel; their Mouths were ſtop'd, and their Faces fill'd with ſhame, *v.* 28. *He mightily convinc'd the* Jews, *and that publickly*, before the People. He did it εὐτόνως *earneſtly*, and with a great deal of vehemence; he took Pains to do it; his Heart was upon it as one that was truly deſirous both to *ſerve the Cauſe of Chriſt*, and to *ſave the Souls of Men*. He did it *effectually*, and to univerſal Satisfaction; he did it *levi negotio*. The Caſe was ſo plain, and the Arguments ſo ſtrong on Chriſt's ſide, that it was an eaſy Matter to baffle all that the *Jews* could ſay againſt it; tho' they were ſo fierce, yet their Cauſe was ſo weak, that he *made nothing* of their Oppoſition. Now that which he aim'd to convince them of, was, that *Jeſus is the Chriſt*, that he is the *Meſſiah* promis'd to the Fathers, who ſhould come, and they were to look for no other: If the *Jews* were but convinc'd of this, that *Jeſus* is *Chriſt*, even their own Law would teach them to *hear him*. *Note*, The Buſineſs of Miniſters is to preach Chriſt; we *preach not our ſelves*, but *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*. The Way he took to convince them, was, *by the Scriptures*: Thence he fetch'd his Arguments, for the *Jews* owned the Scriptures to be of Divine Authority, and it was eaſy for him who was *mighty in the Scriptures*, from them to ſhew, that Jeſus is the Chriſt. *Note*, Miniſters muſt be able not only to preach the Truth, but to prove it, and defend it, and to convince Gainſayers, with Meekneſs, and yet with Power *inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves*. And this is real Service to the Church.

CHAP. XIX.

We left Paul *in his Circuit, viſiting the Churches,* Chap. xviii. 23. *but we have not forgot, nor has he the Promiſe he made to his Friends at* Epheſus, *to return to them, and make ſome Stay there; now this Chapter ſhews us his Performance of that Promiſe; his Coming to* Epheſus, *and his Continuance there two Years; we are here told,* (1.) *How he* labour'd *there in the Word and Doctrine; how he taught ſome weak Believers that had gone no farther than* John's *Baptiſm,* v. 1—7. *how he taught three Months in the Synagogue of the* Jews, *v.* 8. *And when he was driven thence, how he taught the* Gentiles *a long Time in a publick School,* v. 9, 10. *And how he confirm'd his Doctrine by Miracles,* v. 11, 12. (2.) *What was the* Fruit *of his* Labour, *particularly among the Conjurers, the worſt of Sinners; ſome were* confounded *that did but make uſe of his Name,* v. 13—17. *But others were* converted *that receiv'd and embrac'd his Doctrine,* v. 18—20. (3.) *What Projects he had of further Uſefulneſs,* v. 21, 22. *And what Trouble at length he met with at* Epheſus, *from the Silver Smiths, which forc'd him thence to purſue the Meaſures he had laid: How a Mob was* rais'd *by* Demetrius *to cry up* Diana, *v,* 23—34. *And how it was ſuppreſs'd and diſpers'd by the Town Clerk,* v. 35—41.

AND it came to paſs, that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having paſſed through the upper coaſts, came to Epheſus: and finding certain diſciples, 2 He ſaid unto them, Have ye received the holy Ghoſt ſince ye believed? And they ſaid unto him, We have not ſo much as heard whether there be any holy Ghoſt. 3 And he ſaid unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they ſaid, Unto John's baptiſm. 4 Then ſaid Paul, John verily baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, ſaying unto the people, That they ſhould believe on him which ſhould come after him, that is, on Jeſus Chriſt. 5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus. 6 And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghoſt came on them; and they ſpake with Tongues, and propheſied. 7 And all the men were about twelve.

Epheſus was a City of great Note in *Aſia*, famous for a Temple built there to *Diana*, which was one of the Wonders of the World; thither *Paul* came to preach the Goſpel, while *Apollos was at* Corinth, *v.* 1. While he was watering there, *Paul* was planting here; and grudg'd not that *Apollos* enter'd into his Labours, and was building upon his Foundation; but rejoyc'd in it, and went on in a new Work, that was cut out for him at *Epheſus*, with the more chearfulneſs and ſatisfaction, becauſe he knew that ſuch an able Miniſter of the *New Teſtament* as *Apollos* was, was now at *Corinth* carrying on the good Work there; tho' there were thoſe that made him the Head of a Party againſt *Paul*, 1 Cor. i. 12. yet *Paul* had no Jealouſy of him, nor any way diſlik'd the Affection the People had for him. *Paul* having gone through the Country of *Galatia* and *Phrygia*, paſt *through the upper Coaſts*, Pontus *and* Bithynia, that lay *North*; at length came to *Epheſus*, where he had left *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, and there found them.

At his firſt Coming he met with ſome *Diſciples* there, who profeſs'd *Faith* in Chriſt as the true *Meſſiah*, but were as yet in the firſt and loweſt Form in the School of Chriſt, under his Uſher, *John the Baptiſt*; they were in Number *about Twelve*, v. 7. They were much of the ſtanding that *Apollos* was of, when he came to *Epheſus*, for he *knew only the Baptiſm of* John, *Chap.* xviii. 25. but either they had not Opportunity of being acquainted with *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, or had not been ſo long in *Epheſus*, or were not willing to receive Inſtruction as *Apollos* was, otherwiſe they might have had the Way of GOD *expounded to them more perfectly*, as *Apollos* had. *Obſerve here*,

Firſt, How *Paul* catechiz'd them; he was told probably by *Aquila* and *Priſcilla*, that they were *Believers*, that they did own Chriſt, and had given up their Names to him. Now *Paul* hereupon takes them under Examination.

1. They did believe in the *Son of GOD*; But *Paul* enquires whether they had *receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt*? whether they believ'd *in the Spirit*, whoſe Operations on the Minds of Men, for Conviction, Converſion and Comfort, were reveal'd ſome Time after the Doctrine of Jeſus his being the Chriſt; whether they had been *acquainted with*, and had *admitted* this Revelation? That was not all; extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt were confer'd upon the Apoſtles and other Diſciples, preſently after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, which was frequently repeated upon Occaſion: Had they participated of theſe Gifts? *Have ye receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt, ſince ye believed*? Have you had that *Seal* of the Truth of Chriſt's Doctrine in your ſelves? We are not now to expect any ſuch extraordinary Gifts as they had then. The Canon of the *New Teſtament* being long ſince compleated and ratify'd, we depend upon that as the moſt ſure Word of Propheſy: But there are *Graces* of the Spirit given to all Believers, which are an *Earneſt* to 'em, 2 *Cor.* i. 22. v. 9. *Eph.* i. 13. Now it concerns us all who profeſs the Chriſtian Faith, ſeriouſly to enquire, Whether we have *received the Holy Ghoſt*, or not? The Holy Ghoſt is promis'd to all Believers, to all Petitioners, *Luke* xi. 13. But many are deceived in this Matter, that think they have *receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt*, when really they *have not*. As there are Pretenders to the *Gifts* of the Holy Ghoſt, ſo there are to his *Graces* and *Comforts*; we ſhould therefore ſtrictly examine ourſelves; *Have we received the Holy Ghoſt, ſince we believ'd*? The Tree will be known by its Fruits; Do we bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit? Are we led by the Spirit? Do we walk in the Spirit? Are we under the Government of the Spirit?

2. They own'd their own Ignorance in this matter; *whether there be a Holy Ghoſt*, is more than we know; that there is a Promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, we know from the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, and that that Promiſe will be fulfill'd in its Seaſon, we doubt not; but ſo much have we been out of the way of Intelligence in this Matter, that *we have not ſo much as heard* whether the Holy Ghoſt be indeed yet given as a Spirit of Prophecy. They knew (as Dr. *Lightfoot* obſerves) that according to the Tradition of their Nation, after the Death of *Eſra*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah* and *Malachy*, the *Holy Ghoſt departed from* Iſrael, *and went up*; and they profeſs'd they had never heard of his Return. They ſpake *as if* they expected it, and wonder'd they did not hear

of it, and were ready to welcome the Notice of it. The Goſpel-Light, like that of the Morning, *ſhone more and more*, gradually; not only *clearer* and *clearer* in the Diſcovery of Truths not before heard of, but *further* and *further*, in the Diſcovery of them to Perſons that had not before hear'd of them.

3. *Paul* enquir'd how they came to be baptiz'd, if they knew nothing of the Holy Ghoſt? for if they were baptiz'd by any of Chriſt's Miniſters, they were inſtructed concerning the *Holy Ghoſt*, and were *baptiz'd in his Name.* Know ye not that Jeſus being glorify'd, conſequently the Holy Ghoſt is given; *unto what then were ye baptiz'd?* This is ſtrange and unaccountable; What! baptiz'd, and yet know nothing of the Holy Ghoſt? Surely, your Baptiſm was a Nullity, if you know nothing of the Holy Ghoſt; for it is the Receiving of the Holy Ghoſt that is ſignified and ſealed by that *waſhing of Regeneration.* Ignorance of the Holy Ghoſt, is as inconſiſtent with a ſincere Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, as Ignorance of Chriſt is. And applying it to ourſelves, it intimates, That thoſe are baptiz'd *to no purpoſe*, and have receiv'd the Grace of God therein in vain, that do not receive and ſubmit to the Holy Ghoſt. 'Tis alſo an Enquiry we ſhould often make, not only, *To whoſe Honour we were born*, but, *into whoſe Honour we were baptiz'd*; that we may ſtudy to anſwer the Ends both of our Birth and of our Baptiſm. Let us often conſider, *Unto what we were baptiz'd*, that we may live up to our Baptiſm.

4. They own, That they were baptiz'd *unto* John'*s Baptiſm*, *εἰς τὸ ἰωάννυ βάπτισμα*, that is, (as I take it) they were baptized in the Name of *John*; not by *John* himſelf, he was far enough from any ſuch Thought, but by ſome weak well-meaning Diſciple of his, that ignorantly kept up his Name, as the Head of a Party, retaining the Spirit and Notion of thoſe Diſciples of his, that were jealous of the Growth of Chriſt's Intereſt, and complain'd to him of it, *Joh.* iii. 26. Some one or more of theſe, that found themſelves much edify'd by *John*'s Baptiſm of *Repentance for the Remiſſion of Sin*; not thinking that the *Kingdom of Heaven*, which he ſpoke of as at Hand, was ſo very near as it prov'd, ran away with that Notion, reſted in what they had, and thought they could not do better than to perſuade others to do ſo too; and ſo, *ignorantly*, in a blind Zeal for *John*'s Doctrine, they baptiz'd here and there One in *John*'s Name, or as it is here expreſs'd *unto* John'*s Baptiſm*, looking no further themſelves, nor directing thoſe they baptiz'd any further.

5. *Paul* explains to them the true Intent and Meaning of *John*'s Baptiſm, as principally referring to Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo rectifies the Miſtake of thoſe who had baptiz'd them into the Baptiſm of *John*, and had not directed them to look any further, but to reſt in that. They that had been left in Ignorance or led into Error by any Infelicities of their Education, ſhould not therefore be deſpis'd or rejected by thoſe who are more *Knowing* and *Orthodox*; but ſhould compaſſionately be inſtructed, and *better taught*, as thoſe here were by *Paul.* (1.) He owns that *John*'s Baptiſm was a very good Thing as far as it went; *John verily baptiz'd with the Baptiſm of Repentance.* By his Baptiſm he oblig'd People to be ſorry for their Sins, and to confeſs them and turn from them; and to bring any to this, is a great Point gain'd. But (2.) he ſhews them, That *John*'s Baptiſm had a further Reference, and he never deſign'd that thoſe he baptiz'd ſhould reſt there, but told them, *That they ſhould believe on him who ſhould come after him, that is, on Chriſt Jeſus*; that his Baptiſm of Repentance was deſign'd only to *prepare the Way of the Lord*, and to diſpoſe them to receive and entertain Chriſt, whom he left them big with Expectations of; nay, whom he directed them to, *Behold the Lamb of GOD. John* was a great and good Man; but he was only the Harbinger; Chriſt is the Prince; his Baptiſm was the Porch which you were to paſs through, not the Houſe you were to reſt in; and therefore 'twas *all wrong* for you to be baptiz'd into the Baptiſm of *John.*

6. When they were thus ſhow'd the Error they were led into, they thankfully accepted the Diſcovery, and *were baptiz'd in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, v.* 5. As for *Apollos*, of whom it was ſaid, *chap.* xviii. 25. That he *knew the Baptiſm of* John, that he rightly underſtood the Meaning of it, when he was baptiz'd with it, tho' he knew that *only*; yet when he *underſtood the Way of GOD more perfectly*, he was not again *baptiz'd*, no more than Chriſt's firſt Diſciples that had been baptiz'd with *John's Baptiſm*, and knew it referr'd to the *Meſſiah* at the Door, and with an Eye to that ſubmitted to it, were baptiz'd again: But *theſe here*, who receiv'd it only with an Eye to *John*, and look'd no further, as if he were their Saviour; it was ſuch a *Fundamental* Error, as was *fatal* to it, as it would have been for any *to be baptiz'd in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, and were ſo. Not by *Paul* himſelf (as we have Reaſon to think) but by ſome of thoſe who attended him. It doth not therefore follow hence, that there was not an Agreement between *John*'s Baptiſm, and Chriſt's, or that they were not for Subſtance the ſame; much leſs doth it follow that thoſe who have been once baptiz'd *in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt* (which is the appointed Form of Chriſt's Baptiſm) may be again baptiz'd in the ſame Name; for thoſe that were here baptiz'd *in the Name of the Lord Jeſus*, had never been ſo baptiz'd before.

Secondly, How *Paul* conferr'd the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt upon them, *v.* 6.

1. *Paul* ſolemnly *pray'd to God*, to give them thoſe Gifts, ſignify'd by his *laying his Hands on them*, which was a Geſture us'd in *Bleſſing*, by the Patriarchs, eſpecially in conveying the great Truſt of the *Promiſe*, as *Gen.* xlviii. 15. The *Spirit* being the great Promiſe of the *New Teſtament*, the Apoſtles convey'd it by the *Impoſition of Hands:* The Lord bleſs thee with that Bleſſing, that Bleſſing of Bleſſings, *Iſa.* xliv. 3.

2. God *granted* the Thing he pray'd for; *The Holy Ghoſt came upon them* in a ſurprizing, over-powering Manner, and *they ſpake with Tongues and propheſy'd*, as the Apoſtles did, and the firſt *Gentile* Converts, *Acts* x. 44. This was intended to *introduce* the Goſpel at *Epheſus*, and to awaken in the Minds of Men an Expectation of ſome great Things from it: And ſome think, it was further deſign'd to qualify theſe Twelve Men for the Work of the Miniſtry, and that theſe Twelve were the Elders of *Epheſus*, to whom *Paul* committed the Care and Conduct of that Church. They had the Spirit of Prophecy, that they might *underſtand* the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God themſelves, and the *Gift of Tongues*, that they might *preach* them to *every Nation and Language.* O! What a wonderful Change was here made on a ſudden with theſe Men; they that but juſt now *had not ſo much as heard that there was a Holy Ghoſt*, now are themſelves *filled* with the Holy Ghoſt; for the Spirit like *the Wind*, *blows where* and when, *he liſteth.*

8 And he went into the ſynagogue, and ſpake boldly for the ſpace of three months, diſputing and perſuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. 9 But when divers were hardned, and believed not, but ſpake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and ſeparated the diſciples, diſputing daily in the ſchool of one Tyrannus. 10 And this continued by the ſpace of two years; ſo that all they which dwelt in Aſia, heard the word of the Lord Jeſus, both Jews and Greeks. 11 And God wrought ſpecial miracles by the hands of Paul: 12 So that from his body were brought unto the ſick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diſeaſes departed from them, and the evil ſpirits went out of them.

Paul is here buſy at *Epheſus* to do Good.

Firſt, He begins as uſual in the *Jews Synagogue*, and makes the firſt Offer of the Goſpel to them, that he might gather in the *loſt Sheep of the Houſe of* Iſrael, who were now *ſcatter'd upon the Mountains.* Obſerve,

1. *Where* he preach'd to them; in their *Synagogue*, v. 8. as Chriſt us'd to do. He went and joyn'd with them in their Synagogue-Worſhip, to take off their Prejudices againſt him, and to ingratiate himſelf with them, while there was any Hope of winning upon them. Thus he would bear his Teſtimony to publick Worſhip on Sabbath-Days where there were no Chriſtian Aſſemblies yet form'd, he frequented the Jewiſh Aſſemblies, while the Jews were not as yet wholly caſt off. *Paul* went into the *Synagogue*, becauſe there he had them *together*, and had them, it might be hoped, *in a good Frame.*

2. *What* he preach'd to them; *The Things concerning the Kingdom of God*, among Men the great Things which concern'd God's Dominion over all Men, and Favour to them, and Mens Subjection to God, and Happineſs in God. He ſhew'd them our Obligations to God, and Intereſt in him as our Creator, by which the Kingdom of God was ſet up, the Violation of thoſe Obligations, and the Forfeiture of that Intereſt by Sin, by which the Kingdom of God was pull'd down, and the renewing of thoſe Obligations upon us, and the reſtoring of us to that Intereſt again by the Redeemer, whereby the *Kingdom of God* was again ſet up. Or, more particularly the Things *concerning the Kingdom of the* Meſſiah, which the *Jews* were in Expectation of, and promis'd themſelves great Matters from: He open'd the Scriptures which ſpake concerning this; gave them a right Notion of this Kingdom, and ſhew'd them their Miſtakes about it.

3. *How* he preach'd to them. (1.) He preach'd *Argumentatively*; he *diſputed*; gave Reaſons, Scripture Reaſons for what he preach'd, and anſwer'd Objections, for the convincing of Mens Judgements and Conſciences, that they might not only *believe*, but might *ſee Cauſe to* believe. He preach'd *διαλεγόμενος Dialogue-wiſe*; he put Queſtions to them and receiv'd their Anſwers; gave them cauſe to put Queſtions to him, and anſwer'd them. (2.) He preach'd *Affectionately*; he *perſuaded*; he us'd not only *logical* Arguments, to enforce what he ſaid upon their Underſtandings, but *Rhetorical* Motives to impreſs: what he ſaid concerning the Kingdom of God, were Things *concerning themſelves*, which they were nearly concern'd in, and therefore ought to *concern themſelves in*, 1 Cor. v. 11. *we perſuade Men. Paul* was a *moving* Preacher, and was Maſter of the Art of Perſuaſion, (3.) He preach'd *Undauntedly*, and with a holy Reſolution; he *ſpake boldly*, as one that had not the leaſt *Doubt* of the Things he *ſpoke of*, nor the leaſt *Diſtruſt* of him he *ſpoke from*, nor the leaſt *Dread* of them he *ſpoke to.*

4. *How long* he preach'd to them; *for the Space of three Months*, which was a competent Time allow'd them to conſider of it; In that Time thoſe among them that belong'd to the Election of Grace were called in, and the reſt were left inexcuſable. Thus long *Paul* preach'd the Goſpel *with much Contention*, 1 Theſ. ii. 2. yet he *did not fail nor was diſcourag'd*.

5. *What Succeſs* his Preaching had among them. (1.) There were ſome that were *perſuaded* to believe in Chriſt, ſome think that is intimated in that Word, *perſuading*; he *prevail'd* with them. But (2.) Divers continued in their Infidelity, and were confirm'd in their Prejudices againſt Chriſtianity. When *Paul* call'd of them before, and preach'd only ſome general Things to them, they courted his Stay among them, *Chap*, xviii. 20. But now he ſettled among them, and his Word came more cloſely to their Conſciences, they were ſoon weary of him. (7.) They had an *invincible Averſion* to the Goſpel of Chriſt *themſelves*; they were *harden'd and believ'd not*; they were reſolv'd they would not believe, tho' the Truth ſhone in their Faces, with never ſuch a convincing Light and Evidence. Therefore they *believ'd not*, becauſe they were *harden'd*. (2.) They did their utmoſt to *raiſe* and *keep up* in others an *Averſion* to the Goſpel: They not only enter'd not into the Kingdom of God themſelves, but neither did they ſuffer thoſe that *were entring to go in*; for *they ſpoke Evil of that Way before the Multitude*, to prejudice them againſt it. Tho' they could not ſhew any manner of Evil *in it*, yet they ſaid all manner of Evil concerning it. Theſe *Sinners* like the Angels that ſinned became *Satan's*, Adverſaries, and *Devils*, falſe Accuſers.

Secondly, When he had carry'd the Matter as far as it would go in the Synagogue of the *Jews*, and found that their Oppoſition grew more obſtinate, he *left* the *Synagogue*, becauſe he could not *ſafely*, or rather becauſe he could not *comfortably* and *ſucceſsfully*, continue in Communion with them. Tho' their Worſhip was ſuch as he could joyn in, and they had not ſilenc'd him, nor forbidden him to preach among them; yet they drove him from them, with their railing at thoſe Things which he ſpoke *concerning the Kingdom of GOD*: They hated to be reform'd, hated to be inform'd, and therefore he *departed from them*. Here we are ſure there was a Separation and no Schiſm; for there was a juſt Cauſe for it, and a clear Call to it. Now *Obſerve*,

(1.) When *Paul* departed from the *Jews*, he took the Diſciples with him, and *ſeparated them*, to *ſave them from that untoward Generation*, according to the Charge *Peter* gave to his new Converts, *Acts* ii. 40. leſt they ſhould be infected with the poyſonous Tongues of thoſe Blaſphemers. He *ſeparated them* which believed, to be the Foundation of a Chriſtian Church, now they were a competent Number to be incorporated, that others might attend with them upon the Preaching of the Goſpel, and might upon their believing be added to them. When *Paul departed*, there needed no more to *ſeparate the Diſciples*; let him go where he will they'll *follow him*.

2. When *Paul* ſeparated from the Synagogue, he *ſet up a Meeting of his own*; he diſputed daily in the School of one *Tyrannus*: He left the Synagogue of the *Jews*, that he might go on with the more Freedom in his Work; ſtill he *diſputed* for Chriſt and Chriſtianity, and was ready to anſwer all Opponents whatſoever, in defence of them: And he had by this Separation a double Advantage. (1.) That now his Opportunities were more *frequent*: In the Synagogue he could only preach every *Sabbath-Day*, Acts xiii. 42. But now he diſputed *daily*, he ſet up a Lecture every Day, and thus redeem'd Time; thoſe whoſe Buſineſs would not permit them to come one Day, might come another Day, and thoſe were welcome who *watch'd daily at theſe Gates of Wiſdom*, and *waited daily at the Poſts of her Doors*. (2.) That now they were more *open*. To the Synagogue of the *Jews* none might come or could come, but *Jews* or *Proſelytes*; *Gentiles* were excluded; but when he ſet up a Meeting in the School of *Tyrannus*, both *Jews* and *Greeks* attended his Miniſtry, *v.* 10. Thus as he deſcribes this Gale of Opportunity at *Epheſus*, 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 9. a *wide Door*, and an *effectual* was *open'd to him*, tho' *there were many Adverſaries*. Some think this School of *Tyrannus* was a *Divinity School* of the *Jews*, and ſuch a one they commonly had in their great Cities beſide their Synagogue; they call'd it *Bethmidraſh*, the *Houſe of Enquiry*, or of *Repetition*, and they went to that on the Sabbath-Day, after they had been in the Synagogue; they go from *Strength to Strength*, from the *Houſe of the Sanctuary* to the *Houſe of Doctrine*. If this were ſuch a School, it ſhews that tho' *Paul* left the Synagogue, he left it gradually, and ſtill kept as near it as he could, as he had done, *Chap.* xviii. 7. But others think it was a *Phyloſophy-School* of the *Gentiles*, belonging to one *Tyrannus*; or, a *retiring Place* (for ſo the Word σχολὴ ſometimes ſignifies;) belonging to a *Principal Man*, or *Governour* of the City; ſome convenient Place it was which *Paul* and the Diſciples had the Uſe of, either for Love or Money.

3. Here he continu'd his Labours for *Two Years*; read his Lectures, and diſputed Daily: Theſe *Two Years* commence from the End of the *Three Months*, which he ſpent in the Synagogue, *v.* 8. and after they were ended, he continued for ſome Time in the Country about preaching, therefore he might juſtly reckon it in all *Three Years*, as he doth, *Chap.* xx. 31.

4. The Goſpel hereby ſpread far and near, *v.* 10. *All they which dwell in* Aſia, *heard the Word of the Lord Jeſus*; not only all that dwelt in *Epheſus*, but all that dwelt in that large Province called *Aſia*, which *Epheſus* was the head City of; *Aſia* the *leſs* it was called. There was a great Reſort to *Epheſus* from all Parts of the Country, for Law, Traffick, Religion and Education, which gave *Paul* an Opportunity of ſending the Report of the Goſpel, to all the Towns and Villages of that Country. They all heard the *Word of the Lord Jeſus*. The Goſpel is *Chriſt's Word*, 'tis a Word *concerning Chriſt*. This they *heard*, or at leaſt heard of it. Some of all Sects, ſome out of all Parts both in City and Country, embrac'd this Goſpel, and entertain'd it, and by them it was communicated to others, and ſo they all *heard the Word of the Lord Jeſus*, or might have heard it. Probably *Paul* ſometimes made Excurſions himſelf into the Country to preach the Goſpel, or ſent his Miſſionaries or Aſſiſtants that attended him; and thus the Word of the Lord was heard *throughout the Region*. Now they that *ſate in Darkneſs ſaw a great Light*.

Thirdly, God confirmed *Paul's* Doctrine by Miracles, which awaken'd Peoples Enquiries after it, fixed their Affection to it, and engag'd their Belief of it, *v.* 11, 12. I wonder we have not read of any Miracle wrought by *Paul*, ſince the caſting of the Evil Spirit out of the Damſel at *Philippi*; Why did he not work Miracles at *Theſſalonica*, *Berea* and *Athens*? Or if he did, Why are they not recorded? Was not the Succeſs of the Goſpel without Miracles in the Kingdom of Nature itſelf, ſuch a Miracle in the Kingdom of Grace, and the Divine Power went along with it; ſuch a Proof of its Divine Original, that there needed no other? 'Tis certain that at *Corinth* he wrought many Miracles, tho' *Luke* has recorded none; for he tells them, 2 *Cor.* xii. 12. That the Signs of his Apoſtleſhip were wrought among them, *in Wonders and mighty Deeds*.

But here at *Epheſus* we have a general Account of the Proofs of this Kind, which he gave of his Divine Miſſion.

1. They were *ſpecial Miracles* Δυνάμεις ȣ̓ τυχȣ́σας. God exerted Powers that were not according to the *common* Courſe of Nature. *Virtutes non Vulgares*, Things were done which could by no means be aſcrib'd either to *Chance*, or *Second Cauſes*: Or, they were not only, as *all* Miracles are, *out of the common Road*; but they were even *uncommon* Miracles, ſuch Miracles as had not been wrought by the Hands of any of the Apoſtles: The Oppoſers of the Goſpel were ſo prejudic'd, that *any Miracles* would not ſerve their Turn; therefore God wrought *Virtutes non quaſlibet*, ſo they render it, ſomething above the common Road of Miracles.

2. It was not *Paul* that wrought them; *What's* Paul, *and what's* Apollos? But it was *GOD* that *wrought them by the Hand of* Paul. He was but the Inſtrument, God was the principal Agent.

3. He not only cur'd the Sick that were brought to him, or that he was brought to; but *from his Body were brought to the Sick Handkerchiefs or Aprons*: They got *Paul's Handkerchiefs*, or his *Aprons* (that is, ſay ſome) the Aprons he wore when he work'd at his Trade, and the Applying of them to the Sick cur'd them immediately. Or, they brought the Sick Peoples Handkerchiefs, or their Girdles, or Caps, or Head-dreſſes, and laid them for a while to *Paul's* Body, and then took them to the Sick. The former is more probable. Now was fulfil'd that Word of Chriſt to his Diſciples, *Greater Works than theſe ſhall ye do*. We read of one that was cured by the Touch of Chriſt's Garment, when it was upon him, and he perceiv'd that *Vertue went out of him*; but here were People cur'd by *Paul's* Garments when they were taken from him. Chriſt gave his Apoſtles Power *againſt unclean Spirits*, and *againſt all Manner of Sickneſs*, Matth. x. 1. And accordingly we find here, that thoſe to whom *Paul* ſent Relief, had it in both theſe Caſes; *for the Diſeaſes departed from them*, and the *Evil Spirit went out of them*; which were both ſignificant of the great Deſign and Bleſſed Effect of the Goſpel, which was to heal ſpiritual *Diſeaſes*, and to free the Souls of Men from the Power and Dominion of *Satan*.

13 ¶ Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorciſts, took upon them to call over them that had evil ſpirits, the name of the Lord Jeſus, ſaying, We adjure you by Jeſus whom Paul preacheth. 14 And there were ſeven ſons of *one* Sceva a Jew, *and* chief of the prieſts, which did ſo. 15 And the evil ſpirit anſwered and ſaid, Jeſus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? 16 And the man in whom the evil ſpirit was, leapt on them and overcame them, and prevailed againſt them, ſo that they fled out of that houſe naked and wounded. 17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks alſo dwelling at Epheſus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jeſus was magnified. 18 And many that believed came, and confeſſed, and ſhewed their deeds. 19 Many alſo of them which uſed curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thouſand *pieces* of ſilver. 20 So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

The Preachers of the Goſpel were ſent forth to carry on a War againſt *Satan*, and therein Chriſt went forth *conquering*, *and to conquer.* The Caſting of evil Spirits out of thoſe that were *poſſeſſed*, was one Inſtance of Chriſt's Victory over Satan; but to ſhew how many Ways Chriſt triumph'd over that great Enemy, we have here in theſe Verſes two remarkable Inſtances of the Conqueſt of Satan, not only in thoſe that were *violently poſſeſs'd by him*, but in thoſe that were *voluntarily devoted to him.*

Firſt, Here's the *Confuſion* of ſome of *Satan*'s Servants, ſome *vagabond Jews* that were *Exorciſts*, who made uſe of Chriſt's Name, profanely and wickedly in their diabolical Enchantments, but were made to pay dear for their Preſumption. *Obſerve*,

1. The general Character of thoſe who were guilty of this Preſumption; They were *Jews*, but *Vagabond* Jews, were of the Jewiſh Nation and Religion, but went about from Town to Town, to get Money by Conjuring; they ſtroll'd about to tell People their Fortunes, and pretended by Spells and Charms to cure Diſeaſes, and bring People to themſelves that were melancholy or diſtracted. They call'd themſelves *Exorciſts*, becauſe in doing their Tricks they us'd Forms of *Adjuration*, by ſuch and ſuch commanding Names. The ſuperſtitious *Jews* to put a Reputation upon theſe Magick Arts, wickedly attributed the Invention of them to *Solomon*; So *Joſephus*, *Antiq.* Lib. VIII. Chap. ii. ſaith, That *Solomon* compos'd Charms by which Diſeaſes are cur'd, and the Devil driven out, ſo as never to return. And that theſe Operations continu'd common among the *Jews* to his Time. And Chriſt ſeems to refer to this, *Matth.* xii. 27. *By whom do your Children caſt them out?*

2. A particular Account of ſome at *Epheſus* that led this Courſe of Life, and came thither in their Travels: There were *Seven Sons of one* Sceva *a* Jew, *and chief of the Prieſts*, *v.* 14. 'Tis ſad to ſee the Houſe of *Jacob* thus degenerated, much more the *Houſe of* Aaron, the Family that was in a peculiar manner conſecrated to God, that any of that Race ſhould be in League with Satan. Their Father was *Chief of the Prieſts*, Head of one of the Twenty-four Courſes of Prieſts. One would think the Temple would find both Employment and Encouragement enough for the Sons of a Chief Prieſt, if they had been twice as many: But 'tis likely, 'twas a vain, rambling, rakiſh Humour that took them all to turn Mountebanks, and wander all the World over to cure mad Folks.

3. The Profaneneſs they were guilty of; *They took upon them to call over evil Spirits the Name of the Lord* Jeſus; not as thoſe who had a Veneration for Chriſt, and a Confidence in his Name, as we read of ſome who *caſt out Devil's in Chriſt's Name*, and yet did not *follow* with his Diſciples, *Luke* ix. 49. whom he would not have to be diſcourag'd; but as thoſe who were willing to try all Methods to carry on their wicked Trade; and it ſhould ſeem had this Deſign; if the Evil Spirit ſhould yield to an Adjuration in the Name of *Jeſus*, by thoſe that *did not* believe in him, they would ſay, it was no Confirmation of his Doctrine to thoſe that *did*; for it was all one whether they believ'd it or no. If they ſhould not yield to it, they would ſay, the Name of Chriſt, was not ſo powerful as the other Names they us'd, which the Devils had often by Colluſion yielded to. They ſaid, *We adjure you by* Jeſus *whom* Paul *preacheth*; not whom we believe in, or depend upon, or have any Authority from; by *Jeſus* whom *Paul* preached, *q. d.* We'll try what that Name will do. The *Exorciſts* in the Romiſh Church that pretend to caſt the Devil out of melancholy People by Spells and Charms which they underſtand not, and which not having any Divine Warrant, cannot be us'd in Faith, are the Followers of theſe vagabond *Jews.*

4. The Confuſion they were put to in this impious Operation; let 'em not be *deceiv'd*, God is not *mock'd*, nor ſhall the Glorious Name of Jeſus Chriſt be proſtituted to ſuch a vile Purpoſe as this; *What Communion hath Chriſt with Baliel?* (1.) The evil *Spirit* gave them a ſharp Reply, *v.* 15. Jeſus *I know, and* Paul *I know, But who are ye?* I know that *Jeſus* has conquer'd Principalities and Powers, and that *Paul* has Authority in his Name to *caſt out Devils*; But what Power have you to command us in his Name, or who gave you any ſuch Power? *What have you to do* to *declare* the Power of *Jeſus*, or to *take his Covenant* and Commands *into your Mouths, ſeeing you hate* his *Inſtructions*, Pſal. l. 16, 17. This was extorted out of the Mouth of the evil Spirit by the Power of God, to gain Honour to the Goſpel, and to put thoſe to Shame that made an ill Uſe of Chriſt's Name. Antichriſtian Powers and Factions, pretend a mighty Zeal for *Jeſus* and *Paul*, and to have Authority from them; but when the Matter comes to be look'd into, it is a mere worldly, ſecular Intereſt, that is to be thus ſupported; nay, 'tis an Enmity to true Religion; Jeſus *we know, and* Paul *we know, But who are ye?* (2.) The *Man in whom the evil Spirit* was, gave them a warm Reception, fell foul upon them, *leap'd on them*, in the height of his Frenzy and Rage, *overcame them* and all their Inchantments; *prevail'd againſt them*, and was quite too hard for them, ſo that *they fled out of the Houſe*, not only *naked*, but *wounded*; their Clothes pull'd off their Backs, and their Heads broke. This is written for a Warning to all thoſe who name the *Name of Chriſt*, but *do not depart from Iniquity.* The ſame Enemy that overcomes them with his Temptations, will overcome them with his Terrors; and there adjuring him in Chriſt's Name to let them alone, will be no Security to them. If we reſiſt the Devil by a true and lively Faith in Chriſt, he will flee from us; but if we think to reſiſt him by the bare Uſing of Chriſt's Name, or any Part of his Word, as a Spell or Charm, he will prevail againſt us.

5. The general Notice that was taken of this, and the good Impreſſion it made on many, *v.* 17. *This was known to all the* Jews *and* Greeks *alſo dwelling at* Epheſus; it was the common Talk of the Town, and the Effect of it was, (1.) That Men were terrified; *Fear fell on them all.* In this Inſtance they ſaw the Malice of the Devil, whom they ſerv'd; and the Power of Chriſt, whom they oppos'd; and both were awful Conſiderations. They ſaw that the Name of Chriſt was not to be dally'd with, nor his Religion compounded with the Pagan Superſtitions. (2.) That God was glorifyed: *The Name of the Lord* Jeſus, by which his Faithful Servants caſt out Devils, and cur'd Diſeaſes without any Reſiſtance, *was the more magnified*; for now it appear'd to be *a Name above every Name.*

Secondly, Here's the *Converſion* of others of *Satan's* Servants, and the Evidences of their *Converſion.*

1. Thoſe that had been guilty of wicked Practices, *confeſs'd* them, *v.* 18. *Many* that had *believ'd* and were baptiz'd, but had not then been ſo particular as they might have been in the Confeſſion of their Sins, were ſo *terrify'd* with the Inſtances of the magnifying of the Name of *Jeſus Chriſt*, that they came to *Paul*; or ſome other of the other Miniſters that were with him, and *confeſs'd* what ill Lives they had led, and what a great deal of ſecret Wickedneſs their own Conſciences charg'd them with, which the World knew not of; ſecret Frauds, and ſecret Filthineſſes; *They ſhew'd their Deeds*, took Shame to themſelves, and gave Glory to God, and Warning to others. Theſe Confeſſions were not *extorted* from them, but were voluntary for the Eaſe of their Conſciences. which the late Miracles had ſtruck a Terrour upon. *Note*, Where there is true Contrition for Sin, there will be an ingenuous Confeſſion of Sin to God in every Prayer, and to Man whom we have offended, when the Caſe requires it.

2. Thoſe that had convers'd with wicked Books, *burnt* them, *v.* 19. *Many of them which uſed curious Arts*, τὰ περίεργα, impertinent Things, *Multa nihil ad ſe pertinentia ſatagentes*, *Buſy-bodies* ſo the Word is uſed, 2. *Theſſ.* iii. 11. 1 *Tim.* v. 13. that traded in the Study of Magick and Divination; in Books of Judicial Aſtrology, caſting of Nativities, telling of Fortunes, raiſing and laying of Spirits, interpreting of Dreams, predicting future Events, and the like; to which ſome think, are to be added, Plays, Romances, Love-Books, aud unchaſte and immodeſt Poems, (*Hiſtrionica, amatoria, ſaltatoria*, Stres.) theſe having their Conſciences more awaken'd than ever to ſee the Evil of thoſe Practices which theſe Books inſtructed them in, *brought their Books together, and burnt them before all Men. Epheſus* was notorious for the Uſe of theſe Curious Arts; hence Spells and Charms were call'd *Literæ Epheſiæ:* Here People furniſh'd themſelves with all thoſe Sorts of Books, and probably had Tutors to inſtruct them in thoſe black Arts. It was therefore much for the Honour of Chriſt, and his Goſpel, to have ſuch a noble Teſtimony born againſt thoſe Curious Arts in a Place, where they were ſo much in Vogue. It is taken for granted, that they were convinc'd of the Evil of theſe Curious Arts, and reſolv'd to deal in them no longer; but they did not think that enough, unleſs they *burnt their Books.* (1.) Thus they *ſhew'd a Holy Indignation at the Sins they had been guilty of*; as the Idolaters when they were brought to Repentance, *ſaid to their Idols, Get ye hence.* Iſa. xxx. 22. Thus they took a Pious Revenge on thoſe Things that had been the Inſtruments of Sin to them, and proclaim'd the Force of their Convictions of the Evil of it, and that thoſe very Things were now *deteſtable* to them, as much as ever they had been *delectable.* (2.) Thus they *ſhew'd their Reſolution never to return to the Uſe of thoſe Arts.* and the Books which related to them, again. They were ſo fully convinced of the Evil and Danger of them, that they would not throw the Books by, within *Reach* of a *Re-call*, upon Suppoſition that it was poſſible they might *change their Mind*; but being ſtedfaſtly reſolv'd never to make uſe of them, they *burnt* them (3.) Thus they *put away a Temptation to return to them again*; Had they kept the Books by them, there was Danger leſt when the Heat of the preſent Conviction was over, they ſhould have the Curioſity to look into them, and ſo be in Danger of Liking them and Loving them again, and therefore they burnt them. *Note*, Thoſe that truly repent of Sin, will keep themſelves as far as poſſible from the Occaſions of it. (4.) Thus they *prevented their doing Miſchief to others*; If *Judas* had been by, he would have ſaid, ſell them, and give the Money to the Poor; or buy Bibles and good Books with it. But then, who could tell into whoſe Hands theſe dangerous Books might fall, and what Miſchief might be done by them; it was therefore the ſafeſt Courſe, to commit them all to the Flames. Thoſe that are recover'd from Sin themſelves, will do all they can to keep others from falling into it, and much more are afraid of laying an Occaſion of Sin in others Way. (5.) Thus they *ſhew'd a Contempt of the Wealth of this World*; For the Prices of the Books was caſt up, probably by thoſe that perſwaded them not to burn them, and it was found to be *Fifty Thouſand Pieces of Silver*; which ſome com-

pute to Fifteen hundred Pounds of our Money. 'Tis likely the Books were ſcarce, perhaps prohibited, and therefore dear. Probably, they had coſt them ſo much; yet being the *Devil's Books*, tho' they had been ſo *fooliſh* as to *buy them*, they did not think that would juſtify them in being ſo *wicked* as to *ſell them* again. (6.) Thus they *publickly teſtify'd their Joy for their Converſion* from theſe wicked Practices, as *Matthew* did by the great Feaſt he made when Chriſt had call'd him from the Receit of Cuſtom. Theſe Converts *joyn'd together* in making this Bon-fire, and made it *before all Men:* They might have burnt the Books privately, every One in his own Houſe, but they choſe to do it *together*, by Conſent, and to do it at the High-Croſs (as we ſay) that Chriſt and his Grace in them might be the more magnify'd, and all about them the more edify'd.

Thirdly, Here's a general Account of the Progreſs and Succeſs of the Goſpel in and about *Epheſus*, v. 20. *So mightily grew the Word of GOD, and prevail'd.* 'Tis a bleſſed Sight to ſee the *Word of God* growing, and prevailing mightily, as it did here.

1. To ſee it *grow extenſively*, by the Addition of many to the Church; when ſtill more and more are wrought upon by the Goſpel, and wrought up into a Conformity to it, then it *grows*; when thoſe that were leaſt likely to yield to it, and that had been moſt ſtiff in their Oppoſition to it, yet are captivated and brought into Obedience to it, then it may be ſaid to *grow mightily*.

2. To ſee it *prevail intenſively*, by the Advancement of thoſe in Knowledge and Grace that are added to the Church: when ſtrong Corruptions are mortify'd, vicious Habits chang'd, ill Cuſtoms of long ſtanding broken off, and pleaſant gainful faſhionable Sins are abandon'd, then it *prevails mightily*; and Chriſt in it goes on conquering, and to conquer.

21 ¶ After theſe things were ended, Paul purpoſed in the ſpirit, when he had paſſed through Macedonia, and Achaia, to go to Jeruſalem, ſaying, After I have been there, I muſt alſo ſee Rome. 22 So he ſent into Macedonia two of them that miniſtred unto him, Timotheus and Eraſtus; *but* he himſelf ſtayed in Aſia for a ſeaſon, 23 And the ſame time there aroſe no ſmall ſtir about that way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a ſilver-ſmith, which made ſilver ſhrines for Diana, brought no ſmall gain unto the craftſ-men: 25 Whom he called together with the work-men of like occupation, and ſaid, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth: 26 Moreover, ye ſee and hear, that not alone at Epheſus, but almoſt throughout all Aſia, this Paul hath perſwaded and turned away much people, ſaying, That they be no gods which are made with hands: 27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be ſet at nought; but alſo that the Temple of the great goddeſs Diana ſhould be deſpiſed, and her magnificence ſhould be deſtroyed, whom all Aſia and the world worſhippeth. 21 And when they heard *theſe ſayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, ſaying, Great *is* Diana of the Epheſians. 29 And the whole city was filled with confuſion: and having caught Gaius and Ariſtarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they ruſhed with one accord into the theatre. 30 And when Paul would have enter'd in unto the people, the diſciples ſuffer'd him not. 31 And certain of the chief of Aſia, which were his friends, ſent unto him, deſiring *him* that he would not adventure himſelf into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and ſome another: for the aſſembly was confuſed, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckned with his hand, and would have made his defence unto the People. 34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the ſpace of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Epheſians, 35 And when the town-clerk had appeaſed the People, he ſaid, Ye men of Epheſus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Epheſians is a worſhipper of the great goddeſs Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that theſe things cannot be ſpoken againſt, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing raſhly. 37 For ye have brought hither theſe men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blaſphemers of your goddeſs. 38 Wherefore if Demetrius and the craftſmen which are with him, have a matter againſt any man, the law is open, and there are deputies; let them implead one another. 39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it ſhall be determined in a lawful aſſembly. 40 For we are in danger to be call'd in queſtion for this days uprore, there being no cauſe whereby we may give an account of this concourſe. 41 And when he had thus ſpoken, he diſmiſſed the aſſembly.

Paul is here brought into ſome Trouble at *Epheſus*, juſt when he is forecaſting to go thence, and to cut him out Work elſewhere. See here,

1. How he laid his Purpoſe of going to other Places, *v.* 21, 22. He was a Man of vaſt Deſigns to God, and was for making his Influences as far diffuſive as might be; having ſpent above two Years at *Epheſus*.

(1.) He deſign'd a Viſit to the Churches of *Macedonia* and *Achaia*, eſpecially of *Philippi* and *Corinth*, the chief Cities of thoſe Provinces, *v.* 21. There he had *planted* Churches, and now is concerned to viſit them. He *purpoſed in his Spirit*; either in his own Spirit not communicating his Purpoſe as yet, but keeping it to himſelf; Or, by the Conduct of the Holy Spirit, who was his Guide in all his Motions, and by whom he was led. He purpoſed to go ſee how the Work of God went on in thoſe Places, that he might rectify what was Amiſs, and encourage what was Good.

(2.) Thence he deſign'd to go to *Jeruſalem*, to viſit the Brethren there, and give an Account to them of the proſpering of the Good-pleaſure of the Lord in his Hand. And from thence he intended to *go to Rome*, to go *ſee Rome*; not as if he deſign'd only the gratifying of his Curioſity with the *Sight* of that ancient famous City, but becauſe it was an Expreſſion People commonly uſed, that they would go *ſee Rome*, would look about 'em there, when that which he deſign'd, was to ſee the Chriſtians there, and to do them ſome Service, *Rom.* i. 11. The good People of *Rome* were the Glory of the City, which he long'd for a Sight of. Dr. *Lightfoot* ſuppoſeth, that it was upon the Death of the Emperor *Claudius*, who dy'd the ſecond Year of *Paul*'s being at *Epheſus*, that *Paul* thought of going to *Rome*, becauſe while he liv'd the *Jews* were forbidden *Rome*, Chap. xxviii. 2.

(2.) He ſent *Timothy* and *Eraſtus* into *Macedonia*, to give them notice of the Viſit he intended them, and to get their Collection ready for the poor Saints at *Jeruſalem*. Soon after he wrote *the firſt Epiſtle to the* Corinthians, deſigning to follow it himſelf, as appears, 1 *Cor.* iv. 17, 19. *I have ſent to you* Timotheus; *but I will my ſelf come to you ſhortly, if the LORD will.* For the preſent he *ſtay'd in* Aſia, in the Country about *Epheſus*, founding Churches.

2. How he was ſeconded in his Purpoſe, and obliged to purſue it by the Troubles which at length he met with at *Epheſus*. 'Twas ſtrange, he had been quiet there ſo long; yet it ſhould ſeem, he had met with Troubles there not recorded in this Story; for in his Epiſtle written at this Time, he ſpeaks of his having *fought with Beaſts at* Epheſus, 1 *Cor.* xv. 32. which ſeems to be meant of his being put to fight with wild Beaſts in the Theatre, according to the barbarous Treatment they ſometimes gave the Chriſtians: And he ſpeaks of the Trouble which came to them in *Aſia*, near *Epheſus*, when he *deſpair'd of Life*, and *receiv'd a Sentence of Death within himſelf*, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9.

But in the Trouble here related, he was worſe *frightened* than *hurt*. In general, *there aroſe no ſmall Stir about that Way*, *v.* 23. Some Hiſtorians ſay, that the famous Impoſtor *Apollonius Tyanæus*, who ſet up for a Rival with Chriſt, and gave out himſelf, as *Simon Magus*, to be *ſome great One*, was at *Epheſus* about this Time that *Paul* was there: But it ſeems the Oppoſition he gave to the Goſpel was ſo inſignificant, that St. *Luke* did not think it worth taking Notice of. The Diſturbance he gives an Account of was of another Nature: Let us view the Particulars of it. Here is,

Firſt, A great Complaint againſt *Paul* and the other Preachers of the Goſpel, for drawing People off from the Worſhip of *Diana*, and ſo ſpoiling the Trade of the *Silver-ſmiths* that work'd for *Diana*'s Temple.

1. The Complainant is *Demetrius*, a *Silver-ſmith*, a principal Man, 'tis likely of the Trade, and one that would be thought to underſtand and conſult the Intereſts of it more than others of the Company. Whether he work'd in other ſort of Plate or no, we are not told; but the moſt advantagious Branch of his Trade was, *making Silver Shrines for* Diana, *v.* 24. Some think theſe were Medals ſtamp'd with the Effigies of *Diana*, or her Temple, or both: Others think, they were Repreſentations of

the Temple, with the Image of *Diana* in it in Miniature ; all of Silver, but ſo ſmall, that People might carry them about with them, as Papiſts do their Crucifixes. Thoſe that came from far to pay their Devotions at the Temple of *Epheſus*, when they went Home bought theſe little Temples, or Shrines, to carry Home with them, for the gratifying of the Curioſity of their Friends, and to preſerve in their own Minds the Idea of that ſtately Edifice. See how *Crafts-men*, and *Crafty-men* too, above the Rank of Silver-ſmiths, make an Advantage to themſelves of People's Superſtition, and ſerve their worldly Ends by it.

2. The Perſons he appeals to, are not the *Magiſtrates*, but the *Mob* ; He call'd the *Crafts-men* together. *with the Work-men of like Occupation* ; a Parcel of Mechanicks, who had no Senſe of any Thing but their worldly Intereſt, and theſe he endeavours to incenſe againſt *Paul*, who would be acted as little by Reaſon, and as much by Fury, as he could deſire.

3. His Complaint and Repreſentation is very full.

1. He lays it down for a *Principle*, That *the Art and Miſtery* of making *Silver Shrines for the Worſhippers of Diana*, was very neceſſary to be ſupported and kept up, *v.* 25. *Ye know that by this Craft*, we have not only our Subſiſtence, and our neceſſary Food, but *our Wealth* ; we grow Rich, and raiſe Eſtates ; we live great, and have wherewithal to maintain our Pleaſures ; and therefore, whatever come of it, we muſt not ſuffer this Craft to *grow into Contempt*. *Note*, It is natural for Men to be jealous for that, whether Right or Wrong, by which they *get their Wealth* : And many have, for this Reaſon alone, ſet themſelves againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt, becauſe it calls Men off from thoſe Crafts which are *unlawful*, how much *Wealth* ſoever is to be *gotten* by them.

2. He charges it upon *Paul*, that he had *diſſuaded Men* from worſhipping Idols. The Words, as they are laid in the Indictment, are, that he had aſſerted, *They are no Gods which are made with Hands*, *v.* 26. Could any Truth be more plain and ſelf-evident than this? Or any Reaſoning more cogent and convincing than thoſe of the Prophets; *The Workman made it, therefore it is not God.* The firſt, and moſt genuine Notion we have of God, is, that he has his Being *of himſelf*, and depends upon none, but that all Things have their Being from him, and their Dependance on him, and then it muſt follow, that thoſe are no Gods, which are the Creatures of Mens Fancy, and the Work of Mens Hands : Yet this muſt be look'd upon as an Heretical and Atheiſtical Notion. and *Paul* as a Criminal for maintaining it ; Not that they could advance any Thing againſt this Doctrine itſelf, but that the Conſequence of it was, that *not only at Epheſus*, the chief City, but almoſt *throughout all Aſia*, among the Country People, who were their beſt Cuſtomers, and whom they thought they were ſureſt of, he had *perſuaded and turned away much People* from the Worſhip of *Diana* ; ſo that there was not now ſuch a *Demand* for the *Silver Shrines*, as had been ; nor ſuch *good Rates* given for them. There are thoſe who will ſtickle for that which is moſt groſly abſurd and unreaſonable, and which carries along with it, its own Conviction of Falſehood, as this doth, *That thoſe are Gods which are made with Hands*, if it have but Humane Laws, and Worldly Intereſt and Preſcription on its Side.

3. He minds them of the Danger which their Trade was in of going to Decay ; *whatever toucheth that*, toucheth them in a ſenſible tender Part ; if this Doctrine gains Credit, we are all undone, and may e'en ſhut up Shop ; *This our Craft will be ſet at nought*, will be *convicted*, and put into an ill Name, as *Superſtition*, and a *Cheat* upon the World ; and every Body will run it down. *This our Part*, ſo the Word is ; *our Intereſt*, *our Share of* Trade and Commerce κινδυνεύει ἡμῖν τὸ μέρος it will not only come into Danger of being loſt, but it will *bring us into Danger*, and we ſhall become not only Beggars, but Malefactors.

4. He pretends a mighty Zeal for *Diana*, and a Jealouſie for her Honour, *Not only this our Craft is in Danger* ; if that were all, he would not have you think that he would have ſpoken with ſo much Warmth ; but all his Care is, *leſt the Temple of the great Goddeſs* Diana *ſhould be deſpis'd, and her Magnificence ſhould be deſtroy'd* ; and we would not, for all the World, ſee the Diminution of the Honour of that Goddeſs, *whom all* Aſia, *and the World worſhips.* See what the Worſhip of *Diana* had to plead for itſelf, and what was the utmoſt which the moſt zealous Bigots for it, had to ſay in its Behalf. (1.) That it had *Pomp* on its Side. The *Magnificence* of the Temple was the Thing that *charm'd* them ; the Thing that *chain'd* them, they could not bear the Thoughts of any Thing that tended to the *Diminution*, much leſs to the *Deſtruction* of that. (2.) That it had *Numbers* on its Side, all *Aſia* and the *World* worſhip it, and therefore it muſt needs be the right Way of Worſhip, let *Paul* ſay what he will to the contrary. Thus, becauſe *all the World wonders after the Beaſt*, the *Dragon*, the Devil, the *God of this World*, gives him *his Power, his Seat, and great Authority*, Rev. xiii. 2, 3.

Secondly, The *Popular Reſentment* of this Complaint ; The Charge was manag'd by a *Crafts-man*, and was fram'd to *incenſe* the common People, and it had the deſired Effect ; for on this Occaſion they ſhew'd,

1. A great Diſpleaſure againſt the Goſpel, and the Preachers of it ; they were *full of Wrath*, *v.* 28. full of Fury and Indignation, ſo the Word ſignifies. The Crafts-men went *ſtark mad*, when they were told that their Trade, and their Idol were both in Danger.

2. A great Jealouſie for the Honour of their Goddeſs ; *they cried out, Great is* Diana *of the Epheſians* ; and we are reſolv'd to ſtand by her, and live, and die in the Defence of her. Are there any that expoſe her to Contempt, or threaten her Deſtruction, let us alone to deal with them. Let *Paul* ſay never ſo much to prove that *thoſe are no Gods which are made with Hands*, we will abide by it, that whatever comes of other Gods, and Goddeſſes, *Great is* Diana *of the* Epheſians. We muſt and will ſtand up for the Religion of our Country, which we have *by Tradition from our Fathers*. Thus *all People walk'd every one in the Name of their God*, and thought well of *their own*, much more ſhould the Servants of the true God do ſo, who can ſay, *This GOD is our GOD for ever and ever*.

3. A great Diſorder among themſelves, *v.* 29. *The whole City was full of Confuſion* ; the common and natural Effect of an intemperate Zeal for a falſe Religion ; it throws all into Confuſion, *dethrones* Reaſon, and *enthrones* Paſſion, and Men *run together*, not only not knowing *one another's* Minds, but not knowing *their own*.

Fourthly, The Proceedings of the Mob, under the Power of theſe Reſentments, and how far they were carried.

1. They laid Hands on ſome of *Paul*'s Companions, and hurry'd them into *the Theatre*, *v.* 29. Some think with Deſign there to make them *fight with Beaſts*, as *Paul* had ſometimes done, *v.* 29. or perhaps they intended only to abuſe them, and to make them a Spectacle to the Croud. Thoſe they ſeiz'd were *Gaius* and *Ariſtarchus*, of both whom we read elſewhere ; *Gaius* was of *Derbe*, *Chap.* xx. 4. *Ariſtarchus* is alſo there ſpoken of, and *Col.* iv. 10. They came with *Paul* from *Macedonia*, and that was their only Crime, that they were *Paul's Companions in Travel*, both in Service and Sufferings.

2. *Paul*, who had ſcap'd being ſeiz'd by them, when he perceiv'd his Friends in Diſtreſs for his Sake, would have *enter'd in unto the People*, to ſacrifice himſelf, if there were no other Remedy, rather than his Friends ſhould ſuffer upon his Account ; and it was an Evidence of a generous Spirit, and that he *lov'd his Neighbour as himſelf*.

3. He was diſſuaded from it by the Kindneſs of his Friends, that over-rul'd him. (1.) The *Diſciples ſuffer'd him not* ; for it better became him to offer it, than it would have become them to ſuffer it. They had Reaſon to ſay to *Paul*, as *David*'s Servants did to him, when he was for expoſing himſelf in a Piece of Publick Service, *Thou art worth Ten Thouſand of us*, 2 Sam. xviii. 3. (2.) Others of his Friends interpos'd, to prevent his throwing of himſelf thus into the Mouth of Danger ; they would treat him much worſe than *Gaius* and *Ariſtarchus*, looking upon him as the Ring-leader of the Party, and therefore better let them bear the Brunt of the Storm, than that he ſhould venture into it, *v.* 31. They were *certain of the Chief of Aſia*, the *Princes* of *Aſia*, τῶν Ἀσιαρχῶν. The Criticks tell us they were the *Chief* of their *Prieſts*, or (as others) the *Chief* of their *Players* ; whether they were Converts to the Chriſtian Faith, and ſome ſuch there were, even of their Prieſts and Governours, or whether they were only Well-wiſhers to *Paul*, as an ingenious good, Man we are not told ; only that they were *Paul's friends*. Dr. *Lightfoot* ſuggeſts, that they kept up a Reſpect and Kindneſs for him, ever ſince he *fought with Beaſts* in their Theatre, and were afraid he ſhould be abus'd ſo again. *Note*, It is a friendly Part to take more Care of the Lives and Comforts of good Men, than they do themſelves. 'Twould be a very hazardous *Adventure*, for *Paul* to go *into the Theatre* ; 'twas a Thouſand to one it coſt him his Life, and therefore *Paul* was over-rul'd by his Friends, to obey the Law of Self-Preſervation, and hath taught us to keep out of the Way of Danger as long as we can, without going out of the Way of Duty. We may be call'd to *lay down* our Lives, but not to *throw away* our Lives. It would better become *Paul* to venture into a *Synagogue*, than *into a Theatre*.

4. The Mob was in a perfect Confuſion, *v.* 32. *Some cried one Thing, and ſome another*, according as their Fancies and Paſſions, and perhaps the Reports they receiv'd led them : *Some cry'd*, Down with the Jews, others, *Down with Paul*, but the Aſſembly was *confuſ'd*, as not underſtanding one another's Minds, they contradicted one another, and were ready to fly in one anothers Faces for it, but they did not underſtand their own ; for the Truth was, the greater *Part knew not wherefore they were come together* ; they knew not what began the Riot, nor who, much leſs what Buſineſs they had there ; but upon ſuch Occaſions, the greateſt Part came only to enquire what the Matter is ; they follow the Cry, follow the Croud, increaſe like a Snow-ball, and where there are *many*, there will be *more*.

5. The Jews would have intereſted themſelves in this Tumult. In other Places they had been the firſt Movers of ſuch Riots ; but now at *Epheſus* they had not Intereſt enough to raiſe the Mob, and yet, when it was rais'd, they had Ill-will enough to ſet in with it, *v.* 33. *They drew* Alexander *out of the Multitude*, call'd him out to ſpeak on the Behalf of the *Jews*, againſt *Paul* and his Companions ; you have heard what *Demetrius*, and the Silver-ſmiths have to ſay againſt them, as Enemies to their Religion ; Give us leave now to tell you what we have to ſay againſt him as an Enemy to our Religion. The *Jews put him forward* to do this, encourag'd him, and told him, they would ſtand by him, and ſecond him. And this they look'd upon as neceſſary in *their own*

Defence, and therefore what he deſign'd to ſay, is call'd *Apologizing* to the People, not for *himſelf* in particular, but for the *Jews* in general, whom the Worſhippers of *Diana* look'd upon to be as much their Enemies, as *Paul* was; now they would have them know, that they were as much *Paul*'s Enemies as they were. And they who are thus careful to diſtinguiſh themſelves from the Servants of Chriſt now, and are afraid of being taken for them, ſhall have their Doom accordingly in the Great Day. *Alexander beckened with the Hand*, deſiring to *be heard* againſt *Paul*; for it had been ſtrange if a Perſecution were carry'd on againſt the Chriſtians, and there were not *Jews* at one End or 'tother of it; if they could not begin the Miſchief, they would help it forward, and ſo make themſelves Partakers of other Mens Sins. Some think this *Alexander* had been a Chriſtian, but had apoſtatiz'd to *Judaiſm*, and therefore was drawn out as a proper Perſon to accuſe *Paul*; and that he was that *Alexander the Copper Smith* that did *Paul* ſo much *Evil*, 2 Tim. iv. 14. and whom he had *deliver'd unto Satan*, 1 Tim. i. 20.

6. This occaſion'd the Proſecutors to drop the Proſecution of *Paul*'s Friends, and to turn it into Acclamations in Honour of their Goddeſs, *v.* 34. *When they knew that he was a* Jew, and as ſuch, an Enemy to the Worſhip of *Diana*: for the *Jews* had now an implacable Hatred to Idols and Idolatry. Whatever he had to ſay for *Paul*, or againſt him, they were reſolved not to hear him, and therefore ſet the Mob a ſhouting, *Great is* Diana *of the* Epheſians. Whoever runs her down, be he *Jew* or *Chriſtian*, we are reſolv'd to cry her up; She is *Diana of the* Epheſians, our *Diana*; and it is our Honour and Happineſs to have her Temple *with us*. And ſhe is *great*, a famous Goddeſs, and univerſally ador'd. There are other *Diana*'s, but *Diana of the* Epheſians is beyond them all, becauſe her Temple is more rich and magnificent than any of theirs. This was all the Cry for *two Hours* together. And it was thought a ſufficient Confutation of *Paul*'s Doctrine, That they are *not Gods which are made with Hands*. And thus the moſt Sacred Truths are often run down with nothing elſe but Noiſe and Clamour, and popular Fury. It was ſaid of old concerning Idolaters, That *they wore mad upon their Idols*; and here's an Inſtance of it. *Diana* made the *Epheſians* great; for the Town was enrich'd by the vaſt Concourſe of People from all Parts to *Diana*'s Temple there, and *therefore* they are concern'd by all Means poſſible to keep up her ſinking Reputation with, *Great is* Diana *of the* Epheſians.

Fifthly, The ſuppreſſing and diſperſing of theſe Rioters, by the Prudence and Vigilance of the *Town-Clerk*; he is call'd, γραμματεὺς the *Scribe*, or Secretary; or Recorder; the Governour of the City, ſo ſome, The Regiſter of their Games, the *Olympick-Games*, ſo others; whoſe Buſineſs it was to preſerve the Names of the Victors, and the Prizes they won. With much ado, he at length ſtill'd the Noiſe, ſo as to be heard, and then made a *pacifick* Speech to them; and gave us an Inſtance of that of *Solomon*, *The Words of wiſe Men are heard in quiet, more than the Cry of him that rules among Fools*, as *Demetrius* did, *Eccleſ.* ix. 17.

1. He humours them with an Acknowledgement, That *Diana* was the celebrated Goddeſs of the *Epheſians*, *v.* 35. They needed not to be ſo loud and ſtrenuous in aſſerting a Truth which no Body deny'd, or could be ignorant of. Every one knows that *the City of the* Epheſians *was a Worſhipper of the great Goddeſs Diana?* Was νεωκόρος, not only that the Inhabitants were Worſhippers of this Goddeſs, but the City, as a Corporation, was by its Charter *intruſted* with the Worſhip of *Diana*, to take Care of her Temple, and to accommodate thoſe who came thither to do her Homage. *Epheſus* was the *Æditua*, (they ſay that's the moſt proper Word) or the *Sacriſt* of the great Goddeſs *Diana*. The City was more the Patroneſs and Protectreſs of *Diana*, than *Diana* was of the City. Such a mighty Care did Idolaters take for the keeping up the Worſhip of Gods made with Hands, while the Worſhip of the True and Living God is neglected; and few Nations or Cities glory in *patronizing* and *protecting* that. The Temple of *Diana* at *Epheſus*, was a very rich and ſumptuous Structure; but it ſhould ſeem, the Image of *Diana*, in the Temple, becauſe they thought it ſanctify'd the Temple, was had in greater Veneration than the Temple; for they perſuaded the People, that it *fell down from* Jupiter, and therefore was none of the *Gods that were made with Mens Hands*. See how eaſily the Credulity of ſuperſtitious People is impos'd upon by the Fraud of deſigning Men. Becauſe this Image of *Diana* had been ſet up *Time out of Miod*, and no Body could tell who made it, they made the People believe, it *fell down from* Jupiter.

Now *theſe Things*, ſaith the *Town-Clerk* very gravely, (but whether ſeriouſly or no, and as one that did himſelf believe them, may be queſtion'd) *cannot be ſpoken againſt*; they have obtain'd ſuch univerſal Credit, that you need not fear Contradiction, it can do you no Prejudice. Some take it thus; Seeing the Image of *Diana* fell down from *Jupiter*, as we all believe, then what is ſaid againſt *Gods made with Hands*, does not at all affect us.

2. He cautions them againſt all violent and tumultuous Proceedings, which their Religion did not need, nor could receive any real Advantage from, *v.* 36. *Ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing raſhly*. A very good Rule this is to be obſerv'd at all Times, both in private and publick Affairs; not to be haſty and precipitate in our Motions; but to deliberate, and take Time to conſider; not to put our ſelves or others into a Heat, but to be calm and compos'd, and always keep Reaſon in the Throne, and Paſſion under check. This Word ſhould be ready to us, to *command the Peace* with, when ourſelves or thoſe about us are growing diſorderly, *We ought to be quiet, and to do nothing raſhly*; to do nothing in Haſte, which we may repent of at leiſure.

3. He wip'd off the Odium that had been caſt upon *Paul* and his Aſſociates, and tells them, They were not the Men that they were repreſented to them to be, *v.* 37. *Ye have brought hither theſe Men*, and you are ready to pull them in pieces; but have you conſider'd what is their Tranſgreſſion, and what is their Offence; What can you prove upon them? They are not *Robbers of Churches*; you cannot charge them with *Sacriledge*, or the taking away of any dedicated Thing; they have offer'd no Violence to *Diana*'s Temple or the Treaſures of it; nor are they *Blaſphemers of your Goddeſs*; they have not given any opprobrious Language to the Worſhippers of *Diana*, nor ſpoken furiouſly of her or her Temple. Why ſhould you *proſecute* them with all this Violence, who, tho' they are not of *your Mind*, yet do not *inveigh* with any Bitterneſs againſt you; ſince they are *calm*, why ſhould you be *hot*? 'Twas the Idol in the Heart that they levell'd all their Force againſt, by Reaſon and Argument; if they can but get that *down*, the Idol in the Temple will fall of Courſe. Thoſe that preach againſt Idolatrous Churches, have Truth on their Side, and ought vigorouſly to maintain it, and preſs it on Mens Conſciences; but let them not be *Robbers of thoſe Churches*, (*on the Prey laid they not their Hand*, Eſth. ix. 15, 16.) nor *Blaſphemers of thoſe Worſhips*; *with Meekneſs inſtructing*; not with Paſſion and foul Language, reproaching *thoſe that oppoſe themſelves*: For God's Truth, as it *needs not Man's Lye*, ſo it needs not Man's intemperate Heat; The *Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of GOD*.

4. He turns them over to the regular Methols of the Law, which ought always to ſuperſede popular Tumults, and in civiliz'd well-govern'd Nations will do ſo. And a great Mercy it is to live in a Country where Proviſion is made for the keeping of the Peace, and the Adminiſtration of publick Juſtice; and the Appointing a *Remedy* for every *Wrong*. And herein, we of this Nation are as happy as any People.

(1.) If the Complaint was of a *private Injury*, let them have Recourſe to the Judges and Courts of Juſtice which were kept publickly, at ſtated Times: If *Demetrius* and the Company of the *Silver-Smiths*, that have made all this Rout, find themſelves aggrieved, or any Priviledge they are legally entitled to, is infring'd or intrench'd upon, let them *bring their Action*, take out a Proceſs, and the Matter ſhall be fairly try'd, and Juſtice done; *The Law is open*, and *there are Deputies*; There's a *Proconſul* and his *Delegate*, whoſe Buſineſs it is to *hear* both Sides, and to *determine* according to Equity, and in their Determination all Parties muſt acquieſce, and not be their own Judges, nor *Appeal to the People*. *Note*, The Law is good if a Man uſe it lawfully, as the laſt Remedy, both for the *Diſcovery* of a Right *diſputed*, and the *Recovery* of a Right *deny'd*.

2. If the Complaint was of a *publick Grievance* relating to the Conſtitution, it muſt be *redreſs'd*, not by a confuſs'd Rabble, but by a *Convention of the States*, *v.* 39. *If ye inquire any Thing concerning other Matters* that are of common Concern, it ſhall be *determin'd in a lawful Aſſembly* of the Aldermen and Common Conncil call'd together in a regular Way, by thoſe in Authority. *Note*, Private Perſons ſhould not intermeddle in publick Matters, ſo as to anticipate the Counſels of thoſe whoſe Buſineſs it is to take Cognizance of them; We have enough to do to mind our own Buſineſs.

5. He makes them ſenſible of the Danger they were in, and of the *Premunire* they had *run themſelves into* by this Riot, *v.* 40. 'Tis well if we be not *call'd in Queſtion for this Days Uproar*, if we be not complain'd of at the Emperor's Court, as a factious and ſeditious City, and if a *Quo Warranto* be not brought againſt us, and our Charter taken away; for *there's no Cauſe whereby we may give an Account of this Concourſe*, we have nothing to ſay in excuſe of it; we cannot juſtify ourſelves in *breaking the* Peace, by ſaying that others broke it firſt, and we only acted defenſively; we have no Colour for any ſuch Plea; and therefore let the Matter go no further, for it has gone too far already. *Note*, Moſt People ſtand in awe of Mens Judgement, more than the Judgement of God. How well were it, if we would thus ſtill the Tumult of our diſorderly Appetites and Paſſions, and check the Violence of them, with the Conſideration of the Account we muſt ſhortly give to the Judge of Heaven and Earth for all theſe Diſorders. *We are in danger to be call'd in Queſtion for this Day's Uproar* in our Hearts, and in our Houſes, and how ſhall we anſwer it; *there being no Cauſe*, no juſt Cauſe, or no proportionable one, *whereby we may give an Account of this Concourſe*, and of this Heat and Violence. As we muſt repreſs the Inordinacy of our Appetites, ſo alſo of our Paſſions with this, that *For all thoſe Things God will bring us into Judgement*, Eccl.. xi. 9. and we are concern'd to manage our ſelves *as thoſe that muſt give an Account*.

6. When he had thus ſhew'd them the Abſurdity of their riotous Meeting, and the ill Conſequences that might follow from it, he adviſ'd them to *ſcatter* with all ſpeed, *v.* 41. he *diſmiſs'd the Aſſembly*; order'd the Cryer, perhaps, to give Notice that all Manner of Perſons ſhould peaceably depart, and go a-

bout their own Buſineſs, and they did ſo. See here (1.) How the over-ruling Providence of God preſerves the publick Peace, by an unaccountable Power over the Spirits of Men: And thus the World is kept in ſome Order, and Men are reſtrain'd from being *as the Fiſhes of the Sea where the greater devour the leſſer.* Conſidering what an impetuous furious Thing, what an ungovernable, untameable wild Beaſt the Mob is, when it is up, we ſhall ſee Reaſon to acknowledge God's Goodneſs that we are not always under the Tyranny of it. He *ſtills the Noiſe of the Sea,* the *Noiſe of her Waves,* and (which is no leſs an Inſtance of his Almighty Power) *the Tumult of the People,* Pſ. lxv. 7. (2.) See how many Ways God has of protecting his People. Perhaps this Town-Clerk was no Friend at all to *Paul,* or the Goſpel he preach'd, yet his *human Prudence* is made to ſerve the *Divine Purpoſe; Many are the Troubles of the Righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all.*

CPAP. XX.

In this Chapter we have (1.) Paul's *Travels up and down about* Macedonia, Greece, *and* Aſia, *and his Coming at length to* Troas, *v.* 1---6. (2.) *A particular Account of his ſpending one Lord's Day at* Troas, *and his raiſing* Eutychus *to Life there, v.* 7---12, (3.) *His Progreſs or Circuit for the Viſiting of the Churches he had planted, in his Way towards* Jeruſalem, *where he deſign'd to be by the next Feaſt of Pentecoſt, v.* 13---16. (4.) *The Farewell-Sermon he preach'd to the Presbyters of* Epheſus, *now he was leaving that Country, v.* 17---35. (5.) *The very ſorrowful parting between him and them, v.* 36---38. *And in all theſe we find* Paul *very buſy to ſerve Chriſt, and to do good to the Souls of Men, not only in the Converſion of Heathens, but the Edification of Chriſtians.*

1 AND after the uproar was ceaſed, Paul called unto him the diſciples, and embraced *them,* and departed to go into Macedonia. 2 And when he had gone over thoſe parts, and had given them much exhortation he came into Greece, 3 And *there* abode three months: and when the Jews laid wait for him as he was about to ſail into Syria, he purpoſed to return through Macedonia. 4 And there accompanied him into Aſia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Theſſalonians, Ariſtarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Aſia, Tychicus and Trophimus. 5 Theſe going before, tarried for us at Troas. 6 And we ſailed away from Philippi, after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we abode ſeven days.

Theſe Travels of *Paul,* which are thus *briefly* related, if all in them had been recorded that was memorable, and worthy to be written in Letters of Gold, the World would not have contained the Books that ſhould be written; and therefore we have only ſome general Hints of Occurrences, which therefore ought to be the more precious. Here is,

Firſt, Paul's Departure from *Epheſus:* He had tarry'd there longer than he had done at any one Place ſince he was ordain'd to the Apoſtleſhip of the *Gentiles;* and now it was Time to think of removing, for he muſt preach in other Cities alſo: But after this to the End of the Scripture-Hiſtory of his Life (which is all we can depend upon) we never find him breaking up freſh Ground again, nor preaching the Goſpel *there where Chriſt had not been Named,* as hitherto he had done, *Rom.* xv. 20. for in the Cloſe of the next Chapter, we find him made a Priſoner and ſo *continued,* and ſo *leſt,* at the End of this Book.

1. *Paul* left *Epheſus* ſoon *after the Uproar was ceaſed;* looking upon that Diſturbance he met with there to be an Indication of Providence to him, not to ſtay there any longer, *v.* 1. His Remove might ſomewhat appeaſe the Rage of his Adverſaries, and gain better Quarter for the Chriſtians there; *Currenti cede furori.* 'Tis good to lie by in a Storm. Yet ſome think, that before he now left *Epheſus,* he wrote the firſt Epiſtle to the *Corinthians,* and that his fighting with Beaſts at *Epheſus,* which he mentions in that Epiſtle, was a figurative Deſcription of this Uproar; But I rather take that literally.

2. He did not leave them abruptly and in a fright, but took Leave of them ſolemnly. He *call'd unto him the Diſciples,* the principal Perſons of the Congregation, and embrac'd them, took leave of them (ſaith the *Syriack*) with the *Kiſs of Love,* according to the Uſage of the Primitive Church. Loving Friends know not how well they love one another till they come to part, and then it appears how near they lay to one another's Hearts.

Secondly, His Viſitation of the *Greek Churches,* which he had *planted,* and more than once *watered,* and which appear to have lain very near his Heart.

1. He went firſt to *Macedonia, v.* 1. according to his *purpoſe* before the Uproar, *chap.* xix. 21. there he viſited the Churches of *Philippi,* and *Theſſalonica;* and *gave them much Exhortation, v.* 2. *Paul's* Viſits to his Friends were *preaching* Viſits, and his Preaching was large and copious, he *gave them much Exhortation.* He had a great deal to ſay to them, and did not ſtint himſelf in Time. He exhorted them to many Duties, in many Caſes, and (as ſome read it) with *many Reaſonings.* He enforc'd his Exhortation with a great Variety of Motives and Arguments.

2. He *ſtay'd three Months in Greece, v.* 2, 3. *i. e.* in *Achaia,* as ſome think, for thither alſo he purpoſed to go, to *Corinth,* and thereabout, *chap.* xix. 21. and no Doubt there alſo he gave the Diſciples *much Exhortation,* to direct and confirm them, and engage them to cleave to the Lord.

Thirdly, The Altering of his Meaſures; for we cannot always ſtand to our Purpoſes. Accidents unforeſeen put us upon new Counſels, which oblige us to purpoſe with a Proviſo.

1. *Paul* was about to ſail into *Syria,* to *Antioch,* from whence he was firſt ſent out into the Service of the *Gentiles,* and which therefore in his Journies he generally contriv'd to take in his Way; But he chang'd his Mind, and reſolv'd to return through *Macedonia,* the ſame Way he came.

2. The Reaſon was, becauſe the *Jews* expecting he would ſteer that Courſe as uſual, had *way-laid* him, deſigning to be the Death of him; ſince they could not get him out of the Way by ſtirring up both Mobs and Magiſtrates againſt him, which they had often attempted, they contriv'd to aſſaſſinate him. Some think they laid wait for him to rob him of the Money that he was carrying to *Jeruſalem,* for the Relief of the Poor Saints there; but conſidering how very ſpiteful the *Jews* were againſt him, I ſuppoſe they thirſted for his Blood, more than for his Money.

Fourthly, His Companions in his Travels when he went into *Aſia.* They are here nam'd, *v.* 4. ſome of them were Miniſters, whether they were all ſo or no is not certain. *Sopater* of *Berea,* 'tis likely is the ſame with *Soſipater,* who is mention'd, *Rom.* xvi. 21. *Timothy* is reckon'd among them; for tho' *Paul* when he departed from *Epheſus, v.* 1. left *Timothy* there, and afterwards wrote his firſt Epiſtle to him thither, to direct him as an Evangeliſt how to ſettle the Church there, and in what Hands to leave it, ſee 1 *Tim.* i. 3, iii. 14, 15. which Epiſtle was intended for Direction to *Timothy* what to do, not only at *Epheſus,* where he now was, but alſo at other Places where he ſhould be in like Manner left, or whither he ſhould be ſent to reſide as an Evangeliſt; and not to him only, but to other of the Evangeliſts that attended *Paul,* and were in like Manner employ'd; yet he ſoon follow'd him, and accompany'd him with others here nam'd.

Now One would think this was no good Huſbandry to have all theſe worthy Men *accompanying* Paul, for there was *more* Need of them where *Paul* was *not,* than where *he was:* But ſo it was order'd,

1. That they might *aſſiſt* him in Inſtructing ſuch as by his Preaching were awaken'd and ſtartled: Wherever *Paul* came, the *Waters were ſtir'd,* and then there was Need of many Hands to help the Cripples in; 'twas Time to *ſtrike* when the Iron was *hot.*

2. That they might be *train'd up* by him, and fitted for future Service; might *fully know his Doctrine, and Manner of Life,* 2 *Tim.* iii. 10. *Paul's* bodily Preſence was weak and deſpicable, and therefore theſe Friends of his accompany'd him to put a Reputation upon him, and to keep him in Countenance, and to intimate to Strangers, who would be apt to judge by the Sight of the Eye, that he had a great deal in him truly valuable, which was not diſcover'd upon the *outward Appearance.*

Fifthly, His Coming to *Troas,* where he had appointed a general Rendezvous of his Friends.

1. They *went before* and *ſtay'd for him at* Troas, *v.* 5. deſigning to go along with him to *Jeruſalem,* as *Trophimus* particularly did, *chap.* xxi. 29. We ſhould not think it hard to *ſtay a While* for good Company in a Journey.

1. *Paul* made the beſt of his Way thither; and it ſhould ſeem *Luke* was now in Company with him; for he ſaith, *We* ſail'd from *Philippi, v.* 6. and the firſt Time we find him in his Company, was here at *Troas,* chap. xvi. 11. The *Days of Unleavened Bread,* are mention'd only to deſcribe the Time, not to intimate that *Paul* kept the Paſſover, after the Manner of the *Jews;* for juſt about this Time he had written in his firſt Epiſtle to the Church of *Corinth,* and taught that Chriſt is *our Paſſover,* and a Chriſtian Life our Feaſt of Unleavened Bread, 1 *Cor.* v. 7, 8. And when the Subſtance was come, the Shadow was done away. He came to them to *Troas* by Sea, *in five Days,* and when he was there, ſtay'd but *ſeven Days.* There's no Remedy but a great deal of Time will unavoidably be loſt in traveling to and fro by thoſe who *go about doing Good;* yet it ſhall not be put upon the Score of loſt Time: *Paul* thought it worth while to beſtow five Days in going to *Troas* though it was but for an Opportunity of *ſeven Days* ſtay there. But he knew, and ſo ſhould we, how to redeem even journeying Time, and make it turn to ſome good Account.

7 And upon the firſt *day* of the week, when the diſciples came together to break bread, Paul preach'd unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his ſpeech until midnight. 8 And there were

many lights in the upper chamber where they were
gathered together. 9 And there ſat in a window
a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen
into a deep ſleep: and as Paul was long preaching,
he ſunk down with ſleep, and fell down from the
third loft, and was taken up dead. 10 And Paul
went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him*,
ſaid, Trouble not your ſelves; for his life is in him.
11 When he therefore was come up again, and had
broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while,
even till break of day, ſo he departed. 12 And
they brought the young man alive, and were not a
little comforted.

We have here an Account of what paſs'd at *Troas*, the laſt of the ſeven Days that *Paul* ſtaid there.

Firſt, There was a ſolemn religious Aſſembly of the Chriſtians that were there, according to their conſtant Cuſtom, and the Cuſtom of all the Churches.

1. The *Diſciples came together*, *v.* 7. Tho' they read, and meditated, and pray'd, and ſung Pſalms a-part, and thereby kept up their Communion with GOD; yet that is not enough, they muſt *come together* to worſhip GOD in Concert, and ſo keep up their Communion with one another, by mutual Countenance and Aſſiſtance, and teſtify their ſpiritual Communion with all good Chriſtians. There ought to be ſtated Times for the Diſciples of Chriſt to *come together*; tho' they cannot all come together in one Place, yet as many as can.

2. They came together *upon the firſt Day of the Week*, which they call'd the *Lord's-Day*, Rev. i. 10. The *Chriſtian-Sabbath*, celebrated to the Honour of Chriſt and the Holy Spirit in Remembrance of the Reſurrection of Chriſt, and the Pouring out of the Spirit, both on the *firſt Day of the Week*. This is here ſaid to be *the Day when the Diſciples came together*, i. e. when it was their Practice to come together, in all the Churches. *Note*, The firſt Day of the Week is to be religiouſly obſerv'd by all the Diſciples of Chriſt, and it is a *Sign* between Chriſt and them; for by this it is known that they are his Diſciples. And it is to be obſerv'd *in ſolemn Aſſemblies*, which are as it were the *Courts* held in the Name of our Lord Jeſus, and to his Honour, by his Miniſters, the Stewards of his Courts, and to which all that hold from and under him owe Suit and Service, and at which they are to make their Appearance, as Tenants at their Lord's-Courts, and the firſt Day of the Week is appointed to be the *Court-Day*.

3. They were gather'd together *in an Upper-Chamber*, *v.* 8. They had no Temple or Synagogue to meet in, no capacious ſtately Chappel, but met in a private Houſe, in a Garret. As they were *few* and did not *need*, ſo they were *poor* and could not *build* a large Meeting-Place; yet they *came together* in that deſpicable inconvenient Place. It will be no Excuſe for our abſenting ourſelves from religious Aſſemblies, That the Place of them is not ſo decent or ſo commodious as we would have it be.

4. They came together to *break Bread*, *i. e.* to celebrate the Ordinance of the Lord's-Supper; that one inſtituted Sign of *breaking the Bread*, being put for all the reſt; The *Bread which we break is the Communion of the Body of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. x. 16. In the breaking of the Bread, not only the Breaking of Chriſt's Body for us to be a Sacrifice for our Sins is commemorated, but the Breaking of Chriſt's Body for us to be Food and a Feaſt for our Souls is ſignify'd. In the Primitive Times it was the Cuſtom of many Churches to receive the *Lord's-Supper* every *Lord's-Day*; celebrating the Memorial of Chriſt's Death in the former, with that of his Reſurrection in the latter; and both *in Concert*, in a ſolemn Aſſembly to teſtify their joynt concurrence in the Faith and Worſhip.

Secondly, In this Aſſembly *Paul* gave them a Sermon, a long Sermon, a Farewel Sermon, *v.* 7.

1. He gave them a *Sermon*, he *preach'd to them*; tho' they were *Diſciples* already, yet it was very neceſſary they ſhould have the *Word of God* preach'd to them, in order to their Increaſe in Knowledge and Grace. *Obſerve*, The Preaching of the Goſpel ought to accompany the Sacraments: *Moſes* read the *Book of the Covenant in the Audience of the People*, and then ſprinkled the Blood of the Covenant, which the Lord had *made with them concerning all theſe Words*, Exod. xxvi. 7, 8. What doth the Seal ſignify without a Writing?

2. 'Twas a *Farewel*-Sermon; he being *ready to depart on the Morrow*; when he was gone they might have the ſame Goſpel preach'd, but not *as* he preach'd it; and therefore they muſt make the beſt Uſe of him that they could while they had him. Farewel Sermons uſe to be in a particular Manner affecting both to the Preacher and to the Hearers.

3. 'Twas a very *long* Sermon; he *continu'd his Speech until Midnight*. For he had a great deal to ſay, and knew not that ever he ſhould have another Opportunity of Preaching to them. After they had receiv'd the Lord's-Supper, he preach'd to them the Duties they had thereby engag'd themſelves to, and the Comforts they were intereſted in, and in this he was very large, and full, and particular. There may be Occaſion for Miniſters to preach not only in Seaſon, but *out of Seaſon*. We know ſome that would have reproach'd *Paul* for this, as a *long-winded* Preacher that tir'd his Hearers; but they were willing to hear, he ſaw them ſo, and therefore *continu'd his Speech*. He continu'd it *till Midnight*; perhaps they met in the Evening, for Privacy, or in Conformity to the Example of the Diſciples, who came together on the firſt Chriſtian-Sabbath *in the Evening*. 'Tis likely he had preach'd to them in the Morning; and yet thus lengthen'd out his Evening-Sermon even till Midnight; we wiſh we had the Heads of this long Sermon, but we may ſuppoſe 'twas for Subſtance the ſame with his Epiſtles. The Meeting being continu'd till Midnight, there were *Candles ſet up*; *many Lights*, *v.* 8. that the Hearers might turn to the Scriptures *Paul* quoted, and ſee *whether theſe Things were ſo*: And that this might prevent the Reproach of their Enemies, who ſaid they met in the Night for *Works of Darkneſs*.

Thirdly, A Young Man in the Congregation that ſlept at Sermon, was kill'd by a Fall out of the Window, but rais'd to Life again. His Name ſignifies one that had *good Fortune*, *Eutychus*, *bene Fortunatus*; and he anſwer'd his Name. *Obſerve*,

1. The *Infirmity* with which he was *overtaken*. 'Tis likely his Parents brought him, though but a Boy to the Aſſembly, out of a Deſire to have him well inſtructed in the Things of GOD, by ſuch a Preacher as *Paul*. Parents ſhould bring their Children to *hear Sermons*, as ſoon as they can *hear with Underſtanding*, Neh. viii. 2. even the *Little Ones*, Deut. xxix. 11. Now this Youth was to be blam'd, (1.) That he preſumptuouſly *ſate in the Window*, unglaz'd perhaps, and ſo expos'd himſelf, whereas if he could have been content to ſit on the Floor he had been ſafe. Boys that love to climb, or otherwiſe endanger themſelves to the grief of their Parents, conſider not how much it is alſo an Offence to GOD. (2.) That he *ſlept*, nay, *he fell into a deep Sleep* when *Paul* was preaching; which was a Sign he had not duly attended to the Things that *Paul* ſpoke of, tho' they were weighty Things. The particular Notice taken of *his* ſleeping makes us willing to hope none of the reſt ſlept; though it was ſleeping Time; and after Supper. But this Youth fell *faſt aſleep*; he was *carry'd away with it*. So the Word is, which intimates that he ſtrove againſt it, but was overpower'd by it, and at laſt *ſunk down with Sleep*.

2. The *Calamity* with which he was ſeiz'd herein. *He fell down from the Third Loft, and was taken up Dead.* Some think the Hand of Satan was in it by the Divine Permiſſion, and that he deſign'd it for a Diſturbance to this Aſſembly, and a Reproach to *Paul* and it: Others think, GOD deſign'd it for a Warning to all People to take heed of *Sleeping* when they are Hearing the Word preach'd; and certainly we are to make that Uſe of it. We muſt look upon it as an evil Thing, as a bad Sign of our low Eſteem of the Word of GOD, and a great Hinderance to our profiting by it. We muſt be afraid of it, do what we can to prevent our being ſleepy, not compoſe ourſelves to ſleep; but get our Hearts affected, with the Word we hear, to ſuch a Degree as may drive Sleep far enough: Let us *watch and pray, that we enter not into* this *Temptation*, and by it into worſe. Let the Puniſhment of *Eutychus* ſtrike an Awe upon us, and ſhew us how jealous GOD is in the Matters of his Worſhip; *Be not deceiv'd, God is not mock'd.* See how ſeverely GOD viſited an Iniquity that ſeem'd little, and but in a Youth, and ſay, *Who is able to ſtand before this Holy Lord God?* Apply to this Story that Lamentation, *Jer.* ix. 20, 21. *Hear the Word of the Lord, for Death is come up into our Windows to cut off the Children from without, and the Young Men from the Streets.*

3. The miraculous Mercy ſhew'd him in his Recovery to Life again, *v.* 10. It gave a preſent Diſtraction to the Aſſembly, and an Interruption to *Paul*'s Preaching, but it prov'd an Occaſion of that which was a great Confirmation to his Preaching, and help'd to ſet it home, and make it effectual.

1. *Paul fell on the dead Body*, and *embrac'd* it; thereby expreſſing a great *Compaſſion* to, and an affectionate *Concern* for this Young Man; ſo far was he from ſaying, He was well enough ſerv'd for minding ſo little what I ſaid. Such tender Spirits as *Paul* had, are much affected with ſad Accidents of this Kind, and are far from judging and cenſuring thoſe that fall under them, as if thoſe on whom the *Tower of Siloam* fell, were *Sinners* above all that dwelt at *Jeruſalem*; *I tell you nay.* But this was not all; his *Falling on him* and *Embracing* was in imitation of *Elijah*, 2 Kings xvii. 21. and *Eliſha*, 2 Kings iv. 32. in order to the Raiſing of him to Life again; not that this could *as a Means* contribute any Thing to it; but *as a Sign*, it repreſented the Deſcent of that Divine Power upon the dead Body, for the putting of Life into it again, which at the ſame Time he inwardly, earneſtly, and in Faith pray'd for.

2. He aſſur'd them, That *he was return'd to Life*, and it would appear preſently: Various Speculations, we may ſuppoſe, this ill Accident had occaſion'd in the Congregation, but *Paul* puts an end to them all, *Trouble not yourſelves*, Be not in any Diſorder about it, Let it not put you into any hurry; for *his Life is in him. He is not dead, but ſleepeth*; lay him a while upon a Bed, and he will come to himſelf, for he is now alive. Thus when Chriſt rais'd *Lazarus*, he ſaid, *Father, I thank thee that thou haſt heard me.*

3. He return'd to his Work, immediately after this Interruption, *v.* 11. He *came up again* to the Meeting; they *broke Bread* together in a *Love-Feaſt*, which uſually attended the Euchariſt in Token of their Communion with each other, and for the Confirmation of Friendſhip among them; and they *talk'd a long while, even till break of Day*: *Paul* did not now go on in a continued Diſcourſe as before, but he and his Friends fell into a free Converſation, the Subject of which no doubt was *Good, and to the Uſe of Edifying*. Chriſtian Conference is an excellent Means of promoting Holineſs, Comfort, and Chriſtian Love. They knew not when they ſhould have *Paul*'s Company again, and therefore made the beſt Uſe they could of it when they had it; and reckon'd a Night's Sleep well loſt, for that Purpoſe.

4. Before they parted they *brought the Young Man alive* into the Congregation, every One congratulating him upon his Return to Life from the Dead, and *they were not a little comforted*, *v.* 12. It was the Matter of great Rejoycing among them, not only to the Relations of the Young Man, but to the whole Society, as it not only prevented the Reproach that would otherwiſe have been caſt upon them, but contributed very much to the Credit of the Goſpel.

13 And we went before to ſhip, and ſailed unto Aſſos, there intending to take in Paul: for ſo had he appointed, minding himſelf to go a foot. 14 And when he met with us at Aſſos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. 15 And we ſailed thence and came the next *day* over againſt Chios: and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus. 16 For Paul had determined to ſail by Epheſus, becauſe he would not ſpend the time in Aſia: for he haſted, if it were poſſible for him, to be at Jeruſalem the day of Pentecoſt.

Paul is haſtening towards *Jeruſalem*, but ſtrives to do all the Good he can by the Way, ὡς ἐν παρόδῳ, as it were on the Bye: He had call'd at *Troas*, and done Good there; and now he makes a ſort of a *Coaſting* Voyage, the Merchants would call it a *Trading* Voyage, going from Place to Place, and no doubt endeavouring to make *every Place* he came to the *better for him*, as every good Man ſhould do.

Firſt, He ſent his Companions by Sea to *Aſſos*, but he himſelf was *minded to go a foot*, *v.* 13. He had decreed or determin'd within himſelf, that whatever Importunity ſhould be us'd with him to the contrary, urging either his Eaſe or his Credit, or the Conveniency of a Ship that offer'd itſelf, or the Company of his Friends, he would *foot it* to *Aſſos*: And if the *Land-way* which *Paul* took was the ſhorter Way, yet it is taken Notice of by the Ancients as a *rough* Way, (*Homer. Illiad.* vi. and *Euſtathius* upon him, ſay, 'Twas enough to *kill One* to go *on Foot* to *Aſſos*, *Lorin. in loc.*) yet that Way *Paul* would take;

1. That he might call on his Friends by the Way, and do Good among them, either converting Sinners, or edifying Saints; and in both he was ſerving his Great Maſter, and carrying on his great Work. Or,

2. That he might be *alone*, and might have the greater freedom of Converſe with GOD and his own Heart in Solitude. He lov'd his Companions, and delighted in their Company, yet he would ſhew hereby that he did not need it, but could *enjoy himſelf* alone. Or,

3. That he might enure himſelf to Hardſhip, and not ſeem to indulge his Eaſe. Thus he would by voluntary Inſtances of Mortification and Self-denial, *keep under the Body*, and *bring it into ſubjection*, that he might make his Sufferings for Chriſt, when he was call'd out to them, the more eaſy, 2 *Tim.* ii. 3. We ſhould uſe ourſelves to deny ourſelves.

Secondly, At *Aſſos* he *went on board* with his Friends, there they *took him in*; for by this Time he had enough of his Walk, and was willing to betake himſelf to the other Way of travelling: Or, perhaps he could not go any further by Land, but was oblig'd to go by Water. When Chriſt ſent his Diſciples away by Ship, and tarry'd himſelf behind, yet he came to them, and they *took him in*, Mark vi. 45, 51.

Thirdly, He made the beſt of his Way to *Jeruſalem*; His Ship paſs'd by *Chios*, *v.* 15. touch'd at *Samos*, (theſe are Places of Note among the *Greek* Writers, both Poets, and Hiſtorians.) They *tarry'd* a While at *Trogyllium*, the Sea-port next to *Samos*; and the next Day they came to *Miletus*, the Sea-port that lay next to *Epheſus*; for *v.* 16. he had determin'd not to go to *Epheſus* at this Time, becauſe he could not go thither, but he would be urg'd by his Friends, whoſe Importunity he could not reſiſt, to make ſome Stay with them there; and becauſe he was reſolv'd not to *ſtay*, he would not put himſelf into a Temptation to ſtay; *for he haſted if it were poſſible for him to be at* Jeruſalem, *the Day of Pentecoſt*. He had been at *Jeruſalem*, about four or five Years ago, *chap.* xviii. 21, 22. And now he was for going thither again to pay his *continu'd* Reſpects to that Church, which he was careful to keep a good Correſpondence with, that he might not be thought alienated from it by his Commiſſion to preach among the *Gentiles*. He aim'd to be there by *the Feaſt of Pentecoſt*, becauſe it was a Time of Concourſe, which would give him an Opportunity of Propagating the Goſpel among the *Jews* and Proſelytes, who came from all Parts to worſhip at the Feaſt: And the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt* had been particularly made famous among the Chriſtians, by the Pouring out of the Spirit. *Note*, Men of Buſineſs muſt fit themſelves, and it will contribute to the expediting of it, to ſet a Time (with ſubmiſſion to Providence) and ſtrive to keep it; contriving to do that firſt which we judge to be moſt needful, and not ſuffering ourſelves to be diverted from it. It is a Pleaſure to us to be *with our Friends*, it *diverts us*, nothing more; but we muſt not by it be *diverted* from our Work. When *Paul* has a Call to *Jeruſalem*, he will not *loyter* away the Time in *Aſia*, though he had more and kinder Friends there. This is not the World we are to be together in; we hope to be ſo in the other World.

17 ¶ And from Miletus he ſent to Epheſus, and called the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he ſaid unto them, Ye know, from the firſt day that I came into Aſia, after what manner I have been with you at all ſeaſons, 19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews: 20 *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have ſhewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from houſe to houſe, 21 Teſtifying both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. 22 And now behold I go bound in the ſpirit unto Jeruſalem, not knowing the things that ſhall befall me there. 23 Save that the holy Ghoſt witneſſeth in every city, ſaying, that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But none of theſe things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my ſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy, and the miniſtry, which I have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtifie the goſpel of the grace of God. 25 And now behold I know that ye all among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, ſhall ſee my face no more. 26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the counſel of God. 28 ¶ Take heed therefore unto your ſelves, and to all the flock, over the which the holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing ſhall grievous wolves enter in among you, not ſparing the flock. 30 Alſo of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things, to draw away diſciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that by the ſpace of three years, I ceaſed not to warn every one night and day with tears. 32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are ſanctified. 33 I have coveted no mans ſilver, or gold, or apparel. 34 Yea, you your ſelves know, that theſe hands have miniſtred unto my neceſſities, and to them that were with me. 35 I have ſhewed unto you all things, how that ſo labouring ye ought to ſupport the weak; and to remember the words of our Lord Jeſus, how he ſaid, It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.

It ſhould ſeem the Ship *Paul* and his Companions were embark'd in for *Jeruſalem*, attended him on Purpoſe, and ſtay'd or mov'd as he pleas'd; for when he came to *Miletus*, he went aſhore, and tarry'd there ſo long as to *ſend for* the Elders of *Epheſus* to *come to him* thither; for if he ſhould have gone up to *Epheſus*, he could never have got away from them. Theſe *Elders* or *Presbyters*, ſome think were thoſe *twelve* who receiv'd the Holy Ghoſt by *Paul*'s Hands, *chap.* xix. 6. But beſides thoſe, 'tis likely *Timothy* had ordain'd other *Elders* there for the Service of that Church, and the Country about; Theſe *Paul* ſent for that he might inſtruct and encourage them to go on in the Work to which they had laid their Hands. And what Inſtructions he gave to them, they would give to the People under their Charge.

'Tis a very pathetical and practical Diſcourſe with which *Paul* here takes leave of the Elders, and has in it much of the excellent Spirit of this good Man.

1. He appeals to them concerning both his *Life* and *Doctrine*, all the Time he had been in and about *Epheſus*, *v.* 18. *Ye know after what Manner I have been with you*, and how I have done the Work of an Apoſtle among you. He mentions this, (1.) As a *Confirmation* of his *Commiſſion*, and conſequently of the Doctrine he had preach'd among them. They all knew him to be a Man of a ſerious, gracious, heavenly Spirit, that he was no deſigning ſelf-ſeeking Man, as Seducers us'd to be: He could not have been carry'd on with ſo much Evenneſs and Conſtancy in his Services and Sufferings, but by the Power of divine Grace. The Temper of his Mind, and the Tenour both of his Preaching and Converſation was ſuch, as plainly ſpoke that God was with him of a Truth, and that he was acted and animated by a better Spirit than his own. (2.) As an *Inſtruction* to them in whoſe Hands the Work was now left, to follow his Example. *You know after what Manner I have been with you*, how I have carry'd myſelf as a Miniſter; in like Manner be you with thoſe that are committed to your Charge when I am gone, *Phil.* iv. 9. *What you have ſeen in me* that's good, *do*.

2. His *Spirit* and *Converſation* were *excellent* and *exemplary*: They knew *after what Manner he had been among them*, and how he had had his Converſation *towards them*, in *Simplicity*, *and godly Sincerity*, 2 Cor. i. 12. How *holily*, *juſtly*, and *unblameably* he *behav'd himſelf*, and how *gentle* he was *towards them*, 1 Theſſ. ii. 7, 10.

(1.) He had carry'd himſelf well *all along*, *from the* very *firſt Day that he came into* Aſia; *at all Seaſons*; the Manner of his *entering in* among them was ſuch as no Body could find fault with. He appear'd from the firſt Day they knew him to be a Man that aim'd not only to *do well*, but to *do Good*, where-ever he came. He was a Man that was conſiſtent with himſelf, and all of a Piece; Take him where you would, he was the ſame *at all Seaſons*, did not turn with the Wind, nor change with the Weather, but was uniform, like a Die, that throw it which way you will, lights on a ſquare Side.

(2.) He had made it his Buſineſs to *ſerve the Lord*; to promote the Honour of God, and the Intereſt of Chriſt and his Kingdom among them; he never ſerv'd himſelf, nor made himſelf a *Servant of Men*, of their Luſts and Humours, nor was he a Time-ſerver; but he made it his Buſineſs to *ſerve the LORD*: In his Miniſtry, in his whole Converſation, he *prov'd* himſelf what he *wrote* himſelf, *Paul, a Servant of Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom. i. 1.

(3.) He had done his Work *with all Humility of Mind*, μετὰ πάσης ταπεινοφροσύνης, i. e. in all Inſtances of Condeſcenſion, Modeſty, and Self-abaſement. Tho' he was One that God had put a great deal of Honour upon, and done a great deal of Good by, yet he never took State upon him, nor kept People at a Diſtance; but *convers'd* as *freely* and *familiarly* with the *Meaneſt* for their Good, as if he had ſtood *upon a level* with them. He was willing to ſtoop to any Service, and to make *himſelf* and his *Labours* as *cheap* as they could deſire. *Note*, Thoſe that would in any Office ſerve the Lord acceptably to him, and profitably to others, muſt do it with *Humility of Mind*, *Matth.* xx. 26, 27.

(4.) He had always been very tender, affectionate, and compaſſionate among them; he had *ſerv'd the* Lord *with many Tears*. *Paul* was herein like his Maſter, oft in Tears; In his Praying, he *wept and made Supplication*, Hoſ. xii. 4. In his Preaching, what he had told 'em before, he told 'em again, *even weeping*, Phil. iii. 19. In his Concern for them, tho' his Acquaintance with them was but of a late ſtanding, yet ſo near did they lie to his Heart, that he *wept with them that wept*, and mingled his Tears with theirs upon Occaſion, which was very endearing.

(5.) He had ſtruggled with many Difficulties among them: He went on in his Work in the Face of much Oppoſition, *many Temptations*, Trials of his Patience and Courage, ſuch Diſcouragements, as perhaps were ſometimes *Temptations* to him, as to *Jeremiah* in a like Caſe, to ſay, *I will not ſpeak any more in the Name of the LORD*, Jer. xx. 8, 9. Theſe befel him *by the laying in wait of the* Jews, who ſtill were plotting ſome Miſchief or other againſt him. *Note*, Thoſe are the faithful Servants of the Lord, that continue to ſerve him in the midſt of Troubles and Perils, that care not what Enemies they make, ſo they can but approve themſelves to their Maſter and make him their Friend. *Paul*'s Tears were owing to his *Temptation*; his Afflictions help'd to excite his good Affections.

3. His *Preaching* was likewiſe ſuch as it ſhould be, *v.* 20, 21. He came to *Epheſus* to preach the Goſpel of Chriſt among them, and he had been faithful both to them, and to him that appointed him.

1. He was a *plain* Preacher, and One that deliver'd his Meſſage ſo as to be *underſtood*: This is intimated in two Words, *I have ſhew'd you*, *and have taught you*; he did not *amuſe* them with nice Speculations, nor lead them *into*, and then loſe them *in* the Clouds of lofty Notions and Expreſſions; but he *ſhew'd* them the plain Truths of the Goſpel, which were of greateſt Conſequence and Importance, and *taught them* as Children are taught. I have *ſhew'd you* the right Way to Happineſs, and *taught you to go* in it.

2. He was a *powerful* Preacher; intimated in his *teſtifying* to them: He preach'd as One upon Oath, that was himſelf fully aſſur'd of the Truth of what he preach'd, and was deſirous to *convince* them of it, and to *influence* and *govern* them by it. He preach'd the Goſpel, not as a Hawker proclaims News in the Streets, 'tis all one to him whether it be true or falſe; but as a conſcientious Witneſs gives in his Evidence at the Bar with the utmoſt Seriouſneſs and Concern. *Paul* preach'd the Goſpel as a Teſtimony to them, if they receiv'd it; but as a Teſtimony againſt them, if they rejected it.

3. He was a *profitable* Preacher; One that in all his Preaching aim'd at doing Good to thoſe he preach'd to; he ſtudy'd that which was *profitable unto them*, which had a Tendency to make them wiſe and good, wiſer and better, to inform their Judgements, and reform their Hearts and Lives. He preach'd τὰ συμφέροντα, ſuch Things as *brought with them* divine Light and Heat, and Power to their Souls. 'Tis not enough not to preach that which is *hurtful*, which leads into Error, or hardens in Sin; but we muſt preach that which is *profitable*. *We do all Things, dearly Beloved, for your edifying*. *Paul* aim'd to preach not that which was *pleaſing*, but that which was *profitable*, and to *pleaſe* only in order to *profit*.

4. He was a *painful* Preacher, very induſtrious and indefatigable in his Work; he preach'd *publickly*, and *from Houſe to Houſe*. He did not confine himſelf to a Corner, when he had Opportunity of Preaching in the great Congregation; nor did he confine himſelf to the Congregation, when there was Occaſion for private and perſonal Inſtruction. He was neither afraid nor aſham'd to preach the Goſpel *publickly*, nor did he grudge to beſtow his Pains *privately* among a few when there was Occaſion for it. He preach'd *publickly* to the Flock that came together into the green Paſtures, and went *from Houſe to Houſe* to ſeek thoſe that were weak and wander'd; and did not think that the one would excuſe him from the other. Miniſters ſhould in their private Viſits, and as they go *from Houſe to Houſe*, diſcourſe of thoſe Things which they have taught *publickly*, repeat them, inculcate them, and explain them, if it be needful, asking, *Have ye underſtood all theſe Things?* and eſpecially, help them to apply it to themſelves, and their own Caſe. God is ſaid to *teach* his People *to profit*, Iſa. xlviii. 17. Thoſe teach for God, that teach People *to profit*.

5. He was a *faithful* Preacher; he not only preach'd that which was *profitable*, but he preach'd *every Thing* that he thought might be profitable, and *kept back* Nothing; tho' the Preaching of it might either coſt him more Pains, or be diſobliging to ſome, and expoſe him to their Ill-will. He declin'd not preaching whatever he thought might be profitable, tho' it was not faſhionable, nor to ſome acceptable. He did not *keep back* Reproofs, when they were neceſſary and would be profitable, for fear of offending; nor *keep back* the Preaching of the Croſs, tho' he knew it was to the *Jews* a Stumbling-block, and to the *Greeks* Fooliſhneſs, as the Romiſh Miſſionaries in *China* lately did.

6. He was a *Catholick* Preacher; he *teſtify'd both to the* Jews, *and alſo to the* Greeks. Tho' he was born and bred a *Jew*, and had an entire Affection for that Nation, and was train'd up in their Prejudices againſt the *Gentiles*, yet he did not therefore *confine* himſelf to the *Jews*, and avoid the *Gentiles*; but preach'd as readily to *them*, as to the *Jews*; and convers'd as freely with them. And on the other hand, tho' he was call'd to be the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, and the *Jews* had an implacable Enmity againſt him upon that Score; had done him many an ill Turn, and here at *Epheſus* were continually ploting againſt him, yet he did not therefore abondon them as Reprobates, but continu'd to deal with them for their Good. Miniſters muſt preach the Goſpel with *Impartiality*; for they are Miniſters of Chriſt for the univerſal Church.

7. He was a truly *Chriſtian*, *Evangelical* Preacher; he did not preach philoſophical Notions or Matters of doubtful Diſputation, nor did he preach Politicks, or intermeddle at all with Affairs of State or the Civil Governments; but he preach'd *Faith* and *Repentance*, the two great Goſpel Graces; the Nature and Neceſſity of them; theſe he urg'd upon all Occaſions.

1. *Repentance towards GOD*; that thoſe who by Sin had gone away from God, and were going further and further from him into a State of endleſs Separation from him, ſhould by true Repentance look towards God, turn towards him, move towards him, and haſten to him. He preach'd Repentance as God's great Command, *Acts* xvii. 30. which we muſt obey, *That Men ſhould repent and turn to GOD, and do Works meet for Repentance*; ſo he explains it, *Acts* xxvi. 20. And he preach'd it as Chriſt's Gift, in order to the Remiſſion of Sins, *Acts v.* 31. and directed People to look up to him for it.

2. *Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: We muſt by Repentance look towards God as *our End*; and by Faith towards Chriſt as *our Way* to God. Sin muſt by Repentance be abandon'd and forſaken, and then Chriſt muſt by Faith be rely'd on for the Pardon of Sin. Our Repentance towards God is not ſufficient, we muſt have a true Faith in Chriſt as our Redeemer and Saviour, conſenting to him as *our Lord*, and *our God*. For there's no coming to God, as penitent Prodigals to a Father, but in the Strength and Righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt as Mediator.

Such a Preacher as this, they all knew *Paul* had been; and if they will carry on the *ſame Work*, they muſt walk *in the ſame Spirit*, in the *ſame Steps*.

Secondly, He declares his *Expectation* of *Sufferings* and *Afflictions* in his preſent Journey to *Jeruſalem*, *v.* 22, 23, 24. Let them not think that he quitted *Aſia* now, for fear of Perſecution; No, he was ſo far from running away like a Coward from the Poſt of Danger, that he was now like a Heroe haſtening to the High-places of the Field, where the Battle was likely to be hotteſt. *Now behold, I go bound in the Spirit to* Jeruſalem; which may be underſtood either, (1.) Of the certain Fore-ſight he had of Trouble before him. Tho' he was not yet *bound in Body*, he was *bound in Spirit*; he was in full Expectation of Trouble, and made it his daily Buſineſs to prepare for it; he was *bound in Spirit*, as all good Chriſtians are *poor in Spirit*, endeavouring to accommodate themſelves to the Will of God, if they ſhould be reduc'd to Poverty. Or, (2.) Of the ſtrong Impulſe he was under from the Spirit of God working upon his Spirit to go this Journey; *I go bound in the Spirit*, i. e. firmly reſolv'd to proceed, and well aſſur'd that it is by a divine Direction and Influence that I am ſo, and not from any Humour or Deſign of my own, *I go led by the Spirit*, and *bound* to follow him where-ever he leads me.

1. He doth not know *particularly* the Things *that ſhall befall him* at *Jeruſalem*; whence the Trouble ſhall ſpring, what ſhall be the Occaſion of it, what the Circumſtances, and to what Degree it ſhall ariſe; God had not thought fit to reveal that to him. 'Tis good for us to be kept in the Dark concerning future Events, that we may be always waiting *on* God, and waiting *for* Him. When we go *abroad*, it ſhould be with this Thought, we *know not the Things that ſhall befall us*, not what a Day or a Night or an Hour may bring forth; and therefore muſt refer ourſelves to God, Let him do with us as ſeemeth good in his Eyes, and ſtudy to ſtand compleat in his whole Will.

2. Yet he doth know in general, that there is a Storm before him; for *the Prophets*, in every City he paſs'd through, told him by *the Holy Ghoſt*, that *Bonds* and *Afflictions* did *abide him*. Beſides the common Notice given to all Chriſtians and Miniſters to expect and prepare for Sufferings; *Paul* had particular Intimations of an *extraordinary* Trouble, greater and longer than he had yet met with, that was now before him.

3. He fixeth a brave and heroick Reſolution to go on with his Work notwithſtanding. 'Twas a melancholy Peal that was rung in his Ears in every City, That *Bonds and Afflictions did abide him*: 'Twas a hard Caſe for a poor Man to labour continually to do Good, and to be ſo ill treated for his Pains. Now, 'tis worth while to enquire, how he bore it: He was *Fleſh and Blood* as well as other Men; he was ſo, and yet by the Grace of God he was enabled to go on with his Work, and to look with a gracious and generous Contempt upon all the Difficulties and Diſcouragements he met with in it. Let us take it from his own Mouth here, *v.* 24. where he ſpeaks not with Obſtinacy or Oſtentation, but with a holy humble Reſolution. *None of theſe Things move me*, all my Care is to proceed and to perſevere in the Way of my Duty, and to finiſh well. *Paul* is here an Example,

1. Of *Holy Courage* and Reſolution in our Work, notwithſtanding the Difficulties and Oppoſitions we meet with in it; he ſaw them before him, but he made nothing of them: *None of theſe Things move me*, οὐδενὸς λόγον ποιοῦμαι, *I make no Account of them.* He did not lay theſe Things to Heart, Chriſt and Heaven lay there. None of thoſe Things *mov'd him*, i. e. (1.) They did not *drive him off from his Work*; he did not tack about, and go back again, when he ſaw the Storm ariſe; but went on reſolutely, preaching there where he knew how dear it would coſt him. (2.) They did not *deprive* him of his Comfort, nor make him *drive* on heavily in his Work; in the midſt of Troubles he was as One unconcern'd; in his Patience he *poſſeſs'd his Soul*, and when he was *as ſorrowful*, yet he was *always rejoycing*, and in all Things *more than a Conqueror*. Thoſe that have their *Converſation in Heaven*, can look down not only upon the common Troubles of this Earth, but upon the threatning Rage and Malice of Hell itſelf, and ſay, That *none of theſe Things move them*, as knowing that none of theſe Things can *hurt them*.

2. Of a *Holy Contempt of Life*, and the *Continuance* and *Comforts* of it; *Neither count I my Life dear to myſelf.* Life is ſweet, and is naturally dear to us, *All that a Man has will he give for his Life*; but all that a Man has, and Life too will he give, who underſtands himſelf aright, and his own Intereſt, rather than loſe the Favour of God, and hazard Eternal Life. *Paul* was of this Mind; tho' to an Eye of Nature Life is *ſuperlatively valuable*, yet to an Eye of Faith it is *comparatively deſpicable*; 'tis not ſo dear but it can be chearfully parted with for Chriſt. This explains *Luke* xiv. 26. where we are required to *hate our own Lives*, not in a haſty Paſſion, as *Job* and *Jeremiah*, but in a Holy Submiſſion to the Will of God, and a Reſolution to die for Chriſt, rather than deny him.

3. Of a *Holy Concern* to *go through with the Work of Life*, which ſhould be much more our Care, than to ſecure either the outward Comforts of it, or the Continuance of it. Bleſſed *Paul* counts not his Life dear in compariſon with this, and reſolves in the Strength of Chriſt, *Non propter vitam vivendi perdere cauſas*, That he never will to ſave *his Life*, loſe the *Ends of living*: He is willing to *ſpend his Life* in Labour, to *hazard* his Life in dangerous Services, to *waſte* it in toilſome Services; nay, to *lay down* his Life in Martyrdom, ſo he may but anſwer the great Intentions of his Birth, of his Baptiſm, and of his Ordination to the Apoſtleſhip.

Two Things this *great* and *good* Man is in Care about, and if he *gain* them, 'tis no matter to him what comes of Life.

1. That he may be *found faithful* to the Truſt repos'd in him; that he may *finiſh the Miniſtry which he has receiv'd of the Lord Jeſus*, may do the Work which he was ſent into the World about, or rather, which he was ſent into the Church about; that he might compleat the Service of his Generation, might make *full Proof of his Miniſtry*; that he might go through the Buſineſs of it, and others might reap the Advantage of it to the utmoſt of what was deſign'd; that he might, as is ſaid of the two Witneſſes, *finiſh his Teſtimony*, Rev. xi. 7. and might not do his Work *by halves*. *Obſerve*, (1.) The Apoſtleſhip was a *Miniſtry* both to Chriſt and to the Souls of Men; and they that were call'd to it conſider'd more the *Miniſtry* of it, than the Dignity or Dominion of it: And if the *Apoſtles* did ſo, much more ought the *Paſtors* and *Teachers* to do ſo, and to be *in the Church as thoſe that ſerve*. (2.) This Miniſtry was *received from the Lord Jeſus*; he entruſted 'em with it, and from him they received their Charge; for him they do their Work, in his Name, in his Strength, and to him they muſt give up their Account. 'Twas Chriſt that *put them into the Miniſtry*, 1 Tim. i. 12. 'Tis he that carries them on in their Miniſtry, and from him they have Strength to do their Service, and bear up under the Hardſhips of it. (3.) The Work of this Miniſtry was to *teſtify the Goſpel of the Grace of God*, to publiſh it to the World, to prove it, and to recommend it, and being the Goſpel of the *Grace of God*, it has enough in it to recommend itſelf: It is a Proof of God's *Good-will to us*, and a Means of his *good Work in us*; it ſhews him Gracious towards us, and tends to make us gracious, and ſo is the Goſpel of the Grace of God. *Paul* made it it the Buſineſs of his Life to teſtify this, and deſir'd not to live a Day longer than he might be inſtrumental to ſpread the Knowledge, and Savour, and Power of this Goſpel.

2. That he may *finiſh well*; he cares not *when* the Period of his Life comes, nor *how*, be it never ſo *ſoon*, never ſo *ſudden*, never ſo *ſad* as to outward Circumſtances, ſo that he may but *finiſh his Courſe with Joy*. (1.) He looks upon his Life as *a Courſe*, a *Race*, ſo the Word is. Our Life is a *Race ſet before us*, Heb. xii. 1. This intimates, that we have our *Labours* appointed us, for we were not ſent into the World to be idle; and our *Limits* appointed us, for we were not ſent into the World to be here always; but to *paſs through* the World, nay, to *run through* it; and it's ſoon run through; I may add, to *run the Gauntlet* through it. (2.) He counts upon the *finiſhing of this Courſe*, and ſpeaks of it as ſure and near, and that which he had his Thoughts continually upon. Dying is the *End of our Race*, when we come off either with Honour or Shame. (3.) He is full of Care to *finiſh* it *well*, which implies a Holy *Deſire* of obtaining, and a Holy *Fear of coming ſhort*. O that I may but finiſh my Courſe with Joy, and then all will be well, perfectly and eternally well. (4.) He thinks nothing too much to do, or too hard to ſuffer, ſo that he might but finiſh well, finiſh *with Joy*. We muſt look upon it as the Buſineſs of our Life, to provide for a *joyful Death*; that we may not only die ſafely, but die comfortably.

Thirdly, Counting upon it that this was the laſt Time they ſhould *ſee him*, he appeals to their Conſciences concerning his *Integrity*, and demands of them a Teſtimony to it.

1. He tells them, that he was now taking his laſt Leave of them, *v.* 25. *I know that ye all, among whom I have* been converſant *preaching the Kingdom of* GOD, tho' you may have Letters from me, ſhall never *ſee my Face* again. When any of us part with our Friends we may ſay, and ſhould ſay, We *know not* that ever we ſhall *ſee* one another again; our Friends may be remov'd, or we ourſelves may: But *Paul* here ſpeaks it with Aſſurance by the Spirit of Prophecy, that theſe *Epheſians* ſhould *ſee his Face no more*; and we cannot think, that he who ſpoke ſo *doubtfully* of that which he was not ſure of, *v.* 22. (*not knowing the Things that ſhall befall me there*) ſhould ſpeak this with ſo much Confidence, eſpecially when he foreſaw what a Trouble it would be to his Friends here, unleſs he had had a ſpecial Warrant from the Spirit to ſay ſo; to whom I think they do wrong, who ſuppoſe, that, notwithſtanding this, *Paul* did afterwards come to *Epheſus*, and *ſee them again*. He would never have ſaid thus ſolemnly, *now, behold I know it*, if he had not known it *for certain*. Not but that he foreſaw that he had a great deal of Time and Work yet before him, but that his Work would be cut out for him in other Places, and in theſe Parts he had no more to do. Here he had for a great while *gone about preaching the Kingdom of* GOD, preaching *down* the Kingdom of Sin and Satan, and preaching *up* the Authority and Dominion of God in Chriſt; preaching the Kingdom of Glory as the End, and the Kingdom of Grace as the Way: Many a Time they had been glad to *ſee his Face* in the Pulpit, and ſaw it *as it had been the Face of an Angel*. If the *Feet* of theſe Meſſengers of Peace were *beautiful upon the Mountains*, What were their Faces? But now they ſhall ſee his Face no more. *Note*, We ought often to think of it, that thoſe who now are *preaching to us the Kingdom of* GOD, will ſhortly be remov'd, and we ſhall ſee their Faces no more; *The Prophets, Do they live for ever?* Yet a little while is *their* Light with us; it concerns us therefore to improve it while we have it, that when we ſhall ſee their Faces no more on Earth, yet we may hope to look them in the Face with Comfort in the Great Day.

2. He appeals to them concerning the faithful Diſcharge of his Miniſtry among them, *v.* 26. *wherefore*, ſeeing my Miniſtry is at an End with you, it concerns both *you* and *me* to re-

flect, and look back; And (1.) He challengeth them to prove him unthankful, and to have ſaid or done any Thing, by which he had made himſelf acceſſary to the Ruin of any precious Soul. *I am pure from the Blood of all Men*, the Blood of Souls. This plainly refers to that of the Prophet *Ezek.* xxxiii. 6. where the Blood of him that periſheth by the Sword of the Enemy, is ſaid to be required at the Hand of the unfaithful *Watchman*, that did not *give Warning*; you cannot ſay, but I have given Warning, and therefore no Man's Blood can be laid at my Door. If a Miniſter has approv'd himſelf faithful, he may have this *rejoycing in himſelf, I am pure from the Blood of all Men*; and ought to have this Teſtimony from others. (2.) He therefore leaves the *Blood* of them that periſh *upon their own Heads*, becauſe they had fair Warning given them, but they would not take it. (3.) He charges theſe Miniſters to look to it, that they took *Care* and *Pains* as he had done; *I am pure from the Blood of all Men*, ſee that you keep yourſelves ſo too. *I take you to record this Day*; ἐν τῇ σήμερον ἡμέρᾳ *I call this Day to witneſs to you*, ſo *Streſo*. As ſometimes the Heaven and Earth are appeal'd to, ſo here, *this Day* ſhall be a Witneſs; this parting Day.

3. He proves his own Fidelity with this, *v.* 27. *For I have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the Counſel of God.* (1.) He had preached to them nothing but *the Counſel of God*, and had not added any Inventions of his own: 'Twas *pure* Goſpel and nothing elſe, the *Will of God* concerning our Salvation. The Goſpel is the *Counſel of God*; 'tis admirably contriv'd by his Wiſdom; 'tis unalterably determin'd by his Will; and 'tis kindly deſign'd by his Grace for our Glory, 1 *Cor.* ii. 7. This *Counſel of God*, 'tis the Buſineſs of Miniſters to *declare* as it is reveal'd, and not otherwiſe, nor any further. (2.) He had preach'd to them the *whole Counſel of God*; As he had preach'd to them the Goſpel *pure*, ſo he had preach'd it them *entire*: He had gone over a *Body of Divinity* among them; that having the Truths of the Goſpel open'd to them *methodically*, from firſt to laſt in order, they might the better underſtand them, by ſeeing them in their ſeveral Connections with, and Dependencies upon one another. (3.) He had not *ſhun'd* to do it; had not wilfully or deſignedly avoided the *declaring* of any Part of the Counſel of God. He had not to ſave *his own Pains* declin'd Preaching upon the moſt *difficult* Parts of the Goſpel, nor to ſave *his own Credit*, declin'd Preaching upon the moſt *plain* and *eaſy* Parts of it; He had not ſhun'd Preaching thoſe Doctrines which he knew would be as provoking to the watchful Enemies of Chriſtianity, as diſpleaſing to the careleſs Profeſſors of it, but faithfully took his Work before him, *whether they would hear or forbear*. And thus it was that he *kept himſelf pure from the Blood of all Men*.

Fourthly, He *charg'd* them as *Miniſters* to be *diligent* and *faithful* in their Work.

1. He *commits* the Care of the Church at *Epheſus*, *i. e.* the *Saints*, the Chriſtians that were *there*, and thereabouts, (Eph. i. 1.) to *them*; who, tho' doubtleſs they were ſo *numerous* that they could not all meet in one Place, but worſhipp'd God in ſeveral Congregations, under the Conduct of ſeveral Miniſters, yet are here call'd *one Flock*, becauſe they not only agree'd in *one Faith*, as they did with all Chriſtian Churches, but in many Inſtances they kept up Communion one with another. To theſe *Elders* or *Presbyters* the Apoſtle here upon the actual Foreſight of his own final leaving them, commits the Government of this Church, and tells them, that not he, but the *Holy Ghoſt had made them Overſeers*, ἐπισκόπους, *Biſhops* of the Flock; you that are *Presbyters* are *Biſhops*, Biſhops of the Holy Ghoſt's making, that are to *take the Overſight* of this Part of the Church of God, 1 *Pet.* v. 1, 2. *Tit.* i. 5, 7. while *Paul* was preſent at *Epheſus*, he preſided in all the Affairs of that Church, which made the Elders loth to part with him; But now this Eagle *ſtirs up the Neſt*, *flutters over her Young*; now they begin to be *fledg'd*, they muſt learn to fly themſelves, and to act without him, for the *Holy Ghoſt* had made them *Overſeers*. They took not this Honour to themſelves, nor was it confer'd upon them by any Prince or Potentate, but the Holy Ghoſt in them *qualify'd them for*, and *enrich'd them to* this great Undertaking, the *Holy Ghoſt fell upon them*, Chap. xix. 6. The Holy Ghoſt alſo *directed* them that choſe and call'd, and ordain'd them to this Work in Anſwer to Prayer.

2. He *commanded* them to mind the Work to which they were call'd: Dignity calls for Duty: If the Holy Ghoſt has made them *Overſeers of the Flock*, that is *Shepherds*, they muſt be true to their Truſt.

(1.) They muſt *take heed to themſelves* in the firſt Place, muſt have a jealous Eye upon all the Motions of their own Souls, and upon all they ſaid and did; muſt *walk circumſpectly*, and know how to *behave themſelves aright in the Houſe of GOD*, in which they were now advanc'd to the Office of Stewards; you have many Eyes upon you, ſome to take Example by you, others to pick Quarrels with you, and therefore you ought to *take heed to your ſelves*. Thoſe are not likely to be skilful or faithful Keepers of others Vineyards that do not keep their own.

(2.) *Take heed to the Flock, to all the Flock*, ſome to one Part of it, others to another, according as your Call and Opportunity is, but ſee that no Part of it be neglected among you. Miniſters muſt not only take heed to their own Souls, but muſt have a conſtant Regard to the Souls of thoſe which are under their Charge as Shepherds have to their Sheep, that they may receive no Damage. *Take heed to all the Flock*, that none of them, either of themſelves wander from the Fold, or be ſeiz'd by the Beaſts of Prey; that none of them be miſſing, or miſcarry through your Neglect.

(3.) They muſt *feed the Church of God*, muſt do all the Parts of the Shepherd's Office; muſt lead the Sheep of Chriſt into the green Paſtures, muſt *lay Meat* before them; muſt do what they can to heal thoſe that are diſtemper'd, and have no Appetite to their Meat; muſt feed them with wholeſome Doctrine, with a tender Evangelical Diſcipline, and muſt ſee that nothing be wanting that is neceſſary in order to their being nouriſh'd up to Eternal Life. There is need of Paſtors not only to *gather* the Church of God, by the bringing in of thoſe that are without, but to *feed* it by building up thoſe that are within.

(4.) They muſt *watch*, *v.* 31. as *Shepherds* watch over *their Flocks* by Night; muſt be awake, and wakeful; muſt not give Way to ſpiritual Sloth, and Slumber, but muſt ſtir up themſelves to their Buſineſs, and cloſely attend it. *Watch thou in all Things*, 2 Tim. iv. 5. Watch againſt every Thing that will be hurtful to the Flock, and watch to every Thing that will be advantagious to it; improve every Opportunity of doing it a Kindneſs.

3. He gives them ſeveral good Reaſons why they ſhould mind the Buſineſs of their Miniſtry.

1. Let them conſider the *Intereſt of their Maſter*, and his Concern for the Flock, that was committed to their Charge, *v.* 28. 'Tis *the Church which he has purchaſed with his own Blood.* (1.) It is *his own*; you are but his Servants to take care of it for him. 'Tis your Honour that you are employ'd *for God*, who will own you in his Service; but then your Careleſsneſs and Treachery is ſo much the worſe, if you neglect your Work, for you wrong God, and are falſe to him. From him you receiv'd the Truth, and to him you muſt give up your Account, and therefore *Take heed to yourſelves*. And if it be the *Church of GOD*, he expects you ſhould ſhew your Love to him, by feeding his Sheep and Lambs. (2.) He hath *purchaſed* it; The World is God's by Right of Creation, but the Church is his by Right of Redemption, and therefore it ought to be *dear to us*, for it was *dear to him*, becauſe it *coſt him dear*, and we cannot better ſhew it than by *feeding his Sheep*, and his *Lambs*. (3.) The Church of God is what he has *purchaſed*, not as *Iſrael* of Old, when he *gave Men for them*, and *People for their Life*, Iſa. xliii. 3, 4. but *with his own Blood*. This proves that Chriſt is *God*; for he is called ſo here, where yet he is ſaid to *purchaſe* the *Church with his own Blood*, the Blood was his as Man, yet ſo cloſe is the Union between the Divine and Human Nature, that it is here called the *Blood of God*, for it was the Blood of him who is *God*, and his being ſo put ſuch a Dignity and Worth into it, as made it both a valuable *Ranſome of us from all Evil*, and a valuable *Purchaſe for us of all Good*; nay, a *Purchaſe of us* to Chriſt, to be to him a peculiar People: *Thine they were and thou gaveſt them me.* In Conſideration of this therefore *feed the Church of God*, becauſe it is purchas'd at ſo dear a Rate; did Chriſt lay down his Life to purchaſe it, and ſhall his Miniſters be wanting in any Care and Pains to feed it: Their Neglect of its true Intereſt is a Contempt of his Blood that purchas'd it.

2. Let them conſider the *Danger* that the *Flock* was in of being *made a Prey* to its Adverſaries, *v.* 29, 30. If the Flock be thus *precious* upon the Account of its Relation to God, and its Redemption by Chriſt, than you are concern'd to take heed both to yourſelves and to it. Here are Reaſons for both.

(1.) *Take heed to the Flock*, for *Wolves are abroad* that ſeek to devour, *v.* 29. *I know this, that after my Departing grievous Wolves ſhall enter in among you.* (1.) Some underſtand it for Perſecutors, that will *inform* againſt the Chriſtians, and *incenſe* the Magiſtrates againſt them, and will have *no Compaſſion* on the Flock. They thought, becauſe while *Paul* was with them the Rage of the *Jews* was moſt againſt him, that when he was gone out of the Country they would be quiet: No, ſaith he, *after my departing* you will find the perſecuting Spirit ſtill working, therefore *take heed to the Flock*, confirm them in the Faith, comfort and encourage them, that they may not either leave Chriſt for fear of ſuffering, or loſe their Peace and Comfort in their Sufferings. Miniſters muſt take a more than ordinary Care of the Flock in Times of Perſecution. (2.) 'Tis rather to be underſtood of Seducers, and falſe Teachers; probably he has an Eye to thoſe *of the Circumciſion*, that preach'd up the Ceremonial Law. Theſe he calls *grievous Wolves*, for tho' they came in *Sheeps Cloathing*, nay, in *Shepherds Cloathing*, they *made Miſchief* in the Congregations of Chriſtians; ſow'd Diſcord among them, drew away many from the pure Goſpel of Chriſt, and did all they could to blemiſh and defame thoſe that adher'd to it; *not ſparing* the moſt valuable Members of the Flock; did ſtir up thoſe whom they could influence to *bite* and *devour* them, *Gal.* v. 15. therefore they are called *Dogs*, Phil. iii. 2. as here *Wolves*. While *Paul* was at *Epheſus* they kept away, for they durſt not face him; but when he was gone, then they *enter'd in among* them, and ſow'd their Tares where he had ſow'd the good Seed. Therefore take heed to the Flock, and do all you can to eſtabliſh them in the Truth, and to arm them againſt the Inſinuations of the falſe Teachers.

(2.) *Take heed to yourſelves*, for ſome *Shepherds* will apoſtatize, *v.* 30. *Alſo of yourſelves*, among the *Members*, nay, perhaps among the Miniſters of your own Church, among you that I am now ſpeaking to (tho' I am willing to hope it doth not go ſo far as that,) ſhall Men ariſe ſpeaking *perverſe Things*, i. e. Things contrary to the right Rule of the Goſpel, and deſtructive of the great Intentions of it. Nay, they will *pervert* ſome Sayings of the Goſpel, and *wreſt them* to make them patronize their Errors, 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. Even thoſe that were *well thought of* among you, and that you had confidence in, will grow proud and conceited, and opinionative, and will *refine* upon the Goſpel, and will pretend with more nice and curious Speculations to advance you to a higher Form; but it is to *draw away Diſciples after them*, to make a Party for themſelves that ſhall *admire* them, and be led by them, and pin their Faith upon their Sleeve. Some read it, *to draw away the Diſciples after them*; thoſe that are already Diſciples of Chriſt, draw them from *him* to follow *them*. Therefore *take heed to yourſelves*; when you are told that *ſome of you ſhall betrary* the Goſpel, you are each of you concern'd to aſk, *Is it I?* and to look well to yourſelves. This was there fulfill'd in *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes*, who turn'd away from *Paul* and the Doctrine he had preach'd, 2 *Tim.* i. 15. and in *Hymeneus*, and *Philetus*, who *concerning the Truth erred, and overthrew the Faith of ſome*, 2 Tim. ii. 18. which explains this here. But tho' there were ſome ſuch Seducers in the Church of *Epheſus*, yet it ſhould ſeem by St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to that Church, wherein we do not find ſuch Complaints and Reprehenſions as we meet with in ſome other of his Epiſtles, that that Church was not ſo much *infeſted* with falſe Teachers, at leaſt not ſo much *infected* with their falſe Doctrine, as ſome other Churches were: But its Peace and Purity were preſerv'd by the Bleſſing of God on the Pains and Vigilance of theſe *Presbyters*, to whom the Apoſtle in the *actual* Foreſight and Conſideration of the Riſe of Hereſies and Schiſms, as well as of his own Death, committed the Government of this Church.

3. Let them conſider the *great Pains* that *Paul* had taken in planting this Church, *v.* 31. *Remember that by the Space of three Years*, (for ſo long he had been preaching in *Epheſus*, and the Parts adjacent,) *I ceaſed not to warn every one Night and Day with Tears*, and be not you *negligent* in building upon that Foundation which I was ſo *diligent* to lay. (1.) *Paul* like a faithful Watchman had *warn'd* them, and by the *Warnings* he gave Men of the Danger of their continuing in their *Judaiſm* and Heatheniſm, he prevail'd with them to embrace Chriſtianity. (2.) He warn'd *every one*; beſides the publick Warnings he gave in his preaching, he apply'd himſelf to particular Perſons according as he ſaw their Caſe called for it, which he had ſomething to ſay peculiar to. (3.) He was *conſtant* in giving Warning, he warn'd *Night and Day*; his Time was fill'd up with this Work. In the *Night* when he ſhould have been repoſing himſelf, he was dealing with thoſe he could not get to ſpeak with in the Day, about their Souls. (4.) He was *indefatigable* in it; he *ceaſed not* to warn. Tho' they were never ſo *obſtinate* againſt his Warnings, yet he did not *ceaſe* to warn, not knowing but that at length they might by the Grace of God be overcome. Though they were never ſo *pliable* to his Warnings, yet he did not think that would be a ſufficient Excuſe for him to deſiſt, but ſtill he warn'd them that were Righteous, *not to turn from their Righteouſneſs*, as he had warn'd them when they were wicked to *turn from their Wickedneſs*, Ezek. iii. 18----21. (5.) He ſpoke to them about their Souls with a great deal of Affection and Concern: He warn'd them *with Tears*. As he had *ſerv'd the Lord*, ſo he had ſerv'd them *with many Tears*, *v.* 19. He warn'd them with Tears of Compaſſion, thereby ſhewing how much he was himſelf affected with their Miſery and Danger in a ſinful State and Way, that he might affect them with it. Thus *Paul* had begun the good Work at *Epheſus*; thus free had he been of his Pains, and why then ſhould they be ſparing of their Pains in carrying it on.

Fifthly, He recommends them to a Divine Conduct and Influence, *v.* 32. *And now, Brethren, having* given you this ſolemn Charge and Caution, *I recommend you to God.* Now I have ſaid what I have to ſay, *The Lord be with you.* I muſt leave you, but I leave you in good Hands. They were in Care what would become of them, how they ſhould go on in their Work, break through their Difficulties, and what Proviſion would be made for them, and their Families. In anſwer to all theſe Perplexities *Paul* directs them to look up to God with an Eye of Faith, and beſeeches God to look down on them with an Eye of Favour.

1. See here *to whom* he commends them: He calls them *Brethren*, not only as Chriſtians but as Miniſters, and hereby encourageth them to hope in God as he had done; for they and he were *Brethren*.

(1.) He commends them *to God*, begs of God to provide for them, to take care of them, and to ſupply all their Needs, and encourages them to *caſt all their Care upon him*, with an Aſſurance that he car'd for them. Whatever you want, *go to God*, let your Eye be ever towards him, and your Dependance upon him, in all your Straits and Difficulties; and let this be your Comfort, that you have a God to go too, a God All-ſufficient. *I commend you to God, i. e.* to his Providence, and to the Protection and Care of that. 'Tis enough that whoever we are ſeparated from, ſtill we have *GOD nigh unto us*, 1 *Pet.* iv. 19.

(2.) He commits them *to the Word of his Grace*; by which, ſome underſtand *Chriſt*. He is the *Word*, John i. 1. the *Word of Life*, becauſe Life is treaſur'd up for us in him, 1 *John* i. 1. and in the ſame Senſe he is here call'd the *Word of God's Grace*, becauſe *from his Fulneſs we receive Grace for Grace*: He commends them to Chriſt, puts them in his Hand, as being his Servants whom he would in a particular Manner take Care of. *Paul* commends them not only to GOD and to his Providence, but to *Chriſt* and his Grace, as Chriſt himſelf did his Diſciples when he was leaving them, *Ye believe in* GOD, *believe alſo in me*. It comes much to one, if by the *Word of his Grace*, we underſtand the *Goſpel of Chriſt*, for it is *Chriſt in the Word*, that is *nigh unto us* for our Support and Encouragement, and his Word is *Spirit and Life*. You will find much Relief by acting Faith on the Providence of God, but much more by acting Faith on the Promiſes of the Goſpel. He commends them to the Word of Chriſt's Grace which he ſpoke to his Diſciples when he ſent them forth, the Commiſſion he gave them, with Aſſurance that he would be with them always to the End of the World; take hold of that Word, and God give you the Benefit and Comfort of it, and you need no more. He commends them to *the Word of God's Grace*, not only as the Foundation of their Hope, and the Fountain of their Joy, but as the *Rule* of their Walking. *I commend you to GOD*, as your Maſter whom you are to ſerve, and I have found him a Good Maſter, and *to the Word of his Grace* as cutting you out your Work, and by which you are to govern yourſelves; obſerve the Precepts of this Word, and then live upon the Promiſes of it.

2. See here *what* he commends them to the *Word of* GOD's *Grace* for, not ſo much for a Protection from their Enemies, or a Proviſion for their Families, as for the ſpiritual Bleſſings which they moſt *needed*, and ought moſt to value. They had receiv'd, and were intruſted to preach the Goſpel *of the Grace of* GOD. Now he recommends them to that,

1. For their *Edification*: 'Tis able (the Spirit of Grace working with it, and by it) *to build you up*, and you may depend upon that, while you keep cloſe to it, and are deriving daily from it. Tho' you are already furniſh'd with good Gifts, yet that is able to *build you up*; there is that in it which you need to be better acquainted with, and more affected with. *Note*, Miniſters in preaching the Word of Grace, muſt aim at their own Edification as well as at the Edification of others. The moſt *grown* Chriſtians while they are in the World, are capable of *growing*, and they will find the Word of Grace to have ſtill more and more in it to contribute to their Growth. 'Tis ſtill *able to build them up*.

2. For their *Glorification*; 'Tis *able to give you an Inheritance among all them which are ſanctify'd*. The *Word of GOD's Grace gives it*, not only as it gives the *Knowledge* of it; for *Life and Immortality are brought to light by the Goſpel*; but as it gives the *Promiſe* of it, the Promiſe of a God that cannot lye, and which is *Yea* and *Amen* in Chriſt. And by the Word, as the ordinary Vehicle, the Spirit of Grace is given, (*Acts* x. 44.) to the *Seal* of the Promiſe, and the *Earneſt* of the Eternal Life promis'd; and thus it is the *Word of GOD's Grace* that *gives us the Inheritance*. *Note*, 1. Heaven is an *Inheritance*, which gives an indefeaſable Right to all the Heirs. 'Tis an Inheritance like that of the *Iſraelites* in *Canaan*, which was *by Promiſe*, and yet *by Lot*; but was *ſure to all the Seed*. 2. This Inheritance is *entail'd upon*, and *ſecur'd* to all thoſe, and thoſe only *that are ſanctify'd*; for as thoſe cannot be welcome Gueſts to the Holy God, or the holy Society above that are unſanctify'd, ſo, really, *Heaven* would be *no Heaven* to them: But to *all* that are *ſanctify'd*, that are *born again*, and on whom the Image of God is *renew'd*, it is as ſure as Almighty Power and Eternal Truth can make it. Thoſe therefore that would *make out* a Title to that Inheritance, muſt make it ſure that they are *among the Sanctify'd*, and joyn'd to them, and incorporated with them, and partake of the ſame Image and Nature; for we cannot expect to be among the *Glorifyed* hereafter, unleſs we be among the *Sanctifyed* here.

Sixthly, He recommends himſelf to them as an Example of *Indifferency to this World*, and to every Thing in it, which if they would walk in the ſame Spirit, and in the ſame Steps, they would find to contribute greatly to their eaſy and comfortable Paſſage through it. He had *recommended them to GOD, and to the Word of his Grace* for ſpiritual Bleſſings, which without Doubt are the beſt Bleſſings. But what ſhall they do for Food for their Families? and agreeable Subſiſtence for them, and Portions for their Children. As to theſe, *Paul* ſaith, *do as I did*. And how was that? He here tells them,

1. That he never aim'd at worldly Wealth, *v.* 33. *I have coveted no Man's Silver, or Gold, or Apparel*, nor do you, and then you will be eaſy. There were many in *Epheſus*, and many of thoſe that had embrac'd the Chriſtian Faith, who were rich, had a deal of Money and Plate and rich Furniture, and wore very good Clothes, and made a very good Appearance. Now (1.) *Paul* was not *ambitious* to *live like them*; we may take it in that Senſe; I never coveted to have ſo much Silver and Gold at command as I ſee others have; not to wear ſuch rich Cloaths as I ſee others wear; I neither *condemn* them, nor *envy* them; I can live *comfortably* and *uſefully* without living *Great*. The falſe Apoſtles deſir'd to *make a fair Shew in the Fleſh*, Gal. 6. 12. to make a Figure in the World: But *Paul* did not do ſo; he *knew how to want*, and *how to be abaſed*. (2.) He was not *greedy* to re-

ceive from them, either *Silver*, or *Gold*, or *Apparel*; ſo far from being always *craving*, that he was not ſo much as *coveting*, nor deſir'd them to allow him ſo and ſo for his Pains among them, but was content with ſuch Things as he had. He never *made a Gain* of them, 2 *Cor.* xii. 14. He could not only ſay with *Moſes*, *Numb.* xvi. 15. and with *Samuel*, 1 Sam. xii. 3, 5. *Whoſe Ox have I taken*, or *whom have I defrauded?* But whoſe Kindneſs have I coveted or ask'd? Or, to whom have I been burthenſom? He proteſts againſt *deſiring a Gift*, Phil. iv. 17.

2. That he had work'd for his Living, and taken a deal of Pains to get Bread, *v.* 34. *Yea, you yourſelves know*, and have been Eye-witneſſes of it, *that theſe Hands* of mine *have miniſtred to my Neceſſities, and to them that were with me:* You have ſeen me buſy early and late cutting out Tents and making them up, and they being commonly made of Leather, it was very hard Work. *Obſerve*, (1.) *Paul* was ſometimes reduc'd to *Neceſſities*, and the Want of the common Supports of Life, though he was ſo great a Favourite of Heaven, and ſo great a Bleſſing to this Earth. What an unthinking, unkind, and ungrateful World is this, that could let ſuch a Man as *Paul* be *poor* in it? (2.) He deſir'd no more than to have his *Neceſſities ſupply'd*; he did not work at his Calling to *enrich* himſelf, but to maintain himſelf with Food and Raiment. (3.) When he was to *earn his Bread*, he did it by a *manual Occupation*: *Paul* had a Head and a Tongue that he might have got Money by; but they were *theſe Hands*, ſaith he, that *miniſtred to my Neceſſities*. What Pity was it that *thoſe Hands* by the *laying on* of which the *Holy Ghoſt* had been ſo often *conferr'd*, thoſe *Hands* by which God had *wrought ſpecial Miracles*, and both theſe at *Epheſus* too, *chap.* xix. 6, 11. ſhould *there* be oblig'd to lay themſelves to the Needle and Sheers, the Awl and Tacking-end, in *Tent-making*, purely to get Bread. *Paul* puts theſe *Presbyters* (and others in them) in mind of this, that they may not think it ſtrange if they be thus *neglected*, and yet to go on in their Work, and make the beſt ſhift they can to live; the leſs Encouragement they have from Men, the more they ſhall have from God. (4.) He work'd not only for *himſelf*, but for the Support of *them alſo that were with him*; that was hard indeed; it had better become them to have work'd for him, to maintain him as their Tutor, than he for them: But ſo it is; thoſe that are willing to take the *labouring Oar*, will find thoſe about them willing they ſhould have it. If *Paul* will work for the Maintenance of his Companions, he is welcome to do it.

3. That even then when he work'd for the Supply of his own Neceſſities, yet he ſpar'd ſomething out of what he got for the Relief of others; for this he here obliges them to do, *v.* 35. *I have ſhew'd you all Things*, i. e. In all the Parts of your Duty I have ſet you your Copy, and given you a good Example, and particularly in this, that *ſo labouring, you ought to ſupport the Weak.* Some underſtand it of their ſupporting the Faith of weak Believers by removing the Prejudices which ſome conceiv'd againſt Chriſtianity, as if the Preachers of it, made a gainful Trade of their Preaching, and that the Goſpel was only a Trick to get Money by, and pick Peoples Pockets: Now that you may *cut off Occaſion* from thoſe that *ſeek Occaſion* to reproach us, and ſo may *ſupport the Weak* among us; you would do well for the preſent to get your Livelihood by the Labour of your Hands, and not to depend upon your Miniſtry. But I had rather underſtand it of their helping to ſupport the *Sick* and the *Poor*, and thoſe that *could not labour*; becauſe it agrees with *Paul*'s Exhortations, *Eph.* iv. 28. *Let him labour working with his Hands, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* We muſt labour in an honeſt Employment, not only that we may be able to *live*, but that we may be able to *give*.

This might ſeem a hard Saying, and therefore *Paul* backs it with a Saying of our Maſter's, which he would have them always to remember. Theſe *Words our Lord Jeſus ſaid*, it ſhould ſeem they were Words he often us'd to his Diſciples, when he himſelf did ſo much Good *gratis*, and bid them do ſo too, *Matth.* x. 8, 9. he added *this Saying*, which, tho' no-where recorded by the Evangeliſts, yet *Paul* had by Word of Mouth from *Peter*, or ſome other of the Diſciples, and an excellent Saying it is, and has ſomething of a Paradox in it, *It is more bleſſed to give, than to receive.* It is (ſaith Dr. *Tillotſon*) a particular Endearment of this admirable Saying of our Saviour's to us, that being omitted by the Evangeliſts, and in danger of being loſt and forgotten, it was thus happily retriev'd by St. *Paul*, and recorded by St. *Luke*. It *is more bleſſed to give* to others, *than to receive* from others; not only more bleſſed to be rich, and ſo on the giving hand; than to be Poor, and ſo on the receiving hand; every One will own that: But more bleſſed to *do Good* with what we have, be it much or little, than to *increaſe* it, and *make it more*. The Sentiment of the Children of this World is contrary to this; They are *afraid* of *giving*, this *giving* (they ſay) *undoes us all*, but they are in *hope* of *getting*, *every One for his Gain from his Quarter*, Iſa. lvi. 11. *clear Gain* is with them the moſt *bleſſed* Thing that can be; but Chriſt tells us, *It is more bleſſed*, more excellent in itſelf, an Evidence of a more excellent Diſpoſition of Mind, and the Way to a better Bleſſedneſs at laſt, *to give than to receive*. It makes us more like to God, who gives to all, and receives from none; and to the Lord Jeſus who *went about doing Good*. It is *more bleſſed* to give our Pains, than to receive Pay for it, and what we ſhould delight to do if the Neceſſities of ourſelves and Families would admit it. It is more *pleaſant* to do good to the *Grateful*, but it is more *honourable* to do good to the *Ungrateful*; for then we have God to be our Paymaſter, who will reward in the *Reſurrection of the Juſt*, what has not otherwiſe been recompens'd.

36 ¶ And when he had thus ſpoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. 37 And they all wept ſore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kiſſed him, 38 Sorrowing moſt of all for the words which he ſpake, that they ſhould ſee his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ſhip.

After the Parting-Sermon that *Paul* preach'd to the Elders of *Epheſus*, which was *very affecting*, we have here the Parting-*Prayer* and *Tears*, which were more affecting; we can ſcarcely read the Account here given of them, and meditate upon them, with dry Eyes.

Firſt, They parted with *Prayer*, *v.* 36. *And when he had thus ſpoken, he kneeled down and pray'd with them all.* And no doubt it was a Prayer every way ſuited to the preſent mournful Occaſion; he committed them to God in this Prayer, pray'd that he would not leave them, but continue his Preſence with them.

1. It was a *Joint-Prayer:* He not only *pray'd for them*, but *pray'd with them*, pray'd with them *all*; that they might put up the ſame Petitions for themſelves, and one another, that he put up to God for them all; and that they might learn what to ask of God for themſelves, when he was gone. Publick Prayers are ſo far from being intended to superſede our own ſecret Prayers, and make them needleſs, that they are deſign'd to quicken and encourage them, and to direct us in them. When we are alone, we ſhould pray over the Prayers that our Miniſters have put up with us.

2. It was a *humble reverent* Prayer: This was expreſs'd by the Poſture they us'd, he *kneel'd down* and pray'd with them; which is the moſt proper Geſture in Prayer, and ſignificant both of Adoration and of Petition, eſpecially Petition for the Forgiveneſs of Sin. St. *Paul* us'd it much, *I bow my Knees*, Eph. iii. 14.

3. It was a Prayer *after Sermon*; and we may ſuppoſe he pray'd over what he had preach'd: He had committed the Care of the Church at *Epheſus* to thoſe *Elders*, and now he prays that God would enable them faithfully to diſcharge this great Truſt repos'd in them, and would give them thoſe Meaſures of Wiſdom and Grace which it requir'd: He pray'd for the Flock, and all that belong'd to it, That the Great Shepherd of the Sheep would take Care of them all, and keep them from being a Prey to the *grievous Wolves*. Thus he taught thoſe Miniſters to pray for thoſe they preach'd to, that they might not labour in vain.

4. It was a *parting Prayer*; which might be likely to leave laſting Impreſſions, as the Farewel-Sermon did. 'Tis good for Friends when they part, to part with Prayer; that by praying together juſt at parting, they may be enabled to pray the more feelingly one for another when they are *parted*, which is one Part of our Chriſtian Duty, and an Improvement of the Communion of Saints. *The LORD watch between us*, and watch over us both *when we are abſent the one from the other*, is a good parting Prayer, *Gen.* xxxi. 49. As alſo that our next Meeting may be either *nearer Heaven* or in *Heaven*. *Paul* here follow'd the Example of Chriſt, who when he took Leave of his Diſciples, after he had *preach'd* to them, *pray'd* with them all, *John* xvii. 1.

Secondly, They parted with *Tears*, Abundance of Tears, and moſt affectionate Embraces, *v.* 37, 38.

1. They all *wept ſore:* We have Reaſon to think, that *Paul* himſelf began; tho' he was determin'd to go, and ſaw his Call clear to other Work, yet he was ſorry in his Heart to leave them, and many a Tear it coſt him. He that was ſo oft *in Tears* while he was with them, *v.* 19, 31. no doubt ſhed many at parting, ſo *watering* what he had *ſown* among them. But the Notice is taken of *their* Tears; *they all wept ſore*; there was not a dry Eye among them. And 'tis probable the affectionate Expreſſions *Paul* us'd in Prayer ſet them a weeping. Theſe were Tears of Love, and mutual Endearment, like thoſe of *Jonathan* and *David* when they were forc'd to part, and *wept one with another until* (as if they wept for Strife) *David exceeded*, 1 Sam. xx. 41.

2. They *fell upon* Paul's *Neck and kiſs'd him*, all one after another, each bewailing his own Loſs; how can I part with this dear Creature, this bleſſed *Paul*, ſaith one, in whom my Life is in a manner bound up. Farewel, my dear Friend, ſaith another, a thouſand Thanks to thee, and ten thouſand to God for thee, and for all the Pains thou haſt taken with me for my Good; and muſt we part, ſaith another, muſt I loſe my ſpiritual Father, Nurſe and Guide? What will become of us now, ſaith another, when we ſhall no more have him to apply to, and receive Direction from? What ſhall I do, if the Lord take away my Maſter from my Head? *My Father, my Father, the Chariot of* Iſrael *and the Horſemen thereof.* *Note*, Thoſe that are moſt loving, are commonly beſt belov'd: *Paul* that was a moſt *affectionate* Friend himſelf, had Friends that were very affectionate to him. Theſe Tears at parting with *Paul* were a grateful Return for all the Tears he had ſhed in preaching to them, and praying with them. *He that watereth ſhall be watered alſo himſelf.*

3. That which cut them to the Heart thus, and made this Place ſuch a *Bochim*, ſuch a Place of *Weepers*, was that Word which *Paul* ſpake that he was certain, *They ſhould ſee his Face no more.* If he had given them Directions to follow him, as he did to thoſe that were his uſual Companions, or any Intimation that he would come hereafter and make them a Viſit, they could have born this Parting pretty well; but when they are told, That they ſhall *ſee his Face no more* in this World, that 'tis a *final Farewel* they are now giving and taking, this makes it a *great Mourning*; it makes the Farewel juſt like a Funeral, and puts them into this Paſſion of Weeping. There were other Things for which they ſorrow'd, that they ſhould want the Benefit of his publick Performances, and ſee him no longer preſiding in their Aſſemblies, ſhould have none of his perſonal Counſels and Comforts. And we hope, they ſorrow'd for their own Sin in not profiting more by his Labours while they had him among them, and which had provok'd God to order his Remove: But that which gave the moſt ſenſible Accent to their Grief was, That *they ſhould ſee his Face no more.* And when our Friends are ſeparated from us by Death, this is that Conſideration with which we raiſe up our Mourning; That *we ſhall ſee their Faces no more*, but we complain not of this *as thoſe that have no Hope*; for if our Friends dy'd in Chriſt, and we live to him, they are gone to ſee God's Face, to behold his Glory, with the Reflection of which their Faces ſhine, and we hope to be with them ſhortly. Tho' we ſhall *ſee their Faces no more* in this World, we hope to ſee them again in a better World, and to be there together for ever, and with the Lord.

Laſtly, They *accompany'd him unto the Ship*; partly to ſhew their Reſpect to him, they would bring him on his Way *as far as they could*; and partly that they might have *a little more* of his Company and Converſation; if it muſt be the *laſt* Interview, they will have as much from him as they can, and ſee the laſt of him. And we have Reaſon to think, when they came to the Water-ſide, and he was to go on Board, their Tears and Embraces were repeated; for *loth to part bids oft Farewel.* But this was a Comfort to both Sides, and ſoon turn'd this Tide of Paſſion, That the Preſence of Chriſt both went with him, and ſtay'd with them.

CHAP. XXI.

We have with a great deal of Pleaſure attended the Apoſtle in his Travels thro'out the Gentile Nations to preach the Goſpel, and have ſeen a great Harveſt of Souls gathered in to Chriſt; there we have ſeen likewiſe what Perſecutions he endur'd; yet ſtill out of them all the Lord *preſently* deliver'd him, *2 Tim.* 3. 11. *But now we are to attend him to* Jeruſalem, *and there into laſting Bonds: The Days of his Service now ſeem to be over, and nothing to remain but Days of Suffering,* Days of Darkneſs, *for they are* many. *'Tis a thouſand pities that ſuch a Workman ſhould be laid aſide; yet ſo it is, and we muſt not only acquieſce, as his Friends then did, ſaying,* The Will of the Lord be done; *but we muſt believe, and ſhall find Reaſon to do ſo, that* Paul *in the* Priſon *and at the Bar is as truly glorifying GOD, and ſerving Chriſt's Intereſt, as* Paul *in the* Pulpit *was. In this Chapter we have* (1.) *A Journal of* Paul's *Voyage from* Epheſus *to* Cæſarea, *the next Sea-port to* Jeruſalem, *ſome Places he touch'd at, and his Landing there, v.* 1—7. (2.) *The Struggles he had with his Friends at* Cæſarea, *who mightily oppos'd his going up to* Jeruſalem, *but could not prevail, v.* 8—14. (3.) Paul's *Journey from* Cæſarea *to* Jeruſalem, *and the kind Entertainment which the Chriſtians there gave him, v.* 15—17. (4.) *The Compliance with the Perſuaſions of* the Brethren *there, who advis'd him ſo far to complement the* Jews, *as to go to purify himſelf with an Offering in the Temple, as if he had had a Vow, that it might appear he was no ſuch Enemy to the Moſaick Rites and Ceremonies as he was reported to be, v.* 18—26. (5.) *The turning of this very Thing againſt him by the* Jews, *and the apprehending of him in the Temple as a Criminal thereupon, v.* 27—30. (6.) *The fair Scape he had of being pull'd to pieces by the Rabble, and the taking of him into fair and legal Cuſtody by the Chief Captain, who permitted him to ſpeak for himſelf to the People, v.* 31—40. *And ſo we have him made a Priſoner, and ſhall never have him otherwiſe to the End of the Hiſtory of this Book.*

AND it came to paſs, that after we were gotten from them, and had lanched, we came with a ſtraight courſe unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara. 2 And finding a ſhip ſailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and ſet forth. 3 Now when we had diſcovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and ſailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ſhip was to unlade her burthen. 4 And finding diſciples, we tarried there ſeven days: who ſaid to Paul through the Spirit, that he ſhould not go up to Jeruſalem. 5 And when we had accompliſhed thoſe days, we departed, and went our way, and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and we kneeled down on the ſhore, and prayed. 6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ſhip; and they return'd home again. 7 And when we had finiſhed *our* courſe from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and ſaluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

We may obſerve here,

1. How much ado *Paul* had to get clear from *Epheſus*, intimated in the firſt Words of the Chapter, *after we were gotten from them*, were drawn from them as by Violence; 'Twas a Force put upon both Sides; *Paul* was loth to leave them, and they were as loth to part with him, and yet there was no Remedy but ſo it muſt be. When good People are taken away by Death, they are as it were *gotten from* their Friends here below, who ſtruggled hard to have detain'd them if poſſible.

2. What a proſperous Voyage they had from thence; without any Difficulty they came with a *ſtraight Courſe* by direct Sailing to *Coos*, a famous Iſland in *Greece*. The next Day to *Rhodes*, talk'd of for the *Coloſſus* there; thence to *Patara*, a famous Port, the Metropolis of *Lycia*, *v.* 1. There they very happily *found a Ship ſailing over unto* Phœnicia, the very Courſe they were ſteering, *v.* 2. Providence muſt be acknowledg'd when Things happen thus *opportunely*, and we are favour'd by ſome little Circumſtances that contribute to the expediting of our Affairs; and we muſt ſay, *It is GOD that maketh our Way perfect.* This Ship that was bound for *Phœnicia*, i. e. *Tyre*, they took the Convenience of, *went on Board*, and ſet ſail for *Tyre*. In that Voyage they diſcover'd *Cyprus*, the Iſland that *Barnabas* was of, and which he took Care of, and therefore *Paul* did not viſit it but we *left it on the left Hand*, *v.* 3. *ſail'd* upon the Coaſts of *Syria*, and at length *landed at* Tyre, that celebrated Mart of the Nations, ſo it had been, but was now reduc'd; yet ſomething of a Trade it had ſtill, for *there the Ship was to unlade her Burthen*, and did ſo.

3. The Halt that *Paul* made at *Tyre*; when he was got there, he was upon the Coaſt of the Land of *Iſrael*, and found now that he could compaſs the Remainder of his Journey within the Time he had fix'd.

(1.) At *Tyre* he *found Diſciples*, ſome that had embrac'd the Goſpel, and profeſs'd the Chriſtian Faith. *Obſerve*, Where-ever *Paul* came, he enquir'd, what *Diſciples* were there, found them out, and *aſſociated* with them; for we know what's the Uſage of *Birds of a Feather.* When Chriſt was upon Earth, tho' he went ſometimes *into the Coaſts* of *Tyre*, yet he never went *thither* to preach the Goſpel *there*; nor did he think fit to afford to *Tyre* and *Sidon* the Advantages which *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida* had, tho' he knew that if they had had them, they would have made a better Improvement of them, *Luke* x. 13, 14. But after the enlarging of the Goſpel-Commiſſion, Chriſt was preach'd at *Tyre* and had *Diſciples* there; and to this ſome think that Prophecy concerning *Tyre* had reference, *Iſa.* xxiii. 18. *That her Merchandice, and Hire*, ſhould be *Holineſs to the LORD.*

(2.) *Paul* finding thoſe Diſciples at *Tyre*, *tarry'd there ſeven Days*, they urging him to ſtay with them as long as he could; he ſtay'd *ſeven Days* at *Troas*, chap. xx. 6. and here ſo many Days at *Tyre*, that he might be ſure to ſpend one Lord's-Day with them, and ſo might have an Opportunity of Preaching publickly among them; for 'tis the Deſire of good Men to do Good where-ever they come; and where we find Diſciples, we may either benefit them, or be benefited by them.

(3.) The Diſciples at *Tyre* were *endow'd* with ſuch *Gifts*, that they could *by the Spirit* fore-tell the Troubles *Paul* would meet with at *Jeruſalem*; for the *Holy Ghoſt witneſſed it in every City*, chap. xx. 23. It being a Thing that would be ſo much talk'd of when it came to paſs, God ſaw fit to have it much propheſied of before, that Peoples Faith inſtead of being *offended*, might be *confirm'd*; and withal they were *endow'd* with ſuch *Graces*, that fore-ſeeing his Troubles, out of Love to him, and Concern for the Church, eſpecially the Churches of the *Gentiles*, that could ill ſpare him, they begg'd of him that he *would not go up to* Jeruſalem, for they hop'd the Decree was conditional, *If* he *go up*, he *will come* into Trouble there; as the Prediction to *David*, that the Men of *Keilah* will *deliver him up*, that is, if he venture himſelf with them; and therefore they ſaid to him by the Spirit, *that he ſhould not go up*, becauſe *they* concluded it would be moſt for the Glory of God, that he ſhould continue at Liberty; and it was not all their *Fault* to think ſo, and conſequently to *diſſuade* him. For it was their *Miſtake*; for his Tryal would be for the Glory of God, and the Furtherance of the Goſpel, and he knew it; and the Importunity that was us'd with him to diſſuade him from it, renders his pious and truly heroick Reſolution the more illuſtrious.

(4.) The Diſciples at *Tyre*, tho' they were none of *Paul's* Converts, yet ſhew'd a very great Reſpect to *Paul*, whoſe Uſefulneſs in the Church they had hear'd ſo much of: When he *departed* from *Tyre*, tho' they had had but ſeven Days Acquaintance with him, yet as if he had been ſome great Man, they all came together with their Wives and Children, ſolemnly to take Leave of him, to beg his Bleſſing, and to bring him as far on his Way as the Sea would permit them. *Note*, 1. We ſhould pay Reſpect not only to *our own* Miniſters that are *over us in the Lord*, and *admoniſh us*, and for their Work's ſake among us *eſteem them highly in Love*; but we muſt as there is Occaſion teſtify our Love and Reſpect to *all* the faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, both for his Sake whoſe Miniſters they are, and *for their Work's ſake* among others: 2. We muſt in a particular Manner, honour thoſe whom God hath ſingularly honour'd, by making them eminently uſeful in their Generation. 3. 'Tis good to train up *Children* in a Reſpect to good People and good Miniſters. This was particularly remarkable at *Tyre*, which we have not met with any where elſe, that they brought their *Wives and Children* to attend *Paul*, to do him the more Honour, and to receive Benefit by his Inſtructions and Prayers. And as *angry* Notice was taken of the *Children* of the Idolaters of *Bethel* that mock'd a Prophet, ſo no doubt *gracious* Notice was taken of the *Children* of the Diſciples at *Tyre* that *honour'd* an Apoſtle, as Chriſt accepted the *Hoſanna*'s of the little Children. 4. We ſhould be *good Husbands* of our Opportunities, and make the utmoſt we can of them for the Good of our Souls. They brought *Paul* on his Way that they might have ſo much the more of his Company, and his Prayers. Some refer us to *Pſal.* xlv. 12. as a Prediction of this, *The Daughter of* Tyre *ſhall be there with a Gift*; for 'tis probable they made ſome Preſents to *Paul* at parting, as uſual to our Friends that are going to Sea, *Acts* xxviii. 10.

4. They *parted with Prayer*, as *Paul* and the *Epheſian* Elders had done, *chap.* xx. 36. Thus *Paul* has taught us by Example, as well as Rule to *pray always*, to *pray without ceaſing*. *We kneeled down on the Shore and pray'd.* *Paul* pray'd for himſelf, pray'd for them, pray'd for all the Churches; as he was *much* in Prayer, ſo he was *mighty* in Prayer. They pray'd *upon the Shore*, that their laſt Farewel might be ſanctify'd and ſweeten'd with Prayer. Thoſe that are *going to Sea*, ſhould when they quit the Shore commit themſelves to God by Prayer, and put themſelves under his Protection, as thoſe that hope even when they leave the *Terra firma* to find *firm Footing* for their Faith in the Providence and Promiſe of God. They *kneeled down on the Shore*, though we may ſuppoſe it either *ſtony* or *dirty*, and *there* pray'd: *Paul* would that Men ſhould *pray every-where*, and ſo he did himſelf; and where he lift up his Prayer he *bow'd his Knees*. Mr. *George Herbert* ſaith, *kneeling ne'er ſpoiled Silk Stockings*.

(6.) They parted at laſt, *v.* 6. *When we had taken our Leave one of another* with the moſt affectionate Embraces and Expreſſions of Love and Grief, *we took Ship* to be gone, and *they return'd home again*; each complaining that this is a parting World. *Obſerve*, How they diſpos'd of themſelves; we that had a Journey before us *took Ship*, thankful that we had a Ship to carry us; and they that had no Occaſions to call them abroad, *return'd home* again, thankful that they had a home to go to; *Rejoyce* Zebulun *in thy going out, and* Iſſachar *in thy Tents*. *Paul* left his Bleſſing behind him with thoſe that return'd home; and they that ſtay'd ſent their Prayers after them that went to Sea.

5. Their arrival at *Ptolemais*, which was not far from *Tyre*, *v.* 7. We came to *Ptolemais*, which ſome think is the ſame Place with *Accho*, which we find in the Tribe of *Aſher*, Judg. i. 31. *Paul* begg'd Leave to go aſhore there, to *ſalute the Brethren*, to enquire of their State, and to teſtify his Good-will to them. Tho' he could not ſtay long with them, yet he would not paſs by them without paying his Reſpects to them; and he *abode with* them *one Day*, perhaps it was a Lord's-Day. Better a ſhort Stay, than no Viſit.

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Ceſarea; and we entred into the houſe of Philip the evangeliſt, (which was *one* of the ſeven) and abode with him. 9 And the ſame man had four daughters, virgins, which did propheſie. 10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain Prophet, named Agabus. 11 And when he was come unto us he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and ſaid, Thus ſaith the holy Ghoſt, ſo ſhall the Jews at Jeruſalem bind the man that owneth this Girdle, and ſhall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles. 12 And when we heard theſe things, both we and they of that place, beſought him not to go up to Jeruſalem. 13 Then Paul anſwered, What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but alſo to die at Jeruſalem for the name of the Lord Jeſus. 14 And when he would not be perſuaded, we ceaſed, ſaying, The will of the Lord be done.

We have here *Paul* and his *Company* arriv'd at length at *Cæſarea*, where he deſign'd to make ſome Stay, it being the Place where the Goſpel was firſt preach'd to the *Gentiles*, and the Holy Ghoſt fell upon them, *Acts* x. 1.

Now here we are told,

Firſt, Who it was that entertain'd *Paul* and his Company at *Cæſarea*: He ſeldom had Occaſion to go to a publick Houſe, but where-ever he came ſome Friend or other took him in, and bid him welcome. *Obſerve*, They that had ſail'd together, parted when the Voyage was accompliſh'd, according as their Buſineſs was. They that were concern'd in the Cargo ſtay'd where the Ship was to *unlade her Burthen*, *v.* 3. Others when they came to *Ptolemais* went as their Occaſions led them; but we that *were of* Paul's *Company*, went where he went, and came to *Cæſarea*. Thoſe that travel together through this World, will ſeparate at Death, and then it will appear who are of *Paul*'s Company, and who are not. Now at *Cæſarea*,

1. They were entertain'd by *Philip* the *Evangeliſt*, whom we left at *Cæſarea* many Years ago, after he had baptiz'd the *Eunuck*, *Acts* viii. 40. And there we now find him again. (1.) He was originally a *Deacon*, *one of the Seven* that were choſen to ſerve Tables, *chap.* vi. 5. (2.) He was *now* and had been *long* an *Evangeliſt*, one that went about to plant and water Churches as the Apoſtles did, and gave himſelf as they did to the Word and Prayer: Thus having *us'd the Office of a Deacon well*, he *purchas'd to himſelf a good Degree*. And having been faithful in a few Things, was made *Ruler over many Things*. (3.) He had a Houſe at *Cæſarea*, fit to entertain *Paul* and all his Company, and he bid him and them very welcome to it. We *enter'd into the Houſe of* Philip *the Evangeliſt*, and we *abode with him*. Thus doth it become Chriſtians and Miniſters according as their Ability is to *uſe Hoſpitality one to another without grudging*, 1 Pet. iv. 9.

2. This *Philip* had four *Maiden Daughters* which did *Propheſy*, *v.* 9. it intimates that they *propheſy'd* of *Paul*'s Troubles at *Jeruſalem*, as others had done, and diſſuaded him from going; or, perhaps they propheſy'd for his Comfort and Encouragement, a further Accompliſhment of that Prophecy, *Joel* ii. 28. of ſuch a plentiful Pouring out of the Spirit upon all Fleſh, as that their *Sons and their Daughters ſhould propheſy*, *i. e.* fore-tell Things to come.

Secondly, A plain and full Prediction of the Sufferings of *Paul* by a noted Prophet, *v.* 10, 11.

1. *Paul* and his Company *tarry'd many Days* at *Cæſarea*; Perhaps *Cornelius* was yet living there, and (tho' *Philip* lodg'd them, yet) might be many Ways kind to them, and induce them to ſtay there. What Cauſe *Paul* ſaw to tarry ſo long there, and to make ſo little haſte at the Latter-end of his Journey to *Jeruſalem*, when he ſeem'd ſo much in haſte at the Beginning of it, we cannot tell, but we are ſure he did not ſtay either there or any where elſe to be idle; he *meaſur'd* his Time *by Days*, and *number'd* them.

2. *Agabus* the Prophet came to *Cæſarea* from *Judea*: This was he that we read of before, who came from *Jeruſalem* to *Antioch* to foretel a general Famine, *chap.* xi. 27, 28. See how God diſpenſeth his Gifts variouſly; to *Paul* was given the Word of *Wiſdom* and *Knowledge* as an Apoſtle, by the Spirit, and the *Gifts of Healing*; to *Agabus* and to *Philip*'s Daughters were given *Prophecy by the ſame Spirit*, the Foretelling of Things to come, which came to paſs according to the Prediction, (See 1 *Cor.* xii. 8, 10.) ſo that that which was the moſt *eminent Gift* of the Spirit under the *Old Teſtament*, the foretelling of *Things to come*, was under the *New Teſtament*, quite *out-ſhone* by other Gifts, and was beſtow'd upon thoſe that were of *leſs Note* in the Church. It ſhould ſeem as if *Agabus* came *on purpoſe* to *Cæſarea* to meet *Paul* with this *Prophetick* Intelligence.

3. He foretold *Paul*'s Bonds at *Jeruſalem*; (1.) By a Sign, as the Prophets of Old did, *Iſaiah*, chap. xx. 3. and many others. *Agabus* took *Paul*'s Girdle, when he laid it by, or perhaps took it from about him, and with it bound faſt his own Hands, and then his own Feet, or perhaps bound his Hands and Feet together. This was deſign'd both to confirm the Prophecy, 'twas as ſure to be done, as if 'twere done already; and to affect thoſe about him with it; becauſe that which we *ſee* uſually makes a greater Impreſſion upon us, than that which we only *hear of*. (2.) By an Explication of the Sign, *Thus ſayeth the Holy Ghoſt*, the Spirit of Prophecy, *ſo ſhall the* Jews *at* Jeruſalem *bind the Man that owneth this Girdle*; and as they dealt with his Maſter, (*Matth.* xx. 18, 19.) *ſhall deliver him into the Hands of the* Gentiles, as the *Jews* in other Places had all along endeavour'd to do, by accuſing him to the *Roman* Governours. *Paul* had this expreſs Warning given him of his Troubles, that he might prepare for them, that when they came they might be no Surprize or Terror to him. And the general Notice given us, That *through much Tribulation we muſt enter into the Kingdom of God*, ſhould be of the ſame Uſe to us.

Thirdly, The great Importunity which his Friends us'd with him, to diſſuade him from going forward to *Jeruſalem*, *v.* 12. Not only *they of that Place*, but *we* that were of *Paul*'s Company, and among the reſt *Luke* himſelf who had *heard this* often before, and ſeen *Paul*'s Reſolution, notwithſtanding, *beſought him* with Tears, *that he would not go up to* Jeruſalem, but ſteer his Courſe ſome other Way.

Now (1.) Here appear'd a commendable Affection to *Paul*, and a Value for him upon the Account of his great Uſefulneſs in the Church. Good Men that are very *active*, ſometimes need to be diſſuaded from *over-working* themſelves: And good Men that are very *bold*, need to be diſſuaded from *expoſing* themſelves too far. *The Lord is for the Body*, and ſo muſt we be.

(2.) Yet there was a Mixture of *Infirmity*, eſpecially in thoſe of *Paul*'s Company, who knew he undertook this Journey by Divine Direction, and had ſeen with what Reſolution he had before broken thro' the like Oppoſition. But we ſee in them the Infirmity incident to us all; when we ſee Troubles at a Diſtance, and have only a general Notice of it, we can make light of it, but when it *comes near*, we begin to ſhrink and draw back; *Now it touches thee, thou art troubled*, Job iv. 5.

Fourthly, The Holy Bravery and Intrepidity with which *Paul* perſiſted in his Reſolution, *v.* 13.

1. He reproves them for diſſuading him; Here's a Quarrel of Love on both Sides, and very ſincere and ſtrong Affections claſhing with each other. They *love him dearly*, and therefore *oppoſe* his Reſolution; He *loves them dearly*, and therefore chides them for oppoſing it; *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine Heart?* They were an *Offence* to him, as *Peter* was to Chriſt, when in a like Caſe, he ſaid, *Maſter, ſpare thyſelf.* Their *Weeping* about him *brake his Heart*, i. e. (1.) It was a *Temptation* to him, it ſhock'd him, it began to weaken and ſlacken his Reſolution, and made him to entertain Thoughts of tacking about; I know I am appointed to Suffering, and you ought to animate and encourage me, and to ſay that which will *ſtrengthen my Heart*, but you with your Tears *break my Heart*, and diſcourage me. *What do you mean* to do thus? Has not our Maſter bid us *Take up our Croſs*, and would you have me to balk mine? (2.) It was a Trouble to him that they ſhould ſo earneſtly *preſs him* to that in which he could not *gratify* them, without wronging his Conſcience. *Paul* was of a very tender Spirit, as he was much *in Tears himſelf*, ſo he had a compaſſionate Regard to the Tears of his Friends; they made a great Impreſſion upon him, and would bring him almoſt to yield to any Thing. But now it *breaks his Heart*, when he is under a Neceſſity of denying the Requeſt of his *Weeping* Friends. 'Twas an unkind Kindneſs, a cruel Pity, thus to *torment* him with their Diſſuaſions, and to add Affliction to his Grief. When our Friends are call'd out to Sufferings, we ſhould ſhew our Love rather by *comforting* 'em, than by *ſorrowing* for them. But *Obſerve*, Theſe Chriſtians at *Cæſarea*, if they could have *foreſeen* the Particulars of that Event, the general Notice of which they receiv'd with ſo much Heavineſs, they would have been better reconcil'd to it for their own Sakes; for when *Paul* was made a Priſoner at *Jeruſalem*, he was preſently ſent to *Cæſarea*, the very Place where he now was, *Chap.* xxiii, 33. and there he continu'd at leaſt *two Years*, *Chap.* xxiv. 27. Look what more, and he was a Priſoner at large, as appears, *Chap.* xxiv. 23. where Orders were given, that he *ſhould have Liberty* to go among his Friends, and his *Friends to come to him*; ſo that the Church at *Cæſarea* had much more of *Paul*'s Company and Help when he was impriſon'd, than they could have had if he had been at Liberty. That which we oppoſe as thinking it to make much *againſt us*, may be *over-rul'd* by the Providence of God to work *for us*, which is a Reaſon why we ſhould *follow* Providence, and not *fear* it.

2. He repeats his Reſolution to go forward notwithſtanding. *What mean you to weep* thus; *I am ready* to ſuffer what is appointed me. I am fully determin'd to go whatever comes of it, and therefore 'tis to no purpoſe for you to oppoſe it. I am willing to ſuffer, and therefore why are you unwilling that I ſhould ſuffer? Am not I neareſt my ſelf, and fitteſt to judge for myſelf? If the Trouble found me unready, it would be a Trouble indeed, and you might well weep at the Thoughts of it: But bleſſed be God it doth not. It is very welcome to me, and therefore ſhould not be ſuch Terrour to you. For my part, *I am ready*, ἑτοίμως ἔχω, *I have my ſelf in a readineſs*, as Soldiers for an Engagement. (1.) I *expect* Trouble, I count upon it, 'twill be no Surprize to me. I was told at firſt *what great Things I muſt ſuffer*, Chap. ix. 16. (2.) I am *prepar'd* for it, by a clear Conſcience, a firm Confidence in God, a Holy Contempt of the World and the Body, a lively Faith in Chriſt, and a joyful Hope of Eternal Life. (3.) I can *bid it welcome* as we do a Friend that we look for, and have made Preparation for. I can thro' Grace, not only bear it, but rejoyce in it.

Now (1.) See how far his Reſolution extends; You are told that I muſt be *bound* at *Jeruſalem*, and you would have me keep away for fear of that. I tell you, *I am ready not only to be bound*, but if the Will of God be ſo, to *die at* Jeruſalem; not only to loſe my Liberty, but to loſe my Life. 'Tis our Wiſdom to think of the *worſt* that may befall us, and to prepare accordingly, that we may *ſtand compleat in all the Will of GOD.*

(2.) See what it is that carries him out thus, that makes him willing to ſuffer and die, it is *for the Name of the Lord Jeſus.* All that a Man has will he give for his Life; but Life itſelf will *Paul* give for the Service and Honour of the Name of Chriſt.

Fifthly, The patient Acquieſcence of his Friends in his Reſolution, *v.* 14.

1. They ſubmitted to the *Wiſdom* of a good Man; They had carry'd the Matter as far as they could with Decency; but *when he would not be perſuaded, we ceas'd* our Importunities. *Paul* knows beſt his own Mind, and what he has to do, and it becomes us to leave it to himſelf, and not to *cenſure* him for what he doth, or to ſay he is raſh, and wilfull, and humourſome, and has a Spirit of Contradiction, as ſome People are apt to judge of thoſe that will not do juſt as they would have them do. No doubt *Paul* has a good Reaſon for his Reſolution, tho' he ſees Cauſe to keep it to himſelf, and God has gracious Ends to ſerve in *confirming* him in it. It is good Manners not to *over-preſs* thoſe in their own Affairs that *will not be perſuaded.*

2. They ſubmitted to the *Will* of a Good God; we ceas'd ſaying, *The Will of the LORD be done.* They did not reſolve his Reſolution into *his Wilſulneſs*, but into his *Willingneſs* to ſuffer, and *GOD's Will* that he ſhould. *Father, in Heaven, thy Will be done*; as it is a Rule to our Prayers and to our Practice, ſo it is to our Patience. This may refer (1.) To *Paul*'s preſent *Stiffneſs*: He is inflexible, and unperſuadable, and in this they ſee *the Will of the LORD done.* It is he that has wrought this fixed Reſolution in him, and therefore we acquieſce in it. *Note*, In the turning of the Hearts of our Friends or Miniſters, this Way or that Way, and it may be quite another Way than we could wiſh; we ſhould eye the Hand of God, and ſubmit to that. (2.) To his *approaching Sufferings*; If there be no Remedy, but *Paul* will run himſelf into Bonds, *The Will of the Lord* Jeſus *be done.* We have done all that we could do on our Parts to prevent it, and now we leave it to God, we leave it to Chriſt, to whom the Father has *committed all Judgement*, and therefore we do, not as we will, but as He will. *Note*, When we ſee Trouble coming, and particularly that of our Miniſters being ſilenc'd or remov'd from us, it becomes us to ſay, *The Will of the LORD be done.* God is Wiſe, and knows how to make all work for Good, and therefore *welcome his Holy Will.* Not only, The Will of the Lord *muſt be* done, and there's no Remedy; but *let the Will of the LORD* be done, for his *Will* is his *Wiſdom*, and He doth all *according to the Counſel* of it: Let Him therefore do with us and ours as ſeemeth good in his Eyes. When a Trouble is come, this muſt allay our Griefs, That the Will of the Lord *is done*; when we ſee it coming, this muſt ſilence our Fears, That the *Will of the LORD* ſhall be done, to which we muſt ſay, *Amen*, Let it be done.

15 And after thoſe days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jeruſalem. 16 There went with us alſo *certain* of the Diſciples of Ceſarea, and brought with them one Mnaſon of Cyprus, an old diſciple, with whom we ſhould lodge. 17 And when we were come to Jeruſalem, the Brethren received us gladly. 18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were preſent. 19 And when he had ſaluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his miniſtry. 20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and ſaid unto him, Thou ſeeſt brother, how many thouſands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the Law. 21 And they are informed of thee that thou teacheſt all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forſake Moſes, ſaying, that they ought not to circumciſe *their* Children, neither to walk after the Cuſtoms. 22 What is it therefore? the multitude muſt needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23 Do therefore this that we ſay to thee: we have four men which have a Vow on them; 24 Them take and purifie thy ſelf with them, and be at charges with them, that they may ſhave *their* heads: and all may know that thoſe things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but *that* thou thy ſelf alſo walkeſt orderly, and keepeſt the law. 25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, that they obſerve no ſuch thing, ſave only that they keep themſelves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from that which is ſtrangled, and from Fornication. 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himſelf with them, entred into the Temple, to ſignifie the accompliſhment of the days of purification, until that an offering ſhould be offered for every one of them.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, *Paul*'s Journey to *Jeruſalem* from *Cæſarea*, and the Company that went along with him.

1. They *took up their Carriages*, their Bag and Baggage, and as it ſhould ſeem like poor Travellers or Soldiers, were their own Porters; ſo little had they of change of Rayment. *Omnia mea mecum porto.* Some think they had with them the Money that was collected in the Churches of *Macedonia* and *Achaia*, for the poor Saints at *Jeruſalem*. If they could have perſuaded *Paul* to go ſome other Way, they would gladly have gone along with

him, but, if notwithſtanding their Diſſuaſives he will go to *Jeruſalem*, they do not ſay, Let him go himſelf then, but as *Thomas* in a like Caſe, when Chriſt would go into Danger at *Jeruſalem*, *Let us go and die with him*, Joh. xi. 16. Their Reſolution to cleave to *Paul*, was like that of *Ittai* to cleave to *David*, 2 *Sam*. xv. 21. *In what Place my Lord the King ſhall be, whether in Death or Life, there alſo will thy Servant be.* Thus *Paul*'s Boldneſs embolden'd them.

2. Certain of the Diſciples of *Cæſarea* went along with them. Whether they deſign'd to go however, and took this Opportunity of going with ſo much good Company, or whether they went *on purpoſe* to ſee if they could do *Paul* any Service, and if poſſible prevent his Trouble, or at leaſt miniſter to him in it, doth not appear. The leſs While *Paul* is likely to enjoy his Liberty, the more induſtrious they are to improve every Opportunity of Converſation with him. *Eliſha* kept cloſe to *Elijah*, when he knew the Time was at Hand that he ſhould be taken up.

3. They brought with them an honeſt old Gentleman, that had a Houſe of his own at *Jeruſalem*, in which he would gladly entertain *Paul* and his Company, one *Mnaſon* of *Cyprus*, *v.* 16. *with whom we ſhould lodge:* Such a great Concourſe of People there was to the Feaſt, that it was a hard matter to get Lodgings: The publick Houſes would be taken up by thoſe of the better Sort; and it was look'd upon as a ſcandalous Thing, for thoſe that had private Houſes, to hire their Rooms at thoſe Times, but they muſt freely accommodate Strangers with them. Every one then would chuſe his Friends to be his Gueſts, and *Mnaſon* took *Paul* and his *Company* to be his *Lodgers*; tho' he had heard what Trouble *Paul* was likely to come into, which might bring thoſe that entertain'd him into Trouble too, yet he ſhall be welcome to him whatever comes of it. This *Mnaſon* is call'd an *old Diſciple*; a Diſciple *from the Beginning*; ſome think, One of the Seventy Diſciples of Chriſt, or one of the firſt Converts after the Pouring out of the Spirit; or one of the firſt that was converted by the Preaching of the Goſpel in *Cyprus*, *Chap*. xiii. 4. However it was, it ſeems he had been long a Chriſtian, and was now in Years. *Note*, It is an honourable Thing to be an *old Diſciple* of Jeſus, to have been enabled by the Grace of God to continue long in a Courſe of Duty, ſtedfaſt in the Faith, and growing more and more prudent and experienc'd to a good Old-age: And with theſe old Diſciples One would chuſe to *lodge*; for the *Multitude of their Years* ſhall *teach Wiſdom*.

Secondly, *Paul*'s welcome at *Jeruſalem*.

1. Many of the Brethren there *receiv'd him gladly*, *v.* 17, As ſoon as they had Notice that he was come to Town, they went to his Lodgings at *Mnaſon*'s Houſe, and congratulated his ſafe Arrival, and told him, they were glad to ſee him, and invited him to their Houſes; and counted it an Honour to be known to One that was ſuch an eminent Servant of Chriſt. *Streſo* obſerves, that the Word here us'd concerning the *Welcome*, they gave to the Apoſtles, ἀσμένως ἀποδέχειν, is us'd concerning the Welcome of the Apoſtles Doctrine, *Acts* ii. 41. They *gladly receiv'd his Word*. We think if we had *Paul* among us, we would gladly receive *him*; but 'tis a Queſtion whether we would or no, if having his Doctrine, we do not *gladly receive* that.

2. They made a Viſit to *James* and the *Elders* of the Church, at a Church-meeting, *v.* 18. *The Day following* Paul *went in unto James*, and took us with him that were his Companions, to introduce us into Acquaintance with the Church at *Jeruſalem*. It ſhould ſeem that *James* was now *the* only Apoſtle that was reſident at *Jeruſalem*; the Reſt had diſpers'd thrmſelves to preach the Goſpel in other Places: But ſtill they fore-caſted to have an Apoſtle at *Jeruſalem*, perhaps ſometimes one, and ſometimes another, becauſe there was ſuch a great Reſort thither from all Parts. *James* was now *upon the Spot*, and *all the Elders* or *Presbyters*, that were the *ordinary* Paſtors of the Church both to preach and govern, were *preſent*. *Paul ſaluted* them all, pay'd his Reſpects to them, enquir'd of their Welfare, and *gave them the Right Hand of Fellowſhip*. He *ſaluted them*, i. e. he wiſh'd them all Health and Happineſs, and pray'd to God to bleſs them. The proper Signification of *Salutation*, is wiſhing *Salvation* to you; *Salve*, or *Salus tibi ſit:* Like, *Peace be unto you*. And ſuch mutual *Salutations* or *good Wiſhes*, very well become Chriſtians in Token of their Love to each other, and joynt Regard to God.

Thirdly, The Account they had from him of his Miniſtry among the *Gentiles*, and their Satisfaction in it.

1. He gave them a Narrative of the Succeſs of the Goſpel in thoſe Countries where he had been employ'd, knowing it would be very acceptable to them, to hear of the enlarging of Chriſt's Kingdom. *He declar'd particularly what Things GOD had wrought among the* Gentiles *by his Miniſtry*, *v.* 19. Obſerve how modeſtly he ſpeaks, not *what Things he had wrought*; he was but the Inſtrument; but *what GOD had wrought by his Miniſtry*. 'Twas *not I*, but *the Grace of GOD that was with me*. He *planted* and *water'd*, but God *gave the Increaſe*. He declar'd it *particularly*, that the Grace of God might appear the more illuſtrious in the Circumſtances of his Succeſs. Thus *David* will tell others what *GOD had done for his Soul*, Pſal. lxvi. 16. as *Paul* here what God had done *by his Hand*, and both that their Friends might help them to be thankful.

2. Hence they took Occaſion to give Praiſe to God, *v.* 20 *When they heard it, they glorified the LORD*. *Paul* aſcrib'd it all to God, and to God they gave the Praiſe of it. They did not break out into high Encomiums of *Paul*, but leave it to his Maſter to ſay to him, *Well done, good and faithful Servant*; but they gave Glory to the Grace of God which was extended to the *Gentiles*. *Note*, The Converſion of Sinners ought to be the Matter of our Joy and Praiſe, as it is of the Angels. God had honour'd *Paul* more than any of them in making his Uſefulneſs more extenſive, yet they do not envy him, nor are they jealous of his growing Reputation, but on the contrary *glorify'd the LORD*. And they could not do more to encourage *Paul* to go on chearfully in his Work, than to glorify God for his Succeſs in it; for If God be prais'd, *Paul* is pleas'd.

Fifthly, The Requeſt of *James* and the *Elders* of the Church at *Jeruſalem* to *Paul*, or their *Advice* rather, That he would gratify the Believing *Jews*, by ſhewing ſome Compliance with the Ceremonial Law, and appearing publickly in the Temple to offer Sacrifice; which was not a Thing in itſelf ſinful; for the Ceremonial Law, tho' it was by no Means to be impos'd upon the Gentile Converts, as the falſe Teachers would have it, and thereby endeavour'd to ſubvert the Goſpel, yet it was not become unlawful as yet, to thoſe that had been bred up in the Obſervation of it, but were far from expecting Juſtification by it. 'Twas *dead*, but not *bury'd*; *dead*, but not yet *deadly*. And being not ſinful they thought it was a Piece of *Prudence* in *Paul* to *conform* thus far.

Obſerve the Counſel they give to *Paul* herein, not as having *Authority* over him, but an *Affection* for him.

1. They deſire him to take Notice of the great Numbers there were of Jewiſh Converts; *Thou ſeeſt, Brother, how many Thouſands of* Jews *there are which believe*. They call him *Brother*, for they look'd upon him as a *joynt Commiſſioner* with them in Goſpel-work, tho' they were of the Circumciſion, and he the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*; tho' they were Conformiſts, and he a Nonconformiſt; yet they were *Brethren*, and own'd the *Relation*. Thou haſt been in ſome of our Aſſemblies, and ſeeſt how numerous they are; *how many Myriads of* Jews *believe*. The Word ſignifies not Thouſands, but *Ten Thouſands*, Even among the *Jews* that were moſt prejudic'd againſt the Goſpel, yet there were great Multitudes that receiv'd it; for the Grace of God can bring down the ſtrongeſt Holds of Satan. The Number of the Names at firſt, was but One Hundred and Twenty, yet now *Many Thouſands:* Let none therefore deſpiſe the Day of ſmall Things, for tho' the Beginning be but ſmall, God can make the latter End greatly to increaſe. Hereby, it appear'd that God had not quite *caſt away his People* the *Jews*, for among them there was a *Remnant*, an *Election* that *obtain'd*, ſee *Rom*. xi. 1, 5, 7. *many Thouſands that believed*. And this Account they could give to *Paul* of the Succeſs of the Goſpel among the *Jews*, no doubt was as grateful to *Paul*, as the Account he gave them of the Converſion of the *Gentiles* was to *them*; for his Heart's Deſire and Prayer ſo God for the *Jews*, was, *That they might be ſav'd*.

2. They inform him of a prevailing Infirmity theſe Believing *Jews* labour'd under, which they could not yet be cur'd of. *They are all zealous of the Law*. They believe in Chriſt as the true *Meſſiah*, they reſt upon his Righteouſneſs, and ſubmit to his Government; but they know the Law of *Moſes* was of God; they have found ſpiritual Benefit in their Attendance on the Inſtitutions of it, and therefore they can by no Means think of parting with it, no nor of growing cold to it; and perhaps urg'd Chriſt's being *made under the Law*, and obſerving it, which was deſign'd to be our *Deliverance* from the Law, as a Reaſon for their *Continuance* under it. This was a great Weakneſs and Miſtake, to be ſo fond of the Shadows when the Subſtance was come; to keep their Necks under a *Yoke of Bondage*, when Chriſt was come to make them free. But ſee (1.) The Power of Education, and long Uſage, and eſpecially of a *Ceremonial Law*. (2.) The charitable Allowance that muſt be made in Conſideration of theſe. Theſe *Jews* that believ'd, were not therefore diſown'd and rejected as no Chriſtians, becauſe they were *for the Law*, nay were *zealous* for it, while is was only in their own Practice, and they did not impoſe it upon others. Their being *zealous of the Law*, was capable of a *good Conſtruction*, which Charity would put upon it; and it was capable of a *good Excuſe*, conſidering what they were brought up in, and who they liv'd among.

3. They give him to underſtand how theſe *Jews* who were ſo zealous of the Law, were ill-affected to him, *v.* 21. *Paul* himſelf, tho' as faithful a Servant as any Chriſt ever had, yet could not get the good Word of all that belong'd to Chriſt's Family. *They are inform'd of thee* (and form their Opinion of thee accordingly) that thou not only doſt not teach the *Gentiles* to obſerve the Law, as ſome would have had thee; we have prevail'd with them to drop that; but *doſt teach all the* Jews *which are* diſpers'd *among the* Gentiles *to forſake* Moſes, *not to circumciſe their Children, nor to walk after the Cuſtoms* of our Nation, which were of Divine Appointment, ſo far as they might be obſerv'd even among the *Gentiles*, at a Diſtance from the Temple; not to obſerve the Faſts and Feaſts of the Church, not to wear their Phylacteries, or abſtain from unclean Meats, Now (1.) It was true that *Paul* preach'd the Abrogation of the Law of *Moſes*, and that it was impoſſible to be *juſtify'd* by it, and therefore we are not

bound up any longer to the Obſervation of it. But (2.) It was falſe, that he taught them to *forſake Moſes*; for the Religion he preach'd tended not to *deſtroy the Law*, but to *fulfill* it. He preach'd Chriſt, the *End of the Law* for Righteouſneſs, and *Repentance* and *Faith*, in the Exerciſe of which we are to make great Uſe of the Law. The *Jews* among the *Gentiles*, whom *Paul* taught, were ſo far from *forſaking Moſes*, that they never *underſtood* him better, nor ever *embrac'd* him ſo heartily as now, when they were taught to make uſe of him as a *School-Maſter to bring them to Chriſt*. But even the *Believing Jews* having got this Notion of *Paul*, that he was an Enemy to *Moſes*, and perhaps giving too much Regard to the *Unbelieving Jews* too, were much exaſperated againſt him. Their Miniſters, the *Elders here preſent*, lov'd and honour'd him, and approv'd of what he did, and call'd him *Brother*, but the People could hardly be got to entertain a favourable Thought of him; for 'tis certain, the leaſt *judicious* are the moſt *cenſorious*; The *Weak-headed* are the *Hot-headed*. They could not *diſtinguiſh* upon *Paul*'s Doctrine as they ought to have done, and therefore condemn'd it in the groſs, through Ignorance.

4. They therefore deſire *Paul*, that he would by ſome *publick Act*, now he is come to *Jeruſalem*, make it appear that the Charge againſt him was falſe, and that he did not teach People to *forſake* Moſes, and to break the Cuſtoms of the *Jewiſh* Church, for he himſelf retain'd the Uſe of them.

1. They conclude that ſomething of this Kind muſt be done, *What is it therefore?* What muſt be done? *The Multitude will hear that thou art come* to Town; this is an Inconvenience that attends Men of Fame, that their Coming and Going is taken Notice of more than other Peoples; and will be *talked of*, by ſome for *Good-will*, and by others for *Ill-will*. When they hear thou art come, *they muſt needs come together, i. e.* They will expect that we call them together, to adviſe with them, whether we ſhould admit thee to preach among us as a Brother, or no; or, they will come together of themſelves expecting to hear thee. Now ſomething muſt be done to ſatisfy them, that *Paul* doth not teach People to *forſake Moſes*, and this they think is neceſſary. (1.) For *Paul*'s Sake, that his Reputation may be clear'd, and that ſo good a Man may not lie under any Blemiſh; nor ſo uſeful a Man labour under any Diſadvantage which may obſtruct his Uſefulneſs. (2.) For the *Peoples* Sake, that they may not continue prejudiced againſt ſo good a Man, nor loſe the Benefit of his Miniſtry, by thoſe Prejudices. (3.) For *their own Sake*, that ſince they knew it was their Duty to own *Paul*, their doing it might not be turn'd to their Reproach among thoſe that were under their Charge.

(2.) They produce a fair Opportunity, which *Paul* might take to clear himſelf; *Do this that we ſay unto thee*; take our Advice in this Caſe. *We have four Men*, Jews which believe, of our own Churches, and *they have a Vow on them*, a Vow of Nazariteſhip, for a certain Time; their Time is now expir'd, *v.* 23. and they are to offer their Offering according to the Law, when they *ſhave the Head of their Soparation*, a *He-lamb for a burnt Offering*, an *Ew-lamb* for a *Sin-offering*, and a *Ram for a Peace-offering*, and other Offerings appurtenant to them, *Num.* vi. 13---20. many us'd to do this *together*, when their Vow expired about the ſame Time, either for the greater Expedition, or the greater Solemnity. Now *Paul* having ſo far of late comply'd with the Law, as to take upon him the Vow of a *Nazarite*, and to ſignify the Expiration of it by *ſhaving his Head* at *Cenchrea*, Chap xviii. 18. according to the Cuſtom of thoſe who liv'd at a Diſtance from the Temple; they deſire him but to go a little further, and to joyn with theſe four in offering the Sacrifices of a *Nazarite*; *purify thy ſelf with them* according to the Law; and be willing not only to take *that* Trouble, but to be *at Charges with them*, in *buying* Sacrifices for this ſolemn Occaſion, and to joyn with them in the Sacrifice. And this they think will effectually ſtop the Mouth of Calumny, and every one will be convinc'd that the Report is falſe; that *Paul* was not the Man he was repreſented to be; did not teach the *Jews* to forſake *Moſes*, but that he himſelf being originally a *Jew*, *walk'd orderly*, and *kept the Law*, and then all would be well.

5. They *enter a Proteſtation*, that this ſhall be no Infringement at all of the Decree lately made in Favour of the *Gentile-Converts*, nor do they intend by this, in the leaſt to derogate from the Liberty allow'd them, *v.* 25. *As touching the Gentiles* which *believe*, *we have written and concluded*, and reſolve to abide by it, *that they obſerve no ſuch Thing*; we would not have them to be bound up by the Ceremonial Law by no means, but only that they keep themſelves from *Things offered to Idols, and from Blood, and from Things ſtrangled*, and *from Fornication*; but let not them be ty'd to the Jwiſh Sacrifices or Purifications, or any of their Rites and Ceremonies. They knew how zealous *Paul* was for the preſerving of the Liberty of the converted *Gentiles*, and therefore expreſly covenant to abide by that. Thus far is their Propoſal.

Sixthly, Here is *Paul*'s Compliance with it. He was willing to gratify them in this Matter. Tho' he would not be perſuaded not to *go* to *Jeruſalem*, yet when he was there, he was perſuaded to *do as they there did*, v. 26, *Then* Paul *took the Men*, as they adviſed and the very *next Day purifying himſelf with them*, and not, *with Multitude* or Tumult, as he himſelf pleads, *Chap.* xxiv. 18. He *enter'd into the Temple* as other devout *Jews* that came upon ſuch Errands did, to *ſignify the Accompliſhment of the Days of Purification*, to the Prieſts; deſiring the Prieſt would appoint a Time when *the Offering ſhould be offered for every one of them*, one for each. *Ainſworth* on *Num.* vi. 18. quotes out of *Maimonides* a Paſſage which gives ſome Light to this; *If a Man ſay, upon me be half the Oblations of a* Nazarite, or *upon me be half the ſhaving of a* Nazarite, *that he brings half the Offerings by what* Nazarite *he will, and that* Nazarite *pays his Offering out of that which is his*; ſo *Paul* did here; he contributed what he vow'd to the Offerings of theſe *Nazarites*; and ſome think bound himſelf to the Law of the *Nazariteſhip*, and to an Attendance at the Temple with Faſting and Prayers for *Seven Days*, not deſigning that the Offering ſhould be offer'd till then; which was that he ſignify'd to the Prieſt.

Now it has been queſtion'd, whether *James* and the Elders did well to give this Advice, and whether he did well to take it.

1. Some have blam'd this *Occaſional Conformity* of *Paul*'s, as indulging the *Jews* too much in their *Adherence* to the *Ceremonial Law*, and a Diſcouragement to thoſe who *ſtood faſt in the Liberty* wherewith Chriſt had *made them free*. Was it not enough for *James* and the Elders of *Jeruſalem* to *connive* at this Miſtake in the *Jewiſh* Converts themſelves, but muſt they wheedle *Paul* to *countenance* them in it. Had it not been better, when they had told *Paul* how *zealous* the Believing *Jews* were for *the Law*, if they had deſir'd him whom God had endued with ſuch excellent Gifts, to take Pains with their People, to convince them of their Error, and to ſhew them that they were made free from the Law by their Marriage to Chriſt, *Rom.* vi. 4. And to urge him to encourage them in it by his Example, ſeems to have more in it of fleſhly Wiſdom than of the Grace of God. Sure *Paul* knew what he had to do better than they could tell him. But,

2. Others think the Advice was *prudent* and *good*, and *Paul*'s following was *juſtifiable* enough as the Caſe ſtood. It was *Paul*'s avowed Principle, *to the* Jews, *became I as a* Jew, *that I might gain the* Jews, 1 *Cor.* ix. 20. He had circumciſed *Timothy*, to pleaſe the *Jews*; Tho' he would not *conſtantly* obſerve the Ceremonial Law, yet to gain an Opportunity of doing good, and to ſhew how far he could comply, he would *occaſionally* go to the Temple. and joyn in the Sacrifices there. Thoſe that are *weak in the Faith* are to be born with, when thoſe that *undermine* the Faith muſt be oppos'd. 'Tis true this Compliance of *Paul*'s ſped il' to him, for this very Thing by which he hoped to *pacify* the *Jews* did but *provoke* them, and bring him into Trouble, yet that is not a ſufficient Ground to go upon in condemning it; *Paul* might do well, and yet ſuffer for it; But perhaps the wiſe God over-rul'd both their Advice, and *Paul*'s Compliance with it, to ſerve a better Purpoſe than was intended; for we have Reaſon to think, that when the *Believing* Jews who had endeavour'd by their *Zeal for the Law*, to recommend themſelves to the good Opinion of thoſe who believ'd not, ſaw how *barbarouſly* they us'd *Paul*, who endeavour'd to *oblige* them; they were by this more *alienated* from the Ceremonial Law, than they could have been by the moſt argumentative, or affecting Diſcourſes. They ſaw 'twas in vain to think of *pleaſing* Men, that would be *pleas'd* with nothing elſe but the rooting out of Chriſtianity. Integrity and Uprightneſs will be more likely to preſerve us than ſneaking Compliances. And when we conſider what a great Trouble it muſt needs be to *James* and the *Preſbyters* in the Reflection upon it, that they had by their Advice brought *Paul* into Trouble; it ſhould be a Warning to us not to preſs Men to oblige us, by doing any Thing contrary to their own Mind.

27 And when the ſeven Days were almoſt ended, the Jews which were of Aſia, when they ſaw him in the temple, ſtirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, 28 Crying out, Men of Iſrael, help: this is the man that teacheth all men every where againſt the people, and the law, and this place: and farther brought Greeks alſo into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. 29 (For they had ſeen before with him in the City, Trophimus an Epheſian, whom they ſuppoſed that Paul had brought into the Temple.) 20 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the Temple: and forthwith the doors were ſhut. 31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief Captain of the band, that all Jeruſalem was in an uproar, 32 Who immediately took ſouldiers, and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they ſaw the chief captain and the ſouldiers, they left beating of Paul. 33 Then the chief captain came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done. 34 And ſome cried one thing, ſome another, among the multitude: and when he could

not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the caſtle. 35 And when he came upon the ſtairs, ſo it was that he was born of the ſoldiers for the violence of the people. 36 For the multitude of the people followed after crying, Away with him. 37 And as Paul was to be led into the caſtle, he ſaid unto the chief captain, may I ſpeak unto thee; Who ſaid, Canſt thou ſpeak Greek? 38 Art not thou that Egyptian which before theſe days madeſt an uproar, and leddeſt out into the wilderneſs four thouſand men that were murderers? 39 But Paul ſaid, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarſus, *a city* of Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beſeech thee ſuffer me to ſpeak unto the people. 40 And when he had given him licence, Paul ſtood on the ſtairs, and beckened with the hand unto the people: and when there mas made a great ſilence, he ſpake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, ſaying,

We have here *Paul* brought into a Captivity, which we are not likely to ſee the End of; for after this, he is either hurry'd from one Bar to another, or lies neglected firſt in one Priſon, and then in another, and can neither be *try'd* nor *bail'd*; when we ſee the Beginning of a Trouble, we know not either how long it will laſt, or how it will iſſue.

Firſt, We have here *Paul* ſeiz'd, and laid hold on.

1. He was ſeiz'd *in the Temple*, when he was there attending the Days of his Purifying, and the ſolemn Services of thoſe Days, *v.* 27. Formerly he had been well known *in the Temple*; but now he had been ſo long in his Travels abroad, that he was become a Stranger there; ſo that it was not till *the Seven Days were almoſt ended*, that he was taken Notice of by thoſe that had an evil Eye towards him. In the *Temple*, where he ſhould have been protected as in a Sanctuary, he was moſt violently ſet upon by thoſe who did what they could to have *mingled his Blood with his Sacrifices*. In the Temple, where he ſhould have been *welcom'd* as one of the greateſt Ornaments of it, that ever had been there ſince the Lord of the Temple left it. The *Temple* which they themſelves pretended ſuch a mighty Zeal for, yet did they themſelves thus *profane*. Thus is the Church *polluted* by none more than by Popiſh Perſecutors, under the Colour of the Churches Name and Intereſt.

2. The *Informers* againſt him were *the Jews of* Aſia, not thoſe of *Jeruſalem*; the *Jews* of the *Diſperſion*, who knew him beſt, and who were moſt exaſperated againſt him. Thoſe who *ſeldom* came up to worſhip at the Temple in *Jeruſalem* themſelves, but contentedly liv'd at a diſtance from it, in purſuit of their private Advantages, yet appear'd moſt *zealous* for the Temple, as if thereby they would atone for their habitual Neglect of it.

3. The Method they took was to *raiſe the Mob*, and to *incenſe* them againſt him. They did not go to the High Prieſt, or the Magiſtrates of the City with their Charge, probably becauſe they expected not to receive Countenance from them, but *they ſtirred up all the People*, who were at this Time more than ever diſpos'd to any Thing that was tumultuous and ſeditious, *riotous* and *routous*. Thoſe are fitteſt to be employ'd againſt Chriſt and Chriſtianity that are govern'd leaſt by Reaſon, and moſt by Paſſion; therefore *Paul* deſcribed the Jewiſh Perſecutors to be not only wicked, but *abſurd*, *unreaſonable* Men.

4. The *Arguments* wherewith they *exaſperated* the People againſt him were *popular*, but very falſe and unjuſt. They cryed out, *Men of* Iſrael, *Help*; If ye are indeed *Men of Iſrael*, True born *Jews*, that have a Concern for your Church, and your Country, now is your Time to ſhew it, by helping to ſeize an Enemy to both. Thus *they cry'd after him as after a Thief*, Job xxx. 5. or after a mad Dog. *Note*, The Enemies of Chriſtianity ſince they could never prove it to be an *ill Thing*, have been always very induſtrious, right or wrong, to put it into an *ill Name*, and ſo run it down by out-rage, and out-cry, It had become *Men of* Iſrael to help *Paul*, who preach'd up him, who was ſo much the *Glory of his People* Iſrael; yet here the *popular* Fury will not allow them to be *Men of* Iſrael, unleſs they will *help againſt him*. This was like *ſtop Thief*, or *Athaliah*'s Cry, *Treaſon*, *Treaſon*; what is wanting in *Right*, is made up in *Noiſe*.

They charge upon him both ill Doctrine, and ill Practice, and both againſt the *Moſaick Ritual*.

1. They charge upon him *ill Doctrine*; not only that he holds corrupt Opinions himſelf, but that he *vents* and *publiſhes* them, tho' not here at *Jeruſalem*, yet in other Places; nay, *in all Places*, he teacheth *all Men*, *every where*; ſo artfully is the Crime aggravated, as if becauſe he was an *Itinerant*, he was an *ubiquitair*; He ſpreads, to the utmoſt of his Power, certain damnable and heretical Poſitions, (1.) *Againſt the People* of the *Jews*; He had taught, that *Jews* and *Gentiles* ſtand on the ſame Level before God, and *neither Circumciſion avails any Thing, nor Uncircumciſion*; nay, he had *taught* againſt the *Unbelieving* Jews, that they were *rejected*, and therefore he had *ſeparated* from them and their Synagogues, and this is interpreted to be ſpeaking againſt the whole Nation, as if no doubt but *they were the People, and Wiſdom muſt die along with them*, Job xii. 1. Whereas God tho' he had caſt *them* off, yet had not *caſt away his People*, Rom. xi. 1. They were *Lo-ammi, Not a People*, Hoſ. i. 9. and yet pretended to be the *only* People, Thoſe commonly ſeem moſt zealous for the Churches Name, that belong to it in Name only. (2.) Againſt *the Law*. His teaching Men to believe the Goſpel as the *End of the Law*, and the *Perfection* of it, was interpreted his Preaching againſt the Law; whereas, it was ſo far from *making void the Law*, that it *eſtabliſh'd* it, *Rom.* iii. 31. (3.) Againſt *this Place*, the Temple; becauſe he taught Men to *pray every where*, he was reproach'd as an Enemy to the Temple, and perhaps, becauſe he ſometimes mention'd the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the *Temple*, and of the Jewiſh Nation which his Maſter had foretold. *Paul* had himſelf been active in perſecuting *Stephen*, and putting him to Death for Words ſpoken *againſt this Holy Place*, and now the ſame Thing is laid to his Charge. He that was then made Uſe of as the *Tool*, is now ſet up as the *Butt* of Jewiſh Rage and Malice.

2. They charge upon him *ill Practices*. To confirm their Charge againſt him, as teaching People againſt *this Holy Place*; they charge it upon him, that he had himſelf *polluted it*, and by an Overt-act ſhew'd his Contempt of it, and a Deſign to make it common. He *has brought* Gentiles *alſo into the Temple*, into the inner Court of the Temple, which none that were uncircumciſed were admitted, under any Pretence, to come into: There was written upon the Wall that inclos'd this inner Court, in Greek and Latin, *It is a Capital Crime for Strangers to enter*. Joſeph. Antiq. lib. 15. c. 14. *Paul* was himſelf a *Jew*, and had right to enter into the Court of the *Jews*: And they ſeeing ſome with him there, that joyn'd with him in his Devotions, concluded that *Trophimus* an *Epheſian*, who was a *Gentile*, was one of them; Why? Did they ſee him there? Truly no; but they had ſeen him with *Paul* in the Streets of the City, which was no Crime at all; and therefore they affirm, that he was with *Paul* in the inner Court of the Temple, which was a heinons Crime. They had *ſeen him with him in the City*, and therefore they *ſuppos'd that* Paul *had brought him* with him *into the Temple*, which was utterly falſe. See here (1.) That Innocency is no Fence againſt Calumny and falſe Accuſation: It is no new Thing for thoſe that mean honeſtly, and act regularly, to have Things laid to their Charge, which they know not, nor ever thought of. (2.) That *evil Men dig up Miſchief*, and *go far* to ſeek Proofs of their falſe Accuſations, as they did here; who, becauſe they ſaw a *Gentile* with *Paul* in the City, will from thence infer, that he was with him in the Temple? This was a *ſtrain'd Innuendo* indeed; yet, by ſuch unjuſt and groundleſs Suggeſtions have wicked Men thought to juſtify themſelves in the moſt barbarous Outrages committed upon the *excellent Ones of the Earth*. (3.) 'Tis common for malicious People to improve that againſt thoſe that are wiſe and good, with which they ought to have oblig'd them, and ingratiated themſelves with them. *Paul* thought to recommend himſelf to their good Opinion, by *going into the Temple*, and from thence they take an Occaſion to accuſe him. If he had kept further off of them, he had not been ſo malign'd by them. This is the Genius of Ill-nature; *For my Love, they are my Adverſaries*, Pſal. cix. 4. lxix. 10.

Secondly, We have here *Paul* in Danger of being pull'd in Pieces by the Rabble: They will not be at the Pains to have him before the High-Prieſt or the *Sanhedrin*, that's a round-about Way; the Execution ſhall be of a Piece with the Proſecution, all unjuſt and irregular: They cannot prove the Crime upon him, and therefore dare not bring him npon a fair Tryal; nay, ſo greedily do they thirſt after his Blood, that they have not *Patience* to proceed againſt him by a due Courſe of Law, tho' they were never ſo ſure to gain their Point; and therefore, as thoſe who neither fear'd God, nor regarded Man, they reſolv'd to knock him on the Head preſently.

1. All the City was in an Uproar, *v.* 30. The *People*, who tho' they had little Holineſs themſelves, yet had a mighty Veneration for the Holy Place, when they heard a *Hue and Cry* from the *Temple*, were up in Arms preſently, being reſolv'd to ſtand by that with theit Lives and Fortunes. *All the City was mov'd* when they were call'd to from the Temple, *Men of* Iſrael, *help*, with as much Violence as if the old Complaint were to be revived, *Pſal.* lxxix. 2. *O GOD the Heathen are come into thine Inheritance, thy Holy Temple have they defiled*. Juſt ſuch a Zesl the *Jews* here ſhew for *GOD's Temple*, as the *Epheſians* did for *Diana*'s Temple, when *Paul* was inform'd againſt as an Enemy to that, *Acts* xix. 29. *The whole City was full of Confuſion*. But God doth not reckon Himſelf at all honour'd by thoſe whoſe Zeal for Him tranſports them to ſuch Irregularities, and who. while they pretend to act for him, act in ſuch a brutiſh barbarous manner.

2. They drew *Paul* out of *the Temple*, and *ſhut the Doors*, between the outer and inner Court of the Temple, or perhaps the *Doors* of the *outer Court*. In *dragging* him furiouſly out of the Temple, (1.) They ſhew'd a *real* Deteſtation of him as One not fit to be ſuffer'd in the Temple; nor to worſhip there, nor to be look'd upon as a Member of the Jewiſh Nation; as if his Sacrifice had been an Abomination. (2.) They *pretended* a Veneration for the Temple; like that of the good *Jehojadah*, who would not have *Athalia* to be *ſlain in the Houſe of the* LORD, 1 Kings xi. 15. See how *abſurd* theſe *wicked* Men were; they condemn'd *Paul* for *drawing* People *from* the Temple, and yet when he himſelf was very devoutly worſhipping in the Temple, they *drew* him out of it. The Officers of the Temple *ſhut the Doors*, either (1.) Leſt *Paul* ſhould find Means to get back, and *take hold of the Horns of the Altar*, and ſo protect himſelf by that Sanctuary from their Rage. Or rather, (2.) Leſt the Croud ſhould by running in of more to them be thruſt back into the Temple, and ſome Outrage ſhould be committed to the Profanation of that Holy Place. They that made no Conſcience of doing ſo ill a Thing as the Murthering of a good Man, for well-doing, yet would be thought to make Conſcience of doing it in a Holy Place, or at a Holy Time; *Not in the Temple*, as, *Not on the Feaſt-Day.*

3. They *went about to kill him*, v. 31. for they fell a *beating him*, v. 32. reſolving to beat him to Death, by Blows without Number: A Puniſhment which the Jewiſh Doctors allow'd of in ſome Caſes, (not at all to the Credit of their Nation) and call'd, *The Beating of the Rebels.* Now was *Paul* like a Lamb thrown into a Den of Lions, and made an eaſy Prey to them, and no doubt he was ſtill of the *ſame Mind*, as when he ſaid, *I am ready not only to be bound, but alſo to die at* Jeruſalem, to die *ſo great a Death.*

Thirdly, We have here *Paul* reſcu'd out of the Hands of his *Jewiſh Enemies*, by a *Roman Enemy.*

1. Tydings we brought of the Tumult, and that the Mob was up, *and to the chief Captain of the Band*, the Governour of the Caſtle, or whoever he was the now Commander in chief of the *Roman* Forces that were quarter'd in *Jeruſalem.* Some Body that was concern'd not for *Paul*, but for the publick Peace and Safety, gave this Information to the Colonel, who had always a jealous and watchful Eye upon thoſe tumultuous *Jews*; and he is the Man that muſt be inſtrumental to ſave *Paul*'s Life, when never a Friend he had was capable of doing him any Service.

2. The Tribune or chief Captain got his Forces together with all poſſible Expedition, and went to ſuppreſs the Mob; *He took Soldiers* and *Centurions*, and *ran down to them.* Now at the Feaſt, as at other ſuch ſolemn Times, the *Guards* were up and the Militia more within Call than at other Times, and ſo he had 'em near at hand, and he *ran down unto the Multitude*; for at ſuch Times Dalays are dangerous. Sedition muſt be cruſh'd at firſt leſt it grow head-ſtrong.

3. The very Sight of the *Roman* General frighten'd them from *beating Paul*; for they knew they were doing what they could not juſtify, and were in Danger to be *call'd in queſtion for this Day's Uproar*, as the Town-Clerk told the *Epheſians.* They were deter'd from that by the Power of the *Romans*, from which they ought to have been reſtrain'd by the Juſtice of God, and the Dread of his Wrath. *Note*, God often makes the *Earth* to help *the Woman*, Rev. xii. 16. and thoſe to be a *Protection* to his People, who yet have no *Affection* for his People; only have a Compaſſion for Sufferers, and are zealous for the publick Peace. The Shepherd makes uſe even of his Dogs for the Defence of his Sheep. 'Tis *Streſo*'s Compariſon here. See here how theſe wicked People were frighten'd away at the very Sight of the *chief Captain*; For the *King that ſitteth on the Throne of Judgement, ſcattereth away all Evil with his Eyes.*

4. The Governour takes him into Cuſtody: He reſcu'd him not out of a Concern for him becauſe he thought him innocent, but out of a Concern for Juſtice, becauſe he ought not to be put to Death without Trial; and becauſe he knew not how dangerous the Conſequences might be to the *Roman* Government if ſuch tumultuous Proceedings were not timely ſuppreſs'd; nor what ſuch an outragious People might do, if once they *knew their own Strength.* He therefore takes *Paul* out of the Hands of the Mob, into the Hands of the Law, v. 33. He *took him and commanded him to be bound with two Chains*; that the People might be ſatisfied he did not intend to diſcharge him, but to examine him; for he *demanded* of thoſe that were ſo eager againſt him, *Who he was, aud what he had done?* This violent taking of him out of the Hands of the Multitude, tho' there was all the Reaſon in the World for it, yet they laid to the Charge of the chief Captain as his Crime, *chap.* xxiv. 7. The *chief Captain* Lyſias *came with Violence and took him out of their Hands*, which refers to this Reſcue, as appears by comparing, *chap.* xxiii. 27, 28. where the *chief Captain* gives an Account to *Felix.*

Fourthly, The Proviſion which the chief Captain made with much ado, to bring *Paul* to ſpeak for himſelf. One had almoſt as good enter into a ſtruggle with the Wind and the Waves, as with ſuch a Mob as was here got together; and yet *Paul* made a ſhift to get Liberty of Speech among them.

1. There was no *knowing the Senſe* of the People; for when the chief Captain *enquir'd* concerning *Paul*, having perhaps never heard of his Name before (ſuch Strangers were the great Ones, to the excellent Ones of the Earth, and affected to be ſo) *ſome cry'd one Thing, and ſome another, among the Multitude*; ſo that it was impoſſible for the *chief Captain to know their Mind*, when really they knew not either *one another's* Mind, or *their own*, when every One pretended to give the Senſe of the whole Body. Thoſe that will hearken to the Clamours of the Multitude, will know *Nothing for a Certainty*, no more than from the Builders of *Babal* when their *Tongues* were *confounded.*

2. There was no *quelling the Rage and Fury* of the People. For when the chief Captain commanded that *Paul* ſhould be *carry'd into the Caſtle*, the Tower of *Antenia*, where the *Roman* Soldiers kept Garriſon near the Temple, the Soldiers themſelves had much ado to get him ſafe thither, out of the Noiſe, the People were ſo violent, v. 35. *When he came upon the Stairs*, leading up to the Caſtle, the Soldiers were forc'd to take him up in their Arms and carry him, (which they might eaſily do, for he was a little Man, and his bodily Preſence weak) to keep him from the People, who would have pull'd him Limb from Limb, if they could. When they could not *reach* him with their cruel Hands, they follow'd him with their ſharp Arrows, even *bitter Words*; they *follow'd crying, away with him*, v. 36. See how the moſt excellent Perſons and Things are often run-down by a popular Clamour; Chriſt himſelf was ſo, with *Crucify him, crucify him*, tho' they could not ſay, *what Evil he had done.* Take him *out of the Land of the Living*; ſo the Ancients Expound it. Chaſe him out of the World.

3. *Paul* at length begg'd Leave of the chief Captain to ſpeak to him, v. 37. *As he was to be led into the Caſtle*, with a great deal of Calmneſs and Compoſedneſs in himſelf, and a great deal of Mildneſs and Deference to thoſe about him, he *ſaid unto the chief Captain, May I ſpeak unto thee?* Will it be no Offence, or conſtru'd as a Breach of Rule, if I give thee ſome Account of my ſelf, ſince my Perſecutors can give no Account of me? What an humble modeſt Queſtion was this! *Paul* knew how to ſpeak to the greateſt of Men, and had many a Time ſpoken to his Betters, yet he humbly begs Leave to ſpeak to this Commander, and will not ſpeak till he has obtain'd Leave. *May I ſpeak unto thee?*

4. The chief Captain tells him, what Notion he had of him; *Canſt thou ſpeak* Greek? I am ſurpriz'd to hear thee ſpeak a learned Language; for, *Art not thou that* Egyptian *which made an Uproar?* The *Jews made the Uproar*, and then would have it thought that *Paul* had given them Oecaſion for it, by beginning firſt; for probably ſome of them whiſper'd this in the Ear of the *chief Captain.* See what falſe miſtaken Notions of good People, and good Miniſters, many run away with, and will not be at the Pains to have the Miſtake rectify'd.

It ſeems there had lately been an Inſurrection, ſome-where in that Country, headed by an *Egyptian*, who took on him to be a Prophet. *Joſephus* mentions this Story, That an *Egyptian* rais'd a Seditious-Party, promis'd to ſhew them the Fall of the Walls of *Jeruſalem* from the *Mount of Olives*, and that they ſhould enter the City upon the Ruins: The Captain here ſaith, That he *led out into the Wilderneſs four thouſand Men that were Murtherers*, Deſperadoes, Banditti, Rapparees, Cut-throats. What a Degeneracy was there in the Jewiſh Nation, when there was found there ſo many that had ſuch a Character, and could be drawn into ſuch an Attempt upon the Publick Peace. But *Joſephus* ſaith, That *Felix* the *Roman* Preſident went out againſt them, kill'd four hundred, and took two hundred Priſoners, and the reſt were diſpers'd, *Antiq.* xx. 6. *De Bello Jud.* ii. 12. And *Euſebius* ſpeaks of it, *Hiſt.* ii. 20. It happen'd in the 13th Year of *Claudius*, a little before thoſe Days, about three Years ago. The Ringleader of this Rebellion it ſeems had made his Eſcape, and the chief Captain concluded that one that lay under ſo *great an Odium* as *Paul* ſeem'd to lie under, and againſt whom there was ſo *great an Out-cry*, could not be a Criminal of leſs Figure than this *Egyptian.* See how good Men are expos'd to Ill-will by Miſtake.

5. *Paul* rectifies his Miſtake concerning him, by informing him particularly what he was; not ſuch a Vagabond, a Scoundrel, a Rake, as that *Egyptian*, who could give no good Account of himſelf. No, *I am a* Man *which am a* Jew originally, and no *Egyptian*, a *Jew* both by Nation and Religion, *I am of* Tarſus, *a City* in Cilicia, of honeſt Parents, and a liberal Education, (*Tarſus* was an Univerſity) and beſides that, *a Citizen of no mean City*, whether he means *Tarſus* or *Rome* is not certain, they were neither of them *mean Cities*, and he was a Freeman of both; Tho' the *chief Captain* had put him under ſuch an *invidious* Suſpicion, that he was *that Egyptian*, he kept his Temper, did not break out into any paſſionate Exclamations againſt the Times he liv'd in, or the Men he had to do with, did not *render Railing for Railing*, but mildly deny'd the Charge, and own'd what he was.

6. He humbly deſir'd a Permiſſion from the chief Captain, whoſe Priſoner he now was, to *ſpeak to the People:* He doth not demand it as a Debt, tho' he might have done it, but ſues for it as a Favour, which he will be thankful for; *I beſeech thee ſuffer me to ſpeak to the People.* The chief Captain reſcu'd him with no other Deſign but to give him *a fair Hearing.* Now to ſhew that his Cauſe needs no Art to give it a plauſible Colour, he deſires he may have Leave *immediately* to defend himſelf; for it needeth no more than to be ſet in a true Light. Nor did he depend

only upon the Goodneſs of his Cauſe, but upon the Goodneſs and Fidelity of his Patron, and that Promiſe of his to all his Advocates, That it ſhould be *given them in the ſame Hour* what they ſhould ſpeak.

Laſtly, He obtain'd Leave to *plead his own Cauſe*, for he needed not to have *Council* aſſign'd him, when the *Spirit of the Father* was ready to dictate to him, *Matth.* x. 20. The chief Captain *gave him Licenſe*, *v.* 40. ſo that now he could ſpeak with a *good Grace*, and with the more Courage: He had, I will not ſay, that *Favour*, but that *Juſtice* done him by the *chief Captain*, which he could not obtain from his Country-men the *Jews*; for they would not hear him, but the *Captain* would; though it were but to ſatisfy his Curioſity.

This Licenſe being obtain'd,

1. The People were attentive to hear. *Paul ſtood on the Stairs*, which gave a little Man, like *Zaccheus*, ſome Advantage, and conſequently ſome Boldneſs in delivering himſelf. A ſorry Pulpit it was, and yet better than none; it ſerv'd the Purpoſe, tho' it was not like *Ezra*'s Pulpit of Wood, made for the Purpoſe. There he *becken'd with the Hand unto the People*, made Signs to them to be *quiet*, and *to have a little Patience*, for he had ſomething to ſay to them. And ſo far he gain'd his Point, that every One cry'd *Huſh* to his Neighbour, *and there was made* a profound *Silence*. Probably, the chief Captain alſo intimated his Charge to all Manner of People to *keep Silence*. If the People were not requir'd to *give Audience*, it was to no Purpoſe at all that *Paul* was *allow'd to ſpeak*. When the Cauſe of Chriſt and his Goſpel is to be pleaded, there ought to be a *great Silence*, that we may give the more earneſt Heed. And all little enough.

2. *Paul* addreſs'd himſelf to ſpeak, well aſſur'd that he was ſerving the Intereſt of Chriſt's Kingdom as truly and effectually as if he had been preaching in the Synagogue. He *ſpake unto them in the Hebrew Tongue*, i. e. in their own vulgar Tongue, which was the Language of their Country, to which he hereby own'd not only an abiding Relation, but an abiding Reſpect.

CPAP. XXII.

In the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter we had Paul *bound, according to* Agabus*'s Prophecy of the hard Uſage he ſhould receive from the* Jews *at* Jeruſalem, *yet he had his* Tongue ſet at Liberty, *by the Permiſſion the chief Captain gave him to* Speak for himſelf: *And ſo intent he is upon uſing that Liberty of Speech which was allow'd him, to the Honour of Chriſt, and the Service of his Intereſt, that he forgets the Bonds he is in, makes no mention of them, but ſpeaks of the great Things Chriſt had done for him with as much Eaſe and Chearfulneſs, as if Nothing had been done to ruffle him, or put him into Diſorder. We have here* (1.) *His Addreſs to the People, and their Attention to it, v.* 1, 2. (2.) *The Account he gives of himſelf.* (1.) *What a bigotted* Jew *he had been in the Beginning of his Time, v.* 3—5. (2.) *How he was miraculouſly converted and brought over to the Faith of Chriſt, v.* 6—11. (3.) *How he was confirm'd and baptiz'd by the Miniſtry of* Ananias, *v.* 12—16. (4.) *How he was afterwards call'd by an immediate Warrant from Heaven, to be the* Apoſtle of the Gentiles, *v.* 17—21. (3.) *The Interruption given him upon this, by the Rabble, who could not bear to hear any Thing ſaid in favour of the* Gentiles, *and the violent Paſſion they flew into upon it, v.* 22, 23. (4.) Paul*'s ſecond Reſcue out of the Hands of the Rabble, and the further Courſe which the chief Captain took to find out the true Reaſon of this mighty Clamour againſt* Paul, *v.* 24, 25. (5.) Paul*'s pleading his Priviledge as a* Roman *Citizen, by which he was exempted from this barbarous Method of Inquiſition, v.* 25—29. (6.) *The chief Captain's removing the Cauſe into the High Prieſts Court, and* Paul*'s Appearing there, v.* 30.

MEN, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence *which I make* now unto you. 2 (And when they heard that he ſpake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more ſilence: and he ſaith.)

Paul had in the laſt Verſe of the foregoing Chapter gain'd a great Point by commanding ſo *profound a Silence*, after ſo *loud* a *Clamour*. Now here obſerve,

Firſt, With what an admirable Compoſure, and Preſence of Mind he addreſſeth himſelf to ſpeak; Never was poor Man ſet upon in a more tumultuous Manner, nor with more Rage and Fury; and yet in what he ſaid,

1. There appears no *Fright*, but his Mind is ſedate and compos'd: Thus he makes his own Words good, *None of theſe Things move me*; and *David*'s, Pſal. iii. 6. *I will not be afraid of ten Thouſands of People that have ſet themſelves againſt me round about.*

2. There appears no *Paſſion*. Though the Suggeſtions againſt him were all frivolous and unjuſt, tho' it would have vex'd any Man alive to be charg'd with profaning the Temple, juſt then when he was contriving and deſigning to ſhew his Reſpects to it; yet he breaks out into no angry Expreſſions, but is led *as a Lamb to the Slaughter*.

Secondly, What reſpectful Titles he gives even to thoſe who thus abus'd him, and how humbly he craves their Attention; *Men, Brethren and Fathers*, *v.* 1. To you, *O Men*, I call; Men, that ſhould hear Reaſon, and be rul'd by it; *Men*, from whom One may expect Humanity. You *Brethren* of the Common People, you *Fathers* of the Prieſts: Thus he lets them know that he was one of them, and had not renounc'd his Relation to the Jewiſh Nation, but ſtill had a Kindneſs and Concern for it. *Note*, Tho' we muſt not give flattering Titles to any, yet we ought to give Titles of due Reſpect to all; and thoſe we would do Good to, we ſhould endeavour not to provoke. Tho' he was got out of their Hands, and was taken under the Protection of the chief Captain, yet he doth not fall foul upon them, with *Hear now, ye Rebels*; but complements them, *Men, Brethren* and *Fathers*.

And obſerve, He doth not exhibit a Charge againſt them, doth not recriminate, Hear now what I have to ſay *againſt you*, but hear now what I have to ſay *for myſelf*; *Hear ye my Defence*; a juſt and reaſonable Requeſt; for every Man that is accus'd, has a Right to anſwer for himſelf, and has not Juſtice done him, if his Anſwer be not patiently and impartially heard.

Thirdly, The Language he ſpoke in, which recommended what he ſaid to the Auditory: He *ſpoke in the Hebrew Tongue*, i. e. the vulgar Language of the *Jews*; which at this Time was not the pure *Old Teſtament Hebrew*, but the *Syriack*, a Dialect of the *Hebrew*, or rather a Corruption of it, as the *Italian* of the *Latin*. However,

1. It ſhew'd his continu'd Reſpect to his Country-men, the *Jews*: Tho' he had convers'd ſo much with the *Gentiles*, yet he ſtill retain'd the *Jews* Language, and could talk it with Eaſe. By this it appears he is a *Jew*, *for his Speech betrayeth him*.

2. What he ſaid was the more generally underſtood; for that was the Language every Body ſpoke, and therefore to ſpeak in that Language, was indeed to *appeal to the People*, by which he might have ſomewhat to inſinuate into their Affections: And therefore *when they heard that he ſpoke in the* Hebrew *Tongue*, *they kept the more ſilence*. How can it be thought People ſhould give any Attention to that which is ſpoken to them in a Language they do not underſtand? The chief Captain was ſurpriz'd to hear him ſpeak *Greek*, chap. xxi. 37. The *Jews* were ſurpriz'd to hear him ſpeak *Hebrew*, and both therefore think the better of him. But how would they have been ſurpriz'd, if they had enquir'd as they ought to have done, and had found in what Variety of Tongues *the Spirit gave him utterance*, 1 Cor. xiv. 18. *I ſpeak with Tongues more than you all.* But the Truth is, many wiſe and good Men are therefore ſlighted, only becauſe they are not *known*.

3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarſus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, *and* taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous towards God, as ye are all this day. 4 And I perſecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering into priſons both men and women. 5 As alſo the high prieſt doth bear me witneſs, and all the eſtate of the elders: from whom alſo I received letters unto the brethren, and went unto Damaſcus, to bring them which were there, bound unto Jeruſalem, for to be puniſhed. 6 And it came to paſs, that as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damaſcus, about noon, ſuddenly, there ſhone from heaven a great light round about me. 7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice ſaying unto me, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? 8 And I anſwered, Who art thou, Lord? And he ſaid unto me, I am Jeſus of Nazareth whom thou perſecuteſt. 9 And they that were with me, ſaw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that ſpake to me. 10 And I ſaid, What ſhall I do, Lord? And the Lord ſaid unto me, Ariſe, and go into Damaſcus, and there it ſhall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not ſee for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damaſcus. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*, 13 Came unto me, and ſtood, and ſaid unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy ſight. And the ſame hour I looked up upon him. 14 And he ſaid, The God of our fathers hath choſen thee, that thou ſhouldeſt know his will, and ſee that Juſt one, and ſhouldeſt hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou ſhalt be his witneſs unto all men, of what thou haſt ſeen and heard. 16 And now why tarrieſt thou? ariſe, and be baptized, and waſh away thy ſins, calling on the name of the Lord? 17 And it

came to paſs, that when I was come again to Jeruſalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; 18 And ſaw him ſaying unto me, Make haſte, and get thee quickly out of Jeruſalem: for they will not receive thy teſtimony concerning me. 19 And I ſaid, Lord, they know that I impriſoned, and beat in every ſynagogue them that believed on thee. 20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was ſhed, I alſo was ſtanding by, and conſenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that ſlew him. 21 And he ſaid unto me, Depart: for I will ſend thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

Paul here gives ſuch an Account of himſelf, as might ſerve not only to ſatisfy the *chief Captain* that he was not that *Egyptian* he took him to be; but the *Jews* alſo that he was not that Enemy to their *Church* and *Nation*, to their *Law* and *Temple*, as they took him to be. And that what he did in preaching Chriſt, and particularly, in preaching him to the *Gentiles*, he did by a Divine Commiſſion. He here gives them to underſtand,

Firſt, What his Extraction and Education was,

1. That he was One of *their own Nation*, of the Stock of *Iſrael*, of the Seed of *Abraham*, a *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, not of any obſcure Family, or a Renegado of ſome other Nation; No, *I am verily a Man which am a* Jew, ἀνὴρ Ἰουδαῖος, a *Jewiſh Man*. I am a *Man*, and therefore ought not to be treated as a Beaſt; a Man that am a *Jew*, not a Barbarian, I am a ſincere Friend to your Nation; for I am One of it, and ſhould defile my own Neſt, if I ſhould unjuſtly derogate from the Honour of your *Law* and your *Temple*.

2. That he was born in a creditable, reputable Place; *in* Tarſus, *a city of* Cilicia, and was by his Birth a Freeman of that City. He was not born in Servitude, as ſome of the *Jews* of the Diſperſion 'tis likely were; but he was a Gentleman born, and perhaps could produce his Certificate of his Freedom in that ancient and honourable City. This was indeed but a ſmall Matter to make any boaſt of, and yet it was needful to be mentioned at this Time to thoſe, who inſolently trampled upon him, as if he were to be rank'd *with the Children of Fools*, yea, *the Children of baſe Men*, Job xxx. 8.

3. That he had a *learned* and *liberal Education*. He was not only a *Jew*, and a Gentleman, but a Scholar; he was *brought* up in *Jeruſalem*, the principal Seat of the *Jewiſh Learning*; and at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, whom they all knew to be an eminent Doctor of the *Jewiſh Law*; which *Paul* was deſign'd to be himſelf a Teacher of. And therefore he could not be *ignorant* of their Law, nor be thought to ſlight it, becauſe he did not know it. His Parents had brought him very young to this *City*, deſigning him for a *Phariſee*: And ſome think, his being brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, intimates, not only that he was one of his Pupils, but that he was above any other diligent and conſtant in attending his Lectures, *obſervant* of him, and *obſequious* to him in all he ſaid, as *Mary* that *ſate at* Jeſus *Feet*, and *heard his Word*.

4. That he was in his early Days, a very *forward* and *eminent Profeſſor* of the *Jews Religion*; his Studies and Learning were all directed that Way. So far was he from being *principled* in his Youth with any Diſaffection to the *religious Uſages* of the *Jews*, that there was not a young Man among 'em that had a greater or more entire *Veneration* for them than he had, was more ſtrict in *obſerving* than himſelf, nor more hot in *enforcing* them upon others.

1. He was an *intelligent* Profeſſor of their Religion, and had a *clear Head*; he minded his Buſineſs at *Gamaliel*'s Feet, and was there *taught according to the perfect Manner of the Law of the Fathers*. What Departures he had made from the Law, were not owing to any confus'd or miſtaken Notions of it; for he underſtood it *to a Nicety*, κατ᾽ ἀκρίβειαν, according to the moſt *accurate* and *exact* Method. He was not train'd up in the Principles of the Latitudinarians, had nothing in him of a *Sadducee*, but was of that Sect that was moſt ſtudious in the Law, kept moſt cloſe to it, and to make it more ſtrict than it was, added to it the *Traditions of the Elders, the Law of the Fathers*; the Law which was given to them, and which they gave to their Children, and ſo was handed down to us. *Paul* had as great a Value for Antiquity and Tradition and the Authority of the Church, as any of them had; and there was never a *Jew* of them all underſtood his Religion better than *Paul* did, nor could better give an Account of it, or a Reaſon for it.

2. He was an *active* Profeſſor of their Religion, and had a *warm Heart*; *I was zealous towards* GOD, *as ye all are this Day*. Many that are very well skill'd in the Theory of Religion, are willing to leave the Practice of it to others: But *Paul* was as much a *Zealot* as a *Rabbin*. He was zealous *againſt* every Thing that the Law prohibited, and *for* every Thing the Law enjoyn'd; and this was *Zeal towards GOD*; becauſe he thought it was for the Honour of God, and the Service of his Intereſts. And here he complements his Hearers with a candid and charitable Opinion of them, That they were all *this Day zealous towards* GOD. He *bears them Record*, Rom. x. 2. *that they have a Zeal for* GOD, *but not according to Knowledge*. In hating him, and caſting him out, they ſay, *Let the LORD be glorify'd*, Iſa. lxvi. 5. And tho' this did by no means juſtify their Rage, yet it enabled thoſe that pray'd, *Father, forgive them*, to plead as Chriſt did, *for they know not what they do*. And when *Paul* owns that *he had been* zealous for God in the Law of *Moſes*, as *they* were *this Day*, he intimates his Hope, that *they might be* zealous for God in Chriſt, as *he was* this Day.

Secondly, What a fiery, furious Perſecutor he had been of the Chriſtian Religion in the Beginning of his Time, *v.* 4, 5. He mentions *this* to make it the more plainly and evidently to appear, that the *Change* which was wrought upon him when he was converted to the Chriſtian Faith, was purely the Effect of a *Divine Power*; for he was ſo far from having any *previous* Inclinations to it, or favourable Opinions of it, that immediately before that ſudden Change was wrought in him, he had the utmoſt Antipathy imaginable to Chriſtianity, and was fill'd with Rage againſt it to the laſt Degree. And perhaps he mentions it to juſtify God in his preſent Trouble; how unrighteous ſoever they were that perſecuted him, God was Righteous who permitted them to do it; for Time was when he was a Perſecutor. And he may have a further View in it, to invite and encourage thoſe People to *repent*; for he himſelf had been a *Blaſphemer and a Perſecutor*, and yet *obtain'd Mercy*.

Let us view *Paul*'s Picture of himſelf, when he was a Perſecutor.

1. He hated Chriſtianity with a *mortal Enmity*: *I perſecuted this Way unto the Death*, i. e. Thoſe that walk'd in this Way, I aim'd, if poſſible, to be the Death of. He *breath'd out Slaughter* againſt them, *Acts* ix. 1. When they were *put to Death*, *he gave his Voice againſt them*, Acts xxvi. 10. Nay, he perſecuted not only them that walk'd in this Way, but the *Way itſelf*, Chriſtianity, which was branded as a *By-way*, a *Sect*, he aim'd to perſecute this *to the Death*, i. e. He could have been willing *himſelf to die* in his Oppoſition to Chriſtianity; ſo ſome underſtand it. He would contentedly have loſt his Life, and would have thought it well laid out in Defence of the Laws and Traditions of the Fathers.

2. He did all he could to frighten People *from* this *Way*, and *out of* it, by *binding and delivering into Priſon both Men and Women*; he fill'd the Jails with Chriſtians. Now he himſelf was *bound*, he lays a particular Streſs upon this Part of his Charge againſt himſelf, that he had *bound* the Chriſtians, and carry'd them to Priſon. He likewiſe reflects upon it with a ſpecial *Regret*, that he had impriſon'd not only the *Men*, but the *Women*, the weaker Sex, who ought to be treated with particular Tenderneſs and Compaſſion.

3. He was employ'd by the Great *Sanhedrin*, the *High Prieſt*, and *all the Eſtate of the Elders* as an Agent for them in ſuppreſſing this new Sect; ſo much had he already ſignaliz'd himſelf for his Zeal againſt it, *v.* 5. The *High Prieſt* can witneſs for him, that he was ready to be employ'd in any Service againſt the Chriſtians. When they heard that many of the *Jews* at *Damaſcus* had embrac'd the Chriſtian Faith, to deter others from doing the like, they reſolv'd to proceed againſt them with the utmoſt Severity, and could not think of a fitter Perſon to be employ'd in that Buſineſs than *Paul*, nor more like to *go through* with it. They therefore ſent him and Letters by him to the *Jews at* Damaſcus, here call'd *the Brethren*, becauſe they all deſcended from one common Stock, and were of one Family in Religion too, ordering them to be aſſiſting to *Paul* in ſeizing thoſe among them that had turn'd Chriſtians, and bringing them up Priſoners to *Jeruſalem*, in order to their being *puniſh'd* as Deſerters from the Faith and Worſhip of the God of *Iſrael*; and ſo might either be compell'd to retreat, or be put to Death for Terror to others. Thus did *Saul* make *havock of the Church*, and was in a fair Way if he had gone on a While to ruin it, and root it out. Such a one, ſaith *Paul*, I was at firſt, juſt ſuch as you now are. *I know the Heart* of a Perſecutor, and therefore pity you, and pray that you may know the Heart of a Convert, as God ſince made me to do, *And who was I that I could withſtand GOD?*

Thirdly, In what manner he was *converted*, and made what he now was: It was not from any natural and external Cauſes; he did not change his Religion from an Affectation of Novelty, for he was then as well affected to Antiquity as he us'd to be; nor did it ariſe from *Diſcontent*, becauſe he was *balk'd* in his Preferment, for he was now more than ever in the Way of Preferment in the Jewiſh Church, much leſs could it ariſe from Covetouſneſs or Ambition, or any Hope of mending his Fortune in the World by turning Chriſtian, for it was to expoſe himſelf to all manner of Diſgrace and Trouble; and he had no Converſation with the Apoſtles or any other Chriſtians, by whoſe Subtilty and Sophiſtry he might be thought to have been wheedled into this Change. No, *It was the Lord's Doing*; and the Circumſtances of the Doing of it were enough to *juſtify* him in the Change to all thoſe who believe there is a *ſupernatural Power*; and none can condemn him for it without reflecting upon that Divine Energy by which he was herein *over-rul'd*.

1. He relates the Story of his Converſion here very particularly, as we had it before, *chap.* ix. aiming to ſhew that it was purely the *Act of GOD*.

He was as fully bent upon perſecuting the Chriſtians juſt before Chriſt arreſted him, as ever. He *made his Journey and was* *come nigh to* Damaſcus, *v.* 6. and had no other Thought but to execute the cruel Deſign he was ſent upon. He was not Conſcious of the leaſt compaſſionate Relentings towards the poor Chriſtians, but ſtill repreſented them to himſelf as *Hereticks*, *Schiſmaticks*, and dangerous Enemies both to Church and State.

2. 'Twas a *Light from Heaven that firſt ſtartled him*, a *great Light*, which *ſhone ſuddenly round about him*, and the *Jews* knew that *God is Light*, and his Angels, Angels of Light, and that ſuch a Light as this ſhining at Noon, and therefore exceeding that of the Sun, muſt be from God. Had it ſhone in upon him into ſome private Room, there might have been a Cheat in it, but it ſhone upon him in the open Road, at high Noon, and ſo ſtrongly that it ſtruck him to the Ground, *v.* 7. And all that were with him, *chap.* xxvi. 14. They could not deny but that *ſurely the Lord was in this Light.*

3. 'Twas a *Voice from Heaven* that firſt begat in him awful Thoughts of Jeſus Chriſt, whom before he had had nothing but hateful ſpiteful Thoughts of. The Voice called to him by Name, to diſtinguiſh him from thoſe that journey'd with him, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* And when he asked who art thou, Lord? It was anſwered, *I am Jeſus of* Nazareth *whom thou perſecuteſt, v.* 1. By which it appear'd that this Jeſus of *Nazareth*, whom they alſo were now perſecuting, was one that *ſpoke from Heaven*, and they knew 'twas dangerous reſiſting one that did ſo, *Heb.* xii. 2, 5.

4. Leſt it ſhould be objected, How came this Light and Voice to work ſuch a *Change* upon *him*, and not upon thoſe that *journey'd with him*, (tho' 'tis very probable it had a good Effect upon them, and that they thereupon became Chriſtians) he obſerves that his *Fellow-Travellers ſaw indeed the Light and were afraid* they ſhould be conſum'd with Fire from Heaven, their own Conſciences perhaps now telling them that the Way they were in was not Good, but like *Balaam*'s when he was going to curſe *Iſrael*, and therefore they might expect to meet with an Angel with a flaming glittering Sword. But tho' the Light made them afraid, *they heard not the Voice of him that ſpake to* Paul, *i. e.* They did not diſtinctly hear the Words: Now *Faith comes by hearing*, and therefore that Change was now preſently wrought upon him that *heard the Words*, and heard them directed to himſelf which was not wrought upon them who only *ſaw the Law*; and yet it might afterwards be wrought upon them too.

5. He aſſures them that when he was thus ſtartled, he referr'd himſelf entirely to a Divine Conduct? He did not hereupon preſently cry out, well I will be a Chriſtian, but, *What ſhall I do, Lord?* Let the ſame Voice from Heaven that hath ſtopt me in the *wrong Way*, guide me into the *right Way*, *v.* 10. Lord, tell me *what I ſhall do*, and I will do it. And immediately he had Directions to go to *Damaſcus*, and there he ſhould hear further from him that ſpoke to him: No more needs to be ſaid from Heaven, *there it ſhall be told thee*, by a Man like thy ſelf, in the Name of him that now ſpeaks to thee, *all Things which are appointed for thee to do.* The extraordinary Ways of divine Revelation, by Viſions and Voices, and the Appearance of Angels were deſign'd both in the *Old Teſtament* and in the *New* only to introduce and eſtabliſh the ordinary Method by the Scriptures and a ſtanding Miniſtry, and therefore were generally ſuperſeded, when thoſe were ſettled. The Angel did not preach to *Cornelius* himſelf, but bid him ſend for *Peter*; ſo the Voice here tells not *Paul what he ſhall do*, but bids him go into *Damaſcus*, and *there it ſhall be told him.*

6. As a Demonſtration of the Greatneſs of that Light, which faſten'd upon him, he tells them of the immediate Effect it had upon his Eye-ſight, *v.* 11. *I could not ſee for the Glory of that Light.* I ſtruck him blind for the preſent; *Nimium ſenſibile lædit ſenſum*; *condemn'd* Sinners are *ſtruck blind*, as the *Sodomites* and *Egyptians*, were, by the Power of Darkneſs, and it is a laſting Blindneſs, like that of the unbelieving *Jews*: But *convinced* Sinners are *ſtruck blind* as *Paul* here was, not by Darkneſs, but by *Light*; They are for the preſent brought to be *at a loſs* within themſelves, but it is in order to their being *enlighten'd*, as the putting of Clay upon the Eyes of the blind Man was the deſign'd Method of his Cure. Thoſe that were with *Paul* had not the Light ſo directly darted into their Faces, as *Paul* had into his, and therefore they were not *blinded* as he was; yet conſidering the Iſſue who would not rather have choſen his Lot than theirs. They having their Sight led *Paul by the Hand* into the City. *Paul* being a *Phariſee* was proud of his ſpiritual Eye-ſight. The *Phariſees* ſaid, *Are we blind alſo?* John ix. 40. nay, they were *confident that they themſelves were Guides to the Blind*, and *Light to them that were in Darkneſs*, Rom. ii. 19. Now *Paul* was thus ſtruck with bodily Blindneſs to make him ſenſible of his *ſpiritual* Blindneſs, and his Maſtake concerning himſelf, when he was *alive without the Law*, Rom. vii. 9.

Fourthly, How he was *confirm'd* in the Change he had made, and further directed what he ſhould do by *Ananias*, who liv'd at *Damaſcus*. Obſerve,

1. The *Character* here given of *Ananias*. He was not a Man that was any way prejudic'd againſt the Jewiſh Nation or Religion, but was himſelf *a devout Man according to the Law*; if not a *Jew* by Birth, yet one that had been proſelyted to the Jewiſh Religion, and therefore call'd a *devout Man*, and thence advanc'd further to the Faith of Chriſt, who carry'd himſelf ſo well that he had a *good Report of all* Jews *that dwelt at* Damaſcus; This was the firſt Chriſtian that *Paul* had any friendly Communication with, and it was not likely that he ſhould inſtill into him any ſuch Notions as they ſuſpected him to have eſpous'd, injurious to *the Law*, or to this *Holy Place*.

2. The *Cure* immediately wrought by him upon *Paul*'s Eyes; which Miracle was to confirm *Ananias*'s Miſſion to *Paul*, and to ratify all that he could afterwards ſay to him. He *came to him*, *v.* 13. and to aſſure him that he came to him *from Chriſt*, the very ſame who had torn, and would heal him; had *ſmitten* but would *bind him up*; had *taken away his Sight*, but would *reſtore it again* with Advantage; he ſtood by him and ſaid, *Brother Saul, receive thy Sight.* With which Word Power went along, and *the ſame Hour* immediately he received his Sight, and *looked up upon him*, ready to receive from him the Inſtructions ſent by him.

3. The *Declarations* which *Ananias* makes to him of the Favour, the peculiar Favour, which the Lord Jeſus deſign'd him, above any other.

(1.) In the preſent *Manifeſtation* of himſelf to him, *v.* 14. *The God of our Fathers hath choſen thee.* This powerful Call is the Reſult of a particular Choice: His calling God the *God of our Fathers* intimates that *Ananias* was himſelf a *Jew* by Birth, that obſerv'd the *Law of the Fathers*, and liv'd upon the Promiſe *made unto the Fathers.* And he gives a Reaſon why he ſaid *Brother Saul*, when he ſpoke of God, as the *God of our Fathers*: This God of our Fathers hath choſen thee, that thou ſhould'ſt, (1.) *Know his Will*, the Will of his Precept that is to be done by thee, the Will of his Providence that is to be done concerning thee. He hath choſen thee that thou ſhould'ſt know it in a more peculiar Manner, not of Man, or by Man, but immediately by the Revelation of Chriſt, *Gal.* i. 1, 12. Thoſe whom God hath choſen, he hath choſen to *know his Will*, and to do it. (2.) That thou ſhould'ſt *ſee the juſt One, and heard the Voice of his Mouth*, and ſo ſhould'ſt know his Will immediately from himſelf. This was what *Paul* was in a particular Manner choſen to, above others; 'twas a diſtinguiſhing Favour, that he ſhould *ſee Chriſt* here upon Earth after his Aſcenſion into Heaven. *Stephen* ſaw him *ſtanding at the Right Hand of God*, but *Paul* ſaw him *ſtanding at his Right Hand*; this Honour none had but *Paul*: *Stephen* ſaw him, but we do not find that he heard *the Voice of his Mouth*, as *Paul* did, who ſaith he was laſt of all *ſeen of him*, as of one *born out of due Time*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 8. Chriſt is here call'd *that juſt One*, for he is *Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous*, and ſuffer'd wrongfully. *Obſerve*, Thoſe whom God hath choſen to *know his Will*, muſt have an Eye to Chriſt, and muſt *ſee him*, and *hear the Voice of his Mouth*, for it is by him that God has made know his Will to us, and he hath ſaid, *hear ye him.*

(2.) In the *After-manifeſtation* of himſelf by him to others, *v.* 15. *Thou ſhalt be his Witneſs*, not only a *Monument* of his Grace as a Pillar may be, but a *Witneſs*; *viva voce*: Thou ſhalt publiſh his Goſpel, as that which thou haſt experienc'd the Power of and been deliver'd into the Mould of; thou ſhalt be *his Witneſs unto all Men*, Gentiles as well as *Jews*, *of which thou haſt ſeen and heard*, now at the very firſt. And finding *Paul* ſo particularly relating the Manner of his Converſion in his Apologies for himſelf, here, and *ch.* xxvi. we have Reaſon to think that he frequently made the ſame Narrative in his preaching, for the Converſion of others; he told them what God had *done for his Soul*, to encourage them to hope, that he would do ſomething for *their Souls*.

4. The *Counſel* and *Encouragement* he gave him to joyn himſelf to the Lord Jeſus by Baptiſm, *v.* 16. *Ariſe and be baptiz'd*: He had in his Circumciſion been given up *to God*, but he muſt now by Baptiſm be given up to God *in Chriſt*, muſt embrace the Chriſtian Religion, and the Privileges of it, in Submiſſion to the Precepts of it: This muſt now be done immediately upon his Converſion, and ſo was added to his Circumciſion, but to the Seed of the Faithful it comes in the Room of it; for it is as that was to *Abraham* and his believing Seed, *A Seal of the Righteouſneſs which is by Faith.* (1.) The great *Goſpel-Privilege*, which by Baptiſm we have ſeal'd to us, is the *Remiſſion of Sins.* Be baptiz'd, and *waſh away thy Sins*, i. e. Receive the Comfort of the Pardon of the Sins in and through Jeſus Chriſt, and lay hold on his Righteouſneſs for that Purpoſe. And receive Power againſt Sin, for thy Mortifying of thy Corruption; for our being *waſh'd*, includes our being both *juſtify'd* and *ſanctify'd*, 1 Cor. vi. 11. *Be baptiz'd*, and reſt not in the Sign, but make ſure of the *Thing ſignify'd*, the putting away of the Filth of Sin. (2.) The great *Goſpel-Duty*, which by our Baptiſm we are bound to, is to *call on the Name of the Lord*, the *Lord Jeſus*; to acknowledge him to be our Lord and our God, and to apply our ſelves to him accordingly; to give Honour to him, to put all our Petitions in his Hand. To *call on the Name of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, (Son of *David*, have Mercy on us) is the Periphraſis of a Chriſtian, 1 *Cor.* i. 2. We muſt *waſh away our Sins*, *calling on the Name of the Lord*, i. e. we muſt ſeek for the Pardon of our Sins in Chriſt's Name, and in Dependance on him, and his Righteouſneſs. And in Prayer, we muſt not any longer call God, the *God of Abraham*, but the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and in him *our Father*; in every Prayer, our Eye muſt be to Chriſt. (3.) We muſt do this quickly; *Why tarrieſt thou?* Our Covenanting with God in Chriſt is *needful* Work that muſt not be *deferr'd*. The Caſe is ſo plain, that 'tis needleſs to *deliberate*; and the Hazard ſo great, that 'tis folly to *delay*. Why ſhould not that be done at the preſent Time, that muſt be done ſome Ttme, or we are undone.

Fifthly, How he was *commiſſion'd* to go and preach the Goſpel to *the Gentiles*; this was the great Thing which they were ſo angry at him for; and therefore it was requiſite he ſhould for this in a ſpecial Manner produce a divine Warrant, and here he doth it. This Commiſſion he did not receive preſently upon his Converſion; for this was at *Jeruſalem*, whither he did not go till *three Years after*, or more, *Gal.* i. 18. and whether it was then or afterwards, that he had this Viſion here ſpoken of, we are not certain.

But to reconcile them, if poſſible, to his Preaching of the Goſpel among the *Gentiles*, he tells them,

1. That he received his Orders to do it when he was *at Prayer*, begging of God to appoint him his Work, and to ſhew him the Courſe he ſhould ſteer; (And which was a Circumſtance that would have ſome Weight with thoſe he was now ſpeaking to) he was at Prayer *in the Temple*, which was to be call'd, *a Houſe of Prayer for all People*; not only in which all People ſhould pray, but in which all People ſhould be pray'd for. Now as *Paul*'s Praying *in the Temple*, was an Evidence, contrary to their malicious Suggeſtion, that he had a Veneration for the Temple, tho' he did not make an Idol of it, as they did: ſo God's giving him this Commiſſion there *in the Temple*, was an Evidence, that the ſending him to the *Gentiles* would be no Prejudice to the Temple, unleſs the *Jews* by their Infidelity made it ſo. Now it would be a great Satisfaction to *Paul* afterwards in the Execution of this Commiſſion, to reflect upon it, that he receiv'd it when he was *at Prayer*.

2. He receiv'd it *in a Viſion*: He fell into *a Trance*, *v.* 17. His external Senſes for the preſent lock'd up, he was in an Extaſy, as when he was rap'd up into the third Heaven, and was not at that Time ſenſible whether he was *in the Body*, or *out of the Body*. In this Trance he *ſaw Jeſus Chriſt*, not with the Eyes of his Body, as at his Converſion, but repreſented to the Eyes of his Mind, *v* 18. *I ſaw him, ſaying unto me.* Our Eye muſt be upon Chriſt, when we are receiving the Law from his Mouth; and we muſt not only *hear him* ſpeaking, but *ſee him* ſpeaking to us.

3. Before Chriſt gave him a Commiſſion to go to the *Gentiles*, he told him, 'twas to no purpoſe for him to think of doing any Good at *Jeruſalem*, ſo that they muſt not blame *him*, but *themſelves*, if he were ſent to the *Gentiles*. *Paul* came to *Jeruſalem* full of Hopes, that by the Grace of God he might be inſtrumental to bring thoſe to the Faith of Chriſt, who had ſtood it out againſt the Miniſtry of the other Apoſtles, and perhaps this was it he was now praying for; that he having had his Education at *Jeruſalem*, and being well known there, might be employ'd in gathering the *Children* of *Jeruſalem* to Chriſt, that were not yet *gather'd*; which he thought he had particular Advantages for the doing of: But Chriſt croſſed the Meaſures he had laid, *Make haſte*, ſaith he, *and get thee quickly out of* Jeruſalem, for tho' thou thinkeſt thyſelf more likely to work upon them than others, thou wilt find they are more prejudic'd againſt thee than againſt any other, and therefore *will not receive thy Teſtimony concerning me*. As God knows before who will receive the Goſpel, ſo He knows who will reject it.

4. *Paul*, notwithſtanding this, renews his Petitition, that he might be employ'd at *Jeruſalem*, becauſe they knew *better* than any did what he *had been* before his Converſion, and therefore muſt aſcribe ſo great a Change in him, to the Power of Almighty Grace, and conſequently give the greater Regard to his Teſtimony; thus he reaſon'd both with himſelf and with the Lord, and thought he reaſon'd right, *v.* 19, 20. *Lord*, ſaith he, *they knew*, that I was once of this Mind, that I was as bitter an Enemy as any of them to *ſuch as believed on thee*; than I irritated the Civil Power againſt them, and *impriſon'd them*, and turned the Edge of the Spiritual Power againſt them too, and *beat them in every Synagogue*. And therefore they will not impute my preaching Chriſt to Education, or any Prepoſſeſſion in his Favour, as they do that of other Miniſters, but will the more readily regard what I ſay, becauſe they know I have my ſelf been *one of them*; particularly in *Stephen*'s Caſe; they know that when he was ſton'd, I was *ſtanding by*, I was aiding and abetting, and *conſenting to his Death*, and in Token of that, *kept the Clothes if thoſe that ſton'd him*. Now, Lord, ſaith he, if I appear among them preaching the Doctrine that *Stephen* preach'd and ſuffer'd for, they will no doubt *receive my Teſtimony*. No, (ſaith Chriſt to him) they will not; but will be more exaſperated againſt thee as a *Deſerter from*, than againſt others whom they *look upon* only as *Strangers to*, their Conſtitution.

5. *Paul*'s Petition for a Warrant to preach the Goſpel at *Jeruſalem* is over-rul'd, and he has peremptory Orders to go *among the Gentiles*, *v.* 21. *Depart, for I will ſend thee far hence among the* Gentiles. *Note*. God often gives gracious Anſwers to the Prayers of his People, not in the Thing itſelf that they pray for, but in ſomething better. *Abraham* prays, *O that* Iſhmael *may live before thee*; and God hears him for *Iſaac*. So *Paul* here prays, that he may be an Inſtrument of converting Souls at *Jeruſalem*; No, ſaith Chriſt, but thou ſhalt be employ'd among the *Gentiles*, and *more ſhall be the Children of the deſolate than thoſe of the married Wife*. 'Tis God that appoints his Labourers both their Day and their Place, and 'tis fit they ſhould acquieſce in his Appointment, tho' it may croſs their own Inclinations. *Paul* hankers after *Jeruſalem*, to be a Preacher there was the Top of his Ambition; but Chriſt deſigns him greater Preferment; he ſhall not enter into other Mens Labours, as the other Apoſtles did, *Joh.* iv. 28. but ſhall break up new Ground, and *preach the Goſpel there where Chriſt was not nam'd*, Rom. xv. 20. So often doth Providence contrive better *for us*, than we *for ourſelves*; to the Conduct of that we muſt therefore tefer ourſelves, *He ſhall chuſe our Inheritance for us*. Obſerve, *Paul* ſhall not go to preach among the *Gentiles* without a Commiſſion, *I will ſend thee*: And if Chriſt ſend him, his Spirit ſhall go along with him, he will ſtand by him, will carry him on, and bear him out, and give him to ſee the Fruit of his Labours. Let not *Paul* ſet his Heart upon *Judea* and *Jeruſalem*, for he muſt be ſent *far hence*; his Call muſt be quite another Way, and his Work of another Kind. And it might be a Mitigation of the Offence of this to the *Jews*, that he did not ſet up a *Gentile Church* in the *Neighbour* Nations; others did that juſt under their Noſe; he was ſent to Places at a *Diſtance*, a vaſt Way off, where what he did could not be thought an Annoyance to them.

Now if they would lay all this together, ſurely they would ſee that they had no Reaſon to be angry with *Paul* for Preaching among the *Gentiles*, or conſtrue it an Act of Ill-will to his own Nation, for he was compell'd to it contrary to his own Mind, by an over-ruling Command from Heaven.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word,
and *then* liſt up their voices and ſaid, Away with
ſuch a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that
he ſhould live. 23 And as they cryed out, and caſt
off *their* clothes, aud threw duſt into the air, 24
The chief captain commanded him to be brought
into the caſtle, and bade that he ſhould be examined
by ſcurging: that he might know wherefore
they cried ſo againſt him. 25 And as they bound
him with thongs, Paul ſaid unto the centurion that
ſtood by, Is it lawful for you to ſcurge a man that
is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26 When the centurion
heard that, he went and told the chief captain,
ſaying, Take heed what thou doeſt; for this
man is a Roman. 27 Then the chief captain came
and ſaid unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman;
He ſaid, Yea. 28 And the chief captain anſwered,
With a great Sum obtained I this freedom. And
Paul ſaid, But I was *free*-born. 29 Then ſtraightway
they departed from him which ſhould have examined
him: and the chief captain alſo was afraid after
he knew that he was a Roman, and becauſe he
had bound him. 30 On the morrow, becauſe he
would have known the certainty wherefore he was
accuſed of the Jews, he looſed him from *his* bands,
and commanded the chief prieſts and all their council
to appear, aud brought Paul down, and ſet him
before them.

Paul was going on with his Account of himſelf, had ſhew'd them his Commiſſion to preach among the *Gentiles*, without any peeviſh Reflections upon the *Jews*. And we may ſuppoſe deſign'd next to ſhew how he was afterwards by a ſpecial Direction of the Holy Ghoſt at *Antioch* ſeparated to this Service; how tender he was of the *Jews*, and how reſpectful to them, and how careful to give them the Precedency in all Places whither he came, and to unite *Jews* and *Gentiles* in one Body; and then to ſhew how wonderfully God had own'd him, and what good Service had been done to the Intereſt of God's Kingdom among Men in general, without Damage to any of the true Intereſts of the Jewiſh Church in particular. But whatever he deſigns to ſay, they reſolve he ſhall ſay no more to them; *They gave him Audience to this Word*: Hitherto they had heard him with Patience, and ſome Attention: But when he ſpeaks of being *ſent to the Gentiles*, tho' it was what Chriſt himſelf ſaid to him, they cannot bear it, not ſo much as to hear the *Gentiles* nam'd, ſuch an Enmity had they to them, and ſuch a Jealouſy of them. Upon the Mention of this, they have no Manner of Patience; but forget all Rules of Decency and Equity; thus were they *provoked to Jealouſy by them* that were *no People*, Rom. x. 19.

Now here we are told,

Firſt, How *furious* and *outragious* the People were againſt *Paul* for mentioning the *Gentiles*, as taken into the Cognizance of Divine Grace, and ſo juſtifying his Preaching among them.

1. They *interruptod him*, by *lifting up their Voioe*, to put him into Confuſion, and that no Body might hear a Word he ſaid. Gall'd Conſciences kick at the leaſt Touch; and thoſe who are reſolv'd not to be rul'd by Reaſon, commonly reſolve not to *hear it*, if they can help it. And the Spirit of Enmity againſt the Goſpel of

Chriſt commonly ſhews itſelf in *ſilencing* the Miniſters of Chriſt and his Goſpel, and ſtopping their Mouths, as the *Jews* did *Paul*'s here. Their Fathers had ſaid to the beſt of *Seers*, *See not*, Iſa. xxx. 10. And ſo they to the beſt of *Speakers*, *ſpeak not : Forbear, wherefore ſhouldſt thou be ſmitten?* 2 Chron. xxv. 16.

2. They *clamour'd* againſt him as one that was unworthy of *Life*, much more of *Liberty*; without weighing the Arguments he had urg'd in his own Defence, or offering to make any Anſwer to them, they cry'd out with a confus'd Noiſe, *Away with ſuch a Fellow* as this *from the Earth*, who pretends to have a Commiſſion to go to preach to the *Gentiles*, why, *it is not fit that he ſhould live.* Thus the Men that have been the greateſt Bleſſings of their Age, have been repreſented not only as the Burthens of the Earth, but the Plague of their Generation. He that was worthy of the greateſt Honours of Life, is condemn'd as not worthy of Life itſelf. See what different Sentiments God and Men have of good Men, and yet they both agree in this, that they are not likely to live long in this World. *Paul* ſaith of the Godly *Jews*, That they were Men *of whom the World was not worthy*, Heb, xi. 38. And therefore they muſt be remov'd, that the World may be juſtly puniſh'd with the Loſs of them : The Ungodly *Jews* here ſay of *Paul*, That it was *not fit he ſhould live*, and therefore he muſt be remov'd, that the World may be eas'd of the Burthen of him, as of the *two Witneſſes*, Rev. xi. 10.

3. They went *ſtark mad* againſt *Paul*, and againſt the Chief Captain for not killing him immediately, at their Requeſt, or throwing him as a Prey into their Teeth, that they might devour him, *v.* 23. As Men whoſe Reaſon was quite loſt in Paſſion, they *cry'd out* like roaring Lions or raging Bears, and howl'd like evening Wolves; They *caſt off their Clothes* with Fury and Violence, as much as to ſay, that thus they would tear him, if they could but come at him: Or rather, they thus ſhew'd how ready they were to ſtone him ; they that ſton'd *Stephen*, threw off their Clothes, *v.* 20. Or, they *rent their Clothes*, as if he had ſpoken Blaſphemy; and *threw Duſt into the Air* in Deteſtation of it; or ſignifying how ready they were to throw Stones at *Paul*, if the Chief Captain would have permitted them. But why ſhould they go about to give a Reaſon for theſe Expreſſions of Fury, which they themſelves could not account for ? All they intended was to make the Chief Captain ſenſible how much they were enraged and exaſperated at *Paul*, ſo that he could not do any Thing to *gratify* them more, than to let them have their Will againſt him.

4. The *Chief Captain* took Care for his Safety, by ordering him to be *brought into the Caſtle*, *v.* 24. A Priſon ſometimes has been a Protection to good Men from popular Rage. *Paul*'s Hour was not yet come, he had not finiſh'd his Teſtimony, and therefore God rais'd up One that took Care of him, when none of his Friends durſt appear on his behalf. *Grant not, O Lord, the Deſign of the Wicked.*

5. He order'd him the *Torture*, to force from him the Confeſſion of ſome flagrant Crime, which had provok'd the People to ſuch an uncommon Violence againſt him. He *bade that he ſhould be examin'd by ſcourging*, as now in ſome Countries by the Rack, *that he might know wherefore they cry'd ſo againſt him.* Herein he did not proceed fairly ; he ſhould have ſingled out ſome of the clamorous tumultuous Complainants, and taken them into the Caſtle, as Breakers of the Peace, and ſhould have *examin'd them*, and by *ſcourging* too, what they had to lay to the Charge of a Man that could give ſo good an Account of himſelf, and did not appear to have done any Thing worthy of Death or of Bonds. It was proper to ask *them*, but not at all proper to ask *Paul*, *Wherefore they cry'd ſo againſt him*; he could tell that he had given them no juſt Cauſe to do it; if there were any Cauſe, let them produce it. No Man is bound to *accuſe himſelf*, tho' he be *guilty*, much leſs ought he to be compell'd to *accuſe himſelf* when he is *innocent.* Surely the *Chief Captain* did not know the Jewiſh Nation when he concluded, that he muſt needs have done ſomething very ill, whom they cry'd out againſt; Had they not juſt thus cry'd out againſt our Lord Jeſus, Crucify him, crucify him, when they had not one Word to ſay in anſwer to the Judges Queſtion, Why, what Evil has he done? Is this a fair or juſt Occaſion to ſcourge *Paul*, that a rude tumultuous Mob cry out againſt him, but cannot tell why or wherefore, and therefore he muſt be forc'd to tell.

6. *Paul* pleaded his Privilege as a *Roman* Citizen, by which he was exempted from all Trials and Puniſhments of this Nature, *v.* 25. *As they bound him with Thongs*, or leathern Bands to the Whipping-poſt, as they us'd the vileſt of Malefactors in *Bridewell*, from whom they would extort a Confeſſion ; he made no Out-cry againſt the *Injuſtice* of their Proceedings againſt an innocent Man, but very mildly let them underſtand the *Illegality* of their Proceedings againſt him as a Citizen of *Rome*; which he had done once before at *Philippi*, after he had been ſcourg'd, *Chap.* xvi. 37. but here he makes uſe of it for Prevention. He *ſaid to the Centurion that ſtood by*, you know the Law, pray, *Is it lawful for you*, who are yourſelves *Romans*, to *ſcourge a Man that is a* Roman, *and uncondemned*? The Manner of his Speaking, plainly ſpeaks what a holy Security and Serenity of Mind this good Man enjoy'd; not diſturb'd either with Anger or Fear in the midſt of all thoſe Indignities that were done him, and the Danger he was in. The *Romans* had a Law, ('twas call'd *Lex Sempronia*) That if any Magiſtrate did chaſtiſe or condemn a Freeman of *Rome indictâ causa*, without hearing him ſpeak for himſelf, and deliberating upon the Whole of his Caſe, he ſhould be *liable to the Sentence of the People*, who were very jealous of their Liberties. It is indeed the Privilege of every Man not to have *Wrong done* him, except it be prov'd he has *done Wrong*; as it is of every Engliſh Man by *Magna Charta*, not to be diſ-ſeiz'd of his Life or Free-hold, but by a Verdict of twelve Men of his Peers.

7. The Chief Captain was *ſurpriz'd* at this, and put into a Fright; He had taken *Paul* to be a Vagabond *Egyptian*, and wonder'd he could *ſpeak* Greek, *Chap.* xxi. 37. But is much more ſurpriz'd now he finds that he is as good a Gentleman as himſelf. How many Men of great Worth and Merit are deſpis'd, becauſe they are not known! Are look'd upon and treated as the *Off-ſcouring of all Things*, when thoſe that count them ſo, if they knew their true Character. would own them to be of the *excellent Ones of the Earth.* The *Chief Captain* had *Centurions*, Under-Officers attending him, *Chap.* xxi. 32. One of theſe reports this Matter to the *Chief Captain*, *v.* 26. *Take heed what thou doſt, for this Man is a* Roman, and what Indignity is done to him, will be conſtru'd an Offence againſt the *Majeſty* of the *Roman* People, as they lov'd to ſpeak. They all knew what a Value was put upon this Privilege of the *Roman* Citizens. *Tully* extols it in one of his Orations, *againſt Verres, O nomen dulce libertatis, O jus eximium noſtræ Civitatis! O Lex Porcia! O Leges Semproniæ, Facinus eſt vincire Romanum Civem, ſcelus verberare*: Its a Crime to bind a *Roman* Citizen, but an unpardonable one to beat him. Therefore (ſaith the Centurion) let us look to ourſelves; if this Man be a *Roman*, and we do him any Indignity, we ſhall be in danger to loſe our Commiſſions at leaſt. Now,

(1.) The Chief Captain would be ſatisfy'd of the Truth of this from his own Mouth, *v.* 37. *Tell me, art thou a* Roman? Art thou intitled to the Privileges of a *Roman* Citizen? Yes, ſaith *Paul*, *I am*, and perhaps produc'd ſome Ticket or Inſtrument which prov'd it; for otherwiſe, they would ſcarce have taken his Word.

(2.) The Chief Captain very freely compares Notes with him upon this Matter, and it appears, that the Privilege *Paul* had as a *Roman* Citizen, was of the two more honourable than the *Colonel*'s; for the *Colonel* owns that his was purchas'd. I am a Free-man of *Rome*, but *with a great Sum obtain'd I this Freedom*; it coſt me dear, How came you by it? Why truly, ſaith *Paul*, *I was free-born.* Some think he became entitled to his Freedom by the *Place of his Birth*, as a Native of *Tarſus*, a City privileg'd by the Emperor with the ſame Privileges that *Rome* itſelf enjoy'd; Others rather think, it was by his *Father* or *Grandfather* having ſerved in the Wars, between *Cæſar* and *Antony*, or ſome other of the Civil Wars of *Rome*, and being for ſome ſignal Piece of Service rewarded with a *Freedom* of the City; and ſo *Paul* came to be *Free-born*; and here he pleads it for his own Preſervation; for which End, not only we *may*, but we *ought* to uſe all lawful Means.

(3.) This put an immediate Stop to *Paul*'s Trouble; They that were appointed to examine him by Scourging, quitted the Spot, they *departed from him*, v. 29. leſt they ſhould run themſelves into a Snare. Nay, and the *Colonel* himſelf, tho' we may ſuppoſe him to have a conſiderable Intereſt, was afraid when he heard he was a *Roman*; becauſe tho' he had not *beaten* him, yet he had *bound him*, in order to his being beaten. Thus many are reſtrain'd from evil Practices by the *Fear of Man*, that would not be reſtrain'd from them by the *Fear of GOD.* See here the Benefit of Humane Laws and Magiſtracy, and what Reaſon we have to be thankful to God for them; for even when they have given no *Countenance*, or *ſpecial* Protection to God's People and Miniſters, yet by their *general* ſupport of Equity and fair Dealing between Man and Man, they have ſerv'd to check the Rage of wicked and unreaſonable illegal Men, that otherwiſe would know no Bounds, and to ſay, *Hitherto it ſhall come, but no further*; *Here ſhall its proud Waves be ſtay'd.* And therefore this Service we owe to all in Authority, to *pray for them*, becauſe this Benefit we have Reaſon to expect from them, whether we have it or no, as long as we are *quiet* and *peaceable*, to live *quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godlineſs and Honeſty*, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.

(4.) The *Governour* the next Day brought *Paul* before the *Sanhedrin*, *v.* 30. He firſt *looſed him from his Bonds*, that thoſe might not *pre-judge* his Cauſe, and that he might not be charg'd with having pinion'd a *Roman* Citizen, and then ſummon'd *the Chief Prieſts and all their Council* to come together to take Cognizance of *Paul*'s Caſe; for he found it to be a Matter of *Religion*, and therefore look'd upon them to be the moſt proper Judges of it. *Gallio* in this Caſe diſcharg'd *Paul*; finding it to be a Matter of *their Law*, he *drave* the Proſecutors *from the Judgement-Seat*, Acts xviii. 10. and would not concern himſelf at all in it: But this *Roman*, that was a *military* Man, kept *Paul* in Cuſtody, and appeal'd from the Rabble to the *General Aſſembly.* Now (1.) We may hope that hereby he intended *Paul*'s Safety, as thinking, if he were an innocent and inoffenſive Man, tho' the Multitude might be *incens'd* againſt him, yet the Chief Prieſts and the Elders would *do him Juſtice* and clear him; for they were or ſhould be

Men of Learning and Conſideration, and their Court govern'd by Rules of Equity. When the Prophet could find no Good among the *poorer* ſort of People, he concluded it was, becauſe they *knew not the Way of the LORD, nor the Judgement of their GOD*, and promis'd himſelf that he ſhould ſpeed better among the *great Men*, as the *Chief Captain* here did, but ſoon found himſelf diſappointed there: Theſe have *altogether broken the Yoke and burſt the Bonds*, Jer. v. 4, 5. But (2.) That which he is here ſaid to aim at, is the gratifying of his own Curioſity. He *would have known the Certainty wherefore he was accuſed of the* Jews. Had he ſent for *Paul* to his own Chamber, and talk'd freely with him, he might ſoon have learn'd from him, that which would have done more than ſatisfy his Enquiry, and which might have perſuaded him to be a Chriſtian. But it is too common for *great Men* to affect to ſet that at a Diſtance from them, which might awaken their Conſciences, and to deſire to have no more of *the Knowledge of GOD's Ways* than may ſerve them to *talk of*.

CHAP. XXIII.

The Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter left Paul *in the High Prieſt's Court, into which the Chief Captain (whether to his Advantage or no, I know not) had remov'd his* Cauſe *from the* Mob; *and if his Enemies act there againſt him with* leſs Noiſe, *yet it is with* more Subtilty. *Now here we have,* (1.) Paul's *Proteſtation of his own Integrity, and of a civil Reſpect to the High Prieſt, however he had upon a ſudden ſpoken warmly to him, and juſtly, v.* 1—5. (2.) Paul's *prudent Contrivance to get himſelf clear of them, by ſetting the* Phariſees *and* Sadduces *at Variance one with another, v.* 6—9. (3.) *The Governour's ſeaſonable Interpoſal to reſcue him out of their Hands, likewiſe, v.* 10. (4.) *Chriſt's more comfortable Appearing* to him, *to animate him againſt thoſe Difficulties that lay before him, and to tell him what he muſt expect, v.* 11. (5.) *A bloody Conſpiracy of ſome deſperate* Jews *to kill* Paul, *and their drawing in the Chief Prieſts and Elders to be Aiders and Abetters with them in it, v.* 12—15. (6.) *The Diſcovery of this Conſpiracy to* Paul, *and by him to the Chief Captain, who perceiv'd ſo much of their inveterate Malice againſt* Paul, *that he had Reaſon enough to believe the Truth of it, v.* 15—22. (7.) *The Chief Captain's Care of* Paul's *Safety, by which he prevented the Execution of the Deſign; He ſent him away immediately under a ſtrong Guard, from* Jeruſalem *to* Cæſarea, *which was now the Reſidence of* Felix, *the* Roman *Governour, and there he ſafely arriv'd, v.* 23—35.

AND Paul earneſtly beholding the council, ſaid, Men *and* brethren, I have liv'd in all good conſcience before God, until this day. 2 And the high prieſt Ananias commanded them that ſtood by him, to ſmite him on the Mouth. 3 Then ſaid Paul unto him, God ſhall ſmite thee, thou whited wall: for ſitteſt thou to judge me after the law, and commandeſt me to be ſmitten contrary to the law? 4 And they that ſtood by, ſaid, Revileſt thou God's high Prieſt? 5 Then ſaid Paul, I wiſt not, brethren, that he was the high Prieſt; For it is written, Thou ſhalt not ſpeak evil of the ruler of thy people.

Perhaps when *Paul* was brought, as he often was (*Corpus cum causa*) before Heathen Magiſtrates and Councils, where he and his Cauſe were ſlighted, becauſe not at all underſtood; he thought if he were brought before the *Sanhedrin* at *Jeruſalem*, he ſhould be able to deal with them to ſome good Purpoſe, and yet we do not find that he work'd at all upon them. Here we have,

Firſt, *Paul*'s Proteſtation of his own Integrity. Whether the *Chief Prieſt* put any Queſtion to him, or the *Chief Captain* made any Repreſentation of his Caſe to the Court, we are not told: But *Paul* appear'd here,

1. With a *good Courage*; He was not at all *put out* of *Countenance* upon his being brought before ſuch an *Auguſt* Aſſembly, which in his Youth he had conceiv'd ſuch a Veneration for; nor did he fear their Calling him to an Account about the Letters they gave him to *Damaſcus*, to perſecute the Chriſtians there, tho' (for ought we know) this was the firſt Time he had ever ſeen them ſince; but he *earneſtly beheld the Council*. When *Stephen* was brought before them, they thought to have *fac'd him down*, but could not, ſuch was his *Holy Confidence*; they *look'd ſtedfaſtly on him, and his Face was as that of an Angel*, Chap. vi. 15. Now *Paul* was brought before 'em, he thought to have *fac'd them down*, but could not, ſuch was their *wicked Impudence*. However, now was fulfill'd in him what God promiſed to *Ezekiel*, Chap. iii, 8, 9. *I have made thy Face ſtrong againſt their Faces; fear them not, neither be diſmay'd at their Looks.*

2. With a *good Conſcience*, and that gave him a good Courage, *Hic murus aheneus eſto, Nil conſcire ſibi.* He ſaid. *Men and Brethren, I liv'd in all good Conſcience before GOD until this Day.* However, I may be reproach'd, my Heart doth not reproach me, but witneſſeth for me. (1.) He had always been a Man inclin'd to Religion; he never was a Man that liv'd *at large*, but always put a Difference between Moral Good and Evil; even in his Unregenerate State; he was as *touching the Righteouſneſs that was in the Law, blameleſs.* He was no *unthinking* Man, who never *conſider'd* what he did; no *deſigning* Man, who *car'd* not what he did, ſo he could but compaſs his own Ends. (2.) Even when he *perſecuted the Church of GOD*, yet he thought he ought to do it, and that he did God good Service. Tho' his Conſcience was *miſinformed*, yet he acted according to the Dictates of it. See *Chap.* xxvi. 9. (3.) He ſeems rather to ſpeak of the Time ſince his Converſion, ſince he left the Service of the High Prieſt, and fell under their Diſpleaſure for ſo doing; He doth not ſay, from my Beginning *until this Day*, but all the Time in which you had look'd upon me as a Deſerter, an Apoſtate, and an Enemy to Religion, even *to this Day*, I have *liv'd in all good Conſcience before GOD*; whatever you may think of me, I have in every Thing *approv'd* my ſelf to God, and *liv'd honeſtly*, Heb. xiii. 18. He had aimed at nothing but to *pleaſe God*, and *do his Duty*, in thoſe Things for which they were ſo incens'd againſt him: in all he had done towards the ſetting up of the Kingdom of Chriſt, and the ſetting of it up among the *Gentiles*, he had acted conſcientiouſly. See here the Character of an honeſt Man, (1.) He ſets God *before him*, and lives as in his Sight, and under his Eye, and with an Eye to him. *Walk before me, and be thou upright.* (2.) He *makes Conſcience* of what he ſaith and doth, and tho' he may be under ſome Miſtakes, yet according to the beſt of his Knowledge he abſtains from that which is Evil, and cleaves to that which is Good. (3.) He is *univerſally* conſcientious; and they that are not ſo, are not *truly* conſcientious; is ſo in *all manner of Converſation*. I have liv'd in *all good* Conſcience; have had my *whole Converſation* under the Direction and Dominion of Conſcience. (4.) He *continues* ſo, and perſeveres in it. I have liv'd ſo *until this Day*. Whatever Changes paſs over him, he is ſtill the ſame, ſtrictly conſcientious. And thoſe who thus *live in all good Conſcience before GOD*, may, like *Paul* here, *lift up their Face without Spot*; and if their Hearts condemn them not, may have Confidence both towards God and Man, as *Job* had, when he *ſtill held faſt his Integrity*; and *Paul* himſelf whoſe Rejoycing was this, the Teſtimony of his Conſcience.

Secondly, The *Abuſe* which *Ananias* the High Prieſt did to *Paul*: He commanded them that ſtood by, the Beadles that attended the Court, to *ſmite him on the Mouth*, *v.* 2. to give him a Daſh on the Teeth, either with a Hand or with a Rod. Our Lord Jeſus was thus diſpitefully us'd in this Court, by one of the Servants, *John* xviii. 22. as was foretold, *Mic.* v. 1. *They ſhall ſmite the Judge of* Iſrael *upon the Cheek:* But here was an *Order of Court* for the doing of it, and 'tis likely it was done.

1. The High Prieſt was highly offended at *Paul*; ſome think becauſe he look'd ſo boldly and earneſtly at the Council, as if he would face them down; Others, becauſe he did not addreſs himſelf particularly to *him*, as Preſident, with ſome Title of Honour and Reſpect, but ſpoke freely and familiarly to them all, as *Men* and *Brethren*. His *Proteſtation* of his *Integrity*, was Provocation enough to One who was reſolv'd to *run him down*, and make him *odious*. When he could charge him with no Crime, he thought it was Crime enough, that he aſſerted his own Innocency.

2. In his Rage he order'd him to be *ſmitten*, ſo to put Diſgrace upon him, and to be ſmitten *on the Mouth*, as having offended with his Lips, and in token of his enjoyning him Silence. This brutiſh and barbarous Method he had recourſe to when he *could not anſwer the Wiſdom and Spirit wherewith he ſpake.* Thus *Zedekiah* ſmote *Micaiah*, 1 Kin. xxii. 24. and *Paſhur* ſmote *Jeremiah*, Jer. xx. 2. when they ſpoke in the Name of the Lord: If therefore we ſee ſuch Indignities done to good Men; nay, if they be done to us for well doing, and well ſaying, we muſt not think it ſtrange: Chriſt will give thoſe the *Kiſſes of his Mouth*, (Cant. i. 2.) who for his Sake receive *Blows on the Mouth.* And tho' it may be expected, that as *Solomon* ſaith, *Every Man ſhould kiſs his Lips that giveth a right Anſwer*, Prov. xxiv. 26. yet we often ſee the contrary.

Thirdly, The Denunciation of the Wrath of God againſt the High Prieſt for this *Wickedneſs in the Place of Judgement*, Eccl. iii. 16. and it agrees with what follows there, *v.* 17. with which *Solomon* comforted himſelf, *I ſaid in mine Heart, God ſhall judge the Righteous and the Wicked*; *God ſholl ſmite thee thou whited Wall*, *v.* 3. *Paul* did not ſpeak this in any ſinful Heat or Paſſion, but in a Holy Zeal againſt the High Prieſt's Abuſe of his Power, and with ſomething of a prophetick Spirit, not at all with a Spirit of Revenge.

1. He gives him his due Character; *Thou whited Wall, i. e.* Thou *Hypocrite*, a Mud-wall, Traſh and Dirt, and Rubbiſh underneath, but *plaiſter'd over*, or *white-waſh'd.* 'Tis the ſame Compariſon in effect with that of Chriſt, when he compares the *Phariſees* to *whited Sepulchres*, Matth. xxiii. 27. They *that daub'd with untemper'd Mortar*, fail'd not to daub themſelves over with ſomething that made them look not only *clean* but *gay*.

2. He reads his juſt Doom. *God ſhall ſmite thee*, ſhall bring upon thee his ſore Judgements, eſpecially Spiritual Judgements. *Grotius* thinks this was fulfill'd ſoon after his Remo-

val from the Office of the High Prieſt, either by Death or Deprivation, for he finds another in that Office a little while after this; probably he was ſmitten by ſome ſudden Stroke of Divine Vengeance. *Jeroboam's* Hand was wither'd when it was ſtretch'd out againſt a Prophet.

3. He aſſigns a good Reaſon for that Doom; for *ſitteſt thou* there as Preſident in the ſupreme Judicature of the Church, pretending to *judge me after the Law*, to convict and condemn me by the Law, and yet *commandeſt me to be ſmitten*, before any Crime is prov'd upon me, which is *contrary to the Law?* No Man muſt be beaten unleſs he was *worthy to be beaten*, Deut. xxvi. 2. 'Tis againſt all Law, Humane and Divine, Natural and Poſitive, to hinder a Man from making his Defence, and to *condemn* him *unheard*. When *Paul* was beaten by the Rabble, He could ſay, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*; but it is inexcuſable in a High Prieſt that is appointed to judge *according to Law*.

Fourthly, The Offence which was taken at this bold Word of *Paul's*, v. 4. *They that ſtood by ſaid, Revileſt thou God's High Prieſt?* 'Tis probably conjectur'd, that thoſe who blam'd *Paul* for what he ſaid were *believing Jews*, who were *zealous for the Law*, and conſequently for the Honour of the High Prieſt; and therefore took it heinouſly that *Paul* ſhould thus reflect upon him, and check'd him for it. See here then,

1. What a hard Game *Paul* had to play, when his Friends were *abuſive* to him, and his Friends were ſo far from ſtanding by him, and appearing for him, that they were ready to find Fault with his Management.

2. How apt even the Diſciples of Chriſt themſelves are to overvalue outward Pomp and Power. As, becauſe the Temple had been *God's Temple*, and a magnificent Structure, there were thoſe that follow'd Chriſt, that could not bear to have any Thing ſaid that threaten'd the Deſtruction of it; ſo, becauſe the High Prieſt had been *GOD's High Prieſt*, and was a Man that made a Figure, tho' he was an inveterate Enemy to Chriſtianity, yet theſe were diſguſted at *Paul* for giving him his due.

Fifthly, The Excuſe that *Paul made* for what he had ſaid, becauſe he found it was a ſtumbling Block to his weak Brethren, and might prejudice them againſt him in other Things. Theſe Jewiſh Chriſtians tho' *weak*, yet were Brethren, ſo he calls them here, and in Conſideration of that, is almoſt ready to recall his Words; for *who is offended*, ſaith he, *and I burn not?* 2 Cor. xi. 29. His fixed Reſolution was rather to abridge himſelf in the Uſe of his Chriſtian Liberty, than give Offence to a weak Brother; rather than do it, he will *eat no Fleſh while the World ſtands*, 1 Cor. viii. 13. And ſo here, tho' he had taken a Liberty to tell the High Prieſt *his own*, yet when he found it gave Offence, he cry'd *Peccavi*, wiſh'd he had not done it; and tho' he did not beg the High Prieſt's Pardon, nor excuſe it *to him*, yet he begs *their* Pardon who took Offence at it, becauſe this was not a Time to inform them better, nor to ſay what he could ſay to juſtify himſelf.

1. He excuſeth it with this, that he did not *conſider*, when he ſaid it, whom he ſpoke to, v. 5. *I wiſt not, Brethren, that he was the High Prieſt*, οὐκ ᾔδειν, I did not juſt then think of the Dignity of his Place, or elſe I would have ſpoken more reſpectfully to him. I ſee not how we can with any probability think that *Paul* did not know him to be the High Prieſt, for *Paul* had been Seven Days in the Temple at the Time of the Feaſt, where he could not miſs of ſeeing the High Prieſt; and his telling him that *he ſate to judge him after the Law*, ſhews that he knew who he was; but, ſaith he, I did not *conſider* it. Dr. *Whitby* puts this Senſe upon it; That the *Prophetical Impulſe* that was *upon him*, and inwardly mov'd him to ſay what he did, did not permit him to *advert* that it was the *High Prieſt*, leaſt this Law might have reſtrain'd him from complying with that Impulſe, but the *Jews* acknowledg'd that *Prophets* might uſe a Liberty in ſpeaking of Rulers which others might not, as *Iſa.* i. 10, 23. Or, (as he quotes the Senſe of *Grotius* and *Lightfoot*) *Paul* doth not go about to *excuſe* what he had ſaid in the leaſt, but rather to juſtify it; I own that *God's High Prieſt* is not to be *revil'd*, but I do not own this *Ananias* to be *High-Prieſt*; he is an Uſurper, he came to the Office by Bribery and Corruption; and the Jewiſh Rabbins ſay that he who doth ſo is neither a *Judge*, nor to be *honour'd* as ſuch, Yet,

2. He takes Care that what he had ſaid ſhould not be drawn into a Precedent, to the weakening the Obligation of that Law in the leaſt; for *it is written*, and it *remains* a Law in full force, *Thou ſhalt not ſpeak Evil of the Ruler of thy People.* It is for the publick Good that the Honour of Magiſtracy ſhould be ſupported, and not ſuffer for the Miſcarriages of thoſe that are intruſted with it; and therefore that a *Decorum* be *obſerv'd* in ſpeaking both *of* and *to* Princes and Judges; even in *Job's* Time it was *not* thought *fit to ſay to a King, thou art wicked, or to Princes, you are ungodly*, Job xxxiv. 18. even when we *do well and ſuffer for it*, we muſt *take it patiently*, 1 Pet. iii. 20. Not as if great Men may not hear of their Faults, and publick Grievances be complain'd of by proper Perſons, and in a decent Manner; but there muſt be a particular Tenderneſs for the Honour and Reputation of thoſe in Authority more than of other People, becauſe the Law of God requires a particular Reverence to be paid to them as God's Vice-gerents; and it is of dangerous Conſequence to have thoſe any Way countenanc'd, who *deſpiſe Dominions* and *ſpeak Evil of Dignities*, Jude v. 8. *Curſe not the King, no not in thy Thought*, Eccl. x. 20.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadduces and the other Phariſees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a Phariſee, of the hope and reſurrection of the dead, I am called in queſtion. 7 And when he had ſo ſaid, there aroſe a diſſention between the Phariſees and Sadduces, and the multitude was divided. 8 For the Sadduces ſay that there is no reſurrection, neither angel nor ſpirit; but the Phariſees confeſs both. 9 And there aroſe a great cry: and the ſcribes *that were* of the Phariſees part aroſe, and ſtrove, ſaying, We find no evil in this man: but if a ſpirit or an angel hath ſpoken to him, let us not fight againſt God. 10 And when there aroſe a great diſſention, the chief captain fearing leſt Paul ſhould have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the Soldiers to go down. and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the caſtle. 11 And the night following, the Lord ſtood by him, and ſaid, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou haſt teſtifyed of me in Jeruſalem, ſo muſt thou bear witneſs alſo at Rome.

Many are the Troubles of the Righteous, but ſome way or other *the Lord delivereth them out of them all*: *Paul* own'd he had experienc'd the Truth of this in the Perſecutions he had undergone among the *Gentiles*, ſee 2 *Tim.* iii. 11. *out of them all the* Lord *deliver'd me.* And now he finds, that he that *has* deliver'd, *doth*, and *will*. He that deliver'd him in the foregoing Chapter from the *Tumult of the People*, here delivers him from that of the *Elders*.

Firſt, His own *Prudence* and *Ingenuity* ſtands him *in ſome ſtead*, and contributes *much* to his Eſcape. *Paul's* greateſt Honour, and that upon which he moſt valu'd himſelf was, that he was a *Chriſtian*, and an *Apoſtle of Chriſt*, and all his other Honours he deſpiſed and made nothing of, in compariſon with thoſe, *counting them but dung that he might win Chriſt*, and yet he had ſometimes occaſion to make uſe of his other Honours, and they did him Service. His being a *Citizen of Rome*, ſav'd him in the foregoing Chapter from being whipt by the Chief Captain as a *Vagabond*: And here his being a *Phariſee* ſav'd him from being condemn'd by the *Sanhedrin*, as an Apoſtate from the Faith and Worſhip of the God of *Iſrael*. 'Twill conſiſt very well with our Willingneſs to ſuffer for Chriſt, to uſe all lawful Methods, nay, and Arts too, both to *prevent* Suffering, and to *extricate* ourſelves out of it.

The honeſt Policy *Paul* us'd here for his own Preſervation was to *divide* his Judges, and to *ſet them at variance* one with another about him; and by incenſing *one Part of them* more againſt him, to engage the *contrary Part* for him.

1. The great Council was made up of *Sadduces* and *Phariſees*, and *Paul perceiv'd it*; He knew the Characters of many of them, ever ſince he liv'd among them, and ſaw thoſe among them whom he knew to be *Sadduces*, and others whom he knew to be *Phariſees*, *v. 6. One Part were Sadduces, and the other Phariſees*, and perhaps near an equal Part. Now theſe differ'd very much from one another, and yet they ordinarily agreed well enough to do the Buſineſs of the Council together.

(1.) The *Phariſees* were *Bigots*, zealous for the Ceremonies, not only thoſe which God had appointed, but thoſe which were enjoyn'd by the Tradition of the Elders; They were great ſticklers for the Authority of the Church, and enforcing Obedience to it's Injunctions, which occaſion'd many Quarrels between them and our Lord Jeſus; but at the ſame Time they were very Orthodox in the Faith of the Jewiſh Church concerning the *World of Spirits*, the *Reſurrection of the Dead*, and the *Life of the World to come.*

(2.) The *Sadduces* were *Deiſts*; no Friends to the Scripture, or Divine Revelation. The Books of *Moſes* they admitted as containing a good Hiſtory, and a good Law, but had little regard to the other Books of the *Old Teſtament*, ſee *Matth.* xxii. 22. The Account here given of theſe *Sadduces* is, (1.) That they *deny the Reſurrection*, not only the Return of the Body to Life, but a *future State* of Rewards and Puniſhments; They had neither Hope of Eternal Happineſs, nor dread of Eternal Miſery, nor Expectation of any Thing on t'other ſide Death; and it was upon theſe Principles that they ſaid, *It is in vain to ſerve GOD*, and *call'd the Proud happy*, Mal. iii. 14, 15. (2.) That they deny'd the Exiſtence of *Angels* and Spirits, and allow'd of no Being but *Matter*. They thought that God himſelf was *corporeal*, and had Parts and Members as we have. When they read of *Angels* in the *Old Teſtament*, they ſuppos'd them to be *Meſſengers* that God *made* and ſent on his Errands as there was occaſion; or that they were Impreſſions on the Fancies of thoſe they were ſent to, and no real Exiſtences; that were this or that, or any Thing rather than what they were. And as for the *Souls of Men* they look'd upon them to be nothing elſe but the Temperament of the Humours of the Body; or, the Animal Spirits, but deny'd their Exiſtence in a State of Separation from the Body, and any difference between the Soul of a *Man* and of a *Beaſt.* Theſe no doubt pretended to be *Free-Thinkers*, but really thought as *meanly*, *abſurdly*, *and ſlaviſhly* as poſſible. It is ſtrange how Men of ſuch corrupt and wicked Principles could come into Office, and have a Place in the great *Sanhedrin*; but many of them were of Quality and Eſtate, and they comply'd with the publick Eſtabliſhment, and ſo got in, and kept in. But they were generally ſtigmatiz'd as Hereticks, were rank'd with the *Epicureans*, and were *pray'd* againſt, and excluded from eternal Life. The Prayer which the modern *Jews* uſe againſt Chriſtians, *Whitſius* thinks was deſign'd by *Gamaliel* who made it, againſt the *Sadduces*; and that they meant them in their uſual Imprecation, *Let the Name of the Wicked rot.* But how degenerate was the Character, and how miſerable the State of the Jewiſh Church when ſuch prophane Men as theſe were among their Rulers?

2. In this Matter of Difference between the *Phariſees* and *Sadduces*, *Paul* openly declar'd himſelf to be on the *Phariſees* Side, againſt the *Sadduces*, *v. 6.* He *cry'd out*, ſo as to be heard by all, *I am a Phariſee*, was bred a *Phariſee*, nay, I was born one in Effect, for I am the *Son of a Phariſee*, my Father was one before me, and thus far I am ſtill a *Phariſee*, that I *hope for the Reſurrection of the Dead*, and I may truly ſay, that if the Matter were rightly underſtood it would be found, this was it for which I was now *call'd in Queſtion.* When Chriſt was upon Earth the *Phariſees* ſet themſelves *moſt* againſt *him*, becauſe he witneſſed againſt their Traditions and corrupt Gloſſes upon the Law: But after his Aſcenſion the *Sadduces* ſet themſelves moſt againſt *his Apoſtles*, becauſe they *preached through Jeſus the Reſurrection of the Dead*, Acts iv. 1, 2. And it is ſaid, *chap.* v. 17. that they were *the Sect of the Sadduces*, that were *filled with Indignation* at them, becauſe they preach'd that *Life* and *Immortality* which is *brought to Light by the Goſpel.* Now here,

(1.) *Paul* owns himſelf a *Phariſee* ſo far as the *Phariſees* were *in the right.* Tho' as *Phariſaiſm* was oppos'd to *Chariſtianity*, he *ſet himſelf againſt it*, and againſt all its Traditions that were ſet up in competition with the Law of God, or in contradiction to the Goſpel of Chriſt, but as it was oppos'd to *Sadduciſm*, he *adher'd to it.* We muſt never think the worſe of any Truth of God, nor be more *ſhy* of our owning it for its being held by Men otherwiſe *corrupt.* If the *Phariſees* will *hope for the Reſurrection of the Dead*, *Paul* will go along with them in that Hope, and be *one of them* whether they will or no.

(2.) He might truly ſay, that being perſecuted as a Chriſtian, this was the Thing he was *call'd in Queſtion* for; perhaps he knew that the *Sadduces*, tho' they had not ſuch an Intereſt in the common People as the *Phariſees* had, yet had *underhand* incens'd the Mob againſt him, under pretence of his having preach'd *to the Gentiles*, but really becauſe he had preach'd *the Hope of the Reſurrection.* However, being *call'd in Queſtion* for his being a Chriſtian he might truly ſay, he was call'd in Queſtion *for the Hope of the Reſurrection of the Dead*, as he afterwards pleaded, *chap.* xxiv. 15. and *chap.* xxvi. 6, 7. Tho' *Paul* preach'd *againſt* the Traditions of the Elders, as his Maſter had done, and therein *oppos'd* the *Phariſees*, yet he valu'd himſelf more upon his Preaching for the Reſurrection of the Dead, and a future State in which he *concurr'd* with the *Phariſees.*

3. This occaſion'd a Diviſion in the Council: 'Tis probable the *High Prieſt* ſided with the *Sadduces*, as he had done, *chap.* v. 17. and made it to appear by his Rage at *Paul*, *v.* 2. which alarm'd the *Phariſees* ſo much the more, but ſo it was, there aroſe a *Diſſenſion between the Phariſees and the Sadduces*, *v.* 7. for this Word of *Paul's* made the *Sadduces* more warm, and the *Phariſees* more *cool* in the Proſecution of him; ſo that *the Multitude was divided*, ἐσχίσθη, There was a *Schiſm*, *i. e.* a Quarrel among them, and the Edge of their Zeal began to turn from *Paul* againſt one another; nor could they go on to *act againſt him* when they could not *agree among themſelves*, or proſecute him for breaking the Unity of the Church, when there was ſo little among them of the Unity of the Spirit. All the Cry had been againſt *Paul*, but now *there aroſe a great Cry* againſt one another, *v.* 9. ſo much did a fierce furious Spirit prevail among all Orders of the *Jews* at this Time, that every Thing was done with Clamour and Noiſe, and in ſuch a tumultuous Manner were the great Principles of their Religion ſtickled for, by which they receiv'd little Service; for *the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of GOD.* Gain-ſayers may be convinc'd by fair Reaſoning, but never by a *great Cry.*

4. The *Phariſees* hereupon (would one think it) took *Paul's* Part, *v.* 9. they ſtrove, διεμάχοντο, they *fought*, ſaying, *we find no Evil in this Man*: He had carry'd himſelf decently and reverently in the Temple, and had attended the *Service of the Church*, and though it was but *Occaſionally*, yet it ſhew'd that he was not ſuch an Enemy to it as he was ſaid to be; he had ſpoken very handſomely *in his own Defence*, and given a good Account of his Principles of *Religion*, as well as been regular and conſcientious in his Converſation, and therefore they cannot ſee he has *done any Thing worthy of Death or of Bonds.* Nay, they go further, *if a Spirit or an Angel hath ſpoken to him* concerning Jeſus, and put him upon preaching as he doth, tho' we may not be ſo far *ſatisfy'd* as to give Credit to him, yet we ought to be *caution'd* not to oppoſe him, leſt we be found *fighting againſt God*, as *Gamaliel*, who was him ſelf a *Phariſee* had argued, *chap.* v. 39. Now here,

(1.) We may obſerve it *to the Honour of the Goſpel*, that it was witneſſed to even by its *Adverſaries*, and Confeſſions not only of its Innocency, but of its Excellency, were extorted ſometimes by the Power of Truth, even from thoſe that perſecuted it. *Pilate* found no Fault in Chriſt tho' he put him to Death, nor *Feſtus* in *Paul*, though he continu'd him in Bonds; and the *Phariſees* here ſuppos'd it poſſible that *Paul* might have a Commiſſion ſent down from Heaven by an Angel to do what he did, and yet it ſhould ſeem as *Elders* they after this joyn'd with *the High Prieſt in proſecuting him*, chap. xxiv. 1. They Sinn'd againſt the Knowledge which they not only *had*, but ſometimes *own'd* as Chriſt had ſaid of them, *they have both ſeen and hated both me and my Father*, John xv. 24.

Yet (2.) We will hope that *ſome of them* at leaſt did from henceforward conceive a better Opinion of *Paul* than they formerly had, and were *favourable* to him, having had ſuch a ſatisfactory Account both of his Converſation *in all good Conſcience*, and of his *Faith* touching *another World*; and then it muſt be obſerv'd to *their* Honour, that their Zeal for the *Traditions of the Elders*, which *Paul* had *departed from*, was ſo far ſwallow'd up in a Zeal for the great and *fundamental Doctrines of Religion*, to which *Paul* ſtill *adher'd*, *that if he will heartily joyn with them againſt* the *Sadduces*, and ſtick to the *Hope of the Reſurrection of the Dead*, they will not think his ſhaking off the Ceremonial-Law, to be *any Evil in him*, but charitably Hope that he Walks according to the Light God has given him by ſome Angel or Spirit, and are ſo far from *perſecuting* him that they are ready to *patronize* and *protect him.* The perſecuting *Phariſees* of the Church of *Rome* are not of this Spirit; for let a Man be never ſo *ſincere* and *zealous* for all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith, yet if he lay not his Neck under the Yoke of their Churches Authority, they *find Evil enough in him* to perſecute him unto Death.

Secondly, The *chief Captain's* Care and Conduct ſtands him in *more ſtead*; for when he had thrown this *Bone of Contention* between the *Phariſees* and *Sadduces*, which had ſet them together by the Ears, and had gain'd a fair Teſtimony from the *Phariſees*, yet he is never the nearer, but is in danger of being *pull'd in Pieces by them*: The *Phariſees* pulling to have him ſet at Liberty, and the *Sadduces* pulling to have him put to Death, or thrown to the People, like *Daniel* into the *Den of Lyons*; ſo that the chief Captain was forc'd to come with his Soldiers and reſcue him, as he had done, *chap.* xxi. 32. and *chap.* xxii. 24.

1. See here *Paul's* Danger; Between his Friends and his Enemies he had like to have been *pull'd to pieces*, the one *hugging* him to Death, the other *cruſhing* him to Death, ſuch Violences are they liable to that are *eminent*, and that are become remarkable as *Paul* was, who was by ſome much *belov'd*, and by others ſo much *maligned.*

2. His Deliverance. The *chief Captain* order'd his *Soldiers to go down* from the upper Wards, and *to take him by force from among them*, out of that Apartment in the Temple where he had order'd the Council to meet, and *bring him into the Caſtle*, or Tower of *Antonia*; for he ſaw he could make nothing of them towards the Underſtanding of the Merits of his Cauſe.

Thirdly, Divine Conſolations ſtood him in *moſt ſtead of all*: The chief Captain had reſcu'd him out of the Hands of cruel Men, but ſtill he had him in Cuſtody, and what might be the Iſſue, he could not tell; the *Caſtle* was indeed a *Protection* to him, but withal it was a *Confinement*: And as it was now his *Preſervation* from ſo *great a Death*, it might be his *Reſervation* for a *greater.* We do not find that any of the *Apoſtles* or *Elders* at *Jeruſalem* came to him, either they had not *Courage*, or they had not *Admiſſion.* Perhaps *in the Night following*, *Paul* was full of Thoughts and Cares what ſhould become of him, and how his preſent Thoughts might be turn'd to anſwer ſome good Purpoſe. Then did the *Lord Jeſus* make him a kind Viſit, and tho' at Midnight, yet a very ſeaſonable one, *v.* 11. *The Lord ſtood by him*; came to his Bed-ſide, though perhaps it was but a Bed of Straw, to ſhew him that he was all the Day long with him *really*, as ſure as he was in the Night with him *viſibly.* *Note*, Whoever is *againſt us*, we need not fear, if *the LORD ſtand by us*, if he undertake our Protection, we may ſet thoſe that ſeek our Ruin at Defiance. The Lord is with thoſe that *uphold my Soul*, and then nothing can come amiſs.

1. Chriſt bids him have a good Heart on it; *Be of good Chear, Paul*; Be not diſcourag'd, let not what has happen'd *ſadden* thee, nor let what may yet be before thee *frighten* thee. *Note*, It is the Will of Chriſt, that his Servants that are *faithful*, ſhould be always *chearful.* Perhaps *Paul* in the Reflection, began to be jealous of himſelf, Whether he had done well in what he ſaid to the Council the Day before, but Chriſt by his Word ſatisfies him, that God approv'd of his Conduct. Or perhaps, it troubled him that his Friends did not come to him, but Chriſt's Viſit did itſelf ſpeak, tho' he had not ſaid it, *Be of good Chear*, Paul.

2. 'Tis a ſtrange Argument which he makes uſe of to encourage him; *As thou haſt teſtify'd of me in* Jeruſalem, *ſo muſt thou bear Witneſs alſo at* Rome. One would think this was but cold Comfort; as thou *haſt undergone* a great deal of Trouble for me, ſo thou *muſt undergo* a great deal more; and yet this was deſign'd to hearten him; for hereby he is given to underſtand, (1.) That he had been *ſerving* Chriſt as a *Witneſs for him* in what he had hitherto endur'd. It was for no Fault that he was buffeted, and that it was not his former perſecuting of the Church, that was now *remembred againſt him*, however he might remember it *againſt himſelf*, but was ſtill going on with his Work. (2.) That he had not yet *finiſhed his Teſtimony*, nor was by his Impriſoment laid aſide as *uſeleſs*, but was only *reſerv'd* for further Service. Nothing diſhearten'd *Paul* ſo much as the Thought of being taken off from doing Service to Chriſt, and Good to Souls: *Fear not*, ſaith Chriſt, *I have not done with thee.* (3.) *Paul* ſeems to have had a particular Fancy, and an *innocent* one, to go to *Rome*, to preach the Goſpel there, though it was already preach'd, and a Church planted there; yet being a Citizen of *Rome*, he long'd for a Journey thither, and had deſign'd it, *chap.* xix. 21. *After I have been at* Jeruſalem, *I muſt alſo ſee* Rome. And he had written to the *Romans* ſome Time ago, that he *long'd to ſee them*, Rom. i. 11. Now he was ready to conclude, that this had broke his Meaſures, and he ſhould never ſee *Rome.* But even in that Chriſt tells him he ſhould be gratify'd, ſince he deſir'd it for the Honour of Chriſt, and to do Good.

12 And when it was day certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themſelves under a curſe, ſaying, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 And they were more than forty which had made this conſpiracy. 14 And they came to the chief prieſts and elders, and ſaid, We have bound our ſelves under a great curſe, that we will eat nothing until we have ſlain Paul. 15 Now therefore ye with the council ſignifie to the chief captain, that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though you would enquire ſomething more perfectly concerning him: and we or ever he come near, are ready to kill him. 16 And when Paul's ſiſter's ſon heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the caſtle, and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and ſaid, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him. 18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and ſaid, Paul the priſoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath ſomething to ſay unto thee. 19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aſide privately, and asked *him*, What is it that thou haſt to tell me? 20 And he ſaid, The Jews have agreed to deſire thee, that thou wouldeſt bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire ſomewhat of him more perfectly. 21 But do thou not yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themſelves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now they are ready, looking for a promiſe from thee. 22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou* tell no man, that thou haſt ſhewed theſe things to me. 23 And he called unto him two centurions, ſaying, make ready two hundred ſoldiers to go to Ceſarea, and horſemen threeſcore and ten, and ſpearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night. 24 And provide *them* beaſts, that they may ſet Paul on, and bring *him* ſafe unto Felix the governor. 25 And he wrote a letter after this manner: 26 Claudius Lyſias, unto the moſt excellent governor Felix, *ſendeth* greeting. 27 This man was taken of the Jews, and ſhould have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and reſcued him, having, underſtood that he was a Roman. 28 And when I would have known the cauſe whereof they accuſed him, I brought him forth into their council: 29 Whom I perceived to be accuſed of queſtions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. 30 And when it was told me, how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I ſent ſtraightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accuſers alſo, to ſay before thee what *they had* againſt him. Farewel. 31 Then the ſoldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul and brought *him* by night to Antipatris, 32 On the morrow they left the horſemen to go with him, and returned to the caſtle. 33 Who when they came to Ceſarea, and delivered the epiſtle to the governor, preſented Paul alſo before him. 34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what province he was. And when he underſtood that he was of Cilicia; 35 I will hear thee, ſaid he, when thine accuſers are alſo come. And commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgement-hall.

We have here the Story of *a Plot* againſt the Life of *Paul*; how it was *laid*, how it was *diſcover'd*, and how it was *defeated.*

Firſt, How this Plot was *laid.* They found they could gain nothing by *popular* Tumult, or *legal* Proceſs, and therefore have Recourſe to the barbarous Method of *Aſſaſſination*; they will come upon him ſuddenly and ſtab him, if they can but get him within their Reach; ſo reſtleſs is their Malice againſt this good Man, that when one Deſign fails, they will turn another Stone. Now obſerve here,

1. *Who* they were that *form'd* this *Conſpiracy:* They were *certain Jews* that had the utmoſt Degree of Indignation againſt him becauſe he was the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, *v.* 12. And they were *more than forty* that were in the Deſign, *v.* 13. *Lord, how are they increas'd that trouble me!*

2. *When* the Conſpiracy was *form'd*; *When it was Day:* Satan had fill'd their Hearts in the Night to *purpoſe* it, and as ſoon as it was Day they got together to *proſecute* it; anſwering the Account which the Prophet gives of ſome who *work Evil upon their Beds*, and *when the Morning is light they practiſe it*, and are laid under a *Wo* for it, *Mic.* ii. 1. In *the Night* Chriſt appear'd to *Paul* to protect him, and *when it was Day*, here were forty Men appearing *againſt him* to deſtroy him; They were not up ſo ſoon, but Chriſt was up before them; *GOD ſhall help her, and that right early*, Pſal. xlvi. 5.

3. *What* the Conſpiracy was. Theſe Men *banded together* in a League, perhaps they call'd it a *holy League*, they engag'd to ſtand by one another, and every One to his Power to be aiding and aſſiſting to murder *Paul*. 'Twas ſtrange that *ſo many* could *ſo ſoon* be got together, and that in *Jeruſalem* too, that were ſo perfectly loſt to all Senſe of Humanity and Honour, as to engage in ſo bloody a Deſign. Well might the Prophet's Complaint be renew'd concerning *Jeruſalem*, Iſa. i. 21. *Righteouſneſs had lodg'd in it, but now Murtherers.* What a *monſtrous Idea* muſt theſe Men have form'd *of* Paul, before they could be capable of Forming ſuch a *monſtrous Deſign* againſt him; they muſt be made to believe that he was the worſt of Men, an Enemy to God and Religion, and the Curſe and Plague of his Generation; when really his Character was the Reverſe of all this. What Laws of Truth and Juſtice ſo *ſacred*, ſo *ſtrong*, which Malice and Bigottry will not break through!

4. How *firm* they made it, as they thought, that none of them might *fly off* upon Conſcience of the Horror of the Fact at ſecond Thoughts; They *bound themſelves under an Anathema*, imprecating the heavieſt Curſes upon themſelves, their Souls, Bodies and Families, if they did not *kill* Paul, and ſo quickly, that they *would not eat or drink* till they had done it. What a Complication of Wickedneſs is here! To deſign to *kill* an innocent Man, a good Man, a uſeful Man, a Man that had done them no Harm, but was willing to do them all the Good he could, was *going in the Way of* Cain, and ſpoke them to be of their Father the Devil, who was a *Murtherer from the Beginning*; yet as if this had been a ſmall Matter, (1.) They *bound themſelves* to it; To *incline* to do Evil and *intend* to do it, is bad; but to *engage* to do it, is much worſe. This is entring into Covenant with the Devil; 'tis ſwearing Allegiance to the Prince of Darkneſs; 'tis leaving no Room for Repentance; nay, 'tis bidding Defiance to it. (2.) They *bound one another* to it, and did all they could not only to ſecure the Damnation of their own Souls, but of theirs whom they drew into the Aſſociation. (3.) They ſhew'd a great *Contempt of the Providence of GOD*, and a Preſumption upon it; in that they bound themſelves to do ſuch a Thing within ſo ſhort a Time, as they could continue faſting, without any Proviſo or Reſerve for the Diſpoſal of an over-ruling Providence. When we ſay *to Mrorow we will do this or that*, be it never ſo lawful and good, for as much as *we know not what ſhall be on the Morrow*, we muſt add, *if the Lord will.* But with what Face could they inſert a Proviſo for the *Permiſſion of God's Providence*, when they knew what they were about was directly againſt the *Prohibitions of God's Word?*

(4.) They ſhew'd a great *Contempt of their own Souls and Bodies*; of their own *Souls* in imprecating a *Curſe* upon them if they did not proceed in this deſperate Enterprize; what a woful *Dialemma* did they throw themſelves upon; God certainly meets them with his Curſe if they do go on in it, and they deſire he would, if they do not. And of their own *Bodies* too (for wilful Sinners are the Deſtroyers of both) in tying themſelves up from the neceſſary Supports of Life till they had accompliſh'd a Thing which they could never lawfully do, and perhaps not *poſſibly* do. Such Language of Hell they ſpeak, that wiſh God to damn them, and the Devil to take them if they do not do ſo and ſo. *As they love Curſing, ſo it ſhall come upon them.* Some think the Meaning of this Curſe was, they would either kill *Paul*, as an *Achan*, an accurſed Thing, a Troubler of the Camp; or if they did not do it, they would make themſelves accurſed before God in his ſtead. (5.) They ſhew'd a moſt *eager Deſire* to compaſs this Matter, and an *Impatience* till it was done. Not only like *David*'s Enemies that were *mad againſt him*, and *ſworn againſt him*, Pſal. cii. 8. but like the Servants of *Job* againſt his Enemy, *O that we had of his Fleſh, we cannot be ſatisfy'd*, Job xxxi. 37. Perſecutors are ſaid to *eat up God's People, as they eat Bread*; 'tis as much a Gratification to them, as Meat to One *that is hungry*, Pſal. xiv. 4.

5. What *Method* they took to bring it about. There's no getting near *Paul* in the *Caſtle*, he is *there* under the particular Protection of the Government, and is *impriſon'd* not as others are, leſt he ſhould *do harm*, but leſt he ſhould have *harm done to him*. And therefore the Contrivance is, That the *chief Prieſts* and *Elders* muſt deſire the Governour of the Caſtle to let *Paul* come to them to the Council-Chamber, to be further examin'd; they have ſome Queſtions to ask him, or ſomething to ſay to him, and then in his Paſſage from the Caſtle to the Council they would put an end to all Diſputes about *Paul*, by killing him. Thus the Plot was laid, *v.* 14, 15. having been all Day employ'd in engaging one another to this Wickedneſs, towards Evening they come to the principal Members of the great *Sanhedrin*, and tho' they might have conceal'd their main Deſign, and yet might have mov'd them upon ſome other Pretence to ſend for *Paul*, they are ſo confident of their Approbation of this Villany, that they are not aſham'd or afraid to own to them, that they have *bound themſelves under a great Curſe*, without conſulting the Prieſts firſt, whether they might lawfully do it, that they will *eat nothing* the next Day till they have kill'd *Paul*; they deſign to Breakfaſt the next Morning upon his Blood; they doubt not but the chief Prieſts will not only *countenance* them in the Deſign, but will lend them a helping Hand, and be *their Tools* to get them an Opportunity of killing *Paul*; nay, and *tell a Lye* for them too, pretending to the chief Captain that they would *enquire ſomething more perfectly concerning him*, when they meant no ſuch Thing. What a *mean*, what an *ill* Opinion had they of their Prieſts when they could apply to them on ſuch an Errand as this? And yet as Vile as the Propoſal was which was made to them, for ought appears, the Prieſts and Elders *conſented to it*, and at the firſt Word, without boggling at it in the leaſt, promis'd to gratify them. Inſtead of reproving them, as they ought, for their wicked Conſpiracy, they *bolſter'd* them up in it, becauſe it was againſt *Paul* whom they hated: And thus they made themſelves Partakers of the Crime, as much as if they had been the firſt in the Conſpiracy.

Secondly, How the Plot was *diſcover'd*. We do not find that the Plotters tho' they took an Oath of *Fidelity*, took an Oath of *Secrecy*, either becauſe they thought it did not need, they would every one keep his own Counſel; Or, becauſe they thought they could *accompliſh* it, tho' it ſhould *take Wind* and be known; but Providence ſo order'd it, that it was *brought to Light*, and ſo as effectually to be *brought to nought*. See here,

1. How it was diſcover'd to *Paul*, *v.* 16. They was a *Youth*, that was related to *Paul*, his *Siſter's Son*, whoſe Mother probably liv'd in *Jeruſalem*, and ſome how or other, we are not told how, he *heard of their lying in wait*, either over-heard them talking of it among themſelves, or got Intelligence from ſome that were in the Plot; and *he went into the Caſtle*, probably as he us'd to do to attend on his Uncle, and bring him what he wanted, which gave him a free acceſs to him; and he *told Paul* what he heard. *Note*, God has many Ways of bringing to light the hidden Works of Darkneſs; tho' the Contrivers of them *dig deep to hide them from the Lord*. He can make *a Bird of the Air to carry the Voice*, Eccl. x. 20. or the Conſpirators own Tongues to betray themſelves.

2. How it was diſcover'd to the *chief Captain* by the Young Man that told it *Paul*. This Part of the Story is related very particularly, perhaps becauſe the Penman was an Eye-witneſs of the prudent and ſucceſsful Management of this Affair, and remember'd it with a deal of Pleaſure. (1.) *Paul* had got a good Intereſt in the Officers that attended, by his prudent, peaceable Deportment: He could *call one of the Centurions* to him, tho' a Centurion was one in Authority that had *Soldiers under him*, and us'd to *call*, not to be *call'd* to; and he was ready to come at his Call, *v.* 17. And he deſir'd that he would introduce this young Man to the *chief Captain* to give in an *Information* of ſomething that concern'd the Honour of the Government. (2.) The *Centurion* very readily gratify'd him, *v.* 18. He did not ſend a common Soldier with him, but went himſelf, to keep the young Man in Countenance, to recommend this Errand to the chief Captain, and to ſhew his Reſpects to *Paul*. *Paul the Priſoner*, that was his Title now, *call'd me to him*, and *pray'd me to bring this young Man to thee*: What his Buſineſs is I know not; but *he hath ſomething to ſay to thee*. *Note*, It is true Charity to poor Priſoners to *act for them*, as well as to *give to them*. *I was ſick, and in Priſon*, and you went on an Errand for me, will paſs as well in the Account, as I was ſick and in Priſon, and you *came unto me*, to viſit me, or ſent me a Token. Thoſe that have Acquaintance and Intereſt, ſhould be ready to uſe it for the Aſſiſtance of thoſe that are in Diſtreſs. This Centurion help'd to ſave *Paul*'s Life by this Piece of Civility, which ſhould engage us to be ready to do the like when there is Occaſion. *Open thy Mouth for the Dumb*, Prov. xxxi. 8. Thoſe that cannot *give a good Gift to* God's Priſoners, may yet *ſpeak a good Word* for them. (3.) The *chief Captain* receiv'd the Information with a great deal of Condeſcenſion and Tenderneſs, *v.* 19. He *took the young Man by the Hand*, as a Friend or Father, to encourage him, that he might not be daſh'd out of Countenance, but might be aſſur'd of a favourable Audience. The Notice that is taken of this Circumſtance, ſhould encourage great Men to make themſelves *eaſy of Acceſs* to the Meaneſt upon any Errand which may give them an Opportunity of doing Good; to *condeſcend to them of low Eſtate*. This Familiarity to which this *Roman* Tribune or Colonel admitted *Paul*'s Nephew, is here upon Record to his Honour. Let no Man think he *diſparageth himſelf* by his Humility, or Charity. He *went with him aſide privately*, that none might hear his Buſineſs, *and ask'd him, What is it that thou haſt to tell me?* Tell me wherein I can be ſerviceable to *Paul*. 'Tis probable, the chief Captain was the more *obliging* in this Caſe, becauſe he was ſenſible he had run himſelf into a *Præmunire* in binding *Paul* againſt his Privilege as a *Roman-Citizen*, which he was willing now to atone for. (4.) The young Man deliver'd his Errand to the chief Captain very readily and handſomely, *v.* 20, 21. The *Jews*, (he doth not ſay *who*, leſt he ſhould invidiouſly reflect upon the *Chief Prieſts and the Elders*, and his Buſineſs was to ſave his Uncle's Life, not to accuſe his Enemies) *have agreed to deſire thee that thou would'ſt bring down* Paul *to Morrow into the Council*, preſuming that being ſo little a Way, thou wilt ſend him without a Guard; but *do not thou yield unto them*, we have Reaſon to believe thou wilt not when thou knoweſt the Truth, for there *lie in wait for him of them more than forty Men*, who have ſworn to be the Death of him, and *now are they ready looking for a Promiſe from thee*, but I have happily got the ſtart of them. *Laſtly*, The Captain diſmiſs'd the young Man with a charge of Secrecy, *See that thou tell no Man that thou haſt ſhew'd theſe Things unto me*, *v.* 22. The Favours of great Men, are not always to be bragg'd of; and thoſe that cannot *keep Counſel*, are not fit to be employ'd in Buſineſs. If it ſhould be known that the chief Captain had this Information brought him, perhaps they would compaſs and imagine the Death of *Paul* ſome other Way; therefore keep it private.

Thirdly, How the Plot was *defeated*. The *chief Captain* finding how implacable and inveterate the Malice of the *Jews* was againſt *Paul*, and how reſtleſs they were in their Deſigns to do him a Miſchief, and how near he now was to become himſelf acceſſory to it as a Miniſter, reſolves to ſend him away with all ſpeed out of their reach. He receiv'd the Intelligence with Horror and Indignation, at the Baſeneſs and Bloody-mindedneſs of theſe *Jews*; and ſeems afraid leſt if he ſhould continue *Paul* in his Caſtle here, under never ſo ſtrong a Guard, they would find ſome Way or other to compaſs their End notwithſtanding, either beat the Guards, or burn the Caſtle; and whatever came of it, he would if poſſible protect *Paul*, becauſe he look'd upon it that he did not deſerve ſuch Treatment. What a melancholy Obſervation is it, That the Jewiſh *chief Prieſts* when they knew of this Aſſaſſination Plot, ſhould countenance it, and aſſiſt in it, while a Roman *chief Captain*, purely from a natural Senſe of Juſtice and Humanity, when he knows it, ſets himſelf to baffle it, and puts himſelf to a deal of Trouble to do it effectually?

1. He orders a conſiderable *Detachment* of the *Roman* Forces, under his Command, to get ready to go to *Cæſarea*, with all Expedition, and to bring *Paul* thither to *Felix* the *Governour*, where he might ſooner expect to have Juſtice done him than by the great *Sanhedrin* at *Jeruſalem*. I ſee not but the chief Captain might without any Unfaithfulneſs to the Duty of his Place have ſet *Paul* at Liberty, and given him Leave to ſhift for his own Safety; for he was never *legally* committed to his Cuſtody, as a Criminal, and he himſelf owns, that nothing was *laid to his Charge worthy of Bonds*, *v.* 29. And he ought to have had the ſame Tenderneſs for his *Liberty* that he had for his *Life*: But he fear'd that would have incens'd the *Jews* too much againſt him. Or perhaps, finding *Paul* to be a very *extraordinary* Man, he was *proud* to have him his *Priſoner*, and under his Protection, and the mighty Parade with which he *ſent him off*, intimates as much: Two *Centurions*, or Captains of Hundreds are employ'd in this Buſineſs, *v.* 23, 24. They muſt *get ready two Hundred Soldiers*, probably thoſe under their own Command, to *go to Cæſarea*. And with theſe *ſeventy Horſe*, and *two hundred Spearmen*, beſide which,

ſome think, were the chief Captain's Guards: Whether they were Horſe or Foot, is not certain, moſt probably Foot, as Pikemen for the Protection of the Horſe. See how juſtly God brought the *Jewiſh Nation* under the *Roman* Yoke, when ſuch a Party of the *Roman* Army was neceſſary to reſtrain them from the moſt execrable Villanies. There needed not *all* this Force, there needed not *any* of it to keep *Paul* from being *reſcu'd* by his *Friends*; ten times this Force would not have kept him from being reſcu'd by an *Angel*, if it had pleas'd God to work his Deliverance that Way, as he had ſometimes done. But (1.) The chief Captain deſign'd hereby to *expoſe* the *Jews*, as a headſtong, tumultuous People, that would not be kept within the Bounds of Duty and Decency by the ordinary Miniſters of Juſtice, but needed to be aw'd by ſuch a Train as this: And hearing how *many* were in the Conſpiracy againſt *Paul*, he thought leſs would not ſerve to defeat their Attempt. (2.) God deſign'd hereby to encourage *Paul*; for being thus attended he was not only *kept ſafe* in the Hands of his Friends, but out of the Hands of his Enemies: Yet *Paul* did not *deſire ſuch a Guard*, no more than *Ezra* did, *Ezra* viii. 22. and for the ſame Reaſon, becauſe he truſted God's All-ſufficiency; but it was owing to the Governour's own Care. But he was alſo *made conſiderable*; thus his *Bonds in Chriſt* were *made manifeſt* all the Country over, *Phil.* i. 13. And ſo great an Honour having been put upon them before by the Prediction of them, 'twas agreeable enough that they ſhould be thus honourably attended, that the *Brethren in the LORD might wax more confident by his Bonds*, when they ſaw him rather *guarded* as the *Patriot* of his Country, than *guarded againſt* as the *Peſt* of his Country, and ſo great a Preacher, made ſo great a Priſoner.

When his Enemies *hate* him, and I doubt his Friends *neglect* him, than doth a *Roman Tribune patronize* him, and carefully provide, (1.) For his Eaſe; Let them *provide Beaſts, that they may ſet* Paul *on*. Had his Jewiſh Perſecutors been to order his Remove by *Habeas Corpus* to *Cæſarea*, they would have made him run on Foot, or dragg'd him thither in a Cart or on a Sledge, or have Hors'd him behind one of the Troopers: But the chief Captain treats him like a Gentleman, tho' he was his Priſoner, and orders him a good Pad to *ride upon*, not at all afraid that he ſhould ride away. Nay, the Order being that they ſhould provide not a *Beaſt*, but *Beaſts* to ſet *Paul* on, we muſt either ſuppoſe that he was allow'd ſo great a piece of State as to have a *led-Horſe*, or more, that if he did not like one he might take another: Or, (as ſome Expoſitors conjecture) that he had Beaſts aſſign'd him for his Friends and Companions, as many as pleas'd to go along with him, or to divert him in his Journey, and to miniſter to him. (2.) For his *Security*; They have a ſtrict Charge given them by their Commander in chief, to *bring him ſafe to* Felix *the Governour*, to whom he is *conſign'd*, and who was Supreme in all *Civil* Affairs among the *Jews*, as this *chief Captain* was in *Military* Affairs. The *Roman* Hiſtorians ſpeaks much of this *Felix*, as a Man of mean Extraction, but that rais'd himſelf by his Shifts, to be Governour of *Judea*, in the Execution of which Office *Tacitus*, Hiſt. v. ſays of him, *per omnem ſævitiam ac libidinem jus regium ſervili ingenio exercuit*; He us'd Royal Power with a ſervile Genius. To the Judgement of ſuch a Man as this is poor *Paul* turn'd over; and yet better ſo, than in the Hands of *Ananias* the High Prieſt. Now a Priſoner thus *upon his Deliverance by Courſe of Law*, ought to be protected as well as a Prince.

The chief Captain orders for the greater Security of *Paul*, that he be taken away *at the third Hour of the Night*; which ſome underſtand of three Hours after *Sun-ſet*, that it being now ſoon after the *Feaſt of Pentecoſt*, that is, in the Midſt of Summer, they might have the Cool of the Night to march in: Others, of three Hours after *Midnight*, in the third Watch, about three in the Morning, that they might have the Day before them, and might get out of *Jeruſalem* before *Paul*'s Enemies were ſtirring, and ſo might prevent any popular Tumult, and leave them to roar when they roſe, like a Lyon diſappointed of his Prey.

2. He writes a Letter to *Felix* the Governour of this Province, by which he diſchargeth himſelf from any further Care about *Paul*, and leaves the whole Matter with *Felix*. This Letter is here inſerted *totidem Verbis*, *v.* 26. 'Tis probable, *Luke* the Hiſtorian had a Copy of it by him, having attended *Paul* in this Remove.

Now in this Epiſtle, we may Obſerve,

1. The Complements he paſſeth upon the Governour, *v.* 26. He is *the moſt excellent Governour*, Felix, this Title being given him of Courſe, *His Excellency*, &c. he ſends him *greeting*, wiſheth him all Health and Poſperity; may he rejoyce, ever rejoyce.

2. The juſt and fair Account which he gives him of *Paul*'s Caſe. (1.) That he was one that the *Jews* had a mighty Pique againſt; They had *taken* him, and would have *kill'd him*, and perhaps *Felix* knew the Temper of the *Jews* ſo well, that he did not think much the worſe of him for that, *v.* 27. (2.) That he had *protected* him, becauſe he was a *Roman*; when they were about to kill him, *I came with an Army*, i. e. a conſiderable Body of Men, and *reſcu'd him*, which Action of a Citizen of *Rome* would recommend him to the *Roman* Governour. (3.) That he could not underſtand the *Merits of his Cauſe*, nor what it was that made him ſo odious to the *Jews*, and obnoxious to their Ill-will. He took the proper Method to know, he *brought him forth into their Council*, *v.* 28. to be examin'd there, hoping that either from their Complaints, or his own Confeſſions, he ſhould learn ſomething of the Ground of all this Clamour, but found that he was *accus'd of Queſtions of their Law*, *v.* 29. about the *Hope of the Reſurrection of the Dead*, *v.* 6. This *chief Captain* was a Man of Senſe and Honour, and had good Principles in him of Juſtice and Humanity, and yet ſee how ſlightly he ſpeaks of *another World*, and the great Things of that World; as if that were a *Queſtion* which is of undoubted Certainty, and which both Sides agreed in, except the *Sadduces*: And as if that were a Queſtion only of *their Law*, which is of the utmoſt Concern to *all Mankind*. Or perhaps, he refers rather to their Queſtion about their Rituals, than about their Doctrinals, and the Quarrel he perceiv'd they had with him, was for leſſening the Credit and Obligation of their *Ceremonial Law*, which he look'd upon as a Thing not worth ſpeaking of. The *Romans* allow'd the Nations they conquer'd the Exerciſe of their own Religion, and never offer'd to impoſe theirs upon them; yet as Conſervators of the publick People, they would not ſuffer them under Colour of their Religion, to abuſe their Neighbours. (4.) That thus far he underſtood, that there was *nothing laid to his Charge*, *worthy of Death or of Bonds*, much leſs prov'd, or made out againſt him. The *Jews* had by their Wickedneſs made themſelves odious to the World, had polluted their own Honour, and prophan'd their own Crown, had brought Diſgrace upon their Church, their Law, and their Holy Place, and then they cry out againſt *Paul*, as having diminiſh'd the Reputation of them; and was this a Crime *worthy of Death or of Bonds*?

3. His referring of *Paul*'s Caſe to *Felix*, *v.* 30. *When it was told me how that the* Jews *laid wait for the Man*, to kill him without any legal Proceſs againſt him, *I ſent ſtraightway to thee*; who art the moſt proper Perſon to hear the Cauſe, and give Judgement upon it; and his Accuſers go after him if they pleaſe, and *ſay before thee what they have againſt him*; for being bred a *Soldier*, I'll never pretend to be a *Judge*. And ſo *Farewel*.

4. *Paul* is accordingly *conducted* to *Cæſarea*: The Soldiers got him ſafe out of *Jeruſalem* by Night, and left the Conſpirators to conſider whether they ſhould *eat and drink* or no, before they had kill'd *Paul*; and if they would not repent of the *Wickedneſs* of their Oath, as it was againſt *Paul*, they were now at Leiſure to repent of the *Raſhneſs* of it as it was againſt *themſelves*: And if any of them did ſtarve themſelves to Death in Conſcience of their Oath, and Vexation at their Diſappointment, they fell *unpity'd*. *Paul* was conducted to *Antipatris*, which was ſeventeen Miles from *Jeruſalem*, and about the Midway to *Cæſarea*, *v.* 31. From thence the two hundred Foot-Soldiers and the two hundred Spear-men return'd back to *Jeruſalem*, to their Quarters in the Caſtle; for having brought *Paul* out of Danger, there needed not ſo ſtrong a Guard, but the *Horſemen* might ſerve to bring him to *Cæſarea*, and would do it with more Expedition. This they did not only to ſave their own Labour, but their Maſter's Charge: And is an Example to Servants, not only to act *obediently* according to their Maſter's Orders, but to act *prudently*, ſo as may be for their Maſter's Intereſt.

4. He was deliver'd into the Hands of *Felix*, as his Priſoner, *v.* 33. The Officers *preſented the Letter*, and *Paul* with it to *Felix*, and ſo diſcharg'd themſelves of their Truſt, *Paul* had never affected Acquaintance or Society with great Men, but with the Diſciples where-ever he came: Yet Providence over-rules his Sufferings ſo as by them to give him an Opportunity of Witneſſing to Chriſt before great Men; and ſo Chriſt had foretold concerning his Diſciples, That they ſhould be *brought before Rulers and Kings for his Sake, for a Teſtimony againſt them*, Mark xiii. 9. The Governour enquir'd *of what Province* of the Empire the Priſoner originally was; and was told, that he was a Native of *Cilicia*, *v.* 34. And (1.) He promiſes him a ſpeedy Tryal, *v.* 35. *I will hear thee when thine Accuſers are come*; and will have an Ear open to both Sides, as becomes a Judge. (2.) He order'd him into Cuſtody, that he ſhould be kept a Priſoner *in* Herod'*s Judgement-Hall*; in ſome Apartment belonging to that Palace, which was denominated from *Herod the Great*, who built it. There he had Opportunity of acquainting himſelf with the great Men that attended the Governour's Court, and no doubt he improv'd what Acquaintance he got there, to the beſt Purpoſes.

CHAP. XXIV.

We left Paul *a Priſoner at* Cæſarea, *in* Herod'*s Judgement-Hall, expecting his Tryal to come on quickly; for in the Beginning of his Impriſonment his Affairs mov'd very* quick, *but afterwards, very* ſlow. *In this Chapter we have his Arraignment and Tryal before* Felix *the Governour, at* Cæſarea. *Here's* (1.) *The Appearing of the Proſecutors againſt him, and the Setting the Priſoner to the Bar, v.* 1, 2. (2.) *The Opening the Indictment againſt him by* Tertullus, *who was of Counſel for the Proſecutors, and the Aggravating of the Charge with Abundance of Complements to the Judge, and Malice to the Priſoner, v.* 2.—8. (3.) *The Corroborating of the Charge by the Teſtimony of the Witneſſes, or rather, the Proſecutors themſelves, v.* 9. (4.) *The Priſoner's Defence, in which, with all due Deference to the Governour, v.* 10. *He denies the Charge, and challengeth them to prove it, v.* 11—13. *Owns the Truth, and makes an unexceptionable Profeſſion of his Faith, which he declares was it that they hated him for, v.* 14.—16. *And gives a more particular Account of what had paſs'd* *from the firſt ſeizing of him, challenging them to inſtance in any ill that they had found him in, v. 17——21. (5.) The Adjourning of the Cauſe, and the Continuing of the Priſoner in Cuſtody, v. 22, 23. (6.) The private Converſation that was between the Priſoner and the Judge, by which the Priſoner hoped to do Good to the Judge, and the Judge to get Money by the Priſoner, but both in vain, v. 24---26. (7.) The lengthning out of* Paul's *Impriſonment for Two Years, till another Governour came, v. 27. where he ſeems as much neglected, as there had been ado about him.*

AND after five days, Ananias the high prieſt deſcended with the elders, and *with* a certain Orator *named* Tertullus, who informed the governour againſt Paul. 2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuſe *him*, ſaying; Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietneſs, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence, 3. We accept *it* always, and in all places, moſt noble Felix, with all thankfulneſs. 4 Notwithſtanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee, that thou wouldſt here us of thy clemency a few words. 5 For we have found this man a peſtilent fellow, and a mover of ſedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring-leader of the ſect of the Nazarenes: 6 Who alſo hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law: 7 But the chief captain Lyſias came upon us, and with great violence took *him* away out of our hands, 8 Commanding his accuſers to come unto thee: by examining of whom, thy ſelf mayeſt take knowledge of all theſe things, whereof we accuſe him. 9 And the Jews alſo aſſented, ſaying, that theſe things were ſo.

We muſt ſuppoſe that *Lyſias* the Chief Captain, when he had ſent away *Paul* to *Cæſarea*, gave Notice to the Chief Prieſts, and others that appear'd againſt *Paul*, that if they had any Thing to accuſe him of, they muſt follow him to *Cæſarea*, and there they would find him, and a Judge ready to hear them; thinking, perhaps, they would not have given themſelves ſo much Trouble: But what will not Malice do?

Firſt, We have here the *Cauſe follow'd* againſt *Paul*, and it is vigorouſly carry'd on.

1. Here's *no Time loſt*; for they are ready for a Hearing *after five Days*. All other Buſineſs is laid aſide immediately to proſecute *Paul*; ſo intent are evil Men to do Evil. Some reckon theſe five Days from *Paul*'s being firſt ſeiz'd, and with moſt probability, for he ſaith here, *v.* 11. that it was but twelve Days ſince he came up to *Jeruſalem*, and he had ſpent ſeven in his purifying in the Temple; ſo that theſe five muſt be reckon'd from the laſt of thoſe.

2. Thoſe that had been *his Judges*, do themſelves here appear as *his Proſecutors*. *Ananias* himſelf the *High Prieſt*, who had *ſitten to judge him*, now ſtands to inform againſt him. One would wonder (1.) That he ſhould thus *diſparage himſelf*, and forget the Dignity of his Place. Shall the High Prieſt turn Informer and leave all his Buſineſs in the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, to go to be call'd as a Proſecutor in *Herod*'s Judgement Hall. Juſtly did God make the Prieſts *contemptible*, and *baſe*, when they made themſelves ſo, *Mal.* ii. 9. (2.) That he ſhould thus *diſcover* himſelf, and his Enmity againſt *Paul*; if Men of the firſt Rank have a Malice againſt any, they think it Policy to employ *others* againſt them, and to *play leaſt in Sight* themſelves, becauſe of the Odium that commonly attends it; but *Ananias* is not aſham'd to own himſelf a ſworn Enemy to *Paul*. The *Elders* attended him, to ſignify their Concurrence with him, and to *invigorate* the Proſecution; for they could not find any Attorneys or Sollicitors that would follow it with ſo much Violence as they would have it. The Pains that evil Men take in an evil Matter, their Contrivances, their Condeſcentions, and their unweari'd Induſtry, ſhould ſhame us out of our Coldneſs, and Backwardneſs, and Indifferency in that which is Good.

Secondly, We have here the *Cauſe pleaded* againſt *Paul*: The Proſecutors brought with them a *certain Orator* nam'd *Tertullus*, a *Roman*, skill'd in the *Roman* Law and Language, and therefore fitteſt to be employ'd in a Cauſe before the *Roman Governour*, and moſt likely to gain Favour: The High Prieſt and Elders, tho' they had their own Hearts *ſpiteful enough*, did not think their own Tongues *ſharp enough*; and therefore retain'd *Tertullus*, who probably was noted for a Satyrical Wit, to be of Counſel for them: and no doubt they gave him a good Fee, probably out of the Treaſury of the Temple, which they had the Command of; it being a *Cauſe* wherein the Church was concern'd, and therefore muſt not be *ſtarv'd*.

Paul is ſet to the Bar before *Felix* the Governour; he was *called forth*, *v.* 2. And *Tertullus*'s Buſineſs is on the Behalf of the Proſecutors to open the Information againſt him, and he is a Man that will ſay any Thing for his Fee. Mercenary Tongues will do ſo. No Cauſe ſo unjuſt, but can find Advocates to plead it; and yet we hope many Advocates ſo juſt, as not knowingly to patronize an unrighteous Cauſe; but *Tertullus* was none of thoſe; his *Speech* (or at leaſt an *Abſtract* of it, for it appears by *Tully*'s Orations, that the *Roman* Lawyers on ſuch Occaſions, us'd to make long Harangues) is here *reported*; and it is made up of *Flattery* and *Falſehood*; it calls Evil Good, and Good Evil.

1. One of the *worſt of Men* is here *applauded* as one of the *beſt of Benefactors*, only becauſe he was the *Judge*. *Felix* is repreſented by the Hiſtorians of his own Nation, as well as by *Joſephus* the *Jew*, as a very ill Man, that depending upon the Intereſt of the Court, allow'd himſelf in all manner of Wickedneſs, was a great Oppreſſor, very cruel and very covetous, patronizing and protecting Aſſaſſines, *Joſeph. Antiq. l.* 20. *c.* 6. And yet *Tertullus* here in the Name of the High Prieſt and Elders, and probably by particular Directions from them, and according to the Inſtructions of his Breviate, complements him, and extols him to the Sky, as if he were ſo good a Magiſtrate as never was the like. And this comes the worſe from the *High Prieſt* and the *Elders*, becauſe he had given a late Inſtance of his Enmity to *their* Order; for *Jonathan* the High Prieſt, or one of the *Chief Prieſts*, having offended him by too free an Invective againſt the Tyranny of his Government, he got him *murther'd* by ſome Villains, whom he hired for that Purpoſe; and who afterwards did the like for others, as they were hir'd. *Cujus facinoris quia nemo ultor extitit, invitati hac licentia ſicarii multos confodiebant, alios propter privatas inimicitias, alios conducti pecunia——Etiam in ipſo Templo.* And yet to *engage* him to gratify their Malice againſt *Paul*, and to return them *that* Kindneſs for their Kindneſs in overlooking all this, they magnify him as the greateſt Bleſſing to their *Church* and *Nation* that ever came among them.

(1.) They are very *ready to own it*, *v.* 2. *By thee we*, of the Church, *enjoy great Quietneſs*, and we look upon thee as our Patron and Protector; and *very worthy Deeds are done* from Time to Time, to the whole *Nation* of the *Jews*, *by thy Providence*, thy Wiſdom, and Care, and Vigilance. To give him his due, he had been inſtrumental to ſuppreſs the Inſurrection of that *Egyptian* whom the Chief Captain ſpoke of, *Chap.* xxi. 38. But will the Praiſe of that ſcreen him from the juſt Reproach of his Tyranny and Oppreſſion afterwards? See here (1.) The Unhappineſs of *great Men*, and a great Unhappineſs it is, to have their Services *magnify'd* beyond Meaſure, and never to be *faithfully* told of their Faults; and hereby they are harden'd and encouraged in Evil. (2.) The Poſſicy of *ill Men*, by flattering Princes in what they *do amiſs*, to draw them in to *do worſe*. The Biſhops of *Rome* got to be confirm'd in their exorbitant Church Power, and have been aſſiſted in perſecuting the Servants of Chriſt, by flattering and careſſing Uſurpers and Tyrants, and ſo making them the Tools of their Malice, as the High Prieſt by his Compliments deſign'd to make *Felix* here.

(2.) They promiſe to *retain a grateful Senſe of it*, *v.* 3. We *accept it always, and in all Places*, every where, and at all Times, we embrace it, we admire it, *moſt Noble Felix, with all Thankfulneſs*. We will be ready upon any Occaſion to witneſs for thee, that thou art a wiſe and good Governour, and very ſerviceable to the Country. And if it had been *true* that he was ſuch a Governour, it had been *juſt* that they ſhould thus accept his good Offices *with all Thankfulneſs*. The Benefits which we enjoy by Governours, is what we ought to be thankful for both to God and Man. This is Part of the *Honour* due to *Magiſtrates*, to acknowledge the Quietneſs we enjoy under the Protection, and the *worthy Deeds* done by their *Prudence*.

(3.) They therefore expect his Favour in this Cauſe, *v.* 4. They pretend a great Care not to intrench upon his Time, we *will not be further tedious to thee*, and yet to be very confident of his Patience, *I pray thee, that thou wouldeſt hear us of thy Clemency a few Words*. All this Addreſs is only *ad captandam Benevolentiam*, to induce him to give Countenance to their Cauſe, and they were ſo conſcious to themſelves, that it would ſoon appear to have more Malice than Matter in it, that they found it neceſſary thus to inſinuate themſelves into his Favour. Every Body knew that the *High Prieſt* and the *Elders* were Enemies to the *Roman* Government, and were uneaſy under all the Marks of that Yoke, and therefore in their Hearts hated *Felix*. and yet to gain their Ends againſt *Paul*, they by their Council ſhew him all this Reſpect; as they did to *Pilate* and *Cæſar* when they were perſecuting our Saviour. Princes cannot always judge of the Affection of their People by their Applauſes. Flattery is one Thing, and true Loyalty is another.

2. One of the *beſt of Men* is here *accus'd*, as one of the *worſt of Malefactors*, only becauſe he was *the Priſoner*. After a flouriſh of Flattery, in which you cannot ſee Matter for Words, he comes to Buſineſs; and it is to inform his Excellency concerning the Priſoner at the Bar; and this Part of his Diſcourſe is as *nauſeous* for its *Raillery*, as the former Part is for its *Flattery*. I pity the Man, and believe he has no Malice againſt

Paul, nor doth he think as he ſpeaks in *Calumniating* him, any more than he did in *courting Felix*; but as I cannot but be ſorry that a Man of Wit and Senſe ſhould have ſuch a *ſaleable* Tongue (as one calls it) ſo I cannot but be *angry* at thoſe *dignify'd* Men that had ſuch *malicious* Hearts as to put *ſuch Words* into his Mouth.

Two Things *Tertullus* here complains of to *Felix*, in the Name of the High Prieſt and Elders.

1. That the *Peace* of the Nation was *diſturb'd* by *Paul*; They could not have *baited* Chriſt's Diſciples if they had not firſt *dreſs'd them up* in the Skins of Wild Beaſts, nor have given them as they did the *vileſt of Treatment*, if they had not firſt repreſented them as the *vileſt of Men*; tho' the Characters they gave of them were abſolutely falſe, and there was not the leaſt Colour or Foundation for them. Innocency, nay, Excellency and Uſefulneſs are no Fence againſt Calumny, no, nor againſt the Impreſſions of Calumny upon the Minds both of *Magiſtrates* and *Multitudes* to excite their Fury and Jelouſy; for, be the Repreſentation never ſo unjuſt, when it is enforc'd, as here it was, with *Gravity* and pretence of *Sanctity*, and with *Aſſurance*, and *Noiſe*, ſomething *will ſtick*. The Old Charge againſt God's Prophets was, That they were the *Troublers of the Land*, and againſt God's *Jeruſalem*, that it was a *Rebellious City, hurtful to Kings and Princes*, Ezr. iv. 15, 19. and againſt our Lord Jeſus, That he *perverted the Nation*, and *forbad to give Tribute to* Cæſar; and it is the very ſame againſt *Paul* here: And tho' utterly falſe, is averr'd with all the Confidence imaginable. They do not ſay, we ſuſpect him to be a dangerous Man, and have taken him up upon that Suſpicion, but, as if the Thing were paſt Diſpute, *We have found* him to be ſo; we have often and long found him ſo; as if he were a Traytor and Rebel already *Convict*. And yet after all there's not a Word of Truth in this Repreſentation, but if *Paul*'s juſt Character be enquir'd into, 'twill be found directly the Reverſe of this here.

1. *Paul* was an uſeful Man, and a great *Bleſſing* to his Country, a Man of Exemplary Candour and Goodneſs, obliging to all, and provoking to none, and yet he is here call'd a *peſtilent Fellow*, *v.* 5. we have found him, λοιμόν, *Peſtem*, The *Plague* of the Nation, a walking Peſtilence, which ſuppoſeth him to be a Man of a turbulent Spirit, malicious and ill-natur'd, and one that threw all Things into Diſorder where-ever he came. They would have it thought that he had done more Miſchief in his Time than a *Plague could do*. That the Miſchief he did was *ſpreading* and *infectious*, and that he made others as miſchievous as himſelf; That it was of as fatal Conſequence as the *Plague* is, killing and deſtroying, and laying all waſte; That it was as much to be dreaded and guarded againſt as a Plague is. Many a good Sermon he had preach'd, and many a good Work he had done, and for thoſe he is called a *Peſtilent Fellow*.

2. *Paul* was a *Peace-maker*, was a Preacher of that Goſpel which has a direct Tendency to *ſlay all Enmities*, and to eſtabliſh true and laſting Peace; he liv'd *peaceably* and *quietly* himſelf, and taught others to do ſo too, and yet is here repreſented as *a Mover of Sedition among all the* Jews *throughout the World*. The *Jews* were *diſaffected* to the *Roman* Government; thoſe of them that were moſt *bigotted* were ſo. This *Felix* knew, and had therefore a watchful Eye upon them, and they would fain make him believe that this *Paul* was the Man that made them ſo, whereas they themſelves were the Men that *ſow'd* the Seeds of *Faction* and *Sedition* among them, and they knew it; and the Reaſon why they hated Chriſt and Religion, was, becauſe he did not go about to head them in an Oppoſition to the *Romans*. The *Jews* were every where much ſet againſt *Paul*, and ſtir'd up the People to clamour againſt him; they *mov'd Sedition* in all Places where he came, and then caſt the Blame unjuſtly upon him, as if he had been the *Mover* of the *Sedition*; as *Nero* not long after ſet *Rome* on Fire, and then ſaid they were the Chriſtians that did it.

3. *Paul* was a Man of *catholick Charity*, that did not affect to be *ſingular*, but made himſelf the Servant of all for their Good, and yet he is here charg'd to be *a Ring-leader of the Sect of the Nazarenes: A Standard-bearer* of that Sect; ſo the Word ſignifies. when *Cyprian* was condemn'd to die for being a Chriſtian, this was inſerted in his Sentence, that he was *auctor iniqui nominis & ſignifer*. Now it was true that *Paul* was an active leading Man in propagating Chriſtianity. But (1.) It was utterly falſe that that was a *Sect*; He did not draw People to a *Party*, or private Opinion, nor did he make his own Opinions their Rule. True Chriſtianity eſtabliſhes that which is of common Concern to all Mankind, publiſheth good Will to Men, and ſhews us God in Chriſt reconciling the World to himſelf, and therefore cannot be thought to take its Riſe from ſuch narrow Opinions, and private Intereſts as Sects owe their Original to. True Chriſtianity has a direct Tendency to the Uniting of the Children of Men, and the gathering of 'em together in One; and as far as it obtains its juſt Power and Influence upon the Minds of Men, will make them *meek* and *quiet*, and peaceable and loving, and every Way eaſy and acceptable, and profitable one to another, and therefore is far from being a *Sect*, which is ſuppos'd to lead to Diviſion, and to ſow Diſcord. True Chriſtianity aims at no wotldly Benefit or Advantage, and therefore muſt by no means be call'd a *Sect*. Thoſe that eſpouſe a Sect, are govern'd in it by their Secular Intereſt, they aim at Wealth and Honour; but the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity are ſo far from this, that they expoſe themſelves thereby to the Loſs and Ruin of all that is dear to them in this World. (2.) It is invidiouſly call'd the Sect of the *Nazarenes*, by which Chriſt was repreſented as of *Nazareth*, whence no good Thing was expected to ariſe; whereas, he was of *Bethlehem*, where the *Meſſiah* was to be born. Yet he was pleas'd to call himſelf *Jeſus of Nazareth*, Acts xxii. 8. And the Scripture has put an Honour on the Name, *Matth.* ii. 23. And therefore tho' intended for a Reproach, the Chriſtians had no Reaſon to be aſham'd of ſharing with their Maſter in it. (3.) It was falſe that *Paul* was the *Author* or *Standard-bearer* of this *Sect*; for he did not draw People to himſelf, but to Chriſt; did not preach himſelf but Chriſt Jeſus.

4. *Paul* had a Veneration for the Temple, as it had been the Place God choſe to put his Name there, and had lately himſelf with Reverence attended the *Temple-ſervice*, and yet 'tis here charged upon him, That he went about to *profane the Temple*, and that he deſignedly put Contempt upon it, and violated the Laws of it, *v.* 6. Their Proof of this fail'd, for the Matter of Fact they alledg'd was utterly falſe, and they knew it, *Chap.* xxi. 9.

2. That the *Courſe of Juſtice* againſt *Paul*, was obſtructed by the Chief Captain.

1. They pleaded, that they *took him, and would have judg'd him according to their Law*. This was falſe, they did not go about to judge him according to their Law, but contrary to all Law and Equity, went about to *beat him to Death, or to pull him to pieces*, without hearing what he had to ſay for himſelf; went about under Pretence of having him into their Court, to throw him into the Hands of Ruffians, that lay in wait to deſtroy him. Was this *judging him according to their Law*? 'Tis eaſy for Men when they know what they *ſhould have done*, to ſay, that they *would have done ſo*, when they meant nothing leſs.

2. They reflected upon the *Chief Captain* as having done them an Injury in reſcuing *Paul* out of their Hands; whereas, he therein not only did him Juſtice, but them the greateſt Kindneſs that could be, in preventing the Guilt they were bringing upon themſelves. *The Captain* Lyſias *came upon us, and with great Violence* (but really no more than was neceſſary) *took him out of our Hands*, *v.* 7. See how Perſecutors are enrag'd at their Diſapointments, which they ought to be thankful for. When *David* in a Heat of Paſſion was going upon a bloody Enterprize, he thank'd *Abigail* for ſtoping him, and God for ſending her to do it, ſo ſoon did he correct and recover himſelf: But thoſe cruel Men juſtify themſelves, and reckon him their Enemy who *kept 'em* (as *David* here ſpeaks) *from ſhedding Blood with their own Hands*.

3. They referred themſelves to *Felix* and his Judgement, yet ſeeming uneaſy that they were under a Neceſſity of doing ſo, the *Chief Captain* obliged them to it, *v.* 8. 'Twas he that forc'd us to give your Excellency this Trouble, and our ſelves too; for (1.) He *commanded his Accuſers to come to thee*, that thou mighteſt hear the Charge, when it might as well have been ended in the inferiour Court. (2.) He has left it to thee to *examine* him, and try what thou canſt get out of him, and whether thou canſt by his Confeſſion come to the Knowledge of *thoſe Things* which we lay to his Charge.

Thirdly, The *Aſſent* of the *Jews* to this Charge which *Tertullus* exhibited, *v.* 9. *They confirm'd it ſaying, That thoſe Things were ſo.*

1. Some think this ſpeaks the *Proofs* of the *Charge* by *Witneſſes* upon *Oath*, that were examin'd as to the Particulars of it, and atteſted them. And no wonder, if when they had found an Orator that would *ſay it*, they found Witneſſes that would *ſwear it*, for Money.

2. It rather ſeems to intimate the Approbation which the High Prieſt and the Elders gave to what *Tertullus* ſaith: *Felix* ask'd them, Is this your Senſe, and is it all that you have to ſay? And they anſwered, Yes, it was; and ſo they made themſelves guilty of all the Falſehood that was in his Speech. Thoſe that have not the Wit and Parts to do Miſchief with; that ſome others have, that cannot make Speeches, and hold Diſputes againſt Religion; yet make themſelves guilty of the Miſchiefs that others do, by *aſſenting* to that which others do, and ſaying, *thoſe Things are ſo*, repeating, and ſtanding by what is ſaid, to *pervert the right Ways of the LORD*. Many that have not Learning enough to plead for *Baal*, yet have Wickedneſs enough to *vote* for *Baal*.

10 Then Paul, after that the governour had beckoned unto him to ſpeak, anſwered, Foraſmuch as I know thou haſt been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more chearfully anſwer for my ſelf: 11 Becauſe thou mayeſt underſtand, that there are yet but twelve days ſince I went up to Jeruſalem for to worſhip. 12 And they neither found me in the temple diſputing with any man, neither raiſing up the people, neither in their ſynagogues nor in the city: 13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuſe me.

14 But this I confeſs unto thee, that after the way which they call hereſie, ſo worſhip I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the Prophets. 15 And have hope towards God, which they themſelves alſo allow, that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and unjuſt. 16 And herein do I exerciſe my ſelf to have always a conſcience void of offence toward God and toward men. 17 Now after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings. 18 Whereupon certain Jews from Aſia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude nor with tumult. 19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought againſt me. 20 Or elſe let theſe ſame *here* ſay, if they have found any evil-doing in me. while I ſtood before the council. 21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried ſtanding among them, Touching the reſurrection of the dead, I am called in queſtion by you this day.

We have here *Paul*'s Defence of himſelf in Anſwer to *Tertullus*'s Charge, and there appears in it a great deal of the Spirit of Wiſdom and Holineſs, and an Accompliſhment of Chriſt's Promiſe to his Followers, That when they were brought before Governors and Kings for his Sake, it ſhould be *given them in that ſame Hour what they ſhould ſpeak*. Tho' *Tertullus* had ſaid a great many *provoking* Things, yet *Paul* did not interrupt him, but let him go on to the End of his Speech, according to the Rules of Decency, and the Method in Courts of Juſtice, that the Plaintiff be allow'd to finiſh his Evidence before the Defendant begins his Plea. And when he had done, he did not preſently fly out into paſſionate Exclamations againſt the Iniquity of the Times and the Men, *O tempora, O mores*! but he waited for a Permiſſion from the Judge to ſpeak in his Turn, and had it. The *Governor beckon'd to him to ſpeak*, *v.* 10. And now he alſo may have Leave to *ſpeak out*, under the Protection of the Governor, which was more than he could obtain yet. And when he did ſpeak, he made no Reflections at all upon *Tertullus*; he knew he ſpoke for his Fee, and therefore deſpis'd what he ſaid, and level'd his Defence againſt thoſe that employ'd him. And here,

Firſt, He addreſſeth himſelf very reſpectfully to the Governor, and with a Confidence that he would do him Juſtice. Here are no ſuch flattering Complements as *Tertullus* ſooth'd him up with, but, which was more truly reſpectful, a Profeſſion that he *Anſwer'd for himſelf chearfully*, and with good Aſſurance *before him*, looking upon him, tho' not as One that was his *Friend*, yet as One that would be *fair* and *impartial*. He thus expreſſeth his Expectation that he *would be ſo*, to engage him *to be ſo*. It was likewiſe the Language of One that was *conſcious* to himſelf of his own Integrity, and whoſe Heart did not reproach him, whoever did: He did not ſtand *trembling* at the Bar, but very *chearful* when he had One to be his *Judge* that was not a Party, but an *indifferent* Perſon. Nay, when he conſiders who his Judge is, he *Anſwers the more chearfully*, And why ſo? He doth not ſay, Becauſe I know thee to be a Judge of inflexible Juſtice and Integrity, that hateſt Bribes, and in giving Judgment *feareſt GOD*, and *regardeſt not Man*; for he could not juſtly ſay this of him, and therefore would not ſay it, tho' it were to gain his Favour never ſo much; but, *I the more chearfully Anſwer for my ſelf*, becauſe *I know thou haſt been many Years a Judge, to this Nation*; And that was very true. And being ſo,

1. He could ſay of his own Knowledge, that there had not *formerly* been any Complaints againſt *Paul*; ſuch Clamours as they rais'd, are generally againſt *old* Offenders; but tho' he had long ſitten Judge there, he never had *Paul* brought before him yet, till now, and therefore he was not ſo dangerous a Criminal as he was repreſented to be.

2. He was well acquainted with the *Jewiſh Nation*, and with their *Temper* and *Spirit*, he knew how they were *bigotted* to their own Way, what furious Zealots they were againſt all that did not comply with them, how *peeviſh* and *perverſe* they generally were, and therefore would make Allowances for that in their Accuſation of him, and not regard that which he had reaſon to think came ſo much from *Party Malice*. Tho' he did not know *him*, he knew his *Perſecutors*, and by that might gueſs what manner of Man he was.

Secondly, He denies the Facts that he was charg'd with, upon which their Character of him was grounded. *Moving Sedition* and *profaning the Temple*, were the Crimes for which he ſtood Indicted, Crimes which they knew the *Roman* Governors did not uſe to enquire into, and therefore hop'd that the Governor would return him back to them to be judg'd by their Law, and that was all they *wiſhed for*: But *Paul* deſires, that tho' he would not enquire into the Crimes, he would protect One that was unjuſtly charg'd with them, from thoſe whom he knew to be *ſpiteful* and *ill natur'd* enough. Now he would have him to *underſtand*, and what he ſaid, he was ready if requir'd to make out by Witneſſes.

1. That he came up to *Jeruſalem* on Purpoſe to *worſhip* GOD in Peace and Holineſs, ſo far was he from any Deſign to *move Sedition, among the People*, or to *profane the Temple*. He came to keep up his Communion with the *Jews*, not to put any Affront upon them.

2. That it was but *twelve Days* ſince he came up to *Jeruſalem*, and he had been ſix Days a Priſoner; He was *alone*, and it could not be ſuppos'd that in ſo ſhort a Time, he could do the Miſchief they charg'd upon him. And as for what he had done in other Countries, they know nothing of it, but by uncertain Report, by which the Matter was very unfairly repreſented.

3. That he had demean'd himſelf at *Jeruſalem* very *quietly* and *peaceably*, and had made no manner of Stir. If it had been true what they alledg'd, That he was a *mover of Sedition among all the Jews*; ſure he would have been induſtrious to make a Party at *Jeruſalem*, but he did not do ſo. He was in the *Temple*, attending the publick Service there; he was in the *Synagogues* where the Law was read and open'd; he went about in the City among his Relations and Friends, and convers'd freely in their Places of Concourſe, and he was a Man of a great Genius, and an active Spirit; and yet they could not charge him with offering any Thing either againſt the *Faith* or againſt the *Peace* of the Jewiſh Church. (1.) He had nothing in him of a *contradicting* Spirit, as the Movers of Sedition have; he had no diſpoſition to quarrel or oppoſe, they never found him *diſputing with any Man*, either affronting the Learned with captious Cavils, or perplexing the Weak and Simple with curious Subtilties; he was ready if ask'd, to *give a Reaſon* of his own Hope, and to *give Inſtruction* to others, but he never pick'd a Quarrel with any Man about his Religion, nor made that the Subject of Debate and Controverſy, and perverſe Diſpute, which ought always to be treated of with Humility and Reverence, with Meekneſs and Love. (2) He had nothing in himſelf of a *turbulent* Spirit; They never found me *raiſing up the People*, by incenſing them againſt their Governors in Church and State, or ſuggeſting to them Fears and Jealouſies concerning publick Affairs; or by ſetting them at Variance one with another, or ſowing Diſcord among them. He carry'd it as became a Chriſtian and a Miniſter, with Love and Quietneſs, and due Subjection to lawful Authority. The Weapons of his Warfare were not *carnal*, nor did he ever mention or think of ſuch a Thing as taking up Arms for the Propagating of the Goſpel, or the Defence of the Preachers of it; tho' he could have made perhaps as ſtrong a Party among the common People as his Adverſaries, yet he never attempted it.

4. That as to what they had charg'd him with of *moving Sedition* in other Countries he was wholly innocent, and they could not make good the Charge, *v.* 13. *Neither can they prove the Things whereof they now accuſe me.* Hereby (1.) He *maintains* his own *Innocency*; for when he ſaith, they *cannot prove* it, he means *the Matter is not ſo*. He was no Enemy to the Publick Peace, he had done no real Prejudice, but a great deal of real Service, and would gladly have done more to the Nation of the *Jews*: And was ſo far from having any Antipathy to them, that he had the ſtrongeſt Affection imaginable for them, and a moſt paſſionate Deſire of their Welfare, *Rom.* ix. 1, 2. (2.) He *bemoans* his own *Calamity*, that he was *accus'd* of thoſe Things which could not be *prov'd* againſt him. And it has often been the Lot of very worthy good Men to be thus injur'd, to have Things laid to their Charge which they are at the greateſt Diſtance from, and abhor the Thought of. But while they are lamenting this Calamity, this may be their *Rejoycing*, even the *Teſtimony of their Conſciences* concerning their Integrity. (3.) He *ſhews* the *Iniquity* of his *Proſecutors*, who ſaid that which they knew they could not prove, and thereby did him wrong in his Name, Liberty, and Life, and did *the Judge* wrong too in impoſing upon him, and doing what in them lay to pervert his Judgment. (4.) He *appeals* to the *Equity* of his *Judge*, and awakens him to look about him that he might not be drawn into a Snare by the Violence of the Proſecution. The Judge muſt give Sentence *ſecundum allegata & propata*, according to that which is not only alledg'd, but prov'd, and therefore muſt *enquire* and *make ſearch*, and *ask diligently*, *Whether the Thing be true and certain*, Deut. xiii. 14. he cannot otherwiſe give a right Judgment.

Thirdly, He gives a fair and juſt Account of himſelf, which doth at once both clear him from Crime, and likewiſe intimate what was the true Reaſon of their Violence in Perſecuting him.

1. He acknowledges himſelf to be One whom they look'd upon as an *Heretick*, and that was the reaſon of their Spleen againſt him. The *chief Captain* had obſerv'd, and the Governor now cannot but obſerve an uncommon Violence and Fury in his Perſecutors, which they know not what to make of, but gueſſing at the *Crime* by the *Cry*, conclude he muſt needs have been a very ill Man, only for that Reaſon; now *Paul* here unriddles the Matter, I confeſs, that *in the way which they call Hereſy*, or a *Sect*, *ſo worſhip I the God of my Fathers*. The Controverſy is in a Matter of Religion, and ſuch Controverſies are commonly manag'd with moſt Fury and Violence. *Note*, It is no new Thing for the right Way of Worſhipping GOD, to be call'd *Hereſy*; and for the beſt of GOD's Servants to be ſtigmatiz'd and run down as *Sectaries*. The Reformed Churches are call'd *Heretical* Ones by thoſe who themſelves *hate to be Re-*

form'd, and are themſelves *Hereticks*. Let us therefore never be driven off from any *good Way*, by its being put into an *ill Name*; for true and pure Chriſtianity is never the worſe, nor to be the worſe thought of for its being call'd *Hereſy*; no, not tho' it be call'd ſo by the *High Prieſt and the Elders*.

2. He vindicates himſelf from this Imputation; They call *Paul* a Heretick, but he is not ſo; For,

1. He *worſhips the God of his Fathers*, and therefore is right in the Object of his Worſhip; He doth not ſay, *Let us go after other Gods, which we have not known, and let us ſerve them*, as the falſe Prophet is ſuppoſed to do, *Deut.* xiii. 2. If ſo they might juſtly call his Way *Hereſy*, a *drawing of them aſide* into a By-path, and a dangerous one; but he worſhips the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, not only the GOD whom they worſhipp'd, but the GOD that took them into Covenant with himſelf, and was and would be call'd *their GOD*. *Paul* adheres to *that Covenant*, and ſets up no other in oppoſition to it. The *Promiſe made unto the Fathers*, *Paul* preach'd as *fulfill'd to the Children*, Acts xiii. 32, 33. and ſo directed both his own and others Devotions to GOD, as the *God of their Fathers*. He alſo refers to the Practice of all his pious Anceſtors; *I worſhip* the ſame GOD that all *my Fathers worſhip'd*; His Religion was ſo far from being chargeable with Novelty, that it glory'd in its Antiquity: and in an uninterrupted Succeſſion of its Profeſſors. *Note*, It is very comfortable in our worſhipping God, to have an Eye to Him as the *God of our Fathers*. Our Fathers truſted in him, and were own'd by him, and he engag'd to be *their God*, and the *God of their Seed*. He approv'd himſelf *theirs*, and therefore if we ſerve Him, as they did, He will be ours; what an Emphaſis is laid upon that, *He is my Father's GOD, and I will exalt him*, Exod. xv. 2.

2. He *believes all Things which are written in the Law and the Prophets*, and therefore is right in the Rule of his Worſhip; His Religion is grounded upon, and govern'd by the Holy Scriptures; they are his Oracle, and Touch-ſtone, and he ſpeaks and acts according to them. He receives the Scriptures *entire*, and believes *all Things* that are there written; and he receives them *pure*, for he *ſaith no other Things* but what are *contain'd* in them; as he explains himſelf, *chap.* xxvi. 22. He ſets not up any other Rule of Faith or Practice but the Scriptures, not Tradition, nor the Authority of the Church, or the Infallibility of any Man or Company of Men on Earth, not the Light within, or Human Reaſon, but *Divine Revelation* as it is in the Scripture, is that which he reſolves to live and dye by, and therefore he is not a *Heretick*.

3. He has his Eye upon a *future State*, and is a believing Expectant of that, and therefore is right in the *End of his* Worſhip. They that turn aſide to *Hereſy*, have a regard to *this World*, and ſome Secular Intereſts, but *Paul* aims to make *Heaven* of his Religion, and neither *more* or *leſs*, v. 15. *I have hope towards GOD*, all my Expectation is from Him, and therefore all my *Deſire* is towards Him, and all my *Dependance* upon Him; my Hope is towards GOD, and not towards the World; towards *another* World, and not towards this, I depend upon GOD and upon his Power, that *there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Dead*, at the End of Time, of all, both *the Juſt and Unjuſt*; and the great Thing I *aim at* in my Religion is to obtain a joyful and happy Reſurrection, a ſhare in the *Reſurrection of the Juſt*. Obſerve here,

(1.) That there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Dead, the dead Bodies of Men, of all Men from the Beginning to the End of Time; It is certain, not only that the Soul doth not die with the Body, but that the Body itſelf ſhall live again; we have not only *another Life* to live when our preſent Life is at an End; but there is to be *another World*, which ſhall commence when this World is at an End, into which all the Children of Men muſt enter at once by a Reſurrection from the Dead, as they enter'd into this one after another by their Birth.

(2.) It ſhall be a Reſurrection *both of the Juſt and of the Unjuſt*; the ſanctify'd and the unſanctify'd; of thoſe that *did well*, and to them our Saviour has told us, that it will be a *Reſurrection of Life*; and of thoſe that *did evil*, and to them it will be a *Reſurrection of Condemnation*, Joh. v. 29. See *Dan* xii. 2. This implies that it will be a Reſurrection to a final Judgment, by which all the Children of Men will be determin'd to everlaſting Happineſs or Miſery in a World of Retribution, according to what they *were*, and what they did, in this State of Probation and Preparation. The *Juſt* ſhall riſe by Virtue of their *Union* with Chriſt as their *Head*; the *Unjuſt* ſhall riſe by Virtue of Chriſt's *Dominion* over them as their *Judge*.

(3.) GOD is to be depended upon for the Reſurrection of the Dead; I have *Hope towards GOD*, and in *GOD* that there ſhall be a Reſurrection; It ſhall be effected by the Almighty *Power of GOD*, in performance of the *Word* which *GOD* hath ſpoken; ſo that they who doubt of it, betray their Ignorance both of the *Scriptures*, and of the *Power of GOD*, Matth. xxii. 29.

(4.) The Reſurrection of the Dead, is a *Fundamental Article* of our Creed, as it was alſo of that of the Jewiſh Church; 'Tis what *they themſelves alſo allow*; nay, It was the expectation of the Ancient Patriarchs, witneſs *Job*'s Confeſſion of his Faith; but it is more chearfully reveal'd, and more fully confirm'd by the Goſpel, and therefore they who *believ'd it*, ſhould have been thankful to the Preachers of the Goſpel for their Explications and Proofs of it, inſtead of oppoſing them.

(5.) In all our Religion we ought to have an Eye to the other World, and to ſerve GOD in all Inſtances with a Confidence in Him, *that there will be a Reſurrection of the Dead*, doing all in Preparation for that, and expecting our Recompence in That.

4. His Converſation is of a piece with his Devotion, *v.* 16. *And herein do I exerciſe myſelf to have always a Conſcience void of Offence towards GOD and towards Men.* Prophets, and their Doctrine, were to be try'd by *their Fruits*. *Paul* was far from having *made ſhipwrack* of a *good Conſcience*, and therefore 'tis not likely he has *made ſhipwrack of the Faith*, the *Myſtery* of which is beſt *held in a pure Conſcience*. This Proteſtation of *Paul*'s is to the ſame Purpoſe with that which he made before the *High Prieſt*, chap. xxiii. 1. *I have liv'd in all good Conſcience*, And this was his Rejoycing. *Obſerve*,

(1.) What was *Paul*'s Aim and Deſire; To *have a Conſcience void of Offence*. Either (1.) A Conſcience not *offending*, not informing me wrong, or flattering me, or dealing deceitfully with me, or in any Thing miſleading me. Or (2.) A Conſcience not *offended*; 'Tis like *Job*'s Reſolution. *My Heart ſhall not reproach me*, i. e. I will never give it any Occaſion to do ſo. This is what I am ambitious of, to keep upon good Terms with my own Conſcience, that it may have no Cauſe either to *queſtion* the goodneſs of my Spiritual State, or to *quarrel* with me for any particular Action. I am as careful not to offend *my Conſcience*, as I am not to offend a Friend whom I daily converſe with; nay, as I am not to offend a Magiſtrate whoſe Authority I am under, and to whom I am accountable; for Conſcience is GOD's Deputy in my Soul.

(2.) What was his *Care* and *Endeavour* in purſuance of this; *I exerciſe my ſelf*, ἀσκῶ, I make it my conſtant Buſineſs, and govern my ſelf by this Intention, I diſcipline my ſelf, and live by Rule (thoſe that did ſo were call'd *Asketicks*, from the Word here us'd) *abſtain* from many a Thing which my Inclination leads me to, and *abound* in all the Exerciſes of Religion that are moſt ſpiritual, with this in my Eye, that I may *keep Peace with my own Conſcience*.

(3.) The *Extent* of this Care 1. To *all Times*; To have *always* a Conſcience void of Offence, always, void of *groſs Offence*; for tho' *Paul* was conſcious to himſelf that he *had not yet attain'd Perfection*, and the Evil that he *would not do* yet he *did*; yet he was *innocent from the great Tranſgreſſion*. Sins of Infirmity are *uneaſy* to Conſcience, but they do not *wound* it and *waſte* it, as Preſumptuous Sins do, and tho' Offence may be given to Conſcience, yet care muſt be taken that it be not an abiding Offence, but that by the renew'd Acts of Faith and Repentance, the Matter may be *taken up* again quickly. And this however we muſt *always exerciſe ourſelves in*, and tho' we *come ſhort*, we muſt *follow after*. 2. To *all Things*; both *towards GOD and towards Man*. His conſcientious Care extended itſelf to the whole of his Duty, and he was afraid of breaking the Law of Love either to GOD or his Neighbour; Conſcience like the Magiſtrate, is *Cuſtos utriſque tabulæ*. We muſt be very Cautious that we do not think, or ſpeak, or do any thing amiſs either againſt GOD or Man, 2 *Cor.* viii. 2.

4. The *Inducement* to it; *Herein* ἐν τούτῳ, *for this Cauſe* ſo it may be read. Becauſe I look for the Reſurrection of the Dead and the Life of the World to come, therefore I thus *exerciſe my ſelf*. The Conſideration of the *future State* ſhould engage us to be univerſally *conſcientious* in our preſent State.

Fourthly, Having made Confeſſion of his Faith, he gives a plain and faithful *account of his Caſe*, and of the wrong done him by his Perſecutors. Twice he had been reſcued by the chief Captain out of the hand of the *Jews*, when they were ready to pull him to pieces, and he challengeth them to prove him guilty of any Crime either time.

1. In the *Temple*; There they fell furiouſly upon him as an Enemy to their *Nation*, and the *Temple*, *chap.* xvi. 28. But was there any colour for the Charge? No, but Evidence ſufficient againſt it. 1. It was very hard to accuſe him as an *Enemy to their Nation*, when after long abſence from *Jeruſalem* he came to *bring Alms to his Nation*, Money which (tho' he had need enough himſelf of, yet) he had collected among his Friends, for the relief of the Poor at *Jeruſalem*. He not only had no Malice to that People, but he had a very *charitable* Concern for them, and was ready to do them all good Offices; And were they his *Adverſaries for his Love? Pſal*, cix. 4. (2.) It was very hard to accuſe him of having profan'd the Temple, when he *brought Offerings* to the Temple, and was himſelf *at Charges* therein *chap.* xxi. 24. And was found *purifying himſelf in the Temple*, according to the Law, *v.* 18. And that in a very quiet decent manner, *neither with multitude, nor with tumult*; tho' he was a Man ſo much talk'd of, he was far from coveting to *ſhew himſelf*, when he came to *Jeruſalem*, or of being crowded after; but went to the Temple as much as was poſſible, *incognito*; They were *Jews from Aſia*, his Enemies, that made him to be taken notice of; They had no Pretence to make a *Tumult* and raiſe a *Multitude* againſt him, for he had neither *Multitude* nor *Tumult* for him. And as for what was perhaps ſuggeſted to *Felix*, that he had *brought Greeks into the Temple* contrary to their Law, and the Governor ought to reckon with him for that, the *Romans* having ſtipulated with the Nations that ſubmitted to them, to preſerve them in their Religion, he challengeth them to prove it, *v.* 19. Thoſe *Jews* of *Aſia* ought to have been *here before thee*, that they might have

been

ſtand by, and *ſwear to*; for ſome that will not ſcruple to tell a Lye, having ſuch *Leavings of Conſcience*, that they *boggle* at confirming it with an Oath.

2. In the *Council*; ſince the *Jews* of *Aſia* are not here to prove any Thing upon me done amiſs in the Temple, let *theſe ſame* that are *here*, the *High Prieſts* and the *Elders* ſay, whether they have *found any evil doing in me*, or if I were guilty of any *Miſdemeanour, when I ſtood before the Council*, which was another time they were ready to pull in pieces, *v.* 20. When I was there they could not take Offence at any thing I ſaid; for all I ſaid was, *Touching the Reſurrection of the Dead, I am call'd in Queſtion by you this Day*, *v.* 21. which gave no Offence to any but the *Sadduces*. This I hope was no Crime, that I ſtuck to that which is the Faith of the whole Jewiſh Church, excepting thoſe whom they themſelves call Hereticks.

22 And when Felix heard theſe things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and ſaid, when Lyſias the chief captain ſhall come down, I will know the uttermoſt of your matter. 23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he would forbid none of his acquaintance to miniſter, or come unto him. 24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Druſilla, which was a Jeweſs, he ſent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Chriſt. 25 And as he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and anſwered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee. 26 He hoped alſo that money ſhould have been given him of Paul, that he might looſe him: wherefore he ſent for him the oftner and communed with him. 27 But after two years, Porcius Feſtus came into Felix room: and Felix willing to ſhew the Jews a pleaſure, left Paul bound.

We have here the Reſult of *Paul's* Tryal before *Felix*, and what was the Conſequence of it.

Firſt, *Felix* adjourned the Cauſe, and took further Time to conſider of it, *v.* 22. He *had a more perfect Knowledge of that Way* which the *Jews* call'd *Hereſy*, than the high Prieſt and the Elders thought he had; he underſtood ſomething of the Chriſtian Religion; for living at *Cæſarea*, where *Cornelius* a *Roman* Centurion was, that was a Chriſtian, from him and others, he had got a Notion of Chriſtianity, that it was not ſuch an ill Thing as it was repreſented; he himſelf knew ſome of *that Way* to be honeſt good Men, and very *conſcientious*, and therefore he *put off* the Proſecutors with an Excuſe, *When the chief Captain ſhall come down*, hither, *I will know the uttermoſt of your Matter*, or I *ſhall know* the Truth, whether this *Paul* did go about to *raiſe Sedition*, or no; you are Parties, he is an indifferent Perſon. Either *Paul* deſerves to be puniſh'd for raiſing the Tumult, or you do for doing it yourſelves, and then charging it upon him; and I'll hear what he ſaith, and Determine accordingly between you. Now,

1. It was a Diſappointment to the High Prieſt and the Elders that *Paul* was not *condemn'd* or *remitted* to *their* Judgment, which they wiſh'd for and expected. But thus ſometimes GOD reſtrains the Wrath of his People's *Enemies* by the Agency not of their *Friends*, but of ſuch as are *Strangers* to *them*. And tho' they be ſo, if they have but ſome *Knowledge of their Way*, they cannot but appear for their Protection.

2. It was an Injury to *Paul* that he was not *releas'd*; *Felix* ought to have *aveng'd him of his Adverſaries*, when he ſo plainly ſaw there was nothing but Malice, in the Proſecution, and to have *ridded him out of the Hand of the Wicked*, according to the Duty of a Judge, *Pſal.* lxxxii 4. But he was a Judge that neither *fear'd GOD*, nor *regarded Man*, and what Good could be expected from him. 'Tis a Wrong not only to *deny* Juſtice, but to *delay* it.

Secondly, He *continu'd* the Priſoner in *Cuſtody*, and would not take Bail for him; elſe here at *Cæſarea Paul* had Friends enow, that would gladly have been his Security. *Felix* thought a Man of ſuch a publick Character as *Paul* was, had many Friends, as well as many Enemies, and he might have an Opportunity of obliging them, or making a hand of them, if he did not preſently releaſe him, and yet did ſhew him ſome Countenance; and therefore,

1. He *continued* him a Priſoner, commanded a *Centurion* or *Captain* to keep him, *v.* 23. He did not commit him to the common Goal, but being firſt an Army Priſoner, he ſhall ſtill be ſo.

2. Yet he took Care he ſhould be a Priſoner at large, *in liberâ Cuſtodiâ*; His Keeper muſt *let him have Liberty*, not bind him or lock him up, but make his Confinement as eaſy to him as poſſible; let him have the Liberty of the Caſtle, and perhaps he means Liberty to take the Air, or go abroad upon his *Parol*; and *Paul* was ſuch an honeſt Man, that they might take his Word for his Return. The High-Prieſt and the Elders grudg'd him his *Life*, but *Felix* generouſly allows him a ſort of *Liberty*; for *he* had not thoſe Prejudices againſt him and his Way that *they* had. He alſo gave Orders that none of his Friends ſhould be hinder'd from *coming to him*; The Centurion muſt not *forbid any of his Acquaintance* from *Miniſtring* to him. And a Man's *Priſon* is as it were *his own Houſe* if he has but his *Friends* about him.

Thirdly, He had *frequent* Converſation with him afterwards *in private*; once particularly, not long after his Publick Tryal, *v.* 24, 25. *Obſerve*,

1. With what Deſign *Felix* ſent for *Paul*; He had a mind to have ſome Talk with him *concerning Faith in Chriſt*, The Chriſtian Religion; he had ſome *Knowledge of that Way*, but he deſir'd to have an Account of it from *Paul*, who was ſo celebrated a Preacher of that *Faith*, above the reſt. Thoſe that would enlarge their Knowledge, muſt Diſcourſe with Men in *their own* Profeſſion. And thoſe that would be acquainted with any Profeſſion, ſhould conſult thoſe that *excel* in the Knowledge of it; and therefore *Felix* has a mind to talk with *Paul* more freely than he could *in open Court*, where he obſerv'd *Paul* upon his Guard, *concerning the Faith of Chriſt*. And this only to ſatisfy his Curioſity, or rather, the Curioſity of his Wife *Druſilla*, who was a *Jeweſs*, Daughter of *Herod Agrippa*, that was *eaten of Worms*. And being educated in the Jewiſh Religion, ſhe was more *inquiſitive* concerning Chriſtian Religion, which pretended to be the Perfection of that; and deſir'd to hear *Paul* Diſcourſe of it. But it was no great Matter what Religion ſhe was of, for whatever it was, ſhe was a Reproach and Scandal to it, a *Jeweſs*, but an *Adultereſs*. She was *another Man's Wife* when *Felix* took her to be *his Wife* and ſhe liv'd with him in Whoredom and was noted for an Impudent Woman; yet ſhe deſires to hear *concerning the Faith of Chriſt*. Many are fond of new Notions and Speculations in Religion, and can hear and ſpeak of them with Pleaſure, who yet hate to come under the Power and Influence of Religion; can be content to have their Judgments *inform'd* but not their Lives *reform'd*.

2. What the *Account* was which *Paul* gave him of the Chriſtian Religion; by the *Idea* he had of it, he expected to be *amus'd* with a *Myſtical* Divinity; but as *Paul* repreſents it to him, he is *alarm'd* with a *Practical* Divinity; *Paul* being ask'd concerning the *Faith in Chriſt*, *Reaſon'd* (for *Paul* was always a Rational Preacher) concerning *Righteouſneſs*, *Temperance*, and *Judgment to come*. 'Tis probable, he mention'd to him the peculiar Doctrine of Chriſtianity concerning the Death and Reſurrection of the Lord Jeſus, and his being the Mediator between GOD and Man; but he haſten'd to his Application, in which he deſign'd to come home to the Conſciences of his Hearers; and he diſcours'd with clearneſs and warmth of *Righteouſneſs*, *Temperance*, and *Judgment to come*. And there he ſhew'd.

(1.) That *the Faith in Chriſt* is deſign'd to enforce upon the Children of Men the great Laws of *Juſtice* and *Temperance*; The *Grace of GOD* teacheth us to *live Soberly and Righteouſly*, Tit. ii. 12. *Juſtice* and *Temperance* were celebrated Vertues among the Heathen Moraliſts; if the Doctrine *Paul* preacheth, which *Felix* has heard of, as *proclaiming Liberty*, will but *free* him from an Obligation to theſe, he will readily embrace it: No ſaith *Paul*, ſo far from doing ſo, that it *ſtrengthens* the Obligations of thoſe ſacred Laws; it binds all under the higheſt Penalties to be honeſt in all their Dealings, and render to all their Due; to deny themſelves, and to keep under the Body, and bring it into Subjection, The *World* and the *Fleſh* being in our Baptiſm renounc'd, in all our Purſuits of the *World*, and all our Gratifications of the Deſires of the *Body*, are to be under the Regulations of Religion. *Paul* reaſon'd of *Righteouſneſs* and *Temperance*, to convince *Felix* of his *Unrighteouſneſs* and *Intemperance*, which he had been notoriouſly guilty of, that ſeeing the *odiouſneſs* of them, and his *obnoxiouſneſs* to the Wrath of GOD for them (*Eph.* v. 6.) he might enquire *concerning the Faith of Chriſt*, with a Reſolution to embrace it.

(2.) That by the Doctrine of Chriſt, is *diſcover'd* to us the *Judgment to come*, by the Sentence of which the everlaſting State of all the Children of Men will be finally and irreverſibly Determin'd. Men have *their Day* now, *Felix* hath *his*; but *GOD's Day is coming*, when every One ſhall give Account of himſelf to *GOD the Judge of all*. *Paul reaſon'd* concerning this, *i. e.* he ſhew'd what *Reaſon* we have in Conſideration thereof to be Religious.

Now from this Account of the Heads of *Paul*'s Diſcourſe, we may gather (1.) That *Paul* in his Preaching had no *reſpect of Perſons*, for the Word of GOD which he Preach'd has not. He urgeth the ſame Convictions and Inſtructions upon the *Roman* Governor, that he had upon other People. (2.) That *Paul* in his Preaching aiming at the *Conſciences* of Men, and came cloſe to them; ſought not to pleaſe their *Fancy* or gratify their *Curioſity*, but led them to a Sight of their Sins, and a Senſe of their Duty and Intereſt. (3.) That *Paul* preferr'd the ſerving of Chriſt, and the ſaving of Souls before his own Safety. He lay at the Mercy of *Felix*, who had Power (as *Pilate* ſaid) to *crucify him*, or which was as bad to deliver him back to the *Jews*) and he had Power to *releaſe him*. Now when *Paul* had his Ear, and had him in a good Humour, he had a fair Opportunity of ingratiating himſelf with him, and obtaining a Releaſe; nay, and of Incenſing him againſt his Proſecutors: And on the contrary, if he diſoblig'd him, and put him out of Humour, he may do himſelf a great Diſ-kindneſs by it; but he ſeems wholly negligent of theſe Conſiderations, and is intent upon doing Good, at leaſt diſcharging his Duty. (4.) That *Paul* was willing to take Pains and run Hazards in his Work, even there where there were little probability of doing Good; *Felix* and *Druſilla* were ſuch harden'd Sinners, that it was not at all likely they ſhould be brought to Repentance by *Paul's* Preaching, eſpecially under ſuch Diſadvantages; and yet *Paul* deals with them as one that did not *deſpair* of them. Let the Watchman give fair Warning, and then they have delivered their own Souls, though they ſhould not prevail to deliver the *Souls* they *watch for*.

3. What *Impreſſion Paul's* Diſcourſe made upon this great, but ill Man, *Felix* trembled, ἔμφοβος γενόμενος, being *put into a Fright*, or made a *Terror to himſelf*, a *Magor-miſſabib*, as *Paſhur*, Jer. xx. 3, 4. *Paul* never trembled before him; but he was made to tremble before *Paul*. If this be ſo, as *Paul* ſaith, what will become of me in another World? If the *Unrighteous* and *Intemperate* will be condemn'd in the *Judgment to come*, I am undone, for ever undone, unleſs I lead a new Courſe of Life. We do not find that *Druſilla* trembled, tho' ſhe was equally guilty; for ſhe was a *Jeweſs*, and depended upon the Ceremonial Law, which ſhe adher'd to the Obſervance of, to juſtify her. But *Felix* for the preſent, could faſten upon Nothing to pacify his Conſcience, and therefore *trembled*. See here,

(1.) The Power of the *Word of GOD*, when it comes with Commiſſion; 'tis ſearching, 'tis ſtartling, it can ſtrike a Terror into the Heart of the moſt proud and daring Sinner, by ſetting his Sins in order before him, and ſhew him the *Terrors of the LORD*.

(2.) The Workings of *Natural Conſcience*, when it is ſtartled and awaken'd, it will fill the Soul with Horror and Amazement at its own Deformity and Danger. Thoſe that are themſelves the *Terror of the Mighty in the Land of the Living*, have hereby been made a Terror to themſelves. A Proſpect of the *Judgment to come*, is enough to make the ſtouteſt Heart to tremble, as when it comes indeed, 'twill make the *mighty Men* and the *chief Captains* to call in vain to *Rocks* and *Mountains* to *ſhelter them*.

(4.) How *Felix* ſtruggled to *get clear* of theſe Impreſſions, and to ſhake off the Terror of his Convictions, he did by them as he did by *Paul's* Perſecutors, *v.* 27. he *deferr'd them*, He ſaid, *Go thy Way for this Time, when I have a convenient Seaſon I will call for thee.* (1.) He *trembled*, and that was all, *Paul's* trembling, *chap.* ix. 6. and the Goaler's, *chap.* xvi. 30. ended in their Converſion, but this of *Felix* did not. There are many ſtartled by the Word of GOD, that are not effectually *chang'd* by it. Many are *in fear* of the Conſequences of Sin, and yet continue in *Love* and *League* with Sin. (2.) He did not *fight againſt* his Convictions, nor *fly in the Face* of the Word, or of the Preacher of it, to be reveng'd on them for making his Conſcience fly in his Face; he did not ſay to *Paul*, as *Amaziah* to the Prophet, *Forbear, why ſhouldſt thou be ſmitten?* Did not threaten him with a cloſer Confinement, or with Death, for touching him, as *John Baptiſt* did *Herod*, in the ſore Place. But (3.) he artfully *ſhifted off* his Convictions, by *putting off* the Perſecution of them to *another Time*. He has nothing to object againſt what *Paul* hath ſaid, 'tis weighty, and worth conſidering; but like a ſorry Debtor, he *beg's Day*. *Paul* hath ſpent himſelf, and has tir'd him and his Lady, and therefore *Go thy Way for this Time*; Break off here; Buſineſs calls me away, but *when I have a convenient Seaſon*, and have nothing elſe to do, I will *call for thee*, and hear what thou haſt further to ſay. *Note* 1. Many looſe all the Benefit of their Convictions for want of *ſtriking* while the *Iron is hot*. If *Felix* now he *trembled*, had but ask'd, as *Paul* and the *Goaler* did when they trembled, *What ſhall I do?* He might have been brought to the Faith of Chriſt, and have been a *Felix* indeed, Happy for ever; but by dropping his Convictions now, he *loſt* them for ever, and himſelf with them. 2. In the Affairs of our Souls, *Delays* are *dangerous*; Nothing is of more fatal Conſequence, than Mens *putting off* their Converſion from Time to Time. They will repent and turn to GOD, but not yet; the Matter is adjourn'd to ſome *more convenient Seaſon*, when ſuch a Buſineſs or Affair is compaſs'd, when they are ſo much elder, and then Convictions cool and wear off, good Purpoſes, prove to no Purpoſe, and they are more harden'd than ever in their evil Way. *Felix* put off this Matter to a more *convenient Seaſon*, but we do not find that that more convenient Seaſon ever came; for the Devil cozens us of all our Time, by cozening us of the preſent Time. The preſent Seaſon, is without doubt, the moſt *convenient Seaſon*; Behold, *Now is the accepted Time. To Day if ye will hear his Voice.*

Fourthly, After all he *continued* him a Priſoner and left him ſo, when two Years after he was remov'd from the Government, *v.* 26, 27. He was convinc'd in his Conſcience that *Paul* had done nothing *worthy of Death or of Bonds*, and yet had not the Honeſty to releaſe him; to little Purpoſe had *Paul* reaſon'd with him about Righteouſneſs, tho' he then trembled at the thought of his own Iniquity, who could thus *perſiſt* in ſuch a palpable piece of Injuſtice. But here we are told what *Principles* he was govern'd by herein, and they were ſuch as make the Matter yet *much worſe*.

1. The *Love of Money*; He would not releaſe *Paul*, becauſe he hoped to make his Markets of him; And that at length his Friends would make a Purſe to purchaſe his Liberty, and then he would ſatisfy his Conſcience by releaſing him when he could withal ſatisfy his Covetouſneſs by it; But he cannot find in his Heart to do his Duty as a Judge, unleſs he can get Money by it. *He hoped that Money ſhould have been given him of Paul*, or ſomebody for him, and then he would have *looſed him*, and ſet him at Liberty; and in hopes of that he continues him a Priſoner, and *ſends for him the oftner, and communes with him.* Not any more about *the Faith of Chriſt*; he had had enough of that, and of the *Judgment to come*, *Paul* muſt not return to thoſe Subjects, or go on with them; But about his *Diſcharge* or *Ranſom* rather out of his preſent Captivity. He cannot for Shame ask *Paul* what he will *give him* to releaſe him, but he ſends for him to *feel his Pulſe*, and give him an Opportunity to ask what he would *take* to releaſe him? And now we ſee what became of his Promiſe both to *Paul* and to himſelf, that he would hear more of Chriſt at ſome *other convenient Seaſon*: Here were many Seaſons convenient enough to have talk'd that Matter through, but nothing is done in it; All his Buſineſs now is to get Money by *Paul*, not to get the Knowledge of Chriſt by him. *Note*, Thoſe that trifle with their Convictions, and think they can have the Grace of GOD at command when they pleaſe, 'tis juſt with GOD to ſay concerning them, that his *Spirit* ſhall no more *ſtrive with them*. When Men will not hear GOD's Voice *to Day while it is call'd to Day*, the Heart is commonly *hardn'd by the Deceitfulneſs of Sin*.

Paul was but a poor Man himſelf, *Silver and Gold he had none* to give to purchaſe his Liberty; but *Felix* knew there were thoſe who wiſh'd well to him, that were able to aſſiſt him; he having lately collected a deal of Money for the *poor Saints to relieve* them, it might be expected that the *rich Saints* ſhould contribute ſome to *releaſe* him, and I wonder it was done; Tho' *Paul* is to be *commended* that he would not *bid Money* to *Felix*, nor *beg Money* of the Churches; his Great and Generous Soul diſdain'd both; yet I know not whether his Friends are to be commended, nay, whether they can be juſtified in *not doing* it for him; they ought to have *ſollicited* the Governor as preſſingly *for him*, as his Enemies did *againſt him*. And if a *Gift* was neceſſary to *make room for them* (as *Solomon* ſpeaks) and to *bring them before great Men*, they might lawfully have brought it. I ought not to bribe a Man to do an unjuſt thing, but if he will not do me Juſtice without a Fee, 'tis but doing my ſelf Juſtice to give it him; And if they *might do it*, 'twas a ſhame they *did not do it*; I bluſh for them, that they would let ſuch an Eminent and Uſeful Man as *Paul* lie in a Goal, when a little Money would have fetch him out, and reſtored him to his Uſefulneſs again. The Chriſtians here at *Cæſarea*, where he now was, had parted with their *Tears* to prevent his going to the Priſon, (*chap.* xxi. 13.) but could not find in their Hearts to part with their *Money* to help him out. Yet there might be a Providence of GOD in it, *Paul's* Bonds muſt be for the Furtherance of the Goſpel of Chriſt, and therefore he muſt continue in Bonds. However. this will not excuſe *Felix*, who ought to have releaſed an innocent Man without demanding, or accepting any Thing for it. The Judge that will not do Right *without* a Bribe, no doubt will do Wrong *for* a Bribe.

2. *Men-pleaſing Felix* was recall'd from his Government about *two Years* after this, and *Procius Feſtus* was put in his Place; and one would have expected he ſhould have at leaſt concluded his Government with this Act of Juſtice, the Releaſe of *Paul*, but he did not, he *left Paul bound*; and the Reaſon here given is, becauſe he was *willing to do the Jews a Pleaſure*. Tho' he would not deliver him to Death to *pleaſe* them, yet he would continue him a Priſoner rather than *offend them*: And he did it in hope hereby to attone for the many Offences he had done againſt them. He did not think *Paul* had either Intereſt or Inclination to complain of him at Court, for detaining him ſo long in Cuſtody againſt all Law and Equity; but he was jealous of the High-Prieſt and Elders, that they would be his Accuſers to the Emperor, for the Wrongs he had done *them*; and therefore hopes by gratifying them in this Matter to *ſtop their Mouths*. Thus they who do ſome *ill things*, are tempted to do more to ſcreen themſelves, and bear them out. If *Felix* had not *injur'd* the *Jews*, he needed not have done this to pleaſe them. But when he had done it, it ſeems he did not gain his Point: The *Jews* notwithſtanding this, accus'd him to the Emperor, and ſome Hiſtorians ſay, he was ſent bound to *Rome* by *Feſtus*; and if ſo, ſurely his remembring how light he made of *Paul's* Bonds, would help to *make his own Chain heavy*. Thoſe that aim to pleaſe GOD by doing Good, will have what they aim at; but ſo will not they that ſeek to pleaſe Men by doing Evil.

CHAP. XXV.

Some think that Felix *was turn'd out and Feſtus ſucceeded him quickly after* Paul's *Impriſonment, and that the two Years mention'd in the Cloſe of the foregoing Chapter, are to be reckon'd from the Beginning of* Nero's *Reign; but it ſeems more natural to compute it from* Paul's *being deliver'd into the Hands of* Felix; *however we have here much the ſame Management of* Paul's *Caſe as we had in the foregoing Chapter. Cognizance is here taken of it.* (1.) *By* Feſtus *the Governor; 'Tis brought before him by the* Jews, *v.* 1,—3. *The Hearing of it is appointed to be not at* Jeruſalem *as the* Jews *deſir'd,* *but at* Cæſarea, *v.* 4—6. *The* Jews *appear'd againſt* Paul, *and accuſe him.* v. 7. *But he ſtands upon his own Innocency,* v. 8. *and to avoid the removing of the Cauſe to* Jeruſalem, *which he was preſs'd to conſent to, he at length appeal'd to* Cæſar, v. 9,—12. (2) *By King* Agrippa, *to whom* Feſtus *relates his Caſe,* v. 13—21. *and* Agrippa *deſires he might have the Hearing of it himſelf,* v. 22. *The Court is accordingly Set, and* Paul *brought to the Bar,* v. 23. *And* Feſtus *opens the Cauſe,* v. 24,—27. *to introduce* Paul's *Defence in the next Chapter.*

NOW when Feſtus was come into the province, after three days he aſcended from Ceſarea to Jeruſalem. 2 Then the high prieſt, and the chief of the Jews informed him againſt Paul, and beſought him. 3 And deſired favour againſt him, that he would ſend for him to Jeruſalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. 4 But Feſtus anſwered, that Paul ſhould be kept at Ceſarea, and that he himſelf would depart ſhortly *thither*. 5 Let them therefore, ſaid he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuſe this man, if there be any wickedneſs in him. 6 And when he had tarried among them more then ten days, he went down unto Cæſarea and the next day ſitting in the judgment ſeat, commanded Paul to be brought. 7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jeruſalem ſtood round about and laid many and grievous complaints againſt Paul, which they could not prove; 8 While he Anſwered for himſelf, Neither againſt the law of the Jews, neither againſt the Temple, nor yet againſt Cæſar, have I offended any thing at all. 9 But Feſtus willing to do the Jews a pleaſure, anſwered Paul and ſaid, Wilt thou go up to Jeruſalem, and there be judged of theſe things before men? 10 Then ſaid Paul, I ſtand at Cæſars judgment ſeat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knoweſt. 11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death I refuſe not to die: but if there be none of theſe things whereof theſe accuſe me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæſar. 12 Then Feſtus when he had conferred with the councel, anſwered, Haſt thou appeal unto Cæſar? unto Cæſar ſhalt thou go.

We uſe to ſay, *new Lords, new Laws*, new Cuſtoms; but here was a new Governor, and yet *Paul* had the ſame Treatment with him, that he had with the former and no better; *Feſtus*, like *Felix*, is not ſo juſt to him as he ſhould have been; for he doth not releaſe him; and yet not ſo unjuſt as the *Jews* would have had him to be, for he will not condemn him to die, nor expoſe him to their Rage. Here is,

Firſt, The Preſſing Inſtance which the High Prieſt and other *Jews* us'd with the Governor to perſwade him to abandon *Paul*; for to ſend for him to *Jeruſalem*, was in effect to abandon him.

1. See how *ſpeedy* they were in their Applications to *Feſtus* concerning *Paul*. As ſoon as ever he was *come into the Province*, and had taken Poſſeſſion of the Government, into which probably he was Inſtall'd at *Cæſarea*, within three Days he *went up to Jeruſalem*, to ſhew himſelf there, and preſently the Prieſts were upon him to proceed againſt *Paul*. He ſtay'd *three Days* at *Cæſarea* where *Paul* was a Priſoner, and we do not find that in that Time *Paul* made any Application to him to *releaſe* him, tho' no doubt he could have made good Friends to him, that he might hope to have prevail'd by; but as ſoon as ever he comes up to *Jeruſalem*, the Prieſts are in all haſte to make an Intereſt with him againſt *Paul*. See how reſtleſs a Thing Malice is. *Paul* more patiently bares the lengthening out of his Impriſonment, than his Enemies do the delay of his Perſecution even to the Death.

2. See how *ſpiteful* they were in their Application; They *inform'd* the Governor againſt *Paul*, *v.* 2. before he was brought upon a fair Tryal, that ſo they might if poſſible prejudge the Cauſe with the Governor, and make him a *Party*, who was to be the Judge. But this Artifice, tho' baſe enough, they could not confide in; for the Governor would be ſure to hear him himſelf, and then all their *Informations againſt him* would fall to the Ground, And therefore they form another Project much more baſe, and that is, to *aſſaſſinate Paul* before he came upon his Tryal, Theſe in humane helliſh Methods, which all the World profeſſeth at leaſt to abhor, have theſe Perſecutors recourſe to, to gratify their Malice againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt; and this too under the Colour of Zeal for *Moſes*; *Tantum Religio potuit ſuadere malorum.*

3. See how *ſpecious* the Pretence was; Now the Governor was himſelf at *Jeruſalem*, they deſired he would ſend for *Paul* thither and try him there, which would ſave the Proſecutors a great deal of Labour, and look'd moſt reaſonable, becauſe he was charg'd with having profan'd the Temple at *Jeruſalem*, and 'tis uſual for Criminals to be tryed in the Court where the Fact wae committed. But that which they deſign'd, was to way-lay him as he was brought up, and to Murder him upon the Road; ſuppoſing that he would not be brought up under ſo ſtrong a Guard as he was ſent down with; Or, that the Officers that were to bring him up might be brib'd to give them an Opportunity for their Wickedneſs. 'Tis ſaid, they *deſir'd favour againſt Paul*. The Buſineſs of Proſecutors, is to *demand Juſtice* againſt One that they ſuppoſe to be a Criminal, and if he be not prov'd ſo, 'tis as much Juſtice to acquit him, as it is to condemn him if he be: But to *deſire Favour againſt* a Priſoner and from the Judge too, who ought to be of Counſel for him, is a very Impudent thing. The Favour ought to be *for* the Priſoner, *in favorem vite* but here they deſire it againſt him. They will take it as a *Favour* if the Governor will but condemn *Paul*, tho they can prove no Crime upon him.

Secondly, the Governor's Reſolution that *Paul* ſhall take his Tryal at *Cæſarea*, where he now is, *v.* 4, 5. See how he manageth the Proſecutors.

1. He will not *do them the Kindneſs* to ſend for him to *Jeruſalem* No, he gave Orders that *Paul* ſhould be kept at *Cæſarea*. It doth not appear that he had any Suſpicion, much leſs any certain *Information*, of their bloody Deſign to Murder him by the Way, as the chief Captain had when he ſent him to *Cæſarea*, *chap.* xxiii. 30. But perhaps he was not willing ſo far to oblige the High Prieſt and his Party; or he would maintain the Honour of his Court at *Cæſarea*, and require their Attendance there; or he was not willing to be at the Trouble or Charge of bringing *Paul* up; what ever was his Reaſon for refuſing it, GOD made uſe of it as a Means of preſerving *Paul* out of the Hands of his Enemies. Perhaps now they were more careful to keep their Conſpiracy ſecret than they had been before, that the *Diſcovery* of it might not be now as it was then, the *Defeat* of it. But tho' God doth not as then *bring it to light*, yet he finds another Way as Effectual to *bring it to nought*; by inclining the Heart of the Governor for ſome other Reaſons, not to remove *Paul* to *Jeruſalem*. GOD is not ty'd to one Method in Working out Salvation for his People: He can ſuffer the Deſigns againſt them to be *conceal'd*, and yet not ſuffer them to be *accompliſhed*; and can make even the Carnal Policies of great Men to ſerve his gracious Purpoſe.

2. Yet he will *do them the Juſtice* to hear what they have to ſay againſt *Paul*, if they will go down to *Cæſarea*, and appear againſt him there. *Let them among you which are able*, able in Body and Purſe, for ſuch a Journey or *able* in *Mind* and *Tongue* to manage the Proſecution; *Let thoſe among you* that are fit to be Managers, *go down with me and accuſe this Man*. Or, thoſe that are competent Witneſſes, that are *able* to prove any Thing Criminal upon him, Let them go and give in their Evidence, *if their be any* ſuch *Wickedneſs* in him as you charge upon him. *Feſtus* will not take it for granted, as they deſire he ſhould, that there is *Wickedneſs in him*, till it is prov'd upon him, and he has been hear'd in his own Defence; but if he be Guilty, it lies upon them to prove him ſo.

Thirdly, *Paul's* Tryal before *Feſtus*; he ſtay'd at *Jeruſalem* about *Ten Days*, and then went down to *Cæſarea*, and the Proſecutors 'tis likely in his Retinue; for he ſaid they ſhould *go down with him*. And ſince they are ſo eager in the Proſecution, he is willing this Cauſe ſhould be firſt called, and that they may haſten Home, he will diſpatch it *the next Day*. Expedition in adminiſtring Juſtice is very commendable, provided more haſte be not made than good ſpeed. Now here we have,

1. The *Court ſet*, and the *Priſoner* call'd to the *Bar*; Feſtus *ſate in the Judgment-ſeat*, as he us'd to do when any Cauſe was brought before him that was of Conſequence. And he *commanded* Paul *to be brought*, and make his Appearance, *v.* 6. Chriſt to encourage his Diſciples, and keep up their Spirits under ſuch awful, Tryals of their Courage as this was to *Paul*, promiſed them that the Day ſhould come when they *ſhould ſit on Thrones judging the Tribes of* Iſrael.

2. The *Proſecutors* exhibiting their Charge againſt the Priſoner, *v.* 7. *The Jews ſtood round about*, which intimates that they were many, *Lord, how are they increas'd that Trouble me!* That they were *unanimous*, they ſtood by one another, and reſolv'd to hold together; and that they were *intent* upon the Perſecution, and *eager* in Clamouring againſt *Paul*; They *ſtood round about*, if poſſible to frighten the Judge into a Compliance with their malicious Deſign, however to frighten the Priſoner, and at leaſt to put him out of Countenance; But in vain; he had too juſt, and ſtrong an Aſſurance to be daſh'd by them, They *compaſſed me about like Bees, but they are quenched as the Fire of Thorns*, Pſal. cxviii. 12. When they ſtood round about him, they *brought many and grievous Accuſations againſt Paul*, ſo it ſhould be read, They Charge him with High Crimes and Miſdemeanors, The Articles of Impeachment were many, and contain'd Things of a very

heinous Nature, They repreſented him to the Court as black and odious as their Wit and Malice could contrive; But when they had opened the Cauſe as they thought fit and come to the *Evidence*, there they fail'd, *They could not prove* what they alledg'd againſt him, for it was all falſe, and the Complaints groundleſs and unjuſt. Either the *Fact* was not as they open'd it, or there was no *Fault* in it. They *laid to his Charge Things that he knew not*, nor they neither. It is no new Thing for the moſt *excellent Ones of the Earth* to have all manner of Evil ſaid againſt them falſly, not only in the *Song of the Drunkards*, and upon the *Seat of the Scornful*, but even *before the Judgment-Seat*.

3. The *Priſoner's* inſiſting upon his own Vindication; *v.* 8. Whoever reproacheth him his own Heart doth not, and therefore his own Tongue ſhall not; Tho' he die he will *not remove his Integrity* from him. *When it came to his turn to ſpeak for himſelf*, he inſiſted upon this general Plea, *Not Guilty*; *Neither againſt the Law of the* Jews, *nor againſt the Temple, nor yet againſt* Cæſar, *have I offended any Thing at all.* (1.) He had not violated the *Law of the Jews*, nor Taught any Doctrine deſtructive of it. *Did he make void the Law by Faith? No, he eſtabliſh'd the Law*, Preaching Chriſt the *End of the Law*, was no Offence againſt the Law. (2.) He had not profan'd *the Temple*, nor put any Contempt at all upon the Temple-Service; his helping to ſet up the Goſpel Temple did not at all offend againſt that Temple which was a Type of it. (3.) He had not offended *againſt Cæſar*, or his Government; By this it appears that now his Cauſe was brought before the Government, to curry Favour with the Governor, and that they might ſeem Friends to *Cæſar*, they had charg'd him with ſome Inſtances of Diſaffection to the preſent higher Powers, which oblig'd him to purge himſelf as to that Matter, and to proteſt that he was no Enemy to *Cæſar*, not ſo much as they were that charg'd him with being ſo.

Fourthly, *Paul's* Appeal to the *Emperor*, and the Occaſion of it; This gave the Cauſe a new Turn; whether he had before deſign'd it, or whether it was a ſudden Reſolve upon the preſent Provocation, doth not appear; but GOD puts it into his Heart to do it for the bringing about of that which he had ſaid to him, That he muſt *bear Witneſs to Chriſt at* Rome, for there the Emperor's Court was, *chap.* xxiii. 11. We have here,

1. The Propoſal which *Feſtus* made to *Paul*, to go and take his Tryal at *Jeruſalem*, v. 9. *Feſtus* was *willing to do the* Jews *a Pleaſure*, inclin'd to gratify the Proſecutors rather than the Priſoner, as far as he could go with Safety againſt One that was a Citizen of *Rome*, and therefore ask'd him, Whether he would be willing to go up to *Jeruſalem*, and clear himſelf there where he had been accus'd, and where he might have his Witneſſes ready to vouch for him, and confirm what he ſaid. He would not offer to turn him over to the High Prieſt, and the *Sanhedrin* as the *Jews* would have had him; but, Wilt thou go thither and be *judg'd of theſe Things before me?* The Preſident if he had pleas'd might have order'd him thither, but he would not do it without his own Conſent, which if he could have wheedled him to give, 'twould have taken off the *odium* of it. In ſuffering Times the *Prudence* of the Lord's People is try'd as well as their *Patience*; being ſent forth therefore *as Sheep in the midſt of Wolves*, they have need to *be Wiſe as Serpents*.

Paul's Refuſal to conſent to it, and his *Reaſons* for it. He knew if he were remov'd to *Jeruſalem*, notwithſtanding the utmoſt vigilance of the Preſident, the *Jews* would find ſome means or other to be the Death of him; And therefore deſires to be excus'd, and pleads.

(1.) That as a Citizen of *Rome*, it was moſt proper for him to be try'd not only by the *Preſident*, but in that which was properly *his* Court, which ſate at *Cæſarea*; *I ſtand at* Cæſar's *Judgment-Seat where I ought to be judged*, in the City which is the Metropolis of the Province. The Court being held in *Cæſar's* Name, and by his Authority and Commiſſion before One that was *delegated* by him, it might, well be ſaid to be *his Judgment-Seat*, as with us all Writs run in the Name of the Soveraign, in whoſe Name all Courts are held. *Paul's* owning that he ought to be judg'd at *Cæſar's* Judgment-Seat, plainly proves that Chriſt's Miniſters are not exempted from the Juriſdiction of the Civil Powers, but ought to be *Subject* to them, as far as they can with a good Conſcience; and if they be Guilty of a real Crime to ſubmit to their Cenſure, if Innocent yet to ſubmit to their Enquiry, and to clear themſelves before them.

(2.) That as a Member of the *Jewiſh* Nation, he had done nothing to make himſelf obnoxious to them; *to the* Jews *have I done no wrong, as thou very well knoweſt*; It very well becomes thoſe that are Innocent to plead their Innocency, and to inſiſt upon it; 'tis a Debt we owe to our own good Name, not only not to bear falſe Witneſs againſt ourſelves, but maintain our own Integrity againſt thoſe who bear falſe Witneſs againſt us.

(3.) That he was willing to abide by the Rules of the Law, and to let that take its Courſe, *v.* 11. If he be Guilty of any Capital Crime that deſerves Death, he will not offer either to make Reſiſtance, or to make his Eſcape, will neither flee from Juſtice, nor fight with it, *I refuſe not to Die*, but will accept of the Puniſhment of mine Iniquity. Not that all who have *committed any Thing worthy of Death* are oblig'd to accuſe themſelves, and offer themſelves to Juſtice, but when they are accus'd and brought to Juſtice they ought to ſubmit, and to ſay, both GOD and the Government is Righteous; 'Tis neceſſary that ſome ſhould be made Examples.

But if he be innocent, as he proteſts he is, if there be *none of theſe Things whereof theſe accuſe me*, if the Proſecution be Malicious, and they are reſolv'd to have my Blood right or wrong, *no Man may deliver me unto them*; no not the Governor himſelf, without palpable Injuſtice; for it is his Buſineſs as much to protect the Innocent, as to puniſh the Guilty; and he claims his Protection.

3. His Appealing to Court; ſince he is continually in Danger of the *Jews*, and one Attempt is made after another to get him into their Hands, whoſe tender Mercies were cruel, he flies to the (*Dernier Reſort*) the laſt Refuge of oppreſſed Innocency, and takes Sanctuary there, ſince he can't have Juſtice done him in any other Way, I *appeal unto Cæſar.* Rather then be deliver'd to the *Jews*, which *Felix* ſeems inclin'd to conſent to, let me be delivered to *Nero*. When *David* had divers Times narrowly eſcap'd the Rage of *Saul*, and concluded he was ſuch a reſtleſs Enemy, that he ſhould one Day periſh by his Hands, he came to this Reſolution, being in a manner compell'd to it, *There is nothing better for me than to* take ſhelter *in the Land of the Philiſtines*, 1 Sam xxvii. 1. ſo *Paul* here. But its a hard Caſe that a Son of *Abraham* muſt be forc'd to appeal to a *Philiſtine*, to a *Nero*, from thoſe who call themſelves the Seed of *Abraham*; and ſhall be ſafer in *Gath* or *Rome* than in *Jeruſalem*. How is the faithful City become a Harlot!

Fifthly, The *Judgment* given upon the whole Matter; *Paul* is neither releas'd nor condem'd; His Enemies hoped the Cauſe would be ended in his Death; his Friends hoped it would be ended in his Deliverance; but it proved neither ſo, nor ſo, they are both diſappointed; the Thing is left as it was. And it is an Inſtance of the ſlow Steps which Providence ſometimes takes, not bringing Things to an Iſſue ſo ſoon as we expect, by which we are often made aſham'd both of our Hopes and of our Fears, and are kept ſtill waiting on GOD. The Cauſe had before been adjourn'd to another Time, now to another Place, to another Court, that *Paul's* Tribulation might *work Patience*.

1. The Preſident adviſes upon the Matter; He *conferr'd with the Council*, μετὰ τȣ͂ συμβȣλίȣ, not with the Council of the *Jews*, that's call'd, συνέδριον, but with *his own* Counſellors, that were always ready to Aſſiſt the Governor with their Advice, *In multitude of Counſellors there is Safety*; and Judges ſhould conſult both with themſelves and others, before they paſs Sentence.

2. He determines to ſend him to *Rome*; ſomething *Paul* meant, not an Appeal to *Cæſar's* Perſon, but only to his Court, the Sentence of which he would abide by, rather then be remitted to the *Jews* Council, and that *Feſtus* might have choſen whether he would have ſent him to *Rome*, or at leaſt whether he would have *joyn'd Iſſue* with him upon the Appeal. But it ſhould ſeem by what *Agrippa* ſaid, *chap.* xxvi. 32. He *might have been ſet at Liberty, if he had not appeal'd to* Cæſar; that by the Courſe of the *Roman* Law, a *Roman* Citizen might appeal at any Time to a ſuperior Court, even to the Supreme; as Cauſes with us are remov'd by *Certiorari*, and Criminals by *Habeas Corpus*; and as *Appeals* are often made to the Houſe of Peers. *Feſtus* therefore either of Choice, or of Courſe, comes to this Reſolution, *Haſt thou Appeal'd unto* Cæſar? *unto* Cæſar *thou ſhalt go.* He found there was ſomething very extraordinary in the Caſe, which he was therefore afraid of given Judgment upon, either one way or other; and the Knowledge of which he thought would be an Entertainment to the Emperor, and therefore he tranſmitted it to his Cognizance. In our Judgment before GOD thoſe that by juſtifying themſelves appeal to the Law, to the Law they ſhall go, and it will condemn them: But thoſe that by Repentance and Faith appeal to the Goſpel, to the Goſpel they ſhall go, and it will ſave them.

13 And after certain days, king Agrippa and
Bernice came unto Cæſarea to ſalute Feſtus. 14
And when they had been there many days, Feſtus
declaring Paul's cauſe unto the king, ſaying, There
is a certain man left in bonds by Felix: 15 About
whom, when I was at Jeruſalem, the chief prieſts
and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, deſiring *to
have* judgment againſt him. 16 To whom I anſwer'd,
It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver
any man to die, before that he which is accuſed
have the accuſers face to face, and have licenſe
to anſwer for himſelf concerning the crime laid
againſt him. 17 Therefore when they were come
thither, without any delay on the morrow I ſat on
the judgment-Seat, and I commanded the man to be
brought forth. 18 Againſt whom when the accuſers
ſtood up, they brought none accuſation of ſuch
things as I ſuppoſed: 19 But had certain queſtions
againſt

againſt him of their own ſuperſtition, and of one Jeſus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. 20 And becauſe I doubted of ſuch manner of queſtions, I asked *him* whether he would go to Jeruſalem, and there be judged of theſe matters. 21 But when Paul had appealed to be reſerved unto the hearing of Auguſtus, I commanded him to be kept till I might ſend him to Ceſar. 22 Then Agrippa ſaid unto Feſtus, I would alſo hear the man my ſelf. To morrow, ſaid he, thou ſhalt hear him. 23 And on the morrow when Agrippa was come, and Bernice with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Feſtus commandment Paul was brought forth. 24 And Feſtus ſaid, King Agrippa, and all men which are here preſent with us, ye ſee this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jeruſalem, and alſo here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himſelf hath appealed to Auguſtus, I have determined to ſend him. 26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and ſpecially before thee, O king Agrippa, that after examination had, I might have ſomewhat to write. 27. For it ſeemeth to me unreaſonable to ſend a priſoner, and not withal to ſignify the crimes *laid* againſt him.

' We have here thePreparation that was made for another Hearing of *Paul* before King *Agrippa*, not in order to his giving Judgment upon him, but in order to his giving Advice concerning him, or rather only to gratify his Curioſity. Chriſt had ſaid concerning his Followers, That they ſhould be brought before *Governors* and *Kings*. In the former part of this Chapter *Paul* was brought before *Feſtus* the *Governor*, here before *Agrippa* the *King*, for a Teſtimony to both. Here's

Firſt, The kind and friendly Viſit which King *Agrippa* made to *Feſtus*, now upon his coming into the Government in that Province. *v.* 13, *After certain days King Agrippa came to Cæſarea.* Here's a Royal Viſit; Kings uſe to think it enough to ſend their Ambaſſadors to congratulate their Friends, but here was a King that came himſelf, that made the Majeſty of a Prince yield to the Satisfaction of a Friend: for *Perſonal Converſe* is the moſt pleaſant among Friends. *Obſerve*,

1. Who the Viſitants were; (1.) King *Agrippa*, the Son of that *Herod* (ſirnam'd *Agrippa*) who kill'd *James* the Apoſtle, and was himſelf eaten up of Worms, and great Grandſon of *Herod the Great*, under whom Chriſt was born. *Joſephus* calls this *Agrippa the younger*; *Claudius* the Emperor made him King of *Chalcis*, and *Tetrarch* of *Trachonitis* and *Abylene*, mention'd, *Luke* iii. 1. The Jewiſh Writers ſpeak of him, and (as Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us) among other Things relate this Story of him, “That reading “the Law publickly, in the latter end of the Year of Releaſe, “as was enjoyn'd the King, when he came to thoſe Words, “*Deut.* xvii. 15. *Thou ſhalt not ſet a ſtranger King over thee,* “*which is not of thy Brethren,* the Tears ran down his Cheeks, “for he was not of the Seed of *Iſrael*; which the Congregation “obſerving, cry'd out, *Be of good Comfort*, *King* Agrippa, *thou* “*art our Brother*; for he was of their Religion, tho' not of their “Blood.” (2.) *Bernice* came with him; ſhe was his own Siſter, now a Widow, the Widow of his Uncle *Herod*, King of *Chalcis*, after whoſe Death ſhe liv'd with this Brother of hers, who was ſuſpected to be too familiar with her; and after ſhe was a ſecond time marry'd to *Polemon*, King of *Cilicia*, ſhe got to be divorc'd from him, and return'd to her Brother King *Agrippa*. *Juv. Sat.* 6. ſpeaks of a Diamond Ring which *Agrippa* gave to *Bernice* his inceſtuous Siſter, *Hunc dedit olim Barbarus inceſtæ dedit hunc Agrippa ſorori* — And names her *Beronices in digito factus pretioſior*. And both *Tacitus* and *Suetonius* ſpeak of a criminal Intimacy afterwards between her and *Titus Veſpaſian*. *Druſilla* the Wife of *Felix*, was another Siſter; ſuch lewd People, were the great People generally in thoſe Times. *Say not, that the former Days were better.*

2. What the Deſign of the Viſit was; They came to *Salute Feſtus*; to give him Joy of his new Promotion, and to wiſh him Joy in it. They came to Complement him upon his Acceſſion to the Government, and to keep up a good Correſpondence with him, that *Agrippa*, who had the Government of *Galilee* might act in concert with *Feſtus*, who had the Government of *Judea*. But 'tis probable, they came as much to divert themſelves, as to ſhew Reſpect to him, and to ſhare in the Entertainments of his Court; and to ſhew their fine Clothes; which would do vain People no good, if they did not *go abroad*.

Secondly, The Account which *Feſtus* gave to King *Agrippa* of *Paul*, and his Caſe, which he gave.

(1.) To *entertain* him, and give him ſome Diverſion; 'Twas a very remarkable Story, and worth any Man's hearing not only as it was ſurprizing and entertaining; but if it were truly and fully told, very inſtructive and edifying: And it would be particularly acceptable to *Agrippa*, not only becauſe he was a Judge, and there were ſome Points of Law and Practice in it well worth his Notice; but much more as he was a *Jew*, and there were ſome Points of Religion in it much more deſerving his Cognizance.

(2.) To *have his Advice*; *Feſtus* was but newly come to be a Judge, at leak to be a Judge in theſe Parts, and therefore is diſfident of himſelf, and of his own Ability, and willing to have the Counſel of thoſe that were older and more experienc'd, eſpecially in a Matter that had ſo much Difficulty in it, as *Paul's* Caſe ſeem'd to have, and therefore he *declar'd it to the King*.

Let us now ſee the particular Account he gives to King *Agrippa* concerning *Paul*, *v.* 14, 21.

1. That he found him a Priſoner when he came into the Government of this Province; and therefore could not of his own Knowledge give an Account of his Cauſe from the Beginning. *There is a certain Man left in Bonds by* Felix; and therefore if there were any thing amiſs in the firſt taking of him into Cuſtody, *Feſtus* is not to anſwer for that, for he found him in Bonds. When *Felix to to do the* Jews *a Pleaſure, left* Paul *bound*, tho' he knew him to be innocent, he knew not what he did; knew not but he might have fallen into worſe Hands than he did fall into, tho' they were none of the beſt.

2. That the Jewiſh *Sanhedrin* were extremely ſet againſt him; The *chief Prieſts and the Elders inform'd me* againſt him as a Dangerous Man, and not fit to live, and *deſir'd* he might therefore be condemn'd to die: Theſe being great Pretenders to Religion, and therefore to be ſuppos'd Men of Honour and Honeſty, *Feſtus* thinks he ought to give Credit to; but *Agrippa* knows them better than he doth, and therefore he deſires his Advice in the Matter.

3. That he had inſiſted upon the *Roman* Law in Favour of the Priſoner, and would not *condemn* him *unheard*, *v.* 16. *It is not the manner of the* Romans, who herein govern themſelves by the Law of Nature, and the Fundamental Rules of Juſtice to *deliver any Man to die*, to *grant* him to Deſtruction, ſo the Word is, to gratify his Enemies with his Deſtruction, *before the Accuſed has the Accuſers Face to Face*, to *confront* their Teſtimony, and have both *Licence* and *Time* given him to Anſwer for himſelf. He ſeems to upbraid them as if they *reflected* upon the *Romans* and their Government in asking ſuch a Thing, or expecting that they would condemn a Man without trying him; No, ſaith he, I would have you to know, whatever you may allow of among yourſelves, the *Romans* allow not of ſuch a piece of Injuſtice among them. *Audi & alteram partem*, was become a Proverb among them; Hear t'other Side. This Rule we ought to be govern'd by in our private Cenſures, in common Converſation; we muſt not give Men ill Characters, nor condemn their Words and Actions till we have heard what is to be ſaid in their Vindication. See *Joh.* vii. 51.

4. That he had brought him upon his Tryal, according to the Duty of his Place, *v.* 17. That he had been *expeditious* in it, and the Proſecutors had no Reaſon to complain of his being *dilatory*, for *as ſoon as ever they were come*, and who are ſure they loſt no Time, *without any delay, on the Morrow*, he had brought on the Cauſe. He had likewiſe Try'd him in the moſt ſolemn Manner, he *ſate on the Judgment ſeat*, as they us'd to do in weightier Cauſes, while thoſe that were of ſmall Moment, they judg'd *de plano*, upon even Ground. He call'd a great Court on Purpoſe for the Tryal of *Paul*, that the Sentence might be Definitive, and the Cauſe ended.

5. That he was extreamly *diſappointed* in the Charge they brought againſt him, *v.* 18, 19. *When the Accuſers ſtood up againſt him*, and open'd their Indictment, *they brought none Accuſations of ſuch Things as I ſuppos'd*: He ſuppos'd by the eagerneſs of their Proſecution, and their urging of it thus upon the *Roman* Governors one after another, (1.) That they had ſomething to accuſe him of that was *dangerous* either to private Property, or the publick Peace, That they would undertake to prove him a Robber, or a Murderer, or a Rebel againſt the *Roman* Power; That he had been *in Arms* to Head a Sedition; that if he were not that *Egyptian* who lately *made an Uproar*, and commanded a Party of Cut-throats, as the *chief Captain* ſuppos'd him to be, yet that he was One *of the ſame Kidney*. Such were the *Out-cries* againſt the Primitive Chriſtians, ſo loud, ſo fierce, that the Standers-by, who judg'd of them by thoſe Out-cries, could not but conclude them the worſt of Men, and to repreſent 'em ſo, was the Deſign of that Clamour, as it was againſt our Saviour. (2.) That they had ſomething to accuſe him of that was *Conuſable* in the *Roman* Courts, and which the Governor was properly the Judge of, as *Gallio* expected, *Acts* xviii. 14. otherwiſe it was abſurd and ridiculous to trouble him with it, and really an Affront to him.

But to his great Surprize, he finds the Matter is neither ſo, nor ſo: They had *certain Queſtions againſt him*, inſtead of Proofs and Evidences againſt him; the worſt they had to ſay againſt him, was *Diſputable* whether it was a Crime or no, *Moot-Point*, that would bear an endleſs Debate, but had no Tendency to faſten, any Guilt upon him; *Queſtions* fitter for the *Schools* than for the *Judgment-ſeat*. And they were Queſtions *of their own Superſtition*, ſo he calls their Religion; or rather, ſo he calls that Part of their Religion which *Paul* was charg'd with doing Damage to. The *Romans* Protected their Religion according to their Law, but not their *Superſtition*, nor the Tradition of their Elders. But the great Queſtion it ſeems was *concerning one Jeſus that was dead, whom* Paul *affirm'd to be alive*. Some think the *Superſtition* he ſpeaks of was the *Chriſtian Religion*, which *Paul* preached, and that he had the ſame Notion of it that the *Athenians* had, that it was the introducing of a new *Dæmon*, even *Jeſus*. See how ſlightly this *Roman* ſpeaks of Chriſt, and of his Death and Reſurrection, and of the great Controverſy between the *Jews* and the *Chriſtians*, whether he were the *Meſſiah* promis'd or no; and the great Proof of his being the Meſſiah, his Reſurrection from the Dead, as if it were no more but this; There was one *Jeſus* that was dead, and *Paul affirm'd, he was alive*. In many Cauſes Iſſue is joyn'd upon this Queſtion, Whether ſuch a Perſon that has been long abſent be *living*, or *dead*, and Proofs are brought on both Sides; and *Feſtus* will have it thought that this is a Matter of no more Moment. Whereas this *Jeſus*, whom he prides himſelf in being thus ignorant of, as if he were below his Notice, is He that *was dead, and is alive*, and *lives for evermore, and has the Keys of Hell and of Death*, Rev. i. 18. What *Paul* affirm'd concerning *Jeſus*, That He is *alive*, is a Truth of ſuch vaſt Importance, that if it be not true, we are all undone.

6. That therefore he had mov'd it to *Paul*, That the Cauſe might be adjourn'd to the Jewiſh Courts, as beſt able to take Cognizance of an Affair of this Nature, *v.* 20. *Becauſe I doubted of ſuch manner of Queſtions.* and thought my ſelf unfit to judge of Things I did not underſtand, *I ask'd him, Whether he would go to Jeruſalem*, appear before the Great *Sanhedrin*, *and there be judg'd of theſe Matters?* He would not force him to it, but ſhould be glad he would conſent to it, that he might not have his Conſcience burthen'd with a Cauſe of this Nature.

7. That *Paul* had choſen rather to remove his Cauſe to *Rome* than to *Jeruſalem*, as expecting fairer Play from the Emperor than from the Prieſts. *He appeal'd to be reſerv'd to the Hearing of Auguſtus*, v. 21. having no other Way to ſtop Proceedings here in this inferior Court; and therefore I have *commanded him to be kept* a cloſe Priſoner, *till I might ſend him to* Cæſar; for I did not ſee Cauſe to refuſe his Appeal, but rather was pleas'd with it.

Thirdly, The bringing of him before *Agrippa*, that he might have the Hearing of his Cauſe.

1. The King deſir'd it. *v.* 22. I thank you for your Account of him, but *I would alſo hear the Man myſelf*; *Agrippa* knows more of this Matter than *Feſtus* doth of the Cauſe, and of the Perſon; he has heard of *Paul*, and knows of what vaſt Concern this Queſtion is, which *Feſtus* makes ſuch a jeſt of, Whether, Jeſus be alive or no? And nothing would oblige him more than to hear *Paul* Many great Men think it below them to take Cognizance of the Matters of Religion, except they can hear them *like themſelves*, in the Judgment-ſeat. *Agrippa* would not for all the World to have gone to a Meeting to hear *Paul* preach, no more than *Herod* to hear *Jeſus*; and yet are both glad to have them brought before them, only to ſatisfy their Curioſity. Perhaps *Agrippa* deſir'd to *hear him himſelf*, that he might be in a Capacity to *do him a Kindneſs*, and yet did him none, only put ſome Credit upon him.

2. *Feſtus* granted it; *To Morrow thou ſhalt hear him.* There was a good Providence in this for the Encouragement of *Paul*, who ſeem'd bury'd alive in his Impriſonment, and depriv'd of all Opportunities of doing Good; we know not of any of his Epiſtles that bore Date from his Priſon at *Cæſarea*; what Opportunity he had of doing Good to his Friends that viſited him, and perhaps to little Congregation of them that might viſit him every Lord's-Day, was but a low and narrow Sphere of Uſefulneſs, ſo that he ſeem'd to be thrown by as a *deſpis'd broken Veſſel, and a Veſſel in which there was no Pleaſure*; but this gives him an Opportunity of Preaching Chriſt to a great Congregation, and which is more, to a Congregation of great Ones. *Felix* heard him *in private* concerning the Faith of Chriſt: But *Agrippa* and *Feſtus* agree he ſhall be heard *in publick*. And we have reaſon to think, that his Sermon in the next Chapter, tho' it might not be ſo inſtrumental as ſome other of his Sermons for the Converſion of Souls, yet redounded as much to the Honour of Chriſt and Chriſtianity as any Sermon he ever preach'd in his Life.

3. Great Preparation was made for it, *v.* 23. *The next Day* there was a great Appearance *in the Place of Hearing*, *Paul* and his Cauſe being much *talk'd of*, and the more for their being much *talk'd againſt*.

1. *Agrippa* and *Bernice* took this Opportunity to ſhew themſelves *in State*, and to make a Figure, and perhaps for that End deſir'd the Occaſion, that they might ſee and be ſeen; for *they came with great Pomp*; richly dreſs'd with Gold and Pearl, and coſtly Array; with a great Retinue of Footmen in rich Liveries which made a ſplendid Shew and dazzled the Eyes of the gazing Croud. They came *μετὰ πολλῆς φαντασίας*, *with great Fancy*, ſo the Word is. *Note*, Great Pomp; is but great *Fancy*, it neither *adds* any real Excellency, nor *gains* any real Reſpects, but feeds a vain Humour, which Wiſe Men would rather mortify, than gratify. 'Tis but a Shew, a Dream, a *Fantaſtical* Thing, ſo the Word ſignifies, ſuperficial, and *it paſſeth away*. And the *Pomp* of this Appearance, would put One for ever out of Conceit with *Pomp*, when the Pomp which *Agrippa* and *Bernice* appear'd in was (1.) *ſtain'd* by their lewd Characters, and all the Beauty of it ſully'd, and all virtuous People that knew them could not but *contemn* them in the midſt of all this Pomp, as *vile Perſons*, Pſal. xv. 4. (2.) *Out-ſhone* by the real Glory of the poor Priſoner at the Bar; What was the Honour of their fine Clothes, compar'd with that of his Wiſdom and Grace, and Holineſs; his Courage and Conſtancy in ſuffering for Chriſt! His *Bonds* in ſo good a Cauſe were more glorious than their *Chains of Gold*; and his Guards than their Equipage. Who would be fond of Worldly *Pomp*, that here ſees ſo ill a Woman *loaded with it*, and ſo good a Man loaded with the Reverſe of it?

2. The *chief Captain* and *principal Men of the City* took this Opportunity to pay their Reſpects to *Feſtus* and to his Gueſts, it anſwer'd the End of a Ball at Court, it brought the fine Folks together in their fine Clothes, and ſerv'd for an Entertainment. 'Tis probable, *Feſtus* ſent *Paul* notice of it over Night, to be ready for a Hearing the next Morning before *Agrippa*: And ſuch a Confidence had *Paul* in the Promiſe of Chriſt, That it ſhould be *given him in that ſame Hour what he ſhould ſpeak*, that he complain'd not of the ſhort Warning, nor was put into Confuſion by it. And I am apt to think they that were to appear *in Pomp*, perplex'd themſelves more with Care about *their Clothes*, than *Paul* that was to appear as a Priſoner did with Care about *his Cauſe*; for he knew whom he had believ'd, and who *ſtood by him*.

Fourthly, The Speech with which *Feſtus* introduc'd the Cauſe, when the *Court*, or rather, the *Audience* was *ſet*; which is much to the ſame Purpoſe with the Account he had juſt now given to *Agrippa*.

1. He addreſſeth himſelf reſpectfully to the Company; *King* Agrippa, *and all Men which are here preſent with us.* He ſpeaks to *all the Men*, *πάντες ἄνδρες*, as if he intended a tacit Reflection upon *Bernice*, a *Woman*, for appearing in a Meeting of this Nature; he doth not refer any Thing to her Judgment, or deſire her Counſel; but *all you that are preſent, that are Men*, ſo the Words are plac'd) I deſire you to take Cognizance of this Matter. The Word us'd is that which ſignifies *Men* in diſtinction from *Women*; What had *Bernice* to do here?

2. He repreſents the Priſoner as One that the *Jews* had a very great Spite againſt; not only the Rulers, but *the Multitude of them, both at* Jeruſalem, *and here at* Cæſarea, cry out, *That he ought not to live any longer*, for they think he has liv'd too long already; and if he liv'd any longer it would be to do more Miſchief. They could not charge him with any capital Crime, but they want to have him out of the way.

3. He confeſſeth the Priſoner's Innocency; And it was much for the Honour of *Paul* and his *Bonds*, that he had ſuch a publick Acknowledgment as this from the Mouth of his Judge, *v.* 25. *I found that he had committed nothing worthy of Death*; upon a full Hearing of the Cauſe, it appear'd that there was no Evidence at all to ſupport the Indictment; and therefore tho' he was inclinable enough to favour the Proſecutors, yet his own Conſcience brought in *Paul*, *Not Guilty*. And why did he not diſcharge him then, for he *ſtood upon his Deliverance?* why truly, becauſe he was ſo much clamour'd againſt, and he fear'd the Clamour would turn upon *himſelf* if he ſhould releaſe him: 'Tis pity but every Man that has a *Conſcience*, ſhould have *Courage* to act according to it. Or, perhaps, becauſe there was *ſo much Smoke*, he concluded there could not but be ſome Fire, which would appear at laſt, and he would continue him a Priſoner in Expectation of it.

4. He acquaints them with the preſent State of the Caſe; That the Priſoner had *appeal'd to the Emperor* himſelf; whereby he put an Honour upon his own Cauſe, as knowing it not unworthy the Cognizance of the greateſt of Men. And that he had admitted his Appeal; *I have determin'd to ſend him.* And thus the Cauſe now ſtood.

5. He deſires their Aſſiſtance in *examining* the Matter, *calmly* and *impartially*, now there was no Danger of their being interrupted, as he had been with the noiſineſs and outrage of the Proſecutors; that he might have at leaſt ſuch an Inſight into the Cauſe as was neceſſary to his ſtating of it to the Emperor, *v.* 26, 27. (1.) He thought it *unreaſonable to ſend a Priſoner*, eſpecially ſo far as *Rome*, *and not withal to ſignify the Crimes laid againſt him*, that the Matter might be prepar'd as much as poſſible, and put in a readineſs for the Emperor's Determination; for he is ſuppos'd to be a Man of great Buſineſs, and therefore every Affair muſt be laid before him in as little Compaſs as poſſible. 2. He could not as yet write *any Thing certain* concerning *Paul*; ſo confus'd were the Information that were given in againſt him, and ſo inconſiſtent, that he could make nothing at all of them. (3.) He therefore deſir'd he might be thus *publickly* examin'd, that he might be adviſ'd by them what to write. See what a great deal of Trouble and Vexation they were put to, and to what Delay, nay, and to what Hazard in the Adminiſtration of publick Juſtice, who liv'd at ſuch a Diſtance from *Rome*, and yet were Subject to the Emperor of *Rome*; And the ſame was this Nation of ours put to, which is about as far diſtant from *Rome* the other way, when it was in Eccleſiaſtical Affairs Subject

to the Pope of *Rome*, and Appeals were upon all Occaſions made to his Court; and the ſame Miſchiefs and a Thouſand worſe would they bring upon us, who would again entangle us in that *Yoke of Bondage*.

CHAP. XXVI.

We left Paul *at the Bar, and* Feſtus *and* Agrippa *and* Bernice, *and all the great Men of the City of* Cæſarea *upon the Bench, or about it, waiting to hear what he had to ſay for himſelf. Now in this Chapter we have,* 1. *The Account he gives of himſelf in Anſwer to the Calumnies of the* Jews. *And in that,* (1.) *His humble Addreſs to King* Agrippa, *and the Complement he paſs'd upon him,* v. 1—3. (2.) *His Account of his Original and Education, and his Profeſſion as a* Phariſee, *and his Adherence ſtill to that which was then the main Article of his Creed, in diſtinction from the Sadduces, the* Reſurrection of the Dead; *however in Rituals he had ſince departed from it,* v. 4—8. (3.) *Of his Zeal againſt the Chriſtian Religion, and the Profeſſors of it in the beginning of his Time,* v. 9—11. (4.) *Of his Miraculous Converſion to the Faith of Chriſt,* v. 12—16. (5.) *Of the Commiſſion he receiv'd from Heaven, to preach the Goſpel to the* Gentiles, *v.* 17, 18. (6.) *Of his Proceedings purſuant to that Commiſſion, which had given this mighty Offence to the* Jews, *v.* 19—21. (7.) *Of the Doctrine which he had made it his Buſineſs to preach to the* Gentiles, *which was ſo far from deſtroying the Law and the Prophets, that it ſhew'd the fulfilling of both,* v, 22, 23. 2. *The Remarks that were made upon his Apology.* (1.) Feſtus *thought he never heard a Man talk* ſo madly, *and ſlighted him as craz'd,* v. 24. *And in Anſwer to him he denies the Charge, and appeals to King* Agrippa, *v.* 25, 26. (2.) *King* Agrippa *being more cloſely and particularly dealt with, thinks he never heard a Man talk more rationally,* and *convincingly, and owns himſelf almoſt his Convert,* v. 28. *And* Paul *heartily wiſhes him ſo,* v. 29. (3.) *They all agree that he was an Innocent Man, and that he ought to be ſet at Liberty, and it was pity he was provok'd to put a Bar in his own Door, by Appealing to* Cæſar, *v.* 30—31.

THEN Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Thou art permitted to ſpeak for thy ſelf. Then Paul ſtretched forth the hand, and anſwered for himſelf, 2 I think my ſelf happy, king Agrippa, becauſe I ſhall anſwer for my ſelf, this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accuſed of the Jews: 3 Eſpecially becauſe I know thee to be expert in all cuſtoms and queſtions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beſeech thee to hear me patiently. 4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the firſt among mine own nation at Jeruſalem, know all the Jews, 5 Which knew me from the beginning, (if they would teſtifie) that after the moſt ſtraiteſt ſect of our religion, I lived a Phariſee. 6 And now I ſtand, and am judged for the hope of the promiſe made of God unto our fathers: 7 Unto which *promiſe* our twelve tribes inſtantly ſerving *God* day and night, hope to come: for which hopes ſake, king Agrippa, I am accuſe of the Jews. 8 Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead? 9 I verily thought with my ſelf, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jeſus of Nazareth. 10 Which thing I alſo did in Jeruſalem: and many of the ſaints did I ſhut up in priſon, having receiv'd authority from the chief prieſts; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice againſt *them*. 11 And I puniſhed them oft in every ſynagogue, and compelled *them* to blaſpheme; and being exceedingly mad againſt them, I perſecuted *them* even unto ſtrange cities.

Agrippa was the moſt Honourable Perſon in the Aſſembly, having the Title of *King* beſtow'd upon him, tho' otherwiſe having only the Power of the other Governors under the Emperor; and tho' not here ſuperior yet ſenior to *Feſtus*, and therefore *Feſtus* having open'd the Cauſe, he as the Mouth of the Court, intimates to *Paul* a Licence given him to *ſpeak for himſelf*, *v.* 1. And *Paul* was ſilent till he had that Liberty allow'd him; for thoſe are not the moſt forward to ſpeak, that are beſt prepared to ſpeak, and ſpeak beſt. This was a Favour which the *Jews* would not allow him, or not without difficulty; but *Agrippa* freely gives it him. And *Paul*'s Cauſe was ſo good, that he deſir'd no more, but to have Liberty to *ſpeak for himſelf*, he needed no Advocate, no *Tertullus* to ſpeak for him.

Notice is taken of his Geſture, he *ſtretch'd forth the Hand*, as one that was under no Conſternation at all, but a perfect freedom and command of himſelf; it alſo intimates, that he was *in earneſt*, and expected their Attention, while he *anſwer'd for himſelf*. *Obſerve*, He did not inſiſt upon his having appeal'd to *Cæſar*, as an Excuſe for being ſilent; did not ſay, I'll be examin'd no more till I come to the Emperor himſelf; but chearfully embraceth the Opportunity of doing Honour to the Cauſe he ſuffer'd for. If we muſt be ready to give to *every Man that asketh us*, much more to every Man in Authority, *a Reaſon of the Hope that is in us*, 1 Pet. iii. 15.

Now in this former Part of the Speech,

Firſt, *Paul* addreſſeth himſelf with a very particular Reſpect to *Agrippa*, *v.* 2, 3. He anſwer'd chearfully before *Felix*, becauſe he knew he had been *many Years a Judge to that Nation*, chap. xxiv. 10. But his Opinion of *Agrippa* goes further. *Obſerve*,

1. Being *accus'd of the Jews*, and having many Ill Things laid to his Charge, he is glad he has an Opportunity of *clearing himſelf*; ſo far is he from imagining that his being an Apoſtle exempted him from the Juriſdiction of the Civil Powers. Maſtracy is an Ordinance of GOD which we have all Benefit by, and therefore muſt all be ſubject to.

2. Since he is forc'd to *anſwer for himſelf*, he is glad it is before King *Agrippa*, who being himſelf a Proſelyte to the Jewiſh Religion underſtood all Matters relating to that, better than the other *Roman* Governors did; *I know thee to be expert in all Cuſtoms and Queſtions which are among the* Jews. It ſeems *Agrippa* was a Scholar, and had been particularly converſant in the Jewiſh Learning; was *expert in the Cuſtoms* of the Jewiſh Religion, and knew the Nature of 'em, and that they were not deſign'd to be either *univerſal* or *perpetual*: He was expert alſo in the *Queſtions* that aroſe upon thoſe *Cuſtoms*, in determining of which the *Jews* themſelves were not all of a Mind. *Agrippa* was well vers'd in the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, and therefore could make a better Judgment upon the Controverſy between him and the *Jews* concerning Jeſus being the *Meſſiah* than another could. It is an *Encouragement* to a Preacher, to have thoſe to ſpeak to that are *intelligent*, and can diſcern Things that differ. When *Paul* ſaith, *Judge ye what I ſay*, yet he *ſpeaks as to wiſe Men*, 1 Cor. x. 15.

3. He therefore begs that he would *hear him patiently*, μακροθύμως with *Long-ſuffering*. *Paul* deſign'd a *long* Diſcourſe, and begs he would *hear him out*, and not be *weary*; he deſigns a *plain* Diſcourſe, and begs he would hear him with Mildneſs, and not be *angry*. *Paul* had ſome Reaſon to fear that as *Agrippa* being a *Jew*, was well vers'd in the Jewiſh *Cuſtoms*, and therefore the more competent Judge of his Cauſe, ſo he was *ſour'd* in ſome meaſure with the Jewiſh Leaven, and therefore prejudic'd againſt *Paul* as the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*; he therefore ſaith this to ſweeten him, *I beſeech thee, hear me patiently*. Sure the leaſt we can expect, when we preach the Faith of *Chriſt*, is to be heard patiently.

Secondly, He *profeſſeth* that tho' he was *hated* and *branded* as an *Apoſtate*, yet he ſtill *adher'd* to all that *Good* which he was firſt *educated* and *trained up* in; his Religion was always built upon the *Promiſe of GOD made unto the Fathers*; and this he ſtill *built upon*.

1. See here *what his Religion was* in his Youth; his *Manner of Life* was *well known*, *v.* 4, 5. He was not indeed born *among his own Nation*, but he was bred among them *at Jeruſalem*. Tho' he had of late Years been converſant with the *Gentiles*, which had given great Offence to the *Jews*, yet at his ſetting-out in the World he was intimately acquainted with the Jewiſh Nation, and intirely in their Intereſts. His Education was neither *foreign* nor *obſcure*, 'twas *among his own Nation at* Jeruſalem, where Religion and Learning flouriſhed. *All the* Jews *knew it*, all that could remember ſo long, for *Paul* made himſelf remarkable betimes. They that *knew him from the Beginning*, could teſtify for him that he was *a Phariſee*; that he was not only of the *Jewiſh Religion*, and an Obſerver of all the Ordinances of it, but that he was of the *moſt ſtrict Sect of that Religion*, moſt nice and exact in obſerving the Inſtitutions of it himſelf, and moſt rigid and critical in impoſing them upon others. He was not only call'd a *Phariſee*, but he *liv'd a Phariſee*: All that knew him, knew very well that never any *Phariſee* conform'd more punctually to the Rules of his Order than he did. Nay, and he was of the better Sort of *Phariſees*; for he was brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, who was an eminent Rabbin of the School or Houſe of *Hillel*, who was in much greater Reputation for Religion than the School or Houſe of *Samai*.

Now if *Paul* was a *Phariſee*, and *liv'd* a *Phariſee*,

(1.) Then he was a *Scholar*, a Man of *Learning*, and not an ignorant illiterate Mechanick: The *Phariſees* knew the Law, and were well vers'd in it, and in the Traditional Expoſitions of it. It was a Reproach to the other Apoſtles, that they had not had Academical Education, but were bred Fiſhermen, *Acts* iv. 13. Therefore that the unbelieving *Jews* might be left without Excuſe, here is an Apoſtle rais'd up that had ſate at the Feet of their moſt eminent Doctors.

(2.) Then he was a *Moraliſt*, a Man of *Virtue*, and not a Rake, or a looſe debauch'd young Man; if he liv'd like a *Phariſee*, he was no Drunkard or Fornicator; and being a young *Phariſee*, we may hope he was *no Extortioner*, nor had yet learn'd the Arts which the crafty, covetous old *Phariſees* had of devouring the Houſes of poor Widows; but he was, *as touching the Righteouſneſs which is* *the Law, blameleſs*; he was not chargeable with any Inſtances of open Vice and Profaneneſs; and therefore as he could not be thought to have deſerted his Religion becauſe he did not *know it*, for he was a learned Man; ſo he could not be thought to have deſerted it, becauſe he did not *love it*, or was diſaffected to the Obligations of it, for he was a Virtuous Man, and not inclin'd to any Immorality.

(3.) Then he was *Orthodox* ſound in the Faith, and not a Deiſt or Sceptick, or a Man of corrupt Principles that led to Infidelity; He was a *Phariſee*, in oppoſition to a *Sadducee*; he receiv'd thoſe Books of the *Old Teſtament* which the *Sadduces* rejected, believ'd a World of Spirits, the Immortality of the Soul, the Reſurrection of the Body, and the Rewards and Puniſhments of the future State, all which the *Sadducees* deny'd. They could not ſay, he quitted his Religion for want of a Principle, or for want of a due Regard to Divine Revelation; No, he always had a Veneration for the ancient *Promiſe made of GOD unto the Fathers*, and and built his Hope upon it.

Now tho' *Paul* knew very well that all this would not juſtify him before GOD, nor make a Righteouſneſs for him, yet he knew it was for his Reputation among the *Jews*, and an Argument *ad hominem*, that he was not ſuch a Man as they repreſented him to be. Tho' he counted it but Loſs that he might *win Chriſt*; yet he mentions it when it might ſerve to honour Chriſt. He knew very well that all this while he was a ſtranger to the ſpiritual Nature of the Divine Law, and to Heart Religion, and that except his Righteouſneſs *exceeded this*, he ſhould never go to Heaven; yet he reflects upon it with ſome Satisfaction that he had not been before his Converſion an *atheiſtical*, *profane*, *vicious* Man, but according to the Light he had, had *liv'd in all good Conſcience before GOD*.

2. See here *what his Religion is*; He has not indeed ſuch a Zeal for the Ceremonial Law, as he had in his Youth, the Sacrifices and Offerings appointed by that, he thinks are ſuperſeded by the Great Sacrifice which they typify'd; Ceremonial Pollutions and Purifications from them, he makes no Conſcience of, and thinks the Levitical Prieſthood is honourably ſwallow'd up in the Prieſthood of Chriſt; but for the main Principles of his Religion, he is as zealous for them as ever, and more ſo, and reſolves to live and die by them.

1. His Religion is built upon the *Promiſe made of GOD unto the Fathers*; 'Tis built upon *Divine Revelation*, which he receives and believes and ventures his Soul upon; 'tis built upon *Divine Grace*, and that Grace manifeſted and convey'd *by Promiſe*. The Promiſe of GOD is the Guide and Ground of his Religion; the Promiſe *made to the Fathers*, which was more ancient than the Ceremonial Law, *that Ceremony which was confirm'd before of GOD in Chriſt*, and *which the Law that was not till four hundred and thirty Years after, could not diſanul*, Gal. iii. 17. *Chriſt* and *Heaven* are the two Great Doctrines of the Goſpel, that *GOD has given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son*. Now theſe two are the Matter of the *Promiſe made unto the Fathers*; it may look back as far as the Promiſe made to Father *Adam*, concerning the Seed of the Woman, and thoſe Diſcoveries of a future State, which the firſt Patriarchs acted Faith upon, and were ſav'd by that Faith; but it reſpects chiefly the Promiſe made to Father *Abraham*, That *in his Seed all the Families of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed*; and, that *GOD would be a GOD to him, and to his Seed after him*. The former meaning *Chriſt*, the latter *Heaven*; for if GOD had not *prepar'd for them a City*, he would have been aſham'd to have call'd himſelf *their God*. Heb. xi. 16.

2. His Religion conſiſts in the *Hopes* of this *Promiſe*; He placeth it not, as they did, in *Meats and Drinks*, and the Obſervation of *Carnal Ordinances*, GOD had often ſhew'd what little account He made of them, but in a believing Dependance upon GOD's Grace in the Covenant, and upon the *Promiſe*, which was the *Great Charter* by which the Church was firſt *Incorporated*. (1.) He had *Hope in Chriſt* as the *promis'd Seed*; he hop'd to be *bleſſed in him*; to receive the Bleſſing of GOD, and to be truly bleſſed, (2.) He had *Hopes of Heaven*; This is expreſly meant, as appears by comparing, *chap.* xxiv. 15. *That there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the Dead*. *Paul* had no Confidence in the Fleſh, but in Chriſt; no Expectation at all of great Things in this World, but of greater things in the other World, than any this World can pretend to; he had his Eye upon a future State.

3. Herein he *concurr'd* with all the *pious Jews*; His Faith was not only according to the Scripture, but according to the Teſtimony of the Church, which was a ſupport to it. Tho' they ſet him up as a Mark, he was not ſingular; *Our Twelve Tribes*, the Body of the Jewiſh Church, *inſtantly ſerving GOD Day and Night*, hope to *come to this Promiſe*, i. e. to the Good promis'd. The People of *Iſrael* are call'd the *Twelve Tribes*, becauſe ſo they were at firſt; and tho' we read not of the Return of the ten Tribes in a Body, yet we have Reaſon to think many particular Perſons, more or leſs of every Tribe return'd to their own Land; perhaps by Degrees, the *greater part* of them that were carry'd away. Chriſt ſpeaks of the *Twelve Tribes*, Matth. 19. 21. *Anna* was of the Tribe of *Aſher*, Luke ii. 36. *James* directs his Epiſtle to the *Twelve Tribes ſcatter'd abroad*, Jam. i. 1. *Our* Twelve Tribes, which make up the Body of our Nation, to which I and others belong. Now all the Iſraelites *profeſs* to believe in this Promiſe both of Chriſt and Heaven, and *hope to come*, to the Benefits of them. They all hope *for* Meſſiah *to come*, and we that are Chriſtians hope *in a* Meſſiah *already come*; ſo that we all agree to build upon the ſame Promiſe. They look for the *Reſurrection of the Dead*, and *the Life of the World to come*, and that's it that I look for. Why ſhould I be look'd upon as advancing ſomething dangerous and heterodox, or as an Apoſtate from the Faith and Worſhip of the Jewiſh Church, when I agree with them in this Fundamental Article? I hope to come to the ſame Heaven at laſt that they hope to come too; and if we expect to meet ſo happily in our End, why ſhould we fall out ſo unhappily by the Way.

Nay, the Jewiſh Church not only hop'd to come to this Promiſe, but in the hope of it they *inſtantly ſerv'd GOD Day and Night*. The Temple Service which conſiſted in a continual Courſe of the religious Duties, Morning and Evening, Day and Night, from the Beginning of the Year to the End of it, and was kept up by the *Prieſts* and *Levites*, and the *Stationary Men*, as they call'd them, who continually attended there to lay their Hands upon the publick Sacrifices, as the Repreſentatives of all the Twelve Tribes. This Service was kept up in the Profeſſion of Faith in the Promiſe of Eternal Life, and in Expectation of it, *Paul inſtantly ſerves God Day and Night* in the *Goſpel of his Son*; the *Twelve Tribes* by their Repreſentatives do ſo *in the Law of Moſes*, but he and they do it *in hope* of the ſame Promiſe; and therefore they ought not to look upon me as a Deſerter from their Church, ſo long as I hold by the ſame Promiſe that they hold by. Much more ſhould Chriſtians that hope in the ſame Jeſus for the ſame Heaven, tho' differing in the Modes and Ceremonies of Worſhip, hope the beſt one of another, and live together in holy Love. Or it may be meant of particular Perſons who continu'd in the Communion of the Jewiſh Church, and were very *devout in their Way*, *ſerving GOD* with great Intention, and a cloſe Application of Mind, and conſtant in it, *Night and Day*, as *Anna* who *departed not from the Temple, but ſerv'd* ('tis the ſame Word here us'd) *in Faſtings and Prayers Night and Day*, Luke. ii. 37. In this Way they *hope to come to the Promiſe*, and I hope they will. *Note*, Thoſe only can upon good Grounds *hope for eternal Life*, that are diligent and conſtant in the Service of GOD; and the Proſpect of that Eternal Life ſhould engage us to Diligence and Conſtancy in our Religious Exerciſes. We ſhould go on with our Work in Heaven in our Eye. And thoſe that *inſtantly ſerve GOD Day and Night*, tho' not in our Way, we ought to judge charitably of.

4. This was it that he was now *ſuffering for*; for Preaching that Doctrine which they themſelves, if they did but underſtand themſelves aright, muſt own. *I am judged for the Hope of the Promiſe made unto the Fathers*. He ſtuck to the Promiſe againſt the Ceremonial Law, while his Perſecutors ſtuck to the Ceremonial Law againſt the Promiſe; ſo that 'tis *for this Hope's ſake, King* Agrippa, *that I am accus'd of the* Jews; becauſe I do that which I think my ſelf oblig'd to do by the Hope of that Promiſe. 'Tis common for Men to hate and perſecute the Power of that Religion in others, which yet they pride themſelves in the Form of. *Paul*'s Hope was what *they themſelves alſo allow'd*, chap. xxiv. 15. and yet they were thus enrag'd againſt him for practiſing according to that Hope. But it was his Honour, that when he ſuffer'd as a Chriſtian he ſuffer'd *for the Hope* of Iſrael, *chap.* xxviii. 20.

5. This was it which he would perſuade all that heard him cordially to embrace, *v.* 8. *Why ſhould it be thought a Thing incredible with you that GOD ſhould raiſe the Dead?* This ſeems to come in ſomewhat abruptly; but 'tis likely *Paul* ſaid much more than is here recorded; and that he explain'd the *Promiſe made to the Fathers*, to be the Promiſe of the *Reſurrection* and *Eternal Life*, and prov'd that he was in the right Way of purſuing his hope of that Happineſs, becauſe he believ'd in Chriſt who was *riſen from the Dead*, which was a Pledge and Earneſt of that Reſurrection, which the Fathers hoped for; *Paul* is therefore earneſt to *know the Power of Chriſt's Reſurrection*, that by it he may *attain to the Reſurrection of the Dead*, See *Phil.* iii. 10, 11. Now many of his Hearers were *Gentiles*, moſt of them perhaps, *Feſtus* particularly, and we may ſuppoſe when they heard him ſpeak ſo much of *Chriſt's Reſurrection*, and of the *Reſurrection from the Dead* which the Twelve Tribes hoped for, they *mocked* as the *Athenians* did, began to *ſmile* at it, and whiſper'd to one another what an abſurd Thing it was; which occaſion'd *Paul* thus to reaſon with them, *What? Is it thought incredible with you that GOD ſhould raiſe the Dead?* ſo it may be read, *If it be marvellous in your Eyes, ſhould it be marvellous in mine Eyes, ſaith the LORD of Hoſts*, Zech. viii. 6. If it be above the Power of Nature, yet it is not above the Power of the GOD of Nature. *Note*, There is no reaſon why we ſhould think it at all *incredible that GOD ſhould raiſe the Dead*. We are not required to believe any Thing that is *incredible*, any Thing that *implies a Contradiction*. There are Motives of Credibility ſufficient to carry us thro' all the Doctrines of the Chriſtian Religion, and this particularly of the Reſurrection of the Dead. Hath not GOD an infinite Almighty Power to which Nothing is impoſſible? Did not he at firſt make the World out of Nothing, with a Word's ſpeaking? Did he not form our Bodies, form them *out of the Clay*, and breathe into us the Breath of Life at firſt, and cannot the ſame Power form them again out of their own Clay, and put Life into them again? Do we not ſee a kind of Reſurrection in Nature at the return of every Spring?

Hath the Sun ſuch a Force to raiſe dead Plants, and ſhould it ſeem incredible to us that GOD ſhould raiſe dead Bodies?

Thirdly, He *acknowledgeth*, that while he continu'd a *Phariſee*, he was a bitter Enemy to Chriſtians, and Chriſtianity, and thought he ought to be ſo, and continu'd ſo to the Moment that Chriſt wrought that wonderful Change in him. This he mentions,

1. To ſhew that his becoming a Chriſtian and a Preacher, was not the Product and Reſult of any previous Diſpoſition or Inclination that Way, or any gradual advance of Thought in favour of the Chriſtian Doctrine; he did not reaſon himſelf into Chriſtianity by a Chain of Arguments, but was brought into the higheſt Degree of an Aſſurance of it, immediately from the higheſt Degree of Prejudice againſt it: By which it appear'd, that he was made a Chriſtian and a Preacher by a ſupernatural Power; ſo that his Converſion in ſuch a miraculous Way, was not only to himſelf, but to others alſo, a convincing Proof of the Truth of Chriſtianity.

2. Perhaps he deſigns it for ſuch an Excuſe of his Perſecutors as Chriſt made for his, when he ſaid, *They know not what they do*; *Paul* himſelf, when Time was, thought he did what he ought to do when he perſecuted the Diſciples of Chriſt, and he charitably thinks they labour'd under the like Miſtake. *Obſerve*.

1. What a *Fool* he was in his *Opinion*, *v*. 9. He *thought with himſelf, that he ought do many Things*, every thing that lay in his Power, *contrary to the Name of Jeſus of Nazareth*, contrary to his Doctrine, his Honour, his Intereſt: That Name did no harm, yet becauſe it agreed not with the Notion he had of the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah*, he was for doing all he could againſt it. He thought he did God good Service in perſecuting thoſe who call'd on the Name of Jeſus Chriſt. *Note*, 'Tis poſſible for thoſe to be confident they are in the right, who yet are evidently in the wrong; and for thoſe to think they are doing their Duty, who are wilfully perſiſting in the greateſt Sin. They that hated their Brethren and caſt them out ſaid, *Let the Lord be glorify'd*, Iſa. lxvi. 5. Under Colour and Pretext of Religion, the moſt barbarous and inhuman Villanies have been not only juſtify'd, but ſanctify'd and magnify'd, *John* xvi. 2.

2. What a *Fury* he was in *Practice*, *v*. 10, 11. There is not a more violent Principle in the World than Conſcience miſ-informed; when *Paul* thought it his Duty to do all he could againſt the Name of Chriſt, he ſpared no Pains or Coſt in it. He gives an Account of what he did of that Kind, and aggravates it as one that was truly penitent for it, *I was a Blaſphemer*, a *Perſecutor*, 1 Tim. i. 13.

1. He fill'd the Goals with Chriſtians, as if they had been the worſt of Criminals, deſigning hereby not only to terrify them, but to make them odious to the People, He was *the Devil that caſt ſome of them into Priſon*, Rev. ii. 10. took them into Cuſtody in order to their being proſecuted; *Many of the Saints did I ſhut up in Priſon, both Men and Women*, Acts viii. 2.

2. He made himſelf the Tool of the chief Prieſts; herein from them he *received Authority*, as an inferior Officer to put their Laws in Execution, and proud enough he was to be a Man in Authority for ſuch a Purpoſe.

3. He was very *officious* to Vote unasked for the putting of Chriſtians to Death, particularly *Stephen*, to whoſe Death *Saul* was *conſenting*, Acts viii. 1. and ſo made himſelf *particeps criminis*. Perhaps he was for his great Zeal, tho' young, made a Member of the *Sanhedrin*, and their Voted for the condemning of Chriſtians to die; or after they were condemn'd, he juſtify'd what was done, and commended it, and ſo made himſelf guilty *ex poſt facto*, as if he had been a Judge or Jury-man.

4. He brought them under Puniſhments of an inferior Nature, *in the Synagogues*, where they were *ſcourg'd* as Tranſgreſſors of the Rules of the Synagogue; he had a Hand in the puniſhing of divers; nay it ſhould ſeem the ſame Perſons were by his Means *often puniſh'd*; as he himſelf was *five times*, 2 Cor. xi. 24.

5. He not only puniſh'd them for their Religion, but taking a Pride in triumphing over Mens Conſciences, he *forc'd* them to *abjure* their Religion, by putting them to the Torture; *I compelled them to blaſpheme* Chriſt, and to ſay, he was a Deceiver, and they were deceived in him; compell'd them to deny their Maſter, and renounce their Obligations to him. Nothing will lie heavier upon Perſecutors than forcing Mens Conſciences, how much ſoever they may now triumph in the Proſelytes they have made by their Violences.

6. His Rage ſwell'd ſo againſt Chriſtians and Chriſtianity, that *Jeruſalem it ſelf* was too narrow a Stage for it to act upon, but being *exceedingly mad againſt them*, *he perſecuted them even to ſtrange Cities*. He was mad at them to ſee how much they had to ſay for themſelves, notwithſtanding all he did againſt them; mad to ſee them multiply the more for their being afflicted; he was *exceedingly mad*; the Stream of his Fury would admit no Banks, no Bounds, but he was as much a Terror to himſelf, as he was to them; ſo great was his *Vexation* within himſelf that he could not prevail, as well as his *Indignation* againſt them. Perſecutors are mad Men, and ſome of them *exceedingly mad*. *Paul* was mad to ſee that thoſe in other Cities were not as outragious againſt the Chriſtians, and therefore made himſelf *buſy* there where he had *no Buſineſs*, and perſecuted the Chriſtians even in *ſtrange Cities*. There is not a more reſtleſs Principle than Malice, eſpecially which pretends Conſcience.

This was *Paul's* Character, and this his Manner of Life in the Beginning of his Time; and therefore he could not be preſum'd to be a Chriſtian by Education, or Cuſtom, or that he was drawn in by hope of Preferment, for all imaginable *external* Objections lay againſt his being a Chriſtian.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damaſcus, with authority and commiſſion from the chief prieſts: 13 At mid-day, O king, I ſaw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightneſs of the ſun, ſhining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. 14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice ſpeaking unto me, and ſaying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me? *It is* hard for thee to kick againſt the pricks. 15 And I ſaid, Who art thou, Lord? And he ſaid, I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt. 16 But riſe, and ſtand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpoſe, to make thee a miniſter and a witneſs both of theſe things which thou haſt ſeen, and of thoſe things in the which I will appear unto thee? 17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I ſend thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn *them* from darkneſs to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified by faith that is in me. 19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not diſobedient unto the heavenly viſion: 20 But ſhewed firſt unto them of Damaſcus, and at Jeruſalem, and throughout all the coaſts of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they ſhould repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. 21 For theſe cauſes the Jews caught me in the Temple, and went about to kill *me*. 22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witneſſing both to ſmall and great, ſaying none other things than thoſe which the prophets and Moſes did ſay ſhould come: 23 That Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, *and* that he ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the dead, and ſhould ſhew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

All that believe a GOD, and have a Reverence for his Sovereignty, muſt acknowledge that they who Speak and Act by his Direction and by Warrant from him are not to be oppos'd; for that's *fighting againſt God*. Now *Paul* here by a plain and faithful Narrative of Matters of Fact makes it out to this Auguſt Aſſembly, that he had an immediate Call from Heaven, to preach the Goſpel of Chriſt to the *Gentile* World, which was the Thing that exaſperated the *Jews* againſt him. He here ſhews,

Firſt, That he was *made a Chriſtian* by a *Divine Power*; Notwithſtanding all his Prejudices againſt *that Way*; he was brought into it on a ſudden by the Hand of Heaven; not compell'd to confeſs Chriſt by outward Force, as he had compell'd others to blaſpheme him, but by a Divine and ſpiritual Energy; by a *Revelation* of Chriſt from above, both *to him*, and *in him*. And this when he was in the full carreer of his Sin, going to *Damaſcus* to ſuppreſs Chriſtianity by perſecuting the Chriſtians there. As hot as ever in the Cauſe, his perſecuting Fury not in the leaſt ſpent or tir'd, nor was he tempted to give it up by the failing of his Friends, for he had at this Time as ample an *Authority and Commiſſion from the Chief Prieſts*, as ever he had to *perſecute* Chriſtianity when he was obliged by a ſuperior Power to give up that, and accept another Commiſſion to preach up Chriſtianity. Two Things to bring about this ſurprizing Change; a *Viſion* from Heaven, and a *Voice* from Heaven, which convey'd the Knowledge of Chriſt to him, by the two learning Senſes of *Seeing* and *Hearing*.

1. He *ſaw* a *Heavenly Viſion*; The Circumſtances of which were ſuch as it could not be a Deluſion, or a *Deceptio viſus*, but 'twas without doubt a *Divine Appearance*.

(1.) He *ſaw a great Light*, a *Light from Heaven*, ſuch as could not be produced by any Art, for it was not in the Night, but *at Mid Day*, 'twas not in a Houſe where Tricks might have been play'd with him, but it was *in the Way*, in the open Air; it was ſuch a Light as was *above the Brightneſs of the Sun*, outſhone and eclips'd that, (*Iſa*. xxiv. 23.) and this could not be the product of *Paul's* own Fancy; for it *ſhone round about them that journey'd with him*, they were all ſenſible of their being ſurrounded with this Inundation of Light, which made the Sun it ſelf to be in their Eyes a *leſſer Light*. And the Force and Power of this Light appear'd in the Effects of it, they *all fell to the Earth* upon the Sight of it, ſuch a mighty Conſternation did it put them into; this *Light*, was *Lightning* for its Force, yet did not paſs away as Lightning, but continu'd to *ſhine round about them.* In Old Teſtament Times, GOD commonly manifeſted Himſelf in the *thick Darkneſs*, and made that his Pavillion, 2 *Chron.* vi. 1. He ſpoke to *Abraham* in a *great Darkneſs*, Gen. xv. 12. for that was a Diſpenſation of *Darkneſs*; but now Life and Immortality were brought to light by the Goſpel, Chriſt appear'd *in a great Light.* In the creating of Grace as of the World, the firſt Thing created is Light, 2 *Cor.* iv. 6.

(2.) Chriſt Himſelf *appear'd* to him, *v.* 16. *I have appear'd to thee for this purpoſe.* Chriſt was in this Light; tho' they that Travel'd with *Paul* ſaw the Light only, and not Chriſt in the Light. 'Tis not every *Knowledge* that will ſerve to make us Chriſtians, but it muſt be the Knowledge of Chriſt.

2. He *heard* a *Heavenly Voice*, an Articulate one, *ſpeaking to him*; it is here ſaid to be *in the* Hebrew *Tongue*, (which was not taken Notice of before) in his Native Language, the Language of his Religion, to intimate to him that tho' he muſt be ſent among the *Gentiles*, yet he muſt not forget that he was a *Hebrew*, nor make himſelf a Stranger to the *Hebrew* Language. In what Chriſt ſaid to him we may obſerve, (1.) That he call'd him by his Name, and repeated it, *Saul*, *Saul*; which would ſurprize and ſtartle him; and the more becauſe he was now in a ſtrange Place where he thought no Body knew him. (2.) That he convin'd him of Sin, of that great Sin which he was now in the Commiſſion of, the Sin of *Perſecuting* the Chriſtians, and ſhews him the Abſurdity of it. (3.) That he intereſted himſelf in the Sufferings of his Followers: Thou *perſecuteſt me*, v. 14. and again. 'Tis *Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt*. Little did *Paul* think when he was trampling upon thoſe that he look'd upon as the Burthen and Blemiſhes of this Earth, that he was inſulting One that was ſo much the Glory of Heaven. (4.) That he check'd him for his wilful reſiſting thoſe Convictions; *It is hard for thee to Kick againſt the pricks*, or *goads*, as a Bullock unaccuſtomed to the Yoke. *Paul*'s Spirit at firſt perhaps began to riſe, but he is told, it is at his Peril, and then he yields. Or, it was ſpoken by way of Caution, Take heed leaſt thou do reſiſt theſe Convictions, for they are deſign'd to *affect* thee, not to *affront* thee. (5.) That upon his Enquiry he made himſelf known to him. *Paul* ask'd, v. 15. *Who art thou, Lord?* Let me know who it is that ſpeaks to me from Heaven, that I may anſwer him accordingly? And he ſaid, *I am Jeſus.* He whom thou haſt deſpis'd, and hated, and vilify'd; I bear that Name which thou haſt made ſo *odious*, and the naming of it *criminal*. *Paul* thought *Jeſus* was bury'd *in the Earth*, and tho' ſtollen out of his own Sepulchre, yet laid in ſome other, all the *Jews* were taught to ſay ſo, and therefore he is amaz'd to hear him *ſpeak from Heaven*, to ſee him ſurrounded with all this Glory, whom he had loaded with all poſſible Ignominy. This convinc'd him that the Doctrine of Jeſus was *divine* and *heavenly*; and not only not to be oppos'd, but to be cordially embrac'd; That *Jeſus* is the *Meſſiah*, for he is not only riſen from the Dead, but he has *receiv'd from GOD the Father Honour and Glory*; And this is enough to make him a Chriſtian immediately; to quit the Society of the Perſecutors, whom the LORD from Heaven thus *appears againſt*, and to joyn himſelf with the Society of the Perſecuted, whom the LORD from Heaven thus *appears for.*

Secondly, That he was *made a Miniſter* by a *Divine Authority*; That the ſame *Jeſus* that appear'd to him in that Glorious Light, order'd him to go preach the Goſpel to the *Gentiles*; He did not run without ſending, nor was he ſent by Men like himſelf, but by him whom the Father ſent, *Joh.* 20, 21. What is ſaid of his being *an Apoſtle* is here joyn'd immediately to that which was ſaid to him by the Way, but it appears by *Acts* ix. 15. and xxi. 15, 17. that it was ſpoken to him afterwards; But he puts the two together for Brevity ſake, *Riſe and ſtand upon thy Feet.* Thoſe whom Chriſt by the Light of his Goſpel caſt down in Humiliation for Sin, 'tis in order to their *riſing and ſtanding upon their Feet* in Spiritual Grace, Strength and Comfort. If Chriſt has *torn*, 'tis that he might *heal*; if he has *caſt down*, 'tis that he may *raiſe up. Riſe then* and *ſhake thy ſelf from thy Duſt*; Iſa. lii. 2. Help thy ſelf, and Chriſt ſhall help thee. He muſt *ſtand up*, for Chriſt has Work for him to do; has an Errand, and a very great Errand to ſend him upon. *I have appeared to thee to make thee a Miniſter.* Chriſt has the making of his own Miniſters, they have both their Qualifications and their Commiſſions from him; *Paul* thanks *Chriſt Jeſus who put him into the Miniſtry*, 1 Pet. i. 12. Chriſt *appear'd to him* to *make him a Miniſter*. One Way or other Chriſt will *manifeſt Himſelf* to all thoſe whom he makes his Miniſters; for how can they *preach Him*, who do not *know Him*? And how can they *know him*, to whom he doth not by his Spirit make *himſelf known*? Obſerve,

1. The Office to which *Paul* is appointed. He is made *a Miniſter* to attend on Chriſt, and Act for him, as a *Witneſs*; to give Evidence in his Cauſe, and atteſt the Truth of his Doctrine; he muſt *teſtify* the Goſpel of the Grace of GOD; Chriſt *appear'd to him* that he might *appear for Chriſt* before Men.

2. The Matter of *Paul*'s Teſtimony; He muſt give an Account to the World, (1.) Of the *Things which he had ſeen*, now at this Time; muſt tell People of Chriſt's manifeſting himſelf to him by the Way, and what he ſaid to him. He *ſaw* theſe Things, and might *publiſh* them; And he did take all Occaſions to publiſh them, as here, and before, *chap.* xxii. (2.) *Of thoſe Things in which he would appear to him*; Chriſt now *ſettled* a Correſpondence with *Paul*, which he deſign'd afterwards to keep up, and only told him now that he ſhould hear further from him. *Paul* at firſt had but confus'd Notions of the Goſpel, 'till Chriſt appear'd to him, and gave him fuller Inſtructions. The Goſpel he preach'd he receiv'd from Chriſt *immediately*, Gal. i. 12. but he receiv'd it *gradually*, ſome at one Time, and ſome at another, as there was Occaſion. Chriſt often appear'd to *Paul*, oftner 'tis likely than is recorded, and ſtill taught him that he might *ſtill teach the People Knowledge.*

3. The Spiritual Protection he was taken under while he was thus employ'd as Chriſt's Witneſs; All the Powers of Darkneſs could not prevail againſt him till he had *finiſh'd his Teſtimony*, v. 17. *Delivering thee from the People* of the *Jews*, and *from the Gentiles. Note*, Chriſt's Witneſſes are under his ſpecial Care, And tho' they may fall into the Hands of their Enemies, yet he will take care to deliver them out of their Hands; and he knows how to do it. Chriſt had ſhew'd *Paul* at this Time *what great Things he muſt ſuffer*, chap. ix. 16. and yet tells him here he will *deliver him from the People. Note*, Great *Sufferings* are *reconcileable* to the Promiſe of the Deliverance of GOD's People; for it it is not promis'd they ſhall be kept *from Trouble*, but kept *through it*; and ſometimes GOD delivers them *into* the Hands of their Perſecutors, that he may have the Honour of delivering them *out of* their Hands.

4. The ſpecial Commiſſion given him to go among the *Gentiles*, and the Errand upon which he is ſent to them. It was ſome Years after *Paul*'s Converſion before he was ſent *to the* Gentiles, or (for ought appears) knew any Thing of his being deſign'd for that purpoſe, ſee *chap.* xxii. 21. But at length he is order'd to ſteer his Courſe that Way.

1. There is a great *Work* to be *done* among the *Gentiles*, and *Paul* muſt be *Inſtrumental* in doing it. Two Things muſt be done, which their Caſe calls for the doing of.

(1.) A World that *ſits in Darkneſs* muſt be *enlightned*; thoſe muſt be brought to know the *Things that belongs to their everlaſting Peace* who are yet ignorant of them, to know God as their *End*, and Chriſt as their Way, who as yet know nothing of *either*. He is ſent to *open their Eyes, and to turn them from Darkneſs to Light.* His Preaching ſhall not only make known to them thoſe Things which they had not before heard of, but ſhall be the Vehicle of that Divine Grace and Power by which their Underſtandings ſhall be enlightned to receive thoſe Things, and bid them welcome. Thus he ſhall *open their Eyes*, which before were ſhut againſt the Light, and they ſhall be willing to underſtand themſelves, their own Caſe and Intereſt. Chriſt *opens the Heart*, by *opening the Eyes*; doth not lead Men *blindfold*, but gives them to *ſee their own Way.* He is ſent not only to *open their Eyes* for the preſent, but to keep them open, to *turn them from Darkneſs to Light*, *i. e.* from following falſe and blind Guides, their Oracles, Divinations, and Superſtitious Uſages receiv'd by Tradition from their Fathers, and the corrupt Notions and Ideas they had of their Gods, to follow a Divine Revelation of unqueſtionable Certainty and Truth. This was turning them *from Darkneſs to Light*, from the Ways of Darkneſs, to thoſe on which the Light ſhines. The great Deſign of the Goſpel is to *inſtruct the* ignorant, and to *rectify* the Miſtakes of thoſe that are in Error, that things may be ſet and ſeen in a true Light.

(2.) A World that *lies in Wickedneſs*, in the *Wicked one*, muſt be ſanctified and reformed. It is not enough for them to have their *Eyes open'd*, they muſt have their Hearts renewed; not enough to be *turn'd from Darkneſs to Light*, but they muſt be turn'd from *the Power of Satan unto GOD*, which will follow of Courſe, for Satan Rules by the Power of Darkneſs, and GOD by the convincing Evidence of Light. Sinners are under the *Power of Satan*, Idolaters were ſo in a ſpecial manner, they paid their Homage to Devils. All Sinners are under the Influence of his Temptations, yield themſelves Captives to him, are at his beck; converting Grace *turns them from* under the Dominion of *Satan*, and brings them into Subjection to *GOD*; to Conform to the Rules of his Word, and comply with the Dictates and Directions of his Spirit, tranſlates them *out of the Kingdom of Darkneſs into the Kingdom of his dear Son.* When gracious Diſpoſitions are ſtrong in the Soul, as corrupt and ſinful Diſpoſitions had been turn'd *from the Power of Satan unto* GOD.

2. There is a great *Happineſs deſign'd* for the *Gentiles* by this Work, *that they may receive Forgiveneſs of Sins, and Inheritance among them which are ſanctified.* They are turn'd from the Darkneſs of Sin to the Light of Holineſs, from the Slavery of Satan, to the Service of GOD, not that GOD may be a Gainer by them, but that they may be Gainers by him.

1. That they may be *reſtor'd to his Favour*, which by Sin they have forfeited, and thrown themſelves out of, *that they may receive Forgiveneſs of Sins.* They are deliver'd from the Dominion of Sin that they may be ſav'd from that *Death* which is the *Wages of Sin.* Not that they may *merit* Forgiveneſs as a *Debt* or *Reward*, but that they may *receive* it as a *free Gift*; that they may be *qualify'd* to receive the Comfort of it. They are per-

ſuaded to *lay down* their Arms, and return to their *Allegiance*, that they may have the Benefit of the act of Indemnity, and may plead it *in Arreſt* of the Judgment to be given againſt them.

2. That they may be happy in the Fruition of him. Not only that they may have their Sins pardon'd, but that *they may have an Inheritance among them which are Sanctify'd by Faith that is in me*. *Note*, 1. Heaven is an *Inheritance*, it *deſcends* to all the Children of GOD for *if Children, then Heirs*. That they may have κλῆρον, *a Lot* ſo it might be read, alluding to the Inheritances of *Canaan*, which were appointed by Lot, and that alſo is the *Act of GOD*, the diſpoſal thereof is of the Lord That they may *have a Right*, ſo ſome Read it; not by Merit, but purely by Grace. 2. All that are effectually turn'd from Sin to GOD are not only *pardon'd* but *preferr'd*; have not only their Attainder reverſ'd, but a Patent of Honour given them, and a Grant of a Rich Inheritance. And the *forgiveneſs of Sins*, makes way for this *Inheritance*, by taking that out of the Way which alone hinder'd. 3. All that ſhall be *ſav'd* hereafter, are *ſanctify'd* now; Thoſe that have the Heavenly Inheritance muſt have it in this Way, they muſt be *prepar'd* and *made meet* for it; none can be *happy* that are not *holy*, nor ſhall any be *Saints in Heaven* that are not firſt *Saints on Earth*. 4. We need no more to make us happy, than to have our *Lot among them that are ſanctify'd*, to fare as they fare, that's having *our Lot among the Choſen*, for they are choſen to *Salvation* through *Sanctification*. They which are *Sanctify'd ſhall be Glorify'd*. Let us therefore now *caſt in our Lot among them*, by coming into the Communion of Saints, and be willing to *take our Lot* with them, and ſhare with them in their Afflictions, which (how grievous ſoever) our Lot with them in the *Inheritance* will abundantly make amends for. 5. We are *ſanctify'd* and *ſav'd* by *Faith in Chriſt*, ſome refer it to the Word next before, *ſanctify'd by Faith*, for Faith *purifies the Heart*, and applies to the Soul thoſe *precious promiſes*, and ſubjects the Soul to the influence of that *Grace* by which we *partake of a Divine Nature*. Others refer it to the *receiving* both *Pardon* and the *Inheritance*. 'Tis by *Faith* accepting the Grant, it comes all to one, for 'tis by Faith that we are juſtify'd, ſanctify'd, and glorify'd. By Faith τῇ εἰς ἐμὲ, *that Faith which is in me*; 'tis emphatically expreſs'd that Faith which not only receives Divine Revelation in general, but which in a particular manner faſtens upon *Jeſus Chriſt*, and his Mediation; by which we rely upon Chriſt as the *Lord our Righteouſneſs*, and reſign ourſelves to him as *the Lord our Ruler*. This is that by which we receive the Remiſſion of Sins, the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt and Eternal Life.

Thirdly, That he had *diſcharg'd his Miniſtry*, purſuant to his Commiſſion, by *Divine Aid*, and under *Divine Direction*, and *Protection*, GOD that call'd him to be an Apoſtle own'd him in his Apoſtolical Work, and carried him on in it with Enlargement and Succeſs.

1. GOD give him a Heart to comply with the Call, *v.* 19. *I was not diſobedient to the Heavenly Viſion*, for any one would ſay he ought to be obedient to it; Heavenly Viſions have a commanding Power over earthly Counſels, and it is at our Peril if we be *diſobedent* to them. Yet if *Paul* had conferr'd with Fleſh and Blood, and been ſway'd by his ſecular Intereſt, he would have done as *Jonah* did, gone any whither, rather than upon this Errand. But GOD *open'd his Ear*, and *he was not rebellious*; he accepted the Commiſſion, and having with it receiv'd his Inſtructions, he applied himſelf to act accordingly.

2. He enabled him to go through a great deal of Work, tho' in it he grapled with a great deal of difficulty, *v.* 20 He apply'd himſelf to the Preaching of the Goſpel with all vigour, (1.) He began at *Damaſcus* where he was converted, for he reſolv'd to loſe no Time, *chap.* ix. 20. (2.) When he came to *Jeruſalem* where he had his Education, he there witneſſed for Chriſt where he had moſt furiouſly ſet himſelf againſt him, *chap.* ix. 8. (3.) He preach'd *throughout all the coaſts of* Judea, in the Country Towns and Villages as Chriſt had done. He made the firſt Offer of the Goſpel to the *Jews*, as Chriſt had appointed, and did not leave them till they had wilfully thruſt the Goſpel from them, and then (4.) He turn'd *to the Gentiles*, and laid out himſelf for the good of their Souls *labouring more abundantly* than any of the Apoſtles, nay, perhaps than *all* put together.

3. His Preaching was all practical; he did not go about to fill Peoples Heads with Airy Notions, did not amuſe them with nice Speculations, nor ſet them together by the Ears with Matters of doubtful Diſputation, but he *ſhew'd* them, declar'd it, demonſtrated it, That they ought (1.) To *repent* of their Sins, to be ſorry for them. They ought to *bethink themſelves*, ſo the Word μετανοεῖν properly ſignifies; They ought to change their Mind, and change their Way, and undo what they had done amiſs. To *turn to God*; they muſt not only conceive an Antipathy to Sin, but they muſt come into a Conformity to GOD Muſt not only *turn from* that which is *evil*, but *turn* to that which is *good*. They muſt *turn to God* in Love and Affection, and *return to God* in Duty and Obedience, and turn, and return from the World and the Fleſh. This is that which is requir'd from the whole revolted, degenerate Race of Mankind, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, to turn back to God, *even to him*, to turn to him as our chief Good, and higheſt End, as our Ruler and Portion, turn our Eye to him, turn our Heart to him, and turn our Feet unto his Teſtimonies. (3.) To *do Works meet for Repentance*. This was what *John* Preach'd, who was the firſt Goſpel-Preacher, *Matth.* iii 8. Thoſe that *profeſs* Repentance muſt *practice it*, muſt *live a Life of Repentance*, muſt in every Thing carry it as becomes Penitents. It is not enough to ſpeak penitent Words, but we muſt do Works agreeable to thoſe Words. As true Faith ſo true Repentance will Work. Now what Fault could be found at ſuch Preaching as this? Had it not a direct Tendency to reform the World, and to redreſs its Grievances, and to revive Natural Religion?

4. The *Jews* had no other Quarrel with him but upon this Account; That he did all he could to perſuade People to be Religious, and to bring them to GOD, by bringing them to Chriſt, *v.* 21. 'Twas *for thoſe Cauſes and no other*, that *the* Jews *caught me in the Temple and went about to Kill me*, and let any one judge whether thoſe were Crimes worthy of Death or of Bonds. He *ſuffer'd ill*, not only for *doing well* himſelf, but for *doing good to* others. They attempted to *kill him*, it was his precious Life that they hunted for; and hated, becauſe it was a *uſeful* Life. They caught him in the *Temple*, worſhipping GOD, and *there* they ſet upon him, as if the *better Place*, the *better Deed*

5. He had no other Help, but Help from Heaven, and ſupported and carry'd on, by that he went on in this great Work, *v.* 22. *Having therefore obtain'd Help from God, I continue unto this Day*. Ἕστηκα, *I have ſtood*, my Life has been preſerv'd, and my Work continued. I have *ſtood my Ground*, and have not been beaten off; *I have ſtood* to what I ſaid, and have not been afraid or aſham'd to perſiſt in it. It was now above Twenty Years ſince *Paul* was Converted, and all that time he had been very buſie preaching the Goſpel in the midſt of hazards; and what was it that bore him up, not any ſtrength of his own Reſolutions, but *having obtain'd help of God*; for *therefore*, becauſe the Work was ſo great, and he had ſo much Oppoſition he could not otherwiſe have gone on in it, but by *Help obtain'd of God*. *Note*, Thoſe who were employ'd in Work for GOD ſhall *obtain Help from God*; for he will not be wanting in neceſſary Aſſiſtances to his Servants. And our continuance *to this Day*, muſt be attributed to *Help obtain'd of God*. We had ſunk if he had not born us up, had fallen off if he had not carry'd us on, and it muſt be acknowledg'd with thankfulneſs to his Praiſe. *Paul* mentions it as an Evidence that he had his Commiſſion from GOD that from him he had Ability to execute it, The Preachers of the Goſpel could never have done, and ſuffered, and proſper'd as they did, if they had not had immediate Help from Heaven, which they would not have had if it had not been the Cauſe of GOD that they now were pleading.

6. He preach'd no other Doctrine but what agreed with the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*. He *Witneſſed both to ſmall and great*, to young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, obſcure and illuſtrious, all being concern'd in it; 'Twas an Eivdence of the *condeſcending Grace* of the Goſpel, that it was Witneſſed to the *meaneſt*, and the poor were welcome to the Knowledge of it; And of unconteſtable *Truth* and *Power* of it that it was neither afraid nor aſham'd to ſhew itſelf to the *greateſt*. The Enemies of *Paul* objected againſt him that he preached ſomething more than that Men ſhould *repent, and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance*; thoſe indeed were but what the Prophets of the *Old Teſtament* had preach'd; but beſides theſe he had preach'd Chriſt, and his Death, and his Reſurrection, and that was it that they quarrel'd with him for, as appears by *chap.* xxv. 19. that he *affirmed Jeſus to be alive*. And ſo I *did*, ſaith *Paul*, and I *do*, but therein alſo I ſay *no other* than *that which* Moſes *and the Prophets ſaid ſhould come*. And what greater Honour can be done to them then to ſhew that what they foretold is accompliſh'd, and in the appointed Seaſon too, that what they ſaid ſhould come is come, and at the Time they prefix'd.

Three things they *propheſy'd*, and *Pual* preach'd.

1. That *Chriſt ſhould ſuffer*; that the *Meſſiah* ſhould be a *ſufferer*; παθητὸς. Not only a Man and capable of Suffering, but that as Meſſiah he ſhould be appointed to Sufferings. That his Ignominious Death ſhould be not only *conſiſtent* with, but *purſuant* of his Undertaking. The Croſs of *Chriſt* was a Stumbling-block to the *Jews*, and *Paul*'s Preaching that was the great thing that exaſperated them. But *Paul* ſtands to it that in Preaching that he Preach'd the fulfilling of the *Old Teſtament* Predictions, and therefore they ought not only not to be offended at what he preach'd, but to embrace it, and ſubſcribe to it.

2. That *he ſhould be the firſt that ſhould riſe from the Dead*, not the firſt in Time, but the firſt Influence; That he ſhould be the *Chief of th Reſurrection*, the *Head*, or *Principal One*, πρῶτος ἐξ ἀναστάσεως, in the ſame Senſe that he is call'd, the *Firſt-begotten from the Dead*, Rev. i. 5. and the *Firſt born from the Dead*, Col. i. 18. He open'd the Womb of the Grave, as the Firſt born are ſaid to do, and made way for our Reſurrection. And he is ſaid to be the *Firſt-fruits of them that ſlept*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. for he ſanctify'd the Harveſt. He was the firſt that *roſe from the Dead* to die no more, and to ſhew that the Reſurrection of all Believers is in the Virtue of his; juſt when he aroſe *many dead Bodies of Saints aroſe, and went into the holy City*, Matth. xxvii. 53.

3. That he ſhould *ſhew Light unto the People, and to the Gentiles*; To *the People* of the *Jews* in the firſt place, for he was to be the *Glory of his People* Iſrael, to whom he *ſhew'd Light* by himſelf; and

then *to the Gentiles* by the Miniſtry of his Apoſtles; for he was to be a *Light to lighten them*, who ſate in Darkneſs. In this *Paul* refers to his Commiſſion, *v.* 18. *To turn them from Darkneſs to Light.* He roſe *from the Dead* on purpoſe *that he might ſhew Light* to the People, that he might give a convincing Proof of the Truth of his Doctrine, and might ſend it with ſo much the greater Power both among *Jews and Gentiles.* This alſo was foretold by the *Old-Teſtament* Prophets. That the *Gentiles* ſhould be brought to the Knowledge of GOD by the *Meſſiah.* and what was there in all this, that the *Jews* could juſtly be diſpleas'd at?

24 And as he thus ſpake for himſelf, Feſtus ſaid with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beſide thy ſelf: much learning doth make thee mad. 25 But he ſaid, I am not mad, moſt noble Feſtus; but ſpeak forth the words of truth and ſoberneſs. 26 For the king knoweth of theſe things, before whom alſo I ſpeak freely: for I am perſwaded that none of theſe things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, believeſt thou the prophets: I know that thou believeſt. 28 Then Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Almoſt thou perſwadeſt me to be a Chriſtian. 29 And Paul ſaid, I would to God, that not only thou, but alſo all that hear me this day, were both almoſt, and altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds. 30 And when he had thus ſpoken. the king roſe up, and the governour, and Bernice, and they that ſat with them. 31 And when they were gone aſide, they talked between themſelves, ſaying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 32 Then ſaid Agrippa unto Feſtus, This man might have been ſet at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Ceſar.

We have reaſon to think that *Paul* had a great deal more to ſay in defence of the Goſpel he preach'd, and for the Honour of it, and to recommend it to the good Opinion of this Noble Audience; he was juſtly fallen upon that which was the Life of the Cauſe, the Death and Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, and here he is in his Element; now he warms more than before, his Mouth is open'd towards them, his Heart is enlarg'd, lead him but to this Subject, and let him have leave to go on, and he will never know when to conclude; for the *Power of Chriſt Death*, and the *Fellowſhip of his Sufferings*, are with him *inexhauſtible* Subjects. 'Twas a Thouſand pities he ſhould be interrupted as he is here, and that being *permitted to ſpeak for himſelf*, *v.* 1. he ſhould not be permitted to ſay all he deſign'd. But it was a Hardſhip often put upon him, and is a Baulk to us too, that read his Diſcourſe with ſo much Pleaſure.

But there's no Remedy, the Court thinks it is Time to proceed to give in their Judgment upon his Caſe.

Firſt, *Feſtus* the *Roman* Governor is of Opinion, that the poor Man is craz'd, and that *Bedlam* were the fitteſt Place for him. He is convinc'd that he is no Criminal, no ill Man that ſhould be *puniſh'd*, but he takes him to be Lunatick, a Diſtracted Man that ſhould be *pity'd*; but at the ſame time ſhould not be heeded, nor a Word he ſaith regarded, and thus he thinks he hath found out an Expedient to excuſe himſelf both for *condemning Paul* as a *Priſoner*, and from *believing him* as a *Preacher*; for if he be not *compos mentis*, he is not to be either *condemn'd* or *credited.* Now here Obſerve,

1. What it was that *Feſtus* ſaid of him, *v.* 24. *He ſaid it with a loud Voice*, did not whiſper it to thoſe that ſate next him, if ſo, it had been the more excuſable, but (without conſulting *Agrippa*, to whoſe Judgment he had ſeem'd to pay mighty Deference, *chap.* xxv. 26.) *ſaid aloud*, that he might oblige *Paul* to break of his Diſcourſe, and might divert the Auditors from attending to it; *Paul, thou art beſide thy ſelf*, thou talkeſt like a Mad-man, like One with a heated Brain that knoweſt not what thou ſayeſt. Yet he doth not ſuppoſe that a guilty Conſcience had diſturb'd his Reaſon, or that his Sufferings, and the Rage of his Enemies againſt him had given any ſhock to it, but he puts the moſt candid Conſtruction that could be upon his *Delirium*, *Much Learning hath made thee mad*; thou haſt cracked thy Brains with Studying. This he ſpeaks not ſo much in *Anger*, as in *Scorn* and *Contempt*; he did not underſtand what *Paul* ſaid, it was above his Capacity, 'twas all a Riddle to him and therefore he imputes it to all a heated Imagination. *Si non vis intelligi debes negligi.* (1.) He owns *Paul* to be a Scholar, and a Man of Learning, becauſe he could ſo readily refer to what *Moſes and the Prophets* wrote; Books that he was a Stranger to; and even this is turn'd to his Reproach. The Apoſtles that were Fiſhermen were deſpis'd becauſe they had *no Learning*, *Paul* that was an Univerſity Man and bred a *Phariſee*, is deſpis'd as *too much Learning*, more than did him good. Thus the Enemies of Chriſt's Miniſters will always have ſomething or other to upbraid them with. (2.) He reproaches him as a *Mad-man.* The Prophets of the *Old Teſtament* were thus ſtigmatiz'd, to prejudice People againſt them, by putting them into an ill Name; *Wherefore came this mad Fellow unto thee?* ſaid the Captains of the Prophet, 2 *Kin.* ix. 11. *Hoſ.* ix. 7. *John Baptiſt* and *Chriſt* were repreſented as *having a Devil*, as being *craz'd*, 'Tis likely *Paul* now ſpoke with more Life and Earneſtneſs than he did in the Beginning of his Diſcourſe and us'd ſome Geſtures that were expreſſive of his Zeal, and therefore *Feſtus* put this invidious Character upon him, which perhaps never a one in the Company but he thought of. It is not ſo *harmleſs* a Suggeſtion as ſome make it, to ſay concerning them that are zealous in Religion, above others, that they are *craz'd.*

2. How *Paul* clear'd himſelf from this *invidious Imputation*, which whether he had ever lain under before is not certain. It ſhould ſeem it had been ſaid of him by the falſe Apoſtles, for he ſaith, 2 *Cor.* v. 13. *If we be beſide ourſelves*, as they ſay we are, *it is to God*: But he was never charg'd with this before the *Roman* Governor; and therefore he muſt ſay ſomething to this.

1. He *denies the Charge*, with due Reſpect indeed to the Governor, but with Juſtice to himſelf, proteſting that there was neither Ground nor Colour for it, *v.* 25. *I am not mad moſt noble* Feſtus, nor never was, nor any Thing like it; the uſe of my Reaſon, thanks be to GOD, has been all my Days continu'd to me, and at this Time I do not ramble, but *ſpeak the Words of Truth and Soberneſs*, and know what I ſay. *Obſerve*, Tho' *Feſtus* gave *Paul* this baſe and contemptuous Uſage, not becoming a Gentleman, much leſs a Judge, yet *Paul* is ſo far from reſenting it, and being provok'd by it, that he gives him all poſſible Reſpect, complements him with his Title of Honour, *moſt noble Feſtus*, to teach us not to render Railing for Railing, nor one invidious Character for another, but to ſpeak *civilly* to thoſe who ſpeak *ſlightly* of us. It becomes us upon all Occaſions to *ſpeak the Words of Truth and Soberneſs*, and then we may deſpiſe the unjuſt Cenſures of Men.

2. He *appeals* to *Agrippa* concerning what he ſpoke, *v.* 26. *For the King knows of theſe Things*, concerning Chriſt, and his Death and Reſurrection, and the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, which had their Accompliſhment therein. He therefore ſpoke freely before him, who knew thoſe were no Fancies, but Matters of Fact, knew ſomething of them and therefore would be willing to know more; for *I am perſwaded that none of the Things are hidden from him*; no not that which he had related concerning his own Converſion, and the Commiſſion he had received to preach the Goſpel. *Agrippa* could not but have heard of it, having been ſo long converſant among the *Jews. This Thing was not done in a Corner*; all the Country rang of it, and any of the *Jews* preſent might have witneſſed for him, that they had heard it many a Time from others, and therefore 'twas unreaſonable to cenſure him as a *diſtracted* Man for relating it; much more for ſpeaking of the Death and Reſurrection of *Chriſt*, which was ſo univerſally ſpoken of. *Peter* tells *Cornelius* and his Friends, *ch.* x. 27. *That Word you know which was publiſhed thoughout all* Judea concerning *Chriſt*, and therefore *Agrippa* could not but be ignorant of it, and it was a ſhame for *Feſtus* that he was ſo.

Secondly, *Agrippa* is ſo far from thinking him a Mad-man, that he thinks he never heard a Man argue more ſtrongly, nor talk more to the Purpoſe.

1. *Paul* applies himſelf cloſely to *Agrippa*'s Conſcience; Some think *Feſtus* was diſpleas'd at *Paul* becauſe he kept his Eye upon *Agrippa*, and directed his Diſcourſe to him all along, and that therefore he gave him that Interruption, *v.* 24. But if that was a thing that affronted him, *Paul* matters not; he will ſpeak to thoſe that underſtood him, and that he is likely to faſten ſomething upon, and therefore ſticks to *Agrippa*; and becauſe he had mention'd *Moſes* and the *Prophets* as confirming the Goſpel he preach'd, he refers *Agrippa* to them, *v.* 27. *King* Agrippa, *believeſt thou the Prophets?* Doſt thou receive the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament* as a Divine Revelation, and admit them as fore-telling good Things to come? He doth not ſtay for an Anſwer, but in Complement to *Agrippa*, takes it for granted, *I know that thou believeſt*; for every one knew that *Agrippa* profeſs the *Jews* Religion, as his Fathers had done, and therefore both knew the Writings of the Prophets, and gave credit to them. *Note*, It is good dealing with thoſe that have acquaintance with the Scriptures, and believe them; for ſuch one hath ſome hold of.

2. *Agrippa* owns there was a great deal of Reaſon in what *Paul* ſaid, *v.* 28. *Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian.* Some underſtand this as ſpoken ironically, and read it thus, *Wouldſt thou in ſo little a Time perſuade me to be a Chriſtian?* But taking it ſo, 'tis an Acknowledgment that *Paul* ſpoke very much to the Purpoſe, and that whatever others thought of it, to his Mind, there came a convincing Power along with what he ſaid. *Paul* thou art to haſty, thou caſt not think to make a Convert of me all of a ſudden. Others take it as ſpoken ſeriouſly, and as a Confeſſion, that he was *in a manner*, or *within a little*, convinc'd that *Chriſt* was the *Meſſiah*, for he could not but own, and had many a Time thought to within himſelf, that the Prophecies of the *Old Teſtament*, had had their Accompliſhment in him; and now it is urg'd thus ſolemnly upon him, he is ready to yield to the Conviction, he begins to ſound a Parley, and to think of ſurrendring, he is as near perſuaded to *believe in Chriſt*, as *Felix*

when he *trembled*, was to *leave his Sins*. He ſees a great deal of Reaſon for Chriſtianity, the Proofs of it he owns are *ſtrong*, and ſuch as he cannot anſwer; the Objections againſt it *trifling*, and ſuch as he cannot for ſhame inſiſt upon; ſo that if it were not for his Obligations to the Ceremonial Law, and his Reſpect to the Religion of his Fathers, and of his Country, or his Regard to his Dignity as a King, and to his Secular Intereſts, he would turn Chriſtian preſently. *Note*, Many are *almoſt perſuaded* to be religious that are not quite perſuaded; they are under ſtrong Convictions of their Duty, and of the Excellency of the Ways of GOD, but yet are over-rul'd by ſome external Inducements, and do not purſue their Convictions.

3. *Paul* not being allowed Time to purſue his *Argument*, concludes with a *Complement*, or rather a pious Wiſh, that all his Hearers were Chriſtians, and this Wiſh turn'd into a Prayer, εὐξαίμην τῳ Θεῷ, *I pray to God for it*; 'twas his *Heart's Deſire and Prayer to God for them all, that they might be ſav'd*, Rom. x. *v.* 1. *That not only thou, but all that hear me this Day*, (for he has the ſame kind Deſign upon them all) *were both almoſt, and altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe Bonds.* Hereby (1.) He profeſſeth his *Reſolution* to ſtick to his *Religion*, as that which he was entire ſatisfied in, and determin'd to live and die by. In wiſhing that they were all as he was, he doth in effect declare againſt ever being as they were, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles* how much ſoever it might be to his worldly Advantage. He ſticks by the Inſtruction GOD gave to the Prophet, *Jer.* xv. 19. *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.* (2.) He intimates his Satisfaction not only in the Truth, but in the Benefit and Advantage of Chriſtianity. He had ſo much Comfort in it for the preſent, and was ſo ſure it would end in his eternal Happineſs, that he could not wiſh better to the beſt Friend he had in the World, than to wiſh him ſuch an One as he was, a faithful, zealous Diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt. *Let mine Enemy be as the Wicked*, ſaith *Job*, *chap.* xxvii. 7. Let my Friend be as the Chriſtian, ſaith *Paul*. (3.) He intimates his Trouble and Concern that *Agrippa* went no further but being *almoſt ſuch an One* as he was; *almoſt a Chriſtian*, and not altogether One; for he wiſhes that he and the reſt of them might be not only *almoſt*, What good would that do? but *altogether* ſuch as he was, ſincere thorough-pac'd Chriſtians. (4) He intimates that it was the Concern, and would be the unſpeakable Happineſs of every One of them to become true Chriſtians; that there is Grace enough in Chriſt for *All*, be they never ſo *many*, enough for *each* be they never ſo craving. (5.) He intimates the hearty Good-will he bore to them all, he wiſhes them (1.) As *well* as he wiſh'd *his own Soul*, that they might be as happy in Chriſt as he was. (2.) *Better* than he now was as to his *outward Condition*; for he *excepts theſe Bonds*. He wiſhes they might all be *comforted* Chriſtians as he was, but not *perſecuted* Chriſtians as he was; that they might taſte as much as he did of the Advantages that attended Religion, but not ſo much of its Croſſes. They had made light of his Impriſonment, and were in no concern for him. *Feſtus* continu'd him in Bonds to gratify the *Jews*; now this would have tempted many a One to wiſh them all in *his Bonds*, that they might know what it was to be confin'd as he was, and then they would know the better how to pity him: But he was ſo far from this, that when he wiſh'd them in *Bonds to Chriſt*, he deſir'd they might never be in *Bonds for Chriſt*. Nothing could be ſaid more tenderly, nor with a better decorum.

Thirdly, They all agree, that *Paul* was an innocent Man, and was wrong'd in this Proſecution.

1. The Court *broke up* with ſome Precipitation, *v.* 30. *When he had ſpoken* that obliging Word, *v.* 29. which mov'd them all, the King was afraid if he were permitted to go on, he would ſay ſomething yet more *moving*, which might work upon ſome of them to appear more in his Favour than was convenient, and perhaps might prevail with them to turn Chriſtians; The King himſelf found his own Heart begin to yield, and durſt not truſt himſelf to hear more, but like *Felix*, diſmiſs'd *Paul* for *this Time*. They ought in Juſtice to have ask'd the Priſoner, Whether he had any more to ſay for himſelf? But they think he has ſaid enough, and therefore the *King roſe up*, and *the Governor*, and *Bernice*, and *they that ſat with them*, concluding the Caſe was plain and with that they contented themſelves, when *Paul* had more to ſay, which would have made it plainer.

2. They all concurred in an Opinion of *Paul*'s Innocency, *v.* 31. The Court withdrew to conſult of the Matter, to know one another's Minds upon it, and they *talk'd among themſelves*, all to the ſame Purpoſe, That *this Man doth nothing worthy of Death*. He is not a Criminal that deſerves to die; nay, he doth nothing *worthy of Bonds*; he is not a dangerous Man, whom it is Prudence to confine. After this *Nero* made a Law for the putting of thoſe to Death who profeſs'd the Chriſtian Religion; but as yet there was *no Law* of that kind among the *Romans*, and therefore *no Tranſgreſſion*. And this Judgment of theirs, is a Teſtimony againſt that wicked Law which *Nero* made not long after this; That *Paul* the moſt active, zealous Chriſtian that ever was, even by thoſe that were no Friends to his Way, was adjudg'd to have *done nothing worthy of Death or of Bonds*. Thus was he made manifeſt in the Conſciences of thoſe, who yet would not receive his Doctrine, and the Clamours of the Hot-headed *Jews*, who cry'd out, *Away with him, it was not fit he ſhould live*, were ſham'd by the moderate Counſels of this Court.

3. *Agrippa* gave his Judgment, That he *might have been ſet at Liberty, if he had not* himſelf *appealed to* Cæſar, *v.* 32. But by that Appeal, he had put a Bar in his own Door. Some think that by the *Roman* Law this was true, That when a Priſoner had appeal'd to the ſupreme Court, the inferior Court could no more *diſcharge* him, than they could *condemn* him; and we ſuppoſe the Law was ſo, if the Proſecutors *joyn'd Iſſue* upon the Appeal, and conſented to it: But it doth not appear that in *Paul's* Caſe the Proſecutors did ſo, but he was forc'd to do it to ſcreen himſelf from their Fury, when he ſaw the Governor did not take the Care he ought to have done for his Protection. And therefore others think, that *Agrippa* and *Feſtus* being unwilling to diſoblige the *Jews* by ſetting him at Liberty, made this ſerve for an Excuſe of their continuing him in Cuſtody, when they themſelves knew they might have juſtify'd the Diſcharging him. *Agrippa* that was but *almoſt* perſuaded to be *a Chriſtian*, proves no better than if he had not been at all perſuaded.

And now I cannot tell, (1.) Whether *Paul repented* of his having appeal'd to *Cæſar*, and wiſh'd he had not done it, blaming himſelf for it as a raſh Thing, now he ſaw that was the only Thing that hinder'd his Diſcharge. He had Reaſon perhaps to reflect upon it with Regret, and to charge himſelf with Imprudence and Impatience in it, and ſome Diſtruſt of the Divine Protection. He had better had appeal'd to GOD than to *Cæſar*. It confirms what *Solomon* ſaith, *Eccl.* vi. 12. *Who knows what is good for Man in this Life?* What we think is for our Welfare, often proves to be a Trap; ſuch ſhort-ſighted Creatures are we, and ſo ill advis'd in *leaning* as we do to *our own Underſtanding*. Or (2) Whether notwithſtanding this he was *ſatisfied* in what he had done, and was *eaſy* in his Reflections upon it; His Appealing to *Cæſar* was lawful, and what became a *Roman* Citizen, and would help to make his Cauſe conſiderable; and for as much as when he did it, it appear'd to him as the Caſe then ſtood to be *for the beſt*, tho' afterwards it appear'd otherwiſe, he did not vex himſelf with any Self-reproach in the Matter, but believ'd there was a Providence in it, and it would Iſſue well at laſt. And beſides he was told in a Viſion, That he muſt *bear Witneſs to Chriſt* at *Rome*, chap. xxiii. 11. And its all one to him, whether he goes thither a Priſoner or at his Liberty; he knows *the Counſel of the LORD ſhall ſtand*, and ſaith, *Let it ſtand. The Will of the LORD be done.*

CHAP. XXVII.

This whole Chapter is taken up with an Account of Paul's *Voyage towards* Rome, *when he was ſent thither a Priſoner by* Feſtus *the Governor, upon his Appeal to* Cæſar. *(1.) The Beginning of the Voyage was well enough, 'twas calm and proſperous*, v. 1—8. (2.) Paul *gave them Notice of a Storm coming, but could not prevail with them to lie by*, v. 9—11. (3) *As they purſued their Voyage, they met with a great deal of tempeſtuous Weather, which* reduc'd *them to ſuch* Extremity, *that they counted upon nothing but being caſt* away, 12—20. (4.) Paul *aſſur'd them that though they would not be adviſ'd by him to prevent their coming into this Danger, yet by the good Providence of GOD they ſhould be brought ſafely thro' it, and none of them ſhould be loſt*, v. 21—26. *(5.) At length they were at Mid-night thrown upon an Iſland, which prov'd to be* Malta, *and then they were in the* utmoſt Danger *imaginable, but were aſſiſted by* Paul's *Counſel to keep the Mariners in the Ship, and encourag'd by his Comforts to eat their Meat, and have a good Heart on it*, v. 27—36. *(6.) Their* narrow Eſcape *with their Lives when they came to Shore, when the Ship was wreck'd, but all the Perſons wonderfully preſerv'd*, v. 37—44.

AND when it was determined that we ſhould ſail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other Priſoners, unto one named Julius, a centurion of Auguſtus band. 2 And entring into a ſhip of Adramytrium, we launch, meaning to ſail by the coaſts of Aſia, one Ariſtarchus a Macedonian of Theſſalonica, being with us. 3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteouſly entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go unto his friends to refreſh himſelf. 4 And when we had launched from thence, we ſailed unto Cyprus, becauſe the winds were contrary. 5 And when we had ſailed over the ſea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra *a city* of Lycia. 6 And there the centurion found a ſhip of Alexandria ſailing into Italy; and he put us therein. 7 And when we had ſailed ſlowly many days, and ſcarce were come over againſt Cnidus, the wind not ſuffering us, we ſailed under Creet, over againſt Salmone: 8 And hardly paſſing it, came unto a place which is called, The fair havens, nigh whereunto was the city *of* Laſea. 9 Now when much time was ſpent, and when ſailing was now dangerous, becauſe the faſt was now already paſt, Paul admoniſhed *them*, 10 And ſaid unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ſhip, but alſo of our lives. 11 Nevertheleſs, the centurion believed the maſter and the owner of the ſhip, more than thoſe things which were ſpoken by Paul.

It doth not appear *how long* it was after *Paul's* Conference with *Agrippa* that he was ſent away for *Rome* purſuant to his Appeal to *Cæſar*; but it's likely they took the firſt Convenience they could hear of to do it; In the mean Time *Paul* is in the midſt of his Friends at *Cæſarea*, they Comforts to him, and he a Bleſſing to them.

But here we are told,

Firſt, How **Paul** was *ſhip'd* off for *Italy*; A long Voyage, but there's no Remedy. He hath appeal'd to *Cæſar*, and to *Cæſar* he muſt go. *It was determin'd that we ſhould ſail into* Italy, for to *Rome* they muſt go *by Sea*; it would have been a vaſt Way about to go *by Land*. Hence when the *Roman* Conqueſt of the Jewiſh Nation is foretold, it is ſaid, *Numb.* xxiv. 24. *Ships ſhall come from Shittim*, i. e. *Italy*, *and ſhall Afflict* Eber, i. e. the *Hebrews*. *It was determin'd* by the Counſel of GOD, before it was determin'd by the Counſel of *Feſtus*, that *Paul* ſhould go to *Rome*; for whatever Man intended, GOD had Work for him to do there. Now here we are told,

1. Whoſe *Cuſtody* he was committed to; To *One nam'd* Julius *a Centurion of* Auguſtus's *Band*; as *Cornelius* was of the *Italian* Band, or Legion, *chap.* x. 1. He had *Soldiers under him*, that were a Guard upon *Paul*, that he might not make his Eſcape, and likewiſe to protect him that he might have no Miſchief done him.

2. What *Bottom* he embark'd in; They went on board a Ship of *Adramyttium*, *v.* 2. a Sea-port of *Africa*, whence this Ship brought *African* Goods, and as it ſhould ſeem, made a coaſting Voyage for *Syria*, where thoſe Goods came to a good Market.

3. What *Company* he had in this Voyage; There were ſome *Priſoners* that were committed to the Cuſtody of the ſame Centurion, who probably had appeal'd to *Cæſar* too, or were upon ſome other Account remov'd to *Rome*, to be tryed there, or to be examin'd as Witneſſes againſt ſome Priſoners there; perhaps ſome notorious Offenders, like *Barrabas*, that were therefore order'd to be brought before the Emperor himſelf. *Paul* was *link'd* with theſe, as Chriſt with the Thieves that were crucify'd with him, and was oblig'd to take his Lot with them in this Voyage, and we find in this Chapter, *v.* 42. that for their Sakes he had like to have been *kill'd*, but for his Sake they were *preſerv'd*, *Note*, It is no new Thing for the *Innocent* to be *numbred among the Tranſgreſſors*. But he had alſo ſome of his Friends with him *Luke* particularly, the Penman of this Book, for he puts himſelf in all along, *we ſail'd* into *Italy*, and *we launch'd*, *v.* 2. *Ariſtarchus* a *Theſſalonian*, is particularly nam'd, as being now in his Company. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks that *Trophimus* the *Epheſian* went off with him, but he left him ſick at *Miletum*, 2 Tim. iv. 20. when he paſs'd by *thoſe Coaſts of* Aſia mention'd here, *v.* 2. and that there likewiſe he left *Timothy*. It was a Comfort to *Paul* to have the Society of ſome of his Friends in this tedious Voyage, with whom he might converſe freely, tho' he had ſo much looſe, profane Company about him. Thoſe that go long Voyages at Sea, are commonly neceſſitated to ſojourn as it were in *Meſech* and *Kedar*, and have need of Wiſdom that they may do good to the bad Company they are in, may make them better; or at leaſt be made never the worſe by them.

Secondly, What *Courſe* they *ſteer'd*, and what Places they touch'd at; which are particularly recorded for the confirming of the Truth of the Hiſtory to thoſe who liv'd at that Time, and could by their own Knowledge tell of their being at ſuch and ſuch a Place.

1. They touch'd at *Sidon*, not far off from where they went on Board; thither they came *the next Day*. And that which is obſerveable there, is, That *Julius the Centurion* was extraordinary civil to *Paul*; 'tis probable he knew his Caſe, and was one of the *chief Captains or Principal Men* that heard him plead his own Cauſe before *Agrippa*, ch. xxv. 23. and was convinc'd of his Innocency and the Injury done him; and therefore tho' he was committed to him as a Priſoner, he treated him as a Friend, as a Scholar, and a Gentlemen, and a Man that had an Intereſt in Heaven, He *gave him Liberty*, while the Buſineſs of the Ship ſtay'd at *Sidon to go among his Friends* there, to *refreſh himſelf*; and it would be a great Refreſhment to him. *Julius* herein gives an Example to thoſe in Power to be reſpectful to thoſe whom they find worthy of their Reſpects, and in uſing their Power to make a difference. A *Joſeph*, a *Paul* are not to be us'd as common Priſoners. GOD herein encourageth thoſe that ſuffer for Him to truſt in him; for He can put into the Hearts of thoſe to befriend them, from whom they leaſt expect it; can make them to be *pity'd*, nay, can make them to be *priz'd* valu'd even in the Eyes of thoſe that *carry them Captive*, Pſal. cvi. 46. And it is likewiſe an Inſtance of *Paul's* Fidelity, that when the Centurion was ſo civil as to give him his Liberty, he did not go about to make his Eſcape, which he might have eaſily done. But being out upon his *Parol* of Honour, he Faithfully returns to his Impriſonment; if the Centurion be ſo civil as to *take his Word*, he is ſo juſt and honeſt as to *keep his Word*.

2. They thence *ſail'd under* Cyprus, *v.* 4. If the Wind had been fair they had gone forward by *direct Sailing*, and had left *Cyprus* on the right Hand; but the Wind not favouring them, they were driven to *oblique Sailing with aſide Wind*, and ſo compaſs'd the Iſland in a manner, and left it on the left Hand, *Sailors* muſt do as they can, when they cannot do as they would, and make the beſt of their Wind whatever Point it is in, and ſo muſt we all in our Paſſage over the Ocean of this World. When the *Winds are contrary*, yet we muſt be getting forward as well as we can.

3. At a Port call'd *Myra*, they chang'd their Ship; that which they were in 'tis probable having Buſineſs no further, they went a-board a Veſſel of *Alexandria* bound for *Italy*, *v.* 5, 6. *Alexandria* was now the chief City of *Egypt*, and great trading there was between that City and *Italy*; from *Alexandria* they carry'd Corn to *Rome*; and the *Eaſt India* Goods and *Perſian* which they *Imported* at the *Red-Sea*, they *Exported* again to all Parts of the *Mediterranean*, and eſpecially to *Italy*. And it was a particular Favour ſhew'd to the *Alexandrian* Ships in the Ports of *Italy* that they were not oblig'd to *ſtrike Sail*, as other Ships were when they came into Port.

4. With much a-do they made the *Fair Havens*, a Port of the Iſland of *Crete*. *v.* 7, 8. They *ſail'd ſlowly many Days*, being becalm'd, or having the Wind againſt them. 'Twas a great while before they made the Point of *Cnidus*, a Port of *Caria*, and were forc'd to ſail under *Crete*, as before under *Cyprus*; much Difficulty they met with in paſſing by *Salmone*, a Promontory on the Eaſtern Shore of the Iſland of *Crete*. Tho' the Voyage hitherto was not *tempeſtuous*, yet it was very *tedious*. Thus many that are not *driven backward* in their Affairs by *croſs Providences*, yet *ſail ſlowly* and do not *get forward* by *favourable Providences*. And many good Chriſtians make this Complaint in the Concerns of their Souls, that they do not *rid Ground* in their Way to Heaven, but have much ado to *keep their Ground*; they move with many Stops and Pauſes, and lie a great while *Wind-bound*. *Obſerve*, The Place they came to was call'd *The Fair Havens*. Travellers ſay, 'tis known to this Day by the ſame Name, and that it anſwers the Name from the pleaſantneſs of its Situation and Proſpect. And yet (1) It was not the *Harbour* they were *bound for*; 'Twas a *fair Haven*, but it was not their Haven. Whatever agreeable Circumſtances we may be in, in this World, we muſt remember we are not *at Home*, and therefore we muſt ariſe and depart; for tho' it be a *fair Haven*, it is not the *deſir'd Haven*, Pſal. cvii. 30. (2.) It was not a *commodious Haven to Winter in*, ſo it is ſaid, *v.* 12. It had a fine Proſpect, but it lay expos'd to the Weather. *Note*, Every *fair Haven*, is not a *ſafe Haven*; Nay, there may be moſt Danger, where there is moſt Pleaſure.

Thirdly, What Advice **Paul** gave them with Reference to that Part of their Voyage they had before them; and it was to be content to Winter where they were, and not to think of ſtirring till a better Seaſon of the Year.

1. It was now a bad Time for Sailing; They had loſt a deal of Time while they were ſtruggling with contrary Wind. *Sailing* was now *dangerous*, becauſe *the Faſt was already paſt*, i. e. The famous Yearly Faſt of the *Jews*, the Day of *Atonement*, which was on the tenth Day of the ſeventh Month, a *Day to afflict the Soul* with Faſting; it was about the 20th of our *September*. That Yearly Faſt was very religiouſly obſerv'd; but (which is ſtrange) we never have any mention made in all the Scripture Hiſtory of the Obſervation of it, unleſs it be meant here, where it ſerves only to deſcribe the Seaſon of the Year. *Michaelmas* is reckon'd by Mariners as bad a Time of the Year to be at Sea in as any other; they complain of their *Michaelmas Blaſts*: 'Twas that Time now with theſe diſtreſſed Voyagers; the *Harveſt was paſt, the Summer was ended*; they had not only loſt Time, but loſt the Opportunity.

2. *Paul* put them in mind of it, and gave them Notice of their Danger, *v.* 10. *I perceive*, either by Notice from GOD, or by obſerving their wilful Reſolution to proſecute the Voyage, notwithſtanding the Peril of the Seaſon, that *this Voyage will be with Hurt and Damage*; you that have Effects on board, are likely to loſe them, and 'twill be a Miracle of Mercy if our Lives be given us for a Prey. Here were ſome *good Men* in the Ship, and many more *ill Men*; but in Things of this Nature, *All Things come alike to all*, and *there is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked*. If both be in the ſame Ship, they both are in the ſame Danger.

3. They would not be adviſ'd by *Paul* in this Matter, *v.* 11. They thought him impertinent in interpoſing in an Affair of this Nature, who did not underſtand Navigation, and the Centurion to whom it was referr'd to Determine it, though himſelf a Paſſenger, yet being a Man in Authority, he takes upon him to over-rule, tho' he had not been oftner at *Sea* perhaps than *Paul*, nor was better acquainted with *theſe Seas*; for *Paul* had planted the Goſpel in *Crete*, Tit. i. 5. and knew the ſeveral Parts of the Iſland well enough. But the Centurion gave more Regard to the Opinion of the *Maſter and Owner of the Ship* than to *Paul's*;

for

ly; but ſuch a Man as *Paul*, who was ſo intimate with Heaven, was rather to be regarded in Sea-faring Matters, than the moſt celebrated Sailors. *Note*, Thoſe know not what Dangers they run themſelves into, who will be govern'd more by *Humane Prudence* than by *Divine Revelation*. The Centurion was very civil to *Paul*, *v.* 3. and yet would not be govern'd by his Advice. *Note*, Many will ſhew Reſpect to good Miniſters, that will not take their Advice, *Ezek.* xxxiii. 31.

12 And becauſe the haven was not commodious
to winter in, the more part adviſed to depart thence
alſo, if by any means they might attain to Phenice,
and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and
lieth toward the ſouth-weſt, and north-weſt. 13
And when the ſouth-wind blew ſoftly, ſuppoſing
that they had obtained *their* purpoſe, looſing *thence*
they ſailed cloſe by Crete. 14 But not long after
there aroſe againſt it a tempeſtuous wind, called
Euroclydon. 15 And when the ſhip was caught
and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her*
drive. 16 And running under a certain iſland which
is called Clauda, we had much work to come by
the boat: 17 Which when they had taken up,
they uſed helps, undergirding the ſhip; and fearing
leſt they ſhould fall into the quickſands, ſtrake ſail,
and ſo were driven. 18 And we being exceedingly
toſſed with a tempeſt, the next *day* they lightened
the ſhip; 19 And the third *day* we caſt out with
our own hands the tackling of the ſhip. 20 And
when neither ſun nor ſtars in many days appeared,
and no ſmall tempeſt lay on *us*, all hope that we
ſhould be ſaved, was then taken away.

In theſe Verſes we have,

Firſt, The Ship putting to Sea again, and purſuing her Voyage at firſt with a promiſing Gale. *Obſerve*,

1. What induc'd them to leave the *fair Heavens*; It was becauſe they thought the Harbour not *commodious to winter in*; It was pleaſant enough in the Summer, but in the Winter they lay bleak. Or, perhaps 'twas upon ſome other Account incommodious; Proviſions perhaps were ſcarce and dear there; and they run upon a *Miſchief* to avoid an *Inconvenience*, as we often do. Some of the Ship's Crew, or of the Council that was call'd to adviſe in this Matter, were for ſtaying there, rather than venturing to Sea, now the Weather was ſo uncertain. 'Tis better be ſafe in an *incommodious Harbour*, than be loſt in a *tempeſtuous Sea*; But they were *out-voted* when it was put to the Queſtion, and the *more part adviſed to depart thence alſo*; yet they aim'd not to go far, but only to another Port of the ſame Iſland, here call'd *Phœnice*, and ſome think 'twas ſo call'd becauſe the *Phœnicians* frequented it much; the Merchants of *Tyre* and *Sidon*. It is here deſcrib'd to lie *toward the* South-Weſt *and* North-Weſt. Probably the Haven was between two Promontories, or Juttings out of Land into the Sea, one of which pointed to the *North-Weſt*, and t'other to the *South-Weſt*, by which it was guarded againſt the *Eaſt* Winds. Thus hath the Wiſdom of the Creator provided for the Relief and Safety of them who *go down to the Sea in Ships, and do Buſineſs in great Waters.* In vain had Nature provided for us the Waters to ſail on, if it had not likewiſe provided for us Natural Harbours to take Shelter in.

2. What Encouragement they had at firſt to purſue their Voyage: They ſet out with a fair Wind, *v.* 13. the *South Wind blew ſoftly*, upon which they flatter'd themſelves with Hope that they ſhould *gain their Point*, and ſo they *ſailed cloſe by* the Coaſt of *Crete*, and were not afraid of running upon the Rocks or Quick-ſands, becauſe the Wind blew ſo gently. Thoſe who put to Sea with never ſo fair a Gale, know not what Storms they may yet meet with; and therefore muſt not be ſecure, nor take it for granted that they have *obtain'd their Purpoſe*, when ſo many Accidents may happen to *croſs their Purpoſe. Let not him that girdeth on the Harneſs boaſt as tho' he had put it off.*

Secondly, The Ship *in a Storm* preſently, a dreadful Storm. They look'd at ſecond Cauſes, and took their Meaſures from the favourable Hints they gave, and imagin'd that becauſe the South-wind now blew ſoftly, it would always blow ſo, and in Confidence of that they ventur'd to Sea, but are ſoon made ſenſible of their Folly in giving more Credit to a ſmiling Wind, than to the Word of GOD in *Paul*'s Mouth, by which they had fair Warning given them of a Storm. *Obſerve*,

1. What their *Danger* and *Diſtreſs* was, (1.) There *aroſe againſt them a Tempeſtuous Wind*, which was not only contrary to them, and directly in their Teeth, ſo that they could not get forward, but a *violent Wind* that rais'd the Waves, like that which was ſent forth in Purſuit of *Jonah*; tho' *Paul* was following GOD, and going on in his Duty, and not as *Jonah* running away from GOD and his Duty. This Wind the Sailors call'd *Euroclydon*, a *North-Eaſt* Wind, which upon thoſe Seas perhaps was obſerv'd to be in a particular Manner Troubleſome and Dangerous. It was a ſort of a *Whirlwind*, for the Ship is ſaid to be *caught* by it, *v.* 15. 'Twas GOD that *commanded this Wind to riſe*, deſigning to bring Glory to himſelf, and Reputation to *Paul* out of it; *ſtormy Winds* being brought out of his Treaſuries, *Pſal.* cxxxv. 7. they *fulfil His Word*, Pſal. cxlviii. 8. (2.) The Ship was *exceedingly toſs'd*, v. 18. 'twas kick'd like a Foot-ball from Wave to Wave, and as it is elegantly deſcrib'd, *Pſal.* cvii. 26, 27. it and its Paſſengers *mount up to the Heavens, go down again to the Depths, reel to and fro, ſtagger like a drunken Man, and are at their Wits end.* The Ship could not poſſibly *bear up into the Wind*, could not make her Way in Oppoſition to the Wind; and therefore they folded up their Sails, which in ſuch a Storm would endanger them rather than do them any Service, and ſo *let the ſhip drive*, let it go where-ever the Wind hurries it. *Non quo voluit, ſed quo rapit impetus undæ. Ovid. Triſt.* It is probable they were very near the Haven of *Phœnice* when this Tempeſt roſe, and thought they ſhould preſently be in a quiet Haven, and were pleaſing themſelves with the Thought of it, and of wintering there, and lo, of a ſudden they are in this Diſtreſs. Let us therefore always rejoice with Trembling, and never expect a perfect Security, nor a perpetual Serenity till we come to Heaven. (3.) They ſaw neither *Sun* nor *Stars* of many Days; this made the Tempeſt the more terrible, that they were *all in the Dark*; And the Uſe of the Load-ſtone for the directing of Sailors not being then found out, ſo that they had no Guide at all when they could ſee neither Sun nor Stars, made the Caſe the more hazardous. Thus Melancholy ſometimes is the Condition of the People of God upon a ſpiritual Account: They *walk in Darkneſs, and have no Light.* Neither *Sun* nor *Stars* appear; they cannot *dwell*; nay, they cannot *faſten* upon any Thing *comfortable* or *encouraging*; Thus it may be with them, and yet *Light is ſown* for them. (4.) They had abundance of *Winter-weather*; *no ſmall Tempeſt*; χειμων οὐκ ὀλίγος cold Rain, and Snow, and all the Rigours of that Seaſon of the Year; ſo that they were ready to periſh for Cold; and all this continued *many Days.* See what *Hardſhips* thoſe many Times undergo that are much at Sea, beſides the *Hazards* of Life they run; and yet to get Gain there are ſtill thoſe who make nothing of all this: And it is an Inſtance of the Wiſdom of Divine Providence, that it diſpoſeth ſome to this Employment, notwithſtanding the Difficulties that attend it, for the keeping up of Commerce among the Nations, and the *Iſles of the* Gentiles particularly; And *Zebulon* can as heartily rejoice in his *going out*, as *Iſſachar* in his *Tents.* And perhaps Chriſt therefore choſe Miniſters from among Sea-faring Men, becauſe they had been us'd to *endure Hardneſs.*

2. What Means they us'd for their own Relief; they betook themſelves to all the poor Shifts (for I can call them no better) that Sailors in Diſtreſs have Recourſe to. (1.) When they could not *make Head* againſt the Wind they let the Ship *run adrift*, finding it was to no Purpoſe to ply either the Oar or the Sail. When it is fruitleſs to *ſtruggle*, 'tis Wiſdom to *yield.* (2.) They nevertheleſs did what they could to avoid the preſent Danger; there was a little *Iſland* call'd *Clauda*, and when they were near that, tho' they could not purſue their Voyage, they took Care to prevent their Shipwreck, and therefore ſo order'd their Matters, that they did not run againſt the Iſland, but quietly *run under it*, v. 16. (3.) When they were afraid they ſhould ſcarce ſave *the Ship*, they were buſy to ſave *the Boat*, which they did with much adoe. They had *much Work to come by the Boat*, v. 16. but at laſt they *took it up*, v. 17. That might be of Uſe in any Exigence, and therefore they made hard ſhift to get it into the Ship to them. (4.) They us'd Means which were proper enough in thoſe Times, when the Art of *Navigation* was far ſhort of the Perfection 'tis now come to; they *ungirded the Ship*, v. 17. They *bound* the Ship under the Bottom of it with ſtrong Cables, to keep it from *bulging* in the Extremity of the Tempeſt. (5.) For fear of falling *into the Quick-ſands*, they *ſtruck Sail*, and then let the Ship go as it would. 'Tis ſtrange how a Ship will *live at Sea*, (ſo they expreſs it) even in every ſtormy Weather, if it have but *Sea-Room*; and when the Sailors cannot *make the Shore*, 'tis their Intereſt to keep as far off it as they can. (6.) The next Day they *lighten'd the Ship* of its *Cargo*, threw the Goods and Merchandizes over-board, as *Jonah*'s Mariners did, *Chap.* i. 5. being willing rather to be *poor* without them, than to *periſh* with them. *Skin for Skin, and all that a Man has, will be give for his Life.* See what the Wealth of this World is; how much ſoever 'tis courted as a Bleſſing, the Time may come when it will be a Burthen, not only too heavy to be carry'd ſafe of itſelf, but heavy enough to ſink him that has it. *Riches* are often *kept by the Owners thereof to their Hurt*, Eccleſ. v. 13. and parted with to their Good. But ſee the Folly of the Children of this World, they can be thus prodigal of their Goods when it is for the *ſaving of their Lives*, and yet how ſparing of them in Works of Piety and Charity, and in ſuffering for Chriſt, tho' they are told by Eternal Truth itſelf that thoſe ſhall be recompens'd more than a Thouſand Fold *in the Reſurrection of the Juſt.* They went upon a Principle of Faith, who *took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods, knowing in themſelves, that they had in Heaven a better and a more enduring Subſtance*, Heb. x. 34. any Man will rather make Shipwreck of his Goods, than of his Life, but many will rather make *Ship-*

wreck of Faith and a good Conſcience, than of their Goods. (7.) The Third Day they *caſt out the Tackling of the Ship*; the Utenſils of it, *Aramenta*; ſo ſome render it; as if it were a Ship of Force. With us 'tis common to heave the Guns over-board in the Extremity of a Storm; but what heavy Artillery they had then which it was neceſſary to lighten the Ship of, I do not know; and queſtion whether it were not then a *Vulgar Error* among Seamen thus to throw every Thing into the Sea, even that which would be of *great Uſe* in a Storm, and *no great Weight*.

3. The Deſpair which at laſt they were brought to, *v.* 20. *All Hope that we ſhould be ſaved was then taken away.* The Storm continued, and they ſaw no Symptoms of its Abatement: We have known very bluſtring Weather to continue for ſome Weeks. The Means they had us'd were ſo effectual, ſo that they were *at their Wits End*; And ſuch was the Conſternation that this melancholy Proſpect put them into, that they had no Heart either to eat or drink. They had Proviſion enough on Board, *v.* 38. but ſuch *Bondage* were they under *through Fear of Death*, that they could not admit the Supports of Life. Why did not *Paul*, by the Power of Chriſt and in his Name lay this Storm? Why did he not ſay to the Winds and Waves, *Peace*, *Be ſtill*, as his Maſter had done? ſurely it was becauſe the Apoſtles wrought Miracles for the Confirmation of their Doctrine, not for the ſerving of a Turn for themſelves or their Friends.

21 But after long abſtinence, Paul ſtood forth in the midſt of them, and ſaid, Sirs, ye ſhould have hearkened unto me, and not have looſed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loſs. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there ſhall be no loſs of *any man's* life among you, but of the ſhip. 23 For there ſtood by me this night the angel of God, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou muſt be brought before Cæſar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that ſail with thee. 25 Wherefore, Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, and it ſhall be even as it was told me. 26 Howbeit we muſt be caſt upon a certain iſland. 27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria about midnight, the ſhipmen deemed that they drew near to ſome countrey: 28 And ſounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they ſounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. 29 Then fearing leſt they ſhould have fallen upon rocks, they caſt four anchors out of the ſtern, and wiſhed for the day. 30 And as the ſhipmen were about to flee out of the ſhip, when they had let down the boat into the ſea, under colour, as though they would have caſt anchors out of the foreſhip. 31 Paul ſaid to the centurion, and to the ſoldiers, Except theſe abide in the ſhip ye cannot be ſaved. 32 Then the ſoldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. 33 And while the day was coming on, Paul beſought them all to take meat, ſaying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried, and continued faſting, having taken nothing. 34 Wherefore I pray you to take *ſome* meat; for this is for your health: for there ſhall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. 35 And when he had thus ſpoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in preſence of them all, and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat. 36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they alſo took *ſome* meat. 37 And we were in all in the ſhip, two hundred threeſcore and ſixteen ſouls. 38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ſhip, and caſt out the wheat into the ſea. 39 And when it was day they knew not the land: but they diſcovered a certain creek with a ſhore, into the which they were minded, if it were poſſible, to thruſt in the ſhip. 40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themſelves* unto the ſea, and looſed the rudder-bands, and hoiſed up the mainſail to the wind, and made towards ſhore. 41 And ſailing into a place where two ſeas met, they ran the ſhip a-ground; and the forepart ſtuck faſt, and remained unmoveable, but the hinderpart was broken with the violence of the waves. 42 And the ſoldiers counſel was to kill the priſoners, leſt any of them ſhould ſwim out, and eſcape. 43 But the centurion willing to ſave Paul, kept them from *their* purpoſe, and commanded that they which could ſwim, ſhould caſt *themſelves* firſt into the ſea, and get to land: 44 And the reſt, ſome on boards and ſome on *broken pieces* of the ſhip: And ſo it came to paſs that they eſcaped all ſafe to land.

We have here the Iſſue of the Diſtreſs of *Paul* and his Fellow-Travellers; they eſcap'd with their Lives, and that was all; and that was for *Paul*'s ſake. We are here told, *v.* 37. what Number there were on Board, Mariners, Merchants, Soldiers, Priſoners and other Paſſengers, in all Two Hundred Seventy Six *Souls*; this is taken Notice of to make us the more concern'd for them in reading the Story, that they were ſuch a conſiderable Number, whoſe Lives were now in the utmoſt jeopardy, and one *Paul* among them worth more than all the reſt. We left them in Deſpair, giving up themſelves for gone: Whether they *call'd every Man on his God*, as *Jonah*'s Mariners did, we are not told. 'Tis well if the laudable Practice in a Storm was not gone out of Faſhion, and made a Jeſt of. However *Paul* among theſe Seamen was not like *Jonah* among us, the *Cauſe of* the Storm, but the *Comforter* in the Storm, and as much a Credit to the Profeſſion of an Apoſtle, as *Jonah* was a Blemiſh to his Character as a Prophet.

Now here we have,

Firſt, The Encouragement *Paul* gave them by aſſuring them in the Name of GOD that their Lives ſhould all be ſav'd, then when in human Appearance, all Hope that they ſhould be ſaved was taken away. *Paul* reſcued them from their Deſpair firſt, that they might not die of that, and ſtarve themſelves in that, and then they were in a fair way to be reſcu'd from their Diſtreſs. *After long Abſtinence*, as if they were reſolv'd not to eat, till they knew whether they ſhould live or die, *Paul ſtood forth in the midſt of them*; During the Diſtreſs hitherto *Paul* hid himſelf among them, was one of the Croud, help'd with the reſt to *throw out the Tackling*, v. 19. but now he diſtinguiſh'd himſelf, and, tho' a Priſoner, undertook to be their Counſellor and Comforter.

1. He *reproves* them for not taking his Advice, which was to ſtay where they were in the Road of *Laſea*, v. 8. *Ye ſhould have hearken'd to me and not have looſed from* Crete, where we might have made a ſhift to Winter well enough, and then we ſhould not have *gained this Harm and Loſs*; *i. e.* we ſhould have eſcaped it. *Harm and Loſs* in the World, if *Sanctify'd* to us, may be truly ſaid to be *Gain*; for if they wean us from preſent Things, and awaken us to think of a future State, we are truly Gainers by them. *Obſerve*, They did not *hearken to Paul* when he *warn'd* them of their Danger, and yet if they will but acknowledge their Folly and repent of it, he will ſpeak Comfort and Relief to them now they are in Danger; ſo compaſſionate is GOD to thoſe that are in Miſery, tho' they bring themſelves into it by their own Incogitancy, nay, by their own Wilfulneſs and Contempt of Admonition. *Paul* before his Comfort, will firſt make them ſenſible of their Sin in not hearkening to him, by upbraiding them with their Raſhneſs, and probably when he tells them of their *gaining Harm and Loſs*, he reflects upon what they promis'd themſelves by proceeding in their Voyage, that they ſhould *gain* ſo much Time, *gain* this and t'other Point, but ſaith he, you have *gain'd* nothing but *Harm* and *Loſs*; how will you anſwer it? That which they are blam'd for, is their looſing from *Crete*, where they were ſafe. *Note*, Moſt People bring themſelves into Inconvenience becauſe they do do *not know when they are well*, but *gain Harm and Loſs* by aiming againſt Advice to *mend themſelves*.

2. He *aſſures* them, that tho' they ſhould loſe the Ship, yet they ſhould none of them loſe their Lives. You ſee your Folly in not being rul'd by me, he doth not ſay now therefore expect to fare accordingly, you may thank yourſelves if you be all loſt. They that *will not be counſel'd, cannot be help'd*. No, yet now there is Hope in *Iſrael* concerning this Thing; your Caſe is ſad, but it is not deſperate, *Now I exhort you to be of good Cheer*: Thus we ſay to Sinners that are convinc'd of their Sin and Folly, and begin to ſee and bewail their Error, *you ſhould have hearken'd unto us*, and ſhould have had nothing to do with Sin; yet now we *exhort you to be of good Cheer*: Tho' you would not take our Advice when we ſaid, *Do not preſume*, yet take it now when we ſay, *Do not deſpair*. They had given up the Cauſe, and would uſe no further Means, becauſe *all Hope that they ſhould be ſaved was taken away*. Now *Paul* quickens them to beſtir themſelves yet in working for their own Safety, by telling them that if they would reſume their Vigour they ſhould ſecure their Lives. He gives them this Aſſurance when they were brought to the laſt Extremity, for now it would be doubly welcome to them to be told that not a Life ſhould be loſt, when they were ready to conclude they muſt inevitably be *all loſt*. He tells them (1.) That they muſt count upon the *Loſs of the Ship*. Thoſe who were intereſted in that and the *Goods* were probably thoſe *greater Part* that were for

puſhing forward the Voyage, and running the Venture, notwithſtanding *Paul*'s Admonition, and they are made to pay for their Raſhneſs: Their *Ship* ſhall be *wreck'd.* And many a ſtately, ſtrong, rich gallant Ship is loſt in the mighty Waters in a little Time; for *Vanity of Vanities*, *all is Vanity* and *Vexation of Spirit.* But (2.) *Not a Life ſhall be loſt.* This would be good News to thoſe that were ready to *Die* for fear of *Dying*, and whoſe guilty Conſciences made Death look very terrible to them.

3. He tells them *what Ground he had* for this Aſſurance; that it is not a Banter upon them to put them into Humour, nor a human Conjecture, but he has a Divine Revelation for it, and is as confident of it as that GOD is True, being fully ſatisfied that he has his Word for it. *An Angel of God* appear'd to him in the Night, and told him that *for his ſake* they ſhould all be preſerv'd, *v.* 23, 24, 25. which would double the Mercy of their Preſervation, that they ſhould have it not only by Providence but by Promiſe, and as a particular Favour to *Paul.* Now obſerve here,

(1.) The ſolemn Profeſſion *Paul* makes of Relation to GOD, the GOD from whom he had this favourable Intelligence; 'Tis he, *whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve.* He looks upon GOD, (1.) As his *rightful Owner*; that has a ſovereign unconteſtable Title to him, and Dominion over him; *whoſe I am.* Becauſe *God made us, and not we ourſelves*, therefore we are *not our own, but His.* His we are by Creation, for he made us, by Preſervation, for he maintains us, by Redemption, for he bought us. We are more *His* than *our own.* (2.) As his *Sovereign Ruler and Maſter*, that having given him Being, has Right to give him Law, *whom I ſerve.* Becauſe his we are, therefore we are bound to *ſerve Him*, to devote ourſelves to his Honour, and employ ourſelves in his Work. It is *Chriſt* that **Paul** here has an Eye to; He is *GOD*, and the Angels are *His*, and go on his Errands, *Paul* often calls himſelf a *Servant of Jeſus Chriſt*; he is *His*, and *Him* he ſerves both as a Chriſtian and as an Apoſtle; He doth not ſay, whoſe *we* are, and whom *we* ſerve, for the moſt that were preſent were Strangers to him, but whoſe *I am*, and whom *I ſerve*, whatever others do. Nay, whom I am now in the actual Service of; going to *Rome*, not as you are upon worldly Buſineſs, but appear as a Witneſs for Chriſt. Now this he tells the Company, that ſeeing their Relief coming from his GOD, whoſe *he was*, and *whom he ſerv'd*, they might thereby be drawn in to take him for their GOD, and to ſerve him likewiſe; for the ſame Reaſon *Jonah* ſaid to his Mariners, *I fear the Lord, the God of Heaven, which has made the Sea and the dry Land*, Jonah i. 9.

(2.) The Account he gives of the Viſion he had. *There ſtood by me this Night an Angel of GOD*, a Divine Meſſenger, who had us'd formerly to bring him Meſſages from Heaven; He *ſtood by him*, viſibly appear'd to him, probably when he was awake upon his Bed. Tho' he was *afar off upon the Sea*, (Pſal. lxv. 5.) *in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea*, Pſal. cxxxix. 9. yet that cannot intercept his Communion with GOD, nor deprive him of the Benefit of Divine Viſits. Thence he can direct a Prayer to GOD, and thither GOD can direct an Angel to him. He knows not where he is himſelf, yet GOD's Angel knows where to find him out. The *Ship is toſs'd* with Winds and Waves, hurry'd to and fro with the utmoſt Violence, and yet the Angel finds a Way into it. No Storms or Tempeſts can hinder the Communications of GOD's Favour to his People, for he is a very *preſent Help*, a Help at Hand, even when the *Sea roars and is troubled*, Pſal. xlvi. 1. 3. We may ſuppoſe that *Paul* being a *Priſoner*, had not a Cabin of his own in the Ship, much leſs a Bed in the Captain's Cabin, but was put down into the Hold; any dark or dirty Place was thought good enough in common with the reſt of the Priſoners, and yet there *the Angel of God ſtood by him.* Meanneſs and Poverty ſets none at a diſtance from GOD and his Favour. *Jacob*, when he has no Pillow but a Stone, no Curtains but the Clouds, yet has a Viſion of Angels; *Paul* had this Viſion but *this laſt Night.* He had himſelf been aſſur'd by a former Viſion, that he ſhould go to *Rome*, *chap.* xxiii. 11. from which he might infer that he himſelf ſhould be ſafe, but he has this freſh Viſion to aſſure him of the ſafety of thoſe with him.

(3.) The Encouragements that were given him in the Viſion, *v.* 24. (1.) He is forbidden to fear. Tho' all about him are at their Wits end, and loſt in Deſpair, yet *Fear not Paul*; Fear not *their Fear, nor be afraid*, Iſa. viii. 12. Let the *Sinners in Sion be afraid*, but let not the *Saints* be afraid, no not at Sea, in a ſtorm; for *the Lord of Hoſts is with them*, and their *Place of Defence ſhall be the munitions of Rocks*, Iſa. xxxiii. 14, 16. (2.) He is aſſur'd that for his Part he ſhall come ſafe to *Rome*; *Thou muſt be brought before* Cæſar. As the Rage of the moſt potent Enemies, ſo the Rage of the moſt *ſtormy Sea* cannot prevail againſt GOD's Witneſſes till they have *finiſh'd their Teſtimony.* *Paul* muſt be *preſerv'd* in this Danger, for he is *reſerv'd* for further Service. This is comfortable to the Faithful Servants of GOD in Straits and Difficulties, that as long as GOD has any Work for them to do, their Lives ſhall be prolong'd. (3.) That for his ſake all that were in the Ship with him ſhould be deliver'd too, from periſhing in this Storm. GOD *hath given thee all them that ſail with thee.* This Angel that was order'd to bring him this Meſſage could have ſingled him out from this wretched Crew, and thoſe that were his Friends too, and have carry'd them ſafe to ſhore, and have left the reſt to periſh, becauſe they would not take *Paul*'s Counſel. But GOD chuſeth rather by preſerving them all for his ſake to ſhew what great Bleſſings good Men are to the World, than by delivering him only to ſhew how good Men are diſtinguiſh'd from the World. *GOD hath given thee all them that ſail with thee*, *i. e.* ſpares them in anſwer to thy prayers, or for thy ſake. Sometimes good Men deliver *neither Sons nor Daughters but their own Souls only*, Ezek. xiv. 18. But *Paul* here delivers a whole Ship's Crew, almoſt three hundred Souls. *Note*, GOD often ſpares wicked People for the ſake of the Godly; as *Zoar* for *Lot*'s ſake, and as *Sodom* might have been, if there had been *Ten righteous Perſons* in it. The good People are hated and perſecuted in the World as if they were not worthy to live in it, yet really it is for their Sakes that the World ſtands. If *Paul* had thruſt himſelf needleſly into ill Company, he might juſtly have been caſt away with them, but GOD calling him into it, they are preſerv'd with him. And it is intimated, That it was a great Favour to *Paul*, and he look'd upon it to be ſo, that others were ſav'd for his Sake, they are *given thee*; There is no greater Satisfaction to a good Man, than to know that he is a publick Bleſſing.

4. He comforts them with the ſame Comforts wherewith he himſelf was comforted, *v.* 25. *Wherefore Sirs, be of good Cheer*, you ſhall ſee even this will end well; *for I believe in God*, and depend upon his Word, *that it ſhall be even as it was told me.* He would not require them to give Credit to that which he did not himſelf give Credit to; and therefore ſolemnly profeſſeth that he *believes it himſelf*, and the Belief of it makes him eaſy. I doubt not but it ſhall be *as it was told me.* Thus he *ſtaggers not at the Promiſe of God through Unbelief.* Hath GOD ſpoken and ſhall He not make it good? No doubt he can, no doubt he will, for *He is not a Man that he ſhould lye.* And ſhall it be as GOD hath ſaid? Then *be of good Cheer*, be of good Courage, GOD is ever faithful, and therefore let all that have an Intereſt in his Promiſe be ever chearful. If with GOD *ſaying* and *doing* are not *two Things*, then with us *Believing* & *Enjoying* ſhould not.

5. He gives them *a Sign*, telling them particularly what this Tempeſtuous Voyage would iſſue in, *v.* 26. *We muſt be caſt upon a certain Iſland*, and that will both break the Ship, and ſave the Paſſengers, and ſo the Prediction in both Reſpects will be fulfill'd. The *Pilot* had quitted his Poſt, the Ship was left to run at Random, they knew not what Latitude they were in, much leſs how to ſteer their Courſe, and yet Providence undertakes to bring them to an Iſland that ſhall be a Refuge for them. When the Church of GOD, like this Ship, is *toſſed with Tempeſts and not comforted*, when there is *none to guide her of all her Sons*, yet GOD can bring her ſafe to ſhore, and will do it.

Secondly, Their coming at length to an Anchor upon an unknown Shore, *v.* 27, 28, 29.

1. They had been a *full Fortnight* in the Storm, continually expecting Death. The *Fourteenth Night*, and not ſooner, they came near Land. They were that Night *driven up and down in* Adria, not in the *Adriatick Gulf*, on which *Venice* ſtands, but in the *Adriatick Sea*, a Part of the *Mediterranean* containing both the *Sicilian* and *Ionian*-Seas, and extending to the *African*-Shore. In this Sea they were toſs'd, and knew not whereabouts they were.

2. About Midnight the Mariners apprehended that they drew near to ſome Shore; which confirm'd what *Paul* had told them, that they *muſt be driven upon ſome Iſland.* To try whether it was ſo or no they *ſounded*, in order to their finding the Depth of the Water, for the Water would be ebber as they drew nearer to Shore; by the firſt Experiment they found they drew Twenty Fathom deep of Water, and by the next, Fifteen Fathom; which was a Demonſtration that they were near ſome Shore. GOD hath wiſely order'd ſuch a Natural Notice to Sailors in the Dark that they may be cautious.

3. They took the Hint, and fearing Rocks near the Shore, they *caſt Anchor, and wiſh'd for the Day.* They durſt not *go forward*, for *fear* of Rocks, and yet would not *go back* in Hope of Shelter, but they would *wait for the Morning*, and heartily *wiſh'd* for it; who can blame them when the Affair came to a *Criſis?* When they had Light there was no Land to be ſeen; now there was Land near them they had no Light to ſee it by, no marvel then they *wiſh'd for Day.* When thoſe that fear GOD walk *in Darkneſs, and have no Light*, yet let them not ſay, *The Lord has forſaken them*, or *their God has forgotten them*, but let them do as theſe Mariners did, *caſt Anchor and wiſh for the Day*, and be aſſur'd that the Day will dawn. *Hope* is an *Anchor of the Soul, ſure and ſtedfaſt entring into that within the Veil.* Hold faſt by that, think not of putting to Sea again, but abide by Chriſt, and wait *till the Day break, and the Shadows flee away.*

Thirdly, The defeating of the Sailors Attempt to quit the Ship; Here was a new Danger added to their Diſtreſs, which they narrowly eſcap'd. *Obſerve*,

1. The Treacherous Deſign of the Shipmen; and that was to leave the *ſinking* Ship; which tho' a piece of Wiſdom in others, yet in thoſe that were intruſted with the Conduct of it, it was the baſeſt Fraud that could be, *v.* 30. They were about to *flee out of the Ship*, concluding no other but that when it run aſhore, it muſt be broken all to pieces. Having the Command of the Boat, the Project was to get all of them into that, and ſo ſave themſelves, and leave all the reſt to periſh. To cover this vile Deſign, they pretended they would *caſt Anchors out of the Fore-ſhip Boat*, which they had taken in, *v.* 16, 17. and were going into it, having

for the Shore. The Treacherous Seamen like the Treacherous Shepherd, flees when he ſees the *Danger coming*, and there is moſt need of his Help, *John* x. 12. Then true is that of *Solomon*, *Confidence in an unfaithful Man in Time of Trouble, is like a broken Tooth, or a Foot out of Joynt.* Let us therefore *ceaſe from Man. Paul* had in GOD's Name aſſur'd them that they ſhould come ſafe to Land, but they will rather truſt their own *Refuge of Lyes*, than GOD*'s Word of Truth.*

2. *Paul*'s Diſcovery of it, and Proteſtation againſt it, *v.* 31. They all ſaw them preparing to go into the Boat, but were deceiv'd by the Pretence they made, only *Paul* ſaw through it, and gave Notice to the Centurion and the Soldiers concerning it, and therefore the *Shipmen* are now more neceſſary than ever yet: It was indeed not by any skill of theirs that they were brought to Land, for it was quite beyond their skill, but now they are near Land, they muſt uſe their Art to bring the Ship to it. When GOD has done that for us which we could not, we muſt then in his Strength help our ſelves. *Paul* ſpeaks *humanly* when he ſaith, *ye cannot be ſav'd except theſe abide in the Ship*, and doth not at all weaken the aſſurances he had *divinely* given that they ſhould infallibly be ſav'd. GOD that appointed the End that they ſhould be *ſav'd*, appointed the Means that they ſhould be ſav'd by the Help of theſe *Ship-men*; Tho' if they had gone off, no doubt GOD would have made his Word good ſome other way. *Paul* ſpeaks as a *prudent Man*, not as a *Prophet*, when he ſaith, Theſe are neceſſary to your Preſervation. Duty is *ours*, Events are GOD's; And we do not *truſt* GOD, but *tempt* him, when we ſay we put ourſelves under his Protection, and do not uſe proper Means, ſuch as are within our Power for our own preſervation.

3. The effectual Defeating of it by the Soldiers, *v.* 32. 'Twas no Time to ſtand arguing the Caſe with the Shipmen, and therefore they made no more ado but *cut the Ropes* of the Boat, and tho' it might otherwiſe have done them Service in their preſent Diſtreſs, they choſe rather to let it *fall off*, and loſe it, than ſuffer it to do them this Diſſervice. And now the Shipmen being forc'd to ſtay in the Ship whether they would or no, are forc'd likewiſe to work for the Safety of the Ship as hard as they could, becauſe if the reſt periſh, they muſt periſh with them.

Fourthly, The *New Life* which *Paul* put into the Company by his chearful inviting them to take ſome Refreſhment, and the repeated Aſſurances given them, that they ſhould all of them have their Lives given them for a Prey. Happy they who had ſuch a one as *Paul* in their Company, who not only had Correſpondence with Heaven, but was of a *hearty lively* Spirit, with thoſe about him; that *ſharpen'd the Countenance of his Friend*, as *Iron ſharpens Iron.* Such a Friend in Diſtreſs when without are Fightings, and within are Fears, is a Friend indeed. *Ointment and Perfume rejoice the Heart: So doth the ſweetneſs of a Man's Friend by hearty Counſel*, Prov. xxvii. 10. Such was *Paul*'s here to his Companions in Tribulation. The *Day was coming on.* They that *wiſh for the Day*, let them wait a while, and they ſhall have what they wiſh for; The Dawning of the Day reviv'd them a little, and then *Paul* got them together.

1. He chid them for their Neglect of themſelves, that they had ſo far given Way to Fear and Deſpair as to forget or not to mind their Food. *This is the Fourteenth Day that ye have tarried and continued Faſting, having taken nothing*; and that is not well. *v.* 33. Not that they had all, or any of them continu'd Fourteen Days without any Food, but they had not had any ſet Meals as they us'd to have, of all that Time; they eat very little, next nothing. Or, *you have continu'd faſting, i. e.* you have *loſt your Stomach*; you have had no Appetite at all to your Food, nor any Reliſh of it, through prevailing Fear and Deſpair. A very diſconſolate State is thus expreſs'd, *Pſal.* cii. 4. *I forget to eat my Bread.* It is a Sin to *ſtarve* the Body and to deny it its neceſſary Supports; he is an unnatural Man indeed that hateth his own Fleſh, and doth not *nouriſh* and *cheriſh* it; And a *ſore Evil under the Sun* to have a Sufficiency of the good Things of this Life, and not to have *Power* to *uſe* them, *Eccleſ.* vi. 2. And if this ariſe from the *Sorrow of the World*, and from any inordinate Fear or Trouble, 'tis ſo far from excuſing it, that it is another Sin, 'tis Diſcontent, 'tis Diſtruſt of GOD, 'tis all wrong. What Folly is it to *Dye* for *fear of Dying*; but thus the *Sorrow of the World works Death*, while Joy in GOD is Life and Peace in the greateſt Diſtreſſes and Dangers.

2. He courts them to their Food, *v.* 34. *wherefore I pray you to take ſome Meat*; We have a hard Struggle before us, muſt get to ſhore as well as we can, if our Bodies be weak through Faſting, we ſhall not be able to help ourſelves. The Angel bid *Elijah Ariſe and Eat*, for otherwiſe he would find the *Journey too great for him*, 1 *Kings* xix. 7. ſo *Paul* will have theſe People eat or otherwiſe the Waves will be too hard for them. *I pray you* παρακαλῶ, *I exhort you*, if you'll be rul'd by me, take ſome Nouriſhment; Tho' you have no Appetite to it, tho' you have faſted away your Stomach, yet let Reaſon bring you to it, *for this is for your Health*; Or rather, your *Preſervation*, or *Safety* at this Time: 'Tis for your *Salvation*, you cannot without nouriſhment have Strength to ſhift for your Lives. As he that will not labour, let him not eat, ſo he that means to labour muſt eat. Weak and trembling Chriſtians that give way to Doubts and Fears about their Spiritual State continue Faſting from the Lord's-Supper, and Faſting from Divine Conſolation, and then complain they cannot go on in their Spiritual Work & Warfare, and it is long of themſelves, if they would feed and feaſt as they ought, upon the Proviſion Chriſt has made for them, they would be ſtrengthen'd, and 'twould be for their Souls Health and Salvation.

3. He aſſures them of their Preſervation. *There ſhall not be a Hair fall from the Head of any of you.* It is a Proverbial Expreſſion, noting a compleat Indemnity: 'Tis us'd 1 *Kin.* i. 52. *Luk.* xxi. 18. you cannot eat for fear of dying; I tell you, you are ſure of *living*, and therefore *eat.* You'll come to ſhore wet and cold, but ſound Wind & Limb; your Hair wet, but not a Hair *loſt*.

4. He himſelf ſpread their Table for them; for none of them had any Heart to do it, they were all ſo diſpirited; *when he had thus ſpoken, he took Bread*, fetch'd it from the Ship's Stores, to which every one might ſafely have *acceſs* when none of them had an *Appetite.* They were not reduc'd to *ſhort Allowance*, as Sailors ſometimes are, when they are kept longer at Sea than they expected, by *diſtreſs of Weather.* They had Plenty, but what good did that do them when they had no Stomach? We have Reaſon to be thankful to GOD that we have not only Food to our Appetite, but Appetite to our Food, that our Soul *abhors not dainty Meat, Job* xxxiii. 20. through Sickneſs or Sorrow.

5. He was *Chaplain* to the *Ship*; and they had Reaſon to be proud of their Chaplain. He *gave Thanks to God in preſence of them all.* We have Reaſon to think he had often pray'd with *Luke* and *Ariſtarchus*, and what others there were among them that were Chriſtians, that they pray'd daily together. But whether he had before this pray'd with the whole Company promiſcuouſly, is not certain. Now he *gave Thanks to God in Preſence of them all*; that they were alive, and had been preſerv'd hitherto; and that they had a Promiſe that their Lives ſhould be preſerv'd, in the imminent Peril now before them. He gave thanks for the Proviſion they had, and begg'd a Bleſſing upon it. We muſt *in every thing give Thanks*; and muſt particularly have an Eye to GOD in receiving our Food, for it is Sanctify'd to us *by the Word of God and Prayer*; and is to be *receiv'd with Thankſgiving*; thus the Curſe is taken off from it, and we obtain a Covenant Right to it, and a Covenant Bleſſing upon it, 1 *Tim.* iv. 3, 4, 5. And it is not *by Bread alone* that *Man lives*, but *by the Word of God*, which muſt be met with Prayer. He *gave thanks in preſence of them all*, not only to ſhew that he ſerv'd a Maſter he was not aſham'd of, but to invite them into his Service too. If we *crave a Bleſſing* upon our Meat, and *give Thanks* for it in a right manner, we ſhall not only keep up a comfortable Communion with GOD ourſelves, but credit our Profeſſion, and recommend it to the good Opinion of others.

6. He ſet them a good Example, when he had *given Thanks* he broke the Bread, ('twas Sea-bisket) and he *began to eat.* Whether they would be encourag'd or no, he would; If they would be ſullen, and like froward Children refuſe their Victuals becauſe they had not every thing to their Mind, he would eat his Meat and be thankful. Thoſe that teach others, are inexcuſable if they do not themſelves as they teach; and the moſt effectual way of Preaching, is *by Example.*

7. It had a happy Influence upon them all, *v.* 36. *Then were they all of good Cheer.* They then ventur'd to believe the Meſſage GOD ſent them by *Paul*, when they plainly perceiv'd that *Paul* believ'd it himſelf, who was in the ſame common Danger with them. Thus GOD ſends good Tydings to the periſhing World of Mankind by thoſe that are of themſelves, and in the ſame common Danger with themſelves, that are Sinners too, and muſt be ſav'd, if ever they be ſav'd, in the ſame way in which they perſuade others to venture; for it is a *Common Salvation* which they bring the Tydings of; and it is an Encouragement to People to commit themſelves to Chriſt as their Saviour, when thoſe who invite them to do ſo, make it appear that they do ſo themſelves. And it is here upon this Occaſion that the number of the Perſons is ſet down, which we took Notice of before, they were in all *Two Hundred Threeſcore and Sixteen Souls*: See how many may be influenc'd by the good Example of one. They did all eat, nay, they did all *eat enough*, *v.* 38. They were *ſatiated with Food*, or fill'd with it; they made a *hearty Meal*; which explains the Meaning of their *Faſting* before for Fourteen Days, not that they did not eat of all that Time, but they never had their Bellyfull of all that Time, as they had now.

8. They once more *lightened the Ship*, that it might ſcape the better in the Shock it was now to have. They had before thrown the *Wares* and the *Tackle* over-board, and now *the Wheat*, the Victuals and Proviſions they had; Better they ſhould ſink it, than that it ſhould ſink them. See what good Reaſon our Saviour had to call our Bodily Food *Meat that periſheth*; we may ourſelves be under a Neceſſity of throwing that away to ſave our Lives, which we had gather'd and laid up for the Support of our Lives. 'Tis probable the Ship was over-loaded with the Multitude of the Paſſengers, (for this comes in juſt after the Account of the Number of them) and that oblig'd them ſo often to *lighten the Ship.*

Fifthly, Their *putting to ſhore*, and the *ſtaving of the Ship* in the Adventure. It was about break of Day when they eat their Meat; and when it was fair Day they began to look about them: And here we are told,

1. That they knew not where they were; They could not tell what Country it was they were now upon the Coaſt of; whether it was *Europe*, *Aſia*, or *Africa*, for each had Shores waſh'd by the *Adriatick* Sea: 'Tis probable theſe Shipmen had often ſail'd this Way, and thought they knew every Country

they came near perfectly well, and yet here they were at a loſs. *Let not the Wiſe Man then glory in his Wiſdom*, ſince it may perhaps fail him thus egregiouſly, even in his own Profeſſion.

2. They obſerv'd a *Creek* with a *level Shore*, into which they hoped to *thruſt the Ship*, v. 39. Tho' they knew not what Country it was, or whether the Inhabitants were Friends or Foes, Civil or Barbarous, they determin'd to caſt themſelves upon their Mercy. It was *Dry Land* which would be very welcome to thoſe that had been ſo long at Sea. It was pity but they had had ſome help from the Shore, a Pilot ſent them that knew the Coaſt, who might ſteer their Ship in; or another ſecond Ship to to take ſome of the Men on Board. Thoſe who live on the Sea-Coaſt have often Opportunity of ſuccouring thoſe that are in Diſtreſs at Sea, and of ſaving precious Lives, and they ought to do their utmoſt in order to it, with all readineſs and chearfulneſs; for it is a great Sin, and very provoking to GOD to forbear to *deliver them that are driven unto death*, and are *ready to be ſlain*; and it will not ſerve for an Excuſe to ſay, *behold we know it not*, when either we did or might, and ſhould have known it, *Prov.* xxiv. 11. I have been told there are ſome, and in our own Nation too, that when from the Sea-coaſt they ſee a Ship in diſtreſs and at a loſs, will by miſ-guiding Fires, or otherwiſe, purpoſely lead them into Danger, that their Lives may be loſt, and they may have the Plunder of the Ship; one can ſcarcely believe that any of the human Nature could poſſibly be ſo wicked, ſo barbarouſly inhuman, and ſhould have ſo much of the Devil in them; if there be, let them know of a Truth that they ſhall have *Judgment without Mercy, who have ſhewed no Mercy*.

3. They made ſtrait to the Shore with Wind and Tide, *v.* 40. *They took up the Anchors*, the *four Anchors* which they caſt out of *the Stern*, *v.* 29. ſome think they took pains to *weigh them up*, hoping they ſhould have uſe for them again at the Shore; others that they did it with ſuch precipitation that they were forc'd to cut the Cables, and leave them; The Original admits either. They then *committed themſelves to the Sea*, the Wind ſtanding fair to carry them into the Port, and they *looſed the Rudder-bands*, which were faſten'd during the Storm, for the greater ſteddineſs of the Ship, but now they were putting into the Port were looſed that the Pilot might ſteer with the greater Freedom; They then hoiſted up the main Sail to the Wind, and made towards ſhore. The Original Words here us'd for the *Rudder-bands* and the *Main-ſail*, find the Criticks a great deal of Work, to accommodate them to the modern Terms; But they need not give us any difficulty, who are content to know that when they ſaw the ſhore they *haſten'd* to it as faſt as they could; and perhaps made more haſte than good ſpeed. And ſhould not a poor Soul that has long been ſtruggling with Winds and Tempeſts in this World, long to put into the ſafe and quiet Haven of everlaſting Reſt; ſhould it not get clear from all that which faſtens it to this Earth, and ſtraitens the Out-goings of its pious and devout Affections Heaven-wards; and ſhould it not hoiſt up the Main-ſail of Faith to the Wind of the Spirit, and ſo with longing Deſires *make to ſhore*.

4. They made a ſhift among them to *run the Ship a-ground* in a *Shelf* or *Bed of Sand*, as it ſhould ſeem, or an *Iſthmus*, and *Neck of Land*, waſh'd with the Sea on both ſides, and therefore two Seas are ſaid to meet upon it, and there *the fore-part ſtuck faſt*, and then when it had *no Liberty to play*, as a Ship has when it rides at Anchor, but *remain'd unmovable*, the *hinder part* would ſoon be broken of courſe by the *violence of the Waves*. Whether the Shipmen did not do their part, being angry that they were diſappointed in their deſign to *eſcape*, and therefore wilfully run the ſhip a-ground; or whether we may ſuppoſe that they did their utmoſt to ſave it, but GOD in his Providence overrul'd, for the fulfilling of *Paul*'s Word, that *the Ship muſt be loſt*, v. 22. I cannot ſay; but this we are ſure of, that GOD will *confirm the Word of his Servants*, and *perform the Counſel of his Meſſengers*, Iſa. xliv. 26. The Ship that had ſtrangely weather'd the Storm in the vaſt Ocean where it had room to *roll*, is daſh'd to pieces when it *ſticks faſt*. Thus if the Heart *fixeth in the World* in Love and Affection, and adherence to it, 'tis loſt; *Satan*'s Temptations beat againſt it and it's gone; but as long as it keeps above the World tho' it be toſt with its Cares and Tumults, there is Hope of it. They had the Shore in view, and yet *ſuffer'd ſhipwreck in the Harbour*, to teach us never to be ſecure.

Sixthly, A particular *Danger*, that *Paul* and the reſt of the *Priſoners* were in, beſides their ſhare in the common Calamity, and their deliverance from it.

1. In this critical Moment, when every Man hung in doubt of his Life, the Soldiers adviſ'd the *Killing of the Priſoners* that were committed to their Cuſtody, and whom they were to give Account of, *leſt any of them ſhould ſwim out and eſcape*, v. 42. There was no great Danger of that, for they could not eſcape far, weak and weary as they were; and under the Eye of ſo many Soldiers that had a Charge of them, 'twas not likely they ſhould attempt it. And if it ſhould ſo happen tho' they might be obnoxious to the Law for a *permiſſive* Eſcape, yet in ſuch a Caſe as this, Equity would certainly relieve them. But it was a bruitiſh barbarous Motion, and ſo much the worſe that they were thus prodigal of other Peoples Lives, when without a Miracle of Mercy, they muſt loſe their own.

2. The Centurion for *Paul*'s ſake quaſh'd this Motion preſently. *Paul* had found favour with him whoſe *Priſoner he was*, as *Joſeph* with the Captain of the Guard; *Julius* tho' he deſpiſ'd *Paul*'s Advice, *v.* 11. yet he afterwards ſaw a great deal of Cauſe to reſpect him, and therefore being *willing to ſave Paul*, he ſtay'd the Execution of that bloody Project, and *in favorem vitæ*, he *kept them from their Purpoſe*: It doth not appear they were any of them *Malefactors Convict*, but only ſuſpected and waiting their Tryal; and in ſuch a Caſe as this better Ten guilty ones ſhould eſcape, than one that was Innocent be ſlain. As GOD had ſav'd all in the Ship for *Paul*'s ſake, ſo here the Centurion ſaves all the Priſoners for his ſake; ſuch a diffuſive Good is a Good Man.

Seventhly, The ſaving of the Lives of all the Perſons in the Ship; by the wonderful Providence of GOD. When the Ship broke under them, ſurely there was but a Step between them and Death; and yet infinite Mercy interpos'd, and that Step was not ſtep'd.

1. Some were ſav'd by *ſwimming*; The Centurion commanded his own Soldiers in the firſt Place, as many of them as could ſwim to *get to Land* firſt, and to be ready to receive the Priſoners and prevent their Eſcape; The *Romans* train'd up their Youth among other Exerciſes to that of Swimming, and it was often of Service to them in their Wars. *Julius Cæſar* was a famous Swimmer. It may be very uſeful to thoſe who deal much at Sea, but otherwiſe perhaps more Lives have been loſt by ſwimming in ſport, and learning to ſwim, than have been ſav'd by ſwimming for Need.

2. The reſt with much ado ſcrambled to the ſhore, ſome *on Boards* that they had looſe with them in the Ship, and others on the *broken pieces of the Ship*, every one making the beſt ſhift he could for himſelf and his Friends, and the more buſy becauſe they were aſſur'd their Labour ſhould not be in vain: But *ſo it came to paſs*, that thro' the good Providence of GOD, none of them miſcarry'd, none of them were by an Accident turn'd off, but they *eſcap'd all ſafe to Land*. See here an Inſtance of the ſpecial Providence of GOD in the preſervation of Peoples Lives, and particularly in the deliverance of many from *Perils by Waters*, ready to ſink, and yet kept from ſinking, the *deep* from *ſwallowing them up*, and the *Water-floods* from overflowing them; the *Storm* turn'd into a *Calm*, they reſcued from the *dreaded Sea*, and brought to the *deſired Haven: O that Men would praiſe the Lord for his Goodneſs*, Pſ. cvii. 30, 31. Here was an Inſtance of the performance of a particular Word of Promiſe which GOD gave, That all the Perſons in this Ship ſhould be ſav'd for *Paul*'s ſake, Tho' there may be great difficulty in the Way of the promiſ'd Salvation, yet it ſhall without fail be accompliſh'd; And even the wreck of the Ship may furniſh out Means for the ſaving of the Lives; and when all ſeems to be gone, all proves to be ſafe, tho it be on *Boards, and broken pieces of the Ship*.

CHAP. XXVIII.

We are the more concern'd to take Notice of, and to improve what is here recorded concerning bleſſed Paul, *becauſe after the Story of this Chapter, we* hear no more of him *in the Sacred Hiſtory; tho' we have a great deal of him yet before us in his Epiſtles. We have attended him thro' ſeveral Chapters from one Judgment-ſeat to another, and could at laſt have taken leave of him with the more Pleaſure, if we had left him at liberty, but in this Chapter we are to* condole *him, and yet* congratulate *him.* 1. *We condole him as a poor* Shipwreck'd Paſſenger, *ſtrip'd of all, and yet* congratulate *him,* (1.) *As ſingularly own'd by his* GOD *in his Diſtreſs, preſerv'd himſelf from receiving hurt by a Viper that faſten'd on his Hand,* v. 1—6. *And being an Inſtrument of much good in the Iſland on which they were caſt, in healing many that were ſick, and particularly the Father of* Publius, *the chief Man of the Iſland,* v. 7—9. (2.) *As much reſpected by the People there* v. 10. (2.) *We* condole *him as a poor* confin'd Priſoner, *carry'd to* Rome *under the Notion of a Criminal, remov'd by* Habeas Corpus, v. 11.—16. *And yet we congratulate him,* (1.) *Upon the Reſpect ſhew'd him by the Chriſtians at* Rome, *who came a great Way to meet him,* v. 15. (2.) *Upon the Favour he found with the Captain of the Guard, into whoſe Cuſtody he was deliver'd, who ſuffer'd him to dwell by himſelf, and did not put him into the common Priſon,* v. 16. (3.) *Upon the free Conference he had with the* Jews *at* Rome, *both about his own Affair,* v. 17—22. *and upon the Head of the Chriſtian Religion in general,* v. 23. *The iſſue of which was, that* GOD *was glorify'd, many were edify'd, the reſt left inexcuſable, and the Apoſtles juſtified in Preaching the Goſpel to the* Gentiles, v. 24—29. (4.) *Upon the undiſturb'd Liberty he had to preach the Goſpel to all Comers, in his own Houſe for two Years together,* v. 30, 31.

AND when they were eſcaped, then they knew that the iſland was called Melita. 2 And the barbarous people ſhewed us no little kindneſs: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one becauſe of the preſent rain, and becauſe of the cold. 3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of ſticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat and faſtned on his hand. 4 And when the barbarians ſaw the venomous beaſt hang on his hand, they ſaid among themſelves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom though he hath eſcaped

the ſea, yet vengeance ſuffereth not to live. 5 And
he ſhook off the beaſt into the fire, and felt no harm.
6 Howbeit they looked when he ſhould have ſwol-
len or fallen down dead ſuddenly: but after they
had looked a great while, and ſaw no harm come
to him, they changed their minds and ſaid, that he
was a god. 7 In the ſame quarters were poſſeſſi-
ons of the chief man of the iſland, whoſe name was
Publius, who received us and lodged us three days
courteouſly. 8 And it came to paſs that the father of
Publius lay ſick of a Fever, and of a bloody flux,
to whom Paul enter'd in, and prayed and laid his
hand on him and healed him. 9 So when this was
done, others alſo which had diſeaſes in the Iſland,
came, and were healed. 10 Who alſo honoured us
with many honours, and when we departed, they
laded *us* with ſuch things as were neceſſary.

What a great variety of Places and Circumſtances do we find *Paul* in! He was a Planet, and not a fix'd Star. Here we have him in an Iſland to which in all probability he had never come, if he had not been thrown upon it by a Storm; and yet it ſeems GOD has Work for him to do here. Even *ſtormy Winds* fulfil GOD's Counſel, and an *ill Wind* indeed it is that *blows no Body any good*; This ill Wind blew Good to the Iſland of *Melita*; for it gave them *Paul's* Company for three Months, who was a Bleſſing to every Place he came to. This Iſland was call'd *Melita*, lying between *Sicily* and *Africa*; twenty Miles long, and twelve broad, it lies fartheſt from the Continent of any Iſland in the *Mediterranean*; 'tis about ſixty Miles from *Sicily*. It has been famous ſince for the Knights of *Malta*, who, when the *Turks* overrun that Part of *Chriſtendom*, made a noble Stand, and gave ſome check to the Progreſs of their Arms.

Now here we have,

Firſt, The *kind Reception* which the Inhabitants of this Iſland gave to the *diſtreſſed Strangers*, that were *Ship-wreck'd* on their Coaſt, *v.* 2. *The barbarous People ſhew'd us no little kindneſs.* GOD had promis'd that there ſhould be no loſs of any Man's Life; And *as for GOD, his Work is perfect*; if they had eſcap'd the Sea, and when they came a-ſhoar had periſh'd for Cold or Want, it it had been all one, therefore Providence continues its Care of them. And what Benefits we receive *by* the hand of Man, muſt be acknowledg'd to come from the Hand of GOD; for every Creature is that to us and no more, that He makes it to be. And when He pleaſeth, as he can make Enemies to be at Peace, ſo He can make Strangers to be Friends, Friends *at need*, and thoſe are Friends *indeed*; Friends *in Adverſity*, and that's the Time that *a Brother is Born for.* Obſerve,

1. The general Notice taken of the Kindneſs, which the Natives of *Malta* ſhew'd to *Paul* and his *Company*. They are call'd *barbarous People*, becauſe they did not in Language and Cuſtoms conform either to the *Greeks* or *Romans*, who look'd ſuperciliouſly enough upon all but themſelves as *Barbarians*, tho' otherwiſe *civiliz'd* enough, and perhaps in ſome Caſes more *Civil* than they. Theſe *barbarous People*, however they were call'd ſo, were full of *Humanity*; they *ſhew'd us no little Kindneſs.* So far were they from making a Prey of this Ship-wreck, as many I fear who are call'd *Chriſtian People* would have done, that they laid hold on it as an Opportunity of ſhewing Mercy. The *Samaritan* is a better Neighbour to the poor wounded Man than the *Prieſt* or *Levite*: And verily we have not found greater Humanity among *Greeks*, or *Romans*, or *Chriſtians*, than among thoſe *barbarous People*; and it is written for our Imitation, that we may hence learn to be *compaſſionate* to thoſe that are in Diſtreſs and Miſery, and to relieve and ſuccour them to the utmoſt of our Ability, as thoſe that know we ourſelves alſo are *in the Body*, we ſhould be ready to *entertain Strangers*, as *Abraham* who ſate at his Tent-door to invite Paſſengers in, *Heb.* xiii. 2. But eſpecially Strangers in *Diſtreſs*, as theſe were. *Honour all Men.* If Providence hath ſo *appointed the Bounds of our Habitation*, as to give us an Opportunity of being frequently ſerviceable to Perſons at a loſs, we ſhould not place it among the Inconveniencies of our Lot, but the Advantages of it; becauſe *it is more bleſſed to give than to receive*, who knows but theſe barbarous People had their Lot caſt in this Iſland *for ſuch a Time as this.*

2. A particular Inſtance of their Kindneſs; they *kindled a Fire* in ſome large Hall or other, and they *receiv'd us every one*, made room for us about the Fire, and bid us all welcome, without asking either what Country we were of, or what Religion? In ſwimming to the Shore, and coming on the broken Pieces of the Ship, we muſt ſuppoſe they were ſadly wet, that they had not a dry Thread on them; and as if that were not enough, to compleat the Deluge, Waters from above met thoſe from below, and it rain'd ſo hard that it would wet them to the Skin preſently; and it was a *cold* Rain too; ſo that they wanted nothing ſo much as a good Fire, (for they had *eaten heartily* but juſt before on Ship-board) and that they got for them preſently, to warm them, and dry their Clothes. 'Tis ſometimes as much a piece of Charity to poor Families to ſupply them with *Fuel*, as with Food or *Raiment*. *Be ye warm'd*, is as neceſſary as *Be ye fill'd*. When in the extremities of bad Weather, we find ourſelves fenc'd againſt the Rigors of the Seaſon, by the Accommodations of a warm Houſe, Bed, and Clothes, and a good Fire, we ſhould think how many lie expos'd to *the preſent Rain, and to the Cold*, and pity them, and pray for them, and help them if we can.

Secondly, The further Danger that *Paul* was in by a Viper's faſtening on his Hand, and the unjuſt Conſtruction that the People put upon it. *Paul* is among Strangers and appears one of the meaneſt and moſt contemptible of the Company, therefore GOD *diſtinguiſheth* him, and ſoon makes him to be taken Notice of.

1. When the Fire was to be *made*, and to be made *bigger*, that ſo great a Company might all have the Benefit of it, *Paul* was as buſy as any of them in gathering Sticks, *v.* 3. Tho' he was *free from all*, and of greater Account than any of them, yet he made himſelf *Servant of all. Paul* was an *induſtrious* active Man, and lov'd to be *doing*, when any Thing was to be done, and never contriv'd to take his Eaſe; *Paul* was a *humble* ſelf-denying Man, and would ſtoop to any Thing by which he might be ſerviceable, even to the gathering of Sticks to make a Fire of. We ſhould reckon nothing *below us* but *Sin*, and be willing to condeſcend to the meaneſt Offices, if there be Occaſion, for the good of our Brethren. The People were ready to *help them*, yet *Paul* wet and cold as he is, will not throw it all upon them, but will *help himſelf*. They that receive Benefit by the Fire, ſhould help to carry Fuel to it.

2. The Sticks being old dry Rubbiſh, it happen'd there was a Viper among them, that lay as *dead* till it came to the *Heat*, and then *reviv'd*, or lay quiet till it felt the Fire, and then was *provok'd and flew at him* that unawares threw it into the Fire, and *faſten'd upon his Hand*, *v.* 3. Serpents and ſuch venomous Creatures uſe to lie among Sticks, hence we read of him that *leans on the Wall*, and a *Serpent bites him*, Amos, v. 9. 'Twas ſo common, that People were by it frighten'd from tearing Hedges, *Eccleſ.* x. 8. *Whoſo breaketh a Hedge, a Serpent ſhall bite him*; as there is a *Snake* under the *green Graſs*, ſo there is often under the *dry Leaves*. See how many Perils Human Life is expos'd to, and what Danger we are in from the inferior Creatures, which are many of them become Enemies to Men, ſince Men became Rebels to God; and what a Mercy it is that we are preſerv'd from them as we are. We often meet with that which is *miſchievous* where we expect that which is *beneficial*; and many come by hurt when they are honeſtly employ'd, and in the Way of their Duty.

(3.) The barbarous People concluded, that *Paul* being a *Priſoner*, was certainly a *Murderer*, that had appeal'd to *Rome* to eſcape Juſtice in his own Country, and that this Viper was ſent by divine Juſtice to be the *Avenger of Blood*: Or, if they were not aware that he was a Priſoner, they ſuppos'd that he was in his Flight; and when they ſaw *the venomous Animal hang on his Hand*, which it ſeems he could not or would not immediately throw off, but let it hang, they concluded, *No doubt this Man is a Murderer*, hath ſhed innocent Blood, and therefore, *tho'* he hath *eſcap'd the Sea*, yet divine *Vengeance* purſues him, and faſtens upon him *now* he is pleaſing himſelf with the Thoughts of that Eſcape, and will not *ſuffer him to live.* Now in this we may ſee,

(1.) Some of the *Diſcoveries of Natural Light*; they were barbarous People, perhaps no Books or Learning among them, and yet they knew naturally, (1.) That *there is a GOD* that *governs the World*, and a Providence that *preſides* in all Occurrences: That Things do not come to paſs by Chance, no not ſuch a thing as this, but by divine Direction. (2.) That *Evil purſues Sinners*: That there are good Works which GOD will reward, and wicked Works that he will puniſh. There is a Divine *Nemeſis*, a *Vengeance* which ſooner or later will reckon for enormous Crimes. They believe not only that there is a GOD, but that this GOD hath ſaid, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay*, even to Death. (3.) That Murder is a *heinous Crime*, and which ſhall not long go unpuniſh'd: That *whoſo ſheds Man's Blood*, if his Blood be not *ſhed by Man*, by the Magiſtrate, as it ought to be, it ſhall be ſhed by the Rigeteous Judge of Heaven and Earth, who is the Avenger of Wrong. Thoſe that think they ſhall go unpuniſh'd in any evil Way, will be judg'd out of the Mouth of theſe *Barbarians*, who could ſay without Book, *Wo to the Wicked, for it ſhall be ill with them; for the Reward of their Hands ſhall be given them.* Thoſe that, becauſe they have eſcap'd many Judgments, are ſecure, and ſay, They ſhall have Peace, tho' they go on and have their Hearts ſo much the more ſet to do Evil, becauſe Sentence againſt their evil Works is not executed ſpeedily, may learn from theſe illiterate People, that tho' Malefactors have eſcap'd the Vengeance of the Sea, yet there's no out-runing divine Juſtice, *Vengeance ſuffers not to live.* In *Job's* time you might ask *them that go by the Way*, ask the next Body you met, and they would tell you, *That the wicked is reſerv'd to the Day of Deſtruction.*

2. Some of the *Miſtakes* of *Natural Light*, which needed to be rectify'd by Divine Revelation; in two Things their Knowledge was defective. (1.) That they thought all *wicked people* are *puniſh'd in this Life*, that divine Vengeance never ſuffers great and notorious Sinners, ſuch as Murderers are, to live long, but that if they *come up out of the Pit, they ſhall be taken in the Snare*, Jer. xlviii. 43, 44. if they *flee from a Lion, a Bear ſhall meet them*, Amos *v.* 19. If they ſcape being drown'd, a Viper ſhall faſten upon them; whereas it is not ſo: *The Wicked* even Murderers,

ſometimes *live, become old, yea, are mighty in Power*; for the Day of Vengeance is *to come* in the other World, *the great Day of Wrath*, and tho' ſome are made Examples of in this World, to prove that there is a *GOD*, and *a Providence*; yet many are left unpuniſh'd to prove, that there is *a Judgment to come*. (2.) That they thought all that are *remarkably afflicted* in this Life, are *wicked People*; That a Man on whoſe Hand a *Viper faſtens*, may from thence be judg'd to be *a Murderer*, as if thoſe on whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell, muſt needs be *greater Sinners than all in* Jeruſalem. This Miſtake *Job*'s Friends went upon in their Judgment upon his Caſe; but Divine Revelation ſets this Matter in a true Light, That all Things come ordinarily alike to all; that good Men are oftentimes greatly afflicted in this Life, for the Exerciſe and improvement of their Faith and Patience.

4. When he ſhook off the Viper from his Hand, yet they expected that Divine Vengeance would ratify the Cenſure they had paſs'd, and that *he ſhould have ſwoln and burſt* thro' the force of the Poyſon, or that he *ſhould have fallen down dead ſuddenly*. See how apt Men are when once they have got an ill Opinion of a Man, tho' never ſo unjuſt, to *abide by it*, and to think that GOD muſt neceſſarily confirm and ratify their peeviſh Sentence; 'twas well they did not knock him down themſelves, when they ſaw he did not ſwell and fall down; but ſo conſiderate they are as to let Providence work, and to attend the Motions of it.

Thirdly, *Paul*'s Deliverance from the Danger, and the undue Conſtruction the People put upon that. The Viper's faſtning on his Hand was a *Trial of his Faith*, and it was found to *praiſe, and honour, and glory*: For,

1. It doth not appear that it put him into any Fright or Confuſion at all, he did not ſhriek or ſtart, nor, as it would be natural for us to do, throw it off with Terror and Precipitation, for he ſuffer'd it to *hang on* ſo long, as that the People had time to take Notice of it, and to make their Remarks upon it. Such a wonderful Preſence of Mind he had, and ſuch a Compoſure, as no Man could have upon ſuch a ſudden Accident, but by the ſpecial Aids of Divine Grace, and the actual belief and Conſideration of that Word of Chriſt concerning his Diſciples, *Mark* xvi. 18. *They ſhall take up Serpents*. This it is to have the *Heart fix'd truſting in God.*

2. He careleſly *ſhook off* the Viper *into the Fire*, without any Difficulty or calling for Help, or any Means us'd to looſen its hold; and it's probable it was conſum'd in the Fire. Thus in the ſtrength of the Grace of Chriſt, Believers *ſhake off* the Temptations of Satan with a holy Reſolution, ſaying as Chriſt did, *Get thee behind me Satan*, the LORD rebuke thee; and thus they *keep themſelves that the Wicked One toucheth them not*, ſo as to faſten upon them, 1 *Joh*. v. 18. When we deſpiſe the Cenſures and Reproaches of Men, and look upon them with a holy Contempt, having the Teſtimony of Conſcience for us, then we do as *Paul* here, *ſhake off the Viper into the Fire*. It doth us no harm except we either fret at it, or be deterr'd by it from our Duty, or be provok'd to render Railing for Railing.

3. He was never the worſe; They that thought it would have been his Death, *look'd a great while*, but ſaw no *harm at all come to him*. GOD hereby intended to make him remarkable among theſe *barbarous People*, and ſo to make Way for the entertainment of the Goſpel among them. It is reported, That after this no venomous Creature would live in that Iſland, no more than in *Ireland*: But I do not find that the Matter of Fact is confirm'd, tho' the Popiſh Writers ſpeak of it with Aſſurance.

4. They then magnify'd him as much as before they had vilify'd him; *They chang'd their Minds, and ſaid, that he was a God*; an immortal God; for they thought it impoſſible that a mortal Man ſhould have a Viper hang on his Hand ſo long, and be never the worſe. See the uncertainty of popular Opinion, how it turns with the Wind, and how apt it is to run into Extremes, both ways; from *ſacrificing* to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, to *ſtoning* of them; and here from condemning him as a Murderer, to Idolizing him as a God.

Fourthly, The miraculous Cure of an old Gentleman that was ill of a Fever, and of others that were otherwiſe diſeas'd, by *Paul*. And with theſe Confirmations of the Doctrine of Chriſt, no doubt there was a faithful Publication of it. *Obſerve*,

1. The kind Entertainment which *Publius* the *chief Man of the Iſland* gave to theſe diſtreſs'd Strangers: He had a conſiderable Eſtate in the Iſland, and ſome think was Governor, and *he received them, and lodged them three Days very courteouſly*, that they might have Time to furniſh themſelves in other Places at the beſt Hand. 'Tis happy when GOD gives a *large Heart* to thoſe to whom He has given a *large Eſtate*. It became him who was the *chief Man* of the Iſland to be moſt hoſpitable and generous; who was the richeſt Man, to be rich in good Works.

2. The Illneſs of the Father of *Publius*: he lay ſick *of a Fever and a Bloody-flux*, which often go together, and when they do are commonly fatal. Providence order'd it that he ſhould be ill juſt at this Time, that the Cure of him might be a preſent Recompence to *Publius* for his Generoſity, and the Cure of him by *Miracle* a Recompence particularly for his Kindneſs to *Paul*, whom he receiv'd *in the Name of a Prophet*, and had this Prophet's Reward.

3. His Cure; *Paul* took Cognizance of his Caſe, and tho' we do not find he was urg'd to it, for they had no thought of any ſuch thing, yet he *enter'd in*, not as a Phyſician to heal him by Medicines, but as an Apoſtle to heal him by Miracle, and he *pray'd* to GOD in Chriſt's Name for his Cure, and then *laid his* Hands on him, and he was perfectly well in an Inſtant. Tho' he muſt needs be in Years, yet he recover'd his Health and the lengthening out of his Life yet longer, would be a Mercy to him.

4. The Cure of many others, who were invited by this Cure to apply themſelves to *Paul*: If he can heal Diſeaſes ſo eaſily, ſo effectually, he ſhall ſoon have Patients enow; and he *bid them all welcome*, and ſent them away with what they came for. He did not plead that he was a Stranger there, thrown accidentally among them, under no Obligations to them, and waiting to be gone by the firſt Opportunity, and therefore might be excus'd from receiving their Applications: No, a good Man will endeavour to do Good where-ever the Providence of GOD caſts him. *Paul* reckon'd himſelf a *Debtor*, not only to the *Greeks*, but to the *Barbarians*, and thank'd GOD for an Opportunity of being uſeful among them: Nay, he was particularly oblig'd to theſe Inhabitants of *Malta*, for the ſeaſonable Shelter and Supply they had afforded him, and hereby he did in effect diſcharge his Quarters: Which ſhould encourage us to *entertain Strangers*, for ſome thereby have entertain'd *Angels*, and ſome *Apoſtles*, unawares: God will not be behind with any for Kindneſs ſhewn to his People in Diſtreſs. We have Reaſon to think, that *Paul* with theſe Cures preach'd the Goſpel to them; and that coming thus confirm'd and recommended, it was generally embrac'd among them. And if ſo, never were any People ſo *enrich'd* by a Shipwreck on their Coaſts as theſe *Malteſe* were.

Fifthly, The grateful Acknowledgment which even theſe barbarous People made of the Kindneſs *Paul* had done them in preaching Chriſt unto them. They were civil to him and to the other Miniſters that were with him, who 'tis likely were aſſiſting to him in preaching among them, *v*. 7.

1. They *honour'd us with many Honours*; they ſhew'd them all poſſible Reſpect; they ſaw GOD honour'd them; and therefore they juſtly thought themſelves oblig'd to honour them; and thought nothing too much by which they might teſtify the Eſteem they had for them. Perhaps they made them free of their Iſland by Naturalizing them, and admitted them Members of ther Guilds and Fraternities. The faithful Preachers of the Goſpel are worthy of a *double Honour*, then eſpecially when they ſucceed in their Labours.

2. *When we departed, they loaded us with ſuch Things as were neceſſary*; Or, they *put on Board* ſuch Things as we had Occaſion for. *Paul* could not labour with his Hands here, for he had nothing to work upon, and therefore accepted the Kindneſs of the good People of *Melita*, not as a Fee for his Cures, freely he had receiv'd, and freely he gave; but as the Relief of his Wants, and theirs that were with him. And having reap'd of their Spiritual Things, 'twas but juſt they ſhould make them thoſe Returns, 1 *Cor*. ix. 11.

11 And after three months we departed in a ſhip of Alexandria, which had wintered in the iſle, whoſe ſign was Caſtor and Pollux. 12 And landing at Syracuſe, we tarried there three days. 13 And from thence we ſet a compaſs, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the ſouth wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli: 14 Where we found brethren, and were deſired to tarry with them ſeven days, and ſo we went towards Rome. 15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii-forum, and the Three taverns: whom when Paul ſaw, he thanked God, and took courage. 16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion deliver'd the priſoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was ſuffered to dwell by himſelf, with a ſoldier that kept him.

We have the progreſs of Paul's Voyage towards *Rome*, and his Arrival there at length: A rough and dangerous Voyage he had had hitherto, and narrowly eſcap'd with his Life; but after a Storm comes a Calm, the latter part of his Voyage was eaſy and quiet, *per varios caſus, per tot diſcrimina rerum Tendimus ad Latium*;—*tendimus ad Cœlum*—*dabit Deus his quoque finem*. We have here,

Firſt, Their leaving of *Malta*: That Iſland was a happy ſhelter to them, but it was not their Home; when they are refreſh'd they muſt *to Sea* again. The Difficulties and Diſcouragements we have met with in our Chriſtian Courſe muſt not hinder us from preſſing forward. Notice is here taken,

1. Of the *Time* of their Departure; *After three Months*, the three *winter Months*. Better *lie by*, tho' they lay upon Charges, than *go forward* while the Seaſon was dangerous. *Paul* had warn'd them againſt venturing to Sea in winter-weather, and they would not take the Warning, but now they had *learn'd* it by the Difficulties and Dangers they had gone through; he needed not to warn them, their *learning* did them good when they had paid dear enough for it. *Experience* is therefore call'd the *Miſtreſs of Fools*, becauſe they are Fools that will not learn till Experience has taught them.

2. Of the *Ship* in which they departed: 'Twas in a Ship of *Alexandria*; ſo was that which was caſt away, *chap.* xxvii. 6. This Ship had *Winter'd in that Iſle*, and was ſafe. See what different Iſſues there are of Mens Undertakings in this World. Here were two Ships both of *Alexandria*, both bound for *Italy*, both thrown upon the ſame Iſland; but one is *wreck'd* there, and the other is *ſav'd*, ſuch Occurrences may often be obſerv'd; Providence ſometimes *favours* thoſe that deal in the World, and *proſpers* them, that People may be encourag'd to *ſet their Hands* to worldly Buſineſs; at other times Providence croſſeth them, that People may be warn'd not to *ſet their Hearts* upon it. Events are thus vary'd, that we may learn both *how to want*, and *how to abound.* The Hiſtorian takes Notice of the Sign of the Ship, which probably gave it its Name, 'twas *Caſtor* & *Pollux*; thoſe little fooliſh Pagan Deities, that the *Poets* had made to preſide over Storms, and to protect Sea-faring Men, as *Gods of the Sea*, were painted or graven upon the Fore-part of the Ship, and from thence the Ship took its Name. I ſuppoſe this is obſerv'd for no other Reaſon but for the better aſcertaining of the Story; that Ship being well known by the Name and Sign, by all that dwelt between *Egypt* and *Italy*. Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, that *Luke* mentions this Circumſtance to intimate the Mens Superſtition, that they hoped they ſhould have better ſailing under this Badge than they had had before.

Secondly, their Landing in and or about *Italy*, and the purſuing their Journey towards *Rome*.

1. They landed firſt at *Syracuſe* in *Sicily*, the chief City of that Iſland; there they *tarry'd Three Days*, probably having ſome Goods to put a-ſhore, or ſome Merchandize to make there; for it ſeems to have been a Trading Voyage that this Ship made. *Paul* had now his Curioſity gratify'd with the Sight of Places he had aften heard of, and wiſh'd to ſee; particularly *Syracuſe*, a Place of great Antiquity and Note; and yet it ſhould ſeem there were no Chriſtians there.

2. From *Syracuſe*, they came to *Rhegium*, a City in *Italy*, directly oppoſite to *Meſſina* in *Sicily*, belonging to the Kingdom of *Calabria* or *Naples*; there it ſeems they ſtay'd *one Day*. And a very formal Story the Romiſh Legends tell of *Paul*'s Preaching here at this time, and Fiſh coming to the Shore to hear him; that with a Candle he ſet a Stone Pillar on Fire, and by that Miracle convinc'd the People of the Truth of his Doctrine, and they were many of them baptiz'd; and he ordain'd *Stephen*, one of his Companions in this Voyage, to be their Biſhop; and all this they tell you was done in one Day; whereas it doth not appear that they did ſo much as go a-ſhore, but only came to an Anchor in the Road.

3. From *Rhegium* they came to *Puteoli*, a Sea-port Town not far from *Naples*, now call'd *Pozzolana*; the Ship of *Alexandria* was bound for that Part, and therefore there *Paul* and the reſt that were bound for *Rome*, were put *a-ſhore*, and went the remainder of their Way *by Land*. At *Puteoli* they *found Brethren*, Chriſtians; who brought the Knowledge of Chriſt hither, we are not told, but here it was, ſo wonderfully did the Leaven of the Goſpel diffuſe its Savour. GOD has many that ſerve and worſhip Him in Places where we little think He has. And *Obſ.* (1.) Tho' 'tis probable there were but few Brethren at *Puteoli*, yet *Paul* found them out; either they heard of him, or he enquir'd them out, but as it were by Inſtinct they got together. Brethren in Chriſt ſhould *find out* one another and keep up Communion with each other, as thoſe of the ſame County do in a foreign Land. (2.) They deſir'd *Paul* and his Companions to *tarry with them ſeven Days*, i.e. to fore caſt to ſtay at leaſt *one Lord's Day* with them, and to aſſiſt them in their publick Worſhip that Day. They knew not whether ever they ſhould ſee *Paul* at *Puteoli* again, and therefore he muſt not go, but he muſt give them a Sermon or two, or more. And *Paul* was willing to allow them ſo much of his Time, and the Centurion under whoſe Command *Paul* now was, perhaps having himſelf Friends or Buſineſs at *Puteoli* agree'd to ſtay one Week there, to *oblige* Paul.

4. From *Puteoli* they went forward towards *Rome*; whether they travell'd on Foot, or wherher they had Beaſts provided for them to ride on, as *chap.* xxiii. 24. doth not appear; but to *Rome* they muſt go; and this is their laſt Stage.

Thirdly, The meeting which the Chriſtians at *Rome* gave to *Paul*: 'Tis probable Notice was ſent them by the Chriſtians at *Puteoli*, as ſoon as ever *Paul* was come thither, how long he intended to ſtay there, and when he would ſet forward for *Rome*, which gave an Opportunity for this Interview. *Obſerve*,

1. The great Honour they did to *Paul*: They had heard much of his Fame, what uſe GOD had made of him, and what eminent Service he had done to the Kingdom of Chriſt in the World, and to what multitudes of Souls he had been a Spiritual Father; they had heard of his Sufferings, and how GOD had own'd him in them, and therefore they not only long'd to ſee him, but thought themſelves oblig'd to ſhew him all poſſible Reſpect, as a glorious Advocate for the Cauſe of Chriſt. He had ſome time a go written a long Epiſtle to them, and a moſt excellent one, *the Epiſtle to the Romans*, in which he had not only expreſs'd his great Kindneſs for them, but had given them a great many uſeful Inſtructions, and in return for that they ſhew him this Reſpect. They *went to meet him*, that they might bring him *in State*, as *Ambaſſadors* and *Judges* make their *publick* Entry, tho' he was a Priſoner. Some of them went as far as *Appii-forum*, which was fifty-one Miles from *Rome*; others to a Place call'd the *Three Taverns*, which was twenty-eight Miles, (ſome reckon thirty-three Miles) from *Rome*. They are to be commended for it, that they were ſo far from being *aſham'd* of him, or afraid of owning him, becauſe he was a Priſoner, that for that very Reaſon they counted him *worthy of double Honour*, and were the the more careful to ſhew him Reſpect.

2. The great Comfort *Paul* had in this: Now he was drawing near to *Rome*, and perhaps heard at *Puteoli* what Character the Emperor *Nero* now had, and what a Tyrant he was of late become, he began to have ſome melancholy Thoughts about his Appeal to *Cæſar*, and the Conſequences of it; he was drawing near to *Rome*, where he had never been, where there were few that knew him, or that he knew, and *what Things* may *befal him* here he cannot tell, but he begins to grow dull upon it till he meets with theſe good People that came from *Rome* to ſhew him Reſpect, and *when he ſaw them*, (1.) He *thanked GOD*: We may ſuppoſe he *thanked them* for their Civility, told them again and again how kindly he took it; but that was not all, he *thanked GOD*. *Note*, If our Friends be kind to us, it is GOD that makes them ſo, that puts it into their Hearts, and into the Power of their Hands to be ſo, and we muſt give him the Glory of it. He *thanked GOD* no doubt for the Civility and Generoſity of the barbarous People at *Melita*, but much more for the pious Care of the Chriſtian People at *Rome* for him. When he ſaw ſo many Chriſtians that were of *Rome*, he *thanked GOD* that the Goſpel of Chriſt had had ſuch wonderful Succeſs there in the Metropolis of the Empire. When we *go abrod* or but *look abroad* into the World and meet with thoſe even in ſtrange Places that bear up Chriſt's Name and fear God and ſerve him, we ſhould lift up our Hearts to Heaven in Thankſgiving; bleſſed be God that there are ſo many *Excellent Ones on this Earth*, as bad as it is. *Paul* had thanked GOD for the Chriſtians at *Rome* before he had ever ſeen them, upon the Report he had heard concerning them, *Rom.* i. 8. *I thank my GOD for you all*: But now he ſees them, and perhaps they appeared more faſhionable and genteel People than he had converſ'd with, or more grave ſerious and intelligent, than moſt, he *thanked God*. But that was not all, (2.) He *took Courage*: It put new Life into him, chear'd up his Spirits, and baniſh'd his Melancholy, and now he can enter *Rome* a Priſoner as chearfully as ever he had enter'd *Jeruſalem* at Liberty. He finds there are thoſe there who love and value him; and whom he may both *converſe with*, and *conſult with* as his Friends, which will take off much of the *tediouſneſs* of his Impriſonment, and the Terror of his appearing before *Nero*. *Note*, It is an Encouragement to thoſe who are travelling towards Heaven, to meet with their *Fellow-travellers*, who are their *Companions in the Kingdom, and Patience of Jeſus Chriſt*. When we ſee the numerous and ſerious Aſſemblies of good Chriſtians, we ſhould not only *give Thanks* to GOD, but *take Courage* to ourſelves. And this is a good Reaſon why Reſpect ſhould be ſhewn to good Miniſters, eſpecially when they are in Sufferings, and have contempt put upon them that *encourage* them, and makes both their Sufferings and their Services more eaſy. Yet it is obſervable, That tho' the Chriſtians at *Rome* were now ſo *reſpectful* to *Paul*, and he had promiſ'd himſelf ſo much from their Reſpects, yet they fail'd him when he moſt needed them; for he ſaith, 2 *Tim.* iv. 16. *At my firſt Anſwer no Man ſtood with me, but all forſook me.* They could eaſily take a Ride of forty or fifty Miles to go meet *Paul*, for the pleaſantneſs of the Journey; but to venture the Diſpleaſure of the Emperor, and the diſobliging of other great Men by appearing in Defence of *Paul*, and giving Evidence for him, here they deſire to be excus'd; when it comes to that, they will rather Ride as far out of Town to *miſs* him, as now they did to *meet* him. Which is an intimation to us to *ceaſe from Man*, and to *encourage our ſelves in the LORD our GOD*. The Courage we take from his Promiſes will never *fail us*, when we ſhall be aſham'd of that which we took from Mens Complements. *Let GGD be True, but every Man a Liar.*

Fourthly, The delivering of *Paul* into Cuſtody at *Rome*. v. 16. He is now come to his Journeys End. And,

1. He is *ſtill a Priſoner*; He had long'd to ſee *Rome*, but when he comes there, he is deliver'd, with other Priſoners, to the *Captain of the Guard*, and can ſee no more of *Rome* than he will permit him. How many *great* Men had made their Entry into *Rome* crown'd and in Triumph, who really were the Plagues of their Generation; but here's a good Man makes his Entry into *Rome*, chain'd and triumph'd over, as a poor Captive, who was really the greateſt Bleſſing to his Generation. This Thought is enough to put one for ever out of conceit with this World.

2. Yet he has ſome *Favour ſhew'd him*: He is a Priſoner, but not a cloſe Priſoner, not in the Common-Jail, *Paul was ſuffer'd to dwell by himſelf*, in ſome convenient, private Lodgings, which his Friends there provided for him, and a *Soldier* was appointed to be his Guard, who we hope was civil to him, and let him take all the Liberty that could be allow'd to a Priſoner; for he muſt be very *ill-humour'd* indeed, that could be ſo to ſuch a courteous obliging Man as *Paul*. *Paul* being ſuffer'd to *dwell by himſelf*, could the better enjoy himſelf and his Friends, and his GOD, than if he had been lodg'd with the other Priſoners. *Note*, This may encourage GOD's Priſoners, that he can give them Favour in the Eyes of thoſe that carry them Captives, *Pſal.* cvi. 46.

46. as *Joſeph* in the Eyes of his *Keeper*, Gen. xxxix. 21. and *Jehojachin* in the Eyes of the King of *Babylon*, 2 Kin. xxv. 27, 28. When GOD doth not deliver his People preſently out of Bondage, yet if He either make *it eaſy* to them, or *them eaſy* under it, they have Reaſon to be thankful.

17 And it came to paſs, that after three days, Paul called the chief of the Jews together. And when they were come together, he ſaid unto them, Men *and* brethren, though I have committed nothing againſt the people or cuſtoms of our fathers, yet was I delivered priſoner from Jeruſalem into the hands of the Romans. 18 Who when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, becauſe there was no cauſe of death in me. 19 But when the Jews ſpake againſt *it*, I was conſtrained to appeal unto Cæſar; not that I had ought to accuſe my nation of. 20 For this cauſe therefore have I called for you, to ſee *you*, and to ſpeak with *you*: becauſe that for the hope of Iſrael I am bound with this chain. 21 And they ſaid unto him, We neither receiv'd letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came, ſhewed or ſpake any harm of thee. 22 But we deſire to hear of thee what thou thinkeſt: for as concerning this ſect, we know that every where it is ſpoken againſt.

Paul with a great deal of Expence and Hazard is brought a Priſoner to *Rome*, and when he is come, no Body appears to proſecute him, or lay any Thing to his Charge; but he muſt call his own Cauſe; and here he repreſents it to the *chief of the* Jews *at* Rome. 'Tis not long ſince by an Edict of *Claudius* all the *Jews* were baniſh'd from *Rome*, and kept out till his Death; but in the five Years ſince then, many *Jews* were come thither, for the Advantage of Trade, tho' it doth not appear that they were allow'd any *Synagogue* there, or Place of Publick Worſhip; but thoſe *chief of the* Jews, were thoſe of *beſt Figure* among them, the topping Men of that Religion, that had the beſt Eſtates and Intereſts. *Paul call'd them together*, being deſirous to *ſtand right* in their Opinion, and that there might be a good Underſtanding between him and them. And here we are told,

Firſt, What he ſaid to them, and what Account he gave them of his Caſe; He ſpeaks *reſpectfully* to them, calls them *Men* and *Brethren*, and thereby intimates that he *expects* to be treated by them both as a *Man* and as a *Brother*, and *engageth* to treat them as ſuch, and to tell them nothing but the *Truth*, for *we are Members one of another*; all we are *Brethren*. Now,

1. He profeſſeth his own Innocency, and that he had not given any juſt Occaſion to the *Jews* to bear him ſuch an ill-will as generally they did. I have *committed nothing againſt the People* of the *Jews*, have done nothing to the prejudice of their Religion or Civil Liberties, have added no Affliction to their preſent Miſeries, they know I have not; nor have I committed any Thing *againſt the Cuſtoms of our Fathers*; either by abrogating, or by innovating in Religion. 'Tis true *Paul* did not *impoſe* the Cuſtoms of the Fathers upon the *Gentiles*, they were never intended for them; but 'tis as true, that he never *oppos'd* them in the *Jews*; but did himſelf, when he was among them, conform to them. He never quarrell'd with them for practiſing according to the Uſages of their own Religion, but only for their Enmity to the *Gentiles*, Gal. ii. 12. *Paul* had the Teſtimony of his Conſcience for him that he had done his Duty to the *Jews*.

2. He modeſtly complains of the hard Uſage he had met with; That tho' he had given them no Offence, yet he *was deliver'd Priſoner from* Jeruſalem *into the Hands of the* Romans. If he had ſpoken the whole Truth in this Matter, it would have look'd worſe than it did upon the *Jews*, for they would have murder'd him without any Colour of Law or Juſtice, if the *Romans* had not protected him; but however, their accuſing him as a Criminal before *Felix* the Governor, and demanding Judgment againſt him, was in effect *delivering him* Priſoner *into the Hands of the* Romans, when he deſir'd no more but a fair and impartial Trial by their own Law.

3. He declares the Judgment of the *Roman* Governors concerning him, *v.* 18. They *examin'd him*, enquir'd into his Caſe, heard what was to be ſaid againſt him, and what he had to ſay for himſelf; the *chief Captain* examin'd him, ſo did *Felix*, and *Feſtus*, and *Agrippa*, and they could *find no Cauſe of Death in him*; nothing appear'd to the contrary but that he was an honeſt, quiet, conſcientious, good Man, and therefore they would never gratify the *Jews* with a Sentence of Death upon him; but on the contrary would have *let him go*, and have let him go on in his Work too, and have given him no Interruption, for they all heard him, and lik'd his Doctrine well enough. It was for the Honour of *Paul*, that thoſe who moſt carefully *examin'd* his Caſe acquitted him, and none *condemn'd* him but *unheard*, and ſuch as were prejudic'd againſt him.

4. He pleads the Neceſſity he was under to remove himſelf and his Cauſe to *Rome*; and that it was only in his own Defence, and not with any Deſign to recriminate, or exhibit a *Croſs Bill* againſt the Complainants, *v.* 19. *When the* Jews *ſpake againſt it*, and enter'd a Caveat againſt his Diſcharge, deſigning, if they could not have him condemn'd to Die, yet to have him a Priſoner for Life, he was *conſtrain'd to appeal unto* Cæſar, finding that the Governors one after another ſtood ſo much in Awe of the *Jews*, that they would not diſcharge him for fear of making them their Enemies; which made it neceſſary for him to pray the Aſſiſtance of the Higher Powers. This was all he aim'd at in this Appeal; not to *accuſe his Nation*, but only to vindicate himſelf. Every Man has a Right to plead in his own Defence, who yet ought not to find fault with his Neighbours. 'Tis an invidious Thing to *accuſe*, eſpecially to accuſe a Nation, ſuch a Nation, *Paul* made Interceſſion *for them*, but never *againſt them*. The *Roman* Government had at this Time an ill Opinion of the Jewiſh Nation, as factious, turbulent, diſaffected and dangerous, and it had been an eaſy Thing for a Man with ſuch a fluent Tongue as *Paul* had, a Citizen of *Rome*, and ſo injur'd as he was, to have *exaſperated* the Emperor againſt the Jewiſh Nation, but *Paul* would not for ever ſo much do ſuch a Thing, he was for making the beſt of every Body, and not making ill worſe.

5. He puts his Sufferings upon the *true Foot*, and gives them ſuch an Account of the Reaſon of them, as ſhould engage them not only not to joyn with his Perſecutors againſt him, but to concern themſelves for him, and to do what they could on his behalf, if they had any Intereſt to procure him his Liberty, *v.* 20. *For this Cauſe I have call'd for you*, not to quarrel with you, for I have no Deſign to incenſe the Government againſt you, but to *ſee you*, and *ſpeak with you* as my Countrymen, and Men that I would keep up a Correſpondence with, beeauſe that *for the Hope of* Iſrael, *I am bound with this Chain*. He carry'd the Mark of his Impriſonment about with him, and probably was chain'd to the Soldier that kept him; and it was (1.) Becauſe he preach'd, That the *Meſſiah was come*, who was the *Hope of* Iſrael, He whom *Iſrael* hoped for. Do not all the *Jews* agree in this, That the *Meſſiah* will be the Glory of his People *Iſrael*, and therefore He is to be hoped for, and this *Meſſiah* I Preach, and prove He is come. They would keep up ſuch a *Hope* of a *Meſſiah yet to come*, as muſt end in a *Deſpair of him*; I Preach ſuch a Hope *in* a *Meſſiah* already come, as muſt produce a *Joy in him*. (2.) Becauſe he preach'd, That the *Reſurrection of the Dead* would come; that alſo was the *Hope of* Iſrael; ſo he had call'd it, *ch.* xxiii. 6. xxiv. 15. xxvi. 6, 7. They would have you ſtill expect a *Meſſiah* that would free you from the *Roman* Yoke, and make you great and proſperous upon Earth, and that's it that *fills them*; and they are angry at me for directing their Expectations to the great Things of another World, and perſuading them to embrace a *Meſſiah*, who will ſecure *thoſe* to them, and not external Power and Grandeur; I am for bringing you to the *Spiritual* and *Eternal* Bleſſedneſs which *our Fathers* by Faith had their Eye upon, and that's it that they hate me for; becauſe I would take you off from that which is the *Cheat of* Iſrael, and will be its Shame and Ruin, the Notion of a Temporal *Meſſiah*, and lead you to that which is the true and real *Hope of* Iſrael, and the genuine Senſe of all the Promiſes made to the Fathers, a Spiritual Kingdom of Holineſs and Love ſet up in the Hearts of Men, to be the Pledge of, and Preparative for the joyful Reſurrection of the Dead, and the *Life of the World to come*.

Secondly, What was their Reply; They own

1. That they had nothing to ſay in particular *againſt him*; nor had any Inſtructions to appear as his Proſecutors before the Emperor, either by Letter or Word of Mouth, *v.* 21. *We have neither receiv'd Letters out of* Judea *concerning thee*, have no Orders to proſecute thee; *neither any of the Brethren* of the Jewiſh Nation that have lately come up to *Rome* (as many Occaſions drew the *Jews* thither now their Nation was a Province of the Empire,) have *ſhew'd or ſpoke any harm of thee*. This was very ſtrange, that that reſtleſs and inveterate Rage of the *Jews* which had follow'd *Paul* whereever he went, ſhould not follow him to *Rome*, to get him condemn'd there: And ſome think they told a Lye here, and had Orders to proſecute him, but durſt not own it, being themſelves obnoxious to the Emperor's Diſpleaſure; who tho' he did not like his Predeceſſors baniſh'd them all from *Rome*, yet he gave them no Countenance there. But I am apt to think what they ſaid was true, and *Paul* now found he had gain'd the Point he aim'd at in appealing to *Cæſar*, which was to remove his Cauſe into a Court to which they durſt not follow it; This was *David*'s Policy, and it was his Security, 1 *Sam.* xxvii. 1. *There is nothing better for me than to eſcape into the Land of the* Philiſtines, *and* Saul *ſhall deſpair of me, to ſeek me any more in any Coaſts of* Iſrael, *ſo ſhall I eſcape out of his Hand*, and it proves ſo, *v.* 4. *When* Saul *heard that* David *was fled to* Gath, *he ſought no more again for him*. Thus did *Paul* by his Appeal, he *fled* to *Rome*, where he was out of their Reach; and they ſaid, E'en let him go.

2. That they deſir'd to know more particularly concerning the Doctrine he preach'd, and the Religion he took ſo much Pains to propagate in the Face of ſo much Oppoſition, *v.* 22. *We deſire to hear of thee what thou thinkeſt*, ἃ φρονεῖς, what thy *Opinions* or *Sentiments* are, what are thoſe Things which thou art *ſo wiſe* about, and haſt ſuch a *reliſh of*, and ſuch a *zeal for*; for tho' we know little elſe concerning Chriſtianity, we know *it is a Sect every where ſpoken againſt*. Thoſe who ſaid this ſcornful, ſpiteful Word of the Chriſtian Religion, were *Jews*, the *chief of the* Jews *at* Rome, who *boaſted of their Knowledge*, Rom. ii. 17. and yet this was all they knew concerning the Chriſtian Religion, that it was a *Sect every where ſpoken againſt*. They put it into an ill Name, and then run it down: (1.) They look'd upon it to be a *Sect*, and that was *falſe*.

True Chriſtianity eſtabliſhes that which is of common Concern to all Mankind, and is not built upon ſuch narrow Opinions, and private Intereſts as Sects commonly owe their Original to. It aims at no worldly Benefit or Advantage, as Sects do; but all its Gains are Spiritual and Eternal. And beſides, it has a direct Tendency to the uniting the Children of Men, and not the dividing of them, and ſetting them at Variance, as Sects have. (2.) They ſaid, It was *every-where ſpoken againſt*, and that was too true; All that they convers'd with ſpoke againſt it, and therefore they concluded *every Body* did; moſt indeed did. It is, and always has been the Lot of Chriſt's Holy Religion, to be *every-where ſpoken againſt.*

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there
came many to him into his lodging; to whom he
expounded and teſtified the kingdom of God, per-
ſuading them concerning Jeſus, both out of the law
of Moſes, and *out of* the prophets, from morning
till evening. 24 And ſome believed the things
which were ſpoken, and ſome believed not. 25 And
when they agreed not among themſelves, they de-
parted, after that Paul had ſpoken one word, Well
ſpake the holy Ghoſt by Eſaias the prophet unto our
fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people and ſay,
Hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand; and
ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and not perceive. 27 For the
heart of this peopled is waxed groſs, and their ears
is dull of hearing, and their eyes have they cloſed;
leſt they ſhould ſee with *their* eyes, and hear with *their*
ears, and underſtand with *their* heart, and ſhould be
converted, and I ſhould heal them. 28 Be it known
therefore unto you, that the ſalvation of God is ſent
unto the Gentiles, and that *they* will hear it, 29 And
when he had ſaid theſe words, the Jews departed, and
had great reaſoning among themſelves.

We have here a *ſhort* Account of a *long* Conference which *Paul* had with the *Jews* at *Rome* about the Chriſtian Religion. Tho' they were ſo far prejudic'd againſt it, becauſe it was *every where ſpoken againſt*, as to call it a *Sect*, yet they were willing to give it a Hearing; which was more than the *Jews* at *Jeruſalem* would do: 'Tis probable theſe *Jews* at *Rome*, being Men of larger Acquaintance with the World, and more general Converſation, were more free in their Enquiries than the bigotted *Jews* at *Jeruſalem* were; and would not anſwer this Matter before they heard it.

Firſt, We are here told how *Paul* manag'd this Conference in Defence of the Chriſtian Religion. The *Jews appointed* the Time, *a Day* was *ſet* for this Diſpute, that all Parties concern'd might have ſufficient Notice, *v.* 23. Thoſe *Jews* ſeem'd *well-diſpoſed* to receive *Conviction*, and yet it did not prove that they were all ſo. Now when the Day came,

1. There were *many got together* to *Paul*; Tho' he was a Priſoner and could not come out to them, yet they were willing to come to him to *his Lodging.* And the Confinement he was now under, if duly conſider'd, inſtead of prejudicing them againſt his Doctrine, ought to confirm it to them; for it was a Sign not only that he *believ'd* it, but that he thought it worth *ſuffering for.* One would viſit ſuch a Man as *Paul* in his Priſon, rather than not have Inſtruction from him. And he *made room* for them *in his Lodging*, not fearing giving Offence to the Government, ſo he might do Good to them.

2. He was very *large* and *full* in his Diſcourſe with them; ſeeking their Conviction more than his own Vindication. (1.) He *expounded*, or explain'd the *Kingdom of GOD* to them, ſhew'd them the Nature of that Kingdom, and the glorious Purpoſes and Deſigns of it, that it is heavenly and ſpiritual, ſeated in the Minds of Men, and ſhines not in external Pomp, but in purity of Heart and Life. That which kept the *Jews* in their Unbelief was a Miſunderſtanding of the *Kingdom of GOD*, as if it came *with Obſervation*, let but *that* be *Expounded* to them, and ſet in a *true Light*, and they will be brought into Obedience to it. (2.) He not only *Expounded the Kingdom of GOD*, but he *teſtify'd* it, plainly declar'd to them, and confirm'd it by unconteſtable Proofs that the Kingdom of GOD by the *Meſſiah*'s Adminiſtration was come, and was now ſet up in the World. He *atteſted* the extraordinary *Powers* in the Kingdom of *Grace* by which it was *ſet up*, and the *Miracles* in the Kingdom of *Nature*, by which it was *confirm'd.* He bore his Teſtimony to it from his own Experience of its Power and Influence upon him, and the manner of his being brought into Subjection to it. (3.) He not only *expounded* and *teſtify'd* the Kingdom of GOD, but he *perſuaded* them, urg'd it upon their Conſciences, and *preſs'd them* with all Earneſtneſs to embrace the *Kingdom of GOD*, and ſubmit to it, and not to perſiſt in an Oppoſition to it. He follow'd his Doctrine, the Explication and Confirmation of it with a warm and lively Application to his Hearers, which is the moſt proper, profitable Method of Preaching. (4.) He perſuaded them *concerning Jeſus*; The Deſign and Tendency of his whole Diſcourſe was to bring them to Chriſt, to convince them of his being the *Meſſiah*, and to engage them to believe in him as he is offer'd in the Goſpel. He urg'd upon them, τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, *the Things concerning Jeſus*, the *Prophecies* of him, which he read to them *out of the Law of* Moſes, and out of the Prophets, as Pointing at the *Meſſiah*, and ſhew'd how they had all had their Accompliſhment in this Jeſus. They being *Jews* he dealt with them out of the Scriptures of the *Old Teſtament*, and demonſtrated that theſe were ſo far from making againſt Chriſtianity, that they were the great Proofs of it; ſo that if we compare the Hiſtory of the *New Teſtament*, with the Prophecy of the *Old*, we muſt conclude that this Jeſus is *He that ſhould come*, and we are *to look for no other.*

3. He was very *long*; for he continu'd his Diſcourſe, and it ſhould ſeem to have been a continu'd Diſcourſe, from *Morning till Evening*, perhaps it was a Diſcourſe eight or ten Hours long. The Subject was curious, he was full of it, 'twas of vaſt Importance, he was in good earneſt, and his Heart was upon it, he knew not when he ſhould have ſuch another Opportunity, and therefore without begging pardon for tiring their Patience, he kept them all Day; but 'tis likely he ſpent ſome of the Time in Prayer with them, and for them.

Secondly, What was the Effect of this Diſcourſe; One would have thought ſo *good a Cauſe* as that of Chriſtianity, and manag'd by ſuch a *skilful Hand* as *Paul*'s, could not but carry the Day, and that all the Hearers ſhould have yielded to it preſently; but it did not prove ſo; the Child Jeſus is *ſet for the Fall* of ſome, and the *Riſing again* of others, a Foundation-ſtone to ſome, and a Stone of Stumbling to others.

1. They did not *agree among themſelves*, *v.* 25. Some of them thought *Paul* was in the right, others would not admit it. This is that *Diviſion* which Chriſt came to *ſend*; that *Fire* which he came to *kindle*, Luke xii. 49, 51. *Paul* preach'd with a great deal of Plainneſs and Clearneſs, and yet his Hearers could not agree about the Senſe and Evidence of what he preach'd.

2. *Some believ'd the Things that were ſpoken*, and *ſome believ'd not*, *v.* 24. There was the Diſagreement; ſuch as this has always been the Succeſs of the Goſpel, to ſome it has been a *Savour of Life unto Life*, to others a *Savour of Death unto Death.* Some are wrought upon by the Word, and others harden'd; ſome receive the Light, and others ſhut their Eyes againſt it. So it was among Chriſt's Hearers, and the Spectators of his Miracles, ſome believ'd, and ſome blaſphem'd. If all had believ'd, there had been no *Diſagreement*; ſo that all the Blame of the Diviſion lay upon thoſe who would not believe.

Thirdly, The awakening Word which *Paul* ſaid to them at parting; He perceiv'd by what they mutter'd that there were many among them, and perhaps the greater Part, that were obſtinate, and would not yield to the Conviction of what he ſaid; and they were getting up to be gone, they had had enough of it; Hold, ſaith *Paul*, take one Word with you before you go, and conſider of it when you come home; What do you think will be the Effect of your obſtinate Infidelity? What will ye do in the End hereof? What will it come to?

1. You will by the righteous Judgment of GOD be *ſealed up under Unbelief*; you harden your own Hearts, and GOD will harden them, as He did *Pharoah*'s; and this is what was propheſy'd of concerning you. Turn to that Scripture, *Iſa.* vi. 9, 10. and read it ſeriouſly, and tremble, leſt the Caſe there deſcrib'd ſhould prove to be your Caſe. As there are in the *Old Teſtament* Goſpel Promiſes, which will be accompliſh'd in all that believe; ſo there are Goſpel Threatnings, of ſpiritual Judgments which will be fulfill'd in them that *believe not*; and this is one. 'Tis part of the Commiſſion given to *Iſaiah* the Prophet, he is ſent to make thoſe *worſe*, that would not be made *better: Well ſpake the Holy Ghoſt by* Eſaias *the Prophet unto our Fathers*; what was ſpoken by JEHOVAH, is here ſaid to be ſpoken by the *Holy Ghoſt*, which proves that the Holy Ghoſt is GOD; and what was ſpoken to *Iſaiah*, is here ſaid to be ſpoken by him to their Fathers; for he was order'd to *tell the People* what GOD ſaid to him; and tho' what is there ſaid, had in it much of Terror to the People, and of Grief to the Prophet, yet it is here ſaid to be *well ſpoken*; *Hezekiah* ſaid concerning a Meſſage of Wrath, *Good is the Word of the LORD which thou haſt ſpoken*, Iſa. xxxix. 8. And, *He that believes not ſhall be damned*, is Goſpel, as well as *He that believes ſhall be ſav'd*, Mark xvi. 16. Or, this may be explain'd by that of our Saviour, *Mat.* xv. 7. *Well did* Eſaias *propheſy of you.* The Holy Ghoſt ſaid to your Fathers, that which would be fulfill'd in you, *Hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand.*

(1.) That which was *their* great *Sin* againſt GOD, is *yours*; and that's this, *You will not ſee*; you ſhut your Eyes againſt the moſt convincing Evidence poſſible, and will not admit the Concluſion, tho' you cannot deny the Premiſes, *your Eyes you have cloſed*, v. 27. That ſpeaks an obſtinate Infidelity, and a willing Slavery to Prejudice. As your Fathers *would not ſee* GOD's Hand *lifted up againſt them* in his Judgments, *Iſa.* xxvi. 11. ſo you *will not ſee* GOD's Hand *ſtretch'd out to you* in Goſpel Grace. 'Twas true of theſe unbelieving *Jews*, that they were prejudic'd againſt the Goſpel, they *did not ſee*, becauſe they were reſolv'd they *would not*; and none ſo blind as they that *will not ſee.* They would not *proſecute* their Convictions, and for that Reaſon would not *admit* them. They have purpoſely *cloſed their Eyes*, leſt they ſhould *ſee with their Eyes* the great Things which belong to their everlaſting Peace, ſhould ſee the Glory of GOD, the Aimableneſs of Chriſt, the Deformity of Sin, the Beauty of Holineſs, the Vanity of this World, and the Reality of another; they will not be chang'd and govern'd by thoſe Truths, and therefore will not receive the Evidence of them; *leſt they ſhould hear with their Ears,* that which they are loath to hear, the *Wrath* of GOD reveal'd from Heaven *againſt them,* and the *Will* of GOD reveal'd from Heaven *to them:* They *ſtop their Ear,* like the *deaf Adder,* that *will not hearken to the Voice of the Charmer, charm he never ſo wiſely.* Thus their Fathers did, they *would not hear, Zech.* vii. 11, 12. And that which they are afraid of in ſhutting up their *Eyes* and *Ears,* and barricading (as it were) both their learning Senſes againſt Him that *made both the Hearing Ear, and the ſeeing Eye,* is, *leſt they ſhould underſtand with their Heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them.* They kept their Minds in the Dark, or at leaſt in a conſtant Confuſion and Tumult, leſt if they ſhould admit a conſiderate ſober Thought, they ſhould *underſtand with their Heart* how much it is both their Duty and their Intereſt to be Religious, and ſo by Degrees the Truth ſhould be too hard for them, and *they ſhould be converted* from the evil Ways which they take pleaſure in, to thoſe Exerciſes which they have now an averſion to. *Obſerve,* GOD's Method is to bring People firſt to *ſee* and *hear,* and ſo to *underſtand with their Hearts,* and then to *convert them,* and bow their Wills, and ſo *heal them,* which is the the regular Way of dealing with a Rational Soul: And therefore *Satan* prevents the Converſion of Souls to GOD, by *blinding the Mind,* and *darkening the Underſtanding,* 2 Cor. iv. 4. And the Caſe is very ſad when the Sinner *joyns with him* herein, and *puts out his own Eyes, ut liberius peccant libenter ignorant.* They are in Love with their Diſeaſe, and are afraid leaſt GOD ſhould *heal them*; like *Babylon* of old, we would have heal'd her, and ſhe *would not be heal'd,* Jer. li. 9. This was the Sin.

(2.) That which was the *great Judgment* of GOD upon them for this Sin, is his *Judgment upon you,* and that is, *You ſhall be blind.* GOD will give you up to a judicial Infatuation; *Hearing ye ſhall hear,* you ſhall have the Word of GOD preach'd to you over and over, but *you ſhall not underſtand it,* becauſe you will not give your Minds to underſtand it, GOD will not give you Strength and Grace to underſtand it: *Seeing ye ſhall ſee*; you ſhall have abundance of Miracles and Signs done before your Eyes, but *you ſhall not perceive* the convincing Evidence of them. Take heed leſt it be true of you, what *Moſes* ſaid to your Fathers, *Deut.* xxix. 4. *The Lord has not given you a Heart to perceive, and Eyes to ſee, and Ears to hear unto this Day.* And what *Iſaiah* ſaid to the Men of his Generation, *Iſa.* xxix. 10, 11, 12. *The LORD has pour'd out upon you the Spirit of deep Sleep, and hath cloſed your Eyes.* What with their reſiſting the Grace of GOD, and *rebelling* againſt the Light, and God's *withdrawing* and *with-holding* his Grace and Light from them; what with their *not receiving the Love of the Truth,* and GOD's *giving them up* for that to *Strong Deluſions to believe a Lye*; what with their *wilful,* and what with their *judicial* Hardneſs, *The Heart of this People are waxed groſs, and their Ears are dull of Hearing*; they are ſtupid and ſenſeleſs, and not wrought upon by all that can be ſaid to them; no Phyſick that can be given them operates upon them, or will reach them, and therefore their Diſeaſe muſt be adjudg'd *incurable,* and their Caſe *deſperate.* How ſhould they be happy that will not be *heal'd* of a Diſeaſe that makes them *miſerable?* and how ſhould they be *heal'd* that will not be *converted* to the uſe of the Methods of Cure? And how ſhould they be *converted,* that will not be *convinc'd* either of their Diſeaſe or of their Remedy? and how ſhould they be convinc'd that *ſhut their Eyes* and ſtop their Ears? Let all that hear the Goſpel, and do not heed it, tremble at this Doom; for when once they are thus given up to hardneſs of Heart they are already in the Suburbs of Hell; for who ſhall heal them, if GOD do not.

2. Your unbelief will *juſtify GOD in ſending the Goſpel to the Gentile World,* which is the thing you look upon with ſuch a jealous Eye, *v.* 28. *Therefore* ſeeing you put the Grace of GOD away from you, and will not ſubmit to the Power of Divine Truth and Love, ſeeing you will not be *converted* and *heal'd* in the Methods which Divine Wiſdom has appointed, therefore, *Be it known unto you,* that *the Salvation of GOD was ſent to the* Gentiles, that Salvation which was *of the Jews* only, *John* iv. 22. The Offer of it is made to them, the Means of it afforded to them, and they ſtand fairer for it than you do: 'Tis ſent to them, and they will *hear it,* and *receive* it, and be happy in it.

Now *Paul* deſigns hereby,

(1.) To *abate* their *Diſpleaſure* at the Preaching of the Goſpel to the *Gentiles,* by ſhewing them the Abſurdity of it; They were angry that the *Salvation of GOD was ſent to the* Gentiles, and thought it was too great a Favour done to them; but if they thought that Salvation of ſo ſmall a Value as not to be worthy their Acceptance, ſurely they could not grudge it the *Gentiles,* as too good for them, or envy them for it. The *Salvation* of GOD is ſent *into the World,* the *Jews* had the firſt Offer of it; 'twas fairly *propos'd* to them, 'twas earneſtly *preſs'd* upon them, but they refus'd it; they would not accept the Invitation which was given to them firſt to the Wedding Feaſt, and therefore muſt *thank themſelves* if other Gueſts be invited. If they will not ſtrike the Bargain, nor come up to the Terms, they ought not to be angry at thoſe that will. They cannot complain that the *Gentiles* took it *over their Heads,* or *out of their Hands,* for they had quite *laid their Hands off it*; nay, they had *lift up the Heel againſt it,* and therefore it's their Fault; for it is *through their Fall,* that *Salvation is come to the* Gentiles, *Rom.* xi. 11.

(2.) To *improve* their *Diſpleaſure* at the Favour done to the *Gentiles* to their Advantage, and to bring Good out of that Evil; for when he had ſpoken of this very Thing in his Epiſtle to the *Romans,* the Benefit which the *Gentiles* had by the Unbelief and Rejection of the *Jews,* he ſaith, he took Notice of it on purpoſe *that he might provoke* his dear Countrymen the *Jews* to a holy *Emulation,* and *might ſave ſome of them,* Rom. xi. 14. The *Jews* have rejected the Goſpel of Chriſt, and kick'd it off to the *Gentiles,* but it is not yet too late to repent of their Refuſal, and to accept of the Salvation which they did make light of; they may ſay *No,* and *take it*; as the elder Brother in the Parable, that when he was bidden to *go work in the Vineyard,* firſt ſaid, *I will not*; and yet afterwards *repented and went,* Matth. xxi. 29. It is the Goſpel ſent *to the Gentiles?* Let us go after it, rather than come ſhort of it. And *will they hear it,* who were thought to be out of Hearing, and had been ſo long like the Idols they worſhip'd, that have *Ears and hear not?* and ſhall not we hear it, whoſe Priviledge it is to have *GOD ſo nigh to us in all that we call upon him for?* Thus he would have them to argue, and to be ſham'd into the Belief of the Goſpel by the Welcome it met with among the *Gentiles:* And if it had not that Effect upon them it would aggravate their Condemnation, as it did that of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees,* that when they ſaw the *Publicans* and *Harlots* ſubmit to *John*'s Baptiſm, they did not *afterwards* thereupon repent of their Folly, *that they might believe him,* Mat. xxi. 32.

Fourthly, The Breaking up of the Aſſembly, as it ſhould ſeem, in ſome Diſorder.

1. They *turn'd their Backs* upon *Paul*; Thoſe of them that *believ'd not* were extreamly nettled at that laſt Word which he ſaid, that they ſhould be judicially blinded, that the Light of the Goſpel ſhould ſhine among them that ſate in Darkneſs; *when* Paul *had ſaid theſe Words,* he had ſaid enough for them, and *they departed,* perhaps not ſo much enrag'd as ſome others of their Nation had been upon the like Occaſion, but *ſtupid* and unconcern'd, no more affected either with thoſe *terrible* Words in the Cloſe of his Diſcourſe, or all the *comfortable* Words he had ſpoken before, than the Seats they ſate on. They *departed* many of them with a Reſolution never to hear *Paul* Preach again, nor trouble themſelves with further Enquiries about this Matter.

2. They *ſet their Faces* one againſt another; for they had *great Diſputes* among themſelves; there was not only a Quarrel between them which *believ'd* and them which *believ'd not,* but even among them which *believ'd not* there were Debates. They that agreed to *depart* from *Paul,* yet agreed not in the *Reaſons* why they departed, but had *great Reaſonings among themſelves.* Many have *great Reaſoning,* that yet do not *Reaſon right*; can find fault with one another's Opinions, and yet not yield to Truth. Nor will Mens *Reaſoning among themſelves* convince them, without the Grace of GOD to open their Underſtandings.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired houſe, and received all that came in unto him, 31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching thoſe things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

We are here taking our Leave of the Hiſtory of bleſſed *Paul*; and therefore ſince GOD ſaw it not fit we ſhould know any more of him, we would carefully take Notice of every particular of the Circumſtances in which we muſt here leave him.

Firſt, It cannot but be a *Trouble* to us that we muſt leave him in *Bonds* for Chriſt, nay, and that we have no proſpect given us of his being ſet at Liberty. *Two whole Years* that good Man's Life are here ſpent in Confinement, and for ought appears he was never enquir'd after of all that Time by thoſe whoſe Priſoner he was; He appeal'd to *Cæſar* in hope of a ſpeedy Diſcharge from his Impriſonment, the Governors having ſignify'd to his Imperial Majeſty concerning the Priſoner, that he had done nothing worthy of Death, or of Bonds, and yet is he continu'd a Priſoner; ſo little Reaſon have we to *truſt in Men,* eſpecially deſpis'd Priſoners in great Men, witneſs *Joſeph*'s Caſe whom the chief Butler *remember'd not,* but *forgat,* Gen. xl. 23. Yet ſome think, that tho' it be not mention'd here, yet it was in the *firſt* of theſe two Years, and early too in that Year that he was *firſt* brought before *Nero,* and then his Bonds in Chriſt were manifeſt in *Cæſar*'s Court, as he ſaith, *Phil.* i. 13. And at that firſt Anſwer it was that *no Man ſtood by him,* 2 Tim. iv. 17. and his ſpeaking there of his *firſt Anſwer,* intimates, that ſince that he had a *ſecond,* in which he had come off better, and yet was not diſcharg'd. During theſe two Years Impriſonment he wrote his Epiſtle to the *Galatians,* then his ſecond Epiſtle to *Timothy,* then thoſe to the *Epheſians, Philipians, Coloſſians,* and to *Philemon,* in which he mentions ſeveral Things particularly concerning his Impriſonment; and laſtly, his Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* juſt after he was *ſet at Liberty,* as *Timothy* alſo was, who coming to viſit him, was upon ſome Account or other made his Fellow-priſoner; (with him writes *Paul* to the *Hebrews,* xiii. 23.) if he come ſhortly, *I will ſee you.* But how or by what Means he obtain'd his Liberty, we are not told; only that two Years he was a Priſoner. Tradition ſaith, That after his Diſcharge he went from *Italy* and to *Spain,* thence to *Crete,* and ſo with *Timothy* into *Judea,* and from thence went to viſit the Churches in *Aſia,* and at length came a ſecond Time to *Rome*, and there was beheaded in the laſt Year of *Nero*. But *Baronius* himſelf owns that there is no certainty of any Thing concerning him, betwixt his Releaſe from this Impriſonment, and his Martyrdom; but it is ſaid by ſome, That *Nero*, having, when he begun to play the Tyrant, ſet himſelf againſt the Chriſtians, and perſecuted them (and he was the firſt of the Emperors that made a Law againſt them, as *Tertullian* ſaith, *Apol.* cap. 5.) the Church at *Rome* was much weaken'd by that Perſecution; and that brought *Paul* the ſecond Time to *Rome* to re-eſtabliſh the Church there, and to comfort the Souls of the Diſciples that were left; and ſo he fell a ſecond Time into *Nero*'s Hand. And *Chryſoſtom* relates, That a young Woman that was one of *Nero*'s Miſſes (to ſpeak modiſhly) being converted by *Paul*'s Preaching to the Chriſtian Faith, and ſo brought off from that lewd Courſe of Life ſhe had liv'd, *Nero* was incens'd againſt *Paul* for that, and order'd him firſt to be Impriſon'd, and then put to Death.

But to keep to this ſhort Account here given of it.

1. It would grieve One to think that ſuch a uſeful Man as *Paul* was, ſhould be ſo long in Reſtraint; *Two Years* he was a Priſoner under *Felix*, chap. xxiv. 27. and beſides all the Time that paſs'd between that and his coming to *Rome* he is here *two Years* more a Priſoner under *Nero*: How many Churches might *Paul* have planted, how many Cities and Nations might he have brought over to Chriſt in theſe five Years Time, (for ſo much it was at leaſt) if he had been *at Liberty*? But GOD is Wiſe, and will ſhew that He is no Debtor to the moſt uſeful Inſtruments He employs, but can and will carry on his own Intereſt both *without their Services*, and *by their Sufferings*. Even *Paul*'s Bonds fell out *to the Furtherance of the Goſpel*, Phil. i. 12, 14.

2. Yet even *Paul*'s Impriſonment was in ſome reſpect a Kindneſs to him; for theſe *two Years he dwelt in his own hired Houſe*, and that was more for ought I know, than ever he had done before. He had always us'd to be a Sojourner in the Houſes of others, now he has got a Houſe of *his own*; *his own* while he pays the Rent for it; And ſuch a Retirement as this, would be a Refreſhment to One who had been all his Days an Itenerant. He had us'd to be always upon the Remove, ſeldom ſtay'd long at a Place, but now he liv'd for two Years in the ſame Houſe; ſo that the bringing of him into this Priſon, was like Chriſt's Call to his Diſciples to *come into a Deſart Place, and reſt a-while*, Mark vi. 31. When he was at Liberty, he was in continual Fear by reaſon of the *lying in wait of the* Jews, *Acts* xx. 19. but now his Priſon was his Caſtle. Thus *out of the Eater came forth Meat, and out of the Strong Sweetneſs.*

Secondly, Yet it is a *Pleaſure* to us, for we are ſure it was to him, that tho' we leave him *in Bonds* for Chriſt, yet we leave him *at work* for Chriſt. And this made his Bonds eaſy, that he was not by them bound out from ſerving GOD, and doing Good. His Priſon becomes a Temple, a Church, and then it is to him a Palace. His Hands are ty'd, but Thanks be to GOD, his Mouth is not ſtop'd. A faithful, zealous Miniſter can better bear any Hardſhip than being Silenc'd. Here's *Paul* a Priſoner, and yet a Preacher; he is *bound*, but the Word of the LORD is not bound. When he wrote his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, he ſaid he *long'd to ſee them, that he might impart unto them ſome ſpiritual Gifts*, Rom. i. 11. He was glad to ſee ſome of them, *v.* 15. but it would not be half his Joy unleſs he could *impart to them ſome ſpiritual Gift*, which here he has an Opportunity to do, and then he will not complain of his Confinement. *Obſerve*,

1. *Whom he Preacheth to*; To all that had a Mind to hear him, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*. Whether he had Liberty to go to *other* Houſes to *preach*, doth not appear, 'tis likely not, but whoever would had Liberty to come to *his* Houſe to *hear*, and they were welcome, *he receiv'd all that came to him*. *Note*, Miniſters Doors ſhould be open to ſuch as deſire to receive Inſtruction from them, and they ſhould be glad of an Opportunity to adviſe thoſe that are in Care about their Souls. *Paul* could not Preach in a Synagogue, or any publick Place of meeting that was ſumptuous and capacious, but he preach'd in a poor Cottage of his own. *Note*, when we cannot do what we would in the Service of GOD, we muſt do what we can. Thoſe Miniſters that have but little hir'd Houſes, ſhould rather Preach in them, if they may be allow'd to do that, than be ſilent. He receiv'd *All* that came to him, and was not *afraid* of the *greateſt*, nor *aſham'd* of the meaneſt. He was ready to preach on the firſt Day of the Week to Chriſtians, on the ſeventh Day to *Jews*, and to who would on any Day of the Week. And he might hope the better to ſpeed becauſe they *came in unto him*, which ſuppos'd a Deſire to be inſtructed and a Willingneſs to learn; and where they are, 'tis probable ſome Good may be done.

2. *What he preach'd*; He doth not fill their Heads with curious Speculations, or with Matters of State and Politicks, but he keeps to his Text, minds his Buſineſs as an Apoſtle. (1.) He is GOD's Ambaſſador, and therefore *preacheth the Kingdom of GOD*, doth all he can to preach it up; negotiates the Affairs of it in order to the advancing of all its true Intereſts. He meddles not with the Affairs of the Kingdoms of Men; let thoſe treat of them whoſe Work it is; he preacheth the *Kingdom of GOD* among Men, and the Word of that Kingdom. The ſame that he defended in his publick Diſputes, *teſtifying the Kingdom of GOD*, *v.* 23. he enforc'd in his publick Preaching, as that which if receiv'd aright, will make us all wiſe and good, wiſer and better, which is the End of Preaching. (2.) He is an Agent for Chriſt, a Friend of the Bridegroom, and therefore *teacheth thoſe things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; The whole Hiſtory of Chriſt, his Incarnation, Doctrine, Life, Miracles, Death, Reſurrection, Aſcenſion. All that relates to the *Myſtery of Godlineſs*. *Paul* ſtuck ſtill to his Principle, to know and preach nothing but Chriſt and him crucify'd. Miniſters when in their Preaching they are tempted to divert from that which is their main Buſineſs, ſhould reduce themſelves with this Queſtion, What doth this *concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*? What Tendency has it to bring us to him, and to keep us walking in him? for we preach *not ourſelves, but Chriſt*.

3. *With what Liberty he preacheth.*

1. Divine Grace gave him a *Liberty of Spirit*; He preach'd *with all Confidence*, as One that was himſelf well aſſur'd of the *Truth* of what he preach'd, and that it was what he durſt *ſtand by*, and of the *Worth* of it, that it was what he durſt *ſuffer for*. He was *not aſham'd of the Goſpel of Chriſt*.

2. Divine Providence gave him a *Liberty of Speech*; *No Man forbidding him*; giving him any Check for what he did, or laying any Reſtraint upon him. The *Jews* that us'd to forbid him to ſpeak to the *Gentiles*, had no Authority here; and the *Roman* Government as yet took no Cognizance of the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity as a Crime. Herein we muſt acknowledge the Hand of GOD, (1.) *Setting Bounds to the Rage of Perſecutors*; where He doth not turn the Heart, yet He can tye the Hand, and bridle the Tongue. *Nero* was a bloody Man, and there were many both *Jews* and *Gentiles* in *Rome* that hated Chriſtianity; and yet ſo it was unaccountably, that *Paul* tho' a Priſoner was conniv'd at in Preaching the Goſpel, and it was not conſtrued a Breach of the Peace. Thus GOD makes the Wrath of Men to *praiſe Him*, and *reſtrains the Remainder* of it, *Pſal.* lxxvi. 10. Tho' there were ſo many that had it *in their Power* to forbid *Paul*'s Preaching, even the common Soldier that kept him might have done it; yet GOD ſo order'd it, that no Man did *forbid him*. (2.) See GOD here *providing Comfort for the Relief of the Perſecuted*. Tho' it was a very *low* and *narrow* Sphere of Opportunity that *Paul* was here plac'd in, compar'd with what he had been in, yet ſuch as it was, he was not *moleſted* or *diſturb'd* in it. Tho' it was not a *wide Door* that was *open'd to him*, yet it was kept open, and *no Man* was ſuffer'd to *ſhut it*, and it was to many an *effectual Door*, ſo that there were *Saints* even *in Cæſar's Houſhold*, Phil. iv. 22. When the *City of our Solemnities* is thus made a *quiet Habitation* at any Time, and we are fed from Day to Day with the Bread of Life, *no Man forbidding us*, we muſt give Thanks to GOD for it, and prepare for Changes; ſtill longing for that *Holy Mountain* in which there ſhall never be any *pricking Briar*, or *grieving Thorn*.

9 OC 65

The End of the Acts of the Apoſtles.